

STARWEEKLY

Cash boost a win for wildlife

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A local landcare group has received an \$18,000 boost to help bring back native wildlife to the Melton region.

Daryl Akers, secretary of the Melton South based-Pinkerton Landcare and Environment Group said they would spend the National Landcare Program funds on the Werribee River Volcanic Gorge Restoration Project.

“We are restoring a stretch of critically-endangered native grassland including a small section of the adjacent river escarpment; both are threatened by weeds and rabbits,” Mr Akers said.

“In turn, this will provide habitat for native wildlife, and create a nature link through the region.”

Mr Akers said the Werribee River Volcanic Gorge provided a corridor that linked the large Wombat Forest in the Great Dividing Range – via the Lerderderg River – with Port Phillip Bay.

He said in turn, it was “a vital link” in a flight path for migratory birds as they migrate from north to south.

“It is in fact the main wildlife corridor on the western basalt plains between Melbourne and the You Yangs,” Mr Akers said.

“This wildlife corridor will become even more important, when much of the surrounding land will become urbanised in the future.”

Mr Akers said the project would start immediately and was due to be completed in July 2018.

The group was one of 15 to receive a National Landcare Program community grant from Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority for 2016-17.