



Southern New England Landcare Ltd
ACN 099 357 454
Resourcing Landcare in our region

Southern New England Landcare Coordinating Committee
SNELCC Inc
Representing Landcarers in our region

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2013 Chairman's Report

2013 has been a year of great achievement but it has also brought many challenges to those associated in Landcare and natural resource management in the Southern New England region.

Urban Landcare activities have had a dedicated group of volunteers to continue to manage and build upon the work completed through the *High Country Urban Biodiversity Project*. The BOZO, Uralla River Care and Armidale Urban Rivercare groups' have continued to implement works in the townships of Walcha, Uralla and Armidale respectively during this past year.

Many agricultural based Landcare activities have slowed down due to one of the hardest seasons we have seen in recent years. Calving and Lambing have been particularly difficult this spring and most have had to commence hand feeding livestock. Landcare supported projects, in particular improved grazing management techniques have helped with the severity of the season for rural landholders.

Both Federal and State governments have cut millions of dollars in funding from budgets. At State level the reforms to the Department of Primary Industries, Livestock Health and Pest Authorities and the Catchment Management Authorities to form the new *Local Land Service (LLS)*, have been ongoing with the new entity starting on the 1st of January 2014. I would like to thank the Border Rivers Gwydir CMA for their continued partnership and support in the transition process to the new LLS.

The situation with the Federal government can only be regarded as a shambles. Over 100 million dollars of cuts made by the outgoing federal government in reaction to the transition from a carbon tax to an emission trading scheme coupled with a centralised bureaucracy, had led to a disappointing contraction in support for Landcare related activities. The new federal government made pre-election promises to support Landcare, but has had 10 million dollars taken already from the budget to go to drought aid.

These considerable changes will no doubt influence the level of Landcare activity throughout Australia. However, SNELCC will continue to support and service our groups, members, partners and the broader community into 2014.

I would like to thank the organisations that have supported SNELCC this year, including our 4 local government councils, the Northern Rivers, Namoi and Border Rivers-Gwydir CMA's, New England LHPA, New England Weeds Authority and the University of New England. I would also like to congratulate the Armidale Tree Group for the recent achievement of 30 years of service to the community.

2013 saw the NSW State Landcare forum held in Newcastle with the NSW State Landcare Awards function held as part of this forum. The region did very well with the High Country Urban Biodiversity Project winning the Partnerships with Landcare Award, Frog Dreaming winning the Junior Landcare Team Award, Kath Wray, a finalist in the Individual Landcarer Award, and the Taylor family were highly commended in the Innovation in Sustainable Farm Practices category.

On behalf of the board I would like to thank the staff of our organisation for the wonderful support that they have given over the previous 12 months. We have sadly had four team members move on and we thank them for their efforts and contributions to SNEELCC during their time with us. Nic Cobcroft left our office at the end of 2012 to move back to the coast. He worked on projects such as the *High Country Urban Biodiversity Project* which has been proven to be a highly regarded and beneficial project for the region. Project Officer and Malpas Coordinator, Emily Ingram finished up early 2013 after an opportunity for her family to work in the Torres Strait Islands arose. I would also like to thank Mahri Koch who resigned midyear - we greatly appreciated her service and tireless work over the last two years as a Community Support Officer (CSO). Dave Carr also finished up with Southern New England Landcare at 30 June 2013, after being the Project Director of the High Country Urban Biodiversity Project and projects officer for several other partnerships projects with local government. Sadly reduced ongoing funding for SNEELCC has meant Dave has moved on to other endeavours, however he is still in regular contact with SNEELCC. We wish all four of them well. I would also like to thank our ongoing team: Bec, Lucy, Sara, Sally, Ellen and Heather and would like to welcome Ruth Tremont and Des Anderson who joined the team earlier in the year. This year also saw our Executive Officer, Sonia Williams step back from duties with Southern New England Landcare as she has taken a secondment to Landcare NSW as their GM. She continues to act in a mentoring role to other staff.

At Board level there have been a couple of changes with the resignation of long term board members, Caroline Street and Richard Maclean, who was a past chair of the organisation. I would like to thank both Caroline and Richard for their support and service to Landcare over many years. I would like to welcome new board member, Glen Chapman to Southern New England Landcare knowing that he will make a sizable contribution to our organisation.

Finally, I would like to thank the community who have contributed to Landcare in our region. It is humbling to meet so many of you who have a commitment to a sustainable environment. With this kind of dedication and passion it is hopeful that our elected government representatives will assist Landcare to have a healthy future.



Steve Harvey

Chairman

Southern New England Landcare