



Greening the Greyfields – A Pilot Study for Melbourne

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Greening the Greyfields is a project conceived by Professor Peter Newton (Swinburne University) and Professor Peter Newman (Curtin University) and funded by the CRC for Spatial Information in 2011.

The term 'greyfields' refers to the middle suburbs of Australian cities where housing stock is ageing and being replaced by newer, more intensive housing developments. Unlike greenfield (urban fringe housing developments) and brownfield (ex-industrial housing development), greyfield redevelopment occurs on small, individual lots of land and to date has occurring in a piecemeal / ad hoc fashion.

The overarching principle of greening the greyfields is that a new logic for urban development is required to direct population and investment inwards to brownfields and greyfields precincts, rather than outwards to the greenfields. The principle makes economic sense, new greenfield land cost extra due to lack of existing infrastructure for example. It also makes environmental sense to preserve farmland and green space at the edges of the city.

Redevelopment of greyfield areas at a precinct scale (rather than the status quo lot scale development) represents significant potential to improve sense of place, an opportunity to create an attractive physical neighbourhood and social community setting, with a distinctive look and feel. It also provides the opportunity to develop precinct scale stormwater management strategies that can enhance the urban environment through the integration of flood and drainage management services as well as enabling more cost effective and sustainable opportunities for capture, storage, treatment and reuse.

This pilot study represents the first of its kind in Melbourne targeting a precinct in Ringwood, north of the Ringwood Metropolitan Activity Centre. The precinct is subject to flooding which places conditions on future development and there is a lack of treatment prior to discharge to Mullum Creek. The study aims to demonstrate that the greening the greyfields vision can become reality and deliver a range of significant benefits including reduced flooding and improved stormwater treatment.