

# Media Release

**The Hon Harriet Shing MP**

Minister for Water

Minister for Regional Development

Minister for Equality



Thursday, 25 August 2022

## LITTER TRACKERS HELPING TO PROTECT OUR COAST

The Andrews Labor Government is helping to improve waterway health in the Barwon River through an innovative citizen science project tracking litter waste before it travels out to the bay.

Minister for Water Harriet Shing joined the Aquatic Environmental Stress Research Group scientists today, to launch GPS-enabled litter trackers into the Barwon River to simulate litter thrown in the catchments.

The Labor Government invested \$29,790 towards Litter Trackers Project as part of the Coastcare grants program.

This project was led by researchers from RMIT University who will work with school and community groups to release and track litter items fitted to GPS devices in Geelong, Bellarine, and Surf Coast waterways.

Litter, specifically plastic, can be found in every environment on earth including some of Geelong's significant waterways such as the Barwon River and the internationally Ramsar-listed Lake Connewarre.

The project aims to reduce litter ending up on our coast by educating local communities about the environmental cost of litter in our waterways. The project raises awareness about the issue of litter and empowers individuals with knowledge to make more sustainable decisions to drive change.

The Litter Trackers Project is working with schools, community groups, government, and industry partners to support healthy waterways across Geelong and build a more sustainable and liveable future for Geelong, Bellarine, and the Surf Coast.

Local Geelong schools involved in the initiative include Geelong High School and Northern Bay College, St Joseph's Flexible Learning Centre, St Terese Catholic Primary School and North Geelong Secondary College.

The Litter Trackers project: 'Burbs to the Bay' is a collaborative citizen science project between RMIT University, Corangamite Catchment Management Authority and Bellarine Catchment Network.

The Labor Government has invested \$17 million towards improving our iconic urban waterways including \$4.3 million towards the Rivers of the Barwon Action Plan that will protect and manage waterways in the Barwon catchment for the next five years.

### Quote attributable to Minister for Water Harriet Shing

*"Litter dropped on our streets is washed into stormwater systems where it eventually ends up in on our beaches, but this project will gather important information to help tackle the problem and protect our waterways."*

### Quote attributable to Minister Environment and Climate Action Lily D'Ambrosio

*"These grants provide vital funds that encourage the community to get involved in projects that protect and enhance their local environment."*

### Quote attributable to Member for Geelong Christine Couzens

*"To build a more sustainable and liveable future for Geelong, we need healthy waterways- and that means we need to tackle our litter problem at the source".*

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