



Farm Tree & Landcare Association

Annual Forum – 30th May 2016: The Next 30 Years of Landcare Session

Background:

On 25th November 2016, Landcare in Victoria celebrates its 30 year anniversary.

Over the past 30 years, many issues facing Landcare have remained the same – weeds are still a problem, there are always more trees to plant, and erosion is still high on many people's agenda.

The importance of the social aspects of Landcare, the BBQ after the planting, the morning tea after a meeting can never be underestimated. As our rural populations decline, and the local school closes, the local Landcare Group might just be what is holding a community together. But we have lots of new issues to add to the mix, climate change, urbanisation, and technology are just some of the issues adding to the discussions at the local and State Landcare meetings.

So as we enter the next 30 years, the Farm Tree & Landcare Association (FTLA) felt it was important to seek our member's ideas as to what the future holds and just what we can do about it.

At the FTLA Annual Forum held on 30th May 2016, we looked at **six global mega trends** that are facing our rural communities and Landcare:

- Climate Change
- Population Growth / Resource Stress
- Ageing Population
- Technological Change
- Urbanisation
- Increasing Size of Commercial Farms / Growth of lifestyle farm,

And we asked 2 simple questions:

- 1. What impact do you think the issue will have (if any) on Landcare over next 10 years?**
- 2. What are the opportunities for Landcare to deal with the impacts over next 10 years?**

We used a 10 year time frame to give a bit more reality to the discussion.

There were 70 people present representing Landcare and its partners. Many people attended playing multiple roles – Department employee and local Landcare member, FTLA committee member, local Landcare member or office bearer.

- Landcare members
- Office bearers of local landcare groups across the State
- Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
- Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources
- State Landcare staff
- Landcare support staff – locally and State based
- Greening Australia/ Trust for Nature

These notes were taken direct from the butcher's paper, so everyone's thoughts have been captured.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Q1: What impact do you think the issue will have (if any) on Landcare over next 10 years?

Vegetation

- Vegetation/ habitat changes / extinctions
- Breeding management for plants and animals
- Fragmentation of habitat for species
- Seasonal changes affect fertilisation /flowering
- Migration of species to new areas – will they find habitat?
- Need to look after the bees

Invasive species

- New species moving into areas
- Proliferation of invading species (fauna and weed species)

Agriculture

- Different farming models
- Increased periods of drought – may threaten soil stability /salinity

Water

- Water management issues
- Water use conflicts – URBAN V RURAL V ENVIRONMENT
- What prices for water?

Q2: What are the opportunities for Landcare to deal with the impacts over next 10 years?

Carbon

- Carbon farming
- Simplified carbon sink development and management
- Credits – bring them in ASAP

Vegetation

- Survey plants appropriate for changed conditions
- Survey fauna needs – planting etc
- Some flowering plants more abundant
- Ensure tree retention to ensure better robustness in the face of change
- Migration of species

Indigenous

- Chance to reverse the Europeanisation of the landscape by offering indigenous alternatives
- Work with local indigenous people – joint learning
- Look at Indigenous “farming” - refer to Bruce Pascoe

Agriculture

- Changes in Land use – more crops less stock
- Kangaroo control/ harvesting

Systems

- Engage with communities/ landholders post “damage” events i.e.: flood, fire.
- Rebuilding with Landcare principles in mind

- Use Landcare and Logo to market our food into National and International Markets
- Impetus for Action: Eden Project (it can be done)
The Eden Project is a visitor attraction in Cornwall, England, United Kingdom. Inside the two biomes are plants that are collected from many diverse climates and environments.
<https://www.edenproject.com>
- Stimulate change in what and how we work

POPULATION GROWTH/ RESOURCE STRESS

Q1: What impact do you think the issue will have (if any) on Landcare over next 10 years?

Water

- Major stress of water (increase) and decrease
- Increased storm water to rivers/ bays
- Natural streams being reduced from good flows to balance environment etc
- Leads to increased water run off
- Additional water storage = reduced water soaking into ground

Environment

- Increase in 'built' landscape
- Loss of productive land and wildlife habitat
- Land degradation through trying to get more productivity
- Greater acceptance of disturbed environments
- Pollution
- More rubbish and landfills – increased methane gas

People

- New people, new ideas, sometimes ill informed
- More people to feed, house and transport (roads)
- Health stress

Q2: What are the opportunities for Landcare to deal with the impacts over next 10 years?

Water

- Re-cycle water (e.g.: to potable quality) and aquaculture
- Increase efficiencies in water use and new ways of "using rainfall"
- Best use water supply, land, coastal

Environment

- Drive innovation in efficient use of natural resources
- Refocus thinking in agriculture – systems thinking

People

- Strengthen rural communities
- Increase public transport
- Increased demand – food / water
- Use innovative recycling technologies
- More potential Landcare members and volunteers
- Reverse ridiculous metropolitan planning

- Larger audience to market Landcare
- Encourage inland? and development
- Educate Youth to minimise life
- Encourage people to appreciate nature

AGEING POPULATION

Q1: What impact do you think the issue will have (if any) on Landcare over next 10 years?

- Burnout
- Physical limitations (OHS)
- Greater property turnover
- Subdivision of large properties
- More farmers retiring
- Amalgamation of farms
- Farmers retiring – less able to care for the land
- Fewer CFA members – more fire problems
- Later retirement – imposed by government
- Trend to later retirement age
- Reduction of pensions / Free Health care etc
- Communicating to younger generation through Facebook not newsletter
- Reduced Landcare Participants
- New generation not as committed to Landcare

Q2: What are the opportunities for Landcare to deal with the impacts over next 10 years?

- Bus retirees in from suburbs to Landcare Projects
- More volunteers
- Flexibility – weekdays
- Broaden scope of volunteers – core of supervisor/ mentors
- Commitment to helping young people (mentoring)
- Pros/ cons – properties being subdivided
- Mentoring needs training, but bring a member
- People need exercise, outdoor activities
- Longer lifespans - 60 is the new 40
- Good Landcare needs good decision making
- This will benefit from wisdom etc
- Intergenerational handing down of wisdom and knowledge
- Wisdom – experience – professional skills
- Grey (Green) Nomads – Landcare FTLA can help with providing “service” as many feel “guilty” with available FREE TIME early days after no full time work!
- Reframe Landcare for younger generation

TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE

Q1: What impact do you think the issue will have (if any) on Landcare over next 10 years?

- Teach us how maximise use of all the resources currently in place
- Digitisation of media
- Increased cost- Business formula – preventing uptake by NFP groups (Near map)

- Possible decrease costs
- Old ways of communication will start disappearing e.g.: physical meetings
- Challenge getting information to our older members
- Immediacy of knowledge sharing
- Sensing equipment – better measurement
- Precision farming for Broad acre
- NBN- Global services and global lack of communications if network goes down
- Drones – invasion of privacy or could be useful tool for farming
- Tractors/ vehicles self drive – increase in accidents and environmental detriment (could reduce accidents)
- Improved data available for Landcare issues
- Large scale/ speed of development taking away proactive hand

Q2: What are the opportunities for Landcare to deal with the impacts over next 10 years?

- Better data analysis and modelling
- Sensing – improving monitoring
- Virtual Landcare Groups
- Precision – lead to loss of land for environmental purposes
- Education – decrease city and rural divide
- Using new technologies – to measure ecological outcomes (weeds etc)
- Easier reporting of citizen science
- Better public transport with better technology
- The best NBN we can afford
- Robots, drones

URBANISATION

Q1: What impact do you think the issue will have (if any) on Landcare over next 10 years?

- Increasing disconnection between urban and rural people
- Many city dwellers have no experience of life outside the city
- Housing built on productive land decreases the availability of food for city population
- Fewer in country areas
- Loss of habitat (corridors for fauna) (urban sprawl)
- Increased fragmentation
- Greater acceptance of urbanised rural environments
- Urban islands – heat impacts from increase hard surfaces
- Freeways
- Pollution
- Right to farm
- Competition for land for industry
- Higher water use = need to increase food productivity

Q2: What are the opportunities for Landcare to deal with the impacts over next 10 years?

- Educate people everywhere how to be more efficient with water use
- Stop rating farmers out of business
- Move to country
- More country politicians

- Live simple lives
- More vegetarians
- More grass bush fires
- Cooperative renewable energy projects
- Urban population – lots of voters – significant to politicians therefore potential advocacy for Landcare
- Cooler greener cities
- Humanise nature (live in Harmony)
- More volunteers
- Protection of country areas
- Better Planning
- More public transport
- Urban gardens e.g.: rooftops
- Improved footprint of housing and buildings
- Sustainability of housing
- Urban Landcare and Friends
- New ways of doing business
- Biolinks built into PSPs and to connect suburbs
- Retain large canopy trees
- Use unproductive land for urbanisation NOT prime land

INCREASING SIZE OF COMMERCIAL FARMS/ GROWTH OF LIFESTYLE FARMS

Q1: What impact do you think the issue will have (if any) on Landcare over next 10 years?

- Corporate farms alarming short term thinkers – profit and motivated (compared with family farms)
- Corporate governance and family/ individual
- Reduced population / altering balance (numbers) in rural communities
- Family farms more likely to join Landcare
- Family and corporate farms increasing in size in response to economic necessity
- Greater use of GMOs
- Large commercial farms use of GMO crops and mono cultures across more of landscape.
- Large scale use of limited range of fertilisers resulting in reducing nutrients especially micronutrients and potential detrimental effect on soils health and waterways
- Loss of remnant vegetation lead to soil degradation leading to erosion
- Pest plants and animals
- Increased use of herbicides and pesticides results in loss of biomass, beneficial insects and birds
- If foreign – more transfer pricing less tax. More foreign workers to replace us
- Foreign ownership/ management – don't understand conditions/ limitations
- Greater mechanisation and remote operations results in less community involvement and less close observation of soils, flora and fauna
- Large non-resident– loss of people and community
- More life stylers =- more issues/ different issues, more volunteers/ more members
- Growth / expansion of cropping and irrigation (centre pivot)

Q2: What are the opportunities for Landcare to deal with the impacts over next 10 years?

- To insist on landholders on % of indigenous species of trees
- Key advocacy group for sustainable farming through increased community engagement and representations



- Lifestyle farmers likely to support Landcare objectives
- Lifestyle farmers can have money to undertake more Landcare activities
- Encourage hobby farmers/ lifestyle to produce real income
- Need to increase unit output (intensive work) –not at a cost to the environment
- Economies of scale (not of Impact)
- Opportunities for Landcare to advise and teach new small landholders
- Landcare offer opportunity for new landowners to talk to previous landholders to and retain the knowledge
- Increasing size of commercial farms etc
- Bigger farms may equal longer less interrupted biolinks
- Fewer commercial farmers will need to be encased/ influenced in sustainable management of larger areas of land

ANYTHING WE MISSED

- Opportunity for regional map with Landcare contacts for grey nomads to set a trip where “hands on” can be provided in different locations across the State. Make map available at Local Government and Information centre
- “conservation tourism” – offer hands –on and monitoring trips/tours to tourists- spruik into Asia and other overseas countries
- “woofers for conservation” Great idea
- Many corporates have environ- social stewardship programs – use them for volunteers and funding sponsors
- Education program for all new Landcare Presidents on managing a group, marketing and communications, writing grants
- Does FTLA have a fundraising committee?
- Develop Conservation curricula for schools

What do we do with this information?

Firstly, we share it with the Landcare community.

We encourage everyone to have a read, agree, disagree, take an idea and run with it, chat to your neighbour, talk to your Landcare group, talk to us.

The FTLA will circulate this information to State Government Departments, Local Governments, and Catchment Management Authorities to let them know your thoughts.

Over the next 12 months, the FTLA will work through the information and see what it is able to action directly, what needs some helps from others and what is possibly not feasible at the moment. We will keep our members up to date on our progress.

So stay tuned.

But please don't wait for us – this is information for use by everyone in Landcare across the State.

If it has helped you, maybe kick start a project or get some funding – we would love to know.

Yours in Landcare

FTLA Committee and staff