

Mid Murray Landcare SA

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Activity Update June 2021

This activity update is for the month of June. If you would like to be on our mailing list and receive this free update, please email Aimee Linke on the above email address or view on webpage. These projects are made up of several sources of funding including Grassroots Grants, a WIRES Landcare Grant and the Iron Grass Grassland Project plus some other small grants and contract work. Rowena Danks formerly from Murray Mallee LAP is supporting the delivery of some of these projects.

Meldanda

1. Managed the volunteers, camp bookings, provision of materials and equipment and all necessary administrations including invoicing and banking for Meldanda. Kept neighbors informed of any camp bookings.
2. Volunteers Sheralee and Paul have installed the new Bushtucker and plant id signs around Meldanda, thanks to a grant from Friends of Private Bushland. Social media post about this on 26.06.21
3. Volunteers Andy and Paul and Sheralee have been clearing the fenceline along the paddock of roly poly and burning to help reduce summer fire risk. Volunteers Sheralee, Andy and paul got the facilities ready for a weekend scout camp. Echunga Scouts camped at Meldanda overnight.



Figure 1 Clearing the fenceline of roly poly.



Figure 2 new bushtucker signs installed.

4. Michelle Holloway (Cambrai Primary School Principal), Grace Love (Cambrai Primary School Governing Council), Chris O'Keefe Cambrai School Student support officer and groundsman), Chris Tugwell (Chair MM Landcare) and Aimee Linke met on the 3rd of June to discuss Meldanda.
5. We had a videographer from Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board who came to video some of the volunteers working at Meldanda 22.06.21.
6. Mid Murray Council spent 3 days removing about 20 tons of cactus that had grown next

to the Marne. They did an amazing job, especially so close to the river's edge. The volunteers have been over the site and collected any small fragments they could find to dispose of. We will monitor the site regularly and get any seedlings when they germinate, see before and after photos below.



Figure 3 Large cactus at Meldanda alongside Marne 09/03/21



Figure 4 large cactus removed 22/06/21 thanks to MM Council.

Community Nursery

7. Volunteer Cryss Filsell and been working on a propagation calendar for the nursery, which will include all the plants we have in the seed production area at Meldanda.
8. We have been selling more plants to people from Adelaide, Cambrai, Blanchetown, Mannum, and Black hill, have donated 350 Old man saltbush (*Atriplex nummularia*) to two local graziers. Also donated some plants to Mark Metcalf who manages several heritage agreement properties.
9. Volunteers Cryss and Brenton have been doing a winter clean-up at the nursery ready for spring propagation time, it is looking more organised and tidier. Brenton mulched up some plant cuttings that we had a pile of, and we added them to the front garden.
10. Provided Kieren Glenn MMC Engineer Infrastructure some plant suggestions for a swale at Tungkillo.
11. ABC Radio interview about the Cambrai Community Nursery and the nectar plants we have available 10.06.21.

Committee & other

12. Managed the office, volunteers and all necessary administrations including monthly payment of bills, reports, managing webpages and social media posts, scanned all receipts and reconciled monthly accounts in XERO.
13. Supported the monthly Landcare Committee meeting on 10th of June, we held it at Towitta Park and got to see the new telescope pad.



Figure 3 Towitta Park

14. Submitted a Grass Roots Grant application through NY Landscape Board to engage with First Nations Peoples with the Western Pygmy Possum project in the Tothill Ranges.
15. Provided a support letter to Worlds End Conservation Group for their grant application for NY Grass Roots Grant.
16. Meeting with Kylie Moritz, Scott Hutchens, and Alex Emmins from Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board to discuss a potential healthy Rivers grant submission to help control Yellow Water lily.
17. Held a volunteer BBQ at the back shed at Meldanda, the volunteers did a lovely job getting it set up and it was nice to spend some down time together.



Figure 4 Volunteer BBQ at the Meldanda back shed.

River Murray International Dark Sky Reserve

18. Chris Tugwell attended the Landscape Board Volunteers lunch at Murray Bridge.
19. Chris Tugwell provided a Dark Sky talk - Barossa Combined Probus group (~100 attended)
20. Chris and Aimee attended a Meldanda meeting with the Cambrai Primary School, agreement to promote Dark Sky events and seek funding for infrastructure.
21. RMIDSR Committee Meeting held on 11.06.21 at Cambrai. Chris Tugwell and other Dark Sky Committee members marked out proposed Meldanda telescope pad sites.
22. Chris Tugwell provided input into the telescope pad signage.
23. Chris was interviewed for an SA Life article on the RMI Dark Sky Reserve



Figure 5 new telescope pad installed at Towitta Park by MMC



Figure 6 one of the new telescope pad signs by MMC

Irongrass Grasslands Project

24. We have had 12mm of rain on the trial site at Meldanda in May.
25. Attended a workshop by Christine Jones at Stockwell hosted by BIGG and supported by Northern Yorke Landscape Board. Christine talks about the importance of plant diversity and soil microbes in relation to soil health.
26. Picked up the 51 replacement plants from Kersbrook Nursery which includes *Geranium retrorsum*, *Crysocephalum apiculatum*, *Ptilotus spathulatus*, *Whalenbergia sp.* Took some photos of some of the roots, *Ptilotus* was like a carrot, see photo below right.
27. Volunteer Brenton ran a new irrigation line over to the seed boxes at the Cambrai Community Nursery to make the irrigation more reliable.
28. **Wicking bed trial** – Showed the Mid Murray Landcare Committee the trial on 10.06.21.



Figure 7 Wicking bed trial with Landcare Committee, photo by Helen Crisp.



Figure 8 *Ptilotus* root

29. **Trials** – Collected seed for trials ordered through Succession Ecology and dropped to Mt Pleasant ready for Seeding natives to batch up for sowing. 15.06.21
30. Pre-trial monitoring at Trevor Prestons with Kate Graham and Sara Barnes 16.06.21
31. Attended training organised by Anne Brown on 'Making Money from Grass' a manual developed to help guide farmers to making decisions about grazing and when to graze, held at Trevor and Katie Preston's 23.06.21
32. Organised contractor from Clare to spray the 2Ha revegetation trial site at Greg Halls property, it was sprayed on 30.06.21.



Figure 9 Ute load of seed for trials from Succession Ecology



Figure 10 "Making Money Out of Grass" training day.

33. **SPA** – bought 100metres of chicken wire to put around the SPA, baby rabbits are currently getting through the existing chicken wire and munching out on our plants. Volunteers Sheralee, Greg, Wayne and Andy have started putting the new wire up.

Western Pygmy Possums

34. Have been contacting landholders who have boxes installed in the Riverland, volunteer Graham Frahn will start visiting them to inspect their boxes and collect any missing data sheets.
35. Social media post on 2nd June about the Workshop held with Worlds End Conservation group.
36. Western Pygmy Possums are using old beanies as nests that were hung up in trees at Ashville, which is about 10 kms south of Wellington East. We posted this story on social media, the Western Pygmy Possum Facebook Page [\(10\) Western Pygmy Possums | Facebook](#)
37. Rowena Danks has been sorting out the mapping, and we have been sending them to landholders to confirm the locations, this has been such a great help.

WIRES

38. Picked up the tubestock we ordered from Kersbrook Landcare Nursery. Made up some mixed boxes of nectar plants for farmers.
39. Loaded up the trailer to drop off nectar plants, tree guards, mesh guards, dropper's possum, and bat boxes to farmers for the project. Social media post about the project 09.06.21.

40. Prepared and submitted final report for the project,

- we had 89 Western Pygmy Possum (WPP) boxes installed over 21 properties, some of these areas are prime habitat for these species with large areas of remnant vegetation with key nectar plant species.
- We were able to speak to people about the value of diverse habitat, provide nectar plants and tree guards to farmers and 40 mesh tree guards to 3 different farmers to protect naturally regenerating trees from stock grazing.
- We did bat monitoring at 6 different properties, some landholders did them more than once, we also provided 20 bat boxes made by our volunteers.
- We held a WPP box workshop at Burra with the SA Museum Waterhouse Club when we made 40 boxes to support the project, we put them up in the Tothill Ranges.
- We held another WPP box workshop at Read Creek Hills with Worlds End Conservation Group and other volunteers. We had 36 people attend the event and it was supported by our Landcare volunteers who ran the box making part of the day and SA Museum Dr Steve Donnellan (Head of Research and Collections) who spoke about the project and the potential pressures of climate change on our native fauna like the WPP.
- We also made some nest baskets at the workshop to trial these on some properties as habitat enhancement.
- Through this project we have made some great new connections and networks with Bushland Conservation Pty Ltd, Friends of Parks, World's End Conservation Pty Ltd, Burra Revegetation Group, volunteers, and landholders.
- We also had some great communication opportunities through the project, spoke on Riverland ABC Radio and had more people join and share on our Western Pygmy Possum Facebook page.

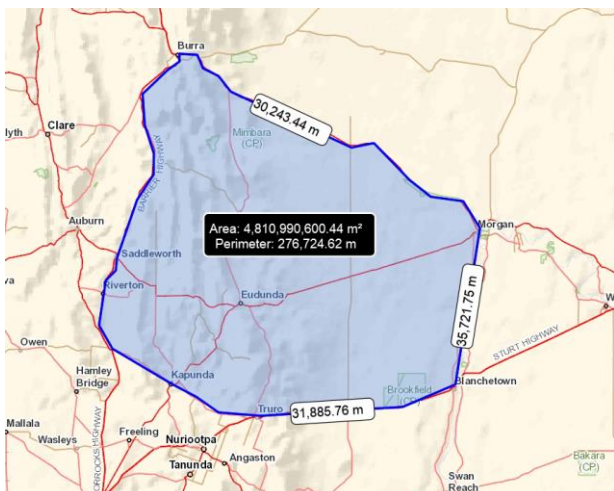


Figure 11 map of WIREs project area



Figure 12 boxes, plants and guards dropped off for farmers.

NY Grass Roots Grants

41. Social Media post about the native grasslands Workshops on the 2nd of June, post reach was 198 people.
42. Held the Grazing Naturally workshop presented by Dick Richardson on 25th June at the Eudunda sports clubrooms. We had the event catered for by local caterer Kooky Katering Kafe. We had 17 people attend the event, everyone enjoyed the day, Dick is a very engaging speaker.
43. We had evaluation forms for the workshop and some of the comments were “Great passion on the subject”, “Very interesting and engaging”, “grazing rate and effect on root and soil structure was really good”, “well organised and presented”. Everyone said that they would recommend the training to others. Other topics people were interested in included paddock walks, native plant and weed id, habitat boxes, fauna surveys and Aboriginal cultural awareness.
44. Have had a farmer ring up since the workshop who was interested in doing some trials on his property and wants to encourage dung beetles on his land.



Figure 13 Dick Richardson talking to the group about plant roots.



Figure 13 showing soil structure.



Figure 15 grass roots from under a tree