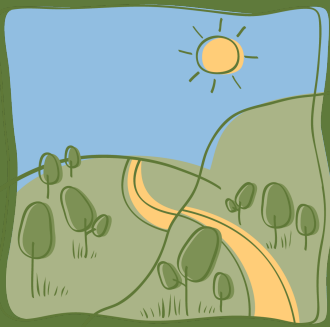


2023-24 SNAPSHOT



G R O W



W E S T

Landscape rehabilitation on a grand scale

Since 2004, 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 2500 hectares have 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 organisations and the community, including: Melbourne Water, Moorabool Shire Council, City of Melton, Southern Rural Water, Greater Western Water, Parks Victoria, Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action and Moorabool Landcare Network.

Melbourne Water coordinates Grow West on behalf of these partner organisations, guided by the community.



Grow West community planting day, Central Highlands Water Treatment Plant, Ballan, 2023



7 hectares
revegetated



11,000 seedlings
planted
9,000 seedlings for
donations



Partner
contributions of
\$58,000 to support
the coordination of
Grow West.



15 organisations
and groups
involved



3 landholders
engaged



5 events with 386
participants

Planting near the Werribee River, Ballan

Grow West partnered with Central Highlands Water to host its planting day at the Ballan Wastewater Treatment Plant. We planted along an escarpment of a tributary near the confluence with the Werribee River and also through a paddock linking vegetation in the rail reserve with the escarpment. 140 volunteers planted 5,000 seedlings. The iconic Platypus is regularly seen in this stretch of the Werribee River. This site sits within an Ecological Vegetation Class called Plains Grassy Woodland of the Victorian Volcanic Plain Bioregion. As a result, the conservation status of the vegetation community along this whole corridor is endangered, even though some of the species are referred to as common. Our work in this area helps to improve the habitat value of this significant link through the landscape.



20 years of Grow West

We had a wonderful year in 2023 celebrating Grow West reaching 20 years of age. Part of the celebration was the ambitious target of putting 20,000 seedlings into the Grow West landscape during the year. Through working with partners we were able to achieve this goal. The Grow West planting day was a wonderful way to come together and celebrate and contribute 5,000 seedlings towards this target. The remaining 15,000 seedlings were put into the landscape through tree planting projects and also donations of seedlings to council, Landcare groups and Friends of groups.

We undertook a review of the Grow West program that looked back over the last twenty years and gave recommendations for the future. The review found that Grow West is very well respected for making remarkable environmental outcomes at the landscape level through creating biolinks and connectivity of habitat. Through working with our partners, Grow West will continue to make a lasting impact on the landscape.



Growing Waterway Knowledge and Engagement in the West

This two-year project to increase community participation, stewardship and capacity; and to value and take action to improve waterways was completed in July. These sessions were well attended with very engaged and enthusiastic participants. This project has run 11 community engagement events:

- Three planting days - two community planting days and one school planting.
- Four workshops - iNaturalist training, Nestbox workshop, Horse property training and a dung beetle workshop.
- Four information sessions - Pykes Creek walk and talk, Werribee River school incursion, Gardens for Wildlife session and Platypus movie night.



Looking Forward

2024-25 will include:

- A revegetation project along the Korjammunnip Creek, Ballan. This is an important site in the landscape, as this creek runs into the Werribee River and contributes to connectivity through the landscape. The iconic platypus is one of many animals that is known to frequent this site.
- Initiation of a four year project in Eynesbury that will rehabilitate a section of degraded woodland.
- A five year project working to protect and raise awareness of the Natural Temperate Grassland of the Victorian Volcanic Plains that is just beginning.



For more information on Grow West:

Lindy MacRaid

Grow West Program Coordinator

Email: lindy.macraid@melbournewater.com.au

www.growwest.com.au