

# STARTING A LANDCARE GROUP

## THE A-B-C OF STARTING A LANDCARE GROUP

### ADMINISTRATION STUFF

Good on you for wanting to start a Landcare group!

To start off, it's important to answer some of the who, what, why, where, when and how questions:

- Who will be joining your group?
- What is the name of your group?
- Why are you starting your group?
- What will your group's rules or constitution look like?
- Who will be running the group?
- Who will sign the official documents of the group?
- Where will your group's activities be held?
- How will you protect your members and the group against lawsuits or claims?

Once you have sorted out these questions, you may wish to incorporate either as an Incorporated Association or as a Company.

Please refer to LNSW Guidelines [START G1.2 Business Structures for Landcare Groups](#) for more information.

### COMMITTEES

Once your group is formed, you'll need some appointed members to run it.

If your group is small, perhaps all your members could be involved in managing the group, but for larger groups, a governing body (i.e. Management Committee or Board) is usually formed and office bearers (e.g. Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer) elected.

You may find the following suggestions helpful:

- Your governing body should be large enough to accommodate a variety of skills and perspectives but not too large as to hinder decision-making
- The term of office for any Committee or

Board members should be specified and their performance reviewed regularly

- Committee or Board members should always act in good faith in all matters relating to your group
- Committee or Board members should have an understanding of the regulatory responsibilities
- A Code of Conduct may be considered for the group

### BANKING AND MONEY MATTERS

If your group is receiving money from members and/or outside sources, your Management Committee or Board will need to exercise care and diligence in managing the money.

Once you've formed the group, you'll need to do the following:

- Open a bank account in the name of your group
- Appoint at least two authorised signatories
- Apply for an ABN and register for GST if appropriate [here](#)
- Apply for not-for-profit or charity status which may entitle you to tax concessions or exemptions – please see LNSW Guidelines [GROW G7.4 Charity Status & Tax Exemptions](#)
- Use a suitable financial accounting and reporting system
- Prepare regular management accounts to facilitate timely financial decision making
- Understand the financial reporting requirements for an Association or a Company

### YOUR COMMITMENTS

You will appreciate that getting the right people on your Management Committee or Board is extremely important.

The people you choose to be on your governing body should be aware of the following commitments:



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- Have sufficient time to attend meetings and effectively discharge responsibilities
- Seek to acquire a working knowledge of all activities or business that your group is involved in
- Able to appreciate your group's financial position and resources
- Able to understand and relate to stakeholders
- Be a team player
- Recognise when to seek help beyond the understanding or expertise of the Management Committee or Board

### USEFUL LINKS

#### Landcare NSW

<http://www.landcarensw.org.au/>

Template documents, marketing documents and factsheets to help new Landcare groups along the way. Please note the majority of these guidelines are available only to [LNSW members](#).

#### National Landcare Network

<http://www.nln.org.au>

Informational on the elected representative peak body for Landcare in Australia.

#### Landcare Australia

<http://www.landcareonline.com.au/>

Plenty of useful resources and case studies.

#### ACNC

<http://www.acnc.gov.au>

Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Commission website. Click on the Guides link for documents for new committees / boards.

#### NSW Department of Fair Trading

<https://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/associations-and-co-operatives>

Information on how to start an Association in NSW.

#### NSW Landcare Gateway

<https://landcare.nsw.gov.au/>

Look for Landcare activity in your area.

#### Register Your Group

[https://landcareaustralia.org.au/nld\\_form/](https://landcareaustralia.org.au/nld_form/)

Register your group **here** on the online National Landcare Directory

#### Local Land Services

<http://www.lls.nsw.gov.au/>

It is also a good idea to register with your relevant Local Land Services office.

#### Local Government

<https://www.olg.nsw.gov.au/public/local-government-directory/>

And your Local Government.

DISCLAIMER: The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of June 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 with the user's independent advisor.

