

Media Release

The Hon Lisa Neville MP
Minister for Police
Minister for Water



DELIVERING
FOR ALL VICTORIANS

Friday, 19 October 2018

BETTER STORMWATER MANAGEMENT TO PROTECT OUR WATERWAYS

The Andrews Labor Government is improving stormwater management to protect our rivers, reduce the burden on our drinking water supplies, and deal with the challenges of climate change and a future with less rainfall.

Minister for Water Lisa Neville and Minister for Planning Richard Wynne announced changes to all Victorian planning schemes to extend the stormwater planning requirements to commercial, industrial, public and multi dwelling residential developments.

The changes will ensure most developments requiring planning permits reduce pollution and other harmful effects of stormwater entering waterways.

This will help protect the long-term health of urban waterbodies such as the Yarra River and Port Phillip Bay – and where possible use stormwater instead of drinking water for purposes such as watering parks and gardens.

The changes were recommended by the Improving Stormwater Management Advisory Committee in their final report – released today. The committee was appointed in April 2018 to advise the Government on how to improve stormwater management and strengthen the links between water and land-use planning.

Expanding the stormwater management provisions will also deliver Action 19 of the Labor Government’s Yarra River Action Plan to protect the *Yarra under the Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murrn) Act 2017*.

The Labor Government is also seeking to restore a natural water inflow regime to the environmental and culturally significant Bolin Bolin Billabong – another key commitment from the Yarra Action Plan.

The Government will now investigate the potential to provide a water licence to support environmental outcomes in the lower Yarra River wetlands - including the Bolin Bolin Billabong – after 1,100 megalitres became available following the sale of the Amcor Paper Mill, providing a secure source for the lower Yarra wetlands.

The investigation will ensure there are no inadvertent environmental or third-party impacts from using the water for these wetlands and look for opportunities to maximise environmental and cultural benefits.

Melbourne Water has released the Progress Report for the Yarra Strategic Plan, which provides an update of the work undertaken to date and the next steps to deliver the community’s vision – visit imaginetheyarra.com.au.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Water Lisa Neville

“Stormwater is the biggest threat to the health of urban waterways and one of the biggest threats to the health of Port Phillip Bay. It’s our responsibility to protect these vital assets for future generations.”

“The Bolin Bolin Billabong is a significant cultural asset and now we have an opportunity to explore a permanent water source for these wetlands.”

Quote attributable to Minister for Planning Richard Wynne

“Over the years many stakeholders have called for more consistent stormwater planning controls and I’m proud that this Government has listened and responded by introducing more equitable and effective controls.”

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