



Challenges for a sustainable Island

Back in 2003, some visionary Phillip Island Landcare group members started the Urban Landcare program with the aims of spreading the message of Landcare into residential areas, reducing the spread of weeds and pest animals, reversing negative attitudes towards using indigenous plants in urban landscaping, and reducing the use of natural resources.

Since then, over 200 members have joined the program and have access to services such as a free site visit to their garden for advice, a voucher for 30 indigenous plants, information on weed and pest control, and newsletters and invitations to events and seminars – all for a low annual membership fee of \$37.50.

Local partner Westernport Water has been there from the start of the program and in the 2012/13 financial year will be the main funding partner of the program. Urban Landcare Facilitator Lisa Wangman commented: "We are looking forward to continued assistance from the Corporation and access to their vast range of services and knowledge to bring some fantastic water-conservation events to the community during this time."

The long-running, successful Urban Landcare events program, the "Practical Sustainability Seminar Series", will continue with this help and support. Past events have focused on options for redirecting water in your garden, household water and energy efficiency, habitat gardening for wildlife, garden design for diversity, creating a garden for living, turning trash into treasure, and discovering local food. Environmental movie nights, and tours of sustainable homes and Urban Landcare Award-winning gardens have also been popular program inclusions.

Urban Landcare is committed to delivering a series of events and tours over the next 12 months, with a specific focus on creative design, showing real-life examples, and taking the jargon out of technical advice with easy-to-understand, engaging speakers and presentations. Look out for event details in local media.

Many Urban Landcare members have been working hard to reduce their impact on our local environment and have been rewarded for their efforts in the annual 'Urban Landcare Garden Awards'. Previous winner Leela Maki of Ventnor, had installed rainwater tank watering systems for her food garden, refuses to water her native and indigenous ornamental garden, and uses truckloads of mulch to ensure that moisture is conserved in the soil so the plants can survive. "If it can't survive on natural rainfall then it won't be living in my garden", says Leela.

Another proud achievement of the Urban Landcare Program is the production of the 'Sustainable Phillip Island' brochure made possible with assistance from local partners including Westernport Water and the Victorian Government Sustainability Fund. The brochure contains;

- a vision for sustainability on Phillip Island
- the core sustainability principles
- a brief history of sustainability achievements across the island
- Urban Landcare Members experiences
- a call to action for residents and references for further information

Officially launched in September 2011, this brochure is available at a number of local outlets including Westernport Water and the Bass Coast Shire Council office in Cowes.



For more information on how to get involved in Urban Landcare, please contact facilitator Lisa Wangman on 5951 3329, 0409 366 914 or l.wangman@basscoast.vic.gov.au

