



Landcare Groups 25 August 1998

Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders): In the electorate of Flinders there are many ongoing Landcare projects actively and ably supported by the sterling efforts of volunteers from rural communities across the Eyre Peninsula. Landcare groups are involved in an extensive range of activities such as catchment management, improvement of water salinity and drainage. They also promote land management planning, revegetation, weed control, propagation of seedlings by school students, wetland rehabilitation, mapping of pest infestation and, in addition, they conduct field days and public education programs.

To illustrate the excellent work that is being done, I will briefly outline some of the projects currently being undertaken by local Landcare groups. The Cockaleeche and Coultla Landcare Groups are investigating salinity levels in their catchment areas and using revegetation as a means of control. Seedlings for the Cockaleeche project have been grown in conjunction with the local Cummins Area School. The involvement of school children in projects in this way ensures that the next generation has an awareness of the need to conserve and nurture our natural resources.

The Big Swamp Landcare Group is looking at the longterm health of its wetland and catchment areas. This involves gaining information on the original state of the wetland, and attempting to restore the wetland using ecological and hydrogeologist advice. The Southern Eyre Aleppo Pine Management Group is involved in the revegetation of roadside weed control and the removal of aleppo pines and mapping of aleppo infestations. This project is being run in conjunction with the community, Transport SA, local councils, SA Water, the Animal and Plant Control Board, PIRSA and DEHAA, and the Port Lincoln prison recently has become involved in aleppo pine removal, with the possibility of chipping the trees for sale as ground cover. The project provides an excellent illustration of how the cooperation of the broader community is vital to the success of such a project.

The Edillilie, Wanilla and Karkoo Landcare Groups are working on improving salinity and drainage in their areas. This requires salinity investigations and monitoring and revegetation programs. Once again, the cooperative nature of such programs is demonstrated by these groups, which on occasion work together and share their knowledge and resources.

The Yeelanna Landcare Group is investigating and promoting sustainable cropping

practices and indicators. The group conducts an annual focus field day and seminar, which attracts more than 180 people. The group also promotes property management planning, among a range of other activities. The Marble Range Soil Conservation Group is working on protecting remnant vegetation and a river red gum regeneration and preservation project. The group works with the Lake Wangary School to grow seedlings for catchment areas. Once again, this provides the Landcare group with an opportunity to educate our youth on the essential nature of revegetating, preserving and conserving our natural resources.

In the past, ignorance has in part been responsible for the degradation of our soil, water and other resources. The formation of Landcare groups provides a focus for communities to become educated and actively involved in restoring to balance those resources that the human race has taken for granted and degraded over many generations—degradation helped by rabbits and cloven-hoofed animals and, to some extent, native animals such as kangaroos that have thrived on the plentiful water and crops provided by farming activity.

We have come to realise that, unless we take care of our air, water and soil, it is not possible for the earth to sustain humanity indefinitely. We cannot drink salty water, we cannot grow crops where soil erosion has taken away our top soil and we cannot breathe if there are no trees. If trees are the lungs of the world, we would be prudent to ensure that we continue to plant them. We are fortunate that Landcare organisations are proactive by nature, and their activities have captured the imagination and service of many people in our communities. I commend all those volunteers and professionals who are actively involved in the many and varied projects which have been undertaken, and I would particularly like to thank the many people actively involved in Landcare projects on the Eyre Peninsula.