

7.2 Notice of Motion, Cr Griffiths: Swimmable Birrarung/Yarra

Mover: Cr Griffiths

Seconder: Cr Camillo

Motion

1. That Council:
 - 1.1. Notes the Lord Mayor's recent public comments expressing confidence that the Birrarung/Yarra can be swimmable before the year 2050.
 - 1.2. Recognises that such an achievement presents an opportunity to reimagine the Birrarung/Yarra as part of a Melbourne 2050 Vision by activating and celebrating one of the city's most iconic natural features, enhancing public use and connection to the river.
 - 1.3. Requests that management investigate:
 - 1.3.1. what actions council has authority to take to support the goal of making the Birrarung/Yarra safe for public swimming and the costs associated with those actions, and the timeframe in which actions need to be carried out to achieve this goal.
 - 1.3.2. which other levels of government have responsibility for policies and delivering water quality improvements and infrastructure required to make the Birrarung/Yarra swimmable and what council can do to advocate to them.
 - 1.3.3. Specific locations along the river which could feature as part of trial program.
 - 1.4. Requests that management report back to a Future Melbourne Committee before the end of 2025 on the findings of their investigations.

Background

2. In the Herald-Sun (17/7/25) it was reported that the Lord Mayor said "We know there are a lot of issues to overcome, but as a city with a united goal, I'm confident we can make it a reality well before the year 2050."
3. The Seine River was made swimmable following extensive works in association with the 2024 Paris Olympics.
4. The Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo (Yarra Strategic Plan) was released in 2022 and fosters river management without borders encouraging state and local government to manage the river together and in partnership with Traditional Owners.
5. In 2024, the City of Yarra (CoY) became the first Australian city to be a signatory to the Swimmable Cities Charter, an international alliance (125 organisations across 72 cities/towns in 27 countries) supporting grassroots movement for transforming urban waterways. The CoY took this step as part of commitment to restoring the health of the Birrarung/Yarra.