

# Landchat

Landcare in the Southern New England, No. 99, January - March 2014

## 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.

Contact US by phone 02 6772 9123 or email [mail@snelcc.org.au](mailto:mail@snelcc.org.au)



Southern  
New England  
**Landcare**



Australian Government



## Regional Landcare Facilitator

### Diary Dates

Walcha Farmers' Markets.....	15 Feb
SNELCC Meeting .....	19 Feb 14
Guyra Show (SNELCC Display).....	21-22 Feb
Waratah Fencing Trials .....	26 Feb
Armidale Show .....	7-8 Mar
Walcha Show .....	14-15 Mar
Armidale Autumn Festival .....	15 Mar
Glen Innes Landcare Adventure .....	19-20 Mar
Armidale Farmers' Markets .....	1st & 3rd
Sunday of the month	

### Armidale Autumn Festival - March 15th

*This year we are celebrating rural, urban and junior landcare with a float in the Autumn Festival – we welcome everyone within our landcare community to join with us. For more details contact Sara at the office or [sara@snelcc.org.au](mailto:sara@snelcc.org.au).*

## **The United Nations General Assembly has declared 2014 as the International Year of Family Farming.**

This global celebration aims to push government policy toward sustainable agriculture based on the social and environmental values embodied in family farming. The celebration also recognises the worldwide significance of family farming to food security, preserving natural resources, protecting the environment and eliminating hunger.

The Director-General of FAO has said “We need to reposition family farming at the centre of national and regional development programmes”.

Brent Finlay NFF President and family farmer from south-east Queensland, confirms that family farms remain the heart and soul of agriculture in Australia. Mr Finlay also said, “Australia’s 157,000 farmers not only produce 93 percent of Australia’s daily domestic food supply . . . they also contribute \$38 billion in export income to the economy and manage some 59 percent of Australia’s land”. “This year, the focus on our farmers via the International Year of Family Farming will help us tell their story and raise awareness of agriculture’s contribution”. Leading on from that are Agriculture Minister Barnaby Joyce’s words, “We must get a better return to the farm gate, and fighting to keep families on the land must be the core of agricultural policy”.

At times like this when drought is hitting everyone hard we need to remember how important family farmers are.

When dealing with drought, remember to plan early (and for the worst), act quickly, check your progress and be ready to adjust your plan. Likewise, act sooner rather than later to get financial assistance or find someone to talk to about your challenges with drought, families and maintaining your presence as a family farmer (see [http://ruralsupport.com.au/?page\\_id=18](http://ruralsupport.com.au/?page_id=18) or phone 6721 0074 or 6767 8678 or contact Local Land Services on 1300 795 299).



# INDIAN MYNA CONTROL PROGRAM

## READY TO KICK OFF

SNELCC has recently taken delivery of nine Indian Myna traps . This will enable our control program to commence for 2014. We have received a pleasing level of interest from the community on the control program with expressions of interest (available from our webpage <http://snelcc.org.au/web3/> ) still open.

We strongly encourage people to assist with this program as these birds are a genuine threat to native fauna including birds and small mammals. The trapping program will allow people to become involved with nine available traps to be placed on properties through the district. You can also assist by reporting sightings of the birds which will enable SNELCC to map and monitor their distribution, thereby increasing the effectiveness of the control program. Anyone who would like to assist is welcome with all efforts greatly appreciated.

For more information please call SNELCC on 6772 9123 or email [mail@snelcc.org.au](mailto:mail@snelcc.org.au)

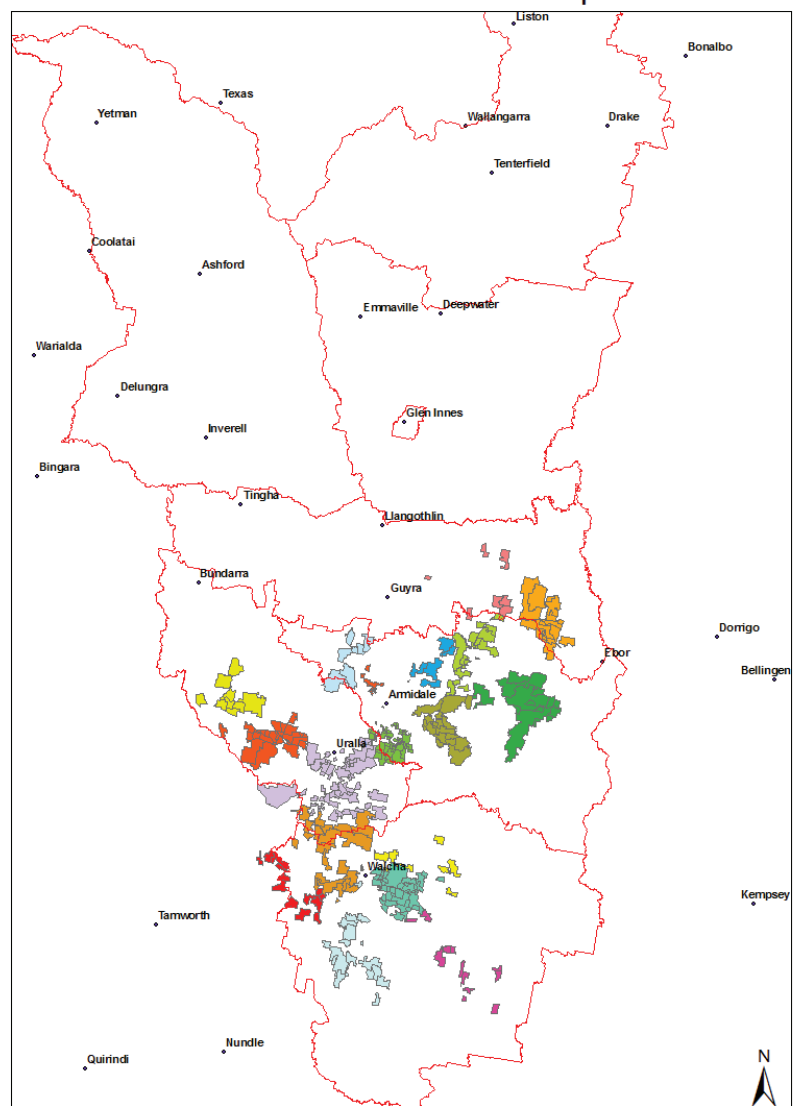


## LLS ELECTIONS : MAKE YOUR VOTE COUNT

Enrolments for the Northern Tablelands Local Land Services (LLS) Electoral Roll closed on the 17th February. Nominations and enrolments were open to all LHPA rate payers within the Northern Tablelands LLS region (see map). The inaugural LLS Board Member elections will take place on 12th March 2014, with enrolled rate payers being eligible to vote. Northern Tablelands LLS Board Member candidates are listed on the Northern Tablelands LLS website at <http://northerntablelands.lls.nsw.gov.au/our-region/our-board/elections>

The NSW Government Local Land Services owes its origins to the amalgamation of the NSW DPI, LHPA and CMAs. As shown in the map, the Northern Tablelands LLS region includes Armidale Dumaresq, Walcha, Uralla, Guyra, Glen Innes Severn, Inverell and Tenterfield LGA's. Keep up to date with Local Land Services issues via the LLS website at: <http://northerntablelands.lls.nsw.gov.au>

NT LLS and SNEL Groups



**Southern New England Landcare** offers its thanks and appreciation to the many individuals and groups who have and continue to provide crucial support to our organisation. The positive day-to-day interaction we have with our members and the broader community underpins our belief in the quality of the services we provide to landholders and community groups. In particular, the support we have received in the face of potential funding cuts to key government funding projects speaks volumes for a strong, resilient and united Landcare community.

Included below is one of the replies received from the Office of the Member for New England in response to a letter from Chair of Southern New England Landcare Ltd, Mr Steve Harvey.



Rec'd 9/1/14

**The Hon. Barnaby Joyce MP**

Minister for Agriculture  
Federal Member for New England

REF: MNMC2013-08382

Mr Steve Harvey  
Chairman  
Southern New England Landcare  
PO Box 85  
ARMIDALE NSW 2350

Dear Mr Harvey

Thank you for your correspondence of 18 November 2013 about funding for the National Landcare Programme.

Local communities and individual property owners play a key role in managing our natural resources. The Australian Government is committed to the long term future of Landcare and our investment in natural resource management programmes. We re-affirmed this commitment during the election when we announced we would merge Caring for our Country and Landcare to create a single National Landcare Programme. The Coalition Government believes this commitment will result in a greater emphasis on Landcare and an increase funding for Landcare activities.

As you know, there are multiple benefits of investment in Landcare, such as improving soil condition and water quality and building resilience in the landscape and in the community. This important work underpins our agricultural productivity and helps drive the sustainability and competitiveness of our food industries.

I am working with my colleague the Hon. Greg Hunt MP, Minister for the Environment, to progress this commitment and have sent a copy of this letter to him.

With regard to drought, recently I announced funds are being made available for water-related infrastructure to assist farmers in Queensland and potentially NSW. The NSW Government has since announced Emergency Water Infrastructure Grants and my department is working with its counterparts in each state to get this funding flowing. This funding has come from uncommitted funds across the department.

Thank you again for bringing your concerns to the Australian Government's attention.

Yours sincerely

Barnaby Joyce MP

20 DEC 2013



# WATCHING OUT FOR WEEDS AND WATER



'Weeds-awareness' has certainly gained momentum since SNELCC's Field Day near Guyra in August 2013, and New England Weed Authority's information days.

As the dry depletes the ground cover in grazing paddocks, now is a good time to **renew your own weed awareness** and readiness to watch for new weed incursions when the rains return, especially where palatable pastures have been depleted.

**Water quality is at risk when it rains again too.** Denuded paddocks will lose soil, nutrients and contaminants to dams and waterways and reduce water quality for livestock, river systems and human use.

Southern New England Landcare and the New England Weeds Authority will be at the Guyra & Walcha Shows with displays and opportunities for land managers to have input and make requests for funding support to manage weeds and water on local properties. If you miss us at the shows now is a good time to seek help to better manage weeds and on-farm water and creeks.

**Watch out for** information on the **Water Quality Field Day near Guyra** this coming autumn.



The figures are supplied by Water Info NSW and is freely available at <http://waterinfo.nsw.gov.au/>  
Some handy facts relating to dam storage capacity are

- Percentage refers to percentage of dams total safe holding capacity (not "full" as the safety margin or overflow capacity will exceed 100%).
- Elevation refers to water level height below maximum capacity.
- Volume is given in ML (or Mega Litres representing 1 000 000 litres) 1ML is roughly equivalent to a standard sized Olympic swimming pool or a water body covering 0.1 hectares at 1 metre deep).

	Monday	Sunday	Saturday	Friday	Thursday	Wednesday	Tuesday
	10-Feb-2014	09-Feb-2014	08-Feb-2014	07-Feb-2014	06-Feb-2014	05-Feb-2014	04-Feb-2014
<b>GARA RIVER AT MALPAS DAM -STORAGE GAUGE (206036)</b>							
Percent Full (%)	82.0	82.2	82.5	82.7	82.9	83.0	83.3
Elevation (Metres)	-1.30	-1.29	-1.27	-1.26	-1.24	-1.23	-1.21
Volume (ML)	10,112	10,136	10,163	10,189	10,213	10,234	10,266

# VALE, RICHARD MCLEAN

Late in 2013 we experienced the sad loss of long term landcarer, Richard Mclean. Richard, a resident of our local region for most of his life with his late wife, Mary, had a great passion for the natural environment and transformed their grazing property so to create a rotational grazing system.

After working for much of his life as a commercial pilot, his passion for the land bought him to Landcare where he spent nearly 20 years associated with the Herbert Park Landcare group, the SNElCC board, and helped establish the New England North West regional network chairs, created to give Landcare a better regional voice.

Richard was also the chairman of Southern New England Landcare for a period of three years while with the organisation.

Richard also spent time on the board of the New England LHPA and had a strong community presence, his skills and involvement will be greatly missed by those close to the land and local environment.



## INTRODUCING NEW BOARD MEMBERS

### Glen Chapman

I have had a background in Agribusiness all my life being brought up on a farm near Guyra and then going to UNE to complete a degree in Agricultural Economics. I have worked in ag finance, consulting and ag tourism over the past twenty years as well as being involved with sustainable business development in the New England through the Ecotourism Society.

I believe SNElCC has a great position in the region to be able to influence sustainable community development. This includes land management and also sustainable businesses and communities that can be resilient through a variety of changes, challenges and opportunities that will be coming our way.

My main aim in working as a member of the Board is to be able to help build an organisation that can be self-sustaining and through this support the development of a sustainable region.



### Peter Metcalfe

I met Sue Sibraa, a high school music teacher in Armidale and we married in 1970. We have lived on our 14 ha block 10 km from Armidale for forty years. We have extensive native gardens, regenerating yellow box forest, over 100 species of birds, wallabies, sugar gliders and even koalas.

National parks are a big part of my life. Besides teaching, I tutored in 50+ adult education courses in national parks for UNE and led many environmental tours to parks across the mainland states. I have been a member of the Armidale branch of the National Parks Association for 35+ years and was on advisory committees to the National Parks & Wildlife Service for 38 years from 1973 to 2011.

My childhood interest in orchids and birds broadened to botany, birds and ecology. I have discovered a few new species of orchids and shrubs and there is a greenhood orchid named *Pterostylis metcalfei*.





## FENCING DEMONSTRATION WITH NEVILLE PRINCE

WEDNESDAY 26TH FEBRUARY 2014

Waratah Fencing and GrazAg Armidale in conjunction with Dangarsleigh Landcare would like to extend this invitation to you to attend a Waratah fencing demonstration with Neville Prince.

### WHERE:

"Greenway"  
Long Swamp Road ARMIDALE NSW  
(follow the Waratah flags from the corner of Long Swamp Road)

### WHEN:

Wednesday, 26th February 2014  
9.00am start.



### Practical demonstrations will include:

- Tips and tricks for straining and tying off wire
- Strainer assemblies and stays
- Features and benefits of the new JIC® posts and clips

### Will also be discussing:

- Pest animal control including feral pigs, wild dogs and foxes



### RSVP:

Light refreshments will be provided.  
Please RSVP by Friday, 21st February to:  
Andy Divall on 0408 659 083 or  
divalla@waratahfencing.com.au



[www.waratahfencing.com.au](http://www.waratahfencing.com.au)

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## PEST ANIMAL MANAGEMENT FIELD DAYS

A number of half day hands-on activities will be delivered throughout the New England and North West areas over the next few months.

The "Regional Pest Animal Community Extension Program", supported by the Northern Tablelands Local Land Service, will be taking training and networking activities to local groups. All activities will cover multiple species, including feral pigs, wild dogs and foxes. Three different field days will be run depending on the needs of local groups. These include;

- Bait preparation for feral pig and predator control
- Reading the landscape and bait placement
- Data management and information sharing

Whether you are an individual landholder, part of a coordinated feral pig or fox control group or a member of a Wild Dog Control Association upcoming Pest Animal Management field days will include something for you.

**Keep an eye out for more information regarding these field days over the next couple of weeks. If your group is interested in hosting a field day**

**contact Bec on**

**0458 729 123 or [bec@snelcc.org.au](mailto:bec@snelcc.org.au).**

## NATIVE VEGETATION FOR THREATENED WOODLAND BIRDS 2 TAKES FLIGHT

Eleven landholder members of Citizens Wildlife Corridors Armidale Inc, are currently signing off on management agreements under a NSW Environmental Trust Grant supporting on-ground works at a total of at least fifteen on-farm locations.

Four areas of remnant woodland will be fenced and at least nine sites are to be fenced and planted with native trees and shrubs. This amounts to 18.5 ha of protected woodland, 16.4 ha of land planted with woody vegetation, over \$54,000 of funding and probably double that of in-kind contributions by local landholders.

By the end of summer works plans will have been finalised for all project sites, and in late autumn - early winter the first of the bird surveys will be happening at each project site.

Now, we just ask the rains to begin!

*A spring-fed dam, its springs and adjacent regenerating woodland will be protected from regular stock grazing.*



*A corridor of native trees and shrubs will span a one-kilometre link from the ute towards the distant block of timber.*

# JOHN MACARTHUR-STANHAM'S VISIT

Congratulations to John Macarthur-Stanham, who was recently appointed as the Local Land Services (LLS) Chair of the Board of Chairs. This position oversees each LLS Board in NSW and is directly accountable to the Minister for Primary Industries.

The appointment of John last year presented a great opportunity for SNELCC and our other Northern Tablelands Landcare networks to showcase the work done within our Landcare communities. Fortunately John was able to accept our invitation to visit on the 9th December last year.

The day was hosted by Michael and Milly Taylor of "The Hill", Kentucky with over 20 people attending. During the visit, John was able to outline his intention to foster a positive and productive relationship between Landcare and Local Land Services by engaging Landcare and local communities.



Left to Right: Rob Dulhunty, John Macarthur-Stanham, Sally Wright, Paul Hutchings, Sonia Williams, John Baveau, Scot MacDonald MLC, Steve Harvey.



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# A CUPPA WITH ... SARA SCHMUDE

## LANDCARE PROJECT OFFICER



Sara first started working part-time project by project with Landcare back in 2002 and is now working on a more permanent basis 3 days a week with a focus on Urban, Junior and Rural Women's Landcare projects.

### Now 12 years on – what initially attracted you to Landcare?

Well Des, I would say it was a perfect fit for someone with an agricultural background, a degree in Natural Resources (UNE) & a passion for sustainable land management with a townie for a husband! But seriously the moment I did work experience in the Landcare office back in my early uni days I was hooked – the whole idea of doing meaningful work with a great team at the grassroots level engaging with a cross-section of people ticked all the boxes.

### Community engagement is a big part of your job – what are some highlights?

Working on programs like Frog Dreaming these past 7 years I've had the very good fortune to work alongside community champions like Ruth Tremont, Bec Smith, Harry White, Adam Blakester and Matt MacKenzie not to mention all the passionate teachers & principals from rural & urban schools across our region...coupled with passionate Landcarers like the Taylor family. And now with the (sad) departure of Ellen Nyberg I will be tackling the urban landscape working on projects with the Armidale Urban Rivercare Group, UNE Landcare and Armidale Urban Maintenance committee – here I find there are lots of opportunities to partner with community groups, local businesses, schools & organisations to collaboratively work at maintaining our healthy & resilient local communities.

### What does 2014 hold for you?

I am the very proud recipient of the John Winter-Irving memorial bursary – this honour has provided me with the opportunity to explore & be creative in all things Landcare....starting with this weekend at a UNE professional development event entitled 'A deeper conversation about change' (will let you know how it goes!). The thing about Landcare is that it doesn't finish when the working week is over – I spend my spare time nurturing a Landcare ethos in those around me starting with my young family ... & in there somewhere I seem to find some time for yoga, cycling, vegie gardening and of late praying for rain!

**And lastly do you have any wise words ....** Explore, Experiment and Laugh as often as you can!



*Sally Wright awarding Sara with the John Winter-Irving Memorial Bursary*



# WEEDS IN FOCUS

## African Lovegrass (*Eragrostis curvula*)

African Lovegrass is not a Weed of National Significance but is still a **noxious weed** in the control area of the New England Weeds Authority. However, rumour has it that it won't be listed as a noxious weed much longer! So, as for Coolatai Grass, it's pretty much over to individual land managers to protect their enterprises from this grassy weed.

African Lovegrass is a **densely tufted perennial grass native to southern Africa**. It also grows in America and Australia. African Lovegrass has been in Australia for over 100 years and there are now about 7 types of this grass recognised in this country. African Lovegrass has been on the NSW Northern Tablelands for a number of decades and landholders around the Tenterfield and Glen Innes districts are well acquainted with this invasive grass.

African Lovegrass can grow to 30–120 cm tall. Its **leaves** vary from dark green to blue-green, depending on the variety, the leaf blade is about 3 mm wide and its margins are often rolled. The **ligule** between leaf stem and blade has a **ring of white hairs**, distinguishing African Lovegrass from other tussock grasses such as Poa Tussock (*Poa labillardieri*). The **seed head** of African Lovegrass is a **loose open panicle**, 6–30 cm long and sometimes bent over. The roots are fibrous and can penetrate to 5 m, although it also grows on shallow soils.

African Lovegrass **is a threat because** it:

- seeds prolifically, can result in a monoculture and seriously reduce carrying capacity;
- tolerates cold, grows rapidly and is difficult to control;
- is indigestible and of low protein value when mature; and
- threatens the biodiversity of pastures and native grasslands and woodlands.

**The best African Lovegrass control is preventing its entry to the property of concern.** Livestock, produce, vehicles, machinery and fodder should not be brought in from infected areas and vigilance should be maintained so that any infestations are removed before seed can set.

**Management** of infestations requires:

- removal of African Lovegrass seed/seedlings by cultivation and/or chemicals, and replacement with a competitive perennial pasture;
- intermittent 'crash grazing' techniques to maintain the lovegrass in a palatable state for as long as possible and enable palatable companion species to increase;
- prevention of seed set;
- prevention of movement of seed by machinery, stock and vehicles; and preventing new infestations.

African Lovegrass responds well to burning, so this is not a recommended control strategy unless part of a rigorous program involving other methods aimed to control seedling establishment.

African Lovegrass is best adapted to **acid soils** of a sandy to loam texture. It is a **summer-growing** warm season (C4) grass making it well suited to warm temperate or subtropical areas. Its efficient photosynthesis means it has the ability to survive under low and erratic rainfall conditions.

African Lovegrass germinates in autumn or spring and grows quickly in warm weather, to flower from early summer. **Huge numbers of seeds** are produced from mid-summer, and quickly establish a large seed bank. Plants are extremely **competitive** with other pasture species and will quickly take over sparse, overgrazed or poor quality pastures. Although African Lovegrass grows only slowly in winter it tolerates cold. Lovegrass increases where stock densities are low and livestock are able to concentrate on more palatable species. African Lovegrass is quite digestible and high in protein until seed head emergence but palatability declines quickly as plants age. Until seed heads emerge, African Lovegrass makes quite good hay BUT this hay should only be made, stored and fed out on infected areas!! And using dedicated machinery not used elsewhere. When mature most African Lovegrass varieties are unpalatable and contain very little protein, resulting in stock doing poorly.



African lovegrass (*Eragrostis curvula*)  
Roadside infestation Inverell area  
Photo LRT



African lovegrass  
*Eragrostis curvula*  
Landscape photo  
Shannon NSW - LRT

**For more information on African Lovegrass go to**

<http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/pests-weeds/weeds/profiles/african-lovegrass>

<http://gbwcmn.net.au/sites/default/files/AfricanLovegrassFactsheet.pdf>

publications prepared by Granite Borders Landcare - 6736 3500, [landcare@halenet.com.au](mailto:landcare@halenet.com.au),

publications prepared by GLENRAC - 6732 3443, [glenrac@glenrac.org.au](mailto:glenrac@glenrac.org.au).

**or phone New England Weeds Authority at**

Armidale (Head Office) - 6772 3602, 0428 211 314, 0419 418 036

Guyra - 6770 7117, 0439 711 701

Uralla - 0488 711 012

Walcha - 6774 2595, 0427 711 729.

*African Lovegrass*  
*Photos - Northwest Weeds*

# BRG CMA TAKES LAND MANAGERS' CONCERNS RE SPREAD OF ROADSIDE WEEDS TO THE NSW ROADSIDE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

The spread of weeds by machinery and activities associated with roadside maintenance was highlighted at the Grassy Weeds Day for the Malpas Catchment and Guyra Plateau last August.

This concern was taken to the BRG CMA Board. In December a letter was sent by the BRG CMA General Manager, on behalf of the Board, to the Executive Officer of the NSW Roadside Environment Committee.

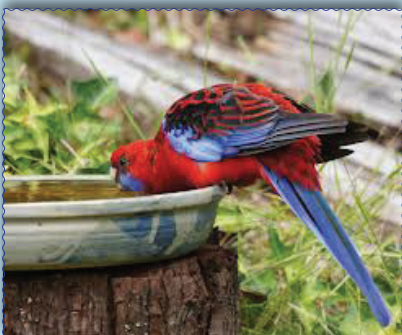
The General Manager's letter seeks advice regarding existing mechanisms and future strategies to enforce uniformity of actions so that NSW Roads and Maritime Services, and their contractors, meet the precedents now being set by Local Control Authorities to prevent the spread of invasive weeds from road plant equipment.

**Thankyou to the BRG CMA (now Northern Tablelands LLS) for representing local concerns.** And looking forward to the Northern Tablelands LLS's integrated and coordinated approach to managing roadside and linear reserve networks (including TSRs) across the Northern Tablelands.



## QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"When's it going to rain,  
Mum? Even the rosellas look  
dry and dusty."



Crimson Rosella  
(Photo from [www.birdsinbackyards.net](http://www.birdsinbackyards.net))

## PLANNING AHEAD – SEND US YOUR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

- SNELCC applies for money to fund your and similar projects, when relevant funding is available.
- No funding has been available for some months, as a result of the fairly recent change of government and current changes involving the merging of Catchment Management Authorities with the LHPA and Department of Agriculture.
- The present drought conditions are putting pressure on governments to support land managers to be 'better prepared' for drought.
- New funding rounds could be announced during the middle of the year.
- The hard times we are experiencing will be showing you weak points in your enterprise. So, **NOW is the time to identify what needs doing on your property** to help with long-term drought-proofing.
- **TALK to us about your ideas and needs, or SEND us your plans** (even rough preliminary ones) as an **Expression of Interest**. Forms are downloadable at [www.snelcc.org.au](http://www.snelcc.org.au), or if you don't have the internet call 6772 9123 to have one mailed out to you.



# OUT AND ABOUT



Dung beetle workshop with Mahri Koch at last year's Landcare Adventure



Kate Boyd from Bushcare with Craig Zirkler (left) & Des Andersen



The team farewelling Ellen Nyberg



Sonia Williams presenting to the Natural Resource Advisory Committee



Steve Harvey farewelling Caroline Street



AURG Rologas planting



Georgia Smith & Margaret O'Connor at the Xmas Party





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**Southern New England Landcare enjoys a good working relationship with a number of reputable local businesses. If you would like to include your business in our publications, please contact us on 6772 9123 or mail@snelcc.org.au**

Southern New England Landcare appreciates generous support from Caring for Our Country, Armidale Dumaresq Council, NSW Environmental Trust, the Border Rivers Gwydir CMA, and the Northern Rivers CMA, and is sponsored by Landmark (Armidale) and Wesfarmers Federation Insurance.

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.



**Catchment Management Authority**  
Border Rivers-Gwydir



**Catchment Management Authority**  
Northern Rivers



**Catchment Management Authority**  
Namoi

## General Meeting

**6.30pm Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2014**

Uralla Community Centre (cnr Hill & Maitland St)  
 All members are invited.

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

Dinner will be provided for a small charge.

**Please RSVP by  
 Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> February 2014 for catering purposes.**

Tel 6772 9123 • mail@snelcc.org.au  
 www.snelandcare.org.au



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COUNTRY

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