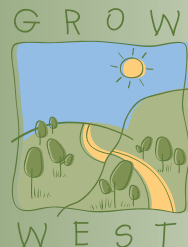


Snapshot 2015/16



Landscape rehabilitation on a grand scale

For more than 10 years, Grow West has worked to improve degraded landscapes around Bacchus Marsh, in Melbourne's west. Its vision is to rejuvenate up to 10,000 hectares and develop vegetation connections across landscapes between the Brisbane Ranges National Park, Werribee Gorge State Park and Lerderderg State Park.

To date, Grow West has worked with numerous landholders on revegetation projects ranging from 1 – 100+ hectares. In total, over 1,900 hectares have been revegetated with the aim to enhance biodiversity, reduce the spread of noxious weeds and pest animals, reduce erosion and improve landholder skills and participation.

Grow West brings together planners and practitioners from a range of organisations and community groups including Moorabool Shire Council, Melbourne Water, Southern Rural Water, Parks Victoria, Department of the Environment, Land, Water and Planning, Conservation Volunteers Australia and the Moorabool Landcare Network.

The Port Phillip & Westernport CMA coordinates Grow West on behalf of these partner organisations by convening an Implementation Committee, managing the project's finances and employing project staff who lead the delivery of on-ground works, reporting and promotion.

Achievements in 2015/16

During 2015/16, Grow West secured funding to continue the delivery of on-ground works and coordination including:

- A share of \$2.08 million from Lead West to assist in the delivery of the Australian Government's 'Greening the West – 1 Million Trees' project. The Port Phillip & Westernport CMA, through the Grow West and Greening the Maribymong projects will deliver 700,000 trees in the Upper Werribee and Maribymong Catchments.
- \$30,000 from partner organisation, including the Moorabool Shire Council, Melbourne Water and Southern Rural Water to contribute to the ongoing planning and coordination of Grow West.

In preparation for the implementation of the 'Greening the West – 1 Million Trees' project, due for roll-out in 2016/17, extensive site assessments across 30 different sites were undertaken in order to identify the most suitable locations for these extensive revegetation works.

Ongoing emphasis on community engagement was also achieved during 2015/16. At the annual Grow West Community Planting Day, held in July 2015, over 5,000 seedlings were planted across six hectares of land, contributing to the overall goals of the Grow West project. This event also marked the 10 year anniversary of Grow West Community Engagement – a significant achievement.



Volunteers at the Grow West 10 Year Anniversary Tree Planting Day

Looking ahead

During 2016/17, sites will be finalised for the 'Greening the West – 1 Million Trees' works with site preparation to commence. The large-scale tree-planting effort is due to commence in the second half of 2016/17.

Grow West will continue its engagement with the wider community through the annual Grow West Community Planting Day. The annual event attracts over 200 people from the local community and it is anticipated that this level of engagement will continue.



Revegetation works along Whitehorse Creek in the Rowsley Valley

Case study - Grow West celebrates 10 years of community engagement

In July 2015, over 200 volunteers helped celebrate 10 years of community engagement at the 10th Annual Grow West Community Planting Day. To mark this special occasion, over 5,000 native trees and shrubs were planted on John and Tristia Lahey's 105 hectare property in Rowsley.

This property was chosen due to its close proximity to Werribee Gorge State Park and to complement the extensive restoration works that the Lahey's have already undertaken on the land.

Community groups involved in the Community Planting Day included the Victorian National Parks Association, Friends of Werribee Gorge and Long Forest Mallee, Bacchus Marsh Lions Club and the Victorian Mobile Landcare Group.

The event provided community volunteers with the opportunity to take part in practical landscape restoration works and work towards making Melbourne's west greener. The event also provided volunteers with a valuable social and networking opportunity and a great sense of achievement after planting 5,000 seedlings during the day.



Volunteers take part in Grow West's 10 Year Anniversary Community Planting Day