

2014 / 2015 Snapshot



Partnerships for a world-class urban ecosystem

Living Links is a major environmental project working to improve the connections between the many parks, reserves, open spaces, coasts, beaches, pathways, rivers, creeks and wetlands in Melbourne's south-eastern suburbs and to make this area a world-class urban ecosystem.

Living Links brings together numerous organisations and community groups including the City of Bayside, City of Casey, City of Greater Dandenong, City of Kingston, City of Knox, City of Maroondah City of Monash, City of Whitehorse, Frankston City Council, Yarra Ranges Council, Melbourne Water, South East Water, Parks Victoria, Bushwalking Victoria, First Friends of Dandenong Creek and Conservation Volunteers Australia. The Port Phillip & Westernport CMA coordinates Living Links on behalf of the partner organisations by convening a Coordination Committee, managing the project's finances and employing project staff who lead the delivery of on-ground works, reporting and promotion.

Living Links has been underway for close to 10 years. In that time, it has secured approximately \$1.6 million used to develop a long-term corridor plan and to undertake or assist over 100 individual projects.

Actions in 2014/15

In 2014/15, around \$117,000 was secured for Living Links work. The main activities occurred at River Gum Creek. Building on works undertaken in the previous year, Living Links secured \$50,000 from the Victorian Government's Community Renewal Flexible Funding to improve the River Gum Creek Reserve in Hampton Park. With this funding, the City of Casey started creating a 'Habitat Island' as part of a new environmentally-themed picnic area and playground along River Gum Creek. In addition, Birdlife Australia carried out visits and excursions with local schools to educate the children about native birds and began development of an interpretive sign to be erected at the new playground.

To promote Living Links to a broad community audience, 8 educational events for school children were conducted and two photography competitions were undertaken. The "Summer in my Park" photography competition concluded in March 2014 and the "Weird and Wonderful Wildlife in my Park" commenced in May.

A prospectus of over 70 projects ready for implementation to contribute to the Living Links vision was also maintained and opportunities for future funding were actively pursued.



Partners at the launch of the Hampton Park Community Renewal funding for River Gum Creek



One of the winning entries in the Living Links "Summer in my Park" photography competition



Living Links Coordinator Sarah Maclagan presenting a prize to one of the junior winners in the photography competition



Frog Hollow Reserve in Endeavour Hills (see case study, right)

Next Steps

Living Links will continue to work collaboratively with the project partners and is actively seeking major funding to support implementation of the Master Plan. The Living Links prospectus is being used to promote and advance the implementation of Living Links wherever possible.

Case study - Frog Hollow rejuvenated

Thanks to the tireless work of the Friends of Frog Hollow and the support of Living Links and the City of Casey, the Frog Hollow Reserve in Endeavour Hills has been completely transformed.

From an area that was once an almost bare sporting field and water treatment pond, there is now a picturesque frog habitat, wetland and native reserve.

The rehabilitation project began in 2002 when the Friends of Frog Hollow secured a Victorian Government grant to remove weeds and plant native vegetation. Since then, more than 70,000 native trees, shrubs and grasses have been planted. The City of Casey has also created walking paths and a native wetland popular with residents and visitors. Frog Hollow is now rich in biodiversity with large water birds including pelicans and black swans as well as the smaller spotted doves and little pied cormorants.

Through Living Links, the Port Phillip & Westernport CMA helped to secure funding for the project to continue, contributing to the planting of 6,000 trees and shrubs as well as several hectares of weed removal.

