



Merri-bek
City Council

Draft Integrated Water Management Action Plan

2025-2030

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Towards a Water Sensitive City

Merri-bek's Draft Integrated Water Management Action Plan (2025 – 2030)

Merri-bek will be a Water Sensitive City. A liveable city where we take good care of our waterways and make the most of our precious water resources. We keep our open spaces resilient to climate change impacts and, enhance urban and natural environments and support community health and wellbeing. Council leads by example and working together with our key partners, supports community actions to become a water sensitive city.

The Integrated Water Management Strategy 2040 – Towards a Water Sensitive City sets a long-term vision for Merri-bek; a liveable city where we take good care of our waterways.

The draft five-year Action Plan (2025 – 2030) builds on the achievements and lessons from the previous Action Plan (2020–2025). It sets out clear, actionable steps to guide Merri-bek's progress toward the 2040 vision. Some actions are ongoing, while some are one off activities. The combined efforts across many areas of Council are required. As this is a long-term strategy, actions will need to be reviewed and updated regularly to remain aligned with evolving priorities, resource availability, and climate and community needs.

Draft Integrated Water Management (IWM) Action Plan 2025 – 2030

Abbreviations used in the table below:

CASBE – Council Alliance for a Sustainable Built Environment
DEECA – Department of Energy, Environment, and Climate Action
DTP – Department of Transport and Planning
MCMC – Merri Creek Management Committee
LGA – Local Government Area
WWCHAC – Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation
NA – Not applicable (the reason may vary)
Neighbouring councils includes Hume, Mitchell Shire, Whittlesea, Darebin, Moonee Valley, City of Melbourne, and City of Yarra
WSUD – Water Sensitive Urban Design

Outcome 1 - Collaborating in a Water Sensitive City

(existing) Indicator	(existing) Measure	Number	Action	Suggested external partners	Delivery Year/s	Existing, amended, or new action
1 Working with others improves IWM outcomes	Number of opportunities and projects implemented with partners to achieve Merri-bek 's Integrated Water Management Strategy 2040 outcomes including through participation in the Yarra and Maribyrnong Integrated Water Management Forums.	1.1	Partner with and support Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people to care for and be the voice of the creeks.	WWCHAC, DEECA, Melbourne Water, neighbouring councils	1-5	Amended
		1.1.2	Work with Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people to agree on how best to include Wurundjeri perspectives in the existing IWM Strategy through an update or agreed similar and implement.	WWCHAC	1-2	New
		1.1.3	Work with our partners to better present and share IWM information to tell the water story, share resources, and coordinate advocacy actions using a variety of platforms and technologies.	Neighbouring councils, WWCHAC, DTP, DEECA, Merri Creek Management Committee, Chain of Ponds, Melbourne Water	1-2	New
		1.1.4	Continue collaboration with academic institutions to advance WSUD research and emerging technologies For example, permeable pavement, passive irrigation, green roofs, Internet of Things (IoT) research, to enhance stormwater management, system efficiency, and adaptive solutions.	Academic Institutions, Melbourne Water	1-5	Existing
		1.1.5	Develop confidence among internal and external stakeholders in the future performance, and value of projects through development of 'scorecards'. These scorecards will explain IWM targets for the sub-catchments of Merri and Moonee Ponds Creeks with baseline and performance data to track progress. Targets include: nitrogen retention, percentage of catchments treated by WSUD, passive irrigation, permeability, volume of harvested and re-used alternative water supply.	DEECA, Melbourne Water, neighbouring councils	1-2	New
		1.1.6	Advocate for Melbourne Water to work in partnership with Council to investigate opportunities, identify barriers and develop a costed and prioritised master plan to naturalise and revitalise sections of Merlynston Creek	Melbourne Water	1-3	New
		1.1.7	Continue to work with IWM Forum to advocate for improved funding for integrated water projects, stronger collaboration between councils and water authorities, and stronger integration of IWM principles into Victorian Planning Provisions to embed stormwater management in urban development	IWM Forum, DEECA	1-5	Amended

Outcome 2 - Resilient and Liveable Landscapes

(existing) Indicator	(existing) Measure	Number	Action	Suggested external partners	Delivery Year/s Delivery Year/s	Existing, amended, or new action
2.1 Increase urban tree resilience supported by water	Percentage of urban forest or street trees with a non-potable source of water such as stormwater harvesting or passive irrigation.	2.1.1	Further develop, update and implement technical guidance relevant to the Merri-bek context to increase uptake, quality and performance of passively irrigated trees and landscapes in capital works programs.	Melbourne Water, neighbouring councils	3	Amended
2.2 Increase permeability	Increased permeability by de-paving hard surfaces and introduce surfaces which allow water to recharge surrounding soils across public areas.	2.2.1	Investigate trends and issues in private and public realm relating to permeability, including soil health and the applications of permeable pavement. In collaboration with our partners, use the findings to develop resources 1) to enhance understanding of impacts of permeability on urban resilience and healthy waterways and 2) outline catchment scale opportunities for improved permeability and implementation.	Melbourne Water, LGAs, DEECA, CASBE	2-3	Amended
	Ensure more than 20% site permeability is adhered to in private development (as required under ResCode).	2.2.2	Urban Planning, ESD, and Planning Compliance teams will continue to enforce existing requirements through their work. Through CASBE continue to advocate for improved Environmentally Sustainable Development in the planning scheme.	CASBE, LGAs, DTP	1-5	Amended
2.3 Reduce extent of flooding	Number of opportunities identified to reduce the impacts of flooding through the increase of effective flood storage volume created as part of multi-functional assets (e.g. green infrastructure, stormwater harvesting schemes, talking tanks, leaky tanks, combined retardation and treatment schemes).	2.3.1	Further develop and share communication resources for the public and for Merri-bek staff about flood risk, inundation and climate change impacts to inform decision making including: - flood and hazard data and modelling; - increased flood risk as a result of climate change; - approaches to mitigate flooding, including use of public open space inundation to slow down water to protect private property and infrastructure.	Melbourne Water	2-4	New
		2.3.2	Align work with the Emergency Management Victoria Critical Infrastructure Resilience Strategy and identify critical infrastructure to inform prioritisation of drainage improvement projects and implement through the required Emergency Management activities.	Melbourne Water, Emergency Management Victoria	1-5	New
		2.3.3	Develop priority drainage asset upgrades program informed by proposed significant development and commence implementation to proactively address stormwater capacity, flooding risks, and WSUD integration.		1-5	New
		2.3.4	Assess opportunities to integrate stormwater detention, harvesting, and smart tank technology at priority flood mitigation sites, including road networks and open spaces. Evaluate costs, maintenance needs, and feasibility, and align with the capital works program to enhance water management and climate resilience.		2-4	New
2.4 Reduce urban heat load	Utilise stormwater harvesting and water sensitive urban design to support increased vegetation and cooling in areas of high heat vulnerability.	NA	<i>This measure is integrated into a range of actions in this action plan.</i>		NA	NA

Outcome 3 - Wise Water Use

(existing) Indicator	(existing) Measure	Number	Action	Suggested external partners	Delivery Year/s Delivery Year/s	Existing, amended, or new action
3.1 Reduce Council's mains water use.	Implement building retrofits and irrigation efficiency upgrades to achieve a 5% reduction in councils mains water use.	3.1.1	Develop sustainable sportsfield guidance to support implementation of the Sportsfield Surface Policy and apply it to relevant capital projects.	Melbourne Water, EPA, DEECA	1-4	Amended
		3.1.2	Continue to integrate water efficiency measures including water tanks through the implementation of the Sustainable Buildings Policy to all new builds and retrofits.		1-5	Amended
3.2 Increase council alternative water use where there will be overall positive impact on the environment	By 2025 implement an additional two new stormwater harvesting schemes and upgrade two existing stormwater harvesting schemes that together substitute potable mains water supply by an additional 18 million litres per year.	3.2.1	Deliver two stormwater harvesting projects in the next 5 years. Depending on the outcomes of the feasibility study, opportunities include: - Oak Park stormwater harvesting scheme in the Moonee Ponds Creek catchment, and - CB Smith stormwater harvesting scheme in the Merri Creek catchment. - AG Gillon (Reaburn Reserve) – Brunswick Central Parklands stormwater harvesting scheme in the Moonee Ponds Creek catchment	Melbourne Water	1-5	Existing (new projects)
		3.2.2	Review the stormwater harvesting priority program for irrigation of sportsfields and passive open space to align with the sportsfield renewal program, irrigation renewal program, and Open Space Action Plan.	NA	1-2	Amended
3.3 Reduce community water use (per capita).	Number of collaborative projects with partners, the community and businesses to increase the number of water tanks, water smart gardening and WSUD on private property and reduce per capita water use to 155 litres per person per day.	3.3.1	Review opportunities with schools and youth groups to identify demand to support a case for increased IWM education and implement (including Waterwatch, litter management, and nature play). And progressively add updated educational signage at our Wetlands/SWH to support the education initiatives. Review council-led educational programs and existing information platforms to ensure they include supporting community to reduce potable water use.	Waterwatch, MCMC, Schools	1-5	Amended
		3.3.2	Build on existing partner programs to improve communities' capacity to maintain and upgrade existing private rainwater tanks.	Friends of Merri Creek, Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek	4	Amended

Outcome 4 - Healthy Waterways

(existing) Indicator	(existing) Measure	Number	Action	Suggested external partners	Delivery Year/s	Existing, amended, or new action
4.1 Reduce stormwater pollutant loads and flow volumes discharged to receiving waters.	Reduce our impact on downstream waterways by further reduction of 112 kg/year total nitrogen in five years from existing urban stormwater via implementation of water sensitive urban design (WSUD) tools.	4.1.1	Seek external funds to support the delivery of at least two large scale WSUD projects with increased habitat in the next 5 years. The projects being investigated to deliver include: - Moonee Boulevard wetland - Kingsford Smith Ulm Reserve wetland - Fran Street Reserve wetland - K W Joyce Reserve large scale bioretention system - Gilpin Park wetland and irrigation under the Brunswick Parklands IWM Plan	Melbourne Water, Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek, Chain of Ponds Collaboration	1-5	Existing (new projects)
		4.1.2	Continue to integrate WSUD into small projects such as road renewal, streetscape projects and private development as appropriate. Continue to integrate WSUD and Integrated water management approach to large scale projects including Coburg Library and Piazza.			Amended (new projects)
	Reduce amount of litter, rubbish and plastic entering our waterways.	4.1.3	Undertake further investigations into identified Gross Pollutant Trap (GPT) opportunities from previous studies to determine appropriate design and sizing responses, and preliminary feasibility of various GPT solutions. Implement the GPT Assessment and Prioritisation Framework to guide future investment and strategic placement.	Melbourne Water	4	New
		4.1.4	Continue to seek funding and support community group activities and education for litter reduction across the Moonee Ponds and Merri Creeks sub-catchments. Prioritise action at litter hotspots and litter sources.	Melbourne Water, Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek, Friends of Merri Creek, MCMC, Chain of Ponds Collaboration	1-5	New
		4.1.5	Develop a communications plan and support materials for new and existing businesses, providing information on how to manage litter and waste in shopping strips and prevent it from entering our waterways. Distribute and make the material accessible in accordance with the communications plan.	Melbourne Water, Neighbouring Councils, Business networks	1-5	New
4.2 Increase provision of water for biodiversity.	Area of passive public open space supported by an alternative water source to capture and utilise stormwater to enhance biodiversity by retaining water in the landscape and mimicking natural flow regimes.	NA	<i>This measure is integrated into a range of actions in this action plan.</i>		NA	NA
	Area of revegetation and rehabilitation works on floodplain or improving the condition of degraded waterway.	4.2.1	Complete a feasibility study for the Jukes Road, Fawkner, stormwater diversion into Bababi Djinanang.		3	New

Outcome 5 - Community Embracing Water Sensitive Urban Design

(existing) Indicator	(existing) Measure	Number	Action	Suggested external partners	Delivery Year/s Delivery Year/s	Existing, amended, or new action
5.1 Continue uptake of water sensitive urban design in new development	Percentage of planning approvals with inclusion of water and stormwater management meeting clause 22.08 of the Moreland Local Planning Scheme and VC154 of the Victorian Planning Provisions.	5.1.1	Explore opportunities to increase enforcement resources to improve compliance with stormwater quality requirements in the Victorian Planning Provisions (Planning Scheme).	DEECA, DTP	1-3	New
		5.1.2	Update and promote council guidance for developers to reflect emerging best practices in rainwater capture, WSUD asset design, construction, and maintenance. Ensure guidelines support effective stormwater management in private developments and align with current industry standards and regulatory frameworks.		3-4	New
5.2 Reduced flow rate and volume of water from new developments, improving on pre-development conditions	The volume of new detention systems and water tanks, the area of WSUD treatments.	NA	<i>This is actioned through the planning process.</i>		NA	<i>Actioned outside this action plan</i>
5.3 Working together with community groups for a transition to water sensitive cities	Number of projects and Council contribution on collaborative projects with community groups (e.g. planting, raingarden webinars, Waterwatch collaboration).	5.3.1	Continue to run community planting days, promote and fund programs such as Waterwatch Activities and Nature Stewards Program and actively partner with neighborhood houses to trial programs	Melbourne Water, Universities	4-5	New