



Victorian
**Environment
Friends**
Network

VEFN Strategy

A Future History



One in which everybody cared about the same things we do.

What would it look like?



That's our **VISION**, WHY we do what we do, so that there is:

A FLOURISHING AND BIODIVERSE ENVIRONMENT SUPPORTED BY ALL THE FRIENDS AND RESOURCES IT NEEDS

Our vision is optimistic. But let's take it on as a goal, something we actively work towards to make happen one day, say by 2050 to pick a date. So what's VEFN's mission [or purpose, if you prefer]?



The **MISSION** of VEFN [and groups like it] then is to create and nurture friends of the environment we envisage.

That's WHAT we do:

We connect, inspire, engage and empower individuals, groups and networks to become effective protectors and advocates for the natural environment.

Or, to put it more succinctly:

**WE GROW FRIENDS
FOR THE ENVIRONMENT**

How will we deliver that mission?

With a strategy that evolves over time; the challenges of 2025 will not be the same as the ones we'll have to overcome in 2050. But we think our five key objectives could use a rethink:

Objectives:

- Provide a united voice to celebrate and advocate for the value of nature and the people that support it
- Build and grow a competent and capable network of individuals and groups to nurture a healthy natural environment
- Empower members to achieve their objectives and thrive
- Support members to engage their communities and support each other
- Grow and sustain the strength, capacity and influence of VEFN long-term



So let's start with our vision
and work backwards to today.
Here's some of what we
imagine for ourselves in
2050...

What we'll OFFER in 2050: Broader, deeper support services

	UNITED VOICE	GROW THE NETWORK	EMPOWER GROUPS	ENGAGE WITH COMMUNITY	GROW AND SUSTAIN VEFN
Recruiting, networking, mentoring, advocating					
Education, administrative support and training					
Experiential knowledge of restoration and conservation of local environments					
Practical know-how that is evolving, shared and archived for easy access					
Connect and leverage the skills and expertise of the entire network					
Be a go-between to streamline and simplify access to government grants					
We can be the matchmaker, connecting funds to projects, solutions to answers					
Regular health checks: how well are groups & the network going? What help do they need?					

Who we'll SERVE in 2050: The environment & all its friends

The environment, as always					
Our members [which should be just about everybody on our PARTNER list]					
Flora and fauna					

How we'll DELIVER in 2050: Through every effective medium & channel

In person, online, events, outreach, festivals					
Representation in government					
Mainstream media, social media, publications					

Who we'll PARTNER in 2050: Everyone who cares like we do

Friends groups of all shapes and sizes					
Ethical businesses					
Zoos, nature parks, botanic gardens					
Educational groups, research bodies, universities, schools, kindergartens					
Indigenous leaders, nurseries					
All three levels of government, public spaces, local communities & residents					

How we'll be RESOURCED in 2050: Multiple sources of sustainable revenue and an experienced, vibrant leadership

Experienced, active committees, subcommittees and working groups with eager successors					
Bequeaths, donations, a deep-pocketed benefactor					
Government funding, grants					
Government contracts					
Passive income – ethical investments					
Consulting fees					
Membership fees					

With what REPUTATION in 2050: A loud & clear voice for nature

Effective, savvy, visionary, professional, approachable, expert					
Ethically pure					
Mentors, thought leaders, thinking ahead					
A peak body with thriving membership across Australia					

But we won't get to this future without reaching some serious milestones in the meantime, so where do we see ourselves by say, 2030?

What we'll OFFER in 2030: Increased support services

Events and workshops					
Outreach in communities					
Education					
Health check-ups of groups					
Care package					
Support with mentoring, insurance, incorporation					
Comprehensive THRIVE toolkit					
A fully funded, on-ground resource					
Management of State level grants to form new groups with start-up funding & induction					
Advocacy, marketing, content					

UNITED VOICE
GROW THE NETWORK
EMPOWER GROUPS
ENGAGE WITH COMMUNITY
GROW AND SUSTAIN VEFN

Who we'll SERVE in 2030: The environment's old [& new] friends.

The environment, as always					
Our members [which should be just about everybody on our PARTNER list]					
Flora and fauna					

What we'll DELIVER in 2030: Increased live & virtual events & programs

Website, updated, curated and maintained by the groups					
Regional events					
Workshops					
Toolkit					
Advocacy & policy change					

Who we'll PARTNER in 2030: New friends & allies

First Nations, Landcare, Gardens for Wildlife, VNPA, Nature Stewards, Bush Heritage					
Formal arrangements with the main players for 2050					
Other state networks					
Federal government, govt departments					
Citizen scientists – what can we give them? What could we get in return?					
Any trusted advisors to rising political stars					
Local govt – MGA, MAV, LGPro etc					

With what RESOURCES in 2030: New avenues of funds and resourcing

Stable, on-going core funding from State government					
1-3 sources of corporate funding, sponsorship and bequests					
Build and prove our credibility [peak body?] as a mean of attracting funding					
Connect into benefactor's networks					
Regular event income [free for members]					
Symposium fees					
500 paid-up members [we currently have 150]					
Sign up 50% of all other friends groups as paid members					
Skilled, active committee, subcommittee and working group members with a strong succession plan					

With what REPUTATION in 2030: A loud & clear voice for our friends

Credible, a voice to be heard					
Dynamic, constantly growing and achieving					
Hosting, sharing, a connector					
At the table where important decisions are made					
Strong advocates with a comprehensive policy platform document and submissions					

Where will we get the best outcomes,
with the least effort and risk?

To find out, we use a Value/Effort grid – like this.

This tells us the relative value/effort of each action
and by extension, its priority.



Let's break the timeline down into NOW [by the 2025 AGM] and NEXT [by 2026].

Like this:

<u>NOW [by the 2025 AGM]</u>	Rating	Priority
CHANGE Centralise all information for ease of access and clarity	A	Now
ADD Develop committees as a place to spot and grow talent	A	Now
KEEP Strengthen our governance and build our policy platform	A-B	Now
ADD Join the benefactor networks	B	Now
KEEP Get more members – 260 members by Nov 2025	B	Now
ADD Define and diversify member categories	B	Now
CHANGE Website – improve, upgrade, refresh	B-C	Now
CHANGE membership targets – 30% growth p.y for next 4 years [340 in 2026... 750 in 2029]	B-C	Now
KEEP Awards [permanently funded]	B	Now
ADD Approach pack – how to attract, recruit and pitch (for us to new members?)	B	Now
KEEP Education and training seminars and workshops	B-C	Now
KEEP Communicate different values/benefits of the network to all stakeholders (Link back to Thrive, Website and other comms and marketing initiatives, LinkedIn, funding allocations)	B-C	Now
ADD Succession plan	C	Now
KEEP THRIVE	F	Now
ADD Post on SEEK, Ethical Jobs and LinkedIn websites to recruit high value volunteers	E	Now

NEXT and later

ADD Join the benefactor networks [Australian Environmental Grants Network]	B	By 2030
ADD Increased number and diversity of funding sources	B-C	Next
ADD More professional marketing/media	B-C	Next
ADD Branding style guide	B-C	Next
ADD Outreach: identify, attract & retain expertise we don't have	B-C	Next
ADD A proper, dedicated administrative coordinator person	C	By 2030
CHANGE Forge better relationships with key players	C	By 2030
ADD Pods with regional champions	C	By 2040
ADD Qualified staff to set up our professional systems and processes (Maybe NAB related?)	C	Next
CHANGE Friends Net – improve, upgrade, refresh.	C	Next
ADD Increased number and diversity of funding sources [other / potentially ALL funding]	F	By 2030
ADD Help desk/library	F	By 2050
ADD Merchandising	G	Next
ADD New categories/levels of membership – pay more to get more	G-H	Next



Victorian
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Friends
Network**



Victorian
Landcare
Program



This strategy has been developed through the collective efforts of the VEFN community and committee, guided by the expertise of Minds at Work and made possible through funding from the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA).

With this roadmap, we take our next steps towards a future where our impact grows, our voices strengthen, and our communities flourish alongside the landscapes we cherish.

VEFN Committee 2025

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