

## **BELLINGER LANDCARE INC ANNUAL REPORT 2018**

As presented at the Annual General Meeting 29 November 2018 at Alma Doepel Park, Mylestom

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Bellingher Landcare and Local Landcare groups – improving and revegetating over 550 hectares of Bellingher Shire land over the past two years and planting over 8380 Trees! This has included bringing in over \$390,968 of funding for restoration and rehabilitation from State and Federal funding sources and over \$700,000 of in kind contributions including hours from our hard working volunteers and financial and time commitments from landholders.

### **LOCAL LANDCARE GROUPS IN THE BELLINGHER SHIRE**

#### **Mylestom Landcare Groups**

Mylestom Landcare Groups has run a very successful project at Alma Doepel Park funded with \$5,000 from the Bellingher Shire Council Environmental Levy Community Fund. This resulted in bush regeneration works on site to eradicate the extensive weed populations and replant with endemic species to provide diversity in the plant communities and stability on the exposed open areas, steep banks of the hind dunes and the river bank within the Alma Doepel Reserve. The use of contractors was an essential requirement to carry out weed control, supporting and complementing the voluntary base of Mylestom Landcare to achieve the desired outcomes. Mylestom Landcare is extremely happy with the end result. Considerable weeds have been removed; a diverse range of endemic species have been planted; costs have been kept down to a minimum; the project was extended to two years on purpose for a sustained result and our group grew from two members to five. Stock items remain an asset to the group and will enable our voluntary contribution to the area to continue.

#### **Rocky Creek Landcare Group**

The Rocky Creek weed control project is nearing completion after making good use of a \$5,000 grant from the Bellingher Shire Council Environmental Levy Community Fund. Spraying and cutting of privet has been done by contractors in June. Excellent results from spraying the honeysuckle, blackberry and small privet. Follow up spraying has been done on the northern bank of Rocky Creek. Spraying of the Waterfall Way side will be done this week. We are trying to get the Shire to do the adjacent roadsides at the same time. Group members, Alan Jarrett, Ted Harrington and Ruth and Rod Holmes have used tractors to pull out the larger privets and stacked them ready for burning. Members of the Dardarra Landcare group have assisted in removing smaller privet. They are growing Antarctic Beech seedlings to plant in the cleared areas.

#### **Urunga Landcare Group**

Urunga Landcare applied for a \$5000 Environmental Levy Community Fund Grant from Council in 2016 and received the funds in 2017 to undertake the Hungry Head Community, Environment and Arts Project. The project aims to highlight the unique environmental features of the area, including the resident wallaby and kangaroo population which is visible and active both day and night. It draws attention to the endangered ecological communities and highlights the duty of care residents feel for the area.

Letterbox drops were done for 100 local residents, and a tea and fire session held to discuss the project and what the residents valued about living in Hungry and Wenonah Heads.

A species list for the area was compiled, and a local ecologist led a spotlight walk in October 2017 on a property adjacent to Hungry Headland. Four hardwood interpretative signposts, constructed by the community with artwork depicting the adjacent fauna and flora, and explaining its significance, were installed beside the new cycle track to coincide with its completion and opening.

Following a series of consultations with members of the Gumbaynggirr community to determine the local birds of significance, the Wood Duck was chosen for a public sculpture installation, a bird often seen on Hungry Head Road. Two local artists were commissioned to create the work, which is currently in the last stages of engineering and is expected to be in place early in 2019.

Urunga Landcare fundraised and received matching funding from the Urunga Mylestom Chamber of Commerce, as well as a generous donation from Urunga Medical Centre. The project has received substantial in-kind support as professionals, including local ecologists, engineers and environmental consultants, have halved or waived fees. The community has donated substantial expertise, as well as wood, tools, materials and labour. Council has assisted with information and support in following processes. Urunga Landcare, a small Landcare group with just two members, has calculated an in-kind contribution of \$30,000, reflecting the generosity of the locals as well as the amount of interest in the project. A media release will advise of the installation date for the sculpture, which will be an occasion to party.

## **Friends of Wonga Forest**

Wonga Forest Volunteers Landcare group formed in October 2017 and has 6 active members. They meet on the first Sunday morning of the month and carry out hand-weeding around trees that were planted and around good native vegetation. They also raise some tubestock and plant those on the banks of Frenchmans Creek.

EnviTE and NSW Forestry Corp are project partners with Bellinger Landcare at this 20 ha site, a former eucalypt plantation between the Bellingen township and Frenchmans Creek.

NSW forestry Corp contributed 600 native tubestock from their nursery this year, which were planted by Australian Conservation Volunteers and by EnviTE workers. EnviTE bush regenerators also carry out bush regeneration with a focus on

- a) Existing native vegetation
- b) Areas to be planted to provide greater biodiversity.

Funding has been supplied through the Jaliigirr Biodiversity Alliance from North Coast LLS and this year we have also applied to the Bellingen Shire Council Environmental Levy for contractor hours to control woody weeds on the edge of the cemetery as well as in the reserve to the west of the cemetery.

In March we held a Clean Up Australia Day event and got rid of a huge pile of unsightly rubbish.

## **BELLINGER LANDCARE PROJECTS**

### **Hydes Creek Koala Project**

Working as part of the Jaliigirr Biodiversity Alliance with the World Wildlife Fund for Nature, Bellinger Landcare are working on establishing a crucial link allowing the movement of Koalas across the landscape in the Bellingen Shire.

We are engaging six to eight private landholders on establishing and reinforcing an integral Koala corridor to connect Bongil Bongil National Park and Pine Creek State Forest with Tuckers Knob State Forest and Dorrigo National Park. This area is home to the highest density of Koala records within the Bellingen Shire outside of Bongil Bongil National Park, and represents a huge proportion of Koalas within our shire. The corridor is located within an incredibly important key Koala linkage area identified by the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage under the Bellingen Koala plan of management. We are also working with the OEH Saving Our Species Koala project lead and the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service to deliver the best outcomes possible for Koala movements across the landscape.

The project entails extensive bush regeneration and the planting of 2,600 trees. This project links in with the Friends of Wonga Forest site behind the Bellingen Cemetery. A group of dedicated volunteers have been improving the site in working bees run on the first Sunday of every month, which is also an integral part of the east-west corridor.

## **Bellinger River Projects**

Improving the condition of and extending the highly endangered Lowland Rainforest on Floodplain Endangered Ecological Community and improving habitat suitability in the upper Bellinger River for threatened species including the critically endangered Bellinger River Snapping Turtle.

In May 2018 we acquitted the final report for the Bellinger River Freshwater Habitat Education and Action Program funded by the NSW Environmental Trust and during 2017/18 we also gained funding from the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage Saving our Species program to undertake landholder engagement and commence on ground work in the Upper Bellinger River catchment. In March 2018 we also drafted a successful new grant application to the NSW Environmental Trust. This allows us to continue with the delivery of the Upper Bellinger River Aquatic and Terrestrial Habitat Connections project over three years during 2019 to 2021. This project is an essential lifeline to improve nesting sites and vegetation condition for the Bellinger River Snapping Turtle, as well as helping to restore significant degraded areas of Lowland Rainforest on Floodplain Endangered Ecological Community. The work will significantly improve riparian vegetation in the upper Bellinger by reducing cover of invasive weed species and planting thousands of lowland rainforest trees in order to protect the banks of the upper Bellinger River from erosion, thereby improving water quality, habitat and connectivity in the upper Bellinger River catchment.

## **Bush Connect**

Over the past 2 years, BLI has been delivering the highly successful Bush connect program as part of the Jaliigirr Biodiversity Alliance. The project is improving 322 hectares on private land, including 34 hectares of weed control targeting invasive environmental weeds impacting on ecological processes, a kilometer of fencing and the planting of 2130 trees!

We are engaging private landholders on seven sites funded by the NSW Environmental Trust and administered by the Jaliigirr Biodiversity Alliance. Two of the sites on the Dorrigo Plateau have waterways protected from stock impacts, each site is benefiting from good bush regeneration outcomes with two of the sites having revegetation planting also being undertaken. Two other sites are located on or adjacent to the lowland areas of Dorrigo National Park so contain the Lowland Rainforest on Floodplain Threatened Ecological Community. Both sites are being assisted by the work of a professional bush regeneration contractor. We have also started work on two additional sites in 2018 on the main channel of the Bellinger River at Gleniffer.

## **Targeted Landcare Project**

This project was completed in June 2018 and was run in conjunction with Clarence Landcare funded by the North Coast Local Land Services. We successfully completed 47 hectares of habitat restoration including 47 hectares of weed control impacting on ecological processes within bushland.

	<b>LOCAL LANDCARE GROUPS</b>	<b>TARGETED LANDCARE PROJECT</b>	<b>BUSH CONNECT</b>	<b>HYDES CREEK KOALA PROJECT</b>	<b>TWO BELLINGER RIVER PROJECTS</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>Timeframe</b>	2017/2018	2016 - 30 June 2018 (3yrs)	2016 – 2021 (6yrs)	Jan 2018 - June 2019 (1.5yrs)	2016 – 2018 (3yrs)	
<b>Number of site action plans</b>	1	11	7	6	16	41
<b>Total area (ha)</b>	10	47	322	92	12	483
<b>Weed control area (ha)</b>	10	47	34	30	12	133
<b>Number of plantings</b>	2,000		2,130	2,600	1,650	8,380
<b>Length of fencing (m)</b>			1,000			1,000
<b>Number of contractors</b>	2	3	4	3	2	4
<b>Value of volunteer in kind contributions (\$)</b>	136,000	100,000	193,000	181,600	90,000	700,600
<b>Number of grant applications</b>	2				1	4
<b>Funding amount (\$)</b>	10,000	45,213	145,000	90,755	100,000	390,968