



MEDIA RELEASE
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Full house at the Growing Connections forum

Over 90 representatives from community groups, councils, state agencies and individual landholders attended the *Growing Connections Biodiversity Planning Forum* held at the Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne last week.

“We were delighted by the positive response to this forum” said Ms Cecelia Witton, Executive Officer of the Western Port Biosphere Foundation. “Our goal was to provide a forum for sharing information about biodiversity projects and it was fabulous to hear about the achievements of so many of our partners.”

Participants were fascinated by Dr Paul Carnell’s presentation about his research into the possibilities vegetated coastal habitats offer for capturing carbon to fight the effects of climate change. Dr Carnell is a Marine and Coastal Ecologist at Deakin University’s Centre for Integrative Ecology.

Mr Chris Chambers, Growing Connections Project Coordinator, presented the Western Port Biosphere’s draft Biodiversity Plan which, when finalised, will provide direction for regional biodiversity planning. The Draft Biodiversity Plan is now available for comment on our website. Members of the community, Landcare, DELWP, our member councils and the Port Phillip and Western Port Catchment Management Authority have contributed to the development of the Plan.

Representatives from Bass Coast Landcare Network, Frankston Environmental Friends Network, French Island Landcare Group, Mornington Peninsula Landcare Network, Western Port Catchment Landcare network, and from the councils of Bass Coast, Casey, Cardinia, Frankston and Mornington Peninsula provided updates about their biodiversity projects. There were also updates from the Western Port Biosphere about the Growing Connections Project and other biosphere activities.

The Draft Biodiversity Plan and copies of presentations are available at www.biosphere.org.au.

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