



Landcare Notes

Planning and running events

Getting the 'basics' right when you're planning and running an event gives you a better chance of having a successful event and achieving your goals. You will need to divide up the tasks that need doing, establish who is going to do them, and check what resources you will need to hold the event.

What is it?

Events come in all shapes and sizes and can include field days, farm and bush walks, working bees, any type of meeting, fundraising activities and celebrations.

Planning an event is a common activity for a Landcare group, and should contribute to the group's overall strategic plan and the action plan for the year. For more information refer to Landcare Notes: 2.2 Strategic Planning; 2.3 Action Planning.

Many events are also held by a number of parties in partnership. This might be a good idea worth considering if you would like to hold a big event or need some help with resources.

How to plan and manage an event

The essentials

No matter what type of event you are planning, there are common elements that you must consider:

- Check if you need permission to stage it
- Have a venue or environment suitable to the event
- Conditions must be safe and comfortable
- Support for the people attending if there is an incident
- Suitable funding and resources
- Publicity and reporting

- People – for planning the event, and managing it on the day.

Three phases of holding your event

Event management is roughly divided into three phases:

- Planning – Why you are doing it? What type of event will it be? How to manage it?
- Implementing – Making all the bits and pieces come together beforehand, and on the day.
- Review and reflection – How did it go? What sort of experience and lessons has it provided for the future?

1. Planning your event

The idea for an event may come from one or two members. Then it needs to be 'fleshed out' to the point where everyone is happy. Before the group makes a decision, it's worth asking these questions:

- What's the purpose of this event?
- Does it fit with the group's plans and priorities?
- Who is the audience?
- What do we want to achieve?
- Can we clearly outline the idea for the event?
- What evidence do we have that this event is wanted or needed?
- Based on that answer, do we need to do any further research?
- Do we need to re-think any aspect of the idea – or all of it?
- Are there other groups, agencies, business, schools who would be interested in being involved in planning and running this type of event?



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You need to think through the idea, purpose and goals very clearly, particularly for bigger events, because this will help with decisions to be made throughout the planning process.

For events that happen regularly, such as working bees, you may only need to ask the above questions occasionally, just to double-check that all is going smoothly.

The type of event you have in mind, and the scale of the event, will give you a fair idea of the lead time you need. It is not unusual for a big event to take a year or more to come to fruition.

2. Getting things underway for your event

An event cannot succeed without a team working together to make it happen, but you will need one person to act as a coordinator to keep everyone on track. This person is nominated to look after the event overall so that all the components come together.

Make sure you schedule some meetings specifically for planning in the lead-up to the event. Early on, these meetings will focus on issues such as understanding the event, brainstorming ideas, clarifying various roles, and organising speakers, budgets and a list of tasks.

Permits and permissions

Before you go too far with your planning, make sure you have the authority to hold the event.

This could be as simple as approval from the committee, to approval from the person in charge of the site where you want to hold the event. Make sure you have the approvals you need – in writing and on file, to prevent any problems on the day. Refer to Landcare Note 7.6: Permits and Permissions in Victoria.

Who's doing what?

The bottom line is – one person can't do it all! Allocate tasks to a number of people and when you're discussing who will do what, consider if

the person has specific skills which might make them better suited to one thing than another. There should be deadlines for each task and you will need to meet regularly or keep in touch to monitor progress. Refer to Landcare Note 8.5: Sharing the Load – Delegation.

Budgeting and resources

If money is involved, managing it properly is a key measure of your success. Make sure you monitor costs against your budget so you don't end up with a huge loss – or unused funds that could have made the event better.

Budgeting - and communicating the details to the committee will help you achieve the goals you have set for this event and ensure that the event does not impact on the group's overall budget.

Making a date – and telling people about it

It's not much point putting all this work into an event if no-one turns up. Before committing to a date (and time) make sure you don't clash with any other important local or major events – public holidays, school holidays, a major agricultural display – because it could limit how many people come.

For a small event, this may only be an issue for your members and local supporters, but if you are planning a big event, you will need to widen your research as to what else might be happening that day.

You need to promote the event effectively to ensure your target audience is in attendance, so use your media wisely (refer to Landcare Notes: 6.4 Raising the Group Profile; 6.5 Working with the Media). Make sure you plan your invitation list properly too, so all the right people are invited.

Logistics and management

There are a number of tasks of all sizes to be done in the lead-up to, during and after the event. The event coordinator should create a list of everything that must be done for the event, and who is going to do it.



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On the day, a 'running sheet' of who is doing what and when will help everyone to know what they need to do. Make sure everyone involved has a copy. This should only be a simple one or two page document.

The task list should include cleaning up. Establish this before the event – the venue, the group or various volunteers – it can be hectic on the day of the event itself, and you don't want this task to be forgotten.

Risk management

No matter what the event is, you have to consider the safety of everyone involved. For a major event, it is valuable to consider a risk management plan which will identify ways of minimising risk as well as how you will cope with any incidents. Ask these questions and brainstorm the answers:

- What can go wrong?
- What can we do to minimise it?
- What will we do if something happens?

You need to be prepared for unplanned situations and you may also have to consider an alternative strategy (contingency plan), especially if you are planning an outdoor event. See Landcare Note 7.4: Risk Management – Why Worry?

3. Recognition, reviews and reports

At the end of the day it's important to acknowledge the extra effort people have put into an event. At the very least, say thank you and send a card, but also consider gifts, vouchers, certificates and maybe even a special 'thank you' function.

If you're going to hold the event again, you need to know what went right (and wrong) with your event, and why. Do your own assessments but don't forget to ask for feedback from some of the people who came along.

Be informed by a range of perspectives on how the event went and then you can analyse this information as a group. Learning from that information will help you plan future events, and build on your group's experience, skills and knowledge. If you have been given donations or assistance to run the event, you can also give a report or write an article about the day, letting people know how it went and what the outcomes were.

Further references

Victorian Landcare Gateway:
www.landcarevic.org.au

Landcare coordinator in your region – contact your local CMA or 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 6.4: Raising Group Profile

Landcare Note 6.5: Working with the Media

Landcare Note 7.4: Risk Management – Why Worry?

Landcare Note 7.6: Permits and Permissions in Victoria

Landcare Note 8.5: Sharing the Load - Delegation



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Landcare Note 5.6

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