



## Landcare Employment Referral Service Report

Landcare Victoria (LVI) launched the Landcare Employment and Workplace-Related Advice, Dispute Resolution, and Referral Service in partnership with DELWP in Oct 2018. Experts in HR and employment law, Workplace Legal, were engaged to provide advice to landcare groups and staff assistance on all HR and employment related matters. The project is the result of LVI, community and staff feedback into the Victorian Landcare Program Review Action Plan released in 2017.

As part of project evaluation, a survey regarding the Service was sent to 943 group contacts (including networks) and landcare support staff in late May 2020. DELWP also offered to circulate.

### Survey questions:

1. Are you: a) Landcare Group or Network Committee Member or Volunteer; b) Friends or other environmental volunteering group Committee Member or Volunteer; c) a Landcare Employee; or d) an Independent Contractor engaged by Landcare
2. If a/b) Does your group employ staff or engage independent contractors?  
[If a/b & no, then skip to qu. 9.]
3. Otherwise: Have you contacted the Landcare Employment Service?
4. If yes, then how would you rate the service from 1 – 5 very helpful
5. If yes, would you recommend the Landcare Employment Referral Service to others? (yes/no)
6. Any comments?
7. If no, then is there a reason you haven't contacted the service (didn't need to, have other sources of advice (please name), didn't know about it, other)
8. Have you considered asking the service to do a health check of your current employment arrangements? Yes/ No / Already done
9. Do you think this or a similar service is an important resource to have?
10. Any other comments or feedback?
11. Would you like to go through the Employment Checklist following this survey?

The response rate was ~12% (114 responses) around average for this type of survey. The response among employers was higher at 54 or 18% based on LVI's data that 13% Member Groups employ staff and 39% engage independent contractors.

### Respondents:

Employees / Independent Contractors	20	18%
Groups/Networks with staff	54	57%
Groups/Networks without staff	36	38%
Groups/Networks hoping to employ soon	4	4%

Of respondents with a reason to contact the service (i.e. employer organisations or staff), 23% had done so:

Employers / Staff	74	
Contacted Service	17	23%
Employers	12	71%
Staff	5	29%

*Landcare Victoria Inc. is the independent, representative body for landcare in Victoria. We work for increased recognition, resourcing and support for resilient and productive landscapes and communities.*



100% of people who used the service would recommend it to others, with over 80% of users rating the service good to very good.

#### Service Rating

Average (3 of 5)	2	12%
Good (4 of 5)	9	53%
Very Good (5 of 5)	6	35%

Of the people who hadn't used the service over half did not know about the service, despite extensive promotion (news items, Landcare magazine, direct mail, forums, Annual Report etc). This included 20% of workers and 50% of employer groups. One respondent didn't realise the service also assisted with independent contractors.

Didn't know about the service	32	53%
No need to (yet)	22	37%
Wasn't sure how / forgot about it	2	3%
Other sources of Advice	3	5% (LVI+CMA+Network)

82% of all respondents thought the service was an important resource. Comments included:

- "Great initiative";
- "This is a great service and something that is really needed, as everyone's employment arrangements vary so much between groups ... as individual groups are not in a position to research all of this info themselves";
- "Absolutely essential to have an independent umpire ... or at least someone outside the organization to provide advice and assistance";
- "I wish this was set up a number of years back. Very valuable service to help people avoid traps, & then later on as a source of advice if things are not going well"; and
- "An important resource to have available ... it looks like the new round of funding through the Victorian Landcare Facilitator Program will require an increased level of compliance around employment conditions and this will present challenges to those Landcare Groups and Networks that may have had limited and/or less than ideal outcomes from existing employment arrangements."

Not all respondents agreed with two feeling it was unnecessary as they used "local reliable tried and true contractors" and another who felt "waste of landcare time and resources".

The survey also served as a prompt for action with six organisations considering calling the service for an Employment Health Check (in addition to three who already had) and over half of employer groups and workers proceeding through the Landcare Employment Checklist.

Of those who completed the Checklist, 100% had OHS procedures, employment contracts and position descriptions and WorkCover policies. Some employment contracts didn't meet the Fair Work standards around maximum weekly hours, Long Service Leave or the Fair Work Information Statement, with a third identified the need for better tracking of leave entitlements. Over 80% had a performance management plan and two thirds had clear line management. Only half had plans to prevent and manage bullying and sexual harassment.