

Communiqué

May 2011



National
Landcare
Network

A particular focus of the May meeting of the NLN was to develop the Action Plan for the Australian Framework for Landcare. Representatives of community Landcare in each state and territory comprising the National Landcare Network were hosted by the Victorian Landcare Council at the quarterly NLN meeting in Melbourne May 23 & 24.

Day 1 saw Kim Chance, Chair of the Australian Landcare Council and Brett de Hayr in discussion with NLN members on the formulation of the Action Plan.

Kim emphasised the opportunity to ensure that policy makers understand the central role that community Landcare plays in NRM. He acknowledged the importance of the Action Plan being owned by the Landcare community, and stressed that the Action Plan and Framework were community Landcare documents - not ALC - and encouraged the NLN to develop its response accordingly.

The NLN resolved that to produce a stand alone Action Plan which addressed the Landcare challenges: food security, water security, climate change and the changing nature of how people volunteer. The NLN would address the Action Plan in terms of the Elements in the Australian Framework for Landcare, ensuring that all the Goals as set out in the ALC's Draft Action Plan are incorporated in the elements. The NLN Action Plan for Landcare is available at <http://www.nln.org.au/files/ActionPlan-%20ReviewSubmission.pdf>.

Day 2 broadened discussions to the many other Landcare issues, starting with a report from Brett de Hayr on the National Landcare Facilitator program, and from Heather Campbell on the activities of Landcare Australia Limited, including advice that all State Landcare Awards functions were finalised, starting with the first in W.A. in August.

Concerns were expressed that in some regions the Regional Landcare Facilitator Program was not being utilised for the benefit of community Landcare and producer and environmental groups, but to meet targets for the host regional body. It was clear that the RLF program was suffering from lack of its own overall MERI Plan against which the Program could be assessed. Further, the absence of a common MERI for the individual RLF positions to provide guidance for the RLF Steering Committees resulted in an inordinate amount of RLF time being misdirected.

NLN has made submission to the Australian Government's *Caring for Our Country* Review. The submission is available at <http://www.nln.org.au/files/Review-CfoC.pdf>.

As well as the issues raised in that submission, additional concerns were raised concerning the need for adequate resourcing of Landcare people to travel, meet to engage in discussion, planning and implementation for future direction and activity of the Landcare movement. Concern with regard to the existence and operation of the Caring for Our Country Business and Industry Program was noted, in particular the confusion it caused with potential corporate sponsors of Landcare.

The lack of a long term (15 years +) National Business Plan for Landcare was identified as being a major contributor for the confusion, frustration, disillusion, potential for duplication, poor level of engagement and less-than-satisfactory uptake of improved practices across the NRM sector. The NLN is offering to help the Australian Government and the ALC in the formulation of such a plan.

A very pleasing part of State and Territory Reports concerned the growing of Landcare in the Northern Territory with the formation of a representative body - the NT Pastoral Landcare Collaborative.

Discussion about the degree of recognition of the NLN at the grassroots level identified a need for the NLN to better promote its activities. In addition to our Communiqué, coverage needs to be extended to a wider range of publications.

The next NLN meeting will be held in Darwin in August.