



Waterwatch Melbourne

Waterwatch Melbourne is a free river health education and monitoring program, which aims to increase community understanding, participation and ownership of local river health issues. It achieves this goal by providing a broad range of structured activities, which encourage the community to become actively involved in monitoring the health of Melbourne's rivers, creeks and wetlands. Melbourne Waterwatch groups include primary and secondary schools, tertiary institutions, community, conservation and Landcare groups, corporate groups, individuals and local government representatives.



Waterwatch Melbourne is a part of the Waterwatch Australia network. The program is sponsored by Melbourne Water, Natural Heritage Trust, and every local Council across greater Melbourne. Other supporters include the Merri Creek Management Committee, the Department of Sustainability and Environment, the Department of Primary Industries, the National Heritage Trust, EPA Victoria and Parks Victoria.

Our objective

The overall objective of the Waterwatch Melbourne program is to provide the structure, expertise, and support required to empower students and community members to achieve the following:

- Gain a comprehensive understanding of river health issues
- Learn how to collect important water quality and river health information from their local creek, river, or wetland
- Interpret the information they have collected and understand what it means
- Discuss their findings with Waterwatch Melbourne Coordinators to identify what can be done at a local level to improve the health of Melbourne's waterways
- Become actively involved in the implementation of on-ground works, with support from both Melbourne Water and local government, in order to help address local river health issues.

How we do it

Waterwatch Melbourne has designed a wide array of activities for people with varying levels of expertise. Previous experience and knowledge is not required to become involved in Waterwatch. Participants can, however, be trained to become among the best river health monitors in Australia.

- Groups just starting out are shown how to measure the pH, electrical conductivity, temperature, turbidity and flow rate of our local creeks and rivers.
- Additional parameters for more advanced groups include the monitoring of nutrient levels and dissolved oxygen concentrations.
- Macroinvertebrate surveys are another important, and extremely popular, part of the Waterwatch program. These surveys involve the identification of all the 'bugs' and 'critters' found within the aquatic environment. Macroinvertebrates are an excellent indicator of river health, as different types of macroinvertebrates vary in their sensitivity to pollution.

Training Sessions

Waterwatch Melbourne offer structured training and information sessions for participants of varying levels of experience.

- Information sessions have been designed for community groups and individuals interested in learning more about the Waterwatch Melbourne program, and for teachers interested in discovering how the program applies to the VELS and the VCE curriculum.
- Advanced Training sessions have been developed for river health monitors across greater Melbourne (full day session), in order to provide participants with the skills required to help develop an ongoing river health monitoring program within their local area, with continued assistance from their local coordinator.

These free training sessions are available to anyone across greater Melbourne who is interested in becoming actively involved in the Waterwatch Melbourne program. Please contact Amy Weir on 9784 6298 or email amy.weir@melbournewater.com.au if you would like to receive a copy of the Waterwatch Melbourne Training Schedule.

2009 promises to be an exciting year for the Waterwatch Melbourne program and we invite enquiries from schools, individuals or community groups who are interested in becoming involved. Remember, by becoming actively involved in the Waterwatch program, you will not only learn how to monitor the health of your local creek or river, you will also identify what needs to be done, and work together with Water Managers in their goal to improve the health of Melbourne's waterways. Please contact your local Waterwatch Melbourne Coordinator for more information.

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