

Statement of Common Purpose

*Landcare communities and regional NRM organisations
working together in changing landscapes*

20th April 2012

1. Signatories

This Statement of Common Purpose is an agreement between the **National Landcare Network** and the **National NRM Regions' Working Group**.

The National Landcare Network is the advocacy and representative body for Landcare¹ at the national level. It consists of representatives from peak bodies for Landcare in each State and Territory, and where no peak body exists from nominated representatives for that State/Territory.

The National NRM Regions' Working Group is the representative body of the Chairs of Australia's 56 regional Natural Resource Management organisations. Its members are the representatives from the State and Territory groups of the Chairs.

This initiative is supported by the Australian Landcare Council, Landcare Australia Limited and the National Landcare Facilitator.

2. Purpose of the Statement

The purpose of the Statement is to establish an enduring and productive relationship between our organisations that uses our collective capacity to optimise outcomes for the protection of natural resources in Australia.

We aim to do this by developing a collaborative relationship at the national level that will foster effective working partnerships nationally, regionally and locally, where we have interests in common, and can collectively produce better value and impact.

The benefits of working collaboratively are:

- Landcare and NRM Regions together can more effectively address environmental challenges to maintain and improve landscape health and resilience;
- Better linkages between community empowerment and ownership, and policy development and delivery;
- Opportunities for mutual public recognition at all levels, strengthening the joint and separate reputations of both partners.

The risks of not working more collaboratively together are:

- We fail to adequately address landscape challenges to achieve improved environmental health and resilience;
- We weaken our reputations in the eyes of communities, governments and other investors;
- We have a divided, disengaged and disempowered community;
- We lose community capacity and social capital.

3. Our Shared Objective

We share the common objective of:

Fostering communities that are aware, engaged and active in ensuring Australian landscapes are healthier, better protected, better managed, more resilient and provide essential ecosystem services in a changing world.

¹ Landcare in this document refers to the grassroots movement that encompasses individuals and groups embracing the ethic of caring for their local environment. It includes all 'Care' groups: Land, Coast, Bush, 'Friends of' and farmers' production groups

4. Individual Focus

We each have a different focus to what we do. Understanding that difference and acknowledging each other's organisational goals, operating approaches and constraints will enhance our collaboration.

4.1 Landcare

- Fosters community self-determination;
- Stimulates voluntary participation in learning about and taking action to address local environmental and sustainable production issues;
- Facilitates the adoption of changed practices;
- Builds community capacity and contributes to the social fabric of communities by enhancing resilience and cohesiveness;
- Brings local expertise and knowledge to the challenge of sustaining landscapes at broader scales.

4.2 Regional Bodies

- Develop regional landscape plans and prioritised investment targets that align government (Commonwealth, State and Territory, and Local) directions with regional community visions for the region, that are based on sound technical knowledge;
- On behalf of larger investors, broker investment in priorities outlined in regional plans, and build regional and community partnerships to implement projects;
- Foster the skills and capacities needed by communities to implement plans.

5. Complementary Strengths

The signatories recognise and acknowledge that in working towards a common objective, much of our work is interdependent and that each can bring complementary strengths to the task when collaborating effectively. For this purpose, our particular strengths are:

5.1 Landcare

- Developing local ownership of issues, solutions and the landscape changes achieved;
- Broad recognition and good reputation in the community;
- Informal structures that enable flexibility and the capacity to quickly respond and adapt to emerging issues and changed circumstances;
- Good local knowledge that supports local innovation and solutions.

5.2 Regional Bodies

- Regional perspectives of landscapes and communities;
- Engaging communities and other stakeholders in developing and implementing regional plans for landscape enhancement;
- Institutional and organisational capacity;
- Established mechanisms for working cooperatively amongst the Regional Bodies, and for linking with governments at all scales;
- Access to technical skills and expertise.

6. How We Will Work Together

6.1 A framework for delivery

We agree to meet annually:

- to develop views on major issues of common interest;
- to review our collaborative arrangements;
- to develop annual work plans;
- to review this statement and the success of its implementation.

We will meet at other times as needed to drive work on agreed projects.

6.2 What we aim to deliver

Through our respective networks at state, regional and local level, the signatories will work together on:

- developing the mutual recognition and respect that are required to make this agreement work;
- investigating and promoting mechanisms for more effective collaboration between Landcare and regional NRM bodies across Australia at all scales;
- exploring and promoting continuous improvement in the community engagement activities of regional bodies;
- identifying and addressing differences, including points of tension, at the national, state and regional scale;
- a new combined and enhanced capacity to:
 - contribute to policy formulation at the national and state levels and
 - strengthen community input at the regional and local levels.

7. Communication and Support for the Agreement

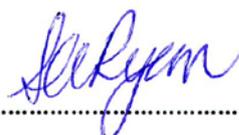
The signatories agree to actively promote this Statement within their member organisations and to be supportive of its intent amongst their wider stakeholders.

Signed: 

David Walker

Chair, National Landcare Network

Date:

Signed: 

Dr Sarah Ryan

National Natural Resource Management
Regions' Working Group

Date: