

# CRITICAL LANDCARE



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EDITED BY

Stewart Lockie &  
Frank Vanclay

# **CRITICAL LANDCARE**

edited by Stewart Lockie and Frank Vanclay

**Key Papers Series, Number 5  
Centre for Rural Social Research  
Charles Sturt University**

*Critical Landcare*

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phone: 069-332778  
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## Notes on Contributors

**Margaret Bailey** is private consultant based in northern NSW. She has been the NSW State facilitator of Landcare.

**Ruth Beilin** lectures in environmental horticulture at the University of Melbourne's Burnley College. She is engaged in doctoral research through RMIT, examining Landcare policy from the perspective of communities in south west Gippsland.

**Andrew Campbell** was Australia's first National Landcare Facilitator. He subsequently undertook postgraduate studies at Wageningen Agricultural University in The Netherlands, and did research through the Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies at the Australian National University. He is now working in the Commonwealth Department of the Environment, Sport and Territories.

**Anna Carr** recently completed a PhD through the Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies (CRES) at the Australian National University, examining the role of community groups in environmental management. She is now conducting post-doctoral research at CRES into innovation and information exchange.

**Allan Curtis** lectures in resource management at Charles Sturt University, and is attached to the Johnstone Centre of Parks, Recreation and Heritage in Albury. He has undertaken several State Landcare evaluations, and is active in local and regional Landcare groups.

**David Davenport** is a postgraduate student at Charles Sturt University and is involved in Landcare groups.

**Terry De Lacy** was the Director of the Johnstone Centre of Parks, Recreation and Heritage at Charles Sturt University, but has since been appointed Dean of Applied Science at the Gatton College of the University of Queensland.

**Sarah Ewing** recently submitted her PhD in the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies at the University of Melbourne, on the subject of Landcare evaluation. She has had extensive involvement in Landcare from the local to the State level.

**Robert Haworth** lectures in physical geography and environmental history at the University of New England in Armidale. His current research and recently completed PhD is on the causes and extent of environmental degradation in rural Australia since before European settlement to the present day.

**Geoff Lawrence** is Foundation Professor of Sociology and Director of the Rural Social and Economic Research Centre at Central Queensland University. He has written extensively on rural social issues and the political economy of agriculture.

**Stewart Lockie** recently completed his doctorate at Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga, on social aspects of Landcare. He is now a Lecturer in Sociology at Central Queensland University, where he teaches in the areas of rural sociology, environmental sociology, social theory and Australian society. His research interests include gender, rural culture, Landcare and the environment.

**Peter Martin** lectures in rural environmental management at the University of Western Sydney – Hawkesbury. His current research interests, and the topic of his recently awarded PhD, relate to the implications of participatory environmental management processes to the economic reform agenda in Australia.

**Patrick Morrisey** completed a degree in Systems Agriculture at the University of Western Sydney – Hawkesbury in 1990. He has since conducted consultancies for the Australian International Development Corporation and worked as a Regional Landcare Facilitator in south-east Queensland. He is now a doctoral student at Southern Cross University where he is investigating the application of the Landcare model to regional development.

**Ian Reeve** is a Senior Project Director with the Rural Development Centre at the University of New England and undertakes applied research in a number of areas relating to rural resource management. He is completing a PhD examining the sociological aspects of the generation and management of municipal solid waste.

**Helen Ritchie** is a New Zealander undertaking doctoral studies in the School of Agriculture and Rural Development at the University of Western Sydney – Hawkesbury. She is researching participatory and self-help environmental management groups in Waikato, New Zealand.

**Henry Schapper** is an Honorary Research Fellow at the University of Western Australia.

**Frank Vanclay** is a Key Researcher with the Centre for Rural Social Research and Senior Lecturer in sociology at Charles Sturt University. He has written extensively in the areas of rural and environmental sociology, particularly on the social aspects of farmer environmental decision making and the sociological analysis of agricultural extension. With Geoff Lawrence he has written *The Environmental Imperative* (Central Queensland University Press, 1995). He has also coedited *Environmental and Social Impact Assessment* (Wiley, 1995) and *Agriculture, Environment and Society* (Macmillan, 1992). He is the Vice President of the International Rural Sociological Association, and is heavily involved with the International Association for Impact Assessment.

## PREFACE

The elevation of rural environmental degradation from virtual invisibility in the 1970s, to the forefront of public and political debate in the 1980s and 90s was instrumental in garnering support for what many believe to be a radically new approach to environmental management based on self-help, cooperation and planning — Landcare! Since the National Landcare Program was launched in 1989, Landcare has attracted levels of public participation and political support few would have dared to predict. It has become one of the few 'good-news' stories emanating from a rural sector struggling with debt, tightening terms of trade, and micro-economic reform. Indeed, in an almost wholly urbanised nation that thrives on the consumption of images of a romanticised pioneering past, while ignoring all but the most severe of contemporary rural problems, the interest in and influence of Landcare beyond its agrarian roots is extraordinary.

In trying to assess the likely impact of Landcare on the social practice of rural environmental management, there is an unambiguous need to locate Landcare more broadly within the social dynamics of rural society. Conversely, the widely heralded success of Landcare has, in turn, made its own understanding fundamental to any sociological understanding of Australian rural society. While much has been written about Landcare, it is spread across a number of disciplines and media. Some is technical, some economic, some political, some procedural and some social. It is, therefore, appropriate and timely to bring together the work of a number of social scientists who have sought to come to terms with the social implications of Landcare. The analyses of Landcare included in this book range from reviews of the effectiveness of the government sponsored Landcare Program in meeting its objectives; through critiques of the assumptions or formulation of the program; to explorations of the social, political and environmental implications of Landcare.

The goal of sustainable land management inherent in Landcare, as ambiguous as it may be, is critical to the long term well-being of the Australian people. We are sure we speak for all the authors represented in this book in declaring our hope that the analyses of Landcare offered here will contribute to a more sustainable future. Failure, we believe, to come to terms with the sociological dimensions of land use and land care will lead only to the inappropriate application of technological 'fixes', the appropriation of Landcare support by a select range of interests and, ultimately, a deepening of the environmental and social malaise of rural Australia that has fostered the initial conditions for Landcare.

Most of the chapters in this book were published previously in a special issue of *Rural Society* 5(2/3), a fully refereed journal published by the Centre for Rural Social Research at Charles Sturt University. The widespread interest that was expressed in that issue encouraged us to make the papers more widely available through this expanded monograph in the Centre's Key Papers Series. Previous monographs in this series include *Rural Women; Family Farming: Australia and New Zealand; Rural Education Issues: An Australian Perspective*; and *Communication and Culture in Rural Areas*.

We would like to thank a number of people for their contributions to the production of this book. Perry Share, regular editor of *Rural Society*, was particularly instrumental in providing the encouragement and cajoling necessary to get the job done, as well as

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contributing invaluable organisational and editorial skills. Max Staples, as acting editor of *Rural Society* while Perry was on sabbatical in Ireland, also assisted. Tony Dunn provided photos which were heavily scrutinised for their suitability for the cover. Debbie Strachan and Helen Swan, administrative officers within the Centre for Rural Social Research, prepared the various manuscripts, checked the consistency of references, and endured all manner of reasonable, and at times unreasonable, requests. We would also like to thank Geoff Lawrence, Bob Doyle and Ian Gray, all of whom have been at some stage Director of the Centre for Rural Social Research, for their encouragement and advice. Other colleagues in the Centre have also been supportive.

Finally, it is worth noting that Andrew Campbell, the first National Landcare Facilitator, who was in some ways was extremely instrumental in the success of the establishment of Landcare, has not only been supportive over the years and appreciative of the social science contribution that we have put to him, but agreed to contribute to the collection. To some extent he has become quite converted to the social science perspective himself. Helen Alexander, the second National Landcare Facilitator, has also been supportive and appreciative and has contributed much to the critical discussion about Landcare. She was invited to contribute to this collection, but unfortunately had to decline due to competing demands on her limited time.

Stewart Lockie and Frank Vanclay  
April 1997

## ABBREVIATIONS

ABARE	Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACF	Australian Conservation Foundation
CaLM	NSW Department of Conservation and Land Management (now DLWC)
CMC	Catchment Management Committee
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
DEET	Department of Education, Employment and Training (Commonwealth)
DLWC	NSW Department of Land and Water Conservation
DPIE	Department of Primary Industries and Energy (Commonwealth)
ESD	ecologically sustainable development
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (now World Trade Organisation)
GDP	gross domestic product
ha	hectare(s)
HVCT	Hunter Valley Conservation Trust (1951–91) & Hunter Valley Catchment Management Trust (1991–)
LAL	Landcare Australia Limited
LCDC	Land Conservation District Committee
LEAP	Landcare and Environment Action Program
LGA	Local Government Area
LMU	land management unit
MAF	Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (New Zealand)
MDBC	Murray-Darling Basin Commission
NFF	National Farmers' Federation
NGO	non government organisation
NLAC	National Landcare Advisory Committee
NLP	National Landcare Program
NLMP	National Land Management Program
NRMS	Natural Resources Management Strategy for the Murray-Darling Basin
NSCP	National Soil Conservation Program
NSW	New South Wales
NSW Agriculture	New South Wales Department of Agriculture
NSW Farmers	New South Wales Farmers' Federation
NZFF	New Zealand Federated Farmers
PBR	Plant Breeders' Rights Act 1994
PVR	Plant Variety Rights Act 1987
RAA	Rural Assistance Authority
RLAP	Regional Landcare Action Plan
SCS	Soil Conservation Service of New South Wales (incorporated into CaLM in 1993, and then DLWC in 1996).
TCM	Total Catchment Management
TNC	transnational corporation
WA	Western Australia