

RESEARCH

Oh Poor Land. Can We 'Turn The Tide' Of Land Degradation Associated With Our Agricultural Industry? Come Join The Regenerative Farmers Movement.

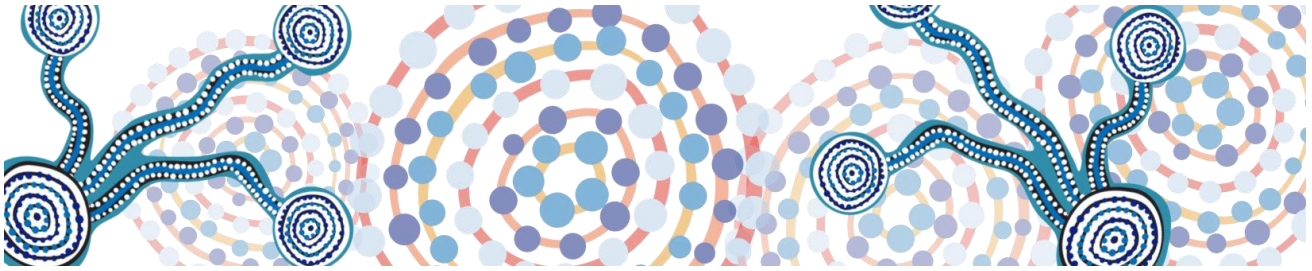
Sylvia Leighton

Abstract

In Australia, over 66% of the landscape is managed by farmers or agricultural practitioners. Agriculture has been responsible for massive land clearing and the consequential decline of our nation's landscape health. In the State of WA another major challenge is the highly urbanised population (approx. 92%) with very little connection and knowledge of the agricultural industry. This divide of separation has increased dramatically over the last two to three decades.

This presentation will provide an outline of the history of agricultural practises in WA and the pressure for increased production. Our broadacre agricultural regions have shifted from a culture of family-owned businesses to large scale corporate style exploitative maximum profit operations. Loss of lifestyle, poor health and minimal interest from the younger generation to engage in this high stress industry sees continual decline in functional rural communities and is tragically decimating the natural ecological systems of our landscapes.

A small but ever-expanding network of farmers is trying to counteract this loss of our landscape health and reinvest in the components of agriculture that make up healthy rural communities and healthy land. Using Wilyun Pools Farm on the southcoast of WA and other farming operations around the state we will provide examples of an ever-increasing network of landholders trying to provide models demonstrating how to do things differently. It is time to challenge the agricultural industry to make effective and genuine changes and demonstrate their contribution to turning around the rapid decline of our landscape health.



Speaker Profile

Sylvia Leighton: MSc. (NRM – soil health), BSc. (Botany), Grad. Dip. Ed., Grad. Dip. (Outdoor Education)

I grew up on a farm in rural WA. I worked in Landcare and Conservation in many different roles; Ranger (Kakadu National Park), Project Officer (Green Skills, NFP), Consultant Flora & Fauna Researcher, *Land for Wildlife* Officer (DBCA), Conservation Lecturer (TAFE). I have always relished sharing learnings and engaging with members of the community to experience the ‘wonder of nature’. Presently my partner and I are rehabilitating an ex-bluegum plantation property to model a ‘farm for the future’. We focus on; revegetating wildlife corridors, alive-soils, regenerative agriculture, healthy community, being adaptive, embracing change, listening, learning, laughing and networking.

Website Links

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