



Sustaining Landcare

FAQ

1. Why is Sustaining Landcare focused on funding support structures like Local Coordinators? Why can't we just raise money to do on ground works?

Landcare groups *do* need access to project funding but the focus of *Sustaining Landcare* is how to fund the support structures.

Funding for Local Landcare Coordinators has been the number one issue raised by grassroots Landcarers at successive NSW Landcare Musters in recent years. Some Local Land Services regions have provided support to engage Local Landcare Coordinators but this has been limited, with most LLS support from National Landcare Program and State Catchment Action funding, being directed to on-ground operations.

The NSW Government's Landcare Policy has provided \$15m to employ 66 part time Local Coordinators backed by a small central team and community of practice. This funding program ends in 2019. The Government's policy is to develop a new funding model to sustain Landcare support into the future.

While it might seem many Landcare activities just 'happen', there is a lot of behind-the-scenes work in applying for and reporting on grant funding for on-ground works. Just as Surf Life Saving, the Rural Fire Service or State Emergency Service need professional support to allow them to focus on the important work they do as volunteers, so does Landcare.

2. Shouldn't governments fund the support structures Landcare needs?

Landcare started as a grassroots movement, initiated and supported by the National Farmers Federation and the Australian Conservation Foundation, and that's what we want to build on. Governments, including local government, are a key supporter, funder and partner, but 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.

3. Isn't Landcare Australia Limited already raising funds for Landcare?

Landcare NSW is not aware of funding provided by Landcare Australia Limited to support the structures needed by the volunteer Landcare movement, ie Local Landcare Coordinators and the organisational infrastructure needed by the volunteer movement. Landcare Australia Limited is a possible source of funds for Landcare support structures in NSW in the future.

4. Why should Landcarers spend time generating funds when we already donate our time?

All volunteer movements rely on volunteers to do the work and to ensure the organisations that make the work possible are supported. Most community organisations need some paid support staff and to meet the out-of-pocket expenses of their volunteers.

The reality is there is increasing pressure on government budgets and community organisations need to demonstrate some independent funding to get continued support. While we recognise competition for donations and investment is intense, there are individuals and organisations who are willing to provide financial support to activities such as Landcare and we need to ensure we have a mechanism for them to contribute.

There are also Landcarers – or beneficiaries of Landcare – who may be in a financial position to provide support themselves or advise Landcare NSW how support might be accessed.

We are also looking at what role membership/affiliation fees might have, and what Landcare groups may be able to expect in return, for example a streamlined insurance scheme.

5. What role might Landcare volunteers, committee members and Local Landcare Coordinators have in the future?

That's what we're working out through this process. What we do know is that Landcare's greatest strength is the network of individuals, local groups, district associations and regional organisations. It's through the Landcare community that we will work out how we can grow in financial independence. Landcarers know their local community and may know where the opportunities lie to identify possible funding sources.

6. We already raise money but it's for our activities at the local level. Why do we need to raise money at the state level?

We recognise that in many areas Landcare has been very effective at raising funds and Landcare NSW strongly supports local and regional fundraising. The question is the Sustaining Landcare initiative is trying to answer is: how do we continue the funding for the 66 Local Landcare Coordinators, central team and community of practice once the current program finishes in 2019? We need to ensure our organisations are strong and viable to support and grow volunteer activity into the future.

7. Who is Landcare NSW? What is their role in Sustaining Landcare?

Since 2007 Landcare NSW has provided support and information to the Landcare community, and provided a voice for grassroots Landcarers so their views are heard by decision makers in NSW. Landcare NSW also represents state issues nationally, to the Federal Government, through the National Landcare Network.

We are a representative body governed by and for our members through a 23-member voluntary Council representing all regions of the State.

Landcare community members have told us the fact sheets, templates, training and 'Landcare in a Box' provided by Landcare NSW over the past few years have been tremendously valuable resources that have lifted the skills and knowledge of groups and individuals.

In 2015 – with the support of everyone in the Landcare community – Landcare NSW led the campaign to secure a new State Government Landcare policy. Landcare NSW is now delivering the new Landcare program in partnership with Local Land Services.

Landcare NSW is managing the Sustaining Landcare initiative, in collaboration with Local Land Services, 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. The Government has provided funding to support Landcare NSW to undertake this work which is being guided by a small Steering Committee with representatives from Landcare, government, corporate and philanthropic expertise.

Landcare NSW's vision is:

To create a viable and resilient Landcare community contributing as a valued partner to a range of community, natural resource management and agricultural outcomes.

8. What's the timeframe for the Sustaining Landcare initiative?

Research and consultation will occur from April to May and a model will be developed by June 2016 so that the focus can turn to implementation.