

# National Landcare Network

## Commuque

### An update to the Australian Landcare movement regarding the Status of Restructure discussions between the National Landcare Network and Landcare Australia Limited.

Dear National Landcare Network members and stakeholders,

I am writing on behalf of the Board of the National Landcare Network (NLN) to provide an update on negotiations between NLN and Landcare Australia Limited (LAL) regarding discussions on the merger of these entities and to advise on NLN's focus given COVID-19.

Negotiations have been underway for 4 years to merge NLN and LAL with the aim of creating a new organisation which would provide a single unambiguous voice for the national landcare movement, and support the corporate roles of LAL.

A draft constitution that met NLN members' needs, and which built on positions established during months of mutual negotiations, was forwarded to LAL in December 2019, noting that with some edits it was considered by the NLN to be the document for detail editing to facilitate progressing the merger.

LAL did not respond with detailed comments on the December draft and advised that:

*The material sent ... December 2019 reflected different approaches to some of the core principles .... There would appear to be little prospect of arriving at a position acceptable to Landcare Australia, the NLN and all of its members at this stage.*

The December 2019 document strived to encompass the core principles STOs and NLN Board members considered to be imperative for a merger:

- the need for the new organization to have as its primary function the role of peak body for Landcare in Australia;
- for the new organization to be strongly directed by and representative of the Landcare movement; and
- for existing Landcare organizations such as State and Territory landcare organisations (STOs) to be supported and enhanced by the structuring and governance of the new organization.

The NLN Board met on 24<sup>th</sup> March, to discuss the response from LAL, and responses received from STO Landcare peak bodies following circulation of a similar letter from LAL to each STO. While all STOs and the NLN agreed a merger is desirable it was also agreed that the above core principles are fundamental to supporting STOs and their members and must be respected.

Given this feedback from its STO members, the NLN Board, at its meeting, unanimously agreed that given LAL's response, the impact on many of our members of the drought and wildfire events plus the more recent emergence of the COVIC-19 pandemic, it is imperative that the NLN Board focus attention on NLN core activities to support its members during this time of crisis. The merger with

LAL will be a standing item on the Board's agenda and subject of further Board discussion in 6 months' time.

The NLN Board, during this time of challenge is using its resources to support and advocate for the grassroots Landcare movement. In partnership with STOs we will work to provide strong leadership for the Landcare movement to maintain resilience in our communities in the face of recent natural disasters and the compounding impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patrick O'Connor".

Patrick O'Connor  
Chair - National Landcare Network