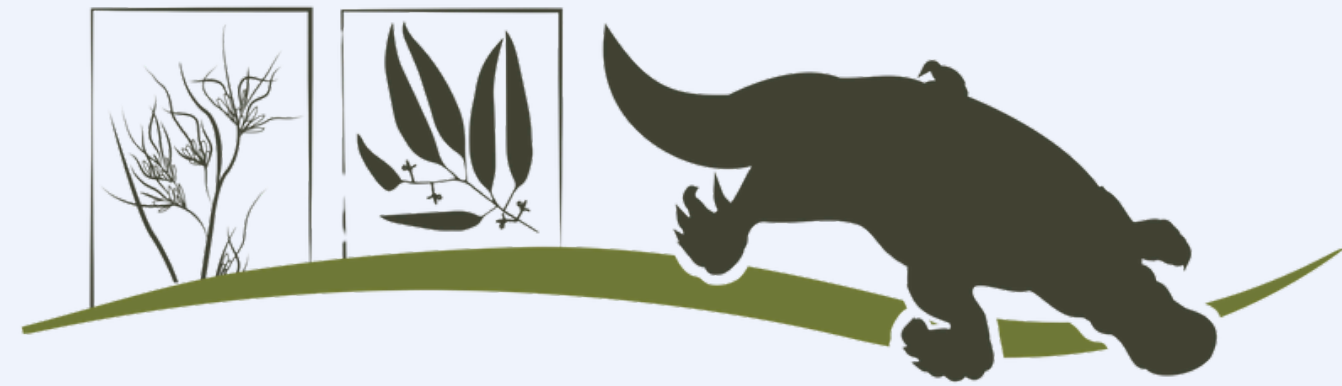




Leigh Catchment Group

2025 - 2029

STRATEGIC PLAN



Produced by:
The Leigh Catchment Group
in collaboration with Julie White
Environmental Evolution



We wish to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land we work on, the Wadawurrung People of the Kulin Nation, and pay our respect to Elders past and present.

We recognise their connection to Country and their role in caring for and maintaining this land, the waterways, and the sky, over thousands of years.

Paleert Tjaara Dja
2020-2030 Plan



TABLE OF CONTENTS



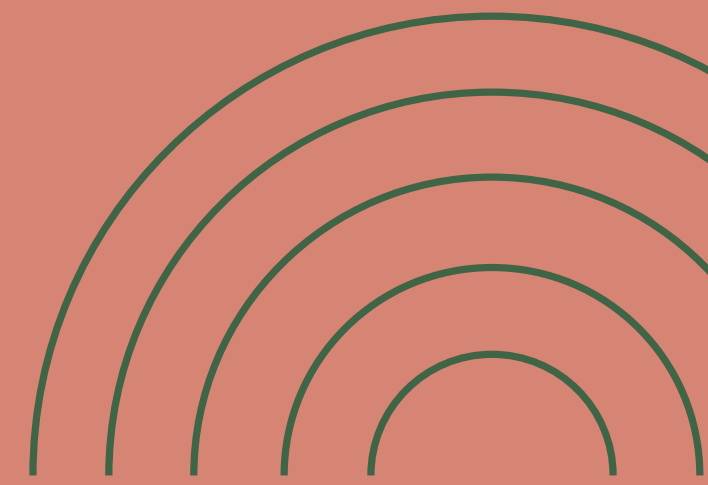
01	Welcome	06	4 Strategic Objectives
02	About Us	07	Strategic Objective 1: Stewardship
03	Vision & Mission	08	Strategic Objective 2: Engagement
04	Guiding Principles	09	Strategic Objective 3: Wellbeing
05	2025-2029 Strategic Objectives	10	Strategic Objective 4: Management



WELCOME



Welcome to the Yarrowee Leigh Catchment Group's Strategic Plan. Our mission is to **Protect, Restore, and Empower**. This strategic plan outlines our vision, goals, and strategies for the next five years, guiding our efforts to improve the health and resilience of our local environment.



ABOUT US

The Leigh Catchment Group (LCG) is a community-driven organisation dedicated to the stewardship of the Yarrowee, Leigh and Woody Yaloak rivers and their surrounding ecosystems. Established over 25 years ago our group has been working collaboratively with local landowners, government agencies and stakeholders to promote sustainable land and water management practices. We aim to support our network of Landcare groups and community-based natural resource management groups and community.

The Leigh Catchment Group works across 1,661 square kilometres, encompassing the Yarrowee, Leigh, and northern Woody Yaloak River catchments. The Leigh River originates northeast of Ballarat as the Yarrowee River, which becomes the Leigh River at its confluence with Williamson's Creek, eventually flowing into the Barwon River at Inverleigh.

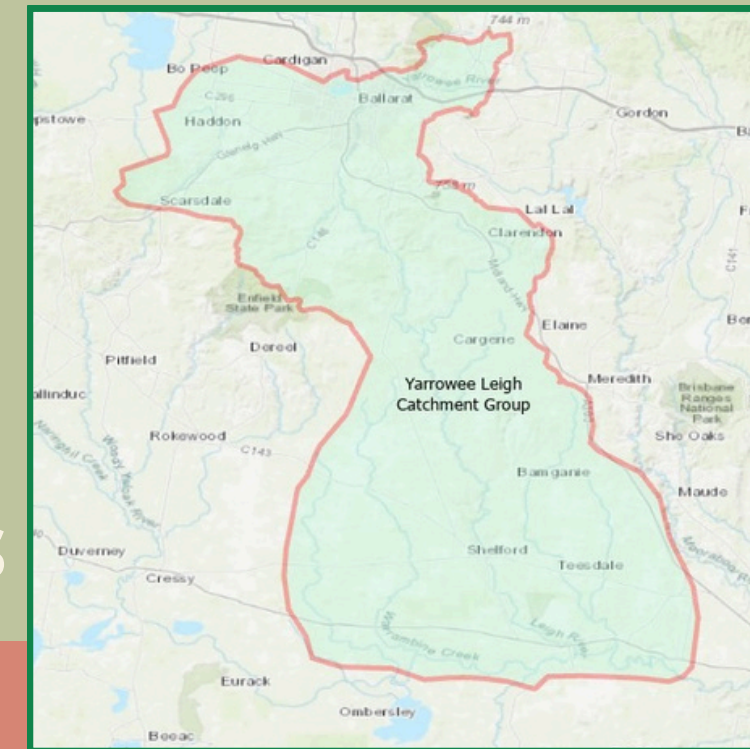
The Yarrowee River, known as Yaramlok in the Wadawurrung language, meaning "gum tree growing in water", is a perennial river within the Corangamite catchment. Rising in the hills near Gong Gong, it flows through Ballarat, crossing the City of Ballarat area before transitioning into the Leigh River.

The Woody Yaloak River, known in the Wadawurrung language as Wurdi-yaluk, meaning "large water," rises below Black Hill, west of Ballarat. It flows southward, joined by three minor tributaries, passing through Smythesdale, Scarsdale, and Cressy before emptying into Lake Martin and eventually Lake Corangamite.



MEMBER GROUPS

- Friends of Canadian Corridor (FoCC)
- Friends of the Woody
- Friends of Yarrowee River
- Wattle Flat Pootilla Landcare
- Garibaldi Landcare
- Napoleons/Enfield Landcare
- Ross Creek Landcare
- Upper Williamson's Creek Landcare



VISION & MISSION

Our Vision

Creating connected and resilient communities dedicated to healing the environment and increasing biodiversity.

Our Mission: Protect, Restore, and Empower

Through community engagement, education, and collaborative action, we strive to enhance biodiversity, improve water quality, and promote the ecological health and resilience of our local ecosystems for the benefit of present and future generations.





GUIDING PRINCIPLES

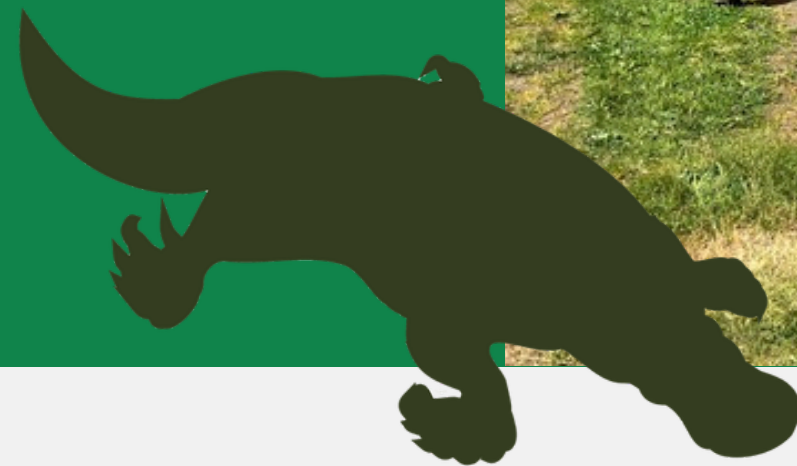


- **Biodiversity & climate focused**
- **Tangible & meaningful action**
- **Good communication**
- **Involve the Wadawurrung First Nations Peoples**
- **Anchor – safe, clear thinking**
- **Inclusive**

- **Accessible**
- **Adaptive**
- **Challenge**
- **Inspirational**
- **Sustainable**



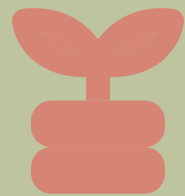
2025 - 2029 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES



Strategic objectives are to establish the boundaries for what we want to focus on in the Strategic Plan. It creates the top layer of our strategic plan's framework, articulating what we will focus on to achieve our vision. These mini vision statements support our overall vision and help us break it down into manageable and actionable focus areas.

4 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

The following are our four Strategic Objectives:



1. Stewardship

Restored Ecosystems:
All habitats are thriving and healthy. By protecting and restoring our land, air and water resources, environmental degradation is stopped, habitats are restored and biodiversity is increased.



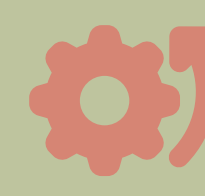
2. Engagement

Local grassroot action:
1 in 10 community members are actively involved. Together, empowering hearts, minds and hands, we heal our landscape.



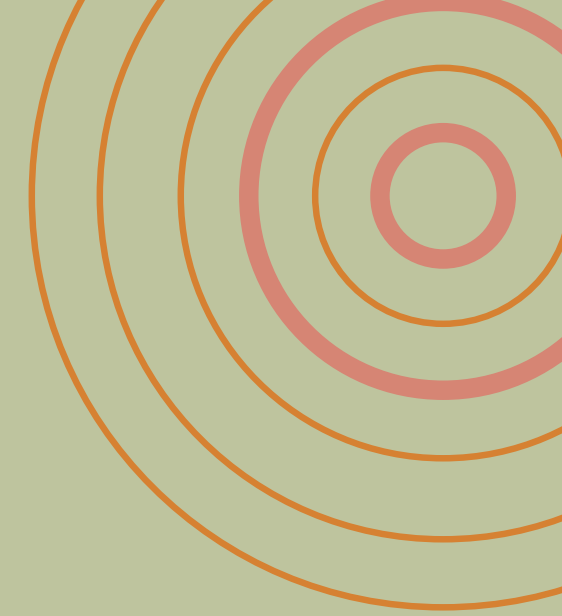
3. Wellbeing

Nurture community care: All are valued, honoured, respected and supported. Our community members are thriving, capable and enabled to drive real change.



4. Management

Pro-active professional operation: Our programs and actions are ethical, sustainable and fiscally responsible. Place a high emphasis and respect for professional management of financial, human and physical resources, and adopting best practice standards.



Restored Ecosystems: All habitats are thriving and healthy. By protecting and restoring our land, air and water resources, environmental degradation is stopped, habitats are restored and biodiversity is increased.

Goals:

1. **Restore, protect and increase biodiversity**
2. **Enhance water quality and soil health**
3. **Mitigate climate change impacts**

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1: STEWARDSHIP

Goals

1.

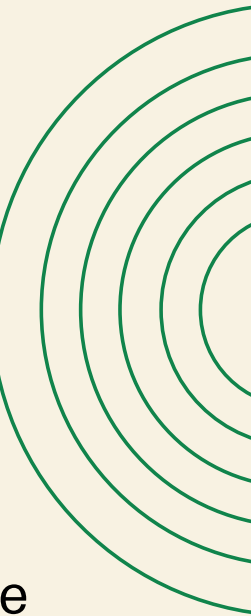
- Revegetate land across the region by 2029 using 60,000 climate-resilient native species and locally provenanced species.
- Implement targeted conservation programs for 5 critically endangered species in the Catchment.
- Remove invasive weeds and pest animals across all projects undertaken.
- Continue to maintain past and current restoration projects.

2.

- Establish riparian buffer zones along priority waterways to improve water quality.
- Implement sustainable agricultural practices on farmland to reduce soil erosion and improve soil fertility.
- Restore 5 wetlands by 2029 to improve water filtration.
- Participate in and promote Water Watch to provide ongoing water monitoring data.

3.

- Increase vegetation cover by 20% across the catchment by 2028 to enhance carbon sequestration.
- Help to transition 25% of the region's farmland to regenerative agriculture practices by 2029.
- Identify and begin to establish 5 new urban forests and green corridors by 2026 to reduce urban heat island effects and reintroduce wildlife.



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2: ENGAGEMENT

Goals

Action

1.

- Ensure current member groups are supported.
- Recruit 1,000 new Landcare volunteers by 2029, with a focus on youth, diverse communities and farmers.
- Encourage and support new Landcare and Friends Of groups as they arise.
- Utilise an app to facilitate communication, training and knowledge sharing between groups, members and partners.
- Become known as the 'voice' and leader in community environmental projects in the region.
- Provide practical on-ground solutions for the community to address climate change impacts.
- Write and implement a Community Engagement Plan.
- Write and implement a Marketing Plan.

2.

- Collaborate with the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners to incorporate traditional ecological knowledge.
- Formalise partnerships with 5 universities and research institutions in Victoria by 2027 to leverage scientific expertise.
- Establish a Landcare Business Alliance with 25 corporate partners by 2029 to secure funding and in-kind support.
- Continue collaborating with local and regional organisations/agencies (eg; Corangamite Catchment Management Authority, City of Ballarat, Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action, Landcare Vic, Parks Vic, Bunanyung Landscape Alliance etc).

Local grassroot action: 1 in 10 community members are actively involved. Together, empowering hearts, minds and hands we heal our landscape.

Goals:

1. **Grow the Landcare community**
2. **Strengthen partnerships and collaborations**
3. **Enhance environmental education and awareness**

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2: ENGAGEMENT

CONTINUED

Local grassroots action: 1 in 10 community members are actively involved. Together, empowering hearts, minds and hands we heal our landscape.

Goals:

1. Grow the Landcare community
2. Strengthen partnerships and collaborations
3. Enhance environmental education and awareness

Goals

3.

Action

- Develop and deliver an environmental education program addressing the Victorian Curriculum.
 - Establish a seasonal and yearly education program.
 - Develop an online booking system for schools and community groups to book in.
- Launch a multi-year public awareness campaign highlighting Landcare's impact and success stories.
- Organise 15 community events and workshops annually to communicate and implement our vision and mission.



Nurturing Community Care: All are valued, honoured, respected and supported. Our community members are thriving, capable and enabled to drive real change.

Goals:

1. Foster community engagement and inclusivity
2. Enhance mental health and wellbeing
3. Promote cultural sensitivity and inclusion



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3: WELLBEING

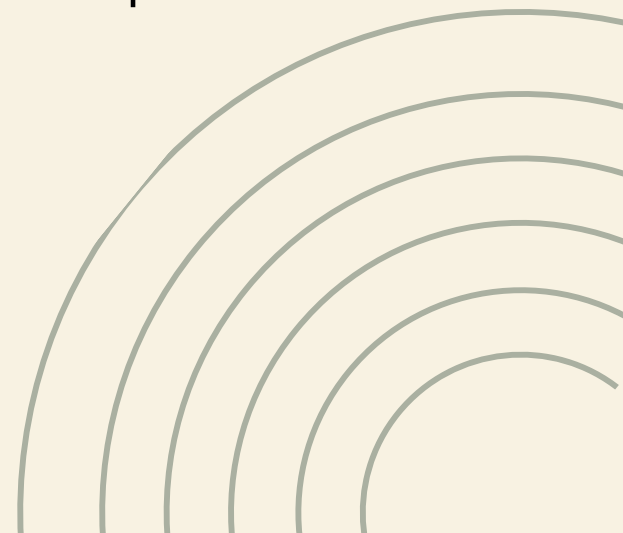
Goals

1.

- Engage the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners to collaborate on revegetation projects, ensuring cultural sensitivity, diversity and inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Use inclusive language and address hard conversations to ensure all community sectors and minorities feel safe, invited and involved in Landcare activities.
- Develop and distribute educational materials that highlight the importance of biodiversity and traditional land management practices.

2.

- Connect with psychologists and climate activist groups in the Leigh Catchment region to support people experiencing eco-distress by providing tangible steps and community support to restore and care for local environments.
- Connect with schools in the Catchment to provide opportunities for students to engage with Landcare activities that promote wellbeing.
- Highlight achievements through social media campaigns to foster a sense of pride and accomplishment within the community.



Nurturing Community Care: All are valued, honoured, respected and supported. Our community members are thriving, capable and enabled to drive real change.

Goals:

1. Foster community engagement and inclusivity
2. Enhance mental health and wellbeing
3. Promote cultural sensitivity and inclusion



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3: WELLBEING CONTINUED

Goals

3.

- Develop and implement Landcare 'therapy' programs for young and older people, connecting them with accredited environmental therapy facilitators at each Landcare site.
- Promote bush playgroups in collaboration with local child health nurses and playgroups, providing options for parents to learn about and contribute to Landcare while being supported by the community.
 - Build on the good work of farming communities and continue to support them in their sustainable practices.
- Diversify options for Landcare working bees on weekdays and evenings to cater to different people's lifestyles and commitments.
- Support and enable local Landcare and friends of groups to thrive and deliver environmental outcomes.
- Create value for membership to the LCG with the following suggestions: welcome starter pack, ongoing engagement package (such as survey, guest speakers, collaboration with Friends of Canadian Corridor, interesting evenings, Frog walks, etc).

Action



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4: MANAGEMENT

Pro-active professional operation:
Our programs and actions are ethical, sustainable and fiscally responsible. Place a high emphasis and respect for professional management of financial, human and physical resources and adopting best practise standards.

Goals:

- 1. Strengthen organisational capacity and governance**
- 2. Secure sustainable funding and resources**
- 3. Enhance monitoring and evaluation processes**

Goals

1.

- Expand the Group to 3 full-time funded facilitators and 3 part-time admin support positions to ensure effective management and coordination of Landcare projects.
- Provide ongoing governance and management program to support to member groups to meet governance and risk management requirements.
- Attend and present at the State-wide Landcare gatherings and programs.

2.

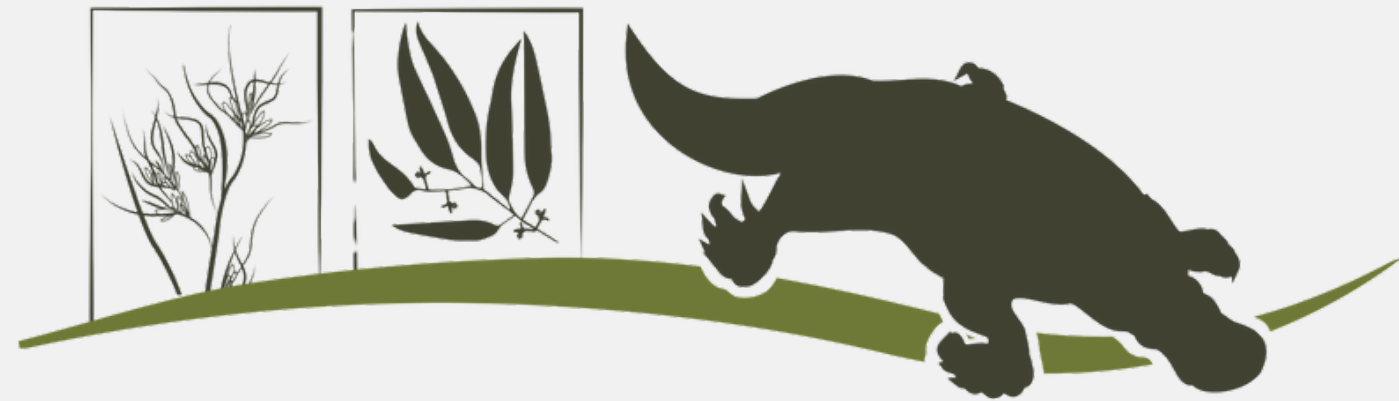
- Implement a fundraising strategy to secure more resources for projects and members.
- Explore opportunities for Landcare in emerging carbon and environmental services markets to help build and sustain major local restoration projects/programs.
- Develop membership subscriptions for corporate businesses and seek grants and donations to support ongoing projects and initiatives.

3.

- Use practical data and statistics to measure the condition of waterways, atmosphere, soil, indigenous plant/animals and environmental DNA.
- Map and store project data for analysis.
- Establish a monitoring and reporting process to document and demonstrate collective achievements of the Landcare sector and identify future needs.

Action





Leigh Catchment Group

THANK YOU

We appreciate the opportunity to share information today. Please scan the QR code below to follow us on social media.

