



Landcare should be the umbrella management of the essential stewardship of the most important elements of life - water, land, air-seeking recognition and commitment from government and the community applying the required sophisticated thinking and essential understanding of the need for localized involvement.

Landcare Listening Forums | Summary Report | 2015

During 2015, Queensland Water and Land Carers (QWaLC) undertook to hold a series of 'listening forums' across the State. The following is a summary of the responses.

What our members told us.

Valued key strengths to build on:

- reputation & networking
- promotion & advocacy
- education & services

Strategic opportunities:

- engagement
- education
- funding
- longer term plans and projects
- landscape management strategies

Membership led direction over the next three years.

Vision, Ethic and the Landcare Name

Unified vision and consolidated organisational structure with Landcare building on its name and increasing in strength and breadth. Leaders providing direction, supported by members and the broader community to retain independent grassroots but having a partnership arrangement with government at all levels. Continuation of current services, such as providing advice, the facilitation of regional, cross regional, state and national networking opportunities and organising collective insurance cover. Generally positive about the future of the movement, depending on government recognizing the role of Landcare and its members and providing adequate support through funding and other resources. Landcare needs to be innovative in its approach.

Networking and Volunteers

Networking is of great importance and is highly valued. Engagement of young people is a high priority. Capturing of current experience would provide 'insurance of continuity' in the event of a 'membership gap'. It was recommended for groups to have engagement with a broad age range, differing viewpoints and to use social media. Having less formalized group structures should be considered with people volunteering around areas of specific (and often short term) interest in a more ad-hoc fashion with a paid coordinator and small core group of organizers for planning and momentum.

Funding

Learn to do more with less and consider what projects can be achieved without funding. Decline/total lack of dedicated funding is seen to be one of the main threats to Landcare, natural resources and the environment by limiting on-ground work and may result in groups being information and education providers. Explore non-government funding sources. If funding can be secured Landcare will be at the forefront for delivering on-ground activities. Results come from the efficient, effective and sustainable allocation of funding, supported by ongoing obligatory management.

Education and Capacity

Maximise education opportunities, particularly for young people, to learn from one another and invited experts in a social setting. Promotion of Landcare at events not traditionally thought of as being linked to NRM through good partnership arrangements and mutual promotion.

The **appointment or reappointment of regional paid full or part time coordinators** was another common priority. Retention and enhancement of current capacity; coordination of projects and people; communications; partnering; research and assistance in securing of funding were all key reasons put forward to have dedicated Regional Landcare Coordinators.

Partnerships and Engagement

The successful engagement of community and working with a diverse range of external groups is key to being strong and effective. Landcare has a role in uniting and formalizing Landcare's partnering (i.e. MOUs) with other NRM organisations and all levels of government and should direct effort into partnering with commercial companies as well as conservation and other environmental groups to access innovative ideas and technologies, greater scope for communication and the sharing of resources.

Landscape Management

A core component of the movement with varied thinking on future priorities and direction, ranging from continuing with grassroots on-ground projects (i.e. weed management) to having a role of restoration and resilience building projects on behalf of governments.

Advocacy and Promotion

Priority should be given to continuing to advocate to all levels of government on the role of Landcare and its members, the importance of volunteers in managing our natural resources and the promotion of rural and urban needs. Support the government by seeking to contribute to Government policy. Communications (via social media campaigns) should highlight the many urgent issues and promote the great outcomes of the many significant projects undertaken across the State to focus political and ideological changes. As government will find it very difficult to meet environmental targets without more support for and from the Landcare movement we need to articulate that partnering with Landcare is a win/win situation and provides a direct connection to landholders and the general community at the grassroots level.

Other issues of importance:

- Reduction of paperwork.
- Funding to be directed to Landcare.
- Cut the cost of chemicals.
- Facilitating organic farming and backyards.
- Toxicology as a primary investigation tool.
- Funding of small scale specific needs.
- Continuity with successive governments.
- Promotion of removal of top barbed wire.
- Centralizing information via host website.
- Learning new techniques and skills such as planning.
- Support from the regional groups coordinator.
- National NRM Policy Council.
- Statistical leverage for advocacy.
- Clarification of roles.
- Use of Plans.
- Supporting our member's health and wellbeing.
- Inform of changes to legalization.
- Recognition by Government of extension work.
- Tax incentives for Landcare activities.
- Commercial recognition of good environmental practices.
- Weed control.

Members want:

- Free access to "The Hands".
- Promotion of Green Nomads.
- Notification of funding opportunities.
- 'Auspicing' in addition to incorporation.
- Development of a mobile App.
- Scouts Landcare badge.
- Green Army forces.
- Expanded definition of Landcare Group.
- Landcare is not just voluntary.
- Facebook site.
- Professional Leadership.
- Resilient organizational and operational structures.
- Recycling and refundable deposits.
- QWaLC - broader role, strong voice, input into policy, ensure all groups are aware of QWaLC's role and services.

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