



North East Downs Landcare Group Inc

Chairman's Report presented to the

Annual Meeting on Wednesday 24th

October 2018

As I commence this report, I wish to acknowledge the recent sad passing of a dedicated and passionate landcarer Nikki Laws. We extend our condolences to her family and the members of the Gomaren & Doctors Creek Landcare Group. Additionally, we acknowledge any other landcarers, across the NED area, who have passed away over the last 12 months.

The Management Committee continued to meet on a regular basis here in Oakey throughout the 12 months, with additional business conducted electronically as required.

Funding for projects has been more difficult to source with Government Landcare disbursements now at a much lower level than several years ago. We are grateful and thank the Regional Bodies, the State Govt and the Toowoomba Regional Council for the approved projects. The Regional bodies had reduced staff numbers and activities to ensure that the on ground work continued, albeit on a smaller scale.

With the need for administration efficiencies, the major talking point for Landcare across the Downs & South West has been the restructure of Natural Resource Management (NRM). Representatives from each of the Condamine Alliance, Qld Murray Darling Committee and South West regional bodies formed a working group to progress the formation of the new single Southern Queensland NRM organisation to cover the same total geographic area. It is now functioning under CEO Paul McDonald with the first general meeting and election of Directors scheduled for the 31st October at Roma.

However, at the time of this report, the Government has not announced the National Landcare Program funding for the 2018 > 2023 period. Therefore, there is no funding currently available for new projects from this source.

Across the NED area, there was such an interesting range of activities from Urban, to peri Urban, to Rural, with workshops, working bees, information sessions, displays, field days, and competitions. Examples include the photo competition conducted by Gomaren and Doctors Creek, the drought information session by Emu Creek, several workshops & field days at South Myall, the displays, sausage sizzles and community meeting re Koala Habitat at Oakey. I know that all groups are similarly active with relevant activities.

The ongoing benefits from these events to our natural environment, the adoption of sustainable agriculture & grazing systems, our communities and the mental health and social well-being of participants are immeasurable.

Though the weather patterns have impacted and delayed many projects, the desired outcomes were eventually achieved, and final reports submitted.

Some of the other events and activities for 17/18 include:

- Continuing to function without a dedicated co-ordinator and dedicated office,

- Continuing partnerships and participation with Condamine Alliance (CA), Qld Murray Darling Committee (QMDC), Darling Downs Regional Landcare (DDRL), Condamine Catchment Management Association (CCMA), Qld Water and Land Carers (QWaLC), Toowoomba Regional Council (TRC), industry and other organisations,
- Participation in the Landcare Forum at Dalby in October last year,
- Involvement with and attendance at DDRL meetings at Millmerran, Oakey & Allora,
- Representing Landcare at the Toowoomba Regional Council Bio Security Advisory Committee meetings,
- Implementing and/or supporting a range of projects across the NED area,
- Compliance with all associated recording, accounting, project reporting and acquittals as required, with our thanks to Glenys and Davida,
- Maintaining and updating the Website, with our thanks to Vonnie Bridson,
- Congratulations to Ashley Volz who was a finalist representing Queensland in the Young Leader's Award at the National Landcare Conference recently held in Brisbane.

Current topics & challenges:

- Though there is restructure at a Regional level, I do not see any reason to change our setup.
- We have not made any recommendations to change and / or update the constitution and strategic plan.
- I had the opportunity to attend the National Landcare Conference in Brisbane, where we were advised that there are 3500 Landcare groups across Australia. Landcare started in 1985.
- A key topic was carbon. We were encouraged to view it as another agricultural product, be it risk or opportunity. With carbon credits from the Emissions Reduction Fund, there has been \$1 billion paid out in Qld. There is another \$500 million in the Land Restoration fund for carbon offset projects.
- It was suggested that Landcare could act as a collective to bring together parcels of land for carbon projects.
- Whilst we hear about the diversity in agricultural systems and the need & desire to protect our resource for the longer term, we did hear how conventional farming can also do great things for the environment.
- Keeping abreast of the rapid change with technology including digital and data collection, and its application. Additionally, there is so much information available on the web, including the TRC Pest Management Newsletter, Weed Spotter Network, Birdlife Australia, and the Threatened Species site.

Conclusion:

As I do each year, I acknowledge the ongoing and daily attention by Glenys to her Secretarial & Project management roles.

Once again, our treasurer Davida Schemioneck has continued to provide good governance with the management of the finances. Well done Davida.

Furthermore, I sincerely thank Ashley, David, Desley and Cheryl for their commitment, ongoing support and input to the Management Committee. There are very few days throughout the year where we would not be in contact.

I thank the Sub Groups and every one of you for your fellowship, interest and support during 17/18, and encourage you to stay involved with Landcare. Though there has been change, you have demonstrated that Landcare is still present and active across the Downs.

We look forward to the year ahead.

Thank you,

Graham Cooke,
NED Landcare Group Inc.

