



ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22

Lower Blackwood Land Conservation District Committee



Lower Blackwood Catchment
Land Conservation District Committee



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A Word from the Chair

The Lower Blackwood Catchment is a unique and special place, home to a large range of landscapes and biodiversity and an important, productive and diverse agriculture industry.

Not only is there diversity in sector (including beef, viticulture, dairy – dryland and irrigated, sheep, horticulture, forestry, fishing and everything in between!), but we have diversity in farming size, diversity in farming methods and diversity in markets. Combine this with our superb growing conditions and you can easily see why this corner of the world is incredibly special.

2021-22 has again been a very busy and productive year for the Lower Blackwood LCDC. We commenced the Department of Water and Regulation's funded Healthy Estuaries WA project, which is a follow on from the previously funded Regional Estuaries Initiative, with the continuing focus on improving and maintaining the health of the iconic Hardy Inlet.

We are also undertaking several other exciting projects focusing on nutrient use efficiency on grazing farms, regenerative

agriculture, pasture biodiversity and we're delighted to continue working with our partners the Lower South West Growers group on filling the summer/autumn feedgap.

Landholder engagement has again been a strong focus for us this year, our monthly 'Talkin After Hours' events have continued to be popular as have our webinar & podcast series on sustainable agriculture topics. Additionally we have moved our website to a new platform and have been developing a comprehensive online community forum to increase our reach and capacity for sharing knowledge and bringing farmers together even more.

The next year is set to be even more exciting and I look forward to continuing to work with this passionate and dedicated committee and hard working staff who have made our achievements possible, all working towards a sustainable future for the Lower Blackwood Catchment.



Tim Crimp
Chair

About Us



Lower Blackwood LCDC is registered as a Land Conservation District Committee under the Soil and Conservation Act (1945). Our mandate to operate is articulated through our vision:

"To promote a sustainable agriculture community in the Blackwood region, where sustainability is measured in economic, social and environmental terms."

Our Committee currently consists of 15 members, including farmers, landowners and representatives from the Augusta-Margaret River Shire, Nannup Shire, Department of Agriculture and Food, Department of Parks and Wildlife, and the Pastoralists and Graziers Association of WA. Their job is to ensure that all projects & work undertaken meet the objectives outlined in the Lower Blackwood LCDC's Business Plan:

- Objective 1:** To develop and enhance the profile of the LCDC
- Objective 2:** To coordinate and provide expert and independent advice to farmers, land managers and other NRM stakeholders on sustainable land use.
- Objective 3:** To identify future needs for productive and sustainable agriculture.
- Objective 4:** To maintain and improve the health of the environment and waterways through sustainable farming by minimising pollution and providing support for ecosystem management.
- Objective 5:** To identify and support value adding elements of farming through improved economic and marketing support.

2021-22

The 2021-22 Financial Year was again a busy and productive year that led to successful achievement of a number of our objectives. By maintaining a strategic approach to project development, our committee has ensured that projects undertaken, and partnerships developed in the 2021-22 period, provided a significant contribution to the health of our large catchment area and the sustainable productivity of our progressive farmers.

2021-22 has also allowed us to further build on our communications and engagement program, supporting our landholders through workshops, webinars, podcasts, resources and peer networking groups.

This has all contributed to the continual building and development of an 'information hub' and the development of an online community for our landholders, allowing us to work towards achievement of our key communication objectives:

- Development of a digital ecosystem that sits alongside traditional marketing methods to build the LCDC brand.
- Develop and implement a content marketing approach to landholder engagement which will aim to inform, educate, inspire, influence & persuade as well as generate conversations & enable stakeholders to express opinions.
- Capture and house landholder data in a manner that enables accurate analysis of gaps, and effective & efficient targeting of landholders for communications and reporting.
- Identify & provide content that will add value for stakeholders (as identified through the organizational goals) and assist with land and ecosystem management



Our Major Achievements



\$2.34 million in revenue for new & continuing projects to support LCDC activities for the next 3 years.



Growth of the LCDC team to bring to a total of 8 staff members for project management, liaison & support.



6ha of revegetation plantings completed & a further 7.7ha contracted, & 4.2km of fencing completed with another 5km planned.



Commitment from 70 Lower Blackwood Land Managers to participate in LCDC on-ground projects in 2021-22 including whole farm soil testing, trials of new practices to improve soil health, multispecies pasture & fodder seeding demonstrations, feral pig control land access, & riparian restoration.



Engagement & delivery of information to over 850 catchment landholders and LCDC subscribers.



Development of the LCDC's online community forum 'Talkin' After Hours', and further development of the LCDC's Knowledge Bank.

Substantial expansion of the LCDC's reach & influence through its YouTube & Podcast channels.



Department of Water and Environmental Regulation
Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development



natural resource
management program



Australian Government
Department of Agriculture,
Water and the Environment



Future
Drought
Fund



Our Projects

Healthy Estuaries WA

Overview

Led by the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation, Healthy Estuaries WA is a \$25 million State Government project building on the work of the Regional Estuaries Initiative and dedicated to improving the health of six key WA estuaries.

Total Project:
Funding - \$1,109,000
Length - 4 years
Completion - 2024

Our Focus

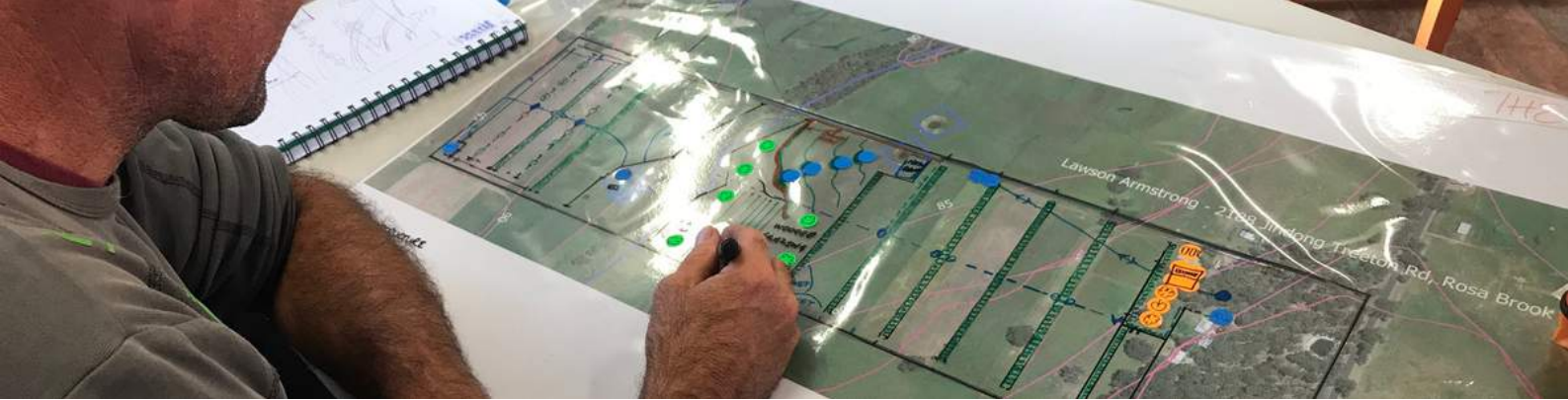
Working with landholders to improve the health of the iconic Hardy Inlet through a range of works including:

- 40km of fencing and 12 ha of revegetation of riparian zones
- Soil testing program that provides Lower Blackwood Catchment Landholders with the knowledge and confidence to tailor their fertiliser practices based on the specific needs of their soil and pasture.
- Building and retaining capacity in the LCDC through collaborative partnerships with state and local government, other catchment groups, industry, farmers, research groups and the community



Our Outcomes (to date)

- 4.2km of riparian stock exclusion fencing and 6ha of riparian revegetation
- 43 participants in the soil testing program



Regenerative Agriculture in Practice: - Whole of Landscape Approach

Overview

Funded by the Shire of Augusta-Margaret River, this project aims to increase the awareness, provide access to supported advice from experts, and encourage adoption of regenerative agriculture principles & practices.

Rather than a few random acts of extension, the program components have been designed as a series of linked activities that provide a range of learning, knowledge sharing and practice opportunities including formal workshops / on farm consultations / supported peer group learning and coaching sessions, & an information hub to provide supporting resources.

Our Focus

Based on the previous 2 years project experience the need was identified for a more holistic & planned approach to the introduction of regenerative agriculture concepts and prompted the inclusion of a whole farm planning component as stage one of the project.

In this component participating landholders developed a Regenerative Whole Farm Plan, assisting landholders to understand how their farm landscape works, identify, assess & prioritise issues, and work up well thought out & appropriate strategies for the improvement of overall landscape health and enterprise productivity on their farms for the long term.



Total Project:
Funding - \$59,014
Length - 1 year
Completion - 2022

Our Outcomes (to date)

- 16 x Lower Blackwood project participants in the full program
- 2 x Practices to Build Building Soil Health Workshop
- 1 x Whole Farm Planning Course
- 1 x Regenerative Grazing Workshop
- 16 x Individual soil health consultations and soil health plans
- 16 x Individual grazing plan consults
- 4 x Peer Group Coaching Sessions
- Development of content for the Information Hub

Our Projects

Filling the Autumn Feed Gap Overview

Funded by Meat and Livestock Australia and delivered in partnership with the Lower South West Growers Group, this project aims to demonstrate the potential of autumn grazed fodder crops that will provide a lower cost and more productive (measured by pasture quality, quantity, animal performance and cost benefit analysis) alternative to supplement feeding with conserved fodder for beef in the high rainfall Lower South West region in WA.

Total Project:
Funding - \$100,000
Length - 4 years
Completion - 2023

Our Focus

The first year of the project saw 2 x strip trial demonstration sites established where 14 different autumn fodder varieties were seeded to see how they perform, with quality and dry matter being measured and season length, timing and persistence of each variety being observed.

Year 2 has seen 5 x farm scale sites rolled out across the catchment to continue the demonstration and incorporate animal weights into the data collection.



Our Outcomes (to date)

- 2 x strip & 5 x farm scale demo sites established, measured and monitored
- Second year case studies developed





uPtake

Overview

Led by the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation, uPtake is a partnership project designed to improve nutrient use efficiency on grazing farms in South West Western Australia by improving farmer and industry knowledge, confidence and uptake of the science supporting fertiliser recommendations.

As part of the project, 2 fertiliser trials that aim to improve confidence in fertiliser recommendations for local soils and conditions are now underway in the Lower Blackwood Catchment.

A desired outcome of the trials is increased uptake of evidence-based fertiliser application that optimises production whilst reducing excess run off of nutrients into waterways and estuaries. The major aspect of the trials will be to test different levels of phosphorus application to optimise production and minimise runoff.

Some trials will also include evaluation of innovative technology to measure pasture productivity and soil nutrient status. Trials will be run over three growing seasons – established in early 2019 and 2020 and will be established and monitored by scientists and agronomists on a Technical Reference Group with local advisors and host farmers. The Lower Blackwood LCDC will provide a point of contact between scientists and farmers.

Our Focus

Farmer engagement and support, communication and extension of results through workshops, field days and through our networks.



Total Project:
Funding - \$90,000
Length - 4 years
Completion - 2022

Our Outcomes (to date)

- 2 trials monitored in the Lower Blackwood catchment
- Building staff capacity through communication and extension training



Our Projects

Pasture Biodiversity to Build Soil Health & Resilience in the Lower Blackwood

Overview

Funded by the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment's Future Drought Fund, this project has been designed to demonstrate the efficacy of multi species cover crops and perennial pasture plants as a means to improve farm drought resilience in the Lower Blackwood catchment .

Total Project:
Funding - \$90,145
Length - 1 year
Completion - 2022

Our Focus

The project includes a series of practical workshops, supported by on site demonstrations at separate farm locations within the catchment.

The demonstrations will be crucial in giving a necessary local context, & will provide evidence that the information delivered in the workshops is applicable & achievable with the soils & climate of the catchment.

The workshops & demonstrations will show how multispecies cover cropping & perennial pastures work to build soil biodiversity, increase levels of soil carbon, & improve water holding capacity.



Our Outcomes (to date)

- 1 x Soil Health & Biodiversity Workshop
- Establishment plus spring & autumn seeding of 3 Demonstration Sites
- 2 x Demonstration Site Field Days
- Development of content for Information Hub

Our Projects

Scott River Implementation Strategy & On-ground Action

Overview

Funded by the State NRM Community Stewardship Grants program this project will see an implementation strategy for the Scott River Action Plan developed and subsequent on-ground action undertaken as a result. It will be a vital step towards a collaborative and on-going effort to protect and enhance the environmental health and community of the Scott River Catchments as well as the health of the Hardy Inlet

Total Project:
Funding - \$198,030
Length - 3 years
Completion - 2023

Our Focus

There are a number of project activities that have been / will be undertaken. These include:

- Developing the Implementation Strategy
- A Whole Farm Planning Program
- A Landholder Engagement Program
- On-ground Revegetation Projects
- Case Studies
- Updating our GIS System

Our Outcomes (to date)

- Developing the draft Implementation Strategy
- 1 x Whole Farm Planning Course
- 1 x Soil Health Workshop
- 10ha revegetation works



natural resource
management program



SCOTT RIVER CATCHMENT

Scott River subcatchments

- Dennis
- Four Acres
- Governor Broome
- Lower Scott
- Middle Scott
- Molloy Island
- Upper Scott
- Hydrography
- SRC area



Datum & Projection: GDA 1994 MGA
Zone 50
Project name: Scott River Action Plan
Author: Cherie Danvers (LCDC)
Data completed: 26/11/2019



Department of Water and Environmental Regulation



Our Projects

Feral Pig Focus - Protecting the Scott Coastal Plain

Overview

This is a 3 year State NRM funded project that is supporting the Lower Blackwood LCDC the Lower Blackwood Vertebrate Pest Management Group (LBVPMG) to work collaboratively with landholders, plantation companies, DBCA, DPIRD, Traditional Owners, & local government, to undertake priority feral pig control work to protect the Scott Coastal Plain.

Total Project:
Funding - \$437,404
Length - 3 years
Completion - 2024

Our Focus



natural resource
management program

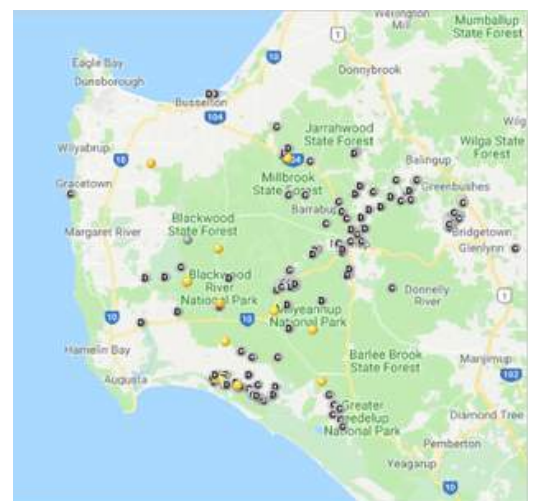


The goals of this project are:

- To implement a multi-year, strategic and collaborative feral pig control program (including monitoring and evaluation) in the Scott Coastal Plain
- To prevent the spread of feral pigs into the Scott National Park (at the Western end of the Scott Coastal Plain)
- To build capacity in Lower Blackwood landholders to monitor and control feral pigs on their own property
- To raise awareness in the Lower Blackwood community of the issues and impacts of feral pigs

Our Outcomes (to date)

- 2 x on-ground field officers and 1 x project officer appointed
- 3 x Feral pig monitoring zones established
- 439 feral pigs removed through a combination of trapping, detection dogs and on ground shooting techniques in the trapping season. (123 working days).
- Continued use and development of the FeralScan mapping tool to map all feral pig control, sightings and damage



Our Projects

Weedwork - Declared weed control support in the Lower Blackwood

Overview



natural resource
management program



This State NRM funded project enables the Lower Blackwood LCDC to work collaboratively with landholders, local government and DBCA to undertake priority declared weed control work in the Lower Blackwood Catchment, building on previous weed control works that have been undertaken by the LCDC and Lower Blackwood land managers

Total Project:
Funding - \$35,000
Length - 1 year
Completion - 2023

Our Focus

Over the last 4 years our primary focus has been on Blackberry, Arum Lily and Cape Tulip, mainly in riparian zones. This project has enabled us to expand beyond riparian and focus on declared weed species within the Catchment. Weed species such as weedy wattles and apple of sodom are becoming a problem at an alarming rate as well as the pressure that weeds such as blackberry and arum lily place on remnant bushland and riparian zones.

Our key goals for this project are:

- To contribute to the control of declared weeds in the Lower Blackwood Catchment
- To collect data on the level of declared weed populations in the Lower Blackwood Catchment to assist in the design and focus of future control work
- To establish a Scott River weed group consisting of landholders, DBCA, local government and other key stakeholders focusing on the mapping and control of weedy wattles and other key weeds in the Scott River Catchment.
- Development of a WeedWork landholder communication and engagement program

Our Outcomes (to date)

- 1 x A Healthy Ecosystems Approach to Efficient Weed Control Webinar
- Establishment of the Scott River weed group
- Commencement of the Weedwork landholder communication & engagement program
- 4 x landholder commitments for Arum Lily weed control across approximately 2ha of creekline & non creekline riparian areas.





Our Projects

Threatened Species in the Lower Blackwood

Overview

This project, funded by the South West Catchment Council, aims to improve habitat for priority Threatened Species in the Lower Blackwood catchment.

Our Focus

Two properties were identified in the catchment, one in Scott River and the other in Courtenay, with considerable areas of remnant vegetation & wetlands in which two priority Threatened Species, the Chuditch and the Western Ringtail Possum have been recorded by the owners on the property. In addition it is thought that Woylie may also persist in the area and other Threatened and Priority flora and fauna species have been recorded in the area and on the properties in the past.

The key activity for this project was stock exclusion fencing of identified areas within the properties. Both properties already have significant areas already protected from grazing livestock - the Scott River property has approximately 234 hectares, registered with Land for Wildlife (LfW) and protected with livestock grazing excluded, this project will increase that area protected by 183 hectares to an overall area of approximately 417 hectares, a significant area for wildlife conservation. The Courtenay property has approximately 82ha of remnant bush and wetlands fenced.

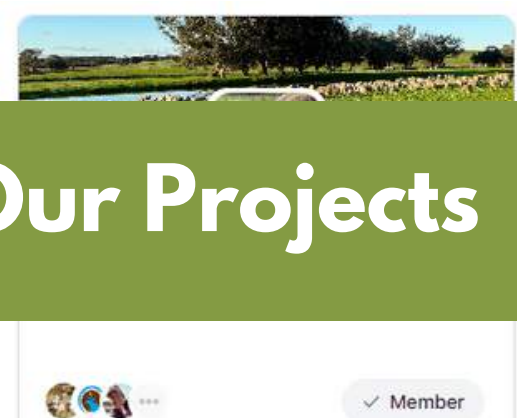
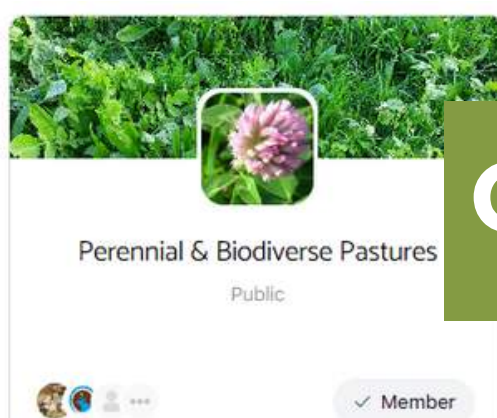
Total Project:
Funding - \$35,829
Length - 1 year
Completion - 2022



Our Outcomes

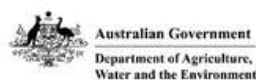
- Property 1: The construction of approximately 800m of fencing.
- Property 2: The construction of approximately 1.62 km of high quality fencing, required due to proximity to Southern Ocean, to exclude livestock from two areas bushland adjacent to existing LfW site.





Lower Blackwood LCDC Online Community Forum & Information Hub Overview

Funded through the Networks to Build Drought Resilience Grant from the Federal Government's Future Drought Fund, the project will develop the LBLCDC's Online Community Forum & Information Hub.



This project is supported by FRRR, through funding from the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund.

Total Project:
Funding - \$49,850
Length - 6 months
Completes - 2022

Our Focus

This community-focused engagement platform aims to bring the Lower Blackwood farming community together, connecting, communicating and learning. Lack of understanding, access to advice and peer-to-peer support, is a substantial barrier to adopting drought resilient land management practices in our catchment. This project aims to provide a local, interactive platform to access information, resources and communities of practice. It will build community capacity to understand & implement the LCDC's sustainable agriculture objectives and drought resilience aims by strengthening social and community networking, support, engagement and wellbeing.

Our Outcomes (to date)

- Migration of LCDC website to compatible software for on line community
- Customisation of website to build online community
- Branding of on line community to Talkin' After Hours
- 6 x Talkin' After Hours podcasts published
- 6 x Talkin' After Hours webinars delivered
- 6 x major written content pieces developed
- Draft launch strategy developed
- Soft launch of online community to Regen Ag Project participants to 'beta test' community functions.



COMMUNICATIONS & ENGAGEMENT



WE HOSTED/ORGANISED **17 EVENTS** (WORKSHOPS & FIELD DAYS), RECORDED **12 PODCAST CONVERSATIONS**, FACILITATED **8 LIVE WEBINARS**, AND DELIVERED INFORMATION TO **1037 PARTICIPANTS**.



496 YOUTUBE SUBSCRIBERS
7290 VIEWS & 860 HOURS OF VIEWING TIME



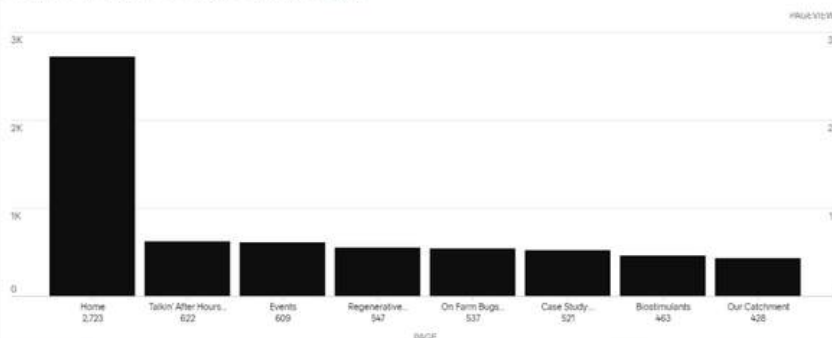
14,011 UNIQUE PODCAST DOWNLOADS



WE HAVE 552 FANS & 639 FOLLOWERS - UP 40%
OUR POSTS REACHED 27,576 PEOPLE - UP 180%

Top Pageviews

Jul 1, 2021-Jun 30, 2022 • 33% of 19,389 Pageviews +11% yr/yr



VISITS

11K

+17% yr/yr

UNIQUE VISITORS

8.2K

+18% yr/yr

PAGEVIEWS

19K

+11% yr/yr





PROFIT, PRODUCTIVITY, & NPK

A Live Webinar Event

Lower Blackwood LCDC Annual Report 2021/22



Lower Blackwood Catchment
Land Conservation District Committee

Our Key Partners



We have also continued to strengthen our relationships with our very valued and long standing key partners. These partnerships are vital in assisting us to achieve our goals and vision:

Augusta-Margaret River Shire

Nannup Shire

Department of Water and Environment Regulation

Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development

Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions

Western Dairy

Lower South West Growers Group

Lower Blackwood Vertebrate Pest Management Group

South West Catchments Council

Nature Conservation

Augusta-Margaret River Clean Community Energy

Margaret River Wine Association

We thank our partners for their encouragement and support, and we look forward to their continued support over the coming year.

Our Finances

Project	Funder	Project Timeline	Total Project Income	Revenue 2021/22
uPtake - DWER	DWER	2018-2022	\$90,800	\$22,500
Filling the Autumn Feed Gap	MLA	2020-2023	\$100,000	\$35,000
Healthy Estuaries	DWER	2021-2024	\$1,109,000	\$331,000
State NRM - Scott River	State NRM	2021-2023	\$198,030	\$80,000
Threatened Species	SWCC	2021-22	\$35,829	\$3,335
Soil health & pasture biodiversity	Federal Drought Fund	2021-22	\$90,145	\$76,623
Regen Ag in Practice - whole of landscape	AMR Shire & DWER	2021-22	\$59,014	\$39,238
Feral Pig Focus - Protecting the Scott Coastal Plain	State NRM	2021-24	\$437,404	\$200,000
WeedWork	State NRM	2021-22	\$35,000	\$25,000
Networks to build drought resilience	Federal Drought Fund	2021-22	\$49,850	\$49,850
AMRCCE - Communications program	AMR Shire	2021-22	\$9,000	\$9,000
TOTAL (OVER WHOLE PROJECT TIMELINE)			\$2,214,072	\$871,546

**Total Investment
2021-22
\$871,546**

AMR Shire Capacity Support Funding

The AMR Shire funding was a vital contributor towards supporting the LCDC in building long term organisational sustainability and managing growth through contributing to the LCDC vehicle and vehicle costs, the office and equipment, training, its staff, and volunteers in delivering projects.

We look forward to the continued support of the shire in the coming year.



Where to now?

2022-23 looks to be another busy and exciting year for the LBLCDC with the continuation of the **Feral Pig Project**, & the **Healthy Estuaries** program. We will also be extending our communication & engagement activities with the launch of the LCDC's Online Community - 'Talkin' After Hours' and we'll be taking a good look at the impact of our engagement with a new State NRM project Evaluating Engagement.



The Lower Blackwood LCDC has also continued to focus on seeking alternative sources of funding for projects that support sustainable agriculture and land care in the Lower Blackwood Region for the including:

- Communication services to the AMRCCE and the Department of Water & Environmental Management.
- Regenerative Agriculture in Practice 2023, including a new formal alumni program for previous participants
- Continued expansion of 'Talkin After Hours' events, webinars & podcasts & development of the Lower Blackwood Knowledge Bank

We thank you for your encouragement and support of the Lower Blackwood Land Conservation District Committee, and we look forward to your continued support over the coming year.



Lower Blackwood Catchment
Land Conservation District Committee



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