



Mid Murray Landcare SA

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Activity Update April 2021

This activity update is for the month of April. 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.

On a personal note, I enjoyed a week's leave in the Flinders and climbed St Mary's Peak!

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 have had a wedding in April and several campers to see the Dark Sky Reserve. Andy and Paul have kept the facilities clean for any arrivals.
3. The solar bore pump has been replaced by a Grundfos pump that runs from a generator that volunteers Andy and Paul have secured up near the bore tank. Thankyou to Chris O'Keefe from Cambrai Primary School with helping to move the generator into position. Andy and Paul have been busy pumping water to get all the tanks at Meldanda full again. A big thankyou to the INTG Project and Nicola Barnes for funding the new pump.

Community Nursery

4. Volunteers Brenton and Mick have been maintaining plants at the nursery. Volunteer Royce has helped weeding. Mick potted on *Acacia acinacea* and Brenton thinned *Atriplex rhagodiodes*, River Saltbush.
5. We have been selling a few plants to landholders, one from the Murray Plains and the other from Bowhill. Have been putting together plant orders for landholders from Towitta, Mannum and Blanchetown.

Committee & other

6. 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.

7. Supported monthly meeting on 8th of April, kindly hosted by committee member Rose Laucke at her property on Sleeper Track.
8. Applied for Grassroots Grant for 'Landcare in the Murray' to continue supporting our volunteers, the nursery, Meldanda, landholders, community groups, RMDSR, threatened species and the Western Pygmy Possum Project.
9. Applied for Grassroots Grant for 'Landcare in the Mallee' to continue supporting the Western Pygmy Possum project, landholders, threatened species, Seed Production Areas, bee projects and community groups.
10. Supported 3 Grassroots Grant applications for other groups, including 2 for MACAI.
11. Contacted by landholder re goat problem on property, in his heritage area. We have done some work with him before using the Judas goat. Put him in contact with Authorised Officer Scott Hutchens.
12. Rowena Danks prepared and submitted the progress report for Grassroots Grant 'Landcare in the Mallee' 2020-2021.
13. Sent a report to the Spiny Daisy Recovery team for meeting that was held on the 07/04/21 in Clare, answered some queries via phone on the day.
14. Provided a letter of support to MMC for a funding application to the Murray Darling Basin Economic Development Program Round 3 'Mid Murray Natural Resource Management Project'.
15. Provided a letter of support for Palmer Biodiversity & Production Protection Project (PBPPP) grant submission for a Murraylands and Riverland Grassroots grant.

River Murray International Dark Sky Reserve

16. We held our Dark Sky meeting in the Cambrai Council Chambers on 9th April, we worked on the strategic plan. Rohie Griffiths has offered to help finalise the Strategic Plan.
17. Justin Porter has agreed to help put together Dark Sky funding applications and has started with a National Science Week Grant application.
18. Chris has posted off 3 x 21.9 t-shirts to people from the PS Marion Dark Sky cruise
19. Chris had a meeting with Graham Hardy to discuss the Observatory/Planetarium concept drawings.
20. Chris spoke to the Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board about our Landcare group and the RMDSR.
21. MMC have had the telescope pad signs approved and installation will begin soon.
22. Chris was also interviewed by Narelle Graham (ABC Regional Radio), Matt Stephens (ABC Riverland), Zoe Rice (for SA Life Magazine) and Anna Kantilaftas (for Get Lost online magazine).

Irongrass Grasslands Project

23. We have had 5mm of rain on the trial site at Meldanda in April.
24. **SPA** - Volunteers Sheralee, Cryss and Aimee collected seed from the SPA's; including *Atriplex semibaccata* (Diamond Saltbush) *Setaria constricta*, *Chrysocephalum apiculatum*, *Convolvulus remotus*, *Minuria leptophylla*, *Glycine rubiginosa* (Twining Glycine). The INTG project has kindly supported the payment of a new pump at Meldanda which waters the SPA's, thankyou to Nicola Barnes for organising this.

25. **Wicking bed trial** – Brenton and Mick took barrel of water to fill up drum (12/04/21), about 80 litres.
26. **Workshop** - Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board Miranda Leckie organised a grass identification workshop to be held at Meldanda with Nicola Barnes as the presenter. There were 30 people who attended and they got some hands on experience using a hand lens to see the distinguishing features of a grasses. Participants then got to come out and see the native grasses in the seed production area which helped to reinforce what they learnt during the workshop. Social media post 18/04/21.



Figure 1 Native Grass ID workshop.



Figure 2 Native Grass Seed Production Area.

27. **Landholder Trials** – site visit with Kate Graham to property near Terowie to set up photo points for a trial site with landholder Brian Sleep (14/04/21). Brian had a fuel operated dropper knocker which we were very grateful for as the property is very rocky. We don't think we would have got the 12 droppers in without it!
28. **Landholder Trials** – Nicola, Aimee and Kate met with landholders Greg and Liz Hall to have a look at their MEC site and set up the photo points for the trial 15/04/21.



Figure 3 Brian Sleep installing dropper into rocky ground for a photo point at trial site, Terowie.

29. Nicola Barnes, Kate Graham and Aimee Linke did some quick surveys of roadside railway corridors near Hallett and looked at the Burra School site 16/04/21.
30. Backed up all photos and sent Dropbox link of trial set up photos to Kate and Nicola.

Western Pygmy Possums

31. Peter Lee is trialling a different style of possum box, based on the bat box design to see if more appealing to the possums.
32. Some landholders from the Waterhouse Club bought 4 boxes to install at their property at Cape Jervois.
33. Rowena has put together a promotion encouraging the community to share their anecdotal Western Pygmy Possum stories in the Facebook Group.

Microbats

34. Clive Kiernan from Mannum installed the bat box we gave him, he sent us a photo of it, he put it up high on a pole.



Figure 4 bat box installed at Mannum.

WIRES

35. Met in Kapunda with landholder Stephanie Simms who borrowed the bat detector, endoscope camera to inspect her WPP boxes and a camera trap to record activity on her property near Morgan.
36. Supported organising the Waterhouse Club workshop to be held in Burra. recce site visit on way back from Burra to locate the sites where possum boxes to be installed. Contacted landholders to make sure they were still happy for us to do this on their properties.
37. Don Lester, Aimee and Zoe Linke supported a 2 day workshop with Waterhouse Club, they made 40 boxes on one day with 20 participants at Burra at the Paxton Square Cottages. Some of the boxes were inscribed with 'Welcome' from about 15 different languages. The next day we headed off "convoy style" to a location near the Tothill Ranges where the Lavender Federation Trail meets the Heysen Trail and set up 8 boxes along a creek. We then went further south to a property that also has some land in the Tothills. We met landholder Brenton Mosey who spoke to the group on the history of the property and how they farm. Brenton was very welcoming and is happy to share the beautiful Tothills with visitors. The group traversed a rough transect through the Tothills and installed 15 boxes.
38. Social media post about the Waterhouse Club workshop and box installation at Tothill Ranges 29/04/21



Figure 5 Waterhouse Club and the WPP boxes they made.



Figure 6 Brenton Mosey talking to the Waterhouse Club about his property.



Figure 7 Waterhouse Club in the Tothills installing WPP boxes.

Murray Mallee Landcare Projects

Honey Bees

39. The online workshop will be held on the 20th May. This aligns with World Bee Day which we are also promoting through the project. As at 28/4 we have 33 registrations for the Powerful Pollinators workshop.

Seed Production Areas

40. Rowena met with Craig Gillespie on 6th April to discuss the remainder of this work and to prioritise maintenance work on the SPAs. It was decided that two SPAs will be maintained, and the remaining two SPAs would be retired. This decision was made after considering the condition of the weed mat and plants at each site. A large amount of investment would be required to revive these SPAs to a point where they would be operational again.
41. At this stage, the Mantung SPA and the Whytes Well SPA will be the continued and maintained so that we can get a good outcome with these two SPAs which are currently in the best condition and producing seed already.
42. The work for this is almost complete with 1 day left to carry out maintenance work on Brian Teakle's SPA. I have also been contracted direct to the Landscape Board to continue the maintenance work after this allocated time has been completed. And Aimee and I have included ongoing maintenance of these two SPAs in our Grassroots Grant submission mentioned earlier.



Figure 8 Online bee workshop flyer