

Media Release



Tuesday, 27 April, 2010

Forest agreement gives eagles' eyrie top spot in Melton's grassy woodlands

A landmark agreement to protect the significant volcanic plains woodlands of Pinkerton Forest near Melton has been celebrated today under a canopy of old growth box gums, which has been home to a pair of nesting sea-eagles this season.

The agreement protects the 35-hectare forest, which is part of Western Water's Melton Recycled Water Plant along side the Werribee River at Melton South.

Western Water Board Chairman Terry Larkins said the agreement with Melton Council not only gives planning scheme protection to this significant woodlands, it recognises the role of Pinkerton Landcare and Environment Group in protecting and enhancing the forest as a significant biodiversity asset.

"This landmark agreement has come about because of Western Water's commitment over many years to putting best practice environmental management into its local partnerships," Mr Larkins said.

"When Western Water joined forces with PLEG in 1994, Pinkerton Forest was in a very marginal situation; it had been overgrazed; people struggled with weed infestations and then there was drought.

"Now it is protected by law and in practice; its good management has ensured there is a long-term focus on restoring its biodiversity."

Melton Shire Council Mayor, Cr Justin Mammarella JP, said the Pinkerton agreement would boost environmental protection well beyond the forest itself.

"Melton Shire Council is committed to enhancing and preserving our environment for future generations," the Mayor said.

"Council is also working closely with Western Water as it transforms its old sludge paddock next door into a wildlife corridor. This will link Pinkerton Forest with Bush's Paddock, building a bridge between two landlocked sites and connecting them to ongoing rehabilitation projects along the Werribee River.

"Both these areas are highly regarded plains woodlands sites with very active community involvement," Cr Mammarella said.

"Pinkerton Forest and the surrounding area are key sites in the big-picture planning for a better, healthier environmental future for the Shire of Melton."

Melton MP Don Nardella said Melton and the Western Plains face many challenges as one of Melbourne's fastest growing areas.

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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.

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“The greatest challenge is to find the balance between urban growth demands, a changing rural sector and a landscape in need of new practices,” Mr Nardella said.

“The Victorian Government has made a \$10 million investment in the Western Plains Vision over recent years for landscape and waterways projects throughout Melbourne’s western growth corridor — projects to safeguard old forest and grasslands and rehabilitate the waterways and catchments of the Werribee River.

“This has seeded a number of important ongoing partnerships with hard-working community groups, who volunteer time, resources, expertise and energy, and their councils, which allocate physical, social and financial resources,” he said.

“Pinkerton Forest would not be the place it is today without such a partnership.”

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