

Sunbury's Water Future

Water management planning
for the Sunbury region

Looking after our rivers and creeks

The importance of healthy waterways

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Rivers and creeks across the Melbourne region are home to more than 1,800 species of native plants and 600 species of native animals. They're also relaxing and enjoyable places to visit and, in some areas, supply water to homes, businesses and agriculture.

What are waterways?

Waterways are our rivers, creeks, wetlands and estuaries.

Why do we need to take care of our waterways?

The plants and animals that rely on rivers and creeks live together in a delicate balance. This can be upset by human activities that change a waterway's natural state, sometimes with damaging results. Some of the threats include:

- drought and climate change
- diverting too much water for agriculture, businesses and homes
- land use next to waterways
- new homes and other buildings

The hard surfaces caused by urban development can't absorb water, leading to litter and pollutants washing into our drains and creeks (stormwater pollution). The volume and velocity of stormwater from these hard surfaces can also cause damage by flushing plants and animals out of waterways and damaging the waterway structure.



Who is responsible for waterways?

Melbourne Water is responsible for waterways in the Port Phillip and Westernport region. This includes the Maribyrnong River catchment which our local Jacksons and Emu Creeks flow into. Western Water has a role to make sure they don't negatively affect local waterways with discharges from their treatment plants or sewer spills. Western Water also has a responsibility to release environmental flows to waterways from its reservoirs. Councils and Melbourne Water share responsibility for the stormwater which drains to the waterways.

A healthy waterways strategy has been developed to address the threats posed by climate change, urban development and population growth on our waterways. The 2018-2028 Healthy Waterways Strategy outlines regional decision-making, investment, management issues and activities to support our waterways.

To find out more about Sunbury's Water Future go to:
yoursay.melbournewater.com.au/Sunburys-Water-Future



The Sunbury region and local waterways

Jacksons Creek and Emu Creek flow through the Sunbury region. They both border the future planned growth area.

More about Jacksons Creek

The current state of Jacksons Creek has been rated between very low to moderate in its ability to support a range of native species, including fish, frogs, macroinvertebrates (such as aquatic insects, worms and snails) and platypus. Platypus have been observed in Jacksons Creek near Sunbury.

The natural flows in Jacksons Creek have changed over time as a result of flows being removed and also added at different locations along the stream and at different times of the year. Examples of these include Rosslynne Reservoir upstream, stormwater runoff from Sunbury, recycled water releases and water diverted for agricultural and other uses. These changes are offset to some extent by 'environmental flow' releases from Rosslynne Reservoir. However, over time there has been erosion along Jacksons Creek and changes to its ecology.

To protect the plants and aquatic life in the creek, it needs to flow at the right levels and at the right times to mimic nature where possible. In addition, the volume of stormwater runoff needs to be controlled and high flows at certain times of the year should be avoided.

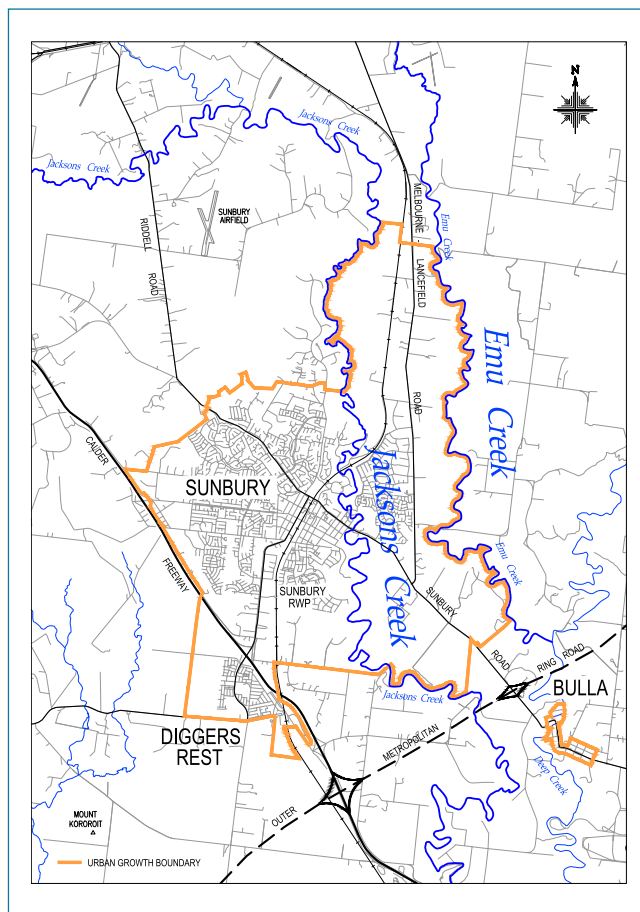


More about Emu Creek

The current state of Emu Creek has been rated between low to moderate in supporting a range of native species including fish, macroinvertebrates and platypus.

Emu Creek is naturally ephemeral (only flows for part of the year) with a chain of ponds providing habitat for a number of native fish and other aquatic life.

Emu Creek is considered to have an important population of, and provide a habitat corridor for, the Growling Grass Frog. To protect the conditions supporting the values in Emu Creek, steps will need to be taken to lessen the risks of additional stormwater flows outlined in the Healthy Waterways Strategy.



How does the water sector look after our waterways?

We can't restore every river and creek to its natural state, but we can help protect and improve them. Each year, Melbourne Water invests \$65 million doing this across the Port Phillip and Western Port catchments, while balancing the needs of the community, costs and safety.

Work includes planting native vegetation, removing weeds and litter and making sure stormwater (flow and quality) from new development is managed to reduce its impacts.

