

# Australian Landcare International Newsletter



October 2013



Australian Landcare International (**ALI**) is an incorporated, not-for-profit organisation whose aim is to assist other countries to take up Landcare ideas. **ALI is about to start a new Overseas Landcare Fund to provide small grants to Landcare projects in developing countries.**

## President's Note

The big news is that ALI has joined Victorian Landcare Council (to be renamed Landcare Victoria Inc in due course) in launching an **Overseas Landcare Fund** so groups here can support community Landcare activities abroad. For now the fund will confine itself to grants of \$500, partly because of the cost of transferring money overseas, plus the observation that a lot can be done with five hundred Aussies! So far we have helped projects in Tanzania (St Kilda EcoCentre), Sri Lanka and Democratic Republic of the Congo (private donors).

The next projects are likely to be in The Philippines, Indonesia and Laos (thanks to groups from the Upper Goulburn). ALI is working on increasing fund-raising. The two partners, helped by bankmecu, which kindly gave \$1500, plan to collaborate with NGOs to ensure projects are completed satisfactorily. We pay the transfer fees set in Australia Thanks especially to bankmecu (Steven Lynch and his staff), VLC's Terry Hubbard, Kaye Rodden, Malachy Tarpey and Roger Hardley, and Paula Havelberg of St Kilda EcoCentre. Horrie Poussard is managing

the fund, with Kaye Rodden's help, and I'm working on fund-raising.

Other recent Australian activities included three ALI members, Bruce Lloyd, Mary Johnson and me, attending Crawford's excellent **conference in Perth on mining and farming in Africa**. We made useful contacts and gleaned some good ideas. There is no doubt at least some of the 140-plus Australian mining companies operating in over 45 African countries can use Landcare ideas, people and services.

This leads automatically to Landcare's continued progress in **Africa**. In August, ALI member Mary Johnson, with Julian Prior, Theo Nabben and Clinton Muller, and Uganda's outstanding co-ordinator from Kapchorwa, Awadh Chemangei, ran a master class in Lilongwe, Malawi. Sponsored by South Africa, the course attracted participants from Lesotho and Swaziland, southern African countries so far not involved in Landcare. Zimbabwe, Namibia, Kenya, Malawi, RSA and Zambia were well represented. Pleasingly, Clinton and wife Alice will continue at ICRAF, Nairobi. (I've said many times how good it is to have young Australians with Landcare co-ordination

experience working in the overseas NGOs in our arena.) Clinton is very enthusiastic about Uganda's Junior Landcare programs. Through ICRAF we are also meeting more major NGOs.

In **the Pacific**, Bob Edgar and Horrie Poussard, with support from the Crawford Fund and Rotary ran a training course in Popua village in Tonga in May. This led to Tonga's first Landcare group being formed. Moreover, Fiji now has seven Landcare projects, as Horrie and I found out in May from two visiting Fijian foresters. And Karen Brisbane is currently developing a joint project concept, supported by Nick Edgar of NZ Landcare Trust and myself, for more Pacific Landcare.

In **Asia**, SILC continues to support projects in central Java and Sri Lanka; SILC's efforts have led to Landcare's very welcome emergence in Bangladesh and Pakistan—John Robinson recently visited the latter nation and some of its first projects. Meanwhile ALI has had informal contact with land managers in Bhutan and Nepal via Charles Sturt (CSU) and Melbourne Universities.

Japanese interest in Landcare continues. PhD student Tomomi Maekawa arrived in late May to complete a year's study of the movement, working under Prof Allan Curtis at CSU. She has moved around the state, including with me, visiting several networks and projects. Her supervisor, Prof Toshio Kuwako from Tokyo Technological University, spent ten days here in September meeting people on the ground, and running a workshop. A leading Japanese community environmental advocate, his work resonated rapidly with those he met. Prof Mick Seigel accompanied Toshio Kuwako, here on his fourth recent trip, bringing seven environmental policy students, accompanied by Dr Kazuki Kagohashi. Mick, a Catholic priest resident in Japan since 1973, grew up at Barooga on the Murray, so his students

annually spend a week there with Boomanoomana Landcare members. Mick also organised for Filipino farmers from Luzon to visit Mindanao Landcare projects this year, a great bit of cross-fertilisation. Publicising these developments has brought forth other supporters of Landcare in Japan, hence our optimism that fruitful ferment is under way.

Moving to the **Americas**, Horrie and I have been in touch for years with Prof Mike Fullen of Wolverhampton University, a soil conservationist of world standing. He assists a group, long resident in the English Midlands, that retains ties with its home western Jamaican parish, Hanover. That group is interested in introducing Landcare to the region around Montego Bay, planning a training course, *inter alia*, next Easter. Let me know if you want to help—at your expense, I have to say. But I reckon it would be a marvellous experience coupled with a trip to Cuba, or southern Florida or Puerto Rico.

We are investigating the possibility of a Landcare poster at the next WACA conference at Winnipeg, Manitoba from 22-26 June 2014.

Finally, in **Europe**, the Germans are patiently promoting a Continental Landcare network.

Rob Youl,  
President, ALI

## ***Popua Village becomes the first Landcare group in Tonga***

Recently Landcare came to Tonga with its first Landcare group established in May. Popua village is a poor village on the edge of an inlet from the Tongan coastline near the capital of Nuku'alofa. Popua was settled with Tongans from other areas and islands who had come to the capital for work opportunities. It was literally carved out of a low-lying mangrove area behind the town tip (now filled and covered) and is still subject to storm surges and flooding.

Rotary Australia has been working with the village community (with the drive and planning skills of ALI member Bob Edgar) to improve the food production and flood protection of the village over the last 4 years. Raised household vegetable gardens, chicken houses and better pig management (pigs tend to roam everywhere threatening food gardens) were the focus of the Rotary project.

In May this year, Bob and Horrie Poussard went to Tonga to run a workshop to improve the skills and knowledge of the Popua community on food production and environmental issues. They were funded by Rotary and by the Crawford Fund. It also provided an opportunity to review the work done over the last few years and identify the benefits and lessons learned.

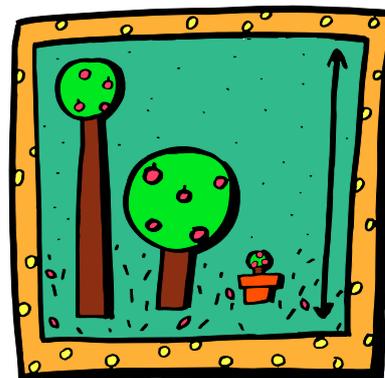
The workshop was given in Tongan with local technical experts from government departments of Agriculture and Environment providing the technical inputs. Staff from the Tongan Community Development Trust, a local NGO of long standing and good reputation, was actively involved in organising the workshop and arranging local visits to other areas of future action. They did a great job, particularly Ms Oketi Faletau, community development officer.

After the technical talks, groups were set up to look at three aspects of the workshop.

1. Teasing out ideas on specific technical issues, such as pig and vegetable management, protection from storm surges and improving nutrition through to local food production, etc.
2. How can additional support (technical, financial, other) be obtained locally.
3. What we will do as a result of this workshop over the next 6 months.

This last aspect was particularly strong in participants' minds and the outcomes listed are very positive and achievable in the short to medium term.

Popua village has about 100 families of which about 20 with gardens attended the workshop. They have a strong leadership and showed they are serious about working towards better food production and environmental protection at both a personal and village level. So much so that the New Zealand government have been very impressed, and are planning, with Rotary support, to upscale the program to more villages, under a \$500 000 program in the near future.



## ***Film on Sri Lanka's Landcare experience***

Over the past five months the Secretariat for International Landcare (SILC) has been coordinating the production of an educational video about Regenerative Agriculture and Landcare in Sri Lanka. The film footage was taken over 10 days in Sri Lanka in July 2013 in conjunction with *She Oaks Films* and with the support of *Ballarat Region Treegrowers (BRT)*.



*Filming on project sites*

Called ***Regenerative Agriculture***, it showcases a number of demonstration sites across Sri Lanka using practices and approaches promoted by the Neosynthesis Research Centre, a partner with ALI in Sri Lankan projects. The training film audio would initially be in English, but it is intended that subtitles, or equivalent, would be included for the different languages spoken in relevant countries, such as Sinhalese, Tamil, Urdu, Bengali, Bahasa Indonesia and Hindi.

Regenerative Agriculture has transformed the livelihoods and lands of many rural communities in Sri Lanka, increasing people's food production and income, while improving the vegetation cover, soil structure and water quality of their lands.

It is planned that the film would be available as a teaching tool both in Sri Lanka and across Asia. SILC will organise the distribution of the video as a teaching tool initially in Asian countries

with emerging Landcare programs, and then more widely in 2014.

## ***The Overseas Landcare Fund (OLF)***

In mid-June, ALI and the Victorian Landcare Council (VLC) launched a new fund to enable Landcare groups and networks in Australia to directly support Landcare projects in developing countries.

The two organisations and bankmecu have provided \$3500 in total as seed funding, which will be used to cover setting up a web site, administration and the significant costs associated with transferring funds overseas.

Already the fund has attracted additional private support and funding from some Landcare groups and networks in Victoria. Donations to date are in the order of \$250 to \$500 per group. We now have a mechanism for the Australian Landcare family to help support Landcare development, especially in developing countries. Local groups can donate to OLF and in some cases specify specific projects listed on the ALI website.

OLF provides small grants up to \$500 to overseas groups to support relevant projects like the protection of natural resources and improved food production. Currently ALI has received a number of applications from groups in Asia and Africa and has delivered the initial grants to projects in The Congo, Sri Lanka and Tanzania. Further grants will be made in the near future to other projects. .

### ***ALI Website***

Have a look at the ALI website from time to time. We aim to update it regularly.  
[www.australianlandcareinternational.com](http://www.australianlandcareinternational.com)

## ***Landcare in Bangladesh***

Secretariat for International Landcare (SILC) Directors, Sue Marriott and Victoria Mack participated in the official launch of Landcare Bangladesh (LCB) at the Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University in Dhaka, Bangladesh in July 2013.

The launch of Landcare Bangladesh follows eighteen months of intense work with farming communities in the Sylhet region in north-east Bangladesh by Friends in Village Development Bangladesh (FIVDB). The drivers behind this pilot work are Dr Shaikh Tanveer Hossain, Sustainable Agriculture Advisor & Chief Agricultural Coordinator and Mr Zahid Hossain, Director of the Livelihood Enhancement Program of FIVDB.

Since March 2012 they have worked intensely with village farmers and communities with the support of FIVDB field facilitators to establish five model house projects in each of 22 areas across the Sylhet region.



*Dr Tanveer presenting at Sylhet*

In November 2011 Dr Tanveer and Mr Zahid organised a study tour to Sri Lanka with four colleagues to learn from *Landcare Lanka* demonstration projects and field sites. Following this visit in early 2012 they invited Sri Lanka's Kamy Melvani to run facilitator training workshops in Bangladesh on Landcare processes.

This has resulted in over 100 small scale demonstration sites which today

provide the educational building blocks for advanced land use planning and improved livelihood decisions by participating farmers and increasingly their wider community networks.

The demonstration sites show how farmers can optimise land use efficiency, increase crop diversity and productivity, diversify enterprises, improve livestock genetics and value add to production.

Landcare Bangladesh is working to form a National organisation in coming months.

## ***Indonesian Landcare project has new website***

The first Landcare group in Indonesia, based near Mt Merapi in Central Java, has recently set up a website in the local Bahasa Indonesia language to encourage the development of good land management practices based on their experience. They will, in the process, be promoting a Landcare approach to natural resource management in Indonesia. The web site is [www.sahabatlahan.org](http://www.sahabatlahan.org)

In November, Victoria Mack will visit Indonesia over seven days, meet with the *Sahabat Lahan Indonesia* (Landcare) committee and visit the project site.

## ***Landcare Notes could be helpful***

Australian Landcare Notes are a set of non-technical guides to help Landcare groups with their planning, management and operation. While the notes addressed issues relevant to Australian Landcare groups, they may also be of value for encouraging and supporting Landcare group development in other countries. They can be found at <http://www.landcarevic.net.au/resources/for-groups/notes/>

Become a member of ALI for only \$40 per year. Your \$40 helps ALI keep up with what is happening globally and supports our website and other office costs.

***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 633-000 Acct 1331 03598  
And inform Horrie on [poussard@iinet.net.au](mailto:poussard@iinet.net.au)

Website:

[www.australianlandcareinternational.com](http://www.australianlandcareinternational.com)

***And of course we are always looking for donations to the new Overseas Landcare Fund (OLF) to help establishing Landcare groups in developing countries. Already several Landcare groups, and a Landcare Network, have donated up to \$500 for OLF projects.***