

# Southern Retarding Basins Package



Client            Melbourne Water  
Date              2017- 2020

## Description

Melbourne Water's Major Project Delivery team packaged nine retarding basin projects in the Southern region of Melbourne to be delivered together and for Melbourne Water to manage both the design and the construction community engagement. This was a new approach that had not been tested before and included the community engagement advisor coordinating all planning approvals. It meant that the contractor did not provide a community engagement advisor for the project.

The following nine projects formed the Southern Retarding Basin Package:

- Lee Street retarding basin upgrade
- Skye Road retarding basin upgrade
- Hessel Road retarding basin upgrade
- Argus Street retarding basin upgrade
- Botany Park retarding basin upgrade
- Banyan Reserve retarding basin upgrade
- Long Island retarding basin upgrade
- Yarraman Creek retarding basin upgrade
- Fairbairn Road retarding basin upgrade

## Approach

Comacon consultants worked closely with the design phase Project Manager coordinating all planning approvals, engaging with all statutory authorities and developing the tender documents.

With early involvement in the projects, we developed a thorough understanding of the issues and were able to ensure community and stakeholder needs were addressed in delivery. Having one community engagement advisor throughout also proved cost-effective, as it eliminated duplication and gave Melbourne Water much more control over issues and reputation management. It also meant once construction started; the community action planning was seamless.

Comacon's engagement approach used included community pop up sessions, widespread distribution of communication collateral (in council offices, libraries, services stations, shopping centres, community centres), posters throughout the area, extra Melbourne Water branded site signage, project business/contact cards, informative videos on the website, live updates to the website, site visits for interested community members, briefings, phone calls, emails, and meetings.

We were able to:

- involve all relevant Melbourne Water, internal and statutory, stakeholders in the project scope
- build effective relationships with stakeholders to ensure the projects were delivered safely, efficiently and with positive outcomes for residents, the community and amenity users
- listen to and, where possible, address community and stakeholder feedback and show how feedback has influenced the project
- involve impacted and interested community members in specific activities, eg the choice and placement of nest boxes, fauna ladders and revegetation.

## Highlights

Our team was widely recognised as extremely effective in managing issues, facilitating construction and achieving positive outcomes for the community. We received a recognition award from Melbourne Water, a message from the Minister's office thanking us for our good management and numerous emails thanking us for our work.

Through our approach, Comacon has developed some fantastic wins for the community, including:

- donating wood from the trees to Woodturners Guilds and local men's sheds
- facilitating a Peninsula Woodturners Guild display of sculptures at McClelland Gallery
- donating mulch to the local school for a sensory garden, the local golf course, other schools and residents
- installing nest boxes and fauna ladders and Involving concerned residents in choosing locations
- collecting and propagating seed from trees for donation and local replanting
- donating branches to wildlife carers for food for rescued animals
- working with local Indigenous groups to have some of the wood made into ceremonial bowls
- offering a wildlife talk for Cranbourne West Primary School during nest box installation
- holding community days held to highlight and celebrate the revegetation.

The community and stakeholder response to our work on these projects was extremely positive; our approach was recognised as best practice and incorporated into Melbourne Water's Tree Removal policy.

## Contact

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