

# Australian Landcare International Newsletter

October 2011



Australian Landcare International (**ALI**) is an incorporated, not-for-profit organisation whose aim is to assist other countries to take up Landcare ideas. **ALI does not normally provide funds for overseas projects – this is left to various aid organisations**

## President's Note

A lot has happened lately, starting with the Thai salinity experts' tour from 12-18 July. I showed them community action at Westgate Park, Bass Coast/Phillip Island and in the Goulburn valley. Finally they participated in the Grow West community planting at Parwan on Sunday 17 July.

Our guests were Mrs Kulras Ananpongsuk, *Director, Office of Research and Development of Land Management*; Dr Chaiyanam Dissataporn, *Senior Agriculturist, Office of Research and Development for Land Management* – both from Bangkok; Mr Pramote Yamclea, *Director, Land Development Research and Technology Transfer Division*; and Mrs Pranee Srihaban, *Director of Research Division, Land Development Region 5* – both from Thailand's north-east. ALI's managed the tour (for a fee) for DAFF.

Distilling their Landcare lessons: value of facilitators; co-operation with science; importance of community consultation; opportunity for bold projects; capacity to act on climate change; city-country partnerships; working with youth; support to mainstream farming; diversity of people involved; community enterprises developing; role in catchment management, especially domestic and industrial supplies; corporate involvement; working with every tier of government; and ability to promote biodiversity.

In Kenya at the World Agroforestry Centre, Landcare International (LI) has been well

served indeed by Mieke Bourne, the young woman from the WA wheat belt working with ICRAF/WAC in Nairobi under the youth ambassador scheme. Accordingly I have drafted a letter for the Director of ICRAF to send to the Foreign Minister Kevin Rudd, asking his department to continue to fund this arrangement. For further evidence of Mieke's many skills, see the latest LI web site at [www.worldagroforestry.org/projects/landcare](http://www.worldagroforestry.org/projects/landcare) Mieke is also sending out an e-newsletter. Contact her at [m.bourne@cgiar.org](mailto:m.bourne@cgiar.org) to get on the mailing list or to send her international Landcare info.

Mary Johnson and I represented ALI and SILC at the World Congress on Conservation Agriculture (CCA) in Brisbane from 26-29 September. We set up a display (including Sri Lankan material), presented a paper, ran a workshop on international Landcare, gave ABC interviews and participated in two dinners with Landcare contacts from across the world, especially Africa, the Philippines and NZ. Then Mary, Noel Vock, Samantha Morris (Queensland Landcare) and I ran a two-day training course at Toowoomba for a mainly African group.

Lurking behind the intense activity building up to the Brisbane event, was an equally if not more important world conference: the UN Conference to Combat Desertification at Changwon, south-eastern Korea from 10-21 October. Australia was of course formally represented, but Dr Dennis Garrity from ICRAF/WAC was keen for an experienced Australian to attend to speak on Landcare, as part of a so-called 'side event' featuring speakers from most countries and regions

that have taken up Landcare ideas. As I (for ALI) had just earned a management fee for organising the Thai salinity tour, and recognising that these huge conventions are pretty overwhelming, I consulted the ALI executive, which endorsed my plan to send two Victorians to Changwon: our secretary-treasurer Horrie Poussard, and Terry Hubbard, chair of Upper Goulburn Landcare Network and the Victorian Landcare Council. (Terry has also spearheaded a remarkable regional post-Black Saturday Landcare recovery program.) Their trip included a few days looking at Korean land management projects, and Horrie revisited Unbong, some 150 kilometres west of Changwon, where he worked for three years on the first AusAID agricultural bilateral project with Korea in the 1970s helping establish a sheep farm.

Their impressions on return have been fascinating and we will hear from them and others at a lunch with a Pacific theme at St Kilda EcoCentre, Blessington Gardens from 1230-1530 on **Friday 23 December 2011**. Keep this date free. Our program hopefully will include Katy Le Roy, the person who drafts legislation for Nauru; Lex Thomson, who works for the South Pacific Commission; Bob Edgar, with his long association with Tonga; and Horrie and Terry on Korea.

Finally, we launched the last of five annual ALI Landcare Travel Fellowships that I set out to organise. (This is the sixth, but NZLT helped hugely with the fifth.) The donors have been the Youl family, Mary Johnson and Bruce Lloyd, plus DSE in 2009, to all of whom I'm indebted. This Fellowship will enable a Victorian co-ordinator to speak to the NZLT national conference in March 2012. The topic: How to ensure good relations between regional NRM bodies and Landcare.

**Rob Youl**



**UNCCD cartoon**

### **Thai soil doctors**

Thailand has twenty-six million hectares of problem soils. The problem soils are mainly saline soils, sandy soils, shallow soils, acid sulphate soils, peat soils and complex slopes. These soils limit land use and affect crop yields. Moreover, the need for soil improvement increases production costs. Whilst it has vast paddy fields, North-East Thailand, has lower rice yields compared with other regions. The important factor here is saline soil covering 2.85 million hectares, or 17 percent of the total area. The salt comes from dissolution of halite from the Maharakham formation, which contaminates the shallow groundwater and rises to the soil surface through capillary movement. The effective way to rehabilitate saline soil is to control groundwater levels, through both vegetative and mechanical measures, such as growing salt-tolerant plants and constructing underground drainage lines. Thais have always looked to Australia for assistance with salinity management. However, they naturally also want local stakeholders to participate in better farm practices. To this end, the Land Development Department (LDD) has established Volunteer Soil Doctors (VSDs) as its representatives to mobilise people and promote authorised LDD activities. There are different levels of VSDs: Village VSDs, Sub-District VSDs, Districts VSDs and Provincial VSDs. Now, LDD has some 70 000 VSDs throughout Thailand. VSDs encourage farmers in villages to co-operate with LDD officials, and they disseminate knowledge and information to their neighbors, register needs and existing problems and keep the appropriate Land Development Station informed.

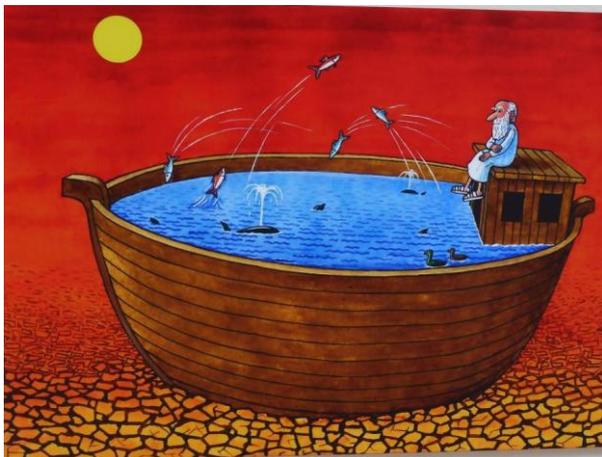
### **New Zealand Landcare Trust Conference 2012**

New Zealand Landcare Trust's next conference will be held at Hamilton (North Island, south of Auckland- near to Rotorua and Lake Taupo) from 29 Feb to 1 March, 2012. This may be an opportunity to link a great holiday with a look at Landcare NZ style. Keep an eye on their website [www.landcare.org.nz/](http://www.landcare.org.nz/) as details emerge. Plan a trip to NZ and include the conference.

## Landcare at UN meeting in Korea

The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) held its 10<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties (COP10) in Changwon City, Republic of Korea, on October 10-21, 2011. The UNCCD has been going for 20 years and focuses on the need to reduce land degradation in various forms to enable people to improve their food security and general livelihoods. The focus for this year's conference was forestry/agroforestry as a significant way to rectify land degradation.

Dr Dennis Garrity, CEO of the World Agroforestry Center (ICRAF) and chair of Landcare International organised a "side event" on Landcare at the conference. He was particularly interested to have representatives from countries with Landcare programs to talk about their programs and outcomes. ALI funded Terry Hubbard (Chair, Victorian Landcare Council) and Horrie Poussard to go to the conference, specifically to give our ideas on Landcare in Australia, but also it was an opportunity to make links with others from various interested countries.



Uzbekistan\_Makhmudjon Eshonkulov

### UNCCD cartoon

At the Landcare event, Terry outlined the on-ground activities of Landcare groups, supported by a local video from the Upper Goulbourn area on a particular project, while Horrie gave some background to the development of Landcare. In addition to our presentation, Michele Lauder, General Manager Landcare, in DAFF, presented the Landcare program from a national government perspective. We also heard about Landcare development in Africa, especially South Africa, and from Iceland

where Landcare has been an integral part of the national soil conservation program for many years.

Other issues and projects of interest included:

1. A plan called the Green Wall to plant trees across the width of Africa below the southern boundary of the Sahara to reduce ongoing spread of desertification and improve people's livelihoods. Australian Tony Renaldo from World Vision has been doing this sort of work in the area for some years.
2. A massive tree planting program to stabilise the "yellow dust" (windblown light soil materials) from the Gobi desert in China that each spring pollutes the atmosphere of China, Korea and Japan causing health and visibility problems.
3. A call to action by the World Bank to develop "Climate Smart Agriculture" to overcome the negative effects of climate change on food production and boost productivity, particularly in Africa.
4. Several global projects supported by IUCN to promote biodiversity improvement at local government level. Urban ecosystem services are being identified and in some cases supported to protect biodiversity, increase habitats, protect from storms and provide green space which is culturally important for citizens.
5. Business and Biodiversity is a link being increasingly made to engage business in the implementation of various protocols and practices. See [www.cbd.int/business](http://www.cbd.int/business).
6. There is a major possibility that Landcare could be the on-ground process used to implement some of the major programs proposed (with huge \$ billion budgets) in areas like Africa, Mongolia and the Middle East.
7. Finally, there was absolute certainty that climate change was with us. The issues were how to adapt to a changed future climate that is more variable, drier in some areas and potentially more destructive to the food security and general livelihood of people.

### ***ALI committee Planning Day***

On 21<sup>st</sup> November, the ALI committee will be holding a planning day and we are very pleased that Landcare International Chair, Dr Dennis Garrity, will be in Melbourne and will be involved in the process. The main issues are:

1. The future global expansion of Landcare, taking in what came out of the UNCCD conference and other worldwide activities.
2. Australia's role in global Landcare and in promoting the Landcare approach.
3. **And** how ALI and its associates, like SILC, can be part of the Australian push.

Issues include: resourcing; training; organising visits; advocacy; networking; and having closer links with government, key NGOs and consulting groups. And how ALI can get the resources for these tasks.

### ***A Report on the Tasmanian Landcare Conference from Sue Marriott***

The Tasmanian Landcare Conference attended by 170 people and held at Stanley on the North West coast was a great celebration of people, achievements and incredibly beautiful local food and wine.

The theme "From the Ground Up" really showed how people are achieving great things with enthusiasm and often little funds.

I was one of the guest speakers at the conference, talking on "***Landcare beyond 'just trees' - how Australia can support international interest in Landcare***". I was able to speak about the work being done by groups, individuals and organisations such as Landcare International (LI) and Australian Landcare International (ALI), as well as SILC. The other guest speakers were Mathew Evans (SBS Gourmet Farmer); Prof David Adams, Commissioner for Social Inclusion; and Dr Tony McCall, the conference MC, whose discipline area is public policy and governance.

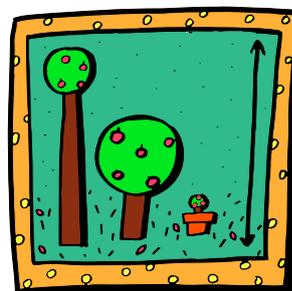
The conference underlined to me the many facets of Landcare and its people working in a diverse range of areas from farming businesses, rare breeds, and migrant integration, through community gardens, the various care groups from coasts to the mountains and the difficulties experienced by communities like King Island who have the trade and transport barriers among many environmental issues, but also celebrate with the wider community and school children the annual return of migratory birds.

Many exciting opportunities are being created everyday through "Digital Landcare", with programs such as Place Stories and attracting volunteers through the online world.

### ***New ALI Website***

A new website which can be readily updated when required is in the final stages of development. Horrie Poussard has taken on the job, with guidance, to get the website (based on WordPress) up and running (no mean task for an old retired fogey!). The site is [www.australianlandcareinternational](http://www.australianlandcareinternational)

**Remember: All welcome to ALI's annual meeting at St Kilda EcoCentre on Friday 25 November from 1200-1500 hrs, and our Christmas lunch at the same venue on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> December.**



### ***UN International Year of Landcare***

Landcare International has called for a UN Declaration for an International Year of Landcare (IYL). Landcare International and ALI have pledged to promote the notion of an IYL where ever possible. The UN process is long and complex, with many more stages. But we are hopeful the IYL will eventuate

**Membership renewal due now or at the annual meeting.  
Your \$40 helps ALI keep up with what is happening globally  
and supports our website and other office costs.**

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**At the annual meeting on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> November, members are welcome to nominate for positions on the Executive Committee which meets about 4 times per year. Nomination form sent separately. Positions available:**

**Chair : Rob Youl has nominated**

**Sec /Treasurer: Horrie Poussard has nominated**

**Committee (up to 5 )**

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## **Become a member of ALI**

### *The Benefits of ALI membership*

- Using your Landcare experience to assist overseas groups
- Overseas contacts for future travel
- Developing links with possible sister groups overseas
- Being part of a world-wide movement for land, biodiversity and community improvement
- Regular e-newsletter on overseas Landcare developments

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**Surname.....Given Name.....**

**Address.....P/C.....**

**Email.....**

**Skills/interests.....**

### **Send cheque or money order for \$40 to:**

Secretary/Treasurer ALI :  
32 Loch Avenue, St Kilda East 3183

Or direct Bank Transfer to Bendigo Bank  
Acct : Australian Landcare International. BSB 633-108 Acct 1331 03598  
And inform Horrie on [landcareint@gmail.com](mailto:landcareint@gmail.com)