

# Edgars Creek and Edwardes Lake Task Force

Report 2022



*Figure 1: Edgars Creek/Edgars wetland*

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# 1. Background

The Task Force is a partnership between water authorities, Traditional Owners, community groups and local government to coordinate and advance initiatives with the purpose to:

Enable and inspire the transformation of the Edgars Creek and Edwardes Lake with a whole of catchment approach to:

- improve water quality,
- build flood resilience; and
- enhance the natural environment.

Water monitoring shows that the water quality at Edwardes Lake is poor, which has been the result of a combination of factors throughout the past few decades including the challenges of climate change, industrialisation, urban densification and stormwater pollution across the Edgars Creek Catchment.

By endorsing the Darebin Council Plan 2021 -2025 and the Darebin Nature Plan 2021-2025, Darebin City Council made a commitment to establish and lead a Water Quality Task Force in partnership with Traditional Owners, government agencies, water authorities and community groups.

## 1.1 Members

The Task Force was officially established in January 2022 with the establishment of a collaboration agreement (Appendix 1) which sets out the direction, aims and objectives for the Task Force. The members consist of agencies and community groups who are actively engaged in water improvement initiatives across the Edgars Creek and Edwardes Lake Catchment:

- Friends of Edwardes Lake
- Friends of Merri Creek
- Friends of Edgars Creek
- Merri Creek Management Committee
- Reservoir Frogs Waterwatch Group
- Yarra Valley Water
- Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation
- Melbourne Water
- Environment Protection Authority
- Merri-bek City Council
- Darebin City Council



## Edgars Creek and Edwardes Lake Task Force

The Task Force is a partnership between local government, Traditional Owners, water agencies and community organisations to coordinate and advance initiatives that significantly improve the environmental health of Edgars Creek and Edwardes Lake with the purpose to:

- improve water quality,
- build flood resilience; and
- enhance the natural environment

### OUR OBJECTIVES ARE TO:

#### Environment: caring for Country

- Improve habitat, ecological connectivity and the natural values of the waterway.
- Increase indigenous vegetation
- Reduce the impact of flooding and stormwater pollution to enhance waterway health.

#### Communities: connecting people to the waterway

- Inspire and enable diverse communities to reduce stormwater pollution and actively care for the waterway.
- Recognise and raise awareness of Indigenous cultural heritage and Traditional Owner values of water

#### Catchment: aligning our effort and impact

- Improve collective understanding and management of water across the catchment.
- Identify and advocate for new initiatives across the catchment for a cleaner, healthier and cooler catchment.
- Create a shared story and vision which inspires collective impact and resourcing.



## 2. The Launch of the Task Force

The Task Force was launched at the 'Our Water Story' community event on the 23rd of October 2022 as part of National Water Week to:

- Raise awareness of biodiversity that rely on health waterways and live in the local area
- Inform people about the task force and its purpose and ambitions
- Celebrate Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung connection with Country
- Raise awareness about the water quality and empower the community to take action within the catchment.

The event was designed to showcase and celebrate Edgars Creek and Edwardes Lake, with the chance to meet some of the animals that depend on the waterways. The event attracted over 150 people throughout the day who participated in the following activities:

- Smoking ceremony, water ritual and welcome to Country
- Experiential education of native turtles, native fish and macroinvertebrates.
- Meet and greet with the Darebin Gardens for Wildlife guides
- Introduction to iNaturalist a citizen science online tool
- Story sharing to understand the community's connection with the waterways and aspirations.



Figure 2: Uncle Ringo and Mayor Messina during the water ceremony.



Figure 3: Uncle Ringo during the smoking ceremony

## 3. Projects Underway

There have been a variety of water quality improvement projects undertaken by various organisations & committees of the Edgars Creek and Edwardes Lake Task force. These water quality improvements have direct positive impacts on the Edgars Creek Catchment. These projects further strengthen the need for a collaborative approach to addressing the catchment water quality outcomes.

### 3.1 Dole Reserve Stormwater Harvest Wetland

This Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) project is designed to treat and harvest stormwater from within the catchment for reuse as irrigation at Donath and Dole Reserve. It could redirect 25ML of stormwater per year to irrigate 7 sports ovals. The stormwater treatment wetland provides habitat for aquatic species and a place for our communities to enjoy with access to a boardwalk. The project was led by Darebin City Council with significant funding and support from Melbourne Water.

The project includes:

- 3 underground storage tanks with 2.5ML capacity. A fourth tank is a buffer tank to treat dirty water.
- A stormwater wetland
- Irrigation system for 7 sports ovals
- A Gross Pollutant Trap, stormwater pipes and pits
- A new boardwalk and footpath for community access
- Nutrients removed from the system:
  - Total Suspended Solids 105kg/yr.
  - Total Phosphorous 22.4 kg/yr.
  - Total Nitrogen 163 kg/yr.



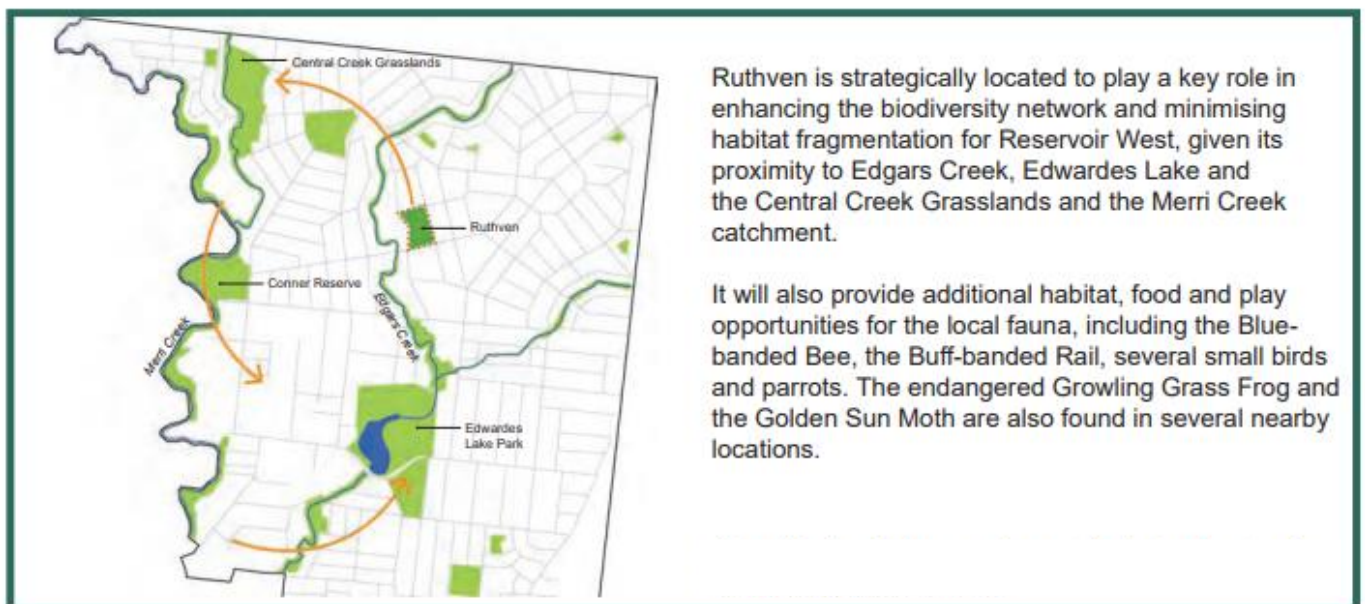
*Figure 4: Making room for underground storage during construction of the harvesting system at Dole Reserve Reservoir.*

## 3.2 New Stormwater Wetland Design

A new stormwater wetland is being designed within the Edgars Creek Catchment at the former William Ruthven Primary School site. The site is near to the Edgars Creek above Edwardes Lake.

The design phase is underway with jointly funded by Darebin City Council along with a \$50 000 grant from the DELWP Integrated Water Management Forum. Concept designs will be designed to address as many of the following outcomes:

- improve water quality
- flood mitigation
- increase biodiversity
- improve social connection



Ruthven is strategically located to play a key role in enhancing the biodiversity network and minimising habitat fragmentation for Reservoir West, given its proximity to Edgars Creek, Edwardes Lake and the Central Creek Grasslands and the Merri Creek catchment.

It will also provide additional habitat, food and play opportunities for the local fauna, including the Blue-banded Bee, the Buff-banded Rail, several small birds and parrots. The endangered Growling Grass Frog and the Golden Sun Moth are also found in several nearby locations.

Figure 5: The Ruthven site provides a stepping stone of green space for people and wildlife.

## 3.3 Waterway Harm Prevention Program

The EPA have planned a Waterway Harm Prevention operation for the industrial area of Thomastown. Modelling by the Healthy Waterways Strategy depicts the target area as susceptible to very low levels of stormwater conditions due to the high rates of directly connected impervious surfaces within the precinct. Runoff and contamination of Edgars Creek and connected catchments is therefore more likely to occur. This operation will focus on educating the operators of small to medium businesses in preventing harm to waterways from chemical spills and inappropriate waste management at industrial estates near Edgars Creek.

A total of 24 small to medium businesses in the Thomastown industrial estate will be inspected on 16 November 2022. During these inspections our officers will focus on:

- Spill containment in place
- Appropriate storage and stockpiling of goods.
- Cross connections between sewerage and stormwater.
- Emergency procedure for spills.
- Stormwater management and controls.
- Trade waste agreements in place where applicable.
- Fire risks have been identified
- Fire prevention controls in place and effective.
- Fire suppression and detection controls in place.
- Permission in correct location if required / correct permission in place

The following questions will be answered to better understand trends in behaviour and help improved the approach for the next operation:

- Were there premises showing non-compliance? If so, why? (e.g., lack of knowledge etc.).
- Can you identify trends in industry type and level of (non) compliance?
- What did not go as planned?
- How do you think this approach could be improved?

The proposed outcomes are:

- Improved compliance with legislative duties.
- Controls in place to prevent harm to Victoria's waterways.
- Controls are in place for other priority harms such as fire prevention and suppression/detection
- Ensure site has correct permission (such as a licence, permit or registration) in place and waste tracker is being used if required. Waste Tracker is the system to track reportable priority waste. This system replaces waste transport certificates. Waste Tracker allows EPA to see the handling of waste around the state in real time. This information will allow EPA to see any unusual activity and help compliance work.



*Figure 6: Target area for Waterway Harm Prevention Program in Thomastown*

## 3.4 Improving Habitat and Connectivity

Darebin's Rewilding project has combined efforts from Darebin City Council, Friends of Edwardes Lake, Friends of Edgars Creek, Merri-bek City Council and Melbourne Water to create significant revegetation projects across the Edgars Creek Catchment to improve biodiversity, limit erosion, improve natural water filtration processes.

Restoration projects completed in 2022:

- Establishment of new vegetation areas at Edgars Creek wetland
- Edwardes Lake Park beneath established trees as well as new patches of revegetation and within riparian areas.
- Riparian areas between Broadhurst Ave and Glasgow Ave
- Along the banks of Edgars Creek south of Henty Street and south of Carrington Rd

Multiple planting days were hosted by Friends of Edgars Creek with a total of 3340 plants planted along the riparian areas of the creek. The Darebin City Council Natural Resource Management Team contributed to 1500 plants along the Edgars catchment area. Merri-bek City Council consolidated 1000 plants along the lower reach of the Edgars Creek.

Twelve community planting days were hosted by the Friends of Edwardes Lake and Darebin City Council which saw a total of 19000 plants in the ground. Bee hotel workshops, frog habitat workshops, weekly weeding and litter collection were all different events hosted by the Friends of Edwardes Lake. Two bee hotels were constructed in the Edwardes Lake and Edgars Creek wetland. In total more than 160 different people joined the community events.

Additional revegetation within the Edgars Creek Catchment through the Rewilding Darebin program included 5000 plants at Allan Street reserve to protect the steep slope, reduce erosion and establish habitat to enhance biodiversity.

The combination of works has seen over 30,000 new indigenous plants within the Creek Catchment





Figure 7: Community engagement Edgars creek



Figure 8: Community participation in Bee hotel workshop Edwardes Lake



Figure 9: Biodiversity Enhancement planting Edwardes lake



Figure 10: Reservoir Joeys looking at water bugs Edgars creek

### 3.5 Litter Collection & Reduction

Friends of Edwardes Lake have coordinated weekly litter collection by inviting the community to help. Over 43,572 pieces of litter has been collected throughout the year. LitterWatch has been used to map and record data to provide a snapshot of litter. For more information visit

[https://map.litterwatchvictoria.org.au?view=23045\\_571abf7](https://map.litterwatchvictoria.org.au?view=23045_571abf7)

Figure 11: Litter collected and recorded by Friends of Edwardes Lake

Friends of Edwardes Lake*	
Total of 43,572 pieces of litter collected	
Total of 53 Participants	
Total of 3 sets of litter data entered into the LitterWatch Portal	
<b>Top 5 items</b>	
Unidentifiable Soft Plastic remnants / fragments	8157+2500 =10,657
Cigarette butts	8,022
Paper napkins	5,058
Food wrappers (metallic + chips)	1,904
Aluminium Cans	1233

\*at the time of publishing, Friends of Edwardes Lake had not uploaded all their 2022 litter data into the LitterWatch Vic portal

### 3.6 Community Water Monitoring

The Waterwatch (WW) program is funded by the City of Darebin's Climate Emergency and Sustainable Transports Team and supported by Merri Creek Management Committee and the Friends of Edwardes Lake.

Waterwatch is a community citizen science education and engagement program connecting local communities with river health and sustainable water management issues.

Through Waterwatch, local residents of Darebin are supported and encouraged to become actively involved in the monitoring, conservation and protection of local waterways. All water testing kits, training and safety information is provided.

In 2022 the following education sessions were delivered at Edwardes Lake:

- Reservoir Joeys water testing and water bugs sessions 10 & 31 March 2022 (30 participants)
- Discovering the Frogs of Edwardes Park Lake event (36 participants) 21 April 2022
- East Preston Islamic School litter clean up at Edwardes Lake (44 participants) 31 May 2022
- Creating Frog habitat workshop (25 participants) 5 August 2022

In addition to the sessions above, Waterwatch supported the Reservoir Frogs WW group, who test a range of water quality parameters monthly on the Edgars Creek, just before it reaches Edwardes Lake. Their site details are below. The results from 2022 appear in Figure 15.

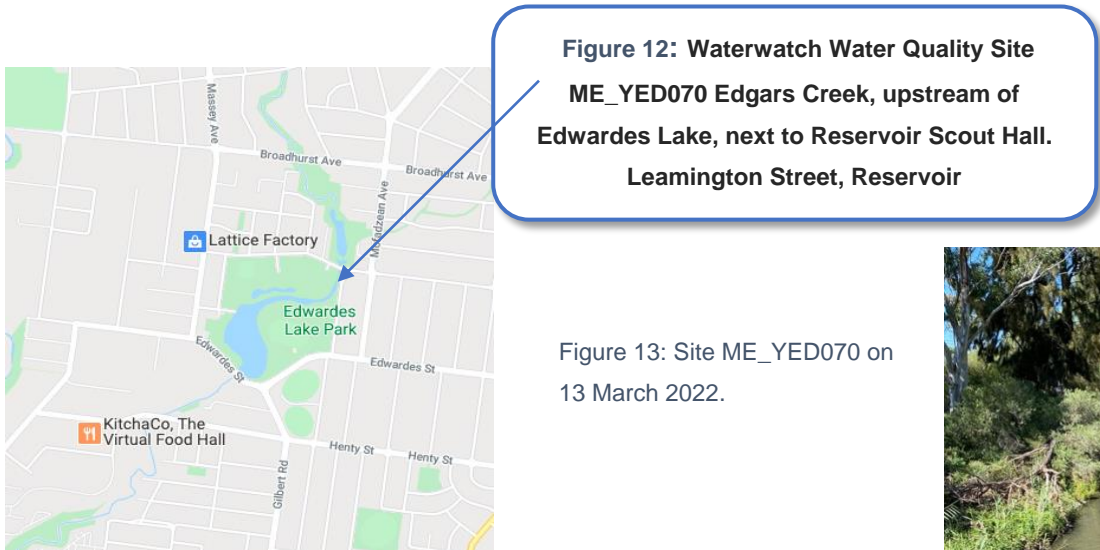


Figure 13: Site ME\_YED070 on 13 March 2022.

The figures were assessed against the 2018 Environmental Quality objectives for urban streams (Environmental Reference Standards, or ERS objectives) in the Urban (highly modified) segment (Figure 14) which includes tributaries of the Yarra River. If the guidelines value for each parameter is exceeded regularly, this signals a water quality issue. The ERS objectives replace the State of the Environmental Protection Policy guidelines (SEPP).

Salinity in Edgars Creek at this site, represented by electrical conductivity (EC), varied between 308–1118  $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ . The ERS objective for this segment is below 500  $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$  for three quarters (or 75%) of Samples. If a measurement exceeds the objective, this signals a water quality issue. On nine visits out of ten (90% of visits), this limit was exceeded, indicating that either there is a problem with salinity in the creek or the creek may be naturally saltier than other creeks within this segment.

Ammonium levels were the highest in the summer months which usually relates to lower creek in-flows and less dilution from rainfall. Reactive phosphate results have a similar pattern, with higher results in the summer period, ranging between 0.00 and 0.30 mg/L. There are no ERS objectives for Reactive

phosphate, but the Waterwatch guidelines (Figure 16) categorize anything over 0.08 mg/L as being degraded and this was the case at Edgars creek for four out of ten visits.

The pH levels were generally stable ranging from 6.9-8.2 which fall within the ERS objectives of 6.4-7.9. On one occasion in October, the pH peaked at 8.2 which is above desired levels.

The Dissolved oxygen percentage fluctuated between 45% and 90% (out of a maximum of 130%). The ERS objectives have a range of 60% and above with a maximum of 130%. Six visits out of ten the results were not within these guidelines, suggesting poor levels of oxygen available for aquatic life in this part of the creek. Further investigation into installing riffles or other oxygenating strategies should be employed.

Turbidity levels ranged from 11-35 NTU. Four visits out of six resulted in 35 NTUs which is right on the edge of the ERS recommended limit of 35 NTU.

In conclusion, the water quality does indicate that there are pollution events from further upstream which do flow into the Edwardes Lake. The main areas of concern are sediment (turbidity) and nutrients, though looking over the WaterWatch date over a period of 10 years, the results are indicating a slight decrease in reactive phosphate. The possible reason for a slight decrease could be the introduction of wetlands on the Edgars Creek further upstream from this site which would have trapped some nutrients (and wetland plants using those nutrients).

The Reservoir Frogs WW group consistently collect data each month. Their annual summaries of this data can be accessed here: <https://www.mcmc.org.au/environmental-education/waterwatch/waterwatch-water-quality-summaries>

For all Waterwatch data collected from all over Victoria visit: [www.vic.waterwatch.org.au](http://www.vic.waterwatch.org.au)

Figure 14. Victoria's Environmental Quality Indicators. Edgars Creek falls under the Urban (highly modified) segment circled.

SEGMENT	ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INDICATOR												
	Total phosphorus (µg/L)		Total nitrogen (µg/L)		Dissolved oxygen (percent saturation)		Turbidity (NTU)	Electrical conductivity (µS/cm @ 25°C)		pH (pH units)		Toxicants Water	Toxicants Sediment
	75 <sup>th</sup> percentile	75 <sup>th</sup> percentile	25 <sup>th</sup> percentile	Maximum	75 <sup>th</sup> percentile	75 <sup>th</sup> percentile	25 <sup>th</sup> percentile	75 <sup>th</sup> percentile	75 <sup>th</sup> percentile	% protection			
<b>Urban (Highly modified)</b>													
Tributaries of Werribee and Maribyrnong Rivers	≤110	≤1,200	≤65	130	≤30	≤3,000	≤6.4	≤7.9	90	Low			
Lowlands of Dandenong Creek, Mornington Peninsula, Western Port catchment and tributaries of the Yarra River	≤110	≤1,300	≥70	130	≤35	≤500	≥6.4	≤7.9	90	Low			
<b>Riverine (Moderate to highly modified)</b>													
Lowlands of Kiewa, Ovens and Goulburn basins	≤55	≤800	≥75	130	≤25	≤500	≥6.4	≤7.5	95	Low			
Lowlands of Campaspe, Loddon, Avoca, Wimmera and Mallee basins	≤50	≤900	≥65	130	≤40	≤2,000	≥6.8	≤7.8	95	Low			
Lowlands of Glenelg, Hopkins, Portland and Corangamite and Millicent Coast basins	≤55	≤1,000	≥65	130	≤20	≤2,000	≥7.0	≤8.0	95	Low			

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2022 Water Quality Data, Reservoir Frogs Waterwatch Group ME_YED070												
Test Type	Units	9Jan	2Feb	13Feb	13Mar	11Apr	1May	12Jun	1Jul	21Aug	9Sep	2Oct
Ammonium	mg/L NH4+	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1	no data	0.0	0.0	0.02	0	0.07	0.06
Dissolved Oxygen mg/L	mg/L	4.0	6.0	7.0	6.0	no data	8.0	7.0	6	3	9	7
Temperature - WATER	° C	21.1	19.5	21.1	18.7	no data	14.6	10.8	11.2	11.8	12.8	15.6
Temperature - AIR	° C	19.5	17.1	26.6	25.6	no data	16.9	11.1	12.9	13.2	14.1	16.6
pH	pH Units	6.9	6.9	7.7	7.0	no data	7.4	7.9	7.3	7.7	7.7	8.2
Electrical Conductivity	µS/cm	787.0	768.0	1118.0	640.0	no data	308.0	710.0	896	646	751	808
Reactive Phosphate (mg/L)	mg/L P	0.3	0.0	0.1	0.1	no data	0.1	0.0	0.02	0.025	0.05	0.05
Dissolved Oxygen % Saturation	%	45.1	67.7	76.4	65.0	no data	78.7	63.3	55.0	30.0	90	75
Turbidity - NTU	NTU	11	19	35	30.0	no data	35	13	35	35	24	24

Figure 15: Monthly data collected by Reservoir Frogs Waterwatch group. Highlighted figures indicate higher than the 2018 Environmental Quality guidelines for urban streams.



## MELBOURNE WATERWATCH Water Quality Guidelines

PARAMETER	RATING				
	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	DEGRADED
CONDUCTIVITY ( $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ )	<100	100 - 250	250 - 500	500 - 750	>750
TURBIDITY (NTU)	<15	15 - 17.5	17.5 - 20	20 - 30	>30
DISSOLVED OXYGEN (% saturation)	>80 %	80-60%	60-50%	50-40%	<40 %
pH	6 - 7	5.5 - 6 or 7 - 8	8 - 8.5	5 - 5.5 or 8.5 - 9	<5 or >9
REACTIVE PHOSPHATE (mg/L)	<0.008	<0.02	<0.04	<0.08	>0.08

(Source: Victorian SOE report)

Figure 16: Waterwatch water quality guidelines



Figure 17: Water Monitoring Edwardes Lake



Figure 18: The Reservoir Frogs Waterwatch group monthly testing session on site.



Figure 19: Overview of recordings of iNaturalist in the Edgars creek Catchment Reservoir

This map taken from iNaturalist shows the many observations of flora and fauna made surrounding the Edgars Creek including 3,917 individual recorded species. This data revealed that there is significant biodiversity living within the catchment as follows:

- 325 different species identified:
  - 4 threatened species (*Dianella amoena*, *Anguilla australis*, *Carex tasmanica*, *Cullen tenax*)
  - 94 introduced species
  - 161 plant species
  - 70 insect species
  - 49 bird species
  - 15 fungi species
  - 5 mollusc species (all invasive)
  - 4 frog species
  - 4 mammal species



## Interesting observations



Figure 20: Rakali (*Hydromys chrysogaster*)



Figure 21: Tawny Frogmouth (*Podargus strigoides*)



Figure 22 : A soundrecording of the Growling Grass Frog was capture using iNaturalist (*Ranoidea raniformis* Photo by David Bryant)



Figure 23: Common Snake-necked Turtle (*Chelodina longicollis*)



Figure 24: Nankeen Night-Heron (*Nycticorax caledonicus*)

## 4. The Next Steps

All Task Force members were invited to take part in a survey to get a greater understanding of three projects that would support a coordinated approach and action plan to improve water quality within the Edgars catchment. The results showed that 50% of respondents chose a scoping and prioritization study at Edwardes Lake Park to identify feasible projects that would improve water quality and enhance the natural environment as their preferred option. 76% of respondents indicated that their organisation viewed it extremely important or somewhat important for a collaborative approach between Darebin City Council and their organisations in funding projects that would contribute to improvements in water quality in the Edgars Creek Catchment. Of the respondents 38% indicated that their organisation/committee would be interested in part funding a water quality improvement project.

This collaborative approach indicates that the establishment of the Edgars Creek and Edwardes Lake Task Force is contributing to improvements of the Edgars Creek catchment health and to establish ways to improve water quality in the catchment. The results from the survey will be strategically used to progress the work of the Edgars Creek and Edwardes Lake Task Force for the future.

This report highlights the vast array of work that is being undertaken by Darebin City Council, water authorities, Traditional Owners, community groups and local governments to coordinate and advance initiatives with the purpose to improve water quality, build flood resilience and enhance the natural environment. For the future, it is recognised that the development of a scoping and prioritization study will guide the decisions that will be made for future improvements to the Edgars Creek Catchment. This will also establish clear priorities to work towards.

# Appendix 1: Collaboration Agreement

## Edgars Creek and Edwardes Lake Task Force Collaboration Agreement

The Task Force is a partnership between water authorities, Traditional Owners, community groups and local government to coordinate and advance initiatives with the purpose to:

Enable and inspire the transformation of the Edgars Creek and Edwardes Lake with a whole of catchment approach to:

- improve water quality,
- build flood resilience; and
- enhance the natural environment.

### Members

The Task Force members are agencies that are actively engaged in water improvement initiatives across the Edgars Creek and Edwardes Lake Catchment that includes:

- Friends of Edwardes Lake
- Friends of Merri Creek
- Friends of Edgars Creek
- Merri Creek Management Committee
- Reservoir Frogs Water Watch Group
- Yarra Valley Water
- Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation
- Melbourne Water
- Environment Protection Authority
- Moreland City Council
- Darebin City Council

### Objective 1

#### Environment: caring for Country

- Improve habitat, ecological connectivity and the natural values of the waterway.
- Increase indigenous vegetation along waterway corridors.
- Reduce the impact of flooding and stormwater pollution within the catchment.

#### Potential measures of success

- Area of riparian margin revegetated
- Number of indigenous plants planted
- Reduction in litter
- Reduced pollutant load
- Reduced algal blooms in the Lake
- More naturalised flow regime
- Ongoing monitoring program that identifies pollution hot spots for a targeted education and enforcement program.

#### Priority for first 12 months

*Collect and collate a co-ordinated database to determine current water quality status, so that action orientated goals can be informed for 2023.*

*Measure for success: Ongoing monitoring program that identifies pollution hot spots for a targeted education and enforcement program*

## Objective 2

### Communities: connecting people to the waterway

- Work with our diverse communities to reduce stormwater pollution within business precincts, industrial zones and residential areas.
- Inspire and provide opportunities for people to actively care for the waterway throughout the catchment.
- Recognise and raise awareness of Indigenous cultural heritage and Traditional Owner values of water.

#### Potential Measures of success:

- Increased participation in community activities such as planting days, clean-up events, citizen science and environmental educational programs.
- Traditional Owner cultural and heritage values evident in design of new initiatives and land management projects.
- Active partnership and collaboration with the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation in project design and delivery.
- Increased community access and use of the Edgars Creek Corridor.
- Decrease in stormwater pollution events.

#### Priority for first 12 months

Host a community event to launch the work of the Taskforce and generate community interest and involvement.

## Objective 3

### Catchment: aligning our effort and impact

- Improve collective understanding and management of water across the catchment.
- Identify and advocate for new initiatives across the catchment for a cleaner, healthier and cooler catchment.
- Create a shared story and vision which inspires collective impact and resourcing.

#### Potential Measures

- Number of projects co-funded or co-delivered.
- On-going participation of partners in the Task Force.
- Reduced impacts of flooding.
- Decrease in annual pollution events at the Lake.
- Number of new Water Sensitive Urban Design assets across the catchment such as:
  - Stormwater treatment infrastructure
  - Water harvesting assets
  - Urban greening and cooling

#### Priority for first 12 months

Collect and collate an evidence base for the source of stormwater runoff and contaminants to inform priorities and strategies for impact in 2023.

## Governance Structure

The Task Force is led and hosted by Darebin City Council. The progress and activities of the Task Force will be reported to Council by the Task Force Lead Officer on a bi-annual basis.

Membership of the Task Force consists of a representative from each partner organisation. The representatives will strive to:

- Bring a 'whole of organisation' perspective.
- Communicate within their own organisations to brief, gather and consider information to contribute to decision making processes.
- Report back on funding contributions from the organisations that they represent.
- Seek out opportunities to co-design, co-fund and co-deliver initiatives through either budget bids, business cases or grant applications.
- Advise on strategic direction and priority setting.
- Support financial management processes (including researching funding opportunities and business cases).
- Contribute to decision making and direct action within their own organisation where necessary.
- Be considerate of each organisation's resources, circumstances, policies and strategic direction.



Figure 1: Diagram shows two-way communication, the structure and support of the Task Force.

## Contributions of Members

### Water agencies:

- Liaison with business customers
- Stormwater harvesting
- Fund citizen science programs
- Technical advice and support
- Flood mitigation opportunities

### Government agencies:

- Resources & coordination
- Access to field officers
- Stormwater network – flood monitoring and mapping
- Technical advice
- Enforcement
- Monitoring
- Promotion, communication and education
- Support and capacity building for volunteer groups
- Conduit between levels of government and other LGA's

### Community and Not-for-profit groups:

- Access to community members and events
- Citizen science initiatives
- Grant writing skills
- Action on the ground
- Advocacy
- Local scale knowledge including community and environmental contexts.
- On ground experience and observations

### Traditional Owners:

- Information and knowledge
- Cultural heritage management skills
- Land management skills.
- Cultural capacity building – ‘right design for Country’
- Project delivery opportunities

## Role of the Task Force

### Better coordination

Across the catchment there are many different land managers and agencies managing different parts of the water cycle. The task force brings together agencies to coordinate new initiatives that deliver multiple benefits to the community and the environment.

### Information & knowledge sharing

The Task Force enables knowledge and expertise to be shared between organisations to generate new ideas and solutions. Consolidation and better access to data and information across the catchment will enable each organisation to be better informed and make decisions that consider different elements of the catchment.

### Advocacy

A key role of the task force is to develop a shared vision and story of the Edgars Creek and Edwardes Lake to advocate and inspire aligned initiatives across different layers of government with our diverse communities.

### Seeking and allocating resources

The Task Force will be a mechanism for co-design, co-investment and co-delivery of new water initiatives. Funds will be sort on projects as they are prioritised through organisational budget bids and grant programs on a case by case basis. Projects may require own governance structure specific to the funding agreement.

### Reflection and learning together

With a process of reflection and learning, the Task Force can improve and persist to achieve measurable benefits in water management.

### Innovation and Prioritisation

Take an evidence-based approach to priorities and identify innovative projects within the catchment.

### Strengthening partnerships and embedding Traditional Owner knowledge

With active learning of Indigenous cultural knowledge; and by listening to and responding to Traditional Custodian leadership, the Task Force will seek meaningful partnerships to improve water management.

### **Resourcing**

Darebin City Council has appointed a Council officer who will take responsibility for providing executive support to the Task Force including provision of meeting agendas and minutes.

Funds for new initiatives will be sought on individual projects as prioritised through organisational budget bids and grant programs on a case by case basis.

Opportunities for co-funding will be sort based on a project's alignment with funding agencies priorities and grant opportunities.

### **Meetings**

- Meetings will be held quarterly at alternating where possible between virtual and in person meetings.
- Meetings will have a rotating chair.
- A quorum will be half of the voting Committee members plus one. In the absence of a quorum, a Chairperson may conduct the meeting for discussion purposes. Committees have no delegated authority to make decisions on behalf of Council, therefore any vote is on a position of recommendation to be made to Council if appropriate.
- Whilst voting on matters is expected to be uncommon a member must be in attendance (either virtually or in person) to vote.

### **Chairperson**

The chairperson's primary role is to facilitate the Task Force meetings and discussions. This entails ensuring that all parties are heard and that all participants demonstrate a shared value mind-set and constructive collaborative behaviours. The chairperson facilitates the identification and prioritisation of opportunities to be explored and ensures partners undertake prioritised actions.

A rotating chair will be determined by the Task Force. To begin with Cr Gaetano Greco will be the designated Chair.

### **Review Period**

This agreement should be reviewed after 2 years.

