



2018 NATIONAL LANDCARE AWARDS

11 October
Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre

Nominee: Kathleen Brack, VIC

Category: Austcover Young Landcare Leader Award

Kathleen Brack is the regional Landcare program officer for the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority (WGCMA). After just three years in the role, Kathleen has changed the way the Landcare story is being told in the region; creating new messages and finding innovative ways to engage with her community.

Keen to attract more young people to Landcare, Kathleen ran an Intrepid Landcare retreat at Wilsons Promontory for 20 people aged 18 to 35. The participants learnt about Landcare, talked, hiked, and worked with the local friends group. Graduates from the retreat have gone on to form the Gippsland Intrepid Landcare Group.

Kathleen has demonstrated how social media can benefit Landcare. In just a year as administrator of the Landcare in Victoria Facebook page she has increased its following by 35 per cent. A podcast she produces that tells the stories of Landcare in West Gippsland was selected as a new and noteworthy podcast by iTunes Australia.

With the aim of explaining the social and community benefits of Landcare, Kathleen recently conducted a social return on investment study on a Merriman Creek Landcare Group project. This study found that for every dollar spent on a Landcare project, there is at least a \$3.41 return in social value. Kathleen has also driven the implementation of a new iPad mapping system for the five Landcare networks in Gippsland, and has organised a huge number of workshops, training courses and field days. Kathleen's energy and enthusiasm are infectious. She is an impressive role model and a true young Landcare leader.

As part of her role as a project officer for the South Gippsland Landcare Network, Kathleen has also been at the cutting edge of managing and inspiring Landcare groups. In order to capture a segment of landholders that were traditionally not represented in Landcare groups Kathleen was a driving force in the creation of the South Gippsland Equine Landcare Group. She assisted in consulting with the community on the type of support horse owners in South Gippsland would prefer, empowering the public to take on the group.

Kathleen has displayed tremendous leadership in encouraging others to undertake natural resource management activities. She has done this through extensive promotion and education campaigns. Kathleen developed the South Gippsland Landcare Network Koala Habitat Preservation Enhancement and Restoration Plan 2012-2015, which included not only bio link planning, but a large community engagement component.

Kathleen has championed a range of Landcare-associated initiatives. She has organised two Landcare Green Carpet events; a gala celebrating and showcasing Landcare in Gippsland (in 2015 and 2017).

This program is supported by Landcare Australia and the National Landcare Network, through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program.



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In the last three years, Kathleen has delivered \$546,000 worth of on-ground works across West Gippsland as part of the Victoria Landcare Grants. These works include; stock-proof fencing for remnant and revegetation works, planting of indigenous plants and seeds, and invasive plant and animal control.

Facing many hurdles in her quest to promote Landcare and natural resource management practices, Kathleen's greatest challenge has been the need to attract young people to Landcare. Facebook has been instrumental to create an online network of young people interested in Landcare in West Gippsland, where followers are able to share job opportunities, information on relevant field days, and feature case studies highlighting their concerns and barriers to adaptation.

Another challenge has been overcoming a negative perception from traditional farmers on Landcare and increasing their take-up of Landcare practices. She has overcome this by understanding the barriers of uptake of Landcare by these farmers, then in order to engage them, changing where extension activities occurred. This included hosting a stall at the Pakenham Saleyards and the South Gippsland Dairy Expo, and changing the message to focus more on the production and monetary benefits of Landcare work.

Landcare is a grassroots movement that harnesses individuals and groups to protect, restore and sustainably manage Australia's natural environment and its productivity. Groups that fall under the Landcare umbrella work on a diverse range of environmental projects and include farmers embracing sustainable farm management and any community group that partakes in volunteer environmental activities. To find out how you can become a Landcare volunteer and for full details on all 2018 National Landcare finalists, visit www.landcareaustralia.org.au

Ends

For further information, photographs or interviews contact:

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Web Summary

Kathleen Brack is the regional Landcare program officer for the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority. After just three years in the role Kathleen has changed the way the Landcare story is being told in the region. She has created new messages and found innovative ways of engaging with her community. Keen to attract more young people to Landcare, Kathleen ran an Intrepid Landcare Retreat at Wilsons Promontory for 20 people aged 18 to 35. The participants learnt about Landcare, talked, hiked and worked with the local friends group. Graduates from the retreat have gone on to form the Gippsland Intrepid Landcare Group.

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