



## ***Governance Check-up***

**What you need to know about upcoming changes**



**March 2025**

*Landcare is sold as a grassroots organisation. One of the risks to future funding is if these regional bodies don't drive coordination with Landcare NSW as the state peak. From our perspective, we are dealing with fewer organisations. That was one of the big steps forward. There is no doubt that we must find a much better balance between state-wide consistency and local delivery. Landcare NSW needs to demonstrate that it has taken steps to ensure greater consistency across the state. Hopefully, people will realise we are mostly the same. You might have a 20% variation but 80% in common.*

NSW Government

#### **NOTICE**

This report was prepared by THINK: Insight & Advice Pty Ltd for Landcare NSW (LNSW) using information provided by LNSW, its leadership, management, members, and external stakeholders. While all reasonable care and skill has been taken in preparing this paper, THINK does not accept any liability in relation to any loss or damage incurred because of or in relation to reliance on our findings.



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## What is the Governance Check-up?

The Governance Check-up is part of a two-part project – Governance and Strategy Check-up - commissioned in 2024 to review the organisation's governance and set a new strategy. A common consultation exercise was held to feed both projects. It was made up of:

- One-on-one interviews - 16 x 60 min
  - LNSW Board
  - Commonwealth Government
  - NSW Government
  - Other e-NGOs
  - Corporate partner
- Focus groups – 4 x 90 min
  - Regional Chairs
  - Landcare Groups
- State Advisory Council – 1 x 90 min – 7 August 2024
- Fieldwork conducted: 17 July – 1 August 2024

The first part of the Governance and Strategy Check-up resulted in the publication of a new strategic plan. This report covers the proposed governance changes.

The governance component of the project included several in-person and virtual elements, including:

- Briefing session for Local Landcare Coordinators – 20 August 2024
- Update at the Landcare NSW AGM - 20 November 2024
- Update at Landcare NSW Board meetings – 10 December 2024 and 17 February 2025
- Insurance review meetings – 22 January 2024 and 28 February 2025
- Final consultation with State Advisory Council – 3 March 2025

This paper has been published as pre-reading for participants in subsequent rounds of consultation.

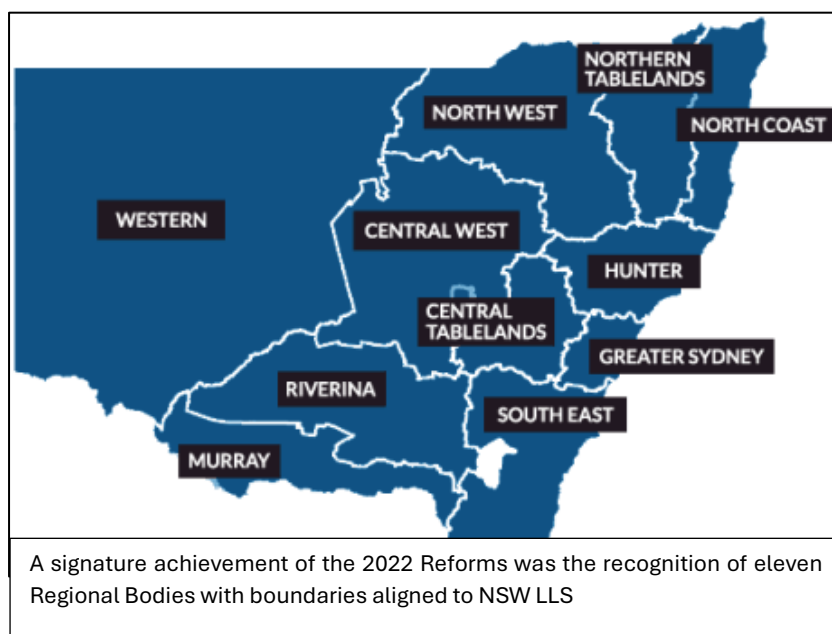
A Special General Meeting will be called in the first half of 2025 to seek member support for the Propositions for Change detailed below.

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 Managing Director  
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## Reactions to the 2022 Reforms

In 2022, Landcare NSW (LNSW) engaged THINK to lead a governance renewal process, ensuring the organisation remained fit for purpose and eligible for ongoing government funding. A key driver of these reforms was the NSW Government's requirement that organisations seeking more than \$20 million annually in funding be incorporated as a company limited by guarantee (CLG). In addition to this structural change, broader governance reforms were introduced across the state.

### Overview of the Reforms



While many of the changes were not immediately visible to grassroots Landcarers, those familiar with the process viewed them positively. The reforms included restructuring the Board, introducing electoral zones, recognising regional bodies, and establishing a State Advisory Council (SAC). The Board now consists of two classes of directors: Ordinary Directors, elected by

members, and Independent Directors, appointed by the Nominations Committee and endorsed by the membership. Six electoral zones were created to elect Ordinary Directors, and eleven regional bodies were individually incorporated and formally recognised within the LNSW Constitution. The SAC was also established, comprising the chairs of regional bodies and LNSW officers.

Beyond these visible changes, several less apparent but equally significant reforms were implemented. LNSW's transition to a CLG provided a stronger corporate framework, imposing legal duties on directors. A Recruitment and Nominations Committee was formed to appoint four Independent Directors, including an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) Director. A Governance Charter was introduced to guide directors, and terminology was updated to ensure clarity and consistency when discussing the constituent parts of Landcare NSW. Additionally, measures were taken to prevent staff (including Landcare Enabling Program (LEP) staff), from participating in the governance system.



## Regional Bodies

One of the most prominent reforms has been the establishment of regional bodies. Five of the six preexisting regions transitioned smoothly, but the Western region presents a challenge due to its large geographical area and small population. The five newly established regional bodies are progressing at different rates, with some facing difficulties in volunteer recruitment. Extending recruitment efforts beyond traditional ‘on-ground’ participants may be necessary to address this.

Regional bodies tend to function most effectively when they employ a Regional Landcare Coordinator (RLC) dedicated to regional-level work. However, the interface with NSW Local Land Services (LLS) remains inconsistent at the regional level, with some LLS regions prioritising agricultural production and others focusing more on environmental sustainability. Despite these variations, the government perceives the formation of regional bodies as a uniformly positive development and has expressed interest in channelling more funding through them. To build confidence, a more consistent approach across all regions is needed. At the August 2024 SAC meeting, regional representatives acknowledged the need to enhance their capability and capacity to manage additional funding.

### 2022 Reforms

- Incorporated as a CLG
- Developed a new constitution
- Installed a Governance Board of Directors
  - 6 Ordinary Directors
  - 4 Independent Directors
    - Including an ATSI Director
- Recognised eleven regional bodies with boundaries aligned to LLS regions
  - 6 existing
  - 5 new
- Established State Advisory Council as the members’ voice to the Landcare NSW Board

## State Advisory Council

The concept of the SAC is widely supported, but its implementation has been inconsistent. The effectiveness of the SAC often depends on the capacity and leadership of individual Regional Chairs. In some regions, Regional Chairs have not been effectively sharing information, leading members to seek updates through informal channels, which can create mistrust. While RLCs are intended to support communication efforts, there have been instances where they have dominated discussions. As LNSW has no direct authority over RLCs, their employer organisations need to ensure they fulfil their communication responsibilities and adhere to appropriate professional standards.

## Governance Board

The transition to a CLG model is seen as a positive step among those familiar with governance processes. However, some members perceive the Board as being more distant than before, which is a common sentiment when an organisation shifts from a representative to a

governance-focused board. Additionally, board discussions now often centre on risk management and financial matters, which may not directly engage the broader membership.

The introduction of Independent Directors has been well received, but recruiting and retaining an ATSI Director has been challenging. Another issue is the uneven workload distribution among directors, raising concerns about burnout. Looking ahead, there is a possibility that the Board may transition to a fully independent model to ensure it has the necessary expertise.

Recruiting State-wide Directors free from conflicts of interest has proven difficult due to the many overlapping roles Landcarers hold. Furthermore, the specific skill sets required for board positions are not always available in the electoral zones where elections must be held. To address these challenges, consideration may need to be given to director remuneration. Directors in not-for-profit organisations increasingly receive stipends due to the growing complexity and liability of governance roles. However, accessing funding for paid director positions may be challenging.

## **Conclusion**

The governance reforms introduced in 2022 have strengthened LNSW's structure and positioned it for future funding opportunities. While broadly seen as beneficial, challenges remain in achieving consistency across regional bodies, improving SAC effectiveness, addressing board recruitment difficulties, and managing director workloads. Continued refinement of governance practices will be essential to sustaining and building on these reforms.



## Nomination and election of directors

Under the 2022 governance reforms, all candidates seeking election as directors of Landcare NSW Limited must first be vetted and approved by the Recruitment and Nominations Committee. This process ensures that the Board is composed of individuals whose skills complement each other, rather than being duplicated, and that it maintains the necessary expertise for effective governance.

### Composition of the Recruitment and Nominations Committee

The Recruitment and Nominations Committee is a General Committee that may include up to five members. Its composition is designed to ensure diverse perspectives and independent decision-making. The committee consists of:

- The Vice Chair (who serves as Chair of the Nominations Committee)
- The Secretary
- An Ordinary Director
- An Independent Director
- A former Director or an Honorary Life Member

To maintain impartiality and prevent conflicts of interest, no member of a Regional Committee or an employee of Landcare NSW may serve on the Recruitment and Nominations Committee.

### Role and Responsibilities of the Recruitment and Nominations Committee

One of the key functions of the Recruitment and Nominations Committee is to develop and maintain a skills matrix to identify gaps in expertise on the Board. This ensures that the Board maintains a diverse range of skills necessary for strategic oversight and governance. However, there is a trend in the not-for-profit sector to expand the matrix to include both skills and perspectives. Landcare NSW requires specific skills and a diversity of perspectives, including viewpoints based on geographic location, gender, age, aboriginality and ethnocultural heritage to inform its decision-making.

Currently, the Recruitment and Nominations Committee is required to fill Ordinary Director vacancies from the same electoral zone where the vacancy occurred. However, in some regions, finding candidates who possess the necessary skills and are willing to serve has been challenging. Given that the State Advisory Council (SAC) provides the representative voice of regional Landcare to the Board, some stakeholders have questioned whether it is necessary also to require that directors be drawn from specific geographic zones.

### Proposed Changes and Stakeholder Feedback

During consultations, several stakeholders suggested that the Nominations Committee should be allowed to search statewide to fill vacancies rather than being restricted to a specific electoral zone. This would ensure the most qualified and suitable candidates are recruited, strengthening the Board's overall effectiveness.

At the November 2024 Governance Workshop, participants expressed support for removing Board electoral zones in favour of a statewide approach to recruitment. In addition, they recommended two key refinements to the nomination process:



1. Expanding the membership of the Nominations Committee to include two appointees from the State Advisory Council (SAC).
2. Expanding the skills matrix to encompass both technical skills and diverse perspectives, including 'geographic location' as a criterion for consideration.

### **Election Process and Candidate Endorsement**

Traditionally, Nominations Committees have assessed and appointed directors one by one, based on their individual skills and expertise. However, there is a growing recognition that an effective board is more than the sum of its parts. Increasingly, organisations are adopting a 'slate' approach—nominating a cohort of directors whose collective skills, experience, and perspectives are deliberately selected to complement one another. With these proposed changes, Landcare NSW's Recruitment and Nominations Committee would present a slate of candidates for endorsement at each Annual General Meeting.

### **Conclusion**

The proposed refinements to the nomination and election process reflect Landcare NSW's ongoing commitment to strong governance and strategic leadership. By broadening the candidate search beyond electoral zones, refining the selection criteria and focusing on the skills and expertise of the Board as a whole, these changes aim to ensure that the Board continues to attract high-calibre directors capable of guiding the organisation effectively into the future.

#### **Propositions for Change**

Amend the LNSW Constitution to:

1. Allow the Recruitment and Nominations Committee to search state-wide for candidates to nominate to the LNSW Board
2. Add two SAC members to the Recruitment and Nominations Committee
3. Broaden the Board Skills Matrix to include 'perspectives' and add 'geographic location' as a search criterion for Board candidates

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **Are competitive elections still permitted even if the Recruitment and Nominations Committee presents a slate of candidates for endorsement?**

Yes. If two candidates are equally qualified and the Committee is unable to determine a clear choice, a competitive election can be conducted. This ensures a fair and transparent selection process while maintaining the necessary skill set for the Board.

#### **How will the two SAC members of the Recruitment and Nominations Committee be chosen?**

At least one month before the Annual General Meeting, the Recruitment and Nominations Committee must nominate the members of the succeeding Nominations Committee. The Committee will consult the SAC to gather recommendations on suitable candidates. All



nominees will then be appointed by acclamation of the Voting Members at the Annual General Meeting.

**How will the Nominations Committee use ‘geographic location’ when managing Board nominations?**

The Nominations Committee will record each director’s residential address to identify gaps in the Board’s geographic representation. While the Committee is expected to collaborate with all Regional Bodies to identify potential candidates, it may work more intensively with specific Regional Bodies if it determines that a particular geographic perspective is underrepresented.

**What is a ‘Skills and Perspectives Matrix’?**

A Skills and Perspectives Matrix is an expanded version of a traditional skills matrix, which assesses the Board’s current skills compared to those needed. In addition to technical skills, this matrix also considers diverse perspectives, including factors such as geographic representation, gender, age, aboriginality and ethnocultural heritage to ensure a well-rounded governance structure.

**Can members access the Skills and Perspectives Matrix before an election?**

Yes. The process requires the Nominations Committee first to develop the Skills and Perspectives Matrix and identify any gaps in skills and perspectives. The Committee then establishes search criteria for the next election and seeks Board endorsement. These criteria are published with the Call for Nominations, ensuring transparency and allowing all members to be informed in advance.



## Composition and size of the Board

### Board Composition

The composition of the Landcare NSW Board has evolved over time, with the addition of independent directors in 2022 being particularly well-received. These independent directors have brought much-needed financial and governance expertise to the Board and have demonstrated a strong commitment to their roles. At the same time, Ordinary Directors have also contributed valuable skills, particularly in the areas of Natural Resource Management (NRM) and Landcare.



Given that the State Advisory Council serves as the voice of regional Landcare to the State Board, some participants suggested that all directors should be appointed based on their skills and expertise rather than their place of residence and that the distinction between Ordinary Directors and Independent Directors be removed. Instead, . Recognising the ongoing need for NRM and Landcare knowledge within the Board, participants recommended that ‘NRM/Landcare experience’ be explicitly included in the Board’s Skills and Perspectives Matrix and director search criteria.

### Board Size

In terms of size, the Board currently consists of ten directors, including six Ordinary Directors and four Independent Directors. However, several participants raised concerns that the Board may be too large to function effectively. The six Ordinary Director positions were intended to align with the six Board Electoral Zones. With the planned removal of these zones, some questioned whether a smaller Board might be more practical. Board recruitment has also become increasingly difficult, as it is challenging to find individuals who are both willing to serve on a voluntary basis and possess the necessary skills.

While the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD) recommends that Boards have between seven and nine members, workshop participants were reluctant to reduce the size, recognising the significant workload a voluntary Board must manage, particularly in the absence of a professional CEO.

To address these concerns while maintaining flexibility, participants proposed amending the constitution to allow for a variable Board size. They suggested setting a minimum of seven directors while permitting the appointment of up to ten members as needed to share the



workload. Importantly, it was agreed that a seat should always be reserved for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander director.

### **Propositions for change**

Amend the LNSW Constitution to:

4. Create a single class of LNSW director
5. Add 'Landcare experience' to the Skills and Perspectives Matrix (i.e., NRM/Landcare experience gained through volunteering or paid employment with an NRM/Landcare organisation or through work on boards and committees)
6. Allow the board to function with between seven and ten directors
7. Continue to reserve a minimum of one seat for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **How will the Nominations Committee determine if a candidate has 'NRM/Landcare experience'?**

The Nominations Committee will assess a candidate's NRM or Landcare experience based on their volunteering within a Landcare organisation, employment in the sector, or service on NRM or Landcare boards or commissions.

#### **What will be the balance between directors with NRM/Landcare experience and those with other expertise?**

The Nominations Committee will determine the appropriate balance based on Landcare NSW's strategic priorities and organisational needs at any given time. This approach gives the Board the flexibility to ensure the right mix of expertise.

#### **Could Landcare NSW lack sufficient NRM/Landcare experience to operate effectively as a peak body?**

No. Landcare NSW will always require multiple directors with NRM/Landcare experience. These skills are essential to the Board's composition and will remain a priority in director recruitment.

#### **If only seven directors are endorsed at an Annual General Meeting, will the Board have to wait a whole year before appointing more directors?**

No. Any additional directors can be appointed as 'casual vacancies' per the process outlined in the constitution.

## Terms and conditions of directors

### Terms

Currently, directors of Landcare NSW are limited to serving two three-year terms, with a maximum tenure of six years. However, this restriction does not apply to those elected as Chair or Treasurer, whose terms are not subject to this limit. Given the challenges in recruiting qualified directors, some participants suggested allowing directors to serve an additional three-year term, extending the maximum tenure from six to nine years. This change would provide greater continuity and retain experienced members on the Board.

Workshop participants were divided on this proposal. Many believed that governance processes, rather than constitutional amendments, could better address concerns about director tenure. Ultimately, participants agreed that directors should be permitted to serve a third term, but reappointment should not be automatic. The Nominations Committee should review each director's performance and attendance before endorsing them for an additional term, whether their second or third. Moreover, the committee should only renew the terms of directors who continue to bring skills needed by the Board, as skill requirements change over time.

### Conditions

Under the current constitution of Landcare NSW Limited, the Board Chair may receive a stipend to compensate for time away from self-employment or reimburse an employer for absences related to Landcare responsibilities. Workshop participants were asked whether this provision should be expanded to include stipends for other board officers, such as the Vice Chair, Treasurer, Secretary and an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander director.

After discussion, participants agreed that the stipend provision should be extended to all directors equally, including an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander director. However, members must approve any payments at the Annual General Meeting.

#### Propositions for change

Amend the LNSW Constitution to:

8. Allow directors to be nominated for a third term (given satisfactory performance and attendance)
9. Make a provision for the payment of a stipend to all directors subject to approval at the Annual General Meeting



## Frequently Asked Questions

### **What is considered acceptable attendance for directors?**

According to the Constitution, a director ceases to hold office if they are absent from three consecutive meetings or four meetings within a calendar year without the Board's consent. However, a director must maintain an attendance record that significantly exceeds this minimum standard to be eligible for a stipend.

### **What is considered acceptable performance?**

Assessing a director's performance involves multiple factors and requires a degree of subjectivity. The Nominations Committee evaluates each director's contributions based on their engagement, effectiveness, and adherence to governance expectations. If a director is found to have breached the Board Charter, the Committee may determine that they are ineligible to receive a stipend on performance grounds.

### **How much is the stipend?**

The Constitution specifies that the stipend must be a 'modest amount.' Typically, directors receive half the stipend awarded to the Board Chair. In 2022, the Chair received a stipend of \$20,000 for the year.

### **Who is eligible to receive a stipend?**

Any director or their employer can receive a stipend—but not both. The stipend is intended to compensate self-employed directors for lost income or to reimburse an employer who allows a director to take time off from their regular work to fulfil Landcare NSW responsibilities.



## Membership: The first building block of governance

Membership is the first building block of governance for not-for-profit organisations in Australia. To incorporate as a company limited by guarantee, an organisation must have at least one member; the most influential have hundreds and thousands of members. Rooted in the principles of liberal democracy, not-for-profits are governed by directors elected by their members, ensuring accountability and representation between annual meetings. As a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee, Landcare NSW operates as a membership-based association.

### The Challenge of Membership for Landcare NSW

Despite its governance structure, Landcare NSW has struggled to build and sustain a strong membership base. One of the key barriers is its close association with the government's Landcare Enabling Program (LEP). People do not typically join government programs, and for Landcare NSW to grow its membership, it must offer more than just its role within the LEP.

A compelling membership proposition often stems from a strong advocacy agenda, which differentiates an organisation from the government and inspires people to join. However, membership has not been a priority for Landcare NSW since its establishment in 2007. In fact, at various points in its history, Landcarers have actively resisted the structure that membership imposes. When a new governance structure was developed in 2022, 'membership' was ruled out of scope, further sidelining its importance.

The current LEP requires Landcare NSW to develop new revenue streams to achieve financial self-sufficiency by the end of the program period. While this condition has historically been stated but not enforced, there remains a real risk that the government will eventually insist on its implementation.

### The Value of a Paid Membership

A well-structured membership program offers several benefits, both for members and for the organisation:

- **A Shared Purpose** – Membership unites individuals and groups around a common goal. A strong value proposition is not merely a marketing tool; it is a commitment to achieving the organisation's mission.
- **Pride and Belonging** – Being part of a recognised movement amplifies members' efforts at the local level and fosters a sense of collective achievement.
- **Stability** – Membership revenues provide financial stability, helping to cover core operational expenses such as board governance and executive leadership. This is particularly crucial for organisations that rely heavily on government funding. With 89% of its FY23–24 revenue coming from government sources, Landcare NSW remains vulnerable to funding cuts.
- **Advocacy Strength** – A large and engaged membership base enhances the credibility of an organisation, particularly when advocating for funding and policy change. Political



influence is often measured by the number of paid members, making membership a key factor in advocacy efforts.

For many years, Landcare NSW claimed—without evidence—to represent 60,000 Landcarers across the state. Today, it acknowledges privately that its actual reach is significantly smaller, with an estimated 5,490 members, including 269 local groups and 110 individual members. If these figures were widely known, they could undermine the organisation’s credibility and its ability to advocate effectively.

### Perceptions of Landcare NSW and Its Membership

Landcare NSW struggles with visibility. In some regions, regional chairs and staff filter or control communication with local groups, limiting engagement. Additionally, because Landcare NSW is closely tied to the LEP, it is often perceived as an extension of the program rather than an independent organisation. This means that Landcare NSW bears the blame when aspects of the LEP are unpopular.

A further challenge is that membership in Landcare NSW is often conflated with insurance. The membership structure is complex and sometimes perceived as competing with local and regional groups. Many Landcarers see their local or regional bodies as their primary representative organisations, particularly since

these entities predate Landcare NSW, have stronger infrastructure, and offer more direct support. Strengthening regional bodies could, in turn, help reinforce Landcare NSW’s role as the state peak body.

### Barriers to Membership Growth

Several factors contribute to the difficulty in attracting and retaining members:

- **A Weak Membership Value Proposition** – Many Landcarers see little benefit beyond insurance. Templates and resources that could support local groups have been removed from the Landcare NSW website, and members often turn to Landcare Victoria’s free resources instead.
- **Lack of a Distinct Public Purpose** – A compelling public purpose attracts members. Young people interested in environmental action have many competing membership options, and Landcare NSW must do more to articulate why joining is valuable.
- **The Government Program Association** – Many potential members do not see a need to pay for membership in what they perceive as a government initiative.
- **Financial Misconceptions** – Some believe that Landcare NSW is a wealthy organisation because of its government funding, further discouraging paid membership.

#### Landcare NSW Membership Structure

**Voting** Landcare Groups

- Local
- Special purpose

**Non-voting** District Networks  
Associate members  
Individual members

#### Regional Bodies – Important Note

Although the eleven Regional Bodies are individually incorporated, they are recognised as integral parts of the organisation within the Landcare NSW Constitution. As such, they are not members.



- **Volunteer Culture** – Many Landcarers feel they contribute through their time and effort and do not see the need to pay fees to participate.
- **Perceived Low Value** – Membership fees are currently low, often seen as token or commitment fees rather than meaningful contributions.
- **Structural Issues** – Small and unincorporated groups can access all membership benefits through an affiliated incorporated entity, reducing the incentive to join. Meanwhile, groups that allow unincorporated groups to ‘piggyback’ on their insurance may not fully realise the liability they assume for unincorporated partners.

### Addressing the Challenges

To strengthen its membership base, Landcare NSW must clarify its value proposition, improve transparency, and reinforce the benefits of paid membership. Greater focus on advocacy, public engagement, and direct member support will be essential to reversing current trends.

Additionally, reforms to the membership structure—such as eliminating insurance loopholes, ensuring equitable access to resources, and fostering stronger regional connections—can help restore credibility and encourage broader participation.

Ultimately, a thriving membership base is critical to Landcare NSW’s financial sustainability, advocacy influence, and long-term success. Addressing these challenges will be key to securing its future as a strong, independent voice for Landcare in New South Wales.

#### Propositions for Change

There are no propositions to change the LNSW Constitution with respect to membership. It is felt that the current structure is adequate but that the rules around which benefits such as access to insurance and the Landcare Enabling Program need to be clarified instead. If Landcarers more clearly understand the urgent need for a large paid membership, they will join.

One of the outcomes of the Governance and Strategy Check-up Project is that Landcare NSW has adopted new statements of purpose, mission, vision and values. By adopting a more purpose-driven approach, Landcare NSW is better positioned to offer a compelling membership value proposition.

#### Purpose

Landcare NSW’s purpose is...

***To nurture productive, resilient landscapes and communities.***

#### Mission

Our work is...

***To advocate for the environment and enable our members to care for Country and nurture productive and resilient landscapes and communities.***



## Vision

When our work is done...

***Landcare NSW will have supported its member groups to deliver lasting environmental, social, health and well-being benefits by sustainably managing natural capital, nurturing productive and resilient landscapes, and enhancing biodiversity for future generations.***

It has also refreshed its statement of values:

*As we work, we will...*

- *Honour the **First Nations People** as **the original Landcarers** and Traditional Custodians of NSW*
- *Exercise leadership by **consulting our members** and **facilitating collective decision-making***
- *Build upon **trust** as the foundation of our advocacy and partnership with government, fostering mutual respect and collaborative success.*
- *Uphold **honesty, integrity, and respect** as the foundation of a healthy culture*
- *Recognise that **adaptability, agility and innovation** are essential in a changing world*
- *Value **collaboration** and actively build partnerships and strategic alliances*
- *Represent our members' views faithfully and advocate in a strictly **non-partisan** way*

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What problem was Landcare NSW formed to solve?

Landcare NSW was established to restore funding, replace organisational support, and reconnect Landcarers across the state following the end of the Decade of Landcare funding in 2004.

### How did Landcare NSW solve the problem?

Landcare NSW formed a membership-based association, establishing a legal entity to advocate for funding, build an organisational support structure, and facilitate connections among members.

### Why is a membership-based association needed?

A membership-based association is essential because it provides a legal entity to conduct business and manage funds. Not-for-profit associations can only be owned by their members, ensuring that control and benefits remain within the community they serve. Additionally,

associations support a democratic governance system, aligning with the principles of Australia's liberal-democratic society by giving members a voice in decision-making.

**Why should membership-based associations only serve their members?**

Membership-based associations exist to serve their members exclusively. They are private entities focused on advancing the mission that members collectively own. Providing services to non-members would dilute the value of paid membership and undermine the benefits reserved for those within the association. Furthermore, Landcare NSW has no formal relationship with non-members, reinforcing its commitment to prioritising and supporting its member community.





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