



MURRUMBIDGEE
Landcare
INCORPORATED

Murrumbidgee Landcare Incorporated Report:

Landcare communications assessment and support.

(Second milestone report)

Prepared by:

Alan P Cole, B.Sc. (For), MBA, R.P.F.

Landcare Support Officer

Murrumbidgee Landcare Incorporated (MLi)

P.O. Box 710

Wagga Wagga NSW 2650

Email: alancole@murrumbidgeelandcare.asn.au

Telephone: 0447 630 922

The Landcare Support Officer project is funded by Murrumbidgee CMA (MCMA) from their Community Partnerships program



Catchment Management
Authority
Murrumbidgee

Contents

Introduction	3
Landcare Support Officer	3
Mr Alan P Cole; B.Sc. (For), MBA, RPF	3
Scope of this Report	4
Limitations	4
Methodology	4
Results	4
Current Needs	4
Current Interests	7
Communication Strategies in Place	9
Communication Strategy Opportunities	9
Discussion	10
Current Needs	10
Current Interests	12
Conclusion	13
Recommendations	14
Signatures	16

Introduction

In early 2013, Murrumbidgee Catchment Management Authority (MCMA) allocated a Community Partnership Grant to Murrumbidgee Landcare Incorporated (MLi) to engage a part time Landcare Support Officer (LSO) to work with Landcare groups in the Murrumbidgee Catchment. The role of the LSO is to assess the status of Landcare groups in the catchment; establish current constraints, needs and interests; enhance communication strategies between groups and to the public; develop project ideas; and seek future funding and partnership opportunities.

The project and this report has been prepared during the regional integration of services offered to landholders in NSW, involving the CMAs (natural resource management, NRM), the agricultural advisory services of the Department of Primary Industry (DPI) and the Livestock Health and Pest Authorities (LPHA). The new regional rural services organisation will be called Local Land Services (LLS), and it will begin operations on 1 January 2014.

This report "*Landcare communications assessment and support*" is the second of eight Milestones to be delivered during the Project.

Landcare Support Officer

Mr Alan P Cole; B.Sc. (For), MBA, RPF.

In April 2013 Alan took on the part time role of Landcare Support Officer with Murrumbidgee Landcare Incorporated. This role supplements his independent consulting forestry service, trading as Acacia Forestry Services.

Alan has had an extensive career in environmental management and as a consulting forester. He was the Forest Manager for the Midway Afforestation Investment Service Pty Ltd group of companies from 1987 to 2003 and was directly responsible for the establishment and maintenance of over 6,500 hectares of hardwood and softwood plantation in south west Victoria.

In 2003 Alan joined GHD Pty Ltd.'s Canberra office as a consulting forester and Health Safety and Environmental Coordinator. He completed numerous major consultancy projects including being Job Manager for GHD's role as the Independent Forester for the Great Southern group of companies. More recently he was a job manager and field team leader for a number of forestry due diligence assessments including the successful acquisition by Global Forest Partners of the Timbercorp Ltd and Willmott plantation estates.

Since returning to Canberra in 2003, Alan has completed his Master in Business Administration (MBA) degree, and has conducted numerous project reviews including reviewing Greening Australia's Gondwana Link Project. He was the Independent Forester for Eraring Energy's investments in Mallee plantings for carbon sequestration in southern NSW, and has conducted environmental auditing of the Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environments and VicForests operational harvest planning.

Alan has a small farm at Bowning in NSW and has entered into a number of Landcare projects with the Murrumbidgee CMA and Greening Australia. He is a member of the Yass Landcare Group.

Scope of this Report

The scope of this report is "*Landcare communications assessment and support*".

"Contact Landcare groups and networks to identify current needs and interests and review communication strategies they have in place or could utilise to support their goals".

Limitations

The services provided by Murrumbidgee Landcare Incorporated in connection with preparing this Report were limited to those specifically detailed in the scope outlined in this Report.

The opinions, conclusions and any recommendations in this Report are based on conditions encountered and information reviewed at the time of preparation.

Methodology

For the purposes of this report *Landcare groups and networks* have been restricted to the Murrumbidgee Landcare Incorporated area of influence, this "catchment" is defined as the published catchment of the Murrumbidgee Catchment Management Authority with the addition of the Australian Capital Territory; the new LLS Riverina Area has not been applied.

As reported in Milestone Report 1 *Map the Landcare Groups (past, present and potential) in the catchment* there are 15 networks listed on the MLI website, of these 11 were considered Active, 1 was considered Inactive and 3 were considered Closed.

A Closed area network does not necessarily mean that there is no Landcare activity within the network area as active individual Landcare groups or alternate organisations engaged in Landcare type activities may still be operational within the boundaries of a Closed area network.

A subsample of both networks and groups was contacted during the preparation of this report to establish at first hand the needs and activities of the Landcare movement across the catchment. Information was sourced from telephone discussions, meeting attendances, one on one interviews with stakeholders and by reference to information collected since the commencement of the LSO project.

Results

Current Needs

The following table outlines the current needs identified in discussion with Landcare stakeholders across the catchment. A number of groups within the sample identified the same or similar needs. Groups raising a "need" have been noted under the column "Reference Networks/Groups".

The following list has been "ranked" by the author into priorities identified by the networks and groups.

Table 1 Current Needs Identified

Identified Need	Explanation	Reference Network/Groups
Project Funding	<p>The “Reason for Being” for most Landcare groups and networks is to conduct projects that restore and improve the environment. Funding for this type of project is difficult to obtain, and reliant on professionally drafted funding proposals. Funding sources such as Caring for our Country are highly competitive, and small Landcare groups without the assistance of professional support are poorly represented in the listings of successful applications.</p> <p>Some funded projects are typically “demonstration” projects, and there is a critical lack of community funding to roll these projects out across the broader rural landscape.</p>	<p>Bowning and Bookham Districts Landcare Group; Tarcutta Valley Landcare; Sutton Landcare Group; Hay Balranald Landcare Groups; Yass Landcare Group; Yass Area Network; Kyeamba Valley Landcare Group.</p>
Professional Landcare Support	<p>Additional resources such as Natural Resource Officers (CMA model) and Regional Landcare Facilitators (MLi model) to assist in organising and administering projects, field days, funding applications and other activities. Some groups seek a part time dedicated facilitator.</p> <p>A co-ordinated approach from support organisations is needed.</p> <p>Environmental Centres for pooled resources for such as proposal writing, media management and newsletters has also been suggested.</p>	<p>Riverina Highlands Landcare Network; Yass Area Network; Molonglo Catchment Group; Tarcutta Valley Landcare; Murrumbateman Landcare; Upper Murrumbidgee Landcare Committee.</p>
Start-up and Administration Funds	<p>Whilst some of the more established networks and groups are the beneficiaries of historic funding consolidation and are financially self-sufficient, new groups and the smaller less established groups and sub-groups have insufficient funds generated by annual subscriptions to finance annual cost obligations such</p>	<p>Bowning and Bookham Districts Landcare Group; Sutton Landcare Group; Queanbeyan Landcare.</p>

	as public liability insurance.	
Membership Rejuvenation and the re-establishment of community networks.	The current membership of many groups are reluctant to take on office positions such as the Chair. Membership rejuvenation within an aging rural population is critical to sustain a dynamic level of activity and viable community networks.	Tarcutta Valley Landcare; Sutton Landcare Group; Kyeamba Valley Landcare Group.
Project Review and Finalisation Assistance	Some groups have unfinished projects that volunteer members are struggling to either complete, review collected data and/or report.	Hay Balranald Landcare Groups; Junee Area Network; Tarcutta Valley Landcare.
Travelling Stock Routes and Crown Land Reserve Management	Community interests in crown land parcels include biodiversity restoration and management; weed control and pest control and heritage values. Responsible Entities are unresponsive to a community interest in management activities. Suggest a whole new approach by Government to facilitate and sponsor community engagement and activity from management planning to project implementation.	Hay Balranald Landcare Groups; Sutton Landcare Groups; Bowning and Bookham Landcare Districts.
Native Seed Collection and Instruction	Promotion and instruction of native seed collection methodologies, species fruiting calendar, and available seed sources across the catchment.	Hay Balranald Landcare Groups; Bowning and Bookham Landcare Group.
Websites	Group stand-alone Website to list and promote activities.	Queanbeyan Landcare.
Community Newsletters	Dedicated Landcare newsletter relevant to local and regional issues, professionally written.	Upper Murrumbidgee Landcare Committee.
Simplified Project Reporting	Simplified reporting process for funded projects.	Tarcutta Landcare Network.
Small Grants for Urgent Works	Small grants to achieve urgent environmental priorities (such as urgent weed control); with minimal administrative burdens.	Queanbeyan Landcare Group.

Current Interests

The following table of “current interests” is extensive and representative of the broad based approach to Landcare taken by the majority of the networks and groups within the catchment. The list is intended as a summary of current interests and not a documentation of every interest practiced by Landcare groups across the catchment.

This list has not attempted to rank these interests into dominant levels of activity.

Table 2 Current Interests Identified

Current Interests	Explanation	Reference Network/Groups
River Restoration	Re-vegetation, bank stabilisation and erosion control following successive flood events over the previous few years. Rubbish removal, water monitoring.	Tarcutta Valley Landcare; Queanbeyan Landcare; Yass Area Network; Yass Landcare Group; Molonglo Catchment Group; Kyeamba Valley Landcare Group.
Carbon Sequestration baseline studies	Establishing carbon baselines on reserve systems to demonstrate carbon potential to rural landholders.	Hay Balranald Landcare Groups.
Weed Control	Locally and nationally significant weeds such as Boxthorn, Blackberry, St John’s Wort. Biological control programmes. Atlas of Living Australia	Hay Balranald Landcare Groups; Queanbeyan Landcare; Molonglo Catchment Group; Tarcutta Valley Landcare; Murrumbateman Landcare Upper Murrumbidgee Landcare Committee.
Travelling Stock Routes and Crown Land Reserve Management	Interests include biodiversity management, weed control, pest control, and sponsorship by Responsible Entity for Landcare activities.	Hay Balranald Landcare Groups; Junee Area Network; Sutton Landcare Group; Bowning and Bookham Districts Landcare Group.
Rabbit and other Pest Control	Mapping of hotspots and funding for co-ordinated control programmes.	Hay Balranald Landcare Groups; Molonglo Catchment Group; Murrumbateman Landcare.
Grazing Management Techniques and Applications	Information provision on grazing options and their implications for the environment and livestock production, health and wellbeing.	Hay Balranald Landcare Groups; Kyeamba Valley Landcare Group; Riverina Highlands Area Network; Sutton Landcare Group.
LSS Future Activities	Future of current Natural Resource Officers, support for locally significant projects	Hay Balranald Landcare Groups; Riverina Highlands Area Network; Upper Murrumbidgee

		Landcare Committee.
History Documentation	Documentation of history from traditional and heritage land management (both oral and recorded).	Hay Balranald Landcare Groups; Wagga Urban Landcare Group.
Cross Property Projects	Linking existing projects, farms, remnant vegetation across the landscape.	Riverina Highlands Area Network; Molonglo Catchment Group; Murrumbateman Landcare; Upper Murrumbidgee Landcare Committee; Kyeamba Valley Landcare Group; Tarcutta Valley Landcare group; Juneee Area Landcare Network..
Landcare Nurseries	Source of native vegetative material for project work.	Riverina Highlands Area Network; Murrumbateman Landcare Group; Yass Landcare Group.
Education and Training Opportunities	Workshops, field days and dinners covering a wide range of topics to provide information, social intercourse and community cohesiveness.	Riverina Highlands Area Network; Kyeamba Valley Landcare Group.
Biodiversity Conservation and Monitoring	Wetland conservation, platypus monitoring, water watch, Frogwatch, Water Rat Counting, Lizard surveys, Grassy Box Woodlands, Glossy Black-Cockatoo.	Hay Balranald Landcare Groups; Queanbeyan Landcare; Upper Murrumbidgee Landcare Committee.
Tree Planting	Trees on Hay Plains, urban tree planting, National tree day, Yass River Restoration.	Hay Balranald Landcare Groups; Queanbeyan Landcare; Yass Landcare Group; Yass Area Network; Bowning and Bookham Districts Landcare Group; Murrumbateman Landcare.
National Days	National Tree Day, Clean Up Australia Day,	Queanbeyan Landcare.
Public Engagement	Outdoor Classrooms, school engagement, indigenous land management and land claims; Field Days; Catchment Strategy Planning.	Queanbeyan Landcare; Yass Landcare Group; Murrumbateman Landcare Group; Yass Area Network; Molonglo Catchment Group.
Sustainable Futures (Agriculture & Urban Development)	Sustainable agricultural practices. Commodity pricing. Sustainable urban developments.	Molonglo Catchment Group; Tarcutta Valley Landcare; Murrumbateman Landcare; Upper Murrumbidgee Landcare Committee.

Public Art	Murals and art competitions depicting Landcare in an Australian landscape.	Queanbeyan Landcare; Kyeamba Valley Landcare Group.
Climate Change	Monitoring the affects and implications of climate change and strategies to reduce its impact.	Molonglo Catchment Group.

Communication Strategies in Place

Communication strategies are highly varied across the catchment's networks and groups. Whilst some groups have embraced information technology others prefer a more traditional approach such as a locally produced public newsletter. This varied approach may be reflective of the differing demographics across the catchment, with some of the approaches adopted by the semi-urban groups contrasting to the approaches taken by the traditional rural based networks and groups.

The following list outlines current communications strategies applied by Landcare Networks and Groups:

- Local Newsletters;
- E-newsletters;
- Emails;
- Dedicated Websites;
- Sponsored Websites;
- Telephone;
- Rural Press;
- Activity Calendar
- Posters and public notices;
- Radio Landcare (ACT and upper catchment)

Note: Landcare organisations in other catchments also use e-media applications such as "You Tube", "Facebook" and "Twitter", the adoption of these applications has been limited within the Murrumbidgee catchment.

Communication Strategy Opportunities

Whilst a catchment wide communication strategy may not be appropriate due to the differing approaches and cultures of individual Landcare networks and groups, opportunities do exist to facilitate networks and groups to fulfil their current communication needs and strategies.

The two main opportunities or needs identified by this report are:

1. Dedicated local Landcare paper based newsletters;
2. Individual Website development.

Financial support for a dedicated local Landcare newsletter would greatly assist a number of Landcare Networks across the catchment. The intent of these newsletters is to inform the general local community, (not just the Landcare membership) of current issues facing the community and available activities. These newsletters have the potential to facilitate a spirit of community, promote Landcare membership as well as being important sources of

information. To be successful they need to be professionally written and presented to differentiate them from the proliferation of other forms of printed material. It has been suggested that a pooled journalistic resource could be utilised across the catchment.

The Queanbeyan Landcare Group are interested in developing their own individual group website, they currently have links to the MLI and Molonglo Catchment Group websites. At least one other Landcare Group (Sutton) already has a dedicated website as a consequence of the efforts and interests of individual members.

Discussion

Current Needs

The dominant need identified by this report is for Project Funding.

Projects are the “Reason for Being” for most Landcare groups, and the failure of groups to source project funding is likely to be a major contributor to the disappearance of Landcare from the rural landscape.

Funding for environmental projects is difficult to obtain, and is becoming increasingly reliant on professionally drafted funding proposals. Funding sources such as Caring for our Country are highly competitive, and small Landcare groups without the assistance of professional support are poorly represented in the listings of successful applications.

A number of Landcare Groups do have a solid track record of sourcing project funding. Groups such as Queanbeyan, Murrumbateman, Harden and the Riverina Highlands have succeeded in sourcing major project funding. These groups have utilised the resources of CMA staff, partnerships with other NGO’s or natural resource management professionals within their own membership to facilitate this success. Groups without these opportunities have been less successful.

Some funded projects are typically “demonstration or pilot” projects, and there is a critical lack of community funding to roll these demonstration and pilot projects out across the broader rural landscape.

It is not surprising therefore that professional Landcare support has been identified as the second most important need for Landcare in the catchment.

Landcare Groups have identified that one of their major needs is for additional human resources such as Natural Resource Officers (CMA model) and/or Regional Landcare Facilitators (MLi model) to assist in organising and administering projects, field days, funding applications and other activities. A number of groups such as Murrumbateman and the Yass Area Network have articulated their desire to share a dedicated part time facilitator.

Where professional Landcare facilitators are resourced their efforts need to be coordinated to avoid overlap and duplication with other organisations. One suggestion was for a pooled Environmental Centre where groups could access resources such as proposal writing, media management and newsletters.

A reinvigoration of Landcare across the catchment is unlikely to occur without a mechanism to provide “seed” funding for new, small or resurrected groups. Whilst the more established

networks and groups are the beneficiaries of historic funding consolidation and many are financially self-sufficient, new groups and the smaller less established groups and sub-groups have insufficient annual subscriptions to finance annual cost obligations such as public liability insurance. No financial assistance is available from umbrella organisations such as the MLI or the CMA/LLS to support the financial viability of new groups.

A number of current groups are finding it extremely difficult to fill positions left vacant by retiring office holders. Members appear reluctant to take on office positions such as the Chair within Landcare networks and groups. With an aging rural population membership rejuvenation is critical to sustain a dynamic level of Landcare activity and viable community networks.

A number of groups have identified unfinished projects that volunteer members are struggling to either complete, review collected data and/or report. They have identified a need for assistance by professional Landcare facilitators to complete and finalise reporting on these projects.

Community land assets such as Travelling Stock Routes and parcels of unallocated Crown Land can be of great significance to local Landcare Groups and communities whose interests include biodiversity restoration and management; weed control and pest control and heritage values. However the responsible Government authorities responsible for these parcels of land can be unresponsive or do not know how to accommodate this community interest. It is suggested that a whole new approach by both State and Local Governments needs to be adopted to facilitate and sponsor community engagement in the planning, management and restoration of these community assets.

The Hay and Bowning and Bookham Districts have identified a need for the promotion and instruction of native seed collection methodologies, the development of a species fruiting calendar and the identification of available sources of seed collection areas to facilitate direct drilling and revegetation projects.

Other needs identified by single groups include:

- A stand-alone Website for Queanbeyan to list and promote activities;
- An Upper Murrumbidgee dedicated Landcare newsletter relevant to local and regional issues and professionally written;
- Tarcutta require a simplified reporting process for funded projects; and
- Queanbeyan need access to an urgent small grants programme to achieve environmental priorities (such as urgent weed control) with minimal level of administrative burden.

Current Interests

The range of interests undertaken by the catchments Landcare networks and groups is expansive. Table 2 outlines 18 of the major interests nominated by the groups and networks. Not all of the catchment's Landcare Networks and Groups were included in this sample and other current interests are likely to exist within these groups.

A selection of a limited number of nominated interests that link to or generate further Landcare needs has been presented for further discussion.

There is an extremely high level of interest in projects such as river restoration, tree-planting and cross property planting projects. These project types invariably require the erection of stock proof fencing and erosion control devices to facilitate revegetation and erosion control and are subsequently costly to implement on a per area basis. As a consequence the interest in these projects significantly exceeds current available funding opportunities. These project types have a high potential to improve our rural landscape, facilitate species survival and to contribute to sustainable land use practices; and should be promoted.

Ongoing, direct Government funding both from State and Federal governments appears to be limited and insufficient to meet the Landcare demand. Landcare leadership at a State and National level needs to liaise with government to initiate a discussion as to how to attract a significant level of private investment into Landcare at a project level. This could be achieved by accommodating highly attractive tax deductible private capital investment in landscape restoration projects in a similar vein as has been applied to the Australian film industry.

Landcare groups and networks have a very high level of interest in weed and pest control. This interest extends to controlling weeds on some public lands, the purchase of specialised equipment for stakeholder use, biological control programmes, weed mapping and information sessions and coordinated cross property control programmes. Stakeholder feedback indicated that a common landholder perception is that the responsible State and Local government authorities are failing in their pest and weed control obligations and as a consequence of these failings responsible landowners are being increasingly threatened by the spread and colonisation of weeds and pests. The state and local road systems have become major pest and weed corridors. Active liaison needs to occur between Landcare leadership, the CMA's and local, state and federal governments to at first acknowledge the extent of the pest and weed problem and then develop policies and plans to address this issue.

The management of Travelling Stock Routes and Crown Land Reserves is of great interest to a number of Landcare Networks and Groups. Some parcels of these unoccupied blocks of Crown Land represent important examples of remnant and threatened biological communities and yet they appear to exist in a vacuum of proactive government management. Landcare groups are extremely interested in the active management of these biodiversity assets, their weed control and pest control and public promotion of these areas, but are stymied by an inability of government bureaucrats to make decisions and the lack of a formal process for Landcare stakeholders to take an active role in the management of these lands. This is not the case in the ACT, where an active programme of Bush Care and Park Care is facilitated by the ACT Government by the appointment of a Bush Care facilitator, the payment of group insurance obligations and the supply of equipment and disposables. It is recommended that the leadership of the Murrumbidgee CMA and the MLi

lobby the State Government at the highest level to initiate a formal process of Bush Care in NSW to facilitate the adoption by Landcare groups of management responsibilities for certain parcels of unoccupied crown land of local significance.

The future of the role of the Natural Resource Officer (NRO) and Property Vegetation Plans under the LLS system is of great interest to Landcare networks and groups across the catchment. The performance of the NRO role is rated by Landcare stakeholders as being variable. In some areas this role has been highly successful and is considered as having critical value; in other areas the NRO's are seen as being too passive; and not actually engaged in the support and management of Landcare. Feelings towards the Property Vegetation Plans are also mixed, whilst the beneficiaries of these plans greatly appreciate the assistance and the programmes have a significant role in improving the sustainable rural landscape; the one-on-one nature of the contract limits group interaction, the pooling of ideas and resources, can isolate the local Landcare network and often there is a total lack of follow up. It is recommended that the LLS consider ways in which the role out of their programmes can support and nurture the Landcare movement to both encourage community support of sustainable environments and the social benefits Landcare can offer in a rural environment.

Conclusion

A total of 11 current needs were identified in discussion with Landcare stakeholders across the catchment. The dominant needs were associated with access to project funding, the ongoing support of professional Landcare staff and financial assistance to new, small or struggling groups.

The current Landcare interests practiced with the Murrumbidgee catchment are extensive and varied, this report documents 18 main interests, however this list is not exhaustive and numerous other minor interests exists within the Landcare movement across the catchment. A number of the major interests have linkages to or generate additional Landcare needs.

Communication strategies are highly varied across the catchment's networks and groups. Whilst some groups have embraced information technology others prefer a more traditional approach such as a locally produced public newsletter. A catchment wide communication strategy is unlikely to be appropriate as the individual Landcare networks and groups have differing cultures and approaches to their current communication needs. Support for these needs should remain flexible, and be able to accommodate group interests whether it is the development of a group website or the publication of locally based paper newsletters.

Recommendations

1. *That the MCMA (Riverina LLS) and MLI seek funding and support to allow MLI to employ professional staff to facilitate Landcare funding applications across the catchment to foster a “Reason for Being” for individual Landcare groups.*
2. *That the MCMA (Riverina LLS) and MLI work cooperatively to source community funding to roll out demonstration and pilot projects across the broader rural landscape.*
3. *That the MCMA (Riverina LLS) and MLI work cooperatively to assist the MCMA Natural Resource Officers to more effectively assist Landcare groups including organising and administering projects and field days, project reporting and other activities.*
4. *That the MCMA (Riverina LLS) and MLI seek funding and support to allow MLI to make available additional human resources to work directly with the Regional Landcare Facilitator to assist Landcare groups through organising and administering projects and field days, project reporting and other activities.*
5. *That the CMA (LLS) and its ACT equivalent, the ACT NRM Council, work co-operatively to enhance partnerships and networking opportunities and to avoid overlap and duplication of activities with other organisations.*
6. *That MLI and its ACT equivalent, the Catchment and Landcare Association, work co-operatively to enhance partnerships and networking opportunities and to avoid overlap and duplication of activities with other organisations.*
7. *That the CMA’s (LLS) and MLI work cooperatively to source funds for MLI to administer a simple small grants program for Landcare groups directed at “seed” funding for new, small or resurrected Landcare groups and small project funding for existing groups.*
8. *Given an aging rural population, that the MCMA (Riverina LLS) and MLI work cooperatively to source community funding to develop a catchment strategy to facilitate Landcare membership to sustain a dynamic level of activity and viable community networks.*

9. *In response to Landcare group requests, that the MCMA (Riverina LLS) and MLI work cooperatively to source the resources to promote and instruct on native seed collection methodologies, the development of a species fruiting calendar and the identification of available sources of seed collection areas to facilitate direct drilling and revegetation projects.*

10. *That the MCMA (Riverina LLS) facilitate a simplified reporting process for funded projects.*

11. *That MLI continue to represent Landcare in the Murrumbidgee at both a State and National level to, amongst other things, further discussion with government to develop taxation incentives to attract significant private investment into Landcare at an on ground project level.*

12. *That the MCMA (Riverina LLS) and MLI continue to lobby for essential active liaison between local, state and federal governments, acknowledging the extent of the pest and weed problem in the Murrumbidgee Catchment and the ineffective control of pests and weeds on some land tenures. The intent of this liaison would be to develop coordinated and funded policies and plans to address these problems.*

13. *That the MCMA (Riverina LLS) and MLI lobby the NSW Government to initiate a formal process whereby Landcare groups could "adopt" prescribed parcels of unoccupied crown land of local significance through a 'NSW Bushcare management agreement'. The agreement would formally recognise the group as having management responsibilities for that land and would include funding to cover off PL insurance, the training of Landcarers and cost of disposables and equipment.*

14. *That the MCMA (Riverina LLS) ensure that programmes delivered through the new LLS are optimised to support and nurture the Landcare movement to both encourage community support of sustainable environments and the social benefits Landcare can offer in rural communities.*

15. *That the MCMA (Riverina LLS) work cooperatively with MLI to source funds to boost Landcare communications, responding flexibly to group needs and interests, including the development of websites and/or the publication of locally based paper newsletters.*

Signatures

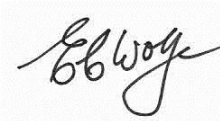


Alan P Cole 14 August 2013

Landcare Support Officer

Referred for comment to Chair, MLi

This is an excellent report providing clear recommendations to advance Landcare and further the impact of MLi and Murrumbidgee CMA/LLS on natural resource management in the Murrumbidgee catchment. On August 19, the report will be placed before the MLi Committee and later in the week Alan Cole will present his interim findings from the project to the MLi Annual Forum. I propose that this report and comments from the Committee/Forum will be sent to Murrumbidgee CMA in early September. In late September or October, I hope to arrange a small delegation from the Executive of MLi and Mr Cole to meet with the General Manager of Murrumbidgee CMA and discuss the recommendations in relation to the operation of Riverina Local Land Services from 1st January 2014.



EC Wolfe, 15 August 2013

Chair Murrumbidgee Landcare Inc.