



DAREBIN CREEK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Terms of Reference

Consultant – Revision of the Darebin Creek Valley Plan

September 2026

1. Background

The Darebin Creek Management Committee (DCMC) is a not-for-profit organisation that works to restore and care for the Darebin Creek and the Darebin Parklands. We do this by working in collaboration and partnership with the community, First Peoples, organisations, governments and businesses, with the knowledge that no one actor can do this work alone; we are more effective when we work together.

DCMC was established and continues to be supported by our member organisations - public landowners and community groups along the Darebin Creek catchment.

In 2021, DCMC led a collaborative process to develop the Darebin Creek Valley Plan. The process involved the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung, DCMC members, key land managers and community organisations. It adopted the Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation framework. The Plan identifies key threats to the Darebin Creek, desired ecological, social and community outcomes, targets and actions

DCMC is seeking an experienced consultant or consultancy team to lead a collaborative process to review, update and strengthen the Darebin Creek Valley Plan (the Plan). This process has been supported by the Victorian Department of Environment, Energy and Climate Action.

2. Purpose of the Consultancy

The purpose of this consultancy is to lead the overall development of the Darebin Creek Valley Plan, providing the strategic leadership, coordination, analysis, collaboration and facilitation, and technical writing required to review and update the Darebin Creek Valley Plan

The current Plan has provided an important foundation for DCMC and its partners. However, several opportunities to strengthen the Plan have been identified, including:

- increasing stakeholder and community ownership and use of the Plan;
- incorporating progress, achievements, lessons learned and contextual changes since 2021;
- strengthening the monitoring and evaluation framework;
- better reflecting the Darebin Creek as a living entity;
- further embedding Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung aspirations and Caring for Country and responding appropriately to Treaty and Native Title developments;
- ensuring the Plan provides a practical basis for prioritising and coordinating future action and investment.

The revised Plan is to be developed through a collaborative, co-design process with DCMC members and key stakeholders – local governments and state government, Melbourne Water,

Universities, community organisations and others, and will include community consultation. It is intended to be a shared, public facing framework for the Darebin Creek catchment that will guide ongoing collaborative action, rather than an internal DCMC document.

This process is being led by DCMC, supported by a project steering group, comprised of stakeholder representatives, that will provide a guidance and review function.

The Consultant will work closely with DCMC, the project Steering Group, and stakeholders in a highly collaborative way to develop an updated Plan that:

1. reflects the current condition, opportunities and challenges of the Darebin Creek catchment;
2. builds a shared vision and strategic direction for the future of the Creek and its catchment;
3. embeds Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Caring for Country and self-determined aspirations in an appropriate and culturally respectful manner;
4. identifies clear strategic goals, outcomes and priorities;
5. strengthens coordination between organisations and land managers;
6. provides a practical framework for prioritising investment and action;
7. incorporates a fit-for-purpose monitoring, evaluation and learning framework;
8. is aligned with relevant Traditional Owner, Victorian Government, local government and catchment strategies; and
9. is sufficiently accessible and practical that it can be actively used by DCMC and its partners over the life of the Plan.

3. Duration, Budget and Location

Duration: The indicative duration of the consultancy is approximately 90 days over the period between September 2026 and May 2028, with the bulk of the work completed before December 2027.

Maximum budget: the budget should not exceed \$90,000 (ex GST)

Location: The assignment location is largely remote, with meetings, workshops and other activities to be held at DCMC's offices in Alphington or other meeting spaces along the Darebin Creek Corridor. There is also potential for the consultant to work from DCMC's office.

4. Scope of Work

The Consultant will provide oversight of all aspects of this strategic process, including coordinating with and incorporating findings from several specialist consultants.

The key delivery areas are below.

4.1 Project establishment and management

- developing detailed project methodology and implementation schedule;
- supporting the operation of the project Steering Group;
- ensuring the project is kept on track and within budget;
- regular meeting and communication with DCMC staff;
- support the preparation of reports to the funder (Department of Environment, Energy and Climate Action).

4.2 Context Analysis

- assessment of current contextual issues that may impact the creek such as:
 - environmental, ecological and climate conditions;
 - urban development and planning controls;
 - community connection to the Creek and volunteering;
 - Traditional Owner aspirations and Caring for Country, Treaty and Native Title;
 - stakeholders and opportunities for collaboration;
 - other emerging issues or threats.

4.3 Strategic Alignment

- Review and identification of strategic alignment relevant with Traditional Owner, Victorian Government, waterway, local government and partner strategies.

4.4 Stakeholder Engagement and Co-design

- engage/consult with and maintain regular communications with stakeholders;
- design, plan and deliver co-design workshops and/or processes;
- document and review findings.

4.5 First Nations Engagement

- work within engagement protocols agreed with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung representatives,
- consider the implications of Treaty and Native Title processes and the Healthy Country Plan
- identify appropriate opportunities to engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities within the catchment,
- ensure that cultural knowledge and information are managed appropriately.

4.6 Community Engagement/Consultation

- review existing Council community engagement findings;
- develop and facilitate appropriate community engagement processes, both with the broader community and relevant local organisations;

4.7 Analysis, Strategic Development and Drafting of the Plan

- Analysis of data, technical information and stakeholder input;
- Drafting strategic framework and priority focus areas,
- Preparing draft document.

4.8 Prioritise Restoration and Activity Sites

- identify priority restoration sites, consider ecological, cultural, social and community values;
- identifies priorities for investment;
- identify opportunities for collaborative delivery.

4.9 Stakeholder Review

- facilitate stakeholder review of draft plan;
- incorporate final amendments.

4.10 Final Plan and Supporting Materials

- Produce final Darebin Creek Valley Plan, ready for design and publication;
- Supporting technical and strategic documentation, as required.

4.11 Communication

- prepare a concise public summary;
- contribute to launch/promotional events;

5. Additional Consultancies (Out of Scope)

To deliver this overall plan development there are resources for two key areas (with the potential to be combined under the one consultant/consultancy team).

5.1 Current Plan Review (approx. 10 days)

- Review progress and achievements of current plan;
- Identify areas for strengthening;
- Identify areas for learning and improvement.

5.2 Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Framework (approx. 20 days)

- Develop a MEL framework that
 - Identifies methods for measuring progress and change;
 - identify methods and responsibilities for data collection and reporting;
 - enable progress to be communicated to stakeholders and the community;
 - supports adaptive management;
 - can be practically maintained by DCMC and its stakeholders.

There are also two specialist areas of work being undertaken externally that are aligned to this process and will need to be considered.

5.3 Engagement with Diverse Communities

- This review is seeking to better understand the cultural diversity of the communities along the Darebin Creek area and investigate how DCMC can better engage with/provide opportunities for CALD communities to enjoy and participate in activities along the Creek.

Ecological Monitoring and Evidence

- This process aims to develop a catchment wide ecological monitoring framework and related processes for the Darebin Creek catchment. It may provide some of the monitoring methodologies and processes for this overall plan.

6. Required Consultant Expertise

DCMC is looking for a consultant or consultancy team that can demonstrate their capacity and skills to deliver this work. Key skills include

- Demonstrated experience in leading strategic planning processes;
- environment, waterway or landscape-scale planning knowledge;
- leading and implementing collaborative planning and co-design processes;
- strong stakeholder engagement and facilitation skills (with communities and professionals);
- development of implementation frameworks;
- the ability to work with Traditional Owners and First Nations organisations in an appropriate and respectful manner; and
- producing high-quality strategic plans for public and stakeholder use.

Experience in urban waterway management and/or Melbourne's waterway management context would be highly desirable. The ability to facilitate constructive discussions where stakeholders have differing priorities will be particularly important.

7. Approach to the Consultancy

DCMC is seeking a collaborative and facilitative consultant. The process should incorporate:

- genuine co-design;
- strong stakeholder facilitation;
- clear and transparent decision-making;
- appropriate recognition of Traditional Owner rights, interests and aspirations;

- integration of ecological, cultural, social and community outcomes;
- practical implementation focus;
- adaptive management; and
- flexibility to respond to emerging issues during the process.

The Consultant should demonstrate how it will ensure that the final Plan is owned and used by stakeholders, rather than being perceived as a document belonging solely to DCMC.

8. Consultant Proposal Requirements

DCMC is inviting proposals that demonstrate the following:

1. Understanding of the project

Demonstrate an understanding of the Darebin Creek catchment, the existing Plan, the purpose of the review and update, the collaborative nature of the process, and the outcomes sought by DCMC.

2. Proposed methodology

Describe the proposed approaches to delivering the various elements of the consultancy.

3. Project team

Provide names and roles, relevant qualifications, relevant experience, and availability over the project period.

4. Relevant experience

Provide examples of comparable projects, particularly those involving waterway or catchment planning, complex stakeholder environments, government/community collaboration, Traditional Owner engagement, environmental strategy and implementation planning.

5. Project management

Describe how the Consultant will manage project timelines, stakeholder expectations, competing priorities, risks, dependencies with other consultants, and quality assurance.

6. Fee proposal

Provide a detailed fee proposal against the scope, including assumptions and exclusions.

9. Intellectual Property and Confidentiality

All intellectual property created specifically for DCMC as part of this consultancy will become the property of DCMC upon payment, subject to any pre-existing intellectual property of the Consultant or third parties.

The Consultant must maintain confidentiality regarding information provided by DCMC and stakeholders and must not publish or distribute project material without DCMC's prior approval.

Any cultural knowledge or information provided by Traditional Owners will be subject to appropriate cultural protocols and any specific requirements identified by the relevant Traditional Owner representatives.

10. Working Arrangements

The Consultant will work with the DCMC Catchment and engagement Manager and Executive Officer as the principal project contacts.

The Consultant will be expected to attend meetings and workshops in person where this materially supports the collaborative planning process. Online participation may be used where appropriate.

DCMC will provide reasonable access to the existing Darebin Creek Valley Plan, relevant DCMC reports and data, stakeholder information, relevant engagement findings, project documentation, existing monitoring information, and other information held by DCMC that is relevant to the project.

The Consultant will be responsible for identifying any significant information gaps that may affect delivery.

11. Contact

For more information contact Annette Salkeld at annette@dcmc.org.au or ph. 0407 543 156.

Proposals for this consultancy close on Sunday 11th October. Please submit to Annette Salkeld (details above).

12. Indicative Timeline

This work is subject to a funding agreement with the Victorian Department of Environment, Energy and Climate Action. The proposed timeline under this agreement is below.

	2026					2027												2028					
	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June
Proposal submitted																							
Project establishment																							
Review																							
Context Analysis																							
Engaging diverse communities review																							
First Nations engagement																							
Strategy design and planning																							
Ecological monitoring plan																							
Community engagement																							
Strategy documentation																							
Review and endorsement																							
Finalisation and launch																							
Project reporting																							

