

“CROSS-ROADS FOR BOB HAWKE LEGACY”: URGENT CALL TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY LANDCARE

EMBARGOED 7 AUGUST: This Landcare Week, the National Landcare Network (NLN) is calling for a commitment from government to support community landcare and deliver on their election promise to fund a National Landcare Facilitator.

The NLN is one of the largest volunteer movements in Australia – made up of over 6,000 individual landcare groups and over 160,000 landcarers. Funding for the movement is yet to be allocated, and is needed to help guarantee their members can continue their invaluable work to address the impacts of climate change, including ensuring landcarers across the country are properly supported to prepare for – and respond to – severe droughts and fires.

“This National Landcare Week, we want to acknowledge the incredible success of landcarers across Australia who support our communities to protect and restore our landscapes, but we also must reflect on how we can continue to deliver such great impact,” said Dr Maxine Cooper, Acting NLN Chair and Chair of Landcare ACT.

“Over the past few years, landcarers have been on the front lines helping communities across Australia rebuild after floods and bushfires. With these natural disasters expected to continue, investing in landcare can help ensure we are best placed to provide rapid and meaningful responses on the ground.

“Community landcare is critical to Australia’s response to the climate emergency and the extinction crisis. We are already achieving great success, but it is clear we could achieve so much more with the right commitment from government,” said Dr Cooper.

“Bob Hawke’s legacy was to use Natural Heritage Trust funding to bolster community-based approaches and maximise the value of volunteer-based grassroots efforts. He understood the importance of landcare. But after almost 35 years, community landcare remains an underutilised resource,” said Jim Adams, NLN CEO.

“There is an enormous amount of work that needs to be done to address biodiversity loss, environmental restoration, and the impacts of climate change on the environment, agricultural production and sustainability. Community landcare has demonstrated landcarers are well placed to achieve this, but they need the right support.

“Funding uncertainty is risking the ability of the NLN and our members to grow our impact. To ensure landcarers are best prepared to face future challenges, the NLN is urgently calling for the government to deliver on its election commitment to fund a National Landcare Facilitator and allocate funding for the next four years.

“In a week celebrating landcare success, it is disappointing to find ourselves having to call for support. But the reality is, with consecutive governments failing to understand the importance of investing in community landcare, achieving these successes is becoming more challenging.

“The greatest recognition of landcarers this Landcare Week would be for the government to invest in the right support mechanisms for the people getting their hands dirty on the ground. Let’s keep Bob Hawke’s legacy alive,” said Mr Adams.

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The National Landcare Network is the peak representative body for community Landcare groups across Australia. We give a voice to Community Landcare across the country, with over 2000 active State and Territory Landcare Organisation members representing 6000+ individual Landcare groups and over 160,000 landcarers across Australia.