



Conservation Volunteers and Parks Victoria are working in partnership under a Memorandum of Understanding to engage the community in a range of conservation programs resulting in an increase to individual and community health and well being as well as benefiting the environment

At a Green Gym participants can engage in a range of enjoyable practical conservation activities as a form of healthy exercise. Green Gym is offered as an alternative to traditional fitness and competitive sporting options.

Green Gym and Parks Victoria

Green Gym is strongly aligned with Parks Victoria's Healthy Parks Healthy People direction. The Green Gym delivery model can be tailored to meet needs and is facilitated by a CVA employed Project Officer. Conservation Volunteers has delivered Green Gym activities Parks Victoria locations, including;

Creswick and Daylesford; Yarra Bend; Braeside Park; Greater Bendigo National Park; Jobs Gully; Southern Goldfields Region, and; Alfred Nicholas Gardens

Green Gym Results

The Green Gym program in 2008—2009 has assisted at 24 public land sites engaging 14132 volunteer hours, resulting in;

- 5230 Trees Planted
- 8.3km² Weeds Removed
- 95kg of Seed Collected

Understanding Volunteer Health Benefits

In order to understand the benefits to volunteers participating in the Green Gym program CVA engages the University of Ballarat to undertake independent evaluation.

Of the 24 Most Significant Change (MSC) stories analysed in 2008/09, 85% demonstrated healthier individuals/communities and 100% demonstrated increased social connectedness

Volunteer's wife and carer (2009) "On most days I have to remind him to put shoes on and to brush his teeth but on Green Gym days he is ready to go by himself with everything he needs already organised. The first few times I walked down with him, now he comes and gives me a kiss and says I'm going now, showing independence. We've got a 27 year old daughter and when she came she said 'you've gotta show me your Green Gym Dad. They walked down together and Leo was really chuffed that she was interested in what he was doing. It's really helped both of us, now I have time for myself to do my own thing (without having to be at home worrying about him and his non-activity)"

Volunteer Quote: "I am more active; have a structured exercise program which I adhere to every day. I am fitter and I have lost weight (approximately 10 kilos). My body image has improved. I am more confident as a result and I have a great deal of social interaction. Subsequently I am less depressed and anxious"

