

# Australian Framework for Landcare

Community Call for Action



Prepared for the Australian Landcare Community by the Australian Landcare Council



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## The Landcare approach comprises:

- a philosophy influencing the way people live in the landscape while caring for the land
- local community action putting the philosophy into practice
- a range of knowledge generation, sharing and support mechanisms including groups, networks (from district to national levels), facilitators and coordinators, government and non-government programs and partnerships.

### Australian Framework for Landcare Community Call for Action

The *Australian Framework for Landcare – Community Call for Action* is a practical guide for the Landcare movement and existing and prospective stakeholders and partners on how they can contribute to developing and improving the Landcare approach.

The *Australian Framework for Landcare* was developed in 2010 through extensive community consultation, and outlines key elements to support resilience and growth of the Landcare movement to 2020. The Framework sets out the Landcare approach in Australia and the achievements to date. It also provides a vision and aspirations for the future. The Framework represents a first stage—it provides the 'what'.

The *Community Call for Action* represents the second stage—it provides the 'how' and calls for response action from Landcare stakeholders and partners that will have benefits long into the future. It reflects community views; and actions proposed reflect requests made by the community. *The Community Call for Action* is based on the responses from written submissions from community-based groups, and Landcare and natural resource management organisations to the draft Landcare Framework Action Plan, which the Australian Landcare Council circulated widely for comment. It also takes into account the feedback from extensive consultations undertaken in 2010 for the

Australian Framework for Landcare. All these contributions are gratefully acknowledged.

The *Australian Framework for Landcare* and the *Community Call for Action* aim to engage all land managers and citizens across Australia in the Landcare approach. This approach supports farmers and pastoralists in developing robust and resilient businesses incorporating sustainable food and fibre production and natural resource conservation. It also supports engagement and participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Indigenous land management, people involved in sustainable resource management on public and private land and activities by young people through educational institutions.

The Australian Landcare Council has overseen development of the *Community Call for Action*. Landcare stakeholders and partners are encouraged to take up the call for action by developing and making their own strategies, plans for action and their commitment to Landcare.

Messages from the community have been arranged as a guide to the Framework's seven key elements. The Landcare movement and existing and prospective stakeholders and partners can draw on these messages in considering their individual responses to the *Community Call for Action*.

The *Community Call for Action* is designed to be read with the Australian Framework for Landcare, which can be downloaded from: [www.daff.gov.au/naturalresources/landcare/the\\_australian\\_landcare\\_framework](http://www.daff.gov.au/naturalresources/landcare/the_australian_landcare_framework) or email [alcsecretariat@daff.gov.au](mailto:alcsecretariat@daff.gov.au).

## Messages from the community – Strategic actions based on key elements of the *Australian Framework for Landcare*

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The *Australian Framework for Landcare* outlines how everyone can contribute to the success of Landcare. 'Everyone' includes the Landcare movement, Landcare associations, industry, corporations, regional natural resource management organisations and governments. It recognises the enormous value that partnerships at all levels add to the capacity and scope of Landcare and its outcomes.

Importantly, the Framework identifies a role for all Australians in the national vision for Landcare, where 'all Australians will take responsibility for the way they live in the landscape to ensure a healthy environment that supports a sustainable future.'

A strong message in the feedback from the Landcare community is the need to revive partnerships at the national level to better support the Landcare approach. This is particularly directed at Landcare associations, industry organisations, the corporate sector and government agencies. Community-based groups can and do operate effectively at a local level, but their overall effectiveness can be significantly enhanced by partnerships that support and complement the resources provided by groups and networks on the ground.

The seven key elements identified by the community are aspirations central to the sustainability and future development of the Landcare approach. A summary of the views of the Landcare movement is given under each key element, followed by suggested 'messages' for action (strategies). These strategies are interrelated and may apply to more than one key element. They are intended as a guide and can be modified according to individual needs.

### **All Australians will take responsibility for the way they live in the landscape to ensure a healthy environment that supports a sustainable future**

The key elements to progress this are:

- Opportunities to be involved: All people are inspired to participate.
- Effective information and knowledge sharing: Mechanisms are available for generating and sharing knowledge and information.
- Acknowledging change: The differences Landcarers make are measured and acknowledged.
- Links to plans at all levels: The Landcare approach is intrinsic to the big picture of sustainable resource management in national, state, regional and local planning.
- Succession planning: The vitality of people involved is maintained into the future by engaging all generations and cultures.
- Celebration: The achievements of Landcarers are recognised and celebrated by all Australians, together with the potential of the Landcare approach to meet future environmental challenges.
- Professional credentials established: Individuals, groups, support staff and networks involved in the Landcare approach achieve high standards of governance and professionalism.



## 1. Opportunities to be involved – All people are inspired to participate

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It is well established that no one takes greater care of their local environment than the people who live, work and play there. Local people also provide much of the resources invested locally in natural resource management, including through contributions to community-based groups. Strategies that take into account local knowledge and experience, and give the local community responsibility for identifying problems and designing and implementing solutions, are likely to be most effective, not only in producing results but also in encouraging people to take part.

Partnerships are a central feature of Landcare. Joint activity between community-based groups, Indigenous groups, regional natural resource management bodies, government agencies and commercial firms produce benefits for all parties.



There is no doubt that community-based groups are more active and effective, and attractive to members, where the availability of support being offered such as facilitators, technical information or government project funding is clear, reasonably long-term and predictable. It is well recognised that small grants are an effective means of supporting and nurturing community action.

### Messages from the community

Involve the community in decision making and ensure adequate resources are made available to facilitate this involvement.

Develop closer connection between Government officers & communities through annual visits.

Provide base-level funding for Landcare state peak bodies to support community-based groups.

Landcare networks should facilitate dialogue within communities to address differences.

Government agencies, corporations, industry organisations and regional and catchment management organisations. Actively work to identify and participate in partnerships between community-based groups, networks and associations.

Develop the skills and capabilities of local leaders and respect their views.

Ensure continuity and predictability of support arrangements, such as program funding and facilitator and coordinator availability, so there is a range of tangible volunteer opportunities across the landscape.

## 2. Effective information and knowledge sharing – Mechanisms are available for generating and sharing knowledge and information

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Landcarers emphasise the importance of effective communication of the valuable knowledge developed over many years within the Landcare movement. Communication is interwoven through most Framework elements. It relies on such things as a well informed community, well trained facilitators and

coordinators, access to science and technology, ways of measuring the range of complex natural resource, economic and social outcomes, good standards of recordkeeping and reporting and mechanisms for knowledge sharing.

Traditional methods of sharing knowledge, such as field days, site visits, conferences and awards, will continue to have an important place. The Landcare community places a high priority on finding ways of improving the sharing and exchange of information. Increased use of telecommunications and internet-based tools provides a way to help the community connect over vast distances and provide easy accessibility to information.

### Messages from the community

Involve the community in decision making and ensure adequate resources are made available to facilitate this involvement.

Establish a national forum to discuss issues and solutions between federal and state natural resource management organisations and the Landcare movement.

Establish mechanisms for formal consultation between regional and local levels.

Fill gaps in research and development programs that relate to challenges for the Landcare movement of food security, climate change, environmental protection and future landscapes.

Improve links between regional and local level participation and planning.

Facilitate information exchange within and between community-based groups and networks and between the Landcare movement and the wider community by all means, including workshops, newsletters, conferences, field days and awards for excellence.

Establish high standards of reporting results while developing user-friendly reporting systems, such as web-based systems, to minimise burdens on the Landcare community.

Maintain and consolidate good relationships with local media.

Establish a central database for housing and accessing project outcomes.



### 3. Acknowledging change – The difference Landcarers make is measured and acknowledged

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Landcare is associated with significant environmental, economic and social benefits. While the Landcare approach has resulted in significant change at the local level, the value of these changes in economic and environmental terms is difficult to identify and measure at broader regional, state and national scales. At the same time, the value of the Landcare approach to the social wellbeing of local and Indigenous communities is being increasingly

recognised. Landcare can be the facilitator of community learning and influence policies and programs for landscape change.

Landcarers want to find better ways of measuring both biophysical and social change to provide a better understanding of the Landcare movement's capacity to make change and contribute to national challenges such as food security, climate change and environmental protection. With effective measures of change, the Landcare community would be better placed to recognise and celebrate its achievements and contributions to national outcomes. As well, policy makers would understand how to engage most effectively with the Landcare movement to achieve better natural resource management outcomes.

#### Messages from the community

Develop a communication plan to ensure the Australian public has a clear understanding of Landcare's capacity to respond to key sustainability issues.

Develop indicators and measures of natural resource management social and institutional capacity as a basis for tracking the Landcare movement's performance.

Publish case studies and people stories that showcase all types of changes.



#### **4. Links to plans at all levels – The Landcare approach is intrinsic to the big picture of sustainable resource management in national, state, regional and local planning**

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In accord with comments made in the first Framework element, Landcarers place a high priority on measures that involve the community in developing and implementing local and regional plans. Many Landcarers believe the local

priorities and knowledge are the missing pieces in natural resource management planning.

The benefits of community engagement and ownership, particularly in regional and remote communities, and the ability to work across public and private land are well recognised. These capabilities should be acknowledged as a specific skill, when appointments to boards and committees are being made at all levels. The overall national sustainability and natural resource management effort would be enhanced as a result.

Networks of community-based groups are increasingly enhancing links between individual groups and other parts of the Landcare partnership.

#### **Messages from the community**

Develop a business case for the Landcare movement, incorporating social, economic, cultural and environmental outcomes.

Community skills and experience should be recognised in making appointments to regional, state and national committees and advisory bodies.

Regional and catchment management organisations should engage with Landcare networks as an entry point for understanding community priorities – facilitators and coordinators have a responsibility to facilitate this engagement.

Funding program guidelines should set minimum standards for community consultation as a prerequisite for funding approval.

## 5. Succession planning – The vitality of people involved is maintained into the future by engaging all generations and cultures

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The Landcare partnership is keen to find ways of attracting young people and engaging a broader cross-section of the community, including peri-urban and urban groups and people from culturally and linguistically diverse groups. An increased use of social media in conjunction with existing delivery models provides particular opportunities. Community

feedback has highlighted the value of Landcare courses and projects in schools as a way of raising awareness and encouraging young people to participate.

While individual groups are addressing leadership, membership and succession issues, they cannot deal with these alone. These issues are major challenges for the volunteer and not-for-profit movement as a whole, which includes most community-based groups such as Landcare. Despite these problems, the sector makes a significant and increasing contribution to the Australian economy. Guidance and support are needed at broader regional, state and national levels to ensure the environmental stewardship and volunteer aspects of the Landcare partnership continue to thrive.

### Messages from the community

Incorporate Landcare principles into the curriculum to link with schools and tertiary institutions.

Develop and support education and training programs to encourage and support young Landcarers.

Recognise that ongoing funding support for Landcare professionals contributes to the stability and continuity of community-based groups.

Contribute to discussions seeking to understand volunteerism and to develop appropriate support measures that encourage participation, targeting rural, urban, peri-urban, Indigenous and ethnic groups.



## 6. Celebration – The achievements of Landcarers are recognised and celebrated by all Australians, together with the potential of the Landcare approach to meet future environmental challenges

The Landcare brand has a high level of respect and recognition throughout the Australian community, and internationally. The Landcare logo has an awareness level of on average 77 per cent<sup>1</sup>, a key factor in attracting prospective partners.

<sup>1</sup> Roy Morgan Research, Landcare Australia Limited - commissioned in 2011

Landcarers consider awards at regional, state and national levels to be an effective way of celebrating the movement's achievements and demonstrating them to the broader community. At the local level, the enthusiastic exchanges between Landcare group members at conferences, field days and workshops reflect a high level of interest in what others are doing and a corresponding willingness of Landcare members to proudly display their achievements.

Australia is an international leader in promoting the Landcare approach, coupled with its technical expertise in land and water management. Other countries continue to show great interest in Australia's approach to Landcare as a way of engaging local communities in handling their local natural resource management and food production challenges.

### Messages from the community

Continue to recognise community achievements & partners through Landcare awards.

Improve ways of reporting on and communicating the Landcare movement's successes and contributions.

Develop metrics for demonstrating the contributions made by Landcare across all key outcome areas, including sustainable agriculture, conservation, community wellbeing and coherence, and the broader community's understanding and awareness of sustainability issues.

Promote the Australian Landcare approach and Australia's technical expertise as means of addressing land rehabilitation and management problems through Australia's overseas aid program.

## 7. Professional credentials established – Individuals, groups, support staff and networks involved in the Landcare approach achieve high standards of governance and professionalism

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Landcarers have highlighted that well-resourced support structures at all levels of the Landcare partnership are essential in maximising outcomes. The effectiveness of Landcare is enhanced by high standards of governance,

well-trained professional facilitators and coordinators as well as credible information and research developed in close partnership with the community.

It is important that support structures, suitable courses and competency standards are designed, not only to improve the functioning of and support for groups, but also to raise awareness about new and emerging issues. Such an approach can help build community capacity, capability and resilience.

Landcarers wish to, and do, display high standards of accountability but are concerned if reporting requirements go beyond what is essential in terms of recording and communicating outcomes and meeting financial accountability requirements.

### Messages from the community

Provide opportunities and support for community group members and support staff to undertake training to raise awareness about current issues, as well as develop leadership and relevant administration and occupational health and safety skills.

Design appropriate courses and associated competency standards relating to Landcare's needs.

Establish a national register of community-based groups.

Simplify reporting accountability and evaluation requirements.





## Framework review

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A clear message from the Landcare community is that the overall contribution of the Landcare movement to the Australian community's economic, environmental and social wellbeing needs to be articulated. In addition, ways need to be found to better measure, assess and report on the Landcare approach—on its performance and achievements overall. To address this, it is intended that a five-year (mid-term) review of the *Australian Framework for Landcare* and the *Community Call for Action* be undertaken, based on the proposed business case for the Landcare

movement. The review should address the movement's multiple outcomes and evaluate the progress that has been made against the key elements identified by the community.

The Australian Landcare Council will be responsible for overseeing the review on behalf of the Landcare community and will work closely with the Australian Government to identify opportunities and help the community fulfil its objectives. The council will report on the progress against implementation of the Framework and *Community Call for Action* and will provide updates through its website and in the council's Annual Report.

## An invitation for stakeholders and partners to contribute to the Australian Framework for Landcare 2010–20 Community Call for Action

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Stakeholders and partners are invited to respond to the *Australian Framework for Landcare 2010–20 Community Call for Action*.

Stakeholders and partners include:

- networks and associations supporting community-based group engagement and participation
- farmer, pastoralist and other industry bodies
- Indigenous groups
- regional, urban and peri-urban groups
- conservation groups
- the corporate sector
- research and development organisations
- regional natural resource management organisations
- government agencies at national, state and territory and local levels.

### Mutual benefits

The *Community Call for Action* provides an opportunity for existing and prospective stakeholders and partners to commit to supporting and engaging with the Landcare movement in addressing sustainable resource

management and production issues of common concern. The *Community Call for Action* will help revive partnerships at the national level to better support Landcare and to facilitate information exchange. It will continue to build stakeholder relations and encourage stakeholders to develop and implement their response strategies, and it will work closely with the Australian Government to identify opportunities to help the community fulfil its objectives.

### How will you support Landcare?

Stakeholders and partners are invited to develop their own response strategies to the *Community Call for Action*. The messages from the community in each key element should guide your contribution. These strategies can be modified and expanded as necessary.

It is recommended that response strategies be presented in the context of the seven key elements outlined in the *Community Call for Action*.

For more information on how existing and prospective stakeholders and partners can contribute, see the stakeholders and partnerships section of the *Australian Framework for Landcare*.

To submit your response strategy and for more information about the *Australian Framework for Landcare and Community Call for Action* visit **[www.daff.gov.au/natural-resources/landcare/the\\_australian\\_landcare\\_framework](http://www.daff.gov.au/natural-resources/landcare/the_australian_landcare_framework)**.

