



Christmas Party 2014

We were honoured by a surprise visitor to our Christmas party. Port Macquarie-Hastings Council Mayor Peter Besseling dropped by to extend his thanks, on behalf of all the community. Mayor Besseling acknowledged the valuable support we offer Council, and cracked a few jokes, before saying farewell.

Group President Estelle Gough then spoke to the 75 gathered party goers. Estelle acknowledged the powerful choice of members to ensure a resilient and biodiverse natural environment for the future. "Imagine one person working 24 hours a day for two years - hard to imagine and not really possible. But that is what we did together this year when we performed 16,889 hours of voluntary work," she said.

Patron Roy Sach travelled from Canberra to celebrate with us and deliver a heart-warming speech. Roy described his fellow scientists and the valuable environmental research being undertaken by them. "But without exception they all regard themselves as simple, ordinary people," Roy said. Our patron declared Port Macquarie Landcare Group members also "felt they were mere ordinary citizens".

"Nothing could be further from the truth. This region has magnificent biodiversity as well as a diverse landscape and topography. With global



Above: Port Macquarie Landcare Group patron Roy Sach and President Estelle Gough get into the Christmas spirit with Port Macquarie-Hastings Council Mayor Peter Besseling.

warming approaching it could become one of the most important hubs of species preservation on the Australian eastern coast. The work being done by our volunteers is therefore of critical and fundamental significance. Landcarers are indisputably the unsung heroes and heroines of the nation," Roy said.

Janet Watson was awarded Life Membership for her decade-plus years of dedication (see story page 2). The inaugural President's Award was given to a deserving Roger Speaight. As

well as getting his hands dirty on-site this year, Roger donated his skills as a graphic designer. This has resulted in the Port Macquarie Landcare Group being presented in a very professional way.

A big thank you is extended to Social Sub-committee members Bronwyn Newton, Mel Losh, Ken Gough and Pieter Schouten. Together they used nursery profits to put on a fun and fabulous Christmas celebration enjoyed by all. Merry Christmas everyone and thank you for your support.



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President's Report

In the time since our last edition of the Habitatler we have held our Annual General Meeting. All standing committee members were re-elected unopposed and the vacancy of Publicity Officer was filled by Nikala Sim. This has completed our very professional team of people who liaise with, and promote us to, the general public.

We now have a small army of volunteers hard at work namely; Peter Crundwell – Website; Julie Ho, Janet Slater –Focus Magazine; Danielle Bermingham, Brian Grant, Bronwyn Newton - Information Stalls; Danielle Bermingham, Angela Millett and myself – Facebook; Sam Dobner and Nikala Sim – The Habitatler.

I have always wanted to have Nikala on board but until this year her life and our needs never coincided. I have known Nikala for many years and am grateful to at last have her skills as a journalist applied for the betterment of Landcare. Nikala has been a member of Landcare for many years and has an extensive background in the environment.

Nikala's understanding of what is newsworthy to the media, and her ability to write the stories accordingly, has been much needed. We have already seen a big increase in media since her involvement and this

keeps raising our profile in the community. Welcome aboard Nikala!!

An initiative that has proved so very valuable to us is our involvement with the Department of Corrective Services. I was doubtful if it would prove beneficial to us when we made first contact but they took on board what I said about needing a supervisor with the group, and were able to source funding for this role. Not only did they do that, but they picked the perfect person for the role in Jeff Woodgate. Jeff has long years of experience in Corrective Services but also has a love of the environment. His people skills have seen the Landcare, Corrective Services and Work for the Dole teams work together in respect and harmony. Welcome aboard Jeff.

Wishing you all a merry and safe Christmas.

Estelle Gough



Life Members



Patron Roy Sach sings the praise of our latest Life Member Janet Watson.

Our newest Life Member, Janet Watson, was presented with her award at our Christmas party. Janet, husband Gavin and 10-month-old daughter Jacinta moved to Port Macquarie in March 2001. Janet has devoted herself to environmental protection in Port Macquarie.

Janet's achievements include:

- * Raising two beautiful children
- * One of the first members of Harry's Track Bushcare Group which later became the PMLG Shelley Beach site
- * Creating propagation lists of, and growing, local flora
- * Established Environment Friends group at Hastings Public School and its Landcare Rainforest site
- * Promoting Clean Up Australia Day, National Tree Day, Earth Hour, World Environment Day, Threatened Species Day, mobile phone muster, recycling, and Save the Koala month
- * Received NSW Department of Education North Coast Region 'Environmental and Sustainability Initiative' Award 2010
- * Started PMLG Merinda Reserve site

The Port Macquarie Landcare Group Life Award The award acknowledges ten years of dedicated and distinguished contribution to the objectives of the Group and, therefore, to the community.



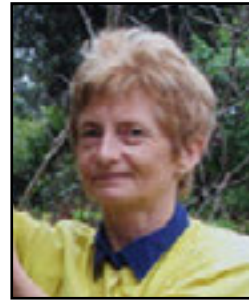
Yvonne Errington
2009



Ken Errington
2009



Steve Cartwright
2009



Julie Ho
2011



Estelle Gough
2012



Our Shed

Many Australian family homes have a backyard shed. Our Port Macquarie Landcare Group family now has a shed too! It is a vital, functioning and strategic hub for our dedicated and much appreciated volunteers.

The initial working bee to set up the shed was in June last year. Since then, ongoing improvements have been made to maximize support for our numerous sites and project managers, and also to provide a place where members are welcomed and easily issued with the correct equipment.

The shed is located behind Council's animal shelter on John Fraser Drive off Lake Road. It is open every Tuesday morning between 9am and 12 noon. The shed manager is member of three years Brian Grant.

Our working bee van, trailer and equipment are kept safely within the confines of the shed each night. Log books are used to monitor the usage and take note of the whereabouts of everything.

The shed has no electricity, water or bathroom so we extend a big thank you to the Port Macquarie-Hastings Council for letting us use their nearby facilities.



Brian Grant and Danielle Bermingham proudly show off our orderly shed.

All of our historical records and reports are now housed in one location at the shed. We appreciate the many members, past and

present, who kept the records in excellent condition & in order for so long.

Brian Grant

The Working Bee Van



The Port Macquarie Landcare Group van goes on its first outing — decked out with new signage.

Our most expensive asset, the working-bee van, is doing a great job. It makes our work on sites and at special functions so much easier. The Landcare signage contributes to raising our profile even higher across the Port Macquarie-Hastings Council.

Volunteers to drive the van have increased with Bronwyn, Steve, Estelle, Thomas, Bill, Brian, Julie Jeff and Kerry all taking turns to sit behind the wheel. Procedures have been set in place and when followed will make it safe and easy so everyone who needs to can use the van without any dramas.

We have been in discussion with government job agency Verto about Work for the Dole recipients participating in bush regeneration with the Port Macquarie Landcare Group. As part of this discussion we needed to perform a risk assessment on one of the sites.

It was great to be able to put the van on show for Verto team leader Charles Thurling. Charles was impressed with the fit out of the van and pleased at the level of safety we extend to volunteers.

Estelle Gough

Meet Our Volunteer: Brian Grant

Brian was born in Martinborough, New Zealand. He spent his childhood living near the base of Mt Taranaki. Brian climbed the 2518m from base to summit at the age of 12.

The deep rich volcanic soil around the mountain allowed invasive Boxthorn, Barberry, Gorse, Californian Thistles, Giant Buttercup and Foxglove to flourish. This posed problems for his family's friends with farms.

During school holidays Brian worked for the State Nursery. He pulled row upon row of fledgling Radiata pine trees which were bundled, tied with flax and transported across

the North Island to re-vegetate hills denuded of plants.

Brian left New Zealand in 1965 as a 21-year-old qualified builder. He sailed for Sydney and soon after met his wife, Pauline (another dedicated Landcare member who washes and irons returned shirts). The Grants and their four children moved to Port Macquarie in 1974.

Brian worked for 12 years as Operations Manager of Port Central Shopping Centre until his retirement in 2007. We are lucky that when he looked for volunteer work in Port Macquarie he found Landcare!



Neil Spires—Volunteer Tribute 1927-2014

In 1989, Neil and his wife Edna, retired to Port Macquarie – the town where they spent their honeymoon in 1952. Neil was skilled in the building trade and had a mad passion for gardening and nature. He also loved to fossick, out west, for gemstones which he turned into wonderful jewellery.

Edna also loved nature and it was not long before they became volunteer guides at Sea Acres Rainforest Centre. Sadly Edna passed away but Neil continued to guide. He led over 1000 walks during his time at Sea Acres. It was here he met fellow guide and Port Macquarie Landcare Group member Yvonne Errington.

It did not take long for Neil to answer the call to get involved with nature and he joined Landcare as a volunteer on the Lilypond project. His effort and expertise contributed to the construction of the riprap drainage system which has prevented major erosion problems at the Koala Street entrance. Neil also was involved in the building of the observation deck and boardwalk around the entire site.

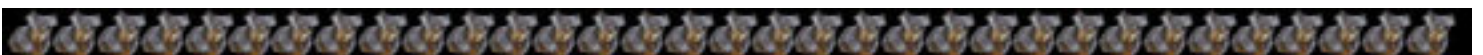
Many a weed, especially farmer's friend, felt the wrath of Neil's passion as he quietly eradicated the infestations with his fellow volunteers. Morning tea times were special when we looked at what

had been achieved, as gradually, the infested area turned into the wonderful habitat it is now – home to water dragons, land mullets and a large variety of birds. The highlight of each year was watching the water lilies bloom and ducks, water hens, cormorants and kingfishers enjoy the cool and pristine water of the pond.

One particular area, named Neil's Elbow in recognition of his hard work, was once a mess of rock, gravel and weeds. It now boasts rainforest trees, shrubs, vines and many species of birds. What a transformation!!

We will miss this kind man named Neil but will never forget him and his wonderful contribution to our community. Vale mate, you are at peace.

The Lilypond Team



On Retirement

"What is Retirement all about?" I was asked.

On my 65th birthday I suddenly realized I was now too old to die young! This was, at least, one positive revelation that got my retirement off to a flying start.

In retrospect, I began thinking about retirement on my second day of work, at the age of 18. Work and I were never close friends - barely acquaintances in fact. My life drifted along with mainly part-time jobs at 25 different companies over 18 years. During this time I continued to be absolutely astounded at the time it was taking to get from 18-years-old to 65-years-old. I drew a comparison with it taking millions of years for a bird to learn to fly.

Then, one day a woman named Fay appeared on the scene, and the road rules changed dramatically. Carrying my comprehensive packed lunch, I was comprehensively packed off to full-time employment. At least my new job was in the Public Circus, so there was a generous component of relaxation included. Twenty long weary years and sufficient flybuy points later, I escaped The Circus. I spent the last 11 years of my Life Sentence back in glorious part-time work, singing songs and watching birds for a living. It certainly beat having a real job!

Apart from providing inner and outer health, part-time work also allowed time to volunteer for Landcare. Not surprisingly I worked on the reserve next door to our home - Blair Reserve. Blair (as for all the Landcare projects) has been a great result for the environment with great people met and great knowledge gained by all. A big 'thank you' to those movers and shakers

who keep the train in motion.

And so, after a couple of million years had passed, my cake with 65 candles was on the table in front of me. I was so totally astounded retirement had arrived, my brakes failed and I kept on working for another four months until New Years Eve 2011/2012. Wow - now at last I was FREE!!!!

Retirement is said to be an opportunity to sit around and do nothing. DON'T BELIEVE THAT RUBBISH FOR ONE MINUTE! In fact I have found retirement to be so busy, I'm thinking of putting a bloke on to give me a hand. Oooops, should have said 'a person'.

My notion is that to have a successful retirement, one needs hobbies and interests. My interests of caravanning and bird watching fit nicely together, as do Fay's interests of caravanning and coffee shops. Sometimes we hobby together, sometimes separately for improved inner and outer health! Since 01 Jan 2012, we (or I) have been "on the road" for about 22 out of 32 months. I am about to depart for another "Four months & Four states" birding adventure. Home to mow the lawn for Christmas.

Every morning a new landscape - I love it!!!!

Tony Bischoff



Barbecue Donation



Our first barbecue was donated to us by the Port Macquarie-Hastings Council in recognition of our contribution to the environment. It was used to feed volunteers at our very first Thank You BBQ in 2012.

As attendance at events increased, it became obvious our barbecue just wasn't big enough for the volume of cooking it needed to do. After a couple of years there were enough funds in the nursery account to purchase a new one more suited to our needs.

The original barbecue had been

gathering dust in the shed and, because every inch of space is precious, we decided to donate it to a worthy cause—the scouts.

The 1st Port Macquarie Sea Scout Group was founded in 1993. Since then it has worked to give boys and girls skills that will last them a lifetime, such as initiative, self-confidence, responsibility, respect and leadership.

Pictured at left : PMLG volunteer Brian Grant hands the barbecue over to scout's Vice Chairman Peter Crundwell.

Native Plant: *Rhagodia candolleana*



Seaberry Saltbush *Rhagodia candolleana* is a dense, medium-sized scrambling shrub to around two metres in height and width, although it may reach greater heights when growing through other plants. The branchlets are distinctly ribbed and the leaves are semi-succulent to 35 mm long, glossy green above and paler below. The leaves are often widened towards the base

into a spade shape and the leaf margins are frequently turned under or recurved. The plant is usually dioecious, meaning the similar male and female flowers occur on separate plants. Flowers are inconspicuous, whitish and occur in mealy pyramidal sprays from December to April, followed by small, glossy dark red berries, which are flattened and dimpled at the top.

Seaberry Saltbush is very common on Venus Bay's coastal sands. It is a tough, screening shrub that is able to tolerate a wide variety of conditions; it is pest-resistant and relatively fire-retardant due to the salt content in the leaves. Its berries are very attractive to many native birds as you can see by their red droppings. The leaves can be cooked and eaten and the berries are edible, although they may be bitter and vary in sweetness from plant to plant. The leaves and fruit were a food source for Aboriginal people. Propagation is from cuttings and pruning may be necessary to keep the plants contained.

As suggested by the name, Seaberry Saltbush belongs to the Chenopodiaceae or Saltbush family. The unusual shape of the leaves is typical of this family, which includes many species adapted to harsh, saline environments. Beetroot and spinach also belong to this family, as well as another common local plant Bower Spinach *Tetragonia implexicoma* and the roadside and cleared area weed Fat Hen *Chenopodium album*. *Rhagodia* comes from the Greek 'rhagos', a berry and *candolleana* comes from the de Candolle family of Swiss botanists.

Lorraine Norden (Dip. Hort.) For further information please visit www.friendsofvenusbaypeninsula.org.au

Photo at left: Lorraine Norden.



Weed: *Ochna serrulata* AKA Mickey Mouse Plant



Origin: Southern Africa

Weed Category: Environmental weed (not classed as Noxious in the Port Macquarie-Hastings LGA)

Description Habit: Dense shrub to 2m, often with multiple trunks, bark with many raised spots (lenticels). **Flowers:** Bright yellow, surrounded by green sepals that turn bright red and curve backward when young fruits develop. **Leaves:** Simple, alternate, margins finely serrated, drawn to a blunt tip; tough, glossy green above and paler below; hairless. **Fruit:** A drupe (fleshy and single seeded) to 7mm that ripens from green to black.

Ecology: An aggressive transforming weed which competes strongly with native vegetation. Potentially thicket-forming. Suited to a range of soils and forest types. Seeds are spread by fruit-eating animals and water.

Control: an Integrated Weed Management (IWM) is required

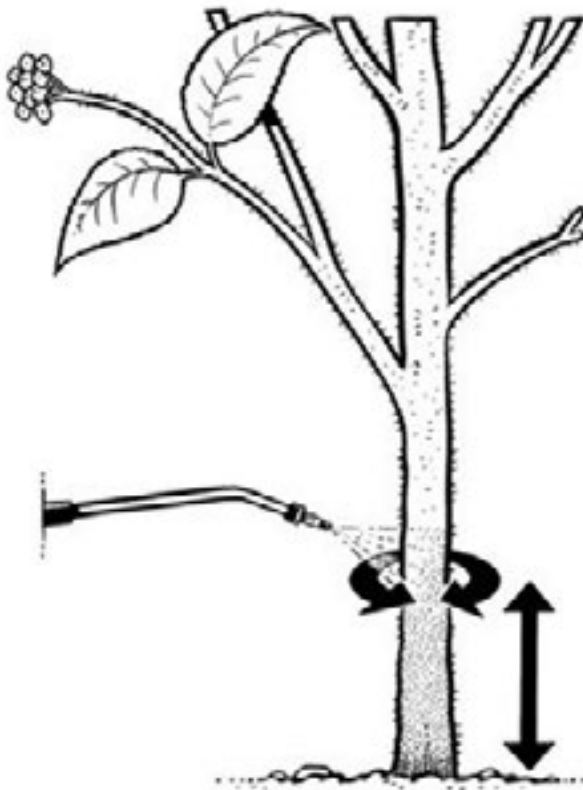
which utilises a combination of techniques based on season, site conditions, weed age, extent and density of infestation and resources available.

Non-chemical: plants very early develop the characteristic S-shaped tap-root structure. Often when hand-pulling is attempted it breaks away and enables the plant to re-shoot from below ground, further complicating non-

chemical control. However, in soft and sandy soils, small plants can often be hand-pulled, but care should be taken to avoid snapping the root. Digging is not recommended as the root anchors deeply.

Chemical: For seedlings and plants to 50cm, foliar spray with fluroxypyr (eg Starane Advanced) at 4mL/L of water + 0.5mL/L spray adjuvant (eg Horti-oil, Pulse, Agral). Other herbicides such as glyphosate (eg Roundup) or metsulfuron-methyl (eg Brushoff) can be effective on seedlings but less effective on larger plants. Some operators use long stem-scrapes of undiluted glyphosate on larger plants and, whilst this can be effective, the results are often patchy and the technique is time-consuming. The alternative, and preferred, method of basal barking is described in detail below.

Peter Michael Coordinator Bush Regeneration team, Port Macquarie-Hastings Council



BASAL BARKING TECHNIQUE

The science behind basal barking is that a “herbicide carrier” enables the herbicide to cross the bark into the plant without the need for removing the bark. It is not recommended for very large woody weeds (>300mm basal diameter) or those with thick, fissured or corky bark.

The herbicide used is fluroxypyr (eg Starane Advanced) mixed in Biosafe (a non-diesel registered herbicide carrier) at a rate of 21mL/L. Biosafe is near-odourless and generally easier to work with and does not have the significant pollution and soil contamination risks associated with diesel. The herbicide mix is applied to the outer bark of the plant from 1cm below ground level to a height of 15cm. Usually the whole of the plant is kept intact, however they can be cut off at the spray height if this improves site access prior to basal barking.

It is essential to prepare the ground around the base of the *Ochna* plant by removing a 1cm deep ring of soil around the base of the plant to be sprayed (this helps kill dormant, below-ground buds). Spray nozzle pressure must remain low to avoid splatter and be careful not to overspray and waste the mix. Extra caution should be used when working near creeks and wetlands and operators should ensure appropriate personal protective equipment is used. Many excellent YouTube tutorials are available online to help new users learn to adopt this technique.

What the Fungi?

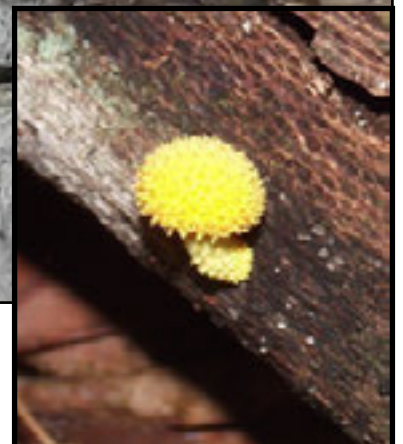
Cyptotrama aspratrum is one of the 100 fungi being studied and surveyed for the Fungimap study being conducted by the Royal Botanical Gardens in Vic. It has been documented in Tasmania and surrounding Islands, South Australia, Victoria, N.S.W and over the Queensland boarder mostly in coastal locations.

These bright yellow fungi have a diameter of up to 6cm and are covered by distinctive pointed fibrillose scales when young resembling a small pom-pom, with age they become flatted and smooth but retain their bright colouring. The stem has a distinctive granular texture and is yellow at the base gradually becoming white in appearance and the gills are widely spaced and also white in colour.

Usually found in rainforests and wet eucalypt forests on fallen logs and branches, they are often seen growing solitary through to small troops of 4 or 5.

Although this fungus is not confined to Australia (also found in North America and Chile) it is the only representative of the *Cyptotrama* genus known in Australia. I have encountered this specimen in several reserves in the Port Macquarie area and is usually seen fruiting between November and July but only if conditions are favourable.

Angela Millett



Corporate Member Donation

ONE of Port Macquarie's most active koala corridors and remnant palm swamp rainforest is being regenerated as a part of a \$1 million, six year project to protect some of the region's most sensitive environmental habitats. Volunteers were getting their hands dirty at the end of Moruya Drive this week clearing weeds and removing dense scrub to clear pathways for koala access and to prepare the site for native replanting.

The work is a part of a long-term project funded by the Environmental Trust to the tune of \$250,000 with ongoing support by Port Macquarie-Hastings Council and Landcare Australia. Volunteers last year alone, contributed more than 16,000 man hours toward conserving sites across the Hastings.

The work commenced at the lilypond on Yarranabee Road which is part of the Wrights Creek catchment. Work has slowly progressed downstream and in the long- term will improve the aquatic health of Kooloonbung Creek.

Landcare coordinator Estelle Gough said the Moruya Drive site is significant in that it has undergone extensive rehabilitation and growth since being almost completely cleared in the 1940s.

"We have about 10 volunteers working on this site and a team from corrective services has also joined us. Next week we will have a Work for the Dole team on the job," Mrs Gough said. "Like many of the sites along Wrights Creek we are working in old drainage areas. This part of Moruya Drive is a beautiful pocket of palm swamp rain- forest."

Landcare has also been working closely with Wyndham Flynn's Resort to help rehabilitate pockets of habitat surrounding the tourist facility. Wyndham Flynn's Beach Resort Manager, Suzy Berry said the resort was dedicated to providing support to organisations in the local community that were making a difference to wildlife and the environment.

"Landcare has been instrumental in assisting us to revegetate the 100m length of Wrights Creek which runs through the resort grounds," Ms Berry said. "They have coordinated a volunteer group and council to keep the creek bed clear to ensure flood waters do not penetrate the resort grounds in heavy rain."

"Landcare and resort volunteers have also kept weeds at bay by regular mulching of the site, and planting the local native species of trees, all hand propagated at the Landcare nursery. This is providing the local wild koalas with a natural habitat in which to live and breed."

Wyndham Resort donated a cheque for \$200 to the Landcare Nursery as



Wyndham Flynn's Resort manager Suzy Berry, Roz Anderson, Wynn timer the Wallaby, Estelle Gough, Kerry Calvert, Annette Prigg, Harry Mitchell and Suzanne Lawrence

a part of its corporate membership to the organisation and commitment to its own reduce, reuse, regenerate initiative. The resort is taking a green approach to its operation by installing recycling and composting stations, a worm farm and chicken coup.

Tracey Fairhurst, Port Macquarie News, 26 September 2014

President's Annual General Meeting Report

It has been another successful year for team "Port Macquarie Landcare Inc". What an outstanding team we make. This year "The Shed" become a very important hub.

We also saw our projects expand with the commencement of the Queens Lake Walkway Project and the Stevens Street Project. Our existing projects perform to the highest standards and continue to gain approval and support from residents and Council.

This year we received vital financial assistance from the Port Macquarie-Hastings Council, Northern Rivers Catchment Management Authority, Holiday Coast Credit Union and the NSW Environmental Trust. These funds were used to host our inaugural National Tree Day event, remove significant weed infestations, and regenerate bush land. The expertise of Julie Ho in gaining grants is much appreciated.

Support for our work has continued to increase and we now have nearly 200 Port Macquarie-

Landcare Group members. This is in part due to our new monthly presence at the Port Macquarie Neighbourhood Volunteer Expos. A big thanks to the many who volunteer time at the nursery. This resulted in another year of strong sales of indigenous plants the proceeds of which funded our Christmas party.

Thank you everyone for your contribution to a very successful year.

Estelle Gough



Site Report: Rushcutter Reserve (north of Bangalay Drive)

It wasn't until March 2012 that we were able to tackle this area of the Rushcutter Catchment, due to a shortage of volunteers and funding. Thanks to \$10,000 from the NRMA we have rehabilitated the missing link between Timber Ridge and Rushcutter Reserve south of Bangalay Drive and completely reconnected the Rushcutter corridor.

Area 2 creek line was heavily infested with Lantana. Matt Atkins, from Gondwana Bush Regenerators, spent many hours removing it and making the site accessible. This allowed us to continue with secondary and follow up work on the site. Matt also assisted with the removal of many Wild Tobacco Trees in the creek and on the banks. Large Cocos Palms were removed by Peter Berecny from Port Tree Fella. This reduced weed load helped prevent weed seeds from germinating on site and spreading further down the catchment.

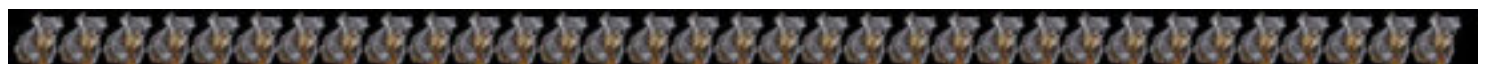
In Area 1 there is a small remnant Rainforest. Gondwana Bush Regenerators removed weeds here because of the steep gradient of the site. They also tackled Morning Glory and Madeira Vine at the top of the site. These weeds would have spread from Timber Ridge at the very top

of the catchment. We have installed an educational sign for the numerous people who use the area. This demonstrates how important funding is to us at Landcare.

After each stage of weeding was completed we planted Gallery Rainforest trees to turn this

waterway back to what it should be, and to improve the health of the corridor. We continue to do maintenance weeding on the site whilst we wait for the trees to grow and do their job for us.

Estelle Gough



Christmas Party 2014



Nursery Natterings



We have been admiring the stand of Jacksonia scoparia that has been in flower for the last few weeks at our Landcare nursery. The soft-orange looks stunning with the grey 'foliage' which is one of their distinctive features. These flat, angular or winged branchlets, are entirely leafless except for when young. These plants are happily growing on the edge of a Eucalyptus woodland.

In September Emily Brock and I attended a history mystery tour of Trial Bay Gaol courtesy of National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS). The gift was in thanks for the help Emily had put in at the nursery during school holidays.

We met our tour guide, Carolyn, from South West Rocks NPWS at the front entrance. As we walked around the grounds she explained how the prisoners worked out on the break wall, which was never completed.

During World War 1 men of Austrian and German descent were interred at Trial Bay Gaol. They were allowed to go fishing, swimming and have some personal time as long as they all returned. We learnt not one internee escaped.

We finished our tour as it started to get dark. Lots of children were participating in the WilderQuest program and making bags. A great and educational afternoon was had by all.

Emily and I would like to personally thank Susan from Port Macquarie NPWS for this amazing opportunity. We were lucky to see whales playing not far from shore, from the top of one of the watch towers.

Thanks again to the NPWS.

Danielle Bermingham



Right: Emily Brock and Danielle Bermingham receive a free pass to Trial Bay Gaol from Susan Phillips of New South Wales Parks and Wildlife Service.

DATE / TIME	EVENT DETAILS	CONTACT
13 January 2014 Commencing 7pm	General Meeting Port City Bowling Club Owen St, Port Macquarie	janetslater1237@bigpond.com

