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THE WA LANDCARE NETWORK

The WA Landcare Network Inc (WALN) is the peak state landcare body representing and supporting landcare groups across the state and at the national level. The operation of WALN is focused on providing improved support, coordination and capacity building to landcare groups and increasing Landcare's input into NRM decision making. It is a member of the National Landcare Network (NLN) both at the Members Council and Board levels (see appendix 1).

We estimate there are over 700 active community landcare groups in Western Australia, 528 of these are on our database. These groups often have strong links with local government, landcare centres, regional NRM groups, other not-for-profit groups, industry and state government agencies. Landcare groups include Land Conservation District Committees, catchment groups, regional NRM groups, coastal, environment and 'Friends of' groups, landholders, production groups and related private businesses. In June 2021 there were 132 Landcare Groups registered as Ordinary Members of WALN, making up 25% of estimated active groups in WA. An additional 39 Associate Members (businesses, local government, individuals, schools and research organisations) were also supporting WALN.

Mission

To establish and maintain an operating and useful community Landcare network in Western Australia that supports and strengthens the ability of member groups to undertake their work and have strong state, national public and private support and involvement.

*Growing and supporting
community landcare.*

Vision

A supported network of diverse community organisations working together to address Western Australia's most challenging environmental problems and building communities able to respond positively to changes; resulting in a natural environment with fully functional ecosystems, a sustainable and productive agricultural systems; and healthy, happy and resilient communities.

1.1 GROUP STRUCTURE AND MANAGEMENT

The WALN is a not for profit Incorporated Association governed by an Executive Committee with a minimum number of six of members, nominated prior to and elected by its members annually at the AGM as outlined in the constitution.

The current Committee consists of:

- ⇒ Mick Davis, Chair - Executive
- ⇒ Jo Ludbrook, Deputy Chair - Executive
- ⇒ John Holley, Secretary - Executive
- ⇒ Helen Watkins, Treasurer - Executive
- ⇒ Julian Sharp, Member
- ⇒ Sabian Wilde, Member
- ⇒ Freya Spencer, Member
- ⇒ Carmen Elrick-Barr, Member
- ⇒ Chris Wyhoon, Member
- ⇒ Bruce Ivers, Member

The Committee is supported by the WALN team:

- ⇒ Dr Louise Duxbury, Co-Executive (part-time)
- ⇒ Caroline Hughes, Communications and Administration Officer (part-time)
- ⇒ Kylie Payne, Landcare Networker (part-time)



1.2 CONTEXT

The success of Landcare has at its foundation:

- ⇒ cooperation across local communities through group partnerships;
- ⇒ support by government to tackle local environmental degradation and productivity concerns with positive action; and
- ⇒ awareness and knowledge.

The spread of the Landcare ethic and the proliferation of Landcare groups was supported by the Australian Government's Decade of Landcare Plan through the 1990s. At this time there was transformation change in the pastoralist, farming, and the broader community in regard to understanding of farming practices, landscape function and of the benefits of nature conservation and a healthy environment.

Since the early 2000s, community based landcare has experienced declining funding, support, profile and influence. The Landcare movement across WA and Australia faces a significant threat if governments do not support the positive and cost-effective contributions that Landcare provides with the community and environment.

A secure funding basis and setting of long term priorities would make the most of the opportunities represented by the Landcare movement in Western Australia and Australia wide. The WA Landcare Network supports the development of a WA State-wide Natural Resource Management Strategy. An annual report card or State of WA, as part of that Strategy, is needed to ensure all collaborators and contributors to on-ground activity are recognised and their efforts recorded.

1.3 WA LANDCARE NETWORK UNIQUE ROLE

There are many Landcare groups and networks that exist across regions but no other grassroots networking organisation that represents the whole state.

The services the WA Landcare Network offers are:

1. Advocacy
2. Communication and networking
3. Profile raising
4. Assistance with resourcing and effectiveness of groups
5. Research - data collection and sharing

The key attribute of Landcare is local knowledge and commitment, leading to ownership of issues and solutions and the peer learning processes that follow.

The success of Landcare is attributed to high levels of 'empowerment', 'ownership' and 'self-determination'.

Empowerment of local communities and their awareness and ability to understand and make the changes required to ensure healthy landscapes and ecosystems is a key focus.

The WA Landcare Network is part of the national effort to ensure that a vibrant, healthy Landcare movement can play its role fostering communities that are aware, engaged and active in caring for their environment and building local resilience.

WALN seeks to ensure continued support for a strong, viable and effective community based movement to enable landscape change in Western Australia's environment.

Landcare builds environmental, social and economic resilience through:

- ⇒ Supporting Traditional Owners, Farmers, Pastoralists, landholders and communities to manage their land and coasts to become more productive and sustainable;
- ⇒ supporting groups working to address environmental degradation or to maintain and enhance habitat quality on public and private land, coasts and waters;
- ⇒ educating community on the value of the natural environment and the benefits of involvement in environmental activities supported by Landcare; and
- ⇒ Investigating and ensuring that new technologies and techniques are shared.

Across the state, Landcare activities are undertaken by communities on private and public land. The Landcare movement creates strong ties between farmers and the broader community to develop, support and promote activities that improve the health and viability of local landscapes, biodiversity and communities.

Landcare provides a focus to build healthy communities and a mechanism to provide resilience in times of hardship and in helping to mitigate the effects of climate change.

1.4 RESPONDING TO NEEDS OF MEMBERS

Member surveys have been conducted in 2017 and 2019. In the 2017 WALN survey, members identified their 5 year priorities as:

- ⇒ Access to direct funding;
- ⇒ Involvement in local/regional partnerships;
- ⇒ Increased on ground action; and
- ⇒ Greater recognition of concerns and work done.

The biggest threats to groups were identified as lack of funding or resources followed by a lack of government support for Landcare/volunteering.

When asked how WALN could support Landcare groups they named:

- ⇒ providing a flow of information;
- ⇒ advocacy for funding commitments for longer projects;
- ⇒ making it easier to obtain funding;
- ⇒ easier to bring on volunteers re insurance and WHS;
- ⇒ fostering collaboration with other networks and groups.

When asked how well a range of organisations supported their landcare work, members rated their local coordinators and networks highest.

WALN has continued to advocate and provide submissions to source funding to continue to support these aspirations and especially the need for professional support via local coordinators. WALN will repeat the member survey in 2021.



1.5 RISK ANALYSIS

Risk	Severity	Likely	To avoid
We don't get a big take-up by Landcare or aligned groups	HIGH	MEDIUM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Simplify membership process changes now in constitution at next AGM and Membership Policy now complete. ⇒ Good Website and Facebook page ⇒ Value of Landcare report media. ⇒ Increase benefits: provide an affordable insurance policy to member groups ⇒ Organise events to support local groups and networks and gain additional members. ⇒ High profile advocacy pre-state and federal elections either through WALN networks or support to others.
The Federal funds don't favour local and regional landcare groups	HIGH	LOW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Help prepare the NLN case for regional funding directly to landcare groups for project delivery – which gives high effectiveness with low transaction costs. ⇒ Work closely with NLN Partnerships working group identifying key partners and opportunities. ⇒ Develop a WALN Partnership Framework.
NRM regional pushback	MEDIUM	HIGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Maintain focus on the positive steps we are taking. ⇒ Avoid distractions from key objectives. ⇒ Work together guided by shared Agreements where appropriate. ⇒ Keep members and other well informed on relative roles and responsibilities of different groups. ⇒ Contribute to the NLN joint Roadmap.



2. WALN STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND ACTION PLAN

The WA Landcare Network aims to strengthen the organising power and voice of community Landcare groups in our State to allow landcare groups to focus on positive action on the ground at the local level.

WALN aims to be able to respond to changes quickly – using an adaptive approach. This means setting a direction and then using our networks to seek input and continual improvement. The physical and social systems in which we operate are becoming increasingly unpredictable and ongoing climate change means this is accelerating.

2.1 STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

Strategic Direction 1

Network, consult and communicate with members and across the broader community Landcare movement

Strategic Direction 2

Advocate for and represent the WA community Landcare movement

Strategic Direction 3

Sustain and build capacity of the WA community Landcare movement

Strategic Direction 4

Strengthen WALN's capacity to facilitate for WA community Landcare



2.2 ACTIONS, TASKS AND TARGETS AGAINST 4 STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 1 NETWORK, CONSULT & COMMUNICATE WITH MEMBERS AND THE BROADER LANDCARE MOVEMENT

Strategic Action	Tasks	Who: WALN committee; WALN staff; Members	Targets
1. Increase and maintain the number of engaged members across the range of community based landcare organisations in WA from coasts to cities, towns, country and the outback.	1. Prepare and use a Communications Plan with key core messages and how to deliver. 2. Membership processes widely available, easy to use and reviewed annually. 3. Track membership increase, location and type of members six monthly and target to fill gaps in geographic, cultural or sector membership. 4. Run Event/AGM each year. 5. Hold at least 1 face to face meeting per year for members (additional to AGM). 6. Run a biennial survey to seek input from members on their needs and how WALN can support them.		⇒ Membership increases 20% annually for 2021/22. ⇒ AGM/event held annually. ⇒ Members event held annually. ⇒ Bi annual survey of members gives useful input.
2. Engage and communicate with members, partners and stakeholders at local regional and state level to benefit and enhance landcare efforts.	1. Be a hub for communication across the Landcare movement. Contact with members via Facebook, website, email and phone, as relevant, to share funding and information opportunities and build collaborations. 2. Facilitate a series of networking/information forums, field days with member groups. 3. Seek funding to assist members to attend conferences and forums of value to the movement.		⇒ Facebook likes and followers on upward trend. ⇒ Landcare Checks In run at least 12 times per year. ⇒ 5 regional forums run annually. ⇒ EOI for the State NRM and Coastal Conference submitted. ⇒ Landcare Facilitators forum run quarterly once formed. ⇒ Coastal and Marine Community Network 6 mtgs/events held annually.
3. Encourage and initiate networking and knowledge exchange between member groups to accelerate landcare efforts.	1. Encourage and increase input and feedback from network members on challenges and positive stories. 2. Further develop and ensure currency of WALN website and Facebook page. 3. Review online Engagement Policy in particular Twitter, Instagram and other platforms. 4. Feature member groups and their activities in online media and presentations.		⇒ Facebook and website current and accessed regularly and usage monitored. ⇒ Policy re online engagement reviewed by end of 2021. ⇒ At least bi-monthly newsletters ⇒ Increased input and feedback

4. Contribute to the promotion and celebration of landcare.

1. Promote WA Landcare Champions at WALN events.
2. Facilitate members presenting at the State and Federal Landcare Conferences and nominations for relevant awards.
3. Support landcarers to nominate for awards.

- ⇒ EOI Participation in planning and coordination of 2021/2022 Coastal and Landcare awards.
- ⇒ Project/event acknowledging landcare champions.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2 ADVOCATE FOR AND REPRESENT THE WA LANDCARE MOVEMENT

Strategic Action	Tasks	Who: WALN committee; WALN staff; WALN representatives on NLN	Targets
1. Undertake advocacy and representation opportunities at Federal and State Levels.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contribute to the NLN advocacy work re future funding and delivery of Landcare and represent WALN viewpoints. 2. Advocate for resources to increase the capacity of landcare groups to successfully manage large funding programs and local project delivery. 3. Call together the WA Collaboration group with the aim to progress with the WA government a WA Landcare Council or similar to provide ongoing regular advice to government. 4. Meet with State Ministers and their staff at least annually to brief on the status of Landcare in WA. 5. Advocate for state funding to landcare for both on ground works and group coordination. 6. Encourage landcare groups to involve federal, state and local decision makers in events, forums and communications to advocate for the value of Landcare across all portfolios. 7. Regularly liaise with the State NRM office. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Annual opportunity for landcare groups to brief Ministers. ⇒ At least one additional Federal and State fund for Landcare works and group coordination are advocated for, applied for and secured. ⇒ At least bi-monthly meetings with State NRM office. ⇒ WA Collaboration re ignited and three meetings per year held. ⇒ Meetings with groups not currently strongly engaged initiated, six per year.
2. WALN representatives active in the national body representing community Landcare.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. WALN representatives at all National Landcare Network Members Council meetings representing the interests of WA Landcare as a whole. 2. WALN on the National Landcare Network Board. 3. Representatives on the NLN Members Council and Board regularly report back to WALN committee and membership. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Maintain 3 WA reps on NLN Members Council. ⇒ WALN committee endorse member on NLN Board. ⇒ Report to WALN committee (and members as appropriate) after each meeting.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2: ADVOCATE FOR AND REPRESENT THE WA LANDCARE MOVEMENT

Strategic Action	Tasks	Who: WALN committee; WALN staff; WALN representatives on NLN	Targets
3. Engage with and influence other decision-makers to ensure that community landcare is recognised, valued and supported.	1. WALN, on behalf of its members, involved with and influential in key forums. 2. Partnerships developed with other networks to increase joint influence for landcare outcomes. 3. Present clear analysis of current landcare structures and their appropriateness to community Landcare. 4. Update the State of Landcare WA Report. 5. Commission production of a Value of Landcare in WA Report. 6. Encourage WA MPs to join the Federal Parliamentary Friends of Landcare. 7. Explore the opportunity of establishing a WA Parliamentary Friends of Landcare.		⇒ Increase membership and influence of WALN through significant networks. ⇒ State of Landcare Report updated 2022. ⇒ Value of Landcare in WA Report completed 2021. ⇒ Annual ministerial and key stakeholder meetings. ⇒ Increase WA membership of Federal Parliamentary Friends of Landcare.
4. Review what other state Networks have underway to be useful for their members and adapt programs for WA as appropriate.	1. Through membership of the NLN share knowledge with other states and territories to strengthen WALN's approach for community Landcare support at a National and State level. 2. Participate strongly in the proposed review of the state NRM framework and development of a strategic action plan ensuring members have a strong voice in its preparation.		⇒ Policy paper re State funding developed. ⇒ Contribute to NLN joint roadmap. ⇒ Ongoing affordable insurance cover option for members available.



STRATEGIC DIRECTION 3: SUSTAIN & BUILD CAPACITY OF THE WA LANDCARE MOVEMENT

Strategic Action	Tasks	Who: WALN committee; WALN staff; Members	Targets
1. Secure resources to support the Landcare movement.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop position paper on preferred Landcare movement funding model. 2. Advocate for preferred funding model through: 3. Meetings with Ministers and Agencies 4. General advocacy. 		<p>⇒ Federal funding model developed as part of NLN joint position.</p> <p>⇒ Model for Landcare funding presented to the WA Government.</p>
2. Facilitate projects that benefit WALN members.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop WALN as the conduit for provision of commercial services, such as insurance, audit processes, OHS plans etc., to benefit landcare groups in WA (in liaison with other states doing same). 2. Contribute to reviews of government funding programs to meet member needs. 		<p>⇒ WALN provides services identified by members.</p> <p>⇒ WALN makes presentations to government re appropriateness of government programs to members' needs.</p>
3. Collate data to track the capacity of the WA landcare movement.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review and update WA State of Landcare Report. 2. Contribute to NLN independent review of NLP. 		<p>⇒ State of Landcare Report updated 2022.</p> <p>⇒ Input to NLN review of NLP 2021.</p>
4. Affirmative action to ensure strong engagement with Traditional Custodians.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Meet with Traditional Custodians to identify if and how WALN can support and collaborate Aboriginal Landcare efforts. 2. Take action where collaboration opportunities have been identified. 3. Highlight Aboriginal landcare projects and champions through WALN communications. 4. Ensure Traditional Custodians are fully consulted and part of collaboration efforts. 5. Involve Traditional Custodians in key networking events as keynote speakers and as advisors. 		<p>⇒ Meet with Traditional Custodians and identify opportunities at least twice a year.</p> <p>⇒ Act on collaboration with joint submission/s.</p> <p>⇒ Aboriginal landcare perspectives part of advocacy representations.</p> <p>⇒ Aboriginal case studies on website 2021.</p>

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 4: STRENGTHEN WALN'S CAPACITY TO FACILITATE FOR WA LANDCARE

Strategic Action	Tasks	Who: WALN committee; WALN staff	Targets
1. Implement strong organisational governance to support WALNs activities.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Developing a strong strategic approach and Action Plan to guide growth of the network. 2. Prepare annual budget. 3. Review Action Plan annually. 4. Review budget at each Committee meeting. 5. Maintain professional Infrastructure for the entity, re keeping of the Corporate Seal, meeting requirements of tax status, ABN, Deductible Gift Recipient status. 6. Develop and manage an effective Database of members and the wider WA Landcare movement. 		<p>⇒ Review Strategic Plan in 2022.</p> <p>⇒ Action Plan reviewed annually.</p> <p>⇒ Effective database with >1000 contacts maintained.</p>
2. Be supportive and build capacity and networks for members through an efficient and cost-effective operating structure and staffing.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Retain sufficient staff to implement the Action Plan. 2. Secure NLN longer-term federal support for Network members. 3. Seek longer-term state commitment for WALN's networking and support roles. 4. Investigate private funding for landcare and implement options. 5. Seek funding opportunities to extend support to members (training grants, grants for workshops etc.). 6. Conduct member survey at least bi-annually to guide WALN priorities. 		<p>⇒ Effective staff attracted and retained.</p> <p>⇒ State and Federal funding secured to implement key elements of Action Plan.</p> <p>⇒ Member survey done July 2021.</p> <p>⇒ Key private funding source in collaboration with key partnerships progressed 2021.</p>
3. Ensure WALN principles are reflected in all our work.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use key policies and review annually. 2. Invite members to express their views on WALN's structure, policies and activities. 		<p>⇒ Key policies reviewed.</p> <p>⇒ Members consulted.</p>



3. FINANCES

3.1 2021 Funding Sources

In 2021 WALN operates with two funding sources:

Federal Government

The Australia Government, through the National Landcare Program, funds each state and territory representative peak body through the National Landcare Network. The 2020 – 2021 allocation to WALN is \$98,385.58. This contract falls within the larger NLP commitment Phase 2 (2018-19 to 2022-23).

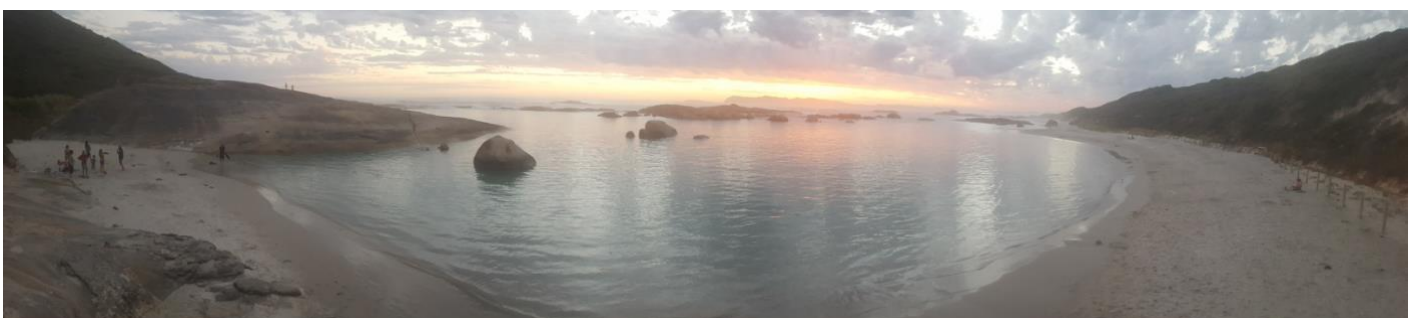
The level of funds allocated to WALN is calculated by the NLN on the basis of capacity and need for each state and territory organisation. Expenditure of funds must be reported on a quarterly basis against a funding agreement that includes:

- ⇒ Attending NLN meetings
- ⇒ Contract staff providing executive and specific contract services to meet action plan activities
- ⇒ Delivery of essential information and services to the Landcare community
- ⇒ Meeting governance requirements
- ⇒ Communication and networking.

State Stewardship Grant

In late 2020 the Western Australian Government made available the sum of \$300,000, through application, to support core landcare services provided by WALN across WA. Key aspects of the Action Plan are being supported including:

- ⇒ Appointment of a part time Landcare Networker
- ⇒ Building the WALN membership and support for members
- ⇒ Continue key communication strategies including regular newsletters, online posts, Landcare Checks In, website updates and case study development
- ⇒ Support for the Coastal and Marine Community Network by: contracting services of a part time officer to help the Network; hosting a webpage; having input to network e news
- ⇒ Contracting development of the Carbon Industry Overview and other support materials
- ⇒ Supporting local groups to run regional forums on topics important to them
- ⇒ Run the Landcare 2021 Awards.



4. APPENDIX

The WA Landcare Network (WALN) is part of The National Landcare Network (NLN) established in February 2009 based on the need for a national advocacy organisation for Landcare.

NATIONAL LANDCARE NETWORK BACKGROUND

The membership of the NLN consists of the representatives from Peak Bodies for Landcare from each State and Territory. The network recognises and acknowledges the term Landcare to include Landcare, Coastcare, Rivercare, Waterwatch, Bushcare, Friends of, and similar organisations founded on hands-on volunteer learning and participation for environmental outcomes.

Vision - *The National Landcare Network is the voice of community Landcare across Australia.*

Mission - *To advocate and represent the interests of community Landcare as fundamental to Natural Resource Management.*

Purpose of the Network

- Demonstrate the Landcare ethic and operate with Integrity
- Foster a cohesive and cooperative forum to collaborate, support, advocate for and add value to Landcare groups to address strategic and proactive natural resource management and environmental issues.
- Encourage development of Landcare organisations, groups and networks
- Support the development of State and Territory representative peak bodies
- Identify and foster strategic partnerships between Landcare groups and the broader Natural Resource Management (NRM) and environmental stakeholders.
- Speak as the national voice in the development of Landcare and broader natural resource management and environmental policy.
- Communicate with and represent community based Landcare at the national level to develop and foster ideas, knowledge and resources
- Celebrate the achievements of Landcare across Australia and promote Landcare and community based NRM organisations and activities.
- To be a key contact point and act as the interface between Government and the Landcare movement to ensure effective communication of issues, programs and policy as necessary.

The NLN is a vital component of the three pillars of Landcare - Government, Community and Corporate.

The two support structures of Landcare are the two national organisations:

**National Landcare
Network**

the advocacy body for community landcare

**Landcare Australia
Limited**

corporate body promoting Landcare and seeking corporate sponsorship