

PRESENTATION TO DELIBERATIVE PANEL ON ELSTERNWICK PARK

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Introduction

- This opportunity to increase Elsternwick Park's ability for flood retardation, water pollution reduction and providing unique community recreation and education on the natural environment are a once in a lifetime chance for those with the decision making capability in this area.
- We mostly support Option One of the concepts provided for this panel discussion.
- Our approach is only one element of an integrated water management plan across catchments.

Introduction

- Our presentation covers the opportunities that exist to create a wetland that addresses these three areas in relation to Elsternwick Park:
 - Flood retardation
 - Water pollution reduction
 - Community recreational and educational opportunity
- We are putting forward a strategy that mitigates the high risk of flooding and further contributes to ensuring that the quality of the water flowing into the bay has been remediated by this project.
- It also provides an opportunity for the public to be involved in nature as a recreational activity which has become an emerging strong desire in the community.

Water Pollution Reduction

- The City of Port Phillip has a target of reducing Total Suspended Solids (TSS) by 148 tonnes by 2020 from the baseline in 2009. Currently the reduction is 5.8 tonnes per annum but this needs to have been at least 13 tonnes per year to reach the required target.
- The current Elsternwick Park wetland is 0.4 hectares instead of the 1.4 hectares recommended to reduce water pollution by 10% per year. This is why the target is not being met.
- Elster Creek has been recently identified by Melbourne Water as large contributor to the water pollution of adjoining beaches.
- By substantially increasing the wetland area, there is the opportunity to improve the quality of water flowing into the bay at a much faster rate than is currently possible.

Water Recycling

- There is also now a second chance to achieve the ability to recycle the water from the wetland, to be used on Elsternwick Park and in Elwood, which to date has not been possible.

Flood Retardation

- Flood modeling done by Melbourne Water has identified that around 26,000 residents in the Elwood area are at high risk of flooding.
- Elsternwick Park is already a low lying catchment area for the Elster Creek. This can be further enhanced to create a shallow wetland that would:
 - Increase the volume of water in Elsternwick park so storm water coming in does not further stress the canal.
 - Make better use of Elsternwick Park as a retarding basin in the areas currently set aside in Option One for urban forests, indigenous garden and passive recreation.

The value of creating a Wetland

- The truth of climate change is staring us in the face and urban ecologies are becoming extinct.
- The Environment protection and biodiversity conservation act of 1999 exists and everyone needs to be doing it. We now have many threatened species and critically endangered fauna and flora.
- A Wetland and public open space that allows for the resurrection of some of the original plant, animal, fish and bird life of this area which would attract a far wider number of residents than a sporting facility. An immersive environmental and recreational strategy is what we are looking for.

The value of creating a Wetland

- By restoring this ecology we provide the opportunity for urban dwellers to learn about and appreciate the value of these highly vulnerable environments.
- Creating a wetland allows floodwaters to spread out and be absorbed instead of flooding the canals and houses.
- This Wetland would play a part in the protection of the ecology of the Bay.
- Also Wetlands contribute to the health of the bay by filtering pollutants out of the water flowing into the Bay.

Characteristics of the Wetland

- It might be advantageous for the created wetland to be shallow and wide for the following reasons:
 - So in the dry season it will be a grassland and only in the wet would it be a wetland. This offers the opportunity for a more diverse fauna and flora.
 - To increase the flood retardation capability, it would be advantageous to increase the area that can be flooded as far as possible.

Careful consideration needs to be given to the edge of the wetland to ensure that it provides a safe environment. The soil that is dug out could be used for recontouring to meet aesthetic, recreational and environmental needs.

Conclusion

- We mainly support Option One.
- Instead of creating urban forests we would recommend creating a wide, shallow coastal wetland with ephemeral trees.
- This wetland would have the capacity to act as a flood retarding basin, reduce water pollution running into the bay and offer the opportunity for a wonderful educative, recreational facility to be built that helps restore biodiversity and the original ecology of the area.

- Land of sweeping plains: Managing and restoring the native grasslands of south-eastern Australia:
- Edited by Nicholas S G Williams, Adrian Marshall and John W Morgan 2015.

Wetland



Boardwalk



Viewing Seating



Viewing/play Equipment

