

Report compiled: 16/04/25

**Waterbug Report for the community census sampling results on Merri Creek at end of Keady Street, Coburg North**



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**Waterwatch Site code and name:**

ME\_YMR155. Merri Creek, just north of the end of Keady Street, Coburg North.

<https://ww-data.waterwatch.org.au/site/2310181>

Date sampled: 13/04/25 at 10.30am

Surveyors: Trevor Hausler and Julia Cirillo (MCMC staff) with 8 community volunteers

**Description**

The weather was sunny, warm (29 degrees) with no wind and the Merri Creek appeared clear, low turbidity, with a low to medium flow. There has not been any significant a month been approx. 20mm of rain over the preceding 5 days. We carried out a habitat survey first to determine the variety of habitats to sample. The site was dominated by an extensive riffle with a pool upstream that had some edge vegetation trailing into the water column. The main riffle (pictured above) that could be safely accessed by samplers and some of the edge vegetation was also safely sampled.

The sampling revealed a moderate range of 19 taxa, though these tended to be dominated by pollution tolerant species. The weighted ALT SIGNAL score was 3.9. This indicates at this section of the Merri


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Creek is heavily impacted by (most likely) stormwater pollution. This is unfortunately usual in the lower, urban reaches of the Merri Creek, 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. For example, the number of taxa on 2x sites surveyed seasonally on the lower Merri catchment usually get between 15-20 mainly tolerant taxa.









Please refer to Table 1 for the full results.

**Table 1. List of Taxa and SIGNAL scores for ME\_YMR155 on 13/04/2025.**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Common Name</b>	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>SIGNAL 2 Score</b>	<b>Photo</b>
Class Oligochaeta	Aquatic worms	2	2	
<b>Phylum Turbellaria</b>	Flatworms	1	2	
<b>Phylum Mollusca</b>				
Family Hyriidae	Freshwater mussels	1	5	
Family Physidae,	Physa acuta sp. (marbled menace)	5	2	
Family Planorbidae	Planorbids, local sp. various genera	1	2	
<b>Class Crustacea</b>				
Family Atyidae	Glass Shrimps	20	3	
Class Amphipoda	Sideswimmers, scuds	2	3	
<b>Class Insecta</b>	<b>Insects</b>			
<b>Order Coleoptera</b>	<b>Beetles</b>			


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Family Hydrophilidae	Water scavenger beetles	1	2	
Family Psephenidae Genus <i>Sclerocyphon</i>	Water pennies	19	6	
<b>Order Diptera</b>	<b>True Flies</b>			
Family Chironomidae	Bloodworms	9	4	
Family Simuliidae	Black Fly Larvae	1	5	
<b>Order Hemiptera</b>	<b>True Bugs</b>			
Family Corixidae	Waterboatmen			
Genus <i>Micronecta</i>	Little brindle boatman	9	3	
Family Notonectidae Genus <i>Enithares</i>	Robust backswimmers	4	3	
Family Veliidae	Water treader	20	1	
<b>Order Odonata</b>	<b>Dragonflies and Damselflies</b>			
Family Coenagrionidae & Lestidae	Leaf tailed Damselflies	4	1	
Family Telephlebiidae	Telephlebs	1	9	
<b>Order Trichoptera</b>	<b>Caddies Flies</b>			
Family Hydropsychidae	Net-spinning Caddis	20	6	
Family Leptoceridae Genus <i>Triplectides</i>	Stick Caddis	20	3	

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Unidentified Leptoceridae (various genera)	Flat shack caddis (messy builders)	4	4	
	<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>66</b>	
			Weighted/ALT SIGNAL2 score	3.9*
			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 [waterbug app and included as part of the National WaterBug Blitz data](#).

This report and the survey was funded by Melbourne Water.

Yours sincerely,

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