



Research into the Health, Wellbeing & Social Capital Benefits of Community Involvement in the Management of Land for Conservation

FINAL REPORT

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**Dr. Mardie Townsend
& Dr Megan Moore
Deakin University**

School of Health and Social Development

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1. ABSTRACT

This study employed mixed methods in exploring the health, wellbeing, and social capital benefits gained by community members who are involved in the management of land for conservation. Fifty-one members of TFN groups across rural Victoria and the urban fringe of metropolitan Melbourne responded to a questionnaire relating to their group membership, general health status and community involvement. Their responses were compared to those of 51 controls comprising members of the local community who were not involved in conservation work. The study found that members of TFN groups gain a variety of direct and indirect benefits from their involvement, such as physical exercise, relaxation and personal pleasure. Furthermore, members of the conservation groups reported higher levels of health and wellbeing, a greater level of community involvement, greater satisfaction with friendship networks, and higher levels of creativity than the controls. A number of suggestions are proposed including future research recommendations and ways in which the results of this study could be employed to promote rural health.