



2014 National Landcare Conference

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1. Executive Summary

Following the 2014 National Landcare Conference and Awards, feedback on the events was gathered through a post-event survey, post-event reviews with the conference committees, and via the 'ideas wall' at the conference. Recommendations and learnings have been distilled into the following report, including comparisons to 2012 where possible.

664 delegates attended the conference, an increase of 15% on the 2012 event, and 395 of these delegates were identified as community members.

The thirteen field trips run on the first day of the conference attracted 331 delegates, with 85% (60% in 2012) of those expressing satisfaction with the organisation of the trips, 86% satisfied with the range or choice (80% in 2012), and 90% satisfied with the relevance (70% in 2012).

When asked about the conference program, which included six plenary sessions, 88% were satisfied or very satisfied, and 90% expressed satisfaction with the networking opportunities on offer. 93% of those surveyed indicated satisfaction with the plenary presentation by CSIRO Futures Leader, Dr Stefan Hajkowicz, making this the most popular session of the conference, closely followed by the First 25 years of Landcare panel, featuring Philip Toyne and Andrew Campbell.

175 abstracts were submitted (an increase of 23% on 2012), and 56 were selected as presentations across 18 sessions in five streams. The Community stream proved most popular, with a satisfaction rating of 85%, and the History stream was the least popular with a satisfaction rating of 58%

The main points which attracted criticism were the choice of venue and ticket pricing. While 62% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the venue, a significant number of comments were received indicating its unsuitability as a Landcare conference venue. As in 2012, the price of attendance was highlighted as a negative point, despite pricing levels remaining the same as the 2012 event, and this was seen as being linked to the cost of the venue hire.

On the impact of the events, 94% of attendees saying that they will apply learnings from the conference in their Landcare work, 90% indicated that the Landcare Awards boost enthusiasm or increase the likelihood of continued participation among Landcare attendees, while 89% said the same about the Landcare Conference.

From a communications perspective, the events proved to be popular across traditional, social and online media, due in part to a lengthy lead time for media promotion, high profile conference speakers, and the tie-in with the 25th anniversary of Landcare as a national initiative. High profile coverage included The Australian, Radio National's Bush Telegraph, and ABC TV's Landline.

Although all plenary sessions were streamed live, there wasn't a significant take-up of this option, with only 32 individuals logging on during the event, potentially indicating that more advance notice of the availability of this service needs to be communicated.

Overall, the 2014 National Landcare Conference and Awards was very well received. A comprehensive list of recommendations across all aspects of the events is provided in the report below, with the following three key areas highlighted as most significant with consideration to any future events of this kind:

1. Organisational lead time, allowing for advance planning and communications



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2. Suitability of venue and location – to ensure a wider choice of venue is available, planning with regard to this needs to begin immediately, with a booking (without incurring cost) entered into as soon as possible
3. Pricing

2. Overview

The 2014 National Landcare Conference was billed as the key knowledge sharing event of the 25th anniversary of Landcare as a national initiative, and took place in Melbourne from 17 - 19 September. Hundreds of Landcarers and Landcare supporters from around Australia came together to share their knowledge, ideas and inspiration. Delegates had the opportunity to hear from a wide range of speakers and panel discussions, both of which were livened by audience participation. Delegates were also encouraged to join in the conversation through Twitter, and all plenary sessions were streamed live across the web, allowing those not in attendance to follow the proceedings live.

Respondents to the post-event survey indicated a high level of satisfaction with the event, with over 83% satisfied or very satisfied with the overall Conference and Awards experience (91% in 2012), 13% were neutral and almost 4% unsatisfied.

The 2014 National Landcare Awards and the Bob Hawke Landcare Award were also presented at the gala awards dinner, which hosted 751 guests, and included some high profile guests, such as former Prime Minister, the Hon. Bob Hawke AC, the Victorian Minister for Environment and Climate Change, Ryan Smith, and Senator Bridget McKenzie, who represented Minister for Agriculture, Barnaby Joyce. This event provided Landcarers with an avenue for celebrating 25 years of Landcare and the many, varied achievements of the grassroots movement, in particular its success in uniting a broad and diverse range of stakeholders to work for a common cause.

The theme for the conference, *Celebrating our history, growing our future*, was tied in with the 25th anniversary of Landcare, and covered a number of different themes including Sustainable Agriculture, Environment, Community, Celebrating our History and Growing our Future, which gave delegates a number of different streams in which to participate.

The purpose of this report is to capture and distil the sentiments expressed by conference delegates through the post-event survey, anecdotal feedback, the ideas wall, and post-event reviews with the Conference committees. The suggestions and lessons learned will be used in the proactive planning of future Landcare conferences.

“Such a wonderful conference and the chance to be a part of it. I, as well as the other members of our Landcare group that attended felt we got a lot out of it and are keen to take some of the ideas learnt back to our group” - Conference delegate

“I really enjoyed the Landcare conference. There were numerous things that I have already applied, and it has changed my mind about Twitter. I can see enormous potential in this.” – Conference delegate

3. Attendance

Attendance at the conference reflected the diversity and far reaches of the Landcare movement. A total of 664 delegates - an increase of over 15% on 574 delegates in 2012 - attended the conference, representing every Australian State and Territory (Figure 1). To help make the conference more



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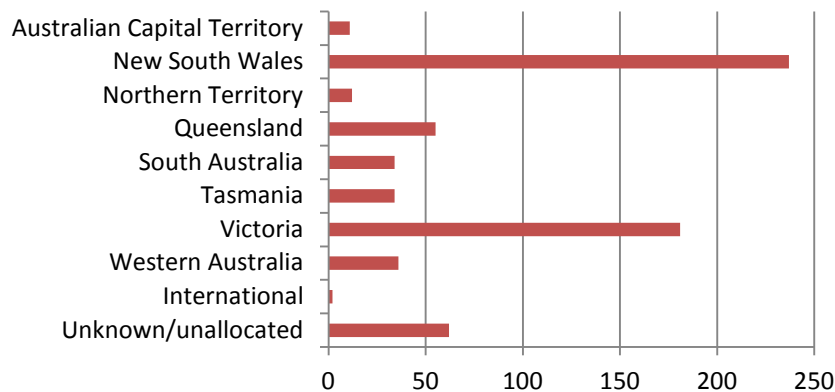
accessible for members of the community, Landcare Australia provided subsidies, funded by the Department of Agriculture, to help cover attendance costs for 56 community delegates at the conference.

Community participants, who paid a cheaper registration rate, made up the majority of conference registrations, followed by, NRM professionals.

Community	395
NRM	194
Govt	52
Student	6
Other (Uni staff, R&D Corps etc)	12
Business	5
Total delegates	664

On geographical spread, New South Wales had the most delegates, with 237, closely followed by Victoria, with 181.

Delegates by State



4. Post-event evaluation

Delegates were emailed an online survey the week after the conference took place. This survey gave delegates the opportunity to comment and rate every aspect of the conference from the food to the field trips.

183 people (28% of all delegates) took up the opportunity to complete the online survey, providing valuable feedback and suggestions. The number of responses suggest that the feedback is representative of the general view (confidence level of 89%, 5% margin of error). Of those who responded to the survey, 56% work in the agriculture sector. The majority of feedback received was positive and most identified the conference to be a success. The following points provide a summary of the feedback received for all elements of the conference, including the registration process, venue, field trips, plenary sessions, concurrent sessions, and National Landcare Awards.

“Congratulations on a wonderful, interesting and useful 2014 Conference.” - Conference delegate



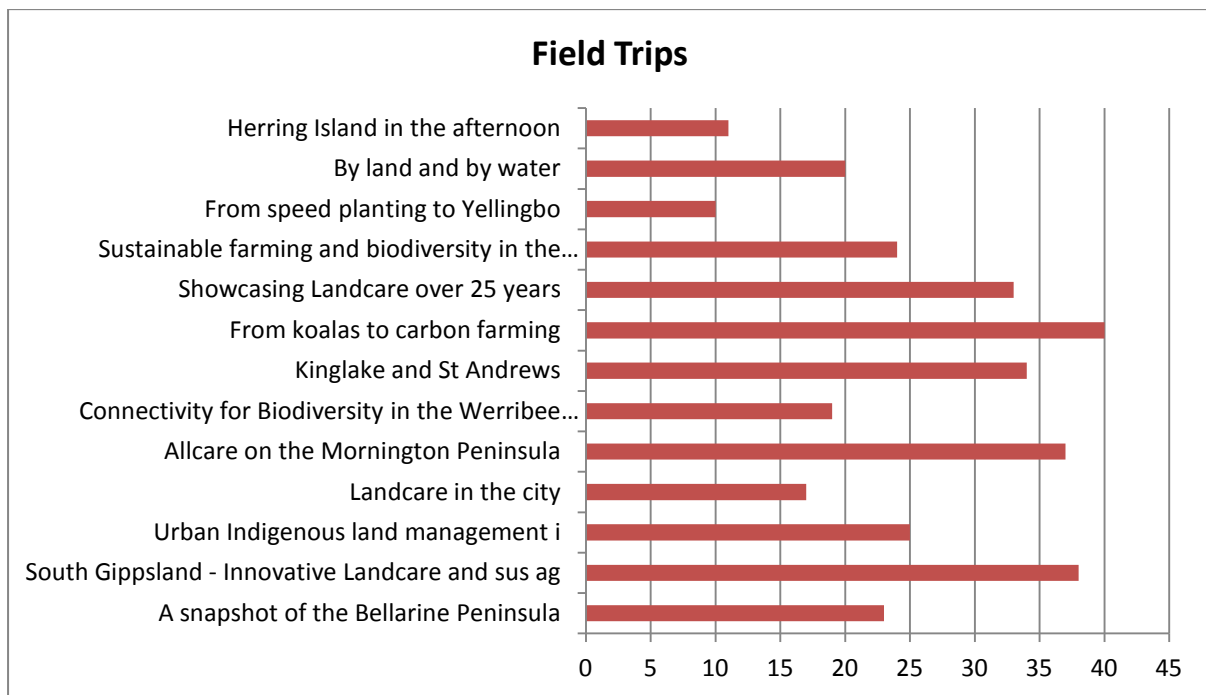
4.1 Field Trips

Thirteen field trips were held across Victoria on day one of the conference, with 331 delegates attending. In the post-event survey, delegates were asked to rate the range/choice, relevance, and organisation of these field trips.

Of those who work in the agriculture sector, 77% were satisfied or very satisfied with the relevance of the field trip they attended, with 18% indicating a neutral opinion.

Overall, 85% of those surveyed were satisfied or very satisfied with the organisation of the field trips (60% in 2012), and 90% were satisfied or very satisfied with the overall relevance (70% in 2012). 86% thought the range/choice of field trips on offer was very good or good (80% in 2012), with just over 14% indicating the choice was OK, and nobody indicating it was poor or very poor.

The breakdown of number of delegates per field trip is outlined in the following graph:



The majority of feedback received on the field trips themselves was overwhelmingly positive, and delegates enjoyed the days. Some recommendations provided to conference helpers and through the survey include that information on the field trips should be issued to those attending at least a week in advance, and more signage made available at departure points.

From an organiser's points of view, although it is difficult to locate a single departure point in a city for such a large number of coaches, it would be a much better option from a logistics and communication perspective, and make it easier for those visiting the city.



4.2 Conference Program

4.2.1 Overview

Six plenary sessions were held during the 2014 National Landcare Conference. These sessions consisted of keynote presentations and panel discussions, followed by a question and answer session. All panel discussions and question and answer sessions were chaired by the Master of Ceremonies, ABC Landline Presenter, Pip Courtney, who proved a very popular addition to the program.

Eighteen concurrent sessions took place across five streams, with a total of 56 speakers presenting during these sessions.

The plenary sessions opened and closed each of the conference days, with concurrent sessions taking place prior and after lunch break, to allow time for rooms to be split and put back together.

Lengthier break times were made available for delegates, as a result of feedback received after the 2012 National Landcare Conference, which indicated that this would be appreciated. 90% of those surveyed were satisfied or very satisfied with the networking opportunities provided, and just over 1% dissatisfied.

Poster displays were set up on the same level as the concurrent session rooms, with just below 70% of survey respondents indicating that they were a useful addition to the conference program (95% in 2012). An ideas wall was made available for people to post their comments and ideas, outside the plenary room, with over 64% of those surveyed favouring this as a useful addition to the program.

89% of respondents to the post-event survey indicated that the variety of presentations across the program were good or very good, with 10% saying they were OK. 88% were satisfied or very satisfied with the program, with 9% neutral and less than 3% unsatisfied.

4.2.2 Plenary and Keynote Sessions

There were high satisfaction levels across the board for all plenary sessions and keynote speakers (one keynote speaker was included in each stream), with low numbers of survey respondents indicating dissatisfaction.

The most popular plenary session was the presentation by CSIRO Futures Leader, Dr Stefan Hajkowitz, entitled Global trends and the next 25 years of sustainable agriculture. 93% of those who attended were satisfied or very satisfied with this session.

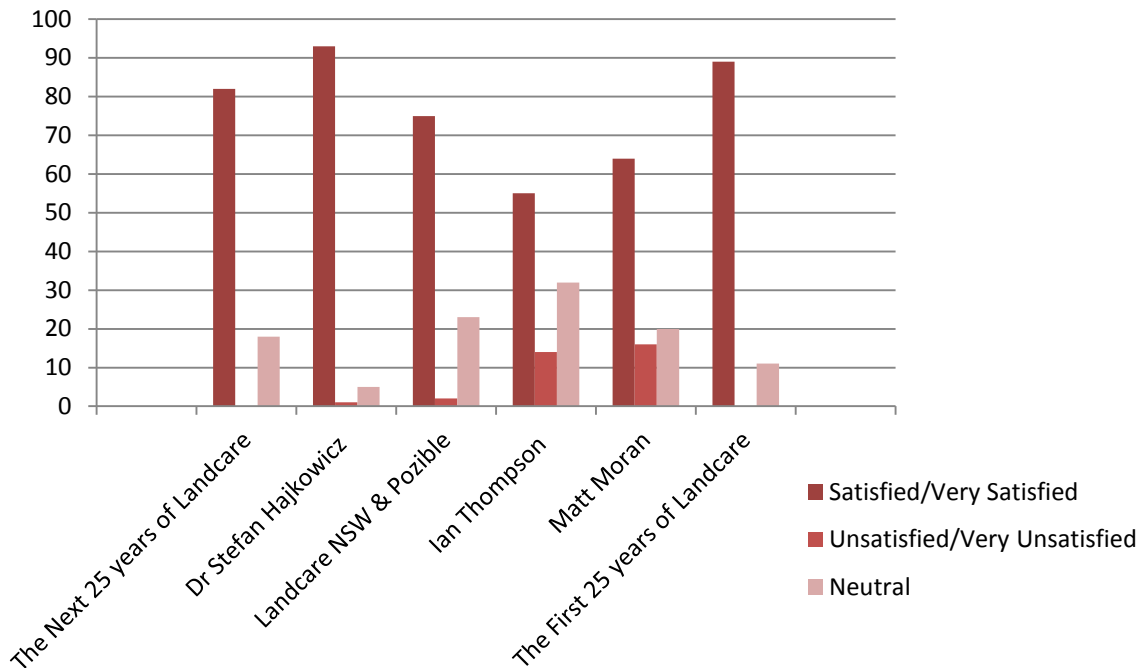
Interestingly, 64% of respondents indicated satisfaction with Matt Moran's presentation, with 20% neutral, and 16% unsatisfied or very unsatisfied. Mixed anecdotal feedback and comments were also received, some of which were full of praise for Matt's session, while others questioned its relevance to Landcare, indicating that perhaps a high profile, celebrity speakers is not a necessary inclusion to the program.

Graphs illustrating satisfaction and dissatisfaction levels across all plenary and keynote sessions is included below.



Plenary session ratings

% of delegates satisfied, dissatisfied or neutral

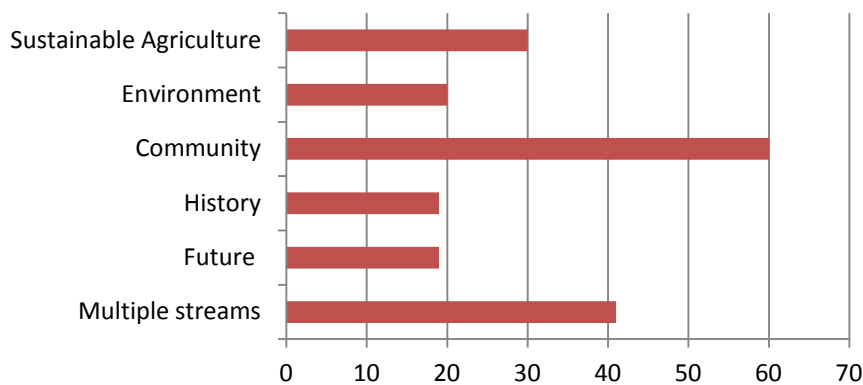


4.2.3 Concurrent sessions

Eighteen sessions on a variety of topics were held concurrently during five streams:

- > Sustainable Agriculture – Challenges for the future & improving productivity
- > Environment – Sustaining & improving our physical environment
- > Embracing our Future
- > Community/Social Environment – Volunteering, collaboration, building & sharing knowledge
- > A celebration of Landcare’s History

Abstracts submitted by stream



56 presentations were allocated to streams and the program populated by the Conference Working and Steering Committees following a widespread call for abstracts, which resulted in 175 abstracts



submitted, an increase of almost 23% on 2012 submissions. The breakdown of abstract numbers submitted by stream is outlined.

The format of these sessions included short presentations by three or four speakers, followed by a panel question and answer section, led by a facilitator. There were also eight concurrent sessions on day two of the conference consisting of short videos for each National Landcare Awards category, followed by a question and answer session with the finalists in this category.

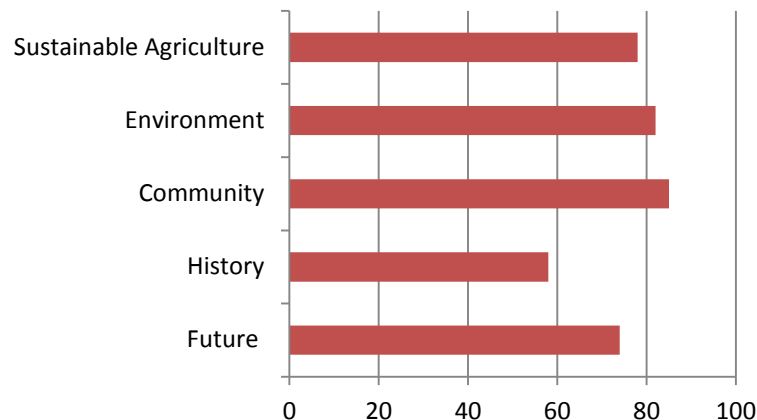
Rather than rating these sessions individually, survey respondents were asked to rate satisfaction levels by stream, as well as identifying the most relevant and engaging speaker across all concurrent sessions they attended.

The most popular stream according to the survey results was the Community stream, with 85% of respondents indicating they were satisfied or very satisfied with it, and the least popular stream was the History stream, with a 58% satisfaction rating. The neutral rating ranged between 14% and 22% across all streams, apart from the History stream, which had a neutral rating of over 38%. Less than 4% of respondents indicated dissatisfaction across all streams.

The satisfaction rating across all streams is outlined in the graph below.

Conference streams - satisfaction levels

% of delegates satisfied or very satisfied



Of all concurrent session speakers, Cam Nicholson of Victoria's Woody Yaloak Catchment Group was selected as the most relevant and engaging speaker by survey respondents. Due to the high number of speakers however, Cam was selected by only 8% of respondents, with only eight of the 56 speakers not receiving any votes.

4.2.4 National Landcare Awards Finalist Sessions

To showcase the work undertaken by the National Landcare Awards finalists, there was a session included in the conference program for eight of the nine Awards categories – the Junior Landcare Team Award finalists were taken to an excursion at Werribee Zoo on the same day.

Of those surveyed 71% had attended one of these sessions, and 63% thought they were a useful addition to the conference program (70% in 2012). 12% thought they weren't a useful addition, and



26% were unsure. 64% indicated satisfaction with the format of the session, with 24% neutral, and 12% dissatisfied.

4.3 Logistics

Respondents were asked to rate a number of key elements of the event organising and logistics, including the venue, catering, on-site and offsite registration process.

Although not included in the survey, a significant number of comments at the end of the survey provided feedback that the conference was too expensive for community members to attend, and that the price should be reduced. The price of the conference was the same as in 2012.

84% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the online registration process (78% in 2012), with only 5% dissatisfied. The organisation used to manage the online registrations, Essential Solutions, were available to deal with any technical issues those wishing to register had, which added to the registration process. The system used – Floktu – was also very user friendly, and the vast majority of technical issues raised were deemed to be user error.

The onsite check-in process received a satisfaction rating of 79%, with 7% dissatisfied. The onsite registration desk was manned the afternoon prior to the conference commencing, and throughout the conference. An online check-in system using iPads and linked to Floktu was used for conference, field trip, welcome function and Awards dinner check-in.

62% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the venue, with 21% unsatisfied or very unsatisfied. The venue also attracted quite a number of comments on the ideas wall and through the comments section at the end of the post-event survey. Many people indicated that a casino wasn't a suitable venue for a Landcare conference, that the venue was too opulent and that if a different venue was chosen, a lower price could be charged to delegates. The venue was deemed to be an 'expensive venue' by delegates, who then perceived that this added to the price of conference tickets.

The catering at the conference attracted a 67% satisfaction rating, with 19% neutral and 14% unsatisfied or very unsatisfied. Some respondents indicated that a greater variety of food would have been appreciated, and that local, more sustainable options should be investigated.

4.4 Social Events

The two social events at the conference were the welcome cocktail reception on the first night, which was held in Crown Palladium, and the National Landcare Awards gala dinner on the second night, which was held in the Royal Exhibition Building.

The welcome reception received mixed reviews, as it also did in 2012. 53% were satisfied or very satisfied with the event, with 45% neutral, and only 3% dissatisfied. The function was a basic stand-up cocktail and canapé affair, with the official proceedings including speeches by Secretary of the Victorian Department of Environment and Primary Industries, Adam Fennessy, Landcare Australia chair, Campbell Anderson, a video message from National Advocate for Soil Health, Major General Michael Jeffery, with Conference Steering Committee member, Pip Job, undertaking the role of master of ceremonies.

The location of this event wasn't ideal, due to the fact that an AFL function was taking place in the other side of the same room at the same time, and both groups of attendees were arriving at the



same time. This provided some confusion to conference delegates, and some felt the venue wasn't suitable for those arriving straight from field trips.

The National Landcare Awards Gala Dinner was a highlight of the conference, with 85% satisfied or very satisfied with the function, and a number of positive comments included in the post-event survey, and sent through to the Landcare Australia team after the event.

Former Prime Minister, Bob Hawke was a very popular addition to the event, and television personality Catriona Rowntree received much praise as MC for the evening. The building received much positive feedback, however the temperature was too cold for some attendees, which was an issue given the size of the building and the unseasonably cold temperature on the day.

Negative feedback included the fact that people had to wait outside in the cold for the venue to open, and that the seating plan didn't work. Feedback from Essential Solutions, the organisation that managed the seating plan and registrations, indicated that this issue would have been worse without names allocated to tables, as attendees moved place cards around and in some cases, place cards were discarded, leaving some people who had been allocated a seat without one.

The Awards still seem to be popular among delegates, with over 90% of those surveyed indicating that they boost enthusiasm or increase the likelihood of continued participation among Landcare attendees. 66% also felt that they could identify one Award winner or finalist that has done something that could be applied to their own Landcare work, with Bob Hawke Landcare Award winner, Colin Seis, identified by over 17% of people.

4.5 The Future

Overall the knowledge sharing aspect of the conference can be deemed a success, with 94% of attendees saying that they will apply learnings from the conference in their Landcare work. 89% feel that the National Landcare Conference boosts enthusiasm or increases the likelihood of continued participation among Landcare attendees.

89% also said that they would attend future national Landcare conferences.

5. Community Subsidies

Landcare Australia, through funding from the Department of Agriculture, subsidised 56 community delegates to attend the National Landcare Conference, with this subsidy matched by the delegate's Landcare group, network, state body, regional NRM body, or Regional Landcare Facilitator.

This system had significant buy-in from community members, however it was undertaken with little previous knowledge of how it ran previously, and could be significantly improved on in future conferences, with lessons learned from this year's process, and feedback received. These recommendations are included in section 7.



6. PR & Marketing

Coverage of the biennial National Landcare Conference jumped markedly in 2014, with Landcare Australia's engagement in running and publicising the event, engaging speakers and utilising its networks as a combined effort running the National Landcare Awards including the Bob Hawke Landcare Award proving a resounding success.

Some highlights include mention of the "major conference" on day one, with a photo story in The Australian newspaper, in addition to a panel interview on Radio National's Bush Telegraph. A live interview on ABC TV News24's Breakfast program with a keynote speaker from the CSIRO was set up but was cancelled at the last minute because of news including terrorist threats and the Scottish referendum developments. The following weekend, ABC TV's national program, Landline, ran a feature on Landcare, with host Pip Courtney including two in-depth interviews from the Conference and Awards and filming "links" between all stories from a Conference field trip in Melbourne's Westgate Park.

6.1 Key Messages

The following key messages were approved by the Conference Steering Committee prior to promotion, and were weaved into any external communications relating to the conference.

- > Taking place in Melbourne from September 17th to 19th and based around the theme, Celebrating our history - growing our future, the National Landcare Conference promises to be the key knowledge sharing event for the Landcare movement as it celebrates 25 years since it went national
- > The theme was included in media releases and websites and was widely referred to. Keynote speakers acted as third party validators in media coverage of the event, which focused on the 25th anniversary.
- > Landcarers across the country grow our food and protect our environment and this year's conference is the ideal platform for them to build a resilient agricultural and environmental future.
- > Major metropolitan media heralded the event as playing an important role in sustaining our natural environment and its productivity, and the range of coverage reflected the varied roles of Landcarers spanning both food production and environmental concerns.
- > The conference program will be engaging and diverse, offering something for everyone involved in Landcare, including farmers, volunteers, community and farming groups, natural resource management professionals, industry and regional bodies
- > The thought-provoking and diverse program was demonstrated through a range of presenters interviewed. Mention of the varied program was included in media releases and repeated in numerous print and online clips, many of which pointed to nationallandcareconference.floktu.com/ including detailed information.
- > Having started out as an unlikely partnership between farmers and conservation groups, Landcare has since grown into a diverse and strong movement that has achieved



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significant results both on the land and in our communities, and is now firmly engrained in Australian society as one of our largest volunteer movements

- > Landcare's strength uniting farmers and greenies was referred to across the range of media, with the movement's success in leading volunteer groups and achieving results a strong focus; as well, media was attracted to covering the event from the viewpoint of how Landcare can adapt to ensure future success.

6.2 Traditional Media

Traditional media outreach for this year's conference was very successful, due in a large part to the fact that there was a single point of contact for media when enquiring about the National Landcare Conference, Awards, and the Bob Hawke Landcare Award. The ability of Landcare Australia's Communications Team to manage the promotions for all three campaigns also lent itself to being able to tailor story ideas based on what media contacts wanted, and having access to all key spokespeople. The 25th anniversary also provided an attractive news hook for media.

Media relations activities reached a cumulative audience of 1,974,436, and attracted an Advertising Space Rate value of \$674,066. 99 print, 16 broadcast and 38 online clippings were recorded, with an even spread across all states, with the exception of New South Wales, which recorded a greater number of local newspaper articles.

6.3 Social and digital media

The #landcareconf14 Twitter hash tag attracted 369 tweets, and was promoted through promotional collateral in advance of the conference, and via the live Twitter stream at the event. The live Twitter feed was included for plenary sessions, and offered delegates, as well as those not in attendance a way of engaging with proceedings. The best tweets were selected and offered spot prizes in the conference wrap-up session on the last day.

144 posts about the conference were recorded on Facebook, and this year's sponsored posts increased the reach and engagement significantly beyond Landcare Australia's existing audience. An audience of 70,262 was reached through Landcare Australia's Facebook posts, and 2,473 people engaged with the posts (liked, commented or shared).

Online advertising was purchased from Fairfax Agricultural Media for two periods of two weeks to attract registrations. The first ran as a high profile position ad on weekly newspaper websites for two weeks from July 17th with a 100% share of voice. These achieved 358,000 impressions and 369 click throughs. A feature also ran on farmonline websites for two weeks from August 25th, and attracted 777 page views. This feature included advertising tiles which linked through to a feature on the conference, profiling the event, speakers, and registrations.

On the Landcare Australia website alone, 6,931 visitors and 12,521 page views were recorded relating to pages about the National Landcare Conference, including call for abstracts information, news stories promoting the conference program, and registration information.

The dedicated National Landcare Conference registration website attracted 7,070 visitors and 31,664 page views.



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All plenary sessions were streamed live online, providing an opportunity for those unable to attend the conference to join in the proceedings. This opportunity was publicised the week of the conference, and resulted in 98 registrations for the site, and 32 individuals logging on during one or more sessions.

Although the technology worked well, and was accessible across all platforms, a lengthier and more targeted promotional period may have helped boost audience numbers. A balance needs to be achieved between promoting early enough to attract an audience, but not too early to affect registration numbers.

7. Reflection Points and Recommendations for Future Conferences

7.1 PR & Marketing

- > The long lead-time to organise the Conference was essential to enable sufficient outreach and create a program including a range of speakers of interest to the media; if possible, even more lead-time would be ideal to help with long lead media.
- > A greater focus on long-lead media could help ensure that even if the event is held during a busy news week, major metropolitan coverage may still be possible.
- > Having one organiser to manage and publicise both the National Landcare Conference and Awards enabled a seamless communications approach and allowed for cross-promotion. The same approach is advisable particularly for the next Conference, which will not have a 25th anniversary as a news hook for the biennial event.
- > Organising relevant high-calibre journalists and VIPs to the positions of Master of Ceremonies and presenters ensures exposure to the diverse and compelling Landcare conference program. In this case, television host Pip Courtney was able to feature the Conference on Landline because she was able to get a local crew in Melbourne to film the event.
- > Including social media outreach in contracts with high profile speakers who are social media users helps reach new audiences. A number of tweets were requested from Matt Moran, who has over 71,000 Twitter followers, as part of his speaking contact. Tanya Ha and Pip Courtney were also supportive of the event through their social media profiles.
- > Including information about live streaming of plenaries from directly after registrations closing could help bolster the number of people not attending the conference exposed to the key Conference learnings.

7.2 NRM assistance process

- > The process should begin significantly earlier to be able to give those community members that receive subsidies sufficient time to book cheaper travel and accommodation.
- > Instead of multiple nominations from the one region to share in the \$1,000, one nomination would avoid disappointment for those who only receive a small amount of funding.
- > The process should be proactively promoted throughout the Landcare community.
- > The NRM regional bodies should be engaged with before the process begins to ensure buy-in across all regions.



7.3 Calls for Abstracts

- > Run the process significantly earlier to allow program to be released and registrations opened earlier.
- > Consider issuing out a template that needs to be completed and standard across all submissions, as well as an example on how to complete the form.
- > All submissions to be kept to a maximum of 300 words, to reduce the length of the conference program book.
- > Make sure communication is clear in the abstract submission process that these are for concurrent sessions, not plenary sessions.
- > Consider asking for plenary abstracts.
- > Send out scoring spreadsheet to reviewing committee to complete with instructions.
- > Note that if one subject matter e.g. community, is attracting the vast bulk of submissions that this is likely to have the biggest audience so allocate room sizes accordingly.

7.4 Cost of Tickets

- > May need to review the cost of purchasing one day ticket especially for National Landcare Award finalists, as buying a day pass worked out at only \$50 cheaper than buying a 2 day conference pass. However, Awards finalists still need to be mindful of the flight and accommodation subsidy they receive.
- > The national conference is going to be more expensive than the state conference.
- > Cost is going to vary depending on state and location.

7.5 Online Registration

- > Possibly ask delegates to select which stream sessions they are interested in attending to get an indication on room sizes which will avoid delegates being disappointed in not being able to get into full rooms.
- > Be mindful of the fact that some people don't have credit cards/Paypal accounts. LAL raised a significant number of invoices for delegates as a result of this.
- > More location and general information before website goes live.
- > Open for registrations much earlier.
- > If same system is used again, need to communicate to delegates how each ticket with a QR code is for a separate event.
- > Wifi issues with at the Royal Exhibition Building caused the iPads to work slower to check people in – check wifi availability at venues.
- > Send a text message to all delegates the night before each individual event as a reminder with location information.
- > There was a lot of last-minute detail in locations for functions, field trips etc. This should be sent out weeks before the event or automatically at time of registration as not everyone has access to their emails once at the conference.

7.6 Field Trips

- > Organising the field trips is too big a job for one person, and requires a team of people to ensure they are run smoothly, and this team to be on hand on the day.
- > All trips to leave from one departure point depending on location if at all possible.



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- > More signage needs to be visible for all attendees.
- > Buses need to be numbered.
- > Review and update WHS and ensure leaders are briefed in advance.
- > Guides should have been briefed better and known what was expected of them. Many field trips ran overtime due to poor time keeping and late departure.
- > Each site should have a safety analysis done and also check if appropriate for coaches.
- > Ensure people with dietary requirements are catered for.

7.7 Venue

- > The directions and orientation in Crown were hard to follow – ensure adequate signage is available.
- > Access to the Welcome Cocktail function was confused by the AFL event – this should have been coordinated better by the venue.
- > AV team was excellent. The in-house team was more expensive than an outsourced provider, but proved to be the best option for smooth running of all AV requirements.
- > Catering staff vague and slow at times.
- > Ample amount of food. A suggestion for next time is to have a nutritionist present at the conference and design the menu. A number of comments also requested more fresh fruit and vegetarian options.
- > Loading dock deliveries – box of merchandise located when LAL staff went looking for banners, which meant we were left with a box of notebooks left over and satchels missing merchandise.
- > Ensure there is a strategy for moving people i.e. bells from the first day. Some people missed the first session because of this, and a large crowd is difficult to manage.
- > Let people know that the plenary room is going to be split in morning tea and to pick up their satchel or personal items.
- > There needed to be a 5 minute change over time between sessions - it was too rushed and presentations were disrupted by people coming in late. Not possible to have sessions running back to back when hundreds of people need to be moved.

7.8 Awards Dinner

- > Some people suggested seating VIP tables only and let guests sit anywhere, however the Conference Steering Committee agreed with having table place cards for all guests, as did Essential Solution staff.
- > Arrange seating or shorter pre-dinner drinks to cater for the older generation.
- > Ensure people can enter the venue as they arrive.
- > Food was well-presented.
- > Glasses not being filled enough by wait staff.
- > Format and timing of the awards worked well due to Catriona Rowntree.
- > Band was excellent.

7.9 Junior Landcare Excursion

- > Organise earlier to give plenty of time for student forms to be completed by schools for taking students interstate.



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7.10 Information

- > Information sent out via email quite late in the piece about aspects of the event e.g. field trip arrangements. Don't assume landcarers look at their emails as regularly as office workers and have facilities to print things out.
- > Send out an information pack two weeks prior to the event, which includes a checklist listing what you need, instructions on getting around the city, maps, etc.
- > Some people weren't aware the lanyard included a mini-program.
- > Consider giving conference satchels out at registration next time, however this could cause an issue during field trips.

7.11 Exhibition Booths

- > Too small and crowded for some.
- > Booths need to be manned at all times.
- > Department of Agriculture indicated the size worked well for them.

7.12 Governance

- > Always ensure strong community participation on both Steering and Working committees. Pip Job or equivalent(s) should have been there at outset.
- > Have a representative from each state.
- > Keep steering committee small but expand the working committee with one group working on field trips, especially from the local area where the conference will be held, and another group working on conference/awards.

7.13 Conference Helpers

- > Staff briefing – we should have all met at the venue the day before and walked through the logistics of it all, so team felt well-equipped to answer questions.
- > Have more people to help out.
- > Split team into sub groups responsible for certain tasks.
- > One team member allocated and responsible to each of the break-out rooms.

7.14 Miscellaneous Recommendations

- > Book 2016 conference and awards venue much, much earlier to ensure the right venues are available – book and promote date and venue in 2015 – would give more venue options.
- > Look at alternative venue types, such as universities, to reduce costs.
- > Educate around the limited choices available when catering for such a large number of delegates, hence a low-key, community venue in a regional town is not necessarily a viable choice for a national conference catering for upwards of 600 people.
- > Begin organisation process much, much earlier – nine months is not enough lead-in time for an event this size.
- > More interactive sessions at the conference.
- > Cloak room at both events.



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- > Hot item as an option for lunch – people feel as though they are getting better value for money.
- > Having a less busy program would allow keynote /panel more time.
- > Include a muster although call it workshops not muster – series of interactive workshops.
- > Timing – make sure not close to school holidays and timing of AFL Final series, which seemed to pump up prices on travel and accommodation.

8. Conclusion

Overall, based on feedback received and a post-event review, the 2014 National Landcare Conference can be deemed a success. The feedback received has also helped greatly to highlight a number of key areas for improvement for future conferences. The major areas of concern to be addressed by future conference organisers should be:

1. Organisational lead time, allowing for advance planning and communications
2. Suitability of venue and location – to ensure a wider choice of venue is available, planning with regard to this needs to begin immediately, with a booking (without incurring cost) entered into as soon as possible.
3. Pricing

Other more minor recommendations outlined above should also be taken on board to ensure that any future national conferences can be even more successful, more relevant and more engaging to the Landcare community.



Appendix A: 'Ideas Wall' and Survey Comments

Ideas Wall

1. The venue and conference set up works, but is not very 'Landcare'. Money could have been better spent while still creating an inspiring environment.
2. Trees Give Life. We grow trees.
3. Thanks for the great awards dinner – I had a ball!
4. We are the caring hands – it belongs to volunteer Landcare.
5. It would be great to have more stories on the rangelands.
6. The 'arty' photo effect on finalist pics was very ordinary. Hurt my eyes.
7. Tap into the passion at this gathering.
8. Start wearing fox fur coats. Wearing fox fur means they will be worth shooting.
9. Let's use 'Grow Railways' instead of growing wider highways and more trucks.
10. Forget the focus on cash, find out what makes people Landcarers, and focus on it.
11. Science at school – Landcare can do this.
12. I would have preferred to hear more from the founders of Landcare than a chef.
13. Landcare conference needs to walk the talk – bags, food, venue. Waste! The next megatrend.
14. Next conference at Atherton Tablelands please.
15. LAL to work with Fed Govt to get a tax incentive passed for corporates – increase \$ into Landcare projects.
16. School Landcare is our future.
17. Don't be afraid to celebrate Landcare failures as well as success.
18. Link with health NSW school program on healthy eating.
19. Don't focus on \$ too much – focus on the people.
20. Teach botany in 3 languages to young people.
21. Need LAL leadership to create a sustainability/ethical assessment tool for Landcare so farmers can use Landcare logo for promo.
22. People at this conference are so friendly. Have not had experience quite like it before.
23. Individual Landcarer Award should be for family/couple – let's see the women acknowledged.
24. Great few days. Great tours and talks. Great people. Venue choice? Surely there is something more environmentally friendly.
25. Just amazing – so inspired. Thank you!
26. Pay farmers to protect biodiversity.
27. Twitter feeds take attention from speakers.
28. Market the green Landcare flags – get a cheap price so groups can use when they are having events.
29. More focus on bushland management/Bushcare – also important.
30. **Land. Community. Achievement. Responsible. Environment.**
31. Too much food waste.
32. Stop relaxing Land clearing laws (WA).
33. More support for Indigenous Landcare involvement in conference.
34. Time to be price makers, not price takers.
35. Hot water for coffee!
36. Australian landscape is diverse. Caring for land is different in each place. Need to keep Landcare broad and flexible and relevant.
37. Use virtual school excursions to Landcare sites via school electroboard.
38. Yr 10 students from Albury High School planted 1400 trees today.
39. Stay positive.



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40. Landcare bags are not biodegradable.
41. Love to know the innovative ways your group gets \$\$ for staff.
42. Where is the Landcare logo?
43. Get Bob back!
44. Local food catering from local producers, e.g. look up spade to blade.
45. Landcare Rocks!
46. Rate rebate for Landcare volunteers.
47. Will there be copies of presentations available on LC website?
48. RU on Facebook? OMG! So are we – Leigh Catchment Group. Love us.
49. Government throwing a few crumbs to Landcare, then watering down legislation to protect the environment is an insulting tease. Rather, create an environment that makes the average Joe want to join a Landcare group.
50. If you are unhappy about poor treatment of Landcare and the environment, speak to your local members and voice your objections.
51. We celebrate a fantastic history and we are talking about reinvigorating Landcare, but we have been talking about it for years! WHO is doing the doing at a policy/leadership level. Show me!
52. It can only get worse.
53. Showcase historic images of Landcare.
54. Extravagance is not sustainable Landcare.
55. Find some protein for the vegies – not a free range egg, artisan cheese, organic nut or bean in sight – even at dinner.
56. Landcare is the over-arch of all NRM projects. Don't ever change this branding!
57. Inland Australia needs more help and resources – largest area, least people, least access. Please don't leave them out.
58. I think they're having a bob each way.
59. Need more room in community forum as this is most important part of Landcare.
60. Where is the chocolate?
61. Why Crown? Is there a more ethical venue in line with Landcare?
62. I agree too.
63. Me too.
64. Where is the Landcare logo? Why not on conference materials?
65. Turned away from community form – not happy.
66. Need to walk the talk – 'sustainable' venues.
67. Walk the talk – more space for community.
68. Strengthen links with councils, GERI and other environmental groups.
69. Perhaps we could plan the National Landcare Awards to be at a carbon neutral venue. Thank you for some great ideas and networking.
70. We need a Landcare branding for all those farmers who farm sustainably – Go Landcare.
71. Hemp not cotton.
72. Recognise and value all the work done in towns through urban Landcare.
73. Landcare needs to advertise more for members, through local Government and media.
74. Albert Morris – Grandfather of Landcare?
75. More incentives to prevent land clearing and revegetating.

Survey Comments

1. Needs to be held at more ethical, sustainable venue in a regional rural centre. Should be a 'Carbon Neutral' event.
2. More varied plenary sessions - better reflecting the diversity of interests. Sessions should be put online so people could watch them later and people who did not attend the conference could



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also watch them. Ideally, the venue would provide the option for 'meet ups' on specific participant-nominated/organised topics to be held during the conference.

3. Make a serious effort with self-financing your good work.
4. Too expensive for the general landcarer, most of the participants were funded.
5. Themed round table discussion- n NRM style discussions across theme(s) - education, interpretation, vegetation mgt, activism, etc..allowing folks to partake in vibrant discussion to participate to connect.
6. No useful suggestions except consider a regional centre
7. Advising at least 8 weeks prior to the Conference to allow interstate guests optimal time to enable them to attend.
8. The conference is totally inappropriate in its present form. Landcare people want a low key awards ceremony.
9. Too much hype, not enough real recognition of everyone's contribution. It's not about winners! The venue is totally over the top. You need a less corporate approach and a more downtown approach.
10. More incentives to regional Landcare to sponsor volunteers to attend conference.
11. Have just been to South Africa's LandCare conference: * Great participation by Junior Landcare * Brief reports next day in Powerpoint format for each excursion * Meaningful resolutions sessions.
12. A couple of the rooms were too small for the audience wishing to hear the presentations and therefore missed out on their first choice for the session. While the winners' presentation sessions were interesting, I feel they took too large a chunk out of the conference agenda.
13. I thought the level of participation was very high. I cannot see how you would get more people to attend actually.
14. No twitter feeds on screens - too distracting
15. Cost was a little steep. Need to be more accessible to community/landcare group members. Many of our members would not have been able to attend unless they had been sponsored by our Landcare Network.
16. Publication of proceedings of the concurrent sessions that one is unable to attend.
17. More space in community sessions. More encouragement of Indigenous participation - invitations to Indigenous Landcare Groups.
18. More funding available for volunteers and part time workers
19. Make it more affordable for volunteers to attend.
20. I really like the topics that showcase innovation and forward thinking by groups. I think this has great potential to stimulate and encourage groups that are flagging.
21. Looking at regenerative agriculture rather than conventional agriculture with Landcare tacked on the side.
22. I thought it was great. I liked the combination of field trips and presentations. Don't allow presenters to use video e.g. Megan Rowlett and Lynne Strong. Short presentations and more discussion from panels of landcarers and award nominees. Less panel forum with high profile celeb type commentators. More time at breaks for networking. A team breakfast could be a good way to start the second day. the venue for conference and awards dinner was very impressive I would be just as satisfied at a less expensive venue however may discourage attendance. There was not a great attendance from farmers as the focus of the program was on Landcare staff and their work. It's not a weakness, it's just why not many find time to attend this event even if subsidised.
23. Did a great job for the audience size!
24. Explore the more innovative approaches around the country in some depth. For Col Seis, say, why does pasture cropping work? Intercropping/co-planting (to build resilience, cycle nutrients, increase water holding capacity etc). There were no speakers on any of these innovative topics,



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yet that is where the future lies if food and fibre production is to be sustainable, if we are to draw down the excess carbon from the atmosphere and if we are reinvigorate rural communities. We need to counter the commercial push from industrial (intensive) agriculture which destroys landscapes and work towards enhanced (smart) farming methods that restore, maintain and build productivity of all our landscapes, even urban.

25. I found the registration process a little confusing and was unable to register on line. Vital information regarding the field trip was sent too late for me to receive it and we nearly missed the bus. I would like to see the next conference held in a regional/rural centre. I'd also think the event should aim to be carbon neutral. I, and many others I spoke to felt uncomfortable having an event that promotes sustainability at a Casino complex. I also felt that the program avoided issues such as land clearing, mining, coal seam gas etc. which for many are major environmental threats to landcare. For me a highlight on the program was Minister Hunt's speech.
26. Bring down the cost of attending.
27. Awards facilitation was not good enough. 45 minutes minus 7 minutes of video which didn't say much, plus a facilitator that decided to spend five minutes talking about his own appreciation of Landcare etc, leaving very little.
28. Time to hear from the winners themselves or questions from the audience.
29. Choose presenters carefully so that time's not wasted on 'big names' with little to say like Matt Moran. Ensure presenters don't go overtime. A lot of time was wasted by the MC promoting twitter, which for this forum was a waste of time. It was a distraction that detracted from the presentations with largely outdated comments about previous day's events screening the following days, and with often inane comments in hard-to-read colours constantly running along the bottom of the screens. Other comments in general as this is the only place allowing comment: Crown Casino was an OK venue for the conference itself but distasteful for a Landcare conference and the materials used in the conference satchels etc could have been more eco friendly.
30. Overall the conference was very good. The Awards sessions were disappointing because the time allocated was too short to get their message. It would be very helpful to have a time allocated for each Award category to actually meet together for discussion. One group attempted this but had to cancel due to timing difficulties.
31. Attendance of future conferences will depend upon the location and travel costs.
32. You need a not sure button in this survey and more space for feedback. 10 mins per speaker in the sessions was not enough when dealing with complex topics. The Exhibition hall was beautiful but cold!!! Not good for northerners. Would have liked more topics that dealt with rangelands issues and more discussion around integrating agricultural and pastoral production with good land management. Most of Australia's landmass supports some sort of business. The Landcare movement cannot divorce itself from business, production, profit issues. If it does, it becomes irrelevant to the very people who care for the majority of our land.
33. I think that more diversity of types of presentation would be good. I found that the presentations didn't really engage with the big issues being raised in the keynote presentations. It would have been nice to see more of a connection between these things. I thought the keynote presentations were excellent - though I missed half of Matt Moran's - the first half I attended didn't seem to have much to do with Landcare.
34. Reduced registration fees.
35. Include some more practical training sessions rather than all lecture based workshops.
36. More time to mingle and network.
37. Fewer slightly longer sessions, it was a bit rushed.
38. Focus more on the diversity of Landcare, the landscapes people come from and the systems they operate in. The conference was very peri-urban, local farmer focused when a significant part of



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the landscape and Landcare community is not within these areas. The conference needs to be relevant to the WHOLE of Landcare.

39. Information earlier regarding concurrent sessions.
40. More case studies of what groups are actually doing. Perhaps a networking case studies forum where groups who are doing similar things, experiencing challenges and wins can present to each other. Also, some of the above questions need a comment box to explain answers.
41. Less 'celebrity' key note speakers, more grass roots case studies, more presentations from people in other fields but with relevance to Landcare.
42. A few points: 1. the venue and catering were over the top- not very Landcare, and not enough fruit available at breaks. 2. The table seating arrangements at the dinner was diabolical- if you ask people to form their own tables and send through dietary requirements in advance, then use them! 3. The display booths were far too small and far too expensive- we are A not for profit movement, not big business.
43. Maybe more interactive sessions with listener participation in the group sessions could be useful.
44. Choosing a big gambling venue to host the program was not popular with people we know in Landcare.
45. Cheaper.
46. Reduce attendance fees ... Gov/Corp sponsorship? Indigenous Presentations and recognition throughout the conference - noticeably absent.
47. I believe the program was quite good as it was & reached a large audience.
48. More time devoted to various categories, less time to general speakers.
49. Shift focus and program to target more participants that are working and delivering on-ground and less so on government funded support and facilitation staff.
50. Yes include some real leadership from Landcare Australia Ltd other than the token Pozible alliance.
51. Increase the number of conference subsidies for community landcarers and publicise them earlier.
52. Yes, just keep moving it each year to a different area to keep marketing its benefits, e.g. Albury or near Adelaide or mid Qld or near Perth.
53. Involve the junior team in the main stream presentations.
54. Maps directions of the venue and less seminars all at once. It was difficult to decide which to attend.
55. More speakers on sustainable ag as most farmers long for more knowledge.
56. Have conferences hosted in rural areas rather than capital cities.
57. Sending out the correct meeting points for field trips with the ticket would have avoided confusion on the day.
58. Might be worth having a look at promoting local sustainable food suppliers, by using their products in your catering.
59. Make it more affordable. I received an enormous amount of feedback from my local Landcare community that the cost to attend the event was extreme, even when our region is only 2-3hrs away. This meant there were many volunteers unable to attend the conference. I was disappointed with the lack of innovation / creativity / thinking outside the box presentations and struggled to find practical ideas to take home to adopt and follow up. For the scale of the event, organisers seemed to be in control however the late email notifications on where/what did not help those delegates who travelled the day before. Providing delegate instructions the week before would have helped.
60. Select venue(s) that reflect Landcarer's principles and values. Make the event cheaper.



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61. While I was satisfied with the venue, I think the conference could have been held in another place maybe out of the CBD in Victoria. Or not the casino. Don't know how you do it but more poster presentations would be nice.
62. More direction on what could be a poster presentation.
63. More accessible to volunteers. Inviting groups to show case posters. Posters on better display (more prominent).
64. It all seems very high end; make it a bit more grass roots/hands on. We need to share our learnings, not just appear as though we've already 'won'.
65. I think the Landcare Conference could encourage participation from university students, especially those studying Agricultural Science as it is highly relevant and important to get awareness of Landcare into our up and coming advisors/scientists in agriculture. As well as environmental science students.
66. Display board of available sessions. Fauna experts & research. More on social ecology, system dynamics & eco-philosophy - requires longer session to cater for Q&A.
67. I voted the catering and venue down as they were far too costly and grand. Not a good look for Landcare that is crying poor when it is comes to funding. Also this must have had some influence on ticket pricing that was way too expensive given there was sponsorship support. This precluded many members of community-based Landcare from attending.
68. On looking back I feel that the venue and location were not really appropriate to enable the grassroots Landcare community to truly celebrate the achievements that they have made over the last quarter of a century + the cost of attending the conference, no matter how you budgeted was significant, I shared an apartment with 5 others and my accommodation bill alone was close to \$200. Whilst the Crown might appeal to the more urbane of us, there were many lost RM's and jeans wandering around the venue not quite at home! It would have been great to have the event at a regional centre, Albury, Ballarat, Mildura say to get closer to the dirt of Landcare. Some time to sit under a tree and network with the bureaucrats, rather than listen to them criticize their minister's speech and refer to the similarities with 'Utopia', whilst drinking a latte and eating a tiny éclair!!!! Although LAL declared when questioned that they had 'involved' grassroots Landcare in the planning, one can't help feeling that it was a very 'top down' approach to what the corporates felt Landcare should be!!!! We need to take back ownership of our Landcare!
69. There needed to be short breaks between the concurrent sessions to allow people the time to move between venues without having to leave the end of a session or arrive after a session had started. While I understand the necessity to have government representatives present at such events the real learnings come from presentations by those people and groups doing works and activities on the ground
70. We need more of the decision makers who allocate federal funds to Landcare to be at the entire conference to see the breadth and scope of the works nationally and engage with people on the ground to get it straight from them how that funding should be allocated.
71. Organisation of the conference? Could have been improved. Delegates were frequently wandering around trying to figure out where to go and what was next. Emailed information at 5 pm the day before is useless. Delegates flying from interstate left home several days before the conference. The information would probably have been helpful - if we had had it in good time. More directions on .where to go., maps/where to find it information would have made our lives a lot easier during the conference.
72. Focus on younger generation achievements.
73. It needs to be cheaper to attract volunteers. Many from our area could not afford to go. Pip Courtney was a great MC and the panel sessions were really good as were the keynote speakers. The information in the leadup to the conference was hopeless. We had already left home when the information for the field trips came through. Many visitors to Melbourne struggled to find



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their way around. We had to meet a bus at Southern Cross station for the field trip, there was no signage or directions, it took our group half an hour to work out where to go to board the bus. The field trip was great once it got away. I missed the conference dinner because I was directed to a venue at South Warf instead of the Exhibition Building. The general information in the leadup to and during the conference was very poor.

74. Repeating some of the concurrent presentations. It was disappointing to miss some of the sessions due to choosing another session.
75. Not sure.
76. Too expensive and too grand a location for many.
77. Perhaps some time devoted for participants to discuss issues for Landcare groups/Facilitators would be time well spent.
78. We (VLC) would like to see a heavier involvement of grassroots landcarers in developing conference theme and content.
79. Bigger and more detailed name tags with info on what project / interest delegate is working on, eg Tony O'Connor, Balcombe and Moorooduc Landcare Group, Project 'Encouraging local school students to make homes for wildlife'.
80. The overall program was good Field days trips were expensive. The average farmer and Landcare volunteers cannot afford the overall cost of the conference plus travel expenses and accommodation costs Ones all item with catering no availability of skim or low fat milk.
81. I would like to see a session at the end of the Conference where attendees from each State all get together and brainstorm ideas for their State from the Conference and have a chance to meet each other as well.
82. Include a volunteer meet & greet session.
83. Perhaps more keynote speakers.
84. Very expensive.
85. Encourage cooperation and collaboration with partners in resourcing the many delivery options. Regional and local interaction is what works.
86. I think some work shop sessions, where some of the issues facing Landcare may be overcome. For example, 1 identified issue was youth engagement. Do a workshop where people can get together and discuss methods to resolve the issue.
87. A more rural setting than Crown Casino.
88. Generally a good program. I personally would have preferred less emphasis on sustainable agriculture and more emphasis on restoration and protection of native ecosystems however I appreciate that you are catering for a wide range of interests.
89. More time for audience questions during panel discussions.
90. Lower cost to volunteers (considering they also have to pay for travel and accom. More appropriate venue Less formal dinners.
91. More interactive sessions epically where we should be heading, future goals and priorities. Break up into focus groups. Expand the board to include future goals.
92. It needs to be cheaper. Is ridiculous how expensive it is. 2. A lot of Landcare members in my region were disgusted that it was held at the Crown. Should be held at a community venue so money goes back into the local community. Should do the same thing for catering. 3. Was not that impressed with the food for the amount of money paid 4. Do not understand why the dinner was an extra \$85 on top of everything else.
93. Earlier notification of field trip information. Ensure field trips leave on time (I know this is tricky but it's a bit frustrating for those who got there at the advertised time). Earlier notification of use of public transport for free.
94. Greater diversity of food.



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95. Difficult with large nos. but always good to have a facilitated session(s) where the participants, esp. Community people, can discuss their issues/ideas in small grps ie participate more actively & be listened to.
96. The program is fine; it is always the cost of these events that is prohibitive for greater community group attendance. I have been fortunate in gaining sponsorship to this event, otherwise I would not be attending. I am one of the many underpaid coordinators who contribute just as much voluntary and weekend effort. We have no holiday pay, nor leave pay to even cover these events, however I did take the opportunity to attend a concert on Friday evening after the conference, and hire a car and visit the Surf Coast for 3 days, including participating in the Angelsea Wildflower Walks. Exceptional- I will return with family one day for a longer stay!
97. As an urban landcarer, although I love the farming side of things, would have appreciated a little more on the urban side of things.
98. 750-odd people attending is pretty good participation! Being the 25th anniversary there could have been more of a focus on looking at lessons learnt over that period. It was a great opportunity having Phillip Toyne and Andrew Campbell at the opening plenary, which could have been capitalised on more. I did not see the value of Matt Moran's talk. I heard quite a few people over the period of the conference feeling dissatisfied at the opulence of the conference, which was a challenge in the face of all the budget cuts to Landcare. A less fancy venue, which still could cater to that many people would probably have been more appropriate. Overall the conference provided lots of great networking opportunities and source of inspiration for our work. Thank you for organising. For the next one, please keep in mind most attendees are operating their groups on very minimal budgets and don't need fancy and would prefer their funds go into on-ground works. In terms of increasing participation the last day could have continued until 5 with the optional opportunity for workshops related to each of the themes. The plenary speakers could have been better chosen, with one government rep probably enough. Pip did a fantastic job as the MC.
99. Increase size of rooms holding community events.
100. Not have it at an expensive location and therefore reduce the cost and make it more accessible for more people.
101. The award sessions were a little short to be able to fit everyone in and have time for questions. Have a giant cake for birthday celebrations!
102. Include good NRM formal research segment.
103. Maybe more interactive sessions on particular topics e.g. Les Robinson's sessions made you partner and participate.
104. Workshop some key questions in break out groups. Have some break out group discussion sessions with some of the plenary speakers e.g. Dr Stefan or Andrew Campbell. You need bigger concurrent session rooms. I couldn't get into some of the sessions I wanted to go to. Better organization in the first place - emails the day before, or during the conference are not always attended too (esp emails about field trips the night before, as I was in transit) - More speakers that work IN landcare, not FOR landcare (farmers, producers, land managers - their real stories) - the venue for the landcare awards was amazing and the staff were really helpful ... just very slow on the drinks service (some on table would have helped).
105. Cost is probably the biggest inhibitor to volunteer landcarers. Keeping costs down I would say would be beneficial for future conferences.
106. Less cost! The tickets were way too expensive +accommodation+travel makes it so many people can't attend. It was all a bit too extravagant really for many grass roots level Landcarers but it was informative and the social parts were fun which creates the time to strengthen our networks and create new Landcare friendships.



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107. Consider holding conferences in appropriate regional centres rather than cities. Have a more high profile drawcard keynote speaker, such as Davis Suzuki was for the last conference. Pick an awards venue where everyone has a chance of seeing and more importantly hearing what is happening. The exhibition building was a disaster of a venue more suited to a long lunch and the meal was a very poor selection of food for such an event e.g. fish for both entrée (tasteless) and main (smelt not fresh) and tough steak, many guests were stuck with both fish dishes.
108. More time for networking. More hands on, interactive sessions.
109. Identify keynote speakers with greater connection to Landcare.
110. I think it was pretty good and I can't think of any changes.
111. Cheaper tickets. Better conference venue. Larger rooms for individual speakers 15 minute talks and 5 minute questions. Don't have tweeter running constantly on main screens. Only have key note speakers that are relevant to Landcare issues, not celebrity chefs.
112. It would be good to see some international case studies or perspectives on Landcare and sustainability.
113. The concurrent sessions that had 3 speakers did not have enough time. More alternative and innovative agriculture.
114. Larger rooms sizes for the breakout sessions - I was unable to attend the sessions I wanted to attend due to overfull rooms.
115. Make it less expensive for community volunteers.
116. Introduce an 'Australian Government Partnerships with Local Government Award'. Also have the best of Local Government as a Keynote Speaker and also a Concurrent Session. Continue to have the best and the brightest of our 20-40 year olds as Conference Speakers. Whilst the History has been well-marked and despite some clear omissions of recognition of people involved 'back then' at this year's 25 year Celebration; those involved with the very development and working to get the name of Landcare as the theme for the Decade - which was the work of NSCP which then became NLAC - and with many members of NSCP further appointed by the Minister to go on to serve on NLAC to carry on the work that was started towards getting the Decade of Landcare, to fully running and to support the newly appointed National Landcare Facilitator and ACF and NFF representatives who joined NLAC - it is time to 'march on'. That said, a concurrent session at any National Conference for a few to be gathered where newer Landcarers can ask questions about the 'back then' could be a fun way of celebrating our history whilst the most important thing is growing our future. I am think this is the last box for comments so I just want to add in a BIG way, as there was no opportunity earlier to comment in this survey that I could see – Pip Courtney was an OUTSTANDING MC - just terrific style, encouragement to questioners to feel okay about standing up - and very generous with her sharing of good tips, ideas and advice. Just excellent. Thank you LAL too for all that you worked so hard to provide to us as attendees.
117. Better organisation on first morning at conference venue - where to go, signs at the different rooms saying what was on. Venue needs better lighting to see the posters. More seating for eating meals, more choice of food at morning/afternoon tea e.g. fruit, not just chocolate éclairs, more cappuccino outlets.
118. More question time for Government Ministers. There were many questions to be answered but not enough time.
119. Improve schedule to allow sufficient time for speakers.
120. A real theme of the conference was ensuring Landcare knowledge was passed on to future generations. Maybe the next conference could focus on lessons learned and mentoring the upcoming landcarers.
121. I would like to have been able to work out who was speaking and when (but then I wouldn't have heard some excellent speakers by being in the wrong room).
122. Conference proceedings online. An abstract of some of the keynote talks.



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123. The before and after photos were good to provide examples of what can be done and where the various groups have made significant progress.
124. Questions after each speaker within the concurrent sessions rather than at the end a panel.
125. Make it more affordable... give people like our field trip leaders an opportunity to attend without making them pay for the conference. They are doing such a great job by showing us around there Landcare region it's the least Landcare could do for them. Also the venue was very extravagant, maybe cheaper venue, cheaper tickets, more people? The bags that were given out are NOT biodegradable, along with pens, coffee cups and books. I think if Landcare want to walk their talk they should take a look at this and choose recycled or biodegradable items.
126. Improved content of papers and so less concurrent programs from fewer presenters.
127. More information from CSIRO like what Dr Mark Howden and Dr Stefan Hajkowicz.
128. I thought the set out, structure and organisation of this conference was excellent, well above expectations.
129. Learned a lot from the sessions and networking with other group members.
130. Ask potential participants what their biggest issues are before the conference and look to ways of addressing those issues. Have a forum that people can have 3 minutes to explain an issue and allow people listening to aid the resolution or direct them to people who might have the answers. This would have helped me!
131. Too dear. Making it cheaper by conducting it in a different place. The only reason I went was because I was sponsored and every other volunteer I spoke to was sponsored too.
132. Much too crowded, need space for interaction. Have a Q&A with no presentation, just a small panel and plenty of time for audience questions.
133. A venue that is true to sustainability - and in general more sustainability and recycling during the conference.
134. I received an email with 'tickets' to the 2 field trips for which I was the guide. One ticket was in the name of Stephen Barker but when I saw the itinerary realised one ticket was not related to either Burke Rd. Billabong reserve or Herring Island. At Herring Island, I was given a 'Pocket Program' which seemed to suggest I could attend the next 2 days of Conference. This was the first indication that I could attend the conference, and by then too late to follow up. I also consider a casino an unsuitable venue for a Landcare conference.
135. Do not have people hanging round outside dinner venue no seating once inside not all members are 100 % fit. I have physically suffered very badly as a result of this. I am sure not the only one
136. it was fine.
137. encourage more people from the grass root level.
138. Hold them in regional centres so they can better involve the Landcare regional community.
139. Following through on some of the keynote speaker presentations with online forums later in the year that provide ideas on the marketing of new niche products. ref: Stefan Hajkowicz
140. An extra day just for networking would be great. There were so many people I wanted to catch up with but just couldn't.
141. Concurrent sessions precluded choices across wide topics. Several emails were poorly timed- e.g. confirmation of registration and dress code for dinner at 5.00pm on Tuesday when most people had left home and travel options for the dinner venue late on Thursday. City venue is not appropriate for a LC conference - Travel to country sites is slow and accommodation is expensive. Total cost precluded participation by community landcarers.
142. Don't have people standing around in a freezing wind for half an hour before allowing them access to the dinner venue. When choosing a menu for the convention - take into account the fact that there are no seats.
143. You do not need expensive venues. Many have commented that so much money was wasted on the venue (like the Landcare advert) that could have been spent on real practical solutions and supporting real Landcare groups in the field. Like the Landcare advert, it was a beat up.



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However, the networking opportunity was brilliant. Being a professional agriculturist, I also felt that the sustainable agriculture sessions could have been more useful and relevant. I could nominate many different talkers who would have a more practical useful presentation than those that I had seen.

144. It needs a bit more scientific interest in the concurrent sessions.
145. A more appropriate venue conducive to community groups/representatives There was some international delegates/representatives present - but more would be ideal - last international conference was 2006 – why doesn't Australia take more pride in its export of Landcare?
146. I'd like to see much more analysis and investigation into this thing called Landcare. It evident that Landcare is a 'broad church' and it could be substantially improved by hearing more analysis of what works and what doesn't rather than here what we did or are doing. Also if Landcare really is a broad movement then we need to hear from all parts of Landcare
147. Send out programs out prior to the conference so there is time to read them and make decisions. The tweets constantly running on the screen were very distracting.
148. Keynote speakers, as with other speakers, should be clearly told they are not to cram too much into a single presentation. One speaker I heard on Friday morning talked very fast to the point of being hard to comprehend and he had to skip over half of his slide show as he could see he was running out of time. Not a good look for a keynote presentation!
149. More emphasis on community groups in the urban area