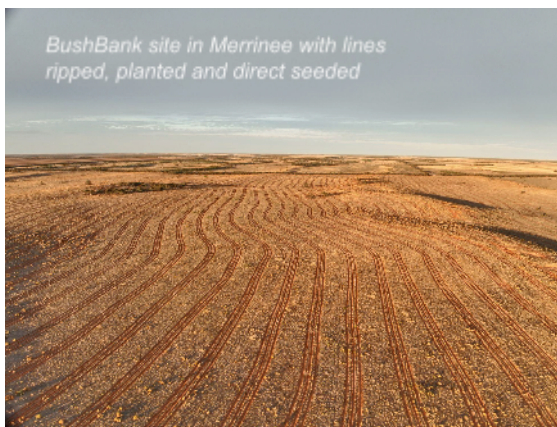


BushBank Program- Private Land Stream

Mid-Year Update 2024



The Victorian Government's \$77 million BushBank Program is addressing climate change and supporting wildlife as it restores more than 20,000 hectares of land across Victoria. Cassinia Environmental, as the Lead Delivery Partner, has been busy establishing the private land stream.

The Private Land Stream of the BushBank Program is well underway, delivering promising results for landowners and nature.

Progress and Achievements

We have made significant strides toward our ambitious restoration target. 43 sites are being progressed including 33 private properties, 5 Cassinia properties, and 5 BushBank Revolving Fund properties.

2,879 hectares of land have been restored across 9 sites and an additional 2,867 hectares will be revegetated in 2025 and beyond. This brings us to just over a quarter of the 20,000 hectare target.

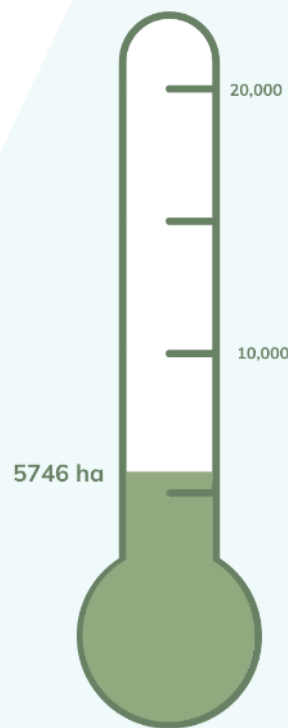
The sites are spread across Victoria and represent a range of bioregions and vegetation types to benefit a range of species.

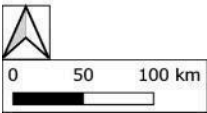
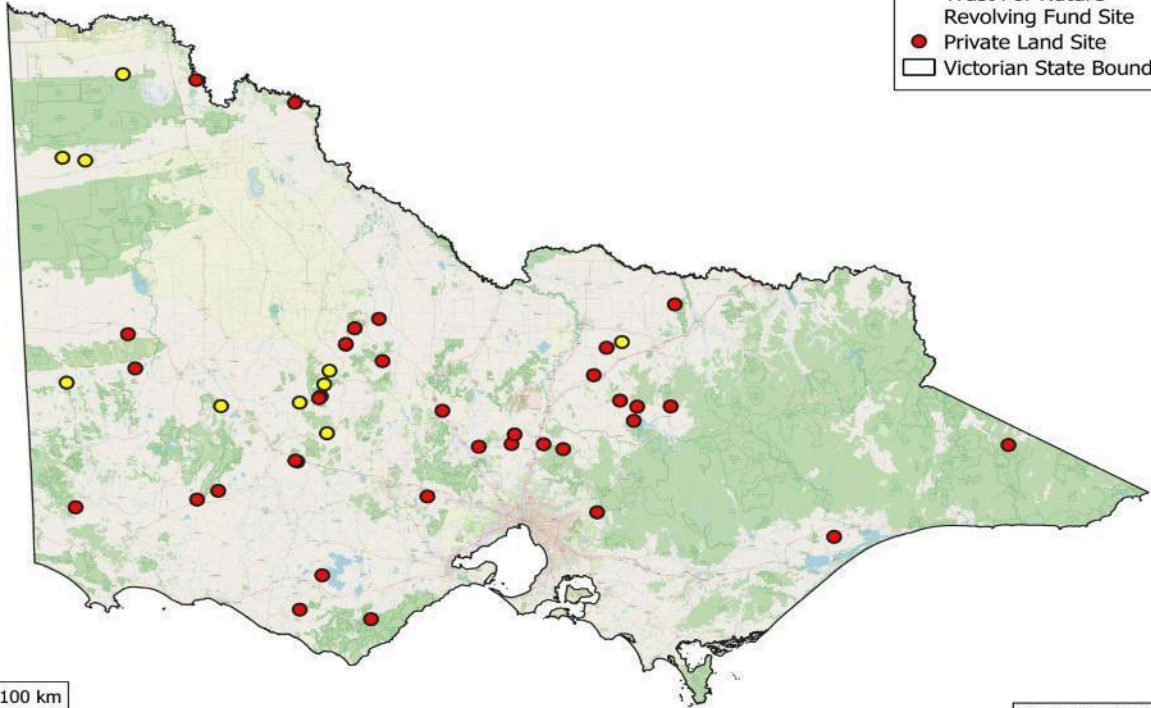
Every BushBank project is different, of the thirteen landowners who have signed agreements or letters of intent:

- Five are carbon co-funded by Greenfleet or Landlife Company
- Two are carbon co-funded by the landowner through the ACCU scheme
- Three are biodiversity co-funded by the landowner
- Cassinia is working through co-funding opportunities for the remaining three.

Financial and Resource Mobilisation

We have secured an additional \$1.21 million from carbon co-funders, bringing the total to \$5.58 million. These partnerships with LandLife Company and GreenFleet amplify the program's impact. Over 54% of the seed planted in 2024 was supplied by First Peoples groups and seed and seedling contracts were worth \$324,904.





We have scaled up for the 2024 planting season

This planting season we planted 68,760 seedlings and 772 kg of seed across 2087 hectares. This mammoth planting task was undertaken by Cassinia staff, contractors, and volunteers.

“Planting 37,705 seedlings at Emu in 3.5 days was a real highlight for me. We threw a lot of people at it and showed we can achieve a lot in a short period of time.”

Chris Lunardi - Revegetation Manager

To support this effort, NatureLab, the R&D component of Cassinia Environmental, developed a large scale direct seeding machine (the CommVeg Seeder) to give us confidence to plant large hectares across the mallee and ex-cropping areas with speed and efficiency. It can plant three seeding lines 2.5 metres apart in one pass. A seedling planter can be attached to the middle line to plant seedlings while seeding the outer two lines.



Biodiversity Impact



Our planting and restoration will play a critical role in enhancing biodiversity across Victoria. In the first half of 2024, we restored and protected habitat for numerous endangered and vulnerable species including the critically endangered South-Eastern Red-tailed Black Cockatoo and several woodland bird species. We are restoring ecosystems including mallee woodlands and grassy woodlands, increasing habitat connectivity and ecological resilience.

Early monitoring of 2023 plantings shows that projects are tracking well. Most sites show good density and diversity of species and some natural recruitment due to changed management practices. However, some sites showed evidence of browsing and pest animal management plans are being implemented.

Partnerships

We continue to develop strong partnerships with key organisations and communities. Collaborations with Trust for Nature, LandLife Company, GreenFleet, and regional contractors including Envite have been integral to the program's success. We look forward to working with several more partners.

First Peoples' Engagement: In the first half of 2024, four First Nations groups were contracted to supply over 423 kg of native seed and 5,115 seedlings.

Cassinia Environmental is actively working with the Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations to develop a "Walking Together" framework to guide future First Peoples engagement and ensure their active participation in land restoration efforts.



Traditional Owners and Cassinia BushBank Workshop #1 Report

Workshop held March 4th, in Kyneton
Facilitated by Myosia
Report compiled by Mycellia

Local Community Benefits: The program has fostered local economic benefits by sourcing supplies from regional nurseries and employing local contractors, bolstering rural economies. Engagement efforts through events like the Victorian Landcare Conference and the Bendigo Sustainability Festival have strengthened community ties, leading to increased landowner participation and interest in the program.

Thinking ahead

Moving into the second half of 2024, key priorities include preparing for the 2025 planting season, landowner engagement, and securing co-funding opportunities for smaller projects. We have plans to scale up seed collection and enhance pest management strategies. By strengthening partnerships, the program is well-positioned to meet its ambitious restoration target.

A snapshot of current BushBank projects



Cowangie: This 960-hectare BushBank Revolving Fund property will restore 635 hectares of mallee woodland and protect 325 hectares of remnant vegetation. Co-funded by Landlife Company, this site will create vital connectivity to the Cowangie State Forest.



Bonnie Doon: This 43-hectare private landowner project is co-funded by Landlife Company. This project will contribute to neighbouring conservation efforts, improve the water catchment and enhance habitat for endangered species like the Gang Gang Cockatoo.



Earlston: This 125-hectare BushBank revolving fund property near Violet Town is co-funded by Landlife Company and will revegetate 106 hectares and protect Lower Slopes Woodland. It will contribute to conservation efforts for species like the Grey Crowned Babbler and Squirrel Glider.



Fentons Creek: This 25-hectare private landowner project is co-funded by Land Life Company. The project will extend a wildlife corridor for species including Lace Monitors and Sand goannas, and link Grey Box ecological vegetation communities.

Get Involved

Landowners can play a key role in restoring habitats and fighting climate change. Get involved by submitting an expression of interest at www.cassinia.com/bushbank.

Next EOI round closes on 30 October 2024.

For more information or to explore partnership opportunities contact Cassinia Environmental at bushbank.partner@cassinia.com.