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MEDIA RELEASE

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LANDCARE READY TO STEP UP AND RESPOND TO ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES

The NSW Landcare community is ready and willing to help whichever party wins government on 18 May to protect and restore the environment.

“The biggest challenge the new Government will face is managing our natural resources sustainably in the context of a changing climate and the needs of a growing population,” said Landcare NSW CEO Dr Adrian Zammit.

Landcare is a community movement that was initiated by a group of farmers 30 years ago. It has been replicated in 20 countries. Local people form Landcare groups and respond to issues in their local area, such as farming more sustainably, restoring rivers and waterways, creating wildlife corridors, revegetating landscapes etc.

A recent report found investment of \$1 in Landcare returns \$6 in economic benefits, equating to \$500m per year in NSW.

Over 30 years, Landcare in NSW has developed an infrastructure of 3000 groups supported by a network of paid professional staff who provide guidance and support to more than 60,000 volunteers.

“Landcare groups contribute a massive amount of voluntary work and are highly effective at leveraging support from various sources but they cannot operate without sufficient federal, state and local government funding. Funds are needed for Local Coordinators and core administrative support and for grants to do on-ground work,” explained Dr Zammit.

“The major political parties in NSW have pledged their support for Landcare and as a result of the State Government’s funding and support from the Opposition and other parties Landcare has been rebuilding over the past four years. This partnership has led to a resurgence of local activity and is highly valued by the Landcare community.

“However, the Federal Government and major parties have been missing in action. Despite the name, the *National Landcare Program* largely does not support community Landcare. The cuts to the NLP in Phase Two have had serious consequences for the NSW Landcare community and threaten to unravel progress achieved over the past few years through the positive Landcare/NSW Government partnership.

A policy document developed by the National Landcare Network and Landcare Australia states that federal funding for Landcare is at a lower annual level than 1997. <http://nln.org.au/>

Landcare NSW is seeking a concrete commitment from all political parties to reinvigorate Landcare in Australia with federal reform to ensure the support hits the ground where local Landcare groups are ready and motivated to provide their own expertise, time and money to manage our natural resources and deal with our environmental challenges.

Landcare NSW recently compiled information based on input from Landcare community representatives to understand the impact of the recent federal funding reductions – see attached for a region-by-region breakdown.

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