

## **MURRAY LOCAL COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP (LCAG)**

A committee of the Murray Local Land Services Board.

### **Report to the Murray LLS Board – November 2016**

#### **LCAG members**

Tony Piggin (Chairperson, Corowa)  
Eric Lavis (Bungowannah)  
Colin Bull (Deniliquin)  
Neil Bull (Deniliquin)  
Helen Collins (Barham)  
Felicity Middleton (Mannus) apology  
Allan Curtis (Albury) apology  
Rick Ellis (Barham) apology  
Rob Fenton (Albury) apology  
Malcolm Holm (Finley) apology  
Phil Snowden (Tocumwal) apology  
Dale Stringer (Holbrook) apology

#### **MEETING 8 – 9 November 2016**

The Murray LCAG held its eighth meeting on the 9 November 2016 in Tocumwal NSW. In addition to members listed above the following people were in attendance at the meeting:

**MLLS:** Chris Cumming, Matt O'Connell, Andrew Cooper, Angelina Moore-Tabuteau, Terry Gorman

#### **LCAG Administration**

Three further members have offered their resignation to Tony Piggin. Rob Fenton and Allan Curtis have cited poor attendance and relevance. Dale Stringer has suggested that it is more appropriate if a committee member from Holbrook Landcare participates on behalf of the organisation.

#### **Community Engagement Model**

LLS has been reviewing its community engagement model assisted by the Murray LCAG. The LCAG has reviewed its operation as part of that review and to inform advice on its Term of Reference

The Murray LCAG explored a community consultation framework based on a sub-regional model and/or a theme-based model. LCAG discussed the benefits and challenges associated with both models and made a series of recommendations as follows

### **1. Geographical consultation**

**Proposal – 1-2 meetings a year in sub regional areas with key LLS staff from each functional area and key stakeholders**

#### **LCAG comments**

- Coordination between stakeholders important
- Providing a clear timeline for discussion and planning for the region would reduce call on groups to approach a range of LLS contacts to put forward ideas
- Standard template for issues to be discussed including – eg planned events and projects, emerging issues, possible partnership bids, prioritisation for funding, feedback/satisfaction, available expertise and skills
- LCAG members from that area should be present – potentially they could be responsible for coordinating meetings or key groups in each area would coordinate. LCAG members would check invitation lists.
- Would include future scanning and issue scanning
- Groups would have done the direct consultation with the land managers and be prepared for discussions

- Individual landholders could be invited but not really role of LLS to be interface when groups are there and landcare coordinators also servicing the area.
- Could potentially combine a number of SES areas
- This model was seen to create administrative efficiencies, assist devolving of decision making, issues scanning and would allow community to be comfortable with how and why LLS are investing.
- Meeting timing should reflect community availability and feed into key planning cycles for **groups** and LLS
- LALCs would be invited to feed into this model

## 2. Functional Consultation

### LCAG Comments

- Not possible in 4 meetings for LCAG to be across every functional area and provide the in depth advice required
- Agree no one size fits all
- Model needs to be flexible to ensure appropriate experience and advice received
- LCAG members with functional expertise may participate in functional advisory groups

## 3. Role of LCAG

### LCAG Comments

- Saw the need for a forum for inter-regionally information exchange between LLS and community.
- LCAG members would champion meetings and possibly coordinate
- LCAG members could prioritise issues of regional importance vs local
- Review the success of the model
- Available for emerging issues such as reviews
- Support regional planning
- Support regional processes eg community grants
- Should remain at a strategic level for discussions
- Review customer and stakeholder satisfaction
- Review communications

## 4. Other

- Existing area mechanisms need to reflect the new model not duplicate
- Specific projects may still need steering committees- this is operational management of a project rather than community consultation

### **Aboriginal Services – Presentation**

Angelina Moore-Tabuteau presented to the LCAG on the Aboriginal community in the Murray region, she described the diversity, the issues facing the community and the opportunities for LCAG to engage with those issues. Angelina canvassed a project concept associated with engaging young Aboriginal people in the agricultural industry. LCAG supported the idea of providing training and skills development as pathways for employment. LCAG discussed their interest in having an Aboriginal representation on the LCAG.

### **LLS Customer Satisfaction Survey - Presentation**

LCAG were presented an overview of the results of the LLS Customer satisfaction survey. LCAG provided comment on suggested improvement actions. LCAG also discussed that there are some individuals that will always complain. LCAG comments have been collected and will be fed into the improvement suggestions being gathered

## **Murray LLS Board update**

Terry Gorman provided board feedback to LCAG. The main points include:

- Cost of LCAGs statewide is prohibitive and the Board is keen to establish a better community consultation model that is more effective in our region. Noted that Murray region has close to 70 groups that we are trying to engage/consult with, so difficult for Board to represent entire region without an LCAG.
- Long-term contracts for projects have been approved to 17/18.
- LLS operations have been interrupted due to flood efforts
- Board supported the bid to host 2017 NSW Landcare conference with some concern over staff time and cost overruns.

Gary Rodda provided some information regarding LLS flood response in the region:

- MLLS staff are providing advice and delivering flood recovery sessions associated with pasture, crop and stock management
- There will be a mail-out to all ratepayers seeking recovery info.

## **LCAG Members Reports**

Members provided reports prior to the meeting. The members report offers LCAG members a chance to raise key concerns, common issues and emerging trends in the region so that they might be addressed at LCAG meetings.

### **MEMBER REPORT HIGHLIGHTS**

- MLA Southern NSW Regional Committee met in September. This committee provides input into the MLA Southern Australia Meat Research Council on how producer levies should be spent on R&D activities. More info at : <http://www.mla.com.au/globalassets/mla-corporate/generic/about-mla/samrc-plan-2016-april-release.pdf>
- Sheep CRC developing a Ram Select app.
- Successful Beef Meet Group in Deniliquin
- Bitterns in Rice Presentation at the International Heron Congress in North Carolina

### **UPCOMING EVENTS**

- Nutrient Management program soil testing underway and workshops in Nov
- Feed Testing program continues
- Prograze nearing completion for 2016
- Gerogery Beef Group
- Discussion group (various ag related topics)
- GRDC Subsoil acidity trails
- MLA/AWI Influencing Lamb Sex Ratios farm trials
- RLF and LLCI activities. LLCI supporting Culcairn LC, West Hume LC, Mountain LC and working with Eastern Riverina LC groups in conjunction with LLC based in Wagga.
- Final Bushlinks projects planted after 4 years of activity
- THE RGA ECP is working on a plan to deliver Irrigation farm business training combined with NRM information and agronomy to groups. The business training component could be part funded by Rural Assistance authority funds.

LCAG would like to see Murray LLS proactive with issues associated with very wet year:

- Lameness in sheep
- Waterlogging making paddocks hard to access for spraying etc
- Crop loss due to waterlogging
- Silage making almost a write off due to poor paddock access and drying conditions.
- Hay making delayed and quality will likely be impacted if pastures/crops go past their peak before they can be cut and baled.
- Flood Recovery. Perhaps LLS agronomy staff assist ratepayers with information post flood for pastures /crops

## Recommendation/Comment/ Advice

### Consultation Models: Recommendation

Board to consider LCAG recommendations on consultation model as detailed in the communicate.

### Customer Satisfaction Surveys: Recommendations:

- Improve use of technology, link community with latest R&D.
- track interactions to assess LLS response time
- Main ways to drive change are to focus on building culture of care and service the rest will follow Provide one point of contact to ensure enquiries get to the right staff member first time.
- Be transparent on the performance standards of LLS.
- Improve staff retention and job-security – Happy workplace and staff drive good culture Encourage feedback from customers/management on performance/accountability.
- Improve staff accessibility.
- Communications need to be relevant to the audience.
- Research complaint topics and response. Analyze trends in complaints