



Facilitator Guidelines

About the VNPA

The Victorian National Parks Association is an effective and influential nature conservation organisation. We've led the creation, oversight and defence of Victoria's natural estate for over 70 years. We advocate for evidence-based policy to safeguard wildlife, habitat and protected areas. We inspire connections with nature through citizen science, activities, community action and education.

We are an independent, non-profit, non-government, and membership-based charity.

About the Nature Stewards Program

Nature Stewards is an engaging and practical program for participants to get comfortable, confident and active around their home and in their local environment, and to develop on-going connections with nature and their community. It is centred around three main goals of 1) environmental literacy and stewardship, 2) participation via volunteering and private property actions, and 3) community connection and wellbeing. The audience for this introductory program is community members over the age of 18, who are interested in learning about their local environment, getting involved in environmental volunteering actions, meeting others, professional development, and/or considering a change of career.

The program was initiated in Victoria in 2017, with inspiration and advice from the well-established Master Naturalist programs in the USA. Two pilot courses were run at the start of 2019, to date over 30 courses have now been hosted across 20 Local Government Areas. A standard program consists of 10 x 3 hr weekly classes, with 4 - 6 x 4 hr field sessions, totalling 36 - 46 hrs basic training. Delivery is face to face, unless required to be online, delivered via Zoom. Typically, programs are run seasonally in autumn and spring, however, programs may run outside of these periods. They generally occur on Saturdays, with field sessions following class on given days. Some LGA's prefer weekday or weeknight delivery, this would be negotiated if and when these requests arise.

More information:

- [Nature Stewards](#)
- [Victorian National Parks Association](#)
- [Alliance of Natural Resource Outreach and Service Programs \(ANROSP\)](#)

Vision

A vibrant community throughout Victoria of well-informed and trained citizens, actively engaged in conserving, observing, and interpreting nature.

Mission

The Nature Stewards program promotes environmental literacy and stewardship of nature through discovery, action, and ongoing learning. The program directly supports participants in training and volunteering, thereby generating benefits for the wider community and the environment.

Aims

- Provide members of the community with fundamental knowledge of their local ecosystems, principles of environmental management, and ways to engage and share nature experiences
- Learn from local First Nations communities which have multi-dimensional approaches to health and well-being based on connection to Country, science, spiritual and traditional knowledge and practices
- Provide an engaging introductory program to facilitate wider sharing and continued ecological learning in informal and/or formal settings
- To support more Victorians to get more active, more often, with the additional social, physical, mental, and spiritual health benefits of spending time and being active in natural settings, in line with the DELWP Protecting Victoria's environment - Biodiversity 2037 Strategy, 2017 Memorandum for Health and Nature, and Parks Victoria Healthy Parks Healthy People approach

To engage and excite participants with the wonder and significance of nature and give an overview of the contemporary strategy and future vision for the state from key Victorian environmental management organisations. Together with introducing opportunities for participants to engage in environmental volunteering, including citizen science, land management and on-ground works, and nature interpretation.

Facilitator Responsibilities

The Facilitator's responsibilities include:

- Teach the content provided by VNPA for the agreed number of sessions (oral delivery, PowerPoint, written materials for participants)
- Facilitate the group in theory sessions & practical in-class activities, facilitate weekly guest presenter/s and other activities as required
- Maintain a welcoming and friendly class environment, support the participants to discover, learn, and participate at their own level of comfort and capability
- Encourage and support participants to engage with and meet others in the group
- Encourage participants to try local environmental volunteering groups or citizen science projects, together with at-home actions in support of the environment
- Undertake program work on weekends
- Travel, depending on program/s location (optional). Upon accepting a program further afield, travel/fuel allowance may apply¹)
- Take part in additional training, where required (e.g. Childsafe if working in schools)
- Other related tasks as required from time to time by the Nature Stewards Coordinator or Community Learning and Engagement Manager team.

¹ Our facilitators ideally deliver program/s that are within their geographic area. However, they may be offered the option of running a program/s further afield subject to discussion with the Coordinator.

Required contract hours

The typical presentation of the 10-session program is one three-hour session per week, with an additional paid two hours of preparation per session (this includes any set up/pack down of the classroom on the day). The Facilitator may also be involved in one or more of the field sessions. Programs typically run over 10 – 12 weeks, depending on public holidays (no sessions run on public holidays). There may be other variations of the program offered, subject to agreement between the host organisation, the facilitator and the Executive Director (Community Learning and Engagement Manager) of the VNPA. Prior to commencing a program, there will likely be a requirement to attend meetings, induction training, class observation, and class venue induction/s.

General conditions

As a contractor, facilitators are required to:

- Act in accordance with the VNPA Code of Conduct (see below)
- Observe relevant OH&S procedures and organisational policies and procedures
- Work collaboratively with all staff, volunteers and contractors
- Support a child safe organisation by being respectful to children and young people and to comply with relevant legislative requirements.

VNPA Code of Conduct

VNPA contractors must, in the course of VNPA activities:

1. behave honestly and with integrity;
2. act with care and diligence;
3. treat everyone with respect and courtesy and without harassment;
4. comply with all applicable Australian laws;
5. comply with any lawful and reasonable direction given with authority of Council;
6. respect the operation of any current enterprise bargaining agreement with staff;
7. maintain appropriate confidentiality;
8. disclose, and take reasonable steps to avoid, any conflict of interest (real or apparent);
9. use VNPA resources in a proper manner;
10. not provide false or misleading information in response to a request for information that is made for official purposes;
11. not make improper use of:
 - inside information, or
 - VNPA duties, status, power or authority, in order to gain, or seek to gain, a benefit or advantage for any person(s)
12. at all times behave in a way that upholds the VNPA's values and the integrity and good reputation of the VNPA; and
13. comply with any other conduct requirement that is prescribed by the Council.

Diversity & Inclusion

We respect and value the diversity of our workforce/staff/contractors. We are committed to creating an environment that values a diverse range of views, knowledge and experiences and uses these to maximise our impact. We welcome applications from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, workers of all ages, people with disabilities and people who identify as LGBTIQ+.

Further information

For enquiries please contact the Nature Stewards Coordinator e.naturestewards@vnpa.org.au.
p. 0400036826