



The National Landcare Facilitator

NEWSLETTER – November/December 2012

Applications Open for CFI Extension & Outreach Program

Applications are now open for the \$64 million Carbon Farming Futures Extension and Outreach Program. Individuals and organisations can apply for grants to assist farmers and land managers to adopt technologies and practices to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and participate in the Carbon Farming Initiative.

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Senator Joe Ludwig, said the program will help farmers to financially benefit from creating Carbon Farming Initiative carbon credits. This program provides farmers with the one-to-one assistance they need to make land sector emissions management part of their normal business decision making. Funding is available for agribusinesses, farming groups, industry organisations and extension organisations to deliver climate action information to people on the ground.”

These grants will also provide funding for targeted industry and regional initiatives. That could mean anything from industry-specific decision support tools to district workshops. To find out more visit www.daff.gov.au/cff, email EandO@daff.gov.au or call 1800 283 940. Applications are open until April 2016, while funds remain, with a bulk assessment at least twice each year.

To be included in the first assessment, applications are due 5 pm, 19 December 2012.

The Atlas of Living Australia & Landcare

By Ian McDonald (CSIRO)



Have you always wanted to know more about the flora and fauna you see during your Landcare activities? The Atlas of Living Australia (AKA: the Atlas) is a partnership of Australian Museums, Herbaria and other biological collections, which contains information on all the known species in Australia. At last count there were over 35 million recordings of species observations in Australia, which has been aggregated from a wide range of data providers such as museums, herbaria, community groups, government departments, universities and individuals.

The website (www.ala.org.au) is simple and easy to use and gives you access to multiple features, including the ability to explore:

- Information pages for individual species containing: Photos, Descriptions, Maps and observations, Both scientific and common names
- Flora and Fauna reported around your neighbourhood or local area.
- The relationship between a wide range of environmental factors (such as temperature and precipitation) and species distribution

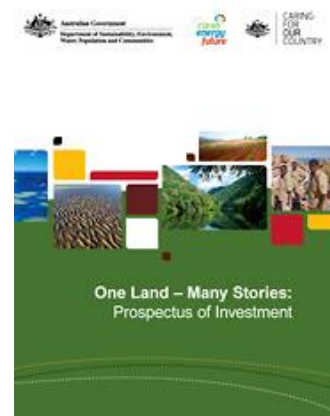
As a project funded by the Federal Department of Science and Innovation, the Atlas also provides critical “eResearch” services for scientists around the country. Of relevance to Landcare is that a group of researchers has recently published an article on how to use the Atlas to select appropriate species for planting in a specific area – see reference below. The article demonstrates how revegetation project leaders can assess whether the species and provenances used in their projects are likely to be suitable for changing environmental conditions.

Another one of the Atlases key aims is to engage with the wider community and leverage your knowledge on the rich diversity of species found in Australia, otherwise known as “Citizen Science”. This is a very important source of data, gained through the efforts of everyday Australians wanting to get involved in nature. It can be just as valuable as that obtained by scientists working in academia, natural history collections, government agencies and business. Harnessing the efforts of the thousands of people participating in citizen science will enhance the range and depth of data available in the Atlas. Our Biodiversity Volunteer Portal (<http://volunteer.ala.org.au>) could also allow Landcare users to transcribe their field notes or other materials which have been collected. So far we have over 30,000 items transcribed by members of the community.

Another new and major feature of the Atlas is our mobile device application ‘OzAtlas,’ which can be downloaded onto any smartphone (Android and Apple) for free. This “App” allows you to explore and search for species in your area, including a simple “field guide” that can help you identify a species you haven’t seen before. While the Atlas already has lots of features, we are also still actively developing the website and our tools, particularly those that help communities capture information. If you wish to make suggestions or comments about adding new features or editing current ones, please contact: info@ala.org.au.

Environment Minister Launches Prospectus of Investment

Tony Burke, Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities has just released *One Land – Many Stories: Prospectus of Investment* which outlines the Australian Government’s vision for protecting Australia’s valuable and most vulnerable environments. It provides an overarching framework of the Australian Government’s priorities for biodiversity conservation and natural resource management in 2013-14 through elements of the Land Sector Package and the Sustainable Environment stream of Caring for our Country.



The Prospectus is not a set of funding guidelines. There is no funding attached to the Prospectus. Funding guidelines, including the new funding amounts available, will be released for the Biodiversity Fund and for the Caring for our Country Sustainable Environment stream in the coming months.

The Prospectus of Investment is available for download from www.environment.gov.au/prospectus. If you would like to talk with an Australian Government officer, please visit www.nrm.gov.au/contact/officers.html for the contact details of your local Australian Government natural resource management out-posted officers. These officers will be able to assist you with the Prospects.

Soils for Life

Soils for Life - chaired by Major General Michael Jeffery (Retd) have released a report "Innovations for Regenerative Landscape Management" which outlines techniques and practices that can help reverse landscape degradation and enable productive, profitable and sustainable farming.

Michael Jeffery introduced the report at its launch - highlighting the need to change landscape management practices to halt degradation and contribute to addressing future challenges relating to global food security.

Soils for Life Program Coordinator, Simon Gould, presented a summary of the report findings, including the inspirational and compelling stories of the innovative farmers in the report case studies who have already made a change for the better in landscape management. To see a copy of the report go to: www.soilsforlife.org.au/resources.html.



Yates Junior Backyard Challenge Winners

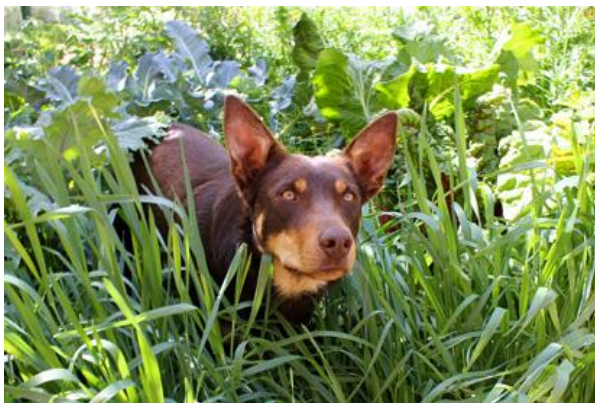


Photo: 7 years and under
Winner – Dougall Hughes (Broken Hill, NSW)
“Boy in the Spelt Grass” - My sheep dog ‘Boy’ loves to hide in, and eat the spelt grass I have planted in our veggie garden. Growing next to the spelt are kale plants, spinach, broccoli and tomatoes. Because we live on a sheep station, we grow fresh veggies to keep us healthy.



Photo: 8 – 11 years
Winner – Natasha Webb (Werrington Downs, NSW)
“Colours Beneath Us” - My backyard is filled with so many different colours. Every plant and flower is that colour for a reason, it sends a message to the birds and insects so they know what is safe to eat. Being different is a good thing.

The Yates Junior Landcare Backyard Challenge winners have been announced, with children sharing their passion for their local environment and flair for photography and film making. Participants were asked to submit entries that answer the question “how does your backyard grow?” The winning photos and videos included themes of gardening, sustainability, water and drought.

Winner of the 8 -11 years photo category, Natasha Webb, describes the story behind her winning photograph. “My backyard is filled with so many different colours. Every plant and flower is that colour

for a reason, it sends a message to the birds and insects so they know what is safe to eat. Being different is a good thing.”

The entries were scored by a panel of high-profile judges, including Landcare Ambassadors Catriona Rowntree and Jack Thompson. Among the prizes for the winners are Canon cameras and video cameras, and Yates and Junior Landcare prize packs. To view the winning photos and videos, please visit: www.juniorlandcarechallenge.com.au.

Australia’s Natural Resources are ‘In Safe Hands’

Landcare volunteers will be the beneficiaries of a \$302,500 grant to ensure they remain “in safe hands”. Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Senator Joe Ludwig, said the grant would be used to fund the delivery of a Landcare work health and safety package, “In Safe Hands”.

“In Safe Hands will help ensure the safety of the most valuable asset the Landcare movement has – our volunteers. There are more than 100,000 Landcare volunteers across Australia playing an important role in our natural resource management. The In Safe Hands training package is about supporting those groups and volunteers to improve their health and safety practices on the ground.”

The management system and training package was developed by, and would be delivered by, Conservation Volunteers Australia.

“The training will be delivered to more than 500 Landcare and community groups across Australia through a series of training workshops in 2013. It will help develop practical skills and ensure people understand their legal obligations. We encourage people to play a role in natural resource management and this grant is about providing people with the work health and safety skills they need to do this.”

International Landcare at the National Landcare Conference

By Sue Marriott (Secretariat for International Landcare)

In 1997 the National Landcare Conference was held in Adelaide. Attending this Conference were 13 South Africans, who were taking part in a three week Landcare study tour. Two years after they returned to South Africa they had started Landcare in South Africa. It continues strongly today.

Since 1997, Australian Landcare Conferences have provided a forum to share ideas with visitors from overseas who have wanted to learn about, and adapt, Landcare to their own particular part of the world.



Some of the international delegates at the 2012 National Landcare Conference in Sydney

Additionally countries which have already adopted Landcare principles sent delegates: two from South Africa (demonstrating a generational change from the original group that attended in the 1997

conference); one from German Landcare, which incidentally, started at the same time that Australian Landcare was born; three from New Zealand, where Landcare continues to grow after the initial exploration of Landcare in Australia by Roger Lough in 1991; and Dr Jerry Moles from Virginia USA who initiated the first group in the United States of America in 2005.

So what do conferences offer and what is the outcome for countries that already have Landcare and for those who wish to learn?

Australian Conferences showcase a range of projects spread across our large continent. Visitors who come from different parts of the world can see what people are doing on similar country to their own. But they can also understand how Landcare works even on country that is very different to their own. It is the process, principles and values that they 'get' which they readily adapt to their own contexts. They learn that Landcare is not just about agriculture but crosses the spectrum: from coast to bush; from cities to towns; from large mining corporations to small lifestyle holdings. They also learn how Australia funds Landcare: the role of government and the corporate sector; and the value of facilitators, coordinators and volunteers. Most importantly they learn from Australia's Landcare people.

From the Sydney Conference SILC's AusAID funded group have decided that they will form an Asian Landcare Network to discuss, share and learn from one another how they can adapt Landcare in the region. Already there is a draft document setting out how this might be achieved. Village meetings have been held at a local level in Pakistan, Indonesia, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka and ideas discussed about how best to use the skills in the community to set up Landcare. In-country proposals have been written to seek some small funding for projects. Indonesia has formed a new Landcare organisation, *Sahabat Lahan Indonesia* or "*Friends of Landcare Indonesia*".

There is much to be done to support this interest but a significant start has been made. The international group that visited Sydney this year are the 'movers and shakers' in their countries. It is highly likely that they will soon become part of the International Landcare network.

Governments alone do not have the resources or personnel to make the changes that are required to ensure our planet remains a sustainable place to live. Landcare provides the people, energy and ideas to help. By supporting people on the ground, in villages and communities, on farms, in cities and towns, by the sea or on the mountain slopes, Landcare can make a difference. The international Landcare movement is demonstrating that Landcare principles are powerful tools that can be used across borders to make a better world.

For more details contact: Sue Marriott: smarriott@silc.com.au or Victoria Mack: vmack@silc.com.au or via website: www.silc.com.au

Report – Farming Smarter Not Harder: Securing our agricultural economy

Released Thursday 1 November, this is a report from the Centre for Policy Development on the future of Australian agriculture in the context of rising global demand, resource scarcity, and environmental pressures.

The report says; "Global populations are growing and food prices are skyrocketing. This creates new market opportunities for Australian agriculture. But Australia has fragile and vulnerable soils, which are being degraded at an unsustainable rate. If we continue with 'business as usual', we will keep losing soils faster than they can be replaced. Acting now to improve soil condition could increase agricultural production by up to \$2.1 billion per year. It could also help farmers cut costs on fertiliser and water use.

“Winners of the food boom will be countries with less fossil fuel intensive agriculture, more reliable production, and access to healthy land and soils” said the report’s lead author Laura Eadie. “How we manage our land and soils will be key to whether Australia sees more of the upsides or downsides of rising global food demand.” **For more information go to: www.cpd.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/cpd_land_report_EMBARGOED_UNTIL_1_NOV.pdf.**

Native Vegetation on Farm Land – ABARE Report

A recently released report by the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES) has found that Australian farmers are playing a leading role in managing native vegetation to help boost production outcomes. The report, [Native vegetation management on agricultural land](#), found that 85 per cent of farmers were gaining on-farm production and/or environmental benefits; with most indicating they wanted to do even more because of the benefits they were gaining.



Key findings

- The agricultural sector is playing an important role in managing native vegetation for environmental and production outcomes.
- Most farmers are managing native vegetation for both environmental and production outcomes and many intend to do more to improve the condition and extent of native vegetation.
- From a national perspective, intentions to clear formed a relatively small part of farmers’ intentions for native vegetation management, but there are regional differences.
- While most farmers who applied for government funding to manage native vegetation were successful, improvements could be made so farmers can more easily find out about and apply for funding programs.
- Improving the transparency of purpose, operation and outcomes of government programs and regulations would improve their effectiveness in delivering environmental outcomes through greater farmer engagement.
- Improving available market information and developing markets for environmental services may provide new opportunities to increase environmental outcomes and benefits to farmers.
- Traditional government assistance through extension and other mechanisms will continue to be important, given the complexities of managing land for multiple outcomes.

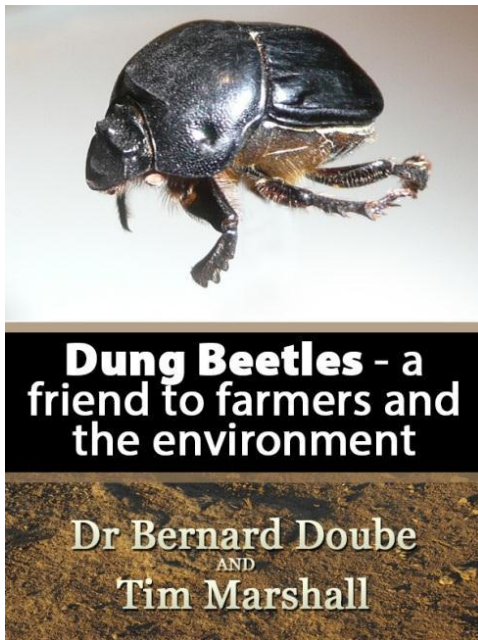


The report also found that “there are opportunities to build on existing programs to improve production and conservation outcomes on farmland. Farmers are uncertain about what the various levels of government want to achieve through the mix of regulation and incentive programs. A challenge for natural resource managers, including farmers, is the changing nature of funding sources and objectives for programs. This can act as a significant barrier to managing native vegetation on agricultural and other private land. Similarly, changing regulations create uncertainty for farmers and industry. As native vegetation management is a long-term process, a lack of continuity in policy can present a challenge for both farmers and for delivering long-term benefits. Greater stability in policy and particularly program availability and funding is important.”

Nearly one-quarter of the farmers surveyed were considering the connection between their native vegetation and the vegetation on neighbouring properties or Crown land. A larger proportion of farmers (30 per cent) took into account how their native vegetation management contributed to

regional or landscape outcomes (such as contribution to a catchment plan). About 15 per cent were managing for both connectivity and landscape outcomes. For more information go to: http://adl.brs.gov.au/data/warehouse/9aal/2012/nvmald9aalm/NatVegManageOnAgLand20121116_Ver1.0.0.pdf.

New Publication about Dung Beetles



Renowned dung beetle expert Dr Bernard Doube and organic agriculture expert Tim Marshall have teamed up to produce a new publication on dung beetles. *Dung beetles: a friend to farmers and the environment* is the definitive resource for farmers and land managers on the benefits and use of dung beetles.

Covering both native and introduced species, this A4 colour booklet outlines the agricultural and environmental benefits of dung beetles. There are sections on soil improvement, water quality improvement and pasture improvement, along with detailed descriptions and guidelines on the establishment and management of dung beetle colonies.

The publication will also feature specific regional information (at least one page per region) that will enable the booklet to have local relevance for your stakeholders. Commonwealth funding for one region in South Australia to produce 1500 copies and these will be available only to the sponsoring group in that region.

Additional commitments to printing this definitive publication will enable a much wider group of stakeholders to enjoy its benefits.

The authors are therefore seeking expressions of interest in forward orders from organisations that support farmer groups, such as NRM groups, Land Care groups, catchment management authorities, local councils and regional development boards. If you would like to be involved in this project email Bernardo@dungbeetlesolutions.com.au or phone 08 8339 4158.

Other News & Funding

Small Grants Program (Victoria) - Communities for Nature grants are targeted towards local community groups and organisations, including schools. The program has up to \$700,000 to invest for the 2012 Small Grants Funding Opportunity for grants of up to \$10,000 each. Projects that will be completed by 31 May 2014 are eligible for funding. Applications close at midnight on 19 December 2012. For more information go to; www.dse.vic.gov.au/conservation-and-environment/biodiversity/communities-for-nature-grant-program.

Regional Growth Fund Initiative - The Regional Growth Fund will support major strategic infrastructure and community-led local initiatives that improve both the competitiveness and liveability of regional and rural Victoria, creating more jobs and better career opportunities. Visit www.rdv.vic.gov.au/ for more information.

National Wildlife Corridors Plan Released – In early November, Federal Environment Minister Tony Burke released the National wildlife Corridors Plan to improve resilience for the environment by connecting protected areas.

Minister Burke said that "You can look at a map of reserved areas and sometimes it looks like someone has dipped a toothbrush in paint and splattered different unconnected dots across the land. Corridors are about connecting those dots; it's a way of improving resilience and ensuring that we are protecting nature in a way that preserves it for generations to come. The Plan outlines a process for communities to identify and nominate areas they believe will contribute to a national network of wildlife corridors. An area that meets the criteria and is declared as a National Wildlife Corridor may be eligible for priority funding under a range of Australian Government funding programs. This is about setting priorities for conservation funding. The plan does not, of itself, lock up any land."

"The Corridors Plan identifies a number of ways communities can become involved in wildlife corridor initiatives, contributing to biodiversity conservation at the landscape scale and improving the sustainability of their local and regional areas." The plan will help guide future government investment through a range of initiatives, such as Caring for our Country and the Biodiversity Fund. The Clean Energy Future Plan's Land Sector Carbon and Biodiversity Board will provide advice to the Environment Minister on wildlife corridors within the landscape.

For more information go to: <http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/wildlife-corridors/index.html>.

Conservation Tillage Refundable Tax Offset - From 1 July 2012, a 15 per cent refundable tax offset (RTO) is available on the purchase of new conservation seeding equipment.
For more information go to: www.daff.gov.au/climatechange/carbonfarmingfutures/rto.

Landholders vote to form Gulf region Landcare group

By Steven Schubert (ABC Radio Friday, 9 November 2012)

A group of land holders from the Cape Crawford region have decided they want to form a regional Landcare group.

While other parts of the Territory have had some sort of association for decades, the region towards the Gulf of Carpentaria has never banded together to work on things like weeds, soil erosion and feral animals.

Judy MacFarlane from Tanumbirini Station says she's not surprised that the vote to form a group was unanimous.



Land holders from the Cape Crawford region vote to form a new Landcare group.

"You get a lot further in life if you work as a group and along with your neighbours. We all have the same problems, and I think the real key issues here today with everybody who's here, and there'd be 30 or 40 people who attended the meeting which I think is great, was feral animals, weed control and erosion." To listen to the interview go to: <http://www.abc.net.au/rural/nt/content/201211/s3629337.htm>.

Conferences & Other Dates

First International CTF Conference - 25 - 27 February 2013 Empire Theatre, Toowoomba Queensland. For more information go to: www.actfa.net/.

Queensland State Landcare Conference – 27-29 September 2013. For more information contact Catherine Potter on 07 4661 9909 or catherine@ddrlandcare.org

If you have any articles that you would like to submit for future newsletters or upcoming events – please email the address below.

To sign up for the NLF newsletter go to: www.landcareonline.com.au/about/the-national-landcare-facilitator/nlf-e-newsletter/

Regards,

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The National Landcare Facilitator Project is funded by the Federal Government