Media Release

7 September 2010

Sweet Celebration for Landcare Week

The grasslands of Western Water's Pinkerton Forest – protected in perpetuity earlier this year - are set for a boost this Landcare Week, with the help of an unusual addition: sugar.

Although it is usually associated with cups of tea rather than native forests, Pinkerton Landcare and Environment Group will be adding common sugar to the soil in an area of Pinkerton Forest before scattering kangaroo grass seeds.

Sugar in the soil helps temporarily reduce levels of nitrogen, which encourages the kangaroo grass to flourish and in turn, lock the nitrogen into its roots.

Landcare Week, which runs from 6th to the 12th of September, celebrates the many Landcare volunteers who care for the environment in their local area.

"Landcare Week is an opportunity for us to pay tribute to the wonderful Landcare volunteers who work closely with Western Water staff to protect and promote biodiversity at our sites across the region," Western Water's Managing Director, John Wilkinson, says.

"Biodiversity is a major focus for Western Water, which is privileged to own sites containing some of the state's most endangered ecosystems and species," Mr Wilkinson says.

"We have a Biodiversity Action Plan, and each major property has a site-specific Biodiversity Management Plan."

Western Water staff work closely with volunteers from environment groups in the region, including Pinkerton Landcare and Environment Group (PLEG) in Melton, Parwan Landcare Group in Bacchus Marsh and Deep Creek Landcare Group in Romsey.

PLEG secretary Daryl Akers says the combined efforts of the group and Western Water has led to much of the local wildlife returning to Pinkerton Forest. The forest is an example of Grassy Eucalypt Woodlands, which have been declared critically endangered.

"There are now about 150 species of birds, and that list is growing," Mr Akers says.

He says other species returning to the forest include lizards, snakes and frogs, as well as a pair of nesting White-bellied Sea Eagles. "They raised two young birds last year - that's validation of all our efforts."

Mr Akers says Pinkerton Forest has been "transformed" since work on restoring biodiversity began. "It's been a real success story – Western Water is to be congratulated."

Efforts to restore biodiversity are at an early stage at the Bacchus Marsh Recycled Water Plant in Parwan South, where a six hectare site has been fenced off to keep stock and rabbits from significant grasslands.

About Western Water

Western Water is one of Victoria's 13 regional urban water corporations. We provide water, recycled water and sewerage services to over 53,000 properties and 134,810 people in an area of 3,000 square kilometres. Our region extends from Lancefield in the north to Melton and Rockbank in the south and from Myrniong in the west to Bulla in the east. We incorporate parts of Hume City Council and Melton, Moorabool and Macedon Ranges Shire Councils.

Media contacts
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Western Water will work with the Parwan Landcare Group to manage the site, which contains the threatened native flowering herb Clover Glycine.

At the Romsey Recycled Water Plant Western Water has been working with the Deep Creek Landcare Group to rehabilitate the frontage of Deep Creek.

Willows have been removed from the creek's banks and native species planted, leading to improved water quality in the creek, whose surrounds are home to swamp wallabies, wombats and echidnas.

ENDS

PHOTO OPPORTUNITY:

Pinkerton Landcare and Environment Group volunteers will be scattering kangaroo grass seeds in the forest grasslands on Wednesday, September 7.

Details:

- **7 September 2010, 1pm**
- **Greigs Rd, Melton, opposite the entrance to Strathtulloh Homestead**
- **Melways map 221, A2.**
- **Contact Frances on 0434 935 055.**

Please note, the planting will continue to 4pm, however as the site is difficult to find, the easiest way is to meet the volunteers at 1pm. If you wish to photograph later than 1pm, please phone Frances.

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