

Case study 14

Greening the West

City West Water together with: Brimbank City Council, City of Melbourne, Friends of Lower Kororoit Creek, Hobsons Bay City Council, Port Phillip & Westernport Catchment Management Authority, Metropolitan Planning Authority, Hume City Council, LeadWest, Maribyrnong City Council, Melbourne Water, Parks Victoria, Regional Development Australia, Urban Development Institute of Australia, VicRoads, Western Water, Wyndham City Council, Yarraville on the Nose Community Group

This case study showcases

how collaboration and integrated planning deliver better value for communities

water businesses delivering more than just water and sewerage provision

Problem

Melbourne's western suburbs are some of the fastest growing in Australia. They receive less rainfall than other parts of Melbourne meaning they're drier and can experience warmer daytime temperatures. As the population increases, so too does pollution, heat stress and pressure on the environment. In addition, community health in the region is currently reported as poor with issues such as diabetes, obesity, heat stress and deleterious effects of air pollution.

Solution

Urban greening has been recognised as a low-cost strategy that will bring high impact results – environmentally, economically and crucially, for the health and wellbeing of the residents who live there.

Following a think tank organised by City West Water in 2011, an alliance of the many stakeholders with an interest in urban greening was formed to share knowledge, promote and implement solutions together. Goals include: joint advocacy for better planning outcomes, community education, new opportunities through collaboration.

Through collaboration the following targets are set to be achieved:

25% increase in alternative water for green space by 2030

Double tree canopy cover in the west by 2050

Green space to be increased by 25% by 2030

Business case

Business cases are completed on a project-by-project basis. One example is the Stony Creek renaturalisation project, where 1.2km of an inaccessible concrete drain will be turned into a natural creek with community access and facilities (e.g. park, playground, bbq). The benefit to the community were estimated to be:

\$5 per visit from new and more frequent visits (\$140,000–\$620,000/year)

10% increase in avoided health costs from increased physical activity (\$75,000 per year within 1 km of creek)

1–8% increased property value within 500m of the creek (\$2.3–\$18.2M)

Key drivers

Poor community health

Manage low rainfall

Low quality open space

Strong organisational leadership

Fast growing suburb, the chance for change is now!

Low tree canopy coverage

Benefit/outcome

Very strong community benefits: More open green and active space, more shade. More attractive region, also for investors and businesses.

Staff capability to be expanded through: collaboration with new disciplines and stakeholders, business cases to be developed with new tools and seeking private investment partners.

Authorising environment to be expanded through wide-ranging collaboration across public and private sector stakeholders.