

Stephanie Cameron – Trees in the House – 13 November 2018

Thank you Adrian.

I'd like to start tonight by thanking and acknowledging the work that Rob has done for over thirty years for Landcare in this state.

Rob has been a passionate and motivated leader, who has made an incalculable contribution to more than 60,000 people and their communities involved in Landcare groups throughout NSW.

Working at a local, state and national level, Rob's contribution has allowed communities to keep doing their vital work in environmental education, better farming practices, protection of native plants and animals and providing vital support for Australians located in isolated communities.

His efforts have resulted in a strong and sustainable Landcare in NSW, and I'd like to thank him for everything he has contributed to the movement over so many years.

Before I turn to what's next for Landcare, I'd like to thank the Landcare NSW Council for supporting me as incoming Chair.

I have big shoes to fill, but I feel energised and excited about working with all of you as the Landcare movement enters a new phase of growth, recognition and importance.

In reflecting on what I would speak about tonight, I thought it a good opportunity to outline what I see as key focus areas for Landcare, and I'll briefly speak to four of these now.

Firstly, it is critical that we provide valuable services to our members.

I've seen directly in my local Tamworth region, that the ability of a Landcare group to get work done on their local patch comes down to support.

This support might be administrative, through help with grant applications or insurance paperwork, or it might be through the provision of people and informational resources to empower local groups.

Landcare works best when the volunteers involved can focus on caring for the land.

Secondly, it is vital that we replicate the successful co-governance arrangements we have in place with agencies such as the Department of Primary Industries and the Local Land Services.

Alliances and partnerships such as these strengthen the work of Landcare, and the model of co-governance, co-management and co-delivery amplifies and spreads the benefits of Landcare across government, agencies, partners and the broader community.

Thirdly, Landcare must secure consistent and stable funding streams, from federal and state governments and from the private sector.

Landcare is a volunteer movement, and without paid services and resources in place to support local groups, volunteer burnout will continue to be a major risk.

We need a refreshed policy and funding initiative to ensure the outstanding work contributed by NSW's 60,000 strong volunteer Landcare community continues, and I'm committed to working with all of you to achieve this.

Fourthly and finally, we need to be better at telling our story.

We are so busy doing, that we struggle to communicate what it actually is that we're doing.

The Landcare brand is well recognised and well known, but the deep and lasting value that Landcare work unlocks is less known. It's that value that we need to articulate.

A study commissioned by Landcare NSW earlier this year is an excellent start to quantifying this value. The report estimates the net benefits delivered by a supported NSW Landcare community to be \$500 million a year, based on the data available.

The amazing diversity of the Landcare movement is both a challenge and a strength.

With groups working on a range of things from broad scale irrigation efficiency to organic gardening, our reach and scope is wide and it can be difficult to communicate with and about such a broad network.

That said, this diversity presents us with real strength and opportunity as well, and it should be celebrated.

In closing, I'd like to once again thank the Landcare NSW Council for their support, and thank Rob for the truly wonderful legacy he leaves with us.

Thank you.