Faculty of Engineering
Summer Research Program 2019/2020

It’s dirty, it’s brown, yet thousands of people still swim in it each year! Understanding the recreational usage of the Yarra River, Melbourne.

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Objective
Currently water quality of the Upper Yarra River is unknown and people are swimming in it! Your aim will be to help assess the health risk by understanding the user characteristics at swimming sites. You will do this by monitoring recreational activities and determining exposure volumes in order to predict the probability of illness. You will analyse the results to understand whether the users of the river are at risk to waterborne diseases.

Project Details
Do you think the Yarra River is important to the community? Do you like to kayak, walk your dog by the water, or splash around with your friends? Are you concerned about the quality of its water since it looks so dirty? Join us to learn more while getting paid too!

It’s summer, it’s hot out, and the local river swimming spot is where everyone is going to cool down. But is that a wise idea? In the 1992 Australian Open, Champion Jim Courier jumped into the Yarra River for a victory swim and fell ill with a stomach virus. Does that mean you will too? We need to assess these locations for recreational risks in order to better manage the risk and preserve the riverine system for the benefit of the community.

This project will include: driving to conduct recreational surveys once a week; monitoring recreational activity remotely on our time lapse cameras; estimate the number of people who swim, kayak, canoe and just sit next to the water’s edge; analyse the results and help present our findings to Melbourne Water and the Victorian Environment Protection Authority (EPA) on the recreational risk of the Upper Yarra River. Long walks along a relaxing, quiet riverbed on sampling days are optional bonuses! Working as a team is a must.

Prerequisites - units, degree, experience or restrictions on student types:
Nothing other than a good attitude and open to having at work.

Additional information for students:
This project is partly funded by Australian Research Council, Melbourne Water, and EPA Victoria, so you will develop close connections with industry partners which may result in new job opportunities. If you are shortlisted, you will attend an informal chat with our team.