

Background and Activities

Background

The loss of biodiversity and the associated crisis with species extinction is well known and accepted by all levels of Government. To put this into context 60% of Victoria's landmass is privately owned with the remaining 40% in the public domain¹. Gardens for Wildlife Victoria attempts to sustain biodiversity across landscapes on public and private land.

Gardens for Wildlife Victoria is a network of community volunteers and staff in government agencies or departments (primarily local government) that support each other to increase awareness and knowledge in the community about the importance of creating and improving habitat for locally native flora and fauna, and to involve them in doing so. We assist the development of community-agency partnerships in Local Government Areas (LGAs) across Victoria to co-design and co-manage programs that engage local residents, schools and businesses to value, connect with, support and improve biodiversity on their land, to support its persistence across the landscape, known as 'wildlife gardening'. Gardens for Wildlife Victoria also advocates for and educates the community about wildlife gardening. The network was launched as a pilot program in 2016, following a review of biodiversity conservation in Victoria².

The importance of wildlife gardening to biodiversity conservation is highlighted in Australia's latest biodiversity conservation strategy.³ Victoria's Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) also advocates for wildlife gardening as an important biodiversity conservation practice⁴.

Vision

Caring for nature together one land parcel at a time – for humans as well as indigenous plants and animals to thrive

Mission

Create empowered networks of communities connecting with, improving and caring for nature through engagement, education and research

Strategic Objectives

- Educate stakeholders on the principles and practices of wildlife gardening
- Embed Gardens for Wildlife Victoria ethic and practice into government strategies, policies and priorities
- Assist Gardens for Wildlife leaders, partnerships and programs to develop, link and thrive
- Improve and care for biodiversity, making sure locally native species are supported
- Train and empower volunteer garden guides to visit residents in their gardens and provide them with site specific information and support on caring for indigenous flora and fauna
- Improve connections and wellbeing of program participants through wildlife gardening
- Research, improve and communicate the impact of the network and wildlife gardening
- Maintain financial sustainability

¹ DELWP. (2020). <https://www.propertyandlandtitles.vic.gov.au/government-land>

² Mackay, M., Colliver, R., Wallis, P. J., Ison, R., Davidson, S., & Allan, C. (2020). *Opportunities for Improving NRM Governance in Victoria, ILWS Report No. 138*. Albury.

³ Commonwealth of Australia. (2019). *Australia's Strategy for Nature 2019-2030*, p.25

⁴ DELWP. (2020). *How Victorians can Act for Nature*. <https://www.ari.vic.gov.au/research/people-and-nature/how-victorians-can-act-for-nature>

Activities

- Workshops – in person and digital
- Education and training sessions
- Advocacy, communication, creating and delivering education tools
- Mentoring and support, including quality review of programs through affiliation
- Research and evaluation of activities and their impact

Composition of the Board

A Steering Group commenced with the seven individuals who participated in the urban biodiversity governance review and developed the pilot network. In July 2020 Gardens for Wildlife Victoria incorporated with a governing board. The Board regularly reviews its composition to ensure renewal, sustainability, and appropriate representation to carry out its work. Members of the Board collectively have knowledge, skills, and experience in:

- Ecology
- Biodiversity planning, management and conservation
- Research/evaluation
- Wildlife gardening
- Environmental volunteering
- Nature/land stewardship
- Natural resource management
- Health and wellbeing
- Community engagement and relationship building
- NFP sector governance

They include members of:

- Community or community groups
- Environmental advisory groups
- Local government
- Regional or state government and agencies
- Tertiary/research institutes

who do not represent their organisations but act as individuals to support *Gardens for Wildlife Victoria*.

Role and functions of the Board

- **Foster the principles** of *Gardens for Wildlife Victoria*
- **Develop educational tools and events** to assist affiliates and members roll out programs in LGAs across Victoria, with varying circumstances and needs
- **Keep abreast of threats and opportunities, and recommend how to respond**
- **Develop and help to implement strategies** for *Gardens for Wildlife Victoria* to carry out its work sustainably and extend participation in its activities.
- **Advocate** for *Gardens for Wildlife Victoria*.
- **Assist to plan and carry out** *Gardens for Wildlife Victoria* activities.

Financial and in-kind support

The network has received grant funding from DELWP (\$40,000 - 2016, \$50,000 – 2018), the Andrews Foundation (\$21,000 – 2017) and RMIT University (\$6,200 – 2017) to help carry out its work. The majority of work is carried out by volunteers with in-kind support from councils, environmental groups and universities.

Activities and outputs: 2016 - 2023

Achievement	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/2022	2022/23
Structure and operating platform	❖Coordinating group formed, facilitator nominated, email address	❖Website placed online		❖Incorporation as not-for-profit documents prepared.	❖Incorporation of GWV Ltd and the GWV Trust as charitable organisations.	❖Registration as Environmental Organisation (on REO), dgr status	
Workshops including educational presentations	❖Three workshops: Aug 2016, Dec 2016, May 2017	❖Two workshops: Oct 2017, Mar 2018	❖Three workshops: Sep 2018, Dec 2018, May 2019	❖Two workshops: Sep 2019, Dec 2019	❖Three workshops: Jul 2020 (Zoom), Dec 2020, May 2021 (Zoom)	❖ Celebration event Dec 2021 (Cranbourne)	❖ Celebration event Mar 2023 (Maribyrnong Boathouse)
Education and training sessions		❖Two training sessions: July 2017, May 2018	❖1 Training session	❖One training session, Aug 2019	❖One training session, Apr 2021	❖Training session, Apr 2021- Casey	❖Training session, May 2023 City of Yarra
					❖Support training at 6 sessions hosted by affiliates	❖Support training at 2 sessions hosted by affiliates: ❖1 session for exploring program devpt: Jul 2021,	❖Support training at 2 sessions hosted by affiliates: ❖3 sessions for promoting program devpt and community recruitment:
Meetings and Sessions for Affiliated Gardens for Wildlife programs							❖Affiliates Meetings commenced - Oct 2022, March 2023, May 2023
Program devpt, affiliation	❖17 programs total	❖25 programs total	❖35 programs total	❖39 programs total	❖40 programs total	❖45 programs total	❖46 programs total
	❖2 programs affiliated	❖4 programs affiliated	❖6 programs affiliated	❖10 programs affiliated	❖15 programs affiliated	❖18 programs affiliated	❖18 programs affiliated
Communication and education tools		❖Video about wildlife gardening prepared and put on website	❖Video about network prepared and put on website	❖4 training videos, 1 communication video ❖Program toolkit in development	❖Program toolkit developed for affiliates	❖Program toolkit and resources put on website ❖Posters at Festivals ❖Presentation Western Region Garden Clubs Conference	❖Presentation in symposium on taking action for urban biodiversity (May 2023)
Partnerships					❖Partnership discussions with Trust for Nature, EarthWatch, Greener Spaces Better Places, Nature Stewards		❖Partnership discussions with Victorian Environment Friends Network
Awards							❖Australian Institute of Horticulture Award Oct 2022 - for promoting and caring for nature through community partnerships
Advocacy, promotion			❖Feature in The Age	❖ABC radio	❖Facebook launched		
Research/evaluation Conferences	❖ Three journal papers on Knox Gardens for Wildlife program published ¹ .	❖Two research workshops: Aug 2017, Nov 2017	❖1 national, 1 international conference presentation ❖1 journal paper ²	❖Research commissioned on benefits of wildilfe gardening ❖3 journal papers ³	❖1 state, 1 national, 1 international conference presentation ❖1 journal paper ⁴	❖1 journal paper ⁵ ❖1 Technical report ⁶	❖1 journal paper ⁷

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Mumaw, L. (2017). Transforming urban gardeners into land stewards. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 52: 92-103;
Mumaw, L. M., Maller, C., & Bekessy, S. (2017). Strengthening wellbeing in urban communities through wildlife gardening. *Cities and the Environment*, 10(1), Art 6.
- 2 Mumaw, L., Gaskell N., & Leskovec, C. (2018). From planning to wildlife gardening: evolving approaches to fostering biodiversity. In I. McShane, E. Taylor, L. Porter, & I. Woodcock (Eds.), *Remaking Cities - Proceedings of the 14th Australasian Urban History Planning History Conference* (pp. 344-353).
- 3 Mumaw, L. M., Maller, C., & Bekessy, S. (2019). Assessing and strengthening community capacity building in urban biodiversity conservation programs. *Cities and the Environment*, 12(2), Art4.
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- 4 Mumaw, L. & Raymond C. (2021). A framework for catalysing the rapid scaling of urban biodiversity stewardship programs. *Journal of Environmental Management*, 292, 112745.
- 5 Mumaw, L. & Mata, L. (2022). Wildlife gardening: an urban nexus of social and ecological relationships. *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment*, 20(6), 379-385.
- 6 Mumaw, L., & Mata, L. (2022). The socio-ecological benefits of wildlife gardening. *Report prepared for Gardens for Wildlife Victoria*, <https://gardensforwildlifelifevictoria.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/The-socio-ecological-benefits-of-wildlife-gardening-Mumaw-and-Mata-v1-31Mar22-lowres.pdf>.
- 7 Mumaw, L., Ison R., Corney H., Gaskell N., & Kelly, I. (2023). Reframing governance possibilities for urban biodiversity conservation through systemic co-inquiry. *Environmental Policy and Governance*, 33, 517-530.