



# OUR SPACE. YOUR PLACE.

Use Melbourne Water land  
to benefit your community

## Case study 21

# Our Space, Your Place

Melbourne Water

### This case study showcases

how water businesses are rethinking internal processes, services and skills to better serve communities

### Problem

There is growing evidence of the benefits of well-planned green spaces on the physical and mental wellbeing of the community. As Melbourne grows it is becoming more important to provide opportunities for exercise, such as cycling and walking and community interactions and access to open outdoor areas.

Melbourne Water is the custodian of 33,000 hectares of land across greater Melbourne, the second largest owner of land in Melbourne behind the Crown. Significant tracts of this land remain underutilised, and are often managed from a community safety perspective by making the land inaccessible to the public. There is great potential for Melbourne Water to provide more value to community for this land.

### Solution

To encourage the use of land for community projects, Melbourne Water created a map based web application, 'Our Space. Your Place.' which makes information on Melbourne Water's land

publicly available and streamlines the process of finding land and expressing interest in using it for community benefit. Community groups and individuals can use the application to search for an appropriate space for their community use concept, access information on potential funding sources, and send through an expression of interest. Community members are encouraged to consider a wide range of activities on the land, such as parks, shared pathways, community gardens, events, landscaping and vegetation, murals and public art. Since launching, over 30 requests have been made through Our Space. Your Place.

Hope City Mission, who provide a significant quantity of food each week to families in need, conceived a 'Garden for Hope' where fresh local produce could be harvested and supplied to clients direct from the garden. Short of space for this project on their own land, Hope City Mission looked to the open space behind their premises where Melbourne Water maintained an easement with significant amounts of open space along its length. Hope City Mission approached Melbourne Water with a proposal to construct a community garden on their land. The beds were built above the ground in a 'no dig' solution to protecting the Melbourne Water assets.

### Business case

Facilitation of the *Our Space. Your Place.* project has been cost effective, and includes some in-kind time and the development and maintenance of a web based platform. In addition to providing the land, Melbourne Water support applications through to implementation for example helping to identify funding opportunities.

### Key drivers

Key to the success of *Our Space. Your Place.* has been a cultural shift within the organisation largely driven by the project champion. This included realising the potential benefits that could come from releasing the land, unlocking data previously only used internally and building capacity to engage and service the community in new ways.

### Benefit/outcome

Assets are improved to directly meet community needs – with a number of potential benefits such as improved amenity, biodiversity and improved mental and physical wellbeing of the community.

Improve transparency, customer service and reputation of Melbourne Water