



Become a Citizen Scientist in the lead-up to Landcare Week

Landcare Australia and ClimateWatch are joining forces to create citizen scientists from every day Australians who have an interest in how climate change is impacting their own backyard. By collecting and recording data, individuals will be helping scientists across the globe, study the impact of climate change on our ecosystems.

"All around Australia, Landcare groups and their volunteers are already making observations about species and animals habitats and the impact of climate change in their local communities. This September we are appealing to all Australians to get their hands dirty and volunteer to become citizen scientists. Help Landcare groups celebrate Landcare Week," said Landcare Australia CEO, Heather Campbell.

To be involved in this concept, participants need to register on the Landcare website to observe and record what is happening in their own environment. These observations can be as simple as when frogs are calling to what birds are migrating and what plants are flowering. The data gathered will then help scientists understand what seasonal variations are occurring around Australia with our animals and plants.

The Liverpool Plains is home to a number of threatened species and ecological communities. Many of the bird species found in this area are under threat of extinction due to degradation, fragmentation and loss of habitat. Predation by foxes and feral cats also threatens the future of a number of endangered birds including the: Australian Bustard, Black-necked Stork, Mallee Fowl, Bush Stone-curlew, Painted Snipe, Regent Honeyeater and Swift Parrot.

These threatened species are also under threat due to the impacts of climate change.

Simple observations of this species will go a long way in assisting in the future management of these species.

Earthwatch Australia Executive Director, Richard Gilmore said: "Climate change is affecting rainfall and temperature across Australia and as a consequence flowering times, breeding cycles and migration movements are changing. Scientists have identified an urgent need for large-scale data gathering to assess how biological systems are responding to climate change. By partnering with Landcare Australia, we hope to significantly increase the amount of data available for scientists to apply to their research."

One local Namoi resident getting involved in the ClimateWatch citizen scientist program is Individual Landcarer National Award winner, Kate McLaren. Kate has dedicated her property to conservation under a Voluntary Conservation Agreement. People will be able to experience Kate's success first hand at a field day to be held at her 7000ha property around Landcare Week, which starts on September 6.

There are also a number of other events and activities in Landcare Week including an Eco Festival at the Peel Wetlands, Tamworth on September 7 and the Tamworth Manilla Landcare Association bush dance in Manilla on September 18.

To find out more about the ClimateWatch citizen scientist program, go to: <http://www.climatewatch.org.au/>. For more information about Landcare events happening in the local area, contact Acting Regional Landcare Facilitator, Rachel Hill at Liverpool Plains Land Management on: 6741 8365 or email: Rachel.hill@lplmc.com.au.