



Landcare
Victoria Inc.

MEMBERS COUNCIL CHARTER

1. Preamble

The Members Council is a core part of the structure of Landcare Victoria Inc, as per section 39 of the association's rules. Like the Committee of Management, its foundation is having regional representation from across the whole State in its membership. The Members Council is designed to draw four volunteer and one professional member, a total of 50 people, together from each of the 10 Catchment Management Authority regions as its base.

2. The Role of the Members Council

The council is designed to firstly bring together a group of landcarers who are diverse in the roles they fulfil, the issues they deal with and the personal skills they have. Further to this they have the capacity to reach deeply into the broader Landcare membership as required when specific skills or experience is needed on matters of policy.

Broadly, a Members Council role is three-fold, being to:

- Be a part of Landcare Victoria Inc's policy response / policy development work, either directly or by linking in other appropriately skilled people
- Be a conduit for ideas and issues that directly relate to the effectiveness of Landcare in Victoria, particularly as they affect multiple groups
- Understand the work and activities of Landcare Victoria Inc. so that they can communicate with members more effectively

3. How the Members Council works

The Members Council works at three levels.

Face to face, bi-annual forums

These forums provide the opportunity to communicate on policy matters, to refine policy approaches and responses, and particularly to put the weight of members state-wide behind matters of priority for the sector as a whole.

Out of session, working groups and sub-committees

It is in these places that most of the work of the Members Council will be done, as matters are worked through in a systematic manner and advice is provided directly to the Committee of Management and to the whole Members Council as applicable.

Individual member, local group work

Each individual member will be regularly liaising with their local groups and networks.

Through this, they can communicate and seek feedback on matters of interest to Landcare Victoria Inc. and on matters of interest to members which Landcare Victoria Inc. should also be aware of.

4. What a Council member does in their role

An individual Council member is a key part of the eyes and ears of Landcare Victoria Inc. proper. Each will have an individual perspective, based on their own experience of matters they deal with. At each level there are clear pathways through which issues can be raised and matters discussed, in order to produce sound results. In broad terms these are outlined below.

Local or Regional issues

These are addressed through linking the relevant regional Members Council delegates and the Committee of Management person for that region together.

State-wide or National issues

These will be addressed initially by a working group or subcommittee. The individual member can either participate directly in this group or feed their information to the group for consideration. Where no committee exists, issues can be directly sent to the convenor of the Members Council. Matters of this nature will find their way to the Committee of Management either through the convenors of the respective working group(s) or through a bi-annual forum of the Members Council.

Sector performance and activity issues

As a Sector we are collectively measured by our best and worst performances on an individual basis. The Members Council has a key role in assisting “Landcare in Victoria” to do their work better, safer and in a way understood by the broader community. Matters such as this will be addressed as for state-wide issues above.

5. Support to the Members Council

Participation in the Members’ Council is a voluntary activity. Individuals are expected to pay their own travel and communication costs for participating. Landcare Victoria Inc. will seek to, where possible, make attendance at bi-annual forums more cost effective by subsidising fuel and accommodation costs for participants.

Landcare Victoria Inc. supports the Members Council in the following manner:

1. Logistical activity to arrange the time and place and notice of the forums
2. Communication to Members Council when issues are under discussion

3. Communication of Members Council outcomes and activities to Landcare Victoria Inc. members
4. Policy background and information as applicable for issues under consideration
5. An appointed executive member from Committee of Management to liaise with the convenor(s) for development of the work plan, agenda and reporting arrangements
6. Participation by Committee of Management members on working groups as required
7. Committee of Management member attendance at bi-annual forums, noting that primacy is given to the views of the respective Members Council members at these events.

Landcare Victoria Inc. staff can provide technical support to various working groups at the request of the convenor or a committee of management member, with the approval of the Landcare Victoria Inc. Chair.

6. Operational matters

The following operational processes and requirements are part of the function of the Members Council. They are that:

1. Representatives to the Members Council are appointed by the Committee of Management following the process outlined in the “Landcare Victoria Inc Election Policy”
2. Appointments are for three years, with a staggered replacement by region over this period. The Committee of Management has the power to fill casual vacancies as required
3. The Members Council is designed to operate on a consensus basis. Where this cannot be achieved dissenting voices should be noted as appropriate in reporting to both the forum and the Committee of Management
4. Ideally working parties or subcommittees will consist of representatives from a majority of affected regions that the issue relates to
5. The Members Council will select one or more of their number to act as Convenor, either for a specific period of time a specific event or a specific issue
6. The annual work plan of the Council is developed by the convenor(s), in consultation with the respective working party and subcommittee convenors. It is subject to the approval of the Committee of Management
7. The agenda for the bi-annual forums is developed by the convenor(s), in consultation with the respective working party and subcommittee convenors
8. Conflicts of Interest are required to be declared by Council members and action taken if applicable to exclude themselves from debate on relevant matters. Most interests are held in common with others, however issues of individual gain or duties to an organisation other than Landcare need to be recognised as potential sources of conflict

9. Financial resources to support work by the Members Council are subject to approval by the Committee of Management
10. Outcomes of Council activities can be reported directly to the Committee of Management or through the bi-annual forum
11. The form and function of the Members Council is subject to formal review by the Committee of Management every three years. Informal reviews can be initiated by the Committee of Management if required.