



Habitat Connectivity of Bunyip River for Southern Brown Bandicoot protection – benefits of CARTs

Bunyip Landcare group consists of passionate members working to engage landholders on Bunyip river to increase habitat connectivity from Bunyip State Park to Koo Wee Rup for the protection of the endangered Southern Brown Bandicoot.

Representatives of the Bunyip Landcare Group attended Catchment Action Round Tables (CARTs) convened by PPWCMA in September 2015 and August 2016. The CARTs were an informal forum designed to enhance cooperation and collaboration, with the aim of achieving landscape scale conservation projects with interested parties.

Indigenous engagement in natural resource management project design was also addressed during the CARTs. “Before the CARTs we didn't know who to talk to or how to go about incorporating this aspect in our Landcare projects, whereas now we do” said Bunyip Landcare Group President, Sue Anderson. “Another great thing about the CARTs was the opportunity to network with the other groups and to see what other people were doing. I got lots of ideas”

During the CARTs, Bunyip Landcare group discussed partnership with the Cannibal Creek Landcare Group for the enhancement of the biodiversity of Cannibal Creek and Bunyip River. Through “Our Catchments, Our Communities” an application for funding for the conservation project was successful, in part due to the effective collaboration between Landcare groups, Cardinia Shire, Melbourne Water and the Wurundjeri indigenous community.



Above: Out in the field with Wurundjeri Elder Uncle Dave Wandin on the Bunyip River

In partnering with Cannibal Creek Landcare group, members of the Bunyip Landcare group have since had the opportunity to attend various information sessions including the topic of street frontage management and fire management, gaining valuable insight from speakers such as Melbourne Water’s River Health Officer Gavin Brock, and The Wurundjeri Tribe Land Cultural Heritage Council. This event was organized and facilitated by PPWCMA’s Regional Indigenous Facilitator Rhys Collins. After walking the Bunyip River the group discussed caring for country and use of traditional fire in land management with Uncle Dave and Victor Steffensen of the Tagalaka people of Northern Queensland.



Right: Bunyip Landcare Group at Bunyip Hall with Victor Steffensen from the Tagalaka people from Cape York.

In addition, contractors have since also been engaged for the control of environmental weeds including Sweet Pittosporum, resulting in improved vegetation quality and maintenance of habitats that support populations of Southern Brown Bandicoot.