Gunning District Landcare [GDL] was formed at a Special General Meeting of the former Jerrawa Creek and Blakney Creek/Biala Landcare Groups on 30 November last year.  This e mail is to let you know what's happened since then.  Read on to learn more about:

         Australia Day Awards in Gunning

         GDL developments

         Preliminary Notice of Our First Farm Walk Sunday 28 February

         UTS Students at Barbour Park on Wednesday 3 February

**Australia Day Awards in Gunning**

At the Australia Day awards ceremony in Barbour Park earlier today, former Jerrawa Creek Landcare [JCLG] President Genevieve Starr was named Gunning Citizen of the Year - and a very well deserved award it was too.  The former JCLG committee had warmly and unanimously supported her nomination, not just for her four very effective years at our helm but because of the wide range of community work she has undertaken over a long period.  It was clear that those present regarded Genevieve as a very worthy recipient.  I know that everybody who has been associated with Genevieve and Gordon will wish them well in their move to the coast - which will be happening in a few months time.

We had a more tenuous link to the awards with GDL committee member Lucy Knight receiving the Event of the Year award on behalf of the Kangaroo March Re-enactment in the Shire.  This very successful event was managed by an autonomous collective of locals but, in presenting the award, Mayor John Shaw OAM#highlighted the very pivotal role Lucy played in bringing it all off.

Graham Ross VMM [a well known veteran horticulturalist, radio and TV gardening presenter, author and international garden tour guide] gave the Keynote Address.  Among many other things he pointed to the fact that indigenous Australians had been managing the land very effectively before white settlement.  And although we have much to be proud of, there is a lot to be done to repair our agricultural land and our environment.  These sentiments were also reflected in Pastor Ellen Manwaring's Prayer of Thanks.  These goals are what landcare generally and GDL particularly is all about.

**GDL Developments**

The GDL committee [comprising Lucy Knight, Helen Kilborn, Jennifer Heffernan, Kristen Proudfoot, Janet Heffernan, Nerida Hart, Nina Young, John Edwards, Scott Keyworth, Vince Heffernan and Bob Spiller] held its first meeting a few weeks ago.  Although you might not have heard a lot about what we are doing yet, we have been laying a lot of groundwork for local landcare.

In a really great development for the Gunning district we have been awarded a three year grant which enables us to engage a paid part-time support worker to be housed in the Council Chambers at Gunning.  However, to employ a worker and register a new group requires a lot of preliminary work.  And we are well on the way as:

         Public Officer John Edwards has had our new name and objects successfully registered with the Office of Fair Trading - which means we are now official!

         A recruitment team led by Nerida Hart with Scott Keyworth and Bob Spiller has shortlisted 5 very promising applicants from the 20 odd applications our advertisement attracted.  The shortlisted people, mainly but not exclusively local, are to be interviewed this coming Friday.

         We are close to finalising lease arrangements for the former General Manager's Office in the Council Chambers.

         A fair bit of tedious but essential work is well underway - a Workplace Agreement, Health and Safety Plan, Equipment Register, changing bank signatories and the like.

         Vince Heffernan and John Edwards are developing plans for our project to improve aquatic habitat in the district - which benefits local endangered species like the Southern Pygmy Perch and Yellow-spotted Bell Frog as well as stock and people.  You can expect to see more on this in the first half of the year.

         We are also working with the Dalton Community Association and Greening Australia on a Dalton Village/Oolong Creek planting project to be done over the next few months.

**Preliminary Notice of First GDL Farm Walk**

The first ever GDL meeting will be a low key and informal gathering at *Woodlands,*263 Iron Mines Road, Ladevale.  You might like to pencil it in your diary now.  Full details will follow in the next few weeks.

**When**Sunday 28 Feb starting around 11.30 am for a 12 noon self catered lunch.  This will be on the veranda of our house probably but could be at a wetland dam depending on weather.  People not coming for lunch should arrive by 2pm when the short tour starts.

**Format and Features**We will be highlighting Whole of Paddock Rehabilitation [WOPR] and, to a lesser extent, farm dams [where there is a lot of work to be done but we can point to some lessons].

Casual lunch.  A very short background to work done on *Woodlands.*We hope to introduce an ANU honours student who is studying WOPRs under the guidance of Greening Australia's Graham Fifield.  Miriam is researching what various WOPR sites will look like over time.  She would give a short informal presentation on this.

Around 2pm we would drive to our WOPR site.  While ambling around Miriam and the Spillers could talk about what worked and didn't etc and the very real benefits.  There are also two new dams on the WOPRs where we could do some self help "what needs to happen here" discussion.  All up should be around 4 hours.

**UTS Students at Barbour Park on Wednesday 3 February**

Subject to confirmation, it is highly likely a small group of UTS students on a working tour from Sydney will be helping us to weed around trees in our project sites around Barbour Park.  This will be for a few hours on Wednesday morning next week.  It would be really helpful to have a couple of landcarers to work with and guide the students.  So, if you are free and would be interested in helping with this please give me a call on 48458217.

**That's It**

That's it for this first GDL newsletter which has been sent to you as a former member or friend of the two founding groups of GDL or because you have otherwise got into our clutches by giving us your details at field days etc.  There will be a lot more exciting stuff to come on GDL in coming months and we will let you know about it through occasional e mails and public notices.  If, however, you would prefer not to receive information on GDL in the future please let me know by reply e mail and I will take your name off the mailing list.  Also, please feel free to pass GDL information on to friends and neighbours if you think they would be interested.

Regards

*Bob*

Bob Spiller

Gunning District Landcare

PO Box 23

GUNNING  NSW  2581

Ph/Fax:  02 48458217

E Mail:    spillers263@bigpond.com

Gunning District Landcare is part of the $25 million National Landcare Programme investment that Local Land Services is delivering to boost farm gate productivity and improve environmental health across NSW.

#Mayor John's award of the OAM was announced in the 2016 Australia Day Honours List