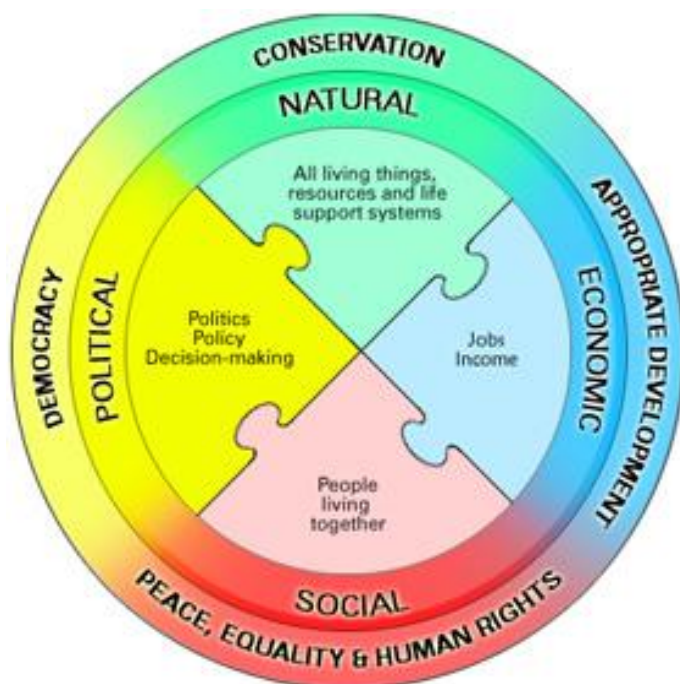


Submission: Inquiry into the National Landcare Program

From what I have personally seen, the Caring for Our Country (CfOC) program has delivered a variety of outcomes such as improved sustainable agriculture in the Hunter; GhostNets Australia; and deliver Wet Tropics World Heritage connectivity in refugia areas. I can see how the CfOC program has effectively delivered many natural resource management (NRM) services to conserve Australia's environment for a large variety of communities.

The performance of the CfOC program, like many similar programs in the past, is highly dependent on the moving goal posted caused by the changing political environment. From my experience this ongoing change will generally shift the 'Political' pillar and subsequently rocks the 'Social, Economic and Natural' sectors (see Figure 1). This creates ongoing uncertainty of delivery processes by government, staff, and the community.

Figure 1 [UNESCO Holistic vision of a sustainable future](#)



For example, I was told in December 2013 at the National forum for Regional Landcare Facilitators that Landcare funding was quarantined from budget cuts by the incoming Federal government. However at the time, the media was reporting one Member of Parliament was asking for Landcare funds to use for other causes; and the funding was eventually slashed in two anyway after the May 2014 Federal budget.

I have seen the evolution of Landcare and participated in some of its activities during the 1980's while living in the Queensland Brigalow Belt. Things have changed over the years but many of the basic activities are the same i.e. off stream watering, weed control, tree planting, community support, etc. Given Landcare is predominately a volunteer based organisation, and the new National Landcare Program, includes the principles of 'Simple, Local and Long Term', rather than providing several pages of detailed advice, I will submit the following one most important recommendation.

I recommend in the future, as a national exemplar model to other similar organisations, that our political parties agree to provide 'some' political immunity for Landcare over at least three terms of government regardless of the change of political party.