

WERRIBEE RIVER ASSOCIATION INC.

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No. A0017169K ABN No. 45 866 719 214



Thursday 28 September 2017

Melbourne Water
990 La Trobe St
Docklands
Victoria, Australia

Submission to Melbourne Water Healthy Waterways Strategy Co-design

The Werribee River Association Inc. was formed in Werribee in 1981, and worked on issues such as small revegetation works, removing car bodies from the river, rubbish clean ups, walks and talks, but also held a vision for the whole of the Werribee catchment.

From the 1990s into the millennium drought years, WRivA worked to meet the varied challenges of growing human impacts on the river catchment, and a drying catchment facing threats from climate change.

WRivA has undertaken a number of initiatives which have added great value to the vision of healthy waterways, wetlands and the bay.

WRivA has made many contributions to matters concerning stormwater, litter, water quality, planning, and development. WRivA was the first organisation in the catchment to research local biodiversity beginning with our platypus surveys, and was the leading community group calling for a waterway manager for the Werribee River until Melbourne Water's boundaries were extended in 2005.

WRivA has had many representative, membership and leadership roles in a wide range of catchment and waterway initiatives.

WRivA has hosted the role of the Werribee Riverkeeper since 2014.

WRivA is currently working with Friends of Steele Creek and Environmental Justice Australia to create a document which will explore the advantages of the Yarra River Action Plan, from the *Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murrn) Bill 2017*, and show what can be rolled over from that action plan onto the Maribyrnong and Werribee River catchments.

WRivA thanks Melbourne Water for allowing the public to have a vital say in the refresh of the Healthy Waterways Strategy, and respectfully submits the following points for consideration.

Yours sincerely

John Forrester
Werribee Riverkeeper



WRivA requests that Melbourne Water:

1. Supports further collaborative catchment activities by the three municipalities in the catchment because of the:
 - a. Advantages to be gained from the Yarra River Protection (Willip-gin Birrarung Murrong) Bill 2017, which identifies the Yarra River and the many hundreds of parcels of public land it flows through as one living, integrated natural entity for protection and improvement.
See Action 28 and others in the Yarra River Action Plan:
https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0024/27177/DELWP0032_YarraRiverActionPlan_v27_weba.pdf
 - b. The importance given to public parklands and open spaces along the Yarra River within metropolitan Melbourne, to be known collectively as the Greater Yarra Urban Parklands.
 - c. Demand for recreational spaces by an expanding population
 - d. Existing calls for the creation of a linear park along the Werribee River
2. Advocates for better planning, protection and enhancement of the forests in the headwaters of the Little, Lerderderg and the Werribee Rivers:
 - a. To provide more resilient water catchments for drinking water, irrigation and stream flows
 - b. To protect natural places of public benefit from damage by mining, soil removal or logging
 - c. To provide high quality habitat for animals and birds
 - d. To meet recreational needs of the expanding urban areas
3. Harnesses positive benefits of cooperative work between community and government, waterway managers, and municipalities by supporting and encouraging:
 - a. More reasonable levels of funding for Parks Victoria
 - b. Core needs funding of those community groups acting as waterway protectors on major waterways
 - c. Acting on local community advice and knowledge
4. Supports research and funding of alternative water sources so that catchment water can be allowed to flow more naturally in rivers and streams:
 - a. Stormwater to be harvested with major results
 - b. Recycled Water to be of the highest quality to make it more beneficial to users
5. Supports rejuvenation of the level of macro-invertebrates and native fish life in waterways by:
 - a. Carrying out in-stream habitat and river bushland initiatives
 - b. Advocating for minimization of regular close-to-stream mowing of parklands
 - c. Creation of further fishways & fishladders in strategic locations
 - d. Advocacy for removal of barriers in waterways or making them human and nature friendly
 - e. Support of initiatives to reduce carp numbers in waterways
 - f. Support the re-introduction and stocking of freshwater native species
 - g. Rethink stocking with exotic species in waterways

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6. Supports work towards the reduction of the existing massive litter problem by:
 - a. Advocating for a review of any existing regulations to a litter-smart standard
 - b. Advocating for the introduction of statewide leadership and initiatives to meet the growing concerns with take away food and packaging items
 - c. Advocating for funding of communities, municipalities, waterway managers and Parks Victoria to continue their work meeting the challenge of growing litter loads

 7. Deliver major messages with a more natural language:
 - a. E.g. Potable water could become 'drinking water'
 - b. E.g. Stormwater could become 'rain water'
 - c. E.g. Environmental flows could become 'natural flows'
 - d. E.g. Ecosystem services could become 'natural benefits'
 - e. E.g. Biolinks could become 'nature links'
 - f. E.g. Riparian areas' could become 'river bushland'
 - g. E.g. D Drains could become 'rain water creeks or channels'
 - h. E.g. Retarding basins could become 'rain water pools'
 - i. E.g. Flora and fauna could become 'plant life , 'animal and bird life'
 - j. Others can be reimagined to bring people closer to our natural places, to build closer links with nature and to allow communities to identify more closely with their waterway

 8. Deliver major messages to multiple audiences by:
 - a. Electronic media e.g. 155L per day program - c2000s
 - b. Printed media e.g. Herald-Sun newspaper, local papers
 - c. Social media
 - d. Programs for networks, groups, schools and the like
 - e. Programs for consultants, developers, bureaucrats, managers, VCAT and politicians
 - f. Programs for universities, TAFE colleges and other training providers
 - g. Other programs as required
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