



# AMENDED BUSINESS PLAN

for the continuation of a service charge for  
landcare support services 2007 - 2008  
in the Shire of Toodyay by the  
Toodyay Land Conservation District Committee

**A BUSINESS PLAN FOR THE CONTINUATION OF A LANDCARE SERVICE CHARGE FOR FUTURE LANDCARE SUPPORT SERVICES IN THE SHIRE OF TOODYAY BY THE TOODYAY LAND CONSERVATION DISTRICT COMMITTEE**

**Introduction**

The Toodyay Land Conservation District Committee (LCDC) was formed in 1989 and operates within the boundaries of the Shire of Toodyay. It has a number of functions under the *Soil and Land Conservation Act 1945*, including *'preventing, remedying or mitigating land degradation and for promoting soil conservation and reclamation.'*

In 1997, in a partnership with the Shire of Toodyay, the Toodyay Land Conservation District Committee received \$104,000 from the Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) to employ a Community Landcare Coordinator (CLC) for a three-year period. Funding was provided on a dollar-for-dollar basis, with the Shire contributing most of the matching funds, the Department of Agriculture contributing funds and the balance provided in-kind by the LCDC and other community organisations.

The first appointee was employed for two years of this contract, followed by a gap of six months. At a public meeting in early 2000, it was resolved to recommend to the Shire that the position continue. Sufficient funds remained for the position to continue until October 2001. The position was re-advertised and filled in July 2000 for a further 12 months. After a further application to Natural Heritage Trust for funding in 2001, the LCDC received another \$30,000 to continue the position through to October 2002.

In the year 2002-2003, a further \$21,000 was provided by NHT, and \$11,000 in 2003-2004, for specific outcomes. No further NHT funding is available for this type of service. Over the life of the project, the Australian Government has provided \$166,000 in funding to the position.

In the original application, a commitment was made by the Shire of Toodyay to seek Council approval to fully fund the position after the NHT funding had been expended. A further commitment was made in the application of 2001. These commitments were made to the Australian Government on the basis that the community would take ownership once funding concluded.

In order to honour that commitment, and to continue the employment of a Landcare Coordinator in Toodyay, in 2002 the LCDC decided to take the initiative and ask the community to maintain this position through a service charge on its ratepayers, for a period of three years. Specific criteria had to be met prior to the imposition of the Service Charge, including the holding of public meetings and the endorsement of Council. The next stage was to refer the matter to the Minister for Agriculture, who subsequently agreed to apply a service charge for the period ending 30th June 2005.

The Toodyay LCDC applied for, and was granted permission by the Minister to raise a service charge for a further three (3) years (to 30th June 2008) to continue to provide landcare support services to ratepayers in the Shire of Toodyay. A Business Plan was developed to assist the community to make an informed judgement on the proposal, and that Business Plan is relevant regardless of the Amended Plan proposed below.

## TOODYAY LAND CONSERVATION DISTRICT COMMITTEE

### **AMENDED BUSINESS PLAN**

At the conclusion of the first two years of the project, the appointee to the position was elected as a Councillor for the Shire of Toodyay (Local Government elections, October 2007), raising the possibility of a 'conflict of interest'. The appointee had also advised the LCDC that she intended to resign from the position, as soon as a replacement was found.

At the same time, the LCDC wished to ensure that during final year of the Service Charge, a strategy for future priorities of the LCDC would be developed, incorporating appropriate features of the Shire of Toodyay's '*Plan for the Future*' document, approved during 2007; this requires a closer working relationship with the Shire, and its Officers.

It is essential that the Amended Business Plan does not stray from the original stated aims of the Service Charge. The priorities expressed below form part of the Amended Plan, however concentration on *General Support to the Toodyay LCDC*<sup>1</sup> in developing a strategy for *Toodyay working towards a sustainable future*<sup>2</sup> will be the emphasis of this Amended Plan.

Priorities for the amended project are –

- General Support to the Toodyay LCDC, including development of a strategy for its future priorities
- To identify point sources of salinity within the Shire, working with adjoining landowners to undertake remedial works, and seeking appropriate funding for assistance
- The provision of access to the latest spatial data systems that offer farmers and other land managers modern mapping tools to increase sustainable land management practices
- To assist and encourage sustainable land management practices such as establishment of perennials (including trees), pastures to reduce groundwater recharge that contributes to rising water-tables, appropriate soil conservation techniques and surface water management to prevent erosion
- To provide advice on the protection and enhancement of the natural assets and biodiversity of the Shire of Toodyay by promoting the planting of local native species and by maintaining remnant vegetation
- To support the establishment of new catchment groups within the Shire
- To provide access to regional information technology
- Act as a point of contact for government and non-government agencies
- Assisting with coordination of the Shire's *Native Tree and Understorey Scheme*
- Provide a service to non-ratepayer based organisations through a cost-recovery arrangement

<sup>1</sup> See General support to the Toodyay LCDC, Page 5

<sup>2</sup> See Toodyay working towards a sustainable future project, Page 5

## TOODYAY LAND CONSERVATION DISTRICT COMMITTEE

### **Project proposal for 2007 to 2008**

The foremost issue for land conservation in the Shire of Toodyay over the next decade will be the sustainable use of our soil resources. It is envisaged that land-ownership trends will move away from the traditional broad-acre farming to rural residential/lifestyle properties, where unsustainable land use may not affect the income base of the landowner. It is therefore essential that a program is developed to provide education to these rural residential/lifestyle landowners.

During the final period of the project, a strategy is to be drafted that will incorporate this education. The strategy will also outline the future directions of the Toodyay LCDC (in consultation with its committee members), and will ensure that the final outcome is consistent with, and compliments, the Shire of Toodyay's recently adopted *'Plan for the Future'*.

To achieve this, the appointee will consult with the Shire of Toodyay and the LCDC, with the aim of developing a good working relationship with both organisations, to provide a strategy that will meet the future requirements for land conservation in the Toodyay Shire.

The strategy will also develop goals for the LCDC, to ensure that the principal aims of the LCDC are carried forward into the future.

## TOODYAY LAND CONSERVATION DISTRICT COMMITTEE

### **JOB DESCRIPTION**

The Community Landcare Support Officer (CLSO) is employed by the Toodyay Land Conservation District Committee to provide the following activities to the community.

- 1. Landcare Support Advice**
- 2. Toodyay working towards a sustainable future**
- 3. Catchment group support**
- 4. Communication**
- 5. Professional Advice**
- 6. General support to the Toodyay LCDC**

#### **1. Landcare Support Advice**

Direct communication with broad acre landowners, assisting them with technical and environmental advice. Provide information to small landowners through the website, and through resources available at the Toodyay Landcare Office.

#### **2. Toodyay working towards a sustainable future project**

Increase the awareness of sustainable land use on small landholdings on issues such as salinity, soil acidity, herbicide resistance, soil compaction, erosion, weeds, animal husbandry and identification of soil management techniques. This will be through the website.

#### **3. Catchment group support**

Assist to facilitate the development of new catchment groups, and provide support and advice to existing catchment groups. Technical advice to catchment groups is fundamental to the position.

#### **4. Communication**

Provide information to the community through the local paper, newsletters and other media

#### **5. Professional Advice**

Provide advice to the farming and general community on natural resource management and the latest sustainable land management practices, and provide technical advice to the Shire of Toodyay, as appropriate.

#### **6. General support to the Toodyay LCDC**

Carry out projects designated by the Toodyay LCDC, and provide support to the committee when required, and to the Community Landcare Support Officer's Management Committee. Assist the LCDC with the Agricultural Show display.

## TOODYAY LAND CONSERVATION DISTRICT COMMITTEE

### **Appointment process**

The position will be advertised on the NRMjobs website, and in other local media. Interviews will be conducted and the appointment made by the Community Landcare Support Officer Management Committee.

### **Accommodation and Travel**

Major capital items such as computer and office equipment were purchased in 2002 and are expected to service the position until 2008. A motor vehicle is not available to the incumbent, however a car mileage allowance is paid at the rate of 65c per km.

The position will be based at an office location within Toodyay

### **Project Management**

The CLSO will be responsible to a CLSO Management Committee (CLSOMC), comprising the Chair (or his/her nominee) of the LCDC and the LCDC Secretary, an officer and a Councillor from the Shire of Toodyay, and an ex-officio officer from the Department of Agriculture. It will meet on a regular basis, and the CLSO will provide a written report of activities to the CLSOMC.

Any other activities of the CLSO must be agreed to by resolution of the CLSOMC

### **Future of the Service Charge**

Continuation of a service charge after the expiration of the three-year funding period cannot occur without further public consultation. The LCDC has agreed that it will not pursue a further service charge, so the position will conclude on 31 October 2008.

### **Toodyay LCDC**

The LCDC comprises volunteer land managers committed to sustainability, and preservation of our natural resources. The employment of a CLSO has promoted the LCDC's objectives, and the imposition of a service charge raised the necessary funds to help finance these projects.

### **Enquiries**

Enquiries can be made through the Toodyay Land Conservation District Committee Chairman, Mr Frank Panizza on 9574 2369 ([chair@toodyaylandcare.org.au](mailto:chair@toodyaylandcare.org.au)) or the Secretary, Mr Wayne Clarke on 9574 5574 ([secretary@toodyaylandcare.org.au](mailto:secretary@toodyaylandcare.org.au))