

## Revitalising Browns Creek

### Manning Landcare Incorporated

### Connecting community, local businesses, Landcare & employment providers for social and environmental outcomes.

#### The issue

Browns Creek is a partly tidal waterway that meanders through the township of Taree, on the Mid North Coast of NSW. It has a catchment area of 730ha and is highly visible to the community. It supports a wide range of environmental habitats from estuarine seagrass beds to Koala habitat. Seventeen fauna & two flora species listed in the Threatened Species Act have been recorded and numerous studies have been done. Over many years the creek has been used and abused and vegetation along the creek has degraded, becoming infested with all manner of exotics, vine weeds, small leafed privet & green cestrum. It has been seen as a dumping ground for waste, a sewerage drain, it was unloved and unappreciated.

#### The solution

By 2015 Manning Landcare and the reviewed the studies that had been done, identified key stakeholders, contacted all adjoining landholders. A steering committee was formed from these discussions. A NSW Environmental Trust grant was successfully applied for - Stage 2 to run from 2016 - 2019. This grant would fund a bush regenerator supervisor to oversee a Work for the Dole team and volunteers. Youth unemployment is high in our region we hoped that by engaging young people in positive experiences we could facilitate a greater sense of ownership of public spaces thus reducing vandalism and antisocial behaviours (this keyed in with a Clean Up Taree initiative, engaging a place maker with the community revamping the Central shopping precinct in Taree). Our initial WFTD team finished with such positive outcomes that a second team started immediately the first team finished.

#### The impact

This project gained a life of it's own with outcomes far exceeding the original plan. We have hosted 7 Work for the Dole crews with participants gaining work skills & several now in full time employment. Manning Landcare & contract bush regenerator have supervised the project covering 2.6 kms of creek line (both sides) weeding 21.6 hectares, planted 4000 tubestock. We have hosted 8 field days/education awareness raising sessions on water quality, plant/weed ID, habitat and species ID, nesting box installation, birdwatching. Other outcomes include Clean up Australia Day events, the installation of a Canoe Launching ramp giving safe access to the river via the creek & boat trips - exploring the creek to the confluence. Participants have been:Taree Landcare, Taree Home Schooling Group, Taree Scouts, Friends of Browns Creek, Taree Indigenous Employment Services, Tursa Employment, Graham Brown Accountants, Midcoast Council, Midcoast Water, Manning Valley Disability Services, Transgrid, Stacks the Law Firm and numerous local businesses that adjoin the works plus thousands of volunteer hours all working together. Friends of Browns Creek also successfully applied to Midcoast Council for a boardwalk to enable a path to be constructed from the existing Bicentennial Gardens on the Manning River to Musico Park and the new Leash Free Dog Park. The whole community now has access to a far greater length of Browns Creek. We are now awaiting the outcome of a Stage 3 application to continue in an area upstream.



#### Key facts

- Connecting community
- Engaging businesses and youth
- Enhancing biodiversity

#### Project Partners



MIDCOAST council



The Local Landcare Coordinator Initiative Program that enables the promotion of these case studies on the Gateway, is funded by the NSW Government and is supported through the partnership of Local Land Services and Landcare NSW

