



# Strategic Plan 2019-2024

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## The National Landcare Network – who we are

The National Landcare Network (NLN) is the representative body for community Landcare groups across Australia. It is a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee.

The objects of the Company identified in its Constitution include *to identify and resolve issues and challenges relating to, and to promote, the conservation, restoration, and economically and socially sustainable management of land.*

The NLN membership comprises each State and Territory peak Landcare body who come together to share their successes and support one another in overcoming challenges. Collectively, they represent community Landcare across the country and seek to foster, support and strengthen the knowledge, resources and capabilities of the Landcare movement and the thousands of volunteers who are at its heart.

The NLN acknowledges that Indigenous people have cared for and managed this continent for millennia and continue to care for their country today. We respect Traditional Owners' knowledge, skills and responsibilities in land and sea management and their role in leading the planning and caring for country across Australia.

## Our Vision

***Communities acting to improve and sustain healthy productive landscapes***

## Our Mission

***To be a representative, effective and trusted national voice for the Landcare community***

## Purpose

***The driving purpose of the NLN is to represent, support and foster the community Landcare movement. To achieve this, we need to be trusted and valued by our members, by the community and by the Federal Government as the national peak body.***

## Our core values

The NLN embodies the values of the broader Landcare movement. We deliver our work within the context provided by our values:

**Representative** – Promoting the views and needs of the grassroots Landcare movement and its core philosophies of local decision making, community volunteerism and community benefits (ground up).

**Consultative** – The views we represent are developed through consultation with our members.

**Non-party political** – The diverse perspectives of Landcare communities inform the movement's bi-partisan approach and are not specific to any political party.

**Knowledge –based** – Building, sharing and applying knowledge old and new, western and traditional.

**Networked and collaborative-** Connecting people with people and with the landscape, bonding within networks and bridging across them.

**Inclusive** – We are inclusive of all persons and groups with similar aims and objectives as ours.

**Focussed on making a difference** – Producing real outcomes for the environment, for our Landcare communities, for the broader Australian community, for our partners and for government.

## Trends and Drivers

The NLN's work is responsive to trends and drivers at local, national and international scales:

### Government priorities and funding program design

- Top-down priority setting and disempowerment of community Landcare
- Australian Government environment funding focussed on matters of national environmental significance and international obligations
- Decline in the effectiveness of Australian Government funding as it lessens its reach down to grassroots community Landcare networks
- Major differences in state and local government support for community Landcare across the country
- A reduction in the total dollars allocated under NLP2 compared to NLP1 and federal funding for Landcare currently finishing end of financial year 2023
- Grant and procurement models which have high transaction costs for applicants funding environmental outcomes which are inherently difficult to value, e.g. air and water quality, soils loss, protection of rare and endangered species and biodiversity.
- Unevenness in the functionality of the NRM regional model across the country
- Diversion of limited NLP funding to Farm Stewardship schemes, application of R&D outcomes on farm and regenerative agriculture.

### Community attitudes and demographics

- Decline in small rural towns and farmer populations
- Agricultural production increasingly concentrated on fewer, larger (corporate) farms
- Rural subdivision leading to an increase in peri-urban landholders seeking a rural lifestyle but unfamiliar with sustainable land management.
- Increased consumer interest in the environmental sustainability of food production, local produce and the quality of food
- Focus on energy and climate as key environmental issues
- Increasing recognition of First Peoples' land management practices especially the use of fire as a land management tool
- Improving local land management practices in many rural environments
- Increasing disconnect between local community priorities and Federal priorities
- International regulatory issues clouding the future of current herbicide-based farming systems
- Role of media, including social media, in driving priorities and perceptions

### Physical environment

- Increasing incidence of drought/currently large areas of the country affected by severe drought
- Salinity, soil acidification and erosion, with erosion by water exceeding soil formation rates

- Changes in river flows and catchment hydrology, deterioration in riverine and wetland environments
- Biodiversity continuing to decline and loss of species
- A changing global climate system beginning to affect all aspects of the environment
- Increasing investment in use of land, soils and native vegetation for carbon sequestration, carbon emissions avoidance or emissions reductions

#### International trends

- Opportunity for Landcare to deliver against sustainable development goals.
- National international obligations for reduction in carbon emissions, biodiversity, wetlands and migratory species and heritage
- Increasing linking of environmental and economic systems thinking, environmental accounting, triple and quadruple 'bottom line'
- Increasing recognition of the value of green and blue infrastructure
- International adoption of Landcare model
- Land-based solutions to climate change
- International philanthropy
- Opportunities in tourism
- UN Decade of Ecological Restoration to commence in 2021

## Strategic Pillars

### 1. Representation and advocacy

- ❖ Ensure the voice of community Landcare is influential and trusted in national conversations on natural resource management, sustainability, liveability, community wellbeing, agriculture and the environment
  - build strong, active relationships with national policy makers and decision takers
  - communicate and promote the value of community Landcare
  - optimise alignment of Australian Government funding opportunities and local community Landcare priorities
  - advocate for increased bilateral Landcare funding commitment
- ❖ Maintain and demonstrate representative structures and processes
  - support an active Members Council which effectively represents 'grass roots' Landcare
  - document the processes and networks which demonstrate representativeness of our Member Bodies
  - support members to participate and build capacity to participate
  - serve as a representative national forum for the identification and resolution of issues and challenges

### 2. Coherence and efficiency

- ❖ Ensure effective internal governance
  - Maintain a strong and cohesive Board which fosters respectful and constructive debate
  - Ensure governance documents and processes are up to date, embody good practice, and foster engagement between the Board and the Members Council
- ❖ Ensure the NLN is effectively resourced
  - Develop and fund a business plan for the NLN which enables it to fulfil the functions of a national peak body expected by its members and other stakeholders
  - Support member bodies to participate within the NLN and, as required, build the capacity to do so
- ❖ Continue national institutional reform

### 3. Knowledge and capacity

- ❖ Share systems and experience to increase the capacity of state and territory organisations
- ❖ Synthesise and promote information which builds the capacity of community Landcare and increases understanding at the national level
- ❖ Undertake and promote relevant research and projects to resolve issues of common concern and support the development of policy and advocacy

- ❖ Build knowledge and the evidence base of the impact and effectiveness of the Landcare movement

#### 4. Collaboration and partnerships

- ❖ Build strategic partnerships with landholders, industry, other NGOs, research agencies, and government
  - Increase the breadth of our collaborations where new opportunities are consistent with our core values
  - Ensure that our collaborations are beneficial to community Landcare
  - Encourage collaboration between STOs, Landcare networks and traditional owners
  - Build strong partnerships with other stakeholders such as NRM Regions Australia, the National Farmer's Federation, peak environmental and key philanthropic bodies.

## Strategic Actions

### 1 Representation and advocacy

Objective	Action	Priority	Year 1	Performance Indicator
Ensure the voice of community Landcare is influential and trusted in national conversations on natural resource management, sustainability, liveability, community wellbeing, agriculture and the environment	Build relationships with national policy makers & decision takers	HIGH	Establish a federal “Parliamentary Friends of Landcare” and encourage state equivalents	progress towards a federal Friends of group held by December 2019
			Engagement with key Government Ministers and their advisers	Constructive CEO and Chair relationships with Ministers and advisers, frequent and timely meetings
			Continue regular meetings with senior officials	At least 12 CEO contacts per year, at least 2 Chair contacts
			Maintain contact with the alternate government	At least 4 contacts per year, provide all output, make aware of advocacy
			Maintain contact with other key “influencers”	Register of key influencers developed
	Communicate and promote the value of community Landcare	HIGH	Collate and promote case studies and stories; literature review; policy statement & value proposition.  Look for new strategic promotional alliances	Increased promotion and profile of community-based Landcare

Objective	Action	Priority	Year 1	Performance Indicator
	Improve alignment of Government funding opportunities and local community Landcare priorities	MEDIUM	Develop “alignment” project and workshops with NLN members and government.	Workshops arranged, developed and conducted including NLP feedback. Achieve clarity on where alignment exists.
			Advocate for favourable Landcare outcomes across all relevant portfolios	Start to develop platforms relevant to each portfolio area, promote and advocate
	Advocate for increased bilateral Landcare funding commitments	MEDIUM	At Federal level, and in support of STOs, develop platforms and actively advocate.	Promote funding platform Federally, assist States and Territories to promote.
Maintain and demonstrate representative structures and processes	Support an active Members Council which effectively represents ‘grass roots’ Landcare	CORE FUNCTION	Face to face meetings of the MC with the Board	At least 2 well attended meetings per year, MC and Board satisfied with level of interaction.
			Dedicated staff support, reviewed annually	Members Council projects are effectively supported
			MC membership able to represent ‘grass roots’ views	Members Council composition enables a representative voice
			Regular MC meetings, monthly by teleconference	All STOs attending and participating in teleconferences
			Attendance of CEO at MC meetings. MC Chair to attend Board meetings and sharing of minutes	Members Council satisfied with level of engagement
	Demonstrate effective representative and consultative processes	CORE FUNCTION	Develop and maintain up -to-date record of STO membership and representative processes	Completed and updated annually

## 2 Coherence and efficiency

Objective	Action	Priority	Year 1	Performance Indicator
Ensure effective internal governance	Maintain a strong and cohesive Board which fosters respectful and constructive debate	CORE FUNCTION	Quarterly Face to face meetings and teleconferences as needed	4 face to face meetings per year with Board members satisfied with level of engagement. Review after a year
			Dedicated board support, reviewed annually	Board satisfied with level of support
			External Board effectiveness review	Annual effectiveness review and uptake of recommendations (governance subcommittee to oversight)
	Ensure governance documents and processes are up to date, embody good practice, and foster engagement between the Board and the Members Council		F&A subcommittee to incorporate risk into ToRs	Risk register reviewed and kept up to date
	Review and update Constitution		Constitution reviewed for consideration by the membership within 6 months	
	Review and collate governance documentation, add to website		Governance documentation reviewed and updated within 6 months	
Ensure the operations of the NLN are effectively resourced	Develop and fund a business plan for the NLN which enables it to fulfil the functions of a national peak body expected by its members and stakeholders.	CORE FUNCTION	Develop 3-year model	Monitor and report on outcomes and achievements against business plan
	Support member organisations to participate in the NLN and, as required, build the capacity to do so		Funding model developed and agreed	Effective member participation in the NLN
	Develop options to diversify funding sources	LOW	Develop business case for philanthropic and other funding	Business case developed – defer year to year 2
National institutional reform	Continue to be the national voice of Landcare	HIGH	Continue to position the NLN as the representative national voice	Increased recognition of the NLN as the national peak body

### 3 Knowledge and capacity

Objective	Action	Priority	Year 1	Performance indicator
Share systems and experience to increase the capacity of state and territory organisations	Share systems and skills amongst members	CORE FUNCTION	Identify knowledge sharing projects and continue Executive Officer meetings	Facilitate at least 3 EO meetings a year
Synthesise and promote information which builds the capacity of community Landcare and increases understanding at the national level	Address the gap between Landcare and the Research & Development Corporations/State Department programs	MEDIUM/LOW	Build relationships with key bodies	Key relationships identified and first steps taken
Undertake and promote relevant research and projects to resolve issues of common concern and support the development of policy and advocacy	Review role of Landcare in delivering international and national environmental priorities	MEDIUM/LOW	Develop reporting approach	First report by end 2019-20 financial year
	Review the national NRM regional framework		Review functional relationships and effectiveness of the model for community-based landcare	Explore with Government re ANAO/EPBC Act reviews. Develop our criteria for successful model
	Landcare Farming: Lead the jointly funded project to ensure it delivers NLN/STO outcomes of actual value to landcare, government and other stakeholders.	LOW	Provide leadership and active engagement via steering committee	Project incorporates NLN advice

#### 4 Collaboration and partnerships

Objective	Action	Priority	Year 1	Performance indicator
Build strategic partnerships with landholders, industry, other NGOs, research agencies, and government	Increase engagement of groups in government programs, and with NRM organisations	HIGH	Conduct engagement project with NLN members and government to achieve better levels of Landcare success in government programs,	Engagement project completed, including documentation of alignment issues and state/territory level discussions
	Ensure partnerships are consistent with core values		Policy document on partnership and sponsorship criteria	Policy in place by end 2019-20 fy
	Continue 'NewCO' discussions with Landcare Australia Ltd		Ongoing negotiations	Progress reviewed regularly by Board
	Increase NLN engagement with Traditional Owners through member networks		First Nations member/s of NLN, or other agreed method of ongoing inclusion	Develop a short paper on current arrangements for engagement by end 2019
	Increase the breadth of strategic collaborations where new opportunities are consistent with our core values	MEDIUM	Undertake stakeholder mapping to identify opportunities	Stakeholder mapping completed by end 2019
	Build formal relationships and engagement with international Landcare movement		Seek more direct involvement with ALI	Written understandings in place and regular discussions occurring

#### Review

Delivery against the Strategic Plan 2019-2024 will form part of the Annual Report at each AGM. It will be a standing item in the CEO's report at each Board meeting. The Plan will be revised annually.