

NSW Local Landcare Coordinators Initiative

2nd State-wide LLCI Workshop

“Share Learn and Connect”

Question and Answers from the Webinar

Background

An important part of the Local Landcare Coordinator Initiative is to connect host organisations and coordinators through a regional **AND** state-wide community of practice, to share experiences, learn skills and connect with each other and other players. The initial State-wide induction activity, held at Stockton in March 2016, laid the groundwork for the implementation of the program.

The second event, a state-wide webinar and regional group work, held on 21 June 2017 provided an opportunity to:

- **Learn about the progress of the project**
- **Increase skills and understanding on aspects relating to achieving LLCI initiative objectives from a range of speakers.**
- **Provide individual and regionally based feedback and input to the future direction of the current program**
- **Contribute your ideas on building a case for supporting Landcare into the future**

We thank everyone for their contribution, on the day and in the lead up to the Webinar. The webinar and regional sessions generated a lot of information:

- **The response collected from the regional evaluation sessions are being collated and will be provided as part of the mid-term review of the LLCI.**
- **The evaluation of the event is underway and will be included in the report of the event.**
- **All questions raised on the day have been compiled and responses have been prepared as below. Where questions are similar we have grouped these and provided a common response.**

If you feel that you have unanswered questions after reading the attached then please contact us.

Chris McCulloch

NSW Landcare Program Manager
6333 2315 | 0427 061 164
chris.mcculloch@lls.nsw.gov.au

Sonia Williams

NSW State Landcare Coordinator
6772 9123 | 0411 113 590
swilliams@landcarensw.org.au



Local Land Services

The Local Landcare Coordinator Initiative is funded by the NSW Government and is supported through the partnership of Local Land Services and Landcare NSW.
www.landcare.nsw.gov.au



General questions:

- ***Will the Q&A from this webinar be published and sent to us?***

This document endeavours to answer all questions raised at or after the seminar. This will be part of the final report and will be published to the Gateway website. The webinar is also available on the Gateway site. If you have any other questions please send them through.

Webinar presentations: <http://www.landcare.nsw.gov.au/local-landcare-coordinator-initiative/second-LLCI-workshop-webinar-21-june-2017>

- ***We'd like the questions to be answered that have been put forward.***

During the webinar, we looked to answer a variety of questions drawn from all regions, many of which did duplicate each other, which is expected, thus it was not possible to answer all questions from a single region in the allotted time. We undertook to answer all questions that were raised during the webinar and have done so in this document.

- ***Western would like to know whether any of the feedback from Stockton was taken into consideration when designing this webinar?***

Yes – the evaluation from Stockton was considered. One of the most valuable outcomes identified was the networking and sharing of ideas. Feedback also indicated that one of the most valuable sessions at Stockton was the “Working at the Regional Scale”. This is why the webinar was designed to be attended via a regional location (rather than attending the webinar from each networks office or home location). Other feedback stated that fewer topics in more detail should be provided which we kept in mind in designing the program. Finally cost and travel time were major considerations for many - a regionally based webinar seemed a compromise between bringing people together, and keeping costs low.

Webinar availability:

- ***Will we be able to use this webinar technology within our own groups?***
- ***Who will pay for the use of Redback?***
- ***We would like to use this webinar technology in our region. What is the cost involved and can individual networks access? ie. Is it paid for centrally or will networks need to pay?***

Yes, the technology is something that we encourage all regions to utilise.

Landcare NSW is working with Redback and other providers to provide some information and material, including costs. RLFs will be canvassed to gain an understanding of the likely usage, as this may affect the cost we can negotiate.

In terms of cost and who pays, a flier from Redback will detail their costs, and this will be distributed via RLFs. There are opportunities to utilise the RLF training budgets, for any regional scale webinars that are held. For any further state-wide webinar sessions (such as specific training webinars) costs will be met by the state program.

Any costs for individual organisations /members for logging on to a webinar should be met from the LLCI budget allocation for attendance at Community of Practice.

- **Could the potential of video conferencing be explored by the central team?**

Yes, video conferencing is a good option. There are some considerations however including internet bandwidth capacity in many regional areas.

Local Land Services has invested in video conferencing facilities in all its regions (various locations) – Local Land Services has offered these facilities to be utilised by Landcare.

Please contact your RLF to negotiate with your relevant Local Land Services team.

- **Any possibility the Muster could be live-streamed. Cost and time are barriers for many Landcare members attending in person but they may be interested in participating in this and conference sessions.**

This will be investigated.

Muster is Wed morning 25 October 2017, before the State Conference.

www.nswlandcareconference.com.au tickets on sale NOW - Muster is free.

Local Landcare Coordinator Initiative specific questions:

- **Are other states pursuing similar initiatives and can we learn from them?**

The LLCI was in part modelled on the Victorian Local Landcare Facilitator Program, however the major difference is that in Victoria the program also funds a Regional Scale Coordinator. Without this position we are relying on the RLFs to assist with linking activity at the regional scale.

Landcare NSW is represented on the National Landcare Network and through this we connect, share and learn about what is happening in other states. The LLCI has attracted a lot of attention at this national scale. Many of the products from the LLCI, such as insurance, are being utilised by other state Landcare organisations.

- **Is the aim to increase numbers of groups or people engaged?**

The aim of the LLCI program is probably best described as a little of both. But it aims to do this through building community ownership - through involvement, building partnerships and developing skills. We need to get people engaged but we also need to ensure we have enough of the right people involved so that we are sustainable. There is progress to be made in all areas.

- **North Coast volunteers are feeling strain and stress from ever increasing commitments and requirements associated with LLCI**

The enormous contribution of volunteers in the North Coast and across the State is recognised, respected and highly valued. The LLCI is taking Landcare support to a new level so it has placed some additional pressures on everyone involved. Working together we have achieved a lot in a short time, providing a strong foundation from which to work. The specific requirements for the program were outlined from the application stage and it is important for all involved to meet the requirements and build an effective program which is able to attract continued funding and support from Government and a range of partners. It's also important to note the LLCI was not designed to merely top up any cut backs to standard CSO or similar funding that networks may have received in the past.

- ***Is the central training budget available to be used for both staff and committee training?***

Yes – a key outcome of the program is to increase the capacity of the host organisations.

- ***North Coast - Strong request for operational budgets for coordinators to use.***

The focus of the LLCI is on capacity building, building up the skills and governance of the host organisation, and assisting the community to identify and develop projects. It is understood that the community does need “doing money” to implement the activities identified in the action plan, and that the LLCI budget does not extend to this (other than for a few very small-scale activities). Groups are encouraged to apply for funding from a variety of sources. It is important to note that the coordinator employed under the LLCI should not be considered as the ‘already funded’ project officer for these projects – a separate line item for staff time should be written into funding application budgets.

- ***Hunter: How do we address the governance issues that are at a volunteer level?***

Effective governance presents challenges in all organisations and sectors. It is an area that needs attention and focus in order to raise awareness and improve skills. In terms of the volunteer committee level, the RLF has a training budget to address specific training requirements of committees and staff in governance. Landcare NSW has a number of resources available to assist (fact sheets, toolkits, information and advice). And there are also many sources of training, information and advice in the community. However, if there are specific areas that you feel are not being addressed; Landcare NSW would like to know so that we can see how we may be able to assist.

- ***For those regions with both Landcare Support funding via Local Land Services and LLCI could the reporting be streamlined to reduce the reporting burden and create efficiency?***

We agree that streamlined reporting is preferable. By working through the forum of the JMC we will explore if this can be achieved for future programs.

- ***Future training needs that could be statewide - what is the best way to provide feedback on the needs of our region?***

The RLF plays a critical role in collating information from the region – please ensure that you let them know of any training needs. RLFs are encouraged to contact Chris McCulloch or Sonia Williams if they feel a state-wide approach to an identified training need is required.

Reporting

- ***Did the previous diagram really show three quarters of the State have not completed reporting?***

Yes! Thank you to those who have completed their reporting. It has been of a high standard so far. For those who have not, please ensure that you schedule the reporting dates and requirements into your work plan. As mentioned during the webinar, reporting is part of the capacity building outcomes for the LLCI – not merely reporting for reporting sake. It is essential that we have information and data in order to manage the program and make a case for its continuation.

- ***Is there any formal training to assist Landcare groups prepare the gateway reporting?***

We are always available to assist, please give us a call. And we will look to provide more formal training via a webinar on this topic.

- ***Is there a time frame on the redevelopment of the Gateway site?***

Work has commenced and it is planned to launch the upgrade at the State Conference in October.

- ***Can we submit 6 month and annual reports that are developed for our host organisations rather than have to complete two sets (sometimes) three sets of reports.***

This question we believe is relating to those grantees that have a number of coordinators under the same contract (as opposed to those organisations that have a separate contract for each coordinator).

The LLCI provides coordinators to work at the sub-regional/district scale to support the local groups in that area. It is important that the reporting reflects the work of each of the coordinators and the groups they work with. Hence the requirement for separate reporting for each position.

- ***We recognise the importance of reporting - however many volunteer groups find it an overwhelming time burden when considering in combination with reporting required for other projects.***

We realise you have many priorities; however reporting is essential. Aside from the Financial and Part 2 report, we have designed the other reporting to assist your group with undertaking planning, collecting information and producing materials that promote your group (in a way that can also be utilised at the state scale). The reports are designed to help you improve your activities and also promote your achievements to your partners and local communities. The dates are known and we ask that you factor in sufficient time in your work plan to undertake it. Thank you!

- ***Is it possible for a draft of Report Card 2 and 3 be submitted for reviewing before finalising?***

We will investigate this.

- ***Whilst we wait for the Report card 2 & 3 to be released are you able to provide us with a heads up on the type of information that will be required.***

Yes, a copy of the questions will be circulated shortly.

- ***I also have to do all the host reporting - is there a checklist somewhere where I can check which of the report cards, host reports, annual reports and 6 month reports I have managed to complete?***

A separate check list has not been developed, however a clear program of reporting requirements in terms of time frames is included in your original host agreement.

Also by logging into your reporting page on Gateway you are able to see what reports and case studies have been submitted. The Gateway reporting page now includes a copy of your application, your contract and any other official correspondence relating to your contract.

- **Can we access our report cards when complete? We are not sure if we got a link after submission.**

We are also including a new area on your Gateway reporting page which will provide a copy of the Report Cards that have been submitted.

- **Is there a Landcare NSW factsheet that spells this out? Reporting??**

All information regarding reporting can be found on the Gateway

<http://www.landcare.nsw.gov.au/local-landcare-coordinator-initiative/reporting>

- **How is the information that is reported used and what is the value of this reporting? Is there any feedback on the overall achievements of the LLCI from reporting? Lots of reporting done but no information coming back down that coordinators can use.**

The information that is being reported is helping to build a picture of Landcare at the State level that can be used in gaining continued and increased support from a wide range of investors (government and non-government). However, the quality and completeness of this is reliant upon the quality and timeliness of the reports that are submitted.

The report card information will be supplied back to give trends at the regional and state scale. Some host organisations are already using the report card information to improve their data, and relay trends back to their groups. The case studies are in a format that can be utilised by groups as inclusions in their annual report to members, or in a prospectus made available to investors (eg local government) in highlighting achievements, or printed to poster size for display material at shows or events.

- **Can existing resources at the regional level such as the LLS or RLFs be used more effectively in the reporting process for coordination and sharing of information being reported – to remove issues around one person receiving all reports at the state level? Potential to remove bottleneck while fostering relationships further.**

As reports are submitted they do have to be reviewed at a state level by the Program Manager – while this does seem like a bottleneck, it does provide a very valuable source of connection to what you guys are delivering on the ground. It is one of the way that as Program Manger I can keep abreast of the work being done and I often use it as a source of information to communicate upwards.

The collation of reporting at a regional scale may in some cases be the ideal model, and does already happen, however this will require negotiation to fit into existing capacity and work plans.

You should consider sharing your reporting regionally as a way to build you community of practice anyway.

- **Our region is very disappointed to hear that many regions haven't completed their reporting, when we have completed everything. Shouldn't progress payments be linked to reporting?**

- **It does seem a little unfair on regions that make the effort to get their reporting in on time. Progress payments could be something to think about in the future?**

Progress payments are made annually – any group not completing their reporting will not receive the next payment until all outstanding reporting is satisfactorily completed without fair reason.

Partnerships

- ***How do we capture quality of engagement?***

Quality is subjective and is difficult but not impossible to measure. Case studies provide one means to capture this, as do tools like; most significant change, partnership mapping and the like. The LLCI Evaluation framework <http://www.landcare.nsw.gov.au/local-landcare-coordinator-initiative/overview> outlines when and how these will be completed.

During the upcoming State conference coordinators and hosts will be approached to be interviewed, to help us gain information such as how the LLCI is meeting the objectives of the program.

- ***End of program outcome about partnerships at all levels has resulted in our activities and branding being closely linked with Local Land Services. How do we maintain our Landcare Group's identity as an independent non-government community driven organisation in the eyes of the public?***

Landcare does have its own identity and this should be preserved. It is important that Landcare groups and Local Land Services recognise that this is a partnership which should look to build on common goals, while recognising that each brings unique and valuable strengths of their own which need to be maintained. Other end-of-program outcomes are ensuring Landcare is valued, capable and resourced.

Keeping your identity will involve marketing your Landcare achievements – one achievement is developing a better relationship/partnership with Local Land Services at all scales. State-wide we are marketing Landcare's achievements and your case studies and information from the Report Cards are assisting us with this task. Regionally and locally it will be about how Landcare and Local Land Services engage in this partnership – and we encourage you to work productively to achieve a robust partnership. We are happy to receive feedback.

Remember that Landcare and Government are well placed to achieve their best when connected and working together.

- ***How does LLCI engage partnerships with Dept Primary Industries, Office of Environment and Heritage and other government agencies re policy to implement programs with Landcare included in design, cascading through all levels.***

Landcare NSW and Local Land Services work in partnership at the State level through the JMC, to provide input to various programs. It is only early days yet however progress is being made.

Landcare NSW also works directly with other departments and programs at the State level to build a greater understanding of the role that Landcare can play and requirements needed for this to be effective.

Whilst it is the LLCI team at State level who are more likely to be involved at the policy level, it is important to recognise that partnerships can happen across the state at all various levels. It is important that you use your local and regional contacts to further outcomes. Speak to your Local OEH, DPI, RDA officers, see where you and your groups want to go and where you can value add. This is where the annual planning process can be a great asset, to articulate which partnerships are needed to deliver on the outcomes identified.

Landcare Trust/ Landcare Marketing

- ***How is the progress going with the Landcare Trust?***

The initial phases of the Landcare Trust project have been completed – see the presentation on the Gateway website. <http://www.landcare.nsw.gov.au/local-landcare-coordinator-initiative/second-LLCI-workshop-webinar-21-june-2017>

The first phase of the project in 2016 involved a period of research and consultation, guided by a Steering Committee comprised of senior Government and corporate representatives with NSW Minister Troy Grant as Patron and the involvement of Minister Blair's office. A model was developed for diversifying funding and establishing a Trust, which outlined six key strategies and 20 recommendations. These related to establishing and then providing ongoing management of a diversified funding base for Landcare support in NSW. The majority of the recommendations are complete or well underway.

- ***What is Landcare Australia's role in raising a correct awareness of Landcare?***

Landcare Australia has a major role in awareness raising for Landcare nationally. Landcare NSW has sought to engage Landcare Australia throughout the Trust project, to ensure synergies this engagement is an ongoing work in progress.

- ***What is the potential for marketing of Landcare at a statewide and regional level? eg TV ads***

- ***Awareness raising about Landcare needs to be state wide but regionally specific as Landcare issues in our region are completely different to those in more urban areas.***

Under the Trust project, the steering committee has engaged a creative agency to assist in developing a marketing campaign that can be rolled out at both the state and regional level. The development work is nearing completion.

- ***The majority of Sydney-siders don't know about Landcare. Can Landcare NSW support Greater Sydney LLCs to improve and increase media coverage to address this low awareness of Landcare, ie we'd like to support the lifting of awareness of Landcare in the Sydney region.***

Raising awareness of Landcare in Sydney is important. Landcare NSW has taken up some opportunities through media outlets however the focus of Landcare NSW as the state representative body is more on statewide awareness raising. All Landcare organisations are strongly encouraged to allocate time and resources to communicating their activities and achievements. There is some useful information on the Landcare NSW website based on sessions that were held at the Stockton meeting. We hope that in future it will be a topic for training. Landcare NSW have produced a Communication Kit to assist you <http://landcarensw.org.au/resources/landcare-communications-toolkit/>

- ***Can Landcare NSW provide more media/ ministerial opportunities in Greater Sydney (due to our high population and high number of politicians)?***

Greater Sydney does present enormous opportunities in this regard and the communications kit mentioned previously has useful information.

The Parliamentary Friends of Landcare is an important conduit for Landcare NSW to promote the Landcare message and gain support. Two meetings and two events are held each year. These are effective but very labour intensive. All groups are encouraged to make contact with their local Member to ensure they know who you are, what you do and how you

are helping the community. Landcare NSW can assist you with advice on how to approach your local Member.

- ***Backing up previous comments about the lack of awareness of Landcare. In our experience, many believe Landcare is Government.***

Communicating, building relationships and raising awareness are core Landcare activities. It is not enough to create a great group, apply for funds and implement successful projects. You need to let people know what you have achieved! That is the way to promote Landcare and convey our identity as a community movement. Landcare NSW will continue to try to support you in this regard, by providing materials, information and advice. You will see more material coming over the next 12 months. While we work at the State level, we encourage you to promote Landcare locally and we are always happy to assist with advice.

- ***It would be great to raise awareness in Sydney of the Landcare issues, activities and achievements of regional/country areas. ie. any Landcare activities across the state.***

This is a focus of the campaign being developed under the Landcare Trust project.

- ***Why didn't the Boorowa event get more media attention?***

We believe the media coverage was good. ABC's The Country Hour conducted an outside broadcast from the event, it was covered in The Land and it also received extensive coverage in the local papers of each community. The event was also highlighted that day in the NSW Parliament and a short film has been produced which showcases the event – we encourage you to utilise this: <https://youtu.be/Dza83RmBr9w>

- ***Has Landcare NSW considered a crowd funding campaign to help secure funds for a future program? Could be a useful way to tell / sell the story in an urban environment...***

This is an area we would like to explore in future. Landcare NSW has already developed a partnership with the crowd funding platform Pozible and we successfully raised more than \$200,000 for projects so we know it can be done.

- ***So, we need to re-own our brand, sell ourselves to MPs, public and other agencies to secure our funding?***

In a nutshell, yes. Your voice and your efforts are what will make the difference – Landcare NSW can value add to this – but in reality it is the grassroots that will make the most impact.

- ***Will people be able to donate to specific groups through the donation portal - or does it just go into a Landcare pool?***

Landcare NSW is yet to establish its own DGR status - this is currently underway but the process can take considerable time to complete. In the meantime, a work around process for obtaining donations has been established utilising the Foundation for Regional and Rural Renewal's services. Landcare Australia has been approached to supply this support for Landcare in NSW however this avenue has not progressed. At present Landcare NSW is unable to take donations on behalf of other groups but we will be exploring this as we set up our own DGR capability.

- ***One of the end-of-program outcomes is to ensure Landcare and volunteer groups are sustainably resourced into the future - Is there a plan to better resource boards to host employees eg admin, financial, skills assessments and education support including the additional shopfront/office maintenance burden.***

The community of practice training is about developing such skills – Landcare NSW is also looking, through the resources gained from the Landcare Trust project to provide more opportunities for Board/Committee members to increase their skills. Unfortunately resourcing of the program is finite and one of the aims of the LLCI is to build the capacity of host organisations so that they are able secure a wider range of resourcing to compliment funds to be distributed from the Trust. We are already seeing great examples of increased support from Local Government in some areas, including office space, vehicles and cash support.

- ***The new Biodiversity Conservation Act may significantly undermine Landcare work - does Landcare NSW see a role for itself in responding to this possible threat?***

The Act could be viewed as containing opportunities as well as threats. Through the JMC Landcare NSW will be endeavouring to obtain further information and stay abreast of the changes.

- ***Would be good to know how often the monthly ministerial opportunities get taken up by the Minister? Feels like this info goes into a black hole.***

These opportunities are important ones. Whether they are taken up or not is beyond the program's control, however without having this information on hand when asked by the Ministers Office what is happening in x area around y date, it is impossible for the opportunity to even be considered.

Case Studies

- ***Should case studies focus on outcomes rather than outputs? Or are outputs more palatable when reporting to politicians and investors?***

The case studies received to date are a mixture – with some providing outputs and some outcomes. Politicians are people too! So different styles will be needed to suit the different personality types – so make sure you provide a mixture. In short **provide both**.

- ***With regards to telling the story, these case studies appear to not be reaching our politicians-why not?***

Landcare NSW uses the case studies in its meetings with both State and Federal Ministers and Members, and for meetings with the NSW Parliamentary Friends of Landcare. Some of the information from the case studies have been referenced in speeches by the Chair of Landcare NSW or by Minister Blair in Parliament.

<https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/Hansard/Pages/HansardResult.aspx#/docid/HANSARD-1820781676-73154/link/90>

However, for your local politicians the most successful approach is for YOU to send your case studies, or preferably make time for a short meeting, or invite them to an activity where you provide the case studies as take home material to reinforce the points you have made during the visit. This applies to both your State and Federal Local Member.

- **Can the monthly update sheet that we are required to complete re dates for Minister be placed on the revised Gateway as an online submission?**

We will investigate if this can be done.

- **The Case Study templates - we want more flexibility in the templates**
- **We have lots of other communication materials we could share that are relevant and impactful which would generate more ownership of the stories/documents??**

We agree that more flexibility would add further to the case studies however it is a matter of balancing the resourcing required to achieve this with other priorities.

IN terms of other communications material we encourage you to utilise your group page on the gateway to load and share your resource.

You can also create as many case studies as you want, you are not limited to the required number set for the LLCI.

Insurance and Landcare Membership

- **Does membership in one Landcare group cover the member at any Landcare activity or Landcare site (eg. a plant nursery) across NSW and or Australia**
- **Why do individual groups still require their own insurance/ membership? Why can this not be covered at a higher/network level?**

No, members are not covered for all Landcare activities just by being a member of one group. Membership of YOUR Landcare group provides you coverage for activities and events of that group. If you are involved in activities in other groups – you are a “volunteer” at that activity and then your coverage falls under that particular group. For any group in which you play an active role in decision making you should be a member of that group.

If your incorporated group is a member of a larger organisation (eg. your incorporated local group is a member of the district network) and you are the groups nominee to the network, your involvement in the district networks work is covered under the district network’s constitution and insurance. However, the district network’s insurance does not cover the operations of the incorporated groups below it, as they have their own decision making structure and are responsible for their own coverage. Please refer to Fact Sheet 31 <http://landcarensw.org.au/resources/factsheets-for-landcare-groups/>

- **Please produce a fact sheet which outlines all benefits to Landcare groups which come from becoming a member and taking out insurance.**

This is currently under development.

- **Any online tools to assist with management of local Landcare membership and fee collection?**

One of the major pieces of work that the Sustaining Landcare project is looking at is the development of a membership app. This will require the securing of sufficient resourcing to make it a reality. Several groups are already utilising on line membership – for example look at www.snelandcare.org.au/membership for ideas on membership apps and fee collection tool.

- ***Is financial membership appropriate for Gen"Y"***

The difference between membership and volunteer involvement in an activity needs to be understood. See Fact Sheet 31 Membership Status for Landcare Groups. Participation in events/activities can be done as a volunteer - however there needs to be a group structure that oversees and supports this volunteer involvement. The group needs membership to exist as a legal entity - so there will always be need for at least a core group to drive and deliver the group's activities, and provide the necessary support and protection for the volunteers who "turn up" to your events.

Membership fees can be \$0. By taking out a membership (paid or unpaid) is a way that volunteers can show their support for what your organisation is achieving. However, to run a group does cost money – insurance, administration, etc - so paid membership helps the group meet their core costs.

Training & Information Sharing

- ***Could we utilise this video (financial skills) for future committee training? It would be a great resource.***

Yes, that's perfectly fine – it has been loaded to the Gateway for you to access.

- ***Can governance and financial literacy training be an annual state-wide event to ensure new committee members each year have the opportunity for training?***

We think this is an excellent suggestion and will explore what avenues are available, such as this year's State Conference and we will slot a session into the 3rd State-wide LLCI event scheduled for February 2019.

In the meantime, we encourage you to work through your RLF to schedule this type of training into the regional community of practice for your area.

- ***Would it be worthwhile having a 5 minute summary across the state after each quarterly Landcare NSW state council meeting to get key messages out there quickly***

Yes, this is a good idea – we will look into how this can be achieved. Also remember to develop a relationship with your regional Landcare NSW Councilor to ensure that information flow is two way. And don't forget the "Advocate" which is produced shortly after each Landcare NSW quarterly meeting provides a quick summary of the key issues. This is emailed to everyone on our distribution list.

- ***We are in favour of more webinar training e.g. Gateway updates and training***

Thanks - we agree. This seems to be a good option for all and we plan to utilise webinars to provide training for Gateway - however this won't be till later in the year when Gateway is upgraded.

Grants

- ***Can the annual plan of activities for each Landcare group or at least region level be advertised so that activities can be held across the year and across as wide a range of geographic areas as possible?***

This will be up to each Landcare group to make happen – the Gateway website provides this statewide platform – but people will only know what is happening if YOU take the time to

load your groups' events to Gateway. When you load an event it is automatically published to the statewide calendar.

Loading an event is a simple task and it provides you a way to showcase at a state level what you group is doing, and possibly gain new members or volunteers for your event. As many groups already have their own websites on which this information is promoted, we suggest that on your Gateway page, load your event with just a taster of the information (but ensure you include key info such as dates and location), and provide a link to your own website so that people can follow up if they are interested.

- ***Can NSW Landcare work with State and Federal Environmental funding bodies to provide a calendar detailing when these grants are coming out. Grant orgs give potential applicants a month to complete a grant proposal however if Landcare groups knew that such a grant was coming up soon they would have more than one month to prepare, plan and submit grant proposal.***

Unfortunately, Landcare NSW gets about the same amount of notice as Landcare groups – it is the nature of many programs that delays in announcements will occur for a number of reasons often beyond the control of the grant making organisation.

Landcare NSW will develop a calendar of known dates, and there are a number of subscription based grant information sources such as Our Community, which groups may wish to access.

Landcare NSW posts every week on Facebook, a “Funding Friday” post, through which a current grant source is promoted. And any grant sources are included in the monthly e-bulletin sent to RLFs, Coordinators and Landcare NSW Council members, to distribute around their networks.

It should also be noted that most grant programs launch around the same time each year and most do not change significantly year to year.

- ***Grants are becoming more complex and requiring more and more information to submit. These grant proposals are written by volunteers with often limited expertise, what can Landcare NSW or LLS do to assist their Landcare groups to submit a grant proposal?***
- ***Grant preparation and submission is a major skill set which we need to improve as Local councils seem to win a number of grants that smaller Landcare groups also apply for***

Skills and time capacity to develop applications is a very real issue. One of the only ways to overcome this is through partnership with other groups or bodies to share the load.

In many cases your RLF or district Landcare Network might be able to assist and it is always a good idea to touch base with your Local Land Services contacts to use any capacity they may have to assist. RLF may even consider this as a training topic.

Similarly, you could ask Landcare groups that do have a successful track record in receiving grants to mentor your group – by providing feedback on your applications. One of the greatest strengths of Landcare is collaboration and sharing of information, rather than competing. We should build on this in all aspects of our work. Landcare NSW will investigate how we can further assist in this regard.

- **Could LLS staff also facilitate cross Landcare group (sub-region) grant submission?**

This is something that will be discussed through the “Stronger Together” project and at the JMC level.

There are many examples of this happening. Talk to your network and Local Land Services staff and try to drive it from the ground up.

- **One Landcare group had revenue less than \$20,000 a year, they won a grant for less than \$5,000 and part of the grant reconciliation was asked to provide an audited report. Which legislation applies in this type of scenario?**

Grant providers can make their own rules outside of legislative requirements, it is their prerogative as to what they see as necessary, though we agree that this does seem an excessive requirement.

We strongly suggest Groups review their grant contract requirements carefully before accepting funding, if these requirements seem excessive, a negotiation of conditions may be possible with the grant provider prior to signing. Or a Group may take the decision not to accept the funding if the administrative costs are excessive to the project benefit.

Again, communication is often key.