



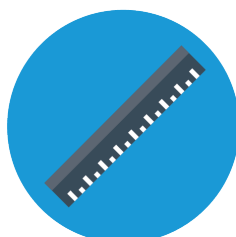
FIRST PERSON
CONSULTING

Evaluation of the Every Bit Counts Program

Prepared for
Department of Planning and Environment



RESEARCH



EVALUATION



DESIGN

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Document details

Title: Evaluation of the Every Bit Counts Program

Client: Department of Planning and Environment

Version	Date	Key changes	Author(s)
Draft v01	5 Oct 2022	Initial draft	Cara Stephenson, Maeva Bennetto, Lucy Walker, Patrick Gilmour
Final v02	7 Nov 2022	Incorporates preliminary feedback from LLS and Environmental Trust staff	Cara Stephenson
Final v03	20 Jan 2023	Incorporates further feedback from senior Environmental Trust staff	Patrick Gilmour
Final v04	22 Jun 2023	Incorporates further feedback from senior Environmental Trust staff	Patrick Gilmour

Executive summary

Background of the Every Bit Counts Program

Across much of NSW, especially the coastal regions, the number of small landholdings is increasing rapidly. These small properties play an important part in the patchwork of land management and environmental values across the landscape. Many of those managing small land holdings have limited knowledge of land management and its role in supporting landscape health and are often disconnected from the broader landscape and land management communities around their properties.

The Every Bit Counts program ('EBC program' or 'the program') was the result of a shared concern between Local Land Services (LLS), Landcare NSW and local councils regarding the environmental impacts of the growing number of small land holdings in NSW. In 2018 the NSW Environmental Trust (the Trust) approved \$2 million in funding for LLS to deliver the EBC program.

The program aimed to improve land management across small properties, from two to 20 hectares. It engaged small scale landholders across four coastal LLS regions: Greater Sydney, Hunter, South East, and North Coast. It focused on:

- encouraging the adoption of best management practices through educational engagements
- improving access to and awareness of education opportunities for both small landholders and community-led network staff
- building peer-to-peer support networks and connection with existing groups including Landcare and local government
- undertaking collaborative works to ensure that there are improvements in the way small "lifestyle" blocks are managed for environmental outcomes.

More broadly, the program aimed to contribute to the Environmental Trust objectives to:

- Encourage and support restoration and rehabilitation projects in public and private sectors that will ultimately reduce environmental degradation in NSW.
- Promote environmental education and to encourage the development of educational programs in both public and private sectors that will increase public awareness of environmental issues.

Key findings

Overall, the EBC program delivered the target outputs as intended, with positive outcomes seen by both small landholders and staff (LLS and community-led network staff). While there were some delays, overall the management and planning processes were appropriate. In particular, having a cross-regional coordinator ensured effective communication and coordination between the regions.

A major challenge in this evaluation was the lack of consistent data between the four regions and an inability to contact landholders who participated in the program for interviews or surveys (because of a lack of consent). However, from the available data and anecdotally, it is clear the program had a positive impact on participating small landholders and staff.

Our findings against the specific areas of inquiry were that:

Appropriateness:

- The program has a strong behaviour-change focus. This theoretical foundation is appropriate, reflecting the vast majority of agricultural extension programs.
- In terms of the planning process itself, the phased approach and use of multiple business plans appears to be appropriate. The approach was also appropriate to reduce risk and ensure success of the program. This is partly related to the ability to do more scoping work and address underlying assumptions or gaps in knowledge, helping to inform the design of interventions.
- In terms of the appropriateness of the program, there was:
 - A clear need for capability building among small landholders
 - Good alignment with the objects of the Trust and LLS Regional priorities
 - Good alignment between the identified need and the design of the program

Process:

- Overall, the program has been well managed:
 - It was delivered within the planned timeframe, despite significant delays in recruitment
 - It was delivered within budget
 - The key planned outputs were all achieved or exceeded
- Program management appeared to be strongly supported by the cross-regional coordinator, particularly in promoting cohesive delivery across the four regions and acted as a broker between LLS and Trust
- The main issues or challenges with program management were the poor management of data and the difficulties in incorporating the program into the LLS' broader work, including business as usual.

Effectiveness and outcomes

- The program successfully achieved or exceeded the cumulative targets that were set out in the business plan and key activities were delivered largely as planned.
- Key outputs included:
 - 187 events were held
 - 1,935 small landholders were engaged in events
 - more than 100 staff attended various capacity building events
 - over 1,800 one-on-one advisory services were provided to small landholders by LLS staff
 - 134 newsletters were developed
 - around 2,000 small landholders have subscribed to newsletters, with 95% of subscribers also opting in to receive local LLS newsletters
 - 31 case studies were developed, including video and written case studies.
- Regions delivered activities in different ways to ensure that they contributed to the intended end of program outcomes. Approaches that were implemented through activities to ensure the outputs led to outcomes included: diversity in workshops, support to regional networks such as local Landcare groups, the EBC program web portal and other resources.
- Survey results were limited, with little raw data available. However, across the regions, an average of 81% of small landholders who completed the survey have undertaken changes to their NRM practices in the 6-12 months following the workshop they attended.

- Most staff indicated the program was ‘somewhat’ or ‘mostly’ effective at building the capacity of small landholders. They generally considered the program was more effective at connecting landholders to networks. Across the four regions, between 32% to 45% of those small landholders who responded to the survey had not engaged with the LLS prior to attending an EBC program workshop.
- Although there were difficulties in measuring the outcomes experienced by participating staff, overall staff felt the capacity of LLS and community staff was enhanced largely through the research undertaken and the resources developed that could be shared more widely across the LLS. Furthermore, Regional and Trust administration staff felt that the program helped build relationships internally with LLS staff.
- Regional staff worked to build the capacity of broader LLS and community-led network staff through:
 - holding workshops on various topics of relevance when working with small landholders
 - providing presentations to broader LLS staff across the entire region
 - developing resources for LLS staff to access and use when working with small landholders
 - partnering with networks to run program-funded workshops targeting small landholders.

Efficiency

- The size and distribution of the budget appears to have been appropriate (for the scale of the program) and the activities appear to have been delivered efficiently with the budget available.
- The program appears to have delivered value for money based on:
 - Its delivery of outputs well in excess of targets, suggesting that if it was scoped appropriately to provide value for money, it more than delivered on this.
 - \$0.5 million of in-kind contributions were leveraged throughout the program
 - The majority of Trust administration and LLS staff considered that the program demonstrated ‘very good’ value for money
 - The value of the intervention itself appears to be high, particularly in terms of the lasting impact on staff capability and resources for doing further work in this space.

Lessons

- Key lessons were identified relating to engaging small landholders. These included ensuring councils are engaged as early as possible, so they are aware of programs and resources, and reaching small landholders through other novel avenues (such as local groups, private landholder networks).
- Staff implementing the activities felt that the key delivery lessons related to the duration of the program, the timeliness of delivering key outputs to inform planning and the benefits that online delivery could offer future programs.
- There is an opportunity to ensure the lessons learned and material created could be turned into a course manual for LLS to use when working with small landholders, or another resource that is used beyond the scope of this program.

Summary of recommendations

For delivery partner/LLS:

We recommend that LLS (or future grantees of similar programs):

1. Build clearer and more comprehensive monitoring and reporting processes and requirements for those implementing the program, this could include:
 - a) Ensuring implementation partners provide comprehensive reporting of delivery data and landholder survey data, with an emphasis on consistency across multi-region projects. This should include ensuring all raw data and program documentation are stored safely in a central location. This is particularly important when programs are being implemented across regions.
 - b) Encouraging the use and reporting of a capacity-building survey for LLS staff or community-led network staff to understand changes in knowledge, awareness and intended practice change following the delivery of virtual or in-person activities.
 - c) Building 'consent to be contacted by external organisations' processes into landholder surveys and forms, allowing landholders to 'opt in' to both internal and external evaluation activities. This would generate a bank of participants available to be contacted to participate in further evaluation activities such as interviews and/or surveys and would reduce the reliance on the LLS to contact participants.

2. Incorporate and share the lessons learned through this program about engaging small landholders. This would help develop and deliver future programs that target this group, as well as potentially integrating the approaches to be more business-as-usual. Key design features to consider and share include:
 - a) Offering awareness raising and capacity building workshops and webinars that focus on key issues experienced by small landholders. These events should continue to be delivered or shared online when appropriate.
 - b) Continue to hold quarterly meetings between regions/participating teams to share updates, ideas and lessons.
 - c) Engaging councils early in delivery, as well as building relationships with a broad range of local networks (such as private groups or commercial entities) to ensure small landholders are reached.
 - d) Emphasise the importance of building connections to community-led networks and LLS to ensure localised support remains in place for small landholders. This could be done, for example, by systematically assessing relevant groups in an area and building partnerships/communication channels across those groups.

For Funding body/the Trust:

We recommend that the Trust (or future funding bodies of programs similar to the EBC program):

3. Ensure future program business plans allocate sufficient time for initial scoping so that this research and information can be used to inform activities related to program delivery. This time allocation may need to explicitly consider the grantee's context and whether:
 - a. Existing staff are available and can commence immediately
 - b. Whether staff need to be hired and the long lead times required for this
 - c. Whether there are elements of the scoping phase that can be accelerated by using contractors to support the grantee delivery team

4. Consider offering tailored evaluation support to grantees to improve the capture of quality data (i.e., through surveying landholders) and improve the management of data. This might be an external resource built into program budgets or a Trust administration staff member. These support people could, for example, 'check in' and support funded projects at key stages of their program design and delivery.
5. Consider updating reporting templates to have a greater focus on program outcomes. This might include reducing the number and variety of output targets and being more explicit about what or how outcomes could be demonstrated. Note that this could be done in concert with the evaluation support noted above, and should consider how qualitative data, case studies and triangulation might also be used to understand and show impact.
6. Continue to allow flexibility with delivery and budget expenditures to support programs to meet the targets.

For future program design:

For the design of future programs we recommend:

7. The LLS and Trust should recognise and consider the value of having a cross-regional coordinator position to manage programs that span multiple regions.
8. In cases where projects are getting grantees to target new audiences or use different approaches, consider how the project can be planned so that those changes (where appropriate) are embedded into business-as-usual. This could, for example, be identified as a key activity in the business plan.

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Acronyms

DPE	Department of Planning & Environment
EBC	Every Bit Counts
FPC	First Person Consulting
KEQ	Key Evaluation Question
LLS	Local Land Services
NRM	Natural Resources Management
VfM	Value for Money

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

In 2018 the NSW Environmental Trust (the Trust) approved \$2 million in funding for Local Land Services (LLS) to deliver the Every Bit Counts program ('EBC program' or 'the program'). The program connects small landholders to the best available knowledge, advice and peer-to-peer support networks and producer groups.

The EBC program was delivered from July 2018 to June 2021 in four NSW LLS regions, including Greater Sydney, Hunter, South East and North Coast. It involved:

- Capacity building exercises for small landholders
- Capacity building exercises for staff who engaged with small landholders
- Development of educational resources specific to small landholders
- Network development and support.

As the program has ended, the Trust contracted First Person Consulting (FPC) to evaluate its design and delivery. Our evaluation findings are presented in this evaluation report.

1.2 Objectives and scope of the evaluation

The objectives of this evaluation are:

- to determine the degree to which the program met or exceeded its intended outcomes and deliverables
- to identify any lessons learned, including but not limited to lessons around governance, financial management, project planning, and delivery of intended outcomes
- to provide recommendations for improvement and future opportunities.

1.3 Content summary

This document presents the evaluation findings, including:

- our methodology for the evaluation (Section 2)
- background and structure of the program (Section 3)
- results relating to the appropriateness of the program, including the planning process (Section 4)
- results relating to project management processes (Section 5)
- effectiveness and outcomes of the program (Section 6)
- program efficiency (Section 7)
- lessons and opportunities (Section 8)
- a summary of key findings and recommendations (Section 9).

2 Methodology

2.1 Overview

Our general approach to this evaluation involved:

- In March 2022, FPC met with Trust administration staff to clarify the overall objectives for the evaluation, agree on the methodology and identify logistical processes and expectations.
- Following the meeting, FPC developed a project plan for the evaluation (key evaluation questions are outlined in Table 1).
- FPC reviewed program documentation and data provided by Trust administration and the EBC program team, including:
 - regional annual reports
 - Trust annual reports
 - business plans
 - budget data
 - grant amendments
 - aggregated survey data
 - case studies and publications
 - the customer segmentation analysis and other business plans.
- FPC completed a total of 16 interviews across two phases:¹
 - Preliminary Phase A interviews (12) with key program staff, including Trust administration staff, Program Managers and Regional LLS staff. These interviews focused on the scope of the program components, lessons from design and delivery, and insights on outcomes and impacts.
 - Phase B interviews with (four) on-ground staff (local LLS, Landcare etc.) who were recipients of capacity building activities or who delivered workshops to small landholders. These interviews focused on delivery and outcomes.

All interviews were completed over the phone or via videoconference and were semi-structured, allowing for a range of issues to be explored depending on their involvement with the program.

- We analysed all available data, including data provided by the EBC program team and additional data collected via interviews to respond to the Key Evaluation Questions (KEQs). This included a thematic analysis of the interviews and simple descriptive analysis of the available survey results.
- Following analysis, we developed this evaluation report, which has been reviewed by Trust administration and LLS staff.

¹ A breakdown of the number of stakeholders from each Phase and group who completed an interview is presented in Table 2.

Table 1. Key evaluation questions. Questions were developed by DPE, with those in bold developed or revised by FPC. The question order has been changed to match the structure of this report (original framework provided in Appendix A).

Focus area	Key evaluation questions
Appropriateness (Section 4)	How appropriate was the planning process in the initial scoping phase?
	Did the program address the identified need and was it the most appropriate thing to do?
Process (Section 5)	How well managed was the program?
	Was the program on time and on budget?
	Were the methods for making decisions and managing the program appropriate and likely to ensure success?
	To what extent were risks identified, mitigated and managed?
Effectiveness and outcomes (Section 6)	Were the program activities implemented as intended. If not, why, and what was the impact?
	Was the program appropriately planned and scoped to ensure delivery of intended outputs and effective measurement of the associated outcomes?
	Were the intended outputs delivered?
	To what extent and in what ways has the capacity of small landholders been built?
	To what extent and in what ways has the capacity of staff who engage with small landholders been built?
	To what extent do small landholders now have access to resources, networks and support through the program to improve their land management practices?
	To what extent have small landholders changed and improved their land management practices? Is there any evidence of positive environmental impact stemming from this?
Efficiency (Section 7)	How efficient were the planned program activities?
	What were the program implementation costs, and were these efficient?
	Could resources be allocated more efficiently?
	Was the expenditure appropriate for the program?
	Did the program deliver value for money?
Lessons and opportunities (Section 8)	What were the lessons learned and/or other opportunities related to the program?
	What could be done differently?
	What were the associated risks with governance, financial management and program planning?

Table 2. Breakdown of stakeholders interviewed for the Every Bit Counts evaluation.

Phase of data collection	Role/stakeholder group	Number
Phase A	Trust administration staff	2
	Regional Program team	6
	Cross Regional Coordinators	2
	Program Managers	2
Phase B	Small Farms Network Capital Region officer	1
	LLS District Vet	2
	LLS Traveling Stock Reserves Team	1
Total		16

2.2 Limitations

There are a range of limitations that should be kept in mind while reviewing this evaluation:

- A large portion of the evidence presented is based on feedback from key stakeholders. It is, therefore, inherently subjective and may contain biases. We have tried to address this by interviewing a broad range of stakeholders involved with the program as well as triangulating results against documents and other data where possible.
- While many of the key program outcomes related to the experiences of small landholders, we were unable to engage any landholders who participated in the program for interviews or surveys. Without consent to directly contact small landholders, FPC relied on regional staff or community-led network staff to reach out to small landholders for interview. Few small landholders were contacted, and of these, no small landholders agreed to be interviewed.
- It was considered inappropriate by the LLS program team for FPC to distribute a new survey to small landholders to assess the overall outcomes of the program. This was because previous surveying had been completed and because of the potential to confuse small landholders, who had engaged with LLS via workshops and may not be aware that these workshops were EBC program activities. Therefore, the direct perspective and insights of the program's target audience is limited to the existing survey data, case studies and feedback from workshops.
- There were missing documents and raw data. In particular, there was a survey conducted of landholders who participated in workshops across the four regions but the raw data was not available because of inconsistent data storage practices and turnover of staff. This contributed to the lack of detailed data regarding landholder outcomes and perspectives.
- The evaluation was completed more than a year since the program's completion so there were difficulties engaging stakeholders to provide feedback on the program.

3 Overview of the EBC Program – structure and key components

3.1 Program background

Across much of NSW, especially the coastal regions, the number of small landholdings is increasing rapidly. These small properties play an important part in the patchwork of land management and environmental values across the landscape. They often carry important ecosystem values and can be stepping stones for native vegetation and animals across broad farming landscapes.

Many of those managing small land holdings have limited knowledge of land management and its role in supporting landscape health and are often disconnected from the broader landscape and land management communities around their properties. As such, small land holding managers have a great capacity for growth and change and are an important demographic to engage. In this context, this program aimed to establish a long lasting, movement of change and improved environmental and community outcomes.

The program is the result of a shared concern between LLS, Landcare NSW and local councils regarding the environmental impacts of the growing number of small land holdings in NSW. In line with their 2015 memorandum of understanding, LLS and Landcare partnered up for the delivery of the program, with the intention of leveraging the LLS' internal resources and Landcare NSW's experience in community engagement and mobilisation.

The EBC program aimed to improve land management across small properties, from two to 20 hectares. FPC developed a program logic (together with existing documentation) for the program, presented in Figure 2, highlighting the activities and aims of the program. The program engaged small scale landholders across four coastal LLS regions: Greater Sydney, Hunter, South East, and North Coast. It focused on:

- encouraging the adoption of best management practices through educational engagements
- improving access to and awareness of education opportunities for both small landholders and community-led network staff
- building peer-to-peer support networks and connection with existing groups including Landcare and local government
- undertaking collaborative works to ensure that there are improvements in the way small “lifestyle” blocks are managed for environmental outcomes.

Specifically, the program aimed to contribute to the Environmental Trust objectives to:

- Encourage and support restoration and rehabilitation projects in public and private sectors that will ultimately reduce environmental degradation in NSW.
- To promote environmental education and to encourage the development of educational programs in both public and private sectors that will increase public awareness of environmental issues.

The EBC program was implemented in three phases across three years, and involved:

- a background review of issues and barriers specific to the engagement of small landholders
- developing, adapting and revising information relevant to small landholders
- engaging with LLS and community networks
- building the capacity of existing LLS advisory and project staff to engage with small landholders
- building opportunities for community networks to engage with small landholders

- education activities and advice for small landholders on specific NRM and land management topics

The governance and delivery structure of the Program is presented in Figure 1.

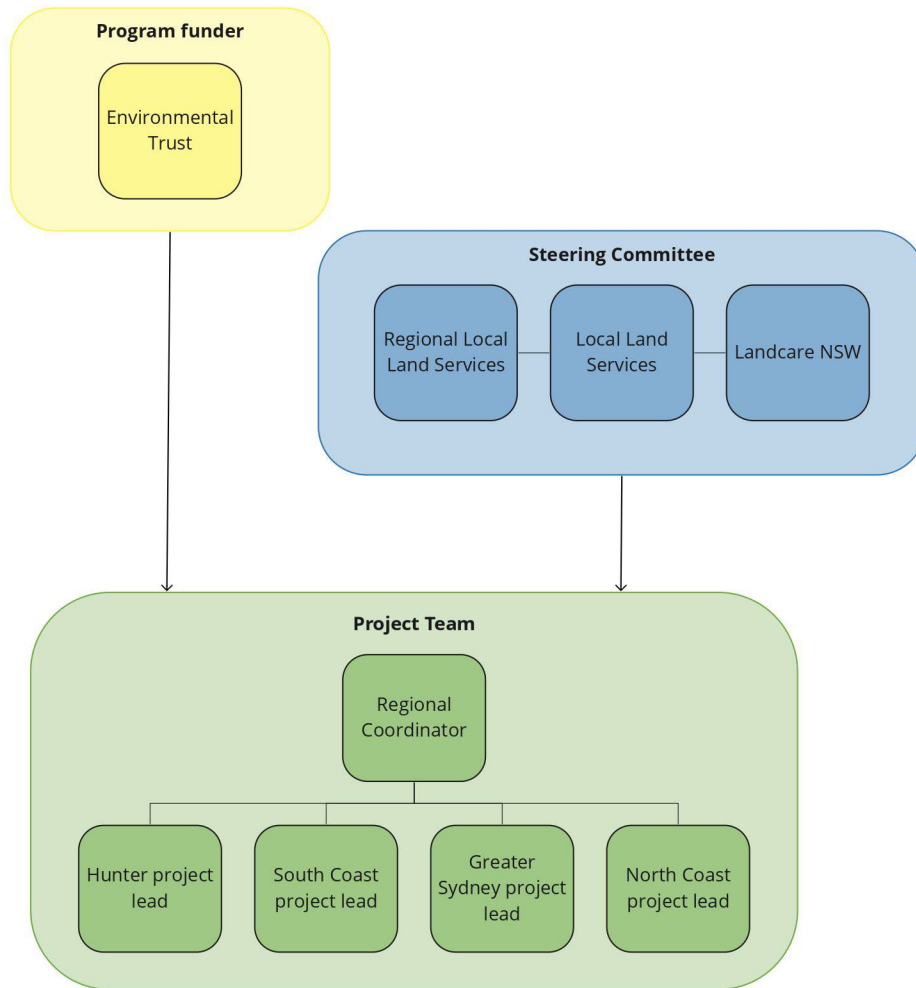


Figure 1. The EBC program Governance and delivery structure.

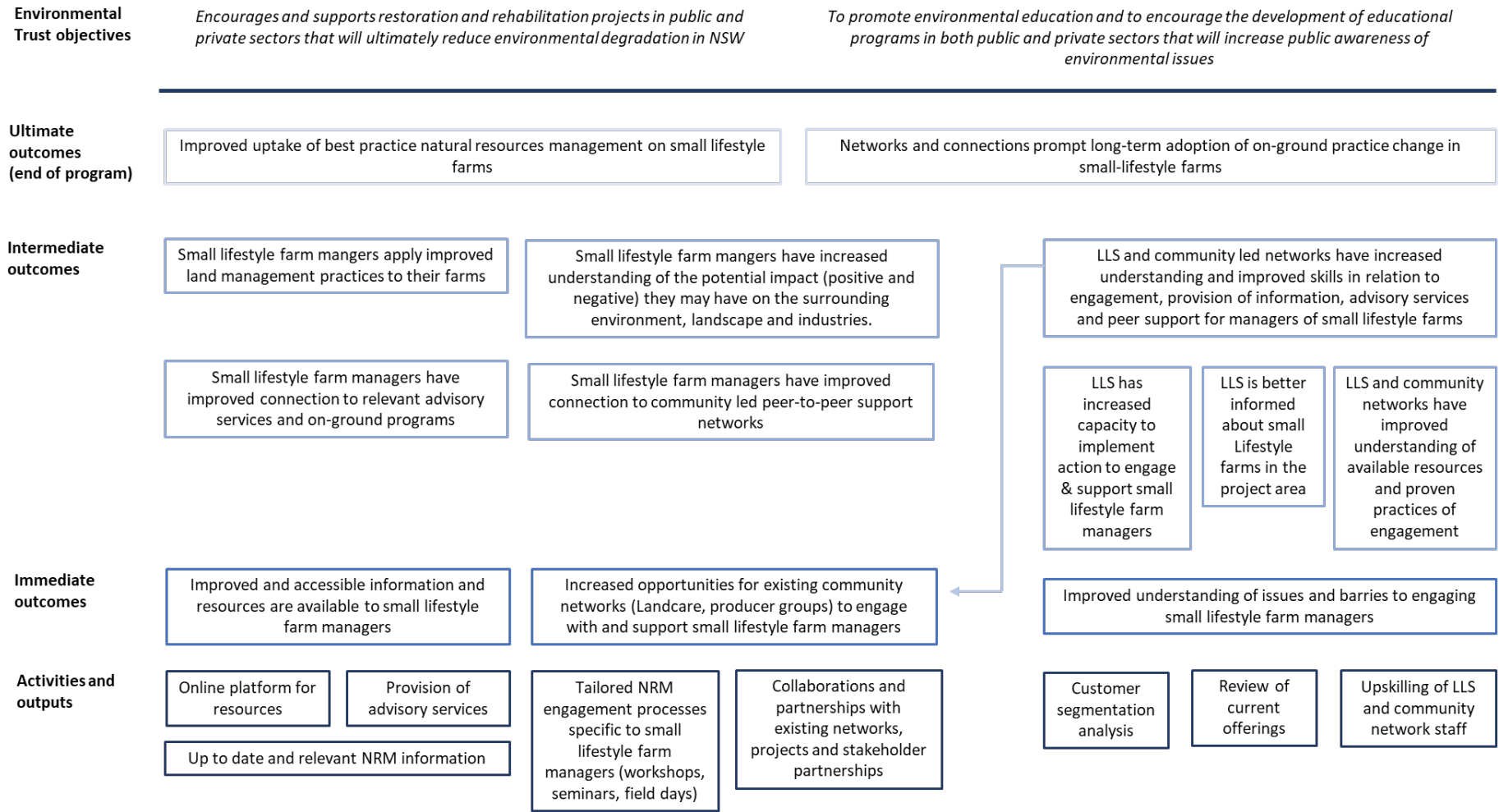


Figure 2. Program logic for the Every Bit Counts Program (developed by FPC based on provided outcomes framework from the EBC program Business Plan).

3.2 Program timeline

Table 3 presents each of the three phases delivered through the program and lists the activities delivered under each phase.

Table 3. Program phases and activities delivered in each phase, as specified in the Business Plan.

Phase 1 - Planning for on-ground engagement (July 2018-2019)	Phase 2 - Delivery of on-ground engagement (2019-2020)	Phase 3 - Delivery of on-ground engagement, evaluation and consolidation (2020-June 2021)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review, research and analyse previous and existing engagement attempts and on-ground programs specific to small land holdings in each of the four LLS regions, to avoid overlap and to learn from other programs. 2. Establish a Steering Committee including LLS, regional LLS and Landcare NSW. to guide and oversee project governance, development and delivery and advise the project team. 3. Build a skilled project team, responsible for the coordination and implementation of the project activities. This includes four regional project leads and a central regional coordinator. 4. Develop refined strategies to implement on-ground actions based on research findings. Design of targeted programs across the four LLS regions. 5. Develop engagement programs, redesign existing NRM information or develop new resources specific to the targeted small land holdings. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Customer segmentation analysis conducted in each of the four regions and presented in a report by the LLS (November 2019) 2. Commence targeted on-ground engagement. The regional coordinators manage on-ground engagement activities. (Note: many on-ground activities were moved online during COVID-19) 3. Develop and/or adapt engagement and education processes and products to meet the needs of small land holders and facilitate practice change e.g., adapting existing material to create YouTube videos 4. Landcare networks identified how to use their resources to facilitate skills exchange with small landholders. 5. Ongoing collection of data on small land holder numbers, locations, issues, demographics, preferred communication formats etc. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to roll-out the tailored on-ground/online engagement and education activities. 2. Consolidate project outcomes by formalising establishment of new local Landcare groups and provide support for these by establishing connections with existing Landcare groups and networks, regional Landcare Facilitators and local government. 3. Monitoring and evaluation program to assess effectiveness of the engagement processes and products delivered in Phase 2. 4. Review, evaluate and report on engagement and on-ground outcomes, dissemination and lessons learnt. This will be used by LLS, Landcare and Local Government. 5. Develop transferability criteria for use in other areas, so learnings can be applied to other areas to improve on-ground environmental outcomes. 6. Foster a culture of ongoing support for small landholders in LLS and Landcare NSW.

4 Appropriateness

This section addresses the KEQs:

How appropriate was the planning process in the initial scoping phase?

Did the program address the identified need and was it the most appropriate thing to do?

4.1 Appropriateness of the planning process and scoping phase

This section considers the appropriateness of the process of planning and scoping the program, specifically:

- The program's underlying theory.
- The phased approach to design.

We did not have any documents dealing with planning processes that occurred before the business plan. However, interviews with Trust administration staff – and the implicit program theory – point to the strong behaviour-change focus of the program. It is, at its core, about changing the behaviour of small-scale landholders so that their practices are more likely to lead to good environmental and production outcomes. This theoretical foundation is appropriate (and mirrors the vast majority of agricultural extension-type programs).

In terms of the planning process itself, the phased approach and use of multiple business plans appears to be appropriate. By having a broad scope in the initial stages, it allowed the program to commence and explore the needs of the target audience. This included consultation with key stakeholders, such as community groups, councils and agency staff. According to the LLS Program manager, there was a lot of value in the consultation early Phase.

'It made the program able to overcome some of the myths around who is a small farmer, or a remote farmer or an absentee farmer, or a farmer who manages farm not necessarily for production' – LLS Program manager

From a Trust perspective, the use of a phased approach was appropriate to reduce risk and ensure success of the program. This is partly related to:

- The ability to do more scoping work and address underlying assumptions or gaps in knowledge that can help to inform the design of interventions – in this case, for example, the customer segmentation analysis.
- The phased approach also helped in extending the co-design process between the Trust and the grantee to better ensure the objectives of the two groups are aligned.
 - The project was originally conceived during a strategic project development process in which the Trust works with stakeholders to identify priority gaps and opportunities for funding.
 - Landcare was originally responsible for developing the business plan before being replaced by LLS.
 - On starting the program, LLS and the Trust administration staff worked together to refine and finalise the program design.

- The phased approach helped to address the risk created by the transition from Landcare to LLS and the potential that the program would not address the original intent of the program or be aligned with the Trust's objects and government priorities.

'Because they were picking up a program half developed by someone else there was a little bit of tension between how much of the program needed to change. And if it changed too much did that mean it wasn't the program the Trust wanted or had proposed?' – Trust administration staff member

One major change that was made throughout the phases was that the targets changed reflecting that the focus shifted away from individuals to community networks, LLS and Landcare capacity building.

4.2 Appropriateness of the program in relation to the identified need

4.2.1 Overview

This section considers:

- What the identified need was for the program
- How it aligns with the objectives of the Trust and LLS regions
- Whether the program's design/approach addressed the need and was the most appropriate thing to do.

4.2.2 Need for the program

There was a clear need for the program associated with:

- The large and growing number of small-scale landholders
- The perception that many of these landholders have relatively low level of knowledge of land management issues such as biosecurity and/or are not as motivated or capable of acting on these issues.

As outlined in Appendix E, a review of other programs suggests there have been few other on-ground initiatives systematically targeting this group of landholders, despite their acknowledged importance.

The business plan thus states the need to build the capability of these landholders for improved natural resource management. An associated need, as refined in the updated business plan, is for improved skills and capabilities among extension stakeholders. This recognises that engaging this cohort of landholders requires a more targeted approach, given many do not engage with advice and information in the same way that larger, production-oriented landholders typically do.

4.2.3 Alignment of the program with the objectives of the Trust and LLS regions

The EBC Program was designed to align with not only the objects of the Trust, but also the LLS regions and the NSW State Government objectives. Specifically, **the program aligned with the following Trust objects:**²

- To encourage and support restoration and rehabilitation projects in both the public and the private sectors that will or are likely to prevent or reduce pollution, the waste-stream or environmental degradation, of any kind, within any part of New South Wales.
- To promote environmental education and, in particular, to encourage the development of educational programs in both the public and the private sectors that will increase public awareness of environmental issues of any kind.

The program aligned with the following LLS regional objective:

- Improved land management skills in lifestyle landholders will result in better weed management outcomes, assisting councils in their roles as Local Control Authorities for weeds under the Biosecurity Act 2015.

The program also aligned, at least to some extent, with each of the four regions' 5-year strategic plans.

- Greater Sydney has a local priority 'extending best practice production to growers and other peri-urban landholders, focusing on growing the Greater Sydney Small Farms Network and VegNet'.
- Hunter region aims to increase the capacity of landholders to be productive in a healthy landscape.
- South East has multiple priority programs that align with the EBC program, including programs aiming to empower landholders to improve farm ecosystems and to build resilience and manage risks.
- North Coast specifically states small land manager engagement as a priority, particularly in supporting them to understand biosecurity risks.

Key LLS stakeholders highlighted that alignment to LLS priority areas is important in increasing the likelihood of the program being embedded in the work of LLS.

4.2.4 Appropriateness of the program's approach to meeting the identified need

Overall, the program addressed the identified need (i.e. for capability building among small-scale landholders) by both:

- Providing resources to directly support capability building among small-scale landholders
- Building the capability of LLS staff and others involved in extension activities to better work with small-scale landholders in the future.

The effectiveness and outcomes from this work are discussed in more detail in Section 6. While we cannot say it was categorically 'the most appropriate thing to do'³, a range of features of the

² *Environmental Trust Act 1998*, Part 2, Section 7

³ Responding to the KEQ 'Did the program address the identified need and was it the most appropriate thing to do?'

program show that it was certainly an appropriate approach and that there were no obviously superior choices. These key features included:

- Tailoring of the engagement approach. Learnings from the customer segmentation and regional analyses helped in developing engagement approaches that were well targeted to small landholders. This included a shift towards strengthening relationships with Landcare and other community networks as part of the program.

‘That’s why the program team keeps in touch with Landcare because Landcare are working on the ground and know the need’ – LLS Program manager

- The regional delivery model. This helped the program draw on information from local stakeholders, ensuring the program addressed issues and topics that were most relevant and important to their context.

‘It really helps with addressing key region-specific topics; different regions have different style of farming and the workshops could address local needs under this model’ – LLS Program manager

The success of the regional model also benefits from the ability to share resources and lessons across regions, and it wasn’t “just a Sydney project”. For example, after one region designed and implemented a customer engagement strategy using postcards, other regions copied the approach, tailoring it to their respective region.

- A geographic focus that was well targeted and matched the program resources. In line with feedback from Trust administration staff, the four regions were good targets for working with small landholders because of relatively high proportion of small landholders in these regions, particularly with an increase in recent migration from metropolitan areas.

“It was really important to define how broad the project could be [...] It was never going to be effective if it went right across NSW, and further West there is less of a target audience, so [the LLS] focused on four coastal regions.” – Program Manager

5 Process

This section addresses the KEQs:

How well managed was the program? (Section 5.1)

Was the program on time and on budget? (Section 5.1)

Were the methods for making decisions and managing the program appropriate and likely to ensure success? (Section 5.1)

To what extent were risks identified, mitigated and managed?

5.1 Management of the program

Overall, the program has been well managed. Key points here are:

- The program was delivered within the planned end date. However, there were some delays during delivery of the program. This included:
 - Delays in recruitment. The LLS project team was not fully recruited until June 2019, a year after the start of the project and nine months after the planned date in the business plan. This compressed the time for project delivery. As suggested by one interviewee, had it not been for COVID-19 and the move to online workshops, the impacts may have been more severe. This delay was attributed to the time taken to finalise the project funding agreement, the LLS approval and recruitment process required for newly developed staff positions and the challenge of recruiting people to limited tenure positions.

“It was hard to find the right project officer and hard to keep them motivated towards the end of the program.” – Program Manager

- Delay to delivery of the customer segmentation analysis. This was not delivered until – according to the 2018-19 progress report – 12 months after its scheduled completion. There is no documentation or feedback on why there was a delay and no variation was submitted. Staff noted that this slowed down their planning for engagement activities, compounding the staff recruitment issues above.
- The program was delivered within budget, with only a slight underspend of \$21,506 out of the \$1,900,000 budget.⁴
- The key planned outputs were all achieved or exceeded and activities were largely delivered as planned, as discussed in more detail in Section 6.

In terms of management and decision making, program management appeared to be strongly supported by the cross-regional coordinator, who was noted to be one of the key elements of success for the program. Feedback from interviewees indicated that the coordinator helped promote cohesive delivery across the four regions and acted as a broker between LLS and Trust.

⁴ Note the total budget of Trust funds was \$2,000,000 but \$100,000 was retained by the Trust for evaluation.

‘We felt protected from a lot of the admin and reporting, and it made [our] work in delivering the project a lot easier.’ – Regional staff

The steering committee, in contrast, was not an influential component of the program and did not appear to contribute meaningfully to program delivery. Regional staff noted, for example, that a more active steering committee would have better helped the regional teams develop overarching approaches to the program, as well as help Landcare have a better sense of connection to the program. Trust administration staff suggested a lack of “buy-in” as one of the key issues here.

Beyond these observations about key roles, two final points in relation to program management are that:

- A key challenge to effective management resulted from difficulties in incorporating the program into the LLS' broader work. Half of the LLS regional staff involved in delivery reported the following organisational barriers to management:
 - The program was not necessarily delivered by the right LLS organisational unit
 - Disinterest in small landholders among other broader LLS staff
 - Concern that the program would create extra workload for LLS staff who were involved in capacity building activities (as an intention was for them to integrate learnings into their work).

There appears to have been, at times, poor management of data. As noted in the methodology section, documents were missing for this evaluation and raw data from a cross-regional survey was not able to be provided due to the lack of centralised storage and turnover of staff. This is an area of opportunity for improved processes, as discussed in Section 9.2.

5.2 Risk identification and mitigation

Many of the risks identified and planned for in the business plan were also pinpointed by interviewed LLS and Trust administration staff during delivery, with two key exceptions:

- the COVID-19 pandemic and concomitant restrictions to movement
- the 2020 summer bushfires, which affected large parts of all four program regions.

Based on program documentation and interviews, both above risks were handled adequately and effectively. In particular, the program’s risk response drew its strength and suitability from:

- Identifying potential opportunities with each risk (e.g. moving delivery online enabled wider reach)
- The ability to enact financial changes and program variations retrospectively (e.g. in response to COVID-19 the program budget was adjusted after the program had ended)

Table 4 below highlights how the program was able to mitigate many of the key risks that were identified in the original business plan. The key outstanding issue that was not fully resolved by the mitigation strategy was the delay in recruiting project staff. This took as much as nine months more than anticipated and did end up delaying progress.

Table 4. Risks and success of mitigation strategies

Key risks from original business plan	Mitigation strategy	Effectiveness of mitigation strategy
---------------------------------------	---------------------	--------------------------------------

<p>Delays in recruitment of project staff cause delayed project commencement</p>	<p>Most initial establishment tasks will be undertaken by existing LLS staff. Likely that some project staff will be current LLS staff reassigned to the project.</p>	<p>This did not appear to be effective – significant delays with recruitment were experienced and LLS interviewees and documents suggest this led to delays in early deliverables.</p>
<p>Small landholders unwilling to participate in the project.</p>	<p>Research and analysis that results in best practice engagement and educational techniques to attract small landholders.</p>	<p>This evaluation showed that the program was able to reach the target number of small landholders. However, some small landholders within the target groups did not attend events, so there remains a gap.</p>
<p>Education may not result in changed behaviour practices by small landholders</p>	<p>Research and analysis that results in best practice engagement and educational techniques to ensure behaviour change.</p>	<p>Utilising existing community networks to support small landholders increased the likelihood that behaviour changes occurred. However, without more rigorous data collection from small landholders, the extent to which behaviour change occurred is unclear.</p>
<p>Project measures not achievable</p>	<p>Can be developed through annual implementation plan after first year of research and project development Re-development of project measures in second year.</p>	<p>Revision of the business plan showed that some changes were made in program activities to ensure the activities were achievable.</p>
<p>Time taken to modify and redevelop engagement strategies delays outcomes - Not able to finish project on time.</p>	<p>Strong project management culture and clear monitoring strategies managed well by project teams.</p>	<p>The coordination between the four regions and project management culture allowed for strong sharing of engagement strategies between the regions. This supported the program to finish on time.</p>

6 Effectiveness and outcomes

This section addresses the KEQs:

Were the program activities implemented as intended. If not, why, and what was the impact? (Section 6.1)

Was the program appropriately planned and scoped to ensure delivery of intended outputs and effective measurement of the associated outcomes? (Section 6.1)

Were the intended outputs delivered? (Section 6.2)

To what extent and in what ways has the capacity of small landholders been built? (Section 6.3)

To what extent do small landholders now have access to resources, networks and support through the program to improve their land management practices? (Section 6.3)

To what extent have small landholders changed and improved their land management practices? Is there any evidence of positive environmental impact stemming from this? (Section 6.3)

To what extent and in what ways has the capacity of staff who engage with small landholders been built? (Section 6.4)

6.1 Delivery of activities

The Phase 1 and Phase 2-3 business plans set out the program activities. As outlined in Table 5, all of these activities were delivered as outlined in this schedule. The key caveat here is that while the original intent was for face-to-face engagement, this had to change to include online workshops in response to COVID-19.

Table 5. Delivery of intended activities as specified from the Project Schedule in the EBC program business plan.

Phase	Milestone	Completed as planned	Comments
Phase 1	Project Steering Committee and Project Team established.	Yes	Some delays in filling roles, but all positions were filled
Phase 1	Review the issues and barriers specific to the engagement of small landholders	Yes	Despite the delays in the customer segmentation analysis, the design of the customer segmentation exercise appears appropriate and produced results that were relevant, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demographic characteristics of small landholders in all four regions • Identification of priority topics for program delivery

Phase	Milestone	Completed as planned	Comments
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential areas of internal leveraging as well as areas of overlap. <p>However, the design of the customer segmentation analysis and report included following limitations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The quality of the methods and evidence used by each of the regions varies considerably. The reporting structure across regions is inconsistent. Not all regions report on the same questions e.g., classification of small landholder, or topics of interest for landholders. <p>Whilst the plans were designed to benefit each region, given the sharing of resources and support between regions was common, having consistency of the reports would have benefited the program overall.</p>
Phase 1-2-3	Develop, adapt, revise and improve access to information relevant to improved practice adoption by small landholders	Yes	<p>All regions developed own extension postcards and reviewed and developed resources, which were adapted throughout the program – including online resources (YouTube, newsletters) to hardcopy resources such as the postcard.</p> <p>Revising the plan through the submission of the Phase 2 Business Plan was an opportunity to formally review the activities and processes.</p>
Phase 2	Engage with Local Land Services and community networks	Yes	The program placed a strong emphasis on relationships with LLS, Landcare and community networks, particularly after realising the impact can be more sustainable.
Phase 2	Improve the capacity of existing LLS advisory and project staff to link with and engage the managers of small lifestyle farms	Yes	Regions took various approaches to this milestone, but all regions partnered with LLS staff from all areas of the business.
Phase 2-3	Build opportunities for existing community networks, such as Landcare and producer groups, to engage with and support small lifestyle-farm managers in their areas.	Yes	The program placed emphasis on these links.
Phase 2-3	Target small lifestyle-farm managers with specific NRM and	Yes	The program met and exceeded targets in this area. Whilst the workshops varied vastly, the targets were well met.

Phase	Milestone	Completed as planned	Comments
	land management education activities and advice.		
Phase 2-3	The project leverages on networks, projects and stakeholder partnerships to extend its influence.	Yes	The program was able to leverage funding and partners to broaden the reach of the program. Whilst the extent to this reach is not well measured, it is positive to see that LLS was able to utilise existing networks to ensure it expanded.
Phase 1-2-3	Implement monitoring and evaluation throughout project to assess project effectiveness	Yes	There was a central survey for use in the evaluation and monitoring of the program. However, the management of data was poor.

It is also important to note that regions delivered activities in different ways to ensure that they contributed to the intended end of program outcomes for small landholders. The following approaches were implemented through activities to help ensure the outputs led to outcomes for small landholders:

- Diversity in workshops, including a wide range of workshops across the regions – for example, focusing on fungi, bees and livestock. The diversity of workshops allowed the program to target diverse small holders’ experiences and interests, while supporting different natural resources management practices.
- Supporting regional networks such as local Landcare groups and other community-led networks, to ensure longevity of networks and their engagement with small landholders. Whilst it is unclear if this is solely due to the EBC program, it is clear the regional networks have felt a positive change since the program began.
- The EBC program web portal, newsletters and extension postcards were written in plain English using simple language to make the content easy for small landholders to understand and implement.
- The newsletters served various purposes, including:
 - landholder engagement, to keep landholders aware of workshops and events that were upcoming
 - sharing information and tips, to contribute to the landholders’ learning and guide them to resources
 - to keep landholders connected to the program and each other.

“Communication has always been a big part of the networks establishment; small landholders often don’t feel part of the community” – Regional staff (annual report)

Regions delivered activities in different ways so that they also contributed to the desired outcomes for LLS and community-led network staff.

The following approaches helped ensure the outputs led to outcomes for community-led network staff:

- the customer segmentation analysis helped regions understand the target audience, including who small landholders are, their motivations, why they own their block, and what they call themselves (e.g., ‘lifestyle’ or ‘hobby farmers’).
- workshops were offered to staff in some regions on various topics, including working with small landholders, communication when targeting small landholders.
- presentations to broader LLS staff across the entire region, to broaden the ‘buy-in’ and need for the program, encouraging broader LLS staff to use the resources and consider small landholders.
- resources were designed for LLS staff to access and use when working with small landholders, to understand the issues facing small landholders and to enable them to adequately support small landholders.
- partnering with networks such as Landcare and other networks to run program-funded workshops targeting small landholders, with support from the EBC program.

6.2 Delivery of outputs

The EBC program achieved a broad range of delivery outputs across the regions:

- 187 events
- 1,935 small landholders were engaged in events
- more than 100 staff attended various capacity building events
- over 1,800 one-on-one advisory services were provided to small landholders by LLS staff
- 134 newsletters were developed
- around 1,800 small landholders have subscribed to newsletters (with 95% of subscribers opting in to receive local LLS newsletters also)
- 31 case studies were developed, including video and written case studies.

As shown in Table 6, virtually all the targets set out in the business plan were achieved and, in most cases, far exceeded. The table below shows how the targets were met, calculated based on data reported in regional annual reports, with green highlight indicating the overall target was reached. There was an agreed +/- 10% tolerance for some targets. Due to inconsistencies in reporting across the regions⁵ a lack of a count may represent lack of consistent reporting rather than signalling that an activity was not delivered.

Table 6. EBC program targets and outputs.

Delivery outputs	Target	Achievement
Number of community-led network groups formed or significantly expanded	20 new or significantly expanded ⁶	3 new groups; 32 groups engaged with – unclear whether they were expanded
Number of activities with small landholders	20 activities with 10 or more participants	103 activities
Number of LLS staff and community-led network staff attending capacity building activities	20 staff	119 staff

⁵ Note that some regions did not report across all delivery outputs.

⁶ Note that this target was removed from the Phase 2 Business Plan

Delivery outputs	Target	Achievement
Number of awareness raising events	40 (20 LLS and 20 community)	187 (84 LLS events and 103 community)
EBC program promoted at other events	No target	10
Social media posts	No target	57
Social media reach	2000 small lifestyle farmers access information	22,154
Newsletters	20% increase in reach	134 newsletters (unclear on increase in reach)
Newsletter subscriptions	2000 small lifestyle farmers access information (target met including social media)	'over 3,000 subscribers across all 4 regions' ⁷
Case studies	20	31

6.3 Outcomes related to small landholder capacity

The following section of the report details evidence of the contribution towards intended intermediate and end of program outcomes.

Table 7 below shows the underlying theoretical framework for how the program activities are expected to flow through to long-term outcomes. The immediate and intermediate outcomes are important precursors to these long-term outcomes. They are an indicator of progress, particularly in cases where direct evidence of longer-term outcomes is limited.

There was good evidence for improved access to resources and networks and there was some evidence - largely positive - that this improved access is leading to behavioural changes among landholders.

Table 7. Theory of change for small landholders (developed by FPC based on the EBC program Business Plan outcomes framework).

Activities and outputs	Intended immediate outcomes	Intended intermediate outcomes	Intended end of program outcomes
Online platform for resources	Improved access to resources for small landholders	Small landholders have improved connection to relevant advisory services and on-ground programs	Improved uptake of best practice natural resources management on small landholders' farms
Provision of advisory services		Small landholders apply improved land management practices to their farms	

⁷ Every Bit Counts – engaging small landholders for on-ground environmental outcomes. Final Report to Environmental Trust. p. 12

<p>Tailored NRM engagements (workshops, seminars, field days)</p>	<p>Increased opportunities for existing community networks (Landcare, farmer groups) to engage with and support small landholders</p>	<p>Small landholders have increased connection to community led peer-to-peer support networks</p>	<p>Networks and connections prompt long-term adoption of ongoing change in small landholder practices</p>
<p>Collaborations with networks and projects</p>		<p>Small landholders have increased understanding of potential impact (positive and negative) they may have on surrounding environment</p>	

Increased access to networks and resources

Trust administration, Regional and Program staff were positive about the increased and improved access to resources and networks. Figure 3 shows that ten of the 13 staff felt the program was ‘mostly’ or ‘very’ effective in improving small landholders’ access to resources, networks and support.

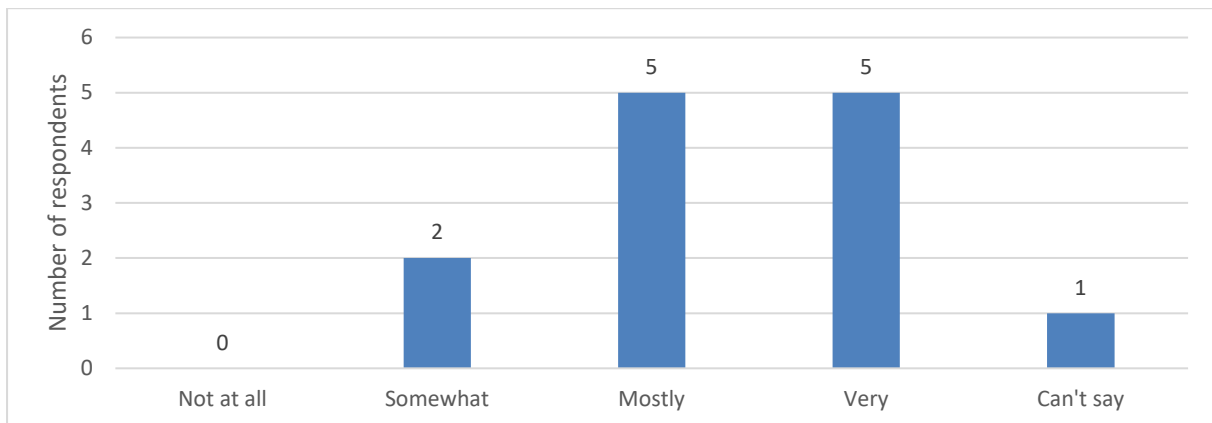


Figure 3. Interviewees response to ‘Has the program been effective in improving small landholders access to resources, networks and support?’ (n=13)

There was evidence that the program contributed to the immediate outcome ‘Increased opportunities for existing community networks (Landcare, farmer groups) to engage with and support small landholders’. While the evaluation did not have access to raw survey data, there was some data provided as a percentage in annual reports. Based on these reports, across the four regions, between 32% to 45% of those small landholders who responded to the survey had not engaged with the LLS prior to attending an EBC program workshop. Whilst this data is lacking nuance and does not show the reach or impact (due to lack of denominators per region), this highlights the opportunity the EBC program has provided to small landholders, to connect them to LLS and the networks they are connected to.

Small landholder survey respondents noted the following changes to their connection to community. Based on percentages provided in the reports, on average across the four regions:

- 45% of survey respondents connected with neighbours following the workshop
- 27% contacted their local Landcare group
- 18% contacted LLS or another local environmental group
- 20% attended further trainings, since attending the previous workshop.

Another noteworthy change was the development of a local neighbourhood conservation group who have toured each other's properties assisting in developing potential conservation actions. These outcomes highlight the long-term changes to connection and networks the program has helped create. As shown in Figure 4, 28 network groups were engaged successfully, with three new network groups being formed through the program, in the Greater Sydney region. This included:

- Platypus Landcare group
- Kurrajong Koala Landcare group
- Community Environment Network.

The membership of these networks and local Landcare groups, excluding councils, is estimated to be approximately 28,807 people.⁸ Whilst these members are not solely made up of small landholders, the membership number demonstrate the broad reach the program can have.

⁸ Calculated from Landcare and network websites and social media

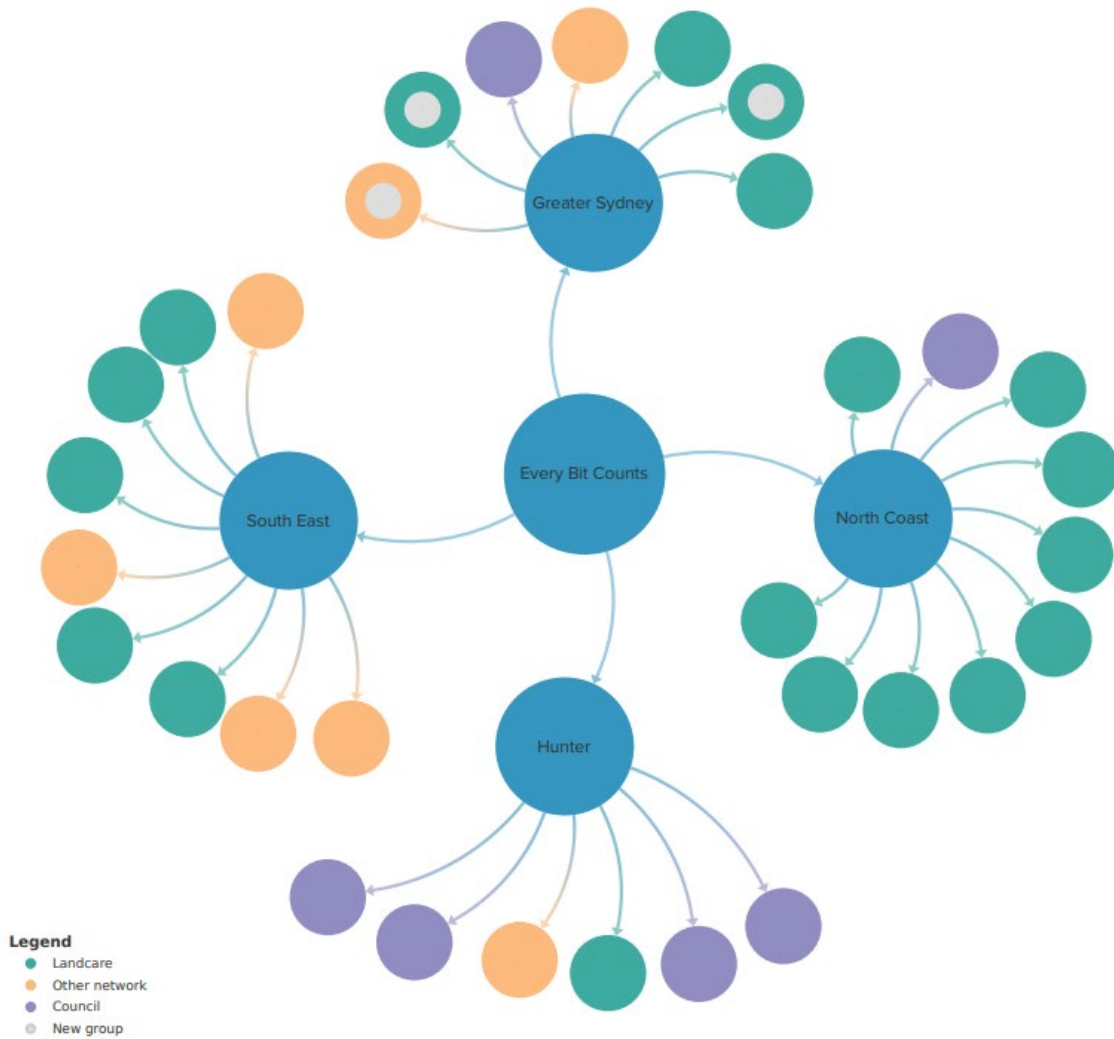


Figure 4. Network map showing the network groups that regions engaged. Blue represents the regions involved in the program, green shows Landcare groups engaged, orange shows other network groups engaged, purple shows council groups engaged. Circles with a grey bullseye show new network groups formed through the program. Data source: regional reports

Evidence of behaviour change

Beyond increased access to networks, there was some evidence of behaviour changes made by small landholders. Small landholders were surveyed between 6 to 12 months after attending a workshop to understand the impacts of the program and any changes that they had implemented since taking part. Reporting of these results varied widely between regions, with some regions reporting a summary of findings lacking details, including number of responses, or changes made by landholders. Whilst the reports met the Trust requirements, the lack of detail in some reports limits the ability to draw strong conclusions. That said, the results of the follow-up survey showed some promising landholder behaviour changes.

Across the regions, 81% of small landholders who completed the survey have undertaken changes to their NRM practices in the 6-12 months following the workshop they attended.⁹ This varied from 72% in one region, to 88% in another.

The practice changes adopted by landholders aligned well with the content of the workshops they attended. For example, in South East region, some workshops were focused on livestock and grazing management. In response, survey respondents in South East region reported improved biosecurity management practices on their property (32%) and improved their grazing management of pastures (27%). In Greater Sydney region, workshops were focused on pest management. The majority of survey respondents reported practice changes including checking their property for pest animal scats and tracks (58%) and removing weeds (52%).

“Absolutely made a significant difference. From a pasture to a wetland habitat that is continually weeded and developed as habitat for natives to survive.” – Small landholder (survey respondent)

On average, 82% of small landholders who completed the survey believe that the changes made have improved the environmental values of their property.

“I have improved the property to be much closer to a natural bushland and will increase the number and biodiversity of native flora and fauna – it’s more productive for nature.” – Small landholder (survey respondent)

Most of the Trust administration, Regional and Program staff interviewed reported that they believed the program was effective in building the capacity of small landholders to some extent (Figure 5). The largest proportion of respondents (n=5) felt the program was only ‘somewhat’ effective in building the capacity of small landholders, compared to feeling the program was more effective at improving small landholders’ access to resources (Figure 3). A key criticism of the program was the lack of long-term evidence and monitoring data to track changes in small landholders’ capacity.

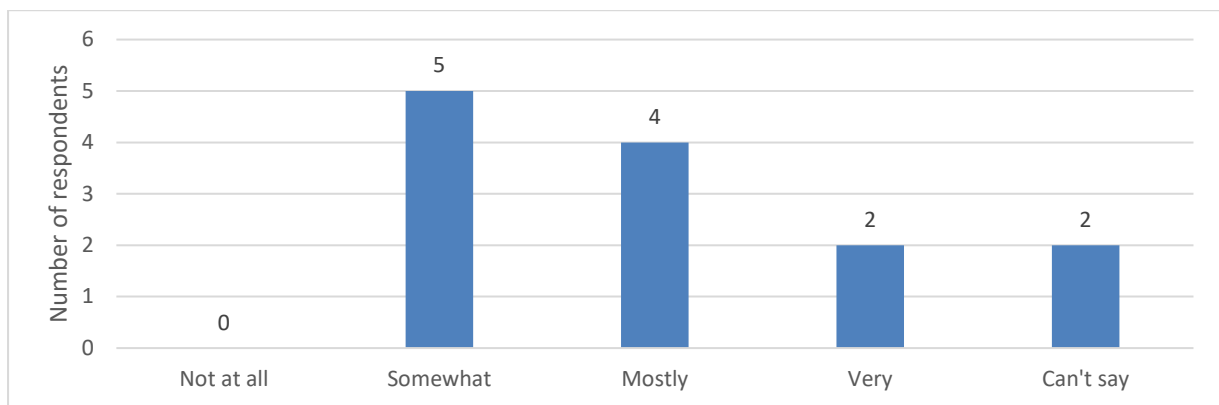


Figure 5. Interviewee responds to ‘Has the program been effective in building the capacity of small landholders?’ (n=13)

⁹ As the n values were not provided across each of the regions, 81% represents the average of the percentage reported by each region, rather than an average proportion of participants across the four regions combined.

Other reasons why the program was perceived to have been less effective than it could be, included:

- workshops relied on landholders who already wanted to increase their capacity in certain areas, and the workshops may not have reached broader groups of small landholders who would benefit from the content area
- there is known to be a high turnover of small landholders, leading to a lack of clarity around the longevity of outcomes
- the scale of the program was small relative to the number of small landholders in each region, as shown in Table 8. Whilst there is some missing data in relation to attendance, it is evident that the number of small landholders reached through workshops and events was low compared to the number of small landholders in the region. However, reach through newsletters and broader information sharing was much higher.

“It probably just scratched the surface - the program has been effective but there is so much to do” – Program Manager

Table 8. Reach of program to small landholders through workshops and events.

Region	No. of small landholders reached in workshops/ events ^{10,11}	No. of small landholders in region
South East	1014	20,556
Hunter	99	15,178
Greater Sydney	526	32,609
North Coast	108	17,165
TOTAL	1747	85,508

6.4 Outcomes related to staff

The following section of the report presents evidence of the contribution towards intended intermediate and end of program outcomes achieved through the program for LLS and community staff.

Table 9 below shows the underlying theoretical framework for how the program activities are expected to flow through to long-term outcomes. The immediate and intermediate outcomes are important precursors to these long-term outcomes. They are an indicator of progress, particularly in cases where direct evidence of longer-term outcomes is limited.

¹⁰ Data from each region’s final reports – total slightly misaligned with the EBC program final report. Some final reports did not include attendance data for events.

¹¹ Note: some regions did not count landholders that were reached through extension workers as part of the program, and therefore the true number of landholders reached will be higher.

Table 9. Theory of change for LLS and community staff (developed by FPC based on the EBC program Business Plan outcomes framework).

Activities and outputs	Intended immediate outcomes	Intended intermediate outcomes	Intended end of program outcomes
Customer segmentation analysis	Improved understanding of the issues and barriers to engaging small lifestyle landholders	LLS and community networks have increased understanding and improved skills in relation to engagement, provision of information and peer support for small landholders	Networks and connections prompt long-term adoption of ongoing change in small landholder practices
Review of current projects/offerings	LLS and community networks have improved understanding of available resources and offerings		
Upskilling of LLS and community staff	LLS has increased capacity to implement action to engage and support small lifestyle landholders		

Each region took varied approaches in how they worked with LLS staff and community-led network staff within their region. Table 10 details the activities and events held across the program targeting LLS staff and community-led staff. Evidence suggests that some regions utilised existing knowledge and networks to reach community-led network staff working with small landholders, some offered workshops and trainings for select LLS staff, and others more holistically looked at offering insights at a high level across the regional LLS network. Whilst there are some details missing on number of attendees, this table highlights the broad range of activities delivered through the program.

Trust administration, Regional and Program staff interviewees felt positive about the capacity building of staff/networks through the program where 10 staff felt the program was ‘mostly’ or ‘very’ effective in increasing the capacity of staff/networks (Figure 6).

Table 10. Activities and events targeting LLS staff and community-led network staff based on annual reporting data.

Activity type	Total	Comments and examples
Attend workshops	274 staff (with some workshops not taking attendance)	North Coast: Workshops on communications and how to communicate effectively with small landholders, community-based social marketing and podcast training. Greater Sydney: Webinars with councils, agencies and networks on engaging with landholders in peri-urban areas, wildlife assessor training, FeralScan session Hunter: 2-day workshop and extension workshop for Hunter LLS and community-led networks covering 'training staff to engage and build capacity of small landholders, EBC program self-assessment tool, website and landholder guide'
Attend presentations	26 presentations At least 300 participants (actual number likely much higher)	Regions incorporated the EBC program into many LLS events, such as LLS Staff summits, monthly meetings
Running workshops and other activities	At least 50 staff went on to run their own workshops with small landholders	Throughout the program, LLS staff who received capacity building support went on to use what they learned and supported the running of workshops to small landholders (alongside others facilitated externally).
Advisory services offered to small landholders	Over 1,800 small landholders	Small landholders were reached by LLS and community-led network staff advisory services offered, highlighting the reach that LLS staff have had.

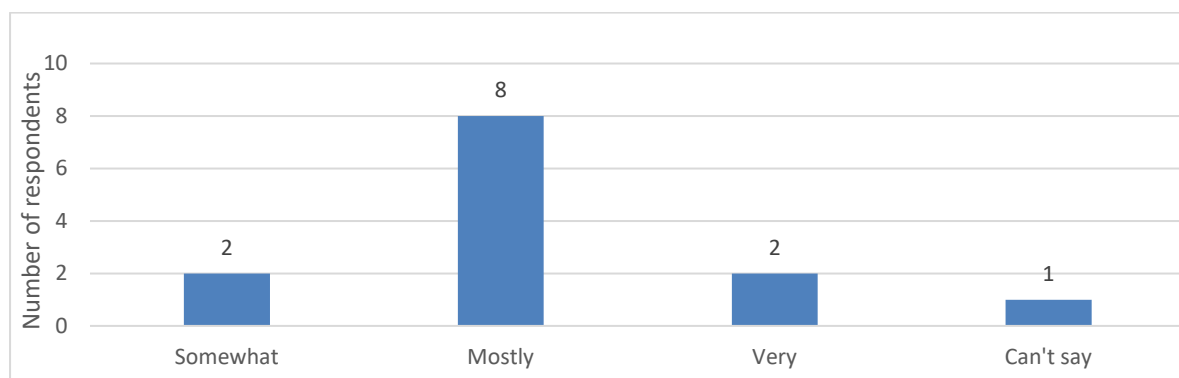


Figure 6. Staff interviewees response to 'Has the program been effective in increasing the capacity of staff/networks to engage with small landholders?' (n=13)

The major challenge in showing the achieved outcomes for LLS staff and community-led network staff is that each region took a different approach in reporting the LLS capacity building data they collected, and uniform data does not exist across the program. The main performance indicators were related to:

- LLS staff having an improved understanding of LLS' resources and support available to work with small landholders.
- community-led networks having an improved understanding of how to best engage small landholders.

However, there were some surveys and feedback collected from various events in each region, as detailed below.

For the webinars run by Greater Sydney for LLS staff across the entire region (up to 200 people), participants were sent a follow up survey and encouragingly, 85% of LLS staff who attended and responded to the survey reported an increase in skills in engaging with small landholders.

"[LLS staff] capacity has increased in terms of being more aware of needs and how to provide opportunities to [small landholders]." – Program Manager

In the Hunter region, LLS staff attended a two-day workshop. Although a formal staff survey was not completed, there was evidence of change and ongoing impact resulting from this activity. For example, staff from the Natural Resources Management, Biosecurity and Sustainable Agricultural teams have promoted and incorporated resources from the EBC program into other programs. This included the following:

- three NRM staff delivered workshops and events tailored to small lifestyle farmers
- five Biosecurity staff adapted their program to incorporate the program to deliver a New Producer and Beef Basics workshop
- two staff supported Landcare groups in the delivery of two events, tailored to both new landholders and peri-urban landholders.

These examples demonstrate the potential legacy of the Hunter training.

Hunter has shown through anecdotal evidence that this model of training LLS staff can have positive long-term outcomes, with staff gaining skills they can transfer to their existing workshops, tailoring content for small landholders. A participant of the 'making your words count' workshop in the Hunter region noted that the workshop was "a timely reminder about how small changes to language can influence a message" and it gave them "some great tools to use when engaging with landholders via written content".

As part of North Coast's capacity building activities, North Coast adjusted their way of supporting local staff after their early assessments informed them that their LLS staff were already in contact with and assisting small landholders. Having extension postcards in all of the LLS fleet available, meant that support was available for LLS staff if being asked for help outside their technical area (with QR code available with additional information) as well as the additional outcome of small landholders have access to information. As well as this, capacity building activities with members of Landcare networks were held, with evidence of increased capacity (19 out of 20 respondents noting their capacity increased).

Beyond region specific examples of positive changes, there is anecdotal evidence that partnering with Landcare and providing funding to Landcare built the capacity of some local Landcare groups to

engage small landholders on an ongoing basis. One region partnered with a local Landcare group and provided funding to conduct property assessments for attendees at workshops, to then come up with a property plan. Through various capacity building activities, the capacity of Landcare was enhanced to engage small landholders on an ongoing basis.

There is also evidence from Regional and Trust administration staff, that the program helped build relationships internally with LLS staff. LLS staff have a lot of internal experience with farmers and large landholders. This program challenged the work they are already doing, since new small landholders have very little idea of what they need and come to LLS with very broad questions such as “what do I do with my land?”. Anecdotally, LLS staff are often uncertain how to respond to such broad needs but this program has built the capacity of staff to support those small landholders with broader needs.

“The big legacy is to change the mindset internally of extension staff.” – Program Manager

Finally, another positive outcome of the program was the satisfaction of Trust administration and regional staff involved in planning and delivery. Whilst not an explicit goal of the program, the satisfaction and personal learning for the staff involved in planning and delivery was deemed to be very positive (Figure 7). Most staff (11 of 13) felt they were quite or very satisfied with the program, with many going on to explain that they personally learned a lot and found the program to have given them new perspectives on approaches future programs could take. This finding supports the intended end of program outcome of increased LLS capacity, understanding and skills to support small landholders. Staff felt they would be more satisfied with the program if there was more time for delivery.

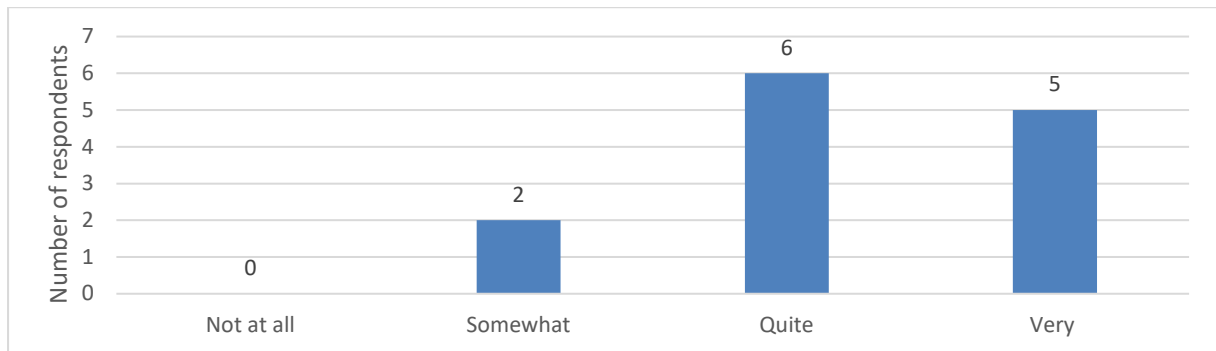


Figure 7. Staff interviewees response ‘To what extent have you been satisfied with the program?’ (n=13)

Despite the mostly positive evidence towards the achievement of outcomes, there are several gaps in the available data that limit understanding as to whether the outcomes were achieved to their full extent, and the longevity of the outcomes. One regional staff explained that they perceived a lack of interest from LLS staff outside of those funded by the program.

Finally, several staff were concerned that the EBC program, while showing promise, was ultimately not integrated into business as usual, and there needs to be ongoing engagement internally for small landholders to remain a priority.

6.5 Unintended outcomes

In addition to the expected outcomes, there were two main unintended outcomes realised through the program. These were:

- strengthening of relationships with other regions
- perceived value of the program beyond the participating regions.

“We have had other regions that weren’t initially involved approach and ask if they can use for their landholders as well. So it’s become a more LLS wide program now, being used by additional regions.” – Program Manager

Positively, the EBC program had two more regions approach the program requesting support to set up networks for small landholders. Internally within the LLS, the program was considered more ‘LLS-wide’ since it spanned multiple regions, meaning that the resources could be used in relevant workshops across other regions.

7 Efficiency

This section addresses the KEQs:

How efficient were the planned program activities?

What were the program implementation costs, and were these efficient? Could resources be allocated more efficiently?

Was the expenditure appropriate for the program?

Did the program deliver value for money?

7.1 Project costs and the efficiency and appropriateness of expenditure

The total budget for the program from the Trust was \$1.9 million (\$2.0 million with \$100,000 left for a final evaluation). In addition, \$516,979 worth of in-kind contributions was leveraged through the program from other sources. The majority of the funds (more than 80%) were spent on Phase 2 and 3 during delivery of on-ground engagement.

Sixteen per cent (\$378,467) was spent on engagement and capacity building activities and other on-ground costs. This is \$23,306 more than the original budget. All of this additional expenditure and around one-third of the expenditure on these items overall was from other sources, rather than Trust funds. Indeed, there was a \$114,506 underspend on Trust funds on engagement/on-ground activities, with overspends on items such as administration (\$35,736) and salaries (\$78,826) accounting for some of this underspend.

Adding to this picture was feedback from two out of six LLS regional staff, who indicated that the size of the operational budget to be insufficient. This is interesting to note in the context that the outputs were not significantly affected and still exceeded targets. While the story is not entirely clear, it appears that:

- Significant budget was spent on staff and administration - as shown in Table 11, most of the overall expenditure (72% of Trust funds) was spent on salaries and administrative costs.
- This meant it was important for the program to leverage LLS resources and internal skills to ensure the activities and outputs were achieved. Some of the strategies used by each of the regions included:
 - re-assigning internal staff to the program
 - engaging specialist LLS teams to deliver workshops or events
 - building on existing networks
 - sharing resources across regions.

Ultimately, this suggests:

- The **delivery of the program was efficient** in terms of meeting the targets.
- The **administration of the program was more costly than budgeted and it is not clear why**. Accounting for 9.6% of Trust expenditure, it is below the administration expense threshold

but, combined with the high level of staffing costs for this project, it is likely that this could have been delivered at reduced costs.

- There was substantial underspend on ‘on-ground’ costs (\$182,358) and overspend on ‘engagement and capacity building’ (\$205,664). A variation completed after the final report suggests this was due to reallocation from ‘on-ground’ to ‘engagement’ because of the impacts of COVID-19 and other external factors. That said, we believe that part of the issue here was that ‘on-ground’ was not a clear category of expenditure and, indeed, ‘on-ground’ could have easily reference ‘on-ground engagement’ as it was discussed in the Business Plans.
- Given regional LLS staff reported resource constraints for ‘on-ground’ or ‘engagement work’ yet the Trust funds this component were underspent, **there appears to be an issue with how the LLS regional and program team member administered and communicated funding arrangements within their team** (rather than being an inappropriate amount of funding per se). This has not flowed through to material impacts on the achievement of targets and **the overall funding allocation from the Trust appears to be appropriate.**

Table 11. Program budget and expenditure from Every Bit Counts Program final report, overall financial report.

Activity	Budget			Expenditure		
	Trust funds	Other sources	Total	Trust funds	Other sources	Total
Staff salaries and on-costs	1,358,556	\$459,484	\$1,817,040	\$1,437,382	\$351,334	\$1,788,726
Eng, & capacity building activities	\$120,656	\$2,172	\$122,828	\$226,508	\$101,984	\$328,492
On-ground	\$232,333		\$232,333	\$11,975	\$38,000	\$49,975
Consultancies	\$15,000		\$15,000	-	\$23,000	\$23,000
General administration	\$143,829		\$143,829	\$179,592	\$1,539	\$181,131
Transport costs	\$29,626	\$4,344	\$33,970	\$23,037	\$1,112	\$24,149
Total	\$1,900,000	\$465,000	\$2,365,000	\$1,878,494	\$516,979	\$2,395,473

7.2 Value for money

In the absence of an assessment of the long-term impacts of the program and appropriate comparative datasets or benchmarks, a comprehensive value-for-money assessment is difficult. That said, the program does appear to have delivered value for money based on the following criteria:

- The program was efficient, greatly exceeding most of the targets established in the business plan (see Section 6.2). Presuming these were established as minimal benchmarks, the program has delivered good value in terms of the quantity of these achievements.

- The program leveraged additional resources in addition to Trust funds. In particular, 0.5 million of in-kind contributions were leveraged throughout the program through LLS resources and skills. For example, the Hunter region had a strong community engagement team who produced branded resources that other regions could tweak and use.

“We got good bang for buck, resources developed by one region were able to be used by other regions.” – Program Manager

- The majority of Trust and LLS staff considered that the program demonstrated ‘very good’ value for money (Figure 8).
- Beyond the quantity of work done (i.e. the first bullet point above), the value of the intervention itself appears to be high. The relates to:
 - the noted importance of addressing small landholders’ capacity gaps given the threats (and opportunities) they pose in the landscape (see Section 4.2)
 - the lack of other interventions in the space (see Appendix E) and the coordinated approach to development and implementation across the LLS regions
 - the potential for the resources and staff capability built through the program to continue to work to enhance small landholder knowledge and skills into the future.

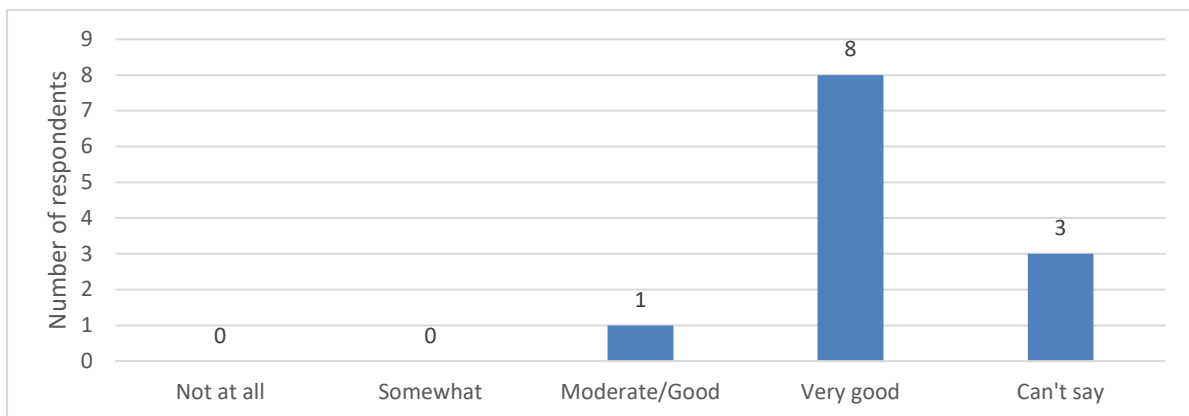


Figure 8. Interviewee responses to ‘To what extent do staff feel the program represents good value for money?’ (n=12)

8 Lessons and opportunities

This section brings together the lessons and opportunities identified through the evaluation that can be used to inform future program design and delivery.

This section addresses the KEQs:

What were the lessons learned and/or other opportunities related to the program?

What could be done differently?

Throughout the delivery of the program, staff involved in the implementation and management of activities reflected on the lessons learned throughout the program and what opportunities there are to further improve NRM practices of small landholders. The lessons and opportunities identified included:

- **Ensuring future programs engage councils as early as possible.** The EBC program engaged with councils in various regions, with staff finding these relationships to be invaluable to increase engagement with small landholders. Councils are often the ‘first port of call’ for small landholders, and ensuring councils are aware of resources, networks and programs is vital for the success of a program.

“Council often hasn’t been great at directing landholders to us and one of the outcomes was upskilling council to direct landholders to LLS or the EBC web portal.” – Regional staff

- To further improve NRM practices of small landholders, the **EBC program highlighted that there is an opportunity for LLS to reach more landholders through other avenues.** For example, some regions suggested LLS could make contact when properties are purchased, either through real estate agents or local government, to engage them as early as possible. Furthermore, engaging private landholder groups and other interest groups (e.g., horse riding groups) will broaden the reach.
- Regarding program design, regional program staff reflected that when implementing a new or novel program, increasing the program duration and timely delivery of outputs that influence program planning could have enhanced program delivery. For example, multiple regions felt that they **did not benefit as much as they had hoped from the customer segmentation analysis due to the completion of this key output occurring during the intended implementation phase**, rather than during the scoping phase. Additionally one region suggested that collecting additional baseline data from small landholders during this process would have enhanced their ability to understand their target group and plan activities accordingly.

“Baseline data was explicitly out of scope for this project. Demographics, social data, e.g., barriers to land management change, and a project specific survey would have been great.” – Regional staff

- Whilst most regions felt that in-person workshops offer greater engagement with content, particularly for community members, there are benefits to online webinars. **For workshops**

with LLS staff and community-led network staff, webinars and online workshops can increase access and attendance to learning opportunities.

“Online delivery can sometimes be a plan A.” – Regional staff

- There were several lessons related to sustainability of the resources and the legacy of the program. While the development of resources produces information that can continue to be accessed beyond the life of the program, **several staff noted that small farms can change hands more often, which impacts the longevity of outcomes.** To mitigate the risk of small landholders moving on, with a new landholder taking on the property, one region mentioned that in their region, the program circulates resources when a farm changes hands.
- **Similarly, another region suggested that an opportunity existed to design a course manual that could be used by any region,** for LLS on-ground staff to deliver to small landholders as a standalone course, based on learnings from this program.
- Beyond the opportunities mentioned above regarding reaching new small landholders, there is an opportunity that was lost during the pandemic to **support more Landcare groups to set up smaller groups between neighbours.** This was flagged as key to ensure that small landholders are engaged with their local Landcare and supported to maintain behaviour changes.

9 Key findings and recommendation

9.1 Key findings

This section outlines the key findings across all five of the evaluation focus areas, including appropriateness, process, effectiveness and outcomes, efficiency and lessons.

Table 12 below presents our key findings. Recommendations presented in Section 9.2.

Table 12. Key findings and lessons from the EBC program evaluation.

Focus area	Key findings
Appropriateness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The program has a strong behaviour-change focus. This theoretical foundation is appropriate, reflecting the vast majority of agricultural extension programs • In terms of the planning process itself, the phased approach and use of multiple business plans appears to be appropriate. It helped to reduce risk and supported success of the program. • This is partly related to the ability to do more scoping work and address underlying assumptions or gaps in knowledge, helping to inform the design of interventions. • In terms of the appropriateness of the program itself, there was: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear need for capability building among small landholders • Good alignment with the objects of the Trust and LLS Regional priorities • Good alignment between the identified need and the design of the program
Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall, the program has been well managed: • It was delivered within the planned timeframe, despite significant delays in recruitment • It was delivered within budget • The key planned outputs were all achieved or exceeded • Program management appeared to be supported by the cross-regional coordinator, particularly in promoting cohesive delivery across the four regions and acted as a broker between LLS and Trust • The main issues or challenges with program management were the poor management of data and the difficulties in incorporating the program into the LLS' broader work, including business as usual.
Effectiveness and outcomes	<p>Outputs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every Bit Counts successfully achieved or exceeded the cumulative targets that were set out in the business plan, including number of events, number of landholders engaged, number of newsletters, case studies and social media posts, number of events targeting capacity building of staff. However, some regions achieved higher reach than others. • Activities were delivered as per the business plan. • Key outputs included:: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 187 events were held ○ 1,935 small landholders were engaged in events ○ more than 100 staff attended various capacity building events ○ over 1,800 one-on-one advisory services were provided to small landholders by LLS staff ○ 134 newsletters were developed

Focus area	Key findings
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ around 2,000 small landholders have subscribed to newsletters, with 95% of subscribers also opting in to receive local LLS newsletters ○ 31 case studies were developed, including video and written case studies. <hr/> <p>Outcomes for small landholders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Regions delivered activities in different ways to ensure that they contributed to the intended end of program outcomes. Approaches included: diversity in workshops, support to regional networks such as local Landcare groups, the EBC program web portal and other resources. ● Survey results were limited, with little raw data available. However, across the regions, an average of 81% of small landholders who completed the survey have undertaken changes to their NRM practices in the 6-12 months following the workshop they attended. ● Most staff indicated the program was ‘somewhat’ or ‘mostly’ effective at building the capacity of small landholders. They generally considered the program was more effective at connecting landholders to networks. Across the four regions, between 32% to 45% of those small landholders who responded to the survey had not engaged with the LLS prior to attending an EBC program workshop. <hr/> <p>Outcomes for community led networks and staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Although there were difficulties in measuring the outcomes experienced by participating staff, overall staff felt the capacity of LLS and community staff was enhanced largely through the research undertaken and the resources developed that could be shared more widely across the LLS. Furthermore, Regional and Trust staff felt that the program helped build relationships internally with LLS staff. ● Regional staff worked to build the capacity of broader LLS and community-led network staff including through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ workshops on various topics of relevance when working with small landholders ○ presentations to broader LLS staff across the entire region ○ resources for LLS staff to access and use when working with small landholders ○ partnering with networks to run program-funded workshops targeting small landholders.
Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The size and distribution of the budget appears to have been appropriate (for the scale of the program) and the activities appear to have been delivered efficiently with the budget available ● The program appears to have delivered value for money based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Its delivery of outputs well in excess of targets, suggesting that if it was scoped appropriately to provide value for money, it more than delivered on this. ● \$0.5 million of in-kind contributions were leveraged throughout the program ● The majority of Trust and LLS staff considered that the program demonstrated ‘very good’ value for money ● The value of the intervention itself appears to be high, particularly in terms of the lasting impact on staff capability and resources for doing further work in this space.

Focus area	Key findings
Lessons and opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key lessons were identified relating to engaging small landholders. These included ensuring councils are engaged as early as possible, so they are aware of programs and resources, and reaching small landholders through other novel avenues (such as local groups, private landholder networks). • Staff implementing the activities felt that the key delivery lessons related to the duration of the program, the timeliness of delivering key outputs to inform planning and the benefits that online delivery could offer future programs. • There is an opportunity to ensure the lessons learned and material created could be turned into a course manual for LLS to use when working with small landholders, or another resource that is used beyond the scope of this program.
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many lessons were learned about end of program evaluation challenges. Due to staff involved in the EBC program moving on and having busy schedules, finding suitable community-led network staff for interview was challenging, with less buy-in to the evaluation than hoped. • Without consent to directly contact small landholders, FPC relied on regional staff or community-led network staff to reach out to small landholders for interview. Few small landholders were contacted, and of these, no small landholders agreed to be interviewed.

9.2 Recommendations

There are several key recommendations based on the findings of this evaluation. These recommendations are directed to the delivery partner of the program, the funding body, and future program design.

For delivery partner/LLS:

We recommend that LLS (or future grantees of similar programs):

1. Build clearer and more comprehensive monitoring and reporting processes and requirements for those implementing the program, this could include:
 - a. Ensuring implementation partners provide comprehensive reporting of delivery data and landholder survey data, with an emphasis on consistency across multi-region projects. This should include ensuring all raw data and program documentation are stored safely in a central location. This is particularly important when programs are being implemented across regions.
 - b. Encouraging the use and reporting of a capacity-building survey for LLS staff or community-led network staff to understand changes in knowledge, awareness and intended practice change following the delivery of virtual or in-person activities.
 - c. Building 'consent to be contacted by external organisations' processes into landholder surveys and forms, allowing landholders to 'opt in' to both internal and external evaluation activities. This would generate a bank of participants available to be contacted to participate in further evaluation activities such as interviews and/or surveys and would reduce the reliance on the LLS to contact participants.
2. Incorporate and share the lessons learned through this program about engaging small landholders. This would help develop and deliver future programs that target this group, as well as potentially integrating the approaches to be more business-as-usual. Key design features to consider and share include:
 - a. Engaging councils early in delivery, as well as building relationships with a broad range of local networks (such as private groups or commercial entities) to ensure small landholders are reached.
 - b. Emphasise building connections to community-led networks and local LLS to ensure localised support remains in place for small landholders.
 - c. Offering awareness raising and capacity building workshops and webinars that focus on key issues experienced by small landholders. These events should continue to be delivered or shared online when appropriate.
 - d. Continue to hold quarterly meetings between regions/participating teams to share updates, ideas and lessons.

For Funding body/the Trust:

We recommend that the Trust (or future funding bodies of programs similar to the EBC program):

3. Ensure future program business plans allocate sufficient time for initial scoping so that this research and information can be used to inform activities related to program delivery. This time allocation may need to explicitly consider the grantee's context and whether:
 - a. Existing staff are available and can commence immediately
 - b. Whether staff need to be hired and the long lead times required for this

- c. Whether there are elements of the scoping phase that can be accelerated by using contractors to support the grantee delivery team
4. Consider offering tailored evaluation support to grantees to improve the capture of quality data (i.e., through surveying landholders) and improve the management of data. This might be an external resource built into program budgets or a Trust staff member. These support people could, for example, 'check in' and support funded projects at key stages of their program design and delivery.
5. Consider updating reporting templates to have a greater focus on program outcomes. This might include reducing the number and variety of output targets and being more explicit about what or how outcomes could be demonstrated. Note that this could be done in concert with the evaluation support noted above, and should consider how qualitative data, case studies and triangulation might also be used to understand and show impact.
6. Continue to allow flexibility with delivery and budget expenditures to support programs to meet the targets.

For future program design:

For the design of future programs we recommend:

7. The LLS and Trust should recognise and consider the value of having a cross-regional coordinator position to manage programs that span multiple regions.
8. In cases where projects are getting grantees to target new audiences or use different approaches, consider how the project can be planned so that those changes (where appropriate) are embedded into business-as-usual. This could, for example, be identified as a key activity in the business plan.

Appendix A – Evaluation framework from the Every Bit Counts Program evaluation plan

Table 13. Evaluation framework for Every Bit Counts Program.

Focus area	Evaluation questions	Indicators, evidence, and other considerations (existing (E)/ new (N) data)
Appropriateness	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How appropriate was the planning process in the initial scoping phase? 2. Did the project address the identified need and was it the most appropriate thing to do? 3. Was the expenditure appropriate for the project? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Evidence of the planning process, including any theory or existing evidence used to inform planning and design of the program (E) ● Evidence of program need (E) ● Consideration of expenditure in relation to the number of people reached through the program (E) ● Program delivery team perspectives on the appropriateness of funding and expenditure for the project (N) ● Alignment of the program with the objectives of the Trust and LLS regions (E)
Effectiveness and outcomes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Was the project on time and on budget? 2. Were the project’s activities implemented as intended. If not, why, and what was the impact? 3. Was the project appropriately planned and scoped to ensure delivery of intended outcomes and effective measurement of these outcomes? 4. What outputs have been achieved to date, and do these represent value for money?¹² 5. Were the intended outputs delivered? 6. To what extent and in what ways has the capacity of small landholders been built? 7. To what extent and in what ways has the capacity of staff who engage with small landholders been built? 8. To what extent do small landholders now have access to resources, networks and support through the program to improve their land management practices? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Program budget, milestone tracking, and achievement of key deliverables (E) ● Program documentation, scope and variations (as applicable) (E) ● Evidence and data on what has been delivered, to whom, and how (E) ● Staff and participant perspective on program scope, delivery and achievements (N) ● Number of workshop/events/activities delivered (E) ● Evidence of increased engagement with community (E) ● Number of people reached through the program, considering different audiences and geographic areas as appropriate, and different part of the program (E) ● Website hits and downloads (as appropriate and available) ● Staff and participant reported increase in capacity (knowledge, understanding, tools, approaches) (E) ● Staff and participant satisfaction and perceived value of capacity building opportunities (N) ● Assessment of resources and support available (E), including participant perspectives on their value and accessibility (N) ● Uptake of newsletters (E) ● Increase in connection for participants including to others in the community, key resources, networks and support (E and N) ● Reported changes in land management practices and examples of how landholders have used new knowledge (E and N) ● Synthesis of case studies demonstrating change (E)

¹² Removed as it was covered by Q2 under Efficiency

	<p>9. To what extent have small landholders changed and improved their land management practices? Is there any evidence of positive environmental impact stemming from this?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Perspectives of staff, network leads and participants of positive environmental impacts resulting from changed practices (N)
Efficiency	<p>1. How efficient were the planned project activities? 2. Did the project deliver value for money? 3. What were the project implementation costs, and were these efficient? Could resources be allocated more efficiently?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Program budget and expenditure (E) ● Examples of action implemented to ensure efficiency (N) ● Feedback and insights from program staff around efficiency and value for money (N) ● Number of people reached through the program, considering different audiences and geographic areas as appropriate (E) ● Comparison of expenditure against other similar programs (if this exists and is available) (E) ● Consideration of expenditure in relation to the number of people reached through the program (E) ● Perspectives on opportunities to improve efficiency (N)
Process	<p>1. How well managed was the project? 2. Were the methods for making decisions and managing the project appropriate and likely to ensure success? 3. To what extent were risks identified, mitigated and managed?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Evidence of good program management practices, including risk management, decision making processes and governance (E) ● Satisfaction of participants with program delivery (E) ● Review of risk register and associated decision-making processes (E) ● Evidence and examples of what worked well and not so well about the way the program was delivered (N)
Lessons and opportunities	<p>1. What were the lessons learned and/or other opportunities related to the project? 2. What could be done differently? 3. What were the associated risks with governance, financial management and project planning?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lessons learnt by program staff and key stakeholders (N) ● Opportunities for improvement (N) ● Identification of gaps and opportunities as seen by participants (N) ● Review of risk register, governance and decision-making processes (E) ● Synthesis of evaluation findings (N)

Appendix B – Interview questions (Trust and Program Managers)

My name is XXX from First Person Consulting. We are currently working with the Environmental Trust to evaluate the Every Bit Counts program. As a part of this we are speaking with a range of people who have been involved in the delivery the program such as yourself. We are keen to understand how the program has been delivered, what has been achieved and what has been learnt through program delivery.

This interview will take around 30 minutes. As we're speaking, I'll be transcribing the interview – this is for our use in analysis and will not be provided to the Trust. The information gathered will be presented in synthesis together with other data and information in an evaluation report. We do sometimes use anonymous quotes in our reporting so please let me know if there is anything you do not wish to be quoted on.

Are you happy to proceed?

1. Can you tell me a little bit about your role and involvement in the Every Bit Counts program?
2. Were you involved in the initial scoping phase of the program? From your perspective how valuable and effective was this process? What can you tell us about the process of developing and scoping the program (noting the 2 stages)

Program delivery

3. What worked well about the program design and delivery? (e.g., resources, communication, delivery, engagement from landholders)
4. What didn't work so well there were several attempts by Landcare – there are a lot of records – challenges about the way the program was designed and delivered? Were there any challenges that arose and if so, how were they overcome?
5. The 4 LLS regions tailored engagement and resources to their respective regions – to what extent do you think this was appropriate, added value or created challenges?
 - a. Do you have any examples of how the program was tailored in different regions? (if not covered above)
6. Were there any risks that you identified along the way? Were there any risks that weren't identified along the way?
7. Were there any changes to program delivery made along the way? If so, how did these changes benefit the program (or otherwise)?
8. To what extent and in what ways was the program delivered in an efficient manner?

For everyone – outcomes

9. Now we have some scaled questions about outcomes. From your perspective, to what extent has the program been effective in achieving the following outcomes?

	1	2	3	4	NA
	Not effective at all	Somewhat effective	Mostly Effective	Very effective	Can't say/not sure
Increasing the capacity of staff/networks to engage with small landholders?					
Building the capacity of small landholders					
Improving small landholders access to resources, networks and support					

- a. Can you tell me more about how the program has increased the capacity of staff/networks to engage with small landholders? Do you have any examples of how you and/or other staff have changed how they engage with small landholders?
- b. How have these outcomes been valuable for staff and the community?
- c. Do you have any evidence of small landholders improving their land management practices?
- d. Is there anything in place to ensure that small landholders access to resources, networks and support networks will continue?

10. To what extent do you feel the program represents good value for money?

- a. Why did you give this response? (Follow-up only if needed)

1	2	3	4	NA
Not at all	A little VfM	Moderately good VfM	Very good VfM	Can't say/not sure

11. Overall, to what extent have you been satisfied with the Program?

- a. Why did you give this response? (Follow-up only if needed)

1	2	3	4
Not at all satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Quite satisfied	Very satisfied

Lessons and opportunities

12. What would you say are the most significant lessons learned from your experience of the Program for future program delivery?
 - a. Is there anything you would have done differently in hindsight?
13. What opportunities are there to further improve NRM management on small holder properties?
14. How did COVID-19 impact the program, in your opinion?
15. How did you find the Trust processes and communication? Was the process of business planning, execution of grants and reporting efficient and valuable?
16. Do you have any other comments and feedback in relation to the program?

Appendix C – Interview questions (Regional LLS staff)

My name is XXX from First Person Consulting. We are currently working with the Environmental Trust to evaluate the Every Bit Counts program. As a part of this we are speaking with a range of people who have been involved in the delivery the program such as yourself. We are keen to understand how the program has been delivered, what has been achieved and what has been learnt through program delivery.

This interview will take around 30 minutes. As we're speaking, I'll be transcribing the interview – this is for our use in analysis and will not be provided to the Trust. The information gathered will be presented in synthesis together with other data and information in an evaluation report. We do sometimes use anonymous quotes in our reporting so please let me know if there is anything you do not wish to be quoted on.

Are you happy to proceed?

Can you tell me a little bit about your role and involvement in the Every Bit Counts program? If involved in scoping - to what extent and in what ways did you find this process valuable and effective? What can you tell us about the process of developing and scoping the program (noting the 2 stages)

Delivery

1. As we understand there were three components to the program – provision of resources, tailored NRM engagement and upskilling of LLS and community network staff. Can you tell me a bit more about your approach to delivering each of these components in your LLS?
 - b. Resources
 - c. Tailored NRM engagement
 - d. Upskilling of LLS and community network staff
2. How did you tailor your approach to meet the needs of the local landholders? (How is your community different?)
 - a. To what extent did you feel this was successful?
3. How did you tailor your approach to ensure LLS and community network staff were engaged?
 - a. To what extent did you feel this was successful?
4. To what extent do you think that tailoring engagement and resources to each region was appropriate, added value or created challenges?

For everyone – program delivery

5. What worked well about the program design and delivery as a whole? (e.g., resources, communication, delivery, engagement from landholders)
 - a. Do you have any specific examples of how the program was tailored in different areas? (if not covered above)

6. What didn't work so well about the way the program was designed and delivered as a whole? Were there any challenges that arose and if so, how were they overcome?
7. Were there any risks that you identified along the way? Were there any risks that weren't identified along the way?
8. Were there any changes made along the way to how the program was delivered? If so, how did these changes benefit the program (or otherwise)?
9. How did COVID-19 impact the program from your experience?
10. To what extent and in what ways was the program delivered in an efficient manner?

Outcomes

11. Now we have some scaled questions about outcomes. From your perspective, to what extent has the program been effective in achieving the following outcomes?

	1	2	3	4	NA
	Not effective at all	Somewhat effective	Mostly Effective	Very effective	Can't say/not sure
Increasing the capacity of staff/networks to engage with small landholders?					
Building the capacity of small landholders					
Improving small landholders access to resources, networks and support					

Can you tell me a bit more about any specific outcomes that you have witnessed or experienced as a result of the program?

Is there anything in place to ensure that small landholders access to resources, networks and support networks will continue in the region?

Can you tell me more about how the program has increased the capacity of staff/networks to engage with small landholders? Do you have any examples of how you and/or other staff have changed how they engage with small landholders?

How have these outcomes been valuable for staff and the community?

Do you have any evidence of small landholders improving their land management practices?

12. To what extent do you feel the program represents good value for money?

b. Why did you give this response? (Follow-up only if needed)

1	2	3	4	NA
Not at all	A little VfM	Moderately good VfM	Very good VfM	Can't say/not sure

13. Overall, to what extent have you been satisfied with the Program?

b. Why did you give this response? (Follow-up only if needed)

1	2	3	4
Not at all satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Quite satisfied	Very satisfied

Lessons and opportunities

14. What would you say are the most significant lessons learned from your experience of the Program for future program delivery?

a. Is there anything you would have done differently in hindsight?

15. What opportunities are there to continue to improve management on small farms?

16. How did you find the Trust processes and communication? Was the process of business planning, execution of grants and reporting efficient and valuable?

17. Do you have any other comments and feedback in relation to the program?

We have a couple more admin questions to help us with the remainder of the evaluation.

18. Do you have any data or information, specific to program activities/delivery from your region that you can share with us to contribute to the evaluation?

- a. Event attendance
- b. Survey responses
- c. Case studies

Appendix D – Interview questions (community-led network staff)

My name is XXX from First Person Consulting. We are currently working with the Environmental Trust to evaluate the Every Bit Counts program. As a part of this we are speaking with a range of people who have been involved in the program such as yourself. We are keen to understand what has been achieved and what has been learnt through program delivery.

This interview will take around 30 minutes. As we’re speaking, I’ll be transcribing the interview – this is for our use in analysis and will not be provided to the Trust. The information gathered will be presented in synthesis together with other data and information in an evaluation report. We do sometimes use anonymous quotes in our reporting so please let me know if there is anything you do not wish to be quoted on.

Are you happy to proceed?

Background:

Can you tell us about small landholders in your community?

Outcomes:

Now we have some scaled questions about outcomes. From your perspective, to what extent has the program been effective in achieving the following outcomes?

	1	2	3	4	NA
	Not effective at all	Somewhat effective	Mostly Effective	Very effective	Can’t say/not sure
Increasing the capacity of staff/networks (including yourself) to engage with small landholders?					
Building the capacity of small landholders					
Improving small landholders access to resources, networks and support					

From your perspective, how has the capacity of small landholders been built? Can you provide some specific example?

How has your own capacity and the team you work with to deliver the project been built?

To what extent do small landholders now have access to resources, networks and support through the project to improve their land management practices?

Do you see the resources and networks being utilised, even after the program is over?

To what extent and in what ways did you engage other community-led groups and networks?

Have partnerships with community-led groups and networks continued to exist after the end of the program? If yes please describe, if no, why do you think this is the case?

To what extent have small landholders changed and improved their land management practices? Do you have any specific examples of landholders making practice change as a result of the program?

Is there anything in place to ensure that small landholders' access to resources, networks and support networks will continue?

Can you tell me a bit more about any specific outcomes that you have witnessed or experienced as a result of the program?

Process:

How did you find communication with the (Insert Regional name) EBC Regional Project manager/team?

Do you feel that the program/activities that you were involved in were managed well?

How did you identify any risks that came up? (Prompts: covid, online, engaging people)

Lessons:

What were some of the lessons that you would suggest this project learn from, for any future programs?

What could be done differently?

Overall, to what extent have you been satisfied with the Program?

c. Why did you give this response? (Follow-up only if needed)

1	2	3	4
Not at all satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Quite satisfied	Very satisfied

Any final comments or feedback on the program?

FINAL QUESTIONS ABOUT SPEAKING TO LANDHOLDERS:

- We are looking to hear the experiences of landholders. Do you have any ideas of landholders who were engaged for the first time through the Every Bits Count program?
- If yes, encourage them to email/reach out to some, get consent to be interviewed, then share contact details with us.

Appendix E – Additional data

Table 14. Networks engaged in the program by each region. Data source: regional reports.

Project	Network
South East	Far South Coast Landcare
	Shoalhaven Landcare
	Illawarra Landcare
	Upper Shoalhaven Landcare
	ACT Landcare
	South Coast Network
	Highlands Network
	Eurobodalla Network
	Capital Region Small Farms Network
Greater Sydney	Hawkesbury-Nepean Landcare Network
	Greater Sydney Landcare Network
	Cattai Hills Environment Network
	Platypus Landcare group
	Kurrajong Koala Landcare group
	Community Environment Network
	Central Coast Council
Hunter	Gresford Beef and Land Group
	Hunter Region Landcare network
	Port Stephens Council
	Dungog Council
	Cessnock Council
	Maitland Council
North Coast	Clarence Landcare
	Brunswick Valley Landcare
	Bellinger Landcare
	Richmond Landcare Inc
	Coffs Harbour Regional Landcare
	Tweed Landcare
	North Coast Regional Landcare Network
	Border Ranges - Richmond Valley Landcare Network
	Richmond Landcare
	Port Macquarie-Hastings Council

Similar programs in other contexts – literature review

There have been several examples of programs and networks across Australia that have focused on smallholder farmers as their primary audience. As shown in Table 15, the overarching aim of these efforts has been to educate, upskill and ultimately change the behaviour of small landholders to promote better natural resource management on their properties. Delivery has generally consisted of in-person activities such as topic-specific workshops and field days, as well as the development of tools and resources, such as handbooks.

However, there is little publicly available evidence to indicate the success of these programs or to inform other programs. In Tasmania, the Small Farm Planning program reported 80% of workshop attendees improving their on-farm practices as a result of their engagement with the program.¹³ Similarly, in Western Australia, 90% of small landholders attending workshops run by the Small Landholder Information Service also reported improved practices.¹⁴ Neither of these reports presented raw numbers behind the presented percentages.

The lack of published evidence on similar projects targeting small landholders further highlights the importance of the EBC program and the need for evaluation to increase the evidence-base for interventions in this space landholders.

¹³ NRM South Tasmania & Huon Valley Council, 2018, 'From little things, big things grow', https://nrmsouth.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/2018-Case-Study_PMP-survey.pdf

¹⁴ Guise, N., Gannaway, N. & Jones, Y., 2010, 'Development of an innovative extension model for small landholders – an experiential learning journey', <https://www.apen.org.au/static/uploads/files/efs-journal-v06-n01-20-guise-et-al-wfpxpunjwkby.pdf>

Table 15: Past similar programs /networks in Australia.

State	Organisation and Program	Funding source	Aims	Delivery	Outcomes
TAS	(NRM North: Small Farm Living (2012- present)	Australian Government (National Landcare Program - Regional Land Partnerships)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build awareness, knowledge, skills and networks • Increase number of small farm landholders implementing best practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops • Biennial Small Farm Living Day • Newsletter • Website • Workbooks and tools 	N/A
TAS	NRM South: Small Farm Planning (2012-2016)	Australian Government (‘National Landcare Program’)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 Hands-on workshops 	80% of attendees of 5 workshops improved on-farm practices
VIC	Euroa Arboretum: Healthy Hectares (2018)	Australian Government (‘National Landcare Program’) Goulburn - Broken CMA (Beyond SoilCare program)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education • Skill development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational workshops • Handbook 	N/A
WA	WA DAF: Small Landholder Information Service (2004-2015?)	WA Department of Agriculture and Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate small landholders • Behaviour change • Increase participation and engagement with local rural networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops • Topic-specific field days 	90% of small landholders attending workshops reported improving their practices (post-workshop survey)
WA	Balingup Progress Association: ‘Small Farm Field Day’ (1991-present)	N/A – Community organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness in the community about relevant farming topics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field day • Farmer’s market • Workshops 	N/A
WA	Blackwood Valley Small Landholders Group	N/A – community organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and assist small landholders in the WA Southwest and Perth • Educate • Promote participation in local small-farm networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online, social media 	N/A

