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2025 - 2026 ANNUAL REPORT

Prepared by :
Claire Diprose and Melanie Cooper

FROM OUR CHAIRPERSON

The English poet William Wordsworth wrote 247 years ago, “Nature never did betray the heart that loved her.” As Weddin Landcare, we gather to carry that spirit forward. Perhaps this is why we do what we do—and a reminder of how far we have come in such a short time.

As we enter the final year of the four-year Landcare Enabling Program, I acknowledge the significant achievements our organisation delivered in 2025/26, led professionally by Melanie Cooper and Claire Diprose. Our executive—James Maslin, Geoff Draffin and Phillip Diprose—have kept things moving as well as Jan Diprose and her extraordinary team at the Weddin Community Native Nursery.

I wish to highlight major projects and events in the past year that have deep significance to our community. The Over the Fence project has already proved farmers learn from farmers. The short films highlight how farm families are doing it from various perspectives. Stuart Walmsley captures well the honest, courageous passion of key local landholders and what drives their appetite for agriculture. Already I am seeing this proves a catalyst for change. The 30-Year Anniversary dinner of Weddin Landcare was a celebration of where we’ve been. To sit with early Landcarers, who are still doing it, demonstrates ongoing commitment around the Weddin Shire. Projects do not need to be large to make a difference.

On a regional level, there is momentum. We remain a respected player within Central West Region Landcare. Other groups watch, admire and learn from what is going on in Weddin. There has been recognition at a local level by Weddin Landcare receiving the Community Event/Organisation of the Year Award at the 2026 Weddin Shire Australia Day Awards.

Present funding for the Landcare Enabling Program runs out June 30 2027. We can only do our best to ensure funding continues to secure the projects and education already achieved to maintain the momentum of landscape protection and enhancement.

It has been an ongoing pleasure to act as Chair of Weddin Landcare and I trust we will continue to be a driver to make positive change in our community arena in the years to come.

Clemence Matchett
Chairperson
Weddin Landcare Steering Committee Inc.



WEDDIN LANDCARE STEERING COMMITTEE

Position	Elected Member
Chairperson	Clemence Matchett
Vice Chairperson	James Maslin
Secretary	Geoff Draffin
Treasurer	Phillip Diprose
Assistant Treasurer	TBA
Public Officer	Phillip Diprose
Weddin Community Native Nursery Delegate	Jan Diprose
Weeds Committee Delegate	TBA
Weddin Shire Council Delegate	John Niven
Ordinary Members	Penny Edgerton, Anita Edwards, Pat Verney, Mikla Lewis, Stephen Pereira, Vincent Nowlan, Linda Maslin, John Johnson, Anthony Myers, Bill White, Margaret Nowlan-Jones and John Jones.

MEMBERSHIP

Weddin Landcare has 380 subscribers, 36 more than last year. There are currently 18 Steering Committee Members.

EMPLOYEES

Melanie Cooper and Claire Diprose job-share one full-time Landcare Coordinator position. Melanie takes on the Senior Landcare Coordinator role with extra reporting, policy, and mentoring responsibilities.

They generally work Tuesday - Thursday from 9 am to 3 pm.



SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENTS



PROJECTS

Weddin Landcare took part in fifteen local projects throughout 2025-2026. These initiatives encouraged engagement in both urban and rural communities, involving families, schools, farmers, landholders and interested individuals in various events and on ground activities. Some of the key projects are outlined below.

Over the Fence

The project extends on the concept that great ideas and practice change often result from the conversations that occur between farmers 'over the fence'. The project connects farmers with leading or early adopting farmers and experts to gain the practical advice and guidance they need to adopt climate-smart agricultural production systems.

Year two of the project saw two of six visual stories on local, progressive farmers released, with positive feedback. The first profiled Graham and Lynne Watt from Greenethorpe and the second featured Jake Chandler and Gemma, Bruce and Tracey Wilkinson from 'Tumbleton', near Wombat. Filmed by Stuart Walmsley, they covered succession, decision making and how to incorporate long-term climate solutions into profitable farming enterprises.



Photos supplied by Stuart Walmsley.

One bus trip to visit seven progressive farms in the Riverina region was held in August 2025 and five field days were held throughout the year including:

- Microbe Friendly Farming Field Day
- Farm Business Strategy Workshop
- Landscape Rehydration Field Day
- Talking Dirty - Soil Health Workshop
- Livestock Technology Field Day

Local farmers also took up our training subsidy as part of the Local Champion Capacity Building component of this project, with one undertaking the Platinum Mastermind program run by Farm Owners Academy and others set to complete a Low Stress Stockhandling school in July.

This initiative is supported by the Australian Government through funding from the Climate-Smart Agriculture Program under the Natural Heritage Trust

PROJECTS

Grenfell Community Produce

The Grenfell Community Produce Project is now a project of Weddin Landcare, with working group members and any volunteers involved in the project joining Weddin Landcare. An Edible Garden Tour was held in April 2026 to reinvigorate interest in the project. Regular social media posts, including calls for fruit donations have been shared and a monthly crop swap with any left over produce donated to the Grenfell Food Hall are scheduled for September 2026.



Salinity Monitoring Project

Claire has continued to monitor salinity levels across the Bland and Tyagong catchment areas and contribute to the Catchment Salinity Risk Profiling project being run by the Department of Climate Change Energy Environment and Water (DCCEEW). Monitoring will continue until the project funds are exhausted. Weddin Landcare joins 13 other Landcare groups across NSW as part of this project to build capacity and awareness of dry land salinity issues and remedies.



Indian Myna Control Program

Six Peegee traps were obtained and sold to local community members. An information pack was developed to go with the traps. Trapping numbers are reported to the Dubbo Indian Myna Control Program to use for awareness and additional funding. Weddin Landcare have set up a MynaScan account to record sightings across the Weddin District. Sixty Indian Myna birds have been trapped so far. More traps (6 peegee and 1 aviary trap) are included in Landcare Enabling Program Phase 3 funding to continue this project into the future.



EVENTS

Riverina Grazing and Cropping Tour

In August 2025 we visited seven farms from Temora to Holbrook that are all progressing in different ways for both grazing and cropping. Our host farmers included Andrew Sinclair, Nick and Dea Austin, Dan Fox, Hugh and Libby Cruikshank, Michael and Anna Coughlan, Daniel and Stirling Moll, and Michael and Leanne Molloy. Eleven farmers came along and we had a couple more jump in on the second day. There were some great discussions had at the farms, over dinner and lunch and on the bus.



Wonderful Wattles Exhibition and Weddin Wattle Trails and Book Launch

Held at the Grenfell Art Gallery and running from July to September, over 50 artists and collectors submitted works to celebrate Wattle Day. During the exhibition, the Weddin Wattle Trails and Field Guide were launched, with support from the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust. Over 60 attendees heard from our guest speaker, Dr Suzette Searle from the Wattle Day Association before hopping on a bus to tour the Weddin Wattle Trails. Mikla Lewis and Wayne Lavers held a wattle walk the following day at their property 'Rosemont'.



Microbe Friendly Farming

We held another successful field day on Friday 26th September as part of the Over the Fence project at Jake Chandler and Gemma Wilkinson's property on 'Microbe Friendly Farming'. Our guest speakers were microbiologist and master composter, Dr. Ernie Harbott, Jake Chandler who gave an overview of their farming practices that are increasing their soil biology, Stephen Stacey from CarbonLink on soil carbon projects as well as Michael Gooden from Vic No-till who gave a kiwi tech fencing demonstration. Around 48 people attended this informative day.



EVENTS



From Scraps to Soil – Composting workshop

Weddin Landcare partnered with Mid-Lachlan Landcare to host a composting workshop with Dr Ernie Harbott at Glen Donald Estate, Bumbaldry. Fifteen people attended to hear Ernie share insights on microbial interactions in creating humus and maintaining healthy compost, including the differences between hot and cold composting. Amanda Foxon-Hill from Mid Lachlan Landcare discussed her experiments composting animal carcasses to enhance soil biology.



Mistletoe workshop with Central West Local Land Services and BirdLife Australia

Seventeen local participants learnt all about the role Mistletoes play in woodland ecosystems from Kristy Peters, who busted quite a few myths about these semi-parasitic plants. Beau Meney shared information about the extremely threatened Regent Honeyeater, which often relies on Mistletoes for habitat and food sources and the recovery efforts being undertaken to prevent its extinction. A field component was undertaken at Stephen Pereira's property on the Cowra Road.



Weddin NAIDOC

Claire and Jan Diprose from the Weddin Community Native Nursery joined in Weddin's NAIDOC celebrations by hosting a stall and making creatures out of gum leaves. It was another great event by the Weddin NAIDOC Committee, bringing community and local services together, with a big highlight being the Forbes High School Aboriginal Dancers and a didgeridoo player from Cootamundra.

EVENTS

Wildflower Walk

Melanie took a small but very keen group on a wild adventure to Bendick Murrell National Park near Mt. Crowther, Greenethorpe. The group managed to identify around 50 plant species over three different vegetation communities along the Annandale fire trail including flowering trees, shrubs, sub-shrubs, lillies, orchids, forbs, rushes and grasses. It was great to explore a new area!



Farm Business Strategies

For this workshop, we didn't just look 'over the fence', we took things all the way to the farm office with our guest presenter, Ellie Hays, from Agrista. Thirty farmers keen to learn how they can improve their farm businesses came along to hear from Ellie and gain insights from Jamie and Alisha Wright along with their employees Dan and Luke about how they are maximising efficiencies, employee satisfaction and family time. To finish the day we had an incredibly inspirational and informative talk from another local farmer, Jarrod Amery.



Landscape Rehydration

Another fantastic Over The Fence field day, supported by Central West Local Land Services, where we got to learn about and look at some practical solutions to combat a drying (and heating) landscape. Eighteen farmers explored approaches for Landscape Rehydration with Sharni Pike and Penny Cooper from Mulloon Institute and we heard from host, Alex MacAlpine, about how he is rehydrating his farm by optimising plant growth and groundcover, improving his soil health through organic matter retention and zero-till and undertaking some additional works to address active erosion and restore his creeks.



EVENTS



Talking Dirty - Soil Health Workshop

Dr. Aurelie Quade from Soil Resilience joined us for this Over the Fence field day at the Fowler's property near Monteagle to help twenty participants better understand the core components of healthy soil. The practical side to the day involved a comparison of a long-term grazing paddock versus a cropping paddock that has been very productive. Auerlie also gave the group some simple in-paddock tools they can use to quickly assess their soil health back at home.



Livestock Tech

We wrapped up our Over the Fence field day series with a Livestock Tech day at Rob, Mandy and Fletcher Taylor's place near Greenethorpe. Bridget Parkman from SheepMetrix spoke about how to get the most out of tech for making livestock decisions and we gained farmer insights into different technologies being used on farms from Fletcher Taylor, Andrew Dowd and James Burge as well as our trade displays. Tech discussed included on-farm monitoring, EID, handling equipment, farm management software, virtual fencing and Optiweigh units. Forty-three people attended.



Clean Up Australia

Fourteen volunteers helped to collect rubbish around The Company Dam on 1 March for Clean Up Australia Day. We managed to collect a ute load of rubbish in the couple of hours we had. The drier conditions meant we were able to extend our collection into the dam, where the water would normally be. It was great to see the kids getting in and helping and it was encouraging to hear their conversations about the unnecessary pollution.



Thirty Trees for Thirty Years of Landcare

In honour of Weddin Landcare's 30th birthday this year, we put the challenge out to community members to plant 30 trees in 2026. We were excited to receive numerous messages with photos from Landcarers who had planted their thirty trees. We also held a tree-planting weekend at Melanie's place near Caragabal in May to help them plant out around 870 trees of the 1,820 trees they were putting in this year

Thirty Year Anniversary Dinner

We held a special dinner at the Grenfell Country Club mid-2026 to celebrate our 30th Anniversary with past and present members and project partners. It was great to gather and reflect on our achievements over the past few decades.

Clemence Matchett, Jan Diprose and Steve Burnell (Chair of the Landcare NSW Board) shared our Landcare journey and we had a motivating presentation from Jake Chandler and Gemma Wilkinson, who are making significant advancements in the regenerative agriculture sector.

At the dinner, we also awarded three lifetime memberships to long-term Weddin Landcare members. Congratulations to John Johnson, Keith Starr and Geoff Draffin for receiving lifetime membership. Their names were recorded in the very first meeting minutes back in 1995-1996 and we are delighted to continue having their support on the Steering Committee today.



SCHOOL EDUCATION

Composting for Kids

We held a composting for kids workshop with Dr. Ernie Harbott and Grenfell Community Produce at St. Joseph's Primary School as part of a school holiday program activity on Tuesday 30th September. Over 20 kids attended, with a class from Grenfell Preschool joining in the fun. The kids got their hands dirty and learnt the basics of compost in a fun and memorable way.



Edible Garden Tour

We visited St Joseph's Primary and The Henry Lawson High School as part of the Edible Garden Tour, which also visited Hugh Moffitt and David Hore's gardens and the Grenfell Food Hall. Teachers and students shared history and information about their vegetable gardens with participants. A student from St Joseph's Primary School attended the tour on behalf of the school and delivered a 5 minute presentation at the next assembly, sharing what she had learned.



THLHS Green Team

This year, we have engaged the services of The Henry Lawson High School's 'Green Team'. The students, who are learning practical skills while completing competency units, helped build garden boxes at the Grenfell Preschool, assisted at the Nursery and removed some woody weeds at Vaughn's Dam Reserve. Melanie also delivered information to the Team about Box Gum Grassy Woodlands at Vaughn's Dam Reserve. She guided them and their teacher on how to identify and remove woody weeds so they are able to help out at the Reserve when they have available time.



WEDDIN COMMUNITY NATIVE NURSERY

The past 12 months have been a busy and productive time for the Weddin Community Native Nursery with large propagation orders, on-ground works and maintenance, education, community involvement, events and 12 new volunteers and 1 past volunteer returning.

We have propagated and supplied over 10,000 native plants for landholders, Landcare groups, Local Land Services and Councils across Central West NSW.

Nursery infrastructure is continually maintained with shade cloth replaced, bays built for potting mix and gravel and our watering system monitored and upgraded.

Through funding received from Essential Energy we were able to refurbish the Endemic Garden at O'Brien's Hill to highlight the Mint Bush and other threatened species in the Weddin Shire. New irrigation was installed, a garden bed was mulched, fresh Mint Bushes were planted and two information signs were erected by our volunteers. We had an official opening attended by volunteers and Weddin Shire General Manager, Matthew Sykes and Director of Infrastructure Services, William Manners.

Holding National Day celebrations continues to raise awareness of the Nursery's role in the community and the importance of our native plants. In September we celebrated National Threatened Species Day with a viewing of Phil Rogerson's video of a Potter Wasp building its nest and other native fauna found on his property; followed by Noel Catwright's DVD on the flora and fauna found in the Brundah Hills. We held a Eucalypt Art workshop run by local artist Kathleen McCue to celebrate National Eucalypt Day in March. National Tree Day was also celebrated with the Nursery giving away free trees to our local schools to plant on School Tree Day and also providing free trees to our local community. The Nursery also attended NAIDOC celebrations with Weddin Landcare.

Providing education concerning our native plants and what is involved in maintaining a nursery is a valuable role the Nursery plays in the community. The Henry Lawson High School Green Team has visited the Nursery and undertaken several activities. Students from Cowra High School come to the Nursery on a fortnightly basis to carry out nursery activities. We hosted a work experience student from The Henry Lawson High School for a week. The Nursery also provided plants to the Young High School in their celebration of David Attenborough's 100th birthday and his environmental contributions.

Our community involvement over the last year has included holding street stalls; being a part of Open Gardens; being involved in the Henry Lawson Festival; plants and donating to the purchase of an inclusive swing for Livvi's Place in Taylor Park; and hosting a morning tea for the CEF Boot Bash. We have also had a presence in the Main Street by providing plants to the Conron Coffee Shop to sell.

Publicity for the Nursery over the year has involved an article in 'Our Gardens' Spring 2025 magazine, several articles in the Grenfell Record, weekly Facebook posts and a revamped brochure.

The Nursery has received funding from a variety of sources: A Michael King Grant to propagate 1700 tubestock and provide tree guards to use towards local community giveaways and small revegetation projects; A Superb Parrot Habitat Grant to put towards seed collection, propagation and planting for Superb Parrot Habitat restoration projects; and an Aboriginal Partnerships Grant to propagate and create a Bush Tucker section in the Nursery.

Our year ahead is already filling up with projects, events and activities and customers placing orders for 2027.

Jan Diprose
Chairperson
Weddin Community Native Nursery



Photos supplied by Jan Diprose.

COMMUNICATIONS

Regular communications from Weddin Landcare this year included:

- A monthly e-newsletter sent to 380 subscribers
- Website updates and posts on weddinlandcare.com.au
- Social media posts on Facebook and Instagram
- Media releases to local newspapers and radio stations
- Flyers for events and opportunities distributed to local businesses, community boards and via Australia Post
- Videos for key projects
- Podcast and radio interviews.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Claire and Melanie have attended the following workshops as part of professional development

- Claire attended Circular Futures Forum in Orange September 2025
- Melanie attended the Vic No-till conference in Moama in September 2025
- Claire and Melanie updated their first aid certificates
- Melanie and several members of our Steering Committee attended a Mental Health First Aid course
- Claire and Melanie attended Event Management training in February 2026
- Claire attended Central West Circular Economy Precinct Accelerator Workshop – February 2026

NETWORKING

Claire and Melanie attended several networking opportunities this year including the Speed Networking night held in Grenfell by Regional Development Australia, Central West Region Landcare meetings, a Natural Resources Commission round-table discussion on native vegetation and a Campfire Gathering at the Wiradjuri Study Centre in Condobolin with Landcare NSW Aboriginal Partnerships Manager, Den Barber.

ADMINISTRATION

Weddin Landcare successfully completed their annual reporting requirements for the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Commission, ATO and the Landcare Enabling Program. General meetings are held once a quarter, along with an AGM.

Four funding submissions were prepared to attract funding for projects, with other partnership project applications supported.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Weddin Landcare would like to acknowledge all of our wonderful volunteers, committee members, project partners, donors, guest speakers, school communities, neighbours and event participants.

Special mention goes to the following organisations and individuals who regularly assisted in 2025-2026:

- Our executive: Clemence Matchett, Phillip Diprose, Geoff Draffin, James Maslin and Jan Diprose.
- Weddin Community Native Nursery
- Central West Local Land Services
- Central West Region Landcare
- Weddin Shire Council
- Central West Lachlan Landcare
- Mid-Lachlan Landcare
- Landcare NSW
- NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust
- DCCEE Andrew Wooldridge
- Dr. Suzette Searle and the Wattle Day Association
- RSPCA NSW
- Mikla Lewis and Wayne Lavers
- Jenn Graham
- Dr. Ernie Harbott
- Grenfell Community Produce Working Group
- Weddin NAIDOC Committee
- Weddin Mountains Tourism and Grenfell Art Gallery staff
- Host farmers/property owners for our field days and bus trip
- Stuart Walmsley
- Graham and Lynne Watt
- Tumbleton Partnership
- Weddin Mountain Muster
- Merle Bryer
- Margaret McDonald and the Dubbo Environment Group
- THLHS Green Team



This initiative is made possible by the NSW Landcare Enabling Program. A collaboration of Local Land Services and Landcare NSW supported by the NSW Government.

CONTACT

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