

Chairman's Report to The Mulloon Institute's Annual General Meeting
24 November 2017

It is a great pleasure to report on The Mulloon Institute's (TMI) activities for the past twelve months. We have developed as an Institute and gone from strength to strength with our activities in research, education & training and advocacy. Our signature Mulloon Community Landscape Rehydration Project (MCLRP) is on the verge of commencing on-ground works and very recently we launched a consulting arm, Mulloon Consulting Contracting & Certifying Pty Ltd (MCCC).

With respect to research, our work has been guided by our highly qualified Science Advisory Council (SAC) chaired by Emeritus Professor Stephen Dovers with TMI's Luke Peel very ably facilitating SAC activities. Research activities carried out during the past year have included installation of piezometers as part of the MCLRP; completion of another bird survey in the Mulloon Catchment as well as aquatic invertebrates and fish surveys; and a series of Landscape Function Analysis (LFA) sites established throughout the MCLRP.

We have also delved into drone technology as an aid to our work and we see a substantial increase in use of this and associated technologies for our work in the future. We have also been approached to be a site for the establishment of floating solar technology. The Home Farm was also the location for a "Frog Watch" evening where about 40 people comprising adults and children surveyed the many frog species that have increased in the area as a result of the repair work on that section of the Mulloon Creek.

TMI was invited to be a participant in a bid under the Federal Government's Cooperative Research Centre Program (CRC). Led by the University of New England (UNE), the bid was called the Farming Smarter CRC and it was successful through the first stage of bidding. As I write, we have provided further input for the second stage of bidding.

Our education and training has been very extensive over the past year. At about the time of last year's AGM we facilitated our first workshop in cooperation with Tarwyn Park Training. During 2017 we have facilitated another three workshops with all workshops fully subscribed. These workshops have been highly successful thanks to the great work of Peter Hazell and Cam Wilson together with Stuart Andrews and Duane Norris from Tarwyn Park Training and Peter Andrews' valuable insights. Kelly Thorburn, who joined TMI as our communications and marketing person in May, has done a great job publicising the workshops and reporting on them. We have had participants from many parts of Australia including Queensland, Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania as well as NSW and the ACT.

In conjunction with the workshops, Peter Hazell and Cam Wilson have authored a "How To" Guide which we labelled "***Landscape Rehydration – Theory and Practice***". This guide was first used with this year's November workshop and proved to be a wonderful resource. A copy will be forwarded to all previous



participants as well. It is a huge first step in the development of a more extensive curriculum that TMI intends to pursue. In that respect we have recently had very excellent discussions with Terry Charlton, head of TAFE NSW as well as being on the Board of Local Land Services (LLS) NSW and Chair of Greater Sydney LLS, about partnering to establish education and training courses in Natural Resource Management.

TMI, in conjunction with Mulloon Creek Natural Farms (MCNF), has continued to facilitate visits by university and school students. Over the past year they have included Australian National University (ANU), Canberra University, Canberra Girls Grammar, Scots College Sydney and Braidwood School. The interest from these sectors is increasing and is certainly helping to spread the word about landscape rehydration and regenerative agriculture. Each January we also host two groups from the National Youth Science Forum (facilitated by Luke Peel) and two groups led by our Science Advisory Council member, John Field.

Further on the theme of education and training, TMI presented at the NSW Geography Teachers Conference with Luke Peel and John Troughton representing us. Peter Hazell also presented to a Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Conference in Sydney. I presented a paper "Landscape Repair, Sustainable Agriculture, Spatially Driven" to the national spatial sciences conference Locate 17. And I completed a UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (UNSDSN) course on-line titled "Feeding a Hungry Planet – Agriculture, Nutrition & Sustainability".

During 2017 there was continued interest from various quarters to visit on the ground with notable visitors including Michael and George Crouch (Waverly Station), Saudi Arabian Ambassador, officers from the Environment Trust of NSW and the Office of Water, to name just a few.

When hosting visitors or meeting with government, corporates and other interested parties, we haven't had an appropriate comprehensive document about TMI to leave with them. Well we do now! Titled "**Regenerating Australia**" it describes who we are and what we do, who our partners and sponsors are and how we can be supported. It was a great team effort and will be a document that our supporters can use to get more supporters and importantly will be used in attracting ongoing funding for TMI.

As mentioned above our MCLRP is nearing the stage where substantial on-ground works can begin. Peter Hazell has lodged the first application with the Office of Water to get things underway and he has had a very positive response. The application was the result of extensive design work and explanations by Peter and it sets us up for future applications. It is also very valuable intellectual property for TMI for the future beyond the MCLRP.

On-ground work that supports the MCLRP that has been done (i.e. not requiring approval) has been carried out by the many Green Army teams under Cam Wilson's direction. They have also been planting thousands of trees funded under the Federal Government's 20 Million Trees program. Cam has also worked with Peter Andrews and Michael Fitzgerald (MCNF) in the "up slopes" of Duralla.

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Other notable happenings over the past year include: Major General the Honourable Michael Jeffery AC, AO (Mil) (Soils for Life) accepted our invitation to be Patron of TMI, which we very much appreciate and also brings TMI in a closer working relationship with Soils for Life; Head of Rothamsted Research in the UK, Achim Dobermann, visited us, toured the Mulloon Catchment and held discussions with TMI thus cementing TMI and Rothamsted's relationship; meetings were held with David Gonski, Minister Niall Blair plus regular contact with the Prime Minister's office; we were asked to prepare a brief for Deputy Prime

Minister and Minister for Agriculture Barnaby Joyce prior to his visit to Rothamsted Research in the UK; and TMI and MCNF is participating in a Holistic Management Branding project led by Advisory Council member Tony Hill.

Almost finally, our great work was recognised during the NSW Landcare Awards with TMI being made a State Landcare Champion in the Australian Government sponsored category of "Excellence in Sustainable Farm Practices". Recognition of not only what we believe and are pursuing but also the wonderful work of all our staff, advisers, partners and supporters. And particular recognition of the vision of our Founder Tony Coote AM.

Finally, as mentioned at the start of this report, TMI has established Mulloon Consulting Contracting & Certifying Pty Ltd (MCCC) as a for-profit company but wholly owned by TMI. The opportunities for MCCC are enormous and we have appointed Carolyn Hall as the General Manager to develop this business. We have a number of potential clients who are seeking guidance from us on how to repair their landscape and improve their agricultural output. We see this scope increasing with profits from MCCC being directed back to TMI to assist its ongoing not-for-profit work.

Thank you to my fellow Directors, Tony Coote, Jim Guilfoyle, Charles Cupit and Richard Allsopp for their ongoing help and support, to staff Peter Hazell, Luke Peel, Cam Wilson, Kelly Thorburn and Jen Southwell, to Advisory and Science Advisory Council members and to our many partners and supporters. Thank you also to MCNF, Farm Manager Michael Fitzgerald and all his staff, we really appreciate the incredible cooperation and assistance. It is a partnership crucially important for the success of TMI. We could not have achieved anything without all of you listed above and I look forward to a prosperous 2018 with many achievements in repairing our landscapes and improving our environment, our farming and our society.

Kind regards

Gary Nairn AO
CHAIRMAN

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