

SQUIRREL GLIDER LAMP PROJECT 2017:
BURRUMBUCK LANDHOLDERS
CONTINUING TO CREATE LANDSCAPE
CONNECTIONS AND HABITAT





Squirrel Gliders LAMP

LOCAL AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN



SQUIRREL GLIDER LAMP PROJECT 2017: BURRUMBUCK LANDHOLDERS CONTINUING TO CREATE LANDSCAPE CONNECTIONS AND HABITAT

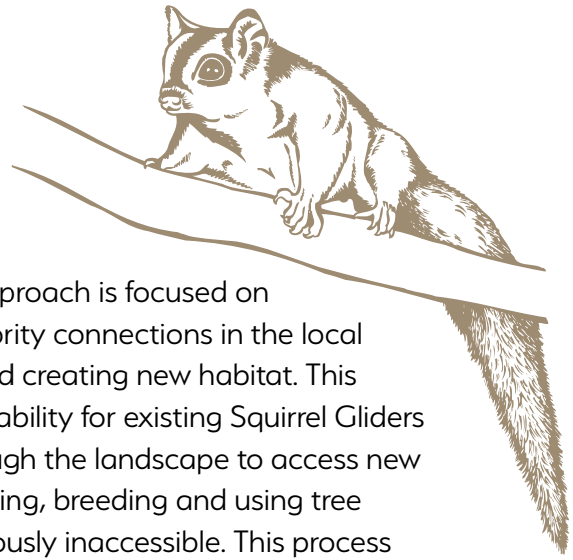
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Photography: All images by Lou Bull

The Squirrel Glider Local Area Management Plan (LAMP) project is a partnership between Murray Local Land Services, Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre, Petaurus Education Group, NSW Office of Environment and Heritage, West Hume Landcare and Greater Hume Shire with funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program.



Squirrel Glider Local Area Management Plan



The Squirrel Glider (*Petaurus norfolcensis*) is a significant local native animal that lives in the area around Burrumbuttock. Squirrel Gliders have been recorded in eastern Australia over a relatively wide area but in low and concerning numbers. Sugar Gliders, a close relative, have not been, or are not, found locally and occur in the higher rainfall areas to the east of Burrumbuttock.

The listing of Squirrel Gliders as Vulnerable under the New South Wales (NSW) Threatened Species Conservation Act recognises the need for us to find ways to increase their numbers so they continue to survive and thrive locally. The Squirrel Glider Local Area Management Plan (LAMP) has been the method adopted by the Office of Environment and Heritage in consultation with the local Burrumbuttock community to achieve this outcome.

The LAMP approach is focused on linking up priority connections in the local landscape and creating new habitat. This improves the ability for existing Squirrel Gliders to move through the landscape to access new areas for feeding, breeding and using tree hollows previously inaccessible. This process also increases the opportunities for young Squirrel Gliders to move out and live in their own home range.

Based on a trapping and release program in 2014, it was estimated that there are 500 Squirrel Gliders in the local area around Burrumbuttock. Ecologists consider this number unsustainable to maintain a local population and suggest at least 1000 would be required for the species to survive.



PHOTO: 2017 was a particularly good year for Yellow Box flowering. This tree is a favourite species for Squirrel Gliders.

To create new habitat and make important connections between patches of good remnant vegetation such as roadsides, travelling stock reserves and old un-made roads, the revegetation works completed in 2017 included:

- planting over 10,000 new plants
- planting individual trees in Stock Proof Tree Guards (SPTG - pictured) to reduce the gaps between trees to less than 20m and
- direct seeding.



PHOTO: A newly planted corridor which will link the distant paddock trees to a roadside that is known to have Squirrel Gliders.

Di and Matthew I'Anson

DI, MATTHEW AND SON DARCY, RUN A MIXED FARMING ENTERPRISE OF 60% CROPPING AND 40% LIVESTOCK – SHEEP.

How aware of Squirrel Gliders were you prior to the Squirrel Glider LAMP project?

We have been involved with them since our children attended Burrumbuttock Primary school in year 2000 onward. They have done projects on them over the years.

Have you seen Squirrel Gliders locally?

We have found an injured Squirrel Glider caught on a barbed wire fence and released it. I have also seen a dead one near our house. My family and I have visited Fe to see night feeding of the Squirrel Gliders.

How has the Squirrel Glider LAMP Project most influenced you?

It has put the welfare of Squirrel Gliders to the front of my mind rather than taking their presence for granted.

What helped motivate you to be part of the LAMP project?

It was easy to get involved in, it helps Squirrel Gliders and hopefully has a low negative impact by the loss of use of land involved for farming.





PHOTO: The black line shows an area that has been planted to connect two remnant patches.

Brian Schilg and Sue Rose

BRIAN AND SUE FARM SHEEP AND GROW CROPS.

What have you particularly liked about the Squirrel Glider LAMP project?

Quality of the work done (the attention to detail), the on-ground works being done for us and involvement with the neighbours.

How has the Squirrel Glider LAMP project most influenced you?

We hope the next generation in 50 years will think of us. I always wanted to see this happen.

How do you think the works you have done on your property will help local Squirrel Glider populations?

Connecting genetics of different families of gliders.

Have you seen Squirrel Gliders locally?

Our son Stephen recently saw one on our property "Freeling" (I have seen them at Fe's when they were being fed). Many years ago I found one drowned in a tank.

What have you learnt about Squirrel Gliders by being part of this project?

Squirrel Gliders need connecting plantings using large trees in them for their movement in flight.

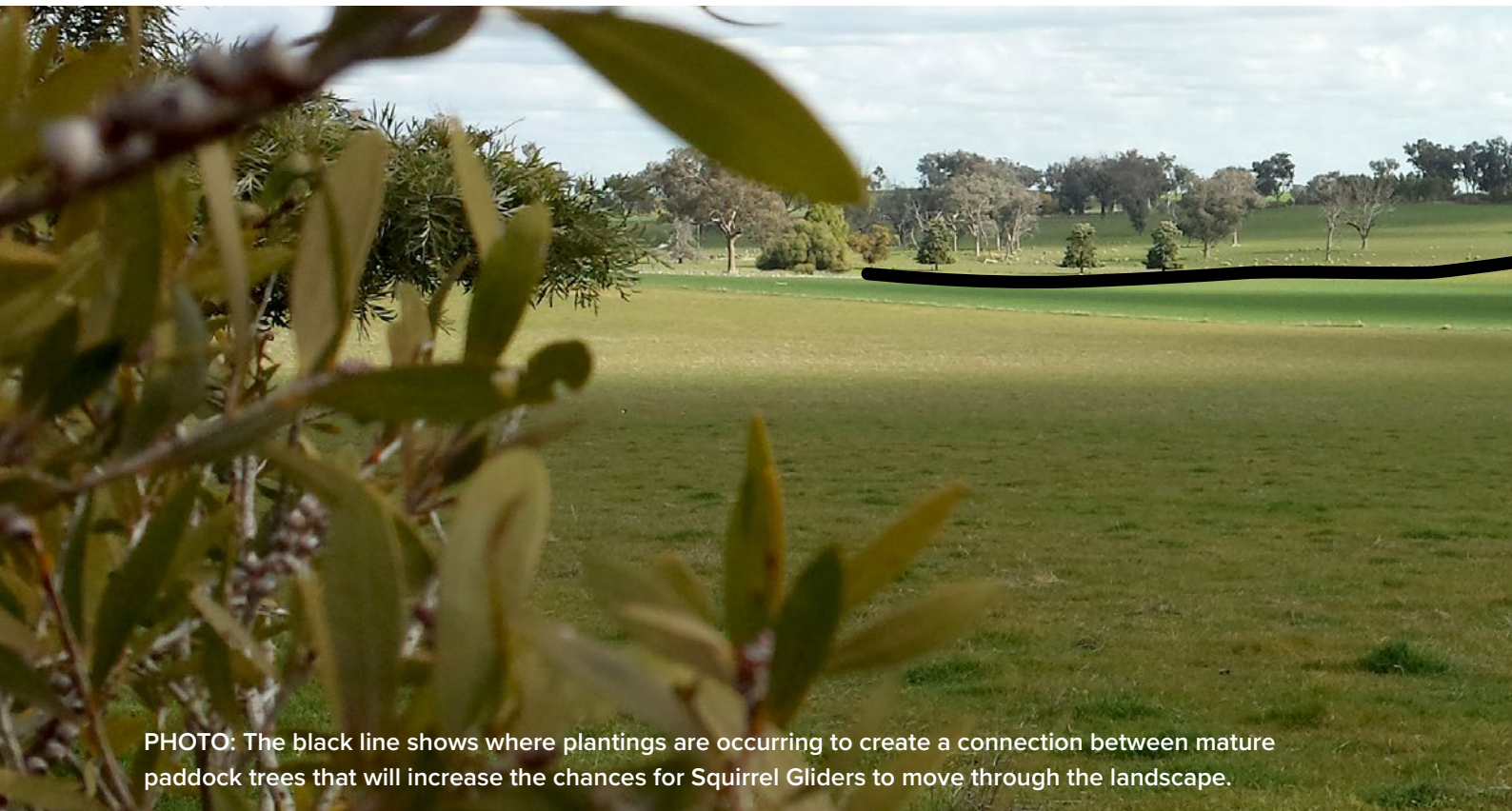


PHOTO: The black line shows where plantings are occurring to create a connection between mature paddock trees that will increase the chances for Squirrel Gliders to move through the landscape.



Tim and Jessica Scott

TIM AND JESSICA RUN ANGUS BEEF CATTLE.

Prior to this LAMP project how aware of Squirrel Gliders were you?

We heard about Squirrel Gliders when we were contacted about this project but we had also learnt about them through our children's school, Trinity in Thurgoona.

What have you particularly liked about the Squirrel Glider LAMP project?

The contractors were easy to work with and having a coordinator helped the process run smoothly

What have you learnt about Squirrel Gliders by being part for the LAMP Project?

We learnt that the distance between trees is critical so that Squirrel Gliders avoid hitting the ground when gliding.





ABOVE LEFT: Young tubestock waiting to be planted into the new corridors on Scotts.

ABOVE RIGHT: The Stock Proof tree guard will protect individually planted trees. They are used to reduce gaps to less than 20m between large remnant paddock trees.

BELOW: Scott's young cattle are very curious about the new gate system.



Jim and Angie Marshall

JIM AND ANGIE MARSHALL, SON SAM AND WIFE BINDI, ALONG WITH NEXT GENERATION EMMA AND ARCHIE, RUN A MIXED SHEEP AND WHEAT FARM.

Jim has been aware of Squirrel Gliders in the local area for about 40 years. Being part of the LAMP project increased this awareness and provided the opportunity to provide habitat and connections.

Jim loves birds and being part of the LAMP project is the opportunity to ensure he has nature around him.

Since the project finished, Sam and Bindi have taken on the farm. The future of farming and Squirrel Gliders looks bright.





FAR LEFT: Three generations of Marshalls.

LEFT: This very mature Box tree has finally developed hollows. To us they may look a bit shabby – to a Squirrel Glider this is top end shabby chic!

BELOW: Creating stepping stones to patches of maturing trees has been a big focus of the Squirrel Glider LAMP project. It can take Yellow Box trees over 100 plus years before they form any hollows. Creating links to trees like these can increase available food and habitat quite quickly.



Martin and Lyn Smith

MARTIN AND LYN HAVE A MIXED FARM OF CROPPING, SHEEP AND FORESTRY.

Martin and Lyn have previously done a lot of revegetation work on their property and have already seen an increase in bird species. The Squirrel Glider LAMP Project was able to link these maturing plantations and create future habitat. This property is close to where a Squirrel Glider was recorded on the roadside. Any revegetation work done nearby will help when young Squirrel Gliders need to leave their home and find new areas to live and feed.

How has the Squirrel Glider LAMP project most influenced you?

We feel like we are putting a small part back into the environment and demonstrating that agriculture and environment can work well together (not mutually exclusive).

What have you learnt about Squirrel Gliders by being part of this project?

How vulnerable they are to predators and habitat loss. They don't mix well with barbed wire.

How do you think the works you have done on your property will help local Squirrel Glider populations?

Over time, they will provide valuable corridors and breeding grounds to increase Squirrel Glider numbers and genetic diversity.



TOP: Martin stands near one of the newly fenced and planted corridors that will link remnant trees in the un-made road to paddock trees and another roadside with historic plantings.

BELOW: Roadside remnants have often been the refuge for Squirrel Gliders in the Burrumbuttock area. Planting to reduce the distance Squirrel Gliders need to glide will reduce risks of predator attack from the ground.



Ian and Isobel Scott

IAN, ISOBEL AND SON BRAD RUN A MIXED FARMING ENTERPRISE OF CROPPING AND STOCK.

Ian and Isobel have been tree planting for over 20 years and were involved in some of the early West Hume Land Care revegetation work aimed at helping Squirrel Gliders. Being involved in the LAMP project helped Ian and Isobel complete areas already planned to be done.

Squirrel Gliders haven't been spotted by Ian and Isobel personally on their property. A neighbour has mentioned seeing one when spotlighting. This highlights how elusive these nocturnal creatures are. Even ecologists looking to find them have difficulty. The Scott's property has incredible existing habitat of mature trees in old designated roads and on the old Burrumbuttock Golf course.



Ross and Jill Jacob

ROSS AND JILL RUN A MIXED FARM OF CROPPING AND CATTLE.

Ross and Jill have been undertaking revegetation works on their property for many years. The Squirrel Glider LAMP project on their property focused on extending a particularly good roadside where Squirrel Gliders had been surveyed during the initial Melbourne University survey in 2014. Their site will create habitat and new food resources to support a family group of Squirrel Gliders.

PHOTO: Ross and son, Sam, in the newly fenced area.



Justin and Lisa Burns

JUSTIN AND LISA RUN A MOSTLY CROPPING ENTERPRISE

The Burns family have previously been involved in Landcare plantings on other properties in the local area.

Justin and Lisa became the custodians of a significant remnant patch of mainly Yellow Box trees when they purchased this local property early in the project. The Squirrel Glider LAMP project was able to create corridors connecting this patch with nearby roadsides and other good remnants.

These “islands” of remnant vegetation have been a major focus of the Squirrel Glider LAMP Project. By planting corridors through these open areas to link patches we can quickly increase the habitat for Squirrel Gliders.

The support of families like the Burns’ is the key to the long-term success of what the Squirrel Glider LAMP Project has set out to achieve.



FAR LEFT: Lisa and Lucy Burns

LEFT: A young Yellow Box tree only 6 months old and growing strongly.

BELOW LEFT: This remnant patch of Yellow Box will now link to areas to the north of the property and adjoin roadsides. Squirrel Gliders have been recorded here regularly by Australian National University researchers.

BELOW RIGHT: Maturing “young” trees in the distance will be perfect for new habitat and feeding areas.



Others involved in the project

Other landholders involved in 2017 included Trevor Hamdorf.

The on-ground works (fencing, planting and site preparation) was done by a mix of locals and experts from a little further away.

Local Craig Eastick ensured sites were deep ripped and ready for planting. He also planted and installed 120 trees into the individual stock proof tree guards.

Jim Hayes expertly constructed 10km of new fencing and takes the award for creating the most elaborate gate system.

Ron Dickenburg and planting team from Australian Native Farm Forestry planted over 10,000 tubestock in only 10 days.

All contractors were instrumental in getting the on-ground works completed. Successful revegetation requires at least 6 months of forward planning including ordering plants, fencing off revegetation sites, preparing the ground by deep ripping and then actually planting the tubestock. The Squirrel Glider LAMP project relied on a team effort to ensure that the 10,000 plus plants went in just before the winter rain began, the fencing installed before paddocks were needed by landholders and the ground was prepared so plants had the best start possible.

We thank the hard work and co-operation of contractors and landholders. Works were completed right on time with incredibly high standards.



