



Local Land
Services



Australian Government

Local links

Local Land Services works with land managers and the community to improve primary production within healthy landscapes.

These case studies highlight the integration of services across the organisation and the diversity of partnerships and projects being undertaken.



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Goal 1 - Resilient, self-reliant and prepared local communities

Landholders connect over flood meetings

Central West Local Land Services recently partnered with Sheep Connect to deliver flood response meetings in Forbes, Marthaguy and Condobolin.

While the immediate focus was on animal health, the workshops also gave information on assistance and resources available to affected landholders.

An added (and somewhat unexpected) advantage of the meetings was that landholders, who had in some circumstances been isolated for weeks, were able to connect socially.

Drawing on Local Land Services staff's regional knowledge meant that each meeting was well received.

Another aspect of the events was planning for landholders who couldn't attend. To overcome this video sessions were filmed and shared online.



Industry partnership paying dividends for dairy customers

The formal partnership agreement between North Coast Local Land Services and industry group Subtropical Dairy will improve the quality of advice provided to dairy customers, with a \$2,500 training scholarship provided to a North Coast Local Land Services agricultural advisory officer.

North Coast Local Land Services is helping farmers grow their knowledge through advice, information and training. Through the scholarship, staff can be across the latest innovations and developments in dairy farming.

Senior Land Services Officer, Brendan O'Brien, who will complete the 'Design Livestock Effluent Systems' course said, "Professional effluent design practitioners are in demand in all dairy regions in Australia and it is a great opportunity for me to participate in this training so that I am better able to provide guidance to local dairy farmers."

Interest in natural resource projects grows amongst farmers

Northern Tablelands Local Land Services received almost 200 expressions of interest from landholders across the region seeking to protect existing bushland, plant more trees and improve water quality on farms.

The Trees on Farms and Healthy Rivers projects, funded through the National Landcare Programme and Catchment Action NSW, encourage landholders to invest in the long term sustainability of agriculture and improved management of natural resources.

The response is a sign of a greater appreciation of the production benefits trees provide through shade and shelter. Native vegetation also supports healthy soils and pastures and improves water quality.

Interestingly it's not just small landholders who applied for the projects. We've also had applications from large agricultural enterprises looking to increase the amount of native vegetation on-farm.

Healthy native vegetation plays a vital role in sustainable, productive farming systems. These projects will help local landholders to bring native trees and plant species back to areas where they've been lost.



Droving the Blues Away fundraising cattle drive

The gavel came down on a successful fundraising event at the Wagga Marketing and Livestock Centre as the Droving the Blues Away cattle drive came to an end. The event saw 12 cattle auctioned raising in excess of \$26,000.

Droving the Blues Away was a unique partnership between Riverina Local Land Services and Riverina Bluebell in recognition of maintaining good mental health within our rural communities.

The drive hosted a series of community events, attracting over 500 people, raising awareness and providing information on support services available in the Riverina.

Chair of Riverina Bluebell, Mac Armytage said at every one of the community events there was someone who came forward with a concern for a friend, family or themselves.

"It has provided a unique way to get rural communities together to talk and seek support."

Goal 2 - Biosecure, profitable, productive and sustainable primary industries

Targeting pests and weeds in significant forest

A six-month program to manage pests and weeds in the Ramsar-listed Koondrook-Perricoota Forest is drawing to a close, with some significant gains achieved.

The program has been supported by Murray Local Land Services through funding from the National Landcare Programme, with on-ground works carried out by members of the Moama Local Aboriginal Land Council.

Under the guidance of staff from Forestry Corporation NSW, the land council team has targeted specific weeds and pests in this ecologically and culturally significant forest.

The work crews have undertaken fox baiting (targeting known turtle-nesting areas), pig trapping, rabbit warren fumigation on sand hills and weed control targeting blackberry, African boxthorn and horehound.

The Koondrook-Perricoota Forest runs alongside the Murray River downstream of Torrumbarry, and includes several lakes, wetlands and sand hills. It is Australia's second-largest red gum wetland.

The works program began in May this year and finished in spring 2016.



Monitoring merino weaners

South East Local Land Services and Gunning land managers Jack and Jennifer Medway are monitoring merino weaner health and performance over the first seven to eight months post weaning, to benchmark weaner performance and provide a reference point for southern tablelands sheep producers.

This project highlights the nutritional requirements of young stock to help sheep producers minimise losses and develop feeding strategies to ensure production goals are achieved.

Weaner losses in merino and cross-bred flocks can be highly variable. Weaner survival is a function of weaning weight and post weaning growth rate. Animals that fail to gain weight post-weaning have a higher risk of dying.

Adequate nutrition is required to make sure weaners continue to grow and meet live weight targets for joining. Despite a long wet 2016 winter, which presented challenging conditions for livestock, the monitored weaners managed to achieve excellent growth (averaging 6.3 kg) and are on track to meet autumn joining weights.

Australian first mesquite bioherbicide trial at Broken Hill

In an Australian first, Local Land Services Western Region is partnering with the University of Queensland to test fungal isolates as potential bioherbicides to treat mesquite, one of the Western Regions most aggressive weeds.

"While biological agents have been trialled in the past, there has been only minimal success, particularly with mesquite in western NSW," said Senior Land Services Officer, Mitch Plumbe.

"A bioherbicide such as this gives the possibility of a control method that not only kills treated plants, but spreads through the broader thicket and suppresses seedling establishment."

Preliminary work with seedlings has already found various isolates that can suppress mesquite. The trial at Broken Hill will determine how well they can control mature plants in the field.

The trial builds on work by Dr Victor Galea and Bioherbicides Australia in the successful development of a similar product for the treatment of parkinsonia.



Spring baiting program collaborative success

Local Land Services partnered with nearly 2,000 landholders as part of its spring wild dog baiting program.

Landholders in 123 wild dog control groups across NSW took part in baiting programs and training in new technology such as canid pest ejectors.

Across NSW the spring program saw a 50 per cent increase in the number of landholders involved in coordinated wild dog baiting programs from 2015.

Collaborative efforts between neighbouring properties have been a key to the success and Local Land Services continued to focus its efforts on working with local wild dog control groups during spring.

Past experience has shown that the most effective campaigns are well-coordinated, landscape-wide and use as many available tools and techniques as possible.

Goal 3 - Healthy, diverse, connected natural environments

Swamped by Threats

'Swamped by Threats' is an exciting new Central Tablelands project funded by the NSW Government's Environmental Trust Saving Our Species Partnership Grants Program.

The project will help protect several threatened species of upland swamps with a focus on the giant dragonfly and the Blue Mountains water skink.

"The giant dragonfly and Blue Mountains water skink are swamp dependent species. If these swamps aren't kept healthy, there is a real risk the species will decline in the future," says Senior Land Services Officer, Huw Evans.

Project partners include the Office of Environment and Heritage, Environmental Trust, Greater Sydney Local Land Services, Lithgow City Council, Blue Mountains City Council, Forestry Corporation, National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Lithgow and Oberon Landcare Association. They will also consult regularly with species experts Dr Ian Baird, Professor Rick Shine and PhD student Sarsha Gorissen.



Chinese community rallies to clean-up Cronulla

A group of ocean-loving Chinese locals rallied together to clean-up Cronulla Beach and promote the importance of rubbish-free oceans earlier this year.

The event was coordinated by Greater Sydney Local Land Services as part of its Aquatic Champions program. This work encourages responsible boating and fishing practices in Sydney. The day saw about 20 Chinese residents collect rubbish and discuss the impacts of plastic litter on the aquatic environment with members of the Mandarin community visiting the beach.

Land Services Officer Linda Dedovic said the clean-up event was just one example of the positive work the group has been doing since being trained on minimising impacts on the aquatic environment when visiting waterways.

"Our volunteers battled traffic delays and road works to be there and their enthusiasm attracted a lot of attention from passers-by which really helped promote the cause," she said.

Hunter swamp now internationally recognised

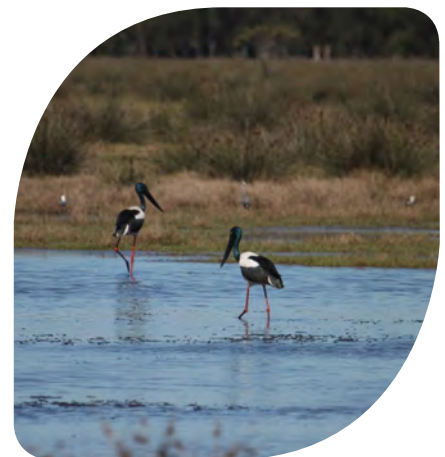
In November this year, Hunter Local Land Services celebrated the 20th anniversary of a successful wetland rehabilitation project in the Hunter River Estuary, near Newcastle.

Floodgates installed on Ironbark Creek in the 1970s eliminated tidal flows into Hexham Swamp, which was a significant mosaic estuarine and freshwater wetland. Mangrove and saltmarsh communities quickly gave way to freshwater reeds.

In 2008, after 12 years of planning, research and stakeholder consultation, the gradual opening of floodgates began.

Since the floodgates have been opened, 443 hectares of estuarine vegetation and habitat have been restored, over 40 new bird species have been recorded, and eastern king prawns and school prawns have increased by 1,500 per cent. In the upper Ironbark Creek catchment, there are 15 new species of fish and prawns, 62 times the number of juvenile bream, and 10 times the number of juvenile mullet.

Hexham Swamp is now an internationally recognised wetland and part of the Hunter River Estuary Ramsar site.



Field days focus on hands-on experience

A series of biodiversity and land use field days across the North West Local Land Services region gave locals the chance to feel like they were on safari while learning about biodiversity, water quality, rivers and catchments close to home.

People from all walks of life attended the 10 field days during October and November. The sessions were designed to give local residents a chance to try a range of hands-on land management activities.

Funded by Catchment Action NSW, events included spotlighting for wild animals, plant and bird identification, water quality testing and test result interpretation.

The field days provided an opportunity for people to find out about the benefits remnant vegetation provides to the productive landscape and how to capitalise on it. They also helped people discover special places in their local area that are home to pockets of rare vegetation that many people are unaware of.