

Project 5.1

Effectiveness of alternative community engagement strategies

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This project will in understanding how Melbourne Water's waterway management teams can best engage the community, including whether different approaches may be needed in different parts of our region. Will identify patterns of socio-institutional variability at practical scales and link these patterns through testing to establish a toolbox of effective engagement methods.

Outcomes for waterway management: An engagement toolbox will be designed as an easy-to-access facility that Waterways officers can put to use when planning and implementing projects.

Details: How best can Melbourne Water's Waterways team engage the community? Should our engagement methods differ across the region? Social research indicates that they should, but how and to what extent can Melbourne Water design engagement methods with confidence that they will be effective across the region? This research aims to address these questions through a dedicated PhD project by identifying patterns of socio-institutional variability at practical scales and linking these patterns through testing to establish a toolbox of effective engagement methods. This toolbox will be designed as an easy-to-access facility that Waterways officers can put to use when planning and implementing projects.

The important deliverables of this project are:

1. **Profiling three distinct project communities:** Using census, social atlas and student-gathered data, a profile of each community that is connected to a proposed Melbourne Water project will be created. Each profile will identify the important factors for engagement that are a distillation of comprehensive social variables. *This understanding will inform Melbourne Water on the community settings for which engagement will be necessary.*
2. **Creating an engagement toolbox for Melbourne Water:** Drawing from the profiles and other sources (such as social marketing tools), an engagement toolbox will be created that will identify the effective engagement tools to select against predefined community criteria that are easily sought by a project manager within Melbourne Water. *This work will be particularly important for implementing new projects which are integrated by nature.*
3. **Trial a deliberative process as part of a Melbourne Water project:** With such a toolbox in mind, a deliberative process will be run with Melbourne Water's project team to demonstrate how the community can work alongside the business. An integrated water project would be carefully selected that can most representatively reveal the effects of such an exercise. *Deliberative processes are considered necessary for integrated project investigations using the*

project summary



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