

# Landcare News

Autumn



The final celebratory event was held recently for the first project that was undertaken by the Jaliigiir Biodiversity Alliance “**Connecting communities and cultures through corridors**”. This project expended \$3 mill over the past 6 years in our region on bush regeneration and revegetation and the outcomes are very satisfying. Representatives of the partners, as well as bush regeneration contractors, attended the event and it was agreed all round that this is a fantastic success story. The Alliance has now matured into a group where partners from government and non-government work together very constructively and aboriginal land councils contribute as well as benefit equally.

Bellinger Landcare now has a Strategic Plan to guide us for the coming 5 years. It is a requirement of the funding we receive through Landcare NSW that we produce the plan and regularly report on our progress on identified priorities. The executive committee is now taking up the challenge to make this a living and useful document – please see our website for the details.

Natasha and myself were offered the opportunity recently to introduce our organisation to the Bellinger Councillors, which was very well received. Councillor Jenny Fenton kindly added to our presentation that we hadn’t “blown our trumpet enough”. She said that her experience with Landcare networks from her time with the Catchment Management Authority is that we ‘provide extraordinary value for money and that our community engagement ability is invaluable’.

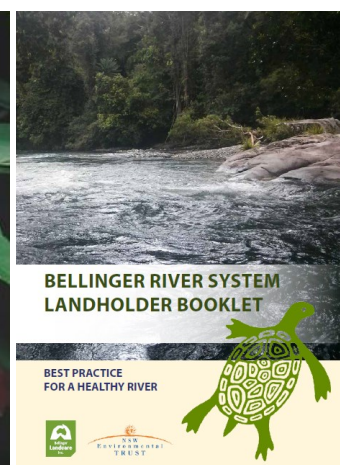
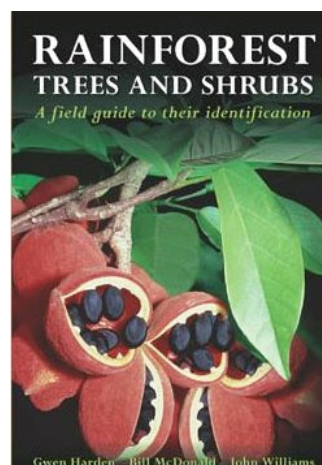
Wishing you all a happy autumn, enjoy the rainy weather and watch your trees grow!

Pia Dollmann

We will be launching our **Bellinger River Landholder Booklet** on May 17th in conjunction with our free **Rainforest Identification Day**.

All participants will take home a rainforest plant and there will be one Lucky Door Prize giveaway of the latest version of the *Rainforest Trees and Shrubs A field guide to their identification* by Gwen Harden, Bill McDonald & John Williams. Please visit our website homepage for further information.

During a fantastic workshop hosted by Coffs Landcare and run by Gwen Harden, we used the new Rainforest Plants of Australia app. You might like to download this prior to the workshop. The cost is \$50, and it proves to be a brilliant tool for identifying species, with loads of pictures and information. With little effort, I managed to get some correct. This is an image of what it looks like.



Bellinger  
Landcare  
Inc.



## Myrtle rust: A threat to Australia's unique biodiversity

*By Geoff Pegg (Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries), Angus Carnegie (New South Wales Department of Primary Industries) and Bob Makinson (consultant)*

Myrtle rust (*Puccinia psidii*, eucalyptus rust or guava rust), is an exotic fungal disease detected for the first time in Australia on the central coast of New South Wales in 2010. Plant Biosecurity CRC researchers have been tracking the effects and spread of myrtle rust – with sobering findings.

“Myrtle rust has continued to spread and is now well established in native ecosystems along the east coast of New South Wales and Queensland,” said Dr Geoff Pegg, a forest pathologist with Queensland’s Department of Agriculture and Fisheries working on the project. “We have seen wide-ranging impacts on plant species in many different ecosystems.” One of the reasons that myrtle rust is so damaging in Australia is that the host range is vast and continues to grow, with more than 350 species now reported as susceptible from 57



“The impact on plant species ranges from minor leaf spotting, varying levels of defoliation and dieback and death of trees/shrubs at all life stages including seedlings, saplings and mature trees,” said Dr Pegg. “Reduced reproduction by myrtle rust infection of flowers and fruit, or indirectly as a result of tree dieback, is compounding the issue.”

“Impacts are also being seen at plant community level, particularly in Myrtaceae-rich ecosystems,” said Dr Pegg, such as Wet sclerophyll, Coastal heath and Melaleuca wetlands.

Myrtle rust infection of growing tips results in dieback and prevents flowering in *Melaleuca quinquenervia*.

“In some sites there is already evidence of change in species composition and reduced diversity, due to local extinction of susceptible species. Additionally we are not sure how this change will affect invertebrates and vertebrates dependent on some of these species.” Fortunately, opportunities to incorporate myrtle rust-resistant trees in revegetation programs exist for some species. This is particularly the case for the broad-leaved *Melaleuca* spp. (*M. quinquenervia*, *M. leucadendra*, *M. viridiflora*). *Melaleuca quinquenervia* are key to maintaining and improving water quality, as well as being important to a range of wildlife. They provide valuable nesting or roosting sites for a number of bird and bat species, and are an important food source for migratory birds. genera, Dr Pegg explained.

# NEWS

From an industry perspective, the developing lemon myrtle (*Backhousia citriodora*) industry has been one of the hardest hit by the disease. Lemon myrtle leaves contain oil with the highest citral content of any known plant in the world – the lemony aroma compound used for its citrus effect. The leaves are dried and milled for use in teas or as a spice, and steam distillation is used to extract the essential oil from the leaf material, which can then be used as food flavouring, in aromatherapy products, cosmetics and toiletries. In 2012, production of lemon myrtle was estimated to be between 575 and 1,100 tonnes of leaf and three to eight tonnes of oil, with a farm gate value of between \$7 and \$23 million.

The introduction of myrtle rust into Australia is jeopardising the growth and success of this industry, with the disease causing foliage loss, dieback and stunted growth – yield losses of up to 70 per cent have been reported in untreated lemon myrtle plantations.

For more information on myrtle rust, see the Plant Biosecurity CRC website ([www.pbcrc.com.au](http://www.pbcrc.com.au)) and the Australian Network for Plant Conservation ([www.anpc.asn.au/resources](http://www.anpc.asn.au/resources)).

## A sustainable dairy industry

DIRECTLY employing almost 40,000 people and producing 9.7 billion litres of milk a year, the Australian dairy industry is undoubtedly a major linchpin of Australia's agriculture sector. As with all elements of agriculture, sustainability is a key concern for dairy farmers, not just as a means of managing land, but ensuring their businesses are equipped to respond to a variety of challenges, including climate, extreme weather, energy costs and soil health. Now in its third year, the Lion Dairy Pride Landcare Grants Program is helping Lion's dairy farmers address some of those challenges by funding projects that address reducing energy use, improving nutrient management or increasing biodiversity. To date, the grants have funded the installation of variable speed controlled pumps in a number of dairies, resulting in energy savings of between 35 and 75 per cent. Biodiversity has been increased through some farm projects, including one undertaken by Richard Smart and Trina Hole in Tasmania, which saw waterways and paddock corners fenced off, and the planting of more than 400 native trees and shrubs. These will eventually be established as shelter and shade breaks, resulting in increased grass production and a reduction in plant stress. Queensland farm "Wilson Plains" is another enterprise that received funding. Operating across 120 hectares, with 460 milking cows producing 1.5 million litres a year, in 2016 the farm used a Lion Landcare Grant to install energy-efficient solid set sprays to move water around the property. This facilitated the irrigation of some marginal country with underground water to stimulate grass growth, resulting in a major increase in feed for livestock and a 65pc reduction in "cut and cart" feed that needed to be purchased. As well as offering these



# LAND CARE IN FOCUS

grants, Lion has recently launched its new Dairy Pride Program, an online portal allowing its 400 dairy farmers to use an assessment tool to see how their operations measure up in ve key areas: milk quality; animal welfare; people, community and wellbeing; the environment, and business management. Lion Dairy and Drinks agricultural procurement director Murray Jeffrey spoke to Landcare in Focus about Dairy Pride and how Lion worked with dairy farmers and industry to develop the program. “Our farmers have been partners in developing this online tool from the start,” Mr Jeffrey said. “Before we launched, we selected 20 farmers to give us feedback, and following their advice, re-engineered some of the programs to suit certain aspects. “e program was developed because we are committed to building a stronger, genuine partnership with our farmers. “We also believe most of our consumers really want to understand what happens at the farm gate and what goes into making a sustainable farmer and sustainable practice on farms.” In an industry where challenges are abundant and demand for product is increasing, initiatives such as Dairy Pride, which help farmers take an in-depth look at the health of their operations and offer real tools and knowledge on how to improve it, are going to become increasingly important.



Landcare Australia are excited to announce the 2017 Sustainable Agriculture Grants program is now open! These grants will support Landcare and farming groups to undertake sustainable agriculture projects and activities.

Eligible groups are invited to apply for a grant of up to **\$10,000 (ex GST)**. Grants will fund sustainable agriculture projects that protect or improve the environment while enhancing farming productivity, through the adoption of sustainable farming practices and / or increased knowledge and capacity. They close very soon however, **May 1st**. Visit: <https://landcareaustralia.org.au/funding-opportunities/landcare-australias-sustainable-agriculture-grants-2017/>

# NEWS



**Bell Miner Colony Project** The bell miner, *Manorina melanophrys*, is a native honeyeater, endemic to eastern Australia. Like the noisy miner, *Manorina melanocephala*, bell miners defend a territory year-round from other bird species, particularly in the eucalypt canopy where they spend most of their time feeding. Unlike the noisy miner, bell miners prefer a thick understorey of any plant

species for nesting. Due to their nesting and foraging behaviour, this species has been implicated as the cause of eucalypt dieback. However, as this species is opportunistic and will nest in exotic plant species such as *Lantana camara*, it is now thought that its presence is a symptom of dieback and forest disturbance where an increase of their food source, namely herbivorous insects, has occurred. Little is known, however, about how or why a bell miner colony chooses a particular site for colonisation and whether they claim a site after insect numbers have increased and the trees are already showing signs of stress, so long before tree death occurs. To determine this, we need more information on the location of colonies, their habitat in terms of understorey plants, eucalypt tree health, and any information on how long a colony has been in the area. Therefore, a project has been started for everyone to report the location of colonies and other information that can be provided. You can help by filling out a survey on the colonies around you and providing any other anecdotal observations you have made in terms of colony movement and their time frames. Visit the website [bmcp.org.au/bmreport/](http://bmcp.org.au/bmreport/) You can also visit the Facebook page [https:// www.facebook.com/bellminercolonies/](https://www.facebook.com/bellminercolonies/) and share photos. This page is regularly updated with information on studies and the progress of the project. Contributed by Kathryn Lambert



## WEED ALERT

Madeira Vine is flowering now. These flowers are often described as 'lambs tail' and Madeira Vine (*Anredera cordifolia*) is very obvious in our landscape at the moment. Once believed to only disperse by



floodwaters or earthmoving activities, it is now understood that Madeira Vine can pop up anywhere, possibly dispersed by birds or bats. It is a declared Weed of National Significance (WONS) in recognition of its highly invasive properties and ability to destroy native vegetation communities. The "Pittwater Ecowarriors" have produced an excellent YouTube video demonstrating how to scrape and paint madeira stems to kill the vine, including any attached tubers. We will provide a link on our website.



# HAPPENINGS



## Frenchmans Creek

RIGHT ON YOUR DOORSTEP

## DO YOU LOVE OR USE THE AREA BEHIND THE BELLINGHER CEMETERY

This is a unique bushland with regenerating creek system, potential koala habitat where restoration works are currently underway. We would like to hear from you about ways we can continue the works underway to protect this and enhance for the future. Please drop me an email

at [nenglishbellingherlandcare@gmail.com](mailto:nenglishbellingherlandcare@gmail.com)

Or call Natasha on 66550588



## GET INVOLVED: CONNELL CREEK & BELLINGHER ISLAND

Connell Creek, on the corner of Endeavour Drive and Crown Street, is getting some renewed attention with an Environmental Levy Grant from Bellingher Shire Council. Joe Losurdo, a local bush regenerator, is heading up a group that consists of locals and students from Bellingher High School. Their next work-bee will be on **Thursday April 27th**, starting at **10am** for a couple of hours. They will then meet every Thursday through May at this time and at the above location. They would love a few more pairs of hands if you have any time or live nearby. Tools and instructions supplied.

With plenty of summer visitors to the Island before all this rain, the BI Group opened up the circular track around the Island, which had become rather overgrown. The group has had to re-route the eastern end around a couple of fallen trees. Bellingher Island lives up to its name, being subject to unpredictable flood damage. However, when dry, the group convenes every **Tuesday morning**. Meet for morning tea at the Bellingher Island Noticeboard in the old Caravan Park at 11am, or call Dorin on 0428 533 195 to check details.

# HAPPENINGS

## Local man lands plum role

BY ALICE BURNET

MYLESTOM resident, Bob Smith, has been named the Local Land Services' North Coast chairman. Mr Smith is an experienced scientist, manager and adviser in the sustainable management, protection and profitable use of natural resources, with extensive experience in all levels of government. He is

### Changing of the guard at Local Land Services

NSW Minister for Primary Industries, Niall Blair has signalled a 'changing of the guard' for Local Land Services with the announcement of 45 new local chairs and board members recently. The Chair of Chairs, Tim de Mestre, has also announced he is stepping down from his position and, as part of the evolution of Local Land Services, the role of state chair will transition to part-time. Richard Bull, a sheep producer from the Murray region has taken up the role of Acting Chair in the interim.

### North Coast appointed board

North Coast LLS is governed by a board of local people. The Chair and three board members are appointed by the Minister for Primary Industries - the remaining three board members are elected by Local Land Services ratepayers. This week saw the announcement of Bob Smith (Mylestom) as the North Coast LLS Chair and Mark Bulley (Port Macquarie) and Tom Cooper (Bonalbo) as Ministerially-appointed Board members. An announcement on the fourth ministerially-appointed board member is expected within the next month.

### \$100 Million for Landcare - Some News Via National Landcare Network

We finally have some news on the additional \$100 million for Landcare that was announced in the MYEFO in December! In the last few months the NLN, together with Landcare Australia, has been in discussions with the Australian Government and the Australian Greens to try and ensure that this money is spent in a way which will bring benefits to landcarers and farmers on the ground. We now have confirmation that:

A first instalment of the funding will be available this financial year after budget announcements in May.

Support for on-ground Landcare projects and small grants for sustainable agriculture and environmental projects will be prioritised in allocating this funding.

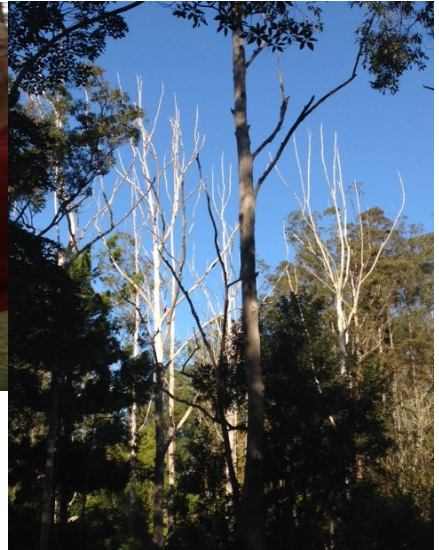
\$15 million will be allocated to new Indigenous Protected Areas.

Money will be available to support Landcare Australia in delivering the State and National Landcare Awards which celebrate the achievements of landcarers.

The NLN and Landcare Australia met with Finance Minister Mathias Cormann's office at the end of March to confirm these allocations and to discuss various aspects of the budget as they relate to Landcare. Our thanks to the Australian Government and Australian Greens for their ongoing commitment to Landcare!



# TARGETED LAND CARE UPDATE



We are into the Second Stage of the Targeted Landcare Grants and going great guns. The overall objectives of this grant from the North Coast Local Land Services are to engage new landholders in property management, develop Farm Plans, increase the extent and condition

of at least 60 hectares of native vegetation across our north coast region, enhance the habitat of threatened species, and engage new farming enterprises. Significantly, the landholders involved have contacted us either through work that they are currently undertaking or have conducted on their properties in the past, and who have filled out our Expression of Interest Form via our website. We date each EoI form as it arrives so that we can contact the next in line for potential funding, keeping in mind that they must fit the criteria mentioned above. When filling out a form, please give us as much information about your

*Tallowood-Blue Gum. Big, old Sydney Blue Gum-Photo Ross Macleay*



property or planned works as possible, including specific activities you would like to undertake and why. In this latest round we will tackle running bamboo and lantana that may be contributing to Bell Miner dieback at a property in Thora. We have helped the Bundilla Community in their rainforest gully with significant assistance from the landholder in killing a lantana thicket; continued riparian works along the Bellinger River near Thora with supplementary planting of riparian species; conducted a vegetation survey, and provided a professional report for a 40 hectare bush block along Hydes Creek that is surrounded



# TARGETED LAND CARE UPDATE

by Pine Creek State Forest and of high conservation value.

The grant originally provided bush regeneration support for dedicated landholders on the Southern slopes of Bellingen, where the property is a significant link to the catchment system of the town. These landholders work tirelessly on weed control and reinstating native plants. The grant has also provided koala food trees to two properties looking to extend existing vegetation corridors.



If you visit our home page and click on **Get Involved**, there is a link to our Expression of Interest Form: 'Tell Us What You Want'. We have included it here again for your use or interest. It really is one of the best ways to let us know what you are dealing with, and particularly if you have neighbours who are also interested in working on similar goals.

# EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

## **Bellinger Landcare Member Expression of Interest (EoI)**

To assist Bellinger Landcare to seek funding opportunities, we are providing you with a brief Expression of Interest Form.

A collaborative/overarching project is more likely to receive funds than small individual projects. Completing this form does not automatically put your project into a wider application. It will depend on the scope of EoI's returned, fitting into objectives of specific Funding Programs, and what the funding priorities are at the time.

If you are interested in and have the ability to implement environmental projects on your property over the next couple of years, please return this form as soon as possible. If there are enough landholders seeking similar projects, Bellinger Landcare will use your EoI towards a collaborative submission (with your permission). Landholders need to demonstrate sound contributions in time or materials and a commitment to maintaining project work beyond the life of the funded project, to be considered for inclusion in grant funding for on-ground works.

Similarly we are keen to find out what type of workshops, training or events you are interested in. In general projects we are seeking expression of interests for:

Soil Improvement/Sustainable Grazing

Biodiversity / Threatened species conservation

Riparian restoration

Paddock plantings (fence-line rows or large scale plantings)

Other weed control activities - for high priority invasive /WONs (weeds of national significance) in conjunction with native regeneration or planting of natives.

Please complete this form to the best of your ability and return to the Landcare Office.

If you would prefer a Word Version of this Document (contact me at [nenglishbellingerlandcare@gmail.com](mailto:nenglishbellingerlandcare@gmail.com))

Property Owner \_\_\_\_\_

Postal address (if not property address) \_\_\_\_\_

Property Address \_\_\_\_\_

Lot/DP \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact Email** (preferred method of contact)

\_\_\_\_\_

Preferred business hours phone contact number \_\_\_\_\_

# EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

What are your main project aims (please tick):

- ☐ Revegetation with local native plants- farm based eg shelter belts, wind breaks, corridors (including stock exclusion fencing if required)
- ☐ Revegetation with local native plants- river bank (including stock exclusion fencing if required and stock watering) What river? \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Weed control (what types) eg vine weeds, \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Soil/ pasture management improvement

☐ Fencing (for what purpose?) \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

What is the total size of your property? \_\_\_\_\_ ha

What is the area that would be incorporated into the project?

Revegetation area \_\_\_\_\_ m<sup>2</sup>

Weed control \_\_\_\_\_ m<sup>2</sup>

Approximate length of fencing \_\_\_\_\_ m

Fencing type electric /post

Please provide a description of your project and what you could contribute to a project in terms of time, materials and/or cash. (50 words) *for example* could you contribute 1-5 hrs of maintenance a week/tree planting/ fencing materials (in-kind is calculated at \$35/hr) AND what are you trying to achieve with your property what is your vision?

What is the approximate amount of funds you may require (if known- otherwise leave blank)? (for materials such as fencing, plants, weed control, herbicide, etc)

- ☐ Less than \$2000
- ☐ \$2000-5000
- ☐ More than \$5000

Is this project adding to any previous works of similar nature? Y/N

Do you have neighbours that are also interested in similar projects? Y/N

(please contact BLI for us to send them an EoI Form)



# FLOOD DRAMA

Spare a thought for our northern neighbours like the property of our lovely North coast Regional Landcare Facilitator Chrisy Clay. Here is her backyard. Chickens lifted to higher grounds, but as she told me, they were prepared and didn't suffer any major damage....



Wyrallah downstream of Lismore on the banks of the  
Wilsons River.

## Contact Us

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These chickens are famous with their own Instagram  
account [https://www.instagram.com/wilsons\\_river\\_cottage/](https://www.instagram.com/wilsons_river_cottage/)



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**Local Land  
Services**  
North Coast

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