



Landcare Plan for Victoria DRAFT

11 May 2023



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We pay our respects to the Traditional Owners of the lands in Victoria.

We are inspired by the legacy of Victorian First Nations people, who have produced food while caring for the ecological systems that life depends upon for tens of thousands of years.

We recognise Traditional Owner rights to self-determination and to speak for and look after Country.

Message from the Chair

I am delighted to present the Draft Landcare Plan (the Plan) for Victoria for consideration of the landcare community.

Landcare has been one of Victoria's greatest exports and the dedicated volunteers and professionals across the State continue to make landcare great. Across Victoria we have improved our local environments, transformed farming systems, and supported communities through both good and difficult times.

The Plan harnesses the strengths of landcare and creates a blueprint for the growth and development of our strong community driven movement.

As we look to the horizon of the next ten years of landcare, I realise we face serious environmental and social challenges. But I also know that together landcare has the strength, connections, knowledge, and expertise to support our communities and landscapes through these challenging times.

This Plan identifies and details activities that will guide us and help our partners to understand enabling ways to provide support.

Partnerships and collaboration within and beyond landcare will be key to achieving the vision of this Plan. Landcare has built strong relationships with government and non-government partners who share our passion for resilient, biodiverse, and productive landscapes and understand the importance of local action. We look to these partners to consider opportunities to support landcare to achieve our priorities as articulated in the Plan.

As the Chair of Landcare Victoria, I am committed to providing solid leadership in delivering this Plan. Working together with groups, networks, and partners across the State, to bring landcare's vision and priorities to life.

I want to thank everyone who provided their knowledge, expertise, and time to inform the development of this draft Plan. This draft concludes twelve months of listening, robust discussions, and testing with the landcare community and its partners. I encourage you to review the draft and provide feedback to ensure that the final Plan meets the needs and aspirations of landcarers across Victoria.

Jane Carney
Chair
Landcare Victoria

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose

The Landcare Plan for Victoria (the Plan) provides a united voice and future vision for the landcare community in Victoria. While the movement is strong and has a long, proud past, the Plan will help landcare to continue growing and adapting.

The landcare community in Victoria has grown in diversity, but still faces similar challenges and shares common aspirations. The Plan outlines the collective goals and priorities of the landcare community for the next decade and highlights the key actions and areas where support is needed to achieve these outcomes.

Developing the Plan

In 2022 Landcare Victoria, the representative body for landcare in Victoria, commenced a process to prepare the Plan. With funding support from the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action, Landcare Victoria appointed Projectura to engage with the landcare community and develop the Plan.

From April 2021 to March 2022, we engaged 512 members of the landcare community, as well as government and non-government partners, to provide input for the Plan. The engagement sought to understand the strengths, challenges, opportunities, and aspirations of the landcare community in Victoria and to test the draft strategic priority statement that presented an initial vision, outcomes, and priorities for the Plan.

This draft Plan is the result of listening to landcare voices throughout all stages of the engagement. Its purpose is to confirm that we have accurately captured the priorities of the landcare community in Victoria, prior to finalisation.

Vision statement

‘Local people working together for resilient, biodiverse, and productive Victorian landscapes.’

Focus areas and outcome statements

1. Local to global impact

Local and landscape scale planning and action supports resilient, biodiverse, and productive landscapes.

2. Community knowledge and resilience

Landcare driven education and community connections support resilient, biodiverse, and productive landscapes and knowledgeable, culturally competent communities.

3. Demonstrating value and impact

Landcare demonstrates its significant value and positive impact on communities and landscapes.

4. Healthy and varied partnerships

Landcare maintains diverse and healthy partnerships that support landcare priorities.

5. Active and diverse volunteers

Landcare is driven and supported by an active and diverse volunteer community.

6. A supported and effective community

Landcare volunteers and professionals use their connections, knowledge, skills, and effective governance to positively impact their communities and landscapes.

1. About this Plan

Victoria's landcare movement has a long, proud past, that remains strong today. There are 550 active landcare groups and networks¹ involving over 70,000 environmental volunteers each year in Victoria.² Their work touches and improves landscapes and communities across the State, with nearly every corner of Victoria stewarded by a landcare group.

What the Plan is intended to achieve

Landcare groups and networks across Victoria are varied and diverse in their activities and simultaneously have many common challenges and ambitions.

The Landcare Plan focuses on uniting the landcare community towards a shared strategic intent that is clearly communicated and widely supported.

Common operational challenges include securing sustainable funding and difficulties in growing membership. Common aspirations include leading action around climate change, landscape restoration, biodiversity decline and sustainable production.

These challenges and aspirations can seem overwhelming when working as individual landcare groups or networks but together the landcare community is strong and can achieve more.

The Plan's primary objective is to document these aspirations, outline activities to achieve them, and identify opportunities for collaboration. By providing a unified voice and a future vision, the Plan seeks to inspire and enable the landcare community to work towards this shared strategic intent, ensuring the success of landcare in Victoria.

The Plan recognises the strengths of landcare and the support required to help this incredible movement to grow, adapt and continue to have an impact. In a time of constant environmental and social challenges, it is time to be clear about what landcare can offer and the support that it needs.

What is landcare?

For this Plan, landcare refers to community-led environmental volunteer groups and networks that provide leadership and on-ground action, solving local issues relating to landscapes and communities. This includes landcare groups and networks, friends of groups and other similar groups.

Diversity of landcare

Landcare, the way it operates and the priorities and activities of groups and networks across Victoria are varied and diverse. The Plan respects this diversity and captures outcomes and priority activities to suit groups and networks with aspirations for large-scale landscape change and priorities for groups focused on local issues of importance.

¹ Landcare Victoria Inc. (2022). 2022 Annual Report.

² Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (2023). Victorian Landcare Group Health survey.

The Plan documents priorities that were consistently expressed by landcarers across the State in the planning consultation processes.

It is recognised that participation in the delivery of parts of the Plan will be decided at the local level by individual groups or networks.

How will the Plan be used?

The Plan will be used to assist the landcare movement to access enhanced levels of support to achieve their aspirations for the future. This includes:

- Working with new and existing partners to develop and update priorities, policy, and funding programs.
- Landcare groups or networks using the Plan to highlight needs at a local level or to support funding bids.
- Landcare Victoria developing new collaborative projects that are state-wide priorities and creating pathways for networks and groups to be involved in collective activities.
- Guiding the Landcare Victoria board's decision-making and setting a work program for Landcare Victoria staff.

Who will lead the Plan implementation?

Landcare Victoria will provide overall leadership to guide the implementation of the Plan on behalf of its members. However, leadership of some actions may not sit with Landcare Victoria.

No part of the Plan can be achieved without working in collaboration with landcare groups, networks, and partners.

2. About Landcare

Landcare in Victoria has a long and productive history, with the first named landcare group established at Winjallok near St Arnaud in 1986. The formation of groups and later landcare networks spread across Australia and the world, growing into the successful model of landcare today.

Early landcare groups focused strongly on the integration of agricultural and environmental goals. This remains a core value but the fundamental power of the landcare concept – of local communities taking action in response to local issues – has seen the expansion of the landcare concept. Today, landcare incorporates bushcare, coastcare, 'friends of' groups and diverse other community-led activities. Its educational value is evident in the proliferation of junior landcare activities.

Landcare in Victoria (infographics)

In 2022 there were:

- 494 landcare groups
- 47 landcare networks
- 17,000+ Victorian households were members of landcare groups and networks³
- 74,000+ landcare members and non-members involved in landcare activities
 - Providing 390,000 hours of volunteer time including:
 - 184,000 hours of on-ground activity
 - 78,000 hours of community learning and training
 - Volunteer time equates to 51,300 days of work or 207 full-time employees
- 6,194 new members who joined landcare groups or networks
- 84% of the 456 groups and networks who responded to the Landcare Group Health survey reporting that their group health was ok to thriving⁴.

Landcare's impact

Since 1986, landcare volunteer efforts have changed urban and rural landscapes across Victoria. Together the movement has driven and influenced landscape-scale changes, linking native vegetation, reducing erosion, increasing soil health, and building community knowledge, amongst many other significant achievements.

We often recognise landcare progress by its environmental and sustainability achievements, but a critical additional value created by landcare is the way its builds community inclusion capacity and resilience.

³ Landcare Victoria Inc. (2022). 2022 Annual Report.

⁴ Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (2023). Victorian Landcare Group Health survey.

Landcare's grassroots approach means that communities take ownership of their achievements. Landcare results are rooted in the community and deliver enduring change in a way that other approaches may not.

Support organisations

Victoria's landcare groups and networks receive support from a range of key Victorian organisations, including:

Landcare Victoria Inc.: The peak body for landcare in Victoria, providing services, support, capacity building, advocacy, investment attraction, State-wide project coordination and insurance to around 550 landcare member groups.

Department of Energy Environment and Climate Action (DEECA): Funds and coordinates the Victorian Landcare Program including the Victorian Landcare Grants, the Victorian Landcare Facilitator Program, and the Victorian Landcare Support Program.

Catchment Management Authorities (CMAs): Support landcare across their regions including employing staff who focus on supporting the landcare community and their activities.

At a national level the Australian Government and landcare focussed organisations support landcare, these include:

National Landcare Network: A member-based organisation that represents and coordinates the activities of the State and Territory landcare organisations, including Landcare Victoria Inc.

Landcare Australia: Supports the landcare community across Australia with funding, capacity building, on-ground projects, information, and promotion of landcare achievements.

Australian Government: Supports the landcare community through funding from the National Landcare Program and other programs.

3. Engagement

Core to the development of this Plan has been a multi-stage program of engagement, with the aim of ensuring the Plan properly reflects the needs and priorities of the landcare community. Between February 2022 and March 2023, over 500 instances of engagement occurred with the landcare community and its partners to inform the Plan’s development.

Engagement stages and activities

Engagement included three stages:

Stage 1 (Feb – May 2022): Initial engagement to understand strengths, challenges, opportunities, and aspirations of landcare.

Stage 2 (Dec 2022): Engagement to further understand and explore challenges and opportunities and identify priority outcomes and activities.

Stage 3 (Mar 2023): Engagement to gather feedback on a draft Strategic Priority Statement that provided draft priority outcomes and activities for public comment.

Table 1. Engagement activities

Activity	No. of participants
Stage 1 engagement	
Five workshops with landcare members, landcare professionals, Landcare Victoria’s board and government and non-government partners	84
Online survey	211
Landcare leader interviews	11
Traditional Owner group representative interviews	3
Partner interviews	4
Stage 2 engagement	
Five workshops with landcare members, landcare professionals, Landcare Victoria’s board, and government and non-government partners	80
Stage 3 engagement	
Four workshops with landcare members, professionals and government and non-government partners	52
Online survey	55
Individual interviews or meetings	12
Total	512

What we heard

Throughout the engagement process we heard the passionate, dedicated, and independent voice of the landcare community. They provided insights into the value landcare offers within Victoria and contributed to a better understanding of what is important for landcare going forward.

The engagement also captured the challenges and barriers faced by the landcare community. These challenges include:

- Sustainable funding – we heard how the landcare community can struggle to achieve their vision because of inconsistent and insufficient funding to support their voluntary efforts.
- Difficulties growing the membership base – there is concern about the demographic profile of landcare and the need to find ways of increasing numbers and diversity of membership.
- Challenges associated with creating a clear brand and shared purpose for landcare – the diverse, grassroots foundation of landcare is one of its great strengths, but it also creates a challenge for creating a clear and consistent message about the value that landcare creates.

The landcare community is excited about the many opportunities it can identify for its future in Victoria. These included:

- United action on climate change and biodiversity decline – the landcare community recognises that it can play a key role in supporting communities respond to the threat of climate change, and to implement landscape scale changes to reverse biodiversity loss.
- Community education – landcare activities generate knowledge and create trusted pathways for the introduction of new knowledge to communities as a basis for positive change.
- Opportunities to improve existing partnerships while creating new partnerships – landcare builds and cultivates partnerships at the local level and recognises that it needs to develop new partnerships to remain strong and effective.

A full copy of the engagement findings from the first stage can be found at <https://www.landcarevictoria.org.au/LVI/Projects/Projects-LandcarePlan.aspx>. Priorities, outcomes, and activities identified during stages two and three of the engagement are reflected in this Plan's outcomes and priority activities.



4. Vision

Vision statement

Local people working together for resilient, biodiverse, and productive Victorian landscapes.

Vision definitions

The vision uses keywords to capture the aspirations of the Victorian landcare community, including:

Local people: The Victorian landcare community who drive the landcare movement, including individual members, groups, and networks.

Resilient: Where landscapes and communities are supported to adapt and recover from disturbance and natural events.

Biodiverse: The number and variety of all living things including plants, animals, fungi, and microorganisms across waterways, land, and oceans.

Productive: Where landscapes achieve their maximum potential providing positive outcomes for humans and nature.

Landscapes: The visible and hidden features and functions of the land, across agricultural, natural, urban, and regional settings at multiple scales.

Plan principles

The following overarching principles will guide the Plan's implementation:

Diversity of landcare: Landcare, the way it operates and the aspirations and activities of groups and networks across Victoria is varied and diverse. It is recognised that groups and networks will decide locally which parts of the Plan they will engage with or participate in.

Respect for Traditional Owner and First Nations people: In delivering this Plan, the landcare community will respect the diversity of First Nations people's cultures across Victoria and their connection to Country. Past injustices and inequality for First Nations people will be recognised and landcare will support and enable self-determination. It is understood that First Nations people will have their own priorities which may not always align with the aspirations of the landcare community.

Support and resources: The landcare movement in Victoria is strong and well supported by government, corporate and community partners. Continued and expanded support, resources, and partnerships will be required to enable the delivery of this Plan.

Collaboration: The achievement of landcare aspirations, as outlined in this Plan, requires collaboration between partners within the landcare movement and with the broader community.

Best practice and informed approaches: The implementation of activities within this Plan should be informed by best practice and scientific information from diverse sources.

Achieving the vision

The Plan guides the landcare community's efforts towards achieving its vision. By integrating the findings of the engagement process, it captures the community's collective aspirations, challenges, and opportunities.

With a focus on shared priority activities and collaboration opportunities, the Plan acts as a roadmap, empowering the landcare community to work together towards achieving their vision. The Plan aims to support local action and drive broader positive change - securing sustainable funding, growing membership, and leading the charge on critical issues such as climate change, landscape restoration, biodiversity decline, and sustainable production.

Ultimately, the Plan is a critical step in realising the vision of a resilient, biodiverse, and productive Victorian landscapes and communities.



Figure 1: Steps to achieving the vision of Victorian landcare



5. The Plan

Six focus areas for the Plan have been developed based on engagement with the Victorian landcare community.

For each area of focus, a long-term outcome statement and a series of priority activities are defined, along with consideration of roles and support required for implementation.

Focus areas

1. Local to global impact
2. Community knowledge and resilience
3. Demonstrating value and impact
4. Healthy and varied partnerships
5. Active and diverse volunteers
6. A supported and effective community.

Terms used within the Plan

10-year outcome statement: Describes how community landcare will look in ten years following the successful implementation of the Plan.

Priority area: A group of priority activities under a focus area.

Priority activity: An important activity that will support the achievement of an outcome statement.

Landcare leadership: Identifies parts of the Victorian landcare community that will be involved in activity delivery. This identifies leadership and support roles. At times there is a clear leadership role, for other activities the leadership role is shared. These columns only identify how the landcare community will be involved in delivery, for some activities external leadership will be required in addition to landcare involvement.

Partner support opportunities: Ways that partners can support and assist landcare with activity delivery.

5.1. Local to global impact

Background

Across Victoria, the landcare movement has various scales of leadership and action. Implementing local solutions that, when combined, have broader impacts, is a vital strength of the movement. Collaborative planning at regional or landscape scales, combined with local implementation, has also been successful in parts of the State.

Collectively, the work of landcare contributes to state, national and global goals for landscape restoration.

During the development of the Plan, the landcare community expressed the importance of secure funding to plan for and implement local solutions. In addition, they expressed the need for funding to plan and deliver landscape scale projects in areas of biodiversity, climate change, and landscape restoration.

10-year outcome statement

Local and landscape scale planning and action supports resilient, biodiverse, and productive landscapes.

Priority activities

Table 2. Local to global impact priority activities

Priority areas and activities	Landcare leadership L = Lead; S = Support	
	Landcare groups and networks	Landcare Victoria
Local solutions and action		
1.1 Enable and continuously improve group and network strategic planning to effectively identify landcare priorities and guide on-ground action.	L	S
1.2 Facilitate access to and sharing of knowledge, expertise, and scientific information to enable the development of best-practice local solutions.	L	S
1.3 Advocate for project funding, including project management resources, to address local landcare priorities.	L	L
1.4 Work together with Traditional Owners to deliver shared priorities on Country.	L	

Table 2. Local to global impact priority activities

Priority areas and activities	Landcare leadership L = Lead; S = Support	
	Landcare groups and networks	Landcare Victoria
Landscape to global impact		
1.5 Support community climate adaptation planning and action across landscapes and on individual properties.	L	S
1.6 Support communities to harness opportunities in carbon and environmental service markets.	L	S
1.7 Facilitate collaboration across landcare networks to identify, resource, and deliver best practice landscape-scale projects that are shared priorities.	L	L
1.8 Undertake landscape-scale planning and seek funding for regionally delivered multi-year projects that enable landcare to support resilient, biodiverse, and productive landscapes and contribute to national and global sustainability goals.	L	L
1.9 Develop and promote a prospectus of biodiversity, climate change, and landscape restoration projects administered at State or network levels and delivered by local landcare groups and networks.	S	L

Partner support opportunities

The following are opportunities that landcare partners could undertake to support the delivery of the Plan:

Government and non-government partners: Support landcare and Traditional Owners and First Nations people to work together to understand shared priorities and collaborate on projects.

Government and non-government partners: Support landcare strategic planning through in-kind resources or funding.

Government, universities, research organisations and other not-for-profit organisations: Support sharing of knowledge, expertise, and scientific information to plan and develop best practice local landcare solutions.

Wider community and industry groups: Collaborate on landcare planning and project delivery.

5.2. Community knowledge and resilience

Background

The opportunity to increase landcare’s role in community education and extension was a top priority identified during the development of this Plan. The landcare community also expressed interest in continuing to support community health, well-being, and connectedness.

Although disaster recovery is not the core business of landcare, research post disaster in Victoria shows that groups like landcare provide a range of critical environmental and psychosocial support to their communities.⁵ The need for landcare to be supported in this role, where they have the capacity to participate, has also been captured in this section.

10-year outcome statement

Landcare driven education and community connections support resilient, biodiverse, and productive landscapes and knowledgeable, culturally competent communities.

Priority activities

Table 3. Community knowledge and resilience priority activities

Priority areas and activities	Landcare leadership L = Lead; S = Support	
	Landcare groups and networks	Landcare Victoria
Education and extension		
2.1 Partner to develop, support and deliver community extension and education on sustainable agriculture, biosecurity, land restoration, eco-literacy, and other landcare priorities.	L	S
2.2 Develop, deliver, and support programs to build household and landowner capacity around climate adaptation, disaster preparedness, and prevention.	L	S
2.3 Support the community to understand opportunities and risks of carbon and environmental services markets.	L	L
2.4 Engage and partner with schools to deliver education on priority landcare issues and to involve students in landcare projects.	L	S

⁵ Brady, K., Reeves, J., Wright, W., Foliente, G., Gibbs, L. (2022). The overwhelm of black and the joy of green – Experiences of members of the Landcare and other environmentally focussed community groups after the 2019-2020 bushfires.

Table 3. Community knowledge and resilience priority activities

Priority areas and activities	Landcare leadership L = Lead; S = Support	
	Landcare groups and networks	Landcare Victoria
2.5 Facilitate landcare community participation in citizen science, building on established partnerships and systems.	L	L
2.6 Explore opportunities to partner with Traditional Owners and First Nations people to deliver capacity-building programs to increase cultural awareness and understanding of cultural land management practices within the landcare and broader community.	L	S
Community connections and resilience		
2.7 Support the delivery of activities that contribute to building community capacity, connectedness, well-being, and resilience.	L	S
2.8 Support the development and delivery of programs and resources to support the community to connect with nature and address eco-anxiety.	L	S
2.9 Facilitate training and capacity development for the landcare community around community resilience and disaster recovery.	S	L
2.10 Advocate for funded liaison positions to support community disaster preparedness and resilience and to connect landcare with government post-disaster.	S	L

Partner support opportunities

The following are opportunities that landcare partners could undertake to support landcare and the delivery of the Plan:

- **Government and non-government partners:** Support community and landcare education, extension, capacity building, training and other programs through funding and collaboration.
- **Traditional Owner and First Nations people:** Where interest and capacity are present, collaborate with landcare to raise community cultural awareness and understanding of cultural land management practices in landcare and the broader community.
- **Government and non-government partners:** Fund landcare liaison positions to support community disaster preparedness and resilience. Better recognise and support the landcare community in disaster preparedness and resilience programs.

5.3. Demonstrating value and impact

Background

At all levels in the landcare, from national to local, the movement has defined visions, goals, and outcomes for landcare. What is often missing are clear value proposition statements for why people would invest or join landcare and demonstrations of what landcare achieves socially and in landscapes.

During this Plan's development, participants called for creating a shared and strong value proposition to motivate people to step away from their home life and contribute, and for demonstrations of landcare's value and achievements.

10-year outcome statement

Landcare demonstrates its significant value and positive impact on communities and landscapes.

Priority activities

Table 4. Demonstrating value and impact priority activities

Priority areas and activities	Landcare leadership L= Lead; S = Support	
	Landcare groups and networks	Landcare Victoria
Measuring outcomes and impact		
3.1 Establish targets and baselines to measure and communicate the value and impact of landcare, including social impacts.	S	L
3.2 Leverage and adapt existing or developing natural resource management monitoring and reporting frameworks and tools to improve the consistency of landcare data reporting.	S	L
3.3 Collaborate with State Government partners to avoid or reduce duplication in reporting, increase data sharing and target the collection of data that demonstrates the value and impact of landcare.	S	L
Communicating landcare value		
3.4 Develop and utilise a series of value proposition statements targeted at partners, potential funders, and new volunteers to communicate the value of supporting and getting involved in landcare.	S	L

Priority areas and activities	Landcare leadership L= Lead; S = Support	
	Landcare groups and networks	Landcare Victoria
3.5 In social and traditional media, utilise storytelling and landcare champions to showcase volunteers and promote the value and impact of landcare.	L	L
3.6 Annually analyse data on landcare achievements, areas of impact, and volunteer efforts and communicate to government, partners and back to the landcare community.	S	L

Partner support opportunities

The following is an opportunity that landcare partners could undertake to support landcare and the delivery of the Plan:

[DEECA](#), [CMAs](#), [Australian Government](#), [National Landcare Network](#) and [Landcare Australia](#): Collaborate and/or provide funding and other supports to improve the measurement of landcare outcomes and impact and to improve the communication of the value of landcare.

5.4. Healthy and varied partnerships

Background

Long standing partnerships with government is a key strength of Victorian landcare. The Victorian Government funds Landcare Facilitators and annual Landcare Grants. This partnership with landcare is important to the viability and operation of many groups and networks.

It is estimated that the funding of Landcare Facilitators returns more than seven dollars in net project benefit for every dollar invested.⁶ Given the importance of existing landcare and government partnerships and their value to the community, maintaining and nurturing these partnerships is vital.

Landcare across the State also maintains a range of other partnerships with industry, research organisations, schools, and not for profit organisations. Nurturing and diversifying these partnerships provide opportunities for landcare to continue to grow its impact across Victorian landscapes and communities.

10-year outcome statement

Landcare maintains diverse and healthy partnerships that support landcare priorities.

Priority activities

Table 5. Healthy and varied partnership priority activities

Priority areas and activities	Landcare leadership L= Lead; S = Support	
	Landcare groups and networks	Landcare Victoria
4.1 Develop and maintain government and political relationships at the Federal, State, and local levels to ensure the value and impact of landcare is recognised and adequately funded.	L	L
4.2 Explore and identify opportunities to partner with local government, non-government, agricultural groups, commercial businesses, schools, and philanthropic organisations to collaboratively deliver landcare priorities.	L	L
4.3 Work with government and private industry to consider innovative funding models to contribute to landscape restoration.	L	L

⁶ RPS (2020). Landcare Victoria – Return on investment: Cost-benefit analysis of the Victorian Landcare Facilitator Program.

Table 5. Healthy and varied partnership priority activities

Priority areas and activities	Landcare leadership L= Lead; S = Support	
	Landcare groups and networks	Landcare Victoria
4.4 Improve or maintain partnership health with key partners and investors through clear shared priorities, communication, and celebration.	L	L
4.5 Advocate for the landcare community to be included and properly supported in natural resource management and sustainable agriculture strategic planning and program development processes at all levels of government.	L	L
4.6 Explore opportunities to meaningfully engage with Traditional Owners and First Nations people to identify and document shared priorities and partnership opportunities.	L	S
4.7 Explore opportunities to facilitate access to privately owned land for Traditional Owners engaging in cultural practices.	L	S
4.8 Develop and promote a database of Traditional Owner and First Nations people work crews and their services relevant to landcare. Support utilisation of these crews wherever feasible.	S	L
4.9 Identify and build relationships with the corporate sector willing to support landcare through corporate philanthropy and sponsorship.	L	L

Partner support opportunities

The following are opportunities that landcare partners could undertake to support landcare and the delivery of the Plan:

DEECA, CMAs, National Landcare Network and Landcare Australia: Partner to raise awareness of the value and impact of landcare within Federal, State and Local government.

Government and non-government landcare partners: Consider opportunities to improve partnership health with landcare through the establishment of clear shared priorities, communication, and celebration.

Federal, State and Local government partners: Include landcare in natural resource management and sustainable agriculture planning and program development processes.

Traditional Owner and First Nations people: Where interest and capacity are present, collaborate to identify shared priorities and partnership opportunities with landcare.

Landcare Australia: Work with Victorian landcare to increase the number and value of corporate partnerships.

5.5. Active and diverse volunteers

Background

In 2021 landcare groups and networks had an average membership of 34.4 individuals per entity.⁷ During the development of this Plan, efforts to increase membership and community engagement in landcare were identified as challenging. In addition, low member numbers were reported to cause burnout among key volunteers.

Environmental volunteers tend to be older than the wider volunteering sector⁸. This age profile can mean that members have more time for volunteering, but also that it can take a lot of work to recruit and organise activities that are attractive to younger volunteers.

The need to engage and facilitate participation in landcare from a broader diversity of the community has been identified as a priority.

10-year outcome statement

Landcare is driven and supported by an active and diverse volunteer community.

Priority activities

Table 6. Active and diverse volunteers priority activities

Priority area and activity	Landcare leadership L= Lead; S = Support	
	Landcare groups and networks	Landcare Victoria
5.1 Identify and implement approaches that make landcare a welcoming and attractive volunteering option.	L	S
5.2 Develop programs and systems to make it easier for people to connect with and find meaningful volunteering options in landcare.	L	L
5.3 Create diverse and inclusive landcare activities and volunteering options that encourage new people to engage with landcare, e.g., young people, Traditional Owners and First Nations people, new and absentee landholders, large-scale agriculture, multicultural communities, students, and urban residents.	L	S
5.4 Develop programs to support community landcare leaders and prevent burn-out.	L	L

⁷ Landcare Victoria Inc. (2022). 2022 Annual Report.

⁸ Department of Land Water and Planning (2018). Victorians Volunteering for Nature: Environmental Volunteering Plan.

Table 6. Active and diverse volunteers priority activities

Priority area and activity	Landcare leadership L= Lead; S = Support	
	Landcare groups and networks	Landcare Victoria
5.5 Collect and monitor the age diversity of landcare volunteers and, where required, develop strategies to create a sustainable landcare age profile.	S	L

Partner support opportunities

The following are opportunities that landcare partners could undertake to support landcare and the delivery of the Plan:

Government and non-government partners: Collaborate and/or fund activities to support an active and diverse landcare volunteer community.

DEECA: Collaborate on data collection around the age diversity of landcare volunteers.

5.6. A supported and effective community

Background

In 2022, over 95,000 hours of landcare volunteer time was spent on administrative tasks, equating to 24 percent of the total time volunteered.⁹ Opportunities to increase efficiencies and decrease administrative and governance burdens are a key priority for landcare.

Continuing to support groups, networks and landcare professionals to develop skills and knowledge and stay abreast of best practice is also important to the movement. Landcare Facilitator positions are known to be integral to landcare success¹⁰ and vital to the ongoing success of landcare in Victoria. The CMA-based Regional Landcare Coordinators also play a vital role.

10-year outcome statement

Landcare volunteers and professionals use their connections, knowledge, skills, and effective governance to positively impact their communities and landscapes.

Priority activities

Table 7. A supported and effective community priority actions

Priority area and activity	Landcare leadership L= Lead; S = Support	
	Landcare groups and networks	Landcare Victoria
Support		
6.1 Advocate to increase the number of landcare facilitators and project managers funded and for an increase in resourcing to allow facilitators to support project delivery.	L	L
Skills and capacity development		
6.2 Partner with universities and research organisations to link landcare with the best practice and scientific information.	L	L
6.3 Develop and deliver training and capacity building focused on governance, administration, volunteer recruitment, health and safety, measuring and communicating impact, leadership, partnership development, and employee management.	S	L
6.4 Provide professional development, knowledge sharing, career progression opportunities, and support for landcare professionals.	S	L

⁹ Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (2023). Victorian Landcare Group Health survey.

¹⁰ Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (2016). Victorian Landcare Program Review Action Plan.

Table 7. A supported and effective community priority actions

Priority area and activity	Landcare leadership L= Lead; S = Support	
	Landcare groups and networks	Landcare Victoria
6.5 Support landcare networks and groups to mentor each other and share knowledge, skills, and experience across the state.	S	L
6.6 Build landcare capacity to access and utilise geospatial data for planning, monitoring, and reporting.	S	L
Governance and administration		
6.7 Pilot alternative governance models for landcare, e.g., where regional networks are resourced to provide administration and governance for several smaller groups who focus on delivering local activities.	L	S
6.8 Advocate for the review of grant administration processes and funding models to streamline, simplify, and allow for real costs of delivery.	S	L
6.9 Implement project development and delivery arrangements that capitalise on regional and state-level networks and partnerships, whilst maintaining local involvement, to reduce administrative overheads.	L	S

Partner support opportunities

The following are opportunities that landcare partners could undertake to support landcare and the delivery of the Plan:

Government and non-government: Fund additional Landcare Facilitators and project managers and increase resourcing to allow Facilitators to support project delivery. Review and improve Landcare Facilitator employment arrangements to ensure continuing effectiveness.

Government, universities, research organisations and other non-government partners: Partner with and/or fund landcare to support community and landcare skills and capacity.

DEECA and CMAs: Collaborate and fund professional development and facilitate opportunities for career progression for landcare professionals.

DEECA and CMAs: Support the planning, delivery, and communication of alternative governance models for landcare.

Government partners: Streamline and simplify funding models and to allow for the real cost of delivery.

6. Implementation and review

Implementation

Landcare Victoria will lead the implementation of the Plan on behalf of its members and work in collaboration with landcare groups networks and landcare partners.

An Implementation Plan outlining priorities for Landcare Victoria over the next two years will be developed and adopted by the Landcare Victoria board during 2023. The Implementation Plan will further develop the priority activities under each goal and will be reviewed and revised every second year.

Landcare Victoria will advocate to landcare partners around the priorities articulated in the Plan. This will encourage integrating these into their priorities, policy, funding opportunities, and support activities.

Landcare groups and networks are encouraged to utilise the Plan to highlight support needs and opportunities at a local level.

Measuring impact

Priority activities have been identified within the Plan to support improved measurement and demonstration of landcare outcomes. Through these actions, Landcare Victoria will work with the landcare community and partners to establish targets and baselines and collect data demonstrating the overall value and impact of landcare. This will be an element of implementation planning.

Monitoring and reporting

Landcare Victoria will prepare a 'Plan' Implementation Report highlighting achievements, challenges, and adaptive management recommendations every second year. The Landcare Victoria board and Members Council will consider the report, with a summary provided publicly to the landcare community.

7. Acknowledgements

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