



Bruce Boyes, Secretary,  
LWMA - Lockyer Landcare,  
PO Box 61, Forest Hill, Qld, 4342.  
Ph: 07 5465 4400, Fax: 07 5465 4067.  
Email: loccatcen@mailbox.uq.edu.au

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The Secretary,  
House of Representatives Standing Committee  
on Environment and Heritage,  
Parliament House, Canberra, ACT, 2600.

### **Submission to Catchment Management Inquiry**

In 1981 Fred From, a farmer from the Lockyer Valley west of Brisbane, had a vision. A vision to bring people together to care for their catchment. His vision became reality with the formation of Queensland's very first Catchment Care/Landcare Group and one of the first of its kind in the whole of Australia. The Lockyer Watershed Management Association (LWMA) - Lockyer Landcare Group emerged as an action-orientated organisation which has now carried out many successful projects and activities.

LWMA - Lockyer Landcare has the following objectives (from the Rules of Incorporation, 18/2/88):

- (i) To encourage community involvement, co-operation and self-help in investigating, documenting, communicating, demonstrating, and implementing sound land use practices, so as to create an aesthetic and economic environment of the highest quality for all people living in the Lockyer Valley, South East Queensland.
- (ii) To develop and advance the science and practice of good land use and promote the sustainable use of the waters, soils, and vegetation of the Valley.
- (iii) To promote the adoption of a total catchment management approach for the integrated conservation and development of the Valley.
- (iv) To enhance the general community's knowledge and understanding of the people, history, land usage, waters, soils, vegetation, and wildlife of the Valley.
- (v) To conserve native flora and fauna by integrating nature conservation practices with rural enterprises for the benefit of the countryside and the community.
- (vi) To develop, in terms of the above objectives, a model of sound watershed management as an example for application to catchments throughout Australia.

As can be seen from Objectives (iii) and (vi), LWMA - Lockyer Landcare was implementing Catchment Management long before the concept became fashionable. However, when the Queensland Government initiated Integrated Catchment Management (ICM) in 1991, LWMA - Lockyer Landcare was ignored. A new organisation, the Lockyer Resource Management Group (LRMG), was instead established. LRMG has since been renamed the Lockyer Catchment Coordinating Committee (LCCC).

The creation of another Catchment Management body in the Lockyer when one already existed has created many difficulties. Most significantly, issues that had been successfully advanced by LWMA - Lockyer Landcare were taken back to square one by LRMG. For many issues, effective progress was lost and action was stalled. LCCC has since made excellent progress on these issues, but a far greater level of outcome achievement could have been reached by now if LWMA - Lockyer Landcare's existing achievements had been further advanced instead of LRMG starting again from scratch.

An example is the issue of nature conservation. LWMA - Lockyer Landcare has led the way in achieving the integration of nature conservation into the rural production landscape, with many successful outcomes including Queensland's first Nature Refuge, the Berlin Scrub Nature Refuge, established in 1994. LCCC is only now at the stage of starting to fully address Lockyer Valley nature conservation issues, whereas a far greater level of outcome achievement could have been reached by now if LWMA - Lockyer Landcare's achievements had been used as the starting point.

LWMA - Lockyer Landcare and LCCC have taken the initiative to try and resolve these difficulties through a proposed amalgamation of the two bodies. Both organisations have passed resolutions supporting progress towards a merger, but progress is being hampered by a lack of resources. Other areas in Queensland are also apparently experiencing similar problems as a result of the initiation of Integrated Catchment Management.

Difficulties like those experienced in the Lockyer are the result of State and Federal Government decision making that ignores local communities. These sorts of problems could be avoided in future by State and Federal Governments properly involving the community in decision-making processes. LWMA - Lockyer Landcare asks the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment and Heritage to consider recommending that all relevant State and Federal Government departments establish and implement Codes of Practice that specify the role the community must be given in any decision-making processes.

Given that the Lockyer problems have been caused by the initiation of Integrated Catchment Management, LWMA - Lockyer Landcare feels that the State and/or Federal Government has a responsibility to provide the resources necessary to achieve successful progress towards a merger of LWMA - Lockyer Landcare and LCCC. LWMA - Lockyer Landcare asks the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment and Heritage to consider recommending the provision of such resources to LWMA - Lockyer Landcare and LCCC, and to any other groups in Queensland experiencing similar difficulties.

## **Summary**

LWMA - Lockyer Landcare asks the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment and Heritage to consider recommending:

1. That all relevant State and Federal Government departments establish and implement Codes of Practice that specify the role the community must be given in any decision-making processes.
2. The provision of resources to LWMA - Lockyer Landcare and LCCC to assist these groups achieve successful progress towards a merger, and the provision of resources to any other groups in Queensland experiencing similar difficulties as a result of the initiation of Integrated Catchment Management.

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