



IMAGINE  
THE YARRA

# DRAFT YARRA STRATEGIC PLAN

## PUBLIC CONSULTATION

### SUBMISSION COVER SHEET

<b>Submission Number:</b>	215058
<b>Name (Individual/Organisation):</b>	Darebin Creek Management Committee
<b>Attachments:</b>	Attachment 1 – Written submission

## Darebin Creek Management Committee

### Submission on the Draft Yarra Strategic Plan

29<sup>th</sup> March 2020



The Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murrong) Act 2017 (the Act) and its required Yarra Strategic Plan (the Plan) mark a significant advance in management of this critically-important waterway. The level of community consultation and participation of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung has been exemplary. The establishment of a 50-year vision is inspiring and suggests both a long-term commitment and a reality check that the improvements we are all seeking will only happen through a consistent longer-term approach.

Darebin Creek Management Committee (DCMC) exists to manage and improve the ecological and social values of the Darebin Creek and its associated creeklands. Darebin Creek which rises in Beveridge and joins the Yarra 50 km south in Alphington, is an important tributary of the Yarra. The Plan refers to the *State of the Yarra and Its Parklands Report* and identifies major threats to the health of the Yarra which include litter, sewage, pollution, urban development and invasive species. Tributaries including Darebin Creek make a significant contribution to these threats but are outside the scope of the Plan.

We would argue that tributaries passing through heavily urbanised suburbs, rapidly expanding new suburbs and significant industrial areas have an impact on the health of the Yarra that is much larger than their size and flow volume might suggest. A failure to address their impact on the health of the Yarra seems to be a weakness in the draft Plan.

Of fundamental importance in achieving the vision is the concept that the Yarra River is to be managed as a single living entity. This requires a consistent approach be agreed and adopted by all responsible regulatory and land management authorities. DCMC strongly supports the existing approach of setting the land use framework within the Act and then building consistent controls into existing mechanisms such as the Victorian Planning Provisions. The 2017 interim controls Richmond-Warrandyte imposed by the Minister for Planning were a promising start and we note the intention to introduce permanent design, development and landscape management controls under the Plan.

It is unclear from the Plan just who is responsible for its development and implementation through the 3-year rolling plans. The Act identifies a Lead Agency and gives them responsibility and also establishes an independent Birrarung Council. However, the Plan also refers to the Yarra Collaboration Committee and appears to give them a central role. Does this Committee have any formal status or is it established by the Lead Agency to continue the consultation process? Does it have any terms of reference? Are the collaborating

agencies in any way bound to continue to collaborate throughout the 10-year planning horizon, are they bound by the decisions of this Committee, are they bound to make certain financial contributions to deliver the Plan's Actions?

Most of the financial commitments to date appear to be works already in progress. This is reasonable as the Plan does not start with a blank canvas. However, it is not clear from the Plan how agreement is to be reached concerning future projects and levels of financial contribution.

At this stage the Plan is rather aspirational and high level. It identifies what work might be done but does not address how the declining health of the system will be halted and how much improvement will result in the next 10 years. In short, what does success look like? We expect that further development and refinement of this draft Plan will result in better defined targets and how progress towards achieving these will be monitored and evaluated.