



**Regional
Landcare**
East Gippsland

Group Handbook



**Developed by the East Gippsland Regional Landcare Team and funded by
the Victorian State Government
through East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority**





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Introduction





This handbook has been funded through the Victorian Landcare Program and developed by East Gippsland Regional Landcare and East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority (EGCMA)

Building on the success of the first edition released in 2018, this updated handbook continues to serve as a practical guide and resource hub for East Gippsland Landcare groups.

It's designed to support committee members and volunteers in running effective, well-governed groups. You're encouraged to adapt the templates and forms to suit your group's needs – and to use this handbook as a central place to store important information such as membership lists, contact details, activity records, and insurance documents.

Each Landcare group in East Gippsland has received both a printed copy and an electronic version. The digital format allows you to easily update templates, complete forms, and enter information directly into spreadsheets.

You'll also find a customisable tri-fold brochure included, ready to be personalised with your group's details and photos.

This handbook will be reviewed and updated periodically, and your input is valued. A feedback form is included at the end – please take a moment to share your suggestions for improvement and pass them on to your network representative or the East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority (EGCMA).

East Gippsland Regional Landcare and East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority acknowledge the Traditional Owners of country throughout East Gippsland and we pay our respects to them, their culture, and their elders past, present and future.

East Gippsland Regional Landcare seeks your support to improve this handbook

Thank you for taking the time to read and use this handbook. It will be reviewed and updated regularly to make sure Landcare committees have access to accurate, practical, and up-to-date information.

Your feedback is essential in helping us improve future editions. Please share your thoughts – big or small – by responding to the questions below.

What additional information or topics would you like to see included in future editions?

Is there anything in this handbook that you found unnecessary, unclear, or confusing?

Are you aware of any advice, laws, or references that need to be updated?

Did your committee find this handbook useful and easy to use?

Do you have any other comments or suggestions for improvement?

Thank you for helping keep this resource relevant and valuable for all East Gippsland Landcare groups.



East Gippsland Regional Landcare Support Team

Secretary

East Gippsland Landcare Network
0428 453 788 | secretary@egln.org.au

Michele Shugg

East Gippsland Landcare Network Facilitator
0404 092 862 | micheles@egln.org.au

Sarah Pizzey

East Gippsland Landcare Network Facilitator
0448 757 208 | facilitator@egln.org.au

Josh Puglisi

Far East Victoria Landcare Network Facilitator
0419 317 509 | facilitator@fevl.org.au

Emma Orgill

Far East Victoria Landcare Sustainable Agriculture Facilitator
0400 467 921 | emma.orgill@fevl.org.au

Mark Chaplin

Snowy River Interstate Landcare Committee
02 6458 4003 | srilc@bigpond.com

Caroline Mildenhall

High Country Landcare Facilitator
0418 961 600 | llfhighcountry@gmail.com

Krystel Handley

*East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority Regional Landcare
Coordinator*
0419 892 268 | khandley@egcma.com.au

East Gippsland Regional Landcare Groups

East Gippsland Landcare Network

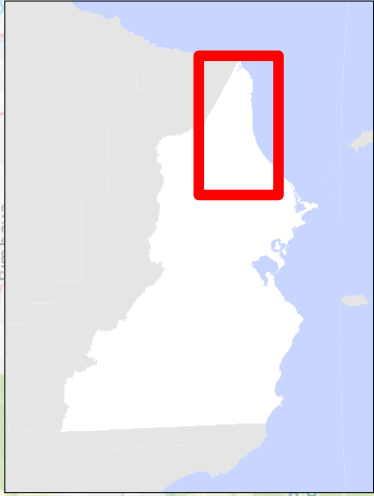
Bruthen and District Landcare Group
Bengworden Landcare Group
Buchan Landcare Group
Clifton Creek Landcare Group
Dargo Landcare Group
Eagle Point Landcare Group
East Gippsland Verge Garden and Landcare group
Eastwood Landcare Group
Flaggy Creek Landcare Group
Friends of Oneonta
Friends of Picnic Point Reserve Landcare Group
Friends of the Gippsland Lakes
Friends of Upper Nicholson Catchment
Gelantipy Landcare Group
Glenaladale Landcare Group
Lakes Entrance Community Landcare Group
Lake Tyers Coast Action
Nagle College Landcare Group
Newlands Arm Landcare Coastcare
Nicholson River Landcare Group
Nungurner Landcare Group
Paynesville Landcare Group
Raymond Island Landcare Group
Romawi Landcare Group
Swifts Creek/Ensay Landcare Group
Tambo Bluff Landcare Group
Timbarra Landcare Group
Tom's Creek Landcare Group

Far East Victoria Landcare

Cabbage Tree Creek Landcare Group
Cann Valley Landcare Group
Goongerah Landcare Group
Jarrahmond Landcare Group
Marlo Landcare Group
Snowy West Landcare Group
Wairewa Landcare Group

Snowy River Interstate Landcare Committee

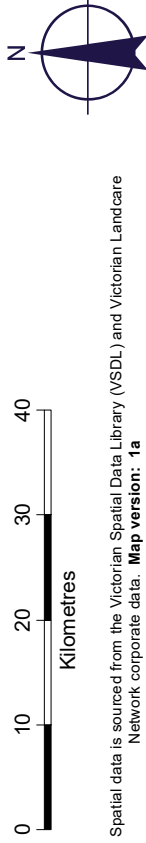
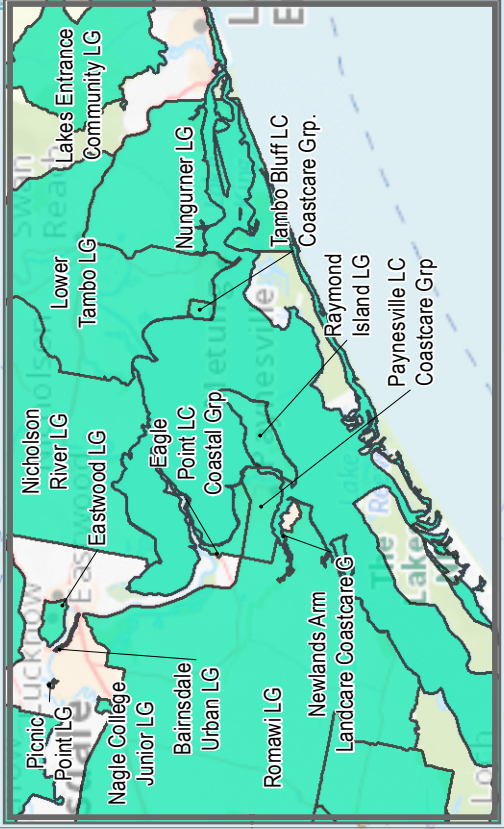
Deddick River Landcare Group



Total area: 2,100,200 ha

There are 37 Landcare Groups covering 21% of this region.

Total area includes:
81% of private land
9% of public land



committee information



Good Governance

Good governance is essential to Landcare groups and networks. It ensures that obligations are met, fairness and due process are followed, problems are minimised, and Landcare groups are enabled to function well.

Good governance means that everything we do in Landcare reflects our culture and values. It ensures that our actions are fair, transparent, accountable, and inclusive, and that people outside the network see Landcare as trustworthy and legitimate.

Groups with strong governance are usually more effective at achieving their goals – in our case, protecting and improving the environment.

What Does “Governance” Mean?

Governance refers to the systems, processes, and practices Landcare groups use to run their activities. These can be shaped by different sources:

Legislation

Some rules are set by state or federal law, such as:

- Requirements under the Incorporations Act for incorporated groups.
- Regulations about using chemicals for weed or pest control.

Landcare Victoria Inc. (LVI)

Some practices come from LVI, for example:

- Meeting insurance and reporting requirements for groups insured through LVI.

Regional Authorities

Regional organisations, such as the Catchment Management Authority (CMA), may require:

- Regular reports on volunteer hours and project outcomes.

Individual Landcare Groups

Each group can also set its own procedures, such as:

- How often meetings or activities are held.
- Rules for using equipment or facilities.

What Good Governance Looks Like

A Landcare group is practicing good governance when it:

- Keeps clear and accurate records.
- Runs meetings fairly and according to agreed principles.
- Meets all safety and risk requirements.
- Has and follows clear codes of conduct, child safety, and anti-bullying policies.

This manual contains guidelines, forms and attachments to help Landcare committee members through good governance principles.

Committee Roles

If your Landcare group is going to work effectively you need a good committee to make it happen. Key roles and responsibilities of committee members are outlined below.

Committee Roles and Responsibilities

The committee represents the Landcare group and manages its key responsibilities – including finance, project planning, insurance, publicity, and record keeping.

A typical committee includes office bearers such as the President, Secretary, and Treasurer, as well as general committee members. Everyone on the committee is accountable to the wider membership.

It's also helpful to appoint assistant roles (e.g. Vice President, Assistant Treasurer, Assistant Secretary). Assistants can support key office bearers and step in when someone is unavailable or finishes their term.

How Committees Work

Most Landcare groups appoint their office bearers and committee members at their first meeting, with positions coming up for election each year at the Annual General Meeting (AGM).

Each role has specific responsibilities, which can be adjusted in your group's constitution or bylaws. It's important to share the workload evenly among committee members.

The Role of the President

The President provides leadership and direction for the group. Their main responsibilities include:

Leadership and Coordination

- Motivate members and encourage participation.
- Delegate tasks and support others in their roles.
- Keep projects on track and completed on time.
- Ensure the committee operates effectively and aligns with the group's goals.

Representation

- Act as the main contact between the group and external organisations or partners.
- Sign official documents on behalf of the group.
- Attend events and functions as the group's representative.

Chairing Meetings

- Welcome members and guests and lead meetings efficiently.
- Encourage open discussion while keeping the group focused on the agenda.
- Ensure all decisions and actions are clearly recorded in the minutes.
- Confirm everyone understands and agrees on the outcomes before the meeting closes.

Committee Roles continued...

Convening Meetings

The President is responsible for calling meetings and preparing the agenda (with support from the Secretary).

They also:

- Set meeting priorities and ensure discussions stay focused.
- Confirm that the venue, guest speakers, and other logistics are arranged.

The Role of the Secretary

The Secretary handles the administration and communication of the group. Their main responsibilities include:

Correspondence

- Manage incoming and outgoing correspondence.
- Keep official records organised and accessible to members.
- Use digital tools (such as email, cloud storage, or management software) to help maintain records efficiently.

Meetings

- Help the President prepare agendas and take accurate minutes during meetings.
- Distribute minutes, notices, and upcoming agendas to all members.
- Ensure any correspondence discussed at meetings is available for review.

Incorporation

If the group is incorporated, the Secretary acts as the official contact for Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV). This includes:

- Paying the annual fee and lodging the Annual Statement.
- Staying up to date with any other CAV requirements.

ACNC Reporting

If the group is registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission (ACNC), the Secretary or Treasurer must submit an Annual Information Statement each year.

Other Duties

The Secretary may also:

- Act as the main contact person for the group.
- Support members with grant applications or funding enquiries.
- Organise and maintain official documents such as letters, leases, insurance policies, and funding agreements.

The Role of the Treasurer

The Treasurer manages the group's finances and ensures all money is handled responsibly and transparently.

All transactions must be properly documented – including cash receipts – and payments approved by the committee unless they are part of a pre-approved budget.

Committee Roles continued...

Key Responsibilities

- Record all financial transactions, including banking, invoices, receipts, and petty cash.
- Keep clear, accurate financial records and correspondence.
- Pay bills and issue receipts on behalf of the group.
- Prepare and present regular financial reports to the committee, including income and expenditure summaries.
- Maintain a cashbook or accounting system to track the group's financial position.
- Prepare and present a financial report at the Annual General Meeting (AGM).
- Maintain a complete file of all financial documents, including those related to incorporation, tax deductions, permits or licences, and insurance policies.
- If the group is registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission (ACNC), the Treasurer or Secretary must submit an Annual Information Statement each year.

The Role of General Committee Members

All committee members share responsibility for helping the group run effectively and achieve its goals.

Their main responsibilities include:

- Promoting and representing the group within the community.
- Supporting the committee and helping implement group decisions.
- Contributing to planning, strategy, and project delivery.

General committee members may also take on specific roles, such as:

- **Vice President** – acts in the President's absence and may prepare to take on the leadership role in the future.
- **Assistant Secretary or Treasurer** – supports those roles and ensures continuity.
- **Newsletter Editor or Project Manager** – helps manage communications or oversee particular projects.

Other committee members may simply participate in meetings, contribute ideas, and assist with decision-making on Landcare activities and other matters.

Good Governance and Roles checklist

Legal & Administrative Requirements			
<i>Task</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>How often</i>	<i>Notes / reference</i>
Maintain Incorporation	Secretary	Annual	Submit Annual Statement and pay fee to Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV). Required under Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (Vic).
Keep Constitution Updated	Committee	As needed	Ensure your rules (constitution) reflect how your group actually operates. Lodge any changes with CAV.
Hold Annual General Meeting (AGM)	President & Secretary	Annual	Elect office bearers, present financial and activity reports, confirm membership.
Maintain a Register of Members	Secretary	Ongoing	Required for incorporated associations; must include name, address, and membership status.
Maintain Records & Minutes	Secretary	Ongoing	Keep accurate minutes of all meetings and decisions for at least 7 years.
Financial & Reporting Requirements			
<i>Task</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>How often</i>	<i>Notes / reference</i>
Prepare Annual Financial Report	Treasurer	Annual	Required for both AGM and CAV. Must include income, expenditure, and assets.
Submit ACNC Annual Information Statement	Secretary / Treasurer	Annual	Required for groups registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC). Due within 6 months of EOFY.
Keep Complete Financial Records	Treasurer	Ongoing	Include receipts, invoices, bank statements, budgets, and funding agreements.
Ensure Bank Accounts Have Dual Signatories	Treasurer & Committee	Ongoing	Best practice for transparency and risk management.

Good Governance and Roles checklist

continued...

Governance & Conduct			
<i>Task</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>How often</i>	<i>Notes / reference</i>
Maintain and Review Key Policies	Committee	Annual	Include: Code of Conduct, Child Safety, Anti-Bullying, Conflict of Interest, and WHS/Safety policy.
Review Committee Structure & Roles	Committee	Annual	Confirm office bearers and assistants; ensure clear delegation of duties.
Keep Insurance Current	Secretary / Treasurer	Annual	Most Landcare groups are covered through Landcare Victoria Inc. (LVI) – confirm renewal.
Manage Risk & Safety	Committee	Ongoing	Review activity risk assessments and incident reporting.
Report Volunteer Hours to CMA or LVI	Committee	As required	Important for funding, grants, and recognition.
Project & Environmental Compliance			
<i>Task</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>How often</i>	<i>Notes / reference</i>
Ensure Environmental Work Meets Legal Standards	Project Leads	Ongoing	Follow chemical use, fire, and native vegetation legislation.
Maintain Permits & Licences (if applicable)	Secretary / Treasurer	As required	For example, permits for spraying, machinery, or controlled burns.
Submit Grant Reports	Project Leads / Treasurer	As required	Meet deadlines for all project funding acquittals and outcomes.

Good Governance and Roles checklist

continued...

Communication & Engagement			
<i>Task</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>How often</i>	<i>Notes / reference</i>
Keep Members Informed	Secretary	Ongoing	Send minutes, newsletters, or updates regularly.
Promote Group Activities	Committee	Ongoing	Use social media, newsletters, or local media to share achievements.
Maintain Partnerships	President / Committee	Ongoing	Engage with CMA, council, schools, and local landholders.

Annual Governance Review – Quick Summary

Each year your committee should check that:

- ☐ AGM held and minutes recorded
- ☐ Financial report approved and submitted
- ☐ CAV Annual Statement lodged
- ☐ ACNC statement lodged (if registered charity)
- ☐ Insurance renewed (via LVI or broker)
- ☐ Policies reviewed and updated
- ☐ Member register current
- ☐ Volunteer hours and outcomes reported
- ☐ All key documents securely stored (digital and/or hard copy)

Becoming a Registered Charity (ACNC)

If your group is registered as a charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC), there are a few important responsibilities to keep in mind.

The ACNC is the national regulator of charities in Australia. Registration as a charity can make your group eligible for tax concessions, grants, and other benefits, but it also comes with additional governance and reporting obligations.

Key Requirements for Registered Charities

1. *Maintain up-to-date records of responsible people*

- You must keep a register of your executive committee or board members (called Responsible People by the ACNC).
- This register should include each person's full name, date of birth, and contact details.
- The group must ensure that all responsible people are fit and proper to hold their roles – meaning they are capable, reliable, and have no disqualifying offences or conflicts of interest.
- It's a good idea to minute the committee's confirmation of these checks at each AGM.

2. *Update the ACNC whenever your details change*

- Any changes to your Responsible People, group address, or governing documents must be updated in your ACNC account within 60 days.
- Keeping this information current helps your charity remain compliant and transparent.

3. *Authorised person for ATO and ACNC matters*

- You should have a clearly identified Authorised Person who handles communication with the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) and ACNC.
- Their details must be kept up to date in both systems.
- It's best practice to record the name of your Authorised Person in the AGM minutes each year, so everyone knows who holds the role – and it's not forgotten during committee changes.

4. *Annual reporting*

- Each year, your charity must submit an Annual Information Statement (AIS) to the ACNC, and in some cases, a financial report (depending on your size).
- Reports are lodged online through the ACNC Charity Portal.

5. *Follow the ACNC Governance Standards*

- All registered charities must comply with a set of Governance Standards which cover things like accountability, transparency, and the proper use of resources.
- These standards ensure your charity is well run and acting in the community's best interests.

Becoming a Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR)

Being endorsed as a Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) allows your group to receive tax-deductible donations – meaning donors can claim their contributions as deductions on their tax returns. This can make it easier to attract larger donations and grants, but DGR endorsement also comes with extra responsibilities and reporting obligations.

What DGR status means

A DGR is an organisation recognised by the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) as eligible to receive tax-deductible gifts. To be endorsed, your group usually needs to be registered as a charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) and operate for an approved charitable purpose. Most community-based environmental groups apply under the Register of Environmental Organisations (REO) category. Your group's constitution must clearly show that your main purpose is environmental – for example, protecting, restoring or enhancing the natural environment – and that you operate on a not-for-profit basis.

Establishing a public fund and applying for endorsement

To qualify for DGR endorsement, your group must set up a public fund. This fund is used only for receiving donations and paying for activities that advance your environmental purpose. It needs its own bank account and must be overseen by a committee of at least three responsible people who are active in the community and not closely related to each other. The application process can take some time and may require detailed information about your governance structure, financial management, and environmental activities.

Maintaining DGR status

Once endorsed, your organisation must; maintain your public fund, keep accurate records of donations and spending, and ensure your fund management committee remains eligible.

Most organisations also need to submit an annual report to the REO, in addition to their regular ACNC reporting. You must notify both the ACNC and ATO of any major changes to your constitution, structure or purpose.

Tip: Keeping clear, consistent records and reviewing your responsibilities annually will help ensure your group retains its DGR endorsement without issues.

Incorporation for Landcare Groups

Some Landcare groups decide to become incorporated, while others operate under the umbrella of another incorporated body. Each group is different – your decision should depend on your size, activities, funding needs, and level of independence.

If your group wants to:

- Apply for grants or hold its own bank account,
- Own, lease, or rent land or property, or
- Enter contracts or employ staff,
- you'll need to be incorporated as a separate legal entity.

Alternatively, some groups choose to become a financial member or sub-group of another incorporated organisation (such as a regional Landcare Network). This provides some of the benefits of incorporation – like insurance and grant eligibility – but limits your ability to make independent decisions or hold assets in your group's name.

Both options have advantages and disadvantages, and your committee should decide which best fits your circumstances.

What Incorporation Means

Incorporation gives your group legal status, separate from its individual members. This means:

- The association itself, not the members, is responsible for debts and legal obligations.
- Members and committee members are generally protected from personal liability, unless they act negligently, fraudulently, or outside their authority.
- The group can sign contracts, own property, and apply for funding in its own name.

Incorporation also gives confidence to funders, suppliers, and partners, and is often a requirement for grant eligibility.

Legislation and Oversight

In Victoria, incorporated associations are regulated under the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (Vic), administered by Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV).

CAV maintains the public register of incorporated associations and ensures groups meet their annual reporting and governance obligations.

Incorporation for Landcare Groups

continued...

How to Become Incorporated

If you decide to incorporate, your group must meet certain conditions and follow the registration process through myCAV, the CAV online portal.

Eligibility Requirements

To become an incorporated association, your group must:

- Have at least five members,
- Operate as a not-for-profit organisation,
- Choose a unique name (ending with 'Incorporated' or 'Inc.'),
- Prepare a Statement of Purposes (your objectives), and
- Adopt a set of Rules (Constitution) that comply with the Act – either:
 - the Model Rules provided by CAV, or
 - your own rules that meet the Act's requirements (for example, the Simplified Rules developed by Justice Connect's Not-for-Profit Law).

Steps to Incorporation

1. Hold a meeting of members to approve:
 - The decision to incorporate,
 - The proposed name, statement of purposes, and rules, and
 - Appointment of a Secretary to lodge the application.
2. Submit an Application for Incorporation via the myCAV website.
3. Pay the prescribed application fee.
4. Receive your Certificate of Incorporation from CAV – your group now exists as a legal entity.

Ongoing Responsibilities of an Incorporated Association

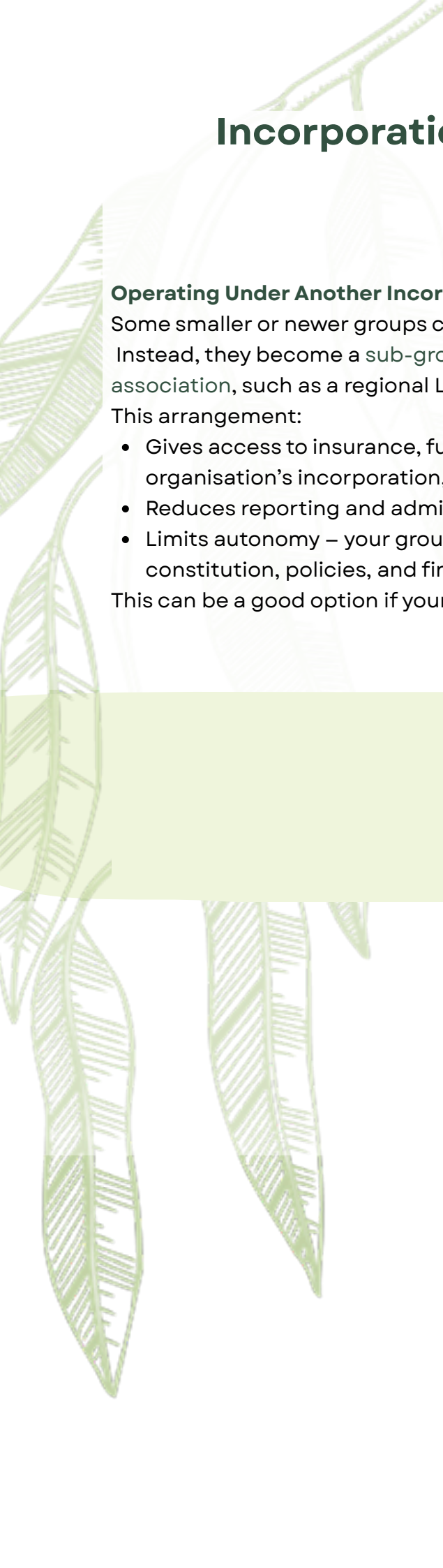
Once incorporated, your group must:

- Hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM) each year.
- Lodge an Annual Statement with CAV via myCAV, and pay the annual fee.
- Keep accurate financial and membership records.
- Use your full incorporated name (including "Inc.") on all official documents and communications.
- Avoid trading while insolvent.
- Manage conflicts of interest in accordance with your rules and the Act.

The Role of the Secretary

Your Secretary acts as the official contact person for CAV and must:

- Be at least 18 years old and live in Victoria,
- Lodge the group's annual statement and other required documents,
- Notify CAV of any changes to the committee, address, or rules, and
- Maintain custody of key documents on behalf of the group.



Incorporation for Landcare Groups

continued...

Operating Under Another Incorporated Body

Some smaller or newer groups choose not to incorporate in their own right.

Instead, they become a sub-group or financial member of an existing incorporated association, such as a regional Landcare Network.

This arrangement:

- Gives access to insurance, funding, and support under the umbrella organisation's incorporation,
- Reduces reporting and administrative obligations, but
- Limits autonomy – your group must follow the umbrella organisation's constitution, policies, and financial controls.

This can be a good option if your group is small, informal, or just getting started.

Record-keeping for Secretaries

The Secretary plays a key role in maintaining accurate, accessible, and compliant records for the group. This includes meeting minutes, correspondence, membership details, and ensuring members are kept informed about key activities and decisions.

Record Keeping

While most information can be stored electronically, some documents should always be kept in physical (paper) form – such as:

- Signed letters or agreements
- Membership application forms
- Records of official activities or events
- Original copies of funding agreements or insurance policies

All electronic records should be securely stored and backed up regularly, either to an external drive or a trusted cloud-based system. The backup should be kept separate from the main files to prevent data loss.

There are several reliable free and commercial tools available for managing group records effectively.

Minutes

Meeting minutes are the official record of decisions made by the group.

Good minutes are:

- Clear, concise, and factual
- Include the date, time, and place of the meeting
- List attendees and apologies
- Record key discussion points and resolutions

After each meeting, the Secretary should finalise and tidy up the notes while details are still fresh.

Minutes should be:

- Approved by the President or Chair (if your group's practice requires it), and
- Distributed promptly to committee members.

A suggested template for meeting minutes can be found on page 42. For tech-savvy folk, a minute-taking app can also be helpful (such as *Minute taker* or *Notion*).

Record-keeping for Secretaries continued...

Correspondence

The Secretary manages both incoming and outgoing correspondence, including mail and emails.

Responsibilities include:

- Recording all correspondence received or sent on behalf of the group
- Presenting correspondence at committee meetings for noting or discussion
- Filing copies of important communications for future reference

Routine enquiries (such as membership questions or event details) can be responded to directly.

More complex or sensitive matters should be referred to the *committee for approval* before replying, to ensure responses reflect the group's agreed position rather than individual opinions.

Paper letters should be stored securely, and key emails may be printed or saved as PDFs for long-term storage if needed.

Storage and Access

The Secretary is also responsible for maintaining:

- Membership lists and registers
- Insurance, grant, and financial documents
- Minutes and reports from all meetings

All official records should be stored in an organised system and made available to committee members when required.

It's often helpful to bring a folder or digital copy of recent meeting minutes to each committee meeting for quick reference.

Tip:

If your group is an *incorporated association*, these record-keeping duties also help you comply with the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (Vic), which requires proper management of member registers, minutes, and financial records.

Secretary's Record Keeping Checklist

Core Responsibilities

- ☐ Maintain an up-to-date copy of the organisation's Rules/Constitution
- ☐ Maintain the organisation's Register of Members (names, contact details, join/exit dates)
- ☐ Keep a current list of committee members and office bearers with contact details and terms
- ☐ File minutes of all committee and general meetings, signed by the Chair and Secretary
- ☐ Maintain the meeting agenda templates and record of motions/resolutions
- ☐ Store official correspondence (letters, emails, notices) – in date order or digital folders
- ☐ Retain copies of legal documents, including incorporation certificate, ABN, insurance policies, leases, and service agreements
- ☐ Keep a record of policies, procedures, and amendments approved by the committee

Annual and Compliance Tasks

- ☐ Record and file Annual General Meeting (AGM) notices, agenda, minutes, and attendance list
- ☐ Lodge annual statements and any required updates with Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV) via *myCAV*
- ☐ Ensure copies of all annual reports, audited financial statements, and committee reports are filed and stored
- ☐ Update the register of members and officers after each AGM

Data Management

- ☐ Maintain both digital and hard copy archives of key records
- ☐ Backup electronic files (e.g. minutes, correspondence, membership lists) at least quarterly
- ☐ Store backups offsite or in secure cloud storage
- ☐ Use consistent file naming (e.g. "Minutes_2025-03-15") for easy retrieval

Record-keeping for Treasurers

The Treasurer is responsible for managing the group's finances and keeping accurate, transparent records of all financial transactions.

Financial Record Keeping

Your records can be kept on paper or electronically, depending on what works best for your group.

If using digital systems, choose a reliable, secure option and back up files regularly – either to an external drive or a secure cloud service. Backups should be kept offsite to protect against data loss, fire, or theft.

Some free or low-cost accounting tools suitable for small not-for-profits include Wave Accounting (free, cloud-based), Zoho Books (free for small organisations), Rounded or QuickBooks Simple Start (paid, but affordable for small groups).

Tip: A computer system complements but does not replace physical records. Always keep hard copies of receipts, invoices, and signed documents to maintain a full audit trail.

Organising Your Records

For small groups, “shoebox accounting” (storing paper records in folders or envelopes) is fine as long as documents are well organised. Consider separate folders for:

- Bank statements
- Outstanding and paid bills
- Receipts
- Asset and equipment files (warranties, manuals, guarantees)
- Lease or rental agreements
- Insurance policies
- The cash book or spreadsheet of transactions
- The group's annual budget

Larger or busier groups should maintain a ledger (paper or spreadsheet) tracking:

- Date of transaction
- Receipt number (if applicable)
- Who paid or was paid
- Purpose or category (e.g. project, event, admin)
- Account name or code
- Amount

Separate ledgers should be kept for major projects or grants to ensure funding is properly accounted for. Some funding bodies may require certified reports or independent reviews.

Record-keeping for Treasurers continued...

Managing Cash

If your group handles cash (for example, at events or fundraisers):

- Provide receipts whenever possible (receipt books are available at stationery suppliers).
- Count and bank cash promptly – never pay wages or expenses directly from collected cash.
- Use a petty cash system for small expenses (stamps, parking, minor supplies):
 - Set a reasonable limit per item and per month.
 - Record all petty cash transactions in a voucher book or spreadsheet.
 - Keep receipts wherever possible.

Bank Accounts and Reconciliation

Bank statements are essential records and should align with your own cash records.

To keep accounts accurate:

- Ask your bank to issue monthly statements ending on the same date each month.
- Complete a bank reconciliation regularly – this explains any differences between your statement and your ledger (for example, timing delays or unpresented cheques).

Recording Assets, Liabilities, Equity, and Revenue

Assets – What the group owns

- Current assets: cash, bank balances, accounts receivable, or stock to be used or distributed within 12 months.
- Non-current (fixed) assets: equipment, vehicles, buildings, or technology used over several years. These depreciate in value and should be recorded accordingly.

Liabilities – What the group owes

- Current liabilities: payments due soon, such as bills, staff entitlements, PAYG, superannuation, or short-term loans.
- Non-current liabilities: long-term loans or lease commitments beyond 12 months.

Equity – The group's net worth

Represents accumulated funds, retained surpluses, or reserves set aside for future needs.

Revenue – What the group earns

Includes membership fees, grants, donations, product or service sales, event income, sponsorships, and consulting or project fees.

Compliance Reminder

If your group is incorporated in Victoria, you must:

- Keep accurate financial records that explain transactions and the group's financial position.
- Present a financial report at the Annual General Meeting (AGM).
- Lodge an annual statement with Consumer Affairs Victoria through myCAV, including the correct financial tier declaration.

Good financial management builds trust, accountability, and transparency – essential for maintaining funding, partnerships, and member confidence.

Treasurer's Record Keeping Checklist

Core Responsibilities

- ☐ Maintain accurate and current financial records for all transactions
- ☐ Issue receipts for all incoming funds and bank cash promptly
- ☐ Record all transactions in a cash book or accounting software (date, source, purpose, amount)
- ☐ Keep a petty cash book and receipts for small expenses
- ☐ Reconcile bank statements monthly to match your own records
- ☐ File all invoices, receipts, and statements in date order or by category
- ☐ Maintain a budget approved by the committee and track actual vs. budget spending
- ☐ Ensure all payments are authorised in line with the organisation's financial policy

Assets, Liabilities, and Revenue

- ☐ Keep a register of assets (purchase date, cost, serial number, condition, location)
- ☐ Record any depreciation or write-off of assets annually
- ☐ Track liabilities (bills, loans, grants received but unspent)
- ☐ Maintain clear records of grants and project-specific accounts (income and expenditure separately)
- ☐ Record revenue sources – memberships, donations, grants, fundraising, sponsorships

Annual and Compliance Tasks

- ☐ Prepare and present financial reports at each committee meeting
- ☐ Prepare annual financial statements for the AGM
- ☐ Assist with or arrange an audit or financial review, if required
- ☐ Submit the organisation's annual financial statement to Consumer Affairs Victoria via myCAV
- ☐ Ensure BAS, PAYG, superannuation, and ATO requirements (if applicable) are met

Data Management

- ☐ Backup digital accounting files and spreadsheets monthly
- ☐ Store backups offsite or in secure cloud storage
- ☐ Keep paper audit trails (receipts, invoices, statements, contracts) for at least 7 years
- ☐ Review and update financial procedures annually with the committee

Group Budget

A budget is your group's financial roadmap for the year. It shows how much money you expect to receive and spend, helping you plan activities confidently and avoid financial stress.

Budgets are usually prepared for a 12-month period – either the financial year (1 July to 30 June) or the calendar year (1 January to 31 December).

Purpose of a Budget

Your budget helps the committee to plan and manage the group's finances, check that expected income will cover expenses, allocate funds fairly across activities and projects, avoid running at a loss and keep finances transparent for members, funders, accountants, and auditors. Even small community groups benefit from having a simple, clear budget.

Who Prepares the Budget

- The **treasurer** usually manages the budget and day-to-day finances.
- The **whole committee** should help plan and approve the budget so it reflects the group's goals and commitments.
- Once approved, the treasurer monitors it and reports regularly to the committee.

What to Include in a Budget

Your budget should show anticipated income and expenses, such as:

Income

- Membership fees
- Fundraising proceeds
- Grants and sponsorships
- Donations or sales

Expenses

- Room or equipment hire
- Insurance and permits
- Printing, postage, and office supplies
- Catering or event costs
- Travel or training expenses

You can use last year's figures to help estimate the year ahead.



Group Budget continued...

Reviewing the Budget

The committee must formally approve the budget before the new year starts. Review your budget regularly (e.g. quarterly) to check if spending matches your plan. If your income or expenses change, update the budget and note the reason in your minutes.

Project Budgets

If your group receives grants or funding for a specific project, create a separate project budget.

This helps you:

- Track income and spending for that project
- Meet funder reporting requirements
- Keep the main group budget simple and accurate
- Project budgets can be separate documents or added as a section in your main budget.

Applying for Grants

Grants are an excellent way for your group to fund projects or buy equipment that might otherwise be out of reach. While the application process takes time and effort, a successful grant can deliver long-lasting benefits for your community and environment.

Grants are funds provided by governments, philanthropic organisations, or corporations to support community projects that create measurable impact. They help your group to undertake new or larger-scale projects, purchase tools, materials, or infrastructure and build partnerships and credibility. Your Landcare network facilitator is a great source of up-to-date grant opportunities and can guide you through the process.

What Funders Are Looking For

Every grant program is different, but all funders generally look for:

- A project that creates real, positive impact
- A group that can deliver on its plan
- A clear, well-written application that shows exactly what will happen and how the community and environment will benefit
- A project that fits their funding priorities and eligibility criteria

Before You Apply

Start by reading the grant guidelines carefully. Then:

1. Contact the funding body early – ask whether your project fits their priorities and what they expect in a strong application.
2. Check key dates and plan your timeline for drafting, gathering quotes, and collecting letters of support.
3. Assemble your materials – photos, maps, project plans, budgets, and supporting letters all take time to organise.
4. Involve your committee – discuss how the project fits your group's goals, capacity, and budget.

Writing a Strong Application

Successful applications usually have a few things in common:

- The guidelines are followed exactly.
- The proposal is clear, specific, and measurable – it describes what will be done, why it matters, who benefits, and how success will be evaluated.
- The writing is straightforward and easy to follow. Use dot points and short paragraphs where helpful.
- The budget is realistic and matches the project description.

Applying for Grants continued...

Tip: Avoid treating it as “just filling out a form” – strong applications tell a compelling story supported by facts, quotes, and evidence.

After You Apply

If your application is successful:

- Acknowledge the funding organisation publicly – through your newsletter, social media, events, or signage.
- Use their logo where appropriate (they’ll usually provide one).
- Keep good financial and project records to make reporting easier.
- Meet all reporting and acquittal deadlines – this builds trust for future funding.

If you’re not successful, ask for feedback and keep your project on a “wish list” for future grant rounds.

Insurance

Every Landcare group needs their own insurance. Even with careful planning and safe practices, accidents and unexpected events can still occur. Insurance protects your members, volunteers, and committee from financial or legal consequences if something goes wrong.

Getting Insurance

Most local Landcare groups access insurance through Landcare Victoria Inc (LVI), which offers a comprehensive package suited to community environmental organisations. You can also choose to arrange insurance through another provider if you prefer – just make sure the cover is appropriate for your group’s activities. Before purchasing a policy, speak with your network facilitator or LVI representative, and an insurance adviser familiar with community or environmental groups.

Maintaining Cover Through LVI

If your group holds insurance through LVI, you must meet the following conditions to stay covered:

- Maintain current financial membership with LVI with an up-to-date membership and volunteer list (names and contact details).
- Make health and safety a top priority and ensure all activities are conducted safely and follow the LVI Rules and comply with relevant legislation (e.g. workplace health and safety, volunteer standards, and land access laws).
- Ensure independent contractors have their own insurance – LVI’s insurance does not cover paid contractors and obtain written landholder permission before carrying out any activities on private property.
- Contact LVI in advance if planning any unusual or high-risk activities (e.g. aerial work, machinery use, large public events) and record all participants at every activity or event.

After an Incident

If an incident or accident occurs, do not admit liability under any circumstances. Notify your insurer immediately about any event that might lead to a claim and keep clear records of what happened, including dates, names, and witness statements if applicable. Check any contracts your group signs to ensure they do not include “hold harmless” or “indemnity” clauses that could transfer risk to your group.

Accessing Policy Information

The LVI Insurance Program Summary provides an overview of the insurance cover available through Landcare Victoria.

Full policy documents can be requested directly from Landcare Victoria Inc. If your group has insurance through another provider, keep a copy of all policy documents and contact details on file and review regularly.

Note: If your group is being auspiced for a grant, insurance is not part of the auspicing arrangement. You will still need your own insurance.

Annual Reporting

Accurate and consistent reporting is vital to demonstrate the impact of Landcare activities and to secure ongoing funding at local, regional, state, and national levels. Clear records help showcase the value of volunteers, attract new members, and strengthen advocacy for increased support.

Reporting to Landcare Victoria Inc (LVI)

All Landcare groups that are members of Landcare Victoria Inc must complete annual reporting as required under the LVI Rules and to maintain insurance coverage.

Reports should include:

- Group activities and achievements
- Financial statements
- Membership and volunteer numbers
- Health and safety compliance

LVI uses this information to:

- Confirm insurance coverage and ensure appropriate risk management
- Support advocacy for increased Landcare funding
- Demonstrate accountability to members and funders

Check with LVI each year for current reporting templates and submission timelines.

Reporting to the State Government

Each year, the East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority (CMA) collects information for the Victorian Landcare Program. Usually, your network facilitator will provide an online form to complete.

The report generally asks for:

- Funding and grants received
- Activities undertaken
- Membership and volunteer hours
- Communication and engagement methods

Maintaining a record of volunteer hours and activities throughout the year will make this process easier.

Reporting on Grant-Funded Projects

If your group has received a grant, you must submit a grant acquittal to the funding body. Requirements vary but generally include:

- What activities were carried out
- How the funds were spent (with receipts if required)
- Any unspent funds and how they were managed
- Lessons learned and recommendations for future projects

Transparency is important – even if a project didn't go exactly as planned, funders value honesty and reflection.

Reporting to Consumer Affairs Victoria (for incorporated groups only)

Incorporated Landcare groups must lodge an annual statement with Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV) each year. This is a legal requirement under the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (Vic). The process involves three stages – before, during, and after your Annual General Meeting (AGM).

Before the Annual General Meeting

Prepare financial statements

1. Prepare your financial statements for the last financial year using accurate records of income, expenses, assets, and liabilities. The format depends on your association's tier level (Tier 1, 2, or 3).
2. Committee review and certification – the committee must review the financial statements and two committee members must sign a certification stating the statements give a “true and fair view” of the association's financial position.

At the Annual General Meeting

Present financial statements to members

3. Present the financial statements and signed certificate to members at the AGM, which must be held within five months of the end of your financial year. If your association is required to have its accounts reviewed or audited, include the review or audit report. Ensure your AGM minutes include a copy of these documents.
4. After the meeting, a committee member must certify that the financial statements were presented to members at the AGM.

After the Annual General Meeting

Lodge your annual statement with CAV

5. Lodge your annual statement online through your association's myCAV account within one month of the AGM.
 - Lodgement can be completed by the secretary or another authorised delegate.
 - Late lodgements may attract penalties, so it's best to complete this step promptly.

Making Your Local Landcare Voice Heard

Raising public awareness of Landcare's achievements helps demonstrate the importance of community-led environmental action and its impact on Australia's future. The more people who understand what Landcare contributes, the easier it becomes to attract funding, volunteers, and local partnerships – and to strengthen Landcare's voice at every level.

Ways to Share Your Story

Media

Local journalists are often keen for community-based stories, so providing clear, ready-to-use content increases your chances of coverage.

Consider offering:

- Newspaper articles – short stories, photos, editorials, or letters to the editor
- Radio interviews – local stations often welcome community guests or announcements
- Television coverage – especially for hands-on events or major launches

When sending a media release, include strong quotes, clear key messages, and good-quality photos.

Social Media

Social media is one of the most effective tools for sharing your group's work and engaging new supporters.

Tips for success:

- Encourage members to follow and share posts from Landcare Victoria Inc and your local group
- Tag other local organisations, councils, and funding bodies when relevant
- Use positive, engaging language and good photos
- Be ready to monitor and moderate comments to maintain a respectful tone

Newsletters

A newsletter—by email or in print—is a great way to stay connected with your members and community.

Distribute copies to:

- Local councils and MPs
- Community groups, schools, and service clubs
- Local utilities such as water authorities

Keep content short, visual, and relevant to your audience.

Website

If your group manages a website, make sure it's updated regularly and includes:

- Contact details and joining information
- Recent news, events, or achievements
- Links to social media or the Landcare Victoria Gateway

Events

Events create great visibility and connections.

Consider:

- Inviting local media, councillors, MPs, or partner groups to attend

Making Your Local Landcare Voice Heard

continued...

- Having a display table or demonstration at community festivals or markets
- Offering a guest speaker from your group at local gatherings or environmental events

Brochures and Flyers

Brochures and flyers are easy to produce and distribute locally.

You can:

- Create a simple design with your network facilitator's help (templates may be available)
- Ask your local MP, council, or neighbourhood house for assistance with printing
- Distribute via post offices, local shops, libraries, or visitor centres

Displays

Community spaces often welcome displays that highlight local achievements.

Ask your:

- Local council about using empty shop windows
- Library about display opportunities for community organisations

Press Releases

A media release is one of the most effective ways to announce your activities.

Keep it:

- **Short and clear** – include a strong headline, lead paragraph, and one or two quotes
- **Visual** – attach a photo where possible
- **Targeted** – call the journalist first, then email your release

Share your release more widely by posting it on social media and forwarding it to relevant groups, such as local councils, MPs, and farming organisations.

Logo Use

When using any Landcare logo, refer to:

- *Guide to Use of Victorian Landcare Program Logos*, and
- *Landcare Australia Logo Style Guide*

If using another organisation's or funder's logo, always check their usage guidelines first. Your network facilitator can assist.

Networking

Strong relationships with key people and organisations help build long-term support for your group.

Suggestions:

- **Stay in touch** with your state and federal MPs, local councillors, and mayors – update them on your group's achievements once or twice a year
- **Invite representatives** to speak at your AGM or attend tree plantings and community events
- **Add them to your newsletter mailing list** so they stay informed about your work
- **Attend local networking events** or service club meetings to share your Landcare story

Attracting New Volunteers and Keeping Members Engaged

Keeping volunteers happy, engaged, and connected is essential for the long-term health of your Landcare group. Attracting new members is only the first step – retaining and supporting them ensures the group continues to thrive.

Recruiting New Members

- Be easy to find - Make sure your group is listed on your local council's website and on the Landcare Gateway register of local groups. Many potential members are already looking for community or environmental projects to join.
- Stay visible - Keep your profile high through newsletters, social media, community noticeboards, and local publications.
- Ask directly - A friendly invitation can be surprisingly powerful – encourage current members to invite friends, neighbours, and colleagues to get involved.

Welcoming and Skilling Up New Members

- Provide every new member with key information such as your code of conduct, child safety policy, and an overview of how the group operates.
- Pair each new member with an experienced volunteer or committee member to answer questions and help them feel included.
- Recognise that some people will arrive with strong practical skills, while others may be learning – offer encouragement and opportunities for skill development.

Monitoring and Supporting New Volunteers

- Have a committee member check in with new participants during their first few months to make sure they feel comfortable and supported.
- Be proactive in guiding behaviour – ensure all members act in accordance with the group's code of conduct and child safety policies.
- Keep communication open and friendly – feedback should be constructive and supportive.

Keeping Members Engaged

A thriving Landcare group depends on enthusiasm and connection. Building a sense of belonging keeps volunteers returning.

During activities:

- Designate a committee member to chat with participants and welcome newcomers. Small gestures of personal connection make a big difference.

Attracting New Volunteers and Keeping Members Engaged continued...

Celebrate milestones:

- Host social gatherings like barbecues or morning teas.
- Celebrate anniversaries (e.g. five years since the group's founding or your twentieth working bee).
- Hold openings for completed projects and invite local media, councillors, and neighbouring groups.

Find fresh ideas:

- Look for inspiration on the Landcare Victoria website or other state Landcare pages – many feature examples of fun, low-cost community activities that work well.

Planning Events

Publicity

Decide whether the event is for existing members only or open to the public. Tailor your promotion accordingly – community noticeboards, newsletters, and social media posts are all effective.

Catering

Food brings people together.

- Check if a food handling certificate or council notification is required.
- Cater for allergies and dietary needs.
- Ensure the organiser is comfortable in the role and reimbursed for costs.

Ice-breakers

Fun, low-pressure activities help people feel relaxed and connected. Examples include:

- “Tell us one thing we wouldn't guess about you.”
- A quick creative task (e.g. making a native bee nest tube or simple craft).
- Line up in order of distance from your birthplace or years in the district.

Keep it light, inclusive, and optional – not everyone enjoys being put on the spot.

Wet Weather Plan

Always prepare for bad weather.

- Have a backup location or postpone if needed.
- Ensure organisers can contact participants and move equipment if required.

Photos and Permissions

If photos will be taken or shared publicly, make sure participants provide consent or are not photographed if they prefer. Use your group's Event Recording Form to document permissions.

Insurance

Confirm your event is covered by your group's insurance. If unsure, contact Landcare Victoria Inc before the event.

Succession Planning

To ensure the long-term sustainability of your Landcare group, it's essential to plan for what will happen when current committee members step down.

Succession planning isn't just about replacing people – it's about building resilience and continuity. By planning ahead, sharing knowledge, and supporting smooth transitions, your Landcare group can remain strong, vibrant, and well-prepared for the future.

Succession planning can be challenging, especially in small groups where it may feel like the success of the organisation depends on one or two key people. In reality, it is usually the collective effort of the group that drives success – and even the most dedicated individuals will eventually need to move on.

Every group is different, so planning for leadership and committee transitions will look different for each one. However, the aim is always the same: to make leadership changes smooth, respectful, and sustainable.

Succession planning involves two sides:

- Encouraging new people to step forward into committee or leadership roles.
- Supporting existing leaders to step back, allowing new members to take ownership and shape the role in their own way.

This transition can be difficult, particularly for long-standing members who have a strong sense of ownership or preferred ways of doing things. However, it's important to give new committee members space to grow and find their own approach.

Steps to Effective Succession Planning

1. Identify and recruit new committee members

The most effective way to find new leaders is often the simplest – ask directly. A personal invitation can be far more powerful than a general callout.

You can also promote opportunities through local newsletters, social media, community noticeboards, or by reaching out to residents who are new to the area.

2. Conduct a skills and interests audit

This doesn't need to be a formal process. Simply getting to know the strengths, interests, and availability of potential members can help assign people to roles that suit them.

Remember, not everyone wants to take on a leadership position – some may prefer to be involved casually, while others are ready for a bigger commitment. Matching roles to capacity is key.

Succession Planning continued...

3. Support and train new committee members

Some new office bearers may be confident stepping straight into their roles, while others will benefit from mentoring or a structured handover.

Consider:

- A one-on-one handover session between outgoing and incoming members.
- A written summary of responsibilities and key contacts.
- A short shadowing period to build confidence and familiarity.

4. Step back and let new members lead

After a reasonable transition period, it's important for outgoing members to step back and allow the new committee to take ownership. This helps prevent confusion and fosters confidence and independence in new leaders.

Common Transition Challenges

Even with good planning, leadership transitions can be bumpy. Common issues include:

- New committee members finding the workload greater than expected.
- Differences in approach or communication styles causing friction.
- Outgoing members stepping away too quickly, leaving new members without enough guidance.

These challenges are normal and usually temporary. With patience, encouragement, and open communication, most new committee members quickly settle in and thrive.

Resolving Issues

Issues and conflicts can arise in any group where people work together. Addressing them promptly and respectfully ensures that your Landcare group continues to function effectively and remain focused on achieving positive outcomes for the environment.

Conflict is a normal part of group life. In many cases, issues can be resolved informally through everyday discussion and good communication. However, sometimes a more structured conflict resolution process is required. The right approach will depend on the nature of the issue and the people involved.

When resolving conflicts, it's essential that everyone involved is treated with respect and that matters are addressed as soon as possible. The aim should always be to achieve a fair, transparent, and timely resolution.

Your group's Code of Conduct, Child Safety Policy, and (if applicable) Landcare Victoria Inc. Rules should always guide your approach.

Principles for Resolving Conflict

While every situation is unique, the following principles have helped other groups navigate conflict successfully:

- **Address issues promptly.** Unresolved conflicts can grow over time and become harder to manage.
- **Choose the right setting.** Depending on the situation, resolution may occur through:
 - A private discussion between the people involved with a neutral facilitator
 - A meeting of the executive (president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer)
 - A full committee meeting
 - A meeting with Landcare support staff
 - Mediation through an independent service such as the Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria
- **Keep records.** Any formal meetings or resolutions should be clearly documented.
- **Create a calm environment.** Sit down to discuss issues – being seated helps reduce tension and minimise power dynamics.
- **Be respectful and empathetic.** Conflict can trigger strong emotions or past experiences. Stay calm, use sensitive language, and model respectful behaviour at all times.
- **Offer support.** Ensure all participants are aware they may bring a support person to any discussions.

Resolving Issues continued...

Key Considerations

When dealing with conflict, keep the following in mind:

- Treat conflict as a normal part of group dynamics – not a crisis. This helps keep the issue in perspective.
- Make sure everyone has access to your group's rules and expectations.
- Recognise that many conflicts stem from differences in opinion or approach, rather than right or wrong behaviour. Constructive disagreement can lead to positive change.
- If allegations of bullying or sexual harassment arise, treat these as legal and safety matters – they must be addressed under relevant legislation and procedures.
- Keep the best interests of the group and Landcare as a whole at the centre of all decisions.
- Don't assume you understand the issue – always check that you've accurately understood each person's concerns.

After the Conflict Resolution Process

Once a decision has been reached:

- Remind members that all are bound by the committee's decision, even if they disagree.
- Encourage respectful communication about the process and those involved, particularly when speaking with people outside the group.
- Follow up after a few weeks to check that everyone feels comfortable with the outcome and their place within the group.

Preventing Future Conflicts

While some conflict is inevitable, good governance can help reduce the likelihood of problems arising. Consider:

- Keeping policies and procedures up to date
- Ensuring information is shared clearly and consistently
- Following proper processes for meetings and decision-making
- Documenting key discussions and actions

Your network facilitator and Landcare Victoria Inc. are valuable sources of advice and support if issues arise. Don't hesitate to reach out early for guidance.

Going into Recess or Becoming Inactive

Many Landcare groups experience periods of reduced activity or go into recess from time to time. Some reactivate after a break, while others decide to formally close. Whatever your group's situation, it's important to approach the process thoughtfully and in line with your group's rules and legal obligations.

Before making any decisions, speak with your network facilitator. They can help you understand your options and guide you through the process of managing a period of inactivity, recess, or closure.

Taking a “Quiet Year”

If your group simply wants a lighter year of activity – for example, running only a few events or focusing on planning rather than on-ground work – this can be agreed upon at your Annual General Meeting (AGM). Your group can set a minimum level of activity for the year while remaining compliant with Landcare Victoria membership and reporting requirements.

Planning for Recess

If your group expects to be inactive for more than a year, it's wise to have a simple plan in place for both going into and coming out of recess.

1. *Check your group's rules or constitution.* Some groups already have a process for going into recess written into their rules. If not, you can establish one through a member resolution.
2. *Set a review process.* Nominate one or two members to act as contact persons who will reconvene a meeting in one to two years to decide whether to restart or close the group.
3. *Include a sunset clause.* Decide on a time frame – usually two to five years – after which, if the group has not reactivated, it will formally close.
4. *Agree on what happens to funds and assets.* This decision must be made at a Special General Meeting (SGM), with at least 75% of members voting in favour of the resolution. The meeting should specify how remaining funds and assets will be used – typically transferred to another local Landcare or environmental group with similar objectives.
5. *Maintain basic financial arrangements.* Speak with your bank about how to keep your group's account open and ensure signatories remain current. Some banks may close inactive accounts, so depositing a small amount each year (even \$1) can help keep the account active.

Going into Recess or Becoming Inactive

continued...

Notifying Landcare Victoria Inc.

Landcare Victoria Inc. (LVI) contacts member groups annually to check whether they have reactivated or closed down. After your SGM, make sure LVI has up-to-date contact details for whoever is responsible for the group during recess.

For Incorporated Groups

If your group is incorporated under the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (Vic), there are additional legal responsibilities. Even while inactive, the group must:

- Hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM) each year, within five months of the end of the financial year.
- Prepare and present financial statements to members at the AGM.
- Lodge an annual statement with Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV) through the group's myCAV account.

Failure to complete these requirements can result in penalties or cancellation of the association's incorporation.

If the group decides to close completely, you must follow the formal winding-up process under the Act, which may include distributing assets in accordance with your association's rules and notifying CAV.

Before Making a Final Decision

Always discuss your options with:

- Your network facilitator
- Landcare Victoria Inc. (for guidance on membership and insurance implications)
- Consumer Affairs Victoria (for incorporated groups)

These organisations can help ensure your group remains compliant and that any transition – whether a temporary recess or formal closure – is handled smoothly and responsibly.

Forms



Forms

Please note the following forms work best as a digital copy. For the entire folder, [click this link](#) (or follow the QR code). Otherwise, individual forms are found below.

Membership Application Form

Membership Register List

Budget Template for Projects

Ordinary Meeting Minutes Template

Annual General Meeting (AGM) Minutes Template

Activity Planning Form

Participant Registration Form



Other Forms you may need:

For planting native vegetation; weed control; general revegetation; habitat restoration on council-managed land (e.g. verge, park, road reserve): must get Council permission – via the “[Public Land Manager Consent Request](#)” form. Works within a road reserve may also require a separate “[Works Within Road Reserve](#)” permit. You also need a “[Permit to Plant or Interfere with Vegetation](#)” from East Gippsland Shire Council.

Works affecting waterways, banks or watercourses (e.g. riparian planting, bank stabilisation, removing fallen timber, installing culverts/bridges/boardwalks) need a “[Works on Waterways](#)” permit from EGCMA.

Membership Form

(Logo if available)

(*GROUP NAME*) LANDCARE GROUP

Welcome! Membership for our group means you can: participate in decision making and activities, have voting rights, a regular newsletter, access to group equipment and assistance with land management (*change to suit your group*).

For further information call (*name*) on (*phone number*).

Membership is \$(*amount*) per household (*if your group has individual memberships, amend details here*).

Full name: _____

Names of all family members (for family membership):

Postal address: _____

Residential address: _____

Telephone number(s): _____

Email: _____

Would you like to receive Landcare notices and information by email?

YES / NO

If paying by direct deposit, please use your name as the payment description and deposit \$(*amount*) for (*group account name*), BSB: (*number*), account: (*number*). Please also fill out and attach this form to an email and send to (*email address*).

If paying by cheque, please make the cheque for \$(*amount*) payable to: (*group name*) and post with this membership form and payment to: (*mailing address*).

Completed forms and cash or cheques can also be given directly to the treasurer at a Landcare event. Please ensure that you enclose the form and cash or cheque in an envelope and write your name on the outside.

Thank You!

Membership List:[Organisation Name]

Add logo here

INSTRUCTIONS

Enter your organisation name above and list all members of your organisation below, along with their membership/contact details.

Refer to your governing document to determine if additional information must be recorded for each member.

Add columns as needed (e.g. join date, expiry date, membership fees paid, category of membership) and update this list regularly to add, remove or update member details as soon as possible after changes occur.

Use a new sheet each year (calendar or financial) for a historical record

[illegible]

Budget for [Group name] in [financial year]

	July		August		September		October		November		December		January		February		March		April		May		June	
	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual
Income																								
Income 1																								
Income 2																								
Income 3																								
Income 4																								
Income 5																								
Income 6																								
Income 7																								
Income 8																								
Income 9																								
Income 10																								
Income 11																								
Total income	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Expenses																								
Expense 1																								
Expense 2																								
Expense 3																								
Expense 4																								
Expense 5																								
Expense 6																								
Expense 7																								
Expense 8																								
Expense 9																								
Expense 10																								
Expense 11																								
Expense 12																								
Expense 13																								
Expense 14																								
Total expenses	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Net income	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Summary	Budget	Actual	Difference																					
July	\$0	\$0	\$0																					
August	\$0	\$0	\$0																					
September	\$0	\$0	\$0																					
October	\$0	\$0	\$0																					
November	\$0	\$0	\$0																					
December	\$0	\$0	\$0																					
January	\$0	\$0	\$0																					
February	\$0	\$0	\$0																					
March	\$0	\$0	\$0																					
April	\$0	\$0	\$0																					
May	\$0	\$0	\$0																					
June	\$0	\$0	\$0																					

Month	Budget	Actual
July	\$0	\$0
August	\$0	\$0
September	\$0	\$0
October	\$0	\$0
November	\$0	\$0
December	\$0	\$0
January	\$0	\$0
February	\$0	\$0
March	\$0	\$0
April	\$0	\$0
May	\$0	\$0
June	\$0	\$0

Ordinary Meeting Minutes

Meeting of the _____ Landcare group committee

Date: _____ Time: _____ Location: _____

Welcome to the meeting by Chairperson

This may include acknowledging the traditional owners of the land

Present:

Names of people at the meeting

Apologies:

Names of people who gave notice that they couldn't attend

Conflicts of Interest:

Any member present who may benefit from activities of the Landcare group

Minutes (from previous meeting)

Moved:

Name of a person who has read the previous minutes and is happy to place on record that they believe the minutes are true and correct

Seconded:

Name of a person who agrees with the mover and is happy to place on record that they believe the minutes are true and correct

CARRIED ☐ NOT CARRIED ☐

(A show of hands that all agree, or a formal vote if it seems evenly split)

Item/Discussion	Action	Who
Business Arising (from previous minutes): <i>Items needing discussion following on from the last meeting</i>		
Correspondence in/out:		



<i>A list of correspondence received by either letter or email and any actions which need to be taken</i>		
Treasurers Report: <i>A written report of the income and expenditure since the last meeting, as well as current bank balance (and cash, if applicable) and any liabilities currently owing</i>		
General Business: <i>Any other items which need to be discussed</i>		

Next Meeting: Date:

Time:

Location:

The meeting closed at: *Time*





Annual General Meeting (AGM) Minutes

If your group is incorporated, you are legally required to hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM) each year, within five months of the end of your financial year. If your group is not incorporated, an AGM is not mandatory, but it is still good practice to hold one annually. The AGM provides an opportunity to; share updates on the group's activities and direction, present financial and committee reports and elect or confirm committee members and office bearers. The timing of committee elections depends on your group's rules — some elect officers each year, while others do so every two or three years.

Before the AGM:

Notify members early - Ensure all members are notified of the AGM in accordance with your group's rules (usually at least 14 days in advance). Optional: Promote the meeting publicly to raise your group's profile and encourage new members.

Confirm the venue or platform - Book the meeting venue (or online platform) and check accessibility, parking, and audio/visual needs.

Plan the agenda and speakers - Invite guest speakers if desired — these can make the meeting more engaging. If you have a speaker, arrange who will introduce and thank them.

Prepare reports - Ensure the President's and Treasurer's written reports are completed and copies are available for attendees (printed or digital).

Complete the Group Health Check – Use the *Landcare Group Health Checklist* before the meeting.

Prepare nominations and election materials - Have nomination forms or voting slips ready (if your group uses them). Confirm who will facilitate the election process.

Bring key documents - Bring your constitution or rules, previous AGM minutes, membership list, and financial reports to reference during the meeting.

Organise catering (optional) - Light refreshments or a shared meal can make the meeting more welcoming and encourage attendance.

After the AGM:

Finalise and distribute minutes promptly - Type up the minutes as soon as possible and distribute them to all members (or at least to the committee).

Follow up on action items - Ensure any agreed actions or decisions are followed up and assigned to the appropriate people.

Handover committee roles - Organise a smooth handover for any outgoing committee members. Provide orientation or mentoring for new office bearers. Provide new office bearers' contact information to the rest of the group.

Update administrative details - If required, update **bank signatories**, contact lists, and online logins.

Lodge statutory documents - If your group is incorporated, the **Public Officer** (or Secretary) must lodge the **Annual Statement** and pay the fee to **Consumer Affairs Victoria** within five months of the end of the financial year.

File and store records - Keep AGM minutes, reports, and attendance records securely (digital or printed copies), as part of your ongoing governance recordkeeping.

Annual General Meeting of the _____ Landcare Group

Date:

Time:

Location:



Welcome to the AGM by Chairperson

This may include acknowledging the traditional owners of the land

Present:

Names of people at the AGM:

Apologies:

People who gave notice that they couldn't attend

Is there a quorum? Yes ☐ No ☐

An AGM is only valid with at least 50% of members +1 present

Conflicts of Interest:

Any group member present who may benefit from activities of the Landcare group

Minutes (from previous AGM)

Moved:

Name of a person who has read the previous minutes and is happy to place on record that they believe the minutes are true and correct

Seconded:

Name of a person who agrees with the mover and is happy to place on record that they believe the minutes are true and correct

CARRIED ☐ NOT CARRIED ☐

(A show of hands that all agree, or a formal vote if it seems evenly split)

Item/Discussion	Actions needed	Who will perform this task?
Business Arising (from minutes): <i>Items requiring discussion following the last AGM</i>		
Chairperson's report <i>The chairperson will usually provide a written report, and will read it out or summarise it for the meeting</i>	Mover: Secunder:	Chairperson's report accepted? Yes/No
Treasurer's report	Mover: Secunder:	Treasurer's report accepted? Yes/No

The treasurer needs to provide a written financial statement, and summarise it for the meeting

Business Arising (from minutes):

Items needing discussion following the last AGM

Actions needed**Who will perform this task?**

Election of Office Bearers:

If the position of Chairperson is going to be elected, another person who is not standing for that position needs to conduct the election

**Nominated by:
(names)****Result of Election****Chairperson**

(name)

Secretary

(name)

Treasurer

(name)

Public Officer

(for incorporated groups – this can be one of the above positions)

(name)

Optional other roles as determined by the group:

Vice-chairperson

Assistant Secretary

Assistant Treasurer

Publicity Officer

Annual membership fees for next year

Network representative(s)

Review of bank signatories

General Business:

Any other items which need to be discussed



Next AGM: Date:

Time:

Location:

The AGM closed at: *Time*



Activity Planning Form

This form can be used to plan any activity - including social events, working bees and major publicity activities.

Part 1 – Event details

Group Name:

Date of Event:

Project / Activity Name:

Project Manager / Coordinator:

Contact Phone / Email:

Event Overview

Describe the activity (or give it a brief name for promotions):

Purpose / outcomes:

Event location:

Event date & time:

Expected number of participants:

Partner organisations (if any) and contact details:

Preparation & Logistics

What equipment is required? Where will this equipment come from (owned / borrowed / hired) and when to return it?

Who is responsible for transport, setup and pack-up?

Has the event been advertised? How?

Do volunteers need to bring equipment, PPE, or sun protection? Do you have spare equipment if someone is not prepared?



Do you have an **inclement weather plan**?

How will you communicate last-minute changes to volunteers?

Have you obtained **written permission** from any Landholders or Land Managers?

DEECA - for any works or events on DEECA managed land Yes / No / N/A

Parks Victoria - for any works or events on Parks Victoria managed land Yes / No / N/A

East Gippsland Shire Council - for any works or events on Council managed land Yes / No / N/A

GLaWAC – for works that may affect cultural heritage values Yes / No / N/A

EGCMA – for works that affect waterways, banks or watercourses Yes / No / N/A

Other – if applying for a grant, support and consent is always needed Yes / No / N/A

Will food or refreshments be provided? If yes, who will handle catering and food safety?

Safety & Risk Management

The risk assessment in part 2 has been completed Yes / No

Are all participants covered by the group's insurance?

Have you sighted **insurance certificates of currency** for any contractors?

Is there mobile coverage at the site? Yes / No

If no, what's your backup plan for emergency contact?

Will a **first aid kit** be available on site? When was it last checked?

Name of trained **First Aider(s)**:

Location of **nearest public toilet**:

Nearest crossroad / reference point (for emergency services):

Nearest vehicle access point:

Do you need wheelchair / pram access to the event? Yes / No

Do you have a plan for waste management and site clean-up?



Communications & Media

Have you advised **local media** or promoted through newsletters / social media?

Will the event be **photographed** for future publicity? Yes / No

Who will take photos?

Do you have **consent** from participants for photos? Yes / No

Who will prepare a **press release or social post**?

Have you tagged or notified relevant partners or sponsors?

Accessibility & Inclusion

Is the site accessible to people with mobility needs?

Are there accessible toilets nearby?

Are event materials (maps, instructions, signage) clear and inclusive?

Will people from diverse backgrounds feel included? How will you ensure this?

Post-Event Review

Were your goals achieved?

Were there any incidents or near misses?

How many volunteers attended?

Were all sign-in sheets completed?

What went well?

What can be improved next time?



During the Event: Key Reminders



Before Activities Begin

Arrive early to check site safety (hazards, weather, access, toilets, parking).

Display clear signage and directions to the meeting point.

Ensure **sign-in sheet** is completed by all volunteers (for insurance purposes).

Welcome everyone and introduce the organisers / committee representatives.

Acknowledge Traditional Owners and the Country where the event is taking place.

Run a short **safety briefing**, covering:

- site hazards and how to avoid them,
- PPE requirements (gloves, hats, sunscreen, etc.),
- location of first aid kit and who the First Aider is,
- what to do in case of emergency or evacuation.

Confirm that all tools and equipment are in safe working order.

Remind everyone to work at their own pace and take breaks as needed.

During the Activity

Keep an eye on weather conditions — have your wet weather or heat plan ready.

Check that volunteers are using correct tools and safe work methods.

Watch for fatigue, dehydration, or overheating — provide rest, shade, and water.

Encourage teamwork, inclusion, and positive communication.

Take a few good-quality **photos** (with permission).

Record any incidents, near misses, or hazards noticed during the day.

Ensure everyone signs out if they leave early.

After the Activity

Thank participants and acknowledge their contribution.

Collect tools, equipment, and rubbish; leave the site tidy.

Confirm that all sign-in and photo consent forms are complete.

Hold a quick debrief — what went well, any improvements for next time?

Remind participants how they'll hear about future events or follow-up results.

Store completed forms (sign-in, risk assessment, incident reports) securely.

Submit any required updates or photos to your **Landcare Network or LVI Gateway**.



Part 2 – Risk and Safety

Risk Assessment

Activity Name: _____

Activity Date(s): _____

Organisation Name(s): _____

Location: _____

Activity Coordinator: _____

Assessment
Date: _____

Risk score determination

The following risk matrix and definitions were used when calculating the risk ratings for this activity.

Risk Matrix					
Likelihood	Consequence				
	Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
Almost certain	3 High	3 High	4 Extreme	4 Extreme	4 Extreme
Likely	2 Medium	3 High	3 High	4 Extreme	4 Extreme
Possible	1 Low	2 Medium	3 High	3 High	4 Extreme
Unlikely	1 Low	1 Low	2 Medium	3 High	3 High
Rare	1 Low	1 Low	2 Medium	2 Medium	2 Medium

Likelihood of an incident

Almost certain – Very high possibility of occurrence / Almost always expect this type of incident

Likely – High possibility of occurrence / Incidents happen often (i.e. regularly, or more often than not)

Possible – Possible / Incidents like this happen sometimes

Unlikely – Low possibility of occurrence / This type of incident does not occur often

Rare – Extremely low possibility of occurrence – These incidents are extremely unlikely to occur (almost never)

Consequence of an incident

Catastrophic – Extremely serious consequences - May include death or permanent disability of individuals, and/or extreme loss of property, and/or the demise of the organisation

Major – Serious consequences – May involve substantial and/or lasting harm to the organisation, and/or serious harm to individuals (e.g. extensive injuries requiring ongoing hospitalisation), and/or substantial property damage

Moderate – Moderate consequences – May involve serious harm to individuals (e.g. requiring brief hospitalisation for observation), and/or temporary interference with the organisation's operations, and/or serious property damage

Minor – Low level consequences – May involve minor harm to individuals requiring medical advice/treatment (not hospitalisation), and/or significant disruption to the activity, and/or minor damage to low value property

Insignificant – Negligible consequences – May involve very minor harm to individuals (e.g. small cuts requiring basic first aid on site), and/or minor disruption to the activity

Risk ratings and actions

1 Low – Acceptable risk, activity may proceed with no further action required as long as risk is being managed

2 Medium – Tolerable risk, activity may proceed with further action desirable to minimise and manage risk

3 High – Potentially unacceptable risk, action must be taken to minimise risk, activity should be reconsidered if risk cannot be reduced

4 Extreme – Unacceptable risk, immediate action must be taken to minimise risk, activity cannot proceed if risk cannot be reduced

Risk Identification and Assessment				
Tasks/hazards	Risk level (prior to mitigation)	Mitigation strategies	Risk level (after mitigation)	Proceed? (Yes / No)
		•		
		•		
		•		
		•		
		•		

Are there arrangements for?	Yes / No	Outline arrangements
-----------------------------	----------	----------------------



Emergency evacuation		
Emergency communication		
First aid		

Have any hazardous substances been identified?	If yes, specify	
Safe handling procedures in place?		

Emergency contacts

Activity coordinator contact(s):

First aid officer:

Nearest accessible reliable phone:

Nearest hospital:

Ambulance / police / fire:

Assessment Completed By	
Name	Signature



Participant Registration Form

Add Logo Here

All volunteers participating at this site must be registered. Please fill in your details below.

Children under the age of 18 must have a parent/guardian sign on their behalf. Participants may be photographed while taking part in this activity, with photos published electronically or in print. Please indicate your consent to be photographed below.

Landcare Victoria Inc. Member Group Name:	Date:	Site:	Activity/Event:
Site Coordinator's Name:	Contact Number:	Contact Email:	

First Name	Last Name	Phone Number	Under 18? ☒	Consent To Photos? ☒	Time Arrived	Time Departed	Signature (Include Full Name If Parent or Guardian)

First Name	Last Name	Phone Number	Under 18? ☒	Consent To Photos? ☒	Time Arrived	Time Departed	Signature (Include Full Name If Parent or Guardian)
Total Volunteers Present:			Total Volunteer Hours:				

other resources



Landcare Group Health Checklist

Corporate Governance

- ☐ The group has a folder of key documents including:
 - Certificate of Incorporation (if applicable)
 - Contact details of members
 - List of current committee members
 - Details of insurance held
 - Assets owned by the group
 - Bank account details and signatories
 - Constitution and policy documents
- ☐ Records are securely stored and retained for at least 7 years.
- ☐ A Hire Agreement is used for any group-owned assets loaned or hired.
- ☐ The committee regularly reviews and understands the constitution and any policies.

Meetings

- ☐ The group meets regularly (e.g., every 2–3 months).
- ☐ All members receive meeting notifications at least 2 weeks prior.
- ☐ Minutes are recorded and distributed promptly:
 - General meetings → all members
 - Committee meetings → committee only
- ☐ Minutes of the previous meeting are confirmed at each meeting.
- ☐ A financial statement is presented at every meeting.

Financial Management

- ☐ All funds are used in line with the constitution.
- ☐ Committee members understand and review the financial position.
- ☐ All payments are authorised by at least two committee members.
- ☐ Bank accounts require two signatories.
- ☐ Annual financial reports are prepared and presented to members.

Insurance

- ☐ The group holds adequate insurance covering volunteers, events, and public liability.
- ☐ Insurance coverage is reviewed annually.
- ☐ Group-owned equipment is insured.

Work Health and Safety

- ☐ Risk assessments are completed for all activities.
- ☐ All incidents or near-misses are recorded and stored.
- ☐ Safe Work Method Statements (SWMS) are maintained for tools, machinery, and hazardous tasks.
- ☐ Volunteers receive safety inductions and understand emergency procedures.
- ☐ The group is familiar with the In Safe Hands Toolkit and/or equivalent WHS guidance.

Landcare Group Health Checklist continued...

Regulatory Compliance

- ☐ Annual statement and fee are lodged with Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV).
- ☐ If registered for GST, BAS statements are up to date.
- ☐ Public officer details are current with CAV.
- ☐ The group is registered on:
 - National Landcare Directory
 - Victorian Landcare Gateway
 - Local Council community register

Independent Contractors

- ☐ Contractor agreements are developed and retained on file.
- ☐ Certificates of public liability insurance are sighted.
- ☐ Workers compensation insurance is verified.
- ☐ Relevant licences (e.g. Chemical User Accreditation) are sighted and current.

Communications

- ☐ The group communicates regularly (e.g. newsletter, email, social media).
- ☐ Consent is obtained before publishing images or personal information.
- ☐ Committee endorses anyone managing group social media.
- ☐ At least two people hold social media logins.
- ☐ The group is aware of its local Regional Catchment Strategy.
- ☐ The group collaborates with neighbouring Landcare groups and networks.
- ☐ The group promotes activities in local media and online.

Volunteer and Membership Health

- ☐ The group has an up-to-date membership list.
- ☐ Volunteers are welcomed, supported, and acknowledged.
- ☐ Induction materials (e.g. safety, conduct, child safety) are provided.
- ☐ The group reviews Child Safe Standards (Victoria 2023).
- ☐ Volunteer roles and expectations are clearly defined.

Leadership and Succession Planning

- ☐ Committee roles and responsibilities are clear.
- ☐ New leaders are mentored or trained before taking on roles.
- ☐ Handover notes or guides are maintained for key positions.
- ☐ The group actively identifies and encourages emerging leaders.
- ☐ The group maintains contact with regional networks for support.

Continuity and Long-term Planning

- ☐ The group has a current Strategic or Action Plan.
- ☐ The committee reviews progress annually.
- ☐ Succession, crisis, or recess plans are documented.
- ☐ The group periodically reviews whether its activities meet community needs.

Useful Links

All links are current and verified as of October 2025.

Resource	Description	QR Code
<u>Landcare Victoria Inc.</u>	Peak body for Landcare in Victoria, offering governance, training and advocacy support.	
<u>Victorian Landcare Gateway</u>	Central portal with toolkits, case studies and practical resources for Landcare groups.	
<u>Victorian Government – Victorian Landcare Program</u>	Official government page about Landcare support, grants, facilitators and programs.	
<u>Victorian Landcare Grants</u>	Details of grant schemes available to Landcare and environmental volunteer groups.	
<u>In Safe Hands Toolkit (by Conservation Volunteers Australia).</u>	A free safety-management resource designed for conservation/volunteer groups; includes templates.	
<u>Our Community – Support for Not-for-Profits</u>	Offers advice, training, tools and resources for community organisations (including volunteers).	
<u>Volunteer Recruitment Directory – Invasives.org.au</u>	National directory of volunteer groups including Landcare/Bushcare organisations.	
<u>Not-for-profit Law</u>	Legal service specialising in governance/compliance for community organisations.	



Landcare Victoria Inc.

Code of Conduct



Landcare Victoria Inc.

ABN 69 561 995 226 | INC A0011936S

PO Box 509, FLINDERS LANE VIC 8009

landcarevictoria.org.au

Endorsed May 2025, to be reviewed by May 2028

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1 Introduction

1.1 Overview and purpose of the Code

Central to the success of the landcare movement are good people who demonstrate a high standard of professional conduct in their interactions with other people and organisations. Landcare Victoria, as the peak body for Victorian landcare, aims to foster a mutually-supportive and safe environment where members, volunteers and staff are respected, valued and enjoy working together towards our shared objects.

The Code of Conduct sets out the expectations of behaviour of all individuals in connection with their roles with Landcare Victoria. The Code has been produced in accordance with clause 17.4 of the Constitution of Landcare Victoria Inc, which gives the Board power to make policies for:

- (i) the general conduct and management of the Association; and
- (ii) the activities and operations of members in their capacity as members as it sees fit

The Code is intended to:

- Ensure Landcare Victoria and all individuals working with our Association meet any statutory requirements, standards and obligations in regard to matters of conduct, health and safety
- Set overarching principles and standards of behaviour to guide people on how to perform their duties in a professional and ethical way
- Ensure the values and integrity of the Association are actively being upheld
- Provide assurance to individuals and organisations working with Landcare Victoria, including external stakeholders, by enabling high standards of practice

All organisational documents referenced in this Code may be accessed on Landcare Victoria's website.

1.2 Updating the Code

The Board of Landcare Victoria Inc is responsible for the accuracy and currency of organisational policies. The Code of Conduct is managed by the Chief Executive Officer of Landcare Victoria.

This Code will be reviewed and updated at least once every three years or when capstone requirements change, including legislative amendments. The Chief Executive Officer with support from staff will prepare recommendations for changes, subject to approval by the Board.

In the case of a discrepancy between the Code of Conduct and the Constitution of Landcare Victoria Inc, the Constitution takes precedence as the organisation's governing document.

Landcare Victoria Inc.

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1.3 Definitions

In this Code:

- a) **Association** means Landcare Victoria Incorporated A0011936S.
- b) **Board** means the board having management of the Association for the time being.
- c) **Code** means this document, the Landcare Victoria Inc Code of Conduct.
- d) **Constitution** means the governing document of the Association as amended from time to time.
- e) **Landcare Victoria** means Landcare Victoria Incorporated A0011936S.
- f) **Member** means a member of the Association as defined in the Constitution.
- g) **Member Policy** means a policy that meets the description in **clause 17.4(a)(ii)** of the Constitution.
- h) **Objects** mean the purposes for which the Association is established, as set out in **clause 4.1** of the Constitution.
- i) **Prejudicial conduct** means conduct meeting the description in **clause 12.1(b)** of the Constitution.
- j) **Strategic Plan** means the current strategic plan of the Association.

2 Code of Conduct

2.1 Scope

The Code of Conduct applies to all Landcare Victoria employees, volunteers, members, contractors and other parties in connection with their roles with Landcare Victoria.

As Landcare Victoria members may be organisations (full members) or people (associate members), individuals are bound by the Code when acting on behalf of or in connection with the Association, including when representing a Landcare Victoria member organisation.

2.2 Capstone requirements

All individuals and organisations in Victoria are bound by the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)*, which provides protections from discrimination in public life in Victoria. Under this legislation, it is unlawful to discriminate against a person because of a protected personal characteristic, to sexually harass someone, or to victimise them for speaking up about their rights, making a complaint, helping someone else make a complaint or refusing to do something that would be contrary to the *Equal Opportunity Act*.

The *Equal Opportunity Act* includes a positive duty to eliminate discrimination, sexual harassment and victimisation as far as possible. This means that, instead of simply reacting to complaints of discrimination or sexual harassment, organisations must be proactive about discrimination and take steps to prevent it from occurring.

With respect to appropriate and safe behaviour, other state and Commonwealth legislation and regulatory standards may also apply, including:

- *Crimes Amendment (Bullying) Act 2011 (Vic)* (also known as Brodie's Law)
- *Work Health & Safety Act 2011*
- *Fair Work Amendment Act 2013 (Cth)*
- Victorian Child Safe Standards

In accordance with clause 12 of the Constitution, Landcare Victoria may take disciplinary action against a member if it determines that an individual member, or one or more individuals within a member organisation, have engaged in prejudicial conduct. Conduct prejudicial to the Association, includes but is not limited to, a failure to comply with a code of conduct or policy of Landcare Victoria.

Individuals working with Landcare Victoria are also expected to consider the objects of the Association as defined in the Constitution, along with the organisational values defined in the current Strategic Plan.

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2.3 Organisational values

Our values, as defined in the Landcare Victoria Inc Strategic Plan 2025-2028, reflect the values of the Victorian landcare community. Actions taken by individuals acting on behalf of or in connection with the Association should always be aligned with these values:

- **Grounded** in the community and knowledge of local landscapes
- **Empowering** individuals and communities to make a positive difference to their local landscapes
- **Respectful** of the knowledge of diverse groups of people with a connection to the land, including First Nations people
- **Collaborative** in our approach to achieving outcomes

2.4 General code of behaviour

When acting on behalf of or in connection with Landcare Victoria or one of its member organisations, those bound by this Code of Conduct will:

- 1) Understand and act in accordance with Landcare Victoria's documented objects, values, Member Policies and procedures
- 2) Comply with all relevant legislation and regulatory standards
- 3) Respect the rights, dignity and worth of others, and value their ideas and opinions
- 4) Be fair, considerate, honest, ethical and professional in all dealings with others
- 5) Strive to make decisions that are fair and equitable
- 6) Always act in an inclusive and non-discriminatory manner towards all persons and challenge inappropriate, exclusionary, or discriminatory behaviour
- 7) Value, respect and leverage the benefits of diverse lived experiences
- 8) Protect the welfare and human rights of others, and particularly those who may be at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation
- 9) Report any unlawful, threatening or violent behaviour to the appropriate authorities
- 10) Accept responsibility and accountability for their own actions
- 11) **Not** engage in unlawful, threatening, violent or discriminatory behaviour
- 12) **Not** shame, humiliate, oppress, belittle, degrade or harass any person
- 13) **Not** use their involvement with Landcare Victoria to promote their own beliefs, behaviours and practices where these are inconsistent with those of the Association
- 14) **Not** take any action or behave in a manner that may bring Landcare Victoria or the broader landcare movement into disrepute

2.5 Breaches of the Code

Any breach of the Code of Conduct may lead to disciplinary action in accordance with the Constitution. Depending on the severity of the breach, such disciplinary action may include reprimand, formal warning, suspension of membership/employment or termination of membership/employment.

Similar disciplinary action may be taken against any leader, supervisor or manager who directly approves or condones a breach of Our Code and does not take immediate action to remediate such breach.

Breaches of applicable laws or statutory regulations may also result in prosecution by the appropriate authorities.

In keeping with the requirement for organisations to be proactive in preventing discrimination, sexual harassment and victimisation as per the *Equal Opportunity Act*, any behaviour contradictory to this Code that may constitute a breach should be reported to Landcare Victoria as soon as is practicable.



Child Safety Policy

Introduction

This Child Safety Policy is prepared to ensure children are safe at all landcare events and activities and to provide guidance to Member Groups about the standards and procedures that they must follow.

The policy conforms to the requirements of the Victorian Child Safe Standards issued by the Commission for Children and Young People that came into force on 1 July 2022. It is based on a template prepared by the Department of Health and Human Services.

Among the organisations explicitly required to adhere to the Child Safe Standards are charities and not-for-profit organisations. Landcare Victoria and its members fall into this category.

Scope and application

Landcare Victoria rules require that:

17.15 Each Member Group is required to have a documented code of conduct which covers child safety, bullying, sexual harassment and respect.

This policy and the related Code of Conduct are mandatory for Landcare Victoria Inc. Member Groups unless the Member Group has itself reviewed its policy and procedures since the introduction of the 2022 Victorian Child Safe Standards and the Member Group policy meets or exceeds the requirements of this policy and the related Code of Conduct.

Under the Act, a Child is a person who is under the age of 18 years.

Our commitment to child safety

Landcare Victoria Inc. is committed to child safety.

We want children to be safe, happy and empowered.

We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers.

We are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children.

We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures.

We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously.

Landcare Victoria Inc. is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early and removing and reducing these risks.

Landcare Victoria Inc. and its Member Groups have practices to reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing board members, staff and volunteers.

Landcare Victoria Inc. is committed to regularly training and educating our board members, staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.

We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.

We have specific policies and procedures in place that support our board members, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

If you believe a child is at immediate risk, phone 000.

Our children

This policy is intended to empower children, who are vital and active participants at Landcare Victoria. We involve them when making decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them. We listen to their views and respect what they have to say.

We promote diversity and acceptance at Landcare Victoria, and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome. In particular, we:

- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- ensure that children with a disability are safe and can participate equally

Our staff and volunteers

This policy guides our staff and volunteers on how to behave with children at Landcare Victoria.

All staff and volunteers must agree to abide by our Code of Conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children. All staff and volunteers, as well as children and their families, are given the opportunity to contribute to the continuing development and update of the Code of Conduct.

Training and supervision

Training and education are important to ensure that everyone at Landcare Victoria Inc. understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

Our organisational culture aims for all board members, staff, volunteers, families and children to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. We train our board members, staff and volunteers to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

We also support our board members, staff and volunteers through ongoing supervision to develop their skills to protect children from abuse and promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability.

New board members, staff and volunteers will be supervised regularly to ensure they understand Landcare Victoria Inc.'s commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse. This will include checking that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate (please refer to the Landcare Victoria Inc. Code of Conduct for information about appropriate behaviour). Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels, including Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

Recruitment

We take all reasonable steps to employ skilled people to work with children. We develop selection criteria and advertisements which clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legal responsibilities. Landcare Victoria Inc. understands that when recruiting board members, staff and volunteers, we have ethical as well as legislative obligations.

We carry out reference checks and police record checks to ensure that we are recruiting the right people. If during the recruitment process a person's records indicate a criminal history then the person will be given the opportunity to provide further information and context.

Fair procedures for staff and volunteers

The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern. We are also fair and reasonable to all staff and volunteers. The decisions we make when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent, and based on evidence.

We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns using our incident reporting form. All records are securely stored. If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, we provide updates to children and families on progress and actions we as an organisation take.

Privacy

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be staff, volunteers, families or children, unless there is a risk to someone's safety. Everyone is entitled to know how this information is recorded, what will be done with it and who will have access to it. This is intended to protect reporters and to ensure that all members of Landcare Victoria Inc. are comfortable to disclose any allegations or concerns in relation to child safety without repercussions.

Legislative responsibilities

Landcare Victoria Inc. takes its legal responsibilities seriously, including:

- Failure to disclose: All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have an obligation to report that information to Victoria Police
- Mandatory reporting: Any board/committee members, staff or volunteers who are mandatory reporters (doctors, nurses, midwives, teacher, principals and police officers) must comply with their duties
- Failure to protect: People of authority in our organisation will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so

- Reportable conduct: In addition to the chairperson of the relevant member group, the CEO of Landcare Victoria Inc. must be made aware of any allegations of physical and sexual abuse, sexual misconduct, significant emotional or psychological harm or significant neglect by an employee or volunteer towards a child. We are also legally required to notify the Commission for Children and Young People of the allegation
- Duty of care: If a child is abused by an individual associated with our organisation, our organisation is presumed to have breached its duty of care unless it can prove that it took 'reasonable precautions' to prevent the abuse in question

Risk management

In Victoria, organisations are required to protect children when a risk is identified. In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to our children.

We have risk management strategies in place to identify, assess, and take steps to minimise child abuse risks which include risks posed by physical environments and online environments.

Allegations, concerns and complaints

Landcare Victoria Inc. takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly. Our board members, staff and volunteers are trained to deal with allegations appropriately.

We work to ensure all children, families, board members, staff and volunteers know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour.

We all have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have a reasonable belief that an incident took place. If an adult has a reasonable belief that an incident has occurred, then they must report the incident. Factors contributing to reasonable belief may include:

- a child states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves)
- behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed
- someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it
- observing suspicious behaviour

Regular review

This policy will be reviewed every two years and following significant incidents if they occur. We will ensure that families and children have the opportunity to contribute. Where possible we will do our best to work with local Aboriginal communities, culturally and/or linguistically diverse communities and people with a disability.

Code of Conduct

Under Rule 17.15 of Landcare Victoria Inc. each Member Group is required to have a documented code of conduct which covers child safety, bullying, sexual harassment and respect.

The Code of Conduct provided at Attachment 2 meets the requirements of Rule 17.15 in respect of child safety and is mandatory for all Member Groups unless they have adopted their

own Code of Conduct that aligns with the 2022 Child Safe Standards and at least meets the standard of the Code of Conduct at Attachment 2.

Further information

Further information about the Child Safe Standards can be found on the [Child Safety page](#) on the Commission for Children and Young People's website.

Approved by the Board, Landcare Victoria Inc.

12 August 2022

Landcare Victoria Inc.

ABN 69 561 995 226 | INC A0011936S
(03) 9034 1940 | info@landcarevictoria.org.au
PO Box 509, FLINDERS LANE VIC 8009



Child Safe Policy

Attachment 1

The Child Safe Standards

Child Safe Standard 1 - Relevant entities establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.

Child Safe Standard 2 - Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.

Child Safe Standard 3 - Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.

Child Safe Standard 4 - Families and communities are informed, and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.

Child Safe Standard 5 - Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.

Child Safe Standard 6 - People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.

Child Safe Standard 7 - Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused.

Child Safe Standard 8 - Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.

Child Safe Standard 9 - Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.

Child Safe Standard 10 - Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.

Child Safe Standard 11 - Policies and procedures document how the relevant entity is safe for children and young people.



Child Safe Policy

Attachment 2

Child Safety Code of Conduct

All staff, contractors, volunteers and board and committee members of Landcare Victoria Inc. and Member Groups are required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children, as noted below.

This Code of Conduct applies to all Member Groups of Landcare Victoria Inc. under Rule 17.15. Incorporated Member Groups may adopt this Code or develop their own which must at least meet the standards of conduct defined in this Code.

A copy of the Code of Conduct must be provided to all Member Group committee members, employed staff and any other members that may be involved in organising events and activities. The Code must be made freely available to all members of the Member Group.

All personnel of Landcare Victoria Inc. and Member Groups are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children by:

- adhering to the Landcare Victoria Inc. Child Safety Policy at all times / upholding Landcare Victoria Inc. statement of commitment to child safety at all times
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- treating everyone with respect
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused and/or are worried about their safety or the safety of another
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal child's self-identification)
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero tolerance of discrimination)
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability (for example, during personal care activities)
- ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not left alone with a child
- reporting any allegations of child abuse to the Chairperson of the Member Group (or another committee member if the Chairperson is the focus of the allegation) and to the CEO of Landcare Victoria Inc, and ensure any allegation is reported to the police or child protection
- reporting any child safety concerns to the Chairperson of the Member Group or the CEO or Landcare Victoria
- if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the child(ren) is/are safe
- encouraging children to 'have a say' and participate in all relevant organisational activities where possible, especially on issues that are important to them

Staff and volunteers must not:

- develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children)
- exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (for example inappropriate sitting on laps. Sitting on laps could be appropriate sometimes, for example while reading a storybook to a small child in an open plan area)
- put children at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors)
- do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (for example, personal social activities)
- use inappropriate language in the presence of children
- express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children
- discriminate against any child, including because of culture, race, ethnicity or disability
- have any online contact with a child or their family (unless necessary, for example providing families with e-newsletters)
- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse

By observing these standards you acknowledge your responsibility to immediately report any breach of this Code to the chair of the Member Group and to the CEO of Landcare Victoria Inc.

Any allegation of a breach of this Code of Conduct will be investigated under the Landcare Victoria Inc. Complaints Policy.

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse, report the matter to the Police (Phone 000).

Prepared July 2022

Acknowledgment of Code of Conduct

Committee Members, employees and event/activity organisers should sign this document as a record of their acknowledgement that they are familiar with the Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct applies to all committees, members and staff whether or not it is specifically acknowledged.

I acknowledge that I have read the Landcare Victoria Inc. Child Safety Code of Conduct.

I understand that if I breach the Code of Conduct, I will face disciplinary action that could lead to termination of employment, being asked to leave the Committee, step down as a Group Representative or any consequences under State or Commonwealth law.

I agree to abide by the Code of Conduct.

Landcare Group	
Role	
Signature	
Date	

Landcare Victoria Inc.

ABN 69 561 995 226 | INC A0011936S
(03) 9034 1940 | info@landcarevictoria.org.au
PO Box 509, FLINDERS LANE VIC 8009

Fact Sheet: 1

How to make a biodiverse property



Purchasing a property of any size presents both challenges and opportunities. If you are a new landholder, we are here to offer support. This factsheet provides some resources, references and ideas to consider for properties of all sizes and landholders who would like to consider including biodiversity options as you plan your new property.



What is Biodiversity?



Biodiversity refers to the variety of all living organisms on Earth, including plants, animals, and microorganisms. It encompasses the range of ecosystems, habitats, and ecological processes that support life. Human activities have led to a significant loss of biodiversity, but it is possible to restore our local environment, no matter how small. This does not mean that we cannot have animals such as horses or generate feed on our land - it is about achieving balance.



Initial Questions

Before you start, it's a good idea to get a clear idea of your end goals before making major commitments.

- What do you want to do with the property? Are you going to run livestock or produce crops? Can you increase the native vegetation on your property to provide habitat for native wildlife? Are you interested in doing both? Is this a smaller property for your personal animals e.g. horses etc?
- What existing experience/support do you have?
- Will you be at the property full time?
- Are you interested in conventional land management practices or are you interested in organic or other methods?
- Are there any overlays on your property that may affect your plans?
- How do your neighbours manage their property? Do they have similar views to you? This could be a potential source of support.
- What shape is your property in now? Consider the current weeds, groundcover, availability of shade and water.

Did you know...

Research shows that at least 30% native vegetation cover across the landscape is required to halt the current decline in woodland bird species

Making a Plan

It may be beneficial to create an overall plan for your property before starting works. Remember that you do not need to achieve everything straightaway, a staged approach may better suit you and your property.

1. Create a Simple Property Map

Draw a simple map of your property:

- Ensure that you're aware of any overlays on your property.
- Mark any water sources or dams
- Outline problem areas e.g. weeds or erosion issues
- Show open space, paddocks and treed areas
- Show any existing fences/access gates
- Identify any remnant vegetation

2. Consider Planting Strategies

Planting for Biodiversity can be done in a number of ways. Generally bigger is better in terms of providing habitat, blocks tend to be better than long strips, however every little bit helps!

Suggestions for planting include:

- **Linkages or expansion of remnants:** plant strips or patches between or around existing native vegetation. Planting around isolated paddock trees will help to preserve that tree.
- **Strategic strip plantings** (windbreaks or shelterbelts) along fence lines can act as wildlife corridors - the wider the better, but 12m wide is the minimum at present.
- **Paddock corners:** fence off and planting out corners is a cost-effective way to create blocks of habitat. A 200m fence can create a 1ha. block.
- **Streamsides** - You will achieve maximum environmental benefits by providing at least 20m set-back to allow for the establishment of a wide dense strip of riparian vegetation. It is ideal if both banks can be protected.
- **Dam enhancement:** Reducing grazing intensity and revegetating around dams can improve both water quality and retention. Even small actions such as adding logs to a dam has an environmental benefit.

3. Find out more about the native species of your local area

Check out the EVC (Ecological Vegetation Class) lists for your area to identify the native vegetation indigenous to your area. These species are adapted to survive under local conditions, are less likely to be invasive and provide critical habitat for local native wildlife.

You can find more information regarding local EVCs in the booklet:

‘Indigenous Flora Species Selection Guide for Bairnsdale and Surrounds’ (available online), or by checking Naturekit. **Nature Kit**



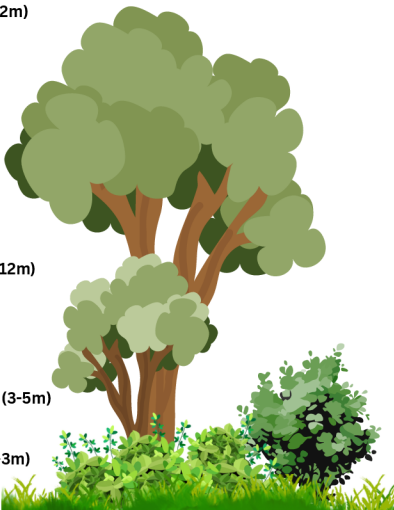
Canopy (over 12m)

Understorey (5-12m)

Medium Shrubs (3-5m)

Small Shrubs (1-3m)

Ground/grasses



You should look at your potential sites and note the landscape features - is it a riparian area? Is it gently undulating or sloped? Sheltered or open, valley floor or hilltop? The location features will assist in determining your EVC and so the best plants to pick.

It is also very important to consider all levels of the vegetation layers from the ground to the tree canopy as this will provide habitat for a variety of different native fauna. The EVC guide also provides a plant density table showing the minimum number of species to select from each of the different plant layers in the EVC.

4. Create a Timeline

Remember: the works don't need to be completed instantly. It is often best to create a staged plan that is flexible and can be adapted as necessary as you monitor the success of your works. There are a number of factsheets in this series that will assist you further in determining your next steps when it comes to planting

Any information provided here is of a general nature and provided with good intent. EGLN accepts no liability for any loss or damage that may arise as a result of you making use of this information.

Fact Sheet 2

Threatened Species in East Gippsland



Victoria's Native plants and animals

80% of Australia's mammals and 90% of our plants occur nowhere else on Earth. Unfortunately, Australia's native plants and animals also have the highest rate of species extinction of any developed nation in the last 200 years. At least 130 known species, including 60 plant and 50 mammal species, have become extinct, with 81 of these being in Victoria.



Five Species under threat in East Gippsland

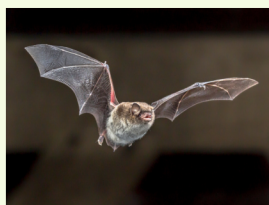
There are many species at risk, but featured here are 5 threatened species in East Gippsland. Species are classified depending on how at risk they are of becoming extinct in the wild. The Categories include: Critically Endangered CE (facing an extremely high risk), Endangered E (very high risk), Vulnerable (high risk). Some live in remote locations, but others may inhabit our local properties and gardens and can be assisted at a local level.

Threats include:

- Changes to the local climate including fire frequency and intensity.
- Land use change - habitat loss and fragmentation.
- Introduction of pest plants and animals / disease.
- Changes to environmental flows / pollution in waterways.



Eastern Bent-wing Bat CE *Miniopterus orianae oceanensis*



Lives along the eastern coastline of Australia. A cave dwelling species that will live in man-made structures like abandoned mines and road culverts.



- Females give birth to a single young in December.
- Has dark reddish brown fur that is slightly lighter on the belly,
- Has a short domed head with rounded ears.
- Forages for flies, cockroaches and beetles well above the canopy but in grasslands stays to within a few metres above the ground.
- Have been known to travel up to 65km in one night.



The only recognised maternity cave in Victoria is in East Gippsland.



Disturbance during hibernation is key threat. Habitat change (mainly through loss of trees and connectivity between landscape elements) may reduce range, as generally bats are reluctant to cross open landscapes.

Glossy Black Cockatoo CE *Calyptorhynchus lathami*



Feed almost exclusively on the seeds in the cones of she-oak trees, so most often found in woodlands and open forests dominated by she-oaks. Require hollows for nesting, typically in old, large, eucalypt trees (living or dead), with an entrance 20–25 cm wide and located 10–20 metres above the ground.



- Has a brown-black head, red or red with orange/yellow tail panels, and an otherwise dull black body.
- Adult females have irregular yellow patches on the head.
- Young birds have yellow spots or streaks on their breast, belly and flanks, with some yellow spots on the cheeks and sides of the head.
- Usually found feeding or flying in pairs, trios or small groups, and seldom form large flocks



Key threat:
Loss of habitat



The smallest of Australia's five species of black-cockatoos (~48cm), they partner for life. Glossy Black-Cockatoos may lay a single egg every 1–2 years.

Species under threat in East Gippsland

Pookila (New Holland Mouse) EN *Pseudomys novaehollandiae*



Photo: Tim Bawden
inaturalist/60176233



A small, terrestrial burrowing native rodent. A nocturnal species inhabiting environments such as woodlands, forests with a heathland understorey, vegetated sand dunes, and open heathlands.



- Plays a role in seed and fungal spore dispersal.
- Pale grey-brown fur, light grey underparts and pale feet; tail is longer than the head-body length. Has a distinct lack of 'mousey' odour.
- Lives in burrows carved out by colonies in softer sands - a social species.
- Omnivorous. Seeds are the most prominent component of the diet but also consumes leaves, fungi and small invertebrates.



Previously known as the New Holland Mouse, the Pookila is extinct in 7 of 12 known Victorian habitats.



Under threat from drought, climate change, & loss of habitat, as well as predators such as feral cats and foxes. Dieback caused by Cinnamon Fungus in its habitat is a major issue. Bushfires and competition from introduced rodents also put this native mouse at risk.

Giant Burrowing Frog CE *Heleioporus australiacus*



The largest frog in Victoria inhabits sandstone heathland, dry, and also wet sclerophyll forest



- Reaches up to 10 cm in body length.
- Has a dark brown, grey or black back, sides are spotted with bright yellow.
- White or bluish-white belly.
- Vertical pupil with silver-grey iris.
- Unwebbed fingers and slightly webbed toes.
- Take three to eleven months to develop from tadpoles into frogs.



Call resembles an owl.

! Main threat is urbanisation & loss of habitat

East Gippsland Galaxias CE *Galaxias aequipinnis*



Freshwater fish inhabiting small to moderate freshwater streams within heavily vegetated catchments, with cool and clear to slightly tannin-stained water.



- Commonly 7-8cm in length.
- Mostly brown, becoming silvery-white below, with dark brown to black irregular blotches and vertical bands,
- Has a small golden patch on the gill cover.



Only found in East Gippsland.

Photo: Greg Wallis
inaturalist/101689468



Biggest threat is predation by introduced trout, alongside loss of biodiversity and altered water quality.

What Can I do?

- Plant native vegetation - Select locally indigenous plants that are a preferred food source.
- Improve and enlarge habitat - plants are also nesting sites and movement paths. Artificial nesting boxes may be a temporary assistance.
- Take part in citizen science monitoring campaigns. Knowledge enhances our ability to help!
- Keep invasive species in check on your property e.g. keep cats contained, control weeds.
- Dispose of waste correctly - e.g. pouring paint down the drain pollutes waterways.
- Take care if fishing not to release exotic species above waterfalls etc.
- Do not disturb bat colonies.

Any information provided here is of a general nature and provided with good intent. It may contain inaccuracies.

Fact Sheet: 3

Remnant Vegetation and the Importance of Bees



What is Remnant Vegetation?



Remnant Vegetation refers to patches of native vegetation that have survived widespread clearing of the landscape. Remnant vegetation can include trees, shrubs, grasses and ground-dwelling plants.

Why is Remnant Vegetation important?

Protecting remnant vegetation brings significant economic and environmental benefits as well as ensuring the provision of 'living seedbanks' to secure the viability of each species into the future. Areas of remnant vegetation are critical for conserving biodiversity, as they provide habitat for numerous plant and animal species, including those that are rare or endangered. Often fragmented and isolated, these remnants are crucial for creating wildlife corridors and connecting larger conservation areas. In an agricultural setting, such vegetation provides shade and shelter for livestock, and provides habitat that encourages ongoing natural pest control through the presence of insectivorous species. If not protected and enhanced, these patches will disappear, taking with them an ecosystem of complex interactions that can never be completely replaced.

How do I know if I've got some?

The exact definition of 'remnant vegetation' in terms of size is open to interpretation, but we believe that it can be anything from single trees to hundreds of acres that can all be protected and restored. To assist in identifying remnant vegetation on your property you can:

- **Compare with Historical Maps or Records:** Look for historical maps, aerial photographs, or land records to see if your property's vegetation matches pre-clearing native vegetation. Even using satellite images from Google maps can be useful as a starting point.
- **Check the vegetation layers on your property:** If 25% of the total perennial understory plant cover is native, then it's possible that you have remnants.
- **Ask for assistance:** Give us a call and we'll take a look with you!



What can I do?

To protect remnant vegetation on your property, consider the following steps:

1. **Control Weeds, Pests and Threats:** Regularly manage invasive plant and animal species that can outcompete native plants (weeds, deer, rabbits etc). Minimise overzealous firewood collection in the area.
2. **Fencing:** Install fencing to protect the area from grazing livestock, which can damage delicate plant species and soil structure.
3. **Revegetation and Restoration:** Supplement remnant vegetation with native plant species to enhance biodiversity and habitat quality. Use locally sourced plants to ensure compatibility with the existing ecosystem. (See Factsheet 1 for further information.)
4. **Seek Advice - give us a call!**



The Importance of Bees



Native Australian bees play a crucial role in maintaining the health and diversity of ecosystems across the continent. These bees are key pollinators for many native plants, including a variety of wildflowers, trees, and agricultural crops, facilitating the reproduction of plants and ensuring biodiversity. Unlike introduced honeybees, native bees have evolved alongside Australian flora, leading to highly efficient and specialized pollination processes. This symbiotic relationship helps sustain the balance of natural habitats and supports the survival of numerous plant and animal species.

There are over 1,500 species of native bee in Australia and they also contribute significantly to agricultural productivity. Many crops benefit from their pollination services, which can enhance yield quality and quantity. Native bees are also more resilient to certain pests and diseases that affect introduced bee species (such as the Varroa mite), providing a reliable pollination alternative.

Many native bees are solitary and where they nest depends on the species. Nesting sites include tunnelling a hole in the ground, hollowing out the soft central pith of stems or using a pre-existing hole in timber.



What can I do?

1. **Plant Native Flowers:** Choose a variety of native plants that bloom at different times of the year to provide a continuous food source. Also, incorporate a mix of plants with various flower shapes, sizes, and colours to attract different bee species.
2. **Create a Bee Habitat:** Provide nesting sites by leaving some areas of bare ground (avoid heavy mulching), as many native bees are ground-nesters. Additionally, you can create bee hotels using bundles of hollow stems, bamboo canes, or drilled wooden blocks to accommodate cavity-nesting species.
3. **Avoid Pesticides:** chemical pesticides and herbicides can harm bees. Use organic or natural pest control methods to keep your plantings bee-friendly where possible.
4. **Provide Water Sources:** Place shallow dishes of water with pebbles or marbles for bees to land on. This helps them stay hydrated, especially during hot weather.
5. **Let Some Areas Be Wild:** Allow parts of your garden to grow a bit wild with native grasses and wildflowers. These areas can serve as important foraging and nesting sites for bees.
6. **Provide Shelter:** Ensure there are sheltered spots in your garden where bees can take refuge from wind and rain. Dense shrubs, rock piles, and logs can offer protection.



By implementing these strategies, you can create a welcoming environment for native bees, contributing to their conservation and enhancing the ecological health of your garden.

Any information provided here is of a general nature and provided with good intent. EGLN accepts no liability for any loss or damage that may arise as a result of you making use of this information.

Fact Sheet 4

Understanding Mistletoe



What is Mistletoe?

Australian mistletoe encompasses several native parasitic plant species from the Loranthaceae and Santalaceae families. These parasitic plants attach to a variety of host trees and shrubs. Australia hosts over 90 species of mistletoe, a keystone species which plays a crucial ecological role by providing food and habitat for various birds, insects, and mammals. Despite their parasitic nature, mistletoes enhance biodiversity by creating microhabitats and supporting ecosystem resilience.

Common Types of Mistletoe in East Gippsland

Creeping Mistletoe (*Muellerina eucalyptoides*)

Leaves up to 2cm wide and pointed. Mostly found on eucalypts but also on other hosts including exotic trees. There are multiple attachment points to the host tree's branch or trunk. Flowers are clusters of 4-5 pairs, each containing 3 flowers which are generally red. The fruit is pear-shaped, 8-15mm long and yellow and can be found from late summer.



Drooping Mistletoe (*Amyema pendula*)

Leaves are long, thin and matt (less than 1cm wide and up to 20cm long). They are supple with a pointed tip. Generally flowering in autumn/winter, the central flower usually lacks a stalk – they are attached directly to the stem. Buds are longer than the box mistletoe (Drooping: 22-40mm, Box: 15 to 28mm). The fruit is egg-shaped, about 10mm long and yellowish-green in colour.



Box Mistletoe (*Amyema miquelii*)

Box has shiny yellowish green leaves with rounded tip and contrasting red stem. Leaves generally have a smooth texture to the touch and can be up to 35cm long and 5-30mm wide. Flowers tend to be red, all have their own stalk and flowering occurs between December and June. The fruit is oval or pear-shaped, generally 8-14mm long and yellowish-red in colour.



Mistletoe has a bad reputation in many circles, but we need to bust some **MISTLETOE MYTHS!**

Mistletoe is Feral / from Europe

MYTH! Mistletoe is native to Australia and there are currently over 90 known native species. Mistletoe first evolved around 70million years ago – before humans and birds.

FUN FACT:

Mistletoe has a long flowering season – it can flower in the height of summer or in dry seasons as it can always obtain water from its host. This makes mistletoe a reliable food/nectar source for birds and animals when nothing else is available.

Mistletoe Myths

FUN FACT:

Mistletoe is able to mimic the host tree in which it lives. Sometimes the mimicry is so close that they are almost impossible to detect.

Mistletoe is poisonous

MYTH! Native Australian Mistletoe is not poisonous to people or stock – koalas, sheep, cattle and insects will all eat the leaves.

Mistletoe flowers and fruits are full of nutrients and are the preferred food source for a wide range of native birds and mammals. Over 25 species of butterflies feed on Mistletoes during their caterpillar stage. Possums love them and will naturally control mistletoe.

Mistletoe kills Trees

MYTH! Remember, mistletoe is dependent on the host tree for its own survival – just because mistletoe is present does not mean that it is the cause of tree death. Mistletoe is beneficial in so many ways: a substantial food source; a preferred nesting site; a constant supplier of nutrient rich leaf litter beneath the host tree. Birds often nest in dense, leafy clumps of Mistletoe, which protects them from bad weather and predators.

Too many mistletoes on a tree may cause that tree stress – but we shouldn't be too quick to just blame the mistletoe, other things may be impacting that tree. Is this an individual paddock tree where the ecosystem has been disturbed and there is no surrounding vegetation to provide habitat for the mistletoe's natural predators – possums and caterpillars? Is the tree already infested by termites? Is the tree simply at the end of its life?

Mistletoe is bad in agricultural environments

MYTH! Mistletoe is a sign of a healthy and resilient ecosystem. Australian mistletoes are not toxic; stock animals can eat the leaves.

Mistletoe boosts wildlife population numbers in agricultural landscapes to assist with natural pest predation – e.g. insect eating birds. Mistletoe provides habitat for birds and mammals that are important pollinators and, when in the tree canopy, it provides dense shade and shelter which is a benefit to stock.

Mistletoe Management

Mistletoe helps maintain ecosystems, but it can get out of control in areas where land has been widely cleared – but does that mean we should remove it from trees?

NO – Generally, a host plant will remain in a healthy condition with mistletoe attached. Remember, the survival of the mistletoe is intrinsically linked to the survival of the host plant. But mistletoe does mean that there is a reduction in access to water and nutrients for the host plant. For this reason, it's a good idea to remove mistletoe from newly planted saplings. Monitor the saplings and remove mistletoe growth until the tree is big and strong enough to support both lifeforms.

Very high densities of mistletoe can be problematic, and these are usually seen in agricultural areas where ecosystems have been disturbed. In extreme cases, this can shorten the tree's life by making it more susceptible to drought, insect attack or fungal infection. Mistletoe removal is possible, but this control method is generally short-lived and expensive as the mistletoe will grow back. It's much better to look at your overall diversity – a lone paddock tree is vulnerable, but planting around that tree (for example with low growing wattles), will increase natural predators, increase biodiversity and ultimately control the mistletoe naturally – remember, episodes of heavy infestation are rare in a remnant native bushland setting.

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Attracting Native Fauna with Native Plants



Why choose Native Plants to Attract Birds and Fauna?

Native Australian plants are vital food sources for Australian birds and fauna, offering a sustainable option for wildlife nourishment. These plants have co-evolved with local species, creating a symbiotic relationship where the flora provides essential nutrients, while the fauna aids in plant pollination and seed dispersal. Additionally, native plants are adapted to the Australian climate and soil conditions, ensuring their resilience and availability throughout the year. This mutual dependency not only supports the health and diversity of ecosystems but also helps maintain the balance of natural habitats.

Top 10 native plants for attracting Birds/Pollinators/Mammals



Attractive to bees, pollinators, and insects



Attractive to butterflies



Attractive to mammals



Attractive to birds

Poa sp.



A worldwide genus including around 45 species of tussock grasses native to Australia. A low-maintenance dense ornamental grass that can reach 1.2m with long, slender rolled or flat bladed leaves. Flowers in spring to summer. Frost tolerant, fast-growing and low maintenance. A food source for many native butterflies and moths. The grasses provide many birds with a source of seeds and insects, and also habitat cover for many species of native fauna.



Themeda triandra (Kangaroo Grass)



A keystone species and the traditional grazing food of kangaroos and wallabies. 13 species of butterfly rely on Themeda as their host-plant. A tufted perennial that can grow to 1.5m tall, it produces distinct large red-brown spikelets. For butterfly caterpillars, finches and parrots it is an excellent food source. For skinks, lizards, frogs, insects and mammals it makes an ideal cover and habitat.



Lomandra sp.



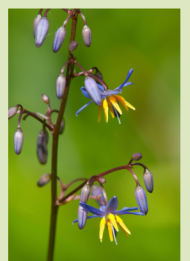
Also known as mat rushes; tough clumping plants with evergreen grass-like foliage that are drought and frost tolerant and can grow in a wide range of soils. There are around 40 native Australian species. Flowers from late winter through to summer and fruits 1-2 months after flowering. Produces spikes of small cream to yellow scented flowers that attract pollinating beetles, and is ideal habitat for butterflies, lizards and frogs.



Dianella sp.



Also known as flax lilies. Dianella is tolerant and easy-going, an erect hairless, perennial herb. Characterised by long, strap-like leaves, delicate blue or purple, nectar-rich flowers, and purple berries, it provides food and habitat for a variety of birds and insects.



Correa sp.



Also known as 'wild fuschia', there are 11 different species of this hardy woodland understorey plant. Mainly small-medium shrubs that are easily grown, flowers from late autumn to early spring. flowers attract nectar-feeding birds and insects. Provide nesting habitat for birds



Callistemon sp.



There are 40 species of callistemon with flowers that are arranged in a 'bottlebrush' shape. Flowers are usually red or yellow and flower in spring and summer. Woody shrubs ranging from 0.5m to 4m which provide shelter for a wide range of native fauna, the flowers are food sources for nectar-feeding birds, mammals and insects. Adaptable to a wide range of soils and climate, most are hardy and tolerate drought and limited maintenance.



Melaleuca sp.



There are more than 200 species of melaleuca which range in size from small shrubs to large trees. Closely related to callistemon but has bundled stamens and flowers may be 'bottlebrush', globular or irregular shaped. An important food source for nectar-feeding insects, birds and mammals, they are adapted to a wide range of soils. Peak flowering is Sept - Nov.



Grevillea sp.



Mostly small to medium shrubs but a few can be large trees. Attract nectar-feeding birds, beetles, moths, bees, ants and small marsupials. The native, non-hybridised varieties with flowers inside the plant offer protection as well as food for smaller birds. Flowers at most times of year but peaks in winter to early-spring, followed by the production of seed pods. A member of the Protea family, with over 300 species.



Banksia sp.



There are 172 native Australian species and they come in various shapes and sizes from low-growing shrubs to large trees. The flower heads are made up of hundreds of tiny individual flowers grouped together which produce large volumes of nectar attracting birds and small mammals e.g. microbats. Banksia grow best in well-drained soiled in a sunny position.



Acacia sp. (Wattles)



There are nearly 1,000 species in Australia. Self-fertilising with nitrogen fixing roots, they're good in poor soils and improve the soil for other plants. Fast-growing and often densely foliated, they provide safe-nesting habitat for small birds amongst the branches, and microbats in peeling bark. A food source for many creatures; flowers attract pollinators, mammals graze on leaves, birds eat seeds, and birds and microbats eat insects that are also attracted to the plants.



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FACTSHEET 6

CHOOSE THIS NOT THAT: A GUIDE TO PLANTING



Native plants are those that occur naturally, without any human intervention, and have evolved to the local conditions alongside wildlife over many years. Exotic plants often displace native species and alter the natural environment in which they grow. Over 70% of Australia's registered weeds started as home garden plants. If you're replacing an existing plant or planning a new garden, consider using native plants instead! There are native choices in all shapes and sizes, from ground cover to the tree canopy.

Benefits of choosing native plants:

- ✓ They are adapted to our dryer climate: many native species are easy to grow, resilient and support themselves in our challenging climate
- ✓ They provide habitat, shelter and food for native wildlife: Native plants and animals have evolved together over thousands of years, supporting one another to survive.
- ✓ They support a healthy environment for humans: native plants do not require the fertilisers and pesticides often applied to support exotic plants - these can cause unintended harm to other plants, wildlife and humans through soil and water contamination.

EXOTIC



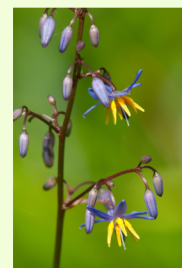
NATIVE

Agapanthus



Environmental weed. Hardy and drought tolerant but easily spread to bushland, forest margins, waterways and pastures, especially through garden waste.

Flax Lily *Dianella*



Drought tolerant, hardy and highly attractive to butterflies and birds. An erect hairless, perennial herb, characterised by long, strap-like leaves, delicate blue or purple, nectar-rich flowers, and purple berries. Good for mass plantings.

English Box *Buxus sempervirens*



Mature size: 1-9m
Slow growing, dense evergreen dwarf shrub. Hardy and frost tolerant. Susceptible to disease and pests including blight which discolours the leaves.

Seaberry Saltbush *Rhagodia candolleana*



Dense, sprawling shrub to 2m high. with semi-succulent glossy leaves. Produces glossy dark red, edible berries. A food source and habitat for small birds and lizards. Also a 'Firewise plant. Low maintenance, favours dull sun to shade, drought tolerant.

Pine Trees *Pinus radiata*



Outcompetes native vegetation by producing dense leaf litter beneath them. When in plantations, animal life can lack diversity.

Black Sheoak *Allocasuarina littoralis*



Native evergreen with slender, needle-like foliage, red flowers and cones. Grows to 10m. Hardy and suitable for both coastal and inland areas. Drought resistant when mature and tolerates poor soils. Vital food source for Glossy Black Cockatoo.

EXOTIC



NATIVE

Jasmine *Jasminum polyanthum*



Climbs rapidly into the tree canopy and covers vegetation at all levels, restricting growth of native species. Spread by dumped garden waste.



Wonga Vine *Pandorea pandorana*

Native climber with twining branches and glossy green foliage. Flowers from winter to summer. Variable colour flowers. Tolerates light frosts. Good for part shade to sun and adaptable to most soils.



Yellow Flag Iris *Iris pseudacorus*



Forms dense stands in wet areas, degrades native fish habitat, and quickly overwhelms shallow ponds and stream edges. Toxic to livestock.



Woolly Water Lily *Philydrum lanuginosum*

Erect tufted, semi-aquatic perennial herb. Tall spikes of yellow flowers from Sep to March. Classified as vulnerable. Good for preventing erosion around pond/dam edges.



Chinese Violet *Asystasia gangetica*



Smothers and outcompetes native plants, reducing food and shelter for native animals. Outcompetes crops (e.g. soybeans, vegetables, tea trees) Smothers garden plants and lawns.



Showy Violet *Viola betonicifolia*

Small perennial herb. Flowers prolifically, especially in Spring. Ideal for rockeries or as groundcover. Easy to grow, adaptable to a variety of soil types but needs reliable moisture.



African Iris *Dietes iridioides*



Produces an abundance of seeds. Each seed can remain viable in the soil for an extended period of time and can readily germinate under most conditions.

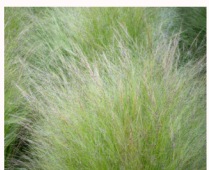


Silky Purple-Flag *Patersonia sericea*

A native member of the Iris family. Densely tufted, perennial herb with narrow leaves. Flowers in Spring and Summer. Frost tolerant, suitable for well-drained sunny or semi-shaded position but requires a reliable source of moisture



Mexican Feather *Nassella tenuissima*



Highly invasive and State prohibited weed. Takes over pasture, contaminates hay and grain, invades native grasslands and woodlands



Common Tussock *Poa Labillardierei*

A low-maintenance dense ornamental grass with long, slender rolled or flat bladed leaves. Flowers in spring to summer. Frost tolerant, fast-growing and needs little maintenance nor watering once established.



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Planting native seedlings is an important step in rehabilitating our local environment and ensuring availability of food and habitat for native fauna. This basic guide will assist you through the planting process, giving your seedlings the best chance to thrive. Native plants are adapted to local conditions, offering benefits such as reduced maintenance and enhanced biodiversity, but there is more to think about than simply putting a plant in the ground. From selecting the right location and plants for your region, to ongoing maintenance - read on for more info!

1. Plan

Consider purpose of planting -

- Are you looking to create a new shelterbelt? Are you infilling a previous site? Do you want a border to your property? Do you want to provide wind/shade for livestock? Are you looking at farm forestry? Do you want to be able to utilise plants in cooking etc?

Choose your site -

- Take note of features such as size, slope, direction, access to water, soil type, weed cover, existing native plants (that may regenerate naturally)

Investigate suitable plants -

- Look up your EVC (Ecological Vegetation Class) for species ideas native to your area and minimum numbers of each species. Allow for an 80% seedling survival rate, so increase plant order to compensate for this.
- Consider your needs: Would certain plants be ideal for this area: e.g. have you considered 'firewise' plants? Do you need to avoid any particular plants e.g. spiky plants in an environment with young children?

Decide -

- How will you exclude pests? (Fencing/exclusion plots/individual guards.) There are a large variety of guards for different situations. See Factsheet 8 for further information.
- How will you access the site later? - for watering / weed control / maintenance. Do you need to add a gate if you are fencing?
- How will you plant? Single holes or ripped lines?

Make a timeline -

- Know when to order your plants / guards / fencing materials.
- Check weather - plant according to optimal rainfall .

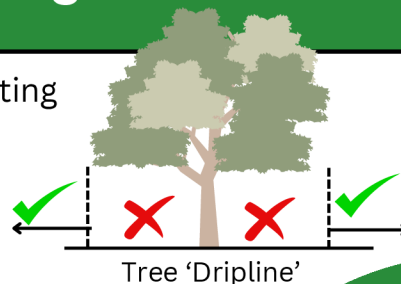
2. Prepare

- Order plants/guards/planting gel - consider time for growth. Usually, for Autumn planting (April/May), plant orders are needed the previous September. Plant numbers depend on your objective but generally allow 500 per hectare. Choose 70-80% shrubs and groundcovers.
- Construct required fencing or exclusion plots.
- Undertake weed removal if required.
- Prepare the ground for planting e.g. rip lines if required. This can be good in heavily compacted or clay soils to assist root penetration.



3. Plant: You're ready to start planting!

1. Collect plants - water well the day before planting
2. Gather equipment on site - you will need:
 - Auger or tree planter (to dig holes)
 - Plants
 - Guards and stakes
 - Water, water-saving granules/gel, and watering can/spray unit if required
3. Dig holes for the plants. (See Density Info) Plant outside the 'dripline' of existing trees.
4. If you have a team of people, consider laying a plant, guard and stakes needed beside each hole.
5. Start planting!



Plant Density:
Space trees 10m apart
Try to leave some open grassy spaces and plant some species in clumps (natural effect).
Intersperse trees with shrubs/grasses of varying heights.

A basic guide to planting:



1. Dig the hole - make it just deeper than the length of the seedling pot.



2. Squeeze the tube to loosen the plant roots and remove.



3. Place the seedling into the prepared hole. The top of the roots /soil should be just below the ground surface.



4. Replace the soil around the plant and press gently around the plant.



5. It's a good idea to leave the pot beside the new plant until the guard is in place to make it easier to spot the new seedling.

4. Protect (and ongoing maintenance)

Immediately after Planting:

- Guard - Individually protect vulnerable plants, especially if not within an exclusion plot.
- Water in - to give your plants the best possible start.

In the longer term:

- Monitor your site on a regular basis.
 - It is unlikely that all your seedlings will survive. You may need to replace some. If you have large losses (more than 30%) note information such as: was it just one species that died? If so, don't replant it. Were the plants eaten? - you may need a different guard.
- Undertake regular weed control.
- Water if needed.
- Check the guards. Remove when they are no longer needed, or are too small for the plant.

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Why fence/guard my plantings?

Newly planted seedlings need protection due to their vulnerability in the environment. Weeds, pests, and diseases compete with or damage seedlings, animals may eat or trample them, and human activities can also lead to damage. Protective measures like mulching, fencing, and guarding help mitigate these threats. Ensuring protection allows seedlings to establish strong root systems, and grow into healthy plants, significantly increasing their survival and long-term growth potential.

Methods of Protecting Seedlings

Exclusion Fencing

Permanent fencing is a good option when you need to exclude stock from large areas of land, e.g. a river frontage. There are a large variety of fencing options available - the height and construction of the fencing will be determined by the protection needs. It is always best to avoid barbed wire where possible.



Individual Guarding



Using individual guards on seedlings offers several advantages and disadvantages and their usage should be considered in the light of project scale, and budget:

Pros:

1. **Protection:** There are many different types of guards and so protection can be customised according to the specific needs of the landholder and plant. Guards provide effective protection against browsing animals such as deer, rabbits, and rodents, reducing the risk of seedling damage or destruction.
2. **Ease of Monitoring:** Individual guards make it easier to find and monitor the health and progress of each seedling, allowing for early detection and intervention in case of issues.

Cons:

1. **Cost:** Using individual guards can be more expensive compared to other protection methods, especially for large-scale planting projects, increasing overall project costs.
2. **Labour Intensive:** Installing and maintaining individual guards for each seedling can require significant time and effort, especially in challenging terrain or conditions.
3. **Maintenance:** Guards may require regular maintenance, such as cleaning, adjusting, or replacing to avoid potential damage to seedlings.
4. **Environmental Impact:** The materials used in guards, such as plastics, may have environmental implications if not disposed of properly or if they degrade and become litter.



Fencing: Benefits of Exclusion Plots

What is an Exclusion Plot?

An exclusion plot is a designated area fenced off to protect seedlings from external threats, such as grazing animals, pests, and human interference. The fencing typically encloses a small section of land where young plants or seedlings are cultivated, preventing access by wildlife like deer, rabbits, and livestock that might eat or trample the plants. EGLN tend to use exclusion plots that cover an area of 8m² (10 star pickets and 10m roll of wire mesh). They allow plants to reach maturity, flower and set seed, thus also providing the potential for regeneration in areas outside of the plot.

Benefits of Exclusion Plots

Pros

1. **Effective Protection.** Plots effectively keep out herbivores such as deer, rabbits, kangaroos and livestock, preventing them from eating or trampling seedlings, so they are potentially good for herbaceous plants that are favoured by such animals. They also protect seedlings from other physical damage, such as trampling by humans or machinery. In comparison to permanent exclusion fencing, exclusion plots remove the need for guarding of individual seedlings due to the smaller area.
2. **Improved Growth Rates.** Seedlings within exclusion plots have been demonstrated to have a higher survival rate and better growth performance due to reduced stress and damage.
3. **Cost effective.** Materials are relatively cheap in comparison to permanent fencing and individual guards. Quick and easy set-up limits labour required.
4. **Reuseable/Sustainable.** The plot fencing can be removed and re-used multiple times.

Cons

1. **Limited Coverage:**
 - **Area Restriction:** Exclusion plots only protect a limited area, which might not be feasible for large-scale planting projects.
 - **Accessibility Issues:** They can make it difficult for workers to access the seedlings for maintenance and monitoring. Think about access in your planning stage.
2. **Potential for Overcrowding.** If too many seedlings are planted within a single exclusion plot, it can lead to overcrowding and competition for resources like light, water, and nutrients.
3. **Temporary Solution:** Plots are not a long-term solution.



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Why do we need to undertake pest plant control?

Weeds alter our native plant communities and the natural landscapes that make East Gippsland unique. Weeds can outcompete and displace native species, thus occupying ecological niches that would otherwise provide food and habitat for our native animals. They may also harbour pests and diseases, alter soil pH and use more water than native species. Weeds can also increase the fuel load for fire. As landholders, it is our legal responsibility to control certain weeds that are declared under the Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994 (CaLP Act).

Steps to undertaking successful weed control:

1. Ensure correct identification of the plant

Accurate identification of a plant is a vital step in the control process. Many plants are very similar, especially in the early stages and there is a risk that native plants are mistaken as weeds. Take photos, verify the identity of the plant and confirm its 'weed' status. There are a variety of apps and information sources to assist in this step, or you can contact your local facilitator. Remember that no app is perfect but those currently available (2024) include:



2. Develop a Management Program

It is not always easy to make management decisions - there are many variables and combinations of weeds growing in many different places and you will need to make decisions based on your own circumstances. Please reach out to your facilitator if you require assistance.

A weed management program for containment or eradication will ideally:

- Provide a long-term approach
- use more than one control method
- emphasise strategic rather than continual use of farm chemicals
- Minimise costs
- Minimise environmental damage
- Involve working with neighbours to ensure containment and widespread control.
- Identify PREVENTION techniques including following hygiene controls for vehicles, equipment, people and materials. A simple wash down of your vehicle can prevent the spread of weeds to other areas of your own property or further afield.



Pest Plant Control



3. Methods of Control

There is no denying that weed eradication is hard to achieve. It can take a long time and persistence, but with suitable planning, great benefits can be achieved for biodiversity. Once you have determined and identified the weeds that need management, you can look to the best control methods for your particular situation.

Chemical



SPRAY: herbicide is applied as fine droplets to the surface foliage. Generally, do not spray when rain is forecast within 24 hours. Always refer to the chemical label for specific details



CUT & PAINT OPTIONS. In this basic factsheet, this includes 'cut & paint', 'scrape & paint' and 'drill & frill'. Suitable for many woody weeds, these techniques involve making a cut or removal of the outer surface of the weed before applying a suitable chemical directly to cut surface.

Remember to consider potential off-target impact - this is especially critical where listed rare or threatened species are in the weed control area. If chemical control is necessary near drainage lines or water courses, use extreme caution as the effects on aquatic life can be devastating. Always refer to the Safety Data Sheets for best practice and follow guidelines for personal protective gear (PPE). Always check if an Agricultural Chemical Users Permit (ACUP) is required.



Non-Chemical



PHYSICAL CONTROL. Usually hand pulling and removing the whole plant from the ground.



USE OF MECHANICAL TOOLS. From using a hoe or shovel to remove the whole plant from the ground, to slashing with a whipper snipper or tractor to cut plants to reduce their capacity to disperse seed.



CROPPING. Using pasture grasses etc to out-compete weeds.



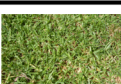
BURNING. Burn large tussocks to reduce biomass. Burning can also encourage any remaining seedbank to germinate so enabling the elimination of seed stock in the area.

Biological

Weed Biocontrol is considered by some to be a more sustainable approach to weed control. This utilises a weed's specialist natural enemies (such as fungi or insects) to reduce the impact of the weed. 'Biocontrol agents' are self-sustaining and so effective for long-term weed control, but may not be sufficient to meet legal obligations to manage certain weeds.

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Seasonal control Calendar

	Summer	Autumn	Winter	Spring
African Love Grass <i>Eragrostis curvula</i> 	  	   	   	   
Apple of Sodom <i>Solanum linnaeanum</i> 	  			  
Blackberry <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> 	  	  		  
Blue Perriwinkle <i>Vinca major</i> 	 			 
Boxthorn <i>Lycium ferocissimum</i> 	  	   	  	   
Bridal Creeper <i>Asparagus asparagoides</i> 	 	 	  	 
Broom <i>Cytisus scoparius</i> 	   	 	 	   
Capeweed <i>Arctotheca calendula</i> 				 
Hawthorn <i>Crataegus monogyna</i> 	 	 		 
Japanese Honeysuckle <i>Lonicera japonica</i> 	 	 	 	 
Mirror Bush <i>Coprosma repens</i> 	 	 	 	 
Bluebell Creeper <i>Sollya heterophylla</i> 	 	 	 	 
St Johns Wort <i>Hypericum perforatum</i> 				
Thistle <i>Cirsium arvense</i> 	  	  	  	  
Wandering Trad <i>Tradescantia fluminensis</i> 	 	 	 	 
Bugle Lily <i>Bulbil watsonia</i> 				
Willow <i>Salix sp.</i> 	  			  
Kikuyu (if bushland weed) 				

Fact Sheet: 10

Commonly Mistaken Plants



Is it a weed?

Distinguishing between native plants and weeds holds critical ecological significance, but this can be tricky, especially when certain plants have many visual similarities. Native plants are integral components of ecosystems, co-evolving with local fauna and flora over millennia. They provide habitat, food sources, and support complex ecological interactions. Conversely, weeds, often invasive species, can disrupt these delicate balances. Ultimately, being able to correctly ID native plants and weeds is essential for maintaining healthy, balanced ecosystems, and preserving biodiversity.

Top 6 most commonly mistaken plants in East Gippsland

Is it African Love Grass or Speargrass?



African Love Grass
Eragrostis curvula

ALG: Grows in dense clumps. It has narrow, drooping leaves and distinctive seed heads with curved awns. ALG has a ring of white hairs at the base of the leaf blade (ligule) **Impact:** Quickly colonises pasture forming monocultures. Seeds have been found to be viable for 17 years.

Speargrass: Has slender, erect stems with wiry leaves. Seed heads are sharp, needle-like awns.



Speargrass
Austrostipa

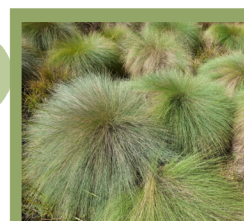
Is it Serrated Tussock or Common Tussock?



Serrated Tussock
Nassella trichotoma

ST: Grows in dense tussocks and has serrated leaf margins. It has long, wiry stems and narrow leaves. Produces distinctive compact, feathery seed heads with long bristly awns. **Impact:** The recorded burn intensity is up to 7 times greater than native grasslands. Unpalatable so expands when other species selectively grazed-out.

CT: Extremely versatile, useful for erosion control. It has fine-textured leaves forming dense tufts. Leaf bases are flat or folded and margins smooth not serrated. Seed heads are open and airy with small individual spikelets along branching stems.



Native Tussock
Poa labillardierei

Is it Native or Introduced Fireweed?



Introduced Fireweed /
Senecio
madagascariensis

Introduced FW: Broader, more oval shaped leaves that are lobed or toothed. **Impact:** Able to grow on most soil types and aspects. Forms a persistent seedbank - one plant can produce up to 30,000 seeds per season.

Native FW: Narrow, linear leaves clustered along stems. Leaves are smooth. Flowers are smaller yet similarly shaped.



Native Fireweed /
Senecio linearifolius

Is it English Broom or Golden Spray?



English Broom /
Cytisus scoparius

EB: Large deciduous shrub (to 3m high) with dense green stems and small narrow leaves. Bright yellow, pea-like flowers clustered along prominently ridged stems.

Impact: Can smother native vegetation. Outcompetes poor pasture and reduces agricultural production.

GS: Densely branched woody stems with small grey-green leaves. Yellow flowers clustered at tips of branches. Grows lower to the ground than EB. Woody stems covered in tiny scale-like leaves so stems appear woolly.



Golden Spray /
Viminaria juncea

Is it Cape Broom or Austral Indigo?



Cape Broom / *Genista monspessulana*

CB: Upright perennial shrub to 3m high. Usually has one main stem with many branches. Leaves are trifoliate on central short stalk. Leaves hairy on undersides. Bright yellow, pea-like flowers. **Impact:** mostly spread by soil movement. Long-surviving seedbank.

AI: Easily mistaken leaves but obvious differences once flowering. Plants have similar habit - spread of branches and leaf appearance/shape. Flowers are purple but seed pods are very similar. For 10 months of the year these two plants can be hard to distinguish!



Austral Indigo /
Indigofera australis

Is it Apple of Sodom or Forest Nightshade?



Apple of Sodom /
Solanum linnaeanum

AS: Woody Shrub to 2m. Long leaves with deep, irregular lobes. Long curved spines on both surfaces of leaf. Stems and leaves covered in tiny star-shaped hairs. Round fruit to 3cm, turns from green to yellow when mature. Flowers are purple and have 5 petals forming a star. **Impact:** Forms dense thickets which harbours pest species and restricts movement of stock and machinery. Seedbank in ground stimulated when adult plant removed.

FN: Very similar as young plants, with similar lobed, spoked leaves and purple star-shaped flowers. Fruit tends to be smaller, a green or purple berry. Grows low to ground (to 50cm) Leaves can have a purple tinge.



Forest Nightshade /
Solanum prinophyllum

Bottom photo: Jenny Lawrence
inaturalist 109451205

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