



IMAGINE
THE YARRA

DRAFT YARRA STRATEGIC PLAN

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

SUBMISSION COVER SHEET

Submission Number:	215037
Name (Individual/Organisation):	Individual
Attachments:	Attachment 1 – Survey submission



New Form submission on Help us shape the final 10-year strategic plan for the Yarra River

Hi YarraStrategicPlan@melbournewater.com.au

There has been a submission on [Help us shape the final 10-year strategic plan for the Yarra River](#) through Engage Victoria

A copy of the submission is provided as below:

Part 1: Working toward the Community Vision

1a. Do the four, 10-Year Performance Objectives adequately reflect the 50 Year Community Vision?

Somewhat

1b. Please outline your reasoning for this opinion (optional)

The Performance Objectives need to reference the environmental indicators in the "State of the Yarra & It's Parklands Report" as a baseline, in order to adequately state and measure improvements as a result of actions over the next ten years. This will support the intention of the Plan to enact more effectively the recent legislation identifying the Yarra River and its corridor as 'one living, integrated natural entity for protection and improvement.' I applaud the now legal requirement to preserve the Yarra River corridor with a strong, ongoing role for the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung people in its protection.

2a. Are the actions identified to deliver the 10-Year Performance Objectives achievable, realistic and measurable?

2b. Please outline your reasoning for this opinion (optional)

As a retired management consultant and trainer I would always guide clients to ensure that any performance and action plans, in order to be meaningful and realistic should highly detail the elements of the SMART model and thus be very: (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-Bound). Also (see 1b above) they need to directly refer to the "State of the Yarra & Its Parklands Report" environmental indicators to be MEANINGFULLY specific and measurable. For example: the report by the Commissioner of Environmental Sustainability shows that 17 out of the 25 environmental indicators are deteriorating rapidly and significantly. Each of these specific environmental indicators must be directly addressed by specific, well defined actions in the YSP, with commitment to specific means of measurement within specific time frame and clearly demonstrating their cumulative effects.

3a. Which specific actions do you think will be easiest or most challenging to deliver?

It will be challenging to manage the need for public access to enjoy the river with the need to protect and preserve native flora and habitat for native wildlife. Particularly difficult will be the management of encroachment by the latest far most destructive to date, invasive introduced animals - deer. Required in the plan are specific tools clearly defining what is to be protected and what methods will be used. Also see my answers below on the challenges posed by inappropriate development pressures.

3b. Why do you think this?

Based on my over 30 years experience as an environmentally active resident living on the banks of the Yarra at Pound Bend in Warrandyte - participating in Friends of the Warrandyte State Park activities and working with other neighbours and groups attempting to meet this challenge of balance between use & preservation. It is my direct experience watching both deterioration and attempts to preserve, if we don't strongly protect & preserve there will be nothing to enjoy. My experience is supported by studies, scientific and specialist.

4. What do you/ your organisation think is the greatest opportunity the Yarra Strategic Plan presents? Please rank the following statements in order of importance from 1 -4

Improving water quality of the Yarra River and protecting land, floodplains and billabongs - 1

Acknowledging, protecting and commemorating the rich heritage of the Birrarung - 3

Improving the river's parklands to support community wellbeing - 4

Protecting the significance of the Yarra River's landscapes and views - 2

5. Do you feel the draft Yarra Strategic Plan has put appropriate actions in place to ensure delivery on the aspirations of Traditional Owners?

6a. Are there key priority areas of land you think should be added to the parkland network along the Yarra River?

6b. If you answered Yes, where are these key priority areas of land and why do you think they should be added?

See point 6 a, above. I defer to Traditional Owners and the Yarra Riverkeeper Assn & Environmental Justice Australia submissions on questions 5 and 6.

Part 2: Land Use framework

7. The Land Use framework aims to put the Yarra River at the heart of future planning and development decisions. What is your / your organisation's view about the Land Use framework?

I defer to Traditional Owners and the Yarra Riverkeeper Assn & Environmental Justice Australia submissions on this point.

8a. Do you believe the Land Use directions will support the 50 Year Community Vision?

8b. Why do you think this?

I defer to Traditional Owners and the Yarra Riverkeeper Assn & Environmental Justice Australia submissions on this point.

9a. Do you agree with the Land Use directions for the Yarra River?

9b. Please outline your reasoning for this opinion (optional)

I defer to Traditional Owners and the Yarra Riverkeeper Assn & Environmental Justice Australia submissions on this point. Having engaged with these groups, I trust and support their views. They have far more detailed examination and understanding of these issues than I do at this point in time.

10a. Do you believe that the 13 significant places identified for the river corridor reflect the most regionally significant locations?

10b. Why do you think this?

See 9 b above.

11. Do you agree with the opportunities identified for the significant places that you connect with?

12. Do you have any further ideas about how the Plan may provide for the cultural/spiritual/environmental care and protection of the Yarra River over the next ten years, whilst also working toward achieving the 50 Year Community Vision?

In regard to point 11 above, the website requested but did not allow a specific answer so I will state here that I am particularly concerned with the preservation of the Warrandyte State Park at the Pound Bend Tunnel area, which has thus far been fairly well preserved & blessed with wonderful markers describing how traditional caretakers lived and flourished here. However, in all areas, it is vitally important that the YSP is strong & clear in protecting the Yarra from attack by groups invested in development for personal

gain and either ignorant of or heedless of the damage to our precious environment. Sadly, this especially includes attempts by some Councils and their lobby groups to subvert protection and preservation objectives by introducing amendments and so called "Environmental Management Plans" which are completely inappropriate and barely concealed moves to expand development (sometimes called 'tourism opportunities') on farms, properties and lands near to or adjoining the Yarra, its tributaries & its parklands. As a passionate lover of the Yarra, having the good fortune to live within a few metres from its banks, I have been involved in working with local communities to prevent the success of many such attempts over the past 30 years- including at VCAT and Planning Panel hearings. The dictionary states the archaic meaning of "management" is "trickery or deceit," and with the careful examination of many such applications, proposed amendments, council plans & decisions one can clearly see trickery and deceit. Therefore, the entire thrust of the Yarra River Protection Plan must provide firm guidance and governance, remaining absolutely firm on protection and preservation.

13. Finally, what are your overarching thoughts and feelings about the Yarra Strategic Plan?

I am deeply concerned that The YSP has been prepared by the Yarra Collaboration Committee (p 4 & p 10 of the Draft Yarra Strategic Plan) that includes member groups with an inherent and previously demonstrated conflict of interest, as referred to in my very personal answer to question 12 above. I am of the understanding that this plan was required under the legislation, to be prepared by the lead agency. I endorse the Yarra Riverkeeper Association/Environmental Justice Australia submission, as their experience and detailed knowledge renders their recommendations of great value in strengthening the Plan to resist this constant pressure for personal gain over the requirements to sustain a healthy Yarra River and environs for the benefit of all. I refer to these specific points: 1) The Performance Objectives of the YSP are too high level and too vaguely worded. They should be stated as SMART objectives (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-Bound). The YSP must, but the draft YSP does not, use the 'State of the Yarra and its Parklands' report to establish a baseline against which the ultimate success or failure of the Performance Objectives and the YSP can be measured. 2) The YSP does not show how the Actions given for each Performance Objective will build a cumulative effect over the ten-year period to create a foundation for the 50 year Community Vision. 3) The following have been

left out of the Yarra Strategic Plan and are gaps: a) no part of the YSP is binding; b) Priority Projects; and c) Decision Making Framework. 4) The draft YSP states that no part of the YSP is binding, though the Yarra/Birrarung Act expects parts of the plan to be binding. (NOTE: THIS ISSUE OF 'NON-BINDING' PARTICULARLY CONCERNS ME.) 5) The draft YSP states Priority Projects will be developed for the final plan. They will not then be developed through 'collaboration with the community' as required by the Yarra/Birrarung Act, but behind doors closed to community input. (NOTE; THIS ISSUE PARTICULARLY CONCERNS ME.) 6) The draft YSP states that a decision making framework is not included in the draft, as the framework itself is still in draft. The Yarra/Birrarung Act requires a decision-making framework to be part of the YSP. 7) The key principle in Yarra/Birrarung Act of a net gain for the environment from every river project is ignored by the draft YSP, which is the appropriate and only vehicle for implementing this important principle. Application of this principle would generate funding for environmental projects. (THIS IS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT BECAUSE OFTEN FUNDING FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS IS OFTEN USED AS A REASON FOR DEVELOPMENTS WHICH ACTUALLY DEGRADE THE ENVIRONMENT. 8) According to the document, the draft YSP was prepared by the Yarra Collaboration Committee, not by the lead agency as required under the Yarra/Birrarung act. 9) The YSP must show how the Land Use Framework will implement the 'Directions' given for each reach in the framework. 10) Annual assessment of implementation of Performance Objective 2 to be paid for by each responsible entity to the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Tribe Land Council as one source of new annual funding for the Council. 11) CEOs and department secretaries need to be included in the Yarra Collaboration Committee for it to be effective in driving change through collaboration and modern governance. It is my personal submission that recommendations of YRA and EJA will assist int YSP in more fully delivering what is actually called for by the new legislation for the protection of the Yarra River Corridor - the Willip-gin Birrarung murron Act.

Contact Details

Individual

First Name

- *the lead agency must make a copy of all public submissions on a draft Yarra Strategic Plan, made to the lead agency, available for public inspection - s24(2)*

All submissions will therefore be made available to the public in accordance with the Act.

Melbourne Water, as lead agency, and or DELWP will publish a copy of your submission, in its entirety, on the Imagine the Yarra website or other Victorian Government website/s as required.

In providing your feedback by written submission you agree that the lead agency may provide a copy of your submission, to affected Local Councils, Government Agencies, Panel (if required) and other submitters.

Your submission may also remain on external servers, even after the period of consultation closes and DELWP has removed the relevant pages from the Engage Victoria website.

Text will be redacted in submissions to remove personally identifying details, and to comply with the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)*.

Should you need to correct the information you provided or gain access to your submission, please contact us via email at: YarraStrategicPlan@melbournewater.com.au

I agree to the Collection Notice

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To view all of the form's submissions, visit:

<https://engage.vic.gov.au/index.php/dashboard/reports/forms/viewDetail/2535>

Regards,
The Engage Victoria Team

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