

Landcare in Australia

founded on local action

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The strength of Australian Landcare is that community groups and networks, with government and corporate support, conceive their own visions and set goals for local and regional environmental action. Working from the ground up to achieve these goals creates freedom and flexibility, giving communities a great sense of purpose.

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I Landcare's development

Australia's problems

European colonisation in 1788 initiated massive clearing for farming and mining, leading to major soil and biodiversity losses, including extinction of many species, declining remnants of indigenous vegetation and several extensive regional salinity problems – both dryland and irrigation. Settlement also brought innumerable weed and pest animal infestations; and greatly reduced water quality through soil erosion and nutrient addition – with resultant algal blooms.

Landcare's roots

From 1945-85, a prosperous, development-oriented era, Australian farmers often received financial support for paddock- or farm-scale soil conservation, initially provided to individuals, and later to small local groups guided by state government representatives. These grant or loan schemes included free extension advice, were well run but labour-intensive, and were backed by research – mostly from government institutions. Some weed and pest control and tree-growing programs also operated. Basin-wide programs emerged in the 1960s, for example Victoria's Eppalock Project, which stabilised much of the erosion-prone upper Campaspe catchment. It involved several departments, built closer relations with landowners, produced better quality water for northern Victorian cities, towns and farms, and generated regional community support.

Several other Australian government programs and community organisations helped shape Landcare, including Victoria's Soil Conservation Authority group conservation projects (from the early 1960s), Garden State Committee farm trees groups (1981) and Salinity Bureau (1983); Western Australia's statutory Land Conservation District Committees (LCDCs) (1982); the New South Wales Government's drive for Total Catchment Management (1985); Tasmania's Private Forestry Division (late 1970s); the South Australian Soil Conservation Boards (1980s); Greening Australia (1983), with its subsequent One Billion Trees program (1990s); the National Soil Conservation Program; and Conservation Volunteers Australia – CVA (1982).

The Ian Potter Foundation's Potter Farmland Plan collaborated with farmers and the Victorian Government in the mid 1980s, underlining the philanthropic sector's role. Queensland's Darling Downs initiated regional projects,

influenced by Dr Brian Roberts and Joan Tully. Dogged individuals, such as Ernest 'Watershed' Jackson, Geoff Wilson, John Jack, Rob Davidson and Carrick Chambers, promoted revegetation and better resource management. The Western Australian LCDCs and the 180-member Warrenbayne Boho Land Protection Group in Victoria developed local leadership and created opportunities for independent community action.

The name 'Landcare' originated in the south-eastern mainland state of Victoria, where soil conservation programs were strong and a major salinity control initiative had begun in 1983-84 in affected regions. Seeking a statewide, more holistic program, Joan Kirner, Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands, enlisted help from Heather Mitchell, Victorian Farmers' Federation president. Despite differing political backgrounds, Kirner and Mitchell readily collaborated – they knew there were many problems, but also saw opportunities for action. Late in 1986, the state government initiated a multi-disciplinary, community-based, highly autonomous Victoria-wide Landcare program. The first group, which still operates, formed at Winjallock near St Arnaud on 25 November 1986. Even then, Joan Kirner envisaged Landcare operating nationally.

The vision proved very practicable and appealing in Victoria. By 1990, around 70 groups had formed, some with part-time coordinators to help group members identify issues, develop action programs and arrange technical training, planning and links with other useful organisations. Landcare focused initially in the rural areas, but many urban communities wanted to form groups to restore local publicly owned bushland remnants with environmental and recreational values. Today (2006) there are an estimated 800 Landcare groups in rural Victoria, plus some 500 urban conservation groups, and 300 community associations engaged in practical Coastcare projects.

Landcare goes national

In 1988, the federal Resources Minister, Senator Peter Cook, launched two Landcare groups in Victoria and saw for himself effective environmental action by local communities.

In 1989, with increasing interest in environmental issues, the Australian government released national conservation and soil conservation strategies and provided extra funding for tree growing, soil conservation and salinity control. However another fruitful alliance had developed – between Rick Farley of the National Farmers Federation (NFF) and Philip Toyne of the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF).

Farley and Toyne recognised traditional conflicts between conservation-

ists and farmers hindered the resolution of environmental issues. Drawing on their diverse experience, and encouraged by several Canberra politicians – Peter Cook, John Kerin, Bruce Lloyd, Graham Richardson and Prime Minister, Bob Hawke – they secured bipartisan support and Australian Government action.

Andrew Campbell, Jane Elix (ACF) and Philip Eliason (NFF) drafted a plan for a decade-long federally funded national program costing \$340 million – an astonishing amount compared with the 1989 allocation of \$1 million for soil conservation. Prime Minister Hawke declared the 1990s would be the Decade of Landcare, and the concept soon spread to every other state and mainland territory. Cook, Farley and Toyne also helped initiate Landcare Australia Limited (LAL) and the National Landcare Program (NLP). Andrew Campbell played a key role as the first National Landcare Facilitator. He travelled widely, telling Australians that every region had land and water problems, but also that community Landcare entities were emerging to tackle these problems. His visits and speeches encouraged more Landcare groups to form. (See Campbell and Siepen (1994))

The current national figure is around 5000 Landcare groups in the six states and two mainland territories. Across Australia Landcare has broad political support and many solid creative partnerships, including government, institutions, universities, industry and commerce, with a foundation of grass-roots participation. Landcare also brings superb and positive networks, many new friendships and alliances, and the ability to quickly form results-oriented task forces.

During Landcare's sixteen years as a national movement, the Australian and state governments have developed a catchment management system to involve communities in natural resource management. There are now 56 regional bodies covering all Australian states and mainland territories, bringing together community and government to plan, finance, oversee and monitor natural resource management (NRM). There were earlier versions in some states, but most date from the mid-late 1990s. The names for the regional NRM bodies vary: for example, in Victoria and NSW they are Catchment Management Authorities (CMAs); while in South Australia they are known as Integrated Natural Resource Management Groups; Tasmania has three Natural Resource Management Committees. This document employs the generic term 'regional NRM bodies.'

Popular appeal

Features of the pioneering Australian farming community (mainly of Anglo-

Celtic and German origin) that tenaciously settled here in the 1800s and converted much of the landscape to agriculture included local autonomy, group support, innovation and close observation of natural phenomena. We realise now that their European-based practices, geared to different landscapes, brought severe environmental problems, but Landcare unselfconsciously shares those same useful community values as it works to halt this degradation.

Landcare also increasingly attracts Aborigines, the indigenous people, who are major land managers in Australia's west, north and centre. It respects their knowledge of the land and its climate, plants and animals, building on their communal traditions and powerful relationship with 'country.'

Perhaps because their industry is highly market-oriented and competitive, Landcare has appealed less to the numerous horticulturalists in irrigated regions – many are migrants of non-Anglo-Celtic origin. However, sensitive and creative programs such as the Ethnic Access Landcare Project at East Shepparton in Victoria's Goulburn Valley, and industry-led environmental and training initiatives are bringing change.

Indeed, despite its youth, Landcare reflects strongly many of the national values and characteristics that Australians, and outside observers, wish to ascribe to this multicultural antipodean democracy.

Australia's media have responded well, especially regional print and radio, and the ABC Landline series, accelerating Landcare's acceptance, spreading new ideas and techniques and highlighting opportunities. Surveys indicate that two-thirds of Australians know about Landcare and recognise its logo; the rural figure approaches 90 percent.

State of the art

There are over 5000 community based groups associated with Landcare and working on NRM issues through Australia. They cover activities on both private and public land and include some focused specifically on coastal concerns.

State or Territory	Estimated number of groups	Comments
New South Wales	1820	All groups identifying with Landcare - about 45 000 members
Victoria	1600	Landcare and 'Friends of' groups engaged with Victorian Landcare Support Network, and an estimated 300 Coastcare/Coast Action groups. Numbers change as groups join networks; two or more groups consolidate; new groups emerge; or are revitalised
Queensland	305	Registered community NRM groups: 165 Landcare, 20 coastal or riparian and 30 groups in catchment management, plus 5 Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander and 10 wildlife rehabilitation groups, plus progress associations and Friends and Bushcare groups
South Australia	400	Friends 52; Landcare 200; Watercare 5; Coastcare 67; Bushcare 1; catchment groups 5; and sundry environment groups 116
Western Australia	500	Of 140 Land Conservation District Committees (LCDCs) set up in WA, 72 remain, with several re-establishing. Some 120 groups work in Landcare, sustainable agriculture and Rivercare. Friends and other NRM type groups complete the tally
Tasmania	297	Includes Landcare, Coastcare and Friends groups
Australian Capital Territory	34	Includes 16 urban Landcare, 14 park care and 4 rural Landcare groups; 3 Sub-catchment Groups act as umbrella organisations. Over 100 Waterwatch and Frogwatch volunteers regularly contribute data
Northern Territory	90	Urban, rural and Indigenous

Note: We use the word 'landcare' (small 'l') as a succinct, community-friendly term for holistic land and water (catchment) resource management. 'Capital L' Landcare covers the broad community movement and its many initiatives, programs and implications. NRM stands for natural resource management.

2 Landcare at work

Landcare tenets

Many elements of land degradation are interconnected. Overclearing and overgrazing help create salinity, soil erosion, biodiversity losses and opportunities for weed invasion. Some cultivation practices cause soil compaction and wind and water erosion. To rectify these problems demands programs based on understanding the links between the natural assets and sustainable land and water use.

Most land degradation problems involve multiple landholdings and affect many others downstream or downwind. Therefore landowners, land managers and local communities must work together to introduce more sustainable management systems.

The combined skills, knowledge and financial and technical resources available within the whole community exceed those of government. Only broad partnerships between government, community and other bodies with useful resources – such as business and the education system – can overcome land degradation and improve productivity. Government therefore plays a very important but not dominating role in improving land management.

By devolving authority to communities, Landcare also strengthens their sense of responsibility. Government and corporate finance, often in large tranches, is allocated directly to networks and groups, which meet and disburse funds to achieve specific catchment objectives, set after substantial consultation. Progress and completion reports are required, and random audits may be undertaken. This trust has almost never been abused.

Government funding is substantial and since 1996 the Australian Government has committed over \$4.5 billion to its three major resource management programs – the National Landcare Program (NLP), Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) and National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality (NAP).

Recognising the changing role of women in Australia and that many manage farms themselves or jointly, Landcare encourages their participation in land restoration. A significant proportion of the outstanding Victorian Landcarers is female. In 1995, Dr Allan Curtis of Charles Sturt University found that 35 percent of Victorian Landcarers were women.

Landcarers also work in schools and community education. There were 200 junior Landcare projects in Victoria alone in 2000. Since 2003, LAL's Junior Landcare program has given hundreds of grants – average \$500 – to Australian schools and youth groups. The funds come from major companies,

spearheaded by Mitre 10, a national hardware co-operative. Enthusiastic children often help change parental attitudes.

Landcare groups

Landcare groups come in all sizes – from a few landholders in an isolated valley or along a rural road, to 100-strong groups in more populated areas. Existing public and farmer organisations spawned some groups while local and state governments catalysed many others, as did numerous small circles of neighbours and friends. The defining feature – whether members feel part of the same community – allows people to work together for a common cause.

Generally, small group committees oversee operations, apply for project funding and organise communal activities like farm planning workshops or tree planting. Most groups have one to six formal meetings annually, besides information sessions involving local experts. They may run discussion sessions, and short trips to other Landcare groups and other activities to gain and share knowledge. Many have a paid coordinator providing part-time assistance, arranging meetings and activities and providing management guidance. Funds to pay these salaries mostly come from government.

Increasingly, Landcare groups amalgamate into networks managed by community boards that take a more regional approach to land and water issues and coordinate activities to achieve catchment-wide outcomes. Networks are now a major community link to all levels of government and industry for financial support and information. Many networks source funding to employ more than one coordinator, allocating their time between network and group affairs as necessary. Networks also have ready access to regional NRM bodies, often helping to draft their regional strategies and plans.

Pragmatic professionals working with people

A new professional has emerged nationally. He or she is practical but still visionary, combining broad technical knowledge with administrative, managerial, communications and community development skills. These people, from diverse backgrounds, often but not necessarily technically qualified, are generally called ‘coordinators,’ or less often ‘facilitators.’ As with any position in a community organisation, relationships can be subtle, but coordinators still need to be leaders. Originally most coordinators were employed directly by Landcare groups and networks, sometimes through private employment agencies. Increasingly many regional NRM bodies have taken over this role.

In turn, coordinators demand new forms of technical and managerial sup-

port, for example, training in databases, computing, sponsorship and marketing, mapping and monitoring, project management, publicity, community education and methods of instruction. One area flourishing everywhere during the 1990s was training to promote group cohesion, better planning and personal development through physical and mental team activities. Recently many ‘capacity-building’ courses have concentrated on project management, monitoring and conflict resolution.

Many group members participate to develop their leadership skills. Indeed Landcare encourages landholder representation at every level and forum, ensuring wide co-operation between agencies and Landcarers, and even healthy tension. A South African visitor in the late 1990s noted that wherever his party went to observe or discuss Landcare, farmers were always present.

Despite the paid full- or part-time coordinators, Landcare mainly relies on landowners and voluntary labour. Government training programs like Green Corps, which takes young people into rural areas for six-month periods to restore degraded land, are useful. Some Landcare groups operate works teams on a fee-for-service basis – this community enterprise ethos is growing in lifestyle-farming zones like Barung in Queensland.

Several organisations act as brokers for volunteers seeking conservation experience, and there are many consultants and contractors, including the nationwide Kondinin Group. Varying from state to state, several bodies support Landcare closely through nursery work, assistance in the field and community education, including Greening Australia, Conservation Volunteers Australia, Men of the Trees, Trees for Life, Tree Project, Greenfleet and the various farmers’ organisations and environmental councils.

Moreover, scores of competent Landcare consultants and contractors, often former government staff, operate throughout Australia. Having a pool of consultants and contractors is healthy – ideally many more people will earn their living from Landcare in future.

Call the council!

Australia has three tiers of government – national, state and local. Landcare at first drew its financial and other support from national and state governments. More recently local government has recognised the value of groups and networks to the environment, economic productivity and community cohesion. Many municipal councils support Landcare groups and networks with office space, administrative backup, meeting-rooms, vehicles and funds to employ coordinators. Often Landcare staff and members reciprocate with direct advisory and operational help.

Some local governments assist Landcare operationally. Hindmarsh Shire

in Victoria coordinates an ambitious campaign involving restoration of corridors of indigenous vegetation across 80 kilometres of farmland to connect two major national parks, as well as revegetation demonstrations, broad-scale in-paddock shelterbelts in cropping zones and works to protect a 100 kilometre stretch of the Wimmera River and its wetlands. Since 1998, nine annual planting weekends have each attracted some 150 metropolitan volunteers and up to 250 local people.

To link communities with their natural assets, a few local government and river management authorities collect conservation levies from both rural and urban populations to support Landcare.

Technical revolution brings new landscapes

Because of Landcare, Australians have looked anew at ways to tackle soil conservation and salinity control. Originally soil conservationists favoured engineering measures to treat the effects – contour banks, watercourse structures, localised usually non-indigenous tree belts and ‘riparian hardening’ to combat sheet, gully and streambank erosion respectively. In the 1970s the need to treat causes was more widely recognised, through pasture improvement, land-class fencing and minimum-tillage cropping in arable zones prone to wind erosion, and, later, indigenous tree planting for gully and landslip stabilisation.

Today, besides appraising problems more holistically, landowners better recognise the vital role of deep-rooted perennial vegetation, especially native ecosystems, in protecting soil, lowering watertables to reduce salinity, producing alternative crops, combating weed invasions, providing wildlife habitat and recreation, improving the landscape and reducing water pollution. Moreover, the Landcare movement enables campaigns to control pest plants and animals, especially foxes and rabbits, to be far better coordinated with land restoration.

Australians are also tackling the huge challenge of eliminating introduced (exotic) bushland weeds and restoring native ground flora. Landcare’s general preference for indigenous species is laudable, a model for land restoration and gene pool conservation in tropical and Mediterranean environments. Many networks will only establish seedlings sourced from locally collected seed. This ethos has spawned regional seed banks and numerous small efficient nurseries producing wide ranges of cheap local-provenance seedlings, including sedges, herbs and ferns. Victoria, for example, has some 150 indigenous nurseries.

In the last 20 years innovative nursery and tree planting equipment has emerged, often from workshops of farmers and other Landcarers, including

tractor-drawn and manual tree planters and seeders; guards; weed control techniques; and protective fencing. Landcare groups or networks sometimes purchase machinery for their members’ use.

Many positive landscape changes are becoming obvious to travellers across Australia: thousands of new, mainly indigenous trees and shrubs; fenced-off streams, gullies and patches of bush and regrowth; wildlife corridors; co-operative research trials; managed shelterbelts; community salinity bores and restored wetlands. Much of this is due to the efforts of local Landcare groups, and many roadside signs display the ‘caring hands’ logo.

Surveys, research and monitoring

Another keystone of Landcare is improving access to technology. Farmer groups directly initiate numerous research projects and collect and analyse data, and farmers often appear at conferences as joint authors of publications. Sometimes the community identifies a problem, starts a trial, develops a proposal, then seeks formal technical support, as in south-eastern South Australia where gypsum is now widely applied to combat waterlogging. Separately, the spread of silvergrass through regional pastures led to a multi-pronged mapping, research, extension and monitoring campaign crossing into Victoria and managed jointly by farmers and departmental staff.

The Community Grasses Project established a network of land managers and scientists in New South Wales and Victoria to promote greater use of native and exotic perennial grasses, and develop low-input, persistent, palatable grasslands that would utilise much more water than the present annuals, thereby reducing dryland salinity. At Tragowel, Victoria, landowners, with departmental help, mapped regional soil salinity using EM 38 technology. They helped prove the system, establish standards and organise training, then sampled some 110 000 ha on a 30 x 60 m grid. The project’s success increased landowner awareness of salinity and they regarded it as their own. Some Western Australian Landcarers own GIS systems to facilitate regional planning and project management, and contract their services.

Besides community involvement in research and planning, Landcare emphasises monitoring of projects and activities. Community programs, such as Saltwatch, Watertable Watch and Waterwatch, feed into official databases, allowing observations and readings made by ordinary citizens to be used for scientific mapping and analysis. In Victoria’s Goulburn Valley, a network of 1200 farmers from 32 Landcare groups maintains a computerised watertable mapping service, distributing monthly maps showing regional levels and potential salinity problems.

Farm planning - an incentive

Whole-farm planning, now officially titled Property Management Planning, has helped induct many landowners into Landcare. State government staff and local colleges run practical courses to map and redesign properties, taking into account productivity, environmental elements and fire protection, classifying the land by hazard categories and relocating fencing and other infrastructure as necessary. Aerial photos and overlays are useful tools, with GIS and other computerised techniques increasingly employed. This training encourages many farm planners to take the next step: joining local Landcare to connect their works with neighbours' conservation and water management initiatives. Victoria's Woody Yaloak Catchment Group, which covers 170 farm and lifestyle properties, has its own GIS-based neighbourhood project management system with embedded photographic archives, so that groups of landowners can work together to plan, carry out, record and look back on their activities.

Lobbying for Landcare

Despite solid bipartisan political support, Landcare still needs a voice. Generally it relies on connections to government through local parliamentarians, the regional NRM frameworks, farmers' organisations, local government, the water industry and resource bureau professionals, as well as its major corporate project partnerships – plus Australian Landcare Council representatives from each state and territory and the National Landcare Facilitator.

For nine years, the 300 groups in Tasmania, the offshore and smallest state, have had a formal state Landcare association with paid staff to support member groups. It facilitates networking, lobbies politicians and departmental executives, is involved in statewide planning with government and promotes the movement. In Victoria, an apolitical Farm Trees and Landcare Association helps groups incorporate to meet legal and insurance requirements. Other states have Landcare forums and councils to take groups' views to government. Why, when Landcare has such broad support and is so much a part of Australian life, does it need these bodies? The answer is that governments come and go, and have so many competing demands, especially social and infrastructural, that politicians need a reminder from time to time to sustain funding and not take Landcare for granted!

3 National perspective

Government's role

Australia's future depends on how landholders, industry and governments share ownership and responsibility for natural resource management. Besides managing its own land estate responsibly (which includes some national parks, other conservation reserves and defence land), the Australian Government provides national leadership and coordination in:

- developing long-term strategies to address resource issues at all levels, including our international obligations, and work towards sustainability
- setting and promoting economic and social frameworks to achieve the designated goals
- leading and funding research and development
- increasing public awareness, education and information exchange, and identifying gaps in knowledge

Regional model for program delivery

The Australian Government has delineated 56 regions covering all Australia, and fosters community-based regional NRM bodies in each to prepare and implement integrated resource management plans and regularly define and review priorities. Many Landcare members serve on these regional bodies.

Currently federal and state governments determine government investment to achieve defined outcomes in each area and gauge program delivery through detailed single regional plans, developed by the local community and based on the best available knowledge. Landcare and other community groups are essential to this model, providing communications links, experience, opinion, planning support and cost-effective vehicles for on-ground works.

These plans take a 'whole-of-region' approach to resource management, incorporating environmental, social and economic elements. Agreements between government and community define goals and contributions from all parties, identify and schedule targets and delineate appropriate investment strategies. Consultation, feedback and negotiation are crucial between regional bodies and key stakeholders, including Indigenous people, academics and scientists, environmental groups, industry, local government and state/territory and national agencies.

Australian Government investment programs

The Australian Government sees Landcare as integral to developing social

and cultural frameworks to promote sustainable land use—caring for land and ‘peer-reinforcement of good stewardship.’ It has supported Landcare through an evolving suite of programs, and established specific national institutions to help landholders and communities manage their natural resource problems where public benefits are involved.

It has also sought to balance environmental and production values to obtain greatly improved community benefits, including economic viability of agriculture and water-use efficiency, whilst maintaining and enhancing our resource base and ecosystems.

Australian Government project funding, first through the National Soil Conservation Program (NSCP), and more recently through the National Landcare Program (NLP), the Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) and the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality (NAP), has significantly influenced land managers’ behaviour. The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) manages the NLP. In 2001, recognising that their core objectives were complementary, the Department of the Environment and Heritage (DEH) and DAFF established a joint Natural Resource Management Team to co-deliver NHT and NAP programs and take responsibility for the Australian Government’s strategy for conservation and sustainable use of land and water resources.

National Soil Conservation Program (1983-92)

The Australian Government’s first contribution to Landcare was the National Soil Conservation Strategy, released by the Australian Soil Conservation Council in 1989 to guide government policies towards sustainable, integrated land use. Recognising that land conservation, involving soil, water and vegetation, needed a concerted national effort, the Australian Government launched the Decade of Landcare (1990-99) in an accompanying Statement on the Environment.

Landcare was funded through the National Soil Conservation Program (NSCP) from 1990-92, which had also financed soil conservation from 1983-90, an important prelude to Landcare. The NSCP sought to complement existing activities, secure additional resources and raise soil conservation’s public profile by providing funds for education, training, demonstrations, research, publicity, technical assistance and planning. During the 1980s, this funding underlined that effective soil conservation action required the integration of biophysical, economic and social aspects of problems with group learning and public participation, including through community-action approaches like Landcare.

National Landcare Program (1993-2008)

The Australian Government is providing \$110 million from 2005-08 to the National Landcare Program (NLP) to support Landcare activities and sustainable agriculture. The NLP focuses on developing community-government partnerships for collective community and industry action to sustainably manage the environment. With community contributions, the NLP supports Landcare group activities and facilitators/coordinators working in Landcare, other volunteer groups and primary industry organisations at regional and local levels. It also funds four important Landcare structures:

- The *Australian Landcare Council*, key community advisor to the Australian Government on Landcare, resource management priorities and strategies for ecologically sustainable development
- *Landcare Australia Limited*, the commercial arm of Landcare
- The *National Landcare Facilitator*, focal point for the Australia-wide network of facilitators and coordinators working with Landcare and other community groups; the NLF links Landcare, parliamentary ministers, government and primary industry organisations and coordinators and groups at a national level
- *State Landcare Coordinators*, appointed in each state and the Northern Territory to support Landcare and industry groups, and *Community Landcare Coordinators* working primarily with regional NRM bodies

The scale of NLP projects varies considerably. At farm and local levels, projects focus on sustainable production, revegetation and restoration of degraded land. Most Government funding requires significant input from the recipient, whether a group, a landholder or a government agency. Many large integrated projects, often implemented through networks, now demonstrate the benefits of comprehensive landscape-scale planning, mapping, research and strategic action.

The NLP has also invested substantially in training, particularly in farm planning, to upgrade skills and extend best-management-practices. Moreover, the NLP has been highly effective in encouraging farmers to adopt sustainable management practices, improving their productivity, profitability and the condition of natural resources, both on- and off-farm. Landcare has also strengthened in and around regional and metropolitan centres.

The Natural Heritage Trust (1997-2008)

In 1997 the Australian Government launched the Natural Heritage Trust (NHT), a \$3 billion investment running until 2007-08. The NHT has funded thousands of community projects. It supports action to improve water qual-

ity, vegetation management and soil condition, and to reduce erosion and restore estuarine health. Associated benefits include more skilled resource managers, communities deciding their future directions, improved productivity and profitability, enhanced protection and restoration of biodiversity, and more people taking direct and indirect roles in improving natural resource management.

The National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality (2000-08)

The National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality (NAP) brings community groups, individual land managers, local businesses and all levels of government together to tackle salinity and improve water quality. Forged by the Council of Australian Governments, this is a joint national and state/territory program with a combined commitment of \$1.4 billion over seven years. Managed jointly with NHT, it has nominated twenty-one NRM regions as priority areas for investment to mitigate or prevent salinity and water problems.

Other measures

The Australian Government seeks to integrate policy and incentives with investment in on-ground works, research and development and information-sharing. Specific areas include

- resource assessment, such as the National Land and Water Resources Audit
- research to increase understanding of land and water degradation and develop new technology to prevent or mitigate these process – through research and development corporations, universities and government bodies such as CSIRO
- financial measures such as appropriate taxation deductions for expenditure on specified landcare activities

Australian Landcare Council

The Australian Landcare Council (ALC) is the Australian Government's independent advisory body on Landcare and matters concerning natural resource management. The initial chair was former federal politician, Bruce Lloyd (1997-2005). The present incumbent is Roberta (Bobbie) Brazil. The ALC includes community representatives from each state and territory, the Indigenous community, Australian youth, local government and various key stakeholder groups for conservation, revegetation and primary industries.

4 Marketing Landcare

Starting from scratch!

As the Decade of Landcare began in 1990, Landcare Australia Limited (LAL) formed as a not-for-profit business, independent of government, raising awareness and corporate support for the fledgling Landcare movement. LAL needed to collaborate with the young passionate Landcare movement to create commercial benefits to encourage Australian businesses to put financial weight behind the cause.

As with any marketing, this involved building a 'brand' – generating awareness of Sydney graphic designer Cliff Burk's powerful 'caring hands' logo. This was not easy. Indeed, the first feasibility study suggested that LAL would have to pay sponsors – rather than the other way around. Nevertheless, Landcare promised a hands-on, mildly conservative image that corporate Australia found attractive. Visionary companies like Telstra, BHP, Uncle Toby's and BP could see Landcare's potential and the benefits of alignment with the movement.

Recognition first, then projects

Therefore, sponsorships before 1994 mainly involved Landcare education and promotion. With government, LAL positioned Landcare as a middle-of-the-road environmental movement that mainstream farming and grazing, and Australia's urban dwellers, could embrace. Unlike many big-budget commercial marketers, Landcare relied on corporate sponsors, LAL staff, Landcare coordinators and active members to get media and editorial coverage.

Landcare groups and coordinators were vital components, so LAL empowered them through the Telstra Communications Kit for Landcarers. It showed groups how to get media coverage, give public talks, mount displays and utilise the logo's power. Templates and artwork readily helped groups gain local media coverage for events like National Landcare Month, by filling in details of planned activities to create ready-made news releases.

The National Landcare Awards, initiated in 1991, the BP Landcare Challenge magazine, television community service announcements sponsored by BP and Uncle Toby's and the promotion of Landcare on millions of Uncle Toby's cereal boxes, all helped build the brand in the early 1990s, as did Australia Post's Landcare stamps and the Australian Mint's one-dollar Landcare coin.

By 1994, with Australian awareness of Landcare reaching 66 percent, it was a highly attractive sponsorship proposition, and LAL could start raising

money for on-ground projects, besides continuing promotion. Launched in 1994 within LAL, the Landcare Foundation, under Olympian Sir James Hardy, raised \$10 million over three years. Pledging \$600 000, Fuji Xerox was the first gold-level supporter. Other partners included international companies such as BHP, Telstra, BP, Alcoa, Ansett, Amcor and Westpac.

Marketing successes and large-scale projects

The second half of the 1990s saw two new developments. The first was 'relationship marketing,' where companies support Landcare projects near nominated sites, often close to their mines, factories or outlets. This approach helps build closer ties with local communities active in Landcare, and increases brand awareness and values through wider marketing of the Landcare connection.

Through the second development, 'cause marketing,' sponsors promote the fact that for every product unit sold, Landcare receives a percentage of the proceeds. The result is classic win/win. Sales expand, and more money is raised for community projects. The longest running program, with Banrock Station wines, involving donations to Landcare for every bottle and cask sold, has generated hundreds of thousands of dollars to restore wetlands here and in eight other countries.

To take Landcare into every Australian livingroom, LAL conceived large-scale, hands-on, entertaining projects involving many people. The first, the Angry Anderson Challenge, ran in 1995. A successful Murray Basin campaign to plant one million trees in seven days, in step with a prime-time television documentary, it involved 10 000 volunteers. From 1997-2000, Olympic Landcare saw 2.6 million trees and shrubs planted across Australia by 40 000 volunteers. Both projects showed city dwellers that regional Australia's huge land degradation problems needed government investment and everyone's involvement.

Recent achievements

LAL ended the Decade of Landcare in 2000 with some impressive marketing achievements. Around 80 percent of Australians knew about Landcare. Forty percent of Australian farmers belonged to groups, providing a powerful network for adopting more sustainable agricultural practices. The National Landcare Awards were now a major celebration, spotlighting the many individuals, groups, communities and organisations active in Landcare and Coastcare. Senior government and corporate executives gathered with the media every two years for the awards ceremony, often with the Prime

Minister present, to applaud over 100 national Landcare finalists across a dozen categories.

The original magazine, BP Challenge, had evolved into the widely read quarterly Australian Landcare, published by Rural Press (circulation 32 000; readership over 80 000). National promotions, such as Landcare Month and later Landcare Week, encouraged groups to grow from 600 in 1991 to 4500 by 2000.

Since forming in late 1989, LAL has raised over \$150 million in cash, in-kind support and assessed value of media editorial. It has won several major awards and continues to broadly and creatively influence Australian environmental attitudes.

Singer James Blundell and cricketer Glenn McGrath have been Landcare ambassadors, and tennis star Pat Rafter for Coastcare. A national practical farm greenhouse study followed Olympic Landcare. Major landscape change projects operate across Australia, through Computershare's eTree initiative, whereby shareholders in 70 companies generate income for Landcare by electing to receive portfolio communications online, rather than on paper.

LAL now runs major communications campaigns in spring (National Landcare Week), summer (National Coastcare Week), and winter – around World Environment Day (5 June). Two episodes of Backyard Blitz, a popular television show, have centred on Landcare projects at Phillip Island and Echuca, Victoria.

LAL communicates with corporations and small and medium businesses through its targeted quarterly newsletter Pulse, which focuses on involving companies in Landcare. Accordingly, major partnerships have emerged with Coles Myer, especially through the ubiquitous green eco-friendly shopping bags; Mitre 10, with both the highly successful Mitre 10 Junior Landcare Grants and Caring for Our Waterways programs; the Bundaberg Rum Bush Fund; Westpac Operation Backyard and Australia Post's Community Development Grants and schools initiatives. Add to these community projects and grants from Toshiba, International Power, Alcoa, Sony, SITA, Onesteel Waratah, Orica Foundation, Dilmah, VicTrack, Rural Press, Water Corporation, PricewaterhouseCoopers, Holden, Alinta, Kennards Hire and Iluka, and another dozen smaller partnerships.

Frequently, sponsors' workforces get involved. For example, during Sony's annual Enviro-Challenge, employees participate in Landcare field days – most recently 300 converged on western Sydney's Nepean River to lend a hand. At Port Campbell, Victoria, five companies bringing natural gas ashore make annual payments to Heytesbury District Landcare Network – a pioneering initiative that can be replicated in conjunction with many other development projects.

LAL has developed a popular up-to-the-minute website www.landcare-online.com, and the first ever National Landcare Directory to link thousands of groups, individuals and supporters, promote networking and increase support.

Since 1989 the Australian Government has funded LAL's administration through DAFF. DEH supports Coastcare, the marine, beach and estuarine offshoot of Landcare numbering over 1000 groups around Australia, contracting LAL to market Coastcare and generate project funds. Each year the government assesses its investment in LAL. In financial year 2004-05, LAL returned \$17.30 for every Australian government dollar.

Beyond 2006

LAL is launching a new greenhouse initiative Landcare CarbonSMART, campaigns for more sustainable agriculture (Landcare Farming), and Landcare Gardening – programs to reduce climate change impacts by adapting home gardens, conserving water and promoting biodiversity with indigenous plantings. LAL is also strengthening links with regional organisations, including regional NRM bodies, to increase their support for and leveraging of Landcare projects.

Most Australians know about Landcare, and scores of thousands have demonstrated their solid support for its ethic. Marketing has ensured that the movement is well funded by government, well respected by the media, strongly engaged with the corporate sector and a vital force in working towards sustainability in Australia.

5 Going forward

Why has Landcare succeeded?

We believe Landcare works because it is compatible with Australia's culture, needs and system of government.

- Landcare stimulates visionary attitudes and activities, and debate on 'what is sustainability?' – which encourage people to take a longer term view of resource use and restoration
- Landcare is egalitarian, democratic and respects local knowledge – 'of the people, by the people, for the people!' It has a 'flat' organisation, with no pretentious, complex or unnecessary hierarchy
- Landcare activities attract strong government commitment. Government supports heavily but doesn't lead – in general, the 'bureaucrats' trust the people! In other words, the community is regarded as comprising positive, responsible, intelligent, cooperative and technically competent individuals capable of managing finance collaboratively and making sensible and, at least, medium-term decisions. Trust brings community empowerment
- Local decision-making is paramount, with strong provision for planning and monitoring
- Many groups have a full- or part-time coordinator to support the voluntary effort
- Women play a vital role. Junior programs have emerged through partnerships between schools, Landcare groups and several major companies
- Sophisticated communities faced with divisive regional planning and conservation issues campaign separately from Landcare, leaving Landcare to continue working on land degradation
- Taxation incentives assist farmers undertaking landcare works
- No attempt has been made to impose nationwide rules; instead, we encourage flexibility – programs try to recognise that most Landcarers are volunteers and can't always meet tight deadlines. This means Landcare is accepted across Australia – in cities, towns, mainstream and lifestyle farming zones, on the coast, North and South and in The Centre
- Landcare has wide community support, including from industry, institutions and the media – from which it gets great mileage; networking is endemic and leads to numerous productive partnerships; farmers'

organisations, conservation bodies and all political groupings strongly support Landcare

- Landcare Australia Limited has generated substantial funds from all community sectors for projects and community education campaigns
- The movement is well served by national community-based bodies such as Greening Australia, providing technical support for revegetation, and Conservation Volunteers Australia, which organises field works teams
- Landcare works with the cultural community – through art prizes, recordings and local festivals, and provides enjoyable social and recreational outlets for communities
- Trusts and foundations are important, particularly with special projects – for instance, The Ian Potter Foundation accelerated two nationally significant projects for the Landcare movement. Campbell (1991) detailed the Potter Farmland Plan, centred on Hamilton, Victoria and involving fifteen demonstration farms in a major and medium-term commitment to property management planning. Managed from Renmark, South Australia, Bookmark Biosphere Reserve, initiated under UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Program, seeks to integrate landscape conservation and economic pursuits in arid inland zones
- The most advanced groups run as community enterprises under boards, operating nurseries, works teams, advisory services, small consultancies and ecotourism ventures. Budgets of \$6-800 000 p.a. are not uncommon
- As new ideas emerge, Landcare has the creativity, resources and enthusiasm to react quickly and initiate practical pilot projects, and resilience, mutual support and understanding when things don't work out – and people in Landcare like to say 'thank you' to those that help

The future

Commentators Schnepf (1998) and Croxton (1999) saw Landcare's greatest organisational challenges as the quest for self-sufficiency; raising urban involvement; and ensuring government continues to employ taxation as a landcare incentive and does not use Landcare to justify diverting resources currently allocated to land restoration. Also important were increasing the accessibility of Indigenous communities to funding programs; achieving greater consistency; maintaining community ownership; balancing support for regional and local projects; reconciling paid and unpaid work; and converting the enthusiasm for planning into on-ground results. One region, for example, finds it has produced four detailed regional catchment/Landcare strategies since the late 1980s.









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Today, several years later, many Landcarers discuss the community-government balance. Some see the regional NRM bodies as excessively authoritarian, with their government-appointed members – should some members be elected? However the authorities have to work effectively with the whole community and all tiers of government, and truly represent regional needs. Another concern is that regional bodies seem to have adopted traditional high-accountability (therefore frustratingly slow) government administrative processes for managing community funding, despite Landcare's admirable record of transparency. Are there simpler alternatives? Moreover, as regional NRM bodies take over disbursing funds, the tradition of belonging to a group to be eligible for finance may be petering out.

Landcare veterans recall the 1980s and early 1990s for endemic, sometimes excessive consultation. Certainly this excellent practice has declined lately. Perhaps people no longer need such detailed consultation today, being much better informed and having universal Internet access. Individuals appointed to boards, authorities and official committees and positions must be accessible, trained in board ethics and rotated regularly to ensure Landcare remains well represented.

Nevertheless, because our problems are frequently regional ones, we believe most Landcarers are very positive about the regional resource management arrangements that have evolved so rapidly, and are starting to appreciate the creativity some regional NRM bodies display to improve resource and Landcare management. There is a buoyant atmosphere in many regions!

Importantly, as groups and networks attempt larger, more complex regional projects, they need management training, and even better communications networks – LAL's LandcareOnline website helps with the latter. Moreover paid employees and contractors are increasingly necessary because of program scale and complexity. However, today less groups and networks employ their coordinators directly, as regional NRM bodies take over this function, putting coordinators on public-service conditions. This brings advantages, and perhaps career paths, but can reduce the capacity and independence of groups and load coordinators with non-Landcare tasks.

In contrast, many Australians believe the major problem is the exhaustion of Landcare leaders and members – they call it 'burnout.' A Victorian survey just released indicates group numbers have declined lately. Despite the ageing population, how can we reinforce the human resources of Landcare well into the twenty-first century? As ever, paid coordinators are essential to support regional and local communities and sustain enthusiasm.

New opportunities lie with promoting sustainable farming; improving water quality in streams and helping reduce individual consumption; regional community-based catchment management programs sponsored by industry and commerce; working more closely with the Murray Darling Basin Commission; making the most of the bounty of the NHT and NAP; revegetation programs to create carbon sinks using greenhouse credits from industry – possibly alongside the national program to treble the area of commercial tree plantations; and bringing more overseas landowners and managers to Australia to see Landcare on-the-ground. Moreover, mainstream and Indigenous Landcare must work more closely.

A good example of a futuristic Landcare enterprise lies 70 kilometres north-west of Melbourne – Grow West, a long-term (20-50 year) project, has emerged, combining government policy and funding support, commercial and ethical investment and contract labour with community action. Potential income sources include carbon credits, fuelwood and other forest products, biomass energy, ecotourism and land development for recreation.

6 Landcare beyond Australia

Australians are proud that, through government and private networking, several initiatives overseas have developed or are evolving to promote Landcare's approach to sustainable landscapes:

Republic of South Africa (RSA)	Canada
Philippines	Iceland
New Zealand	Great Britain
Kenya	Fiji
Uganda	Jamaica
United States	Sri Lanka

After organising a southern Australian tour by a thirteen-strong South African group in 1997, which led to the launch of Landcare in RSA, the Secretariat for International Landcare (SILC) incorporated in Victoria in 1998 to promote Landcare internationally and form a professional gateway for overseas visitors to explore Landcare through innovative tours, seminars and active-learning, field-based training in Australia. SILC's efforts have been important, with its directors delivering papers and promoting Landcare in places as diverse as the Philippines, Canada, Iceland, Inner Mongolia and Italy.

During 1998-99, Western Australia's AGWEST International ran feasibility studies for the RSA Department of Agriculture; exchange visits and study tours; provided technical advice, program design and capacity building; and helped develop institutional arrangements. Next it organised a United Nations Development Program study tour in March 2000, hosting 26 Zimbabweans.

The Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) has funded a project involving the Queensland Department of Primary Industries, the University of Queensland, Barung Landcare and the International Council for Research in Agroforestry (ICRAF) to support Landcare in the Philippines, where, over the last decade, 600 groups have formed in Mindanao and the Visayas. Australian consultants have also promoted Landcare-style programs in several countries, including Vietnam, China and Argentina.

The Victorian Landcare Network, a coordinators guild, runs a Sri Lankan project, repairing tsunami damage and fostering locally managed ecotourism along the island's southern coastline. A thirteen-strong team paid its own way to work there during March 2006, raising funds in Australia for materials from philanthropists and the community.

Interestingly, Germany's Landschaftspflegeverband (literally 'landscape-care association') dates from 1986, the year Landcare started in Victoria.

Other countries have adapted Landcare to meet local needs and circumstances. The common thread is community empowerment to identify, plan and act holistically on environmental problems. There is much Australia can learn from these fledgling movements, from farmer-driven research at subsistence levels in Uganda to more complex systems in the US and Britain. In the latter, existing structures and groups see benefit in employing farm subsidies as environmental payments rather than production supports, and use the term 'Landcare,' not only to engage all levels of society, but to be part of the international movement, with its networking and opportunities to learn. Moreover, some overseas governments are considering using the Landcare approach to mobilise rural communities to better manage issues such as waste, waterways, farmer training and new technology.

7 Case studies

Landcare at national level

eTree

Annual reports of Australian public companies and other shareholder communications require large volumes of paper – an estimated 180 million sheets of paper annually.

Computershare, a leading global provider of financial market services and technology to the securities industry, manages the share registers of some two-thirds of Australia's listed companies. Computershare established eTree with Landcare Australia to encourage shareholders to receive correspondence via emails instead of hard copy. For every email address registered through eTree's website, the relevant company donates two dollars to Landcare Australia for Australasian reforestation projects, reducing printing, handling and recycling costs to business, and simultaneously restoring landscapes.

Before eTree, the uptake of electronic communications was 1-2 percent. Thanks to a vigorous public relations and TV campaign with cricketer Glenn McGrath, and the Landcare connection, shareholders strongly support eTree – with a 22 percent response for one major company. There were fourteen eTree foundation members in early 2004; now 70 companies participate. More than 430 000 shareholders have registered, raising over \$750 000 in two and a half years.

In its first thirty months, eTree-supported projects in Australia, along with a small subsidiary in Hawkes Bay, New Zealand, have established 1400 hectares of native vegetation – comprising 1200 hectares of woodland and 200 hectares of wetlands – well over 1200 soccer fields. This vegetation will remove some 300 000 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent from the atmosphere over the next 30 years. Each project has leveraged the support of local Landcare coordinators, volunteers and landowners, who add value to project funding with in-kind contributions of labour, materials and project management – the average Landcare contribution is \$3 for every dollar of funding.

Four Landcare networks around Albury – Holbrook, Upper Hume, Jindera and Culcairn – have been especially active, establishing around 800 hectares of new bushland in three planting seasons.

For years landscape change was an academic theme at Australian conferences; eTree has helped make it happen, just in time for major action on the

greenhouse front. It's now a global initiative, with successful programs in Britain, USA, Canada and South Africa.

Landcare at state level

Coordinating community effort in Victoria and Western Australia

In Victoria Landcare groups can be based on any convenient legal, geographic or social entity. There are groups centred on a couple of rural roads, groups based on whole shires and one covers half the northern Mallee (50x100 kilometres). Curtis (1996) reported that one-third of all groups had a paid, usually part-time, coordinator; this is likely to be much higher today. Wherever possible, Landcare professionals encourage groups to form on a catchment or sub-catchment basis. A catchment can be an ideal unit for restoring land, but life is not always that simple, and groups often reflect social or local government factors.

A feature of Victorian Landcare has been the widespread development of regional networks, of which there are at least 90. Commonly comprising 5-25 local groups, these bodies generate ideas, speed communications and liaise with government on major projects requiring government and corporate finance. Regional networks also have ready access to the ten catchment management authorities and a central Catchment Management Council; indeed most help draft regional strategies, plans and priorities. Many networks also have strong ties with municipalities, regional water boards and waterway protection bodies.

The Department of Sustainability and Environment head office has a small Victorian Landcare team; the Department of Primary Industry also gets involved in rural Landcare. There are several state-level coordinators for Bushcare, municipal activities, Coastcare, primary industries and Indigenous projects, and each CMA has at least one regional Landcare coordinator; many have Indigenous coordinators too. There are also regional Coastcare coordinators.

A Victorian Landcare Network operates as a professional guild, with some 200 members, almost all employed by Landcare networks, groups, councils, state departments and CMAs.

These activities are duplicated around the country. For example, Agriculture Western Australia coordinates Landcare in that state, with 80 or so Land Conservation District Committees (LCDCs), which give advice to the Commissioner for Soil and Land Conservation on soil maintenance and local drainage, and on applications to the Department of Environment to clear native vegetation.

Many LCDCs support sub-catchment groups, variously named and equiv-

alent to Landcare groups/networks in the other states. In 2006, there were 500 such groups in Western Australia. Moreover, the Western Australian office of Landcare Australia raises corporate funds.

Landcare at regional level

Goolwa to Wellington Local Action Planning Board

Based in Strathalbyn, 60 kilometres south-east of Adelaide, Goolwa to Wellington Local Action Planning Board (LAPB) is an incorporated community organisation involving the regional community in natural resource management planning and on-ground works. It formed in 1997, one of eleven along the lower Murray, to help support environmental groups and other community members by developing a local action plan to identify and quantify major natural resource management issues. The plan also outlines management strategies to address these issues and target funding and other resources to achieve on-ground action. Over the past eight years the board's community members have contributed over 6000 hours of volunteer time.

The group works in one of the most diverse parts of South Australia, including areas of the eastern Mount Lofty Ranges, the Murray Plains and the Coorong and Lower Lakes Ramsar site. Rainfall varies from 350-950mm, and land use ranges from major urban centres such as Mt Barker, to belts of intensive agricultural production with vineyards and dairy farms, and areas of broadacre cropping and grazing. The coastal section of the LAP area includes some of the most rapidly developing localities in Australia.

The LAP Board accesses considerable funds from the Australian and South Australian governments and corporate investors, such as eTree, Greenfleet, Medibank Private and Coles, to support on-ground works by the community directed towards the region's priority natural resource management issues and locations. Other LAPB support includes assistance with project planning, technical advice, project delivery and seed financial support for new initiatives.

Other programs are directed at watercourses, irrigation management and erosion, as well as soil acidity, water logging, water repellence, poor soil fertility and salinity. The region has 6000 hectares of salinised land – where farming is severely affected. The area is increasing; moreover, salts wash from saline land into rivers and streams, degrading freshwater aquatic ecosystems. There are five employees: a project manager, two full-time project officers and two part-time implementation officers working with catchment groups. Annual funding for on-ground works is about \$185 000, plus some \$80 000 from corporate sources.

Landcare at catchment level

Woody Yaloak Catchment Group

South-west of Ballarat, Victoria the Woody Yaloak Catchment Group's 170 landholders share their knowledge, experience and commitment to the adoption of on-farm Landcare solutions. The Group's objective is to blend productivity, environmental restoration and community development.

Over the last ten years, WYCG has moved from a collection of landholders tackling rabbits, erosion, revegetation and pasture improvement to a sophisticated catchment-wide grouping completing holistic projects for the benefit of business and the environment.

Early in the 1990s, Landcare groups in the area amalgamated into WYCG. During its first five years it established 4000 hectares of perennial pasture, 135 hectares of trees, stabilised 40 hectares of erosion and eliminated 200 000 rabbits. The second five-year-plan was more ambitious, taking a triple-bottom-line approach and bringing landholders, schools, local governments, Ballarat University and the community together to achieve major landscape change. A vital component was the involvement of Alcoa World Alumina Australia, which contributed more than \$850 000 over ten years to accelerate this major demonstration of catchment-level Landcare. However, landholders contributed \$2.6 million. Woody Yaloak Catchment Project now sees many encouraging results, especially from its 2001 benchmark survey.

Outcome 1 - Viable businesses

- Gross farmer income increased from \$275/hectare in 1990 to \$335/hectare in 2001, mostly due to productivity improvements gained from pasture-based activities
- Key productivity indicators included a 33 percent increase in perennial pastures; better management practices, such as soil testing and minimum tillage; a 51 percent increase in fertiliser usage; and improved fencing to allow rotational grazing
- Support for productivity improvements included one-to-one technical advice, information sessions, farm walks and training courses
- In 1990, gross farmer income was 20 percent below the South West Monitor Farm Project average; by 2000 it was 10 percent above!

Outcome 2 - A strong community, capable of managing change

- Community participation has remained at about 65 percent since 1993
- Over one-fifth of landholders have served on the Woody Yaloak Executive Committee and 32 percent on subcommittees, and 16 percent

- have hosted tours, field days or farm walks
- The project has greatly increased neighbourhood integration

Outcome 3 - A natural environment that nurtures business viability and works within the capacity of the catchment

In areas where the WYCG has been active, the level of continuing investment is strong. After a decade of activity:

- The area of private land in the catchment under trees has increased from 0.8 percent to 2.4 percent (57 percent of which is commercial blue gum and pine)
- An average 97 hectares of perennial pasture has been resown on each farm
- Rabbit populations are significantly lower
- Erosion has been controlled through earthworks and fencing over some 60 hectares

Neighbourhood groups

The larger group has encouraged small groups of landholders to work together to achieve landscape change in their local area (average six landholders per neighbourhood group). This innovation gets neighbours collaborating, addressing cross-boundary issues, sharing ideas and learning from each other. Each has a 3-5-year plan, and the groups have annual sessions where participants discuss what the group has achieved, review progress of on-ground works projects, chart the next stages and share experiences on technical aspects. All on-ground works projects are filed on a geographic information system recording facts, figures and photos.

Corporate partnerships

WYCG has worked to expand its funding base beyond reliance on government. While it receives good support from government, it also has several rewarding business-sector partnerships besides Alcoa.

Geographic Information Systems

WYCG, with a local software developer, pioneered a low-cost computer-based planning and recording tool. In 2003 the Group formed a not-for-profit company 'Landscapes for the Future' to promote this package to Landcare.

By 2006, WYCG had raised \$3.13 million from 25 organisations and businesses. This included contributions from Australian, Victorian and local governments; industry groups such as Meat and Livestock Australia, Australian Wool Innovations and the Grains Research and Development Corporation;

and many private industries and organisations. The major private contribution has been Alcoa's \$870 000.

Other help has come from agribusiness and local companies, and many organisations have provided technical expertise to projects or volunteered business skills to ensure the management of the project is accountable and transparent. The value of the direct cash contribution of supporters has been more than optimised by local contributions of over \$3.7 million of landholder cash and in-kind support.

The project is managed by the equivalent of 1.1 full-time staff, shared between four part-timers from within the local community. Staff members report to an executive committee elected by members from each of the Landcare groups in the catchment. This committee operates as a board, with members either chairing or participating in one or more portfolio areas, including finance, on-ground works, publicity and communications, corporate and strategic partnerships and on-farm productivity. The group produces a detailed annual report that examines its successes, comparing outcomes to benchmarks, and reviews projects that did not meet expectations. Other publications, available on its website, include a brochure detailing achievements and outcomes since its inception.

Woody Yaloak has a close relationship with local tertiary education institutions, such as Ballarat University, and takes on students for work experience and honours projects. In 2004 the Woody Yaloak Catchment Group won the National Landcare Catchment Award. That year four new neighbourhood groups formed.

Urban Landcare

B4C

Bulimba Creek Catchment Coordinating Committee (B4C) is a voluntary not-for-profit organisation committed to protecting and enhancing Bulimba Creek catchment, one of the largest in metropolitan Brisbane. It covers 122 square kilometres (ten percent of the city area) with eight main tributaries and five wetland systems. Home to over 120 000 people, it is part of Australia's fastest growing region.

Since 1999, B4C has planted over 250 000 trees, creating some 360 hectares of new habitat, and its advocacy has helped protect 426 hectares of urban bushland. It manages Waterwatch and schools education programs. Through the committee's volunteer program, community open days and education projects, B4C involves around 5300 people a year – this means that B4C engages one in every 22 people living and working in Bulimba Creek catchment at some level.

In 2005, B4C became the first Queensland organisation to win the Thiess National Riverprize for excellence in river management. The winning submission outlined B4C's revolutionary catchment management program that includes but transcends the 'planting trees in the ground' concept – it is financially secure, environmentally driven, culturally inclusive and ethically based – it aims to be truly sustainable. National recognition has allowed B4C to further develop partnerships with industry leaders and all levels of government to fund on-ground works, a community education facility – the Southside Sustainability Centre – and an international schools twinning program.

B4C firmly believes people must lose their 'my patch' curator mentality and become true custodians of the earth. In highly urbanised catchments behavioural change is necessary to ensure communities have a future. B4C's Sustainability Centre, built with help from Boral Queensland, is in Carindale. The staff numbers six: a catchment coordinator, office manager, two field supervisors and two trainees. B4C currently has over \$500 000 (including substantial in-kind contributions) worth of projects under way. It raises funds through its Bulimba Creek Environment Fund. Working closely with 23 bushcare groups in the catchment involving 900 members, it is affiliated with another fourteen organisations. Moreover its relationship with Brisbane City Council (BCC) is excellent: BCC finances a coordinator, B4C grows plants and does contracting for the council and B4C members sit on two council advisory groups.

Landcare at primary producer level

Andrew and Carolyn Nichols

Andrew and Carolyn Nichols have been farming their 380 hectare property, Redbanks, in north-west Tasmania for over 20 years. An exemplary enterprise for profitability and sustainability, almost one-third is natural bush, wetlands and revegetation areas. The farm's natural assets combine with diversified rotational production, from poultry to cropping (1000 tonnes of potatoes annually, plus peas, poppies, broccoli, wheat and triticale), beef cattle, farm forestry and a fine foods line, Naturally Nichols – including puddings, heritage biscuits and pork pies.

Regional Landcare issues include localised overclearing, erosion and water pollution. Since the Nichols adopted a nature conservation management plan in 1998, they have also launched several initiatives to improve crop yield, including manure application from intensive livestock areas, cover crops on bare ground during Tasmania's wet winters, best-practice

cropping rotation, mulched rip lines and a farm policy of only tilling flat ground.

The steeper areas have been converted to commercial tree plantations or revegetated with native species to create wildlife corridors between bushland remnants. Nearly all creeks and waterways have been fenced and revegetated with local species. Shelterbelts provide cover for stock and crops. Proceeds from Naturally Nichols products are reinvested into the 100 hectares of native bushland, which contains some of the most pristine remnant forest in the region, including white gum forests, blackwood stands and valuable old habitat trees. The farm also hosts a family of wedge-tailed eagles, and the threatened freshwater lobster and burrowing crayfish live in local creeks.

Even with these best-practice initiatives, the Nichols still encounter challenges. Run-off from laneways has caused erosion and pollution, rectified by developing sumps and underground drains. The fenced-off areas of native bush and waterways have been invaded by blackberry bushes; these are removed either by hand or using bio-active Roundup. These areas have also become a haven for the Bennetts wallaby, which are kept off the paddocks and plantations by wallaby-proof fencing and occasional controlled culling.

Most importantly, the Nichols have educated those around them that 'landcare values do not conflict with production values,' by showing very clearly that the two can operate in harmony with great success.

Indigenous Landcare

Traditional Owner Plans in Queensland

Indigenous peoples in Australia play an important role in natural resource management, bringing a unique understanding of land and water based on deep spiritual, cultural and economic connections. Indigenous people also share concerns, along with many Australians, about the state of the environment. To date Indigenous engagement in Landcare has been limited for a number of reasons, including marginalisation of groups and communities, and difficulty in understanding and making use of mainstream natural resource management project development, with its activity funding and reporting frameworks. Nonetheless many Indigenous groups contribute significantly and effectively to Landcare through a multitude of project activities, on-ground works and provision of advice to other Landcare groups, and recognise that many people in mainstream Landcare strongly support their aspirations and acknowledge that Australia needs a broader social and culturally defined context to manage natural resources.

Wet Tropics Aboriginal Cultural and Natural Resource Management Plan

This is a major achievement for the region's traditional owners, a very positive step towards ensuring that government and non-government and industry groups and the broader Wet Tropics community recognise the rights and custodial obligations that traditional owners in the region have for 'Caring for Country.'

The Aboriginal Plan was developed by the eighteen traditional owner groups in the Wet Tropics NRM region, one of fifteen such regions in Queensland.

The Aboriginal Plan identifies a range of strategies to address traditional owner priorities and aspirations, and recognises the holistic approach practised by traditional owners in Caring for Country. Many of the strategies in the plan address issues such as unemployment, economic development, intergenerational knowledge transfer, cultural continuity, community governance, education, training, skill development and self-determination.

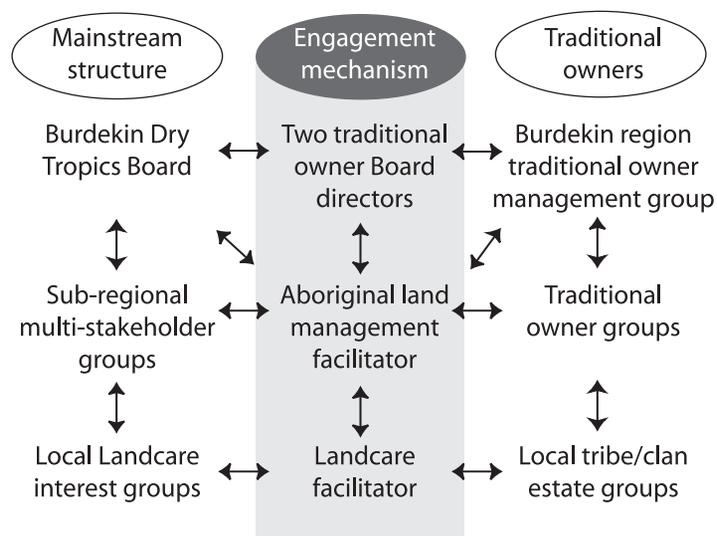
The Aboriginal Plan also lists key management arrangements, issues, actions and procedures and potential partners for implementing the plan within several themes, including Increased Access and Use of Country, Aboriginal Knowledge of Country, Places of Cultural Significance, Aboriginal Material Culture, Aboriginal Languages, Cultural and Natural Resources and Commercial Use of Resources on Country.

The Burdekin Dry Tropics Region Traditional Owner Engagement Framework

The Burdekin Dry Tropics region in north-east Queensland covers eight per cent of the state, supports a large agricultural, mining and industrial base and adjoins the Great Barrier Reef – the largest World Heritage listed area in Australia.

The Burdekin Dry Tropics Board (BDTB) was established in 2002 to develop regional partnerships, deliver Australian Government NRM funding initiatives and guide community driven NRM in the region. The BDTB was the first regional body in Queensland to employ a permanent full-time Aboriginal Land Management Facilitator to liaise with traditional owners. Two regional forums were held with traditional owner groups, which resulted in an agreed Engagement Framework and a number of priority projects.

The Engagement Framework has been utilised to enable traditional owners to participate in regional NRM planning processes through a parallel decision-making structure to that of the Board, and a Traditional Owner Management Group was formed to represent Indigenous interests.



Burdekin Dry Tropics Traditional Owner Engagement Framework
(Adapted from George and Smythe, 2004).

Indigenous Land Management Facilitator (ILMF) support for Traditional Owner engagement in NRM

To help Indigenous people address their land and sea management needs, contribute to national objectives and gain access to NHT funding, a national network of thirteen ILMFs has been established. The ILMFs act as practical two-way links between Indigenous land managers and other individuals and organisations involved in promoting sustainable land management and nature conservation. The ILMFs are funded through the NHT and employed through regionally based host agencies in each state and territory. Cliff Cobbo, ILMF for Central and Northern Queensland, assists with traditional owner engagement across five regional NRM bodies and encourages Indigenous representation on regional bodies.

People in Landcare

Bruce Munday, Adelaide Hills

Bruce writes: I breed Murray Greys on 120 hectares in the Adelaide Hills and

run a communications consultancy from an office on the farm. I stumbled across Landcare in late 1989, struck by the unlikely love affair between the NFF and the ACF. Tungkillio Landcare Group was born shortly after in our kitchen, witnessed by five like-minded neighbours. That was the charm of Landcare in those days – innovative, totally grassroots, and driven by a dream.

Initially our dream was revegetation, inspired (or perhaps depressed) by the bald hills all around us. But we soon moved into both agricultural production, mainly perennial pastures, and natural resource management, particularly watercourse protection and dryland salinity. The group grew rapidly from five to 43, had a monthly newsletter, numerous field days and even exciting annual general meetings.

In 1992 we initiated Reedy Creek Catchment Group, which spawned three more Landcare groups linking the top of the catchment with the bottom. The activity continued at a great pace and the achievements, particularly in the upper catchment, are obvious today.

I found myself chairing the State Landcare Consultative Group, which, among other things, ran the State Landcare Conference. My fifth and final conference was at Roxby Downs. I'd gloomily predicted no-one would go to a distant uranium mine for a Landcare conference, but the 450 people who turned up proved me very wrong! In the mid 1990s I chaired the Landcare Association of SA, an advocacy group seeking to directly link Landcarers and policy-makers – despite some hard work, few groups saw the relevance of the Association, which has been in recess for the last two years, although it was welcomed by the policy-makers.

By the late 1990s I sensed that a lot of the steam had gone from Landcare – increasingly it appeared to belong to project officers. Where there was still action it often seemed disconnected from significant resource-condition outcomes, but most of all I thought that many farmers had done what they were going to do – mainly planting trees – and the next steps had to be driven by business rewards.

The light appeared on the hill for me in 2001 in the form of Jock Douglas's Australian Landcare Management System (ALMS), which enables landholders to improve environmental outcomes and have their achievements recognised. Following this dream I have been leading an NHT-funded EMS Pilot Trial in the eastern Mt Lofty Ranges and Murray Plains catchment – tough work with some painful lessons to learn. However, being catchment-based with national links, I believe it's the vehicle to take Landcare forward because it keeps landholders accountable, rewards those who measure up and delivers prioritised natural resource outcomes. I also chair the Eastern Mount Lofty Ranges and Murray Plains NRM Group.

Gus Green OAM, Launceston

Christopher (Gus) Green has been involved in Landcare since its inception in Tasmania. While managing his foam fabrication business in 1989, Gus heard a radio interview with Greg Pinkard from the Department of Agriculture about a new program called 'Landcare.' An idea came to him to get some help to restore Launceston's major stream, the North Esk River, which was badly degraded by willows and other weeds. Gus immediately contacted the department and started on a Landcare journey that continues to this day.

North Esk Landcare Group was formally established in 1991 by Gus and Merv Whybrow with backing from two Lions Clubs - Launceston-Riverside and City of Launceston. The group generated a vision called the 'Ribbon of Blue,' aimed at rehabilitating the North Esk's winding fourteen kilometre path through Launceston before it joins the Tamar. The group's first grant was \$1500 from Greening Australia. Since then, with Gus the driving force, the group has been able to complete \$1.3 million worth of on-ground works – a fraction of the total investment. 'The money put into works has been matched by an immeasurable amount of in-kind support – probably ten times as much!' Gus says.

Gus has had funds from the National Landcare Program, Envirofund, the Natural Heritage Trust, sponsorships, Landcare Australia, Launceston City Council and numerous local and national businesses and companies, including Telstra, Ford Australia and Stihl. Politicians from all sides have supported the project, as have the media. 'The Examiner editor was one hundred percent behind the project from its earliest days – the media exposure has helped us immensely – especially at the start!' Gus recalls.

The project has also succeeded because Gus not only motivated the Landcare group and volunteers, but those participating in labour-market programs such as Green Corps, Jobskills, Work for the Dole and CVA. 'Those workers are the real heroes; they've toiled in temperatures from -2°Cel to burning hot summer days in the thirties. They've come out with their chainsaws and tractors and excavators on rainy winter mornings, in frost, and summer heat waves – and at times they've worked in mud up to their waists. We nearly lost one excavator when three-quarters of it sank into the mud. These guys are the ones who've got the job done and we couldn't have managed without them.'

Today, fifteen years later, work continues on the Ribbon of Blue. The group has gracefully retired; Gus has wound back his commitments, but he still has input into current willow removal, revegetation and habitat restoration. Because of his persistence and success, Launceston City Council commits \$30 000 annually for maintenance and works. 'The long-term success of

this project has been due to getting the council on board with full support and commitment. This takes the pressure off the Landcare group and lets volunteers move on eventually to other projects and the rest of their lives,' Gus emphasises.

Where once willows grew so densely that the river was invisible for large stretches, today hikers, cyclists and families are walking along its banks, enjoying the rapid flow of the river and the gliding black swans, and watching kayakers paddle up and down past numerous anglers. Flood-prone land can be used productively and sea eagles have returned to the river to fish. Upstream, Esk Corra-Linn Landcare Association, spawned in 2001, does similar good work.

Gus took the Tasmanian Individual Landcarer award in 1994, the same year his group won the Landcare Community Group award, and for his outstanding commitment to the community, Gus received an OAM in 2005.

By showing what a small group of people with a vision can create, Gus has become a model for many in Landcare. Gus summarises, 'I think this Landcare group project is a good example of the principle that, if you really believe in something, you can get it done.'

Anne Davie OAM and Bob Davie, Bimbadeen, Phillip Island

Bob and Anne started dairying in 1954 on 48 hectares off Back Beach Road, Ventnor. Milk prices fluctuated, so during the 1967-68 drought they changed to growing beef, purchasing another 96 hectares. The Brangus breed suited their locality; initial stock records were based on performance and weight until Bob attended a course at University of New England on Breed Plan. This international system evaluates every animal in the herd. Breed Plan information combined with steer trial data, such as growth and carcass characteristics, is compared against other breeds. Bimbadeen steers have been successful in national and state trials over 30 years.

Currently the Davies are part of a DNA testing trial to determine genetic characteristics that match consumer preference. Gene Star can predict which bulls will sire offspring to produce marbled meat and other desirable marketing qualities such as tenderness. Two Bimbadeen sires have already produced GeneStar 1 marbling rating and three sires have GeneStar tenderness rating, giving all progeny over the last five years guaranteed genetic tenderness. Bob and Anne have also been involved in the Gippsland Beef and Lamb EMS project and Enviromeat – selling their own produce at farmers' markets and retail outlets.

During the 1970s the Davies noticed soil scalding on lower lying areas of their farm. People thought then that it was a drainage issue, so Bob mounded paddocks to increase runoff and allow pasture to grow above saltwater

levels. 'The turning point for us was when we realised that salinity was a challenge, not a problem. We decided that we had to learn to work with it, instead of against it,' Anne says. Subsequently organic fertiliser application, extensive pasture selection, tree planting and reduced paddock sizes with controlled grazing, were all used to treat salinity, as well as manure smudging, the promotion of dung beetle activity and reduced dependence on herbicides. Where possible Bob and Anne control weeds manually or through grazing management, and use herbicide when no other option is available. Weeds are now a minor problem across the property.

By the late 1980s, they had double-fenced and treed their perimeter. When Phillip Island Landcare Group started in 1987, the incentives for fencing and tree planting enabled Bob and Anne to accelerate their planting program. Each year they aim to plant 2000 seedlings; there are break-of-slope plantings and large shelterbelts/corridors along every fenceline, including some salinity discharge areas considered beyond redemption for now. A two-kilometre length of the Phillip Island Wildlife Corridor passes through the farm, and a 500 m section of Saltwater Creek was recently fenced and revegetated. Anne once heard a speech by David Bellamy where he labelled melaleucas as the kidneys of the earth, and thought it beautifully described what was needed at Bimbadeen. In 1987 the Davies purchased another property, McHaffies, with unusual spring-fed lagoons forming vital migratory bird habitat. They have successfully fenced and protected this land, along with a large section of remnant coastal scrub, linking it to Ramsar-listed Western Port Bay.

Their experiences with salinity led Bob and Anne to Landcare immediately the group formed. 'Landcare has been a lifeline for us,' Anne says. 'It gave us hope!' They mentored new landholders coming to Phillip Island and helped others undertaking salinity amelioration and revegetation, running Bimbadeen as a demonstration farm from 1991. Since that time students from Iowa University, Korean government officials, Monash Environmental students, KPMG, the East Gippsland Landcare Network, the Goulburn Broken Landcare Network, Victorian Geography Teachers Association members and many others have visited the farm to learn about Landcare works on Phillip Island. Bimbadeen is now part of a statewide dry land salinity awareness tour for VCE students.

Other research involvement includes establishing four piezometers as part of the Phillip Island bore network, help with a masters thesis on groundwater mapping, pasture trials, 3D groundwater modelling, groundwater and stream quality assessments, EM31 salinity hazard mapping and a study of groundwater pumping into a sewerage outfall main.

Both Bob and Anne have been members of the Phillip Island Landcare

Group committee and Anne has been vice-president and president. They both serve on the weeds and salinity sub-committees. Anne sits on Bass Coast Landcare Network's steering committee, Gippslandcare, and the South Gippsland/Bass Implementation Committee of West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority. She has a people and communities portfolio with that CMA, and has also assisted Bass Coast Shire to develop its Land Management and Biodiversity Incentive Scheme. Moreover she helps manage Barb Martin Bushbank, sits on a planning forum for Phillip Island, and is on a team organising a national Indigenous land managers' conference.

It's not difficult to see how Bob and Anne won the 2005 Victorian Landcare Primary Producer Award – and Anne recently gained an OAM.

Jim Sansom, Newham and District Landcare Group

In mid 2003, a bearded man in bike leathers and footy jumper visited Romsey Landcare office in central Victoria. Jim Sansom, a retired geography teacher, wanted to form a Landcare group at Newham, at the foot of Hanging Rock and the top of Deep Creek, one of the Maribyrnong River's tributaries. As a retired geographer, Jim began asking questions about the area, its native vegetation and the risks posed by erosion and salinity. He had long wanted to get involved in catchment management, and saw Landcare as the best way to operate locally. He joined nearby Deep Creek Landcare, but, reckoning Newham needed its own group, spent several months talking to landowners and other community members. The idea resonated strongly with a core of locals, so in late 2003 a steering committee was formed, backed by staff from Macedon Ranges Shire, and Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority (PPWP CMA).

Late in 2003, Jim Sansom survived a heart attack. However, Jim pressed on, soon calling a meeting to initiate Newham and District Landcare Group, which formed in mid 2004 with 40 members and Jim as president. Momentum built up quickly, which meant funding was necessary! Melbourne Water had extended its Stream Frontage Management Program (SFMP) into the Maribyrnong catchment in 2003-04, but upper Deep Creek wasn't seen as a high priority waterway in the Regional River Health strategy. With the PPW CMAs guidance, Jim vigorously canvassed Newham landholders, and ten, some with adjoining stream frontages, applied for help through SFMP. Jim went further; he drafted a restoration plan for upper Deep Creek for Melbourne Water.

Concurrently, Newham Landcare applied for a CMA community grant. The group was very successful overall, so that almost all the committed landowners with stream frontage could proceed. Jim continued to promote

the need for comprehensive plans for the catchment, and enlisted graduate students from LaTrobe University for a fauna survey. Since then, Newham Landcare Group has thrived:

- Membership has risen to 60 and is still growing
- Landowners, many of them 'lifestylers,' feel far greater responsibility for their properties and are much more active land managers
- It helps educate the community through information evenings, property planning courses and its newsletter
- Social interaction founded on Landcare activities has multiplied
- Neighbours help each other more and talk about Landcare-related issues and what they can do to improve their land
- Succession planning ensured Jim could step down after 18 months as president
- The group has run numerous community planting days

Recently, Newham Landcare gained Envirofund money – \$24 000 for the Cobaw-Macedon Ranges Biolink Project, and \$7500 for a trailer-mounted weed spraying unit, as well as an \$11 500 Community Water Grant to revegetate, protect, and enhance a six hectare site. Then, in December 2005, Melbourne Water and DSE committed \$80 000 for further rehabilitation along upper Deep Creek. Melbourne Water has also provided aerial photos for property planning courses, which strongly reflect the group's vision for the upper Deep Creek catchment.

What about Jim? He remains on the committee and is firmly committed to the Deep Creek Project. Jim exemplifies how one person can spark rapid and profound community-wide action that far exceeds what might have been expected from that first call at Romsey office three years ago.

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The first National Landcare Facilitator, Andrew Campbell, detailed the evolution in each state in three reports from 1990-92. His successor, Helen Alexander, did the same from 1993-96. The next incumbent, Lachlan Polkinghorne, presented five reports, each examining issues and major influences on Landcare. His successor, Coral Love, has delivered a further three reports.

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www.woodyyaloak.com.au

Authors

Sue Marriott and her husband run a Coopworth sheep stud near Geelong, Victoria. Involved with the Potter Farmland Plan, she also spent several years managing rural training programs. Through a 1995 Churchill Fellowship, she expanded her international networks and organised the South African Landcare study tour of southern Australia in 1997. She is a founder of SILC.

Settling in Western Australia in 1991, Theo Nabben joined the Australian Conservation Foundation, the national community body representing the environmental movement, then moved in 1993 to the Department of Agriculture Western Australia. He was involved in Landcare activities in Southern Africa from 1998-2004, acting as South African National LandCare Facilitator from 2003-4. He is a member of the International Landcare Steering Committee.

From 1981-96, Rob Youl worked in farm forestry, Landcare, urban revegetation, project development and publicity with Victorian resource management departments and Greening Australia, and has been a project and fundraising officer with Landcare Australia since 1996. He owns two blocks of native forest and, through eTree and other connections has become involved in New Zealand Landcare.

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