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Many Hands, One Voice

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MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

Making Friends and Sustaining Landcare

The voices of around 60,000 Landcare volunteers and 3,000 groups will be heard in the NSW Parliament following the formation of the NSW Parliamentary Friends of Landcare.

The creation of this group presents exciting opportunities for Landcare in NSW and is a pivotal step forward in the *Sustaining Landcare* campaign.

The group is chaired by the Hon Katrina Hodgkinson MP, Member for Cootamundra. The Deputy Chair is the Hon Mick Veitch MLC and the Treasurer is the Hon Jeremy Buckingham MLC. Members include representatives from all political parties.

The first meeting, attended by around 30 MPs and MLCs, was addressed by Landcare NSW Deputy Chair David Walker from Gunnedah and Councillor Bev Debrincat from Sydney, who thanked Members for their support.

The Parliamentary Friends of Landcare group's activities include:

- Hearing from representatives of Landcare about issues affecting the movement;
- Discussing policy and legislative ideas to support Landcare;
- Promoting the work of Landcare within parliament and the community, and;
- Hosting events involving Landcare.

Landcare NSW Chair, Rob Dulhunty said: "We are thrilled about this latest addition to the Landcare family which will strengthen Landcare's ties with our elected representatives. Over the past few years Landcarers across NSW have struggled with the loss of our infrastructure and funding. The Government's new Landcare Support program coupled with the Parliamentary Friends of Landcare has given us confidence for the future.

Chair of NSW Parliamentary Friends of Landcare, the Hon Katrina Hodgkinson MP, said: "I've been a long-term supporter of Landcare, and relish the opportunity to continue working with Landcare and draw Landcare's achievements, aims and aspirations to the attention of Parliament. The Parliamentary Friends of Landcare aims to further enhance and grow the important and inspiring work this community organisation does for our environment throughout NSW."

Deputy Chair, the Hon Mick Veitch MLC, said: "It's an honour to be involved in this important parliamentary group. I can't wait to get my hands dirty as an advocate for Landcare NSW to make sure the Landcare movement is supported and enriched into the future.

“The legacy of Landcare is already remarkable, and I know its success over many years is due to the committed organisers and thousands of hard-working volunteers around the state. I pay tribute to you and I look forward to meeting many of you as we begin this new chapter together.”

Treasurer, the Hon Jeremy Buckingham MLC, said: “I am proud to have been part of establishing this important group which brings Landcare into the heart of decision making and Government. Landcare is the very essence of localism and community spirit and I will continue to work in the Parliament and in the community to ensure this vital movement is supported and celebrated.”

The formation of the Parliamentary friendship group builds on the cross party support for Landcare that emerged out the *Sustaining Landcare* campaign conducted by the grassroots Landcare community over the past 12 months. At the March 2015 election all major political parties released strong policies in support of Landcare.

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