

# WHAT IS A 'COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE'

## ABOUT

*"A community of practice is a group of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly. This definition reflects the fundamentally social nature of human learning. It is very broad."* (<https://wenger-trayner.com/introduction-to-communities-of-practice/>).

A Community of Practice (CoP) is a group of people who share a common concern, a set of problems, or an interest in a topic and who come together to fulfill both individual and group goals. The individuals who come together in a CoP are practitioners –developing a shared repertoire of resources: experiences, stories, tools, ways of addressing recurring problems.

The Regional Community of Practice (RCoP) component of the **2019 – 2023 NSW Landcare Program** is an opportunity for Landcarers across a region to get together to work out how to do things better, from protecting soils, to riparian restoration.

Everyone has a voice and there is meaningful two-way conversation which ultimately leads to an improved environment. However, the success of a CoP is not just measured by the improvement in the environment, but also in better communication outcomes, stronger social bonds, or a more connected community.

Communities of practice are also important as a professional learning strategy, because they have the potential to stimulate learning by serving as a vehicle for authentic communication, mentoring, coaching, and self-reflection.

(CoPs) collaborate regularly to share information, improve their skills, and actively work on advancing the general knowledge of the domain.

A Community of Practice is driven by the value it brings to the members. People volunteer to be part of the community because it is interesting, and it helps them to be more effective. A CoP normally has a much longer life than a project team or task force. It continues as long as it is useful to its members. It is the ideal model for Landcarers whose focus is on repairing the land in perpetuity, not just for the life of a program.

The term "community of practice" is of relatively recent coinage, even though the phenomenon it refers to is age-old.

### **2019 – 2023 NSW Landcare Program.**

"The Community of Practice component is about connecting existing groups with networks in ways that magnify peer support outcomes, collation and sharing of knowledge, practices and learnings across a range of topics at a range of scales. It will invest in state and regional scale forums designed to bring Landcarers together to do what they do best... connect as a community" (A. Zammit. CEO, Landcare NSW).

**DISCLAIMER:** The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of July 2020. However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that information upon which they rely is up to date and to check currency of the information the user's independent advisor.



**Landcare**  
New South Wales