



**FARM TREE &
LANDCARE ASSOC**



Landcare Governance Kit

Contents

Introduction	3
Purpose	5
Having a clear purpose.....	5
Keeping it relevant.....	5
People	7
Formal Roles: Committees & Office Bearers	7
Legal Duties of Committees	8
Executive Roles	10
1) President.....	10
2) Vice-President.....	11
3) Secretary	12
4) Treasurer.....	13
Record-keeping & transition	14
Filling Committee Positions: Succession!.....	15
Induction	15
Developing Leadership Capacity	16
Managing Membership: Gaining & Retaining Members	19
Effective Decision-making.....	24
Incorporation & Structures	28
Planning	32
Strategic Planning in Detail	33
Action Planning in Detail.....	34
Project Planning: Event Planning	36
Meetings	40
Organising Meetings	43
Meeting Format and Procedure.....	44
Annual General Meetings	51
Risk Management	56
Managing the Books	57
Financial Management.....	57
Budgets	62
Reporting.....	63
GST and Income Tax for landcare groups	65

Further Resources	68
Sourcing funding & Membership	69
Health and Safety (OH&S).....	75
Insurance.....	84
Appendices.....	86
Committee member - Code of Conduct - Sample.....	87
Conflict of Interest Policy - Sample	88
Minutes Template – Sample I	89
Minutes Template – Sample II	91
Financial Report to AGM – Template.....	92
Landcare AGM Running Sheet – Template	93
Meeting Standing Orders – General Meetings	101
FTLA Insurance Summary.....	105
Volunteer/Attendance Registration Form:	111
Going Into Recess / Becoming Inactive.....	112
Closing Down or Merging.....	113
Chemical and Spraying Equipment Use and Hire.....	116
Agreement for Hire of Plant and Equipment	118
Membership Application Form - Template.....	122
Key to Acronyms – ‘a head start’	123

Introduction

The Farm Tree & Landcare Association (FTLA) is an independent incorporated association governed by its members. The FTLA exists to serve the Member Groups and supports Member Groups where issues arise that are common across the membership, most notably the FTLA insurance package but also the provision of information to members.

This guide has been prepared by the Farm Tree & Landcare Association (FTLA) using materials from a range of sources, both landcare and non-landcare based, and utilising the experience of the Association over 25 years of supporting landcare and similar groups. It is intended to be used by anyone involved in administering or decision-making within a landcare group or network. This could include:

- Committee members and office bearers
- Sub-committee, focus group, or working party members
- Co-ordinators, facilitators, project officers and other paid support staff in landcare
- Group members or network representatives
- Or anyone interested in the above roles!

Around three quarters of landcare groups and networks in Victoria plus a number of other organisations are members of the FTLA, so FTLA specific information has been included in the guide, and it is noted as such. Most of the material will apply whether or not your group or network is a member of the FTLA. Contact the FTLA to confirm whether your organisation is an FTLA member.

There is no one true way of running a successful group or network, what works for one group may not work for another and vice versa. But there are some general principles, some common issues, and also some legal obligations.

Explore this guide, use it to inform your thinking and the conversation among your group. Seek out other resources and use what works for you. Be aware that best practice is always changing, even the law changes – so keep an eye out for updates and if you're not sure then check whether something is legally required, suggested best practice or simply out of date.

You might get inspiration for a new project, you might solve a problem, or even better *prevent* a problem.

If you have a problem to be solved, an issue to be addressed or an idea you're not sure how to implement, then it's probable that someone else has been in the same situation and has a solution.

If you can't find what you need there are many sources of support available to you: your fellow group members, your network, other groups, your local council, local facilitators or co-ordinator, the Regional Landcare Co-ordinator and Facilitator, the Farm Tree & Landcare Association, Landcare Australia Ltd, the Landcare team at the Department of Environment & Primary Industries (Vic) or the responsible government department or authority as well as a host of other non-profit organisations. Someone somewhere will be willing and able to help!

And always have fun!

Acknowledgements

This guide has been updated from a previous FTLA landcare Governance Kit, which itself could not have been prepared without funding from the Department of Sustainability & Environment and the use of extensive resources available to landcare and more broadly the community and volunteer sectors. Many people's work and ideas have gone into the guide and we have tried to acknowledge these where appropriate but sometimes the originators have been lost in the mists of time or the mysteries of the collaborative process for which we can only apologise, or wish to remain anonymous. We thank all those who have contributed for their time and wisdom.

Feedback Requested

This is intended to be a living document, so please advise us where there are errors, gaps or improvements to be made. We are particularly interested if you have a procedure, template resource or case study that has proved successful for your group that you would like to share with other landcarers.

Terminology

Landcare vs landcare: Landcare arose out of a specific program and model designed as a holistic locally group based approach to caring for the land, founded in 1986 by Joan Kirner and Heather Mitchell, then respectively Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands and Victorian Farmers Federation President. However there were locally group based approaches to caring for the land before 1986 (Farm Tree groups, Soil Conservation groups etc) and there are many now (Friends of, Coastcare, Climate Action groups etc) whose work fits the broad understanding of landcare and may be considered part of the landcare "family" even if they do not bear the Landcare name. Sometimes the lower case "landcare" is used to recognise that diversity but throughout the guide we mean to be inclusive of the broader landcare movement.

Groups and Networks: Within the landcare sector there are specific understandings of the word "group" and the word "network" within the landcare context. The terms and their meanings are more fully explored under the section on Group Structures, but otherwise throughout this guide when there is reference made to "groups", this applies to both "groups" and "networks" and any other organisational structure that may undertake landcare or similar work.

Acronyms: While we have tried to limit our use of acronyms, some acronyms are inevitable. We have provided an acronym list in the appendices – let us know what we have missed!

Purpose

Having a clear purpose

At the most basic level an organised group of people need to have a reason to exist. People form a group around a **common** purpose.

The purpose of your group or network needs to be mutually **understood** by the group's membership. Everyone needs to agree or at least accept with the group's purpose. This may be informal, particularly if you have good internal group communication, or if the group is starting out.

However over time, understandings may change, or new members may join and therefore it is a good idea to write down the purpose of your group (you might be surprised if you've never done it before!). Different understandings of the group's purpose can be a source of conflict in the group, so it is good to keep the group's agreed purpose in mind when discussing plans and activities.

That purpose may be written down as a vision or a mission statement or slogan such as:

"Supporting volunteers in developing sustainable productive landscapes"¹

Or it may be written down in a formal Statement of Purpose, particularly if your group is incorporated in its own right (see the incorporation section on how to check if you're not sure). If you are an FTLA Member Group, then the FTLA's broad Statement of Purposes will apply to you (See the Appendices) but you will probably have a more local vision or purpose for your group or network.

A Vision, Mission or Statement of Purpose should probably be somewhere between a paragraph and a page long. It should be clear and easy to understand, and should be provided to new members when they join the group.

If you are starting to write down specific projects and activities you may have moved into strategic planning – which is different but still a very good thing to have (see the planning section). Strategic Plans generally have a lot more detail and may be changed more often.

Keeping it relevant

The purpose or vision of the group should inspire your members and reflect their vision for the future. It needs to be broad enough to stay relevant to the membership over time and specific enough to keep the group motivated.

It might be time to revisit your purpose if you are hearing statements such as:

"We've done everything we set out to do".

¹ Tagline on FTLA banners and brochures

Or if the group is losing membership and there are only the same old faces at meetings.

Revisiting your purpose is a little bit like starting a new group. It means getting together a group of interested people and having a conversation. It starts with your members, and it's great to also talk to past members and to the wider community as well.

Hold a meeting of all the group's members, or make it a meeting open to the community and have a conversation about you as a local community want to see in the landscape where you live and work. Find an inspiring speaker who can get the conversation going

Call people on the phone or talk to them across the fence or at the local shops. Talk to other community organisations and stakeholders. Start a conversation on Facebook if that's where your target audience is!

Thinking Outside the Box:

One Landcare Network sent out disposable cameras to their groups and asked people to take photos of what landcare meant to them, of things they valued in the landscape or problems they wanted to address. They then used those photos to help revisit their Strategic Plan. The act of taking photos really got people talking and involved in the purpose and possibilities of Landcare.

People

Landcare is a socially based approach to landscape change. That means you need people!

- **Members and volunteers** who make on ground work possible
- People **behind the scenes** to organise and make things happen
- Need **leaders** to set strategy, make decisions, resolve problems and hold the group to its purpose

Landcare is traditionally good at attracting members and volunteers to do on-ground work, to plant trees, or remove weeds or try new farming practises. Without those members and volunteers landcare wouldn't happen.

But landcare groups and networks also need people to organise activities and undertake group administration, to apply for grants and manage the books. These can be elected office bearers such as the Secretary or Treasurer or they may members and volunteers who help out but who don't have specific roles. Some groups may have paid support staff, access to a facilitator or be able to engage a bookkeeper etc.

Sometimes people behind the scenes may also active on the ground, but its alright if they're not – if their only role in the group is to support other members and volunteers.

Leaders are sometimes the people elected to committees or office bearer roles (see below) but sometime leaders are informal – they're the people who everyone turns to for advice, or who provides the passion to keep people involved. Whether formal or informal leaders should be supported and recognised.

All three roles: on-ground, support and leadership, are vital to maintaining a successful group.

Formal Roles: Committees & Office Bearers

A committee is a smaller group of people within your group that has been elected by your members in order to manage the group's affairs. The Committee is small enough to allow informal discussions and decision-making on matters where the wider membership has entrusted responsibility to the committee.

The committee is usually elected at the annual general meeting or AGM (for further information see the section on AGMs under Meetings) and there are usually a number of distinct roles on the committee – president, secretary, treasurer – as well as other or "ordinary" members.

The Committee (also known as the Committee of Management or the Board or sometimes the Council) is a major contributor to group success. The Committee is responsible for the effective governance of the Group, and is accountable to:

- The members
- The local community

- Funding and regulatory bodies

To perform their duties, individual committee members need to:

- Know about committee roles and responsibilities
- Be committed to the larger organisation and be informed about its strategic objectives
- Keep and understand proper records of finance and other processes; ensure debts are paid
- Liaise with the professionals in the field to seek training to ensure compliance with laws and legislations that affect the landcare groups' activities.
- Be aware of contracts, if any, the landcare group signs, and be prepared to seek professional advice when there is insufficient information to make an informed decision.
- Know and understand the constitution of the organisation
- Ensure the Executive acts honestly, carefully and ethically

The committee has a range of responsibilities when it comes to managing the group and its projects, particularly if it is accepting membership fees and public funding. Specifically, the committee has responsibility for group representation to the wider community, as well as administrative requirements of finance, project planning, incorporation and insurance, publicity and record keeping.

Legal Duties of Committees

Committee members have specific legal duties. Most of these are common sense or good practice, and most of the time you as committee members will be performing these duties even without thinking about them.

The relationship between a Committee member and their organisation is one of trust (called a 'fiduciary relationship') and the law says that people who are in a position of 'trust' must act in the best interests of those who have trusted them.

"Unofficial" or "de facto" committee members also have legal duties. These could include the co-ordinator or manager, people of influence, people who participate in key decisions; people can significantly affect the finances of the organisation. Anyone who is part of the governing body of the organisation, even if unofficial, must comply with the four main legal duties:

- ▶ Duty to act in good faith in the best interests of the organisation and for a proper purpose and within the powers given to the committee
- ▶ Duty to act with reasonable care and skill (including the duty to prevent insolvent trading)
- ▶ Duty not to improperly use information or position
- ▶ Duty to disclose and manage conflicts of interest

For more information on these duties go to the Not For Profit Law "Guide to the legal duties of not-for-profit Committee members in Victoria" available via <http://www.justiceconnect.org.au/>, but some of the more common issues in a Landcare context are outlined below and through this guide

The **duty to act in the best interests of an organisation** overrides any duties you may have to other organisation or groups of people. This includes where you have been elected to a Committee by a 'group' or 'sector' or 'region', who might expect you to represent their interests, for example:

- Group representatives serving on a Network committee
- CMA/ Shire employees sitting on a group's committee of management

The **duty to act with reasonable care and skill** includes responsibilities for financial management of the organisation which is covered in more detail under the section on Managing the books, but it is important to note that the **duty to monitor the organisation's financial position is shared by all members of the governing body** – not just the Treasurer!

All Committee members have a duty to make inquiries and satisfy themselves that the organisation is being well-run, and is operating in a safe and efficient manner – you cannot just "rubber stamp" decisions. If your Committee does not have the required skills on a particular matter, this duty means you need to seek help from someone who does.

The duty also requires that you give sufficient time, thought and energy to any tasks you have undertaken and to decisions you are required to make. Should anything go wrong in the organisation (eg. it gets into financial trouble and starts to trade while insolvent, or someone starts to defraud the finances) you could be legally responsible. It will not be a defence to say 'I wasn't at the meeting when they made that decision' or 'I'm just a volunteer'.

If you don't have the time to give to your role as a Committee member then it is worth seeking assistance from other members to enable you to accomplish your role. You may need to consider whether you are able to reasonably able to serve on the Committee or if you could make a contribution in another way.

Good group management will be assisted by a focus on:

1. Planning and goal setting

The committee should lead the strategic planning for the group with input from all members. This process could involve several meetings but is important to help the group make decisions on where it wants to get to over a number of years. The process of strategic planning is outlined in another section of this document.

2. Communications

Effective communication should be encouraged with the rest of the group, the wider community, government agencies and funding bodies.

3. Financial Management

Documentation and management of funding submissions, project expenditure and insurance, as well as recording general cashflow (income and expenditure) and most importantly ensuring that the group is able to pay its debts.

4. Membership

Another key role is developing and maintaining membership and the motivation of members. Having a strong, happy and effective group will mean your members will keep returning and your group will grow.

5. Celebrating success and hard work

It's also a committee responsibility to ensure that conflicts are minimised and successes maximised. Celebrating and rewarding the group's work will keep you motivated. This includes the work of your committee!

6. Sharing the load

Delegating tasks will be important to share the workload and minimise the risk of 'burn out' of your committee and office bearers. Tasks can be delegating to individual members or volunteers or via sub-committees, working parties or focus groups.

Executive Roles

The Executive of a Group Committee consists of the following roles:

- President
- Vice President
- Secretary
- Treasurer

Deputy and other support office bearers can be determined by each Group, depending on activity.

The Executive is responsible for:

- Planning and running effective Group meetings and activities
- Group administration and financial reporting
- Member and volunteer inclusion and satisfaction
- Furthering of the Group's purposes

1) President

The President is in charge of the Group operations and should provide committee and general members with leadership, guidance and assistance, as well as a point of contact for the public, potential members and other stakeholders.

Presidential Duties:

- Providing leadership for the group
- Motivating committee members and ensure they fulfil their responsibilities
- Speaking on behalf of the group and liaising with other organisations
- Acting as the public face of the organisation
- Setting operational objectives and priorities for group activities

- Seeking new members and welcoming them to the group
- Coordinating planning and implementation of activities to ensure they run smoothly and result in member satisfaction
- Convening and Chairing regular Group meetings; providing leadership and guidance

As Meeting Chair:

- Set the Agenda
- Run the meeting; moving through agenda items, time management, and promoting participation
- Drive formal voting and decision-making processes, including election of representatives
- Manage guest speakers & other high profile visitors

For more detail see the section on Meetings.

While the President is most often also the Chair of committee and group meetings it is not a requirement, and when the president is absent the vice-president or another committee member may act as Chair of the meeting. The skill sets required for the role of President and Chair are slightly different and occasionally the role of Chair may be delegated away from the role of President but the President still retains overall responsibility for leading the group.

An effective President should possess, or seek to develop the following skills:

Impartiality	<i>...Give everyone a chance to express their opinion; seek alternative views</i>
Responsibility	<i>...Members trust you to run the Group with integrity</i>
Firmness	<i>...Be decisive: you are in charge & need to keep things moving</i>
Courtesy	<i>...Showing your good manners encourages them in others</i>
Common sense	<i>...Avoids confusion, time wasting, and may reduce red tape</i>
Consistency	<i>...Of behaviour will build trust among local members</i>
Meeting procedures	<i>...Knowledge will allow you to maintain control and credibility</i>
Tact & Awareness	<i>...Encourage people to contribute rather than embarrass them with thoughtless comments</i>

2) Vice-President

The Vice-President is the deputy (or second in charge) to the President. If the President is unable to attend, or falls ill, the Vice President will normally take their place, for example chairing a meeting. Other specific duties are generally not defined, but will be determined at the discretion of the President and Committee. Support tasks might include, editing a newsletter, or actively coordinating

an event or activity of importance to members, so that the workloads of President and Secretary are eased.

3) Secretary

The Secretary is the Group Administrator. Group efficiency & effectiveness is largely dependent on the ability of the Secretary.

The Secretary should be enthusiastic, outgoing, have initiative, be committed to the FTLA, and capable of working co-operatively with the President. The Group should make available to the Secretary whatever facilities are required to carry out the duties effectively, including an elected assistant.

Primary Duties can be divided into 4 sections:

- Between meetings: *Managing correspondence & membership issues*
- Before the meeting: *Arranging meeting logistics & notifying members* (more detail in Organising Meetings)
- During the meeting: *Minutes notation and presenting correspondence*
- Immediately after the meeting: *Distribution & filing of minutes*

It is often expected that the Secretary is involved in the organisation of project work as well, with particular regard to managing the notification and publicity process, ensuring attendance lists and contact details are maintained, as all appropriate hire or safety contracts are signed and or distributed.

The Secretary's role is the one most often divided into separate parts such as Minutes Secretary, Correspondence Secretary or Membership Secretary. Depending on your Rules, these roles may be directly elected or may be members of a secretarial sub-committee with specific roles.

Between Meetings

- Direct incoming correspondence to President or Committees or members as appropriate
- Maintain membership records
- Maintain records of income and expenditure for submission to Treasurer
- Communicate with President, Committee and Members
- Keep an inventory of equipment owned or held by the Group

Before the Meeting, the Secretary should:

- Assist the President to set the meeting Agenda
- Circulate the meeting papers (agenda, previous minutes, other information) to attendees
- Organise venue, and if appropriate, catering

At the Meeting, the Secretary should:

- Record the minutes
- Note attendance and inform Chair/President of visitors and apologies
- Note the membership status of members present (if appropriate)
- Read minutes of previous meeting if not previously circulated, prior to confirmation by the meeting
- Deal with the correspondence (summarise items, but have original documents for further reference)
- Keep the Chair/President informed on procedural matters, e.g.: Quorum
- Record starting and finishing time of the meeting.

Minutes are a complete and accurate record of the procedural matters, and should:

- Describe the nature of the meeting, for example, ordinary, special, annual, general
- Specify the date, time and place
- Record the business conducted, the order of the business, and all decisions made.

Usually minutes record decisions (resolutions), and only so much of the discussion as to be able to explain or defend the decision. Some groups or committees may wish for more detailed minutes but this should be agreed in advance. It is not usual to record the names of individuals during discussion, other than movers and seconders, unless someone specifically asks that their name be noted, usually if they have an objection.

See the Appendices for different possible minute taking formats.

Immediately After the Meeting

- Concise & accurate minutes typed up and filed, with a copy sent to the Group President.
- Produce any correspondence arising from the meeting and distribute. Keep a copy on file
- File all correspondence and papers

Landcare groups, as with all organisations, receive a lot of general information such as newsletters and so on that may or may not be useful to the group. The Secretary acts as a filter for this information so that the committee and membership receives information that is relevant to them, but not so much information that they suffer overload and turn off.

4) Treasurer

The Treasurer is responsible for the financial integrity of the Group. This means accounting for, and paying out monies collected by the local Group; and reporting to members on the financial status, as well as administering grants for landcare work.

Good financial management is not only important for reporting what you have done with funds, but also making sure you have the revenue available to fulfil group priorities and objectives.

The Treasurer should supply to each meeting of the committee clear financial reports outlining:

- income
- expenditure
- assets
- liabilities (amounts owing / to be paid)
- budget position

As the committee as a whole shares the responsibility to ensure that the Group can pay its debts (not trade while insolvent), it is very important that the financial reports be easily understood by the committee members.

The Treasurer is also responsible for ensuring a budget is developed and followed and to assess the financial impacts of any activity or undertaking.

The Treasurer is able to seek advice and assistance for professionals such as bookkeepers or accountants and may have a financial sub-committee assisting him or her but remains ultimately responsible.

The Treasurer is usually one of the signatories on the bank account.

The Treasurer is also responsible for reporting annually to the membership in the same way as she/he is to the committee. This may involve organising an audit or an accountant's review and each Group should check whether it is required under legislation to have an annual audit as it depends on the level of annual turnover of funds. Even for small groups it a good idea to have the books checked by a professional every couple of years to ensure the financial processes are up to date.

There is more detail on financial management under the section Managing the Books in this guide and the Appendices for a treasurer's report template.

Record-keeping & transition

The committee as whole is responsible for maintaining the group's records. For some items such as financial documents, contracts, minutes and membership records there are legal requirements to hold those records for up to seven years. Other documents, letters and photographs are important for recording and celebrating the group's history and achievements.

Each officer (President, Treasurer, Secretary) is responsible for keeping the records that belong to their role, and should be ready to hand them over at each AGM to ensure a smooth transition. It is also a good precaution to have records kept in more than one place so that in case of emergency the group can continue on smoothly.

It is now possible to hold group records electronically, perhaps on a secure website, which allows all committee members to access them as needed.

Filling Committee Positions: Succession!

Continuity is important in a committee but so is some change which brings new energy. Ideally each year, some experienced members should remain on the committee and some new ones join. This allows for a balance of experience and new ideas to guide the committee for the following year.

Your group should decide what works best for you. It is not ideal for one person to stay in the same position for more than three or four years because it prevents the emergence of fresh ideas from new people and may also lead to the incumbent person suffering from 'burn out'. On the other hand, there are key people whose knowledge and experience is invaluable and that the group doesn't want to lose: one solution is to rotate the positions, or to create mentor positions to allow new officers to access the wisdom of experienced committee members.

When looking for new committee members, a helpful strategy is to develop a list of key tasks that the committee must undertake. Then to identify the skills and knowledge required by that list that are already in the committee, could be developed further, or could be found by encouraging other people to join.

Once the skills that are needed have been identified it makes it easier to find the right person for the role. Recruiting for committee can be very much like recruiting someone for a job. By allowing people to utilise their skills in areas they are interested in, you will encourage a sense of commitment and valued involvement.

Most existing committee members took the roles because they were asked, but if possible avoid leaving it to last minute at the AGM. If prospective committee members have had a chance to think about it and they understand how much time is involved, the tasks that need doing, how long they will be in the position then people are more likely to be willing to commit to a committee position.

Other strategies include recruiting people into sub-committees, focus groups or working parties as a stepping stone to elected positions. Some organisations such as Rotary use deputy or junior positions as clear pathways to office bearer positions, which prepare people for greater responsibilities.

It can also be helpful to retain the knowledge of past committee members as mentors or senior officers. Past committee members are important sources of knowledge and expertise and having acknowledged positions to "retire" into demonstrates the value the group places on their experience and service. This is most commonly done with the role of President, with the role of Immediate Past President being an as of right committee position.

Induction

When you have recruited a new committee member it is important to follow through and introduce them to the committee properly, not leave them to sink or swim. Having found someone to serve on committee you want to retain them!

An existing committee member (usually the President, Vice or Secretary) should arrange a conversation with the new committee member prior to the first meeting. Even if they have been on the committee previously it is good to tell them what has been happening recently and any changes in procedures.

- Pass on the governing documents (purposes, Rules, policies & procedures, strategic plans) and any documents specific to their role (such as treasurer)
- Be clear on expectations. Have role descriptions or procedures on committee conduct (see sample policy in appendices). It may be useful in setting appropriate expectations to give them a Not For Profit Law “Guide to the Legal duties of not-for-profit Committee members in Victoria”
- Pass on the minutes for the last year and provide the background for any issues with which the committee is currently dealing
- Notify relevant people including members and external stakeholders. Give the new committee member a list of useful contact people.

If someone is taking on an officer position, the person exiting the role should also do a handover of documents and knowledge, even if the person has already been on committee.

At the first committee meeting, introduce the new member to their fellow committee members, allow them to introduce themselves and explain their skills. Even if you think you know them you might discover they were an accountant or safety officer in a previous career.

Let your members and stakeholders know that you have a new committee member, particularly a new office bearer. Anyone with whom you have an existing contract or relationship needs to know who to contact and who can speak on behalf of the group.

Developing Leadership Capacity ²

If your group is to be effective, its best chance is with leaders who enthuse, guide and direct you all. Every member is a volunteer and volunteers are not compelled to do anything, which can make managing a community group far more challenging! Volunteers get involved and stay committed because they are inspired. Initially, that inspiration is because they want to make a difference but it needs to be encouraged and directed – and that’s where good leadership is important.

Understanding what is important to group members and volunteers, and then setting goals and priorities will help determine what your group wants to achieve.

Not everyone is naturally an inspirational leader. However sound leadership skills can be developed. Some helpful hints are provided below:

Encourage communication

² Further information available in *Landcare Information Notes* on the *Gateway* website. (Acknowledgments to N. Blackett - 2001)

Leaders should get to know group members as well as possible. Start a conversation and then ***listen***. By listening, you will learn about the interests of members and be able to suggest ways that people can be more involved. Encourage feedback on local issues and projects of the group before and after they happen.

At meetings or gatherings

Greet everyone personally and introduce members who have not previously met, or who have common interests. Wear a nametag and encourage others to do the same, especially if it's a large group or there are a lot of new members. Make new members feel welcome by asking an experienced member to explain to them the group's procedures, terminology, history and local contacts.

Delegate

Leaders who try to do everything themselves not only run the risk of 'burning out' but also create instability. If you give the impression everything is under control, and you are taking on all the work, then others may feel they're not needed.

Activities should be assigned to other members so that each person's workload is reduced and you can all work more effectively. When people take responsibility for an action or task, they will have more ownership of the group.

Don't wait for members to volunteer their help - encourage and suggest they take on a role, particularly if you know they have skills and interests in that area, and support them as they do it.

Praise and recognition

A great way to inspire people is to praise their efforts and contributions. Do it as soon as possible after the event, at an appropriate place and time, and be specific about what they have done, that you admire. Praise doesn't have to be public or elaborate, but it should reflect that person's personality and achievements. You could offer congratulations and recognition at a meeting, send them a card or gift or make very public acknowledgement at one of the group's events.

Be consistent and set limits

People need to know what to expect from leaders. Sudden bursts of inspiration followed by inactivity and inattention will confuse and frustrate them. Learn your limitations and keep within them. Honesty will be respected. If you are in a leadership position, you must overcome personal preferences and treat all members equally, particularly if there are conflicts that must be managed.

Manage conflict in the group

Conflict is incompatible behaviour between people who have different interests. It's a natural part of life and common in group situations and can often be an indicator of passion for the group's purposes. Facing and managing conflict can increase your understanding of issues and help create new solutions. See the section on Bullying and Conflict for further information.

Learn from other leaders

Talking with leaders of other organisations, sporting and community groups can give new insights to leadership. The same goes for talking to someone whose leadership style you admire. Find out what they do to succeed as a leader, and try to use some of those techniques.

Take advantage of training opportunities

Members of landcare groups can be sponsored to attend training and personal development opportunities such as workshops and conferences. Improving leadership skills may be enhanced by attending courses on a range of topics so think broadly when looking at the options, and discuss opportunities with your local landcare facilitator.

Look for new leaders

Look for natural leaders in your group and encourage the development of their leadership skills.

Signs of leadership potential include a friendly open person with a variety of skills who is willing to be involved. They will have good local knowledge and be well respected by other members of the group or the community.

Many potential leaders never take on leadership roles, probably because of lack of support or confidence and limited development opportunities. As a leader, you should delegate tasks and responsibilities to them, starting small and providing support. The next step would be to approach them about assuming a leadership role and discuss their potential. Invite them with you to functions to act as a group representative.

Common Leadership Pitfalls

Being a good leader isn't easy but avoiding some common mistakes can make things simpler.

Trying to be like previous leaders

Everyone has different skills and talents and a leader should do what they are good at. Discover your own strengths and talents and capitalise on them; then don't be afraid to change procedures so the group benefits from what you do best.

Not asking for help

Going outside the 'comfort zone' is great for personal development, but don't be afraid to ask for help while you are out there! Previous leaders are usually willing to help out, especially if their leadership was openly admired.

Pushing too hard

Members may feel uncomfortable if a new leader tries to push too hard. Instead of introducing all the great ideas immediately, you should start slowly and build group confidence. Leadership is not about power – it's about helping members move in a direction that is good for the group.

Managing Membership: Gaining & Retaining Members

Many groups experience lower membership numbers than they would like. When creating a membership strategy think about the following:

- *Why* do you need new members?

Do you want new members because you want greater community involvement? Do you need more bodies on the ground to do the physical work? Or do you need someone to help do the member mail-out or organise food for events? Do you want someone with specific skills to help you set up a website or organise an event? Are you recruiting members to increase your membership subscription income? Do you want more members or more volunteers or more newsletter subscribers? Do you want them to stay for the long term or is it OK for them to come to a single event or help out with a specific project?

Sit down as a committee or a group and discuss some of these questions. The answers will help you focus your recruiting efforts and also help you explain to prospective members or volunteers why they should help out.

Many groups are concerned about getting young people involved: which is great if you're looking for different perspectives. But if you're concerned about numbers to do the work then a new active members in their sixties may be more valuable to the group than members in their thirties with young families and many other commitments!

- Are you ready for them?

New members can bring new energy but at the same time it takes energy to support them, to find an appropriate role for them in the group and make them feel welcome. New members also bring new ideas and vision which may be disrupt current group dynamics. Is the group ready to change in response to new ideas? Are current members willing to accept new people?

- Why don't we have new members already?

What are the existing barriers to new members? Does the wider community know about the group? Do prospective members think they need to have existing skills around tree-planting or soil health? Do they know what the group does and what roles they could do? Are the events or meetings at an inconvenient time?

Keep it in perspective:

The average size of a Landcare Group in Victoria is 29 members (individuals or families) and can range from five to over two hundred.³ Some small groups are very successful and very active, some large groups are quite inactive.

- Recruitment Strategies

Once you've decided why you need new members and that your group is ready for them, then there are many different strategies to attract new members: the simplest is to ask them!

The reason most people volunteer is because they were asked. Raising the group profile can be helpful in obtaining a yes when you ask people to join or volunteer, and there will be a couple of people who will seek Landcare out themselves. There are many places to advertise your group, and contact details should be kept up to date. Options include:

- the Landcare Gateway website (every group can have its own page)
- the National Landcare Directory (via Landcare Australia Ltd)
- the local council may have a website or volunteer directory
- having a flyer at the local shopping centre / community hall / library
- articles in the local newspapers
- a stand at the local fair or ag show
- A listing in the phone book
- New resident packs via council or real estate agents. Or if you know someone is new in the area or a property is changing hands, drop a newsletter in their mailbox or give them a call and ask them to come along to the next meeting.

The second reason people volunteers is because they want to "give back" but there are many other reasons such as meeting people, learning new skills, getting experience and having fun. Appealing to those reasons can be part of your recruitment & retention strategy.

Having different types of activities will appear to prospective members with different needs:

- Good guest speakers on a different topics
- Have an locally identified 'icon' project with a charismatic cute animal or iconic local place
- Activities designed for families
- Try different timings of events to fit in with the differing availability of your prospective volunteers
- Short term projects or clearly defined volunteer roles to make it easy for volunteers to commit.

³ FTLA figures 2013

- Different options for people with different skills: someone may be happy to help with the newsletter or the mail-out but not want to get their hands dirty. (Remember to check that's what they want to do or whether they want to learn new skills – not every accountant wants to be treasurer and not every “young” person wants to create a website!
- A mentor program for new landholders
- Approach the local school / university / CFA / historical society etc to do a joint event
- Activities designed for the less physically able, seated or with a gentler pace.

Don't forget your current membership – check if they are happy with what you're currently doing and if they'd like different activities. Try giving inactive members a call and seeing why they aren't attending events. Everyone is busy but ask them what would make Landcare a priority for them.

It can also be very helpful to involve the wider community in a vision for the local landscape so that they have ownership of the vision. Be creative. Hold a forum or a dinner. Ask people to take photos or what they like or dislike in the landscape. This can also be a good way of re-energising existing members.

If the group's planning and activities are responsive to local needs it is much easier to recruit and retain both members and volunteers.

The best advertisement for your group is an existing member who enjoys it and is passionate! Choose the right people to do your recruitment and make sure your group has something to offer new members and new volunteers.

- What do we do with new members once we've got them?

Having put all that energy into recruiting members and volunteers you need to retain them.

- **Be welcoming:** greet them when you see a new face at an event or meeting and introduce them around. Find out their interests and skills. If you know someone is thinking about coming for the first time offer to pick them up so they aren't walking into the group alone. Organise for your friendliest members to be the welcoming committee.
- **Respond quickly:** If someone expresses an interest in joining get back to them as quickly as possible with some information about the group and the next event. If there isn't one scheduled, organise to meet them and have a chat about the group's activities and plans.
- Make **orientation / induction** easier and compulsory: have a conversation about the benefits and responsibilities of membership, expectations by the group about appropriate behaviour, give them copies of the governing documents and any

material such as a flier about the group's history and achievements, the current strategic plan or an article about the last event.

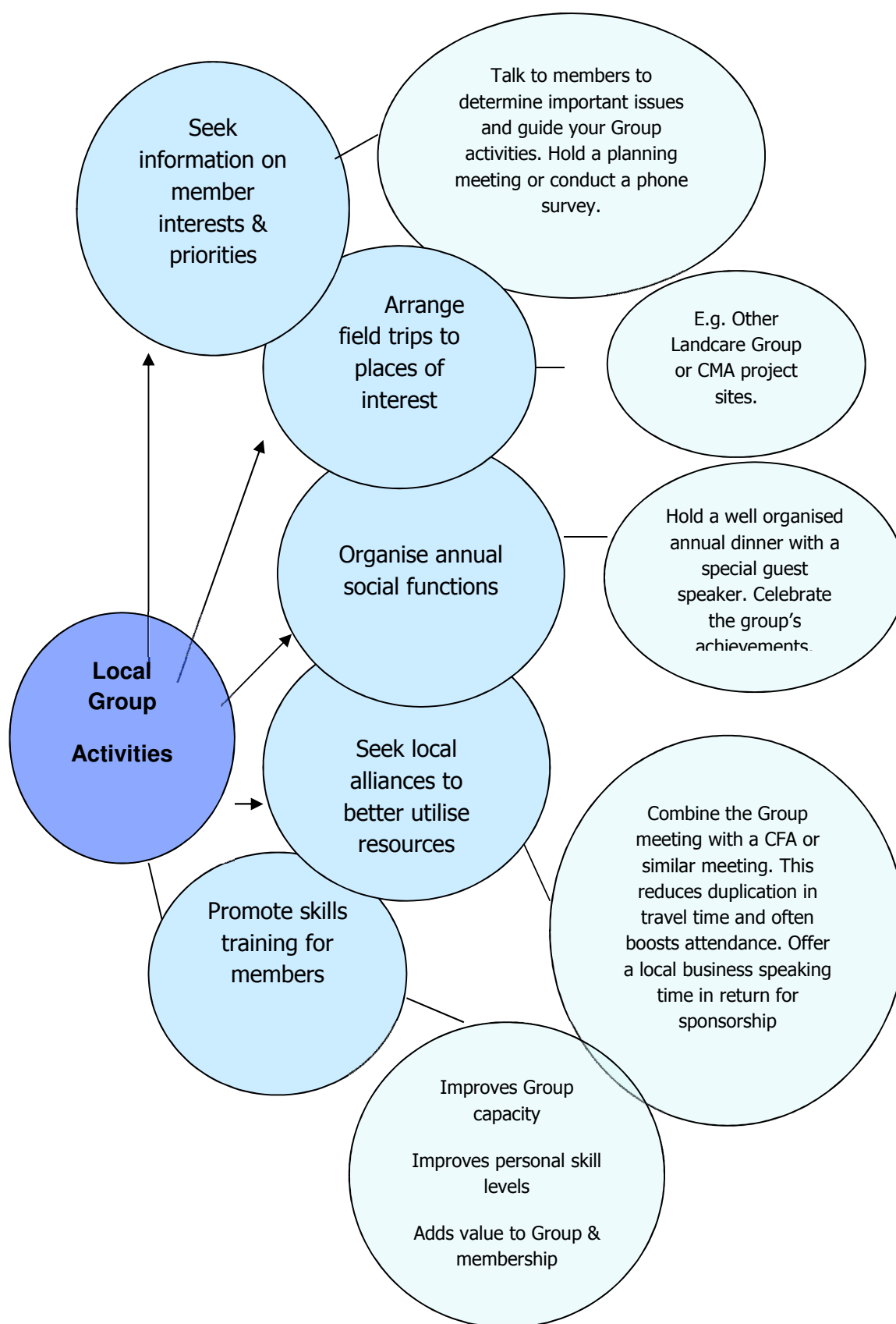
- **Get them involved:** tell them what roles are available in the group and find an activity or role that suits them
- **Thank them!** Some groups give new members a free plant or a farm walk with an experienced member or something else appropriate but even a simple thank-you can make people feel appreciated and welcome
- **Follow up:** Keep attendance lists for meetings and activities, including contact details such as phone or email. Then you can invite anyone new to the next event, or visit them as part of a membership drive. With new members check in six months or a year whether they feel happy and involved in the group. What has been good about joining and what could be improved?

Everyone should take responsibility for making newcomers welcome, but you may also want to assign someone specific responsibility for new members – preferably someone who likes new people!

Don't forget about your existing members

Existing members need to feel valued and useful just as much as new members. Groups that are active and have a visible profile in their community will tend to both attract and retain members. Running a Group should be interesting and enjoyable: being in charge of a Group provides elected officers the chance to use their imagination to organise events that will be stimulating and interesting to those who attend.

Below are some ways in which successful groups are maintaining the interest of their members:



Effective Decision-making

Being able to make effective decisions is a feature of most groups that are successful over the long term.

Effective Decision-making processes are:

- Clear
- Mutually agreed
- Inclusive
 - so that everyone “owns” the decisions and stays involved
 - to get the widest possible pool of talents and ideas

Usually this means writing them down!

When thinking about effective decision-making you need to decide:

who (members, staff, committee, executive, president) makes
which decisions (elections, mergers, grants, insurance, media, policy etc); and
how (formal, informal, meetings, votes etc)

At each level of decision-making, you need to know

- Who has a vote?
- How are the decision-makers chosen?
 - Membership eligibility?
 - Election of committee of management and office bearers?

This system of who and how decisions are made is also known as governance.

“Governance is the system by which a committee ensures an organisation’s responsibilities are met.” (ECG – 2006)

Governance is not a separate activity, but an overarching framework for running an organisation. It refers to the processes (policies and practices) by which landcare groups are operated, guided and held to account. Governance involves authority, accountability, leadership, direction and control. While the complexity might vary dependent on group size and activities undertaken, active adherence to principles of good governance will ensure the long term viability of the group.

Good governance = sustainable performance

Good governance will allow organisations to thrive. A landcare group may grow in size and capacity, through sound management, direction and leadership. The security provided by a well-managed Group, encourages people to become involved, and remain as committed members.

A system of good governance doesn’t have to be complicated, but some of the basic building blocks might include:

- The purpose of the group

- Who is eligible to join the group (everyone? Only locals? Over 18?)
- Who has a vote? (e.g. how many votes per household? Do you have to be financial? Is it OK to vote at the AGM if you only paid your subs at the AGM?)
- How are the committee elected?

These sorts of decisions should be ratified by the members and should only be changed at an AGM. Groups that are incorporated should have these sorts of items specified in their Rules, but if the Rules are silent or if groups are operating under the FTLA Rules which a lot of room for groups to manage their own day-to-day operations, then these are matters that should be considered as bylaws.

Many groups simply mirror the FTLA Rules, but others develop bylaws which is a good idea so long as they don't conflict with the FTLA Rules (e.g. groups can't adopt bylaws saying they are going to distribute profits to members: see Rules 2A.1). The FTLA Rules are designed to manage the FTLA as a whole, and the relationship between the FTLA and its Member Groups, and may not always be appropriate to mirror for groups that have individual members for instance.

Similarly FTLA Member Groups must align with the FTLA Purposes, but the FTLA Purposes are very broad so a much shorter more specific purpose would be appropriate to a group or network.

Other processes such as meeting procedures or the group's health and safety policy can be decided at a committee level so long as they are consistent with the group's Rules or constitution and with relevant legislation.

Governance is also about avoiding problems. Some of the most common problems that Landcare groups face are:

- Losing membership
- Stagnant leadership
- Burnout
- Long boring meetings
- Lack of funds

Some other serious problems include:

- Bullying / Conflict / Harassment
- Lack of financial reporting, or in the worst case scenario, an ex-treasurer who won't hand over the books
- Conflict of Interest
- Confusion over whether you are engaging an independent contractor or an employee – which means that the group may be in breach of its responsibilities as an employer

All of these problems are so common that there a wide range of resources available to help deal with them. This guide has sections on leadership and meetings and tips for handling conflict and succession planning. Have look at the Landcare Gateway or the Not For Profit Law portal or Our

Community for further resources. Or call your local facilitator, community officer or the FTLA for advice.

Conflict of Interest

Some of these problems have been around for so long that avoiding them has become part of the legal duties of the governing body of an organisation. One of these is **conflict of interest**.

Common examples of conflict of interest include:

- You are on the committee of two different groups, or of a group and a network, that are applying for the same grants or are competing for members.
- You work as a local weed contractor / farming consultant and your group is looking to engage a contractor / consultant for a project

Conflicts of Interest are not necessarily bad and can even be beneficial but where conflicts of interest are not managed properly they can affect the reputation of the group, as decisions will lack transparency. A sample conflict of interest policy can be found in the appendices.

Bullying / Conflict / Harassment

Conflict is incompatible behaviour between people who have different interests. It's a natural part of life and common in group situations and can often be an indicator of passion for the group's purposes. Facing and managing conflict can increase your understanding of issues and help create new solutions.

Conflict in the group can develop into bullying, can cause other members to leave, and can spill outside the group causing damage to the group's reputation.

If necessary, get external assistance from a respected community member or a formal mediation service such as the Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria.

It is always best to deal with conflict early. Set clear expectations about appropriate behaviour and have a conversation when conflict arises, behaviour is inappropriate or someone is upset. Having strong processes and procedures in place assists in reducing conflicts, including at a minimum:

- Bully and Harassment Policy
- Volunteer Policy (rights and responsibilities)
- Grievance & Disciplinary Policies (see your Rules)
- Conflict of Interest Policy (sample in appendices)

The advantages of dealing with potential conflicts early and as informally as possible are substantial: the benefits of a quiet cuppa as a conflict resolution tool. Just in case the conflict develops into something more serious, have a witness and take notes immediately after the conversation in case you need to rely on them later.

Once conflict occurs there are grievance and disciplinary measures in your Rules which need to include an unbiased decision-maker. Part of the procedures should include mediation, and the Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria provides a free service: see <http://www.disputes.vic.gov.au/> .

A mediator is not an unbiased decision-maker as per the Act. In the case of a member vs. member dispute, the committee might be an unbiased decision-maker provided they have no interest in the outcome (other than in seeing it resolved). Other examples of an unbiased decision-maker include an arbitrator, a barrister or ultimately the courts. It is important to document *at the time* any situation that might develop into a conflict: this includes notes of conversations, emails etc. However the most likely outcome of a serious conflict is not a court battle but rather a loss of reputation and community standing.

For further information, Not For Profit Law have some further resources to assist with handling disputes available on their website here: <http://www.pilch.org.au/handlingconflict>

Template policies to assist not-for-profit groups can be found at the website Our Community has and Worksafe has some information on Bullying. As with any publicly available information, such templates is going to designed to cover all sorts of organisations and will therefore may be more complicated than you need: most policies you will need should be around a page long unless you have particularly complicated circumstances.

Incorporation & Structures

When thinking about governance as a first point you need to know what the structure of your organisation is:

- Are you incorporated?
- Do you have a constitution / Rules / bylaws / existing policies and procedures?
- Are you a member of a bigger entity such as the FTLA?
- Are you a member of a Network?
- Are you a charitable institution?

Incorporation

Incorporation is a voluntary process whereby a not-for-profit club or community group can apply to become its own 'legal person' (i.e. the association becomes a distinct legal entity that continues regardless of changes to its membership, or appointed office bearers).

The advantages of incorporation include:

- **Protection of the members and office holders against personal liability for debts and other legal obligations of the organisation;**
- The ability to buy and sell property in the name of the organisation;
- **Greater certainty and acceptability to potential contracting parties such as lenders, lessors, employees and suppliers of goods and services;**
- The ability to sue and be sued in the name of the association;
- The ability to open bank accounts, invest and borrow money; and
- **Greater eligibility to apply for government grants and funding.** ⁴

Incorporation however will not protect a group or its members from the consequences of their own negligence or from a breach of legal duty.

Incorporation in your own right

For an organised group this isn't particularly difficult. Most groups would become an Incorporated Association through Consumer Affairs (Victoria), but other structures are possible. It does mean going through a registration process and then complying with the legislation, which largely means annual general meetings (AGMs) and complying with various deadlines and reporting requirements including financial reporting requirements.

Being a Member Group under the FTLA umbrella of incorporation

⁴ CAV – Consumer Affairs Victoria website, Sept 2008

The FTLA acts as an umbrella body under which Member Groups obtain the benefits of Incorporation (as described above), without the member group having to deal directly with the required legal requirements associated with incorporation. It can also offer more flexibility at the group level.

The FTLA Committee and Executive Officer take care of general compliance issues, which may be of value to smaller, disorganised, or unstable groups. FTLA Member Groups must be **financial** in order to obtain the benefits of membership.

FTLA Member Groups have a responsibility to assist the FTLA in fulfilling the incorporation requirements by:

- supplying a current list of members complete with postal addresses (also enables them to receive the Victorian Landcare & Catchment Management magazine);
- keeping adequate financial accounts, hold them for a period of seven years, and providing the FTLA with a summary each year
- informing the FTLA of any change to your purposes or activities
- maintaining your non-profit status
 - not distributing surplus monies to members
 - complying with the non-profit winding up clauses

Or Both!

Of course, if a group chooses to incorporate through Consumer Affairs they are still welcome to join the FTLA for the other benefits (about 30% of the membership fits this category). Conversely if a group chooses initially not to go through the incorporation process they can always change their mind at a later date.

(Note: Member Groups that retain their own separate Incorporation will still be required to meet their statutory obligations with respect to that Incorporation).

Groups and Networks

The two main structures in Landcare are the Group (usually local scale) and the Network (usually landscape scale).

There are many advantages for groups in joining together as a network:

- sharing resources and information
- sharing support staff
- being able to handle bigger projects which may assist with some grant applications
- co-ordinating activities across a larger area
- can provide support for less active groups or groups in recess

There are also some difficulties in belonging to a network:

- maintaining the connection to local members and issues
- losing local group leaders to the network level
- both of which can lead to inactive local groups

These issues can be managed if both the network and the local group are aware of them.

Further information about managing networks and useful tools was developed as part of the Network Readiness Project and can be found via the Landcare gateway (www.landcarevic.net.au).

Networks ain't Networks: to fully merge or not to fully merge!

With networks, the two ends of the scale are a) where the local groups are fully merged and b) where the local groups are independent or semi-independent: independence is indicated by separate bank-accounts, AGMs, Rules / Constitution, decision-making processes or ABN.

Local groups in a network, particularly where they are fully merged, may be called sub-groups, branches, or local area committees.

It is really about the degree of local independence. It seems to take a more sophisticated approach to maintain local connectivity in a fully merged network, as all the energy and resources go to the network, causing people to disengage at the local level. That said, some fully merged networks manage these tensions well and maintain vibrant local sub-groups - but it is something to consider and manage when moving to a fully merged structure.

Some networks mix the two structures, having some fully merged groups and some independent local groups, depending on local needs and preferences.

Independent local groups will largely be responsible for themselves, but Networks need to decide on what basis they are eligible to be members of Networks. Usually this would include being in alignment with network's vision and purposes and being in good standing: i.e. being financial if Networks has fees for these groups, being solvent (i.e. able to pay its debts), having appropriate insurances, and acting in such a way that their membership does not bring Network into disrepute.

Fully merged sub-groups are directly part of the network and as such, the Network's responsibility towards them is the same as to itself. Simply put, to act in the best interests of members for the agreed purposes of the network, to be solvent and to have effective governance to achieve those purposes.

The structure of the fully merged sub-groups is up to Networks to a large degree – they can be formal sub-committees / local area working groups of the network with committees appointed by the network or with sub-elections conducted by the network (in which case the network needs to decide who can vote in the sub-elections). Or they can be informal groupings of people who live in a particular area or work on a particular project run by the network.

Any fees would be paid by members to the Network (not the sub-group as that would mean the sub-group would have its own funds and therefore be independent). Member fees should be set as funding measure for the network to cover, at least partially, its operating costs.

For independent local groups, there should be some recognition of the affiliation on both sides, whether agreement or application. Just because a local group is in the network area it doesn't automatically mean they are a member of the network. It is good practice to formally accept / ratify all members of the network in some way. Networks may choose to set fees for the affiliate groups, once again to fund its own operations.

Implications for insurance and FTLA membership

Where local groups belonging to a network are still independent, they will need to be separately insured whether through the FTLA or someone else.

In the case of a network with independent local groups the membership component of the FTLA fee is multiplied by the number of local groups plus number of committee members and staff. The membership list should include the network's sub-groups themselves (not including subgroup members), committee members and staff.

In the case of a network with fully merged sub-groups then the FTLA membership fee is multiplied by the total number of members across all the sub-groups, plus committee members, staff and where applicable, members of the network direct.

Planning

Good planning can help you be clear on what you want to achieve and how to do it. Having a plan focuses you on the most important issues and the best use of your time, skills and funds, as well as provide solid risk management.

Planning also clarifies your purpose which can help with communications, recruitment, leadership and seeking funding. It helps prepare you for opportunities and obstacles and gives you a sound basis for evaluating your success.

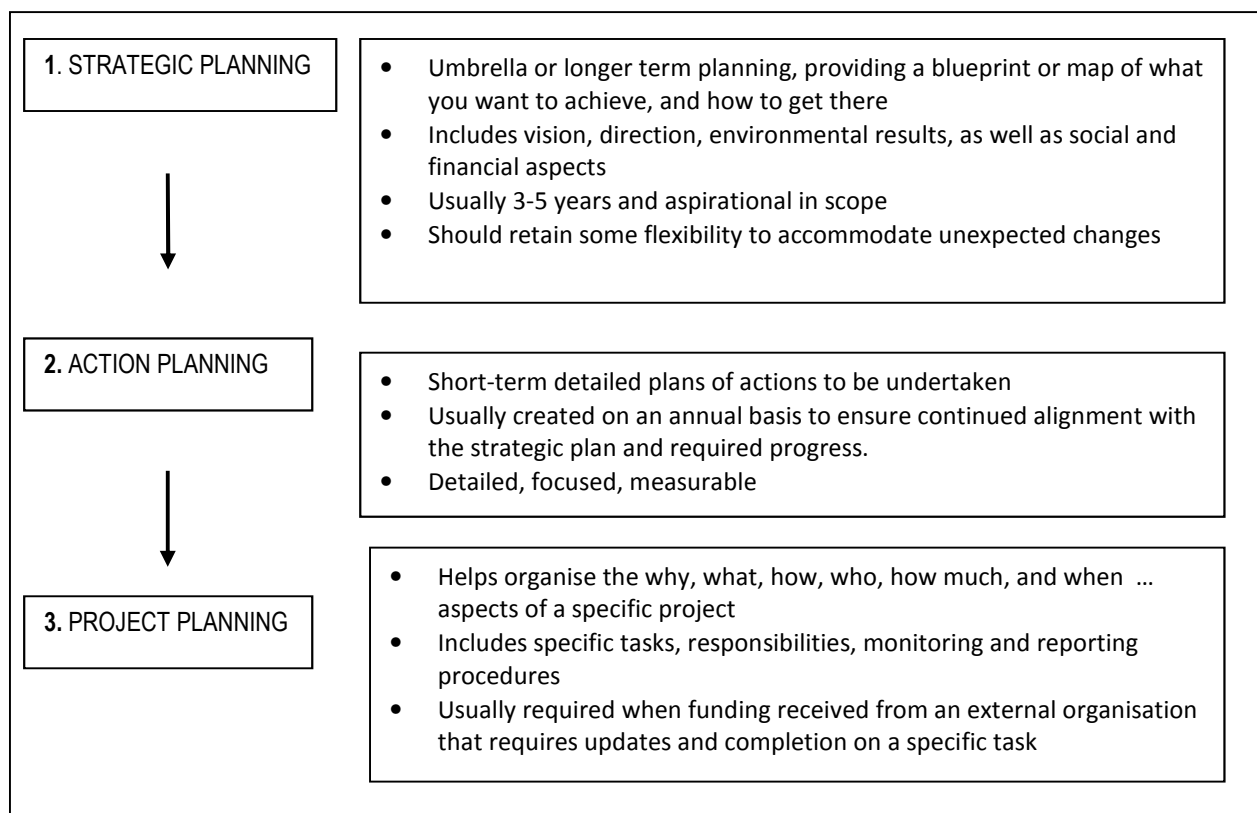
Planning takes into account all the circumstances that could influence your chances of achieving your goals including how many members you currently have, the time available, your group's financial resources, skills and knowledge, as well as the external political, social and financial constraints and opportunities.

Plans can be made for all kinds of activities including communication, field days, creating a website, group training and workshops, working bees and group celebrations.

For a more comprehensive look at planning see the **Planning with Purpose Toolkit** available under Resources on the Landcare Gateway and developed by the Bass Coast Landcare Network.

Planning Types ⁵

Planning 'maps out' the methods and activities you will use to achieve the result you want. It happens at three levels:

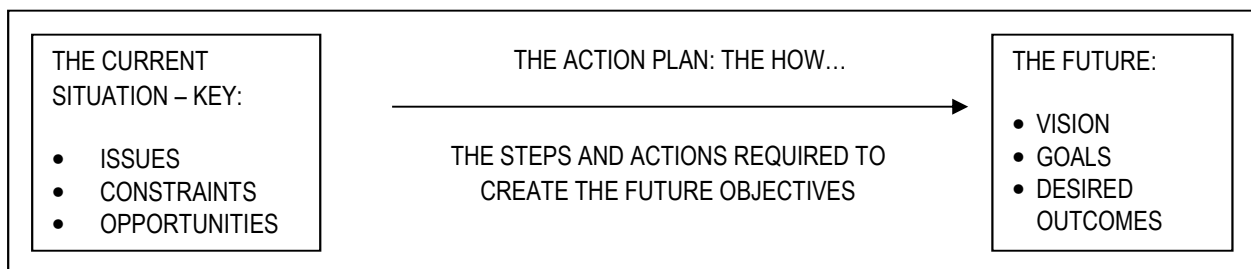


How to go about planning

Different levels of planning call for different levels of detail on how to achieve the results. For example local action plans and project plans can detail specific materials, activities, timelines and people that will be undertaking the tasks. Strategic plans will not go to this level of detail but provide a longer term road map so you are following your ultimate goals from year to year, and helps to guide the activities you decide to undertake.

Regardless of the level of planning, the same three basic steps apply:

- Determine the future vision or end objective
- Analyse the current situation
- Determine, with specific milestones and responsibilities, the process for getting from the current situation to achieving the end objective.



Strategic Planning in Detail

As discussed above, strategic planning helps you set out what you are trying to achieve and how to get there. It gives clarity and a sense of direction and purpose that will help you be focused and effective. It can also help you stay motivated, communicate what you are doing and attract new members and resources.

A good strategic plan must be realistic and attainable. Remember the three step process (above).

Situation – clarify the current situation and what limitations or problems you face. Often it is helpful to group these into social, financial and environmental categories, for example:

- Social: low membership or only reaching certain landholder types
- Financial: small amount of cash in the bank or reliance on government grants
- Environmental: such as loss of natural vegetation, and impact of weeds or rabbits

Goals and Targets – describe the goals you want to achieve in the next three to five years, as well as the measures of success for each goal. Goals might include or be similar to:

- increased membership (social and financial)
- increased funding from the private sector (financial)
- reduced impact of specific weed species (environmental)

For a goal of increased membership, the measure of success might be an increase to 50 families)

Path/Action – work out ways you can achieve these targets.

Understanding the situation and asking the right questions

There are a number of ways to assess the current situation, define your goals and work out how to get there. Answering the following questions may help:

1. What is our story?
2. What is our current vision and purpose?
3. What do we believe in? What are we committed to?
4. What do we do at present?
5. What situation are we in? What things impact on us?
6. What are our strengths? Weaknesses? What are the possibilities?
7. What are the major challenges?
8. What directions are foreseeable outside our organisation?
9. What are the priorities for our region? Who are we working with?
10. If we were to move in new directions, what would be different?
11. What do we need to do to go that way?
12. How will we do it? Who should we involve in our plan?

In summary, a good strategic plan will serve as a framework for making decisions or for securing support and approval, and as a basis for more detailed action planning. This will also help you explain your goals to others so they are more motivated and involved, and help you to benchmark and monitor your performance and stimulate change to create a building block for the next plan.

Action Planning in Detail

Having an action plan means you can organise your activities efficiently and effectively. It identifies the activities you want to be involved in and the resources you will need (funds, machinery, materials and people) to carry them out, usually on an annual basis.

Where should your Group start?

Setting priorities (including timeframe and linkage with overarching strategic plan)

Setting priorities will help you achieve your goals, identify potential problems and allow planning for seeking funds and resources. It also makes it easier for members to stay committed to group activities because they know when and where everything is happening. Identifying the group's priorities could be done through a group workshop or a general discussion of members' concerns. Broader community consultation may assist depending on the nature of the problem the action plan is trying to address.

Your plan need only be simple, but things will run more smoothly if you work out all the important components before starting on any projects.

Involve the Group in the planning process

Involve as many of your members as possible - so everyone has the opportunity to have a say, can take on any tasks identified, and is committed to the activities of the group. Seek external assistance if you feel it would assist the process.

3. Remember previous experience

Take into account any past experience from similar projects carried out by you or other groups that will help you to create a better plan.

4. Designate a Planning Project Officer or Project Sub-Committee

It is helpful to designate one member as a project officer or coordinator for this activity, or have a project sub-committee that can report back to the greater group on progress.

What detail should your Action Plan contain?

- the group's priorities, and how these fit in with the priorities of your local authorities and regional plans
- the type and extent of activities
- the timing/sequence and where they will take place
- what resources (funds, machinery, material and people) you need
- who is involved, and who is coordinating the activity
- how you will acquire the resources needed (including time needed to secure funds)
- whether your members have the skills or you can source that skill or get training from elsewhere
- what you will do if something doesn't go according to plan
- how the activities, results and benefits will be recorded and reported
- what outcome you seek from the activity – how will you know that you have been successful

Remember that the Action Plan is meant to be more than a pretty document. Your group will benefit from having a Plan that is easy to follow, and assists with following your group's aims, reporting on outcomes, and sets out what your group will do for the coming period.

HELPFUL IDEAS – Where to go for additional assistance

Landcare coordinators can provide advice on planning and may have some tools and facilitation skills that they can offer the group.

Neighbouring groups that have an Action Plan can also help with advice on the process they used, where to focus your attention, and what issues to consider.

When planning, you might identify where members could undertake training such as salinity monitoring or seed collection. Ask other members if they can pass on their knowledge, so the group grows a solid skills and knowledge base.

Keep a record of any training needs identified by your members so that you can look out for any training opportunities that arise.

Good planning takes time so make sure you allow for it. Consider dedicating one or more meetings for the process or even a specific day.

Project Planning: Event Planning

Events come in all shapes and sizes and can include field days, farm and bush walks, working bees, any type of meeting, fundraising activities and celebrations. Planning an event is a common activity for a landcare group, and should contribute to the group's overall strategic plan, and the action plan for the year.

Getting the 'basics' right when you're planning and running an event gives you a better chance of having a successful event and achieving your goals. When assessing the viability of an event, it is helpful to identify and divide up required tasks – as well as who is going to take care of those tasks – and determine availability of necessary resources.

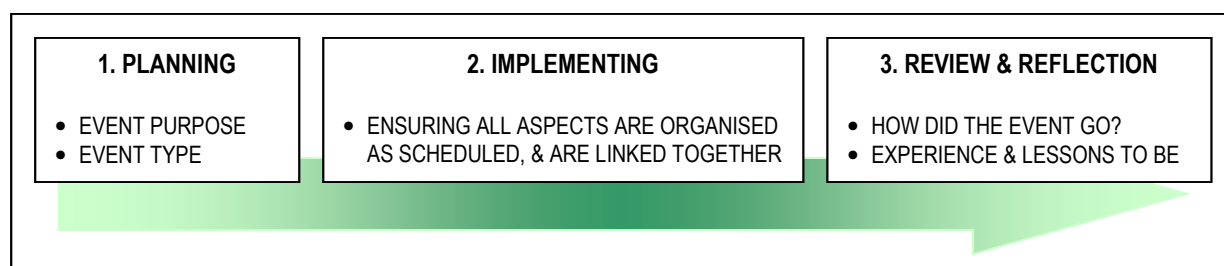
The Essentials

No matter what type of event you are planning, there are common elements that you must consider:

- check if you need permission to stage it
- have a venue or environment suitable to the event
- conditions must be safe and comfortable
- support for the people attending if there is an incident
- suitable funding and resources
- publicity and reporting, and
- people – for planning the event, and managing it on the day

Think through the idea, purpose and goals very clearly, particularly for bigger events (which may take up to 12 months to plan and organize), because this will help with decisions to be made throughout the planning process.

Holding An Event: A Three Phase Process



Before the group makes a decision regarding a proposed event, it is worth asking these questions:

- what is the purpose of this event?
- does it fit with the group's plans and priorities?
- who is the audience?
- what do we want to achieve?
- can we clearly outline the idea for the event?
- what evidence do we have that this event is wanted or needed?
- based on that answer, do we need to do any further research?
- do we need to re-think any aspect of the idea – or all of it?
- are there other groups, agencies, business, schools who would be interested in being involved in planning and running this type of event?

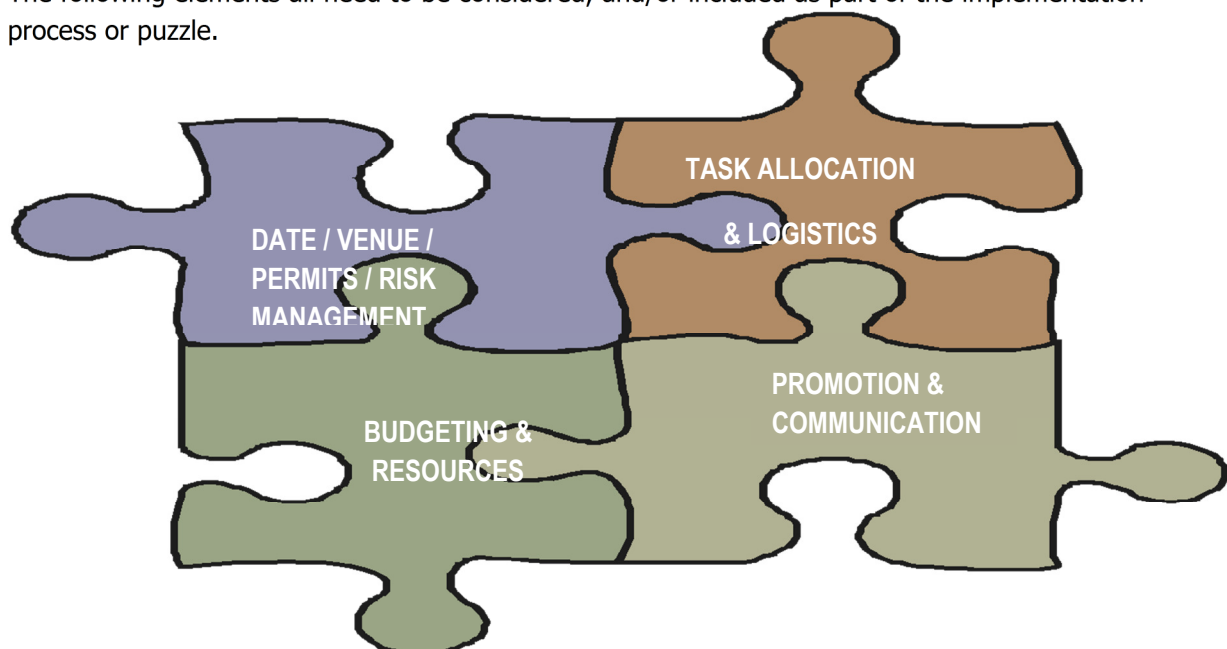
TIP: For events that happen regularly, such as working bees, you may only need to ask these questions occasionally, just to double-check that all is going smoothly.

2. Event Implementation

An event cannot succeed without a team working together to make it happen, but you will need one person to act as a coordinator to keep everyone on track. This person is nominated to look after the event overall so that all the components come together.

Make sure you schedule some meetings specifically for planning in the lead-up to the event. Early on, these meetings will focus on issues such as understanding the event, brainstorming ideas, clarifying various roles, and organising speakers, budgets and a list of tasks.

The following elements all need to be considered, and/or included as part of the implementation process or puzzle.



Date, Venue Permission and Risk Management

Date

Events take a lot of work and it can be very disappointing if nobody attends. Before committing to a date (and time), make sure you don't clash with any other important local or major events – public holidays, school holidays, a major agricultural display – because it could limit how many people come. Additionally check venue or site availability. For a small event, this may only be an issue for your members and local supporters, but if you are planning a big event, you will need to widen your research as to what else might be happening that day.

Permits

Before you go too far with your planning, make sure you have the authority to hold the event. This could be as simple as approval from the committee, to approval from the person in charge of the site where you want to hold the event. Make sure you have the approvals you need – in writing and on file, to prevent any problems on the day.

Risk Management

No matter what the event is, you have to consider the safety of everyone involved. For a major event, it is valuable to consider a risk management plan which will identify ways of minimising risk as well as how you will cope with any incidents.

Ask these questions and brainstorm the answers:

- what can go wrong?
- what can we do to minimise it?
- what will we do if something happens?

You need to be prepared for unplanned situations and you may also have to consider an alternative strategy (contingency plan), especially if you are planning an outdoor event.

Task Allocation and Logistics Management

The bottom line is – one person can't do it all!

There are a number of tasks of all sizes to be done in the lead-up to, during and after the event. The event coordinator should create a list of everything that must be done for the event. Allocate tasks to a number of people and when you're discussing who will do what, consider if the person has specific skills which might make them better suited to one thing than another. There should be deadlines for each task and you will need to meet regularly or keep in touch to monitor progress.

On the day:

A 'running sheet' of who is doing what and when will help everyone to know what they need to do. Make sure everyone involved has a copy. This should only be a simple one or two page document.

The task list should include cleaning up. Establish this before the event – the venue, the group or various volunteers – it can be hectic on the day of the event itself, and you don't want this task to be forgotten.

Budgeting and Resources

If money is involved, managing it properly is a key measure of your success

Make sure you monitor costs against your budget so you don't end up with a huge loss – or unused funds that could have made the event better.

Budgeting - and communicating the details to the committee will help you achieve the goals you have set for this event and ensure that the event does not impact on the group's overall budget.

Promotion & Communication

How will people know something if you don't let them know?

You need to promote the event effectively to ensure your target audience is in attendance, so use your media wisely

Make sure you plan your invitation list properly too, so all the right people are invited.

Recognition, Reflection And Review

At the end of the day it's important to acknowledge the extra effort people have put into an event. At the very least, say thank you and send a card, but also consider gifts, vouchers, certificates and maybe even a special 'thank you' function.

If you're going to hold the event again, you need to know what went right (and wrong) with your event, and why. Do your own assessments but don't forget to ask for feedback from some of the people who came along. Be informed by a range of perspectives on how the event went and then you can analyse this information as a group.

Learning from that information will help you plan future events, and build on your group's experience, skills and knowledge. If you have been given donations or assistance to run the event, you can also give a report or write an article about the day, letting people know how it went and what the outcomes were.

Meetings

Meetings are simply a way of coming together to share information and make decisions. If you are to run efficiently as a group, you will be holding several different types of meetings. Some will involve everyone in the group; some may involve only a small group of members and other meetings may include stakeholders the wider community .

While different levels of structure and formality are involved for each type, all meetings need a clear purpose. Such clarity will enable the group to function effectively, maintain enthusiasm, and help stop the key members from burn out through work overload.

When setting the time and location of meetings consider who you'd like to attend and whether the proposed venue and time will be convenient and comfortable for them.

An **effective meeting** is well organised, has a clear purpose, is comfortable and relaxed, allows for people's viewpoints to be heard, and is kept on time.

How to Arrange and Chair Meetings

Arranging a meeting, or planning an activity, may seem deceptively simple. However to increase your chances of a successful meeting, and ensuring members attend the next one, consideration of the following points might be beneficial:

- Type of meeting required and key agenda items
- Activity progress
- Appropriate date and time, & keeping the meeting itself on schedule
- Venue choice for accessibility, location, & variety
- Catering or audio-visual requirements
- Required notification and advertising lead times
- Potential for new member inclusion

It is very important for the Secretary, in conjunction with the President, to determine a clear agenda for the meeting and circulate it to members prior to the meeting date, along with the minutes of the previous meeting. This action will:

- Inform members where and when the meeting is
- Inform members what is to be discussed (so that members can research topic or form opinions)
- Inform members about what was discussed at the last meeting

Meeting Types⁶

1. General Meetings

⁶ Further information available in *landcare Information Notes* on the *Gateway* website (Acknowledgements to R. Jones & B. Payne –DPI – 2001)

- Annual General Meeting (AGM)
- Special General Meetings

3. Committee Meetings

4. Sub-committee Meetings

1. General Meetings

General meetings are open to all members and provide a chance for discussion and reporting to the whole group. This type of meeting might have a special theme, such as action planning, or a guest speaker, who may potentially attract new members. It may be formal or informal – such as a half hour discussion check in during a field day.

Meetings should be held whenever and wherever it suits the attendees. It may be in the morning or at a café or during a field day or via teleconference. It doesn't have to be 8pm every second Tuesday night at the local pub unless that's what suits everyone. When in doubt ask!

One group doubled meeting attendance by shifting to breakfast meetings after surveying their membership about the best meeting time

The **Annual General Meeting or AGM** is a relatively formal review of the past year, and is mandatory for incorporated groups. All members should be encouraged to attend because the group needs a given number of attendees to make the formal decisions, a quorum. Given AGMs tend to be fairly dry, procedurally driven events, you may choose to invite a guest speaker or organise an activity to create some extra interest.

AGM proceedings usually include:

- Minutes of the past AGM – are checked and formally accepted
- The president's report – setting out the achievements of the previous year and intended priorities for the year ahead
- The treasurer's report and copies of the financial report (may require auditing)
- The secretary and other committee members may also present reports at this meeting

The AGM is also likely to include:

Resolutions: If group decisions are to be made at the meeting or reports are to be accepted then a resolution should be moved, considered, and adopted, amended or rejected by the meeting.

Election of the committee: Unless otherwise specified, all positions are declared vacant at the AGM. An impartial person or observer chairs the election process.

A **Special General Meeting or SGM** is a type of general meeting that considers special business such as changes to the group's name, purposes, rules or bylaws, or structure (e.g. mergers). Notice for an SGM should be similar to an AGM and should specify the business to be conducted so as to alert members that this meeting is of special importance and to allow all members to have input.

Resolutions put to an SGM may require a 75% majority rather than a simple 50% majority depending on the substance of the resolution and the group's Rules or bylaws.

Changes to a group's name, purpose or decisions to merge or close down may be discussed at an ordinary committee or general meeting but should always be then recommended to and confirmed by either a special resolution at the AGM or an SGM with the appropriate notice and voting requirements.

3. Committee Meetings

Committee meetings are the forum to discuss and decide on issues relating to the work of the group. These meetings usually cover the more day-to-day operations and decisions. Separating general meetings and committee meetings, enables general meetings to be reserved for items or relevance to the whole membership. Committee are also a smaller group enabling easier discussion and decision-making.

Where a major decision needs to be taken, the committee should recommend a general meeting to gain the necessary support and agreement from the members.

4. Sub-committee Meetings

Your group may have several sub-committees tackling specific tasks. They usually report back to the committee regularly. Any important decisions needed should be made as recommendations from the sub-committees to the full committee. Sub-committees will tackle issues like finances, preparing funding submissions, managing specific projects, event organisation, or writing the group's newsletter.

Encouraging Meeting Participation

When meeting participants are well informed prior to the meeting, they are more likely to actively engage in the meeting, leading to better results for the management of your Group.

It is very important that the Chair

- Know the agenda
- Start on time and keep meeting moving & on schedule, to finish at advertised time
- Make introductory remarks
- Start discussions and encourage participation
- Prevent embarrassment, monopolising speakers, and intimidation of free expression
- Manage disturbances
- Assign work and check reports / progress

Individual Participants should:

- On receiving the agenda and other material discuss with the Chair items you do not understand, or advise of attendance status
- Talk to other people before meeting on issues of concern
- If presenting at meeting; thoroughly prepare report or other required items (lengthy reports or proposals should be written and distributed in advance to other members through the Secretary)
- During the meeting let your viewpoint be known on important matters – especially if you can clarify an item

Organising Meetings

There are a number of things that need to be organised before the meeting, at the meeting and between meetings. An example checklist is provided below. Tasks can be shared around more easily when clearly set out, communicated and understood.

WHO	ACTIONS	
PRESIDENT	<p>1. Determine Type Of Meeting Required & Key Agenda Items</p> <p>What do you want to achieve at the meeting? Is it a...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social gathering, or chance for a guest speaker? • Discussion or Debate Forum? • Organising / Activity Planning meeting? 	
PRESIDENT IN CO- ORDINATION WITH SECRETARY	<p>2. Set Date, Time, & Venue</p> <p>Is the date & time convenient for members to attend? Is a suitable venue available?</p> <p>Select for suitability & Confirm:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Venue Cost • Car parking access • Childminding facilities • Travel time for attendees • Catering type, availability & cost • Audio-visual requirements, availability & cost • If a guest speaker is attending, do they have availability, or special needs? • Other requirements 	
SECRETARY (may enlist support of other group members to assist)	<p>3. Notification Of Meeting To Members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure Group members have adequate notice of date, location, style of meeting, & agenda items (2 weeks minimum) • Arrange notification to Group Members and local communities as required (invitations / newspaper) <p>Note: Advertising your meetings and other events to the widest</p>	

	<p>possible range of members is crucial to your Group's success and also may assist membership recruitment within your Group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you need to extend a special invitation to anyone? 	
SECRETARY IN CO- ORDINATION WITH PRESIDENT & TREASURER	<p>4. Preparation Of Meeting Documents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agenda finalised & typed up • Minutes from the previous meeting typed up • Correspondence log / summary prepared • Other reports called for & received, for example from President / Treasurer • Supporting material / documents for other agenda items compiled • Agenda & previous minutes distributed 1-2 weeks prior to meeting. Make spare copies for meeting • Update membership records as required to know who has a vote and should receive notice of meeting 	
SECRETARY	<p>5. Confirm Catering & Other Requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm general expected attendance levels • Confirm catering requirements with caterer 1 week prior to meeting • Arrange for venue setup, including Audio-visual requirements • Confirm schedule with guest speaker/ s (if applicable) • Organise directional & promotional signage 	
PRESIDENT & SECRETARY	<p>30 Minutes Prior To Meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrive at venue • Check setup and catering correct • Put up signage • Have all handouts / spare agendas ready for distribution • Welcome members & guests 	
EVERYONE	CELEBRATE A SUCCESSFUL MEETING!	

Meeting Format and Procedure

The following section will discuss in greater detail:

- Setting the Agenda
- The definition of key terms regarding correct meeting procedure
- Specific procedures that the Chair oversees, including elections & guest speakers

Setting the Agenda

The group or committee may have standing items on the agenda, which would usually include reports. General business would include items that are decided in advance. Depending on the meeting and the standing orders, the chair may open up discussion to other business: depending on the nature of the other business the meeting may wish to delay decisions until the next meeting to give members a fair chance to come along to discuss it.

Together the items for discussion form an Agenda, which should be circulated in advance so that members know if an item of importance is going to be discussed and can be prepared.

It can also be useful as reminder to have the group's purpose or vision listed on the Agenda in order to keep everyone on track.

Depending on the type of meeting, the meeting format may alter. However, the meeting should be opened at the appointed time and would usually work through the following items:

- Distribution of Agenda
- Chair opens meeting
- Chair welcomes Special Guests, Visitors and members
- Those present recorded in minutes
- Apologies
- Declaration of Conflict of Interest
- Acceptance of Minutes of the Previous Meeting (can be noted as read, if circulated prior to meeting)
- Business arising from the Minutes
- Acknowledgements of Out of Session Resolutions
- Reports
 - o Correspondence (Inwards & Outwards Summary)
 - o Financial
 - o Sub-committeenn
 - o Other reports (if applicable)
- Standing Items
 - o Safety
 - o New Members
 - o Other (if applicable)
- Special or notified business
- General business
- Any other Business
- Announcements
- Set Date and Place of Next Meeting prior to Meeting Close

It is the responsibility of the Chair, usually in consultation with at least the Secretary and perhaps other committee members to set the Agenda. Some groups may also allow members to recommend items for discussion prior to the meeting, or some items may have been proposed or carried over from the last meeting.

Common problems include meetings running overtime or meetings where items scheduled later are rushed. A simple remedy might be putting times on the Agenda so everyone knows what is expected. Consider tabling any item that runs overtime or calling for a vote. And if long meetings are an ongoing problem consider delegating some discussions to sub-committees or having shorter meetings more often.

Other considerations might include the availability of speakers, or positioning of breaks. Also if there are items which are subject to conflicts of interest then it can be considerate to schedule at the beginning or end of the meeting or around breaks.

Meeting Procedures

Meetings can be either formal or informal and sometimes can shift within the meeting depending on whether the issue being discussed is controversial. Meeting procedures are intended to enable the chair to manage a meeting and ensure everyone has a fair hearing. Formal meeting procedures can also be helpful in taking the heat out of an issue and enabling it to be discussed fairly so is a good idea to have agreed meeting procedures prepared in advance. The bigger the meeting or the more controversial the issue is the more useful formal meeting procedures.

It is important to record decisions properly, even if it is an informal meeting with no controversy. The process of calling for a resolution, voting on it, and recording it in the minutes, is the easiest way to get clarity around decisions. The minute taker should always feel able to stop the meeting and read out the wording of the resolution to ensure that everyone is clear on the decision.

See the Secretary section under Committee Roles for further details on Minutes and the Appendices for different possible minute taking formats.

Definition of Key Terms

The Rules

The rules governing the organisation, also known as the constitution. Broadly outlines the aims and objects of the organisation, the composition of its membership, what the structure of its governing bodies shall be, what officers it shall have, and how its rules and by-laws may be created and altered. Often will contain meeting procedures for at least AGMs and SGMs.

Standing Orders

Another name for formal meeting procedures, sometimes specified in the Rules, sometimes agreed by the group or committee using them. May cover such procedures as who has a right to speak, for how long, right of reply, what to do when there's a tied vote, how to handle non-agenda items etc

Quorum

This is the number of people required in order to make a decision made at that meeting valid. Only people with voting rights should count towards quorum. Quorum requirements for each meeting type should be specified in your Rules or Standing Orders, and are usually higher for committee meetings (usually 50% plus one) than general meetings (e.g. 10% of voting members) and can be expressed as a number or a proportion. If the meeting does not reach quorum then it should either be postponed or all decisions made at the inquorate meeting will need to be ratified by the next quorate meeting.

Motion

A proposal, placed before the meeting by one of the members, that something be done, or that something previously be done be approved, or that the meeting express an opinion on some matter. In a formal meeting a motion may be needed before discussion can commence.

Mover / Secunder

The mover is someone who proposes the motion, and a seconder is someone who agrees that the motion should be discussed. A seconder ensures that issues are only discussed if they are of interest to more than one person in the group: in a formal meeting a motion without a seconder will not be discussed.

Speakers For and Against

In a formal meeting the chair may call for alternating speakers for and against the motion before putting it to a vote. Usually at a minimum this would include the mover and seconder. In a less formal meeting discussion may be more general.

Resolution

A motion after it has been agreed upon at the meeting. A motion that is “carried” becomes a resolution of the meeting. If the motion is not agreed to it is “lost”, and never becomes a resolution. (Some less formal groups may use the term resolution and motion interchangeably, particularly if motions are rarely lost).

Amendment

Is a proposal to alter a motion in some way – either by adding to it or taking away from it. If the members agree to the amendment then they agree to altering the motion: the amendment becomes the motion. The altered motion is debated and if it is agreed to it ultimately becomes a resolution.

Procedural Motion

Relates to the conduct of the meeting. Procedural motions are a set of formal motions which are used to control the conduct of meeting in a number of specific ways. Further information on procedural or formal motions is contained in this section.

Point of Order

Is a type of procedural motion raised by a member who considers that there has been a breach of rules, conduct of debate or decorum.

Tabling a Motion or Item of Business

Tabling a motion is to delay the decision until a later meeting and is formally done via a second motion “That the motion be tabled until”

Tabling a motion is often done if further information is required to make the decision, if the meeting is running out of time to properly consider the matter, or if it is new business and the group wants to let absent members know about the issue so they can have a fair chance to attend the meeting where it will be discussed.

Action

An action can be the result of a resolution and will usually specify who is responsible for the action and when it should be completed.

Out of Session Resolutions

To manage urgent issues between meetings, a group may allow out of session resolutions. The committee might send around a motion via email or other methods but as there is no opportunity for real-time discussion, agreement should be unanimous in order to pass the motion. If there is any disagreement or doubt, consider holding a quick teleconference on the issue. In either case out-of-session resolutions should be ratified at the next meeting.

Delegations

If the group is aware in advance that a decision may need to be made between meetings they may have a resolution delegating the decision, often with conditions, to a sub-committee or perhaps the executive. The resulting decision should then be ratified at the next meeting.

Specific Chair Procedures

Elections

Where elections are to be held, the Chair must ensure that they are conducted in accordance with the Rules of the organisation. The system of accepting nominees and counting the votes should be clearly defined by the Chair before any election takes place.

Vacating the Chair

In order to ensure that the Chair remains impartial, it may be necessary to vacate the chair when:

- wishing to speak for or against a motion;
- contesting an election;
- a motion of censure on the Chair is presented to the meeting.

Guests

The Chair is responsible for introducing the guests at a meeting, welcoming visitors and specifically introducing guest speakers, as well as arranging any votes of thanks required.

Guest speakers should have the option of speaking early and understand that, if necessary, it is acceptable to leave before the meeting concludes. If it is not intended for the guest to speak early in the meeting, nominate a later time that the guest may wish to arrive at the meeting.

Introducing a Guest Speaker

The first step is to find out about the speaker, the subject, and the particular qualifications for talking on the subject. These become the main part of your introduction – a few plain, concise facts on the relevance of the subject to the meeting, then the background and qualities of the speaker which explains the authority to talk on the subject. You should end your introduction by repeating the title of the talk and the speaker's name.

Thanking the Speaker after their Presentation

Method 1: Formal vote of thanks

The Chair calls for someone to move a vote of thanks. This vote of thanks should be carried with acclamation. After the applause has ceased the Chair asks the person to accept the vote of thanks. It is incorrect for the meeting to applaud after the mover has spoken before the Chair has called for acclamation.

Method 2: Expression of appreciation (is shorter and more frequently used)

One speaker expresses the thanks of the meeting to a person and at the conclusion asks those present to show this by acclamation. After the applause the Chair conveys the appreciation of the meeting to the person.

In Meetings...

General Effective Chair Conduct

- Ensure effective time management & firm direction of proceedings, including speakers and discussion
- Be considerate of guest speaker requirements (*they may not be able to stay for the entire meeting*)
- Exercise discretion with regard to meeting procedure. For example, if the minutes were distributed previous to the meeting, it is not necessary to read them out; simply ask for a general motion of acceptance
- Place important discussion issues before procedural issues such as correspondence if appropriate to better utilise participants' attention span
- Provide summaries to prompt participants towards a motion, vote, or effective conclusion
- Be fair and impartial

exemplify

encourage

engage



In chairing the meeting, the Chair will encounter
many types of communication styles:

The members who consider procedure unnecessary

The Chair should emphasise that meeting rules are not intended to impede discussion, but promote the expression of a broad range of opinions before voting.

The member who whispers to the neighbour

At a large meeting, whispers amongst participants are common. While making the talkative member a focus of everyone's attention and embarrassing them may work; a better method is to ask the whisperer, who may have a real contribution to make to the proceedings, to express the views to the chair for the benefit of the meeting.

The silent member

Needs encouragement from the meeting as all views should be valued.

Annual General Meetings

Groups who are incorporated in their own right are required to hold an Annual General Meeting. Unincorporated groups may still wish to hold an AGM as a formal review of the year's activities and achievements.

The ordinary business of an AGM is:

- (Adoption of Standing Orders for the meeting where applicable)
- Accepting minutes of last AGM
- Accepting apologies
- President's / Annual / Committee Reports: presentation, questions and moved, seconded and accepted by the meeting
- Treasurer's / Financial Reports: presentation, questions and moved, seconded and accepted by the meeting
- Declaration of Financial Conflicts of Interest
- Election of Committee

AGM Checklist⁷

Date

Rough date set by legislation – eg within 3-6 months of end of financial year

Plan around local events and/or school holidays

Notice and Advertisement

If you are incorporated, legislation states advertise AGM to members 2-4 weeks beforehand

Newspaper advertising not now required by law, but is good promotion

Office Bearers and committee

Confirm which current office bearers will be re-nominating

Check constitution for eligibility

Plan ahead to fill vacancies – ask people

Constitution probably says receive nominations at least a week in advance

Minutes

Do you send them out after the AGM – and people lose them before the next AGM?

⁷ Barbara Look

Do you send them out before the following AGM when people might have forgotten what actually happened?

On balance, probably best to do both!

Voting on accepting the minutes is not confined to those who were present at the meeting!

Auditor

All incorporated associations have to produce accounts, but generally only large organisations that are required to have them fully audited

If you are required to present audited accounts, leave sufficient time for the auditor to go through the books and prepare the audit.

Customary to elect the auditor at AGM but not a legal requirement. However if you change auditors you need to seek approval at an AGM.

Publicity

If your AGM will be a bit of a showcase, with a guest speaker, or video, or important announcement – organise and promote well in advance!

Meeting papers

Prepare the following documents and post them out to all members and office bearers in advance of the meeting:

A set of accounts – balance sheet and financial statement – in required format

Annual report – should contain accounts, a summary of the year's activities, record of year's achievements, preview of next year's planned activities

Meeting Agenda

Minutes – relevant minutes from the previous AGM – not the previous committee meeting

On the Day or Night

Have copies of the constitution on hand in case you need to check anything – when in doubt, the chair's decision is final.

Members

Many organisations make a practice of signing up new members and renewing old members before the meeting. Strictly speaking, new members don't become members until approved by the board/committee and so cannot vote at the AGM

Chair's Report

While there is no legal obligation to do so, it's a good idea to have the Chair report on behalf of the board/Committee and the organisation on the achievements and developments of the past year.

This gives people a chance to find out what's happening and a chance to ask questions – and is your opportunity to show new members that it's not all routine formalities.

Financial Reports

Incorporated associations are legally obliged to pass out particular financial documents at their AGMs, basically:

- Income and expenditure of the association during its last financial year
- Assets and liabilities of the association at the end of its last financial year
- Mortgages, charges and other securities of any description affecting any of the property of the association at the end of its last financial year.

Legislation in most states provides that you must have your accounts audited if your turnover is above a certain level. If you are below that level, you can still have your accounts audited – it may be more expensive, but it provides some assurance that nothing has been overlooked that is likely to damage the organisation.

Note again, that because you have to make a report to your members at the meeting doesn't mean that you have to send that particular set of financial reports out to anyone else. The Annual report that you send out to stakeholders and donors can be different and better focussed.

See the Appendices for a treasurer's report template.

Business

It is unusual to have any consequential business discussed or passed at the AGM. Any business except constitutional amendments can be handled at a board/committee meeting – and if something can be done at a smaller meeting with fewer complications then it's generally safer to do that.

Elections

At the meeting you need to validly elect key office bearers. Depending on the size and nature of the organisation, the AGM is the time to publicly elect the Chair, Deputy Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and other board/committee members. General outlines of the election procedure will be in the constitution.

Documentation

Most Australian states require you to send in an annual report after your AGM.

Meeting Procedure

The procedures at the AGM are generally the same as at an ordinary committee meeting. Motions must be moved:

To accept the minutes of the last AGM

To approve the Chair's Report (the Annual Report)

To approve the Treasurer's report (the Financial Statement)

Motions must be seconded and a vote, generally a show of hands, taken

Check whether the quorum is different for an AGM – check your constitution.

Guest speaker

Guest speakers can be people you want to use to impress those at the meeting, or people you want to be impressed by the meeting – or both!

If you have any changes you want to make to your bylaws, name or structure (e.g. mergers) then you would frame it as a special resolution to the annual general meeting.

Notice: Notice of the AGM, including any special resolutions, needs to send out to your membership 2-4 weeks in advance.

Please note that the items on the notice of meeting are the only things that should be discussed at an AGM so as members know what is on the table and can decide whether to attend. If you want to discuss other business, the Chair can close the AGM and open a General Meeting directly afterwards but a general meeting should not deal with special business such as changes to the group bylaws, name or structure (e.g. mergers). Votes of thanks are an exception.

Good idea to include any papers to be presented or voted on at the AGM with the notice of meeting if you can.

Chair

Usually the president chairs the meeting, and in his/her absence, the Vice President

Usually the chair of the meeting has the final say in any dispute, and holds the deciding vote (good idea to spell this out in your standing orders)

Voting

If you are inviting members of the public then you will need some system to determine who has a vote – voting cards or similar. For most small groups voting is unlikely to be contentious but it is a good idea to have a system in place just in case.

Many organisations make a practice of signing up new members and renewing old members before the meeting. Strictly speaking, new members don't become members until approved by the board/committee and so cannot vote at the AGM. This prevents stacking, but it is a good idea to advise of a closing date for new *voting* members so people don't get upset.

Publicity: If you are inviting members of the public, do your usual publicity

Elections

Confirm which current committee members will be re-nominating

Check your bylaws for eligibility (i.e. they usually should be financial members in good standing. Some groups have restrictions on two people from the same family holding office at the same time but most don't worry about it)

Plan ahead to fill vacancies – ask people! Most people volunteer because they were asked but there is nothing worse than having your arm twisted on the day. See the section on succession planning.

Decide whether you are going to have nominations for committee positions beforehand, and if so the closing date (usually at least a week in advance) and a system to do so. The other option is nominations from the floor. Once again it is a good idea to be prepared in case you have an election. Find someone neutral to act as a returning officer just in case.

Decide on standing orders i.e. the procedure for decision-making: what the quorum is, who gets to speak, for how long, does the president hold a casting vote in the event of a tie etc? Once again, it won't be a problem for most groups but if things get contentious it isn't a bad idea to have this all thought out and written down. Similarly good idea to have the procedure for voting or elections written down. Hopefully you already have this, if not, it isn't a bad idea to present them to the meeting and ask the meeting to adopt the standing orders and then you can use them for the next AGM.

Guest Speakers:

Guest speaker will technically be before or after the AGM not during. If you want to schedule them between the reports and the elections or between the elections and the announcement if you need to count votes then the chair will need to adjourn and reopen the AGM. Sometimes you can dragoon the speaker into acting as your returning officer as a neutral party.

Remember Speaker Gifts: always easy to forget in all the AGM rush

After the AGM

- advise those members who weren't in attendance of the outcome
- Induct new committee members (see section on Induction)
- Send out draft minutes
- Advise stakeholders and contractual partners of changes in officers
- And, if you are an FTLA Member Group, send us the updated financials and a committee list!

See the appendixes for an AGM running sheet template

Risk Management

Community organisations such as landcare must comply with government and contractual requirements, as well as attempt to fulfil community expectations. Many of elements of effective governance are described in this document. Many landcare projects involve outdoor work, sometimes with machinery and chemicals, or in unstable terrain, or with volunteers and members of the public as well as Group members. All of these elements add to the risk perception that must be managed and alleviated.

Risk management is the series of checks and investigations an organisation uses to avoid, reduce or control risks, while continuing to operate and take advantage of opportunities, which may arise. Formal risk assessments assist to:

- Identify the hazards and assess related risks
- Reduce risk through hazard removal or mitigate the risk through appropriate behaviour and strategies
- Ensure a safe working environment

Types of risk include:

- Financial
- Health & Safety
- Reputational

Managing the Books

Financial Management⁸

While the volunteer contribution in terms of time and in kind support is significant, most organisations still need funds in order to carry out their activities, and that's where financial management comes in.

Having good financial management aids in assisting the group achieve its purpose in a positive sense. However financial management is also about managing risks, about making sure that the group is able to continue operating. It's also about protecting the group's reputation – no one wants to deal with an organisation that doesn't pay bills promptly or fulfil its contracts.

Good financial management is:

ACCOUNTABLE;

RESPONSIBLE; and

TRANSSPARENT.

Most importantly, the whole committee has a legal duty not to trade while insolvent, i.e. to make sure the organisation can pay its debts as and when they fall due. It's not just the duty of the Treasurer!

Entering into Contracts

It is important to have a clear procedure on who is able to enter into contracts on behalf of your group and how that decision is made. Usually the President will sign the contract on behalf of the group, but the President should have the agreement of the committee of management **before** entering into a contract.

Agreement can take the form of:

- A budget that has been agreed to by the committee
- A decision at a formal committee meeting
- An out-of-session resolution circulated between meetings (needs unanimous approval to compensate for lack of discussion)
- Pre-approved spending limits (e.g. the President may authorise expenditure up to \$500 without committee approval OR the secretary may spend \$50 per quarter on postage)

⁸ Thanks to Alan MacKinnon for his assistance with this section

Authority to enter into contracts

Unless something in your bylaws, or a prior committee decision, delegates the power for signing contracts to someone else, the decision to enter into a contract (including a membership arrangement) should rest with the committee and be signed by the president. If your bylaws are silent on this point then it is advisable to write that in explicitly.

It is also important to make sure that your suppliers and stakeholders know who has the authority to enter into contracts on behalf of the group. And keep them updated!

The last thing you want is to have an ex-committee member or other unauthorised person making financial commitments on behalf of the organisation. Even if you can demonstrate the group member did so without authority it can severely damage your relationship with that stakeholder as they will be out of pocket having entered into the contract in good faith.

Case Study:

Jane has been the president of her local landcare group for just over a year and everything is going well when the treasurer comes to her with an invoice from the local council for \$5000 and asks her if she knows anything about it. She doesn't and they ask everyone on committee before then going to the council. The council says that it is for a spray contractor who did some work on a piece of public land which the landcare group manages and that they had agreement with the group for the work. After more investigation, Jane discovers that the council spoke to Bob, who had been president for the previous six years and who was the council's contact during that time, but who is no longer on committee. The council rang Bob to tell him they had a delay on another job and a spray contractor was available and they'd noticed the land under management needed some work. Bob said it sounded OK and the council proceeded on that basis. The group now has a bill for \$5000, which wasn't in the budget, and will clear out their bank account.

What policies could the group have adopted to prevent this situation?

Key Tools

Your group may want to consider documenting your financial procedures in a simple *Financial Procedures Manual*. The Manual can describe how you go about your financial procedures and ensure continuity when there is a change of responsibility for the finances on your committee.

Have a clearly written annual budget for your group as well as the information that makes it all come together – books of account (including receipt books, bank deposit book, cash-book, members ledger) as well as a calendar of financial commitments such as insurance, rent, printing, and postage.

Financial statements are needed for regular reporting to the committee and they should cover the source and amount of income, your operating expenses, the amount of money invested and any outstanding debts. A computer based program can be useful in helping you keep track of these records.

Tax can be a tricky area for non-profit organisations. Being non-profit does not automatically mean an organisation is exempt from income tax. To be exempt, either the organisation must be endorsed as such by the Australian Tax Office or appropriately self-assess as exempt. Either way, the tax status of the organisation must be regularly reviewed, especially if circumstances change.

Besides income tax there is also GST and employee-related taxes such as Fringe Benefits Tax and PAYG (Pay As You Go) withholding. If you are unsure about whether you are registered for GST or have tax concessions check your group's ABN record with the Australian Business Register (ABR).

Additional Notes on GST and Income Tax for landcare Groups are contained in the appendices.

Group Bank Accounts

Opening Accounts

Bank accounts should require dual signatories, and most banks will have options that allow double electronic authorisation meaning that signatories do not need to physically meet to sign cheques.

*Dual authorisation is a basic check
on group expenditure*

Authorised signatories to the account should include the President / Vice President / Secretary / Treasurer.

If your Group is not individually incorporated, a letter of authority from the parent organisation, for example the FTLA (provided on request), may be required to open an account.

Most organisations use just a basic bank account, if possible fee-free. If there is a need for funds to be accounted for separately (e.g. for a grant) then this is best done by using a separate bank account to the main one.

If the group is holding a significant amount of reserve funds (or for instance has a multi-year grant that has been paid up front) then it is a good idea to investigate an high interest or term deposit account.

Managing Accounts

When office bearers change (such as after an AGM) the account signatories must change. This involves the outgoing office bearers signing off the account, and the new office bearers validating their signatures. The bank will supply the required form on request.

Deposit Procedure (Income)

All monies received must be paid into a Group bank account

Expenditure Procedure (Payments)

All payments on behalf of the Group should be:

- paid by with dual authorisation; that of the Treasurer, President, Secretary or Vice President
- paid within pre-approved authorisation limits by the individual office bearer or staff member and then reimbursed by the Group with dual authorisation

All payments must be approved by the Group prior to payments being made. Approval is obtained by resolution of the committee or the group in general meeting and can either be:

- Part of the Budget
- Specifically approved

A written receipt must be obtained for all payments and filed. If the group is registered for GST then the receipt will need to be a tax invoice.

Record Keeping: Cash Account Book

A cash account book is to be written up progressively, which will make financial reporting easier. Expenditure figures are taken from the cheque book stubs, and income from the deposit/receipt book. Bank charges and interest payments are taken from the Bank Statement. Cash Account Book figures should reconcile or match with bank statements.

The cashbook format should include the columns illustrated in the table below. Accounts may be kept in excel or in accounting software such as MYOB, Xero or Saasu but the principles remain the same.

CASH ACCOUNT							
DATE	PARTICULARS	RECEIPT/ INVOICE#	CHQ #	INCOME	EXPENDITURE	GST	TOTAL (BANK)
28/2/2012	<i>Meeting catering</i>	6854	052	-	\$330.00	\$30.00	\$4530.00
	A brief description of the item received or paid for	The number shown on the deposit book or receipt	The last 3 numbers of the cheque butt	Amount received	Amount paid	Included in invoice total	The progressive amount obtained by adding receipts to and subtracting payments from previous balance / total

Bank Reconciliations

These are key to maintaining proper supervision of bank accounts.

The basic process is:

- Bank (per accounts) plus income less expenses gives amount 1;
- Bank (per statement) plus deposits not credited less un-presented cheques gives amount 2;
- Amounts 1 and 2 will be equal when all items are correctly noted.

Bank reconciliations should be conducted at least monthly and should be part of the regular reports to the committee by the Treasurer.

Asset Register

Many groups have some physical assets (spray equipment, cameras etc) and these are often housed by a group member or occasionally by a third party such as the local community house.

Such assets should be listed on an asset register held by the committee, and usually is the responsibility of the treasurer. It should list:

- Description of the item
- Where it is held
- Who is responsible for maintenance
- Conditions of use / loan / hire
- Any relevant insurance arrangements (theft & damage)

The person housing the item should sign that they accept the conditions. If held by a third party, this may take the form of a short agreement signed by both parties. It is also very helpful to put a sticker on the actual item, noting "Property of Please Return to:"

The asset register should be made available to members, perhaps as part of the AGM papers, but as the location of valuable items should not be publicised, it may be wise not to include the location in the circulated version.

Having a register means that everyone is clear about what is expected and can be very helpful in conflict prevention and resolution.

Budgets

“Remember that the budget is a tool, not a straightjacket: a budget can be varied when necessary.”

A budget is an important tool for any organisation. It allows responsible planning and provides a good basis for checking how things have gone compared to plans.

It should be closely connected with your annual planning cycle. If the annual plans are similar year to year then it can be adapted from a prior year or from scratch if there are significant changes.

There are two basic approaches to budgeting:

1) Take Income as given → then decide how to spend it

OR

2) Work out what the group wants to do (strategic or business planning)

- How much will it cost?
- How much uncommitted income / assets do we have?
- Less liabilities
- Less reserve funds
- How can we raise the rest?
- What needs to be delayed until we can source the necessary funds?

Another way to frame the budget is to have an operating budget plus project budgets that add together to create a total budget. That way it is clearly expressed which part of the budget is dependent on obtaining additional project-based funds.

Actual transactions should be tracked against the budget on a regular basis, preferably in preparation for each committee meeting.

Where budgets are complex or transactions are not evenly spread across the year, it may be advisable to break the budget down to quarterly or even monthly figures.

Reporting

Reports are usually presented by a Treasurer at regular committee meetings. They should at minimum have:

- a statement of current funds available,
- an overview of any significant income or expenses
- bank reconciliations appended.

Some organisations require authorisation of all spending so this is usually when motions for payment authorisation are made. Comparisons to budget are also useful.

Grants

When reporting on grant expenditure it is best to record expenditure against the budget set out in the contract and/or the original application. It is also a good idea to check with the grant body to see if they need the financial reports in a particular format.

Record how much the project actually costs – if it's over budget you can always record the additional costs as being contributed by the group. Otherwise you will find it difficult to track how much a project actually costs the group, and it also makes it difficult for funding bodies to get a realistic picture of project costs.

Tip: From the project budget allocate a code against every budget line. Then use the code to track transactions throughout the year which will make it easier to report on it at project end.

Reporting to Authorities

If your organisation is incorporated in your own right then you will need to report to Consumer Affairs via an Annual Statement, to be submitted after your AGM. It is a good idea when tracking your transactions to do so in a way that makes it easy to report on the figures required.

Depending on what taxes affect your organisation you will have different reporting requirements, be they income tax returns or Business Activity Statements or others.

Other taxes and tax reporting that may affect your organisation (not an exhaustive list)	
GST	BAS (Business Activity Statements)
Payroll (Employees)	PAYG payments summaries
Income Tax	Tax returns
Fringe Benefits (Employees)	FBT reports

Organisations that are registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) will have additional reporting and governance requirements, most notably the annual information statement. Please see the ACNC website for details.

Checks and Balances

Lastly don't forget your checks and balances. The best assurance you have of making sure your organisation is able to pay its debts is to keep a close eye on the books.

- Double authorisation on bank accounts
- Spending Limits
- Spending within budget
- Authority to enter into contracts
- Reporting back to the committee

Case Study:

Julia is the new Treasurer of her local Landcare Group when the group president Ignatius, the other cheque signatory, asks her to pre-sign cheques for some spray chemical. The chemical wasn't in the group's budget and wasn't raised at the last committee meeting. Ignatius tells her not to worry, that this is how it's done, and feeling intimidated, she reluctantly signs the cheques after having made Ignatius promise that he wouldn't use them until the committee agreed. At the next meeting it is discovered that Ignatius bought the spray chemical without waiting for committee agreement: the group is very unhappy as the spray chemical was used on Ignatius's farm and not for group purposes – the committee decides to seek reimbursement from Ignatius for the spray chemical. Julia feels awful and is no longer comfortable working with Ignatius.

What policies could the group have adopted to prevent this situation?

Audit & Review

Depending on the group's turnover of funds (income or expenditure) a group may be required under legislation to conduct an audit of their accounts or have their accounts reviewed by an independent accountant.

Audits and reviews are not the same thing and neither is a guarantee that everything in your books of account is 100% accurate: what they do is provide different levels of assurance as to whether your books reflect a true and fair view of your organisation's finances for the period examined. An audit provides reasonable assurance, expressed as a positive statement (e.g. "we believe the financial statements present a true and fair view"), while a review provides limited assurance, expressed as a negative statement (e.g. "we have not become aware of any matter to cause us to believe the financial statements do not present a true and fair view").

Funding bodies may also require an audit or accountant's review for grant monies, and depending on timing it may be worthwhile getting rest of the group's books audited or reviewed at the same

time. Please note that sometimes funding bodies ask for positive assurance even though they might only require a review.

Even for small groups it is a good idea to have the books checked by a professional every couple of years to ensure the financial processes are up to date.

GST and Income Tax for landcare groups

GST – Information current at August 23, 2010

Does my group need to be registered for GST?

If your group has a turnover of more than \$150,000 in a year then yes. Turnover will be equal to all the money* received by your group during the year, except for any GST-free amounts or financial supplies, such as loans or interest.

*Not just money, but also barter!

If we don't have to be, should we be registered for GST?

There are pros and cons with registering for GST. The pro is that you will likely recover some of your costs during the year by way of refunds of GST. However it takes more record-keeping, and if this is done incorrectly your group may be penalised by the ATO.

How do we register for GST?

You can register for GST (and get an ABN if you don't already have one) by using the ABN application form available via the Australian Business Register website at www.abr.gov.au/ABR_BC/.

What's the difference between a Cash basis and an Accrual basis?

Cash basis is when you report GST according to what has actually been received or paid, rather than owed or owing, during the period. Accruals basis is when you report GST according to what has been invoiced or billed, regardless of receipt or payment, during the period.

Which is better?

If your group tends to have long periods between receiving bills and paying them, then an accruals basis may be better, although it does require more record-keeping than a cash basis. If there are long periods between sending your own bills out and receiving payment, then the cash basis may be better.

How do I deal with a cheque that is written in one GST period and presented in another?

If you are using a cash basis, then the date that the cheque is presented is the relevant date for GST, whereas under an accruals basis the date that counts is the date of the invoice for which the cheque was written.

Income Tax – Information current at 1 January 2014⁹

Do we need to pay income tax?

Maybe. Being a not-for-profit group does not automatically mean that you are exempt from income tax. Your group may already have endorsement by the Australian Taxation Office (“ATO”) for exemption from income tax and so it is best to check your group’s ABN (if it has one) on the Australian Business Register at www.abr.business.gov.au. If you are already endorsed as income tax exempt then that will be listed under ‘tax concession status’ at the bottom of the webpage once you click into your record. If nothing is noted, you are not endorsed as income tax exempt.

Many philanthropic organisations require that recipients be tax concession charities – endorsement for income tax exemption qualifies enabling groups to access these funding streams.

If you are not endorsed as tax exempt then your group will need to either seek endorsement for income tax exemption or self-assess whether you need to lodge income tax returns.

Groups that are primarily community service organisations, or with purposes primarily for promoting the development of primary resources including agricultural and horticultural purposes may be able to self assess as exempt. Groups with income solely sourced from members might not have assessable income. Groups with purposes primarily for the advancement of the natural environment should consider seeking endorsement as income tax exempt.

Becoming endorsed as income tax exempt.

To become endorsed as income tax exempt your group will need to register with the Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission (ACNC). If your group is already registered with the ACNC then you will need to complete an endorsement application form (available from the ATO).

Your group will need to provide documents that show that your group is a non-profit organisation that exists to benefit the environment (for example through sustainable land management) with appropriate governance standards.

Documents that will assist include a statement of purposes, written rules, and any leaflets or flyers that show what your group does. If your group is not non-profit or has a significant purpose other than benefiting the environment, for example social or lobbying, then this information should not be used as a guide; please seek other advice.

Do you have written rules for your group, other than the FTLA rules? If yes, do these rules spell out the non-profit nature of your group and provide for distribution of funds to a similar group if the group winds up? If they do, or if your group is operating only under the FTLA rules, then you can proceed to apply for endorsement. If not, then it would be advisable to adopt clauses for those purposes.

⁹ Please note that the Australian Government has expressed intentions to make changes in this area. Please check that information is still current.

Sample Clauses from the ATO:

Non-profit clause

'The assets and income of the organisation shall be applied solely in furtherance of its above-mentioned objects and no portion shall be distributed directly or indirectly to the members of the association except as bona fide compensation for services rendered or expenses incurred on behalf of the organisation.'

Dissolution clause

'In the event of the organisation being dissolved, the amount that remains after such dissolution and the satisfaction of all debts and liabilities shall be transferred to any organisation with similar purposes which is not carried on for the profit or gain of its individual members.'

Source: <http://www.ato.gov.au/Non-profit/Getting-started-for-non-profit-organisations/In-detail/Tax-concessions/Non-profit-organisations/Is-your-organisation-non-profit->

Applying for endorsement as income tax exempt

If you have registered with the ACNC, you should have received endorsement as income tax exempt at the same time. If not, you will need to apply via the ATO. To complete an application for endorsement as income tax exempt, you will also need the following:

- your group's ABN and name as per the Australian Business Register (at www.abr.business.gov.au);
- the details of when your group was started; and
- financial information for the most recent year.

When filling out the application form you will be applying as a registered charity, with the purpose of "advancement of the natural environment". "Governing documents" refers to your group's written rules. You will be applying for income tax exemption, dated from 1 July 2000 or when your group started, whichever is later. If you are registered for GST you may wish to apply for the "GST charity concessions" and if you have employees you may wish to apply for the "FBT rebate"; the date for these is 1 July 2005 or when your group started, whichever is later. "Associated persons" includes your group's members and committee and "property" will include such items as spray units. The form will need to be signed by an office bearer of your group.

Do we need an ABN?

If your group wishes to apply for income tax exemption or become registered for GST then yes. ABNs can be applied for via the Australian Business Register website (see above). Groups applying for grants will also find most granting organisations will require an ABN.

Do we need a Tax File Number (“TFN”)?

If your group is not endorsed as income tax exempt then you will need a TFN for lodging income tax returns. If you have an ABN, it is likely that you also have a TFN; if you do not know what your TFN is, you can write to the ATO to find out.

Can the bank withhold tax on interest?

Yes, if you do not supply them with either your group’s ABN or TFN. If tax is withheld, then you may be able to ask the bank to refund it when you supply them with an ABN or TFN, but otherwise you will need to claim it from the ATO.

Further Resources

Under the Landcare Notes on the Landcare Gateway (see: <http://www.landcarevic.net.au/resources/for-groups>) there are a series of six notes on Financial Management covering:

- Financial management
- Keeping financial records
- Banking
- Budgeting
- GST and ABN
- Deductible gift recipient and taxable charity concession information for Landcare groups

There are also a number of guides available for Treasurers, including from the Institute of Chartered Accountants Australia (<http://www.gststartup.gov.au/educational/pdfs/treasurershandbook.pdf>) and the Community Treasurer’s Guide at (http://www.westpac.com.au/docs/pdf/bb/guide_communitytreasurers.pdf)

Remember:

- Know your financial position
- Be solvent!

Sourcing funding & Membership

Overview of Funding Types

Cash funds and in-kind support is necessary to support and enable the projects your Group wants to pursue. Funding programs often change, so make sure when planning a project and targeting a funding source, that your information is up to date. Funding and support can be sourced from government, corporate sources and local business and community groups. Other funding options include advertising, selling goods and services, or membership fees.

Groups may also wish to approach their membership directly for donations as depending on how many members they have the cost of a particular project or activity may be feasible on a per member basis.

External funding is available through the following sources:

Government

Local

Tends to be project-based, or take the form of rebates or lending of shire equipment. Projects tend to be community-education or capacity building focused, or targeted at weed control and other land management issues. Check the website of your local council and CMA to see what grants may be available.

State

Funding and support is mainly provided through DEPI, sometimes via the CMAs, although the other government agencies such as the EPA may also offer assistance. The primary form of funding at present is the Victorian Landcare Grants which focus on weed and pest management, salinity and erosion control, re-vegetation and biodiversity management, and support of landcare groups. To find state government grants go to <http://www.vic.gov.au/grants.html> and also check the CMA websites.

Federal

Grants tend to be focused on projects fostering biodiversity and sustainable production. Such funding may be targeted towards selected works or geographical areas, so it is important to carefully check the guidelines and eligibility criteria. For Australian government grants check <http://www.grantslink.gov.au/>

Philanthropic Grant Programs

Many philanthropic organisations run grant programs and eligibility differs but often philanthropic organisations require grant recipients to be tax concession charities (TCC: see section on income tax exemption) or to have deductible gift recipient (DGR) status.

Some Landcare Groups and networks already have TCC or DGR status and if your group is going to be regularly applying for philanthropic funds then it may be beneficial to apply for TCC or DGR status. It is also worth exploring whether you can partner with another organisation such as Landcare Australia Ltd in order to access these philanthropic funds.

Information about philanthropic grants can be found via the organisation's websites, or publicised via newsletters or your local council or CMA may have a grant guide. Our Community has an extensive grants newsletter available for subscription.

Corporate Sponsors and Funding Programs¹⁰

What is Sponsorship?

Sponsorship is provided by corporate and philanthropic foundations to support and encourage community organisations. In addition to cash funding, sponsorship may include time, labor, knowledge and training, donations of goods and services, discounts and special deals, loan of equipment and resources, and joint sourcing funding activities.

Each sponsor will have different expectations, which should be managed by your group as a partnership – which will benefit both sides.

Landcare Australia Ltd (LAL) was specifically set up to foster corporate sponsorship arrangements, and should be contacted for advice if your group believes that they have a suitable project.

Local businesses and partnerships. Local businesses may be interested in supporting your Group's work by supplying materials, equipment, and skilled workers at a discount.

Money, Volunteers, Skills: Your Guide to Seeking Sponsorship¹¹ has been developed to provide landcare groups with ideas on how to source and secure sponsorship, and offers tools to assist with this process.

The Guide is based on key messages that apply to all landcare groups seeking sponsorship – these are listed below.

A. Start from where you are now. Be clear about your current situation/ capabilities and set realistic goals.

B. Start small, but be open and adaptable because one thing leads to another - small opportunities can, if identified, nurtured and maintained yield big results over the long term.

C. Value and utilise what you have – your unique 'assets' such as skills and knowledge and your role in something bigger (catchments, Victorian and national landcare).

¹⁰ Further information available in *landcare Information Notes* on the *Gateway* website. (Acknowledgements to J. Niemic & N. Blackett – 2001)

¹¹ <http://www.landcarevic.net.au/resources/for-groups/guide-to-seeking-sponsorship/seeking-sponsorship>

- D. "Be prepared!" This is not just about getting ready to ask for support but applies every step of the way.
- E. Make a plan that you want to follow, that is adaptable (not set in stone) and then follow it.
- F. Don't be afraid to ask for what you need, but be very well prepared before you do.
- G. Think outside the square. What are all the different ways you could receive support, not just the usual channels? This can include volunteers and skills-based support.
- H. Don't reinvent the wheel but adapt available resources (short cuts help you work smart).
- I. Think about when to stand alone and when to link with others (groups, networks, not-for-profits etc). One of the keys to landcare's success is diversity, but strength also comes through the collective – the power of one voice, one message and one brand cannot be underestimated.
- J. Build partnerships with like-minded organisations that can assist you in mutual goals.

Obtaining Funding:

Research options available that meet your project needs

Choose your funding option, based on what your group wants to achieve, and the sources of support available.

Ensure that the administrative requirements or obligations are able to be met, and are within required timelines

Create a project plan and proposal and create the right contact, and follow-up with a meeting

Explain your project; what you need, and what's in it for the sponsor

Negotiate sponsorship amount, compliance terms, and reporting / progress requirements, and expectations of participation or publicity

If your approach is unsuccessful....

Sometimes, despite thinking you have done all the right things, your sponsorship proposal will be rejected. Don't be afraid to ask why, so you can adjust anything necessary before approaching another potential sponsor.

Local funding

Getting support from your local community, whether in cash or in-kind, is an important resource for your local landcare group. Your members are part of that community and may have connections to business, service groups and sporting organisations that can assist with group support.

There are some basic principles to apply when seeking local support:

Seek money to meet your needs – don't change plans radically to suit the requirements of a funding source – and always identify what the funding will be used for

Spend the money as agreed. If the situation changes, talk to the donors. Keeping a good relationship and keeping them informed will assist the chance of a favorable outcome

Keep accurate records of your spending and provide that information when it is requested.

Basic Ingredients of the funding Process

Common sense

Willingness to approach people or organisations

A clear view of what you want

Basic Steps for Sourcing Funding

Step 1: Background

- Group brainstorm session, identifying potential funding sources
- Identify potential benefits that would appeal to funding sources
- Build relationships with prospective donors and find out what they are looking for in return for project investment
- Ensure your communication tools such as fliers and membership information are professional in appearance and up to date
- Document your projects through clear, consistent records. Not only will it be useful to future sourcing funding proposals, but demonstrates success, and why your group might prove a good investment

Step 2: Seeking donations of services and resources

- Let people know what you need in the way of money, materials, equipment, etc
- Keep the community informed and publish your 'wish list' in local newspapers, newsletters, community notice boards, and website
- Make sure your members are aware of needs, so they can take advantage of any opportunities that arise

<p>You can only offer tax deductions for donations if you have Deductible Gift Recipient Status. Landcare Australia Ltd has Deductible Gift Recipient Status, donors can donate via Landcare Australia Ltd and receive the associated tax deduction and nominate a group to receive the funds)</p>
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Step 3: Reporting back

- Acknowledge supporters through letters of thanks or certificates
- Keep your members up to date
- Celebrate project completion or success
- Keep the communication channels open

Alternative Funding Ideas

Advertising – promotion of local business and services in your group newsletter in exchange for other services you need, such as photocopying or postage costs

Sell goods and services – including excess plants not required by a project, or items produced by members. Attendance fees for people attending group organized workshops, or other sessions based on member expertise

Membership fees – generally collected to cover basic group administrative costs

General Fundraising

Fundraising activities include, but are not limited to:

- Doorknock appeals
- golf days, movie nights and trivia nights
- dinner dances and balls
- public auctions
- public appeals to support clubs, associations, causes or people, or
- sale of goods where part of the sale price is donated to a charitable organisation or cause.

If you received fundraising of \$10,000 or more (gross or total amounts before deductions and tax) in a financial year; **OR** if you pay people as fundraisers (i.e. not unpaid volunteer fundraisers) then you will need to register as a fundraiser.

Fundraising activities do not include:

- Requests for funds targeted only at current or past members and their relatives
- asking a person to pay a membership fee
- receiving grants from a government body
- receiving sponsorships from commercial organisations (such as corporations, partnerships or trusts) permitted to donate money or benefits to charity
- memorial gifts (such as donations in lieu of flowers being sent to a funeral).
- raffles, lotteries or other gaming activities authorised or permitted under the Gambling Regulation Act 2003 (raffles and bingo require a separate permit from the Victorian Commission for Gambling Regulation website)

- Where the funds are considered to be solely for the benefit of the organisation. e.g. Organisations that decide to raise funds in order to send their members on an overseas tour.

If your organisation needs to register as a fundraiser, you need to apply to Consumer Affairs Victoria for a licence **28 days** before you start fundraising. There is no fee to register as a fundraiser and not requirement to be separately incorporated or to hold DGR status (?).¹²

Partnerships and Collaborations

Working with other groups, organisations and people is a basic aspect of being involved in landcare. 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. Good partnerships should be based on honesty, and transparency, and provide benefits for both sides. When exploring a partnership, you group should ask itself the following questions:

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

The partner will also need to feel confident about the relationship, and will likely seek answers to the following questions:

- What can your group or project offer a partner?
- Who is involved in the group and how are they organized?
- What is the group's long term vision or goals?
- Do you have a strategic plan to achieve those goals?
- What do you need from a partner, and how does it help the achievement of your goals?
- What are the costs and benefits of an association with your group?
- Can you deliver what you say you will?

¹² Sources <http://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/clubs-and-not-for-profits/fundraisers/registration/exemptions-from-registration>; <http://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/library/forms/clubs-and-not-for-profits/fundraisers/application-for-registration.pdf>;
<http://www.pilch.org.au/Assets/Files/Guide%20to%20Fundraising%2027%20Feb%202013.pdf>

Health and Safety (OH&S)¹³

All Victorian landcare groups and networks have a moral and legal obligation to ensure they provide a safe working environment to prevent risk or injury to any person/s involved in formal landcare activities.

When landcare groups and networks host any landcare activity they must be sure to protect the health and safety of all participants.

Landcare groups and networks employing personnel (including contractors) must also have in place appropriate health and safety policies and procedures, and recognise that they are responsible in ensuring that all employees and/or contractors adhere to and conform to such procedures.

Landcare groups and networks must consider health and safety as a core function of the organisation and include within meeting procedures, appropriate time for the lodgement, communication, consultation and resolution of health and safety matters. Landcare groups and networks must also maintain appropriate systems for recording and filing of health and safety documentation.

Office bearers and/or executive committee members of landcare groups and networks have a responsibility to ensure that the organisation has in place suitable risk prevention measures as well as complying with the Victorian Occupational Health & Safety Act 2004.

As part of the organisations structure, it is recommended that a delegated person/s be responsible for the coordination of and record keeping of health and safety policies and procedures.

Landcare support persons or “employees” are persons that receive financial remuneration for the provision of a service to a landcare organisation. This includes landcare Coordinators, Facilitators, Project Managers employed either as part time or full time, or contract based service providers. Employees also include on-ground contract service providers, such as machinery operators, spraying contractors, work crews etc. Effective communication between employers of landcare support persons and employees needs to take place to ensure that all health and safety policies, procedures, legislative requirements and training needs are followed.

Each landcare member has a responsibility to comply with the relevant landcare health and safety policies and procedures applicable to the organisation of which they are a member.

Financial members of landcare groups or networks have a responsibility to themselves, other members and all other participants when at a landcare workplace. A member’s personal conduct must not create potential to harm or increase the likelihood of an accident or injury to either themselves or others at any landcare worksite/activity.

There are four types of strategy when reducing risk¹⁴:

¹³ Acknowledgements to Ben Kroker and GreenCorps for information and tools

- ***Eliminate/Substitute*** - a permanent solution to either completely remove the hazard or substitute the activity or environment. This should always be attempted first
- ***Engineering*** - physical barriers or structural changes e.g. place barriers between steep ground and work area
- ***Administrative*** - altering procedures or providing training e.g. working in the shade in the heat of the day, rotating tasks
- ***Personal Protective Equipment*** - should always be used, but is a last resort in controlling the hazard

The sections in this document on Incorporation and Insurance provide information on effectively managing two key elements of risk to Landcare Groups, that of personal and public liability. However adherence to WorkCover and OH&S legislative requirements is also very important, where volunteers are involved in unpaid manual work. In many instances, the precautions taken will just be common sense. For example, seed collection by experienced volunteer 'Mike' might seem like a low risk activity. However depending on the site, risk factors might include passing traffic, defective equipment such as frayed ropes or harnesses, or falling debris as parts of the tree are impacted. In this instance, the appropriate risk management assessment would require: the correct safety gear on such as safety goggles and a hard hat, the use of safety checked equipment, and choose a tree well off the road. Working in pairs would further decrease the risk, and provide immediate assistance in the event of an accident.

A basic checklist when planning a project or event would include:

- ⇒ Understanding the 'duty of care'
- ⇒ Conducting a risk assessment
- ⇒ Undertaking basic risk management on the basis of the assessment
- ⇒ Including an onsite safety briefing to event volunteers
- ⇒ Keeping volunteer registers or site attendance lists (example above)
- ⇒ Depending on the Group, further training might be of use, such as ACUP (Agricultural Chemical Users Permit) training for chemical use, or a session (and follow-up observance) or correct lifting techniques

Ensuring the health, safety and welfare of all members and volunteers engaged in Landcare Group projects is of vital importance. A 'duty of care' means that:

- ⇒ Group committees and project site leaders are responsible for
 - Ensuring there is no compromise on safety to achieve other outcomes
 - Ensuring equipment to be used is in good working condition
 - Training of involved group members, and looking out for site visitors
 - Conducting risk assessments for all activities
- ⇒ Individuals are responsible for
 - Ensuring a safe workplace for themselves and others through developing a culture of safety in the team (safety first every time), and complying with safety policies
 - Undertaking training
 - Following directions
 - Looking out for all visitors to work sites
 - Taking personal responsibility for the safety of themselves and others
 - Using tools and equipment only for their proper use

Common procedures to help manage health and safety hazards might include:

- Regular demonstrations of the safe and efficient use of tools and equipment to include appropriate and safe use, safety checking, maintenance, carrying, transport and storage
- All participants are to be fully inducted in the use of any tools and equipment prior to the activity
- Ensuring all participants have the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment that tasks require
- Promptly addressing inappropriate or unsafe practice
- Monitoring group members and others closely for fatigue and injury risk
- Ensuring that First Aid kits are current and comprehensive

Hazard Checklist

The following list (compiled with thanks for Green Corps 2002) can assist in your hazard identification and mitigation strategies. It is not intended to be exhaustive, and not all suggestions will be appropriate for your specific project.

Hazard	Risk	Risk Control Strategy
Brushcutters & Mowers	Eye damage; hearing damage; cuts and gashes; fire; poisoning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure brushcutters and mowers are used at a safe distance from other people • Ensuring equipment is in safe working order • Ensure that the operator has received adequate training and is physically capable of controlling the equipment • Ensure that ear, eye, face and all other appropriate protection is available and being used by all users and persons nearby • Ensure equipment is shut down before attempting to refuel or replacing nylon cord • Have a fire extinguisher on hand • Survey area for sure footing and obstacles
Chainsaw Use	Injury; cuts and gashes; eye damage; hearing damage; death;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chainsaws are only to be used by trained personnel • Maintain a safe distance between users and other workers • All users must have and wear appropriate personal protective equipment (helmet, boots, ear protection with an appropriate decibel rating, mesh visor or safety glasses, cut proof chaps or pants, high visibility safety vest) • Appropriate PPE must be worn if in proximity to chainsaw users (helmet, boots, ear protection with an appropriate decibel rating, mesh visor or safety glasses high visibility safety vest) • Adjust task allocation and duration to avoid strain injuries
Chemical Transport, Disposal and Storage	Poisoning of persons and/or the environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a register of all chemicals in use and amounts used • All members to have read and understood the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) • All dangerous goods are stored in a secure location, with authorized access only, with appropriate HAZCHEM signage displayed, and with ready access to decontamination and washing and appropriate ventilation • All chemicals to be stored only in the original containers • All dangerous goods are transported only in a trailer, and never inside a vehicle • Any spillages are covered with 7.5cm of absorptive material (kitty litter), bag it and dispose of same as for empty containers • Triple rinse containers and dispose of in fashion specified on the MSDS • Team members and other users wear all necessary personal protective clothing
Chemical Use	Poisoning of persons and/or the environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid chemical use where possible • Mark areas to be or that have been treated • Ensure all people coming into contact with chemicals/hazardous substances have been fully trained in their use • Wash thoroughly after using chemicals before eating, drinking or smoking • Material Safety Data Sheets must be available for any hazardous substances, and all team members must have read and understood them • Team members and other users wear all necessary personal protective clothing and equipment • Maintain a register of all chemicals in use

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use most appropriate approved chemical dispensers to avoid excess poison being applied • Establish a decontamination/ wash down area • Ensure that chemicals are used at the correct rate and dilution • Inform all staff of where and when spraying is occurring • In the event of a suspected poisoning, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Call the Poison's Information Centre 13 11 26 ○ Do not give the person any food or liquid until further information is available ○ Notify the health authority ○ Ensure that the affected person does not handle, or come into contact with, any further chemicals or hazardous substances until cleared by the health authority
Electrical Tool Use (drills, circular saws, grinders, etc)	Electrocution; cuts and gashes; eye damage; hearing damage; strains and sprains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe distances between workers must be adhered to • Ensure a clear working area • Ensure that all electrical cords are tagged, in sound condition and well away from any water • Ensure that users have been fully inducted into the use of any power tool by an experienced user • Protective clothing and safety gear must be worn at all times when using or in proximity to electrical tools • Do not operate if there is a chance of water coming into contact with power tools
Fires	Poisoning, allergic reactions, infectious diseases, death, burns, respiratory diseases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No fires to be lit without site leader supervision and approval • LP gas appliances to be used for cooking wherever possible • Any fire set for cooking is consistent with regulations that are in force at that location and in that season • No fire is set for 'recreation' or to create 'atmosphere' • During the bushfire danger period or when a fire is burning in the district where the team is operating: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team members to understand the risks and procedures for emergency evacuation • Liaise with relevant authorities so that they are aware of the team's activities and location • Monitor broadcast weather information and fire danger ratings • Ensure availability of emergency communications • Know the location, accessibility and trafficability of possible evacuation routes in more than one direction • Ensure that vehicles have sufficient fuel to evacuate to a safe area • Postpone or cancel field activities during days of extreme fire danger or when a fire is burning in the vicinity of the activity • In the event of a postponement, cancellation or emergency evacuation, encourage and facilitate contact between staff or team members and their families to advise of their safety
Insect Stings & Spider Bites	Poisoning, allergic reactions, infectious diseases, death	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boots, long trousers and long sleeves (and gloves as appropriate) should be worn at all times • Have Insect repellent be available but, due to skin sensitivities, encourage participants to bring their own • Use cups or water bottles rather than soft drink cans to eliminate the risk of swallowing wasps and bees • Obtain local knowledge of the area and the likelihood of coming across types of spiders and insects – have a list of stings and bites from various causes and their treatment available in the first aid kit • Do not approach any unknown animals
Hand Tool Use (shovels, rakes, picks, crowbars, hammers, knives, forks, fencing tools, hoes, etc)	Cuts and gashes, eye damage, strains, crushing, pinching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team members and others working at a safe distance (3m for long handled tools) • Induction to tool use, by experienced user, prior to use for each new tool • Ensure tools are maintained to a high standard • Team members other users are wearing protective clothing and safety gear • Ensuring adequate supplies of equipment for maintenance of tools • Adjust task allocation and duration to avoid strain injuries

Working at Heights	Injury; death	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If possible, replace use of ladders with scaffolding and landings • Use long handled tools in preference to ladders • Ensure the ladder is tied off/secured and a support person/spotter is used • Ladders are to be based on a level, firm and non-slip surface • Ladders are not to be handled or used where either the ladder or the user may come into contact with overhead power lines. • Ladders are not to be used within 2 metres of a drop over which a person could fall if the ladder toppled • There is only to be one person on a ladder at any time • A person working from a ladder is to have two hands free to ascend and descend, is to be able to brace themselves at all times, and is to face the ladder when working • A person working from a ladder is not to overreach – feet should not be higher than 90cm from the top of the ladder • A person working above a fall height of 1.8 metres is to use an approved fall arrest device • Power tools are not to be used on aluminium ladders • Codes of Practice must be adhered to for ladder angles and use of harnesses •
Manual Handling (any activity requiring force exerted by a person to move, hold, or restrain any animate or inanimate object)	Strains, sprains, back injury, repetitive strain injury, crush injury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify whether the activity can be achieved without moving heavy objects • Use mechanical means for loads e.g. wheelbarrows • Reduce weight or bulk of loads lifted or held below mid thigh or above shoulder height or carried over long distances or periods • Ensure that team members others have frequent rests and that there is task rotation • Train in correct methods of lifting to avoid back injuries
Sharps (needles, nails, broken glass)	Needle stick injuries, tetanus, HIV, hepatitis, puncture wounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team members and others are to be thoroughly briefed on the risks and safe practice in handling sharps • Any sharps are only to be picked up using implements such as shovels and tongs, and no attempt should be made to reinstall needle caps • Team members and others are to be issued with gloves to reduce the risk of injury • Sharps containers are to be placed in all GC vehicles • Sharps must be carefully placed in the provided container • Report even minor incidents with syringes • Do not crush paper bags as they may contain sharps • Provide induction on procedure to be used around people who have been injecting (not to be approached and an ambulance to be called)
Snakes	Varying degrees of poisoning, death	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boots, long trousers and long sleeves should be worn at all times • Walk heavily and be noisy • Avoid working in amongst long grass or edges of waterways • Visit local herpetologist to investigate local species and habitats • Obtain pictures of local snake species to have as a training tool • Develop and enforce a snake sighting strategy with the team • Ensure team are aware of likely habitats e.g. under tin/rubbish, behind logs, in old fence posts
Storm & Flood Risk	A range of projects may require assessment of risk from high winds, heavy rains, hail or snow and flooding. Additional	<p>The team leader is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefing team members on the risks and on procedures for emergency evacuation (see below) • Liaising with relevant authorities so that they are aware of the team's activities and location (these authorities may be able to assist with the briefing) • Monitoring broadcast weather information and alerts • Ensuring availability of emergency communications • Knowing the location and accessibility of possible evacuation routes in more than one direction • Ensuring that vehicles have sufficient fuel to evacuate to a safe area • Ensuring that all staff and team members wear protective clothing (long sleeves and long trousers), and have ready access to hard hats and safety vests • Postponing or cancelling field activities during days of very high or gale force

	assessment may need to be made on a daily basis due to changeable weather conditions.	<p>winds, heavy rain, hail or snow and flooding risk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the event of a postponement, cancellation or emergency evacuation, encouraging and facilitating contact between staff or team members and their families to advise of their safety
Vehicle Accident	Crash, impact injuries, death, burns, trauma	<p>If during a Landcare Group activity a member is involved in a vehicle accident, they or surrounding uninvolved members should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stop immediately Assist any injured parties if safe to do so Ensure the safety of other persons Send for ambulance/police if there are any injuries Provide name, address, registration number, vehicle owner's name and address (delivery agent) to anyone involved in the accident, and/or the police Remove all debris from the road If there is only property damage, report the accident to the nearest police station in compliance with state/territory regulations <p>FOR INSURANCE PURPOSES THE FTLA GROUP MUST:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not admit liability Obtain names, addresses, phone numbers, licenses numbers and vehicles registrations of all those involved in the accident. Inform the FTLA Executive Officer as soon as possible
Vehicle Travel	Crash, impact injuries, death, burns, trauma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Always comply with state/territory road laws, including wearing of glasses or contact lenses as required Have a blood alcohol level of zero Drivers are not be fatigued or under the influence of substances that may cause drowsiness or alter perception or state of consciousness Maintain vehicles in a safe and roadworthy condition Always drive to suit the road, weather and load conditions All passengers wear properly fitted seat belts If tools and equipment must be in vehicle, ensure they are well secured Vehicles to always have at least half a tank of fuel Vehicles and trailers are loaded and used in accordance with the vehicle manufacturers' recommendations Minimise in vehicle distractions All body parts to be inside the vehicle at all times Always park the vehicle facing ready to leave the site forwards Ensure first aid kit and spare tyre are available and reliable
Working in or near water	Hypothermia, illness, drowning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activity members and volunteers to be supervised at all times when working or around water Working in cold water must be for limited times only To minimise the risk of water borne diseases never allow swimming in areas of dubious water quality
Working in the Elements	Dehydration, sunstroke, heat exhaustion, skin cancer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where possible, work in the shade between 11 am and 3 pm Rotate workers so that the same people are not exposed all of the time Change the type of work carried out on hot days Apply sunscreen provided – SPF 30+ broad-spectrum, water resistant – apply 20 minutes before going outdoors Wear appropriate Personal Protective Equipment- broad brimmed hat, long sleeves, long pants, Australian Standard (AS1067) sunglasses Ensure adequate water available at all times (at least 2 litres / day / person)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop for regular breaks and sit down in the shade • Rest if you feel too hot or dizzy • Report immediately to the site supervisor if you begin to feel ill
--	--	--

Conducting a Risk Assessment (form adapted from Green Corps 2002)

For each project site, a Project Risk Assessment Report must be completed by the Group committee. If an accident occurs, the RA report may be required for legal proceedings. A sample risk assessment form is below.

SAMPLE PROJECT RISK ASSESSMENT (RA) FORM				
PROJECT NAME				
GROUP NAME PROJECT LOCATION				
PROJECT COORDINATOR ASSESSMENT DATE				
HAZARD IDENTIFIED	RA SCORE* <small>a+b (prior to mitigation)</small>	MITIGATION (CONTROL) STRATEGIES	RA SCORE* <small>a+b (after mitigation)</small>	Proceed Yes / No
<i>E.g.</i> <i>Manual handling</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Break up repetitive work with alternative activities • Re-emphasise proper lifting and carrying techniques 		
<i>Bites and stings</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid working near bee hives or ant nests • Ensure first aid kit is well provisioned 		

***EXPLANATORY NOTE ON RA SCORING**

1. Possible Consequences (constitutes 'a' in the scoring process)

SCORE	CONSEQUENCE	EXPLANATION
4	Fatal	May cause one or more deaths
3	Major injury / illness	Serious damage to health which may be irreversible, requiring medical attention, and on-going treatment. Such an injury is likely to involve significant time off work
2	Minor injury / illness	Reversible damage to health, requiring limited medical treatment, and limited time off work
1	Negligible injury	Requiring first aid only, with little or no lost time

2. Likelihood of each of the situations occurring (constitutes 'b' in the scoring process)

SCORE	LIKELIHOOD	EXPLANATION
4	Very likely	Could happen frequently
3	Likely	Could happen occasionally
2	Unlikely	Could happen, but only rarely
1	Very Unlikely	Extremely rare – it could happen, but probably never will

3. Determine the level of risk by adding the consequence (a) and likelihood (b)

4. Determine whether work should go ahead, based on:

- (i) Level of risk measured before the implementation of control measures**
- (ii) Reassess risk once control measures are in place**
- (iii) Follow the outline below to determine whether work should continue**

<i>RA Score after Mitigation Strategy</i>	<i>Action</i>
6, 7, 8	Do not attempt
5	Engage in further consultation before proceeding
2, 3, 4	Proceed with Care

For example, the risk of bites and stings occurring may have minor illness/injury consequences (2) and be likely (3), dependent on the site, time of day, environment. Prior to risk mitigation strategies being employed, this has a RA score of 5. However, once the appropriate controls are in place, such as:

- Do not attempt work near bee hives or stinging ant nests
- Have a list of local stinging and biting creatures and appropriate first aid
- Wear appropriate personal protective equipment- boots, long sleeves and pants
- The RA score will be 3 or 4, and the project may proceed.

Are there arrangements for?	Yes	No	Outline Arrangements
• Emergency Evacuation			
• Emergency Communication			
• First Aid			

Emergency Contacts:			
Project Contact	Ph (AH)	Ph (B)	Ph (Mob)
Nearest accessible reliable phone			
Nearest hospital	Ph		
Ambulance Ph:	Police Ph	Fire Ph	
Are there any hazardous substances?	Yes / No	If yes, specify	Safe handling procedures in place?

There are many place to go for further information on safe working practises including:

- Worksafe (<https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/>)
- Creating a Safe Working Environment (Landcare Gateway)
- Landcare group risk prevention toolkit
- In Safe Hands Toolkit (Conservation Volunteers Australia)

Insurance

Many associations have been created to meet a wide range of community needs, however, despite good intentions, and worthwhile activities, these organisations and their elected officers may find themselves involved in expensive litigation as a result of bad management practices, or things going wrong on a field project involving members or volunteers.

The increased risk of expensive legal action being taken against associations, and their officers, as well as rising corporate governance requirements highlights the importance of obtaining adequate and appropriate insurance cover.

Adequate public liability and personal accident insurance cover is essential to protect group members in case a claim is made against the group. Similarly office bearers and employees should be covered by office bearers insurance and professional indemnity respectively.

Moreover where have employees the group will need to check whether the group's payroll exceeds the level at which the group needs to take out a Workcover policy. It is the responsibility of the organisation to be familiar with all the clauses of the insurance policy and provide details to it's members and staff. Landcare groups should endeavour to minimise risk to their volunteers, staff, clients and customers through proper health and safety practices, documented procedures, training and management practices.

The major insurance categories include:

Public and Products Liability Insurance

Covers personal injury or property damage arising from the negligent actions of a Member Group or its members.

Personal Accident (Volunteer) Insurance

Provides for payments where a volunteer, a worker or a member is injured while engaged in project activities, excepting where deliberate infliction of injury or self-harm has occurred. Incident notification should occur as quickly as possible.

Directors & Officers Liability Insurance

Provides protection for office bearers in not-for-profit organisations, in the course of carrying out their duties on behalf of their organisation

Professional Indemnity

Provides protection for employed staff in not-for-profit organisations, in the course of carrying out their duties on behalf of their organisation, with relation to advice

Workcover

Provides for payments where an employee is injured while engaged in project activities, excepting where deliberate infliction of injury or self-harm has occurred. Incident notification should occur as quickly as possible.

FTLA Member Groups are covered for Public Liability, Voluntary Workers, Office Bearers & Professional Indemnity but will need to source their own Workcover and Contents Insurance. Please see the appendices for a summary.

Appendices

Committee member - Code of Conduct – Sample	87
Conflict of Interest Policy – Sample	88
Minutes Template – Sample I	89
Minutes Template – Sample II	91
Financial Report to AGM – Template	92
Landcare AGM Running Sheet – Template	93
Meeting Standing Orders – General Meetings	101
FTLA Insurance Summary	105
Volunteer/Attendance Registration Form:	111
Going Into Recess / Becoming Inactive	112
Closing Down or Merging	113
Chemical and Spraying Equipment Use and Hire	116
Agreement for Hire of Plant and Equipment	118
Membership Application Form – Template	122
Key to Acronyms – ‘a head start’	123

Committee member - Code of Conduct - Sample

1. A committee member must act honestly, in good faith and in the best interests of the organisation as a whole.
2. A committee member has a duty to use due care and diligence in fulfilling the functions of office and exercising the powers attached to that office.
3. A committee member must use the powers of office for a proper purpose, in the best interests of the organisation as a whole.
4. A committee member must recognise the primary responsibility is to the organisation's members, but should, where appropriate, have regard for the interests of all stakeholders of the organisation.
5. A committee member must not make improper use of information acquired from their position within the organisation.
6. A committee member must not take improper advantage of their position.
7. A committee member must not allow personal interests, or the interests of any associated person, to conflict with the interests of the organisation.
8. Confidential information received by a committee member in the course of the exercise of committee duties remain the property of the organisation from which it was obtained and it is improper to disclose it, or allow it to be disclosed, unless that disclosure has been authorised by the organisation, or the person from whom the information is provided, or is required by law.
9. A committee member should not engage in conduct likely to bring discredit upon the organisation.
10. A committee member has an obligation, at all times, to comply with the principles of this Code.
11. A committee member must disclose any conflict of interest.
12. A committee member has responsibility to provide known information relevant to committee/council deliberations

Name: _____ Signed: _____

Date: _____

Conflict of Interest Policy - Sample

Any existing or potential conflicts of interest shall be declared by the member concerned and recorded in the minutes of the meeting. A Committee member who believes another Committee member has an undeclared conflict of interest should indicate to the chair the basis of this potential conflict.

Procedure

Following the opening of the meeting the chair of the meeting will ask all members to declare any conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest arising out of any of the issues to be put to the meeting as per the agenda.

Members shall declare any conflicts of interest either at the start of the Committee meeting concerned or when a relevant issue arises if not apparent from the agenda. The nature of this conflict of interest should be entered into the meeting minutes.

Where a conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest is identified and/or registered, the Committee member concerned shall leave the room when that item comes up for discussion. The Committee member concerned shall not vote on that issue, nor initiate or take part in any Committee discussion on that topic either in the meeting or with other Committee members before or after the Committee meetings.

If the member has specific expertise on the issue with which they have a conflict of interest, and if the committee cannot reasonably source another expert, then the member may give a short presentation on the issue, prior to leaving the room but shall not engage in any discussion.

If a person declares themselves to have existing or potential conflict of interest confidentiality will be respected.

If a person believes that another person has a conflict of interest, whether existing or potential, and if the parties cannot resolve the issue to the satisfaction of both parties the matter shall be decided on by the Committee.

Where a conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest exists the Committee of Management may by a general vote, decide to exclude the Committee member concerned from receipt of related materials that would otherwise be supplied to them due to their position as a Committee member.

Where a conflict of interest is realised subsequent to the meeting, the Committee member concerned should declare the conflict of interest to the President, who may disclose it to the whole Committee of Management if appropriate. The Committee member concerned should, in so far as is possible, refrain from using information obtained from their position as a committee member in any way that could disadvantage the organisation.

Minutes Template – Sample I

Group: _____

Group Purpose: _____

Location: _____

Date: _____

Start Time: _____

Close Time: _____

Chair: _____

Those Present: _____

AGENDA ITEM

Apologies

“That the apologies be accepted.”

Mover

Secunder

Carried?

Conflict of Interest Declaration

None OR _____

Acceptance of Last Minutes

“That the minutes of the meeting held on _____ be accepted as a true and fair record of the meeting.”

Business arising :

Acknowledgement of Out of Session Resolutions:

Mover

Secunder

Carried?

REPORTS

Financial / Treasurer’s

Mover

Secunder

Carried?

Correspondence

Seconder

Secunder

Secunder

When

Secunder

When

_____ be accepted as members."

Secunder

Minutes Template - Sample II

AGENDA ITEMS	Time	Discussion / Notes	Resolution	Mover / Second	Carried?	Actions	Who	When
Welcome		Those present:						
Apologies			That the apologies be accepted.					
Conflict of Interest Declaration								
Acceptance of Last Minutes			That the minutes of the meeting held on [date] be accepted as a true and fair record of the meeting.					
Business arising								
Acknowledgement of Out of Session Resolutions								
REPORTS								
Financial								
Correspondence								
(Other Reports)								
GENERAL BUSINESS								
Safety								
(Other)								
New Members			That _____ be accepted as members.					
OTHER BUSINESS								
Announcements								
Next Meeting								

Group: _____

Location: _____

Date: _____

Group Purpose: _____

Start Time: _____

Chair: _____

Close Time: _____

With this format held in excel the agenda can easily be extracted and, with the addition of a "Completed" column, an action list can easily be created.

Financial Report to AGM – Template

Please Note: Items in bold are required for the FTLA Renewal paperwork and a financial report from the AGM containing this information will be accepted in lieu of the completion of the group details on the FTLA renewal form. Figures are not required to be audited if income is under \$250,000 per annum unless required by the group membership.

Group Name: _____

AGM Date: _____ **Financial Period Covered:** _____

Income Total: _____ **Expenditure Total:** _____

Grant Income: _____ **Staff Costs:** _____

Membership: _____ **(Number of Staff:** _____ **)**

Interest: _____ **Independent Contactors:** _____

Other: _____ **(Number of Contactors:** _____ **)**

Other: _____

Assets Total: _____ **Liabilities Total:** _____

Bank Balance: _____ *(Contracted Commitments)*

Petty Cash: _____ Unspent Grant Funds: _____

Property: _____ Staff Entitlements: _____

(Asset Register attached) *(Leave provisions etc)*

Amounts Owed _____ Amounts Owing: _____

Other: _____

NOTES

Other Committed Funds (Non-Contracted):

Comparison to Budget:

Projected Budget Position:

Signed:

Treasurer: _____ Committee Member: _____

Landcare AGM Running Sheet – Template

Please note that every organisation will have its own Rules regarding Annual General Meetings and may be subject to certain legislation, therefore each organisation will need to check that this running sheet is suitable to their purposes.

Voting: Who votes at an AGM will be set out in your Rules: it is usually financial members. If you have elections or controversial decisions then it is important to know who has a vote. This can be done most easily at registration by handing every member entitled to vote a dated voting card.

AGM RUNNING SHEET

Group Name:

Date & Time of AGM:

Location of AGM:

Chair of the Meeting:

Those Present (Or Attendee list appended)

.....

.....

WELCOME

The Chair of the Meeting opens the meeting and welcomes attendee. Remind all attendees to sign in.

Housekeeping: advised attendees of fire exits, any safety issues, toilets etc

(Voting Instructions if applicable: only financial members can vote (check Rules). You should have received voting cards when signing in. Please show the card when moving, seconding or voting on a motion)

QUORUM

In order to conduct business at a General Meeting a certain number of members is required to be in attendance for decisions to be valid: the minimum number is called a quorum. This will be specified in your Rules and will usually be at least 10% of Members entitled to vote but may be up to half plus one of Members entitled to vote.

No business may be conducted until a quorum is achieved. If quorum is not achieved the meeting must be postponed.

STANDING ORDERS

The group's Rules should specify at least some aspects about how to run an annual general meeting. Where the Rules are silent or if the group is un-incorporated then the committee may wish to prepare additional standing orders and circulate them prior to or at the meeting and ask the meeting to adopt them as circulated.

RESOLUTION: "That the Standing Orders for the AGM be accepted".

Moved:

Seconded:

Carried?	YES	NO
----------	-----	----

APOLOGIES

The Chair should note any apologies received prior to the meeting.

The Chair then calls for any other apologies, and then calls for the resolution to be moved, seconded and carried.

RESOLUTION: "That the Apologies for the AGM be accepted".

Moved:

Seconded:

Carried?	YES	NO
----------	-----	----

MINUTES

Minutes should either be supplied to attendees in print form when they sign in or displayed on a presentation. (Can also be read out but this is time-consuming).

The Chair refers the attendees to the minutes, and then calls for the following resolution to be moved, seconded and carried.

RESOLUTION: "That the minutes of [Previous Year] Annual General Meeting of the [Group Name] held onbe accepted as true and correct"

(If the meeting of the previous meeting are not correct then amendments may be proposed).

Moved:

Seconded:

Carried?	YES	NO
----------	-----	----

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The president then gives a verbal report on the group's activities, successes and challenges of the past year and some indication of future plans for the group. This may be back up by a written report supplied to attendees or by a presentation.

The President calls for questions.

Following questions, the Chair then calls for the following resolution to be moved, seconded and carried.

"The President's Report be accepted."

Moved (usually moved by the President):

Seconded:

Carried? YES NO

TREASURER'S REPORT

The Chair calls the Treasurer to present his report. The report should include details of income and expenditure for the previous financial year and liabilities and assets (including cash and any outstanding grant contracts and committed funds). This report may also show a comparison against a budget to date and other comments. The treasurer should arrange for the report to be printed and distributed at the meeting or prior to the meeting.

If the group is incorporated then there may be requirements for specific reporting (see Annual Statement from Consumer Affairs) and a financial statement needs to be presented to members. Depending on the turnover of the group, the accounts may need to be reviewed or audited by a registered accountant.

The Treasurer presents his report and calls for questions.

Following questions, the Chair then calls for the following resolution to be moved, seconded and carried.

RESOLUTION "That the Treasurer's Report be accepted".

Moved: (usually moved by the Treasurer):

Seconded:

Carried? YES NO

If a Financial Statement needs to be submitted to Consumer Affairs, the Financial Statement should be circulated to members either at or prior to the meeting, and the following resolution put by one committee member and seconded by another:

RESOLUTION: "That the statement be confirmed as a true and fair record of the financial position of the incorporated association during and at the end of its last financial year, and that the secretary submit the statement to Consumer Affairs Victoria within one month of the date of this meeting."

Then the financial statement should be signed by a committee member to certify that it was presented to the meeting and submitted to Consumer Affairs. The group should keep a copy and hold it (along with all other financial information) for seven years.

ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS

Your Rules will also specify whether nominations are to be received prior to the AGM or may be accepted at the AGM. The following template assumes that nominations may be accepted at the AGM.

If nominations are to be accepted at the AGM, or if more nominations have been received than positions vacant and election must be held then a Returning Officer should be appointed to run the elections. Preferably the Returning Officer will not be a group member, or at least will not be standing for elections.

The Chair proposes the following resolution:

RESOLUTION: "That be appointed as the Returning Officer for this election"

Moved (usually moved by the Chair of the meeting):

Seconded:

Carried? YES NO

The Chair then cedes the chair to the Returning Officer.

NOMINATIONS FOR EACH POSITION

Most groups have committee with a president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer and two ordinary committee members but it will depend on your Rules, you may also have other officers such as a Membership Secretary or a Weeds Officer etc.

Your Rules will also tell you how to conduct elections. Usually (but not always) people are elected to specific positions. Usually only voting members can be nominated and both the nominator and seconder must also be voting members.

For each position, the Returning Officer declares that: "We have received the following nominations before the closing date ..."

Then depending on the Rules, the Returning Officer may call for additional nominations. (additional position tables in appendix one).

POSITION:

NAME:			
Nominated by :			
Seconded by:			
Nomination accepted by the Nominee? YES / NO			

Then either:

1. The number of nominations equals the number of vacancies for that position, therefore the nominees are declared elected unopposed; or
2. The number of nominations is insufficient for the number of vacancies, therefore any nominees are declared elected unopposed and the remaining position remain vacant; or
3. There are more nominations than positions vacant, an election will need be held.

Repeat for each position (additional space for recording nominations at end of running sheet)

If an ELECTION is being held, then the Returning Officer may wish to give each nominees time to speak (2-5 minutes). While one nominee is speaking the others should leave the room.

After the speeches, the Returning Officer thanks the nominees and opens voting.

Your Rules may specify how voting for election should be conducted. In general voting should be secret ballot and may either be a simple vote where the preferred candidate's name is written down and submitted to the Returning Officer or (if there are more than two candidates) a preferential vote where the members are asked to number their preferred candidates.

If you are using election cards these should only be distributed to valid voting members. Otherwise the Returning Officer should confirm that a person is a valid voting member before accepting their vote.

Once all votes are cast, the Returning Officer should return the chair back to the Chair of the meeting while the votes are counted. If the candidate wish they should be allowed to appoint scrutineers.

The Chair may either suspend the meeting or continue with other business while the counting is happening. If there are speakers this is a good time for them!

Once all votes are counted, the Chair should return to Returning Officer for the announcement or successful candidates. The Returning officer should note

"Please note as a matter of housekeeping, all ballots will be destroyed at the end of today"

The Returning Officer then returns the chair back to the Chair of the meeting. The Chair thanks the Returning Officer and congratulates the new committee

SPECIAL BUSINESS

Special business consists of matters placed on the agenda by the committee or the secretary. Special business may also be a proposed special resolution or some other important matter to be discussed. Note: there may be particular procedures for giving members notice of special business under your organisation's rules, and there are legislated special notice requirements under for some matters (such as proposed special resolutions and resolutions to remove an auditor).¹⁵

GENERAL BUSINESS

At this stage of the meeting, any member may raise a question or an issue which has not yet been dealt with. These are usually minor matters, such as setting the date of the next meeting (which may be a regular yearly date, such as the first Monday in May, or another agreed date) or votes of congratulations, appreciation and/or farewells.

However, if a new resolution is proposed by a member, it should not be considered at that meeting because proper notice has not been given to all members. If additional matters of important business are raised at the meeting, it is best for the organisation to convene a further meeting with sufficient notice to members) to consider the issues properly and vote on any resolutions. This is to avoid a situation where a member who didn't attend the meeting complains that they would have attended (and voted on the resolution) if they were aware it would be proposed.

Members who wish to raise complex issues should advise the chairperson of their intentions before the meeting, and provide a written copy of the motion they intend to move.¹⁶

CLOSE

The Chair thanks everyone for attending and declares the meeting closed.

Meeting Closed at:

After the AGM:

- *Circulate draft minutes to members*
- *Notify stakeholders (incl FTLA) of changes in office bearers, particularly President or Secretary.*
- *Induct new committee members*
- *If required, send the Financial Statement to Consumer Affairs.*

¹⁵ Sourced from NOT FOR PROFIT LAW: Annual General Meetings: Part 5 Tool 3

¹⁶ Sourced from NOT FOR PROFIT LAW: Annual General Meetings: Part 5 Tool 3

RECORD OF NOMINATIONS & ELECTIONS

POSITION:

NAME:			
Nominated by :			
Seconded by:			
Nomination accepted by the Nominee? YES / NO			

SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE:

POSITION:

NAME:			
Nominated by :			
Seconded by:			
Nomination accepted by the Nominee? YES / NO			

SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE:

POSITION:

NAME:			
Nominated by :			
Seconded by:			
Nomination accepted by the Nominee? YES / NO			

SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE:

POSITION:

NAME:			
Nominated by :			
Seconded by:			
Nomination accepted by the Nominee? YES / NO			

SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE:

POSITION:

NAME:			
Nominated by :			
Seconded by:			
Nomination accepted by the Nominee? YES / NO			

SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE:

POSITION:

NAME:			
Nominated by :			
Seconded by:			
Nomination accepted by the Nominee? YES / NO			

SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE:

Meeting Standing Orders – General Meetings

1. These standing orders shall be applicable to all general meetings and shall be construed subject to the applicable Rules¹⁷.
2. The Secretary of the group shall, at least 14 days before the date fixed for holding a general meeting of the group, cause to be sent to each Member at his/her address appearing in the register of members, a notice by email, facsimile or pre-paid post stating the place, date and time of the meeting and the nature of the business to be transacted at the meeting
3. No business other than that set out in the notice convening the meeting shall be transacted at the meeting.¹⁸
4. A member desiring to bring any business before a meeting may give notice of that business in writing to the Secretary, who shall include that business in the notice calling the next general meeting after the receipt of the notice.
5. Meetings shall, subject to the presence of a quorum, start at the time set out on the notice, and shall, subject to the discretion of the meeting, continue until all business on the agenda is completed or adjourned. No item of business shall be transacted at a general meeting unless a quorum of members entitled under these rules to vote is present during the time when the meeting is considering that item.
6. Upon any question arising at a general meeting of the group a Member has one vote only,¹⁹ and all votes shall be given personally by the Member or by proxy.²⁰ Only financial Members are able to vote.²¹
7. Either five Members or 10% of Members entitled to vote, whichever is greater, either personally present or via proxy, constitute a quorum for the transaction of the business of a general meeting.²²
8. If within half an hour after the appointed time for the commencement of a general meeting, a quorum is not present, the meeting if convened upon the requisition of members shall be dissolved and in any case shall stand adjourned to the same day in the next week at the same time and (unless another place is specified by the Chair at the time of the adjournment or by written notice to members given before the day to which the meeting is

¹⁷ Incorporated organisations will have their own Rules or Constitution. FTLA Members should have reference to the FTLA Rules.

¹⁸ May be altered to “No substantive business” depending on the Rules

¹⁹ If there are household or family memberships then if the Rules are silent need to decide whether each family membership has a one vote, or two votes, or a vote per adult member

²⁰ Specified in Rules, otherwise need to decide whether to accept proxies.

²¹ Some groups may not accept memberships that were not financial before the AGM (i.e. subscriptions collected before the AGM do not count). Or some groups may allow a grace period so that voting rights are retained for a period after the membership subscriptions become due.

²² Quorum will be specified by the Rules. This is a general guide, quorum requirement may be up to 50% of members entitle to vote plus one

adjourned) at the same place and if at the adjourned meeting the quorum is not present within half an hour after the appointed time for the commencement of the meeting, the members present (being not less than five) shall be a quorum.

9. The President, or in his/her absence, the Vice-President, shall preside as Chair at each general meeting of the group.

10. Any member desiring to speak at general meetings shall indicate such by a raised hand and when called upon by the Chair shall address the Chair. If two or more members rise simultaneously, the Chair shall call upon the member who first caught the eye of the Chair.

11. When the Chair rises to speak any member standing shall sit down.

12. No member other than the proposer of a resolution or an amendment shall speak to it until it has been seconded. A resolution or amendment lapsing for want of a seconder shall not be recorded in the minutes.

13. A resolution or amendment before the chair shall not be withdrawn except by its mover and by leave of the meeting. No resolution shall be withdrawn while any amendment is under discussion or after any amendment has been adopted.

14. If required to do so by the Chair, the proposer of any resolution or amendment shall submit it in writing.

15. A resolution or amendment before the chair may be reworded by the mover subject to leave of the meeting.

16. Except in committee, no member shall speak more than once to any question, except that the mover of a resolution (but not of an amendment) shall have a right of reply, which reply shall close the debate. An amendment shall constitute a separate question from the original resolution and from any other amendment.

17. A member moving a resolution or amendment shall be deemed to have spoken to it. A member seconding a resolution or amendment without speaking to it may reserve the right to speak to it subsequently.

18. When an amendment is before the chair, discussion shall be confined to that amendment. No further amendment shall be proposed until the amendment before the chair has been disposed of.

19. The Chair shall, as far as practicable, call on speakers for and against a resolution or amendment alternatively, subject to the right of the seconder to speak immediately after the mover. If two consecutive speakers have both argued for or against a resolution or an amendment, and there is no member wishing to argue the opposite view, or, in the case of a resolution, to move an amendment, the resolution or the amendment shall, subject, in the case of a resolution, to the mover's right of reply, be put without further debate.

20. Any member may raise a point of order, which shall take precedence over all other business, and which shall be open to discussion. The point must be raised at the time the

alleged irregularity occurred. An explanation or contradiction shall not constitute a point of order.

21. Any member disagreeing with the Chair's ruling on a point of order may move dissent. The Chair shall then vacate the chair and such resolution shall be put forthwith without debate.

22. A question arising at a general meeting of the group shall be determined on a show of hands and unless before or on the declaration of the show of hands a poll is demanded, a declaration by the Chair that a resolution has, on a show of hands, been carried or carried unanimously or carried by a particular majority or lost, and an entry to that effect in the Minutes of the group is evidence of the fact, without proof of the number or proportion of the votes recorded in favour of, or against, of acceptance of that resolution.

23. If at a meeting a poll on any question is demanded by not less than three members, it shall be taken at that meeting in such manner and at such time before the close of the meeting as the Chair may direct and the resolution of the poll shall be deemed to be a resolution of the meeting on that question.

24. A poll that is demanded on the election of a Chair or on a question of an adjournment shall be taken forthwith and a poll that is demanded on any other question shall be taken at such time before the close of the current financial year.

25. In the case of an equality of voting on the question, the Chair of the meeting is entitled to exercise a second or a casting vote.

26. A member who has not already participated in the debate may at any time, whether another speaker has the floor or not, move, "That the question be now put", which resolution, if accepted by the Chair, shall be put without amendment or debate. The Chair shall have absolute discretion to accept or refuse the resolution. The Chair may also without returning a resolution put the question if the Chair feels that adequate discussion has taken place. In either case the mover of a resolution shall retain the right of reply. If an amendment is before the chair, the closure resolution shall be deemed to close the debate on the amendment only.

26. A member may at any time move, "That the speaker be no longer heard" or, "That the speaker be heard for a further limited period only". Such resolutions shall be put without amendment or debate. No other resolution, except the closure resolution or a resolution dealing with the speaker's time, shall be moved while a speaker has the floor.

27. During the discussion of a resolution (but not of an amendment), a member who has not already participated in the debate on the resolution may move: "That the question be not now put." This resolution shall be open to debate, and shall be debated together with the original resolution. If carried, the original resolution shall not be dealt with further. If lost, the original resolution shall be put forthwith, subject to the mover's right of reply. The resolution may be foreshadowed while an amendment is before the chair, but in no case shall it be put till all amendments have been disposed of.

28. A member may move: "That the debate or meeting be now adjourned." Discussion shall be in order, but only amendments as to time and/or place shall be permitted. The resolution shall take precedence over other business before the chair except points of order and personal explanations.

29. Any Standing Order(s), other than the quorum requirements or those specified in the group's Rules 1 may be suspended by a majority of those present. A resolution to this effect shall be open to debate.
30. No member shall reflect on the vote of a meeting, except on a resolution for the rescission of any resolution previously adopted. No member shall reflect on a clause of the constitution or a standing order, except on a resolution (of which due notice was given) to amend or repeal such clause or order.
31. Notwithstanding anything hereinbefore contained, any decision made by a validly constituted meeting shall not be void by reason only of a departure from these standing orders which was not detected till after the decision had been made.
32. Alterations to the standing orders shall be made only by a general meeting after 14 days' notice has been given.
33. The Chair of a general meeting at which a quorum is present may, with the consent of the meeting, adjourn the meeting from time to time and place to place, but no business shall be transacted at an adjourned meeting other than the business left unfinished at the meeting at which the adjournment took place.
34. Where a meeting is adjourned for 14 days or more, a like notice of the adjourned meeting shall be given in accordance with the Rules, otherwise it is not necessary to give notice of an adjournment or of the business to be transacted at an adjourned meeting.

FTLA Insurance Summary



Insurance Program 2014

Summary

- Cover:** Policy 1: Public and Product Liability Insurance
includes a) Public & Products Liability b) Pollution Liability
Policy 2: Personal Accident – Voluntary Workers Insurance
Policy 3: Association Liability Insurance
- Brokers:** NCA Insurance Services (Policy 1)
Aon Insurance Services (Policy 2)
NCA Insurance Services (Policy 3)

ALL coverages in relation to the above policies are subject to the Terms, Conditions & Exclusions contained in the respective policies issued by the Insurers

Insured: Farm Tree & Landcare Association Inc, Landcare Committees, Landcare Groups, Catchment Coordinating Committees and Catchment Care Groups endorsed by the VFF Farm Tree & Landcare Association, including but not restricted to Steering Committees, Sub-Committees, Sub-Groups, Associations of endorsed groups, Working parties and Workers, Host families / persons carrying out authorised Landcare or Catchment Management Activities, and the non-government employed members of Landcare

Business: Principally monitoring, planning, development, promotion, demonstration and implementation of improved land, water and vegetation management practices, including field days, bus trips, camping trips, office occupancy, meeting lectures, seminars, displays and all other activities, including business not exceeding AUD\$500,000 in gross revenue and all other activities in which the insured may become engaged.

General Conditions: FTLA Member Groups must, in order to be covered by the FTLA insurance:

- 1) be financial members of the FTLA at the time of the incident, which requires
 - a. accurate member numbers must be reported to the FTLA
 - b. regular volunteers should be included on the membership list
- 2) ensure health and safety obligations are met when conducting activities
- 3) make all reasonable efforts to record participant details
- 4) in the case of an incident, inform the FTLA as soon as possible and must *not* admit liability or fault
- 5) avoid entering into contracts with "hold harmless" clauses

Policy 1: Public and Product Liability Insurance

Insurer: Liberty International Underwriters

Rolls over: 30 June 2015

Indemnity Limits: AUD\$20 million any one occurrence or in respect of Products and Pollution, in the aggregate.

Sub-Limits: Statutory Liability - \$1 million

Property temporarily in the insured's possession - \$100,000

Covering: Insured's legal liability to pay compensation in respect of:

- 1) bodily injury
- 2) damage to property

Situation of Risk: Anywhere in the world except United States of America and Canada other than in respect of:

- a) Products exported to the United States of America and / or Canada without the knowledge of the insured
- b) Commercial visits by directors and non-manual employees normally resident outside USA or Canada

General Conditions:

The policy is interpreted in accordance with the laws of Australia and all claims for indemnity under this Policy shall be decided in accordance with those laws

The underwriters shall be entitled to take over and conduct the defence or settlement of any claim.

The Insured must:

- Provide notice as soon as reasonably practicable of any occurrence that may give rise to a claim.
- Give no admission, offer, promise or payment in respect of any occurrence that may give rise to a claim.
- Exercise reasonable care that only competent Workers and/or employees are employed and take reasonable measures to maintain all premises, fittings and plant in sound condition
- Take all reasonable precautions to prevent Injury and Damage, prevent the manufacture, sale or supply of defective Products and Comply and ensure that its Workers, servants and agents comply with all statutory obligations, by-laws or regulations imposed by any public authority for the safety of persons or property

General Exclusions

- any liability arising out of negligence, breach of contract or breach of duty
- Any alleged or actual fraudulent, dishonest, malicious, wilful or criminal act or omission of the Insured or any person covered by the Policy
- injury to any person arising out of or in the course of their service or employment, whether or not a contract of or for service or employment exists

Statutory liability provides cover for fines and penalties with regard to reasonable legal costs and associated expenses, excluding wilful, intentional or deliberate failure, gross negligence or recklessness by the insured.

Public and Products Liability covers the insured for injury and/or damage occurring during the period of insurance.

Exclusions include:

- Any motor vehicle or trailer for which compulsory insurance is required by legislation other than:
 - 1) claims caused by the use of any tool or plant used in connection with any motor vehicle or trailer which are not covered by compulsory insurance;
 - 2) claims arising from motor vehicles or trailers temporarily in the insured's control for the purpose of parking; and
 - 3) damage to any bridge, weighbridge or road, or anything beneath such bridge, weighbridge or road caused by the weight of any motor vehicle or trailer or of the load carried thereon
- Ownership, maintenance, operation, possession or use by or any product incorporated into behalf of the insured of: any aircraft or aerial device; any watercraft exceeding 10 meters in length or any hovercraft
- Asbestos, asbestos products and/or products containing asbestos
- Property damage to property owned, leased or hired or otherwise in the Member Group's care other than premises temporarily occupied by the Member Group for work therein other than Directors', employees' and visitors' clothing and personal affects.
- Damages claimed for, and/or costs of withdrawal, recall, inspection, repair, replacement, disposal or loss of use when products form a part or property that is withdrawn from the market due to known suspected defect or deficiency
- The erection, demolition, alteration of and/or addition to buildings by or on behalf of the Insured except for contracts not exceeding in cost the sum of AUD500,000 or 10% of the Limit of Indemnity whichever is the lesser
- Damage to premises, which is presently or was at any time previously tenanted by the Insured.
- Injury to a person under a contract of employment where such injury arises out of the execution of such a contract.
- Awards or damages of a punitive nature.
-

Hiring Disclaimer

Where equipment is hired to a non-member, the conditions of hire are to include a requirement for the non-member to sign a hiring disclaimer.

NB. Contact the FTLA for a sample Agreement of Hire and Plant Equipment sheet.

Pollution Liability

The Member Group is covered for injury and/or damage during the period of insurance arising out of pollution but only to the extent that it can be demonstrated that pollution was the direct result of a sudden, specific and identifiable event.

Taking reasonable precautions with respect to the use of herbicides and pesticides would include but not be limited to:

- Complying with environmental laws and regulations relating to the use of herbicides and pesticides.
- Complying with the manufacturer's usage requirements and regulations.
- Obtaining the permission of all landowners.

Exclusion:

- Injury sustained due to the inhalation or ingestion of, or exposure to: tobacco or tobacco smoke, or any ingredient or additive present in any articles, items or goods which contain or include tobacco

Policy 2: Voluntary Workers Insurance

Insurer: Ace Insurance Ltd

Rolls over: 30 June 2015

Coverage: Provides for payment of benefits when injury happens to volunteers, members and workers whilst actually engaged in activities officially organised and under the control of the Member Group or necessary direct travel to and from such activities including:

- Lump sum benefits (eg death, disablement, loss of sight, limbs etc) limited to age group between 10 – 90 years ranging from \$10,000 to \$100,000 subject to age.
- Lump sum death benefits for under 10 and over 90 limited to \$10,000.
- Weekly benefits - for income earners limited to 85% of weekly income to maximum of \$500 per week not exceeding 104 weeks. Elimination period of 7 days applies.
- Emergency Home Help up to \$500 pw, Student Tutorial Costs up to \$500 pw, and
- Non-Medicare Medical Expenses (not including the Medicare "gap") up to \$5,000 maximum

Member Group Sanctioned Activities

In respect of voluntary workers, the cover applies to those insured events suffered by an insured person whilst actually engaged in voluntary work or necessary direct travel to and from such activities; provided that the policy shall only apply in respect of such work officially organised by and under the control of the Member Group.

Exclusions:

If the event is attributable or consequential upon among others;

- Deliberate self-inflicted injury.
- Workcover: it is agreed and declared that this policy does not cover any insured events in respect of which there is a right to compensation under any Workers Compensation Act or Ordinance whether the right is exercised or not. (In Victoria any organisation with a total payroll of \$7,500 or more must hold a separate Workcover policy).
- Any illness or injury existing at the date of acceptance of this insurance.
- Being under the influence of any intoxicating liquor or drugs other than those prescribed and taken in accordance by a qualified medical practitioner.
- Excludes any expense which can be claimed from Medicare or the gap between the doctor's bill and the Medicare payment.
- Also excludes pharmaceutical products covered by National Health Legislation.

Conditions: Notification as soon as possible of an injury likely to give rise to a claim. Certificates and evidence to be provided as may be prescribed.

Policy 3: Associations Liability Insurance

Insurer: Chartis Insurance

Rolls over: **30 June 2015**

The Association Liability policy is a combination of Professional Indemnity and Directors & Officers Liability Insurance designed to meet the needs of 'not-for-profit' organisations and provides the payment of legal costs and compensation following an allegation of a 'wrongful act' in the course of carrying out duties for the organisation.

Indemnity Limits:

\$5,000,000 in any one claim and in the aggregate

Specific sub-cover indemnity limits

Crime Protection \$250,000

Statutory Liability \$250,000

Coverage of note

- a) Officer Bearers Insurance
Provides personal protection to all office bearers and employees for claims that arise from wrongful acts committed whilst representing the Member Group.

- b) Professional Indemnity
Provides protection to the Member Group, office bearers and employees for claims that may arise from any advice they give to third parties and members.

Specific Coverages

- Management Liability
 - Includes coverage for individual office bearers, outside entity directors, association reimbursement, and reinstatement limit.
 - Extensions include assets and liberty costs, insured person statutory liability, investigations, Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S), public relations expenses, extradition proceedings, run-off for retired insured persons, superannuation schemes, and access to complimentary legal advice.
 - The Insurer shall not be liable for loss resulting from bodily injury and property damage and deliberate or intentional conduct.

- Corporate Liability
 - Includes corporate liability, membership liability, professional liability, and accidental death.
 - Extensions include pollution condition entity defence costs, Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S), breach of contract, identity fraud, crisis event, disappearance of insured executive, superannuation scheme, taxation audit and tax status costs, access to complimentary legal advice, and liability to third party entities due to employee dishonesty or fraud.
 - The Insurer shall not be liable for loss under anti-competitive practices, benefits, bodily injury and property damage, conduct, contract, employment practices liability,

intellectual property rights, specified accidental death, pollution, and professional services.

- **Employment Practice Liability**
 - Includes employment practices liability and third party liability.
 - Extension for access to complimentary legal advice.
 - The Insurer shall not be liable for loss under anti-competitive practices, benefits, bodily injury and property damage, conduct, intellectual property rights, pollution, and professional services.
- **Crime Protection**
 - Includes employee fraud or dishonesty, third party crime, destruction and damage of money or negotiable instruments, shareholders, and care, custody and control.
 - Extensions include legal fees, reconstitution costs, and investigative specialist fees.
 - The Insurer shall not be liable for agent acts, benefits, confidential information, direct financial loss sustained after knowledge, fire, forcible and violent theft, premises damage, voluntary exchange or purchase, and profit, loss or inventory computation.
- **Superannuation Trustees Liability**
 - Includes individual superannuation trustees, insured entity reimbursement, exoneration, insured entity liability, and ombudsman and superannuation regulator awards.
 - Extensions include loss of documents and access to complimentary legal advice.
 - The Insurer shall not be liable for loss from bodily injury and property damage, conduct, Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA), failure to fund a plan, and superannuation benefits.
- **Statutory Liability**
 - Includes insured person statutory liability and insured entity statutory liability.
 - The Insurer shall not be liable for deliberate or intentional conduct, anti-competitive practices, corporations act, Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA), professional services, tax, and traffic.

GENERAL EXTENSIONS:

Court attendance, regulatory crisis response, discovery period, emergency costs, legal expenses pay, and new subsidiary.

GENERAL EXCLUSIONS:

The Insurer shall not be liable for Loss under arising out of, based upon or attributable to:

- (i) any conduct or contravention in respect of which a liability is the subject of a prohibition in section 199B(1) of the Corporations Act 2001 (Commonwealth); or
- (ii) the committing of any deliberately dishonest or deliberately fraudulent act

ALL coverages in relation to the above policies are subject to the Terms, Conditions & Exclusions contained in the respective policies issued by the Insurers. Please contact the FTLA for complete and current policy wording.

Volunteer/Attendance Registration Form:

Group: A Member Group of the Farm Tree & Landcare Association

Site:						Activity:						Date:				
Site Coordinator's						Contact				Contact						
Name:						Number:				Email:						
For safety purposes, all volunteers participating at this site must be registered. Please fill in your details below! Children under the age of 18 must have a parent or guardian sign for them.																
																LAST NAME
																FIRST NAME
																ADDRESS
																POSTCODE
																PHONE
																EMAIL
																ARRIVAL TIME
																TIME DEPARTED
																SIGNATURE

Going Into Recess / Becoming Inactive

Many groups experience periods of inactivity or recess from time to time. Some groups reactivate and some groups fold or fade away. If the group just wants a quiet year then they would have the usual complement of committee members (President, Secretary, Treasurer plus two to three other committee members perhaps with specific roles such as Vice President) and decide at the AGM.

If the group has been inactive for more than a year or intends to be completely inactive, then it is advisable to have a plan for going into and coming out of recess. Call a meeting of the group and decide on a process.

The process for going into recess should be something that everyone agrees to (sometimes the group finds some new active members coming out of the woodwork when this discussion is started) and then the group sets up a system for the members to be called back every one or two years to see if they want to restart. Set a sunset clause of five-ten years that if the group hasn't reactivated by then that the group closes down, with an agreement on what is then done with the funds and assets of the group, which needs a 75% vote at a meeting called for that purpose: an SGM.

The group needs to nominate a person or several people, with the power to call a meeting (usually the president or secretary but not necessarily) and someone with the power to close down the group (which would include the bank signatories necessarily). The group would be looking for someone who is unlikely to move from the area and someone who has the sort of personality that they are going to remember and actually call a meeting after a period of years (and they're going to need a membership list to do that) but who is also willing to close the group if necessary. The group will also need a back-up person just in case. If a bank signatory is planning to move out of the area that should trigger a meeting to assign a new signatory (preferably before they move!).

If the group is incorporated in its own right or is registered for GST then there will be additional procedures.

The group will also need to keep the bank accounts active as otherwise they will be declared dormant and the monies will be difficult to retrieve. Even depositing a dollar a year will be enough to keep the accounts active so the group will need to designate a responsible person.

It's also worth having a conversation around what "reactivation" means - the group might set a minimum of five members for instance. The FTLA usually contacts inactive member groups once a year to see if they have reactivated or closed down, so it's a good idea to make sure we know who to contact. Other people to keep informed would be the local network or facilitator and the CMA.

This process can appear a bit complicated but it does help to have a plan around how to reactivate the group after a few years of inactivity. The worst possible outcome is that the group slowly fades away and no one has any ownership of the group anymore so the funds sit in a bank account until they are rolled into unclaimed funds.

Closing Down or Merging

Any group considering closing down or merging should check its own documentation first to see if any procedure is specified. If the group is incorporated independently through Consumer Affairs it will definitely have its own Rules - check the Victorian Names Register to see if a group is incorporated.

A merger effectively involves one or more groups closing down and rolling over their funds and membership into another group. That group may or may not change its name as part of the merger. Or both groups may close down and roll over into a new entity, but starting the new entity first is advisable so that the old groups have an existing entity into which to transfer funds etc and to provide continuity.

Sometime mergers occur when group join a network. Networks are formed where one or more groups decide to work together: there are two types of networks a) where the subgroups are fully merged and b) where the subgroups are semi-independent: independence is indicated by separate bank-accounts, AGMs, rules, decision-making processes. Please note that for the second scenario to also be appropriate, the sub-groups will need to be separately insured whether through the FTLA or someone else.

If either or both groups are FTLA Member Groups they must therefore abide by the FTLA Rules in addition to any rules of their own they may have. The relevant FTLA rule is:

9.8 A Member Group may be dissolved by a resolution of members making up that Group. Such a resolution requiring a three quarters majority of the members of the Group present at a meeting convened for that purpose. Upon dissolution all funds of the Member Group are to be remitted to the Association or with the approval of the Committee to an organisation having the same or similar objectives to the Association and which has rules prohibiting the distribution of its assets and income to its members.

Such a meeting is called a Special General Meeting, and notice should be sent to all members at least 14 days in advance of the meeting, noting the reason for the meeting. Where groups have been inactive for a period, the members from the last time the group was active would be the relevant membership set.

Often groups in this situation will also make this notice public and will offer three options to the meeting:

1) Renewal of the group

As the current office bearers usually having come to this point do not wish to lead the group anymore, this is usually done by declaring offices open and calling for new leadership. As always it is good to have recruited potential office bearers prior to the meeting if possible.

2) Dissolution of the group (closing down)

3) Merger of the group with another group or network

Both dissolution and merger will require a vote with three quarters majority of those present.

Should either dissolution or merger be the result of the meeting, the following actions will need to be taken:

- 1) The group will need to ascertain whether there are any contracts outstanding, e.g. grant contracts or employment contracts. If any contracts are outstanding then the other parties will need to be contacted and dissolution of the contract (or in the case of a merger transferral of the contract to the merged group) or the acquittal of the grants.
- 2) Any debts held by the dissolving group will need to be paid out.
- 3) Any funds or assets to held by the dissolving group, need to be remitted either to:
 - a. The FTLA
 - b. Another FTLA Member Group
 - c. Another organisation having same or similar objectives to the FTLA and which has rules prohibiting the distribution of its assets and income to its members. In this case approval will need to be sought from the FTLA Committee.

This will involve closing down the bank accounts of the dissolving group(s) and having a resolution to that effect.

In the case of a merger you would also need a resolution about the name of the new account, the new signatories and preferably the bank at which the account is to be opened. If opening an entirely new account the bank may ask for proof of incorporation or a letter of authority from an incorporated association, which in the case of an FTLA Member Group would be the FTLA.

- 4) In the case of a merger membership lists need to be given to the merged group.
- 5) Stakeholders will need to be informed, including but not limited to:
 - a. FTLA Member Groups will need to inform the FTLA
 - b. The membership of any group affected
 - c. The Australian Business Register (ABR) if the group holds an ABN
 - d. The Australian Tax Office (ATO) if the group is registered for GST or income tax.
 - e. The CMA (i.e. the Regional Landcare Co-ordinator)
 - f. The Network if the group belongs to a larger network

Where an active group is merging with an inactive group, it may be that only the inactive group goes through the dissolution process but the active group as a matter of good governance should seek the approval of its membership for the merger. Both groups should consider the benefits and disadvantages of any merger as the new entity may inherit any debts, liabilities, obligations and disputes of the dissolved group(s).

If any group has a name change, either as a result of a merger or any other reason, the group should inform their stakeholders as above, plus the bank. Once again the approval of the membership may be required under the organisation's Rules and should be sought prior to any name change as a matter of good governance.

Chemical and Spraying Equipment Use and Hire

Many landcare Groups have spraying equipment for use in their Groups activities. This equipment is used by the Groups and their members or also hired out.

Guidelines for Spraying Equipment:

Equipment to be used at sanctioned Group activity – an activity that has been noted in the Groups Meeting Minutes and with the approval of the Group committee.

Appointment of Committee member with appropriate experience and qualifications to manage the equipment. Their duty to ensure that the Group is providing Duty of Care to the user (following points).

Material Safety Data sheet (MSDS) of chemical products to be used must be available for all persons involved in the spraying operation. For initial instruction, information and for further reference – these are available from supplier or chemical manufacturer.

Ensure that all instructions described in the MSDS and on the product label are outlined and understood.

Ensure all people involved in the spraying operation are suitably trained i.e. Agriculture Chemical Users Permit (ACUP Victoria) or equivalent or under the direct supervision of someone who has completed the above.

All persons involved in the spraying operation must use the 'Code of Practice for Spraying' as the basis in undertaking these activities (available from DEPI).

The Group has to provide Duty of Care to user of the equipment;

Ensure equipment is maintained i.e. no leaking pipes, nozzles or hand wands.

All appropriate personal protective equipment to be made available and used.

Induction for all persons involved on safe equipment use

Landcare Group committee to approve and sign off on the chemicals to be used;

Recommended that this is Non Dangerous Goods classification (DG Class) and have a rating no higher than POISON on the Poisons Schedule.

Agriculture Chemical Users Permit (ACUP Victoria) is required for members handling higher toxicity chemicals (usage to be approved by landcare Group committee).

If using chemicals that are Dangerous Goods, DANGEROUS POISON or requiring an ACUP a copy of all appropriate records (who, where, what chemicals, weather conditions etc) and paper work must be provided along with a risk assessment (proforma attached).

All equipment to be flushed and cleaned on completion of spraying activities in accordance with label statement.

Hiring out of equipment – for activities other than sanctioned Group activity (copy of disclaimer attached). Please note that Disclaimers can be helpful in the event of an incident however they will not prevent a claim from being made and will not clear the Group of it's legal responsibilities.

Reference sources:

Conservation Volunteers Australia 2005: In Safe Hands: a safety management toolkit for community groups in practical conservation.

The Farm Tree & Landcare Association supports the adoption of this manual by landcare groups for the minimisation of risks involved in conservation activities.

Hiring disclaimer form courtesy of the Victorian landcare Gateway located at www.landcarevic.net.au/resources/hire/

ChemCert Australia (Victoria)

Department of Primary Industry (DPI) Code of Practice

Agreement for Hire of Plant and Equipment

This Agreement is made on the Day of 200.....

Between:

of

.....("owner")

And:

of

.....("hirer")

Recitals:

R1. The owner is the proprietor of the plant and equipment ("equipment") listed in the schedule to this Agreement ("schedule").

R2. The hirer will hire the equipment specified in the schedule from the owner upon the terms and conditions in this Agreement.

Operative Part:

1. Hire of plant and equipment

1.1. The hiring of the equipment will commence from the commencement date specified in the schedule and continue for the term specified in the schedule.

1.2. The hirer is entitled to use the equipment for the hire period and for any agreed extension of the period.

1.3. The hirer agrees to return the goods to the address of the owner on or before the end of the hire period as outlined in the schedule

1.4. The owner will not refund any hire charge monies if the hirer elects to return the equipment prior to the end of the hire period, regardless of reason.

2. Payment for rental

2.1. The hirer agrees to pay the owner the hire fee specified in the schedule for the equipment for the hire period, which includes any applicable GST, if a hire charge is applicable.

2.2. The hire fee must be paid to the owner prior to or on the commencement date of the hire period.

3. Use, operation and maintenance

3.1. The hirer agrees that the use of the equipment carries with it dangers and risks of injury and the hirer agrees to accept all dangers and risks.

3.2. The equipment shall not be used by anyone other than the hirer without the expressed permission of the owner.

3.3 The hirer agrees to operate, maintain and store the equipment strictly in accordance with any instruction provided by the owner, with due care and diligence, only for its intended use and in accordance with any manufacturer's instructions and recommendations whether supplied by the owner or posted on the equipment as to the operations, maintenance and storage thereof.

3.4 The hirer agrees to comply with all occupational health and safety laws relating to the use of the equipment and related operations.

3.5 The hirer shall ensure the equipment is returned to the owner clean of soil or any other foreign matter and any spray tanks and spray equipment shall be thoroughly cleaned. Fuel tanks on any equipment shall be full of fuel when the equipment is returned to the owner. In the event that these requirements are not complied with the hirer shall pay the owner the reasonable costs of compliance with these requirements.

4. Hirer's warranties

4.1. The hirer warrants that:

4.1.1. the equipment will be used in accordance with the conditions outlined in the schedule;

4.1.2. the particulars in the schedule are correct in every respect and are not misleading in any way including, without limitation, by omission;

4.1.3. the hirer holds a valid current driver's licence, operating licence or permit valid for the type of equipment hired;

4.1.4. the equipment will not be used for any illegal purpose;

4.1.5. the hire's vehicle is suitable for towing the equipment;

4.1.6. the hirer will not, without prior written consent of the owner, modify, or permit any modification of, the equipment in any way; and

4.1.7. the hirer agrees that the equipment complies with its description, is in merchantable condition and is fit for the hirer's purpose.

5. Indemnity

5.1. To the full extent permitted by law the hirer releases, discharges and indemnifies the owner from all claims and demands on the owner arising out of or consequent on the use or misuse of the equipment during the hire period.

6. Loss, damage or breakdown of plant and equipment

6.1. The hirer will be responsible for any loss or damage to the equipment irrespective of how the loss or damage occurred (fair wear and tear excepted) during the hire period.

6.2. If there is a breakdown or failure of the equipment then the hirer shall return the equipment to the owner at the hirer's expense and the hirer shall not attempt to repair the equipment.

7. Insurance

7.1. The owner will maintain current insurance policies in respect of the equipment to its full insurable value.

8. Liability

8.1. The hirer will assume all risks and liabilities for and in respect of the equipment and for all injuries to or deaths of persons and any damage to property howsoever arising from the hirer's possession, use, maintenance, repair or storage of the equipment.

9. Disclaimer

9.1. To the extent permitted by law the owner disclaims all liability for and does not give any warranties to the hirer as to the condition of the equipment.

10. Title to goods

10.1. The hirer acknowledges that the owner retains title to the equipment and that the hirer has rights to use the equipment as a mere bailee only. The hirer does not have any right to pledge the owner's credit in connection with the goods and agrees not to do so.

10.2. The hirer agrees not to agree, offer or purport to sell, assign, sub-let, lend, pledge, mortgage let or hire or otherwise part with or attempt to part with personal possession or otherwise not to deal with the equipment and not to conceal or alter the goods or make any addition or alteration to, or repair of, the equipment.

11. Repossession

11.1. The owner may retake possession of the equipment if the hirer breaches any provision of this agreement, notwithstanding anything else herein contained.

11.2. If repossession takes place, the owner shall only charge the hire fee up to and including the time of repossession.

12. Completion of the hire period

12.1. The hire period is completed when the equipment has been returned to the owner:

12.1.1. in the same condition as when it was hired; and

12.1.2. on or by the date and time outlined in the schedule.

13. Non-merger

13.1. The covenants, agreements and obligations contained in this agreement will not merge or terminate upon the termination of this agreement and to the extent that they have not been fulfilled or satisfied or are continuing obligations they will remain in force and effect.

14. Severance

14.1. If any provision of this agreement is wholly or partly invalid, unenforceable, illegal, void or voidable, this agreement must be construed as if that provision or part of a provision had been severed from this Agreement and the parties remain bound by all of the provisions and part provisions remaining after severance.

15. Governing law

15.1. This Agreement is governed by the laws of Victoria. Each party submits to the non-exclusive jurisdiction of the courts exercising jurisdiction there in connection with matters concerning this Agreement.

16. Interpretation

16.1. In this Agreement, unless the context otherwise requires:

16.1.1. A reference to the singular includes the plural and vice versa;

16.1.2. A reference to any party to this Agreement includes the party's executors, administrators, successors or permitted assigns, and where applicable, its servants and agents;

16.1.3. A reference to an individual shall include corporations and vice versa; and

16.1.4. If a word or expression is defined, its other grammatical forms have a corresponding meaning.

16.2. In this Agreement, headings are for convenience only and do not affect interpretation.

Executed as an Agreement

For and on behalf of ("the owner").

Authorised Person:

Signature: Date:

Hirer:

Signature: Date:

Schedule

1. Plant & Equipment:

2. Hire fee (if any):

3. Hire period: From to

Conditions of use specific to the equipment:

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Membership Application Form - Template

Group Name: _____

ABN: _____ Inc: _____ An FTLA Member Group

Annual Membership is \$_____ (per person / property / family)

Please tick box if you require a receipt : ☐ Membership year end: 31 March

Group Purpose / Vision:

Description:

Membership Benefits:

E.g. - Networking with local people who have experience in land management in your area.

- Access to information sessions on sustainable practice, weed removal, and land management.

Membership Application

Name:

Postal Address:

Telephone: Mobile:

Fax: Email:

Declaration: I agree to support the purposes of [Group Name] and abide by its Rules and relevant policies and procedures.

Signed:

Property Address: (if different from above)

Property Size: Hectares..... Melways Reference.....

Current Land Use:

What do you hope to gain from landcare membership:

What are the main land management issues concerning you?

Can you assist with grant applications, newsletter production, working bees, other Landcare tasks?

Completed application and payment can be sent to:

Further Enquiries:

Key to Acronyms – ‘a head start’

AGM	Annual General Meeting
ALC	Australian Landcare Council
CAG	Community Action Grants
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
CFI	Carbon Farming Initiative
CFOC	Caring For Our Country
CMA	Catchment Management Authority
CoM	Committee of Management
CVA	Conservation Volunteers Australia
DAFF	Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (Superseded)
DGR	Deductible Gift Recipient Status
DPCD	Department of Planning and Community Development
DEPI	Department of Environment and Primary Industries
DPI	Department of Primary Industries (Superseded)
DSE	Department of Sustainability and Environment (Superseded)
EDO	Environment Defenders Office
EOI	Expression of Interest
EPA	Environment Protection Authority
F68	Local Facilitators Program (DEPI)
FOI	Freedom of Information
FTLA	Farm Tree & Landcare Association
LAL	Landcare Australia Ltd
MERI	Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting, Improvement
NFF	National Farmers Federation
NFP	Not For Profit

NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NHT	Natural Heritage Trust
NLF	National Landcare Facilitator
NLN	National Landcare Network
NLP	National Landcare Program
NRIP	Natural Resources Investment Program
NRM	Natural Resource Management
PV	Parks Victoria
RIP	Regional Investment Program
RLC	Regional Landcare Coordinator
RLF	Regional Landcare Facilitator
SEWPaC	Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (Superseded)
SGM	Special General Meeting
TCC	Tax Concession Charity
VAPSGL	Victorian Action Plan for Second Generation Landcare (Superseded)
VBT	Victorian Blackberry Taskforce
VCMC	Victorian Catchment Management Council
VEAC	Victorian Environment Assessment Council
VFF	Victorian Farmers Federation
VLC	Victorian Landcare Council
VLN	Victorian Landcare Network
VLP	Victorian Landcare Program
VMLCG	Victorian Mobile Landcare Group
VNA	Victoria Naturally Alliance
VNPA	Victorian National Parks Association
VSLT	Victorian State Landcare Team

VST WP	Victorian Serrated Tussock Working Party
WoNS	Weeds of National Significance