

AUGUST 2023

LEARNING WITH LANDCARE

CASE STUDY ON THE BENEFITS OF CO-DESIGN AND
MENTORING WHEN WORKING WITH YOUNG ADULTS



DELIVERED BY UP2US
LANDCARE ALLIANCE WITH
SUPPORT FROM GOULBURN
BROKEN CATCHMENT
MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY
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THE VICTORIAN
GOVERNMENT LANDCARE
PROGRAM



GOULBURN BROKEN
CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY



Caring for Mansfield's Environment



Victorian
Landcare
Program



PROJECT SUMMARY

A two-day event, held in Mansfield, aimed at young adults in tertiary education and who wish to gain experience in the Natural Resource Management (NRM) sector. The event offered participants an opportunity to network with people in industry, gain on-ground experience, and develop leadership skills.

OUTCOMES

ENVIRONMENTAL

Students participated in practical NRM education throughout the weekend. Information and resources were provided to highlight the benefits of shelter belts, dam enhancement, pasture management, soil health, paddock trees and enhancing biodiversity on farm.

Students were practically involved in a revegetation activity on private property, resulting in the planting of approximately 200 indigenous trees, shrubs and grasses. They gained the benefit of knowing they contributed to biodiversity enhancement and provided valuable ecosystem services to the local landscape.

A wildlife spotlighting walk, with a local Ecologist enabled students to observe native fauna species, including sightings of six Greater Gliders. This experience was a highlight and reinforced the importance of remnant vegetation and connectivity across our landscapes.

SOCIAL

Networking was a key feature of this two-day event with time available to connect with peers, industry professionals, and landholders - an essential component of working within a team.

A workshop on leadership skills facilitated interaction and social connection between student attendees from various universities. It enabled participants a snap shot in how to gain confidence and skills with team building, problem-solving and self-reflection being explored through activities.

ECONOMIC

Though indirect, there were some economic outcomes. The weekend focussed on educating students on the importance of NRM and biodiversity enhancement on agricultural farms. The understanding that agriculture and NRM are linked was a key 'Ah ha' moment for many of the students in traditionally siloed education streams and will have benefits in farm management or industry related work during their career.

This event has given students the opportunity to network with industry professionals and broaden their employment prospects. This may lead to an increase in future young professionals seeking employment regionally, which will have positive economic benefits for rural and regional areas.



BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS

During the planning and delivery of Learning with Landcare, relationships were enhanced and maintained between several project partners and landholders.

Project Officers at Up2Us worked closely with the Regional Landcare Coordinator from Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority (GB CMA) on project management and coordination through regular online meetings and mentorship.

Relationships with landholders were enhanced by the project through revegetation planting and property tours. Landholders enjoyed offering their time to students, and valuable knowledge from lived experience of NRM on farm was willingly shared.

Fifteen students from either Deakin University, Melbourne University or LaTrobe University were represented at this event with strong relationships formed and nurtured for future partnerships.

Embedded in this event was the ‘Young Professionals’ discussion. Young professionals employed by the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) joined the group for an informal discussion on the value of job-ready skills, job applications, interview preparation, and the importance of volunteering. This session had excellent feedback from both students and DEECA staff and a must do for future events in this space.



CHALLENGES

During the development of the project, challenges were more operational such as the difficulty of deciding on a location for the wildlife night walk. When planning for risk with young adults at night in the bush whose experience is unknown, many factors needed to be considered. The consideration was valuable as it resulted in a fantastic location which complied with risk management procedures - there was ease of access/parking in a bush setting, close proximity to the accommodation for safer night driving and the added bonus of sightings of Greater Gliders among other native wildlife species.

Remote meetings posed a slight challenge as the project coordinators and participants were unknown to each other and inexperienced in having open in-depth discussions online. Whilst the initial meetings were staccato, this was overcome as the familiarity between the organisers increased and the online platform use improved.

Challenges during the delivery of the project included:

- Attendees did not turn up, leaving vacant places that could have been used by other students on the waiting list.
- Time was a major constraint during the event, with students reporting that they wish they had more time during activities, workshops and hands-on activities.
- Some attendees didn't bring adequate clothing/footwear for the event, despite this being highlighted in the required items to bring.
- Weather proved to be very pleasant during the day, however it was extremely cold in the evening during the wildlife night walk, this was uncomfortable for many who were not used to a more Mediterranean climate.
- Equipment constraints (torches at night walk, planting equipment during revegetation planting).



LESSONS LEARNED

After delivering this project, it was evident that there is a demand for this type of training and support for students. The overall feedback was very positive, with students requesting the delivery of more specific skills in plant ID, data relating to outcomes of NRM practices implemented on farms.

Students also reported wishing that more time had been allocated to leadership and work ready training activities.



PROGRAM OUTLINE AND BUDGET

PROGRAM OUTLINE

WITH LESS THAN \$10,000

DAY ONE:

Start 11.00am with Introductions and Leadership workshop. Later start to allow for driving time.

Afternoon: Leadership workshop, Revegetation information and practical task

Evening: Wildlife Night Walk

DAY TWO:

Morning: Discussion re: workplace pathways and opportunities with young adult workers from DEECA

Regenerative Agriculture in practice with landholder information and tour

Lunch and departure

Budget Expenditure:

With a total of approximately **\$6000**, Up2Us was able to cover accommodation, food, presenters and the coordination /facilitation of this event. For a breakdown of expenses, please contact either Kim or Kerstie as identified on the final page.

Volunteer hours worked on the project:

Three University student volunteers on the organising committee who attended monthly meetings for 6 months, one secondary college volunteer and two landholders contributed a total of **37 hours** of time to this event.



NEXT STEPS

This project was delivered as a pilot project to gauge the interest and uptake of an event geared towards young people interested in NRM and to boost volunteering involvement in Landcare.

Future events include four Extension Training in Landcare events delivered over a two-year period to train young people in extension work specifically targeted at drought preparedness and recovery.

For further information and discussion of this project, please contact Kerstie Lee on kerstiel@gbcma.vic.gov.au or Kim Magnay on projects@up2us.org.au.



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