

Media Release

The Hon Lisa Neville MP

Minister for the Coordination of Environment, Land, Water, and Planning – COVID-19
Minister for Police and Emergency Services
Minister for Water



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CLEANING BLITZ FOR MELBOURNE WATERWAYS

A small army of Victorians will clean up litter, remove weeds and help make local rivers and creeks more beautiful as part of the Victorian Government's plan to keep Victorians working through the coronavirus pandemic.

Minister for Water Lisa Neville today announced over 110 people will take on roles cleaning and protecting Melbourne's suburban waterways through the Government's \$500 million Working for Victoria fund.

The fund creates employment for people who have lost their jobs due to the impacts of coronavirus, while delivering valuable community services. The program has placed almost 7,000 workers since its launch in April.

More than 90 employees will remove rubbish, undertake invasive weed management and improve vegetation along the Yarra, Maribyrnong and Werribee rivers, as well as throughout the Dandenong and Bayside region.

The improvement works will be delivered in collaboration with the Yarra River Keeper Association, along with community groups and local councils along urban waterways.

A recent series of litter clean-up 'blitz' events along the Yarra and Maribyrnong rivers saw almost 40 tonnes of rubbish cleaned out, improving the health of the waterways and making them more enjoyable for Victorians getting out for essential exercise during coronavirus restrictions.

In addition, more than 20 new employees will work in administration roles for Melbourne Water, supporting the waterway health blitz and other important projects in the greater Melbourne catchment area.

The initiative builds on the \$48 million for shovel ready water projects announced recently under the Government's \$2.7 billion Building Works program. These projects will modernise irrigation, secure water supplies through recycling and stormwater use and assist with bushfire recovery.

The Victorian Government has already delivered \$222 million record funding for waterway and catchment health from 2016-2020 - improving over 1,500 kilometres of waterways and over 2,600 hectares of riparian land.

People looking for work and businesses searching for staff can register with Working for Victoria at vic.gov.au/workingforvictoria.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Water Lisa Neville

"Local rivers and creeks have become even more valuable in recent months, with people getting out of the house to exercise and get some fresh air – this will make them cleaner and healthier."

"It's great to see Working for Victoria making a big contribution to improving our waterways, while also keeping people in work through the coronavirus pandemic."

Quotes attributable to Minister for Employment Jaala Pulford

"This is about creating jobs for Victorians and providing real benefits for our community."

"Working for Victoria has provided thousands of Victorians with employment and we'll continue to support people who've been knocked around by the pandemic to get back earning a wage."

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