

Media Release

The Hon Harriet Shing MP
Minister for Housing
Minister for Water
Minister for Equality



Monday, 4 December 2023

BIRRARUNG COUNCIL SECURES A STRONG VOICE FOR THE YARRA

The Allan Labor Government is ensuring the continued protection of the Yarra River and its lands for future generations through the critical work of the Birrarung Council.

Minister for Water Harriet Shing announced appointments for the next term of the Birrarung Council, which will continue to be enriched by the voices of the Traditional Owners of the Yarra River, Birrarung.

Chair of the Birrarung Council, Chris Chesterfield has been reappointed along with Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung Traditional Owners Diane Kerr, David Wandin and Andrew Gardiner and Bunurong Traditional Owner Shane Clarke.

The *Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murrong)* Act recognises the Birrarung (the Yarra River and its lands) as 'one living and integrated natural entity' and reflects the existing laws and leadership of the Traditional Owners of the River.

New members welcomed to the Council include Sandra Brizga, David Jones and James Thyer, and Barkandji woman Zena Cumpston. Bronwyn South has been reappointed to the Council with Erin O'Donnell and Alexandra Lee also continuing their terms.

Council members bring extensive knowledge and experience across environmental and agricultural industry groups. The selection process was overseen by an independent selection panel.

The 12 member council is now 50 per cent women – achieving the Labor Government's commitment for equal representation of women on government boards.

The Birrarung Council will be integral to the delivery of the *Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo* (the *Yarra Strategic Plan*) and *Water is Life: Traditional Owner Access to Water Roadmap*.

The Birrarung Council will continue its important work to advocate for the protection of the Yarra River, Birrarung and provide advice on the implementation of *Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo* (the *Yarra Strategic Plan*).

Quotes attributable to Minister for Water Harriet Shing

"The Birrarung is one of the world's great waterways, and the Birrarung Council plays a vital role ensuring the iconic waterway and its surrounding areas are healthy and protected for generations to come."

"These new and returning members of the Birrarung Council, all bring a wealth of experience and expertise that will provide a strong voice championing the interests of the Birrarung."