

YarraStrategicPlan@melbournewater.com.au

From The Friends of Damper Creek Reserve Inc. Mt Waverley
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The Friends of Damper Creek Reserve Inc. Mt Waverley (FoDCR) thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Yarra Strategic Plan (YSP).

Members of the FoDCR have been pleased to participate in meetings and discussions over recent years towards the formation of the Yarra River **Vision** and they have also attended and contributed towards EJA Community Assemblies. FoDCR would like to see the tributaries of the Yarra River (Damper Creek is a tributary of the Yarra River) included and offered protections in a broader Yarra Strategic Plan.

FoDCR as a group is a subscriber to Environmental Justice Australia. FoDCR fully supports the Yarra Strategic Plan and its goals set out in Sections 20 and 21 (and sub-sections) and, as a comment, urge that strong consideration be given to strengthening the *action words* i.e. “*identify*” and “*set out*” to become more “*specific, measurable and targeted*” with a time frame for completion (perhaps in identified stages) and to lock-in end date goals.

A particular concern of FoDCR is the effect on stream health of the incremental, continual and insidious creep of ‘moonscaping’ and over-development of land along the Yarra and its tributaries. A major concern is the loss of significant trees and vegetation resulting in vastly increased impermeable surfaces where housing development has become more dense, with very little space for replanting. Because of the loss of absorption and increase in more frequent significant rain storm events, Damper Creek increasingly receives short periods of massive run off, and water surges, causing erosion and other damage to the creek. Creek environs need greater protection provided from such effects by both State and local government planning policies. The Yarra Strategic Plan is an opportunity for planning coordination to be achieved and for such protections to be put in place.

FoDCR urges the YSP “*Vision*” be kept to the forefront of all decisions. An example of such vision is available from FoDCR’s history of the saving of Damper Creek from being barrel drained and lost to housing development and roads in 1968 (now 50 years ago). The “*Vision*” of the then Council and the foresight, passion and vigilance of the local community, is an example of how courageous decision making can protect the environment for the enjoyment, health and well-being of future generations. Damper Creek, and its Reserve, is now a highly valued community asset in the middle of suburbia.

An environmental asset such as the Yarra River and its tributaries can be incrementally lost to neglect, greed and insufficient foresight and protections, and your work on the YSP is to be applauded.

Sincerely

Doug Scott, President

Friends of Damper Creek Reserve Inc. Mt Waverley

22 July 2018