

Speech by Sue Salvin

Chair, Nambucca Valley Landcare/Vice Chair, North Coast Regional Landcare

NSW Parliamentary Friends of Landcare Event

10 May 2016

The history of Nambucca Valley Landcare (NVL)

- I would like to start by providing a history of Nambucca Valley Landcare
- When it was first formed in 1998, there were 32 separate Landcare, Coastcare, Dunecare and Rivercare groups in the Nambucca Valley, each relying completely on volunteers undertaking projects to improve the environment in their local area
- NVL was originally formed to be an umbrella organisation
 - providing the necessary insurance cover for the smaller groups
 - helping groups with funding applications
 - supporting groups and individual landholders in the valley to deliver and report on their projects
 - running workshops and field days - plant identification, weed control, bush regeneration
- NVL also took on responsibility for delivering projects of benefit to the catchment as a whole
 - Coordinating Land for Wildlife
 - Resource kit for new landholders
 - Indian Myna
 - Nambucca Vegetation Planting Guide
 - Work in collaboration with the local Aboriginal Green team to improve coastal habitats and the health of the estuary
- NVL also took a more strategic approach to delivering on ground works
 - Preparing river reach plans for the freshwater parts of the catchment
 - Reviewing existing local plans
 - Nambucca Valley River and Catchment Management Study
 - River and Wetland Management Plan
 - Nambucca River Master Plan
 - And working with landholders to implement priority actions identified in those plans

On the north coast, the North Coast CMA used to contract the Landcare Networks to deliver their required outcomes for capacity building and community support

- This resulted in NVL receiving core funding in the order of \$80,000 per year
- With the change to LLS, this decreased to \$20,000 in 2015/16
- As a result, staff voluntarily reduced their number of hours
- The office moved to smaller premises
- And we became more reliant on project funding to cover staff costs
- From 2012/13 to 2015/16, our project income as a proportion of total income grew from 16% to 73%
- As a result, staff had less time to devote to supporting community engagement

- With the exception of the two Dunecare Groups, one in Nambucca Heads and the other in Scotts Head, the individual groups were no longer actively engaged
- Staff who had been with Landcare for a long time were becoming demoralised – wanting to return to how things had been in the past

Local Landcare Initiative

- When I took over as Chair of NVL last year, it coincided with the NSW Government's announcement of the LLCI funding
- Through the Initiative, North Coast Regional Landcare Network (NCRLN) received funding for an additional 3.75 EFT for the whole of the north coast region (11 networks) and of that, NVL was allocated 0.3 EFT
- This doesn't sound much but it has proved to be the catalyst for enormous positive change within our organisation
- We didn't want to use the money to just do more 'business as usual'
- As I mentioned, people weren't terribly happy with 'business as usual' so they wanted to use this opportunity to make a real change to the way NVL operated
- The Committee therefore went through a Strategic Planning process to work out what we wanted to achieve as an organisation over the next three years
- Key to this will be reinvigorating the individual Landcare groups
- The Vision in our Strategic Plan is that *"there is a well-supported, engaged and active Landcare community in the Nambucca Valley, achieving improved productivity and environmental outcomes"*
- We also looked at the requirements of the Local Landcare Coordinator Initiative in terms of what it wanted host organisations to deliver and did a skills audit of the existing staff to identify where we needed to bring in additional skills
- We then negotiated new contracts with existing staff to clearly identify their specific roles, and advertised a new position for the 0.3 EFT
- Logan was appointed to this position and will start with NVL at the beginning of July
- He was however able to take time off from his current position to attend the Local Landcare Coordinator Induction and Training Workshop in Stockton in March and he has also been working on developing our action plan for the coming year
- He will talk to you about both of these in a moment

Wrap up

- The availability of this funding has enabled NVL to again be pro-active and forward looking
- It has brought some much needed generational change to the organisation
- It has also provided the committee and the staff with a new sense of optimism and enthusiasm which we are hoping will now extend into the broader Landcare community

BUT we clearly recognise that we need to spend the next three years wisely

- not only by increasing our NRM activities and re engaging our Landcare groups to broaden the reach of what we do
- but also by developing new partnerships and securing new sources of funding
- which will ensure the long-term viability of the Landcare community in the Nambucca Valley