

Recipes for Success - community advocacy for waterway protection

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Crises in waterway management are the stuff of many alarmist headlines in our papers. As the ongoing drought, problematic water use and over-optimistic water allocations affect the wider community, these are only likely to become more common as communities express their displeasure with the managers of our waterways.

Two examples of waterways in such crisis are the Murray, with its dying red gums, and the Yarra, with proposals to take out water and reduce flows that could lead to decline in water quality.

Are these really crises? How did they come about? What can be done about them? What is the role of the community in cases such as this? And what can Waterkeepers Australia, as a community support organisation, do?

In this workshop, we will examine these two case studies - one rural, one urban - to see the basis of the issue, decide who might be involved, and try to agree what a successful resolution of the issue might look like.

Different groups might see success differently, of course. We will then plan strategies that community groups might follow in working towards this resolution and identify the knowledge and skills that they might need. What training programs are available that might help? Who could be involved in helping them?

The support services of Waterkeepers Australia will be presented, and the gaps between what is needed and what is available will be determined. This will assist workshop participants in planning their future community liaison programs, and also shape the work program of Waterkeepers Australia as it becomes established as a major player in community support for waterway protection.

Participants should bring with them their knowledge and experience of working with waterways and waterway communities, a pen and an inquiring mind.