

Quarterly Regional Reporting

TRENDS For Landcare Across NSW

February 2017

Prepared by Cassie Price & Sonia Williams
Landcare NSW



Purpose of this Document

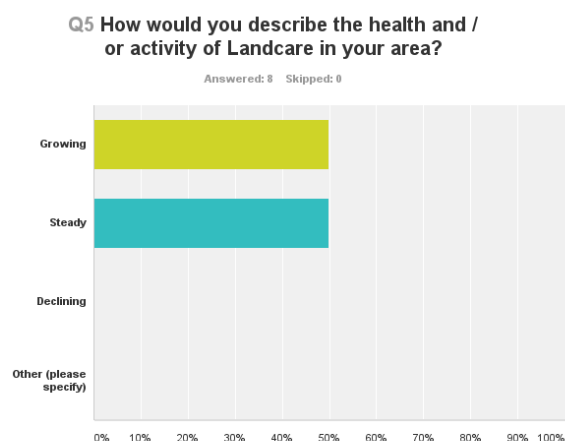
This document summarises the trends in the current position of Landcare across NSW as at February 2017. The purpose of reviewing these trends is to provide feedback to the Regional Landcare bodies to assist in their planning and also combined efforts to create positive changes for Landcare across NSW with common issues.

LANDCARE HEALTH CHECK

In February 2016 and 2017 are very similar, showing similar responses across growing and steady Landcare activity across NSW. Importantly, no region reported a decline (Fig. 1).

TREND: The response indicates that Landcare activity has had a period of **stability** from 2016 to 2017.

2016



2017

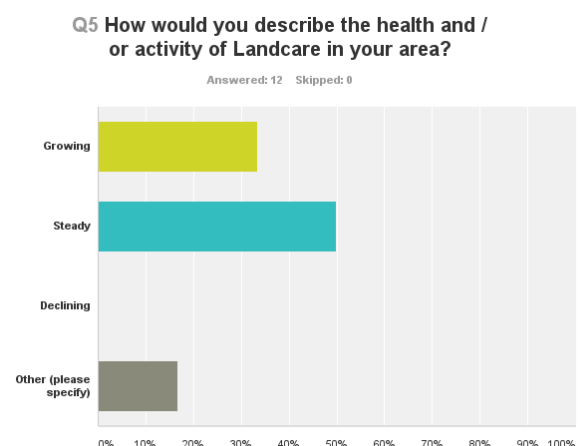


Figure 1. Survey responses from February 2016 and 2017 survey question regarding health of Landcare in NSW regions.

WHAT IS LANDCARE?

In February 2016, Councillors and groups were talking about;

- Creating strong **partnerships**
- Sourcing greater **funding**
- The **broad range** of projects including sustainable grazing, habitat creation, waste management, bees and pests
- **New groups** created
- A focus on group **Governance improvements**

In 2017 February, Councillors and groups were talking about;

- Creating strong **partnerships**
- Sourcing greater **funding**
- The **broad range** of projects including native revegetation, habitat boxes, soil health, bio-farming,
- **New groups** created
- A focus on group **Governance improvements** (succession and leadership in particular)



Some emerging themes included;

- Getting the most out of **solar power** on farms
- **Species specific** projects
- **New sources of funding**, including philanthropic funds

TREND: The response indicates that Landcare has really **strengthened its core activities**.

CHALLENGES FOR LANDCARE

This time last year (February 2016) regions were finding that getting set up to host their LLCs and RLFs a challenge, finding additional funds to boost their roles difficult and struggling to find relevance of available funding sources to their work.

This year (February 2017) regional challenges are turned more inward, considering improving governance and systems, but also concern for the coming end of funding for LLCs and other useful programs.



KEY PARTNERSHIPS

In the most recent survey (February 2017) when asked about the level of financial and staff support provided by key partner; **Local Land Services** most respondents reported a stable level of support. However, just under 40% of respondents reported decreased support from their Local Land Services partnership, this shows the high variability of Local Land Services partnership support for Landcare across the state (Fig 2).

Q9 Landcare - LLS Partnership Has the level of financial or staff support from LLS for group /network operations in your region changed?

Answered: 11 Skipped: 1

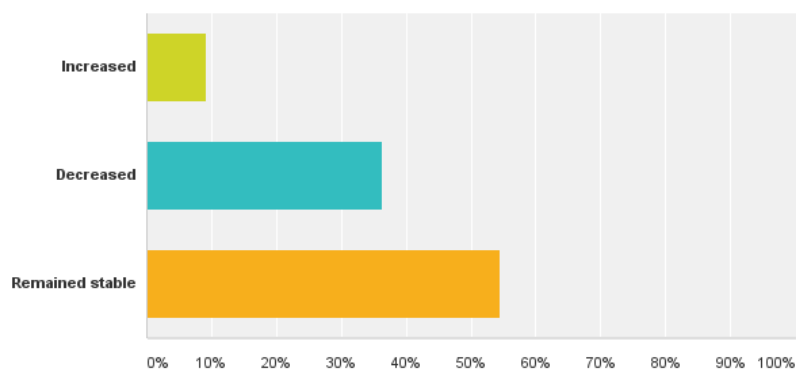


Figure 2. Survey response from February 2017 survey question regarding Local Land Services Partnership.

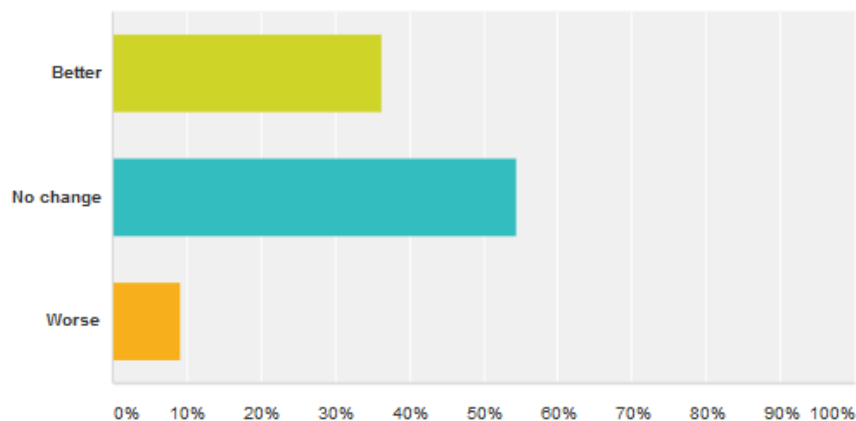
Comments from regional networks with increased and stable Local Land Services support have praised the work of the Local Landcare Coordinators in building the relationship between Landcare and Local Land Services. Other positives noted were instances of additional funding for Landcare projects and generally improved communication between the partners.

Comments from the regional networks with decreased Local Land Services support have cited Local Land Services office closures, Local Land Services staff instability and funding pressures as likely causes of reduced Local Land Services support.

Regional representatives were also asked ***'how the relationship between Landcare and Local Land Services had changed over the last 12 months'***. 36% indicated that the relationship had improved, 55% responded that it had not changed and 9% indicated that the relationship had worsened.

Overall is the relationship/support to Landcare from LLS better off or worse off than 12 months ago?

Answered: 11 Skipped: 1



Some comments include:

"We have a good working relationship with our RLF and also our LLCs are hosted in the LLS office. We only need to ask and we are generally accommodated".

"Employment of RLF by regional network is working well with LLS providing facilities and resources. Partnership Implementation Group is also working well and the annual gathering, Landcare and LLS staff jointly presented on projects on which they were collaborating. No relationship between Landcare and the LLS Board members. The last two scheduled CAG meetings have been cancelled".

"Working well: Community Grants, capacity support for groups, participatory decision making".

"The CSO (LLCI) positions are working very well. We are maintaining support to our groups. Have very little funding for projects or support educational programs".

"Our LLS funding of several Local Landcare coordinator positions and some (limited) small landholder grants. RLF's have worked hard on regional Landcare communication and interaction".

LANDCARE AT NATIONAL SCALE

There is currently a lot of Landcare activity at the national scale, in particular around the National Landcare Programme coming to an end and being reinvented for the future.

When asked if Regional Networks were aware that the **National Landcare Programme** (NLP) would come to an end June 2018, all but one respondent were aware.

When asked how well NLP has supported Landcare over the time of the Program the Regional Networks were divided, with 30% believing there was no real change as a result of the Program, 30% believing the support under the Program had decreased from past programs, a further 16% claiming that NLP had significantly decreased support for Landcare. In the positive, only 16% of Regional Networks thought that the National Landcare Program had increased support for Landcare in their area (Fig. 3).

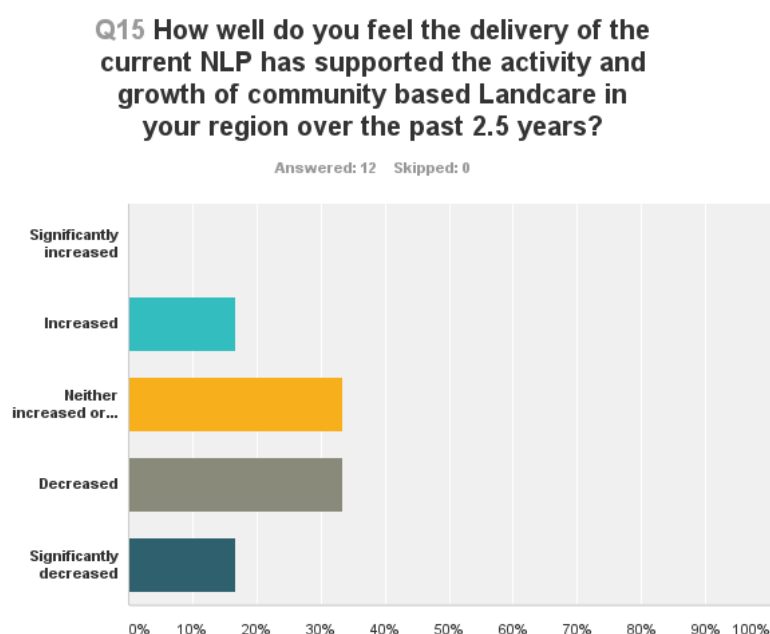


Figure 3. Survey response from February 2017 survey question regarding National Landcare Programme.

When asked questions concerning the ***‘input of Landcare into the design and delivery of NLP investment’***, either in medium and large scale projects, and the role Landcare played in delivering small scale projects under the NLP there was wide variability in the response, indicating the varied approaches of each Regional Delivery Organisation (Local Land Services) in their approach to delivering the NLP.

When asked what could be improved in the delivery of the NLP, most responses indicated the need for improved communication and involvement of Landcare with Local Land Services, with a request by one that both be considered equal partners at the table. However, there were a number of respondents that called for an investment from the Australian Government directly to Landcare.

In terms of support from **Landcare Australia Limited**, most regions answered 'Not supported at all' or 'Not well supported' to most suggested support roles. Where Regions selected 'somewhat supported' included in *General Promotion of the importance of Landcare to the broader public* and *Celebration of Landcare Achievements through Landcare Awards and promotion*.

Very few regions reported direct support for Landcare Australia Limited, however two areas reported group benefits from LAL's small grants program and another from the facilitation of the Green Army program.

A graph of all responses is shown on the next page at Figure 5.

With regard to the **National Landcare Network**, there is a general lack of knowledge of their role at national Landcare level across the regions. Most regions reported that their Landcarers were either not aware or only somewhat aware of the National Landcare Network. No regions reported a general or high awareness of the National Landcare Network and their work (Fig. 4).

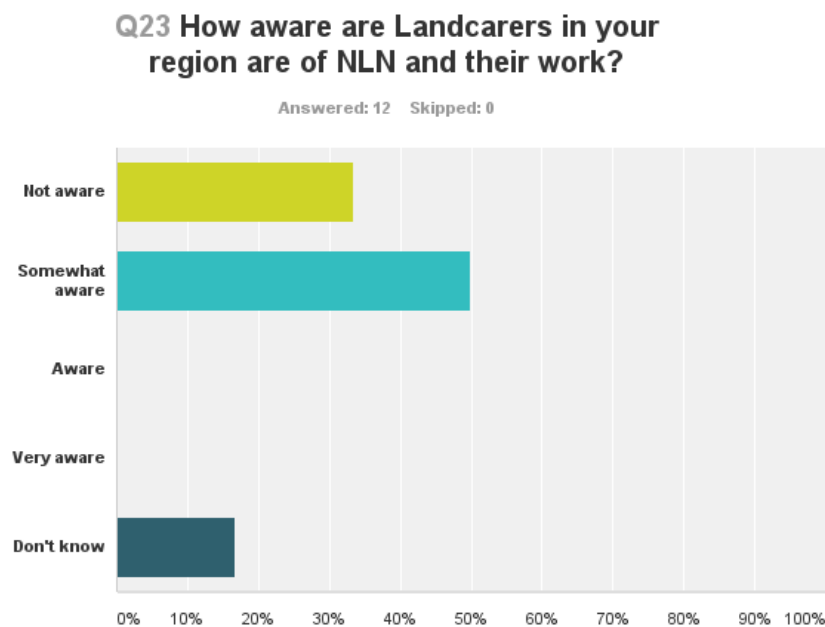


Figure 4. Survey response from February 2017 survey question regarding National Landcare Network.

However, when asked '**How important do you feel that it is for grassroots Landcarers to have a representative voice at the national scale?**' on a scale of 0 (not important) to 100 (extremely important) the response was clear with an average answer of 94, indicating that the NSW regions, collectively, felt it was extremely important that grassroots Landcarers to have a representative voice at the national scale.

Respondents were asked '**how they felt the NLN could best communicate**', suggestions included placing summary information in existing communications, informing RLFS and LLCI of their work, and promotion of their work through general media. Some requested that additional separate emails form NLN not be generated, and that information only be provided where it was of direct relevance to grass roots landcarers.

Q20 How well do you think Landcare in your region is supported through the following activities of Landcare Australia?

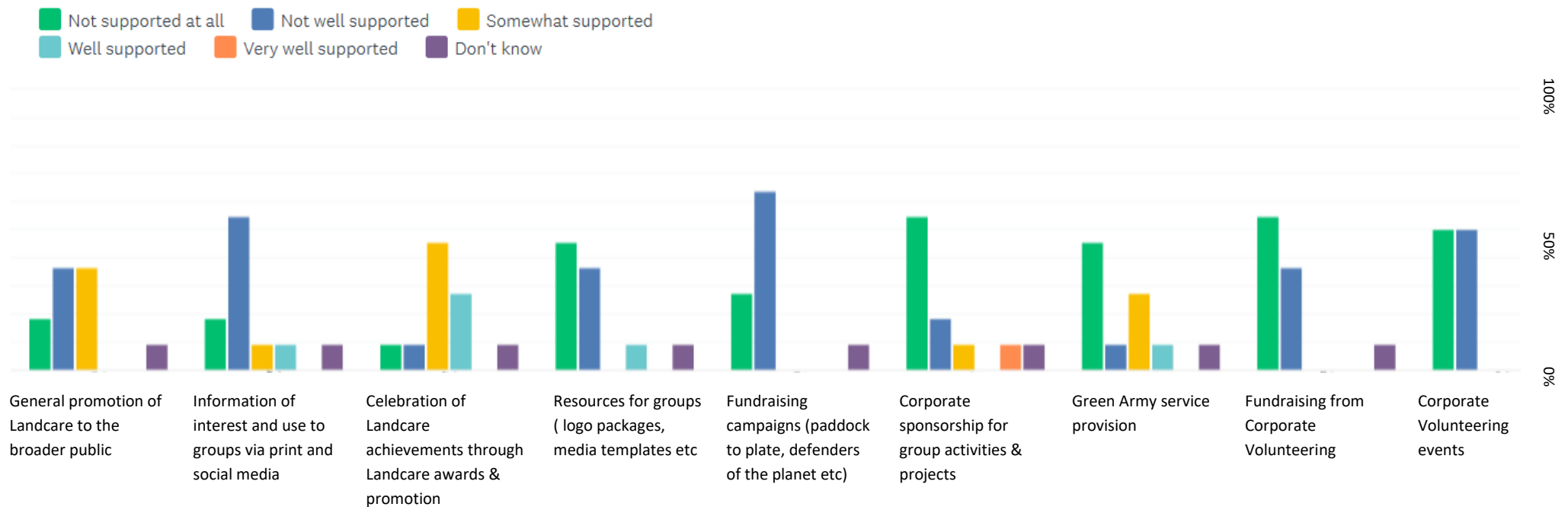


Figure 5 –Responses to Q20 - Support from Landcare Australia

Comments:

- Nothing to my knowledge - other than a few tweets on Twitter and seeing the lovely Charlie Arnott garner support for the Tasmanian Trek
- The small grants program last year saw some successful groups receiving grant funds.
- We think there have been one or two Green Army projects, however we were not involved in the planning and delivery. We are also under the impression that the project/s were failures due to misinformation, disorganisation.
- They are quite good at providing grants for projects with greater visibility and also support young person engagement projects. Landcare Australia is based in Sydney and therefore some groups are quite well connected with them.
- At least 1 group in our region has been supported by Landcare Australia or has linked to philanthropic organisations through LA to access project fundings to deliver NRM and community learning outcomes.
- LAL has supported a couple of local projects at Condobolin but I'm unaware of any other projects supported in the Lachlan catchment.