



Project Summary

Project 5.4 Community participation in waterway protection and restoration

Over the past 20 years, there has been a dramatic increase in community participation in waterways management, including participation in environmental research, decision-making and management actions. For Melbourne Water, the drivers for supporting community participation in waterways management include: i) harnessing and developing community knowledge and skills; ii) enhancing community awareness and education in relation to waterways management; iii) creating conversations about priorities for waterways; and iv) improving acceptance and legitimacy of management decisions and actions.

Project 5.4 is a program of social science research projects led by Dr. Stephanie Lavau (University of Melbourne) and Dr. Peter Morison (Melbourne Water). The starting point for this research is the acknowledgement that waterways management is facilitated and informed by various forms of community participation.

Aim

To support Melbourne Water in evaluating the opportunities and outcomes afforded by community partnerships in supporting healthier waterways

Research Methods

Project 5.4 is comprised of four research sub-projects (listed below) and a component to develop a research framework for Theme 5 for stage 2 of the Waterway Partnership. The primary methodology used across the 4 Sub-Projects, are volunteer interviews and focus group discussions, which will be undertaken by post-graduate students and project staff. Project 5.4 will also be used to inform the development of an application for an Australian Research Council Linkage Grant in the second half of 2018.

Sub-projects:

1. Engaging communities with “catchment thinking” in an urban environment*.

Explores the potential for improving citizen understandings of the city as a catchment, in order to drive practices related to integrated water management that support healthier urban waterways.

2. Community perceptions of ephemeral waterways in Melbourne's north-west

Documenting the ways in which the local community interact with and perceive the waterways in their present and potential forms.

3. Improving community engagement through volunteer work on waterways *

Examining the motivations, contributions and experiences of volunteers, in order to sustain their participation over the long term and identify the

* A Sub-Project Summary is available
at MWRPP.org

value of volunteers to organisations such as Melbourne Water.

4. Measuring social benefits of river restoration and waterway improvement works

Investigating the range of social outcomes arising from river restoration and other waterway improvement works and preparing a framework for recording and measuring social outcomes from river restoration and other waterway improvement works .

Project team

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