

# Global Resilience Through Local Self-Reliance - The Landcare Model

**A Summary of the Discussion of International Conference of Landcare Studies 2017**



Synthesised by Michael T. Seigel and Kazuki Kagohashi  
with input and editorial support from Allan Dale, Jen Quealy,  
Andrea Mason, Rob Youl and other conference participants



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**Nanzan University Institute for Social Ethics  
Australian Landcare International**



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This report is published and distributed by:

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Cover design by Takuya Murakami ('s lounge)

Layout and book design by Kazuki Kagohashi (Nanzan University Institute for Social Ethics)

Photos by Malachy Tarpey (Australian Landcare International) except the photos on page 2 and 22, which are by Julia Strang

Printed by Well On Inc.

ISBN 978-4-908681-37-0 (PDF)

ISBN 978-4-908681-36-3 (print)

The 1st International Landcare Conference was carried out with support from the Australia-Japan Foundation, the World Business Council for Sustainable Development and the Global Agribusiness Alliance.



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## Foreword

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November 5-8, 2017, a conference was held in Nagoya, Japan, focusing on Landcare studies. The conference was hosted by Nanzan University Institute for Social Ethics (NUISE) and organised jointly by Australian Landcare International (ALI) and NUISE. For the most part, NUISE was responsible for preparing the venue, the management of the conference, and the difficult task of ensuring participants received visas in timely manner. ALI selected and approached most of the speakers, and generally managed return travel from Australia. The two organising bodies jointly set the theme, focus and orientation of the conference. While some funding for the conference came from Nanzan University, ALI raised a substantial portion from the Australia-Japan Foundation and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development and the Global Agribusiness Alliance.

The organising committee consisted of Rob Youl, Andrea Mason and Jen Quealy from ALI, Allan Dale from James Cook University, and Michael Seigel and Kazuki Kagohashi from NUISE. This group met in Nagoya in November 2016 to begin direct preparation for the conference. The conference was, however, the outcome of a long association of ALI and NUISE. NUISE has made Landcare one of the focuses of its research, and, since 2011, ALI has wholeheartedly cooperated with this, helping particularly with organizing both short and longer term visits by Japanese to Australia to observe Landcare.

NUISE has for some time felt the need for a more organised approach to academic research and associated community discussion on Landcare. Much of course has already been done on this, but much of the current research relates to methodologies for the management of the natural environment or the effectiveness of Landcare methods in dealing with environmental problems. NUISE however, with its focus on social ethics, is interested in the philosophy and ethic of Landcare and how the experience of Landcare can help to shed light on approaches not only to management of the natural environment but on numerous social issues. It seeks, therefore, to highlight the basic thinking and principles of Landcare, to see how these work out in practice, and to see what can be learned from them that will be of interest to and helpful to others.

For this purpose, the idea originally broached, in 2015, was to initiate a journal of Landcare studies making Landcare knowledge available to practitioners, academics, governments, and beyond. After consultation with relevant persons, the decision was made to begin by organising an international conference of Landcare studies.

The conference is therefore seen as the beginning of a process. As well as the present booklet, which aims to bring the basic thinking of the conference to the general public, particularly to those interested in agriculture, environment, social issues or governance issues, the proceedings of the conference will also be published. Following this, means will also be explored of furthering this process of reflection and articulation.

Pre- and post-conference tours were organised for interested participants. The pre-conference tour to the Shinshiro region of Aichi Prefecture looked at the current rural situation in Japan. The post-conference tour to Fukushima saw the condition of the area affected by the 2011 earthquake/tsunami/nuclear accident and the activities for recovery. These tours were organised by the Secretariat to Promote the Establishment of Landcare in Japan (SPELJ).

### **Operation of the conference**

The conference was attended by Landcare practitioners, service providers, policy makers and academics from eleven countries. It began with a welcome event on Sunday November 5, 2017. The opening date was selected to coincide with World Tsunami Day as a tribute to the enormous community work still underway in the wake of the tsunami that devastated the east coast of Japan in March 2011.

The conference was made up of six sessions over three days, with each session occupying a morning or afternoon and consisting of a keynote address, four supporting addresses and a panel discussion. The six sessions were:

- (1) The critical role of local self-reliance in achieving global sustainability
- (2) What makes local self-reliance deliver on sustainability?
- (3) Innovation and risk taking through Landcare approaches
- (4) Landcare as transformation agent in crises (including disasters, emergencies)
- (5) Practice models and pragmatics of Landcare (fund-raising, schools projects, international aspects, communications, administration, insurance, governance), and
- (6) Systemic change

As well as these thematic sessions, evening discussions focused on country-based round-ups and further thoughts and support needed to continue the momentum in new Landcare nations, including individual countries that are more recently exploring Landcare opportunities and are keen to further develop Landcare as a movement to build self-reliance. Such presentations were given on Landcare in the Philippines, Uganda, Indonesia, Cambodia, South Africa and Ghana.



At the end of the conference, a broad wrap-up session was held to integrate the key messages and actions emerging from the process.

### **About this report**

A group of rapporteurs kept track of the discussion at each session and presented a summary at the beginning of the next session to capture important ideas and build on the discussion of each previous session. From the reports of the rapporteurs, Allan Dale drew up a report on the proceedings of the conference. From this, with a review of the recordings of the discussions, Michael Seigel and Kazuki Kagohashi drew up a draft summary of the discussion. This draft was sent out to conference participants for comments and the paper has been revised in light of these comments. As a result, this present report is a synthesis of the discussion at the conference that focuses on highlighting the principles, the philosophy and the ethic of Landcare in a way that will make it accessible beyond the current academics and practitioners involved in Landcare.

While every effort has been made to reflect accurately the overall content and tone of the discussion, no consensus process has been undertaken and the ideas and views expressed in this paper do not necessarily reflect the thinking of all the participants or of any individual participant.

The outcomes, perspectives and reflections of the conference presented in this report will be presented in more detail in the proceedings, the publication of which will use a collaborative approach where academic authors will be paired with practitioners to keep the language accessible and ensure that the perspectives and on-ground experience of the practitioners will be reflected.

### **A note on the authorship of this report**

A list of the participants in the conference is given on page x. In a sense, all participants have a role in the authorship of this report, in that the report is built on the discussion of what was a highly enthusiastic and participatory conference. Where the report uses phrases or sentences that are direct quotes from participants, the participant to whom the quotation is to be attributed has been indicated by placing the participant's initials in parentheses after the quotation. Where a particular idea comes from one particular individual although it is not a direct quotation, the participant's initials are placed in parentheses without quotation marks. For clarity, these initials will be included also in the list of participants on page x. It must be noted, however, this method of attribution understates the contribution of each participant, since, in many cases, no attribution is made either because similar contributions have been

made by a number of people or because the contributions participants have made have been integrated into the text in a way too complex to make specific attributions possible. The whole report is essentially made up of contributions from the participants.

One section, the portion under the heading “Landcare achievements and scope internationally” was added for background and was drawn up by Malachy Tarpey (ALI) with some additions provided by other participants.

Responsibility for the final text rests with the synthesisers, Michael T. Seigel and Kazuki Kagohashi, with thanks to the ICLS Organising Team for editorial assistance.

### Sponsors of the conference

The conference was carried out with support from the Australia-Japan Foundation, the World Business Council for Sustainable Development and the Global Agribusiness Alliance.

A range of Japanese community, agency and NGO people also assisted by giving their time and expertise to conference participants through pre- and post-conference field tours, which superbly rounded-out the Japanese Landcare and related experience for sharing with global participants.



## **Table 1: Organising institutions**

### **Australian Landcare International (ALI)**

Australian Landcare International is a non-profit organisation that aims to facilitate and support overseas communities adopting a Landcare approach to manage and sustain their land, water and biodiversity. It does this by:

- Promoting Landcare to national and international organisations as a sustainable way to manage natural resources
- Encouraging a Landcare approach within local communities in various countries, including via small monetary grants
- Training overseas participants in Landcare in Australia and in home countries, and
- Making connections between people and projects in Australia and overseas.

ALI began in 2008. Many of its members have been involved in Landcare in Australia at policy, program and operational levels for over 30 years. Some have international experience in agricultural, forestry and environmental management. ALI can draw upon a wide range of expertise through its specific database of members and its wider network. Moreover, it has good relationships with various corporate, industry, community and government organisations.

### **Nanzan University Institute for Social Ethics (NUISE)**

Founded in 1980, the Institute for Social Ethics seeks to analyze social problems from a standpoint consistent with Christian principles, and bring about a greater awareness of human ethical values in the social sciences and in the approach to social problems in general. The Institute takes a comprehensive and interdisciplinary approach and seeks to take full account of the realities of contemporary society. It therefore develops links with on-ground activities aimed at social and environmental well-being, both to see how ethical principles work out in practice, and also to elicit insights and principles from these activities to ensure that what is gained from experience at the ground level is reflected in discourse at the academic and policy making levels.

### **Secretariat to Promote the Establishment of Landcare in Japan (SPELJ)**

Founded in 2012, SPELJ aims to make known the principles and philosophy of Landcare in Japan, to create links with and promote networking and partnership among community-based activities in Japan that aim at maintaining traditional practices in agriculture and the management of the natural environment (such as *Satoyama*) and/or at revitalising rural areas and dealing with current and emerging environmental problems. SPELJ was not a direct part of the conference, but organised the pre-conference and post-conference tours.

**Table 2: Conference participants**

Akiko Tsuzuki	Malachy Tarpey
Alice Cummins	Mary Johnson
Allan Dale (AD)	Masahiro Kurauchi
Andrea Mason (AM)	Megan Rowlatt (MR)
Andrés Arnalds (AA)	Michael Seigel
Andrew Campbell (AC)	Miranda Gardner
Anne Kibet	Misato Imase
Ashley Bland (AB)	Miyako Takamura
Beatrice Dossah (BD)	Mubarak Yaqub
Brian Slater	Narumi Ishihara
Chikashi Kubo	Neil Davidson (ND)
Clinton Muller (CM)	Nick Edgar (NE)
Darryl Ebenezer	Nobutsugu Kanzaki
Don Bruce	Paul Martin
Evy Carusos	Pip Job (PJ)
Francis Smit	Reiko Yamada
Francis Steyn (FSt)	Rob Youl (RY)
Geoff Elliot	Ross Colliver (RC)
Graham Marshall (GM)	Shakeel Ahmad Ranjha
Henry S. Binahon	Sonia Williams (SW)
Hideo Horasawa	Steve Mere
Him Saroeurn	Stewart Lockie
Jen Quealy (JQ)	Sue Marriott
John Muir	Takumichi Kojo
Jónína Sigríður Þorlákssdóttir	Taro Okuda
Joseph Runzo-Inada	Terry Hubbard
Joy Margaret B. Tukahirwa	Tina Lathouras
Karin Moriyama	Tokihiko Fujimoto (TF)
Kaye Rodden (KR)	Tomomi Maekawa
Kazuki Kagohashi	Toshiyuki Yamazoe
Liddy Nevile	Victoria Mack
Lisa Robins (LR)	Yvonne Everett (YE)

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# Introduction

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## Background and purpose of the conference

While there have been numerous international Landcare conferences, mostly in Australia, this conference was unique in that it aimed specifically at bringing together both academics and practitioners of Landcare for the purpose of, if not actually defining Landcare, at least distilling a fairly concise description of Landcare with the hope that, as time passes and differing approaches emerge, Landcare will lose neither its holistic and integrative approach nor its breadth, flexibility, and adaptability to local circumstances. It is important to ensure that these aspects of Landcare are identified and clarified so that they are not lost as time brings changes in circumstances and the roles that Landcare can play, and most importantly as Landcare and its various stakeholders respond to the emerging need for some form of global Landcare alliance.

Conference goals included to further develop the intellectual and academic framework for Landcare, to achieve an effective shared Landcare model for use by local communities across the world and to articulate a philosophy of Landcare as a mechanism for building local self-reliance. Consequently, the conference did not focus on specific methods or techniques such as agriculture, resource management or care of the environment. Rather, the focus was on the philosophical, social, political and economic dimensions of the Landcare approach. This should enable the term 'Landcare' to be warmly and usefully embraced by local communities anywhere in the world.





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## Chapter 1

### *Landcare: What it is*

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While there have been plenty of descriptions of Landcare and attempts to spell out its basic principles, there has been no actual precise definition nor any authoritative articulation of what Landcare is, leaving a sense of vagueness about the actual meaning of the term and, indeed, about what the movement is. However this vagueness and ambiguity has often been seen as one of the strengths of Landcare, providing breadth, flexibility and adaptability to local circumstances and making it malleable to the thinking and understanding of each local community—consistent with the Landcare emphasis on local self-reliance and autonomy. The vagueness may actually contribute to the unity and harmony of Landcare by avoiding the risk of debates and divisions on ideological issues. The advantages of this lack of definition must be kept in mind as we seek a clearer articulation of Landcare.

However, that very lack of articulation and definition also creates the risk of more narrow interpretations emerging, resulting in the loss precisely of the breadth, fluidity, flexibility and adaptability that has made Landcare what it is. In fact, it is already the case that many associate Landcare with particular activities for managing or restoring the natural environment without being cognizant of its social and communal dimensions. Some articulation is therefore necessary to preserve this breadth, flexibility, fluidity and adaptability and to create a Landcare model that is shareable with new communities and peoples.

Landcare is certainly an approach to managing the environment and sustaining agricultural land. But it is equally a programme oriented towards social and communal well-being. “What sets Landcare apart is its focus on building resilient and sustainable communities that have the capacity to act to repair, enhance and maintain the natural assets in their landscape” (KR). Landcare aims at dealing not merely with the natural environment, but also with the needs of the local community. Fundamentally, Landcare is about farmers, landowners and community members cooperating to ‘care’ for the land whilst engaging in farming, agriculture and environmental conservation and restoration.

Landcare achieves this in part by combining a focus on the autonomy and self-reliance of local communities with networking and partnership that link them with each other and with agencies, experts, corporations and other NGOs, and in part by taking a holistic approach that integrates environmental issues with issues related to community and to social and economic well-being.

**Table 3: Two country case studies of statements of Landcare principles****South Africa**

1. Integrated Sustainable Natural Resource Management addressing primary causes of natural resource decline
2. Community based and led natural resource management within a participatory framework
3. The development of sustainable livelihoods for individuals, groups and communities utilising empowerment strategies
4. Government, community and individual capacity building through targeted training, education, and support mechanisms
5. The development of active and true partnerships between governments, LandCare groups and communities, non-government organisations, and industry
6. The blending together of appropriate upper level policy processes with bottom up feedback mechanisms

**Japan: SPELJ**

1. Landcare is based on local autonomous voluntary groups rooted in the local community and attuned to the local natural environment
2. Landcare groups focus on local issues. They may address global issues such as climate change, but the focus will still be on what can be done locally
3. Landcare groups aim at addressing environmental issues holistically. The focus may be on a specific issue, but the attempt will remain to understand that issue and deal with it in relation to other issues
4. Landcare groups focus not only on the conservation or restoration of the natural environment, but also on the well-being of the local community
5. Landcare is characterised by partnership and networking. This means partnership and networking among the different Landcare groups, with the various levels of governments, with academics and specialists, with business corporations, NGOs, etc.

**Combining autonomy and self-reliance with partnership and networking**

Conference participants recognised Landcare as a movement based on autonomous local groups and, at the same time, a programme of support for and partnership and networking with and among these groups. So, while autonomy and self-reliance constitute one fundamental dimension of Landcare, networking and partnership constitute another equally important dimension. The foundations of Landcare are all about building *local* and *connected* autonomy and self-reliance. It acts as a network that facilitates adequate



partnerships, collaborations, innovations and access to and sharing of resources (knowledge, skills, information, training, goods and funds). Landcare may be comprised of multiple partnerships with various levels of government, with universities, corporations, etc., all of which can bring resources to the table. These networks and the partnerships they make possible are ordered towards reinforcing self-reliance at the local level.

Landcare therefore constitutes “a community-based system of land and water stewardship” (AC) for sustaining agriculture, environmental conservation and community building. It is, at the same time, “a framework for subsidiary governance of natural resources” (AC) in which care for the environment is carried out by those closest to it, with the support of the various levels of government and others including corporations, experts, NGOs, etc. (This presumes willing, prepared and empowered community members and would not justify governments foisting tasks and responsibilities onto those who are not willing, prepared, or empowered. Nevertheless, care for the environment can always be best carried out by those who interact most directly with it. Supporting and sustaining such activities is an effective way for governments to carry out their own role of protecting the environment and sustaining communities.)

In Australia, where Landcare originated, it has developed into a multi-tiered network of Landcare groups with larger networks at district, regional, state and national levels. This provides the possibility of partnerships with various levels of government and with every kind and scale of private enterprise, and creates the possibility of Landcare being a ‘voice’ for the grassroots at all of these levels. The concept of nested connectedness (from global to local scales) was raised by conference participants as being crucial in identifying the needs, barriers and assets of each level of the system.

Landcare is therefore “grounded, collaborative, local, voluntary action to ‘care for the land’ within a context of support, capacity building and knowledge sharing” (JQ), resulting in the co-production of knowledge (citizen science) and improved practice and innovation. In this sense, it is “a form of participatory research and extension, including farmer-to-farmer extension and knowledge dissemination” (AC) that both empowers individual landholders and other Landcarers while strengthening bonding within the community. It is a “model of self-reliance at the community scale, bringing local farm-based knowledge and learning together with science, with innovative (government-community) extension”, and with “the enabling influence of indigenous need and knowledge and young and older knowledge” (JQ). It is, at the same time, a process of developing interactions with all kinds of partners and collaborators.

### **A holistic and integrative approach**

Landcare is an approach to community-based resource management that treats environmental, agricultural, social and community aspects of the local situation in an integral and holistic way. As well as being an approach to environmental management, environmental sustainability, land restoration, etc., it is also a means of community building and an approach to building social capital. In this sense, it is compatible with the concept of a social-ecological system (SES) in which social and ecological elements co-evolve such that the ecological health of the SES depends on its ecological health, and vice versa.

This is achievable precisely because of the emphasis on self-reliance and autonomy. As long as decision-making and responsibility rest with the local community, the social and economic needs of this community are not likely to be ignored. “The best Landcare groups and networks eventually become community enterprises, contributing to livelihoods and building independent resourcing” (RY).

Landcare does not focus only on environmental or agricultural activities, but often includes community activities and socializing, playing an important role as “part of the social fabric of a community” (PJ). “Its ability to be inclusive and provide a sense of connectedness” (PJ) can stimulate both trust and self-reliance.

Because of its holistic, comprehensive and integrative nature, and because of its strong level of trust and respect at a local level, Landcare groups can often be in a position to help with “problem solving of local issues and provide strong leadership in the face of adversity” (PJ). This can make groups a powerful resource in face of a common threat or following a natural disaster or conflict. Landcare’s holistic approach and extensive network can help to “soften red-tape to achieve outputs and outcomes for investors and stakeholders” (PJ). “Landcare drives community resilience and in some cases, helps to build individual and family resilience” (PJ). Landcare therefore has the potential to become the critical social infrastructure underpinning local and bioregional resilience.

### **Landcare’s background and development in Australia**

“The history of Landcare’s formation and expansion in Victoria, throughout Australia and overseas, is well documented” (KR). Landcare began in 1986 “as a grassroots, community-led approach that was strongly grounded, in the first instance, in farmer-to-farmer knowledge exchange and tackling local-level issues” (LR). It commenced as “a willing and respectful partnership between organisations that had a vision of a community led approach to sustainable

private land management, with a supporting government policy framework that smoothed the way and provided foundational resourcing to enable the process” (KR). “It grew and adapted within progressive (but stressed) rural farming communities, growing by an organic process of ‘inviting-in’ and ‘reaching-out’ into other communities and landscapes” (JQ). It evolved into a national movement with Prime Minister Bob Hawke’s declaration of the 1990s as the ‘Decade of Landcare’ and the granting of “a 30-fold increase in Commonwealth funding for community-based Landcare groups” (AC), and with announcement of the first National Landcare Program “at the behest and with the imprimatur of a hitherto unlikely alliance between the National Farmers’ Federation (the ‘brownies’) and the Australian Conservation Foundation (the ‘greenies’)” (JQ).

The Decade of Landcare and the concomitant Australian Government funding were achieved through a bipartisan commitment. Over 6000 voluntary community groups were formed, mostly over the Decade of Landcare (1990-2000), “involving one-third of all farming families” (AC) and in some areas up to two-thirds. It was marked by “cooperative work across farm boundaries, neighbourhood group extension, community based monitoring (WaterWatch, Saltwatch, Frogwatch, etc.), and extensive programs in schools” (AC). The Landcare ‘caring hands’ brand became recognised by 85 percent of urban communities (AC), and even more in rural and regional areas.

“In its early years, Landcare in Australia was seen as a new, potentially more effective form of agricultural extension, influencing the behaviour of farmers towards more sustainable practices by changing social norms, encouraging collective activity across farm boundaries, and providing entry points for social groups who had hitherto not been visibly active in natural resource management, including women, youth, ‘hobby’ or ‘lifestyle’ farmers, conservationists and urban people” (AC).

“Now, more than 30 years on, there is much evidence to substantiate the pivotal role Landcare has played in stimulating and enabling knowledge sharing, learning and on-ground action across Australia in the arena of natural resource management” (LR).

The support for Landcare from government has not always been maintained, and policy and other changes in the overall approaches of governments have sometimes created headwinds for Landcare and Landcare-style activities. From the latter half of the 1990s, there was a move to a regional (rather than local) model, scaling up to the catchment or regional level. Fifty-six regional/catchment bodies were established in Australia. This aimed at a more integrated approach at landscape scale, but sometimes undermined community and self-reliance models of Landcare. A narrower, more business oriented approach has also impacted on the level of support for Landcare (AC).

### Summation of the achievements of Landcare in Australia

Nevertheless, even with “some model imperfections” in the course of its development, “the Landcare approach (with its consistently sound ethic and movement ...) has stood the test of time, and proven itself to be robust” (LR). “Landcare is an example of a long-lasting local self-reliance approach that has been flexible, innovative and dynamic enough to survive for over 30 years and, mostly, thrive in an ever-changing, and occasionally even hostile, policy environment” (LR).

Landcare groups in many areas have achieved substantial improvements in the natural environment and in the sustainability of agriculture. The perspective of the conference was that Landcare has achieved this both because it has been able to bring together different aspects of care for the environment with improving social well-being and community and because it has been able to combine networking and partnership with local autonomy and self-reliance and, through this, to provide effective and pragmatic help for landholders and communities to deal with their degradation issues.

“In Australia, Landcare’s major functions are community action on environmental restoration with a multi-disciplinary approach, sustainability projects especially amongst farmers, advice to all tiers of government, training at many levels covering coordinators and community, on-ground management of numerous public reserves, citizen science such as Waterwatch programs, environmental education for schools and the public, and, increasingly, post-disaster rehabilitation within communities affected by cyclones, floods and wildfire” (RY).

Landcare has been effective in changing social norms (for example, through promoting a changed awareness of the value of planting trees), sharing information, improving skills, marshalling resources, enhancing involvement and building partnerships (young-old, urban-rural, green-brown, hobby farmers-other farmers, scientific experts, government and community, etc.) (AC).

“The ‘Landcare approach’ in its contemporary form is articulated in the ‘Australian Framework for Landcare 2010–2020’<sup>i</sup> as comprising the Landcare ethic (a philosophy, influencing the way people live in the landscape while caring for the land), the Landcare movement founded on stewardship and volunteers (local community action putting the philosophy into practice) and the Landcare model (a range of knowledge generation, sharing and support mechanisms including groups, networks from district to national levels, facilitators and coordinators, government and non-government programs and partnerships)” (LR).

“Landcare’s diversity is one of its greatest strengths. Landcare uses a multi-

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<sup>i</sup> Australian Landcare Council Secretariat, 2010, <http://www.agriculture.gov.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/natural-resources/land-salinity/framework/framework-for-landcare.pdf> (accessed 18 March, 2018)

disciplinary approach to resolve problems. Its grass roots approach, embedded in communities, encourages diverse and creative approaches to issues pertinent to its own communities” (AM).

“Landcare is not an exchangeable word for natural resource management” (SW). It is people focused. It is a social way of handling both socio-economic and environmental sustainability and well-being and a shared process of co-discovery and co-development. In the current global situation, Landcare is “a legitimate and important world model of local and empowered self-reliance” that is continuously adaptive “within a context of climate impacts on agriculture, food security and ecology” (JQ).

### **Landcare achievements and scope internationally**

Landcare commenced independently in Australia and Germany, both at around the same time, then in Iceland, New Zealand, South Africa and the Philippines. The movement spread organically to Europe and Eastern Africa with various groups and associations forming themselves into networks and organisations. The Landcare approach was adopted in small communities throughout Asia and more recently in the Pacific and the Caribbean Islands.

An innovative rural waste management network also operates in countries surrounding the Mediterranean. European and North American Land Stewardship Societies/Networks have similarities with Landcare, differing on the emphasis placed on nature-conservation versus sustainable-agriculture. In Eastern Europe “Environmental Partnership Associations” play a similar role to Landcare but do not have an agriculture or farmer component.

Programs and networks that take a Landcare approach can be found in at least twenty-six countries on five continents and the Pacific Islands. The common attributes found in the goals, values, missions and principles that are practiced by individuals and groups in those countries are testament to the universality of Landcare and the strength of its diversity.

Expressions of interest in Landcare have also been received by the key Landcare support NGOs, Secretariat for International Landcare (SILC) and ALL, from individuals or groups from the following countries: Burundi, Bhutan, Botswana, Cambodia, Cameroon, Colombia, Ethiopia, Ghana, Japan, Korea, Laos, Nepal, Nauru, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Swaziland, and Thailand.

Landcare approaches have been applied to rebuild social capital in post-conflict situations in the Philippines, in post-cyclone contexts in the Pacific, and to improve smallholder access to food value chains in Africa. In the Philippines, through the Landcare approach, conservation farming such as soil and water conservation and agroforestry has been widely adopted by upland farmers. The most recent application is combining efforts on developing agricultural

**Table 4: Regions and countries where a Landcare approach has been introduced (Mar 2018)**

Americas	Europe	Africa	Asia	Oceania
<b>North America</b> Canada USA	<b>Northern Europe</b> Iceland	<b>Southern Africa</b> Namibia South Africa	<b>Southern Asia</b> Indonesia Philippines	<b>AUS &amp; NZ</b> Australia New Zealand
<b>Caribbean</b> Jamaica	<b>Western Europe</b> Germany	<b>Western Africa</b> Malawi Nigeria <b>Middle Africa</b> DR Congo <b>Eastern Africa</b> Kenya Uganda Rwanda Tanzania Zimbabwe	<b>South East Asia</b> Bangladesh India Pakistan Sri Lanka	<b>Melanesia</b> PNG Fiji <b>Polynesia</b> Tonga

livelihood programs and improving the social capital of farmers within the conflict vulnerable areas in the Southern Philippines.

In the USA thousands of grassroots organisations, e.g., community based resource management groups, watershed councils and community forestry groups, are pursuing pathways that parallel Landcare, though only a few explicitly use the term Landcare. These groups seek socio-ecological resilience through place-based environmental, social and economic sustainability and through regional and national networking with like-minded groups, and are championing approaches to adaptive polycentric governance. There is much potential for expanding linkages between these groups and Landcare groups internationally.

In South Africa, the government approach to dealing with land degradation has relied substantially on a Landcare approach.

Landcare in Japan, in its infancy, is being driven by a network of academics, university students and practitioners and is focusing on rural revitalisation drawing on traditional practices.

Importantly, the conference highlighted that Landcare varies nation to nation and that this is both to be expected and encouraged. Landcare should not be prescriptive but rather, a tool (or a brand) to address localised issues and to engender community buy-in. The best solution is one created at a community scale!

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## Chapter 2

### *Rationale, Premises and Principles of Landcare*

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Behind the Landcare movement lie certain perceptions of the environmental and socio-economic situations and related agriculture and food production issues, and the approaches that are likely to be effective in dealing with these situations. Essentially, Landcare is premised on the need for local autonomy and self-reliance, for partnership and networking to support that autonomy and self-reliance, and for a holistic and integrative approach. The key principle has been community ownership of problems and solutions at local levels, with the direct engagement of local individuals in planning and works.

#### **The environmental situation**

In regard to the environmental situation, the world is at a critical juncture. At the conference, Andrew Campbell spoke of “converging insecurities” in the areas of food, water, energy and climate. The word “converging” stressed the interrelated nature of these issues. A critical perspective in addressing global environmental and social challenges requires understanding the high interlinkages of these issues. Socio-economic issues such as poverty reduction and the sustainability of the natural environment are equally critical and are inevitably interrelated. “The interlinked nature of these global challenges is increasingly apparent, particularly in many of the poorer parts of the globe where incidences of rural poverty are aligned to degraded landscapes” (CM). In such contexts, especially where there are historic inequities, seeking broad and equitable participation in programmes like Landcare can lead to a higher diversity of people in the group, which will lead to greater resilience and greatly improved chances of success and positive outcomes for people, place and productivity.

The challenge is “to decouple economic growth from carbon emissions, to adapt to an increasingly difficult climate, to increase both water and energy productivity, and to develop more sustainable and resilient food systems, all at the same time” (AC). To this list of issues to be addressed can be added poverty, conflict and the movement of peoples, which also contribute to the composite problem the world faces. These challenges must be addressed simultaneously, even though their respective solutions are sometimes in conflict with one another. Trying to improve water efficiency while also trying to reduce energy inputs, for example, will be far from easy (AC).

Besides the need for an approach that addresses multiple issues simultaneously and in an integrated way, presenters and participants stressed the need for

programmes and policies that are amenable to practical implementation. The environmental crisis and the crisis in agriculture will require concrete steps that are implementable now. Proposed solutions to these that involve radical changes in world views and social structures, even if they are absolutely convincing, will not lead to real change unless they can point to concrete actions that can be taken now. The goal may be a fundamental change in society, but the starting point must be accessible and identifiable steps. Innovations must be adoptable. It was argued, for example, that farmers will adopt new things “if those things offer substantial relative advantage, if they’re trialable, if they’re not too complex, and if they actually fit with the farmer’s worldview and value system” (AC).

### **Inadequacy of a top-down approach**

Such concrete steps cannot be simply dictated from above, whether that “above” is made up of government authorities, academic experts, or any other group or individual outside the local community. They cannot be solved “by decree” (AC) or by centralised top-down approaches. Such approaches may give the impression of going well as long as substantial resources are being provided, but once the resources are gone there is likely to be very little “adoption, and certainly no diffusion” (AC).

A point that was frequently made in the conference was that, to resolve environmental problems, it is not just a matter of simply identifying problems and solving them. Even when a problem is clearly identified, there is still a need to look at the decision making processes according to which the problem is addressed, to look at whose voices are heard (or are being ignored) in this decision-making process, and determine who are the people in a position to carry out the solution, and determine whether these persons are empowered to do so in terms of knowledge, skills, time and financial support.

In most cases local communities and grass roots groups and individuals, when they are acting on their own initiative and are prepared and empowered, will be in the best position to do something about the problems and challenges the community faces. For example, with regard to the use and management of land (and all aspects of the natural environment), since “the vast majority of land use and management decisions happen at the scale of local sites and small farms, governance at that level is crucial” (AC). “Global sustainability cannot occur without local action” (AC).

There is a need therefore, to ensure that decision-making rests as much as possible at the local level, that the voices of local individuals and communities are heard, and that these people and communities are empowered. When they are not empowered, then ensuring that they become empowered is an essential part of the process of addressing the problem. Such empowerment will result in “well-



distributed social capital, which is essential for improving livelihoods and taking promising innovations to scale” (AC). “No amount of science, no amount of legislation, no amount of subsidy will produce lasting change unless it is owned and adaptively managed by those closest to their environment” (SW). This is essential in a successful Landcare model and especially from a legislative point of view. If legislation is only a top down, bulldozer approach, then it will be forever ineffective.

Solutions for management of land degradation, for example, “require collective approaches through engagement of community at the grassroots and actors within the landscape” (CM). Working in partnership with government bodies and organisations is essential for success, but the farmer, or the person directly in contact with the natural environment, must be “the pivoting role in this partnership” and “an essential leader of the methodology if it is to be successfully implemented” (FSt).

### **Local self-reliance**

The key to addressing the environmental crisis is a more polycentric governance model in which communities are “engaged, informed, empowered” (AC) within a multi-level system not dominated by government nor any other single centre of power. “The solution to the global problem of sustainability is ultimately community-based” (GM). “If we are going to influence environmental outcomes, the key is to influence and build the self-reliance of the people that manage their own environments” (SW).

Local self-reliance is a critical component of any strong national governance system. It is critical in “so many policy domains, ranging from environmental management to health and social welfare, law and order, counter-terrorism and even economic development” (AD). Strong national governance systems need to be deeply polycentric. Delivery failure in national and state-based policies and programs almost always emerges because of a lack of support for building local self-reliance. For this reason, there is a need to build the concept of local self-reliance into the global conversation. There should be stable and long term investment in place-focused governance systems such as Landcare and other self-reliance movements.

“This building of self-reliance—the capacity to acknowledge, assess, manage and continuously adapt to changing circumstances—can only occur when we ensure that those who are affected by the changes required to move us to a more sustainable future are part of the process of learning about the causal factors, and are valued as contributors to the design and implementation of that change” (SW).

“Self-reliance evolves from a confidence in being able to make decisions as a community that are respected, acknowledged and included in government and non-government policies that will have an immediate impact on the

community. Policy settings, at whatever level of government, and subsequent resourcing need to develop a framework that enables this process to occur” (KR).

With regard to local self-reliance, it was noted that in some countries where there has been a tradition of sustainable interaction with nature, traditional community knowledge and technologies are disappearing. The more the local community is empowered and autonomous, and at the same time connected with multiple and diverse resources, the more it will be possible to integrate traditional knowledge and technologies with new ideas and technologies.

In this regard, it was also argued that the introduction of small-scale renewable energy generation can promote local self-reliance. “Renewable energies are essentially local commons” (TF), so, when communities take the initiative to install and manage renewable energy resources, this contributes to community cohesion, as well as to “energy independence and regional sustainability” (TF).

### **Necessity of a voice from the grassroots**

An innovative idea from the conference was the idea of a ‘systems doctor’ involving Landcare. Many national governance systems, and indeed the global governance system, need some sort of “systems doctor” (AD) or advocate to keep pressure on for strongly embedded self-reliance building. If human history has taught us anything, it is that we cannot anticipate sustained governance that is consistently attentive to the needs of people and the environment and responsive to the voices of people, particularly the grassroots. There will always be ups and downs with this. Inevitably, some governments will place little value on local self-reliance. Organising in community may be “marginalised by top-down scientific management” (RC). New governments may or may not understand Landcare. The past thirty years of Landcare has made this clear.

There is the need for a system that can ensure that the voices of the grassroots can be made to be heard at every level of governance in spite of the ebbs and flows in governance. This must be a system that both prescribes the subsidiarity principle and puts in place institutions capable of holding governments to account for their performance in respect to this principle. “In many of our nations, more centralized forms of governance have emerged that tend to eschew the subsidiarity principle, implicitly (and often explicitly) diminishing the importance and profile of local self-reliance. This ongoing trend in governance systems across the world brings significant risk to policy domains that fundamentally rely on the behaviour of individuals, property owners and local communities as the first line of action” (AD). The system envisaged here, then, must be able to function regardless of the preoccupations, preconceptions and predilections of the persons in government at the time.

There was a strong message about the importance of governance innovation

in creating the space for co-design or systemic inquiry to help remove some of the critical barriers to new thinking and actions. In order to create an avenue for the voices, the insights and the learning of local individuals and communities to move beyond the local level, there is a need “to improve the practices and institutional relationships of public governance. Approached as co-design, this is an undertaking premised on equality between practitioners, paid and unpaid, at local, regional and state level, and on social learning between those practitioners” (RC). This “learning between peers can widen beyond tacit and localised knowledge to explicit practice that influences how we organise local action and our governance systems” (RC). A balance of using independent local groups that feed into more formal district, provincial and national Landcare networks could be an option, although these must never undermine the freedom of speech and action of individuals.

With its focus on both local autonomy and self-reliance and on the networking and partnership that will empower that autonomy and self-reliance, Landcare fits nicely within a national governance architecture that is polycentric and supports local self-reliance. Even when the trend is away from polycentric governance, “with collaboration and advocacy”, Landcare can continue to maintain its influence (RC).

Landcare has the capacity to develop multi-tiered networks. Landcare type networks have the potential to make “rural community voices heard, influencing policy decisions by state and federal government” (YE), and thereby making a contribution to polycentric governance. Their growing organisational capacity can enable these networks to carry out “political lobbying, liaison and direct collaboration with all tiers of government” (RY).

This means increasing the innovation in networking and Landcare-government partnerships. “The scale of collective action required for global sustainability is feasible only to the extent that efforts at this level are able to build on the trust, reciprocity and cooperation already established for sustainability at national and successively lower levels” (GM). A bottom-up process of building capacities for global sustainability is essential. This can be achieved through “community-based environmental governance—at least where this governance is understood properly as a nested multi-level system of (private and public) groups and organisations established in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity” (GM).

### **The spiritual and cultural dimensions of Landcare**

The way peoples, nations, communities and groups operate is going to be determined very much by how culturally and spiritually they see their relationship with the land, with the natural environment, and with each other.

People's perceptions of these relationships are extremely important parts of dealing with environmental, social and lifestyle sustainability. They are the sources of the passion and the values that drive people.

The spiritual and cultural dimensions of Landcare are clear across the global movement. Landcare has an ethic and philosophy that is not inter-changeable with more formal and narrowly defined natural resource management approaches, sustainable agriculture and other concepts, even if this ethic and philosophy remain to be fully articulated. At the local level, Landcare is driven by love of the land and mutual responsibility and commitment to learning with peers. Care for the community, the ability to spend enjoyable time with people, and placing value on the interrelationships and cohesion of the group at the same time as one values the different perspectives and contributions of individuals, are as important as care for the land. It was suggested at the conference that one of the things that has made Landcare relatively successful is that it creates the opportunity for fulfilling the ten social desires articulated by the Australian sociologist Hugh Mackay<sup>ii</sup>: the desire to be taken seriously, to have a place, to have something to believe in, to connect, to be useful, to belong, to have more (not just in material things), to have some control, the desire for something to happen (not to be bored) and the desire for love—to love and be loved (JQ).

Landcare integrates care for the land with human, community and social relationships, which also has implications for urban-rural relationships as well. In this context, it can be argued that Landcare calls for a cultural change in the wider society—a change in which the place of agriculture in both society and the economy is reconsidered. In many cases, there is a lack of interest from NGOs and government in on-ground and agricultural issues and sometimes among rural people themselves there is a certain shame felt in working on the land. A sense of dignity in farming needs to be reclaimed and fostered. Agriculture needs to be repositioned as “integral to the food, health, energy and water systems” (AC). Urban populations and children must become “re-engaged with agriculture and food systems” (AC). Real sustainability comes on the back of the relationship between the city, the hinterland and the rural community.

The conference provided further evidence of the role of Landcare as connecting opportunities through the rural-urban synergy. Globally, “cities house more than 50% of people” (AC). Areas in reasonable proximity to urban communities can be fertile ground for urban-rural collaboration. For Landcare, cities can be allies and supporters. The peri-urban areas around the cities globally provide tremendous opportunities to rethink the relationship between agriculture, environment, human habitation and the way we live on this planet generally.

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ii cf. Hugh Mackay, *What Makes us Tick: The Ten Desires that Drive Us*, Hachette Australia, 2010.

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## Chapter 3

### *Landcare: Where to from here?*

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The conference considered where Landcare sits in the wider sustainability jigsaw puzzle, particularly considering the public/private benefit interface it has always straddled. As a driver of local and connected action, Landcare has much to offer in the resolution of emerging global environmental and other social and economic challenges. Landcare contributes to the resolution and progression of key social and livelihood agendas. Landcare values and principles could significantly contribute to grassroots activities for sustainable agriculture, climate adaptation and mitigation, and social and environmental well-being, and could therefore contribute significantly to the achievement of the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). More investment by governments and the corporate sector in building social infrastructure and on-ground action through Landcare and similar community based activities and networks could be an effective way to help achieve intended nationally determined contributions for climate change mitigation and adaptation.

#### **Landcare's contribution to capacity building**

Landcare has the potential to deliver capacity building at local, regional, national and global levels and to support communities as they address their own vulnerabilities. In that sense, Landcare is not merely concerned with capacity building for local groups and individuals. There is a concomitant need for capacity building at the various levels of governance and among the individuals and groups, public and private, that involve themselves in care for land and for community. The focus areas for capacity building include consensus building, conflict resolution and dealing with splits in communities, learning to cope with failure, issues surrounding funding and the need to go beyond 'chasing after money', education for practitioners and local communities, and, for governments, the capacities to understand, promote, support and work with local communities within community-based approaches. Informed communities, aware of common compounding inter-related harms are more likely to be able to build coherence around moving forward together. This can result in autonomously decided and agreed 'projects', yet starts far above that level of thinking (ND).

Capacity building must include developing the capacity to deal with differences and divisions. It must include skills in conflict resolution and consensus building and this applies to all levels of Landcare from the local to

the global, avoiding polarisation between groups. Decision-making should not just focus on results. Satisfaction surrounding the process of decision making (locally and across levels) is crucial.

Landcare has an important real role in brokering appreciative inquiry as a basis for consensus building. This will also help resolve standing psycho-social problems within communities as a basis for reconciliation. Healing is a critical precursor to renewed consensus building. The practice that Landcare has of not focusing merely on issues and activities, but of having a social dimension of barbecues, picnics and field days, and simply having fun together, has been an important part of the movement that has helped to engender trust and keep differences of opinions over specific issues from dominating groups. This can contribute both to overcoming divisions and to healing. It is important that Landcare groups build strong corporate governance practice, but this good practice must always include the fun dimension. This might also mean being a strong integrator and provider of safe discussion spaces in big debates requiring multi-disciplinary responses.

Landcare can also help heal splits in communities on polarised issues—for example, when there are splits in a community over how to deal with population decline. Landcare may be seen as a safe-space for revisiting new technological innovations (from the past—such as fire and hydro—or from the future). It could focus on protecting traditional practices that are now again relevant in the modern world. There is a strong ‘small is beautiful’ and a ‘think global act local’ thematic to Landcare. Combining traditional with modern knowledge is important in technology and also in supporting new ways of thinking. This will be important for future consensus building.

Capacity building also means learning to cope with failure. Landcare should not be overrated. Not all Landcare groups or networks are going to succeed all the time. “Progress has been partial, patchy and slow, and the published evidence base is thin” (AC). It is important to acknowledge failure, but not to be disheartened by it. Failure can simply be a new starting point.

Funding is also an important part of capacity building, but there can be a risk in Landcare as a movement becoming all about chasing funding resources, and this has the potential to distract from the core purposes of the movement. There is also the very real risk that public funding is used to control local communities rather than support their autonomy. In this respect too, the role of Landcare as mediator is important. Landcare should not take responsibility for funding any more than it takes responsibility for the direct actions of the local group. Landcare needs to focus its efforts on the core self-reliance agenda and be careful not to forget the foundations of Landcare: building local and yet connected autonomy.

Landcare can have a key role in education, sharing stories, sharing knowledge and the importance of research at every level (including measuring impact). To achieve this, Landcare needs more and better story-telling practices and more educating of the educators. For this, it also needs to become digitally savvy (aware).

### **Landcare's role in times of crisis**

Landcare also has a role in times of crisis. Given the current global situation, it is logical that the Landcare movement is shifting towards the preparatory foundations for dealing with profound global change. Climate change and other environmental issues will increase natural disasters, conflicts and movements of peoples. Landcare groups have been in the business of prevention of (e.g., responding to toxic development) and response to (e.g., human-induced erosion or pests) humanly-caused disaster ever since their formation. Landcare consolidates opportunities presented in times of conflict and disaster, building local resilience as a key feature in the face of change.

The aftermath of disaster presents a key opportunity to engage more widely. Landcare's role in building social capital is crucial in assisting with longer term mental health recovery in communities, particularly in the post disaster space. The community Landcare model, which includes the knowledge and values held by Landcare networks, makes Landcare an ideal partner of broader communities and agencies, for both the thinking and preparation for, and responses to and recovery from natural disasters and emergencies. Landcare helps build resilience. Landcare was considered, however, to particularly have a role as a mediating voice or broker for the grass roots in crisis response, and can further have a role in ascertaining if the assistance given is effective and in planning for proactive measures to mitigate the risks from recurring.

Preparation, response and recovery will all need to be part of the post-crisis role, but great caution needs to be placed in localizing the context for Landcare to play in this space. There is emerging an opportunity for the Landcare movement

#### **An example from South Africa:**

In one district of the Central Karoo in South Africa, drought has gripped the area since January 2016 and farmers are experiencing severe stress. This has led to two farmers committing suicide. The Landcare group has initiated training for farmers to re-teach them in ways of managing the drought from an animal, plant and financial position as well as training in how to handle the human traumatic effects. This brave step came about as a result of the urgent need expressed by the Landcare group. The first meeting was held in the small town of Prince Albert and a record number of farmers attended. (FSt)

to be proactively positioning groups in this space where it is the right fit for purpose. If local Landcare groups are to play a big role post-disaster, then there are important roles for higher level networks (regional, provincial, national and global) to play. This is one reason why the globalisation of this conversation is important. The scales of Landcare are important here too, since local activities require a broader network and system in order to be able to respond. Some of the activities that have been carried out could not have been carried out if there had not been a national support base.

One dimension of crisis is the trauma engendered. Experiences such as that of Japan with the 2011 earthquake/tsunami/nuclear accident show the need for a focus on trauma and better knowledge of how to deal with it. We have to anticipate increasing trauma and grief as climate change proceeds. Since there is increasing evidence that intergenerational trauma is a real thing, then dealing with trauma is going to be an essential and increasing part of crisis response. Landcare will have a role, and needs to enhance its ability to deal with this.

Landcare hasn't been a formal emergencies partner, except in a few cases, and is sometimes left out of such structures and resources—perhaps in part because it does not have an organisational structure amenable to such inclusion in the way that other organisations do. Research is needed to understand the experience of Landcare in disasters, and that where and when Landcare is involved, recovery can be more successful and sustainable, can build resilience in both landscape and community, and can extend the Landcare model's relevance to the world (JQ and AM).

### **Intergenerational communication**

The concept of paying attention to the role of different age groups in the Landcare movement also received a good deal of attention at the conference. There needs to be a proactive approach to passing on insights, understanding and practices to a more diverse cohort. Landcare needs the more experienced members fostering the younger and more diverse participants (and vice versa). Junior Landcare is essential for developing awareness among young people and will also go far in addressing negative (or complacent) attitudes towards agriculture and the environment. The focus on encouraging Junior Landcare and on succession planning is crucial to the longevity of the local self-reliance agenda. More specific actions need to be created for young/youth Landcare, recognizing that younger generations bring with them many new skills required in the modern world, especially those associated with social media and modern thinking.

Intrepid Landcare can offer leadership development expertise—especially with a youth focus—and connection with Landcare elders (MR).



Another option would be to consider putting resources toward supporting new Junior Landcare in schools, which has been very successful across Australia. The suggestion was also made (BD) that to attract the young, the fun aspect should remain an essential part of Landcare, with partnership between Landcare personnel and appropriate artists as a means to promote this.

### **An academic dimension to Landcare**

From the very beginning of its planning, one of the major goals of the conference was to further develop the academic dimension of Landcare.

One aspect of the academic dimension is to articulate what Landcare is, what its goals and ethics are, and what its philosophy is. How is the purpose in Landcare framed in a way that is congruent with the grassroots but influential with wider stakeholders and with creating change at the global level? This will involve consolidating the thinking and knowledge that Landcare has acquired and developing “more discipline and consistency around terminology to better articulate what Landcare is (and isn’t)” (AC). There are existing activities and research on what is already happening that ‘is’ Landcare. The first task would be to make an effort to make this research more accessible to both academics and practitioners.

This does not necessarily imply some final articulation of Landcare that ends this ongoing and dynamic discussion on the matter. Rather, the articulation of Landcare will be an ongoing process arising from the on-ground experience of Landcare practitioners and in-community learning. “Experiences from community-based approaches in caring for the land indicate a need to build a stronger bridge between the generation of knowledge and action for progress. Such a paradigm shift has the potential to generate knowledge across unprecedented scales and at lower cost than through conventional approaches. This means that research and other relevant institutions need to be stakeholders in the change and actively form a community with land managers. This extends to research initiation, defining the key questions of why and for whom, setting the research questions, planning (the how), funding, operation, and assessment. Common failures of past approaches are partly from lack of respect for the principle that knowledge is most useful and most used when it is jointly produced by participants in decision and action for progress, such as land users and experts with technical and domain knowledge” (AA). One of the goals of this academic dimension of Landcare will be to pick up the knowledge that is generated in local experience and local networks, move this learning from the many isolated local social networks in which it first arises, and connect it into a wider network, bringing it into academic discourse, and making it available to decision-makers at all levels.

One dimension of the role of academia in relation to Landcare will always be to make available to Landcarers all forms of knowledge that will be helpful to them. This will involve “the implementation of scientific and evidence-based knowledge in an accessible way, properly understanding the target audience, critically analysing



Rapporteurs' report to the conference

the true role and capacity of various stakeholders, understanding the effectiveness of top-down versus bottom up drivers, and, accounting for the importance of external social factors and timing” (AB).

Additionally, there is a need for objective academic impact evaluation in Landcare activities. There are already some studies of the environmental and agricultural impacts of Landcare activities. Studies are also required that show the economic benefit of a basic Landcare architecture, the role of Landcare in building democratic strengths, the roles that Landcare has had in post-crisis situations, the lessons that have been learnt and the roles that Landcare could potentially have in these situations.

A valuable approach would be to document Landcare’s impact against the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This could be done individually for each of the SDGs and for each country in which Landcare is active (LR). The language could focus around advancing the SDGs’, ‘enhancing earth ethics’, and ‘ethics for sustainability’ as key concepts.

This academic work would both articulate Landcare and be a part of communicating Landcare’s message to the wider world by contributing to academic discourse on the role of self-reliance in governance systems, the value of a companionship epistemology, neoliberal economics and its impacts and responses to it, and economic models that promote local self-reliance and the nested connectedness that Landcare advocates. This is one way that Landcare working with academics can contribute to building “a critical mass of knowledge for action” (AC). If this is grounded in an objective evaluation of Landcare’s impacts, and if the Landcare message is clearly and profoundly articulated, then the Landcare ethic and philosophy and all that Landcare has learned can be communicated to the broader environmental movement, to the various levels of decision-making, and to the Conferences of the Parties (COPs)

of environmental treaties and other UN and business, industry and community sustainable development forums.

There is a need for a forum for the academic dimensions to come together, perhaps in the form of a global Landcare library or a dedicated Landcare University.

### **International spread of Landcare and the need for a global Landcare network**

Building local self-reliance would be enhanced through the international spread of Landcare principles. The presence of conference participants from eleven different countries indicates the extent to which Landcare has already spread internationally. This spread has happened organically and deserves to be widely encouraged. Landcare can evolve differently in different countries depending on local and national situations and needs, but many of the key practice models are highly inter-changeable and globally relevant. The whole concept of localisation is able to be contextualised globally, but equally, the global template for Landcare can be applied by any locality. Individual Landcare groups can all be “Landcare laboratories” (JQ) whose experience will be of value to all others. The idea of twin relationships, as is done with twinning rivers in New Zealand (NE), would seem to be a concept with good potential.

This internationalisation can be promoted through publications, managing and improving our websites, documenting success stories, and by developing training programmes (in areas such as leadership and consensus building, etc.) that would be available to participation globally. This could include online and video training programs. It could also be done in collaboration with other bodies with similar or complementary programmes (such as, for example, the United Nations Land Restoration Training Programme of the Agricultural University in Iceland).



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Conference participants learn about international Landcare

Various forms of people exchange could also be considered. Countries in which Landcare is already established could host interns from other countries or regions to live and work on activities. Tours to Australia, Philippines and elsewhere (of anything from 3 days to 3 months), and international visits by Landcarers could all be helpful, especially where Landcare is in its initial stages.

**Table 5: ALL and overseas Landcare excursions**

Visits from overseas to Australia have already proven an invaluable way of promoting understanding of Landcare. In the case of Japan, ALL has organised excursions and experiences for overseas visitors in Australia to learn about Landcare.

2011-2015: ALL annually provided a two-day guided tour of Landcare sites for students from the Policy Studies Department of Nanzan University.

October 2011-March 2012: ALL assisted Michael Seigel in researching Landcare with a view to the establishment of SPELJ.

May 2013-March 2014: ALL arranged excursions, experiences and contacts for a Japanese PhD candidate spending a year in Australia researching Landcare.

September 2013: ALL assisted a researcher (Kazuki Kagohashi) from Nanzan University Institute for Social Ethics visiting Australia for a month of research into Landcare.

February 2016: ALL provided introductions and guidance for a professor and a PhD candidate from Meijo University visiting Australia.

September 2016-February 2017: ALL provided assistance and guidance for an undergraduate student from Nagoya University on a government scholarship.

March 2018: ALL helped an undergraduate student from Nanzan University in Australia for a month.

**Intrepid Landcare** has also cooperated in hosting visitors from overseas and guiding them to various Landcare sites.

The first Australian body involved with overseas projects was the **Secretariat for International Landcare (SILC)**. SILC commenced in 1998 after a successful Landcare initiative working with a high-level group of South Africans in both South Africa and Australia in 1997. Sue Marriott and Victoria Mack and Mary Johnson saw a need and an opportunity and took the initiative to expand the ideals of Landcare internationally. SILC has actively supported global Landcare since 1998. Sue Marriott, Victoria Mack and Mary Johnson attended the Nagoya International Landcare Conference in November 2017.

In Japan, **SPELJ** organised global participants on self-funded field trips in November 2016 and 2017, as well as organising the pre- and post-conference excursions for this conference.

In this process of internationalisation, we need to look at all the layers: the Landcarer as an individual, groups, bioregions, states, and the national and international levels. What are the needs and the assets that each level has? If we understand how these overlay with governments, other NGOs, philanthropists, etc., then we may find better synergies and places to work in leverage.

However, there is a need to focus on globalizing Landcare and not just internationalising it. As well as the Landcare networks in each country and networking between countries, it is vital that we expand on the relationships and sharing of knowledge from this conference to create a global Landcare network.

There are numerous means by which this global Landcare network can be furthered. One would be to have continuing and regular Global Landcare forums or events similar to this conference. Another would be to strengthen regional collaboration, for example at the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) level or between Australia and Asia.

Global Landcare could take the form of a network that has the strength of scale without becoming bureaucratic. The establishment of such a global Landcare network would most likely require some kind of global entity—a ‘Head Office’ location or a hub for contact for support—perhaps with one representative from every Landcare nation. It would involve the establishment of means of communication (including a website) that would function as a ‘Global Landcare’ information hub, library, digital training centre and logo, and enable the sharing of stories and approaches, skills and knowledge among groups and networks globally.

Such an entity could help with the preparation of global events. At the moment Australian Landcare International (ALI) offers a communications hub online. This could perhaps be developed so people would know exactly who to call for what type of support and expertise within the organisation, and more broadly in the network.

A global Landcare network would contribute to nourishing the grassroots efforts of communities while ensuring that the situations, the thinking, and the needs of communities are communicated to all levels of decision making from the local to the global. This could be done by producing materials that present the Landcare message and support it with evidence, and through such strategies as launching a Landcare campaign at the COPs of environmental treaties.

A global Landcare network could also be expected to help local and national Landcare networks influence the policy of their nation-states. There is a need for knowledge exchange and mutual support at this level.

The conference outlined the significant practical importance of the Landcare brand and ongoing marketing of Landcare and the Landcare

movement, but it also stressed that we should not be too hung up on the brand. If people in a particular country prefer another name or brand, we should accept that. It is the ethic, not the brand that is important. However, an explicit recognition of the ‘Landcare Approach’ and its principles in each country would be beneficial to a global movement and would facilitate the global Landcare network we are advocating.

The conference helped to articulate Landcare, but also considered that Landcare may need to define some limits of how far the Landcare brand can be stretched. The conference asked questions about the point at which we need to talk about supporting wider self-reliance models, versus trying to spread Landcare too thinly. A part of globalising Landcare would therefore involve networking with other movements and groups with similar or complementary goals and activities. The conclusion was that we should “build alliances with like-minded NGOs and initiatives” (AC), but keep Landcare as an active, dynamic and global knowledge-sharing network.



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## Conclusion

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We are very fortunate to have the collective experience of over three decades of Landcare. From this has emerged a highly satisfying collegiate network wanting to share its activities, learning and achievements, of which the conference was an exemplar.

But, importantly, the Nagoya gathering amplified or actually raised several new, or at least so far generally unrecognised issues, not even especially widely discussed in Australia. These include Landcare's role in disaster planning (not just post-event), its usefulness in community reconciliation processes, its political potential in Southeast Asia, its capacity to plan and execute multi-regional (cross-border) landscape restoration, the need for and possibility of increased intergenerational communication, greatly expanding Landcare training online via formal and semi-formal courses, the importance of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and in particular the need for a global Landcare alliance facilitated by a dedicated professionally staffed bureau.

The conference, while usefully recalling and reconsidering past academic investigations, demonstrated that we would benefit greatly from research into many contemporary Landcare issues, such as communications, management, training, climate change action, social and environmental impacts of Landcare, and launching and managing multi-regional projects.

Finally, the conference is seen as the beginning of a process. Not all issues of importance to Landcare were fully covered in this conference. For example the all-important role of Landcare facilitators and coordinators was not one of the major topics of discussion at the conference and therefore has not had the coverage in this report that the importance of the topic would call for. This and other issues must be dealt with in follow up work.

This report itself is a preliminary summary, and the full proceedings of the conference will be published at a later date. This later publication will bring a more detailed and profound understanding of the various ideas and issues raised in this report.



# 1st International Conference of Landcare Studies

Global Resilience Through  
Local Self-Reliance – The Landcare Model

5-8 November, 2017 / Nagoya, Japan

Nanzan University Institute for Social Ethics  
Australian Landcare International

With support from



For Further Information & Registration  
<http://resiliencestudies.com/landcare-conference2017/>





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Global Resilience Through Local Self-Reliance – The Landcare Model

5-8 November, 2017

Kanayama Plaza Hotel, Nagoya, Japan

Nanzan University Institute for Social Ethics

Australian Landcare International

November 5 (Sun)

15:30- Registration  
16:30-18:00 General presentation  
19:00- Welcome Party



November 6 (Mon)  
9:00-17:00



Session 1: The critical role of local self-reliance in achieving global sustainability

Keynote speaker: Andrew Campbell  
(CEO, Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research, Australia)  
"Landcare: Grassroots Participatory Governance for the Anthropocene?"



Session 2: What makes local self-reliance deliver on sustainability?

Keynote speaker: Joseph Runzo-Inada  
(Chief Resilience Officer, Head of Strategic Planning City of Toyama, Japan)  
"Human-Human and Human-Nature Bonds: The Keys to Self-reliance and Resilience"



19:00-20:30 Pop-up session

November 7 (Tue)  
9:00-17:00



Session 3: Landcare practice models and pragmatics

Keynote Speaker: Jen Quealy  
(Member of NSW Landcare Council and ALI, Australia)  
"Landcare Praxis – From Little Things Big Things Grow: A Fascinating 'Speed-date' on Landcare Origins, Practice, Fields and Futures, and the Critical Elements for a 'Landcare Everywhere' Model"

Session 4: Landcare as a transformative agent in crises

Keynote speaker: Stewart Lockie  
(Distinguished Professor, James Cook University, Australia)  
"Community as Transformation Agent and the Temporality of Disaster"



November 8 (Wed)  
9:00-17:00



Session 5: Innovation and risk taking through Landcare approaches

Keynote speaker: Ross Colliver  
(Director, The Training and Development Group, Victorian Landcare Council Committee of Management, Australia)  
"Designing the Transformation of Environmental Governance: Principles and Prototypes from Recent Australian Experience"

Session 6: Systemic change, and merging discourses

Keynote speaker: Yvonne Everett (Professor, Humboldt State University, USA)  
"Cross Scale Stewardship Capacity of Community Based Organizations from Northern California across the American West to Washington DC: Will it Work for Cannabis?"



Venue: Kanayama Plaza Hotel  
3-7-15 Masaki, Naka-ku, Nagoya 460-0024, Japan  
Access: JR / Meitetsu / Meijo Line Kanayama Station (7-minute-walk)

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Landcare, a framework for subsidiary governance of natural resource and a network that facilitates partnerships and provision of resources, focuses on both social and community well-being and environmental management. In Australia, it has achieved substantial improvements in the natural environment and the sustainability of agriculture and become a multi-tiered network. Internationally, it has spread to over 20 countries. With its focus on community, it has the potential to bring about social and cultural changes that can enhance resilience.

Landcare is grounded in the premise that global sustainability hinges on local self-reliance. Climate change, environmental decline, poverty, conflict and other such issues must be addressed simultaneously and cannot be solved through centralised top-down structures. A polycentric governance model is required with structures that ensure the voices of the grassroots are heard at every decision-making level. A Landcare style network can help in this.

Landcare itself needs to further develop its strengths in the areas of capacity building, consensus building and disaster response and to deepen inter-generational communication. It needs to deepen the intellectual and academic dimension to provide clearer evaluations of its impacts and so that its principles and experience can be more effectively transmitted.

The internationalisation of Landcare should be promoted, and a global Landcare network established that, in alliance with like-minded partners, can be a voice for the grassroots at global levels.



2018 Nanzan University Institute for Social Ethics  
Australian Landcare International

ISBN 978-4-908681-37-0