

Australian Landcare International Newsletter

May 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

Retirement's joys! Alison and I visited Europe in April starting in northern Italy mainly looking at architecture and art, then travelling by train/bus/train from Trieste through Carinthia to Vienna, meeting an Austrian forester en route.

On to Middle Franconia, where Josef Goeppel founded German Landcare(DVL) in 1986. Indeed the DVL turns 25 at the end of May. I invited the Australian embassy to the celebrations, but its environmental attache will be in Australia then. Beate Krettinger and colleagues showed us two projects, one a broad swampy basin from which farmers cut hay from April-October. DVL's co-ordinator, himself a farmer, advises when to harvest without interrupting nesting rare wetland birds like curlews. The nearby stream supported beavers. It being Sunday, the basin attracted many walkers, joggers, cyclists and fishermen. Whereas DVL staff would prefer belts of vegetation along all regional streams to reduce nitrate seepage, German fishermen, wanting to fish anywhere they like, hate streamside scrub.

We motored to Hesselburg, the district's highest hill, where a local shepherd grazes some 1000 sheep on herb-rich grasslands. The excellent meat with its natural origins attracts a premium, especially as Germans generally raise stock indoors. The local co-ordinator runs community days followed by beer and wurst to help shepherds cut scrub

such as blackthorn and juniper, thereby maintaining the grassland and its wildflowers. A real entrepreneur with a passion for fruit trees, he presses Landcare juices from fruit gathered all over the district. He has also created a small park around a restored stone icehouse. Next day we met Beate's colleagues at their Ansbach office, also DVL's national headquarters. They were so like Australians, our brief chat was delightful. Later in Berlin Joseph Goeppel (who is an MP) showed us the Reichstag, another great privilege. He promotes the idea of Landcare as part of the EU's farming policies.

Moving to eastern Belgium we stayed one night on a friend's farm. Joe, who'd lived there all his life, was proud of his 20 milkers, several vealers, 80 pigs - all indoors, and 120 sheep. A problem I saw was that the picturesque village attracts numerous wealthy Netherlanders, who don't speak French, the local language, and, wanting to live in an idealised rural environment, were unlikely to tolerate animal odours and disruptions to traffic when farmers move stock. Joe's main environmental problems were moles and badgers; he only sprays to control nettles.

The Scottish Borders' bare impoverished hills cried out for revegetation; generally absent was heather, which at least supports profitable grouse shooting. Frequent erosion along the beautiful rivers troubled us, but we marvelled at the greenness and productivity of mainstream farms on flatter country. In Aberdeen where I studied 39 years ago, we

met Katrin Prager, who did Landcare research in Melbourne around 2007. She's in touch with Iceland's Andres Arnalds about a European scientific meeting on Landcare.

As you will read elsewhere, Landcare Fellow Kellie Nichols visited New Zealand last month. We are helping organise a visit by three Thai scientists and possibly a farmer to examine how we've combined Landcare and community action on salinity. We also hope to run a training course in Landcare at Brisbane's WCCA conference in September. And we keep in touch with our WAC colleagues in Kenya.

Rob Youl

Australian Volunteer in Kenya for Landcare

Mieke Bourne is a 31 year old volunteer from Australia under the Youth Ambassador scheme. She has just started a one year position at the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF) in Nairobi, Kenya.



Mieke comes from a small town near Albany in Western Australia and has a background in Environmental Science. She has worked

on a number of Landcare projects on the South Coast of Western Australia including the preparation of management plans for Stokes and Culham Inlets. Mieke will be working on Landcare at ICRAF. She will be assisting the secretariat of Landcare International, working on further developing the African Landcare Network and helping with the organisational development of the Kenyan Landcare Network.

Mieke is passionate about working with people towards improved land management for social and environmental outcomes and is looking forward to the challenges and opportunities in the year ahead. Her first tasks include updating the Landcare International website and helping with the second Landcare International newsletter. She is also looking forward to making contact and working with members from all the African and internationally focused Landcare members.

New Zealand Landcare Trust Conference 2012

New Zealand Landcare Trust's next conference will be held in the Waikato region (North Island - Bay of Plenty - close to Rotorua and Coromandel Peninsula) from 7-8 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/ as details emerge.

Indonesian Landcare Program

Following the eruption of Mt. Merapi in November 2010, Landcare works and planning were put on hold until the farmers could repair their land from damage by the hot ash and replant cash crops. However, in early June the Landcare groups held a joint planning meeting to review their programs.

Priority plans agreed by groups include the following:

1. The Landcare groups will register as a legal structure under Indonesia law (incorporate) so they can apply for

ongoing support from government and non government agencies.

2. A coffee plant nursery will be established in August 2011 for planting in 2012.
3. Cheese making trials are to continue.
4. The installation of Biogas plants for cooking to replace firewood collection will be ongoing.

Biogas

The biogas plants are being established across the community with a self-financing credit scheme. In the first phase eleven trial biogas plants were constructed and tested. All are working effectively. The credit scheme is managed by the Landcare groups and as each plant is paid off new plants are

established under similar credit financing arrangements. .



Sludge collection from low-cost community-made biogas plant, powered by animal manure

Seven more plants are planned this month. Farm

families are reporting good results from the biogas program. Each household consumes approximately one bundle of fuel wood per day at a cost of approximately 20,000 rupiah (AUD2) or 600,000 rupiah per month (AUD60). The installation of a biogas plant has reduced daily fuel wood needs by up to 50% which means a saving of 300,000 rupiah per month (AUD30). The additional benefits include the time saved collecting wood and reduced pressure on local forests.

A by-product of biogas is sludge. The sludge is used as a fertiliser for vegetables which additionally saves on fertiliser costs.

Pest control – action research

Farmers at Selo have become increasingly concerned about the damage caused by *Plasmiodiophora brassicae* (club root) in vegetable crops, particularly cabbage and cauliflowers - a staple cash crop for the community. Club root causes a cancer-like

tumour in the root which destroys production. To tackle the problem the Landcare groups in both Samiran and Lencoh will conduct "action research" in small demonstration plots to get more information about how to control this serious disease.

Women's Landcare groups

The women's Landcare group at Samiran village will conduct a one-day cross visit to Yogyakarta next month. The visit will include learning about micro-finance management and vegetable processing, in particular how to make persimmon syrup and carrot chips.

Overall

The Merapi Landcare groups have now largely recovered from the significant damage caused by the Mt Merapi eruptions of 2010. The volcano did set the Landcare project back, but it is gratifying that the farmers have resumed their Landcare works and planning which they tell us has been highly beneficial to their communities.

Report by Victoria Mack (SILC)

Progress report WCCA Conference

The 5th World Congress for Conservation Agriculture (WCCA) will be held in Brisbane, on 26-29 September 2011, integrated with the 3rd Farm Systems Design conference.

The Congress brings together scientists and policy makers from around the world to discuss issues in and around conservation agriculture and associated issues of farming systems.. The Congress is overseen by an International Steering Committee, with support from an Australian-based Local Organizing Committee with links to conservation agriculture research, extension and farmers. Mary Johnson, an ALI member, is on this local committee.

Landcare has been given several opportunities to be seen and heard. Dr Dennis Garrity, the CEO of the World Agroforestry Center (ICRAF), will be giving a speech on agroforestry as the keynote speaker for Theme 3 of the Congress. Theme 3 focuses on achieving impact through more effective consultation, participation and knowledge sharing. Dennis is also Chair of Landcare International and will be showing

how Landcare provides a significant approach to community-based land management.

One Sub theme (3.3) is *Landcare and participatory natural resource management*. This is a workshop where representatives from several countries will outline the Landcare approach. ALI also hopes that it may be able to submit a "condensed paper" on the role of international Landcare in dealing with production and conservation concerns in various countries. Submission of conference papers is still open. This is a great opportunity for Landcare people to display their experience and to promote Landcare both locally and on the world stage.

The last opportunity for submissions of condensed papers is 15 June 2011. For more information go to: www.wcca2011.org

Still waiting for DAFF support for Landcare International teleconferences.

The Department Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) agreed to organize the resumption of the Landcare International teleconferences with its committee members and representatives from various countries. . However this has not yet been set up and we have no word on when this will be so. The cost is minimal in the scheme of things (about \$1500 per year). The teleconferences provide a valuable means of keeping international Landcare contributors in touch, discussing issues, sharing learnings and enabling opportunities.

Recently Landcare International funded a teleconference to allow a much needed update on Landcare activities around the world. Of interest was:

- Phil Dobie has joined ICRAF after some years as a program director in UNDP.
- ICRAF will continue to try to mainstream Landcare through programs associated with UNDP, UNEP, and UNCCD (UN Convention for Combat of Desertification).
- There is not much discussion In the US on Landcare at the national level,

but the groups in Virginia and North Carolina are still very strong.

- It is reported that about 35% of farmers in Iceland are now involved in Landcare-related activities
- Approximately half the participants in a participatory evaluation course in June in Limpopo Sth. Africa, will be from Landcare. Theo Nabben is delivering the course.
- Dr Julian Prior has submitted a new proposal to South Pacific Commission and AusAID for a Landcare Master Class for the South Pacific.

Thai visit on Landcare and salinity

From 12-18 July 2011, ALI will be delighted to host a delegation of four Thai salinity specialists here to see how Landcare promotes community action. Our visitors are:

Dr Chaivanam Dissataporn, Senior Agriculturist, Office of Research and Development for Land Management and Planning Division, Thailand Land Development Department;

Mrs Kulras Ananpongsuk, Director of Office Research and Development of Land Management;

Mr Pramote Yamclee, Director, Land Development Research and Technology Transfer Division; and

Mrs Pranee Srihaban, Director of Research Division, Land Development Region 5.

We will welcome the group in Melbourne, then take it for two days to see a very active rural Landcare network - Bass Coast Landcare. After that it will visit the Goulburn Valley 160 km north of Melbourne. Both areas have salinity problems, and both are noted for their Landcare innovations, so we believe our visitors will find much of interest. They will encounter Landcare professionals, Victorian salinity specialists and landowners. One or two ALI members will be with the party at all times, and there will be home-stays. ALI members Karen Brisbane and Matt Stephenson, both ALI travel fellows, are helping out. The tour will end with a visit to the Grow West - VNPA community tree-

planting day on Yaloak station in the Parwan valley on Sunday 17 July.

Video from Grayson LandCare

Our Landcare friends in Grayson County, Virginia, USA are faced with many of the same problems we see of the breakup of farming properties into lifestyle blocks and the change in the rural landscape over time. Fortunately we have much stronger planning provisions through zoning for various uses and the accompanying minimum subdivision areas associated with each zone. In the US methods to counteract their weak planning laws include the use of conservation covenants on properties to maintain them in a more rural fashion for 99 years. There are often incentives to assist with taking up of covenants and both Grayson and Catawba Landcare groups have members who have done this.

Recently a video was made to highlight their concern about the ‘urbanisation’ of the rural environment.. See it on [:http://www.youtube.com/user/MountainCatBobs#p/u/0/38WqiRUJeRw](http://www.youtube.com/user/MountainCatBobs#p/u/0/38WqiRUJeRw)

Australian Input into New Zealand Landcare Strategy

Kellie Nichols of the Bass Coast Landcare Network was invited by Dr Nick Edgar, NZ Landcare Trust’s CEO Landcare to assist in a strategy meeting in New Zealand earlier this year. The New Zealand Landcare Trust is being reviewed and revitalized with a doubled budget. Dr Edgar approached Australian Landcare International (ALI) with the idea of using the ALI Landcare Travel Fellowship scheme to support the initiative and further reinforce links between international Landcare organisations.

The New Zealand Landcare Trust was undertaking a comprehensive review of its business strategy. This process included a 'blue sky' session where staff had the opportunity to help shape the future direction of the organisation. It was here that Kellie was able to share her experiences working on Landcare projects with the Bass Coast Landcare Network, including rewarding partnerships with government and industry,

biodiversity offsets, pest plant and animal control campaigns, community events and more.



Some of the NZ Landcare Trust review group.

The NZ Landcare Trust, a national peak body works directly with farmers, landowners and community groups to improve the sustainability of New Zealand landscapes and waterways. There are several commonalities between the New Zealand Landcare Trust and the Bass Coast Landcare Network and the trip provided a great number of opportunities for the organizations to learn from one another. The New Zealand Landcare Trust, like the Bass Coast Landcare Network, focuses on sustainable land management through community involvement, building good relationships based on trust and mutual respect.



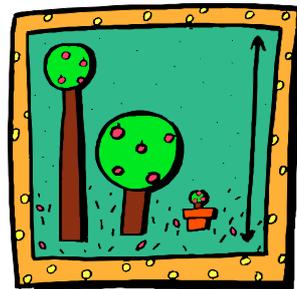
Kellie was incredibly impressed by the foundations of the Landcare Trust. The Trustees represent a broad cross section of highly respected organisations with a keen interest in land and water management,

including Federated Farmers of New Zealand, Federation of Maori Authorities, Royal Forest & Bird Society of New Zealand, Ecologic Foundation, Fish & Game New Zealand, Rural Women New Zealand and Federated Mountain Clubs of New Zealand. With such a diverse group of Trustees one of NZ Landcare Trust's greatest strengths is the ability to unify the interests across the country.

Kellie believes that initiatives such as ALI provided leads to invaluable opportunities to learn from each other through information exchange, cross-visits and people exchanges, peer-to-peer learning, regular conferences and training workshops, and encourages national Landcare initiatives.

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 www.australianlandcareinternational should be on-stream by end of June.



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

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

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