



WERRIBEE
RIVER ASSOCIATION



Bunurong Traditional Owner event and Riverkeeper Walk, April 2022
at Grahams Wetland Reserve, Werribee South

Annual Report 2021-2022

OUR Vision

A healthy Werribee River and catchment waterways by 2070, giving life to a modern, sustainable and culturally rich community.

Let's connect to and protect the Werribee River and its waterways

About Us

The Werribee River Association Inc. (WRA), established in 1981, is a not-for-profit waterway protector whose purpose is to work with the community to protect the natural environment and promote sustainable living practices.

The history of the organisation is rooted in advocacy and volunteerism for the environment and human health within the Werribee River catchment. The former Committee of Management is now a Board of Management with paid staff leading the work, supported by community volunteers.

The organisation is guided by a Strategic Plan 2019 – 2024, a Business Plan 2021-2025 and has completed a Concept Proposal for a Community Enviro-Hub.

We work with the land and water managers, and the local community, to help build the biodiversity of the waterway ecosystem, and to support the iconic platypus. We also invest in programs that build community connection and strength as we believe that healthy communities and healthy waterways go hand in hand.

Our Strategic Directions

Community Engagement



Education



Organisational development



Partnerships



Science

Werribee River Association staff and board acknowledge and respect the Traditional Owners of the land and waterways upon which we work, live and play, in particular the Wadawurrung, Bunurong and Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation.

We acknowledge and respect Elders past, present and emerging and that sovereignty was never ceded.

Chairperson Report



Kathryn Williams

Chairperson 2021-22

It was a great honour to serve on the Werribee River Association board as chairperson this year; well supported by our vice chair, Rob, and each member of our board.

Over the last 12 months, there have been some terrific advances for the Association. 2021-22 has been a period of significant growth and evolution which is testament to the dedication of our staff, our Werribee Riverkeeper, my fellow board members, and all of the volunteers who give their time and energy towards the aims of our terrific organisation.

A highlight for us this year was the successful recruitment of new staff working in education, regeneration, short term projects and research. Our expanded staff team has accelerated the organisation's reach and capacity significantly, demonstrated by the data contained within this report. On behalf of the board, I thank them for their commitment and hard work.

Our funding relationships with Melbourne Water, Ross Trust, DELWP, Wyndham City and others, have enabled us to assemble a professional team to deliver a program of activities that is strong on community engagement and environmental benefits. We also commenced a project focus on working with our culturally and linguistically diverse community, which is supporting the Waterways of the West Action Plan.

The Werribee River Association was the first community organisation in Victoria to organise platypus surveys. Again, in this financial year we have

undertaken these surveys with Australian Platypus Conservancy, and shared these findings, continuing to advocate for platypus sensitive urban design.

Advocacy is central to our work. Behind each and every program, event, or campaign, the Werribee River Association works closely with multiple stakeholders and networks to advance reform for the environment, waterways, biodiversity and human health.

The board has continued to focus on the strategic objectives of the Association, and a review of the Strategic Plan 2019 – 24 was undertaken this year.

Board members have reviewed several operational policies and business improvements including the purchase of our first vehicle, and engagement of a book-keeping service.

Our work towards finding our own home, an environmental hub, has continued this year. We completed and shared a concept proposal and video presentation, and we are currently liaising with Wyndham City for a formal feasibility study. In the meantime, we are pleased to operate from the Eco-Living Centre in Wyndham Vale, and thank former board members of Western Region Environment Centre for clearing out space to accommodate us.

Partnerships still remain a key focus of the work of the Werribee River Association and it is very pleasing to see Victoria University join us as a new sponsoring partner. As you will see from our list of partners, these cover a broad cross section of community, government, and business organisations.

I personally would like to thank the board who volunteer their time. This year we met 11 times. We all have different skill sets and backgrounds, work and family commitments, but we are all firmly committed to advancing the organisation, ensuring stability, and good governance for the Association.

It is very pleasing to welcome incoming board member Liesl Verity who will step into the Treasurer role. Her experience with her accountancy background will be well utilised.

On behalf of the board, I wish to present to you our Annual Report 2021-22, detailing our community environment leadership and impacts. A special thank you to our Business and Operations Manager Lisa for all her hard work in preparing this report, and a huge thank you to all of our members, volunteers and supporters for your work for nature.

Our *Impact*

Werribee River Association is firmly rooted in supporting healthy waterways and healthy communities – working with diverse stakeholders to deliver on: community engagement, education, regeneration, litter clean-ups, science and advocacy.

Here is a SNAP SHOT of our work this past financial year 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022.



Education in Schools

Schools, kinders, learning providers

37 Sessions, 28 providers

1511 students

Most popular topic – Platypus education



Community Engagement

Walks, talks, stalls, presentations

96 events

17 online, 79 in person

3611 attendees



Litter Blitz

Community clean-ups & individual cleans

169 total events

32 community cleans, 137 private cleans

624 volunteer contributions

880 hours

4483 kilos removed



Regeneration

Weeding, mulching, guarding, planting

30 events, 373 volunteer contributions

839 hours

10,000 plants



Plant Give-aways

Native plants made available by donations from Level Crossing Removal Project and Plantmark

12 public open spaces

450 private gardens

65 volunteer hours

9,500 native plants distributed

Project Management & Grants

16 new grants applications submitted
14 successful, 1 unsuccessful, 1 pending

20+ active projects

Volunteer Contribution

Volunteer hours: 3568
(excl. Governance & other unrecorded coordination time, valued at \$40 per hour attributed)

\$142,720 value

Media & Comms

4.5K LIKES / 5 K Followers on Facebook -
170,000 reach

1000 Followers, Instagram

30,000 newsletters sent

14 Stories in the Media – 8 Print, 3 Radio, 3 Other 1 TV





The Werribee Riverkeeper Team manage various projects, research, campaigns, and is actively working alongside diverse communities in the catchment – leading and inspiring change for healthy waterways and for healthy communities.

NatureWatch

This is a major project and focus for the Werribee River Association, undertaking work to build a foundation to achieve our long-term goal for a healthy Werribee River, and other waterways within the catchment, by 2070. Deliverables focus on Education & Engagement, Water Quality & Recreation, Advocacy for Access & Amenity, and Regeneration. This work is aligned with the outcomes of various strategies, including Melbourne Water’s Healthy Waterways Strategy. The project is guided by a three-year masterplan and annual project plans.

Funded by Melbourne Water.

CALD Engagement Program

This project targeted members of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds and was designed to test out the CALD Waterways of the West toolkit, developed by DELWP. Project impacts included guided walks in urban areas, educational session in schools and to community groups, the development of new resources, Traditional owner events and support for volunteers. The result has been a powerful shift of focus for the organisation, building our capacity and partnerships with CALD groups and individuals.

Following a DELWP grant round in May 2022, in partnership with Melbourne Water, our CALD Engagement program will continue on for another 20 months.

Funded by DELWP. Newest engagement work auspiced by Melbourne Water.

Volunteer Waterkeepers

The project aimed to support community environmental leadership, new volunteer opportunities and deeper appreciation of the natural environment within the Werribee River catchment.

Deliverables included:

- 6 online educational sessions covering water quality, soil health, fish, mangroves, eels and trees.
- Volunteer networking sessions
- Whole of catchment tour

Funded by DELWP.

Love Our Patch

The project aimed to increase the number of individuals and families collaborating to keep our open spaces and waterways in Wyndham clean and create opportunities for community connections that support social and environmental outcomes. The project aims included community resilience and connection to country through walks, creative activities, networking opportunities, garden blitzes and a photo competition.

Funded by Wyndham City.

Sustainability Streets

Commencing in April 2022, the Sustainability Streets is a 12-month project to deliver localised community activations, presentations, workshops and volunteer recruitment, to engage, educate and build community resilience, a connected community and further develop sustainable living practises in Wyndham.

Funded by Wyndham City.

Platypus Surveys

Courtesy of Greater Western Water funding, Werribee River Association engaged Australian Platypus Conservancy (APC) to conduct a platypus live trapping survey in Bacchus Marsh in January and February 2022, in conjunction with Bacchus Marsh Platypus Alliance. APC also conducted a one-night pro-bono survey in partnership with Ecology Australia (EA) in Werribee in February 2022.

In a very positive result for both locations, four animals were encountered in Bacchus Marsh, two female and two males, in average to good condition, while in Werribee we encountered three animals, one female sub-adult and two males, one adult and one a junior, all showing average to good condition.

The organisation is now committed to further advocacy for platypus water sensitive urban design, with a focus toward planning controls.

- Improve irrigation practices and reduce water extraction
- Remove barriers (dams and weirs) no longer in use
- Improve stormwater quality
- Encourage uptake of regenerative agriculture (organic inputs and biological pest control) and discourage use of herbicides, pesticides and fungicides
- Adopt platypus water sensitive urban design in new development areas, and upgrade existing settlements to align with these values

A full report of this work is available on the WRA website. *Funded by Greater Western Water.*

Grahams Wetlands Restoration Project

Support regeneration works in the wetlands, and raising the values of conservation of coastal areas, this project delivered:

- Guided coastal walks at Wyndham Harbour, Werribee South, Campbells Cove and Grahams Wetlands;
- Community education and support for Wyndham Council's coastal masterplans and DELWP's Ramsar boundary review of Grahams Wetlands;
- Traditional Owner welcome to country and smoking ceremony;
- Frog survey and grant submission for further frog monitoring and habitat assessments at Grahams Wetlands; and
- In partnership with land managers and community, 2 plantings days, 4500 coastal tube stock planted.

Funded by DELWP; partnering with Wyndham City.

PIPS Research & Advocacy Project

This project is researching the psychological impacts of potential contaminated waste disposal near a school in the Werribee River catchment, conducted by researcher-advocate, Dr Jodie Valpied. This research is being conducted in collaboration with Melbourne University's School of Psychological Sciences and other departments within the University. The final report will be available early 2023.

Funding by Bacchus Marsh Grammar.



Litter Blitz – Spot Cleans

Our team occasionally work on spot cleans, to rapidly respond to an environmental hazard. We also work with community groups and businesses for partnered Litter Blitz projects, targeting litter hot spots.

Some of our special litter projects has included:

- Corporate clean-up at the Hoppers Crossing Business Centre, working with All Green Nursery and Telstra Business Centre, *July 2021*
- Clean-up at Bungey’s Hole, working with community members on kayaks, *July 2021*
- Spring Clean Our Patch, working with Beach Patrol Australia in a Melbourne wide clean up, this time done localised, individually, and in pairs, due to covid restrictions, *October 2021*
- Manor Lakes clean-up, working with the Manor Lakes Community, Parkrun, Wyndham City, *January 2022*
- Business Clean-up Australia Day event in Manor Lakes, working with multiple business and community stakeholders, *February 2022*
- Clean-up behind Watton Street shops following heavy rainfall, *February 2022*
- Pasifika Community of Australia clean-up day at Werribee Train Station, *February 2022*
- Removal of Polystyrene waffle pods in Wyndham Vale, *May-June 2022*

More Trees for a Cooler Greener West

Responding to the urban heat island effect and the low tree canopy cover in Melbourne’s West, the State Government announced 500,000 trees in April 2021 to be planted across Wyndham, Melton, Maribyrnong, Brimbank, Moonee Valley and Hobsons Bay over a two-year period. The Association has secured funding and permissions to plant 5,000 trees at Werribee River Park. This work and funding expected in Spring 2022.

Expected funding by State Government. Partnership with Parks Vic.

Werribee Park Golf Club

WRA began a program of strategic meetings and activities with Werribee Park Golf Club for revegetation and litter removal on their site. We have submitted grants for future plantings.

Future funding to be announced.

Davis Creek Regeneration

WRA and Wyndham City developed a program of regeneration works along Davis Creek, Tarneit. Deliverables included two clean-ups in partnership with Love Our Street 3029, site preparation and plantings in partnership with students from Davis Creek Primary School.

Self-funded and funds from corporate sponsorship.





The Werribee Riverkeeper has continued to partner with an alliance of community and environmental organisations on greater dialogue and input into the Sustainable Water Strategy. Speaking up, together for a long-term plan to secure a sustainable supply of water in Victoria's regions.

The Concerned Waterway Alliance (CWA) included representatives from groups from the Otway Ranges to the Gippsland Lakes, with the support of Environment Justice Australia and Environment Victoria. Meeting fortnightly, the CWA worked on the Central and Gippsland Region Sustainable Water Strategy, (CGRSWS), engaging with DELWP other officials, and the Minister for Water, Harriet Shing.

The Alliance submitted an initial submission in December 2021 asking to be more involved in the development of the strategy and again in June 2022 with a comprehensive report toward the development of this important piece of water policy.

Some of the key points include:

- The recognition of rivers as living entities, connected from source to sea and to wetlands and

floodplains, with ecological processes and functions intact and healthy.

- Provide powerful and decisive direction and a strong implementation plan that sets out how to meet the real and serious challenges widely acknowledged in the CGRSWS.
- The government should expressly require all allocation and licensing decisions to apply the precautionary principle.
- Providing water rights to enable Traditional Owners to care for Country will be of enormous benefit to rivers and wetlands.
- Engaging on issues of ecosystem health across the region must deal squarely with internationally protected wetlands in that region.
- A successful CGRSWS needs a strong implementation plan and adequate funding to address the crisis facing our rivers.

Waterways of the West

The Waterways of the West (WOW) Action Plan, a joint State Government ministerial initiative in which WRA had taken a very active leadership role over a three-year period, was officially launched in late 2021.

The WOW Action Plan was meant to give the waterways of the west of Melbourne, the same legal protections granted to the Yarra River; however, the plan does not give new strategic planning for waterways, or investment in green infrastructure, nor does it set out a new model for urban design laws.

WRA will continue to advocate for funding and legislation to secure better outcomes from the plan.

In partnership with Environment Justice Australia, we submitted to DELWP a Press Release re Lack of Meaningful Action, December 2021

“It's pleasing to see the living entity concept introduced for all waterways... but our platypus are in strife, and our water quality is poor, hurting the public and farmers. So, we need to be assured that the concept is actually brought to life, is funded, all parties obliged to act, on the ground on all waterways.”

Werribee Riverkeeper – in response to the Waterways of the West Action Plan

Victorian Container Deposit Scheme (CDS)

Werribee River Association responded to the government's consultation on the design of the CDS. Our position is that the scheme must be designed to maximise litter and waste reductions, increase container recycling, provide new business opportunities and stimulate community-based fundraising. We agree that the State Government should manage the scheme, and that the Scheme Coordinator (which collects the funds from drink producers and audits performance) should be a separate entity from the Network Operator (which collects containers).

WRA remains positive about the impacts this long-awaited scheme that has been a significant piece of our advocacy work for many years.

Advocacy Walks & Talks

Campaigning on the ground – activities include

Coastal Discovery Walk – to enable and advocate for environmental outcomes within the Werribee South Masterplan. This session was followed up with an online session, furthering the community and member input on developments at Werribee South.

Campbells Cove & Baileys Beach Walk – designed to explore the recommendations in Wyndham City's masterplan for this site; supporting community members to participate in the consultation process.

Nature Stewards – community education to enhance advocacy for clean water, for protection of biodiversity, and environmental stewardship.

Spectacle Lake – leading community and Council stakeholders to assess the decline of this lake which once provided important bird habitat.

Three new Regional Parks – communications to support community members to participate in Parks Vic engagement for the 3 new regional parks.

Whole of Catchment Tour – community and stakeholder walk highlighting the irrigation and human-made water management along the river and how these systems have impacted waterway health.

Boundary review of Ramsar Wetlands – communications to support community members to participate in the review by State Government.

Other partnered campaigns and planning

Lower Werribee Waterway Amenity Action Plan, articulates a 10-year vision for improved amenity, cultural values, community access and visitor experience along the Wirribi Yaluk (Werribee River) corridor, and prioritised actions to achieve this. The Plan has been co-designed by a collaborative partnership including representatives (in alphabetical order) from Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation, DELWP, Melbourne Water, Parks Victoria, Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation, Werribee Open Range Zoo, Werribee River Association, Western Melbourne Tourism Inc. and Wyndham City Council.

Waterways of the West Pollution Taskforce, EPA, review of community perspective on litter.

Werribee FLOWS Study & Project Advisory Group, upper Werribee River.

Healthy Waterways Strategy Forum, Melbourne Water's strategy for the Werribee River catchment.

Litter & Illegal Dumping, Reimagining Litter and Illegal Dumping Pilot with EPA.

Platypus Sensitive Urban Design sharing the results of our Platypus Surveys, Summer 2022, and our collaborative recommendations for individuals, land managers, policy makers and planners.

Water is Life providing contributions to Cultural Water for Traditional Owners - Environmental Policy and Community Partnerships, June 2022.



Case Study

Submission to Water is Life

Bryony Grice, Director, Environmental Policy and Community Partnerships, DELWP,

Thank you for the opportunity to meet you online and hear of the background and intent of the 'Water is Life' initiative. The initiative is a good one, and WRA believes it will contribute to a better relationship between Traditional Owners and the general community. We do have some concerns however.

The Werribee River has almost total regulation of the waterway for irrigation, and its three storage reservoirs do not all contribute to environmental flows, leaving possibly over 80% of the waterway (comprising two rivers) without enviro flows. The enviro flow allocations which do occur only come after bulk allocations for irrigation and town supply are satisfied.

Therefore, this raises the fact that if government has stated that they will not change business as usual around the allocation of water, they themselves will be the barrier to cultural water for TOs. The water corporations and others, need to be firmly directed to stop or change some practices, and to begin others.

This includes matters such as the ongoing poor control/knowledge about existing and new farm dams, the non-waterway friendly minimal return of water savings to waterways from irrigation infrastructure improvements, the continuation of taking water for irrigation for recreational spaces from passing flows, allowing new irrigation extractions, sale of water licences to big users and more.

It also includes the slow uptake of increasing usage of alternative water sources by reducing the cost of recycled water, reducing salinity in recycled water - most relevant to the Werribee, rapidly increasing stormwater usage and removing the already present 'emerging' pollutants.

The many varied and detailed criteria causing decisions around environmental flows in various streams, make it hard for even the most involved community member to understand and improve the situation, let alone the TOs who traditionally have been excluded. Our waterways do need innovative approaches and this is one is very welcomed, but the many existing concerns will make it very hard to sway general community concerns and get over the actual practicalities of gaining cultural water.

Yours sincerely,

John Forrester, Werribee Riverkeeper



Photo: Doug Gimsey



Our work is made so much richer by our relationships with partners. Thank-you for your support!

Business

- Arboregreen
- Australian Platypus Conservation
- Bio2Lab
- Bookit Bookkeeping
- Collins & Co Audit Pty Ltd
- CSCG
- Newport Lakes Native Nursery
- Relativity 3D Photography
- Sam Burone Design
- Snap Werribee
- Seed2Leaves
- Westend Photography
- Seatree Signs
- Western Plains Flora

Community

- 1st Iramoo Joys
- 2nd Werribee Scout Group
- Australian India Foundation
- Club 60 Tarneit
- Club 60 Wyndham Vale
- Crossroads Uniting Church
- Dreambuilders Centre 4 Change
- GenU
- Pasifika Community Australia
- Wyndham Park Community Shed
- Wyndham Women Support Group
- Friends of Hopetoun Park & Parwan Gorge
- Friends of Little River
- Friends of Steele Creek
- Friends of Skeleton Creek
- Melton Environment Group
- Multicultural Women's Victoria
- Paddle Victoria
- Rotary Clubs in Wyndham
- Town Teams Tarneit
- Werribee Bushwalking Club
- Werribee Park Farm & Hub
- Wyndham BMX Warriors

Government – Semi Government

- CSIRO
- DELWP
- EPA
- Melbourne Water
- Melton City Council
- Moorabool Shire Council
- Wyndham City Council

Member

- Anti-Toxic Waste Alliance
- Committee for Wyndham
- Community Water Alliance
- Grassy Plains Network
- Tarneit Business Association
- Teacher Environment Network
- Town Team Tarneit
- Victorian Environmental Friends Network
- Victorian National Parks Association
- Waterkeeper Alliance
- Werribee Business & Tourism Association

Partner

- Australian Waterlife
- All Green Nursery
- Bacchus Marsh Grammar
- Bellarine Catchment Management Network
- Bacchus Marsh Platypus Alliance
- Beach Patrol Australia
- Conservation Volunteers Australia
- Deakin University
- Dolores Skowronski Malloni
- Eat My Garden
- Environment Justice Australia
- Greening the West
- Hobsons Bay Wetlands Centre
- Holcim
- Jawbone Marine Sanctuary Care Group
- Level Crossing Removal Project
- Marine Freshwater Discovery Centre
- Melbourne University
- Monash University
- NatureWest

Outdoor Education Group

- Outdoors Victoria
- Pacific Plaza Werribee
- Parks & People Foundation
- Parks Victoria
- Port Phillip EcoCentre
- Port Phillip Westernport CMA
- River Connect
- Riverwalk - Development Victoria
- Telstra Business Centre
- Werribee Birdlife
- Western Melbourne Tourism
- Wyndham Community Education Centre
- Wyndham Harbour
- Wyndham Star Weekly
- Wyndham Wildlife Gardens
- Yarra Riverkeeper Association
- Werribee Open Range Zoo

Philanthropic & Sponsor

- Alto Project Space
- Arts Assist
- Community Enterprise Foundation
- Dennis Family Corporation
- Frasers Properties
- Greater Western Water
- Lend Lease
- NAB
- Ross Trust
- Stockland
- Victoria University
- Westbrook

Traditional Owner

- Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation
- Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation
- Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung CHAC

OUR Volunteers

A big thank-you to these green champions for leading and inviting people to connect to and to protect waterways in the west.

Beach Patrol 3030

Rob Bradley, Erin Bradley & John Forrester

Love Our Street 3030

Lisa Field & Nick Alderson

Love Our Street 3029

Karen Hucker & Ruth Mihelcic;
Nikki Colliver, commencing
March 2022

Love Our Street 3024

Melissa Newman
June & Colin Styles, commencing
Jan 2022

Friends of Cobbledick's Ford

John Marks & Joe Cumbo

Friends of Werribee River Park

John Forrester

Friends of Presidents Park

Vacant – supported by
Regeneration Officer, Maryann
Weatherill

Friends of Werribee Riverine

Vacant – supported by
Regeneration Officer, Maryann
Weatherill

WRA volunteers have achieved great result for the community and the environment, including the removal of a massive 4.5 tons of litter; the planting of 10,000 new shrubs, trees and grasses; the distribution of almost another 10,000 plants to homes and public spaces, around 1000 volunteer engagements, valued at approximately \$150,000. See pg. 4 & 5 for more info on these impacts.

Celebrating Volunteers

This year we hosted a Christmas Garden Party and a National Volunteer Week dinner and at both events we acknowledged some of leading volunteers.

End of Year Awards 2021

Karen Hucker & Ruth Mihelcic –

Litter Coordination

Nick Alderson – Nature

Stewardship

Kellie Stewart & Juke Campbell

Beschorner – Tree Hollows

Project

Volunteer Week Award Recipients 2022

John Marks - Community Leader
Award

Leanne Cooper - Young Gun
Award

Kathryn Williams - Strategic
Vision Award

Dolores Skowronski-Malloni -

Creative Vision Award

June and Colin Styles -

Community Changemaker Award

Nikki Colliver - Community

Changemaker Award

Club 60 Wyndham Vale -

Participation Award

Case Study

Erin Bradley Volunteer

Erin Bradley has been volunteering with the Werribee River Association for most of her life and currently she co-coordinates Beach Patrol 3030 with her father Rob. She loves engaging with like-minded people and knowing she is making an impact in moving towards a more environmentally sustainable future. Her deep connection with the environment has led her to pursue a career in the sector and she has recently completed her Bachelor of Environmental Science.

While volunteering in the Peruvian Amazon Rainforest, Erin became intrigued by frogs. Walking into the forest at night and seeing their eyes shining back at her was surreal, she was instantly hooked. She has since developed and is leading a project monitoring frogs at the local Wyndham wetlands. Knowing frogs are a good bio-indicator of ecological health, frog spotting down at the wetlands, is a regular passion of hers.



OUR TEAM 2021-22

We can all be stewards for nature



OUR STAFF

Charlotte Williamson, Education Manager

Charlotte has over 15 years-experience as an environmental educator, and since August 2021 has been the inaugural Education Manager for the Werribee River Association. Charlotte has delivered the 1st year of the Association’s CALD (culturally & linguistically diverse) Engagement program. Charlotte has built new relationships, and resources to enable communities to develop a deeper connection and care for the environment.

Lisa Field, Community & Business Development Manager

Lisa has worked extensively in community services and a history of environmental activism. Since November 2020 Lisa has overseen the community programming, and business services, communications and key projects of the Association. Supporting staff, attracting ongoing funding and partnerships are a key part of Lisa’s role. Lisa is also a volunteer, leading the Love Our Street 3030 clean-up group.

Maryann Weatherill, Regeneration Officer

Maryann has extensive conservation expertise, working with local government, land and water managers, and community organisations. Since 2021, Maryann has worked steadily to grow the Werribee River Associations Landcare programming. Maryann is playing a lead role in monitoring our broad range of programs, in building partnerships and leads us out into the field weeding, brush cutting, and digging holes for planting.



Jess Fairfax, Sustainability Officer

Jess is a creative scientific communicator and environmental programmer, working to build up our services and programs that promote sustainable living practices. Since 2021 Jess has been delivering on some short and medium terms projects that include immersive nature experiences, community connections, volunteer support and presentations on all things to do with waste and sustainability.

Fatima Measham, Community Engagement Facilitator

Fatima is a passionate nature educator and communicator who has a long history of volunteering with the Association. Since 2022, Fatima has begun to undertake projects to enhance access to the Lower Werribee River, and toward facilitating engagement with our culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) community.

Dr Jodie Valpied, Researcher-Advocate

Jodie is a research academic with experience in all phases of the research process. She is undertaking funded research on links between waterway health and human psychological wellbeing. Jodie is also the founder and President of Bacchus Marsh Platypus Alliance, sharing common projects and concerns for waterway health, environmental health and human health.

Staff Jess Fairfax, Charlotte Williamson, Maryann Weatherill, John Forrester, Lisa Field & Fatima Measham

OUR BOARD

John Forrester, Werribee Riverkeeper and Board Secretary

John is a well-known community champion for the Werribee River and he has been instrumental in leading the way for the development of the Association. John has made a significant impact on the Werribee River catchment through direct action, advocacy and education. His involvement and support for waterways reform now spans almost thirty years. When not at his desk, John can be found surveying the river environs, bird watching and platypus spotting.

Kathryn Williams, Chairperson

Kath is an environmental scientist who has worked in environmental assessment and management for 14 years before joining TreeProject as their Revegetation Coordinator to help landholders revegetate and restore habitat on private land across Victoria. Kath volunteers with a number of organisations including TreeProject, Rotary, at WRA planting days and at Beach Patrol 3030 clean-ups.

Rob Bradley, Deputy Chair

Rob is passionate about caring for our environment and deeply concerned about the biodiversity loss of the western grasslands species. Since 2012 Rob has been involved in litter work and advocacy on single use plastic reform. He is the convenor of the Justice Taskforce at Crossroad Uniting Church, has a productive food garden and occasionally can be seen driving around town in his collectable vehicle.

Nathan Williams, Treasurer

Nathan is an environmental professional, working as a chemical engineer, in planning and approvals, and in contaminated lands. Nathan has multiple qualifications and an eye for details, perfect skills to help assess and monitor our financials. Nathan is also Kath's husband, and father to two kids, and likes to keep fit by riding, running or walking along the river trails.

Meghan Hopper, Board Member

Meghan is a governance and advocacy professional, working in local government and with family links to the catchment, having grown up in Wyndham Vale. Meghan has been a board member for CERES Environment Park, the Council of Monash University, and is a former Moreland Councillor and Mayor. Meghan understands the importance of working closely with government stakeholders and in building up our policies and processes as we now grow from a small to a medium sized agency.

John Marks, Board Member

John is a long-time environmentalist and community activist. John is the guy you call when you want something done. John leads the Friends of Cobbleticks Ford and is a regular contributor to other clean-up groups and Landcare activities. His skills and contacts span business, gardening, and boating. John is passionate about getting more people on the waterways.

Sophia Bagatsing, Board Member

Sophia is a proud urban farmer advocating for youth in agriculture and action on climate change. Sophia is involved in multiple environmental organisations and campaigns, as well as finishing up her Masters in Agricultural Science and Diploma in Sustainability. Originally from the Philippines, Sophia and her family enjoy traditional Asian cuisine.

Liesl Verity, Board Member

Liesl is an experienced risk, governance and tax professional and is a Chartered Accountant and a Fellow member of The Tax Institute. Liesl also has post graduate qualifications in psychology and business management and is passionate about supporting separating families, children and women, as a coaching professional. Liesl is a dedicated mother to her young daughter, and is a regular attendee to the Beach Patrol 3030 clean-up group.



Group photo of past and current board members taken at our history book launch, August 2022: Kath Williams, Liesl Verity, Rob Bradley, Lisa Field, Robyn Thomas, Heather Noble, Darryl Wells, Ron Rixon, Rohan Bugg, Meghan Hopper, Nathan Williams & John Forrester

Financial Reports 2021 - 2022

Although we have a loss of about \$60,000 for the financial year, we have increased our total assets by approximately \$200,000 to \$700,000. The loss occurred as we shift our method of accounting from cash basis to accrual. This shows up on our balance sheet in the line, *Income in Advance*, which sits at \$340,000, so we have plenty of work lined up for the team and can expect a busy year for 2022-23.

Approximately half of our income was generated through grants from government and through Melbourne Water. The remainder is mostly through program fees for services we provide such as our educational sessions, from corporate interests for team building events such as tree plantings and litter collection. We also receive income from memberships and donations. We are grateful for the generous ongoing support from the Ross Trust.

We continue to maintain very modest operational costs, i.e., for insurance, website, communications and office expenses. Our accounting and bookkeeping expenses have increased but this is in line with our increased activity.

Despite our net loss for the financial year, the Werribee River Association is in a very strong financial position and continues to expand our operations. It is pleasing to see our organisation continue to grow and keep driving engagement with our river.

WRA have engaged an Auditor for an assessment of our Finances for 2021 - 22 and their report is printed below.

It has been my pleasure to support the Werribee River Association as the Treasurer. We have grown in terms of number of staff and the scale of our operations, and we are in a strong position to continue to do so.



Nathan Williams
Treasurer 2021-22



Compilation Report

Werribee River Association Inc. For the year ended 30 June 2022

We have compiled the accompanying special purpose financial statements of Werribee River Association Inc., which comprise the balance sheet as at 30 June 2022, the profit and loss for the year then ended, a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory notes. The specific purpose for which the special purpose financial statements have been prepared is set out in Note 1.

1. Director's Responsibility

The directors of Werribee River Association Inc. are solely responsible for the information contained in the special purpose financial statements and have determined that the significant accounting policies adopted as set out in Note 1 to the financial statements are appropriate to meet their needs and for the purpose that the financial statements were prepared.

2. Our Responsibility

On the basis of information provided by the directors of Werribee River Association Inc., we have compiled the accompanying special purpose financial statements in accordance with the significant accounting policies adopted as set out in Note 1 to the financial statements and APES 315: Compilation of Financial Information.

Our procedures use accounting expertise to collect, classify and summarise the financial information, which the directors provided, in compiling the financial statements. Our procedures do not include verification or validation procedures. No audit or review has been performed and accordingly no assurance is expressed.

The special purpose financial statements were compiled exclusively for the benefit of the directors of Werribee River Association Inc.. We do not accept responsibility to any other person for the contents of the special purpose financial statements.



Karen Kennedy
Bookit Bookkeeping Services
PO Box 5100
Hoppers Crossing VIC 3029

Directors Declaration

Werribee River Association Inc. For the year ended 30 June 2022

The directors have determined that the company is not a reporting entity and that this special purpose financial report should be prepared in accordance with the accounting policies outlined in Note 1 to the financial statements.

The directors of the company declare that:

1. the financial statements and notes, as set out herein present fairly the company's financial position as at 30 June 2022 and its performance for the year ended on that date in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements; and
2. in the directors' opinion there are reasonable grounds to believe that the company will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

Signed 13 October 2022
Nathan Williams
Treasurer

John Forrester
Secretary

Profit and Loss

Werribee River Association Inc. For the 12 months ended 30 June 2022

	Jun-22	Jun-21
Income		
Corporate Support Programs	11,000	795
Donation (DGR)	1,955	1,949
Donation (non-DGR)	14,050	-
Grant - Photo Comp WCC2021	-	750
Grant non government	1,818	-
Grant Ross Trust Business Manager	40,000	40,000
Grants from Local-Government	12,720	1,000
Grants from Semi-Government	69,603	100,000
Grants from State/Fed Government	68,569	6,900
Interest Income	(186)	768
Membership - Corporate	30,286	30,091
Membership - Family	1,536	1,284
Membership - Individual	1,038	1,282
Program Fees	5,913	20,682
WRA's 40 Years of Waterway Protection	-	5,500
Total Income	258,304	211,001
Gross Profit	258,304	211,001
Plus Other Income		
Cash Flow Boost (tax free)	-	10,000
COVID Grants Government	-	25,000
Job Keeper Wage Subsidy	-	43,800
Total Other Income	-	78,800
Less Operating Expenses		
Accounting/Bookkeeping	14,903	11,854
Advertising/Marketing	670	360
Affiliations/Memberships	1,010	1,526
Annual Leave Provision Expense	8,787	5,468
Bank Fees	10	-
Bookkeeping	5,505	-
Computer Software/Hardware/repairs	3,340	296
Consultant - Business	8,508	3,818
Consultant - Environment	31,102	30,331
Conversion Balance/Written Off Expense	-	(2,178)
Depreciation	778	-
Donations	65	3,750
Entertainment/Functions Board/Catering/program exp	1,232	-
Finance Charges	-	2
Freight & Courier	10	-
Gifts	100	-
Grant - Photo Comp Project	900	1,000
Grant - Sculpture Project	-	1,000

Insurance	2,845	1,489
Marketing	2,422	1,305
Meeting Expenses	606	879
Members Portal/Admin	768	934
Memberships/Subscriptions	956	198
MV Expenses - fuel, R&M, Ins	2,567	-
MV Fuel & Oil	458	-
Office Expenses	672	-
Plants Purchased	21,627	4,692
Postage - PO Box Rental	131	124
Printing - Business	2,350	28
Professional Development	699	317
Program Expense	5,421	-
Regeneration Outdoor Tools - equipment/program expenses	200	129
Rent - Office	326	(572)
Repairs and Maintenance	2,021	168
Staff & Volunteer Protective Clothing & Equipment	770	756
Stationery	39	54
Telephone & Internet	1,631	1,376
Training Courses	269	-
Wages and Salaries	176,681	94,281
Wages Superannuation	17,687	7,199
Website Expenses	720	2,377
Workers Compensation	1,362	1,511
Total Operating Expenses	320,147	174,472
Net Profit	(61,843)	115,330

Movements in Equity

Werribee River Association Inc. As at 30 June 2022

	30 Jun 2022	30 Jun 2021
Equity		
Opening Balance	373,437	258,107
Current Year Earnings	(61,843)	115,330
Total Equity	311,594	373,437

Balance Sheet

Werribee River Association Inc. As at 30 June 2022

	30 Jun 2022	30 Jun 2021
Assets		
Bank		
AUD PayPal	228	228
Bendigo TD 1	100,000	100,000
Bendigo TD 2	50,000	-
Debit Card xx6906	330	972
xx3335 Community Solutions	540,474	317,344
xx6914 Public Fund	505	504
Total Bank	691,537	419,048
Current Assets		
Accounts Receivable	8,140	52,580
Sundry Debtor	77	263
Total Current Assets	8,217	52,843
Fixed Assets		
2012 Nissan Navara ZME 334	15,968	-
Acc Dep 2012 Nissan Navara	(778)	-
Total Fixed Assets	15,191	-
Total Assets	714,945	471,891
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable	5,982	4,091
Annual Leave Provision	14,255	5,468
GST	24,044	6,547
GST Adjustment Account	(1,138)	(1,138)
Income in Advance	342,048	79,500
PAYG Payable	8,074	1,406
Rounding	1	1
Suspense	4,105	957
Wages Deductions Payable	5,982	1,855
Wages Payable - Payroll	-	(232)
Total Current Liabilities	403,351	98,455
Total Liabilities	403,351	98,455
Net Assets	311,594	373,437
Equity		
Current Year Earnings	(61,843)	115,330
Opening Balance Equity	57,383	57,383
Retained Earnings	316,054	200,724
Total Equity	311,594	373,437



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WERRIBEE RIVER ASSOCIATION INC.
A.B.N. 45 866 719 214
INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS

Opinion

I have audited the accompanying financial report of Werribee River Association Inc. (the Association), which comprises the balance sheet as at 30 June 2022, and the income statement, statement of changes in equity and cash flow statement for the year ended on that date, a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory notes and the statement by the members of the Board.

In my opinion, the financial report of the Association is in accordance with the *Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission Act 2012* and the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012*, including:

- i. giving a true and fair view of the Association's financial position as at 30 June 2022 and of its performance for the year ended; and
- ii. complying with Australian Accounting Standards as per Note 1, the *Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission Act 2012* and the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012*.

Basis for Opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report section of our report. I am independent of the Association in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (the Code) that are relevant to my audit of the financial report in Australia. I have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Emphasis of Matter - Basis of Accounting and Restriction on Distribution

I draw attention to Note 1 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared to assist Werribee River Association Inc. to meet the requirements of the *Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission Act 2012* and the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012*. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose. My opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Report

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with the financial reporting requirements of the applicable legislation and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, management is responsible for assessing the Association's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters relating to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Entity or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Association's financial reporting process.



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Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards, I exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. I also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the registered entity's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the responsible entities.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the responsible entities use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the registered entity's ability to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion. My conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of my auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the registered entity to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

I communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal controls that I identify during my audit.

Auditor: Frederik Ryk Ludolf Eksteen ASIC Registration Number: 421448

Address: Collins & Co Audit Pty Ltd, 127 Paisley Street, FOOTSCRAY VIC 3011

Signature:

Date: 13 October 2022



Our waterways thank you for your support
Become a Member TODAY!

Werribee River Association *Inc.*

Working for the Werribee River since 1981

Werribee River Association is a registered charity.

To make a donation, arrange a sponsorship or leave a gift in your will,
please contact the Werribee Riverkeeper, John Forrester, on 0401 854 560



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