

Successful 2015–16 Beyond SoilCare Funded Small Project Grants

Organisation	Project Name	Project Brief
Delatite Landcare Group	Good farm management starts with understanding your soil	Members of the 'Mansfield Soil Group' will support new land managers in a peer review program where they can discuss the different methods of soil management undertaken and how this has contributed to their production. In order to achieve good discussions and provide solid information to new members, the project will offer initial soil tests for new members and 3 year follow up soil tests for existing members of the Mansfield Soil Group to gather baseline scientific information. In addition, the project will provide a soil test interpretation session in order for people to understand their soil tests, providing the initial information for ongoing discussions within this project.
South West Goulburn Landcare Network	Healthy Soils, Healthy Foods	This is the intermediate phase of work by the SWG Landcare Network looking at methods to improve soil nutrient availability through increased soil microbiological activity. In this phase the focus will be on testing the results of the fertiliser regime that was designed to increase soil microbial activity and thereby increase nutrient cycling releasing previously unavailable nutrients, particularly phosphorous and, at the same time, improve the soil physical and chemical environment, through liming and application of gypsum.
Goulburn Valley Environment Group	<u>GV21.</u> Enhanced Landscape Health and Productivity	The project vision is to bring together key industry sectors, commerce, service industries and the community to form a 'regional cluster', that would see the Goulburn Valley recognised globally as a centre of innovation and the implementation of leading edge technologies that would enhance existing strengths and attract new emerging industries.
Goulburn Murray Landcare Network	Continuing to improve the uptake of sustainable farming practices in the GMLN	This project will build on a previously successful project that has been undertaken in the GMLN area, which focusses on improving sustainable farm practice. The project will engage and provide support to all groups within the GMLN area with the delivery of community education around soil health. This will include specialist presentations, field days, distribution of project material, facilitated information sharing and articles in Landcare newsletters and in local media.
Upper Goulburn Landcare Network	Learning with Landcare – small farm tours and learning for small scale landholders	At least 50% of the landholders in Murrindindi Shire are absentee, many with landholdings of 100 acres or less. It is common that the properties are purchased as a lifestyle choice, with little comprehension of land management issues. The proposed tours will highlight small farms that have alternative enterprises and integrate sound land protection into their farming enterprise. Proposed property tours will be: Wines and bread making – a biodynamic approach to viticulture – incorporating healthy soils, native vegetation and healthy insect populations to produce a quality wine and bread. Cattle and chooks – a winning combination. Chooks are used in this cattle enterprise to incorporate manures effectively – improving soil health, incorporating native vegetation and good whole farm planning design into the property. Alpaca farm with a natural focus – Good planning on this farm in Taggerty incorporates excellent protection of native vegetation, a focus on a healthy waterway

		and weed control. Weeds are a huge issue in the district but with vigilance, can be well controlled.
Yea High School	Yea High School Cert II Agriculture	Yea High School Year 9 students will be studying a Certificate II in Agriculture in 2015. As part of this course, it is important that the students gain some on-site, hands-on experience from primary producers and agricultural agencies. Therefore ten field visits and incursions have been integrated into the course. The problems being addressed are the lack of people entering the agriculture workforce in the Goulburn Broken Catchment, the lack of awareness of the impacts of agriculture on the environment for young people living in the catchment, and lack of knowledge of the positive impacts of the environment on agriculture.
Gecko Clan Landcare Network	Sustainable Futures in Farming	The project promotes farming and agriculture as a career path for primary and secondary students in the Benalla and Euroa areas. Year 9/10 students will go on a field trip to the National Environment Centre which is a specialist TAFE College as part of the Riverina Institute of TAFE. The centre specialises in developing systems of food production that are suitable and sustainable in times of change and uncertainty in weather, food security, and environmental awareness and responsibility. The project will also include a field trip to the Melbourne University Dookie Campus Robotic Dairy and visit to a local farm.
Goulburn Murray Landcare Network	Annual Farm Forum	After five successful forums from 2010 on, the GMLN has made the Farming Forum an annual event for the farmers and landholders in the Agricultural Floodplains. This year the format of the forum is a series of information sessions that will provide up to date, topical and practical information for local farmers who are dealing with a number of land use change issues due to water availability, changing climate and carbon farming. Information presented to attendees will help them to diversify their farming systems to be viable in a changing farming landscape. It provides an easily accessible mechanism for increasing knowledge about new or different land use options for their farms, and in turn, improves the economy and farming systems in the region.
Yea River Catchment Landcare Group	A farmer's guide to understanding soil tests in lay terms	Applying fertiliser is a costly process and one that (if incorrectly applied) can do long-term damage to the soil. Understanding the principles of soil fertility (and hence soil test results) is essential to efficient agricultural production and environmental protection. The soil test is an invaluable tool/guide for farmers to determine the basic nutrient status of the soil. But soil chemistry is a complex science and farmers commonly find its interpretation (read, their soil tests) challenging, particularly as the exercise is revisited only once a year. The proposed guide aims to explain in <i>lay terms</i> how to understand soil test results line by line. Thus the farmer can make more environmentally informed and cost-effective fertiliser decisions each year. There is literature available (a couple of books, a few websites), but it is often too long-winded, technical or does not adequately answer the questions the average farmer needs to know. A guide such as this will offer immediately relevant and accessible information during an important decision-making time.
Gecko Clan Landcare	Water security for grazing enterprise	Productivity improvements to dryland farming espoused by industry and agency coupled with climate change are increasing pressures on livestock water at a farm level. A significant barrier to the adoption of sustainable grazing practices are the

Network		implications on water storages. Best practice grazing management frequently relies on increasing the numbers of grazing paddocks or briefly increasing stocking rate to improve pasture quantity and composition. However both forms of change require review of available farm water storages to meet the demand and subsequent changes to quantity or water use efficiency. Increased frequency of below average seasonal and annual rainfall demands farmers have contingencies that increase their ability to manage water supply and become more resilient. Via four farm field days and three on farm demonstrations and trial sites, this project will provide high level advice on water supply to sustain improved grazing management. The project will also evaluate new water saving technology to aid farmer decision making. Key to the project is an understanding of the various grazing management systems on offer to farmers in the region and the integration of water supply.
Goulburn Murray Landcare Network	Rapid Assessment of Soil Health (RASH) – a Landcare Tool	To keep the momentum going from the Soil Test Interpretation Workshops we will introduce a Landcare tool developed and successfully used in northern NSW and Qld. The Rapid Assessment of Soil Health (RASH) is a 'kit' to help farmers assess their soil health and some of its key properties. The guide is presented as a workshop with hands on demonstrations where participants are encouraged to be involved. The benefits are landholders learn techniques that help them confidently carry out assessment of the 10 soil health indicators. This knowledge then benefits their management decisions for now and into the future.