



MARYBOROUGH IWM PLAN: DELIVERING REAL COMMUNITY BENEFITS THROUGH THE WATER CYCLE

Celeste Morgan¹

¹E2Designlab

Biography:

Celeste loves intersections. Not the kind with traffic lights - but the intersections of form and function, of the engineered and the natural, and of the planned and the unexpected. With both a design and a communications background, Celeste has worked globally with a focus on sustainable design at a city scale, exploring opportunities to deliver new solutions in place-shaping projects ranging from urban growth areas to the London and Rio Olympic Parks. Having made Australia her home for the last five years, she is recognised a leading practitioner in Integrated Water Management - a field of many intersections. Celeste recently led the AWA award-winning Ballarat City IWM Plan and was a project leader for demonstration for the CRC for Water Sensitive Cities.

Working in partnership, Central Highlands Water, Central Goldfields Shire Council, North Central Catchment Management Authority and the Victorian State Government (DELWP) have developed an Integrated Water Management (IWM) Plan for the regional town of Maryborough in Victoria. The first IWM Plan to be developed for a small-medium sized regional town, the project has developed a replicable and successful methodology for implementing a partnered approach to water management at a town scale. By examining the whole water cycle and engaging with a wide range of stakeholders and community representatives, the plan set a clear vision and identified numerous opportunities to deliver tangible benefits to the community through local water management. By recognising and evaluating economic, social and environmental benefits together, projects were prioritised and planned which will be jointly taken forward by stakeholders.

The plan sought to address a range of issues including salinity challenges relating to water supply and recycled water management in the area, as well as waterway conditions, particularly the impact of the town on the downstream waterway, Four Mile Creek, in terms of 'excess' stormwater flows caused by urbanisation. Understanding the socio-economic characteristics of the town were key to shaping the project. Maryborough has the lowest average household income in Victoria, and support of community well-being, health and economic development were major priorities for the plan. Notably, the joint appraisal of stormwater, recycled water and other water supply options in the plan highlighted the potential to utilise stormwater as a new resource for the town which has a lower salinity than raw water and recycled water, providing the ability to enhance the value and application of these resources. The plan also identified several projects that will deliver direct social and economic benefits to the Maryborough community. These included improving the amenity of the town through stormwater-fed street trees, improving the town's key recreational water bodies (Lake Victoria and Goldfields Reservoir), securing long-term alternative water sources for green space irrigation and creating new community assets to enhance well-being and liveability.