



Werribee River Association Inc.

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To: Andrea McIntosh URS Consultants to Wyndham City Council Date: Monday 15th Aug 2011

Response for consultation on Coastal Strategy – River to Skeleton Creek 2011

Introduction:

The Werribee River Association (WRIVA) has been in existence since April 1981, and arose from local interest in the promotion and improvement of the Werribee River.

WRIVA has worked strategically to ensure integrated management of the river and its catchment.

For example, WRIVA successfully led the initiation of:

- The Werribee River receiving environmental flows
- The Waterwatch Program on the western plains
- Melbourne Water becoming the waterways manager for the west of Melbourne, including the Werribee and Maribyrnong rivers.

WRIVA has also been a leader and active participant in natural resource management plans, works and research along the Werribee River in Wyndham.

- River strategies and policies
- Flora and fauna surveys
 - Platypus Surveys
 - *Eucalyptus baueriana* ssp. *thalassina*
- Planting projects
- Litter and rubbish removal

1. What can you tell us about the different uses, development, and recreational facilities you and/or your organisation use within the study area?

WRIVA has worked in the estuary on the Grahams Wetland Reserve, took part in the studies of the estuary and its needs by Melbourne Water, was invited to take part in fish surveys with the Arthur Rylah research staff, has been interested in outflows of the irrigation overflow or drainage channels, effects of rain events on river condition, as well as being invited to the opening of the new jetty and ramps.

For example WRIVA worked with the Friends of Werribee South in the early 2000s, mentoring and completing planting projects and the like in their main focus area of the wetland reserve and the foreshore.

Currently we are working with Parks Victoria, Wyndham City Council and Melbourne Water on the development of the Werribee River Regional Park on the west bank of the river.

2. What type of pressures are inland users placing on the coast and its recreational facilities within the study area?

Recreational usage of the area has increased in the past few decades, with resultant effects caused by people, animals and vehicles.

This pressure comes from the need for people to access, see or live near or in view of the coastline. In fact people are wishing to be close to nature, which WRIVA is interested in protecting for its own sake and the right of future generations to access that also.

Urban expansion has resulted in the development of whole suburbs in Werribee Hoppers Crossing, Tarneit, Point Cook, and now right on the bay at the Wyndham Cove Martina. Resultant vehicle traffic has increased for sightseeing, boat launching, fishing, swimming, bike riding, pet exercise and other visits.

Some effects of the expansion are:

- disturbance to habitat
- over fishing
- damage and loss of vegetation
- introduction of weeds, feral animals, pollutants and litter

3. What can you tell us about the following issues within the study area:

- **water quality**

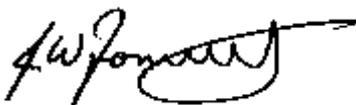
- a) Irrigation and drainage channels contribute excess nutrients, fertilizers and other chemicals to the bay
- b) Excess algae can result in blue-green blooms
- c) Poor river flows inhibit breeding of fish
- d) Clearing of vegetation effects bird lives and fish
- e) Dredging may allow salty water in to aquifers

- **known erosion sites**

- a) banks of river without vegetation
- b) coastline of estuary
- c) coastline along where vehicle tracks have been uncontrolled

- **flora and fauna sites of significance**

- a) Graham's Land salt marsh
- b) Cheetham Ck wetlands
- c) Point Cook Marine Park
- d) Coastal vegetation
- e) Seagrass beds



John Forrester
Secretary
WRIVA