



Sustaining Landcare

Discussion Guide

Many Hands, One Voice
Wanda Wanda One Voice

Calling all Landcarers. We want your thoughts!

Our strength lies in the fact that we're a grassroots, community movement – we're about local people doing work on the ground on local problems and we're about changing hearts and minds.

Rob Dulhunty, Chair, Landcare NSW
*Speech to the inaugural meeting of Local Landcare Coordinators,
Stockton Beach, 21 March 2016*

Introduction

Landcare is entering a new era in NSW. With the Local Landcare Coordinator Initiative (LLCI) and a strengthened partnership between Landcare NSW and Local Land Services, Landcare's reach is expanding to deliver even more results for the environment, sustainable agriculture and local communities.

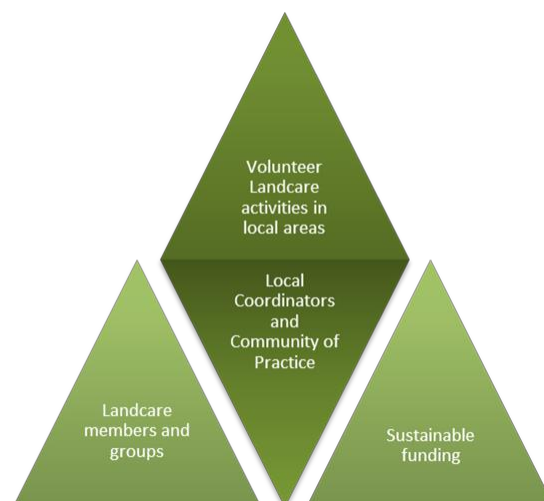
The NSW Government's Landcare Policy 2015-2019 provided \$15m to employ 66 Local Coordinators backed by a small central team and community of practice. This program provided a major boost to existing arrangements that have grown over 27 years of Landcare.

Part of the Government's policy is to design a funding model that enables the future of these Local Coordinators to be secured long term. This has become known as the *Sustaining Landcare* Project.

The goal is to create a model that will see Landcare in NSW grow in independence and maturity. Landcare will continue to work with State and Federal Government partners and explore avenues to generate additional funding sources. These might include industry and corporate partnerships, philanthropy, donations, local and statewide fundraising, fees for services, bequests and membership or affiliation fees, and closer partnerships with Bushcare which is currently well-supported by Local Councils.

This approach recognises that while governments will continue to play an important role in funding Landcare, there are other willing investors and supporters in the community. Landcare NSW is working with grassroots Landcare to design and implement a new funding model.

The diagram below shows what people see on the surface: landholders and volunteers doing valuable work in the community. Supporting this effort is a network of Local Landcare Coordinators bolstered by a small central team and community of practice. Buttressing the Local Coordinators is the infrastructure provided by the Landcare community – local groups, district associations, regional networks and Landcare NSW, complemented by sustainable funding.



Principles of Sustaining Landcare

- Generate a minimum of \$3.5m a year to fund Local Coordinators, the small central support team and community of practice, ie the infrastructure that Landcare needs to operate
- Sustaining Landcare's focus is operational support, not project funding
- Start with \$3.5m pa baseline but aim to increase this amount over time
- Landcare community is central to the *Sustaining Landcare* initiative
- Design a model that also incorporates continued government investment, commercial opportunities, corporate partnerships and donations from various sources
- Strengthen the ability of Landcare NSW to enhance its services to regions and groups
- New funding arrangements must be in place by 2018 allowing for seamless transition when current program ends in June 2019.

What we need to make it happen

If Landcare is to grow in independence and maturity we need to:

- build the capacity and strength of our organisations, including regional Landcare organisations and Landcare NSW: these are fundamental to Landcare's ability to operate
- create structures to receive and hold significant funds in trust
- take into account national developments in community Landcare policy and institutional arrangements as this new approach is developed
- look for opportunities to partner with Federal, State and Local Government.

Who is Landcare NSW?

Since 2007 Landcare NSW has provided support and information to community Landcare and provided a voice for grassroots views to be conveyed to decision makers. A representative body governed by and for its members, Landcare NSW is chaired by Rob Dulhunty, a grazier from Glen Innes and long term Landcarer, and governed by a 23-member voluntary Council representing all regions of the State.

In 2015 Landcare NSW led the campaign to secure a new State Government Landcare policy. The result was the NSW Government's decision to provide \$15m in new funding, resulting in the employment of 66 part time Local Landcare Coordinators.

Landcare NSW is leading the *Sustaining Landcare* initiative in line with the NSW Government's policy to design a model to secure a reliable ongoing funding source for the infrastructural support the volunteer movement needs.

How is Landcare NSW approaching the *Sustaining Landcare* challenge?

We are confident in the value of what we do and we are collating the evidence base. Our approach in the *Sustaining Landcare* initiative is not to *ask* for funding, but to educate governments and the broader community about what we do, why it is of value and how they can get involved.

Our message to governments is that Landcare can assist their goal of communities being skilled, equipped and motivated to participate in natural resource management so that biodiversity is conserved, agriculture is productive, and the social and economic health of our communities is strengthened.

Our message to the broader community is that everyone is welcome to join Landcare. Some people may donate time while others may donate money. Many will volunteer time *and* donate money. By introducing a mechanism to enable regular financial contributions from Landcare volunteers and supporters, we will generate funds to support our operation *and* send a critical message about Landcare's self-reliance to other investors and donors, including governments.

What is the key to building a sustainable funding model for Landcare?

The Landcare community! Landcare NSW has a very small 'secretariat' consisting of a handful of regionally based part-time staff. The strength of the organisation is in the large statewide network of grassroots Landcarers who are supported by their Landcare local, district and regional organisations and Local Landcare Coordinators. It is the members of the grassroots Landcare network who are in the best position to help source the funds we need to support our operations.

Landcare NSW will develop the framework and tools to enable grassroots Landcarers to pitch our message to potential partners, investors, members and supporters in local communities around NSW. By succeeding in this mission, the Landcare community will secure the support needed to enable it to carry out its valuable work for years to come.

Questions

1. By telling us what motivated you to get involved in Landcare, you will help us pitch our messages to a broader audience:
 - Why did you get involved in Landcare in the first place?
 - What drew you to Landcare?
 - What does your group look for in partners and supporters?
2. A minimum of \$3.5m a year is needed to fund the Local Landcare Coordinators, central support team and community of practice. Over time this amount will need to increase.
 - What sources do you think might contribute to a statewide fund?
 - What proportion should be contributed by Federal/State/Local Government vs other sources?
 - How might Landcare support the NSW Government's policy goals in the Biodiversity Reforms?
 - Is there a role for the Federal Government's National Landcare Program in funding Landcare support in NSW? If so, what role?
 - What opportunities might exist to introduce membership or affiliation fees for Landcare individuals or organisations to demonstrate our size, legitimacy and commitment of our members **and** help generate a regular, small but significant funding stream?
 - What is the role for fee for service/ 'commercial' activities provided by Landcarers?
 - What other organisations do you belong to, or financially support, that might offer a potential model.
3. Some Landcarers feel their contribution is their volunteer time and/or the fee they pay to their local group. Other Landcare individuals and groups say they would be happy to contribute financially to help pay for the structures Landcare needs, or to find others in their local communities who might contribute...ranging from \$10 a month to \$1000 annually.
 - In the future, are there individuals, local businesses or community leaders you might consider approaching to join Landcare and pay a regular contribution?
 - Are there larger scale donors or investors in your community who you could identify for Landcare NSW to approach to provide a more substantial contribution on a broader regional or statewide basis?
 - How would you envisage Landcare NSW, your regional Landcare network, and your group might work together to identify and/or approach local individuals and organisations/companies to invest in the fund?

Timeframe for input

There will be many opportunities for input over the next couple of years but in this initial stage we are asking for your feedback by **4 May 2016**. By July this year we aim to have a model for sustainable funding so the focus can move to implementation.

How to have your say

Ideas, suggestions, comments and feedback from the Landcare community are welcome. Please talk about the issues raised in this paper at your meetings, in your groups, amongst your friends and colleagues, and in your communities.

You can convey your input via a number of means:

- Talk to your local Landcare NSW councillor. You can find who represents your area by visiting the Landcare NSW website <http://landcarensw.org.au/about-us/council-members-2/>
- Send an email with your responses and ideas to sustaininglandcare@landcarensw.org.au

Keeping you informed

- We will continue to provide updates via the Landcare NSW website and your regional Landcare network, and welcome your contribution at any time.

Chairman's Message to the Landcare Community

Landcare started as a grassroots movement and that's what we want to build on. We're not a government program. We're a diverse community movement so our financial support needs to come from a broad range of sources.

Our core strength comes from being a huge network involving thousands of volunteers.

I'm confident people will donate to and invest in Landcare in NSW because they support the work we do.

This is an exciting era for Landcare – I'm looking forward to us working together to secure our financial future so the Local Coordinators, central support team and community of practice are funded into the future.

Please take time to talk about the Sustaining Landcare Project in your community, and help us develop the model that will secure the future of Landcare in NSW.

Rob Dulhunty, 13 April 2016

Landcare NSW Incorporated

ABN 24 958 819 359

PO Box 2069 | Armidale NSW 2350

www.landcarensw.org.au

sustaininglandcare@landcarensw.org.au