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**Presentation Title:** Waterway connections – an exploration of place

## **ABSTRACT**

If green spaces are the 'lungs' of the city, and all life requires water, then waterway corridors are the true arteries of our cities, conveying nature's lifeblood. Together, green spaces and blue waterway corridors form the cardio-pulmonary circulation system of cities. They are both critical in providing clean air and fresh water - the building blocks of liveability.

As arteries, creeks and rivers traverse great distances, connecting disparate towns and communities, topographies, ecosystems, landscapes and places. Water is essential to nature, and nature is necessary to human habitat. Rivers provide opportunities to connect with nature, providing respite from busy urban environments. Waterways are ingrained in community and personal histories and memories through their experience of, and connection to 'place'.

As our cities continue to grow in the face of a changing climate, focus on social values such as amenity, recreation and community connection, are increasingly important for our citizens well-being. Linking open spaces with waterways, creates an integrated blue/green network across the city, with opportunities to regenerate and improve ecological systems and biodiversity, while building on site specific social values.

There is no 'one size fits all' solution in achieving amenity and liveability outcomes, as site context is critical in developing 'places'. High amenity values of rivers and waterways will look different in natural, wild environments compared to suburban and city settings. Both have their place in contributing to improved social outcomes.

Case studies and examples will be explored, to demonstrate that acknowledgement of site context as part of good planning and design, are essential to developing desirable, memorable places, valued by the community along our life-giving waterways and their surrounds.