

Capacity building

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Group Action Planning Initiative Reinvigorates Landcare Groups

Southern New England Landcare Ltd



Engaging and supporting Landcare groups to implement action plans gaining traction with new memberships, new projects and new grant opportunities.

The issue

Southern New England Landcare had not undertaken a coordinated Group Action Planning (GAP) process since 2023. Although 39 subgroups were registered with the organisation, only three to four were actively engaged prior to the commencement of this initiative.

The loss of momentum during COVID-19, declining volunteer numbers, an ageing volunteer base, volunteer fatigue and historically reduced coordinator time all contributed to reduced engagement across the network.

Groups with ongoing involvement were largely limited to those with strong leadership or advocacy capacity. As a result, some groups stagnated or became inactive, despite still holding funds for activities.

The solution

Funding through the Landcare Enabling Program (LEP) enabled Local Landcare Coordinators to re-engage groups with a structured GAP process.

Each group was given the opportunity to take part in a workshop facilitated by the coordinators, where the outcome would be development of a Group Action Plan tailored to the needs, priorities, and capacity of the individual group.

To date, six facilitated workshop sessions and group action plans have been delivered and developed across the region.

The impact

The GAP process brought renewed energy, focus, and direction to participating groups. There has been an increase in group activity with more frequent events, and stronger engagement, supported by clearly defined goals and practical strategies for the future.

Key outcomes achieved include:

- Increased membership
- More frequent group activities and events
- Development of new logos and refreshed branding
- Increased volunteer participation
- Successful grant submissions.

The increased level of activity has resulted in significantly higher demand for coordinator support, reflecting the renewed momentum and confidence of participating groups.



Key facts

- Structured planning enables clarity and confidence among volunteer-led groups.
- Facilitated, face-to-face engagement is essential for building momentum and participation.
- Many groups benefit from continued support beyond planning, particularly in project delivery and funding applications.
- Group Action Planning is most effective when embedded as an ongoing capacity-building process rather than a one-off exercise.
- Group Action Planning increases membership, activities and events.
- Reinvigorated groups take new initiatives.