

# Victorians Volunteering for Nature

Environmental  
Volunteering Plan 2018



## At a glance



Between 2019 and 2024, **\$86.7 million in funding has been directed to the community**, guided by Victoria's Environmental Volunteering Plan. This funding has been distributed through programs such as the Port Phillip Bay Fund, Victorian Landcare Program and Community Volunteer Action Grants.



In 2023 **213,532 volunteers contributed more than 1.9 million hours** across 1,955 groups to help protect Victoria's environment and biodiversity.



Over the lifetime of the Environmental Volunteering Plan, the number of **Victorians volunteering for nature has increased by 80,000 (37%)**.

## What's been achieved

Five years of supporting Victorians to care for the state's precious environment and biodiversity, which also benefits local communities and the economy.

### Background

In 2018, the Victorian Government released [Victorians Volunteering for Nature: Environmental Volunteering Plan](#) (*Environmental Volunteering Plan*) – a coordinated and revitalised approach to environmental volunteering across the state. The plan, developed in consultation with the sector, presented an ambitious and comprehensive program of change focused on four key areas:



**Sustain**

Sustain existing environmental volunteering programs and networks



**Expand**

Regenerate environmental volunteering and encourage more Victorians to act for nature



**Value**

Value and recognise the contributions of environmental volunteers



**Understand**

Understand the diverse needs of the environmental volunteering sector

The *Environmental Volunteering Plan* outlined 20 actions and 31 options to support environmental volunteering. Of the actions and options, 36 have been completed or embedded while substantial progress has been achieved for 8 others.



## Making change

There's a lot to be proud of over the past five years.

Key achievements include:

### The future is now

We've nudged the dial towards the sector being more inclusive of young people – because the future of Victoria's natural environment depends on it.

- In partnership with Volunteering Victoria and Youth Affairs Council Victoria, we developed a sector-first tool to support environmental volunteer groups to [increase youth participation](#).
- Through the [New Growth](#) initiative we collaborated with 23 diverse partners to direct \$250,000 to support youth-led, youth-inclusive environmental volunteer projects across Victoria.
- Guided by the *Environmental Volunteering Plan*, DEECA partnered with Parks Victoria and Scouts Victoria to involve young people in citizen science. This included the development of a bespoke [education toolkit](#) and the engagement of 700 young Victorians in people-powered research.

### Strengthening Regional Volunteer Collaboration

- We invested \$1.1 million in a two-year pilot program across Victoria that advanced regionally based environmental volunteer coordination, impact and partnerships. As a result, environmental volunteer managers and groups are better connected locally and across Victoria.

### Exploring pathways to volunteering

- The Victorian Government increased the diversity and offering of opportunities to volunteer for nature through its [Volunteering Innovation Fund](#). This initiative, led by Parks Victoria, allocated \$2 million in funding to community-led projects exploring new ways of volunteering in, and for the benefit of, nature.
- It's now easier for Victorians to find opportunities to volunteer for nature through an [interactive map](#) connecting environmental volunteer groups with each other and prospective volunteers.

### Investing in knowledge

- It's now possible to monitor the health of Victoria's environmental volunteering sector, by numbers. In 2019, we launched [Volunteering Naturally](#), an annual snapshot reporting on environmental volunteer hours, numbers, economic contribution and trends.
- We conducted research to strengthen our understanding of best-practice approaches to encourage more Victorians to volunteer for nature. The community now has access to an updated evidence base for i) motivators and barriers to environmental volunteering, and ii) characteristics of volunteering that appeal to target audiences.

## Supporting self-determination

- We have invested \$2.1 million into our Landcare for Country pilot that is supporting Traditional Owner and First Nations capacity, employment and connections with the environmental volunteering and landcare community. The four-year pilot is supporting Traditional Owner and First Nations aspirations and [building cultural competency](#) in the environmental volunteering sector.

### Building sector capability

- We have supported professional volunteer managers to connect, collaborate and learn from each other through our annual Environmental Volunteer Managers' Forum (EVM Grow). Effective volunteering doesn't just happen, it requires deliberate and ongoing leadership from volunteer managers and professionals. Whether paid or unpaid, we recognise the central role that those leading and coordinating environmental volunteers have in determining volunteering outcomes.
- It's now easier to find the information needed to deliver projects with impact that involve environmental volunteers, thanks to a newly created Volunteer Resource Hub. The [online hub](#) is connecting groups with quality resources developed by subject matter experts.

### Celebrating community contributions

- Every year, hundreds of thousands of Victorians volunteer for nature. The Victorian Government continues to celebrate and promote environmental volunteering in all its forms through [campaigns](#) including National Volunteer Week and Landcare Week. This is communicated across social media, online, including a regular newsletter and a comprehensive environmental volunteering website.
- We have also actively sought to reshape public perception on what volunteering for nature is and who engages in it, by sharing stories showing the diversity of people involved and the wide range of opportunities available.

## Looking forward

The Victorian Government is committed to supporting Victorians to act for nature and to connect people to their environment. We will continue do this through our community grants, capability building and storytelling for change.

## Thank you

Thank you to the hundreds of thousands of Victorians across the state who volunteer their time and expertise to helping to protect the state's precious environment and biodiversity. We also acknowledge the volunteer managers and coordinators who provide critical and inspiring leadership, and enable volunteer efforts to take place. Your contributions to Victoria are invaluable.

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