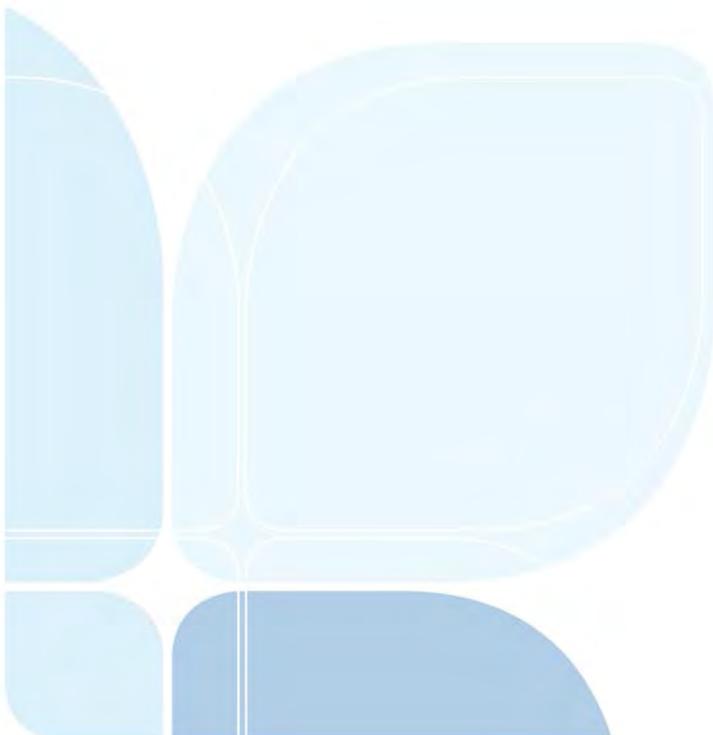




**Local Land
Services**
Greater Sydney

Landcare Strategy

2015 - 2020



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GS LLS Landcare Strategy

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GS LLS Strategic Land Services team

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Disclaimer: The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing February 2016. However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that information upon which they rely is up to date and to check currency of the information with the appropriate officer of Local Land Services or the user's independent adviser. To advise of errors or omissions please email admin.greatersydney@lls.nsw.gov.au and with the subject "GS LLS Landcare Strategy feedback".

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1. Introduction

Landcare is “a unique community-based approach that has played a major role in raising awareness, influencing farming and land management practices and delivering environmental outcomes across Australian landscapes for many years. Largely, local group involvement has been the catalyst for voluntary community engagement, understanding and action in the development and adoption of sustainable land management practices and the acknowledgement of our shared responsibility for conserving biodiversity” (Australian Framework for Landcare Reference Group, *Australian Framework for Landcare*, 2010).

The local Landcare community have contributed to natural resource management and environmental rehabilitation in the Greater Sydney region over the past 25 years. Greater Sydney Local Land Services (GS LLS) is committed to continuing this important work into the future.

The purpose of this Strategy is to describe what Landcare activity currently occurs in Greater Sydney, and to clarify the objectives and activities of GS LLS in supporting Landcare across this region over the next five years.

This Strategy complements the GS LLS Local Strategic Plan 2015-20 which operates at a higher level, aiming to provide a framework for service delivery across all areas of GS LLS activity. The GS LLS Local Strategic Plan 2015-20 provides a shared vision for communities and Government to work together for productive and healthy landscapes, and can be viewed at www.gslls.nsw.gov.au.

This Landcare Strategy is supported by an Action Plan, which details the specific activities to be implemented by GS LLS to deliver the Key Actions identified in this Strategy. While the Action Plan is intended to apply for the 5 year life of the Strategy the activities will be reviewed on an annual basis for effectiveness, timing, and efficiency. As such the Action Plan is an internal working document to GS LLS.

2. Vision and Purpose

Our vision for Landcare in the Greater Sydney region is to see a diverse range of community groups across the region actively involved in delivering positive sustainable environmental, social and economic outcomes in natural and agricultural systems. By 2020 we hope to see an increase in Landcare activity, both in the level of volunteer involvement and on-ground outcomes.

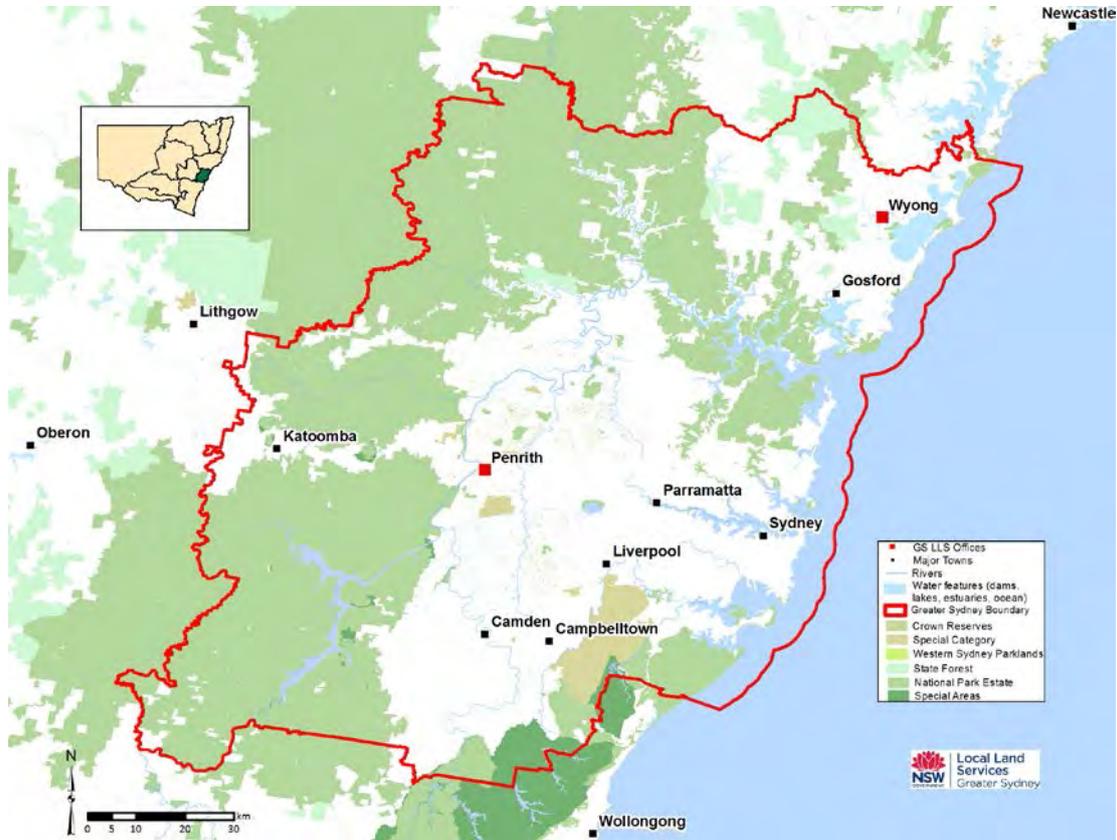
The purpose of this Strategy is to guide GS LLS support of Landcare for the period 2015-2020.

3. Background Context

3.1. Local Land Services

Local Land Services is a statutory corporation established under the *NSW Local Land Services Act (2013)* to manage and deliver services that bring positive social, economic and environmental outcomes to communities and landscapes in NSW. It brings together agricultural production advice, biosecurity, natural resource management and emergency management into a single state wide organisation consisting of eleven regions.

The Greater Sydney Local Land Services region includes the metropolitan area of Sydney, parts of the Central Coast and the Blue Mountains. It consists of 43 local government areas (in 2015) and is home to some 4.4 million people. The map below shows the region's boundaries.



Map 1: Boundary of the GS LLS region

A profile of the Greater Sydney LLS region including key assets and threats is in Appendix One.

GS LLS delivers Landcare related support to landholders, producers and Landcare groups across this region through:

- A dedicated Regional Landcare Facilitator,
- financial incentives,
- taking a lead in facilitating and encouraging networking of groups, and
- providing training, assistance and advice directly to where it is needed.

GS LLS maintains consistency with all relevant State and Commonwealth legislation and policies. Those specifically relating to Landcare include:

Table 1 State and Commonwealth legislation and policies specifically relating to Landcare.

	Australian Government	State	Regional and Local
GS LLS Landcare Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Landcare Programme, 2015-18 • Australian Framework for Landcare, 2010 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landcare NSW / Local Land Services partnership Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) (2015) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GS LLS Local Strategic Plan 2015-2020

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Landcare NSW and Local Land Services was signed on 1 September 2015. The goal of the MoU is to establish a foundation for collaboration between Landcare NSW and Local Land Services at a state level on a broad range of natural resource management and farm productivity issues, and aspects of biosecurity and emergency management (Landcare NSW/Local Land Services partnership Memorandum of Understanding 2015). It is also intended to provide guidance for the building of similar relationships at a regional level.

The Greater Sydney LLS Landcare Strategy 2015 – 2020 is intended to provide the Strategies and Key Actions for regional expression of this collaboration.

3.2. Defining Landcare in the Greater Sydney region

The term “Landcare” has received a range of definitions. Articulating a meaningful definition for this Strategy is helped by looking at current definitions across a range of scales.

3.2.1. National Landcare Programme definition of local Landcare community

Landcare is currently part of the Australian Government’s agenda for the delivery of natural resource management investment nationally. It will invest \$1 billion over the next four years through the National Landcare Programme (NLP) to help drive sustainable agriculture as well as supporting the protection, conservation and rehabilitation of Australia’s natural environment.

The NLP recognises that the composition of the local Landcare community will likely differ between NRM regions, and might include stakeholders such as:

- Identified Landcare groups and other ‘care’ groups such as bushcare, coastcare, rivercare etc.
- ‘Friends of’ groups and other community environment groups
- Farmer/producer groups
- Indigenous communities and organisations
- Individual land managers working in the Landcare / natural resource management sector.

3.2.2. Landcare NSW definition of Landcare

Landcare NSW defines Landcare as 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*** and includes but is not limited to groups that describe themselves as landcare, bushcare, coastcare, dunecare, friends of groups, and producer groups. There are currently around 3600 such groups in NSW.

3.2.3. Defining and describing Landcare in Greater Sydney

Landcare in the Greater Sydney region can be described as functioning mainly in three categories:

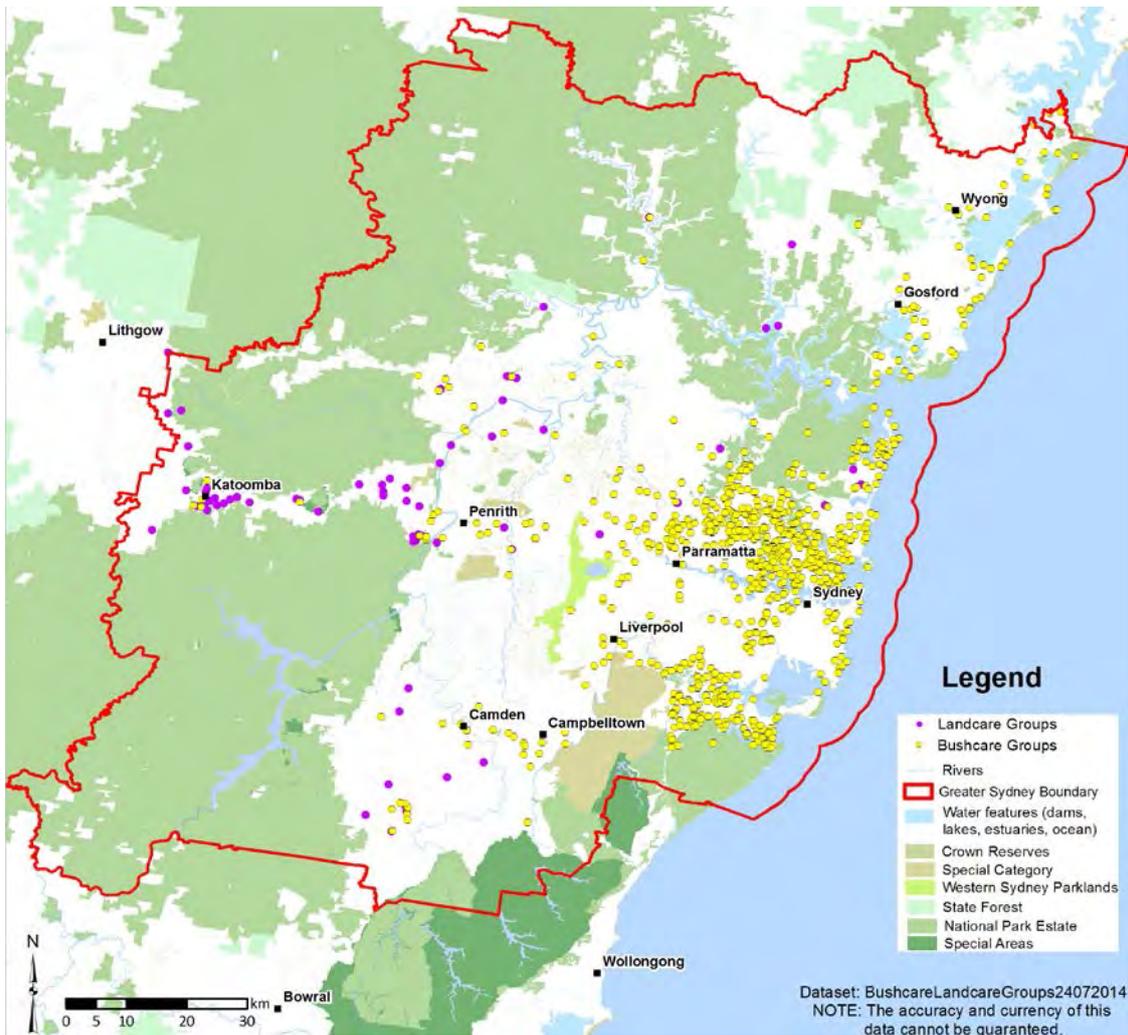
- community-based autonomous *groups*
- supported Bushcare *groups* (local government or National Parks and Wildlife Service-supported groups working on public lands)
- local or sub-regional *networks* of groups (umbrella groups in various forms)

Landcare in the Greater Sydney region is therefore defined as any community based group or network operating in the sphere of sustainable agriculture or natural resource management. It includes groups identifying themselves as Landcare, Bushcare and Streamwatch groups, and Landcare, Bushcare and Environment networks.

While individual land managers are not considered to be part of this Landcare structure in the Greater Sydney region, they may be supported through other GS LLS mechanisms such as natural resource management incentive programs.

Landcare groups in Greater Sydney

Landcare in Greater Sydney, as it is across Australia, is fundamentally driven by local communities and volunteers. The Greater Sydney region has a distinctive Landcare landscape consisting of some 1000 individual groups, comprising about 30% of all the groups in NSW and one sixth of all groups in Australia. In comparison to the rest of NSW there is a greater percentage of groups in this region (around 90%) connected with local Councils working on public land (Bushcare groups) and fewer groups primarily focused on private land management in agricultural or peri-urban landscapes (community-based autonomous groups). Greater Sydney region also includes a number of Aboriginal Landcare groups focusing on caring for and implementing cultural practises on country. The map below shows the locations of Landcare groups in the Greater Sydney region at December 2014.



Map 2: Landcare groups in the Greater Sydney region at December 2014.

As of Dec 2014 it was estimated that Landcare in the Greater Sydney region contributes around 90,000 volunteer hours annually, benefiting Sydney's unique environment and social landscape.

A map showing the distribution and density of Council-supported Bushcare groups per Local Government Area is at Appendix 2.

The group locations, contact details and worksite locations for Landcare groups and networks in the Greater Sydney region are maintained by the Department of Primary Industries on the NSW Landcare Gateway website at www.landcare.nsw.gov.au/groups.

Landcare networks in Greater Sydney

These networks cover larger areas of the region than individual groups and usually involve multiple groups within their operations. Networks operating in Greater Sydney include:

Council Bushcare Networks

Many local Councils facilitate Bushcare networks which bring together representatives from local Bushcare groups to collaborate on relevant issues in their local government area (e.g. Blue Mountains Bushcare Network and Ku-ring-gai Bushcare Association).

Central Coast Community Environment Network (CEN)

A network formed in 1997 as an overarching body to support individuals and groups in Lake Macquarie, Wyong and Gosford Local Government Areas who are working for the environment - www.cen.org.au

Greater Sydney Landcare Network (GSLN)

A network started in 2014 aiming to forge better links between Landcare, Bushcare, bush regeneration contractors and others in bushland management in Greater Sydney - www.greatersydneylandcare.org

Hawkesbury Environment Network (HEN)

A network launched in 2011 as an environmental umbrella group in the Hawkesbury Local Government area which also partners with groups and institutions including the University of Western Sydney and Western Sydney institute of TAFE - www.hen.org.au

Streamwatch Network

Some groups primarily monitor water quality. From 2013 the Australian Museum has had the responsibility for running the Streamwatch program, through funding from Sydney Water - www.streamwatch.org.au

Volunteer Coordinators Network (Natural Areas) Sydney Region (VCN)

A network of people employed to co-ordinate volunteer involvement in natural resource management and on-ground work. It primarily consists of local government Bushcare Coordinators and meets quarterly. VolCoord is a yahoo group and bulletin board for VCN members.

Wyong Care Groups Network (WYCARE)

WyCare Inc. is the management arm of the Wyong Shire Landcare Network, to support Landcare groups in this local government area with resources and administration - www.wycare.com.au

Other current Landcare initiatives in Greater Sydney

Other issue-based Landcare initiatives or entities in the Greater Sydney region are:

Adventure Landcare

This is a tag for some groups who incorporate aspects of travel or adventure into their programs to manage weeds and protect the wildness areas that surround Sydney. Examples include conservation kayaking on the Nepean River to remove Black Willows and remote area bushcare in the Blue Mountains.

Equine Landcare

GS LLS developed this initiative in 2013 to connect and grow the capacity of recreational horse owners in the region to manage their land sustainably. They are notified of training opportunities and sustainable property information through e-newsletters and training events.

Floating Landcare

GS LLS coordinates Landcare events with volunteers on sites managed by local councils or NPWS in the Hawkesbury River, Pittwater, Brisbane Water and Central Coast area. These events involve undertaking environmental restoration activities on sites that can only be reached by boat. Activities include weed and litter removal.

4. Review of current GS LLS support of Landcare

This section details the mechanisms GS LLS has used to support Landcare in the region up to June 2015.

4.1. Funding

GS LLS has disseminated Catchment Action NSW funding to Landcare and environmental community groups via:

- natural resource management incentive funding programs,
- hosting regional events,
- providing insurance to groups.

The Australian Government's National Landcare Programme (NLP) requires a minimum of 20% of funding to be delivered to Landcare community based projects. GS LLS is committed to substantially exceeding this level, and expects to achieve approx. 45 % of project funding being delivered through Landcare projects for the current NLP funding round, 2015 to 2018.

GS LLS has also been successful in attracting other external funding for Landcare activities including funding through the Department of Primary Industries Landcare Support Package, and an Environmental Trust grant for the Floating Landcare initiative.

4.2. GS LLS Staff Support

One full time Regional Landcare Facilitator (RLF) based in Penrith is employed by GS LLS through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Programme and coordinates many of the regions Landcare support functions.

The role of the RLF is to engage with the landcare community to support them to achieve the NLP outcomes of increasing awareness, engagement and participation in sustainable land and natural resource management practices. This position provides a broad range of Landcare support including:

- Organising major regional Landcare events,
- Providing direct support to community based groups and networks on administration, funding applications, and the formation of new groups,
- Facilitating insurance for community based groups,

- Facilitating training workshops in Equine Landcare and other sustainable agricultural practices,
- Facilitating a range of training workshops for Landcare and Bushcare members and coordinators.

Additional general support is also provided to the Landcare community from GS LLS natural resource management, agricultural extension and biosecurity staff.

4.3. Current communication to networks and groups

GS LLS uses various means to inform the Landcare community about training events, funding availability, updates on what Landcare groups are achieving, and other initiatives. These currently include:

Landcare Latest – a monthly e-newsletter developed by the GS LLS Regional Landcare Facilitator. The distribution list has approximately 300 email addresses, and newsletter content focuses on items of interest for community-based autonomous groups.

Sydney Nature Carers Newsletter (SNaC) - a Yahoo Group of people who take an active interest in the natural environment within the Sydney Metropolitan region.

VolCoord - a yahoo group and bulletin board for members of the Volunteer Coordinators Network.

Direct emails – from the Regional Landcare Facilitator.

GS LLS also actively seeks and utilises opportunities to promote Landcare via print media, radio and television. GS LLS develops project stories and case studies for promotional use and provides project information to local Members of Parliament to encourage their attendance at project launches and community events.. GS LLS encourages and seeks to assist project partners and stakeholders in developing promotional material to publicise local Landcare initiatives.

4.4. Events for Landcare groups and Networks

Regional Landcare Forum

Regional Landcare Forums with volunteer award systems have been held by GS LLS and predecessor organisations either annually or biennially. GS LLS held a Forum in May 2015 and plans to hold these events annually. They have proven to be effective in promoting a regional identity, sharing knowledge, networking, generating good will and encouragement, and recognising the outstanding achievements of the volunteers on which Landcare relies.

Landcare training and information events

GS LLS and its predecessors have run significant numbers of training events to support Landcare volunteers, bushcare coordinators, farmers and other primary producers in the region. Over 90 events were run in the calendar year of 2015.

Source to Sea

GS LLS has had a key role in organising and promoting “Source to Sea”, a celebratory event of Landcare volunteer work on and along rivers in Sydney, held every two to three years.

4.5. Support for Networks

Throughout 2015 GS LLS has been assisting the Greater Sydney Landcare Network in the early stages of its development. GS LLS also chairs and organises the Sydney Volunteer Coordinators Network meetings, and has worked with CEN, HEN and Council Bushcare programs to fund community engagement and on-ground projects.

4.6. Interaction with Landcare Australia Ltd

GS LLS and its predecessors have collaborated with Landcare Australia Ltd. to attract and manage corporate funding and to organise Landcare activities with corporate groups. These usually generate a modest profit, strengthen collaboration with other partners, result in on-ground outcomes and raise awareness with new participants who may be encouraged to become volunteers or supporters through their positive experience.

4.7. Support for Local Landcare Coordinator Initiative

This 4 year program funded by the NSW Government includes funding for up to 60 part time (0.5 EFT) Local Landcare Coordinators in NSW. GS LLS has provided assistance to Landcare Networks and NSW Farmers Association to develop applications, and will be providing office accommodation, access to vehicles, computers etc for 3 Local Landcare Coordinators from early 2016. A coordinating group will also be established to provide integration and communication for the 5 Local Coordinators engaged under the program within the Greater Sydney region.

4.8. Interaction with Government agencies

GS LLS works to bring together key government agencies and the local Landcare community to collaborate on shared projects and local issues e.g. managing weeds on Roads and Maritime Services road verges adjacent to Landcare sites.

GS LLS also aims to link the local Landcare community with other related government programs such as the Department of Primary Industries Fishcare program and the Sydney Weed Committees' strategic weed management initiatives.

4.9. Interaction with Non-Government Organisations

GS LLS also collaborates with many non-government organisations to support Landcare in delivering outcomes. These include Greening Australia, Conservation Volunteers Australia, National Parks Association, OceanWatch Australia, Birds Australia, fishing clubs, Plant Societies, NSW Wildlife Information and Rescue Service (WIRES) and Sydney Wildlife. Some local branches of these organisations could also be viewed as Landcare groups.

5. Feedback from the local Landcare community

Regional surveys of the landcare community have been periodically undertaken in the region (through previous Catchment Management Authorities) since 2007. As a requirement under the National Landcare Programme, the Regional Landcare Facilitator is also required to deliver the new National Landcare Survey to gather regional Landcare information that feeds into an Australian-wide data set.

GS LLS has used the results of the National Landcare Survey (and previous regional surveys) to better understand the issues and constraints faced by groups within the region. Feedback on Landcare issues is also sought by GS LLS from Landcare groups in the course of delivering incentive projects and undertaking community consultation.

The following key points of feedback have been compiled from the 2014 National Landcare Survey results and stakeholder meetings in 2015 throughout the region:

- Support for Landcare groups and Networks by the Regional Landcare Facilitator is appreciated.
- There appears to be a trend of less volunteers committing to long term involvement in Landcare but an increase in people wanting to help out at one-off events.
- There are concerns that the transition from catchment management to the LLS model may shift priorities away from Landcare, weed control and bushland management.
- There are concerns that levels of government funding and other support for Landcare are being steadily lowered.
- There are concerns that the reduction of support staff in the GS LLS Parramatta office will reduce support to the VCN and local urban Landcare groups.
- The three biggest challenges for successful group functioning are primarily a “lack of community interest” and “lack of time from volunteers,” followed by “high volume of paperwork/administration”.

See Appendix three for an analysis of some of the 2014 National Landcare Survey results.

6. Resourcing constraints to supporting Landcare

Landcare is an important long term entity for achieving natural resource management and sustainable agriculture outcomes. As a community-based movement it is recognised that Landcare needs and deserves support, particularly in areas of governance, strategic planning, funding and meeting legislative requirements. In return, Landcare delivers major on-ground outcomes to improve the condition of natural assets, and positive social change in community understanding of the natural environment and the threats that can degrade it.

There are limitations to the ability of GS LLS to support all of the Landcare activity occurring in the Greater Sydney region.

GS LLS has limited resources and a broad scope of services it is expected to provide. Support for Landcare must therefore be focused on those areas of Landcare activity that contribute to outcomes within the areas of GS LLS core business.

GS LLS also operates in an environment of declining and uncertain funding from both NSW and Australian governments, and has an obligation to meet their investment preferences.

The reduction in staff resources for Landcare is a result of declining resources across all LLS program areas.

Accordingly, expectations about the role of GS LLS in supporting Landcare must be carefully managed. It is anticipated that GS LLS will need to continue to refine how it operates to get the best Landcare support outcomes in the region within its limited capacity. It is hoped that the strategic approach outlined in the following sections will help to achieve the vision outlined in Section 2.

7. GS LLS Landcare Strategy

7.1. Alignment with GS LLS Local Strategic Plan

To better focus its resource use GS LLS has undertaken a regional strategic planning process to clarify and define those services it must deliver, how this will be done, and the priority areas and assets for investment of resources.

The Greater Sydney Local Strategic Plan identifies six Strategic Objectives which guide how GS LLS works with partners, industry, state and local Government and the community to maintain and build increased productivity, economic growth, strong and healthy communities and a valued natural environment.

Nineteen Strategies have been identified to deliver on the six Objectives. For each Strategy a number of Key Actions have been identified to provide delivery mechanisms. GS LLS support for Landcare in the future will be focused on supporting delivery of these strategies to achieve the Strategic Objectives.

The significance of the Landcare community in Greater Sydney is demonstrated by Landcare being identified as playing a role in achieving five of the six Strategic Objectives, and in assisting in the delivering of eight of the nineteen Strategies. This alignment with the Local Strategic Plan is shown in the following table 2 detailing the specific Strategies and Key Actions that directly involve Landcare as a delivery partner.

Table 2 GS LLS Local Strategic Plan 2015-2020: Strategies and Key Actions directly involving Landcare as a delivery mechanism

GS LLS Strategic Objectives	Strategies & Key Actions
1. Reduce risks from animal and plant pests and diseases	<p>1.1 Improve management of key vertebrate pests to reduce impacts on agricultural, environmental and social assets</p> <p>1.1.3 Provide advice, training and pest control with landholders and groups</p> <p>1.1.4 Develop and support vertebrate pest management groups</p> <p>1.4 Improve management of pest plants to minimise impacts on agricultural and environmental assets</p> <p>1.4.2 Deliver investment in weed management</p>
2. Productive and sustainable agriculture	<p>2.3 Improve knowledge transfer and peer support for small area landholders to improve sustainability of resource use</p> <p>2.3.2 Support peri-urban Landcare/biosecurity groups and networks</p> <p>2.3.3 Development of a Small Farms network to support small scale enterprises</p>
3. Healthy harbours, rivers and waterways	<p>3.2 Improve the condition of urban waterways to enhance amenity value, ecosystem health and the quality of receiving waters</p> <p>3.2.2 Support capacity building initiatives for best practice urban waterway management.</p> <p>3.3 Improve the condition of Greater Sydney's harbours and estuaries to maximise recreational, commercial and environmental values</p> <p>3.3.1 Develop local government, agency and community partnership projects with incentive funding partnership projects with incentive funding</p>
4. Healthy native vegetation and habitats	<p>4.1 Increase the extent and connectivity of priority native vegetation to improve ecosystem health and resilience</p> <p>4.1.2 Establish partnerships with key land managers to support strategic rehabilitation projects</p> <p>4.1.3 Deliver strategic rehabilitation projects through partnership and incentive programs</p> <p>4.1.5 Support and promote Landcare programs which improve vegetation connectivity</p> <p>4.2 Protect and restore key biodiversity assets such as wetlands and rainforests to improve ecosystem health and resilience</p> <p>4.2.3 Establish partnership projects with key land managers to reduce threats or recover assets</p> <p>4.2.6 Support and promote Landcare programs which protect biodiversity assets</p>
5. Emergency Management	<p>5.1 Provide appropriate resources to enable delivery of effective Emergency Management to the community</p> <p>5.1.5 Educate ratepayers and community to facilitate preparedness, minimise animal welfare impacts and enhance recovery</p>
6. Service Delivery	<p>6.4 Engage customers and stakeholders in the delivery and improvement of LLS services</p> <p>6.4.4 Develop and implement a Landcare Strategy and Action Plan</p> <p>6.4.5 Activities which support Landcare</p>

7.2. GS LLS Landcare Strategy

GS LLS will continue to operate strategically in order to deliver support for Landcare effectively and efficiently. Principally, GS LLS will strengthen partnerships with existing networks as the most efficient way of supporting the large number of Landcare groups the region contains. GS LLS has identified three over-arching focus areas for Landcare support. These provide the high-level Strategic Objectives for this Landcare Strategy, as follows:

1 Support Landcare

Fundamental to supporting Landcare is supporting existing Landcare groups to undertake on-ground work. This includes making available funding for works, building capacity and assisting with governance and legislative requirements. The large number of groups in the Greater Sydney region means that GS LLS does not have the resources to work with each group individually. Therefore GS LLS will focus its resources on assisting Landcare networks and community-based autonomous groups.

2 Grow Landcare

The population size and footprint of environmental impacts in the Greater Sydney region is growing rapidly. This creates both the human capital and the need to increase Landcare activity. In addition the diversity of natural assets and land use in the region means there is scope for Landcare to expand into new aspects of sustainable agriculture and natural resource management activity. Greater Sydney is the international gateway to NSW and Australia, bringing with it a high level of biosecurity risk due to the movement of goods and people. GS LLS will help to grow existing groups and facilitate formation of new ones, and increase Landcare activity in the increasingly important areas of biosecurity and peri urban agricultural production.

3 Promote Landcare

As a community based movement using volunteer effort it is essential that Landcare achievements are promoted. Celebrating Landcare fosters volunteer engagement and informs the general public about the positive role that Landcare plays in managing issues. GS LLS will focus on hosting high profile regional events that celebrate and promote Landcare volunteers and their achievements, and will also promote Landcare to the general public through various forms of media.

Each of these Strategic Objectives has a number of Strategies to define how they will be delivered, and each Strategy has associated Key Actions for implementation by GS LLS over the next 5 years. These are shown in the following table.

Separate to this Landcare Strategy, specific Activities with time frames have been identified for implementation of the Key Actions. These are contained in the GS LLS Landcare Action Plan. This will remain an internal GS LLS working document due to the need for periodic review of the Activities for effectiveness, timing, and efficiency.

Table 3 GS LLS Landcare Strategic Objectives, Strategies and Key Actions

Landcare Strategic Objectives	Landcare Strategies & Key Actions
1. Support Landcare	<p>1.1 Facilitate support of Landcare to maximise efficient resource use</p> <p>1.1.1 Liaise with the Landcare community to identify areas of duplication of effort, gaps in support and resources needed to function effectively.</p> <p>1.1.2 Communicate in a timely and effective manner with the Landcare community.</p> <p>1.1.3 Facilitate communication between Landcare community and other government agencies.</p>
	<p>1.2 Increase the capacity of the Landcare community to achieve outcomes</p> <p>1.2.1 Increase the capacity of networks to manage projects.</p> <p>1.2.2 Assist Bushcare Coordinators to support their volunteers.</p> <p>1.2.3 Support the establishment of the Greater Sydney Landcare Network.</p> <p>1.2.4 Encourage Landcare groups and networks to connect with others for support.</p> <p>1.2.5 Facilitate training events for groups and networks.</p>
	<p>1.3 Deliver resources and funding to assist Landcare to achieve GS LLS Strategic Objectives.</p> <p>1.3.1 GS LLS-hosted Regional Landcare Facilitator to provide primary support for community-based autonomous Landcare groups.</p> <p>1.3.2 Establish a GS LLS Landcare coordinating group.</p> <p>1.3.3 Continue to initiate and implement GS LLS programs delivered by Landcare.</p> <p>1.3.4 Provide funding to Landcare consistent with available funding sources, GS LLS strategic priorities and investor preferences.</p>
2. Grow Landcare	<p>2.1 Expand Landcare by developing new areas of Landcare operations</p> <p>2.1.1 Develop a Small Farms Network to support small scale agricultural enterprises.</p> <p>2.1.2 Encourage existing Landcare groups and networks or establish new groups to address biosecurity and agricultural issues.</p> <p>2.1.3 Collaborate with non-government environmental organisations to expand their Landcare engagement and support.</p> <p>2.1.4 Assist formation of new Landcare groups and networks</p>
3. Promote Landcare	<p>3.1 Promote Landcare to increase its profile among the general public and raise community awareness of local assets and threats.</p> <p>3.1.1 Recognise and celebrate Landcare achievements.</p> <p>3.1.2 Maximise Landcare media and political engagement opportunities.</p> <p>3.1.3 Assist networks to raise the profile of Landcare and to increase community awareness of local assets and threats.</p>
	<p>3.2 Promote Landcare to facilitate recruitment of new volunteers</p> <p>3.2.1 Disseminate information about Landcare volunteering.</p> <p>3.2.2 Assist networks and other partners to attract new volunteers.</p>

7.3. Landcare Communications Plan

Developing a Landcare Communications Plan is identified as an activity (1.1.2b) in response to Key Action 1.1.2 “Communicate in a timely and effective manner with the Landcare community”. Many of the other actions and activities in this Plan also rely on purposeful and effective communications. An overarching Landcare Communications Plan needs to be developed to ensure communications are targeted, effective and resource-efficient. It may include the following communication mechanisms:

- Developing GS LLS community-focussed e-newsletters.
- Improving GS LLS website content, utility, and usage.
- Celebrating Landcare achievements and outcomes by developing good news stories and showcasing innovations and successes.
- Preparing a case study template for multiple uses.
- Developing new Landcare group “starter packages” and other relevant information packages for groups.
- Using Facebook and other social media options as applicable.

7.4. Landcare Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement Plan (MERI Plan)

Monitoring the progress and success of implementation of this Landcare Strategy, and adaptively managing Landcare activities based on feedback and evaluations is integral to achieve the Strategy’s objectives. The elements of a monitoring and evaluation plan are identified in the Key Actions of this Strategy, and their accompanying Activities in the Landcare Action Plan. These are summarised in the following table.

Table 4 Landcare Monitoring, Evaluation Reporting and Improvement Plan.

ACTION	FREQUENCY/TIMING	EXPECTED OUTCOME
Landcare Community survey	Annually, from April 2016	Data collection on membership and activities, identifying opportunities for improvement. Reporting back to Landcare community on results and GS LLS response (Activity 1.1.1 a.)
Analyse “lesson learnt” data from final reporting of projects involving Landcare community	As Final Reports are completed	Ongoing improvement of the design and delivery of future projects with Landcare groups (Activity 1.1.1.c)
Prepare an annual Landcare report card	Annually, in October	Summary Annual Report on the level of Landcare membership, activity and GS LLS support, for use in the GS LLS Annual Report, and distribution to stakeholders and the Landcare

ACTION	FREQUENCY/TIMING	EXPECTED OUTCOME
		community. (Activity 1.1.2.c)
Communication survey	February 2016	Survey recipients of current newsletters (e.g. SNAC, Landcare Latest) to determine preferences for content, frequency etc
Review of Landcare Action Plan	Annually	Re-alignment of Activities to be consistent with GS LLS and landcare community priorities, and for efficiency and effectiveness
Mid term review of Landcare Strategic Plan	2.5 years, in 2018	Update Plan for consistency with current Landcare priorities and GS LLS resources
Review Landcare Strategic Plan	5 years, in 2020	Re-alignment of Plan to be consistent with the new GS LLS Local Strategic Plan

This analysis will assist in monitoring Landcare community activity and identify constraints and areas of opportunity in order to adaptively manage the supporting activities of GS LLS to improve Landcare outcomes.

Appendix One: Profile of the Greater Sydney LLS region including key assets and threats

Population/community

With a population of some 4.4 million people in an area of 12,474 square kilometres, the Greater Sydney Local Land Services region is diverse, extending from densely urbanised cities and coastal waterways through to rural lands and extensive World Heritage wilderness areas.

Cultural heritage

More than 30 per cent of the regions population speak a language other than English. The region contains important Aboriginal Cultural Heritage sites as well as European historical sites dating from the earliest European settlement of Australia.

Economy

Sydney is the capital city of NSW. Major industries in the region include finance, business, extractive and manufacturing industries, property development, agriculture, commercial fishing, tourism and recreation. The large urban population places significant pressure on natural resources, and there is an ongoing tension between competing land uses for urban growth, the natural environment and agriculture.

Although it covers just 1.5 per cent of the land area of NSW, the Greater Sydney region accounts for seven per cent of the State's agricultural production by value. Primary industries include high value intensive enterprises such as market gardens, poultry and mushrooms. Preservation of agricultural land in close proximity to the urban market is an important consideration for the region. The region also supports commercial aquaculture (oyster growing and prawn trawl) and recreational fishing.

Tourism is a vital part of the economy and is focussed on natural environment attractions including Sydney Harbour, ocean beaches and the Blue Mountains.

Landscape types

The GS LLS region consists of a central shale/clay basin surrounded by elevated sandstone plateaus and escarpments.

The basin is drained by the Hawkesbury–Nepean River as well as the Parramatta, Georges, Cooks and Wyong Rivers. These rivers meet the coast in a series of drowned river valleys, lakes and wetlands that comprise some 100 kilometres of harbours, lakes and estuaries including Port Jackson, Tuggerah Lake, Brisbane Waters, Pittwater, Narrabeen Lagoon, Port Hacking and the Ramsar-listed Towra Point wetlands.

Vegetation

With 80 national parks and seven state forests, almost 70 per cent of the region is covered by contains native vegetation. These reserves focuss on the forests of the elevated sandstone plateau.

The western escarpment of the Blue Mountains is dominated by over one million hectares of World Heritage and Wilderness listed National Parks. Many pockets within the World Heritage Area are pristine, with little to no impact from European settlement, providing a sanctuary for native wildlife and plants. The sandstone plateau to the north and south of the Sydney basin also include large reserved areas including the Royal and Ku-ring-gai Chase National Parks. By contrast the woodland communities of the clay basin (the Cumberland Plain) have been heavily cleared for urban development and agriculture, and very little of the remaining vegetation is protected.

The forests, woodlands and wetlands of the Greater Sydney region are significant assets. In addition to their environmental, social and recreational value, these areas also form part of the catchment that provides drinking water to over 4 million people.

Threatened species

Despite its large areas of National Park the region includes some of the most critically endangered wildlife, plants and ecological communities in NSW.

The extensive forests of the sandstone plateau include at least seven threatened ecological communities, 32 threatened animals and 100 threatened plant species. By comparison, the small shale basin containing the Cumberland Plain woodlands and the estuaries include the disproportionately large numbers of 25 threatened ecological communities, 30 threatened plant species, 38 terrestrial threatened animals, 15 threatened aquatic animals and 27 threatened seabirds. The region also boasts many species of threatened and protected migratory birds.

Key threats to threatened species include weeds, feral animals, disease, inappropriate recreational use, climate change, land clearing, underscrubbing, removal of old & dead trees, firewood collection, herbicide and fertiliser use, noise, light and air pollution, urban heat effect, and stormwater pollution. Aquatic areas including estuaries are further impacted by inappropriate recreational and commercial fishing, stormwater pollution and sewage disposal.

Pest species

The combination of urban areas, intensive agriculture, and poorly managed agricultural land awaiting development results in serious pest issues for the region.

Major agricultural pest animals include pigs, wild dogs and foxes. Amongst numerous agricultural pest plants some key problems include Serrated Tussock, Chilean Needle Grass, African Olive, Lantana, Blackberry and Fireweed.

Major environmental pest animals include fox, cats, deer, pigs, goats, rabbits, and the black rat. Amongst numerous pest plant species key problems include African Olive, small- and large-leaved Privet, various willow species, Gleditsia, Lantana, Blackberry, and exotic vines.

Pest animal species have a particularly big impact in urban and agricultural lands adjacent to extensive natural areas, while pest plants proliferate on the high fertility lands of the Cumberland Plain, river banks and floodplains, and in urban bushland. The World Heritage listed natural areas of the Blue Mountains are greatly affected by being bisected by urban areas and roads along the two major transport corridors of the Great Western Highway and

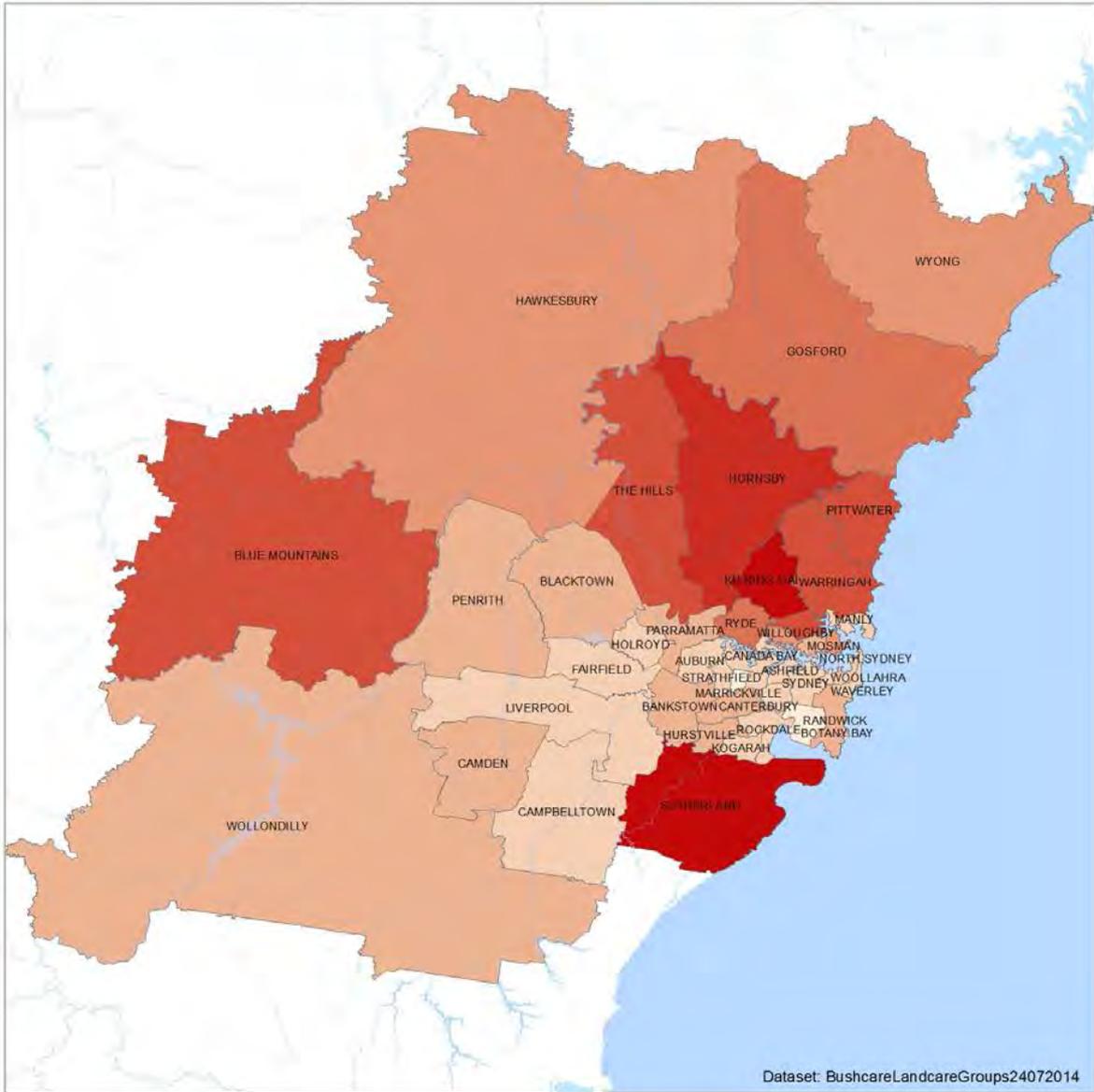
Bells Line of Road. As a capital city and major port Sydney faces significant biosecurity risks. The introduction of new pest species is a particular problem at major transport infrastructure nodes such as Botany Bay and Towra Point.

Appendix Two: Map of density of Council-supported Bushcare groups per Local Government Area in Greater Sydney



Local Land Services
Greater Sydney

Map of density of Council Landcare groups per LGA



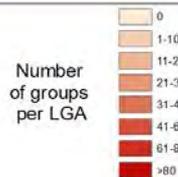
Disclaimer:
Data has been extracted from digitized field information. The State of NSW and Greater Sydney Local Land Services and its employees, officers, agents or servants accepts no responsibility for the result of any actions taken or the decisions made on the basis of the information, or for any errors, omissions or inaccuracies contained in this map.

Sources:
Map created by Greater Sydney LLS. Base topographic data supplied by the © NSW Department of Finances and Services. Reference data © NSW Office of Environment and Heritage.

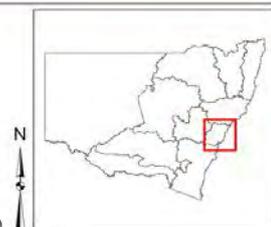
Projection: Geographic Coordinate System
Datum: Geocentric Datum of Australia 1994
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Legend

- Rivers
- Water features (dams, lakes, estuaries, ocean)

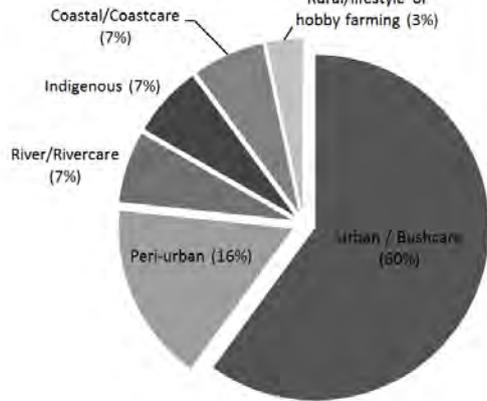


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Date Prepared: June 2015
Contact Number: (02) 4725 3050

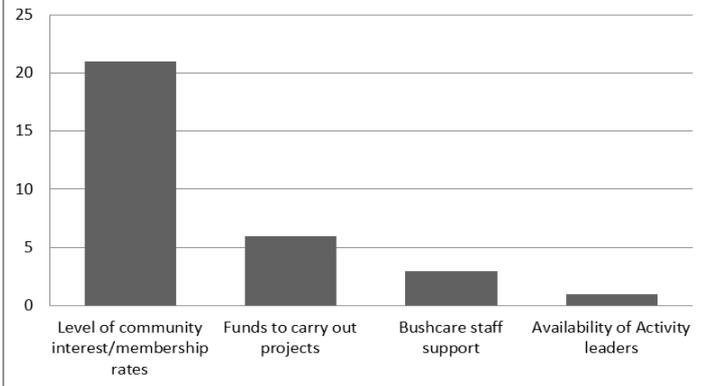


Appendix Three: National Landcare Survey 2014 Analysis - Greater Sydney Region

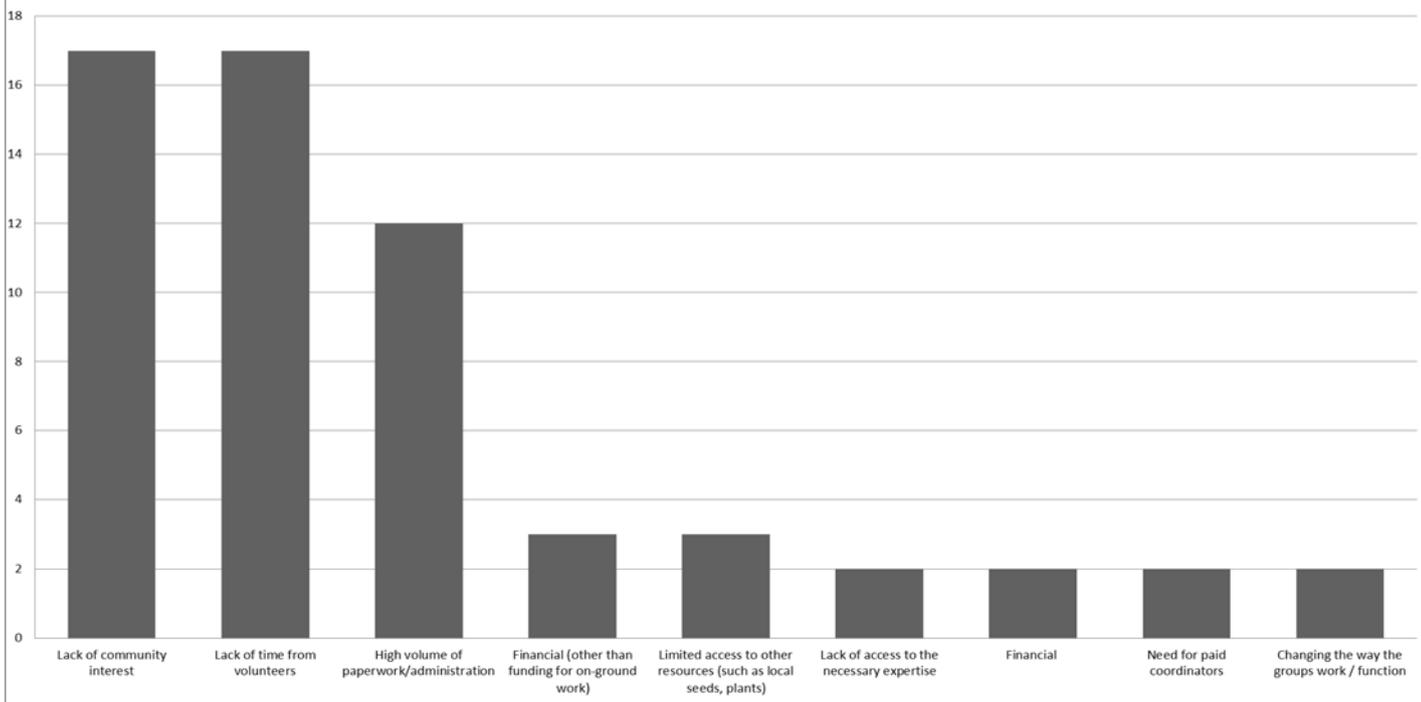
1.4 How would you best describe the focus of your group's activities?



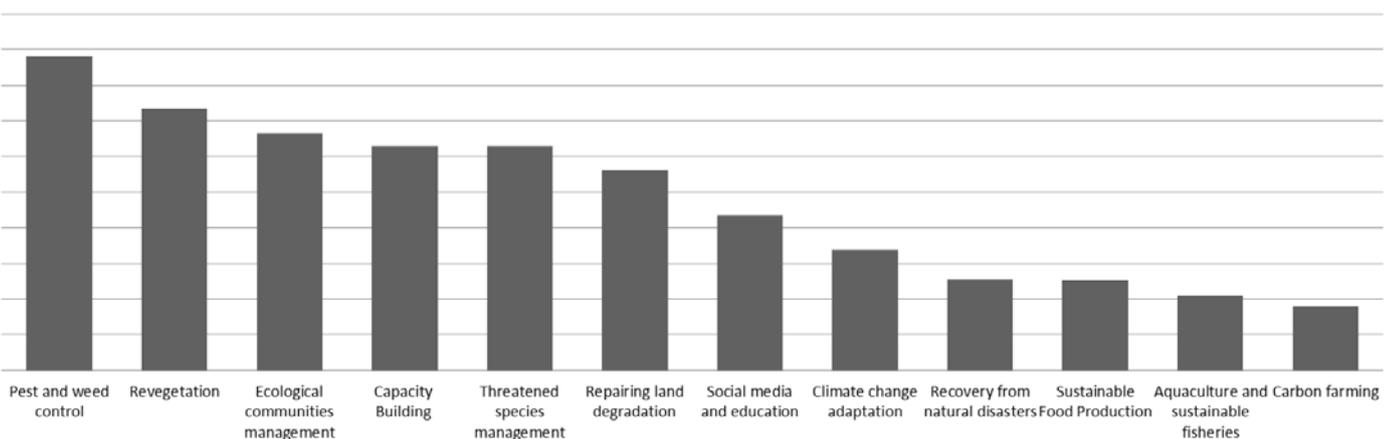
2.2 What is the most influential factor on whether your group will be active in the next two years?



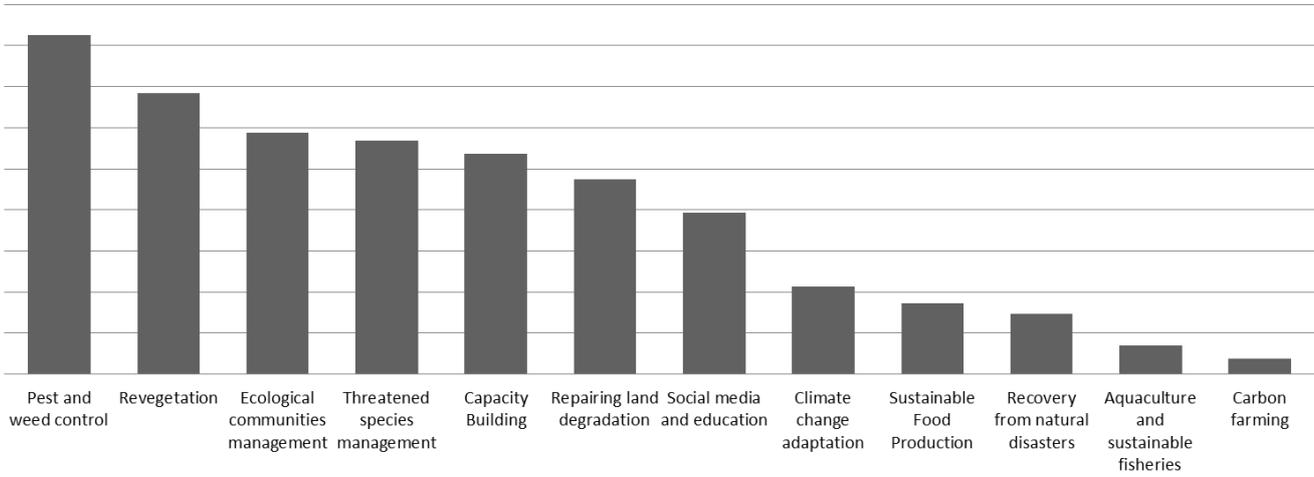
2.4 What are the three biggest challenges facing your group's successful functioning?



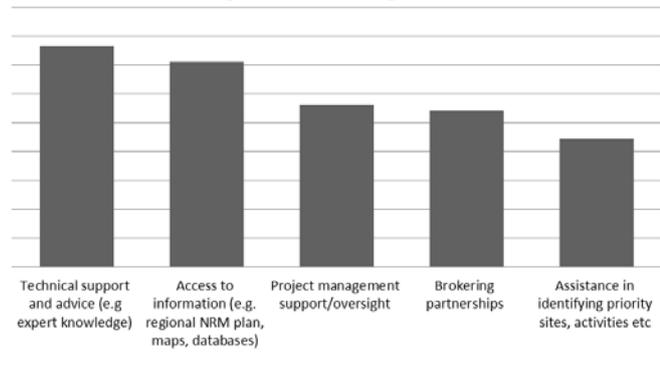
4.1 What are the priority issues your group focuses on?



4.3 What are the priority issues that your group would like to focus on in the next 4 years?



5.4 Non-financial support you've received from this regional NRM organisation



5.6 What form(s) of non-financial support are not currently available from your regional NRM organisation that would help your group with its Landcare activities?

Access to training workshops in website development and maintenance would be handy for small community groups such as ours.	Volunteer capacity remains as the greatest threat to the groups viability. LLS staff have provided some important ideas and assistance. Together we need to come up with some new ideas to improve existing and future volunteer capacity.	The focus of LLS has been pushed away from urban areas. Setting up the Greater Sydney Landcare Network should help fill this gap to build support for bushcare and landcare groups in the urban areas.	Hard to answer: GSLLS is new to our area, and replaced a very supportive organisation with many interested and committed experts. The support in nurturing a group and maintaining its momentum is now not as evident while this transition is taking place. Developmental support eg capacity-building workshops; working up integrated programs; might be 2 areas of need...how would we know what is NOT currently available?	help with site management plans	Applied research (e.g. bush-friendly approaches to controlling particular urban escapee plants that can over run bush care sites).
Networking and publicity	Assistance in attracting volunteers and retention of volunteers	Information on biological control	Mobile app to collect project data on tasks completed and volunteer and community investment and map the data, send the data to all agencies who could use the data to plan their activities and use it to replace the interim and final reports for all grants	Guide to resources available	Not sure - training workshops, guest speakers to public joint events