



THE HON MURRAY WATT MP
Minister for Environment and Water

THE HON GAYLE TIERNEY MP
Minister for Water, Minister for Skills
and TAFE

MEDIA RELEASE

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HELPING PLATYPUS AND THREATENED SPECIES THRIVE ON THE YAROWEE

Corangamite Catchment Management Authority (CMA) and the City of Ballarat have partnered to restore river and water habitats critical for platypus and other threatened species on the Yarrowee River in Sebastopol.

The works form part of the landmark \$24 million 'Platy Patch Project', a four-year, statewide initiative receiving significant co-funding from the Albanese Labor Government, the Allan Labor Government and Melbourne Water.

Member for Ballarat Catherine King and Member for Wendouree Juliana Addison representing Minister for the Environment and Water Murray Watt and Minister for Water Gayle Tierney today visited the local project area, which spans the Yarrowee River in Sebastopol from Docwra Street to Bridge Street.

The river has been facing pressure from urbanisation, including increased stormwater runoff, soil disturbance and bank erosion – factors that impact water quality and biodiversity.

Works will commence in early 2026 and include the large-scale removal of invasive tree species such as willows, desert ash and pine trees. These species restrict waterways, increase flood risks, displace native vegetation, and reduce habitat for platypus and other native species.

Woody weed removal and pest management will also be undertaken within the first year.

Revegetation will occur across winter and spring of 2026 and 2027, using locally indigenous species to stabilise the riverbank, filter pollutants, and provide vital habitat corridors.

Platypus populations across Victoria are declining, with localised extinctions particularly in urban and agricultural landscapes. In 2021 the platypus was listed as Vulnerable under Victoria's Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988. Platypus were detected downstream of the Yarrowee Platy Patch site at Garibaldi during The Great Platypus Search in 2021.

The Yarrowee site is one of two Platy Patch sites managed by Corangamite CMA. The second is being delivered in partnership with the City of Greater Geelong along the Moorabool and Barwon Rivers.

The Project is jointly funded by the Australian Government's Natural Heritage Trust under the Urban Rivers and Catchments Program, the Victorian Government, and Melbourne Water, under the guidance of the Arthur Rylah Institute (ARI), with the support of One Tree Planted, City of Ballarat, Coliban Water, Zoos Victoria, and other Catchment Management Authorities.

Quotes attributable to Federal Minister for the Environment and Water Murray Watt

"Platypus need stable river and stream banks to burrow, as well as plenty of riverbank vegetation and woody habitat to provide food.

"The Albanese Government is proud to work with the Allan Government to support game changing environmental projects right across the state to restore critical habitat for our beloved platypus and other threatened species.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Water Gayle Tierney

"Platypus are considered vulnerable in Victoria, so rehabilitation works funded under the Platy Patch project are providing long term stable environments for them."

"Work to protect and restore Victoria's waterways and catchments is vital to support Australia's iconic wildlife who live our rivers and creeks."

"This is a significant collaboration that brings together extensive knowledge and experience that will ensure we can restore our waterways to a natural state for generations to come."

Quotes attributable to Member for Ballarat Catherine King

"As our communities grow so too does the pressure on local waterways. The work being done here will not only preserve local platypus habitat, it'll create jobs and enhance green spaces that support community wellbeing, and connection to nature.

"This project is a great example of what can be achieved when governments and communities work together to protect our natural environments."

Quotes attributable to Member for Wendouree Juliana Addison

"The work being done here will not only benefit our beloved platypus but also other species that call this waterway home."

Quotes attributable to City of Ballarat Deputy Mayor Cr Ben Taylor

"The Yarrowee River is a treasured part of our city's natural landscape, and this project is an important step in protecting it for future generations, and the City of Ballarat is proud to partner in this initiative that delivers real environmental and social benefits."

ENDS

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