

REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE ACTION PLAN

2022-2024

DRAFT VER2 30th December 2021





Contents

Summary and overview	3
What is Regenerative Agriculture?	4
Development of Regenerative Agriculture Action Plan	8
Key actions identified	9
Education – need to improve knowledge and understanding (training)	10
Demonstration – need for farm walks (practical application)	11
Measurement – need for monitoring & testing the benefits	12
Branding & marketing	13
Short term outcomes (2022)	14
Medium term outcomes (2023)	15
Longer term outcomes (2024)	15
Targets achieved	16
Aspirational goals	16
Collaborative partners	16
Detailed list of and actions, partners, timing and funding required	18
Summary list of actions & timing	21
Rollout of plan	22
Funding requirements	22

Summary and overview

The West Gippsland Progress Association Inc. (WGPA) was formed after the Bunyip Complex bushfires in March 2019. Over 300 primary producers were impacted by the fire. Several passionate volunteers formed the WGPA to support farmers and local businesses recovery efforts in the Bunyip Complex Bushfire affected area. The Cardinia Shire Council's (CSC) Bushfire Recovery Team works closely with the WGPA to progress economic bushfire recovery efforts for the community.

The purpose of the WGPA is to increase prosperity for the local economies of Nar Nar Goon to Longwarry and the adjoining areas. WGPA is engaging with local businesses and key community organisations through partnerships to connect farmers, businesses and community organisations to boost the economic and community development of rural areas in the shire and surrounding areas.

The WGPA has 3 core areas of focus;

1. Food & Tourism strategy

Council is supporting the WGPA to develop a food and tourism strategy to put West Gippsland on the map for visitors to Melbourne. The strategy will focus on promoting West Gippsland's tourism products and experiences, and the region's food tourism/agritourism point of difference.

2. Farmer & Small Business Mentoring Program

WGPA encourages all small businesses to learn and grow. In 2021, the WGPA introduced a Farmer & Small Business Mentoring Pilot Program to engage young entrepreneurs to connect with mature-age businesses to learn new skills and experiences in a supportive environment. The success of the Pilot Program was fantastic, and we are now looking to expand and grow the Program formally and re-launch the Program in 2022.

3. Regenerative Agriculture

An aim of the WGPA regenerative agriculture working group is for the region to be defined as a centre of regenerative farming excellence, with large numbers of landholders increasingly implementing regenerative practices leading to improved profitability and environmental indicators.

An overarching aim is to create a 'regional and regenerative agriculture produced' brand linking farmers and retailers, and providing opportunities for farmers to sell their produce locally. The point of difference is that produce would be grown from farms close to Melbourne using regenerative practices with full traceability back to the farmer.

This regenerative agriculture action plan outlines and expands on focus area 3 – 'Regenerative Agriculture' and has been created with input from key stakeholders encompassing the WGPA regenerative agriculture working group, local farmers and Cardinia Shire Council.

The plan documents the feedback received from the key stakeholders and lists key objectives of the group which can be used to measure progress, apply for funding, and provide an overarching guide for the group.

What is Regenerative Agriculture?

Regenerative agriculture is currently a 'hot topic' in agriculture, but the term 'regenerative agriculture' is confusing to many people as there is not a set of specific practices or a compliance scheme that define whether a farmer is actually farming 'regeneratively' or not! Many farmers are applying practices that fit under the banner of 'Regenerative Agriculture' and would claim that as a result they are 'regenerative' farmers. However, the true measure of whether a farmer is actually 'regenerating farming' may only be confirmed when a complete holistic assessment of the farm resources and systems are assessed to determine whether the farmer is truly 'regenerating', 'sustaining' or 'degrading' the land, people and community.



Figure 1. Regenerative agriculture illustration - Rodale Institute

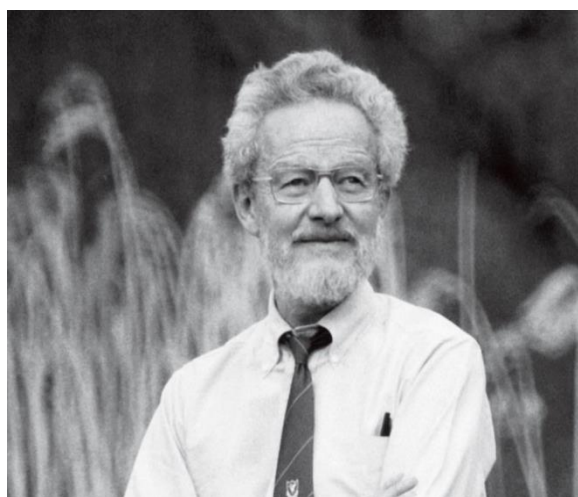


Figure 2. Robert Rodale

Robert Rodale coined the term "regenerative organic" in the 1970's to describe a holistic approach to farming that encourages continuous innovation and improvement of environmental, social, and economic measures. The number one priority in regenerative organic agriculture is soil health as this is intrinsically linked to the total health of our food system. Soil health affects everything from plant health to human wellbeing and the future of our planet¹.

Beyond Sustainable - Robert Rodale, head of Rodale Institute, championed regenerative before the USDA organic standards and certification even existed. Regenerative as we know it today applies specifically to measures of soil health, animal welfare, and social fairness. But Robert Rodale's original philosophy of regenerative encompassed a broader spectrum of human values.

¹ <https://rodaleinstitute.org/why-organic/organic-basics/regenerative-organic-agriculture/>

Together with his daughter, Maria Rodale, Bob penned 7 principles of regenerative as he saw them, which are outlined below².

1. Pluralism

- Increase in diversity of plant species
- Increase in diversity of business, people, and culture
- Increase in diversity of personal experiences, capacities, opportunities and openness to new experiences

2. Protection

- More surface cover of plants, ending erosion and increasing beneficial microbial populations near the surface
- More resistance to economic and cultural fluctuations because of quantity and variety of businesses and people, which increases overall employment and community stability
- Improvement of personal hardiness and an ability to withstand crisis, accompanied by a boost in the body's immune system

3. Purity

- Without chemical fertilizer and pesticide use, a greater mass of plants and other life exists in the soil.
- Without pollution of the environment, more people can exist in better health.
- By ending detrimental habits such as smoking or thinking negatively, the potential for growth, happiness, and success increases.

4. Permanence

- More perennials and other plants with vigorous root systems begin to grow.
- As businesses and individuals become successful and stable, they can contribute more to the community.
- New, more positive, personal spiritual behaviours take root and provide a deeper meaning to life.

5. Peace

- Past patterns of weed and pest interference with growing systems are disrupted
- Former patterns of violence and crime are reduced, improving overall security and well-being.
- Negative emotions such as anger, fear, and hate lessen in intensity and are replaced by tolerance, compassion, and understanding.

6. Potential

- Nutrients tend to either move upward in the soil profile or to accumulate near the surface, thereby becoming more available for use by plants.
- "Trickle up" economics – more resources and money accumulate and are more available to more people
- The positive qualities and resources in yourself and your environment become easier to access and effect more people around you.

7. Progress

- Overall soil structure improves, increasing water retention capacity
- Overall community life improves, increasing the health and wealth of its inhabitants
- Capacity for well-being and enjoyment increases

² <https://rodaleinstitute.org/blog/original-principles-of-regenerative-agriculture/>

There is no doubt that the original intent of Rodale’s definition has been watered down considerably since it was first penned, with regenerative agriculture now more commonly defined as a holistic land management system that leverages the power of photosynthesis in plants to close the carbon cycle, and build soil health, crop resilience and nutrient density. Regenerative agriculture improves soil health and nutrient cycling, primarily through practices that increase soil organic matter through biological activity and natural processes, rather than external inputs. This not only aids in increasing soil biota diversity and health but increases biodiversity both above and below the soil surface, while increasing both water holding capacity and sequestering carbon at greater depths, thus drawing down climate-damaging levels of atmospheric CO₂, and improving soil structure to reverse human-caused soil loss. Research continues to reveal the damaging effects to soil from tillage, applications of agricultural chemicals and high input applications of fertilisers, and carbon mining. Regenerative Agriculture reverses this paradigm to build for the future³.

There is a general consensus amongst regenerative agriculture advocates that there are 5 basic principles which need to be practiced to achieve the maximum benefit when regenerating soils. These include:

1. Keep soil covered,
2. Minimise soil disturbance,
3. Maximise crop/pasture diversity,
4. Maintain living roots year-round,
5. Integrating animals.

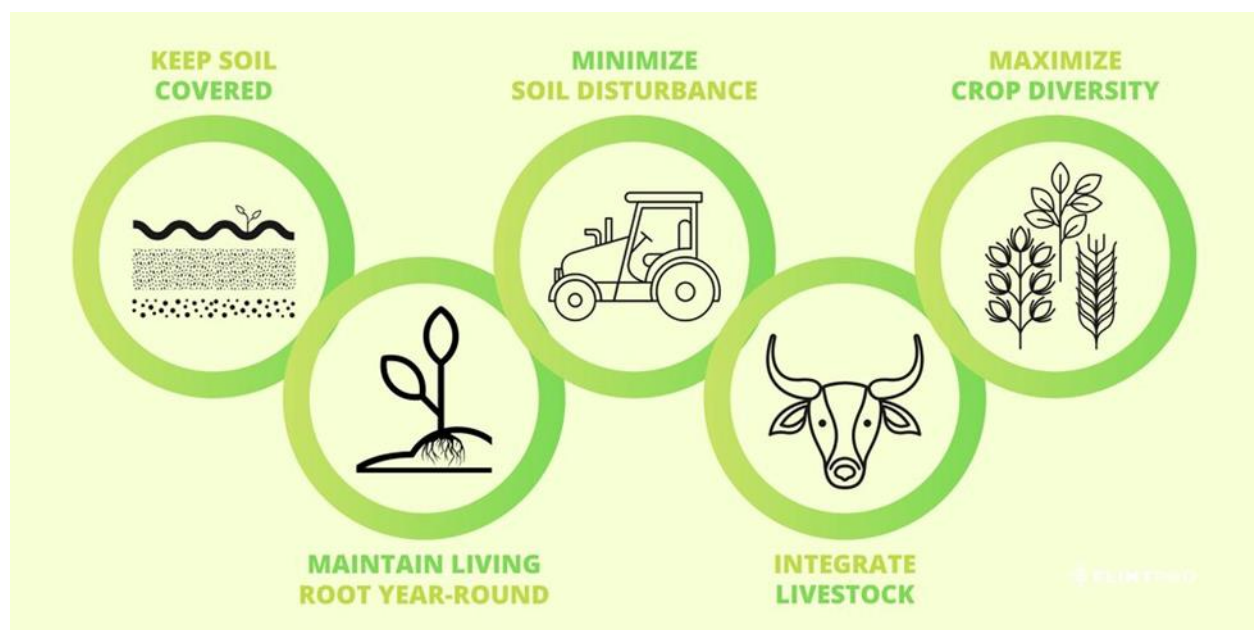


Figure 3: Principles of regenerative agriculture (Lower Blackwood Catchment).

³ <https://regenerationinternational.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Regen-Ag-Definition-2.23.17-1.pdf>

Recent Australian research⁴ conducted by Vanguard Business Services has shown farm family businesses using Regenerative Agriculture principles have similar levels of profit to traditional businesses but with lower risk. The research also found that family members have higher physical and mental wellbeing, and land that is healthier.

Some of the findings are listed below:

- The average profit levels from the regenerative graziers were comparable with the Holmes-Sackett elite producers.
- The average profit levels of the regenerative graziers were consistently higher than the average ABARES farm survey participants and showed less variability over the study period.
- The average profits of regenerative graziers were consistently better in years where there was low rainfall.
- The regenerative managed farms had substantially lower cost structures, in key areas such as supplementary feed costs/DSE, pasture costs/DSE and animal health and breeding costs/DSE.
- Regenerative graziers reported significantly higher levels of wellbeing compared to similar farmers in the Regional Wellbeing Survey.
- They had greater confidence in their ability to achieve farming goals, and their optimism was higher, and significantly, higher levels of general health.
- However, some regenerative graziers reported challenges in gaining acceptance in their local communities.
- The environmental health of their farms was also assessed and found the average ground cover percentage of the participants' properties was up to 18% higher than the average in the locality (10km² radius) over time.



⁴ Ogilvy, S., Gardner, M., Mallawaarachichi, T., Schirmer, J., Brown, K., Heagney, E. (2018) Report: Graziers with better profitability, biodiversity and wellbeing. Canberra Australia

Development of Regenerative Agriculture Action Plan

A range of key stakeholders encompassing the 'WGPA regenerative agriculture working group', 'local farmers' and 'CSC Bushfire recovery team' contributed to this plan through meetings, emails and phone calls.

Several phone and online meetings were held in August and November 2021 and a formal online meeting with the WGPA and CSC was held on November 22nd. There were 8 farmers in attendance representing, beef, dairy and horticulture who were invited by the WGPA to participate. In addition, there were 3 CSC representatives. Another 3 farmers were interviewed on the phone on the 24th November. These key stakeholders informally make up the WGPA Regenerative Agriculture working group.

The farmer participants were specifically identified by the WGPA and CSC due to their involvement in the recovery process, industry links (i.e., VFF, Gippsdairy, UDV), and/or involvement in regenerative farming management programs that have been delivered as part of the bushfire recovery process. These programs included:

- Farmer to farmer mentoring system
- Land to Market workshops
- Southern Cross University workshops
- Holistic training – Brian Wehlburg

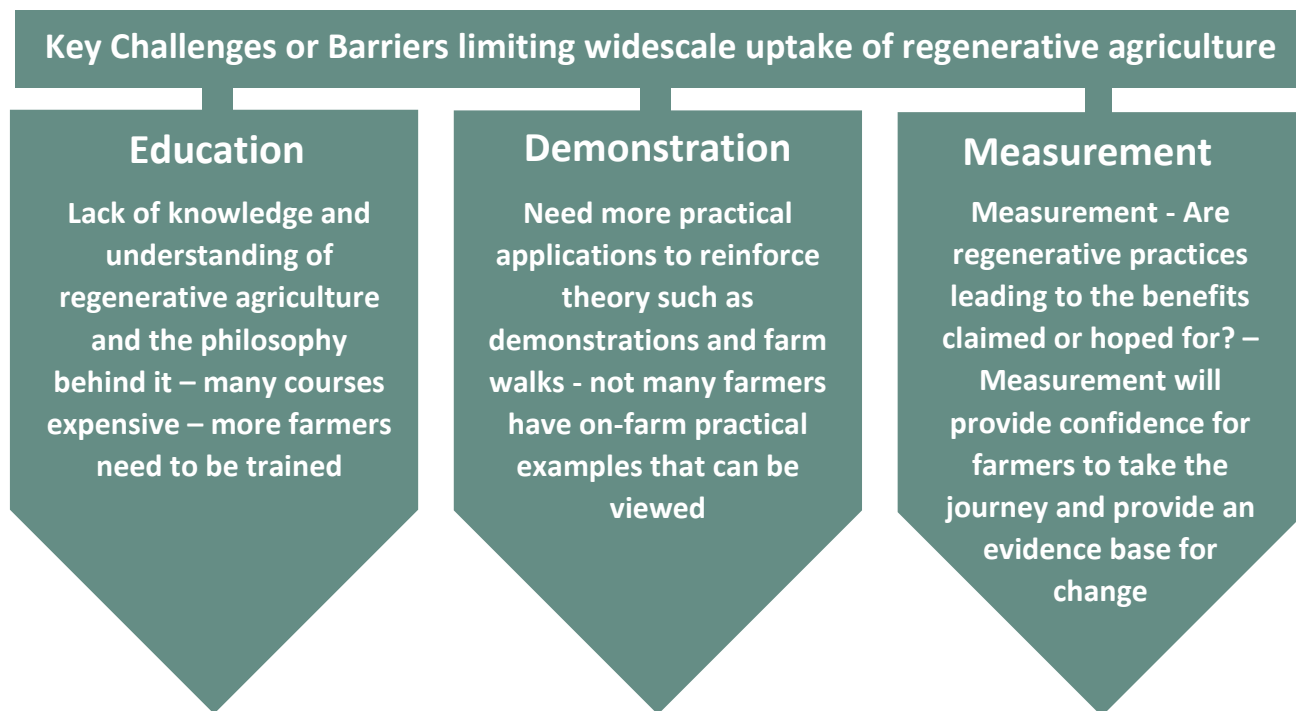
At the meeting and also during the phone interviews, each participant was asked to identify:

- Key gaps in regenerative agriculture knowledge in the region
- Outcomes they would like to see the WGPA achieve in 2022
- Outcomes they would like to see the WGPA achieve in 2-3years time
- Potential collaborators the WGPA can partner with
- Methods to achieve outcomes identified

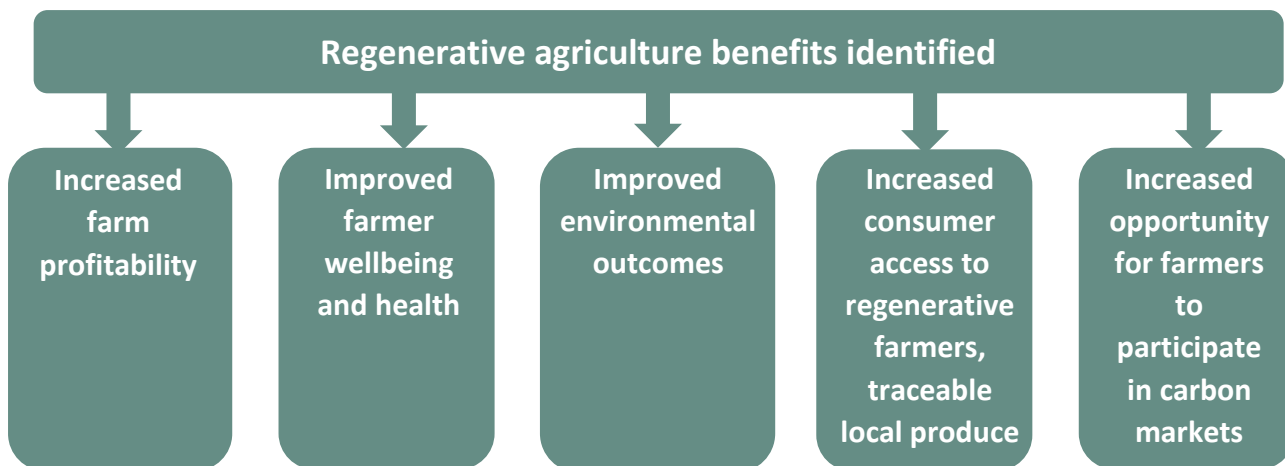
The feedback from the WGPA working group was used to formulate this plan and is detailed on the following pages.

Key actions identified

There were 3 key challenges/barriers identified by the working group that are potentially limiting the widescale uptake of regenerative agriculture practices. These are listed and captured in the following pages.



Through addressing these challenges and barriers, the working group believes a number of outcomes will develop over time leading to benefits for farmers, consumers and the community.



The WGPA regenerative agriculture working group would like to establish a local provenance brand where regenerative practices deliver farmers a premium price for their product.



Education – need to improve knowledge and understanding (training)

The farmers who were interviewed all agreed there was a lack of understanding about what regenerative agriculture actually is and how some of the principles can be applied to their farms. All acknowledged the strong interest in regenerative agriculture from the farming community and press, but this is also causing confusion as there is so much diversity in viewpoints.

Some obstacles to uptake include; farmers believing that regenerative agriculture requires certification such as ‘organic’ or biodynamic’. Other believe is it too risky, and their production would crash if they were to drop out nitrogen fertiliser. Others are hesitant to change from current practices they are familiar with. Others are leasing land or are working for others, and are limited with the actions they are permitted to take.

There are a number of private consultants and advisory companies situated throughout Australia which have been training farmers in regenerative agriculture management. Many of these courses have a strong focus on holistic grazing management for livestock. Several of the WPGA farmers interviewed are currently participating in privately run programs which are sponsored by the CSC.

The Western Port Catchment Landcare Network in partnership with Bass Coast Landcare Network, and Mornington Peninsula Shire developed a 7-week regenerative training program which was piloted in 2020. 25 farmers participated in the program (including several from the WPGA). This training program was refined based on feedback from the 2020 participants, and was rolled out to another 40+ farmers in the Mornington Peninsula and Bass Coast region during Oct-Nov 2021. Several independent farm advisors were engaged to deliver this training program and each specialised on a key principle. The cost was \$250+GST for each farm and the program was subsidised with funding from the Federal Government, Melbourne Water, Mornington Peninsula Shire, Bass Coast Landcare Network and a local philanthropic organisation.

There is a significant opportunity for the WPGA to co-partner with, and leverage off some of these existing successful training programs.



Demonstration – need for farm walks (practical application)

All interviewed farmers agreed that there needs to be more farm walks to view practical on-farm examples to reinforce the theory.

For many farmers, there is a lack of understanding on where to start with regenerative actions. Concepts such as: how do I migrate from a conventional agricultural system to a regenerative system without crashing productivity, what species of seed should I be sowing, how do I get the seed in the ground using minimal tillage equipment, how do I graze multi species pastures, when are they most nutritious, how do I utilise my waste (resource) streams such as old hay, old silage, woodchips from sheds and calving pads, what locally available resources do I have access to which could benefit me on my farm?

Currently, a small number of farmers are embracing regenerative agriculture wholeheartedly on their properties locally. These farmers are early adopters, and are trialling and experimenting with grazing rotation lengths, multi species pasture, minimal till cultivation (horticulture and also pasture renovation). There are good opportunities to showcase some of these activities through farm walks and discussion groups. In addition, there is potential for the farmers who have completed existing regenerative agriculture training programs to mentor other farmers who are starting on their journey. This could be through the existing mentoring program that was piloted in early 2021.

A number of the collaborative partners regularly run farmer discussion groups and field days which often have a sustainable/regenerative focus.

A key point was that lots of farmers aren't aware of all the regenerative agriculture focused activities happening in the region. This can be due to farmers sticking within their own industry group circles. It can also be due to a lot of these activities occurring within existing discussion group activities and are therefore not widely promoted. Also, collaborative partners are often limited by available grants, and as a result cannot afford to advertise in wider circulating regional newspapers.



Measurement – need for monitoring & testing the benefits

One of the biggest challenges made towards those practicing or advocating regenerative agriculture is that there is little research or science backing up the claims made by some in this space. Open Food Network Australia and Climate Works Australia have compiled an excellent literature review of regenerative agriculture focused science and research which can be found here⁵.

The WGPA farmers strongly agreed there needs to be more measurement happening on farms as some of the practical applications being recommended by regenerative agriculture advisors may need to be adapted to suit our high rainfall region.

Demonstration sites and test strips are simple methodologies that can provide quick and simple answers through visual observation. In some cases, more technical monitoring is required to track change over time. The importance of having a baseline measurement or control is of critical importance.

Knowing what to measure is one of the challenges as we are trying to monitor continually changing natural systems. The WGPA farmers identified the following parameters that should be monitored:

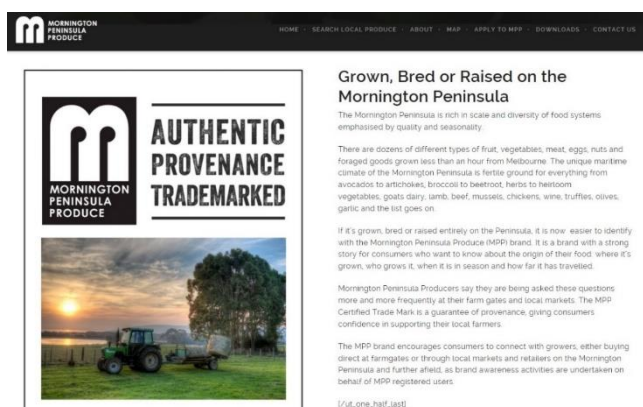
- Soil health (microbiology, nutrient cycling, chemistry)
- Sequestered Carbon & carbon neutrality
- Pasture species diversity
- Animal health
- Profitability
- Premium price paid for produce
- Number of farmers applying regenerative practices



⁵ <https://ofnaus.gitbook.io/regenerative-agriculture-literature-review/>

Branding & marketing

The WPGA is very keen to establish a ‘provenance based regenerative agriculture farmed’ brand for the region, which pays farmers a premium for their produce. The Mornington Peninsula Shire in partnership with a number of growers have established their own provenance brand ‘Mornington Peninsula Produce MPP’⁶. The ‘Prom Coast Food Collective’⁷ has also established a very successful brand in South Gippsland. The WPGA would be advised to speak with both organisations and hear their stories on how they established their brands.



In addition, there are several local groups focusing on community food security, with the Cardinia Food Movement⁸ and Baw Baw Food Movement⁹ both very connected with producers, wholesalers, farmer markets, local food sellers and value adders, and the consumer. The WPGA will collaborate with both these food networks.



⁶ <https://www.mppproduce.com.au/>

⁷ <https://promcoastfoodcollective.com.au/>

⁸ <https://www.cardiniafoodmovement.org/>

⁹ <https://www.facebook.com/bawbawfoodmovement/>

Short term outcomes (2022)



The WGRA Regenerative Agriculture working group have a number of targets that they would like to see achieved in 2022 which include:

- Collaboration with others working in this space to inform them of the WGRA purpose and explore opportunities to partner and cross promote
- WGRA to develop an appropriate way to communicate regional activities to their target audience
- Increase knowledge amongst farmers of regenerative agriculture through:
 - Continue the mentoring program to include 5 experienced regenerative farmers mentoring 5 farmers starting on their regenerative journey
 - Support 10-20 farmers to participate in a 7-week regenerative agriculture training program
- Increase knowledge amongst farmers on how to implement regenerative practices on their farms through:
 - Conducting 4 quarterly farm walks per year on regenerative practicing farms to explore how concepts can be applied practically. i.e., view multi species pastures, sowing techniques, grazing management, input selection and rates, biodiversity etc
 - Establish a small grant program so farmers can test regenerative practices with some assisted support from professionals
 - Establish several small trials and demonstrations underway on local properties
- Explore carbon neutrality – how do we measure, what do we measure, what does it mean?
- Explore opportunities to establish a provenance and regenerative agriculture brand through meeting with the developers of the Mornington Peninsula Produce (MPP) brand on the Mornington Peninsula
- Define compliance standards for farmer participation in the 'regenerative agriculture' brand

Medium term outcomes (2023)



Medium term targets for 2023 include:

- Increasing knowledge amongst farmers of regenerative agriculture through:
 - An additional 5 local farmers who are formally trained in Regenerative Agriculture mentoring another 5 farmers starting on their regenerative journey through farm visits & support
 - Support soil training workshops which demystify soil health & soil testing
- Increasing knowledge and confidence for farmers on implementing regenerative practices on their farms through:
 - x4 quarterly farm walks per year on regenerative practicing farms to explore how concepts can be applied practically. i.e., view multi species pastures, sowing techniques, grazing management, input selection and rates, biodiversity etc
 - Several small trials and demonstrations underway on local properties
 - Run a field day on 'measuring regenerative farming' practices at a local farm
- WGPA finalise establishment of a 'regenerative agriculture produced' provenance brand

Longer term outcomes (2024)



By the end of this plan, the WGPA regenerative agriculture working group would like to have achieved:

- Increased knowledge amongst farmers of regenerative agriculture through:
 - An additional 5 local farmers who are formally trained in Regenerative Agriculture mentoring another 5 farmers starting on their regenerative journey through farm visits & support
 - Information session on circular economy and how to utilise waste (resource) streams on farm
- Increased knowledge amongst farmers on how to implement regenerative practices on their farms through:
 - Conduct 4 quarterly farm walks per year on regenerative practicing farms to explore how concepts can be applied practically. i.e., view multi species pastures, sowing techniques, grazing management, input selection and rates, biodiversity etc
 - Continue with several small trials and demonstrations on local properties
- Information session on circular economy (Law of Return - cycle of life nutrient cycling) and how to utilise waste (resource) streams on farm
- Creation of 5 farmer case studies (video/print) which document farmers journeys into implementing regenerative agriculture
- Provenance and regenerative branding established with farmers receiving a premium price for produce
- Review outcomes achieved in first 3 years of the plan & determine whether a new plan is required

Targets achieved

By December 2024, the WPGA Regenerative Agriculture working group aim to achieve the following specific targets:

- Participation of 30 farmers in the mentoring program - 15 regenerative farmers mentoring 15 farmers starting on their regenerative journey
- The participation of 10-20 farmers in a 7-week regenerative training program
- 12 quarterly regenerative agriculture focused farm walks/practical sessions
- 5 case studies written showcasing local farmers practicing regenerative agriculture and the benefits to their business
- Several small regenerative agriculture trials underway and monitored
- Provenance based regenerative agriculture brand created and being utilised

Aspirational goals

By December 2024, the WPGA Regenerative Agriculture working group hopes that:

- The West Gippsland area is known as a centre of excellence for regenerative agriculture
- Increasing numbers of farmers practicing regenerative agriculture in the region
- Regenerative agriculture practices are viewed as mainstream by the majority of farmers
- Industry bodies are engaging actively in this space (GippsDairy, VFF, Horticulture, MLA)
- Farmers implementing regenerative practices feel supported by peers and industry bodies
- Farms of all enterprise types and size are advocating regenerating agriculture
- Multiple trials and demonstrations underway to test new practices
- A range of regenerative practices have been measured, with results validating benefits from implementation
- Opportunities for ongoing training in regenerative agriculture with basic courses for those starting their journey, and 'Master classes' for those who are more advanced on their journey.

Collaborative partners

The WGRA working group identified a range of potential partners who are working in the regenerative agriculture space, and who may provide leverage and cross pollination. These include:

- Gipps Dairy/UDV – strong regional dairy network with farm walks and training programs
- MLA – Beef & sheep focused – potential source of funding & resources – Aspiring for Carbon Neutral by 2030
- Gardiner Foundation – dairy focused – potential source of funding for start-up programs
- Ausveg, Horticulture Australia – potential source of funds and resources
- Sustainable Table – philanthropic organisation – potential source of funds
- Cardinia VFF – group representing & advocating for local farmers at a state level
- Universities – potential for students to research projects
- Port Phillip & Westernport Catchment Management Authority – well connected with industry, farming and Landcare networks. Has a good understanding of current projects
- Western Port Catchment Landcare Network – active in the sustainable/regenerative agriculture space. Good connections to farmers and potential source of resources
- Melbourne Water – potential source of funds
- Cardinia Shire – good networks with fire affected farmers, and potential source of funds
- Baw Baw Shire – sends out welcome pack to all new landholders (could potentially cross promote)
- Other - Composting worm farm Tooradin, seaweed
- In addition, there are several local groups focusing on community food security, with the Cardinia Food Movement and Baw Baw Food Movement both very connected with producers, wholesalers, farmer markets, local food sellers and value adders, and the consumer.

Detailed list of and actions, partners, timing and funding required

Key action	What	Who	Date	Resources
			2021	
Governance	Regenerative action plan approved	WGPA, CSC, IAS	Dec 2021	Existing resources
			2022	
Governance	WGPA to liaise with key stakeholders and discuss opportunities to collaborate	WGPA, all Collaborators	Jan-Mar 2022	Existing resources
Governance	WGPA to develop an appropriate method to communicate regional activities to their target audience	WGPA	Jan-Mar 2022	Existing resources
Education	Continue the mentoring program with 5 local farmers who are formally trained in Regenerative Agriculture mentoring 5 farmers starting on their regenerative journey	WGPA, CSC	Feb - Dec 2022	\$1,000 to access existing program using existing resources
Education	Delivery of a 7-week 'Regenerative Agriculture Training Program' in partnership with WPCLN for 10-20 West Gippsland farmers. This program utilises experienced regenerative agriculture trainers who cover key regenerative agriculture concepts over 7 consecutive weeks	WGPA, CSC, WPCLN	Aug-Oct 2022	\$5,000 WPCLN (tbc), \$5,000 Farmers \$7,500 other
Education	Explore carbon neutrality – how do we measure, what do we measure, what does it mean	WGPA, all Collaborators	Jul-Sep 2022	\$2000 other
Demonstration	x4 quarterly farm walks per year on regenerative practicing farms to explore how concepts can be applied practically and tested. i.e., view multi species pastures, sowing techniques, grazing management, input selection and rates, biodiversity etc	WGPA, all Collaborators	Mar-Dec 2022	Existing resources, \$5000 other
Measurement	Establish a small grant program so farmers can test regenerative practices with assisted support from professionals	WGPA, CSC	Mar-Jun 2022	\$10,000 other 4 trials @ \$2,500 each to be managed by WGPA with professional support
Measurement	Several small trials and demonstrations underway on local properties	WGPA, CSC, WPCLN, GippsDairy	Jul-Sep 2022	Existing resources

Branding	WGPA make contact with MPP and discuss the processes and compliance standards involved to establish a provenance brand	WGPA, MPP	Jan-Mar 2022	Existing resources
Governance	Review outcomes achieved in 2022 & revise planning for 2023 if required	WGPA, CSC	December 2022	Existing resources
2023				
Education	Continue the mentoring program with 5 local farmers who are formally trained in Regenerative Agriculture mentoring 5 farmers starting on their regenerative journey through farm visits & support	WGPA, CSC	Jan - Dec 2023	\$1,000 to access existing program using existing resources
Education	Support soil workshops which demystify soil health & soil testing	WGPA, WPCLN, all Collaborators	Mar-Jun 2023	Existing resources
Demonstration	x4 quarterly farm walks per year on regenerative practicing farms to explore how concepts can be applied practically. i.e., view multi species pastures, sowing techniques, grazing management, input selection and rates, biodiversity etc	WGPA, all Collaborators	Feb-Dec 2023	Existing resources, \$5000 other
Measurement	Several small trials and demonstrations underway on local properties	WGPA, CSC, WPCLN, GippsDairy	Jan-Dec 2023	Existing resources
Branding	WGPA continue working on establishing a provenance brand	WGPA, MPP	Jan-Dec 2023	Existing resources
Governance	Review outcomes achieved in 2023 & revise planning for 2024 if required	WGPA, CSC	December 2023	Existing resources
2024				
Education	Continue the mentoring program with 5 local farmers who are formally trained in Regenerative Agriculture mentoring 5 farmers starting on their regenerative journey through farm visits & support	WGPA, CSC	Jan - Dec 2024	\$1,000 to access existing program using existing resources
Education	Information session on circular economy and how to utilise waste (resource) streams on farm	WGPA, Gippsdairy	Feb-Jun 2024	\$2000 other

Demonstration	x4 quarterly farm walks per year on regenerative practicing farms to explore how concepts can be applied practically. i.e., View multi species pastures, sowing techniques, grazing management, input selection and rates, biodiversity etc	WGPA, all Collaborators	Jan-Dec 2024	Existing resources, \$5000 other
Measurement	Several small trials and demonstrations underway on local properties	WGPA, CSC, WPCLN, GippsDairy	Jan-Dec 2024	Existing resources
Demonstration	Creation of 5 farmer case studies (video/print) which document farmers journeys into regenerative agriculture documenting the wins, the challenges, and things they would do differently next time	WGPA, all Collaborators	Jun-Nov 2024	\$7500 other
Branding	Provenance and regenerative branding established with farmers receiving a premium price for produce	WGPA, MPP	Jul-Dec 2024	
Governance	Review outcomes achieved in first 3 years of the plan & determine whether a new plan is required	WGPA, CSC	Nov-Dec 2024	Existing resources

WGPA – West Gippsland Progress Association

CSC – Cardinia Shire Council

WPCLN – Western Port Catchment Landcare Network

GippsDairy – Regional Dairy Extension Provider

All Collaborators – see Collaborative partners

Summary list of actions & timing



Rollout of plan

The successful rollout of this plan will take significant effort, and is dependent on:

- Continuing support from Cardinia Shire Council, Bushfire recovery agencies and other local and state government departments
- Seed funding obtained to assist with rollout, to build momentum quicker and avoid a slow burnout of volunteers
- Active collaboration with partners and sharing of resources and information
- Active engagement with the target audience through multiple communication channels
- Key farmers being prepared to commit time in mentoring, planning and delivery of programs

Funding requirements

All activities incur costs to run, and it is unrealistic to expect advisors, trainers and guest presenters to volunteer their services on a regular basis. It is also not appropriate to expect other partners to channel their minimal resources into a small area when their brief is often to engage with farmers on a regional scale (or even a state-wide scale).

The WGPA Regenerative agriculture working group needs to receive between \$20,000-25,000 on an annual basis to achieve the targets set out in the plan. Funding in the sustainable agriculture space is very hard to obtain, with grant applications being very competitive. The funding for these projects usually come via the Federal Government, with larger collaborative regional projects that have a history of successful project management, more likely to be successful.

As the WGPA is a newly established entity without a long-term project history, the working group will need to explore alternative, niche and specific funding sources.

Potential sources of funding could include philanthropic organisations, Local government (Cardinia Shire, Baw Baw Shire, City of Casey), State Government, or even Federal Government. Bushfire recovery funds are probably the most logical source of funds for the WGPA. There is also potential to apply for funds through state government which has an interest in supporting alternative food marketing programs, such as the establishment of farmer run cooperatives and provenance branding.



For more information about the W GPA Regenerative working group contact:

Robert Green via info@westgippslandprogassoc.org.au

<https://www.facebook.com/WestGippslandProgAssoc>

www.westgippslandprogassoc.org.au

Date of second draft – 30th December 2021

Author:

Peter Ronalds - Inspired AG solutions

inspiredagsolutions@gmail.com

www.inspiredagsolutions.com.au



Reviewed by:

Chris Alenson – Independent soil consultant

