



Snapshot 2012-13

Grow West

Grow West is creating major biolinks, healthy waterways, healthy soils and resilient ecosystems in the Upper Werribee Catchment, 50km west of Melbourne. It is an ambitious program of landscape renewal which over the past decade has proven to be one of Victoria's largest revegetation projects.

Grow West's vision is to rejuvenate 10,000 hectares of land by creating links between the Brisbane Ranges National Park, the Lerderderg Gorge State Park and the Werribee Gorge State Park.

It aims to enhance biodiversity, reduce the spread of noxious weeds, improve landholder skills, protect profitable farming land, reduce erosion and improve local amenity. Grow West brings together hundreds of committed landowners, community representatives, project partners and investors to achieve this.

Funding

During 2012/13, the PPWCMA secured \$411,940 to coordinate and undertake projects in the Grow West area, including:

- \$10,000 from Ballarat City Council & Moorabool Shire Council for the Land Fit for Heroes project;
- \$50,000 from partner organisations including the Moorabool Shire Councils, Melbourne Water and Southern Rural Water;
- \$5,000 from Landcare Australia Limited for the annual Grow West Community Planting Day;
- \$338,050 from the Australian Government's Biodiversity Fund for the Brisbane Ranges National Park to Werribee Gorge State Park Biolink; and
- \$8,890 from landholders and other sources.



Myrning Creek – site of the 2012 Grow West Community Planting Day

Projects

The Grow West Project supported site preparation works, revegetation, weed treatment and rabbit control activities. These included:

- **Whitehorse Creek Biolink Project:** A multi-stakeholder project funded by the Department of Environment and Primary Industries (formally DSE) – Vision for Werribee Plains and in partnership with Rowsley Landcare Group, PPWCMA – Grow West Project and Melbourne Water Stream Frontage Program, all of whom are contributing funds, in-kind support and coordination towards the project. The project will implement 58 hectares of revegetation, 70 hectares of protection and enhancement of remnant vegetation, and 6km of waterways fenced and revegetated.
- **Brisbane Ranges to Werribee Gorge Biolink:** Funded through the Federal Government Clean Energy Biodiversity Fund in May 2012 for two years. The project will establish a 12km biolink, 296 hectares of revegetation and 52 hectares of remnant enhancement and protection.
- **VicRoads:** A joint partnership project to achieved extensive woody weed removal and warren destruction in over 110 hectares along the new Western Freeway between Melton and Bacchus Marsh.
- **Ingliston Stage 1:** An Integrated Rabbit Management Field Day was held attracting 60 Natural Resource Management staff and landholders. This stage is now complete.
- **Ingliston Stage 2:** This site has been recognised as a nationally important site for rabbit management and has been included in the validation trial for the Rapid Rabbit Assessment Guide. It is also the primary Victorian research site testing the relationship of dung counts to spotlight and warren monitoring data in the assessment of rabbit populations. Site preparation has been completed for direct seeding to occur later in 2013. This will link the two major tributaries and add significantly to the current Werribee River biolink in Ingliston Park.

Community Engagement

A range of marketing activities was undertaken to build support for Grow West in the local community and enable the delivery of on-ground works. Events and activities held in 2012/13 included:

The 7th annual Grow West Community Planting Day on Sunday 15 July 2012 at David Muir's Property along the Myrmiong Creek. The day involved 200 volunteers planting 6,000 indigenous seedlings. The event featured the Hon. Ryan Smith MP, Minister for Environment and Climate Change planting Grow West's one millionth tree;

Sponsorship of the Grow West Art Prize in the Bacchus Marsh Rotary Art Show; and

A field day demonstrating successes in rabbit management on replanted and naturally regenerated land; attended by over 70 people.



Hon. Ryan Smith MP, Minister for Environment and Climate Change planting Grow West's one millionth tree



2012 Grow West Art Prize Winner

Artist: Brian Nash

Medium: Oil

View: Rowsley Valley, Cut Hill looking east