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

Yarrowee Leigh Catchment Group

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 3
Specimen Vale

Friends of Specimen Vale
(sub group of the Yarrowee Leigh Catchment Group)



Site map - Six areas along Specimen Vale Creek have been planted from Stawell St to Princes Streets in Ballarat East.

The Challenge

Specimen Vale Creek in Ballarat East has been extensively modified and now functions as an urban drainage channel, with sections of the waterway enclosed within a pipe. The Specimen Vale trail winds between Stawell Street and Princes Street and is a much loved track providing a valued community asset. While the creek supports limited remnant native vegetation, previous revegetation efforts have established a diverse range of predominantly native species along the corridor. Significant opportunities remain to further enhance the site through targeted weed control, supplementary planting, and habitat improvements, increasing biodiversity, ecological function, and community recreation.

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**, a vegetation community characterised by eucalypts, grasses, sedges, and a diverse range of native groundcovers.

Project Aims

- Strengthening connections in the community
- Boost urban biodiversity
- Make the creek and trail a better place to enjoy
- Build on previous restoration works along Specimen Vale Creek

---

The Restoration

Site Budget

Green Links Funding	In-kind contribution	Total
$9,428	**$49,200***	**$58,628**

*In-kind contribution based on $30 per 1640 volunteer hours

Site Preparation

Black plastic weed matting from earlier plantings was removed from the sites, which were then mulched and replanted with native seedlings during the group's fortnightly working bees and community planting events. The City of Ballarat played an important role in the project, supplying mulch and equipment and preparing planting holes ahead of community planting days, helping volunteers get more plants in the ground.

Plant Supply

Indigenous seedlings were supplied by the City of Ballarat Community Indigenous Nursery and Ballarat Wild Plants Nursery.



Friends of Specimen Vale volunteers at an Urban Ripple planting day

Project Outcomes

Seedlings Planted	Area Restored	Volunteers Engaged	Events Held
2,000	7.04 ha	820	52

Community Impact

The Urban Ripple project has strengthened community connections while improving the health and recreational value of Specimen Vale Creek and its walking trail. Local schools, including Mount Clear College through its *Pay It Forward* program and St Alipius Primary School, contributed to planting and restoration activities alongside volunteers from Geocaching Victoria.

Throughout the project, the Friends of Specimen Vale Creek continued their fortnightly working bees, helping to deliver project outcomes while enhancing habitat for birds and other wildlife and creating a more attractive and enjoyable space for the community.

A highlight of the project was the National Tree Day planting event in July 2026 supported by the City of Ballarat, which provided opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to participate.

"What's been most rewarding is seeing the connections this project has created between Landcare, Council and the local community. It has generated real enthusiasm among our members and inspired a future goal to establish wetlands"
– Sue Wylie, Friends of Specimen Vale (FOSV)



Volunteer Tim was ready for planting on National Tree Day.



Friends of Specimen Vale, Yarrowee Leigh Catchment Group and students from Mount Clear College at a planting day.

Project Highlights

Increasing the momentum of the Friends of Specimen Vale Group

Connections between urban landcare, local government and local residents to achieve a shared outcome

Future Opportunities

Short term	Medium term	Long term
• Continue weed control • Maintain planted areas • Maintain access requirements for City of Ballarat management • Establish long term photo monitoring points	• Install nest boxes and bat boxes for an immediate impact on habitat	• Expand revegetation works along Specimen Vale Creek once existing sites are established • Establish wetland areas to improve habitat values

Before and After





Project Partners

Friends of Specimen Vale (FOSV) • City of Ballarat • City of Ballarat Community Indigenous Nursery • Mount Clear College • St Alipius Parish School • Ballarat Wild Plants Nursery • Geocaching Victoria • Victorian Government Green Links Grant Program

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