Report compiled: 12/05/25

Waterbug Report for the community census sampling results on Edgars Creek at the waterfall (dog crossing), Ronald Street, Coburg.

MERRI CREEK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

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WaterWatch Site code and name:

ME_YED030. Edgars Creek, dog crossing, Ronald Street, Coburg.

https://ww-data.waterwatch.org.au/site/2001544

Date sampled: 11/05/25 at 10.30am
Surveyors: Trevor Hausler and Julia Cirillo (MCMC staff) with 7 community volunteers

Description

The weather was sunny, approx. 20 degrees with no wind and the Edgars Creek appeared clear, low turbidity, with a low to medium flow. Many dogs were swimming in the water which did stir up the sediment. There has not been any significant rain for the past month. We carried out a habitat survey first to determine the variety of habitats to sample. It consisted of 50% edge plants and 50% boulder, cobble, and coarse substrate. The sampling site lies a few hundred metres upstream of its confluence with Merri Creek. The site consists of a rock ledge with a pool approx. 1 m deep and 10 m across upstream and downstream there is a rocky riffle about 20 m long and descending approx 2m in elevation. Upstream and downstream of the pool there is some edge vegetation, but most of it has been stripped away by erosion

due to high stormwater flows after heavy rain. There is no instream vegetation. The surrounding area is heavily urbanized.

The sampling revealed a low range of 14 taxa, dominated by pollution tolerant species. The weighted ALT SIGNAL score was 3.4. This indicates at this section of the Edgars Creek is heavily impacted by (most likely) stormwater pollution. This is unfortunately usual in the lower, urban reaches of the Merri Creek catchment, where previous stormwater pollution events, and lack of instream vegetation and habitats are lacking. The SIGNAL score (and the number of taxa) was a usual for this area, tending to be a bit lower.

Please refer to Table 1 for the full results.

Table 1. List of Taxa and SIGNAL scores for ME_YMR155 on 13/04/2025.

Name	Common Name	Quantity	SIGNAL 2 Score	Photo
Class Oligochaeta	Aquatic worms	2	2	
Phylum Annelida, Class Hirudinea	Leeches	4	1	
Phylum Mollusca				
Family Sphaeriidae & Family Cobiculidae	Basket and pea shells mussels	8	5	
Family Physidae,	Physa acuta sp. (marbled menace)	5	2	
Class Crustacea				
Family Atyidae	Glass Shrimps	2	3	
Class Insecta	**Insects**			
Order Coleoptera	**Beetles**			
Family Psephenidae Genus *Sclerocyphon*	Water pennies	19	6	
Order Diptera	**True Flies**			
Family Chironomidae	Bloodworms	15	4	

Family Simulidae	Black Fly Larvae	4	5	
Order Hemiptera	**True Bugs**			
Family Corixidae	Waterboatmen			
Genus *Micronecta*	Little brindle boatman	2	3	
Family Notonectidae Genus *Enithares*	Robust backswimmers	2	3	
Family Veliidae	Water treader	3	1	
Order Odonata	**Dragonflies and Damselflies**			
Family Coenagrionidae & Lestidae	Leaf tailed Damselflies	20	1	
Order Trichoptera	**Caddies Flies**			
Family Leptoceridae				
Genus *Notalina*	Headbanger caddis	20	6	
Family *Ecnomidae*				
Genus *Ecnomus*	Bandit caddis	9	6	
	TOTALS	**115**	**48**	
	No. of taxa	14	Weighted/ALT SIGNAL2 score	3.4*
			Meaning	Heavily impacted

***Explanatory notes on SIGNAL Score (from the Waterwatch Victoria website)**

Each aquatic macro invertebrate is given an ALT (Agreed Level Taxonomy) SIGNAL2 score depending on their sensitivity to pollutants. SIGNAL stands for Stream Invertebrate Grade Number - Average Level. In 1994, a new version of this method, known as SIGNAL2, was developed and is available on the Federal Government website. By knowing the SIGNAL2 grade for every family, the SIGNAL2 score of a site, and therefore its health, can be assessed. For example a site that has abundant diversity and many sensitive aquatic invertebrates will have a high ALT SIGNAL2 score.

To calculate an ALT SIGNAL2 score for a site:

Step 1. Collect, sort and identify the creatures found at the site

Step 2. Calculate the sum of the individual ALT SIGNAL2 grades

Step 3. Divide the sum of the individual ALT SIGNAL2 grades by the number of different invertebrates collected to calculate the ALT SIGNAL2 score.

A guide for interpreting water health according to the SIGNAL score of a site is given in this table

SIGNAL score ratings

Higher than 6	Healthy habitat
Between 5 and 6	Mild pollution
Between 4 and 5	Moderate pollution
Less than 4	Severe pollution

These ratings were originally developed for very “normal” freshwater streams and rivers, and do not work as well for wetlands or lakes.

This report has been added to the WaterWatch database www.vic.waterwatch.org.au

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Images courtesy Amy Piesse, Atlas of Living Australia, National Waterbug Blitz, MCMC and I Naturalist.