



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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1300 795 299

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

Project sees Austral grower halve input costs

Greater Sydney Local Land Services have worked with Austral grower Hok Lam, to improve water and nutrient management on his farm.

Building on the success of NSW Department of Primary Industries Smart Farms initiative, Local Land Services provided on-ground support to capture and treat rainwater. This in turn reduced the reliance on town or potable water.

His farm has shown nutrient rich waste water to be a valuable resource and with proper treatment, the water can be recycled. Over a period of one summer, Hok recorded a saving on his water bill of more than 50 per cent.

"The farm is now able to use rainwater in conjunction with the existing UV recycling system to irrigate truss tomato crops," Hok said. "The benefits of this project to growers like me would not have happened if Greater Sydney Local Land Services had not been involved and funding was not available. Extension resources like this should be available to growers in this challenging and competitive industry."



Supporting local student to deliver important message to Hunter households

Hunter households this month received useful tips to help protect the region's waterways from pollution in a brochure produced by a local school student with the help of Hunter Local Land Services.

Put litter in the bin, wash your car on the grass and pick up grass clippings ... these were among the tips featured in a 'Water Worries' brochure, delivered to homes in Maitland and surrounding areas.

Of the 12,000 brochures distributed, 250 contained a winning code redeemable for environmentally sustainable prizes including compost bins, water-saving hose trigger nozzles, stainless steel drink bottles and dog waste bag holders.

The brochure was produced by a local high school student as part of an annual competition undertaken by Hunter Local Land Services in partnership with Hunter Water. Students were asked to produce a brochure to raise awareness about how to keep their local waterways healthy.

Detection dog sniffs out cool country koalas

In partnership with Northern Tablelands Local Land Services, the Detection Dogs for Conservation team from the University of the Sunshine Coast hosted field days to involve the Tenterfield and Inverell communities in the Cool Country Koalas project and to see Maya the conservation detection dog in action as she sniffed out koala scats.

Carina Johnson from Northern Tablelands Local Land Services said the sniffer dogs have been specially trained to detect koala scats. "They are a novel and very accurate tool in collecting data for this first ever large scale koala distribution survey on the Northern Tablelands."

"We're really keen to get farmers and other private landholders taking part in the project because private properties play a critical role in koala conservation. Landholders look after large areas of key koala habitat and country that provides essential connecting routes between Crown land reserves and other areas of protected habitat for native species.



Driving the Blues Away

In recognition of the importance of maintaining good mental health within our rural community, Riverina Local Land Services has entered into a unique partnership with Riverina Bluebell to conduct a milestone community event.

Driving the Blues Away is a fundraising cattle drive that will take place along 260 km of the iconic "Long Paddock" in the Riverina region.

At each stock resting point, an event will bring the community together to raise awareness of mental health issues and the support services available.

At the end of the six-week drive, the stock will be sold at a celebrity auction at Wagga Wagga Livestock Marketing Centre.

All proceeds raised at the auction and during the drive will go to Riverina Bluebell to support their continuing campaign for increased mental health support within our local communities.

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

Legume collaboration gets the nod(ule)

A series of workshops across central and southern NSW has highlighted the soil conditions that impact on the nodulation of legumes and improved the knowledge of growers and agronomists. More than 150 landholders and agricultural advisors attended six workshops that were coordinated jointly by Central West, Central Tablelands and Riverina Local Land Services to address ways to improve legume nodulation and nitrogen fixation.

Dr Belinda Hackney from Central West Local Land Services said surveys had shown more than 90 per cent of paddocks sampled across the regions had inadequate levels of nodulation. "Survey results suggest that farmers are missing out on the nitrogen these legumes can contribute to other pasture species or crops following the pasture phase," Dr Hackney said.

The forum also addressed research at Murdoch University investigating the impact of some commonly-used herbicides on legume growth and nodulation.

Surveys taken during the Forbes workshop showed a dramatic shift, with participants showing their level of knowledge doubled as a result of the workshop.



Joint training to grow farm productivity

Members of North Coast Local Land Services biosecurity, agricultural advisory and natural resource management teams recently joined Norco field advisors in training designed to help farmers grow farm productivity. The training is the second in a series that has seen the group complete the Department of Primary Industries PROfarm courses Landscan® and Prograze®.

The beef cattle industry is the largest agribusiness contributor to the North Coast economy, contributing more than \$200 million annually. Lindy Brown, Team Leader said, "Beef producers access information from a range of advisors including private consultants and rural store staff. We are focusing on lifting the knowledge and skills of not just our staff, but other farm advisors as well."

Bruce Lyle from Norco Rural highlighted the excellent relationship between staff. "Training like this allows us to improve the quality of farm advice in the retail sector and we really appreciate the opportunity to come together with Local Land Services staff like this."



Black-striped wallaby (*Macropus dorsalis*) found on TSR

North West Local Land Services is undertaking a camera monitoring program in an attempt to identify where black-striped wallabies occur and in what densities.

The black-striped wallaby is listed as an endangered species in NSW meaning there is a very high risk of extinction.

The program recently struck success with the discovery of several black-striped wallabies, including a female carrying a joey, on a travelling stock reserve where they haven't been recorded for several decades.

The motion-activated cameras have a dual function and will capture images of pest species in addition to black-striped wallabies, which will be used to raise awareness with the local landholders and assist staff in planning.

Funding partner: Australian Government's National Landcare Programme



Stock handling workshops teach Western landholders new tricks

Advanced Livestock Movement and Management workshops were hosted by Local Land Services at Ivanhoe, Wilcannia and Bourke, attracting strong interest from landholders, including a large representation of female land managers.

Over the three-day workshops, livestock expert, Neil McDonald, highlighted practical stock management strategies to help overcome problems such as staff shortages and an aging workforce. The workshops focused on techniques such as flight zones, body language, speed and pace when approaching stock, and applying the right amount of pressure at the right spot. The aim was to reduce stress on livestock and enable less physical exertion by the stock handler, allowing for increased productivity and better health and safety outcomes.

The workshops also proved to be an excellent opportunity for landholders to share their experience in managing stock to better manage groundcover.

Funding partners: Australian Government's National Landcare Programme and University of Sydney



Goal 3 - Healthy, diverse, connected natural environments

Serrated tussock training on demand

Serrated tussock is a noxious weed estimated to cover over one million hectares in southern Australia. It is unpalatable to livestock and reduces farm productivity significantly.

Central Tablelands Local Land Services, the NSW Department of Primary Industries and Mid-Western Regional Council have built a suite of training resources to help farmers manage this threat to farm viability.

These resources are available online to help farmers better understand how to control serrated tussock on their land. This training covers a range of presentations from expert speakers at the Mudgee workshop.

Senior Land Services Officer Phil Cranney coordinated recording and packaging the presentations.

"This is a way of us extending the value of workshops happening on the ground. The knowledge shared with the participants at Mudgee is now freely available to anyone with a computer and internet connection," Phil said.



Counting on curlew conservation

Murray Local Land Services is carrying out surveys of bush stone-curlews this spring to gain information on the current population across the Murray region.

Numbers have declined over the past two decades, and it is unclear how many curlews remain in the region. A group of local farmers working on bush stone-curlew conservation has released young, captive-bred curlews in Buraja and Moulamein to supplement declining local populations.

Funded by Catchment Action NSW, the surveys will enable a better understanding of how the released curlews are faring and how far they have moved from their release location.

Mail surveys have been sent to landholders in the Buraja, Moulamein and Barham areas, and will be supplemented by nocturnal field surveys.

The information landholders provide on curlew sightings will allow planning for curlew conservation activities, helping to ensure the bird's distinctive call will be heard in the area into the future.

Funding partner: Catchment Action NSW

Improving seasonal monitoring

South East Local Land Services has provided funding to the Tablelands and Monaro Farming Systems groups to install additional soil moisture probes on farming enterprises across these two regions. This will extend the geographic spread and expand upon the data gathered from existing probes previously installed by Local Land Services.

These probes will monitor soil water content in paddocks to provide more comprehensive seasonal conditions reporting data for the Tablelands and Monaro regions. This important information, combined with rainfall statistics and Local Land Services regular seasonal conditions forums, will assist land managers in their farm planning and pasture and grazing management decision making.

The data will help producers maximise water use efficiency, optimise growing conditions, maintain ground cover, and maintain moisture during dry times – contributing factors in achieving improvements in enterprise productivity and profitability and landscape outcomes.



Landcare project supports oyster industry



Under the NSW Government's \$15 million Local Landcare Coordinators Initiative, Oceanwatch has been working to increase the level of support for oyster farmers up and down the coast of NSW.

An industry survey revealed communications and networking opportunities were severely needed, and this became the focus of early work by the part-timer Local Landcare Coordinator engaged under the initiative.

Approximately 300 oyster farmers and interested parties now receive a bi-monthly NSW Oyster Newsletter, while Oceanwatch has also established a new centralised NSW oyster industry website nswoysters.com.au. The site features a series of one-minute innovation videos, news, research, classifieds, spat availability, contacts, committees, associations and much more.

This project is one of many positive stories coming out of the Local Landcare Coordinators Initiative, which was launched in September last year. Under the program, more than 60 part-time coordinators have been employed by non-for-profit organisations across NSW. They will help build and support Landcare and community networks across the state over three and a half years.