

KETTERING COASTCARE/LANDCARE

Senate Inquiry into Natural Resource Management and Conservation Challenges

- Commonwealth investment in resource management has generally been very successful and much appreciated. The Landcare 'brand' that was once just a good idea is now generally recognised and held in high regard by the community. This wouldn't have happened without the investment of significant funds that resulted in many successful projects of benefit to the natural environment. The many local 'care' groups were able to generate and take through to completion projects of importance within a particular region. Of particular use to small groups was funding that provided equipment for on ground projects. From its small beginning, the 'Care' movement has been able to expand its horizons to a more widespread regional viewpoint – a catchment to coast approach.

There have been some problems along the way.

- funding seemed to be rather more focussed on achieving administrative outcomes than on ground results with projects expected to be finalised within certain timeframes rather than considering biological cycles.
 - goals need to be measurable in the short term ie how many trees were planted or kms of fencing installed rather the long term result such as the amount and quality of vegetation rehabilitated by removal of environmental weeds etc.
 - there have been a number of teething difficulties associated with Caring for Our Country grant applications. While Envirofund did have problems, it would have been preferable to refine any new system before foisting it onto people who in many cases are working in a voluntary capacity. It seems we always have to reinvent the wheel.
- there is a need to support existing effective organisations, such as Tasmanian Landcare Association, who have built up strong networking skills and who are able to assist groups to achieve their desired outcomes.
 - regional NRM groups have been effective in prioritising regional focus and distributing devolved grants. This structure has also been successful in addressing ecosystem management across a variety of land tenures.
 - it is imperative to continue to adequately fund this environmental work to ensure future ecosystem health over the long term.