

A group of young people are sitting in a circle on a grassy field, possibly participating in a community activity or meeting. In the foreground, a woman with sunglasses on her head is smiling and holding a smartphone. The background shows a large, open grassy area under a blue sky with some clouds.

WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO YOUNG PEOPLE IN LANDCARE RESPONSE TO THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT'S REVIEW ON THE NATIONAL LANDCARE PROGRAMME

*Intrepid
Landcare*



Intrepid Landcare is not your usual on the ground 'Landcare group'.

We are an adventurous organisation that empowers young people to lead on stuff that matters. We provide a common space to inspire, connect and empower young people to act and lead with Landcare.

Our vision is for young people to be connected with their communities and care for the environment.

Our mission is to empower young people to lead on stuff that matters.

Our definitions

- + Stuff - "Stuff that matters can be a cause, project or interest that is important and makes a difference"
- + Young people - young people aged 16 years - 30 something

Why Intrepid Landcare? By creating a national movement connecting young people to drive and lead environmental initiatives that are relevant and important to them, we believe we will have the best chance forward in continuing an already highly effective movement which continues to repair the Australian environment, combat climate change and leave this place in better condition for future generations.

Who contributed to this submission? This submission is to complement our individual online surveys and capture the ideas and voices of young people involved in Intrepid Landcare to meaningfully contribute to the review of the National Landcare Australia Programme.

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A NEW DIRECTION

Climate change poses the biggest uncertainty for all life on earth. We are already seeing the effects of climate change driving ecosystem collapse. Daily news of coral bleaching, mangrove dieback, wildfires, stricken droughts and widespread flooding is a reminder of the future we living now and into, and that we must act today for our future.

This is why supporting Landcare is important. Landcare gives Australians the access to do stuff that matters in their local community for the environment. This could be on their paddock through to their urban patch of parkland. The last 30 years of Landcare has transformed landscapes back into functioning ecosystems benefiting the economy, social fabrics of communities, cultural connection and environmental resilience and sustainability. The rich history of bringing farmers, conservationists and politicians together to invest in a sustainable future for Australia's land and water should be acknowledged and foremostly, financially supported through the investment of the National Landcare Programme.

There are a number of aspects of the National Landcare Programme that are positive. We welcome the Australian Government's commitment to engaging with a diverse group of people and organisations to inform the future of the Programme through a formal review. However, the short timeframe for the review may limit contextual in depth responses that would largely benefit the review process. In light of this we have focused our submission, as a national organisation representing diverse groups of young people involved in the Landcare movement, to present a new direction in response to the following scope:

Approaches to and effectiveness of engagement with the community and with industry for the National Landcare Programme.

Intrepid Landcare and our supporters reflect on our experiences in Landcare (e.g. the National Landcare Programme) and present a new direction. There are a number of common themes and those being, the need for better coordination between the regional natural resource management and Landcare groups. This is particularly needed where there is a lack of capacity to meet the demand of

Landcare or more broadly environmental issues. This could be addressed with increasing support resources for the Regional Landcare Facilitator Program, and review capacity constraints in priority areas with high population growth density areas or marginalised communities.

We also need to share the benefits and results of the many projects funded through the Programme. This will increase the value proposition of Landcare and more effectively encourage the wider community, corporate and industry groups to co-invest in projects.

We also need the Programme to invest in the development of young people to build their skills and capacity to lead in their communities. We present two opportunities that are currently in development given recent funding from the NSW Government. As a national organisation with a mission to empower young people to lead on stuff that matters to them, we believe we are in a good position to facilitate this conversation and expand our programs across Australia.

The last comment is on future employment opportunities for young people in the environment. There are minimal environmental jobs available for young people and with the current oversupply of qualified young people seeking employment in the environment, the Programme could facilitate a skilling program beyond the Green Army Programme. This is why we are empowered to connect young people across Australia to share employment opportunities and pathways in for natural resource management of our land and water

We choose to not live in a future of extreme uncertainty and this is why we are empowered to connect young people to act and lead with Landcare. We look forward to hearing from the Australian Government to discuss future opportunities to effectively engage young people in natural resource management, sustainable agriculture and Landcare.

Megan Rowlatt + Naomi Edwards
Co-Founder of Intrepid Landcare

WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE THINK ABOUT THE FUTURE OF LANDCARE

Maddy-Rose Braddon - Lismore, New South Wales



Originally from a farming background, she has swapped her boots for flippers and is completing a Bachelor of Marine Science (Coastal Management) at Southern Cross University in northern NSW.

She was recently sponsored by Intrepid Landcare to attend the National Landcare Conference. Her ideas about the future of Landcare was inspired by this unique experience.

“My main concern is climate change. I worry about what increasing fires, floods, droughts and irregular rainfall will mean for our native vegetation, our coastlines and

our unique wildlife. Landcare has a fundamental role to play in strengthening our land, water and biodiversity through all of the on-ground activities undertaken by the hundreds of amazing Landcare groups.

After attending some really informative, inspiring talks by scientists, land carers, natural resource groups and government agencies at the 2016 National Landcare Conference, I feel that one thing is clear: collaboration leads to action. Working together using integrated, holistic approaches is the best way to ensure that real outcomes are achieved for the sustainable, long-term benefit of the community, and our land, water and biodiversity.

Young people have a big role to play too. By working alongside our Landcare role models we can be the change we wish to see in the world. I am incredibly energised, inspired and ready to leap into action with Intrepid Landcare in my region.

I feel that by engaging the next generation in caring for our country, we have the chance to help make Australia more resilient to the effects of a changing, warming, wilder climate. We need to make sure that the doors are open for people from marginalised groups, too, which is an area I see that could be improved upon.

In terms of supporting young people in Landcare into the future, I think the government really needs to be looking at how caring for our country can be integrated more into schools. I'd love to see more agricultural awareness being integrated into the school curriculum, more outdoors experiences, and more knowledge of soils and food production being taught at all levels of education. Of course, there should be more funding being put into efforts such as Intrepid Landcare. Young people want to change the world, but they also love an adventure, and why not reward them with that.”

Naomi Edwards - Gold Coast, Queensland



Naomi has roots from the Darling Downs in southern Queensland and has been a coaster for most of her life. She was recently awarded the 2016 National Young Landcare Leader, is co-founder of Intrepid Landcare and currently completing a PhD in coastal management at Griffith University.

Her response to the review is a reflection on her in depth experience with leading 'land and water care' initiatives for over 10 years, and long standing representations on many natural resource boards and committees.

"I think there needs to be better coordination and communication overall.

Programme delivery approach needs to be reviewed, especially the timing of program approvals and funding allocations. I have been in many meetings when I have heard that the Australian Government has not paid invoices for Programme-specific projects. This can put regional natural resource management and

Landcare groups out of pocket for a period of time, which can place unneeded stress on program directors and managers, and volunteer groups. We need to reduce the red tape and paperwork and spend more time on the ground where it counts.

There needs to be more face to face engagement between the Australian Government and the people who deliver Programme projects. This could be facilitated through the coordination of regional forums to showcase the benefits of projects, which would also enhance the value proposition with community and industry engagement with sharing knowledge.

Undoubtedly, there needs to be better coordination between regional natural resource management and Landcare groups. This could be facilitated with increasing resources for the Regional Landcare Facilitator program based on per capita and strategic priorities. It is crazy to think South East Queensland only has one Regional Landcare Facilitator to support the needs of Landcare groups and industry partners across one of the fastest growing regions in Australia.

We also need to better communicate the benefits of Landcare. This should not be solely the responsibility of Landcare, however, a collaborative effect. It would be great to see a weekly segment that focuses on Landcare on Landline funded by the Australian Government, and increase the minimal funding allocation in grants for marketing and communications."





Sophie Robertson, East Gippsland, Victoria & currently in the Hunter region, NSW

Sophie is originally from a farm in East Gippsland, Victoria, and currently lives and works in the Hunter region as a holistic health practitioner. She holds a Bachelor of Nursing and is currently studying a Masters in Holistic Medicine. This is what she thinks about Landcare more broadly.

“Some of the major issues that I see for the Landcare movement is funding security, community engagement and succession planning. For the Australian environment climate change is of course a major issue, as well as the war on weeds and pests.

It has become very apparent to me that although we come together to care for the land, it is the people that are the most important aspect of the many projects as they drive the projects and initiatives.

This is why we need to emphasise the need to support people in Landcare, which could be achieved with exciting education programs delivered by the incredible bunch of people already in Landcare. As they can forge new relationships and memories for people to care for this beautiful country.

By supporting initiatives like Intrepid Landcare, this will also bring young people into volunteering, looking after the land, learning about what Landcare is and igniting their passion to get more involved!”

Megan Rowlatt, Wollongong, New South Wales



Megan is from Wollongong NSW and has been an instigator of progressive change in engaging people in natural resource management and Landcare. She was awarded the 2012 National Young Landcare Leader, is co-founder of Intrepid Landcare and recently completed a Diploma of Business.

Her response to the review is a reflection on her in depth experience in Landcare and sustainable agriculture for over 10 years.

“If there is one thing to change in each of the following areas of the National Landcare Programme, what would it be?”

Programme delivery approach (e.g. delivery through small grants, regional delivery):

I think regional delivery is a good idea as it fosters partnerships and collaboration. We are fortunate to work with staff in our region who apply best practice in community engagement and capacity

building to support the community to apply and design projects that have a high impact for natural resource management. But this is not consistent across all natural resource management regions in Australia.

There needs to be a consistent approach, consistent support, and organisational values which support community projects and recognise the value and ability of community to deliver on regional natural resource management outputs. Staff need to be skilled in working with community and share the values of community contribution to natural resource management outcomes, and regional NRM organisations need to be well staffed to support the community effectively.

National Landcare Programme objectives and priorities:

It would be good to see an emphasis on community leadership development as quite often local and regional projects are driven by a key person or group of people. The more we invest in leadership skills and development in these key drivers in the community, the more we will see higher quality community natural resource management projects. This is particularly evidenced in my area where we have a higher level of collaboration, and more diverse and innovative programs being delivered.

Outcomes of the National Landcare Programme need to be communicated to the broader public in a digestible and engaging way. Outcomes of many funded programs remain largely unknown (even within the natural resource management sector) and therefore efforts and knowledge gained remains underutilised. We won't know the overall impact on-ground for many years yet, and social impact needs to be consistently captured and measured if this is to be reported on.”

THE FUTURE WE ARE CREATING: YOUNG PEOPLE TO BE
CONNECTED WITH THEIR COMMUNITIES
AND CARE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

OPPORTUNITIES >>>

WITH INTREPID LANDCARE

Young Sustainability Ambassadors Program

Recently funded by the NSW Department of Family and Community Services, Picture You in Agriculture under the banner 'Art4Agriculture' and Intrepid Landcare will be delivering a Young Sustainability Ambassadors program - an intergenerational initiative that works with young people and community and empowers them to take action to meet Australia's commitment to the United Nations Global Goals for Sustainable Development and ensure a bright future for generations to come.

The Young Sustainability Ambassadors (YSA) program has been designed to capture the momentum created by, and build on the success of the collaboration between the Young Eco Champions and the Young Farming Champions programs, which have been successfully delivered in the past. By spreading key sustainability messages through trained young professionals entering schools, and creative ways of learning, the overarching program called, Kreative Koalas will enable schools to Design a Brighter Future to inspire and empower the next generation to create the future they want to see.

Excitingly this program adds another dimension of engagement, and that is with Landcare elders (Landcare Legends) in the community. This intergenerational engagement model recognises the wealth of knowledge and experience of Landcare Legends who have been part of a grassroots movement which has been addressing sustainability issues on the ground for over 30 years.

There is opportunity for the Australian Government's National Landcare Programme to support such programs, in particular, to support marginalised and isolated young people who are imbedded by circumstances to act and lead on stuff that is important.

Nurture Young Landcare Leaders

Intrepid Landcare's Nurture Young Landcare Leaders program has also been recently funded. As part of the Communities Caring for the Environment (Youth Environmental Engagement) NSW Government Office of Environment and Heritage has identified an opportunity to encourage the participation of young people in environmental initiatives, using a model developed by Intrepid Landcare.

The objective of this project is to design and deliver a package including four (4) workshops for Landcare coordinators and other facilitators of environmental initiatives in four regional locations in NSW which will build the capacity of coordinators and facilitators to engage young people in environmental conservation activities, and nurture their passion, knowledge and skills as young volunteers and leaders in this space.

The end goal is for communities across NSW to be better equipped to engage and support young volunteers and leaders in environmental conservation, and more young people will be aware of, connected to, and driving community projects for young people.

There is an opportunity for the Australian Government's National Landcare Programme to continue its commitment in supporting the needs of young people to get involved in Landcare, and more fundamentally, answer the calls to action from Landcare groups across Australia who seek valuable contributions from young people.

Intrepid Landcare would welcome the opportunity to discuss any of these ideas and comments further. Please do not hesitate to contact our Co-founder and Chair:
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