

**gardens**  
*for* **wildlife** | VICTORIA



ANNUAL  
HIGHLIGHTS  
2023-2024



## Message from the chair

This year we continued to expand our reach, with over 400 network members in 47 Victorian local government areas and 21 Affiliate Gardens for Wildlife programs, supporting their local communities to wildlife garden.

We advocated for wildlife gardening at federal and local government level and built capacity through training sessions, workshops, and events.

My gratitude and thanks to our volunteers and program participants – helping human and wildlife communities to have a vibrant future.

*Nadine  
Gaskell*





## Our Vision

Caring for nature together one land parcel at a time - for humans, plants and animals to thrive

## Our Mission

Create empowered networks of communities connecting with, improving, and caring for nature

## OUR ASPIRATIONS

Extend conservation efforts to private land

Integrate human wellbeing and community building with nature conservation

Ground nature conservation in everyday life through wildlife gardening

Facilitate a sustainable network of co-designed wildlife gardening hubs



# The Challenges

**We are facing a species extinction crisis, exacerbated by climate change and urbanisation. Urban land is not valued for biodiversity yet continues to be vitally important for its survival.**

We continue to lose local nature and with it, connections that can support our physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing.

The majority of urban land is in private hands yet the residents managing the land are not seen and often do not see themselves as conservers of biodiversity.

Governments – (Federal, State, Local) - do not operate in a way that involves citizens in co-design of actions and policy for conserving nature.



# The Opportunities

Faced with these challenges we believe a system of integrated care for nature that supports locally native species is needed; a system that extends across public and private land.

Public agencies would care for public land - parks, reserves, habitat patches and wildlife corridors.

Citizens would improve habitat in their gardens through wildlife gardening to supplement this work.

**Such a system needs to be sustained in a way that involves and supports citizens in co-designing and implementing actions and policy for nature stewardship.**



# Our work to support widespread nature stewardship

1.

Gather and support  
a network of champions

Community members,  
council and agency staff  
Share, mentor, innovate

2.

Co-design and deliver  
Gardens for Wildlife programs

Locally sited  
Include face to face interaction  
Designed by locals for local needs  
Serve social and environmental purposes

3.

Monitor and evaluate  
Provide facilitation  
and governance integrity



**Communities caring for nature**  
Across landscapes  
In actions and policy





# Strategic goals

**Educate/Engage/Inspire stakeholders  
on the Gardens for Wildlife Victoria  
principles of wildlife gardening**

**Assist Gardens for  
Wildlife champions and  
programs to develop,  
link and thrive**

**Foster and extend  
collaborations and  
partnerships**

**Research,  
improve and  
communicate  
the impact of  
our network  
and wildlife  
gardening**

**Good governance  
and sustainability**



# 2023-2024 Achievements

Workshops and events Pg 8

Education and training sessions Pg 9

Programs and affiliates Pg 10

Advocacy and communication Pg 13





# Workshops and events

## Participant feedback

“The value of codesign and codelivery from community and local government is just a wonderful concept”

“The volunteers are key but it's also nice for council officers to have that positive feedback and increase the positive vibe ... around the value of a program such as this”

## Workshop

Volunteer Retention & Recruitment  
August 2023 (Online)

## Celebration event

Studley Park Boathouse  
November 2023





# Education and training

## Participant feedback

"I really got a lot out of meeting the network of people who have the same passions as me"

"I continue to be inspired by the whole Gardens for Wildlife program and do as many visits as I can. I learn something new each visit"

## Garden guide training sessions

Merri-bek, November 2023

Banyule, March 2024

## Session for exploring program development

Geelong, October 2023





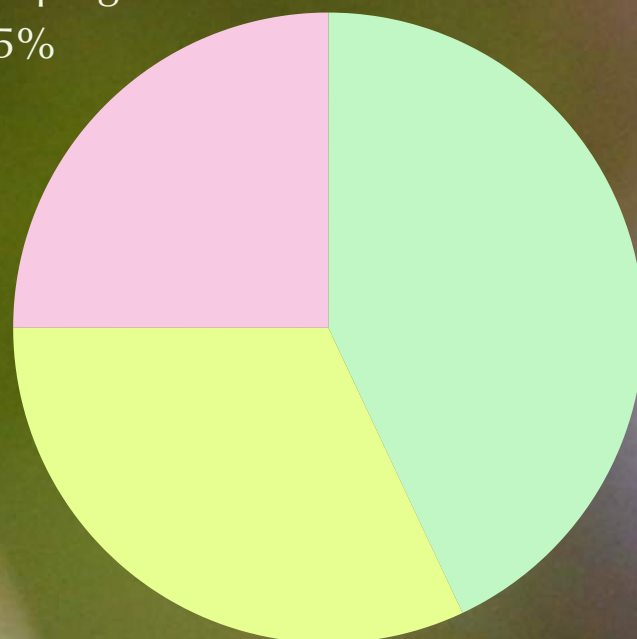
# Programs and affiliates

At the end of the year there were over 400 network members in 47 of Victoria's 79 local government areas.

Participants were exploring, developing, or operating Gardens for Wildlife programs in their areas.

## Status of Gardens for Wildlife Victoria supported programs

Developing  
25%



Operating  
43%

Exploring  
32%

## Location of Gardens for Wildlife Victoria supported programs



Gardens for Wildlife Victoria - supported programs are in diverse local government areas. The majority are in Greater Melbourne, with 94% of LGAs involved.



Gardens for Wildlife programs that have been endorsed as Affiliates share these key principles known to provide benefits to humans and wildlife:

- Designed and run by a local government – community volunteer partnership
- Are locally sited
- Include face to face interaction with participants
- Support residents to garden for wildlife
- Foster social connections and wellbeing
- Monitor and share progress

This year three new programs affiliated: Bayside Gardens for Wildlife, Geelong Gardens for Wildlife, and Queenscliffe Gardens for Wildlife.

This brings the number of Affiliates to 21.





# Advocacy and communication

**Facebook group  
6,400 members**

**Instagram  
1,600 followers**

**Information stall  
at VicBiodiversity Conference  
February 2024**

**Discussion with Federal environment  
officials on submission for big ideas  
to halt species decline  
February 2024**



We are a network of community members and council/shire officers across Victoria supporting each other to involve local residents, schools and businesses to join us in caring for the native plants and animals of our communities.

We acknowledge the Traditional owners of the lands across Victoria, their unique ability to care for Country, and deep spiritual connection to it.