



Stony Creek Rehabilitation Plan Annual report card

2020 – 2021

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Acknowledgement of Country

Melbourne Water respectfully acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners and custodians of the land and water on which all Australians rely. We pay our respects to Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung, Bunurong and Boon Wurrung, their Elders past, present and future as Traditional Owners and the custodians of the land and water on which we rely and operate.

We recognise Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung as the Traditional Owners and custodians of the country on which upper Stony Creek meanders and Bunurong as the Traditional Owners and custodians of the country through which lower Stony Creek winds and joins Port Phillip Bay.

We acknowledge and respect the continued cultural, social and spiritual connections that all Aboriginal Victorians and the broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community have with lands and waters, and recognise and value their inherent responsibility to care for and protect them for thousands of generations.

Melbourne Water acknowledge Aboriginal Victorians as Traditional Owners and in the spirit of reconciliation. We remain committed to working in partnership with Traditional Owners to ensure meaningful ongoing contribution to the future of land and water management.



1. Overview

A significant amount of work has been undertaken by Melbourne Water, Maribyrnong City Council, the Environment Protection Authority Victoria (EPA) and the local community to rehabilitate and protect Stony Creek following the August 2018 Tottenham warehouse fire.



Friends of Cruickshank Park Community Day in April 2021

Released in 2019, the Stony Creek Rehabilitation Plan (2019–2029) outlines a 10-year program of actions for project partners and the community to work together to restore, enhance and protect the condition of the creek and its surrounding environment into the future. The Plan was developed through close consultation with interested local community members, organisations and government agencies.

This is the Plan's second annual report card, providing an update on the status and progress of actions from July 2020 to August 2021.

In total, there are 18 actions being reported on this year. The list includes many important projects, ranging from on-the-ground works and new infrastructure, to education activities, improved water quality monitoring and more resourcing.

A new frog pond was installed to create an off-stream habitat for frogs and birds and a new habitat for native wildlife while filtering stormwater before it reaches Stony Creek.



Friends of Cruickshank Park Community Day in April 2021



Kindergarten students at the Drew Street frog pond

Careful planning around Coronavirus (COVID-19) public health measures enabled the Friends of Cruickshank Park and Friends of Stony Creek to host a number of community events throughout the year. These included Clean Up Australia day activities, information displays at the Yarraville Festival, a bird walk, a pop-up toddler play space, frog pond planting activity, a Community Day in April 2021 and a number of planting events over the year. Council, Melbourne Water and EPA attended the community day to discuss the Stony Creek Rehabilitation plan and the status of the actions.

Research partnerships with RMIT produced insights into water and sediment quality and a comprehensive litter survey. Recommendations from these studies will be taken on board and used into the future.

The Stony Creek Pedestrian Footbridge in West Footscray (completed in May 2020) is being heavily used by the local community.

The resourcing boost by Maribyrnong City Council to create two new roles in 2019/2020 were a wonderful contribution enabling delivery of timely responses to local pollution and waste issues, as well as improving guidance for stormwater retention and reuse in new developments.

These are some examples of the actions progressed in the past year, with more outlined in the report card.

Next year's report card will include updates on projects including installing water quality sensors throughout the catchment and creating more signage along the creek.

The long-term rehabilitation of Stony Creek requires a sustained effort to improve the condition of the creek into the future. The actions progressed in the past year add to the progress of the Plan and bring the community's vision for Stony Creek to life.

2. Highlights

While the year was an unusual one that brought with it challenges from several lockdowns and restricted activities across the city, there were several highlights.



EPA inspection blitz in Tottenham



EPA inspection blitz in Tottenham

One day, nine site inspections: The results stack up in Stony Creek blitz

Following a number of pollution reports about Stony Creek, EPA's West Metro team along with their Maribyrnong Officer for the Protection of the Local Environment (OPLE), conducted an inspection blitz at Sara Grove, Tottenham.

Four EPA teams completed a total of nine inspections, resulting in:

- Two Pollution Abatement Notices (PANs) issued
- Four sites receiving compliance advice on how to improve process and practice
- One further site scheduled to be inspected at a later time
- One site noted to be compliant with Minor Works Pollution Abatement Notice previously issued
- A connection issue identified from a broken water main on private property that was followed up with Council and City West Water
- All duty holders advised of their obligations under Victoria's environment protection laws.

Steve Lansdell, Regional Manager West Metro, commented

“ This proactive approach has produced fantastic results. The team were able to pick up any issues before they progressed further, and provided advice to our duty holders on their obligations and best practice. This is a great result for the community and the environment. EPA will continue to maintain a strong regulatory focus and work with stakeholders to prevent and tackle pollution in the waterways in the west of Melbourne. ”

EPA received positive feedback on the blitz, with a number of community members at the Friends of Cruickshank Park event (held 11 April 2021) mentioning that they became aware of the blitz through EPA's social media posts, and spoke positively about EPA's efforts.



Drew Street frog pond site – before



Drew Street frog pond site – after

Supporting ecosystems at Cruickshank Park

With the help of students from Gowrie Clare Court Kindergarten, a new frog pond area with more than 500 plants has been created at Cruickshank Park, Yarraville to encourage the return of frogs to the area and create new habitats.

This new frog pond area is part of the vision in Maribyrnong City Council's Stony Creek Future Directions Plan 2020 and a key action of the Stony Creek Rehabilitation Plan 2019–2029, highlighting the collaborative efforts to restore habitat and biodiversity in the area for the community.

It was installed by Melbourne Water near the pedestrian footbridge at Drew Street, Yarraville, and over time will offer a new home to frogs and insects in the area.

The area around the pond has been planted with native plants, including aquatic and semi-aquatic plants to encourage and enhance the development of local ecosystems. It has also been fenced to help protect the wildlife as they return to the area and create habitats.

The survival of native wildlife in our city depends on healthy native vegetation communities. Frogs play an important role in the waterway ecosystem and are easily affected by changes to their environment. This frog pond will provide vital habitats for a range of native animals such as the Banjo Frog and the Spotted Marsh Frog, and many bird species.

Further upcoming work along Stony Creek, as part of the Stony Creek Future Directions Plan and Stony Creek Rehabilitation Plan, includes the installation of further frog pond areas and raingardens, and amenity and facility improvements such as upgrades to the shared user path that runs along the Creek, more revegetation throughout the Park, and new toilets and a BBQ area.





Kindergarten students at the Drew Street frog pond



Kindergarten students at the Drew Street frog pond

“ Cruickshank Park is a much-loved open space in our community and I am thrilled to see the collaboration with Melbourne Water in progressing the recovery of Stony Creek.

Supporting local ecosystems and encouraging native animals to return to the area is an important part of recovery, and is just one of the many things we will be doing to restore the area for generations to come. ”

Cr Michael Clarke
Mayor - Maribyrnong City Council

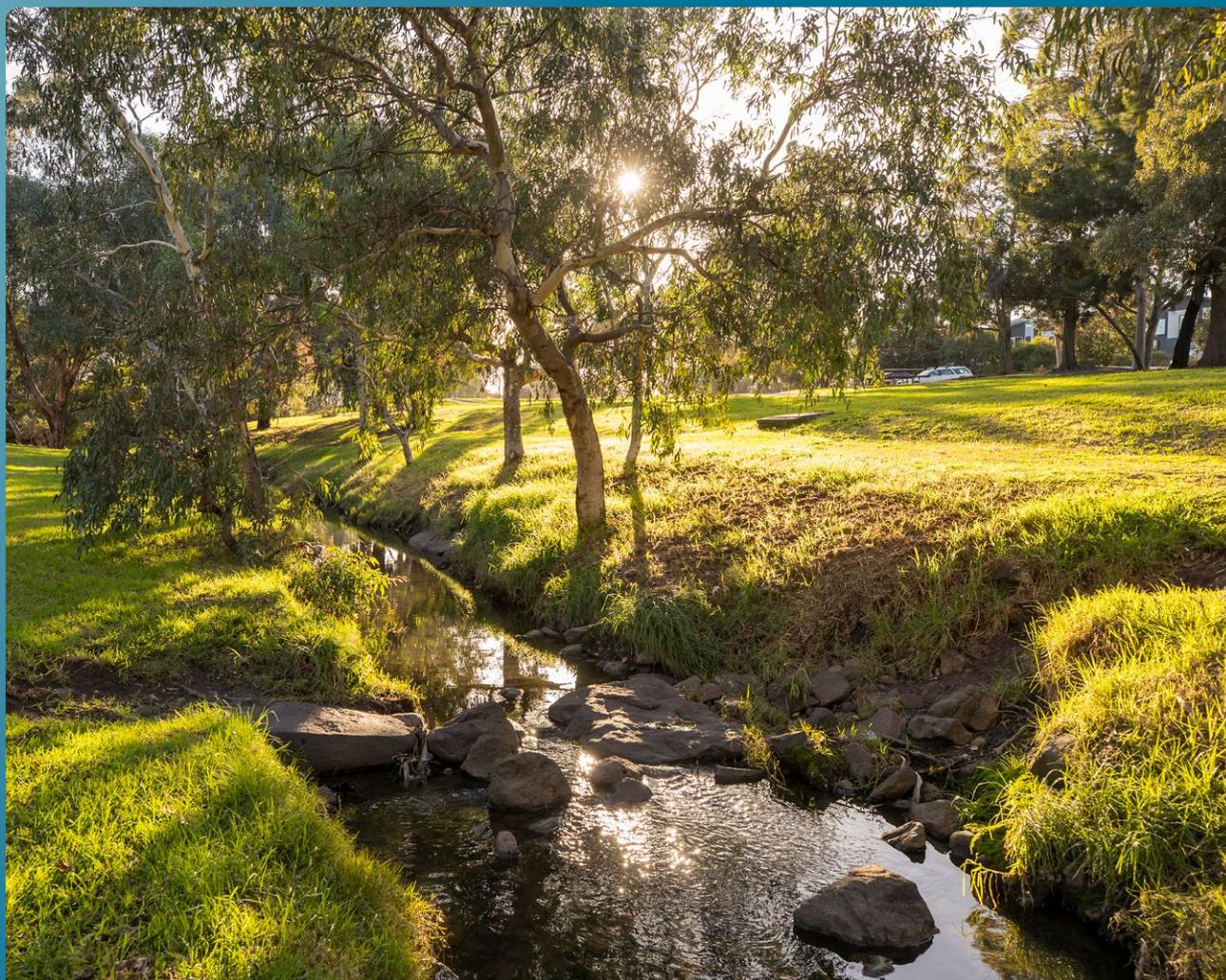
“ Working together with Melbourne water and Maribyrnong City Council helps us to know this Place better and incorporate new knowledge into our programs with children. Whilst planting around the new frog pond we learnt that water bugs will get into the pond through bird poo! As we begin to cross Stony Creek rocks again for the first time since the West Footscray fire, we are looking forward to what we will learn and how this relationship with waterways may shape who we are as community members. ”

Stephanie Amici-Limco
Educational Leader, Gowrie Clare Court Kindergarten

3. Report card

The report card includes status updates on 18 actions. These include actions due in 2020 or 2021, actions to be reported on annually and also actions that have been completed ahead of schedule. For a full list of actions for the 10-year program, please see the Stony Creek Rehabilitation Plan (2019–2029).

As outlined in the Plan, each action has a code (eg. WH 1, WH 2 etc) which indicates its priority (1 being highest priority; 10 being lower priority), in accordance with how the community ranked them. Completed actions from previous year's Report Card are not in this table.



Stony Creek



Key theme	Code	Action	Lead	Support	Timeframe	Status information as at August 2021	Status
Waterway Health	WH 1	Investigate reasons for poor water quality (eg. low dissolved oxygen levels) in Stony Creek and develop options and/or strategies to improve them	Melbourne Water EPA Victoria	Maribyrnong Council	2020	An investigative project has been completed by RMIT University to understand key drivers of poor water quality in Stony Creek. The report provides recommendations on feasible options to address water quality issues. Findings will be shared with the community, council and EPA. This work is being supported by EPA's inspections, and investigation, in responding to pollution incidents and compliance and strategic inspections throughout the Stony Creek catchment.	✓✓✓ Complete
Waterway Health	WH 3	Ensure that planning controls are appropriate for long-term protection of Stony Creek and take action where these controls have been contravened eg. encroachment, filling etc	Maribyrnong Council	Melbourne Water	2021	Maribyrnong City Council's Stony Creek Future Directions Plan includes a vision for a continuous public open space corridor along the creek, including investigating a Public Acquisition Overlay. Maribyrnong City Council is currently seeking an amendment to the Planning Scheme to ensure appropriate controls are in place.	→→→ In Progress
Waterway Health	WH 4	Create off-stream habitats for frogs and birds	Melbourne Water	Maribyrnong Council Community groups (eg. Friends groups) Public land managers Private landowners	2022	A Melbourne Water habitat and amenity improvement project is underway that has provided bird and frog habitat through streamside revegetation, weed control and creation of a new frog pond at Drew Street, Yarraville. A second frog pond will be created in partnership with Council during the second half of 2021 at Bishop Street.	→→→ In Progress
Waterway Health	WH 5	Improve environmental flows in Stony Creek by removing upstream diversions to Kororoit Creek and Maribyrnong River	Melbourne Water	—	2021	A feasibility assessment from Melbourne Water hydraulic engineers has determined that this proposal is not feasible. Modelling indicates that removing the existing upstream flow diversion to Kororoit Creek and the Maribyrnong River will result in an large increase in localised flooding. Reducing stormwater inputs to Stony Creek, as with other urban waterways, is the most meaningful contribution that can be made to improve waterway health. More details on Melbourne Water's activities and targets in relation to urban stormwater can be sourced from the Melbourne Water 2018 Healthy Waterways Strategy.	✓✓✓ Complete



Key theme	Code	Action	Lead	Support	Timeframe	Status information as at August 2021	Status
Waterway Health	WH 7	Plant native vegetation to establish a continuous corridor along Stony Creek. Design revegetation to retain important sightlines in public areas	Melbourne Water	Maribyrnong Council Community groups (eg. Friends groups) West Gate Tunnel Project Traditional Owner groups	2022	<p>The Friends of Cruikshank Park Junior Ranger program completed planting and weeding activities along the creek in partnership with Maribyrnong City Council. Junior Rangers established more than 3000 indigenous plants, providing habitat for local fauna such as skinks and owls.</p> <p>The Friends of Stony Creek held two successful community planting and weeding days in Hyde Street reserve in partnership with Maribyrnong City Council, where over 1000 indigenous plants were established. The friends group also worked with Melbourne Water to remove of exotic trees from the waterway in Matthews Hill Reserve.</p> <p>Refer also to the Melbourne Water project update against WH4.</p>	 In progress
Waterway Health	WH 8	Adjust/widen channel form to allow for high catchment flows, slow flows to promote pollution capture, connection to floodplain for habitat purposes and introduce deeper pools to allow habitat diversity and accessible areas for desilting.	Melbourne Water	Maribyrnong Council	2021	<p>Land availability and flooding constraints severely limit opportunities to naturalise Stony Creek downstream of Paramount Road. In this area, efforts are focussed on habitat improvements through plantings and frog ponds (eg. WH 4, WH 7 and WH 10).</p> <p>Opportunities to naturalise the channel upstream of Paramount Road will be investigated if this area becomes publically accessible in future (refer WH 3).</p>	 Under reassessment





Key theme	Code	Action	Lead	Support	Timeframe	Status information as at August 2021	Status
Water Quality	WQ 2	Install water quality sensors throughout the catchment to investigate sources of pollution and litter, and enable a targeted response	Melbourne Water EPA Victoria	Maribyrnong Council	2019	<p>An Officer for the Protection of the Local Environment (OPLE) has been embedded into Maribyrnong Council offices since October 2019, and within Brimbank and Hobsons Bay Local Government Areas since February 2018. OPLEs are employed by EPA and they respond to small scale and low risk pollution and waste reports. These include dumping, litter, noise, dust, odour and illegal chemical and waste stockpiling from small-to-medium businesses and industry. The OPLE role contributes to delivering timely responses to local pollution and waste issues and also supports EPA's work to prevent illegal waste stockpiling and activities as part of their focus on waste crime.</p> <p>A water quality sensor project is due to commence in late 2021 in partnership with Monash University. The project will deploy sensors over a 8 month period to monitor dry weather flows in the Stony Creek stormwater network. The aim of this project is to develop our understanding of when and where pollution events are occurring in the catchment, and will provide authorities with information to target inspections to problem areas in the catchment.</p>	→ → → In progress
Water Quality	WQ 9	Place litter traps in appropriate places throughout the Stony Creek catchment	Melbourne Water	Maribyrnong Council EPA Victoria Brimbank Council	2021	Melbourne Water is leading the development of a litter source reduction plan to determine major types and sources of litter (e.g. 'hotspots') in the Stony Creek catchment (including the Brimbank Council area). This plan, developed by RMIT researchers, will help to target activities to reduce litter. A background report was published in July 2020. The final plan is due October 2021.	→ → → In progress
Water Quality	WQ 10	Regular reporting by Council and EPA on compliance with stormwater management regulations across the catchment	Maribyrnong Council EPA Victoria	—	2029 (Annual)	<p>Maribyrnong Council will create a planning report outlining approved new development in the Stony Creek catchment for 2019/20 in July.</p> <p>Maribyrnong Council and EPA will work to improve compliance activities based on data received from the sensor network project (refer Action WQ2).</p> <p>During 19/20, EPA received six water pollution reports for Stony Creek. All of these reports were inspected by EPA Officers as a priority.</p>	→ → → In progress



Key theme	Code	Action	Lead	Support	Timeframe	Status information as at August 2021	Status
Education & Participation	E 1	Engage and educate industry about better practices	EPA Victoria	Maribyrnong Council	2029 (Annual)	<p>Increased industry understanding of stormwater quality control obligations has been targeted during routine inspections of industrial areas in the Stony Creek catchment. This work has been supported by EPA Victoria's Industry Guidance Unit (IGU) along with other units including the OPLEs. The IGU has been actively engaging with a wide range of industry groups across Victoria.</p> <p>EPA will develop an industry engagement strategy specifically for businesses that interact with Stony Creek to provide information about best practice stormwater management and the new laws under the <i>Environment Protection Act 2017</i> which will come into effect on 1 July 2021.</p>	 In progress
Education & Participation	E 3	More signage along the creek (especially in parks) about littering, impacts on stormwater, and directional signage to the community garden and other assets	Maribyrnong Council	Melbourne Water EPA Victoria	2021	New wayfinding signage has been funded in Council's 2021/22 budget, and will be delivered this year.	 In progress
Education & Participation	E 4	Community education around rainwater harvesting on residential sites – support for residents to invest in hardware	Maribyrnong Council	—	2020	<p>Maribyrnong Council ran three Sustainable Living workshops for local residents during 2021 including;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Water smart gardening in summer - Greywater for food gardeners - Water smart gardening - Further activities and engagement to be undertaken. 	 In progress
Education & Participation	E 7	In partnership with Traditional Owners; returning Aboriginal ways of knowing, being and doing to waterways and the land	Melbourne Water Maribyrnong Council Traditional Owner groups	—	2029 (Annual)	<p>In June 2021 the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council took a major step in determining formally recognised Traditional Owner groups for the Melbourne CBD and 24 local councils. This determination recognises the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation for lower Stony Creek, and Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation for upper Stony Creek.</p> <p>Melbourne Water has secured funding for Cultural Heritage value recording and the development of a strategic cultural heritage and environmental management plan for Stony Creek within Matthews Hill Reserve during 2022.</p>	 In progress



Key theme	Code	Action	Lead	Support	Timeframe	Status information as at August 2021	Status
Education & Participation	E 8	Routine publishing of test results on publicly available websites	EPA Victoria Melbourne Water Maribyrnong Council	Community groups (eg. Friends groups)	2029 (Annual)	EPA has monitored water and sediment quality in Stony Creek since August 2018. Latest results include test results from samples taken on 9 January 2020. These are available at www.epa.vic.gov.au/for-community/incidents/tottenham-fire Community water quality monitoring is not currently underway due to COVID-19 restrictions. Data and information on community water monitoring is available at vic.waterwatch.org.au	 In progress
Education & Participation	E 10	Have more frequent community 'pop up' information events in Cruickshank Park for residents to find out about the creek	Maribyrnong Council Melbourne Water Community groups (eg. Friends groups)	EPA Victoria Community groups Interested community members	2029 (Annual)	Careful planning around Coronavirus (COVID-19) public health measures COVID restrictions enabled the Friends of Cruickshank Park and Friends of Stony Creek to host a number of community events throughout the year. These included Clean Up Australia day activities, information displays at the Yarraville Festival, a bird walk, a pop-up toddler play space, frog pond planting activity, a Community Day in April 2021 and a number of planting events over the year. Council, Melbourne Water and EPA attended the community day discussed the Stony Creek Rehabilitation plan and the status of the actions. The Friends of Cruickshank Park Junior Ranger program have continued monitoring the 20 nest boxes established in Cruickshank Park using mobile telescopic cameras. This information is used as an educational tool, and importantly, to ensure the boxes are providing shelter to native fauna.	 In progress
Education & Participation	E 12	Develop regulations holding industrial groups accountable for damage, continue to inform and support these groups to make better choices in their industrial practices	EPA Victoria	Maribyrnong Council	2020	<i>Environment Protection Act 2017</i> came into effect on 1 July 2021. These new laws give EPA increased powers to prevent harm to public health and the environment from pollution and waste. Environment Protection Officers and Officers for the Protection of the Local Environment have responded to, and investigated, pollution incidents impacting Stony Creek. Where sources of pollution have been identified, Officers have remediated, supported industry to comply with regulations and sanctioned where necessary.	 Complete



Key theme	Code	Action	Lead	Support	Timeframe	Status information as at August 2021	Status
Amenity	AM 7	Improved weed management along the creek corridor (eg. adjacent to Hyde Street Reserve and the creek beyond Francis Street)	Melbourne Water	Maribyrnong Council Parks Victoria Hobsons Bay Council West Gate Tunnel Project	2020	<p>Weeds are controlled on an regular and ongoing basis through Melbourne Water's and Maribyrnong Council's programmed maintenance regimes. These regimes have been reviewed and updated where required to ensure adequacy of timing and coordination of weed control objectives.</p> <p>Weed control is being carried out between Paramount Road and Francis Street as part of a revegetation and frog pond project. This project commenced in April 2020. More information on this capital project is available on the Melbourne Water website: melbournewater.com.au/stonycreek</p>	 Complete
Access	AC 7	Investigate improvements to active transport at the Geelong Road and Somerville Road intersection to improve pedestrian connectivity, efficiency, and safety	Maribyrnong Council VicRoads	—	2021	<p>Priority pedestrian/bike crossings have been installed on the slip lanes on the North East and South East corners linking with bike facilities on the Geelong Road service lane. Additional safety improvements have also been made for pedestrians.</p> <p>Council is seeking Department of Transport approvals to adjust the pedestrian crossing time; link the signals to support safer crossing, and add facilities on the western side of the intersection.</p>	 In progress





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