

Landchat

Landcare in the Southern New England, No. 82, March - April 2011

Southern New England Landcare...

Our **VISION** is for a vibrant, socially and economically healthy community existing in a healthy, productive and biodiverse environment.

Our **MISSION** is to foster community participation in sustainable natural resource management.

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Diary Dates

Namoi Catchment Awards close	2 May
New England EXPO.....	6-8 May
Dr Christine Jones & Garry McDouall, Uralla...	14 May
Talking About the Weather Conference	18-19 May
CFOC Review submissions	20 May
Farm Day.....	28-29 May
Environmental Trust Grant workshops	11 Apr
State Landcare & Catchment Management Forum and State Landcare Awards, Parkes	5-7 Sep

Landcare Adventure

Strong in 13th Year

By Sara Schmude

From beginning to end, the 13th annual New England North West Landcare Adventure was a force to be reckoned with... the force of knowledge, experience, experimentation, innovation, networking, and capacity building on a regional scale.

In today's changing climate our land managers are confronted with many factors that influence their decision making. Factors, including political, economic, social and environmental, that have the potential to significantly influence the future of our rural and regional urban communities.

The 13th Landcare Adventure held at Guyra, which attracted 150 participants, was all about providing resource managers with the tools to build their capacity to understand these factors and to build their resilience through a desire to experiment, recognise opportunities and to develop a knowledge and skill base to implement their ideas.

Day one of the two day event found participants at 'Kenilworth' Guyra with Fiona and Derek Smith – both open-minded opportunists who through their 'working with nature' (www.workingwithnature.net.au) approach have explored the possibilities of diversifying through the creation of a 'pastured-egg' business coupled with a cattle enterprise, soil consulting, TAFE teaching and commercial vegetable production.

Continued on page 2



Above: Galbaan community members register for the Landcare Adventure.



Above: L to R – Glenda Reeves “Wyuna” Amosfield, Liston, Martin l’Ons Tenterfield, Rod Reeves “Wyuna” Amosfield.



Above: Jenny and Jack , visitors at the HiCUB/ SNELCC display at the Adventure.



Above: Sally and Simon Wright, ‘Wongwibinda’.



Above: Steve Harvey catches up with Carina Johnson at the Adventure displays.

Fiona delighted in sharing her chook experience—feedback indicated that everyone was engaged and inspired by her tenacity and passion for producing a wholesome product.

Central to the Smith family’s success is a balanced soil—Derek, Laurie Smith and Ian Holmes (local chemical-free potato producers) gave our Adventurers an insight into their experience in creating biological and nutrient rich soils that have ultimately lead to producing food that is ‘nutrient dense, clean, green and energetic’.

Our Kenilworth experience was further enhanced with an informative talk by Clare Edwards (NSW Industry and Investment) about weed management in our pasture systems – it soon became apparent from open discussions that interest centred on the control of the menacing Chilean Needle grass, Coolatai grass and African Lovegrass and the need for an innovative integrated approach to control.

Guyra’s Mother of Ducks Lagoon provided a serene backdrop to our biodiversity management sessions – here was an opportunity for our questioning Adventurers to broaden their knowledge base of upland wetland biodiversity and the importance these areas play as the ‘kidneys’ of hydrological systems within the Murray Darling Basin. Special thanks to Dr Dorothy Bell (Botanist, University of New England), Peter Metcalfe (Ornithologist extraordinaire),

Nic Cobcroft (HiCUB) and James Browning and Rachel Betts (New England Weeds Authority) for furthering our ability to identify the relevance of our natural environments

in sustaining the healthy function of our farming systems. More HiCUB news later in this edition.

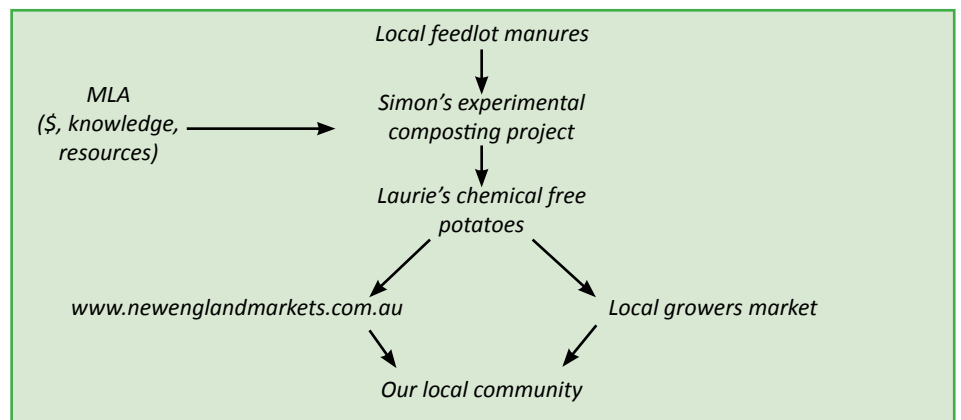
“It’s refreshing to see biologically sensitive farmers strive to produce top quality food rather than just another commodity.”

Dr Christine

Jones (www.amazingcarbon.com) – what a coup for us to have the opportunity to experience an internationally renowned expert talk about soil carbon and the relevance it has, not only for the production of healthy food, but for the future of farming in regional Australia. Dr Jones impressed upon our Adventurers the great importance to acknowledge/ observe/ measure and learn how to rapidly build fertile topsoil and essentially create on-farm carbon sinks that count. The feedback from this gathering was significantly positive and potentially an indication that land managers realise the benefits a movement toward carbon-based farming has and how this can contribute to a stable and sustainable farming future with local, regional, national and international implications.

Sonia Williams, Regional Landcare Facilitator Project Manager for NENW Landcare gave an overview of the Australian Governments Carbon Farming Initiative (CFI) - and whilst this is still largely in the development stage, encouraged Adventurers to begin to understand the language and concepts around carbon, so that they

Below: The life cycle of locally grown - locally sold produce.



can effectively participate in the debate and determination of whatever the CFI may end up being. Indeed Christine Jones's talk was just one opportunity to do so – Adventurers were to hear more about carbon on Day 2 of the Adventure.

A big breakfast with the Guyra Lions began our day 2 Adventure...with the Lower Apsley River Landcare Group carbon audit findings dished up by local landholder, and Chair of Lower Apsley Group Ross King and Shane Andrews, project officer with Southern New England Landcare.

This presentation created much interest and discussion with a number of people planning to go home and talk to their groups about doing a carbon audit for their own group.

And what would a trip to Guyra be without going to look at the impressive "Guyra Tomato Exchange", run by the Costa Group. This enormous outfit has generated employment and investment in Guyra, much needed after the closing of their meat works, and is a great demonstration of how the Council and the community can promote and improve their local economy.

Venturing out to Robert and Fiona Kelly's property "Mt William", the focus was on livestock production, showcasing innovative technologies available to our rural landholders. Robert gave our Adventurers a firsthand experience at the ease of operating a sheep grazing management system that through the utilisation of select animal genetics and pasture varieties, and active grazing management has lead to an increase in productivity and an effective reduction in parasites.

Rob also gave an awe inspiring demonstration of setting up 50 m of electric fencing without stepping off his quad bike in no time at all.

In recent years Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA) have funded a Producer Initiated Research and Development program – The Technograzing system and Wongwibinda Landcare Group Composting Trial (presented at the Adventure by Sally &

Simon Wright) are two such projects that have received this valued support. Our guest speaker MLA's Cameron Allen was on hand to talk about the multiple dimensions and objectives of sustainable grazing systems; and challenged the audience to determine what does "farming sustainably" mean and how might this be relayed to the non farming community. Vigorous discussion has given Cameron, and audience members, some feedback and useful insights to use in debating and promoting the role of farming in our society.

An enthralling presentation by Prof Roger Hegarty, Professor of Animal Nutrition from University of New England, about livestock methane emissions and the importance for primary producers to recognise that through genetic selection & optimising feed intakes there is the potential to significantly improve production outputs while reducing methane emissions. Prof Hegarty encouraged Adventurers to learn more at an upcoming field day on the subject which was to be held the following week at Trevenna glasshouse complex located near the western car park at UNE.

Out in the field participants cycled around "hands-on" skill building activities – pasture assessment and monitoring with Dr Lewis Khan from Agricultural Information Monitoring Services (AIMS) and sheep and cattle condition scoring with Jim Meckiff and Jason Siddell from NSW Dept. of Industry and Investment. Feedback collected on these sessions revealed that our Adventurers greatly valued the opportunity to actively build on their tools of estimation and the relative ease of application in their livestock enterprises.

Whilst on the buses travelling back from Mt William to Guyra, Adventurers had the opportunity to learn more about agricultural production and natural resource management in the region, with local landholders Simon Murray, Wal Perry and John Winter Irving providing commentary and answering questions.

The Guyra region provided an ideal
Continued on page 4



Above: Fiona Smith talks 'pastured eggs' at 'Kenilworth'.



Above: The 'Kenilworth' hens and their transportable accommodation.



Above: Nic Cobcroft (HiCUB) talks about wetland management and upland wetlands at Mother of Ducks Lagoon.



Above: Over lunch Adventurers are updated on the activities of the HiCUB project.

platform to showcase a range of natural resources and the Vernon Street Travelling Stock Route (TSR) was no exception. It was here that our Adventurers learned to identify various attributes of our bushlands – eucalypt identification with Dave Carr (read more in the HiCUB article) and bush fire fuel loads with Trevor Strudwick from the Rural Fire Service. We gratefully thank Tanya Cutmore (Banbai), Lesley Patterson (Banbai) and Ross Macleay for their talks about the declaration and management of Indigenous Protected Areas (IPA), cultural artefacts and native plant propagation.

No Adventure is complete without the fun and frivolity of a celebratory dinner in honour of the vast achievements of our regional resource managers, leaders and educators.

The Landcare Adventure provided a perfect opportunity to host the Border Rivers Gwydir CMA Landcare and Natural Resource Management Awards presentation dinner. Among the award winners were local farmers, aboriginal groups, high school teachers, urban and young landcarers. These award winners will go on to represent the Border Rivers Gwydir region at the NSW State Landcare Awards to be held in Parkes in September.

The dinner also presented an opportunity for our 150 landcare Adventurers to network on a regional scale with a variety of people representing the five different landcare networks across the New England North West.

Special thanks goes to our Northern Tablelands MP Richard Torbay, who acknowledged the work that Landcare does across the region in bringing the community together as well as improving agricultural sustainability and natural resource management.

Many thanks... This Adventure would not have been possible without the valued support of the five New England North West Landcare networks and their Chairs (SNELCC, UGLA, GWYMAC, Granite Borders, GLENRAC), The Australian

Government - Caring for our Country, and Regional Facilitator Project, the Border Rivers Gwydir Catchment Management Authority (BRG CMA), Northern Rivers CMA, Namoi CMA, Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA), WFI, High Country Urban Biodiversity Project (HiCUB), Armidale Dumaresq Council and Orkney Management Farm Mapping.

Our Landcare Adventure organising team, made up of Jennie Coldham, Sonia Williams, Bec Ballard, Alice Devlin, Sarah Tait, Brenda Shepherd and Sara Schmude, would also like to thank the Guyra clubs, charities, schools and businesses along with the agricultural communities for putting on such a good show...

Well done to all for a very successful 2011 Landcare Adventure and we look forward to the 2012 Adventure hosted by GWYMAC!

This event was sponsored by:



Testimonials for a great Adventure...

"The Landcare Adventure was a fantastic show. It was good to meet old friends as well as being able to show off the HiCUB projects. Nic Cobcroft, Dorothy Bell, James Browning and Peter Metcalf all ran the fascinating workshops at Mother of Ducks Lagoon whilst the Lions Club catered with a really great barbecue. The Lagoon is renowned for its Copperhead snakes – not one was spotted!" - Brenda

"There were diverse landbased topics and a well-organised, well-run, well-planned event. Congratulations!" - Phil

"I liked learning cutting edge ideas and sharing with other people ... it's an absolutely invaluable experience where I learn so much - and this has been **the best**. Well done!" - John

"The breadth of experience and expertise ... a most informative and enjoyable experience" - Jack & Jenny

"Comradeship and efficient organisation" - Robin

"Every session was worthwhile with very high quality presentations" - Michelle

"A very good balance of talk and walk ... very well organised, and an interesting, varied and balanced program" - Julie

"The pertinence of the workshops and the great opportunities for social interaction" - Helen

"It was an extremely interesting, educational and thought provoking 2 days. The event was superbly organised, beautifully paced, incredibly well catered and fabulously facilitated. Visiting the properties were the highlights for us, but all the varied showcases, discussions and presentations worked brilliantly together and the handouts contained a great deal of very valuable information that we are still digesting. And that's without mentioning all the lovely and interesting people we met! We enjoyed it from the first minute until the last, and are looking forward to next year already." - Donna Lee and Wes.

Local Winners in *Regional* Landcare Awards!

The achievements of a number of groups and individuals across our region have the opportunity to be recognized through the Regional Landcare and Catchment Management awards. Each Catchment Management Authority holds regional awards – read below to find out what's happening across our SNELCC area.

Border Rivers–Gwydir CMA Landcare & Catchment Management Awards

These were judged recently with winners being awarded at the Landcare Adventure Dinner, attended by 150 people with Northern Tablelands MP Richard Torbay presenting the trophies. In his address Mr Torbay acknowledged the work that Landcare does across the region in bringing the community together as well as improving agricultural sustainability and natural resource management.

Congratulations to our 4 winners:

Balala Brushgrove Landcare Group who won the Community Group Award, with their long history of amazing projects. The group formed in 1989 and is still going strong, with its hands on approach to trialing and demonstrating a range of on farm NRM issues.

The Engineered Woodlands Project, that won the Innovation in Sustainable Farm Practices Award. Judges felt that this project demonstrated great innovation with its establishment of native trees within grazing enterprises, providing benefits in shade and shelter as well as timber products in the longer term, and in particular were impressed by the extension efforts of the project. Congratulations to Shane Andrews from Southern New England Landcare and David Thompson and the Northern Inland Forestry Investment Group, and all the participating landholders.

Banbai Business Enterprise Inc, winner of the Autry Dennison Memorial Indigenous Award for their work to increase indigenous participation in natural resource management and their management of Indigenous Protected Areas to the east and west of Guyra.

Uralla Shire Council, winners of the Local Government Partnership Awards, for its work on a diversity of projects including the Uralla Sub-Catchment Plan, the High

Country Urban Biodiversity program and communication initiatives such as the Living Sustainably Uralla Shire newsletter.

The prestigious Individual Landcarer Award was contested by a number of worthy nominees, with Rex Maddocks from Tenterfield taking out the Runner Up for his commitment to the Border Landcare Organic Group and Tenterfield Community Garden Group. Andrew Baker of Ashford was awarded the Individual Landcarer Award for his contribution to Landcare at many levels, from his activities on his property, with his local Landcare group Myall Creek / Ashford Landcare and as Deputy Chairman of GWYMAC.

Northern Rivers Landcare Awards

Finalists from our region were announced at the Landcare Adventure dinner. Winners were then announced at a celebratory lunch held in Grafton on the 1st of April. Congratulations to **Armidale Urban Rivercare Group** winners of the Urban Landcare Award. Congratulations to other winners from the tablelands region - Greg & Sally Chapel, and Kylie Falconer of Glenrac, and Geoff Robertson of Granite Borders Landcare.

Namoi Catchment Awards

Namoi CMA has launched their 2011 Catchment Awards. There are 11 award categories on offer, including Education, Community Group, Innovation in NRM, Young Landcarer, Primary Producer and more.

Download an entry form at www.namoi.cma.nsw.gov.au. Entries close 2nd May 2011.

State Landcare Forum and Awards

Winners from each of the regions will automatically be entered in to the judging of the State Landcare Awards, which will be presented at the State Landcare Forum to be held in Parkes from the 5th – 7th September.

Winners will be subsidized to attend the conference, and New England North West Landcare is organizing a bus and group accommodation so that as many as possible can attend this event. Mark your diary now and watch the SNELCC web page and future editions of Landchat for more information.



Above: Shane Andrews (second from right) receives the Innovation in Sustainable Farm Practices Award for the Engineered Woodlands Project.



Above: Members of Banbai Business Enterprise Inc, Tanya and Douglas Cuttmore with their Autry Dennison Memorial Indigenous Award.



Above: Tom O'Connor of Uralla Shire Council (second from right) receives the Local Government Partnership Award for their work with the community in Uralla.



Above: Shane and Cheryl Andrews celebrated their 25th Wedding Anniversary while at the Adventure - congratulations!

Funding *Successes!*



CARING
FOR
OUR
COUNTRY

Community Action Grants

Some of our Landcare Groups have been successful in gaining funding for group projects through the federal government's Community Action Grant Program. These projects will be implemented over the next 18 months.

Glen-GRO

The Glen-GRO Landcare group has successfully gained \$8,200.00 in funding for the "Majors Corner Rehabilitation and Enhancement of Native Vegetation" project.

This project will enhance the biodiversity of a 360m rundown section of Thunderbolts Way roadside, 4.5km south-east of Walcha. Local native trees and plants will be introduced to enhance the native eucalypt woodland and to provide attractive roadside vegetation. The enriched site will provide native wildlife with additional habitat and connectivity with surrounding remnant bushland. Farmers adjoining the site will revegetate their properties with the same native plants. The project will include invasive weed control of wood weeds, and watering and mulching for new plants. Local artists will assist in developing signage for the area. The project will result in increased community knowledge and awareness for natural resource management activities in the area.

Dangarsleigh

The Dangarsleigh Landcare group has successfully secured \$19,980.00 in funding for the "Biodiversity Connectivity in the Dangarsleigh Area" project.

This project will connect existing remnant areas of woodlands through fencing and revegetation to close gaps and restore biodiversity corridors. Group members will prepare the grounds of the revegetation zones by controlling weeds and ripping, followed by fencing to exclude stock.

A mix of local trees and shrub species will be planted and tree guards and stakes installed. The project will establish biodiversity corridors on four properties and contribute to sustainable farm practices outcomes including improved soil health and reduced erosion. New vegetation will be monitored and protected by landholders as it becomes established, with further weed control, fence maintenance and watering undertaken as required.

Wongwibinda

The Wongwibinda Landcare group has secured \$17,150.00 in funding for the "Enhancing Biodiversity and Production at Wongwibinda" project.

This project will improve outcomes for soil, pasture, creek water and significant remnant vegetation linking the headwaters of Doughboy and Kangaroo Creeks. The project will implement changes in the management of land on either side of Doughboy Creek and the feeder streams and gullies supporting the creek. Remnant vegetation patches of less healthy vegetation will be fenced and managed to exclude stock and aid biodiversity health. A new off-stream watering system will be set up and a system of monitoring soil, pasture and vegetation will be put in place. More than half the area is native pastures and it is expected that these will regenerate and improve.

Caring for Our Country

Southern New England Landcare has been successful in securing a 2010-11 Caring for Our Country grant.

The "Enhancing Connectivity of Remnant Native Vegetation in Walcha/Uralla District" project will connect existing remnant vegetation through the implementation of biodiversity corridors across the landscape.

These corridors will lead to increased native species biodiversity, improved ground cover and water use efficiency. Remnant vegetation assets will be

enhanced through riparian protection projects that result in the conservation of upland riparian zones, improved soil health and water quality in numerous tributaries of the Northern Rivers, Namoi and Border Rivers Gwydir Catchments. This project will assist in the development of management plans and implementation of on-ground works that align with local, regional, state and federal priorities.

The project will run from 2011 to 2013 and includes revegetation, remnant protection and riparian protection works in the Walcha and Uralla areas. The total funding secured for the project is \$189,940 with \$151,275 allocated to on-ground works and awareness raising activities.

The project includes 23 projects on 18 properties and is comprised of projects that have been developed from 2009-10, mostly through the Project Planning Workshops run by Southern New England Landcare.

Bec is currently finalising paperwork with the Federal Government for delivery of this project and will be in contact with individuals involved in the next month.

The 2011-12 Caring for Our Country funding round will open shortly and we will be submitting a number of applications. If you have NRM projects on your property and are interested in trying to access funding to support in the implementation of these works please complete an expression of interest form located at www.snelandcare.org.au and drop it into the SNEL office. Make sure you include the type of works you want to do as well as the km of fencing required and the ha of revegetation, remnant, riparian area included in the project. If you attended the project planning workshops in 2009-10 or have planned a project in the last 12 months with SNEL we will be re-submitting your project in the Caring for Our Country funding round, so fingers crossed for a successful submission.

The Soil Health Forum

Field Day with *Dr Judi Earl* a great success!

The torrents unleashed by the weather gods south of Uralla in late November and early December washed out roads and isolated quite a few properties. This impacted negatively on the numbers who turned up for The Soil Health Forum sponsored Planned Grazing field day at Craig and Karen Zirkler's "Bimbi Vale" presented by Dr. Judi Earl.

However the few dozens who made it through the mud found it well worth the effort, and information gained will doubtless inform quite a few future on-ground changes and "experiments" on local grazing properties.

The day was devised as an introduction to planned grazing concepts for landholders who've heard about these and are interested in learning more. Interactive questioning was encouraged. There were a number of farmers putting a foot into these waters for the first time, as well as others – including host Karen Zirkler – who have split up their own paddocks over the past several years and thus able to recount real life stories about any issues, problems and gains as a result.

Fencing styles, water, pumps, animal management and animal health were all discussed. In particular, Judi emphasised the importance of understanding which pasture plants are present in your paddock and knowing how they perform from season to season, as well as being able to estimate their per hectare kilograms. The rain cleared long enough for a dash into a "Bimbi Vale" paddock for some practical learning and demonstration of this by use of pasture measurement sticks.

After a super barbeque lunch (courtesy of NAB Agribusiness, Armidale – thank you NAB!) focussed discussion continued freely. Judi Earl's quiet skill as a facilitator of land manager learning is well known to those who've seen her in action, her own wide knowledge never overwhelms. When we wound up at about 4pm and she was thanked for presenting a top day, those thanks were genuine!

Anyone interested in further events or field days involving Dr. Judi Earl, including Holistic Management training, is invited to visit www.aimsag.com.au or phone 0409 151969.



Above and below: The rain cleared long enough for a demonstration of how to use the pasture sticks to estimate dry matter per ha at Bimbi Vale.



Many thanks to Pat Schultz

Huge thanks to Pat Schultz for getting more than 1500 locally provenanced native shrubs donated by Olivia Schaefer of Cedar Nursery & Landscaping. Olivia donated them for community use, and Pat provided a boost by re-potting them all! In less than a week from pick-up all were planted out and are already showing new leaf.

About half went to a huge new bird sanctuary south of Uralla. Several hundred went to Uralla Rivercare, and some to the Uralla Community Garden. The balance went in smaller lots to provide habitat around dams, fencelines and in gardens. All are greatly appreciated by both Landcarers and birds!

Jill Moore Kashima

Worm Resources

Want to know more about earthworms and the tireless work they do for your soils? An online Pictorial Guide to Paddock Earthworms in SE Australia is available for download. A great resource for NRM staff and land managers; download at www.dpi.vic.gov.au/dpi/vro/vrosite.nsf/pages/soil_health_worm_wise

Dr Christine Jones to speak in Uralla

Saturday 14th May

with Garry McDouall



8.30 am for 9 am start,
Uralla Memorial Hall, Salisbury Street

This will be a full and interactive day devoted to the theoretical and practical issues around soil carbon and its sequestration including myths, opportunities and challenges.

An internationally respected ground cover and soils ecologist, Dr Jones has a wealth of on-ground experience working with farmers and is an excellent communicator. Her innovative new work focussing on biological mechanisms, particularly the role of mycorrhizal fungi in improving drought resilience and soil health, will be highlighted.

Particular attention will be paid to the effects of common management systems on food security and nutritional quality. Energy and its impact on both agriculture and the people in agriculture will be discussed.

The principles of a genuinely regenerative agriculture will be talked through, leading to questions of how we design a system which meets these principles.

Learn more about how what you do on your own land can influence nutrient availability, build topsoil, improve soil water storage and lift economic returns.

\$55 pp

(\$40 for accompanying partner).

Includes lunch, all refreshments and take-home information bag.

Please register by Tuesday 10th May with SNECC on 67729123.

This event is subsidised by The Soil Health Forum under an Australian Government Caring for our Country grant. The Soil Health Forum is incorporated under Southern New England Landcare Coordinating Committee Inc.



Have your say on what support is needed to make Landcare relevant for you!

Landcare did not develop in a vacuum. Whilst it is an organization where the majority of works are achieved by volunteers, it gained its original momentum from a well-resourced plan—the “Decade of Landcare Plan”. This plan underpinned Federal, State and non-government investment in Landcare over the 10 year period from 1990-2000.

Since then, no comprehensive plan to ensure Landcare’s effective operation has been in existence. In some areas where Landcare is supported by Catchment Management Authorities, it still operates well, in other areas it has all but ceased operation.

Even where Landcare is still operational, members have expressed views that Landcare has moved from the grass roots, and that it is harder and harder to find support and resources for activities their group has identified. This support for local action is what drove the success of Landcare... but since the Decade of Landcare Plan ended there has been little or no recognition nor support of this.

I encourage everyone to take the opportunity to comment on the Draft Action Plan for Landcare and the Caring for Our Country Review, which are currently open for comment.

*Regards Sonia Williams – Executive Officer
Southern New England Landcare*

Australian Landcare Council wants YOUR comments

The Australian Landcare Council now seeks your comment on a draft of the Australian Framework for Landcare Action Plan. The Action Plan supports the Australian Framework for Landcare which was released in September 2010.

The Action Plan has been drafted by the Australian Landcare Council on behalf of the Landcare Community, and discusses the seven key elements of the Framework identified by the community, how the key elements will improve Landcare and actions for landcarers to contribute to achieving Landcare goals.

The Australian Landcare Council welcomes feedback on the proposed goals and actions and any suggestions on what activities and actions you or your group can take to contribute to the achievement of these goals. Your involvement in the development of this Action Plan will help to strengthen and reinvigorate the Landcare movement into the future.

This draft Action Plan will be open for public comment for three months, from **7 March 2011 to 17 June 2011**.

How to make a comment: go to www.daff.gov.au/natural-resources/landcare/the_australian_landcare_framework

Read the Draft Australian Framework for Landcare Action Plan.

You may also find it useful to read the Australian Framework for Landcare before providing your comments.

Email your comments or request a hard copy.

LANDCARE

Come Home to Grass Roots.

On the 5th - 7th Sept. 2011, Landcare is coming home to Parkes for the NSW Landcare and Catchment Management Forum.

PARKES & DISTRICTS

Thinking Differently:

New solutions, for old issues.

Challenge your perceptions and revisit perennial issues with new perspectives.

Urban: Agriculture: Biodiversity:

What are the old issues? What are the new solutions? What will work for you in the 21st Century?

For details on Sponsorship applications and other information...Phone (02) 6862 4914

www.parkeslandcare.org.au

Northern Rivers CMA Board visits *Walcha*

The Northern Rivers Catchment Management Authority held their March board meeting in Walcha. Day 2 of their meeting, Wednesday the 2nd of March, consisted of a farm visit to BOZO Landcare group members James and Caroline Street's property "Blaxland".

On arrival at "Blaxland" the NR CMA board and staff were shown some of the NRM works that Caroline and James have implemented on their property. The board were impressed with the scale of works undertaken and commented that it was great to view positive on-ground environmental outcomes first hand. In fact it was difficult to keep the program on schedule as Board members wanted to see more...

Back at the Woolshed, a number of landholders representing BOZO, Lower Apsley and Harnham Landcare Groups, as well as Board members of Southern New England Landcare joined the audience as Bec Ballard and Sonia Williams highlighted to the NRCMA Board how Southern New England Landcare use their NRCMA funded Community Support Officer to facilitate project development by landholders and other organisations so that a number of "shovel ready" projects can be slotted into whatever funding becomes available to assist in getting these projects up and running. In this way Southern New England Landcare

has been able to leverage the investment of CMA funds to get additional non CMA external funding on-ground for catchment benefits

The HiCUB project is just one such example – Dave Carr introduced the HiCUB project and in particular the proposed works on Apsley River and the Urandangie Wetland Plan that will result from the NSW Environmental Trust investment in the region.

After morning tea the NR CMA board members and staff discussed with landholders, the future direction of Landcare and Natural Resource Management in the region. Through these discussions it was highlighted that engaged communities and landholders who are passionate about the sustainability of their properties are a major asset in the implementation of environmental works and value for money.

The field trip concluded with lunch at Dangars Lagoon where Dave Carr talked about previous NRM works completed at the lagoon and the importance of Upland Wetlands in our environment.

Thankyou to James and Caroline Street for hosting the day and to the landholders who attend, your input was greatly appreciated.

Review of CFOC

The review of the Caring for our Country initiative has commenced. The review will look at the effectiveness of the program, achievements to date and will explore options for natural resource management delivery in the future.

An important part of the review will be consulting with Australia's natural resource management stakeholders. The views and experiences of our partners and stakeholders are an essential part of informing the review and will help identify program improvements that are practical and focused.

In addition, specific feedback from the recipients and applicants of Caring for our Country funding about the outcomes of investments will help tell the Caring for our Country story and inform the review.

Southern New England Landcare will be making a submission to the review as it is an important opportunity to give feedback to the Australian Government about how the program has affected Landcare activities in this region. If you would like to have some input into SNEELCC's submission please contact Dave Carr or Sonia Williams on 6772 9123.

If you would like to make an individual submission or to find out more about the review, go to www.nrm.gov.au/review/index.html.

The closing date for submissions is 20th May, 2011.

New England EXPO

Volunteers required!

Once again Southern New England Landcare will have a display at The New England Expo (previously Wool Expo) in Armidale from the 6th – 8th of May.

This year's display will include other organizations and Natural Resource Management providers from the Southern New England area and has space for a display from your Landcare group if you are interested.

If you are able to help us on the site for a two hour stretch some time during these three days or if you can help us set up Thursday afternoon, please let us know.

There will be a Southern New England Landcare staff member present at all times and it is a great opportunity to catch up with people you haven't seen for a while.

So come along and join us for a while in the NRM tent. Contact us at the office on 6772 9123!



High Country

Urban Biodiversity Project



Above: With the Marquee set up, Landcare and the HiCUB display looked brilliant at the Walcha Show.



Above: A visit from the dignitaries: Walcha mayor Bill Heazlett and Local MP, Richard Torbay.



Above: Bec Ballard and NSW Farmers' President, Jock Laurie inspect the fox trap at the Walcha Show.

HiCUB hits local shows

As HiCUB community co-ordinator I have been out-and-about, sharing with the SNElCC co-ordinators, at local shows.

Bec and I had an outdoor exhibit at the Walcha Show, and the reception was fantastic. Walcha has a vibrant show – masses of people, great atmosphere and we had a good location between the sheep sheds and the Bar. We had announcements over the PA system advertising our presence and estimated about 50 people visited and asked questions.

The Indian Myna display, with trap, attracted a lot of attention. Another display that drew in the public was the Coordinated Fox Control Program and the cage fox trap. We had a visit from Richard Torbay and all the candidates for the election, as well as Hon. Rick Colless MLC.

The displays in the Pavilion were outstanding and Bec loved the chooks.

The Walcha Show also gave me an opportunity to discuss the plan for the work to be carried out in the Apsley River with the Mayor Bill Heazlett and other interested members of the community.

This plan should be approved by Walcha Shire Council soon and then put out for Public Display.

We propose to also have a Launch to publicise the project in the near future.

We also had exhibits at the Uralla and Guyra Shows. The weeds display at Uralla show attracted interest. At Guyra, where I worked with Alice and Sarah, our display was in the Pavilion, and was very enjoyable. We had a moderate number of visitors to our displays at both of these shows.

Biodiversity Survey

Let us know what you think about biodiversity and its impact on you and you could win an Apple iPad!

Visit www.tinyurl.com/unebiodiversity

The High Country Urban Biodiversity Project (HiCUB) has engaged researchers at the University of New England to carry out a broad survey of the community's views on biodiversity. The researchers aim to document residents' understanding of - and concerns about - biodiversity in their communities, and what actions, if any, they are taking to address potential threats.

"The UNE team consists of both environmental and behavioural researchers, representing a truly multi-disciplinary approach for understanding potential threats to biodiversity in the region," said psychology professor Don Hine, a member of the research team.

"The New England Tablelands is a good area to study, as it's quite small in area when compared to other bioregions in Australia, and yet it has such a unique biodiversity," Professor Hine said. "We want to see what people think about the areas of biodiversity in the New England Tablelands region, and particularly those left in urban areas."

"Previous researchers have found that if people have regular contact with nature, they value nature more," said Dr Robyn Bartel, an environmental geographer from the UNE's School of Behavioural, Cognitive and Social Sciences. "The research findings will tell us a lot about how the biodiversity around us might best be managed in the future."

The project also involves monitoring the effectiveness of several biodiversity enhancement initiatives currently taking place in the area. According to Dr. Darren

Ryder, the team leader of the waterway restoration monitoring part of the project, "the ecological success of stream restoration is seldom assessed, especially for our regional streams that have agricultural and urban impacts".

"We're measuring water quality, water bugs and wetland plants to determine the success of current restoration works in local creeks," Dr Ryder said. "The results will help promote the wise use of resources by developing the best methods for successful restoration in our regional waterways."

The researchers are encouraging residents in Armidale, Guyra, Uralla and Walcha to complete a short questionnaire about their biodiversity-related values, beliefs and behaviours. An online version of the questionnaire can be accessed at www.tinyurl.com/unebiodiversity

Hard copies of the questionnaire can be requested from the project's coordinator, Methuen Morgan, at mmorgan5@une.edu.au or 6773 2899. All individuals who complete the questionnaire will be entered into a draw for an iPad version 2.

Wind Farm Survey

What do you think about a community-owned wind farm for New England? Where should it go? Who should invest in it? Would you invest in it? Why?

New England Wind are investigating the feasibility and support for a community-owned New England wind farm as there is a very good wind resource here. Such a community-owned enterprise could be the first one in NSW, and only the third in Australia (though there are hundreds overseas, particularly North America and Western Europe).

With just four to six turbines we could produce enough electricity for 20% of the homes in the New England Tablelands.

The purpose of this survey is to help us assess the merits, issues and support for a community-owned wind farm. Have your say at www.tinyurl.com/newenglandwindcommunitysurvey and help shape the future of New England's power supply.

New: a well researched guide to myths and facts about wind energy produced by the Department of Environment, Climate Change & Water. Visit www.snelandcare.org.au for a copy.

SNELCC is a partner in New England Wind specifically to give the community an opportunity to participate and comment on the Community Wind Farm proposal.

Urandangie Ck restoration plan launched!

One of the major tributaries into Malpas Dam is Urandangie Creek, a typical Tablelands waterway meandering from South Guyra, through a number of grazing properties and discharging into the Malpas Catchment.

Many years of intensive farming, clearing, and grazing in the catchment of Urandangie Creek, combined with storm water collection in South Guyra, have significantly contributed to increased sediment and nutrient loads in the waterway. A much simplified and less resilient riparian community along Urandangie Creek has contributed to significant stream bed and bank erosion. As a consequence of these pressures and the loss in local biodiversity, the quality of water entering Malpas Dam has been significantly impacted upon.

In an effort to address these issues, the HiCUB Project has developed a rehabilitation plan for Urandangie Creek. The three stage plan seeks to improve the quality of water entering Malpas Dam, increase the health and extent of the riparian community through the property Urandangie and provide a showcase for healthy creeks.

The plan includes a number of engineered structures to be placed in-stream to halt bed lowering and stream bank erosion. As well as earthworks, a three kilometre stretch of creek will be fenced from stock and sections will be revegetated.

On Wednesday 2nd March, local landholders, staff and representatives from both Guyra Shire and Armidale Dumaresq Councils gathered at the 'Urandangie' woolshed to celebrate the launch of the restoration plan.

The concept for the Urandangie Creek restoration plan has been a vision of the Malpas Catchment Group for a number of years now. The HiCUB Project has provided the opportunity to see this vision developed into a reality. With the 3 stage plan now completed, on-ground

works will commence in the next few months.



Above: Dave Carr, Bill Perrottet, Mike Lloyd and Mayor Hans Hietbrink launch the Urandangie Creek Restoration Plan.

Mt Mutton

HiCUB has commenced work on Mt Mutton in Uralla. This Reserve has some patches of bushland in very good condition, but which are threatened by encroachment of weeds. Uralla Shire Council approved a Development Application from HiCUB to tackle these weeds over the next 9 months. With the help of community volunteers, HiCUB staff aim to remove weeds from the area above the walking track. In the last week of March volunteers and staff cut out 8T of hawthorn, Chinese wormwood, Cotoneaster and blackberry.

A work crew from the Galbaan team in Armidale then removed a large stand of privet near the summit, just before the berries ripened and started a whole new problem. Uralla Shire Council removed all the green waste. Efforts to control weeds will be monitored over the project course by Eco Logical.

Regular working bees will be held on the last Sunday of the month at Mt Mutton. Chris Whackett will also be working at Mt Mutton and The Glen on the first and third Monday of the month. Volunteers or young people seeking work experience are welcome to join him. Contact ellen@snelcc.org.au to register your interest.



Above: HiCUB staff Dave Carr and Chris Whackett with the results of the recent Mt Mutton working bee.

Indian Mynas

People often don't know the difference between the native Noisy Miner and the invasive pest, the Indian Myna, but the impact on biodiversity of the Indian Myna can be awful as they aggressively take over and defend territory, evicting native birds.

Identifying these birds is simple when you know what to look for:

Indian Mynas, introduced pests, are predominantly chocolate brown with a black head.

- In flight, white wing patches are clearly visible
- Yellow beak, eye patch and legs
- Ground foragers moving with a hopping gait
- About 12cm tall
- Opportunistic feeders: meat, food scraps, pet food, seed, berries, chicks



Above and below: The invasive Indian Myna.



Noisy Miners, Australian native birds, are predominantly grey with black patch around eye and on top of head.



Above: The native Noisy Miner.

- Yellow beak and eye patch
- Flesh coloured legs
- Pale grey breast and white belly
- Olive tinge near wing edge
- A honeyeater that forages for nectar and small insects

What can we do about this undesirable invader? Some simple things include:

- not leaving cat and dog food out in the backyard during the day for mynas to take,
- making public areas such as shopping centres, restaurants, schools, picnic areas and cafes much less attractive to mynas by not leaving food around,
- planting more shrubs in gardens to reduce open areas that mynas prefer,
- avoiding planting tall thin trees with dense foliage such as pencil pines which flocks of mynas use for roosting at night;
- checking your roofs for any holes or entry points and block them to prevent entry by mynas, making sure at the same time that you haven't accidentally imprisoned a possum, bat or other native resident, and
- keeping stock feed in rural areas secured away from mynas.

The HiCUB project is working with the four councils to have traps available, as well as training in management, to people from Walcha to Guyra. There is information on the website www.hicub.org.au and there will be information sheets, with colour photos, at all Council offices.

Clean Up Australia Day

The annual Clean Up Australia Day took place nationally on Sunday March 6th this year. In conjunction with New England Mutual, the Armidale Urban Rivercare Group hosted the event along Dumaresq Creek and Civic and Curtis Parks in Armidale.

The day was another huge success for the Group, with overall about 120 people turning up to lend hand, including a large contingent from St Alberts College. A great effort for a chilly Sunday morning!

50 full bags of rubbish were collected, which together filled one tip truck. The common species of Shopping trolley is growing in abundance along Dumaresq Creek, with around 15 specimens collected and disposed of on the day.

Duval Lions again provided a much

needed warm cup of coffee for morning tea and a delicious lunch. The Armidale Urban Rivercare Group would like to thank everyone for coming along and contributing their bit to cleaning up Australia.

Meanwhile, Armidale Tree Group hosted a clean up activity in the Snow Gums Reserve on North Hill in Armidale. 25 volunteers turned up and worked for 3 hours pulling out blackberries, St Johns Wort, Hawthorn and other weeds. Organiser Kate Boyd was thrilled with the response and hopes people will continue to come to regular working bees every Thursday afternoon in the Reserve. HiCUB bush regenerator Chris Whackett will also be helping Kate to run monthly working bees in the Reserve on the first Sunday of each month from 9.30 am.

HiCUB on the home straight

The High Country Urban Biodiversity Project (HiCUB) is now in its final year and activities are in full swing. The project team has been working very hard to build awareness of the project and get more residents of Armidale, Guyra, Uralla and Walcha involved. The Monitoring and Evaluation team from Eco Logical have also been busy with biodiversity and water monitoring as well as social surveys.

Recent activities have included support for bush regeneration activities in Armidale, Guyra and Uralla, assisting the Armidale Urban Rivercare Group with plantings, maintenance and monitoring and supporting other community projects in Armidale. Major planning activities have been completed for Urandangie Creek in Guyra Shire, the Apsley River and Walcha Woodlands project and the Uralla Creeks Sub-Catchment Plan. For a full picture of what the HiCUB project is doing, visit the website at www.hicub.org.au.

In the next few months major works will get underway in Uralla, Walcha and Guyra:

- The Soil Conservation Service is about to start construction of bed control structures in the creeks in Uralla and other erosion control works. These will incorporate fish passage, bank armouring and willow removal. The most public site will be in Alma Park, where a large bed

control structure will be built just below the footbridge. The aim of these works is to reduce the amount of sediment entering the creeks, and ultimately the Gwydir River. This improves water quality for aquatic plants and animals. The HiCUB team will follow up these works with a program of woody weed control, riparian plantings and site maintenance.

- The Urandangie Creek project is ready to start. In partnership with land owner Bill Perottet, HiCUB will fence out the creek, install bed control and wetland structures, plant 20,000 seedlings and provide supplementary stock water. The project will have local biodiversity benefits by protecting important riparian vegetation communities and will have significant water quality benefits for Urandangie Creek, which feeds directly into Malpas Dam, Armidale's water supply. In early March we launched the plan developed by Mike Lloyd from Red Frog Environmental Services at the Urandangie woolshed. The plan will be on display in both Guyra and Armidale-Dumaresq Council offices until the end of April.
- Plan development for the Apsley River Corridor and Walcha Woodlands Project has just been completed and the plan is due to be presented to Walcha Shire Council for approval, followed by a community consultation process. Nic Cobcroft has worked tirelessly to develop this plan with advice from a range of people. The project will see the channel of the Apsley River within the levy reshaped to give a diversity of depths. Plantings in and around the channel will be designed to cope with floods without endangering the levy banks. The finished project will see the biodiversity and aesthetic values of the Apsley River in Walcha greatly enhanced. Associated works will improve the health of important bushland remnants in Walcha through woody weed removal. You can see a video describing the project on the HiCUB website (www.hicub.org.au)
- There are now regular bush regeneration activities supported by HiCUB in Armidale (Snow Gums Reserve- first Sunday of the month) and Uralla (Mt Mutton – last Sunday of the month). Regular activities are

Hotspots

The Hotspots Fire Project has been underway in two localities in the Northern Rivers Catchments of the Southern New England region over the past 18 months. Landholders at Enmore and Wards Mistake have been involved in this exciting program, looking at the impacts of fire in maintaining native vegetation on the New England Tablelands.

Both the Enmore and Wards Mistake groups have completed two of the three workshops that make up the program. This unique project was targeted towards landholders who have native vegetation on their property and were interested in learning more about fire ecology.

With assistance from the NSW Rural Fire Service, ecologist Ross Macleay and Never Never Resources, participants have been introduced to the concepts of determining fire

also planned for the campus of the University of New England in the significant bushland remnants there. Watch the HiCUB website for details.

- Other activities planned over the coming months include: the development of biodiversity plans for public land in the four towns; biodiversity walking trails in Ben Lomond and Guyra; many more plantings on Dumaresq Creek in Armidale; starting out the Easlecc environmental centre near the old YCW club in Armidale; bush regeneration in Guyra; a project to get more water into Mother of Ducks Lagoon in Guyra; biodiversity plantings in Guyra; an environmental education program at SLEX and a program to get rid of Indian Mynas.

There are so many things going on with HiCUB that it is hard to keep track of them all. If you want to get involved in learning about biodiversity or get active in bush regeneration or plantings, the best way is to subscribe to the fortnightly email newsletter. Email Ellen Nyberg (ellen@snelcc.org.au) and let her know you would like to subscribe. You can also follow us on Facebook or on our website.

history in their area, the role of fire in maintaining and enhancing biodiversity, measuring fuel loads and working with neighbours in constructing fire management plans.

By neighbouring landholders working together in developing fire management plans at Workshop 2, varying priorities, concerns and desired outcomes were highlighted. With these in consideration, participants could develop their management to focus on their property, whilst also considering how their decisions may impact on their neighbours.

The third and final workshops for both groups are planned for early spring 2011. In Workshop 3, the NSW Rural Fire Service will demonstrate a prescribed burn operation on one property at Enmore and one at Wards Mistake that have completed a fire management plan. This workshop will tackle the practical implications of conducting a prescribed burn on property as part of a management plan.



Above: Enmore group identifying Land Management Zones.



Above: Wards Mistake group learning how to measure fuel loads.

What's new & happening?

NSW Environmental Trust Grants

The NSW Environmental Trust will be holding workshops in Armidale on its Environmental Education grants program for 2011. Workshop your ideas for an environmental education project and learn about:

- the 2011 Environmental Trust education grants
- effective project planning

- tools for monitoring and evaluating your education project
- application process

Monday 11th April 10 am to 2 pm and 6 pm to 8 pm Armidale at the Aboriginal Cultural Centre and Keeping Place.

Bookings: close 4th April Call (02) 8837 6093 or email info@environmentaltrust.nsw.gov.au

Program	Detail	Closing Date	Program Funds
Education (Community)	Expression of Interest	21 April 2011	\$500,000
Education (State & Local Government)	Expression of Interest	21 April 2011	\$500,000
Eco Schools	Application	20 May 2011	\$150,000
Protecting Our Places	Application	3 June 2011	\$500,000
Restoration & Rehabilitation (Community)	Application	June/July TBC	\$1,500,000
Restoration & Rehabilitation (State & Local Government)	Application	June/July TBC	\$1,500,000

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New WaterWatch Website

A new WaterWatch website has been launched. The website address is www.environment.nsw.gov.au/waterwatch

The site includes information of how schools, groups and individuals can get involved with the sustainable use and management of our catchments. It also includes Manuals for teachers and trainers. Border Rivers-Gwydir CMA also has copies of the manuals and WaterWatch resources are available from the CMA's online resources library.

Grasslands Booklet

Natural Resources Advisory Council (NRAC) has released a new booklet, Understanding Our Native Grasslands. The booklet aims to raise community awareness about the critical role native grasslands play in maintaining healthy soils and water, creating habitat for animals and plants, fodder for stock and as being culturally important for indigenous people. The booklet is available from the NRAC Secretariat (02 9895 7334) or download at www.landcareonline.com.au.

Talking About the Weather

Droughts one year... floods the next... what is going on with the weather?

Border Rivers - Gwydir CMA and Inverell Shire Council are hosting a 2 day conference 18-19 May regarding climate variability, future climatic changes and their effect on the land.

At this Conference we will be exploring the weather patterns that have been affecting us in recent times and look at the frequency at which they will continue into the future. We will look at what people have been doing in the local area on their farms and in their homes. We will also be involving our local youth in understanding their vision for the future and up-skill them in the climate debate.

This conference is intended to break down the barriers of understanding and encourage everyone to openly talk about their concerns and options for looking after their land and home.

Speakers include Martin Babakhan (Newcastle University), Tony Windsor MP, and Dr Brian Wilson (UNE). Tickets for the two days \$85 Register now at www.brg.cma.nsw.gov.au

Calling all farmers to open their gates this *FarmDay*

Australia's agricultural sector has experienced a difficult start to the year but an initiative to educate urban families on the business of farming and food production may well provide the confidence and backing the industry needs to get back on its feet.

On Australia's annual FarmDay, held on the weekend of 28 and 29 May 2011, farmers across the country are encouraged to open their gates and welcome a city family to spend a day on their farm.

Since 2007, close to 1000 city families have visited working farms around the country on FarmDay to gain a better understanding and appreciation of this important industry.

FarmDay is calling on farmers to consider hosting a family this year with registrations for hosts now open.

"Now, more than ever, it's important for our industry to demonstrate the work that we do under complex

circumstances to make sure there's great Australian food on family tables around the country," says FarmDay Founder, Deb Bain.

"We've found that the city families who have participated in FarmDay are now our greatest advocates in metropolitan areas and are educating their friends and family on the importance of supporting Australia's farmers.

"It's a great chance for individual farmers and farming families to promote agriculture to urban Australia," she said.

"By spending a day on a farm during FarmDay, urban families gain a better understanding of where food comes from and what impacts supply, as well as appreciating the lifestyle and choices that farming families make every day.

"Our research indicates that 90 percent of city families participating in FarmDay come away with a better understanding of the role of farming in

their daily lives and 98 percent are more likely to buy Australian produce as a result," Deb says.

"In order to gain a greater level of understanding and support from urban Australia, it is important to provide them with an opportunity to see the great work that we do firsthand.

It's so important that urban families understand how their food and fibre is produced and the impact that events like the January floods on the east coast and fires and drought on the west coast have on agricultural production and supply.

"I'd strongly encourage farmers to get involved in this important initiative by registering to host a city family at www.farmday.com.au."

FarmDay is a not-for profit organisation proudly supported by Meat and Livestock Australia.

Russia & Finland

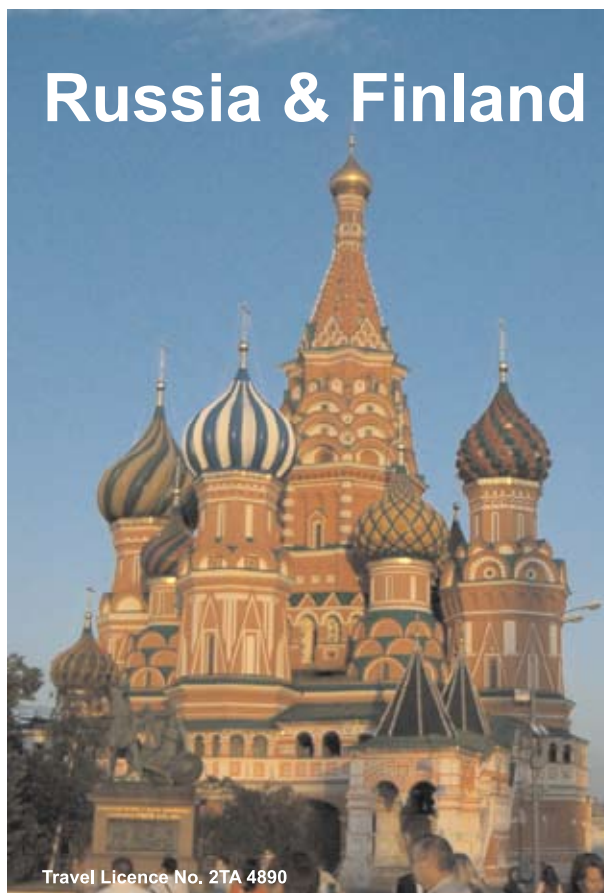
Cattle & Farming study tour

Opportunity to see and understand the development of the beef cattle industry, and farming in general, in Russia and Finland.

The tour includes agricultural visits to Stevenson Sputnik's breeding herd, feedlot and abattoir, as well as Angus genetics in Russia

Visits to cattle, forestry and grain operations in Finland

23 Day Escorted Tour 15th Jun - 7th Jul 2011



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Landchat

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Landchat presents a forum for the expression of a range of opinions.

The views and opinions expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily represent those of Southern New England Landcare or its employees.

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.



General Meeting

6:30 pm Thursday 12th May 2011

Uralla Community Centre (cnr Hill & Maitland St)

All members are invited.

Please contact your group's SNECC Representative if you wish to accompany them to the meeting.

Dinner will be provided for a small charge.

Please RSVP by

Tuesday 10th May 2011

for catering purposes.

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