



2018 NATIONAL LANDCARE AWARDS

11 October
Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre

Nominee: Helen Eastburn, TAS

Category: Australian Government Individual Landcarer

Ross and Helen Eastburn were instrumental in forming the West Tamar Landcare (WTL) group, one of the longest-running Landcare groups in Tasmania.

The couple's small cattle grazing property in the Winkleigh area fronts onto the Supply River. In the early 1990s the river was suffering from erosion due to successive floods, so Helen and Ross mobilised the local community. It soon became clear that there was strong interest in forming a Landcare group to foster sustainable practices.

After the couple spearheaded a successful funding application, the river was stabilised and more than 3,000 plants were planted following willow removal from the upper catchment. Large drop structures, riffles and erosion stabilization works were undertaken and many trees and native shrubs planted. This work improved the riparian habitat, slowed the erosion of the riverbank and formed pools for aquatic life, including platypus and native fish. The grant of \$150,000 secured to carry out this work was at least tripled in volunteer and in-kind contributions from partners, and Ross and Helen were active in overseeing expenditure and communication with Council and other agencies.

As well as battling riverbank erosion, the Eastburns have been active in eradicating weeds. For 11 years WTL has undertaken seasonal raids on ragwort and boneseed in public areas. Running the "Ragwort Raids" means at least three weeks of work for the Group annually. In addition to coordinating volunteer weed pullers, WTL must also acquire permits to work on the roads, provide safety gear and briefings, and organise the collection and disposal of all pulled weeds. Ross works on the roadside every year, while Helen mans the BBQ.

Another current project has NRM North and local school and government working together on the rehabilitation of a small reserve by replanting with native species and through weed control and landscaping. Tree-planting demonstrations at the Exeter Show and other public forums are a chance for Helen and Ross to raise awareness of erosion, revegetation and land rehabilitation, and to engage with the public on weed species identification and containment.

The couple has helped prepare many successful funding applications for West Tamar Landcare projects, with many hours spent on paperwork as well as project logistics. Helen and Ross communicate with stakeholders on the local council and elsewhere to keep them up to date on Landcare activities and project status. Where funding has been insufficient, they've been creative and adaptable: the couple's development of cheap but efficient tyre mats to install at riverbank erosion hot spots is an outstanding example among many.

Landcare is a grassroots movement that harnesses individuals and groups to protect, restore and sustainably manage Australia's natural environment and its productivity. Groups that fall under the Landcare umbrella work on a diverse range of environmental projects and include farmers embracing sustainable farm management and any community group that partakes in volunteer environmental activities. To find out how you can become a Landcare volunteer and for full details on all 2018 National Landcare finalists, visit www.landcareaustralia.org.au

This program is supported by Landcare Australia and the National Landcare Network, through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program.





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Ends

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Web summary:

Ross and Helen Eastburn were instrumental in forming the West Tamar Landcare (WTL) group, one of the longest-running Landcare groups in Tasmania. Helen and Ross mobilised the local community to protect the Supply River, which was suffering from erosion due to successive floods, and more than 3,000 plants were planted following willow removal from the upper catchment. Stabilization work was undertaken and many trees and native shrubs planted. A grant of \$150,000 was secured to carry out this work, and Ross and Helen were active in overseeing expenditure and communication with Council. As well as battling riverbank erosion, the Eastburns have been active in eradicating weeds. For 11 years WTL has undertaken seasonal raids on ragwort and boneseed in public areas. Ross works on the roadside every year, while Helen mans the BBQ.

Pull-out quote:

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