

4.1 INTEGRATED WATER MANAGEMENT (IWM) FORUMS & CATCHMENT SCALE IWM PLANS

Responsible Director: Deb Cailes

RECOMMENDATION

That Council

- 1. Endorses the Yarra Catchment Integrated Water Management (IWM) Plan and the Dandenong Creek IWM Plan, as outlined in the Summary Plans in Attachments 1 and 2 respectively.*
- 2. Supports embedding relevant targets from the Catchment Scale IWM Plans into Council's future plans and actions, as appropriate.*
- 3. Notes that endorsing this Plan does not commit any future funding and any budget requirements will be subject to approval through the normal budget processes.*
- 4. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to write to DELWP noting Recommendations 1, 2 and 3.*

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to inform Council of the Integrated Water Management (IWM) Catchment Plans and Targets. These have been developed by the IWM Forums, established by the Victorian State government to identify, coordinate, and prioritise opportunities that would most benefit from collaborative water cycle planning and management.

This report recommends that Council endorse the IWM Plans as outlined in the Summary Plans for the Yarra River and Dandenong Creek Catchments in Attachments 1 and 2 respectively, and to support embedding relevant targets from the Plans into our future and actions, as appropriate.

BACKGROUND

Integrated water management (IWM) brings together the whole water cycle by making use of alternative water sources (such as rainwater, stormwater, or recycled water) for appropriate uses. IWM requires a collaborative approach to city planning and management and delivers environmental, social, and economic benefits. These include greener, cooler cities that are more resilient to floods, droughts, and heat waves. IWM also delivers healthier waterways, amenity, enhanced passive and active recreational opportunities, and improved community well-being.

The City of Monash has significant experience in this area with the delivery of over 250 Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) assets over the past 30 years and extensive revegetation and rehabilitation works along our waterways.

The Victorian Government also recognises the value of IWM in its strategic plan *Water for Victoria 2016*. As a result, IWM Forums were established for 15 major catchments across the state in 2017. The Forums enable collaboration between local governments, water corporations, catchment management authorities, the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA) and Traditional Owners.

The City of Monash is located within the Dandenong Creek and Yarra River Catchments (Figure 1) and participates in these two IWM Forums.

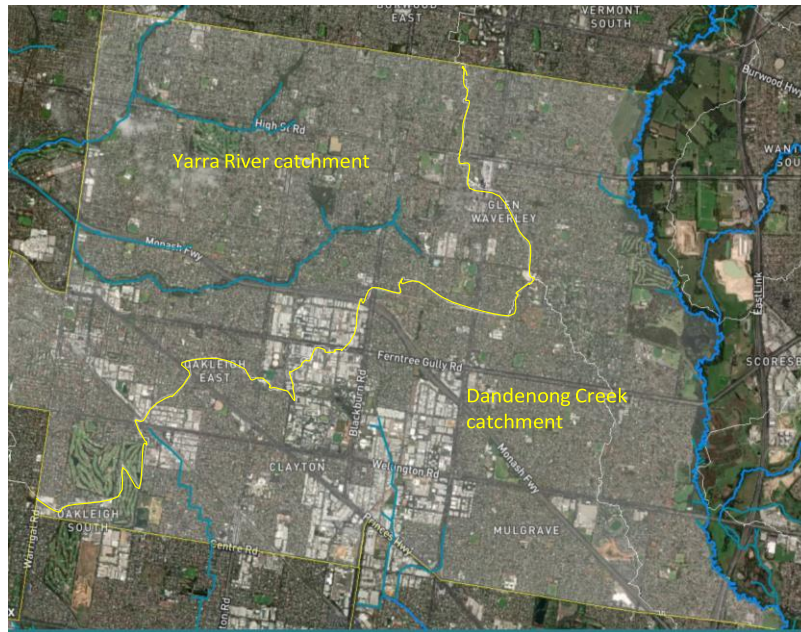


Figure 1 City of Monash with major waterways and division between the Yarra River and Dandenong Creek catchments delineated by a yellow line. Sourced from Melbourne Water and modified.

DISCUSSION

Catchment Scale IWM Plans have been collaboratively developed by the Forum partners and are underpinned by rigorous scientific analysis and evidence (Attachments 1 and 2). These set out measures to assess progress towards the vision and 7 strategic outcomes for the catchment (Appendix A). To guide strategic investment, targets have been set for each catchment for 2030 and 2050.

The targets will deliver alternative water sources to support the sportsgrounds, golf courses, parks, gardens, reserves, and street trees of Monash. This increases the water supply security and climate-resilience of our green spaces and will help to keep them functioning and welcoming spaces in periods of extreme heat and water restrictions.

Forum members work together to identify on-ground projects and initiatives to deliver the strategic outcomes for the catchment. It is recognised that the applicability of the targets and capacity for organisations to work towards the targets will differ. The targets are also highly interconnected, so that progress towards one will invariably progress multiple targets.

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) have asked Forum partners to endorse the Catchment Plans and Targets. . It is expected that relevant indicators and targets will be included in Forum Partner organisational strategies, plans and processes that contribute to the delivery of IWM outcomes, as and when they are due for review.

To date water authorities, VPA and most Council members have provided their endorsement, with several others seeking endorsement through Council processes.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

While the IWM Targets are more ambitious and quantitative in nature than Councils existing Strategies, the Catchment Plans and Targets do align and deliver on the aspirations and actions of multiple Monash strategies, building upon work that we are already doing, including supporting the:

- ‘Garden City Character’ vision in the *Monash Council Plan* and *Municipal Strategic Statement*
- Principles in the *Monash Open Space Strategy (2018)* to provide high quality, environmental protection, and sustainability in public open space management
- Diverse flora and fauna, leafy and shady streets and parks, green corridors, canopy cover and mature trees outlined in the *Monash Urban Landscape and Canopy Vegetation Strategy 2018* and *Street Tree Strategy 2016*.
- Strategic approach, best practice water management and enhanced community understanding in IWM; a priority area within the *Environmental Sustainability Strategy (ESS) 2016-2026*.
- Actions and targets in the *Water Saving Feasibility Study (2019)* including reducing reliance on potable water for irrigation and increased use of passive irrigation, stormwater harvesting and Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD).
- *Stormwater Asset Management Plan* via stormwater retention and detention, which reduces runoff volume and peak flows.

HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

The proposal is not expected to impact negatively on any human rights.

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

IWM delivers benefits to the community by improving the health and amenity of our green and blue spaces, thus promoting physical recreation

and mental wellbeing. By supporting the tree canopy and urban cooling, IWM may also improve the accessibility of services and activity centres to the community during summer, particularly for the very young and elderly. Promoting walking and neighbourhood exploration may also foster community connection.

GENDER EQUITY ASSESSMENT

A gender impact assessment has not been undertaken on this policy at this time. This will be reconsidered for individual IWM projects.

CONSULTATION

No public consultation has yet been undertaken by the Forums on the IWM Plans, but the Strategic Directions Statements have been released.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

It is recognised that collaboration and co-funding will be vital to fund and deliver projects. Partnerships with water authorities, other government agencies and, where appropriate, private organisations (such as golf courses) will be sought. There are several Grant programs available, including an upcoming Grant program exclusively for Forum members, Melbourne Water's Liveable Communities, Liveable Waterways Program and potentially through partners such as South East Water.

Some targets will be partly delivered through the private sphere, such as through the application of existing planning controls on developments for stormwater management. Certain targets do not have significant associated costs as they relate to capacity building or processes. The Water Authorities also bear significant responsibilities to deliver against many of the Targets.

A cost assessment and full funding plan are yet to be developed, but DELWP are commencing this now through the collaborative development of Action Plans. We note the critical importance of this work. While we can adapt our processes and existing projects to contribute towards some targets, significant external funding will be required to deliver infrastructure such as stormwater harvesting systems. These concerns have been communicated to DELWP.

CONCLUSION

Monash has a demonstrated history in Integrated Water Management. The IWM Forums allow us to better leverage the collaboration and funding opportunities available to deliver best practice water management, improve the health of our valued waterways, and future-proof our green public open spaces. It is recommended that Council endorse the IWM Catchment Plans so that we can continue on the journey alongside other metropolitan and regional Councils in Victoria.

APPENDIX A – STRATEGIC OUTCOMES AND MEASURES

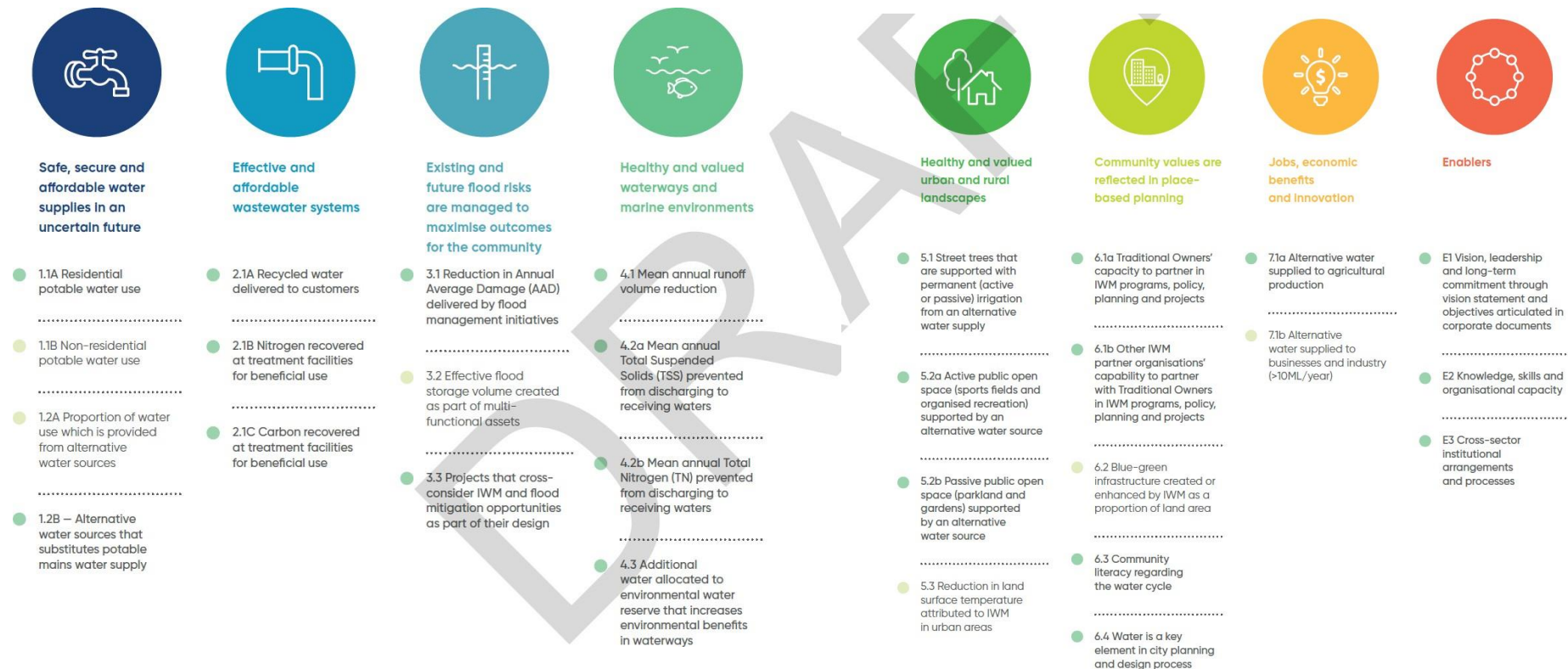


Figure A1 The Strategic Outcomes and Measures from the IWM Catchment Plans. The measures include leading (green dots) and lagging (pale green dots) indicators. 2030 and 2050 Targets have only been set for leading measures.