



IMAGINE
THE YARRA

DRAFT YARRA STRATEGIC PLAN PUBLIC CONSULTATION

SUBMISSION COVER SHEET

Submission Number:	214697
Name (Individual/Organisation):	Individual
Attachments:	Attachment 1 – Written submission

Submission re draft Yarra Strategic Plan

I'm making this submission because of the foundational role of the 2017 Yarra River Action Plan Wilip-gin Birrarung murrn, especially its Actions 27-29, in the Waterways of the West initiative to which I am deeply committed, following lifelong involvement with Moonee Ponds Creek, similar and more intensive since residing further west with the Maribyrnong, and increasingly with Stony Creek. A career understanding and designing systems has provided the tools to look at everything in terms of its broader context, the information technology end of those tools nowadays providing opportunity to share information with a wider range of environmentally and heritage-oriented communities than even the several Friends of and similar groups I am regularly involved with. So this submission only tries to address the Yarra Plans' influence on Waterways of the West, without pretending sufficient awareness of detail further east to offer locally relevant commentary. To that end it will be short and unrelated to the structure of the two part web form offered.

Between the two central Ministerial Advisory Committees, for the Yarra and the West, Melbourne Water's Healthy Waterways Strategy renewal process opened a hopeful window through its use of catchment collaborations which intersected with my academic interests and led quickly to making a presentation to our academic group, the slide deck for which is online at:

[REDACTED]

A key consequence has been the recognition that Waterways of the West needs to look beyond the immediate riverside corridors to the wider catchments, bringing to account factors from major tributaries' vital roles in the Werribee and the Maribyrnong to RAMSAR flyway sites. To that end I try to confine my focus to streams that intersect the urban end of the Victorian Volcanic Plains, that is everything west of Darebin Creek, including a frustrated wish that the Merri Creek be seen as one of the key Waterways of the West, especially given the ecological disasters being dumped on it through hydrologically ignorant planning for the northern urban growth corridor have more in common with Waterways of the West than the scope of the draft Action Plan.

While fully understanding that the Yarra protection principles referenced in the draft Strategic Plan are inherited from the 2017 Act, the primary point I wish to make is that I find them less than adequate for Waterways of the West in a couple of specific areas:

- Ideally a seventh would be added to the "six themes" (p.44): Hydrological principles - Respect the Geology, natural hydrological flow, soil integrity and sub-surface relationships; with appropriate detailing.
- Victoria has established way too many unsatisfactory precedents for "environmental" assessment to be confined to human amenity with no consideration to the intrinsic worth of natural systems, save for attention to biodiversity which is effectively restricted to the critically endangered without concern for wider ecological and substrate health. It would be much better to stop using "environmental" wherever it is likely to be inaccurately presumed to mean "ecological".

Sadly I don't have the resources, nor focus, to make detailed suggestions as to how these could be incorporated into the extant draft, I would hope that those responsible for final revision can add some hooks that might better serve those who will inherit from its precedent.

21 March 2020

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