

2010

Leschenault Community Nursery Inc.



ANNUAL REPORT – IN BRIEF

As the Leschenault Community Nursery Inc. continues to uphold its intention to be an effective partner in the restoration, conservation and maintenance of healthy natural ecosystems in the South West, we have invested strongly this year to improve operations to assure customers of our commitment to providing quality native plants grown in Bunbury for the south west environment.

THANK YOU

Our grateful thanks are due to:

Bunbury Port Authority and the Department of Water for the lease arrangement that allows us to use the land in the Department of Water depot at Johnston Road, Bunbury.

Department of Water for support services and for providing us with two superseded computers.

MYR Consulting of Fremantle for their pro bono services to update our Risk Management Plan.

Water Corporation for including us in their Waterwise Garden Centre program.

Cover picture: Tuesday volunteers and staff

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Mission and Vision

Leschenault Community Nursery Inc (LCN) holds the intention of being an effective partner in the restoration, conservation and maintenance of healthy natural ecosystems in the South West, particularly in the Leschenault Catchment.

As an organisation we aim:

- to work in partnership with the community and with government to achieve our goals
- to provide leadership in fostering local expertise on endemic species
- to be accessible to our community of interest

Mission

To provide local plants for revegetation work in the Leschenault Catchment

Vision

A region where the conservation and diversity of plants and native fauna are assured.

Objects of the association

1. To provide local native plant species for land, waterway, wetland and coastal rehabilitation.
2. To involve the community in creating a sustainable and productive environment.
3. To foster an appreciation of the value of local plants and their role in ecosystems.

Chair's report

This year we have invested strongly so that we can assure customers of continuous improvement in quality and service. This has meant being brave enough to dip into our reserves, knowing that it may take at least two years for the improved practices to result in an annual surplus. Implementing and auditing a quality management system has given us the tools for managed change.

Board, staff and volunteers have all contributed to the success of changes being made and have put in the extra effort needed. There is an air of enjoyment and focus around the nursery as people go about their allotted tasks.

We are greatly indebted to all the volunteers. They are a great source of expertise and never cease to amaze with their inventiveness. They keep on coming (no matter what the weather) and some have been willing to become volunteer team leaders and take responsibility for their area of work.

The staff team work together and also alongside the volunteers and with skill and good humour ensure the work is done.

The board have been extra busy this year preparing plans and policies that will set the pattern for development over the next two to three years. We are fortunate to attract the range of skilled and dedicated people who make up the current board.

My sincere thanks to all who have participated this year.

Carolyn Switzer

Chairperson

29 Nov 2010

Achieving our objectives

Achieving Objective 1

To provide local native plant species for land, waterway, wetland and coastal rehabilitation

Production November 2009 – Oct 2010

About 180 revegetation species were grown (mostly from seed) and 45 species (mostly from cuttings) for gardens and landscaping.

Customer orders

Revegetation orders placed with us in 2010 showed about half were small orders (under \$500), with the bulk of the rest falling between \$1000 and \$5000 worth of plants.

Improving operations

Quality assurance

Jacqueline Stenhouse of Dinnie Enterprises worked with LCN to complete a quality management system early in 2010 and conducted monthly audits to ensure procedures were embedded into practice.

Nursery Industry Accreditation

LCN was inspected by the Nursery and Garden Industry WA technical officer in September 2010 and awarded accreditation. This is a great result achieved in the step by step work of manager Helen Doe to improve conditions and engage the staff in making a difference.

[The Nursery Industry Accreditation Scheme Australia (NIASA) is the national program for the adoption of best management practice for production nurseries and growing media manufacturers.]

Business Plan – for a social enterprise

A new Business Plan has been developed and will replace the one initially produced in 2007. The new plan sets out a rationale for development and development objectives.

The plan makes clear that LCN maintains the ethos of a not for profit social enterprise. LCN provides a community service in collecting seed and growing local native plants while also supporting development of people. There is a reciprocal relationship between the work carried out by community volunteers and the role of the nursery in providing a suitable place for volunteers of all ages and abilities.

Marketing Plan

The marketing plan was completed by committee members in October 2010 and is a companion document to the Business Plan.

Waterwise Garden Centre

During the year staff undertook training with the Water Corporation and as a result the nursery will be listed as a Waterwise Garden Centre.

Risk management update

In July, the LCN Board undertook a review of its initial Risk Management Plan with the pro-bono assistance of a professional from MYR Consulting, of Fremantle. We developed an LCN Risk Register and found we have already addressed high priority actions and in 2011 will concentrate on the medium level risks while monitoring the status of high level risks.

Nursery location

LCN has been concerned that the site in Johnston Road would be impacted by Port of Bunbury expansion. After discussions with representatives of the Port of Bunbury during 2010, LCN has been assured that the nursery site will be available for the foreseeable future.

LCN is considering the potential for improving efficiency by making changes to nursery layout and by updating existing infrastructure. We would like to ensure that our water use has no impact on surrounding lands, by installing a wastewater collection and biological treatment system. We have begun to canvas support for these ideas from our stakeholders, particularly the Department of Water.

Achieving Objective 2

To involve the community in creating a sustainable and productive environment

Volunteers

We are indebted to all the people who contribute their time to help LCN fulfil its mission. Since February, 95 people have been listed on the LCN volunteer register. They include: Individuals; Return to work program participants; People with disabilities; Horticulture trainees; Students from the West Coast International College of English.

Volunteers perform a variety of tasks - including maintenance (especially reticulation), constructing nursery benches, cleaning pots for re-use, making soil mixes, weeding, producing plant cuttings, sowing seeds, monitoring plant health and team leadership.

In the nine months from 1 February to 31 October 2010,

volunteers contributed 4140 hours of their time.

Volunteer South West in Bunbury is a key source of referrals and other agencies such as Community First, Skill Hire, People Sense, Forrest Personnel, and Enable also provide referrals. LCN also provided a weekly placement for two Newton Moore High School Education Support students.

Seed harvesters

Along with staff members Helen Doe and Peter Duane, there are 8 volunteers now licensed to collect seed for the 2011 season.

Volunteer highlights

Trip to Rockingham Men of the Trees nursery

In July volunteers enjoyed an 'end of growing season' outing to visit the Rockingham Men of the Trees nursery.

Seed collecting training

Structured training for staff and would-be volunteer seed collectors was held in September with SW Herbarium volunteer and former Board member Shirley Fisher providing the expertise.

The Cutting Team

The volunteer cutting propagation team have developed their skills to the extent that they are now achieving 100% strike rates.

Stakeholders

This year we have begun to reach out to encourage support for what we do. We invited stakeholders from local industry, government agencies and local governments to a "Getting to Know You" event in October and were pleased at the attendance and the personal contacts made.

Achieving Objective 3

To foster an appreciation of the value of local plants and their role in ecosystems

Plants for Group TENG

LCN continues to support Group TENG (To Encourage Native Gardens) at Dalyellup by providing them with plants at a discounted rate for giving away at community events.

Plants for Schools

Plants were made available free of charge to a number of local schools, Girl Guides and Edith Cowan University to promote awareness of the value of growing local native trees to young people and to promote the work of the nursery and its links to the community.

Market Days

Market Days were held on the second Saturday morning each month from April to October to allow members of the public to buy South West plants and to encourage water-wise gardens. The nursery has also been open on Tuesday mornings throughout the year for market sales.

Website

The professional website is a flagship for information about the nursery including the range of plants grown and the current price list: www.leschenaultcommunitynursery.com.au

Native orchid project

The orchid house constructed last October by SW Regional College of TAFE students with lecturer Jeff Hardwick (Conservation and Land Management) has seen the growth and flowering of its first batch of 12 species of orchid.

A plan to expand orchid propagation and collection is underway and will provide for technical research and the development of methods for large scale propagation of plants in the nursery rather than in a laboratory. The first step is to obtain a suitable grant.

A parallel development would be the propagation of other genus of plants that grow with orchids particularly around wetlands: Stylidiiums, Droseras and bulbous species including Burchardia and Thysanotus, for example.

Donation from Worsley Alumina (BHP Billiton)

We are still holding the donation of \$11,000 from Worsley-BHP Billiton's Collie refinery with the intention of allocating it to infrastructure development as our plans progress.

We are grateful to Andy Van Dijk, Worsley's Community Relations Manager for his interest in our work and future plans.

Looking ahead

The 2010-2011 year will be the first full season of operation of our quality management system with new manager Helen Doe in charge. We are aiming for improved plant quality, superlative customer service, a full range of south west revegetation species, and some experimentation with propagation of less familiar species. The wetland section will continue to expand on the new raised 'wet beds' set up for this purpose.

The visitor area will continue to improve with landscaping and garden plants on display during their flowering periods in order to show them to the best advantage.

One of the board's critical tasks for 2011 is to recruit new members and allow a staged succession as long term members retire.

It will be yet another busy year for volunteers, staff and the board of the Leschenault Community Nursery.