

# Holbrook Landcare Network

## CHAIR'S REPORT 2019-2020

This year has been a busy year for Holbrook Landcare with the celebration of our 30 years being an active and strong Landcare and producer network in southern NSW. Our celebration was well attended by the leaders of National and State Landcare organisations and politicians, and a range of partners and members. The information and presentations really showed what an impact HLN has had over the years in the economic contribution and the landscape changes.

After the highs of celebrating at the end of 2019, 2020 proved quite challenging for our members and the community with major bushfires on our doorstep over the new year and the COVID restrictions that have been in place most of the year. Fortunately, we were able to adapt quickly and the efforts made to get our operational systems up to scratch paid off, with the transition to online working and extension was relatively seamless.



We farewelled our Executive Officer for the past five years, Dale Stringer in January. Dale left to take a new job with the Murray LLS and still works closely with us. We would like to thank him for his 5 years of leadership and the commitment to organisation and the producers. Dale has really increased our reputation and collaboration with the other farming systems groups and drove a really strong sustainable ag program. We also welcomed a new staff member, Nick McGrath, to the team and would like to acknowledge the contribution he is already making to our soils programs.

HLN has posted a modest profit for the 2019/20 year, which is the first substantial profit for a few years. The organisation's financial position is now very healthy and we have rebuilt the savings that will be used to carry us in leaner times, and have funds to reinvest in the organisation and leverage in future funding bids.

I'd like to thank our members and advocates very much for their ongoing support and we look forward to 2021.

Colin Geddes  
BOARD CHAIR



### VISION

An economically and socially resilient rural community demonstrating strong environmental stewardship.

### MISSION

We exist to support our rural community to achieve positive and enduring changes in agricultural productivity, environmental sustainability and social capacity in the region.

### GOAL

To be a dynamic, member driven, nationally recognised, financially stable organisation that creates opportunities to improve natural resource and sustainable agriculture outcomes in the high rainfall mixed farming zone of southern NSW.

# STRATEGIC GOALS

**GOAL 1** HLN has an engaged and connected membership that is growing, and their needs are being well met.

## 2019/20 ACHIEVEMENTS

- Maintained over 380 members representing around 53% of the land in the HLN traditional footprint are members plus many outside this footprint in the Mullengandra, Bowna and Gerogery areas and the Upper Murray.
- 73% of our members are actively using our services and attending events.
- Maintained member services such as soil testing processing, equipment loan, newsletter, website calendar, SMS alerts for events, weather station and soil monitoring equipment with seasonal outlook information provided twice a year.



**GOAL 2** HLN has provided a range of quality services that have built the capacity of our rural community to increase the adoption of improved farming practices and natural resource management outcomes.

## 2019/20 ACHIEVEMENTS

- 80 formal one-on-one site visits with farmers.
- 237 meetings with partners, project and management teams including producers, members and scientists.
- 293ha of area under management agreements for revegetation and/or restoration.
- 34,038 plants going in the ground and 25km of direct seeding.
- Removal of 50 tonnes of plastic waste off farm for recycling.
- 26 field days/workshops/forums and discussion groups, which directly engaged more than 1875 people.
- Hundreds more were passively engaged through displays at events such as Henty Machinery Field Days. Staff also attended and participated in over 32 other events.
- Management of 4 field research sites.
- 25 products developed including brochures, posters and video clips.
- 104 traditional media articles (radio, newspapers, HLN newsletters, community newsletters and magazine features).
- 12 new landholder on-ground project contracts.





# 2019/20 ACHIEVEMENTS

**GOAL 3** To derive stable and sufficient funding to deliver on the strategic goals from a diverse range of valued partners and investors.

## 2019/20 ACHIEVEMENTS

- Celebrated 30 years of Landcare with a celebratory event with attendance from the Federal Environment Minister Sussan Ley, Chair of Landcare NSW, CEO Landcare Australia and the General Manager of Murray LLS with data collection and presentations articulating the value of HLN.
- Provide support for the representative on NSW Landcare Committee on behalf of the Murray Region, representing grassroots landcare and lobbying for support for local community group action.
- Effective engagement with three levels of government promoting our brand through our Regional Landcare Coordinator's "Trees in the House" Parliamentary Friends of Landcare speech in Nov 2019; attendance of Justin Clancy and Sussan Ley at HLN events; partnerships with Greater Hume Council and Snowy Valleys Council through the Bushfire recovery work and other community initiatives.
- Be a leading member of Slopes to Summit partnership and drive the Ecological Fire Recovery Strategy for the Dunns Rd/Green Valley fires in partnership with Murrumbidgee Landcare Inc.
- Participate as a leading producer and sustainable farm network in the Woodlands Birds Conservation Action Plan (Birdlife Australia).
- Hosted an international delegation from Pakistan studying agricultural extension models.
- Engaged as an active partner in the CRC for High Performance Soils.
- Continued our relationship with a network of Farming Systems Groups across southern NSW to collaborate on successful projects and share knowledge including the \$2M FutureSOILS.

**GOAL 4** HLN has maintained and enhanced its robust, effective and accountable governance systems.

## 2019/20 ACHIEVEMENTS

- Implementation of the new accounting standards in the EOFY processing.
- Public Health order compliant policy successfully implemented for staff and the organisation for COVID-19 pandemic.
- Continued effective implementation of policy and operational procedure including managing WHS and employment for subcontractors on the delivery of a major revegetation project.
- Acting EO completed governance training provided by Landcare NSW.
- Successful recruitment of a new Project Officer, Nick McGrath.
- Successful management of the EO recruitment.
- Financial Statements 19/20 audited with no major issues.



# 2019/20 PROJECTS

- Adaptive Farming Systems (National Landcare Program)
- Birds on farms – Saving the Nectar Lovers Saving our Species
- Bush Connect (NSW Environmental Trust)
- Influencing Lamb Sex Ratios (Australian Wool Industries and Meat and Livestock Australia)
- 2019-2023 NSW Landcare program - Local and Regional Landcare Coordinator Initiative (Landcare NSW/LLS)
- FutureSOILS – tools for soil acidity management
- Aquatic Systems – Farm Dams as Habitat (Murray LLS)
- Monitoring Acid Soils (Murray LLS)
- Grassy Woodlands Restoration Project (Murray LLS)
- Regional Capacity Building Program, Support and Activities (Murray Local Land Services)
- Innovative Approaches to Managing Subsoil Acidity (Grains Research and Development Corp, NSW Dept of Primary Industries)
- Embedding a recycling culture for Hay and Silage Wrap and farm plastics (National Landcare Program)
- Holbrook Woodland Bird Habitat Offsets (Roads and Maritime Services)
- Southern Pygmy Perch Habitat Protection (NSW Environmental Trust)
- Tackling Acid Soils (National Landcare Program)
- Acid Soils Discussion Group (Meat and Livestock Australia)
- Visualising Acid Soils (VAS) Federation Uni and Soils CRC
- Drought Preparedness Workshops (Murray Local Land Services)
- Continuation of Soil Testing Project as a member service



## Contact Info

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