

yarra4life

2024 - 25 SNAPSHOT

Yarra4Life 2024-25 snapshot

This year, the collaboration has focused on securing funding for and establishing three new flagship regeneration and habitat restoration projects that meet Yarra4Life's strategic goals:

- **Vital Landscapes in the Mid-Yarra** - supporting sustainable agriculture and biodiversity on farms, with funding from DEECA's Our Catchments Our Community program.
- **Habitat Restoration on the Birrarung-Yarra River floodplain** - habitat restoration works in high priority locations near Healesville for critically endangered Helmeted Honeyeater and Leadbeater's Possum, with funding from DEECA's Faunal Emblems Program.
- **Climate Plots for Leadbeater's Possum** - establishing trial climate plots using climate adjusted seed sources from a previous Yarra4Life Project, with funding from Melbourne Water.

The Yarra4Life program secured \$927,438 in grant funding to manage and implement on-ground projects in 2024-25. Total new funding secured in 2024-25 is \$1,189,897.



Yarra 4 Life Mission

Yarra4Life brings together agencies and communities in genuine collaboration to protect biodiversity and rehabilitate the unique natural values of the Yarra Valley, expand the engagement of communities in actively caring for the region, and acknowledge and incorporate the approaches of Traditional Owners to heal their Country.

Working towards our goals:

Rehabilitating landscapes

In 2024-2025, Yarra4Life has delivered the following on-ground works that have increased protection and improved the condition and resilience of habitats in the Yarra4Life area:

- Area rehabilitated through revegetation activities – 11.28 ha
- Area rehabilitated through weed control activities – 38 ha
- Area covered by herbivorous pest control – 12,110 ha
- Fencing to exclude stock from native vegetation – 0.75 km
- 13 land management agreements were either newly established or actively maintained. An additional six agreements are currently in negotiation.

Aligning efforts

Through coordination of the Yarra4Life program and its Committee, Yarra4Life has strengthened alignment in planning and investment among partner organisations. Three committee meetings were held, each attended by an average of 12 members, fostering collaboration and shared decision-making.

Yarra4Life continues to partner with Yarra Ranges Council's Ribbons of Green program to extend on-ground outcomes.

Partner project spotlight

Yarra4Life life partnered with Yarra Ranges Shire Council to support their deer control program, providing \$20,000 to control deer access across 12,096ha. This partnership resulted in 42 deer being removed from the Yering Gorge to Yarra Junction area.

Working towards our goals:

Connecting community

Yarra4Life facilitated two working group meetings that brought together landholders to collaboratively plan sustainable farming and biodiversity initiatives across adjoining properties in a high-priority area near Healesville. A total of 25 landholders and land managers participated in the sessions.

In a separate event, Trust for Nature, in partnership with the Friends of Wanderslore, hosted a gathering to promote the benefits of conservation covenants. The event attracted 120 attendees and featured presentations on ecological values and First Nations perspectives.

Supporting Traditional Owner aspirations

A team of 28 Narrap Rangers participated in a cultural exchange program, visiting several Traditional Owner groups and Indigenous-led businesses across Victoria. A highlight of the journey was a powerful welcome smoking ceremony and the ceremonial exchange of message sticks with Wadawurrung Elders, symbolising respect, connection, and shared cultural values.



Yarra Flats property being assessed for habitat restoration in 2025/26, Image credit: Melbourne Water

Yarra4Life Partnership Coordinator update:

Thank you, Kacie Melfi!
Welcome, Karen Lester!

In July, Karen Lester joined us as the new Partnership Coordinator for Yarra4Life. We extend our gratitude to Kacie for her dedicated eight years of service in this role and wish her the best in her new position as Senior Service Planner within the Service and Asset Lifecycle team at Melbourne Water.

In August, Kacie took Karen and the Melbourne Water team on a tour of Burungmar Biik, a revegetation site near Yellingbo, which was a key project she led. This is a significant new habitat area for release of Helmeted Honeyeater and the lowland Leadbeater's Possum.



For more information on Yarra4Life:

Karen Lester
Yarra4Life Partnership Coordinator
Email: Karen.Lester@melbournewater.com.au
Phone: 0438 220 983

www.yarra4life.com.au

Looking ahead

In 2025/26, Yarra4Life will continue to bring together agencies and community to deliver practical collaborative projects. The focus for the coming year will be on delivering on-ground works for the three flagship projects:

- Vital Landscapes - continue supporting sustainable agriculture and biodiversity on farms through development and implementation of land stewardship plans, and working with Wurundjeri Narrap rangers to conduct biodiversity surveys on Country.
- Faunal Emblems - habitat restoration for Lowland Leadbeater's Possum and Helmeted Honeyeater on the Birrarung -Yarra River floodplain. Revegetation and herbivore exclusion fencing is planned for 3 adjoining properties, to create significant links between existing habitat and the Birrarung.
- Climate Plots for Leadbeater's possum – focus on co-design with project partners and site selection and preparation.

The Yering Gorge to Yarra Junction project is extending, and additional on-ground works will be completed on up to nine properties, implementing actions identified in landholder land stewardship plans.

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