

COFFS HARBOUR REGIONAL LANDCARE INC. STRATEGIC PLAN 2013-18



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Coffs Harbour Regional Landcare Inc. would like to thank the Executive committee, volunteers and staff for their input into the development of this plan.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

Coffs Harbour Regional Landcare Inc. embarked on a strategic planning process in late 2013 to help define and focus the direction of the organisation over the coming 5 year period. Planning sessions were held with the CHRL Executive over several months and during these sessions the Executive worked through a series of planning activities based on the “Planning with Purpose Toolkit” developed by the Bass Coast Landcare Network. The following Strategic Plan provides a summary of these planning sessions.

COFFS HARBOUR REGIONAL LANDCARE: A BRIEF HISTORY

As the Landcare movement was rapidly expanding throughout Australia, a small group of volunteers from the Ulitarra Conservation Society commenced work in 1982 on the very degraded and weed infested Jetty Foreshores area, and in the process formed the Jetty Dunecare Group. By the mid-1990s the number of Dunecare groups working along the Coffs Coast had grown considerably and the Landcare movement had become well established in Coffs Harbour.

A few years later, in 1997, several rural Landcare groups partnered together to start the ambitious job of restoring the health of Orara River. To help facilitate this project the Orara Valley Rivercare Groups Management Committee (OVRGMC) was established and over the following years worked closely with Coffs Harbour City Council (CHCC) and other Government departments to facilitate planning and to seek funding for rehabilitation works. At the time a number of grants programs were becoming available for Natural Resource Management (NRM) projects but applying for these funds and reporting on grants was beyond the capacity of most individual groups. To many in the region the need for a Landcare support organisation was now obvious.

In 1997 Dee Wallace and Desnee McCosker asked the Ulitarra Conservation Society to assist them to form such a support organisation and a steering committee was subsequently established which resulted in Coffs Harbour Regional Landcare Inc. being registered as an incorporated body on 27th May 1998. The organisation received strong support from Coffs Harbour City Council and the then NSW Department of Land and Water Conservation (DLWC), and in 2000 DLWC funded a support officer position for two days per week with office space provided in their Coffs Harbour office. As the work volume increased, CHRL engaged full time support officers and rented their own office facilities at two different sites in Park Avenue, then in the Monterey Arcade, and in recent years at the current location on West High Street.

Coffs Harbour Regional Landcare currently acts as the umbrella network for 39 sites and groups with a combined membership of approximately 280 individuals. The majority of these members volunteer on public land within the Coffs Harbour Local Government Area, with worksites occurring throughout the Coffs Coast Regional Park, Coffs Harbour City Council’s reserve network, or other public land managed by NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service and the Crown Lands Division of the NSW Trade and Investment.



CHRL members at a working bee in Karangi

VISION AND MISSION

VISION

To be a respected, independent and professional community based organisation which actively promotes environmental awareness and provides leadership, support and advocacy for effective community involvement in sustainable Natural Resource Management in the Coffs Harbour region.

MISSION STATEMENTS

- I. To recruit and support volunteers working to help improve the health and sustainability of the natural and agricultural systems in the Coffs Harbour LGA.***
- II. To develop and deliver professional and engaging workshops and training events, to help empower the community to be pro-active in the management of their environment.***
- III. To promote and access funding opportunities for NRM projects for individual landholders, and Landcare groups and sites. By providing these resources and incentives we aim to improve environmental outcomes at both a local and a landscape scale.***
- IV. To liaise and partner with government, and other stakeholder groups, to promote and better manage NRM issues and projects within and beyond the Coffs Harbour region.***
- V. To acknowledge and promote the achievements and contributions of Landcare, the Coffs Harbour Regional Landcare network and our members.***

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS (SWOT) ANALYSIS

The following SWOT analysis outlines the key internal and external factors affecting CHRL's ability to achieve its mission and purpose. These priority SWOT factors were developed from an extensive SWOT analysis undertaken in late 2013, and form the basis of the subsequent key objectives and actions tables.

STRENGTHS: What makes CHRL stand out?	
I.	Our people: CHRL's volunteers, members and staff are the key to our success. How we support these people is what maintains our success.
II.	Our relationships: The links we have with neighbouring networks, land managers, funding bodies and other stakeholder groups allows us to better achieve our objectives.
III.	Our culture: Good governance, project management and depth of experience have created a culture of success that allows us to operate effectively and efficiently.
WEAKNESSES: What internal factors reduce the likelihood of CHRL successfully achieving our mission?	
I.	Our ability to communicate our purpose and successes to the broader community.
OPPORTUNITIES: What external factors and changes offer potential for CHRL to improve or expand what it does?	
I.	As the Coffs Harbour community develops, new opportunities to engage with the community also emerge. CHRL is well placed to provide support to new primary production enterprises and build awareness of emerging environmental issues in the broader community.
II.	The NRM delivery model is constantly evolving – funding programs and government agencies change regularly and our ability to keep abreast of, and anticipate these changes will make us a more resilient organisation.
THREATS: What external factors could impact negatively on CHRL achieving our mission?	
I.	The constantly changing NRM model also threatens the future of CHRL. Short-term funding cycles and a lack of guaranteed base-level funding limit our ability to plan for the future.

Priorities	Key Objectives	Actions	By Whom?	When?
<p>A.</p> <p>Our people: CHRL's volunteers, members and staff are the key to our success. How we support these people is what maintains our success.</p>	<p>1. To improve the support we provide to Landcare volunteers in the Coffs LGA.</p>	<p>1. Apply for CHCC EL funding to provide volunteer support and undertake on-ground works on volunteer sites.</p>	<p>Staff, Site Coordinators and Executive</p>	<p>Annual</p>
		<p>2. Acknowledge outstanding Landcare volunteers through the annual CHRL Landcare Awards.</p>	<p>Executive</p>	<p>Annual</p>
		<p>3. Undertake a volunteer survey to assess the support needs of volunteers.</p>	<p>Executive and Site Coordinators</p>	<p>Biennial</p>
		<p>4. Undertake an assessment of the specific support needs of landcare volunteers working on private land and ensure that the CHRL Volunteer Policy adequately supports these groups.</p>	<p>Executive and Staff</p>	<p>X</p>
		<p>5. Undertake an assessment of the specific support needs of Incorporated Landcare groups operating under the CHRL umbrella and determine and document the level of support CHRL can provide to these groups.</p>	<p>Executive and Staff</p>	<p>X</p>
	<p>2. To improve the capacity of CHRL members to undertake their work through the development and delivery of professional and appropriate training opportunities.</p>	<p>1. Develop and deliver a minimum of 4 volunteer training workshops each year.</p>	<p>Staff</p>	<p>Annual</p>
		<p>2. Develop and maintain a register of volunteer qualifications.</p>	<p>Staff</p>	<p>On-going</p>
		<p>3. Develop a minimum of six instructional videos on weed management techniques for volunteers and the broader community.</p>	<p>Staff</p>	<p>X</p>

	3. Support the on-going professional and career development of our staff.	1. Maintain a budget for staff professional development in the annual CHRL budget and encourage staff to attend and present at relevant NRM conferences. 2. Undertake annual performance reviews for all staff and review position description as required.	Executive and Staff Executive	Annual Annual
	4. Minimise paperwork burden/stream line work arrangements for volunteers	1. Review the recently developed Work-site Logbooks and modify if required.	Staff and Site Coordinators	X
B. Strength - Our relationships: The links we have with neighbouring networks, land managers, funding bodies and other stakeholder groups allows us to better achieve our objectives.	1. To strengthen our working relationship with the public and private land managers of CHRL worksites.	1. Secure agreements with the NSW Crown Land Division for all volunteer sites on Crown land. 2. Finalise the MoU between CHRL, CHCC and NPWS for all other CHRL volunteer sites.	Executive and Staff Executive and Staff	X X
	2. To increase cooperation with neighbouring Landcare networks so as to improve outcomes in the Coffs LGA	1. Continue to support and participate in the work of the North Coast Regional Landcare Network (and other levels of Landcare – e.g. NSW Landcare and Landcare Australia).	Executive and Staff	On-going
		2. Seek partnerships with neighbouring or regional networks for workshop “roadshows” and strategic projects when appropriate.	Executive and Staff	On-going
3. To be pro-active in developing new partnerships with key NRM or volunteer stakeholders in the region.	1. Organise/contribute to a regular NRM round table to share information and develop partnerships.	Executive and Staff	Annual	

		2. Continue to provide support and mentoring to other NRM groups and organisations (e.g. Bush Regenerators Action Network Coffs Harbour (B.R.A.N.C.H.), Darrunda Wajaarr Repair to Country Team etc.).	Executive and Staff	On-going
		3. Develop a strategy to respond to employment agency partnerships/referrals and other special interest groups.	Executive and Staff	X
<p>C.</p> <p>Strength - Our culture: Good governance, project management and depth of experience have created a culture of success that allows us to operate effectively and efficiently.</p>	1. To support appropriate skills development within the CHRL Executive.	1. Undertake an annual organisational health check (See <i>Organisational Health Check for Landcare Networks</i> , Landcare NSW).	Executive	Annual
		2. Support Executive members (1or 2) to attend annual Landcare conferences (regional, state and national) and other training opportunities as appropriate.	Executive	Annual
		3. Establish portfolios and sub-committees to help manage the workload of the Executive.	Executive	On-going
	2. To better document our internal processes and build our corporate knowledge.	1. Collate and document the history of the CHRL Network.	Executive Sub-committee	X
		2. Develop a yearly program of policy development and reviews to be approved by the Executive each year (see also, <i>In Safe Hands</i>).	Executive and Staff	Annual
<p>D.</p> <p>Weakness - Our ability to communicate our purpose and successes to the broader community.</p>	1. To improve the effectiveness of our communications and better target our messages.	1. Develop and implement a communication plan.	Executive and Staff	X

<p>E.</p> <p>Opportunity - As the Coffs Harbour community develops, new opportunities to engage with the community also emerge. CHRL is well placed to provide support to new primary production enterprises and build awareness of emerging environmental issues in the broader community.</p>	1. Continue to engage with new landholders and industries.	1. Seek funding to continue working with the blueberry industry (project scope will depend on funding available).	Staff	On-going
		2. Seek funding to develop projects to support the emerging hothouse horticulture industry as well as small farmers and lifestyle block owners.	Staff	On-going
	2. To provide information to the general community about emerging environmental issues.	1. Develop urban sustainability displays for the Woolgoolga Curry Fest and Botanica, Moonee Beach Fair, Chilli Fair (and other local fairs and events).	Membership, Staff and Executive	On-going
<p>F.</p> <p>Opportunity/Threat - The constantly changing NRM model also threatens the future of CHRL. Short-term funding cycles and a lack of guaranteed base-level funding limit our ability to plan for the future.</p>	1. Keep up to date with developments in/ changes to funding programs.	1. Organise an annual/biennial meeting between a sub-committee from the Executive and local state and federal members.	Executive	Biennial
	2. Investigate alternative funding streams.	1. Investigate alternative funding streams such as fee for service, corporate volunteer days, tax free gift recipient status and private benefactors.	Executive and Staff	X