

National Landcare Conference 2016

22-23 September 2016

<http://www.nationallandcareconference.org.au/>

NOTE: Video recordings of the plenary sessions and presentation notes from each of the presentations over the two days of the conference are now available online:

Presentation notes - <http://nationallandcareconference.org.au/speakers/>

Videos - <http://www.nationallandcareconference.org.au/program/plenary-speakers/>

Report on the sessions attended by Kimberley Beattie

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Thursday 22 October 2016

Officially opened by Costa Georgiadis

Welcome to Country

Opening Plenary: Save the soil; Save the planet – by Major General the Honourable Michael Jeffrey

Presentation about the importance of healthy soil and healthy water to global communities, and how these can influence human population health and international politics. Session was filmed and is available to view online.

Second Plenary: National Landcare – by Dr Ron Edwards from the National Landcare Advisory Committee

Presentation on the national and international importance of Landcare action in Australia. Looked at the considerable economic benefits provided by Landcare action; the role of Landcare in driving agricultural innovation and the development of Australia's high standard of food and fibre production, and Natural Resource Management; the importance of Australia's 'quiet values' of volunteerism and community cohesion, especially when facing hardships. Session was filmed and is available to view online.

Community Engagement session Thursday morning

Integrating Cultural Connections and Connectivity Conservation – by Mary Bonet and Steve Taylor

Great Eastern Ranges Initiative = 3600km 'continental lifeline' linking people, reserves, and habitats

Mary and Steve working in Kanangra-Boyd to Wyangala Link from Blue Mountains to Wyangala dam – seeking to connect remnants

Great Eastern Ranges Initiative = a partnership involving Landcare, assorted govt organisations, other Non-Government Organisations, and others including several Local Aboriginal Land Councils and other Indigenous groups. Seeking to restore key linkages across 50,000 hectares of land. Received \$2.7million from Australian government over 2012-17.

Wanted to incorporate cultural component of what they were doing and the land they were working on, so formed a Cultural Connections Working Group.

In order to identify who to connect with, they started by identifying which Local Aboriginal Land Councils were in their area, and approached them, then further identified who else needed to be included, and built up from there. It was a learning process as they went, discovering who they needed to include and speak with.

Building networks and connections via informal discussions and camping groups, canoe dreaming, not just formal meetings and note-taking – people were more interested in opening up and sharing

their stories and ideas in a less formal setting, rather than in formal meetings with people taking notes.

They have now run several events/programs including:

- Cultural mapping
- Canoe trip incorporating Indigenous astronomy
- Traditional Burning
- Arts/communications
- Working on Country
- School activities
- Corroboree

Have a 3 day Indigenous astronomy children's camp coming up soon.

Working with Aboriginal Land Councils to do cultural mapping, identifying locations of significant sites, scar trees etc, and develop management plans for these

Working with landholders to dispel myths and reduce reticence in identifying the presence of Indigenous sites on their properties

Have done a lot of traditional burning – have sent community members and RFS volunteers to the Northern Territory to take part in traditional burning workshops

Cool Burn Exhibition – Indigenous and non-Indigenous local artists attended a workshop to create art inspired by cultural burning practises – will be published in a book soon

Ran a schools cultural day in Cowra, free of charge. Included workshops for kids in throwing boomerangs and spears, traditional fire use, meeting native animals, making stone tools, and other activities, a dance was done by an Indigenous dance group. The event involved kids from schools from several surrounding towns, Indigenous and non-Indigenous kids – was held as part of a larger 3 day corroboree for the broader community.

8 months spent planning the corroboree event; low cost to run because meat, generators, other resources all donated by local businesses and groups; free to attend, because it was about connecting with culture and the organisers felt that charging people would be exclusionary and give the wrong message.

People from across Eastern Australia and even a few from the Northern Territory came to the corroboree, 90 dancers joined in

Produced some videos of the Cowra corroboree – showing some of the dancing, some of the kids activities, and feedback from attendees and organisers [Note from KB. I can't find the videos they produced themselves on Youtube, but a number of other people have uploaded videos of the corroboree, including Cowra News; a quick Youtube search got me these: https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=corroboree+cowra]

Corroboree was a great event for the participants – feedback was that people felt proud to be involved and learning and sharing their own culture, and connecting with their ancestors and

history, and having the opportunity to teach others about Indigenous culture and share that knowledge and understanding.

The dancers came from all over Eastern Australia and danced for free because they felt it was most important to share the culture

After the corroboree, several people asked Steve to develop more events – now he and other locals are running weekly (fortnightly in winter) classes/small get-togethers teaching kids dancing, spear-throwing, and cultural connection, free of charge, and food is provided, up to 60 kids now involved on a regular basis. Dinnawan's connection. (Dinnawan = emu)

Links to look up for further information:

Great Eastern Ranges Initiative; <http://www.greateasterranges.org.au/> and K2W www.k2wpartnership.org

- Fire Workshops- Cape York <https://capeyorkfire.com.au/> and Mulong Arts <http://www.mulong.com.au/>

- Dinawan's Connection @Dinnawansconnection

- Indigenous Astronomy- <http://aboriginalastronomy.blogspot.com.au/>

Mary Bonet email: mary@upperlachlanlandcare.org.au ph 0459352892

Steven Taylor email: binghi4life@y7mail.com ph 0416470510

Building your Crowdfunding campaign in a week - Step-by-step guide to getting your project funded by Rob Novotny from Landcare Australia

Official definition: Crowdfunding is the process of funding a project online by collecting small amounts of money from a large volume of people

Rob's 'funky' definition: Crowdfunding is a marketing campaign targeted at people who love you, which if it does well spreads from your friends to other people in the wider community and online [Note from KB. This is paraphrased, his exact wording is available in the presentation notes online]

Crowdfunding involves setting a target/goal amount and a time limit in which to raise it

5 easy steps to set up a Crowdfunding campaign

- 1 - Choose the right project
- 2 - Set a reasonable target and timeframe
- 3 - Design compelling perks or dollar handles
- 4 - Build your audience
- 5 - Promote the hell out of it

Step 1 - Choose the right project

Your project needs to be specific – funds to be raised for specific activities not just general funds (eg. ‘We need \$20k to plant understorey species on [specific site] for [specific reason]’, not just ‘we need \$20k to support revegetation projects’; use language that engages people and makes them want to support those activities

Explain what you’re going to do, why it’s important, and how the funds will be used

It’s all about telling stories

Stories need to ‘come from the soul’ – you are sharing your story, so people will care, not just quoting impersonal figures. Including the figures and statistics can help tell the story, but by themselves are cold and uninspiring, make it personal.

Be inspiring – get people excited about your project, so they will support it and talk about it and encourage their friends and neighbours to contribute and care

Key message: **Be Specific – Tell Stories – Be Inspiring**

Step 2 - Set a reasonable target and timeframe

Think about:

- 1) How much it will cost (always overestimate your costs; remember to include Crowdfunding platform fees, costs involved in time spent developing campaign, costs of perks being offered, etc)
- 2) How much time can you dedicate to the campaign?
- 3) Who are your existing customers and how can you get your message to them?

How much time is needed to run a crowd-funding campaign? 4-6 weeks is the average

Run it too long, it loses momentum; run it too short and your window of opportunity is too small

Also usually need around 4 weeks preparation before launching it

How much money do you want? This will affect how much time you need to put into running your campaign.

While running spend 1 day per week promoting and running it for <\$5K; up to 5 days per week for \$25k projects

Target:

< \$5k Own network, 1 day

\$5k - \$25k 1k+ emails, 2-5 days

25K+ 3k+ emails, 5+ days

Also good to have ideas in mind for stretch-goals right from the start – if your campaign is very successful and you raise more than your target amount, what will you do with the extra funds? Have an idea in mind, and if it looks like you’re getting there, update your campaign page to let supporters know.

Step 3 - Designing perks and dollar handles

Examples of perks – physical gifts (eg prints or postcards or other merchandise), ‘your name will be written on one of our new rakes’, experiences (eg. Contribute \$100 and get invited to the grand opening event)

Dollar handles = telling people what their specific dollar amount will achieve, eg \$5 means 3 trees will be planted, \$25 means a new shovel will be bought, \$50 means a community gets fresh water, etc (lots of charity organisations use dollar handles instead of physical perks)

Perks can cost a lot of money – try to keep to ones that don’t cost you much, eg donated items or low-cost recognition of supporters (eg all supporters getting their name written up on the Thank You Wall or on the organisation’s website doesn’t cost as much as getting posters printed and mailed to people)

Include multiple ‘levels’ of perks/dollar handles to encourage people to donate different amounts. Often the more expensive or valuable perks will be offered in return for higher \$\$ amounts.

Step 4 – build your audience

Who do you need to talk to?

Who do you think will support your audience? How best to connect with these people?

True believers; Influencers; Everyone else

Who	What they care about	Channel
True believers e.g. Immediate family, friends, volunteers in the Landcare group	They care about you. They want to see you succeed!	1:1 email Text message Phone follow up Ipad page handy (just add your credit card!)
Influencers e.g. Corporate partners, suppliers such as your local butcher, nursery	Betting on a winning horse! Brand exposure!	Personal conversations Email
Everyone Else e.g. All my gmail contacts Other Landcare groups	Joining the party that’s been organised by someone else!	Email Social media

Encourage your supporters to join in your promotion efforts – the more people spreading the word about your campaign, the more people you will reach.

Step 5 – promote!

List every opportunity – social media, emails, conversations, newspapers, newsletters, others

Rob sets out a 4 week promotion schedule each time: in week 1 do these things; in week 2 do these things – and stick to it.

Who	How	Why	Note!
Believers	Get in early with the true believers	The people who really love you feel it is important	Get 30% in 3 days before launching!
Influencers	Get reach with the influencers once you got credibility!	They get socially excited by telling people about you!	Launch to them days 3-10 (aim for 50%)
Everyone else	Get volume with everyone else!	Everybody else feels involved with little effort	Get new volunteers!

Your supporters can help spread the word, and will if they're enthusiastic about it

Most funds come in usually in the first and last week of the campaign, often with a dip in the middle – the first week is when your campaign has the most momentum, and the last week is often due to a final push before the campaign ends. Don't get discouraged if your start with a bang and then it seems to drop off in the middle – this is normal. Don't get complaisant either: you need to keep promoting throughout your campaign or it will completely lose momentum.

Keep in contact with your supporters throughout the campaign and afterward – update your campaign site and social media regularly with updates, let people know what's happening. People want to give money to people to achieve specific things, not just throw money into a void. If there are successes or delays at any stage of the process, even after your campaign has closed, let your supporters know.

Tips for a good campaign presentation/pitch:

Keep text to 300-500 words

Make a short, informative, engaging video

Use pictures to show impact – show pics of people doing things, not just pics of landscapes etc; pretty scenery is pretty, but pictures of people show that there are real people out there doing real things

Keep it simple

Don't forget to evaluate

Choose a crowdfunding platform you feel most comfortable with and which best suits your project, your target goal and your audience.

Some Crowdfunding platforms: Pozible; Kickstarter; Chuffed; GoFundMe; Indiegogo; many others

Chuffed has no fee to be used – but contributors can choose to donate a couple of dollars extra to help support the platform

Other platforms often have fees – so factor that into your \$\$ target

Contact Rob: Rob.novontny@landcareaustralia.com.au

Rob and LAL can provide support for Landcare groups developing Crowdfunding campaigns, or you can do it all yourself if you'd prefer.

Community engagement session Thursday afternoon

Engaging the community for cane toad management and reversing reptile decline – by Graeme Sawyer

Cane toads are a massive problem in northern Australia, especially in the Top End, and are recognised as a Key Threatening Process for several native species.

Cane toads impact wildlife/ecosystems from multiple angles, impacting predators of many sizes, other frogs, and more

Lots of small animals that don't interact with or eat large toads, are impacted by eating toxic baby toads

Cane Toads also eat many native species which have no natural defences against them

The density of cane toads is impacting the density of many native species

Popular attitude is that nothing can be done about toads and community engagement doesn't help, but surveys have shown that it does – 79% of people responding to surveys say they take actions to reduce toad numbers locally, this all adds up over the whole range

Volunteers Great Toad Muster = 139 volunteers; 48,000 toads = \$325,000 in effort

Involving schools = greater community education, which then influences ongoing volunteer efforts as the kids become adults

Volunteers value being included in research aspect of programs – citizen science is a great tool for educating and involving community members; involving volunteers to help with field work on university or government research projects

Reptile decline project being run in Darwin, by microchipping goanna species *Varanus panoptes* to find out why numbers are dramatically declining and if cane toad related, as suggested by sighting dropping drastically after cane toads reached the area

Community 'muster' for goanna project – app for reporting sightings

Communication strategy:

- Media strategy
- Find a 'hook' eg 'Disco toads' (because toads attracted to blacklights -> got picked up by national and international media and so got a lot of coverage and promotion that way)
- Websites and social media serve different roles
- Schools = great education outcomes
- "You can make a difference" – provide evidence
- Encourage action
- Newsletter = more detailed messaging

Websites and Facebook pages are very different tools and work in different ways/are capable of achieving different things

- Information model is vital. Must be a two way conversation to engage people. Ask & encourage don't tell what to do!
- Content management capability essential to help keep site relevant.
- The core aspect of our information dissemination
- In early 2006 the most searched for term on Google from Darwin was "Cane Toad"
- Automated registration system, Contact systems
- Facebook etc take people back to the website & vice versa.

When tackling environmental problems:

- Community conversation is vital and best when supported by online presence and central information source (ie informative website)
- Media is powerful but limited to '30 second syndrome'
- Identify the people who can talk well (or get training) to engage with the public
- Leadership and advocacy are necessary
- Understanding the political process is important
- Relying too much on govt support and funding is risky, so better to diversify or seek elsewhere for funding that is less likely to be suddenly pulled halfway through a multi-year program

Important to keep the conversation going, and encouraging feedback from the public, provide channels through which people can share their own information, eg reporting sightings of target species through an app

If you can find a 'hook' or key subject that community members are passionate about, can use that to help draw people into other Landcare events/activities through holding events that combine the two

South East Local Leaders Program - Developing capacity, strengthening industry, building community resilience – by Peter Piggott

SE Local Leaders Program = 3 month program SE LLS and Landcare working in local communities

Small improvements, skills building & relationship-building on a personal level translate into community-wide impacts

Communities are more resilient when they have great leaders who collaborate – especially important in rural communities during times of change

What is leadership? A process of social achievement that influences the achievements of others

Good leaders are aware + connected + strategic

Self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, social skill, emotional intelligence = good leadership skills

Good leaders are also strategic, can work with others towards a goal

Leadership + collaboration = important to the ability of communities to sustain themselves and develop over time (ie important to community resilience)

Landcare is Leadership:

A PHILOSOPHY: influencing the way people live in the landscape while caring for the land

THE MOVEMENT: local community in action

THE MODEL: a range of knowledge generation, sharing and support mechanisms.

Landcare and LLS in South East region working together to develop and deliver leadership program

60 local leaders participating in 8 day local leadership program over several months

Cost = govt funding subsidised by participant fees

Self-awareness, reflection, team-building workshops + 2 follow-up workshops to identify constraints and develop local projects also online coaching and team-building activities between workshops and some alumni events to bring past graduates together to discuss their ongoing successes in their communities

‘The main role of a leader is to create other leaders’

SE program costs ~\$60k per cohort to run – 8 day intensive workshop program

Contact Peter for more information: peter.piggott@lls.nsw.gov.au

Mastering farmer to farmer extension to drive landscape change – by Rowan Reid from the Australian Agroforestry Foundation

Rowan has been working in agroforestry for the last 20 years

Rowan's experience is that many farmers don't want to be involved with forestry – it's not attractive to landholders or members of the broader community

Bambra Agroforestry Farm: Trees for conservation and profit – over 50 species for timber, bushfood, shiitake and seed production.

Want to change the way we do forestry to make it more attractive to farmers: Plant for conservation and agriculture, and manage to create opportunities.

How can we also change the way we do conservation to make it more attractive to people with a commercial interest in land management?

Can you plant trees for conservation and use them for commercial gain as well? Rowan says yes

One thing Rowan does is growing forestry trees in riparian zones to support creek health, and leaving the 'heads' of the trees (not needed for milling/timber) as snags in the creek to provide habitat for fish and tadpoles, and slow down water flow. Logging along creeks is not allowed in most places though, so this needs to be taken into consideration.

Some farmers growing forestry timber in shelter belts that support other enterprises on the property – it's their landscape, so it's their choice how they want to do it.

Can grow forestry timber in systems that are designed for biodiversity, aesthetics, shelter, and whatever else you want to actually get out of your landscape and your trees. Decide what you want to gain/achieve through tree planting, and design your agroforestry plantings and management around this.

'Landcare is a process, not an outcome'

Trees for conservation and profit

Master Tree-growers program >110 Courses >2000 participants over the time it's been running

Master Tree-growers 5-Part Program:

1. Why farmers want/need trees
2. Markets for products and services
3. Measurement and monitoring
4. Establishment and Management
5. Multipurpose Design and Evaluation (4 days)

In the Otways, Rowan and company developed a Peer Group Mentoring program – pay landholders involved in the program \$40 an hour to go talk to other farmers and share their knowledge

What happens when farmers talk?

- Interpretation
- Validation
- Adaptation
- Evaluation

Otway Agroforestry Network - Undertake site visits and provide peer mentors; No paid facilitators, group is supported by paid memberships; Teach new landholders what to do, once they've got it they might decide to become mentors themselves to help teach others; Every property involved in the group is unique, because everyone does things differently, depending on personality, and what they want to get out of their farm forestry efforts

Otway Agroforestry Network:

- Landcare group since 1993
- >200 members (\$60)
- \$3M in programs
- No paid "facilitator"
- Run by paid members

No demonstrations

No \$ for trees and fences

What we do:

- Run MTG courses
- Undertake site visits
- Provide peer mentors
- Facilitate markets
- Build information networks
- Lobby govt/industry
- Seek funds to pay for it all

'You've got to develop a good story and then sell it to politicians' to attract government funding and support

'Trees don't change landscapes – people do: just let them do it their way'

Communication with neighbours and communities is important so people know what you're doing and why – information is key to understanding and acceptance

Rowan uses appropriate technology that allows him to selectively remove trees with minimal impact on the surrounding trees and landscape – no destructive, ugly, clear-felling, minimal unwanted negative side-impacts. It is important to identify and use the tools, techniques, and technology needed to combine commercial tree production and biodiversity/conservation benefits.

Important to develop methodologies that best suit the local system, local conditions, and local values – what do you want to achieve? What do you want to avoid or prevent? Build your system around your goals and values.

Introduction and Q&A with finalists for the Landcare Facilitator or Coordinator Award

- Cherie White the NSW finalist
- Her greatest successes have been in helping Landcare groups work with government organisations whilst maintaining independence and ability to function on their own
- One of her proudest achievements is that she helped establish Tumut Landcare nursery – completely unfunded, run by volunteers, now able to raise enough of their own income to employ a nursery manager

All of the finalists have achieved great things, including: starting up new groups and networks or helping them expand and respond after natural disasters; helping community networks run without relying on external funding; working across very diverse regions and groups and interest areas

Finalists for the Landcare Facilitator or Coordinator Award:

Kay Enkelmann – QLD

Jill Richardson – WA

Rob Fallon – VIC

Holly Hansen – TAS

Jill Woodlands – SA

Vanessa Drysdale – NT

Cherie White – NSW

Martin Lind – ACT

All 2016 National Landcare Award finalists listed online here:

<http://www.nationallandcareconference.org.au/awards/>

3rd Plenary: New research on how water and soils impact on plants in Australia – by Don Burke

(Presentation notes and video of the session are available online)

‘Sometimes the best thing you can do is try to make things a little less worse – in doing this you can change the world’

Don has been working on saving the bush for the last 30 years – has been passionate about native plants since he was a kid, for the last 30 years has been working on rehabilitating his own patch of land, has managed to bring it back to ‘near virgin bush’, including return of native orchids, restoration of soil, and removal of introduced weeds.

Has established sections of lawn as swales that ‘quarantines’ the water from the bush sections on his property – the swales are used to carry water around his property and then ends in a dam, which serves as wetland habitat and also as emergency water supply in case of fires.

Has Glossy Black Cockatoos that nest on his property in his revegetated bush patches.

When planning what plants you keep or plant into your garden/environment, keep in mind what birds and other wildlife may rely on the species currently present for food or shelter, and plan your plants accordingly, so you continue to support the species you want to keep, and can discourage the ones you don’t want.

Don has found that narrow grassy sections between bush patches discourage pest birds more so than open grassy areas do.

Who changes governments? Who changes Australia? We Do.

Many Australian soils are water-repelling, often as a result of native plant and fungi action – this inhibits seedling growth and reduces competition.

Spinifex affects the way water infiltrates the soil around them – recently discovered by a research project.

If we want native plants to survive, we need to consider the soil and water conditions they evolved under, and how local hydrology and nutrient loads have changed in recent decades due to human activity, eg run-off from urban areas and in gardens. It might not be possible to return local native veg to what it was before the town was built there, so may need to shift goal-posts to an alternative option (eg used to be dry sclerophyll woodland but now lots of run-off, so maybe replant with wet sclerophyll woodland species, which will have a better chance of long-term expense)

When it rains go outside and see where the water comes from and where it goes to.

Micro-biomes ‘drive everything’ – they exist in human bodies, and other places including around plant roots = mini-ecosystems of micro-organisms around all plant roots – vital to be aware of and nurture these.

Ease up on fertilisers and use slower-release fertilisers and native-friendly ones because a lot of fertilisers used in agricultural and urban environments will run-off into nearby bush, and alter the soil.

4th Plenary: Indigenous Landcare Stories – Caring for the ancient heart of Country, Wurdi Youang, and building a bright future for its people, plants and animals – by Reg Abrahams – Indigenous Protected Areas Project Coordinator

(This session was recorded and is available to watch online)

Wurdi Youang is on the Victorian volcanic plains, which stretches from Melbourne to the SA border, and only 1% is left intact. Very unique landscape.

Stone arrangement on Wurdi Youang is an astronomical marker and is the 'equivalent of Stonehenge' – Indigenous astronomy rock formation site:

<http://aboriginalastronomy.blogspot.com.au/2011/03/wurdi-youang-aboriginal-stone.html>

Similar sites have been destroyed, most likely by farmers 'de-rocking' their properties for production

Currently working to restore 20 hectares of kangaroo grass grassland – Biodiversity Fund Round 1 funded project \$1M

'Agri-Cultural conservation' – growing Indigenous grasses on Country and harvesting them

Seed orchard – seeds grown in the ground, not in a nursery, so they adapt to local conditions

Chilean Needlegrass and serrated tussock are major threats

Learning to do traditional burning to manage their grasslands

Threatened flora and fauna on the property, and several artefacts sites

Mt Rothwell Conservation Centre is nearby – hoping to partner with soon

Major threat – compulsory requisition of land for the expansion of Melbourne = native grasses being removed across the reclaimed land

Re-learning how to do broad-acre-style native vegetation management – replanting many native grass species

Training people up in rural fencing, chainsaw use, and other skills, and revegetating as much land as possible with native grasses and seed production areas every year, to create a seed bank

Working to empower Indigenous communities to become more self-sufficient

Including cultural activities like building traditional stone 'huts' that used to be a common sight across the landscape

Have had kangaroo grass and other native plants tested for nutritional value – could be the species that feed the world into the future, better than oats and wheat

Discovered gilgais and terracing on their land, so will be doing archaeological surveys to discover if/where there are more

Hoping to develop a 'living museum' on the volcanic plains

Round table session: Building strong Indigenous partnerships in Landcare - Aunty Esther Kirby, Reg Abrahams, Bambi Lees and Robyn McKay

Bambi is the Indigenous Facilitator for the North Central Catchment Management Authority - she finds she works more with non-Indigenous people, 'the Indigenous people are already there, so it's about bringing non-Indigenous people into that space'.

Reg: Indigenous Ranger programs are important because kids grow up seeing their parents and aunts and uncles working on Country and being role-models, and they get inspired to do the same when they grow up. It creates community leaders, which then has flow-on effects into the future as each generation grows up with good leaders and role-models, which in turn affects the broader community on many levels.

Aunty Esther: connection to Country is ongoing and important, everything that's there is so precious, you can feel the spirit in the trees. Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities working together and sharing knowledge in both directions is important – there doesn't have to be a division. The same species and ecosystems are important to everyone, Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians alike.

The video for this session is combined with Reg's speech and is well worth listening to in its entirety.

Video available on: <http://www.nationallandcareconference.org.au/program/plenary-speakers/>

Or Youtube: <https://youtu.be/FPFUYUx17Zo>

End of day one

Friday 23rd September 2016

2016 National Landcare Award winners

Rhonda Williams, WA - Australian Government Individual Landcarer Award

Southampton Homestead, WA - Australian Government Innovation in Sustainable Farm Practices Award

Jill Richardson, WA - Australian Government Landcare Facilitator or Coordinator Award

Lake Macquarie Landcare, NSW - Australian Government Partnerships with Landcare Award

Coolum and District Coastcare, QLD - Coastcare Award

Blackwood Basin Group, WA - Fairfax Media Landcare Community Group Award

Crocodile Islands Rangers, NT - Indigenous Land Management Award

Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre, NSW - Junior Landcare Team Award

Naomi Edwards, QLD and Ella Maesepp, WA - Manpower Young Landcare Leader Award

Southampton Homestead, WA - People's Choice Award

Stephen Burgess, QLD - Bob Hawke Landcare Award

All of the 2016 National Landcare Award winners are listed online here:

<http://www.nationallandcareconference.org.au/2016-national-landcare-award-winners/>

Welcome to day two by Costa Georgiadis

Video message from Josh Frydenberg, Minister for the Environment and Energy (this video has not been made available online)

Costa encouraged everyone involved in Landcare to utilise video more as an outreach and engagement tool.

Panel Session – Future Directions for Landcare

Panelists: Michelle Lauder (Department of Agriculture and Water Resources), Kylie Jonasson (Department of the Environment and Energy), Paul Smith (Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning), Terry Hubbard (National Landcare Network), and Hannah Moloney (Goodlife Permaculture)

Terry:

The social value of community Landcare and the drive of volunteers to 'leave the land in a better state than they found it' is the 'glue' that holds communities together, and helps to pull communities together in times of crisis to work together to address problems and emergencies.

Landcare has suffered a series of financial hits, which have caused ongoing frustration; in response advocacy bodies have developed which promote the value of Landcare at a national level. Working together will carry more weight than working separately.

Landcare to date has seen the development of many Landcare groups, and branched out to include Bushcare, Coastcare, Junior Landcare, and other landscape- or issue-specific groups, as well as State and Territory Landcare peak representative bodies arising to support and represent the grassroots volunteer groups.

Currently, Landcare is continuing to develop, with initiatives like Intrepid Landcare forming and growing, presenting a new approach to include younger people and fit in with the lives and priorities of young people these days – a flexible approach to Landcare to be more inclusive.

The future of Landcare 'rests in our hands', and depends on our ability to nurture and inspire and be inspired by younger generations. We also need to continue to advocate for Landcare and convince the government that Landcare is a valuable tool in addressing national and global environmental challenges, including climate impacts. We should also be aware of the value of Landcare for community wellbeing.

Hannah:

Good Agriculture integrates entire systems on the land, in the water, and in social systems. There are three key challenges to youth engagement in agriculture: number one is access to land – it's 'almost impossible' for young people to afford to buy land and infrastructure, especially if not inheriting from family; number two is lack of access to training – there are great courses available, but they might not be teaching people the things they need to know, eg how to manage soil; number three is the culture of our food system, it's heavily regulated which is good, but can be crippling, especially for smaller farms, and our food culture is driven by global economics, and there's not a lot of support, so being a farmer requires you to be multi-skilled in many areas.

Solutions: different options available in different places for leasing land; increasing numbers of hobby farmers and small-holders, some cities have land available and are developing 'city farms'.

Good training starts from school gardens, but as soon as you go from primary to secondary school gardens tend to drop off, which gives the message that gardening is fun, but not serious or a

possible future job avenue. Hannah suggests that secondary and tertiary programs could be developed to teach gardening (eg market gardening, larger scale crop management, soil management etc), as a life skill and job skill, to help young people start careers in market gardening.

We have everything we need right now to respond to the massive challenges we're facing (climate change, land degradation, etc), there are amazing opportunities for Landcare to collaborate with other community organisations and educators to develop solutions to address these challenges.

Paul:

Integration is key to addressing challenges. Land is best managed at the landscape level, not in small isolated parcels, and people working together across a landscape will get a better outcome than working separately in a carved up landscape. ← this has always been key for the Landcare approach and culture

As well as individuals, why not get the institutions to work together at a higher scale? Create high-level institutional change. This thinking led to the development of integrated and total catchment management organisations, eg Catchment Management Authorities

Supporting legal frameworks were then developed to support the above. Then looking into funding support structures to support this approach.

Thirty years of learning has helped us understand what works best, and will help us develop the framework for the future. Things will be better if we put our actions into place in an integrated way. The people lead at the local scale, and the country leaders follow that example.

The future of Landcare won't come from top-down government, it will come from people on the ground, in the landscape, working together and making it happen.

We have different agricultural practises, more diverse communities, and changed cultural values, compared to 30 years ago – how do we make these qualities work to best effect to make Landcare more successful into the future? 'People on the land are different now' - we need to move away from conservative white people thinking, and acknowledge and incorporate Indigenous knowledge and other cultural knowledge that exists in our multicultural community.

Kylie:

The strength of Landcare is in partnerships and collaboration. Monetary support from the government is a scarce resource, so we need to identify the best ways to encourage government ministers to understand what needs to be done and how best to support Landcare. We need to capture the on-ground knowledge and translate that into something the politicians can understand, so they can translate it into ongoing, meaningful financial support.

Engagement of young people is essential, so we need to be aware of the best ways to connect with, inspire and engage younger generations. Young people have energy, enthusiasm, and passion – how to capture and engage that? Social media is one option, MPs are starting to use social media, so how

best to teach them how to use it in a way that will help them really connect with communities and young people?

Michelle:

Landcare is unique, and one of the most recognised brands in Australia, and approaches and technologies that have been pioneered by Landcare have led to wide-scale practise change in sustainable agriculture and Natural Resource Management. There are hundreds of Landcare groups, with thousands of volunteers. New technology – computers, drones, remote-control of farming equipment – are an integral part of agriculture and society these days. Australian communities are becoming more multi-cultural, and people are moving into new communities all the time, more so than in the past, and wanting to get involved in their new communities.

We need to explore options to connect with more people eg. connect with pony clubs - horse health fits in with land management.

Increasing number of Landcare groups on Facebook and even Twitter, compared to four years ago.

Need to convince funding sources as to why they should fund you, and why it will be a good investment for them. More groups are using crowdfunding and other sources these days instead of or in addition to government funding.

Strength in diversity: diversity of ages, skillsets, interests, cultural/ethnic backgrounds, and engagement strategies – some people want ongoing involvement, some only want to occasional or one-off engagement/involvement

Key strength of Landcare has been sharing information – what has worked and what hasn't → we can use the internet to share these messages

'Thinking globally and acting locally has always been one of Landcare's strengths'

Costa attended Buschare's Major Day Out recently – people dressed up in native bird costumes, walking around and talking to people planting trees, saying things like "the tree you're planting will provide seeds for cockatoos like me". Costa thought with was a clever, engaging idea – it catches people's attention, sticks in their mind, and helps them connect the action of planting a tree with the greater ecological implications and future outcomes.

Points raised in the general panel discussion:

"Human health and well-being is intrinsically linked to the environment"

Gregory Andrews, the Threatened Species Commissioner, has done a great job of connecting with the community about feral cats and other threats to native species, through Facebook, Twitter, and going to meet people in person – he shows up to events dressed in a bilby suit. He has engaged in some very challenging conversations directly with people about feral cat control and other controversial and sensitive issues. His use of social media means he can connect directly with people at all levels of society, in real time, and have real conversations with people which is an amazing

engagement tool. “It has to be a real conversation, it has to use real language, and it has to be meaningful”

Landcare needs to be driven by communities not bureaucracies – we need to have a conversation looking at how to get the community back to the centre of the decision-making process, rather than the bureaucracies being at the centre and driving the decisions.

Audience member: we need to connect with human health and the linkage between human health, nutrient density of food produced, and the soil. Get the Health Minister involved.

Audience member: don’t lead the conversation/engagement with health or with telling people what to do, lead with pleasure. Get the foodies involved – ‘the best food in the world is from the best practises in the world’. We need to engage outside of the production sector into the food consumer sector. Tap into shows like *Master Chef*, which connect to the broader community through an interest in good food, use that to help people connect back to the sources of the food, and the practices for producing good food.

FarmBlitz is a program introducing newcomers to many aspects of the local community

Audience member: There’s a GP in Mittagong who prescribes Landcare events for health benefits – studies have been done that show that engaging with nature has positive health impacts.

Audience member: engaging youth is important for the future of Landcare, but middle-aged people want to be involved too, and want to help their kids create that connection with nature – meetings and traditional group structure doesn’t fit well into the lifestyles of people with kids. Landcare needs to investigate ways to better engage with this demographic.

Audience member: Landcare needs a stronger political voice. We hear lots of promises from governments, but it often doesn’t translate into meaningful support on-ground. We need to push far harder at the political level, rather than relying too heavily on existing bureaucracies.

This session was filmed and can be viewed on line at:

<http://www.nationallandcareconference.org.au/program/plenary-speakers/>

or on Youtube: <https://youtu.be/AwGiN16jjjU>

Victorian Government presentation – by Anthony Carbines

Landcare is about collaborative communities. The Victorian government has made a new commitment of \$18million over the next few years; their total commitment is now \$40million. They are looking to identify gaps in Landcare networks across Victoria, and identify opportunities to do more, and increase Facilitator opportunities to do more in these communities, and build more support for Landcare across Victoria.

Launch of new Landcare website for Victoria: <https://www.landcarevic.org.au/>

Landscape Challenges and Responses session Friday morning

Biosecurity, land management and the importance of a partnership approach – by Debbie Langford on behalf of Monica Finlayson

Partnerships are fundamental to Landcare and also for biosecurity management. Weed and pest management falls under biosecurity management.

Biosecurity is the management of risks to the economy, environment, and community, of pests and diseases entering, emerging, establishing and spreading. It's critical to a sustainable and productive agricultural sector and healthy environment.

We need to know if introduced pests and diseases are likely to take root and become a problem here – which means assessing threat levels and risk sources, preferably before known potential pests/diseases are introduced. We also need to manage the spread of those already here.

Biosecurity can help reduce input costs of agriculture and reduce pesticides being used and released into production and natural systems.

Australia's isolation from other countries/continent and control measures have been historically very helpful for keeping diseases and pests out, but this is becoming more difficult as travel between countries gets easier.

Some bugs come in on the wind or water, or are carried by migratory birds, so they are hard to keep out, and it's difficult to identify when new ones have arrived.

Climate change is impacting how things move, and it's hard to predict these changes.

The huge complexity in ecosystems and uniqueness of Australian ecosystems means it's difficult to predict how pests and diseases will act when they get here. There is also lots of hard-to-access land that is difficult to monitor.

Lots of work is done offshore to identify what's out there, how it's affecting other places, how it's moving, and if it has potential to be a threat to Australia.

Border controls are put in place to manage what comes into the country.

Work done onshore in Australia is mostly focussed on containing, eradicating or managing what's here. Surveillance = knowing what we have and don't have. Preparing for new incursions.

The same sort of system applies for on-farm biosecurity: the border is the property boundary, and gates are access points (also things coming in on the wind, etc). Managing your borders and known entry points can help prevent some pests and diseases entering (or leaving) your property, while you work on monitoring and eradicating those already present.

Preventing things from coming in is more effective and more cost-effective than managing it once it's already here.

Four steps/levels of biosecurity: Prevention – Eradication – Containment – Asset-based protection

Biosecurity is a shared responsibility and we must all work together.

Productive relationships with state and territory government colleagues, industry, farmers, communities and other groups ensure we work as a team and are prepared for new biosecurity challenges.

Lots of good industry-driven partnerships in place at the moment, including fruit fly management and others.

Farmers and communities are the best-placed people to know what's actually here and where it is.

Some jurisdictions have an obligation for reporting – if you see something, know what it is, and don't report it you can be fined. (If you genuinely don't know what it is the fine may be waived)

Case study – *Xylella fastidiosa* – a bacterium that affects many tree species, including grapes, olives, and others, including some Australian native species. Symptoms look like a drought-stricken tree, so hard to identify when it's present or if you're actually looking at drought damage. Can be spread by any sucking insect. It's spreading around the world. No evidence of successful eradication techniques anywhere yet. As far as we know it's not in Australia yet, and we don't know how it will react if it gets here. Can't risk bringing it here for lab testing, in case it escapes. In Italy it's having a huge social impact because it's killing trees that are socially, culturally and personally important to families and communities.

Currently strict emergency measures are being implemented on plants coming into Australia to prevent it from being introduced here.

Exotic Plant Pest Hotline: 1800 084 881 ← if you see something report it

To report pests and diseases of animals, call the **Emergency Animal Disease Hotline: 1800 675 888**

Case study – rabbits. Introduced to Australia in 1859. Have had a huge environmental and economic impact since. Social and psychological impact for people trying to manage them. Myxoma virus released in 1950 and RHDV released in 1996 – has drastically reduced numbers compared to what they would have been without these, but immunity is rising and populations are increasing again. K5 being developed for release.

Biological control alone will not result in total eradication.

Landholders and communities are being asked to register to help with the release of K5 and in monitoring rabbit numbers. Information available on the PestSmart website:

<http://www.pestsmart.org.au/boosting-rabbit-biocontrol-rhdv-k5-national-release/>

Signs are available to put up on boundary fences, and there are other tools and actions people can adopt to help manage biosecurity on their properties and locally, which adds up to boost national biosecurity

One useful tool: <https://Portal.biosecurityportal.org.au>

If you see something, report it.

The grass is not greener on the other side: How rural landholders perceive environmental issues on their property and locally – by Helen Smith

Helen is doing a PhD on this subject for Southern Cross University, and has been interviewing many landholders and communities over the past few years, and gotten some interesting results.

Landholders have to balance the 'three-legged stool' of environmental sustainability, social responsibility, and economic sustainability.

Environmental issues and health of natural resources on rural land – what issues do people perceive as happening in the landscape?

When asking landholders what issues are present on the land, they often think and respond on a single property scale – but environmental issues occur across the landscape, not isolated property per property.

Farmers like to look over fences to see what their neighbours are doing.

So Helen decided to ask people what issues are happening in the local area, as well as on their own land, to get property- and landscape-scale information/responses.

Case study Richmond River catchment – diverse area, diverse rural uses including beef cattle, lifestyle blocks, macadamias, sugar cane, forestry and more.

Property sizes ranging from 2ha to 1570ha. Landholders were typically male between 56 – 65 years old with different levels of education.

50% of respondents were lifestyle blocks, not commercial farmers. 21.6% were Landcare members.

Helen asked how people perceive soil health on their own properties and locally.

60% think their own soil is 'good', but judge soil across the local area to be only 'fair'.

Most think their own soil quality has increased in recent years, but that local soil has quality has decreased.

There is a similar trend in opinions regarding water quality: more people think their own water is 'good', but local area water is 'fair'. Likewise for water quality changes over past 5 years - most think their water quality own has remained unchanged, but that local water quality has changed.

Questions about native vegetation reveal the same pattern: 70% of respondent think native vegetation is 'good' on their own property, but only 50% think it's 'good' across the local area. 30% say Unchanged for both their own properties and the local area in the past 5 years.

The next part of Helen's survey was looking at 16 environmental issues identified within the Richmond River catchment. She asked farmers how concerned they are about these issues on their own land 0 = no concern, 5 = major concern and how concerned they are about environmental issues in the local area.

15 out of 16 of the issues yielded significantly different responses → people are significantly more concerned about issues in the local area than on their own properties.

Conclusion: Over-all people see their own properties as being in better shape than other people's properties/the local landscape generally. People are concerned about the issues in the local landscape, but tend to think these issues are not so bad on their own properties.

The next challenge for Helen while working on her PhD is to investigate why this trend is there.

The answers have their roots in environmental psychology – the closer you are spatially to a problem, the less concerned you are; the further out you go the more concerned you are, it comes down to control. ← This is seen in the climate change sphere as well.

Peer-to-peer learning, and networking and partnerships/working together hold the answer to addressing the problems.

Audience member: anecdote of similar response from dog-walkers and shore birds – many are concerned about the impact of dogs on shorebirds, but each person is convinced it's not their dog, it's other people's dogs that are the problem.

Another audience member: anecdote that in her area people are very keen to point out weeds on other people's properties, and say 'they need to do something', but never point at their own weeds and say 'what can I do?'

Helen mentioned that in the Richmond River catchment there is some conflict between productive and lifestyle landholders regarding where responsibility lies and who is 'not doing enough' regarding weed and pest control, and maintaining fencelines.

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Collaboration and Innovation: Using innovation to collaborate at large scales session Friday afternoon

A question of leadership: Challenging assumptions through strategic innovation and collaboration on prickly acacia control in the Northern Lake Eyre Basin - by Vol Norris & Doug Allpass Desert Channels Queensland

Lake Eyre Basin alternates between very wet and very dry, meaning it supports a unique ecosystem

There is an increasing problem with 'Prickle Bush' Prickly Acacia in the region

750 landholders across 509,933km²

The plant forms dense thickets, nothing grows underneath, lots of seeds, long thorns, can't muster livestock through it, impacts crop production as well → infestations take over large areas and make them unfit for production or other use.

Infestations have been known to block up channels that only started flowing again after the prickly bush was removed.

Less feed = less carrying capacity = less income

Healthy land = healthy productive system = more income and healthier communities

Up to 100,000 prickly bushes per property to control; \$24million worth of production lost

Introduced in the 1920s as a shade and fodder plant. Declared a noxious weed a few decades later; now a massive problem across the region. Spread by waterways and cattle.

Up until 2012 no co-ordinated approach to prickly bush control; there was a scattered approach as individuals and Landcare groups tried to do a little in their own patches, but no strategic wide-spread approach, so it was very difficult, with little cumulative impact; people became overwhelmed and started to give up.

Desert Channels Queensland (DCQ) started a partnership with Landcare groups, local governments, and other government agencies to develop a solution.

'Positive Action Cluster Team' = groups of landholders working together over borders. DCQ tackling creeklines, and landholders tackling their own properties away from the thickly infested creeklines

Support from industry bodies, including Yamaha and Dow, with donations of chemical and mechanical control tools and drones. Have needed to get special permission to use residual chemical Tebuthiuron – it's the only thing that works on it, but will take out native woody plants as well, so very tight guidelines of where they can use it, and how close they can get to drip-lines of native vegetation.

Critical element: Accurate regional mapping – satellite assisted time-series mapping and analysis to identify hotspots and increases in prickly bush infestations.

Have mapped across a 500km area.

Next step is to get landholders on board, and map individual properties, and work out detailed property plans for what control techniques need to be done where. This means plans can be developed for DCQ to tackle the thickest areas, while landholders will be responsible for the other areas.

Critical element = using a range of treatment techniques, including drones, quadbikes, hand-spraying, and spray-misting.

So far they're having a very high success rate across infestations that could not have been controlled otherwise. Estimated 50 million mature prickly acacia trees killed (based on areas and densities) since 2013.

No data has been collected on whether this has increased production, but there is visual evidence that some sites are showing good recovery.

Visible success has been great for encouraging landholders to become engaged in the program – more so than ever just offering money.

Good data and mapping have been crucial to accuracy and success.

'Eradication is a mindset not just a word' – it gives people a goal and motivation, more so than just 'control' or 'management' do.

The Rangeland NRM Alliance and the development of the NRM Spatial Hub – innovation through collaboration - by Kate Forrest, Rangeland NRM Alliance Coordinator

National Rangelands NRM Alliance formed 10 years ago and works together collaboratively to achieve outcomes across the Australian rangelands.

The Rangelands cover over 80% of the country but support only 2-3% of Australia's population.

There are 14 regions involved in the Alliance.

The land covered is a mix of Indigenous land, private and public land, including national parks, and productive land.

The Alliance formed because the NRM funding system was inefficient, competitive and geographically based, and therefore not really working well for rangelands managers. So several organisations decided to work together to address issues stemming from lack of political power and suppression of voices. They set terms of reference and priority areas for NRM work – originally very project-driven, now moving toward more policy-focussed.

It is a nationwide collaboration, developing a vision for the rangelands.

Together they collate information across the rangelands, work together to identify widespread issues, and gather data to inform decision-making and project planning. The Alliance will back nation-wide issues and also regional issues of members.

Set and influence the rangeland policy agenda by:

- providing members and partners with a platform for networking and communicating
- developing an integrated body to represent rangeland NRM
- developing a vision for the rangelands with key issues and delivering solutions
- demonstrating and delivering nationwide collaboration

'Action through collaboration'

The Alliance is not an organisation it's a network, so all funding goes through specific members, as appropriate, not controlled through a central body.

Members are currently regional NRM bodies, but they welcome other partners.

All members pay a fee toward supporting the Alliance, which pays for Kate's position as Coordinator.

The Alliance works for the Rangelands as a whole, not for the individual member organisations.

The Alliance members work locally for national issues.

'If not us who? If not now, when?'

The Alliance led the development of the Australian Rangelands Initiative, which has the following goals:

1. Creating a national awareness of the importance of Australia's rangelands.

2. Develop programs for improving ground cover for sustainable agriculture and habitat values across the Australian rangelands

Rangelands = large areas, and there are often long time frames between when projects start and when impacts can be seen – this affects project monitoring and reporting on success rates.

The Alliance have developed a system to establish long-term monitoring, and gathering of large volumes of spatial data which can be used for planning, incorporating a way to allow NRM bodies and landholders to easily access the data collected:

➔ They Developed The NRM Spatial Hub ‘Turning big data into better decisions in the paddock’

Over 20 partners involved in the development of the Hub, including Meat and Livestock Australia, the Rangelands Alliance, and many others.

Workshops: GIS with the people – enabling resilient environmental and business practices; community involvement in outcome and technical design; provide expert services to non-expert users → found that the landholders wanted a low-bandwidth online tool, with a user-friendly interface, that they could save property maps locally or print off; wanted to be able to use the tool to assess the quality of own property and compare to neighbours and use this information to inform planning decisions.

The Hub can identify water points and which ones are used by stock. Has been built using satellite data collected over 30 years. Can identify fencelines, roads, native vegetation patches, terrain conditions, live vegetation cover vs dead vegetation cover vs bare ground, and more. Can flick back and forth between different scenarios to compare and inform decision-making. Data can be available for land types or individual paddocks. Can be used to plan new infrastructure.

The original target number of properties they needed to work with to prove it could work was 40 properties. They ended up with over 340 properties actively using the program by the end of the project.

The target was to collate satellite data over 50,000ha but in the end they did the whole country.

Overwhelming positive response from landholders using the program.

User Survey results:

90% found the Hub easy to use

95% said the Hub has the potential to improve the productivity, profitability, and sustainability of their property.

More than 50% felt the Hub would save them between 10 and 30 labour days a year.

75% said it would measurably increase safe carrying capacity, and 70% expected more than a 3% increases in live weight gain through improved pasture utilisation.

72% rated this type of technology as crucial to making their business both viable and sustainable in the future.

“To also have the opportunity to be a part of developing the skills of the next generation to ensure they can operate with success in an environmentally conscious world is hugely satisfying” Russel Lethbridge, Werrington Cattle

The project was finalised in June 2016

Long-term collaboration with partners means people are interested in long-term outcomes, not just wrapping up at the end of a project. The Alliance are looking to develop a business plan for sustainable long-term delivery of the Hub as a tool that can continue to be used by landholders. Their current priority is to maintain it as a service available to the current users, and looking toward being able to expand in future.

They would like to approach state and fed governments to discuss wider-spread access to and use of the technology.

Question from audience: how does the hub integrate with Indigenous mapping? Answer: Kate would like to see a layer added that identifies where Indigenous sites are without needing to give specifics. It does currently have the opportunity to integrate people’s existing layers, so if a user has that data stored in their own system, they can overlay it themselves.

Closing Plenary

Wrap-up and thanks from Costa, and airing of video footage taken over the conference, sharing the insights of the attendees.

The video recording of this session, including the video footage of the attendees is available to be viewed via the Conference website:

<http://www.nationallandcareconference.org.au/program/plenary-speakers/>

or on Youtube: <https://youtu.be/DmfPB9XeMW0>

End of conference

