



***“My bit is giving the flora and fauna a helping hand”***

### **Carmel from Catherine Hill Bay Landcare and LMLN Chair**

I grew up in country NSW, helping my parents create gardens in our schoolyards and principal's residences. At Stanbridge, we'd open a canal plate and flood the garden! At Tingha my father jackhammered out rocks himself to make a playground, and about a hundred gum trees were planted. We had family picnics on bush creeks most weekends, and camped on the coast most holidays. I guess that's why I chose to live at Catherine Hill Bay 20 years ago, despite the cottage having boards hanging off – the village, bush and beach were like home. Our garden here is full of lilly pillies, callistemons, grevilleas, frogs, lizards and birds.

When my son became a Cub Scout, I soon took over from Alyson Gearing coordinating 1st Swansea Scouts Landcare. We saw the hall become surrounded with bushes, the lake edge change from kikuyu to native plants, and best of all, local Indigenous elders joined us in planting a bush tucker garden. We changed to a scout group near my son's high school, and I handed over to Karen Fuller. Great to see how well the plants have grown.

Catherine Hill Bay Dunecare/Landcare then restarted and we joined them regenerating the dunes on Graveyard Beach and the banks of Catherine Hill Bay Creek, at the south end. The enthusiastic residents dwindled to just a couple of us, and for a few years we just kept all the walkways to the beach clear, replanting the pigface in bare areas. Last year brought some welcome interest: Damien Hawcroft and other locals took on regenerating the slopes and dunes in front of the Surf Club and BBQ area, and I took over coordinating. These public areas look vegetated and cared for now.

Other areas are still black, burnt last October, but we've gratefully received a load of Landcare plants and are taking this opportunity from nature to get these into the formerly bitou areas.

Why am I still in Landcare? I'm continually inspired by the people in Catho still fighting to protect history and community; my bit is giving the flora and fauna a helping hand.