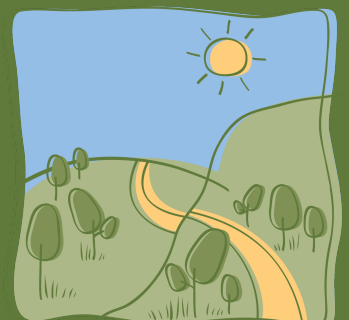


2021-22 Snapshot



Image: Kel Shields planting site 2021,
courtesy of Helena Lindorff

G R O W



W E S T

www.growwest.com.au

Landscape rehabilitation on a grand scale

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.

Grow West works with a range of landholders on revegetation projects of all sizes. Over 2,500 hectares in total has been revegetated, enhancing biodiversity, reducing the spread of noxious weeds and pest animals, reducing erosion and improving landholder skills and participation.

The success of the project is due to the strong collaboration between the organisations and community, including: Port Phillip & Westernport CMA, Moorabool Shire Council, Melbourne Water, Southern Rural Water, Parks Victoria, Department of the Environment, Land, Water and Planning, Moorabool Landcare Network, and landholder representatives.



Move to Melbourne Water

At the beginning of 2022, Grow West made the move to Melbourne Water. The Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority was integrated into Melbourne Water on 1 January 2022. This means the catchment and waterways management across the Port Phillip and Westernport region will now come under a single, integrated entity with a shared vision to improve and enhance our land, water and biodiversity.

Since the start of the year, Melbourne Water has hosted the Grow West program, allowing Grow West to continue its strong history of delivering important on-ground outcomes through collaboration and strong partnerships.

Achievements in 2021-22



2.5 hectares
revegetated



4,000 seedlings planted



Partner contribution of
\$50,000 to support the
coordination of
Grow West.



14 organisations
and groups
involved



1 landholder
engaged due to
Covid 19



5 volunteers

Planting at Kel Shields Flora Reserve

It was a difficult year for holding community events due to Covid-19. Plans for the event were cancelled twice, hence the 4,000 plants ended up being put in the ground by contractors. The planting day site was located at Kel Shields Flora Reserve in Bacchus Marsh, a five-hectare reserve that forms an important urban biolink, connecting the escarpment with the Werribee River that runs through town.

The reserve supports a diverse understory of native grasses and shrubs and would benefit from the revegetation of native canopy trees to improve the biodiversity of the area. Early this year two Working for Victoria Crews, employed by the Port Phillip and Westernport CMA and one council crew helped remove a large volume of Boxthorns and Prickly Pear from the site with council following up with the removal of a number of large peppercorn trees.

It is envisaged that the reserve will become an important thoroughfare for the community, with walking tracks connecting new suburbs of Bacchus Marsh to the train station and main street. This planting could not have occurred without the kind sponsorship from Bendigo Bank, Fifteen Trees, Natural Resources Conservation League of Victoria and Suregro Treemax.



Three Rivers Project

This project was set up to enhance habitat in the Upper Werribee and Moorabool Catchments, especially focusing on the Werribee River, Lerderderg River and Moorabool River. This project will run until the end of December, 2022 and on ground works will consist of: the 2022 Grow West Community Planting Day, a landholder plant give away to help revegetate the area, a Moorabool Landcare Network Nursery upgrade, and pest management on private land that adjoins Parks Victoria land. The Three Rivers project, was provided via Parks Victoria through funding from DELWP.

To date:

- Moorabool Landcare Network Nursery upgrade initiated
- Plants prepared for landholder giveaway
- Planning underway for Community Planting Day



Winning artwork

The 50th anniversary Bacchus Marsh Rotary Art Show was held this year. Artists of all levels are invited to enter a work for the Grow West art prize in any medium that expresses their understanding and appreciation of the work done to protect the precious, yet fragile, environment in the Grow West area. The prize was awarded to Ray Rattenbury for the beautiful artwork titled "Kangaroo".



Looking Forward

2022-23 will focus on a revegetation project at Pelican Point on the Werribee River in Hopetoun Park. The area will be right at the intersection of the Djerrivarrh Creek and the Werribee River as the Werribee flows into the Melton Reservoir. This site is known to be home to many threatened species such as the endangered Werribee Blue Box and Growling Grass Frog. Other iconic species such as Platypus and White-bellied Sea Eagles are regularly seen from the site. These species sit within an Ecological Vegetation Class called Plains Woodland/Plains Grassland Mosaic of the Victorian Volcanic Plain Bioregion. Our work along the river here will help to improve the habitat value of this significant link through the landscape.

2022-23 will also finish the work of the Three Rivers project, funded by DELWP. Works to complete, alongside the Community Planting day at Pelican Point, also include completing the landholder plant give away and undertaking pest animal control adjacent to Parks Victoria reserves.



For more information on Grow West:

Lindy MacRaild

Grow West Program Coordinator

Email: lindy.macraild@melbournewater.com.au

www.growwest.com.au

