

MURRAY LOCAL COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP (LCAG)

A committee of the Murray Local Land Services Board

Report to the Murray LLS Board for the period October to December 2015

LCAG members

Tony Piggin (Chairperson, Corowa)
Tony a'Beckett (Glenroy/Tumbarumba) apology August meeting
Colin Bull (Deniliquin)
Neil Bull (Deniliquin)
John Bruce (Barooga) apology
Alan Curtis (Albury) apology
Rick Ellis (Barham)
Rob Fenton (Albury)
Terry Hogan (Jerilderie) apology
Malcolm Holm (Finley)
Eric Lavis (Bungowannah)
Felicity Middleton (Mannus)
Phil Snowden (Tocumwal) apology
Dale Stringer (Holbrook)
Helen Collins (Barham)

MEETING 28 October 2015

The Murray LCAG held their fourth meeting on the 28th October 2015 at Berrigan.

In addition to members listed above the following people were in attendance at the meeting

MLLS Staff: Chris Cumming, Matt O'Connell, Andrew Cooper, Rhiannon Caynes, Tom McIntosh, Dan Salmon.

Regional Landcare Facilitator: Edwina Hayes

Guest: Jenny Hehir – MLLS Board

Members report

Murray LCAG members provide a verbal report to the group on issues of concern or interest in their area. A discussion was had about the purpose and relevance of the members report, which culminated in LCAG members supporting a move from a verbal report to a written report that follows a template to improve consistency and relevance. The written report will be made available to the Board.

Murray LLS Biosecurity and Agricultural Extension - Productive Lands Strategy

Dan Salmon and Tom McIntosh presented to the group on the Murray LLS Biosecurity and Productive Land service delivery models. The group was engaged to discuss the key hubs and

industries, MLLS capacity and commitments, and engagement and consultative structures and provide recommendation on how and where it could be improved.

The key points emphasised were that the Agriculture team allocates resources based on

- identified key industries (based on a range of factors)
- service gaps and potential to have impact
- Key natural resources.

The Biosecurity team focusses resources primarily based on legislative requirement and biosecurity risk

The LCAG overall agreed with the prioritisation processes Murray LLS was applying.

There was general discussion about the Ag and biosecurity services and a number of ideas canvassed including:

- that the biosecurity team could be utilised to a greater extent in the extension space
- Structural reorganisation of MLLS so that the Biosecurity and Agricultural extension teams report to the same manager for an integrated productive lands component of MLLS.
- Acknowledged that within the resources available the Aquaculture, Horticulture, Plant Biosecurity, Bees, Pork, Deer and Cotton may be industries we don't service well.
- MLLS only have one livestock officer and she should stay focused on the biggest industries.
- A belief that Peri-urban properties are the biggest threat to biosecurity of industries in this region.
- Could be improvements to the way biosecurity particularly understands, collaborates, upskills, informs and delivers collaboratively with groups across the region

The Ag and Biosecurity managers will incorporate the LCAG response into theme and project planning

Feedback from LCAG was sought on potential MLLS' response to drought. There was general discussion entered into and a number of ideas put forward including:

- An impending drought is a chance for MLLS to get officers back on the ground by coordinating a response using indicators on climatic conditions to inform the community.
- There is need for a quick response in the west of the catchment
- work closely with groups
- support multi- disciplinary approach
- Murray LLS has an opportunity to show the community that they are proactive in this space.

NSW Landcare

Dale Stringer is the Murray Region's representative on the NSW Landcare Committee. Dale provided an update from NSW Landcare

Key focus has been the State Landcare Coordinator Support program – with regards to the NSW Local Landcare Coordinator initiative, representatives in Murray region are working with MLLS to put a bid forward. The panel will continue to refine the bid and meet again on the 16th of November 2015.

There is a Parliamentary *Friends of Landcare* group. Greg Aplin and Katrina Hodgkinson are members and interested in what Landcare is up to. A good opportunity to get the message through that Landcare is about productive and sus Ag not just tree planting.

Murray Landcare

Murray Landcare is a term used to refer to Landcare and producer groups in the region. Murray Landcare meets a number of times a year. Murray Landcare has a process where issues and feedback of relevance to LLS can be fed to the LCAG (in addition to normal communication channels) as such a verbal report was provided from Murray Landcare.

Eric Lavis, Helen Collins and Dale Stringer all provided comment including:

- Finalising Group Capacity Contracts with MLLS.
- Smaller groups are struggling to juggle both the 14/15 and 15/16 grant rounds running simultaneously.
- Green Army processes have run into each other –Applicants from round 4 haven't heard back from AG yet.
- NSW Landcare conference was well attended with 13 Murray Landcare reps and 5 MLLS staff attending.
- NSW Local Landcare Coordinator initiative – supporting groups to think about whether they can receive positions. A clear plan with a clear mandate.
- RLF supported MLLS recruitment for SLSO position
- Planning to support the reporting frameworks that groups are working with – MERIT training etc.
- Supporting recruitment of weeds committee.
- Dale has been re endorsed to represent Murray Landcare on the NSW landcare committee

RLF report

The RLF provided a report to the LCAG. It was noted that the way LLS works with community is exemplary. This comment was endorsed by Tony Piggin and Eric Lavis, particularly given their observations at the state landcare conference

Issue Progression/Resolution process for advice to LLS board

The LCAG are continuing to try to refine processes to ensure the LCAG meetings are productive. Screening of issues raised to determine relevance is improving all the time. The LCAG will be putting the following filters over issues

1. Why is this an issue?
2. What is the scale of the issue? (Extra Regional, Regional, Sub regional, Local)
3. Is it core business for Murray LLS to address this issue (eg agricultural extension, emergency management, biosecurity coordination, Facilitating Land Use change)?

- a. If so, what the areas for improvement/comment:
 - i. promotions/marketing
 - ii. Service Planning
 - iii. Service Delivery
 - iv. Supporting practice change
 - v. Policy ideas
 - vi. Or other functions
4. If not core Murray LLS business then ...
- i. Is it an important gap/substantial issue for the region?
 - ii. What is the public benefit from progressing this issue?
 - iii. Can a difference be made with small investment/capacity?
 - iv. If so, how?
 - v. If not, what is the strategy to promote/advocate for resources to make a difference?
5. What is the advice from Murray LCAG to MLLS Board on how to progress the policy idea?

LCAG members like the process and agreed to apply it to issues when raising an agenda item. The process will be put into the members report template.

Draft Murray LSP

The LCAG members provided input into the strategic Plan. MLLS staff member Gill Earl presented to the LCAG who provided feedback through a 'clicker' Q and A session. This process generated good discussion. Feedback will be fed into the consultation and review process. Members were encouraged to provide more information via Murray Open.

Murray Aboriginal Technical Group (MATG)

An update from MATG was presented to the LCAG.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

The LCAG had no additional comments for the MLLS Board.

| Recommendation/Comment/ Advice |
|--|
| <p>COMMENT: Business process</p> <p>The LCAG expressed ongoing frustration with the steering committee 'employment process' They have asked LLS to pursue avenues to streamline. Indicated that not all Dept. of Industry committees require members to be employees.</p> <p><i>LLS agreed to continue to investigate options</i></p> |
| <p>COMMENT: Extending LCAG usefulness</p> <p>The LCAG members were keen to provide support between meetings to LLS delivery. It was agreed that</p> |

LCAG members would document their skill sets and areas of interest to share with Senior Managers

LCAG members should also be included in all our communication products.

LCAG would also like to see copy of board reports

LCAG would like to be able to communicate directly with board and LLS staff.

LCAG want to participate in policy reform processes of relevance to land services in the region that may not coincide with LCAG meeting schedules

RECOMMENDATION: Terms of Reference –

Add that LCAG is a link between grassroots organisations, community and the Board

Reference RLF role

Concern raised re 2 year term - agreed to discuss at the next meeting including a suggestion that there only be a half spill at the next elections.

COMMENT: Miscommunication?

LCAG member indicated that a Board member had advised they weren't seeing LCAG recommendations. LLS Confirmed that the LCAG communique was in the Board papers every 2 months.

COMMENT: Green Army

LCAG emphasised that to maximise effectiveness their will need to be a solid process when working with groups and landholders

COMMENTS: Ag and biosecurity discussion

The LCAG had overall agreement with the prioritisation processes the Ag and biosecurity teams were applying in the allocation of staff and \$ resources.

The LCAG members provided a range of additional comments that went from operational to strategic and organisational. (see in body of the communique) The practical delivery components have been captured by the Team leaders for feeding into their theme plans.

RECOMMENDATION: Impending Drought

The LCAG suggested that LLS respond to an impending drought by offering some early sessions in the west, working closely with groups and supporting a multi-disciplinary approach to drought advice.

OTHER ADVICE;

Following experience at the state landcare forum and after discussion with the NRC and others it is clear Murray operating very well with community

- commended foresight of Board in planning one region wide LCAG (couldn't understand why regions would have topic based or small area LCAG's)
- commented on MLLS staff leading state in approach to communities and collaboration