DRAFT

Elster Creek Litter Collaboration

Elster Creek Litter Action Plan 2026–2031

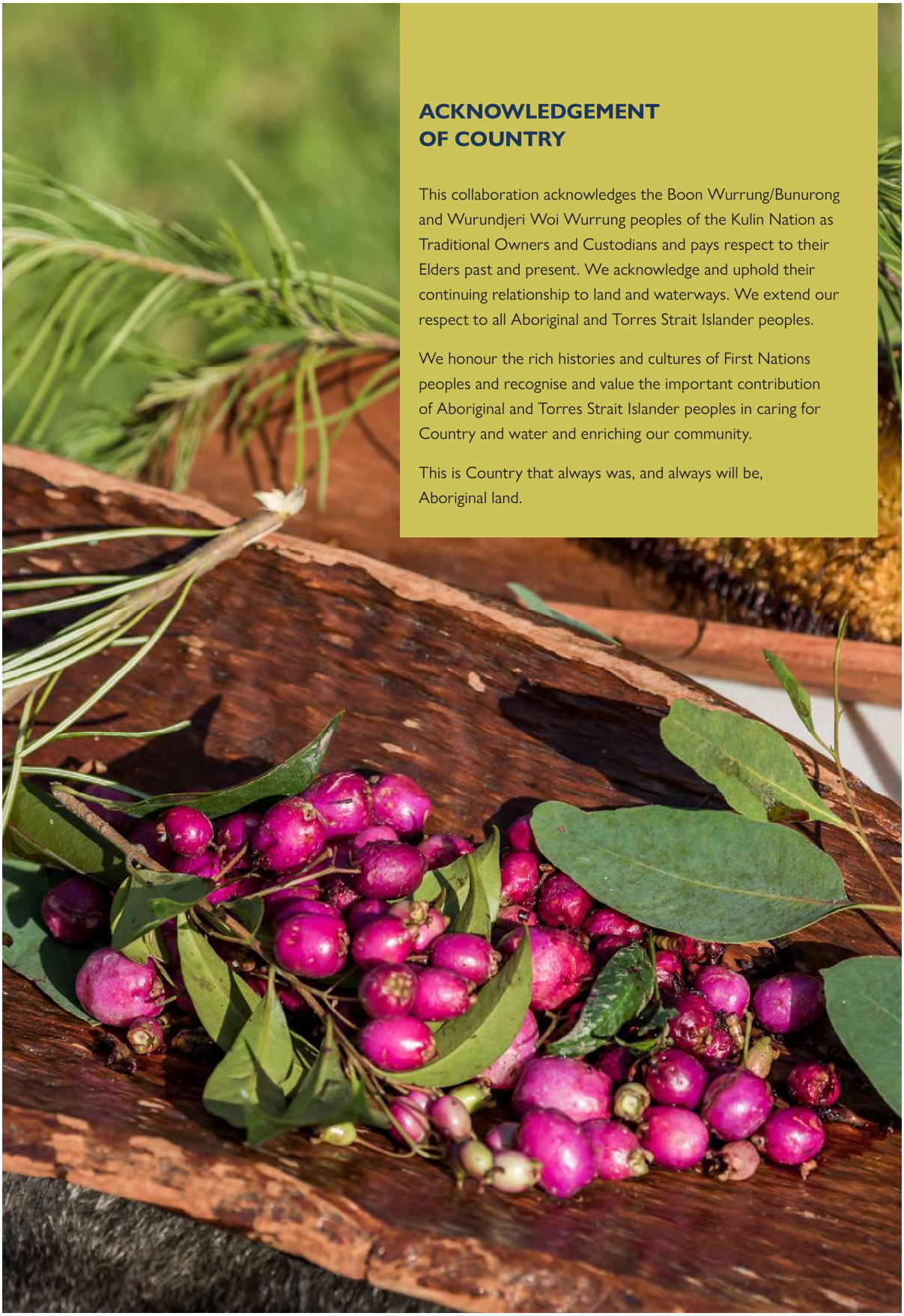
City of GLEN EIRA
GLEN EIRA CITY COUNCIL

City of Port Phillip

Bayside City Council

Melbourne Water

EPA VICTORIA

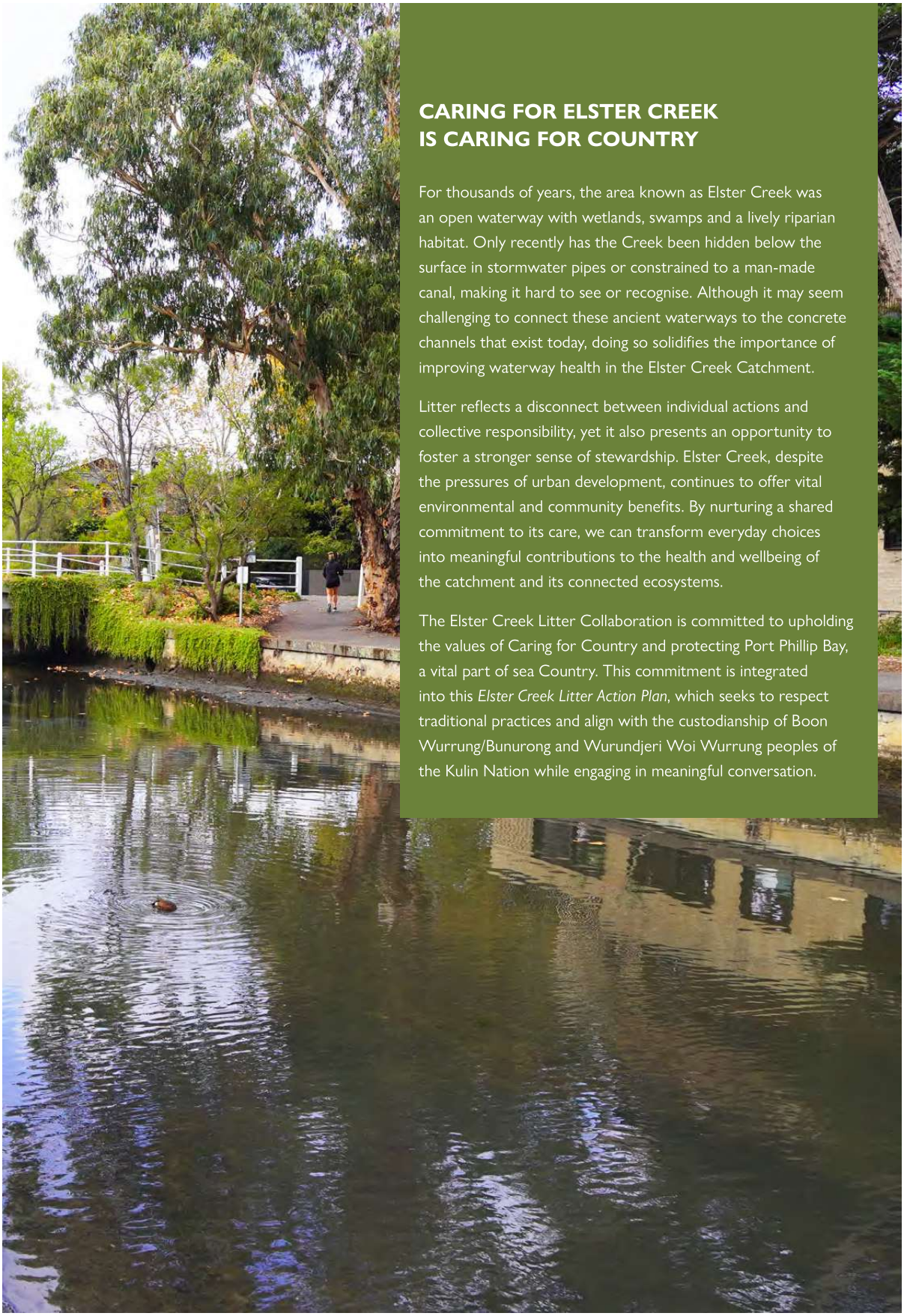


ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

This collaboration acknowledges the Boon Wurrung/Bunurong and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung peoples of the Kulin Nation as Traditional Owners and Custodians and pays respect to their Elders past and present. We acknowledge and uphold their continuing relationship to land and waterways. We extend our respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We honour the rich histories and cultures of First Nations peoples and recognise and value the important contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in caring for Country and water and enriching our community.

This is Country that always was, and always will be, Aboriginal land.



CARING FOR ELSTER CREEK IS CARING FOR COUNTRY

For thousands of years, the area known as Elster Creek was an open waterway with wetlands, swamps and a lively riparian habitat. Only recently has the Creek been hidden below the surface in stormwater pipes or constrained to a man-made canal, making it hard to see or recognise. Although it may seem challenging to connect these ancient waterways to the concrete channels that exist today, doing so solidifies the importance of improving waterway health in the Elster Creek Catchment.

Litter reflects a disconnect between individual actions and collective responsibility, yet it also presents an opportunity to foster a stronger sense of stewardship. Elster Creek, despite the pressures of urban development, continues to offer vital environmental and community benefits. By nurturing a shared commitment to its care, we can transform everyday choices into meaningful contributions to the health and wellbeing of the catchment and its connected ecosystems.

The Elster Creek Litter Collaboration is committed to upholding the values of Caring for Country and protecting Port Phillip Bay, a vital part of sea Country. This commitment is integrated into this *Elster Creek Litter Action Plan*, which seeks to respect traditional practices and align with the custodianship of Boon Wurrung/Bunurong and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung peoples of the Kulin Nation while engaging in meaningful conversation.

Acknowledgements

The development of the *Elster Creek Litter Action Plan* was led by Glen Eira City Council with support from the partners of the Elster Creek Litter Collaboration — City of Port Phillip, Bayside City Council, Melbourne Water and Environment Protection Authority Victoria (EPA Victoria). Many thanks to the community participants who provided their insight and commentary; to Melbourne Water for proposing the *Action Plan* and providing funding; and to the partner organisations and individuals working towards a healthier Elster Creek.

Accessibility

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The *Elster Creek Litter Action Plan (Plan).* is a collaborative cross-catchment initiative developed by Glen Eira, Port Phillip and Bayside councils, Melbourne Water, EPA Victoria, community environment groups and engaged individuals. It provides a strategic framework for reducing litter across the Elster Creek Catchment.

Litter continues to threaten the health of Elster Creek, despite long-standing recognition of the issue by environmental organisations and government bodies. While previous efforts have achieved some success, persistent pollution highlights the need for renewed and coordinated action.

This five-year *Plan* outlines tangible, measurable steps to reduce litter in the catchment. It is informed by stakeholder input, community consultation and the joint research efforts of the Elster Creek Litter Collaboration (ECLC). It should be read alongside the 2024 *Elster Creek Litter Analysis,* which identifies key litter 'hotspots', 'accumulation zones' and infrastructure gaps.

The wellbeing of Elster Creek is closely linked to the health of Port Phillip Bay. By supporting this *Plan*, we move toward a future where the creek flows clean and litter-free, contributing to a thriving marine environment for generations to come.

This *Plan* sets out clear objectives and initiatives aimed at achieving three primary outcomes. Success will depend on available resources, prioritisation and ongoing collaboration among stakeholders and community members. Continued dialogue and engagement are essential to ensure effective implementation and lasting impact.

Outcome #1
Prevention

Litter generation is reduced at the source through awareness, education and changes to systems and behaviours.

Outcome #2
Removal

Litter that has entered the catchment is actively removed and stopped from reaching Port Phillip Bay.

Outcome #3
Monitoring

Litter in the Elster Creek Catchment is actively monitored and assessed to measure progress and identify priority areas of improvement.

OUR SHARED WATERWAY AND ITS CHALLENGES

The Elster Creek Catchment is an urbanised area that drains through the Elster Creek into Port Phillip Bay. This catchment area spans four local councils — Glen Eira, Bayside, Port Phillip and Kingston — and covers 40 square kilometres. It connects directly to Port Phillip Bay through a network of more than 10,000 drains and pipes that twist along the path of the historic Elster Creek.

Litter — What is it?

Litter is the improper disposal of waste. Common litter items are cigarette butts, takeaway containers, drink containers (metal and plastic), coffee cups, polystyrene, and pieces of paper.

In all urban catchments, litter management is an ongoing challenge, with litter from shopping strips, parklands, construction sites and industrial areas being carried by rainfall or winds into local drains that meet our waterways.

A littered environment has many consequences,[1] not all of which may be immediately detectable.

1. **Litter can block drains and cause flooding:** When rubbish enters the stormwater systems, it stops water from flowing properly and can lead to flooding or pooling around drains.
2. **It pollutes land and water and creates microplastics:** Litter, especially plastics, can poison the soil and our rivers and oceans, ultimately causing major harm to the environment.
3. **It harms animals and reduces biodiversity:** Wildlife can get tangled in or eat litter, which can injure or kill them. This disrupts food chains and can contribute to declining native species populations.
4. **It can make public places feel unsafe and encourage vandalism:** Littered areas can attract graffiti or other antisocial behaviours and make people feel it's acceptable to further damage a space.
5. **It weakens our connection to nature and community:** Litter makes it harder for people to enjoy and feel proud of their local parks or waterways, especially as cities grow and green spaces shrink.

Every waterway is shaped by the landscape it flows through and Elster Creek is no exception. Nestled within a highly urbanised environment, it presents a distinctive case for litter management and waterway protection. Unlike many natural waterways, Elster Creek runs almost entirely underground within the Melbourne Water drainage system, lacking traditional banks and vegetation. Although residents can catch glimpses of the natural waterway in Elwood and at open channel locations throughout the catchment, most of it is hidden, which can make the issue of litter less visual and consequently less urgent to address. Despite these challenges, Elster Creek continues to provide valuable environmental and community benefits, demonstrating the resilience of urban waterways and the importance of tailored approaches to their care.

[1] EPA NSW (Environmental Protection Agency New South Wales) (2022) *NSW Litter Prevention Strategy 2022–30.*

HOW LITTER CONNECTS TO WATER MANAGEMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE AND OUR CHOICES

Litter is more than just a visual pollutant — it poses a serious threat to waterway health, especially in urban environments like the Elster Creek Catchment. To tackle it properly, we need to think about the bigger picture: how we manage water, how we prepare for climate change and how we deal with waste in our daily lives.

Integrated water management (IWM) looks after all parts of the water cycle — stormwater, drinking water and wastewater — to keep our water safe and our environment healthy. Within this framework, litter management plays a vital role. IWM tools, such as water sensitive urban design (WSUD), incorporate elements that trap litter or filter out gross pollutants before they reach the waterway. WSUD facilities have multiple benefits beyond litter and can increase overall water quality, supporting cleaner waterways and healthier ecosystems. That's why an IWM perspective is so important to consider — because litter projects can turn into water projects when planned together.

Climate change is making storms heavier and more frequent, which increases the risk of flash flooding, a known vulnerability for Elster Creek. When litter blocks drains and pipes, it makes flooding worse. That's why this *Plan* aligns closely with the *Elster Creek Flood Management Plan*, ensuring litter reduction efforts also contribute to flood mitigation and climate adaptation.

The way we consume and how we dispose of things is also linked to litter. In today's throwaway culture, cheap and disposable products are readily available, while sustainable options are often overlooked. This creates more waste and in turn, more litter. But there's a chance to do things differently. By shifting toward a culture of care — where individuals, businesses and governments take shared responsibility for the full lifecycle of products — we can reduce waste at its source. Encouraging reuse, supporting circular economy initiatives and advocating for better product design and packaging are all part of the solution.

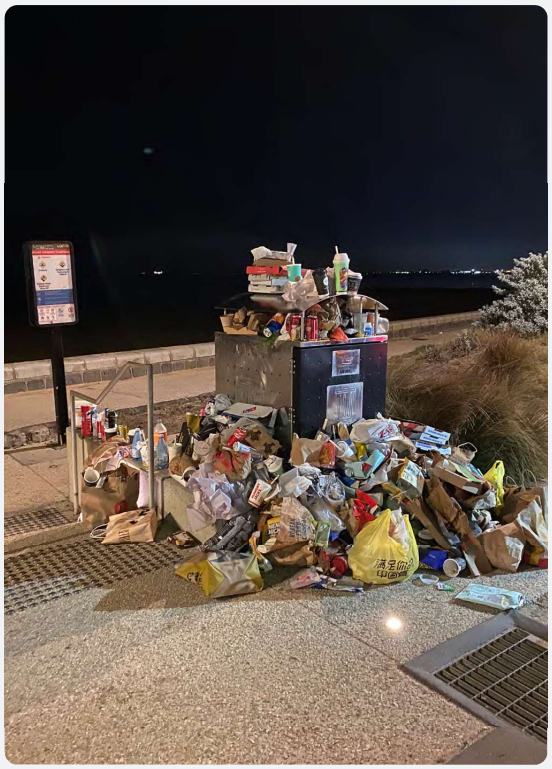


Image: Elwood Foreshore bin after Stargazers.

A PLAN FOR LITTER MANAGEMENT

What is this Plan?

The *Elster Creek Litter Action Plan* is a living document to guide work over the next five years that will reduce and prevent the amount of litter entering Port Phillip Bay through the Elster Creek Catchment. It is supported by the Elster Creek Litter Collaboration (ECLC) that will coordinate litter reduction actions across the catchment and prioritise and plan the future actions needed for lasting litter reduction within the waterways.

Although this *Plan* focuses on the Elster Creek Catchment, the actions it proposes can be applied across all areas of the three participating councils of Glen Eira, Port Phillip and Bayside. These councils, Melbourne Water and EPA Victoria share responsibility for protecting the Elster Creek Catchment and working together is the best way to make a real impact.

How was this Plan developed?

This *Plan* was collaboratively developed by Glen Eira City Council and the other members of the ECLC, with the help of interested community groups.

The Elster Creek Litter Collaboration (ECLC)

These organisations work together through the Elster Creek Litter Collaboration (ECLC) with participants from:

- Glen Eira City Council
- Port Philip City Council
- Bayside City Council
- Melbourne Water
- EPA Victoria

The ECLC's role is to coordinate efforts and oversee the implementation of the projects in this *Plan* (see Appendix B for governance structure).

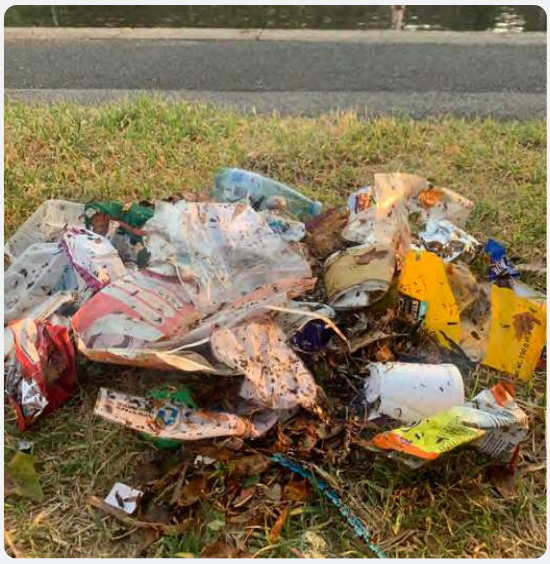


Image: Litter picked up from Elwood Canal in one hour after a storm.

Image: Elster Creek.

Glen Eira City Council is the lead organisation in this collaboration because more than 70 per cent of the catchment lies within its boundaries and more than 85 per cent of the runoff that contributes from the catchment comes from the municipality. As a result, many of the proposed actions are led by Glen Eira.

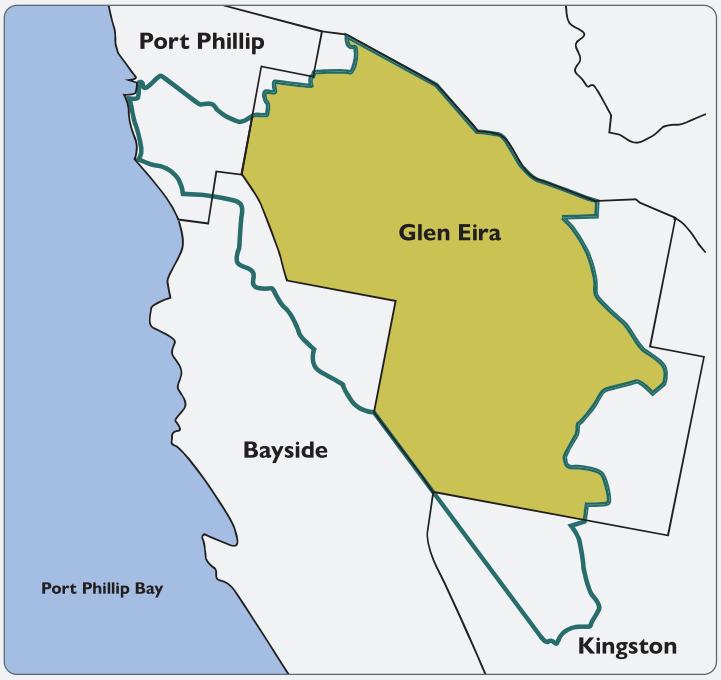


Figure 3: Elster Creek Catchment boundary map.

Catchment boundary

Glen Eira catchment area

Working with community groups

During the development of this *Plan*, it became clear that local community groups and individuals play a vital role in protecting the catchment. Their involvement helps ensure that the *Plan* reflects the local knowledge and values, and that actions are supported by the people who live and work in the area.

There is ongoing consultation with the following community groups and organisations:

- Beach Patrol
- Elwood Canal Action Team (ECAT)
- Glen Eira Climate Emergency
- Action Network (GECAN)
- Love Our Street
- Port Phillip EcoCentre
- Port Phillip Emergency Climate
- Action Network (PECAN)

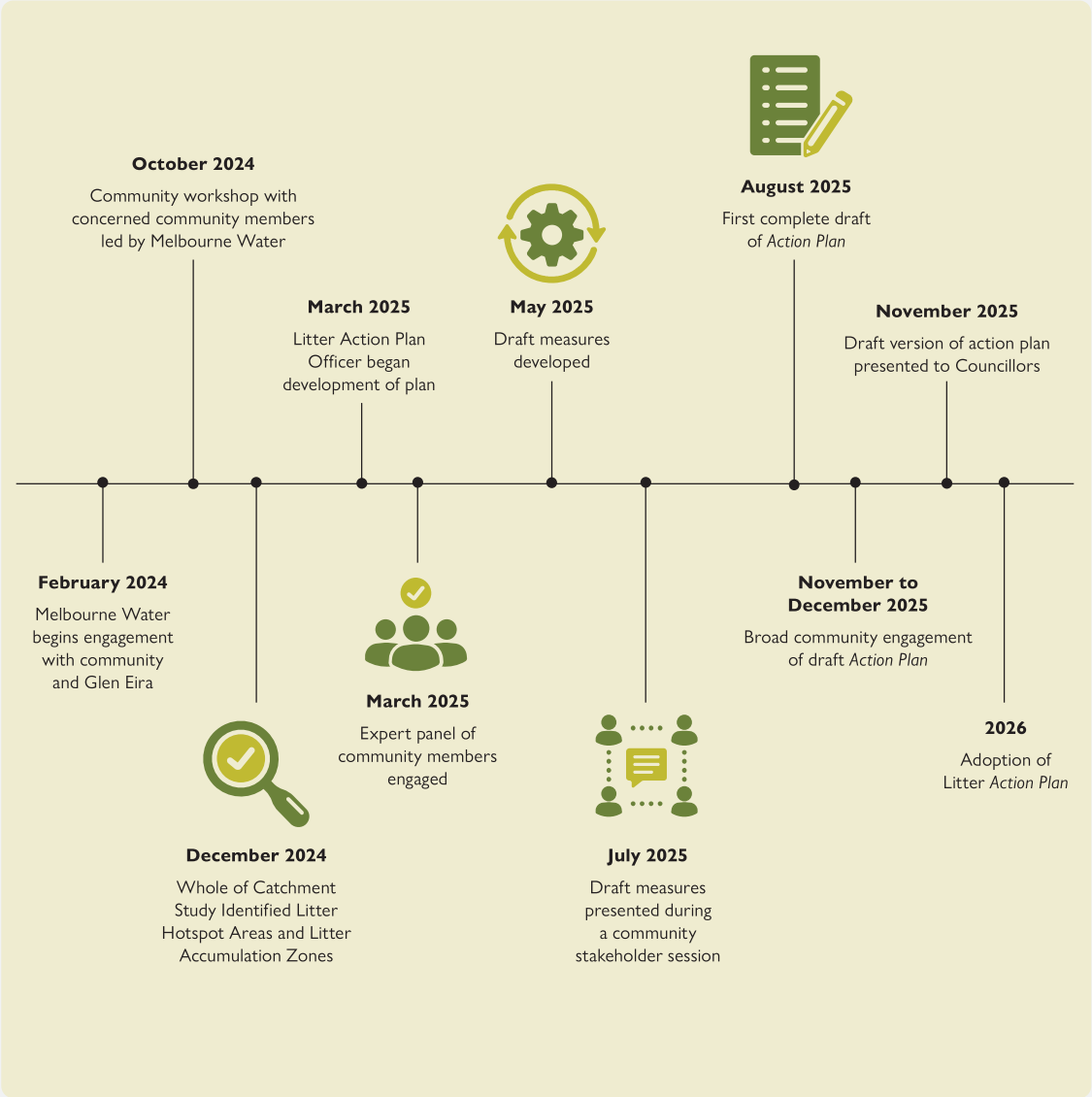
In the future, the *Plan* aims to involve more community organisations beyond those listed above. Expanding these partnerships will help build broader support and ensure the *Plan* reaches more people.

Image: Elster Creek.

Plan development timeline

This *Plan* is a product of stakeholder input provided during workshops, professional meetings and investigations into best practices. Melbourne Water initiated the *Plan* development process with the *Elster Creek Catchment Litter Analysis* that identified litter hotspots and accumulation zones within the catchment (see Appendix C). Using this as a basis for understanding of litter within the catchment, further community consultation and research has been done to identify best practices moving forward.

A summarised timeline of activities that contributed to the development of this *Plan* is outlined below and more details can be found in Appendix A.



General environmental duty

Everyone has a duty to reduce risk to human health and the environment from pollution and waste.

— EPA Victoria

Strategic context

State and regional litter management policies

This *Plan* supports existing state and regional efforts to tackle litter and aligns with the *Environment Protection Act 2017*.[2] Under Section 25 of the *Act*, everyone in Victoria — including councils and Melbourne Water — has a legal duty to reduce the risk of harm to people and the environment so far as *reasonably practicable*. The General Environmental Duty applies to anyone creating or depositing litter and there are additional penalties for people who deposit litter unlawfully.

Other legislation and strategies this *Plan* aligns with include:

- the *Water Act 1989*
- *Healthy Waterways Strategy* (HWS) regional performance objectives 26 and 27
- *Dandenong Catchment Integrated Water Management Plan* measures 3 and 4
- *Elster Creek Flood Management Plan*
- *Port Phillip Bay Environmental Management Plan 2017–2027* (EMP)

Local strategies and plans

The councils that are members of the ECLC also have their own internal plans and policies that align with this *Plan*.

Bayside	*Recycling and Waste Management Strategy* (2018–2027)
Glen Eira	*Integrated Water Management Plan/ Dhumbali W'urneet Gadhaba* *Climate Emergency Response Strategy 2025–2029* *Circular Economy Plan 2022–2026*
Port Phillip	*'Act & Adapt' — Sustainable Environment Strategy 2023–2028* (Themes 1 and 5) *Don't Waste It! Waste Management Strategy 2022–2025*

Table 1: Local strategies and plans by councils.

[2] *www.epa.vic.gov.au/general-environmental-duty*

What will this Plan do?

Strategic outcomes

The *Plan* contains three strategic outcomes with eight overall objectives. The objectives seek to simplify the prioritisation of resources to more effectively communicate and evaluate what is necessary to achieve each outcome. Each objective has actions for delivery.

34 Actions: 17 short-term actions (0–2 years) and 17 long-term actions (3–5 years)

How will this Plan succeed?

The *Plan* is designed to be adaptive and responsive over its five-year implementation period.
Progress will be tracked with annual reviews and ongoing evaluation of individual projects. As specific initiatives are developed under each action, tailored indicators will be created to measure their effectiveness and guide continuous improvement. These indicators will complement the overarching measures outlined below, which provide a broader view of the *Plan's* impact across the catchment.

Implementation approach

Each action in the *Plan* will follow a structured four-phase process:

1. Investigate
Understand the issue and gather relevant data.

2. Pilot
Test potential solutions on a small scale.

3. Invest
Allocate resources to scale successful initiatives.

4. Evaluate
Measure outcomes and refine approaches.

Prioritising actions

Given that implementation depends on available resources, the ECLC has developed a prioritisation matrix to guide funding and delivery. Actions are assessed using the following criteria:

1. Cost and benefit
High-benefit, low-cost actions are prioritised for short-term delivery.

2. Allocated resources
Actions with existing funding or support may be fast tracked.

3. Alignment with strategic objectives
Actions align with existing stakeholders plans and strategies.

4. Community preferences
Interested parties were engaged at multiple times during the development of this *Plan* and their suggestions are considered.

Tracking overall progress

Progress will be measured against a baseline estimation of litter in the catchment, established using data from the *Elster Creek Litter Analysis* and supplemented by research from the *Clean Bay Blueprint* and *Plastic Free Bay* reports. Each project will have its own metrics aligned with best practice methodologies to ensure consistency and comparability

In addition to project-specific key performance indicators (to be developed later), the *Plan* includes overarching measures to track its overall impact. These indicators will be reviewed annually to assess progress toward key outcomes.

Outcome	Measures of progress
#1 — Prevention	Percentage reduction in litter volume (kg or m^3) collected by community groups and stakeholders over time
#2 — Removal	Total kg or m^3 of litter removed
#3 — Monitoring	Percentage composition of litter by type identified

Table 2: Measures of progress.

Ongoing communications

The ECLC recognises that transparent, up-to-date information builds public trust and shared responsibility. A centralised platform will be used to regularly communicate progress, share data and celebrate successes with the community and decision-makers.

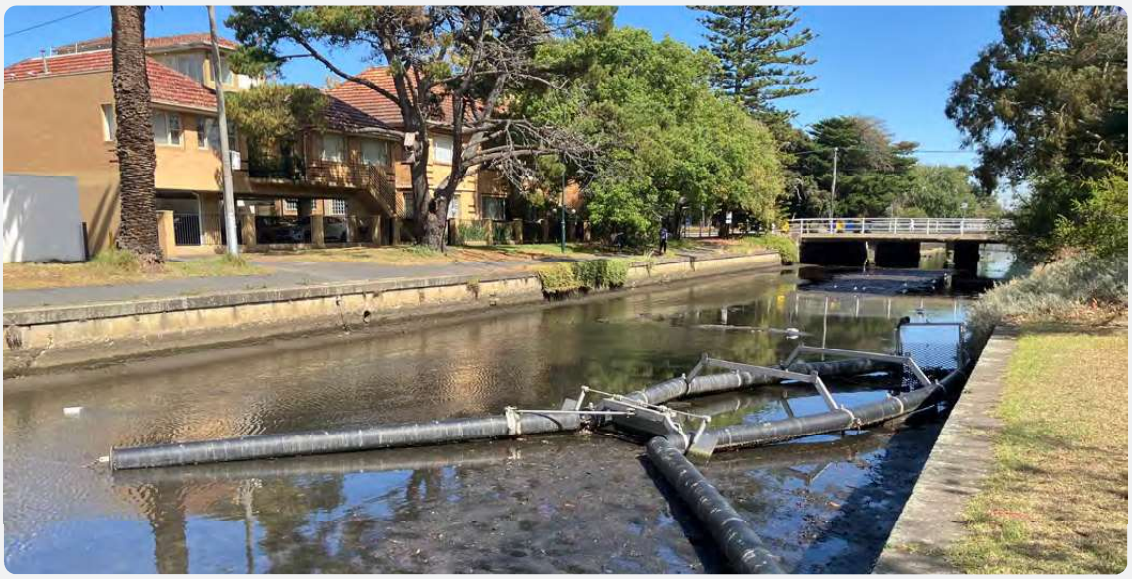


Image: Melbourne Water floating litter traps in the Elster Creek Canal.

ACTION PLAN
2026–2031

ACTION PLAN 2026–2031

Short term (0–2 Years) Long term (3–5 Years)

OUTCOME #1 — PREVENTION
Litter generation is reduced at the source through awareness, education and changes to systems and behaviours

Prevention is key to solving the litter issue in the long term. Prevention efforts need to include general waste reduction support by all community members and a change in consumer behaviour. The combined efforts of individuals, groups, businesses, councils and state government are necessary to ensure lasting change. This *Plan* seeks to improve information sharing, education and outreach, circular economy concept implementation and upstream waste prevention through a collaborative process amongst catchment stakeholders.

Objective 1: The community changes their behaviour to reduce the amount of litter in the catchment and understand their role and the ECLC's role in improving our waterways

Action item		Deliverable/s	Lead	Support
1.1	Create a communications and engagement strategy to support catchment-wide campaigns and create an identity for the Elster Creek Catchment	> Strategy produced > Identity created	Glen Eira City Council	Bayside City Council City of Port Phillip Melbourne Water EPA Victoria Community groups
1.2	Develop a communications campaign targeted at residents in litter hotspot areas and high use public spaces, including parks and sporting grounds, to support source reduction and encourage behaviour change	> Data gathered to inform source reduction priorities > Incorporate the standards created in 1.1 messaging > Engagement messaging is delivered in targeted locations > Source reduction plans trialled at hotspots	Glen Eira City Council Community groups	Bayside City Council City of Port Phillip Melbourne Water
1.3	Develop a litter reduction education program (using resources from Melbourne Water, Sustainability Victoria and partner organisations) and trial the program in interested learning centres	> Existing educational material is synthesised > Education toolkit is developed and trialled	Glen Eira City Council City of Port Phillip Community groups	Bayside City Council Melbourne Water
1.4	Identify and support opportunities for councils to launch litter programs that actively involve and empower local communities	> Options for new litter programs investigated > Feasibility study on specific programs created	Glen Eira City Council	Bayside City Council City of Port Phillip
1.5	Continue to support circular economy initiatives that focus on source reduction for individuals, businesses and the broader community	> Support existing initiatives by stakeholders that promote waste reduction	Council partners	Melbourne Water EPA Victoria

ACTION PLAN 2026–2031

Short term (0–2 Years) Long term (3–5 Years)

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ACTION PLAN 2026–2031

Short term (0–2 Years) Long term (3–5 Years)

1.4	Identify and support opportunities for councils to launch litter programs that actively involve and empower local communities	> Options for new litter programs investigated > Feasibility study on specific programs created	Glen Eira City Council	Bayside City Council City of Port Phillip
1.5	Continue to support circular economy initiatives that focus on source reduction for individuals, businesses and the broader community	> Support existing initiatives by stakeholders that promote waste reduction	Council partners	Melbourne Water EPA Victoria

Objective 2: Apply comprehensive enforcement and public reporting tools to reduce the amount of litter entering the waterways

Action item		Deliverable/s	Lead	Support
2.1	Explore the development of a community-informed litter enforcement approach in commercial litter hotspots, aiming to support greater public compliance with local waste regulations	> Enforcement plan created and trial conducted	Glen Eira City Council	Bayside City Council City of Port Phillip EPA Victoria
2.2	Collaborate with EPA Victoria to align compliance procedures with council processes, ensuring clear use of Officers for the Protection of the Local Environment (OPLEs) and other resources to support council enforcement	> EPA Victoria processes are united with the council enforcement scheme	Council partners EPA Victoria	Melbourne Water
2.3	Monitor construction-related littering to inform the development of further controls for managing on-site construction waste	> Construction littering is investigated > Controls are identified	Glen Eira City Council	Community groups EPA Victoria
2.4	Develop a business case for a Litter Enforcement Officer (LEO) and create clear enforcement guidelines based on best practices	> Case for LEO created > Case used to decide whether a LEO is hired	City of Port Phillip	Glen Eira City Council EPA Victoria Bayside City Council
2.5	Work with businesses in activity centres to improve litter management, including improving compliance and adoption of best-practice litter reduction approaches	> Litter management practices established explicitly for businesses	Glen Eira City Council City of Port Phillip	EPA Victoria Bayside City Council Melbourne Water

ACTION PLAN 2026–2031

Short term (0–2 Years) Long term (3–5 Years)

Objective 3: Existing stakeholder processes are reviewed to improve litter maintenance and assist in selecting new programs for litter prevention

Action item		Deliverable/s	Lead	Support
3.1	Audit waste management practices at a key litter hotspot to identify source reduction opportunities and apply the findings to other priority locations	> Current waste practices like bin placement and pick up frequency are reviewed in one location > Lessons learned are used in another location	Council partners	Community groups EPA Victoria Melbourne Water
3.2	Improve hard rubbish collection by building on current program knowledge, updating collection rules and reviewing effectiveness of pickups	> Guidelines investigated and monitored for compliance > Updates are provided where needed	Glen Eira City Council	Bayside City Council City of Port Phillip
3.3	Explore just-in-time technology to improve maintenance response times to litter	> Business case developed for just-in-time technology > Technology installed and trialled	Glen Eira City Council	Bayside City Council City of Port Phillip Melbourne Water
3.4	Explore ways to limit organic litter (e.g. leaves, grass clippings, garden waste) in stormwater system	> Impacts of organic litter are investigated > Case study conducted and evidence provided for future changes	Council partners	Melbourne Water EPA Victoria Community groups
3.5	Identify opportunities to improve street sweeping practices and maintenance frequencies	> Existing street sweeping programs are reviewed > Practices are updated per findings	Council partners	Community groups
3.6	Review guidance for new developments and apartment buildings to explore options to strengthen compliance monitoring and include litter reduction measures	> Review of existing method > Audit approach created and trialled	Glen Eira City Council	Bayside City Council City of Port Phillip

ACTION PLAN 2026–2031

Short term (0–2 Years) Long term (3–5 Years)

Objective 4: Achieve litter reduction by securing strong leadership, improving state policies and supporting community-led solutions

Action item		Deliverable/s	Lead	Support
4.1	Advocate for expanding the *Container Deposit Scheme (CDS)* at litter hotspots using data from litter cleanups, council reports and citizen science initiatives	> Support is provided to existing efforts for advocacy > CDS sites are expanded	Glen Eira City Council	City of Port Phillip Bayside City Council Community groups
4.2	Advocate for a continuous role that establishes leadership and accountability for the implementation of the *Elster Creek Litter Action Plan*	> Development of business case for action plan implementation officer	Melbourne Water Glen Eira City Council	City of Port Phillip Bayside City Council EPA Victoria
4.3	Advocate to the Victorian Government for additional state-wide source reduction initiatives, in partnership with community groups and sustainability ambassadors	> Development of advocacy priorities > Advocacy conducted with other stakeholders and levels of government to support this *Plan*	Council partners	Community groups

ACTION PLAN 2026–2031

Short term (0–2 Years) Long term (3–5 Years)

Outcome #2 — Removal
Litter that has entered the catchment is actively removed and stopped from reaching Port Phillip Bay

Although prevention is the ultimate method to protect our waterways, the removal of litter from our community is essential to reduce the immediate threat and harm caused by this litter. Removal of litter is a collective effort with councils, state government and individuals all having the power to clean up our catchment.

Objective 5: Existing infrastructure is improved and/or new methods are deployed that increase the removal of litter from the stormwater system and waterways

Action item		Deliverable/s	Lead	Support
5.1	Review the design and performance of current stormwater management systems (e.g. WSUDs) and upgrade standard guidelines as necessary to effectively prevent land-based litter from entering the stormwater system	> Audit of existing stormwater management standards > Existing council WSUD guidelines updated with findings	Glen Eira City Council	Bayside City Council City of Port Phillip
5.2	Review recommendations from the *Elster Creek Litter Analysis Report* about litter hotspots and accumulation zones and develop a priority list of locations for implementation	> Prioritisation matrix developed > Priority projects selected	Melbourne Water Council partners	N/A
5.3	Continue to assess the performance of existing assets that capture litter in the Elster Creek main drainage channels and use the findings to guide improvements	> Existing infrastructure assessed > Information presented to community > Alternative solutions investigated	Melbourne Water	Community groups

ACTION PLAN 2026–2031

Short term (0–2 Years) Long term (3–5 Years)

Objective 6: Community groups, individuals, stakeholders and external asset managers are mobilised to participate in litter cleanups while cultivating a sense of ownership and raising awareness of litter sources

Action item		Deliverable/s	Lead	Support
6.1	Promote community-led cleanups and citizen science at litter hotspots and accumulation zones	> Citizen science and cleanup programs identified and promoted > Data collected by citizen science is combined with other efforts in hotspots	Council partners	Community groups Melbourne Water
6.2	Support and scale up existing litter cleanup activities, such as working bees and *Glen Eira Play* events	> Existing cleanup activities are identified and supported	Council partners	Community groups
6.3	Request that Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) install signage on roads it manages to highlight penalties for littering and illegal dumping	> DTP engaged > Possible signage locations identified	Glen Eira City Council	Bayside City Council City of Port Phillip EPA Victoria
6.4	Engage with DTP to advocate for the increased maintenance of roadsides and major road swales where litter accumulates	> DTP engaged to increase maintenance	Glen Eira City Council	Bayside City Council City of Port Phillip Melbourne Water
6.5	Identify opportunities for employees of ECLC organisations to take part in volunteer catchment cleanup projects	> Opportunities found for employee participation > Activities planned and implemented	Council partners	Melbourne Water
6.6	Work with Metro Trains and VicTrack to increase litter management and removal on rail lines and at stations	> Landowners engaged to increase their maintenance	Glen Eira City Council	City of Port Phillip Melbourne Water EPA Victoria

ACTION PLAN 2026–2031

Short term (0–2 Years) Long term (3–5 Years)

Outcome #3 — Monitoring
Litter in the Elster Creek Catchment is actively monitored and assessed to measure progress and identify priority areas of improvement

To tackle litter effectively, we first need to understand its scale and nature. While it's clear that litter accumulates in streets and travels downstream, accurately measuring the problem is challenging. We can see litter in streets and waterways but it's hard to measure the full extent of the problem. That's why it's important to invest in identifying not just how much litter exists, but also what types and sources are most common. This knowledge will allow us to establish a baseline to track progress over time, target interventions where they're needed most and support long-term catchment-wide solutions.

Objective 7: A monitoring system based on a standardised methodology is created to evaluate the progress of this Plan

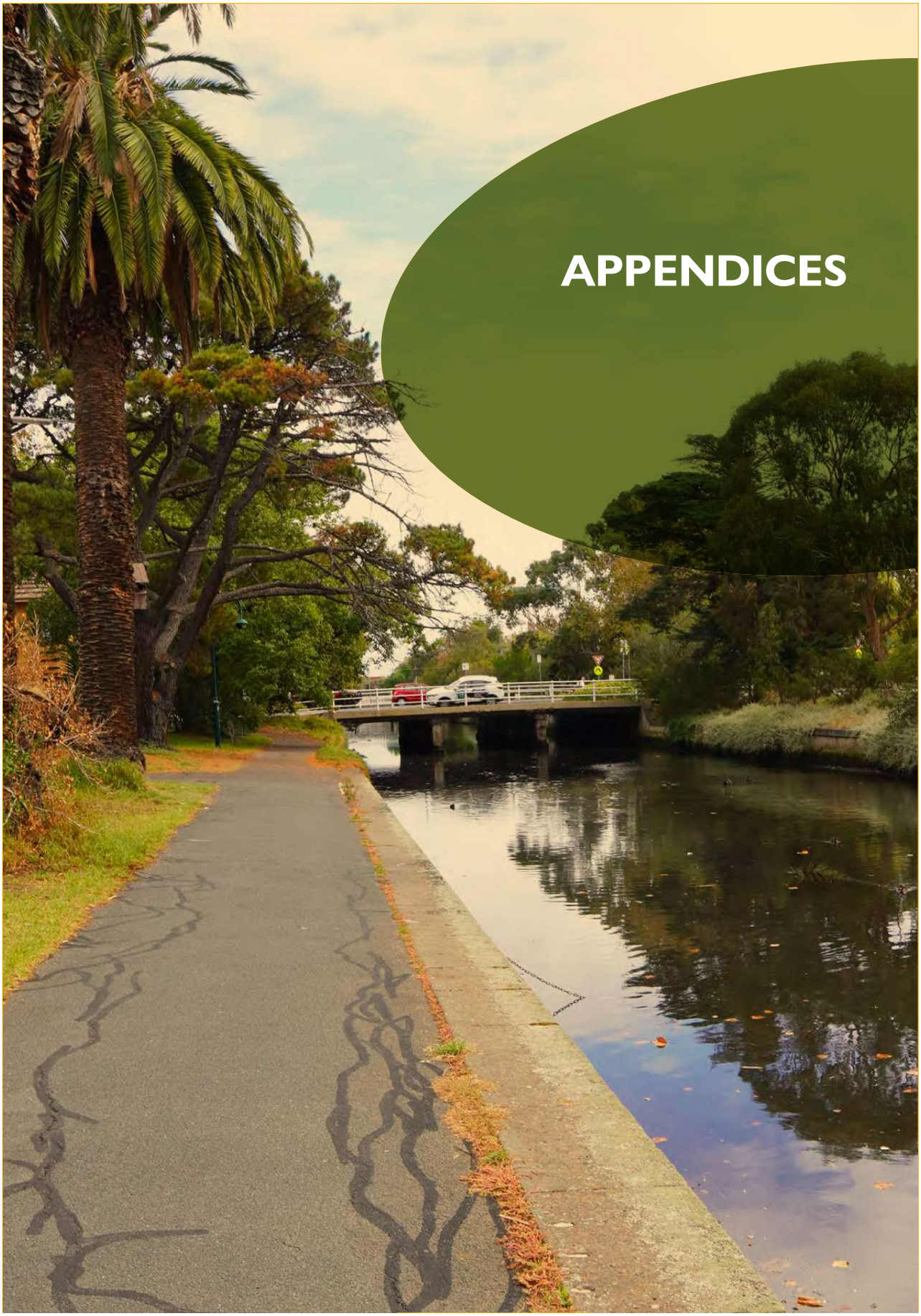
Action item		Deliverable/s	Lead	Support
7.1	Adopt a consistent data collection method to allow for comparative analysis, improve data accuracy and promote existing resources, such as LitterWatch Victoria	> Various methods to use between partners are investigated > Method adopted	Council partners Melbourne Water	Community groups
7.2	Adopt a shared litter monitoring tool that can be used by all partners and stakeholders	> Monitoring system selected and adopted > Incorporate existing monitoring framework used in *Clean Bay Blueprint, Plastic Free Bay* and other published research	Glen Eira City Council	N/A
7.3	Adopt a consistent method for auditing litter after routine maintenance to validate existing data and support ongoing improvement of councils' waste collection activities	> Auditing methodology identified and tested > Method implemented into council processes	Council partners Melbourne Water	Community groups
7.4	Create a reporting dashboard to help stakeholders visualise ongoing issues and track current actions	> Dashboard created and updated regularly	Glen Eira City Council Melbourne Water	N/A

ACTION PLAN 2026–2031

Short term (0–2 Years) Long term (3–5 Years)

Objective 8: The ECLC and community groups have established ongoing monitoring techniques to understand the composition of litter within the catchment

Action item		Deliverable/s	Lead	Support
8.1	Monitor upstream locations along Elster Creek to better understand litter at entry points	> Litter loads are identified at a minimum of two upstream locations	Melbourne Water Glen Eira City Council	Community groups Council partners
8.2	Investigate the extent of stormwater pollution generated from industrial areas within the upper catchment of Elster Creek, in partnership with key stakeholders, to inform the priority of further actions, such as targeted enforcement or education programs	> Stormwater pollution is monitored in industrial areas > Responsible stakeholder is engaged	Glen Eira City Council EPA Victoria	Melbourne Water



APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: TIMELINE AND OUTCOMES OF THE ACTION PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

2024

March 2024, Melbourne Water responds to community desires for litter management — The project plan was initiated for the *Elster Creek Litter Action Plan* after vocal community members engaged Melbourne Water to act on the litter management problem in Elster Creek.

April 2024, Elster Creek Litter Collaboration established — After need was identified for a catchment-wide approach to the litter problem, Melbourne Water established the ECLC.

5 and 6 August 2024, Melbourne Water gains insight via community sessions — As part of the investigation into the Elster Creek Catchment Litter Analysis, Melbourne Water met with members of the community to validate and/or refine the mapping of litter hotspots and accumulation zones.

31 October 2024, community meeting with Melbourne Water and ECLC — The ECLC was first introduced during this community meeting to receive feedback on litter hotspots and accumulation zones within the catchment as well as any other litter-related problems the community had.

December 2024, *Elster Creek Catchment Litter Analyses* published — The November community engagement meeting fed into a larger study that became this analysis. The catchment-scale study identified litter hotspots and accumulation zones where the litter issue heavily persists based on land use mapping, LitterWatch data and the validated community input.

2025

3 March 2025, *Elster Creek Litter Action Plan Officer* appointed in Glen Eira City Council —
A co-funded role with Melbourne Water and Glen Eira City Council established an ongoing position to lead the development of the *Elster Creek Litter Action Plan*.

31 March 2025, *Elster Creek Litter Action Plan* workshop — The same community members that engaged in November 2024 were asked to participate in a workshop to provide recommendations for the content of the *Plan*. These community members were unofficially grouped as the 'expert panel' for discussions regarding the *Plan*.

1 July 2025, re-engagement with the expert panel — Participants reviewed, discussed and when needed, provided edits to the list of actions developed during the *Plan* drafting process. The panel, which consists of community group members and conscientious individuals, worked to identify ways the ECLC can work with the community to deliver the actions within the *Plan*.

August 2025, draft *Action Plan* finalised — Feedback from community members, council officers and the stakeholders of the ECLC were used to finalise the first draft of the *Elster Creek Litter Action Plan*.

APPENDIX B: THE GOVERNANCE OF THIS ACTION PLAN AND THE ELSTER CREEK LITTER COLLABORATION

Provisions of the Action Plan

Duration: Five years
Leadership: Glen Eira City Council
Communication: To provide routine updates to community groups via a bi-annual forum

Governance structure of the Elster Creek Litter Collaboration (ECLC)

The ECLC was formed to ensure the actions described in this *Plan* are executable across the stakeholder organisations.

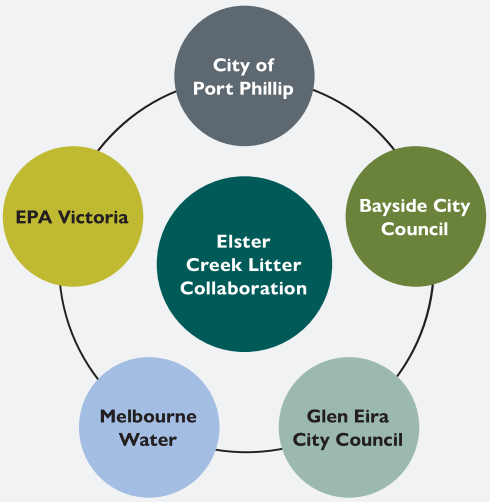
The roles of the ECLC include:

1. Continuous partnership with the community, NGOs and learning and teachings from Traditional Owners
2. Share the successes of this *Plan* with other catchments to contribute to the overall health and wellbeing of Port Phillip Bay
3. Continuous learning cycle during implementation of these action items and update them to fit our goal as we better understand the impacts of the *Plan*
4. Manage governance of this *Plan*, including regularly convening an Implementation Working Group, developing a rolling financial plan and implementation timeline
5. Clearly define the process for the implementation of this *Plan*

To ensure the *Elster Creek Litter Action Plan* is implemented within an appropriate timeline and under the considerations of necessary stakeholder involvement, an effective monitoring organisation must be established. This *Plan's* success leans on the collective understanding that the ECLC will be formalised as the governing body under which the *Plan* can be operated and executed.

Guiding framework

- **Data-driven approach:** Actions backed by data ensure we're putting our resources in the right place.
- **Collaboration and interdisciplinary action:** Working together with community groups, stakeholders and other catchment collaborations will ensure effective actions are developed and implemented.
- **Empowerment and accountability:** Individuals and community groups have the chance to change the health of Elster Creek and hold the ECLC accountable.



APPENDIX C:
LITTER HOTSPOT AREAS AND ACCUMULATION ZONES

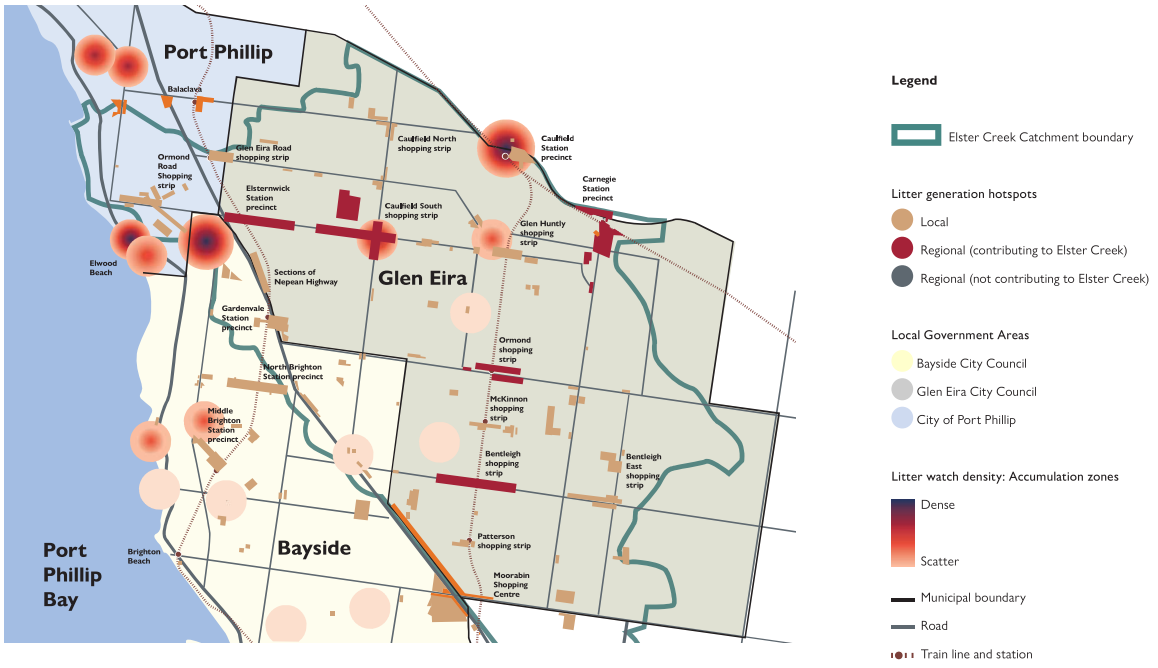


Figure 4: Litter generation hotspot areas and accumulation zones map from Elster Creek Litter Analysis, Alluvium (November 2024).

APPENDIX D: FUTURE OBJECTIVES, INITIATIVES AND ACTIONS

Due to the time and resource restrictions of this *Action Plan*, these items were not prioritised for further investigation but should be considered at the review of this *Plan* in 2030.

> Research efficacy of increasing penalties or fines for littering.

> Look into the health and safety guidelines for Glen Eira City Council to clarify whether it requires businesses to have a waste management service on premise. If not, guidelines by EPA Victoria can be used to enforce the presence of bins under the General Environmental Duty.

> Develop stricter guidelines for private waste companies to prevent overfilling of bins in commercial districts that use their services.

> Research rewilding or planting efforts at select locations along the extent of the Elster Creek main drain channel.

List of abbreviations

CDS	Container Deposit Scheme
ECLC	Elster Creek Litter Collaboration
IWM	Integrated water management
LEO	Litter Enforcement Officer
WSUD	Water sensitive urban design

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National Relay Service

A phone solution for people who have a hearing or speech impairment. Internet relay users connect to NRS then ask for 03 9524 3333.

TTY dial 13 36 77 or Speak and Listen dial 1300 555 727 then ask for 03 9524 3333. https://internet-relay.nrscall.gov.au

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