

Landcare NSW Inc

Quarterly Regional Report Summary

November 2017

Prepared by
Sonia Williams &
Jodie Lovell
Landcare NSW



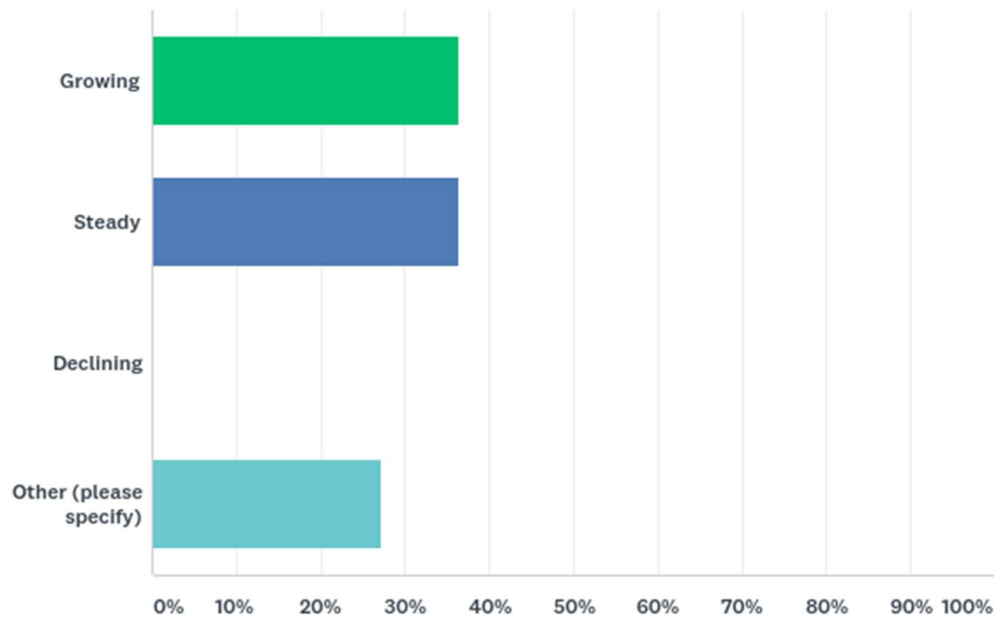
Background

Landcare NSW regularly asks for feedback from our Councillors using Survey Monkey to allow us useful analysis tools for their responses. This document summarises the current position of Landcare across NSW as at November 2017. The purpose of analysing 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 November 2017, responses around the activity of Landcare showed 37% of Landcare regions recording 'growing' and 37% 'steady', compared to last quarter where only 10% were reported as growing, indicating an upswing in group activity.

Of the "other" responses one region indicated they were in a state of flux, with other regions indicating that there were opportunities for consolidation. No regions reported a decline in activity.



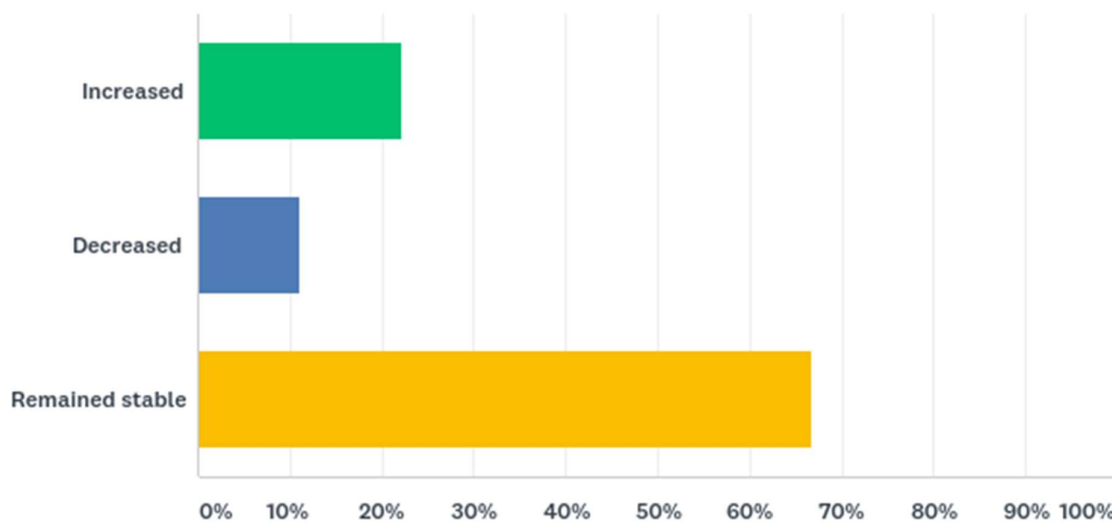
TREND: The response indicates that Landcare activity continues to show **stability**. One of the comments from a respondent states that Landcare in their region is steady and beginning to grow while another reports it is in a state of flux.

PARTNERSHIPS:

Local Land Services

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?



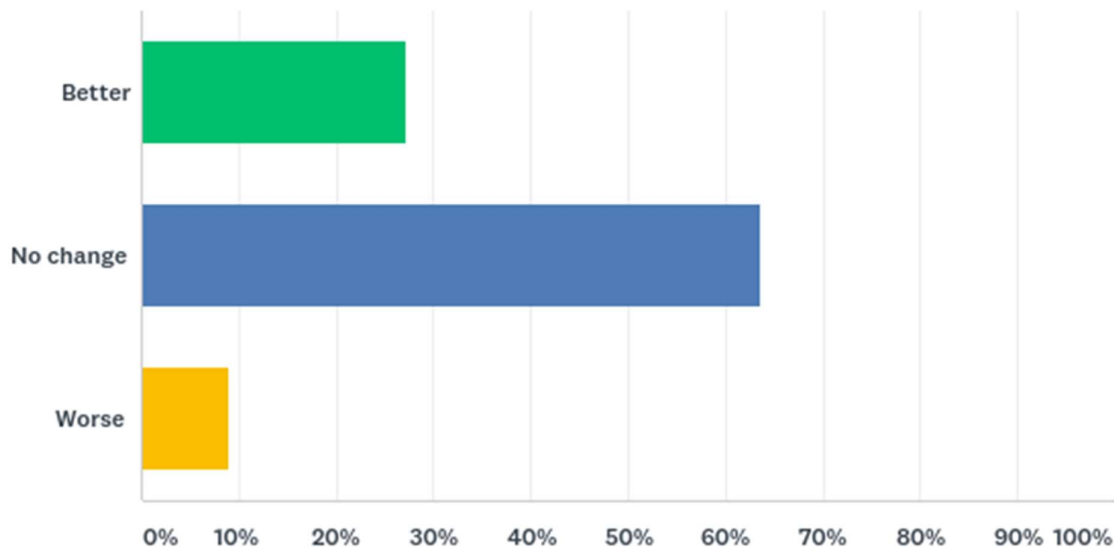
Whilst in most regions support remained stable, there were two regions that reported an increase while one reported a decrease.

When asked how support had changed responses included;

- More coordination of LLCs is done by RLF. (This may weaken local steering committees which consist of community members....I think we need to invest in the next generation of leaders so not limiting ourselves to the views of the same group of people, increasing our range and reach in programs and communication)
- Want to invest more but need to build better partnerships
- Continues to be a good partnership down in our patch
- New RLF working on partnership. NLP 2 application with the LLS
- Losing staff and either not replacing or re purposing existing staff who don't have the understanding of community groups or building capacity. Is impacting on LLS ability to engage with groups, particularly lower capacity groups

- Overall less general interaction between LLS staff and Coordinators. Also the Partnership Implementation Group hasn't met since June, and there is currently no set date for the next meeting. The new Chair and GM have expressed their concerns about whether the PIG as it has been operating is the best mechanism for furthering the partnership.
- Still waiting for details of small Scale Partnerships Program funding. Again it will be a rush to complete any activities by the May/June deadline. If the LLS were to state in writing that funding was guaranteed then we could advertise and undertake events in the period July to December using its own funds until the money was paid for the activities

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



27% indicated that the relationship was generally better, and 64% indicated that there was no change in the relationship. It is worth noting that the number of respondents who indicated that they believed the relationship was worse than 12 months ago decreased significantly from 40% last quarter to 9% in November 2017.

In terms of support for Landcare in your region what's working well and what's not working well? Why?

Responses varied but feel to some major themes

Landcare Network Operation and capacity

- LLCs are becoming more confident and wanting to take on more. they are becoming known in our community and are the face of Landcare in our region
- The group is undergoing a restructure at the moment with changing employees and members
- There is a genuine effort being made to improve the user experience on Gateway, this is well appreciated.

- More schools coming on board; more groups wanting to form & become members. This is due to good communication, open debate & sound backgrounding. Overall we are happy with where we are in the scheme of things and the progress we have made and issues overcome to get to where we are
- Local Government support is good especially in Singleton and Muswellbrook. The LLCI is delivering great results (See the AGM Report on the HRLN website)
- Local Landcare is working well in all our groups. All feel supported at regional level by LLS and RLF. It is not as clear to Landcarers how LNSW helps at the local level
- There is great value in having the support of the coordinators and in our case the position of a consultant to negotiate the extensive paperwork associated with Network activities under the LLCI program and where this may lead for Landcare in general. Committee members need to raise their skill levels as well

Landcare and LLS relationship

- LLCI working well. NLP2 is a risk - we are at the table with LLS so a positive future
- Future is looking reasonably bright in LLS partnership as long as federal government funding through NLP 2 allows for land care activities on ground to flourish. This is a risk, and relationship with LLS is a risk, for both bodies if funding doesn't meet objectives.
- What is working: Sound partnership with LLS; Good access to Board & GM & Chair;
- Great intent to partner and support. Our LLS are trying hard to be interactive and open. Resources to do so are limited. Large focus on internal survival and sourcing funding for themselves which is understandable. They are still trying to figure out how the partner and on what projects locally. It's a very confusing space as we well know at the moment
- Working well - continued housing and support for RLF position Not working well - communication and liaison between the two organisations at the Executive and Local Officer level.
- There is the potential for positive change if the LLS could sort out its own internal problems
- Have offered assistance re NLP - positively received
- Honesty is the best policy. Be accountable. Learn from mistakes.
- Creating a partnership is one thing, maintaining it through significant organisational changes is another.

RLF and role

- Generally if we need something our RLFS are very approachable. If funding for small project required can apply for funding - mostly successfully
- The RLF and their commitment to facilitating good communication channels between District Landcare Associations's is a huge plus in our region. More development is needed around listening to the local Landcare groups, and then getting that information in to LLS and up to the board if necessary. We are seeing improvements, but we could be doing better

NATIONAL LANDCARE PROGRAM 2:

The NLP2 is a significant source of support for Community Landcare. Regions were asked if they had attended the Australian Government briefing session - 45% of regions indicated that 5 or less people from their region had attended. Regions were also asked if, they had met to discuss the NLP2 – 64% indicated that they had met. Regions were asked for their initial responses to NLP2 - these are provided on the table on the next page.

Initial responses on the NLP2

Region 1	great for sustainable agriculture and land holders RLF changing to RALF - extra responsibilities, will there be extra resources? funding is reduced but longer time frame for projects offered perhaps
Region 2	Haven't had a meeting to discuss
Region 3	Complicated Less funding We know what's on the Federal table until 2023
Region 4	The deadlines are short, but that's ok There will be big winners and big losers. The focus on innovation is positive.
Region 5	Changes to be more agricultural focus with RALF OK Smart Farms has less opportunity for Peri urban and urban on ground works Good that partnerships are being encouraged in bids
Region 6	Generally LLS was positive about partnership Network staff meeting this week on planning Hopefully LLS will work with landcare in developing funding proposal to meet both organisations objectives
Region 7	very project oriented possibly LLS might be out competed in some projects opportunity to build more connection between LLS and our regional landcare network
Region 8	Timeframe too short Very confusing Seems like an almighty task
Region 9	Lots of opportunities, albeit for a very reduced bucket of money Very confusing guidelines. Contextual statements, purpose, objectives and then descriptions of whats included all send slightly different messages Lots of confusion about who can apply for what and what project fit where. This is both in Landcare circles and within the LLS
Region 10	A challenge for some Networks and some areas in our region that have been predominantly working on biodiversity issues. NLP2 is a significant opportunity that our region is actively exploring The deadlines for developing project proposals, particularly under the Smart Farms Partnership Program are extremely tight, given the requirements for collaborative approaches

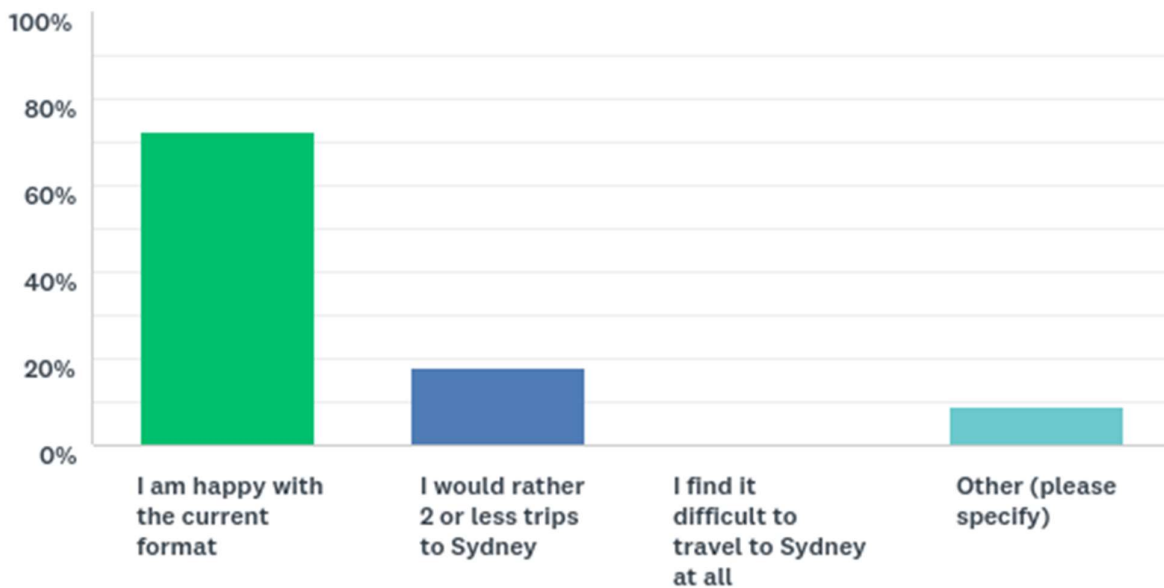
One region provided significant feedback on their approach to NLP2:

Regional discussions and approach to NLP 2 preparations: The 11 Networks in our region have met for the second time to discuss and prepare for NLP2. Through a process facilitated by our RLF, our Networks and Coordinators have identified areas of capacity and interest and this information has been collated at the regional level, and areas of commonality identified. These have been used to develop a number of possible regional themed projects. At our most recent regional meeting we have identified projects that would be better suited to the different elements under the NLP2 banner: Smart Farms Partnerships, Smart Farm Small Grants and the Regional Land Partnerships. The process has built a solid collaborative basis for the projects, across a diverse and active region. We have also met with the Chair and GM of the LLS to start discussions about a partnership approach to NLP2.

Coordinators and Networks under pressure to develop project proposals and responses to NLP2 in order to meet the prescribed deadlines, and under the new management within LLS and the declining partnership we have experienced, [we are not confident that a good partnership will result] Responses were varied – with many indicating that uncertainty and reduced funding had impacted on the culture of partnership. Long standing partnerships and general support for Landcare were highlights of the feedback. Future funding, and communication were highlighted as areas that need improving.

LANDCARE NSW COUNCIL IN 2018

What are your thoughts on the current format of the four face to face Landcare NSW Council meetings annually?



73% of respondents were happy with the current format and 18% would rather 2 or less trips to Sydney. One respondent felt the frequency and format of the Council meetings should be driven by what the desired outcomes are for those meetings.

If Landcare NSW was to consider a new, part video conference format for some Council meetings, would you prefer:



- 2 face to face meetings in Sydney and 2 full day video conferences**
- 2 face to face meetings in Sydney and 4 half day video conferences**
- All video conferences, perhaps 6-8 per year**
- None of the above, I value the current 4 face to face meetings in Sydney**
- Other (please specify)**

Of the respondents, 45% value the current 4 face to face meetings in Sydney above any of these formats, 27% would prefer 2 face to face meetings in Sydney and 4 half day video conferences and 1 respondent would prefer 2 face to face meetings in Sydney and 2 full day video conferences.

Do you have any other suggested changes for the Council meeting format that we should consider for 2018?

- great if these meetings can be as inclusive as possible. allow regions to send alternates or guests. annual muster could be explored?
- I feel it is worth trialling the video idea, although I love the old fashioned face to face meeting. We could focus our Sydney meeting around those subjects that require an open space discussion. I would hope that we didn't lose the invited guests with a chosen topic format - I get a lot from those sessions
- Maybe 3 meetings a year and one or two half day video conference meetings as a trial?
- At least once a year staff and committee webinar like we had earlier in year may be an idea. Develop learning aids and topics over several months from financial accountability to network development.
- Extend the amount of meeting time to 1.5 days per meeting so that issues may be more fully dealt with.