

Revitalising your Landcare or bushcare group...

**“If not,
then
what?”**



...with the magic of reinvention.

What if revitalising a Landcare or bushcare group was less about persuasion and more about **reinvention**?

Reinvention means changing the 'recipe' of a group to make it more like one that new people would love to join - and which gives a fresh experience for existing members.

An easy way to start reinventing a group is to look at each ingredient of your recipe and ask: "If not that, then what?"

This booklet shows how, illustrated with ideas provided by hundreds of Landcare and bushcare members in NSW and Victoria.



The main things that current Landcare members felt would maintain their interest were:

- More members in my Landcare group: 46%**
- Different types of activities: 30%**
- Not having to take on an executive position: 25%**
- More direct benefits for my property: 24%**
- Not having to give as much of my time: 19%**

Source: *Landcare in Victoria: Community Participation and Perceptions Research Final Report*, Department of Sustainability And Environment, 2008

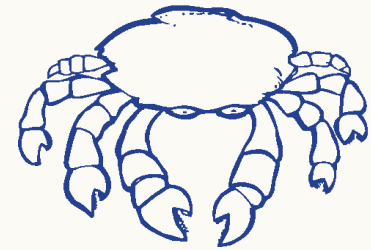
These ideas were sprouted in Les Robinson's **Passion Mashin' workshops** with Landcare and bushcare members in Wollongong, Lawson, Picton, Hornsby, Castlemaine, Wedderburn, Lave Cove, Dubbo, Parkes, Tempe, Randwick, Kenthurst, and Cobar during 2011 and 2012.

The brackets () show groups who are already doing a particular activity.

For more on the Passion Mashin' workshops see:
www.enablingchange.com.au/passionmashing.html

If not [the usual name], then what?

Mudcrabs (Cooks River, Sydney)



Fish and Chippers (Berowra Waters, Sydney)

Saturday Afternoon Tea Group (Lane Cove Valley, Sydney)

Willow Warriors (Nepean River, Sydney)

Beer Makers Bush Club

JamCare (jamming on the land)

Le Bushcare (practice your French)

Coffee and Chocolate Lovers Bushcare group (where do I sign up?)



Your group's name tells a story about the group. It's often the first thing a potential volunteer hears. Does it suggest that the experience would be satisfying and enjoyable? When it comes to choosing a name remember that quirky names travel fastest and farthest.

If not [the usual suspects], then who?

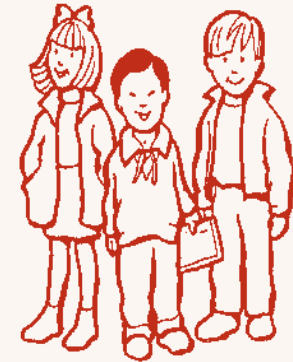


Green nomads (Upper Thompson Landcare, Old)

Retirement villagers: “The Regenerators”

Children (Bushkids, Lane Cove Valley)

Corporate team-building groups (Landcare Illawarra)



Singles (Landcare for Singles: Yarra Valley Landcare, ACT Landcare, Illawarra Youth Landcare, CVA Darwin, Coastcare for Singles Fremantle)

Visitors (South West Rocks Dune Care)

Geeks Who Care

Nature lovers everywhere: a “friend of” membership for anyone who picks weeds.

Youth who like to party (DancePlant, TrancePlant)



When making invitations the place to start is with people in our own social networks. Then, to reach out to different groups, ask: what experiences might they be on the lookout for, then build those experiences into the group and frame your communications around the experiences. Remember that young men are on the lookout for hard exercise, parents are on the lookout for interesting things to do with their children, older people are looking for low impact exercise. Practically everyone is on the lookout for friendly conversation, time in nature and de-stressing.

If not [the usual location], then where?

A beautiful site that just needs a touch-up

A roadside nature strip. A wildlife corridor in every street!

Roving hands, helping out on a different site every month

A wildcard site you only find out about the night before

Along a bike track

A frog habitat

A riverbank you can only get to by canoe ([Willow Warriors](#))

Half way down a cliff ([Jenolan Caves Landcare Group's Sycamore War](#))

Somewhere wild and remote ([Victorian Mobile Landcare Group](#), [Friends of the Colo](#))



Maybe not to work the same weed-pit every month. Consider having a few a sites and shifting between them. Some sites could be almost pristine so volunteers get inspired by (and learn about) the richness of nature. Others could be in a mix of habitats to create variety and inspiration. Some groups spread the love by helping out a sister group every few months.

If not [the usual time], then when?



Sunrise breakfast

Full moon nights



Twilight evenings

Daylight saving afternoons

A different day and time every month



Different people have different rhythms. Older people often wake early and appreciate a social breakfast and some physical activity to start the day. Busy people also enjoy a power breakfast. Mums with young kids like later morning activities. Everyone loves long warm daylight evenings. Twilight is for romance. Moonlight is for magic.

If not [the usual refreshments], then what?



Freshly brewed coffee and Fair Trade chocolate

Tea flavoured with native plant leaves

Bacon and eggs

Sunset drinks



A Chocolate cake baking competition

Wine tasting

Edible weeds

Gourmet food tasting



A Big Brew and Bake-off (Barker Creek Landcare Group, Vic)

Marshter Chef CookOff (Macquarie Marshes Landcare Group, NSW)



Food is the world's best connector. Interesting and unusual foods give people something to get excited about and the buzz with their friends. Successful volunteer groups always pay attention to the social side of their activities and food is the key! If you already have cake competition, tell everyone about it: why not call your next working bee the "Aunty Jacquie's Unique Blood Orange Sponge Cake field day"?

If not [the usual activities], then what?



A string quartet

A Fire Fly BBQ

An Easter Egg Hunt

A Mad Hatters Tea Party

A mudfight

A Teddy Bears picnic

Seed bombing

Spotlighting

Weaving with Weeds

Making nestboxes

Guerilla knitting

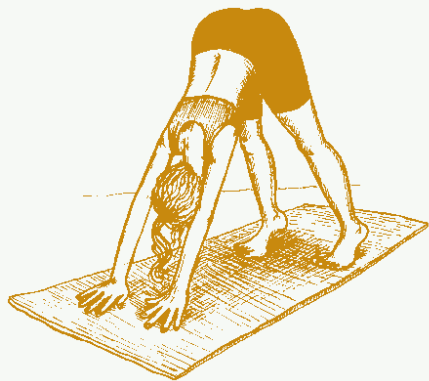
A singing class

A ukulele lesson

A Landcare for Singles day (Yarra Valley Landcare, ACT Landcare, Illawarra Youth Landcare, CVA Darwin, Coastcare for Singles Fremantle)

Outsourcing your nursery to a school class
(Bambara Roselea Bushcare Group, Sydney)

Stage a flash mob (Landcare Australia)



Breaking the routine with interesting, buzz-worthy activities is the secret to attracting new volunteers and reawakening “sleeper” members. It’s also the key to spreading the word and getting media attention. Out-of-the-ordinary activities can attract entirely new members who wouldn’t be drawn to just weeding and planting on a particular block of land. Young people, especially, are looking for activities with variety, sociability and excitement.

More unusual activities

A school education day ([Buckwaroon Landcare Group](#), Cobar)

Partner with a heritage group and start a Heritage Walk (Bambara Roselea Bushcare Group)

Do a dung beetle survey.

Focus on just one species (Capertee Valley Regent Honeyeater Recovery Group)

Tree Triathlon. Swim to the tool collection point, bike to the plant collection point, run to the tree planting site, then we all collapse!

Turf and Surf Day. A surf class and bitou bush weeding morning.

Landcare Olympics. How many plants can you plant in 5 minutes?

Billy Tea and Poetry (Woodford Glen Landcare Group)

Have a birthday party for your group each year (Cooks River Mudcrabs)

Bushcare with Tai Chi, Yoga, meditation. Perfect!

A loyalty program. Rewards for the most weeds pulled.

Weed Jam. At the end of a weeding session invite a local band for a sunset session of music and people bring their own instruments.

WavePlant Surfing Contest. The winner plants 20 trees, the second place 10 trees etc

Coastcare Campout. Dune regeneration and campout for young people.

Bushcare Bike Crawl. Biking from one group's site to another, doing work and enjoying a snack at each place.

Sand sculpture and Coastcare

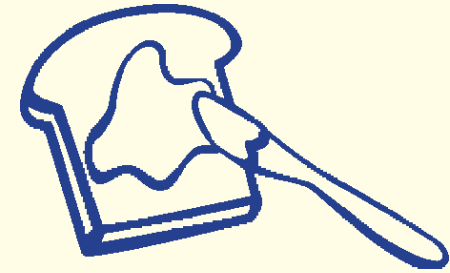
Biggest Weed Competition. A school holiday activity.

A plant ID competition.

Bushcare Stick Up. Make stick sculptures on your site.



Reinvention is an idea from The Diffusion of Innovations (the science of how ideas, practices and products spread through societies.)



According to diffusion experts, what spreads an idea is not persuading more people to do it, but rather the way the idea itself changes. Ideas spread when they become easier, cheaper, faster, more useful and more satisfying. This makes them more attractive to more people.

Reinventing a Landcare or bushcare group might involve small changes like a new name (“Chocolate Lovers BushCare”) or adding a new activity (a moonlight picnic). Or it might involve transforming the group’s purpose, for example changing from a Landcare Group to a Regent Honeyeater Restoration Group. Or it might involve organising an buzzworthy new initiative like Landcare for Singles or BushCare for Kids.

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www.enablingchange.com.au

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