

Victorian Landcare Council Activity Briefing Note 19



Victoria has more than 780 Landcare groups and 67 Landcare networks, and more than 500 other community-based natural resource management groups. The State's Landcare and other community-based natural resource management groups have around 60,000 members and engage an additional 45,000 volunteers in on-ground activities each year. Advocacy for grassroots Landcare is a big job - **here's what the VLC has been doing over the last six months**—see more detail at www.vlc.org.au.

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Throughout 2014, **we have been “Making the Case”** for continuation of funding for the 68 Landcare Facilitators. Facilitators help communities get more done. Sustainable farming practices and improved habitat is not something government can do on its own—it needs volunteer effort from communities, and Landcare is a credible, trusted platform for long-term change, helping to make landscapes and communities more resilient. In collaboration with the FTLA, we have documented the impact of facilitators and presented our case for on-going funding of facilitators to Coalition Ministers and Labor parliamentarians. Thanks to VLC President Terry Hubbard for meeting with politicians.



Our **Landcare Champions program** invites politician to speak out for Landcare, and keeps them informed of Landcare issues. We have begun with Federal members, and Cathy McGowan, MP for Indi in NE Victoria, is our first Champion. Thanks to Sandy Mackenzie for getting this started, and contact VLC Secretary Kaye Rodden for an invitation to send to your local Federal member.

The whole Committee of Management has developed a business case and then a budget for **Federal Government funding** to enable the VLC to build Landcare capacity and participation in NRM decision making. Funding is being finalised in September, with a further 2 years of funding. This means we can strengthen our organisation and offer more to Landcare. Thanks to Phil Horner and Ian Maclagan from the COM for their work on our planning and management structures.

We meet three times a year with **DEPI Landcare** team, most recently to discuss evaluation of facilitator program, status of State funding for Landcare (budget continues at same level), training for facilitators and volunteers, and Landcare access to data provided in project reporting. We will continued negotiation for a place on the editorial panel of magazine, and to seek a positive response on State Landcare Forum in 2015, with Minister Smith.

Presentation to **CMA Chairs and CEOs**, and draft of VLC policy on the partnership with CMAs, where we propose that the VLC's role is to support regional Landcare communities in strengthening their working relationship with their CMA. The policy suggests essential agenda items for that discussion.

We developed two concise statements on how Landcare can be better integrated in the NRM system, First in a submission to the **Senate Inquiry** into the National Landcare Program, and then with a response to the **Consultation Paper** from the design team for the NLP. We suggested that the



Federal Government take the rhetoric about participation and turn it into written agreements about how Landcare and regional NRM organisations will work together, then measure implementation and pay attention to that feedback. Negotiate clear expectations of Landcare Networks and CMAs in relation to planning and service delivery, and set up and use feedback mechanisms that inform all parties in a timely way about performance. Thanks to Ross Colliver for his work here.

We developed and piloted our first workshop "**Taking Landcare Planning to the Next Level**" with Wottenhall Foundation funding, with Donald and District Landcare. We will run the workshop in Goulburn Broken region in October.



COM members presented Landcare members concerns with the independent consultation team on **On-Shore Gas**, and we have commenced research for information on Coal Seam Gas for Landcare members.

Ross Colliver and Kaye Rodden won three year funding from Natural Resources Conservation League (NRCL) for **CLEA—Community Learning for Environmental Action**—a project to develop learning and mentoring between community environmental groups. CLEA's focus will be the skills and knowledge needed to organise community action, collaborate and influence decision makers.

We are in **discussion with FTLA** for collaboration between VLC and FTLA. Exhibition space at the **National Landcare Conference**, to be shared with the FTLA, will be staffed by VLC delegates.

Our collaboration with **Australian Landcare International (ALI)** continues, supporting funding of small Landcare projects overseas ([see here](#) for examples).

We hold **VLC COM meetings** every two months, with continual email discussion on matters as these arise. Endless hours by Secretary Kaye Rodden has kept us organised with agenda, minutes and actions to be taken. During National Landcare Conference Workshop, we will join a workshop with the **National Landcare Network** on future directions for Landcare.

Phil Horner organised a very successful **VLC Forum and Council meeting** at Ovens, NE Victoria, 17-18 May (there we are below). Planning is underway for next Forum, 18-19 October, Mornington Peninsula. Come along!

