

VMFRP

Nyah & Vinifera

Project Update
October 2020

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact:
Daniel Freitag – Project Manager
Daniel.Freitag@vmfrp.vic.gov.au or on 0428 687 327



**VICTORIAN MURRAY FLOODPLAIN
RESTORATION PROJECT**
HEALTHY LANDSCAPES, STRONG COMMUNITIES

Acknowledgement of Country

The Victorian Murray Floodplain Restoration Project (VMFRP) acknowledges and respects Traditional Owners, Aboriginal communities and organisations. We recognise the diversity of their cultures and the deep connections they have with Victoria's lands and waters.

We value partnerships with them for the health of people and country.

VMFRP management and staff pay their respects to Elders past and present, and recognise the primacy of Traditional Owners' obligations, rights and responsibilities to use and care for their traditional lands and waters.

Team introduction

- Josh White - Project Director
- Daniel Freitag – Project Manager - Central
- Nick Sheahan – Community, Environment and Heritage Manager
- Lisa Rankin – Manager Communications and Engagement
- Troy Gavin – Manager Traditional Owner Engagement
- Leeza Wishart – Parks Victoria – Area Chief Ranger

Format of the Information Session



Information session format

1. Project overview by members of the project team
2. Time for questions and answers
3. Discussion time – an opportunity for you to tell us what you think and what you'd like to see from us

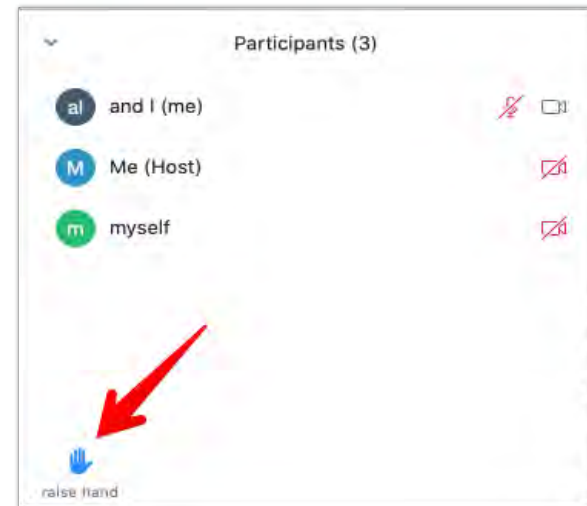
Note that this is just one of many conversations that we will be having with the community. If we run out of time and you still have things you want to discuss, we can follow up with a phone or arrange a face-to-face meeting with you.

Format of the Information Session



Housekeeping

- It's important that everyone is given the opportunity to speak so please be mindful of this.
- During the project overview, all participants will be muted until it's time for questions and discussion.
- If you have a question during the project overview, you can type it into the **comments box** or **raise your hand** by clicking '**participants**' then '**raise hand**'. If you raise your hand, you'll be invited to unmute and ask your question or make your comment.
- The same format will be used during the discussion time – place your comment in the comments box or raise your hand to make your comment verbally.
- This way we can ensure that everyone has the opportunity to participate in the discussion.



Why do these projects? – some background



Why do these projects?



Photos show the difference before and following environmental watering at Hattah-Kulkyne National Park

Why do these projects?

Improvement in river red gum tree condition after environmental watering at Nyah.

The project will help us see more improvements like this.



Photo point monitoring shows river red gum tree condition improvements at Nyah Park as a result of environmental watering (Above left: 2010; Above right: 2012)

Why do these projects?

- The primary objective of the Project to make our forests healthier.
- Under natural conditions, the Murray River would often spill onto floodplains.
- The floodplains have undergone substantial changes over time as our towns, cities, agriculture and industries have grown.
- Flood events are now less frequent, smaller, and don't last as long.
- These changes mean the floodplains don't get as much water as they need to be healthy and survive.
- These projects will help the environment by providing a reliable way of delivering water to the Parks
- Without these projects, the health of the floodplains will continue to decline.
- Recovery of more water to keep the environment healthy would require further buy back from irrigation communities. This would have negative social and economic impacts for the region by reducing the water available to support jobs and industry
- Even if more water was made available to keep the environment healthy, the river system would still be heavily modified and have competing demands and competing timing, meaning we cannot return to pre-regulation inundation and flows.



What do the projects involve?



What do the projects involve?

- The Project involves building infrastructure at nine sites (including Nyah/Vinifera) to keep water in our floodplains for longer.
- We will remove things that are currently blocking water flows.
- Roads and banks will be raised to capture water in the floodplain



Example of existing infrastructure that blocks the flow of water through the floodplain



Photo shows a raised bank at the Hattah-Kulkyne Park, which can hold water in the floodplain either side.

The banks at Nyah/Vinifera will look similar.

What do the projects involve?

We will install regulators so that we can get water where it needs to be effectively and efficiently.

This also means that when the sites flood naturally, we can hold the water in there for longer.

Once the water has been in there for long enough to benefit the environment, it will be released back into the Murray River.



Images of regulators

What will the projects achieve?



What will the projects achieve?

- Replicate a more natural flooding regime in the park
- Ecological benefits targeted:
 - Vegetation
 - Trees
 - Waterbirds
 - Fish
 - Frogs
- The parks are nicer to visit for social, recreational and tourism purposes.



What will the projects achieve?

- Improved health of wetlands and ecosystems
- Local economy benefits from capital investment
- Building resilience in times of low inflows and help prepare for a drier future, creating a refuge for plants and animals.



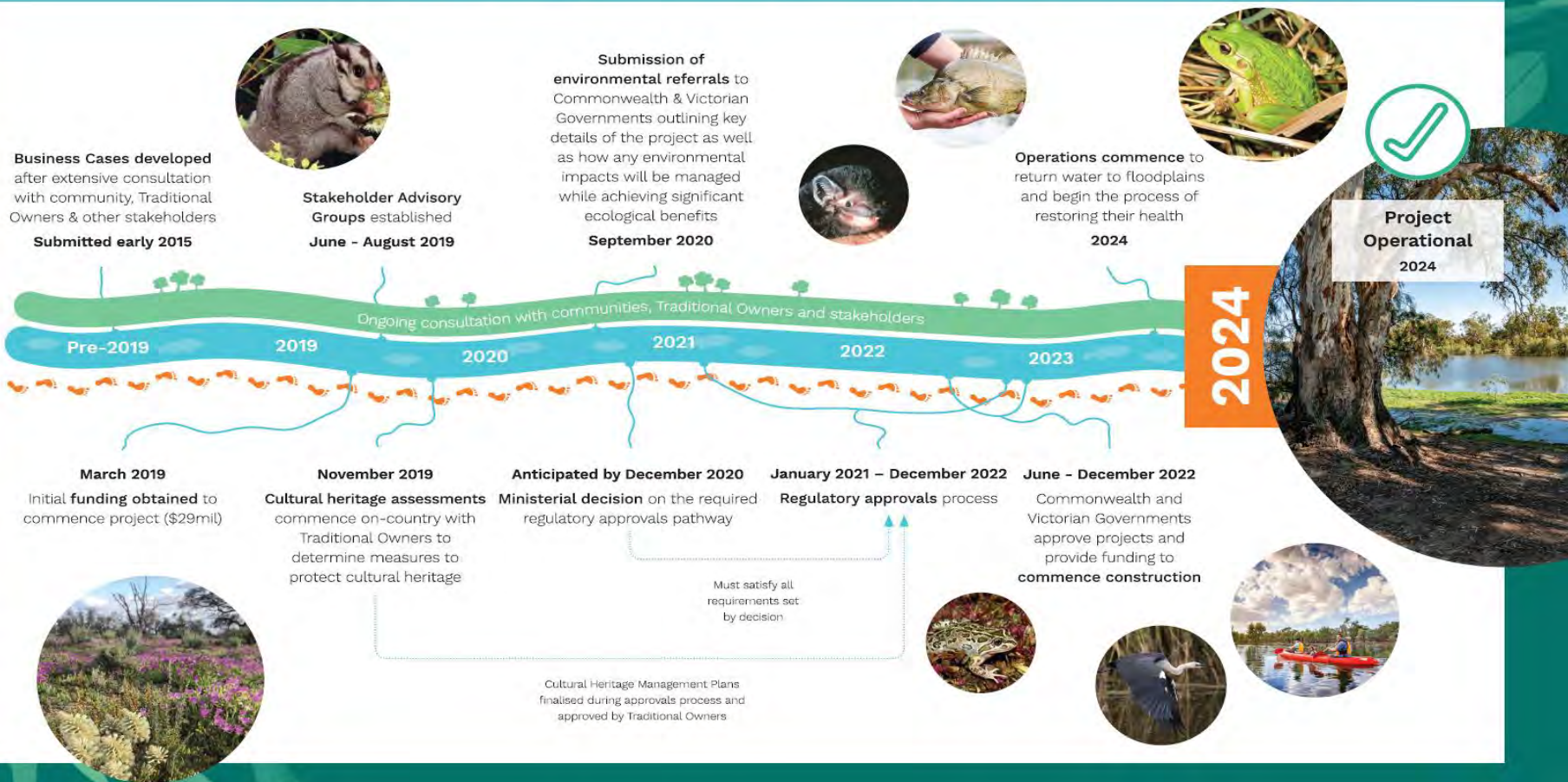
Nyah/Vinifera forest during natural flooding

Future beneficiary of the project - photo taken at Nyah/Vinifera forest

Next steps



Victorian Murray Floodplain Restoration Project Timeline



Community and stakeholder consultation

Recent engagement activities

- Project Team has been meeting with interested people on-site and via phone to discuss the project
- Liaison with landholders adjacent to the Parks
- Project update circulated widely – electronic and hard copies
- Stakeholder Advisory Group meetings
- Website updates and social media posts

Next steps

- As part of next year's regulatory approval process we will need to prepare either **Environmental Effects Statements** or **Environment Reports** for each of the nine project sites.
- As part of this process we will:
 - Be talking to more people, more often – informing the public about the projects and consulting with stakeholders
 - Prepare a Consultation Plan
 - Widely advertise opportunities for people to have a say or make a formal submission

PROJECT UPDATE

NYAH & VINIFERA
VICTORIAN MURRAY FLOODPLAIN RESTORATION PROJECT
SEPTEMBER 2020

Above: The seasonal floodwaters flow through country near the Nyah.

Formal engagement in the past three months:

- we engaged **151** people
- we had **10** face-to-face meetings
- we had **95** phone conversations with locals

WHAT'S HAPPENED RECENTLY?

Thank you to everyone who has taken the time to discuss the Nyah and Vinifera projects with us in recent months. Your local knowledge and advice is really valuable and helps ensure a wide range of points are considered. The discussions we have had are only the start – there will be many more and we are looking forward to continuing to work with you.

We are currently planning our next phase of community consultation to understand what people value about the forests, and to provide an opportunity for people to learn more about these projects. As part of this we'll be talking to more people, more often. These opportunities will be held in the coming months starting from October.

Our main focus has been on discussing why the Nyah and Vinifera projects are needed, including the preservation of cultural heritage. Essentially, both projects will help make the floodplain healthier. If nothing is done, the forest we all love so much will continue to decline, and so will the birds, frogs, fish, turtles and other animals that depend on it for survival. It is vital that we help these floodplains survive and to build resilience in them so they can cope with future dry conditions and drought, and protect the many species that depend on them.

Above: I felt work underway earlier this year to inform a Cultural Heritage Management Plan for the Vinifera project.

HEALTHY LANDSCAPES, STRONG COMMUNITIES

Traditional Owner Engagement



Recent engagement activities

- Our more recent engagement with Traditional Owners to date has focussed on beginning the development of Cultural Heritage Management Plans (CHMPs).
- CHMPs assess the potential impact of the project on Aboriginal cultural heritage, and outline measures to be taken before, during and after construction to protect Aboriginal cultural heritage. They are developed in partnership with Traditional Owners, under the guidance of Aboriginal Victoria.
- As part of this process we have been on-site with Traditional Owners conducting archaeological assessments and other fieldwork.
- The next phase of Traditional Owner consultation beginning in the coming months will have a broader focus and will explore how the project can complement the broader Traditional Owner land and water objectives for each site.

Vinifera



Vinifera - Objectives

- Site objectives
 - Inundation of up to 350Ha
 - Watering will depend on seasonal conditions and allocations. Water is planned to be delivered up to 8-9 years in 10 for 2-6 months.
 - VMFRP will deliver water to the floodplain to fill in the gaps between natural floods.
 - Our preference is to 'capture' water from high river events. Temporary pumps will only be used when river peaks are too infrequent to meet environmental watering targets (estimated 1 in 10 years)

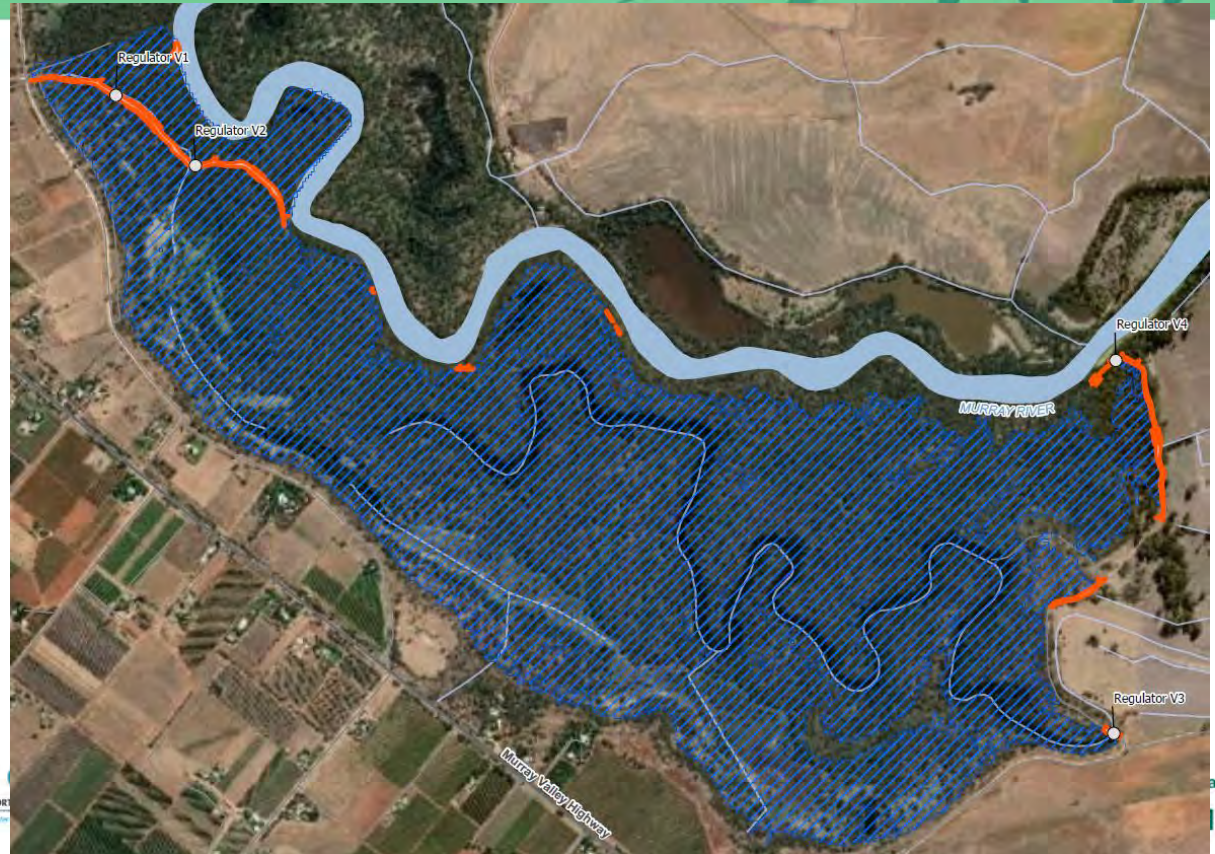


Vinifera - Works Location

The works involve:

- Four regulators (the dots on the map)
- 2.5km of track raising (the orange on the map)
- A temporary pump site (near 'Regulator V4').

The blue is the maximum area we will be able to water using these works.



Nyah



Nyah - Objectives

- Site objectives
 - Inundation of up to 488Ha
 - Watering will depend on seasonal conditions and allocations. Water is planned to be delivered up to 7-9 years in 10 for 1-6 months.
 - VMFRP will deliver water to the floodplain to fill in the gaps between natural floods.
 - Temporary pumps only used where river peaks too infrequent to meet environmental watering targets (estimated 1 in 10 years)

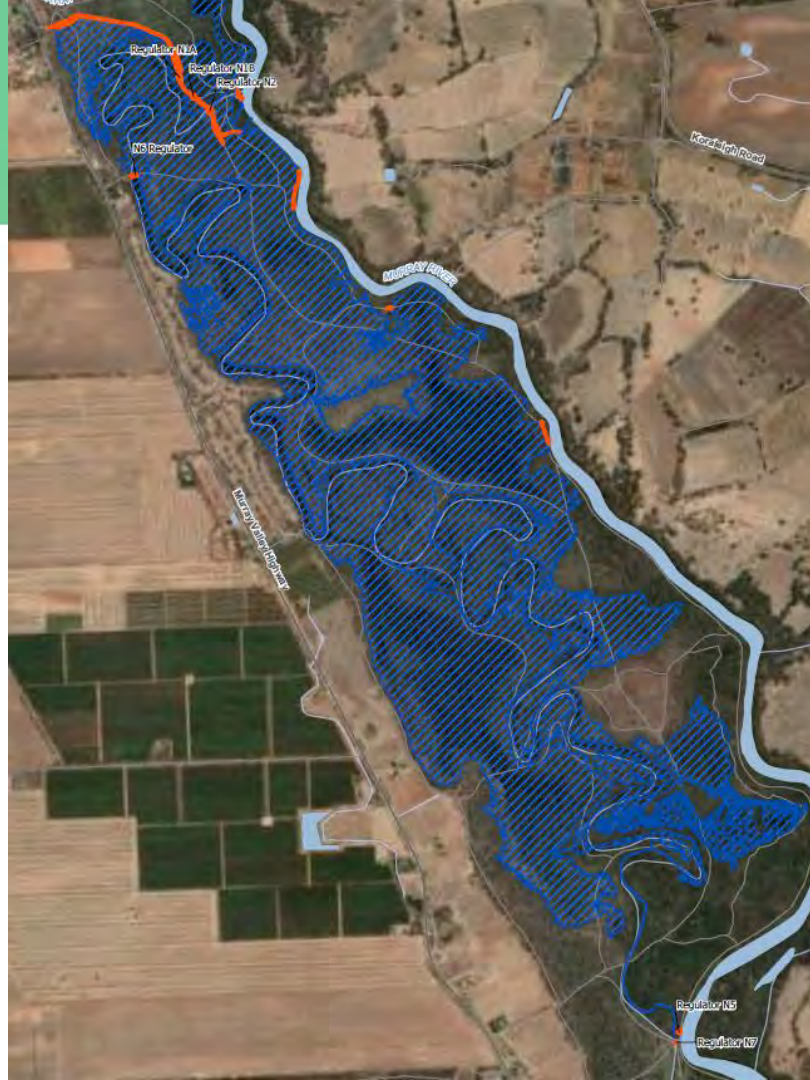


Nyah - Works Location

The works involve:

- Five regulators (labelled on the map)
- 1.4km of track raising (the orange on the map)
- A temporary pump site (near 'Regulator N5')
- Removal of the bank near the old golf course

The blue is the maximum area we will be able to water using these works.



Water inundation maps – Nyah and Vinifera

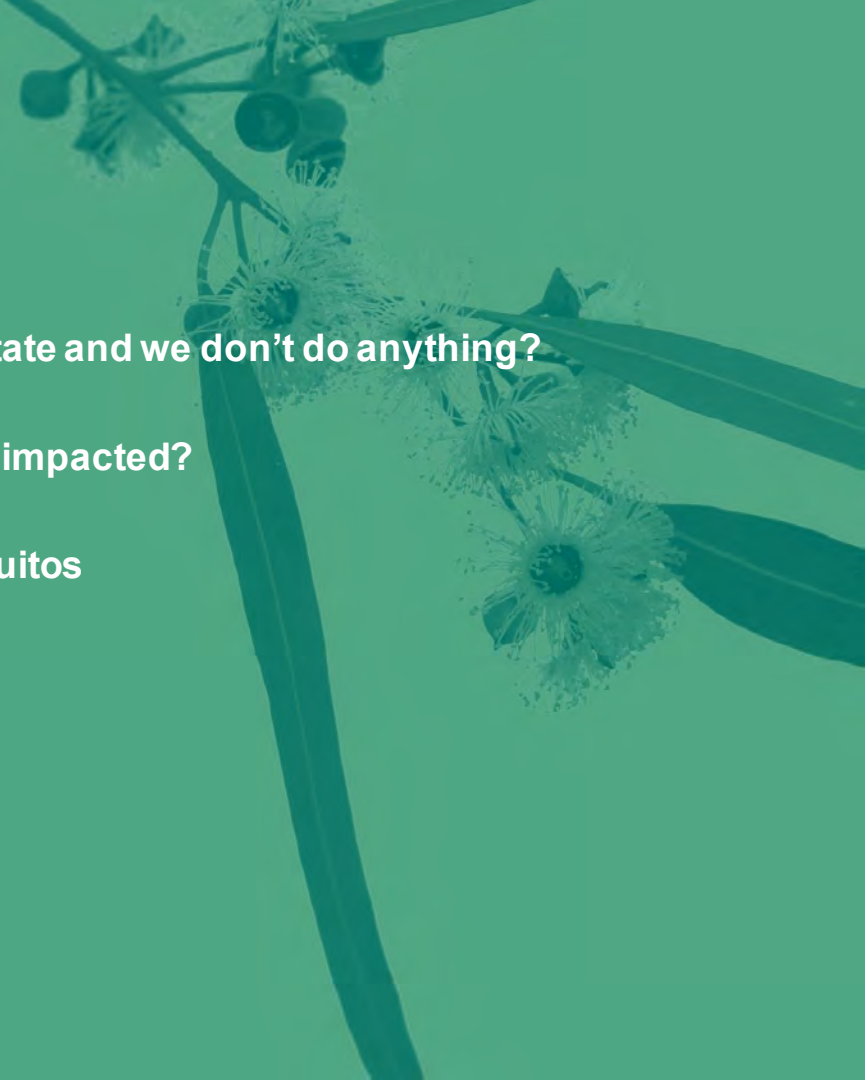


Every forest and wetland is different. The watering plans are flexible; each year and each water event will be planned depending on what has happened the year before, what the condition of the floodplain is, what water is available, and whether it can be delivered when it is needed. The floodplains will not be full all of the time.

Some commonly asked questions

- What happens if we leave the forest in it's current state and we don't do anything?
- Could the project cause a blackwater event?
- Will public access to the parks and Murray River be impacted?
- How will pest species be managed?
- Will the projects create a breeding habitat for mosquitos

Are there any other questions you'd like us to answer?



Where to go for more info

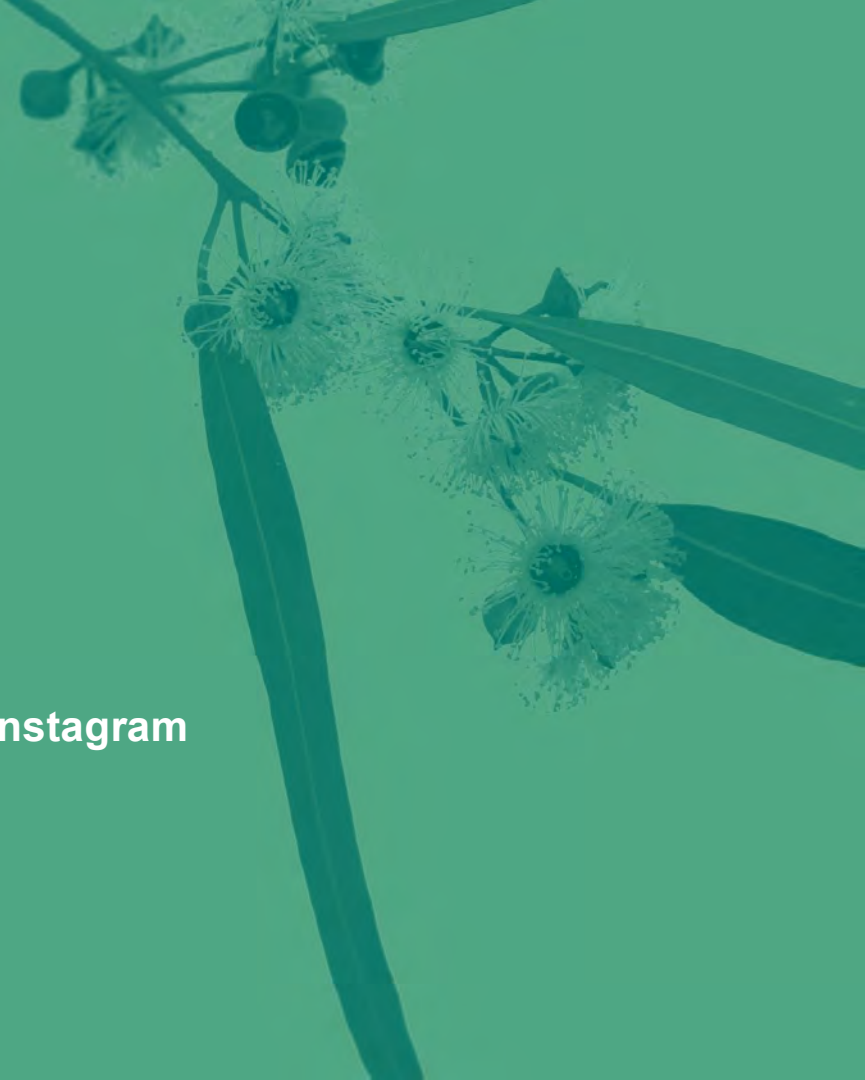
If you have any questions, please feel free to contact:

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Other ways to connect:

- Website: vmfrp.com.au
- Find us on social media – Facebook, Twitter, Instagram
- Email us: info@vmfrp.vic.gov.au





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