

STRENGTHENING AND GROWING COMMUNITY-LED LANDCARE



National
Landcare
Network

2030 Strategic Directions

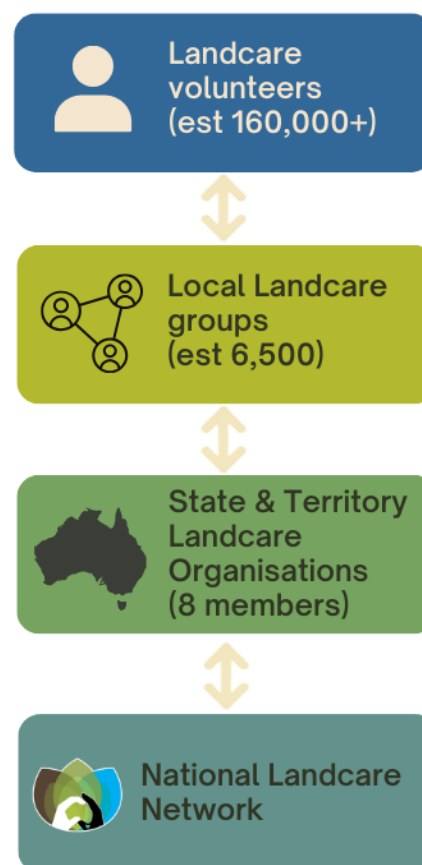


Introduction

To achieve healthy landscapes, stronger communities and more sustainable farming over the long term, the community-led Landcare system must be strong at the local, state and national level.

At the local level, Landcare brings people together to care for land, water, coasts and seas. This work is grounded in place, shaped by local knowledge, and sustained by over 160,000 volunteers, coordinators and community leaders who care deeply about the places they call home. It involves meaningful change for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, restoring ecosystems, supporting sustainable production, strengthening community connection, and responding to local environmental challenges.

At the heart of this movement sit Australia's State and Territory Landcare Organisations (STLOs). They provide essential support to more than 6500 Landcare groups, tailoring their strategies to the diversity of Australia's landscapes and communities. Their roles include advocacy, capacity building and knowledge sharing. They also deliver practical services that keep these 6500+ Landcare groups operating, such as insurance and, in some States, devolved grant programs.



The National Landcare Network (NLN) is the national peak body for this community-led Landcare movement. It is a member-based organisation, governed by a Board of 8 directors; 1 from each State and Territory.

The Members Council is the representative heart of the NLN and provides strategic advice. It is comprised of grassroots Landcare volunteers; 3 from each State and Territory. The Board and Members Council work independently of each other but in constant collaboration.

The NLN 2030 Strategic Directions (the Strategy) outlines the NLN's vision, goals and strategic priorities for the next 5 years. It has been developed in consultation with our Members Council, our STLO' Executives and endorsed by the NLN Board. The Strategy provides high-level strategic direction and is supported by a detailed Operational Plan.



Unlocking the potential of community-led Landcare

Australia is entering a period of accelerating change. Climate impacts are intensifying, biodiversity loss remains a critical concern, and communities are facing increasing pressure to respond, adapt and recover. In this context, the role of community-led Landcare—and the systems that support it—has never been more important. Unlocking the potential of the grassroots movement through support for innovation, leadership and improved access to investment, will ensure we have pathways needed to respond to both current and emerging challenges.

This Strategy represents our members desire to embrace these new opportunities. It reflects extensive engagement with STLOs and a clear understanding of the diverse contexts in which Landcare operates. While each jurisdiction is unique, we are united by shared values, shared challenges and a shared commitment to community-led action.

Working together with the STLOs, by 2030 we will unlock the next phase of community Landcare through:

- Building national coherence while respecting local leadership
- Creating meaningful change for First Nations peoples and our diverse Landcare communities.
- Supporting learning, innovation and collaboration to advance the sustainability of agriculture, horticulture, and pastoral industries.
- Amplifying the impact and value of community-led Landcare
- Securing the investment and confidence needed for landscape restoration



Walking Together for Meaningful Change

The NLN acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First People of Australia and as the first Landcarers, whose stewardship of Country spans tens of thousands of years. In this Strategy, we use the term *First Nations peoples* to recognise the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their cultures, and their unique connections to the lands and waters on which they live. We acknowledge the enduring cultural, spiritual and ecological relationships First Nations peoples have with land, waters, coasts and seas, and we pay our respects to Elders past and present. We recognise that caring for land and seascapes is not only an environmental task, but a cultural, social and intergenerational practice grounded in knowledge systems that continue to sustain Australia's landscapes.

The NLN supports partnerships that are led by Traditional Owners with cultural authority to speak for Country, and that are grounded in local governance, consent and long-term relationships. Across Australia, STLOs and local Landcare groups are already building partnerships with Traditional Owners, Aboriginal Land Councils, Prescribed Bodies Corporate, Ranger Groups, Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations and other First Nations organisations. These partnerships reflect local priorities and contexts and are central to delivering lasting environmental and land-management outcomes.

The NLN recognises this diversity of practice and the leadership already occurring across the system, and recognises that further effort, capability and investment are needed to strengthen and sustain this work.

As the national peak body, the NLN's role is to support this work by:

- Supporting partnerships that respect cultural authority, local governance and shared decision-making
- Promote the appropriate use of Traditional Ecological Knowledge alongside scientific and local knowledge
- Strengthen system capability by sharing practical experience on what works in First Nations partnerships
- Advocate for policy and funding that recognise and resource First Nations leadership and participation
- Respect Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property, including consent, attribution and benefit
- Embed cultural respect, learning, transparency and accountability across the NLN's leadership, governance and impact systems

This work requires listening, learning and long-term commitment. The NLN recognises that knowledge belongs to Country and to the people who hold it, and that partnerships must be built on trust, consent and mutual benefit.



Our Vision

Thriving communities caring for resilient land and seascapes across Australia.

Our Mission

To enable, connect and represent Australia's community-led Landcare movement—strengthening State and Territory Landcare Organisations and amplifying their collective impact nationally.

Priority Pillars

These areas represent where NLN can add the greatest national value by working with STLOs to develop shared approaches, tools and partnerships that benefit communities across Australia.

Pillar 1: Community Capability

Landcare groups are continually seeking up-to-date research insights and practical, on-ground applications they can share with their members. Landcare groups also collect large amounts of high-quality, place-based information. The NLN is working with STLOs to increase capability of community-led Landcare to:

- adopt new technologies (including AI),
- engage with environmental markets and other sources of restoration funding
- adopt practice change based on new research and collect data sets to complement government and scientific monitoring systems.

Pillar 2: Community wellbeing and resilience

Landcare groups bring people together to care for place. This leads not only to ecological benefits, but also to stronger social connection, improved mental health and increased community resilience—particularly during and after events such as fires, floods and drought. Supporting our First Nations to Care for Country supports their wellbeing. The NLN is strengthening the role of community-led Landcare as essential social infrastructure that supports environmental outcomes, community wellbeing and resilience.

Pillar 3: Community-led codesign landscape planning and restoration

Landscape restoration is at the centre of credible, science aligned environmental action. Moving beyond individual property boundaries to plan at a scale that reflects how water, wildlife, soils, and climate interact is critical to ecosystem integrity and climate change adaption and resilience. The NLN and our members recognise the enormous capacity that grassroots Landcare organisations have for leading landscape restoration and protection initiatives. We are working with our STLO's to support Landscape action planning and link it to concrete investment vehicles through targeted business development.



Our Strategic Goals

Goal 1: National Leadership and Stewardship

NLN provides national leadership that strengthens community-led Landcare as a connected, values-driven system that delivers sustainable agriculture and pastoral industries, and on-ground outcomes for the environment. We support STLOs to succeed locally while contributing to shared national priorities.

The NLN sets a shared strategic direction that aligns community-led Landcare with national priorities. The NLN harnesses collective effort to deliver greater impact when responding to emerging challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss, disaster risk and changing land-use and market conditions.

Objectives

Over the life of this Strategy, NLN will:

1. **Maintain a unified, national, strategic direction for community-led Landcare**, grounded in shared values and principles, while retaining local autonomy and place-based leadership. These will be reviewed annually with STLOs, and updated as needed to respond to emerging environmental, social and economic challenges.
2. **Support First Nations leadership and participation across the Landcare system** by embedding First Nations perspectives in national strategy, advocacy and system-level initiatives, and supporting to strengthen local partnerships.
3. **Support the escalation of system-level risks and opportunities** by working with STLOs to identify priority issues affecting community-led Landcare, and by raising these issues with government, funders and partners where national coordination or action is required.
4. **Clearly define and communicate NLN's role within the Landcare system**, so STLOs, partners and funders understand what NLN is responsible for, what it enables, and how collective action is supported.



Goal 2: Representation, Advocacy and Collective Voice

NLN is the trusted national voice for community-led Landcare. We amplify the collective experience, priorities and impact of the movement in national conversations.

NLN acts as a professional and effective representative body by bringing together insights from STLOs to influence policy, investment and decision-making. We tell a clear and consistent national story about what community-led Landcare delivers for land, agriculture and communities, and why it matters.

Objectives

Over the life of this Strategy, NLN will:

1. **Represent community-led Landcare in national policy and funding discussions** by participating in priority Commonwealth forums, consultations and stakeholder processes identified with STLOs.
2. **Communicate a clear national narrative of Landcare's value**, drawing on evidence and insights from STLOs to demonstrate Landcare's contribution to sustainable agriculture, horticulture and pastoral industries, and position it as a foundation for government programs, environmental investment and community-based delivery.
3. **Support opportunities for First Nations leadership and voices in Landcare to be heard nationally** by elevating perspectives in policy, funding and sector-wide conversations.
4. **Build and maintain trusted relationships with government, industry, First Nations organisations and key partners**, so NLN is recognised as the preferred national point of engagement on community-led Landcare.



Goal 3: System Capability, Knowledge and Capacity Building

NLN strengthens the Landcare system by helping STLOs learn from each other, build shared capability and use good information to make better decisions.

NLN provides a platform for STLOs to come together to share knowledge, experience and practical tools for better on-ground outcomes for both agriculture, horticulture and pastoral industries and the natural environment. We support learning, innovation and accountability, creating the foundations for a more informed and resilient Landcare community. A core part of this work is building respectful partnerships with First Nations peoples.

Objectives

Over the life of this Strategy, NLN will:

1. **Strengthen capability across the Landcare network to build respectful, long-term partnerships with First Nations peoples** by sharing practical guidance and examples of effective two-way knowledge sharing, that recognise cultural authority and local governance, respect Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property, demonstrate free, prior and informed consent, and achieve mutually beneficial environmental, social and cultural outcomes.
2. **Facilitate knowledge exchange between STLOs** through communities of practice, peer learning and shared problem-solving on priority issues.
3. **Build learning, leadership, and adaptability** to changing environmental, social and economic conditions, including capability to explore sustainable funding pathways and government initiatives.
4. **Improve data and information sharing** to support decision making, accountability, monitoring and continuous improvement.



Goal 4: Sustainable Funding and Investment

NLN helps secure stable, long-term funding for community-led Landcare by bringing organisations together to secure opportunities that cannot be achieved by individual organisations alone.

NLN's role is to unlock funding at scale and help ensure investment reaches communities fairly across Australia. We do this by coordinating national funding approaches, strengthening governance and evidence, and supporting ethical, meaningful partnerships, including with First Nations communities. This work helps stabilise existing funding and grow new investment to support healthy landscapes, strong communities and sustainable agriculture, horticulture and pastoral enterprises.

Objectives

Over the life of this Strategy, NLN will:

1. **Coordinate national funding approaches** to support multi-year, multi-jurisdiction investment in community-led Landcare, including from government, philanthropy, corporate partners and emerging markets.
2. **Increase funder confidence in community-led Landcare** by maintaining clear governance, transparent systems and consistent national evidence of environmental, social and economic impact including through community-led monitoring and landscape-scale outcomes.
3. **Support ethical and respectful investment partnerships with First Nations communities** by promoting approaches that recognise cultural authority, local decision-making and shared benefit.
4. **Advocate for equitable investment across regions and communities**, ensuring funding recognises diverse landscapes, priorities and community needs.
5. **Work with the Australian Government to secure ongoing operational funding for STLOs**, including through successive Natural Heritage Trust funding rounds, recognising their essential role in supporting community-led Landcare.



