

# REGIONAL LANDCARE FACILITATORS COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

27 & 28 June 2018

With the future of their work clearly in focus, 27 passionate Landcare team members from across NSW, came together in Sydney for the first time as a Community of Practice. The group of Regional Landcare Facilitators, Regional Landcare network committee members, Local Land Services staff and Landcare NSW staff were hosted by David Newell (Campfire Coop), Chris McCulloch, Peter Piggot, Edwina Haynes, Tamara Harris and Natasha English.

They had a clear purpose - to celebrate and acknowledge the efforts of the past and the experience and knowledge of participants, acknowledge the tensions and challenges of the current changes, and plan together for the future. Participatory processes and practices were used to host the group in these important conversations for the future of the Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitator program. Here is a summary of what we shared and learned.

## How are you arriving?

- Delighted
- Grateful
- Apprehensive and optimistic
- Really supported
- Excited to work together
- Cautious and moving forward positively
- Looking forward
- Exhausted & optimistic
- Uncertain about jobs
- Being part of a group
- Interested to learn
- Passionate
- Bit overwhelmed
- Open
- Fairly positive
- Excited with where we can head to
- Positive
- In transit
- Excited to be starting at the start
- Rattled
- Uncertain - transitions
- Excited, anxious, optimistic
- Let's go!
- Curious and lucky
- Concerned about loss of good workers
- Here to learn
- Glass half full
- Uncertain
- Content, excited and re-connected
- Bit excited
- Happy to meet everyone
- Happy for rain
- Energy in the room
- Mix of emotions

## LOOKING BACK: LEARNINGS FROM THE RLF PROGRAM

### Stories

RLFs came with postcards highlighting significant parts of their work from the past four years, and some shared their stories using a process called Collective Story Harvest. We heard from Hannah Rice, North Coast; Vanessa Keyzer, Greater Sydney; Edwina Hayes, Murray and Pip Swain, North West. The purpose was to celebrate and honour the work that had gone before, and to deeply listen for what we wanted to take from those experiences into this new phase.

Here is a synthesis of what we learned from the stories, to inform how we work in the new RALF roles, in Landcare and Local Land Services.

### Key principles

- We understand that relationships matter, and that they need time and energy
- We keep a positive intent, support what's working and share good news stories
- We continue learning, from our past experiences, from community, partners, from each other
- We are willing to adapt, explore new approaches, be responsive and flexible



## Key insights

- Good collaboration can overcome barriers and hurdles and has multiple benefits
- People working together on common issues can make a difference in many ways
- Powerful, trusting relationships are gold
- It's vital to build and nurture diverse networks - to connect, share and celebrate
- Use local knowledge and influencers to build the capacity and ownership of others
- It's important to support individual leaders
- It's important to build in continuous learning and reflection
- It's critical to understand the bigger context - 'what else is at play?'
- Landcare is full of good people who make it all worthwhile
- Don't underestimate that big things can happen

## Questions

- What are the different understandings and perceptions of 'partnerships'?
- What makes a strong partnership tick?
- What is the LLS - Landcare organisational culture?
- What is it that has contributed to great LLS & Landcare partnerships in some places but not in others?
- How do we promote the value of long term / corporate knowledge and experience - within LLS and Landcare?
- How do we better understand the structure of Landcare Facilitators on a national scale?
- When change is big, how do we acknowledge and manage the anger?



## WHERE ARE WE NOW? WHAT DO WE TAKE FORWARD?

Over 3 rounds of small group conversations (World Cafe), harvested collectively, we explored these questions:

### What principles are present when you're doing your best work?

Key responses:

- Feeling respected, supported & able to bring whole self
- Open & honest relationships with good communication
- Clarity of purpose and shared understanding
- Clear goals, boundaries and targets
- Flexible, adaptive and solutions focused
- Meaningful, worthwhile, relevant contribution

### What practices and actions help you integrate these principles into your best work?

Key responses:

- Lead by example to create a work culture of innovation, positive feedback and respect
- Collaborative practices and processes for co-creating and decision making in teams
- Communicate well with an awareness of community needs and issues
- Undertake planning with a well defined and communicated purpose

### What has the RLF program meant to you?

- First job
- Brought order
- Strength & power
- Blossomed
- Fellowship
- Friendships that will continue
- Opportunity to work with great people
- People
- Extraordinary calibre of people
- Admiration
- Building partnerships
- Connections established
- Connected communities - resilient land
- Fun - don't take yourself too seriously

### How could we amplify what we have & do, to make the next Facilitator program a success?

Key responses:

- Recognise lessons learned, build on what we've created
- Nurture existing relationships and build others with respect and trust
- Collaborate, communicate, coordinate with the LLCI team
- Establish & support a RALF forum and platform for sharing and building capacity
- Develop RALF strategic plans with strong scope and vision from the community
- RALF facilitates development of regional Landcare Action Plans
- Build a narrative of the integrated nature of Landcare and agriculture



## LOOKING FORWARD: WHAT COULD THE RALF PROGRAM LOOK LIKE?

Some of the questions we were curious to answer were: What is the core business of the RALF program across the state? What outcomes are we trying to achieve? What would success for the RALF program look like in each region?

We adapted a collaborative design process to delve into the strategic short term outcomes from the RALF program logic. We spent a morning intensively working on these in small groups, with others adding value later. It's hoped this will be useful for all new RALFs in the development of our action plans. Here is a summary of where we got to. *For a full transcript contact Chris McCulloch.*

### Support for **Community Engagement** to participate in the implementation of practice change

#### What does it look like?

- People 'doing' practice change
- People participating in programs
- Community being aware of opportunities
- Engaged and supported Landcare Community of Practice
- Facilitate and support new, growing or existing groups
- Ensuring relevance of practice change
- Assisting with grant applications, not writing them

### Facilitation of **partnerships and collaborative networks** across Landcare, NRM and Sustainable Agriculture stakeholders

#### What does it look like?

- A connection resource
- Groups interacting themselves
- Being a host - facilitated collaborative networks
- Holder of the connection - individual, agriculture and Landcare
- Clarified RALF and LLCI roles
- Ag outcomes
- Ag connected with Landcare and community
- Establish regional network / collective
- A supported and facilitated Community of Practice
- We are well trained and skilled
- Information flows between stakeholders
- Groups work well together
- Stakeholders know each other and work together where appropriate
- Resources are leveraged

### Provide a mechanism for Landcare, NRM and Sustainable Agriculture stakeholders to **exchange ideas**, share experiences and to learn from each other

#### What does it look like?

- Facilitating Community of Practice, forums, workshops
- Regional Forums
- Well structured and governed Landcare networks or collective
- Supporting project - direct engagement
- Looking around, finding the information, synthesising it and sharing it
- Supported Landcare Coordinators

### Community groups supported to seek funding, increased membership, participation and sustainable resources

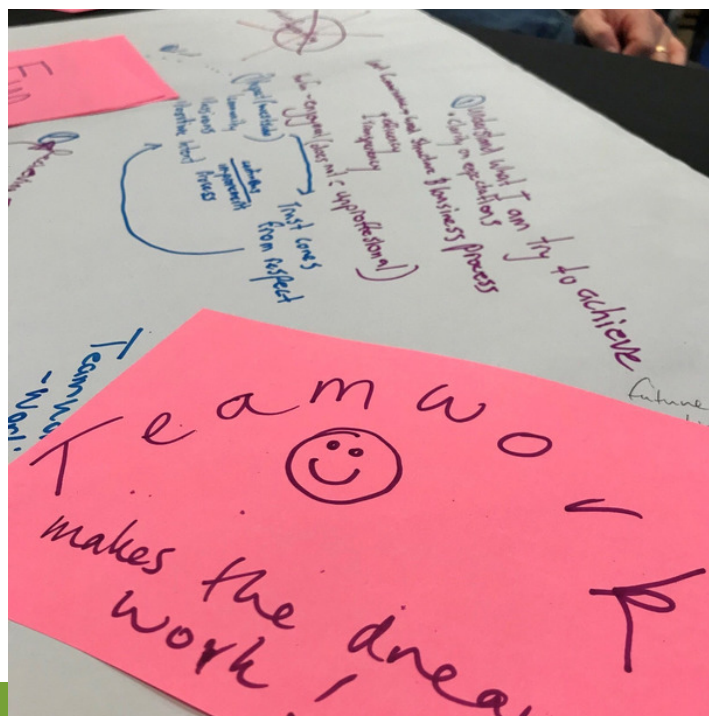
#### What does it look like?

- Regional CoP (collective networks) supported
- Enabled and supported groups are empowered to attract new members and develop projects (enabler not doer)
- Fostering champions and leadership
- Represent community LC to higher up. A conduit up and down
- Aggregate and share information - LALCs
- Well structured and governed groups with the capacity to deliver
- Training & capacity building

### Provide a **central contact point** for farmers, industry and community groups

#### What does it look like?

- Approachable, friendly and accessible link between NRM agencies, ag industries, community and LLC
- Questions referred to the right people
- Connecting through LLCI groups
- At the right scale - local - network - region
- For out-of-region, state and national
- A conduit as much as contact
- Build understanding in LLS of the bigger picture and specific roles of the RALF
- Community of Practice



## Effective leverage of **state programs** including the NSW Local Landcare Coordinator Initiative

### What does it look like?

- RALF captures the outputs and outcomes of activities under state programs
- Using the resources of the LLCI to leverage funding under other opportunities
- RALF is an essential linking contact for each region to state
- Capture full value of LLCI program (in kind) to leverage in funding applications
- Collecting data to show engagement, and promote findings and results

## Provide a **link** between community and key LLS advisory staff

### What does it look like?

- RALF participating in Ops planning
- RALF knows everybody
- Community Landcare participation in NRM technical committees
- Clear communication processes between LLS & Landcare & other community groups
- Landcare engaged on LLS committees
- Landcare buddy
- Staff and Board know what RALF does, and what's happening on the ground

## Support in the **design and delivery** of agriculture projects

### What does it look like?

- Ag projects happening on the ground, shelf projects ready to go
- Linking with researchers - universities and industry groups
- Partners more engaged and aware of projects and plans
- Working closely with other pillars of LLS
- Work holistically across sectors
- Productive partnerships
- Supporting collaboration
- Sharing ideas and resources across RALFs & regions
- Local, state and national priorities
- Stakeholder consortium: Ag, Bio, EM services, NRM
- Project management structures clear and in place
- Helping stakeholders write project plans and grant apps
- Funding community driven capacity builders
- Develop standard reporting

## Support effective delivery of NLP **Core Services** in the context of Landcare & sustainable agriculture

### What does it look like?

- Regional strategic planning
- Capacity building
- Sharing information
- Link across core functions (LLS)
- Link between core services and community / individuals
- Community / individual perspectives are integrated into core services
- Community / individuals included in planning
- LLS are people too
- Community / individuals / groups delivering core services
- Supported by IT, admin, comms
- Networks get core services \$
- RALF is on key working groups

## Who do we need to work with?

- Aboriginal community
- Consultants
- Landholders
- Industry groups
- Landcare & landcare
- Ag groups & NSW Farmers
- Providers of innovation
- LLCIs -connections with industry & community groups
- Sustainable ag groups
- LLS staff
- Local government
- DPI
- Researchers and industry experts
- State Landcare team
- Subject matter experts & advisers
- Boards, local staff & partners
- Project delivery teams
- Communications team
- Media

## WHAT ARE THE CONVERSATIONS WE NEED TO HAVE NOW?

Using Open Space Technology, we had conversations about the things that were most important to our work going forward. Here's a summary of the key insights from those conversations. *Contact Chris McCulloch for complete notes.*

### RALF & LLCI... How do they work together?

- Still a need for regional connection of local Landcare coordinators
- The balance between LLS support and community support - impacted by reduced resources
- Regional community needs are different in focus and scale
- What can the RALF and LLC do for each other?
- RALFs need to know what the LLCI really is, and vice versa Inductions!







## North Coast building bridges

- We need to take time to build trust and relationships
- We need to develop an 'arrangement' for better collaboration
- We need to manage community expectations re the move to LLS
- We have the mojo, resolve and passion to make it happen
- Keep sharing
- Collaborate on next SMART FARMS grants

## Planning with community - between and across regions

- Better community ownership = a more efficient RALF program
- Face-to-face RALF planning with community is needed
- Professional development needed for ongoing collaborative relationships
- Take into account community and LLS needs
- Address cross-regional consistency
- Identify common elements, synthesise and share

## Promotion tools for the RALF program

- Clear messages about the RALF role
- Tools to share consistent message: Powerpoint pres.; short videos tailored to audience; brochure / flyer
- Developed collaboratively & approved by RALF community
- Rolled out alongside development and implementation of RALF plans.
- Clarity for us, communities and partners

## Healthy links with the Feds

- Need better understanding on how the role will work with things like Ministerials
- LLS needs to maintain healthy strong dialogue with NLP2
- Need diversity in case studies, showing triple bottom line
- Better communicate the strength we have in the team
- Messages need to be communicated via existing pathways
- Lost resources - Just keep moving forward

## TEAM RALF

- Purpose: Foster skills and connections to work well with people; Build connection, trust, shared understanding, learn about each other, build a culture
- We need a Team RALF
- We need to bring new people in and help them - induction & mentoring
- Use existing reporting (Iris) to collate state-wide RALF MERI
- Regular connections: face to face; group or individual teleconference; brains trust
- Clear purpose & focus. It's about people & relationships!

## Personal wellness

- Mechanisms to put boundaries around roles to manage burn out
- Understand people and myself (we are different!)
- Practice mindfulness and living in the present moment
- Be curious, have conversations, take care of yourself 1st
- Incorporate wellness into our programs
- Are you okay?

## What will you take with you?

- Gratitude
- Hopeful
- Thankful
- Teamwork
- Enthused
- Collaboration
- Together
- Curious
- Build upon
- Patchwork
- Opening
- Brave
- Together
- Stronger
- Future
- Action
- Fortunate
- Connected
- Hopeful
- Enlightened

## WHAT'S NEXT?

The last two days have been a great success, a real mixture of reflection and celebration of what has worked, what we have learned and what we need to carry into the future. The workshop has been the closing of the chapter of RLF and the turning the page to RALF - it was never about the right or wrong going forward, but giving you all access to this great collective knowledge. What the RALF program becomes is now up to you all in your regions.

*Chris McCulloch, LLS Landcare Program Manager*



Local Land  
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