

Activity Update June 2025

This activity update is for the month of June 2025. If you would like to be on our mailing list and receive this free update, please email Aimee Linke at the above email address, or view it on our webpage. These projects are from varied sources of funding including the Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board's Grassroots Grants and contract work.

Support the objectives of Mid Murray Landcare SA.

1. Managed the office, volunteers and all necessary administrations including monthly payment of bills, reports, invoicing, managing webpages and social media posts, scanned all receipts and reconciled monthly accounts in XERO.
2. Sent out monthly activity update, agenda, minutes, correspondence list, and financial report for the month to the Committee.
3. We held our monthly committee meeting at the Cambrai Community Library.

Support volunteer activities at the Cambrai Community Nursery, provide support to landholders, groups, and schools with land management projects.

4. Provided support to six landholders or groups with site visits or project support or plant identification including two site visits near the Black hill area.
5. Volunteers have been potting on *Callistemon teretifolius*, Needle Bottlebrush and *Acacia* species. Dug up some *Dianella revoluta* ready for planting day.
6. Sophie Thomson and four of her volunteers worked in the nursery to make mixed boxes of 2000 plants ready for the first planting day for her rewilding project.
7. When Gardening Australia did the filming at Meldanda we also did some at the nursery, filming the collection of Sophie's plants, ready for her rewilding planting day.



Figure 1 Cambrai Community Nursery - batching up mixed boxes with Sophie Thomson and her volunteers ready for rewilding planting day.



Figure 2 Cambrai Community Nursery filming with Gardening Australia and Sophie Thomson, collecting plants.

8. Supported planting event at Sophie Thomsons, there were approximately eighty people who attended on the day, Sophie spoke about her project objectives to create a diverse mix of native vegetation on her property over the next five years. We had three different planting groups and worked in the most western section of her property. We planted, watered, and guarded 750 plants, it was a terrific day, everyone was so enthusiastic, the weather was perfect and the whole event was filmed and professionally photographed. Everyone brought along a savory plate to share for lunch and Sophie had Sally, of Sophie's Patch cake fame, make delicious deserts to share. Sophie mentioned this event and the Landcare group in her latest newsletter.

[Sophie's Patch newsletter for June 2025 with lots of progress on the new patch](#)



Figure 3 first planting day event at Sophie's new patch, attended by many people including members from Birds SA and Butterfly Conservation SA (BCSA).



Figure 4 BCSA members, Gil Hollamby (front centre), my former Adelaide University professor and Sophie Thomson (green top), BCSA Patron.

Manage Meldanda on behalf of the Cambrai Primary School Governing Council

9. Continued with managing the volunteers, camp bookings, provision of materials and equipment and all necessary administration managing the booking page, cleaning, watered, had the septic pumped and repairs done to the water pump.
10. Camp bookings - we had twelve camp nights for June, twenty adults and twenty children which were a group of cubs, with four of those booking the Astronomy Paddock.
11. Supported site visit from Mannum Community College Agriculture students, showed them around Meldanda and the Seed Production Area, spoke about the importance of soil health and plant diversity. The role native plants can play with improving the health of livestock and crops. The students also visited the nursery, and I showed them collected seed and how we propagate.
12. Filming with Sophie Thomson and Gardening Australia at Meldanda. Meldanda has been inspiration for Sophie's re-wilding project and Meldanda is a great example of what can be done with country that has once been cropped and turned into a beautiful plant diverse property. It was a great experience to see how things are filmed for television, we had a field director, camera, and sound person. Once the filming was done, everywhere we had walked, stopped, and talked we had to walk again so the drone could fly overhead. We were very fortunate with a beautiful and calm sunny day.



Figure 5 Filming with Gardening Australia at Meldanda.

Support the River Murray International Dark Sky Reserve Committee and Mid Murray Council with projects to maintain dark sky accreditation and education on the impacts of light pollution. Chris Tugwell

- 13. Letter of concern to government ministers re freight bypass through Dark Sky Reserve.
- 14. Kate Wills has joined our Dark Sky Reserve committee and will manage our website and social media (thanks Kate).
- 15. Nominations for proposed observatory/planetarium board.
- 16. Discussions re replacement of Cambrai school 'security lights'.
- 17. Draft response to Council darkness measurement proposal.

Support Citizen Science projects in the region to engage landholders and volunteers in Water Watch activities, Turtle Conservation and Feral Goat projects.

- 18. There were six sightings submitted to FeralScan for June with approximately fifty goats seen from Sleeper Track to Morgan from three observers.
- 19. Have been working on a poster on the Western Pygmy Possum project that we will present at a Landcare Conference that we will attend in September with students from Cambrai Primary School.
- 20. Contacted several Pygmy Possum project participants about their box activity including one near Sutherlands – no possums just a huntsman, on near Bakara CP – no possums. There are possums in boxes at Hartley and some other sites we will visit to determine activity.

Murray Darling Carpet Python Project – Aimee Linke

- 21. A camera that has been deployed by landholder near Ridley CP captured activity of a feral cat, cats are not only a threat to pythons but many of our native wildlife species as predators and spreaders of disease.
- 22. Teams Meeting with project lead Mel Burford and Skylos Ecology who trained up the sniffer dogs on the pythons. We are considering the feasibility of using the dogs for helping to locate turtle nests and pythons at the same river/floodplain sites.

Native Grasslands Project 2023-2026 – Aimee Linke

23. Seed production areas - have continued to work with the volunteers on replacing a section of matting of the native grass, we pulled up all the old plants, laid and secured the new mat.



Figure 6 grasses all cleared out.



Figure 7 new mat laid and secured.

Supporting Biodiversity Across Conservation and Production Lands – Rowena Danks

Maintain partnerships with Industry where Regent Parrot management is crucial to crop management.

24. Partnerships have been maintained to support Regent Parrot management in almond orchards and to identify opportunities for best practice at the interface between conservation and production. The connection between the Almond Board of Australia and the SA Regent Parrot Recovery Team—marked by Ella Henson from the Almond Board joining the Recovery Team—has been a great step forward in fostering these partnerships.

Report on EDNA work on Murpook

25. We have received the report for the EDNA work at Murpook. Unfortunately, the lab was not successful in extracting and amplifying DNA in the samples. The main issue was apparently the level of degradation of the scats. However, they did uncover a promising pathway for DNA extractions that may give us some better results down the track.

26. For future work the learnings are to collect scat samples in commercial storage buffers, or in 100% ethanol and then drying the samples and freezing them.

27. So, there are no results to use, but some guidance for future collection of scats from Regent Parrots.

Attend Regent Parrot Recovery Team meeting.

28. I have sent a report and farewell message to the Regent Parrot Recovery Team.

Maintain 2 x Seed Production Areas to support establishment and harvest of seed producing plants that contribute to the establishment of habitat for priority species in the Murray Mallee, Mid Murray, and Pastoral areas.

29. I have been liaising with Craig Gillespie and Phil Druce about the maintenance of the seed production areas at Mantung and Whytes Well, now that this project has been completed.

30. I visited the Mantung site in June and took some footage to help with planning this site and offered some recommendations. There will need to be some work done to repair/replace weed mat and to replace some old plants that are at the end of their life.



Figure 8 some of the dying shrubs and worn mat.



Figure 9 shrubs in the seed production area.

Harvest seed at two seed production areas as available.

31. Seed set was poor this year due to the dry season. However, we have some seed collected and cleaned by Blackwood Seeds ready to be use for projects.

Maintain seed database for habitat restoration projects.

32. Phil Druce has the latest seed collection which he has processed, and this will be added to the database before the final report is submitted.

Identify potential awareness raising / engagement opportunities for pollinators in production.

33. As well as work done through this project, I'll be continuing to share relevant opportunities with Mid Murray Landcare as they arise. Currently, an Online Pollinator Stewardship Program is in early development and may be valuable to both the Mid Murray community and Aimee. I'll keep you updated as it progresses.

Final report

34. I have started to prepare the final report for this project. I am waiting on the online final report form to be ready in Smarty Grants. Once this is accessible, I can complete the online report and run it past Aimee before submitting.

Thanks again to you all for your support over the past few years. I have truly enjoyed working with you all and of course it has been such a pleasure to work with Aimee and the volunteers.

Take care everyone.

Ro x