

Melbourne Water is the waterway and flood plain manager for the region

Under the **Water Act 1989**, Melbourne Water is the designated caretaker of river health and the flood and drainage manager for the Port Phillip and Westernport region.

Under the **Planning and Environment Act 1987** Melbourne Water is a statutory referral authority for planning applications that may affect waterways.

Under the **Environment Protection Act 1970 and State Environment Protection Policy, Waters of Victoria**, Melbourne Water has a role in managing water quality in individual waterways and protecting Port Phillip Bay and Western Port.

Waterway & drainage services provided by Melbourne Water

Waterways and drains in the Port Phillip and Westernport catchments are critical to the life and liveability of all who inhabit the region.



Melbourne Water manages rivers, creeks and estuaries across the region, protecting and enhancing the ecological health, use and amenity values of these systems.



Melbourne Water protects people from flooding in new growth areas, and manages existing flood risks and community safety across the region.



Our region covers 12,800 km² of catchment area and we manage:

- 8,400 kms waterways
- 442 waterways treatment systems and wetlands
- 1,500km of major drains
- 30 estuaries
- 221 retarding basins
- 197 kms levee banks
- 22 pump stations
- 10 tidal gates
- 160 urban lakes

Our Key Challenges

Our biggest challenges in delivering the benefits from our waterways and drainage services are climate change and urban and rural development.

Past development of Melbourne and surrounding rural areas has resulted in:

- 130,000 properties at risk of flooding, 15,000 of these above floor level.
- 56% waterways in a poor or very poor condition and only 5% in good condition



Addressing these legacy issues will take considerable time and effort.

This development provides many benefits but unless the runoff from these newly developed areas is managed appropriately it will degraded waterway health and expose more properties and infrastructure to flood risks.



Climate Change is expected to increase extreme events such as fire, floods and drought. These events will damage river condition and expose more people to flood risks impacting on the waterway and floodplain services we provide.

Our Strategies

We have 3 key strategies which outline how we plan to maintain and improve flood protection and the health of waterways.

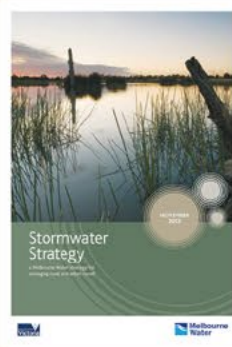
The strategies were developed in consultation with the community and key stakeholders.

They set out clear and agreed Levels of Service.



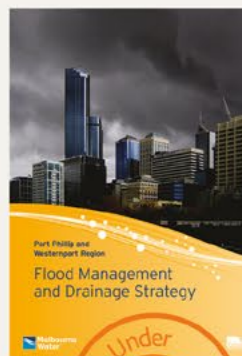
Healthy Waterways Strategy

Vision: Healthy and Valued waterways are integrated with the broader landscape and enhance life and liveability.



Stormwater Strategy

Vision: Sustainable stormwater management supports prosperous communities, thriving landscapes and healthy waterways and bays.



Flood Strategy

Vision: Together we are aware, responsive and resilient.

Communities, business and government understand flooding, plan for challenges and take action to manage risks.



Our Programs and Activities



- We protect and enhance the environmental condition of waterways through management of vegetation, creation of fish passage and provision of environmental flows
- We stabilise streams where erosion is threatening critical built and natural assets (eg rock beaching of banks)
- We clean up pollution events to minimise environmental impacts
- We improve access, use and visual amenity of waterways
- We construct and maintain regional wetlands, sediment ponds and litter traps to improve quality of water for waterways and the bays.



- We provide flood warning information to improve community preparedness for floods.
- We provide information around flood risks to properties and put conditions on developments to minimise or avoid flood damage and safety risks.
- We maintain and repair the regional drainage network (e.g. by removing blockages) so it can carry stormwater away when we have heavy downpours and reduce the risk of flooding.
- We build pipes, retarding basins and other infrastructure to reduce the risk of property damage from large flood events in high risk areas.

Melbourne Water has a strong focus on building awareness, skills and capacity of community, land managers and other organisations around waterway health and flood management.

Melbourne Water also invests in research, monitoring and evaluation to ensure continual improvement and optimisation of programs.



We apply Best Practice standards for new development to protect people from flooding and minimise impacts on the health of waterways



We work with local government, land managers and other stakeholders to manage both urban and rural stormwater impacts (flooding and waterway health) higher up in the catchment

Our Price Submission



Our charge is reviewed every 5 years and we are preparing a Price Submission which will be submitted to the Essential Services Commission at the end of this year.

This will set our price and investment for the period 2016/17 to 2020/21

We need to better understand the services our customers value most and what they are willing to pay for.

To better understand this we will be surveying over 1000 customers on the services they want, what they cost and importantly how much they are willing to pay.



The Waterways Management Survey will also be open to everyone across the region and will provide us with valuable input into how we shape our services and programs over the next 5 years.

As a valued stakeholder we encourage you to use this survey as a way of inputting into our price submission.

Based on feedback we will develop an Investment Plan which will underpin our Price Submission to the Essential Services Commission.



Drainage Services

Where flooding does occur, Melbourne Water is seeking to understand how best to direct its efforts to reduce the impact of flooding and flood risks to the community.

People understand the risk of flooding

Currently we share flood risk information through Planning Schemes and provide on request and for purchase flood level information for individual properties. We also provide limited support to public education, delivered via the SES, councils and other agencies

We could cut the service back to the provision of basic flood information
OR
We could go further and make our information more accessible and expand our education programs.

We could focus on river level forecasts only
OR
We could extend new automatic warning systems into more high risk areas

Good flood warning Systems

Currently we provide river level forecast information along 7 major waterways. We are also trialling automatic flash flooding warning systems for home owners in 2 high risk areas.

Reduce the risk of property damage from flood or storm water

Currently we are investing in mitigation works to reduce the flooding impacts for 2,000 properties in extreme risk communities

We could minimise our investment in building new flood reduction infrastructure
OR
We could increase our investment in risk mitigation solutions that reduce the impacts of flooding.

To advise us on your preferences in relation to flood management you can comment on the draft Flood Strategy and/or undertake the Waterways Management Survey.

Further details can be found at www.pricereview.melbournewater.com.au/waterways-and-drainage-services



Melbourne Water manages the major drainage system that connects local drains with rivers, creeks and the bays.

Melbourne currently has a good overall level of flood protection and a high quality drainage system.

Melbourne Water manages 1,500 km of major drains and 8,400 kilometres of rivers and creeks that flow into Port Phillip Bay or Western Port. This includes maintaining these systems in good working order and generating information about areas that may be affected by flooding. Melbourne Water also designs new drainage systems in growth areas and some established areas, helps to educate people about flood risks, and responds to extreme events when they occur.

Flooding is a natural occurrence and not all flooding can be prevented. There are significant flood risks in some locations affecting homes, businesses, and public infrastructure.

Waterway Services

Melbourne Water is seeking to understand how best to direct its efforts to improve the value of waterways.

Better access and use of our land and waterways

Currently we focus on improving the environmental condition of waterways while encouraging other land managers such as local government and Parks Victoria to provide access and recreational opportunities.

We could reduce our support to land managers around improving access and recreation along waterways
OR
We could increase our support and directly invest in improving access and use of our waterways.

Melbourne Water manages the regions rivers, creeks and estuaries

Melbourne has 8,400km of waterways, around 30 estuaries and many natural and constructed wetlands. Waterways support diverse aquatic ecosystems and provide important ecosystem services that are critical to Melbourne's liveability.

Melbourne Water is responsible for protecting and enhancing waterway condition. The growth of Melbourne, its suburbs and outer regions over the past 200 years has left many waterways in a degraded state and returning our waterways to a better condition will take considerable time and effort.

Melbourne Water's management activities have focused on maintaining and improving the condition of rivers and creeks to support 7 key values: amenity, birds, fish, frogs, macroinvertebrates, platypus and vegetation.



Greater protection of the ecological condition of our waterways

We could focus on just maintaining the current ecological condition
OR
We could invest more in improving the ecological condition of more than the current 25% of waterways.

Improving the value of urban waterways

Improving the value of urban waterways

Currently we invest in urban waterways to maintain existing amenity values or protect remnant environmental values.

We could reduce our investment to just provide basic maintenance requirements or urban assets
OR
We could increase our investment to revitalise the amenity and environmental value of some urban streams.

To advise us on your preferences in relation to our waterway condition services please fill out the Waterways Management Survey.

Further details can be found at www.pricereview.melbournewater.com.au/waterways-and-drainage-services