

Growing our Future: The Cross-border Community Nursery & Seed Collections Project.

Nature Glenelg Trust is a locally based environmental organisation which has secured funding through the Australian Government's Clean Energy Futures Biodiversity Fund for an exciting new initiative.

The Cross-border Community Nursery Project is all about working with and supporting our local native plant growers, direct seeding contractors and seed collectors in the region to improve the diversity of plants available to local revegetation projects. It will do this by filling knowledge gaps, sharing information, being practical, not reinventing the wheel and, most importantly, working together (see overleaf).

Project Objective: Develop a reliable source of native seed and seedlings (otherwise not available) for large scale biodiverse plantings and create a community hub for developing revegetation skills and techniques.

Project aims and outcomes:

- 1) Regional "Community Seed Bank":** Collect/source seed focussing on hard to collect (otherwise uneconomical) species from across the cross-border region.
- 2) Regional "Community Nursery":** Work with hard-to-propagate or uneconomical species required for regional revegetation projects, gather knowledge and trial techniques to share with growers.



Leafy Templetonia (*Templetonia stenophylla*) - Vulnerable in SA

The nursery will specialise in growing species that are currently unavailable or not viable for commercial growers, or are required for specialised projects, such as rare or threatened species and wetland plants.

- 3) Regional "Community Education":** The key to the project's success is partnerships and high levels of community and industry involvement. This includes:
 - Developing a growers network, and providing learning opportunities for current and potential growers;
 - Establishing a "Friends of the Community Nursery" volunteer group and offer meaningful volunteering opportunities for regional residents;
 - Running hands-on workshops, including seed collection, propagation techniques and revegetation; and;
 - Working with local schools and councils in partnering Local Government area to establish local species "display gardens", and include information of how and where the wider community can source plants.

Project area: The project is truly regional, working with local communities to learn together, grow plants and collect seed for projects across South East South Australia and Victoria's South West.

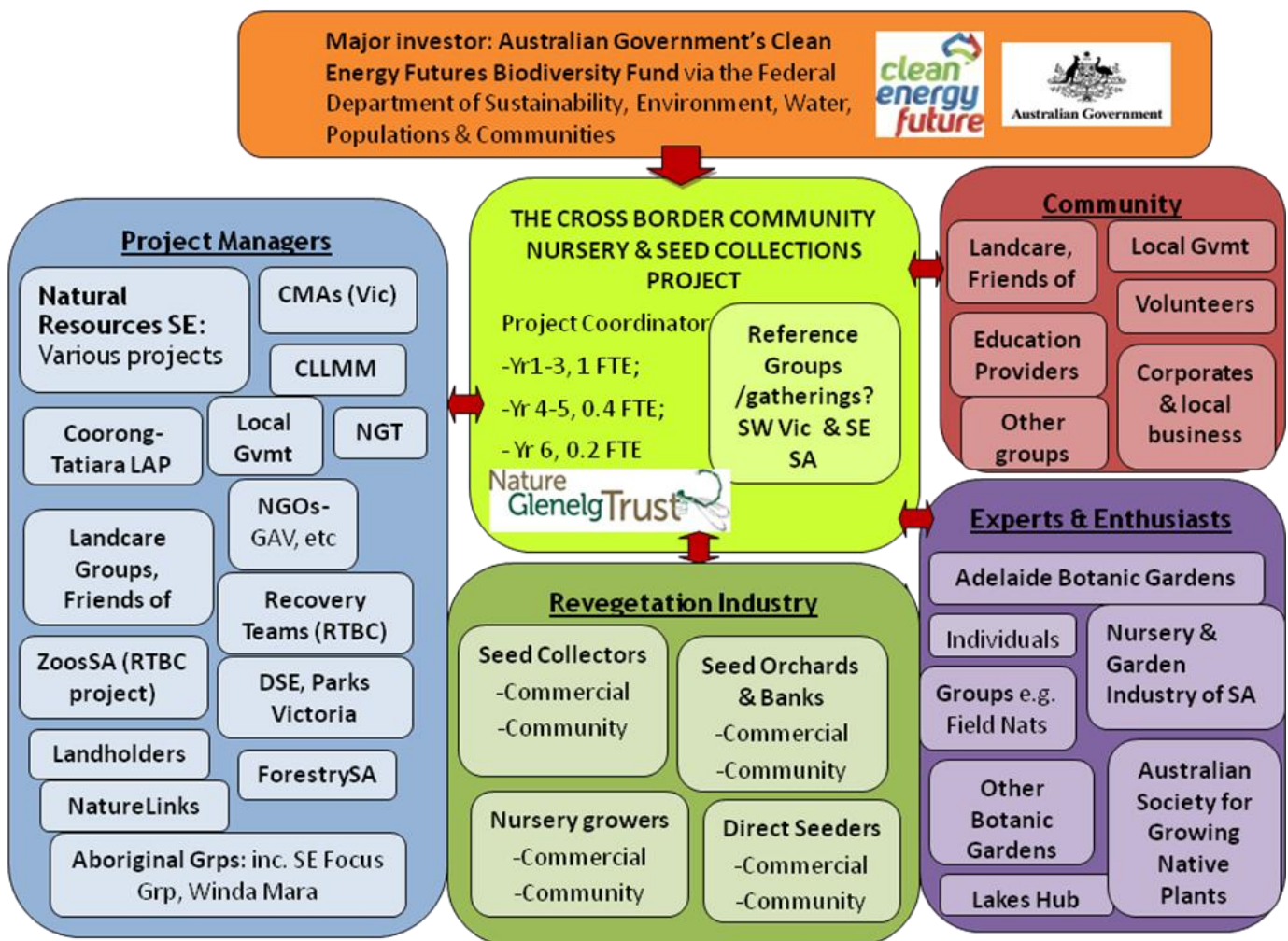
The City of Mount Gambier has generously made a location at Vansittart Park available for establishing our main nursery site to focus on research/growing the hard to grow species.



Not in competition: The Community Nursery Project has come about to create access to a greater diversity of plants for regional revegetation projects. Where existing commercial growers and collectors can be supported to collect and grow a wider range of local species, this will remain our first priority. This means that the community nursery will only grow plants that are not currently grown or available commercially.

Reasons for species not being grown commercially at the moment include the length of time these species require to be ready, and difficulties in propagation or seed collection. Knowledge on growing these plants will be shared with growers as we learn about them, so every opportunity will be provided for these plants to be grown commercially, enabling the community nursery to tackle new species.

The cost structure of plants and seed the community nursery produces will be comparable with (not cheaper than) what people expect from commercial growers. Volunteers are critical in ensuring that we can produce these more labour intensive plants and seed at a feasible price for revegetation projects. All proceeds from plant and seed sales will go to help cover the running costs of the nursery.



To find out more contact: Ken Baker, Nursery Project Co-ordinator on: 0437 597 685 or ken.baker@natureglenelg.org.au.

For more information, go to www.natureglenelg.org.au. Subscribe to our blog and keep up to date with all the latest news on the project and other happenings.