

Annual Report 2018 - 2019



Bass Coast
Landcare
Network

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners, the Bunurong and the Boonwurung, of the places in which we live, work and play. We recognise and respect the enduring relationship they have with their country, and we pay our respects to elders past, present and future.



Welcome from the Chair

Ric Oldham

Welcome Landcare members, their families, our volunteers, friends, staff, and fellow Board Members to the Bass Coast Landcare Network 2018/19 Annual Report.

Our Network continues to be one of the most successful Landcare organisations in Australia and remains true to our core purpose **“Educate, Grow, Feed”**.

Never has the importance of what we do been so relevant. As issues of food and water security, increased fire threat, storms and flood are happening in real time in our everyday lives, we are all experiencing the effects of a changing climate.

At Bass Coast Landcare Network, we are responding to these challenges, learning and teaching each other how to manage our land and our environment in the face of a changing climate. We hope that you are inspired by our actions as we continue to address future challenges together.

Proudly Supported by



BCLN Board Executive

The Chair – Ric Oldham

Deputy Chair – Brett Dodd

Treasurer – Roger Lee

Secretary – Anna Gloria

Portfolio Holders

West Gippsland CMA – Paul Spiers

Port Phillip and Western Port CMA - Ric Oldham, Peter Mulherin

Audit and Finance – Don Creed, Brett Dodd, Roger Lee
Abigail Yarranton

Risk and Compliance – Ric Oldham, Anna Gloria, Abigail Yarranton

HR Advisory Committee – Daryl Hook, Brian Enbom, Abigail Yarranton, Lisa Wangman

Groups and Representatives

Archies Creek – Paul Speirs

Bass Valley – Jean Coffey

3 Creeks – Ray Kirk

Anderson Inlet – Daryl Hook

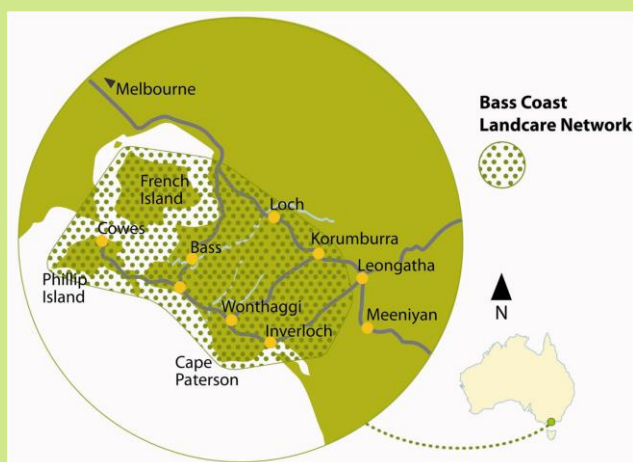
French Island – Linda Bowden

Kongwak – Clare Stainsby

Korumburra – Don Creed

Phillip Island – Mike Cleeland

Powlett Project – Brian Enbom



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Background and History

The Bass Coast Landcare Network (BCLN) was formed in 2003 as an affiliation of the Landcare Groups in the region, 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 the Groups and the Network Board, our Landcare Staff manage a variety of programs including;

- Education and Training - Engaging the next generation, supporting a community of practice
- Demonstrating Sustainable Agriculture - Providing pathways to resilient and profitable farming
- Natural Resource Management - Remnant vegetation protection and revegetation
- Pest Plant and Animal Control - Integrated management and control
- Works Crew - Assisting landholders in on ground works and offering traineeships
- Indigenous plant nursery - Volunteers growing local indigenous plants for Landcare projects
- The River Garden - A community trials, education, demonstration space and future food hub
- Practical Sustainability - Community action for sustainable farms and homes
- Capitalise on Carbon - Supporting landholders to generate income from sequestration
- Partnerships in Action - Engaging and delivering partnerships in the corporate and agency sector
- Ecosystem Services Delivery - Valuing biodiversity and providing consulting services

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 several 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, improving water quality and monitoring biodiversity.



Our Core purpose

Educate – Grow – Feed

Our Vision

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

Our 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.

Our Values

The BCLN core values have been drawn from a consultative process between the Board and BCLN staff. They are not rules but represent guiding principles that we should test all decisions and actions against.

Excellence: To strive for high standards in everything we do to create the best outcomes for the community and future generations.

Respect: To maintain a respectful and professional attitude to embrace individuality and different viewpoints and values.

Teamwork: To create a healthy, cohesive and supportive work environment to ensure collaboration and cooperation are cornerstones of our organisation.

Optimism/resilience: to continually adapt and evolve to change while remaining optimistic and confident in our values.

Integrity: To take pride in working professionally and honestly to achieve outcomes that reflect our values and enhance our reputation as a trust worthy organisation.

*As an organisation we value and support **biodiversity and the natural environment.***



Our Strategies and objectives 2018-2025

To achieve our core purpose, 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. Strong communities engaged and connected through Landcare

- 1.1 Increase volunteer activity by 50% by 2025
- 1.2 Increase new memberships within Landcare groups by 20%
- 1.3 Engage 50 new landholders (average 5 per member group) in Landcare activities per year
- 1.4 Increase level of lobbying on Landcare issues by Landcare groups by 100%
- 1.5 Double funding from corporate sources by 2020
- 1.6 Raise awareness of BCLN within the philanthropic sector
- 1.7 Explore other commercial opportunities that align with principles of the network.
- 1.8 Develop an MOU with the Bunurong Land Council

2. Grow and protect a connected biodiverse landscape

- 2.1 Increase indigenous vegetation cover by 1.5 % per annum
- 2.2 Protect and enhance 40 ha of remnant vegetation per annum
- 2.3 Hold a minimum of 15 community planting days per annum
- 2.4 Increase works crew revenue by 25% by 2025
- 2.5 Facilitate 6 more traineeships by 2025
- 2.6 Establish 50 new Biolinks Projects by 2025
- 2.7 Increase woody weed eradication funding by 30% by 2025
- 2.8 Trial 3 new technologies in revegetation by 2025

3. Lead an innovative sustainable agricultural community

- 3.1 50% of the agricultural community have implemented productive changed practice to become resilient to climate change
- 3.2 25% of agricultural properties have developed carbon-neutral action plans and implemented changed practice to become carbon neutral
- 3.3 75% of the agriculture community have developed approved farm biosecurity plans and have implemented changed practice
- 3.4 BCLN will have established a peer to peer mentoring program for 5 key sectors;
 - Organic/regenerative horticulture
 - Master Tree Grower/Multi Story farming.
 - Grazing (beef and sheep)
 - Zero Emissions agriculture
 - Mixed Farming
- 3.5 25% of the agricultural community will have developed drought proofing water plans and have become water stewards

4. Capitalise on Carbon

- 4.1 Expand BCLN vehicle offset program to include flights, by 100% by 2025
- 4.2 Become a carbon neutral organisation by 2022
- 4.3 Train 2 staff members in carbon accounting by 2020
- 4.4 Develop an on-farm carbon sequestration and carbon reduction program by 2020
- 4.5 Develop a carbon consultancy prospectus by 2020
- 4.6 Develop carbon offsets programs by 2020

5. Best Practice Governance and Safe, Skilful Operations

- 5.1 Maintain a quality board and management team which provide effective, accountable and strategic leadership and sound succession planning
- 5.2 Implement Professional development for staff to the minimum of 5% of salary
- 5.3 Maintain effective, nationally compatible systems across all key areas of operation.
- 5.4 Zero Harm, live a culture of safety
- 5.5 Develop plan for Network to become progressively less reliant on public funds in support of operational overheads and support self-sufficiency by 2025
- 5.6 Maintain strong cash reserves (>\$500K), high levels of secured work and an ongoing annual surplus (>5%).
- 5.7 Maintain high quality assets, infrastructure and equipment in priority locations.

6. Deliver leading edge experiences, education and training

- 6.1 Develop and market two new profitable environmental experiential activities per year
- 6.2 Increase by 10%, the number of students reached each year by the Environmental Detectives Program
- 6.3 Develop new environmental detective's activities per annum
- 6.4 Develop an integrated and accredited Landcare Training program for landholders by 2025
- 6.5 Establish a partnership with an Adult, Community and Further Education (ACFE) accredited centre to deliver accredited Landcare training
- 6.6 Increase landholder/farmer engagement in education by 50% by 2025
- 6.7 Engage 15% more volunteers in training – both as trainer and trainee
- 6.8 Establish 3 Educational Hubs in Gippsland by 2025

The following Annual Report will be structured following our 6 key strategies.



Best practice governance and safe, skilful operations

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.

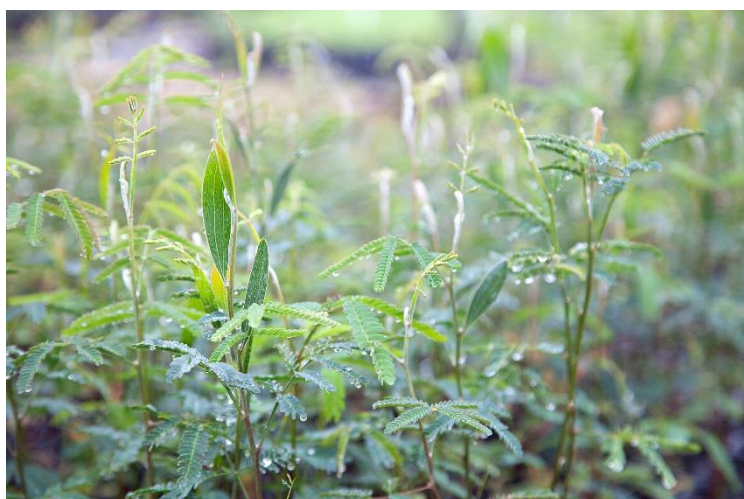
Overall Operations

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



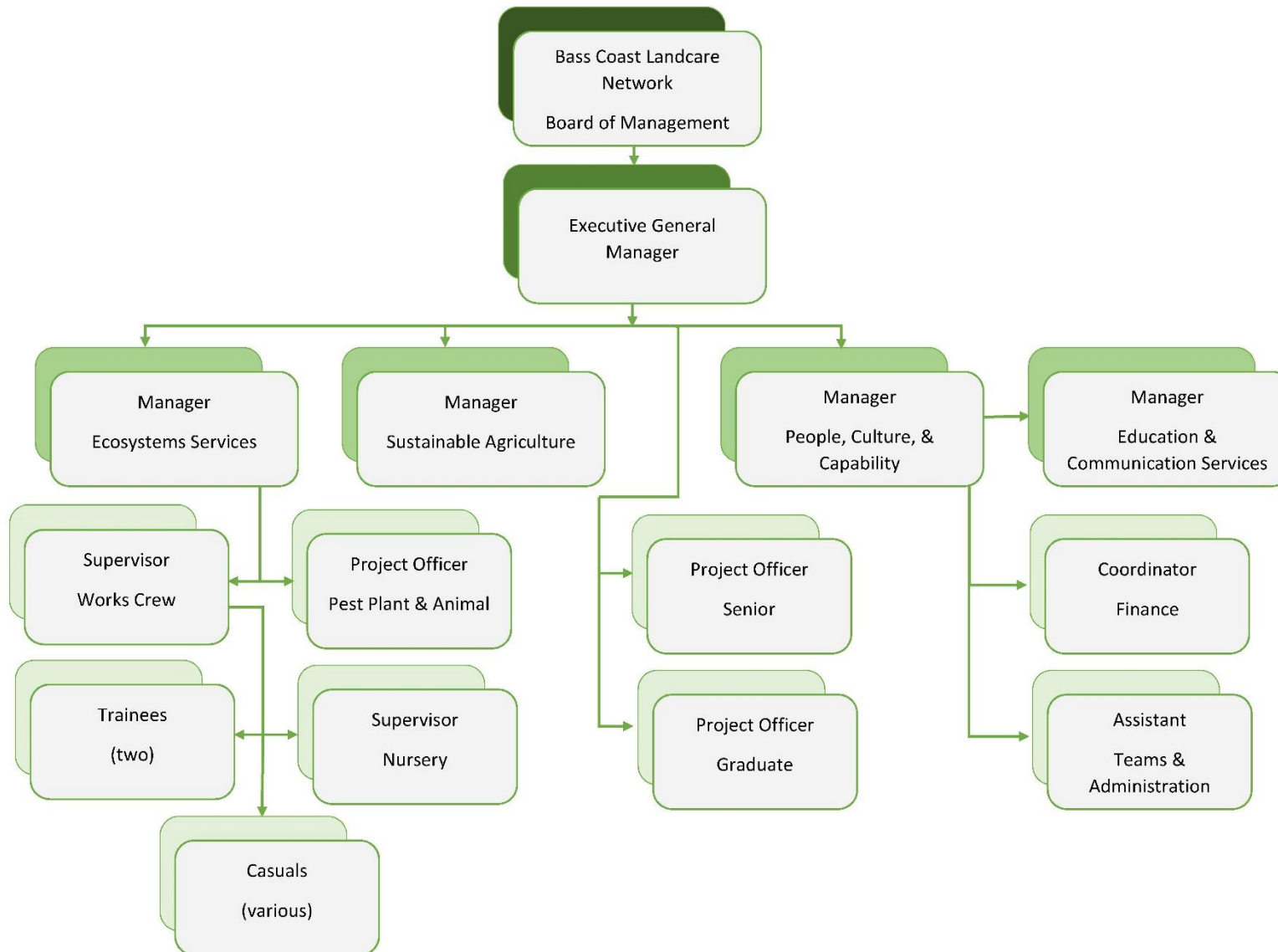
Legal Conformance

Understand and protect the financial position of the BCLN.

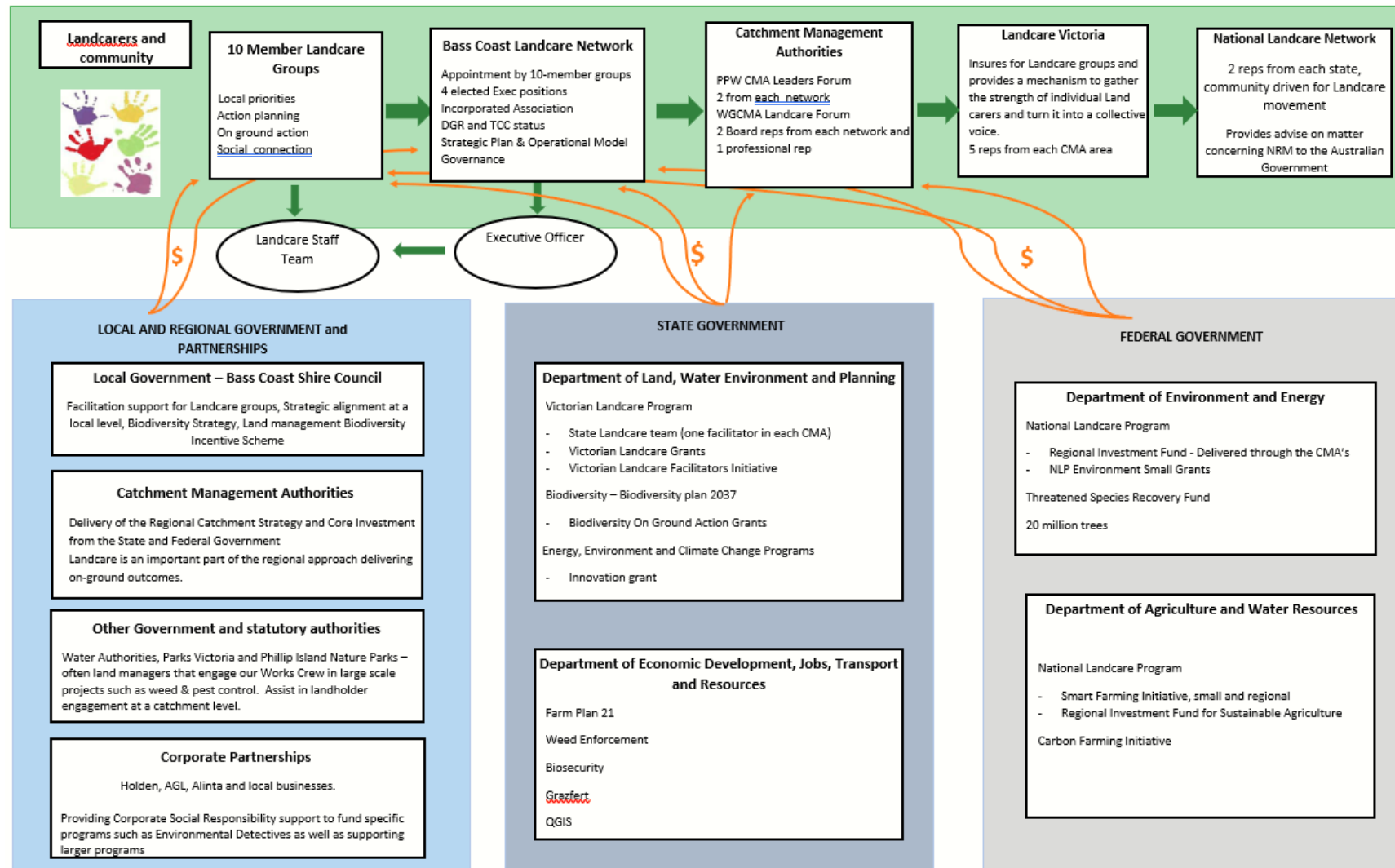
Require and monitor legal and regulatory compliance including adherence to the conditions of funding.

Approve annual accounts, annual reports and other public / sensitive reports.

BCLN Organisation Structure



Landcare Framework in Australia



Chair's Report

Ric Oldham

The past year has seen the Network together with its active Member Groups, build upon our strong foundations and reinforce by action, a commitment to our core purpose, **Educate - Grow - Feed**. Our education programs, activities and projects remain aligned to our strategic intent with all sectors of our Network continuing to operate well and to plan despite the unexpected and significant replacement of our Executive Officer which had the potential to cause a major setback.



It was with great pride that BCLN received the Victorian Landcare Network Award in the category “Best Landcare Network” at a recent ceremony at Government House. This award acknowledges the Leadership, strategic vision, achievement through hard work, dedication of effort of our staff and volunteers, and the innovation and successes of BCLN’s activities and pursuits.

We have delivered many major projects this year and developed numerous new partnerships that will improve outcomes for BCLN and all its stakeholders into the future. This includes the great progress and development of The Growing Southern Gippsland Project which has been moving along at an impressive pace. The project has delivered field days, farm walks, presentations, and media updates together with the development of a data rich interactive web portal. This project is exciting, well-timed and aligned to our “All Things Carbon” strategy as we look to new opportunities to develop and expand our regenerative agriculture plans and expand our engagement with the agricultural sector and new partners in the years to come.

We have worked hard on delivering enhanced communications through various traditional and social media platforms where the Board now has insight into BCLN communications statistics and the Smart Farming in Westernport Project 2018-2023 Training needs analysis. Reporting statistics helps keep us on track with the needs of our farmers, and allows us to provide direction for relevant, quality training and field days.

The year has seen us deliver awesome on ground and educational outcomes, take further steps to better care for our young landcarers and increase our focus on managing critical risks whilst continuing to build upon the solid operational foundations already laid over the past decade.

All of this has only been possible because of the exceptional efforts of our;

- Community led group membership and network volunteer base,
- The leadership and skills of our top-class executive, their administrative support and on-ground operational teams and,
- The enduring support of the Bass Coast Shire, our many corporate partners and the successful applications for public and private sector financial support.

With diminishing federal government support our network stands resilient with a competent well-respected environmental services Works crew. We have many reasons to be confident that our skilful, innovative, executive management team led by our new Executive General Manager is capable of continuing to secure our share of grants and corporate partnerships, providing an exceptional level of funding for high value and truly worthwhile projects.

Our staff team are continually writing innovative grant applications, and as a result we were rewarded with new grants from various sources this year that assisted with revegetation projects, education for all age groups, supplies for our River Garden, tools, and project management funds to make our projects and programs possible.

With the departure of our Executive Officer (EO), came a period of expected disruption and uncertainty. The Board acknowledges the efforts and professionalism of the Leadership and applauds the entire management team and operational staff for their commitment post the departure of our Executive Officer (EO), and the ensuing period of disruption and uncertainty.

The Board and the Executive Officers are thanked for their continued contributions and diligence in their strategic advice and governance role and in particular we acknowledge and thank retiring inaugural BCLN Board Member Brian Enbom for his years of dedicated and tireless service.

We thank the Bass Coast Shire Council for their continued support and their valued partnership and together with the continued and growing sponsorship of our respected corporate and government partners, our future remains well placed. Our Board and Management acknowledges and celebrates the efforts and achievements of our Volunteers, the very heart and soul of our reason for being.

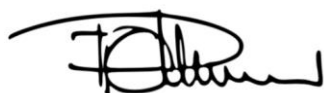
It is the combined capability and capacity of our Network and Member Landcare Groups comprising our volunteers, its Board, Management and on-ground teams that together present as a strong, dynamic and well-respected values-based organisation. We stand united and remain ready and proactive into 2020 and beyond to secure and deliver outcomes that protect, enhance and secure our natural and social environment.

As always, there is much to do to for BCLN to remain successful and to ensure we continue to pursue our stated 2018-2025 Strategies namely;

- Strong communities engaged and connected through Landcare
- Growing and protecting a connected biodiverse landscape
- Leading an innovative sustainable agricultural community
- Capitalising on Carbon
- Ensuring best practice governance and safe and skilful operations
- Delivering leading edge experiences, education and training.

Ric Oldham

Chair – Bass Coast Landcare Network



Treasurer's Report

Roger Lee

The Network's trading activities for this year produced an overall breakeven result. This is a very acceptable outcome considering the unexpected challenges and disruptions encountered during the year.

Total Income (excluding extraordinary income) was \$1,283,000. This was in line with budget and slightly more than the prior year.

The corresponding Expenses were \$1,306,000, slightly higher than budget resulting in a small loss of \$23,000 for the year.

It should be noted that Income (and Net Surplus) shown in the attached Financial Reports includes an extraordinary item (an accounting term) which arose from the conclusion of the Vic Roads offset program in the previous year. The contractual reconciliation showed that BCLN far exceeded the requirements of the project producing a final payment of \$153,000 ... significantly higher than expected. This income item has been highlighted as an extraordinary item because it relates to previous year's activities. This income goes straight to the bottom line and results in a Net Surplus for 2018-19 of \$130,000. This is a great outcome and all those involved in the project are commended.



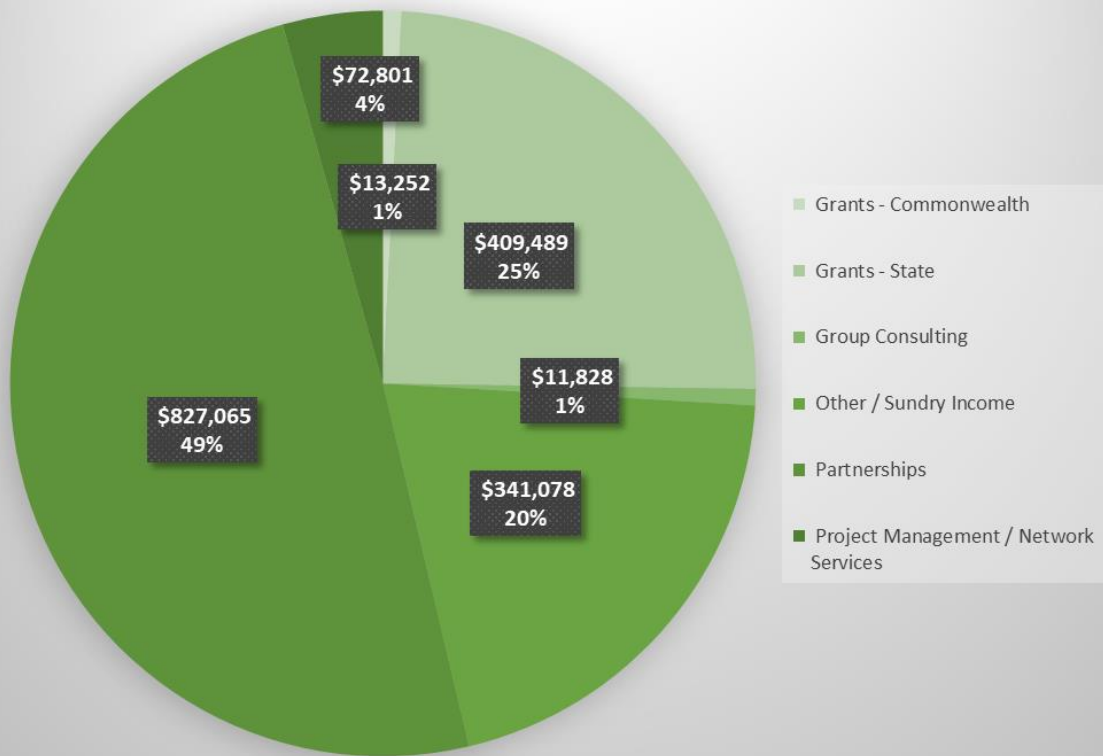
The Balance Sheet at year end shows the Network to be in sound financial condition. The working capital ratio of 2.1 is at a very healthy level and together with reserves of \$800,000 means the Network is well able to meet its financial obligations.

The Board has set a budget for 2019-20 that requires Network to generate 18% more revenue than the previous year. At the time of writing the Network has made a great start towards achieving this target by winning the major pest animal control component of a large project titled "Enhancing Biodiversity at the Bunurong Coastal Landscape". This has required investment in staff and equipment and the Network expects to continue to benefit from this project over the next two years.

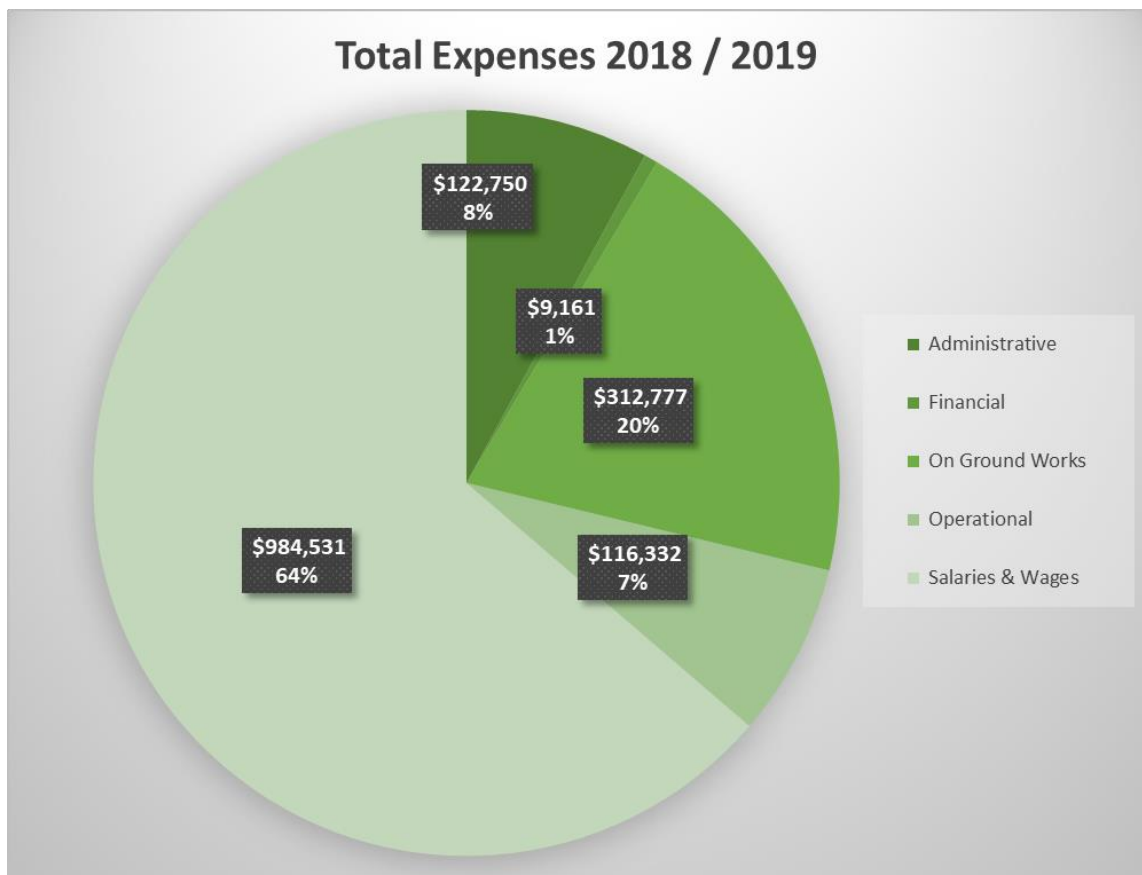
The challenge for the Network's management and staff in 2019-20 is to maintain firm control over the additional expenses, especially staff costs, required to generate the additional revenue.

Many thanks to Cheryl and Abby for their excellent work in managing the accounts, generating monthly financial reports and responding to my many questions. I'm also thankful for the assistance of my colleagues Jon Hauser, Bret Dodd and Don Creed and look forward to their future input to the Audit & Finance committee.

Total Income 2018 / 2019



Total Expenses 2018 / 2019



Executive General Manager Report

David Bateman

Bass Coast Landcare has now been in operation as an independent Landcare network for 13 years. Over this time the BCLN has grown significantly to become one of the largest and most successful Landcare networks in Australia if not the world. We have delivered a wide variety of sustainable agriculture, education and environmental services to our members and beyond. This year was one of our largest ever planting seasons with 242,000 plants in the ground. A massive volunteer effort has helped get the bulk of the plants in the ground with some excellent coordination and support from my staff team.

The Growing Southern Gippsland Project has also been a fantastic project that will continue to have an impact into the future, through its web portal which will allow farmers to get on the path towards creating a climate adaptation plan/whole of farm carbon plan. Our Environmental Detectives program has evolved to a fee for service and small grant-based operation, which Lisa Wangman has continued to drive and implement across the Bass Coast. The program is still returning some great results for our local schools despite the loss of our major sponsor.

Our BCLN works crew have returned a fantastic on-ground and financial result again this year. This has come through the excellent leadership of both Mark Rowe and Robbie Gray, who have worked well with our partner organisations to deliver a wide variety of on-ground works. This year we have broadened out our services to include Pest Animal Control and skilling up to do Willow removal with the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority. Pest animal



Dave Bateman with Young Uncle Shane from Bunurong Land Council

control programs have been made possible through two State Government Biodiversity Response Planning projects, one through BCLN and one through South Gippsland Landcare Network.

Our success can be attributed to fantastic leadership through our Board and my fantastic staff team and our volunteers. Our team is highly skilled and willing to adapt to change. We take on opportunities to do

innovative environmental works and expand and contract our team to get it done. Our key partner, Bass Coast Shire Council, has again been a great supporter of BCLN. Through our shared goals and MOU, we have been delivering great results for both organisations. The Biolinks project has been a fine example of collaboration. Through this project we have leveraged funding from multiple partners to get the bulk of 242,000 plants in the ground. The Biolinks Strategy was also a key factor in the success of our \$413k Biodiversity Response Planning application.



Dave Bateman and John Mumford Planting at Brett Price's farm Archie's Creek

Our partnership with the Bunurong Land Council has been established and is working very well. The BLC have been a key partner in all of our natural resource management grants this year and have delivered cross-cultural inductions and cultural heritage reports on key riparian project sites. Our partnerships and relationships, I believe, are the key to our continued success. I would like to thank all of our key partners including Bass Coast Shire Council, West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority, Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority, Westernport Water and Phillip Island Nature Parks for their support.

I am proud of what our Staff team, BCLN Board and volunteers have achieved this year and would like to thank everyone that has contributed. We will continue to innovate and strive to do great things for the Bass Coast and the world. Well done.



Dave and some of the BCLN staff team

Human Resources Report

Overall

The human resource activities of BCLN, as always, have created and presented numerous challenges and opportunities this year. We have sadly said goodbye to some long-term staff and welcomed other new ones, including a returning staff member who was previously one of our star trainees.

BCLN is committed to producing policies and activities adapting to the changing commitments of staff and the organisation. These activities ensure BCLN retains quality staff with as much in-depth practical and technical local knowledge in our team as possible. Changes in the BCLN structure ensures it meets its key strategic goal of developing and enhancing the internal structures and functions of BCLN management. Specifically, BCLN continues to meet its goals in attracting, developing and retaining talented staff with the high-level capabilities and skills.

Further it should be acknowledged the positive actions and active assistance of the Human Resources Advisory sub-committee in supporting and upholding BCLN's goals. This includes fostering a positive, engaging and proactive work environment while still able to identify and respond to the changing needs of our diverse stakeholders, community, and organisation.

Recruitment and Staff Turnover

Low staff turnover continues to be a positive attribute for BCLN, actively demonstrating the staff and organisational commitment to one another. BCLN lost only two non-casual staff this entire year. This positive commitment is supported by excellent opportunities for flexible working arrangements including utilising time in lieu and changing work location or times, and part-time employment, which has increased over the prior year.

Our Executive Officer left during the year and this has provided an excellent opportunity for BCLN to review and update its current structure to better meet the changing needs of the organisation. We are pleased to advise David Bateman has been appointed to the position of Executive General Manager. David has a wealth of experience with BCLN and a fresh perspective of how the organisation should be led and developed. Further this has allowed BCLN to engage the services of a new Environmental science graduate, Jye Andersen, who has considerable volunteering experience, innovative perspectives on BCLN activities, and, having undertaken his university placements with BCLN, knowledge of the organisation. Lastly Abigail Yarranton has been able to redeploy the activities of the HR function into a more combined and focused position of Manager People Culture and Capability, which will encompass a new emphasis on organisational and individual competencies, proficiencies, and those activities which lead to occasions for change and outcome enhancement.

Further, we would like to welcome back one of our previous successful trainees Jason Good who has joined us in the position of Pest Plant and Animal Officer which has been made possible with development of new and exciting partnerships to combat those pests that plague our landscape.



Jason Good



Caleb Kilgour on graduation day from the Certificate III Conservation and Land Management Indigenous

Again, this year we have continued our traineeship program in the works crew. We had a total of three trainees this year undertaking different programs. Excitingly we took on our first trainee through the Indigenous program and we are pleased to congratulate Caleb Kilgour for all his hard work and graduating from Holmesglen Institute of TAFE with a Certificate III in Conservation and Land Management. We will continue traineeship programs and offering opportunities for our young people in the area. With changes in state

government training activities we are also hoping to be able to include new opportunities in other areas, such as arborists.

Our trainees offer a wonderful occasion to improve employment prospects for the youth of Bass Coast as well as offering BCLN itself access to people with new skills and enthusiasm. I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate all our trainees in their studies and endeavours.

The overall number of full-time staff has decreased, but this is reflected in an increase in part-time staff, and those existing staff accessing opportunities for flexible working arrangements, including part-time work. In total we had five new employees and six left the organisation.

Casual workers continue to be essential and utilised by our works crew to create a flexible workforce and to allow our team to easily adapt on a seasonal or demand basis. This high level of casual staff will continue, but it is hoped as the level of ongoing work for our team increases, we will be able to offer more staff permanent employment opportunities.

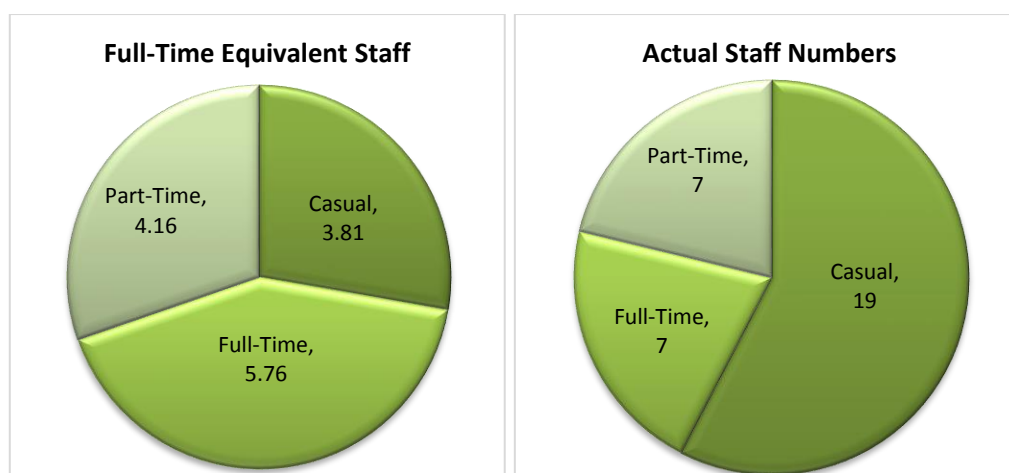
Volunteering is integral to our team and without the commitment of our Nursery Group Volunteers we would be unable to produce the high level of quality plants we are utilising in our plantings. These volunteers come from all areas of the community and a special thanks must go to the Nursey Group who have allowed us to develop the nursery and allow us to control the quality of our plants now and into the future.



Nursery Group Volunteers

BCLN volunteers range from our entire Board, who offer a strong and ongoing commitment, to those who come to a casual planting. Each person is needed, and essential in creating successful outcomes for BCLN activities and its stakeholders. I take this opportunity to thank all of you, our vitally important and needed volunteers.

Statistics



| Employee Status at 30 June 2019 | | | |
|---------------------------------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| | Female | Male | Total |
| Casual | 4 | 6 | 10 |
| Full-time | 1 | 3 | 4 |
| Part-Time | 3 | 4 | 7 |
| Total | 8 | 13 | 21 |

Training and Development

Human Resources provides a variety of training and development opportunities aimed at building employee capacity to deliver services, meet strategic needs and align with BCLN's values, strategic plan, and overall mission. BCLN continues to sponsor staff in informal, short and nationally recognised vocational training during the year and anticipates an ability to develop programs and activities into the future from this investment.

Training activities have included; chainsaw usage, traffic control, payroll and taxation, employment law masterclass, leadership development, chemical endorsement, health and safety, master tree growing, pitching, and vocational Certificate III for our trainees.

Specifically, Abigail Yarranton, our Manager People Culture and Capability, was invited to participate in the Gippsland Community Leadership Program, conducted through Committee for Gippsland. This is a year-long activity offering unique networking, personal, and professional development opportunities that will continue to benefit the Network long after it is completed.

BCLN also encourages staff to undertake other outside studies improving their professional and personal skills. We are pleased to report BCLN staff are independently undertaking or completing vocational and post graduate studies, further developing the knowledge base and experience at BCLN. We are pleased to be able to offer these staff support in ways other than direct financial contribution.

Work Health and Safety Injury Management

BCLN acknowledges continual improvement of our work health and safety policies, procedures and guidelines are essential to help identify, adopt and develop best practice in health and safety management processes. These proactive activities reduce social and financial costs of workplace injuries and illnesses and improve the overall performance of BCLN.

We continue to review the opportunity of developing Quality Assured program ensuring we not only meet but exceed our expectations in this area.

Conclusion

We believe our employees are the most important resource for creating organisational value. By increasing our investment and commitment in human resource development and bolstering the strengths of individuals BCLN will maximize the power and value of its people and the organisation itself. BCLN strives to enhance capabilities, building strong, highly competitive foundation, bringing value to all its partners, volunteers, and other stakeholders.

Special thanks go to all of our volunteers, our dedicated staff, and the members of the HR Advisory Committee for the committed 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 has developed a thorough and clear policy that both define 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 have been trained in and subscribe to the BCLN child protection and safety policy and code of conduct.



Public Fund

Ian James

The Public Fund was set up by the Bass Coast Landcare Network in order to raise funds to finance projects proposed by community groups aimed at assisting the environment through revegetation and development of sustainable agriculture.

2018/19 was the first year that the Public Fund saw some reasonable size donations from individuals. These donations enabled the Fund to diversify its support for projects. Financial support was provided for an eight-week course to assist foresters to improve their practices and encourage development of sustainable agriculture.

The Public Fund received requests for financial support for two exciting projects. The first was for further development of the previously supported 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, bushfoods and composting. The second was for the Bass River Walk and Canoe Access Project. This project has multiple objectives:



Master Tree Grower's course participants

- to enable the public to observe the diversity in river systems as the river transitions from fresh to brackish to estuarine and bay eco systems.
- to open up the lower reaches of the Bass River for recreational activity.
- to restore the riverine vegetation.
- to appreciate the significance of the Bass River in Victoria's indigenous culture and settlement history.

This project requires further investigative and integration work. Approaches to Melbourne Water and to university research interns have resulted in support for this work.

During the year the Public Fund completed a brochure aimed at tapping funds through wills and bequests. This brochure is being distributed to relevant parties and in particular solicitor and accounting offices in Bass Coast and South Gippsland Shires. It is available on the website and the Fund has fielded a number of requests for assistance in how to leave bequests to enable conservation work to continue to benefit future generations.

While individual interest remains high in providing financial support the level of donations from the corporate and philanthropic sectors remains disappointing. In 2019/20 the trustees are hopeful that canvassing of these sectors will yield financial donations that will boost available money and assist the Public Fund in meeting its objectives.

Ian James (Chairperson) for the Trustees

Successful grant applications and Major Contracts

| Funding Source | Amount | Grants Included |
|---|-------------|--|
| Melbourne Water | \$35,330.76 | Stream Frontage contract |
| DELWP | \$154,228 | Building the Bass Coast Biolinks project, Community Grants |
| Victorian State Government | \$69,774 | F78 Facilitator funding, Victorian Gorse taskforce |
| Australian Federal Government | \$13,252 | 20 Million trees project |
| West Gippsland CMA | \$54,937 | Victorian Landcare Grants, Regional community Grants |
| Bass Coast Shire Council | \$275,348 | Roadside weed spraying, Biolinks project, MOU funding and other contracted works |
| Westernport Water | \$68,158 | Operational Plan works and contracted works |
| Kongwak Hills Landcare Group | \$15,260 | DEWLP Community Grant Owls Grows 2 |
| French Island Landcare Group | \$10,849 | DEWLP Community grant |
| Powlett Project Landcare Group | \$24,326 | National Landcare Program Grant and State Government Community Grant |
| Phillip Island Landcare Group | \$8,950 | DEWLP Community grant |
| Three Creeks Landcare Group | \$4000 | Victorian Landcare Grant |
| Engie | \$42,901 | Environmental detectives |
| AGL | \$5000 | Managing Sustainable Farms using STEM Pilot Education Program |
| Vic Roads | \$223,571 | Net Gain Project finalisation |
| Fee for Service Works Crew and Operational | \$253,657 | Works Crew Contracts |
| Fee for service Consulting and operational | \$18455 | Environmental Management plans and other consulting |
| Victorian Centre for Climate Change Innovation. | \$254,236 | Growing Southern Gippsland Project |
| National Landcare Program 2 | \$68,600 | Smart Farming in Westernport |
| Victorian Gorse Taskforce | \$25,000 | Incentives to control gorse, community engagement, and project management |
| South Gippsland Landcare Network BRP | \$104,500 | Fox baiting and calici virus release over 16,000 Ha |
| Cloverdale Estate | \$54,800 | Planting water drain at Dalyston estate |
| Biodiversity Offset | \$25,000 | Supply and plant 6 Ha adjacent to Swan Lake |
| PINP Conservation Grant | \$20,000 | Rabbit control around Fishers Wetland |

Strong communities engaged and connected through Landcare

Activity Days

| Date | Name | Location | Description | Attendance |
|--------------------------------|---|--------------------|------------------|------------|
| Weekly | Nursery Group | Bass | Group Activity | 12 |
| Autumn/ Winter 2018 | Bird Monitoring Training (4 groups) | Multiple Locations | Workshop | 4 groups |
| July 2018 | Planting Day | Woolamai | Planting Day | 30 |
| July 2018 | Planting Day | Phillip Island | Planting Day | 25 |
| July 2018 | Planting Day | Ryanston | Planting Day | 26 |
| July 2018 | Planting Day | Kilcunda | Planting Day | 15 |
| August 2018 | Popping and Plant Preparation Day | Glen Forbes | Group Activity | 8 |
| August 2018 | Planting Day | Glen Forbes | Planting Day | 28 |
| August 2018 | Planting Day | Bena | Planting Day | 17 |
| August 2018 | Planting Day | Glen Forbes | Planting Day | 27 |
| August 2018 | Planting Day | Kongwak | Planting Day | 26 |
| September 2018 | Phillip Island Beef Group | Phillip Island | Discussion Group | 25 |
| September 2018 | Seed Collecting | Phillip Island | Group Activity | 12 |
| September 2018 | Planting Day | Woolamai | Planting Day | 22 |
| September 2018 | Planting Day | Ventnor | Planting Day | 24 |
| October 2018 | Climate Change Land Capacity and Capability Project Launch | Foster | Project Launch | 25 |
| October 2018 | Kongwak Ellipak Discussion Group | Anderson | Discussion Group | 10 |
| Oct/Nov 2018 | Property Management Planning Course | Krowera | Workshop | 15 |
| Nov 2018-April 2019 | Bee Keeping Masterclass | Bass | Workshop | 9 |
| December 2018 | Kongwak Ellipak Discussion Group | Grantville | Discussion Group | 13 |
| January 2019 | South Gippsland Fresh Produce Farm Visit | Grantville | Farm Visit | 26 |
| February 2019 | Atlas of Living Australia Information Forum & Gorse Taskforce Field day | Bass | Workshop | 12 |
| February 2019 | Kongwak Ellipak Discussion Group | Ryanston | Discussion Group | 15 |
| March 2019 | Innovation Discussion Group Farm Visit | Strzelecki | Discussion Group | 21 |

| | | | | |
|----------------------|---|-----------------------------|------------------|----|
| March 2019 | Passata Starter Day – River Garden | Bass | Workshop | 15 |
| Autumn 2019 | Grazfert Workshops | Krowera | Workshop | 14 |
| April 2019 | Victorian Gorse Taskforce Field Day | Phillip Island | Field Day | 6 |
| April 2019 | Phillip Island Beef Group | Phillip Island | Discussion Group | 11 |
| April 2019 | Kongwak Ellipak Discussion Group | Phillip Island | Discussion Group | 13 |
| April 2019 | Innovation Discussion Group Farm Visit | Koonwarra | Discussion Group | 12 |
| April 2019 | Grazfert Farm Walk | Kernot/ Woodleigh | Farm Visit | 12 |
| May 2019 | Charles Massy Regenerative Farming Workshop | Poowong | Workshop | 80 |
| May 2019 | Phillip Island Beef Group | Phillip Island | Discussion Group | 13 |
| May 2019 | Bimbadeen Soil Carbon Field Day | Phillip Island | Field Day | 43 |
| May/June 2019 | Master Tree Growers Course | Multiple Locations | Workshop | 18 |
| June 2019 | Understorey Planting Candowie Reservoir | Almurta | Planting Day | 6 |
| June 2019 | Kongwak Ellipak Discussion Group | Bundoora-Latrobe University | Discussion Group | 15 |



L-R Liz, Anna and Linda tending to the plants at the BCLN Indigenous plant nursery

Group President Reports

Powlett Project – Paul Speirs

Group Focus:

The Powlett Project has had a busy year considering projects within the catchment. A total of 29 Project sites were approved for funding in the 2018/19 financial year through 6 separate funding sources. The group has met 4 times throughout the year to look at proposed Landcare projects and give guidance on how they could be improved and managed. A total of 137,890 plants were planted in the catchment which is a great result.

Highlights:

The most significant highlight for our group has been the large number of large-scale projects that have been completed this year. Stan Tirpcou's was the largest in the Powlett Catchment with 9,000 plants being planted by Wonthaggi Secondary College year 10s. This project had been in the Powlett system for 5 years, due to the fact the site had needed a large amount

of weed control to be completed prior to planting. The site links into Sibly's farm and forms a key Biolink connection that we will hopefully connect the Siblys' farm through to the Bass Highway at Dalyston in years to come. The Bass Coast Shire and WGCMA have been our key partners in delivery of almost all of our Projects this year providing the bulk of the funding through the Bass Coast Shire Council Biolinks Strategy.

Another highlight of the year was the Wonthaggi year 9s planting at Bruce and Anna Spidens. The kids, led by our favourite Wonthaggi Year 9 coordinator Nick Sibly, planted another 6,000 plants to add the 40,000 that have been planted over the past 6 years. Well done to the Spidens and the kids.



Wonthaggi year 9s Planting at Spiden's



Wonthaggi year 10s planting at Tirpcou's

Anderson Inlet – Daryl Hook

Local 'bird guru' Dallas Wyatt won more hearts in our district than even Dave Bateman and I thought possible. Birds are very good at finding suitable places to live. As such, they are a measure of the success of revegetation.

Now 'Places for Laces' will fill us all with renewed enthusiasm. We will survey members to find the most likely spots to find Lace Monitors (Goannas). Wildlife cameras will quickly verify their presence... I already know some suitable spots to look. Big thanks to Bass Coast Landcare for putting in for the grant.



A Lace Monitor spotted in the local area

Our farm walk to Dennis Ginn's property on the Inverloch/Cape Paterson Road was memorable. Great views, a giant wetland, and plenty of thriving vegetation.

We always welcome new landowners, especially those like Geoff McInnes, Chris Holland and Ken Worthy who want to do some revegetation.

Our group is grateful for the support we get from the Bass Coast Landcare Network. We look forward to a long and friendly partnership with Dave Bateman and staff.

Daryl Hook

President Anderson Inlet Landcare Group

| Anderson Inlet | Project type | Ha Reveg | Plants |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|----------|--------|
| Geoff McInnes | revegetation | 2 | 4000 |
| Chris Holian | revegetation/remnant enhancement | 1 | 1000 |
| Kane worthy | revegetation around dam | 0.3 | 600 |
| Peter Lyon | revegetation | 0.1 | 200 |
| Totals | | 3.4 | 5800 |

Bass Valley – Lew Potter

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

Revegetation Projects Along with remnant bush protection, revegetation projects are our main group activities. This year we have achieved significant outcomes getting 78,000 plants in the ground in an area of 44 Ha of land. Most of these projects were carried out on the land of newer members.

Landcare Promotion The involvement of local school groups in plantings remains our most diverse promotional system. Hopefully the experiences of these kids will indelibly imprint our brand in them leading into the future.

Partnership Development Holden's influence has waned but Holcim continues to be our main corporate sponsors and our acceptance of them will ensure our commercial viability. The McLaren Boys' "Hills are Alive Festival" group have come on board with a very successful planting involving 9,000 plants and 80 young people, another healthy promotional event.

Membership and Staff Support Our membership has grown slightly during the year but more importantly new



Beautiful weather for a planting day at Tony and Jacinta Van Steklenberg's property

| Bass Valley and Melbourne water | Ha Reveg | Ha Remnant | Plants |
|---------------------------------|--------------|------------|--------------|
| Matt Stewart | 3 | | 6000 |
| Spidens | 2.5 | | 4500 |
| Spiros | 2 | | 1000 |
| Ross Horner | 1 | | 5000 |
| Des Kelly | 0.75 | | 1500 |
| Peter Toole | 5 | | 6000 |
| Alister McBride | 2 | | 4000 |
| Greg Shilton | 0.5 | | 1000 |
| John Koolstra | 1 | | 3000 |
| Seb Ellis | 2 | | 4000 |
| Mark Beenes | 2 | | 4000 |
| Lew Potter | 0.5 | | 500 |
| Guy Angwin | 1 | | 2000 |
| Rick Oldham | 3 | | 700 |
| Marrie Trigg | | | 1000 |
| Statter Mission rd Biolinks | 2 | | 3500 |
| Seb Ellis | 0.5 | | 600 |
| Barb Stewart | 0.2 | | 300 |
| Karl Russo | 15 | 3 | 30000 |
| Totals | 43.95 | 3 | 78600 |

landholders have engaged our services and joined in on plantings at other properties. 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 enjoyed the experience and our meetings have been well attended.

Future Direction Promoting our brand to existing landholders remains our main challenge and will be our focus. Cultural awareness is one aspect that we will have to consider going into the future. Most staff and board members have taken the lead in this field.

Dave Bateman has continued to be our driving force. Secretary Mez Oldham has very capably kept us abreast of all activities. Our treasurer Graeme Wood has reconciled our finances admirably. Thanks to committee and members alike for your efforts. I hope we can continue to do well next year. Thanks to all for your efforts and involvement.

French Island – Chris Polatsidis

Another year has flown past and as usual it was a mix of highs and lows.

Perhaps one of the most exciting achievements for me personally was when French Island Landcare Group gained the use of the old CFA shed annexe as our new office. This was quite a while coming but worth the wait. With the help of a couple of small grants, one from the Bendigo Bank and the other from the Federal government via our local member Greg Hunt, as well as using our own saved resources we have been able to refurbish it into a very usable space. There is still some fine tuning happening, but we have now used it twice for our monthly meetings. I would like to thank landcare members Paul Henwood, a fantastic project manager, David Paonetti and Trevor Robotham for the great work that they have done. We are also in the planning stage of considering whether we can build a community bush foods garden on the site beside the tennis court. More on that at a later date and we are still in the planning stage.

Another wonderful achievement is the recent release of the critically endangered Eastern Barred Bandicoot at 'Blue Gums' on Friday 11th October. The consultation process was a long and thorough one and we are proud of the way our community came together to contribute to a well-informed decision. Thank you to Zoos Victoria and the French Island Community Association facilitating all the consultation, the release and the monitoring.

A very successful "Start Up" day was held in January 2019 at Barbara Coulter's property where we all brought our own pizzas to cook and share. It was a delight to sit around, share some really interesting pizzas and have a few quiet drinks and conversation. Many of us went home with serious "deck envy". Thank you to all those who attended.

For some time, the Bass Coast Landcare Network had been developing a child safety policy. This has been fully endorsed by French Island Landcare. Basically, it means that all committee members and employees of French Island Landcare and the Bass Coast Landcare Network must have a valid working with children check.



Newhaven College Students putting up shade mesh at the French Island Nursery November 2018

We have had two very successful planting days this year. The first one in June with F.O.F.I. and with workers from Esso/BHP. This day and the trees, fencing and weed work was financed with a grant from Esso.

We have been quite successful with the grants this year. We obtained two which are now in the process of finalizing and another which will be in operation fully later this year. Unfortunately, we had a second go at one to grow saltbush and failed again.

We are also now in the third year of a three-year war against Cape Tulip. Unfortunately, many land owners are unaware of the gravity of the situation if they continue to ignore it. As we have finite funds we hope that next year we can apply for a grant so that we can continue to provide a subsidy for the eradication of this insidious, noxious weed.

A well-attended Chemical Users course was run this year. We wanted to ensure that all weed contractors who work under a French Island Landcare grant are properly trained and aware of all O.H.& S. requirements. Consequently, we now have a register of all qualified and insured weed contractors so that the landowner can make an informed decision on who they wish to employ.



Friends of French Island and French Island Landcare tree planting along the coast road June 2019

The French Island Nursery continues to provide plants for all our landcare projects. There have been a few challenges along the way. Primarily our main concern has been the quality of the watering system and the supply source. Over the summer months, which seemed to go on forever, volunteers needed to attend the nursery every day to check on the watering as it was extremely unreliable, this included Christmas Day. Fortunately the watering system in the hardening off area was upgraded which took the pressure off a little and this was followed with the system in the green house. Hopefully, whilst we will still need to check occasionally, it won't need to be checked every day this coming summer season. The supply source still needs attending to as it would appear that there needs to be some aeration added to it as it actually smells pretty bad.

| French Island | Project Type | Ha Reveg | Ha Remnant | Plants |
|--------------------------|---|------------|-------------|--------------|
| David and Anja Simms | Remnant protection and revegetation | | 4.5 | 2500 |
| Neville and Lynne Imlach | Weed control in remnants | | 30 | |
| Gavan O'Connor | Weed control in remnants | | 40 | |
| Nankervis | Weed control and revegetation in remnants | 2.5 | | 1500 |
| Sue Jenkins | Weed control, revegetation and remnant protection | 0.4 | 0.9 | 700 |
| Andrew Hatton | Revegetation | 1.5 | | 2500 |
| Julie and Jack Trezise | Revegetation and weed works | 2 | | 4000 |
| Totals | | 6.4 | 75.4 | 11200 |

We had some dieback with the eucalypts and so we are taking measures to ensure that this doesn't happen again. However many other species thrived.

Now it's thank you time. As always, I would like to thank the Bass Coast Landcare Network for the valuable advice and assistance that they have

given us over the past year. Without them and their hard work it would be extremely doubtful that we would have gained the grants that we have done. They have also been invaluable in providing at times advice on some very sticky challenges. Thank you.

I would also like to thank the committee. They do an amazing job fitting in meetings between hay sheds being blown over, cows giving birth, cars getting bogged, breaking down, flat tyres, stuck off the island due to ferry cancellations, exams and sick kids. You could write a book on all the reasons we don't always have a full complement of committee members at our meetings. As ever Julie Trezise has done a brilliant job as treasurer and Glenys Ralph, our secretary, has taken on the formidable task with her usual enthusiasm.

Kongwak Hills – Sue Mooney

The Kongwak Hills Landcare Group remains committed to working within our local community to protect and restore vegetation on the surrounding farming land 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.

The Kongwak Landcare group has been in operation since 2012 and has delivered on average 6,000 plants per year over the past 7 years. This equates to 42,000 plants over the life of the group. The group has strong history of partnership development throughout the community, including the South Gippsland Shire Council, which has been particularly supportive of our work in the Pioneer Reserve.

It has been another successful year for Kongwak Hills Landcare. As at 30 June 2019 our memberships totaled 24 households and over 50 individuals. It has been confirmed by Landcare Vic that as our memberships are currently per household, this is reflected in voting rights to one vote per household.

During the 2018/19 year we managed to plant 7,500 plants over 4.5 hectares. This included revegetation projects on the properties of Clare Stainsby (4,000 plants), Andrew Perry (2,000), Kongwak Pioneer reserve (1,000 plants), and Murray Coghill (500).

For the period 30 June 2018 to 1 July 2019, we have had the responsibility of managing the Biodiversity On Ground Action Grant of \$50,000 entitled Kongwak Gums, Owls and Growls, the funds for which were deposited in our bank account. As at 30 June 2019, we had spent a good proportion of these funds with the expectation that the funds would be fully acquitted in the next few months. A detailed outline of the outcome of this project will be provided in the 2019/20 report. The grant included revegetation works for Clare Stainsby, Wolfgang and Wendy Kessler, Steve Oliver and the Pioneer Reserve.

Again we were successful in obtaining a grant of \$19,968 from WGCMA the project called Connecting Kongwak Communities. This project was managed by BCLN and seeks to establish 5,500 indigenous plants and enhance 3.48 Ha of Damp Forest on 2 sites. The project aims to





create Biolinks for wildlife and to encourage growth of Indigenous plants, linking up previous plantings and original remnants to provide habitat for the Southern Toadlet, Brown Quail and Giant Gippsland Earthworm and other important fauna. Weed control includes removal of blackberry above and beyond the landholders' responsibility. The project involves establishing wallaby guards to ensure the survival of susceptible species in high wallaby grazing areas and camera monitoring equipment will be employed. The properties involved in the grant are Mark and Bonnie Young's (4,000 plants) and Marg and Jon Hauser's (1,500 plants with wallaby guards and blackberry control).

On the administration front and as a member of BCLN, we welcomed Lisa Wangman as our new coordinator in the wake of Kellie Nichols' sudden departure. We are grateful to Dave Bateman for his ongoing assistance and advice and congratulate him on his appointment to the role of Executive General Manager. We are particularly fortunate to be a part of the BCLN with its ongoing program of environmental and landcare education, of which all members can partake.

As a group, we are grateful to all those members who are prepared to open up their homes for our meetings which inevitably are followed by convivial get-togethers and wonderful local food offerings.

| Kongwak | Project type | Ha Reveg | Plants |
|-----------------|------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Claire Stainsby | Revegetation a huge gully | 2 | 4000 |
| Andrew Perry | Revegetation | 1 | 2000 |
| Kongwak reserve | Revegetation | 1 | 1000 |
| Murray Coghill | Revegetation | 0.5 | 500 |
| Totals | | 4.5 | 7500 |

Special thanks must go to Marg Hauser for her work as secretary, a role she has performed admirably for the last 7 years, Susan Pryde, our Treasurer, Steve Mooney, our Vice President and Clare Stainsby as our Board representative.

Korumburra – Marie Creed

We only had the one community planting during the planting season but what we lacked in quantity was made up for in quality. We helped Chris and Michelle Miller plant out 2,000 trees in amongst a magnificent stand of mature *Eucalyptus strzeleckii*. Chris did an amazing job prepping the site and mixing the trees, and after the planting we were treated to a fabulous lunch from local producers, wineries and brewers. Thank you Chris and Michelle.



Lunch at Chris Miller's

As usual we had some interesting social evenings and meetings. For our AGM Ken Sim showed us one of Korumburra's hidden gems with a walk along the Skip Track to Ritchies Reserve, a project initiated and maintained by Rotary, and then on to Brian Griffins Old Print Shop Café for dinner and our AGM. Lynette Plenderleith came along to our June meeting at Prom Country Cheese to give us some insights into the world of frogs followed by a beautiful meal provided by Bronwyn and Burke.



Planting at Chris Miller's property

Dallas Wyatt kept us updated on his bird monitoring which gave us insights into the value of our reveg work. As a group we continued our support of the Korumburra Show, with members manning the gates and Landcare Caravan.

A summary of planting in 2018/19 season was Chris Miller 2,000 and Bill Irving 600, Michelle Axford 1,000, Vic Nanut 500, Rob Paterson 80 and Outtrim Rec Reserve 500. Special thanks to Dave Bateman for all his efforts writing grants and co-ordinating projects for the group, we really appreciate what you do Dave – thanks!

Paid up members remains at around 40. Thanks to our Secretary, Paul Calvert, Treasurer, Don Creed, and Vice President Melynda Dawson.

| Korumburra | Project | Ha Reveg | Plants |
|-----------------|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Bill Irving | Revegetation | 0.2 | 600 |
| Michelle Axford | Revegetation / remanant | 1.07 | 1000 |
| Chris Miller | Revegetation / remanant | 2 | 2000 |
| Victor Nanut | Revegetation | 0.5 | 500 |
| Rob Paterson | Revegetation top ups | 0.1 | 80 |
| Outtrim reserve | Remanant | 0.5 | 500 |
| Totals | | 4.37 | 4680 |

Phillip Island – David Rooks

2018/19 was as busy as ever for the Phillip Island Landcare Group. A few years into the role of President and I'm still appreciating the high levels of participation our group has with the wider community. I'm also learning how our group is well received and supported by the community. It's a pleasure volunteering for such a group.

Thanks to all the committee, BCLN staff and any others who have supported our group this year. Thanks to Joel Geoghegan for being our staff contact for the last few years and welcome back Lisa Wangman to our group.

This years activities included:

New:

- Establishing a working group to address the dieback issue on Phillip Island. Other group members are Nature Parks, Council, and Conservation Society.
- Participating in the Phillip Island Wildlife Plan. Other working party members are Nature Parks, Council, Cape Barren Geese Action Group, Bununrong Council and DELWP.
- Partnering with Totally Renewable Phillip Island to establish regenerative farming practices on Phillip Island farms.
- Partnering with Nature Parks to establish a site for our new Shed. The Shed will house our caravan trailer. Through successful grants we have funding for the Shed from Council and Bendigo Bank.
- Reinvigorating the partnership we have with Westernport Water.
- Monitoring four revegetation sites as a part of the Adaptive Learning – Revegetation Monitoring project being undertaken by LaTrobe University, the Arthur Rylah Institute (DELWP) and Greening Australia.
- Donation recipient exhibitor at new Phillip Island Running Festival event.



Ongoing:

- Keeping our 100 members informed and participating in our activities.
- Managing the Bushbank voucher system for members.
- Ensuring the wider community is aware of Landcare and its purpose.
- Planting over 9,000 tubestock on 9 sites.
- Held five community planting days. 150 attendees in total. Partners include local farmers, Our Lady Star of the Sea primary school, Nature Parks, members, non members and Geocaching group.
- Hold a Christmas Dinner Event at Bimbadeen farm, in place of 2019 Bunny Boiler event.
- Continue monitoring new and existing re vegetation sites. Candice, Bushbank Co-ordinator, now visiting sites with our group adding extensive knowledge and support to our reveg program.

- Support the Winter Hoedown dance evening organised by the Bass Coast Acoustic Music Club.
- Organised our new Uniform. Vests (\$60.00) and polo shirts (\$30.00) for sale.
- Exhibitor at the Nature Parks open day.



Future:

Geoff was successful in obtaining \$19,892, Enhancement and Monitoring of the Phillip Island Wildlife Corridor through the WPWCMA. Good one Geoff and thank you for your continued interest in our groups activities.

| Landowner | Project Type | Ha Reveg | Ha Remnant | Plants |
|---------------------------------|--|-------------|------------|--------------|
| Bill Cleeland | Revegetation | 0.4 | | 1000 |
| Jim McPhee | Remnant protection / revegetation | | 2.5 | 2000 |
| Phillip Island Race Track | Revegetation | 1 | 6.7 | 1000 |
| Richard Davie | Revegetation | 0.5 | | 1000 |
| Paul Pearson and Jurgen Plecko | Revegetation | 5.5 | | 1000 |
| Cowes Primary School | Revegetation within remnants | 2.3 | | 400 |
| Deborah Holland | Revegetation around wetland and wind break | 2.5 | | 1200 |
| Helen Henderson | Revegetation | 0.3 | | 700 |
| Pauline Urbino | Revegetation | 0.6 | | 500 |
| Our Lady Star of the Sea School | Revegetation | 0.6 | | 750 |
| Phill Wright | Revegetation | 7 | | 1000 |
| Island Bay Ranch | Revegetation | 1.5 | | 1000 |
| Total | | 22.2 | 9.2 | 11550 |

Three Creeks – Nick Sibly

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.

As in past years, a core group of dedicated members have regularly attended tree planting days come rain, hail, wind or shine. In total there were six official 3 Creeks plantings where a total of 32,000 trees were put in the ground. This did not include separate plantings within the Bass Coast area that many of our members participated in including the 20,000 trees planted at Brad and Dani Carr's property in West Creek. One of the big highlights of the year was when our group worked with over 120 Year 9 students from Wonthaggi Secondary College to plant 15,000 plants at Anna and Bruce Spiden's farm. Anna and Bruce enlisted the help of a great group of locals to help with the food and it was such a pleasure to sit on their deck and enjoy a beautiful view with some lovely young people.

What has made my presidency so enjoyable at 3 Creeks is the enthusiasm, positivity and good humour of the committee members. In a time of much doom and gloom regarding the climate of the planet it is great to be surrounded by people who want to make a positive difference in our community and its natural environment. Our members embrace the idea of community wholeheartedly. Whether it is volunteering at the Landcare nursery or cooking sausages for hungry Year 9 students, our members were keen to help out.

It is no surprise that with such generosity we have increased our overall membership this year. To date we have received six new memberships this year. To sweeten the deal, the Landcare Nursery in Bass will offer each new 3 Creeks Landcare member ten free trees of their choice.

The equipment loan program has continued this year. Ben Maghanoy has kindly continued to coordinate this from his home on McDowell Road. This has allowed members to access equipment such as Indian Mynah bird traps and the 400L spray

unit. Our group has once again delved into the world of wine this year as our main fund raising activity. The wine was purchased from Gippsland Winery in Loch. It is hoped that this will be an ongoing fundraiser for 3 Creeks. A Christmas order has been organised for the end of this year.

The plantings along the Bridge Creek Biolink have continued in 2019 with a planting at the Sibly farm. This is the first of three plantings that will include the entire creek in this property. This will hopefully be completed by 2021. The 5km Biolink follows Bridge Creek reserve between Hawkins Road in Woolamai and the Powlett River. It is hoped that more farmers along the



3 Creeks Planting at Alan and Diana Holberg's Property



Biolink will get on board in the next few years. It will provide a valuable link for wildlife and provide opportunities for people to explore the various habitats that link the Powlett River estuary with the damp forests of the Strzeleckis. Funding for this project is a combination between West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority (WGCMA) and the Bass Coast Shire. Once again, our volunteers will be called upon to help get the work done.

In 2019, members of 3 Creeks continued to take part in regular bird watching sessions run by Dallas Wyatt. Various sites around the 3 Creeks regions were monitored to help build a data base of local indigenous and introduced birds in significant sites.

To date there are 7 properties that are regularly monitored. Members of the 3 Creeks Landcare group have been involved in the monitoring and are slowly learning the distinctive calls of some unusual birds which will hopefully become more widespread in the years to come. We hope to continue to deepen our connection with the local community in 2019 and will hopefully attract more new memberships as local landowners discover the benefits of considering native flora and fauna in their whole farm plans.



| 3 creeks | Project | Ha Reveg | Ha Remnant | Plants |
|-------------------------|---|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| Anna Spiden | Revegetation | 5 | | 6000 |
| Andrew Page | Revegetation | 1.43 | | 4000 |
| Brett Price | Revegetation | 2.26 | | 4000 |
| Paul Spiers | Revegetation along existing large patch | 1.7 | 14 | 500 |
| Ray Kirk | Revegetation | 0.5 | | 1000 |
| Stan Turquoi | Revegetation | 4.35 | | 9000 |
| Finn Mcrae | Revegetation | 1.5 | | 3000 |
| Alan and Diane Holmberg | Revegetation / remnant | 1.2 | 0.6 | 3000 |
| Total | | 17.94 | 14.6 | 30500 |

Partnerships

Holden the Bass

Overview

The Holden the Bass project involves undertaking revegetation sites in the Bass River Catchment to protect waterways, and reduce sediment and nutrient run off into Westernport Bay. These works also contribute towards the creation of wildlife corridors and biolinks within the catchment. The Holden funding enables the Bass Valley Landcare group to leverage funding from other sources to achieve fantastic NRM outcomes.

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 Water's 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 10-year land management agreement stipulating that the site would be maintained beyond the life of the project. Unfortunately this year the partnership has gone into financial remission. We are endeavouring to keep the partnership going into the future.



Partnership Highlights

The major highlight this year was the partnership planting day held at Frank Lemans farm at Kernot. The Holden staff did a great job planting 3,500 plants at 2 sites on Frank's beautiful farm at Kernot.

Partnership Outputs

- 6,100 hyco cells were planted and 840m of stock proof fencing installed, which has created 7.7ha of new revegetation sites at 5 farms across the Bass River catchment.
- 'One Partnership' planting day held at Frank Leman's farm, 15 staff attended and put 3,500 plants in the ground



Holden Staff team at Partnership Planting day at Frank Leman's

Bass Coast Shire Council

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.



Bass Coast Shire Staff team planting at Russo's

Partnership Highlights

The continued support to both deliver Biolinks and roadside weed control have been key highlights for our partnership. Both partnership areas have had increases in activity, due more funding both from the Shire and more funds leveraged through grants.

The relationship with Bass Coast Shire continues to grow and prosper through working towards shared goals. BCLN developed a values statement which, we presented to the Shire councillors this illustrates that for every \$1 invested from the Shire returns a net value of \$15.

Partnership Outputs

The annual deliverables of this partnership include:

- Executive support to the BCLN Board and facilitation of ten Landcare Groups to ensure alignment of Landcare Strategic Direction
- Partnership Planting day at Karl and Rachel Russo's with 35 BCSC staff planting 4,000 plants

- Delivery partner in the Growing Southern Gippsland Project.
- Delivery of the Biolinks Program, which has contributed directly to all of the 242,000 plants in the ground this year.
- Delivery of the Building the Bass Coast Biolinks BRP project, working on the 10 best pieces of remnant Vegetation throughout the Shire.
- Linkages with the Landcare Community to communicate and deliver on Council Initiatives, ie. Rural Land Use Strategy
- 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 100 customer requests,
- Coordination of DELWP program including 7.6km of rabbit control and 195 km of weed control
- Delivery of approximately 277 km of roadside weed spraying.



Paul Speirs with Uncle Shane Clarke at the Bass Coast Shire Planting day at Karl and Rachel Russos

Westernport Water

Westernport Water's long term partnership manager, Benita Russell, has left to take a position with Bass Coast Shire Council. Many thanks to Benita for being a great supporter and driver of the Westernport Water – BCLN partnership, and we look forward to working with you at BCSC.



Revegetation works at Candowie Reservoir

A new 5-Year Bushland Management plan was developed for Westernport Water, and a successful year of on ground works completed. Vegetation photo points were switched from ground based to aerial, using BCLN's drone. In 2018/19 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.

The Partnership contribution component allows BCLN to develop a real presence in the community, particularly in 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 Water's Stream Frontage Management Program.

Fee for service works were undertaken by the BCLN Works Crew and included; Pest plant and animal control works, revegetation works and photopoint monitoring. The BCLN 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 2018/19.

Phillip Island Nature Parks

Our partnership with Phillip Island Nature Parks was strengthened through BCLN staff sitting on steering committees for the PINP 30yr Conservation Plan and attending plan development sessions. Having worked with the PINP for seven years, Jason Good has existing relationships that will be valuable in further extending BCLN's partnership with PINP. BCLN secured a PINP Conservation Grant for rabbit control around Fishers Wetland, and the Nature Parks have donated a shipping container to BCLN for storage of pest animal control equipment and material. They have been invaluable in providing advice and assistance during BCLN's development of pest control services.



Grow and protect a connected biodiverse landscape

Project Statistics 2018-19

We have achieved:

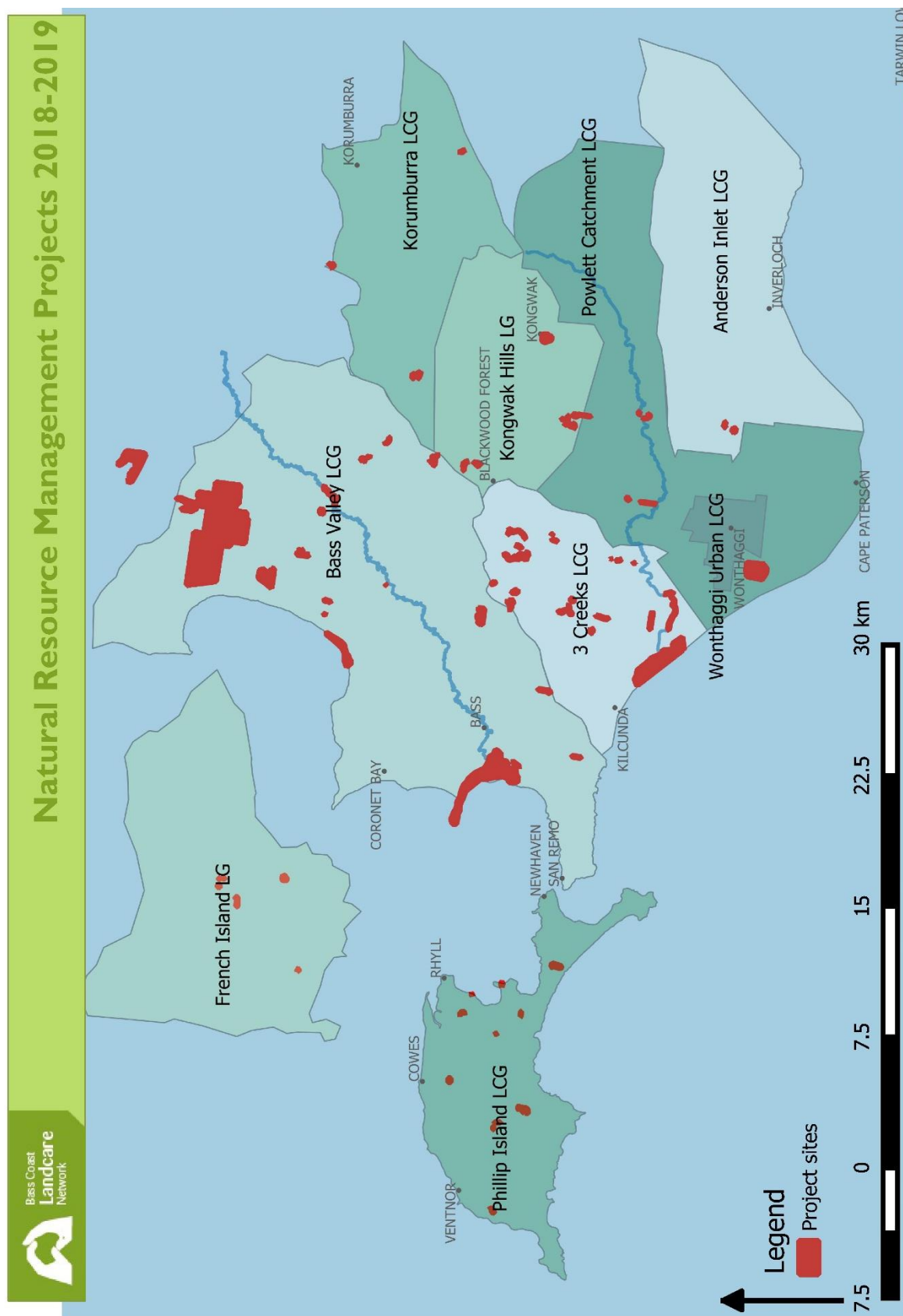
- 22,350 volunteer hours involved in Landcare activities
- 10 Community/Landcare Group Planting days
- 66 Management plans created through the DELWP catchment modelling tool EnSym for all revegetation and remnant protection projects
- 242,830 Indigenous plants established over 104.82 hectares of land
- 4kg of Indigenous seed sown in direct seeding projects over 2 hectares of land
- 25,575 metres of fencing
- 852 hectares of remnant vegetation protected and/or enhanced through weed control
- 850 hectares of Weeds of National Significance (WONs) weeds controlled
- 277 km of roadside weed control
- 760 hectares of rabbit control works
- 634 hectares of fox control works
- 1 Soil Carbon Demonstration site



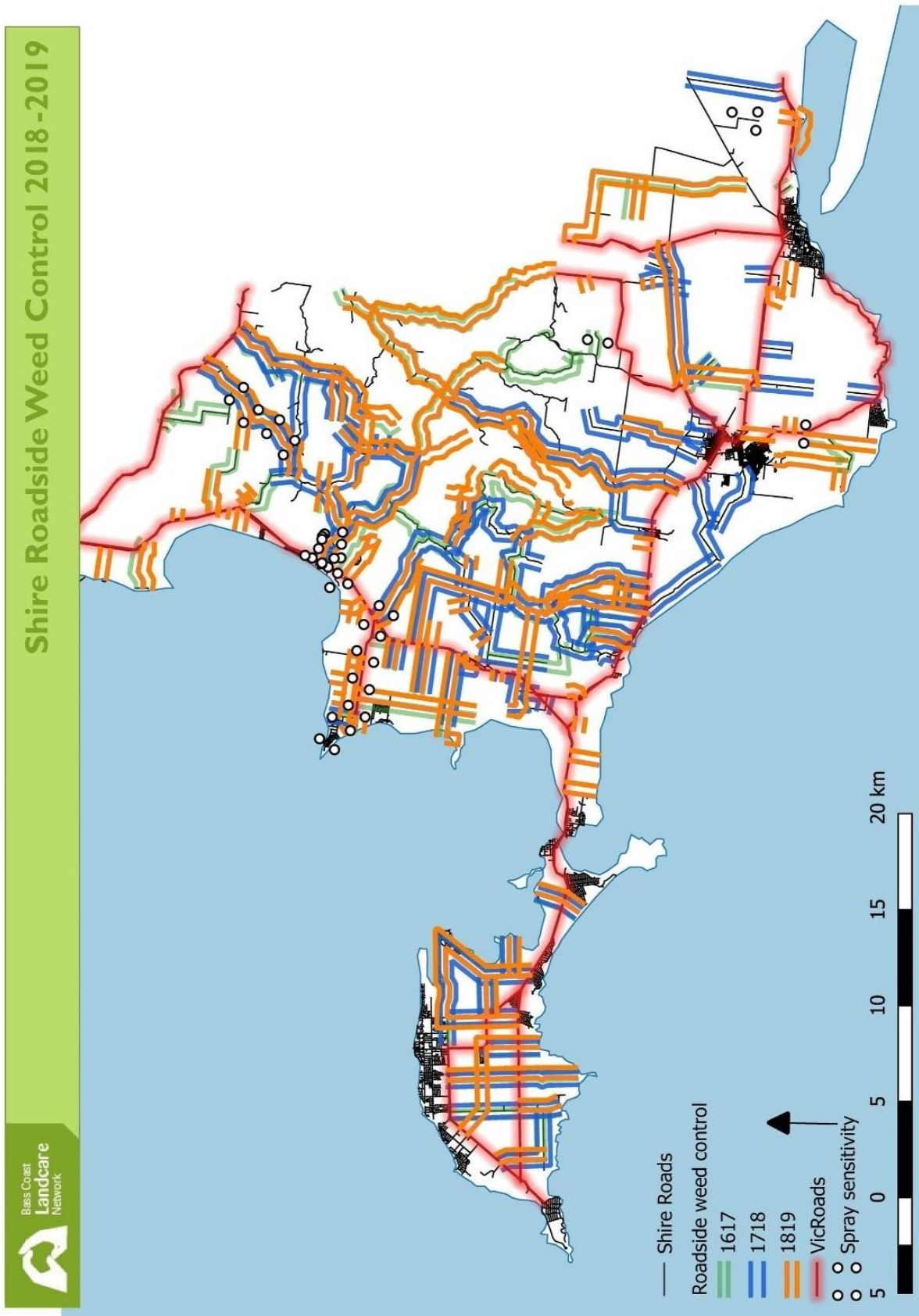
Diversification and Innovation discussion group visit to Maccas Farm in March 2019

Maps

Revegetation, Remnant, and Horticulture Works



Roadside Spraying Projects



Portfolio / Program Reports

Natural Resource Management Portfolio

Description

The Natural Resource Management program covers all revegetation and remnant protection projects throughout the Bass Coast Landcare Network. 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. Funding for the NRM projects this year has come from a variety of sources, including Local, State and Federal Government Grants and Corporate Partnerships with Holden and Holcim. Major projects for 2018/2019 include; Phillip Island Wildlife Corridor, Powlett Project, 20 Million Trees projects, Bass Coast Shire Council Biolinks projects, Biodiversity Response Planning, Melbourne Water, and Victorian Landcare Grants. We have had great planting results this year, with 242,830 plants in the ground. Geoff Trease has done a fantastic job engaging with the Phillip and French Island Group members and undertaken site visits and projects. Dave Bateman continues to work with the Powlett Catchment groups and Bass Valley.

Highlights

2018/19 has been another great year in the NRM Area. As a direct result of the Bass Coast Shire Councils Biolinks plan we have been able to draw in several large projects, including a \$413,000 Biodiversity Response Planning project, 'Building the Bass Coast Biolinks'. This project is a large-scale remnant vegetation and enhancement project, running for 3 years to enhance our 10 biggest and best remnant vegetation sites across the Bass Coast, with the Holden Proving Ground as the largest of the sites. This project has funded the BCLN works crew to undertake both woody weed control and pest animal control throughout the sites. This project and the South Gippsland Landcare BRP have also enabled the BCLN works crew to up-skill in the area of Pest Animal control.



Wonthaggi Secondary kids planting 20,000 plants at Russo's

We have also significantly increased our engagement with the Bunurong Land Council. We met with the BLC before we wrote our grants for 2018/2019 and asked them how they would like to be involved as project partners. As a direct result of this meeting we were able to work with them on 5 individual projects. Through these projects we have been able to work with our Traditional Owners on cultural heritage inspections of our revegetation sites and cross-cultural inductions at many of our planting days. The partnership is still evolving, and we will continue to work closely with the Bunurong on our future projects.

The Biolinks projects have contributed over \$60,000 of funding to the Network and have helped leverage many more dollars from Melbourne Water and other project partners.

The major highlight of the year was stage 2 of Karl and Rachel Russo's project. The Russo project was a major focus for the BCLN staff team due to its large scale and visual and environmental impact on our landscape. Stage 2 of the project involved planting 30,000 plants at one of the steepest gullies in our region. We were able to pull together funding from the 20 Million Trees program and the Bass Coast Shire to make this happen.



BCLN staff and Nursery Volunteers with 400 buckets of plants at Russos

We held 2 planting days, which included our first Intrepid Landcare Planting of 10,000 plants, and 200 Wonthaggi Secondary School year 9s led by Nick Sibly planted a further 20,000 plants. The BCLN works crew did a fantastic job doing all the site prep and our own community nursery at Bass grew 20,000 plants for the project.

Also of note is the contribution from the Wonthaggi Rotary Club for the second year running, who cooked 500 sausages and 250 hamburgers on the day to feed the hungry kids.

New Innovations

BCLN Drone

The BCLN drone has been utilised at many of our large-scale planting days and has also been used for monitoring of our large scale Biolinks sites. The Drone has been a fantastic acquisition for BCLN and allows us to better tell our story of success with our revegetation projects.



Drone Shot of the Spiden's Biolink

Wildlife Monitoring Cameras

BCLN now own 30 high-quality infra-red wildlife monitoring cameras, with the addition of some new cameras purchased through our BRP project.

We have been deploying cameras at our planting sites before commencing NRM works on several of our large project sites to obtain baseline data for species presence in our revegetation sites. We have also been completing 3-week monitoring programs at each of our BRP sites, where we have captured some great shots of some native wildlife (see photos)

As well as native animals, we have recorded some pest animals such as Sambar Deer at the Mouth of the Powlett River and foxes at over 90% of our sites. These cameras are also used for our newly formed pest animal programs, to monitor bait takes and potential baiting sites.



A series of wildlife photos from our BRP site

Natural Resource Management Outputs

Overall on ground outputs

- 25,575 metres of fencing
- 242,830 indigenous plants in the ground
- 4kg of indigenous seed sown in direct seeding projects

Outputs by each BCLN Landcare Group

- Three Creeks Landcare group members planted 30,500 plants and established 4,655 metres of stock proof fence.
- Korumburra group members planted 4,680 plants and established 1,156 metres of stock proof fence.
- Powlett Project members planted 89,500 plants and established 2,000 metres of stock proof fence.
- Kongwak Landcare group members planted 7,500 plants and established 234 meters of stock proof fence.
- Phillip Island Landcare group members planted 11,550 plants and established 2,440 metres of stock proof and wallaby proof fence.
- Bass Valley Landcare group members planted 82,100 plants and established 11,720 metres of stock proof fence.
- French Island Landcare group members planted 11,200 plants and established 3,370 metres of stock proof fence.

Natural Resource Management Outcomes

- 104.82 Ha of land revegetated through hyco plantings
- 2 Ha of land revegetated through direct seeding
- 852 Ha of Remnant Vegetation protected and or enhanced through weed control.
- EVCs re-established include Damp Forest, Wet Forest, Lowland Forest, Swamp Scrub, Damp Sands Herb Rich Woodland, Swampy Riparian Woodland, Coast Dune Scrub, Coastal Banksia Woodland and Riparian Forest
- 66 Management plans created through the DELWP catchment modelling tool EnSym for all reveg and remnant protection projects
- WONs weeds controlled over 850ha



Paul Speirs with Leongatha secondary students in the 'Outdoor classroom'

Ecosystems Services Portfolio

Pest Plant and Animal Program

Victorian Gorse Taskforce

During the VGT grant period there was a change in staffing and the project got off to a slow start. However, we finished strong with gorse control undertaken on 20 properties, totaling 772 Ha of land on Phillip Island with approximately 10% of that land containing gorse infestations. Another VGT field day was held at Pacific Resorts, demonstrating slashing and mechanical removal of Gorse, as well as inspecting a site one year after an Eco Blade trial – it was impressively clean.



Gorse at Pacific Resorts, Phillip Island

Biodiversity Response Plan

BCLN secured a grant from DELWP to undertake pest plant and animal works on 12 sites which spans 1,660 Ha identified in the Bass Coast Shire Councils Biolinks Plan. The key objective of the project is to protect the best of Bass Coast's remaining biodiversity which provides habitat for threatened flora and fauna species. Some of these species include; Southern Brown Bandicoot, Growling Grass Frog, Swamp Antechinus, Orange-Bellied Parrot, Swift Parrot, Swamp Skink and Powerful Owl.

Year 1 saw 628 Ha of weed management (Spraying, Cut & Painting and Ring Barking) and 1,660 Ha of pest animal monitoring and control (Motion Sensing Cameras & Baiting) undertaken across the 12 sites. An ecological and cultural burn is also being planned in partnership with the Bunurong Land Council, CFA and Corinella Foreshore Committee.



Fox at Reef Island

Phillip Island Nature Parks

The relationship between BCLN and PINP was further strengthened this year with the continuation of the Newhaven Buffer Zone project along with continued weeding projects. The Newhaven Buffer Zone project expanded to 385ha. An extensive warren mapping program was conducted which found there to be 1.005 warrens per hectare. Once the mapping was completed four days of warren control was conducted with 170 warrens treated by BCLN staff. Pindone baiting was also conducted for the 4th year in a row. In 2016 when the project first started there were 42 rabbits per square kilometer and on the final count in 2019 the numbers had dropped to 10 rabbits per square kilometer, which shows that the work we have been doing has been of great value. Spotlight shooting was undertaken to compliment the baiting and warren work with 96 rabbits shot over 3 nights.



All active warrens that were mapped over 3 day joined effort, Red = Untreated – Blue = Treated)

Westernport Water The newly updated 5-year Bushland Management Plan for Candowie Reservoir, and Cowes and King Road Waste Water Treatment Plants was implemented. Gorse, bridal creeper, and boxthorn is well under control at Cowes, with hare and rabbit control undertaken. Weeds at King Road are also in hand, but foxes are still a problem for the wading birds. Willow regrowth was tackled at Candowie, and blackberry needs constant attention.

Bass Coast Shire Council BCLN continued to answer enquiries and provide advice to people calling BCSC on pest plant and animals. The number of rabbit enquiries was lower than last year.

South Gippsland Landcare Network BCLN has gained a contract from the South Gippsland Landcare Network to undertake Pest Animal control in a 16,000 Ha project zone that spans from Venus Bay to Waratah Bay. The project will focus around Fox control through baiting and trapping, Rabbit control through the release of the new strain of Calicivirus (RHDV K5) as well as community engagement and capacity building. This contract is part of the Biodiversity Response Planning grants and is aimed at protecting significant habitat for threatened Flora and Fauna. BCLN started on this three-year project in June 2019.

Works Crew

The Works Crew was developed by the 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 12 trainees, and over the last year the team has dropped to three full time employees and at times, up to six casuals.

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

Outputs snapshot

| Task | Ha | Tubes planted |
|------------------------------------|-------------|----------------|
| Remnant protection | 627 | - |
| Revegetation | 173 | 138 000 |
| Weed control (including roadsides) | 223 | - |
| Pest animal control | 1660 | - |
| TOTAL | 2683 | 138 000 |

Outcomes

The Works Crew staffing structure had a few changes. A big congratulations to Caleb in completing his indigenous traineeship, Luke spent a season working with a restoration crew on the Sunshine Coast, returning after summer, and Mark took over the reins of the Works Crew at the start of the year. Jason Good, a trainee from 2010, returned after several years at the PINP to head up the Pest Animal role. Initially a 0.6FTE position, with the securing of the SGLN BRP contract it which rapidly grew to a full time within 6 months, purchasing of a dedicated vehicle and storage area.

Safety continues to be a focus this year, especially around chemical usage. Trials of organic herbicides were undertaken and though costly were found to be effective for revegetation preparation.

With a good planting season, including a large planting at both the end of winter 2018 and start of winter 2019, roadside weed control, Victorian Gorse Taskforce grants, and Biodiversity Response Planning grants, there was plenty of work and the works crew made a modest profit:

- Holcim: 20 days weed control and planting 10,000 plants throughout 2 quarries in the Grantville district.
- Metro Group Quarry; 10 days of weed control
- Victorian Gorse Taskforce: 20 properties targeted with infestations of gorse
- Biodiversity planting; 25,000 plants



We also secured our first big housing estate landscaping contract at the new Cloverdale estate in Dalyston. 87,000 plants were planted over 4 months. They were predominantly grasses, sedges and rushes with a scattering of melaleuca and eucalyptus. The time frame was spread out due to various factors including a saturated site and gaining access to the site due to the ongoing earth works, which hindered the planting process in the end as the ground became extremely hard in areas. Overall the job was a success given the hurdles that we faced.



Works Crew members planting at Cloverdale

The number of Bass Coast Shire Council roadsides we covered this year for weed spraying has increased by 60km from 210km to 277km.

| Roads sprayed | No | km |
|---------------------|-----------|---------------|
| Phillip island | 15 | 68km |
| Bass Coast mainland | 68 | 209km |
| Total | 82 | 277 km |



Bass Coast Landcare Network Indigenous Plant Nursery

The continuing success and expansion of the nursery is thanks to the great volunteer group that has established; Ross Arestia, Liz Bernal, Ray Kirk, Linda Nichols, Louis Madge, Ben Maghanoy, Anna Spiden, Carol Timothy, Lyndall Wales, Donna Williams, Chris Rayner, and Rod Shilts. Bronwyn Teasdale, with her extensive knowledge and innovative ideas, along with Stevie Wynen are essential to the running of the nursery.

Over 30 species were propagated, and the nursery produced a similar amount to last year, but the quality of plants was the best yet.

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

16.5 Ha were planted out using the plants grown at the nursery.



L-R Linda Nichols, Stevie Wynen, Anna Spiden, Liz Bernal

The group had a new tea room installed in May 2019, a portable building which they quickly made into an inviting space to socialize over cups of tea during their weekly meetups. They are very deserving of this new addition, and no longer need to have their tea break in the cold shed at the depot.



*Bron cutting the ribbon at the opening of the new tearoom.
L-R; Michael, Liz, Louis, Chris, Ray, Bron, Rob, Ross, Ben, Linda*



L-R Liz, Anna and Linda tending to the plants

Outputs

- Over 48 volunteer mornings attended by an average of 8 volunteers over the year
- Upgraded watering system
- Propagation of 35,000 seedlings
- Holding orders of a further 60,000 seedlings during planting season

Outcomes

- Increased plant production, health and vigor
- New watering system and tearoom
- Site visit to Barb Martin Bush Bank
- Seed collecting near Kitty Miller



Lead an Innovative Sustainable Agricultural Community

Sustainable Agriculture Portfolio

Farmer Discussion Groups

In 2018/19 the Smart Farming in Westernport Project contributed to the ongoing support of three discussion group programs;

- The Kongwak Ellipak Group
- The Phillip Island Beef Group, and
- The Innovation and diversification group.

A total of 13 discussion group events were hosted in 2018/19 with a combined total of 193 people attending.

2018/19 discussion group highlights include the following:

- The annual Kongwak Ellipak discussion group Christmas lunch held at the Kernot property of Barb Stewart
- The Diversification and Innovation discussion group visit to Strzelecki Heritage Apples in March 2019
- The Diversification and Innovation discussion group visit to Maccas Farm in March 2019
- The Kongwak Ellipak discussion group visit to Bimbadeen in April 2019 to hear Mick Green from Drift Media talk about potential use of drone technology in agriculture
- Kongwak Ellipak discussion group visit to AgriBio at Latrobe University in June 2019

Thank you to agronomist John Galleon for his ongoing facilitation of the Phillip Island Beef Group and Faye Tughton for coordinating the Kongwak Ellipak discussion group events. Also a big thank to all our farm hosts for the 2018/19 year.

Future priorities for all these groups include:

- Planning to develop long term group priorities
- Encourage increased participation in the discussion groups.
- Encourage the groups to become self-determining and self-governing
- Investigate opportunities to set up an agroforestry discussion group and a climate change adaptation discussion group under the 'Growing Southern Gippsland' program.



In March 2019, 21 people visited Strzelecki Heritage Apples, owned and managed by Mark and Margaret Brammer. Mark and Margaret showcased the diverse and innovative agricultural business which includes beef, sheep and heritage apples. This farm visit was a part of the Innovation and Diversification discussion group farm visit program.

Growing Southern Gippsland

Building on the success and momentum of the 2017/18 program, the Sustainable Agriculture program again went from strength to strength. It was a year of new beginnings with two major projects commencing on July 1st, 2019.



The project has been rebranded as 'Growing Southern Gippsland'.

As announced in last years report, the network was successful in securing funding from the Victorian Centre of Climate Change Innovation. The official title of the project is the Climate Change Land Capacity and Capability project. This project has been rebranded as 'Growing Southern Gippsland'. This project is a true collaboration and we welcome and thank our project collaborators for their commitment and support; Federation University Australia, RMIT University, South Gippsland Landcare Network and Bass Coast Shire Council.

The main project deliverables are:

- 12 targeted Southern Gippsland case studies:
- 6 targeted field days/workshops
- Development of a web-based decision-making portal and website
- Production of a series of supporting multimedia products
- Project launch and wrap-up

The Growing Southern Gippsland project is a two-year project with all deliverables due for completion by June 30th, 2020.

Our 12 Cases The projects 12 case studies are in progress and are distributed throughout Southern Gippsland representing multiple landscapes, enterprise sizes and types.



Project progress to date includes:

- 12 case studies are underway
- 6 field days planned with preliminary scheduling
- Website in development- www.growingsoutherngippsland.org.au
- Production of a series of multimedia products available on the Bass Coast Landcare Network vimeo channel- <https://vimeo.com/user86454618>

Year one of this exciting project focused around project set up and planning. Looking ahead into 2019/20 this project will culminate in the successful implementation on our six field days which will focus on the following topics;

- Biosecurity in a changing climate
- Carbon Farming in a changing climate

- Water Management in a changing climate
- Waste and Energy in a changing climate
- Farm Planning for a changing climate
- Supporting climate change transition through digital technology

(Note at the time of writing this report we just successfully hosted our first project field day, Biosecurity in a Changing Climate, with 45 people attending)

The Growing Southern Gippsland website is the largest of the project deliverables and is due to be launched in April 2020. Currently in development, the website is due for completion in April 2020 and will include a decision support tool that will enable Southern Gippsland farmers to produce their own 'climate adaptation plan' and 'whole of farm carbon plan'.



The Growing Southern Gippsland project was launched at Fosters Gurneys Cider in October 2018.

The Growing Southern Gippsland project's key measure of success is inextricably linked to its future legacy. The projects key measures of success will be:

- The 'Growing Southern Gippsland' website will be relevant, functional, useable and used by farmers to plan for a changing climate beyond the life of the current funding
- The 'Growing Southern Gippsland' collaborative partnership will continue to work together on future projects under the 'Growing Southern Gippsland' umbrella.

In simple terms, WATCH THIS SPACE.

Smart Farming in Westernport - National Landcare Program 2

After the completion of the Demonstrating Sustainable Agriculture Program in June 2018 we were successful in securing funding through the National Landcare Program 2. This project is a continuation of the Demonstrating Sustainable Agriculture project and has been rebranded as 'Smart Farming in Westernport'. The project is operating across the entire Westernport Catchment and is a partnership between the Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority, Westernport Catchments Landcare Network, South Gippsland Landcare Network, Mornington Peninsula Shire, Melbourne Water and Agriculture Victoria. The project is funded for 5 years.

In 2018/19 the project undertook the following activities:

- One soil carbon demonstration site at Bimbadeen on Phillip Island
- One grazfert nutrient management program in the Bass River Catchment attended by 15 Bass catchment landowners
- One field day at Bimbadeen attended by 43 people
- One Charles Massy workshop at Poowong attended by 80 people
- 13 discussion group events attended by 193 people



*Bimbadeen Soil Carbon Demonstration.
Graze Radish carbon crop being
mulched in May 2019.*

*The Charles Massy workshop held
in May 2019 at the Poowong
Football Club was very attended by
80 people. From left- Libby
Anthony (Former CHAIR SGLN),
Joel Geoghegan (BCLN), Charles
Massy, Ric Oldham (Chair BCLN),
Cassie Wright (SGLN)*



Capitalise on Carbon

All things Carbon Program

The demand for food and fibre is increasing, but during periods of climate variability, maintaining a productive and profitable farm is becoming difficult. Farms that provide shade and shelter and build and increase soil organic matter can capture and hold water for longer and maintain good pasture cover. During long dry periods these farms dry out later and recover much earlier, and during good seasons they are much more productive.

Building soils increases soil carbon which can be traded. Increasing soil carbon provides the option for 'carbon neutral' produce, proving access to 'clean and green' high-end markets. Also, the agricultural sector will need to account for carbon emissions in the near future, and soil carbon sequestration will be the major carbon sink.

Using the Landcare brand, trust, knowledge, and expertise, Bass Coast Landcare Network (BCLN) will provide farmers with the ability, confidence and skills to improve productive capacity, resilience, and branding in a more variable climate, as well as achieve carbon neutrality and generate income from carbon sequestration.

BCLN, with its close connection to the agricultural community in Southern Gippsland, is well placed to promote regenerative agriculture as the means to build soils, increase productivity, facilitate reduction in farm emissions, and sequester soil carbon.

To this end, a few BCLN staff and Board members have been attending Carbon and Regenerative Agriculture conferences, meeting with project developers for the federal Climate Solution Fund (previously the Emissions Reduction Fund), with Bass Coast Shire Council and Totally Renewable Phillip Island, and have developed a model for supporting regenerative agriculture and trading carbon.

With the demand for local offset planting just starting (another South Coast Taxi's offset planting was recently completed), and the start of soil sequestration in the upcoming year, this is a very exciting space with great potential to achieve many of BCLN's goals.



From the Ground Up – regenerative agriculture conference in Colac. L-R Ric Oldham, Chair BCLN, Cassie Wright, South Gippsland Landcare Network staff and Rob Grey, BCLN staff.

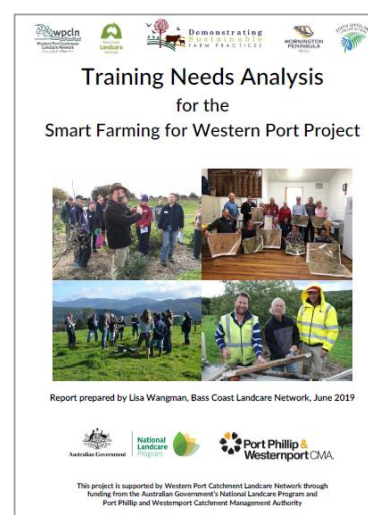
Deliver leading edge experiences, education and training

Education & Training Portfolio

Training Needs Analysis

BCLN completed a Training Needs Analysis report in mid-2019 summarising key survey findings and giving recommendations for training related activity within the 'Smart Farming for Western Port' project region. This project works with landholders from multiple enterprise types throughout the Western Port catchment, aiming to promote sustainable farming and increase the understanding and uptake of innovative farming practices to improve farmer's productivity and our natural resources.

Landholders in each sub-region including; Western Port Catchment Landcare Network, Bass Coast Landcare Network, Mornington Peninsula Shire Council and South Gippsland Landcare Network were consulted via an online survey to ascertain information on demographics, past training undertaken, how they source information, and their preferences for future training activity including; timing, topics of interest, delivery methods and presenters of interest.



Over 280 responses were received and used to create recommendations for each sub-region that will now inform the direction and content of field days and training, ensuring that the delivery of training activity across each project sub-region is timely and relevant to a range of landholders and enterprises. It will also assist project staff to determine the most suitable methods to present information and host events that use available resources efficiently, while catering for landholders needs in each area. The project is supported by Port Phillip & Westernport Catchment Management Authority through funding from the Australian Governments National Landcare Program (NLP2).

Training Programs – Sustainable Agriculture and Landcare Groups



Farmer Discussion group at Bill Cleelands

Much of the activity involving Training for adults over 2018/19 has focussed on Sustainable Agriculture including Farmer Discussion Groups, Diversification group day trips, Master Tree Growers Course and Grazfert nutrient management program.

Funding of \$19,975 was also received from the Victorian Government Community skills development grants in 2018, to help our group members manage their groups more effectively including workshops on: First Aid, Citizen Science and Monitoring, communications including Facebook for Landcare Groups and How to use the Weebly Platform for your website and Grant writing and fundraising resources for groups. These are to be rolled out in the second half of 2019.

Master Tree Growers

The Bass Coast Public Fund were a key partner in our 2nd Master Tree Growers Course over consecutive years. The course was made possible through a major funding boost from an anonymous donor, who contributed \$15k towards the course and also a variety of other funding sources including; Smart Farming and Westernport project, Gippsland Agroforestry Network, Latrobe Catchment Landcare Network, WGCMA and Melbourne Water .

The course was extremely successful. Over 20 landowners and Landcare support staff from West Gippsland participated in a 9-week Master Tree Growers program. The program proved to be an amazing opportunity for all participants to increase their knowledge, engage with other like-minded people and develop ideas and actions for their own properties.

Facilitated by national and local leaders in tree growing on farms, participants visited a series of outstanding West Gippsland properties and enterprises that demonstrated 'what can be done' and inspired participants to create a vision for their properties and landscapes that includes trees for multiple purposes.



Peter Ronalds Measuring the DBH Diameter at Breast Height of a Californian Redwood at Lardner Park

River Garden

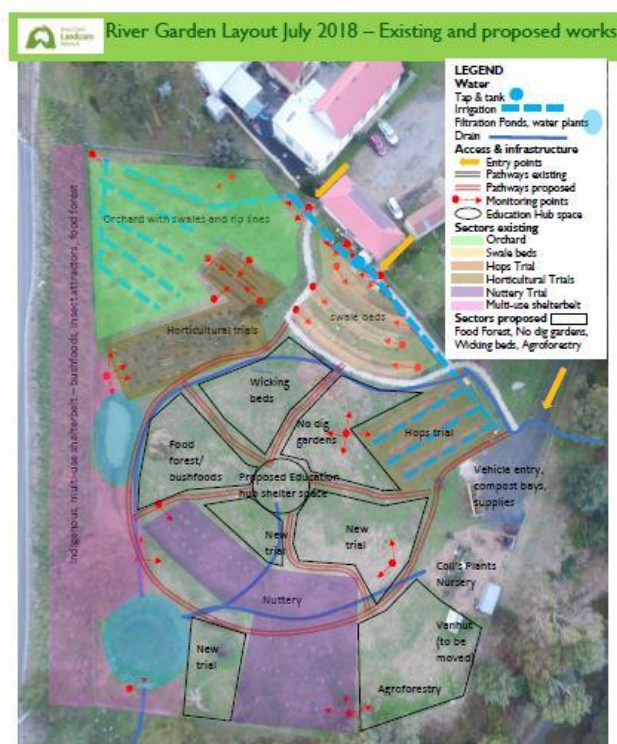
The River Garden is envisaged as a regional Landcare hub, community garden, trials, innovation and education precinct, located on the banks of the Bass River, adjacent to our Bass Office and the highway. The focus is on regenerative soil management practices, nutrient dense growing techniques and local food systems, from the backyard garden to horticulture and broad acre farming. The last few years has seen it slowly evolve from just a 'Pony Paddock' to an innovative growing space, still in its early stages, but with exciting potential for the future.



After a series of activity days funded by a Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority Grant helped establish basic growing infrastructure on site in early 2018, we have been working on establishing a volunteer program, held a Bee Keeping Master Class, continue to work with and host Coll's plants nursery and worked with a Community Corrections Crew to help maintain the site. There are now swale garden beds, an orchard, nuttury, berries, compost bays and a five-bed trial comparison site.

Updated maps and community plans have been generated with input from participants. This information was used to create a Feasibility study this year that takes a creative look at the many opportunities waiting to be realised at the River Garden. As BCLN aims to ultimately turn this site into a self-supporting enterprise, this study outlines opportunities for community involvement, income generation, partnership development and looks at new innovations to create community generated projects partnering with schools and local producers to encourage innovation and diversification of agriculture in the Bass Coast. This document is the precursor to developing a self-sustaining business plan ensuring the positive ongoing management of the River Garden.

Phase three of development in 2019 and beyond focusses on community engagement, establishing monthly volunteer days and Master classes, site management and business planning. There has been a lack of successful funding applications over the last year, with the BCLN Board and BCLN Public Fund making a decision to support the River Garden in a low maintenance phase while committing to assist in finding further funding and sponsorship for the three core business areas of the River garden; Environmental Education, Community Gardening/volunteer engagement and Food production and trials in a community learning environment. It is evident that initial income from activities and produce will only provide a modest income stream, which will likely need to be supported by ongoing grants, partnership projects and corporate sponsorship, in order to maintain the site. BCLN strives to reach the point when the River Garden site can be self-supporting and sees the exciting potential that it has to be a Landcare education centre and trials site that could be a showpiece throughout Gippsland and Victoria.



Environmental Detectives Schools program – connecting kids with Nature

Our major sponsor ENGIE sold the Loy Yang B Power station to Alinta in early 2018, who chose not to continue funding the Environmental Detectives program. As a result, we are now operating as of July 2018, on a fee for service basis, which understandably has seen a reduction in booked activities, although it is pleasing to see the program continue in this format.

Additionally, due to the loss of this corporate funding we have had to sadly say goodbye to long term BCLN employee, Education Officer, Peter Baird early in 2019. Pete was instrumental in the running of activities for this program and will be sorely missed. We wish Pete all the best in his personal pursuits and artistic projects.



The following table shows the numbers of activities held and number of students involved both in Bass Coast and in the Latrobe Valley for 2018/19. The drop in participation rates for the past subsidised program vs the current fee for service program is evident, further confirming cost as a major barrier for school participation.

| Environmental Detectives | Term 3/18 | Term 4/18 | Term 1/19 | Term 2/19 | Totals 2018/19 | Previous Totals 2017/18 |
|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------------|-------------------------|
| Number of Schools | 7 | 5 | 0 | 2 | 14 | 26 |
| Number of activities | 13 | 8 | 0 | 10 | 31 | 138 |
| Number of teachers | 40 | 19 | 0 | 14 | 73 | 225 |
| Number of children | 513 | 228 | 0 | 188 | 929 | 3479 |



There are currently 10 activities in this program, run at parks, reserves, farms or as incursions to schools, including: Aquatic Macro Invertebrates, Testing physical and chemical features of Water, Bird watching and nest construction, Bug Bits, Little Big things, Soils ain't soils, Exploration trail nature walks, Seed collection & Propagation, Tree planting and A Coastal and Bush Pantry. We also have plans for new activities underway and help schools with designing gardens for veggies, bush food, indigenous plants, habitat or sensory gardens and tailor our activities to school needs. All information including a booking form can be found on our web page at <http://www.basscoastlandcare.org.au/education.html>

BCLN has developed a proposal to expand this program from Bass Coast and Latrobe Valley into South Gippsland. We have met with and garnered support from surrounding Landcare networks and are creating and refining the pitch for this program to approach sponsors and partners to be involved in a Gippsland wide program. Another exciting facet of this program proposal includes setting up Landcare Education hubs in each area with a shelter, dam and garden to facilitate activity delivery and act as a community resource. Landcare staff in each area would also be trained to take activities in under this new proposal. We plan to trial this approach at the River Garden in Bass and use this as a demonstration for setting up similar hubs across Gippsland.

Sustainable Farms use STEM – Pilot Secondary Schools Program

This education program focused on Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) and was funded as a pilot from AGL. This secondary level program looks at farm sustainability and shows how farmers use STEM in everyday operations. Adapting the method used in the Environmental Best Practice Management program of monitoring then taking steps to improve management of properties we looked at planning, water, soils, biodiversity and pest plants/animals. A farm visit to Peter Devonshire's Agroforestry property in Boolara South combined with enquiry-based experiments and activities familiarised students with what's required to operate a healthy, sustainable farming business and introduced them to careers available in this sector.

The last classes attended this program in late 2018 with a total of 8 year 7 and 8 classes. Although AGL chose not to further support the program after this pilot, we have developed a solid STEM program for secondary students, learned valuable lessons along the way and improved the program by incorporating those learnings.



Students from Kurnai College and St Pauls participating in the 'Sustainable Farms using STEM' program.

Catchment Custodian Kids Program

BCLN was successful in gaining \$20,000 funding from the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority for a new schools-based project 'Environmental Detectives help protect the Powlett catchment - Powlett Catchment Custodian kids. Throughout 2019, classes from local schools were matched with landholders undertaking revegetation projects, to help with planting days and monitoring activities to gather baseline data on the health of the catchment. The funding helped to get busloads of students from Powlett River Primary, Bass Valley Primary, Wonthaggi Secondary College and Leongatha Secondary College to planting sites to help plant over 8000 plants this planting season. Great news for this program is the announcement of further funding from both the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority and the Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority under the Victorian Landcare Grants Program, to continue offering these opportunities to local schools across the network area during 2020.



(L)Wonthaggi Primary School students planting day at the Spiden property in the 2019 planting season.



Audited Financial Statements



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