



Maribyrnong Catchment Collaboration -- Implementation Workshop 2

Co-delivering the Healthy Waterways Strategy

Date: 28 May 2019

Time: 9.30am-1.30pm

Venue: Medway Golf Club, Maidstone

Purpose of the workshop

The purpose of the workshop was to continue implementation planning by confirming how we will work together to create healthy waterways in the Maribyrnong catchment, and to identify priorities for discussion at the next forum(s). The workshop allowed for members of the catchment community to share information and lessons about existing collaborations in the catchment and to explore how they might work together across the region to implement the [Maribyrnong Catchment Program](#).

Who attended?

A total of **40 participants** representing 22 different organisations attended the workshop.

- 28 participants were external partners who represented a diverse array of groups including: councils, community and landcare groups, land owners, consultants, water retailers, industry groups, PPWCMA, Parks Victoria and DELWP.
- 12 participants from Melbourne Water helped support the conversations and provide catchment knowledge.

What happened?

Part 1: Setting the scene

Jesse Barrett (Team Leader, Maribyrnong at Melbourne Water) welcomed participants and shared his vision of success for the Maribyrnong catchment: members of the catchment community coming together to collaborate and create healthy waterways. He acknowledged the other catchments in the region who have also progressed their collaboration model and opportunities to learn from them.

Facilitator **Geoff Brown** explained that the purpose of the workshop was to explore how to collaborate in the future whilst remaining connected and engaged with the activities and targets needed to maintain healthy waterways in the region, and identify priorities for the next forum. Invited to connect with each other, participants noted that:

- although everyone is different there are shared goals and a desire to listen
- the program is still attracting new people to come in and participate
- there is value in creating a culture where we have visibility of what each other is doing and can share what we need help with.



Part 2: Building on existing collaborations

Three presentations highlighted existing successful collaborations in the catchment.

- **Nigel Corby** (Western Water) provided an update on the [Sunbury's Water Future Project](#). He shared how significant population growth in Sunbury is expected to have a serious impact on Jacksons Creek, the water supply options for the new precinct and the innovative community engagement process underway where a deliberative forum of 35 community members has been convened to collaboratively identify possible solutions to Sunbury's water future and report back to water authorities and the State government. The engagement process will provide valuable input to policy discussions, better and more integrated solutions for the precinct, and enable broader community engagement through knowledge building, empowerment and networking.



Geoff Brown noted that *'every good collaboration and good project can be traced back to conversations between people and the alliances that are generated'*.

- Damien Harrison** (Hume City Council) reflected on the Chain of Ponds Collaboration, where a group of stakeholders including community, water companies, and State and local governments came together with the vision to transform the Moonee Ponds Creek into an iconic waterway for Melbourne. He discussed how creating meaningful change required developing a new approach which included: a Memorandum of understanding signed by 15 organisations, securing funding for a collaboration lead, developing a prospectus that identifies strategic opportunities, establishing several working groups, developing a brand and building on where the energy is. He also recognised that a key to success was being committed to the process, forming relationships, building trust and having a platform where everyone can be heard and canvass ideas.



- Helen Kalajdzic** (Stanley Park Committee of Management) discussed Stanley Park (Mount Macedon) as an example of collaboration. She explained how after being in danger of subdivision 100 years ago, the community came together to purchase and care for Stanley Park. She highlighted how the park's committee of management works with a number of partners, state agencies and community volunteers to restore the park and through their work are discovering multiple species of flora and fauna and animal behaviour. Workshop participants identified that Helen's work contributes to the [Co-Designed Catchment Program for the Maribyrnong Catchment Region](#) and the [Biodiversity 2037 Strategy](#) through:



- Monitoring and evaluation
 - Maintaining vegetation quality
 - Weed management
 - Strength of collaboration and community that pulls everyone together, including new partners
 - Importance of protecting headwaters and flows
 - Demonstrating that it is possible to bring back biodiversity
 - Increasing community knowledge and awareness

Geoff then invited the participants to share other projects that involve collaboration currently occurring in the Maribyrnong catchment. Projects included:

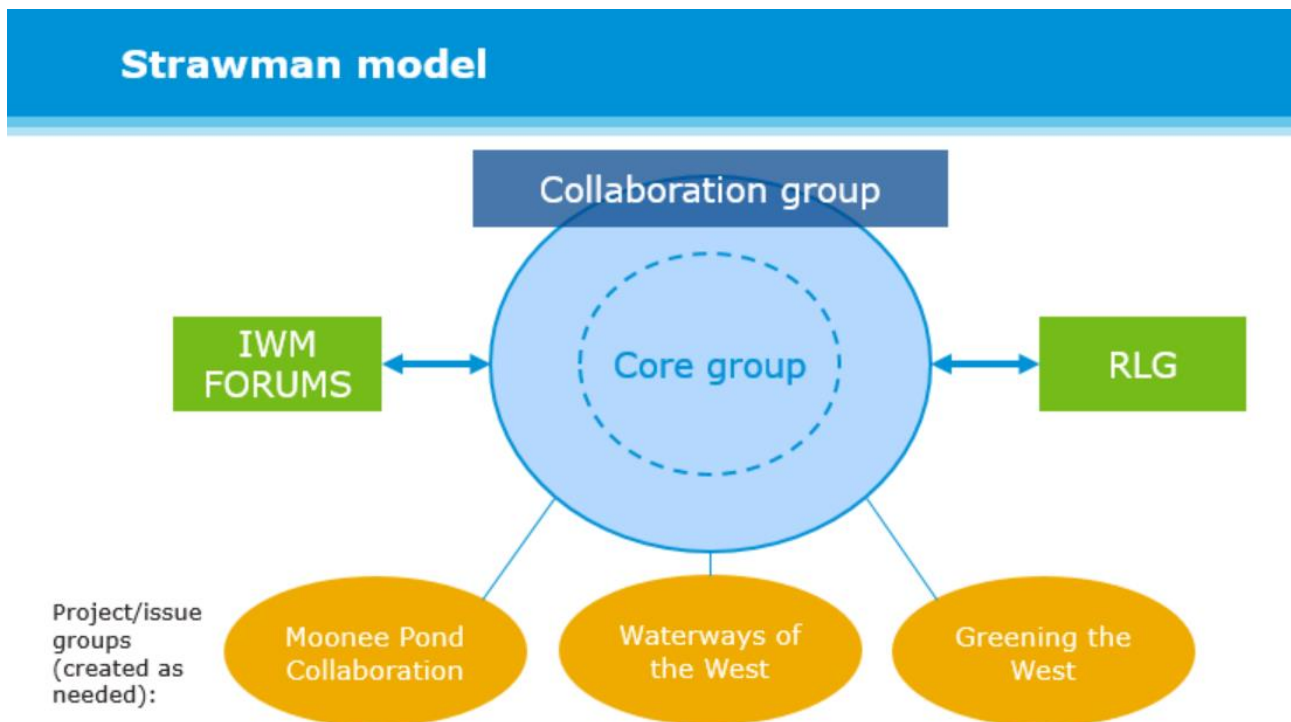
- Riparian work with neighbouring landholders as a Hume Envirochamp (Michael Howson)
- Working with landowners at a large scale in Darraweit Guim to protect remnant vegetation (Robert Hall)
- Maribyrnong Valley Connection Project Update (Simon Purves)
- Rehabilitation of the Stony Creek following on from the Footscray fire (Jesse Barrett)

The last project sparked a brief discussion about the possibility of retrofitting industrial estates with wetlands to prevent runoff from entering waterways untreated and how this would be a potential application of the precautionary principle.

Part 3: What is the preferred collaboration model for the Maribyrnong Catchment Program?

Rachel Lopes (Engagement Lead, Healthy Waterways Strategy, Melbourne Water) provided an update on where Melbourne Water is at in the implementation of the Strategy, including a draft Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting framework to be released end of the June and progress on the Waterways and Drainage Investment Plan, which will set Melbourne Water's investment in Waterways for 2021-26.

Jesse Barrett then presented a possible model for ongoing collaboration in the Maribyrnong catchment, which was based on the outcomes of the October 2018 workshop and the lessons learnt from the four other catchments.



He explained how the collaboration group is the voice and pulse of the Maribyrnong catchment, and how for the model to work well it needs for everyone to continue to come together and collaborate. He mentioned the important links to the IWM forum and the Region-wide Leadership Group (who has oversight of the Strategy). Jesse also detailed the functions and roles of collaboration partners and the principles of the model (see details in the document library).

Participants then discussed the concept of a core group, who would act as:

- a central point to convene views, keep track of progress and progress program;

- a connecting point to higher policy but also to local groups, i.e. a facilitator with access to points of influence (e.g. DELWP, EPA) and the power to convene and invite the right people to forums

They decided that:

- they would prefer to continue to meet as a whole of catchment group, three times a year with a solid agenda and a champion who can be the face of the collaboration
- the catchment group should be supported by a smaller coordinating team (or 'conduit group').

As a starting point, the coordinating team would comprise of about five people (each with a back-up person), include lower and upper catchment collaboration, be supported by Melbourne Water and:

- provide administrative assistance to organise the catchment forums (including setting the agenda)
- facilitate communication with local communities (including the gathering of local stories and mapping of projects)
- be in tune with the catchment needs and issues and critically think about solutions
- communicate priorities that come from forums / influence up
- be well connected and have the power to go out and engage diverse groups (e.g. VicRoads, farmers, etc.).

Geraldine Plas (Melbourne Water), Darren Coughlan (City West Water), Michael Howson (Land Owner), Simon Purves (Brimbank), Amanda Gauci (FEHMR), Michelle Wyatt (Macedon Ranges Shire Council), David Collins (Parks Victoria), Alex English (on behalf of the Chain of Ponds Collaboration) volunteered to join the Maribyrnong coordinating team.



As a final activity, **Geoff Brown** invited all participants to identify agenda items for the next forum. Top priorities were:

- **Cross collaboration:** how to best communicate with each other and involve/engage others / the broader group
- **Governance of waterways and management of extraction:** who is responsible for waterway management, oversubscribed water, illegal extraction
- **Funding and grant opportunities:** upcoming grants and/or funding sources
- **Show, share, ask:** having stakeholders showcase specific on ground results, identify gaps in monitoring and evaluation, and seek input and support from agencies
- **Healthy Waterways Strategy progress & updates:** showcasing updates on HWS targets.
- **Networking** (long coffee breaks)
- **Regional vs. local approaches (bottom-up):** accountabilities at all levels of government
- **Strategic priorities:** possible projects and collaborations, setting priorities together to target limited resources (vs. funding what is ready to go)



Part 4: Where to next?

Geraldine Plas provided an update on the Region-wide Leadership Group, stating that an interim region-wide leadership group had been set up and was considering input from the catchment forums and how best to connect with the forums.

Prachi Samir (DELWP) provided an update on Waterways of the West. She made reference to the Ministerial Advisors Committee (MAC) for government consideration of how to manage and protect waterways in Melbourne's west and to the community vision process. She stated that the discussion paper by the MAC with input of the vision will be available for public consultation in July/August, and announced that a community assembly had been convened to develop a vision.

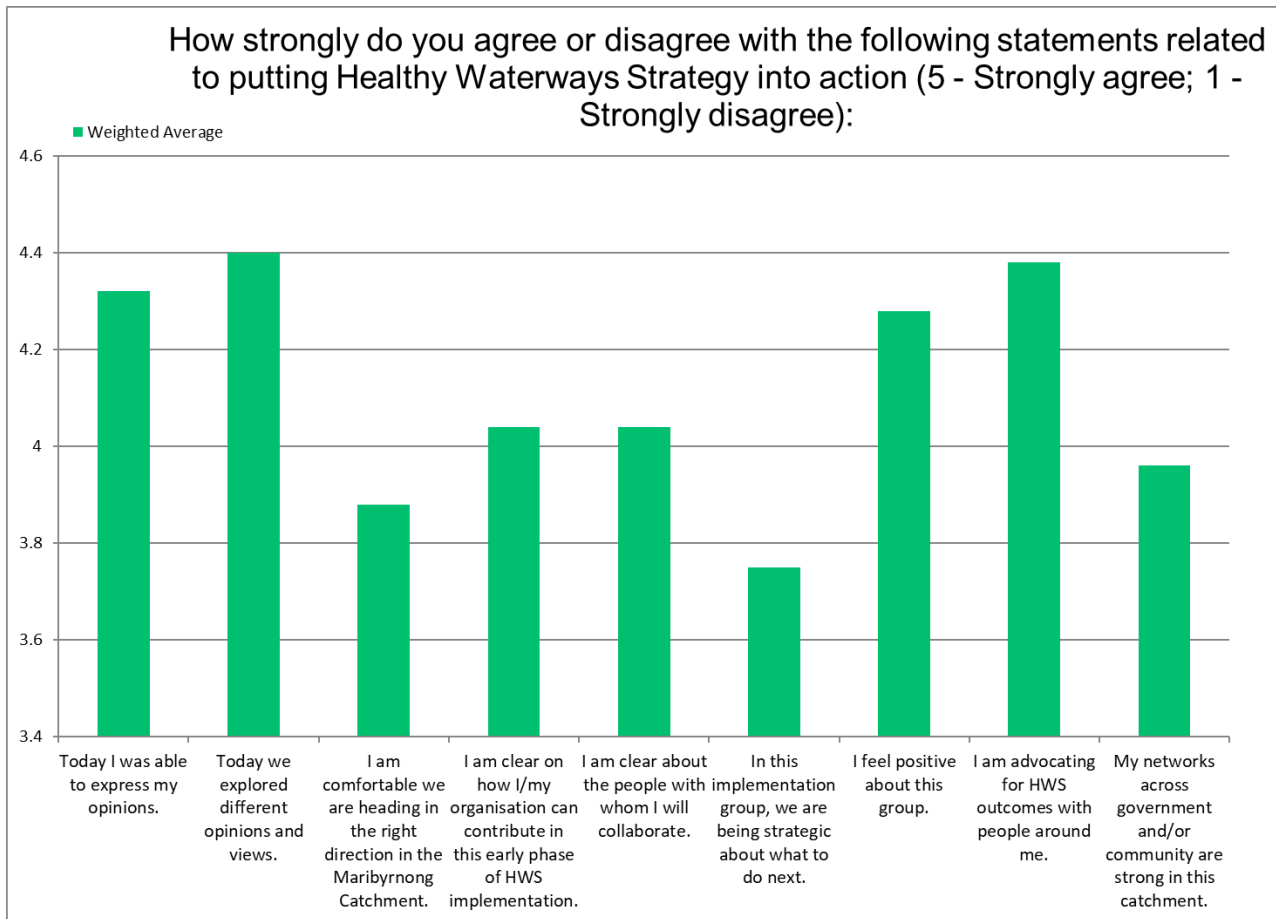
Jesse Barrett closed the workshop thanking participants and outlining next steps:

- Geraldine Plas to convene the core group to digest outcomes of today and start planning for next conversation.
- Region-wide Leadership Group meeting on Friday May 31st to progress terms of reference (more information to be available)
- Reporting framework (MERI) draft available for comments in June

Part 5: Evaluation from the sensing sheets

The workshop was evaluated to provide opportunity for ongoing learning. As a final action, participants completed a sensing sheet and provided comments on the design of the workshop and their experience of collaboration.

26 out of 40 attendees (65%) filled out the sensing sheets.



What did you enjoy about this workshop?

"It wasn't MW centric, other agencies and community groups have ownership"

"Networking, feeling connected to the big picture decisions of water health"

What could be improved for next time?

"Include a visual update of all the projects. Clarity on priorities"

"Reminder of the HWS targets and what needs to change at a strategic level"

"Showcasing the 'wins' stakeholders have had through a presentation - specifically showcasing on ground outcomes"

What could you/your organisation be doing more of to meet the targets in the Maribyrnong Catchment Program?

"Improvement in advocacy to get planning improvements"

"Promoting community participation in awareness and care of the waterways"

"Continue to look for opportunities via collaboration to maximise similar objectives: as many stakeholders as possible benefit"

For more information about creating healthy waterways together please visit

<https://yoursay.melbournewater.com.au/healthywaterways>