

Capacity building

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Engaging a New Bush Army for the Undefendable Town

Murrumbidgee Landcare Inc



How Batlow rallied local community networks and Landcare groups to restore bushland and build environmental resilience after the devastating 2020 bushfires.

The issue

The 2020 Black Summer bushfires devastated Batlow's bushland, wiping out swathes of native vegetation and wildlife habitat, whilst leaving the landscape badly scarred. In the aftermath, the Batlow Environment Network (BEN) formed to bring together community members, government agencies and environmental NGOs, to coordinate conversations and action on how to heal and protect their bushland. BEN quickly discovered industry and agencies were already stretched thin, under-resourced, under-staffed and unable to properly care for Batlow's bush. Limited support has intensified the challenge, making local, community-driven stewardship even more important.

The solution

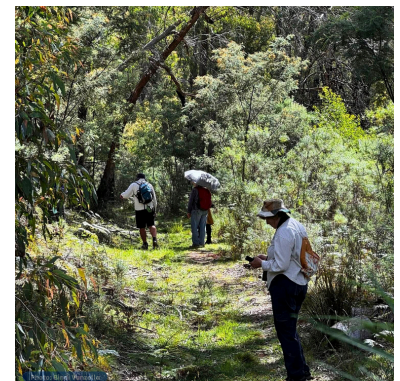
BEN partnered with Do It for Batlow, Riverina Highlands Landcare Network and Murrumbidgee Landcare Inc to engage the community. Batlow's first Bush BioBlitz was hosted, inviting locals to explore and identify native plants, birds and nocturnal wildlife. The event built momentum within the community, sparking discussions beyond BEN, on the need for local stewardship to support under-resourced agencies with practical on ground work partnerships to maximise protection.

The impact

The BioBlitz was used as a conduit for local environmental collaboration and education of community, pathing the way for healing of the mind and bush. Increased connection has fostered a stronger sense of stewardship for the local bushland and its inhabitants helping fill data gaps on biodiversity, providing valuable information to guide conservation and recovery. Long term, such activities that build community capacity and resilience, encouraging ongoing involvement and vigilance in caring for the bush, is crucial given ongoing limitation of resources from agencies and industry.

Learnings

The Batlow Bush BioBlitz demonstrated how engaging community in hands-on biodiversity discovery can transform fear into care and stewardship. It revealed a rich variety of plants and animals, filling critical data gaps and helping guide recovery efforts. The event showed the power of partnerships between local volunteers, Landcare groups and agencies in maximising resources and impact. Overall, the BioBlitz provided vital learning about building resilience through local knowledge, collaboration, and citizen science participation.



Key facts

- 600+ hectares of bushland impacted by fire targeted for restoration.
- Integration of citizen science through Bush BioBlitz events.
- Strong partnerships between community groups, council, government agency and landcare.

Project Partners



This initiative is made possible by the NSW Landcare Enabling Program, a collaboration between Local Land Services and Landcare NSW supported by the NSW Government.

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