Review of
the Murray Landcare Collective and
Murray Regional Landcare Facilitator project
2014-2018

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Disclaimer
The views expressed in this report are solely the authors, and do not necessarily reflect the views of Charles Sturt University, Holbrook Landcare Network, or any other individual or organisation consulted or involved in the research.
Introduction

The NSW Murray Local Land Services region covers 40,000 square km and extends over 500km east-west. The Murray River forms its southern boundary. Elevation, temperatures, rainfall, soils, vegetation, agriculture, culture and population distribution vary significantly across the region (Murray Local Land Services 2016).

Landcare has a long history in the Murray Region (Earl 2003), which is currently blessed with over 70 community-based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) groups (Hayes, pers. comm.).

The Murray Regional Landcare Facilitator (Murray RLF) project commenced in 2010, funded by the federal government’s Caring for Our Country program until 2014. In that phase the Murray RLF was staffed by two part-time positions, based in the east and west of the region. The project continued between 2014 and June 2018 with funding from the National Landcare Programme (Phase 1). In this period, the Murray RLF was delivered by Holbrook Landcare Network with funding provided through Murray Local Land Services. Between 2014 and 2018 the Murray RLF was again staffed by two positions (0.8 EFT and 0.2EFT), both located at Holbrook in the east of the region. Holbrook Landcare Network hosted the Murray RLF and delivered the project with funds that came via Murray Local Land Services. Both Murray RLF staff operated across the whole Murray region. In 2016, the NSW Local Landcare Coordinator Initiative delivered a substantial boost to Landcare support by creating six part-time positions that were embedded in some of the larger regional community groups. The Murray RLF played a significant role in ensuring the local coordinators were well inducted and supported in their roles.

The Murray RLF project was staffed by two people:

- Edwina Hayes (0.8 EFT) came to the role with a background in mental health and community development. She commenced work as a Murray RLF back in 2010, in a part-time position servicing the eastern Murray region. In 2014, Edwina assumed the current Murray RLF position, with responsibility across the entire Murray region. She brought to her role, a perspective that appreciated the importance of relationships, networks and capacity in bringing about a shift to sustainable land management. Edwina is widely recognized as the ‘face’ of the Murray RLF, a reflection of the highly visible presence she has had in Murray landcare.

- Dale Stringer (0.2 EFT) maintained a more strategic role as Murray RLF between 2014 and 2018. Dale is the CEO of Holbrook Landcare Network, the host group for the Murray RLF project. Dale came to the RLF role with a background in soil science, and experience working in government and managing Holbrook Landcare Network. As well as having management responsibility for the Murray RLF project, Dale engaged in high level liaison, as well as guiding and mentoring groups on strategic governance matters.

Key objectives of the RLF project

The RLF Job description included:

- Engage Landcare, community and producer groups,

- Support new groups, and

- Build capacity within existing groups that support sustainable farming and better environmental outcomes.
The Murray RLF has achieved many things during the 2014-2018 period. The achievements themselves are documented in various reports. This report is reflecting on the impact of the sum of achievements. Based on the interview data the standout achievements of the Murray RLF are:

1. Redefining ‘landcare’ as an inclusive community
2. Acknowledgment the importance of local differences in the landcare community
3. Driving a unified Murray regional bid for the Local Landcare Coordinator Initiative
4. Championing and coordinating the 2017 NSW Landcare and Local Land Services conference in Albury
5. Bringing targeted training and skills development to the Murray landcare community based on their identified needs
6. Improving communication flows to and from groups and stakeholders, and to the wider community.
7. Supporting the Murray Landcare Collective

From July 2018 the Regional Agricultural Landcare Facilitator (RALF) position in the NSW Murray region will be hosted by the regional government NRM agency, Murray Local Land Services. The Holbrook Landcare Network commissioned this review to document and celebrate the Murray RLF 2014-2018.

**Aims and Method**

**Aims**

This review aims to:

1. Identify the key achievements of the Murray RLF during 2014-2018 period.
2. Summarise the legacy of the Murray RLF for the 2014-2018 period
3. Seek evidence of social learning in the Murray Landcare Collective, and
4. Provide a source of inspiration for Murray landcare groups as they embark on the next 3-5 year journey.

**Method**

This study reviews the Murray RLF project based on reflections of representatives from groups and organisations that interacted with the Murray RLF during the period 2014-2018. Data for this review have been created from semi-structured interviews with stakeholders reflecting on their experience with, and the achievements of, the Murray RLF during the 2014-2018 period.

For the interviews, purposive sampling of eighteen key informants was undertaken. Informants were recruited from three segments of stakeholder representation:

1. District groups - Large groups and networks that operate across extended parts of the region, and who regularly attend Murray Landcare Collective meetings (total = 6 groups).
2. Local groups - Smaller groups that do not regularly attend Murray Landcare Collective meetings, including i) 2 groups that indicated in a recent survey (Mitchell & Allan 2018) they were dissatisfied with their current capacity, ii) 1 group that has re-formed in the past 2 years, and iii) 2 groups that are outside categories i) or ii) but do not attend Murray Landcare Collective meetings (total = 5 groups)
3. Organisations that have interacted with the RLF and who are familiar with the Murray Landcare Collective, such as Local Land Services, or Landcare NSW (total = 2 organisations).
Pre-testing of the interview format was undertaken with Michael Mitchell from ILWS. Cognitive pre-testing with two participants familiar with the Murray Regional Landcare Facilitator project was undertaken, to ensure the intent of questions was understood and to test the duration of the interview. Data from these test interviews has not been used in this report.

In total 15 interviews were conducted, with 18 individuals participating. While most interviews were with individuals, three interviews involved two participants. Interviews were undertaken by a member of the research team (G Earl) and a representative from Landcare NSW (Natasha English).

Interviews were conducted by telephone, or in some cases face-to-face. Interviews were semi-structured, following an interview guide (Appendix A) developed for this project, with predominantly open questions designed to elicit conversational, in-depth responses.

Data were tabulated to allow for manual thematic sorting and categorizing (coding). Theoretical frameworks relating to group capacity (Mitchell & Allan, 2018), and social learning (Cooke, 2012, Keen et al. 2009, Pahl-Wostl et al. 2007) were used to structure the reflection on achievements.

The following results are a synthesis of the comments provided by the interview participants. The authors’ opinions on the implications of the results are presented in the Discussion.

**RLF Achievements**

**Standout achievements**

The Murray RLF has achieved many things during the 2014-2018 period. The achievements themselves are documented in various reports. This report is reflecting on the impact of the sum of achievements. Based on the interview data, and in addition to the Murray Landcare Collective which is discussed separately below, six standout achievements of the Murray RLF were identified by participants. It should be noted that many of the RLF achievements have been made in collaboration with others, particularly with Murray LLS and the National Landcare Programme (Phase 1). Without Murray LLS programs such as Communities in NRM, and Community Small Grants, it is likely the RLF project achievements would be different from those described below.

1. Redefining ‘landcare’

The traditional concept of the ‘Landcare’ movement encompassed community groups with an interest in sustainable land management that were formally described as Landcare groups. However, this definition excluded many other community groups operating in the cultural, agricultural and environmental space, that share similar interests in sustainable land management, albeit with different motivations, and whose actions result in some public good outcomes.

   *Landcare needed that type of input, making people realise Landcare is not just tree-huggers. Farmers here are croppers, they don't appreciate biodiversity. #District group*

   *[The RLF was responsible for] introducing diversity, the idea that landcare is not just about planting trees. #Local group*

By reimagining a broader and more inclusive, small ‘I’ landcare community in the region, the Murray RLF has succeeded in engaging over 70 groups and networks with diverse interests in sustainable land
management – including groups with a focus on production agriculture, environment, Indigenous and cultural heritage, education, and recreational fishing. From this, groups and organisations in the Murray region have developed wider and stronger networks, with new relationships developing.

[My network] is more connected to groups because of the RLF. #District group

[We have] better links to community and producer groups because of the RLF. #Organisation

2. Acknowledging local context

The Murray RLF had a strong understanding of local context, i.e. the interests of groups, their capacity, and the areas they broadly operated over. This understanding was critical when the Local Landcare Coordinator Initiative bid was being developed, as the proposed LLC positions were structured in a way that reflected local context, culture and capacity.

Planning for the LLCI bid was informed by RLF understanding of the existing support structure and distribution. #District group

The Murray RLF has also influenced the way Landcare NSW understands local variation in Landcare groups across the state.

Edwina made me understand that Landcare infrastructure is not the same everywhere. There are many different models and they can all work with the right support. We need to adjust our delivery to suit. #Organisation

3. Facilitating the Local Landcare Coordinator Initiative (LLCI)

In 2016 the NSW Government launched the Local Landcare Coordinator Initiative (LLCI) with funding to employ part-time Landcare coordinators (LLCs) in regions until June 2019. The initiative invited community groups to prepare bids to host a LLC. In the Murray region, Murray LLS, Landcare, producer and other groups prepared a single bid for six part-time positions in the Murray region.

The Murray RLF, with Murray LLS, played a critical role in brokering the bid, bringing detailed local understanding of groups, and years of relationship building to what was ultimately a single bid where groups collaborated, rather than competed, with each other for positions. The bid was designed to use existing resources efficiently, while maximizing the geographic coverage of a LLC network. As mentioned previously, the bid also considered variation in groups (context, capacity, interests) across the region.

When the LLCI was coming up, the RLF was keen to have a LLC at Corowa. Dale/Edwina were influential in facilitating that. Without their support I'm not sure what would have happened. #District group

Once the LLCI commenced the RLF played a key role inducting and mentoring the LLCs, ensuring they were able to ‘hit the road running’ in their new roles.

...the RLF was the glue for the LLCI to function, and roll out. #Organisation

Edwina supported them with capacity building and learning about governance - it got all staff on a good footing. #Organisation
They mentored me closely. They have very different perspectives - Dale is more strategic, Edwina is more emotional. They are good for bouncing ideas off; they know the region really well, and who to get in contact with. #3 Landcare coordinator

The collaborative underpinning of the LLCI continued; for example, the Murray RLF facilitated a Community of Practice for the LLCs, a forum where the Murray LLCs could get together regularly to discuss opportunities and challenges in their roles, share information, undertake training and build a peer support network. In addition to establishing the Community of Practice in Murray, the RLF (Edwina) also helped with the establishment of the Community of Practice for LLCs in other regions of NSW.

She was able to be involved in coordinating our Community of Practice, coaching the landcare coordinators #District group

It [the Community of Practice] would still have happened, but the RLF had enthusiasm to ensure their [LLCs] participation continued. #Organisation

The Murray RLF has continued to play a critical role in the LLCI, providing ongoing mentoring and support for the LLCs, being the ‘go-between’ for Landcare NSW and LLCs, although day-to-day staff management responsibilities for LLCs was undertaken by the host groups. As the ‘go-between’, the Murray RLF acted as a conduit of information flowing in both directions. In regions where the RLF has functioned in this way, the LLCI is seen to have had greater impact.

The RLF staff are our go-to people for local insights and information about where/when/how to do things in regions. If Edwina recommended a Landcare NSW event to the Murray community, we would expect a much greater turnout/uptake. #Organisation

The RLF (Edwina) has given us a good connection to Landcare NSW. Getting to know [staff at Landcare NSW], getting to know them, understanding their roles. Corowa Landcare has a relationship with Landcare NSW; we are part of the NSW container deposit scheme because of it. #District group

4. Hosting the 2017 NSW Landcare conference

The NSW Landcare and Local Land Services Conference was held in Albury in 2017. The hosting of this event came about because of the efforts of the Murray RLF. Edwina in particular, championed the proposal, convincing the local Murray LLS Board of the merit of hosting such an event, convening a steering committee that included LLCs, plus other stakeholders, and creating an agenda that was attractive to both the Landcare community and the LLS community.

...no-one was thinking about the value of bringing it to the region. It was an ‘out there’ idea. Murray Board saw it as a big risk #Organisation

The event was successful against many criteria; of note was the inclusion of a wider range of participants than past events had attracted.

Previously the conference focus had been on Landcare and volunteers - Landcare groups were over-represented. This time it attracted LLS people. It gave an opportunity for Landcare and LLS people to spend time together. #Organisation
5. Access to training and skills development

One of the achievements, in the sense of making a difference, that participants attributed repeatedly to the Murray RLF project, was training and skills development. It is difficult to attribute all the credit to the RLF because other parties, in particular Murray LLS, also played a key role in providing fund for capacity development in the 2014-2018 period. Participants noted that many workshops and other training opportunities occurred between 2014 and 2018, covering topics such as governance, strategic planning, GIS, nature photography, fungi identification, grant writing, use of social media, marketing, facilitation, conflict management, negotiation skills, and speaking on radio; and the RLF encouraged participation in that training.

RLF facilitated attendance of people from our group at state/national Landcare conferences. Edwina organised transport, accommodation, registration - we just had to turn up. It was a big learning curve for me, we had access to top people speaking about projects/topics, there was good discussion. #District group

The inclusive approach of the Murray RLF also meant that where there was room available, workshops were open to participants from other regions or organisations, providing additional opportunities for new relationships to be seeded. For instance, a workshop on facilitation and conflict resolution as attended by community and staff from NSW Murray, Riverina, and Western regions, and Victorian North East region.

6. Improved Communications

Communication with groups occurred through a range of channels including regular emails and newsletters, social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram), a fortnightly ABC radio segment, and face-to-face meetings. Groups were kept informed of events, funding and training opportunities, and what other groups were doing. This coordination of news and information was recognized as a great time saver for individual groups, making groups aware of opportunities they otherwise would not have known about.

[The RLF] kept us up to date with funding opportunities, what’s going on with other groups, other activities happening in the region . . . opportunities we wouldn’t have had by ourselves. #Local group

Murray Landcare Collective

The Murray Landcare Collective (MLC) is a forum where CBNRM groups in the Murray region can go to share knowledge, ideas, and information. The MLC has been supported by the Murray RLF, and through the 2014-2018 period, its identity as a community-based collective has become clearer, and better appreciated. As described by the RLF, the MLC is based on the philosophy of collective ownership by the members. The MLC is intended to provide a forum for challenging status quo ideas, with a view to achieving more innovative, inventive and entrepreneurial outcomes for member groups (Hayes unpubl. 2014).

Over 70 Landcare, producer, and community groups are members of the MLC. The collective is characterized as being non-hierarchical, and without formal governance requirements such as a constitution, office bearers, or Terms of Reference. There is no membership requirement, no voting, and
no obligation to participate. In the absence of a formal code of conduct, members self-regulate behaviour at meetings.

It operates in different ways to suit different groups, predominantly through regular face-to-face meetings, as well as regular newsletters and emails from the RLF, and collaborative ventures that are ‘badged’ under the MLC. It is an inclusive forum, where community groups sit alongside agencies and other parties as equals. A key outcome from the MLC is that ‘non-allied’ parties come together at the MLC, engaging with each other in ways not previously seen.

**MLC and district groups**

Members who attend the face-to-face meetings of the MLC are predominantly from the district (larger groups and networks) and Murray LLS staff. Staff from other agencies attend occasionally when there is a particular need to do so, e.g. to explain one of their programs or opportunities. Typical expectations that members sought from participation in the MLC included: opportunities for sharing ideas, finding out what others were doing, sharing knowledge, information about upcoming events and funding opportunities, building networks, building relationships and developing partnerships. Generally, these expectations have been met. Most of the district groups already had internal and external networks, but with LLCs participating in face-to-face meetings, the MLC has served to strengthen and deepen them.

> It’s given a conduit to the MLC that wasn’t there before. We had relationships with individual groups, but it [the MLC] has strengthened them. #District group

> It’s provided an opportunity to interact with other groups in the region. #District group

At an individual level, participants in MLC meetings recognize that the relationships they have developed are based on trust, friendship and a sense of belonging. One participant attributed their growing sense of optimism to the MLC.

> Participating in the [collective] I realized that I was becoming more optimistic about the future. #District group

**MLC and local groups**

Although all local groups are invited to MLC meetings, full participation is not really feasible, as most groups operate with volunteers who are unable to take a day out of their work to travel and attend. LLCs provide their main conduit to the MLC, as well as newsletters and emailed meeting agendas/meetings. Communication of events and funding opportunities provides the main benefit for small groups. For some groups were unclear of the roles of the multiple entities associated with the RLF – for example the MLC, the LLCs, and the CoP- and the benefits to them of all these entities were equally unclear. Nevertheless, some small group representatives said they were content to know the MLC exists without having much idea of how it works. Importantly, many LLCs attend local group meetings to share information. There is an opportunity for the MLC to consider ways of increasing access of smaller groups to face-to-face meetings in the future.

**MLC and Collaboration**

The spirit of collaboration was on show when the proposal for the Local Landcare Coordinator Initiative (LLCI) was under development. Through the MLC, a single, collaborative regional bid was made, with
agreement from all district groups and Murray LLS. This collaborative approach stands in contrast to the competitive process outlined for the LLCI. Collaboration of this type required the MLC members to think at a regional scale, rather than at the scale of their immediate self-interest. As one member observed, the collaboration did not happen overnight, but was instead the culmination of years of relationship building, particularly by the Murray RLF.

*The groundwork was done in the preceding years, with big input from the RLF. It eliminated the contest, created the culture of collaboration. #District group*

*The Collective operates above the responsibility of district groups. It's a stretch [for members] to go beyond that responsibility. They need to see something. They are meeting to see how they can support the world they live in. #Organisation*

**MLC and organisations**

The MLC has provided a number of opportunities for organisations. For Landcare NSW, the MLC has provided an access point for facilitating communication and relationships, giving/receiving information and permitting direct contact with MLC members. Relationships with the MLC are expected to continue.

*MLC has given us permission to pick up the phone easily. It has facilitated communication and relationships. #Organisation*

For Murray LLS, the MLC offers opportunities to engage in genuine collaboration that in turn helped to attract funding.

*Through the collective we knew we had the backing of the community. It made a huge difference when talking to government. Co-delivery [arrangements] were critical for attracting funding. #Organisation*

It also offers Murray LLS an opportunity to get closer to the community, build trust and increase legitimacy with them.

*Through MLC we have a platform to interact, that we wouldn't have otherwise had. #Organisation*

*[We are aware] that still too many people in government are too far removed from what community want. #Organisation*

*[Murray LLS] Senior management changed the way they do business. They go to MLC meetings, pay respect to MLC, see value in MLC. Groups value having access to Murray LLS. #Organisation*

Murray LLS staff also acknowledge the positive feeling of being valued and connected to their local community and working towards a bigger common good. In addition, several Murray LLS staff have enjoyed personal development in workshops organised through the MLC.

The openness and inclusiveness of the MLC has brought some surprising outcomes too. In some cases, relationships between parties with very different goals have found in the MLC a platform for dialogue that did not exist anywhere else. An urban group has gradually come to see itself as a landcare group, while still feeling different to many others. One of the strengths of the MLC is that it has welcomed
groups with diverse goals, and ways of operating to achieve public good natural resource management outcomes and allowed them to be acknowledged and valued. For groups, participating in a broad-based and influential collective enhances their reputation both within their own membership, but also in the wider community.

Conversely, different groups bring insights that, to other MLC members, may be quite innovative

A lot of times the proponents (speakers at MLC) don't realise that what they're doing is innovative . . . Farming systems groups haven't been highly engaged. They work on a business ‘fee for service’ model. They are not sure what they bring to MLC. But when they talk, I see other groups listen, ears prick up. That’s a surprising benefit - I hadn’t expected that outcome. #District group

MLC and power relations
Fundamentally, the MLC is a forum where relative power is neutralized, and all participants sit at the table as equals. For many of the district groups this aspect of the MLC and its relationship with Murray LLS is very important, especially at meetings.

Its strength is that it is not a creature of LLS. Groups are so strong that LLS won’t push the MLC. We want to work with LLS, not for them. #District group

In keeping with the MLC’s stated purpose to challenge the status quo to achieve innovative, inventive and entrepreneurial outcomes, participants reported times when discussions become tense, particularly when differences between Murray LLS and groups arise. While some MLC participants perceive robust and tense discussions as a healthy part of the collective operations, others, particularly those who attend meetings intermittently, are more apprehensive, not wanting to ‘bite the hand that feeds them’. One interviewee observed that

Usually issues are about i) language, or ii) lack of understanding about context/constraints. #Organisation

Overall the MLC is seen to be one of the outstanding successes of the Murray RLF, and one that everyone hopes will continue even though the Murray RLF is no longer there to facilitate it. While there is the hope that the MLC has the capacity within its membership to sustain its momentum, members also understand that somethings will change.

We’ll need to think about what things that MLC has done are worth keeping. #District group

Potentially members could share the coordination responsibilities if the MLC continues in its current format, but there is also a level of uncertainty about whether it will continue in the short-term. Other suggestions for the MLC over the next months or years include:

- Developing a strategic vision/plan for the MLC.
- Considering ways to make the MLC more accessible and relevant to local groups.
- Seek funding for a regional facilitator
Legacy of the Murray RLF

In this section we look at the ways that the Murray RLF has supported landcare, using the capitals framework of Mitchell and Allan (2018) as the lens to view the support. The intention of the Regional Landcare Facilitator program was to provide support in the realm of capacity development, rather than in project implementation, and that is what the Murray RLF has clearly done. Importantly, the Murray RLF has worked to instill a good understanding of ‘capacity’, as an enabler of community development, and as a concept that is relative to aspirations and not static. The RLF has also helped to set expectations about what capacity can deliver to groups, and the importance of relationships - that it’s not just about getting projects done.

[It was a] slow ‘light bulb’ for me - understanding what it means to build capacity, i.e. “teaching someone to fish, don’t catch it for them. What it really means to build capacity. #District group

It is also useful to understand the central role of the Murray RLF as this was a strongly recurring theme in the interview data, where the RLF was variously described as ‘the glue’, ‘the conduit’.

It is clear that the Murray RLF had influence in a space that spanned multiple levels of governance, from sub-regional scale, through to national organizational levels, connecting groups and organisations in the Murray region with networks that reach far beyond the scope of the RLF.

The RLF was on a range of our committees, e.g. Weeds, LCAG - it assisted LLS by giving us an avenue into other parts of communities. The RLF brought advice from communities to our committees. #Organisation

Mitchell and Allan (2018) organise social capital into three types: bonding social capital (the glue that binds), bridging social capital (the oil that makes for smoother connections) and organisational capital (the nuts and bolts of social coordination). To these they add human capital (individual skills and knowledge), and physical and financial capital (the infrastructure that enables action). Each of these is considered below, in relation to the Murray RLF project.

Human capital

Group skills and experience

The Murray RLF project supported a substantial increase in the skills and experience, across an increased range of community groups in the region. Throughout the 2014-2018 period, the RLF has played a role in bringing a diverse array of training opportunities including strategic planning, governance, GIS, media skills, effective communication, marketing, conflict management, grant writing, budgeting, nature photography, leadership, and personal development. The role of the RLF in building human capital has typically been in the targeting of training to suit needs, sourcing specialist trainers, and providing funding, often in conjunction with other partners, and Murray LLS in particular. For some groups major capacity changes have occurred

We are a hub of knowledge and resources. We are more capable and confident. We have better systems and planning processes. I’ve learnt about things like crowdfunding, and reconciliation ecology. Farming Together - enabled us to think about different business plans/strategies. #District group
The mentoring role provided to groups in their infancy stage was phenomenal.

#Organisation

Up-skilling

Up-skilling and leadership development has been particularly evident with the way LLCs have been able to gain traction very quickly with their local groups, in large part because of the mentoring and support provided to them by the RLF. Among the LLCs there is now a high level of competency in areas such as social media and website development, managing meetings, workshop facilitation and interactive audience participation, conflict management, project management and community engagement. There is some evidence of LLCs transferring new skills to local groups.

She put me on to web training, and we’ve continued learning. I’d never started web design from scratch. She found someone to help me. [The LLC] is my ‘go to’ person.

#Local group

Group motivation and leadership

The flow-on effects of up-skilling can be seen in improved funding applications that have yielded increased funding success, leadership development in groups, and increasing self-confidence of group representatives.

The RLF has displayed strong leadership in governance matters, assisting district and local groups to take governance more seriously and establish best practice procedures. Leadership was also evident in the process to gain support for the 2017 NSW Landcare conference, both in securing the event and promoting its value to the local Board and to LLS more broadly. The role of Holbrook Landcare Network in delivering the Murray RLF project, and applying their considerable leadership skills, was also acknowledged.

The RLF was housed externally – it was a real strength: there was perceived independence and connection to the actual groups, because one of them hosted the position.

#Organisation

Holbrook Landcare Network is an autonomous NGO, but with a background knowledge of government processes. It gave us the confidence to continue on [our] path.

#District group

There is evidence of a flow-on effect with leaders emerging in district and local groups, after RLF input. For example, with help from the RLF one local group has changed its trajectory from one focused on winding down the group, to a renaissance with a changed operating model that better suits the times.

If not for the RLF I don’t think the group would have got going again. It had no ‘new blood’, it was stuck in the traditional model of Landcare, i.e. monthly meetings at night, tree planting projects. . . . We are trying a different approach. We have some goals and are trying to visualise what success looks like. We meet as we need to rather than on a fixed cycle.

#Local group

In another example, the Western Murray Land Improvement Group (WMLIG) is leading a proposal for a collaborative, community-based environmental/agricultural education hub, negotiating with some 35 potential partners on the project. In their own words, WMLIG is “giving it a red hot go”. It has been
suggested that such bold, aspirational behavior would not have been seen even two years ago, and that.
capacity change in WMLIG is having a significant influence on WMLIG’s actions and behavior.

I’m so proud of WMLIG given the funding cliff they are approaching. Their mission is
to assist their local communities to stay vibrant. Lack of funding hasn’t stopped
WMLIG from looking for funds/partners outside Murray LLS. They have taken on
board all the capacity building. They give me perspective and I am filled with
admiration. #Organisation

Bonding social capital
Respect/trust/commitment
An increase in bonding social capital is evident within the Murray Landcare Collective, particularly
among members who participate in face-to-face meetings. The structure of the collective places no
obligation on members to actively participate in meetings, so people attend because they want to, and
because they have the time and funding resources to do so (acknowledging that not all groups have
those resources). Over time members at meetings have come to respect and trust each other and view
the MLC as a vehicle for enabling information sharing, collaboration and partnerships that did not exist
previously.

It changed our relationship with Murray LLS. Other regions don’t have the same
relationship with Landcare. #District group

Those relationships [in MLC] will get you through times of change (like the current
one). The relationships are strong enough. #Organisation

Identity
The identity of the MLC as a collective has been shaped by the RLF over the past 4 years. For some (but
not all) members who have participated regularly at MLC meetings, close bonds appear to have been
developed.

The last meeting had a ‘family feel’ about it. There is comfort in relationships. We
have an ease with each other. #District group

We feel part of the region, stronger together. It’s inclusive. #District group

There’s comradeship – knowing you’re not in it on your own, especially when things
get tough. #District group

The challenge for the MLC, now that the RLF project has concluded, will be to maintain the identity and
enthusiasm that has been built.

Shared values
There is some evidence that the MLC has created a platform for higher-level shared values and a
common purpose.

We are seen/see ourselves as a leader in the region. It shows we are part of a bigger
picture. #District group
It has made us see that we are part of a bigger world. There are the same issues everywhere, but with different local character. #Local group

It has given us a common purpose, a common platform. #District group

However, some interviewees emphasized the different focus of their group, suggesting a range of values and purposes exist among MLC members, which is not surprising given the breadth of member groups and interests.

Bridging social capital
Significant improvements in bridging social capital are evident from the interview data.

Community engagement
Community engagement has been enhanced through training offered to groups, and through actions of the RLF to increase the impact of communications. Training has helped Murray landcare groups and others to tailor their communications to be more succinct, targeted and hopefully effective.

Key examples where community engagement has been enhanced include the fortnightly radio spot on ABC Riverina, with a large listenership, where the RLF participated in a talkback/information session promoting awareness and information about Murray landcare events and activities, and often featuring interviews with individual Murray landcare or Murray LLS staff. Media training assisted group members and LLCs to present well to media on radio and in other media opportunities. The RLF has also been instrumental in establishing a strong presence for Murray landcare on social media, including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Community catalyst
Landcare, producer and conservation groups have been major proponents of community events and activities. Improvements in communications, facilitated by the RLF, have helped to expand the influence of Murray landcare. An example can be seen in the Henty Field Days where the efforts of the RLF are perceived to have contributed to an increase in visitor numbers.

Edwina provided coordination and funding support for the Landcare shed. . . . It’s important to have a presence at Henty Field Days. By the end, you’d have regulars that call in every year to find out what’s happening. #Local group

Edwina helped with the Landcare shed – she organised groups, volunteers, tickets, we had a display there. Visitor numbers have increased. #District group

Community discontent with the Murray Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) water reform process has been very strong in the western Murray, where communities are significantly impacted by proposals. Community engagement strategies to date have failed to resolve outstanding issues. More recently WMLIG has played a pivotal role in the establishment and running of the MDBA – Edward Wakool Basin Reference Group, bringing together a range of affected stakeholders to discuss difficult problems. The role of WMLIG in this is that of a trusted local group that has the legitimacy and credibility to facilitate and negotiate across multiple levels of bureaucracy. An important outcome from the reference group is in bringing parties that have previously taken strongly adversarial positions to sit around the table together.
A big learning [for groups] is unless you invite [your adversaries] into your community, nothing will change, ... unless you have a voice. #Organisation

**Relationships and networks**

The Murray RLF position has developed important relationships both within the Murray region, but also with stakeholders at state and federal level. The high regard for Murray RLF staff is reflected in different ways. For instance, Dale sits on the Landcare NSW State Council, which allows him to represent regional landcare perspectives, and to convey state Landcare information back to Murray landcare. Some of the metaphors used to describe both Edwina and Dale, including the “glue”, the “conduit”, the “trusted middleman”, convey something of the central and two-way role they have played in the Landcare space.

As one informant commented

*This [the RLF] is a critical role for statewide programs. It improves our ability to do our jobs . . . Both Edwina and Dale give us honest feedback. It helps in making sure we stay grounded to what is needed, it influences how we operate. #Organisation*

Similarly, relationships forged by the Murray RLF with government stakeholders at regional, state and federal level, have helped to build trust and ensure that devolved funding balanced the needs of investors with the priorities of local groups.

Within the region, the Murray RLF is central to an extensive network of groups and stakeholders, one that is enhanced by the personal networks of RLF staff. The network has been particularly beneficial for larger groups and networks, assisting them to develop new relationships and strengthen existing ones.

*It has] enabled us to connect with landcare/producer groups and assist with those groups on the ground. . . [The RLF] made us aware of some groups, or the need for new groups to be established. [She] introduced us to key people in relation to those groups, helped us understand their needs. #District group*

For groups run by volunteers, the opportunities to develop face-to-face relationships were more limited, but being in a network with other groups provided an opportunity to feel connected, and less isolated.

*It’s so important to know people. Having a relationship allows for the building of ideas. You don’t value it until you think about not having it. You take it for granted. It can be very isolated working in these roles. #Local group*

For some groups, the feeling of ‘connection’ only emerged when Local Landcare Coordinators (LLC) took up their roles, allowing for more frequent and closer interactions to occur:

*Before [LLC], there was not much interaction. We didn't feel connected to the RLF. When [LLC] arrived, there was more interaction with other groups. She has been very helpful . . . We are now more aware of the other groups. #10 Local group*

In groups where staff have been employed continuously over a long period, the arrival of LLCs resulted in minimal change to their relationship with the RLF. As one group representative commented:

*I’ve been there since 2011. My needs have decreased overtime. #District group*
Others valued the information, awareness and opportunities that being in the network offered, without feeling a need for more interaction:

*The RLF kept us up to date with funding opportunities, what was going on with other groups, and other activities happening in the region. There were training opportunities we wouldn’t have had by ourselves. #Local group*

*We haven’t seen the RLF; [the LLC] comes to our meetings. The RLF saves us time, disseminating information. Edwina brings the network together. #Local group*

There is also evidence of a changing culture, from competition to one of collaboration, as seen in the LLCI regional bid. Collaboration of this type, where individual groups choose to pursue outcomes that benefit the whole region rather than just their narrower interests, is likely to be a key factor in the resilience of Murray Landcare over the coming period.

*Our first reaction now is to think more broadly - What could this be? Does it apply elsewhere in the region? Who could our partners be? #District group*

**Brokering and external partnerships**

The RLF played a key brokering role in securing support for the 2017 NSW Landcare conference. As mentioned previously the RLF was responsible for persuading the Murray LLS local Board of the value in hosting the event, as well as ensuring organization of the conference proceeded smoothly. The RLF played a critical role in developing the agenda and securing presenters to make the conference appealing to both Landcare members and LLS staff, in process setting up opportunities for both to spend time in each other’s company. Feedback on the conference was highly complimentary to the organisers, including the RLF.

The RLF was also the driver behind the unified Murray regional bid for the LLCI. A strong relationship between the RLF and Murray LLS, as well as the existence the MLC, enabled this approach. As mentioned previously, There are now 6 part-time LLC positions in the Murray region, all situated in the community. The RLF input into design of the proposal, along with has ensured that LLCs can optimize social and geographic coverage across the region.

**Representation and advocacy**

Within the region the RLF sat on multiple committees, including the Regional Weeds Committee, LCAG, ensuring a strong community voice was present. The Murray RLF also sat on the NSW Landcare Council, bringing a regional voice to the state council, and advocating on behalf of the Murray community. Participation on the NSW Landcare Council also enabled the Murray RLF to reflect on how the project was run in comparison with the RLF in other regions, allowing for some pitfalls to be avoided, and providing confirmation of the approach being taken in the Murray region.

**Fairness of decision making and knowledge availability**

The RLF place great emphasis on training in good governance, which includes fairness of decision-making. A number of groups made particular comments about how Dale, in a dual role as RLF and CEO of Holbrook Landcare Network, had shared grant applications with them, forgoing competition in favour of collaboration.
Dale helped me even when we were competing for grants – it was pivotal support.
#District group

Sharing knowledge and disseminating information, in and out of the Murray region, was a key function of the RLF and one that has been acknowledged widely in interviews. The value of information about upcoming events and funding opportunities to district and local groups was emphasized repeatedly in interviews. This coordinated advisory service was recognized as a great time saver for LLCs, and local groups acknowledged that they received information they would otherwise not have had access to.

The RLF never missed a relevant funding opportunity. #District group

Organisational capital
It is clear from interviews that the Murray RLF has played an extremely important role in developing organizational capital, not only in the larger groups, but also in smaller groups that were seeking to improve their governance procedures. The areas where significant organizational capital improvements have been made can be summarized under the following headings:

Strategic planning
A surprising finding from the limited interviews conducted is the importance that groups place on strategic planning. Many informants commented that their group was either i) preparing a strategic plan, or ii) reviewing an existing one.

It is notable that many of the district groups are either developing strategic plans, or reviewing existing strategic plans, as part of their preparation for the next 3-5 years. Some informants commented that on reviewing their strategic plans, they had realized their higher-level vision, goals, values and objectives remained unchanged, but they now saw a need for different strategies describing how they would reach their goals.

One participant noted how normalized strategic planning has become for their group.

Strategic planning has become more acceptable to this group. We started a strategic plan about 2 years ago, members didn't engage. Now they are viewing it as an exciting challenge . . . Now members understand the need to take a broad view first. . . [The plan is] needed to help with funding changes for the future. #District group

RLF support for groups in the areas of strategic planning was highlighted by several participants. In late 2017, with funding from Murray LLS, the Murray RLF organised a series of workshops, including sessions on strategic planning, that have consolidated group capacity in these areas. The RLF also facilitated an informal strategic plan review session at the MLC, where participants shared their strategic plans with each other and received feedback, comments, suggestions from others, a process that was well received.

Comparing Strategic Plans has been helpful. It's inspiring to see what others are doing. #District group

At the strategic planning day we learnt we were right 'up there' with governance, and planning. #District group
Overall, groups suggest they are better equipped to undertake strategic planning, and it is clear that strategic planning, either review or development, will be a core interest for several groups over the coming years.

*Reviewing the strategic plan is one of our next steps. #District group*

In discussions about strategic planning the RLF helped groups to understand where government policy was coming from, and encouraged groups to consider opportunities and consequences, helping to bring their ideas through to fruition.

*Being involved with regional governance arrangements, means we have increased our understanding of context - policies, priorities, how government works - we have our finger on the pulse! #District group*

*RLF enables others to undertake projects which otherwise had no traction. Some people have great ideas but need support to make it happen. #7 Local group*

For some groups, the impact has been enormous and potentially transformative. For example, the Western Murray Land Improvement Group (WMLG) proposal for an educational hub mentioned previously, if successful, will dramatically change the way the group sees itself and works. Such opportunities would not have been conceivable to the group even four years ago.

*Now we have better skills to take the next steps to be transformative. We are better as a business, doing what we need to do, better even since 2014. #District group*

**Program management**

In describing how the RLF helped groups with a planning proposal, one interviewee commented that

*[We had] essential support from Dale, leading the meetings, like steering a rudderless ship. He got them to bring it all together and then progressed it. He changed the momentum. #Local group*

**Governance and accountability**

Interview participants reported improved standards of governance because of support from the RLF. The RLF has been able to assist groups with a variety of governance related matters, including the provision of advice and guidance to groups undergoing, setting up contracts and staff payroll systems, managing budgets, providing reporting templates, constitutional compliance, running meetings, and managing conflict. The flow-on effects of improved governance, include better record keeping and reporting, increased opportunities for partnerships, well written funding applications, increased confidence of investors, and in theory at least, increased funding success for groups.

*Better understanding of governance. Better connected. Better applications. Better at knowing who/how to play with. #District group*

*The RLF project helped us to look at the importance of our governance operations, making us aware of what our group needs to operate at a high level of governance. #District group*
Dale gave lots of assistance to [our group] . . . our organisation was emerging; he especially helped strategically, looking ahead, lessons, governance, staff management, contracts, bookkeeping, especially in the last 2 years. #District group

Program management
For some of the large district groups the past four years has been a period where they have stepped up to manage larger projects. As mentioned in the previous section, improved governance standards have been a key element of project management gains. Much of this high-level governance advice was given by Dale, whose experience as CEO of Holbrook Landcare Network was highly relevant. But interestingly, the RLF has also helped Holbrook Landcare Network improve its capacity to manage large projects such as the Carbon Farming Project, particularly through Edwina’s connections with federal government, and being able to convey an understanding of government’s needs for the Carbon Farming Project.

At a practical level the RLF also provided training in the use of budgeting tools, e.g. phased budgeting, as well as templates to help simplify processes for groups, and strengthen accountability.

Critical reflection and flexibility
The clearest indication of critical reflection came from groups that are reviewing their existing strategic plans. One group commented that the review of the strategic plan had confirmed their vision, goals and objectives were still appropriate, but their ways of doing things may need to change. The review has engendered confidence in the strategic direction the group is planning to take over the next few years. This type of thinking suggests triple-loop learning is occurring in the group. The group linked their ability to undertake critical reflection of the strategic plan to an improved understanding of governance.

Our priorities haven’t changed, it’s how we go about it. . . With our understanding of governance. . . .We are able to reflect better on achievements in the strategic plan.

#District group

Information management
As mentioned previously, the RLF is a highly connected and capable communicator. Through the RLF project, Murray landcare in its broad sense has developed a high profile in the community, using a variety of channels, including radio, print media, social media email and newsletters to broadcast news and information. In addition, the RLF has provided training and mentoring to groups, and LLCs in particular, about communication and information management.

No information about electronic information management systems was gathered during this study.

Organisational communications, systems and procedures
The RLF ensured meetings were supported with agendas and minutes/meeting notes, that were distributed after events. Minutes/meeting notes were distributed electronically to all MLC member groups (though not all local group members interviewed were entirely clear about receiving meeting notes).

In terms of meeting procedures, a number of interviewees commented that MLC meetings sometimes did not have clearly articulated objectives and/or outcomes. For some, the reason for discussing particular topics in depth was not always clear. This is an area that the MLC could improve on in future.
However, the LLCs in particular appreciated mentoring the RLF gave them in managing meetings, allowing them to build confidence in their own abilities.

*We’ve been taking turns to chair/take minutes. Edwina has been weaning us in preparation for the change.* #Landcare coordinator

**Physical and financial capital**

Objectives of the RLF did not specifically include building physical and financial capital, so it is not surprising that there is little evidence of change resulting from the project. Where the RLF has played a major role, is in making groups aware of opportunities, particularly funding opportunities. Regular updates of funding programs and guidelines ensured groups have been well informed of opportunities.

*Edwina kept us up to date with funding opportunities, and changes in funding arrangements. She provided crucial information we wouldn’t find out about otherwise.* #Local group

*The RLF communicated the majority of available funding opportunities, reviewed and provided information on the guidelines of these funding opportunities, and highlighted possible collaborators. All the communications provided enabled us to focus on realistic funding opportunities and prepare the best possible applications.* #District group

Similarly, the RLF made groups aware of types of assets and infrastructure, enabling groups to decide whether to invest in them. For instance, one group purchased audience response hardware (“clickers”) as a result of RLF information.

**Evidence of social learning**

In this study we have also looked for evidence of informal social learning occurring in the Murray Landcare Collective. Social learning can be broadly understood to mean

*...the collaborative or mutual development and sharing of knowledge by multiple stakeholders (both people and organizations) through learning by doing.* (Armitage et al., 2009, p. 96).

It refers to collective action and reflection that occurs among different individuals and groups, as they work to improve the management of human and environmental interrelations. There is no easy method for recognising when social learning is occurring, but various studies have drawn attention to characteristics that may be helpful in seeking evidence for it. For instance, Keen et al. (2009, p.3.) identified 5 intertwined characteristics that they regard as integral to social learning. They are: reflection, systems orientation, integration, negotiation and participation.

Pahl-Wostl et al. (2007) considered the triple-loop learning framework as a way of measuring social learning. Using this framework, learning questions might ask:

In the single loop - Are we getting the right results? This type of questioning can lead to minor changes, i.e. refinements or ‘tweaking’, without much variation from existing methods, assumptions, structures
or values. Changes at this level tend to be incremental, and concern changes to skills, practices and actions.

In the double loop – Are we doing things the right way? Are we making the right assumptions? This type of questioning may lead to more significant changes in the way things are undertaken, and challenge underlying assumptions and models. Changes at this level tend to be associated with adaptive management.

In the triple loop – Are our values, norms, structures appropriate for the purpose? This type of questioning can lead to major changes in organisational structures, governance, policies and values, and have significant disruptive effects. Changes at this level tend to be associated with adaptive governance and transformation.

Social learning may take place in formal (e.g. training workshops, classes) or informal settings (e.g. forums, meetings). The Murray Landcare Collective could be regarded as a suitable situation where informal social learning might take place.

In a recent study Cooke (2012) used a three-pronged framework to examine informal learning among NRM groups, where:

- **Saying** encompasses thinking, speaking, discussion, discourses, knowledge
- **Doing** encompasses actions, on-ground activities
- **Relating** encompasses changes in relationships, relating to the world

From the interview data, there are certainly suggestions that social learning is occurring among some participants of the MLC, although it is not apparent from all the interviews. The evidence for social learning is strongest in:

- The way members see themselves as being connected to a much larger world
- The positive emphasis on strategic planning and review as a way of adapting to change
- The willingness to engage with groups that have diverse interests and objectives in the broad landcare space.
- The embracing and adoption of new knowledge, skills and capacities through shared learning opportunities.

Beyond these brief observations it is not possible to draw any other conclusions about social learning.

**Next steps**

When asked about the next steps, groups put forward a range of priorities including strategic plan development/review, maintenance of communications, taking stock, restructuring the organisational structure, developing partnerships and developing new projects.

In the short term, the Murray landcare community needs to plan for a period with fewer resources coming from government, and resources available for different purposes. In this context, groups have an opportunity to reassess their strategic directions, to work out potential ways to operate within the constraints. Opportunities may be to:

- Adjust planned projects to suit the priorities of government funding bodies
- Seek funding for projects elsewhere while still adhering to current planning directions
• Concentrate on preparing project proposals and being ready when funding becomes available (although there is a risk of losing too much momentum if this were to be the only course of action).
• Take a break until funding for groups becomes more readily available.

One of the key changes, will be the reduced capacity of Holbrook Landcare Network to assist other groups in the region, by virtue of Dale’s role in the RLF project.

*As a result of the RLF, we'll continue to be looked to as a regional leader, without having the resources to continue. #District group*

**Summary of the RLF legacy**
We have outlined the key achievements of the Murray RLF project between 2014-2018, noting that there are many more that have not been mentioned here. The achievements we have highlighted are:

1. Redefining ‘landcare’ as an inclusive community
2. Acknowledgment the importance of local differences in the landcare community
3. Driving a unified Murray regional bid for the Local Landcare Coordinator Initiative
4. Championing and coordinating the 2017 NSW Landcare and Local Land Services conference in Albury
5. Bringing targeted training and skills development to the Murray landcare community based on their identified needs
6. Improving communication flows to and from groups and stakeholders, and to the wider community.
7. Supporting the Murray Landcare Collective

**Discussion**
It is clear that the Murray RLF has contributed enormously to capacity development in Murray landcare over the 2014-2018 period, particularly in the areas of human capital, bonding social capital, bridging social capital and organizational capital. In facilitating this capacity development, the RLF has acted in partnership with others including Murray LLS, Riverina LLS and Landcare NSW. This legacy, the enhanced capacity, now resides in Murray landcare groups and their staff.

As we have described in the previous sections, the capacity improvements have taken many different forms, some more tangible and enduring than others. For instance, the provision of tools and templates for managing meetings, projects and budgets become embedded in normal administrative procedures, and the skills involved will get handed on within groups. Other types of capacity, such as self-confidence, bonding capital, or trust can be considered as less tangible, i.e. they reside in individuals, and stay with the individual even when s/he departs, and they take time and effort to rebuild with different participants.

Much of the capacity embedded in the RLF project was not visible. For instance, the RLF was able to draw on extensive personal networks in dealings with government and organisations such as NSW Landcare. Within the region, the influence of the RLF on local groups was less visible than that of LLCs; some groups expressed more concerned about continuity of the LLCs than the RLF. It is also clear that the RLF brought a lot of external relationships to the Murray region, being ‘the glue’, ‘the conduit’,

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essentially a connector between Murray landcare and other organisations and people. In the absence of an RLF, these relationships may be changed or weakened, but not necessarily lost.

From an outside perspective the role of the RLF in supporting the LLCs has been critical, and its absence leaves a gaping hole in the Landcare system. Without the RLF position, NSW Landcare expects that the effectiveness of the LLCI will drop off (this is no reflection on the LLCs).

The Murray Landcare Collective (MLC) is one of the more tangible reminders of the capacity that has been built by the RLF project. The MLC has been the vehicle for increasing social bonding and bridging capital in particular, providing an opportunity for diverse groups and organisations to come together, share knowledge, learn from each other, and develop partnerships. Along the way, much respect and trust has been developed, particularly between the district groups and organizational members. There is also some evidence that MLC members are developing a shared identity and values, a willingness to embrace differences, and an ability to hold robust and frank discussions about difficult topics, signs that would seem to be of strong and maturing relationships.

In the absence of RLF support it is inevitable that the MLC will change. In deciding how to adapt to changes, the MLC will need to be highly strategic, making wise use of what limited resources are available, and ensuring there is no overlap in efforts. Drawing on their relationships and their capacity, MLC members, particularly those that have participated in regular meetings, will need to be bold and creative, and figure out how best to maintain the open, inclusive platform that has been established. This process will require honest contemplation about what to keep, what to let go, what to create/acquire for the future. It is very important that expectations be realistic. Without the RLF to champion the collective vision, it remains to be seen how MLC members will manage the tension between their shared values and aspirations versus their individual ones.

We suggest a short-term objective for the MLC should be to maintain the coordinated email notification to all groups advising them of upcoming events and funding opportunities, as this has clearly been something that has benefited all groups. In the medium-term we suggest the MLC should consider how best to maintain its social bonding and bridging capital over the next few years.

The Murray landcare community – conservation, Landcare and producer groups – have gained enormously from the Murray RLF project. The legacy of the RLF project will hopefully live on in groups that have the resilience and capacity to adapt to the changing circumstances they are faced with and make positive decisions about how they wish to proceed over the next 3-5 years.
References


Appendix 1

Interview

This first set of questions relates to the Murray Regional Landcare Facilitator project (or the RLF as I will call it), between 2014-2018. In that period the RLF was staffed by Edwina Hayes (0.8 EFT) and Dale Stringer (0.2 EFT).

B1 In your current role, how long have you had interactions with the RLF?

B2.1 Thinking about the relationship between [insert the name of your group/network] and the RLF since 2014, what difference has the RLF made to your group/network?

B2.2 Could you tell me in a few words why that is important for your group/network?

B2.3 What difference has the RLF made to you personally?

B3 Thinking about your group/network, what are some of the standout achievements/ successes you have had over the past 4 years?

B4 Thinking about these achievements [the previous B3 response], could you identify 1-3 items where the RLF had an influence? [PROMPT IF NECESSARY] for example, in your ability to get projects up, or to manage and/or deliver them?

B5. For each of those items/achievements I am going to ask you a series of questions.

B5.1 Thinking about [item x] can you describe in a few words how the RLF supported your group/network?

B5.2 Which of the following categories on a scale of 1 to 5, best describes the effect of support given by the RLF? where: [Read out the scale values and categories].

1=Unnecessary (the [item] would have happened anyway)
2=helped a little bit
3=moderately helpful
4=helped a lot
5=critical (the [item] wouldn’t have happened without the RLF input)

B5.3 In a few words could you explain your response [to 5.2]?

B5.4 How would you best describe the scale of the RLF support, where: [Read out the scale values and categories. Scale here should be interpreted as relative to the whole effort required to make the item happen].

1=Negligible
2=small
3=moderate
4=large
5=huge

B5.5 In a few words could you explain your response [to 5.4]?
B5.6 What role(s) did other collaborators/partners play in supporting your group/network with [insert item label]?

Repeat B5.1 to B5.6 for each item nominated in B4

B6 Has the RLF has influenced your group/network in other significant ways? Please describe in a few words.

B7 Can you think of any instances where the influence of the RLF has been unhelpful for your group/ network? Please describe in a few words.

B8 How has the Local Landcare Coordinator Initiative changed the relationship of your group/network to the RLF?

B9 Can you think of any ‘light bulb’ moments you or your group/network have had during interactions with the RLF (e.g. where things suddenly made sense or became clear)? Please explain.

B10 How has the RLF project helped your group/network to prepare for the next 3-5 years?

B11 What are the next steps for your group/network in the next 3-5 years? [for groups only]

B12 What support would your group/network need to make these steps happen? [for groups only]

B13 Overall what do you think the key strengths of the RLF have been over the past 4 years? [for organisations only]

Murray Landcare Collective

One of the key actions of the RLF was to support the Murray Landcare Collective. The following questions will explore your views about the Collective, particularly for the 2014-2018 period.

C1 What did you hope/expect the Murray Landcare Collective would offer for your group/network?

C2.1 How well has that hope/expectation been met?

C2.2 How would you rate your response to the previous question on a scale where:

- □ 1=Not at all
- □ 2=Poorly
- □ 3=Not well
- □ 4=Quite Well
- □ 5=Very well
- □ 6=Exceptionally well

C3 How have you usually maintained contact with the Murray Landcare Collective over the past 4 years?

- □ Attending meetings
- □ Newsletters
- □ Emails
- □ Social media
- □ Collaborations
- □ Other – please explain ..................

C4 How has the Murray Landcare Collective made a difference?

C4.1 To you personally

C4.2 To your group/network

C4.3 To other groups/networks/organisations

C5 Can you think of any ‘light bulb’ moments you or your group have had during Murray Landcare Collective interactions? (e.g. where things suddenly made sense or became clear).
C6 Have you observed/noticed any other Murray Landcare Collective members experience ‘light bulb’ moments because of something you have said or done?

C7 Have you observed/noticed any other Murray Landcare Collective members experience ‘light bulb’ moments because of something others have said or done?

C8 Were there any unexpected or surprising benefits for your group/network from being part of the Murray Landcare Collective that you can think of? Please describe.

C9 Are there instances where the Murray Landcare Collective has been unhelpful for your group/network? Please describe in a few words.

C10 How has participation in the Murray Landcare Collective changed the way you/your group/your network sees yourself/itself?

C11 Are there things you/your group/network does differently because of participation in the Murray Landcare Collective? Can you describe them briefly?

C12 In a few words, what is it about the Murray Landcare Collective that you/your group/ network likes?

C13 How has the Murray Landcare Collective helped your group/network to prepare for the next 3-5 years?

C14 What do you think the next steps should be for the Murray Landcare Collective over the next 3-5 years?...

C15 What importance would you place on maintaining connections with the Murray Landcare Collective in the future?

a. For yourself personally
b. How would you rate your previous response on a scale where:
   - 1=not important
   - 2=slightly important
   - 3= moderately important
   - 4=very important
   - 5=extremely important

c. For your group/network
d. How would you rate your previous response on a scale where:
   - 1=not important
   - 2=slightly important
   - 3= moderately important
   - 4=very important
   - 5=extremely important

C16 Is there anything else about the Murray Landcare Collective or the RLF that you would like to add?