

Landcare Notes

Landcare Note 3.2
September 2010

Partnerships and collaboration

Landcare groups need to collaborate with people and organisations who can provide information, technical, material and financial support. Partnerships can be one-off or developed over a longer term and are a great way to help the group achieve its goals.

These partnerships and collaborations mean your group can tackle more and bigger projects to improve the environment in your area.

What is it?

An effective partnership between a Landcare group and a community, corporate or government partner relies on the partners developing similar aims and goals.

Partners will need to share a vision with a commonly agreed outcome, share their knowledge and experience and have an ongoing commitment to the project. Responsibilities, communication activities and accountability should be negotiated early in the decision making process.

Good partnerships can provide your group with funding, technical knowledge, labour, project materials, extra skills, education and training opportunities, coordination between public and private land management activities and support for project staff.

Partners can come from all types of backgrounds and offer either limited resources or a wide range. Grants and sponsorships are the most obvious way of getting a project started, and keeping it going, but there are other ways where community groups or businesses can be involved (see Landcare Note 3.5: *Local fundraising*).

Collaborating with others

Working with other groups, organisations and people is a basic aspect of being involved in Landcare. It opens up opportunities for further action as well as allowing access to the experience and support of others - and everyone is working towards protecting and improving local natural resources.

Such partnerships can operate in two ways. One is at the community level, with other organisations in your area such as schools, environmental groups, businesses or local government agencies. This type of collaboration can help everyone become more confident and effective as they share and build their skills and knowledge. It can also result in a better way of getting the job done.

Groups can also collaborate at a regional, state, national or international level, often by joining a network of organisations with similar ideas and goals. Again, everyone wins through the sharing of information and experience.

How to do it?

Making the link

Working with another group or organisation may be ongoing, or just for a short time on a particular project. No matter what the goal, the partnership must be based on honesty and transparency so before you get involved with someone else, you must be very clear about what you hope to gain and what you can offer.

Partnerships are a two-way process and the arrangement should benefit both sides, so your group should ask yourselves these questions:

- What products and services can we offer this partnership?
- What type of partner do we need?
- What type of resources do we need?
- How big is the commitment?

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- Can we get all we need from one partner, or do we need several?
- If we need several, how will we handle those relationships?
- Will we, personally or as a group, be compromised by this association?
- What do we need to do to begin negotiations with potential partners?

What the potential partner needs to know

The partner you link up with may prove to be very generous, but they still need to feel confident about what you are doing and the arrangement they have with you. You should have answers for these questions:

- What can your group and your project offer a partner?
- Who is involved in the group and how are you organised?
- What is the group's long term vision or goals?
- Do you have a strategic plan to achieve that?
- Do you have an OHS plan to implement your activities?
- What do you need now (from a partner) and where does it fit with your goals?
- What are the costs and benefits of an association with you?
- Can you deliver what you say you will?

Collaborations are a two-way street, so you need to be clear on why the group wants to collaborate with another organisation, what it brings to that collaboration and what level of commitment you have to the collaboration.

Collaborations could be as simple as sharing a joint event with another local group or organisation, to developing relationships with an international company.

What are the possibilities?

Once you have a clear idea of what you want and what you can offer, don't limit your thinking to the usual government grants and project activities.

Consider linking up with other groups and agencies to exchange speakers, provide venues for events or put together joint displays at regional, state or national conferences. You could also have joint workshops or tours on common issues and projects, or involve a local sporting group in your activities.

Information sources

- Members of your group may have personal contacts with potential local partners (businesses, service organisations, sporting groups etc) willing to help on community projects
- Working out who you need to contact and what is possible can take time, so be prepared to put in the effort – and some of your own resources – for good results
- There are some websites specifically devoted to resources for community groups (see Further References).

Success breeds success

There is now a long list of examples of Landcare groups who have joined up with different partners and have collaborated with others to achieve successful projects.

Talking to other groups and learning about successful projects (check with your local Landcare coordinator or CMA grants or investment officer) will give you some good ideas on what (and who) is possible. See the Landcare websites for examples.

Further references

Being investor ready

This handbook is designed to help you develop the most effective and suitable partnership(s) for your group. The toolkit includes case

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studies of successful group programs, and checklists to help groups to plan and prepare for investment.

Statewide Landcare Team Victoria (2004)
Being Investor Ready.

<http://www.landcarevic.net.au/resources/for-groups/birtoolkit/>

Landcare success stories

Department of Sustainability and Environment
(2005) – *Stories of Success*

[http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/CA256F310024B628/0/72FDC5E464C1C3D6CA2571D8000DD0CC/\\$File/Stories+of+Success.pdf](http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/CA256F310024B628/0/72FDC5E464C1C3D6CA2571D8000DD0CC/$File/Stories+of+Success.pdf)

PPWCMA (2004), *Stories of Community Landcare Success: Port Phillip and Westernport Region 2004* –

<http://www.ppwcma.vic.gov.au/downloads/StoriesCommunityLS.pdf>

Funding information

Victorian Landcare Gateway

<http://www.landcarevic.net.au/>

For general advice, ideas and some sources:

<http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/>

Related Landcare Notes

This Landcare Note is one of a series. These notes provide an excellent guide for the ongoing operation of your group.

Landcare Note 3.1: *Funding Options*

Landcare Note 3.3: *Sponsorship*

Landcare Note 3.4: *Grants Guide for Community Groups*

Landcare Note 3.5: *Local Fundraising*

Other information

For the Landcare coordinator or Investment/Grants officer in your region – contact your Catchment Management Authority www.dse.vic.gov.au – use the search window for Catchment Management Authority and find your nearest area.

Youl, R (ed) (2006) *Landcare in Victoria*, Rob Youl, Landcare Australia Ltd, Melbourne.

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