

# GLENRAC NEWSletter



Glen Innes Natural Resources Advisory Committee

**Our vision is to create solutions for a sustainable and productive landscape.**

**In this final issue of our hard-copy newsletter, we pay tribute to our wonderful ecologist, Dr Mahri Koch, upon her retirement.**

### Farewell, Good Luck and Thank You!

It's a difficult task, to sum up in a few short paragraphs, the contribution that Mahri Koch has made to GLENRAC as an organisation and to us personally.

She is a much-loved colleague and a widely-esteemed scientist who has brought a wealth of knowledge and expertise to our team.



Since moving to the New England from Queensland in the 1990s, Mahri completed a Bachelor of Science and a PhD in Habitat and Population Ecology and has forged a reputation across the region as an environmental and sustainability champion.

Mahri brought an impressive set of skills to a diverse range of projects during her time with GLENRAC, including school's Waterwatch activities to coordinated weed control, feral cat, revegetation and much more.

Her pet project - to which she has brought so much passion - is the Little Llangothlin Nature Reserve project. Her work over five years in engaging research scientists, indigenous groups, adjoining landholders and government agencies resulted in some incredible achievements that gained international recognition by the RAMSAR Steering Committee in Geneva and also at the 2022 NSW Landcare Awards.

The project has been beautifully showcased in the RAMSAR documentary which can be accessed from the GLENRAC website [glenrac.org.au/resources/videos](http://glenrac.org.au/resources/videos)

GLENRAC CEO Kylie Falconer says Mahri has been integral to the success of several projects delivered across the Glen Innes district. "Mahri is a passionate conservationist and her work includes providing refuges for location fauna, including the platypus, spotted tail quoll, Regent Honeyeater and wombat as well as endangered regional ecosystems. She's incredibly knowledgeable, however, most importantly she's a terrific mentor to others and always willing to share her knowledge and experience".

*continued...*



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# GLENRAC Matters

Welcome to our last hard-copy newsletter!

Whilst there remains a multitude of places to learn about GLENRAC's latest news, upcoming events and funding, learning or training opportunities, due to the increasing uptake of digital communications across our community, we are discontinuing this hard-copy version.

Make sure to check the News and Events Calendar pages on our website, or follow us on Facebook and Instagram to keep up to date.

We will continue to populate our display window in Grey Street (outside H & R Block) with event flyers and you are also very welcome to call into our office to chat with our friendly staff to keep up to date on our events and collect any of our variety of free and useful resources in our foyer.

A natural educator, Mahri has been a sought-after speaker on topics including dung beetles and hands-on ecology in the classroom for local students to learn more about their natural environment.

Over the years, Mahri has also generously opened her home, "Platypus Run" - a Volunteer Conservation Agreement property - to the community by hosting Landcare and Biodiversity Conservation Trust field days.

Beyond Landcare, Mahri has also volunteered with several organisations, including the Community Advisory Committee for Gondwana Rainforests, the Glen Innes Severn Council Australia Day Committee, Glen Elgin Ecocarers Landcare Group and has worked to fundraise for women's shelters.

The management committee and staff of GLENRAC thank Mahri for her immense contribution to natural resources and wish her well in her retirement.

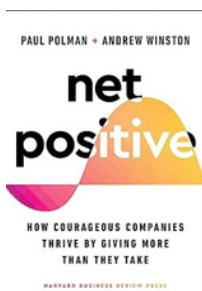


We also bade a sad farewell in May to our amazing Project Officer Emma Tilley, who headed back to the Sunshine State to take up a research position with Queensland University of Technology.



Finally, we offer a big welcome to the GLENRAC family to our newest staff member, Katie Barnett as our Sustainable Agriculture Project Officer (Monday to Wednesday).

## Books donated to the library



### **Net Positive (Paul Polman & Andrew Winston)**

Former Unilever CEO *Paul Polman* and sustainable business guru *Andrew Winston* explode 50 years of corporate dogma, revealing key lessons about how you can profit by fixing the world's problems instead of creating them by:

- Improving the lives of everyone it touches
- taking ownership of the social and environmental impacts its business model creates.
- Partnering with competitors, civil society, and governments to drive transformative change



### **Future Farm Blueprint - Liz Otto**

On the surface, the goal for every farm is for enhanced production and profitability, while caring for the environment, people and livestock. But what does this really mean to you, your team and your business?

Future Farm Blueprint will help you cut through the current issues and find clarity in what you are aiming to achieve. The Blueprint empowers confidence in your future farming system and broader business decision-making.

# PROJECT NEWS AND ACTIVITIES

## All The Dirt!

Yarraford Hall recently became 'Soils Central', as the venue for numerous GLENRAC numerous soil-related activities. We delivered these workshops and field days as part of two projects funded by the *National Landcare Program*.

**Soils Alive** focused on soil health and soil biology and GLENRAC worked with **Soil Land Food** to deliver a series of four workshops to approximately forty landholders across the region, looking at the importance of soil biology, what are the major components of soil biology and how to measure soil biology.

Participants learnt about field assessments to monitor soil biology after having soil samples from their properties tested to establish baseline soil biology measures. The project embraced new technology with DNA analysis of soil samples through *Metagen Laboratory*, which provided information about the different types of bacteria, fungi, nematodes etc. in the soil that can't be seen with the naked eye.

This information provides insight into disease resistance, system resilience and productivity, and - when combined with comprehensive soil fertility analysis, climate data and paddock history - enables a comprehensive picture to be built of soil health and some influencing factors.



Participants were also lucky to have Chandra Iyer, from Green Microbes at Forbes, spend a couple of days in Glen Innes, drilling more deeply into soil bacteria and especially rhizobia.

Everyone was surprised to learn about the importance of the timing of legume seed inoculation to enable the most benefit from the legume content in pastures. Chandra teamed up with Carol Harris and Andrew Faithfull from NSW DPI for an informative evening Looking at Legumes, held at the NSW DPI Glen Innes Agricultural Research Station.

At the field day, examples of clovers, lucerne and newcomer Sun Hemp were dug up to look at nodules in the flesh. Carol and Andy spoke about recent legume trials and their results, as well as showing off the multi-species cover crop demonstration.



Another GLENRAC project, **Making Sense of Soil Tests**, involved three groups of landholders guided by Kristy Youman (Soil Land Food) through a series of three workshops looking at soil type, soil health and soil fertility.

These landholders also had soil samples analysed for soil fertility and attended soil test interpretation sessions aimed at helping them make sense of soil tests results and how best to use this information for making decisions about fertilizer, lime etc.

Taking the skills learned and knowledge gained from the workshops into the paddock is the focus of a series of paddock walks being delivered through this project.

For more information about upcoming paddock walks and soil test interpretation sessions please contact Jennie Coldham on 0427 260 258 or [jennie@glenrac.org.au](mailto:jennie@glenrac.org.au)

# Drone Spraying Project

Drones are being used more and more frequently for spraying in agriculture. This April, in collaboration with StevTech and Uncrewed Operations, GLENRAC **put drones to the test** to determine their capacity to spray Blackberry across steep, vegetated terrain.

Prior to the spraying, drones were used to map the area and software was used to identify blackberry plants.

Using this information, spraying was conducted at two demonstration properties, in Glen Innes and Walcha. In some areas, drones could autonomously spray the blackberries using the information from the mapping.

In other areas where there were more trees and/or Blackberry plants had not been detected on the mapping, drone pilots needed to manually fly the drones.

GLENRAC found there are many considerations involved in using drones for spraying, many which are not immediately obvious. Keep an eye out for on the GLENRAC website for the results and some points to consider for anyone looking to use drones in a similar situation.



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## It's all about the TREES!

There has been a **frenzy of tree planting activity** in the Glen Innes region recently.

Through a project funded by Australian Government's Murray-Darling Healthy Rivers Program, GLENRAC has provided more than **15,000 native trees and shrub seedlings** and assisted twenty landholders to plant on private properties across the headwaters of the Murray Darling Basin

These plantings will help to improve the protection and enhancement of endangered ecological communities, have a positive impact on surface water flow, and provide shelter for stock.



A cracker of a day was had at the **Best Practice Native Tree Planting Field Day** in May, with a lot of useful tips and information provided by David Carr of Stringybark Ecological.

Thanks also to Luke Corben from Glen Industries for his 'show and tell' planting demonstration, as well as the team at Glen Innes Agriculture Research & Advisory Station for hosting the event.

This event was supported by the NSW Government through its Environmental Trust, and the Australian Government's Murray-Darling Healthy Rivers Program.



# Providing habitat for Endangered & Vulnerable creatures

Another GLENRAC project planted native species seedlings **(6,000)** as well as installing **100 artificial nest boxes** has also been completed.

Two nestbox-building workshops were held at Torrington and Boliva Halls, where community members were guided through the process of assembling timber squirrel glider nestbox kits. Attendees also learnt about the importance of providing artificial homes - especially in our local areas that were seriously affected by the 2021-2022 Black Summer bushfires. Additional tube nests for the cockatoos were designed and constructed locally.

It was especially reassuring to welcome young people to these events since the future of our vulnerable and endangered species will be in their hands.

NPWS staff provided valuable support in project planning and implementation, including assisting with tree planting and advice on nestbox installation locations.

To showcase the project's outcomes, a **Community Open Day** was held at Nomads Day Area in Torrington State Conservation Area (SCA), also the location of nestbox installations and several planting areas, as was Curry Gap SCA near Tenterfield. Additional seedling plantings and nestbox installations were carried out on three private properties.

The nest boxes will continue to be monitored with a purpose-built camera, with data and observations (including those by private landholders) being provided to NPWS regarding the activities of any newly-arrived nestbox inhabitants.



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## Honey Locust Control a Success at Wyaliba and Newton Boyd

Honey locust control work was completed along a 20km stretch of river at Wyaliba and Newton Boyd as part of GLENRAC's 'Monitoring and Control of Honey Locust, Wyaliba and Newton Boyd' project, which aimed to **protect priority species and their ecosystems** across the Wyaliba and Newton Boyd area.

A helicopter and drone were used to conduct a baseline survey in 2021, allowing the distribution of Honey Locust trees in the region to be mapped.

A local contractor was then engaged to apply basal bark treatment to the Honey Locust trees, covering a total of 700 hectares. This is a great outcome and will contribute significantly towards the improved ecosystem health of the Mann River at Wyaliba and Newton Boyd.



# Soil Erosion Action

Drought, fire and floods have all contributed to **soil erosion** issues across the GLENRAC region over recent years.

GLENRAC are currently working on a number of projects helping landholders to rehabilitate areas of gully and streambank erosion.

Technical advice has been provided by Mike Lloyd, Red Frog Environmental Solutions, to help design the most effective strategies and structures to deal with gullies big and small as well as eroding river banks.



Funding to assist with the cost of earthmoving machinery hire, materials and fencing has been accessed from the Australian Government's Murray Darling Healthy Rivers Small Grants program, NSW Government Environmental Trust and the Local Land Services Landcare Riparian Grants. Landholders are all making significant contributions to the projects with their own machinery, fencing materials and construction, rock, seed, mulch, fertiliser and labour.

**A field day** to view some of the project sites will be held in spring, once works are completed. For more information please contact Project Manager, Jennie Coldham at [jennie@glenrac.org.au](mailto:jennie@glenrac.org.au)

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## Creating Capability & Confidence for Community Champions

Community members from across the New England and North West have taken part in an educational program aimed at **increasing community leadership capacity**. March 2023 saw the program's first cohort of participants complete their course and we welcomed the second cohort of new participants.

All participants met up at the end of June for an evening forum with guest speaker, Rob Dulhunty for an opportunity to celebrate new skills and networks to lead change in our local businesses, community, and volunteer groups.

The project was a custom-designed range of face-to-face and online rural leadership modules delivered by GLENRAC and award-winning business leader and trainer, Julia Spicer OAM, from Engage and Create Consulting.

The course has been developed for existing, emerging and future leaders who are working or volunteering in community, business or government roles including sport and recreation, art, culture and community groups.

Participants taking part are passionate about connecting with others, contributing to the region and making a difference in their field.



Modules delivered over four-month course included: creating a clear vision; values for leadership; good governance; how to lead through change; board dynamics; working in a team; decision making skills; time management; legal requirements of leaders; communication; networking and conflict resolution.



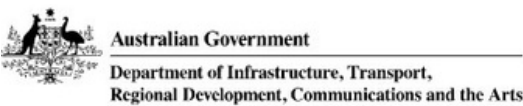
At the conclusion of the program, participants were equipped with the skills, motivation and networks to lead change in their business, community or volunteer group.

This program is funded by the Australian Government's Building our Future and supported by the Glen Innes Severn Council.

## In Other News...

Local Land Services worked with a local Burrill Lake landholder to put together a video highlighting the how and whys of **Wildlife Friendly Fencing**. Learn some of the specifications required to not only build a wildlife-friendly fence but also have to retrofit a current fence for a variety of wildlife species. The most important locations to focus your efforts to reduce the risk to wildlife in the landscape are also discussed.

Find out more at <https://youtube.io/3gQ5>



The **Regional Connectivity Program (RCP)** is a grants program funding the delivery of 'place-based' telecommunications infrastructure projects to improve digital connectivity across regional, rural and remote Australia.

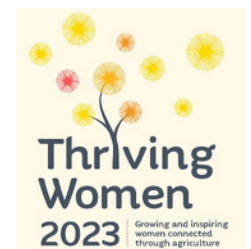
Up to \$160 million (GST exclusive) is available for this combined Round, comprising two streams:

- A \$110 million (GST exclusive) Regional Connectivity (Round 3) stream for place-based solutions that deliver new or upgraded broadband services and/or upgraded mobile services; and
- A \$50 million Mobile Black Spot (Round 7) stream to deliver New Handheld Coverage to regional, rural and First Nations Australia.

Applications to Round 3 of the RCP are open until **Friday 11 August 2023** (5:00pm AEST).

**Thriving Women 2023** is the premier conference event to secure a sustainable future for women living and working in agriculture and associated industries.

Leigh Sales is keynote speaker for the event being held at Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga from 13 - 15 August, 2023. Read more at <https://www.thrivingwomen.com.au/>



After the inaugural gathering in 1993, Orange will once again present the 30th annual **Rural Women's Gathering** from 25 – 27 August 2023, returning to a full and diverse program post-Covid.

Hosted by Australian National Field Days, with support from the NSW Government and Rural Women's Network, the theme of this year's event is "Still Going Strong and Getting Stronger". Read more at <https://nswwomensgathering.com.au/>

GLENRAC OPERATING COMMITTEE 2022/23  
CHAIR - Julie Firth      VICE CHAIR - Ian Lockwood  
SECRETARY - Tony Corcoran      TREASURER - Sam Baker

LANDHOLDER & DEPARTMENT REPRESENTATIVES:  
Andrew Campbell, Sandy FitzGerald, Barb Holliss, Selena McMullen  
Suzie Meyer, Jane Munro, Mike Norton, Ben Wirth

GLEN INNES SEVERN COUNCIL: Rob Banham  
GLEN INNES SEVERN COUNCIL STAFF: Gayleen Burley  
NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE: Koen Dijkstra  
NSW DPI: Carol Harris      PUBLIC OFFICER: Sam Baker

For all questions relating to GLENRAC please contact our staff at:  
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Phone: 02 6732 3443      Mobile: 0427 325 901      Email: [glenrac@glenrac.org.au](mailto:glenrac@glenrac.org.au)      [www.glenrac.org.au](http://www.glenrac.org.au)

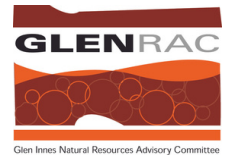
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# To The Land Manager



This initiative is made possible by the NSW Landcare Program.  
A collaboration of Local Land Services and Landcare NSW Inc.  
supported by the NSW Government.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

**12 July 2023: Bush Kids First Aid @ Ben Lomond**

**27 July 2023 : Sheep Confinement & Drought Feeding Workshop & Farm Walk**

To register call (02) 6732 3443 or see our full range of events at [www.glenrac.org.au/events](http://www.glenrac.org.au/events)