



Landcare Notes

Raising the group profile

This Landcare note should help you get more of your members involved in group activities as well as tell the community what you are doing.

It also includes suggestions on ways you can raise awareness of local Landcare issues among the broader community. Greater awareness will boost community support for what you are doing, and hopefully get new members joining the group.

What is a group profile?

The profile of your group is how it is recognised by your community and further a field.

Before they can decide if they support you or not, people need to know the name of the group, its interests and reason for existence, what it does and who is involved.

With everything else that is going on locally, people are unlikely to have more than a passing interest in what you are doing unless you make a determined effort to promote the group and its activities.

It makes sense to make the effort to raise your group's profile because it can mean better access to resources, more recognition of your achievements and acknowledgement of the changes you are making, at local, regional, state or national level.

Raising your profile can also be beneficial in terms of motivating existing members and recruiting new ones.

How to do it

Making Landcare interesting to members

Landcare offers your members a chance to tackle environmental problems as well as improve their own knowledge and skills on a technical and organisational level.

Landcare also offers a social connection which has become increasingly important for a satisfying community life, and getting to know the people living in your local area, so making Landcare interesting should be one of your prime aims.

If you meet your members' interests, it can lead to them having a more positive impact on the rest of the community, so consider some of the following as ways of keeping them involved in the group:

- Do a survey of their interests and concerns about your area
- Invite interesting speakers
- Organise opportunities to increase skills and knowledge
- Provide committee positions for your members to get involved in work such as writing newsletters or media articles, managing specific group projects and doing schools education
- Support your members if they're interested in going to Landcare conferences and workshops
- Organise field days, tours and farm walks to observe and celebrate the success of your projects and visit other groups whose work interests you.

The more involved, dynamic and productive your group is, the more recognition and respect you will receive, and the higher your profile.

Raising the group's profile in your community

Improving community awareness of what you are doing, plan to do and have already achieved will make it easier for you to attract new members and local resources.

You can lift the group's standing in a number of ways. Consider these:



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- Publish newsletters and send copies to key local organisations and other nearby groups
- Give talks at local schools, community associations and catchment and regional events
- Invite community members and relevant groups to your major activities and celebrations
- Plan special evenings to tell the community what you are doing and why and attend conferences and workshops and promote your group
- Write regular articles for your local paper or community newsletter about Landcare needs, approaches and activities
- Provide local television or radio stations with information about the group - and opportunities for them to promote it
- Develop demonstration sites (with signage) along main roads to promote your work to people going past
- Identify the boundaries of your group with appropriate signs. Individual property signs showing Landcare membership could also be worthwhile.

Landcare in the broader community

While most Landcare groups may only be interested in their local area, some want to promote themselves more widely. This can take considerable skill, time and resources because you are competing with a huge range of other groups and activities. Consider these methods:

- Develop a group website and make sure it is updated regularly
- Submit applications about your work to relevant award programs such as your state and regional Landcare awards, and the Banksia Foundation
- Hold a major annual field day and publicise it widely

- Build an attractive portable display and take it to conferences and other major events to demonstrate your work
- Join forces with other organisations to work together on projects and promote the results
- Produce things to sell which would be of interest to other Landcare and conservation groups
- Create a 'sister' link with another Landcare group and promote member interchange.

Key tools

Contact your Landcare coordinator for further information on organisations which run award programs that are available in your area. Each year, Landcare and organisations such as the Banksia Foundation provide guidelines on requirements for applications.

Some CMAs and local governments also run awards which would be relevant to your group. Winning such awards is a great way to raise your profile.

Further references

Victorian Landcare Gateway:
www.landcarevic.org.au

Department of Sustainability and Environment (magazine) - *Victorian Landcare and Catchment Management*

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

Our Community help sheet – *Marketing and Your Community Group*:
http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/marketing/marketing_article.jsp?articleId=1415

Port Phillip and Westernport CMA (2004) – *Stories of Success*:
www.ppwcma.vic.gov.au/downloads/StoriesCommunityLS.pdf



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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 3.2: Partnerships and Collaborations

Landcare Note 5.6: Planning and Running Events

Landcare Note 6.5: Working with the Media

Landcare Note 9.3: What Skills and Knowledge Does the Group Have?

Landcare Note 9.4: Celebration and Recognition

Acknowledgements

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Compiled by the Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority's Landcare Support Team

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