



Nairn Catchments Network Report: Potential Baywide network models for our community water protectors

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Summary and Key Learnings

The Port Phillip EcoCentre, in collaboration with Werribee River Association and Yarra Riverkeeper, has researched the potential to establish a network made up of community-based organisations involved in the protection and restoration of the Port Phillip Bay and/or its associated water catchment areas. In this report, we call this the Nairm Catchments Network. *Nairm* is the Boon Wurrung word for Port Phillip Bay.

The Nairm Catchments Network could help protect Port Phillip Bay and its catchments by:

1. Establishing connections through which groups learn from each other, pool their expertise, share knowledge and provide strategic support.
2. Building capacity within volunteer-led organisations to engage local communities and attract resources to care for their catchment.
3. Supporting a body of informed organisations that can more efficiently and clearly communicate with, and advocate to, Government and its agencies for the benefit of Port Phillip Bay and each of the catchment areas.
4. Acknowledging the need to effectively address 'local' issues strategically so that the whole area thrives.
5. Acknowledging the interconnectedness of catchments and how each depends on the other, while each is unique.

Research for this report was conducted in tandem with Melbourne Water's extensive consultations held to co-design 'strategies' and 50 year visions for the Werribee River, Maribyrnong River, Yarra River, and Dandenong Creek catchments, which together form the bulk of Port Phillip Bay's catchments. This consultation concluded in July 2018.

Each of the Melbourne Water Healthy Waterways draft strategies has a set of performance objectives specific to the catchment. The one performance objective all catchments have in common is to *"Provide systems to share knowledge and information between communities and stakeholders; to empower communities to participate and influence waterways management."* Each catchment includes goals relating to community engagement and collaboration. We believe that a catchment network could support this objective and the individual goals (see *Appendix 1: Link to Melbourne Water Healthy Waterway draft strategies* and *Appendix 2: Notes from the Melbourne Water Draft Healthy Waterways Strategy*).

To inform this report the Port Phillip EcoCentre has consulted with individual Riverkeepers, local community volunteer organisations, regional not-for-profit organisations and Government agencies through partnership projects, meetings, workshops and desktop research, including:

- Attendance of community group AGMs; and post-it-note planning workshops with groups and individuals from five groups who currently protect and restore Port Phillip Bay and its associated catchment areas.
- Attendance at 15 Melbourne Water Healthy Waterways Co-Design Workshops (Nov 2016 – June 2018).
- Attendance at Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) strategy planning workshops, including for the Port Phillip Bay Environment Management Plan and stormwater management.
- Consultations with Riverkeepers John Forrester and Andrew Kelly (ongoing), including reports from the Yarra Riverkeeper and the Werribee Riverkeeper reviewing the work completed to date.
- Consultations with community environment groups as part of an ongoing joint venture with Community Learning for Environmental Action (CLEA), a Landcare Victoria Inc. project that aims to discover how best to support peer-to-peer learning in the community environment sector.
- Desktop research on past and existing national and international networks in the environment sector (ongoing).
- Exchange visits with Georges River Combined Councils' Committee Inc. Riverkeeper Program (Werribee Riverkeeper to NSW in 2016, Georges Riverkeeper to Melbourne in 2018).
- Attendance at the Victorian Environment Friends Network partnership-building forum (2018).

- Attendance at state government SEPP (Water) policy review information session (April 2018).
- Attendance at the Rivers of the West forum (convened by Environmental Justice Australia, May-July 2018).
- Attendance of and presentation to the Werribee River Association Autumn Forum (May 2018).
- Attendance at Waterkeeper Alliance Annual Conference including formal and informal workshops on network models (in the US, June 2017 and 2018).
- Modelling network benefits through events like 'Port Phillip Bay Fund Grantwriting Bee' for support and partner matchmaking (2017 and 2018) and 4 funded Community Skills Development workshops with attendees from 13 environmental organisations across the catchment registered (June-Sept 2018).
- Appointment to the Elster Creek Reference Group working with Melbourne Water and four Local Governments to coordinate the first action plan based on ecosystem not municipal boundaries.

Key learning 1:

Government agencies are beginning to recognise the value of co-design and community collaboration, but are uncertain of pragmatics for collaborative planning and implementation.

In addition to the Melbourne Water catchment strategies (final Draft open for consultation through July 2018), several structural and legislative changes at agency/government level have occurred. These include:

- State Government (in response to inspired and sustained advocacy from Yarra Riverkeeper Association and Environmental Justice Australia) adopted the Yarra River Protection (Willip-gin Birrarung murrn) Act;
- State Government included community in the Port Phillip Bay Environment Management Plan 2017-2027;
- State Government initiated the Port Phillip Bay Fund (total pool of \$10 million over 3 funding rounds);
- Victorian EPA Victoria enforcement and investigative staff are now embedded in local government agencies; and given stronger local powers to pursue and prosecute polluters;
- Metropolitan Melbourne has experienced an unprecedented period of population growth and associated urban development with associated impacts on waterways; and
- State Government State Environment Protection Policy (Waters) consultation currently underway.

All of the above represent significant opportunities for community groups dedicated to waterways protection. At the same time, they present significant logistical challenges, particularly to those groups who are entirely managed by volunteers who may be unable to commit the extra time required to fully realise and capitalise on the funding opportunities; and/or deliver complex projects involving multiple partners.

Key learning 2:

Existing groups are already stretched to maintain and grow their organisational profile and programs.

While all sectors appreciate the Catchments Network intellectually, they are wary of the 'cost' of collaboration. Will the outputs of the collaboration match the organisational investment required? This wariness applies in varying forms across the different types of organisations:

- Volunteer-led local groups have existing project commitments and are quite reasonably reluctant to regularly devote time to proposals that are distanced to their immediate environment;
- Regional scale not-for-profits with paid staff are engrossed navigating the day to day reality of short term and relatively small-scale funding cycles that currently sustain their organisation;
- Government agencies are under constant pressure to justify current budgets; and to demonstrate efficiency in the light of sometimes adversarial/political public scrutiny.

Key learning 3:

Community groups are inspired by tangible local works, not necessarily long-term strategies. Across Melbourne, groups face significant risk from reliance on ad hoc funding, ad libitum work plans, modern technology overwhelm, and inevitable turnover of volunteers with key expertise.

The network needs to be designed to function within this constantly evolving landscape and limited human and organisational resources. Of central importance is for the network to support and strengthen local groups, as opposed to impose participation and burdensome processes.

The Nairn Catchments Network will act as a forum or council, and support mechanism for waterway protectors on waterways feeding into Port Phillip Bay. Independent waterway protectors (ideally at least one located in each catchment) will:

- Seek mutually beneficial opportunities within their sub-catchment from linking with, and learning from, other organisations in other catchments;
- Strategically share information to build an overall picture of the health of their catchment and how that in turn influences or supports the health of other adjacent catchments and of Port Phillip Bay; and
- Each in turn host a network information and strategic planning forum to strengthen community action in each locality and draw together community perspectives of the wider waterways system. These sessions may be run in conjunction with other groups with networking functions such as the Victorian Environment Friends Network (VEFN) and Landcare.

Given the anticipated continuing rapid growth of Melbourne, we foresee many situations where peer-to-peer exchange of knowledge, skills and information will benefit community action in each locality, lead to better protected ecosystems, and support a thriving community of care.

While there is dubious value in groups in different catchments using their organisational resources on competing with other catchments for available funding, there is value in sharing knowledge, skills and resources between catchments to ultimately achieve catchment protection outcomes. However, while some groups may subscribe to this assertion on face value, others whose outlook is geared to resource 'scarcity' may be sceptical of the limits of time, funding, headspace and public influence. This reality must be acknowledged and accommodated within the proposed network model. To do otherwise would risk jeopardising the central objective of establishing enduring reciprocal relationships between network participants.

It takes time to build a network where all members are supported and engaged. We need to look at informal ways that we can work together to enhance each other's work and recognise our special contributions, while not competing with or duplicating existing networks.

Seed-funding is needed to enable the potential network members to meet regularly over 18-24 months to discuss local challenges, share insights, and identify strategic partnership opportunities and build useful relationships. Ideally, each participating group would host a network forum in their catchment and provide tours to selected sites that showcase successes and challenges. Each forum would also include an opportunity for all groups to present a succinct report on their current projects and challenges. Discussion in the network will likely refine what is important in each catchment, build trust and appreciation between participants, and identify common needs for capacity building so those who participate will be better able to engage their local community and advocate to policy makers for waterways' protection and restoration. By taking this conversational and informal approach we can all explore, test and refine a model that will work best for everyone in the network.

Key learning 4:

Community groups feel burnt out when land/water manager consultations don't translate to visible local impact.

Key learning 5:

Realising organisational and environmental opportunities between community groups themselves, as well as between community and institutions within convoluted operating contexts, will likely achieve greater effectiveness and leverage through a funded Network Coordinator role.

Collaboration and information sharing can only be effective if approached in focussed and strategic manner with appropriate resources to follow through.

There is currently no role in Australia that spans the scales and disciplines of expertise required to coordinate practical works across the lands, waters and human systems of a catchment. (Waterkeepers try!) Practical collaboration around waterways at a catchment scale requires understanding and balance of community values; multiple sciences, engineering, education and behaviour change; relevant laws; various planning and funding cycles; strategies and policies of local government/state government, relevant agencies and authorities. This is beyond the scope of most stakeholders, let alone community groups, and can lead to frustrations “translating” between what is desirable and what is feasible. Major documents like the Bay Environment Management Plan still suffer critical, impractical exclusions (wildlife and ports) due to departmental silos between DELWP, Fisheries and Ports.

Community consultation is a significant investment for government agencies. However, what is a *fraction* of the typical work hours for land and water managers often requires a *multiple* of the typical work hours for community groups. (For example, groups that mobilise a monthly half day working bee, or 6 full days per year, each also spent 4-6 full days over the year to participate in Melbourne Water's recent workshops.)

Melbourne Water's proposed Collaborative Implementation Plan (July 2018 powerpoint, see Appendix 2) allows for a Healthy Waterways Strategy Regional Committee and catchment-based Implementation Forums to involve community. We see great benefit for a funded Coordinator to play a representative role for Nairn Catchment Network member orgs (in addition to any attendance by members themselves). The value of such a role was discussed favourably with Melbourne Water in late July 2018; although it was too early to discuss specific feasibility of seats on the HWS Regional Committee(s) or whether Melbourne Water might be resourcing a similar role.

There are few “keystone” organisations to foster ongoing, potent connections between community groups and institutions who care for waterways, and to “translate” between contexts. (Waterkeepers, Environmental Justice Australia and Catchment Management Authorities do so, inasmuch as funding allows.) Given the long-term and deep goals of such a role (beyond any single stakeholder), systems philanthropy offers the most likely continuous funding. Once practical benefits are proven, there may be buy-in for co-funding from local governments.

As of the writing of this report, because of the multiple management regions, there is not even a reliable map showing the whole of the catchments of Port Phillip Bay. (see page 11)

Key Learning 6:

No authority is operating with a full Baywide perspective.

Network landscape and known models

We are not aware of any other community-driven networks in Australia that have a specific focus on waterways protection and operate on the same regional scale as is envisaged for the Nairn Catchments Network.

However, there are existing, well-established networks within the Greater Melbourne area whose multiple affiliate groups are located within a single geographic catchment, for example, Jackson's Creek Eco Network, Friends of Kororoit Creek, and Merri Creek Management Committee (see below in Our Network Members). It can be noted that the Merri Creek Management Committee has a substantial resourcing from the local governments located within the catchment, and this model has proven effective within the individual catchment.

Other affinity groups are linked by context of work. Victorian Environment Friends Network (VEFN) links environmental 'Friends of' groups volunteering on public reserves across Victoria, while Landcare provides a government-resourced umbrella network for local groups, typically with a focus on private land.

Activities of community-based organisations can be generally grouped under three categories:

1. advocacy;
2. education and community engagement; and
3. practical action.

The numerous groups engaged in waterways protection present different levels of focus and capacity to engage in these categories and may adopt different approaches to each category. Organisational development is generally ad hoc and influenced by the personalities and experience of the members, as well as external funding opportunities.

Practical rehabilitation of local areas is a major focus for local groups. While impressive, their capacity to advocate for government policy to protect waterways from threats that diminish water quality and biodiversity is limited by existing legislation, the lack of third party appeal rights, and management practices by government department and agencies. Consequently, the availability of legal expertise is vital to achieve better management practices.

Environmental Justice Australia (EJA) has demonstrated capacity to work with community organisations to reshape government policy and legislation. EJA is a Melbourne-based not-for-profit legal team that aims to:

- use the law to protect nature, empower communities and safeguard the climate;
- litigate, advocate, and collaborate for social and environmental justice; and
- use legal expertise on behalf of people, climate and nature.

EJA worked with the Yarra Riverkeeper on the Yarra River Protection Project that led to new planning scheme amendments on the Yarra and to the Yarra River Protection (Willip-gin Birrarung murrn) Act, and is working with the Werribee Riverkeeper and other community groups on the Rivers of the West legislation reform project.

Our observation of international, state and interstate models has revealed that local threats and legislative provisions vary substantially from country to country and regions, to the extent that strategies appropriate in one location may be practically irrelevant in others. Again, access to dedicated legal expertise will be fundamental to achieving waterways protection into the future.

In the past two years, there has been a significant shift by government and government agencies to consult with communities and to explore the opportunities to implement co-design principles. Examples include the Port Phillip Bay Fund and Melbourne Water Healthy Waterway Strategy. This flags potential to better link community expertise and institutional management, and to lift local issues into a cohesive, regional context. We note that Port Phillip

Bay's catchments cross two Catchment Management Authorities and reach beyond the Melbourne Water service boundaries; as of July 2018 even the Victorian Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning could not easily provide us an accurate map of Port Phillip Bay's catchments.

Although the models referred to below may vary widely in forms of governance, constituents, issues, funding support and operational capacity, they also have common issues, which provide opportunities for collaboration.

The following material has been gathered from the organisations' websites and interviews with members.

International model

Waterkeeper Alliance (WKA)

The Port Phillip Baykeeper (at Port Phillip EcoCentre), Werribee River Association, Yarra River Association are members of 'Waterkeeper Alliance' (WKA), the US-based international advocacy group for waterways.

WKA is the international centre of a network of grassroots Waterkeeper programs. The Alliance approves new Waterkeeper programs, licenses the use of the Waterkeeper names, represents the individual Waterkeepers on issues of international interest, and serves as a meeting place for all the Waterkeepers to exchange information, strategy and skills. The Alliance and its member Waterkeeper groups typically meet once per year, rotating between regions, and communicates regularly in the interim. Waterkeeper organisations adhere to 10 quality standards but operate independently, seeking funding and setting priorities within local contexts.

WKA has regional network examples in the United States of America, which are united around a waterway or geographical region, for example, Waterkeepers Chesapeake (14 keepers); California Coastkeeper Alliance (14 keepers); and Waterkeepers Washington (4 keepers).

<https://waterkeeper.org>

National models

Waterkeepers Australia (2003-2009)

Waterkeepers Australia was a not-for-profit, independent organisation that was formed in 2003 and was wound up in 2009. Initiated through inspiration from the international Waterkeeper Alliance, at its peak Waterkeepers Australia had 18 members, located in Queensland, New South Wales, South Australia and Victoria, with a mission to inspire Australians to restore and keep their waterways healthy. Waterkeepers Australia's aim was to establish a national community of local Waterkeepers actively protecting and restoring waterways for all living things to enjoy. Recruitment was a mix of re-branding existing organisations, and the creation of new Waterkeeper organisations.

The national office in Victoria provided the support framework for the members, each a registered Waterkeeper organisation in their own right. These were dedicated groups of people committed to doing all that they can for their local waterway. Several of the Victorian groups represented by Waterkeepers Australia (such as Yarra Riverkeeper, Werribee River Association, Port Phillip Baykeeper and Surry Riverkeeper) continue to operate as members of the international network of Waterkeepers.

A report subsequent to the winding up of Waterkeepers Australia, and the decline in the number of Waterkeepers in Australia, has informed the considerations around the Nairn Catchments Network. Representatives of the three

Melbourne based ‘keeper’ organisations continue to attend the annual global WKA conferences and participate in ongoing discussions about how to cooperate more effectively both within Australia and WKA’s International Region.
<http://www.waterkeepers.org.au>

Landcare Australia

Landcare Australia is a not-for-profit organisation, and registered charity, which leads the promotion and provision of financial support to the Landcare movement’s national resource management programme in Australia. It aligns the practice of environmental management with land productivity, and delegating governance and management to local communities.

The Landcare movement developed nationally in 1989 as a result of farmers and environmentalists uniting to care for our land and water. The Landcare movement is made up of more than 5,400 local groups across the nation. The groups that fall under the Landcare umbrella are varied in nature, including Coastcare, as well as productive farming groups, ‘Friends of’, Bushcare, Rivercare, Dunecare and indigenous ranger groups. Each of these groups actively cares for Australia’s invaluable land and water assets, utilising assistance from interested volunteers to safeguard, rebuild, regenerate, and sustainably manage the natural environment. Although Landcare does not work exclusively on private land, there is a strong emphasis on working with private landholders.

Landcare Australia works collaboratively with federal, state and local governments, corporate partners and sponsors, and individuals, to deliver hundreds of projects annually through the volunteer efforts of local community groups, indigenous groups, and the more than 5,400 Landcare and Coastcare groups across Australia.

<https://landcareaustralia.org.au>

Environmental Justice Australia (EJA)

Environmental Justice Australia is the environment’s legal team. They use their technical expertise and practical understanding of the legal system to protect nature and defend the rights of communities to a healthy environment. They are a not-for-profit legal practice. They are lawyers and legal advisers to environment and community groups, providing strategic and legal advice to support campaigns for positive social change. They are donor-funded, supporter-driven, independent of government and reliant on the backing of the community. Environmental Justice Australia is leading a campaign that aims to secure improved legal protection for key urban waterways in Melbourne’s west, equivalent to the safeguards provided for the Yarra River in a law established in 2017. Through work on the Yarra River Act and Rivers of the West, EJA are part of a network of interested waterway protectors.

<https://www.envirojustice.org.au/>

State Models

Victorian Environment Friends Network (VEFN)

The VEFN is the peak body for Friends groups across Victoria including within the Port Phillip Bay catchment. It exists to help represent the common interests of all Friends groups in Victoria. VEFN is coordinated by a committee. Friends groups, and groups with similar objectives, work in a great variety of natural situations on public lands, including coastal sites, bush, grasslands, watercourses or wetlands. They typically work on reserve rehabilitation, weed removal and habitat protection. A significant number of groups would have a connection with their local catchment or would work on a waterway.

Some Friends groups have a species focus, such as the Friends of Leadbeaters Possum. Some groups are large, with sophisticated structures, and are able to attract significant amounts of government funding. Others are more locally based and are composed of nearby residents who come together to defend something they love. There is a place-based focus within these groups and many have a strong sense of local identity. They frequently operate in conjunction with the relevant management authority, usually Parks Victoria, a municipal council, or some other organisation such as the Trust for Nature. Every group is independent and autonomous. Some are incorporated and have a formal constitution and membership structure, others operate informally, with no membership fee.

The recently revitalized VEFN is providing training opportunities as well as the opportunities for Friends groups across Victoria to connect and share information, both about ecology and biodiversity as well as organisational development through workshops and mentoring.

<https://friendsvic.org>

Merri Creek Management Committee

The Merri Creek Management Committee Incorporated (MCMC) is an environmental coordination and management agency formed in 1989 to achieve a shared vision for the waterway corridors of the Merri Creek Catchment. Its members include all the municipalities in the catchment: the Darebin, Hume, Moreland, Whittlesea and Yarra City Councils plus Mitchell Shire Council, the Friends of Merri Creek and the Wallan Environment Group.

Representatives of these member groups form a Committee of Management which develops policy and guides MCMC's activities. The primary purpose of the MCMC is to ensure the preservation of natural and cultural heritage, and the ecologically sensitive restoration, development and maintenance of the Merri Creek and tributaries, their corridors and associated ecological communities.

MCMC plants and manages indigenous (local native) grasses, shrubs and trees at more than 80 sites along the Merri Creek and its tributaries in the northern suburbs of Melbourne, in partnership with local communities. MCMC's funding comes from its local government members, from regional, state, federal and philanthropic grant programs, and from competitively won tenders. It employs about 20 staff. The Committee collaborates with its neighbours, the Moonee Ponds Creek Coordination Committee and the Darebin Creek Management Committee.

<https://www.mcmc.org.au>

Darebin Parklands Association (DPA)

The Darebin Parklands Association is a friends group that cares for the Darebin Parklands, a 33-hectare bushland reserve on the border of Alphington and Ivanhoe in Melbourne. The group was initially founded in 1973 as the Rockbeare Park Conservation Group, which was formed to preserve and rehabilitate Rockbeare Park, one of the earliest suburban parks in Australia which dates back to 1929. The group was instrumental in establishing the current large park through submissions to local, state and federal governments to purchase adjoining land on the Darebin side of the creek.

Almost all the vegetation in the parklands has been planted by members of the DPA who work with the park's paid rangers and the community. The DPA's goals are to continue protect and improve the bushland character of the parklands, maintaining it as a wildlife haven and a place to appreciate nature. Their long-term goal is to reinstate native animal habitat so that more animals, including the platypus, return to live in and around the Darebin Creek.

<https://www.dpa.org.au>

Victorian Landcare

Landcare is a community-based movement that began in Victoria in 1986. It now involves thousands of Victorians

and more than 600 groups working together to shape the future of our land, biodiversity and waterways. Groups work together to develop their own priorities and projects and are often supported through this process by a Landcare network and their regional Catchment Management Authority. Groups apply for funding from a variety of different sources including local, state, and federal government, and corporate and philanthropic organisations to support their work. Most Landcare networks in Victoria rural and peri-urban areas receive funding for networking and administration.

Generally, committees oversee a group's operations, apply for project funding and organise activities like community workshops or tree planting. Increasingly, Landcare groups are also collaborating to form Landcare networks that take a more regional approach to environmental issues and coordinate activities to achieve catchment wide outcomes. These Landcare networks also provide a community link to all levels of government and industry for financial support and information. The success of the Landcare bottom-up approach can be attributed to the inspiring contributions made by the passionate individuals who make up Victoria's and Australia's Landcare movement.

<https://www.landcarevic.org.au>

Interstate models

Georges River Combined Councils' Committee Inc. Riverkeeper Program (GRCCC).

The GRCCC formed in 1979 in New South Wales. It includes Bayside, City of Canterbury Bankstown, Campbelltown, Fairfield, Georges River, Liverpool City Council and Sutherland and Wollondilly Shire Councils. Each Council is represented by up to three Councillors. GRCCC has been an effective lobby group, able to represent the needs of the Councils when dealing with government policies as they affect the Georges River. It operates with a team of three staff, executive, Riverkeeper and scientist, who carry out fund raising, ecological restoration, litter clean ups, water quality and other works, and who are paid officers from funds contributed by all councils.

<http://www.georgesriver.org.au>

The Parramatta River Riverkeeper

The Parramatta River Riverkeeper is funded through the Local Landcare Coordinators Initiative, funded by the NSW Government and supported through the partnership of Local Land Services and Landcare NSW.

<http://www.ourlivingriver.com.au/>

Our network members

The Nairn Catchments Network would be made up of member organisations from the catchments of Port Phillip Bay and organisations that are directly connected to the bay itself. In view of the number and diversity of groups active within Port Phillip Bay catchments, it was deemed appropriate for this project to speak broadly to groups informally during Healthy Waterways Strategy workshops and consult closely with a representative sample.

Map of the Melbourne region

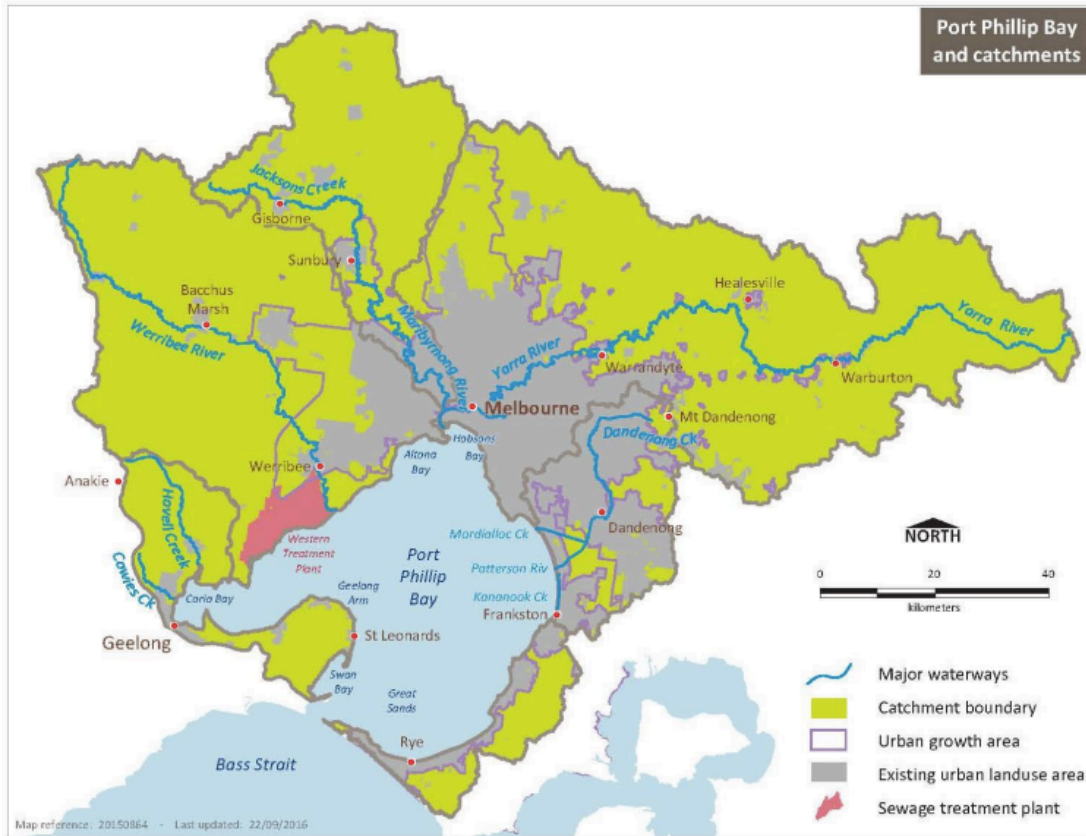


Image source: Port Phillip Bay Fund Guidelines 2018 (note DELWP has since indicated this is not fully accurate)

These organisations include (in alphabetical order):

- Balcombe Estuary Reserve Group (BERG)
- Bellarine Catchment Network
- First Friends of Dandenong Creek
- Friends of Elster Creek
- Friends of Kororoit Creek
- Jacksons Creek Eco-Network
- Port Phillip EcoCentre/ Port Phillip Baykeeper, Neil Blake
- The Werribee River Association/ Werribee Riverkeeper, John Forrester
- Yarra Riverkeeper Association/ Yarra Riverkeeper, Andrew Kelly

(For the organisations' biographies see Appendix 4: Member biographies)

Our network's challenges and opportunities

The environment citizenship and volunteering sector is highly effective and delivers a high return in terms of environmental improvement and community satisfaction and health for every dollar invested. Yet it is under-resourced as a sector and participants can face significant challenges through overwhelming workloads, lack of resources, changing environmental conditions and perceived political and societal disengagement that lead to burnout and a sense of powerlessness. The incredible volunteer-based knowledge and skill base for waterway protection currently faces significant risks as current leadership ages without succession planning and resourcing.

The main opportunity for the network is to enhance a proactive and positive community of practitioners who all have the capacity to address their local needs, plan ahead, build on their resources and work in partnership to achieve their goals. The ability to do this across the network is critical to nurturing sustainable, well-funded organisations that achieve the best environmental outcomes for their areas. It is also important in achieving engaged communities and collaboration between community, industry and government.

The key is finding a network structure where we can work together to enhance each other's work, recognise our special contributions and celebrate our achievements, while not increasing workloads or competing with and duplicating existing networks. Some network members already have initiatives to enhance the work of groups within their catchment. Future activity could be targeted at supporting existing groups to consolidate and extend links within their catchments. Key existing organisations should be encouraged to continue building informal networks that are based on inclusion and respect. The network should be administratively light but a broad scoping, open and inclusive organisation.

The Nairn Catchments Network can support Melbourne Water's Healthy Waterways strategy by providing a forum to connect communities and stakeholders for the benefit of healthy waterways (see *Appendix 2: Notes to the Melbourne Water Draft Healthy Waterways Strategy*).

Each of Melbourne Water's Healthy Waterways draft strategies across the catchment areas has a common objective to, *"Provide systems to share knowledge and information between communities and stakeholders; to empower communities to participate and influence waterways management."* (Draft Healthy Waterways Strategy, Executive Summary, 'The community', p.viii, https://s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/hdp.au.prod.app.mw-yoursay.files/5215/2946/6926/Draft_Healthy_Waterways_Strategy_2018.pdf).

This objective is a clear indication that community engagement and collaboration is a valued component of the Melbourne Water strategies, presenting a focus for the proposed network to help Melbourne Water achieve overall goals across Port Phillip Bay and the catchment areas.

Some initial challenges and opportunities across the network were identified in consultation with each of the potential network members. Neil Blake conducted Post-it workshops to help the organisations identify their opportunities and how they could prioritise their activity (see *Appendix 5: Post-it workshops data and summary*).

These workshops were a tool to identify organisational priorities that are common to all groups, thus providing a focus for future capacity-building initiatives as a network. It became clear in the workshops that the challenges/opportunities intertwined thematically, meaning that work in one area could provide benefits in another. For example, developing our communication skills will allow us to attract more members who can help us achieve our goals and plan for succession, as well as take advantage of funding opportunities which will provide us with more program resources and partnerships to help us to do our work.

Separate consultations were also conducted with Riverkeepers John Forrester and Andrew Kelly. Out of all those discussions, these are the top opportunities where each organisation can build capacity and develop a network as they support each other in the process.

Organisational opportunities

1. Telling our stories

Clear communication between organisations supports healthy conversation, knowledge-sharing and effective partnerships. It builds on the trust and collaboration between organisations. Learning how to tell our stories helps us to connect well with our communities to spread the impact of our environmental work. Sharing knowledge and resources between groups helps share the workload and avoid duplication.

Regular knowledge-sharing and practical partnerships with groups that protect waterways and engage their local communities living in their catchment would be invaluable to achieving community stewardship for the whole area.

Communication also helps us raise our profile to attract members and funding to ensure a sustainable future for the organisations.

The suggested activity to build capacity around communication incorporates:

- Communication skills development.
- Communication tools and systems (Branding, Website, e-news, Media, social media).
- Community engagement and recruitment (including events/programs and membership info).
- Fundraising skills.
- Marketing and Campaigns.
- Education programs and resources.

2. Strategic planning

Strategic Planning is a vital part of running an organisation, but needs time to plan ahead and it also requires specific skills.

If our organisations are to have sustainable futures we need to have clear succession plans. We need to attract new members and younger members who can learn from our experience, continue our good work, and find better ways to do things in this changing environment. We also need to see the opportunities coming so that we can take advantage of them, whether that is taking up a funding opportunity or advocating for an important issue.

In the highly competitive context of fundraising for necessary projects, the collective impact/ability of strong partnerships is more attractive to a range of government and philanthropic funding sources than groups operating in isolation.

The suggested activity to build capacity around strategic planning incorporates:

- Developing issues positions.
- Creating organisation structure and strategy, including succession plans.
- Building internal support services (including staff and admin).
- Seeking funding opportunities.
- Increasing program resourcing.

3. Partnerships

Our work is more effective and our impact is greater when we work with other groups and organisations. Partnerships take time and skill to develop and maintain so that they thrive.

Awareness of the efforts of other groups reduces the tendency to work on local issues in isolation, and neglecting other issues that have ‘flow-on’ effects through the catchments (for example, weeds).

Citizen science programs that monitor aspects of the environment are also increasingly recognised cost-effective ways to generate community awareness and provide evidence to inform government management strategies.

The suggested activity to build capacity around partnerships incorporates:

- a) Liaising with local organisations.
- b) Building internal catchment partnerships.
- c) Citizen Science research and knowledge sharing.
- d) Getting the most of external support services (including educational skills and resources, research, land use and town planning advice).

4. Advocacy

Community engagement to promote behaviour change and stewardship of waterways will be optimised though through positive collaborations with relevant agencies, in particular: Melbourne Water, state government environment departments, local governments and catchment management authorities.

The Nairn Catchments Network could draw upon our members’ established relationships with Environmental Justice Australia and relevant government agencies to create more dialogue at a senior level around appropriate legislation and regulation. Lifting site-specific issues into proposed regional solutions may additionally attract more traction with large agencies and legislators.

Environmental opportunities

Each catchment area has its own environmental needs that relate to its specific context and location. Different catchment priorities can be defined by various factors that include, but are not limited to, climate change, peri-urban residential development, biodiversity, litter, weeds, plastics and microplastics, chemical contaminants, excess nutrient flow from suburban streets, re-vegetation, urban planning, landscape preservation, waterflows, commercial and recreational fishing, port and shipping activity, road projects, environmental flows, stormwater, loss of habitat, the impact of pets on native wildlife, capital works (e.g. boardwalks) and the differences between saltwater and freshwater environments.

While issues across the catchments may overlap, they are not always identical. That’s why any network co-operation and partnership needs to be based on a respect for the variation of local demands and contexts. The value of place-based commitment and advocacy needs to be recognized as part of the effectiveness of any proposed network.

The next steps (Phase two):

While we have a better understanding of the needs and wants of our potential network membership, we don't yet have all the answers. That is why we propose to pilot an informal network model that supports organisations to build their capacity based on their individual priorities; and to seek funding for a full time baywide catchments Coordinator who can support these priorities, identify shared opportunities, represent members in significant forums (e.g. Melbourne Water HWS Regional Committee) and facilitate more fruitful cross-sector collaboration.

Develop from the bottom-up

We believe that a network is best developed from the bottom-up. That is why we propose to continue consulting with the network organisations to help them address their priorities and plan for the future. By doing this, they can increase their capacity based on their needs and can continue to evolve, share and participate. There are several ways that all the network members can create a space for a network to evolve:

- knowledge sharing, where groups share what they do and why it works;
- training, where people learn a skill from an expert;
- peer inquiry, where groups work together on a difficulty they each face; and
- mentoring, where a group/individual with experience supports another group/individual as they develop a capacity.

We acknowledge that a successful network will require social buy-in and shifts in thinking beyond the pragmatics of securing funding or scheduling events.

Find funding

Functional, healthy and accessible waterways are critical. Various sources may support the activity and build towards a sustainable model (e.g. Melbourne Water, local Councils and philanthropic organisations).

Conclusion

A network could provide sustainable support to protect Melbourne's catchment areas and Port Phillip Bay and support them to thrive by:

1. Sharing knowledge and skills through community connection.
2. Pursuing opportunities that will benefit the individual organisations and their environments, with understanding that will help the whole area.
3. Providing a clear and informed voice to advocate for the different and shared needs of the environment and sector.

Building a successful, respectful, and productive network takes care and time. Such a network is best to begin 'informally' from the bottom-up, and the Waterkeepers and VEFN are fostering opportunities where possible to gather groups together in valuable ways (such as free Media & Marketing training in June 2018). A network should allow each organisation take their own approach and address their own priorities while supporting sharing knowledge and training to enable capacity building across all the organisations. A network should align with the current needs and resources of the network members and it should support them to achieve their goals. That way the network will be useful for the all members while they are creating benefits for the entire Bay and catchments.

Now is the moment to take advantage of the opportunities and to address the current challenges. Funding and time is required to get this right, as growth needs to be appropriate to the needs of the network members.

We seek funding for Phase two of this Nairn Catchments Network project in order to work with network members who opt in, to help them build individual organisational capacity where required, and to strengthen multiple connections across the membership in service of environmental outcomes.

Appendices

Appendix one: Link to Melbourne Water's Healthy Waterway draft strategies

<https://yoursay.melbournewater.com.au/healthy-waterways>

Appendix two: Notes from the Melbourne Water Draft Healthy Waterways Strategy

Melbourne Water initiated a series of 'catchment strategy co-design' workshops in September 2016 to involve a wide range of stakeholders in setting a strategic direction for management of rivers and creeks across the Port Phillip and Westernport region. The draft Strategy is intended for state government, Melbourne Water, Parks Victoria, local government, the Environment Protection Authority, the Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority, other regional agencies and authorities and management partners, developers, Traditional Owners, Aboriginal Victorians and landholders or community groups involved in waterway management activities that may affect waterway condition.

Stakeholders from community, water corporations, researchers, local and state government agreed to the following process principles during the Strategy development workshops:

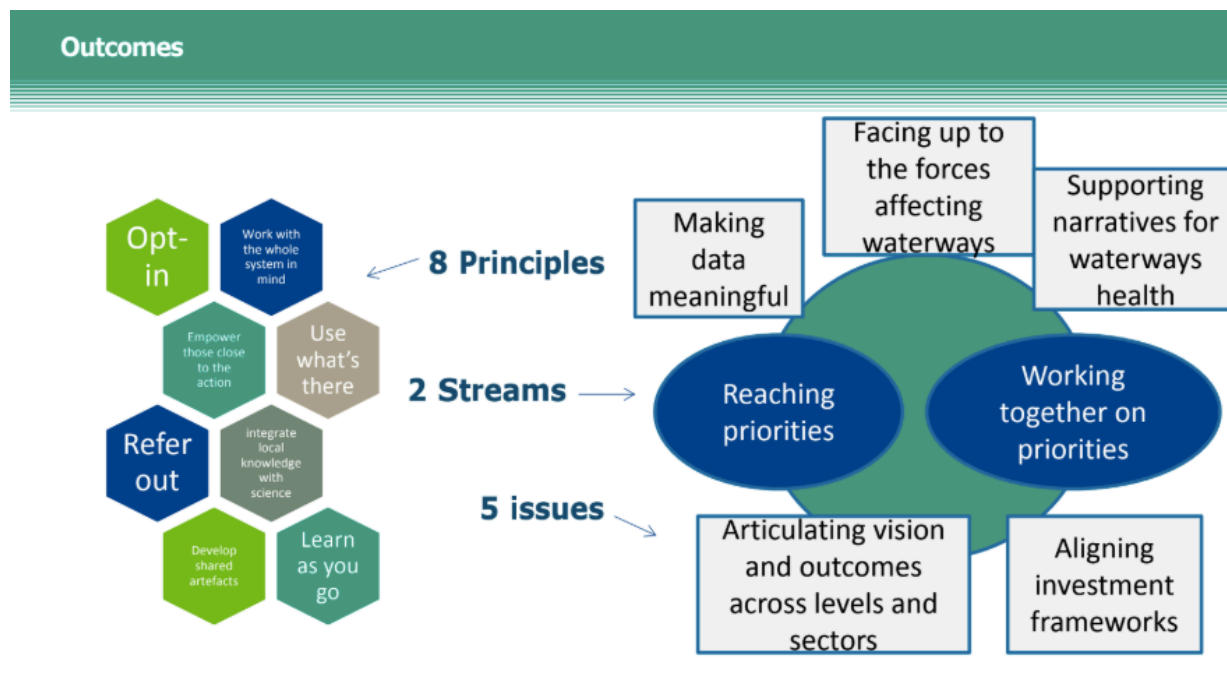


Image Source: Melbourne Water 170329_Waterways_Lab_3.pdf

The Executive Summary of the Healthy Waterways Strategy (draft released June 2018) included the following:

The community

Waterways are community assets – and this draft Strategy seeks to put the community at the centre of waterways management. It proposes systems to share knowledge and information between communities and stakeholders to empower them to participate and influence waterways management.

The following extracts present avenues/opportunities for community waterways protectors to link Melbourne Water and wider community engagement:

11.2.1 Education

Melbourne Water works collaboratively to improve water literacy and connectedness by:

- Developing a network of agencies, educators and the community to facilitate knowledge sharing and collaborative actions
- Leading the direction of water education by setting key themes that highlight the value of waterways in a sustainable and water smart city.

People can access tools and resources from Melbourne Water to spread water education in their local community, including:

- Openly accessible curriculum-aligned resources for use by schools and communities
- Developing new education methods that are relevant and accessible to a diverse audience, including people from different cultural backgrounds and those with a disability
- Creating an innovative web presence and digital experiences to complement face-to-face education.

Melbourne Water's education program aims to improve water literacy by informing people about the urban water cycle and demonstrating the value of Melbourne Water's assets for water supply, sewage treatment and waterway management. It also encourages behaviour change in water usage to lead to a more resilient and water smart city.

11.2.3 Citizen Science

Everyone in the community can influence and participate in waterway management through citizen science:

- The community collects meaningful waterway health data that informs decision-making, supports adaptive management and evaluates environmental works
- Citizen science data can be used to protect waterway values and meet community expectations
- The community has the support to enhance its knowledge of waterways and become local champions by:
 - Providing information, interpretation and resources that anyone can access to increase their knowledge and appreciation of waterway health
 - Empowering a network of champions to encourage shared stewardship of waterways.

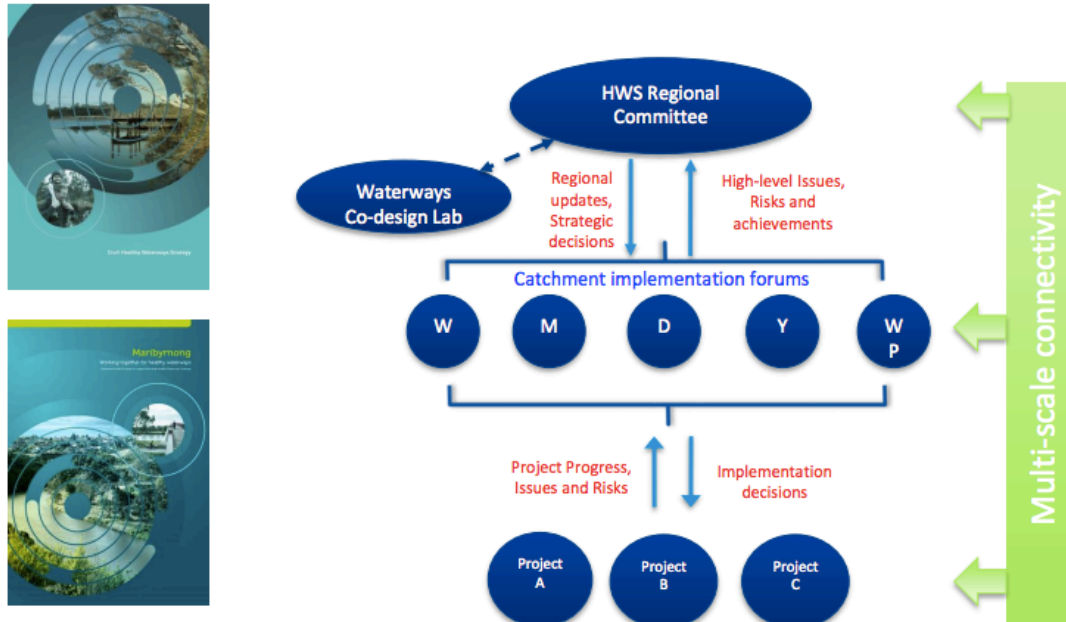
Each draft catchment strategy has a number (ranging between 15 and 19) of performance objectives indicating specific outcomes to be reported on. The following objectives relating to community participation and engagement are included in each catchment and are of relevance to all community waterways protector organisations:

6. Increase participation rates in education, capacity building, incentive programs and citizen science activities to enable greater level of environmental stewardship for our waterways.
7. Develop a better understanding of the potential impacts of emerging contaminants of concern such as microplastics, pesticides and pharmaceuticals.
8. Have in place methods to assess volume and source of litter to inform litter reduction programs.

19. Provide systems to share knowledge and information between communities and stakeholders; to empower communities to participate and influence waterways management.

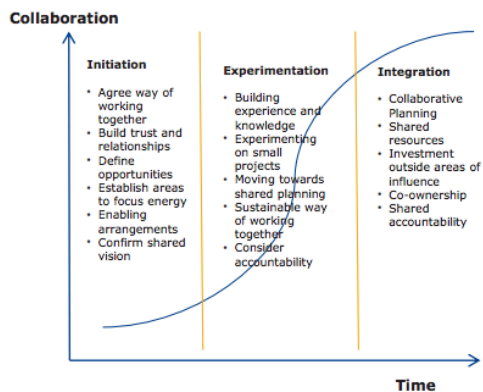
In late July 2018, a draft implementation model was presented in Powerpoint by Melbourne Water. Excerpts:

A proposal for collaborative implementation



Where to start....

Click to go forward, hold to see history



What will make Collaborative Governance successful?

We also identify a series of factors that are crucial within the collaborative process itself. These factors include face-to-face dialogue, trust building, and the development of commitment and shared understanding. **We found that a virtuous cycle of collaboration tends to develop when collaborative forums focus on "small wins" that deepen trust, commitment, and shared understanding.**

- Collaborative Governance in Theory and Practice, Chris Ansell Alison Gash

Appendix three: Draft principles for a network model

Clear feedback from community groups reviewing drafts of our findings was KEEP IT SIMPLE. The research process for this project was overwhelmingly detailed. Therefore, the EcoCentre prepared this (*draft*) brief that may be more suitable for presenting to potential member groups.

Formal entity

- Community-based, politically non-partisan, not-for-profit, registered charity;
- Governance maintained in accordance with relevant legislation and standards;
- membership base including individual citizens and affiliated organisations;

Purpose

Universal protection and restoration of natural and social values of water, underpinned by:

- Commitment to practical action from the source to the sea;
- Agreed 'global' position statement for waterways protection;
- Research to inform evidence-based advocacy for legislation/regulation for environmental protection of waterways in all stages of the hydrological cycle;
- Practical action to maintain and enhance biodiversity in catchments;
- Education program to promote wider community appreciation and behaviour change;
- Communications and marketing to grow and maintain positive relationships and public profile of waterways protectors.

Ongoing dialogue/collaborations with parties (local to international) with direct interest in waterways management, including:

- local 'Friends of' groups involved in practical care of natural areas in local catchments;
- community-based organisations involved in advocacy, education and research at a regional to national scale;
- Melbourne Water as peak responsible agency for waterways management;
- local governments responsible for building planning approvals, street cleaning, development and maintenance of local stormwater system, parks and open space in local catchments;
- relevant state government agencies / authorities;
- Federal government agencies involved in environmental management and protection;
- International waterways protectors such as Waterkeeper Alliance;
- Potential funding or supporting bodies including corporate sponsors and philanthropics.

Organisational capacity

1. Strategic plan based on widely canvassed and endorsed organisational aims and objectives; and responding to Melbourne Water's 'Healthy Waterways Strategy 2018';
2. Committee of Management with demonstrated relevant skills and experience;
3. Effective web and social media platforms;
4. Medium term tenure of base for office and community engagement;

Philosophy

- Caring for catchments is caring for the Bay;
- Commitment to supporting fellow organisations (collaboration not competition);

Why bother?

There are myriad organisations with interest and/or responsibility for healthy waterways, ranging from small community groups with limited resources to large government agencies tasked with program governance, asset

maintenance, and forward planning for infrastructure development . All are challenged by the dynamics of change driven by:

- Rapidly increasing human population with associated urbanisation (impermeable surfaces);
- Competing demands for funds;
- Difficulty realising meaningful cross-sector projects given community/government/corporate configurations;
- Reduced recruitment of the next generation of volunteers and support; and
- climate change.

Effective and timely communications are key to successful planning, delivery and evaluation of waterways protection programs. Supporting community groups and government agencies by increasing their capacity to achieve their goals is fundamental to protect local waterways and Port Phillip Bay.

How?

1. Establish a Nairn Catchments Council comprised of community representatives from each catchment.
2. Create funded role for Catchments Council Liaison Coordinator to:
 - Directly support the Catchment Council;
 - Identify suitable host organisation to accommodate the role;
 - grow relationships with other community groups, government agencies and funding bodies;
 - prepare funding submissions for strategic projects to build capacity of groups working in catchments; and
 - participate in Melbourne Water 'Healthy Waterways Strategy' community engagement processes.

Appendix four: Members' biographies

(Listed in alphabetical order)

Balcombe Estuary Reserve Group (BERG)

BERG Mt Martha is a Friends' group formed in 1997 to preserve and restore the bushland of the Balcombe Estuary Reserves. Its vision is to preserve and restore the precious ecology of the Balcombe Estuary and Reserves through best practice technical knowledge, passionate volunteerism and community involvement. It is an incorporated body run by a Committee of Management. The Committee comprises four elected officers and up to ten elected ordinary members. BERG volunteers and contractors, with help from local schools and other groups, remove quantities of pest plants, plant many thousands of indigenous plants raised from local seed, control feral animals, mainly foxes and rabbits, and build community awareness, knowledge and involvement.

<http://www.berg.org.au>

Bellarine Catchment Network (BCN)

BCN is an Incorporated Association with a management committee comprised of 4 office-bearers and 2 ordinary members that meet at least 7 times per year. The BCN fulfils a similar role to of groups in other catchments around the Bay. However, two key points of difference are that the region is outside of the Melbourne Water area and there are no rivers or creeks that flow into Port Phillip Bay from the Bellarine region. The BCN comprises representatives from key catchment and coastal organisations (both government and non-government) with a community environment focus, as well as two project coordinators. A designated representative from each of the organisations is appointed by the individual organisations to the BCN.

<http://www.environmentbellarine.org.au>

First Friends of Dandenong Creek (FFDC)

FFDC was formed in May 1999 by a group of residents concerned about the state and development of the middle reaches of Dandenong Creek and surrounds between Bayswater Rd in Bayswater and Boronia Rd in

Wantirna/Vermont in Melbourne's outer east. Working with Melbourne Water, Knox and Maroondah Councils, the EPA and the Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority, their overall aim is to return our section of the Dandenong Creek to its original condition as far as possible. One of their dreams is to see the return of the platypus. FFDC's aims are to improve the quality of the water, reduce litter, control weeds, re-establish indigenous flora and fauna in appropriate areas, improve recreational facilities and safety along the corridor, encourage local community participation in our activities, and foster an appreciation of the corridor's history and environmental significance.

<https://www.ffdc.org.au>

Friends of Elster Creek

Friends of Elster Creek is a subgroup of Earthcare St Kilda. Earthcare St Kilda is a non-profit volunteer group that works in partnership with local government, state government bodies and specialists to improve the natural resources of the City of Port Phillip and Elster Creek. The aims of the Friends of Elster Creek are to protect, improve and expand areas of habitat for indigenous plants and animals along Elster Creek, Elwood Canal and adjacent parks, to provide educational opportunities and experiences for local schools and the general public regarding the local environment, to reduce the amount of pollution flowing into Port Phillip Bay, and to improve the aesthetics of Elster Creek, Elwood Canal and adjacent parks.

<http://earthcarestkilda.org.au/get-involved/friends-of-elster-creek/>

Friends of Kororoit Creek

The Friends of Kororoit Creek are an active group of volunteers working on a range of activities which aim to improve the health of the Kororoit Creek and its surrounds in the Brimbank area. Their activities include plantings during the cooler months, maintenance of new and older planting sites, group working bees at designated work sites, working with schools, Waterwatch, social gatherings and informal walks along the Kororoit Creek trail. Re-vegetation and maintenance activities are currently carried out from Isabella Williams Reserve in Deer Park downstream to Buckingham Reserve in Sunshine West.

<http://www.fokc.org.au>

Jacksons Creek Eco-Network (JCEN)

JCEN is a network of 11 Landcare and Friends Groups, and volunteers who care for the environment along Jacksons Creek and its tributaries, including Riddells Creek, from Keilor, through Sunbury and Riddells Creek, to Mt Macedon, Victoria. JCEN's aims are to promote the health of Jacksons Creek, its tributaries and its environment by acting as an advocate on behalf of the Creeks, liaising with the community and public authorities, promoting cooperation among our member groups along the Creeks, actively restoring native vegetation, removing weeds and preserving remnant vegetation, cooperating with Waterwatch to monitor water quality, and disseminating promotional, educational and technical information concerning the Creeks.

<http://www.jcen.org.au>

Port Phillip EcoCentre/ Port Phillip Baykeeper, Neil Blake, OAM

Port Phillip Baykeeper is a community program of Port Phillip EcoCentre Inc. and is affiliated with Waterkeeper Alliance, a global network of non-governmental advocates for an identified river, lake, bay, or sound. Port Phillip EcoCentre Inc.'s vision is *an empowered community actively cultivating long-term environmental well-being*.

Neil Blake, OAM, founding director of the EcoCentre and multi-award winner, has been widely recognised and loved by the community for over three decades. He is the Port Phillip Baykeeper, providing an independent voice for our Bay and its inhabitants large and small. Neil regularly participates on environmental panels and consults with groups including EPA Victoria, Sustainability Victoria, Melbourne Water, local and state government, RMIT University and

community groups. Neil inspires all ages to prevent plastic pollution, assisted by his alter ego Captain Trash, the musical pirate who teaches the six 'ARRRGHS': Refuse, Reduce, Re-use, Repair, Recycle and Remove.

<http://www.ecocentre.com>

The Werribee River Association/ Werribee Riverkeeper, John Forrester

The Werribee River Association (WRivA) began its life in Werribee Township in 1981, with a view to protect and enhance the natural environment of the whole of the Werribee River. WRivA acts strategically and practically in an effort to gain support for the health of the people and the rivers, creeks, wetlands, estuaries and coastline of the Werribee catchment.

Werribee Riverkeeper, John Forrester, has worked for the Werribee River for many years. He has been active on the ground, in community engagement and in advocacy to protect and revitalise the river and catchment. He has over 40 years experience in education in Victoria as a teacher and principal, and has been an active volunteer in environmental advocacy for the past 20 years. As Werribee Riverkeeper, John is co-leading the Rivers of the West campaign that seeks to have the Maribyrnong and Werribee Rivers and other smaller waterways acknowledged as valuable community assets and better protected in law. An extension of Yarra River's model "river legislation" with appropriate adaptations has the power to contribute to healthy and bountiful rivers and waterways, for which the whole community will act as guardians.

<https://werribeeriver.org.au>

Yarra Riverkeeper Association/ Yarra Riverkeeper, Andrew Kelly

The Yarra River Association was incorporated in 2005 and is part of the Waterkeeper Alliance of more than 150 Waterkeepers worldwide. Their vision is a Yarra River, with tributaries, that is healthy, ecologically sustainable and valued by the community. Their aim is to protect and restore the Yarra River and its tributaries, from source to mouth, for current and future generations. They tell the river's "story", highlighting its wonders and its challenges. They monitor its health and activities affecting it. They run educational events, river tours and give informative presentations to schools, community groups, the authorities and businesses. And they work closely with numerous government bodies and NGO's and advocate directly and through the news media for river care.

Andrew Kelly is the current Yarra Riverkeeper, following on from the establishing work of Ian Penrose as the first Yarra Riverkeeper. A key part of Andrew's work as Riverkeeper has been the suite of work around the Yarra River Protection (Willip-gin Birrarung murrn) Act. This was proposed to government before the 2014 election and a commitment by the Victorian Government followed. The Yarra Riverkeeper worked closely with government and Environmental Justice Australia in the formulation of the legislation and of the amendments to the planning controls along the river. In February 2017, the Victorian Government announced the 30 point Yarra River Protection Plan. Though part of this included the Yarra River Protection (Willip-gin Birrarung murrn) Act, it was a much broader plan and included a review of waterway management in the west of Melbourne. Andrew and Ian's work as Riverkeepers was acknowledged by all sides of the Victorian Parliament during the debate that led up to the passing of the legislation.

<http://yarrariver.org.au>

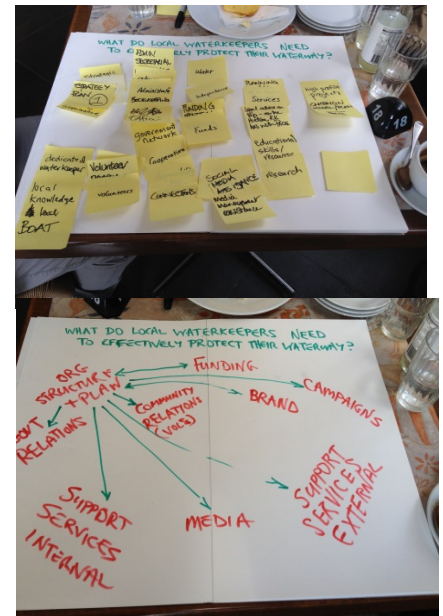
Appendix five: Post-it workshops data and summary

Through post-it note workshops facilitated by Neil Blake, organisations

- Captured what each individual considered priority actions on post-it notes (1 action per note)
- Collectively grouped actions into 5-10 themed categories of activity
- Used an arrow-drawing exercise to illustrate which categories enable other types of activity
- Tallied which categories were most enabling of other activities (had the most arrows coming out)

This typically reveals that on-ground works, while the biggest driver of passion and often prime focus, are in fact served by prioritising organisational tasks like strategic planning and recruitment.

The 6 workshops identified a combined total of 43 activity areas, many of which were closely related.



Melbourne Waterkeepers joint workshop Nov 2015	Jackson's Creek Eco Network	Balcombe Estuary Reserve Group	1 st Friends of Dandenong Creek	Port Phillip Baykeeper	Werribee River Association
Brand (8)	Community recruiting (8)	Liaising with local organisations (5)	Communications & marketing (4)	Strategy & issues positions (7)	Committee / governance (7)
Support services (internal) (7)	Accountability of government (6)	Website, social media, newsletter etc (4)	Advocacy for agency partners (3)	Program operational resources (7)	Clear purpose / plan (7)
Funding (7)	Succession (6)	Mt Martha boardwalk, bird hide (4)	Citizen science / knowledge share (3)	Citizen science research (6)	Paid staff (7)
Campaign (6)	Funding (5)	Yellow Robin & dragonfly trail (4)	Waterways biodiversity (3)	Branding & communication (5)	Funding & resources (5)
Media (5)	Strong regs / protection (5)	Community events/ programs/member information (1)	Funding (2)	Succession plan (5)	Programs (5)
Community relations (5)	Education (5)			Bay/catchments wide network (4)	Membership engagement (4)
Organisational structure & plan (4)	On ground works (4)			Community engagement (4)	Advocacy (4)
Support services (external)(4)	Weeds & pest control (3)			Advocacy for accountability (2)	
Government relations (3)	Bio connectivity (2)				

Seven overarching action categories emerged – organised here from Major enablers → Minor enablers:

Committee & governance	Purpose & plan	Operational resources	Communications & marketing	Hands-on projects	Community engagement & recruiting	Advocacy for accountability
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The full details resulting workshops per group are available as a separate report document.

