

Muckleford Landcare creates a corridor

Article by Muckleford Landcare Group Secretary
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Many of us involved in Landcare know about the concept of landscape connectivity, and about planting habitat corridors to enhance biodiversity.

So our group applied for funding from the Victorian Government to do a connectivity project of our own. We particularly wanted to show exactly what is required to put in a habitat corridor, what it would cost, and then be able to tell that story to landholders in our area.

We approached a Muckleford landholder and his family about putting in a habitat corridor which would connect a bush block on one side of the property to a bushland reserve on the other. They jumped at the chance, knowing that putting in this habitat would only enhance the biodiversity values of their property, and provide shade for their stock.

Because the landholders had stock, we contracted a fencing company to put up a new fence with access gates. A contractor then deep ripped several lines inside a 30m wide corridor. The same contractor planted more than 3,000 native plants across the paddock – just over half a kilometre.



The Landcare volunteers got together to put guards on the plants during a community day event. We had more than 30 people turn up to help.

Should other landholders in this area want to put in a similar corridor, we can provide advice on fencing, ripping, plant selection, and cost. We can let landholders borrow our plastic plant guards we've been using and re-using for many years. You can watch a video of our project on <https://mucklefordlandcare.wordpress.com>

The Habitat Corridor Project was supported by the Victorian Government through the 2021 Community and Volunteer Action Grants – Stream 2 Biodiversity On-ground Action and Stewardship.

Nature Fund – Leveraging private and philanthropic investment to protect our natural environment

Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change Lily D'Ambrosio recently announced \$10 million for the Labor Government's Nature Fund, to match biodiversity projects proposed by private or philanthropic groups.

The Nature Fund will be used to support high-impact projects to top up investment from non-government organisations, including market-led proposals that can be delivered through partnerships between public and private organisations.

There are already more than 72,000 hectares of private land designated for conservation across Victoria. This will ensure funds are readily available to respond to new conservation opportunities and to environmental threats.

This investment will help to deliver on the goals of *Biodiversity 2037*, the Government's plan to stop the decline of native plants and animals and improve the state's natural environment.

A Caring for Country stream of \$1.4 million is included in the Nature Fund to support biodiversity actions led by Traditional Owners.

On top of this, the Government is investing \$2.8 million to Trust for Nature to protect important habitat on private land through voluntary conservation covenants signed with private landowners, as part of the Iconic Estates Program.

Details on applying to this fund will be made available later in 2022.

Protecting habitat on private land will improve resilience for threatened species on our public land, creating buffers zones and corridors to allow species more space to move and adapt to climate change.

More information about applying for the Nature Fund: [Nature Fund \(environment.vic.gov.au\)](https://environment.vic.gov.au)