

RETURNING THE BUSH TO A SECTION OF THE YARROWEE RIVER

Project supported by Victorian Landcare Support Grant, financial year 2016 – 2017

History

The Garibaldi Bridge Reserve has had extensive work done over the past 17 years, to restore the degraded and eroded river banks by revegetation with local riparian tree and understorey species.



What it was like in 1960



What it is like today **TAKE PHOTO FROM BRIDGE**



Section where restoration planting failed

This work was carried out by a combination of contract planters and school groups under the coordination of the Leigh Catchment Group at least 3 years ago. Whereas Garibaldi Landcare Group (GLG) has taken on Garibaldi Bridge Reserve to develop and maintain, the planting work was not overseen by nor “owned” by GLG, and care of the newly planted tubestock did not occur. The survival rate of the planting is estimated at less than 5%. The most successful species were *Poa labillardierei* and *Leptospermum myrsinoides*, in one gully, indicating that dryness was the main issue.

PHASE 1 - Preliminary work which inspired the application for Landcare Support Grant to try again.

In February this year we set out to remove the unsightly tree guards along the south bank of the river, discovering also some wire netting that was in good condition. Examination of the tree guards and stakes in the open area where the planting was largely unsuccessful, we found that most of the guards and stakes were in good condition, so we decided that it would be much better to simply try again. This time, we determined to prepare the area well, to make sure that the planting is done properly, and that aftercare with watering, weeding and guard maintenance would be done. The grant money is therefore largely being spent on maintenance: tools, equipment and herbicide. Fortunately, we already have several hundred understorey plants suitable for the local riparian environment, as set out in the grant application description. This will be supplemented with 200 trees purchased from a local indigenous nursery.

We also decided that this planting would be an excellent project for our annual National Tree Day event, and booked it for the 17th of July, as this was the closest scheduled working bee time in our annual plan.

Work done since we decided to apply for the Landcare Support Grant, in (hopeful) anticipation of being successful:

Firstly, we removed quite a number of guards & stakes, because the planting had been done very thickly. We also sprayed many of the worst annual weeds that had appeared (thistles and hemlock mainly). This was done over a couple of weeks, involved 8 GLG members and 26 volunteer hours, from late March through early April.



PHOTO OF WORK SITE

Formal application for the Landcare Support Grant was begun on 20th April, 2016, with final submission after GLG committee input being made on 2nd May. We received the good news that our submission was successful, on 20th May.

PHASE 2 – Work done since receiving notification that our grant application was successful

The very next day, 21st May, a couple of us painted the tops of stakes to mark where TREES will go; the rest will be understorey plants. This required 1 hour for each of two people on site.

We also contacted LCG to help us with contacting schools who might have groups willing to help us plant the site and learn a bit about how to do a successful planting.

Over the next month, teasels and larger gorse were removed to a burn pile, herbaceous weeds such as paterson's curse, skeleton weed, fennel, hemlock and thistles were sprayed with glyphosate, as well as spraying around the tree guards to be planted, cleaning out the insides of these guards and subsequently spraying inside as well. Large fennel stalks and skeleton weed from last summer were brushcut to make way for this spraying effort. Altogether, this preparation phase involved 7 volunteers and 18 volunteer hours of work.

In addition, we have made contact with Mt. Clear SC to arrange a group of student volunteers to come out on our scheduled National Tree Day event at this site (17th July, 2016). For these students and for all of the volunteers we hope to attract on the day, we prepared documentation about the day, including one we entitled [RETURNING THE BUSH TO A SECTION OF THE YARROWEE RIVER](#) in which the revegetation process is illustrated in some detail, and the preparation and follow-up care is outlined. Preparation of the documentation including photos on site of the tree planting process involved 2 volunteers and 3 volunteer hours. Advertising National Tree Day has taken more volunteer hours which we didn't try to record. Please refer to linked documents [1](#) and [2](#).

Initial purchases for this project:

Because we felt that it was imperative that weeding take place well before the National Tree Day event in July, we purchased one of the two 16 litre backpack sprayers and 2 burr hoes, which were used in the spraying and weeding work described above.

PHASE 3 – Work done since 1st July, 2016, the formal start of the grant funding period

Preparation and printing of flyers to advertise our National Tree Day event, acquisition of tubestock from Wild Plants Nursery, and distribution of flyers occupied a fair amount of background time on the rainy days prior to the weekend of tree day.

National Tree Day and follow-up reports describe the work done, repairs to flood damage, and planned follow-up work.