



# Mid Murray Landcare SA

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## Activity Update October 2021

This activity update is for the month of October. 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, the Iron Grass Grassland Project, Healthy Rivers Grant plus some other small grants and contract work.

## 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. We had some Astro photographers camp at Meldanda, a family of four and a family of two.
3. Volunteers kept up with maintenance, weeding, watering, cleaning, spraying, and sorting out septic and other irrigation issues.
4. We had a group of 4 families camp for 3 nights. Plus 2 other different lots of campers during the school holidays. Some star gazers also camped a couple of nights.
5. Darren Reid from MMC helped the septic issues and we have let the school know that a new soakage trench needs to be dug.
6. MMC Lachlan Graetz mowed the large areas for us, which include the Astronomy Paddock, near the Seed Production Areas and the large campground.

## Community Nursery

7. Volunteers Cryss, Brenton and Royce have been propagating *E. largiflorens* (Black Box or River Box) and other Eucalyptus species, *Sida corrugata*, *Goodenia pinnatifida* as well as potting on *Clematis microphylla* (Old Man's Beard)
8. We got one of our volunteers back from winter pruning, Mick Lowe who will help in the nursery.
9. Donated some native tube stock to a landholder in Palmer for a Landscape Officer who had removed some olive trees from the property.
10. Supported landholder from Cowirra with floodplain community species selection to assist with project on Council land.

## Committee & other

11. 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. Organised for some new tyres to be put on the work ute.
12. Sent out agenda, minutes, correspondence list, and financial report for September to the Committee, we held our monthly meeting at Meldanda.
13. Completed and sent Mid Murray Landcare Grass Roots Grants final report with all the supporting documentation, which is quite extensive. It has been accepted and approved.
14. Completed and sent final report for Small Grass Roots Grant for community group 'Murray Eco Arts Kollektiv'. It has been accepted and approved.
15. Dug up the "soil your undies" Citizen Science experiment, posted them off and uploaded photos to project site. There was no obvious difference with the 2 pairs I buried, one was under wild oats, they were damper when I pulled them out, compared to the ones buried under wild geranium. Results can be found here [Cotton Soil Map \(cottoninfo.com.au\)](http://cottoninfo.com.au)
16. Organised a Eucalyptus Identification workshop which will be held at Meldanda on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of November, details can be found on our website [www.midmurraylandcaresa.org.au](http://www.midmurraylandcaresa.org.au)
17. Rowena Danks in partnership with the SA Regent Parrot Recovery group has prepared a workshop which will promote Bee Friendly Farming Program, which covers not only bees but other pollinators in crop production. A webinar has been tentatively booked in for Pollinator Week in November (6-14<sup>th</sup>).
18. Rowena Danks has been organising seed collecting for the seed production areas in the Murray Mallee, *Leptospermum coriaceum* (Mallee Tea-tree) seed has been collected by Blackwood Seeds for the Mantung SPA. This seed has been collected from north of the river to access northern province seed with the aim of a more climate change resilient plant.
19. Rowena Danks – *Lasiopetalum* seed has been sent to Blackwood seeds to be cleaned and seed bags have been placed over seed pods in the SPA and will be monitored for collection as they ripen.
20. Provided a letter of support for National Parks and Wildlife Service Friends of Parks 'Partnership Grants' Program for Friends of Burra Parks 'Mid North Parks restoration project'
21. Purchased a chainsaw, pole pruner and hedge trimmer, plus safety gear, oil etc. for MACAI as part of the Small GRG we are supporting for the group. All the equipment has been delivered to the group by Phil McNamara.
22. Rowena Danks - Pollinator Week is coming up in November (13<sup>th</sup> -21<sup>st</sup>). Check out how you can get involved and have a look at the activities that are happening in Pollinator Week near you or online. Like the **Powerful Pollinators - planting to create havens for pollinating insects webinar**.  
Go to <https://www.australianpollinatorweek.org.au/event/powerful-pollinators/> to register.
23. **Regent parrots** – supported a workshop Rowena Danks ran from Loxton called 'Encouraging Biodiversity in Horticulture', it was also presented online which was great. There

were some interesting speakers, on pollinators, almonds and the Regent Parrot.

24. **Regent Parrots - MD Healthy Rivers Grant** - The 6 weeks of Regent Parrot surveys have been completed. A summary of the surveys will be provided soon.

## River Murray International Dark Sky Reserve

25. The RM Dark Reserve Committee meeting was held in October.
26. The Light Pollution brochure was picked up by one of our volunteers Brenton Jay from Print City in Murray Bridge. A PDF version was sent to the Council to use on their website or other.
27. Chris Tugwell submitted the annual report for the Dark Sky Reserve on time to the IDA
28. A photo has been chosen for Smithsonian Exhibition
29. Chris Tugwell had a meeting with the Trade and Investment Minister James Paterson, they met at the Swan Reach Hotel, went to the Big bend lookout with the new telescope pads and signage and to Paul Haese's Observatory. Other attendees were mayor Dave Burgess, Bill Nehmy, Kelly Kuhn, Ben Scales, Jake McVicar, and various ministerial staff
30. Chris Tugwell has received the drawings from architecture Graham Hardy for visitor centre, planetarium etc.
31. Paul Haese has offered to host a sky quality meter at his observatory site near Swan Reach
32. Council ratified the Astro tourism strategy unanimously without any changes, they are looking at appointing a staff person.
33. Kelly Kuhn had a meeting with State Premier about the Dark Sky Reserve
34. The Chief Scientist is meeting with the Minister for Skills and Innovation and will talk about the Dark Sky Reserve
35. Chris will be talking about the 'Creating the River Murray International Dark Sky Reserve' for ASSA on the 3rd of November
36. Joe Grida will be joining the Dark Sky Committee and will be the Astronomical Society of SA representative.

## Irongrass Grasslands Project

37. We have had 26.5mm of rain on the trial site at Meldanda in October.
38. **SPA** – Aimee and volunteers have been weeding in the seed production areas. Cryss has been potting on some seedlings that have come up so we can have them in the nursery. Sheralee and Paul sprayed around the edges of the fenced areas, while Wayne mowed down the barley grass. Cryss collected seed from *Maireana excavata* (Bottle Bluebush) which is endangered in South Australia and *Ptilotus spathulatus*, while Sheralee started harvesting *Minuria leptophylla*. Mick at the nursery harvested some *Glycine* seed from one of the seed boxes.
39. **Flora Surveys** – Georgie Keynes property finished mapping with Sara Barnes. We found a nice patch of B-minus, which means it had a great diversity of grassland species but no *Lomandra effusa*.
40. **Trials** – Poonthie Ruwe – uploaded photo point photos to Dropbox and sent to the team.



Figure 1 *Ptilotus spathulatus* starting to set seed.



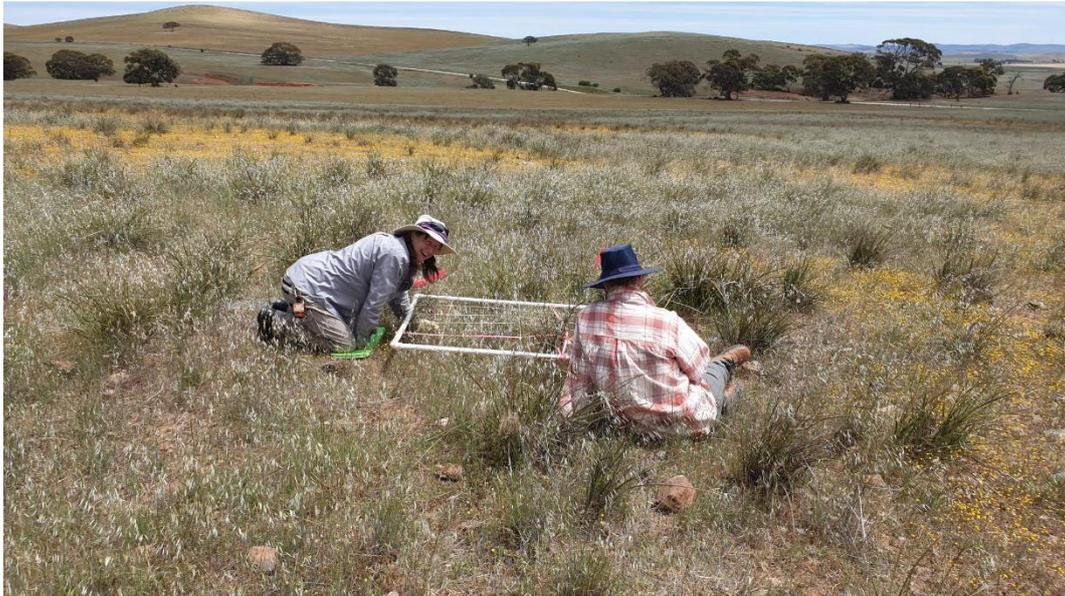
Figure 2 *Maireana excavata* seed

41. A group of people set out to monitor the Long-Term Monitoring (LTM) sites and Trial sites. The expedition included Alex Emmins from Riverland and Murraylands Landscape Board as a training experience. We also had Dr Lucy Clive from Nature Foundation join us to learn how we do our vegetation assessments, to possibly use in the management of Tiliqua.

Day 1 Lucy Clive, Nicola Barnes, Wendy Stubbs, Alex Emmins and Aimee Linke met at Truro and travelled out to a trial site north of Truro known as Dietrich's. Aimee realigned the mapping for the site on the device while Nicola showed the others some native plant identification. Next stop was to set up the monitoring tapes at Schneider's, which is LTM site, took the photo with the device, Nicola, Wendy, and Lucy stayed to do the monitoring. Aimee and Alex headed off to another LTM site known as Leakes's Pass and I taught Alex Emmins how we do the monitoring and some plant identification.

Day 2 the whole team including Rowena Danks, Kate Graham and Diago headed for Terowie from Burra where we monitored Sleep's property. There are trial sites set up and 6 different monitoring quadrats to do. It was a long 10-hour day and was great to have the extra help so we could get it all done. Diago who is supporting the project from Adelaide University is gathering drone footage over the trial and LTM sites to get a better picture of "year-round green".

Day 3 Kate and Lucy came and helped me, and Rowena set up the tapes at the MEC LTM site which we monitored, it is a very steep hillside but does have some Kangaroo grass. When we finished, we went and helped Kate and Lucy finish the LTM known as Kurculoo. Then we went to Mokota to help Nicola finish the LTM there. Diago did some extra drone work with Anna Senior, the Conservation Ecologist for the Park.



*Figure 3 Kate and Lucy monitoring LTM at Kurculoo*

42. **Wicking bed trial** – Brenton and Aimee topped up the water tank with approximately 180 litres of water. The landholder Georgie Keynes is going to fence around the trial beds and graze the property soon, the annual grasses are very high.

## Western Pygmy Possums

43. Rowena Danks social media post about a WPP trapped in a bucket in Western Australia.
44. Tim Pascoe reported on a pygmy possum that was captured in one of the pit lines that had been set up at Gluepot for a kid's campout. Tim will place a nest box in the area where the possum was caught.
45. Ann Williams who attended our WPP workshop we held at Bowhill shared some of her nest box designs, she also has camera's set up on the boxes and gets some great images of the possums.



*Figure 4 nest box designs provided by Ann Williams*