

2 What is Landcare?

Landcare is about you caring for what is in your backyard...

However large or small that backyard may be.

What is meant by the term landcare? In simple terms landcare is about putting people in control of their local environment. If we take the idea further, it can be seen as enabling people to manage their land in a sustainable manner ensuring economic, ecological and social benefits for present and future generations. Land management issues don't respect property boundaries therefore a landcare based approach can also help draw people together by encouraging shared solutions. This is how landcare groups are formed and the many benefits of such an approach are explored in later chapters of the guide. In practice hundreds of farmers and landowners have reviewed and improved their approach to land management; trees have been planted, waterways protected, pests controlled and native species encouraged in an effort to maintain a sustainable landscape.

Within New Zealand a number of agencies are involved with promoting a sustainable approach to land management. NZ Landcare Trust undertakes a critical and unique role as the only independent, national, non-government organisation working with the land user community to encourage and actively support sustainable land management.

At a practical level NZ Landcare Trust supports landowners, farmers and community groups to carry out sustainable land management projects. Our Regional and Project Coordinators work closely with rural people, gaining a good understanding of local issues and helping to turn ideas into actions. The Trust helps establish projects by assisting with facilitation and negotiation with local councils and other agencies. Our experience dealing with funding requests can help inject valuable financial assistance to get a project started and our relationships with the scientific and agricultural communities ensure workshops and field days are really useful. We also assist in maintaining longer term project momentum and increasing the scope of already successful projects. In a nutshell, NZ Landcare Trust is about 'action on the ground', encouraging and helping communities to making a real difference. This is the landcare approach.

NZ Landcare Trust unifies diverse interest groups, such as production, environment and recreation. The Board of Trustees includes:

- Federated Farmers of New Zealand
- Fish and Game New Zealand
- Ecologic Foundation
- Federation of Maori Authorities.
- Rural Women New Zealand
- Royal Forest and Bird Society
- Federated Mountain Clubs

