

Landcare NSW Inc

Feedback on Strategic Regional Pest Management Plans

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Prepared by Sonia Williams
State Landcare Facilitator
Landcare NSW



Introduction

The development of the Regional Strategic Pest Animal Management Plans provided a process whereby a regional approach to pest animal management could incorporate existing community infrastructure and programs into a region wide planning process.

Landcare NSW is the state peak representative body for the nearly 3000 Landcare and similar type groups (including Landcare, producer groups, pest management groups etc), and their 56000 members. Landcare Groups have a long and strong history of involvement in pest animal education and control. Though these groups the efforts of landholders can be coordinated and the investment individual landholders place into pest control can be leveraged for a greater outcome than would otherwise occur by individual action.

Landcare NSW has reviewed the 11 plans and has sought feedback via the Council of Landcare NSW. We have done so against the Terms of Reference of these plans and against the Natural Resources Commission review into Pest animal Management.

Our approach to viewing the plans is built upon the principles articulated in the Natural Resources Commission’s Review in to Pest Animal Management, as outlined in Figure 1 below, and is based upon 25 years of Landcare practice in community consultation and project design.



Figure 9. Relationship between local, regional and state planning

Figure 1 The recommended planning Framework from the Natural Resources Commission final report *SHARED PROBLEM, SHARED SOLUTIONS - State-wide review of pest animal management* p 39

Feedback on the Regional Strategic Pest Animal Management Plans

Landcare NSW encouraged Landcare groups to respond directly to the Consultation process. – Their local concerns will therefore be captured through the official process and it is likely many points raised were in relation to individual species and the proposal surrounding these.

Landcare NSW does not offer any feedback on any particular pest species, but rather on the content and process of engagement with the local communities under each plan. We do so under a number of sub headings, from a viewpoint of providing ways in which delivery of the plan will be enhanced.

Involvement of Landcare in the Development of the Plans

Membership of the Regional Pest Animal Committee was determined by each Local Land Services region and was based upon the terms of reference which indicated that Landcare representation should be sought.

Whilst several regions utilised a process to invite the regional Landcare Network to provide a representative to be a conduit through the established Landcare network, others did not.

Where there is not a representative provided by the recognised Landcare Network infrastructure of the region there is a missed opportunity for both the feedback from the Network on current issues, and opportunities not being identified and thus included into the work of the regional pest committee. Eg the Local Coordinators that are employed by the network under the Local Landcare Coordinator Initiative provide an excellent pathway for involvement of their Landcare community in the design and delivery of Local plans, and indeed this connection is articulated as one of the objectives of the LLCI.

“link to programs of Local Land Services and other organisations to develop on-ground natural resource management projects in line with regional and state strategies” Fact Sheet 2 Local Landcare Coordinator Initiative.

Responses provided by regional Landcare NSW Council members at the May 2018 Landcare NSW Council meeting showed

- 36% of regional Landcare Networks had been approached by their LLS to provide a representative to the Regional Pest Committee
- 36 % indicated their regional network was not approached to provide a representative
- 9% indicated that they had been asked but declined to provide a representative
- 18% indicated they were not sure if they had been approached to have regional representative on the committee

Recommendations

<i>For Local Land Services</i>	<i>For Landcare NSW</i>
That the peak regional Landcare network be approached to place a representative on the Regional Committee if this has not yet occurred	Convey the importance to Regional Landcare to be actively involved in the Regional Pest planning process
The LLS provide a list of members of each Regional Pest Committee to ensure there is a pathway to an appropriate member on the committee, so their thoughts and concerns and opportunities can be raised	That Landcare NSW encourage Regional Landcare Networks to contact representatives on the committee re concerns and opportunities
That opportunities for Landcare networks to be involved in developing the local plans under the regional plan be provided.	Promote the opportunity and need for Landcare networks be involved in the development and delivery of local plans.

The role of Landcare in the Regional Plan

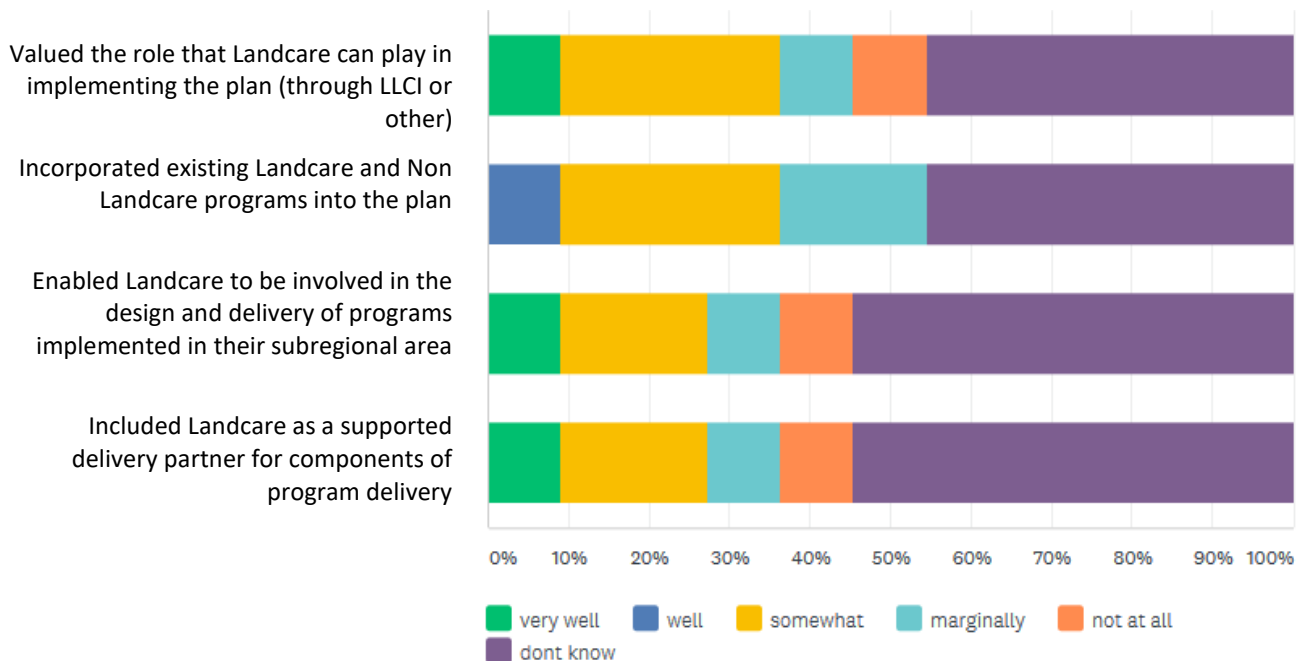
A review of the regional pest plans shows very little articulation of the role Landcare groups and networks would play in the delivery of activities and information that contribute to meeting the objectives of the regional plan.

A word search of the 11 plans shows:

- 6 plans (55%) do not mention Landcare at all
- 3 plans (27%) mention the word Landcare only once or twice
- 2 plans (18%) mention the word Landcare only 5 or 6 times

Greater Sydney Local Land Services mentioned the role of Landcare more often than other regional pest plans, which is interesting as pest management is considered most often in the context of rural landholders

Landcare NSW Councillors were asked a number of questions asking how satisfied they were that the plans:



Less than 10% of respondents indicated that that they thought the plans valued, incorporated, enabled or supported Landcare to contribute to the plans or be involved in the design or delivery of actions under the plan. It is noteworthy that it was only one Local Land Services region (Central Tablelands) that scored very well or well against all criteria

More than 50% indicated for most of the statements that they did not know how Landcare would be involved in the plans.

There is a concern that the 25years of experience of delivery by Landcare groups is not recognised or seen as a pathway for pest control by Local Land Services. Many plans talk of establishing control groups – however in Landcare NSW experience there is often little understanding of the legal and risk frameworks of working in groups by some Local Land Services staff. Landcare can play a valuable role in ensuring participation by community is done within a framework that provides coverage against these risks.

Recommendations

<i>For Local Land Services</i>	<i>For Landcare NSW</i>
That LLS review the plans to determine how Landcare be incorporated, particularly in the local planning and delivery of activities	Landcare NSW work with LLS to provide communications on the plans and the role Landcare can play
That the approach of Central Tablelands LLS be used as an example of involving Landcare through the plan	Landcare NSW address Biosecurity managers and staff on and benefits, including risk and compliance mitigation that working through Landcare groups networks can provide
Training opportunities for LLS biosecurity staff and managers that increase understanding of how Landcare can support a groups-based delivery approach (based on work of Invasive Animals CRC).	Landcare NSW continue to support groups with Insurances and governance materials and advice
Wherever possible LLS should ensure that pest control groups operate within or under the existing frameworks provide by Landcare in their region	

Formal Recognition of the role of Landcare in the Regional Plans

Across all plans there is no formal recognition of the importance of the role of community groups in the development and delivery of pest management activities.

An early draft of the common template had the following paragraph, however Landcare NSW notes it is no longer included in any of the Regional Plans.

Community groups

Community and special interest groups play a vital role in the management of pest animals in NSW by sharing biosecurity responsibilities across stakeholders. These groups improve the coordination and collaboration between key stakeholders in pest animal management in an effective manner through direct activities for control and monitoring. Additional work around the conservation of biodiversity to increase the resilience of our natural environment to pest animals is also a key role of many community groups across the state¹

This is of concern given the findings and work of the Invasive Animals CRC and Wild Dog Action Plan, which through numerous studies have shown the importance of supported groups in gaining buy in from community for effective pest animal control.^{2 3}

Landcare NSW recommends that the lead in section of each of the regional plans reinserts a clause in relation to community groups and suggests that this should be expanded as follows to ensure that the

¹ REVISED 2 FEB Template. Regional Pest Animal Plan

² Paul Martin, Darryl Low Choy, Elodie Le Gal and Kylie Lingard 2016 [Effective Citizen Action on Invasive Species: The Institutional Challenge](#)

³ Quealy, J (2017)[Community Landcare Case Study – for the National Wild Dog Action Plan](#)

supportive mechanisms required for community groups to operate effectively and within a risk management framework are included.

1.6 Roles and responsibilities.

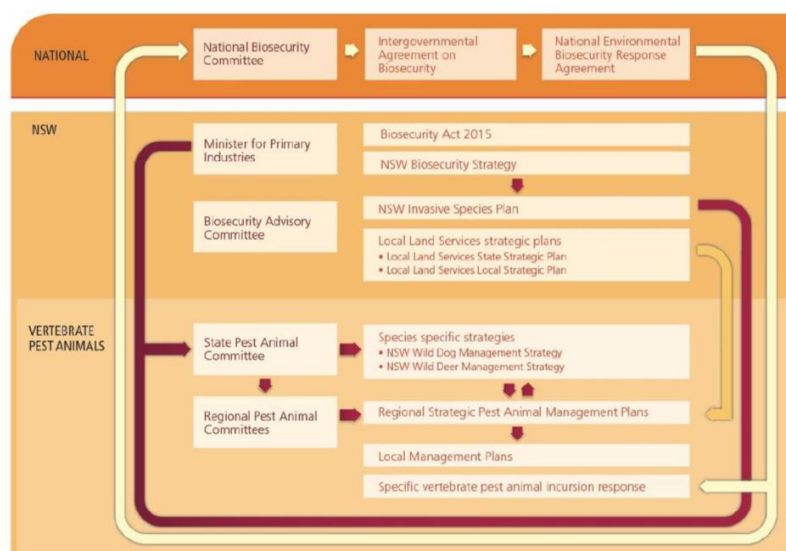
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1.5 Framework for Invasive Species

Landcare NSW believes the Framework is missing a critical element- community based groups. We suggest that the Framework be modified to include the role that community-based groups play in best practice delivery of pest animal management.

Current Framework



Proposed Framework

Note the addition of Community based groups, and their role in both development of Local Management plans and specific vertebrate pest animal incursion response

