

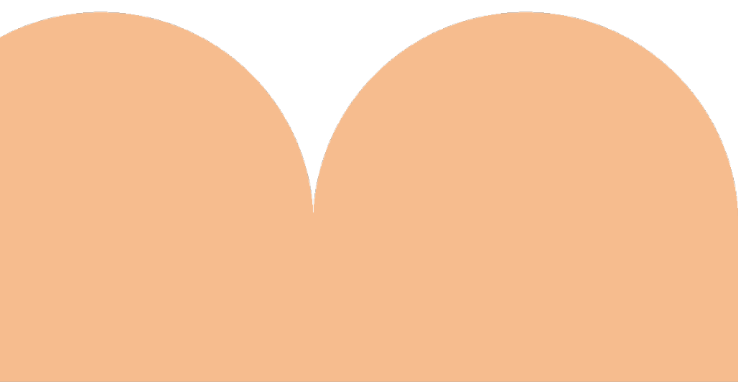


Landcare Plan for Victoria Strategic Priority Statement

February 2023

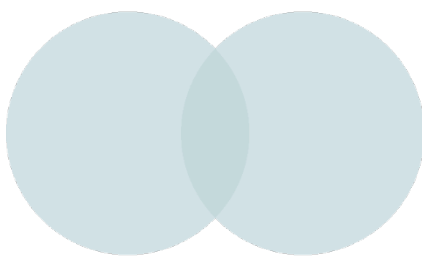


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Strategic Priority Statement

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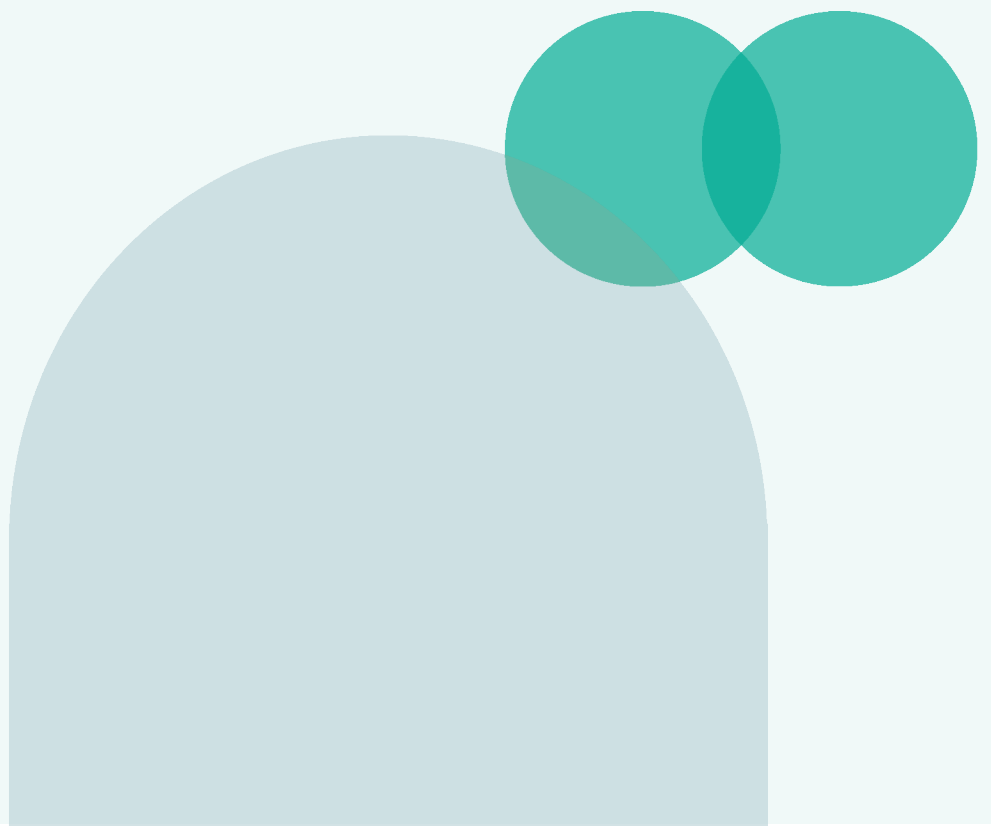
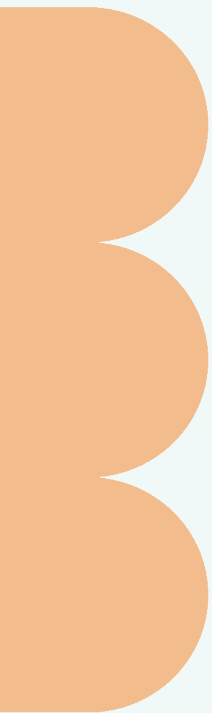
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Landcare Victoria and Projectura pay our respect to the Traditional Owners of the lands in Victoria.

We take inspiration from the legacy of Victorian Aboriginal people, who have produced food while caring for the ecological systems that life depends upon for tens of thousands of years.





1. Introduction

This Strategic Priority Statement is part of the engagement to inform the development of a Landcare Plan for Victoria.

Due for completion in June 2023, the Plan will provide a united voice and future vision for the landcare community in Victoria.

The landcare movement is strong and has a long, proud past and the Plan will help community landcare to continue to grow and adapt. It will recognise the strengths of landcare and plan for ways to tackle internal challenges, such as funding sustainability and declining membership, as well as external crises, such as climate change and biodiversity decline.

Landcare Victoria is leading the development of the Plan with funding from the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA).

Between February and December 2022, Landcare Victoria delivered two stages of engagement with the landcare community to inform the Plan. Over 400 people participated in interviews, workshops, and an online survey. A review of literature and government strategy has also been conducted.

A copy of the engagement findings from the first stage of engagement and further information on the development of the Landcare Plan is available on [Landcare Victoria's website](#).

Purpose of this paper

This paper aims to test the outcomes and priority actions identified for the Plan. It is based on the opportunities, challenges and aspirations identified by the landcare community during the engagement process.

Using this statement as a conversation piece, the aim is to continue listening to the Victorian landcare community and to ensure that the Plan truly reflects their needs and aspirations.

Feedback received on this paper will be considered while developing the draft Landcare Plan for Victoria.

How can I provide feedback?

- Complete the online survey [here](#).
- Attend one of five online workshops scheduled for the start of March 2023. For further details click [here](#).
- Review and provide feedback on the full draft of the Plan which is scheduled to be available during April 2023.



2. Strategic Priority Statement

2.1. Vision

Healthy, productive, and resilient landscapes delivered by local people working together and in partnership.

The draft vision is aspirational and aims to describe what the Victorian landcare community would like to achieve in the next ten years.

During the preliminary engagement, 197 people described their aspirations for landcare in Victoria by 2032.

We heard much about on-ground action, local leadership, and active groups. We also heard about people's vision to address environmental challenges, adapt to climate change, transform landscapes, reduce biodiversity decline, and support sustainable production.

The draft vision statement seeks to capture the breadth of aspirations of the Victorian landcare community.

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

Healthy: Where the needs of humans and ecosystem function are balanced within the landscape.

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

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

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

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

Partnerships: With government, industry, the broader community, state and national landcare organisations and others.

2.2. Outcomes

Six outcomes have been developed based on the engagement with the Victorian landcare community.

Each outcome describes how community landcare will look in ten years following the successful implementation of the Landcare Plan for Victoria. Some outcomes focus on the existing strengths of landcare and consider activities required for continuous improvement and maintenance, whilst others aim for new or expanded areas of achievement.

The following section outlines the activities prioritised to achieve each outcome. Landcare will consider further responsibilities and prioritisation before drafting the Plan.

The outcomes include:

1. Victorian community landcare is well-known, demonstrates value and is recognised as an influential and essential partner in delivering healthy and productive landscapes.
2. Victorian community landcare is mobilising diverse volunteer participation and developing local solutions to local issues.
3. Victorian community landcare is collaborating to deliver large-scale projects that balance the needs of people with the creation of healthy, climate-resilient landscapes.
4. Victorian community landcare is supported by landcare structures, governance, connections, capacity building and staff that enable them to positively impact their communities and landscapes.
5. Victorian community landcare builds community knowledge about healthy landscapes and supports community well-being, resilience, adaptation, and recovery from extreme events.
6. Victorian community landcare is building trust and partnerships with Traditional Owners and First Nations people, providing opportunities for employment, truth-telling, and the delivery of shared priorities.

2.2.1. Outcome one

Victorian community landcare is well-known, demonstrates value and is recognised as an influential and essential partner in delivering healthy and productive landscapes.

What we heard

During the engagement, we heard about the importance of landcare having clear value proposition statements and being recognised as a key partner in delivery. We also heard about the vast diversity in what landcare delivers in agricultural, urban and regional settings, which we have summarised as delivering 'healthy and productive landscapes'. The challenges surrounding measuring, demonstrating, and communicating the impact and outcomes of landcare were also raised and have been addressed in priority activities under this section.

Priority activities

Communicating landcare value

- Develop and utilise a series of value proposition statements targeted at partners, potential funders, and new volunteers to communicate the value of supporting landcare.
- In social and traditional media, utilise storytelling and landcare champions to showcase volunteers and promote the value of landcare and its achievements.
- Annually analyse data on Victorian community landcare achievements, areas of impact and volunteer efforts and communicate to government, partners and back to the landcare community.

Measuring outcomes and impact

- Collaborate with State government partners to reduce the duplication in reporting, increase data sharing and target the collection of data that demonstrates the value and impact of landcare.
- Leverage and adapt existing or developing NRM monitoring and reporting frameworks and tools to improve the consistency of landcare data reporting and the demonstration of outcomes.

- Measure and communicate the social impact of landcare across the Victorian community.
- Establish targets and baselines to articulate gaps for key landcare aspirations e.g. % of landscapes protected.

Partnerships

- Develop and maintain government and political relationships at the Federal and State levels to ensure the value and impact of landcare is recognised.
- Improve or maintain partnership health with key landcare partners and investors through clear shared priorities, communication, and celebration.
- Advocate for the landcare community to be included in natural resource management and sustainable agriculture strategic planning and program development processes at all levels of government.

2.2.2. Outcome two

Victorian community landcare is mobilising diverse volunteer participation and developing local solutions to local issues.

What we heard

Local leadership and action on local priorities were identified as key strengths of community landcare, alongside the need to support local groups to undertake planning and secure funding to implement local solutions. Increasing membership and diversity were also identified as critical priorities during the engagement and are captured in this section.

Priority activities

Local priorities and delivery

- Continue to improve group and network strategic planning to effectively identify landcare priorities and guide on-ground action.
- Advocate for project funding, including project management resources, to address local landcare priorities.
- Develop partnerships with local government to increase local support of landcare.
- Build landcare capacity to access and utilise geospatial data for planning, monitoring, and reporting.

Diverse volunteers and active members

- Support landcare groups and networks to identify and implement approaches that make landcare a welcoming and attractive volunteering option.
- Develop programs and systems to make it easier for people to connect with and find meaningful volunteering options in landcare.
- Create diverse landcare activities and volunteering options that encourage new people to engage with landcare, e.g., young people, new and absentee landholders, large-scale agriculture, multicultural communities, and urban residents.

2.2.3. Outcome three

Victorian community landcare is collaborating internally and externally to deliver large-scale projects that balance the needs of people with the creation of healthy, climate-resilient landscapes.

What we heard

The opportunity for landcare to collaborate to secure funding and deliver large-scale projects across the State was a clear priority in the engagement. When asked what type of large-scale projects could be delivered, the priorities were mainly projects associated with biodiversity, climate change and landscape restoration. Opportunities to diversify the kinds of landcare partners and funding sources were also raised.

Priority activities

Large-scale planning, partnerships, and funding

- Explore and identify opportunities to partner with government, non-government, agricultural groups, commercial businesses, and philanthropic organisations to collaboratively deliver landcare priorities.
 - 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.
 - Undertake landscape-scale planning and seek funding for regionally delivered projects that enable local people to act to protect and restore nature.
 - Enable landcare networks to work together to identify, resource, and deliver large-scale projects that are shared priorities.
 - Foster partnerships that enable landcare to support place-based delivery of climate change adaptation capacity-building programs and on-farm climate action plans.
- Work with government and private sector organisations to consider innovative funding models to contribute to landscape restoration.
 - Advocate for increased access to the Landcare logo to support the development of commercial and landcare partnerships in Victoria.

2.2.4. Outcome four

Victorian community landcare is supported by landcare structures, governance, connections, capacity building and staff that enable them to positively impact their communities and landscapes.

What we heard

The importance of landcare facilitators to the operation of landcare groups was highlighted throughout the engagement. The need to support volunteers and landcare professionals to continue to develop their skills and knowledge and the need to share knowledge across the landcare community were also identified. Challenges with administration and governance burdens at local levels and the need for innovative solutions were also discussed.

Priority activities

Support

- Advocate to increase the number of landcare facilitators funded and increase resourcing to allow facilitators to support project delivery and event coordination.

Skills and capacity development

- Partner with universities and government scientific bodies to link the landcare community with the best practice and scientific information.
- Develop and deliver training and capacity building for landcare, focussed on governance, administration, volunteer recruitment, health and safety, measuring and communicating impact, leadership, partnership development and employee management.
- Support professional development and knowledge sharing for the landcare professionals who support community landcare in Victoria.
- Support landcare networks and groups to share knowledge, skills, and experience across the State.
- Support communities to be informed about and harness opportunities in carbon and environmental service markets.

Governance and administration

- 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.
- Advocate for the review of grant administration processes to consolidate, streamline and simplify processes for landcare.
- Implement project development and delivery arrangements that capitalise on regional and state-level networks as a means of reducing administrative overheads.

2.2.5 Outcome five

Victorian community landcare builds community knowledge about healthy landscapes and supports community well-being, resilience, adaptation, and recovery from extreme events.

What we heard

The opportunity to increase the role of landcare in community education and extension was a top priority identified during the engagement. The landcare community also explained their role in cultivating community connections and supporting the health and well-being of the community. Landcare's role in disaster recovery and community resilience was also identified, as well as opportunities to increase the capacity of landcare to work in this space.

Priority activities

Education and extension

- Develop and deliver programs to support household and landowner engagement in disaster preparedness and prevention.
- Develop programs and tools to support locally delivered on-ground extension and community education on priority landcare issues.
- Partner with existing sustainable agriculture groups to deliver community extension and education.
- Partner with Victorian agricultural government agencies to deliver community extension and education on sustainable agriculture and biosecurity.

Community connection, resilience, and recovery

- Support the training and capacity development of the landcare community in mental health first aid, building community resilience and disaster recovery.
- Develop programs to support community landcare leaders and prevent burn-out.

- Create funded liaison positions to support community disaster preparedness and resilience and to connect landcare with government agencies post-disaster.
- Develop programs and resources to support the community to connect with nature and address eco-anxiety.
- Support landcare to deliver activities that contribute to community connectedness, well-being, and resilience.
- Collect and monitor the age range of landcare volunteers and, where required, develop strategies to create a sustainable landcare age profile.

Note: Resilience in this outcome refers to communities being supported to implement activities that lessen the impact and quicken the recovery time from extreme events.

2.2.6 Outcome six

Victorian community landcare is building trust and partnerships with Traditional Owners and First Nations people, providing opportunities for employment, truth-telling, and the delivery of shared priorities.

What we heard

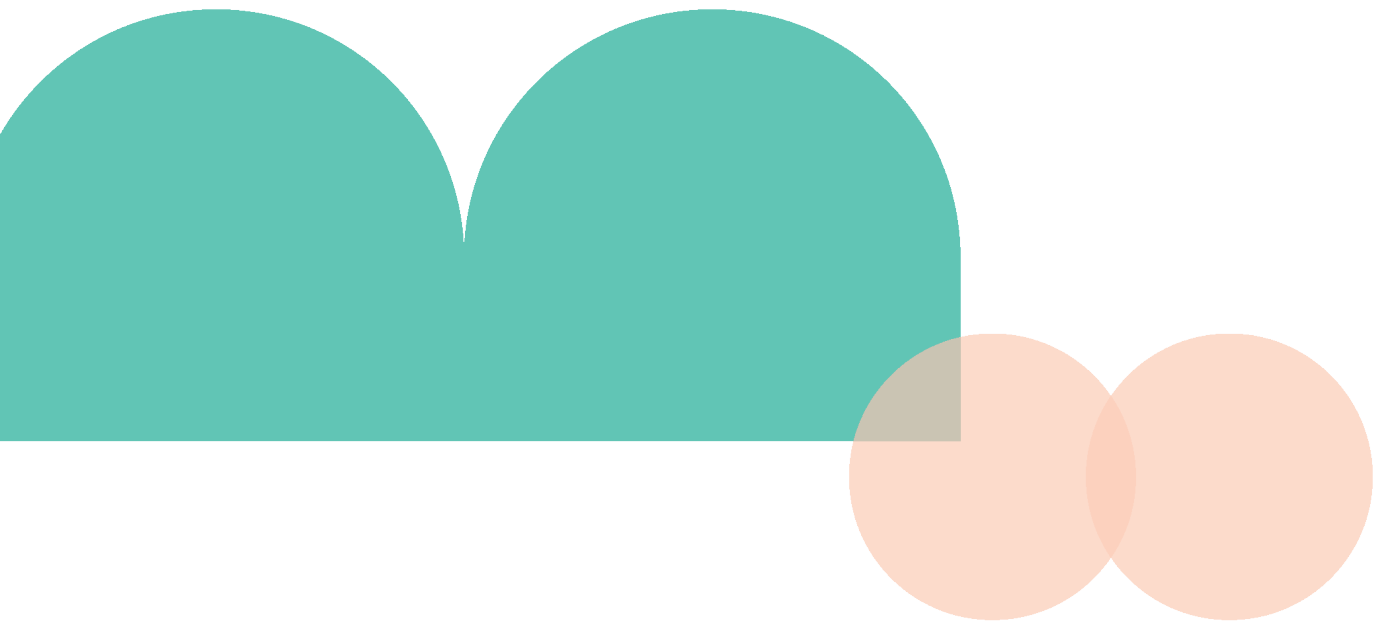
Establishing partnerships based on trust and respect with Traditional Owners and First Nations people was identified as a priority by the landcare community.

Three Traditional Owner representatives were interviewed as part of the engagement, which helped identify some priority activities. In recognition that all Traditional Owner groups have not been engaged, the draft activities have focussed on further exploring opportunities.

Priority activities

Traditional owner partnerships

- Explore opportunities to partner with Traditional Owners and First Nations people in delivering capacity-building programs to increase cultural awareness and competency within the landcare and the broader community.
- Explore opportunities to meaningfully engage with Traditional Owners and First Nations people to identify and document shared priorities and opportunities to partner with landcare.
- Work together with Traditional Owners to deliver shared priorities.
- Explore opportunities to partner with Traditional Owners to raise community awareness of cultural land management practices.
- Explore opportunities to facilitate access to privately owned land for Traditional Owners.
- Develop and promote a database of Traditional Owner and First Nations people work crews and their services relevant to landcare.



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