



Landcare Notes

Planning

Good planning can help you be clear on what you want to achieve and how to do it. A plan helps you focus on the important issues and the best uses of your time, skills and funds.

Planning also clarifies your purpose which can help with communications, recruitment, leadership and funding. It helps prepare you for opportunities and obstacles and gives you a sound basis for evaluating your success.

What is planning?

Planning maps out the methods and activities you will use to achieve the result you want. It happens at three levels:

1. Strategic planning – the 'umbrella' or longer term planning where you set out what you want to achieve and map out what you need to do to get there. It's your vision and direction.

With a Landcare group, strategic planning should include the social and financial aspects as well as the environmental result you want. This type of planning takes into account what has happened to the group in the past as well as the current situation, inside and outside the group. This could include any bigger picture plans, directions and trends that may provide context, opportunities or constraints (see Landcare Note 2.2: *Strategic planning*).

2. Action planning – shorter-term (often annual) detailed plans of the actions you have in mind. Action plans are created in line with strategic plans so your actions will move you toward the final result you want (see Landcare Note 2.3: *Action planning*).

3. Project planning – doing this helps you organise the why, what, how, who, how much, and when aspects of a specific project. A project plan helps you manage and monitor what you are doing and includes specific tasks,

various responsibilities, monitoring, financial and reporting procedures (see Landcare Note 5.2: *Project planning*). A project plan may be needed if you have received support or funding from an outside organisation where you have agreed to undertake a certain task and will report back to them on your results.

Plans can be made for all kinds of activities including communication, field days, creating a website, group training and workshops, working bees and group celebrations.

With all plans, however, you need to monitor what happens during the process and make changes if new conditions and barriers can put your plan at risk. Part of the planning should focus on good risk management to minimise any potential problems.

How to do it

Whatever type of plan you are preparing, there are three key aspects you need to consider:

1. Looking ahead

Where do you want to get to? What does success look like?

Always start with the goal and work back, because where you want to get to will influence what you need to do to get there. Individual views may be very different so you need to discuss all those views and their merits to find a shared goal.

2. Building upon what is happening now

What is the current situation? What are the key issues, constraints, opportunities and options to achieving your goal?

This step is often skipped because the group can see an obvious way forward and are keen to get something done. However, as a group there may be things that are obvious to some but not to others. It's worth discussing all the issues and options so you all arrive at a common understanding of the current situation.



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3. Working out the how

How will you to get there?

Different levels of planning call for different levels of detail on how to achieve the results. For example local action plans and project plans can detail specific materials, activities, timelines and people that will be undertaking the tasks. Strategic plans will not go to this level of detail but provide a longer term map so you are following your ultimate goals from year to year, and helps guide your activities.

There are many techniques available to facilitate these planning processes – ask your Landcare coordinator for help.

Good planning takes time so make sure you allow for it. Consider dedicating one or more meetings for the process or even a specific day.

Planning takes into account all the circumstances that could influence your chances of achieving your goals. This can include how many members you currently have, the time available, your group's financial resources, skills and knowledge, as well as external political, social and financial constraints and opportunities.

Getting help

There are many community tools available to help you create these different types of plans.

You could talk to your Landcare coordinator, who has access to a range of activities and guides to help you work through the planning process.

There are also a wide range of facilitation tools and guides for running planning processes on

the internet (try searching for strategic planning processes or action planning processes).

You can find more detailed information about each of these planning processes in other Landcare Notes (see below).

Further references

Victorian Landcare gateway – Resources for groups: www.landcarevic.org.au

Chamala, S and Mortis, P (1990) - *Working Together For Landcare*; Department of Primary Industries, Queensland.

Landcare coordinators in your region – contact your CMA or nearest DPI office.

McFarlane, G, Carpenter, J and Youl, R (1996) – *Group Skills and Community Action*: http://web.archive.org/web/20050315170751/www.neon.net.au/community/environment/grp_skills/

National Landcare Program Evaluation Coordinators (1997) - *Setting Up for Success – A Guide for Designing, Managing and Evaluating Projects*: <http://catalogue.nla.gov.au/Record/2713703>

Related Landcare Notes

This Landcare Note is one of a series. These notes provide an excellent guide for the ongoing operation of your group.

Landcare Note 2.2: *Strategic planning*

Landcare Note 2.3: *Action planning*

Landcare Note 5.2: *Project planning*



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Landcare Note 2.1

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