Bass Coast Landcare Network Inc.

Annual Report
2016-2017

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Incorporation No. A0048273Z

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Background and History

The Bass Coast Landcare Network (BCLN) was formed in 2003 as an affiliation of the Landcare Groups, enabling them to better position themselves for investment from government, local, state, federal and corporate programs. Sixty percent of the 1,400 rural properties in the Network area are involved in and supported by the BCLN.

Under the direction of each of the Groups and the Network, Landcare staff manages a variety of programs, including;

- Partnerships in action – Engaging and delivering partnership in the corporate and agency sector;
- Practical Sustainability in the peri-urban environment – Landcare for urban residents;
- Restoring Our Fragmented Landscape – Remnant Vegetation Protection and Revegetation;
- Pest Plant and Animals Know No Boundaries – Integrated Pest Plant and Animal Control;
- Ecosystem Services Delivery – Valuing biodiversity and guaranteeing a Net Gain;
- Bass Coast Greenhouse Challenge – Putting Targets into Action;
- Land Stewardship – a pathway to resilient and profitable farming

The Bass Coast Landcare Network falls in two Catchment Management Areas, West Gippsland and Port Phillip and Western Port. The top of the catchment is characterised by steep hills with slopes from 20 to 40 degrees whilst the lower catchment area is flat and prone to flooding and salinity. Within the catchment there are a number of small rural settlements surrounded by agricultural enterprises, such as dairying, beef cattle, sheep and vegetables, which support the majority of the population. Tourism, small rural allotments and extractive industries are other typical land uses within the catchment.

The Network has the twin focus of changing the understanding and the practices of landholders. In recent years the Network has conducted education and training programs for landholders and facilitated farmer discussion groups to highlight the issues of land management, best practice farming techniques and whole farm planning. In addition, the Network has been successful in gaining funds to support landholders and urban groups to complete works to improve their land. This includes re-vegetation, soil health, salinity control, sustainability, greenhouse reduction, wetland restoration, coastal rehabilitation, pest plant and animal control and improving water quality.

Vision

Our vision is to be a community engaged in supporting a productive, biodiverse landscape incorporating sustainable agricultural practices and innovative environmental enterprises.

Our Story

Educate – Grow – Feed

Mission statement

To collaborate with our groups, the community and partners and to enable the delivery of innovative land and environmental management practices to support healthy and resilient communities and ecosystems.

Strategies

To achieve the mission statement, six key strategies and their objectives have been identified. These strategies and objectives will guide the selection and focus of the activities undertaken by the Network. How the activities are to be managed will be outlined in an annual Operational Plan, compiled and reviewed in November each year for the coming year.

1. Strengthen engagement with Landcare groups and the Bass Coast community.
2. Build and develop strong and resilient relationships with partners.
3. Strive to create a connected biodiverse landscape and an innovative sustainable agricultural community.
4. Develop and enhance the internal structure and function of BCLN management.
5. Conduct a comprehensive Landcare education and training program which promotes the land stewardship principles.
6. Expand environmental services to support Landcare.

Governance and Planning

The BCLN Board has the ultimate responsibility for BCLN projects, funding and activities. It is assisted in fulfilling its responsibilities by the Network Coordinators and other Network managed staff. Specifically, its role is as follows:

Broad Aims

Pursue core purpose, mission statement of the Bass Coast Landcare Network.
Develop clear aims and objectives for the BCLN and provide leadership in their implementation.
Provide support to all member groups.
Coordinate the activities of member groups in relation to Network wide projects.

Overall Operations

Approve the strategic plan for the Network.
Delegate authority to staff and member groups appropriately.
Demonstrate Leadership.
Recommend the auditor's report be approved at the AGM.
Ensure effective communication between Landcare Groups and other stakeholders.
Establish ethical standards for the BCLN.

Performance

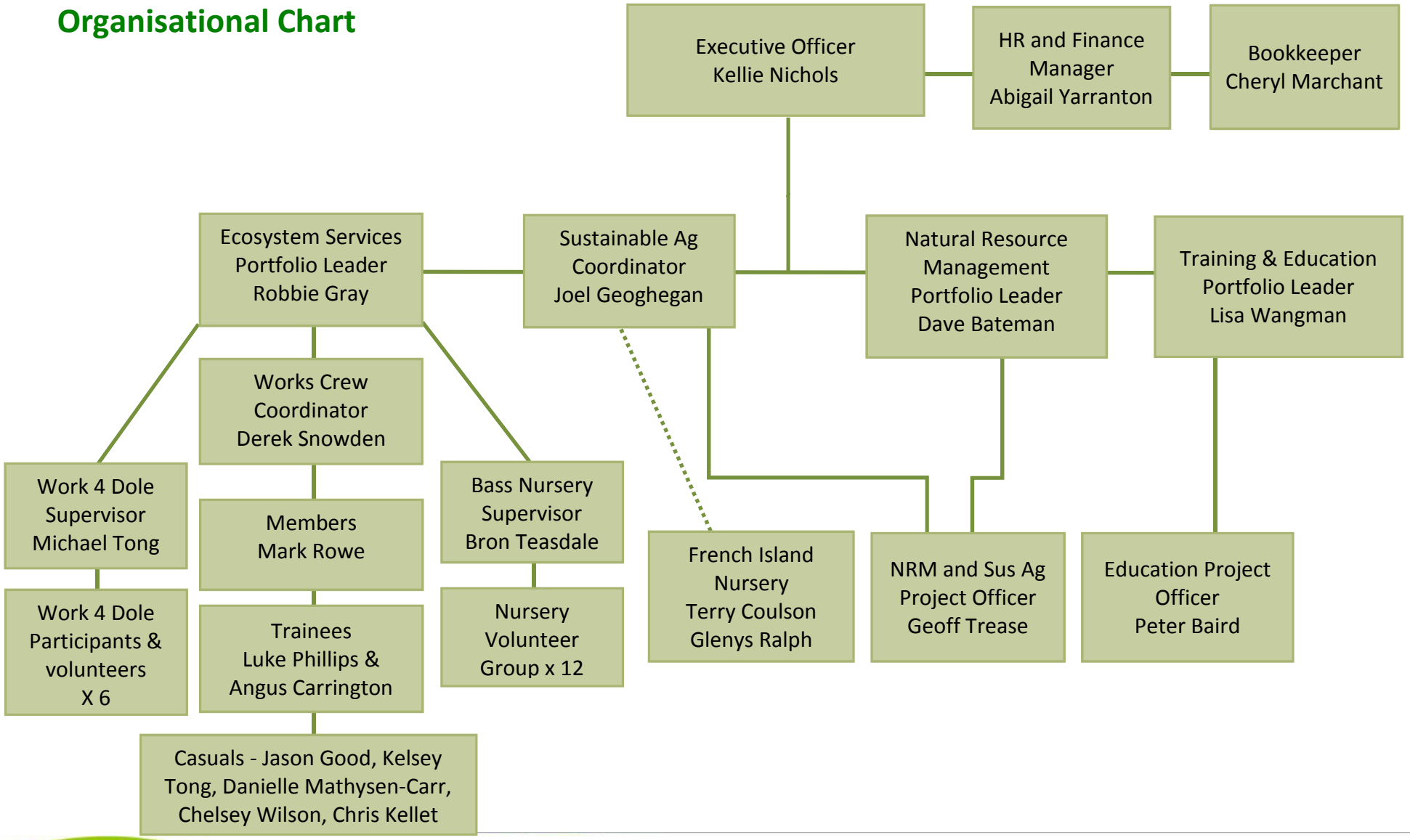
Ensure the long-term viability of the BCLN.
Oversee the implementation of the strategic plan.
Ensure development of project proposals across the Network and seek funding in line with:

- Strategic directions and resources capabilities
- Member groups action plans, their needs and capacities to achieve stated outcomes
- Ensure proper disbursement of any funds received in line with funding agreements
- Monitor developments in the Landcare field and the operating environment

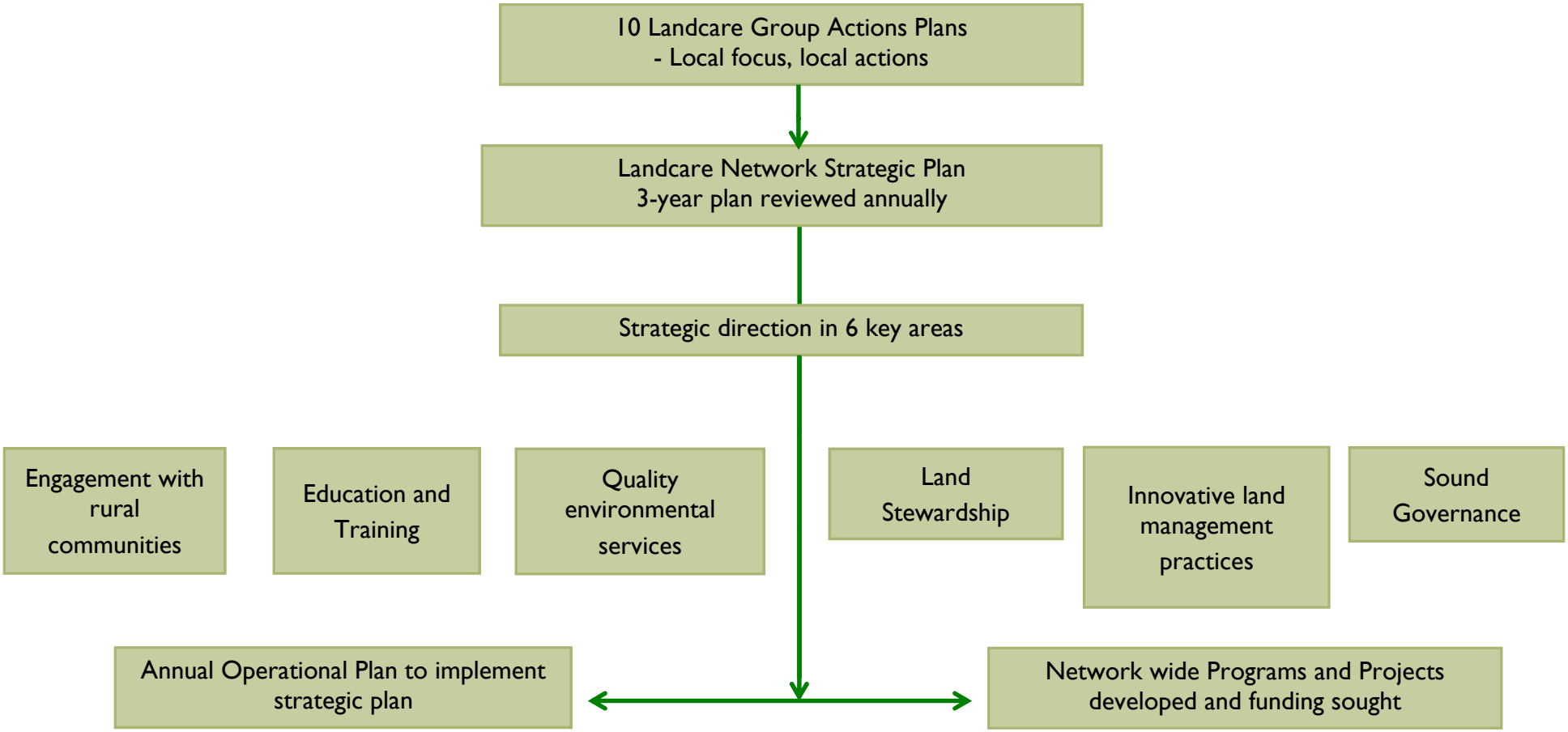
Legal Conformance

Understand and protect the financial position of the BCLN.
Require and monitor legal and regulatory compliance including adherence to the conditions of funding.
Approve annual accounts, annual reports and other public / sensitive report.

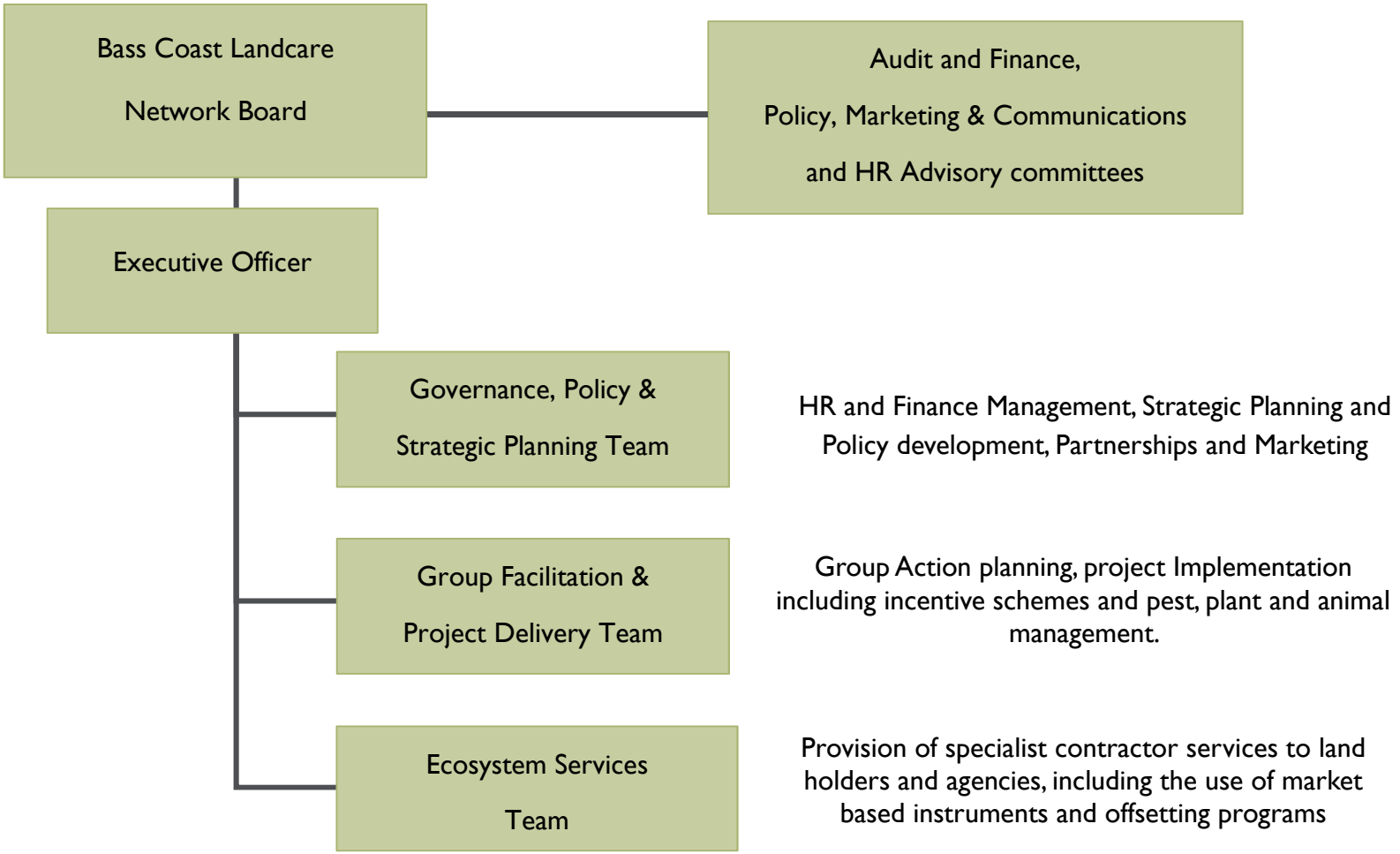
Organisational Chart



BCLN Strategic Plan development



Governance Structure



Chair's Report

Mike Cleeland

It is pleasing to note that 2017 has been a year of stability and expansion for the Bass Coast Landcare Network.

Against a backdrop of declining Federal support for Landcare across Australia, it has been a particularly good result to have achieved a record number of trees planted in our area, largely due to the effort and commitment of staff that have been able to secure funding from other sources.

I would like to thank all Board members for their time and commitment to the governance of BCLN, a factor that has contributed to good morale, informed decision making and judicious forward planning at Board level.

I would also like to thank all staff for their input this year, and to note that their skill level and experience continues to increase as they take on new projects and challenges.

There will continue to be challenges ahead but I am confident that the BCLN team has the capacity to meet them, and to continue the critically important work of caring for our land.

Executive Officer Report

Kellie Nichols

It is pleasing to report another successful year for the Network with passionate and active groups who have been able to utlise the enthusiasm of their members and the volunteers who have all contributed to the overall positive result, both financially and for projects undertaken. Funding for new projects continues to be challenging but we are pleased with our overall success in gaining state and federal funding as well as both the maintenance and expansion of our partnership programs. Our staff are to be commended for their hard work in coordinating and delivering the work outlined in the BCLN Operational plan as well as ensuring the future of the Network with new and diverse funding opportunities.

Kellie Nichols leading a Biolinks Workshop

Innovation is the key to the ongoing progress and success of the Network. Staff are continuing to initiate new programs that transform our landscape. Project ideas are continuously shared by the team and placed onto an ongoing register for future, further development when a suitable opportunity arises.

Our ongoing partnerships with Bass Coast Shire Council, Westernport Water, West Gippsland CMA Port Phillip and Westernport CMA, South Gippsland Water continue to grow and be prosperous both for the network and the works we are undertaking together. These relationships are essential for our ongoing operations and our capacity to support the community and their desired outcomes.

Our monthly eNews is working to improve communication to groups, their members and our stakeholders. We would like to see an emphasis on community contributions to Network publications to promote local involvement. This has been strengthened by our ongoing involvement in social media via twitter and Facebook.

Our partnership with Engie to support the implementation of the Environmental Detectives Program has expanded with more efforts being focussed in the Latrobe valley. Our Holden partnership continues, with significant efforts going into enhancing the Proving Ground. On top of all our project work we have been very active in communications and community engagement as you will see e from our events schedules.

Thanks, as always should go to all the Board and staff for their insights and contributions to the Networks' functionality and outcomes. We are a very active and dynamic group that contribute in many ways to ensure the Bass Coast Landcare Network remains a vibrant community organisation.

Treasurer's Report

Don Creed

It is with pleasure that I present my Treasurers report for the network for the year ended 30th June 2017. Despite no new major funding initiatives the Bass Coast Land Care Network (BCLN) managed to finish the year in a positive position.

Key outcomes for the year and issues for the year;

- The Works Crew again finished the year in surplus, helping to support the operations of the BCLN.
- The Network continues to support the groups.
- Securing smaller grants through the groups and continuing and expanding partnerships continues to be the key to the Network's operation.

Key financial indicators;

- Operating surplus is down compared to last year $23,626 (2016/17) from $65,699 (2015/16), due to a reduction in income notably fee for service. The contribution from the works crew and the efforts of staff to secure whatever grant funding was available cannot be underestimated in helping to keep the Network in surplus. Key

funding sources continue to be Port Phillip & Westernport CMA, Engie and the Bass Coast Shire. We have not had to use any of our reserves which continue to grow thanks to the increase in retained earnings.

- Cash at bank rose to $1,212k at end of 2017 compared to $1,127k in 2016. This leaves us in a very healthy position going forward.
- Accounts Receivable has turned around from last year and we no longer need our $3,000 provision for doubtful debts. Good work everyone for getting this back under control.
- As at 30 June 2017 Current Asset totalled $1,360k offset by Current Liabilities of $860k giving us confidence that we are solvent and will be able to pay our debts as they fall due.

Going forward I am confident that we will see out 2017/18 at current staffing levels, but we will need to again have a close look at our budget later this year to try and access the situation for 2018/19. With no new major projects on the horizon this will continue to be the main focus for the audit and finance committee.

Once again thank you to Cheryl & Abby for the hard work they put in to provide us with the financial reports that guide us during the year.

Finally I would like to thank the other members of the Audit and Finance Committee, John Hauser, Roger Lee, Abigail Yarranton, and Kellie Nichols for their valuable contributions throughout the year. Being my final report as Treasurer I would like to say it has been a pleasure working with all the members of the board during my time as Treasurer.

Human Resources Report

Daryl Hook

It is the commitment of Human Resources sub-committee to support and uphold BCLN's goals by fostering a positive and engaging work environment while identifying and responding to the changing needs of our diverse community and organisation.

As always it has been a full year for BCLN and this is always reflected in the challenges presented. Funding continued to be an ongoing issue however through careful management of staff we were able to maintain our existing staffing. We welcomed staff back from parental leave and adapted to changing work / life commitments of staff. BCLN continues to meet its goals in attracting, developing and retaining talented staff with the appropriate capabilities and skills.

Recruitment and Staff Turnover

Capable and skilled employees are vital to achieving the objectives of BCLN. As we recognise the high cost of recruitment and the importance of retaining knowledge and experience much of the work of human resources is dedicated to ensuring staff retention and expanding capabilities of existing staff.

Low staff turnover is encouraged by support and access to flexible working arrangements such as time in lieu and working arrangements such as change in work location. Flexible working arrangements continue to assist staff and they are both supported and supportive when changes to work levels and commitments require change to working arrangements.

Staff continue to be also been encouraged to take outstanding leave and this is further reflected in a significant decrease in the outstanding liabilities of BCLN.

We were pleased to continue with our trainee program in the works crew we are pleased one has been able to graduate early. He has now been welcomed as a member of our works crew team. We anticipate continuing the program and looking towards recruiting an additional trainee in the new year.

Works Crew Casual: 5 Trainees: 1

New Hires

Again there are a significant number of casual hires in the works crew and this reflects the ongoing casualisation of the workforce is a trend in Australia as a whole. This casual workforce has a positive effect on the works crew and allowing for adaption and change based on seasonal requirements. It is anticipated that this trend will continue with only a small core permanent employee group, which will include fixed term trainees.

Performance Management

BCLN has been introduced new, more effective performance management with more regular check-ins and updates with supervisors. It is anticipated this will create a more dynamic and responsive system. Should an issue arise it will be more readily identified and addressed, ensuring a better result for all.

Training and Development

BCLN continues its commitment to the ongoing improvement of staff both personally and professionally. BCLN has sponsored staff in informal, short and nationally recognised training during the year and anticipates positive outcomes into the future from this investment.

Outside studies that improve staff skills are actively encouraged. This has resulted in staff undertaking or completing vocational and university studies, further improving the knowledge base and experience at BCLN.

Work health and safety injury management

The work health and safety policies, procedures and guidelines aim to identify, adopt and develop best practice in health and safety management to reduce the social and financial cost of occupational injuries and illnesses and improve overall performance.

BCLN had only one Workcover claim during the year. This was used as a valuable training opportunity for the team to ensure that best practice is maintained into the future and BCLN returns to a claim free future.

Special thanks are given to the members of the HR Advisory Committee for the dedicated work all year.

Child Safety Statement

Board of Management

Bass Coast Landcare Network is committed to the safety of children and young people who participate in our programs. BCLN is developing, in consultation, a thorough and clear policy that defines this commitment and the steps to be taken to ensure compliance.

BCLN will demonstrate its commitment to applying the seven standards and three principles of Child Safety Standards and outlines by having;

- A clear written commitment by the BCLN Board of Management to child safety
- A communicated policy of zero tolerance for child abuse
- Actively working to listen to and empower children
- Having system to protect children from abuse and takes allegations and concerns seriously
- Actively promoting cultural safety for Aboriginal children and those of a culturally and / or linguistically diverse background or with a disability.
- Actively ensuring all persons involved with BCLN is trained in and subscribe to the BCLN child protection and safety policy and code of conduct.

Public Fund

Ian James

The Public Fund is a regional not for profit organisation focusing on conserving bio-diversity by providing funds to support community groups. Since its inception the emphasis of the trust has been on assisting projects designed to improve conservation and the opening up and improvement in public access to open space. As a policy the Public Fund focuses on public land projects with a strong emphasis on community involvement.

The Public Fund would like to acknowledge the strong support of the Helen MacPherson Trust. We would also like to place on record the enormous contribution in the establishment of the Public Fund from Michaela Salvato who stepped down as a trustee in 2016. During this year two new trustees volunteered their services. Peter Mulherin and Warren Thompson were appointed as trustees and attended their first meeting in March 2017

The Public Fund considered a number of projects during the year. Some of these were referred back to the applicants to ensure that they met the criteria for the development of a community asset. Funding was provided to the Bass Valley River Garden project which aims to engage the local community in developing sustainable agricultural practices including natural soil improvement, shelterbelt structure, non-chemical weed control, bush foods and composting. This year also saw the near completion of the rehabilitation of the Pioneer Reserve in Kongwak to which the Public Fund provided financial assistance.

Considerable effort was put into the Bass Coast Arc Implementation Plan together with means of tapping funds through wills and bequests and a planned giving fund. The emphasis of the Fund in 2017/2018 will be on adopting strategies to increase the level of financial contributions so that we can better deliver on our objectives.

Project Statistics 2016-17

We have achieved:

79.5 Ha of Revegetation through hyco cell plantings
139,650 Indigenous tubestock planted and 20 KG of seed planted over 10 ha
EVCs re-established include Damp Forest, Wet Forest, Lowland Forest, Swamp Scrub, Damp Sands Herb Rich Woodland, Coast Dune Scrub, Coastal Banksia Woodland and Riparian Forest
16,578 mt of fencing installed
28.2 ha of Remnant vegetation protected
WONS weeds controlled over 117.7 ha
33 Management plans created through the DELWP catchment modelling tool EnSym for all revegetation and remnant protection projects
2 Soil Health Management plans over 673 ha
1 ongoing acid root mat and compost trial over 5 hectares
2 ongoing Demonstrating Sustainable agriculture trials focusing on organic horticulture and growing of hops.
2 completed soil health trials over 15 hectares focusing on application of compost over 3 properties. 2 properties on French Island and one property in Bass Valley.
Held 138 Environmental Detectives activities with 2717 students participating.

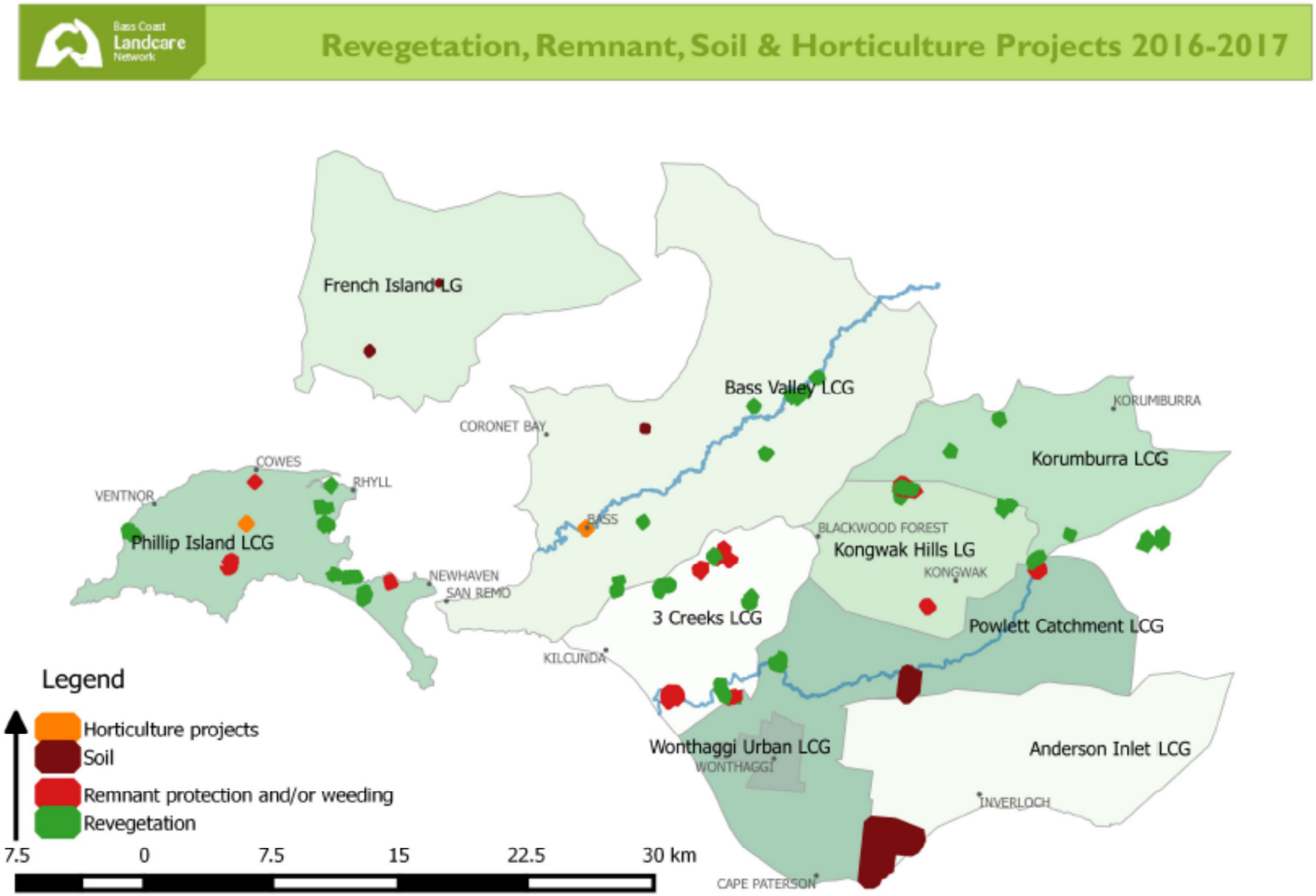
Successful Grant Applications

Group	Project Title	Name of Funding Program	Purpose	Amount ($) (ex GST)
BCLN	Demonstrating Sustainable Ag	Westernport Landcare Network	Engagement and on ground works	$33,000
FILG	French Island Ramsar Protection Project	PPWCMA	On ground	$27,025
FILG	French Island Growing connections project	Westernport Biosphere Growing Connections project	On ground	$33,421
BCLN	Healthy Soils, Sustainable Farms	WGCMA	Engagement and on ground works	$36,000
PILG	Operational plan	Phillip Island Nature Parks	On grounds works	$15,000
BCLN / PILG	Operational Plan	Westernport Water	Engagement and on ground	$64,422
BCLN	Threatened Species Holden the Ground 2	Community Volunteer Action Grants – State Government	Engagement and on ground	$20, 597
PILG	Threatened Species Grant - Eastern Barred Bandicoot Buffer Zone	Community Volunteer Action Grants – State Government	Engagement and on ground	$17, 500
BCLN	Developing the River Garden	Work 4 Dole – two projects	Engagement and on ground	$35, 000
BCLN	Educate Grow Feed – VanHut shelter	BCSC Community Grants	On ground	$3, 000
BVLG	Educate Grow Feed – all weather site access track	BCLN Public Fund	On ground	$5, 000

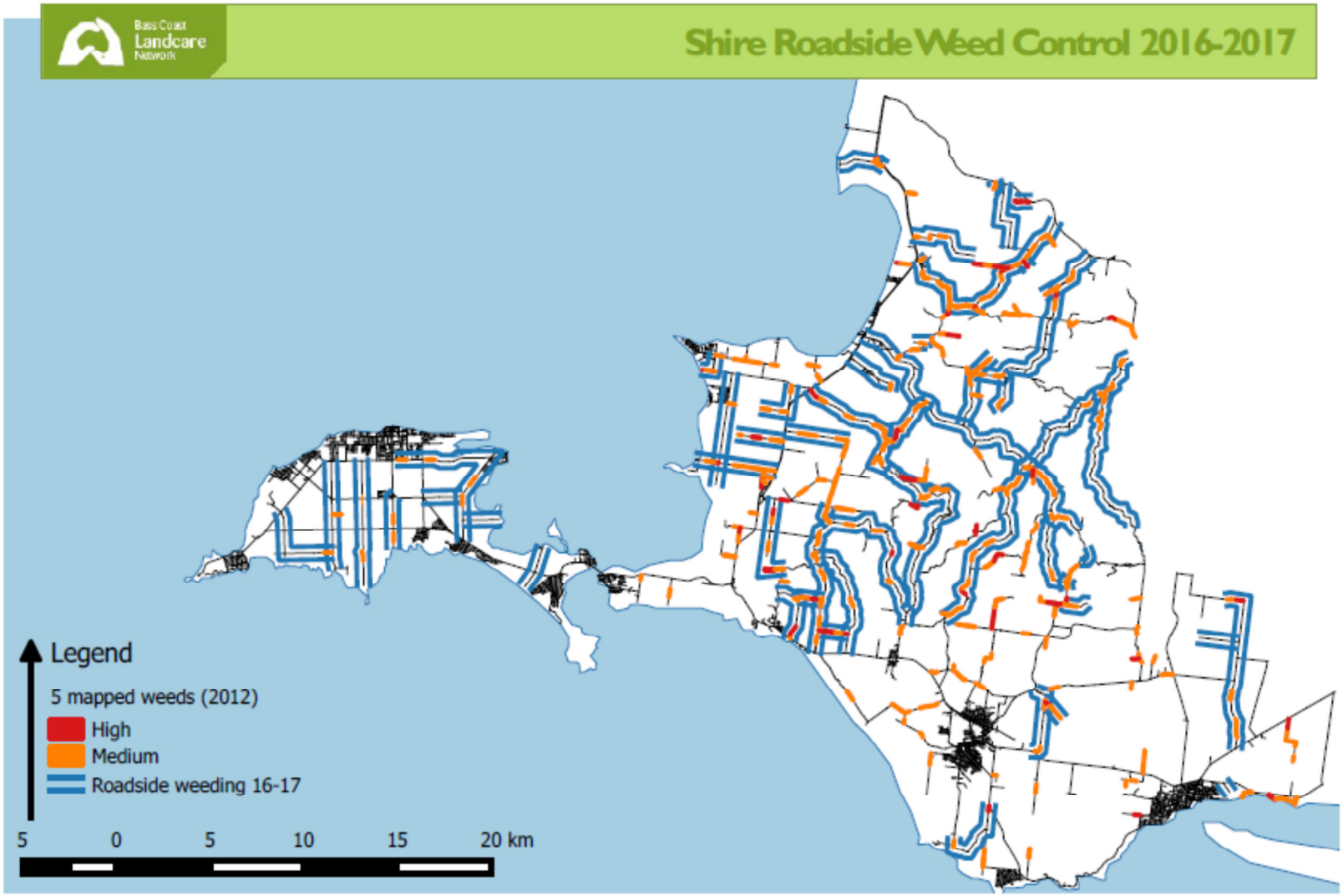
Koo Wee Rup Secondary College Planting

Maps

Revegetation, Remnant, Soil and Horticulture Works



Road Side Spraying Projects



Activity Days

Date	Name	Location	Description	Attendance
1/07/2016	Diversification/Innovation Farm Visit to Gippsland Mushrooms	Ryanston	Farm talk and tour	33
15/07/2016	Healthy Soils Sustainable Farms Field Day	Moyarra	Field Day	31
1/08/2016	Westernport Water Partnership Tree Planting	Almurta	Partnership planting event	29
30 & 31/8/2016	Roadside vegetation management	Wonthaggi	Workshop	28
1/9/2016	Rabbit Control Workshop	Kilcunda	Workshop	26
13/09/2016	Phillip Island Landcare Group Community Tree Planting.	Phillip Island	Community Tree Planting	23
13/10/16	Kongwak Ellipak Discussion Group meeting	Glen Forbes	Discussion Group meeting	17
25/11/2016	Phillip Island Discussion Group Meeting	Phillip Island	Discussion Group meeting	12
8/12/16	Kongwak Ellipak Discussion Group meeting	Glen Forbes	Discussion Group meeting	16
9/12/2016	Diversification/Innovation Farm Visit to Moyarra Fine Foods	Moyarra	Farm Walk and tour	17
15/01/2017	Manuka Honey Field Day	Lang Lang	Field day	68
18/01/2017	Day on the Farm- Prom Country Cheese	Moyarra	Field Day	73
2/06/2017	Phillip Island Landcare Bunny Boiler	Phillip Island	event	116
9/02/2017	Kongwak Ellipak Discussion Group Meeting	Foster	Discussion Group Meeting	11
18/02/2017	Organic Horticulture Field Day- Phillip Island Community Orchard	Phillip Island	Field Day	35
25/02/2017	Hops into Bass Field Day	Bass	Field Day	34
27/02/2017	Phillip Island Discussion Group Meeting	Phillip Island	Discussion Group meeting	12
1/3/2017	RabbitScan	Ventnor	Field Day	12
11/04/2017	Day on the Farm- Bimbadeen Phillip Island	Phillip Island	Field Day	110
13/04/2017	Kongwak Ellipak Discussion Group Meeting	Anderson	Discussion Group Meeting	15
21/04/2017	Soilkee Demonstration Field Day	Loch	Field Day	34
5/05/2017	Phillip Island Discussion Group Meeting	Phillip Island	Discussion Group meeting	9

Date	Name	Location	Description	Attendance
22/05/2017	Diversification/Innovation Bus tour	Macclesfield/Pakenham	Bus Tour	18
9/06/2017	Kongwak Ellipak Discussion Group Meeting	Glen Forbes	Discussion Group Meeting	12
22/06/2017	Dairy Effluent Field Day/Workshop	Moyarra	Field Day/Workshop	16
30/06/2017	Phillip Island Discussion Group Meeting	Phillip Island	Discussion Group Meeting	10
Alt. Wed & Thur	Bass Indigenous Plant Nursery	Bass	Volunteer day	360

Group President Reports

Archies Creek – Paul Spiers

The Archies Creek is an afforestation group, an historic micro group and is now an associate Landcare group to BCLN. This helps with ensuring no fees and an agile structure for meetings and undertakings.

We have had a very active year in our main areas of planting, weed eradication and education. Our woody weeding and eradication of such continued. Our membership also attended numerous other community plantings and events in our neighbouring catchments.

Thank you to all for your works with the group.

Anderson Inlet – Daryl Hook

The 1.5km of Pound Creek planted on the Davis property "Hidden Springs" has boomed. The tiny hiko plants are now waist high and the Phragmites (reeds) have colonized too. The Davis Family fenced off this creek to provide:

- An environment for wildlife
- Cleaner water for Pound Creek, hence Anderson Inlet
- Shelter for their Brangus Cattle
- Shelter to get better pasture growth

Claire Davis still bottle feeds tiny orphaned wildlife. Her dedication saw her awarded an Order of Australia.

Not such a good result at Helen Luscombe and Kath Fisher's property. I can't believe I'm writing this BUT the kangaroos and wallabies ate many of the tiny plants. Better than being eaten by rabbits I guess. On a brighter note, the lace monitors are thriving and they bring life in Gippsland.

We are in partnership with the Conservation Society in doing enrichment plantings. And weed spraying at Snow Creek. As a result of much debate, the developers of the east side of Screw Creek have donated lots of land for the environment. This creek is now planted and fenced right up and past the Leongatha-Inverloch Road. Well done to all who helped.

By far the most exciting and wettest outing for our group was a boat ride around Anderson Inlet. It was great to look back to see all the trees we have planted on "terra firma". Wet and cold bodies soon warmed up at the BBQ which followed.

Last year Dave Bateman organised a guest speaker from Work Safe. As a result I now have a rollover protection device on my quad bike and farm safety is often discussed.

We are lucky to have Nicole May continuing on as Treasurer/Secretary. John Dale is full of enthusiasm for Landcare work. Rob Milner does a good job of communication with our members via internet.

Bass Valley – Lew Potter

Bass Hills

BVLG continues to grow and engage issues relative to our aims. Revegetation projects remain our prime objective however, Landcare promotion, partnership and membership development have been high on our agenda as well as social Interaction.

Revegetation Projects - These are our main Group activities. Although we occasionally struggle to get members to turn out regularly, we have found that works crew engagements included in funding have been very beneficial. 15,000 plants in the ground and a direct seed of 5kg is a great result.

Landcare Promotion - Our interaction with other community groups and events continues to be our best means of promotion. Involvement with large school groups on planting days has been a very positive form of exposure which will carry us into the future.

Partnership Development Holden and Holcim are two of our most active sponsors and successful planting days with them help to galvanise those relationships. Again the publicity surrounding our schools involvement will entice future partners into our fold.

Membership and Staff Support - Our membership has grown slightly during the year but more importantly new landholders have been the group that have swelled our ranks. Those

members and landholders who have worked with the works crew and facilitating staff have surely encouraged our staff to respect the great workplace we foster.

Social Interaction - Those members who have attended plantings as well as our popular meetings have benefited from those joyous activities. Meetings invariable run overtime, not because of the tedium of the agenda but rather from the robust discussions and participation by attendees.

Lew Potter – Photo courtesy of Bass Coast Post

Future Direction - Dealing with "difficult" landholders to promote our cause remains our main challenge and will be our focus in the near future. It is worthy of note that new landholders like David Ryan and Seb Ellis approached us as part of their purchase option to ensure they capitalise on their investments

I've said it before and I'll say it again. Our energetic facilitator Dave Batemen has significantly promoted our team. Secretary Mez Oldham has kept us abreast of all activities and stabilised our sometimes raucous meetings. Graeme Wood our treasurer has reconciled our finances admirably. Thanks to committee and members alike for your efforts. On a more sombre note I say we are missing Anwyn who has been benched at Rose Lodge. To those that still can. Keep coming and keep up the good work

French Island – Judith Metcher

FILG Tree Planting

The first item up was the planning of the refurbishment of the decommissioned CFA shed annexe. What with one thing and another I'm pleased to say that finally this will take place and we look forward to having a facility to store our bits and pieces, provide an activity room for junior Landcare and organize a lending library for our members.

We were also waiting to see if we had been successful in our application for a CMA grant. Unfortunately this was not the case. We have been unsuccessful for two years now however we continue to apply and are presently working

on another application. We were successful though in obtaining $1,000 from the Bendigo Bank for our office refurbishment. We are presently waiting to hear if we have been successful, or not, in obtaining a further two grants.

Cape Tulip reared its ugly head. This continues to be a problem and unfortunately many landowners do not realise the gravity of the situation if they continue to ignore it. We have endeavoured to help this year with a subsidy and hope to continue this for a further two years.

In November a successful wildflower walk was held, despite the atrocious weather and the ferry being cancelled so our "expert" was unable to make it! Fortunately we had our own local expert on hand to take over and many thanks to Chris Chandler for his work. The garden tour was also an enjoyable event and I believe that a few cuttings went home with the participants. We hope that this too will be an annual event.

During the year Nola White resigned from her post as a nursery supervisor to take up employment at Willum Warrain in Hastings. Willum Warrain is the gathering place in Hastings for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders come together to explore their goals, ideas and identity. We hope to share plants and ideas with each other and already a number of cuttings and seedlings of our indigenous bush foods have been taken to be propagated in their nursery. We look forward to a visit from their growers once the problem of the lack of transport on French Island is sorted.

FILG Picnic Point Tree Planting

After advertising, the position of nursery supervisor was given to Glenys Ralph. Terri Coulson and Glenys have combined brilliantly. In fact their enthusiasm knows no bounds.

We continue to have the use of the nursery at Long Point and many thanks to French Island Vineyards for this. It is a remarkable asset for us to have as it not only provides plants for shelter belts, private gardens and wildlife habitat but also provides part-time employment for two locals.

I would like to thank the Bass Coast Landcare Network, especially our facilitator Joel Geoghegan. Joel is an incredible asset for us to have access to and is often on the receiving end of some quite curly questions that have been generated by one of our committee meetings!

Finally I would like to take this opportunity to thank our hard working Landcare committee. We are a diverse group which has meant that we are able to combine these differences in a most productive way. In fear of offending some by not mentioning them personally I would like to say thank you so much to all. It has been an interesting year being both President and

secretary and I really look forward to Glenys becoming our new secretary. I also need to thank Julie Trezise for her works. Julie is a fantastic treasurer who asks every year, rather plaintively "would anybody like to be treasurer?" She has also done a brilliant job with the Ramsar program. But most of all she has been able to cope with a President who even when using a calculator still can't add up accurately. Thank you for your patience Julie.

Kongwak Hills – Les Cruikshank

The Kongwak Hills Landcare Group remains committed to working within our local community to protect and restore vegetation on the surrounding farming land and linking these patches through a series of wildlife corridors. We seek to focus on striving to raise Kongwak's profile as an open and caring community.

Group highlights

Now in our fifth year, we have managed to retain a healthy membership of 30 which equates to over 50 individuals.

With a generous grant of $24,960 under the 2016 Threatened Species Protection Initiative Community Action Grants program, we were again able to contribute to significant tree planting in our local area. Kongwak Landcare Group members planted 22,500 plants and constructed 1,800 meters of fencing, made up as follows:

Project sites

- Tim Dell 10,000 plants
- William Brereton 5,000 plants
- Bonnie Young 3,500 plants
- Kate Davis 4,000 plants

This was the first year we trialled the pottiputki system, commencing with the planting at the Davis property. The general consensus was that the system worked extremely well and we managed to plant several thousand trees in record time.

Group activities

Our group continues to work effectively with South Gippsland Shire Council in relation to the Kongwak Pioneer Reserve. The council continues to do general maintenance work on the track and the promised controlled burn off by the CFA has been put off once again. We have noticed that many young saplings are unable to reach maturity because they are eaten by the black wallaby population who have made the reserve their home so we have resolved to use the balance of our grant monies to undertake revegetation with wallaby guard protection.

Some of our members attended a wonderful evening at Outtrim in collaboration with Korumburra Landcare Group where we were enthralled and entertained by the informative Snake Man. Others attended equally informative learning about fungi at the Dalyston hall.

Our meetings continue to be productive and popular, the excellent catering adding to the appeal.

Korumburra – Marie Creed

After the dry hot spring/summer of the previous year it was a relief to have excellent spring/summer rains giving our plants the best chance of survival. We had five community planting days with 24,250 plants getting in the ground. Most sites now have a very good coverage of established trees. In general we had good member turnouts at our community plantings, a big thankyou to the children from St Joseph's Primary helping to get 4,000 trees in the ground at Hilco Zuidema's.

Once again, we had some great social evenings and meetings. Colin & Jenny Dowel hosted a farm walk, meal and a fascinating presentation from Beverly Von Prague on Giant Earth worms in South Gippsland. Outtrim Hall was the venue for a meal, walk of the reserve and guest speaker Geoff Lockwood talking to a combined gathering of 45 Landcare's from groups across the BCLN about snakes in South Gippsland. This was a wonderful presentation about these misunderstood creatures. A healthy snake population equals a healthy environment. Our winter meeting was held at Burke and Bronwyn Brandon's Prom Country Cheese another great meal and opportunity for updates on coming planting season, wrapping up the year. As a group we continued our support of the Korumburra Show, with members manning the gates and Landcare Caravan.

A summary of planting in 2016 season was:

- Don & Marie Creed's 5,000 plants,
- Doug Clarke 1000 plants,
- Brian Griffin 7,000 plants,
- Burke and Bronwyn Brandon 1,000 plants,
- Susan Davies 250 plants,
- Ian Haw 2,000 plants,
- Hilco Zuidema 4,000 plants,
- Paul Calvert 4,000 plants.

All in all a good effort for the group. Special thanks to Dave Bateman for all his efforts and co-ordination of projects within the group, we really appreciate what you do Dave – thanks!

Paid up member's remains at around 40, current executive President - Marie Creed, Secretary – Jenny Dowel, Treasurer - Don Creed, Vice President – Colin Dowel.

Phillip Island – David Rooks

This was my first year as President of the Phillip Island Landcare Group. It's a role I enjoyed immensely. It was easy to enjoy when working for such a great cause and amongst wholesome people.

Thanks to the committee for all their efforts throughout the year. Each person on the committee brings their own individual area of expertise and as a group we created a full list of achievements.

In the area of administration we:

- Updated our constitution
- Merged urban and rural Landcare on the Island
- Undertook a survey of our action plan, the results indicated our current action plan is well received in the community.
- Began process of CAPS for our new action plan
- Better presented our finances helping our committee understand project funding and current funds available. We are a financial group.
- Improved process of voucher system for bush bank

- Funded and created a re vegetation review with results due in December
- Sorted historical data and created usable presentation folders

In the area of marketing we:

- Took ownership from the Landcare staff of our membership database
- Updated our website
- Increased our membership from last year
- Contributed monthly to the enews
- Designed, and distributed a new DL size brochure

Planting at Bill Cleelands

On ground activities:

- 3 successful planting days
- A day at Kitty Miller undertaking maintenance work
- School planting days at Cowes Primary School
- Walk the Island series as a new event
- Created full moon walks as a new event

We celebrated:

- A successful bunny boiler
- Organised 30th year celebration
- Had monthly meetings with dinner preceding each meeting

PILG Coastal Walks

Next year we can look forward to the following:

- $2,500 in grants to local schools. Our group recently approved $500 for each local school to apply for garden or planting projects through a grant process.
- Introduction of a Cat Management Strategy for the Island
- Further gorse removal on the Island via a $30,000 grant over two years. Thanks to Robbie Gray.

- Revegetation and fencing to the value of $49,000 thanks to a successful grant by Geoff Trease.
- Wildlife corridors walk as part of the 150 year celebration of white person settlement on Phillip Island.

I look forward to being involved with Landcare in 2018.

Powlett Project – Brian Enbom

Group Focus:

The Powlett Project has had a busy year approving projects within the catchment. A Total of 25 Project sites have been approved for funding in the 2016/17 financial year. The group has been primarily focussed on adding expertise and support for Landholders undertaking in large scale revegetation projects. We have developed some new procedures to mitigate the risk of low quality projects through a new set of Project guidelines and extra site visits prior to community plantings

Highlights:

The major highlight of the year would be the Wonthaggi Secondary year 9s planting at Anna Spidens. The kids led by the marvellous Nick Sibly planted 10,000 plants in a morning which was the 5th year the Wonthaggi secondary School has been planting at the Spidens Gully with a grand total of 3,000 plants in the ground so far in one of the best examples of Wet forest vegetation in the Powlett Catchment.

Another Highlight of the year was the RMIT planting and Willow removal project at Andrew Perrys property. WGCMA partnered with Kongwak Landcare group to plant 4,000 plants and remove a large section of Willows and Cyprus trees along a large section of Foster Creek. The RMIT students did a fantastic job getting all the plants in the ground.

Three Creeks – Nick Sibley

Group Focus:

The 3 Creeks Landcare Group seeks to restore and protect the integrity and sustainability of the land, biodiversity and waterways in our precinct by encouraging assisting landowners to adopt sound land management practices.

Peter & Libby at Planting Day

2017 has been a busy year for the 3 Creeks Landcare Group. I have been very proud of the commitment from our members to participate regularly in tree planting events and support the local land owners in their environmental work. It is no surprise that with such generosity we have increased our overall membership this year. To date we have received twelve new memberships this year. To sweeten the deal Melaleuca nursery in Inverloch has offered each new 3 Creeks Landcare member ten free trees of their choice from the nursery.

A core of ten committee members as well as other members and local volunteers have ensured that the tree planting days have been well attended and that landowners have achieved their goals. Our merry band of planters have taken part in 8 tree planting events and have planted over 30,000 trees. We also took part in the largest single tree planting ever held in the Bass Coast at Karl Russo's property at Woolamai where a total of 25,000 trees were put in the ground over a week in August. As well as planting, our group members were able to assist with the coordination of the various groups who contributed to this enormous undertaking including 180 Year 9 students from Wonthaggi Secondary school.

Enjoying lunch after a successful planting

2017 was a year of new initiatives including the establishment of the equipment loan program which has been coordinated by Ben Maghanoy. This has allowed members to access equipment such as Indian mynah bird traps and the 400L spray unit.

Our group has delved into the world of wine this year and have raised approximately $600. The wine was purchased from Gippsland Winery in Loch. It is hoped that we will be able to repeat this fundraiser in 2018.

The really exciting news for 3 Creeks is planned Biolink project which will begin next year. The Biolink follows Bridge Creek reserve between Hawkins Road in Woolamai and the Rail trail near to where Bridge Creek enters the Powlett River. This is the main branch of Bridge Creek and it is hoped that eventually the entire 5 km length will be replanted. Next year it is planned that a large section shall be planted along the back boundary of Stan Turpcou's property which begins at Hawkins Road. This will join an older planting that requires some rehabilitation. The blackberries and variegated thistles have been sprayed this year and hopefully everything will be in place for a winter planting. It is estimated that this site will require 10,000 trees. Funding for this project is a combination between WGCMA and the Bass Coast Shire. Once again local volunteers will be called upon to help get the work done.

Chris Payol planting day

Receiving Award at Government House

The really interesting part of this biolink is that it incorporates all EVCs within the Bass Coast from marshland all the way to damp forest. It is hoped that all landowners along this reserve will eventually get on board and bring something unique and beautiful to the Bass Coast as well as a scenic walk from the rail trail to the Archies Creek pub!

Finally, 3 Creeks has been the recipient of two major awards in 2017. Firstly we were recognized at the Green Carpet awards held in Heyfield earlier in the year. At the recent Landcare awards, held at Government House, our group were Highly Commended for the best Community Group category. This was in recognition of the work 3 Creeks has done within the local community to improve the local environment right across the Bass Coast. We have much to be proud of in 3 Creeks and have much to look forward to in 2018.

Wonthaggi Urban – Carolyn Charles

Group Focus:

Wonthaggi Urban Landcare Group continues to retain, restore and revegetate public land within the town area with a view to improving, biodiversity, water quality, and health and community wellbeing.

Group Activities

We have had another successful year of on ground work and a continuing productive connection with Parks Vic, the Bass Coast Shire and the Bass Coast Landcare Network. We appreciate our Facilitator Rob Grays' support and expertise. None of our work would eventuate without our fantastic Committee and volunteers. Their willingness to support and persist with ongoing work is commendable and I would like to thank you all for your generous efforts.

Clean up Australia Day was held at the Wonthaggi Wetlands with our group members and some very welcome volunteers from the public. Considering that there are other walkers who regularly collect rubbish there it was amazing how much remained. The winds blowing across the Plaza Carpark deposit huge amounts of unwelcome fast food rubbish into the adjoining bush.

Following a request by the Bass Coast Shire Disability Support Group to provide a suitable activity for clients and their carers Pete Baird conducted a very successful wheelchair friendly nature walk on the edge of the wetlands. They returned (eventually) and were amazed how much wildlife existed in close proximity to the centre of town. Thanks to you Pete.

The long awaited information boards for the Wonthaggi Wetlands have been setup By Bass Coast Council at the main Dudley Street entrance with smaller boards set along various paths They look fantastic. We appreciate help from Terri Allen for the information and the colourful photos that were taken by Heather Gardner.

Work and monitoring on various properties has continued.

- Watertower Hill. Monitored by Waterboard staff. Mixed quality vegetation .Needs intervention.
- Shaynes Bush. Mostly removal of Monpellier brome, weeding.
- White Road. Monitored, looking improved. Information Board to be made.
- Wonthaggi Wetlands. Monitoring, weeding large woody weeds and broome,
- Tank Hill. Planting, weeding.

We have undertaken a total of 22 working bees, monitoring and maintenance. Hour's worked - 290.Participants - 94

Future Directions

Continue work on and monitoring existing properties

Parks Vic has introduced a new data recording system, Park Connect Portal, and request that we use it. We will trial it and decide.

Our projects require funding in the future and we will continue apply for Grants

Due to lack of members able to commit to take Committee positions we are considering how our non-incorporated group can manage to continue to operate with a less formal but viable model.

We are looking at various options and are feeling optimistic that increased contact via emailing could be more efficient, centralized information from 'friends of 'groups used, and individuals special talents promoted.

Whilst our future involves changes we are still committed and enthusiastic and looking forward to continuing the great work we have already done.

Roger Lee – Three Creeks

Geoff Treases talking at Direct seeding field day at Brad and Dani Carrs

Partnerships

Holden

Project Name:	Holden the Bass
Landcare Groups:	Bass Valley Landcare Group
Project Managers:	Dave Bateman

Overview

The Holden the Bass project has two main areas of focus. The first involves undertaking revegetation sites in the Bass River Catchment to protect waterways, and reduce sediment and nutrient run off into Westernport. These works also contribute towards the creation of wildlife corridors and biolinks within the catchment. The second area is around the establishing a vegetation management plan for the Holden Proving Ground, this is the 5th year of a five year program. Our works crew has undertaken extensive fauna and flora surveys and has developed a vegetation management plan, including a table outlining general management actions.

All of the sites identified for revegetation were in the middle and upper reaches of the catchment focusing on streams and gullies in the Strzelecki Ranges and the Gippsland Coastal Plains. Sites were accessed individually and wherever possible complimented works undertaken by Melbourne Waters Stream Frontage and Capital works programs in the major waterways of the Bass River and its tributaries. All of these were located on private land and landholders signed a land management agreement stipulating that the site would be maintained beyond the life of the project.

Partnership Highlights

Holden staff engagement day long lunch at the Bass office

One of the highlights this year was the celebration of 30 years of landcare, where Holden opened the gates at the Proving ground for 100 community volunteers and took us on a tour of the grounds.

The project also involved the Bass Valley Primary School and Holden staff in working bees at the Arboretum and revegetation activities on private land. The local schools thoroughly enjoyed being involved in these activities and would like to pursue them into the future.

Partnership outputs

2000 tube stock planted and 4 kilograms of seed direct seeded over the upper reaches of the Bass River catchment;

Two community activity days held at the Bass Arboretum site. Holden staff were invited to attend both days;

Two local media releases were completed to highlight the partnership and the benefits of local seed collection in the Landcare program;

Arboretum maintenance including ongoing track maintenance, weed maintenance, supplementary planting of tube stock and signage maintenance and implementation of year 5 of the Vegetation management plan for the 880 Ha Holden Proving Ground site.

Bass Coast Shire Council

Project Name:	Bass Coast Shire Council
Landcare Groups:	All
Project Managers:	Dave Bateman

Overview

Diana Whittington at the with Ian James and Jean Coffee at the Bass Valley Biolinks Workshop

Bass Coast Landcare Network and the Bass Coast Shire Council have enjoyed a strong partnership since 1994. This has included the Bass Coast Shire Council providing significant financial and in-kind support for the Bass Coast Landcare Network.

Bass Coast Landcare Network and Bass Coast Shire Council aim to encourage sustainable land use and promote the conservation of biodiversity across the region. Both organisations support the adoption of environmental best management practices to reverse land and water quality decline through community action, knowledge and skills.

Shared goals of both organisations include:

- Protection of the natural resource base of the Bass Coast Shire
- Promotion and implementation of activities that protect biodiversity and encourage sustainable agriculture
- Create training opportunities based on environmental best management practices
- Provide incentive programs for land managers based on environmental best management practices

- Establish a strong and vibrant rural agricultural community comprising a range of diversified enterprises that is efficiently managed and ecologically sustainable.

Partnership Highlights

On 7 June 2017 Mayor Pamela Rothfeild and Mike Cleeland signed our new Memorandum of Understanding between BCLN and BCSC. The document outlines our shared goals and the ongoing commitment from BCSC to BCLN and vice versa. This document is integral to Bass Coast Landcares operation as BCSC provide base level support that makes it possible for us to operate and thrive as an organisation.

Bass Coast Shire Council Partnership Planting day at William Breretons

Another highlight for the year was our involvement in the development of the BCSC Biolinks plan. BCSC engaged BCLN to do the community consultation in regards to the creation of the plan. This involved getting as many landholders into 3 separate localised workshops to draw in proposed Biolinks on large maps. The results were outstanding with over 100 individuals engaged and many proposed Biolinks drawn onto the maps. BCLN sees this plan as a major asset to our network which will hopefully draw in future funding to establish the Biolinks on the ground. As a part of this plan the BCSC committed 30k of funds towards Biolink projects. This resulted on a further 30000 plants going in the ground for the planting season.

Partnership outputs

The annual deliverables of this partnership include:

- Executive support to the BCLN Board and facilitation of eleven Landcare Groups to ensure alignment of Landcare Strategic Direction
- Partnership Planting day at William Brereton's with 40 BCSC environment staff planting 4,000 plants
- Delivering programs to Create Healthy, Cohesive and connected communities
- Linkages with the Landcare Community to communicate and deliver on Council Initiatives, including the Rural Land Use Strategy
- Support in the Delivery of the annual catchment health on ground works program, averaging 100 hectares of revegetation, 50 hectares of remnant vegetation protection, 200 ha soil health
- Annual delivery of 50 natural resource management activity days involving approximately 1,500 participants

- Assist in planning permit conditions and referrals.
- Coordination of partnership programs and funding applications
- Expert advice on the Native Vegetation Framework and net gain opportunities
- Delivery of the Bass Coast integrated pest plant and animal program including approximately 400 customer requests, 500 ha weed control, 20 Rural rate rebate inspections, pest plant and conduct of related forums and meetings
- Coordination of DCPD program including 7.6km of rabbit control and 195 km of weed control
- Delivery of approximately 900 km of roadside weed spraying.

Westernport Water

Project Name:	Westernport Water Operational Plan
Landcare Groups:	Bass Valley and Phillip Island Landcare Groups
Project Managers:	Joel Geoghegan

Partnership Highlights

In 2016/17 the partnership again went from strength to strength, based on the fundamentals of good governance, trust, flexibility and a shared commitment to improving biodiversity in the Bass Coast region. With the signing of an updated 5-year MOU the previous year the focus again turned to on ground outcomes and further partnership development. A highlight of the year was the partnership planting day held at the property of Alister McBride's in August 2016. On a cold and wet winters day representatives from both partner organisations got together and planted 1000 tubestock along upper sections of the Tozer Creek, which forms part of the water catchment for the Candowie reservoir. A

Left to right: BCLN Works Crew Coordinator Derek Snowden with Westernport Waters Benita Russell, and BCLN Ecosystems Services Coordinator, Rob Gray, inspecting a revegetation plot at the Candowie Reservoir

well-deserved BBQ lunch was enjoyed by everyone afterwards, the day a true celebration of a healthy partnership.

More importantly, the annual operational plan for 2016/17 was negotiated and endorsed, again focusing on two major components, Partnership contribution and Fee for Service Works. The total partnership totalled $64,422 for 2016/17.

Partnership Outputs

Partnership Contribution $21,128

- Catchment support contributing to BCLN facilitation and project officer- $15,000
- Phillip Island Urban Landcare Support- $6,128

Fee for Service works totalling $43,294

- Various fee for service works undertaken at:
- Cowes Treatment Plant
- King Road Treatment Plant
- Wimbledon Heights Community Orchard
- Westernport Water Head Office- Boys Home Road
- Candowie Reservoir including Lower Reaches of Tenant Creek
- San Remo Basin works
- Candowie Reservoir

BCLN Executive Officer, Kellie Nicholls (left) enjoying a rainy planting day with Westernport Water Managing Director, Peter Quigley

The Partnership contribution component of the partnership really allows the Bass Coast Landcare Network to develop a real presence in the community, particularly the focus areas of the Candowie Reservoir Catchment and Phillip Island. It also allows the Bass Coast Landcare Network to leverage support for Westernport Water through Melbourne Waters Stream Frontage Management Program. In 201617 funding was provided by this program for works along Saltwater Creek on Phillip Island and the Lower Reaches of Tenant Creek, downstream of the Candowie Reservoir. This successful 3-way partnership provided funding support for Westernport Water and contributed to the

Fee for Service works being undertaken by the Bass Coast Landcare Networks works Crew.

Fee for service works were undertaken by the Bass Coast Landcare Networks Works Crew and included, pest plant and Animal Control works, revegetation works and Photopoint monitoring.

The Bass Coast Landcare Network and the Phillip Island Landcare Group are proud to be a partner with Westernport Water and look forward to a secure partnership into the future. Many thanks to the Westernport Water staff we worked with in 2016/17.

Melbourne Water

Project Name:	Melbourne Water Stream Frontage Management Program
Landcare Groups:	Bass Valley Landcare Group
Project Managers:	Joel Geoghegan

The Bass Coast Landcare Network continues to provide contractor services for Melbourne Waters Stream Frontage Management Program. This contract provides valuable fee for service income for the Bass Coast Landcare Network and gives the network some income certainty in an era of contracting resources. In 2016/17 our income from this contract was $24,896. We are expecting this to increase into the future.

The services provided include new stream frontage management program project assessments, ongoing project assessments, mid-term projects audits and final auditing

The Contract has been renewed for the 2017/18 financial year.

Programs / Projects Reports

Education & Training Portfolio

Environmental Detectives Schools program – connecting kids with Nature

The Environmental Detectives (ED) program engages schools across the Bass Coast and Latrobe Valley in activities aimed at connecting school children with the natural environment. This program is generously sponsored by the power company ENGIE, with whom the BCLN have had many years of close association.

Inverloch Primary Grade 1 classes on an 'Exploration Trail Walk' at Screw Creek in March 2017

The Environmental Detectives Program won an award this year at the Green Carpet Awards, run by the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority every two years to 'Honour and celebrate local Landcare legends who have led the way in improving Gippsland's environment'.

Congratulations to Lisa, Peter and Rosie who have all worked on this program this year.

This year saw record numbers of activities held and number of students involved both in Bass Coast and in the Latrobe Valley as displayed in the following table:

Environmental Detectives	Term 3/16	Term 4/16	Term 1/17	Term 2/17	Totals 2015/16	Totals 2016/17
Number of Schools	30	13	3	13	41	59
Number of activities	42	21	21	54	81	138
Number of teachers	77	39	26	106	163	248
Number of children	801	498	445	973	2,017	2,717

Compared to the previous financial year the increase in schools using the program is almost 50%, the activities over 40% and the number of children engaged has increased by over 30%. This is a pleasing result and reflects well on the quality of the program and its delivery.

Most activities are run at local parks, reserves or farming properties however the majority are adaptable to run as incursions in schools as well which is very handy for horrendous weather days. We now run 10 activities in this program including:

- Aquatic Macro Invertebrates,
- Testing physical and chemical features of Water,
- Bird watching and nest construction,

Latrobe Special Development School Students in a 'Little Big Things' activity in May 2017

Barringa Special School Bugs artwork

- Bug Bits,
- Little Big things,
- Soils ain't soils,
- Exploration trail nature walks,
- Seed collection & Propagation,
- Tree planting and
- A Coastal and Bush Pantry.

For full descriptions of these activities see our web page at *http://www.basscoastlandcare.org.au/education.html* We also help schools with designing gardens for veggies, bush food, indigenous plants, habitat or sensory gardens and tailor our activities to school needs.
When we're not taking activities, we have been busy working on updating promotional sheets which link our activities to descriptor statements in the Victorian Curriculum. We will soon be launching an updated version of our website page with new promotional materials, videos on our activities and photos of students in action. Watch this space for another exciting year to come in Environmental Detectives.

Bona Vista Primary at Mt Worth looking at water bugs

Sustainable Farms use STEM – Pilot Secondary Schools Program

Our established presence conducting school environmental activities in Bass Coast and Latrobe Valley with the Environmental Detectives Program led to discussions in early 2017 with energy company AGL around developing a new education program with a focus on Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM).

We were able to successfully negotiate funding from AGL in mid-2017 to develop a Secondary level program looking at farm sustainability and showing how farmers use STEM in everyday operations. The 'Sustainable Farms use STEM' pilot will use the same methodology as the Environmental Best Practice Management program of first monitoring what you have and then taking steps to improve management of property planning, water, soils, biodiversity and pest plants/animals. A farm visit combined with enquiry based experiments and activities will familiarise students with what's required to operate a healthy, sustainable farming business and introduce them to careers available in this sector.

Initially this pilot will run at 9 schools in the Latrobe Valley over 2017/18, allowing us to create and trial this program there, then leverage further funding to expand to more schools in Latrobe Valley and Bass Coast.

Training Programs

Powlett Catchment Tour Day May 2017

Much of the activity involving Training over 2016/17 has focussed on Sustainable Agriculture including Farmer Discussion Groups, Diversification days, The Day on the Farm series, Soilkee Demonstration Day and Polyface Farms film nights. You can find more information about these in the Sustainable Agriculture Portfolio report.

Other workshop and information sessions over 2016/17 have included: IFarm Training days, Rabbit control workshop, Biolinks Community Workshops in conjunction with Bass Coast Shire Council, Foray into the Curious Kingdom of Fungi Day and the Powlett Catchment Tour Day.

Future plans for training in the Network include a series of Workshop days around the River Garden site. These days will be designed to coincide with construction of various components of the site including: bio intensive horticulture trials, orchard and nut tree establishment, community gardening, crop diversification, composting, improving soil health and structure, property management planning and maintenance.

Foray into Fungi Day May 2017

It's an exciting time for the Bass Coast Landcare Network, Groups, Members and Friends to have our own site and the opportunity to be involved in such an interesting range of learning opportunities.

***Vision** of the Education and Training Department:*

A community of knowledgeable land managers caring for a healthy, productive landscape, with the capacity to adapt to changing environmental, social and economic conditions into the future.

Natural Resource Management Portfolio

Description:

The NRM program covers all revegetation and remanent protection projects throughout the Bass Coast Landcare Network. Major projects for 2016/2017 include; Phillip Island Wildlife Corridor, Powlett Project, 20 Million Trees projects, Threatened species Grants. The Bass Coast Landcare Network has been in operation for 13 years and we have planted on average 150,000 plants per year and have endeavoured to protect as much of the little remnant vegetation remaining in our Network.Geoff Trease has done a fantastic job engaging with the Phillip and French Island Group members and undertaken site visits and projects. Dave Bateman has been looking after the Bass Valley and the Powlett Catchments.

Highlights:

2016/17 has been a very productive year in the NRM Area. We have had strong levels of funding to undertake on ground works from State and Federal Governments and corporate funding through ENGIE. We have continued to focus on large scale Revegetation Projects. The major highlight of the year was the 10,000 plant project at Tim and Lydell Dells farm. This project was initially planted 10 years ago by Mike Cleelands crew. The project was never completed as it had a big gap in the middle so we set upon filling it in with 10,000 plants. National Australia Bank and the Kongwak Landcare group teamed up to get all the plants in. The Phillip Island Wildlife Corridor continued to expand with a further 27,500 plants in the ground funded from a variety of smaller projects

New Innovations:

We have continued the use of hyco cells rather than tubestock has worked out to be by cost effective and time effective for our works crew and the green arm for planting. We have planted 95% hyco's this year and we are looking forward to monitoring the success rates over the next few years. From our initial monitoring the hyco's are holding up quite well, despite a very tough planting season in 2015. Peter Xuerbs 40,000

Using hyco cells and potipuki planters at Dells Property

plant project is looking fantastic after three years in the ground. We also had another go at growing mangroves for the Westernport RAMSAR project. After learning a lot from the previous year our BCLN works crew did a fantastic job growing them for Bruce Atkins property. We also installed barricades in front of the mangroves to protect them from Storm surges. From all reports they are holding strong and growing well.

BCLN Works Crew Trainee Angus Carrington installing Barricades at Bruce Atkins Mangroves

Outputs:

Overall on ground outputs

- 16,578 metres of fencing
- 139,650 indigenous plants in the ground
- 20kg of indigenous seed sown in direct seeding projects

On ground works achieved at a group level

Anderson Inlet Landcare group Planting at Kath and Helen Fishers

- Three Creeks Landcare Group members planted 44,000 plants and 4,500 metres of fence
- Korumburra Group members planted 18,000 plants 1,500 metres of fence
- Andersons Inlet Landcare Group members planted 11,500 plants and 2,000 metres of fence and 15kg of direct seeding
- Kongwak Landcare Group members planted 22,500 plants and 1,800 meters of fence
- Phillip Island Landcare group members planted 27,500 plants and 3,020 metres of fence
- Bass Valley Landcare Group members planted 15,350 plants and 2,600 metres of fence and 5kg of direst seeding

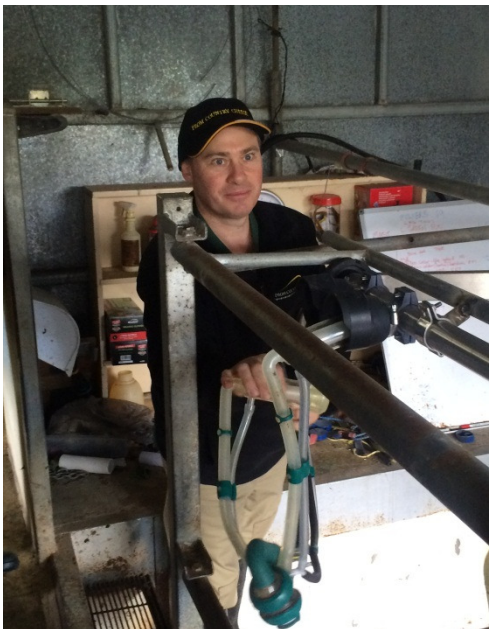
Outcomes:

- 79.5 Ha of land revegetated through hyco plantings
- 10 Ha of land revegetated through direct seeding
- 28.2 Ha of Remnant Vegetation protected.

- EVCs re-established include Damp Forest, Wet Forest, Lowland Forest, Swamp Scrub, Damp Sands Herb Rich Woodland, Coast Dune Scrub, Coastal Banksia Woodland and Riparian Forest
- 33 Management plans created through the DELWP catchment modelling tool EnSym for all reveg and remnant protection projects
- WONs weeds controlled over 117.7ha.

Sustainable Agriculture Portfolio

Description:



Healthy Soils Sustainable Farms Field Day

The focus of the Bass Coast Landcare Networks Sustainable Agriculture program in 2016/17 was field days and events. Over the entire financial year, the program facilitated a total of 20 events and engaged 583 people. This is a wonderful achievement which we are committed to emulate into 2017/18 and beyond. In 2016/17 the Sustainable Agriculture program had two major regional support programs;

- The Demonstrating Sustainable Farm Practices project in the PPWCMA area; and,
- The Healthy Soils, Sustainable Farms project in the WGCMA area.

The Demonstrating Sustainable Farm Practices project continued into 201617 with momentum. Working with key partners the project has been successful in demonstrating new and innovative practices throughout the region. Heading into its final year it's important that project maintains its momentum and maximise its effectiveness in the region.

Hops in the Bass Field Day

The two Bass Coast trials, Hops into Bass and the Phillip Island Community Orchard Horticulture project are still progressing well and have both hosted multiple field day events. A second successful field day was held at the community orchard in February 2017 with 35 attendees attending. Project manager Adrian James spoke about the successes and challenges he has faced in managing this project and was supported by expert agronomist, Chris Alenson. Gill Freeman, from grow lightly was also on hand to

highlight the importance of healthy local food being available to the entire community, not just those who can afford it. The feedback from the day was positive and provided the participants will valuable information on how to set up similar enterprises on their own properties. Also in February 2017, the project hosted the Hops into Bass field day hosted 34 people. The field day visited the Loch Brewery and Distillery before finishing up at the hops trial site in Bass. Both these trial projects will continue into 2017/18 with field days and community engagement continuing to be the focus.

There were many more highlights as part of the Demonstrating Sustainable Farm Practices project. These include:

- A Day on the Farm activity hosted by Prom Country Cheese in January attended by 73 people;
- A Manuka honey field day in January attended by 68 people;

Healthy Soils Sustainable Farms Field Day at Prom Country

- A day on the Farm activity hosted by Bimbadeen on Phillip Island in April attended by 110 people;
- A Soilkee demonstration field day in April attended by 34 people;
- A series of farm visits focusing on innovation and diversification attended by 68 people.

Day on the farm - Bimbadeen

Heading into the final year of the project there are multiple events and activities planned that will ensure the momentum will keep going into the future. The project team is actively planning for the future and it is hoped that this will result in further funding support for a new and improved program.

The Healthy Soils Sustainable Farms project operating in the West Gippsland Catchment management area of the network was also very active in the 2016/17 year.

The soil health management planning component of the project continued with two more landowners engaged resulting in the development of two soil health management plans over 673 hectares. Declan McDonald and Chris Alenson were engaged to produce the plans as independent expert consultants.

The trial at Daryl and Margaret Hooks continued in 2016/17. Looking at the impacts of compost mixed with chicken litter the trial continues to undertake monitoring of soil chemistry and pasture species composition. This trial will continue into 2017/18 with the results of all monitoring being developed into a formal case study.

The project also supported a number of farmer discussion groups, namely the Kongwak Ellipak Discussion Group and the Dairy Discussion Group. (read below for Discussion group reporting).

This project will be funded through to June 2018 so look out for future events and project highlights. Future planning beyond June 2018 is currently taking place with the aim of developing up a future project proposal targeting funding that will continue the great work of the project in the region.

Ongoing outcomes for the project is as follows:

- 10 soil health management plans developed Declan McDonald and Chris Alenson.
- 1 ongoing trial at Daryl and Margaret Hooks, Pound Creek.

Specifically, for 2015/16 the project achieved the following:

- 2 soil health management plans developed over 673 hectares
- Ongoing trial at Daryl and Margaret Hooks over 5 hectares
- One field day event at Prom Country cheese in July 2016 with 31 people attending.

Moyarra Fine Foods Diversification Farm Walk

Farmer Discussion Groups.

Both the Healthy Soils Sustainable Farms project and the Demonstrating Sustainable Agriculture project support Bass Coast Landcare Networks Farmer Discussion Group program which is comprised of the following groups:

- The Kongwak Ellipak Discussion Group
- Phillip Island Better Beef group
- Dairy Discussion Group
- Innovation and Diversification discussion group.

Discussion group highlights for 2016/17 include:

- A diversification and innovation farm visit to Gippsland Mushrooms in July 2017;
- A diversification and innovation farm visit to Moyarra Fine Foods in December 2017;

- Diversification and Innovation bus tour to Pakenham to Macclesfield in May 2017;
- An effluent management plan workshop with the Moyarra Dairy Discussion group on June 2017.

Future priorities for all these groups include:

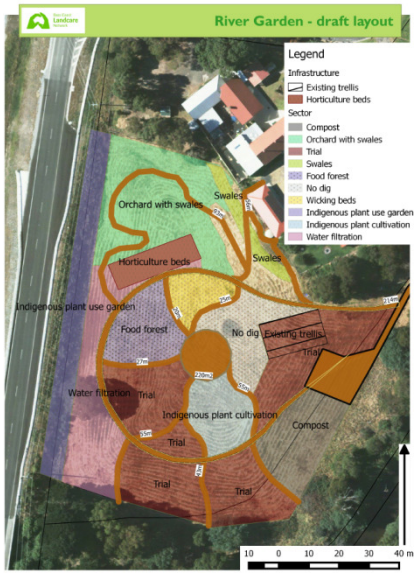
- Strategic planning to develop long term priorities
- Development and implementation of agricultural demonstration trials in partnership with industry and tertiary education institutions.
- Continue to showcase best practice examples of diversification and innovation from the region and beyond.
- Encourage increased participation in the discussion groups.
- Encourage the groups to become self-determining and self-governing.

Overall a total of 13 discussion group activities were coordinated in the 2016/17 financial year with a total attendance of 198 people.

Ecosystems Services Portfolio

River Garden

Description: The River Garden is set on a 1Ha parcel of land on the banks of the Bass River behind the BCLN office. The vision for the River Garden Project is to be a:



- Demonstration trial site for regenerative agriculture practices;
- Outdoor living classroom hosting workshops, field days and training programs for the local community including school groups;
- Community garden promoting community volunteerism and learning.
- Regional hub for local food box distribution (with long established food network Grow Lightly)

The project ties the nurturing of innovative local food systems into BCLN's existing work in natural resource management, sustainable agriculture and community education/capacity building. This project will deliver on our goals of creating long-term health and resilience in our local food systems, agricultural economy, community and the broad ecological processes that underpin them.

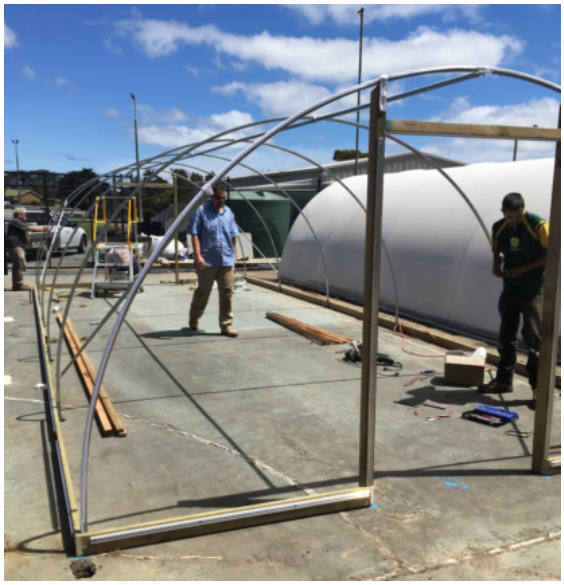
Outputs:

- 50m of all-weather access track and turn around developed
- One VanHut / shed delivered and anchored
- first hops harvest and yield recording
- 283m of rabbit proof fencing
- Solarisation of 200m2 patch of kikuyu and 300m2 commercial style horticulture plot
- earthworks for orchard site (swales) and dam
- Maintenance of site

Outcomes: Access has been made much easier thanks to the all-weather track, allowing work to continue over winter. Development of the site has continued largely through the Work 4 Dole program, but also with VCaL students. Bass Coast Shire, AGL, BCLN Public Fund, and Environmental Detectives have all committed funds to the project, with much more development scheduled for next year.

All weather access developed, VCaL students shaping orchard swales and spreading plastic in background for solarisation

Work 4 Dole



Description: Following on from the first 6 month project in 15-16, a second project was secured at the end of 2016, and a third started just before the end 2016 financial year. As well as several program participants, 3 Centrelink volunteers joined the team and worked on a variety of projects at the River Garden and Nursery. This has allowed BCLN to commencement unfunded projects, and build enough momentum so they attract funding.

Outputs:

- 486 hrs of staff supervision and project management in and around Bass
- 2432 hrs of participant labour

- Development of Bass Nursery; installing second hot house, creating 2 hardening off areas, constructing 5 benches and 5 irrigation loops
- Maintenance of hops trial plot, harvesting and recording of hops
- Development and maintenance of the River Garden; weed control, rabbit proofing the site, slashing and mowing, elevation mapping and site
- set out, solarisation of kikuyu and garden beds

Outcomes:

- Develop the River Garden site
- Continue to develop nursery infrastructure
- Maintained, trained, harvested and recorded yields at the hops trial plot

Maintenance of hops trial plot

Nursery benches being built

Pest Plant and Animal Program

Outputs:

Rabbit Strategy – quarterly meetings of the Rabbit Working Group (BCSC, PINP, BCLN), successful application as a release site for the K5 calci virus (which was released on Phillip Island Autumn 2017), and set up Phillip Island as a 'group' under Rabbit Scan, with 2 community education sessions held on how to use RabbitScan.

Eastern Barred Bandicoot at Newhaven

Bass Coast Shire Council – both sides of 253km of roadsides were sprayed – 62 roads across Phillip Island and the mainland. Weed and pest animal enquiries / complaints from the community were much lower compared to last year (57 lines of communication regarding feral animals,

mainly rabbits, and 27 regarding weeds), and approximately 24 pails of Rabbait were distributed.

New rabbit fence at Newhaven

Phillip Island Nature Parks –150Ha of land surveyed for rabbits, harbour and warrens, then baited and ripped. Reduction in rabbit numbers from 128 to 49. Chilean Needle Grass sprayed at 3 properties as well as roadsides. Rabbit proof fence at Churchill Rd and Veterans Drive repaired.

Victorian Gorse Taskforce – a large grant application was submitted for gorse control on 10 properties from Phillip Island to Grantville.

Community Weeds Taskforce (CWT) – BCLN hosted every second meeting of the CWT, and held the acting Secretary role. The old South Gippsland Weeds website was integrated with South Gippsland Landcare network site, pressure for more enforcement was applied to State Government, Organic Farming bodies were contacted and asked to emphasise the importance of weed control to their members.

Protecting the Eastern Barred Bandicoot - another Threatened Species grant application was successful and provided funding to install a rabbit proof fence along the western edge of Newhaven, remove harbour in this area, and provide bait to landholders along the fence.

Westernport Biosphere, Growing Connections – a large amount of woody weeding and spraying was undertaken in the area around the Holden Proving Ground and up to Adams Creek. This included large areas of remnants at Boral, Bell Park Scout Camp, Metro Group Quarry, and Lang Lang Golf course.

Smoking warren to find all entrances before collapsing

Holden the Ground – A second round Threatened Species grant application for attaching a skirt to remaining half of the Holden Proving Ground 16km perimeter fence was successful. All the material was ordered and the Green Army started work on the fence at the end of the financial year.

Outcomes:

Rabbit Strategy – The working group is continuing to meet and work on issues such as aligning monitoring and baiting programs, prioritising assets for rabbit control, seeking further assistance to expand rabbit control in our network, and engage a much larger portion of our community which is essential for effective and long lasting rabbit control.

Bass Coast Shire Council – we are proud of the low level of weed infestations in our network, and motivation is high to continue reducing weed cover, increase woody weeding, and control less targeted environmental weeds. Bass Coast Shire contributes a huge amount of funding towards roadside weeds compared to most other shires, and should be congratulated for making weeds a priority. There was an increase in the distance of roads treated compared to last year. On behalf of the shire, BCLN continue fielding pest plant and

animal enquiries and complaints from the public, ranging from weed identification and advice to handing out rabbait. This year's complaints / enquiries were more than 60% less than last year.

Woody weeding at Boral

PINP - BCLN managed a large rabbit control program over 150Ha of land around Fishers Wetland, incorporating 9 landholders, in a bid to keep rabbits off Churchill Island and protect the newly released Eastern Barred Bandicoot (EBB). This is the second year, and numbers have dropped from 453 rabbits two years ago to 49 at the end of the second year control program.

Protecting the Eastern Barred Bandicoot – this project complimented the work done with PINP, and has slowed rabbit invasion from Newhaven into the EBB buffer zone following rabbit control. EBB's were seen on 5 occasions in the buffer zone during the rabbit control program – they have expanded off Churchill Island.

Victorian Gorse Taskforce - Confirmation of application success received in July 2017.

Westernport Biosphere, Growing Connections – large tracts of remnant bush were improved as part of a project focussing on improving habitat in a corridor for Southern Brown Bandicoots between Adams Creek Reserve and the area around the Holden Proving Ground.

Bass Indigenous Plant Nursery

Description:

The success of the first full operating year of the nursery is thanks to the great volunteer group that has formed over the year; Annie Ross Arestia, Liz Bernal, Ray Kirk, Linda Nichols, Louis Madge, Ben Maghanoy, Anna Spiden, Carol Timothy, Lyndall Wales, Donna Williams and a special thanks to Bevan who always brings a delicious morning tea! Bronwyn Teasdale's, with her extensive knowledge and innovative ideas, is a great asset to the staff team.

Some nursery stock on hardening off benches

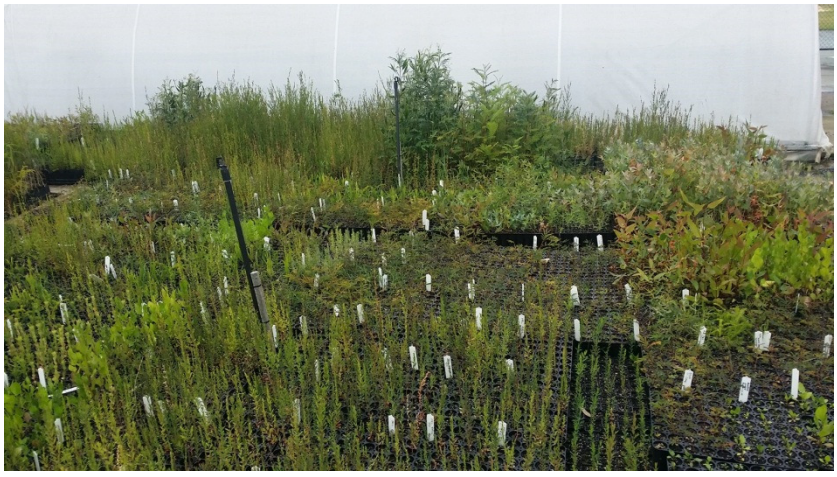
Over 30 species were propagated and 30 000 plants in total were grown for a variety of projects and sites across Bass Coast Shire. Next year this number will be slightly increased, with potting media, fertiliser, and watering regimes refined to increase plant vigour.

An aquatic plant propagating area was set up, trials of little grown understorey species conducted, and the outside benches and watering system installed thanks to the Work 4 Dole program. Once the hardening off area dries out drainage will be improved, gravel and weed mat laid down, and a wind break constructed. A commercial grade watering system will also be installed.

Nursery group at the 1st year celebration lunch

In addition to growing our own plants, the nursery allows BCLN to hold and maintain 10's of thousands of plant orders until they go out to sites with a minimum of effort.

Outputs



Plants propagated at the BCLN Nursery

- Over 45 volunteer mornings attended by an average of 8 volunteers over the year
- Construction of a second hothouse, an aquatic propagation pond (and source aquatic plant material), benches and irrigation system
- Propagation of 30,000 seedlings
- Holding 3,000 seedlings over summer
- Holding orders of a further 50,000 seedlings during planting season

Outcomes

- Developed hardening off areas and irrigation system
- A strong volunteer group has established
- 15 Ha were planted out using the 30,000 plants grown at the nursery

Works Crew

Description: The Works Crew was developed by Bass Coast Landcare Network in 2006 with the aim of assisting landholders with environmental and sustainable agriculture works, undertaking environmental works on public land, and to offer traineeships in the environmental field. Since then the Works Crew has taken on ten trainees, and the team over the last year consisted of three full time employees, two part time employees, and at times up to seven casuals.

The Works Crew is currently based at Bass, and undertakes work throughout the Bass Coast Shire, occasionally extending into South Gippsland Shire. They have an annual operating budget of $500k, and work across a broad range of projects.

Outputs Snapshot

Network Area	Ha	Tubes Planted
PPWMA remnant protection	239.5	-
PPWCMA revegetation and weeding	15.5	25,900
WGCMA remnant protection	235.5	-
WGCMA revegetation and weeding	16.0	28,000
Totals	**506.5**	**53,900**

Roads sprayed	Number	Kms
Phillip Island	17	50.2
Bass Coast mainland	45	202.8
Totals	**62**	**202.8**

Trainee – Angus Carrington

Outcomes: The Works Crew staffing structure has shuffled to be a more flexible, adaptive unit, drawing upon the strengths of our growing base of casual employees. With safety and profitability the leading priorities, it was very encouraging to see a continued low incident rate and again achieving enough profit to feed back into BCLN reserves.

It was also fantastic to see the results of a recent staff survey, where the common themes indicated a high level of job satisfaction and friendship between the crew.

Flanking both planting and spray season, the crew was able to focus on rehabilitating large areas of natural bushlands, targeting large invasive weed species such as cedar wattles(Acacia elata), pine trees(Pinus radiate) and Pittospourms(Pittosporum undulatum).

Furthermore, the crew extended the kilometres covered on Bass Coast Shire Council roadsides from 207.3kms to 253kms, a jump of nearly 25%.

Our new website and mobile version

Environmental Detective's artwork

Audited Financial Statements

BASS COAST LANDCARE NETWORK INC.

A0048273Z

FINANCIAL REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED

30 JUNE 2017

3 Creeks Planting at Chris Heislars

Anderson Inlet Planting at Kath and Helen Fishers