



Victorian
Landcare
Program



West Gippsland Landcare Support Plan

2024–2028



Landcare
in West Gippsland

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Assessibility

This document is also available in pdf format on the WGCMA website www.wgcma.vic.gov.au For Further Information West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority PO Box 1374, Traralgon VIC 3844 T: 1300 094 262

Traditional Owner Acknowledgement

WGCMA acknowledge and pay our respects to the Traditional Land Owners and other indigenous people within the West Gippsland catchment area: the GunaiKurnai, the Bunurong and Boon Wurrung, and the Wurundjeri people. We also recognise the contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations in land and natural resource management.

Cover Image

Claudia Tivendale Photography.

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Abbreviations

CMA - Catchment Management authority
DEECA - Department Energy, Environment and Climate Action
LVI - Landcare Victoria Inc
RLC - Regional Landcare Facilitator
DAFF - Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (Australian Govt)
SAF - Sustainable Agriculture Facilitator
GLAWAC - Gunai Kurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation



How to use this plan

This Plan outlines how the West Gippsland CMA supports Landcare and provides a framework for an ongoing partnership between the West Gippsland CMA and Landcare in the region.

The Plan guides the work of the Regional Landcare Coordinator and can be used by all stakeholders to understand the relationships and processes that guide the relationship.

Specifically, it can be used to:

- Understand how the West Gippsland CMA supports Landcare activities. Understand the Landcare focused roles in the region and how they relate to each other.
- Communicate Landcare's activities and impact in the region.
- Identify the key policies and strategies that may impact on Landcare's work.
- Understand the relationship between Landcare and the CMA, including the guiding principles, strategic focus and processes for working together.
- Guide the regular activities of the Regional Landcare Coordinator.
- Guide the annual process for developing a shared Action Plan that can respond to the emerging needs and priorities of Landcare in the region.
- Guide a monitoring and review process.





Landcare in West Gippsland in 2023

5
Networks

75
Groups

50+
Associated environmental groups

2300
Volunteers and active members

What is Landcare?

Landcare is an Australian-wide grassroots movement of community groups, networks and individuals working in their local area to improve and enhance the natural environment through sustainable land management, agricultural practices and conservation activities.

Landcare has a long and proud history in West Gippsland, made up of a committed and motivated grassroots community that have delivered best practice natural resource management for more than 30 years. In 2023, five Landcare networks support 75 Landcare groups and approximately 50 associated environmental groups such as 'friends of' groups and foreshore committees of management.

All these groups and networks drive projects that address local and landscape scale issues through on ground works such as revegetation, pest plant and animal management, soil health and riparian management. They also build skills and social connections in the community through training and events.

We recognise the successful history of Landcare in the region, its current important role in enhancing the West Gippsland environment, and its ability to adapt to meet emerging challenges. We believe partnering with Landcare is one of the best ways to achieve great on ground outcomes for our catchment. We also recognise that Landcare belongs to the community, and respect its independence, autonomy and partnership.

Key Roles Working with Landcare

Landcare Groups

Landcare member (Volunteer member of a group)

Supports Landcare through local membership and activities. Members work on local projects and share local knowledge.

Landcare Group committee member (Volunteer elected by a group)

Supports Landcare by leading the local group and guiding projects and activities. These people work with their committee and local members to achieve local outcomes.

Landcare Group Committee Chair (Volunteer elected by a group)

This person ensures their group is meeting legal obligations and advocates at the network level. This person is also an active volunteer guiding projects and activities

Landcare Networks

Landcare Network Chair (volunteer elected by Network)

Supports local groups to connect and collaborate and ensures the Network is meeting legal obligations, this person shares information about their network and advocates at the regional level and support Landcares relationship with the West Gippsland CMA

Local Landcare Facilitator (employed by network, funded by DEECA)

Works with local Landcare groups by facilitating opportunities to develop projects, learn and share new information and gather funding. This person shares info about their network and advocates at the regional level and support Landcares relationship with CMA

Other local Landcare staff (Project Officers, Executive Officers) Employed by Network and funded through grants and projects

Support Landcare by working on specific projects or activities. This person works with the local Landcare facilitator and network committee.

Regional Support

Regional Landcare Coordinator (Employed by WGCMA, funded by DEECA)

This role supports Landcare through actions outlined in this plan. Coordination of opportunities for collaborations, funding and communications. This person coordinates the VLG process in West Gippsland CMA

Sustainable Agriculture Facilitator (SAF) Employed by WGCMA and funded by the Australian Government

This person is a key contact for Landcarers to learn about sustainable agriculture, support Landcare, farmers, industry and community groups to adopt sustainable agriculture practices. Establishing and building partnerships with these key groups is central to the Sustainable Agriculture Facilitator role. This person shares regional information and advocates at a national level. Landcare supports this role to reach new landholders and develop strong relationships.



State Support

Landcare Victoria Inc representatives (Volunteer elected by LVI)

Support Landcare by representing the region at the State Level. This person shares information about LVI's activities and priorities and connect them, as a representative of all groups, into the work of the networks and West Gippsland CMA. This role supports LVI through participation in the Board or Members Council to develop the Victorian Landcare Strategic Plan and assist with the provision of insurance to groups.

Landcare Victoria Inc staff (Employed by LVI)

Provides support to Landcare groups in the region. LVI organises membership, insurance, events, resources and information that can assist groups.

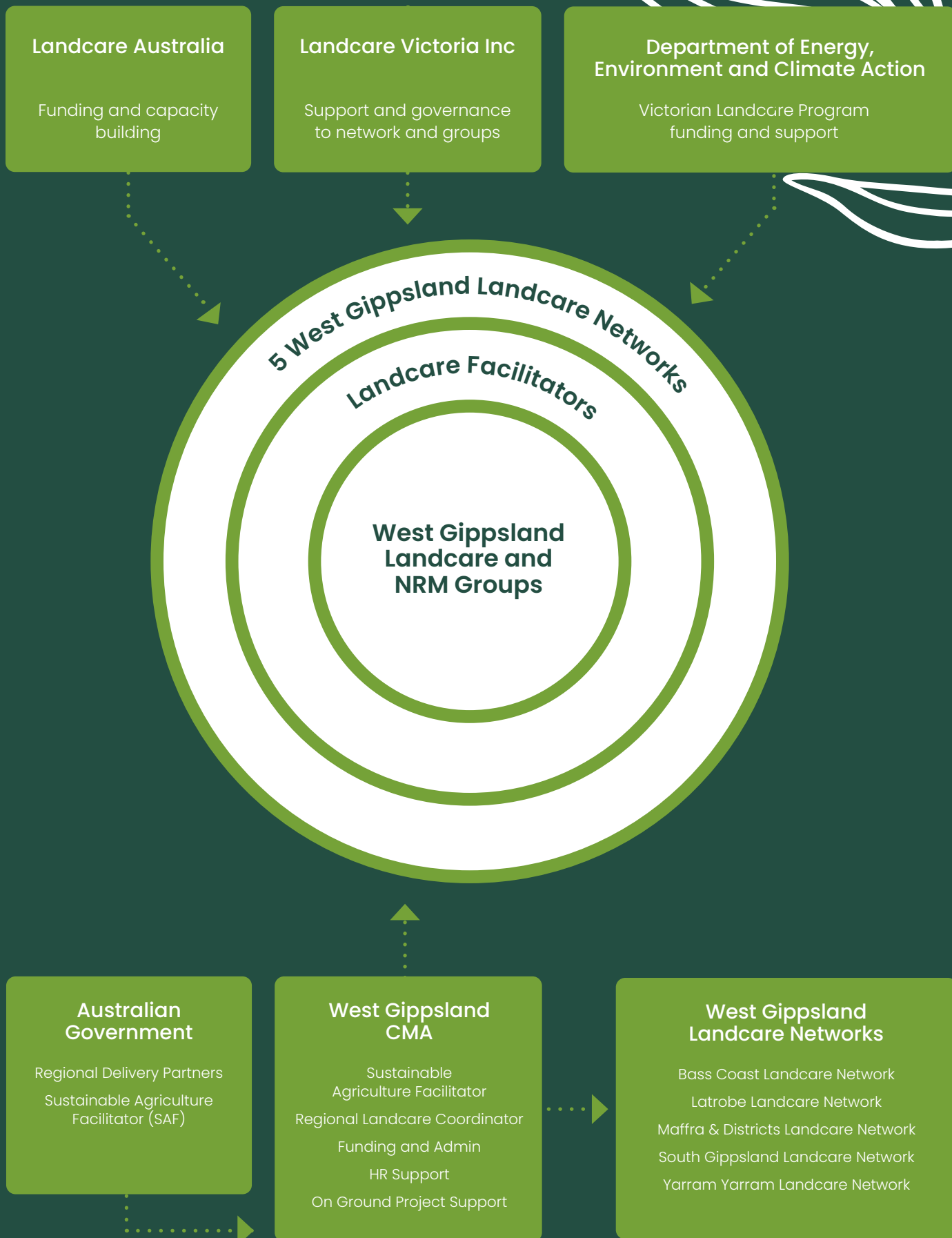
Victorian Landcare program staff (Employed by DEECA)

Supports Landcare by connecting the work of the RLC to state priorities and sharing information and opportunities. This person offers support to regional Facilitators and advocate for Landcare within the State government. This person helps guide the Victorian Landcare Team, which includes Regional Landcare Coordinators and DEECA staff. They coordinate DEECA investment to support Regional Landcare Coordinators, Local Landcare Facilitators and the Victorian Landcare Grants across the state.

Landcare Networks and Groups, friends of groups, agricultural groups and other community NRM groups are supported to advocate and take measures to protect and enhance the natural resources of West Gippsland



Landcare in West Gippsland



Strategic Connections

There are a number of regional, state and national strategies policies and programs that guide the work of the West Gippsland CMA and other government organisations. These policies can determine priority areas of focus for projects. It can be extremely

useful for Landcare members, leaders and staff to understand these strategies and can be helpful for guiding grant applications and project planning.

Summary of key strategies and policies relevant to Landcare in West Gippsland

Regional / Local

West Gippsland Regional Catchment Strategy	WGCMA	The RCS identifies desired regional outcomes and priorities, as well as describing an approach for further inclusion of local priorities. It is an overarching strategic framework for action. It recognises the role of Landcare in local natural resource management and environmental volunteering. It identifies Landcare as a key collaborator in achieving locally relevant outcomes.
West Gippsland Waterway Management Strategy	WGCMA	The purpose of the West Gippsland Waterway Strategy is to ensure the future management of waterways provides the appropriate environmental conditions to support the range of identified values (environmental, social, cultural and economic).
Gunaikurnai Whole of Country Plan	GLaWAC	Has been developed by the Gunaikurnai people and aims to bring together and add to the discussions that Gunaikurnai people have had over the past two decades during their fight for Native Title and paints a picture of how they are now going to move forward.

State (Victorian Government)

Protecting Victoria's environment - Biodiversity 2037	DEECA	Protecting Victoria's Environment – Biodiversity 2037 is Victoria's new plan for the future of Victoria's biodiversity. The Biodiversity Plan embraces transformational developments in thinking about conservation and the sustainability of human civilisation and economic development
Landcare Plan for Victoria 2023-2033	Landcare Victoria Inc.	Outlines the collective goals and priorities of the Landcare community and highlights the key actions and areas where support is needed to deliver on its vision.

Victorians Volunteering in Nature – environmental volunteering plan (EVP) 2018	DEECA	The EVP is a plan to strengthen environmental volunteering to encourage all Victorians to volunteer for nature where and how it suits them. The RLC role supports the implementation of this plan by supporting Landcare to sustain, expand and share their work, and building relationships between Landcare and Aboriginal communities.
Water for Victoria and the Victorian Waterways Management Strategy	DEECA	Water for Victoria is a plan for a future with less water as Victoria responds to the impact of climate change and a growing population, while the Victorian Waterway Management Strategy provides the policy direction for managing Victoria’s waterways and aims to maintain or improve their condition

Federal (Australian Government)

Threatened Species Strategy 2021–2031	DCCEEW	The Threatened Species Strategy is the Australian Government’s way forward for prioritising action and investment, setting the direction for efforts to recover our threatened plants, animals and ecological communities from 2021 to 2031. The Strategy is underpinned by 5-year Action Plans, which set actions and targets to focus efforts on 100 priority threatened species and 20 priority places.
National Soil Strategy 2021–2031	DAFF	The National Soil Strategy sets out how Australia will value, manage and improve its soil for the next 20 years. It prioritises soil health, empowers soil innovation and stewards, and strengthens soil knowledge and capability. It is relevant to Landcare groups working on sustainable agriculture programs and provides funding for soil testing and data collection, research and soil health activities.
Australia’s Strategy for Nature 2019–2030	DCCEEW	Australia’s Strategy for Nature is the overarching framework for all national, state and territory and local strategies, legislation, policies and actions that target nature. The strategy moves away from a purely protection-based approach and strives to incorporate adaptation, resilience and natural resource management in our cities, rural and natural environments, on land and at sea.
Australian Framework for Landcare 2010–2020	DAFF	The Framework is a guide for Landcarers and sets out the vision, main features, guiding principles and key elements of the Landcare approach.

Working in Partnership and Developing the Plan

West Gippsland CMA have long recognised the positive impact Landcare projects have on the local community. West Gippsland Landcare networks have been a key delivery partner for West Gippsland CMA for close to 20 years.

West Gippsland CMA support landcare because:

Landcare has good connections to local communities

Landcare groups and networks have excellent connections to their local communities. Working with landcare groups and networks is an efficient way of engaging people.

Working with landcare creates community ownership

By working with landcare groups and networks, communities gain ownership over projects which often means they are more likely to take care of the project over many years.

Landcare creates many benefits, not just for the environment

Studies have found that supporting landcare groups creating a range of benefits for the local community including improved health benefits, better social connectivity and increased emotional well-being.

The development of the West Gippsland Landcare Support Plan is led by the Regional Landcare Coordinator as a core component of the West Gippsland CMA's funding agreement with DEECA. Consultation of key goals are facilitated during quarterly Regional Landcare Forums and Chairs meetings and bi-annual regional strategic planning events.

Key objectives include:

- Support the operation of networks and groups.
- Understand the breadth and changing nature of community groups and engage them at the appropriate level.
- Understand and respond to the evolving needs of groups by improving access to grants, guidelines, technical assistance and training, while streamlining administration requirements.
- Encourage more people in West Gippsland to act to improve the region's catchment.
- Communicate the efforts of environmental volunteers to value their work, increase awareness of volunteering opportunities and increase awareness of activities in the region.

Governance of the Partnership

The quarterly West Gippsland Regional Landcare Forum (RLF) provides guidance and oversight for the partnership between West Gippsland CMA and Landcare.

The Regional Landcare Coordinator supports the RLF to deliver its role by taking on administrative responsibilities for organising and documenting the quarterly meetings. The RLC also organises quarterly Chairs meetings which is an opportunity for the network Chairs to meet directly with West Gippsland CMA Executive Officer and bi-monthly Landcare staff meetings for facilitators, project officers and coordinators.

The role of the Regional Landcare Forum is to:

- Demonstrate a tangible commitment to the West Gippsland CMA / Landcare partnership
- Provide advice and recommendations to the West Gippsland CMA on regional opportunities and issues
- Ensure CMA is aware of matters of significance to the Landcare across the region
- Seek and review community input on regional landcare matters within the context of setting regional priorities
- Provide a voice for our Landcare Networks and the regions Landcare community.
- Operate within relevant natural resource management laws and regulations
- Monitor Landcare issues and trends and advise the CMA board of any changes
- Meet quarterly to share information and maintain the partnership, including regular review of the Principles of the Partnership
- Guide the process to review and develop the Annual Action Plan as outlined
- Work together to advocate for positive outcomes for the region.

Strategic Objectives

Five key themes and the associated objectives will form the focus of the support outlined in the Action Plan.

Consultations will be facilitated through West Gippsland's Landcare networks and groups. Visits across the region will be undertaken and discussions will be held with Chairs and Facilitators at quarterly Regional Landcare Meetings (RLF) and monthly Landcare staff catch ups.

1 Theme: Align

Objective

Align our work areas across the region

Facilitate collaborative efforts across West Gippsland where goals of Landcare align with those of government and non-government organisations

2 Theme: Sustain

Objective

Support Networks to achieve their goals

Understand and respond to the evolving needs of groups by improving access to grants, guidelines, technical assistance and training, while streamlining administration requirements.

3 Theme: Expand

Objective

Expand beyond the usual ways of Landcare

Develop new ideas and ways to act for the environment through encouragement of inclusive, relevant and diverse opportunities for volunteering in the region.

4 Theme: Understand

Objective

Understand the breadth and changing nature of community groups and engage them at the appropriate level

Increase the visibility and understanding of Landcare to drive investment and engagement through representation at multiple levels.

5 Theme: Value

Objective

Communicate the efforts of environmental volunteers to value their work, increase awareness of volunteering opportunities and increase awareness of activities in the region.

Recognise and celebrate Landcare within government and the broader community.

Action Plan

Standing Actions – Regional Landcare Coordinator (RLC)

The Regional Landcare Coordinator is required, through agreement with DEECA to:

- Support regional Landcare and environmental volunteering
- Support the statewide delivery of the Victorian Landcare Program
- Deliver and report on outcomes that demonstrate the support provided and contribution to priority programs and themes, including the Landcare grants, Aboriginal and Traditional Owner engagement, training and communications.

From this agreement, the Regional Landcare Coordinator commits to the following ongoing actions:

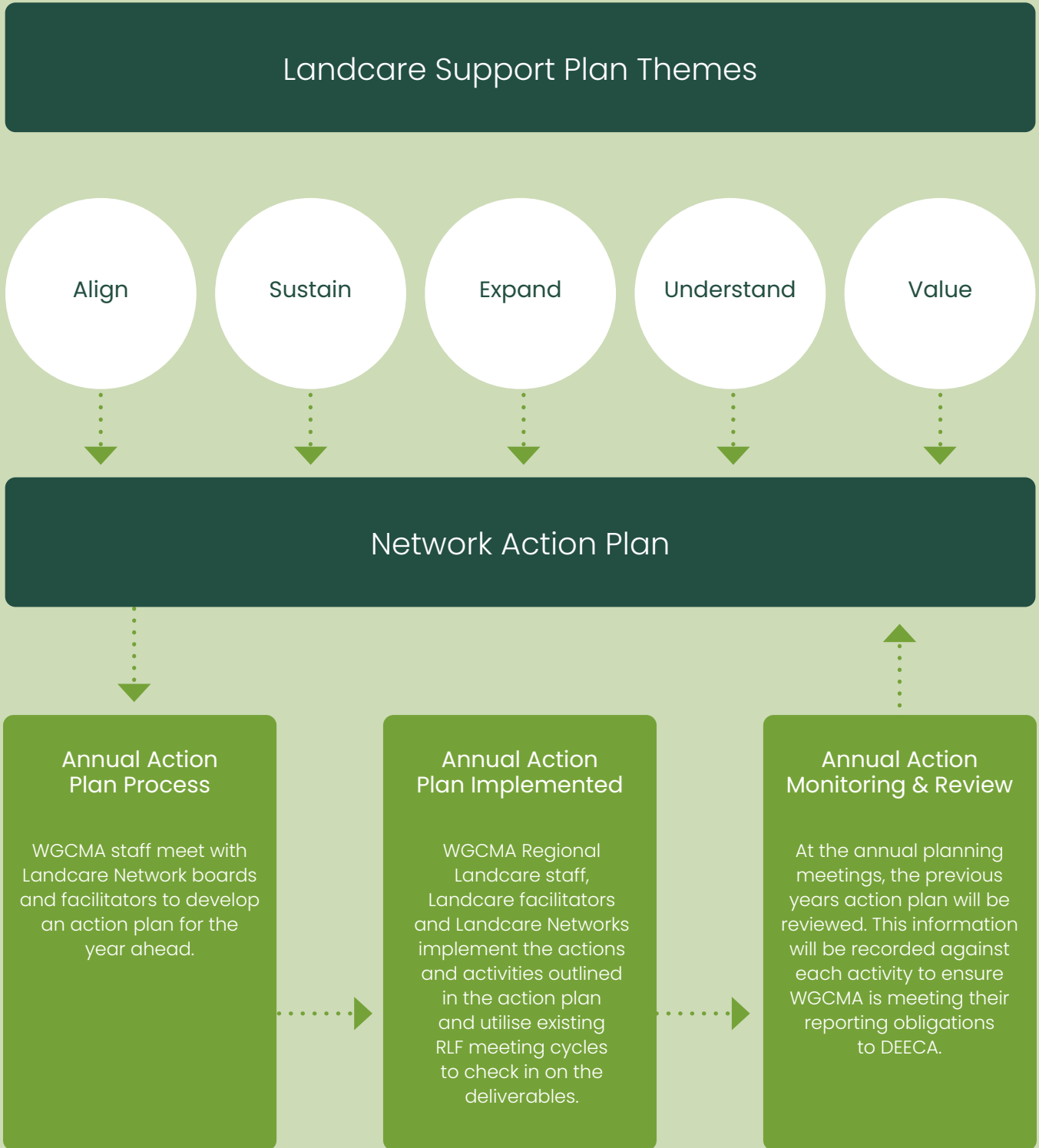
- Organisation of quarterly meetings for Chairs and Facilitators
- Participation in Victorian Landcare Team
- Share training and funding opportunities, information and resources
- Facilitate the publication of regional photos and stories at a state level through the Victorian Landcare and Catchment Magazine
- Work with the West Gippsland CMA Communications team to amplify Landcare activities through official CMA channels.
- Support groups to use and maintain the Victorian Landcare Gateway
- Gather local news and information from Landcare groups and networks and distribute within the West Gippsland CMA. Advocate for Landcare's skills and capacities within project development and raise awareness of the Partnership Principles. Support the communication of landscape issues identified by Landcare.

Standing Actions – Sustainable Agriculture Facilitator (SAF)

The SAF is required through agreement with the Australian Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry to support Landcare in the region with the following actions:

- Engage and inform farmers, landholders, community groups, and agriculture industries within their NRM region about climate-smart, sustainable agriculture practices. This may include sharing relevant government information, policies, programs, and tools; advising of upcoming funding opportunities; sharing relevant training opportunities.
- Facilitate partnerships and connections that will assist farmers, landholders, community groups and agriculture industries to work together to achieve sustainable agriculture outcomes.
- Support the delivery of sustainable agriculture projects in West Gippsland.
- Work with the West Gippsland CMA Communications team to amplify Landcare activities through official CMA channels.

How will the support plan be implemented ?



WGCMA Annual Action Plan Template

Focus Area	Objective	Shared Priorities	WGCMA Actions	Network Actions
Align	<p>Align our work across the region</p> <p>Facilitate collaborative efforts across West Gippsland where goals of Landcare align with those of government and non-government organisations</p>	<p>Example:</p> <p>Focus on and strengthen landcare relationships with Government and non-government organisations</p>		
Sustain	<p>Support Networks to achieve their goals</p> <p>Understand and respond to the evolving needs of groups by improving access to grants, guidelines, technical assistance and training, while streamlining administration requirements.</p>	<p>Example:</p> <p>Support governance and compliance requirements</p>		
Expand	<p>Expand beyond the usual way of Landcare</p> <p>Develop new ideas and ways to act for the environment through encouragement of inclusive, relevant and diverse opportunities for volunteering in the region.</p>	<p>Example:</p> <p>Support development of new interests groups in West Gippsland</p>		
Understand	<p>Understand the breadth and changing nature of community groups and engage them at the appropriate level</p> <p>Increase the visibility and understanding of Landcare to drive investment and engagement through representation at multiple levels.</p>	<p>Example:</p> <p>Increasing diversity of funding source</p>		
Value	<p>Communicate the efforts of environmental volunteers to value their work, increase awareness of volunteering opportunities and increase awareness of activities in the region.</p> <p>Recognise and celebrate Landcare within government and the broader community.</p>	<p>Example:</p> <p>Increasing group membership</p>		

Monitoring and Evaluation

Annually, we collect data from Landcare groups and networks on membership, funding, group health, areas they require support and education; and challenges and threats facing the Landcare groups.

This data is presented in our Landcare Report Card. As described in the objectives, this data will be reviewed to assess emerging trends and assist with the yearly review of this plan to ensure we are working to meet our SMART outcomes by 2028:

- 1** We have maintained or increased the strength of Landcare and Community NRM partnerships through delivery of appropriate support.
- 2** We have increased the number of community-NRM groups it informs and consults
- 3** Landcare and Community NRM groups have increased the number of volunteers in the region. Data will be collected to assess any training requirements by Landcare groups and networks.

We also require groups and networks reporting on their Victorian Landcare Grants and sustainable agriculture events to document the successes and challenges of their completed projects to further inform common themes for targeted support.

Reporting

RLC report to Landcare

The RLC Reports to DEECA annually on the delivery of their work against the agreement. The outputs the RLC reports on will be tabled annually for the Chairs and Facilitators.

This report will include:

- Regional Landcare Report Card – providing an overview of Landcare in the Region
- Summary of outputs delivered
- Progress on the implementation of the Landcare Support Plan

Annual Review

From 2025, the Landcare Networks will report against specific actions that have been committed to under the Annual Action Plan and the RLC will review the actions agreed for the West Gippsland CMA. The RLC will draw together a Summary Review document outlining progress against the actions, including feedback from the review meetings with Networks, actions by the Landcare groups and networks and the West Gippsland CMA actions.

The summary review document will be presented at the December Regional Landcare Forum annually.

Timeline

September

Annual Action Plan Review with Networks

Oct-Nov

RLC/WGCMA to meet with Networks individually to develop an annual action plan for the following calendar year.

Nov-Dec

Development of the Summary Review to be presented at December Regional Landcare Forum.

Program Logic

WGCMA Regional Landcare Support Plan 2024–2028 Program Logic			
Vision	Landcare networks and groups, friends of groups, agricultural groups and other community-based NRM groups are supported to advocate and take measures to protect and enhance the natural resources of West Gippsland.		
Key Themes	Align • Sustain • Expand • Understand • Value		
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the operation of groups and networks. • Understand the breadth and changing nature of community groups and engage them at the appropriate level. • Understand and respond to the evolving needs of groups by improving access to grants, guidelines, technical assistance and training, while streamlining administration requirements. • Encourage more people in West Gippsland to act to improve the region's catchment. • Communicate the efforts of environmental volunteers to value their work, increase awareness of volunteering opportunities and increase awareness of activities in the region. 		
SMART Outcomes	<p>By 2028:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WGCMA has maintained or increased the strength of Landcare and Community NRM partnerships through delivery of appropriate support. • WGCMA have increased the number of community NRM groups it informs and consults. • Landcare and Community NRM groups have increased the number of volunteers in the region. 		
Assumptions that activities will lead to plan outcomes	Providing information to community groups will increase awareness of CMA support, Natural Resource Management activities and opportunities that lead to increased volunteerism.		
WGCMA Landcare Program Objectives	<p>Regional Landcare Coordinator (RLC) Support the operation of Landcare networks and community - NRM groups in West Gippsland</p>	<p>Sustainable Agriculture Coordinator (SAF) Support networks and groups to deliver activities that raise awareness of sustainable agriculture practices.</p>	<p>Other WGCMA Support Build, maintain and strengthen partnerships with Community Groups and Landcare Networks.</p>
Activities	<p>RLC/SAF Common Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Running informal face to face training for networks and groups (ie GIS, sustainable agriculture, project management, new technologies) • Providing formal training to all groups with topics derived from yearly training survey • Sharing external training opportunities, events and grants to all networks and groups (including sustainable agriculture for RALF role) • Identify new and emerging groups, add them to database, upskill if required • Promoting opportunities to volunteer or join a group 		







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