

update

I love living here
So please protect our rivers & creeks™



Environmental flows and the Maribyrnong River Catchment



Melbourne Water continues to work with community partners to investigate environmental flows needed for a healthy Maribyrnong River. Establishing optimal environmental flows, the amount of water that needs to flow through the river at various times to keep it healthy, is a process that links community values with science.

Melbourne Water's Christine Hughes says that establishing healthy flows ensures that the plant and animal life that the river supports can be protected.



"We need to hear what the community values about the river," she explains. "We then incorporate those thoughts into the research to identify what flows are needed to support the life of the river. The values and the science are inextricably linked."

A breakthrough study of the river in 2005 and advice provided by a panel of community representatives plays a key role in Christine's work.

"We have three key considerations in the work we have done so far. One, it is about efficiently releasing water. Two, we need to ensure that the water used by the community is protected and, importantly, we need to acknowledge that for the river to be healthy it needs its share of water too."

Melbourne Water's rain gauge operators

At 9 o'clock every morning, in homes across the Port Phillip and Westernport region, a time-honoured ritual takes place: Melbourne Water's 360 private rain gauge operators check their gauges.

Melbourne Water's Paul Rasmussen oversees the findings from this hardy band of volunteers.

"There's a real sense of community among the operators," he says. "One gentleman has been with us for more than 50 years."

"We operate automated monitoring stations," explains Paul, "but readings provided by the volunteers enhances that data. Getting the most accurate picture of rainfall patterns helps us with our flood and drought responses, and assists us in understanding the water required in our rivers and creeks to support platypus, native fish and plant life."

Currently we're looking for operators in the Hume City region. If you would like to get started as a rain gauge operator please call 131 722, and for more information about rainfall data visit melbournewater.com.au

Please turn over for **important information** about the proposed Waterways Charge relating to your Hume City property



The Waterways Charge: an investment in your community

As part of the Victorian Government's *Our Water Our Future* action plan, Melbourne Water's waterways and drainage boundary has been extended to cover the majority of the Port Phillip and Westernport catchment, an increase in area of more than 5,000 square kilometres.

Melbourne Water is now the caretaker of river health and the authority responsible for regional drainage, waterways and floodplain management throughout the entire region.

The boundary extension means that, since November 2005, Melbourne Water has extended services further into the Hume City Council region. Melbourne Water has been improving the health and management of the region's waterways, drainage systems and floodplains through works including weed removal, replanting, erosion management and the construction of major drains, flood retarding basins and stormwater treatment wetlands.

These projects, and the ongoing support Melbourne Water is providing to local community groups, will be funded by the Waterways Charge. This is an annual charge that will appear on your water bill.

Melbourne Water has had responsibility for delivery of these services to part of the Port Phillip and Westernport region since the 1920s. The majority of these works are funded through a charge which is currently paid by the 1.5 million property owners in Melbourne Water's existing service area.

From July this year, the property based Waterways Charge will be collected by Western Water on behalf of Melbourne Water.

The Waterways Charge is ultimately set by the Essential Services Commission after consultation with the community. The charges at the time of printing are detailed in the table below. Please visit www.esc.vic.gov.au to read the Commission's final pricing decision.

If you would like to know more about the charge – and the important work it funds – please contact Western Water on 1300 650 422, or visit melbournewater.com.au

Charges for 2008/09 (at time of printing)	
Residential (inside Urban Growth Boundary)	Flat charge of \$63* pa
Non-residential (inside Urban Growth Boundary)	Flat charge of \$82* pa
Rural (properties outside the Urban Growth Boundary)	Flat charge of \$39* pa

*Prices to apply from 1 July 2008 will reflect any further adjustments arising from the Essential Services Commission's Final Determination.

The Urban Growth Boundary is set by the State Government and indicates the long-term limits of urban development. For more information on the Urban Growth Boundary, please visit www.dse.vic.gov.au/melbourne2030online



Melbourne Water services and works in the Hume City

This list provides examples of local Hume City works either proposed or currently being undertaken:

- We are carrying out willow control, revegetation and minor erosion works on Blind Creek, Sunbury upstream of Riddell Road to complement works carried out by the local Friends group and Hume City Council.
- We have proposed weed control and revegetation works for almost a kilometre of Jacksons Creek within the Sunbury Pop Festival Site.
- We have also proposed weed control and revegetation along Deep Creek adjacent to the Bulla – Sunbury Road. This project involves us working with five landowners along two kilometres of Deep Creek.
- We will carry out almost one kilometre of weed control and revegetation works along Kismet Creek, Sunbury between Elizabeth Drive and Racecourse Road to complement earlier plantings by Hume City Council.
- Works on a Gross Pollutant Trap on the Brook Street Main Drain are near completion. These works will improve drainage to avoid potential flooding of downstream properties.
- We recently opened a regional office located in the old Hume City Council offices. This office is used by our field staff and enables us to improve services to the Western region.

Did you know...

- That the waterways and floodplains in the Port Phillip and Westernport region support 1,800 species of native plants and 600 species of native animals.
- We will develop Flood Management Plans in partnership with local councils. The plans will coordinate flood management activities such as flood mapping, mitigation programs, education and awareness to manage risk in the community.