

Media Release

The Hon Harriet Shing MP
Minister for Water
Minister for Regional Development
Minister for Commonwealth Games Legacy
Minister for Equality



Friday, 16 June 2023

PROTECTING THE YARRA RIVER FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

The Andrews Labor Government is investing in the future of the Birrarung (Yarra River) by improving native habitat along the river as part of *Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo* (the Yarra Strategic Plan).

Minister for Water Harriet Shing today announced \$1.65 million for transformative projects that enhance collaboration between agencies, the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and Bunurong Traditional Owners and community groups to better protect and manage the Birrarung.

The investment will strengthen the habitat values through a river wide planting program, designed and implemented in consultation with Traditional Owners.

The Labor Government has invested over \$2.7 million in transformative projects through the Yarra Strategic Plan to bring to life the 50-year Community Vision and Traditional Owner aspirations to help the Yarra River thrive into the future.

The Birrarung is home to native wildlife, with more than 150 species of birds, platypus, koalas, echidnas and more calling it home. Enhancing vegetation along the river will improve water quality and habitat connectivity, helping these species to survive and flourish.

The plan, which is the first step towards achieving an agreed 50-year community vision for the Birrarung, was launched in February last year, ensuring the river and its lands are protected as one living and integrated natural entity.

Implementation of the plan is a partnership with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and Bunurong Traditional Owners agencies, the community and the Birrarung Council. The Birrarung Council is the independent voice of the river – an independent advisory body established by the Minister to advocate for the river’s protection.

This 10-year plan is the first of its kind for Victoria. It brings statutory planning and land and waterway management together for the first time, setting out directions for future land use and development for the entire river corridor.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Water Harriet Shing

“The Birrarung is the lifeblood of our city and this important work being led by Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and Bunurong Traditional Owners will ensure it can continue to be enjoyed now and into the future.”

Quotes attributable to Minister for Planning Sonya Kilkenny

“It’s critical that we protect the significant landscape, environmental and cultural values of the Birrarung – and all of our urban waterways – for the benefit of current and future generations.”

Quotes attributable to Minister for Environment Ingrid Stitt

“Improving habitat along the banks of the Yarra River will help protect the fish and wildlife that depend on this waterway as well as improve the environmental benefits that it provides to Victorians.”