

October 2018

# SUSTAINING LANDCARE - THE NEXT CHAPTER

*An update from Landcare NSW*

## LANDCARE IS A VOLUNTEER MOVEMENT

*Like all volunteer movements, it can't operate without paid, professional services to support the volunteers*

**Landcare NSW and NSW Local Land Services have submitted a joint business case to the NSW Government for funding to deliver the next phase of the NSW Landcare Program for 2019 – 2023.**

The **NSW Landcare Program 2019-2023** will build on the ground work achieved during the Local Landcare Coordinator Initiative (LLCI). Launched in 2015, the LLCI has been embraced by farmers, volunteers and local communities as a means of re-energising community Landcare.

Landcare and the NSW Government have partnered successfully at the state, regional and local scales to deliver on-ground outcomes.

When the Landcare community is empowered and actively partnering with Local Land Services and other agencies, the capacity for state and federally funded programs to be effectively delivered is greatly enhanced.

With project implementation funding currently being reduced from both the National Landcare Program and Catchment Action NSW programs, and the redirection of the Regional Agricultural Landcare Facilitators to federal priorities, the partnering, leveraging and multiplication effect of Landcare is more important and valuable to Local Land Services, and state and federal programs now than ever before.

In NSW funding for Landcare support services is approximately \$41m between 2015 and 2019. This includes the \$15m LLCI *plus* funds from other state and federal sources. The LLCI ends in June 2019 and other funding sources are declining.

A refreshed policy and funding initiative is urgently needed to ensure the outstanding work contributed by NSW's 60,000-strong volunteer Landcare community continues.

With the appropriate support services in place, Landcare groups can get on with the job of implementing on ground projects and changing practices.

The Landcare community has consistently advised the Government that **\$32.5 million over four years** is needed commencing July 2019 to build on the platform created by the LLCI and continue the momentum of rebuilding Landcare in NSW.

Compared with \$41 million in the current period, the business case for \$32.5 million is approximately a 20% reduction in funding over four years that reflects reductions in other funding programs.

While the business case provided alternative lesser funding investment options, Landcare NSW's position is that \$32.5 million is needed for the program to achieve its objectives and provide significant return on investment. Landcare NSW does not support the alternative lesser funding investment options.

**The NSW Landcare Program will deliver outcomes for Government, Local Land Services and the NSW Landcare Community. The objectives for the next phase are:**

- **Partnerships** – Effective partnerships between NSW Government Agencies, Local Land Services and Landcare
- **Delivery** – Landcare and Local Land Services delivering outcomes together for the people of NSW
- **Supported** – Landcare and volunteer groups are sustainably supported into the future
- **Valued** – Landcare is recognised, understood and valued by community, investors and partners
- **Capable** – Landcare is capable and delivering on its goals.

**A recent study shows a supported Landcare community contributes over \$500 million to the economy every year.**

**A conservative estimate of return on investment is \$6 for every \$1 spent on centralised and coordinated support.**

**(Aurecon, 2018)**

*For more information visit:*

<http://landcarensw.org.au/partnerships/sustaining-landcare/>

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*Many Hands, One Voice*

The NSW Landcare Program going forward proposes a suite of components designed to deliver outcomes for Government, Local Land Services and the NSW Landcare Community:

## LOCAL COORDINATORS 50 X 1 FTE

Local Landcare Coordinators who are connected, capable, flexible and able to respond to changing needs are critical to the success of this program and the Landcare movement as a whole.

One of the most important considerations in terms of this component is momentum. Local Coordinators are building operational and social momentum, something that is not quickly installed, but provides massive benefits.

Over the past three years of the LLCI:



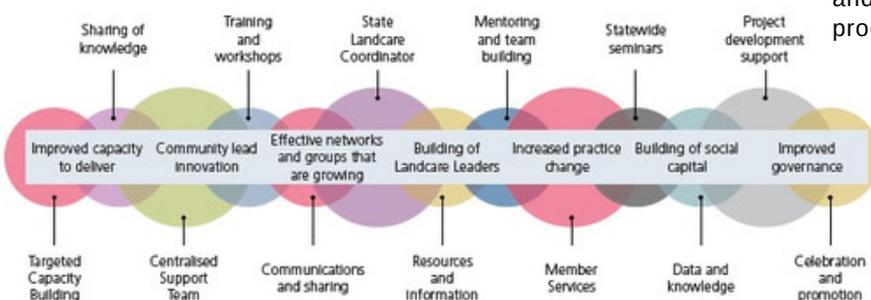
## ABORIGINAL LANDCARE 1 FTE + PROJECTS

The development and implementation of actions to build engagement between the Landcare movement and Aboriginal people is a priority. This initiative will:

1. Collaborate on projects to improve natural resources, create training and employment opportunities and support social and mental wellbeing
2. Consolidate Aboriginal and Landcare partnerships for mutual benefit and to maximise resources
3. Support representation of Aboriginal people in Landcare at state, regional and local levels
4. Deliver education, information and resources.

## COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

The Community of Practice is led by the central support team and is the connecting thread that delivers increased activity and effectiveness of Landcare networks by providing consistent approaches across the state. It works with the Regional Coordinators to ensure best practice occurs within and across regions and that partnerships are established and maintained with the broad range of organisations and stakeholders by Landcare. This component is about connecting, collating and sharing knowledge, practice and learnings. It is the central hub that lifts productivity and effectiveness across the whole



Activities and outcomes of the Community of Practice Component.

## REGIONAL COORDINATORS 11 X 1 FTE

To ensure the program delivers on its goals, Regional Coordinators are needed in each of the 11 Local Land Services regions. In light of the changes in the Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitator program and federal priorities, it is likely that failure to invest in regional coordinators at a state level would see significant declines in the effectiveness of Landcare across the state.

Feedback from the ground, supported by mid-term evaluation, is that these positions are essential. Regional coordinators have been part of the Victorian program for many years.



Regional Coordinator Component benefits and outcomes.

## PEOPLE DEVELOPMENT

The NSW Landcare Program is a significant employer. The current LLCI is responsible for the employment of 70 people in part time roles hosted by volunteer organisations. These jobs are highly valued in small communities, often in remote areas. Going forward the plan is to invest back into hard working local coordinators of the NSW Landcare Program, to support training, capacity development and other modern workplace practices.

## PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

The Program will continue to be jointly managed by Local Land Services and Landcare NSW under the oversight of a Joint Management Committee reporting to the Minister.

The model of co-governance, co-management and co-delivery generates benefits for government agencies, partners and the Landcare community – ensuring positive environmental, agricultural and social outcomes. The management component will focus on the administration of program funding, the development of and maintenance of relationships between the program and host organisations, evaluation, the promotion of success and ensuring the success and growth of all elements of the program.



Many Hands, One Voice