Taking Action

Use this section to get guidelines and hints to help you take action in managing your natural resources

What is in this section?

This section contains guidelines and information to help you and your community group take action in managing our natural resources.
It has information about planning and undertaking an environmental project and about applying for funding.
There is also information about how to form a community group and tools to help keep your group running well.

Community involvement in natural resource management

Why get involved?

All of us share natural resources such as soil, water, air, vegetation and fauna. When we have a natural resource issue such as salinity, soil erosion or loss of biodiversity it is important to remind ourselves and others that the causes of these problems are larger than one yard, town or property in size. The solutions therefore also lie at the same scale. This means it works best to **work together** to create real solutions.

How to get involved?

There are many ways to participate in natural resource management. The first way is in your own home and on your own property. This can involve recycling rubbish and composting, creating edible gardens, doing a farm plan protecting areas of remnant vegetation and enhancing these with biodiversity corridors.

Joining a community group allows people to deal with issues at a wider scale, which is important as most issues occur across the wider area. As a community group people can involve other members in their local community. Groups can more easily attract the attention of local and state governments, local businesses and other groups to help deal with natural resource issues.

Taking action

This section provides guidelines and information to help you take action. These guidelines are not fixed recipes but contain tips and tools that you can use in working as an individual or in a group.

Contents

8-1 Plan an environmental project

Why Plan

Deciding to carry out a project to improve your environment is a good way to bring people together and motivates them to take action. An environmental project can be undertaken by either a whole group, a few members of the group or by an individual.

In all cases there are usually some similar steps that you need to follow to get the job done successfully, and the first few of these steps involve thinking and **planning**. Larger projects may require a Management or Catchment plan but smaller projects may only need a simple project plan. Whatever the scale of your project, planning helps to organise your resources.

Steps to plan an environmental project

There are **six steps** involved in planning an environmental project. These will help ensure it stays focused, practical and organized. The order of these steps is a guide only. You may have already completed one or more of them. Usually your action plan and budget need to be done last of all.

Step 1 - Define the natural resources in your area.

Step 2 - Consider your goals and what you want to achieve.

Step 3 - Look for solutions & partners.

Step 4 - Develop an Action Plan.

Step 5 - Budget your project.

Step 6 - Revise the plan if needed.

Step 1- *Define the natural resources in your area.*

Do you know what natural resources you are managing?

It is **essential to know what natural resources you are managing**. This is true for a single property, a Landcare group or a regional catchment group.

Our environment is made up of the climate, soils and geology, the flora and fauna and the water that flows through it. It may also contain important Aboriginal and European cultural heritage. Finally, understanding who lives in the community will also help you get an accurate picture of things.

You can define your area and develop an understanding of it by:

- **Look at existing maps or map the area concerned.**
- **Talking to local experts who can help you get more information.**
- **Have field days and walks to see the area.**
- **Do some research in the local library about the natural resources in your area.**

Drawing up an inventory of your natural resources will help you understand them better. Some of the benefits include:

- **Giving you a clear idea about the scale at which you are working.**
- **Seeing how your area is connected to the wider landscape.**
- **Building your capacity to identify issues and solutions.**
- **More effective planning and solutions. Maps and accurate information can help you make good decisions.**
- **Maps are great tools when doing group planning as everyone can see the area and participate in planning together.**

It is important to check the accuracy of your maps and other information. This can be done by getting technical advice from local natural resource officers and taking a walk in the area and having a look.

For the contact details of people who can help you define your natural resources see the LINKS pages and the Landcare section of this toolkit.

Step 2 - *Consider your goals and what you want to achieve*.

Is the project helping you achieve your broader goals?

It is important to know why you want to do a project. What do you hope to achieve in the long run?

Environmental projects take time and energy so **it is essential to have a clear idea of why you are doing the project.** What are your longer term aims? This applies if you are doing the project on your own or in a group.

For Landcare groups a **vision statement** – the long term vision of what people want the district to look like and be like in the future is important. This helps everyone keep focussed when issues and challenges come up.

For guidelines on developing a vision statement see 8-5 "Tools for running a community/Landcare group"

Have you identified what the issue is and why the project is necessary?

Your project is necessary because it will be addressing a specific issue or in some cases a number of issues. It is important to clarify what the issue is and why the project is necessary. Usually issues arise because people are experiencing problems and **they want to change the situation**.

Some common natural resource issues include

- **Water quality**
- **Soil erosion**
- **Sustainable farming**
- **Native vegetation**
- **Streambank degradation**
- **Weeds**

Salt in the paddock.

A farm manager noticed that the vegetation in a low gully on his property was dying off and bare patches were developing at the site. Loss of pasture and productivity was affecting his grazing business. Talking to a local natural resource officer he identified the issue was dryland salinity. He then decided to develop a project to combat the problem.

Identifying an issue can be done through observing the environment and noticing any problems that you or others might be experiencing. Defining and mapping your natural resources will also help you identify any local issues. Remember to talk with other people in your group and in the wider community. It is important to **get as much information and opinions as possible when identifying issues in your area.**

It is a good idea for community groups to discuss the different issues and agree together upon those that are important for everyone. This will help you decide what needs to be done as a group.

For guidelines on how to decide what the important issues are for your group then see 8-5 "Tools for running a community/Landcare

What is your project's objective? What will be the outcome?

You have decided that the project you have in mind is relevant to your overall goals and there is an important issue that needs addressing. You now need to clearly state what you want the project to achieve. This is the **project objective.** The objective needs to be a clear, specific statement of what you want to achieve.

You also need to define what the desired result will be. This is the **project outcome**. The outcome needs to state clearly what the results of the project will be.

A clear focus

The Wombat River Landcare group had a vision of "working together for a clean healthy landscape and a connected community". They wanted to address the issue of native vegetation in their area that was stressed and dying. The group decided to do a project to help preserve the vegetation.

*Their project objective was "**To plant 2000 native trees and shrubs along Willow Creek**". The project outcome was "**Both banks of Willow Creek will be revegetated with local native species**".*

Step 3 - *Look for solutions & partners.*

Have you involved a range of people?

After you have identified the issue it is time to work out the best way to address it. What are the different options you have to deal with the problem? It is a good idea to **get as many ideas and as much information as possible**. Take time to consider the options and get as broad a range as possible. Encourage lateral thinking and don't be too quick to discard an idea that may not seem feasible at first.

This is the stage when you also need to consult technical experts such as government natural resource officers, Aboriginal contact officers, or other specialists. Don't forget that there is also probably heaps of experience and knowledge in other members of your community. Just ask around!

Now is also the time **to look for possible partners** who can help you do your project. Perhaps local council can provide you with some green mulch to protect your trees or students from the local high school can monitor the stream for you. The more you ask around and involve people the more help you are likely to get.

Do you know what is already being done?

In many cases other people or organizations may already be dealing with your issue or a related one. Spend time listing and **recognising what already exists** to address your issue. How can your project compliment existing efforts? How can they help improve your project?

This is very important. Complimenting what is already on the go is far more efficient than inventing (or re-inventing) the wheel. It also prevents the feeling of the whole world being on one's shoulders.

Other people who are working on your issue will also have a lot in common with you so they are ideal candidates to network and build partnerships with.

Win-Win

A rural Landcare group on the edge of a town was planning some tree corridors to link up biodiversity in their area. After contacting the local council they discovered that the council had a Vegetation Plan and was also planting biodiversity corridors. By forming a partnership with council the group was able to get support and information from council who were keen to get residents help in improving the environment. They were even given some free trees!!

Is your solution appropriate?

There is always more than one way of doing things. So there may be more than one way of dealing with your issue. Also some solutions **address the symptoms** of an issue while **others deal with the cause**. Both solutions may be needed. Protecting a riparian zone may help address the immediate problem of excess sediments in the local creek. Another solution is to change grazing management on nearby properties. This can lead to good groundcover that may stop the cause of the problem: excessive soil erosion from surrounding pasture land.

It is important to evaluate your options, get good advice and see if it will be the best one for your situation? Make sure you chose options that will:

- **Be technically feasible and will work.**
- **Be achievable with your local resources and time.**
- **Not cause more problems elsewhere in your catchment.**
- **Have potential benefits that will outweigh any costs.**

- **Meet any relevant government regulations and not break any environmental & heritage laws.**
- **Deal appropriately with aboriginal and other cultural heritage in the area.**
- **Compliment what has already been done.**

Does your project connect to the bigger picture?

Our natural resources such as water, biodiversity and soils are all linked across the wider landscape. Try choosing solutions **that link to a wider catchment plan** or strategy. This ensures that your project helps address important wider natural resource issues.

If you are an individual then joining with others helps to broaden the impact of your project. This brings **a wider public benefit**, not just to your place but to your whole area. Cooperation can help everyone achieve more than what you can do on your own.

Linking Biodiversity

A local resident living near town was thinking to plant some trees on her block. Talking to the local Landcare group she realised she could link her project into their bigger one – Biodiversity corridors throughout the valley. By linking in with them she not only helped improve her own local biodiversity but she helped enhance biodiversity in the wider area

It is also a good idea to **choose a solution that deals with more than one issue**. Often more than one problem can be addressed by one solution. If you have identified a number of issues in your group then try to find solutions that can help address more than one of them. Careful thinking at this stage may help increase the overall effectiveness of your project in the long run.

Step 4 – *Develop an Action Plan.*

What actions are needed to get the project completed?

Now that you have decided on a solution you need to work out how you are going to do it! This means deciding on a plan of action! This involves deciding **what actions are needed to reach your objective**.

If you are doing a project on your own then discuss what needs to be done with someone who may have experience and can help you. They can help you decide what needs doing.

If you are working in a group then it is important to discuss ideas in the group and agree together upon what actions are needed to get the project done.

For hints on group discussion and decision making then see 8-5 "Tools for running a community/Landcare group"

Changing the grazing management

A couple wanted to change the grazing management on their property to be more sustainable. This meant refencing the property as well as putting in new watering troughs, gates and some shelter belts. There seemed to be a lot to do. They wrote up a list of all the things they thought needed doing. They then realised there might be something they had not thought of so they discussed the project with their neighbour. She had some experience and added a few more, vital things to their list that they would need to complete the project.

Who is going to do the work?

After you know what actions need doing you need to decide **who will do them**. If it is an individual project then maybe you will be doing all the work yourself. Or perhaps you will get a contactor in for part of the job. As a community group you might want to delegate the jobs around the group. This will ensure everyone gets the chance to contribute. Community group members always have a wide range of skills so by sharing the work around you can use these skills and keep people involved.

When will they do it?

You will also need to decide **what order the actions will need to be done in**.

This will give you **a list of actions in the order that they need doing**. Remember some things can be done at the same time. For a tree planting project you can order trees from the nursery while preparing the ground.

Getting it sorted

After the couple worked out what tasks needed doing the neighbour also helped them decide what needed to be done first. They decided that fencing and watering points would be the first steps and they would plant trees later on. They also decided that they would get a contractor to install the watering points but they would do the fencing themselves.

What resources will be needed to do the project?

The people involved are the human resources necessary for your project. Projects also need other resources such as trees, fencing wire, posts, a tractor, tools, a camera, etc.. Listing all the resources that each action will need helps you see what things you have and what things you might need to borrow or buy. Is there a partner or other group in the community who can help you with a resource?

How will you coordinate the project?

As you start doing the project you **need to ensure it goes to plan**. If it doesn't then you need to see why and adjust things accordingly. In an individual project you will probably be coordinating the project yourself. In a community group project everyone needs to communicate with each other to ensure things remain focused. For large scale projects you might need to engage a project coordinator. Some ideas for project coordination are:

- **Have a checklist of the actions and tick them off after they are completed.**
- **Nominate a project coordinator from within your group. They can monitor things, file any paperwork and keep the communication lines between everyone open.**
- **Put project coordination into your action plan and budget for it.**

Have you written the action plan down?

It is not essential to write down your action plan but it is certainly a good idea. It can be as simple as a single sheet of paper hand written or it can be a typed up document with tables. The main thing is it helps you (and your group) see what needs doing, when and by who.

Some things that go into a project action plan might be:

- **The name of the project.**
- **The objective of the project.**
- **The outcomes of the project.**
- **A list of the actions needed.**
- **Who will be doing them and when they will do them.**
- **The resources needed for each action.**
- **A checklist to see the jobs get done.**

A good way to do an action plan is in the form of a table. For groups it is important **to keep your plan simple**. That way it will be used and not take up more time than people have available.

Wombat River Landcare – Project Action Plan

Below is an example of the Landcare group's tree planting project.

Project name: Willow Creek revegetation project
Objective: To plant 2000 native trees and shrubs along Willow Creek.
Outcome: Both banks of Willow Creek will be revegetated with local plants.
Project Coordinator: Rendle Smith

Action	**Who**	**When**	**Resources**	**Completed** ✓
Find out local species for project.	Brian Jones	May 2004	Contact Greening Australia and look in library.	✓
Slash and rip planting areas.	Mike Smith	May 2004	Tractor, ripper and slasher.	✓
Order seedlings.	Brain Jones	May 2004	Place with nursery.	✓
Spray area for weeds.	Mike Smith	Nov 2004	Ute and spray rig, chemical.	
Plant trees and shrubs	Whole group	Nov 2004	Tree planter, morning tea, tractor, trees, mulch, watering unit.	
Photograph new plantings	Margie Crowther	Nov 2004	Camera	
Coordinate project	Rendle Smith	Ongoing	Telephone.	

Step 5 – *Budget your project*.

How much will it cost you?

The final step in planning your project is **to budget your action plan**. How much money will you need to get all the actions completed? You may already have some resources amongst members of your group but there will probably be things that you will need to purchase.

There are different ways to budget your project but one way is to cost each action from your Action Plan. Add the up the totals and this will give you an idea of the total cost for your project. Do you have the money needed?

Wombat River Landcare – Project Budget

Project name: Willow Creek Revegetation project

Action	Resources needed	Costs	Total cost
Find out local species for project.	Contact Greening Australia and look in library.		
Slash and rip planting areas.	Tractor, ripper and slasher.	Slasher hire$150, Tractor 4 x $50/hr Labour 4 x $25/hr	$450
Order seedlings.	Place with nursery.	Seedlings 2000 x $1.5 ea	$3500
Spray area for weeds.	Ute and spray rig, chemical.	Chemical $100 Fuel $70	$170
Plant trees and shrubs	Tree planter, morning tea, tractor, trees, tree guards, mulch, watering unit.	Planter hire $150 Tractor 4 x $50/hr Mulch $500 Guards&Stakes 2000x$0.80	$2450
Photograph new plantings	Camera	80c per copy for file and reports	$20
Coordinate project	Telephone.		$50
		Total Costs	**$6640**

Step 6 – *Revise the plan if needed.*

Do you need to adjust the project plan?

Perhaps the project costs are more than you anticipated. Or new information has come to light regarding your issue that has an impact on your project. Or a key person is suddenly unable to help. These things happen, so don't give up. **Now is the time to review it.**

Where can you make savings on the budget? Maybe you can find further support from your council or a local business. If someone leaves, see who else can help.

Checklist – Planning a project

Step 1 - ***Define the natural resources in your area.***

- ✓ ***Do you know what natural resources you are managing?***

Step 2 - ***Consider your goals and what you want to achieve.***

- ✓ ***Is the project helping you achieve your broader goals?***
- ✓ ***Have you identified what the issue is and why the project is necessary?***
- ✓ ***What is your project's objective? What will be the outcome?***

Step 3 - ***Look for solutions & partners.***

- ✓ ***Have you involved a range of people?***
- ✓ ***Do you know what is already being done?***
- ✓ ***Is your solution appropriate?***
- ✓ ***Does your project connect to the bigger picture?***

Step 4 - ***Develop an Action Plan.***

- ✓ ***What actions are needed to get the project completed?***
- ✓ ***Who is going to do the work?***
- ✓ ***When will they do it?***
- ✓ ***What resources will be needed to do the project?***
- ✓ ***How will you coordinate the project?***
- ✓ ***Have you written the action plan down?***

Step 5 - ***Budget your project.***

- ✓ ***How much will it cost you?***

Step 6 – ***Revise the plan if needed.***

- ✓ ***Do you need to adjust the project plan?***

8-2 Implement an environmental project

Getting on with the job

After planning your project you then need **to implement it**. It is also important to **monitor** your progress and **evaluate** how you are going. This involves keeping track of the project's progress and solving any problems that might arise. What worked and what didn't? This will help you learn so that next time your projects will be more effective.

Finally you might want to tell others about what you did. **Promoting the project** can be a powerful way of raising awareness in the wider community about environmental issues. This can motivate more people to participate in looking after our natural heritage.

Steps to do a project

Step 1 – Coordinating the project.
Step 2 – Monitoring & evaluation.
Step 3 – Promoting the project.

Step 1 – *Coordinating the project.*

Coordinating a project will usually take more time than what you thought. This is because a project usually involves more than one person and more than one organisation. Coordinating information, options, discussions, decisions and signatures between all interested parties will take time. It will also bring lots of enjoyment as the process of informing and involving different people is one of the great things that connects communities to the things that they value and want to improve.

Use different types of communication depending on the complexity of what is being coordinated. Lots of complication – use meetings. Some sorting out – phone calls. Follow up and clarification – emails.

Most projects will progress well through one or two main people being the main ‘coordinators’. These coordinator positions succeed at doing what they do (and also succeed at being something that others will take on for other projects) **if**, they delegate well. Some people feel more or less confident with delegating. Asking others to do things can be awkward especially since almost everyone we know is already busy. Some tips that help include: describe a task well, break big tasks into smaller tasks, give a definite end point or date to the task, give an interesting task to two people not just one (that way they bounce ideas off each other and aren’t working in isolation for the benefit of the group and project).

Step 2 – *Monitoring & evaluation.*

Being able to reflect on a project – where it worked well and lessons learnt - is as valuable as doing the project. Information from monitoring and evaluating the change is the greatest promotion you can give your project. It allows your group communicate not only what the project has done but what difference it has made.

Keep monitoring exercises simple and within the voluntary capacity of your group. If the monitoring process must involve frequent and more complicated measurements with lots of equipment, find some way to fund it or partner with an organisation sharing similar goals that can deliver what is required.

Decide on: What does the project want to influence? What do we need to measure so we know if there is a change? Who is going to be involved in the monitoring? What area is to be covered? How often will the monitoring be carried out? How will it be recorded and shared?

Simple monitoring programs can include:

- Photo points – making sure to record info such as date, stage of the project, place and direction of shot. Take photos of “before” and “afters” from exactly the same point. These are amazing way of telling a big story about your project to a wide audience easily.

- Attendance sheets – for field days or working bees. These are usually a must for insurance purposes anyway. Decide beforehand what information is really useful for your group to collect so you can monitor it and evaluate if there has been any change e.g. maybe your group is hoping to involve more younger people – so asking people to tick a box of a certain age bracket can be the way to collect this data.
- Counting – whatever it is. Certainly it is easy to count things like number of trees planted and numbers survived. Beyond those types of counting exercises, however, do consult some professional advice. There are some real intricacies with seasonality of many living things that require more planning and timing of the monitoring process e.g. doing certain animal counts will give totally different results depending on season and time of day; recording pasture composition will vary on time of year and are only comparable if taken at the same time each year; taking simple soil tests will vary on moisture content and require sufficient sampling for the data to be useful. These are all achievable by a community group but the information is only useful if collected at the times when the data from each measurement can be compared. The best idea is to consult a professional first and you never know – they may join your group.
- Water tests. There are many kits created for community and even school groups to use. Check with your local natural resource organisation to see if they have any programs or kits already available that compliment your project.

Step 3 – *Promoting the project.*

Keeping people informed about the project is important from the perspective of ensuring clarity of what is going on, keeping up positive and appreciation messages for those putting in the hard yards, and creating opportunities for more people and organisations to become involved.

Check all promotional messages with the people and organisations involved first before distributing. Correct spelling and correct use of logos is a certain way to show consideration of others. The most positive promotional messages focus on the efforts of a group rather than an individual, because the success of a whole project is due to everyone involved.

A community group project is fantastic for promotion – no matter what the stage it is up to. You easily have content because you are real people with common concerns, actively doing something about it. Even what you think is an ordinary event or activity is interesting and unusual for many other people.

Promoting your group project can involve any and all types of communication:

- chatting to friends,
- giving a presentation to other groups, schools, council or board meetings,
- putting up posters around your community,
- creating a flier that is sent to everyone in your locality or is placed in the stands at your local council, neighbourhood or visitor information centre,
- writing letters sent in the mail or via email lists
- newsletter articles

- media releases,
- magazine articles,
- radio interviews,
- TV. coverage,
- compiling reports (hard copy or CD) and posting them to departments, other groups, and your local library.
- creating a DVD visual promotion,
- putting information on web sites
- … and whatever else your group has the skills and resources to do.

Even though your group may have a good understanding of what is going on, others will need it to be explained in general terms they can understand.

Media Releases:
A very common form of promotion by a community group are media releases for a newspaper or newsletter. Here are a few tips to help it be accepted and effective:

- A successful article makes and impression, is short and to the point.
- Your article is more likely to be printed if you can keep it to one page.
- Photos and logos help immensely to make it interesting. The best pictures are a bit like your article – they contain only what is important, are clear with strong contrasts.
- A template you can use for designing your media articles:

<table>
<tr><td>Name of newspaper
Attention: Name of contact person
Address of newspaper
Contact numbers</td><td align="right">Name of your group
Main contact person
Group address
All your contact numbers/email</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2" align="center">MEDIA RELEASE

To frame your information succinctly write about:

WHO… WHAT… WHERE… WHEN… WHY… and HOW.

(Include a photo with caption and/or a logo)

-END-</td></tr>
</table>

- Unlike other types of writing, each paragraph in a media release usually contains only one sentence in it.
- Include a name and a contact number in the article so the general public can ask for more information if they wish.
- Put the most important information first because if the article gets cut to fit the newspaper space they will cut the end of the article… so don’t put important times and dates at the end.
- Put “end” at the end of your article so they can be sure that they have not missed a page.

Speaking in Public:
Connecting people to your group project may include taking up opportunities to speak about it in public. Here are a few tips about giving presentations:

- Your message and delivery needs to have impact. This does not necessarily mean loud, punchy and high tech. It may be quiet, slow and low tech. Whatever methods you use, the content must be relevant and memorable to most of the audience most of the time.
- Your audience's response to your presentation relies on: less than 10% of what you say, about 30% by the tone of your voice and about 50% of your non-verbal communication. Therefore it is more important to smile, move and look at all sections of the audience than it is to say anything☺!
- You need new information or a new method of capturing interest every 6 minutes, so have several ways of capturing their interest – be it photos or display items, talking, asking questions, writing ideas down or asking people in the audience to write down ideas, giving a demonstration, …etc.
- Present your information in blocks of 3 'take home' messages at a time. More than three and it can be too much to remember for an audience that is listening to something quite new to them.
- A gentle way to invite the audience to participate is to ask "does anyone have any questions about the topic so far?" rather than, "does anyone have any questions?"
- Have a simple handout or flier to distribute to the audience so people can take home something that summarises the presentation and has a contact name and number on it if they want to pass it on to others or get in touch with your group at a later date.

8-3 Applying for funding

Getting help

Before applying for funding to help you or your community group it is important to remember that **there are no guarantees with funding**. You can have the best project in a high priority area, put in a great funding application and for one reason or another, the funding doesn't come through.

It takes time and energy (often volunteer) to apply for funding so **before** applying for a grant it is a good idea to decide whether you really need it. We sometimes forget that we have a lot of resources within our own community. By doing projects within your own group's resources you help build the local capacity to solve issues. Managing our natural resource issues is a huge task however so inevitably we sometimes need more than local resources to tackle things. This is when you or your group may need to apply for funding.

Many funding and sponsorship opportunities can arrive with incredibly short time frames. Often it is a rush to get all the information and signatures together for the application so it can be sent in on time. Keep in mind that some funding opportunities can also occur during your busiest times.

One way to take advantage of funding opportunities is to have a Project Plan "B" sitting "on the shelf" waiting for when the funding programs are announced. A good idea is the **two plan approach:**

- **Plan A - What you can do within your own individual or group's resources.**
  This provides you with a plan of action to get things done within your own group.

- **Plan B - What your group can do with additional funding or sponsorship.**
  Having a draft outline of this plan ready and sitting "on the shelf" helps incredibly when opportunities do come up. You can quickly take advantage of them. In addition to the Plan it is a good idea to keep copies of other relevant information that might be needed by the funding bodies. These include things like your Constitution, property or district map, Certificate of Incorporation or an insurance certificate.

Steps to apply for funding

Step 1 – Read the guidelines.

Step 2 – Prepare the application.

Step 3 – Check & submit the application.

Step 1 – *Read the guidelines.*

Does your project match the issues of the funding body?

This may be too obvious to be true but it is important to establish whether the grant body you are applying to is **actually interested in investing in your issue**. There is no point spending a lot of effort applying for funding only to discover your type of project was not what the funding body was looking for. It is a good idea to read the guidelines for the grant carefully and make sure your project addresses the priority issues of the funding body.

Ideas to help you ensure your project matches the aims of the funding body are:

- **Do some research on the organization and find out what their aims and goals are. What issues does the organization deal with? What types of projects have they previously funded?**
- **You may like to contact the funding body and discuss with them your project to see if it is the type of project that they are looking for.**
- **Make a list of the main aims and priority issues that the funding grant is trying to achieve. Then prepare a list to show how your project will match these aims.**

A good match

A Landcare group was planning a stream rehabilitation project that involved removing weeds and replanting the streambanks of a local creek with native plants. They were thinking to apply for a government environment grant to help them do the project. Looking at the eligible areas they saw that the fund would support projects that "reversed the long term decline in the extent and quality of Australia's native vegetation". They decided that their project matched this aim and so they put in an application.

Are you eligible to apply?

You have decided that your project is what the funding body is looking for. Now you need to **check your eligibility for the grant**. Do you meet their funding guidelines? Most grants have certain criteria that you or your group needs to meet if you want to apply for funds. These criteria may be a set of eligible activities that the funding body will support. The grant may only be available to certain types of people or organizations.

In some cases eligibility criteria are not compulsory. They are just preferred guidelines that the funding body sees as ideal. **The more of them you can meet however, the better your chance of getting funding**.

Some common eligibility criteria you might need to meet include:

- **Technical feasibility.** The funding body might want verification (via a letter submitted with the application) from technical experts that you are using the right techniques in the right place. Contact these people well in advance to ensure you can get their help within a proper timeframe.
- **Doing an appropriate activity**. Some grant applications will list those types of eligible activities that they will fund and those that they will not.
- **Being the right type of applicant**. Some grants are only available for community groups while others are available for individuals as well. It may be that you need to be an Incorporated or "Not for Profit" organization to be eligible.
- **Having insurance**. You may need to show proof of insurance when applying for a grant. This may especially apply to community groups with volunteers.
- **Having an ABN.** Without an ABN the funding body is obliged to deduct the withholding tax of 48.5% from your payments. If your community group has a turnover of $100 000 or more they will also have to be registered for GST.
- **Getting appropriate permission**. If your project is on a number of people's land then the application may require you to get their permission in writing. This will need to be submitted with the application. Depending upon whose land your project is on permission may be needed from local government, Crown Lands, the RLPB along with any private landholders involved.

- **Checking Aboriginal issues**. Environmental projects may impact on sites of aboriginal heritage. Some organizations require you to check with a local aboriginal contact to confirm your project is appropriate.
- **Involving the wider community**. Many funding bodies prefer to give money to projects that will have a broad community benefit. Make sure you show how your project will benefit the wider community in your application. This is especially important if you are applying as an individual.

Have you listed all the information you need for the application?

Now that you have read the guidelines carefully it is a good idea to **make a list of all the information you will need** to complete the application. You will need information about your project, including its objectives and outcomes, an action plan and usually a map of the project site. You will also probably need legal information such as your ABN and insurance details.

Finally you may require letters of technical support and the signatures and details from all landholders included. Make sure you contact **early** any other people who you need to involve. It often takes time to get all the paperwork together so doing it as early as you can prevents last minute panic.
Funding applications usually have a checklist of all the information you will need to complete the submission successfully. This information may include:

- **Your Project objective and outcomes.**
- **A Project Action Plan.**
- **A budget.**
- **Legal information on the grant applicant.**
- **A site map.**
- **Species lists.**
- **Information on how you will coordinate the Project.**
- **How you will monitor & evaluate the Project.**
- **How you will report the progress of the Project to the funding body.**
- **Support letters and any necessary permission documents.**

Getting ready – The Willow Creek project

The Wombat River Landcare group decided to apply for an environmental funding grant to revegetate Sandy Creek. After reading through the guidelines the group's project officer, Mary Jones, made a list of all the information she needed to get together in order to fill in the application.

The group already had a project plan. The guidelines however said she also needed consent signatures from everyone on whose land the project would be done. Finally she needed to get a local NR facilitator to sign the application as well.

Do you know your reporting requirements for the grant money?

Most grants have a string attached – reporting! They require you **to submit a report to the funding body when it is completed**. This report allows the funding body to check that the money they provided went where it was supposed to: into the project.

It is important to be clear about what the reporting requirements are for your grant. They need time to do and you need to budget that time into your project. If the funding body requires a project report then it is your legal duty to ensure it gets done. You need to know what information the report will need as well as the time by which it has to be submitted.

Step 2 – *Prepare the application.*

Have you gathered all the information?

It is now time to **gather all the information together** using the list you prepared whilst reading the application guidelines. In a group project this will involve ringing around members of your group to get them to organize the necessary information and documents. This is also the time to get the technical help and advice from extension officers. They may need to come out for a site or group visit. In some cases they can do it on the phone.

Have you involved everyone concerned?

In many groups the role of writing an application is delegated to one person. It is still a good idea to **make sure everyone concerned with the application is kept involved.** A short phone call or email keeps the lines of communication open and keeps everyone up to date with the progress of the application.
Good communication helps keep everything on track.

Preparing the application as a group.

The group's project officer, Mary Jones, and five other members of the Wombat River Landcare group decided to get together one evening and write the grant application.

Before the meeting the project officer invited a vegetation expert out to help decide on species and the best way to revegetate the creek. She also invited the local Natural Resource Officer along for the night meeting. Finally she rang around all those people on whose land the project would be done. She confirmed with them the details and sent them the consent form to sign.

At the night meeting Mary had brought along all the necessary documents and information. The group then worked in pairs to do a part of the application. After everyone had finished their section they got together and went over the application. Then it was left with Mary to finalize a few minor details.

Have you written a draft?

Once all the information is at hand you are ready to write the application. **Just get in and have a go!** Grab a pencil, rubber, calculator and all the information that you have gathered. If a few people are doing the application together then why not make a social event of it? Bring some drinks and supper and enjoy it. Discussing ideas and sharing information helps everyone to learn more.

Use your **Project Action Plan** and **Project Budget** to help you fill in the details of the grant application.

Have you revised the application?

Once a first draft is completed it is a good idea to **get some feedback** and help in refining the application. Most Natural Resource officers won't have time to help you write your application from the beginning. Once you've done the first draft, however, give them a call and they may be able to help your group fine tune it. They can also help in interpreting the "funding jargon" that is often found on application forms. Other people to talk to include experienced Landcarers from neighbouring groups or the environment officer at your local council.

Decoding the jargon

Some common terms found in environment application forms and their definitions are:

Issue	**This is the problem you are going to address.** **eg** – Soil erosion in the XYZ area
Aims	**This is what your project is aiming to achieve.** **eg** – The project aims to keep topsoil where it is in the XYZ area.
Objectives	**These are usually "To… by…" statements.** **eg** - "To decrease soil erosion in the XYZ area by increasing ground cover throughout the year"
Outcomes	**This is what will happen as a result of the project.** **eg** – The increased ground cover will keep water and wind away from direct contact with the soil.
Outputs	**These are the measurable outcomes of your project.** **eg** – The project will increase ground cover by 30% and reduce sedimentation of the XYZ creek by 15%. **You may also have a product or service which is an output.** **eg** – a glove-box guide to ground cover. **eg** – the local agronomist may develop a short course from the work developed with your group.

Once you have made improvements to your application and you are happy with it you can now send it in.

Step 3 – *Check & submit the application.*

Have you done a final check?

You have done all the hard work and you think the application is ready to go. Before you send it however **check it one last time!** We all make mistakes so it is good to carefully go over the application one last time. Have you put your name and address on it? Is there someone's signature that you forgot to get?

Often applications will have a checklist to help you. Use it! It will ensure you put in the best application possible and helps give you the best chance of getting the funds you or your group need.

Is it sent yet?

It is critical to **get the application in by the due date**. Always allow enough time for the post. Especially if you are sending your application from a property and have infrequent mail pick ups. It is important when you first read the guidelines that you know **how and by when the application has to be submitted.**

Checklist – Applying for funding

Step 1 – ***Read the guidelines.***

- ✓ ***Does your project match the issues of the funding body?***
- ✓ ***Are you eligible to apply?***
- ✓ ***Have you listed all the information you need for the application?***
- ✓ ***Do you know your reporting requirements for the grant money?***

Step 2 – ***Prepare the application.***

- ✓ ***Have you gathered all the information?***
- ✓ ***Have you involved everyone concerned?***
- ✓ ***Have you written a draft?***
- ✓ ***Have you revised the application?***

Step 3 – ***Check & submit the application.***

- ✓ ***Have you done a final check?***
- ✓ ***Is it sent yet?***

8-4 Forming a community/Landcare group

Getting together

Many landcare groups form either because one person or a few people in a district are keen to find out what others are thinking about, or there is a specific issue in the district that needs attention and it is decided to invite other local people to be involved.

Getting together involves finding a location to have an event. A neutral local place is best if you have a local hall, bush fire brigade shed or council meeting room. Some districts don't have these so people rely on rotating around private homes or shearing sheds for the group gatherings. Whatever is chosen – be sure that the venue is covered by some public liability insurance. Even though it sounds onerous it is something that will become automatic with each of your public and group events.

After a place for the gathering has been found, decide if you want to invite a guest speaker for the event. This may be a person who can talk about one or more natural resource issues of the district or a person who can talk from the perspective of another community or Landcare group or project.

Once these have been chosen, the next step is to find a date and time that suits most people in your district, the guest speaker (if you are having one) and the availability of the venue.

After these have been checked and decided upon, the event can be promoted. Choose several methods of promotion: e.g. mail drop fliers, posters in the local stores, media releases, community radio announcements, email, faxes, phone calls and door knocking. The most effective is usually something that is face to face but considering time and people hours the other methods will help spread the message too. The time between promotion and event will depend on your district and the amount of absenteeism. People who live or work away from the road or district for part of a week or month may not catch up with a flier for 1 – 4 weeks. Despite all best efforts though – there will always be someone who wants to come which the date won't suit or someone who is interested that has missed hearing about the group event. There are always more opportunities to be involved and they can give you a better idea of more regular contact methods when they eventually do catch up.

Double, actually triple check, your promotional details. It is amazingly easy to slip up when you've been close to all the decisions. Get someone not so close to the coordination to read it through before the final print or pressing "send" on the email. Include clear information:

- What – an event to meet other interested people in forming a Landcare group in this district. Promote if there is a guest speaker or a display occurring at the event.
- When – time, day, date
- Say if the event includes a catered or BYO supper or meal
- Where – give an address and clear directions on where to find the venue – e.g. not just 26 Clarence Rd – but also give indications of on left or right hand side or opposite something significant or between certain recognisable locations.
- Who can be involved – although this may be obvious to you, others may not think that they can be involved because they don't own enough land or they own too much or they earn off farm income or they are only renting and don't own the house or whatever assumption. Be really clear that it is for anyone, any age, and any interest…
- Contact details – have a contact name and number so people can ask more questions, give RSVP's, coordinate car pooling etc.

- State if a RSVP's is necessary or not. Some people need to know there is someone to RSVP to and other times it can work against an event. If people miss the RSVP they can feel that they can't come even if they are interested. One way around it is to request a RSVP that is really close to the event (such as the night before) or say that there is no RSVP but to bring a plate to share and tea and coffee will be provided.

<u>Steps to forming a group</u>:
Shared Interests:
Begin by finding out what it is that people are interested in. Basically if it doesn't light their fire they won't stay involved. Ways to find this out can include:

- Distributing a survey in the mail or email.
- Asking people on the phone or face to face what they are interested in and recording this.
- At meetings distribute pens and paper to everyone. Invite people to draw or write down "5 points that interest them most about caring for their local environment". Ask people to prioritize their list. Go around the room and ask people to read out their top 3 points. Record ideas on a large sheet of paper that everyone can see. Where there are repeats of topics mentioned, just add a star instead of rewriting. At the end of hearing every persons list the items on the main sheet with the most stars against them will be the main projects that will attract the most number of people to be involved in the landcare group.

Rolls:
Decide on what rolls the group wants. The typical President/Chairperson, Treasurer, Secretary, Project Officer rolls can be a part of your group but don't have to be. Even if the group wants to Incorporate and get insurance they only need a "main contact person" (or Public Officer as the Office of Fair Trading calls it). Choose and name rolls that suit your group. This may include a President, Treasurer, Communications or Promotions Officer. Other rolls such as secretary can be filled by rotating the minute taking and suggesting that if people want to write letters they do it themselves and run it by the group before sending it with the President as the main contact. Project Officers can be attached to specific projects when they happen. Some groups may have a Schools Contact Officer or anything else that works for their district and their projects.

At the first meeting often the person with the most experience steps into the roll that suits them most. Everything is new so most people want things to run smoothly and with some degree of competence. Be aware right from the start that roll changeovers will be a part of some if not all the rolls a group has. Before the roll changeovers occur set up a buddy system or coaching roll so that the second people (who follow the ones with the most experience) are not set up to feel unable to perform as well.

Regularity:
How often a group meets is entirely up to the group except if the group is incorporated (where the annual requirement is a minimum of 3 meetings, including an Annual General Meeting). Some groups find that monthly meetings during their less busy times work well for momentum and also allows people to have a break

from the group during harvest or shearing or the summer holiday season. Certain projects may require some members of the group to meet more often. This works well so long as there is clear communication with the whole group at regular meetings. There are many options for the timing of a meeting. Breakfast meetings work well for many where they can catch up over a simple and enjoyable meal, have a meeting and or a field walk and get on with their day. Flexi-time allows many workers to handle breakfast meetings and still be at work by mid morning. Night or weekend meetings may suit for certain times of the year and not others – depending on seasonality of sport etc. On occasions groups have found that a phone conference is the quickest and easiest way for everyone to catch up – particularly if some members work away from the district but still want to be involved in the discussions. Despite all these options – there is a paradise in predictability if the landcare group has a regular time and place of meeting. Whatever the group chooses – it will work best for your group because your people make the decision.

Registering:
There is a method of registering your landcare group with a list of other landcare groups. Community Landcare Information On-line has a web site with a support contact for this www.clio.dnr.nsw.gov.au
Some shires or neighbourhood information centres keep lists of local community groups and their contacts. These are good places to link with because they often have opportunities for community groups that they can forward to your group – e.g. putting on information events on “applying for grants” etc.

Incorporation:
Incorporation is a step that many community groups take. The Office of Fair Trading www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au is the government organisation that you deal with for Incorporation.

The reason that groups decide to incorporate relates usually to their type of operation. If what your group does means that you are developing partnerships, delivering a service, seeking funding or sponsorship, buying or selling equipment or property, then there is a need to make the group an entity that stands alone from the individual members.

Incorporation also provides a certain amount of limited liability for members. This means that if the organisation was to be sued, then the members individually cannot be sued – just the resources of the group. (If, however, a member has been shown to not demonstrate ‘duty of care’, and property or people are injured, then Incorporation does not protect that individual from being sued.)

Groups of 5 or more members are eligible to incorporate. The Office of Fair Trading staff can take you through the process. Incorporated Associations must set rules that guide their operation. The Office of Fair Trading has developed “model rules” which many groups adopt, or groups can draft their own rules (which much comply with Section 11 of the Associations Incorporation Act 1984 and comply with the 17 items in Schedule 1 of the Act).

Insurance:

Insurance is a part of risk management. Risk management begins with a thinking process. Although it is problem-focused, it has many positive benefits. As most of the people you are dealing with are volunteering their time and resources, everyone owes it to each other to protect people and their property from preventable damage or injury.

The thinking process for risk management involves, asking: What could go wrong? What can we do to prevent it? What can we do if it happens?

Regardless of whether your group has insurance or not, individuals and the group must show duty of care for others and property. Even if the group has insurance and something goes wrong where it was conceivable you/the group had the knowledge and skills to prevent it, you or the group may be sued – insurance or no insurance, incorporation or no incorporation. So how do you show duty of care? One way is to develop your own “Hazard Risk Assessment Form”. An example may look like:

EVENT:	Landcare Working bee	PLACE:	XYZ hall and neighbouring bushland
ASSESSOR:	Kylie Clark	DATE:	3/5
RISK	RATING	ACTIONS	DONE
Tripping over cord	High because near door	Tape down cord	Yes
Falling down wobbly step	High for very young and very old	Have someone able to help others at the step when people come to and leave the meeting room	Organised
Injury from chainsaw	Low because only those with certificates and wearing protective clothing are allowed to use chainsaws at the working bee	Project officer to confirm certificates are current before the working bee and supervise task at working bee	Mark is checking certificates week of 4/5 and is confirmed to attend working bee on 26/5.

Aim to reduce the amount of negative perception of members toward this approach. Initially it can be awkward for some members to accept, but it can also be a part of the whole package of how your group likes to promote itself with an organised and professional image. A group that sets and maintains standards of operation can more easily promote itself and attract committed members.

8-5 Tools for running a community/Landcare group

<u>Developing a vision for your group</u>:
Vision statements are really useful so that everyone in your group can briefly explain in a reasonably similar way, what your group does and values.

Vision statements are great to put on all your project signs, letterheads and any group products (shirts, caps, etc) and media releases, just to name a few examples.

Keeping the vision statement prominent helps the group remind itself of what it is all about. When things are going well – people can point to it and say "see we are doing that" and when problems occur the group can use it to remind themselves of the bigger picture of where they are heading (rather than getting totally absorbed in discussing the problem).

Create the vision statement through input from the whole group. Ask everyone to answer the question, "In 10-20 years time what will your community/landscape look like with the help of this group's efforts?" Share these with each other and rewrite a statement that reflects the common vision.

If it is brief, you can use it like a slogan, almost anywhere. If it is longer with many points, put copies of it on the front of every folder that the group uses so it is still always in VISION.

A template which can help construct your groups vision statement:

…………………………Landcare Group.
A local community group that is
working with……..
caring for…………..
aiming to create………….
working to achieve…………….

We share the values of …………………..

Group discussions and decision making:
This is probably one of the most important aspects of a group, regardless of how important the cause is. If existing or potential new members can see that the group doesn't make discussions and decisions effectively then they will not continue to be involved and will find another way to address their interests.

It is common that the people who are willing to jump through the hoops of coordinating, administering and participating in a community group are often very passionate. Strong opinions will appear, just as there will be those who want participate quietly. Operating a group so that regularly everyone feels considered and involved, will require some facilitation skills either within the group or bringing in an independent person for the more significant discussions.

Some methods of collecting ideas from members were mentioned in the section about "Steps to forming a Landcare Group" in this chapter. All of those methods involve asking each individual what their thoughts are and then collating these ideas. Not every idea can always be acted upon but when people can see that their idea has been considered they are more likely to be content that the most common idea is the one the group acts on. It certainly works better than people not knowing if their idea has been heard or if the activities happening are just the view of the loudest person in the group.

One method that helps with group discussions and decisions is where the options for what is to happen are drawn on a big sheet of paper or a table top or even the floor. People are asked to put a marker of where they ‘sit’ along the line between all the options. This allows people to not necessarily have a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answer – but instead demonstrate a preference. Once everyone has placed their marker on the line between the options – visually there is a picture of where the group ‘sits’. This activity can be used to make the decision quickly or to develop discussions – where individuals are asked to explain why they put their marker where they did. Once everyone has heard the range of views there is the opportunity for each individual to change where their marker is. Then there is the more final picture of where the group ‘sits’ and a decision can be made, not by ‘who was the last or loudest person to speak’, but rather where most of the members of the group think would be the best idea.

This style of participatory decision making can be a bit unusual for many members. Introduce it with less stressful decisions first – letting people see how effective it can be - before expecting every member to join in for the more significant group decisions.

Group Maintenance:

Keeping on Track

There are many ways of keeping on track that help the group function with it’s many activities:

- Time keeping and referring to an Agenda at meetings,
- Using a calendar and work plan for projects
- Recording income and expenditure
- Monitoring results of a project to see if it is achieving what it set out to achieve
- Discussions and decision making for activities that address the group’s vision and values.

Many of these tools are easy to use and don’t cause stress to the group. All of these systems need feedback – is it on track or off track. Sometimes, even when the feedback was designed to be constructive, it can rattle an individual or group. Avoiding giving feedback, just in case people may feel hurt, will also drive the group into some dysfunctional patterns too. Keeping the groups feelings on track is just as important as all of these other items.

The voluntary nature of what we do in Landcare group’s means that people will only continue to be involved if they feel valued and enjoy it. Feedback works well when it is given in a format where the listener still feels respected:

- Feedback must be constructive at all times
- Focus on the issue not the person. Footballers call it “play the ball, not the man” e.g. the trees died because of a mishap in the work plan, so next time what can be done differently?
- Avoid using the word “you”.

- Ask rather than tell: “What worked well?” “What could be changed if it was done again?”
- Give recognition and thanks to any achievement – no matter how small

<u>Maintaining and attracting new Members</u>
Remember back to a group you were thinking of joining. Did the reaction of current members make a difference to how you felt about networking with them? The most effective way to maintain and attract new members is for the current members to feel and demonstrate that they are a part of a happy and effective group.

Small amounts of effort can make a big difference:
- Providing detailed maps
- Make quick follow up calls after events to clarify things or just to say “thanks again”
- Check that times and locations are still suiting those involved
- Program social times into an event so people can introduce themselves informally
- Give small rolls to everyone
- Allow everyone to participate, even briefly at each event.
- Have name tags (written on gum leaves if people don’t like sticky labels).

When the group is aiming to widen it’s network, it works best to approach other people or groups from the perspective of how the issue interests them.

Create a list of what your group wants to do and next to it a list of what other groups are interested in. Join the two columns with arrows **from** the ‘other groups’ list **to** your group’s list e.g.:

Our group wants to do:		**Other groups and their interests:**
Clean up and revegetate the creek park in town		New apprentice at council needs promotional experience
Measure water quality		Cricket Club – clean park
Create a new promotional pamphlet		School science club – wants new projects close to school

A conversation may go something like: “We can see that having the park litter free is important to your cricket teams. Our Landcare group is planning to include cleaning up this section of the creek in our group projects this year. Is it something that we can both consider doing together for one or two working bees during the spring?”

<u>Chairing a Meeting and Meeting Procedure</u>
Meeting procedure is a framework to help run a meeting. It ensures that the important things are dealt with regularly and the group doesn’t need to call for a special meetings because things were forgotten.

A framework for an agenda may include:

1. Open the meeting. The President declares the meeting open at … time and welcomes members, guests and receives apologies.
2. Check and approve minutes of the previous meeting
3. Deal with Business Arising from the previous meeting
4. Correspondence – received and sent
5. Reports: Treasurer's; and any other position or subcommittee in the group
6. General Business for this meeting
7. Events and Dates coming up
8. Date and time of next meeting
9. President declares the meeting closed at … time and thanks everyone for their contribution to the meeting.

Check:

- When people have gathered for the meeting the president checks that there is a quorum before declaring the meeting open. A quorum is the minimum number of members required by your rules of constitution. Why a quorum? Decisions that require a good spectrum of the group shouldn't be made if there isn't a quorum. If there aren't important decisions to make – don't have a meeting – have a working bee or some other fun event.
- When approving the minutes of the previous meeting, check that the people who move and second the motion have been present at the previous meeting.
- The President or Chairperson's role is important to not let any part of the meeting run overtime so other parts don't get their fair share of time. To achieve this keep in mind that the roll of the President is not to decide if something gets discussed but when. If required the President can delegate and issue to a subcommittee or put it on the agenda of the next meeting.

Motions:

- "Motions" are proposals made during a meeting that clarify decision making on important issues or records.
- "Motions" now don't require "seconders" before they can be passed, although many groups still feel that it is a good idea. A "Seconder" is a second person that agrees that the motion should be put forward to the group.
- The President then asks people to vote for or against the motion, either by voices of a showing of hands. The President then announces if the motion is carried or defeated.
- If and when a motion has been passed, it becomes a resolution. A "mover" may withdraw a motion if the "seconder" agrees and the meeting consents.
- The best idea is to consult an up-to-date book on meeting procedure if you have any queries about motions.

Executive Roll Changeovers

Sometimes one of the more stressful parts of being an executive is when it is time for you to resign and hand the responsibility on. Waiting till the AGM to announce you are vacating the position is disrespectful to the position and the people we hope may consider taking on a roll.

Take some action before the AGM will help the process of roll changeovers. One idea is to clarify: 1) What each position does, 2) What skills were used in each roll, 3) What time it took, 4) What rewards were enjoyed from having the roll.

POSITION	President	Secretary	Treasurer	Public Officer	Project Officer
① What you do					
② Skills used					
③ Time involved					
④ Rewards					

This works well because it demystifies what each roll actually involves – since there are variations in each community group. It treats the issue of roll change over with the respect it deserves – allowing people time to consider taking on a position. If there are not enough rewards for being in the roll then the group can do something about that – either through gifting vouchers to those in the rolls or having working bees at the executives farm or house.

Celebrate

Most people are involved in your group because of their ethics and what they value about their community and district. Keeping people motivated to stay involved requires looking after their good feelings about being involved. Most group discussions have to be about how to overcome problems and blockages. What is important is to spend just as much time focused on the good things.

Sometimes it is hard to spend 50% of the group's time on the good things. The good things work, they are uncomplicated – so it stands to reason that they don't require as much time. One way to spend more time on the good things is to create celebrations around them. These celebrations can take whatever form suits the group and/or the individual. Celebrations show people that they are valued. When thanking an individual in the group – choose a celebration that suits them. When celebrating with the group – choose something that involves everyone.

Tools for celebrations: smiles, laughter, speeches, gifts, certificates, cards, badges, vouchers, music, flags, balloons, flowers, food, drinks, …

Celebrations that can happen frequently: morning teas/ suppers, thank you speeches, presentations, cards of appreciation, …

Celebrations that take more organising: Shire Council Events, State Awards, Dinners, Media Coverage, …