



## Waterways Local Update 2017-18

Melbourne Water's work to enhance waterways and build resilience to flooding in the **City of Whittlesea**.



**147**  
FLOOD INFORMATION  
REQUESTS REVIEWED



**1645.4 M<sup>3</sup>**  
SEDIMENT, SILT, LITTER  
AND DEBRIS REMOVED



**\$90,393**  
IN COMMUNITY  
FUNDING

Melbourne Water plays an active role in the daily lives of Melburnians. We contribute to Melbourne's famous lifestyle by protecting and enhancing over 25,000 km of rivers and creeks, and more than 479 stormwater treatment systems and wetlands in the Port Phillip and Westernport region.

The Waterways and Drainage Charge, which is paid by property owners and collected by retail water companies on our behalf, funds this work. It is an important part of ensuring a thriving natural environment.

Melbourne Water cares for many waterways. Some in your local area include:

- Merri Creek
- Woodland Waters Wetlands
- Edgars Creek
- Darebin Creek
- Plenty River
- Mernda Wetlands

# Healthy waterways

## Maintenance and new projects

We are the caretakers of waterway health in the Port Phillip and Westernport region. Each year, we create and maintain healthy waterways by removing litter, debris and excess sediment. We remove and spray weeds, cut grass and plant native trees and shrubs.

### What we have done

### Why

**4.3 km** Revegetation

We plant native trees and shrubs along waterways to provide habitat for birds and animals. Revegetating waterways and replacing weeds with native plants prevents erosion and improves water quality.

**59 km** Weed control

Introduced and noxious weeds can choke waterways and take over from plants that provide healthy habitats for birds and animals.

**1645.4 m<sup>3</sup>** Sediment, silt, litter, debris removal

Silt, sediment, litter and debris is removed for drainage and flood protection, and to prevent pollution building up in our waterways and wetlands. An excess of these can impact the habitat for platypus, fish and other animals, as well as native plants.

Carried out works to control weeds e.g. gorse, and plant native semi-aquatic plants, grasses, shrubs and trees along Merri Creek

The work aims to provide habitat for frogs, birds and animals, prevent erosion and improve water quality in our waterways.

## Stormwater

Rainwater, stormwater and recycled water are valuable resources. We work closely with Council and local communities to protect our rivers, creeks and bays, provide alternative water sources and improve the stormwater that flows into local waterways by integrating stormwater into the urban landscape.

### What we have done

### Why

Living Rivers provided funding to monitor stormwater quality entering the Plenty River, and to alert the community and Council to potential pollution

Monitoring and recording with innovative environmental sensing technology creates better understanding and response to stormwater pollution threats, and provides opportunities for education and citizen science to help protect waterways.

Through the Clearwater program, we supported Council to take a whole-of-water cycle approach by providing a wide range of tools and resources, and opportunities to participate in a variety of activities

This work helps to improve skills, increase knowledge and foster better networks across councils to change the way we manage water for healthy, connected communities.



The Living Rivers program offers councils funding, expertise and guidance to build their understanding, skills and commitment to manage stormwater within an integrated water management approach. We contributed \$9,616 to projects in your area.

Find out more at [melbournewater.com.au/livingrivers](http://melbournewater.com.au/livingrivers)

## Environmental water

Working with government agencies, councils, industries, landowners and the community ensures we provide the allocated water needed in rivers to maintain healthy natural ecosystems.

### What we have done

#### Worked with land owners to monitor groundwater and surface water levels in Merri Creek

### Why

Monitoring groundwater provides understanding of the role that groundwater plays in drought refuge areas, to help enhance and manage groundwater dependent ecosystems.

#### Worked with the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) and Southern Rural Water on environmental outcomes

Advocating for environmental outcomes for waterways in Integrated Water Management forums improves the health of waterways.

## Monitoring and research

We improve local waterways by undertaking regular and extensive monitoring, investigations and research to better understand them.

### What we have done

#### Monthly monitoring of water quality at two sites within your area. These tests measure:

- water temperature
- dissolved oxygen
- salinity (conductivity)
- pH level
- nutrients (nitrate, nitrite, ammonia, Kjeldahl nitrogen, soluble reactive phosphorus and total phosphorus)
- indicators of faecal contamination (*E. coli*)
- metals (arsenic, cadmium, chromium, copper, lead, nickel and zinc)

### Why

Our water quality monitoring program is designed to assess broad-scale, long-term trends in water quality (typically over 8 - 10 years). We use this data to help identify pollution sources and inform the community about local water quality.

#### Macroinvertebrate surveys in the Upper Plenty catchment

These surveys improve our knowledge of the condition of waterways and how they change.



## Planning for future development

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We ensure local waterways aren't threatened by growing communities and that new developments do not increase flood risk through planning, and by providing advice to assist future development.

### What we have done

### Why

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**126** referrals for land subdivisions reviewed

Ensure proposed land subdivisions meet current standards for drainage and stormwater quality.

**37** development applications reviewed

Ensure that growing communities don't contribute to an increase in flood risk.

**147** flood information requests reviewed

Provide flood information to property owners and people interested in purchasing or redeveloping property.

**11** applications for works near Melbourne Water assets and works such as bridges, shared pathways and jetties reviewed

Ensure waterways, and the plants and animals that live there, are protected from the potential impacts of building works.

**11** stormwater connection applications reviewed

Ensure waterways and the plants and animals that live there, are protected from the potential impacts of construction works.

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## Flood protection

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While floods are natural and we can't stop them all from occurring, we can build our resilience to them and minimise the damage they cause to people, places and communities.

We manage the regional drainage system and work with Council, the Victorian State Emergency Service, the Bureau of Meteorology, property owners and developers to make sure flood information is up to date. We provide flood warning services, prepare flood response plans, and identify and construct new flood protection projects in areas with the greatest need.

### What we have done

### Why

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Continued collecting hydrological data

Data is used to analyse flood warning during emergency situations, as well as for such things as development referrals and projects to reduce the risk of flood.

Mapped areas of flooding within the municipality

Updating flood information ensures current information is available to help build resilience to flooding.

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Three volunteers in your area provide us with rainfall data by recording information from a rain gauge in their backyard. These figures and the data from our automated gauges provides us with valuable rainfall information.

Find out more at [melbournewater.com.au/communityrainreaders](http://melbournewater.com.au/communityrainreaders)

## Working with the community

Working collaboratively with community groups, volunteers, land managers and farmers allows for better management of local waterways, natural environments and regional drainage systems. It protects the environment and promotes conservation. If you'd like more information about funding opportunities, please call 131 722 or email [river.health@melbournewater.com.au](mailto:river.health@melbournewater.com.au)

| Funding provided | Grant                             | For   |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| <b>\$66,344</b>  | <b>Stream Frontage Management</b> | Private land owners and managers for works that protect or enhance riverbanks, such as weed control, fencing and planting native trees. |
| <b>\$17,133</b>  | <b>Corridors of Green</b>         | Councils and public land managers for projects such as weed control, fencing and creating management plans.                             |

We also worked with the local community on several events and initiatives throughout the year.

### Who we worked with

**Merri Creek Management Committee**

**Victoria State Emergency Service (VICSES)**

**University of Melbourne**

**City of Whittlesea (Community Engagement for Disaster Risk Reduction pilot project)**

### What we did

Supported the committee to undertake Waterbug Census monitoring with the community on Merri Creek in Donnybrook.

Through the pilot project, supported VICSES to deliver innovative community engagement approaches to communities at risk of flooding.

**Land holders and managers**

Presented at Weed Networkers workshop in Beveridge and discussed land owner incentives.



Our Space Your Place is an app that helps you find land managed by Melbourne Water to use for projects that benefit the wider community, such as community gardens. We encourage communities to apply to use the land. Find out more at

[melbournewater.com.au/ourspaceyourplace](http://melbournewater.com.au/ourspaceyourplace) or call 131 722.



Our citizen science programs harness the power of community through **Waterwatch** programs. They support people to collect and analyse data on platypus, frogs, waterbugs and water quality in their local river or creeks and advocate for waterways to help protect them and promote conservation.

Find out more at [melbournewater.com.au/waterwatch](http://melbournewater.com.au/waterwatch) or call 131 722.