



Trees Please

A cuddly koala welcomed us, the sun shone, scores of adults and kids came to plant Aussie trees with love. Everything was right for our 2015 National Tree Day! Finding a koala overhead told us we had chosen a good site, despite a last-minute change.

It reinforced a major purpose of National Tree Day: giving koalas and other animals safe passage, by connecting the food trees and bushland they need. Connectivity is becoming even more important because climate change will mean some animals and plants need to migrate to survive. We need green corridors because many species can only live within a certain temperature range.

Green corridors work better if they are wider because this means there's less edge in relation to area – so less opportunity for weeds to invade. Our National Tree Day site at Herschell Street achieved this, widening the bushland by many metres.

Plant diversity also enhances a green corridor, offering different resources to support a greater number of lifeforms which creates alternatives for species coping with variations in the environment.

Our National Tree Day site added 3000 plants, including eucalypts, which were placed to build the forest without adding fire risk for nearby residences. Like any good home, bushland must also have structure and different compartments to suit the various residents and visitors.

Compatible plants were added to make an understorey, with rainforest species creating a moist environment with less build-up of fuel. A complete forest! It will need time to develop but you'll be surprised how quickly it will grow. Soon there will be inviting birds to come and deliver more seeds.



As in 2014, the day could not have happened without the support of the Holiday Coast Credit Union Community Partnership grant for plants, fertiliser and promotion.



Support from Council was also vital to success. Firstly, by making the site available and by our Deputy Mayor Justin Levido attending. We were lucky to have our local member Lesley Williams in attendance and many people from the Natural Resources section of Council.

We thank all the volunteers who took part: our Work for the Dole people who spread the mulch, our Corrective Services Order people who dug hundreds of holes and watered the plants. PMLG volunteers were also essential to the success of the day. They planned, did paperwork, nurtured seedlings, carried, cooked, photographed, planted, and got dirty. Thank you all for your great work!

And let's not forget our local media partner Your Local Independent who publicised the event, ensuring it was well attended.

Julie Ho



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## President's Report

I am sorry to report that the request for helpers last issue fell on deaf ears, this has necessitated a change to our committee, and we will no longer have a publicity officer position. It has been changed to a "committee position" and jobs that arise will be allocated accordingly. The publicity we receive for National Tree Day is extensive so we feel this will be sufficient for our needs at this time.

Further good news on the Camphor Laurel front, Council invested \$11.000 in removal of these weed trees in addition to what already had been done;



not only that but there is \$40,000 allocated in each years' budget for removal of Camphors across the Local Government Area. What a win for the environment.

Our first BBQ with our like-minded group Friends of Kooloonbung Creek Nature Park has been too long coming and hope to have more interaction with this group in the future. They can't wait for us to finish the Wrights and Yarranabee Rehabilitation that helps their area by reducing weed propagules ending in their reserve. The works the

council have planned for this year (dragging the creek from Lord Street to Lake Road) will assist both them and us; another great outcome for the environment.

The winter months have seen excellent progress on all sites and it is wonderful to report that we have commenced on the last of the sites of the Wrights and Yarranabee Creeks. The Taro primary knockdown is complete and now there will be follow up once per year to keep it under control. Well done to the Monday Team who took to the water to get this job done.

Invites about to go out about the Christmas Party - see last page.

## Waterhousea floribunda



The nursery was recently able to assist our great seed collector and avid plantophile, Colleen Werner by supplying "models" for her painting in the form of seedlings held at the nursery. What a great result.



# Managed Public Bushland

Port Macquarie-Hastings Council has a large area of bushland under its jurisdiction. 1500 ha of this bushland is currently managed for weed control and biodiversity conservation purposes (see Figure 1). We call this our “Managed Public Bushland Portfolio”.

Many partners work together on this large area, including Council’s Bushland Management Team, Noxious Weeds Team, and 8 different “Friends of...” and Landcare Groups. Port Macquarie Landcare currently co-manages close to 86 ha of this bushland portfolio (see Figure 2) in Port Macquarie’s urban areas.

Port Macquarie-Hastings Council’s Managed Public Bushland Portfolio is ever-growing, as environmental land is progressively dedicated

to Council for development ‘offset’ purposes.

Once Council adopts an area into its Managed Public Bushland Portfolio, we undertake a commitment to see that area through to “ecological maintenance”, a state where all ecosystem niches have hopefully been filled by native species, thus allowing little opportunity for nasty weed intruders. In this condition, the ecosystem will have high ‘resilience’ against disturbance.

Just over one-third (578 ha) of the “Managed Public Bushland Portfolio” comprises Endangered Ecological Communities as listed under the NSW Threatened Species Conservation Act. The three most common EECs under management include “Swamp

Sclerophyll Forest on Coastal Floodplains” (282 ha), “Littoral Rainforest in the NSW North Coast” (104 ha) and “Freshwater Wetlands on Coastal Floodplains” (102 ha).

These bushland reserves support multiple threatened species of both fauna and flora and also act as incredibly vital wildlife corridors, both locally within Port Macquarie’s urban context and for seasonal latitudinal migrants.

So.....it is clear the enormity of the task at hand and the importance of groups such as Landcare in helping us to protect these incredibly important biological assets.

*Rebecca Montague-Drake*

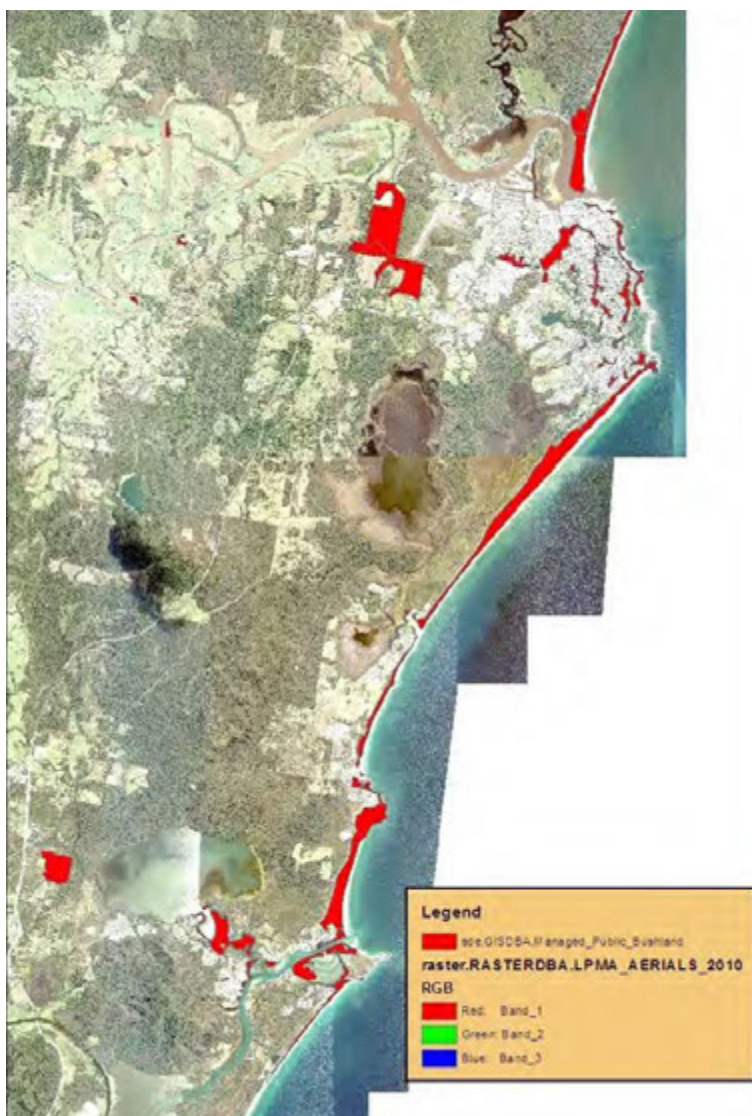


Figure 1: Port Macquarie-Hastings Council’s Public Managed Bushland

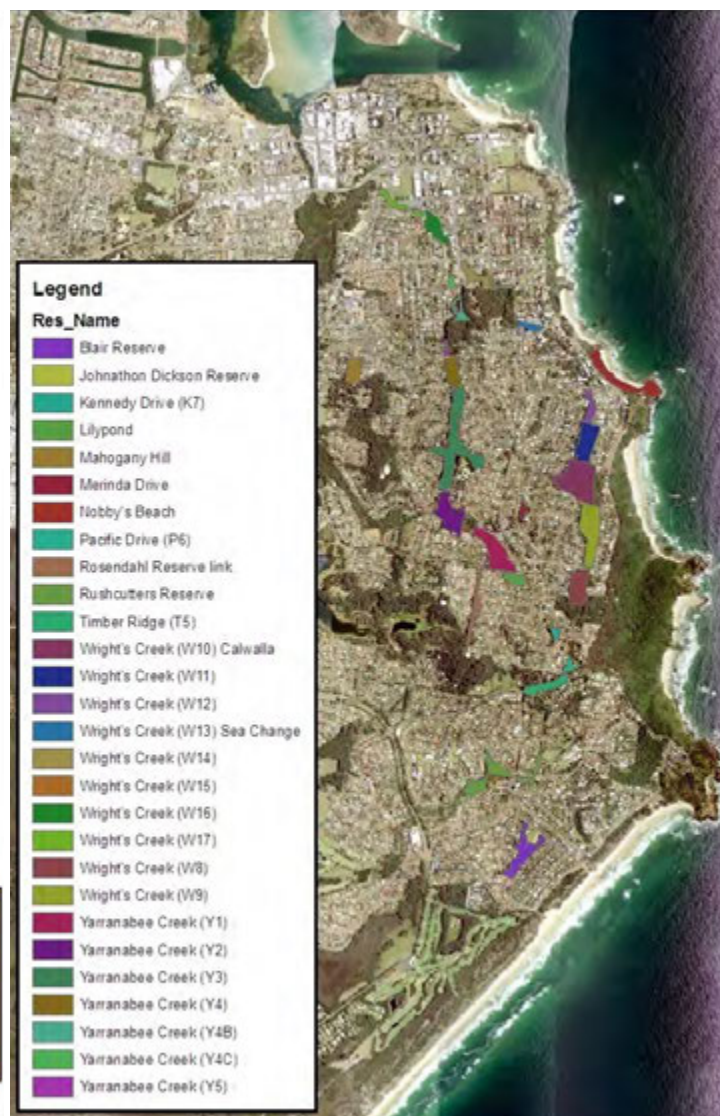


Figure 2: Bushland Reserves Co-managed by PMLG Inc.



# Kooloonbung Creek Thank You Barbecue

At 10 o'clock the rain stopped, just in time for our spring barbecue and tour at Kooloonbung Creek Nature Park. Bronwyn, Brian, Mel, Bruno and Ann set up the shelter and erected the gazebo before the arrival of the Friends and the Landcarers – including many from the Queen's Lake group. We were treated to cakes and fruit while the cooking got started.

Most of the 30 people who came joined Janet Watson's informative walk through the park, to learn about history, ecological communities and what the Friends of Kooloonbung Creek do. Access is easy thanks to the boardwalk, and despite the wet conditions, there were no casualties. Partly because many slippery sections are now covered with chicken wire.

Spring wildflowers welcomed us: greenhood orchids, pink milkmaids, scarlet running postman vines, purple false sarsaparilla, yellow native frangipani and orange shaggy pea. The park is in good condition thanks to the Friends' hard work, and so wildlife is doing well. There were water dragons, bower birds, a shrike-thrush calling, and plenty of chattering

bats near Glebe Close. Council has consulted with residents, and managed to give them some separation from the fruit bat colony, while protecting the animals and their habitat.

One highlight of the walk was seeing the success of taro control, which has improved the habitat for swamp wallabies. Another was the new concrete bike path, along the western boundary, which links to the Googik Track.

We could have spent longer exploring the park, but time was moving on, and the sausages were ready to eat. The lovely setting contributed to everyone's enjoyment of the event. We agreed that Kooloonbung is one of our best attractions, and deserves to be visited more!

It was wonderful to spend time with like-minded people who are equally as passionate about environmental protection as we are.

*Julie Ho*





## Native Plant: Scolopia braunii

Flint Wood is a wonderful small compact shrub, to small tree, for the garden. It tolerates most conditions and grows naturally within dry rainforest to gallery and riverine habitats. Not only that, but it has thorns on most plants so is a great refuge for small birds when predators are about.

It is an excellent plant to grow in tubs because of its compact form. Sweetly scented flowers in spring and attractive flushes of pink new growth mean it is a delight to look at. The fruit adds to the attractiveness of the plant and it changes from green to yellow, orange, red and then black in summer. If kept well-watered and fertilised in good quality soil, it will produce new growth most of the year.



I was lucky enough to be given seeds from a local collector and was able to germinate several trays for the nursery. This was a real boon as many of the fruit are

seedless. If you would like one of these versatile plants for your garden come and visit us at the nursery any Monday between 9am and 12noon. Either wear your Hi-Vis shirt or call in to the NPWS office to obtain one.



## Weed: Liriope muscari

When we plant our gardens we look to many sources to choose our plants - books, TV shows, nurseries and other people's gardens. One of the main things we see constantly are public plantings.

When residents see a successful public planting they want to have that replicated in their garden. That is great when they are not

planting serious environmental weeds like Liriope. The public plantings mainly have sterile versions of these plants but they are more expensive and not readily available to the home gardener. People then resort to friends for easy to grow plants and share excess clumps of Liriope or seedlings.

"These are so easy to grow,"

their friends say. Or people buy the cheaper, non-sterile plants from local nurseries.

We have only started seeing Liriope on our sites in the last six years, after the first plantings by Council of non-sterile plants. It is mostly seen in shaded riparian areas particularly near drain inlets. It is spread through dumped garden waste and transported in water.

These plants are difficult to remove. The whole clump has to be dug out and left up off the soil to dry and die. If it is a mature plant then the seeds need to be taken off-site.



Active management is necessary in all garden situations (remove seed heads and put excess clumps in the green bin) to prevent this plant from degrading bushland.

*Estelle Gough*



# Horticultural Speakers' Day



As I mentioned in the last edition, I was lucky to be asked to be a guest speaker at the Horticultural Speakers Day, held by the Kendall District Gardeners. Every two years four guests are invited to give a talk on any subject related to gardening.

This year the topics were "Gardening's a piece of cake" a very colourful talk from Frith Peters, who explained how with a lot of devotion, disappointment and patience anyone can

flowers in every colour.

Kath Gadd gave an insightful look at "Garden design with Native plants", and as dedicated Landcarer's most of our gardens probably full of native plants. Kath showed us how native gardens can be formal and manicured something which I have not seen before and will definitely be experimenting with this idea.

Kim Gollan who established Dingo Creek

create an oasis bursting with colour in the Australian Outback. Frith's photos were spectacular showing us the barren, dry and treeless plains, dust storms and droughts all while trying to establish her gardens. The end result was incredible with beautifully restored house surrounded by

Rainforest Nursery talked about her efforts in restoring and conserving our endangered Floodplain Rainforests. These Rainforests were destroyed for farming land during early settlement and consequently removing vital pockets of native plants and safe paths for wildlife to migrate.

I wasn't as nervous as I thought I would have been leading up to getting on stage, and even made it through introducing myself and how I got involved with Landcare without having a meltdown, things were looking good...then they turned off the lights and my notes were rendered useless!!!!!! My passion for fungi was what got me through and I managed to deliver my speech resulting in some positive feedback during question time at the end of the day. I have since had contact from Conservation and Bush Regeneration groups wanting to know more about fungi and the roles they play in the environment. I recommend the day to anyone and will let you know dates and topics for the next Horticultural Speakers Day.

*Angela Millett*

## What the Fungi?

*Amanita punctata* is an uncommon fungi I have come across several times in the Port area. This beautiful little gem has a very distinctive volva or sac, this protects the immature fruit until it is strong enough to push through the thin layer, usually resulting in remnants remaining on the cap.

The cap can reach up to 10cm wide and is grey when young, as they mature a white ring becomes evident highlighting the radial grooves at the margin. The

stem tissue looks shaggy and can vary from pure white to having grey flecks, the stem is hollow and up to 10cm tall and 2cm wide. *Amanita punctata* is a solitary fungi but occasionally found in small troops. Found growing on soil in eucalypt and beech forests, seen fruiting during autumn.

*Angela Millett*



# Hazard Reduction Burn

Once again there has been smoke in the air and this is predominantly a result of hazard reduction burning in the area of Acacia Avenue to reduce fuel loads before the predicted hot and dry summer fire season.

Burning off, as it is commonly called can be planned and implemented to reduce or minimise any negative impacts on our native flora and fauna, and although the primary purpose of hazard reduction may be for protection of human life and property this can and should result in protection from wildfire for our environmental assets and our local biodiversity.

When a burn-off is done under mild weather conditions and when the fuel moisture is at optimal levels for control, the destructive

nature of fire becomes almost benign providing benefits that outweigh impacts.

Qualified and informed fire managers ensure that the balance between fuel reduction and environmental principles are managed and the results are low flame height, low scorch height and rate of spread of fire can be as slow as 2 metres per minute or 0.03 km per hour. The burns are also lit in a way which allows a path for any animals, including reptiles, or birds to move away safely.

Australia's native flora and fauna have adapted over many thousands of years to fire events including indigenous mosaic burning. Many plants respond positively to fire in the landscape. While animals may not need fire to reproduce they can benefit from low intensity

burns stimulating food supplies, and differing habitat structure. Creating mosaic burns allows variations in vegetation age classes and habitat structure which can provide and support higher biodiversity values in the landscape.

Extreme fuels loads in flammable vegetation builds up over time and this can result in areas that sustain high intensity fire runs that can have a devastating impact on our native animals as they cannot escape these wildfires.

Fire in the landscape under controlled conditions is good for biodiversity and ultimately helps protect our animals.

*Melinda Losh  
Port Macquarie-Hastings Council  
Bushfire Officer*



This shows the varying burn levels and naturally occurring non-burnt areas as a result of the right weather and fuel moisture conditions.



This critter is observed moving around post burn without injury.

## Council Biodiversity Strategy

Biodiversity Strategy for Port Macquarie Hastings Council.

Port Macquarie-Hastings Council has begun the process of creating a Biodiversity Strategy (first discussed as long ago as the year 2000). The most important steps are to collect information (usually maps), that guide Council's policy deliberations and the development of a strategy. This is important now: because the State Government is re-writing its natural

resource management and biodiversity conservation legislation and amalgamating them into one Act. This Act is likely to stipulate that Local Government will require a Biodiversity Strategy.

The aim of the strategy is to locate and map the biodiversity assets of the Local Government Area (LGA), so that appropriate decisions can be made regarding conservation of our natural heritage, a major reason why we choose to live

in this beautiful area. This will provide information for planning, development and residents to know where to invest and how to obtain funding for nature conservation and land management.

18 months ago, a very important part of the data foundations for a strategy were completed (a Koala population and mapping study and the Ecological Community vegetation mapping). We should all be very pleased that



## Council Biodiversity Strategy continued...

the Councillors and staff are now engaging with the community to collect and analyse the final data sets that will underpin the strategy.

Bill Peel is the Port Macquarie Landcare's community representative on the Community Panel which provides feedback and involvement in this crucial phase for the Council. There is also a scientific panel of local experts that are advising the Council on the process to create tools and maps to help make good natural resource decisions. He is also represented on this panel.

The last two data sets are: the hotspots in the landscape where the greatest diversity of living things occur, in the most concentrated form and where things are restricted (rare or threatened entities occur). This might be number of plants and/or animals, plant communities or threatened species. In this mapping, those areas that are the most heterogeneous shine through: because if you think about it, one patch of bush that is all the same is going to have a smaller suite of species over a large area. Hotspots are those where there are lots of different vegetation

communities in close proximity, with very different groups of plants or animals restricted to or only in one or two vegetation types. This often occurs where there are very different environments in close proximity (coasts are a good example, streams are another). You can easily judge for yourself, by standing in one spot and looking around, if you can see more than one vegetation community and you know of others just out of view nearby, then you are on the money and in a hotspot. Many of the reserves you work so hard to repair are hotspots, with different types of forests, wetlands etc.

The hotspots map gives you two things: an indication of where you should put your conservation effort; and natural resources investment sites, where you probably should not be aiming to develop.

The second map looks at existing patches of bushland and asks the question, where are the best connections, and, if you were to invest in restoring a connection, where can this be done most cheaply with the biggest benefit. The importance of this corridor mapping is that it

helps plants and animals move around the landscape and stay connected genetically. This is really important for building and maintaining strong populations that will have the greatest resilience against changes such as fire, drought or climate change.

Both of these maps provide good data for sound decision making, in particular, how to minimise conflicts between the natural areas of the LGA and human activities that can remove or damage our natural heritage (a key aim of the State Governments new Act). It will ultimately provide a map for investment and the creation of bushland reserves or sites where private land conservation works are most needed. This investment may come from the need to compensate for the impacts of necessary development such as infrastructure (road upgrades, the airport etc): by providing an offset and funding for looking after the types of bush that are to be destroyed because of development.

*Bill Peel  
Ecologist*

## Council Bush Regeneration Team Helps Out



Where would we be without the extra help the Bush Regeneration Team give to us? This steep bank in Crisp Street was a tangled mess of large weed trees that were outside our capabilities. They swung into action with Peter Michael leading the way with a safety talk on working near a chain saw.

With the help of the young Work for the Dole participants, the Landcare volunteers and the other two members of the Bush Regeneration team the site was cleaned up ready for the next stage.

*Estelle Gough*



## Fauna Friend: Pacific Baza

Blair Reserve added another bird species to an already impressive fauna list, on 27 July 2015.

The Pacific Baza (previously known as Crested Hawk) is found in warm-temperate forested and wooded lands (including urban areas) along the east coast of Australia, through tropical NT and as far as The Kimberleys in WA. In NSW. It is rare south of Grafton (Field Guide to The Birds of Australia, *Pizzey & Knight*) but

has been recorded as far south as Moruya.

This species measures 35-45cm from tail tip to beak tip, and has a wingspan of 80-110cm. The photo below shows the prominent erectile crest (which is unique among Australian raptors) and the bright yellow iris. The photo does not show the bold rufous to blackish-brown barring of the belly, flanks, and the under wing primaries which make it a truly

magnificent sight in flight. Sexes are similar. The Pacific Baza is renowned for performing spectacular aerial displays prior to nesting which occurs during October to February. The call of this species is a far-carrying mellow disyllabic whistle which reminds me of a high-pitched sneeze "ah-choo, ah-choo" repeated slowly.

The Pacific Baza is omnivorous with a principal diet of stick insects (at least when breeding). It also takes a range of adult and larval insects (see photo), as well as tree-frogs, nestling birds, lizards and fruit. In addition to slow contour-hunting over the tree canopy, it often perches within the canopy and inspects foliage for prey. But yet another interesting method of hunting is employed when the bird scrambles or drops and crashes through the foliage to disturb prey. I have observed this many times, always a thrill to witness. They are attracted to forest ecotones (edges) such as where there are adjoining watercourses or roads.

Generally considered sedentary, it may be that the Pacific Baza will settle in the Port Macquarie area. Birdwatchers have their fingers crossed!

*Tony Bischoff*



## Meet the Volunteer

I grew up in what was once rural Eastwood in Sydney surrounded by commercial agriculture. Our two acre house block was half bush, a quarter acre of Dad's highly productive vegetable garden, a quarter acre dahlia plot and six bee hives.

Mum always loved animals so we rescued stray cats and dogs. My brother and I were big on budgies. My young life was surrounded by nature.

My recollections of early schooling was of the teacher that would take us on nature walks and give us his deeper explanation of other areas of nature such as Geology. My father wanted to encourage me to go into farming at Hawkesbury Agricultural College but I was very lucky to be able step through the fence

straight into the grounds of Epping Boys High School with its magnificent native vegetation surrounds.

I started University and enrolled in a Science degree with a major in Biology with Chemistry and Physics. I have now retired after teaching Science for 41 years!

In the later years of my tenure at Westport High the students formed a group called the Westport Environment Team. I admit the students became a powerhouse on a range of environment issues not only related to the High School but to the wider

student audience from Bellingen to Taree.

My role with KPS is to be the project manager for the Koala Food Tree Farm on the Maria River Road. For this to succeed the human resources of Port Macquarie Landcare will form a vital part of its beginning and future.

*Graham Hargreaves*





# Annual General Meeting Report

The AGM this year was well attended and everyone enjoyed Rebecca Montague-Drake's very informative talk regarding Council issues that affect us. Rebecca spoke about the Biodiversity Strategy that you can read about elsewhere in this edition authored by Bill Peel, the green groups' representative on the panels.

The report from the Treasurer was well received with our accounts in good order and sufficient funds on hand for our needs.

The year in review showed how much impact the partnerships with Corrective Services and Work for the Dole, adding a massive 2,000 extra hours into the environment. This extra help has allowed us to take on helping return Rushcutter Reserve back to good condition, helping council in the process.

This year also saw us taking on two more affiliated groups, Dunbogan Bushcare Group and Mrs York's' Garden. Our new

project "Koala Corridor" is well underway under the management of Julie Ho.

Our second year of hosting a National Tree Day event was even more successful than the year before. The publicity generated is so outstanding we will be able to change how we run this department. Our Facebook page is going from strength to strength under Nikala Sims' stewardship. Over 250 a day look at the site.

The sub committees for the BBQ'S Christmas Party and National Tree Day are doing a great job keeping these events interesting for our volunteers. Some more willing helpers agreed to participate in these subcommittees to ease the load a bit.

Most of the committee stood again and were confirmed in their positions. We welcome two new people to the committee Joan Wilson, Secretary

Continued over page...



**President & Nursery Manager:**  
Estelle Gough



**Vice President:** Bruno Ryan



**Treasurer:** Ken Gough

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## Annual General Meeting continued...

and Geoff Teasdale an extra committee member. We have utilised the empty and at present redundant position of Publicity Officer to gain an extra willing pair of hands. This committee has always run shorthanded and having Geoff on board to help with the myriad small jobs that come up will be an asset to the group.

The changes to the constitution and standing directions to bring them in line with how our group now operates were passed without comment.

*Estelle Gough*



**Secretary:** Joan Wilson



**Funding Officer:** Julie Ho



**Committee Member:**  
Geoff Teasdale



**Public Officer:** Brian Grant



**Committee Member:**  
Bronwyn Newton

## School Visit



Estelle Gough from Port Macquarie Landcare Group visited Tacking Point Public School to talk to some of the staff about maintaining our Bush Tucker Garden. It was a great opportunity to extend our knowledge about the plants in our garden. Thank you Estelle for volunteering your time. It was much appreciated.

*Linda Jackson*



## Site Profile: Timber Ridge

Time is what the bush needs to recover and look like it has never been disturbed, yet Timber Ridge is showing great results in a very short time: just two and a half years!

Landcare volunteers have returned it to the original Lowland Subtropical Rainforest community. It has become a wildlife corridor with access for walkers. This road reserve and surrounding 1.6 ha have now become community environmental land.

Ecologist Bill Peel says Timber Ridge is a critical location: "The site forms important stepping stone links between Rosendahl Reserve, Rushcutters, Wrights Creek and Yarrabee Creek. It conserves areas of Lowland Subtropical Rainforest, which is a state and federally listed community" (i.e. Endangered Ecological Community). Timber Ridge divides the watershed between Rushcutters catchment and Wrights Creek catchment.

This site included a large road reserve that ran from the roundabout where Timber Ridge meets Pacific Drive, across the back of houses onto Pacific Drive near the private road. The area was degraded, with large infestations of weed trees including Broad Leaved Privet and Coral Trees.



Timber Ridge is a testament to what can be achieved with multiple partners. Council's Bushfire Management Officer played a significant role by removing weed vegetation close to houses, and Council's Bush Regeneration Team sprayed large areas with their Quick Spray unit, saving a lot of time for volunteers.

The road maintenance department from Council reconstructed the road edge on Pacific Drive and removed many Coral Trees at a significant saving to Landcare, then paid for plants from the Community Nursery to

replant the area. Port Tree Fella was engaged to remove weed trees and of course, to supply mulch.

There are still years of work ahead for this site. Cypress, Figs and Beech trees growing together will be removed in stages so as not to open up the site too much. Where the Rainforest canopy was opened by frilling of the Broad Leaved Privets, and around plantings, maintenance weeding continues. Julie Ho and her team are enjoying Sunday mornings here, supported by visits from the CSO team when required.

*Estelle Gough*

## Nursery Natterings

We have received an invitation to quote on 6,000 plants for the Sovereign Hills area, these will be produced over the next 18 months if we obtain the go ahead.

We have commenced putting in the seedlings for the KPS order for 4000 trees.

The Lions Club have taken the remainder of their order for Goal Point. They have put a

lot of work into the refurbishment of this area, the plants are the finishing touch.

We have had a few people away and needed a heavy lifting job done on the Monday that was too wet for the Taro workers; our thanks to Jeff and Ben for coming over and helping out.

*Estelle Gough*



DATE / TIME	EVENT DETAILS	CONTACT
November 10 Commencing 7pm	General Meeting Port City Bowling Club Owen St, Port Macquarie	<a href="mailto:joniwilo541@yahoo.com.au">joniwilo541@yahoo.com.au</a>
November 28 Commencing 5.30pm	Landcare Christmas Party Port Macquarie Race Course Buffet dinner, RSVP by November 20	<a href="mailto:treasurer@landcareportmac.com.au">treasurer@landcareportmac.com.au</a> 6583 6508

Habitatler Team: Nikala Sim and Estelle Gough Email submissions to:

[habitatler@gmail.com](mailto:habitatler@gmail.com)