



Photography: Peter Chaloner

A GREENER, BRIGHTER FUTURE

GROW WEST

A MULTI-GENERATIONAL PROGRAM

Since 2003, 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.

FACILITATION

Over the past decade, the Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority, has facilitated a major project in the Upper Werribee Catchment, 70km west of Melbourne, called Grow West.

The program was born from a ground swell of people in the late 1990s who felt that a coordinated approach was required to address some of the costly land degradation issues. Local groups and organisations were addressing these issues in an isolated manner; in a conventional way. The word 'collaboration' wasn't used or practiced well.

COLLABORATION

The community saw that there had to be a better way forward if they were to make inroads with these issues. The word collaboration was put on the table, a vision was created and in 2003 the community officially launched the Grow West program.

Over the past 15 years Grow West has collaborated with over 30 organisations, businesses, community & service groups and governments. The strength of Grow West is how it can bring people together with a vision for change and how to apply a practical approach to the issues that impact the local community.

VISION

With its vision well on track with connecting large areas of public reserves; Brisbane Ranges National Park, Werribee Gorge State Park and the Lerderderg State Park, through a mosaic of restoration works on private property, one can report that the model and the mechanisms employed have helped the program flourish; it continues to ride the highs and low of the funding cycle and continues to gain support with the community and various environmental organisations.



LANDSCAPE

2500 hectares have been planted by Grow West over the past 15 years



PLANTS

1,343,000 plants have been planted in the Upper Werribee Catchment.



PEOPLE

48 landholders have been engaged and over 3,000 volunteers have helped plant 56,000 indigenous plants at 15 community planting day events.



COLLABORATION

Grow West have partnered with over 30 organisations; local business, government agencies & authorities, local councils, landcare and friends of groups, service groups and charities.



FUNDING

Grow West have received funding, co-funded and supported projects with organisations such as Melbourne Water, Southern Rural Water, Moorabool Shire Council, Moorabool Landcare Network, Australian and State Governments, Friends of Werribee Gorge & Long Forest Mallee, Pentland Hills and Rowsley Landcare Groups, 15 Trees, Bendigo Bank and many more.



1960s



2018

ROWSLEY VALLEY CASE STUDY

The Rowsley Valley is a picturesque volcanic lava flow located 50kms north-west of Melbourne and was among the earliest regions in Victoria to be settled by Europeans.

Given the fragility of the soils in Rowsley, it did not take long for the valley to be denuded and become prone to erosion. To make matters worse, in 1865 rabbits began to spread across Victoria, with Rowsley Valley becoming heavily infested; preventing natural regeneration of indigenous plants and pasture species.

In addition with the drought of the 1980s, the bare ground provided a great canvas for Serrated Tussock to take a strong hold in the valley. With rabbits, erosion and Serrated Tussock, the land was becoming costly to manage for farming and environmental purposes.

Grow West was born in the Rowsley Valley, and over the past 15 years has coordinated a variety of projects to address these issue. Over 1500 ha have been planted with indigenous and farm forestry species on 124 sites with over 20 landholders involved with the program.

www.growwest.com.au



Grow West's annual community planting day event attracts 200 people

