

From
the
ground
Up

Film Festival



Welcome to the launch of 'From the Ground Up' – our Inaugural film festival



We acknowledge today's film screening is on Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Country and we pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians of the land and water on which we come together.

Melbourne Water respectfully acknowledges the Bunurong, Gunaikurnai, Taungurung, Wadawurrung and Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land and water on which we rely and operate. We pay our deepest respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.



Today's screening will showcase some of the passionate and industrious environmental volunteers making impact on land and waterways across the Melbourne Water catchment.

The eight inspiring short films show the diversity of efforts and activities which define environmental volunteers across more than 500 groups working to improve soils, waterways, critical species and other environmental values in our region. Along with a healthier environment the work brings connection for people and a valuable outlet in a third place outside of the workplace and family.

Our feature film rounds out the session following Costa Georgiadis as he discovers the wonderful groups and soulful lead characters of the stories – we hope

by sharing the journey of a few, many others here will be inspired to take action for the environment.

We will close by meeting some of our staff, volunteers and Landcare professionals who champion our sector and build projects, hope and commitment from the ground up.

The project is supported by Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action and the Victorian Landcare Program. Thanks also to Costa Georgiadis for comparing today's event. We thank Michael Portway and Tim Brown of Grassland Films for their expertise in delivering these invaluable films and everyone who shared their work and stories.



Narrap Rangers



To open the event we will receive a Welcomeproduced by First Nations filmmaker Daniel King and creative partner Ben Pederick from First Person Films. This video is valuable intellectual property and is used to explain the impact of the Narrap Rangers to industry partners at Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage sessions. The Narrap Rangers are a previous state and national

Our first film is called Healing Country, an inspiring story following the growth of the Narrap Rangers, the natural resource management arm of Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation. Healing Country was

Landcare award winner for their work.

Bass Coast Landcare Network



Victoria's biggest and busiest Landcare network is the **Bass Coast Landcare Network**. It has used funding bids and council contracts to build its footprint over more than 20 years making as lasting impact on the environment. But it's been the gentle building of relationships with landholders that underlines its work. In this story we meet Landcare Facilitator Dave Bateman and three landholders who have joined the Bass Coast Landcare Network cause of transforming landscapes.



Northern Yarra Landcare Network

In Landcare people rally around a common cause. In the case of **Northern Yarra Landcare Network** the target was weeds, specifically weeds such as blackberry which had proliferated in the fire-ravaged landscapes, post-Black Saturday. With the disaster further in the past their diverse membership are still finding ways to keep weeds out of the Yarra Valley including with some natural mower mouths, the humble goat. As Landcare Facilitator Rob Fallon explains, for this network, pragmatism endures.



Mornington Peninsula Intrepid Landcare



Intrepid Landcare aspires to give would-be youthful volunteers a purpose to follow through on their environmental passions. Usually its multi-day leadership and enviro retreats that distill the vision of these groups. In this film we meet Amy Henson and other founders of the Mornington Peninsula Intrepid Landcare group, documenting how young people interact with nature in these busy times.

TreeProject



Some ideas are so empowering success is inevitable. This is true for the **TreeProject** formula. For more than 30 years volunteer staffed depots have distributed soil, seeds and growing kits to suburban families. Four months later a bounty of healthy seedlings are collected bound for the country where they shape biolinks and shelterbelts. In this film we meet TreeProject manager Susi Milton, the urban growers and volunteers who shape TreeProject.



Nangana Seedies



Repairing the environment starts with a caring eye for nature and an awareness of its cycles. South of Yellingbo are a group of women who converge weekly in all forms of weather to find, gather, clean and transport seed from the source. **Nangana Seedies** are self-taught observers of nature. Julie Thompson explains the intrinsic knowledge sharing this group gathers and shares, particularly collecting seed next to Noel Gross who has been combing the bush for decades. Collectively the group is returning habitat to the Helmeted Honeyeater and Lowlands Leadbeater Possum.

Urban Bushland Initiative

Environment volunteering is full of feel-good opportunities like tree plantings but the challenge is to find and bring new people to these activities. The **Urban Bushland Initiative** finds its volunteers by knocking on doors, by posters left in cafe walls and in savvy social media posts. For Alex Paporakis, diverse, colourful planting days are all small steps to bringing nature back to suburban Melbourne.



Friends of Iramoo



Grasslands in Melbourne's west are encroached on by some of the nastiest and most pervasive weed species including serrated tussock and Chilean Needle Grass, threatening to overrun them. A target for developers, volunteers for grasslands like Megan O'Shea and the **Friends of Iramoo** go the extra mile knocking down the weeds and championing the delicate niche plants and animals that prove just how dynamic these endangered grasslands are.

Nugal Biik Junior Rangers

Re-establishing a relationship with Country is what the **Nugal Biik Junior Rangers Program** is putting in place. Thanks to the efforts of Sharna Brown, aboriginal children from Melbourne's north are experiencing a classroom on Country. In its early stages Nugal Biik Junior Rangers hopes to be a catalyst for First Nations youth finding pathways to secure lives and employment, using Country as the teacher.



From the Ground Up feature film



The eight short films screened today were filmed between March 2023 and February 2024.

The body of work which Tim Brown and Michael Portway had shot and edited was significant – many of the films featured multiple engaging personalities and inspiration stories fuelled by nature and social connection.

So it was decided to produce a longer film combining all the great stories uncovered over the project. From the Ground Up became the working title and planning for a film festival commenced. It was decided to make this project a celebration.

Costa Georgiadis, a Junior Landcare Ambassador with Landcare Australia was approached to narrate the project and generously agreed. In May 2024 four of the film subjects David Bateman, Susi Milton, Alex Paporakis and Sharna Brown met Costa and took part in more filming

at Thompson St Reserve, Avondale Heights and the old saleyards in Kensington.

We chose to screen today's films on the same day as the Victorian Landcare Awards - collectively the two events celebrate the effort and commitment of those working for the environment, their communities and Country. Thanks to today's volunteers from DEECA and Melbourne Water in supporting the running of the event and to our guests.

The From the Ground Up Film Festival encapsulates how community led environmental projects are genuinely important to environmental restoration and give agency to people who want to do their bit.

We also hope you have found seeds of inspiration in today's films. Thanks for coming!

How Melbourne Water supports environmental volunteers

Melbourne Water, as a Catchment Management Authority supports Landcare and other environmental groups through its Regional Landcare Coordination role.



This includes administering the Victorian Landcare Grants, coordination of regional forums and other capacity building events, support and interaction with locally employed Landcare Facilitators and collecting and sharing Landcare information and its successes.



More than 500 groups with an on-ground focus operate within the Melbourne Water catchment area. These groups contain thousands of regular and occasional volunteers. Groups articulate and develop strategies, record hundreds of thousands of volunteer hours, leverage other investment and form partnerships with agencies, tertiary institutions, traditional owners and other community groups.

The Regional Landcare Coordination role complements and supports this work.



From the Ground Up Film Festival Partners



