

# Join the Voluntary Conservation Area Platform



## *Do you own or manage land? Do you undertake conservation activities?*

If so, we invite you to become a Member of the **VCA Platform**. Working through an international coalition of partners, we are building a new social movement to conserve our planet, hectare by hectare. You are most welcome to join.

**VCA Membership** offers individuals, local communities, and private companies the opportunity to be recognised for their voluntary area-based conservation efforts.

Any area which is being managed to deliver conservation outcomes can be registered as a **Voluntary Conservation Area (VCA)**. The area could be a farm, a forest, a recreational or industrial area, a housing development, or a private estate.

The VCA Platform is an inclusive, voluntary platform for recognising and encouraging positive area-based actions across the planet to conserve the areas where we live and work.

## *What do we mean by area-based conservation?*

We follow the IUCN definition – conservation is “the management of human use of the biosphere so that it may yield the greatest sustainable benefit...” Thus, conservation is positive, embracing:

- Preservation;
- Maintenance;
- Sustainable Utilisation;
- Restoration; and
- Enhancement of the Natural Environment.”

Importantly, conservation is not just about preserving or protecting nature. Conservation can also include management plans to restore a degraded area, to enhance an area’s natural environment, or to utilise an area’s living natural resources sustainably.

We aim to recognise the diversity of commitments undertaken voluntarily by public, private, and community land managers to conserve nature.

## *What are the benefits and costs of becoming a VCA Member?*

Through becoming a **VCA Member**, you will be recognised for your efforts to conserve our planet.

Your voluntary conservation commitments will become visible to key stakeholders including neighbours, investors, donors, customers, local authorities, friends, and family.

You will be joining a growing and dynamic social movement of like-minded conservationists with whom you can exchange experiences.

Our aim is to recognise and encourage you, your family, your friends, and your colleagues to conserve the areas where we live or work.

**There is no membership fee.** You will, however, need to prepare a conservation management plan for your area. More details are on the VCA website.

We are, of course, happy to assist you in becoming a member. Ask us about initially joining the VCA Platform as a VCA Bronze Member.

*To get started, please go to: [earthmind.org/vca/register](http://earthmind.org/vca/register)*

## How to become a VCA Member

To become a **VCA Bronze Member**, ask a Silver or Gold Member to nominate you.

To become a **VCA Silver Member**, submit a conservation management plan and a letter of support.

To become a **VCA Gold Member**, also submit an audit of the plan by an approved VCA auditor.

1. VCA Silver	2. VCA Gold	3. Staying a Member
<p>↓</p> <p>1.1 Draft a <b>conservation management plan</b> including a description of the area, conservation status and conservation management.</p>	<p>↓</p> <p>2.1 Draft a <b>conservation management plan</b> including a description of the area, conservation status and conservation management.</p>	<p>↓</p> <p>3.1 Annually prepare a <b>conservation performance update</b> annually including conservation outcomes and lessons learned.</p>
<p>↓</p> <p>1.2 Secure a <b>letter of support</b> from an independent, reputable professional (recommended).</p>	<p>↓</p> <p>2.2 Also secure a <b>management plan audit</b> from an approved VCA Auditor who will review documents, visit the area, and conduct interviews.</p>	<p>↓</p> <p>3.2 To maintain VCA Gold status, also secure a <b>performance update audit</b> from a VCA Auditor, who will, at a minimum, review documents.</p>
<p>↓</p> <p>1.3 Prepare the <b>webpage information and files</b> for constructing the area's VCA webpage.</p>	<p>↓</p> <p>2.3 Prepare the <b>webpage information and files</b> for constructing the area's VCA webpage.</p>	<p>↓</p> <p>3.3 <b>Update the VCA webpage</b>, as needed, e.g. new text, links, or photos.</p>
<p>↓</p> <p>1.4 Submit the plan, the letter, and the webpage items.</p>	<p>↓</p> <p>2.4 Submit the plan, the audit, and the webpage items.</p>	<p>↓</p> <p>3.4 Submit the update, the audit (if done), and webpage updates.</p>
<p>↓</p> <p><b>We will register you as a VCA Silver Member.</b></p> <p>Go to 3. ↗</p>	<p>↓</p> <p><b>We will register you as a VCA Gold Member.</b></p> <p>Go to 3. ↗</p>	<p>↓</p> <p><b>We will maintain your VCA Silver or Gold Membership.</b></p> <p>Repeat 3 annually. ↑</p>

