

“Soapy’s Dam Reserve” plant list

The 2020 plants for Soapy’s Dam were all sourced from the Wadawurrung Indigenous Nursery at Bostok (Ballan).

Plant selection utilised the ecological report on the reserve was made in 2024 and the “Bunanyung Native Habitat Restoration Guide” <https://bunanyunglandscapealliance.org>

<i>Microseris walteri</i>	Murnong	<i>Eucalyptus aramaphloia</i>	Scent bark
<i>Acacia paradoxa</i>	Hedge Wattle	<i>Eucalyptus Ovata</i>	Swamp Gum
<i>Acacia verticillata</i>	Prickly Moses	<i>Eucalyptus Radiata</i>	Narrow Leaf Peppermint
<i>Bursaria spinosa</i>	Sweet Bursaria	<i>Eucalyptus dives</i>	Broadleaf Peppermint
<i>Dianella revoluta</i>	Black-anther Flax-lily	<i>Acacia stricta</i>	Hop Wattle
<i>Eucalyptus yarraensis</i>	Yarra Gum	<i>Themeda triandra</i>	Kangaroo grass
<i>Juncus pallidus</i>	Pale Rush	<i>Acacia aculeatissima</i>	Snake Wattle
<i>Leptospermum continentale</i>	Prickly Tea-tree	<i>Lomandra filiformis</i>	Wattle mat rush
<i>Lomandra longifolia</i>	Spiny-headed Mat-rush	<i>Hardenbergia violacea</i>	Purpal Coral pea
<i>Poa labillardierei</i>	Silver Tussock		

Grasstrees

Despite the heavy impact of mining on Soapy’s Dam Reserve, there remains a surprising amount of biodiverse native plants in existence.

Surprises include three large remnant Xanthorrhoea Minor grass trees (trunkless).

And more surprising are two juvenile grasstrees in the middle of one of the planting areas. These juvenile grasstrees had actually survived the Council mowing of last year.



Murnong Field

A small murnong field has been established beside the Canadian Creek. Murnong was grown extensively in by the Wadawurrung people in the time before squatters and the gold rush destroyed the creek side fields.

There is nearby a Murnong field that is believed to have survived on the site of Damascus College.

According to Wikipedia “murnong tubers were often dug out with digging sticks and cooked before eating. They were widespread and deliberately cultivated by Aboriginal peoples in some areas, but the hooved animals introduced by early settlers to Australia destroyed vast areas of habitat, leading to calamitous results for the Indigenous people”



Urban Ripple

A partnership of Bunanyung Landscape Alliance and Yarrowee Leigh Catchment Group



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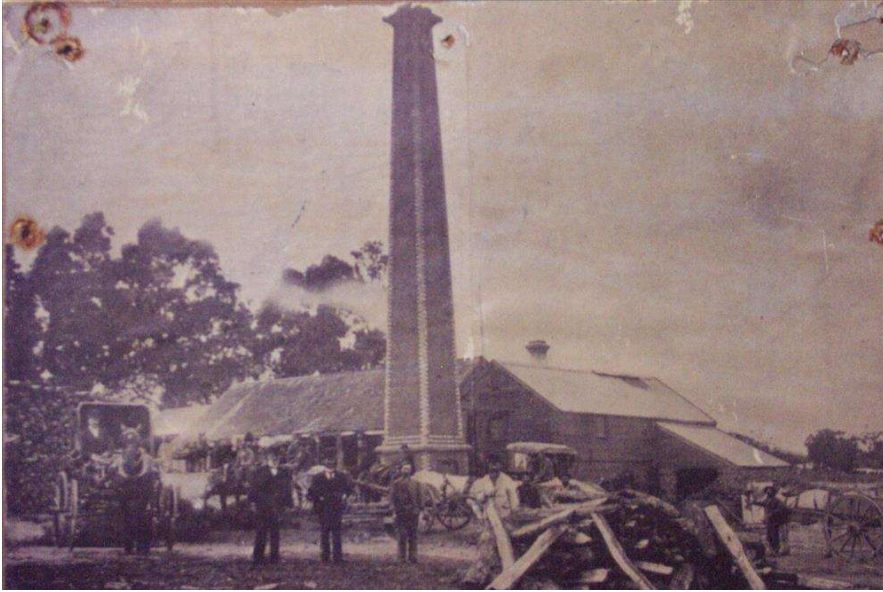
Planting Soapy’s Dam Reserve June to August 2025



Soapy’s Dam Reserve is managed by the City of Ballarat as an Open Space Reserve. The 2020 Yarrowee River Master includes upgrading the Soapy’s Creek shared trail which runs along the southern boundary of the reserve and establishing ecological connections along the creek to Woookarung regional Park.



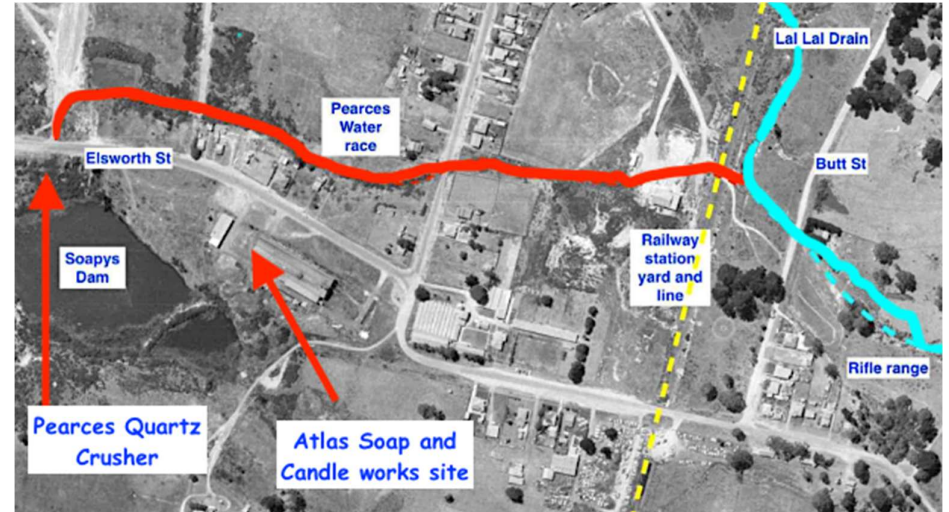
Pearce's Quartz Crusher



Pearce's Quartz Mill was situated on Elsworth Street on the north side of Soapy's Dam. It was established sometime in the 1870s. Isiah Pearce held a mining lease on the western side of Geelong Road opposite what is now the Golden Point Hotel..
Image of Pearce's Quartz Mill. Courtesy Ballarat Historical Society

The quartz mill was still in operation in 1907 when a Victorian Government mining report logged Pearce's Mill putting sludge into the Yarrowee River. Pearce's mines closed around 1916 most likely leading to the closure of the Quartz Crusher.

Image right: Remnant steam engine foundations 2022.



The route of the water race from Lal Lal Drain to Pearce's Quartz Crusher

Atlas Soap and Candle Factory

The Atlas Soap and Candle Factory works operated around the 1890s on the site now occupied by Replas. The dam was the result of clay pit used to supply local brick and pipe makers after the crusher and soap works had closed. After World War 2, Amcast industries made cast iron pipes in a foundry within the building now used by Replas industries. Amcast closed in Ballarat in the early 1990s and Replas eventually took over the site as a plastic recycling factory.

The Jeweller's shop

The Jeweller's Shop was one of the richest alluvial gold fields ever found. It is located beside the Canadian Creek Trail about 150 m south from Elsworth St. There is an early 1900's cast iron sign on Main Road describing the 1853 find. It is reported that more than a ton of gold was taken out of the claim.

