

## Promote, Protect and Preserve: Rural Lands IWM

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### **Biography:**

Rowan is the Rural Land Officer for Melbourne Water in the Yarra Ranges. For the past 5 years he has been working with rural landholders to improve management and develop small scale projects to improve water use efficiency on farm and to reduce the amount of sediment and nutrient runoff impacting on waterways. Growing up on a dairy farm and a horticulturalist by training, Rowan's career has encompassed Landcare, farm extension, as well as parks and bushland management in state and local government.

Matthew is a Civil Engineer at Storm Consulting in Richmond. He has over 5 year experience in civil design and recourses with particular focus on investigation and design of WSUD assets, Storm Water Harvesting and flood mitigation measures.

Rowan and Matthew have been working together on the Rural lands Program for three years working on Multiple projects from inception through to construction and ongoing monitoring.

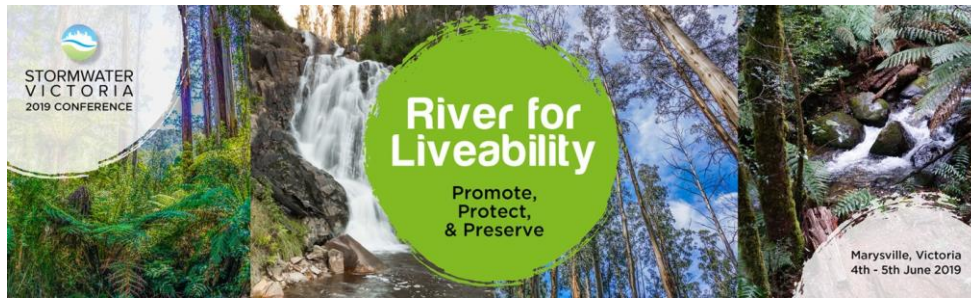
Melbourne Water has committed to delivering Integrated Water Cycle Management (IWCM) throughout the greater Melbourne region. The Mitigating Catchment Impact Program (MCIP) is used to target stream management practices. It is also expanding its area of interest away from the direct margins of waterways via the Rural Land Program (RLP). These developments provide an opportunity to protect and enhance stream flow through the adoption of IWCM and alternative water sources. The Healthy Waterways Strategy has identified on-ground investment, improving passing flow and addressing stock and domestic water use as priorities for unregulated catchments. Melbourne Water is working with Storm Consulting to develop Stream Flow Management Plans (SFMPs) in unregulated catchments.

Some initiatives that would build on SFMPs to improve the way we manage water in unregulated catchments include:

- better consideration and treatment of unlicensed water use
- adding engagement and incentives to the current regulatory/enforcement framework
- making decisions without the need to convene a ministerially appointed Consultative Committee.
- working closely with horticultural industry associations to promote best practice irrigation and land management

Storm has been working with Melbourne Water for 4 years to provide technical design support for the Rural Lands and Mitigating Catchment Impact Programs. The presentation will deliver a broad understanding of the programs, targeted outcomes, successes, challenges and Improvements. Case studies will also be presented as examples of how our integrated approach to farm management in partnership with the landholder can benefit both the farmer and the waterway. A brief description of the 2 programs is listed below.

The Melbourne Water's Rural Land Program provides assistance and funding opportunities for landholders on agricultural properties to undertake works that will keep soil and nutrients on their



farm and out of waterways. The Program is about improving the management of water sensitive areas such as waterways, drains, dams, wetlands, gullies, seeps, soaks springs and low-lying and seasonally wet areas. Benefits include increased productivity for the property owner and improved waterway health for the broader community.

The Mitigating Catchment Impact Program (MCIP) is a Melbourne Water grants program that targets landholders who operate farm dams and direct access pumping in unregulated surface water systems. The overall objective of the program is to increase the security of supply for existing users, both environmental and consumptive. This will be achieved by:

- Increasing community knowledge of ecological and hydrological issues within catchments.
- Increasing the capacity of communities to deal with these issues independently and proactively
- Reducing evaporation from farm dams
- Reducing or maintaining the area impounded by dams
- Increasing or maintaining low flows from dams
- Increasing the use of alternative water supplies in rural catchments.
- Decreasing demand on water resources through better land management