

WA Parliamentary Friends of Landcare Reception, 15th September 2026
Anne-Marie Offer, WA Landcare Network

Thank you to our Convenors - Hon. Jess Beckerling MLC and Shane Love MLA, for your acknowledgements, introductions and words of encouragement and support. Thanks also to other members of the Parliamentary Friends of Landcare – Michelle Maynard MLA, David Bolt MLA, Peter Rundle MLA, Hon. Rob Horstman MLC.

And we are very thankful to be joined by Hon. Jackie Jarvis MLC; Minister for Agriculture and Food, Fisheries, Forestry, Small Business and Mid West, thank you for your address. Thanks to other Ministers and Members joining us.

On behalf of WA Landcare Network and our guests, thank you for this opportunity for parliamentarians to connect with a sample of our WA landcare sector. I would like to acknowledge WA Landcare Hall of Fame members who are here this evening, Dr Louise Duxbury and Keith Bradby OAM. I also warmly welcome our First Nations partners who have joined us.

Gathered here are local and regional community groups, First Nations, not for profit, philanthropic, scientific, and commercial organisations all part of on-ground restoration and care of land and waterways. Active in all settings from bushland, estuaries, rivers and streams, to farming and urban areas.

Landcare is on-ground, hands-on, practical effort. Improving water quality and soil health, mitigating erosion, holding water in the landscape and restoring functional, self-sufficient, biodiverse habitats and ecosystems.

WA is an amazing, unique place – and is ancient, fragile and precious. The South West is a recognised biodiversity hotspot, one of just 36 worldwide. Some of our endemic flora species are among the oldest on earth, evolving over 250 million years on soils over 3.5 billion years old.

And the soils, waterways and people sustaining our crops and pastures have always been part of landcare. The science, hands-on work and the connection of groups support the aim of resilient landscapes and resilient communities - meaning their health, their ability to get through challenge and their capacity to recover.

The Australian landcare sector has a legacy of over 40 years. It's an enduring, science led, future focused movement. It's of growing importance as accumulated past degradation and increasing climate impacts need hands-on action. A conservation lens is no longer sufficient - work to restore and regenerate is essential for the land to continue to provide into the future.

Of course, Caring for Country, through a First Nations lens, has a far deeper meaning and a more significant legacy across deep time in this place. The practice of landcare

offers opportunity for learning, understanding, and to connect us to very old values that originate here.

Many of our groups work to support First Nations leadership and employment in landcare and they strongly evidence what walking forward together to care for Country and people can look like as a lived and shared experience.

So you see, that landcare is very broad in scope and reach and very deep in values and capacity to transform places and people.

WA Landcare Network supports and represents this community across the state. It is one of the eight State and Territory peak bodies in Australia, and together they are represented and supported by the National Landcare Network. This essential scaffold and the collaboration of knowledge and support the network provides is what enables and links community to meaningful impact at scale.

In all sectors, volunteers are amazing. Though in landcare, their achievements are amplified. Because in addition to social and community dividends, they bring real, lasting improvement to the condition and productive potential of our lands and waterways.

It's clear these people are not what you might call recreational volunteers. Typically, they are knowledgeable, deeply experienced, connected and impactful. Would you agree?...

They are practitioners, they are valued and their work is very valuable.

At a WA Parliamentary Friends of Landcare reception in 2023, Dr Louise Duxbury spoke of the substantial return on investment in community landcare through leveraged contribution. Landcare NSW cites independent studies showing a return of at least six dollars for each dollar invested.

It is so important for funders and project partners to see the true value of support to landcare, in terms of the total effort and impact. At a Federal Parliamentary Friends of Landcare reception in Canberra this July, the National Landcare Network released its latest report card, with more than 4 million volunteer hours contributed across Australia for the year, with nearly 250,000 volunteers engaged.

Economically, the state of WA is now a powerhouse national contributor. However, there are still big gaps in state support to the landcare sector relative to the eastern seaboard. For WA's such special and valuable country, wouldn't it be great to see our landcare effort on a pathway to leading the nation?

You'll notice the members of this Parliamentary Friends group are from across the political divide. That's meaningful, as it reflects the unifying appeal of landcare. Where political debate is often, necessarily centred on problems, landcare is a connector and a vehicle to align with a future focused, solutions outlook.

Over 40 years nationwide, landcare has always been supported at all levels of government, and across different political parties. It is durable proof of our ability to all work together on things that are important.

Community expectations of support for landcare are growing, and people are participating with their hearts and hands. Youth are increasingly activated across Australia. From the perspective of my member group in the Leschenault catchment, it's amazing to see such a broad diversity of people joining in. They come from all ages, cultures, occupations, abilities and political persuasions. They share a common purpose. The sense of unity is energising and powerful. Every time they act together for the environment they are building social and climate resilience, two of the most critical needs for our society going forward.

And, they are happy to turn up, often with their family on a weekend morning, sometimes in the rain! The quality of engagement with people caring for places they love and want to learn about in a positive setting is phenomenal. What a great option for our politicians to more deeply connect in their electorate! Please support and get involved with landcare!

Thank you to our incredible community, for your vital contribution and all that you bring. Enjoy this time of networking and fellowship, and please join me in thanking our Parliamentary Friends of Landcare for hosting this evening.
