

Bondar Wines, Rayner Vineyard, McLaren Vale, SA

EcoGrowers: Andre Bondar and Ben Lacey (from Lacey Viticulture)

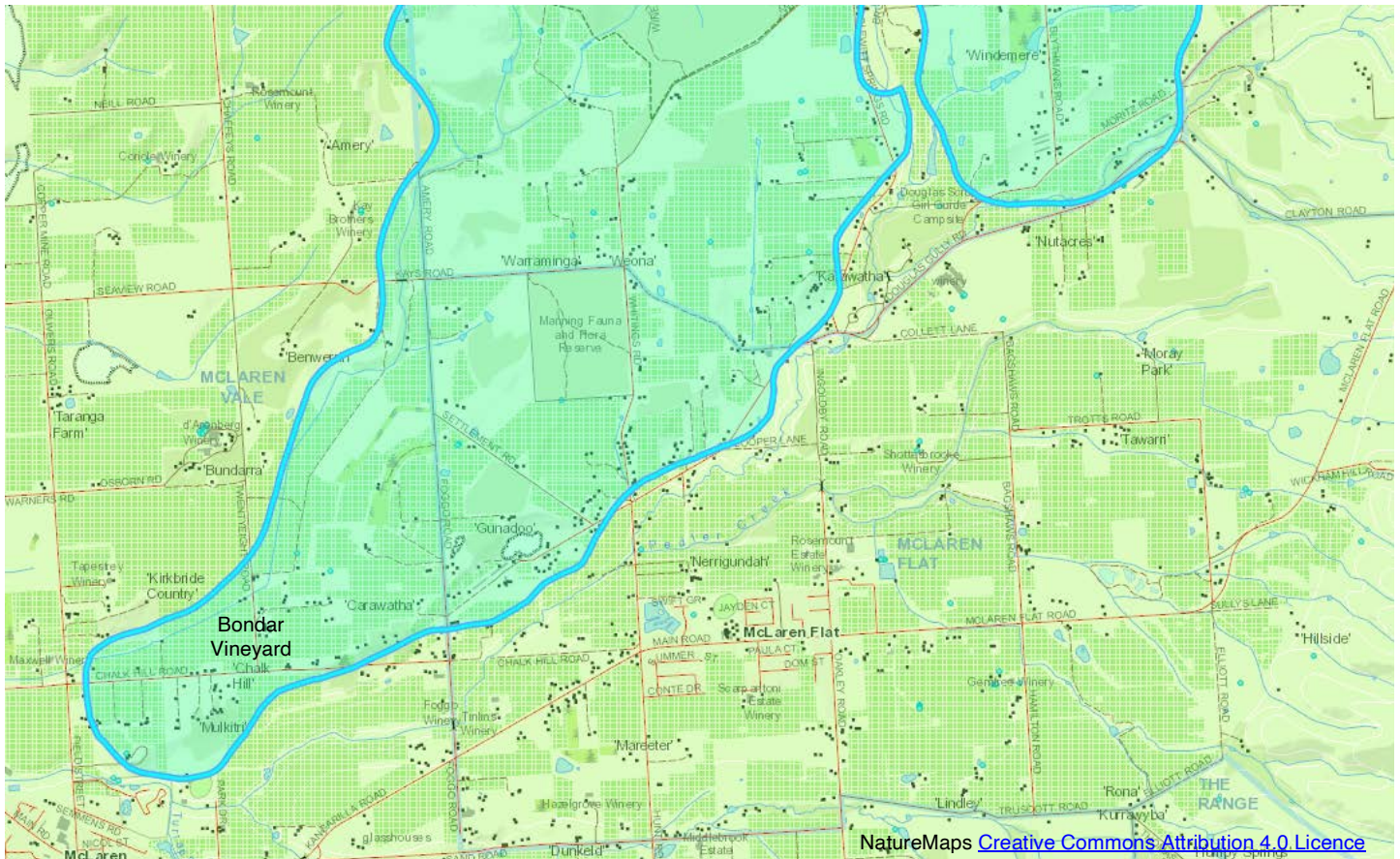
“Our EcoVineyards experience has been a thoroughly satisfying one, with our thriving planted area sitting proud, right in the midst of our vineyard.

We are excited to watch the new plants grow, increasing the biodiversity of our site, and to watch new the birds and insects that will be attracted to the area go to work.”



McLaren Vale Wine Region

Plant community (marked in blue): Pink gum, *Eucalyptus fasciculosa* woodland over grassy and herbaceous understorey



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Case study

What worked well?

- Most of the plants took (~80 - 90%) and are thriving. We were lucky with a cooler summer and some timely rainfall in January 2021.
- I think that getting the plants in after a good rain was beneficial in this success.
- We have controlled weeds well with well-timed sprays and the application of straw mulch.
- We had a very good success rate on all the planted species. We have some *Bursaria spinosa*, Christmas bush already growing and thriving planted 5-6 years ago so we know that does very well on our site.

“A big thanks to Dr Mary Retallack for being so passionate about these topics.

Matters such as biodiversity are/will be very important initiatives for grape growing in Australia as we find local and international consumers prefer/demand an environmental conscience when they purchase wine.”



Progress (June 2019 to 2021):

We were due to replant a large area of our vineyard. We identified a small section (0.1ha) of this area that wasn't going to work for the quality outcomes we wanted. Our EcoVineyards project was ideal for this area. We planted over 500 plants of ~30 different species native to our area, adding immensely to the biodiversity of our site. The plants selected are known to harbour insects that are predatory to pests of the (very) nearby grapevines.

What did you do and when?

We prepared the planting area by spraying out the weeds a couple of times prior to planting. We planted the 500 plants at the end of June 2020, right after some decent rain. There were around 5 of us planting, then putting a guard and stake over each plant. It took us around 6 hours all up. In spring we had to spray out weeds again around the guards. Then in summer we lay a thick layer of straw mulch around the entire area to prevent weed growth. We now need to hand weed intermittently but the straw seems to do a very good job generally.

What are you more aware of now?

We are on the lookout for different birds, insects and other wildlife as our EcoVineyards area matures. We are definitely aware of other areas in on our property that won't ever be planted to vines, that we could plant native plants in.

Where to from here (future plans)?

I have already identified a potential area for planting more native insectary plants, close to the winery shed. Again, an area that won't fit into future vineyard replanting plans. We also have a creek line that in time I would like to clean up to remove pest plants such as olive and plant some native/insectary plants.

What has been the most valuable aspect of the program?

Making use of the land that is not able to produce grapes of sufficient quality to instead be home to a diverse range of native plants that not only increase the biodiversity of our land, but also harbour predatory insects that will benefit our grape growing.

Has your level of knowledge increased significantly?

Yes, it has taught us many things about plants native to our area, and how increasing biodiversity can be beneficial to our land, grapes and wine company in many ways.

Photo above: Andre Bondar and Ben Lacey installing an Ocloc photo-point (Photo: Mary Retallack).

Photo left: Ben Lacey preparing corflute tree guards and stakes (Photo: Andre Bondar).



Before: 24 June 2020 (Photo: Mary Retallack)



After: 10 May 2021 (Photo: Mary Retallack)

This project is supported by the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment through funding from Australian Government's National Landcare Program





Insights

Pitfalls to avoid

- We were lucky with the season being kind with rain and the plants flourishing as a result.
- The weeds have threatened at times, but we have managed to control them even by hand at times. Straw mulch has been our best ally in this, so I'd highly recommend its use from the beginning.

Expenses (cash and in-kind):

Cash

We spent our EcoVineyards budget on plants, guards and stakes.

In Kind

- Site preparation:
2 x sprays = 4 hours
- Planting/guards:
5 people for 6 hours = 30 hours
- Spraying weeds after planting:
2 x sprays = 4 hours
- Hand weeding:
4 hours
- Spreading mulch:
4 people for 2 hours: 8 hours

Total = 50 hours

The EcoVineyards interpretive sign was installed via funding from Wine Australia's Regional Program.

Native plant list:

- *Acacia acinacea*, gold dust wattle
- *Acacia verticillata*, prickly Moses
- *Acacia myrtifolia*, myrtle wattle
- *Acacia paradoxa*, kangaroo thorn
- *Acacia pycnantha*, golden wattle
- *Allocasuarina verticillata*, drooping sheoak
- *Atriplex semibaccata*, creeping saltbush
- *Austrostipa nodosa*, tall spear grass
- *Bursaria spinosa*, Christmas Bush or sweet bursaria
- *Calocephalus citreus*, lemon beauty heads
- *Chrysocephalum apiculatum*, common everlasting
- *Clematis microphylla*, old man's beard
- *Dianella revoluta*, black anther flax lily
- *Dodonea viscosa*, sticky hop bush
- *Einadia nutans*, climbing saltbush
- *Enchyleana tomentosa*, ruby saltbush
- *Eutaxia microphylla*, mallee bush pea
- *Grevillea lavandulacea*, lavender grevillea
- *Hardenbergia violacea*, native lilac
- *Kennedia prostrata*, running postman
- *Juncus subsecundus*, common rush
- *Leptospermum myrsinoides*, heath tea tree
- *Lomandra multiflora* ssp. *dura*, hard mat rush
- *Melaleuca lanceolata*, dryland tea tree
- *Pomaderris panniculosa*, coast pomaderris
- *Olearia ramulosa*, twiggy daisy bush
- *Rytidosperma caespitosa*, common wallaby grass
- *Poa labillardieri*, common tussock grass
- *Scaevola albida*, pale fan flower
- *Themeda triandra*, kangaroo grass
- *Vittadinia blackii*, New Holland daisy
- *Xanthorrhoea semiplana*, yacca



Photo above: *Chrysocephalum apiculatum*, common everlasting (Photo: Mary Retallack).

Photo left: One year old native insectary plants (Photo: Mary Retallack).

Expenses (cash and in-kind)

Name: Bondar Wines		Region: McLaren Vale			
Date	Activity	Number of plants	Grant cash expenses	Additional cash co-contribution	In-kind time captured
29/04/2020	Goolwa to Wellington LAP (nursery)	400	\$1,003.20		
	Site preparation: 2 x sprays				4 hrs
	Planting/guards: 5 people for 6 hours				30 hrs
	Spraying weeds after planting: 2 x sprays				4 hrs
	Hand weeding				4 hrs
	Spreading mulch: 4 people for 2 hours				8 hrs
12/06/2020	Arboregreen (500 Corflute guards)		\$ 819.50		
	Arboregreen (500 hardwood stakes)		\$ 390.50		
	Straw mulch 5 x round bales (\$30 ea) donated			\$ 150.00	8 hrs
TOTAL		400	\$2,213.20	\$ 150.00	58 hrs

Thank you to our project partners!



This project is supported by the Hills and Fleurieu Landscape Board's Grassroots Grants Program and is funded by the landscape levy.

Acknowledgement of country

The EcoVineyards project acknowledges Aboriginal people as the First Peoples and Nations of the lands and waters we live and work upon and we pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. We acknowledge and respect the deep spiritual connection and the relationship that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have to Country.

The Kurna people are the traditional custodians of the McLaren vale region and have an ongoing connection to the land.

Disclaimer

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For more info about the National EcoVineyards Program see www.ecovineyards.com.au

This case study was collated by Dr Mary Retallack, Retallack Viticulture Pty Ltd