



## Water for the Environment Port Phillip and Westernport

### Water for our Environment

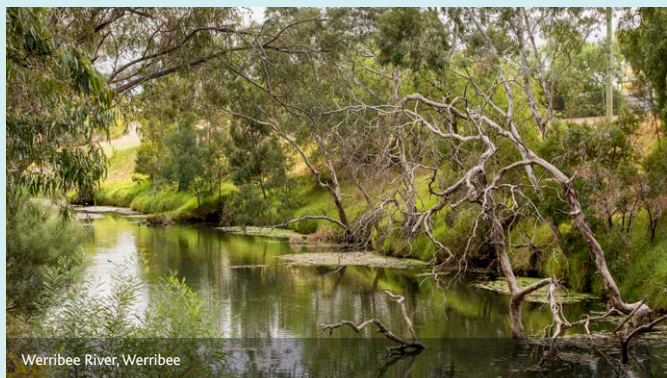
As Melbourne's population has grown, many of its rivers and wetlands have been significantly modified to provide water for communities to grow and thrive.

As a result, some of our rivers have given up more than half of the water that would have naturally flowed in them. Water for the Environment can be set aside in storages such as reservoirs and dams that is then released into rivers and wetlands to improve their health and protect environmental values.

Melbourne Water works with the Victorian Environmental Water Holder (VEWH) to release water into some of Melbourne's waterways through the management of Environmental Entitlements.

**An Entitlement is a legal right to access a share of water at a particular location (for example, Upper Yarra Reservoir) and release that water to the waterway to mimic some of the flows that would have occurred naturally, before the construction of dams.**

Melbourne Water in conjunction with VEWH, manage Environmental Entitlements in the Yarra, Tarago/Bunyip, Werribee and Maribyrnong rivers. Environmental watering can help reverse the decline in river and wetland health.

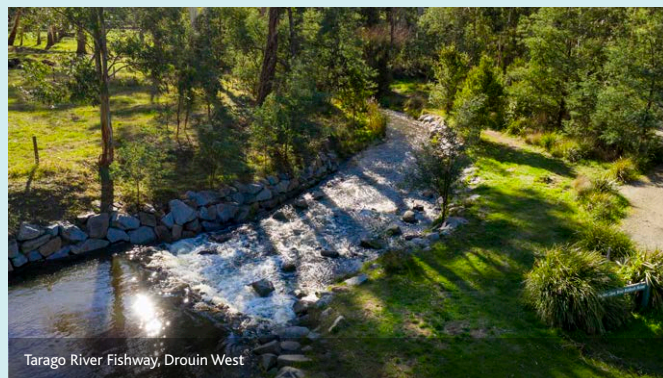
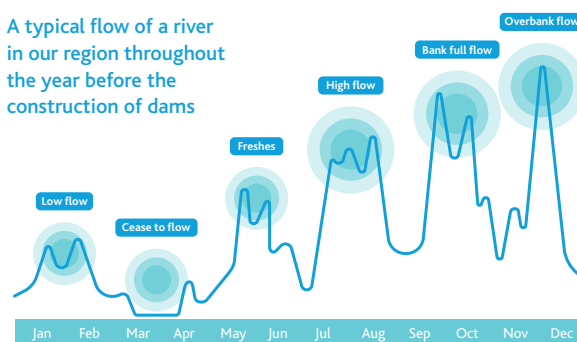


### Water allocation and timing

For water for the environment to be most effective, the right amount needs to be released at the right time for the right duration.

For example, high flows released in Autumn provide opportunities for fish and platypus to move up and down rivers. Low flows in summer maintain pools that provide refuges for aquatic animals by maintaining water quality.

A typical flow of a river in our region throughout the year before the construction of dams



To find out more about Water for the Environment visit:  
[melbournewater.com.au/environmentalwater](http://melbournewater.com.au/environmentalwater)



## How much water do our rivers need?

Environmental flow studies have been undertaken in many of the rivers and creeks in the Port Phillip and Westernport region.

These scientific studies identify the flows needed for a particular river or the wetting and drying patterns of a wetland. They also provide recommendations on the timing, duration and amount of water needed to support the native plants and animals in these waterways. This information uses the best available scientific knowledge for setting environmental objectives and the environmental watering requirements.



Yarra River, Heidelberg

## How do we deliver Environmental Water?

Delivery of water for the environment involves a number of people and organisations. Melbourne Water works with Southern Rural Water to deliver water in the Maribyrnong and Werribee rivers and with the Melbourne Water Operators to deliver water in the Yarra and Targo systems.

Water for the environment is planned in advance for the following water year (July – June) and is based on the seasonal conditions, how much water is available and what ecological objectives are being targeted for that year.



Dights Falls, Yarra River

## Monitoring

To ensure we are managing water for the environment effectively, we undertake a range of monitoring, including measuring water levels at gauges and observing water quality parameters such as dissolved oxygen and temperature. Other monitoring includes fish sampling, assessing vegetation communities or tracking platypus.

All this information is used by environmental water managers to improve the use of Environmental Entitlements to ensure we are being effective and that the environmental objectives are being met in each system.

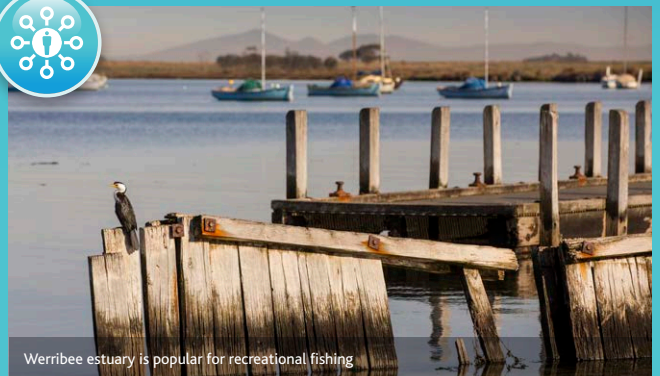


Monitoring flows in O'Shannassy River

## Shared Benefits

Environmental watering provides a range of shared benefits including recreational, cultural and economic benefits.

Where there are opportunities to maximise these benefits through environmental watering, we will endeavour to do so, provided environmental outcomes are not compromised. Everyone benefits from healthy rivers and wetlands. Water for the environment primarily cares for plants and animals, but improving the environmental health of rivers, wetlands and floodplains intrinsically benefits everyone who works, lives and plays near them. Healthy rivers are for all of us.



Werribee estuary is popular for recreational fishing

## More Information

Everyone benefits from a healthy river. For more information visit Melbourne Water's Environmental Water website: [www.melbournewater.com.au/EnvironmentalWater](http://www.melbournewater.com.au/EnvironmentalWater)  
Email [environmentalwater@melbournewater.com.au](mailto:environmentalwater@melbournewater.com.au) or call 131 722

