

# Collaborations

**LP038-005**



# Community comes together to replant after Sir Ivan Bushfire of 2017

## The issue

In the days following February 12, 2017 the Sir Ivan bushfire at Cassilis burnt out over 55,000 hectares destroying 35 homes, numerous sheds and thousands of kilometres of fencing. As well as the physical damage many thousands of native animals, pets and livestock were killed.

Following the fires affected landholders were keen to not only rebuild and restart but they were also wanted to revegetate many of the areas which had been burnt and restore some of the habitat which had been lost. In the following months, with the assistance of Blazeaid, burnt fences and sheds were cleared away and rebuilt and plans for revegetation developed.

Unfortunately while plans were made for planting it wasn't until three years later that the rains returned and conditions improved enough for planting.

The arrival of Covid-19 saw a massive increase in demand from nurseries as people took a greater interest in the environment around themselves which led to shortages of the plants needed for the project.

## The solution

In her role as Community Services Officer with Upper Hunter Shire Council, Tash Taffe had recognised an increased interest from residents of the Cassilis and Merriwa areas in gardening and vegetable growing and contacted Upper Hunter Landcare Coordinator Paul Melehan to run a series of plant propagation workshops. An opportunity to overcome the plant availability issue was quickly recognised.

With the assistance of Local Land Services and Merriwa Landcare the "Greenthumbs" project had a series of 4 workshops to teach participants tricks and techniques of propagating native plants.

Participants took the plants home to look after over summer while Merriwa Landcare and Catherine Conroy of Hunter Local Land Services organised the planting and planters. With around 4500 plants to go in a big effort would be needed for the planting with Blazeaid coming to the rescue, many of whom had previously assisted in the area with the initial clean up and fencing.

## The impact

Around 4500 trees and shrubs were planted, with around a third being grown by volunteers from Merriwa and Muswellbrook (Muscle Creek Landcare Nursery). Interest has continued from the Merriwa volunteers and funding is currently being sought to establish a community nursery in Merriwa.



- The 2017 "Sir Ivan" bushfire burnt out over 55,000 Ha
- Regeneration was slow due to ongoing drought
- Increased enthusiasm due to Covid lockdowns for gardening led to reduced plant availability at nurseries
- Increased interest in growing plants was harnessed with around 1500 plants being propagated for revegetation
- Blazeaid volunteers camped nearby and undertook most of the planting work

## Project Partners



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