



Geelong Landcare Network

Discussion by the Board

24th June 2017

- 1. What have we strengthened over the last couple of years?**
- 2. Where do we need to break new ground?**
To keep being relevant and making a difference, what do we need to get into, develop, open up, understand?
- 3. What is our Question Without an Easy Answer?**
A question that doesn't have a simple or obvious answer.
A question with several answers, each one right in a different situation.
A question that keeps coming back, and that leads you to other questions, deepening your understanding.
- 4. What have we tried already and what can we learn from this?**

Our facilitator has a relationship with each group, and there's a better targeted flow of communication to groups about funding opportunities. Groups vary in their level of activity, and the amount of support they need, but there's support available to help each group setting up their projects.

Facilitator of Community Learning and Action
Enabler of Partnerships

We need to break new ground in how we engage people and work with them

Governance

Improved our financial management and service agreements. More groups have active Board members, load is shared. Board and facilitator work as a team.

We're getting project bids funded at a steady rate – we don't get everything we ask for, but enough.

Provider of Services
NRM Planner

A major area of growth for us. Partnership with Gordon TAFE is generating a flow of time and skills into grassroots projects. Partnership with CeRDI, Federation Uni, starting. Collaboration between facilitators of Leigh CG, Upper Barwon LN and SCIPN is sharing specialist skills and saving each Network time. And we have a stronger voice with the Corangamite CMA.

Our Facilitator puts a Landcare opinion on environmental issues into plans like the Moorabool River Management Strategy, Victoria's Water Plan, the Western Grasslands Reserve Weed Management Group, the Serrated Tussock Working Party. The Facilitator links the committees working on these plans with the opinions and knowledge of local Landcare groups.

The roles of Landcare Networks

*Over the past few years, what have we strengthened in the way we do business?
Where do we need to break new ground?*

Geelong Landcare Network's *Questions Without An Easy Answer*

Suburban subdivisions, more lifestylers, new owners of production-focused farms, new residents in towns – where are the new Landcarers going to come from? Let's choose our target audiences, then get inside how they think and what's important to them, so we can start speaking their language.

Which new residents should we target?

The "trees and weeds" tag cramps our style. We need a bigger canvas, but how do we widen perception of Landcare beyond "trees and weeds." What will we speak to? Making landscapes healthier? sustainable production? responsible management of land? stronger communities? protecting flora and fauna?

How do we rebrand Landcare?

How do we seed new forms of organising, communicating and leading community action?

Local committees and Network committee aren't the only ways to organise action, and many new residents and younger people don't have the time or commitment to be on a permanent committee. But they want to make a difference and be part of something bigger than themselves. We need to support the new forms emerging. If an approach takes off, great! If it falls over after giving it a good run, put it aside. Keep testing new ways to organise, communicate and lead, then build our capacity around what works. The four other questions will be addressed as we pursue this central question.

On what issues do we most want to make a difference?

Urban expansion, new pressures on waterways and land health, growth of lifestylers and the need for land management skills, turnover of residents and maintaining community connectedness - there's so much going on, we have to pick our issues and set our strategic priorities.

What's the Network's role?

As we find new ways of organising, communicating and leading, this will may change the role of GLN. We shouldn't just keep doing what we've always done.

Seeding new forms of organising, communicating and leading community action

What have we already tried?	What can we learn from this?	What will we do next?
Last facilitator organised and ran big projects, bringing Landcare groups in on these when they were set up. The Board didn't guide action.	Groups got upset about being left out, giving the Network a bad name. This approach doesn't build social networks locally and between groups, and doesn't support local groups initiating.	
Board sets agenda to guide facilitator; facilitator works with local group initiatives. Good flow of info to Board.	Good understanding has developed between Board members as they set agenda together. Trust between Board and facilitator; facilitator can act on own initiative, and Board members provide sounding board. But urban expansion means many strategies and policies affect our area. We can give opinions, but we don't have the grunt for high level advocacy. Tie in at State level is weak. We need LVI to step up.	<p>Develop a template for getting concise info on opportunities out to groups: What's the opportunity? Who relevant to? Potential benefits? Next step (with links). Collaborate between GLN, SCIPN and UBLN in applying template to different subject areas, eg sustainable ag, biodiversity, to spread workload.</p> <p>Ask LVI to trial a way of getting local members informed about State and regional policy issues, gathering opinion from members, and feeding back the results of LVI advocacy.</p> <p>Meet with other Network Boards to discuss how they are handling the questions we are asking.</p>
Partnership with Gordon TAFE	<p>TAFE has a strong need for on-ground/hands on/rural experiences for their students, around specific courses. We have the landholders, and we want the time and skills they bring.</p> <p>We've proceeded slowly, one topic at a time, around specific initiatives coming from local groups, connected to specific courses, and where there is an enthusiastic initiator in the local group and in TAFE.</p>	<p>Document each project, what it's achieved and why it's worked. Put this in front of GLN groups and Gordon TAFE teachers, so more people see what's possible and act on their own ideas. Facilitating the relationships between Landcare groups and TAFE as people put up their hand.</p> <p>When we have that documented, present the model to other education providers, like Marcus Oldham and Deakin, and get them into it.</p>
Intrepid Landcare	A new way to get young people involved. Works because it's organised by this age group for this age group, and they know how to keep the fun going.	Back Intrepid getting started in our area. Publicise what they do to Landcare groups.