Urban Ripple Project
2024-2026
Restoring the Yarrowee River and its Little Creeks

Victorian Government's Green Links Grants Program Round 1: $701,584
Project Reach: 9.8 km of waterways | Sites Restored: 13 sites | Area Improved: 45.5 ha

Site 1
Ditchfield

Wattle Flat Pootilla Landcare Group



Site map: Site 1 is located in the Ditchfield Bushland Reserve in the suburb of Brown Hill.

The Challenge

Ditchfield Bushland Reserve forms part of an important ecological corridor linking Nerrina Bushland, Creswick Regional Park and the Yarrowee River. The reserve supports diverse native vegetation and is a recognised bird hotspot, providing habitat for woodland and migratory bird species. Key threats include invasive weeds, which degrade habitat quality and limit native vegetation regeneration.

Ecological Target

Native plant species historically occurring at this site were identified using a vegetation mapping tool based on Floristic Mapping Units (FMUs). Mapping indicates that the site previously supported **FMU 23753: Colluvium Transitional Plains Damp Forest** and **FMU 25499 Lancefieldian Damp Forest.** This information has been used to guide ecological management, revegetation, and restoration activities at the site.

Project Aims

- Restore an urban waterway
- Increase wildlife habitat through planting native shrubs and groundcovers
- Improve local amenity for Yarrowee Trail users
- Build on previous restoration works along the Yarrowee River

---

The Restoration

Site Budget

Green Links Funding	In-kind contribution	Total
$36,479	**$16,890***	**$53,369**

*In-kind contribution based on $30 per 563 volunteer hours

Site Preparation

The project began with a coordinated weed control program involving multiple partners. Goldfields Weed Management undertook several rounds of targeted spraying to control gorse and other invasive weeds, while EME Contracting used machinery to remove dense woody weeds from the gully. Prior to these works, the City of Ballarat contributed by felling three large pine trees to improve site access and restoration outcomes. Together, these efforts transformed the site and prepared it for revegetation, with weed mats installed around newly planted seedlings to support their establishment.

Plant Supply

Indigenous seedlings were supplied by Ballarat Wild Plants.

"We've loved adding back about 40 different shrubs and small groundcovers that would once have filled the gully"
– **Stephanie, Wattle Flat Pootilla Landcare Group**





Volunteers planting in a gully in the Ditchfield Bushland Reserve. Photos supplied by WFPLG.

Project Outcomes

Seedlings Planted	Area Restored	Volunteers Engaged	Events Held
1800	1.28 ha	428	17

Community Impact

Wattle Flat Pootilla Landcare Group (WFPLG) has been committed to improving the Ditchfield Reserve area for many years, and the Urban Ripple program provided an opportunity to accelerate restoration efforts and expand community involvement.

The project strengthened partnerships with neighbouring Landcare groups, including the Yarrowee Leigh Catchment Group and Bald Hills Creswick Landcare Group, and significantly raised WFPLG's profile in the Brown Hill community with a number of people attending their first landcare planting or working bee.



Wattle Flat Pootilla Landcare Group members and friends braved the cold weather for an Urban Ripple planting day for National Tree Day in July 2025.

Project Highlights

Being one of many groups, involving hundreds of people working towards the same goal

Seeing new volunteer groups establish further downstream

Improving the diversity of understorey plant species in the reserve

Future Opportunities

Short term	Medium term	Long term
• Follow up weed control with a focus on gorse • Plant maintenance • Continue long-term photo monitoring points	• Weed control • Regular bird surveys • Install and monitor nest boxes • Consider camera wildlife monitoring	• Weed control • Expand revegetation • Improve habitat for threatened species through targeted restoration actions

Before and After





Photo: S.Mahony

Project Partners

Wattle Flat Pootilla Landcare Group • City of Ballarat • Ballarat Wild Plants • Goldfields Weed Management • EME Contracting • Brown Hill Community Newsletter • Smartpix • Victorian Government Green Links Grant Program

A partnership project between the Bunanyung Landscape Alliance and the Yarrowee Leigh Catchment Group.