



ISSUE 1

PORT MACQUARIE LANDCARE GROUP INC

WINTER 2011

President's Report



Welcome to our first edition of The Habitatler. This idea has been kicked around for a number of years but due to lack of volunteers to fill this extra role we could not get it off the ground.

I thank our sub-committee of Renelle Smith, Rex Moir, Bev Sibthorpe, Carol Jungblut and Jo Kerr for their very professional first edition and the dedication they have shown to our cause. I am hoping that everyone will take the opportunity to comment to the contributors and get discussions going.

This year has seen a marked increase in membership with the ever expanding group at Nobbys Beach and growth in numbers on most sites. This in turn has led to new initiatives like the volunteer training manual and getting plant profiles done to complement the species list on the web-site. This work has been able to go ahead as the load of running our group is being shared.

The health of our sites is outstanding and I complement all of you for the effort I know goes into improving our environment. We have seen progress in getting nasty weeds like Madeira vine under control on some sites and Morning Glory on others while some lucky sites have both to contend with. It is all doable as we approach our sites in such a professional way. Well done to all our volunteers!

I take this opportunity to say thanks to some of our supporters, Peter Berecny with his timely loads of mulch that have made our weeding efforts so much easier, Bill and Thor at Council (too many and varied assists to mention here) Matt Atkins and his great machines that have lightened our load and of course all our friends at NPWS who put up with so much from our unruly customers!! Estelle Gough nursery@landcareportmac.com.au

Meet our Volunteer

Julie Ho aged 60 who has been involved with Landcare for 10 years

What got you involved in Landcare? Near my home was a neglected bit of bushland known as "the old quarry" where koalas hung out. When a neighbour asked how we could help the koalas, I thought of Landcare, which I joined through a fellow volunteer guide at Sea Acres. I'd done bush regeneration with the Friends of Kooloonbung. I became Landcare's secretary, and the quarry became a project. Weeds and truckloads of rubbish were carted away and many trees were planted. It still suffers from green waste dumping and vandalism but is growing in resilience.

The other site I manage is Watonga, which is built on a previous school planting. Rainforest is now replacing weeds thanks to weeding, mulching and planting by volunteers. Watonga is part of Lighthouse Beach, where contractors and Council are working to control many weeds including Ehrharta, Acetosa and other vines. Volunteers are essential to the success of this work.

What do you get out of Landcare? Great people to be with; time in the Aussie bush with all its critters and bities; learning about plants and ecology; the challenge of persuading funding bodies to be generous to us.

A memorable Landcare moment: When Roy Sach asked, "What's the job that nobody wants to do?" and I replied, "We are looking for a new president...."

Other interests: beach, travelling, walking, bike riding



Blair Reserve

Blair Reserve consists of 3.13ha and is located at Lighthouse Beach, Port Macquarie NSW. It is bounded by Blair, Pettit, Hart & Hassall Streets, with a buffer of houses between sections of the reserve boundary line and the actual streets. The site was used as a dry weather refuge for an unknown number of domestic stock probably up until the c1970s when housing development increased. It was subsequently left to re-establish as a Swamp Oak & Melaleuca Floodplain Forest. Landcare became involved through a Blair Reserve neighbour Tony Bischoff in 2004. This followed PMHC construction of a boardwalk through the Reserve. Tony had been weeding adjacent to his own property and planting his own plants since c2000, and contacted Landcare to obtain additional (free) plants. The site was assessed and approved as a Landcare project. The challenge was 40 years of weed growth (along with the native regeneration) in a muddy and wet environment.

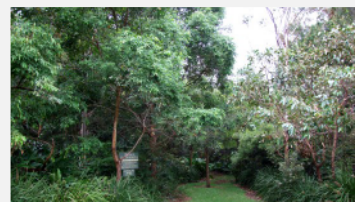
Weeds from the whole site have been removed several times. There is on-going regrowth of several weed species in difficult areas. Chemical spraying with appropriate safeguards has replaced a proportion of hand weeding. Approximately 17,000 plants have been added to the Reserve, including many Koala food trees on the higher ground. The team is working on a successional plan of weed treatment. Attracting suitable long term volunteers is the major challenge. The plan is to move through the successional weed plan to work towards minimal maintenance.



Early days Blair Reserve

Tony Bischoff 65825055, 0408 825055

email tonyward@optusnet.com.au



Blair Reserve

Widderson Street Reserve

Widderson St Reserve is a small reserve of 0.6 of a hectare owned by Port Macquarie Hastings Council. The site was a degraded remnant of open woodland previously overrun with lantana and various annuals and woody weeds. The lantana was removed by local residents in the 1980's. Revegetation works commenced in 2005-2006 and the initial works were conducted by Jai Cooper, member of Port Macquarie Landcare Inc. after receiving Environmental Levy Funding. This funded the regeneration project which he then handed over in 2008 to Ann & Bruno Ryan, who are current site managers. The planned works were to revegetate the site to provide threatened species habitat to koalas, increase biodiversity of both flora and fauna and provide connectivity to surrounding bush land fragments. With the revegetation works now completed and previously planted sites now coming into their third growing period overall site health has been improved. There have been more bird species sighted with the yearly return of the common Koels for breeding. The presence of numerous Camphor laurels has been and will continue to cause minimal regeneration in some areas, benefiting other woody weeds and annuals. Plantings in all zones have had less than 5% plant losses and growth has been consistent mostly due to increased rainfall over the past three years. The regular spraying (and hand weeding) of annual weeds in August, February and the continued treatment of woody weeds as needed will be an ongoing management plan.



Early days - June 2007

Ann & Bruno Ryan 6583 4821

email brunoski54@gamil.com



Widderson - February 2010

Merinda Reserve - Several neighbours help maintain this koala vegetation corridor in Merinda Dr, Calwalla Cres and Bundaleer Ave. Working bees are held quarterly, the main tasks are removing weeds and planting native trees. The biggest threat is other neighbours dumping their garden clippings over their back fences. It would be great to have every neighbour on board - Janet Watson 6582 5265

Hastings Public School - since the 1990s the school community has been working in the school rainforest and the adjacent Yarranabee Creek area. Large infestations of camphor laurel and lantana have been removed and hundreds of native trees planted have restored nearly 2 hectares of rainforest. Many students and parents are willing to help at weekly working bees, but their skills and abilities are limited as is lack of funding by any agency eg Education Dept, council - Janet Watson 6582 5265

Lilypond Reserve - The Pond has reached a stage that only requires minor attention compared to other sites. Although we have some erosion troubles, some non-indigenous trees and weeds to remove and require signage for the area, we are addressing most of it by funding applications now. Hopefully we have achieved most of the aims and objectives started 16 years ago - Ken Errington 6582 3500

Absalom Reserve - Significant erosion during the heavy rain times. Knockdown area along the Ocean Drive area. Neighbours worried about loss of "noise barrier" - Rex Moir 0429680131

Rushcutter Reserve - Some tobacco seedlings occurring near motel side/horse paddock from seeds of now extracted large Tobacco plants. Pockets of Wandering jew in centre of swamp Rushcutter Way side now sprayed. Taro still a significant problem - Rex Moir

Kinny's Timber Ridge - Main transforming weeds are the "Madera vine" and Coastal Morning Glory....but these are within control. Site area is in maintenance mode - Rex Moir

The Vendul Project - area remains in good condition through continued vigilance and consistent follow up by volunteers. This work has included occasional help by professional regenerators, provided by grant monies. Most threatening species have been controlled, with the possible exception of *ehrharta erecta* grasses. Erosion due to heavy seas is quite noticeable - Stephen Cartwright 6582 1009

Nobbys Beach - The majority of the Bitou has now been sprayed by council. We've been pleasantly surprised by the number of native ground covers and tree seedlings, including *Comelina* and *Tuckeroo*, that have emerged in the cleared areas. People on the beach are interested in our work and on average we get one new member each month - Isobel Joiner 6582 6437



WHAT THE FUNGI ???

Welcome, I'm Angie your local amateur macro-biologist and I'm excited to share the fascinating world of fungi with you. My involvement with Landcare is very limited as I have a full time job and two children, but where there's a will there's a way. I have been able to find enough time to follow a hobby of photographing fungi with a lot more direction and purpose.

Fungi are smelly, colourful and sometimes just plain weird, but first we will start with basic mycology 101. Fungi are very different from plants as they do not have roots, leaves or flowers, but produce fascinating fruit. Fungi are a mass of tiny cotton-like strands spreading out like a web. They do not contain chlorophyll and therefore cannot produce their own food through photosynthesis, so this web absorbs nutrients from the hosts on which they live, mostly decaying plant matter. They are very good at recycling - not only plants, but some species will break down animal matter as well. What we see above the ground is the fruit of fungi, like an apple on an apple tree.

This issue I want to introduce the smelliest fungi I know- Stinkhorns. Alien like fruit breaking out of an egg sac, Stinkhorns will continue to smell like rotting meat for about a week, attracting flies and other insects to eat the spore rich gleba. The insects carry the spores to new locations and hopefully deposit them in a prime spot for the next generation to continue the cycle.

Stinkhorn spores are cylindrical like a sausage and tiny, measuring just $4.5 \times 2\mu\text{m}$ on average [μm (micron) = one millionth of a metre]. To get a better idea of just how small these spores are it would take about 440, laying end to end, to reach from one side of a pin head to the other.

Stinkhorns' reproductive system, like that of all fungi, works on the principle of producing a mass of spores on the basis that only some will reach a suitable site, unlike plants, which produce fewer seeds that are full of nutrients giving them time for seasons and animals to play their part. A site that has been freshly mulched will certainly have stinkhorns popping up, as spores are also carried in mulch, so look out for stinkhorns at your site. If you find any other species that you think are new or different take a photo or just let me know as I am always happy to check out different sites - Angela Millett



Aseroe rubra



Aseroe rubra egg sac



Mutinus sp.



Pseudocolus fusiformis

Fauna

As this is the first issue of our new Newsletter, it would be appropriate to outline a few of our lovely and mysterious fauna that live in one of our project sites, the Lilypond. At last count, 117 species of birds have been formerly identified there over the years! The Pond is also home to tortoises, eels, water dragons, land mullet, echidnas, ring-tailed possums, koalas, swamp wallabies, bush rats, bats, frogs, fish, dragon flies, butterflies, leeches, ants, numerous other fauna and insects. We have even seen a voluntary Landcare worker or two roaming the area. All this in just two (2) hectares! Since the restoration and regeneration project started over 16 years ago, we have noticed the coming and going of fauna due to seasonal changes, habitat changes and the natural food chain availability. The jewel in the area is its abundance of lovely fresh water provided by natural springs and storm water run-off, which is purified by the abundance of native reeds and rushes and is the main reason we have so many varieties all year round.

We have one particular section of the Pond we call the "Graveyard" and I'd like to share with you the reason it was so named and it does refer to fauna. Some years ago, one of the neighbors backing onto the Pond had a daughter who just loved all living things. When anything died or was found dead, she would bury it and strew flowers upon the grave. We found this rather big grave one day and one of our helpers at the time saw the daughter over her fence and asked her what it was. She sadly replied that it was her pet snake. She had wrapped it inside an electric blanket, because it was cold, turned the blanket up to the highest setting and forgot to turn it off. The result was one cooked snake. We had a smile on our faces and we hope you enjoyed that little anecdote! Ken Errington. lilypond@midcoast.com.au

Native Plant



Melastoma affine — Common name: Bluetongue

This plant has recently been recorded in the Port Macquarie Hastings LGA at Macquarie Nature Reserve, the North Shore and at Diamond Head. Previously, it was believed its range was to Kempsey. It is a small to medium attractive shrub which is fast growing and adapts well to a variety of soils and conditions, although best flowering is achieved in full sun with a good water supply. The large showy flowers last only a few days but are produced over many months. These are followed by blue-black fruit with a sweet edible flesh which will stain the mouth a dark bluish colour, hence the common name Bluetongue.

In our reserves we would find it in littoral Rainforests, wet sclerophyll forest and subtropical floodplain forest on sand, so keep your eyes open for this beautiful new comer.

Nursery Natterings

Morning Tea, is it important? Recently the nursery was so busy that everyone forgot to allocate this job for the next week, so what did our resourceful team do? They all brought morning tea.....What a banquet!!

Invitation: The nursery team extend an invite to Landcare Members to join us for morning tea any Monday around 10.00am. You can then take a tour of the nursery to see this vital hub at work.

Warning: NPWS Rules- please park in the street and wear Hi Vis shirt to enter the depot. Phone Estelle 0432 141 605 or Anne Rudd 6586 0810 to let us know you are coming.



Visit: We recently had a visit from the nursery manager of Floragro, Terry Flanagan. He was so impressed he sent us a thankyou email telling us "You guys Rock"!!! The nursery team nursery@landcareportmac.com.au

JULIE - you secretive star - Sorry, we had no idea you had been declared the Grand Champion Volunteer of the Year.

WHAT AN ENVIRONMENTAL ICON!!!
WHAT A BEACON OF LIGHT ON A RAINY DAY!!!
WHAT A FANTASTIC FLOWER IN A SWAMP FULL OF WEEDS!!!



You get the picture. The Blair Reserve Team is very proud of you and the fact you have been recognised right across the world for the champ you are. Congratulations!!!
On behalf of John & Jenny Reeve, Robo Pearson, John Seward, Albert X, Steve Ho and Tony Bischoff. Plus Blair deserters - Johnny Wallace & Big Phil Reynolds.

Fascinating Facts

- ◆ 80% of the flowers in Australian rainforests are not found anywhere else in the world
- ◆ The platypus swims with its eyes shut ◆ The male platypus has venom strong enough to kill a small dog
- ◆ The female green sea turtle lays its eggs in the same place as it was born and returns to the same place each year to lay eggs

REDBACK BOOTS - Recently Tony Bischoff purchased Redback elastic side boots, soft toe, from the internet - @ \$76.90 including a free pair of work socks, and delivered direct to his door. The business name is Aussie Work Boots, the owner is Tony Goldyn. Asked about a catalogue, he said to just look under eBay where all his shoes are for sale. Below is the email address.

BOOTS_Tony Goldyn
E-mail Address: tonygoldyn@hotmail.com
Personal Information: Mobile: 0449 256 929

Weeds



Ehrharta erecta Lam.

Panic Veldt Grass is invading reserves in Port Macquarie so **trial plots** at Lighthouse Beach are investigating how to manage it here (involving seed banks, mulch, herbicide, native groundcovers). Information comes from WA where it has been a weed for many years.

Source: <http://florabase.calm.wa.gov.au/browse/profile/348>

Origin Africa, temperate Asia. **Similar native species:** *Microlaena stipoides*.

Growth form: Grass to 0.45 m high. Photosynthetic pathway C3 (adapted to cool season establishment, grows in wet or dry environments). Perennial; caespitose (small dense clumps or tufts).

Reproduction: Seed, short rhizome (a creeping stem, usually below ground, having nodes

and internodes with adventitious roots)

Dispersal: Water, wind, birds, slashing/mowing. **Seed bank persistence:** Possibly short, 1 yr.

Fire response: Resprouts, enhances seed production and germination.

Notes: Can rapidly spread and mature. Capable of outcompeting native grasses and herbs. Accumulates large amounts of litter beneath plants, which has been identified as one of the mechanisms of competitive exclusion. Dominates ground and understorey layers. Thrives in sun or heavy shade. Tends to prefer moist, shady sites, having a high level of shade tolerance. Sets prolific seed over an extended period. Formation of seed occurs rapidly, within several weeks of flowering. Mowing aids establishment.

Suggested management : Dig out small outbreaks including rhizomes, bag and remove.

Alternatively spray with Fusilade® Forte 30 ml/10 L + wetting agent on actively growing and unstressed plants. Use unplanned fires to spray regrowth and seedlings within 4-6 weeks of germination.



The Story of Stuff - Ever wondered why we have so much stuff? Annie Leonard, author of "[The Story of Stuff](http://www.storyofstuff.org/)" (published by Free Press of Simon and Schuster) did and she has spent nearly two decades investigating environmental health and justice issues. Travelling to around forty countries and visiting literally hundreds of factories where our stuff is produced and the dumps where our stuff ends up. Having coordinated the Funders Working Group for Sustainable Production and Consumption, she currently is the Director of **The Story of Stuff Project**. The Story of Stuff website provides several stories on subjects such as bottled water <http://storyofstuff.org/bottledwater> or electronics <http://storyofstuff.org/electronics> which cover the topics of why we want to buy stuff and what happens when we are finished with them.

Nightmare!

weed.....
weed.....
weed.....
then repeat



Comic Corner

Landcare
worker
Robo
always
enjoys
sinking his
teeth into
weeding
out Morning
Glory from
Blair
Reserve



Helmuth - worms have all the
protein and nutrients you need!



Ian - Hmmmm I must get in touch
with my soul!



Boss Tony - shows us
how its done!

LANDCARE SAYS FAREWELL TO "BIG PHIL" REYNOLDS

Every morning at Landcare you could hear him arrive,
He was six feet tall and weighed 105,
Kinda broad at the shoulder, and broader at the waist,
The weeds all knew they were gonna to taste -
The bio-spray of Big Phil !!!

I am writing this having just climbed out of my influenza death-bed, and with only one eye following a pterygium operation, but such is the dedication inspired by people such as "Big Phil".

This great man came to Landcare (Blair Reserve is where I knew him) on 18 November 2008 and stayed for over 2 years. But it could have been the equivalent of 20 years, for Big Phil and his rattling Ute worked like a team of Giants. He tackled all jobs without question – tearing into weeds big & small; digging holes like a machine then planting & bagging; moving loads of mulch like there was no tomorrow. He was always transporting Landcare gear from site to site in his Ute, and helping other Landcare projects however he could. Nothing seemed to be too much trouble for Phil.

Big Phil used his knowledge of local weeds to great advantage when he moved to the backpack spray, his favorite job of all. Phil undertook his work with good spirit and enthusiasm. His gentle nature and especially his ready sense of humor, carried his fellow workers through some tough hard-yakka days. He truly was a "funny bugger". On the serious side, Phil was a font of knowledge on many subjects and his opinions were always valued during our smoko conversations. Big Phil was an absolute joy to have on our work site, and he is sorely missed. I even built a special "Giant" table when we celebrated his Landcare contribution over a farewell smoko! But life does move on. We at Landcare join together to wish Big Phil Reynolds every possible success in his future undertakings - Tony Bischoff



Upcoming Events

<p>Hastings Public School fete Saturday 20 August 2011 10am to 3pm Waniora Parkway Port Macquarie</p> <p>Landcare volunteers are being sought to help man the PML display marquee from about 10am til 2pm. Please contact Rex Moir 0429680131</p>	<p>Everyone is welcome to visit the school rainforest during the fete event. Over the past few years the site has been transformed from a camphor laurel forest with dense lantana understorey, with thanks to assistance from Port Macquarie Landcare (funding and volunteers) and the school's Environment Friends students. It is a PML project site, and the local volunteers will be conducting guided tours on the day. There will also be rainforest treasure hunts for the kids, and native plant sales.</p> <p>For more information contact Janet Watson on 6582 5265</p>
<p>Port Macquarie Landcare AGM Tuesday 13 September 2011- 7pm Port City Bowling Club Owen Street Port Macquarie</p>	<p>At the AGM this year all the positions will be vacant and anyone can nominate for any position. Most of the committee are renominating for their positions but there will be 3 positions vacant, these are Publicity Officer, Secretary and a Committee Member. Although Peter Crundwell is stepping down from the Committee position he will remain as our Technical Support Officer. We don't see much of Peter at the meetings but he has done a lot of work behind the scenes and on the Website. Janet Watson is stepping down, she has done a great job over her time in this position but feels it is time for a chance for someone else to have the opportunity to fill this essential role on the committee. Anne Rudd is also stepping down as secretary after 12 months due to family issues.</p> <p>Anyone interested in the Publicity Officer role could phone Janet Watson on 6582 5265 or email gavjan1@gmail.com, the Secretary or the Committee position contact Estelle on 0432 141 605 or nursery@landcareportmac.com.au The organisation is only as strong as it's committee so please, add your skills to our committee.</p>
<p>Volunteers Spring BBQ Sunday 18 September 2011 9am at Lilypond Reserve Mimosa Drive Port Macquarie</p>	<p>To celebrate the arrival of Spring, come join us in Lilypond Reserve. A guided walk around the Lilypond and a BBQ. This is an opportunity to introduce family, friends and interested people to one of our sites.</p> <p>For more information phone Ken 6582 3500</p>

Humankind has not woven the web of life. We are but one thread within it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves. All things are bound together. All things connect. - Chief Seattle, 1855

Be kinder than necessary, for everyone you meet is fighting some kind of battle
Always keep your words soft and sweet, just in case you have to eat them!



Port Macquarie
Landcare

NEW VOLUNTEERS WELCOME