



IMAGINE
THE YARRA

DRAFT YARRA STRATEGIC PLAN

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

SUBMISSION COVER SHEET

| | |
|--|------------------------|
| Submission Number: | 187524 |
| Name (Individual/Organisation): | Individual |
| Attachments: | 1. Survey submission |
| | 2. Supporting material |



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?

Yes

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

The intentions sound very good, so I have put 'yes', however I have a major reservation regarding the regeneration of the riverside vegetation zone, including the billabongs, in the Lower Rural Reach (LRR) .

The words are good but there is no quantification of the amount of actual physical

works will be aimed for and no measurable targets have been set to gauge performance. The lack of vegetation on the river banks and the billabongs throughout the LRR is a major concern for the environmental health of the river. The 50 Year Vision calls for a 'wide mature cloak of indigenous vegetation. For this to be mature in 50 years (2068), revegetation works need to be planted in this 1st 10 year section of the plan.

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

Somewhat

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

Refer to comments in 1b.

Regulation and control of 'pesticides and chemicals entering the waterway' needs to be better defined to set measurable targets. Involvement of EPA type controls and testing is essential

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

The regeneration of the riverside vegetation zone, including the billabongs, in the Lower Rural Reach (LRR) will be the most difficult to achieve.

3b. Why do you think this?

MW's Streamside Improvement program has been in place for many years, so the vast majority of landowners willing to participate in this will have already done so. In

other words, the majority of areas needing revegetation will be on land where the landowners will be averse to any change. This means that stronger government initiatives (land acquisition?) will need to be adopted to enable the changes required to achieve the 50 Year Community Vision. (The 50 Year Vision defines a 'wide mature cloak of indigenous vegetation [continuous] for the riverside vegetation zone, including the billabongs, in the Lower Rural Reach). This could make this item very expensive, however it is fundamental to the restoration and improvement of the health of the Yarra River.

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 - 2

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

Protecting the significance of the Yarra River's landscapes and views - 3

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

Yes

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

Yes

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

The creation of a 'Billabong Park/Nature Reserve' along the Yarra from Yering Gorge to Tarrawarra in the LRR, to encompass the riverside vegetation and the billabongs on both sides of the river, would be a standout achievement for this 1st 10-year stage of the 50-year plan. This obviously would be expensive, but it would be clear indication of true commitment to the Strategy.

It would restore the health of this much degraded section of the river, and would create a valuable community asset for all future generations to utilise and enjoy.

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?

My comments are focused on the Lower Rural Reach (LRR).

The Land Use Framework concept is a good one, however its effectiveness is dependent in clear definition of the directions and analysis of these to create measurable goals, so that its effectiveness can be monitored and progress on the achievement of the 50 Year Vision can be clearly assessed and documented.

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

Somewhat

8b. Why do you think this?

One of the main thrusts one the 50 Year Vision for the LRR is the revegetation of the streamside zone and billabong areas to create a 'wide mature cloak of indigenous vegetation'.

Given the continuous improvements to the river and its environs, since the 1970's, in the 2 reaches downstream of the LRR, it can be argued that the LRR section across the flood plain (Yering Gorge to Healesville), is currently the most environmentally degraded section of the river.

To gain an appreciation of this degradation one can use Google Earth to take a 'drone view' along the river. The lack of streamside vegetation, and the parlous state of the billabongs is astounding, despite MW's Streamside Improvement program which has been in place for many years. The river is basically little more than a drain across the floodplain. Refer to ATTACHMENT 1 for a snap shot of this 'drone view'. The extent of degradation, and the dire need for action, can only be fully appreciated by checking the whole length of this section of the river.

The 1st and 4th dot points of the 'In the next 10 years' (page 85) mention 'restoration of depleted sections' and 'new protection'. There is no real definition of these statements or quantification of the works involved, and this is critical.

To have a 'wide mature cloak of indigenous vegetation' in 50 years (2068), planting needs to happen in this 1st 10-year program. This is a massive task, but without it, it could be argued that the strategy is only 'paying lip-service' to the 50-year Vision.

Perhaps a way to justify the expenditure required to achieve this is to consider the creation of a 'Billabong Park/Nature Reserve', as mentioned in 6b above, with

appropriate restrictions to ensure environmental functionality. This will incorporate a huge on-going benefit to the public, whilst achieving the river health objectives of the Vision.

Watsons Creek biodiversity corridor (pages 86 & 93)

The map shows the habitat link up Watsons Creek but in fact the effective link is much wider and extend easterly to the escarpment line at the east of Sugarloaf dam. There are excellent records of the use of the east side of the link by various species coming from Kinglake NP to the Bend of Islands via this route, including Lyrebirds, Lace Monitors, Red-browed Tree-creepers etc. (detailed records are available) Sugarloaf Link Project is a good example of the environmental enhancement appropriate to the link to ensure its on-going benefit to the Yarra and Warrandyte State Park.

Further weed and pest animal control along Watsons Ck and beyond is welcomed.

Billabong systems (page 90)

The title of this section should be Yering Gorge to Healesville (not Yering and Tarrawarra)

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

Yes

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

I fully support almost all the directions, both in the LRR and the other reaches. My concern is that there is lack of definition which is needed to ensure the progress

made in the 1st 10-year plan will be adequate to achieve the 50-year Vision.

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

Somewhat

10b. Why do you think this?

Not sure how the 13 is arrived at. The map on pages 68 & 69 shows 10 Wurundjeri Sites of Significance (brown title boxes) and 6 Areas for protection (pink title boxes).

I'm surprised that there are no sites nominated upstream of Coranderrk??

Access to the river needs to be strategically planned and controlled. It will be a balance of nurturing the public's appreciation of the river's special places and ensuring the cultural/environmental qualities are not compromised.

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?

It may be useful to show how the 1st 10-year plan has been designed to fit into an overall 50-year plan, although it is recognised that there are many unknowns

involved.

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

The passing of the 'Act', the development of the 50 Year Community Vision, and now the YSP are a fantastic initiative to better protect and enhance the Yarra.

Looking at the Yarra as an entire entity clarifies appreciation of its huge value to Melbourne and its residents.

This value must be enhanced by the protections and initiatives incorporated into the YSP.

The YSP is essential to reverse the mistakes of the past and to overcome the increasing degradation pressures of population growth and climate change.

Contact Details

Individual

First Name

██████

Last Name

██████

Organisation (if applicable)

Address

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Upload your submission here

[ATTACHMENT 1 - 2020-03 - YSP -](#)

[_Lower Rural Section Environmental Priorities.docx](#)

Collection Notice

The Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murron) Act (the Act) requires:

- *all submissions to be made available for inspection by the public (s24(1)(b))*

- *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

Yes

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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2019-02 - YSP - Lower Rural Section – Environmental Priorities

Wurundjeri First Peoples

The Wurundjeri are supportive of the broad objectives identified for the YSP in the Wilip-gin Birrarung murrong Act, in particular the objective of returning the Yarra to a healthy river, a key aspiration of the Wurundjeri and central to our vision of the future of the Yarra.

50 Year Vision

It is embraced by a wide, mature cloak of indigenous vegetation through the flats, filled with the sights and sounds of native animals and birds.

Our Yarra River, Birrarung, is home to happy farmers, making a living and caring for the river and its lands.

People visit the river in key locations to meet and play in, on and beside the water whilst learning about its rich history, its Wurundjeri carers and incredible environmental values.

From Yering Gorge, our Yarra River, Birrarung, is continuously replenished by plants and animals from Kinglake and beyond, joining the river on its journey to the city.

- Google Earth 'Drone Journey' along river from Yering Gorge to Healesville and beyond (See photos attached) –need for revegetation of the River environs including the billabongs – needs to happen now to have maturity in 50 years.
- Habitat Link from Kinglake NP to Warrandyte SP feeds biodiversity to bush areas flanking the River – providing a 'Biodiversity Recharge' before the River hits the suburbs and city. – The Habitat Link and bush areas adjacent to the River need special environmental management and improvement to be as effective as possible for the River.



Typical stretch of River in Yarra Valley – Lower Rural Reach



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Google Earth

Typical stretch of River in Yarra Valley – Lower Rural Reach – Detail with Billabongs