

Integrated Water Management Planning

A step by step guide for local councils



Acknowledgement of Victoria's Aboriginal communities

The Victorian Government proudly acknowledges Victoria's Aboriginal communities and their rich culture; and pays its respects to their Elders past and present. The government also recognises the intrinsic connection of Traditional Owners to Country and acknowledges their contribution in the management of land, water and resources.

We acknowledge Aboriginal people as Australia's first peoples and as the Traditional Owners and custodians of the land and water on which we rely. We recognise and value the ongoing contribution of Aboriginal people and communities to Victorian life and how this enriches us. We embrace the spirit of reconciliation, working towards the equality of outcomes and ensuring an equal voice.

Photo credit

Source: Melbourne Water

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DRAFT REPORT:

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Abbreviations

Alluvium	Alluvium Consulting Australia Pty Ltd
CMA	Catchment Management Authority
DELWP	Department of Environment Land Water and Planning
Forum	Integrated Water Management Forum
IWM	Integrated Water Management
IWCM	Integrated Water Cycle Management
Water Plan	Water for Victoria – Water Plan 2016
WfV	Water for Victoria - Water Plan 2016

1 Introduction

Integrated water management (IWM) is a collaborative approach to planning and managing all elements of the water cycle to deliver social and environmental outcomes. The Victorian State government has recently detailed its priorities for IWM that are set out within *Water for Victoria* (DELWP, 2016a). Specifically, Chapter 5 describes five desired outcomes to achieve *Resilient and liveable cities and towns* (See Figure 1).



Figure 1. IWM key benefit areas (DELWP, 2016a)

Local government, catchment management authorities and water corporations all have a role in delivering these outcomes and each will have strategies, objectives and actions that will ideally align with the outcomes described within *Water for Victoria*.

The role of local government

Local government plays a critical role in IWM through:

- Drainage and stormwater quality treatment
- Parks, streetscapes, open space and gardens maintenance
- Domestic wastewater management
- Urban and land use planning, and
- Building and planning approvals.

Local government also have arguably the closest relationship with the community they serve. This relationship links the five *Water for Victoria* outcomes (Figure 1) to the community and their aspirations.

2 The IWM forums

To facilitate the identification and prioritisation of collaborative projects that deliver on the desired outcomes and encourage an IWM approach to planning, the State Government has released the Integrated Water Management Framework for Victoria (DELWP, 2017). This document emphasises the role of collaboration in IWM planning and puts forward 'IWM forums' as a central method of achieving effective collaboration between agencies.

The IWM Forum is a group made up water corporations, catchment management authorities (CMAs) and local government. Sixteen forums will be held across Victoria providing an opportunity for all organisations to present IWM opportunities for collaboration.

The aim of the Forum is to consider, evaluate and prioritise IWM opportunities identified by participants. Prioritised IWM opportunities will form part of the strategic direction statement for the region with implementation tracked and monitored by the Forum and reported back to the Minister. A working group may also be established to progress prioritised IWM opportunities. Outcomes of the forum would then be included within respective business plans where appropriate for funding and implementation.

What are the benefits of participating in the forum?

The Forum represents an opportunity for well-prepared local governments to elevate their IWM priorities with project partners. In doing so, Local Governments can:

- Ensure adequate representation of Local Government issues and priorities
- Identify opportunities that deliver on community needs and expectations
- Progress Council's strategic aims
- Deliver projects in partnership where this may have been difficult in the past
- Identify cost-sharing opportunities
- Leverage existing or future funding opportunities
- Support internal capacity building; and
- Participate in and influence a regional/catchment view that improves investment decisions for water cycle projects

Examples of the types of projects that can be considered within the forum context have been set out within the *Integrated Water Management Framework for Victoria* (DELWP, 2017) and include:

- Greenfield development
- Channel naturalisation
- Public open space master planning
- Streetscape renewals
- Water-energy-waste initiatives
- Climate adaption
- Drainage
- Peri-urban agriculture
- Urban waterway revegetation
- Stormwater harvesting and re-use
- Localised urban flood mitigation
- WSUD installation
- Urban greening

3 Preparing for the forums – A five step guide

Preparing for the forums will ensure that Council’s IWM opportunities are well considered and presented, further, that Council representatives support those opportunities. IWM opportunities need to be identified early in the forum process with Council representatives prepared to present their priorities.

To assist with that preparation, a five-step guide to identifying, prioritising and developing project opportunities is provided below. The process is designed for a workshop setting involving a cross section of staff who are involved in water related disciplines such as strategic and statutory planning, open space management, landscape architecture, environmental management, capital infrastructure and community development.

Diverse perspectives ensure that a range of opportunities are captured, all aspects of IWM are identified and the opportunities have internal support. As an indication, 10-15 staff members from a diversity of council activities will achieve a ‘whole of organisation’ perspective.

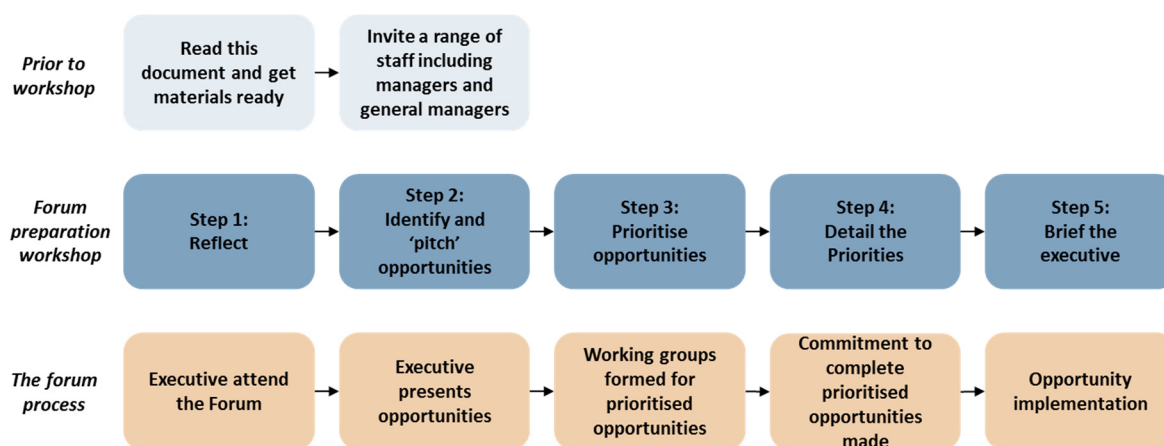


Figure 2. Forum preparation (in dark blue) and implementation.

Step 1: Reflect

What are your council's drivers to adopt an IWM approach? What issues drive existing strategies, objectives and actions across IWM, stormwater, drainage, open space, climate adaptation and other strategies and plans?

Step 1 involves reflecting upon this to consider where these objectives sit against the Chapter 5 Water for Victoria outcomes. These outcomes can be used as a framework to organise the range of IWM related Council's objectives as well as providing a common framework with other forum stakeholders. This can also highlight where Council's objectives strongly align with those of State government, and where there are gaps.

Prior to the workshop, on one slide set out the Council's strategic context (i.e. what are the main strategies and objectives relating to IWM that guide council's activities). Using the questions in Table 1 as a prompt, the group can discuss and agree on the main drivers for an IWM approach. This gives attendees a chance to reflect upon current strategies identifying relevant and redundant objectives, or perhaps where things have changed since the time of writing older strategies.

Table 1. IWM drivers

Drivers	Reflect on....
Strategic Drivers	<p>What strategies are currently in place and how do they relate to integrated water management?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are these drivers still relevant?• Are there actions (including project ideas) that could be progressed within the IWM forum process?• Are there strategic gaps that could be filled through additional project work?
Issue-based Drivers	<p>Are there recurring and persistent issues within your municipality that relate to IWM? (e.g. recurring flooding, water supply security risks, degrading waterways etc)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Could these issues benefit from collaboration and partnerships to be resolved? (i.e. does the issue relate to elements of IWM that you do not control?)• Does the profile and importance of these issues need to be raised?
Opportunistic Drivers	<p>Reflect on future planning opportunities and trends within your municipality.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are there opportunities to incorporate IWM initiatives into upcoming projects and initiatives (e.g. new greenfield developments, roadworks etc)?• Are there community demands that could be addressed through opportunities that are suited to the IWM forums?• Is there a convergence between water, planning and community that may present an opportunity to advance IWM initiatives to realise multiple benefits?

Step 2: Identify and 'pitch' opportunities

Leveraging off Step 1, the group will work in groups to identify opportunities. An opportunity can be defined as is a IWM or water related project that:

- Is socially, technically and economically feasible
- Requires buy in and collaboration with other organisations and agencies
- Is place based, and
- Aligns with Water for Victoria objectives.

To maintain consistency with *Water for Victoria* (WfV) outcomes, it is suggested that two groups are formed to focus on the Water for Victoria outcomes as set out in Figure 3.

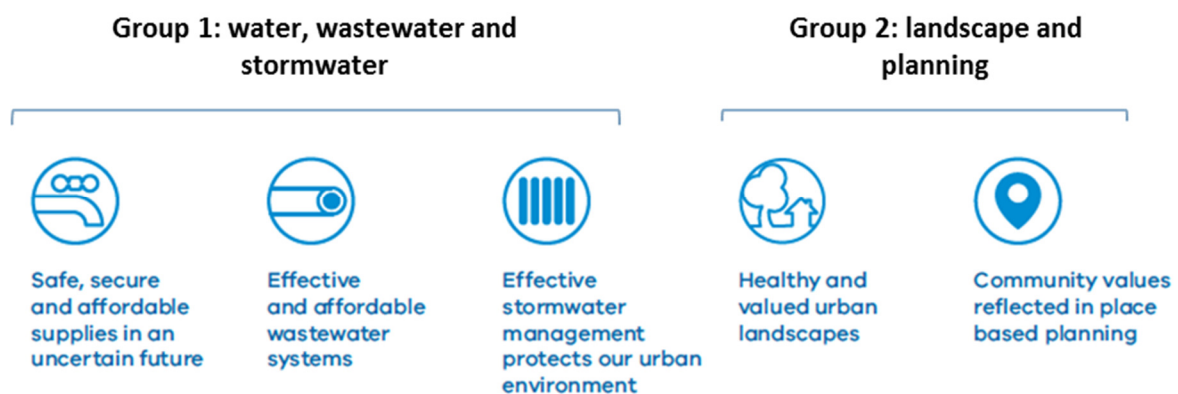


Figure 3. Suggested groups for opportunity identification

The two groups should self-select based on their expertise and role. The aim is to get people with overlapping interests to discuss their issues and priorities and corresponding opportunities that they wish to present back to the broader group.

Each group should aim to identify approximately 1-3 opportunities per WfV outcome (i.e. 3 – 9 opportunities for Group 1 and 2 to 6 opportunities for Group 2). Document ideas during the discussion, capturing as much information as possible. When the table agrees that they have an opportunity that they wish to present to the broader group, add the title and description to a A5 sticky note (for example) that can be adhered to the wall under the WfV outcome 'category'. Each opportunity needs a champion who can describe its merits to the group.

Bringing the two groups back together, the champion 'pitches' the opportunity back to the group. The aim is to get others interested in your opportunity by describing in 3-5 minutes:

- The opportunity, why it's important, what issue it addresses and how it fits with council's strategic direction?
- Why it's appropriate for presentation at the Forum, citing prospective project and funding partners?
- The environmental and community benefits?
- The work will need to be done, timeframes and likely costs (high, medium, low)?

Once each of the opportunities have been pitched, undertake a prioritisation process.

Step 3: Prioritise

An easy way to prioritise is by informal vote. A suggested approach is to allocate each workshop attendee three votes (i.e. three sticky dots), to assign a maximum of one to their top three opportunities.



Figure 4. Voting on opportunities at Banyule City Council (Image: Alluvium)

Logically those opportunities that appeal to a broad cross section of those in the room are well supported, those that have a narrower focus, do not. The experience across several workshops, is that 2-4 opportunities gain greater support. If opportunities receive similar votes, facilitation will be required to critically evaluate the opportunities to ensure that they meet the main criteria:

- ✓ Alignment with council’s strategic direction? Do we know if the community supports this?
- ✓ Will other forum attendees support it? (e.g. are there shared benefit for CMA’s, water corporations, local community etc.)
- ✓ Is it place-based?

✓ Will the shared benefits likely outweigh the costs?

The aim from this step is to highlight and agree on three to five of the highest priority opportunities that the group can explore

in more detail. Prior to moving on, check in with the group: have we missed anything and are we happy to move on?

Step 4: Detail the priorities

It is critical that the organisation’s representative are briefed sufficiently to ensure they can advocate effectively within the forum.

Once the preferred three to five opportunities are agreed upon, split the remaining workshop time evenly amongst those opportunities to undertake a ‘deep dive’ on each. Together the group will fill in as much detail as possible on each opportunity focusing on:

- The definition if the opportunity: what does it look like and what benefits will it bring and to whom?
- The geographical location and boundaries of the opportunity (include spatial or graphic representation)
- Potential partners and why they would be interested (what’s in it for them?)
- Benefits and likely costs (including any costs associated with ‘do nothing’)
- Implementation timeframes
- Community views that will drive or support this opportunity (if known)
- References to relevant documentation

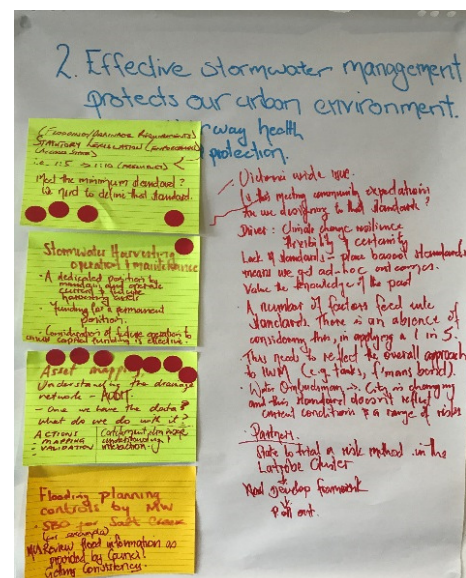


Figure 5. Opportunities presented and voted on with additional detail (Image: Alluvium)

Ideally, each opportunity will have ½ to 2/3 of a page of detail that will succinctly describe the opportunity and council’s interest in it.

Step 5: Brief the executive

Ensuring executive buy-in is critical. Including general managers and managers in the workshop process will go a long way to achieving this.

Following the workshop, the Council's IWM champion or appropriate manager should organise an executive briefing, setting out the process (briefly) and the identified opportunities. Following discussion and feedback from the executive changes in priorities may be made.

Appendix 1 provides an example format for introducing the key elements of the short-listed opportunities, ranked from highest to lowest based on the prioritisation process, and a more detailed list of the top 4-5 opportunities to take to the forum.

4 Conclusion

The Integrated Water Management Framework for Victoria (2017) has planned for IWM forums to be held on a quarterly basis to track the progress of projects.

The five-step guide presented in this document is a guide that has been effectively used with a number of regional and metropolitan Councils to develop their IWM opportunities. It is recommended that the process is repeated or reflected upon annually to re-examine priorities and their relevance to the IWM forums, and identify any upcoming opportunities as strategic priorities and circumstances change.

Frequently asked questions

Q: What are the boundaries for opportunities?

A: In metropolitan Melbourne boundaries for the IWM forums are based on catchment areas. In regional Victoria IWM forums are based on water corporation boundaries. IWM Forums will consider the water cycle with an urban focus, however this extends across peri-urban boundaries and landscapes/land development that influences the urban water cycle.

Q: Can council participate in more than one forum?

A: Yes – if your local government area intersects across more than one catchment area (metropolitan) or water corporation boundary (regional) then you may choose to attend any or all of the forums that are relevant to your local government area.

Q: Who will be responsible for the delivery of IWM plans?

A: IWM Working Groups will be formed for prioritised opportunities. It is expected that working groups will have representation for each of the IWM Partners that have an interest.

In most instances it is expected that water corporations will lead the collaborative IWM Plan process unless it is determined that another organisation is in a better position to do so.

As IWM Plans progress through design to business cases, specific delivery responsibilities will be allocated to partnering organisations. These organisations will each need to take the business case through their own business processes in order to commit the partnership to implementation.

Q: Where will funding for these projects come from?

A: Co-investment by IWM partners is expected across all stages of the IWM process. This should be a focus of the collaborative forum process and reflect the principles outlined in the Cost Allocation Framework. It is anticipated that through co-investment organisations can leverage funding from a range of sources to meet their organisation's goals more cost effectively or to a higher standard.

Q: Where can I find out more?

A: You can find out more about the forums in the Integrated Water Management Framework for Victoria (DELWP, 2017):

[https://www.water.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0022/81544/DELWP-IWM-Framework-FINAL-FOR-WEB.pdf](https://www.water.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0022/81544/DELWP-IWM-Framework-FINAL-FOR-<u>WEB.pdf</u>)

5 References

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DELWP (2016a). Water for Victoria, Water Plan. DELWP 2016.

DELWP (2016b). Victoria in Future 2016: Population and household projections to 2051. DELWP July 2016.

DELWP (2017). Integrated Water Management Framework for Victoria, An IWM approach to urban water planning and shared decision making throughout Victoria. DELWP 2017.

DELWP (2017). A Cost Allocation Framework for IWM Projects. DELWP June 2017.

Appendix 1 – Briefing Format

Below is an example table for a complete list of identified opportunities:

Opportunity title	Water for Victoria Linkage	Short Description	# of Votes
1. Retarding basin rehabilitation and stormwater reuse	Effective stormwater management protects urban environments	There is an opportunity at site 'X' to rehabilitate an existing retarding basin (RB) to improve flood detention function. Adding a constructed wetland in the base of the RB will improve stormwater quality and protect natural asset 'A' downstream. There is also an opportunity to reuse treated stormwater on nearby open space 'B'.	X

Below is an example format for detailing the top 4-5 priorities to take to the forum:

Priority 1: {insert name here}

Strategic Linkage (i.e. what WfV outcome does this contribute to):

Opportunity description:

Geographic location:

Potential partners:

Key benefits:

Progress to date:

Timeline (Short / Medium / Long):

Likely budget (High / Medium / Low):

Local Council Champion: