



# Skills audits – finding hidden talents

Nicole Blackett & Jude Niemiec (South West Landcare Project –Hamilton)

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*Successful groups find ways of maximising individual skills to help the group function smoothly and achieve their goals.*

*This Landcare note outlines a simple approach to conducting skills audits of group members, and includes a sample survey to assist with collecting information.*

## Skills audits – the four step approach

### Step 1 – Define your group’s goals and the roles needed to achieve them

Consider your goals or long term plans at a group meeting.

Discuss and record the actions needed to achieve your group’s goals. These actions will help to identify possible roles for group members.

To make it easier for members to understand the commitment required, develop clear descriptions of what each role involves.

**See Landcare Note LC0039 “Priority Setting” for more information**

### Step 2 – Skills Audit

Skills audits are a method of identifying the skills and talents that are brought to the group by members.

Skills audits can be detailed or as simple as a short survey to identify members skills, interests or training needs.

Surveys can be undertaken at meetings, over the phone, by mail or as a face-to-face interview. They should be short, clear and to the point, taking no more than 20 minutes to complete.

The type of information sought could include experience in or some understanding of:

- technical skills
- academic qualifications or specialist knowledge
- public speaking experience
- meeting procedures
- writing and communication skills
- public relations and promotional skills

A sample survey that can be adapted to suit your groups needs is included on the next page.

### Step 3 – Linking skills to roles (skills matrix)

Once the new group roles have been defined, and the skills audit has identified the available skills in the group, the next step is to link the roles to members’ skills.

When linking skills to roles, remember to include the areas members are interested in, not just what their current skills are.

A skills matrix is a simple way of using the survey information to identifying members’ skills and interests. An example is shown below.

Sample Skill Matrix

	Bill	Bob	Jane
Weed ID	✓		✓
Public speaking		✓	
Native plant ID	✓	✓	

*Note:* A skills matrix can also identify areas that members wish to gain skills in, or skills that they are willing to train others in.

Once the skills matrix is completed, confirm the results with the group. You may find that there are obvious links between members and roles.

**Remember** – members have busy lives. It is important to ask members if they are willing to commit their skills and time to these roles. If they cannot commit to a role, they may be willing to train other members.

### Step 4 – Updating Skills and Achievements

Group roles should be reviewed regularly to make sure they are still the most relevant and suitable to the group. This is particularly important if the group has lost or gained members.

If a role is no longer necessary, ensure the group thanks the member that was fulfilling this role for their efforts.

If a new role is identified, the skills matrix can again help to find the best match.

Overall, using a skills audit and matrix will help the group to achieve its goals in an efficient and effective way.

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## Landcare Member Skills Survey

<b>Background</b>				
Member's name:		Contact details:		
I have basic agricultural understanding	Yes /No	I live on a farm/ large acreage	Yes /No	
I have basic environmental awareness	Yes /No	I live on a small acreage/ bush block	Yes /No	
I am from a rural/ urban background	Rural/Urban	I live on an urban block	Yes /No	
		1 definitely	2 some	3 not much
			4 definitely not	
<b>Activity preference</b>				
I prefer to be outdoors				
I prefer to be indoors				
I enjoy physical activity				
I prefer to work in a large group				
I prefer to work in a small team				
I prefer to work alone				
I would consider taking a leadership role				
I would be happy to be involved in planning				
I would be happy to coordinate activities				
I would be happy to be on a committee				
I would be happy to train members				
I would be happy to work with a primary school				
I enjoy talking to a crowd of people				
<b>Skills</b>				
I can identify common weeds				
I know basic native plant identification				
I grow native plants				
I have basic accounting / bookkeeping skills				
I can use a computer				
I have computer programming skills				
I have electronic/ electrical skills				
I have general mechanical skills				
I have small business management skills				
I am a good organiser				
I can drive a tractor				
<b>Permits/ Licenses</b>		Yes / No		
I have an Australian Chemical Users permit				
I have a seed collecting permit				
I have a chainsaw license				
I have a bus license				
<b>Fitness level</b>				
Very fit	Moderately fit	Average	Moderately unfit	Not fit at all

<b>Equipment use and access</b>		<i>Own</i>	<i>Have access to</i>			
Chain saw						
Brush cutter						
Welding equipment						
Camera						
Video camera						
Spray unit						
Small engine						
Ride- on mower						
Other:						
<b>Hobbies/interests</b>						
		Yes / No			Yes / No	
Bush walking			Photography			
Bird observation			Gardening			
Local wildlife/ insects			Carpentry			
Writing/ research			Music			
History and heritage			Cooking			
Sports – list:			Other:			
			Member of club(s):			
<i>I want to involve my children in activities</i>		Yes / No				
Age of children		<5 years	5-10 years	10-16 years	>16 years	
<b><i>I joined Landcare because...</i></b>						
<b><i>I would like to learn or understand more about...</i></b>						
<b><i>I am available:</i></b>						
<i>Weekdays</i>	Yes/ No	All day	Mornings	Afternoons	Evenings	Nights
<i>Weekends</i>	Yes/ No	All day	Mornings	Afternoons	Evenings	Nights
	Monthly	Several times a year		Once or twice a year		

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