



# Wollombi Valley Landcare Group News for April 2013



## AGM AND A PRESENTATION ABOUT FUNGI IN THE WOLLOMBI VALLEY

*The next Landcare meeting will be on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> April at the Dairy at Buralong, along Murray's Run, commencing at 2 PM.*

Our meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup> April will include our AGM (usually a very short affair) followed by a presentation by Anna Durkin on Fungi, and also, weather and time permitting, a walk to see the work being undertaken by Buralong Valley Landcare.

You are invited you to hear the presentation by Anna Durkin on fungi found in the Wollombi area. Regular readers of OON will know Anna Durkin's regular segment "Fungi Findings". Anna has wide ranging interests and since moving to the Wollombi Valley has increased her knowledge and ours with her most informative writings and pictures.

Anna says "she can't remember when she first became interested in fungi as it is just one aspect of this wonderful natural world around us. Each area - ecology, fauna, botany, insects as well as fungi - is fascinating but one could spend a lifetime studying each one."

Anna has worked for ten years, with other landcarers to restore the previously wrecked Budgewoi Beach and adjacent beach areas on the Central Coast where the array of vegetation species is particularly rich. Anna has also worked with another team for many years working on a SEPP 14 wetland at Colongra.



Photo courtesy of Anna Durkin

Anna has kindly agreed to take us for a walk and share her knowledge with us. Please bring your questions for her to answer and any specimens or photos for ID.

There will be tea and coffee available, but please bring a folding chair and wear suitable clothing.

**Where is the Dairy at Buralong?** It is just past 845 Murray's run Road, on the right. Look out for the Landcare signs. Parking is along the road. **Allow 30 minutes travel time from Wollombi.**

*Everyone is welcome. We look forward to seeing you there.*

□ *The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of Wollombi Valley Landcare Group Inc, or any other Landcare agency or government department, but are presented to promote discussion about and the practice of sustainable land use and environmental responsibility.*

## Our last meeting on Saturday, 16<sup>th</sup> February....

We met at the Tennis Club building in Negro Street, Wollombi to hear how Burrealong Valley Landcare is spending their Biodiversity Fund grant money and to view the progress of the weeding team "WARTS" who are tackling the massive weed infestation along the Wollombi Brook at the end of Negro Street.

Lesley Williams gave us an update on the first round of work completed with their \$15,000 grant.

The three themes for Biodiversity Funding are:

- biodiversity plantings
- enhancement of existing vegetation
- minimisation of invasion by exotic plants and animals.

A considerable amount of flexibility is built into the grant. The \$15,000 granted is available over 4-5 years and as each round is satisfactorily completed a report is sent in and the next installment of the money becomes available.

To understand Burrealong Valley's progress it is necessary to see what they started with: the Hungry Creek Motorcycle Track.

Lesley showed us a brief history in photographs of how the area looked when it was a motorcycle track and the considerable progress made since in revegetating the river flats. Coordinating the 37 lot holders and managing the 200 ha of communal land is a considerable challenge and the revegetation and weed control has to be a continuing work in progress.

Since Burrealong contains several wetlands not all the weed problems are terrestrial, one of the worst infests the water courses.

The biggest problem for several years was the exotic aquatic fern, *Salvinia molesta*. A combination of spraying followed by a well-timed flood removed it from several ponds. One of the purchases under the grant was a punt to facilitate the patrolling of the waterways to catch any new colonisations before they have a chance to spread.

The biggest terrestrial weed problem was blackberry which is now also under control after a program of spraying. The privet is currently being successfully attacked.

Burrealong is responsible for approximately 3 km of the Brook. Approximately 10-15 years ago the brook was fenced off from the cattle and planted with a range of natives. Spontaneous regeneration of wattles also occurred in large numbers causing the occasional problem when they uproot and fall on other plantings. Overall however, establishment of new plants is better where there is shade in summer, either from wattles or willows.

Most of the grant was spent on labour, mainly on Australian Conservation Volunteers, with the punt costing \$1,000 and another \$1,000 spent on additional fencing.

Planting of riparian plants and Lomandras is planned for an ephemeral waterway in the South Field to provide another type of habitat for native animals and plants.

The report has been sent back to the Biodiversity Fund and Burralong is now waiting for the next installment of money to buy more plants and to pay for slashing the area to be planted.

After Lesley's talk there was a general discussion on activities and topics for the coming year, over coffee and cake, followed by a barbeque.

The group was then conducted on a tour of the progress of the weeding team tackling the infestations at the end of Negro Street. The removal of weeds and planting of natives is continuing. I was particularly impressed by the labelling identifying the new plants. This makes the walk along the Brook truly educational and helps the rest of us decide what can be planted in similar sites elsewhere in the Valley.

Points to Note: Trees in Newcastle (TIN) is not only a good source of native plants but have donated extra plants to us when we bought the Lomandra, Water Gums, Lillypilly and figs.

The Plan of Management for Wollombi Brook also has a good list of suitable plants. Shelagh Brigg and I will be trying to pull together a list of plants native to the Wollombi Valley. Anybody who has a species list for their property, if you could give us a copy (either paper or electronic) we would be very grateful.

The Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney also has a resource called PLANTNET which can be useful at [rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au](http://rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au).

Jane Mowatt

## **President's Report 2013**

This has been another very unusual year for weather. After a wet winter we had a very dry spring and early summer with very hot total fire ban days and thoughts were concentrated on fuel reduction and evacuation plans. Then, to most people's surprise it began to rain and kept on raining. Wollombi and Laguna had the worst flood since June 2007 and the roads stayed boggy and increasingly impassable for weeks. We're now entering autumn with a saturated catchment and very high levels of plant growth. This is therefore ideal planting weather for both landholders and our planting team at Negro Street.

We have had two tours of this site, one in April 2012 and a follow-up in Feb 2013, showing the progress of the dedicated weeding and planting team.

This year also saw the Environmental Defenders Office under duress from reduced government funding and from the developers of Coal Seam Gas. In June, we were lucky to have two of their Outreach Officers give us the lowdown on our legal rights and protections with respect to CSG. We also received a box of their latest (and possibly last?) publication. (Available free from our stall at Laguna or direct from me.) We have written letters of support and donated \$200 to help them survive.

In August and October, we visited different plant communities at Warwick Briggs' property "St Ives" in Wollombi and Stanford Merthyr near Kurri Kurri. At the former, Warwick showed us his heath and at the latter Max Elliott introduced us to three endangered forest communities.

At Christmas, we revisited Brian and Barbara Barnes in Blaxland's Arm for a very enjoyable social visit and a catch up on their success at growing plants on a dry ridge top.

Once again, Landcare had a stall at the Wollombi Community Fair held in November with the help of several volunteers for the roster. As well, when the weather and roads permitted our stall at Laguna Market was set up to provide books, advice and a Plant Identification service.

NB. The new owners of the Laguna General Store have changed the date of the market from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sun to the 1<sup>st</sup> Sun of each month.

We sold out of the Weed Identification Books and bought some more from Tocal so they will continue to be available.

On Chris Jackson's recommendation we've bought two new books "What Makes a Good Farm for Wildlife?" and "The Untrained Environmentalist". These will be available on loan at our stall. We've also acquired some weeding tools being used at Negro Street.

This year is our last with Louise Hicks as Treasurer. Our heartfelt thanks for her years of very competent service in this position. So far, we have no candidates for her replacement and suggestions would be gratefully accepted.

My thanks to the other executive members who have assisted us over the last year and a special thankyou to the team at Negro Street and Graham Taylor for the newsletter.

Jane Mowatt

**TREASURER'S REPORT**  
**WOLLOMBI VALLEY LANDCARE GROUP Inc.**

**APRIL 2012 – MARCH 2013**

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I am pleased to report that the association's financial position remains sound. I refer you to the attached statement of earnings and expenses for the year ended 31 March 2013 and balance sheet as at 31 March 2013.

- As of March 31, 2013, Wollombi Valley Landcare Group Inc. had cash at bank with the Commonwealth Bank of **\$3,819.83** and a further amount invested with the Commonwealth Bank on interest-bearing term deposit of **\$10,000**.
- The association had accumulated funds of **\$8,144.85**, unused tied grants of **\$4,967.98** and creditors of **\$707** being cheques unrepresented at year-end..
- Income for the year was **\$1,013**. Membership fees accounted for **\$810**. Book and DVD sales and donations comprised the balance of earnings.
- An amount of **\$657.94** was spent on equipment, consumables and plants for the Wollombi Brook Rehabilitation Project. This cost was met from the Catchment Management Plan Tied Grant.
- Other expenses for the year totalled **\$1,202.49** (being total expenses of \$1,860.43 shown in the statement of earnings and expenditure less the amount of \$657.94 applied to the grant). These other costs included the annual insurance premium, new books for the library, a \$200 donation to the campaign to save the NSW Environmental Defenders Office, costs to produce and distribute the newsletter and sundry costs associated with administration, meetings and workshops.
- Excluding costs met from the grant, this financial year expenses exceeded income by **\$189.49**.
- A number of memberships expired at the end of March 2013 so look out for those reminder letters.
- I look forward to welcoming and handing over to the new Treasurer after the AGM.

Louise Hicks  
Treasurer  
5 April 2013

**WOLLOMBI VALLEY LANDCARE GROUP Inc**

<b>BALANCE SHEET</b>	<b>31/3/2012</b>	<b>31/3/2013</b>
<b>ASSETS</b>		
Cash at bank	13,960.26	3,819.83
Term deposit		10,000.00
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>13,960.26</b>	<b>13,819.83</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
Grant funds - see note 1	5,625.92	4,967.98
Creditors	0.00	707.00
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>5,625.92</b>	<b>5,674.98</b>
<b>Accumulated funds</b>	<b>8,334.34</b>	<b>8,144.85</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Equity</b>	<b>13,960.26</b>	<b>13,819.83</b>

**STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE Y/E 31/3/2013**

<b>INCOME</b>		
Book & DVD sales		183.00
Membership Fees		810.00
Donations		20.00
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>1,013.00</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
CEN membership		40.00
Christmas party		30.00
EDO donation		200.00
Equipment / Books / DVD's - new Assets		271.03
Dept of Fair Trading		49.00
Gifts for presenters		26.00
Hire of Premises		72.40
Insurance		350.00
Office (including Newsletter)		164.06
Wollombi Brook Rehabilitation Project		657.94
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		<b>1,860.43</b>
<b>Excess/Deficit of Income over Expenditure</b>		<b>-847.43</b>
Plus paid from CMA grant		657.94
<b>Adjusted excess/deficit</b>		<b>-189.49</b>
<b>EQUITY</b>		
Opening Balance		8,334.34
Net Income		-189.49
<b>Total Equity</b>		<b>8,144.85</b>
<b>Note 1 Tied Grants</b>		
Blaxland's Arm	2.62	
Bridge to Bridge	1,199.00	
Catchment Management Plan	2,686.36	
Millpond	340	
Noulanan's Arm	229	
Nudge Pump	511	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4967.98</b>	

## Renewal of membership now due

The financial year for Wollombi Landcare is from April to March, so renewal of membership is now due! Membership dues remain unchanged from previous years, \$15 per property per annum or \$40 per property for 3 years.

## **The AGM**

Have you considered joining the Landcare committee? During this year three committee members have resigned from the committee due to other commitments, so we are hoping that there are members who would be interested in taking their places.

Landcare relies on the good work and enthusiasm of our members who form the committee. Don't leave it just to the few longstanding members - why not join the committee, learn more about Landcare and have some input into the future direction of Landcare in the valley.

Being on the committee is not a particularly onerous task. Apart from our bi-monthly general meetings, the committee meet about 4 or 5 times per year for 1-2 hours, normally over the weekends, so the demand on your time is not too great.

The current committee are all longstanding members who have served our Landcare group for many years and would welcome the involvement of other members and particularly those who are new to the valley.

## **It is not too late to have your say on Coal Seam Gas and mining exclusion zones?**

The NSW government has released a draft of proposed amendments to the Mining State Environmental Planning Policy (Mining SEPP) to implement **CSG exclusion zones**.

The draft is now on exhibition for public feedback **until Friday 12 April 2013** and can be viewed here: [http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/on-exhibition#mining\\_sepp\\_2013](http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/on-exhibition#mining_sepp_2013)

The proposed changes provide welcome protection for zoned residential areas and mapped critical viticulture and thoroughbred industry clusters.

However, they do nothing to protect those living on farms and rural properties and fail to provide protection for other vital food growing lands, water catchments and sensitive environmental areas. Other shortcomings of these amendments are that they allow council's to exempt an area from the protections, while failing to give councils the right to include additional areas for protection; they don't cover other types of unconventional gas; and they don't cover coal mining.

Please take a few moments to have your say on this policy and tell the government that these protections don't go far enough.

Some suggested points to make are provided below.

### **How to make a submission:**

Feedback can be sent in writing to The Director Strategic Regional Policy, Department of Planning and Infrastructure, GPO Box 39, SYDNEY NSW 2001 or by email to [srlup@planning.nsw.gov.au](mailto:srlup@planning.nsw.gov.au).

All submissions will be made public. If you do not want your name and contact details to be published, do not include those details in your submission or attachments. Before making a submission, please read the [Department of Planning privacy statement](#).

### **Suggested feedback points to include in your submission:**

1. The SEPP amendments should be broadened to include a 2km buffer around all residential dwellings.
2. The right to veto for local councils should be removed unless it is matched with an equivalent power for councils to list new prohibited areas.
3. The provisions should include exclusions for all identified food producing lands, water catchments and sensitive environmental areas.
4. The SEPP amendments should be expanded to apply to coal mining and to all forms of unconventional gas extraction including shale gas and tight gas.
5. The SEPP amendments should apply to projects that have been approved but have not yet satisfied their conditions of approval, and have not yet commenced operation.

It is not too late to take a few minutes to have your say on this policy and tell the government that these protections don't go far enough.

### **Your future – Lower Hunter – Have your say!**

The NSW Government is developing a new plan for the way the Lower Hunter will grow over the next 20 years.

The Lower Hunter is covered by 2 active Petroleum Exploration Licences – AGL & Dart Energy whose seismic surveys indicate high potential for CSG in our vicinity – Wollombi, Crumps Retreat, Bucketty & Peats Ridge. Go to [www.planning.nsw.gov.au/lowerhunter](http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/lowerhunter) where you can download a community brochure and also a discussion paper.

The deadline for submissions is 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2013. You can lodge your submission by email to [lowerhunter@planning.nsw.gov.au](mailto:lowerhunter@planning.nsw.gov.au) or post to the NSW Department of Planning & Infrastructure, Newcastle Office, PO Box 1226, Newcastle 2300.

### **To all White Cedar, *Melia azedarach*, owners...**

**The caterpillars are back !!!** Trees are being defoliated in Millfield and Wollombi as I write. They haven't made it to Knights Arm yet but I am on my guard. They form dense dark brown groups on the trunk often within reach. If you want to help your tree (s) remove the caterpillars from the trunk with rake (or broom?) and squash them on the ground. They will also collect under sheets of newspaper placed around the trunk where they can be trodden on. A layer of petroleum jelly on the trunk is supposed to stop them climbing back up.

On the other hand, if you have too many White Cedars you can watch biological control in action. One defoliation won't kill the tree but in earlier years they just kept munching until the tree starved to death.

Jane Mowatt

### **Wollombi Valley Landcare Group Contacts**

**Mail:** Wollombi Valley Landcare Group, Inc. c/o Wollombi General Store, Wollombi 2325

**Items for newsletter:** Graham Taylor 9981 6317/4998 3326 or

[wollombi.landcare@gmail.com](mailto:wollombi.landcare@gmail.com)



EDO NSW  
ABN 72 002 880 864  
Level 5, 263 Clarence Street  
Sydney NSW 2000 AUSTRALIA  
E. edonsw@edonsw.org.au  
W www.edonsw.org.au  
T. + 61 2 9262 6989  
F. + 61 2 9264 2412

01 March 2013

Wollombi Valley Landcare Group Inc  
c/o Wollombi Store  
Wollombi NSW 2325

Dear friend

I write to offer my sincerest gratitude for your recent gift of \$200.00.

Thanks to your support, and that of other community members who feel as passionately as you do about the need to defend our environment and heritage, the EDO NSW now has a chance of meeting the demands upon our service in 2013.

Your gift has been prudently directed towards the Legal Outreach Program, which assists over 1,000 NSW residents each year.

This vital program is at the very heart of our services to the NSW community. Through the provision of free community legal education workshops, advice on how to write submissions and plain English publications explaining environmental law, the Legal Outreach Program gives ordinary people the knowledge, tools and a resounding voice to influence what happens to the environment they care deeply about.

To date, this program has empowered concerned individuals, families and groups to affect the outcome of countless insensitive developments which posed a real threat to the health and integrity of the environment. Your generous gift gives me the reassurance that the EDO NSW's Legal Outreach Program can continue to be a source of information, solidarity and strength for those who will need us over the coming year, and beyond.

As you know, it is impossible to place a monetary value on the environment or to fully measure the positive benefits that abound for the entire community when even one acre of land is protected against unsustainable development. However, what I can say with certainty is that your generous donation will go a long way towards defending NSW's varied fragile and beautiful ecosystems and heritage.

Yours sincerely,  
EDO NSW



Jeff Smith  
Executive Director