



## The National Landcare Facilitator

**September 2010**

Welcome to this edition of news from the National Landcare Facilitator (NLF). I would like to take this opportunity to thank Coral Love for her assistance over the last few months, but also for her contribution to Landcare over eight years as the National Landcare Facilitator.

### Feature Issue: Soil Carbon

There are currently few topics in the Landcare community which generate as much interest as soil carbon. While there is much discussion about what this might mean in relation to production, the environment and any future carbon trading scheme, it is an area that we know little about. However, what we do know is that this can be a "no regrets" topic with the potential to deliver multiple benefits for food production, the environment and climate.

The Landcare community has been doing some great work of its own and an example of this was recent a workshop that I attended on soil carbon hosted by Richmond Landcare and SoilCare in the northern rivers area of NSW with Dr Yin Chan, who explains many of the complex issues in this area in his publication - [A Farmers Guide to Soil Carbon Under Pasture](#) Another publication on this topic is the [CSIRO Fact Sheet on "Soil Carbon the Basics" \(November 2008\)](#). A good example of work being done by Landcare Groups in this area is a publication by the Southern New England Landcare Network [called "Greenhouse gas emissions, flows & stores in a mixed grazing landscape in the New England region of NSW"](#)



**NLF & Dr Yin Chan at Richmond Landcare soil carbon workshop**

Biochar is one aspect of the soil carbon discussion which many people are interested in and CSIRO have produced two very good fact sheets in the area, the latest of which has only just been released and provides some of the latest findings of the research into biochar and agriculture, which is being funded by the Federal Government. ["Biochar Fact Sheet" -\(January 2009\);](#) and ["Biochar for Agronomic Improvement and Greenhouse Gas Mitigation Fact Sheet" \(September 2010\)](#). More information on the Climate Change & Productivity research being funded by the Federal Government through the Department of Agriculture Forestry & Fisheries can be found at <http://www.daff.gov.au/climatechange/australias-farming-future/climate-change-and-productivity-research>.

Some other useful resources which have been recently released include; ["Science for Decision Makers: Soil Carbon management & Carbon Trading 2010" \(March 2010\);](#) and ["Soil Carbon Sequestration Potential \(May 2010\)- A Review for Australian Agriculture"](#) (Technical paper with link to fact sheet summary).

## Federal Election Carbon Farming Initiative

During the recent Federal election the government announced a "Carbon Farming Initiative" supported by \$45.6m from the Renewable Energy Future Fund. Under the Carbon Farming Initiative, the Federal Government would dedicate resources to developing methodologies for the recognition of carbon credits from carbon farming that could then be sold on voluntary domestic or international markets.



The aim is for farmers to be able to know in advance exactly what they need to do to generate credits that are internationally recognised and available for trading. It is proposed that Landcare would be funded to provide information on how farmers can further benefit under the initiative. Eligible methodologies that are expected to be settled in the early years of the scheme include reforestation, as well as projects that avoid or reduce emissions from: Livestock, Fertiliser use and manure management, Savannah burning, Legacy waste in landfills and Deforestation. The Carbon Farming Initiative will be of interest to many in the Landcare community and I hope to keep you informed as this initiative is further developed. For more information go to <http://www.alp.org.au/agenda/more---policies/carbon-farming-initiative/>.

## Landcare Knowledge Archive

Landcare Australia Limited (LAL) and I are seeking the help of landcarers from across the country in collecting the knowledge that has been built by the broader Landcare community across the country since the inception of Landcare at the national level nearly 21 years ago.

The aim of the Landcare Knowledge Archive is to capture existing print or electronic knowledge from the Landcare movement and make it publicly accessible in a central online location on the LAL website and build on this in the future. So far we have had great co-operation from a number of groups, networks and organisations associated with the Landcare movement, but there is still much more that can be done. It would be a shame to see some of the great knowledge gained since the start of Landcare lost to future generations.

Information is being sought from any group/organisation/government agency that has produced information relating to the broader Landcare movement, not just Landcare branded groups. The material being sought for the Landcare Knowledge Archive includes books, guides, fact sheets, and any other information in an electronic form. PDF copies of material can be submitted to me at [landcarearchive@nrm.gov.au](mailto:landcarearchive@nrm.gov.au) along with an email which gives approval of the author or responsible entity for it to be made available to the public via the LAL website. If you already have the material on a website, just send me an email giving your approval to download it for the Landcare Knowledge Archive. Alternatively information burnt onto a disc can be sent to the National Landcare Facilitator at Po Box 869 Samford LPO Qld 4520.

## Bob Hawke Launches Landcare Week

The 20th of July this year marked the 21st anniversary of the historic partnership between the Federal Government, the National Farmers Federation and the Australian Farmers Federation which led to the formation of Landcare at the national level. The speech by Bob Hawke made on that day at Wentworth 21 years ago is just as relevant today as it was then as illustrated by the following extracts;



*"This morning's journey through three States, culminating in this launch at Wentworth, symbolises two realities about our environment. It shows in a graphic way that the degradation of our environment is not simply a local problem, nor a problem for one State or another, nor for the Commonwealth alone. Rather, the damage being done to our environment is a problem for all of us - and not just governments - but all of us individually and together. The second reality is that the solutions - just as we have witnessed with the*

*land rehabilitation programs in this region - are to be found through co-operation at all levels of government and by community groups who care for the land, who want to repair our damaged environment."*

*"And we're asking the community to join us in these efforts, for it is only by working together that we will restore and improve our environment."*

These statements shows that Landcare is just as relevant today as it was at the beginning and that although much remarkable work has been done in partnership by individuals, groups, organisations and governments, there are still challenges to be faced for the future and that these are a shared responsibility.

Also, a number of States have been hosting their own 21st year celebration of Landcare. In July Landcare Qld and QWALC hosted a celebration at which the key speaker was the Governor of Queensland Her Excellency Ms Penelope Wensley AO. The Governor, who is the patron of Landcare in Queensland, is also a former Australian Environment Ambassador to the United Nations.

## New Landcare Campaign "Donate Yourself to the Land"

During Landcare week LAL launched the new community service announcement for Landcare based around people donating their time for the land – from volunteer groups on the coast, indigenous people working on country or farmers volunteering their time on their own farms for environmental works. The commercial will hopefully be shown across the country with the support of commercial networks as part of their community service announcements. The campaign was produced with funding support from the Federal Government through Caring for Our Country and the Victorian Department of the environment & Sustainability and congratulations to LAL on this initiative.



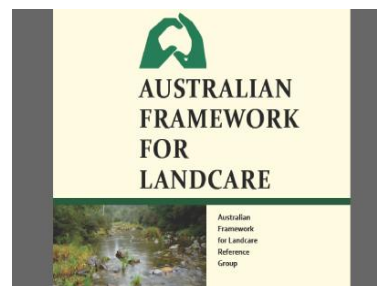
View the landcare tv ad on youtube:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/LandcareEducation>



## Australian Framework for Landcare

After a number of rounds of consultation, The Australian Framework for Landcare has been released and is available from [http://landcareonline.com.au/?page\\_id=2076](http://landcareonline.com.au/?page_id=2076) . The final print version of the Australian Framework for Landcare was launched on 8 September 2010 in Sydney by Coral Love, Chair, Australian Framework for Landcare Reference Group as part of the National Landcare Week celebrations. The Framework process has undergone a number of consultations with the Landcare community over the past year and a half and the aspirations in the document belong to the community. The Australian Framework for Landcare in reflecting the views of the Landcare community will help guide decisions about investment by government and other sections of the broader Landcare partnership.



## Regional Landcare Facilitators

Earlier this year the then Federal Agriculture Minister Tony Burke announced that \$8m pa for three years would be allocated for 56 regional Landcare facilitators. The Regional Landcare facilitators will have a key role in working with the community in their region to help deliver an integrated response to issues such as the environment, food and climate in ways that are relevant to each region and their local community. I look forward to working with these Regional Landcare facilitators to support them in their delivering meaningful outcomes to their local communities. These positions not only have a key role in providing relevant information and co-ordination to Landcare activities in their region, but also to bringing relevant issues or concerns of the Landcare Community in their region to the attention of the Federal Government. Contracts with host organisations are still being finalised and it is hoped that the RLF's for each region will be up and running in the near future.

## Landcare Features in WA Drought Pilot

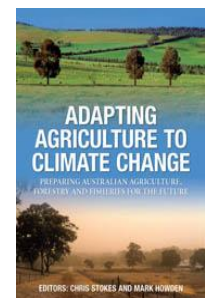
The Commonwealth Government, in partnership with the Western Australian Government, is conducting a pilot of drought reform measures in part of Western Australia. The pilot will test a package of new measures developed in response to the national review of drought policy. The measures are designed to move from a crisis management approach to risk management. The aim is to better support farmers, their families and rural communities in preparing for future challenges, rather than waiting until they are in crisis to offer assistance. The pilot will be in place from 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2011. Payments made under one measure— Building Farm Businesses—will continue until 30 June 2014.

The pilot measures provide support for eligible farmers, their families and rural communities through: planning and training activities, grants to farm businesses to implement eligible priority activities (including projects that are consistent with state and national natural resource management priorities), projects that will help build the resilience of farms and rural communities, access to a coordinated social support network, income support, grants to farmers who are leaving farming, including for retraining and relocation expenses, bringing farmers and former farmers together to discuss the opportunities outside of farming.

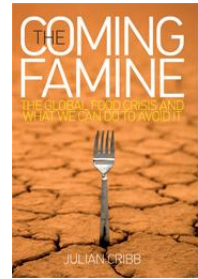
Importantly the announcement recognised the need to integrate the Federal Government response and that issues such as drought, environment and productivity cannot be addressed in isolation. The trial will include Farm Business Adaptation Grants of up to \$40,000 for eligible activities that support farm businesses to manage and prepare for the impacts of drought, reduced water availability and a changing climate and there is a further on-farm investment grant of up to \$20,000 for eligible Landcare activities which may include managing soil salinity, revegetation, re-fencing or improving wetland management. This recognises the fact that a healthy and resilient environment will assist farming systems to become more resilient to climate variations such as drought. A total of \$17.9 million has been allocated by the Federal Government and \$5 million by the Western Australian Government to fund the WA drought reform pilot and the drought reform pilot will run for 12 months from 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2011. I am sure many people will be watching this trial with interest. For more information on the drought pilot visit [www.daff.gov.au/droughtpilot](http://www.daff.gov.au/droughtpilot) or call the Drought Assistance Hotline on 13 23 16.

## Publications

**Adapting Agriculture to Climate Change** This is a great publication which contains some of the best background information that I have seen about climate change projections and agriculture as well as agricultural greenhouse gas emissions and mitigation options. Importantly the publication also discusses some of the adaptation challenges and options regarding specific industries such as grains, cotton, rice, sugarcane, winegrapes, horticulture, forestry, broadacre grazing as well as marine fisheries. It is a shame that this is not freely available to the public as a PDF, however the book can be obtained (now in its second print run) from [www.publish.csiro](http://www.publish.csiro).



**Food Security** – With the current debate over sustainable populations, the recent spike in global wheat prices and the suspension of wheat exports by the Russian Government to limit the cost impact on its domestic population, food security is returning to the media as a current topic. Therefore the release by Julian Crib of his new book "The Coming Famine" is timely. While you may and may not agree with all of his comments, the book is a useful edition to the debate, which has both global and local implications and will be of interest to many in the Landcare movement. The book can be obtained from [www.publish.csiro](http://www.publish.csiro).



## Other News

**Better Future for Catchment Managers** - Applying a whole-of-catchment approach to water management is now possible thanks to Source Catchments, the first component of eWater's integrated water modelling suite, eWater Source to be publicly released. A water quality and quantity model, Source Catchments is designed to help natural resource managers and consultants develop targets, prioritise improvement programs and measure the effectiveness of a broad range of catchment management activities. For more information contact Sue Bushell on 02 6201 2840

**WetlandCare Australia national competition now open for entries** - The competition, which receives entries from across Australia, is open to children and adults in both Art and Photography, giving as many people as possible the opportunity to submit entries. The competition is an excellent opportunity for all Australians to consider the importance of wetlands and what wetlands mean to them, in this time of water shortages, drought, and other impacts of climate change. The theme of the competition for 2011 is *Forested Wetlands: their importance and wise use*, which reflects the theme for World Wetlands Day 2011 of *Wetlands and Forests*. World Wetlands Day is an international event proclaimed by the United Nations to raise awareness of, and celebrate wetlands. Competition entry forms and further information can be obtained from WetlandCare Australia's website: [www.wetlandcare.com.au](http://www.wetlandcare.com.au) The closing date for competition entries is December 3, 2010.

**Victorian Landcare Forum 2010** - Each year the Victorian Landcare Network (VLN) organizes a Landcare Forum where Landcare members and professionals can meet other Landcarers to learn, network and celebrate Landcare success. This year the forum is hosted by the Wimmera Landcare Team and will be held at the Halls Gap Colonial Motor Inn on the 19th and 20th of October. For more information visit [www.landcarevic.net.au](http://www.landcarevic.net.au) or call the Project Platypus office on 5358 4410.

Regards,

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