

Parklands Albury Wodonga Ltd

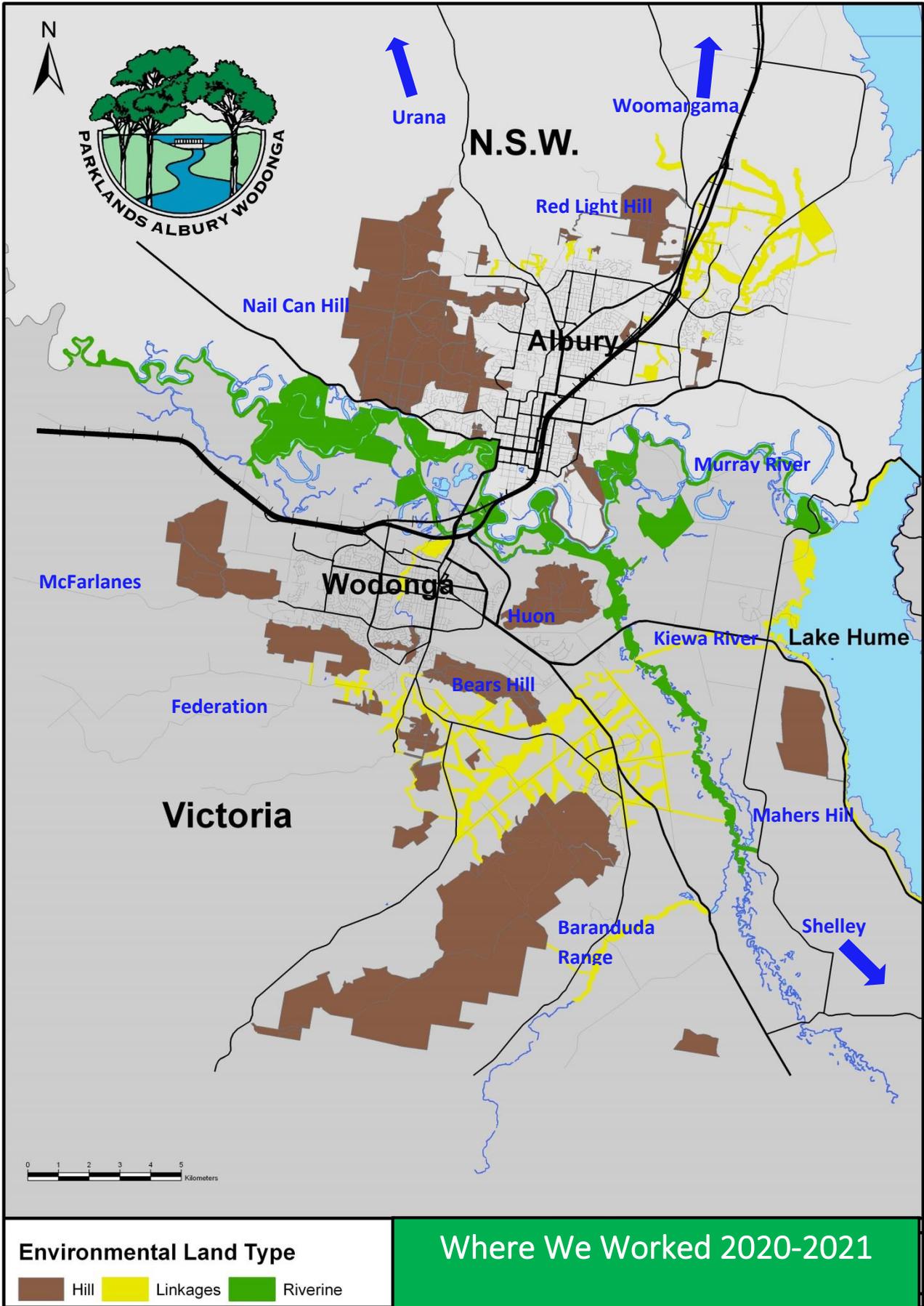
ANNUAL REPORT

Year Ending 30th June 2021



*Bush parks and trails
connecting community...*





PARKLANDS ALBURY WODONGA LTD

2021 Annual Report to the
Albury Wodonga regional community

CONTENTS

PARKLANDS VISION	5
CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY	6
OPERATIONS REPORT	7
OBJECT 1: OPTIMISE BIODIVERSITY	9
OBJECT 2: EDUCATE THE REGIONAL COMMUNITY	10
OBJECT 3: PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR VOLUNTEERS	11
OBJECT 4: MAINTAIN A PUBLIC FUND	12
OBJECT 5: INTERNATIONAL BEST PRACTICE MANAGEMENT	12
OBJECT 6: INVOLVE THE COMMUNITY	14
OBJECT 7: FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE	15
PARKLANDS OBJECTS	16
PARKLANDS BOARD OF DIRECTORS	17
PARKLANDS STAFF	18

Parklands Vision

Our bush reserves and trails will have a high standard of biodiversity and natural values, achieved by empowering community participation and partnerships.

Purpose

Restore, improve and maintain the network of bush parks connecting urban and rural communities.

We encourage community learning and engagement with the local natural environment.

Guiding Values

Our People - learning and growth. We place to the forefront: healthy, inclusive and connected communities.

Our Planet - healthy and biodiverse. We create habitat and improve biodiversity, through connected landscape scale environmental restoration.

Our Parks - natural and connected. We restore regional bush parks within a network that provides complementary uses built on an ethos of naturalness.

Our Prosperity for all - sharing resources. We adopt a social enterprise model: sustainability through shared vision, resources and partnerships.



Realising Our Vision

In working across the public lands, along streams and within and beyond urban areas of Albury, Wodonga, Indigo, Federation, Towong and Greater Hume local government areas, Parklands realise our vision through:

Our Approach. Our decisions are guided by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. We facilitate, collaborate and empower communities to restore and enhance the connectivity of parks, trails and facilities.

Our Resources. Our greatest resource is the people of the region especially the caring and energetic volunteers. Paramount is the fostering through educative means the link between our bush parks and their contribution towards improved physical and mental health and wellbeing of the region's people.

Our Partnerships. Partnering with businesses, organisations, community groups and the three levels of government to deliver the best combination of financial and community outcomes within and between areas of public land.

Chairman's Report to the Community

"The difference between stumbling blocks and stepping stones is how you use them." – Unknown

Welcome to the 24th Annual Report covering the financial year to 30th June 2021.

Leading virtually

Face-to-face meetings were few during the past year as the Board of Directors piloted the organisation through pandemic, bushfire recovery and climate change impacts on all aspects of our outdoor workplace.

Our virtual meetings (via Webex, Zoom and Microsoft Teams) began with acknowledgement of country and of context. That is, Board members were reminded that the times in which we live call on us all to understand that everything we do, and every decision we make, has the power to make a difference.

Shift in strategic direction

In times of crisis, there is a need for a bold vision to plan for and create the legacy we want to leave for future generations.

*"Have great hopes and dare to go all out for them.
Have great dreams and dare to live them.
Have tremendous expectations and believe in them."
- Norman Vincent Peale*

A new Strategic Plan 2031 was developed over a series of face-to-face meetings earlier this year together with a three-year Business Plan to put this Strategy into action. Staff have been working on action plans to deliver this at various regional parks.

We thank landholders and the regional community for their input to surveys and face-to-face meetings, that have guided the strategic planning sessions.

Delivering virtually all our 2031 Strategic Plan

Partnerships and collaborations with community, business and government stakeholders that have endured for over two decades are the key reason for recent successes in securing significant economic stimulus investment for projects on the Murray River, McFarlanes Hill, Baranduda through to the Upper Murray on the High Country Rail Trail.

"We are the last generation that can take steps to avoid the worst impacts of climate change" - Ban Ki-moon, UN

We are grateful for the opportunity to partner with our regional communities to deliver on these strategic projects over the coming year, as we all seek to do our bit to help nature and community adapt to the changing climate.

Thank you to philanthropists The Ross Trust, Commonwealth Bank and community for investing in our community's aspirations and our planet's future.

Thank you to all three levels of Governments for their financial and in-kind support that has enabled our organisation to deliver on Strategic Plan goals and help nature adapt to a changing climate.

Virtually everyone connecting with nature

The doubling of patronage of our regional park nature trails over the past 18 months demonstrates just how important connecting with nature is for our physical and mental health and wellbeing, particularly during times of crisis.

More people connecting with nature and caring for nature means that together, we can create a healthy, climate adapted and biodiverse landscape and a more resilient and connected regional community.

Daryl Betteridge
Chairman



Operations Report

“If life were predictable it would cease to be life, and be without flavour” (Eleanor Roosevelt)

The past year has certainly brought with it many challenges. This has created opportunities to learn new skills and pivot in the way that we work to deliver more “virtual experiences” such as:

- Virtually no volunteers
- Virtual storytelling with signage projects
- Delivered events virtually with short videos
- Virtually everyone in Albury Wodonga out walking with big increases in patronage of trails and parks
- Volunteering adapted by travelling independently and registering online
- Virtually all of our 2031 Strategic Plans funded through environmental and park infrastructure stimulus package programs

Whilst all of our longer-term volunteer programs and partnerships were paused during the pandemic, we are grateful for the opportunity to share staff with our long-term partners. We shared a six months Working for Victoria Team with Trust for Nature, Landcare, North East Catchment Management Authority and Towong Shire Council.

We are grateful for Landcare Led Bushfire Recovery grants that enabled us to share a small Recovery Team with the Upper Murray Landcare Network, with three young staff employed for the next year to deliver on many of our 2031 Strategic Plan.

Lots of people ...

12 Friends Groups empowered

41 partner organizations cooperated

837 volunteers involved

\$560,802 volunteer hours contributed

119 learnt new skills

481 felt happier or healthier

9 made changes in their lives



Below is a list of concrete actions that were delivered on the ground.

Lots of on ground outcomes...

11,500 native seedlings planted

6,520 woody weed stems removed

58,256 litres weeds sprayed

9km stock exclusion fences installed

38km fuel reduction firebreaks

256 nest-boxes installed or monitored

7 threatened species recovery projects

223km nature trails maintained

180 garden beds (community farm)



Lots of financial supporters...

Community Financial Partners:

Baranduda Landcare Group
 Bonegilla Rail Trail Advisory Group
 Community members
 Rotary Club of Albury Foundation
 Tallangatta Rail Trail Advisory Group
 The Ross Trust

Business Financial Partners:

Alpine Views Estate
 Albury Wodonga Commercial
 Barro Group
 Commonwealth Bank
 Neighbours (grazing license fees)
 Smart Air

Government Financial Partners:

Albury City Council
 City of Wodonga
 Dept. Agriculture (Vic)
 Dept. Environment, Land, Water & Planning (Vic)
 Dept. Environment & Energy (Aust)
 Dept. Industry (Aust)
 Dept. Premier & Cabinet (Vic)
 Multicultural Affairs NSW
 Murray Local Land Services
 North East Catchment Management Authority

OBJECT 1: Optimise biodiversity

Strategic Objectives	What we delivered in partnership with others
Protect old growth trees	Funding was secured to fence and revegetate 20% of large blocks of which PAW is the Committee of Management. These corridors will prioritise protecting large trees.
Deliver pest plant and pest animal programs	<p>3 steep gullies of Tree of Heaven were cut & poisoned and 90% of blackberry sites sprayed at a large Bush for Birds project site in Baranduda Regional Park.</p> <p>Blackberries along all riparian frontages were followed up as well as previous Black Willow removal sites on the Lower Kiewa River. The wet summer meant the volume of this work was significant compared to usual years.</p> <p>Our Albury Park Stewardship program delivered significant volumes of environmental woody weed removal across most of the Albury Environmental lands with regular monthly working bees at Eastern Hill, Norris Ridge, Thurgoona corridors and Red Light Hill.</p> <p>Our feral animal volunteer network continued to control rabbit, fox, deer & pig issues as these were identified.</p>
Create connected habitat corridors	<p>Connected corridors were created with stock exclusion fencing and revegetation at Gateway Island, Bullioh, Travellers Creek, Kiewa River and Beetoomba.</p> <p>Funds were secured to continue this stock exclusion work along Wodonga Creek, Murray River floodplains, Koetong, Beetoomba, Shelley, Swainsona and McFarlanes Hill. Thank you to local suppliers for their significant support with bulk purchase of 10km of fencing materials. It will certainly be another busy year with three additional staff employed to help deliver these works, and work alongside volunteers and partners!</p>
Provide and protect habitat for threatened fauna	<p>256 nest-boxes installed or monitored for Squirrel Gliders. Our Nest-box Network volunteers continued to monitor and maintain these nest-boxes. Wodonga Mens Shed fabricated 170 nest-boxes that were installed across Nail Can Hill and Ryans Lagoon Wetlands. A recent Landcare Led Bushfire Recovery has seen both Wodonga and Thurgoona Men's Shed volunteers busy fabricating another 100 nest-boxes with a small pilot trialling different insulation materials.</p> <p>The significant increase in observed birds, bats and bees across Albury Wodonga since the Black Summer bushfires confirms the importance of extending environmental corridors to provide refuges for native animals whilst the burnt landscape recovers.</p> <p>Stock exclusion fences were installed for 5 threatened species recovery projects</p>

OBJECT 2: Educate the regional community

Strategic Objectives	What we delivered in partnership with others
Provide quality engagement activities that connect a broad cross section of the community with nature.	<p>8 Bush Park Explorer short videos were produced and launched through a series of Bush Getabout - Live Q&A with Ranger Dan Zoom sessions, due to ongoing Covid19 restrictions.</p> <p>Thank you to video presenters for their much valued time, including First Nations people, 6 local experts and 8 youths.</p>
Share stories about how to protect biodiversity and help nature adapt to a changing climate.	As Covid19 prevented planned guided nature based events, our focus shifted online with more than 50 website stories published during the past year, with some shared through partner organisation newsletters and local papers.
Share stories illustrating how to reduce our collective environmental footprint through recycling, repurposing, reusing.	11 stories published on website and e-newsletters over the past year.



OBJECT 3: Provide opportunities for volunteers

Strategic Objectives	What we delivered in partnership with others
<p>Deliver quality citizen science and park stewardship volunteer programs that build capacity understanding and on ground outcomes.</p>	<p>Our park stewardship volunteer programs were pivoted during the past year, with participants required to register online prior to the day and drive independently to each park, rather than travelling with our staff. This resulted in a much more diverse range of people volunteering than our regular programs.</p> <p>Many of our tailored volunteer programs were paused due to the difficulties of border crossings and ongoing restrictions. The wet spring and summer created a significant increase in workload with much less assistance available from partner organisations. It is at these times we appreciate just how generous people in this community have been over the past 22 years caring for our parks!</p> <p>Three regular volunteers were sponsored to complete Chemical Users Certificates.</p>
<p>Engage volunteers from a diversity of backgrounds</p>	<p>Thank you to the Multicultural Affairs NSW and Albury City Council for their financial support and time in considering 13 potential sites in Albury to establish another CALD managed community farm. Unfortunately planning controls meant this community aspiration could not be realised.</p> <p>The community farm on Gateway Island was doubled in size with another 100 gardeners, an extension of the irrigation and much needed upgrades to the water pressure. Any further extension of this community farm requires access to the adjoining City of Wodonga land.</p>
<p>Support internships</p>	<p>As and when Covid restrictions permitted, Wodonga Senior Secondary College VCAL students, TAFE and University students undertook their practicum hours.</p>
<p>Ensure safe and efficient delivery of all on ground works and activities</p>	<p>Thank you to the Rotary Club of Albury Foundation for their donation of fencing tools (motorised post driver and wire spinner) that has increased the efficiency that our staff, volunteers and Friends Groups as they installed fences across the regional parks.</p> <p>It is pleasing to report that workplace incidents, accidents and near misses during the past year were primarily a result of disturbing bees, wasps, ants and maggies.</p>



OBJECT 4: Maintain a public fund

Strategic Objectives	What we delivered during the year with partners
Public Fund Management Committee meet and approve environmental projects	Thank you to our Public Fund Management Committee’s John Watson, Dougald Frederick and Brian Harty for their valued time and expertise in reviewing and approving Public Fund projects. It is in response to this expertise that the Parklands Albury Wodonga Constitution was amended at a Special General Meeting on 17 August 2021 to better acknowledge and support First Nations people’s contribution towards traditional land management
Promote the Public Fund and share stories of projects	Participated in Our Community’s Giving Tuesday. During the year stories were published on philanthropist funded projects.
Fundraise to grow Public Fund	Thank you to Alpine Views Estate, The Ross Trust, Commonwealth Bank, Rotary Club of Albury Foundation and regular donors for their continued financial support. This philanthropic support enabled ongoing delivery of environmental outcomes as per our Strategic Plan 2031.



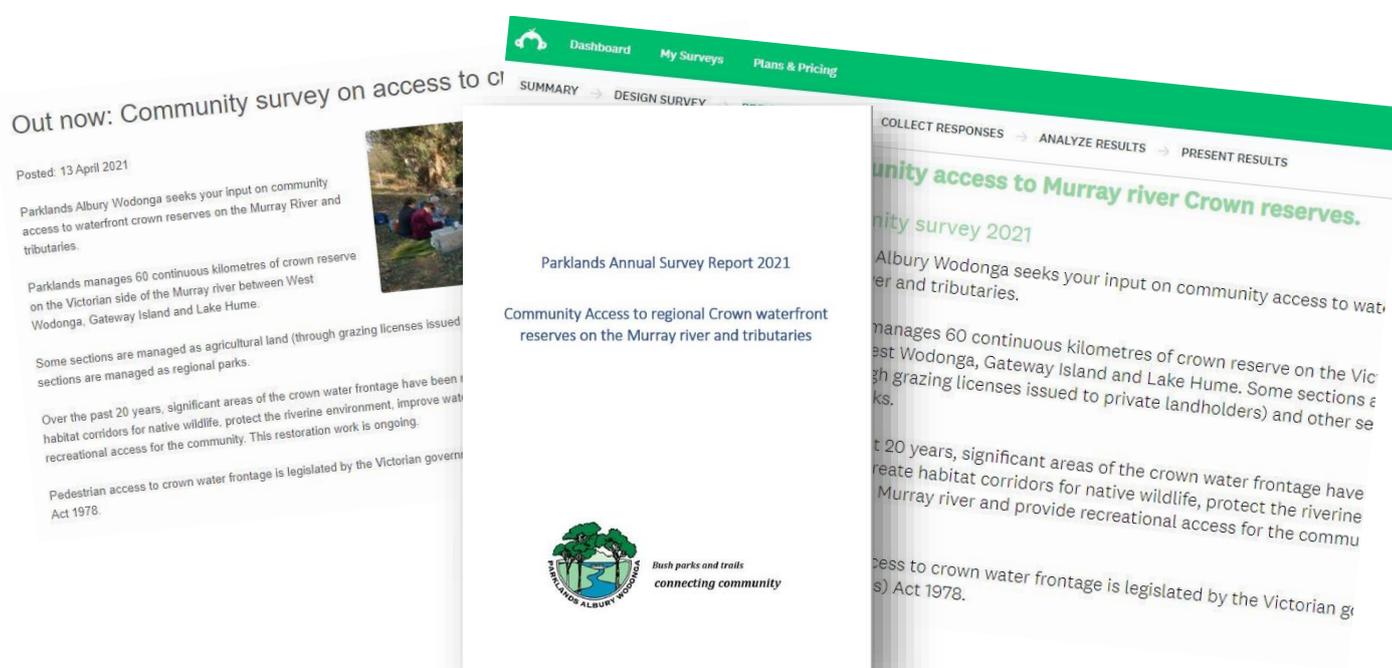
OBJECT 5: International best practice management

Strategic Objectives	What we delivered during the year with partners
Improve the visitor experience	<p>Thank you to the Commonwealth Bank and North East Catchment Management Authority for grants that have enabled wayfinding, track head and interpretive signs to be produced and installed across the entire Wodonga Regional Park network. Aluminium seating was installed to replace damaged timber seats, as part of our climate adaptation. Low level boardwalks were installed around Gateway Island, designed to be resilient to the increased severity floods and storms.</p>
Improve accessibility	<p>Thank you to Department of Justice for a grant to improve access to popular swimming and fishing areas on the Kiewa River, Waterworks and Travellers Creek. Wodonga Men’s Shed fabricated chicane gates that were installed to provide access to additional river and hill areas, whilst restricting unauthorised trail bikes and vehicles.</p> <p>Thank you to Bushfire Recovery Victoria for a grant that enabled completion of the safety hand-rails across four railway bridges on Gateway Island’s “Tree Top Trail”. Rotary Club of Albury and North Albury volunteers installed chainmesh on the final bridge. This added to the long list of supporters of this community project with Excel Gray Brunei, Abolcon Steel, Barro Group, Wodonga Mens Shed, Murray Valley Centre, Border Trust and City of Wodonga all contributing along the journey.</p> <p>Thank you to City of Wodonga who plan to upgrade the Gateway Island trail with gravel and seal a section of the High Country Rail Trail near Ludlows Reserve. This will increase the diversity of people utilising these popular trails.</p>
Improve awareness and online presence	<p>Virtual volunteers stepped up, quite literally, to map nature trails across Albury Wodonga, thanks to Parks Victoria grant. These maps are in the process of being uploaded to a diversity of Walking Apps and our website. Albury City Council and City of Wodonga staff provided feedback and sponsorship to reprint the popular regional parklands A2 brochure as well as website links to our nature trail notes and maps.</p>
Improve capacity with skilled bank of staff	<p>We welcomed new skilled Board members and staff during the year, who have collectively addressed gaps and improved our capacity to deliver for planet and people.</p>
Reduce environmental footprint	<p>Park infrastructure and environmental projects were delivered with low maintenance, climate adapted materials, reusing and repurposing where feasible.</p>



OBJECT 6: Involve the community

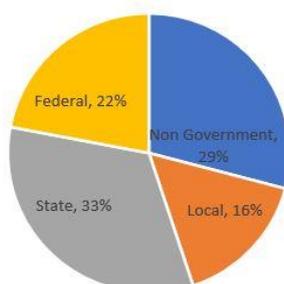
Strategic Objectives	What we delivered during the year with partners
Consult and involve Traditional Owners and First Nations people	Much time was spent consulting with the four Traditional Owner Groups on interpretive signage works. Four local First Nations artists were engaged to deliver artwork and stories for 70 interpretive signs that have since been printed and installed. All parties spent much time researching Dhudhuroa place names for future projects.
Consult and involve neighbours	Face to face meetings with many neighbours and grazing licensees occurred between lockdowns and restrictions as part of developing the Strategic Plan 2031. The cooperation from these meetings led to grants to continue fencing and revegetation.
Consult and involve community, workplaces, natural resource management networks and government	365 people responded to 4 online Surveys (Survey Monkey) during the year. The community input from these surveys has guided plans and actions for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Access to Murray River and tributary waterfront reserves • Adapting to Climate Change in our own back yards • Kiewa River pedestrian access at Baranduda (Chapples Road) • McFarlanes Hill Regional Park Trails
Undertake social procurement and local procurement where possible	Covid restrictions significantly impacted on the fundraising capacity of many community organisations. A large Bushfire Recovery Victoria grant to “connect Seniors through Wodonga Regional Park Infrastructure” enabled procurement of goods and services from local businesses and community groups including Wodonga Men’s Shed, Thurgoona Men’s Shed and Our Native Garden nursery.



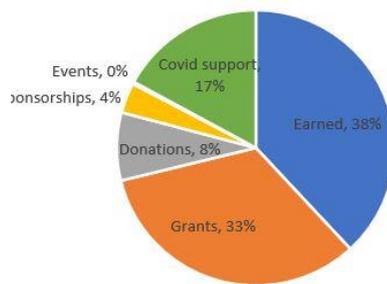
OBJECT 7: Financial Independence

Strategic Objectives	What we delivered during the year with partners
Pursue diverse income streams including goods, services, events, donations, sponsorships, grants, license fees and niche offerings	<p>Thank you to the Australian and Victorian Governments for their Covid Support payments (Jobkeeper, rent relief and Business Support) which helped make up the shortfall from regular earned income and nature based events that were cancelled.</p> <p>Covid19 created both challenges and opportunities. Whilst Parklands has been working steadily towards a goal of 50% non-government sourced revenue, the securing of a number of large one-off economic stimulus grants resulted in a shift from “earned revenue” to “grant revenue”.</p>
Pursue partnerships and in-kind support	<p>Thank you to Towong Shire Council and North East Catchment Management Authority for both sharing their Working for Victoria teams during a time when our regular volunteer programs had been paused. Parklands is grateful of the opportunity to be able to return that in kind contribution through sharing of a Landcare Led Recovery funded Recovery Team with the Upper Murray Landcare Network and community.</p>
Work towards preferred supplier for delivery of land management and environmental projects across the region	<p>Thank you to Murray Local Land Services for the ongoing Wild Orchids project partnership. Whilst Covid 19 travel restrictions delayed the translocation program, we were grateful of the opportunity to employ three young staff to deliver stock exclusion fences for both wild orchids and a climate adaptation seedbank site.</p> <p>Thank you to Albury City Council for their 22nd year of a service agreement. Whilst travel restrictions limited volunteer programs in Victoria, it was great for both staff and Albury residents to be able to participate in a Covid-safe adapted Albury park stewardship program, as and when restrictions permitted.</p>
Contribute to the environmental, social and economic wellbeing of the regional community	<p>During the year over one quarter of a million dollars in goods and services were procured from local and regional businesses and community organisations. The significant increase in patronage of our nature trails network demonstrates their value in terms of health and wellbeing during a period of significant distress. The observed increase in birds and bats demonstrates the importance of these environmental lands as “wildlife refuges” whilst the bushfire impacted areas recovery</p>
Efficiently and effectively manage projects and administration	<p>Thank you to Board members and volunteers who assisted with the removal of 22 years of records, furniture and community group goods and chattels from our office and dairy shed, when the Landlord directed these buildings be emptied. Thanks to the support from CKC Computing, the transition to working from home did not impact on the efficiency and effective delivery of our environmental programs. Instead, the team have pivoted to more virtual meetings on our mobile phones whilst working across the region. Community volunteers and groups can still access our centrally located depot to catch up outdoors or to pick up or deliver materials. In the new year, the search will commence for a new depot site.</p>

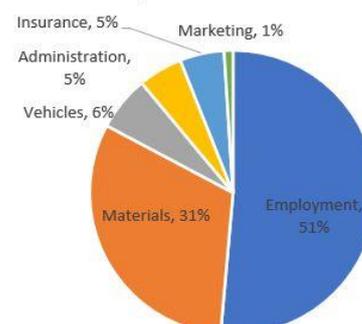
Income Source



Income Type



Expenditure 2020-21



Parklands Objects

Object 1

Optimizing the biodiversity of the reserved land surrounding the cities.

Object 2

Educating the regional community about environmental issues and the wise use of resources such as soil, water and vegetation.

Object 3

Providing opportunities for volunteers and members of the general community to engage with and learn about the natural environment through the implementation of conservation works plans and programs, and the development of passive recreational opportunities in the reserves.

Object 4

Establishing and maintaining a public fund to be called the “Parklands Public Fund” for the specific purpose of supporting the environmental objectives of Parklands.

Object 5

Providing international best practice environment and passive recreation management guidance to the community through the setting of policies, goals and priorities, by developing appropriate plans and by monitoring on ground outcomes.

Object 6

Involving the community through regularly seeking their views, advice and participation.

Object 7

Achieving financial independence through rigorous pursuit of government funding, corporate sponsorship and commercial practices which are compatible with environmental and heritage values; and

Object 8

Parklands shall be organised and operated exclusively for the attainment of, and holds its assets and income on trust exclusively for, those objects.



Parklands Board of Directors

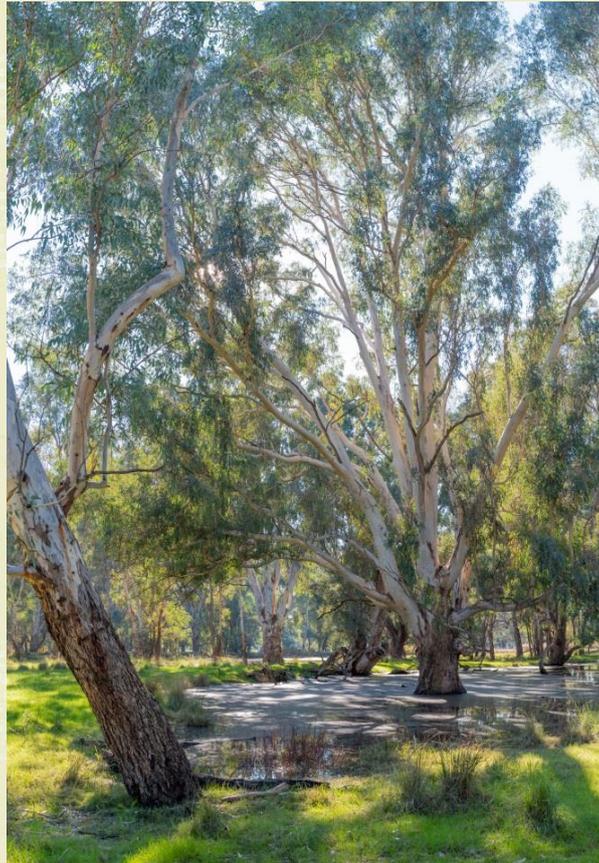
At 30 JUNE 2021

Chairperson and Albury Representative	Daryl Betteridge
Deputy Chairperson & Environment Rep	Alison Hayman
Secretary and Wodonga Representative	Di Pritchard
Treasurer and Wodonga Representative	Phil Oates
Director – Albury City Council Representative	Cr David Thurley
Director – Lavington Representative	Joy Briggs
Director – Baranduda Representative	Liz Fuchsen
Director – User Group Representative	Simon Mullumby

Parklands Staff

At 30 JUNE 2021

Ranger – Community / Executive Officer	Ant Packer
Ranger – Field / Community Engagement	Danny Jones
Ranger – Communications	Anne Stelling
Ranger – Field / Community Farm	Tilak Chhetri
Ranger - Planning	Penny Wladkowski
Ranger – Landholder Liaison	David Saxton
Ranger – Field / Recovery Team	Chris Allen,
Ranger – Field / Recovery Team	Fraser Myers
Ranger – Field	Isaak Haebich
Ranger – Workshop	Wayne Bishop & Mick Eade



Parklands Albury Wodonga

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