Strategic priority 3:

Integrated water management

Context

Water is a finite and valuable resource essential for life and a healthy environment.

The two major waterways in Stonnington are the Yarra River and Gardiners Creek. Gardiners Creek enters the Yarra, which then flows into Port Phillip Bay. Scotchmans Creek is a secondary waterway that flows into Gardiners Creek through the Malvern Valley Golf Course. Wetlands are located in Glen Iris, Percy Treyvaud Memorial Park and along Grange Road, South Yarra.

Our local waterways provide important ecological processes such as draining stormwater from urban areas, providing wildlife corridors and habitat for aquatic wildlife and helping to improve the quality of water entering Port Phillip Bay. These waterways also provide opportunities for the community to experience local wildlife, find quiet natural areas in a busy city and support sport and recreation activities. Ensuring our local waterways are healthy and functioning is a high priority for Council.

Climate change will have an increasing influence on how water in Stonnington is supplied, used and managed. CSIRO and the Bureau of Meteorology predict winter and spring rainfall will decrease across southern Australia, with more time spent in drought. Floods will also be an issue, as rainfall, when it does arrive, is expected to be more intense.

Maximising the value of water as it moves through the city is a key element in Council's approach to improving water use efficiency. Currently, high quality potable water is commonly used to flush toilets, cool buildings and water parks and gardens. Sourcing alternative water supplies, such as recycled water and treated stormwater and groundwater, will help to keep the city cool and green and manage the effects of climate change.

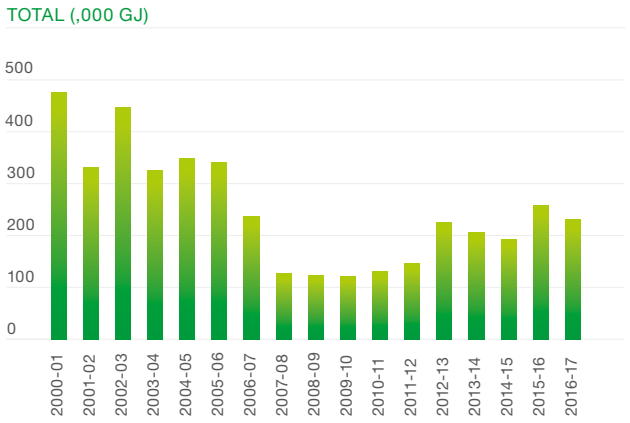
Stonnington's growing population and urban densification places pressure on existing water supplies and infrastructure. Community demand and expectation for high quality parks and green spaces has resulted in rising water use and the city's ability to capture and manage water is increasingly limited. At the same time, water prices are expected to increase substantially over the coming years.

Council water use was comparatively high in the early 2000s but began to decrease following investment in water efficiency measures and increasing use of alternative supplies. With water restrictions easing in 2010, Council water use began to rise. This increase was principally in order to meet community expectations for high quality, usable open space.

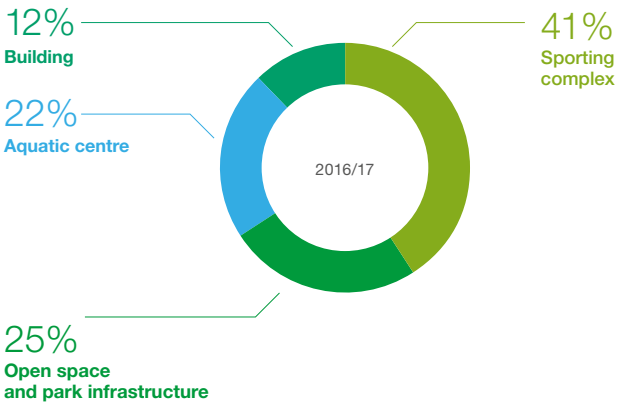
Sporting complexes currently contribute 41 per cent of Council's potable water consumption and one quarter is used on open space and park infrastructure. Innovation and smart design will help Council reduce water use in our open space over the coming years.

Reducing potable water consumption will be a key priority for Council over the next five years.

Total annual potable water consumption



Breakdown of Council potable water consumption



Our approach

Council is responsible for protecting and managing water assets, improving the quality of waterways within the municipality and integrating Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) into city projects.

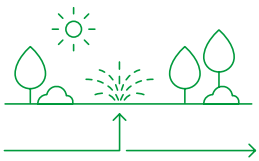
Integrated water management provides a holistic approach to managing water within the City. Council recognises that the supply, storage, use and reuse of water needs to be considered as a whole system to have the greatest effect and support a sustainable and liveable community.

Through leadership and education, the City of Stonnington encourages the community to reduce water and minimise stormwater pollution in the local area.

Water quality

Council has made significant investment in infrastructure to intercept and treat water as it moves through the catchment. WSUD aims to create an urban environment that mimics the natural water flow, reducing the impact of development and maximising the value of water as it moves through the city. Over 100 WSUD assets including raingardens, rainwater and stormwater harvesting, green roofs and walls, tree pits and porous pavements have been added throughout the city. The integration of these elements into the municipality helps support city greening initiatives, while also improving the aquatic environment.

Council has also invested significant resources to regenerate local waterways through planting along the Yarra River, Gardiners Creek and Scotchmans Creek at the Malvern Valley Golf Course. These projects included weed removal, bank stabilisation and planting indigenous plants with an aim to increase habitat connectivity, improve water quality and provide recreational and educational opportunities for the community. Council is also planning further regeneration works along Gardiners Creek.



Water conservation

Council has converted a large number of its sports fields to drought tolerant surfaces and introduced efficient irrigation systems for parks and sports fields to reduce potable water consumption.

Gardens and streetscapes include indigenous and drought tolerant exotic species to improve water efficiency and rainwater harvesting systems have been installed at parks and Council buildings.

Council building projects include rainwater capture and reuse in their design as well as water efficient fittings and fixtures.

Integrated water management strategic objectives

Council will:

3.1 maximise water efficiency in Council buildings, facilities, sporting complexes and open space through design, technology and innovation

3.2 install and maintain water sensitive urban design treatments throughout the city

3.3 achieve minimum WSUD standards for Council building projects

3.4 support development to meet minimum WSUD standards

3.5 increase the collection and use of nonpotable water, and

3.6 improve the health of local waterways.

Council will support the community to:

3.7 use water more efficiently, and

3.8 help improve the health of local waterways.