



2022-23 SNAPSHOT



Creating a web of green spaces across Melbourne's south-east

Living Links is an urban nature project working to create a web of high quality, interconnected green spaces across Melbourne's south-eastern suburbs.

By improving the connections between the many parks, reserves, open spaces, coasts, beaches, pathways, rivers, creeks and wetlands, we aim to make this area a world-class urban ecosystem. This will improve habitat for wildlife, as well as making it easier for people to experience the many benefits of connecting with nature as part of their daily lives.

Living Links is a collaboration between 18 organisations (councils, government agencies and community/interest groups) all working together towards our shared vision.

Our Catchments Our Communities

In 2020/21 Living Links was successful in obtaining \$325,000 in funding through the OCOC Program for the Urban Forest Project. The Living Links Urban Forest aims to enhance integrated water management, biodiversity protection, climate change mitigation, increased involvement from research partners, urban cooling and shading, community engagement and education, and enhance human health and wellbeing. On ground works have commenced and are scheduled to be complete by June 2024.

In 2022/23 the OCOC Urban Forest Project delivered the following overall outcomes:

- 15.5 hectares of revegetation
- 180 hectares of weed control
- 12 ecological assessments
- 3 videos produced
- 5 written publications
- 234 volunteers contributed 916 hours for tree planting activities
- 223 residents attended Nature Strip Planting workshops



Our Catchments Our Communities Living Links Urban Forest Highlights:

Climate Ready Research Plot Project

The 'Climate Ready Research Plot Project' is a partnership with Bunurong Land Council, Federation University, Melbourne University, the City of Greater Dandenong (CGD), Knox and Maroondah City Councils.

An additional \$223,000 was leveraged from the Melbourne Water Biodiversity fund: \$69,437 for Federation University to conduct additional monitoring & \$153,488 for CGD to fund materials, additional sites and to project manage implementation and maintenance of the research plots over the next 3 years. Additional Plots have now been added to increase the viability of the data collection. These new plots are in Maroondah & Knox City Councils and are also within the Living Links project area of the Dandenong Creek Catchment.

Planting of the plots has been delayed for 12 months until June 2024, to ensure adequate site preparation requirements are achieved. An additional \$60,000 was leveraged from the Melbourne Water - Liveable Communities, Liveable Waterways Grant for the Bunurong Environment Team to maintain the CGD plots over the initial 3 year period.

Climate Future Plots Working Group members attended the Greening Australia - Haining Farm Climate Plot Workshop on 'restoration and biodiversity conservation in a changing climate'. Additional knowledge was gained, new connections were made, views for the project were consolidated and an additional project partner was gained at Knox City Council.



Federation University measuring plots in the City of Greater Dandenong.



Haining Farm Workshop Participants looking at Climate Plots.



Climate Plots Working Group Members: Daniel Flaim (Maroondah), Jessica O'Keefe (Knox), Kushan Tennakoon (Fed Uni), Melinda Pickup (Greening Australia) & Nicole Palombi (CGD).

Our Catchments Our Communities

Living Links Urban Forest Highlights:



Holmesglen TAFE student tree planting along the Dandenong Creek

City of Greater Dandenong:

The City of Greater Dandenong has already exceeded the required 40 hectares of weed control and the 10 hectares of revegetation is on track to be completed within the project timeframe.

Parks Victoria: Revegetation of Parks Victoria's Police Paddocks site has been delayed due to Traditional Owner permit processes. Therefore, planting and weed control will now commence in Spring at Churchill National Park instead.

Kingston landfill site restoration: Revegetation of Elder Street South Reserve in Kingston, and Cleanaway's 7 hectares of in-kind revegetation at the adjacent Victory Road Landfill site are both complete. These 2 new parks will now join the Kingston 'Chain of Parks', providing valuable open space for the local community. Gas generated from the landfill site will be extracted and used to supply local energy.



Victory Road Reserve Tree Planting



Victory Road Reserve Fenced Gas Extraction Points

Our Catchments Our Communities Living Links Urban Forest Highlights:

Monash City Council: Micro Forest & Nature Strip Planting have commenced at Monash City Council. Monash conducted two well attended Nature Strip Planting workshops and have developed a Nature Strip Planting Council Policy.

Frankston City Council: have also conducted a community engagement and education campaign and developed a Nature Strip Planting Council Policy. Frankston have also established 70 street trees for Urban Cooling benefits.



Nature Strip Planting in Monash Municipality with volunteers



Nature Strip Planting in Monash with native plants

Living Links Ambassador School Program:

The Living Links Ambassador School 2022/23:

The winning school was Lyndale Greens Primary School for an educational activity day planned in September 2023 for: "Knowing the Walk – Exploring the Dandenong Creek between Booth Road and Tirhatuan Road". The day will include Walking the River and wetland, Tree planting, River Detectives water testing, bird watching & litter surveys.



Lyndale Greens Primary School students receiving their Ambassador Schools Certificate

Discover Dandenong Creek Festival:

Discover Dandenong Creek Festival:

Congratulations and thank you to the City of Greater Dandenong for an amazing, well organised festival with perfect weather and over 600 people attending. Other Living Links Partners participating in the festival included: Bunurong Land Council, City of Kingston, Conservation Volunteers Australia, Greater Dandenong Environment Group and Melbourne Water and Parks Victoria. The Living Links tent was well attended with Living Links & Urban Forest information displayed, Living Links Quiz with prizes and an Identification of Dandenong Creek Micro Beastie activity.



Sam Bradley with Platypus - Trent Griffiths



The Koorie Youth Will Shake Spears Dance Group



A well attended Living Links tent

Looking forward:

Living Links Strategic Review:

The Living Links Strategic Plan review will commence in 2024.

OCOC Urban Forest Project:

The OCOC funded Urban Forest Projects will be completed in 2024, however it is expected that the Climate Ready Research Plots establishment will continue until 2026, with a view that the monitoring and research will continue for the next 2 decades in partnership with Federation University.

Melbourne Water Research Partnership Projects:

Melbourne Water will be commencing another 5 year Research Partnership with Melbourne University and RMIT for 24 exciting research projects designed to increase our understanding of waterway and catchment management. The prospectus of these research projects can be viewed on the Living Links website: livinglinks.com.au

Urban Rivers & Catchments Grant: The Living Links Partnership will be exploring opportunities for a joint application to enhance habitat for threatened species remaining in the Dandenong Creek Catchment.

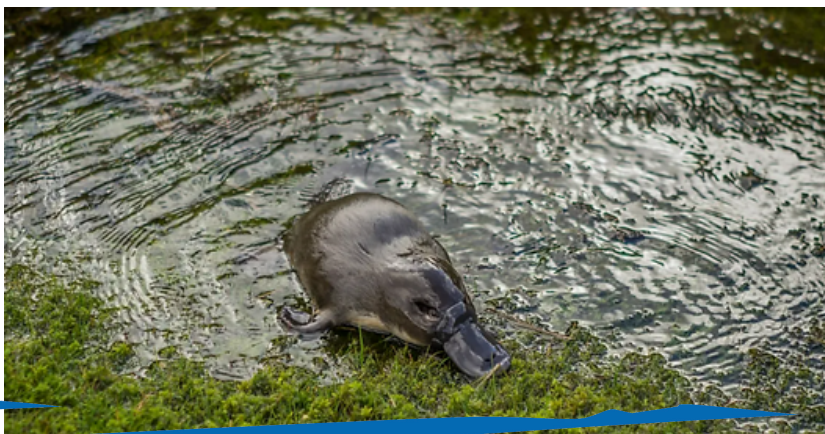
Living Links Conference - early May 2024:

The Living Links Conference for Friends Groups will be held in early May 2024. This will be a great opportunity to acknowledge and thank the Friends Groups for all the great work they do to improve the health of our Dandenong Creek Catchment. More details will be available in 2024.

Living Links Website Mapping Update: The RMIT 'Living Links: Map the Gaps Report, 2020' will be uploaded onto the Living Links Website's Interactive Map, to support future priority project planning. Melbourne Water - 'Urban Cooling Mapping' will also be added as layer to the Living Links website to assist with prioritisation of Urban Cooling canopy planting planning.



**Dandenong Creek
Threatened Species
Dwarf Galaxis**



**Dandenong Creek Catchment
Threatened Species
Platypus**

Living Links 2022-23 Achievements



476 hectares

of native vegetation
managed or established

105,771+ native plants

planted to improve habitat
and strengthen corridors



119 kilometres

of riparian vegetation
enhanced along waterways

8.5+ kilometres

of recreational trails
established or improved



32,457+ hours

of volunteer time spent
caring for the environment



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