

**DRAFT**

**Regional Landcare Support Strategy**

**February 2005**



**NORTH CENTRAL**

Catchment Management Authority

## Regional Landcare Support Strategy

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ISBN:

A copy of the draft is also available on [www.nccma.vic.gov.au](http://www.nccma.vic.gov.au)

Front cover photo:

The North Central Catchment Management Authority wishes to acknowledge the Victorian and Commonwealth governments for providing funding for this publication through the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality.

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# Foreword

# Acknowledgements

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“Landcare requires a ‘one in, all in’ approach. Landcare is the community. If you don’t care about Landcare, you don’t care about your community.  
Many people have been practicing Landcare for generations”

President, Campaspe Runnymede Landcare Group

# Executive Summary

This Landcare Support Strategy was developed by, and for, the North Central Landcare Community. The strategy sets the broad direction for the future of Landcare in North Central Victoria. Responsibility for the future of Landcare lies, not with one organisation, but with the whole Landcare community. The North Central Catchment Management Authority (CMA) coordinated the development of this strategy and will share the responsibility for its implementation. The North Central CMA is responsible for the coordination of Landcare support in the region, and more specific recommendations for Landcare support are included in this document.

The content of this strategy is drawn from over 130 individual interviews conducted during February – April 2004 and a two-day Landcare Summit involving over 80 participants. This is a working document for use by any of the stakeholders in North Central Landcare. Each organisation/group/individual is encouraged to use the information and ideas in this strategy as a guide to their own approach to supporting Landcare and contributing to Landcare's 2009 vision in the region.

Storytelling by the people involved in Landcare is the basis of this strategy - the stories are about the achievements of Landcare so far. Therefore the strategy builds on what Landcare has already proven it can do – and achieve – and the special circumstances and conditions that enable Landcare to operate at its very best. It is important that these continue to be acknowledged and supported. They include: long-term planning and succession; passion; pride; inspired leadership; results; personal discovery; ownership; spiritual connectedness; learning; one step at a time; resources; purpose and direction; connecting with children; social cooperation and diversity; partnerships; tapping into local knowledge; and community action.

The aspirations for Landcare developed by participants at the Landcare Summit have been divided into two groups.

## **1. Changes by 2009 in the social, environmental and/or economic conditions**

Higher order outcomes

- Healthy, indigenous landscapes across all boundaries
- Landcare involves the whole of the community and is considered to be a part of everyday life – it is part of our national identity
- Landcare is a fundamental part of the education curriculum
- Landcare is inclusive, diverse and supportive
- The price of primary produce and natural resources is inclusive of the real environmental costs

## **2. Impact/practice change**

More immediate outcomes

- Industry invests in Landcare and 'green' practices
- Landcare and scientists work together for results
- Landcare is politically recognised and supported
- Landcare is regularly covered by all media
- People take personal responsibility for the environment
- Lined and efficient administration and resourcing of Landcare

In all of these aspirations, Landcare contributes to varying degrees.

Support for Landcare (to help Landcare contribute to achieving these outcomes by 2009) falls into three broad categories. These categories are explained further in [Section 4.5 on Page 13](#). They are:

1. Capable Groups
2. Resourcing
3. Recognition

Specific actions for the North Central CMA to undertake, along with those for the Regional Landcare Coordination Team and Landcare groups, are listed in section 7.

Any person, group or organisation wanting to support the continued development and success of Landcare is encouraged to review the community-identified actions/directions (section 6) and determine those to which they can contribute.

Participants of the Landcare Summit identified these actions as priority actions. The remaining suggestions have been analysed and divided into the 'other suggested approaches' and 'principles' sections listed under each theme.

“The group is embarking on a five year plan that includes country health. That is the health of the country itself and the health of the people looking after the country. My interest is in the health of the country and its people.”

Implementation Committee member and Landcare group member

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# 1. Purpose

This Landcare Support Strategy provides a basis for the ongoing development of Landcare and continuing support for Landcare in North Central Victoria. It recognises and values the work of individuals, groups and organisations that have contributed to Landcare's development and growth in the region.

This strategy brings together the collective wisdom of the North Central Landcare community, recognising the conditions that enable Landcare to operate at its very best. It will ensure that Landcare is maintained and enhanced by understanding and supporting what makes Landcare work.

The strategy was developed by, and for, the North Central Landcare community. This includes members of Landcare groups and other affiliated groups, organisations and agencies that support Landcare, and individuals.

The North Central CMA will coordinate the implementation of the Strategy with support from the regional Landcare Coordination team. The strategy has the status of a policy document that sits under the Victorian Action Plan for Second Generation Landcare and the North Central Regional Catchment Strategy (2003-2007).

See Appendix 1 for an outline of the process used to develop this strategy.

“Undertaking works on landholders’ ground can be hard to do on an individual basis. By working with landholders who are part of a group, there is more power to encourage other landholders to see some of the works and realize how beneficial it could be to them if they become involved. We fit in with the Landcare group and have managed to achieve a lot of integrated works with landholders. This has proved a lot better than just coming in on our own and trying to complete works”

North Central CMA Works Coordinator

## 2. Background

### North Central region

The North Central region is bordered by the River Murray to the north, the Central Highlands to the south, the Mt Camel range to the east and the edge of the Richardson River catchment to the west. The region covers an area of around three million hectares (13 per cent of the State), with a population of over 230,000 people.

Approximately 140,000 people live in urban areas ranging in size from Marnoo with 100 people, to almost 90,000 in Greater Bendigo. The region contains more than 50 urban centres including Swan Hill, Echuca, Donald, Maryborough, Castlemaine, Daylesford and St Arnaud.

The population is concentrated mainly in provincial centres, especially along the Calder and Murray River corridors. In addition, the population growth rate within the North Central region is higher than average for both the State and regional Victoria (2.5% population growth since 1996).

In particular, there is a migration away from agricultural areas to provincial centres. For example, since 1996 population growth has been highest in the Campaspe Shire (6.6%), followed by the Macedon Ranges Shire (6%) and the City of Greater Bendigo (5.8%).

The North Central region is agriculturally diverse. Irrigation areas cover much of the lower Loddon and Campaspe Riverine Plains. Horticulture and dairying are the main land uses. Improved irrigation technology and tradeable water entitlements have encouraged the rapid expansion of horticulture outside traditional irrigation areas. Dryland agricultural areas are characterised by broad acre land uses, such as cropping and grazing. Land close to the major centres is increasingly developed for horticulture, new and emerging agricultural commodities and for 'lifestyle' farming. Intensive animal production industries are also represented in the region.

Significant changes in land use in recent times have seen the advent of new agricultural developments, including viticulture and olives. An influx of people onto small holdings that were previously used for dryland agriculture poses a challenge for conservation and protection of remnant vegetation.

Most soil types in the region are fragile, have poor fertility and are shallow and prone to degradation. Major threats facing the region include irrigation and dryland salinity, water quality decline, groundwater contamination, soil acidification, erosion and soil structural problems, flooding and drainage, fragmentation and destruction of wildlife habitat, and pest plant and animal infestations and proliferation.

The viability of some agricultural industries is also threatened. The region has some of the most severely salt affected areas in Victoria directly impacting on the River Murray.

Figure 1: Map of the North Central region



“Landcare is about the relationship between people and the environment, not about trees or fish or beetles, it’s about the community.”

(Long-time member from Tragowel Plains)

## Landcare

Landcare is "an Australian community-wide program with strong government support at all levels that promotes more sustainable land and water management. Landcare tries to balance economics and ecology, productivity and resource protection, and contributes strongly to community development"<sup>1</sup>

Landcare was launched in 1986 at Winjallock, in the western part of the North Central region. It grew out of Soil Conservation and Farm Tree groups and an alliance between the then Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands and the Victorian Farmers Federation.

<sup>1</sup> Marriott, S., Nabben, T., Polkinghorne, L. and Youl, R. (2000). “Landcare in Australia founded on local action”, International Landcare Conference Melbourne Australia.

The number of Landcare groups has continued to increase to around 900 in Victoria at present. Recent ABARE<sup>2</sup> figures state “Some 40 per cent of farmers are members of Australia’s 4,000 Landcare groups, and another 35 per cent participate from time to time in Landcare activities.” Landcare acts as a hub, particularly for government partnership programs with community, and its influence is far wider than figures for membership of groups would suggest.

“Landcare is the biggest positive change in rural Australia in decades.”

North Central CMA Board Member

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<sup>2</sup> Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics (2003)

# 3. Landcare in the North Central Region

## Landcare – a regional asset

Landcare is well recognised as an asset in the North Central region both by natural resource management decision-makers and by funding agencies. Its potential is also increasingly being recognised in developing community capacity for natural resource management and social assets change in the region.

### *On-ground works*

Landcare's contribution to implementing on-ground works is highly significant. With 70 percent of the land in the region in private ownership, cooperation by the community is essential to effecting significant landscape change.

The 2000-01 Agricultural Census found that 48.6% of agricultural land in North Central region is managed by a member of a Landcare group. This only encompasses farms with large incomes and it excludes land not managed for profit. It also fails to count the influence of Landcare beyond paid up membership of groups. Even so, regional natural resource decision makers may consider this figure reassuring as it is reasonably safe to assume that membership of a Landcare group signifies the adoption of better land management practices and a predisposition to work for positive landscape change.<sup>3</sup>

Landcare acts as a hub at a local level focusing community effort on natural resource management issues that the local community sees as important, as well as the high priority issues identified in regional plans. Funding for smaller Landcare projects may come from landholder funds alone, or if the local priority corresponds with regional priorities, funds may be sought through regional sources. The Commonwealth Government may fund Landcare directly, or funds may be sourced from industry or another sponsor. In all these projects, Landcare is likely to contribute local knowledge and community energy, as well as resources.

Landcare is becoming increasingly adept at contributing to partnerships, enabling larger projects to be undertaken achieving multiple outcomes. Agency staff, with project funding for on-ground works, frequently approach Landcare groups to put them in touch with landholders likely to be willing to participate. Landcare is thus a contact point, frequently on behalf of the whole of the local community of landholders, not just paid up members of Landcare groups.

### *Community awareness raising*

When Landcare acts as a 'focus for community' it has an influence far larger than simply the membership of groups.

Landcare groups frequently initiate awareness raising activities on issues they perceive to be of interest or concern to their community. Activities are usually open to any interested person. Agencies often work with Landcare groups to mount Field Days, Farm Walks and Expos to spread the word about good practice and highlight achievement. Many Landcare groups regularly invite guest speakers to their meetings. These speakers cover a wide range of topics of interest to the Landcare group's local community. This all contributes to the North Central Regional Catchment Strategy vision of a "well informed, resourced and actively committed community protecting and improving the natural resources for the environmental, social and economic benefit of our region."

In the last few years, Landcare has increasingly become adept at using the media to publicize their achievements and keep environmental concerns in front of the community.

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<sup>3</sup> Cary, J. and T. Webb (2000) Community Landcare, the National Landcare Program and the Landcare movement: the social dimensions of Landcare. Canberra, Social Sciences Centre, Bureau of Rural Sciences.

### *Community Capacity Building*

Landcare contributes significantly to building the capacity of the community for natural resource management in the North Central region.

### *Communication and networking*

Landcare networks are dense and interlinked, not only with each other, but also with other networks. This means that Landcare has considerable ability to get news out, to share information, to promote informed discussion and, over time, to raise awareness. In general, the networks are inclusive and tolerant and participation by “outside” interests, or occasional contributors, is welcomed.

The ability to promote dialogue, mutual respect and the sharing of knowledge and skills between those new to living on rural properties and the traditional farming community is an aspect of Landcare’s local communication that is becoming increasingly well recognised. This role is increasingly significant in the southern part of the region and there is no indication that the flow of new landholders will diminish in the near future. The role of Landcare in assisting in settling the newcomers into rural communities is very important in building community cohesion, developing their skills and understanding of natural resource management, building commercial opportunities for experienced landholders to share their skills, and opportunities for the newcomers to contribute to community vigour.

### *Skills and knowledge*

Landcare groups create opportunities for people to share knowledge and skills on an informal basis, as well as through learning opportunities such as guest speakers, farm walks and even lecture series. Landcare networks are also used by various organisations to promote training activities. In the past this has been largely used by natural resource management agencies, but is increasingly now being used by other agencies such as health professionals. Landcare groups are also beginning to explore the potential of art as a vehicle for the raising of community awareness of environmental issues.

In the past three years, accredited training has been offered in natural resource management topics through the partnership with the University of Melbourne’s Glenormiston College. This partnership, between an adult education provider and Landcare, is now being developed with the aim of opening up the audience for natural resource management knowledge and skills and awareness of environmental issues to the whole of the community of the North Central region.

### *Leadership*

With 150 Landcare groups in the region, Landcare is a significant contributor to the development of leadership and a training ground in skills of office bearers in community groups. Landcare also contributes to leadership in natural resource management in the region. Most of the Implementation Committee members of the North Central CMA have active, current involvement in Landcare and their association with Landcare has honed their knowledge of natural resource management, their leadership skills and their understanding of regional issues.

### *Trust*

Landcare contributes to the development of trust in the region by communicating with all stakeholders and developing understanding in the community of regional natural resource management strategies and processes. Landcare activities provide opportunities for stakeholders to work in partnerships, thus developing shared experiences and understanding. This builds trust between community and other stakeholders enabling deeper commitment, streamlined communication, the sharing of knowledge and innovation to occur.

### *Culture*

Landcare is both a leader and supporter of natural resource management values for community. It is an avenue for the deepening and celebration of a sense of place that promotes the community’s commitment to on-ground works and participation in natural resource management in the region. From this stems the persistence of the Landcare effort, its robustness and vigour and its availability to partnerships in environmental repair.

“The aborigines took care of the land. They didn’t strip every tree. They left enough to make more. We were the first Landcarers.”

Kerang resident

## Landcare participation

“Landcare is not just about controlling pests and planting trees, but includes all aspects of caring for the land by all people, farmers, professionals, or whatever, and including suburban and country residents.”

North Central CMA staff member

There are 150 Landcare groups in the North Central region. These include 10 urban groups, many peri-urban groups with both broad acre and recreational landholders amongst their members, and traditional broad acre farmer groups located largely in the northern part of the region.

Landcare groups in North Central are involved in:

- Planning, obtaining resources for, and executing on-ground works
- Raising community awareness of environmental issues
- Building community capacity

Landcare groups work in partnership with a variety of 'Not-for-Profit' organisations, including:

- Greening Australia
- Conservation Volunteers Australia
- Trust for Nature
- VFF
- Universities
- Training providers
- Schools
- A host of community organisations such as Aboriginal Groups, Cemetery Trusts, sporting clubs, Progress Associations, Girl Guides, Service Clubs.

To date, only a few Landcare groups in North Central have worked with industry. Initiatives include industry funding for Landcare equipment to use in landscape restoration projects, and project funding up to \$5,000.

See Appendix 2 for location of Landcare groups in North Central.

“The guys always had time to share what they knew and I didn’t because we had a common cause to improve the land. The Landcare community makes an effort to support those who are keen.”

Baynton Sidonia Landcare member

## Landcare Support

“The will is there in the community, but support is needed to turn the dream into reality.”

Landcare group member

“We were bumbling along – and along came our Coordinator and she’s been excellent. After not wanting a Coordinator, even demanding money instead for on-ground works, and NOT a Coordinator – we got one and it’s been the best thing for our Landcare groups.”

Long-standing Landcare group member

The former Department of Agriculture initially supported Landcare Groups, but in 1998 regional Landcare support became one of the roles of CMAs under the umbrella responsibility of 'Coordination of catchment-related activities'<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> DNRE, The State of Victoria. (2002). “Healthy Landscapes, Sustainable Communities” Victorian Action Plan for Second Generation Landcare.



In 2000, the North Central CMA participated in the Commonwealth funded 'Landcare into the Twenty-First Century' project to explore ways to support Landcare into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The region's current model of Landcare support developed from that project.

A team of Landcare Coordinators now supports Landcare groups. Funding for coordinators comes from local government, the State Government and the Federal Government. (See Table 1)

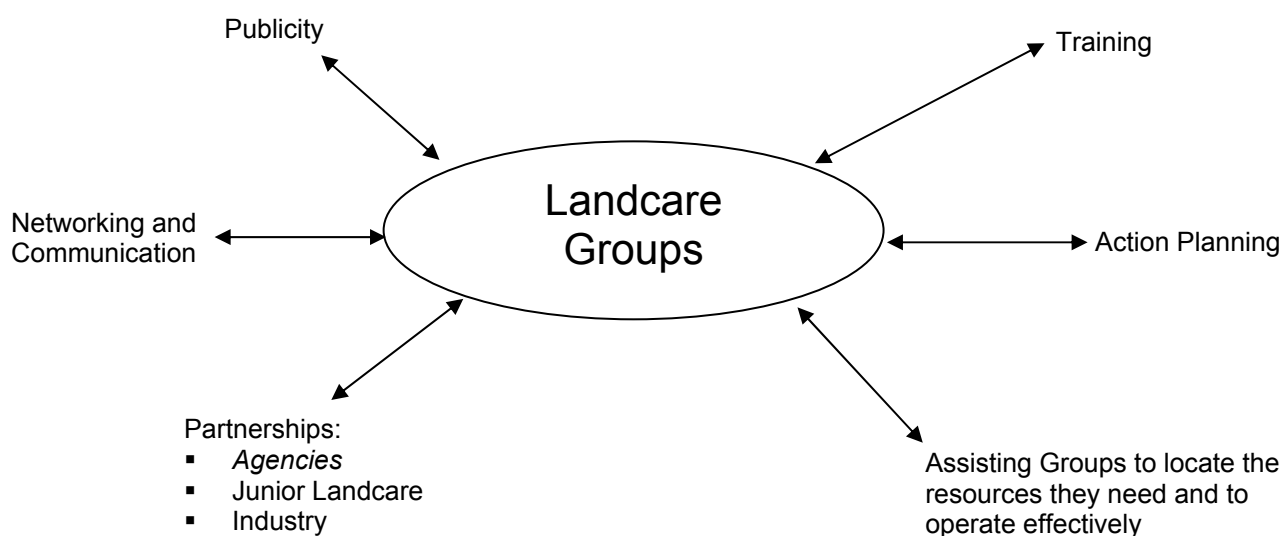
Table 1: Funding and Landcare Employment

Position	Employer	Source of funding
Regional Landcare Coordinator	North Central CMA	State funds supplemented by North central CMA funds.
Shire-based Landcare Coordinators	Local Government	Commonwealth funds supplemented by Local Government cash and in kind support.

Landcare Groups with significant project funding usually employ a Project Manager on a casual basis for the duration of the project. The allocation for project management within the project funding may be derived from Commonwealth, State or industry funds.

The regional Landcare coordination team delivers Landcare Support in the following areas:

Figure 2: Regional delivery



### Regional arrangements

#### *North Central Landcare Coordinator*

The North Central Landcare Coordinator is part of the statewide Landcare Coordinating team working on the Recommended Actions of the Victorian Second Generation Landcare Action Plan. These outcomes are:

- Strengthening investment in Landcare
- Supporting Landcare volunteers
- Helping people manage land



### *Shire-based Landcare Coordinators*

The Shire-based Landcare Coordinators work with the Regional Landcare Coordinator, forming the regional Landcare coordination team.

Shire-based Landcare Coordinators each have an Advisory Committee to whom they regularly report. The Advisory Committee:

- Provides guidance and support
- Is chaired by a North Central CMA Board or Implementation Committee member
- Includes Landcare, Local Government, Department of Primary Industry/Sustainability and Environment and North Central CMA representatives.

Members of the Landcare Coordination team liaise closely with, and report to, each of the North Central CMA's Implementation Committees.

### *Regional Landcare Coordination team outputs*

Collectively the regional Landcare coordination team contributes to the relevant outcomes of the North Central Regional Catchment Strategy. These include:

- Community Engagement Target 2 - A community that is actively engaged in natural resource management processes and equipped to implement landscape change.
- Community Engagement Target 3 - A comprehensive network of self-directed Landcare and other community groups participating in natural resource management in rural, peri-urban and urban areas.

The work of the regional Landcare coordination team and Landcare groups also contributes to most other Regional Catchment Strategy targets by strengthening the community's capacity for contributing to natural resource management. Shire-based Landcare Coordinators also deliver Landcare outcomes for their employing Local Governments.

It is anticipated that a regional Landcare Monitoring and Evaluation Plan will be developed in July 2004. It will help to ensure that the Landcare Support program is on target, that appropriate data is collected for accountability purposes, and monitoring and evaluation data informs planning.

### *Landcare Action Plans*

Landcare groups in North Central are encouraged to develop Landcare Action Plans. These are strategic documents identifying local priorities in order to ensure the sustainability of community enthusiasm and their efforts in natural resource management.

In 2004, almost half of North Central's Landcare groups had current Action Plans. As partnerships continue to develop in the region, and as planning becomes increasingly part of the region's culture, Landcare Action Plans will become an integral part of catchment planning.

"Money is not the issue: it is time and people power!"  
Echuca Urban Landcare group member

## **Assessing Landcare support in the North Central region**

The Landcare community's comments about Landcare support clearly fall into three broad equally represented categories.

### *1. Capable Groups*

'Capable groups' have the capacity to:

- Build partnerships
- Provide direction and leadership
- Lobby and advocate on behalf of Landcare

- Carry out projects

Capable groups are also able to attract 'new blood' and engage with the wider community, building links and networks.

"Landcare groups are very good at what they do – getting locals involved, being excited and pleased about the things they do, seeing changes take place and helping both the community and the landowners to use good land management practices. Enthusiasm at its best!"

Landcare Group member

## 2. *Recognition*

'Recognition' at all levels is an important aspect of Landcare support – of individuals, of groups, of partnerships and of successes.

"I think there are many positive things happening in the way that community is being engaged by government and NRM professionals. I just hope to see a growing sincerity in the relationship and a genuine recognition that, by and large, it is the same ethic that brings each of us to the table."

Landcare Coordinator

"Landcare must be recognised: not for its glory, but for its influence.

Broadacre Farmer

## 3. *Resourcing*

'Resourcing' includes support from Government through direct grants and employing coordinators; using skills, knowledge and talent within groups and the community; stability; trained people to support groups; and streamlined processes.

"Less bloody paper work and simplified reporting processes!"

Jeffcott North Landcare Group member and primary producer

## 4. A Vision for Landcare

“A core strength is the social side of Landcare, people coming together to communicate and share ideas, enjoy each other’s company.”

Founding Member, Bendigo Environment Council

### 4.1 What is most valued about Landcare and the way it works when it is at its very best?

By far the most important aspect of Landcare valued by people in North Central Victoria is its capacity to bring people from different backgrounds, ages, experience, and knowledge together to work towards a common purpose. This inclusive nature of Landcare – that embraces diversity in all its forms – creates a sense of worth and belonging in communities that is very highly valued.

“It is embracing. It embraces the community – it doesn’t matter who or what you are, they are interested in what you are doing.”

Member, Lexton Landcare Group

People also value Landcare’s tangible results, and some of the ‘spin-offs’ – the opportunity to learn and develop all sorts of skills, to be creative and a deep and enduring respect for the environment.

“It’s a leader in resource management. We do resource management because the government tells us to. Landcare people do it because they want to. I think it’s an indication of the power of the human heart, those emotions empower us into action.”

Parks Victoria officer

Support is also very important. Beyond the obvious monetary support, there is recognition of the importance of agency staff providing their skills and expertise, the role of coordinators, and of networking with each other and between groups – capitalising on existing knowledge and skills within groups and within the community.

“Continue to attract coordinators with a passion for Landcare and the ability to work with people. Good people can do good things with nothing: if you give them something, then they can do miracles! When you find the people with both community skills and passion, then you need to give them support to make sure they stay!”

Member, Campaspe Valley Landcare Group

Analysing stories about Landcare’s success reveals the following additional elements that are highly valued by the North Central Landcare community. These are listed in alphabetical order.

#### *Community Action*

“Dalliston’s Road has been interesting. It’s a road that was infested with gorse for a long time. A creek running parallel was also infested. The community worried about the fire risk etc. The local Landcare group brought their concerns to DPI who gave the group a project manager and finance to work with. The project manager supported the groups with legislative muscle and the gorse was all removed successfully. The group are keen to keep the follow up control going and it’s a great example of community capacity building – now there is a newsletter in that area. It’s brought all the landholders together even some absentees. It’s an example of a common goal – now the group wish to continue by planting indigenous plants in the area. A partnership between DPI, Shire and local people who really drove the project.”

Landcare Coordinator

### *Connecting with children*

"We had a planting day on our property involving Landcare members and the local primary school's Junior Landcare group. About 60 kids planted over 1,000 trees. At the end of the day, the adults were exhausted but the kids were still looking for more trees! The adults had taken the time to explain to the children about salinity and other environmental issues. This got the kids excited and interested – they still ask how the trees are going!"

North Harcourt Landcare group member

### *Inspired leadership*

"We are politically insignificant. We need to become politically significant. Planting rare species is a good political move, as well as the biodiversity gains."

President, Loddonvale Landcare Group

"I am someone who believes we are one species amongst many and are destroying it for all species. I am trying to reverse that"

Mclvor Landcare Group member

### *Learning*

"Landcare is a learning process. The more you can learn and share local knowledge the better it will work. The closer to home the knowledge is, the better the solution will work."

Timor West farmer

"When people come together there are great opportunities to learn from each other"

Member, Friends of the Box Ironbark Forest

### *Long-term planning and succession*

"We need to be inclusive and friendly, to be open for people to get involved. Some of the younger people are more a "me" generation – not as used to working in communities as the older folk. They need to understand that it's not onerous to take part – that there are good rewards for working in the community."

Mclvor Landcare group member

### *One step at a time*

"I believe that the environment is the important thing – extending from our own place outwards – and that every little bit helps. I'd like to think of what we do as part of the big picture"

President, Golden Point Landcare Group

### *Ownership*

"Landcare interests me because it is a very powerful grass roots organisation that allows people to identify their issues and go about addressing them in a cooperative way."

Former President, Trentham Landcare Group

### *Partnerships*

"The fact that governments are prepared to hand these people money to work is mind blowing. Overseas it would be local authorities, not community."

Landcare Coordinator

"Our community planting day last year involved many different groups working together to coordinate and implement the day – CMA, local council, Tree project, Landcare group and members of the community. Many people came out on a cold rainy day, some from Melbourne, to participate."

Golden Point Landcare Group Member

### *Passion*

"What excites me is the incredible sense of commitment some people have – it's infectious. It's a community-based thing with people taking care of their own area. People have control over their destinies. This is powerful."

Landcare Coordinator

#### *Personal discovery*

“It is what you make of it and activities are limited only by your own imagination.”

Member, Campaspe Valley Landcare Group

#### *Pride*

“It has been a great inspiration to see the creek freed from its weed overload and inspiring to see what could be done. To see the creek flow freely again!”

Member, Muckleford Landcare Group

#### *Purpose and direction*

“The dramatic change from 10’ gorse to groomed gorse is pretty memorable. The feeling that finally it was going to happen amongst the groups, they were going to get rid of the gorse. The sense that it was achievable – everyone felt good about it.”

Landcare Coordinator

#### *Resources*

“Great value -‘more bang for your buck’ – by combining farming with environmental management we can still live and work on the land, while protecting it from degradation.”

North Central CMA Works Coordinator

“Our flats were completely covered in spiny rush – non-productive full of foxes and rabbits. Through getting these resources we fenced off and sowed it down to tall wheat grass and clover and now it’s become an important part of property grazing regime. Provides good summer green feed. Animals are now in better condition. Property now has become a district showpiece. We wouldn’t have done the work as fast if it wasn’t for Landcare and resource made available in terms of funding and advice through Landcare”

Primary Producer

“Without Landcare, we couldn’t get the money into our little area.”

President, Mologa Landcare

#### *Results*

“In a short space of time the area has gone from a bare hill to a little forest, because a few got together to improve an area that was starting to degrade. We can now see the results of our work.”

North Harcourt Landcare member

#### *Social cooperation and diversity*

“Landcare brings you into contact with people you might not choose to socialise with, but you can listen to their ideas and respect what they do. You can listen to what others say is important to them and see things through another person’s eyes. Landcare cuts across the whole range of community and includes children and oldies.”

Founding Member, Campaspe Valley Landcare Group

“Years ago the community was divided, we went our own way. Landcare has brought us together. There are only 10 of us, but we now talk together and discuss things. The ladies always put on a good cup of tea, then more is discussed during the meeting. People can be a bit uptight at meetings, but over a cuppa they discuss things”

President, Mologa Landcare

#### *Spiritual connectedness*

“It [a tree planting day] was a wonderful educational opportunity for all involved and established a strong bond to the place with all involved in the planting day.”

Golden Point Landcare Group member

#### *Tapping into local knowledge*

“It’s allowed farmers who’ve been traditionally very individual to open up and share strengths and weaknesses with other farmers.”

North Central CMA Board member

“I brought it [The Native Veg Plan] to a meeting as a simple report for noting. One and a half hours later we had plotted and described a whole range of native plants and associations across the area, using both a knowledge and an interest from committee members that I had certainly never recognized. From here the group has now mapped the pre-clearing vegetation distribution of the area as the basis for indigenous planting, built its own species list and seedbank for the group”  
Coordinator, Lexton Landcare Group

## 4.2 Aspirations and hopes for Landcare’s future

“I’d like to see people barracking for the land the same way they barrack for a sporting team. The love of the landscape becomes an infatuation or obsession.”  
Local artist and Landcare member

Overwhelmingly, the most common comment (from the interviews) about hopes for the future was to increase involvement, with appropriate funding and support provided by firstly governments, and secondly from within Landcare.

Other hopes for the future included maintaining the skills base and increasing opportunities for capacity building; continued leadership and direction; and importantly, higher visibility of Landcare – both in terms of the activities and the achievements where success is acknowledged and celebrated by the whole community.

“All projects that were started have been finished, built upon and maintained; the work of previous people who put in the initial work has been acknowledged and valued by having follow-up effort committed by managing authorities of the land and local communities.”  
Long-time Landcarer

The following aspirations for Landcare were developed by participants at the Landcare Summit. These are divided into two groups: the first is changes in the social, environmental and/or economic conditions (higher order outcomes); the second is impact or practice change (more immediate outcomes). In all of these, Landcare contributes to varying degrees.

### *Changes in the social, environmental and/or economic conditions*

- Healthy, indigenous landscapes across all boundaries
- Landcare involves the whole of the community and is considered to be a part of everyday life – it is part of our national identity
- Landcare is a fundamental part of the education curriculum
- Landcare is inclusive, diverse and supportive
- The price of primary produce and natural resources includes the real environmental costs

### *Impact/practice change*

- Industry invests in Landcare and ‘green’ practices
- Landcare and scientists work together for results
- Landcare is politically recognised and supported
- Landcare is regularly covered by all media
- People take personal responsibility for the environment
- Streamlined and efficient administration and resourcing of Landcare

“It is exciting to have the opportunity to work collectively with neighbours to do things beneficial to the environment. On ground works are satisfying but they also create a sense of community. People have amazing skills.”

Member, Wattle Flat Pootilla Landcare Group

## 5. Community Identified Actions/ Directions

Participants at the Landcare Summit identified approaches to help deliver the hopes and aspirations – the Landcare vision for 2009. They also chose the three actions, that when implemented by the Landcare community in North Central Victoria, would make the biggest contribution to achieving that outcome. The suggestions have been divided into priority actions; other approaches; and principles. (Principles are those comments that are not really actions but are nonetheless important).

In reality, Landcare will contribute to achieving these outcomes in addition to a number of other programs and projects.

### 5.1 Changes in the social, environmental and/or economic conditions

#### 5.1.1 Healthy, indigenous landscapes across all boundaries

##### *Priority actions*

- Restriction of exotics at nurseries and markets
- Whole of catchment landscape planning that can be broken into local 'units of work'
- Encourage building knowledge base and relationships with Traditional Owners ('appropriate' Aboriginal community organisations) - insight into 'sustainable' and traditional uses of the land in your area

##### *Other approaches*

- Festivals open to all public on indigenous topics eg educate about threatened species and cultural values of local area – celebrate achievements and be aware of threats/impacts
- Collect seed, propagate and plant – get your hands dirty – learn about local species – what will survive and thrive
- Practical give-away plants (paying attention to provenance) and provide fun activity – planting day
- Promote indigenous landscape illustrations in kids' literature so Aussies grow up with an eye for our straggly bush – institute a prize for the best children's book with Aussie illustrations
- More indigenous landscapes on TV gardening shows
- Allow Landcare groups to form and function across Shire and CMA boundaries
- Groups establish seed nurseries i.e. plant plants so as they can be harvested for seed or cuttings (paying attention to provenance)
- Educate about values of indigenous landscapes eg bush food, seed production, environmental and economic value
- Local government should play a role in increasing natives in town environments eg parks, nature strips, developments (core objective corporate plan)
- Local government – Landcare native plant give-aways to residents
- More awareness re indigenous and non-indigenous plants, animals and impacts
- Educate community on why indigenous vegetation is here – it belongs here as it evolved here

##### *Principles*

- Need to define sub-strategies to achieve this goal (eg strategies for education at all levels, media exposure, community involvement etc)
- Social interaction – meet your neighbours
- Cross Shire boundaries – cooperate not competition
- Wildlife corridors everywhere
- Trend towards indigenous home gardens



### 5.1.2 Landcare involves the whole of the community and is considered to be a part of everyday life – it is of our national identity

#### *Priority Actions*

- Identify community support networks that operate and establish partnerships
- Promote Landcare to the wider community through awareness raising and celebration
- Start at educating and creating excitement in the youth - schools for the environment; and encourage Junior Landcare members to participate in Landcare (research their needs; match to Landcare goals)

#### *Other approaches*

- Involve local politicians, school community
- Make Landcare an attractive investment for the business sector
- Provide opportunities to increase participation and training in Landcare
- Sell Landcare by employing a marketing firm to raise the profile in areas where it is needed (funded by State Government)
- Neighbourhood/Community Houses offer Landcare adult education courses
- Up-skilling the entire community – ‘getting your eye in’ native vs. exotic; plant ID courses etc
- Some form of credits for Landcare participation – not only associated with land owning
- Finding ways of incorporating Landcare into everyday culture – information evenings, local indigenous, local European perspectives, redefining what Australian culture is
- Create a Landcare Committee in which business/industry members can comment on and get assistance with implementing and creating green strategies
- Landcare advertise training and education courses held – through local schools, TAFEs, universities, health centres etc
- Landcare to explore possibility of creating a program for young people who are involved in the welfare/child protection areas
- Landcare representation in local council
- Landcare school curriculum to be brought up-to-date and steps taken to implement it

#### *Principles*

- Landcare delivers landscape change
- Landcare tax
- Sharing the workload means it takes less time for each individual
- When people know why and understand, they are more likely to DO!

### 5.1.3 Landcare is a fundamental part of the education curriculum

#### *Priority Actions*

- Sell the idea to teachers etc through a campaign (eg a forum) and have more education officers or staff with schools to do this (be sympathetic to pressures placed on teachers through ‘crowded curriculum’)
- Lobby State Government to legislate change in curriculum by all involved in Landcare – write to local member, use media etc
- Create Junior Landcare groups in schools – help with grant funding

#### *Other approaches*

- Funding sources located for interactive classrooms
- Establish interactive classrooms – the bush university (in areas that may otherwise be destroyed)
- Encourage thinking across boundaries (fences, soil and vegetation types) geographical and discipline based
- Value of other and diverse knowledge bases/types/understandings and included in education curriculum through storytelling, field trips, visual media, song and dance, etc.
- Focus on teacher professional development and availability of tailored environmental education manuals
- Landcare has education officers who design and provide education packs to schools
- Offer incentives to children/students to study eg scholarships, HECS exemption



- Examine education and employment pathways through institutions or on-farm training in Landcare - develop career paths
- Scholarships for environmental projects eg along the river with first prize a flight along the Murray from border to border
- Use the Victorian Landcare Centre (it exists!)
- CMA Youth Advisory panel
- North Central CMA hold a think-tank forum with non-environment teachers/principals of region on how to sell the idea

#### *Principles*

- Children love getting outside, planting, watching natives grow in their area
- Need to consider education 'beyond school' as well
- Need for practical community education – city and country
- Improve communication between education providers eg councils, State government, Landcare representatives etc.
- Encouragement programs to have schools operate sustainably

### 5.1.4 Landcare is inclusive, diverse and supportive

#### *Priority Actions*

- Integrate Landcare philosophies into all community, business, social, economic etc
- All partners are identified and engaged in 'true' partnerships
- Consider the concepts of Landcare as an evolving, dynamic and diverse activity and recognise this through discussions at farms etc

#### *Other approaches*

- Identify and recognise gaps in the Landcare community
- Actively support and facilitate cross-community, ethnic, disability, social etc involvement, participation and awareness
- Consider multilingual publications – consider cultural diversity
- Explore community events, festivals, forums etc to better understand the needs of the whole community
- Ensure local government and government agencies are accountable for what they say they are going to do – regular audits
- Have core group discussions then write in newsletters to encourage more to be active in actual projects
- Spirituality, mindset of how we see our connection to land – understanding of Aboriginal stories, myths, Dreamtime as well as own cultural roots
- Make Landcare more appealing to peri-urban, small landholders eg have municipal-based coordinators in peri-urban areas to draw them in

#### *Principles*

- Landcare needs to be open to constructive criticism

### 5.1.5 The price of primary produce and natural resources includes the real environmental costs

#### *Priority actions*

- Research on the real and all costs of food production eg packaging, transport. Environmental. Such costs off-set by environment/Landcare support practices - more realistic food pricing and improved understanding of primary production environmental costs
- Council rates tied to natural resource management (NRM) on properties
- Environmental Management System (EMS) branding

#### *Other approaches*

- Lobby decision makers – environmental food tax; tax system based on ecological footprint
- Promoting current best practice in resource management
- Greenhouse brokering (linking 'emitters' to Landcare initiatives)

- Latest information on economic value of eco-services
- Increase publicity
- Increase awareness of cradle to grave processes
- Clearly explain how this all relates to Landcare issues
- Consider the environmental costs of imports
- Buying local green produce – less transport costs
- Have local food industries include the greenhouse cost on packaging – give them an incentive (rebate) or deterrent (tax)
- Encourage Councils to give an environmental rate rebate

#### *Principles*

- Bipartisan political support and will
- Allow primary producers to pass on cost increases arising from legislated changes, taxes, levies etc.
- Definition of environmental costs as being more than monetary
- A national water policy for the equitable distribution and pricing of water
- Changes to competition policy to allow groups (such as farmers) to form cooperative marketing groups - fairer competition, not a supermarket duopoly
- Farmers to have an input into the price of the product they sell so they can factor in environmental issues
- How do we put a \$ value on 'intrinsic values'? and community landscapes? What's it worth?

## **5.2 Impact/ practice change**

### 5.2.1 Industry invests in Landcare and 'green' practices

#### *Priority actions*

- Link specific industry with relevant Landcare groups to foster personal connection
- Promote the Australian Landcare tax deductibility of donations and work with Landcare Australia Ltd to develop 2nd and 3rd tier sponsorships at a local and regional level
- Property subdivisions and development is required to fund regional environmental programs ie plant stock to revegetate a creek line, pay for rabbit-proof fencing for a corridor in a rabbit-infested area

#### *Other approaches*

- Sponsorship sought from local/regional industries, not just national corporations – be creative in seeking sponsorship
- Deliver Landcare support programs and info through industry extension programs
- Explore/promote use of Greenhouse Gas 'mitigation brokers'
- Failure to comply with EPA standards results in fines diverted to local Landcare projects
- Include industrial environmental issues in educational activities
- Environmental report card system for industry
- Recognise and promote positives in industry re good environmental practice

#### *Principles*

- What is the currency? Carbon credits? Energy rebates/offsets? Biodiversity credits? Salinity credits?
- Not charity!
- Tax on water pollution (fed into local projects)
- Develop a positive reward system to encourage improvement
- Encourage industry representation in Landcare groups
- Higher taxes for degradation, tax rebates for good ecological practices
- Labelling – legislated
- Community involvement
- Penalty or reward system for sound environmental practices - responsibility to be taken by industry)
- Ethical investment promotions
- Native grasses to be seen by industry as a profitable proposition

- Place a surcharge on exotic species at nurseries to subsidise natives
- Environmental levy on imported goods
- Develop further relationships/sponsorship of events/machinery by industry of Landcare groups

### 5.2.2 Landcare and scientists work together for results

#### *Priority actions*

- Explore the Land Grant University model for relevance with NC tertiary institutions (LaTrobe, Ballarat, Creswick and Charles Sturt) whereby academia is combined with extension and community (landholders)
- Develop one central catalogue of research findings/projects and someone available to help interpret to the general public
- Develop relationships between Primary Industries Research Victoria (PIRVic) and Landcare through a mentoring program where each Landcare group has a designated PIRVic contact/mentor (with access to a network of mentors) who attends meetings, listens, understands what's going on for each other and helps interpret current research

#### *Other approaches*

- Provide ways for Landcare to meet with academics/researchers: Forums to exchange knowledge and strategies, determine priority projects that need scientific research; web page or chat room; create links with relevant CRC
- Tap into the 'grey brigade' in academia eg Uni of the Third Age
- Present research findings in accessible form (TV, internet, radio) to be seen and heard – and returned to the landholder/local area/region – two-way flow
- Have media releases on scientific studies in NC Vic
- Science Show, with talkback – identity on local media, like Dr Karl
- Scholarships for Landcare study

#### *Principles*

- More research into land systems and their management
- Have more research that combines local knowledge and scientific expertise. Find a way of valuing different knowledge e.g. oral histories; learning from the ancient past.
- Start at ground level. Encourage Landcare links in schools – will flow onto tertiary study
- Landholders' local information requests to drive research projects so that the answers can assist the landholder in their everyday activities
- More research on native/perennial systems instead of annual/European systems to drive perenniality in our landscape
- Identify common goals for science and Landcare to create a framework for working together
- Funding to allow long-term (eg 20-year) research projects, as ecological research projects can take many years to produce valid results – not just funding 'flavour of the month' projects

### 5.2.3 Landcare is politically recognised and supported

#### *Priority actions*

- Lobby local, state and federal governments to ensure that environmental outcomes/impacts are considered in all decision-making and planning
- Lobby the North Central CMA Board to promote a targeted federal environmental levy
- Community Landcare incentives match those in targeted bid areas

#### *Other approaches*

- \$ rewards for landholders who remove land from production to environmental protection
- Legislated, full-time local government positions
- Personalise Landcare by involving local politicians, especially those with landholdings
- Lobby opposition members
- Collate the \$/hectares/plants outputs that are occurring through Landcare groups and inform their local councillors/Shire CEO/managers of these
- Landcare coordinators need to spend more time in the political arena to make change – advocacy work on behalf of Landcare

### *Principles*

- Federal and State Ministry for Environment and Landcare
- Landcare to become more political
- Need bipartisan support and will
- When a government project requires an Environmental Impact Statement, such statement be done by an independent body, not by a section of the Department concerned with the project
- Only vote for Landcare member
- Youth better educated – will bring change when they vote
- Legislative reform
- Landcare groups valued as stakeholders in land management agreements ie encourage groups to comment on development applications – triggers in statutory planning process to refer to Landcare groups
- Target the largest group of electorate – market to them
- Landcare/environmental audit of all party candidates at local, state and federal elections
- Landcare communities have more input into legislation

### 5.2.4 Landcare is regularly covered by all media

#### *Priority actions*

- Build positive local relationships with media
- Offer media training for relevant Landcare groups
- Develop strategic communication plans that include all these other approaches listed below

#### *Other approaches*

- Send press releases and photos to local media to praise Landcare and show projects
- Copies of press cuttings to local politicians
- Arrange local politicians to 'open' projects – promote media coverage
- Local 'personalities' (TV, sport, music etc) sponsor Landcare activities
- Essential to televise – get through to children, non-readers, busy people
- Educate media personnel about value of environmental stories
- Bendigo Weekly and other free community papers like good news
- Landcare groups themselves need to initiate media contact for all their positive stories (media officer active in group). Groups use local papers to communicate aim, project etc to local community. Not rely on word-of-mouth. Write the article and submit it.
- Determine what messages will 'turn on' the non-Landcare converted (which is the majority)
- Case studies of landowners that have received government funding, rebates or incentives due to positive environmental activities
- Landcare-based TV program (like Burke's Backyard Improvement show)
- Segment on Landline just of Landcare achievements
- Positive advertisements on TV that include positive way of improving the environment
- Find opportunities to connect media CEOs with Landcare regional groups
- Industry-sponsored Landcare feature eg "Mitre 10 Landcare Snippets" or green business promotion that is tax deductible
- Broaden the definition of stock market reports to include 'stock' of the farming variety and have daily Landcare reports
- Award for best media articles promoting Landcare – make presentation bigger than the Logies

#### *Principles*

- Environment report between finance (self interest) and sport ('religion')
- Tapping into people's environmental aspirations, allowing understanding of mindsets to inspire others, and educate them about views
- Sandra should work weekends!
- Good Weekend and all news sheets with green information
- Nightly news stories – both good and bad news
- Recognition of work achieved

## 5.2.5 People take personal responsibility for the environment

### *Priority actions*

- Publicise the environmental costs of everyday activities (not just economical) and encourage people to only use recyclable or reusable containers and products
- Make people accountable for the environment (environment levy for using plastic bags/non-recycling levy)
- Campaign to educate city and suburban dwellers that their actions, purchases, recreation etc have a large effect on the North Central environment, which may not have been apparent to them

### *Other approaches*

- Environmental plan for your own backyard (with recognition eg an award/prize) – including a kit, resources and contact lists
- Use local icon species to explain and motivate
- Enhanced anti-rubbish/litter program
- \$30 tax reintroduced
- Be a good example to inspire others to help Landcare projects
- Get outside, relax, enjoy, improve, connect spiritually with the earth
- Environmental tax or levy on developers eg developers put up a \$ bond which is only refunded after a period of time if environment has not been compromised

### *Principles*

- Make people aware of their impact on the environment and how it affects them personally
- Make people aware before they move onto the land
- All people to think and act sustainably
- Information made more readily available
- Involve schools and schoolchildren
- Greedy developers should be made responsible for their actions
- Need to include everyone (we all live in a catchment) – particularly city dwellers
- Governments to encourage rebates for environmentally-friendly actions
- Crown land managers enforce and adhere to the rules
- Government to lead by example and manage public land well (eg control weeds and rabbits)
- The sale of rural land be subject to an environmental audit before the sale
- More active compliance system (fines etc)
- Industry/corporations and individuals should all take personal responsibility
- Start education of youth - the ripple effect
- People who put in time and energy to Landcare voluntarily receive some form of tax rebate

## 5.2.6 Streamlined and efficient administration and resourcing of Landcare

### *Priority actions*

- Efficient monitoring and reporting of outcomes
- A streamlined and efficient funding process eg KISS forms
- Map of all projects/actions/priorities for all stakeholders available (internet)

### *Other approaches*

- Administrative assistance available from funding sources to help a network of Landcare groups or at a regional/sub-catchment level
- More local input for training sessions – register of presenters
- Opportunities for people to improve knowledge and skills with regard to administrative procedures (good governance/training)
- Ensure opportunities for joint projects; cost sharing; partnerships are considered and better use of resources
- That strategic plans and project management exists for all stakeholders
- CMA and local government talk to each other at budget time
- Local group gets all partners together to discuss what's going on – timetables/projects
- Understand the time constraints, i.e. time lapse between funding applications to receiving \$
- Statewide signage system so Landcare groups don't have to use their own resources

- Know what members can/will offer (get to know skills, work together)
- Information exchange

#### Principles

- Enviro-levy to fund admin, projects, field workers etc
- Efficient use of money – not all spent on bureaucracy
- Quicker access to funding with less paperwork
- Less confusion and simplify process to resource Landcare
- Resourcing isn't just about \$ - it's about people. Open access and info dissemination to groups, not the other way around
- More action, less rhetoric
- Remove DPI/DSE ability to veto our plans
- Less bloody paperwork and simplified reporting processes
- A funding cycle that fits the biological/seasonal cycle
- Attract more people to Landcare to replenish enthusiasm and skills and help in core roles
- Flexibility in funding regulations about depth of windbreaks on small farms

“Landcare needs to become more of a priority with Councils/community”

Local Government Operations Manager

## 6. North Central CMA's recommended actions

North Central CMA's support for Landcare falls into three categories as identified in the Landcare interviews:

1. Capable groups
2. Resourcing
3. Recognition

The following table identifies the specific actions, who is responsible, and the indicative budget. These are drawn from the suggestions in Sections 6.1 and 6.2, the Landcare interviews, and the opinions of the regional Landcare Coordination team. These actions need to be reviewed annually to take account of the ongoing development of Landcare in the region.

<b>Capable Groups</b>				
<b>Specific Actions</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>2004/05 Budget</b>	<b>Performance Indicator</b>	<b>By when?</b>
Offer media training for Landcare groups	Landcare Coordination team and Landcare members	Regional Landcare support program budget of \$670,000 pa	2 media workshops	June 05
Opportunities for people to improve knowledge and skills with regard to administrative procedures/governance	Landcare Coordination team and Landcare members	Included in regional Landcare support program budget	Governance booklet to each Landcare group. 4 governance workshops	Jan 05  June 05
More speakers and information sharing – coordinated across region	Landcare Coordination team	Included in regional Landcare support program budget	4 regional Landcare Gatherings, 1 North Central Landcare Expo, 4 Landcare network meetings. Email discussion group membership increased to 200 subscribers	June 05
Continued development of Landcare Action Plans	Regional Landcare Coordination team and Landcare groups	Included in regional Landcare support program budget	22 new or revised Action Plans	June 05



<b>Capable Groups</b>				
<b>Specific Actions</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>2004/05 Budget</b>	<b>Performance Indicator</b>	<b>By when?</b>
Form partnerships with Unis, TAFEs and Adult Community Education providers to deliver training to community in natural resource management	Landcare Coordination team	Included in regional Landcare support program budget	1 NRM training day for Adult Community Education providers  4 NRM courses run by Adult Community providers	Nov 04  June 05
Promote Junior Landcare Groups in schools	Landcare Coordination team and Landcare groups	Included in regional Landcare support program budget	6 new schools offering Junior Landcare activities	June 05
Develop community knowledge and skills in NRM	Landcare coordination team, Landcare groups and University of Melbourne	Included in regional Landcare support program budget and Uni of Melbourne's accredited training delivery budget	7 accredited training courses delivered	June 05
Increase Landcare groups' awareness of what Landcare support can offer	Landcare coordination team and Landcare groups	Included in regional Landcare support program budget	4 "What Landcare Support can Offer" workshops	June 05

<b>Resourcing</b>				
<b>Specific Actions</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>2004/05 Budget</b>	<b>Performance Indicator</b>	<b>By when?</b>
Ensure continuation of regional Landcare support team and delivery of regional Landcare support program	North Central CMA  Local Government	Included in the Regional Landcare budget and  \$35,000 plus in kind support	5.4 Landcare coordinator positions continue. 1.0 Regional Coordinator. 1.5 new positions	From June 04  By January 05
Manage the disbursement of Second Generation Landcare funding	North Central CMA	Approx \$350,000	Funds distributed to successful applicants	Dec 04
Assistance to Landcare groups with applications for Envirofunds	Landcare coordination team	Included in regional Landcare support program budget	Assistance with at least 10 Envirofund applications	June 05



<b>Resourcing</b>				
<b>Specific Actions</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>2004/05 Budget</b>	<b>Performance Indicator</b>	<b>By when?</b>
Promote Australian Landcare tax deductibility of donations and work with Landcare Australia Limited to develop sponsorships at a local level	Landcare Coordination team and Landcare groups	Included in regional Landcare support program budget	Sponsorship of 2 Landcare projects by industry	June 05
Link specific industry with relevant Landcare groups to foster a personal connection	Landcare Coordination team and Landcare groups	Included in regional Landcare support program budget	Establish 4 Landcare/ industry connections	June 05
Regional Landcare team act as information brokers	Landcare Coordination team	Included in regional Landcare support program budget	600 queries/contacts for information	June 05

<b>Recognition</b>				
<b>Specific Actions</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>2004/05 Budget</b>	<b>Performance Indicator</b>	<b>By when?</b>
Tap into the 'grey brigade' in academia eg Uni of the Third Age	Landcare Coordination team and Landcare groups	Included in regional Landcare support program budget	2 workshops for Uni of the Third Age	June 05
Promote Landcare to the wider community through awareness raising and celebration	Landcare Coordination team and Landcare groups	Included in regional Landcare support program budget	15 community awareness displays, 70 newspaper/ magazine articles, 16 radio interviews re Landcare achievements	June 05
Make Landcare more appealing to peri-urban and small landholders	Landcare Coordination team and Landcare groups	Included in regional Landcare support program budget	Offer 'Landcare for new Landholders' course x 2 Complete Absentee Landholder research project	June 05  June 05
Arrange local politicians to 'open' projects – promote media coverage	Landcare Coordination team and Landcare groups	Included in regional Landcare support program budget	4 Landcare project "openings"	June 05

<b>Recognition</b>				
<b>Specific Actions</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>2004/05 Budget</b>	<b>Performance Indicator</b>	<b>By when?</b>
Regional Landcare day out/festival to celebrate achievements	Landcare Coordination team and Landcare groups	Included in regional Landcare support program budget, local sponsorship, Local Govt, 2 <sup>nd</sup> generation grant	NC Landcare Festival	August 04
			North Central CMA Natural Resource Management Recognition Event	August 04

In addition, the regional Landcare Coordination team reviewed the above actions and the Landcare interviews and identified the following additional actions for Landcare support to be undertaken that fall outside of the above three categories.

<b>Specific Actions</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>2004/05 Budget</b>	<b>Performance Indicator</b>	<b>By when?</b>
Increase Landcare understanding of Koori culture	Regional Landcare team	Included in regional Landcare support	At least one workshop on Koori culture	June 05
Expand and deepen Landcare relationship with Koori community	Regional Landcare team	Included in regional Landcare support	At least one initiative with Koori community	June 05
Ensure Landcare Coordinators' access to compatible GIS	North Central CMA		All coordinators have access to software compatible with North Central CMA GIS	June 05
Regional Evaluation Plan	Regional Landcare team	Included in regional Landcare support program budget	Evaluation Plan	September 04
Develop Landcare team's evaluation skills	Regional Landcare team	Included in regional Landcare support program budget	Evaluation skills workshop	July 04
Evaluate 04/05 Regional Landcare project and plan for 05/06	Regional Landcare team in consultation with Landcare groups	Included in regional Landcare support program budget	Monitoring and evaluation process and end of year workshop	June 05

[In getting involved in Landcare]"I was excited by the possibility of making a difference and the pleasure and challenge of working with others"

Member, Newstead Landcare Group

# 7. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

Landcare alone cannot, and should not, be expected to achieve the desired changes in social, environmental and economic conditions, or even the practice change identified in this strategy. However, it is important to measure, acknowledge and recognise the ongoing contribution that Landcare makes to achieving these outcomes.

## Monitoring

Monitoring of activities and inputs will continue as a part of Landcare projects.

For example, the North Central CMA will continue to coordinate data management and reporting of Second Generation Landcare Grants projects. In particular, the CMA will spatially map the outputs of Landcare Groups for vegetation protection, enhancement and establishment activities and enter project data into the State Catchment Activity Management System (CAMS). Data entry will be performed in accordance with the guidelines for '*Recording 2003/2004 Second Generation Landcare Grants project information using CAMS*' to:

- Monitor expenditure
- Record details on activities
- Record the spatial location of activities
- Report on activities, outputs, issues and budget lines

This is important data to monitor Landcare's contribution to regional landscape change, where funding is being spent, how partnerships in on ground works are being developed and the mix of activities undertaken by Landcare groups.

Landcare activities other than on ground works will be monitored with a framework of largely qualitative tools the details of which will be fleshed out in the development of the Regional Landcare Evaluation Plan to be completed in July 2004.

## Evaluation

To determine Landcare's contribution towards achieving the short and long-term outcomes in this strategy, ongoing evaluation of Landcare's impact will be needed to supplement data collected by ongoing monitoring.

In July 2004, the regional Landcare Coordination Team will develop a Regional Landcare Monitoring and Evaluation Plan. The regional Landcare Coordination Team will also undergo monitoring and evaluation training to be equipped to implement the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan. It is anticipated that the plan will include an annual workshop using the Most Significant Change approach to evaluation, to review the previous year, identify strengths, weaknesses and gaps and ensure continual improvement is adopted into planning for the next year.

It is also proposed that stories about Landcare's achievements will continue to be collected. In particular, these stories will be used as a basis for the evaluation of Landcare – to determine what Landcare has contributed to Regional Catchment Strategy targets and what improvements are needed to continue appropriate support for Landcare.

## Review

The evaluation of Landcare can provide useful information, but it will be of little value unless it is used and acted upon. For this reason, it is proposed to review this Landcare Support Strategy annually to take account of lessons learned from the evaluation and make any adjustments needed to ensure that Landcare is being supported in the most effective and efficient way. The North Central CMA will initiate and lead each review.

“Landcare exists because it is “grass roots, people caring.”  
Guildford Landcare Coordinator

“We can’t sit back and expect that the passion and commitment can be tapped endlessly without providing appropriate sustenance to reinvigorate or rejuvenate. The more Landcare gives, the more seems to be expected of them. There’s a cost and we have to be prepared to cover the cost, to pay dues, to ensure we hold on to what is a priceless asset.”  
Public servant

“What excites me about Landcare is how it is helping communities to take a much broader view of the environment.”  
North Central CMA Board member

“It’s not what Landcare can do for you, but what you can do for Landcare”  
President, Kerang Landcare Group

“Working on other people’s properties really broke down the barriers. It made them realize that we are all interconnected.”  
Long term Landcare member

“The Landcare ethos is “caught” by neighbours from enthusiasts”  
Peri-urban Landcare group member

“What interests me about Landcare is the diversity of people involved. It draws together people from a huge range of ages, experiences and backgrounds. This leads to the exchange of ideas between people of different walks of life, eg between farmers and environmentalists.”  
Member, Castlemaine Urban Landcare Group

“Landcare is the last thing left in a lot of communities as a common interest – the football and tennis have gone.” (Member, Mid-Loddon Tree Group)

“The Campaign for the National Park in this area was significant. It formed a focus for community activism, was an example of the Landcare cause at its best because so many Landcare groups were actively involved in the process.”  
Member, Friend of the Box Ironbark Forest

# Appendix 1

## Introduction

In the Victorian Action Plan for Second Generation Landcare (2003), CMAs in Victoria were asked to develop a Regional Landcare Support Strategy. This was intended to be an overarching strategic document that sits beneath the North Central Regional Catchment Strategy and the Victorian Action Plan for Second Generation Landcare and above Landcare Network and Group Action Plans. The strategy would become the primary strategic planning and investment framework for Landcare Support in the CMA regions.

The Landcare Support Strategies are required to be endorsed and accredited by 30 June 2004 and should cover the five-years to 2009.

In selecting a process to develop the Landcare Support Strategy, the North Central CMA wanted to:

- Provide opportunities for the widest possible involvement
- Build on past successes
- Encourage learning and understanding of the approach for people involved (capacity building)
- Use a process that could be ongoing and adaptable at all levels (from individual groups to region-wide)

The process was developed and implemented by Viv McWaters, Beyond the Edge Pty Ltd and Jessica Dart, Clear Horizon, using elements of Appreciative Inquiry and Most Significant Change evaluation process. The basis of the process was storytelling.

## Stage One: Interview Guide Development

An interview guide was developed that would enable anyone who wanted to undertake interviews. Six half-day training programs were also provided. The interview guide was designed in two parts. Part one was background on the interviewee, their story about a significant Landcare experience and comments on why the story was significant. Part two of the interview guide asked about what worked in Landcare and should be retained, what hopes and aspirations the interviewee had for Landcare and what specific support was required.

## Stage Two: Conducting Interviews – collecting stories and other data

Individuals carried out interviews, wrote them up and sent them in to a central location.

## Stage Three: Story and Data Analysis

Part one of the interviews (the stories) were put into emergent categories. These were read by the Advisory Committee and the most representative stories selected for use in the Landcare Summit. This process was required to have a manageable number of stories to use.

The remaining parts of the interviews were analysed.

## Stage Four: Landcare Summit

People were invited to a two-day Landcare Summit to have further direct input to the development of the strategy.

Participants at the Summit used the stories to identify how Landcare works when it is at its very best; determined their hopes (visions) for Landcare in 2009; and identified actions that would help contribute to achieving the visions. A graphic facilitator was engaged for the summit to help capture the outcomes in pictures.

### **Stage Five: Strategy Writing**

Using the information in the interviews, plus the information that came from the Landcare Summit, a Landcare Support Strategy was drafted using plain English and avoiding strategy/bureaucratic language.

### **Stage Six: Individual/ group/ organisation use of the strategy**

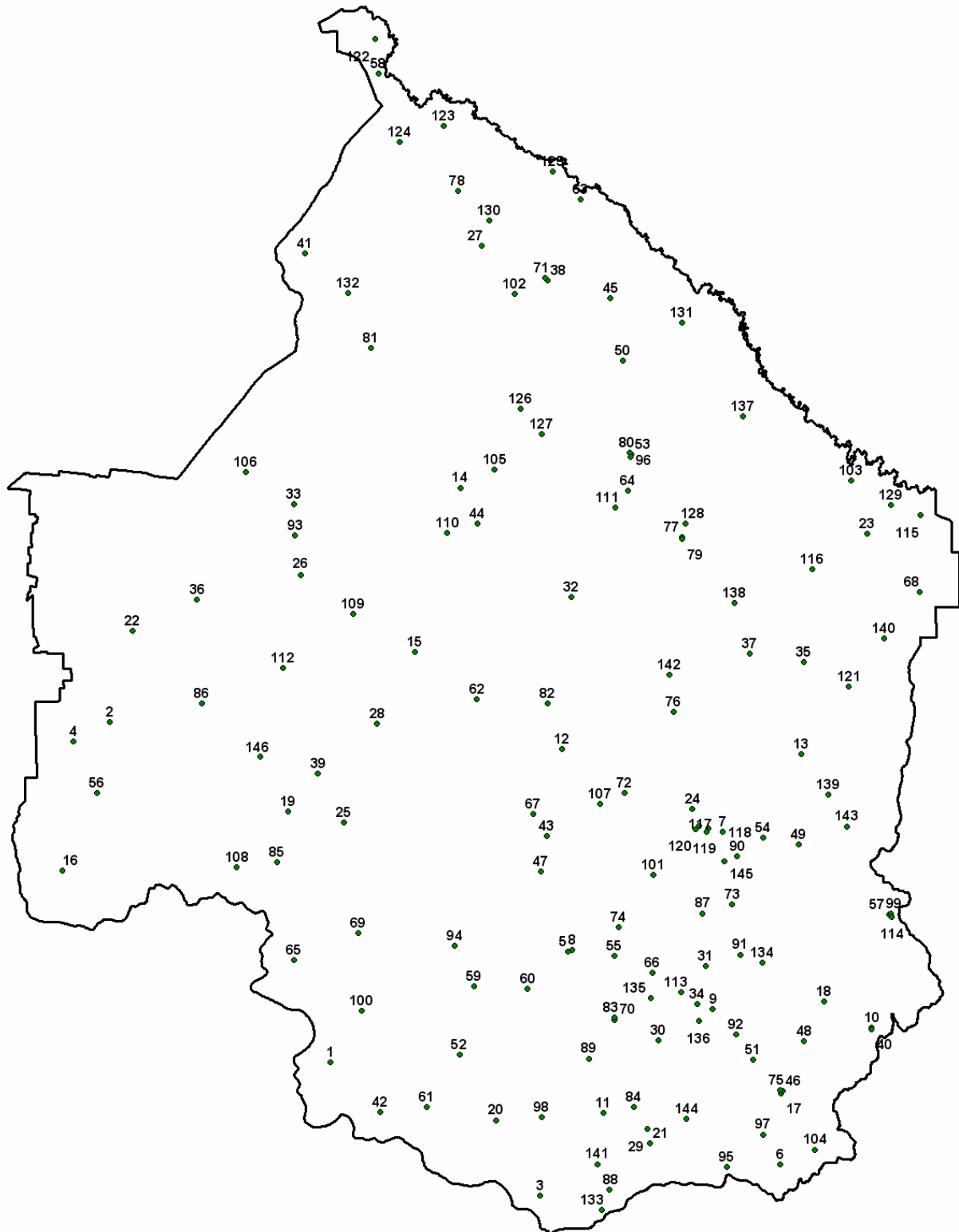
The strategy was released as a working document with individuals, groups and organisations invited to identify how they can contribute to Landcare support over the next five years.

### **Stage Seven: Rolling Process**

All the interviews were burnt onto CDs and provided to any stakeholders who wanted to use them for ongoing strategy development/action planning. People are encouraged to continue to tell their stories, collect stories, and use stories as a basis for ongoing assessment of Landcare and its achievements.

# Appendix 2: Location of Landcare Groups in North Central

Landcare Groups In The North Central CMA





Group Number and Name

- 1 Amphitheatre Landcare Group
- 2 Avon Plains Landcare Group
- 3 Bald Hills-Creswick Landcare Group
- 4 Banyena Landcare Group
- 5 Baringhup Young Landcare
- 6 Ashbourne Landcare Group
- 7 Axe Creek Catchment Landcare Group
- 8 Baringhup Landcare Group
- 9 Barkers Creek Landcare and Wildlife Group
- 10 Baynton-Sidonia Landcare Group
- 11 Blampied-Kooroocheang Landcare Group
- 12 Bridgewater Lamb Group
- 13 Campaspe Runnymede Landcare Group
- 14 Boort West Landcare Group
- 15 Brenanah Creek Group
- 16 Callawadda Landcare Group
- 17 Campaspe River and Land Management Group
- 18 Campaspe Valley Landcare Group
- 19 Carapoee Landcare Group
- 20 Clunes Creek and Landcare Group
- 21 Daylesford Region Landcare Group
- 22 Donald and District Landcare Group
- 23 Echuca West Salinity Landcare Committee
- 24 Eaglehawk Environment Group
- 25 Emu Landcare Group
- 26 Charlton Landcare Group
- 27 Fairley Bael-Bael Landcare Group
- 28 Fentons Creek Conservation Group
- 29 Glenlyon Upper Loddon Landcare Group
- 30 Guildford/Upper Loddon Catchment Landcare Group
- 31 Harcourt Valley Landcare Group
- 32 Jarklin Landcare Group
- 33 Glenloth Landcare Group
- 34 Golden Point Landcare Group
- 35 Hunter Landcare Group
- 36 Jeffcott North Landcare Group
- 37 Kamarooka Landcare Group
- 38 Kerang Landcare Group
- 39 Kooreh Group
- 40 Kyneton Elite Lamb Group
- 41 Lalbert Landcare Group
- 42 Lexton Landcare Group
- 43 Kangeraar Catchment Landcare Group
- 44 Kinapanial Landcare Group
- 45 Korop/Gannawarra Landcare Group
- 46 Kyneton Cattle Finishers
- 47 Laanecoorie Top Crop Group
- 48 Langley Landcare Group
- 49 Lower Axe Creek Waterway Group
- 50 Macorna Landcare Group
- 51 Malmsbury District Landcare Group
- 52 McCallums Creek Landcare Group
- 53 Mid Loddon Tree Group
- 54 Lonlea and District Landcare Group
- 55 Maldon Urban Landcare Group
- 56 Marnoo Land and Water Management Group
- 57 McIvor Landcare Group
- 58 Mid Murray Landcare Network
- 59 Middle Creek Catchment Group
- 60 Moolort Landcare Group
- 61 Mt Bolton/Beckworth Landcare Group
- 62 Mt Korong Landcare Group
- 63 Murrabit Landcare Group
- 64 Mologa District Landcare
- 65 Moonambel-Frenchmans Landcare Group
- 66 Muckleford Catchment Landcare Group
- 67 Murphy's Creek Catchment Landcare Group
- 68 Nanneella/Timerring Landcare Group
- 69 Natte Yallock Landcare Group
- 70 Newstead Landcare Group
- 71 Normanville Farm Advance
- 72 North Central Plains Farm Tree Group
- 73 North Harcourt-Sedgwick Landcare Group
- 74 Nuggety Land Protection Group
- 75 Pipers Creek and District Landcare Group
- 76 North Central Landcare Group
- 77 North Central Regional Waterwatch
- 78 Mystic Park and District Landcare Group
- 79 Pine Grove Farm Advance Group
- 80 Pyramid Hill FM500
- 81 Quambatook Landcare Group
- 82 Salisbury West Landcare Group
- 83 Sandy Creek Landcare Group
- 84 Shepherds Flat Landcare Group
- 85 Stuart Mill Landcare Group
- 86 Swanwater Landcare Group
- 87 Ravenswood Valley Landcare Group
- 88 Rocky Lead Landcare Group
- 89 Sandon-Werona Landcare Group
- 90 Sheepwash Creek Landcare Group
- 91 Sutton Grange Landcare Group
- 92 Taradale Walking and Landcare Group
- 93 Teddywaddy Rabbit Action Group
- 94 Timor West Landcare Group
- 95 Trentham Landcare Group
- 96 Terrick Terrick Landcare Group
- 97 Tylden Landcare Group
- 98 Ullina Landcare Group
- 99 Upper Campaspe Landcare Group
- 100 Upper Avoca Landcare Forum
- 101 Upper Spring Creek Landcare Group
- 102 Wandella Landcare Group
- 103 Wharparilla West Land Management Group
- 104 Woodend and 5 Mile Creek Landcare Group
- 105 Yando Landcare Group
- 106 Wycheproof Landcare group
- 107 West Marong Landcare Group
- 108 Winjallock Landcare Group
- 109 Woosang Landcare Group
- 110 Wychitella District Landcare Group
- 111 Yarrowalla and District Tree Group
- 112 Yawong Conservation Group
- 113 Friends of Campbells Creek
- 114 Heathcote Tree Group
- 115 Koyuga/Kanyapella Landcare Group
- 116 Lockington and Districts Landcare
- 117 Bendigo Field Naturalists Club
- 118 Bendigo Creek Floodplain Group
- 119 Box Ironbark Farm Forestry Network
- 120 Raywood Cropping Group
- 121 Elmore/Rochester Farm Group
- 122 Tyntynder Landcare Group
- 123 Pental Island Landcare Group
- 124 Lake Boga Landcare Group
- 125 Benjeroop Landcare Group
- 126 Canary Island Landcare Group
- 127 Loddon Vale Landcare Group
- 128 Calivil Landcare Group
- 129 Echuca Urban Landcare Group
- 130 Lake Charm Landcare Group
- 131 Cohuna Landcare Group
- 132 Prairie Ground Cherry Action Group
- 133 Wattle Flat - Pootilla Landcare Group
- 134 Specimen Gully Landcare Group
- 135 Castlemaine Landcare Group
- 136 Chewton Landcare Group
- 137 Gunbower Landcare Group
- 138 Bendigo Creek Floodplain Landcare Group
- 139 Campaspe-Runnymede Landcare Group
- 140 Campaspe River Reserve Committee
- 141 Blampied-Kooroocheang Landcare Group
- 142 Northern United Forestry Group
- 143 Mt Pleasant Creek Catchment Landcare Group
- 144 Malmsbury Landcare Group
- 145 Bushlinks
- 146 St Arnaud Hills Landcare Group



# Appendix 3: Stories that demonstrate the 'best' of Landcare

## Story #72 Through learning I obtained enlightenment

A local farmer lasered his paddock, then a little native pea came up. The farmer put a fence and a tyre around it and protected it, and valued it. I'm proud of that – his change in attitude.

From a personal perspective, it's been more of an evolution. As a boy, my job was to spray out a weed we called 'blue star thistle'. We thought it a terrible plant. For years I tried to kill this plant. I then found out that it was a native and quite rare. I now cherish and protect this plant. Through learning, I obtained enlightenment (like a Buddhist). The nature of reality changes, and something that was terrible is now something to be protected and treasured.

The significance of this story for me is personal growth and understanding. Many people who claim to be gurus don't know anything and have no understanding of what is there. We must be prepared to learn more.

President, Loddonvale Landcare Group

## Story #36 Positive feedback does wonders

The rehabilitation of Chinaman's Point made a huge difference. The area had been degraded through the gold-rush days and then further worked over by the local Shire's use as gravel pits. The planning and organisation of the rehabilitation work took some time and the exciting part was that we weren't working in isolation – the shire, North Central CMA, Parks Victoria, Threatened Species Network, Chewton Primary School, Castlemaine Field Naturalists all worked towards planting plants and maintaining the area. As a result the number and the different species of birds that have reappeared is amazing – this area is now included in the Castlemaine Diggings National Heritage Park so the ongoing maintenance should be ensured.

The natural regeneration that is also happening because of the weed control makes this area very special and is being acknowledged by other people not associated with Landcare. There are many more visitors and walking groups and they all comment favourably which makes it all feel worthwhile. Positive feedback does wonders for keeping going!

President, Golden Point Landcare Group

## Story #55 Managing Landcare into the future

The development of a five-year plan for the group was a turning point which enabled us all to focus on a plan for our area.

Since then we have embarked on two major revegetation programs, which have encouraged people who have not previously been actively involved in these areas of development. This has also encouraged individual members to put forward projects and with some assistance to develop funding submissions and be responsible for carrying through their projects on behalf of the group.

Naturally, this spreads the workload away from the president and secretary. Two new projects are being handled in this way.

The development of the plan ensured that all members had something to say and provide some level of impact to the decision-making. Because they were involved they have become more focussed and have 'ownership' of the planned activities.

By taking on these responsibilities hopefully it will mean, when the time comes, that there will be members willing to take on the office bearer roles.

Loddonvale Landcare group member

### **Story #17 From little things...**

Guest speaker attracted her to attend a meeting. When she attended she found that he spoke well and inspired her with his visionary posters of how land could look. It highlighted to her that it was possible to make changes. "Someone gave me a vision, and it's my vision now." The meeting showed her that personally you could make a difference, and as a group make a bigger difference. Because of that, she proceeded to gain knowledge from the group – it was a way of educating herself.

Last year, there was very little funding – there was project momentum, yet funding ending. And strong committee meetings that everyone turned up to. They discussed what they would do". There was a lot of work to do yet. They decided they didn't want to lose momentum. The Project Manager then decided to continue as Project Manager without pay. She was supported to do this by the group.

They then gained sponsorship money. Everyone donated their time. Resulting report of four A4 pages detailing who did what – eg. seed collectors collecting for nothing. Resulted in \$90,000 worth of on-ground work.

Then there was a note in Newsletter – more funding was available. The Project Manager then took phone calls that overwhelmed her.

Coordinator, Upper Spring Creek Landcare group

### **Story #20 Creating a sense of community**

One day was the weed information activity day. For me that felt as though the group was responding to a need in the community. It gave a feeling of satisfaction within the group by satisfying a need in the community. It was an issue that had interest right across the whole community both large and small landholders. We had very high quality speakers. To me it was a turning point for the group, like they had found their feet. Even though it had been an intensive day people still wanted to stay around and socialize afterwards. This brought a lot of people out who were not originally involved. It was an opportunity to have direct contact with the wider community. There was a high level of learning associated with it; it was a thirsting for information from those attending. I was amazed and impressed with the quality of presenters and how relevant they made it.

The Christian community group, who have an annual camp at Adekate Camp in our area offered to do volunteer work with our group. Thirty individuals came for two and a half hours to work on ten properties. They were involved in a range of activities including planting, seed collection and fence removal. Everyone had a great day and they are wanting to make this an annual event. The members of the group are mostly from Melbourne. For our group the people's time contribution was very valuable.

Secretary, Wattle Flat Pootilla Landcare Group

### **Story #32 Landcare as a political force for change**

Some eight years ago, a large local estate, which is administered by a company in Bendigo, was up for lease by tender. The previous lessees had let the place become overrun with weeds. Pressure was brought to bear by local landholders on the administrators to ensure that land management issues were included in the tender process. This resulted in a turnaround in the management of the land.

Landcare enables small groups to get things done, such as putting pressure on the local Council to look seriously at flood plan management. It promotes ideas, provides a social outlet and engages other community entities, such as the local school.

I have been a member of the Campaspe Landcare Group for five years and am currently in my second year as Chairman.

Landcare requires a “one in all in” approach. Landcare is the community, if you don’t care about Landcare, you don’t care about your community. Many people have been practising Landcare for generations.

Turning around the weed problem on the aforementioned estate was significant. The fact that, following community input, it was leased to a person who looked after it rather than being leased to the highest tenderer, as had been the case previously. This showed initiative and prompted other landowners to act on weeds. It made adjoining landholders lift their game. It inspired a change of attitude. Others saw what could be done, showed how things can change, new broom.

President, Campaspe Valley Landcare Group

### **Story #35 Squirrels to Tuans**

I first became involved in Landcare when I moved back to the country and have seen it evolve from just a few committed people to lots of people being interested – even if they’re not sure what they can or should be doing. I like to see things improve through weed control and planting as these help control feral animals and provide habitat for native flora and fauna. I am in the process of updating the photo points for the projects that have been going on in the valley for the last 5 years.

Golden Point Landcare worked with the Threatened Species Network (North Central CMA) to identify sites in the area that were the habitat for the phascogale. People had talked about seeing “squirrels” on their window ledges and didn’t know what they were. Jenni Collier from North Central CMA provided information about the phascogale’s lifestyle and hair tubes for monitoring – when the hairs were stuck onto the sticky sheet they were collected, recorded and sent away for identification. The tubes were placed in 20 sites along Forest Creek catchment and we had five confirmed sites. This corridor linked Specimen Gully to Forest Creek and Fryers Forest.

Everyone involved learnt so much about biodiversity – for phascogales to be found in our area meant that there was enough food sources, not enough predators to wipe them out. It was exciting to find these animals alive and well and that all the Landcare weed control and revegetation projects were helping improve their habitat. The children involved took the tubes and their stories to their schools which meant the word was being spread about how important it is to look after our bushland.

Golden Point Landcare Group

### **Story #38 I’m stoked the Landcare is taking an interest in Aboriginal issues**

I’m of Thursday Island descent on my father’s side. Born in Perth WA and adopted at birth to a Victorian family I was flown to Melbourne at the age of six weeks. I grew up in the western suburbs of Melbourne in a very lovely non-indigenous family who had a deep appreciation of the outdoors and natural environment. At the same time my family also fostered an Aboriginal girl who was ten years older than me. She was part of the stolen generation so I suppose I grew up thinking I was Aboriginal and she was my sister. It wasn’t till I was 13 it was made clear that I was actually of Thursday Islander descent. We used to have wonderful family holidays in the Grampians every school holidays for years, it was a very special place to our family. It was there that our parents used to take us for walks through the bush – pointing out the beauty of nature. We were brought up to be in awe of nature and how insignificant man was in comparison. As I got older my adopted father died when I was seven, my brother took on the father role in the family and influenced me in my thinking about the outdoors. He continued to take me snorkelling, camping, climbing, bush walking. Given that influence I then enrolled to do outdoor education at University (Bendigo). It was accidental that I had to find a job at the uni and I happened to be at the right place at the right time. At the age of 21 I was offered an Aboriginal Ranger traineeship. So in 1987 I began my career with the CF&L (Conservation Forests and Lands).

The first five years as a ranger I got to meet lots of people who are absolutely passionate about the environment and all for different reasons. I suppose I realised that despite all those differing interests there could always be common ground that could be found – eg the love of the bush. That's what I value in people now.

I think becoming a mother puts a different perspective for life and that's given me even more of a drive to care for this country because now I have children who will inherit it – it's now become personal.

I resigned after having three kids from National Parks and the following two to three years I grieved. There was something definitely missing in my life – I didn't feel whole and what I found is during that time being able to go out into the bush, listen to the silence, feel the wind on my face, smell the bush after the rain, watch a swamp wallaby grazing quietly. These experiences were my strength emotionally and physically to live my life and have a quality of life. I hadn't recognised the spiritual or emotional benefit to me, those three years I couldn't go into the bush every day told me that it is something I needed as a human being. There was an offer of work in Bendigo three years ago with working on community grants then the possibility of indigenous project officer came up to work with Brien (Nelson). Always had a draw to cultural heritage and saw this as a focus in my work area. I've learnt more in the last three years about cultural heritage than the last ten as a ranger. Parks Vic has developed the opportunities for indigenous people to learn more about their own culture. Today (2004) I believe indigenous people do have a contribution in Landcare or what we call caring for the country. I think we can learn more about sustainable practices by looking at traditional lifestyles. For a culture to have survived for 40,000 years they must have something right (to have lived off the land). Connection to country is important for indigenous people, it's a cultural obligation to care for country.

I'm the eternal optimist. I can't really highlight any particular experiences because for me it is still very early days. What we're trying to do at the moment before we even try to start protecting or conserving cultural heritage in changing the attitudes of people. Dispel some of the myths about the past in relation to the black past in their state and country. I'm stoked that Landcare is taking an interest in Aboriginal culture, communities and their planning for nature resource management. The fact that Aboriginal people are now being recognised as traditional owners of their land. I look forward to working with (I might be too old), I'm looking forward to the third and fourth generation landcarers. The motivation for all this is to present cultural heritage in a certain way – trying to instil an empathy in people towards Aboriginal culture has come from seeing sites destroyed and a lack of value in the past.

It's the beginning of change, change in attitudes. To hear the comments from elders, it gladdens their hearts (it's a healing process) to see that people want to care for that country they they've always held dear to their hearts – their ancestral lands.

Most indigenous people who work in land management are doing it for their elders and their children. For me I also do it for the wider community. Which is on the path to reconciliation.

Parks Vic Officer