



CRC for
Water Sensitive Cities

Victoria Planning Provisions Amendment

(VC154 – Stormwater management)

Location:
Victoria



Case Study — Prepared by Cooperative Research Centre for Water Sensitive Cities, September 2020



Business
Cooperative Research Centres Program

Insight

This state-wide initiative aims to enable stronger stormwater management planning provisions for urban development and clearer integrated water management planning policies

Project description

On 26 October 2018, Amendment VC154 changed the Victoria Planning Provisions (VPP) and all planning schemes, to introduce new stormwater management provisions for urban development and amend State planning policies related to integrated water management (IWM). These changes followed recommendations made to the Victorian Government by the Improving Stormwater Management Advisory Committee.

This planning reform introduced stormwater management requirements for all commercial and industrial subdivisions and developments, all public use developments, and all residential multi-dwelling developments (VPP Clause 53.18 – Stormwater management in urban development). The Amendment also introduced a new IWM policy into the Planning Policy Framework (PPF) to embed IWM objectives and strategies in urban land use planning (VPP Clause 19.03-3S – Integrated water management).

The Amendment responds to Victorian Government commitments in: Water for Victoria, the Plan Melbourne Implementation Plan, the Yarra River Action Plan and the Port Phillip Bay Environmental Management Plan and was prepared in consultation with stakeholders in metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria.

↓ Image courtesy of DELWP.



What does this case study demonstrate?

Each case study has been selected to demonstrate specific solutions, benefits or enabling structures that support the creation of water sensitive cities. This case study focuses on:

Governance and policy

Water sensitive homes and buildings

Leadership and influence

Rainwater and stormwater harvesting

Water literacy and behaviour change

Waterway naturalisation

Stormwater treatment

The drivers

Planning reforms provide a pathway to achieve consistent and effective urban water management in Victoria

Despite significant policy support for water sensitive urban design (WSUD) and advances in WSUD practice, Victoria's policy and regulatory framework for stormwater management (including the Urban Stormwater Best Practice Environmental Management Guidelines, BPEM) was fragmented and incomplete. Reforms were needed to reduce dependence on individual local planning policy responses to achieve WSUD across commercial and industrial development, and to support the Victorian Government's priorities to protect the long term health of urban waterways and maintain the resilience of the state's towns and cities.

Previously, only residential subdivisions and apartments were required to meet the state's stormwater management requirements (BPEM). The PPF also did not adequately reflect contemporary approaches and government policy related to IWM and planning.

In 2018, the Minister for Planning established the Improving Stormwater Management Advisory Committee to provide advice on possible improvements to stormwater management. Following extensive consultation with stakeholders and the public, the Committee identified 18 short- and long-term recommendations to address the issues surrounding IWM, including planning reforms to help improve stormwater management in Victoria.

The innovations

Building capacity to support and strengthen stormwater management mechanisms in urban development and IWM practices across Victoria




- **Broader scope to reduce environmental impact** – A proactive, state-wide approach to broaden the range of urban development types subject to stormwater management requirements helps achieve improved water quality in our waterways and bays.
- **Coordinated action on IWM** – The amended PPF supports coordinated action on IWM and a consistent approach to planning requirements at state, regional and municipal levels across Victoria.
- **Behaviour change in the development community** – Amendment VC154 supports increased water literacy and a shift in the cultural mindset of the development community, because stormwater management requirements and IWM are now an obligation for residential, commercial and industrial developments.
- **Broad community and industry engagement** – The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) has delivered information sessions to a state-wide audience of over 800 participants (including local councils, water sector and the urban land development community) to provide further information and guidance about the changes introduced by Amendment VC154, with further training underway in 2020.

- **Online Navigator Tool and Resource Portal** – To further assist capacity building in councils and the urban land development community, DELWP, in partnership with Clearwater, has developed an online resource portal for development applicants and assessors. This online resource provides key information relating to stormwater management requirements for urban developments and aims to be a comprehensive guide about stormwater planning requirements within Victoria. This portal will be available later in 2020.

The lessons

- **Support regional areas** – Regional councils may need more support than their metropolitan counterparts and targeted workshops can be conducted to share further information and offer peer-to-peer networking opportunities.
- **Interpretation for each region** – It is important for local governments or planning authorities to firstly interpret the strategic intent of this new state-wide policy and work with the local development community to provide a clear set of expectations for its application. These expectations should closely align with each municipality's long term environmental, social and economic strategic objectives and values.
- **Review compliance** – Consider a process to ensure ongoing compliance with the new planning provisions, such as meeting permit conditions for achieving stormwater management on-site.

The outcomes

 Cities providing ecosystem services	 Cities as water supply catchments	 Cities comprising water sensitive communities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stronger IWM approach – Urban water will be planned in an integrated way to mitigate its impacts on the environment, property and public safety, and provide cooling, local habitat and amenity benefits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced impact on urban waterways and the bay – Improve the quality of stormwater runoff from most forms of urban development entering local waterways and reduce the rate of nutrient and sediment loads. • Alternative water supplies – Promote stormwater harvesting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building knowledge – Improve water literacy in the development community and drive behaviour change through additional support and capacity building. • Consistent policy – A clear and consistent state-wide policy framework will enable the planning system to better manage the environmental issues arising from increased urban development.

Business case

Costs	Benefits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amendment VC154 is expected to have a minor impact on the resource and administrative costs of local governments or planning authorities. Any new requirements for planning permit applications are consistent with existing requirements for other forms of development, which are well understood by industry, councils and relevant agencies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen stormwater management mechanisms by applying consistent requirements across residential, commercial and industrial development in urban areas. • Streamline policies relating to IWM to allow responsible authorities and applicants to navigate the framework more effectively. • Reduce the environmental impact of stormwater runoff. • Create and maintain urban landscapes that provide healthy waterways, wetlands and coasts and deliver more resilient communities with healthier ecosystems.

Transferability

Amendment VC154 offers a consistent, state-wide policy to help plan IWM, stormwater management and WSUD in urban development, and provides an effective framework for other jurisdictions across Australia to consider and adopt.

Project collaborators

- Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP)
- Victorian local governments
- Water sector
- Academia
- Housing and building industries
- Environmental groups
- Government departments

New developments including steep stormwater outfalls at Highton, Geelong.



Additional information

[Improving Stormwater Management Advisory Committee Final Report](#)

[Planning Advisory Note 75: Amendment VC154 – Stormwater management](#)

[VPP Clause 53.18: Stormwater management in urban development](#)

[VPP Clause 19.03-3S: Integrated water management](#)

