Local fundraising

Local fundraising is vital for community groups, not only because it generates important funds but it also allows you to strengthen ties with local community members, so all can share ownership of the aims and successes.

What is local fundraising?

Getting support from your local community, whether in cash or in-kind, is an important resource for a Landcare group. Your members are part of that community and may have connections to business, service groups and sporting organisations that will work in your favour.

Those relationships mean you could have opportunities to present a case to get support or volunteer help for what you are doing. You can gain greater understanding of the types of support available from different people/organisations.

There are some basic principles that apply no matter who you are approaching for a donation.

You should:

- Seek money to meet your needs – don't change plans dramatically to meet the requirements of a funding source, or ask without identifying how you will use the money

- Spend the money as agreed – if the situation changes, talk to the donors

- Build a good relationship with them and keep them informed

- Keep accurate records of your spending and provide this information when it is requested.

So how do you do it?

Basic fundraising steps

Step 1: Some background work

Run a group brainstorm session to identify potential funding sources – and think through the benefits people would receive from supporting your project so you can tell them when they ask.

Research those potential supporters, build a relationship and find out what they would need from you if they invest in the project.

Make sure your group's communication tools such as flyers and membership information are professional in their preparation and appearance and are up to date.

Document your projects and have clear, consistent records of everything you do – this could all be useful for future fundraising proposals. Think about your successes and why your group would be a worthwhile investment.

Step 2: Seeking donations of services and resources

You know what you need in the way of money, materials, equipment etc – so let people know about it! Publish your wish list in your newsletter, the local paper – or on your own website, which is a great way to keep the community informed of your activities.

Make sure your members are well aware of the group needs that have been identified so they can take advantage of any opportunities that arise.

Step 3: Reporting

Ensure you remember to thank the donor – perhaps in a public speech, or by writing a letter from the group. Keep your supporters up to date with what your group has achieved and continue to do by adding them to your list of contacts for newsletters and so on. You may have completed the work they have funded,

but you may want to ask them for support in future. Knowing that you continue to be active, and being able to see where you might need help, allows them to approach your group when they see an opportunity.

Other ideas

Advertising

Relevant local businesses could advertise in your newsletter to reach interested customers.

Their payment could be goods or services you need, rather than cash. The company may also be able to offer discounts, lend equipment or provide staff time.

Sell goods and services

As a group, you could sell excess nursery plants or unused materials, even items produced by members to raise funds. You could also charge fees for organising workshops and other events that draw on member skills. Then there are the usual fundraisers – but think carefully. Will raffles and car boot sales etc raise enough money to be worth the effort?

Membership fees

Some groups charge a membership fee to cover administration costs. It's not a major funding source but it is a regular income that takes care of the necessary costs – and is a commitment from the members to the group. Many groups collect the annual membership fee at the group's Annual General Meeting and make sure members are aware that this fee is due to be paid, and what it covers.

Getting ideas from others

While no particular fund raising attempt is guaranteed, there are innumerable ways of doing it. Talk to everyone you can – other groups (not just Landcare), service organisations, local business owners, local government officers – and brainstorm the results to find ideas that will work for you.

Further references

Building Stronger Communities:
www.ourcommunity.com.au

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Related Landcare Notes

This Landcare Note is one of a series. These notes provide an excellent guide for the ongoing operation of your group.

Acknowledgements

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