

Supporting the Landcare Movement

Snapshot 2015-16

During 2015/16, the Port Phillip & Westernport CMA continued to provide strategic support and leadership for the region's Landcare movement. This support and leadership is guided by the Port Phillip & Westernport CMA Landcare Support Plan published in 2012/13 and coordinated by a Regional Landcare Coordinator position funded by the Victorian Landcare Program.

Landcare Communication and Promotion

Regular communication was undertaken with the 85 Landcare groups, 13 networks and 250 other community environment groups across the region alerting them to a range of funding opportunities. These included the Victorian Landcare Program, National Landcare Programme grants (through the Port Phillip & Westernport CMA's Community Grants) and Victorian Threatened Species Initiative grants. Groups were also alerted to the opportunity to provide feedback to improve the Port Phillip & Western Port Regional Catchment Strategy.

In addition, eight groups and networks were featured in editions of the Victorian Landcare and Catchment Magazine, along with regular features in the Port Phillip and Westernport CMA's e-newsletter. At the 2015 Victorian Landcare Awards, announced at Government House in September 2015, the Port Phillip and Western Port region was well represented with 14 groups receiving awards or commendations.

Helping groups and networks collaborate

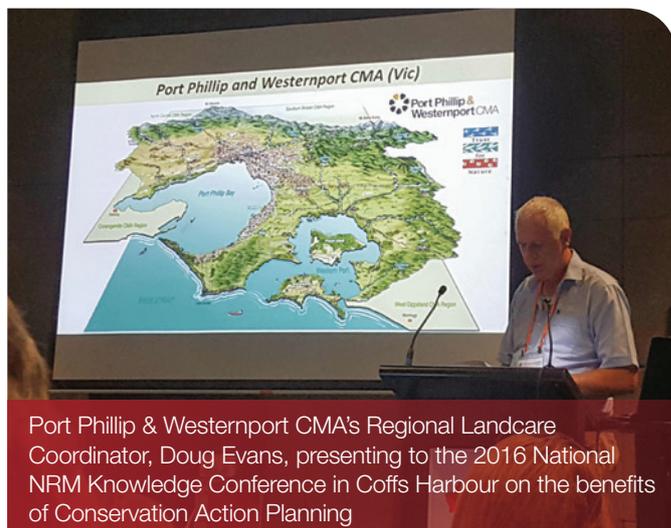
In 2015/16, the Regional Landcare Coordinator convened two forums for community-based Leaders of Landcare Networks. The purpose of these forums, as decided by the participants, is to share and learn from each other, stay informed and provide a shared voice, and collaborate where opportunities arise. Discussions to date have focussed on the challenges Landcare groups face in employing local Landcare Facilitators.

The Regional Landcare Coordinator also convened two forums for local Landcare Facilitators. The participants in this forum focused their discussions on the Victorian Landcare Facilitator Program Delivery Plan requirements.

The Regional Landcare Coordinator also assisted 46 Landcare groups and networks collaborate with one another, along with various agencies, by hosting five Catchment Action Round Tables across the region.



Port Phillip & Westernport CMA's Regional Landcare Coordinator, Doug Evans, with participants at the Yarra Catchment Action Round Table



Port Phillip & Westernport CMA's Regional Landcare Coordinator, Doug Evans, presenting to the 2016 National NRM Knowledge Conference in Coffs Harbour on the benefits of Conservation Action Planning

Community Grants

The Port Phillip & Westernport CMA delivered \$452,000 of Victorian and Australian Government funding to community groups in 2015/16 through the annual Port Phillip & Westernport CMA Community Grants. Fifty-eight groups received support grants of \$500 and 19 larger projects were funded to undertake on-ground works and capacity building activities.

The Regional Landcare Coordinator supported the delivery of the 2015/16 Port Phillip & Westernport CMA Community Grants through the development of the grant guidelines and example projects, providing advice on grant applications to prospective applicants and as a member of the Regional Assessment Panel.

Annual Landcare Snapshot

Data collected from 62 Landcare groups and 10 Landcare networks was compiled into a 2014/15 Landcare Report Card. The Report Card is available at www.ppwcm.vic.gov.au. The Report Card indicates that Landcare groups in this region now cover 731,366 hectares, representing 57.2% of the region and 76.8% of all private rural land. In addition, Landcare volunteers contributed an estimated \$1,546,830 value in reported volunteer time delivering activities, including on-ground works and learning activities.

Landcare groups and networks have also provided updated information on their boundaries, which has been used to update the Port Phillip & Westernport CMA's Geographic Information System (GIS) data and the Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning's state-wide Landcare mapping.

Looking ahead

The Port Phillip & Westernport CMA will continue to pursue the directions outlined in the Regional Landcare Support Plan. Funding from the Victorian Government's Landcare Program for the Regional Landcare Coordinator role and community grants is central to this work. Forums for Landcare Network Leaders and Landcare facilitators will be continued to ensure collaboration and coordination across the region.

With funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Programme, the Port Phillip & Westernport CMA, through the work of the Regional Landcare Coordinator, will continue to assist Landcare groups and networks to use the Conservation Action Planning process, collaborate at Catchment Action Round Tables and provide the opportunity to access community grants for local projects.

Case study - Growing Landcare connectivity

Improving connectivity and collaboration between Landcare groups and networks is an ongoing goal across the Port Phillip & Westernport region. Recent data gathered by the Port Phillip and Westernport CMA is showing that this goal is being achieved across the region.

One focus of the Port Phillip and Westernport CMA's Landcare Support Plan is to encourage groups and networks to "collaborate with other groups and agencies to enhance sharing and possibilities". In order to achieve this, the Regional Landcare Coordinator pursues actions that are designed to connect Landcare groups and networks to each other, as well as to agencies and the private sector.

The 2014/15 Landcare Report Card is the latest summary of data collected from Landcare groups and networks in the region, over many years. This data shows a significant change in the connectedness of Landcare groups over time, based on the increasing number and membership of Landcare networks.

In 2005/06, the first year of data collection, 84 groups formed six networks, meaning that only 38.1% of groups were in a Landcare network. The latest Report Card shows that in 2014/15, 85 groups form 13 networks, meaning that 92.9% of groups were part of a Landcare network.

Year	Total # groups	# networks	# groups in networks	% in a network
2005/2006	84	6	32	38.1%
2007/2008	86	9	47	54.7%
2011/2012	75	10	54	72.0%
2012/2013	78	11	64	82.1%
2013/2014	81	13	75	92.6%
2014/2015	85	13	79	92.9%

This data shows that efforts to improve connections between Landcare groups and networks has been successful and assists groups in sharing knowledge and learning from each other. Ultimately, this leads to increased coordination, collaboration and more effective and efficient use of available resources.

