

Landcare NSW Inc

Quarterly Regional Report Summary

May 2017



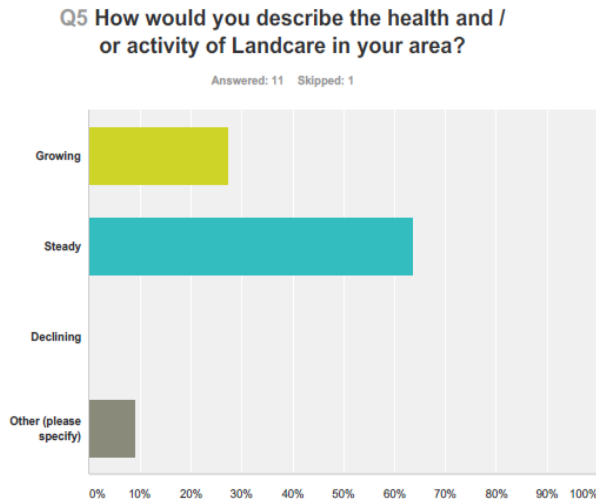
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Landcare NSW

BACKGROUND

As part of the quarterly meeting process Landcare NSW asks for feedback from our Councillors using Survey Monkey to allow us useful analysis tools for their responses. The purpose of ascertaining these trends is to provide feedback to the Regional Landcare bodies to assist in their planning and understanding of the state wide picture of Landcare across NSW. This information is also used by Landcare NSW in our reporting, promotion and representational efforts.

LANDCARE HEALTH CHECK

During May 2017, responses around the activity of Landcare showed 72% of Landcare regions recording 'steady' and 27% as 'growing' in terms of their activity. In comparison to the response from twelve months ago (May 2016) where 45% responded that they were 'growing' and 36% as 'steady', but almost 20% were struggling.



No region reported a decline in activity in May 2017. This has largely been attributed to the Local Landcare Coordinators activities and as positive as this response is there remain concerns about the future beyond the current program.

TREND: The response indicates that Landcare activity has had a period of greater **stability** in May 2017. However, it is understood that it will be important to look to the future to ensure this stability continues.

The Landcare NSW Quarterly Regional Forums and Reports are supported by:



WHAT IS LANDCARE?

In May 2017, the words Councillors used to describe what they are **proud of** are highlighted in the word cloud (right). Some key themes also included;

- **Habitat & threatened species** projects
- Special **events**
- New **Landcare Offices**
- New **partnerships & collaboration**



In May 2016, key themes included;

- Commencement of the **Local Landcare Coordinators**
- New **partnerships** and **projects**

TREND: The response indicates that in the 12 months following the commencement of the Local Landcare Coordinators in many areas and the hard work in establishing new partnerships and projects surrounding their commencement have resulted in fantastic new projects, events and greater stability in Landcare regions as evidenced by the establishment of new office bases.

CHALLENGES FOR LANDCARE

May 2017 highlighted a range of challenges for regional Landcare, with some key themes including;

- **Governance**, especially succession planning
- **Funding**, especially ongoing funds
- Feral animals and weeds
- Strategic **planning**, especially the **time** to plan
- Increasing **volunteer** and landholder engagement numbers



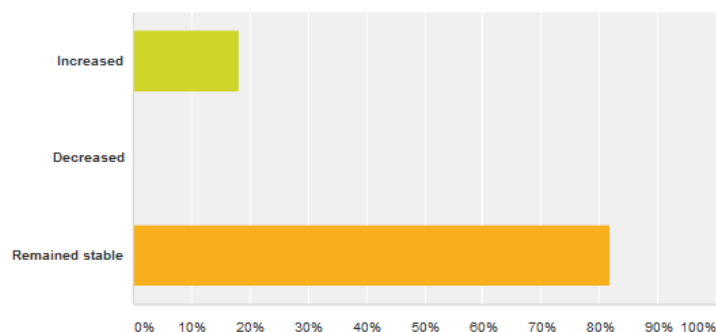
May last year (2016) raised very similar challenges, with the addition of:

- Changes to legislation
- Water security/rights & other factors around drought
- Preparations for the Local Landcare Coordinators

LANDCARE - LLS PARTNERSHIP:

Council representatives are asked each quarter a series of questions designed to examine the state of relationships with their Local Land Services region.

Has the level of financial or staff support from LLS for group /network operations in your region changed since you last reported?



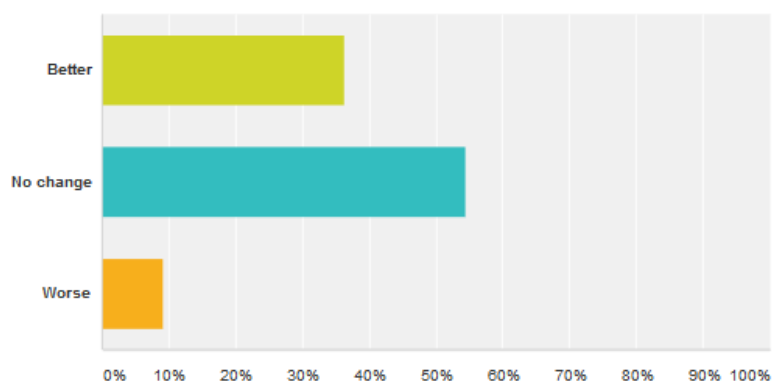
No region reported a decrease in the level of financial or staff support received by groups/networks in their areas.

When asked how support had changed responses included

- *Better support from LLS manager*
- *Less engages with Tablelands, very engaged with Riverina and Central West and SELLS*
- *LLS Western have secured an extra \$8k to help run our Executive & Steering committee. This means we can have more meetings around the region each year to engage members. Have decided to spread the meetings both geographically and time wise.*
- *A little bit more money coming through to do the little things.*
- *Local LLS office has been vacant (maternity leave) for almost 12 months - project inspections and reports now overdue. Most activity is Landcare organised with some support from LLS. Landcare interaction through RLF is good / increased*

Overall is the relationship/support to Landcare from Local Land Services better or worse than 12 months ago?

One third indicated that the relationship was generally better, just over half indicated that there was no change in the relationship. Where the response indicated a worsening this was due in part to the retraction of support due to the Local Land Services office in parts of the region now vacant.

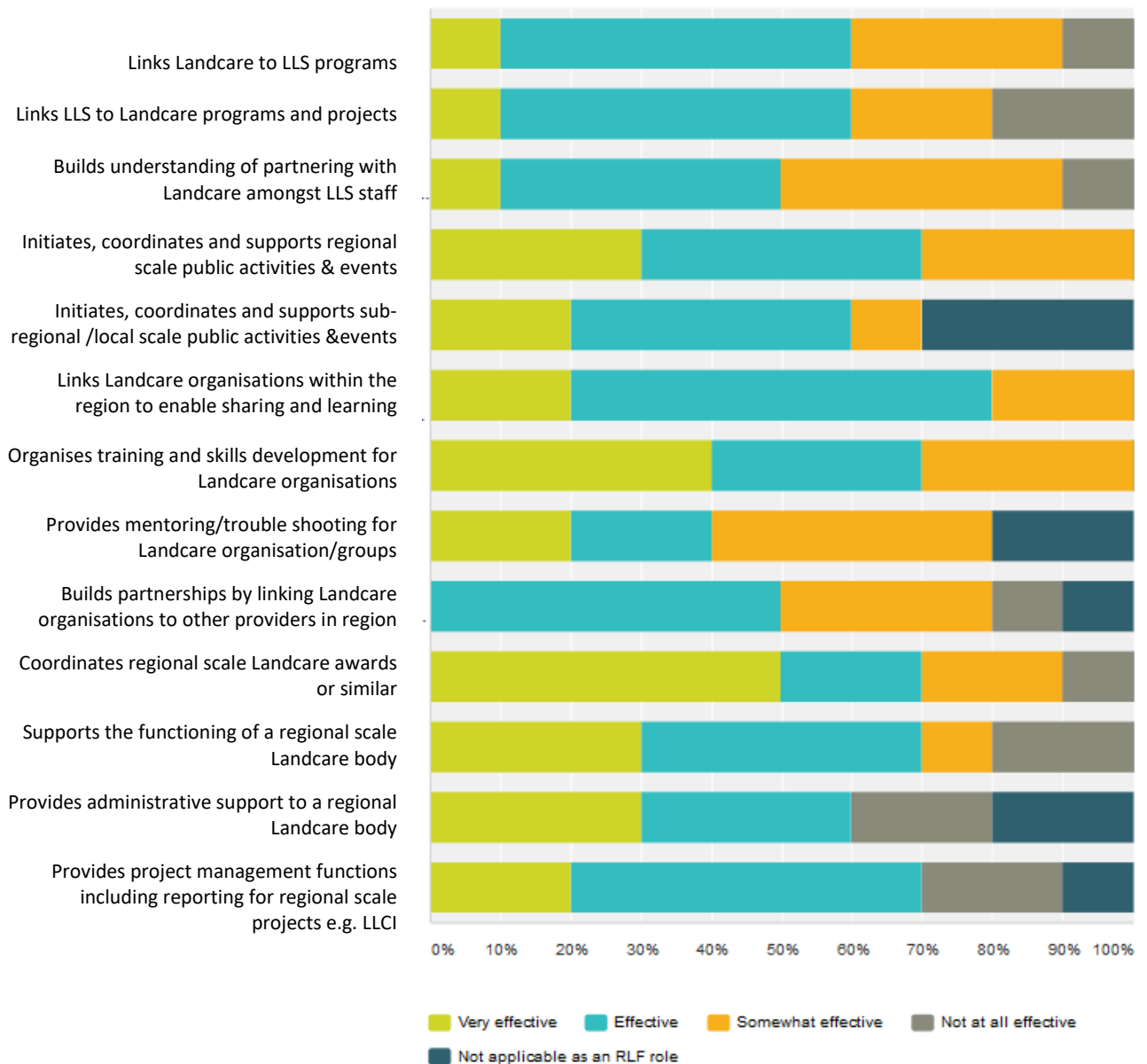


REGIONAL LANDCARE FACILITATOR

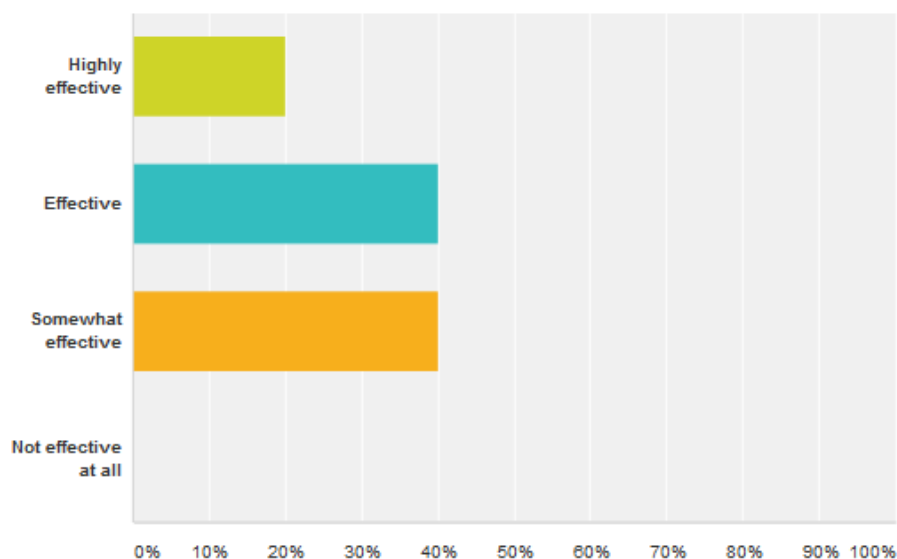
The focus area for the May 2017 regional report was the role and effectiveness of the Regional Landcare Facilitator program.

A number of questions were asked that examined the roles undertaken, and how effective the overall role of the RLF positions were. Further questions were asked to understand the approaches taken within each region to the deployment and functions of the RLF position.

The roles of RLF vary across each region. For your region what roles does your RLF undertake, and how effective is this?



Overall how effective do you feel the approach to RLF delivery undertaken in your region is to supporting the growth and development of Landcare?



Whilst it is encouraging that 60% of the responses indicated that in their region the approach was effective or highly effective, there would appear to be room for improvement with 40% of the responses indicating that the RLF program in their area was only somewhat effective.

The following questions were asked to try and understand the factors that may impact on the effectiveness of the delivery by the RLF program.

How many RLFs does your region have?

The RLF role is delivered in a number of ways across the regions. One EFT of RLF is a mandated requirement of the Australian Governments National Landcare Program.

- Six respondents reported the position was filled by 1 employee
- One respondent indicated the position was job shared between 2 people
- Four respondents indicated that the position was job shared between 3 people

This data does not necessarily corresponded to regions, as some respondents are reporting across regions as they interact with RLFs from several regions. Post survey information determined that there are 6 regions with 1 employee carrying out the RLF role, 1 region with 2 people job sharing the RLF role, 2 regions with 3 people job sharing the RLF role; and two regions where the role is currently vacant, with recruitment underway.

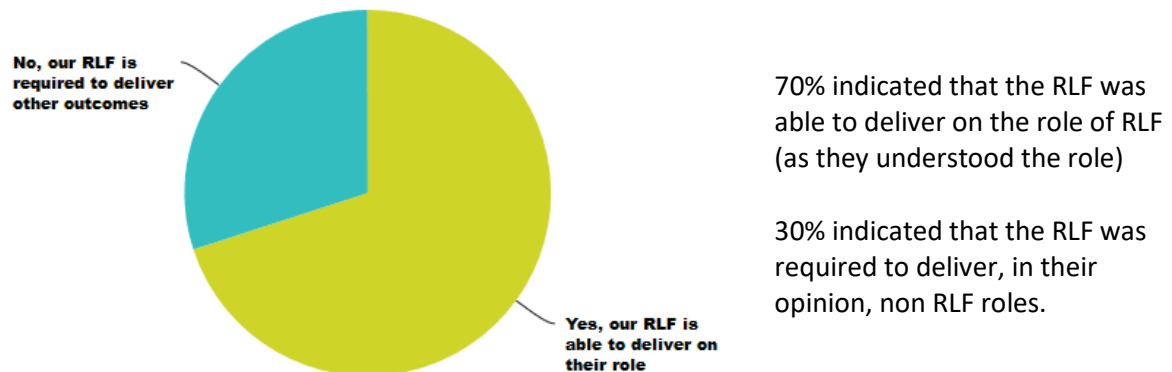
Is your RLF/s an internal LLS staff member or employed by a Landcare organisation?

- 6 regions indicated that the RLF was a Local Land Services internal employee.
- 5 regions indicated that the RLF was employed via a regional/district Landcare organisation

How integral is the RLF in coordinating the regional community of practice for Landcare in your region?

- 70% indicated that the RLF was integral to the delivery of the Regional Community of Practice,
- 30% indicated that they were somewhat important.

Is your RLF able to focus on delivering the RLF role and activities or do their host organisation require them to deliver other outcomes?



Comments included

- Our RLF has resigned partly because of the network not fully understanding the issues regarding the role of facilitator.
- There is a lot of beauracracy that the LLS based RLFS have to deliver on internal governance to government, higher overhead etc
- The primary focus is on peri-urban rather than urban however we get plenty of Council support in urban areas
- This is only the 0.3EFT based in Bourke
- Answers to last two questions reflect past arrangements for RLF. We hope to have the position focussed completely on Landcare outcomes.

LANDCARE NSW COUNCIL – LECG PROJECT

The quarterly Landcare NSW Council meetings provide an opportunity for regional representatives to participate in information sharing and provide input and feedback on various policies and programs. The Partnership Forum held at each meeting allows for direct communication between regional Landcare representatives and invited participants from the Australian Government, Local Land Services, the NSW Environmental Trust and the National Landcare Network, and is supported by funding from the NSW Environmental Trusts Lead Environment Community Group (LECG) program. Part of our feedback for the May meeting was to ask how Councillors feel we are meeting (or otherwise) the objective we set for ourselves through the LECG project, which was:

Build on the skill development and capacity building of regional workshops with quarterly forums for regional representatives to have active input to decision making on state and national environmental activities, policies and programs

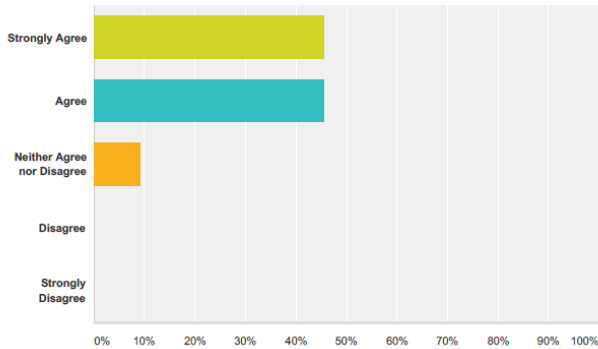
Survey Results

The results indicate that regional representatives agree the Forums held at the Council meeting provide for the input to local, regional and State/National scale decision making. The overall response to feeling confident in carrying out this role was slightly weaker: this is an area we can work to improve over the second half of the LECG project.

These questions will be repeated for the August, November, February and May upcoming Council meetings to ascertain improvements, declines or other trends as a result of the LECG project

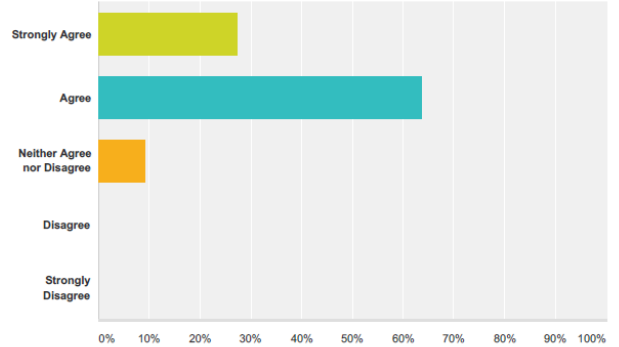
Q14 Do you feel that by being a representative for your region on the Landcare NSW Council, that you have the opportunity to input to local, regional and/or national scale decision making?

Answered: 11 Skipped: 1



Q15 Do you feel that by being a representative for your region on the Landcare NSW Council, that you are confident to input to local, regional and/or national scale decision making?

Answered: 11 Skipped: 1



Comments from respondents regarding the opportunity to provide input were mixed across local, regional and State/National scales; some seeing the benefit locally or regionally, others only seeing the opportunities to comment arise at a National scale.

“With the support of Landcare NSW, regional representation is greatly enhanced allowing Landcare to work with regional bodies to allow Landcare to have a say in NRM processes.”

“Locally and regionally no - however through LNSW agree Nationally.”

“Representation to council 'resulted' in establishment of an Environment Advisory Committee, including three local Landcare representatives”.

“Keep information coming. Nothing worse than not knowing what is going on.”

Feedback and Suggestions

The comments provided in response to these questions also raised a number of areas where improvements can be supported as we enter the second year of the LECG project.

“Council meetings could provide a better opportunity for Councillors to put their concerns/issues by providing a standing item not just 'other business'. Appreciate time is limited but there is a need for somewhere to record regional issues concerns that can be followed up or directed to sub-committees.”

“Give a longer time frame for getting feedback before submitting a position or comment to a request.”

“At Landcare NSW we could identify the LLS regions where relationships are working the best. Then educate the other regions on how this process worked and try to replicate this process.”

“LNSW could provide Councillors with an overview of how Landcare operates across the state. With the LLCI initiative now in place we may be able to present this picture. I think there is not a good understanding throughout Council how Landcare operates across the State.”

“Leadership and communication training”