



V3.1 GUNNING DISTRICT LANDCARE | STRATEGIC PLAN 2026-2029

Statement of Purpose

To support and empower our community in building a sustainable and ecologically healthy Gunning District, with farms that are economically and environmentally sustainable, residential and rural landscapes that are rich in natural biodiversity, and communities who are informed, engaged and collaborative.

Goals

1. Respond effectively to climate change

Gunning District Landcare recognises that we live in a rapidly changing world, as climate change pressures and new technology reshape both our landscape and our response to these changes. Our response to the challenge of climate change and increasing climate variability should include both mitigation and adaption, striving to achieve a carbon-neutral future while adapting farming and land management to better suit the hotter and more extreme climate yet to come.

2. Foster community interest and understanding

We will maintain active engagement across the whole District, including production farmers, smaller landholders, business enterprises, village residents and school children. Recognising that the demographics of the Gunning District community are changing as the population grows, we must ensure that we continue to be relevant, welcoming and inclusive. We aim to foster a culture within our group that reflects these values, and positions Gunning District Landcare as a trusted local advocate, educator and facilitator, offering unbiased information.

3. Promote community participation

Gunning District Landcare aims to empower the community, increasing their capacity to produce effective outcomes by developing their knowledge, skills and experience. We will develop and implement a program of activities that support this. Such activities will be enabled by funding and resources that we will seek from a diverse range of sources. We will encourage initiatives by community members, local groups and organisations, and retain an agility to respond to new challenges such as those posed by natural disasters. Everyone with an interest in caring for our land and/or an appreciation of the natural environment will feel welcome, respected and safe as a member of the group.

4. Continue to be a viable and effective organisation

As a volunteer-run community organisation, Gunning District Landcare must maintain strong and transparent governance. We strive to be integral to the community, respected for our care and commitment to our shared environment. We will continue to foster productive, collaborative and enduring stakeholder relationships with Upper Lachlan Shire Council, South-East Landcare and its member networks, and Local Land Services. In all that we do we will work strategically, identifying clear priorities that can be fully and effectively implemented within the known constraints of resources, time and capacity.



Principles

Recognising that the environment and production are intertwined, we promote and encourage the adoption of natural resource management principles. We focus on sustainable land management, biodiversity conservation, and community involvement in environmental stewardship. We place emphasis in all that we do on the principles that:

- The plight of several endangered species in our district is linked in part to past land management practices. By working with land managers to restore the natural function of our landscape, we help biodiversity while also improving the agricultural and environmental health of our District
- Landcare is for all in the District, be they long established full-time farmers, new hobby farmers, landholders, conservation property owners or village residents
- Landcare is inclusive; we achieve best results through working in consultation and partnership
- Collectively, our efforts make the area we live in a nicer place for us all, improving our quality of life and our social cohesion
- We remain agile in order to effectively anticipate and respond to challenges in our region. We will adopt a culture of encouragement and openness towards new and different ideas consistent with our goals

First Nations Commitment

Gunning District Landcare recognises that Aboriginal people are the original landcarers of Australia. We respect the Aboriginal custodians of our District, and seek to build meaningful partnerships that emphasise Indigenous knowledge and caring for Country. We are committed to engaging with local Aboriginal leaders and community members through consultation, advice, cultural knowledge workshops, and on-ground partnerships.

Commitment to Inclusion

Gunning District Landcare is committed to fostering a culture that is safe, respectful, inclusive, equitable and diverse, where everyone feels included and is given the opportunity to thrive. This includes supporting staff and volunteers from diverse backgrounds, including but not limited to gender identity, cultural background, race, disability, sexual orientation and age.

Background

Landcare is a community-based approach to managing and protecting our natural resources – creating more productive and sustainable farms, conserving our environment and building more cohesive and resilient communities. Landcare has helped to transform the landscape, enabling farmers, landowners and conservationists to work together at a local level on local issues.

Our purpose is to support and empower our community in building a sustainable and ecologically healthy Gunning District, with farms that are economically and environmentally sustainable, residential and rural landscapes rich in natural biodiversity, and communities who are informed, engaged and collaborative.

Active since 1993, Gunning District Landcare is a grassroots community group supporting sustainable land management across the southern part of the Upper Lachlan Shire, consisting not only of Gunning but also



other villages including Breadalbane, Collector, Dalton and Jerrawa, along with smaller settlements and the surrounding farms and land holdings.

Our work recognises that healthy ecosystems and productive farms go hand in hand, with a focus on conserving several endangered species in our region, addressing biodiversity and landscape function, pests and weeds, and publication education and engagement.

This is achieved through on-ground restoration, community education, and practical support. Our current projects include:

- working with community, scientists and relevant agencies to conserve threatened species including the Southern Pygmy Perch, Superb Parrot, Yellow-spotted Bell Frog and Koala
- holding public forums and school holiday workshops to increase understanding of our natural environment
- planting native trees, shrubs and grasses to increase biodiversity and landscape function
- working closely with local landholders to reduce the impact of feral pests

We are an active member of South East Landcare, a federation of 14 District Landcare Networks.

Key projects to date

Our impact over recent years includes:

- 30 community and school activities
- 1,777 native plants installed
- 22 partners
- 120 financial members

Completed major projects include:

- Walk along Meadow Creek with interpretive signs (2015)
- "Tussock Tamers" (2010 - 2015)
- Southern Pygmy Perch signage and habitat improvements at Fossil Park/Oolong Creek (2016 - 2023)
- "Mates of Mundoonen" koala surveying (2020-2022)

Major projects which continue to be active:

- "Mates of Mundoonen" – ongoing bird surveying
- Feral Fox Fighters – a Gunning District initiative now run by LLS, ongoing promotion by GDL
- Gunning Showground Ecological Park – major transformation completed but GDL will still be involved
- Southern Pygmy Perch Farm Dams – a register of dams and aquatic plants to ensure the breeding of "insurance" populations

Priority Areas of Focus 2026-2029

1. Threatened species

Work with community, scientists, partners and relevant agencies by commissioning, designing and/or implementing conservation strategies for locally threatened species.

2. Biodiversity and landscape function

Collaborate with landholders to plant climate-ready vegetation that will increase biodiversity and landscape function and contribute to the conservation and enhancement of local natural areas, including in towns.



3. Pests and weeds

Work closely with landholders and relevant agencies on biosecurity threats, and provide advocacy, communication and education surrounding pests and weeds to increase the effectiveness and uptake of eradication strategies.

4. Aboriginal Partnerships

Build relationships and connections with local Aboriginal groups and communities, and encourage increased participation and partnership opportunities.

5. Volunteers and members

Maintain support for and acknowledge the value of volunteers and members and the importance of their safety and wellbeing, and build their skills, capacity and shared knowledge.

6. Public education and engagement

Hold relevant forums and hands-on workshops, and school holiday programs for young people, to facilitate sharing of information, knowledge and resources.

7. Partnerships

Build on and nurture existing fruitful partnerships, as well as establish new ones in order to increase our ability and capacity to deliver on-ground initiatives and activities.

8. Promotion and advocacy

Build awareness of GDL with our community, government, partners and stakeholders by regularly communicating and promoting our purpose and activities, and highlighting community-led achievements, through in-person, online and social media presence.

9. Operational sustainability

Seek funding through grants from State and Federal Government departments and agencies, and from philanthropic foundations, and other similar bodies to expand our impact on the ground. Work closely with South East Landcare to secure ongoing funding through the NSW Government's Landcare Enabling Program to support Gunning District Landcare's part-time coordinator, a professional role that is critically important to our impact and success.

10. Governance

With energy, leadership and clarity of focus, ensure that Gunning District Landcare's organisational structures are healthy and can sustain our actions, maintain full accountability and discharge our Constitutional responsibilities in a professional manner.

By 2029

Our Strategic Plan will guide our efforts to achieve key outcomes over the coming years, including:

- Securing sustained funding for the Southern Pygmy Perch initiative, Coordinator funding, and School Holiday Program
- Improving our communications of our impact in context. We may not have as many volunteers as the urban Landcare networks, but we support landholders who collectively manage thousands of hectares.
- Better communicating our legacy and who we are to our community and external partners (including government).



- Growing our membership with stronger engagement (members and volunteers) and having succession planning underway
- Committing to maintaining what we have built.
- Investing in relationships with partners and keeping existing projects/documents/relationships alive (including the SPP Action Plan, Upper Lachlan Habitat Connectivity Prioritisation Plan, Showground bush block, and personal relationships within Aboriginal community).
- Being known as a group that pioneers ideas and concepts, that is nimble in our response to new and existing challenges, and that is keen to share with other Landcare groups interested in adapting our concepts or projects within their own contexts.

Refer to the GDL Priority Areas of Focus and Activities 2026-2029 for more detail regarding ongoing and planned GDL initiatives and projects.