



Dobsons Creek Disconnection Project Evaluation

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Dobsons Creek has the highest ecological value of any waterway within the Knox City Council area, and is one of the highest value waterways in the wider Dandenong Creek catchment.

In 2010, Melbourne Water, Knox City Council and South East Water initiated a pilot program to retrofit part of The Basin within the Dobsons Creek catchment with stormwater disconnection measures on public and private land. The aim was to improve the health of Dobsons Creek by disconnecting impervious surfaces to reduce runoff reaching the creek, restore catchment hydrology towards pre-development levels and improve the ecological health and water quality. It also aimed to engage the community in stormwater management to protect their local waterway.

This project serves as an important demonstration of a multi-agency/government approach to catchment scale stormwater disconnection.

A comprehensive evaluation of the project has been undertaken. Evaluation covered ecological and hydrological outcomes, project economics, agency collaboration and community buy in.

Key outcomes:

- Improvements in ecological indicators, hydrology and water quality.
- Multiple Council treatments – biofilters, rain gardens and swales.
- Tanks for Helping Your creek, 214 properties SEW 2012-2013, 33 Properties Melbourne Water MBI auction, 2015-2016.
- Ongoing instream monitoring program.

Key messages:

- Streets-scale treatments are more effective and sustainable than on lot systems over the mid to long term.
- A multi-partner delivery model encourages collaboration, allowing organisations to draw on a variety of expertise that can address technical issues and deliver efficient community programs.
- Community uptake of on-lot tanks was significant but not strongly correlated to engagement with the creek or stormwater management.
- Having a central coordinating role and governance structure (either working group or officer) is critical to ensure consistency and momentum across the lifespan of the project.

- Early establishment of the catchment condition and priority areas and clear and agreed objectives are critical to achieving project outcomes in a timely and economically efficient way.
- Retrofit projects are complex and take considerable effort, finances, commitment and time to do effectively.
- Review and evaluation is critical to capitalising on learnings to inform future catchment disconnection projects.
- Monitoring is necessary to determine progress towards ecological outcomes and ongoing improvement