

Champions of the Catchment Awards

Foxground Landcare – Cooperative Landcare Group Award

Established in 2001, Foxground Landcare now boasts more than 28 members ranging in age from 18 years to 81. Every month the team carries out on-ground works on a different property located in the Foxground area. The work load is now shared amongst 14 properties and the team carries out all sorts of tasks ranging from weed removal, to farm infrastructure maintenance, to tree planting and creek restoration works. The group meet based on a labour exchange program on the third Saturday of every month at 9.30am. A different property is worked on each month and any new members must attend five working bees with the Landcare group before their property can be included in the work plan. To date the group has been successful in obtaining a number of grants for a range of environmental projects, most recently being the World Wildlife Funds Threatened Species Network Community Grant which has awarded the Landcare group funding to carry out the project entitled "Surveying and monitoring Spotted Quolls in Foxground NSW". The project will use remote cameras strategically placed throughout Foxground to survey the presence of Spotted Quolls around the area. Past projects include Environmental Trust projects aiming to reduce the occurrence of



threatening environmental weeds such as Madeira vine, and regenerate the rainforest and eucalypt communities around the Foxground area. Foxground Landcare ensures that the wider community are kept informed of their activities to invite comments, suggestions and new memberships in the region. Letter box drops, Media coverage, invitations to workshops and annual events are all an integral part of extending their efforts to the wider community. Foxground Landcare has established some strong relationship with local government and other community organisations. Landcare Illawarra has been a key partner in achieving group targets and objectives, Kiama Municipal Council and the Southern

Rivers Catchment Management Authority have also been essential partners in achieving environmental outcomes. Members of the group agree that it is a wonderful system which has not only strengthened relationships within the small farming community, but with the wider NRM community.

Bombo Headland Landcare – Long Term Landcare Award

The Bombo Headland group was formed in Australia's Bicentennial year, 1988, by a few dedicated local conservationists who were determined to regenerate a site that had become seriously degraded since the earliest days of European settlement and the establishment of extensive quarrying in the Kiama area. Bombo headland, known to locals as The Boneyard, had been used as a recreational site for many thousands of years and was a gathering place for the Dharawal people to catch and collect marine life. While a few middens remain to attest to the original use of the site, decades of quarrying and neglect destroyed most of the remnants of aboriginal culture and history. The construction of a wharf enabled the export of the quarried blue metal basalt to Sydney where it was used for road construction. Tailings from the quarry were dumped, leading to further degradation of the 80 hectare site. In the 1970s local



activists managed to halt quarrying and in 1974 the Headland was declared a state park. It was weed-infested, stripped of its native vegetation, and the dumping of quarry fill meant that it bore very little resemblance to its original form.



Lantana, blackberry and kikuyu grass were the main species present and this exotic cocktail together with other destructive activities such as trail bike riding, led to severe erosion problems. The volunteers who founded the Bombo Landcare Group wanted to create a haven for passive recreation such as cycling, swimming, fishing, and the observation of plants and wildlife. Twenty-three years later the group is still going strong. Today, Bombo Headland is an important habitat for a range of native animals including the majestic white breasted sea eagle, tiny blue wrens, black cockatoos, red bellied black snakes, echidnas, and even swamp wallabies. More than one thousand native trees, shrubs and plants have been successfully established each year since the rehabilitation of the site began, with the help of Landcare volunteers, Kiama Council, and other interested groups such as Green Corp, and students from some of our local schools. Plants of particular note include the regionally rare Beach Rose, *Canavalia Rosea*, a climber that reaches its southern limit only a few kilometres south of the headland. There is also a small remnant of littoral rainforest on the northern cliffs of the Boneyard which contains Black Apple, Coast Canthium and Port Jackson Fig. As the

vegetation becomes more diverse through the efforts of the Bombo Headland Landcare Group and through natural regeneration, it can be expected that there will be a continuing increase in the number of species that call the headland home.

Lynne Kavanagh – Outstanding Support for Bushcare Volunteers Award

Lynne Kavanagh came to Australia in 1988, and was immediately fascinated with the Australian natural environment. Shortly after completing studies in horticulture and bush regeneration, she found herself working as a casual bush regeneration contractor, and not long after, in 2002, was employed as the Wollongong City Bushcare officer. In this role, Lynne was responsible for the management and support of more than 50 active volunteer sites around the Wollongong Local Government Area. Over eight years, Lynne was responsible for developing programs and resources which assisted Bushcare volunteers to carry out literally thousands of volunteer hours in restoring and rehabilitating the natural environment. Through her management of the Bushcare program Lynne not only supported on-ground work in the community, she also helped to develop a wide variety of opportunities for Illawarra community members to increase their capacity to carry out natural resource management and adopt a more sustainable way of living. In her role as Bushcare Officer, Lynne was able to plan and develop workshops, open days, and other environmental events to help raise awareness and educate the general public about Bushcare and Landcare, and help residents to appreciate Bushcare and the natural environment. This included programs such as the Bushcare art competition, and the Summer Coastal Walks, which received a Coastcare award in recognition of the success of the program. Lynne was a point of contact for all volunteers for information resources, advice and as a friend. Volunteers connected with her over the years and very much appreciated all her efforts and initiatives she brought to the program. Lynne says one of the most



valuable and rewarding things about being in this role is the people, and she counts herself very fortunate and lucky to have been involved in the program and says she will always be involved with Bushcare in one form or another.

Terry Rankmore and Jim Derbyshire – Landcare and Indigenous Education Award



Jim Derbyshire began his fight for Blackbutt Forest Reserve when, in 1978, the then state government proposed to clear cut the forest for public housing. Many, including Jim, protested so vigorously that the forest was given to the community to be held in trust by Shellharbour City Council. Since that time, Jim has been involved on and off with Blackbutt volunteers. In 2008, thirty years later, as his dicky back was getting more and more dicky, Jim switched from slashing away at lantana and other weeds to portraying the forest through art interpretation. Helped initially by his teacher daughter Celina, Jim set about working with students from the schools which had been involved in National Tree Day plantings at

Blackbutt Forest. Various animals of the forest were outlined on calico by Jim, painted by the students –sometimes quite creatively – then their edges were trimmed and they were glued on to a Blackbutt Forest backdrop painted by Jim. Each mural measures 90 cm by 150 cm, and the 18 murals completed by Jim and the school students in 2008, 2009 and 2010 are now displayed in nine local schools. A further three murals will be completed in October/November this year. Jim Derbyshire’s imagination and rich artistic skills have led to proud, permanent and beautiful records of schools assisting with National Tree Day plantings, totaling 5,180 local indigenous plants at Blackbutt over the past four years.

Terry Rankmore has a passion for native plants and a great admiration for the complex plant science of traditional aboriginal people. Terry is a regular volunteer on working bees at Blackbutt Forest Reserve, but his real love is building his knowledge of the usage of native plants by the aboriginal people of the Illawarra and sharing that knowledge as widely as possible. In 2009 Terry received a grant from Landcare Illawarra which enabled him to turn his private notes on plant use by the Dharawal people into Murni Dhungang - a beautiful, commercially printed, 70-page, full colour book on the plant foods and animal foods of the local, traditional aborigines. Three hundred copies were printed. Murni Dhungang was then introduced to teachers from twenty Illawarra schools at a two-hour workshop. Schools which sent a teacher to this workshop received a class set of books for their use. A grant from Southern Rivers CMA enabled 700 more copies of Terry’s book to be printed. Workshops were conducted with a further twenty-three schools in the Illawarra and Shoalhaven, to help ensure that the substantial plant science of traditional aboriginal peoples was more widely appreciated and respected. Terry has now received a major grant from the NSW Environmental Trust to produce another book on Bush Medicines of the Illawarra. The Illawarra Aboriginal Corporation has been essential in backing this passion of Terry’s to research and then share such vital understandings of aboriginal history.



Anders Bofeldt – Outstanding Contribution to Biodiversity Award



Anders was a man whose life passion was to discover and preserve the beauty and value of plants and their ecosystems. He regarded the trees and plants of the Illawarra region like a family, and he made it his personal crusade to preserve the essential biodiversity of our region for future generations. For someone whose antecedents were in the chilly climes of Scandinavia, he had the affinity of an indigenous Australian for man's oneness with the environment. He understood the language of country, and he walked the land with the knowledge and confidence of someone for whom it was a birthright. It was a knowledge that combined the European formality of botanical Latin with an understanding of the ancient aboriginal culture that sustained our environment over the centuries. It was as if he knew every tree in the region as an individual. Those who worked with him would watch in awe as he found a particular tree he was looking for, even if it was several years since he had last seen it, greeting it like an old friend. As a biologist, Anders worked at the Wollongong Botanic Gardens where he started as a trainee back in the 1980s. His obsession was seeds. Seeds of every description, lovingly collected from our region's forests, to be stored in bags and trays that overflowed his

office. He was responsible for most of the rainforest plantings in the Botanic Gardens, of which he was immensely proud, but his realm was much wider than that, and spanned the entire Illawarra region. Anders was only too well aware of just how much our environment has been degraded over the past two hundred years, and how immense the task of preserving so many of our endangered plant communities that face the risk of extinction. His office was a gathering place for botany students from across the road at the university because above all, Anders was a teacher, who liked to share his immense botanical knowledge with others. He was always looking for ways to educate more people about the need for environmental action. He would tell people: "What we have lost is a national tragedy, but what's done is done. The question now is how we are going to protect what's left." The loss of Anders Bofeldt will make the task that little bit harder, but he leaves a great legacy. He left forests in his wake and we will cherish him every time we see his trees. We will also remember the enthusiasm and encouragement he shared so readily with others in his quest to raise awareness about the loss of biodiversity. And, of course, there are the seeds. Thousands of them. If seeds represent wealth to be invested in the future, then Anders leaves as his legacy a true cornucopia of riches. Landcare Illawarra's project officer Richard Scarborough, together with helpers from Conservation Volunteers Australia, the Green Corp, and Warrigal Nursery, are gradually working their way through Anders' unique collection, deciphering his handwritten records, photographing and cataloguing the seeds, converting them to tubestock, and making sure they are preserved as a living and growing legacy for a man who dedicated himself to the preservation of the environment. Anders Bofeldt passed away in June this year at the tragically young age of 46.

