

## **Community Conservation Conversation Camp – Kinchega 2025**

*Partnership Report: Landcare NSW, NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust & Western Landcare NSW Inc.*

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### **Introduction**

Western Landcare NSW Inc. (WLNSW) operates across 40% of New South Wales—from the QLD border through Bourke, Cobar, and Hillston to the VIC and SA borders. In this vast and sparsely populated region, conservation is done differently. Our approach is adaptive, collaborative, and grounded in practical outcomes.

The Landcare ethos—caring for the land and community—is evident in our partnerships with Western Local Land Services (WLLS), the Biodiversity Conservation Trust (BCT), Local Aboriginal Land Councils (LALCs), National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), and others. Together, we developed a unique delivery model: the Community Conservation Conversation Camp. Held in nature and about nature, it fosters meaningful connection, deeper learning, and trust-building between landholders, agencies, and community members.

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### **Kinchega National Park and Joint Management**

Kinchega National Park, east of Broken Hill, is steeped in natural and cultural significance. Aboriginal people have lived in the region for over 35,000 years, with archaeological sites dating back more than 13,000 years. In recognition of this deep heritage, NPWS established a Joint Management Agreement with the Menindee Aboriginal Elders Council in 2002. This formal partnership ensures collaborative management and interpretation of cultural sites and supports Aboriginal involvement in park planning, employment, and research.

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### **The Project Concept**

#### **Original Proposal: Biodiversity & Conservation Community Camps**

The aim was to design a dynamic educational experience that would:

- Increase understanding of biodiversity conservation,
- Foster curiosity in BCT and WLLS programs,
- Build trust between landholders and agencies,
- Engage families and young people,

- Support sustainable property management decisions.

Key camp features included:

- Presentations from knowledgeable experts,
- Interactive Q&As around the campfire,
- Junior Landcare activities,
- Bush catering using native ingredients,
- Cultural tours,
- Live music and shared meals.

The success of other models (e.g. Rites of Passage Institute) has inspired exploration of a long-term sustainable camp delivery model. This is currently being considered by RLC Melanie Gates and Landcare NSW Community of Practice lead Peter Piggot.

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## **Outcomes and Impact**

### **Expected Outcomes**

- Improved biodiversity and conservation knowledge
- Stronger inter-agency and landholder relationships
- Increased confidence and curiosity among participants
- Youth engagement through Junior Landcare
- Data to inform future camps
- Exploration of a sustainable camp model

### **Reflections from the Camp**

- Conversations were enriched through informal settings—especially around the campfire.
- Tech demos (e.g., drones for monitoring, weed detection) generated significant interest.
- Collaborative dialogue emerged between pest managers, agency staff, and landholders.
- Wontanella's cultural catering and tours fostered cultural understanding and trust.
- Shared meals and live music helped build a welcoming, inclusive atmosphere.

- Participants valued seeing the “real” people behind programs—resulting in stronger relationships.
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## **Participant Transformation and Feedback**

The event proved transformative for many. A nervous tech presenter from the east coast left feeling connected, inspired, and committed to camping more. Other participants reported changed perceptions—such as better understanding kangaroo and goat management in western NSW and shifting language preferences (e.g., regenerative vs. sustainable agriculture).

## **Quotes from Attendees**

- *“A great couple of days of good formative discussions and awesome networking.”*
  - *“It was very real and motivating... I learned loads.”*
  - *“The event was professionally run and lots of fun. The speakers were fascinating, and the food was amazing.”*
  - *“We loved every minute of it.”*
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## **Event Overview**

### **Location**

Kinchega National Park (NPWS accommodation at the historic Shearers’ Quarters + bush camping)

### **Attendance**

- Approx. 50 total participants (varied duration)
- Approx. 20 landholders (not all evaluations returned)

### **Activities**

- Campfire networking
- Cultural heritage walks
- Junior Landcare activities
- The Stars of Kinchega stargazing
- Live music and informal dancing
- Shared long-table meals

## Media and Promotion

- Facebook: WLNSW, BCT, Landcare Broken Hill
  - Websites: WLNSW, BCT
  - Newspaper: Broken Hill Times (4 articles)
  - Radio Interviews: 2WEB and ABC Broken Hill
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## Presenters and Topics

(Only business emails shared)

Topic	Presenter	Organisation	Contact
Biodiversity & Conservation	Glenn Harpley, Jo Milgate	BCT	<a href="mailto:glenn.harpley@bct.nsw.gov.au">glenn.harpley@bct.nsw.gov.au</a> <a href="mailto:jo.milgate@bct.nsw.gov.au">jo.milgate@bct.nsw.gov.au</a>
Pest Management	Steve Johnston, Jason Manning	Independent	<a href="mailto:accounts@rosj.au">accounts@rosj.au</a>
NPWS Workplan & Area Management	Jaymie Norris	NPWS	<a href="mailto:Jaymie.Norris@environment.nsw.gov.au">Jaymie.Norris@environment.nsw.gov.au</a>
Security & Surveillance	Tony Elderidge	TeMT	<a href="mailto:temteletrical@gmail.com">temteletrical@gmail.com</a>
Fire Safety	Terry Smith	RFS	N/A
Tech in NRM	John Twohill	Treefera	<a href="mailto:johnnytwohill@gmail.com">johnnytwohill@gmail.com</a>
Drone Mapping	Jason Jackson	WLNSW	<a href="mailto:jaj1contracting@gmail.com">jaj1contracting@gmail.com</a>

Topic	Presenter	Organisation	Contact
Aboriginal Culture & Food	David Doyle	WONTANEL LA	<a href="mailto:dave.doyle.creative@gmail.com">dave.doyle.creative@gmail.com</a>
Astronomy	Linda & Travis Nadge	Broken Hill Astronomy	<a href="mailto:linda@outbackastronomy.com.au">linda@outbackastronomy.com.au</a>
Natural Capital	Paris Capell	WLLS	<a href="mailto:paris.capell@lls.nsw.gov.au">paris.capell@lls.nsw.gov.au</a>
Junior Landcare	Kelly Eglington-Lewis	WLNSW	<a href="mailto:kelly@westernlandcarens.w.com.au">kelly@westernlandcarens.w.com.au</a>
Other contributors	Selen Nazmiye Bilal, Sonia Carey, Paul Heley, Sharon Hocking, Melanie Gates	WLNSW	Various

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## Organisational Learnings

### What Worked Well

- Informal, immersive setting helped people relax and connect
- Catering and cultural engagement created lasting impressions
- Diverse mix of technical, cultural, and personal sessions
- Intergenerational and family-friendly format enhanced participation

### Opportunities for Improvement

- Clarify program timing in advance
- Allocate more time for reflection and group discussions

- Ensure follow-up contact and resources are provided post-event
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## **Acknowledgements**

### **Partners and Supporters**

- **In-kind Support:** Western LLS, Far West NPWS, Kinchega NP with Menindee Aboriginal Elders Council
- **Partnerships:** Landcare NSW, Broken Hill Landcare Inc.
- **Funding:** BCT – Landcare Private Land Conservation Matters
- **Ongoing Support:** Local Broken Hill businesses and our amazing Landcare volunteers