

Legislative Assembly Hansard – 20 September 2018 – Proof

**NSW SUSTAINING LANDCARE WEEK**

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (12:12): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes NSW Sustaining Landcare Week took place from 17 August to 2 September 2018, and acknowledges events and activities held throughout this period.
- (2) Commends the achievements of the Landcare community in regional and metropolitan New South Wales.
- (3) Supports these hardworking volunteers through the NSW Parliamentary Friends of Landcare.

I am the proud chair of the NSW Parliamentary Friends of Landcare. I welcome Landcare NSW chief executive officer Adrian Zammit and International Environmental Weed Foundation founder and executive director Bev Debrincat to the gallery. I thank them very much for joining us today. Landcare NSW is the peak body for Landcare in this State and a community-based organisation that focuses on managing and protecting our natural resources. Its members are creating more productive and sustainable farms, conserving our environment and building more cohesive and resilient communities. The iconic institution has transformed the landscape by enabling farmers, landowners and conservationists to work together at a local level on local issues.

Landcare NSW was established in 2007 after a group of volunteers recognised a need for a unified voice to represent the State's dedicated community of land carers. After months of consultation and planning an inaugural meeting was held in Sydney, which was followed by the first muster in Tamworth in October 2007. Since then, every two years land carers from across the State gather at musters to harness ideas and discuss issues. With the support of the New South Wales Government and Local Land Services [LLS], Landcare NSW is building its capability and capacity to better support the 60,000-strong volunteer Landcare community. In 2015 the New South Wales Government cemented its commitment to Landcare NSW by developing and funding a new Landcare policy that is being implemented through a partnership between Landcare NSW and Local Land Services.

This Government saw the value that Landcare provides and in 2015 at the initiative of Minister for Police Troy Grant, who was the patron of Landcare at the time, it committed \$15 million to Landcare NSW to provide for Landcare across the State. The initiative included the development of a sustainable funding source that is partly being used to support volunteers into the future and to help set up the four-year New South Wales Local Landcare Coordinators Initiative, which creates a network of locally based coordinators and a centralised support team to increase the effectiveness of Landcare networks. Currently, 34 host Landcare organisations are engaged and 72 local Landcare coordinators are doing a magnificent job on the ground and achieving real outcomes. The proof of Landcare's success is in the pudding. Some 63 per cent of Landcare groups have reported increased participation, 86 per cent have reported increased capacity to address social, agricultural and environmental issues, and 92 per cent have reported better interactions with Local Land Services.

The importance of the community Landcare movement is highlighted by the impact of the drought on farmers and rural communities, which is presently at the forefront in New South Wales. Our primary producers are core to our productivity and growth, and organisations such as Landcare support our farmers and regional communities. For example, in response to the ongoing drought LLS teamed up with Landcare to roll out a series of free drought workshops focusing on the health and wellbeing of our farming women. That is just one example of the work Landcare is doing to support our regional communities outside of delivering environmental outcomes. There is a real social benefit to it.

Many members of the House are part of the NSW Parliamentary Friends of Landcare. We have all stood together at Landcare events at Parliament House to acknowledge the fantastic work of program coordinators across the State. The Parliamentary Friends of Landcare group was set up in 2015 as an outcome of the Sustaining Landcare campaign prior to the State election. The group is bipartisan in its support for Landcare, as we will hear from members today, and provides an avenue for us to connect with and offer support to Landcare at the State level and a local level in suburbs, regional towns and farming communities. The Parliamentary Friends of Landcare continues a longstanding tradition of support for Landcare with all political parties represented and has been a strong advocate for the NSW Sustaining Landcare Week. The NSW Sustaining Landcare Week continues across the State and again this year it was strongly supported by the Parliamentary Friends of Landcare.

Running for 16 days from 17 August to 2 September, Sustaining Landcare Week aimed to raise community awareness of the vital work undertaken by Landcare across New South Wales. It is not easy to start a community organisation from scratch that has such an impact on local communities. It is therefore only appropriate to have a week to celebrate the important work that the people do. The week gave land carers and members of the public an opportunity to come together to share their experiences and knowledge. More than 30 events were held, with hundreds of people who are dedicated to supporting the Landcare movement in attendance.

Landcare groups across the State showcased their work at a range of events from Penrith to North Sydney, from Nowra to the North Coast and from Bendemeer to Broken Hill. Generating understanding of the work of Landcare and other community organisations is critical to maintaining ongoing support for those groups and their dedicated volunteers. There was an opportunity to engage in my electorate of Tamworth. I know many members also attended events in their electorates to support and promote Landcare and the work it does. Landcare has always been about more than just planting trees. It is about sustainable and productive agriculture, environmental conservation, restoration and social capital. Other Landcare NSW initiatives that are taking place across my electorate include the fantastic Office of Environment and Heritage Blinky Drinkers program for koalas. [*Time expired.*]

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (12:19): I am pleased to speak in the House today to this motion. I have been a member of the NSW Parliamentary Friends of Landcare for some three years. I pay tribute to the chair, the member for Tamworth, for running such a good, strong, bipartisan group; he has done a terrific job. I pay tribute also to Adrian and Bev, who are in the gallery, and to Rob Dulhunty, who I believe is finishing up after 10 strong years as Landcare NSW chair and who also has done a terrific job. Speaking from a bipartisan point of view, I commend the Government for the \$15 million it has put towards the Landcare networks.

Newcastle has a very active and dedicated network of Landcare groups and volunteers. Locally, Landcare works to preserve and protect the biodiversity of our natural environment and to foster community awareness and participation in sustainable natural resource management for Newcastle. City of Newcastle Landcare and the Hunter Region Landcare Network have formed an alliance to help support Landcare volunteers and groups in natural resource management activities, such as bush regeneration, dune rehabilitation, seed collection and plant propagation. They have done a magnificent job along the Merewether Beach to Bar Beach strip in particular. Griff Foley has led a wonderful band of local community Landcare workers who have made what was a fairly denuded dune system into a beautiful place.

Volunteers of the City of Newcastle Landcare work within the framework of the Landcare ethic, that is, the ecological restoration and sustainable management of the land and water resources in the Hunter region and to pass on a healthier natural environment to future generations. The City of Newcastle Landcare volunteers receive free training and guidance from council officers; resources such as tools and plants, mulch and signage; and safety gear and insurance cover whilst working on council land. Each year there is a barbecue and awards event to celebrate their volunteering and achievements. I have been out on the hills working with one of our groups and I have to say that they do a great job. The electorate of Newcastle has a number of devoted Landcare groups who work in the following locations: Arcadia Park, Charlotte Street Reserve, Dixon Park Beach, Merewether foreshore, Morgan Street Reserve, Myambalah Crescent, Nesca Parade, Nobbys Horseshoe Beach, Obelisk Hill, Stockton and Trig Shepherds Hill. I thank all of those Landcare groups and volunteers for the outstanding work they do for the community and the environment.

More broadly, the Hunter Region Landcare Network cares for a diverse region that includes natural parks and forests, wetlands, coastal land and seascapes. The Hunter is a rich farming and husbandry area with a wide variety of crops and livestock which contribute to the State and national economy. The Hunter Region Landcare Network acts as a voice for more than 300 Landcare groups in the catchment and it is involved in the promotion, support and funding of Landcare activities in cooperation with the Hunter Local Land Services and various councils. It is critical that we provide these organisations with the funding they need to get on with the job of protecting and preserving our environment. I place on record my thanks to the team at the Hunter Regional Landcare Network for the work they do, in particular Stacy Mail, the Lower and Mid Hunter Local Landcare Coordinator; Nicholas Alexander, the Upper Hunter Local Landcare Coordinator; Leslie Pearson, president; Chris Wokes, treasurer; committee members Jenny Castles, Carmel Brown, Chris Jackson and Lyn Morris; Stephen Thatcher, public officer; and John Hughson, network adviser. I again commend the motion and say what a great job Landcare does in New South Wales.

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (12:24): I support the motion of the member for Tamworth to acknowledge NSW Sustaining Landcare Week and the hard work of all the volunteers involved in the continuing success of this great organisation. I too acknowledge Bev and Adrian in the gallery today. The Cootamundra electorate is represented by LachLandcare, Mid Lachlan Landcare and Murrumbidgee Landcare with three local Landcare coordinators based in Young, Temora and Cootamundra. From 17 August to 2 September Landcare groups all across the State showcased the work they carry out day in, day out, the ultimate reward for which is seeing our precious environment and agricultural landscapes thriving and existing in harmony.

It has been wonderful to experience a growth in the Landcare movement across the electorate. On 30 August it was my pleasure to address the Women in Agriculture Forum in West Wyalong, hosted by LachLandcare. This was a truly inspirational workshop field day about diversification in small business and farming enterprises and sustainable lifestyles. Forty women from across the region attended and were inspired by the tenacious stories of innovation and resilience. Annie Jacobs' Wallendbeen cattle farm now doubles as a homestay, for example, and Helen West has branched out on her Lake Cowal property with olive oil production. I thank Anne Duncan, General Manager of LachLandcare, Brittany Turner, the tireless Local Landcare Coordinator for Bland-Temora and speakers and attendees for supporting this fantastic event.

On National Tree Day on 27 July it was a joy to officially open the new amenities block and storeroom at the Hillview Park Community Garden and Landcare Nursery in Temora. Well done to Clair Golder for leading the charge on this community project. I hope the eucalyptus macrocarpa I planted on the day is going strong. On the same day in Narrandera the local Landcare group was supported by Life Skills students from the high school, who planted more than 700 trees. It is wonderful to see our volunteer Landcare groups engaging our youth and future generations in the vital work they do in caring for the environment. Of course, as well as sustaining and supporting flora across the Cootamundra electorate, our Landcare groups are tireless advocates for our native fauna. In Young, under the leadership of district coordinator Mikla Lewis, Landcare has been working to provide habitat for up to 15 species of microbat. To date they have installed 140 microbat roosting boxes at various locations across Young. Planting days at Chance Gully and Burrandong Creek have provided future habitat, and a plant giveaway donated 1,000 trees and shrubs to the Young community.

I was thrilled recently to announce a \$400,000 grant to a group comprising five Landcare groups, including LachLandcare and Mid Lachlan Landcare, for the conservation of superb parrot habitat through the Saving our Species program. These groups are out on the ground, propping up the habitats of these breathtaking birds so that the next generation can enjoy them. In Cootamundra we have seen Landcare supporting farmers in the drought and providing information about feeding in dry times as well as encouraging farmers to look after themselves through diet, exercise and mindfulness as part of the recent Calmer Farmer workshops that were carried out in partnership with Active Farmers. I know that many members of this House are members of the NSW Parliamentary Friends of Landcare. The group is bipartisan in its support for Landcare and has been a strong advocate for NSW Sustaining Landcare Week. Once again I thank the chair of the group, the member for Tamworth, for bringing this important motion to the House.

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (12:28): I too acknowledge the member for Tamworth and thank him for bringing this important matter of Landcare in New South Wales to the attention of the House. I also acknowledge Bev and Adrian from Landcare NSW as representatives of a magnificent organisation. I first became involved in the political process for only one reason: to address the decline in the natural environment where I lived. The area around Lake Macquarie was suffering greatly and we needed to take action locally. I cannot think of a better organisation to deal with issues locally while at the same time dealing with the broader problem of the degradation of our natural environment, including the impact and damage to rural production.

When I first became involved in the environmental movement, there were a lot of well-intentioned people and well-intentioned programs. The first program I was involved with was called LEAP, the Landcare Environmental Action Program. I was a director of Hunter LEAP. They were very well-intentioned, but as with many good thoughts they do not necessarily progress to achieve their goals. To see the substantial growth of Landcare and to see how effective it has been is something to behold. It has been my opinion through my role with Lake Macquarie City Council over many years—and there are still more than 200 Landcare groups throughout Lake Macquarie—that Landcare has been the most effective mobilisation of volunteers in New South Wales and, indeed, Australia.

Amazing practical experience and energy is being brought by locals to pay attention to and repair the local environment. An amazing level of expertise has also been developed. People who have taken their qualifications to a very high standard have improved our understanding of how to deal with the degradation that has occurred across New South Wales. There are other electorates that fit within the Lake Macquarie local government area under the umbrella of Lake Macquarie Landcare—for example, Wallsend, Charlestown, Swansea and Cessnock, to a degree. We have all benefited, as have our communities.

There are too many people in my area for me to name, but I do want to talk about John Hughson, who was mentioned by the member for Newcastle, because John Hughson was there from the beginning. He is one of the great inspirations for other people to get involved. It is about people being able to share information, lending support and bringing together like-minded people. In New South Wales we are getting much more for our environment from Landcare than any government or any other group would be able to or has been able to provide. Once again, I thank the member for Tamworth.

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (12:32): I contribute to debate on this motion moved by the member for Tamworth, and I thank him for doing so. Even as a representative of an urban area, the community of North Shore, I believe the role of Landcare cannot be underestimated. In my area we have some significant activity and engagement, particularly through North Sydney Bushcare programs. I support this motion on NSW Sustaining Landcare Week. Landcare is an iconic institution which has transformed the landscape of our State, enabling farmers, landowners and conservationists to work together at a local level on local issues. There are tens of thousands of individuals who are working to protect, restore and improve the natural environment through their involvement in Landcare, Bushcare and other care groups.

In North Sydney we have an active Bushcare program of approximately 150 volunteers working in 12 groups around local reserves. These volunteers are rehabilitating publicly owned natural bushland. North Shore also offers a number of Adventure Landcare events. These activities that have environmental aims and objectives involve kayaking, bushwalking, boating or abseiling to beautiful and often infrequently visited places. Last year Landcare NSW and Parliamentary Friends of Landcare held an event in North Sydney at the Coal Loader Centre for Sustainability, which was a huge success. I joined them there to do some tree planting. That event was about something that is fundamental to North Sydney Bushcare: bringing country and city Landcare groups together. The Coal Loader Centre for Sustainability has been transformed from what was an industrial zone into a green space that showcases sustainable environmental practices. The purpose of the event was to celebrate this remarkable city-country partnership.

Since 2000 one of the landmark elements of my local Bushcare group in North Sydney is the Building Bridges to Boorowa Program, through which more than 60,000 trees have been planted in Boorowa. Each year volunteers from North Sydney make the trip to the farming community of Boorowa, near Young. The work they have done with this tree-planting initiative restores critical habitats and builds strong bonds between city and country communities. When the kids from Boorowa joined us last year at the Coal Loader it was the first reciprocal visit from them. On board the coach were 50 schoolchildren, teachers, farmers and Landcare members. They came to thank the North Sydney volunteers, to cement their partnership and to help revegetate this special part of Sydney that is the Coal Loader. Parliamentary Friends of Landcare were there, including Katrina Hodgkinson, to celebrate this bipartisan tradition that has existed since the Landcare movement started nearly 30 years ago.

The Boorowa tree-planting activity that happens each year is a habitat restoration effort between North Sydney Council, the Boorowa Community Landcare Group and Hilltops Council, formerly Boorowa Council. Each year we have around 40 Bushcare volunteers go to Boorowa for a day and a half to two days. Substantial preparation work is undertaken by the local landholders, often six months in advance. Our most recent annual trip to Boorowa took place on 7 September, with 31 volunteers. I spoke to some locals on their return from that trip and they enjoyed it once again. This year was a great success. They provided habitat for local wildlife, including the superb parrot, and 4,695 trees were planted. I look forward to the exciting twentieth anniversary of the Building Bridges to Boorowa Program in 2019. I again thank the member for Tamworth for raising this. Both in the country and the city, the protection of our environment and our Landcare is crucial.

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (12:37):By leave: I speak on the motion that my colleague the member for Tamworth has moved in relation to Landcare Week and the great work of Landcare throughout New South Wales. I too welcome and acknowledge Adrian and Bev who are present in the gallery today, as well as all the other Landcare coordinators and volunteers throughout the State who are no doubt watching these proceedings and have a vested interest in this matter. In the electorate of Orange we have three Landcare groups and coordinators, who do a fantastic job. Marg Applebee is the coordinator of the Central West Lachlan Landcare, which looks after the Parkes and Forbes Shires. Tracey Potts is the chief executive officer of Little River Landcare, looking after Yoeval and Cumnock. Dr Marita Sydes is a coordinator of Central Tablelands Landcare, looking after Orange, Bathurst, Molong and Blayney.

It is estimated that between these groups there are approximately 3,500 volunteers in varying capacities, whether in committee roles, participating in local projects or as landholders. As well as undertaking projects with landholders promoting improved land management and stock management on properties within the Orange electorate, these groups play a huge role in educating students within the local schools, running and participating in community events, and focusing on participation and environmental education. Since the commencement of the Local Landcare Coordinators Initiative [LLCI] an estimated 10,000 people have been engaged through Landcare activities in the Orange electorate alone. That is a fantastic effort. Coordinators have also distributed more than 350 media releases and 500 newsletters, and sourced grants and funding for community projects, tabling into the millions of dollars for the region.

Sustaining Landcare Week was recently held and I attended an event called Eco Day organised and hosted by the Central West Lachlan Landcare group and run by coordinator Marg Applebee. It targeted stage 3, or year 5 to year 6 students, from various local schools within the Forbes Shire Council and Parkes Shire Council areas. More than 70 students attended. I spent the day with them at the Forbes saleyards and they had a magnificent day. There were various activities including creating worm farms, learning about weeds and recycled water, a walk through the livestock exchange with the local stock and station agent, soil workshops, insect workshops, environmental art, recycling and there was also a snake man to entertain the children and adults.

The hope is to expand the day to make it available to more students and to encourage and involve more students in 2019. The event was held with the assistance of Forbes Shire Council and Parkes Shire Council and the Central West Lachlan Landcare group. It has been held annually for three years. I acknowledge Councillor Bill Jayet from Parkes Shire Council and Councillor Jeff Nicholson from Forbes Shire Council who attended the event. Both Forbes Shire Council and Parkes Shire Council have thrown their considerable financial support behind the Central West Lachlan Landcare group with the provision of a vehicle and by paying for running costs. The group will require additional funding. This is an investment not only in the environment but the future. By involving young students we are engaging with those people who are the future for Landcare and land management in our State. I thank the member for Tamworth and the volunteers, staff and coordinators who all do a fantastic job. I commend the motion to the House.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (12:41): By leave: It is with great pleasure that I make a contribution to debate on the motion brought to the House by my neighbour and friend, the member for Tamworth. I acknowledge the presence in the gallery of Adrian and Bev from Landcare NSW and I welcome them. I acknowledge that Landcare plays a significant role in the community of the Upper Hunter. Landcare is an iconic and community-based institution which has transformed the landscape, enabling farmers, landowners and conservationists to work together.

Recently in my electorate of Upper Hunter there was an opportunity to engage with local Landcare as part of NSW Sustaining Landcare Week. On Sunday 19 August the Martindale Creek Catchment Landcare group held a community social evening in conjunction with their annual general meeting. A recent study commissioned by Landcare NSW shows that Landcare contributes \$500 million per annum in economic value, and that is considered a conservative estimate. Since 2015 Landcare has had strong support from the New South Wales Government and this has made a difference to Landcare on the ground. With the backing of the Government, Landcare NSW and the Local Land Services [LLS] Landcare has been able to achieve a number of outcomes. I congratulate the New South Wales Government and Landcare on their efforts in this partnership.

Martindale Creek Catchment has a serious problem with green cestrum, which is a weed that causes stock death, if eaten, and environmental damage. With the support of the Muswellbrook Shire Council the Martindale Creek Catchment Landcare group has successfully undertaken stage one of a community-wide program to help farmers control green cestrum. It is funded by the Muswellbrook Shire Council. The results of stage one of the green cestrum program were presented to the community in conjunction with the Martindale Creek Catchment Landcare group annual general meeting on a damper and video night. We were joined by representatives from the project partners, Muswellbrook Shire Council and Hunter LLS. There were representatives from their support systems and partnerships across the Landcare community, government departments, non-government organisations, members and local residents. It was a successful evening enjoyed by all.

Some details of the project include that it was managed by the Martindale Creek Catchment Landcare; it covered 33 properties plus sections of the Wollemi National Park and more than 16 kilometres of creek; 80 hectares of riparian zone was treated; it used 282 hours of contract team; 15 five-litre containers of chemical were supplied to 15 other farmers, plus in-kind from Martindale Creek Catchment Landcare; there were more than 165 hours of project management and an estimated 450 hours of farmers spraying with free chemical; and it utilised at least \$19,500 worth of time from the Martindale Creek Catchment Landcare. I am sure members will agree that is a magnificent effort. It is making a significant positive impact on eradicating the green cestrum. In late August Murrurundi Landcare-Pages River Warriors launched a new outdoor learning area on the banks of the Pages River to be shared by local schools. Murrurundi Landcare-Pages River Warriors received \$5,000 from the Hunter LLS to construct a classroom. I congratulate everyone involved.

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (12:45): By leave: I congratulate the member for Tamworth on moving such a worthwhile motion. Landcare Week runs from 17 August to 2 September. I acknowledge that the Landcare NSW chief executive officer Adrian Zammit is present in the gallery. Mr Zammit has experience with delivering healthy land and water to South-East Queensland and brings that enormous knowledge to Landcare NSW. I will speak about the 62 groups in the Richmond Landcare network in Ballina Shire and the many groups within the Brunswick Valley Landcare network. The aim and the purpose of all of those volunteers is to conserve and restore our natural resources from forest to foreshore.

In particular I give a shout-out to Big Scrub Landcare. I have spoken about them having received first place in 2017 for ecological restoration practices at the highly regarded Society of Ecological Restoration Australasia Awards for excellence. That award recognised that they planted more than 1.3 million trees and oversaw 35 projects worth more than \$5 million on both private and public land. Big Scrub Landcare was started in 1992 by a small group of people who were passionate about the local rainforest. Today it has a membership of more than 400. Each year for years I have attended the Big Scrub Rainforest Day at Rocky Creek Dam to celebrate more than three decades of rainforest restoration. It is the largest annual environmental and community event in Australia.

The Big Scrub subtropical rainforest and Gondwana ecology is truly one of the most beautiful treasures of our region. This Saturday there is a very special Big Scrub Landcare event. Big Scrub Landcare President Dr Tony Parkes and representatives from the Australasian Association of Bush Regenerators, the Society for Ecological Restoration Australasia and Big Scrub Landcare are gathering together in Alstonville to present a framed commemorative photo to Stan Dudgeon, the nephew of Ambrose Crawford, one of the founders of Alstonville. It is in recognition of Ambrose's role in instigating and leading the conservation and regeneration of the Lumley Park rainforest remnant.

Other dignitaries will be in attendance including councillors from Ballina Shire Council. The Lumley Park project is likely to be the oldest twentieth century ecological restoration project in Australia, if not the world, having started in 1935. In 1934 Ambrose Crawford worked to achieve the formal conservation of part of Lumley Park as a preserve for native trees. Commencing in October 1935 he led a small group of fellow citizens to remove weed and replant rainforest species, making it the earliest ecological restoration project in Australia. Ambrose continued his regeneration work at Lumley Park until 1979, when he was 99 years of age.

The award will cite three contemporary organisations: the Australian Association of Bush Regenerators, the Society for Ecological Restoration Australasia and Big Scrub Landcare. Big Scrub Landcare President Dr Tony Parkes praised Ambrose's vision as being ahead of its time. It was not until the 1970s that rainforest restoration of both private and public land in Big Scrub started to become an accepted activity for landholders. I am proud of the history of my electorate. I congratulate every volunteer for Landcare across the State.

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Tourism and Major Events, and Assistant Minister for Skills) (12:49): By leave: I support my colleague the member for Tamworth and the motion he has moved in praising and acknowledging the wonderful work that Landcare does in our communities and urban and rural environments across our State. It is a terrific organisation that leverages the expertise, knowledge and passion of people who are determined to preserve or restore our natural habitat. It also leverages the expertise of farmers in rural settings and the experience of people in urban settings to restore creeklands, farmlands and our native animals habitat. My electorate of the Northern Tablelands is blessed with a number of Landcare organisations. For many years the Southern New England Landcare group has been working closely with the Armidale Urban Rivercare Group as well as the Armidale Tree Group on projects to restore the natural environment around Dumaresq Creek or what we know as the Armidale creeklands.

Recently the Prickly Problems Project was unveiled in the creeklands, which is the culmination of nearly three years work by a team of 90 volunteers which has been working for weekends here and there as well as weekdays. They were fed and watered by members of the Armidale Dumaresq Lions Club to keep them going. I acknowledge Bruce Whan, a longstanding member of the Armidale Rivercare Group, and Sara Schmude from the Southern New England Landcare, and all members of the Armidale Dumaresq Lions Club who have combined to harness the expertise and passion of the 90 volunteers to restore what I think is one of the most special, tranquil and picturesque locations in the city of Armidale. It is wonderful to have the area opened up. It not only improves the health of the creeklands and the river system but also makes it an area of which the community can be proud and which locals and visitors alike can enjoy. Before the intervention by the group the creeklands were a mess. It was a disgrace because it became an unofficial dumping ground. Nasties such as discarded shopping trolleys, plastic bottles, plastic bags and all sorts of junk and rubbish were destroying the environment.

I also acknowledge the Glen Innes Natural Resources Advisory Committee, known as GLENRAC, for the work it does in hosting the local Landcare coordinator; working with farmers to restore habitat, particularly native trees; and working with farmers to restore koala habitat and other habitats. I acknowledge Kylie Falconer and Jennie Coldham, who does a terrific job. They are supported by a magnificent committee headed by John Bavea. Wherever we look around this State, Landcare groups work together with community organisations, eking out every last bit of value of Government grants and other support they receive at Federal and State level, preserving our local habitats, waterways and farming properties so that the next generation can benefit from the very best of our natural habitats and biodiversity. Well done.

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (12:53): By leave: I take the opportunity of the debate on Landcare Week to mention and acknowledge the Palm Grove Ourimbah Creek Landcare Incorporated group, which cares for a parcel of land between the M1 motorway at Ourimbah and Ourimbah Creek. The history of that area is interesting and reflects the development of the area. The care that this group provides to the area is a great contribution to our local community. In 1834, Sarah Mathew, the diarist wife of surveyor Felton Mathew, described the deep shade and rainforests along Ourimbah Creek on a horseback journey from Wyoming to Wyong with an Aboriginal guide.

Between 1898 and 1928, the land was subdivided for farming. Military photographs from 1940 show fields in the area being developed for pasture and citrus orchards for the local citrus industry. In 1975 the land along the creek was purchased by Wyong council for a weir and pumping station to supply town water, and vegetation was reserved to protect the water supply. In the 1990s, the flood plain was resumed by what was then the Department of Main Roads for freeway construction. In 2000, the Landcare group was licensed to managed the council land along the creek and the adjoining Roads and Maritime Services private land. More recently in 2017, the licence was extended so that the Landcare group now manages the shoulder land of the M1 motorway.

The Palm Grove Ourimbah Creek Landcare group cares for this area. One important consequence of its work is water purification. The regeneration of plants in the area filters water that runs off the freeway before it goes into Ourimbah Creek, which is used for the town water supply. The area also helps with flood mitigation. A number of areas form lakes during flood periods and proper vegetation helps filter the water before floodwater flows into Tuggerah Lake. The site is also used for education purposes with a number of tours being conducted by volunteers of the group.

I mention some of those volunteers, of which there have been many over the years. The main volunteers of the group are the conservation officer, Brian Patterson; public officer, Ian Playford; chair, Ray Galway; and secretary, Robyn Nutley. Other volunteers who participate on a regular basis are Eileen Patterson; Kay Voller; Al Wagenaer; Jon Pike; Roger Hansford; Henry Wagenaer; Tony Voller, who is also the treasurer; and Maryanne Millington. I acknowledge those volunteers who care for the area. They are passionate about the area and get together each week. They provide a fantastic service for the Central Coast community and the environment at large.

Mr ANDREW FRASER (Coffs Harbour) (12:57): By leave: I congratulate all those involved in Landcare not only in my electorate but also across the State. I acknowledge the visitors in the gallery today and their great work. The Coffs Harbour electorate has a number of Landcare groups. I will raise some of the problems they face, which also can be found across the State. When the Minister for Education, who is present at the table, was the Minister for Planning, I showed him some of those issues. When we have storms in the riparian zone, noxious weeds such as camphor laurel are blown into creeks and onto the banks of creeks. The Landcare people who do such a great job are restricted as to how they can remove those trees, which eventually wash down the streams, lodge against banks and create erosion in times of high water. They also take out bridges in the area. A huge cost is then placed on local and State governments to repair and replace the damaged bridges.

The regulations in place state that tractors cannot be taken into the riparian zone. Trees cannot be removed, even if they are plantation trees from the creeks. At the end of the day, those trees do more harm to the environment and the great work of the Landcare group is negated because of this Government regulation.

I have taken a number of Ministers to Bucket Creek, out near where I live. Flooded gums criss-cross the area purely because of the storm that happened some years ago and the inability of any government department—be it Forestry or a Landcare group—to remove them. The member for Clarence and I visited Glenreagh, which is in his electorate, where camphor laurels were poisoned by Landcare. They eventually fell over and went into the creek and travelled downstream. The then Mayor of Clarence Valley, Richie Williamson, and I saw where they took out a bridge, which cost Clarence Valley Council more than \$1 million to replace, purely because of restrictions placed on these fantastic volunteers.

Garry Due, Chairman of the Coffs Harbour Branch, NSW Farmers Association, spends countless hours with a group of volunteers including farmers, cleaning out lantana, camphor laurel trees and other noxious weeds to improve the riparian zone to ensure that the Orara River and other creeks and rivers around the Orara Valley are maintained to reduce erosion. I implore the Ministers responsible for the Office of Environment and Heritage, the Environment Protection Authority and other groups who have an interest in this matter to look at the regulations that surround the riparian zones—especially in coastal areas that get heavy storms, high winds and volumes of water—and ensure that they support the Landcare groups that do such a fantastic job. They fix years of damage to riparian zones and restore them. I commend the member for Tamworth for bringing this motion before the House. I am sure all members of this House support the motion as well as Landcare.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (13:01): In reply: I thank members representing the electorates of Newcastle, Cootamundra, Lake Macquarie, North Shore, Orange, Upper Hunter, Ballina, Northern Tablelands, The Entrance and Coffs Harbour for their contributions to this debate. I also thank you Mr Temporary Speaker, as the member for Albury, for your contribution. You have been a great supporter of Landcare as Deputy Chair of the Parliamentary Friends of Landcare.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Aplin): Indeed, thank you. I congratulate you on the motion.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: I also thank the member for Wallsend for her patience to allow members to make a contribution to this debate to clearly demonstrate the importance of Landcare across New South Wales. It has been enlightening to hear about the projects that are being undertaken right across this great State of ours. I also thank the outgoing Chair of Landcare, Rob Dalhanty, for his dedicated services over the past 10 years. He has been at the forefront of driving change in Landcare. There is a groundswell of support for those changes right across the State—I can feel it. I congratulate Rob Dalhanty and the Chief Executive Officer, Adrian Zammit. We welcome the new Chair of NSW Landcare, Stephanie Cameron, from Tamworth, who has a passion for the organisation. I know she will carry on its great work and will introduce new initiatives and push the boundaries for Landcare.

Landcare has had strong support from the New South Wales Government since 2015, which has made a real difference to it on the ground. I know that funding will be a challenge into the future. Adrian Zammit is actively looking at every option available. He is knocking on doors right across the spectrum—whether it be the Federal Government, the State Government, local government, the corporate sector and the philanthropic sector—to obtain sustainable funding for Landcare into the future. I cannot think of a better time to get on board and support Landcare, just like the members who have contributed to this debate have advocated for Landcare.

With the backing of the New South Wales Government, Landcare NSW and NSW Local Landcare Services have been able to achieve outcomes which otherwise might not have happened. I congratulate both the New South Wales Government and Landcare NSW on their efforts and this partnership. We are all confident that Landcare is as strong an organisation today as it has been for many decades. I commend Landcare, which is a professional and credible organisation doing important work. I thank its staff, volunteers and the local Landcare coordinators who are making it happen. Without them, a lot of its projects would not be able to progress and the volunteers would not have the support and impetus to keep going. I thank Landcare NSW for its work. I look forward to seeing what its team will achieve well into the future. I also thank the support of Clementine Julian and the office of the Hon. Rick Colless—he has been an absolute stalwart for Landcare. We look forward to continuing that partnership well into the future. I thank members of the House for their support.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Aplin): The question is that the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.