

Householders' Options to Protect the Environment (HOPE) Inc. (Australia)

Caring for Our Land and Wildlife:

A Connected Approach to Environmental Stewardship in Australia



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Table of Contents

Introduction	3
State & Territory Conservation Councils	4
Landcare and Community Stewardship	6
Wildlife, Conservation Groups and Protected Areas	9
Supporting Community Action	10
The HOPE Perspective	11
Looking Ahead: Strengthening Environmental Stewardship	12
Conclusion	12



Introduction

Connecting Land, Wildlife and Community Stewardship Across Australia



[Householders' Options to Protect the Environment \(HOPE\) Inc. \(Australia\)](#) recognises that caring for Australia's environment requires both strong policy frameworks and active community participation. Environmental stewardship is not limited to managing land alone. It involves protecting wildlife, conserving habitats, and sustaining the ecosystems that support biodiversity across the country.

Across every State and Territory, Conservation Councils contribute through advocacy, policy engagement, and public awareness, helping to shape environmental decision-making at multiple levels. At the same time, Landcare organisations and community groups lead practical, on-ground restoration and stewardship efforts, ensuring that environmental action is grounded in local knowledge and long-term community commitment.

These combined efforts reflect a broader understanding that environmental protection is most effective when policy, practice, and community engagement work together. As environmental pressures continue to grow, from climate change to biodiversity loss, the need for coordinated and sustained action becomes increasingly important.

Together, these efforts form a connected national framework that supports both the protection of natural systems and the conservation of biodiversity. This approach recognises that environmental challenges are complex and interconnected, and that meaningful solutions require collaboration across sectors, communities, and landscapes.

State & Territory Conservation Councils

Advocacy and Campaign Leadership



Environmental policy and advocacy play a key role in shaping sustainable futures across Australia.

State and Territory Conservation Councils operate as independent peak environmental advocacy organisations, representing community environmental interests in public policy and legislative processes. Their work ensures that environmental standards are not only maintained, but strengthened in response to emerging challenges.

In Queensland, advocacy efforts have centred on renewable energy policy, vegetation management, and environmental assessment processes. The [Queensland Conservation Council](#) (QCC) has engaged in public discussion surrounding key energy transition plans, including the [Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan](#) and broader efforts to accelerate renewable energy deployment. Queensland has committed to significant renewable energy targets and energy system transformation, marking a substantial shift toward cleaner energy generation. It continues to participate in debates regarding land clearing regulation and environmental approvals for major developments. Through submissions and public engagement, it contributes to ongoing scrutiny of how policy decisions affect climate emissions, habitat protection, and the state's transition toward clean energy.

In New South Wales, the [Nature Conservation Council](#) has been deeply involved in public debate surrounding native forest logging reform and climate commitments. Recent reforms to native forest management and increased public scrutiny of biodiversity protections reflect sustained advocacy efforts within the state. Its work has contributed to discussions on forestry transitions and biodiversity protection, alongside ongoing scrutiny of environmental planning frameworks and state-level emissions reduction pathways.

Victoria's advocacy landscape has centred on legislated climate action, including clearly defined [climate action targets](#) that guide state-level emissions reduction pathways and accountability. Victoria has legislated binding emissions reduction targets and committed to net zero emissions by 2045, positioning the state as a national leader in climate governance. [Environment Victoria](#) has played a key role in supporting the state's emissions reduction targets, including renewable energy expansion, electricity transmission reform, and household electrification initiatives designed to reduce both emissions and energy costs.

In Western Australia, attention has focused on environmental assessment and accountability in resource development. The [Conservation Council of Western Australia](#) continues to engage in discussions relating to [Environmental Protection Authority](#) reform and the scrutiny of major industrial and gas proposals. Increased public examination of major resource developments and stronger climate considerations within project assessments reflect growing accountability in environmental approvals processes.

[South Australia's Conservation Council](#) has remained active in water policy discussions, particularly in relation to [Murray–Darling Basin](#) reform and water allocation frameworks, while also contributing to renewable energy and coastal protection initiatives. South Australia's continued leadership in renewable energy generation demonstrates how sustained advocacy can align environmental protection with energy transition goals. In Tasmania, [Environment Tasmania](#) continues its longstanding advocacy on native forest management and biodiversity protection. Public policy frameworks now include the permanent reservation of over 1 million hectares of [old growth forest](#), reflecting the long standing public debate over forest conservation and sustainable management.

Within the ACT, the [Conservation Council ACT Region](#) contributes to sustainable urban planning and climate adaptation strategies, reflecting the Territory's strong climate policy agenda. The ACT's legislated climate commitments and investment in renewable energy infrastructure represent some of the most ambitious subnational climate actions in Australia. Meanwhile, the [Environment Centre NT](#) remains engaged in policy submissions and advocacy relating to hydraulic fracturing regulation, water security, and environmental safeguards across remote and regional areas, ensuring that environmental risks associated with resource extraction remain subject to public scrutiny.

Across jurisdictions, these Conservation Councils translate community concern into structured policy engagement. Through submissions, campaigns, and legislative scrutiny, they help shape environmental law, regulatory standards, and long-term environmental governance across Australia.

Landcare and Community Stewardship

Community-led Environmental Action

Community-led action plays a vital role in restoring and protecting Australia's natural environments. Alongside policy and advocacy, practical on-ground stewardship is essential to maintaining healthy landscapes and resilient ecosystems.

Queensland Water and Land Carers (QWaLC)



Community-led action plays a vital role in restoring and protecting local environments.

[Queensland Water and Land Carers](#) (QWaLC) serves as the peak representative body for community-based Landcare and watercare groups across Queensland. As an incorporated association, it focuses on supporting, coordinating, and representing grassroots environmental stewardship organisations.

Unlike Conservation Councils, which primarily engage in policy advocacy, QWaLC strengthens the capacity of local groups to deliver practical environmental outcomes. By facilitating collaboration, sharing knowledge, and promoting best practice land and water management, it ensures that community experience informs broader natural resource management discussions.

Through volunteer-led projects across Queensland, Landcare groups contribute to habitat restoration, soil conservation, improved water quality, and increased landscape resilience. This work reflects the importance of local knowledge and long-term community commitment in environmental protection.

Interstate Landcare Peak Bodies



Community networks across Australia support large-scale environmental restoration and stewardship.

Similar Landcare peak organisations operate in every state and territory, including [Landcare NSW](#), [Landcare Victoria](#), the [WA Landcare Network](#), the [Landcare Association of South Australia](#), [Landcare Tasmania](#), [Landcare NT](#), and [ACT Landcare](#).

These organisations provide coordination, capacity building, and representation for thousands of volunteers and community groups. Their work ensures that local environmental efforts are supported, connected, and aligned with regional and national priorities.

In addition to these networks, a range of organisations also support Landcare initiatives across Australia, including [Farmers for Climate Action](#), [Biosecurity Australia](#), [PestSmart](#), [FeralScan](#), the [Australian Network for Plant Conservation](#) (ANPC), and [Intrepid Landcare](#). They contribute to research, education, and practical tools that support environmental management at both local and national levels.

Landcare also reflects a broader cultural understanding of stewardship. Across Australia, community-led action continues to be guided by a simple but enduring principle: when we care for the land, the land takes care of us. This principle guides environmental efforts across the country and underpins actions to protect, restore, and sustain the places we depend on, not only for today, but for generations to come.

This perspective also highlights the evolving role of Landcare in supporting communities, strengthening partnerships, and responding to emerging environmental challenges. Building on this foundation, Landcare continues to evolve through a range of initiatives and partnerships that enhance its impact and relevance, and is also supported through a wide range of volunteering opportunities that strengthen community engagement and environmental outcomes. These include corporate volunteering programs, which provide both practical support and potential funding pathways, as well as citizen science initiatives that enable individuals to contribute to environmental monitoring and data collection.

Partnerships further enhance the effectiveness of Landcare activities. Collaboration between community groups, environmental organisations, and networks such as [Friends of the Escarpment Parks](#) helps build local capacity through education, shared knowledge, and collective action. These partnerships play a key role in strengthening long-term environmental stewardship.

At the same time, Landcare activities also contribute to broader global and national priorities, including alignment with the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#), particularly those related to

climate action, life on land, and sustainable communities. Biosecurity is another critical aspect of Landcare, recognising the importance of maintaining healthy environments, landscapes, and communities. Managing threats such as invasive pest plants and animals requires a balanced approach, including biological control methods alongside careful consideration of chemical use.

Landcare groups also respond to a range of environmental challenges, including droughts, floods, bushfires, soil salinity, erosion, and habitat loss. Efforts such as establishing wildlife corridors are increasingly important in supporting biodiversity and ecosystem resilience. Emerging approaches such as regenerative agriculture are becoming more prominent within Landcare as a way to restore soil health, improve biodiversity, and support sustainable food systems. This reflects a broader shift away from monoculture cropping towards more integrated and resilient agroecosystems.

Looking ahead, the future of Landcare as a movement will depend on continued community engagement, strong partnerships, and the ability to adapt to evolving environmental challenges. Its strength lies in its ability to connect people, knowledge, and action at the local level, while contributing to national and global environmental goals.

Wildlife, Conservation Groups and Protected Areas

Protecting Biodiversity and Ecosystems



Protecting Australia's landscapes and wildlife requires coordinated conservation across multiple levels.

Caring for Australia's environment requires protecting both natural landscapes and the wildlife that depends on them. This involves a coordinated system of protected areas, national organisations, and community-based conservation efforts working across land, water, and ecosystems.

Protected Areas and Conservation Frameworks

Australia's conservation system is supported by an extensive network of protected areas. National and state parks, reserves, and conservation areas play a critical role in safeguarding habitats and maintaining biodiversity. These protected landscapes provide long-term security for native species and ecological systems.

National park associations also contribute to this effort through advocacy, education, and community engagement, helping to strengthen the management and protection of these important areas.

Nature refuges and privately managed conservation areas further strengthen this framework by preserving ecologically significant environments. In addition, wetlands listed under the [Ramsar Convention](#) are internationally recognised for their importance in supporting migratory birds, aquatic ecosystems, and biodiversity.

At a broader scale, organisations such as the [Australian Marine Conservation Society](#) contribute to the protection of marine ecosystems, highlighting the strong connection between land, water, and ocean environments. Collectively, these frameworks reinforce the importance of integrated environmental management across Australia.

Wildlife and Fauna Conservation Efforts

Alongside landscape protection, a wide range of organisations focus specifically on wildlife conservation and species protection.

Zoos and wildlife sanctuaries contribute significantly to conservation breeding programs, species recovery initiatives, and public education. These institutions help raise awareness while actively contributing to the protection of threatened species.

Specialist organisations, such as the [Australasian Bat Society \(ABS\)](#), support research and conservation efforts for specific species, drawing attention to wildlife that is often overlooked but ecologically important.

Wildlife carers and volunteer networks, including [WIRES](#) and similar organisations across Australia, provide essential rescue, rehabilitation, and release services for injured and displaced animals. Their work reflects the critical role of community participation in protecting native fauna.

Together, these efforts demonstrate that environmental stewardship extends beyond land management alone. Protecting wildlife, preserving habitats, and supporting biodiversity are essential to maintaining healthy and resilient ecosystems.

Supporting Community Action

Everyday Actions for Environmental Stewardship



Everyday actions play an important role in supporting broader environmental outcomes.

While government policy and industry initiatives are important, meaningful environmental change also depends on the choices made by individuals and communities. Everyday actions, when taken collectively, can significantly reduce waste, conserve resources, and support more sustainable systems.

Practical steps may include using available take-back and recycling services, reducing consumption and avoiding unnecessary waste, choosing products that support responsible production and recovery, and

sharing knowledge to encourage others to act. These actions help translate environmental awareness into tangible outcomes.

A simple and practical starting point is [Planet Ark – Recycling Near You](#). This online service allows households to search by item and postcode to find nearby recycling and take-back options, making it easier for individuals to make environmentally responsible choices in their daily lives.

The HOPE Perspective

A Stewardship-Based Approach to Environmental Protection



Environmental stewardship begins with a commitment to protect natural systems that sustain life.

Householders' Options to Protect the Environment Inc. (HOPE) advocates for responsible and sustainable environmental stewardship. From this perspective, environmental protection should focus first on preventing harm, rather than relying primarily on measures after damage has already occurred.

While policy tools such as environmental offsets may offer a way to address certain unavoidable impacts, they represent only a limited approach. They cannot replace the fundamental responsibility to safeguard ecosystems before they are damaged. Natural systems are complex and often fragile, and once degraded, they may be difficult or impossible to fully restore.

For HOPE, effective environmental protection requires a balanced approach that combines strong policy frameworks, informed decision-making, and active community participation. This includes prioritising the avoidance and minimisation of environmental harm, supporting responsible resource use, and encouraging practical action at both institutional and individual levels.

Ultimately, caring for the environment is about stewardship. It is about recognising our shared responsibility to protect the land, wildlife, and ecosystems that support life, and taking meaningful action to ensure their long-term health and resilience.

Looking Ahead: Strengthening Environmental Stewardship

A Connected Framework for the Future



Collaboration across communities and organisations strengthens environmental protection.

Australia's environmental governance system relies on complementary roles working in partnership. Conservation Councils advocate for stronger policy and regulatory reform. Landcare peak bodies coordinate and represent community networks. Grassroots Landcare groups deliver practical restoration and stewardship on the ground, while national and regional organisations provide strategic alignment across landscapes.

For HOPE, understanding and supporting this interconnected framework is essential. Effective environmental protection requires both informed advocacy and sustained community stewardship. As environmental pressures intensify, from climate change to biodiversity loss, collaboration between advocacy bodies and community networks becomes increasingly important.

Caring for our land is a shared responsibility that connects volunteers, advocates, policymakers, and communities across Australia. Through continued engagement, constructive policy dialogue, and practical environmental action, we strengthen our collective ability to protect the ecosystems that sustain life.

Conclusion

Caring for Australia's land and wildlife requires a shared commitment across communities, organisations, and policymakers. Through a combination of informed advocacy, community participation, and practical action, we strengthen our collective ability to protect the ecosystems that sustain life.

Across the country, Conservation Councils, Landcare networks, and conservation organisations each play a distinct but connected role. Together, they form a framework that supports both environmental protection and long-term stewardship.

As environmental pressures continue to grow, maintaining this balance between policy, community action, and conservation will be increasingly important. By continuing to work together, Australia can strengthen environmental protection and resilience, ensuring that landscapes, wildlife, and ecosystems remain healthy and resilient into the future.