



Editor: Narelle Clarke
Armidale Tree Group
80 Mann St, Armidale, 2350
Phone 02 6771 1620
<http://armidaletreegroup.org.au/>

FOR THE LOVE OF TREES!



Chris Nadolny and Helen Webb

FROM THE EDITOR

That handsome man on the cover of this long-awaited edition of the ATG Newsletter, for those who don't know, is a foundational member and life member of Armidale Tree Group, Chris Nadolny. From when Chris and David Curtis took on the challenge of Dieback in the New England Region until the present, for more than 40 years, his strength, commitment and knowledge have been inspirational. Chris is retiring from the Committee but his legacy will continue in the work of those he mentored and the lives of millions of native plants and the vital habitat they provide. Thank You Chris!

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FROM THE COMMITTEE

Thank you to our members, who attended the AGM in December, and in particular to those who volunteered to serve on the committee. The year ahead will have challenges, which we will turn into opportunities for the ATG to adapt and grow.

The Office Bearers for 2026 are:

Garry Slocombe - President

Barton Wickstead Vice President

David Steller – Treasurer

Kerry Steller – Secretary

Ordinary members - continuing

Peter Metcalfe

Chris Nadolny

Narelle Clarke

Dave Carr

Lorna Dickson

New Committee members

Paul Eichorn

Penny Main

Rochelle England

Subsequent to the AGM two additional members have joined the Committee:

Sally Dixon

Pat Schultz

President's Report 2025 - Paul McFarland

Every year seems to be full of much activity and many memorable events. 2025 has been no different. ATG has hosted a number of workshops and an Open Day. All of which were well attended. The feedback indicates that more of these would be welcomed. The public really showed their awareness of and appreciation for the Tree Group during the New England Garden Festival and the Black Gully Festival. On both occasions visitations and sales exceeded expectations (Liz had to bring extra stock for the garden festival stall). Liz's initiative disorganizing a bush dance fundraiser was, to me, an exceptional highlight.

The staff and committee have continued to work tirelessly toward the achievement of the objectives of ATG. The motto 'Every Tree Counts' is certainly fostered through the work undertaken here. It is very noticeable when you spend time here that there is a passion for what we do. The stability of our staff this year has greatly contributed to this.

Teamwork is a notable feature of the interaction between staff and Committee. People have been very willing to work together to achieve desired outcomes. These include initiatives such as plant promotions, retail sales, ideas on improving plant propagation through to winning bids for large-scale work for the environmental services and festivals and the Open Day. In this regard I thank Richie, Kim, Jesse, Sam, Brad, Sabnam, Zac (and our newest addition Sonny) for their on-going efforts. Their knowledge, skills and enthusiasm keep the place operating at its best.

I have saved special thanks for two other staff – one leaving and one recently arrived. After many years as our bookkeeper, Carla Borin, has decided to retire. Her tireless attention and service to the ATG will be missed. All is not lost, however, as the ATG has been very fortunate to be able to welcome Galina Burgess as a more than capable replacement. Not only is Galina an excellent bookkeeper, she is also passionate about ATG. We wish Carla a long and happy retirement and formally issue a warm welcome to Galina.

A great deal of appreciation must also be shown for our volunteers. These are the quiet achievers that give of their time to help in many and varied ways; from plant propagation to weeding and general cleaning. The work is not always the most exciting, but they work away diligently and with as much enthusiasm and passion as anyone.

The members and general public also need a vote of thanks. People in the Armidale community only need to be asked if they will come and help be it a working bee or planting days. Thank You.

Of all the people I have worked with this year (and during my time on the Committee more broadly) a huge vote of thanks needs to be given to my fellow Committee members. Everyone on that Committee gives of their knowledge, skills and abilities with equal enthusiasm as and when needed. People who work with volunteer organizations understand how increasingly difficult it is to attract volunteers, especially younger ones. The ATG has been extremely fortunate to maintain a base that has been there from its inception while also attracting some new faces.

Paul McFarland
President - Armidale Tree Group

On behalf of the ATG members the committee thanks Paul for taking on this challenging role during 2025. Garry Slocombe will lead the organisation going forward with the full support of committee members old and new.



Carla Borin farewelled after eight years at the Tree Group as bookkeeper and supporter

NURSERY NEWS

Sonny Thompson's Success Story

As many in our community know, we work closely with the Department of Corrections delivering the Community Service Work Program. Tree Group stands firm that people can repay their debts through meaningful action. Working with plants toward a common goal as part of a team is a profound way for this reconnection to be fostered. In truth, this has mixed results; sometimes participants aren't ready for rehabilitation and are resistant to collaboration which results in poor attendance, but on occasions — such as in the case of Sonny Thompson — this kind of engagement blossoms.



Sonny Thompson in front of a flowering *Sannantha angusta*. Photo: Richie Bell

Sonny is to be commended for the exemplary manner in which he embraced his rehabilitation. Beginning with basic tasks such as weeding, it was clear that his attention to detail and meaningful engagement ignited purpose within him, so he quickly progressed to more complicated tasks and even concluded his work order by learning how to propagate native plants from cuttings! This is no mean feat. His work with plants is tidy and careful and the nursery staff have been pleased to upskill this young man. He happily attended a community planting with Armidale Urban Rivercare Group, Armidale Tree Group and Armidale Dumaresq Lions Club where Sonny made a point of introducing himself to all of the volunteers and worked hard to restore vegetation, rehabilitating a section of the creek. He was noticeably pleased with his achievement and was an integral member of the team. Indeed, his work ethic has led to both our Environmental Services department and the Nursery offering him casual work. In Sonny we have witnessed a profound flourishing which has been heartening and proves how mutually beneficial social programs such as CSW are to the community. As an environmental not-for-profit and charity, it is within our charter to embrace this kind of engagement and in Sonny's case, this has been a tremendous success.

Community Service Work adds value to the community, the benefits of which are far-reaching; we greatly appreciate the keen awareness with which the Department of

Corrections place their participants and the support provided to us in fostering teamwork and cultivating healthier attitudes. The life skills imparted as we support people repaying their debts to society are remarkably enriching for all concerned.

Changes in personnel: Farewell, Jesse Powell

Jesse Lachlan Powell, or JLP, began work at ATG as the Environmental Coordinator in late 2023. Since then, his meticulousness and remarkable work ethic ensured the organisation persevered through unpredictable seasons. Under his leadership, significant strides were made towards emerging markets, establishing relationships with carbon and energy projects, and around the compound. Jesse's intelligence and humour strengthened teamwork and his contribution to the Tree Group has been outstanding in every way.



Trustworthy with chainsaws, picks and axes. Photo: Richie Bell

We wish him success with a new business: **Yard and Tree by JLP**

If any of our community requires garden or lawn maintenance, green space planning, landscaping or tree and green waste management, we heartily recommend this reliable, hard-working, lovely human being. You can book his services at:

Website: yardandtree.com.au
Email: jlp@yardandtree.com.au
Phone: **0434 616 965**

We've been blessed to have him as a colleague and friend and wish him well in all his future endeavours. Godspeed, JLP!

Congratulations to Sam and Sabbu!

Replacing Jesse as ES Coordinator is Sam Arandale-Bioletti who steps away from his role as Wholesale Team Leader, one he held for three years, in which time he headed the propagation of around 300,000 endemic trees and shrubs! Many will have been dazzled by this botanical savant; few folks speak the language of local ecological communities as he can and his new responsibilities will complement his existing talents. He's handy, he loves to be outside and he knows how to plant a tree! Congratulations, Sam!



The ethereal glow of ATG staff. Photo: Richie Bell

There is no one better to fill Sam's shoes than Sabnam Tamang. She is our own multilingual cheeky genius. Contracted with us since early 2025, Sabu holds a Bachelor of Science (Forestry) and Masters of Science in Agriculture. Her work as a propagator is dazzling, her bravery as a non-native English speaker is humbling and her nous for business and work ethic is inspiring. It's also worth noting that Sabnam aims to become an Australian citizen this year—surely her knowledge of local plants can garner some extra points on the test? Well done, Sabbu!

Essential Energy Wetland Revegetation on the Creeklands Sunday, October 12

With several loads of fresh snow-damage woodchip mulch delivered to the site at the end of Kennedy Street, AURG hosted the second installment of the Essential Energy Wetland Revegetation. This planting was far easier than the first event as clearing the mulch was less labour intensive than the river rock session, yet still just as carefully managed by Bryan, Angus and Bruce. Plants included the following species:

<i>Lomandra longifolia</i>	160	<i>Callistemon pungens</i>	80
<i>Leptospermum polygalifolium</i>	200	<i>Casuarina cunninghamiana</i>	80
<i>Leptospermum novæ-angliæ</i>	80	<i>Callistemon sieberi</i>	200



Look at this achievement! A credit to AURG and its volunteers.

Photo: Richie Bell



A worthy, unstaged tableau.

Photo: Richie Bell



Narelle Clarke making the *Lomandra longifolia* border as stylish as possible. N.B. *Lomandra* borders are a regular feature of AURG plantings and help the Armidale Regional Council mowers delineate garden beds from lawn—pew! *Photo: Richie Bell*

Further along the creek AURG was able to stretch the Essential Energy budget to another site. A similar planting took place in November and with an experienced crew was achieved quickly and with little fuss.



The wonderful Bea Bleile (pink hat) ensures that Ken Barnett doesn't slack off!

Photo: Richie Bell

Biodiversity Offset and Screening Planting at the Armidale Waste Facility along Grafton Rd, November 2025

Our Environmental Services department in collaboration with Stringybark Ecological was hired by the Armidale Regional Council Waste Management Facility for four individual plantings. Three internal sites feature strategically-placed screening belts with a fourth site in the Travelling Stock Reserve adjacent to the property.

Sam's species list

<i>Acacia dawsonii</i>	90	<i>Eucalyptus blakelyi</i>	30
<i>Acacia filicifolia</i>	340	<i>Eucalyptus bridgesiana</i>	25
<i>Acacia rubida</i>	80	<i>Eucalyptus caliginosa</i>	100
<i>Acacia siculiformis</i>	50	<i>Eucalyptus dalrympleana</i>	20
<i>Allocasuarina littoralis</i>	35	<i>Eucalyptus melliodora</i>	100
<i>Bursaria spinosa</i>	30	<i>Eucalyptus nicholii</i>	15
<i>Callistemon sieberi</i>	40	<i>Indigofera australis</i>	25
<i>Daviesia latifolia</i>	140		



Southern screen. The view is rubbish. Photo: Brian Miller



The Eastern Screen L-to-R, the notorious ZPG, Tormagh Cafarella and Claudia Miller-Teece. Photo: Brian Miller

Dave Carr's involvement was imperative as the TSR features a Threatened Ecological Community (TEC) of remnant Box-Gum Grassy Woodland.

Photo: Brian Miller



Uptake Monitoring Miracles!

Environmental Services sent Brian Miller and Claudia Miller-Teece to complete uptake monitoring for twelve nestboxes in woodland on the roadside near Cathedral Rock National Park. Our team discovered signs that most had been inhabited and were thrilled to find the below:



Can you guess who this is? It's an Owlet-nightjar with fluffy nestlings!



Look! A Bunyip!

OPEN DAY - March 22, 2026 - Liz Anderson

Open day was a great success with lots of visitors and lots of customers.

The excellent speakers were a highlight of the day.

Andrew Thornhill explained the value of planting natives.

Rose Andrews spoke about hybridisation, occurring both naturally and with human intervention.

Guy Ballard spoke at length on the history, biology and ongoing management of dingoes.

Angus Adair spoke about nest boxes and their maintenance.

Thank you very much to the speakers. Your contribution to the day was invaluable, as was the music from Mark Cooper and the local Old Time Jammers.

We must also thank our wonderful staff and volunteers who worked together to make the whole day an interesting and successful occasion.

Photos below are courtesy of Kerry Steller

Suzy Grant's completed mandalas made from natural materials. This activity was a wonderful group craft experience.



Thank you to Rotary and the Ezidi community for their contribution to the success of the day

Margaret England's Leaf printing workshop produced some spectacular results.





Old Time Jamming

Sally Dixon's usefulness is truly omnidirectional.



Zach and Sabnam did an amazing job serving nursery customers.

Autumn Festival, 2026



ATG Truck on Parade!

Autumn Festival Stall on the Creeklands



Garden Festival, 2025



Dave Carr and Kerry Steller looking smart and all smiles in their Black Gully and ATG shirts.

Garry Slocombe and Sally Dixon enjoying the morning shift at a full and lush stall.



Adapting revegetation to a hotter and drier climate: Lessons from the drought.

Rachel Lawrence and David Carr

Armidale Tree Group.
6771 1620
80 Mann St, Armidale, NSW, 2350

The drought of 2018/2019 was considered the worst in recorded history for the New England Tablelands. At the time, it seemed many plantings, including long-established ones, had died. Fortunately, in-part due to the good rainfall that followed the drought, most revegetation sites recovered well. The region is expected to experience similar hot and dry conditions under predicted climate change scenarios. Armidale Tree Group interviewed 30 experienced revegetation experts in the region and captured their insights from the drought, regarding maximising revegetation success in future droughts. Presented here is a summary of outcomes from these interviews.

A clear message from this project is that **current recommendations for revegetation, when done well, lead to very successful revegetation**, even under predicted hotter and drier conditions. These are:

- Rip the soil to >450mm deep, at least 6 months before planting to build subsoil moisture.
- Keep weeds and competing grasses at least 50 cm away from planting lines and planted seedlings at least 6 months before and 12 months after planting.
- Ensure seedlings are planted with the rootball 25 mm below the surface and in firm contact with surrounding soil and water seedlings in well after planting.
- Use sufficiently wide spacings between rows and between plants.



- Aim to plant in autumn as this is now likely to be a more reliable time to plant than spring.

Most tree and shrub **species** that are currently used in plantings are surviving well, with the exception (in some situations) of Snow Gums (*Eucalyptus pauciflora*) and *Banksia integrifolia*. Species from higher rainfall areas have struggled in recent years and should be avoided. These species include Shining Gum (*Eucalyptus nitens*), Sydney Blue Gum (*E. saligna*) and Eurabbie (*E. bicostata*).

More species that are found in the western region of the Tablelands could be added to plantings to increase diversity and climate resilience. Obvious contenders include Kurrajongs, Cypress Pines and *E. bridgesiana*, *E. albens*, *E. moluccana* and *E. sideroxylon*. More Casuarinas in plantings would increase climate resilience with these trees also providing a range of biodiversity values.

While the **genetics** of species currently used in Tableland plantings are generally doing well, future seeds should be sourced from areas along a gradient from the current climate to areas likely to approximate future climate conditions. This 'climate-adjusted' seed sourcing strategy will improve the likelihood of including genetics in revegetation projects to better adapt to future challenging conditions. Increasing the number of plants (and locations) that seeds are collected from for each species will also increase genetic diversity.

Ensuring **fencing** is adequate to protect your investment in revegetation may become even more critical in dry and hot conditions as hungry native herbivores can place additional pressure on already stressed plants in revegetation areas.

Major **natural regeneration** events commonly follow drought, especially where good and prolonged rainfall occurs in following years. The abundant regeneration is due to ample bare ground providing good conditions for seedling germination and reduced stocking rates. Eucalypts are the most conspicuous element of this natural regeneration, but other species have also germinated. To facilitate diversity, it may be necessary to

exclude stock for long enough to allow a range of understorey species to grow to maturity, or to do in-fill plantings into these areas to encourage greater diversity.

Wildfires have not been a regular threat for the Tablelands previously. However, the Black Summer fires of 2019/20 highlighted that this could be an emerging threat and management strategies such as controlled burning, managing biomass with grazing and the use of less flammable species should be used in certain areas.

More detailed guidelines for revegetation that incorporate these lessons, and a podcast, can be found on the ATG website (www.armidaletreegroup.org.au).



This project was supported by the NSW Government's *Increasing Resilience to Climate Change Program*.

Call Out for Volunteers

ATG is a local, not-for-profit, environmental community organisation, with charity status and is also the only native plant nursery left in the region. Volunteers have been essential to so much of what the ATG has achieved and are always needed for a variety of important tasks such as:

- to assist our nursery in providing happy, healthy plants
- to help with planting projects
- to assist with our communications platforms
- to assist with marketing and fundraising
- to assist with accessing grants and other projects.

Urgent need: Our website is in urgent need of updating. If you or anyone you know has expertise and/or experience in building websites, we are in dire need of a volunteer to update our digital interface.



A mystery volunteer generously purchased new laserlite sheeting and donated his time to replace the roof of the entrance walkway at the Woodlands Centre.

Photo: Dave Steller

That Time Again - End of Financial Year (EOFY)!

It is that inescapable time of year again when good will is tested to the limit. As the End of Financial Year approaches (EOFY) some of our members are considering the benefits of making tax deductible donations to deserving not-for-profit enterprises of which we are one.

Make a tax deductible Donation via the ATG website at [Donate | Armidale Tree Group](#) or you can direct debit to our Armidale Tree Group Fund Account. Please remit payment to **Armidale Tree Group**
BSB: **932000** Account No: **100431904**
Detail: “**Donation: <Name>**”
Receipts will be issued on request.

Membership Renewal is now due June 30th, 2026

The true strength of the Armidale Tree Group is our members. You turn up, you plant trees, volunteer your time, donate funds and you support us in so many ways. Thank you. The fact that we have a strong membership base locally and beyond is essential when applying for grants. Now is the time to renew your membership.

For **\$10 per year** we provide updates of what events are on, any nursery bargains and a newsletter of what we've been doing, educational advice and how we contribute to a better environment. We welcome input and feedback on how we can do this better.

Renew your membership and or gift ATG membership to a friend and/or family. Just go to the ATG website select the **Get Involved** Option and follow the links to the updated **Membership/Renewal Form. Members who renew by 30th June 2026 will receive a free tree from the ATG nursery.** Membership is NOT tax deductible as you receive the benefit of membership,

If you are a **new member**, having joined since January 2026 you do not have to renew until June 2027! **Life members** also are not required to renew.

There is also an **easy no cost** way to contribute financially to ATG. If you bank with the Regional Australia Bank please consider participating in the **Regional Australia Bank Community Partnership Program.**

This Program is an option on the everyday banking account – Community Partnership Account. It is as simple as visiting the branch and changing the name of your everyday account to a Community Partnership Account (from S1 to S3). Alternately you can visit <https://www.regionalaustaliabank.com.au/everyday-banking/everyday-accounts/community-partnership-account>

When you nominate ATG the bank will calculate your average balance and donate 1.00% p.a. for the period from 1 July 2025 at no cost to you. In the previous financial year ATG was well supported by this program receiving over \$6,000. Thank you to all of our members who are currently participating. This is an excellent program that supports so many local not-for-profit organisations. Please consider it!





Armidale Tree Group Inc. is a registered charity under the Australian Charities and Not-For-Profit Commission.

ATG's objectives are:

- (a) To protect and conserve the New England environment by: the raising and planting of native plants; managing threats to natural ecosystems; and managing habitats for wildlife in the region.
- (b) To promote public awareness of the role played by trees and other native plants and the value ecosystems have in improving the ecological balance of the New England Landscape and sustaining biodiversity.

Fundraising requests 2026:

Major infrastructure upgrading to the Matrix (hardening off area for wholesale trees).

Item	Quote
New skillion extension on large hoophouse for hardening off + construction	\$29,165 \$22,000 TOTAL: \$51,165
Hail netting for the Matrix	\$600
Aggregate for Matrix floor	\$5,000



Membership Application/Renewal

Period: 01/07/2026 - 30/06/2027
Name: _____
Telephone: _____
*Email (Required): _____

The annual Membership fee is \$10.

Membership \$ ___10_____
Donation \$ _____ (donations over \$2 are tax deductible, a receipt will be emailed)
Total Payment \$ _____

Payment methods

In store: EFTPOS / Cash
Mail/email: Credit Card (below) / Direct Credit
(Send a copy of this form: Email to office@[armidaletreegroup.org.au](mailto:office@armidaletreegroup.org.au); Mail to Armidale Tree Group, 80 Mann Street, Armidale NSW 2350)

Credit Card –	Card type:	Visa / Mastercard only
	Card number:	
	Expiry date:	
	CCV number:	
	Name on card	
	Signature	
Direct Credit -	Please remit payment to BSB: 932000 Account No: 100016306 Detail: “Subs <Name>”	

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!