

LANDCARE



GET CONNECTED WITH THE ENVIRONMENT
IN YOUR COMMUNITY



HOW TO START A
LANDCARE GROUP



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ABOUT LANDCARE

Landcare plays a leading role in advocating a balance between Australian sustainable land management practices and environmental conservation.

Landcare activities deliver a diverse range of positive environmental and community outcomes. These include the environmental protection, enhancement and conservation of land, water, waterways and coasts, natural habitat restoration to enhance biodiversity, building resilience in Australia's food and farming systems, and helping create social cohesion and wellbeing in communities.

From the coast to the country, and from urban cities to the outback, landcare's greatest asset is its people. With over 6,000 groups and 100,000+ volunteers, the landcare movement is diverse and encompasses farmers and farming systems groups, landowners, Landcare groups and networks, Traditional Owners, Bushcare and 'Friends of' groups, Coastcare, Dunecare and Rivercare groups,

Landcare Australia supports, promotes and raises funds for Landcare groups and volunteers across Australia.

GETTING STARTED

Each year more than 1/3 of Australians volunteer their time to the causes they care for. In 2019 that equated to 596.2 million hours contributed through community groups and non-profit organisations. Contributing your volunteer time to an organisation or group as opposed to going it alone, amplifies your impact and generates a larger return on investment to the cause for your time.

Landcare groups can be formed around location (e.g. your local park or nature reserve), topic (e.g. habitat restoration), or campaign (e.g. nest box installation).

Importantly, anyone can start a Landcare group. Landcare groups are made up of people who have a common purpose to restore, enhance and protect the coastal and marine environments in their community. If you are ready to get started on forming your new Landcare group, here are few useful tips on how to get started:

KEY STEPS

1. Check for existing groups

There are thousands of Landcare volunteers across Australia and more than 6,000 Landcare groups that already exist, so before you get started and kick off your new group, be sure to check what groups already exist in your region. Contact your local council, or you can search for a group on the National Landcare Directory here <https://landcareaustralia.org.au/landcare-get-involved/findagroup/>

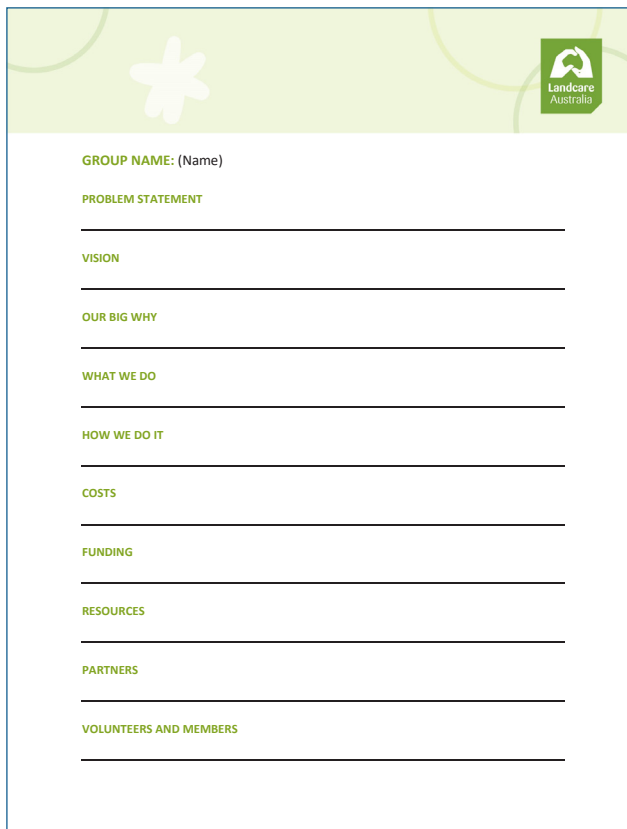
You may discover that a Landcare group or other environmental community group already exists in your area. It is incredibly valuable to find out who else is operating in your area and reach out to ensure you are linking in with existing groups and contributing to coordinated local efforts. They can assist with useful information about local operations, environmental issues and become a precious partner.

2. Start fleshing out your ideas

Getting some initial thoughts down on paper will assist you to communicate your ideas to others and get them involved. It also helps to have a foundation from which to speak to local authorities such as local government or a local Landcare Facilitator or Coordinator. It can be a tricky line to discover how much planning you should do before getting others involved. On one hand, it's important to get your thoughts in order to help you clearly communicate and persuade others to come along on the journey. On the other hand, it is important to not get too attached to the details, as it is vital to engage people and allow others to input and feel a part of the group and its formation.

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The [Community Group Canvas](#) is a template that will help you think through your initial ideas. Prior to a community meeting, the key areas to think through your Problem Statement (the environmental issue you are trying to solve) and the Our Big Why (your reason for coming together) as these will assist you to communicate the need to your audience and involve Partners (as this will assist you with understanding who else to invite).



The image shows a 'Community Group Canvas' template. It features a green header with a white flower icon and the Landcare Australia logo. The main body is white with green text labels for various sections, each followed by a horizontal line for input. The sections are: GROUP NAME: (Name), PROBLEM STATEMENT, VISION, OUR BIG WHY, WHAT WE DO, HOW WE DO IT, COSTS, FUNDING, RESOURCES, PARTNERS, and VOLUNTEERS AND MEMBERS.

3. Gather support and assemble a core group

Reach out to your community broadly to garner support for your new group. Assembling a group of individuals to guide the group in its initial stages has many advantages including:

Credibility

When your group is diverse and representative of your community, it is more likely that the group will get off the ground and have enthusiastic support. Look to involve different community organisations, people with different interests and cultural backgrounds, Traditional Owners, local government, Landcare facilitators or Coordinators, and government agencies like natural resource management agencies and catchment management authorities, local businesses and schools.

More ideas

While it can be more difficult to take on board the many ideas of others, the end product will always be more interesting and effective than if you had approached it alone.

Opportunity to educate the public about your issue

The more involvement you get from the community in the initial stages, the more advocates you will have spreading the word.

Membership, support and fundraising

Each of the people you get involved will know hundreds of other people, and the connections you make in these early stages will make a huge difference to how quickly you can get your group off the ground.

Gather relevant experience

It is important to engage a group that includes the relevant stakeholders and key supporters as well as people with specific knowledge in the issue.

One of the best ways to kick off a new group is to hold a community meeting. Invite people to participate and find the balance of social, informative and creative. Present your planning template and gather the input of others. Using post it notes to add ideas to the planning template can be an effective way to capture input and be able to move things around easily. Treat it like a brainstorm session, where all ideas are captured and then refined by a steering committee or your core group at a later stage.

An alternative to a community meeting could be using social media (Facebook groups work well for this), existing local networks, and surveys to gather input and establish interest.



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4. To formalise or not to formalise

When it comes to formalising your group and attending to legalities, there are many options to consider at varying degrees of complexity, including deciding on a legal structure, electing a committee of management or executive committee, insurance requirements, Occupational Health and Safety, formalising membership processes, setting up a bank account or obtaining an ABN.

These issues broadly fall under the governance of your group and they are important aspects that need to be decided and addressed. There are many benefits to formalising aspects of your group, however not all are essential right away and particularly in the early stages you may wish to keep it fairly simple. In the very first stages you may wish to elect a committee who can gradually assess next steps as they become important for things like gaining funding, insurance and being able to work effectively with authorities. Talk to your local Landcare peak body in your state or territory for information on becoming a member and how they can support your group's activities.

5. Connect with others who can support you

Connect with the people in your community who can help you get started and bring your ideas to life:

- Local government, water, natural resources or catchment management authorities
- Local Landcare facilitator or coordinator
- Landcare State and Territory peak body in your region:
 - ACT <https://actlandcare.org.au/>
 - NSW <https://landcarensw.org.au/>
 - NT <https://landarent.org.au/>
 - QLD <https://qwalc.org.au/>
 - SA <https://landcaresa.asn.au/>
 - TAS <https://www.landcaretas.org.au/>
 - VIC <https://www.landcarevic.org.au/>
 - WA <http://www.landcarewa.org.au/>

6. Connect with Landcare

Register your new group with Landcare Australia's National Landcare Directory and receive a Landcare logo for your group: <https://landcareaustralia.org.au/nld-form/>

Keep connected with Landcare and access resources, campaigns, case studies with ideas for your group, and grants opportunities, visit the Landcare website and subscribe to LANDLINK newsletter and the Landcare in Focus magazine: <https://landcareaustralia.org.au/resources/publications/>

Share your Landcare story online and submit your stories, video and photos to the LANDLINK newsletter, Landcare in Focus magazine or on Landcare Australia's social media channels.

Explore Landcarer – there are community networks on this page for people just like you <https://www.landcarer.com.au/>