



AABR NEWS

Australian Association of Bush Regenerators NSW

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July
2011

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Deb Holloman, bush regen co-ordinator from Gosford Area NPWS will host the day, explaining various weed management approaches at Wamberal Lagoon and Wambina Nature Reserves.

You don't have to be an AABR member to come along—just be interested in restoration and management of natural environments from rainforests to dunes.

Thursday
August 11
10:30 - 4:00

Wamberal Lagoon Nature Reserve

Wamberal Lagoon Nature Reserve is a 130-hectare reserve preserving ten vegetation communities including, littoral rainforest and coastal dune systems. The reserve protects two threatened flora species, *Syzigium paniculatum* (magenta lilly pilly) and *Chamaseyce psammogeton*. The integrity of the reserve is threatened by weed invasion from *Chrysanthemoides monilifera* (bitou) and *Lantana camara*—two WoNS—as well as other weeds including *Erharta erecta* (panic veldt grass), *Polygala myrtifolia* (African scurf pea), and *Asparagus sp* (asparagus fern).

The reserve is habitat for seven species of migratory birds

protected under CAMBA and/or JAMBA treaties.

WLNR is a high priority Threat Abatement Plan (TAP) site. The degraded site has had over \$150,000 worth of funding from Bitou TAP, CMA and the environmental trust. The methods used for weed removal include hand removal, cut and paint, splatter gun and aerial spraying.

The site shows amazing resilience with over 40 native flora species replacing removed weeds. There is an active volunteer group on site. Work has also been done on site by Green Corps, TAFE and Newcastle Uni students. Seven nested quadrats have been established on site.

Wambina Nature Reserve

Wambina Nature Reserve protects the headwaters of Erina Creek, a gallery rainforest, listed as an EEC (Lowland Rainforest), and is habitat for 145 fauna species of which 12 are threatened (including powerful owl, yellow-bellied glider, greater broad-nosed bat) and contains 134 native flora species. Matcham Holgate Landcare has been carrying out restoration work on site for the past 12 years. This significant site suffers from weed invasion from

WoNS—lantana, blackberry and bitou as well as privet, asparagus fern, honeysuckle and tobacco bush. The site has had an active Landcare group for 15 years. Two nested quadrats have been established on site.

Wambina has the dubious honour of being the first bushland site to be found to have myrtle rust—it is used as an important monitoring site for myrtle rust and has had a variety of treatment.

Where meet at Wamberal Lagoon Nature Reserve, Spoon Bay Road carpark at Forrester's Beach [Link to map](#)
Allow 2 hours if coming from Sydney CBD. Minimise car numbers by coming with others.

Bring morning tea. Sausage sizzle lunch provided - otherwise bring your own. Raincoat, hat etc

Cost none (donations are welcome)

RSVP To help with organising, please RSVP by August 8 to Jane at secretary@aabr.org.au

President's Perspective

Hi all,

Thanks to our newsletter editor Virginia Bear for continuing this vital linkage between us all—keeping us in touch as AABR members and friends. Many activities are reported in these pages, reminding us that while we are head down bum up getting on with the job of saving the bush—so are many others. It stands to reason that the combined effort is slowly but surely making a sound contribution to conserving natural heritage in our cities, coastal and rural areas.

The main NSW committee is chugging along well, with the 'Change Working Group' also on track to produce a 're-visioning' document sometime this year for consideration by members. As part of AABR's resolve to expand our horizons and link to other restoration organizations, the main committee has decided to develop an affiliate relationship with the new Australasian Chapter of the Society for Ecological Restoration (SER Australasia), whose inaugural meeting will be held on August 9th.

Other members of the committee have also been active in coordinating a range of AABR field trips and workshops. An Urban Wildlife field trip conducted by Peter Clarke, Ku-ring-gai Council was held on the 3rd June and was much enjoyed by about 18 attendees—see article in this newsletter. It was organized by our secretary Jane Gye. Paul Ibbetson, AABR's treasurer, also organized two full weekend training workshops conducted by Van Klaphake (on grasses and eucalypts respectively) and held in Sydney on 18-19 June and 2-3 July. Each workshop was booked out, attended by 30 people who were not AABR members which shows there is a growing constituency for conserving and managing our native ecosystems.

There are also more events planned for this year: a field workshop will be given by Deb Holloman on threatened

species management issues at Wamberal Lagoon (August 11th); a potential workshop on cryptogams planned for a brilliant cryptogam site in Bankstown (in spring); and potentially a 'Bush Regen Stories' event to coincide with our AABR AGM in Sydney, inspired by the success of a similar event held annually by the northern sub-committee. (Maybe you have a story to tell?)

Past President, Matt Springall, also gave an address on our behalf at Ryde TAFE on the occasion of the Beverley Blacklock Award, drawing attention to Beverley's contribution to bushland conservation and emphasizing the importance of looking after our natural areas and TAFE courses in natural area restoration.

AABR members have also been busy serving as reps on other committees. AABR has two representatives on Environmental Trust sub-committees evaluating applications for grant funding—which involves quite a lot of time. (Mary-Lou Lewis serves on the Trust's Restoration and Rehabilitation sub-committee, while Elisabeth Dark serves on the EcoSchools educational committee). Jane Gye, AABR's rep on the Nature Conservation Council of NSW's Bushfire Advisory Committee, attended their annual conference on the theme of "Different values: Shared vision" which sought to bring together people from a wide range of backgrounds including research, rural, indigenous and other sectors, presenting the latest research on the complex relationships between fire, social values and biodiversity to ensure ecologically sustainable bushfire management—although it was noted that there were not many contributions on the role of fire in the restoration of degraded areas.

The committee thanks all members for their continued support and newsletter items—and encourages all members and friends to help to promote AABR as a great organization to be part of.

Tein McDonald
July 2011

Queensland/Northern NSW AABR

Telling your bush regen stories

The northern region sub-committee of AABR is holding another 'Telling your bush regen stories' event this year, where about 8 of the most interesting short project reports submitted will be selected for presentation.

The event will be held on the Gold Coast on Sat 12th November 2011—so north coast and Qld members and friends, please keep this date free and start to think about whether you have a story to present.

The venue, time and directions for submitting your entries will be posted on the AABR Website by mid-late August.

Thankyou and congratulations to Mitra

Mitra Gusheh, our website manager, has had a second child recently.

Thankyou, Mitra for all your help over many years. You are much appreciated! Congratulations on the new addition to the family.

Remembering Anders

Legendary Illawarra botanist Anders Bofeldt has died. On June 30, after a short, acute illness caused by a ruptured brain abscess. He was 46. His knowledge was vast—and not all recorded. There was a huge turnout of bush folk, and others, at his funeral. Many were inspired by his enthusiasm for protecting the bush—particularly rainforests.

Danie Ondinea sent the following thoughts about Anders.

Even though I wasn't a very close friend of Anders, his illness and death has affected me deeply, I feel an incredible loss.

I knew he was not a robust person physically and didn't look after himself well but he had such a life spark, such enthusiasm for the natural world—I hoped that would sustain him.

He was always so willing to help me and I really appreciated his enthusiasm, his knowledge, generosity and patience.

I always enjoyed our conversations, mostly about flora and fauna but sometimes much more personal. They were open and trusting and safe and I felt I was with someone very special. I will miss him and miss knowing that his lovely self is somewhere around, observing and thinking about nature.

Like many people, I have Anders' plants growing in my yard at Scarborough. Often they were species he felt were in trouble and needed safe havens. I especially think of the 3 Bangalow Palms he gave me in the mid-90s—now mature and fruiting. He was concerned about the loss of them from much of the Illawarra. There are now many seedling palms in my yard—another Anders' legacy.

Also, many of the species lists and other notes I have put together have Anders all over them—his idents, all the comments about the local significance, distribution, etc came from him. And I often ended with something like "Anders Bofeldt says to look out for..." or "Anders Bofeldt suggests planting X and Y to improve plant diversity and replace species lost from this site". It felt like he knew each plant personally and where it belonged.



Anders in the rainforest at Scarborough NSW, sharing his knowledge with the group who attended the AABR field trip in April 2009.

Even though I'm leaving the Illawarra soon, I hope to be part of somehow paying tribute to Anders and his incredible contribution to our knowledge and understanding of Illawarra's natural environment.

Goodbye Anders and thank you, it has been wonderful knowing you. I will miss you but you are now a part of me and I will remember you.

Peace be with you.

July 2011

Awards winning regen students 2011

AABR sponsors two annual awards for Conservation and Land Management - Natural Area Restoration students at TAFE

This year the Beverley Blacklock Award award for the most outstanding student in Certificate III CLM at Ryde campus went to Simon Teagle.

The Mark Foster Memorial Award for the most motivated graduate in Certificate II or III at the Ourimbah Campus has been awarded to Mitchell John Sinclair.

EMR Journal discount subscriptions

The 2011 affiliate discount rate for Ecological Management & Restoration in 2011 is \$64 (GST inclusive price is \$70.40).

Members of Australian Association of Bush Regenerators can subscribe to EMR by contacting Wiley-Blackwell directly. Information on subscription options is available via the journal home page: [http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/\(ISSN\)1442-8903](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/(ISSN)1442-8903)

AABR walks and talks: urban wildlife with Peter Clarke

Peter Clarke is the Community Volunteer Coordinator at Ku-ring-gai Council. He has worked as a bush regenerator, and bushcare trainer and has run the Bushcare program in Ku-ring-gai since 2001. Parkcare, Streetcare and WildThings are some of the programs that he has developed. He is passionate about wildlife and worried we are “throwing the baby out with the bathwater” with some of our plant-focussed ecological restoration approaches. It was an entertaining, thought provoking day, and the pool conversions we saw were fascinating. Here are some of Peter’s thoughts...

I believe there is too much emphasis on vegetation in environmental restoration programs and WildThings was created in response to this institutional bias. WildThings is Australia’s first urban wildlife translocation program run by a council, and at its essence, is attempting to connect urban Australia with it’s wildlife.

Plants are over emphasised because as a component of the ecosystem they are easy. This is because plants:

- don’t move
- aren’t nocturnal
- are very visible
- are easily identified

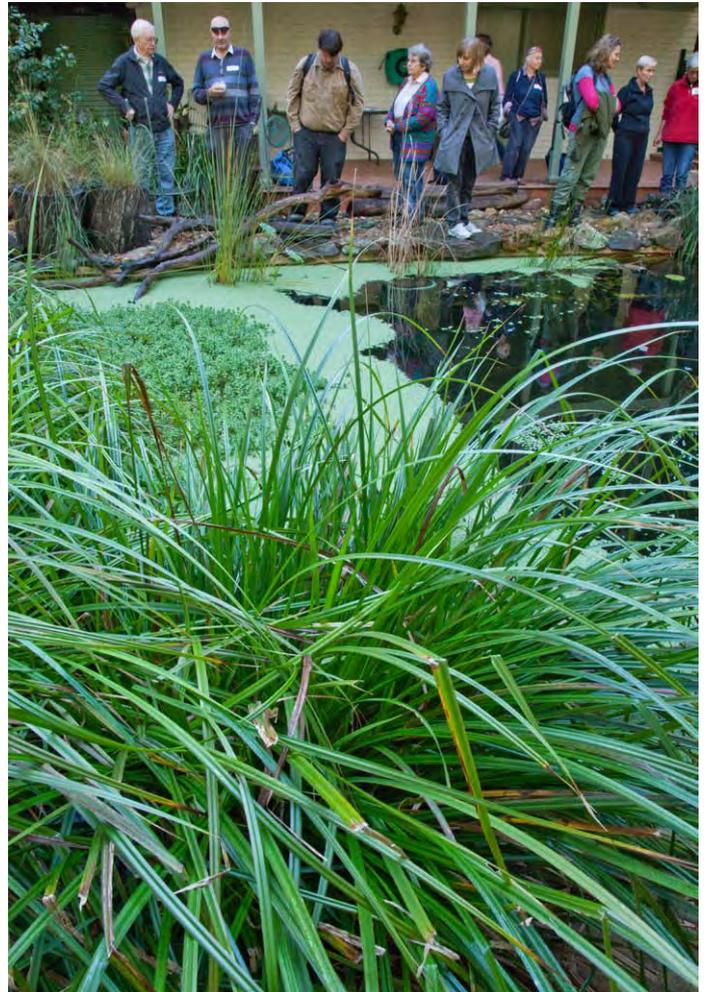
Another major problem is that there are too many plant experts. Many council staff have career progressions that start as a field worker, with horticultural/bush regeneration qualifications, progressing to team leader, then coordinator and finally manager. Councils are overrun with plant experts with a serious shortage of riparian and wildlife experts.

Another reason for the over emphasis of vegetation is that Australia with its obsession for the ¼ acre block is a nation of gardeners, contrasting to England being a nation of shop keepers. Sydney’s largest environmental community volunteer program is Bushcare, with smaller programs such as Easy Care Gardening and Conservation Volunteers Australia, all of them focussing on plants.

This over emphasis on plants causes major issues with riparian zones (see the work of Peter Andrews*) and habitat removal. Aggregating water into channels, removing silt plugs are usually a complete disaster for riparian zones, however riparian zones are regularly sacrificed on the altar of vegetation.

Bushcare groups meet every month, which also causes problems. Most groups work much faster than weeded areas can regenerate, before moving on to more weed clearance.

Mosaic weeding patterns often only pay lip service to habitat retention. Ironically in most council areas the only people working in severely degraded areas are bushcare volunteers and most of their work involves removing habitat.



The group admiring a pool conversion



This backyard nestbox is attached to a chain that is anchored to the ground. Its not fixed to the branch—just looped over—so it can be easily lowered for maintenance.

Weed removal is only one part of ecological restoration. Every environmental project should come under the 3 pillar principle: the 3 pillars being:

- wildlife
- riparian zones
- vegetation



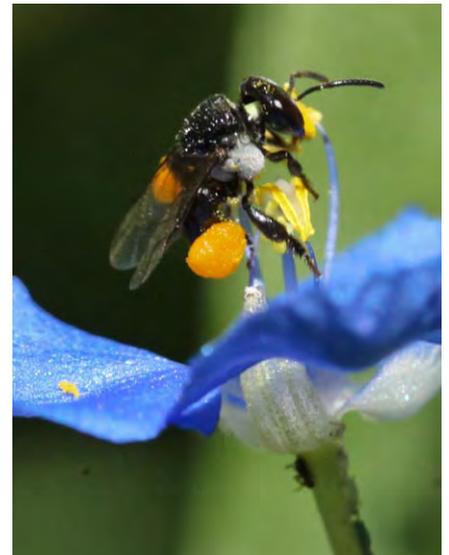
Each pillar deserves equal weight when deciding on work priorities. It may well be that you remove weeds but it should only occur after an analysis of the consequences of that action in relation to the other 2 pillars.

WildThings has a motto of promote, protect and proliferate. Currently most Australians only connect to native wildlife through documentaries and have no real emotional connection with native fauna.

People are emotionally connected with a wide range of exotic Fauna, as evidenced by the responses that occur whenever horses or rabbits are culled, or when people talk about dogs or cats. When the same people are asked about quolls or numbats, most of them don't even know what they are, let alone trying to protect and conserve them.

Until people are emotionally connected with native wildlife their survival is parlous and one of the long term aims of the WildThings program is to promote native animals as pets. This will create the emotional bonds that are currently missing and underpin the long term survival of native wildlife.

Currently the WildThings program has converted over 40 swimming pools into ponds with scientifically validated positive biodiversity outcomes. It has placed over 200 stingless native bee hives, 30 tree frog habitats and released over 50 captive bred Bluetongues on properties within Ku-ring-gai. In the next quarter it will relaunch WildLife Watch and is planning to announce an exciting new initiative with a hitherto unknown native animal—stay tuned, this program is going places!



A trigona hive at Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden. Trigona collecting yellow pollen from a flannel flower, and orange pollen from commelina. Peter talked about how interesting they are as backyard companions. He recommends placing the hive where you see it every day—watch how their activity changes with the weather.

***Peter Andrews and natural sequence farming**

From <http://www.nsfarming.com/>

Natural Sequence Farming (NSF) is a rural landscape management technique aimed at restoring natural water cycles that allow the land to flourish despite drought conditions. NSF offers a low-cost, widely applicable method of reducing drought severity and boosting productivity on Australia's farms and landscapes. The technique is based on ecological principles, low input requirements and natural cycling of water and nutrients to make the land more resilient.

Significant areas of Australian land and water bodies have been seriously degraded, largely through the removal of natural means of conserving water. The challenge to provide Australia's ongoing water requirements without undermining the ecological resilience of the land demands urgent and informed action.

Founder, Peter Andrews has devoted his life to the development of Natural Sequence Farming (NSF) techniques to restore the natural balance of water cycles prevalent before they were disturbed. In January this year he was awarded Australia's highest public honour: the Order of Australia Medal.

Pools to ponds

It's easy to convert to a pond, and then back to a pool if required

A chlorinated pool will be largely free of chlorine within a week of the last application. Salt water pools need to be emptied and refilled

Aquatic plants are vital for keeping the nitrogen cycle working properly. A 50% plant cover is ideal, and this isn't hard to achieve because the plants tend to expand into new territory. To provide suitable growing heights, pond owners usually construct platforms or islands. The plants soon cover them, and the islands we saw looked quite natural.

Green is OK—just be patient!

Once the chlorine disappears, it doesn't take long for the water to change colour. But as the plants establish, a new balance develops: between algae, zooplankton, bacteria, plants—and later, animals such as fish. It can take up to a year but the water will eventually look clean and clear (as did the three pools we saw) and no chemicals or filters are ever needed again.

Council provides gudgeon, smelt, galaxias and pacific blue-eyes (all fish native to local area that do well in ponds) and a range of aquatic plants.

From Ku-ring gai Council's website (there are also brochures and youtube videos).

Have you got an unwanted or unused swimming pool sitting in your backyard? Why not join forty other Pool to Pond converts and go with an eco-friendly, cost-effective alternative that promotes biodiversity?

Ku-ring-gai Council has assisted local residents in converting their unwanted swimming pools into ponds since 2007 by supplying native fish, aquatic plants and technical advice for the conversion.

Benefits

Switching off the pool pump and filter can easily save you \$1,000 on your electricity bill.

The conversion is reversible—if you sell your house in future it will not have lost any value.

A pond enhances household sustainability by reducing toxic chemical use and providing a source of water for garden irrigation.

Maintaining a pond is not expensive or time-consuming.

A floating island can be made from a thick piece of polystyrene (as thick as possible) and camouflaged with shade cloth. The shade cloth can be secured with fishing line.

The polystyrene will be very buoyant and able to support rocks and pot plants. To prevent the island from constantly moving with the wind you may like to secure it with fishing line to something heavy on the pool edge.

A Fixed Island can be built with besser blocks in the shallow end of the pool, plastic furniture can be placed and weighed down with rocks and pots of aquatic plants.

Ponds are a useful educational resource for kids—try dip netting to collect a range of aquatic wildlife.

Promote biodiversity in your own backyard.

Become the custodian of a species of threatened native fish by using your pond as a biobank.

Frequently asked questions

Are mosquitoes a problem?

No. Approximately 60 mosquito species live in the Sydney area, 3-4 of which are considered pests. These 3-4 species prefer shallow ephemeral water and dislike living in depths greater than 30 cm. These mosquitoes are typically found in saucers under pot plants.

Will my water smell?

Pond odour has not been raised as an issue with any of the conversions. The surface area of a pool is large enough to ensure that the water is relatively oxygenated.

Is the water safe?

A study facilitated by a researcher at the University of Western Sydney has shown that the water in converted ponds meets Australian recreational water guidelines. The water is "clean" enough to swim in provided that animals such as ducks are not present in large numbers, as that can lead to faecal coliform contamination. The water standard of converted ponds does not meet drinking water guidelines.

Will a pond damage my pump and filter?

Pumps and filters are manufactured to last for approximately 8 years and may need to be replaced if the pond is converted back into a swimming pool. Algae will not cause any problems to your pool equipment.



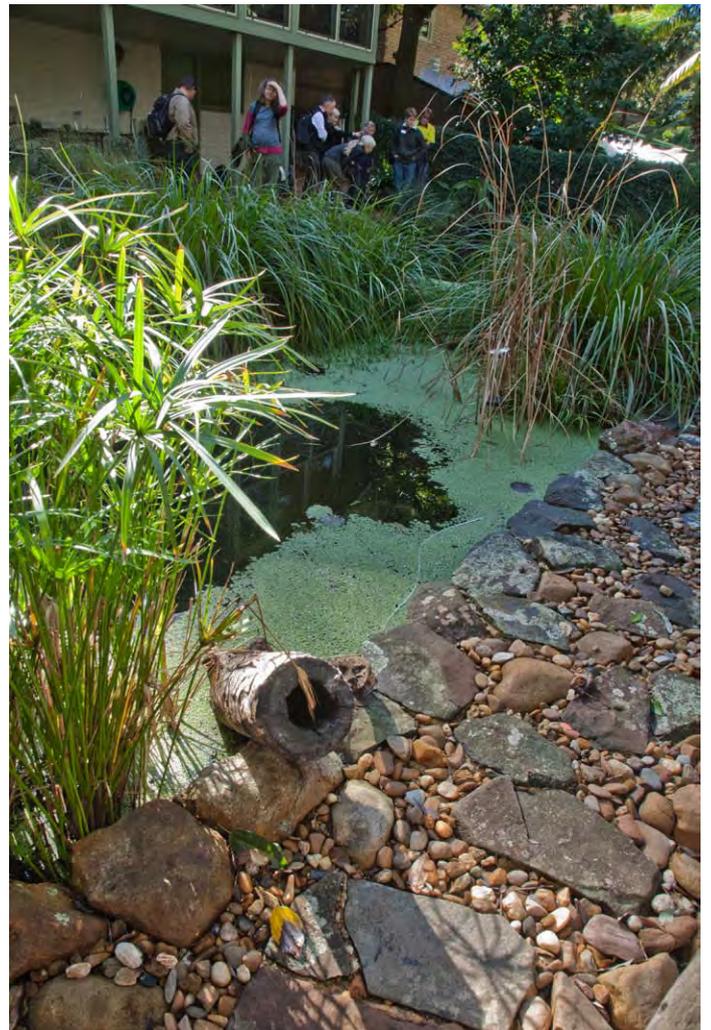
The floating leaves of nardoo helped make an attractive backyard pond



A range of aquatic plants growing in different depths



A 1960s classic pool, and an example of a conversion with minimal effort and expense—mainly planting *Eleocharis* (which quickly took off). The owner was worried about what to do with a pool she didn't use and didn't want to maintain. She now has a pleasant place to watch wildlife—and no more work to do.



A pond conversion complimented with some quality landscaping.

Wildthings contacts

Peter 9424 0811 or Taysha 9424 0972

wildthings@kmc.nsw.gov.au

<http://www.kmc.nsw.gov.au/www/html/466-wildthings.asp>

Photos on pages 4-7: Virginia Bear

New Rules

How the Gardening and Landscape Services Award may affect the bush regeneration industry

Bush Regeneration employees and employers have worked under the new Federal Award system since July 2010. This has had a number of effects. The attached document is some anecdotal thoughts on the new system by Dave McGuiness of Bush-It. We hope that they will be of some interest to those working in the industry and we welcome further discussion and comments.

In July 2010 bush regeneration gained a new legitimacy when it was included in a national award along with other occupations such as gardeners and landscapers. This was a significant step towards establishing bush regeneration as a professional industry. It also presents employers with a range of new challenges that may prompt changes to our industry.

Details of the Award can be found on the website of Fair Work Australia. http://www.fwa.gov.au/documents/modern_awards/award/ma000101/default.htm

We urge all those involved in the industry to take the time to have a look at the Award and see how it affects them. While it is a step in the right direction, it's not a perfect solution for our industry.

Below we outline some of the main points and look at some aspects of the Award that may be contentious or cause some problems.

This document is presented to promote awareness of the Award and is offered as general information only. We recommend contacting the Fair Work Ombudsman or seeking qualified legal opinion for definitive advice on how the award may affect any individual or organisation.

Job classification structure

The award has six pay categories detailed in Schedule B with specified minimum wages for employees with increasing levels of expertise and responsibility. Employers are free to pay their staff more than the award but they are within their rights to choose not to.

The Introductory Level and Levels 1, and 2 cover employees without qualifications.

Level 3 requires completion of a horticulture training course.

This doesn't accurately reflect our industry, where some gain their CALM III qualification or other tertiary qualification before finding employment. There is no mechanism for acknowledging this in the pay scales. Individual employers can choose to pay above minimum wage to recognise this but there is no obligation.

Level 4 specifies both a minimum of three years' experience in the industry and a Certificate III (CALM) qualification.

While this period may be suitable for apprenticeships in the Landscaping or Gardening Industries it gives no leeway for those who have prior knowledge or become proficient in a short time. A long period on a lower pay grade may add to the drift from Bush Regeneration to the better pay and conditions offered elsewhere.

Level 5 is the only classification that makes mention of 'coordinating work in a team environment', i.e. supervising, and specifies Certificate IV. There is an alternative in Clause B.6.1.(b) which allows for a supervisor to 'hold a trade certificate and/or possess the skills, knowledge and experience to perform work within the scope of this level'.

The Cert IV is still not a widespread qualification in the private sector and smaller operators may find that they do not have enough qualified staff to meet their supervision needs.

Level 5 is the highest level of this award. As it is structured to the larger outdoor industries there is no scope for recognition of the other duties undertaken by regenerators such as project management and administration. This creates a 'ceiling' beyond which there is no legislative guarantee of higher wages for more demanding roles. This continues to be an incentive for workers in the private sector to leave in favour of higher-paid positions in councils and elsewhere.

It seems that the award is skewed to the other (much larger) industries it seeks to manage and doesn't always reflect the realities of natural area restoration. It has too many pay classifications at the bottom, and not enough at the top, so trainee regenerators have a long time ahead of them before they're rewarded for their growing expertise, while aspirational supervisors still really have no-where to go except management roles in the public sector.

Costs

So what new costs are employers likely to face?

The award lays out provisions for allowances that previously did not exist.

There is a 2% loading for nominated first-aiders, and a 2-7% loading for 'leading hands', (i.e. supervisors) depending on team sizes.

These are only small sums and should not place much more of a burden on employers, while they offer incentives to senior team members for their greater contribution.

Accurately tracking these expenses can be a challenge and puts new demands on reporting systems and payroll. For example, who is a nominated first-aider on a particular day? Just how many staff were being supervised on each day in a given week? Can these figures be passed to payroll staff in a way that is reliable and verifiable?

Regenerators are now expected to work up to 38 hours per week on average at regular rates.

Beyond these hours, employees are entitled to overtime provisions of time and a half for the first two hours and double time after that.

Various mechanisms such as Rostered Days Off (RDOs) and 4-week averages are allowed for in the award to spare the employer having to pay overtime. This assumes that regenerators work to a regular routine which is often not the case.

Work hours can vary due to many factors including contracts requirements, the season and weather. So it may be difficult to reasonably apply these rules to regenerators. The only way (at least so far as we can tell in our organisation) for employers to ensure they are meeting their legal obligations is to pay overtime where necessary every week, regardless of what happened last week or might happen next week.

As for the RDO, it's hard to justify paying staff for a day off when it's not clear whether they may or may not have worked that day anyway in a casual roster. All this rapidly becomes complicated for administrative staff given that many and varied complex rules relate to overtime, and it's further complicated by the implicit assumption in the award that staff work for a regular rate, whereas in our company for example, staff may be working as a trained regenerator today for one rate of pay, and supervising tomorrow at another rate. At the end of the week, it's not always clear exactly which hours were worked outside the standard 38.

Then there's the expense. Suppose a staff member works on the ground eight hours a day five days a week. Already they're entitled to two hours overtime at time and a half. And extra two half hour periods in the week helping maintain equipment or assisting with administrative roles and there's another hour at double time. That extra three hours will cost the company five hours wages. If the pattern is widespread across many employees, the costs rapidly escalate.

One possible solution to the problem is working a seven or seven and a half hour day. Some contractors already work to this model. This automatically reduces even a full working week to between 35 and 37.5 hours, and eliminates the need to pay overtime. Other options might include a four-day week, or a nominated early finish at the end of the week, but these can clash with the requirements of a flexible roster, transport of staff and equipment, and contract deadlines.

A casualty of the overtime provisions may be supervision of volunteer Bushcare groups. Our industry has a long supported community participation in the protection of bushland. Indeed, it's where the industry grew from and is an essential part of the regeneration ethos.

Bushcare often takes place on weekends and if employers have to pay their staff double time for the work and pass on these costs the community groups and even councils will decide they can't afford to pay the prices that regeneration companies will be obligated to ask.

Whatever changes we see emerging industry-wide, it seems likely that these new provisions for workers may paradoxically endanger the current model under which they work.

Transitional arrangements

The Schedule A transitional provisions of the award is a mechanism that softens the financial blow to companies by allowing them to move to the new award over a four year period.

In simple terms each financial year from July 1st 2010 the minimum rate of pay rises by 20% of the difference between the old rate and the new award rate so that by 1st July 2014 all staff are being paid the full award rate (at minimum).

Until then employers can legally pay staff less than the stated minimums in the award, so long as such rates are determined according to the formulae specified in the award.

This gradual increase in minimum pay rates over that time should (in theory) allow for a similar gradual increase in chargeout rates so that employers can adapt to their new costs. This is a general provision that applies to any move from an old state-based award to a new national award.

Prior to July 2010 bush regenerators had no award and so were deemed to be covered by the Federal Minimum Wage. The minimum wage is a 'transitional instrument' according to the terms of the relevant legislation, so it's acceptable to calculate the transitional rates from the minimum wage. The stand-out feature of the minimum wage (apart from how shamefully low it is) is that it makes no distinction between pay categories, so in fact the difference between the minimum legal wage for a supervisor prior to July 2010 and after July 2014 is significantly larger than the difference between legal minimum rates before and after for a trainee.

Look before you leap

These various issues have only scratched the surface of all the terms and provisions of the award, so if you're an employer or an employee, take the time to read it. Ask yourself if you're meeting your obligations or getting your full entitlements. Workers can approach the Fair Work Ombudsman free of charge with questions or complaints, and employers can likewise obtain advice from Fair Work Australia and may find it a worthwhile investment to seek professional legal guidance if they're in any doubt.

And finally

So far, I've probably made the award sound like a bit of a downer, and I do think that bush regenerators within the context of the Gardening and Landscape Services Award are something of a square peg in a round hole. But nevertheless, it's a start. It reflects something that has been lacking in the regeneration industry until now; the recognition that we are a body of knowledgeable, qualified professionals who deserve acknowledgement of our skills and a fair price for our services. The new award provisions are entirely affordable if operators can pass on costs to clients without jeopardising their business. I see being incorporated under an award as an opportunity to raise the standard within the industry and allow employers more bargaining power when tendering to clients to offset the greater protections and entitlements that employees now have and thoroughly deserve. Better paid workers with better incentives carry out better work. There's no getting around the plain fact that a national award has made bush regeneration more expensive. And so it should be. As with all things, you get what you pay for.



This greater glider was one of the lucky ones—released with fairly minor scratches (to glider and rescuer). Photo L. Turton

Wildlife friendly fencing

The wildlife friendly fencing project

From <http://www.wildlifefriendlyfencing.com/WFF/Home.html>

“The wildlife friendly fencing project is raising awareness of the impact of fencing on Australian wildlife, and developing guidelines for good practice. Barbed wire in particular is a major hazard for wildlife. Each year thousands of animals face a cruel death or permanent injury from entanglement on barbs, usually on the top strand. More than 75 wildlife species have been identified in Australia as occasional or regular victims of barbed wire fences, especially nocturnal animals such as bats, gliders and owls. Many fail to see the fence, or cannot clear the height under windy conditions. Most of those rescued are too severely damaged to return to the wild.

There are also other fencing hazards. Kangaroos get hung up in fences that are too high, whether plain or barbed, a situation made worse by the bottom strand of the fence being too low. Wetlands fenced too close to the waterline prevent wetland birds from landing or taking off, especially cranes.

Barbed wire is both an animal welfare and conservation issue. It is recognised as a threatening process in the draft recovery plans for a number of species. These include the Yellow-bellied glider (*Petaurus australis*), the Mahogany glider (*Petaurus gracilis*), the Spectacled flying fox (*Pteropus conspicillatus*) and Grey-headed flying fox (*Pteropus poliocephalis*).

We seek a fundamental change in the approach to fencing, a change that considers the welfare of wildlife in the landscape. The project is looking to establish partnerships with a wide range of organisations to help promote and implement wildlife friendly fencing. These include wildlife rescue groups, natural resource management groups, all levels of government, fencing manufacturers, contractors and suppliers.

Damage results not only from entanglement on the barbs, but also from dehydration, attempts by the animal to untangle itself, and impact with the fence and fence posts. The forces involved at impact are quite significant especially for an animal that is moving at speed. The longer the animal is on the fence, the less likely it is to ever return to the wild”.

Barbed wire fencing over water is dangerous to wildlife for several reasons:

- bats fly over water to drink at night and do not see the fence
- many water birds need a fair length of water to take off and land, and as waterholes shrink find they can no longer do this without entanglement
- barbed wire fences are dislodged in waterways in flood, and become a hazard to wildlife in the water like turtles

In their leaflet *Bats and Barbed Wire*, Bat Care Brisbane points out that “In urban environments barbed wire is still being erected along railway lines, in car parks and industrial estates and much of it is being planted with wildlife attracting native plants.

Barbed-wire is erected as a human deterrent and our nocturnal wildlife are rarely considered.

These fences are a constant death trap and every year thousands of animals are caught and suffer horrid deaths or face months of rehabilitation with wildlife organizations”.

http://www.bats.org.au/wp-content/uploads/batcarebrisbane_barb-wire.pdf

Wildlife friendly fencing tips

- replace barbed wire fences with plain wire, nylon, timber, or electric fencing—or at least replace the top strand
- cover the top strand with split poly pipe
- make the fence more visible—particularly at night—by using bright tape, flags or CDs
- as a priority, modify or remove any fence:
 - with a known history of entanglement
 - that is new
 - in a recognised hotspot i.e. over water, on ridge lines, near feed trees
 - near fruiting or flowering plants
- remove redundant barbed-wire as quickly as possible from the landscape
- provide macropod access by leaving a 50 cm gap below the lowest strand
- place wombat gates in fence lines to allow access without damage

Funding for weed research

The Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC) has boosted its investment in weeds research, commissioning major new projects to significantly advance Australia's response to its on-going weeds challenge. These commissioned projects follow on from an open call for research applications. In total, the RIRDC Weeds Program is

providing around \$12.4 million (GST inclusive) to more than 50 projects, which will report back in May 2012.

Some of the more biodiversity related projects are listed here. Results will be published in the second half of 2012.

More information is available on the RIRDC website www.rirdc.gov.au/weeds.

Project	Principal researcher and research collaboration
<p>The weight of the vine: Impacts of vine infestations on plant health Exotic woody vines are common along edges of fragmented habitats and some species are particularly destructive and becoming increasingly common, but a lack of knowledge of the degree and type of damage these vines cause is hampering the development of appropriate management strategies. This project aims to fill research gaps by undertaking a significant survey across the distribution of Madeira vine and cat's claw creeper to identify levels of infestation and damage.</p>	<p>Dr Kris French, University of Wollongong</p>
<p>Weed Risk Assessment for Australian Nursery & Garden Industries This project will utilise an existing weed risk assessment system developed for Australia's Botanic Gardens, known as Botanic Gardens Weed Risk Assessment Procedure (WRAP), to screen 1000 common ornamental taxa cultivated in Australian nurseries for sale to the public to ascertain the degree of weed risk associated with each species. It is envisaged that this project will lead to the development of an Australian white list of low risk ornamental taxa, which is a list of safe plants to cultivate for production, distribution and sale to the general public by production nurseries across Australia.</p>	<p>Dr Anthony Kachenko, Nursery Garden Industry Australia Collaborators - Royal Botanic Gardens, South Yarra; NSW Department of Primary Industries</p>
<p>Just how bad are coastal weeds: assessing geo-eco-psycho-socio-economic Impacts Exotic plants seem to easily invade Australia's coastal fringe and there has been little research on the multi-faceted impact of such plants. This project will collate existing information on the impacts of coastal plant invaders in Australasia and undertake formal research on impacts that have received the least attention. Research will be conducted by a multidisciplinary team, including ecologists, economists, psychologists, sociologists and geomorphologists, interacting with state governments, CMAs, shires and local communities. The purpose of the project is to provide guidance for more strategic approaches to the management of coastal weeds and more effective use of limited resources.</p>	<p>Professor Roger Cousens, University of Melbourne</p>
<p>Innovations in institutions to improve weed funding, strategy and outcomes The aim of this study is to investigate opportunities to streamline and broaden the laws relating to weed management, reshape the coordinating structures, build in economic feedback loops that increase accountability, create new markets for weed control, reform the intelligence approaches that are used, and create more effective collaborative governance with the industries that are concerned. The outcome of the research will be an integrated set of institutional reform proposals, intended to stimulate debate and further focused research, designed to show how contemporary natural resource governance institutions and institutional thinking might be applied to better enable weed professionals to deliver the public and private benefits that are sought from their work.</p>	<p>Professor Paul Martin, University of New England Collaborators - University of Melbourne; Department of Primary Industries, CSIRO Ecosystem Sciences, Sydney University of Technology</p>
<p>Cabomba ecology and dispersal in Australia This research program is designed to help obtain a better understanding of the ecology and dispersal of cabomba in Australia and fill large gaps in knowledge of this aquatic weed. Detailed knowledge about the ecology and dispersal of cabomba is necessary to predict likely habitats where it could establish. A predictive capacity will allow concentration of monitoring efforts to areas deemed as high risk, and therefore will improve the likelihood of detecting cabomba infestations in an early stage when successful removal from a site is still a viable proposition.</p>	<p>Dr Tobias Bickel, Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation (QLD)</p>
<p>Manipulating weed successions when restoring native vegetation communities: Riverina Murray Area Development, demonstration and adoption of simple, effective and affordable methods of weed management will enhance the establishment, growth and survival of native vegetation by direct seeding.</p>	<p>Mr Malcolm Taylor, Regional Development Australia-Murray Collaborators - Murray Catchment Management Authority</p>
<p>Weed management on Indigenous lands: Indigenous values, perceptions & capacity This project will address the issue of weed invasion and weed management on Aboriginal-owned lands in northern and central Australia. The project team will work with Aboriginal land owners in a case study approach, covering examples from North Queensland, the Top End of the Northern Territory and Central Australia. It will describe weed problems on case study lands; identify Aboriginal perspectives on those weeds, including threatened values; compare and contrast them with non-Indigenous perspectives; review weed management activities; and identify ways in which the capacity of Aboriginal owners to address weed issues of concern to them can be improved.</p>	<p>Dr Tony Grice, CSIRO Ecosystem Sciences</p>

What's happening

Thursday August 11

Bush Regen field workshop (See cover)

Where Wamberal Lagoon Wambina Nature Reserve Central Coast NSW

Organiser AABR

Sunday September 4

13th Annual Big Scrub Rainforest Picnic Day

Where Rocky Creek Dam, Near Lismore NSW

Contact www.rainforestrescue.org.au/events/big-scrub-day.html

Rainforest restoration walks and workshops, rainforest flora walk, weed ID workshop, bird walk and talk, community organisation stalls, exhibits and children's activities. BYO picnic

Gwen Harden will be discussing the new interactive DVD based on the iconic books Rainforest Trees and Shrubs, and Rainforest climbing plants, from 10am.

Big Scrub Rainforest Day has inspired and educated thousands of landholders and volunteers to tackle weeds, plant trees and get passionate about rainforests since 1999. Through its innovative, fun program, the event engages the whole community, not just those converted to rainforest restoration and landcare.

Sunday September 11

Bushcare's Major Day Out

Where Various sites around Australia

Contact <http://bushcaresmajordayout.org>

September 25-30

3rd Asian-Pacific Weed Science Society Conference

Where Cairns, Nth Queensland.

Contact: www.apwss2011.com

Weed Management in a Changing World. There will be presentations on the role of genetically modified organisms in weed management, climate change, water availability, biosecurity, population growth and the utilisation of weeds.

Sat November 12

Telling your bush regen stories (see page 1)

Organiser AABR northern region sub-committee.

November 21-25

ESA Annual Conference. Ecology in Changing Landscapes

Where Hobart, Tasmania

Contact: <http://esa2011.org.au/index.asp?IntCatId=14>

The Ecological Society of Australia Conference is the pre-eminent conference in ecology in the southern hemisphere, bringing together the best and brightest ecologists from academic, government and non-government backgrounds in Australia, New Zealand and internationally. We welcome practitioners and students from a range of disciplines to facilitate broad conversation within the areas of natural resource management, conservation biology and ecological science.

The aim is to inspire challenging dialogue across all fields of ecology and to link research with practical conservation biology. We hope to stimulate debate and challenge current thinking, particularly with reference to the need to mainstream climate change ecology. Are the ecological questions and methods of the past still relevant and are they up to the questions of the future?

Bushcare's Major Day Out

Sunday September 11

From <http://bushcaresmajordayout.org>

Bushcare's Major Day Out is an opportunity for each of us to join with others in the community and participate in the regeneration of the bushland—or simply come along and celebrate the part that the bush plays in our nation.

Just as Clean Up Australia Day has made us a litter conscious nation, Bushcare's Major Day Out aims to establish a day where we celebrate our concern and love for bushland and the process of Bushcare as an accepted and desirable part of our culture.

This year Bushcare's Major Day Out is happening all around Australia in Queensland Victoria and Tasmania. It is an opportunity for us to do some great work and acknowledge the importance of bushland to our fauna and ourselves.

Vision: If you could imagine bushland that was as pristine as when the First Fleet arrived then you have an idea of our vision. You might say 'yer dreamin' and we wouldn't disagree. We know we can't turn back the clock but we think we can all work together to mitigate some of the problems that our bush is facing.

To do that we need to build awareness of the issues and the role that we all play in living with and caring for bushland.

That's why a National Day for the Bush was started. A day where we can learn and become involved with helping the bush. A day when we can not just dream, we can make it better.

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AABR News is the newsletter of the Australian Association of Bush Regenerators (NSW) AABR Inc.

AABR NSW was established in 1986 out of concern for the continuing survival and integrity of bushland and its dependent fauna in or near bushland areas, and seeks new members and friends for promoting good work practices in natural areas. The Association's aim is to foster and encourage sound ecological practices of bushland management by qualified people.

AABR NSW has regional committees in northeast NSW/Southeast Queensland and the Hunter, and a sister organisation in Western Australia: AABR WA.

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To keep in touch and be notified about events, subscribe to Bush Regeneration or Bushcare list servers and check out Solutions, the Bush Regeneration Bulletin Board—see website for detail.

\$20:00	p.a	AABR Newsletter Subscription	(all interested people)
\$10:00	p.a	AABR Newsletter Subscription	(email for 1 year for students of Certificate III CLM-Natural Area Restoration)
\$25:00	p.a	AABR Membership	(appropriately qualified & experienced bush regenerators)
\$50-400	p.a	AABR Contractors & Consultants List	(appropriately qualified & experienced bush regenerators)

Newsletter contributions and comments are welcome

Contact Virginia Bear newsletter@aabr.org.au 0408 468 442

Opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of AABR NSW