



**Local Land
Services**

Landcare NSW/Local Land Services Partnership Memorandum of Understanding



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1 Context

Twenty five years ago, the then Australian Government recognised that effective land rehabilitation and management required broader community engagement, supported by government to work together on addressing the nation's land degradation problems. As a result Landcare was born, along with government structures that engaged, supported and maximised the efforts of Landcarers.

A well-resourced, engaged Landcarer can make a considerable contribution to natural resource management on public and private land, across a wide range of land-uses. A group of Landcarers working together, to address local issues, is even better. A network of Landcare groups, that provide structures to support Landcarers is capable of working together to address catchment, district, regional and state level issues.

Commencing operations in 2014, Local Land Services was formed as part of a NSW Government reform to provide a regionally based structure that supports natural resource management, agricultural advisory services, biosecurity and emergency management at the local level.

Local Land Services supports structures and government funded programs to facilitate, and resource, co-designed projects that are guided by science and make the best possible use of the resources available, both financial and human. Together they record and celebrate strategic, best practice Landcare actions that have been identified in consultation with their community. A true collaboration will deliver on the NSW Government State Plan, organisational Strategic Plans and Catchment Action Plan outcomes.

This Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been developed to support the partnership between Landcare NSW and Local Land Services. Both organisations are reliant upon external resourcing to enable their operations. The design and delivery mechanisms of State and Federal programs impact on the operational capacity of both organisations, at the state and regional scale.

At the time of development, the majority of the Federal National Landcare Program was delivered under regional arrangements, hence the capacity of Landcare at the local and regional scale was directly affected by the relationship with, and resourcing and support provided by, the Local Land Services organisation for that region.

This MoU documents the foundation for a relationship between Landcare NSW and Local Land Services at a State level, and provides guidance for the building of similar effective relationships at a regional level.

This MoU has been developed in the context of previous activities at the State and Federal Level. A listing of documents used to inform the process is included in the Appendix.

2 Partnering organisations

This MoU is between:

Landcare NSW (LNSW)

and

Local Land Services (LLS)

3 Background

Landcare NSW

Landcare is a unique community-based approach to managing and restoring Australia's natural environment, improving the sustainability of agricultural activities, and building the resilience of communities. Landcare refers to any community based group operating in the sphere of sustainable agriculture and natural resource management in NSW and includes but is not limited to groups that describe themselves as Landcare, Bushcare, Coastcare, Dunecare, Friends of groups, Producer groups. There are currently around 3600 such groups in NSW. Established in 2007, Landcare NSW (LNSW) is

the voice of grassroots Landcare in NSW and is incorporated under the *NSW Associations Act 2009*. It exists to improve the resourcing of, and support for, community led action to improve natural resource management, promote sustainable agricultural practices, and increase community resilience. Landcare NSW is governed by a 22-member Council comprised of endorsed representatives from all regions of NSW and four members co-opted for their specific skills. A small executive committee oversees the operations of the organisation.

Local Land Services

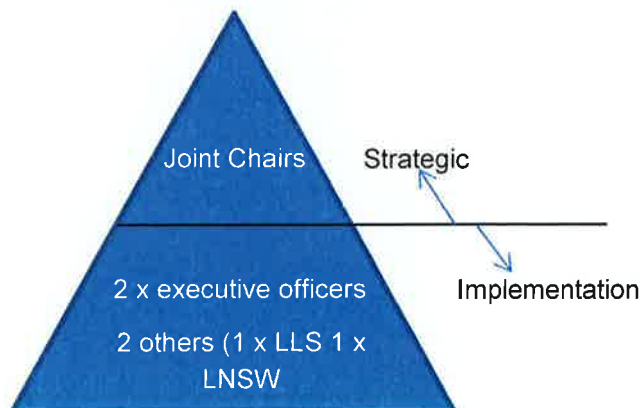
Local Land Services brings together agricultural production advice and extension, biosecurity, natural resource management and emergency management into a single State government organisation. Local Land Services was established in 2013 under the *Local Land Services Act 2013* (NSW). It is comprised of 11 Local Land Services regions governed by 11 local Boards across NSW. Each region is accountable for delivering services that add value to local industries, enhance natural resources, protect industries from pests and disease and help communities respond to emergencies such as flood, fire and drought. Due to the local nature of each Local Land Service organisation, service delivery is able to be planned and prioritised on a regional basis, reflecting regional priorities that deliver on the State goals and objectives. Local Boards headed by local Chairs work closely with landholders, communities and industry. Together they form the Local Land Services Board of Chairs which is led by the Chair of the Board of Chairs, with support for day to day leadership of state-wide issues and value adding of regional operations provided by the Executive Manager.

4 Partnership statement

Landcare NSW and Local Land Services as a government and community partnership are stronger together in achieving outcomes for communities and landscapes.

5 Governance

It is recognised that the relationship between Landcare NSW and Local Land Services is vital to deliver on the partnership statement. The Chair of Landcare NSW and the Chair of Local Land Services jointly have the responsibility and accountability to manage the partnership and the relationship. The decisions of the Joint Chairs will be implemented by deployment and delegation to a Joint Management Committee (JMC) which is co-chaired by the Chairs of Local Land Services and Landcare NSW. Any joint programs or projects of Landcare NSW and Local Land Services will be managed by the Joint Management Committee. The specific governance requirements for each program or project will be collaboratively developed by the partners, and will become an addendum to this MOU. The relationship will be a standing item on the agenda of all meetings of the Joint Management Committee.



6 Goals and objectives

The goal of this MoU is to establish a foundation for collaboration between Landcare NSW and Local Land Services on a broad range of natural resource management and farm productivity issues, and aspects of bio-security and emergency management.

The objectives of this MoU are:

- to provide guidance and a framework to ensure a productive partnership that builds the capacity of both Landcare NSW and Local Land Services. In doing so communities are empowered to take effective action and assume leadership roles in the sustainable development of their respective communities and landscapes;
- to provide consistency of underlying principles across Local Land Services regions whilst allowing flexibility for each region to implement actions in a way that respects the unique attributes of the region and its peoples, and incorporates the desires of the communities within those regions; and
- to establish methods consistent with this MoU to harness the skills, knowledge and resources of both Landcare NSW and Local Land Services to meet our common goals, objectives and vision.

7 Partnership foundations

This MoU articulates the intent of Landcare NSW and Local Land Services to work collaboratively while building on existing relationships, principles and co-contributions. The partnership between Landcare NSW and Local Land Services in NSW is nested within a broader context and the key foundations of common purpose, complementary skills and resources, shared values and principles.

7.1 Common purpose

Landcare NSW and Local Land Services share a common purpose in addressing significant challenges faced by land managers and communities in NSW across natural resource management, biosecurity, farm productivity and community viability. At a national level, the NRM Regions Australia and the National Landcare Network have agreed on a Statement of Common Purpose which provides guidance to the establishment of enduring and productive relationships. (<http://nrmregionsaustralia.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Statement-of-Common-Purpose-REVISION-20131008-Final.pdf>)

7.2 Complementary skills and resources

Landcare NSW and Local Land Services recognise and acknowledge that they are working towards a common objective and often their work is interdependent. Each party can bring complementary strengths to this relationship to enable effective collaboration. For this purpose, the particular relevant strengths of each party are:

7.2.1 Landcare NSW

- Developing local ownership of issues, solutions and landscape changes;
- Broad recognition and good reputation in the community;
- Informal structures that enable flexibility and the capacity to quickly respond and adapt to emerging issues and changed circumstances;
- Good local knowledge that supports local innovation and solutions;
- Ability to leverage financial and in-kind resources; and

- Access to skills within and from the community.

7.2.2 Local Land Services

- Regional perspectives of landscapes and communities;
- Engaging communities and other stakeholders in developing and implementing plans for landscape enhancement;
- Institutional and organisational capacity;
- Enablers of practice change; and
- Technical skills and expertise in natural resource management, agricultural production, biosecurity and emergency management.

The partnership between Landcare NSW and Local Land Services brings together the resources and complementary skills and values of the respective organisations to strengthen delivery and maximise delivery capability.

7.3 Shared values

It is recognised that collaborations between Landcare and Local Land Services will vary across the State, and operate at a range of scales. Both parties aspire to a relationship based on trust, respect, connection and understanding. To be successful this collaboration is founded on agreed values, intentions, practices and working together towards a common purpose.

Landcare NSW and Local Land Services aspire to be:

- Conscious of regional diversity;
- Local, long term and simple;
- Leaders;
- Complementary;
- Innovative;
- Adaptive;
- Supportive; and
- Resilient.

7.4 Principles

Landcare NSW and Local Land Services recognise that the success of this partnership will be enabled by:

- Shared and agreed common goals;
- Appropriate and strategic collaboration;
- Aligning funding and other resources for shared purposes;
- Clarity of roles and responsibilities;
- Effective communication between parties;
- Strong capacity and leadership within community groups;
- Sharing knowledge in a framework of trust;

- Measuring, acknowledging, promoting and celebrating achievements;
- Investing time in relationships;
- Transparent decision making;
- Practical support being provided for leaders, drivers and staff;
- Diverse and resilient groups and networks; and
- Strong and effective, accountability and leadership.

8 Delivery

This partnership is founded and builds upon the successes achieved to date and the strengths of the existing relationship between Landcare NSW and Local Land Services (and its preceding organisations). This MoU sets the partnership foundation for strong leadership at the State level which will inform, guide and support regional relationships and natural resource management activities.

The objectives of this partnership will be delivered through:

- Open, regular and effective communication processes between the partners including:
 - Dialogue between Landcare NSW Council and the Local Land Services Board of Chairs;
 - Collaborative networking opportunities at the State level; and
 - Clear regional and local communication pathways.
- Development, alignment and adaptive improvement of strategic planning processes through collaboration and sharing of information and knowledge;
- Development, refinement and implementation of innovative community capacity building strategies through collaborative and open processes;
- Identification and securing of investment and resources using the strength of the partnership to leverage greater outcomes;
- Establishment of a collaborative partnership approach to implementation through support of regional delivery processes which capitalise upon the strengths of the respective partners;
- Active and collaborative promotion of the capability provided by the partnership to Government, investors and key stakeholders;
- Provision of mutual support for each other as genuine and respected partners;
- Active support for the regions to develop effective monitoring, evaluation, reporting and improvement mechanisms to accurately report on resource condition including community capacity change; and
- Adaptive management which will monitor, review and evaluate the success of the partnership to guide adaptive improvement.

The mechanisms listed above provide leadership, guidance and support to inform the development of regional relationships.

9 Relationship review

Landcare NSW and Local Land Services acknowledge the importance of ensuring this MoU remains relevant to the needs of their collaborative working relationship at the state, regional and local scale. As such, they will

consult on an ongoing basis on possible variations of the MoU with the aim of making arrangements for its continuing and effective implementation. The primary purpose of this relationship review is to ensure this MoU is used at all scales to frame the partnership and enact collaboration.

This MoU will also be supported by a monitoring plan including key performance indicators that can be modified over time to reflect both the needs of the parties and the requirements of the current programs that support both Landcare NSW and Local Land Services.

The Chair of Landcare and the Chair of the Board of Chairs of Local Land Services (or their delegates) will jointly review this MoU every two years or within another period as mutually agreed.

10 Partnership benefits

Through adoption and delivery of the principles and delivery components espoused in this MoU, the mutual benefits will need to be tangible for the partnership to succeed. This partnership is anticipated to provide a range of benefits, as outlined below, to the partner organisations and the broader community:

10.1 Benefits for the partner organisations include:

- Skills and knowledge of the respective organisations harnessed for better outcomes;
- Coordinated, innovative and supported approach to planning and delivery at the relevant scales;
- Stronger relationships between Landcare groups and members and Local Land Services;
- Mutual support and acknowledgement;
- Reduced potential for conflict resulting from collaborative, adaptive, innovative and outcome focused relationships;
- Symbiotic outcomes achieved across program design, MERI, etc.;
- Greater volunteer support and increased on ground outcomes; and
- Effective and efficient delivery of regional plans and achievement of organisational strategies.

10.2 Benefits to the broader community:

- Greater public value from investment of public funds;
- Actively engaged, supported, empowered and resilient communities;
- Greater awareness of support available and appreciation of the organisations roles and functions;
- Enabled local communities that are aware, engaged, active, supported, skilled and resourced;
- Simple and flexible processes to support landholder and community engagement; and
- Sustainable, productive agricultural industries and improved natural resource condition.

11 Communication and media

Landcare NSW and Local Land Services agree to inform each other with respect to any communication with the media or third parties, and any public communications, that involve issues of mutual interest or issues which concern the other party. Where possible, where a matter involves issues of mutual interest Landcare NSW and Local Land Services will work together to develop a joint and consistent approach to the communications strategy.

12 Commencement, duration and termination

This MoU commences on the date it is signed by all the parties, and remains in force until it is terminated in accordance with the paragraph below.

Termination

- a) This MoU may be terminated at any time; however termination requires at least 3 months' written notice of an intention to terminate or such other notice as agreed.
- b) Any termination may only be effected by the Chair of Landcare NSW and the LLS Chair of the Board of Chairs.

13 Status of MoU

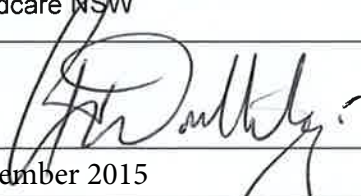

This MoU is administrative in nature and is not intended, in whole or in part, to create, maintain or govern legal relations or obligations between the parties. Any obligations arising under legislation for each organisation are not affected by this MoU.

Nothing in this MOU or activities carried out pursuant to it give rise to or create a legal partnership or relationship of principal and agent between Landcare NSW and Local Land Services.

This MoU does not create an exclusive relationship between Landcare NSW and Local Land Services. Any existing agreements between the parties and other entities are not affected by this MoU, and each party may engage with any other individuals or community groups to form relationships or partnerships with respect to the same or similar subject matter in this MoU.

14 Signatories

Each party signs this MoU to acknowledge that it will use its best efforts to work collaboratively with the other party to reach the objectives stated in this MoU.

Landcare NSW		Local Land Services	
Name: Mr Rob Dulhunty		Name: Ms Alex Anthony	
Title: Chair, Landcare NSW		Title: NSW Local Land Services Chair of Chairs	
Signature: 		Signature: 	
Date	1 September 2015	Date	1 September 2015

Appendix – List of policy documents referred to in developing this MoU

Documentation used to inform the MoU establishment includes however is not limited to the following:

- “Performance standard for Local Land Services a working draft for discussion”, June 2014;
- “Statement of common purpose Landcare communities and regional NRM organisations working together in changing landscapes”, October 2013;
- “National NRM regions localism position paper”, March 2014;
- NSW 2021 Plan to Make NSW number one, Sept 2011;
- The 2014 NSW Regional Landcare Support Forum, May 2014;
- Caring for our Country: Role of the Regional Landcare Facilitator (2013-18);
- Caring for our Country Regional Landcare Facilitator Host Responsibilities (2013-18);
- Australia’s NRM Governance System, Foundations and principles for meeting future challenges, NRM Chairs 2010;
- Speech by the Prime Minister, Launch of Statements on the Environment (Wentworth NSW, 20 July 1989); and
- Minister Hodgkinson’s second reading speech to NSW Parliament on the establishment of LLS (28 May 2013).