



IMAGINE  
THE YARRA

# DRAFT YARRA STRATEGIC PLAN PUBLIC CONSULTATION

## SUBMISSION COVER SHEET

<b>Submission Number:</b>	YSP19
<b>Name (Individual/Organisation):</b>	Individual
<b>Attachments:</b>	Attachment 1 – Written submission

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Yarra Strategic Plan](#)  
**Subject:** DRAFT Yarra Strategic Plan  
**Date:** Sunday, 29 March 2020 9:47:09 AM

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To Whom it may Concern re Draft Yarra Strategic Plan:

Dear Sir,

I wish to endorse the submission of Yarra Riverkeeper Association/ Environmental Justice Australia.

The Association is my voice, and the voice of thousands of us who love and value the Yarra River. Via the Association, we see ourselves as citizen custodians, as we try ensure its future well-being. Through the Association, we wish to defend and protect the river against the pressures of climate change and urbanisation. This can be done with thoughtful collaboration and coordination, that is lead by a sound guiding Plan.

At present, it appears that the draft YSP is too high level and aspirational in its wording, and thereby cannot be a truly useful practical guide to the river's ongoing management. It is crucial that it includes each of the following steps, which are basic key factors:

- clearly identifies specific problems that need to be addressed to alter and improve the health of the Yarra River
- clearly identifies specific objectives to be achieved and their associated time-frames
- clearly identifies the tools designed to achieve these objectives,
- clearly identifies how the implementation of these objectives will take place
- clearly identifies how the implementation will be monitored
- clearly identifies the desired outcomes
- clearly identifies how each outcome will be evaluated and measured for success.
- clearly identifies how problems will be followed up and addressed

Does the Plan contain these specific details? If it does, it will work. How are results to be achieved, monitored and maintained over the longterm? These steps are fundamental to any strategic plan; it's called monitoring and evaluation. Without these steps embedded, it becomes impossible to identify problems or to track accountability and expenditures.

I live in Warburton on the upper reaches of the Yarra River. Here, the river is beautiful and generally in good condition. I have come to understand its moods and currents, its biodiversity. Most days I walk along the riverside trails. I carry a plastic bag and tongs, which I use to pick up discarded rubbish - usually, after a weekend, I fill the rubbish bag. I gain some small comfort in doing this - my personal effort to help keep the river safe. Others do the same.

Sometimes I see platypus and kingfishers. One day I saw a hessian bag sitting in the

water out from the bank. I noticed that the bag was moving, so with some difficulty I managed to pull it in. As I did so, a huge trout escaped and swam away. I wondered how long he'd been trapped there. We each do our bit for the river, because we love it.

We residents are well aware that a significant amount of untreated sewage enters the river here. Many house blocks are not sewered, septic tanks overflow after rain and the discharge enters the river. Also when we have rain, many storm water drains empty directly into the river; then the water carries bacteria-laden animal faeces, discarded plastic etc. Even during dry times, there are places beside the river that smell where house-hold effluent seeps.

Some time ago, there was an imperative issued by the State Government to Yarra Ranges Council to address the problem of non-connection to sewer. Does the Yarra Collaboration Committee know about this? Where has the imperative disappeared to? Nothing has changed here. This is the sort of basic but significant problem that the draft YSP needs to incorporate.

So, I ask the questions: Does the draft YSP take these factors into account? Do you consider the draft YSP to be visionary and pro-active, or is it unambitious and limited?

The Yarra River is not limited to the city. This is near where it begins its journey, and surely there's a strong reason to start at the beginning - or at least to include the whole of the river in the Committee's thinking and planning.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely

