

**Management report to Council**

**Agenda item 14.6**

**Other Confidential Matter**

**Council**

**Endorsement of draft Yarra Strategic Plan for public consultation**

**29 October 2019**

**Presenter:** Claire Ferres Miles, Director City Strategy and Place

**Purpose and background**

1. The purpose of this report is to seek endorsement of the draft Yarra Strategic Plan (the 'draft plan') for public consultation.
2. The Yarra Strategic Plan is a key component of the *Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murrong) Act 2017* (the 'Act'). The draft plan aims to transform how the Yarra River is managed, recognising the intrinsic connection of the Birrarung to Traditional Owners and the community and to protect the river and its parklands for generations to come.
3. The draft plan, led by Melbourne Water, has been prepared by the Yarra Collaboration Committee made up of senior representatives from the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP), Parks Victoria, Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority, Transport for Victoria, VicRoads, Victorian Planning Authority and the eight Yarra River corridor councils including the City of Melbourne.
4. As a 10 year strategy, the draft plan sets out the foundation to achieve the Yarra River 50 year community vision and deliver on the aspirations contained in the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation's water policy.
5. The draft plan is the first integrated river corridor strategy. It identifies immediate actions for the river, enables long term collaborative management between agencies and Traditional Owners, and guides local planning.
6. The draft plan is scheduled to be released for public consultation in late 2019. Prior to public consultation, the Act requires the draft plan be endorsed by each of the responsible public entities.

**Confidentiality**

7. The information contained in this report has been designated as confidential information by the Chief Executive Officer because it contains information which if released, would prejudice the Council or any person. Melbourne Water and DELWP have requested that the draft plan not be made public before endorsement by all responsible public entities.

**Key issues**

8. City of Melbourne is located in the inner city reach extending from Dights Falls to Westgate Bridge. The inner city reach is guided by its own 50 year community vision.
9. The land use framework will guide future land use and development and ensure that activities within the corridor deliver on the performance objectives over the next 10 years.
10. The Act designates three categories of land to which the plan applies including Yarra River Strategic Plan area, Yarra River land and Greater Yarra Urban Parklands.
11. Yarra River land has not been declared in City of Melbourne as it only currently applies upstream of Punt Road, South Yarra. Management are seeking advice from DELWP on when the Yarra River land will extend into the municipality.
12. Three distinct Traditional Owner groups are associated with the inner city reach of the Yarra River. Currently the draft plan only includes formal input from the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung.
13. DELWP has been engaging regularly with staff at the Bunurong Land Council and Yaluk-ut Weelam Elders Council regarding development of the draft plan. This engagement has been positive and is ongoing, but has not yet produced feedback or input to the draft plan. City of Melbourne will continue to encourage broad engagement during the consultation period to recognise the connection to country of all Traditional Owner groups in the final Yarra Strategic Plan.
14. The City River Strategy is being developed in parallel to the Yarra Strategic Plan. There is strong alignment between the Yarra Strategic Plan and City River Strategy. Consultation on the Draft City River Strategy concluded in July and is currently being finalised for Council's consideration in early 2020.

**Recommendation from management**

15. That Council:
  - 15.1. Endorses the draft Yarra Strategic Plan for public consultation.
  - 15.2. Notes not all Traditional Owner Groups in the inner city reach are represented in the draft plan with an expectation that the final Yarra Strategic Plan will include input from all groups.
16. That the resolution and report be made public once the draft Yarra Strategic Plan is endorsed by all responsible public entities and released for public consultation.

**Attachments:**

1. Supporting Attachment (Page 3 of 137)
2. Draft Yarra Strategic Plan (Page 4 of 137)

## Supporting Attachment

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### Legal

1. The Yarra Strategic Plan is a key component of the *Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murrong) Act 2017* (the 'Act'). The plan aims to transform how the Yarra River is managed, recognising the intrinsic connection of the Birrarung to Traditional Owners and the community and to protect the river and its parklands for generations to come.

### Finance

2. The draft Yarra Strategic Plan references financial commitments City of Melbourne has already made publicly in our 2019/20 annual plan and budget for projects that will enhance amenity and connect the community to the Yarra River.

### Conflict of interest

3. No member of Council staff, or other person engaged under a contract, involved in advising on or preparing this report has declared a direct or indirect interest in relation to the matter of the report.

### Health and Safety

4. The 10 year performance objectives of the draft plan include improving the rivers parklands to support community wellbeing and improving the water quality of the Yarra, these objectives provide opportunities to improve the Health and Safety of people visiting the Yarra.

### Stakeholder consultation

5. Once endorsed by all responsible entities, the draft Yarra Strategic Plan will be available for public comment commencing in November 2019.
6. To achieve the Act's requirements for best practice public participation, it is anticipated that public consultation will run for up to three months and be designed in conjunction with the Yarra Collaboration Committee.
7. Following public consultation, the reviewed Yarra Strategic Plan will be finalised and presented back to the 15 organisations for endorsement. The final plan will then go through Ministerial approval.

### Relation to Council policy

8. The recommendation is consistent with Total Water Mark City as a Catchment Strategy and Nature in the City Strategy as it relates to improving the water quality of the Yarra River and protecting its land, floodplains and billabongs to achieve greater biodiversity. It is also consistent with the Open Space Strategy in improving the rivers parklands.

### Environmental sustainability

9. In developing this proposal, environmental sustainability issues and opportunities have been considered. The Yarra Strategic Plan will deliver on 10 year performance objectives which include improving water quality, biodiversity and protecting the natural beauty of the Yarra River corridor.

Draft

# YARRA STRATEGIC PLAN

(version 7)

Draft for endorsement - confidential

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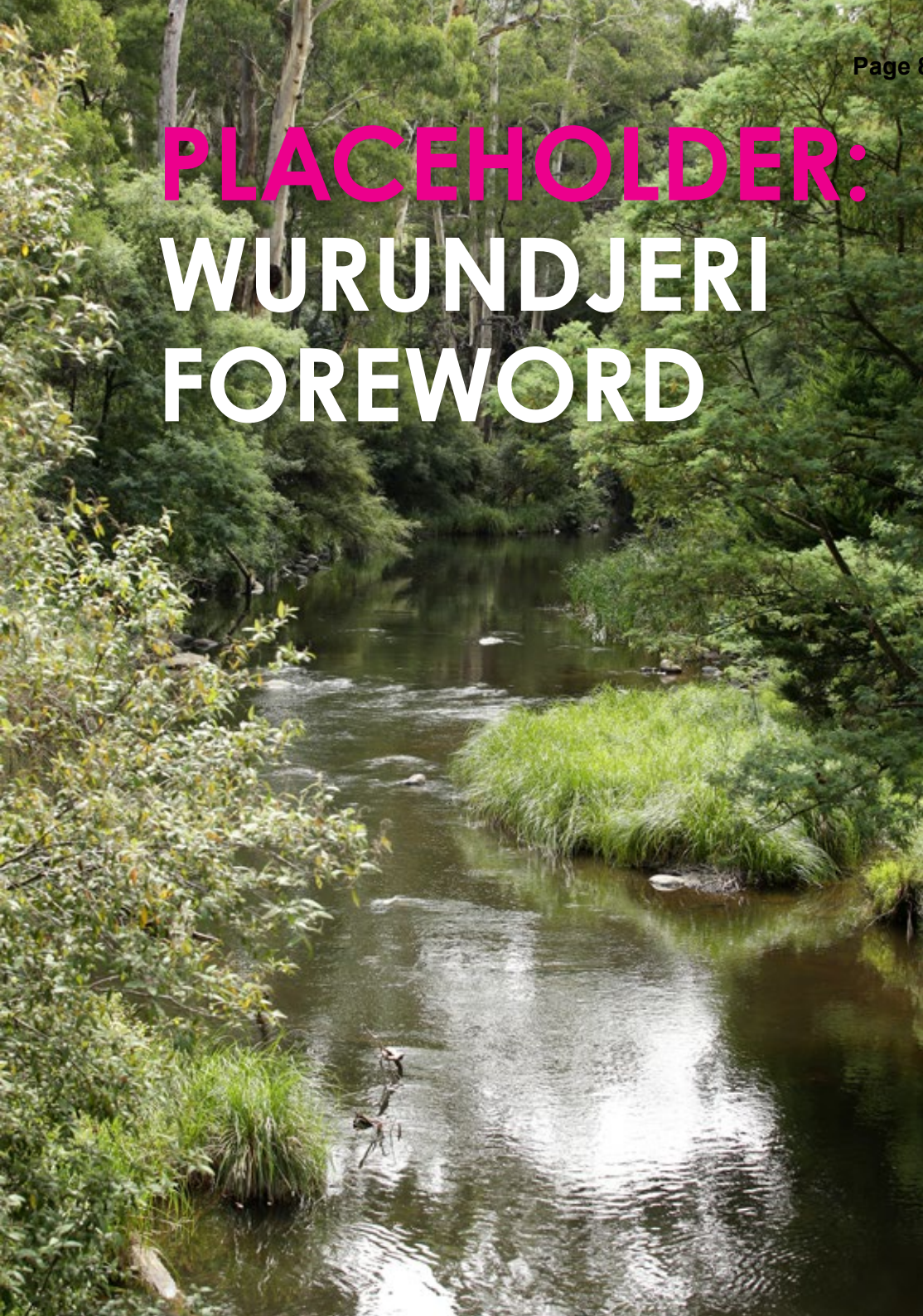
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# PLACEHOLDER: MINISTERIAL FOREWORD



# PLACEHOLDER: WURUNDJERI FOREWORD





# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

'A special place for me is where the Yarra meets the sea, where my Aboriginal mother lived and my English father worked. I love to walk along the Yarra and remember stories my father told me about his grandfather Tom Roberts, the artist who painted the river as it is: a whole living entity.'  
– Lisa Roberts, community member

As a 10 year strategy, the Yarra Strategic Plan sets the foundation to achieve the Yarra River 50 Year Community Vision and deliver on the aspirations contained in the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation's water policy.

The Yarra Strategic Plan has been prepared by the Yarra Collaboration Committee, which is made up of senior representatives from Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation; Banyule City Council, Boroondara City Council; the Department of Environment; Land, Water and Planning; Department of Transport (VicRoads and VicTrack); Manningham Council; Melbourne City Council; Melbourne Water; Nillumbik Shire Council; Parks Victoria; Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority; Stonnington City Council; Victorian Planning Authority; Yarra City Council and Yarra Ranges Council.

## The Birrarung: our lifeblood, our shared history, our river

Over tens of thousands of years the Yarra River, Birrarung, has shaped the lives of those around it.

The river is our lifeblood, providing water to drink, places to socialise, parks for play, nature to experience and landscapes to explore.

As our city grows and the climate warms there will be more demands placed on our iconic waterway and its parklands. For the Yarra to thrive under these pressures, our river needs more from us.

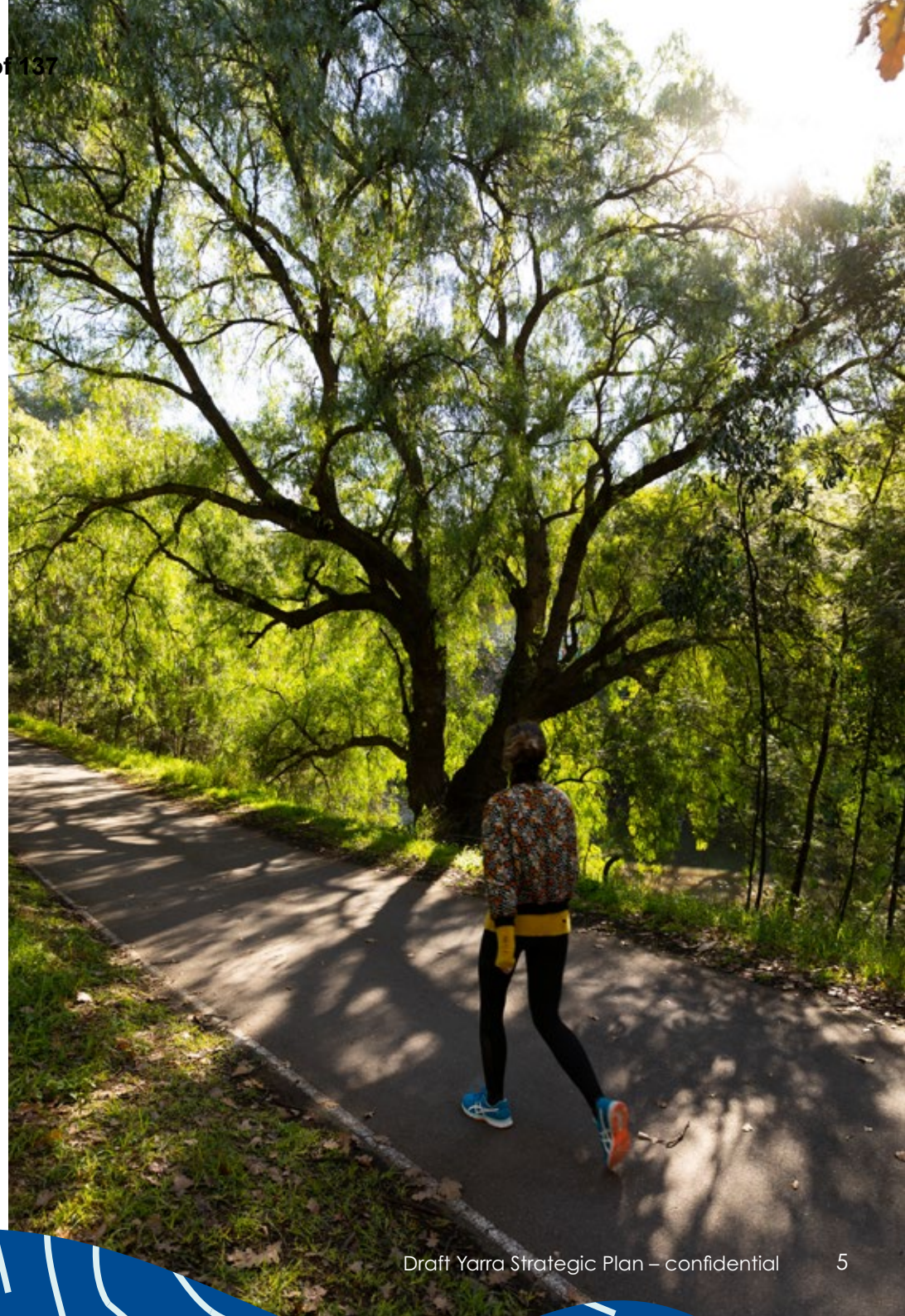
With changing practices, and the efforts of stakeholders and the community, the condition of the river has improved considerably over recent decades. However, in its lower reaches the Yarra remains a polluted river facing unprecedented population growth, climate change – and an uncertain future without significant intervention. We must act now to protect the river and ensure it continues to support our healthy city and environment.

To deliver this plan we will work with the Yarra's Traditional Owners, whose interdependent relationship with the environment provides us with a blueprint for holistic management of the river and its lands.

The community is calling for us to work with Traditional Owners to deliver on a shared goal: the Yarra River 50 Year Community Vision.

'The city of Melbourne grew from the banks of the Birrarung – the river has allowed it to become the vibrant city it is today, but this has come at great cost to the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung people and the Birrarung itself. Under Wurundjeri lore, it is the responsibility of everyone living on Country to protect the water and the land. A willingness by the broader community to take responsibility for the waterways is in itself an opportunity for reconciliation.'

– Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation



## Achieving the community's vision for our river, together

The Yarra Strategic Plan is the first integrated corridor plan developed collaboratively by senior representatives from the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, as well as all 15 state and local government agencies involved in managing the river. This unprecedented alliance demonstrates the serious and sustained commitment, by all levels of government, to protect the Yarra River corridor for future generations.

The community is calling for us to work with Traditional Owners to deliver on a shared goal: the Yarra River 50 Year Community Vision.

To achieve the Yarra River 50 Year Community Vision we must take collective action. This requires a significant shift in the way state and local government agencies view and manage the river. We need to work with Traditional Owners to ensure that, as the vision states, 'Our Yarra River, Birrarung, is respected as a sacred natural living entity and everyone takes responsibility for its care'.

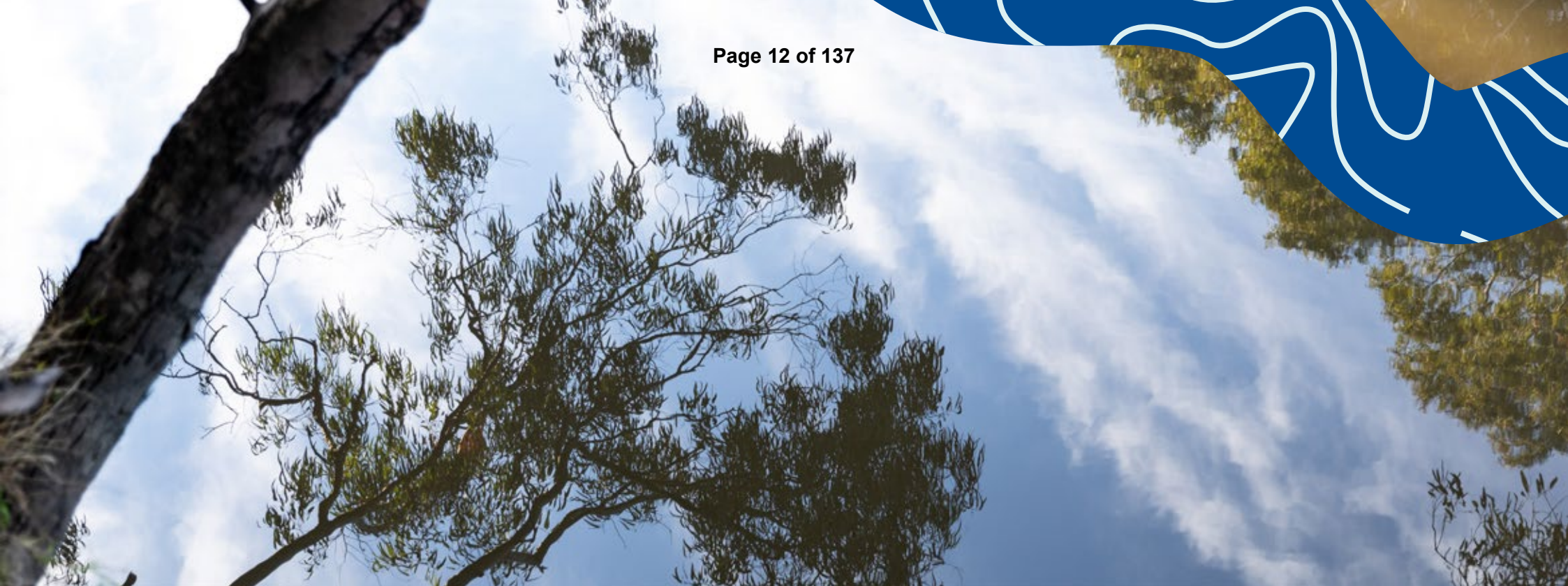
To achieve this change we must harness the great work that is already being done for the river: the 50,000 hours community members spend volunteering each year, the water available for environmental flows, the reestablishment of Traditional Owner cultural knowledge and practices, and the significant annual investment (\$80 million in 2019/20) by state and local government agencies to improve the river corridor. We will work across organisational boundaries to leverage these existing efforts to get the greatest benefit for the river as a whole – to ensure it remains a central part of the lives of our children and grandchildren.

The Yarra Strategic Plan is the first integrated corridor plan developed collaboratively by senior representatives from the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation as well as all 15 state and local government agencies involved in managing the river. This unprecedented alliance demonstrates the serious and sustained commitment, by all levels of government, to protect the Yarra River corridor for future generations.

The Yarra Strategic Plan is the first of its kind and sets the foundation for incremental change to achieve the Yarra River 50 Year Community Vision. As a 10 year strategy, it identifies immediate actions for the river, enables long-term collaborative management between agencies and Traditional Owners, and guides local planning.

## The 10 year performance objectives: celebrating the relationship between the river and the community

To help guide our activities in the Yarra River corridor, we have identified four 10 year performance objectives. These objectives represent the changes we are seeking for the river.



## 10 YEAR PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES



### A healthy river and lands

Improving the water quality of the Yarra River and protecting its land, floodplains and billabongs to achieve greater biodiversity.



### A culturally diverse river corridor

Acknowledging, protecting and commemorating the rich heritage of the Birrarung and its stories.



### Quality parklands for a growing population

Improving the river's parklands to support community wellbeing and strengthen the relationship between the Yarra River, its community and visitors.



### Protecting the natural beauty of the Yarra River corridor

Respecting the significance of the Yarra River's landscapes. Where we build, we will protect and celebrate the river's natural beauty, landscapes and views.

## How the Yarra Strategic Plan works

The Yarra Strategic Plan is split into two interrelated parts:

**Part 1 – Working together to achieve the community vision:** this part of the plan showcases the immediate investment already planned for the river; acknowledges the history of Traditional Owners and recognises their intrinsic relationship to the Yarra River, Birrarung. It outlines a modern governance approach for our collaborative actions on Yarra River land (public land) in the next 10 years.

Achieving the performance objectives requires a shift in the way agencies and Traditional Owners work together to manage the river.

**Part 2 – Land use framework:** this part of the plan marks a step-change in how we manage development along the river, setting a new standard for decision-making and placing the river at the heart of land use planning.

As Melbourne grows, the Yarra River must be a central consideration in land use planning and development in the corridor. The land use framework will guide future land use and development to ensure that activities within the corridor deliver on the performance objectives over the next 10 years.

The framework will protect areas of high environmental, landscape and cultural value, and identifies opportunities to improve access to the river for community enjoyment. It ensures that the health and integrity of the Yarra are protected.

All members of the Yarra Collaboration Committee are committed to delivering the projects, objectives, and actions outlined in the Yarra Strategic Plan. We will work towards achieving the community's vision for the river to 'deepen the relationship between nature and people' and manage the river as one living entity.

## YARRA RIVER 50 YEAR COMMUNITY VISION

Our Yarra River, Birrarung, is recognised around the world as an iconic example of a nurturing relationship between a river and its community.

Flowing from source to sea, it is the resilient lifeblood of past, present and future generations of Victorians. It connects and enriches our flourishing city, suburbs, regions and beyond.

Our Yarra River, Birrarung, its essential role in our lives and its rich history, are respected, understood and protected. It has cared for us for thousands of years and will for thousands to come.

The vital and continued role of Traditional Owners as custodians of the River, and its role in their culture, is recognised and celebrated.

Our Yarra River, Birrarung, and its diverse surrounding landscapes provide a place of refuge, recreation, learning and livelihood. It brings communities together and supports sustainable local economies.

Its clean waters and connected network of thriving green spaces nurture biodiversity, and deepen the relationship between people and nature.

Our Yarra River, Birrarung, is respected as a sacred natural living entity and everyone takes responsibility for its care. Its health and integrity are paramount and uncompromised.

What is good for the Yarra is good for all.



# INTRODUCING THE YARRA STRATEGIC PLAN

The Yarra Strategic Plan is a 10 year overarching policy and planning framework for the Yarra River corridor. The plan will set the foundation for delivery of the Yarra River 50 Year Community Vision.

The draft Yarra Strategic Plan has been prepared by the Yarra Collaboration Committee, which is made up of senior representatives from Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation; Banyule City Council; Boroondara City Council; the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning; Department of Transport (VicRoads and VicTrack); Manningham Council; Melbourne City Council; Melbourne Water; Nillumbik Shire Council; Parks Victoria; Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority; Stonnington City Council; Victorian Planning Authority; Yarra City Council and Yarra Ranges Council.

## The story of the Yarra and its parklands

The Yarra River has flowed for at least 100 million years. Shifting and cutting new paths across the landscape, the river has shaped Greater Melbourne.

From the near pristine flanks of Mt Baw Baw, the Yarra River flows for 242 kilometres through its protected forested catchment, agricultural land, townships and suburbs into the heart of Melbourne and out to Port Phillip Bay.

The Yarra River provides Melburnians with 70% of our world-class drinking water. It is a valuable natural asset that supports the community by providing water for potable and agricultural uses, areas for recreation, and protected areas that allow native flora and fauna to thrive. The river corridor is a key contributor to Melbourne's famous liveability; it encourages us to walk, row, cycle, run, play, swim, reflect, appreciate, observe and explore. The river corridor provides an estimated \$730 million in value to the community annually, with recreation and aesthetic benefits being the largest contributors. This is in addition to the significant value provided by the Yarra River as the city's main water supply.

The river acts as a timeline of our geographical and cultural history. The Yarra River and its lands have always been pivotal in the lives of Traditional Owners and have also shaped the European settlement of Melbourne.

To the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung people, the river is known as the Birrarung, meaning 'river of mists and shadows'. It is the sacred lifeblood of their Country, providing food, water and meeting places, as well as being a central element in the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung people's cultural and spiritual life.

The role of the river in the lives of the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung people has been captured and carried in oral memory for tens of thousands of years.

The Wurundjeri Woi wurrung people have lived in harmony with their surrounding environment, managing the country along the Birrarung to ensure a continuous and sustainable food supply.

For European settlers from 1835 onwards, the river provided a reliable water supply for the frontier town that would become Melbourne and became a focal point for settlement, commerce and industry.

Colonisation led to large-scale devastation of the Aboriginal population in Victoria. European settlement displaced many Aboriginal people from their land and had a major impact on the health of the river.

In direct contrast with the harmonious management of the river by Traditional Owners early colonists', land clearing, sewage and industry polluted the Yarra's lower reaches.

Over the last century, there have been several successful government and community-led campaigns to improve the health of the Yarra River and its lands. As Melbourne faces its third, and largest, wave of population growth, modern governance and management will be more important than ever to protect the Yarra River.

To refocus the way the Yarra River corridor is managed and protected, the Victorian Government has worked closely with the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation<sup>1</sup> to deliver the *Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murron) Act 2017* (the Act). This legislation enshrines in law the protection of the Yarra River corridor and acknowledges the significance of the river to the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung people, highlighting their ongoing role in its management.

The Act calls for collaborative management of the Yarra River corridor, driven by the development of the Yarra Strategic Plan and a long-term community vision. Together, these documents will ensure that the Yarra River is protected 'as one living and integrated natural entity'.



## A powerful water policy and community vision

*Nhanbu narrun ba ngargunin twarn Birrarung (Ancient Spirit & Lore of the Yarra)*

The Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation developed a water policy to define their ambitions for planning, policy and decision-making for the Birrarung.

The policy *Nhanbu narrun ba ngargunin twarn Birrarung*, meaning 'Ancient Spirit and Lore of the Yarra', was launched in May 2018.

The policy has informed the development of the Yarra Strategic Plan, ensuring that the Wurundjeri's aspirations for the river, and the inclusion of Traditional Owners in the ongoing management of the Birrarung, are prioritised.

The close involvement of the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation in the development of the draft plan represents the Victorian Government's commitment to meaningful partnerships to protect our Birrarung.

*'As the Traditional Owners of the Birrarung and its surrounding country, the Wurundjeri will bring their unique knowledge, connections and understandings of the River and the wider Yarra catchment into the Yarra Strategic Plan to enhance the integrity of the Plan.'*

*– Nhanbu narrun ba ngargunin twarn Birrarung*

## Yarra River 50 Year Community Vision

The landmark *Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murrn) Act 2017* calls for the development of a long-term community vision which identifies the community's 'values, priorities and preferences' in relation to the management of the Yarra River corridor.

After engaging with over 2500 Victorians in 2017<sup>2</sup> to find out what they value about the Yarra, an independent consultant selected 24 community members to write the 50 year community vision.

The vision sets out the community's long-term aspirations for the Yarra River corridor. The Yarra Strategic Plan is an overarching policy and planning framework to guide management of the river and bring the vision to life with local and state government agencies, Traditional Owners and the community.

In recognition of the Victorian Government's commitment to delivering on the community vision, the vision document was launched in May 2018 by the Hon. Lisa Neville, MP, Minister for Water, the Hon. Richard Wynne, MP, Minister for Planning and the Hon. Lily D'Ambrosio, MP, Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change.

## YARRA RIVER 50 YEAR COMMUNITY VISION

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Flowing from source to sea, it is the resilient lifeblood of past, present and future generations of Victorians. It connects and enriches our flourishing city, suburbs, regions and beyond.

Our Yarra River, Birrarung, its essential role in our lives and its rich history, are respected, understood and protected. It has cared for us for thousands of years and will for thousands to come.

The vital and continued role of Traditional Owners as custodians of the river, and its role in their culture, is recognised and celebrated.

Our Yarra River, Birrarung, and its diverse surrounding landscapes provide a place of refuge, recreation, learning and livelihood. It brings communities together and supports sustainable local economies.

Its clean waters and connected network of thriving green spaces nurture biodiversity, and deepen the relationship between people and nature.

Our Yarra River, Birrarung, is respected as a sacred natural living entity and everyone takes responsibility for its care. Its health and integrity are paramount and uncompromised.

What is good for the Yarra is good for all.

## The future of the river: climate change and population growth

Over the next 100 years, it is predicted that there will be a dramatic and long-term decline in rainfall, increases in temperature and more frequent extreme weather events in Victoria.<sup>3</sup>

For Greater Melbourne, climate change will mean less water entering our dams and waterways, as well as more frequent extreme weather such as droughts, floods and heatwaves. This change is already being felt, with the amount of rainfall entering the Yarra River halving since 2012.<sup>4</sup>

Hotter, drier temperatures will increase bushfire risk, placing lives, jobs, homes and the environment at risk.

We can expect higher maximum temperatures in summer, which will exacerbate urban heat impacts on communities. The prevalence of heat-absorbing materials, such as bitumen and concrete, will mean people living in urban areas will be more susceptible to negative health and wellbeing impacts caused by heat waves.

For the Yarra River, more intense storm events will result in poorer water quality, increased sediment and nutrient loads, reduced dissolved oxygen, rapid alteration of habitats, and reduced amenity and access for communities.

Over the longer term, warming and drying trends will affect the plants and animals that can survive in and along the river.

All these changes will have a significant impact on the ability of the Yarra River corridor to adapt and thrive.

A decline in the health of the river corridor will likely affect the Yarra's ability to support the many economic activities that take place along it, including farming, tourism and hospitality.

Climate change is expected to occur against a backdrop of rapid population growth in Melbourne, which will place pressure on infrastructure, services and the environment.

As Melbourne grows to almost 8 million people by 2051<sup>5</sup>, the city will change significantly, with new communities developing in growth areas and higher-density housing being built in inner areas.

This growth will place further pressure on the Yarra River and its lands.

To accommodate the growing population, around 140,000 additional homes will be constructed within the Yarra River corridor by 2041.<sup>6</sup> Without stronger management, development will likely increase stormwater runoff, impacting the health of the Yarra, and potentially also compromising the river's landscapes, views and access.

Higher-density living will increase demand for public open space as well as placing pressure on existing parklands. Green spaces promote health and wellbeing as well as increasing opportunities for recreation.

While planning and investment have maintained the city's liveability, the *State of the Yarra and Its Parklands* report<sup>7</sup> indicates that the river is already experiencing the impacts of climate change and population growth.

The report suggests the river is in poor condition and that the key threats to its health are litter, sewage, pollution, urban development and invasive species. Litter is of particular concern with nearly 180 tonnes of rubbish pulled from the Yarra River over a four-year period. These threats will be exacerbated by population growth and climate change.

To protect the Yarra River corridor we must work collaboratively to manage these pressures. We must act now to ensure the river remains a thriving part of Greater Melbourne.

To deliver on the community's vision, the Yarra Strategic Plan will work to protect the Yarra River corridor, using the *State of the Yarra and Its Parklands* as a benchmark for progress.

## The Yarra Strategic Plan: the first integrated river corridor strategy

As a 10 year strategy, the Yarra Strategic Plan sets the foundation to achieve the Yarra River 50 Year Community Vision and deliver on the aspirations contained in the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation's water policy.

To help guide our activities in the Yarra River corridor, we have identified four 10 year performance objectives. These objectives represent the changes we are seeking for the river. The objectives have been informed by the *Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murron) Act 2017* (the Act) and the broad objectives contained in the Victorian Government's *Yarra River Action Plan*.<sup>8</sup>

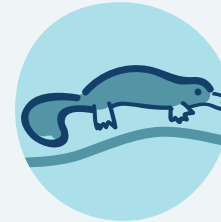
### 10 year performance objectives

As we work together to achieve the performance objectives in this Yarra Strategic Plan we acknowledge the social, recreational and economic value the river provides to Melburnians. Underpinning these four objectives is the intrinsic relationship between the river and its community.

'In fifty years I will be 61 years young. I imagine you will be a beautiful flowing river with platypus, ducks and fish. What I love about you is how you're surviving against pollution.'

– letter to the Yarra River from Ben, age 11

## 10 YEAR PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES



### A healthy river and lands

Improving the water quality of the Yarra River and protecting its land, floodplains and billabongs to achieve greater biodiversity.



### A culturally diverse river corridor

Acknowledging, protecting and commemorating the rich heritage of the Birrarung and its stories.



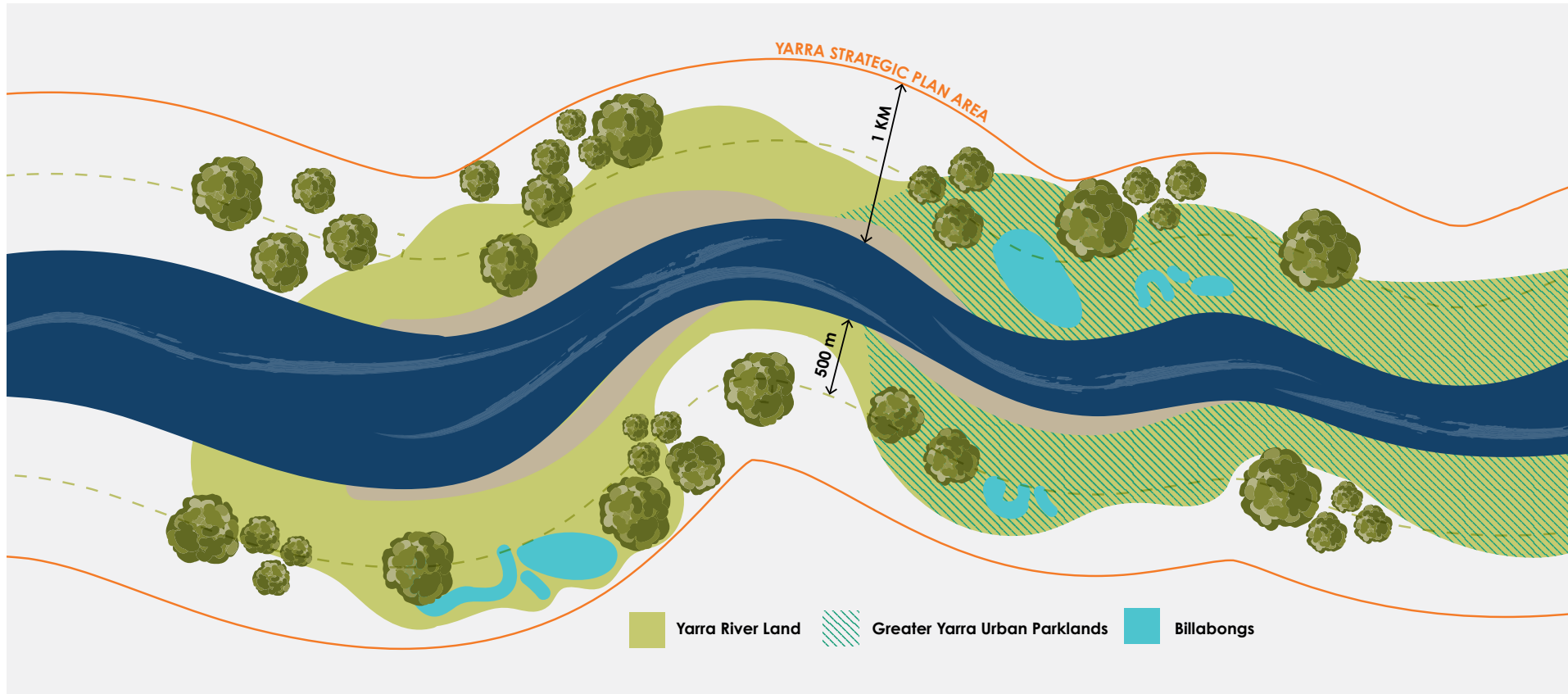
### Quality parklands for a growing population

Improving the river's parklands to support community wellbeing and strengthen the relationship between the Yarra River, its community and visitors.



### Protecting the natural beauty of the Yarra River corridor

Respecting the significance of the Yarra River's landscapes. Where we build, we will protect and celebrate the river's natural beauty, landscapes and views.



### The scope of the plan<sup>9</sup>

To guide and manage activities on public and private land, the Act designates three categories of land to which the plan applies<sup>10</sup>:

**Yarra Strategic Plan area** defines the boundaries of the plan. The area includes land of any kind located within one kilometre of the banks of the Yarra River. Some areas are defined as excluded land.<sup>11</sup>

**Yarra River land** is designated to allow for coordinated management of public land along the waterway. Yarra River land is the largest category of land protected by the Act. It includes the bed, soil and banks of the Yarra River and Crown and state government owned land parcels within 500 metres of a bank of the river.<sup>12</sup> Yarra River land does not include private land and some areas are defined as excluded land.<sup>13</sup>

**Greater Yarra Urban Parklands** recognises the network of parklands along the Yarra River as one of Melbourne’s greatest open space assets that enhances the city’s economic prosperity, vitality and liveability. At present, Greater Yarra Urban Parklands include Yarra River land that is used as public open space between Punt Road, South Yarra, and the urban growth boundary in Warrandyte. Amendments to planning schemes that relate to rezoning land within the Greater Yarra Urban Parklands must be ratified by both houses of parliament.

### Purpose and structure of the plan

The plan is the first integrated river corridor strategy. It identifies immediate actions for the river, enables long-term collaborative management between agencies and Traditional Owners, and guides local planning. The plan is split into two interrelated parts:

#### Part 1 – Working together to deliver the community’s vision

In the next 10 years, our collaborative action for the Yarra River will be vital to protect the Yarra against further decline in the face of climate change and population growth. In 2018/19, it is estimated that state and local government agencies invested over \$45 million in the management of the Yarra River corridor.

In the next 10 years, the Yarra Strategic Plan will enable a coordinated approach to investment on public land and waterway management to ensure that we deliver greater value from our investments and achieve broader benefits for the river and the community.

Part 1 celebrates the current commitments planned for the river, acknowledge the history of Traditional Owners and recognise their intrinsic relationship to the Yarra River, Birrarung, and outline a modern governance approach for our collaborative action on Yarra River land in the next 10 years.

#### Part 2 – Land use framework

The land use framework provides directions for land use and development to ensure that activities throughout the corridor deliver on the performance objectives over the next 10 years. The framework complements the collaborative actions on Yarra River land and ensures that the Yarra River is at the centre of planning and decision-making.

‘What is good for the Yarra is good for all.’  
– Yarra River 50 Year Community Vision

## DRAFT YARRA STRATEGIC PLAN

### 10 YEAR PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

#### PART 1 – WORKING TOGETHER TO DELIVER THE COMMUNITY VISION

##### What we are already doing for the Yarra:

current investment and management for the protection and improvement of Yarra River land.

##### Custodianship of the Birrarung:

Traditional Owners bring their unique knowledge and understanding of the river to the plan. Their involvement in policy planning, decision-making and management of the river will help preserve and restore the wellbeing of the Birrarung.

##### Collaborative actions for the next 10 years:

outlines changes to our current governance models to align activities and coordinate investment. The draft plan sets out a series of foundational actions to enable collaborative management of the Yarra River and achieve the 10 year performance objectives.

#### PART 2 – LAND USE FRAMEWORK

##### Land use framework:

ensures that the Yarra is at the centre of future land use and development decisions. As a regional framework, it provides a spatial structure to ensure that activities throughout the corridor align with the 10 year performance objectives and the community vision.



# PART 1

# WORKING TOGETHER TO DELIVER THE COMMUNITY VISION





# WHAT WE ARE ALREADY DOING FOR THE YARRA

In the coming year, members of the Yarra Collaboration Committee have committed to over **\$80 million** of investment in the Yarra River corridor. We will implement these projects and initiatives while we test the directions of the plan with the community.

This chapter outlines each of the Yarra Collaboration Committee members' roles and responsibilities in the Yarra River corridor. The chapter also includes an overview of investment taking place in 2019/20 and explains existing mechanisms that shape our management of the Yarra River corridor.



**Nillumbik Shire Council:** local government responsible for riverside suburbs including Eltham and Bend of Islands.

Over 45 km of the Yarra River runs through the Shire of Nillumbik, with over 1000 ha of Yarra River land in the council area.

# Managing the Yarra River corridor

The plan has been prepared by Melbourne Water in collaboration with members of the Yarra Collaboration Committee:

**Banyule City Council:** local government responsible for riverside suburbs including Ivanhoe, Heidelberg and Lower Plenty.

Over 20 km of the Yarra River runs through the City of Banyule, with approximately 281 ha of Yarra River land in the council area.

**Yarra City Council:** local government responsible for riverside suburbs including Burnley, Richmond and Abbotsford.

Over 20 km of the Yarra River runs through the City of Yarra, with approximately 275 ha of Yarra River land in the council area.

## INNER CITY REACH



## SUBURBAN REACH

**Melbourne City Council:** local government responsible for the municipality of Melbourne, within the inner city reach of the Yarra River.

Over 10 km of the Yarra River runs through the City of Melbourne.

## SUBURBAN REACH

**Stonnington City Council:** local government responsible for riverside suburbs including South Yarra and Toorak.

Approximately 4 km of the Yarra River runs through the City of Stonnington, with 16 ha of Yarra River land in the council area.

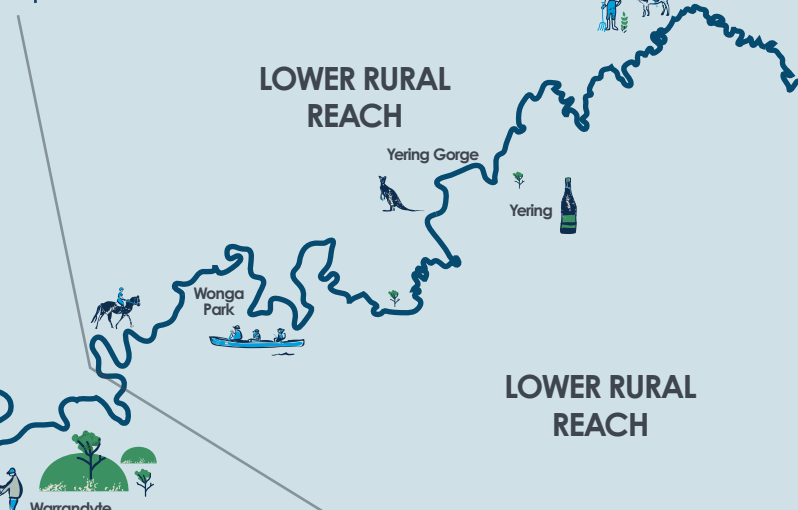
**Manningham City Council:** local government responsible for riverside suburbs including Bulleen, Templestowe and Warrandyte.

Over 50 km of the Yarra River runs through the City of Manningham, with over 1000 ha of Yarra River land in the council area.

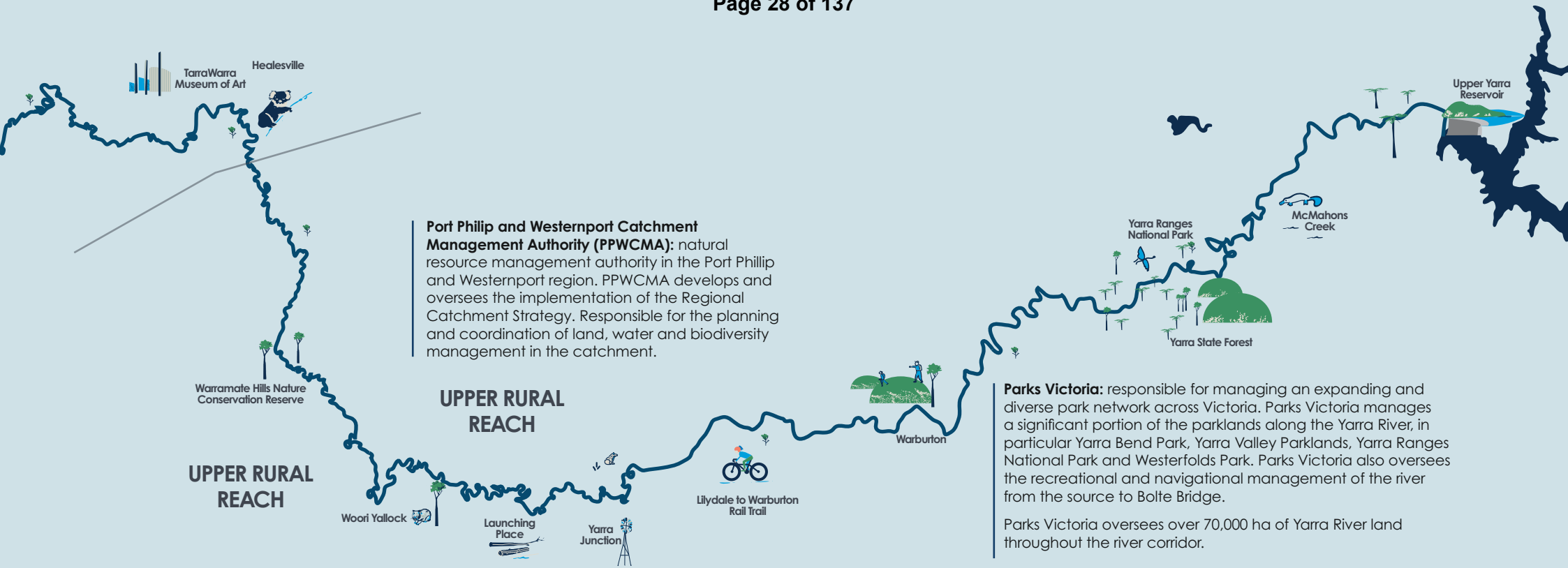
**Boroondara City Council:** local government responsible for riverside suburbs including Hawthorn, Kew and North Balwyn.

Over 23 km of the Yarra River runs through the City of Boroondara, with approximately 164 ha of Yarra River land in the council area.

## LOWER RURAL REACH



## LOWER RURAL REACH



**Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority (PPWCMA):** natural resource management authority in the Port Phillip and Westernport region. PPWCMA develops and oversees the implementation of the Regional Catchment Strategy. Responsible for the planning and coordination of land, water and biodiversity management in the catchment.

**Parks Victoria:** responsible for managing an expanding and diverse park network across Victoria. Parks Victoria manages a significant portion of the parklands along the Yarra River, in particular Yarra Bend Park, Yarra Valley Parklands, Yarra Ranges National Park and Westerfolds Park. Parks Victoria also oversees the recreational and navigational management of the river from the source to Bolte Bridge.

Parks Victoria oversees over 70,000 ha of Yarra River land throughout the river corridor.

**Department of Transport:** plans, builds and operates an integrated, sustainable and safe transport system across Victoria. Responsible for long-term planning and development of the transport network throughout the Yarra River catchment, including integrating public transport with other modes such as cars, cycling, and walking (includes VicRoads and VicTrack).

**Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP):** creates liveable, inclusive and sustainable communities with thriving natural environments. DELWP brings together Victoria's climate change, energy, environment, water, forests, planning, local government and emergency management functions into a single department.

DELWP oversees more than 47,000 ha of Yarra River land throughout the river corridor.

**Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation:** Traditional Owners and the Registered Aboriginal Party for the Birrarung above Dights Falls. The Wurundjeri Woi wurrung bring their unique knowledge, connections and understandings of the river. Their interdependent relationship with the environment provides a blueprint for holistic management of the river and its lands.

**Victorian Planning Authority:** works with councils and local communities, government agencies, landowners and developers to plan for strategically important precincts in the inner and middle rings of Melbourne.

**Yarra Ranges Council:** local government responsible for the largest area of the Yarra River. Its area stretches from the lower rural to the upper rural reach.

Over 130 km of the Yarra River runs through the Yarra Ranges, with more than 100,000 ha of Yarra River land within the council area.

**Melbourne Water:** responsible for the environmental management of all waterways (including the bed and banks of the Yarra River) and major drainage systems in relation to water quality, flood protection and floodplain management affecting the river.



## Investment highlights

Collectively, we have committed over \$80 million of investment in the Yarra River corridor for 2019/20.

**Melbourne City Council** has committed **over \$25 million** towards the renewal of Southbank Boulevard, Promenade and Queensbridge Square.



**Melbourne City Council** has committed **over \$8 million** to connect the community to the Yarra River through New Year's Eve fireworks and Moomba festival celebrations.

**Melbourne City Council, Yarra City Council and Stonnington City Council** collectively committed **over \$2.5 million** to improve their urban forest network.



**Banyule City Council** has committed **\$1.9 million** to upgrade the Banyule Flats Reserve Pavilion.



**Yarra City Council** has committed **over \$450,000** to restore bushland along the Yarra River corridor.



**Boroondara City Council** has committed **over \$1 million** to improve stormwater management through works at Chandler Park wetland and Macleay Park raingarden.

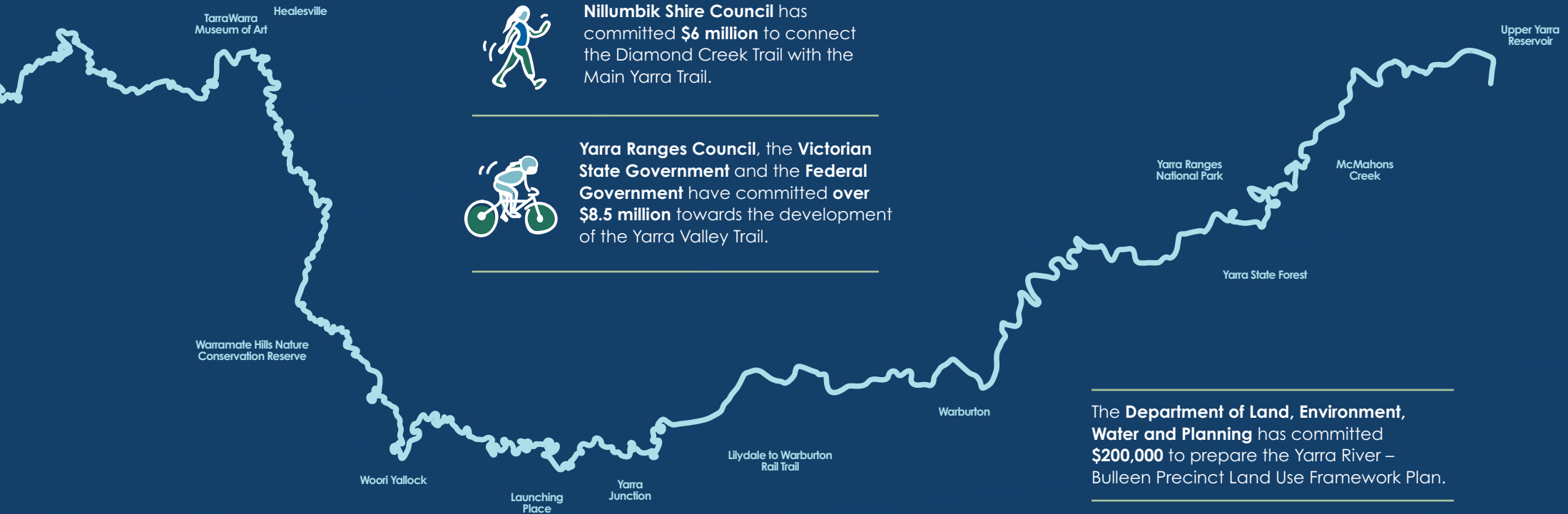


**Parks Victoria and Boroondara City Council** have collectively committed **\$500,000** for biodiversity programs and works in the Yarra River corridor.

**Melbourne Water and Manningham City Council** have collectively committed **over \$600,000** to improve the health of billabongs in the Yarra River corridor. This includes integrated water management, watering for Bolin Bolin and Banyule billabongs and investigations at Annulus Billabong.

**Manningham City Council** has committed **\$2 million** to improve safety, access and connectivity to Warrandyte State Park and the Yarra River through the Jumping Creek Road Stage 1B upgrade.

**Manningham City Council and Stonnington City Council** have collectively committed **\$800,000** to improve and extend the Main Yarra Trail.



**Nillumbik Shire Council** has committed **\$6 million** to connect the Diamond Creek Trail with the Main Yarra Trail.



**Yarra Ranges Council, the Victorian State Government and the Federal Government** have committed **over \$8.5 million** towards the development of the Yarra Valley Trail.

The **Department of Land, Environment, Water and Planning** has committed **\$200,000** to prepare the Yarra River – Bulleen Precinct Land Use Framework Plan.

The **Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning** has committed **over \$2 million** to support a healthy river and lands throughout the Yarra River corridor.



The **Department of Land, Environment, Water and Planning** has committed **over \$4 million** towards the Warburton Mountain Bike Destination.

**Parks Victoria and Yarra City Council** have committed **over \$9.1 million** to parkland management and improvements throughout the Yarra River corridor.

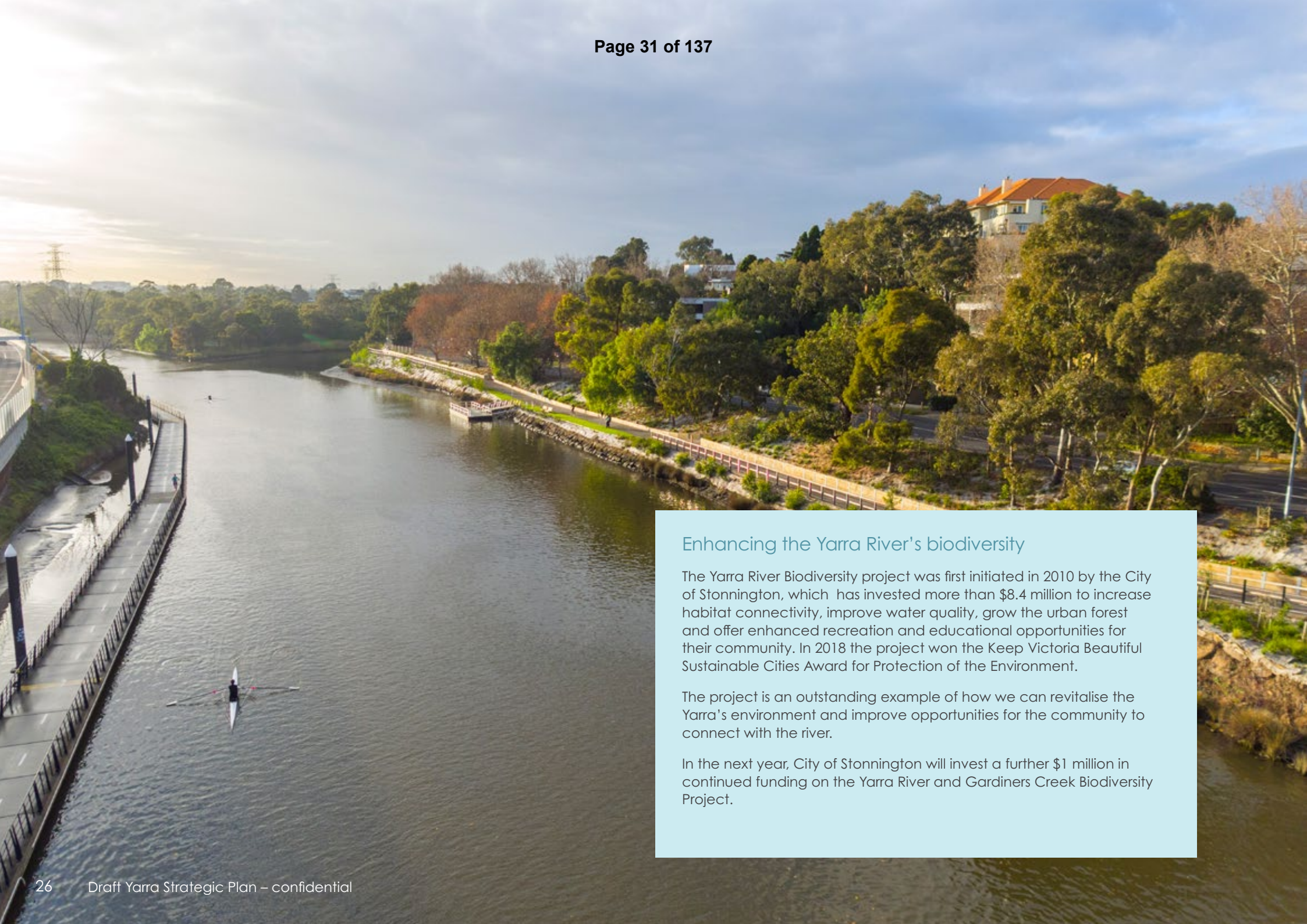


Collectively, we have committed **over \$10 million** for drainage and capital works throughout the Yarra River corridor.

**Melbourne Water** has committed **over \$3.7 million** towards maintenance programs in the Yarra River corridor.



**Port Philip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority** has committed **\$300,000** to help threatened Helmeted Honeyeater and Leadbeater's Possum populations.



### Enhancing the Yarra River's biodiversity

The Yarra River Biodiversity project was first initiated in 2010 by the City of Stonnington, which has invested more than \$8.4 million to increase habitat connectivity, improve water quality, grow the urban forest and offer enhanced recreation and educational opportunities for their community. In 2018 the project won the Keep Victoria Beautiful Sustainable Cities Award for Protection of the Environment.

The project is an outstanding example of how we can revitalise the Yarra's environment and improve opportunities for the community to connect with the river.

In the next year, City of Stonnington will invest a further \$1 million in continued funding on the Yarra River and Gardiners Creek Biodiversity Project.



### Creating a valley-wide loop

Works are underway on the first stages of the Yarra Valley Trail, connecting Lilydale to Yarra Glen. The first stage will open up views of the Yarra Valley not seen for over 40 years and includes new and repaired bridges to replace the heritage rail bridges that were lost in the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires.

A total of \$8.5 million will be invested in Stage 1, with \$3.5 million from State Government, \$2.5 million from Federal Government and \$2.5 million from Yarra Ranges Council.

Once complete, the trail will link Lilydale, Yarra Glen, Healesville and connect into the Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail, offering a unique recreational and cultural experience of the Yarra Valley.



### Supporting Birrarung rangers

This new three-year program will establish traineeships for a small team of Aboriginal people to learn and work in conservation, habitat restoration and land management within the river corridor.

#### **2019/21 investment to initiate the Birrarung rangers program:**

- \$600,000 will be invested by DELWP to support:
  - Traditional Owner capacity building and self-determination
  - integration of Traditional Owner ecological knowledge into natural resource management
  - cultural land and water management practices and the continuity of Aboriginal culture, community and connection to Country within urban and rural landscapes
  - the important cultural and spiritual connection Traditional Owners have with the Birrarung and its parklands.



## Existing mechanisms for managing the Yarra

In addition to the immediate investment for the Yarra River corridor, state and local government agencies are continuing their efforts to deliver on a range of commitments that will benefit the Yarra River and its parklands. These include:



*Protecting Victoria's Environment – Biodiversity 2037* is the Victorian Government's plan to stop the decline of biodiversity and improve the state's natural environment over the next 20 years. It highlights the need to protect our waterways to improve biodiversity and protect related ecosystem services. The strategy recognises that the 'natural environment is not only beautiful, it is fundamental to the health and wellbeing of every Victorian'.

The Yarra catchment and corridor will contribute to state targets:

- 60 ha of new permanently protected areas on private land
- 2378 ha of pest herbivore control in priority locations
- 2855 ha of pest predator in priority locations
- 1369 ha of weed control in priority locations.



*Water for Victoria* aims to manage water resources now and into the future to ensure its continued role in supporting a healthy environment, a prosperous economy and thriving communities.

Released in late 2016, *Water for Victoria* announced \$537 million in funding over four years to strengthen water security, protect jobs and agriculture, recognise Aboriginal water values and improve environmental health across the state.



The *Port Phillip and Western Port Regional Catchment Strategy (RCS)* aims to protect the environmental assets that are the cornerstones of healthy and resilient ecosystems in the Port Phillip and Westernport region, and to enhance collaboration and coordination between organisations involved in environmental management.

Achieving these targets for the Yarra Catchment supports the delivery of the Yarra Strategic Plan:

- At least maintain the extent of native vegetation that is permanently protected and managed primarily for conservation purposes.
- At least retain the collective quantity/quality of the other native vegetation across the landscape.
- Undertake major revegetation to generate major new 'Nature Links' to improve habitat extent, connectivity and resilience.
- Stabilise and improve the health of populations of native flora and fauna species that are threatened with extinction.
- At least maintain the diversity of native animal species present in the catchment.
- Retain extensive and healthy rural landscapes and open space that supports habitat for native species, productive and valuable agriculture, food security, clean air, carbon sequestration, water quality, social amenity values, cultural values and tourism.



Melbourne Water's *Healthy Waterways Strategy (HWS)* outlines a shared vision for protecting and improving waterways across the Port Phillip and Westernport region. The strategy was co-designed with over 400 community representatives and stakeholders.

The Yarra Strategic Plan will contribute to delivering the water quality targets outlined in the *Healthy Waterways Strategy* and build on the performance objectives outlined for the Yarra Catchment. Specifically, the HWS performance objectives that support the Yarra Strategic Plan include:

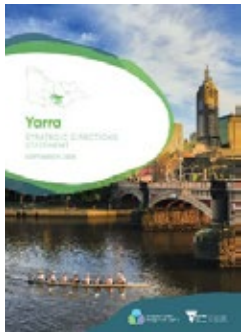
- implementing stormwater harvesting in priority rural townships
- investigating options to increase the environmental water reserve by 10 GL/year by 2028
- establishing 376 km and maintaining 1793 km of continuous vegetated buffers across the Yarra Catchment
- maintain 735 km of high and very high quality vegetation in headwaters and tributaries across the Yarra Catchment.



The Victorian State Government's *Plan Melbourne* will guide the growth of our city for the next 35 years. It sets the strategy for supporting jobs, housing and transport, while building on Melbourne's legacy of liveability and sustainability.



*Living Melbourne: our metropolitan urban forest* aims to create a greener, more liveable Melbourne. This strategy focuses on improving the quality and quantity of trees and vegetation in the urban forest – whether on public or private land.



The Yarra Integrated Water Management Forum's *Yarra Strategic Directions Statement 2018* articulates the regional context, shared vision and strategic water-related outcomes for the Yarra Catchment. The Yarra River 50 Year Community Vision informs the Yarra Integrated Water Management Forum's vision for integrated water management in the catchment.



A new draft *Metropolitan Open Space Strategy* to deliver Action 93 of *Plan Melbourne 2017–2050*, will enhance recreation, amenity, health and wellbeing, species diversity, sustainable water management and urban cooling across Melbourne's open space network.



*State of the Yarra and Its Parklands* report provides a comprehensive baseline for the environmental condition of the Yarra River corridor: a clear starting point to which future assessments can be compared. In addition to evaluating environmental condition, future reports will also report on the key objectives of the Yarra Strategic Plan.



The *Victorian Cycling Strategy 2018–28* aims to increase the number, frequency and diversity of Victorians cycling for transport. This strategy sets out the strategic basis for Victorian Government funding commitments to develop a safer, better-connected network and prioritise strategic cycling corridors.



# CUSTODIANSHIP OF THE BIRRARUNG

## WILIP-GIN BIRRARUNG MURRON

We the Wilip wurrung, the First People, and the Birrarung, belong to this Country. This Country and the Birrarung are part of us. The Birrarung is alive, has a heart, a spirit and is part of our Dreaming. We have lived with and known the Birrarung since the beginning. We will always know the Birrarung.

Bunjil the great Eagle, the creator spirit, made the land, the sky, the sea, the rivers, flora and fauna, the lore. He made Kulin from the earth. Bunjil gave Waa, the crow, the responsibility of Protector. Bunjil's brother, Palliyang, the Bat, created Bagarook, women, from the water. Since our beginning it has been known that we have an obligation to keep the Birrarung alive and healthy—for all generations to come.

## Introduction

The Birrarung is as central to the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung people as it is central to Melbourne. The Wurundjeri Woi wurrung people are the first and only Aboriginal people with the cultural, legislated and moral authority to speak for their Country.

Today, the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung people are represented by a peak body, the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation. (The corporation was appointed as a Registered Aboriginal Party in 2008.)

When Traditional Owners introduced the *Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murrn) Act 2017* (the Act) on the floor of the Victorian Parliament in the Woiwurrung language of the Wurundjeri, it was an Australian first. The symbolism of the Act is incredibly significant for the Wurundjeri and for all Aboriginal Victorians, and a major step towards acknowledging the importance of Traditional Owner language and culture.

The city of Melbourne grew from the banks of the Birrarung – the river has allowed it to become the vibrant city it is today, but this has come at great cost to the Kulin Nation and the Birrarung itself.

**'The Yarra River is an icon of Melbourne. The history is rich. The river is respected. The river has been looked after by us for thousands of years. Make it clean and let the species live.'**

**– Aunty Alice Kolasa**

Under Wurundjeri lore, it is the responsibility of everyone living on Country to protect the water and the land. A willingness by the broader community to take responsibility for the waterways is in itself an opportunity for reconciliation.

The introduction of diseases and the treatment of Aboriginal people by colonists reduced the Indigenous population significantly.





### Postcolonial history

The Wurundjeri Woi wurrung people are the Traditional Owners of a large estate that extends from the mouth of the Werribee River, north to the Great Dividing Range, including Mount Baw Baw, and south to the mouth of Mordialloc Creek. Prior to European contact there were numerous clans of the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung people. It is the Wurundjeri balluk and Wurundjeri willam clans whose traditional Country included the Birrarung.

To understand the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung people and the Birrarung today, it is essential to understand postcolonial history. The story of the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung people is a story of survival in the face of brutality, hardship and systematic policies of aggressive dispossession and dispersal. As Europeans expanded their footprint across the Port Phillip District of New South Wales, later Victoria, the surviving Wurundjeri Woi wurrung people were forced to relocate, time and time again.

**'The Birrarung is part of our identity.'**  
**– Aunt Margaret Gardiner**

### Wurundjeri Woi wurrung missions, protectorate stations and government reserves

- 1837–1839** Port Phillip Aboriginal Mission (current-day Botanic Gardens)
- 1840** Jacksons Creek and Arthurs Seat (temporary)
- 1840–1843** Nare Nare Warren
- 1841–1851** Merri Creek Protectorate Station
- 1852–1862** Pound Bend, Warrandyte (reserved land but functioned as a rations depot due to gold mining activities)
- 1859–1860** Acheron Station (North of the Great Dividing Range)
- 1860–1863** Mohican Station (Adjacent to Acheron Station)
- 1863–1924** Coranderk Station

The Wurundjeri Woi wurrung also established informal camps along the Birrarung at Bolin Bolin (Bulleen), south of the Yarra in the Melbourne settlement, and in the upper Yarra.

Coranderk Station was initially very successful and profitable, producing hops and wheat while maintaining a butcher, dairy and garden, with produce feeding the community and neighbouring communities. The station provided Wurundjeri Woi wurrung people, and members of other dislocated tribes, with stability and opportunity.

But its prosperity proved its downfall; successive decisions by the Aboriginal Protection Board imposed increasingly harsh restrictions and inflexible regulations, which frustrated the commercial viability of the station.

The government eventually closed Coranderk Station in 1924 and moved its residents to Lake Tyers Mission in Gippsland. However, five people, including Wurundjeri ancestor Jemima Wandin, refused to leave.

‘We will show the country that the station could self-support itself.’

– **Coranderk letter of petition, 16 November 1881**

Chapter under review by Wurundjeri





## Significant sites and areas for protection

‘The river is our physical and spiritual connection to this land.’  
 – **Uncle Bill Nicholson**



The Wurundjeri Woi wurrung people consider the following places along the Birrarung (Yarra) to be sites of significance:

<b>Federation Square*</b>	Traditional meeting place of the Kulin Nation.
<b>MCG*</b>	Significant ceremonial ground used right up until the Wurundjeri people were displaced from Melbourne city.
<b>Dights Falls</b>	Birrarung crossing place for the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung where a canoe was not required.
<b>Yarra Bend</b>	Site of the first Aboriginal School. Also known as an important Kulin meeting place and the site of the first Aboriginal Police Station.
<b>Yarra Flats</b>	Area of significant cultural resources: food, fibre, and medicine. It is also a meeting place with other Kulin Nation groups.
<b>Confluence of the Maribyrnong and Yarra*</b>	High resource area in the swampy salt flats. Higher ground on the western side for meeting and trade with other Kulin Nation groups.
<b>Bend of Islands</b>	Environmental Living Zone where landowners are required to maintain and manage the environmental and cultural values of the land. Adjacent to the Birrarung. No non-native species.
<b>Coranderrk</b>	Land procured by Wonga and Barak for the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung and Aboriginal people displaced from their homelands, originally including Healesville on the Yarra River.
<b>Tikalara</b>	Natural or cultural value (TBC by Wurundjeri: Ringwood Mullum Mullum Tunnel).
<b>Birrarung (the Yarra) Falls*</b>	Natural crossing point for Wurundjeri Woi wurrung, located south of current-day Queen Street. This waterfall was the natural rock barrier that separated the salty tidal water from the fresh water that flowed from the Birrarung. The Yarra Falls were blasted away with explosives in the 1880s to make way for Queens Bridge.

\* Acknowledging the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung people's consideration of this location as a site of significance, no Traditional Owner Group/s have yet been formally recognised for this area of land by the State of Victoria.

'It's fantastic that our cultural views and values are being acknowledged.'

– **Aunty Pat Ockwell (Senior Wurundjeri Elder)**



The Wurundjeri Woi wurrung people have identified the following sites as areas for protection:

<b>Bolin Bolin Billabong</b>	Traditional eel fishing ground and meeting place was important to the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung people and is currently the subject of a Cultural Values Study.
<b>Merri Confluence</b>	Initiation place for the Wurundjeri.
<b>Brushy Creek Confluence</b>	William Barak's birthing tree is located on the banks of Brushy Creek.
<b>Laughing Waters</b>	Contains historic eel traps, which are actively maintained by the Corporation in association with Parks Victoria.
<b>Bulleen-Banyule Flats</b>	Important gathering place and area high in food resources. Bulleen is a place where important settler and Indigenous relations played out within the political context of the Aboriginal Protectorate.
<b>Yering</b>	Site of Yering Station. On 13 January 1840 Wurundjeri warriors fought troopers of the Border Police to secure the release of Wurundjeri leader Jaga Jaga.

## ***Nhanbu narrun ba ngargunin twarn Birrarung (Ancient Spirit and Lore of the Yarra) – Wurundjeri water policy***

'It's a living lifeline, the main highway for our resources and our spirituality.'

– **Aunty Margaret Gardiner**

The Wurundjeri water policy, *Nhanbu narrun ba ngargunin twarn Birrarung*, is a guiding document, which outlines Wurundjeri Woi wurrung aspirations for community and Country and the fundamental connection of both to the Birrarung.

The development of the policy was a community-driven process that enabled the Wurundjeri to articulate their vision for the Birrarung. The Wurundjeri's connection to the land and waterways is unique and their cultural knowledge and understanding of the landscape is reflected throughout the document.

The water policy outlines the nature of Wurundjeri involvement in the development of the Yarra Strategic Plan. It outlines Wurundjeri's contributions to the objectives of the Yarra Strategic Plan, decision-making framework and Wurundjeri's performance objectives and targets. The Yarra Strategic Plan has been guided by the Wurundjeri water policy and has incorporated its values, actions and examples of priority projects. The water policy will help inform the direction of the Yarra Strategic Plan.

The Wurundjeri water policy provides clear guidance on when and how there should be collaboration with Traditional Owners on planning, policy and decision-making. The policy flags Wurundjeri's intention for collaboration and sets out priorities for the Birrarung to the Government, responsible public entities and the community.

The Wurundjeri water policy identifies and prioritises the following priority projects from the *Yarra River Action Plan*:

- Cultural practice, knowledge and cultural mapping
- Abbotsford River Structure Plan
- Bulleen-Banyule Cultural River Precinct Structure Plan
- Bolin Bolin Billabong Complex Rewatering.



'The Yarra is one of the major transport routes. We didn't have a train system in those days, we had a water system.'

– **Uncle Ron Jones**

### Cultural Flows

'The river was the main source of our culture and economy. Our relationship is both physical and spiritual. Cultural Flows are a modern way of interpreting this relationship.'

– **Uncle Bill Nicholson**

Cultural Flows are about entrenching the rights of Traditional Owners as custodians of their waterways and are essential to the cultural, social, environmental, and economic wellbeing of Traditional Owners.

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'Cultural Flows' are water entitlements that are legally and beneficially owned by the Nations of a sufficient and adequate quantity and quality to improve the spiritual, cultural, natural, environmental, social and economic conditions of those Nations. These are our inherent rights.'

– Murray Lower Darling Rivers Indigenous Nations (MLDRIN) Echuca Declaration, 2007.

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Traditional Owners have always cared for waterways and used water to sustain their culture and livelihoods. Today, Victoria is leading the nation in its commitment to engaging Traditional Owners and Aboriginal communities in water planning and resource management.

While there is often a natural overlap of environmental and Cultural Flows, it is essential that the entire spectrum of opportunities for Traditional Owners is realised through Cultural Flows. As a recent concept, the opportunities Cultural Flows afford Traditional Owners are themselves evolving. Cultural Flows should be viewed as an ongoing opportunity for engagement and development.

Wurundjeri Cultural Flows priorities:

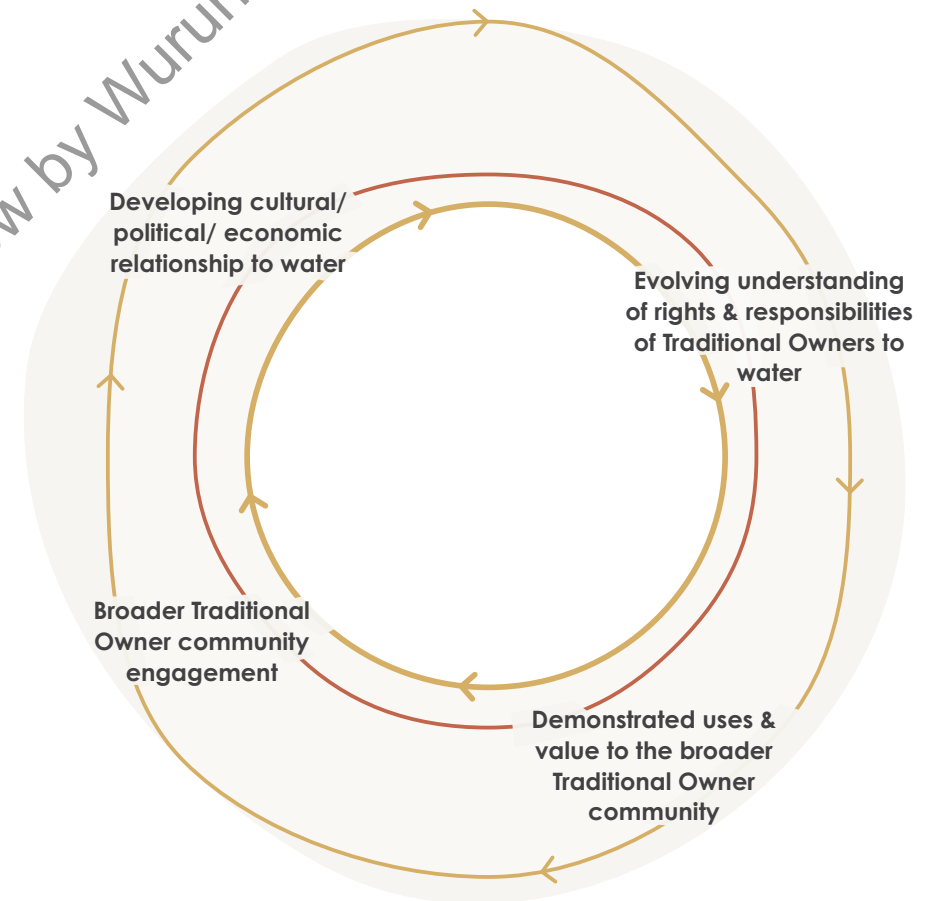
- rewatering of wetlands and billabongs
- establishing Wurundjeri Water Rangers
- using proceeds to educate private landholders along the Yarra corridor of the need to protect, rewater and/or rehabilitate significant sites
- commercially cultivate native bush foods on Wurundjeri properties
- restocking of the Blackfish population
- eel farming on Wurundjeri Country.

'Water Rangers would allow us to practice our culture without asking government permission to do so. In real terms, we could actually be custodians of the river.'

– **Aunty Gail Smith**

'The Birrarung is life.'

– **Jacqui Wandin**



# COLLABORATIVE ACTIONS FOR THE NEXT 10 YEARS

## How we manage the Yarra River

Over the last few decades, there have been several visionary government and community-led initiatives to improve the health of the Yarra River and its lands including introducing planning and land use controls, setting aside large areas of green open space, sewerage new suburbs, large-scale community revegetation programs and constructing a network of recreational trails along the river.

Community custodianship plays an important part in modern management of our river, with volunteers spending around 50,000 hours a year working in parks along the Yarra.

In the coming year we will invest over \$80 million in the management of the Yarra River corridor. Although this investment will lead to good outcomes for the river, in the future we will work across organisational boundaries to leverage our efforts and get the greatest benefit for the river and the community.

## Holistic management of the river corridor

In line with community feedback, the Act calls for modern governance and management arrangements that recognise the importance of the Yarra River and its parklands to the economic prosperity and vitality of Melbourne.

We need a more coordinated approach to investment and decision-making to realise the community's vision and ensure the river corridor remains central to life in Greater Melbourne. To ensure a holistic approach to the management of the river and its environs, all agencies responsible for management of the river will work together, across boundaries, to manage the river as one living entity.

The Yarra Strategic Plan will focus on achieving collaborative management on Yarra River land. These state and publicly owned lands have been declared to enable coordinated management and ensure the continued health of the river. Working to coordinate our management and investment on Yarra River land will enable ongoing collaboration between agencies and Traditional Owners, which in the longer term, can extend beyond Yarra River land.

### Our commitment to future management

The Yarra Strategic Plan has been developed by a governance group made up of the senior representatives from the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation as well as the 15 state and local agencies who manage the Yarra River corridor. This group, known as the Yarra Collaboration Committee, exemplifies the transformational partnerships we are seeking and demonstrates a serious commitment to cross-boundary management of the Yarra River.

In order to implement the Yarra Strategic Plan, the Yarra Collaboration Committee has decided that we need to embed long-term change in the way government agencies and councils work together in the Yarra River corridor. To embed collaborative management of the Yarra River corridor, the plan proposes four changes to be implemented over the next 10 years:

1. There is continued commitment of the Yarra Collaboration Committee to oversee rolling three-yearly implementation plans and ensure whole-of-government decision-making for Yarra River lands.
2. There is commitment to coordinated investment decisions on Yarra River land.
3. All stakeholders, including the community, are involved in taking care of the river.

4. Government agencies and Traditional Owners are supported in their transition to deliver on the 50 Year Community Vision.

Consistent with the Act, each of the responsible public entities<sup>14</sup>:

- must not act inconsistently with any part of the Yarra Strategic Plan that is expressed to be binding on the entity in relation to Yarra River land<sup>15</sup>
- must have regard to the Yarra protection principles (refer to Figure 1), and those parts of the Yarra Strategic Plan not expressed to be binding on the entity
- must prepare an annual report on their implementation of the Yarra Strategic Plan. This report will include actions and projects delivered towards the plan's performance objectives.
- must not prepare an amendment to a planning scheme that relates to Yarra River lands that is inconsistent with anything in the Yarra Strategic Plan expressed to be binding on the authority (planning scheme amendments which have been approved by the Minister, but are inconsistent with the plan, must be ratified by both houses of Parliament [as per the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.])

The Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murron) Act 2017 sets out 19 protection principles for Yarra River land, related to six themes::



**General principles** – Decision-making related to Yarra River land integrates environmental, social and cultural factors, including climate change. Care for the environment is a shared societal responsibility.



**Environmental principles** – Protecting biodiversity and ecological integrity is paramount and decisions should result in a net gain for the environment on Yarra River land.



**Social principles** – Ensuring the community is involved in decision-making to protect the landscape amenity of Yarra River land.



**Recreational principles** – Ensure appropriate community use, enjoyment and access to Yarra River land.



**Cultural principles** – Ensure Traditional Owners are involved in decision-making and their cultural values, heritage and knowledge is acknowledged, reflected, protected and promoted. Ensure Aboriginal and postcolonial heritage is protected on Yarra River land.



**Management principles** – Decision-making related to Yarra River land should result from coordinated between all levels of government and government agencies and aim for the best outcomes beyond compliance.

Figure 1 Themes of the Yarra protection principles

### Our framework for collaborative action

The passing of the Act signalled an important shift in the way the Yarra River corridor is managed and protected. The Act requires that the Yarra River corridor should be protected as one living and integrated natural entity and outlines the strategic framework for the Yarra Strategic Plan (refer to Figure 2). In addition, the Act calls for the development of the Yarra River 50 Year Community Vision, which is complemented by the Wurundjeri water policy, *Nhanbu narrun ba ngargunin twarn Birrarung (Ancient Spirit & Lore of the Yarra)*. Together the Act, the community vision and the Wurundjeri water policy set the direction for how we manage the Yarra River collaboratively.

The **four performance objectives** represent the change we are seeking for the river in the next 10 years. They set the foundation for achieving the 50 year community vision. The objectives have been informed by the community vision, the Act and the broad objectives contained in the Yarra River Action Plan<sup>16</sup>. The performance objectives guide the Yarra Strategic Plan and our commitment to a new, modern governance approach.

**Priority projects** will be developed for the final plan. These are projects that go above and beyond business as usual and can be assessed annually by the Yarra Collaboration Committee. Projects will be assessed by the following criteria:

- extent to which they capitalise on opportunities – e.g. the ability to i) leverage existing funding opportunities, ii) partner with Traditional Owners and iii) align to delivering the community vision
- extent to which they contribute to the protection and enhancement of the Yarra River corridor and build resilience to climate change; e.g. the ability to i) deliver on the performance objectives, ii) achieve benefits for the broader community and iii) and address the impacts of climate change and population growth.

**10 year actions:** The Yarra Strategic Plan focuses on coordinating investment across responsible public entities to improve public land and waterway management and achieve the Yarra River 50 Year Community Vision. The plan will do this by working towards achieving the 10 year performance objectives on Yarra River land. The draft plan sets out a series of foundational actions to enable collaborative management of the Yarra River and achieve the 10 year performance objectives.

**Decision-making framework:** To ensure implementation and decision-making meets the performance objectives, a decision-making framework will enable coordinated investment decisions on Yarra River land, led by the Yarra Collaboration Committee. The decision-making framework will ensure alignment with the Yarra River protection principles on Yarra River land and achieve the management principles (refer to figure 1) to:

- Ensure coordination between all levels of government and government agencies when designing policies and programs and making decisions in relation to Yarra River land.
- Use the best practicable measures available at the time when designing policies and programs.
- Aim for continuous improvement and extend beyond compliance with relevant laws and requirements when implementing natural resource management.

Application of the decision-making framework on Yarra River land must ensure that representatives from each family group of the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation – the Nevin, Terrick and Wandin families – are engaged to inform projects.

The decision-making framework is still in draft and will be tested within the Yarra Collaboration Committee before its inclusion into the final Yarra Strategic Plan.



**Land use framework:** The framework provides a series of actions and directions to ensure the Yarra River is at the heart of decision-making for land use and development activities in the corridor. The framework will ensure that the health and integrity of the river are protected through a number of statutory mechanisms. Implementing the land use framework through planning schemes will ensure that land uses and activities, including on private land, can deliver on the Yarra Strategic Plan's performance objectives.

**Modern governance and the role of the Birrarung Council:** As part of our progress towards modern governance, we will work to align our normal business to achieve the 10 year performance objectives. This includes identifying opportunities for annual investment on Yarra River land, implementing the land use framework through planning decisions and completing a report on the implementation of the Yarra Strategic Plan.

To support the Yarra Collaboration Committee, the Minister for Water will nominate one responsible public entity as the lead agency for implementation. The lead agency will:

- Enable the Yarra Collaboration Committee to implement the decision-making framework and deliver the 10 year actions.
- Draft the implementation plan in partnership with the Yarra Collaboration Committee.
- Coordinate the development of a consolidated annual report, using information provided by each responsible public entity. They will then submit the report to the Birrarung Council.<sup>17</sup>

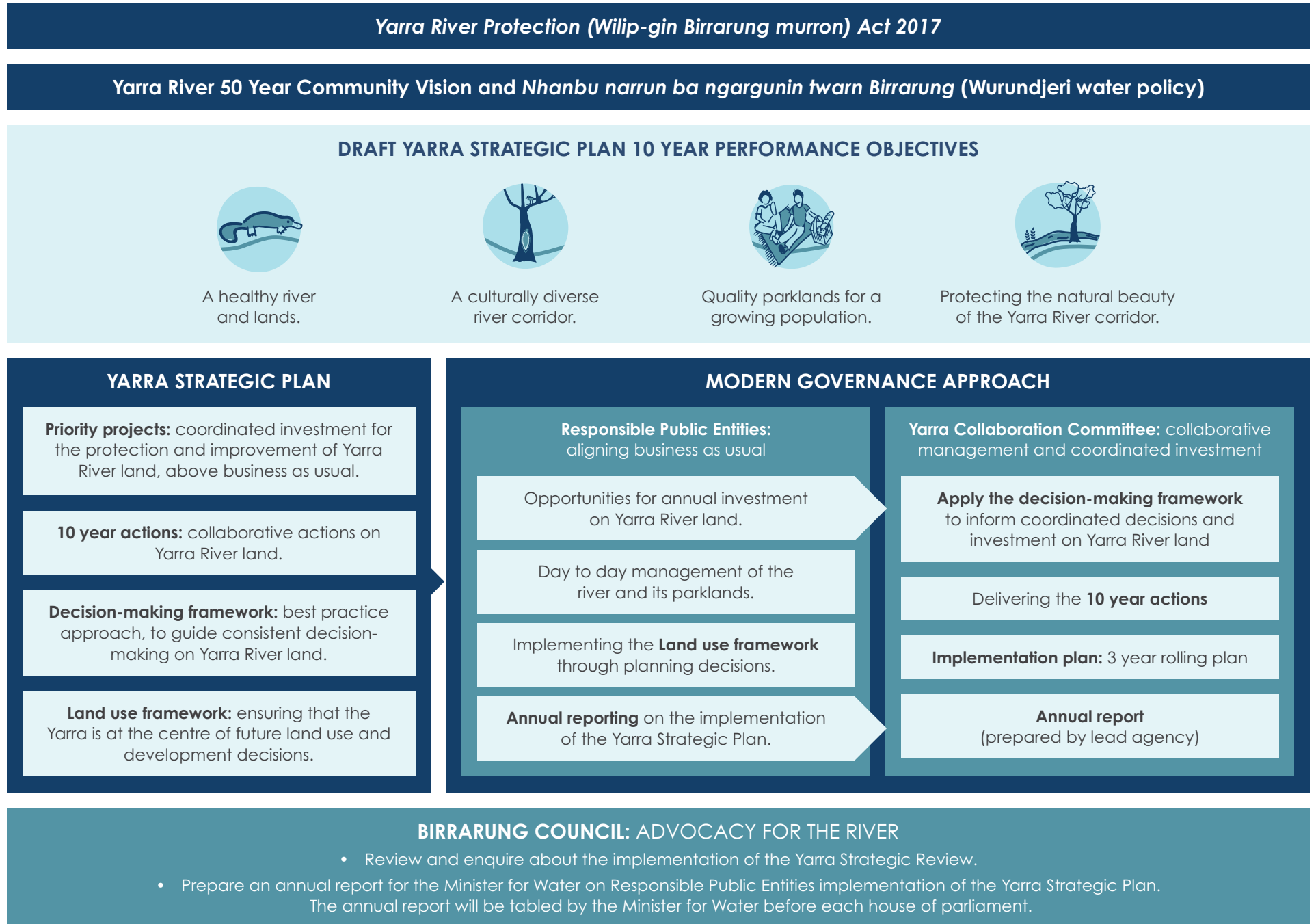
The Birrarung Council, established by the Act as the independent voice of the river, will then provide a response to this consolidated annual report, which outlines progress towards the community vision. To ensure appropriate accountability, the Birrarung Council's report will be delivered to the Minister for Water, to be tabled in parliament.

## 10 year actions

Over the next 10 years, the Yarra Strategic Plan will focus on coordinating investment across responsible public entities to improve public land and waterway management and achieve the 10 year performance objectives on Yarra River land. The actions outlined are considered priorities for the corridor, and build on the many initiatives already underway in the catchment.



Figure 2: Yarra Strategic Plan framework





## Performance objective 1: A healthy river and lands

Improving the water quality of the Yarra River and protecting its land, floodplains and billabongs to achieve greater biodiversity.

With substantial projected population growth, rising temperatures and decreasing rainfall, the health of the river corridor is under significant pressure. More frequent extreme weather events due to climate change will have a detrimental impact on biodiversity and water availability, and increase bushfire risk.

Building the resilience of our Yarra River and its parklands is crucial to delivering the community's vision. We must act now to protect the Yarra River corridor's environment and secure the social, recreational and economic benefits of the river for future generations.

To deliver a healthy river and lands, the Yarra Strategic Plan builds on existing state and regional environmental initiatives such as the *Biodiversity Strategy 2037*, the *Regional Catchment Strategy* and the *Healthy Waterways Strategy*.

The Yarra Strategic Plan will:

1. Restore billabongs and wetlands by increasing water for the environment and undertaking complementary land and water management.
2. Strengthen terrestrial and aquatic habitat corridors between the Yarra River and the catchment to support biodiversity. Priorities include:
  - Healesville to Warrandyte
  - Healesville to Millgrove
  - Watsons Creek (area for protection)
  - Gardiners Creek (celebrating significant places).
3. Deliver foundational actions to achieve the community's vision for 'clean waters'. This includes:
  - reducing the volume of litter impacting the Yarra River
  - strengthening stormwater management controls and strategies
  - increasing education, awareness and regulation to reduce pesticides and chemicals entering the waterway
  - improving septic tank and wastewater management.



## Swimming in the Yarra River

For decades the Race to Princes Bridge attracted hundreds of entries each year. The race ran from 1913 until its cancellation in 1964. It is still possible to enjoy a swim in the Yarra, but due to boating activity it is illegal to swim below Gipps Street in Abbotsford.

The community's vision for 'clean waters' demonstrates a strong desire to continue the tradition of swimming in the river. By delivering the actions under this performance objective we aim to improve water quality to ensure people can continue swimming in the Yarra.

Melbourne Water and EPA Victoria monitor recreational water quality at four sites over summer to ensure they are safe for swimming. Monitoring takes place at Launching Place, Healesville, Warrandyte and Kew.

From a water quality perspective, Warrandyte is consistently the best location for swimming, while Healesville and Kew vary between summers.

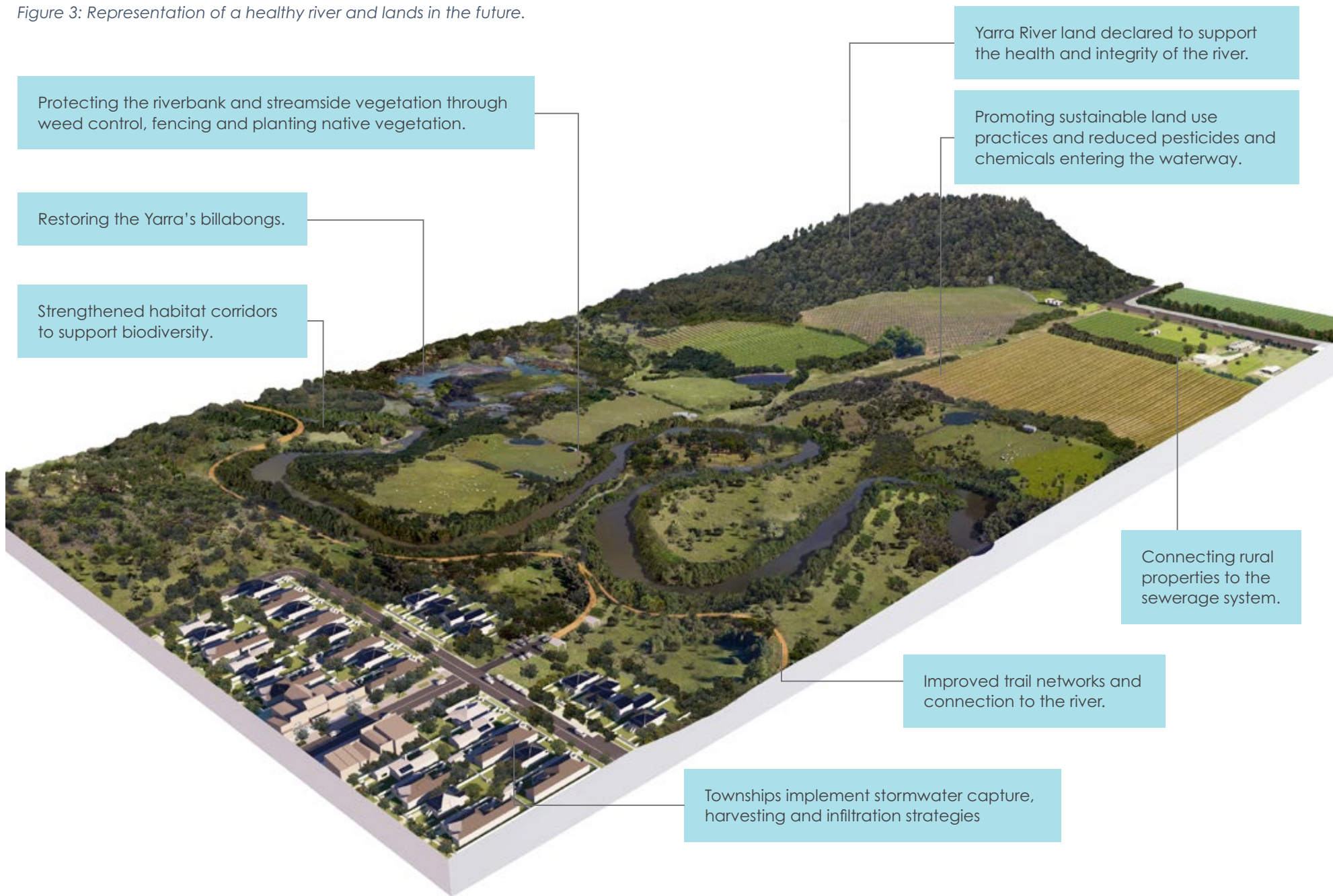
If it has rained in the past 48 hours, people are advised not to swim in the river.

To check whether it's safe to swim visit Yarra Watch:  
[yarraandbay.vic.gov.au/yarra-watch](http://yarraandbay.vic.gov.au/yarra-watch)

Image source: State Library Victoria



Figure 3: Representation of a healthy river and lands in the future.



'Flowing from source to sea, it is the resilient lifeblood of past, present and future generations of Victorians.'

'Its clean waters and connected network of thriving green spaces nurture biodiversity, and deepen the relationship between people and nature.'

'Its health and integrity are paramount and uncompromised.'

– Yarra River 50 Year Community Vision





## Performance objective 2: A culturally diverse river corridor

Acknowledging, protecting and commemorating the rich heritage of the Birrarung and its stories.

The river's history and heritage are documented in numerous sources; however, no single heritage assessment exists for the Yarra River, Birrarung, and information contained in council studies is inconsistent. We need consistent documentation of the cultural and heritage values of the river. Otherwise, we risk losing or mismanaging places of significance. Pressure for new development within urban areas may threaten the protection of these important places.

The Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation will also undertake mapping to identify culturally significant landscapes along the river. Some information from this study will be shared publicly, while some sites will remain part of the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung people's cultural knowledge.

To deliver a culturally diverse river corridor and share the stories of the river, the Yarra Strategic Plan will support a consistent approach to providing information about the Yarra's history and important sites.

The Yarra Strategic Plan will:

1. Support Traditional Owners to record the river's cultural values on Yarra River land.
2. Pilot interpretive and educational programs for five sites that have shared values for Traditional Owners and post-settlement cultures. The sites are:
  - Abbotsford Convent, Abbotsford
  - Dights Falls, Abbotsford
  - Bolin Bolin Billabong, Bulleen
  - Domain Parklands, Melbourne
  - Brushy Creek, Wonga Park.
3. Deliver an interactive education program (e.g. signage, and smart device application) that includes storytelling about the rich culture and heritage of the Yarra River, Birrarung.

'Our Yarra River, Birrarung, its essential role in our lives and its rich history, are respected, understood and protected.'

'The vital and continued role of Traditional Owners as custodians of the river, and its role in their culture, is recognised and celebrated.'

- Yarra River 50 Year Community Vision

Figure 4: Representation of a culturally diverse river corridor.







### Performance objective 3: Quality parklands for a growing population

Improving the river's parklands to support community wellbeing and strengthen the relationship between the Yarra River, its community and visitors.

The Yarra River flows through around 2,450 ha of parkland and public open space, supporting a range of recreational, social, environmental and sporting activities. The diverse spaces along the river help to define our city. They provide a unique sense of place for local communities, support access and connection throughout the river corridor and, importantly, they play a vital role in the community's health and wellbeing. Visitors can experience high-quality services linked to the river corridor during their daily exercise or on longer journeys. The river's parklands are also enjoyed by the millions of tourists who visit Melbourne each year.

In January 2018 the Victorian Government declared the Greater Yarra Urban Parklands. The declaration recognises the network of parklands along the Yarra as one of Melbourne's greatest open space assets, which enhances the city's economic prosperity, vitality and liveability. The declaration aims to promote the connection of these parklands to the Yarra River and includes public open space between Punt Road, South Yarra, and the urban growth boundary in Warrandyte.

Climate change and a growing population will place pressure on existing parklands, increasing the demand for access to green space in our bustling city. Green spaces combat the urban heat island effect and are vital to keeping Melbourne cool as the climate becomes hotter, drier and more prone to extreme weather events. Green spaces provide opportunities for integrated water management projects that help maintain our city's amenity. We must account for rising temperatures and reduced water availability in our long-term planning, all green spaces need to be managed to adapt to and mitigate, the impacts of climate change. We need to ensure that the quality and quantity of green space within the corridor continue to offer places of refuge, activity and connection for the community. The services and experiences in these parklands also need to be inclusive.

To deliver the deliver quality parklands for a growing population, the Yarra Strategic Plan will complement the draft *Metropolitan Open Space Strategy's* three key programs of work: 'Protect, Optimise and Grow'.

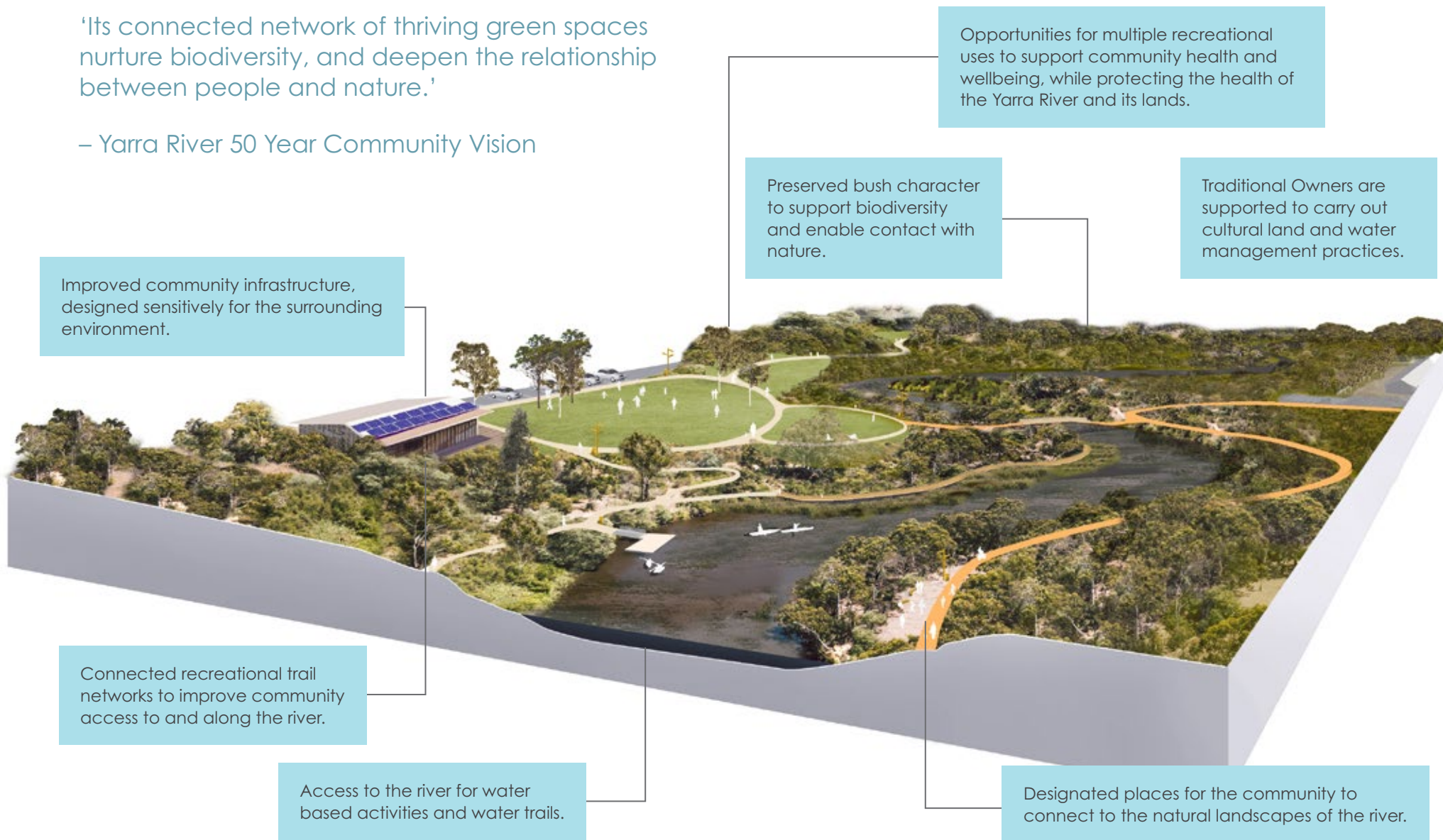
The Yarra Strategic Plan will:

1. Establish a sub-committee of the Yarra Collaboration Committee to support planning, design and management of the river parklands as one living entity.
2. Support Traditional Owners to carry out cultural land and water management practices.
3. Improve community access to the river by connecting recreational trail networks.
4. Establish partnerships to manage sites with Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation and Traditional Owners.
5. Extend the parkland network to cater for a growing community.
6. Ensure park infrastructure and services are contemporary, inclusive, and provide multiple benefits.
7. Improve on-water access by constructing all abilities kayak/canoe access points at key locations. Improve signage and information for on-water journeys.
8. Develop a 10 year berthing strategy for the lower Yarra River.
9. Ensure access and egress to priority sites along the Yarra River through investment in a comprehensive dredging operation and ongoing maintenance dredging for the Yarra River.
10. Form a Yarra River Management Committee to oversee commercial berthing, events and activation, and infrastructure activities in the lower Yarra River.

Figure 5: Representation of quality parklands for a growing population in the future.

‘Its connected network of thriving green spaces nurture biodiversity, and deepen the relationship between people and nature.’

– Yarra River 50 Year Community Vision





## Performance objective 4: Protecting the natural beauty of the Yarra River corridor

Respecting the significance of the Yarra River's landscapes. Where we build, we will protect and celebrate the river's natural beauty, landscapes and views.

As the river journeys from the mountains to the bay, it transitions through a rich variety of landscapes.

In the rural reaches, the protected forests create a sense of seclusion and offer a wilderness experience. Through the Yarra Valley, the river's setting opens out to expansive and picturesque rural landscapes. Within the suburban reach, the parklands and conservation areas have created a near-continuous vegetated corridor along the river's edge, screening views of residential neighbourhoods that lie beyond. As the river flows through the heart of Melbourne, activity and development are in close proximity.

The river's landscapes are highly valued by the community for their scenic qualities, environmental diversity, amenity and cultural associations.

There are numerous locations from which to view the river and its landscapes. This includes formal lookouts, the many bridges which provide long-range vantage points, and the recreational trails which run alongside the water and through the parklands.

Within the inner city and suburban reaches, the extensive parklands along the river's edge allow for direct access to the river and, in some places, an 'immersive' experience of the landscape. However, through the rural areas there are fewer parks and recreational trails, and opportunities to access and experience the river are more isolated.

As our city grows we need to ensure all development along the Yarra is undertaken in a consistent way that aligns with the community vision. The river's highly valued and diverse landscapes must be protected, its role as a vegetated corridor strengthened, and new opportunities to view, access and experience the river created where possible. In addition to these actions, the land use framework provides statutory mechanisms to support many of these outcomes throughout the corridor, on both private and public land.

The Yarra Strategic Plan will:

1. Enhance the river's landscapes and views by improving public access, viewing locations and user experiences (as indicated within the significant places in the land use framework).
2. Monitor changes in land use in order to prioritise the integration of new open space, access to the river and habitat corridors.

*'Our Yarra River, Birrarung, and its diverse surrounding landscapes provide a place of refuge, recreation, learning and livelihood.'*

– Yarra River 50 Year Community Vision



Figure 6: Representation of protecting the natural beauty of the Yarra River corridor in the future.

## Actions, responsibilities and targets\*

The Yarra Collaboration Committee will coordinate and oversee the delivery of each of the 10 year actions\*. This will also be supported by 3 year rolling implementation plans which will provide greater detail relating to the process for delivery and investment commitment across organisations,

Performance objective 1: A healthy river and lands			
Action	Yarra Collaboration Committee member(s)	Delivery timeframe	
1. Restore billabongs and wetlands by increasing water for the environment and undertaking complementary land and water management.	DELWP, Melbourne Water, Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation	Short term (1–3 years)	
2. Strengthen terrestrial and aquatic habitat corridors between the Yarra River and the catchment to support biodiversity. Priority areas include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Healesville to Warrandyte</li> <li>Healesville to Millgrove</li> <li>Watsons Creek (area for protection)</li> <li>Gardiners Creek(celebrating significant places).</li> </ol>	PPWCMA, Melbourne Water, local government, Parks Victoria, Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, DELWP	Short term (1–3 years)	
3. Deliver foundational actions to achieve the community's vision for 'clean waters'. This includes:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>implementing a stormwater awareness and behaviour change campaign targeted at reducing litter and contamination entering the Yarra River</li> </ul>	DELWP, Melbourne Water, local government	Short term (1–3 years)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>increasing education, awareness and regulation to reduce pesticides and chemicals entering the waterway</li> </ul>	Melbourne Water, DELWP, Parks Victoria, EPA, industry	Short term (1–3 years)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>implementing the Stormwater MAC recommendations for the protection of the Birrarung (and other urban waterways) as follows:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>investigate changes to the Victorian variation to the Building Code of Australia and supporting regulations to improve stormwater management from urban development</li> <li>provide clear and effective accountabilities and funding arrangements for stormwater management</li> <li>improve guidance and enforcement of stormwater management during construction.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	DELWP, Melbourne Water, Parks Victoria	Long term (8–10 years)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>improving septic tank and wastewater management using mechanisms such as:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>education and awareness campaigns</li> <li>increased compliance</li> <li>implementation of the state-wide risk assessment framework.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	DELWP, Melbourne Water, local government, EPA	Long term (8–10 years)	

\*All actions are subject to funding

## Performance objective 2: A culturally diverse river corridor

Action	Yarra Collaboration Committee member(s)	Delivery timeframe
1. Support Traditional Owners to record the river's cultural values on Yarra River land.	Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, Parks Victoria, local government	Short term (1-3 years)
2. Pilot interpretive and educational programs for five sites that have shared values for Traditional Owners and post-settlement cultures. Sites include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abbotsford Convent, Abbotsford</li> <li>• Dights Falls, Abbotsford</li> <li>• Bolin Bolin Billabong, Bulleen</li> <li>• Domain Parklands, Melbourne</li> <li>• Brushy Creek, Wonga Park.</li> </ul>	Heritage Victoria, Museum Victoria, local government, Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, Parks Victoria	Medium term (4-7 years)
3. Deliver an interactive education program (e.g. signage, and smart device application) that includes storytelling about the rich culture and heritage of the Yarra River, Birrarung.	Heritage Victoria, Museum Victoria, local government, Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, Parks Victoria	Long term (8-10 years)

## Performance objective 3: Quality parklands for a growing population

Action	Yarra Collaboration Committee member(s)	Delivery timeframe
1. Establish a sub-committee of the Yarra Collaboration Committee to support planning, design and management of the river parklands as one living entity. Priority objectives for committee include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ensuring that all Greater Yarra Urban Parklands have a consistent profile and celebrate the relationship between the river and its parklands</li> <li>- delivering a Yarra River Recreation Strategy to support diverse recreational experiences along the corridor.</li> </ul>	Parks Victoria, local government, Melbourne Water, Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation	Short term (1–3 years)
2. Support Traditional Owners to carry out cultural land and water management practices.	DELWP, Parks Victoria, Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, Melbourne Water	Short term (1–3 years)
3. Improve community access to the river by connecting recreational trail networks as indicated within the significant places.	VicRoads, Parks Victoria, local government	Medium term (4–7 years)
4. Establish partnership to manage sites with Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation and Traditional Owners.	Parks Victoria, Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation	Medium term (4–7 years)
5. Extend the parkland network to cater for a growing community.	DELWP, Parks Victoria, local government	Long term (8–10 years)
6. Ensure park infrastructure and services are contemporary, inclusive, and provide multiple benefits.	Parks Victoria, local government, Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation	Medium term (4–7 years)
7. Improve on-water access by constructing all abilities kayak/canoe access points at key locations and improve signage and information for on-water journeys.	Parks Victoria, local government, Department of Transport (VicRoads and VicTrack), Melbourne Water	Long term (8–10 years)
8. Develop a 10 year berthing strategy for the lower Yarra River	Parks Victoria, City of Melbourne	Short term (1–3 years)
9. Ensure access and egress to priority sites along the Yarra River through investment in a comprehensive dredging operation and ongoing maintenance dredging for the Yarra River.	Parks Victoria	Short term (1–3 years)
10. Form a Yarra River Management Committee to oversee commercial berthing, events and activation, and infrastructure activities in the lower Yarra River. The key terms of reference for this committee would include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- driving the development of a 10 year strategic plan for the lower Yarra River focused on commercial berthing, events and activation, and infrastructure investment</li> <li>- driving the alignment of Parks Victoria and City of Melbourne annual works programs</li> <li>- overseeing the implementation of the outcomes of the Yarra Strategic Plan for the lower Yarra River.</li> </ul>	Parks Victoria, City of Melbourne, Melbourne Water, Traditional Owners	Short term (1–3 years)

## Performance objective 4: Protecting the natural beauty of the Yarra River corridor

Action	Yarra Collaboration Committee member(s)	Delivery timeframe
1. Enhance the river's landscapes and views by improving public access, viewing locations and user experiences (as indicated within the significant places in the land use framework).	DELWP, Parks Victoria, local government, Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation	Medium term (4–7 years)
2. Monitor changes in land use in order to prioritise the integration of new open space, access to the river and habitat corridors.	DELWP	Medium term (4–7 years)

Each performance objective will have a series of targets against which responsible public entities will measure their progress. Targets will cover the following areas:

#### A healthy river and lands:

- number of hectares of vegetation and habitat corridor that connect to Yarra River land
- proportion of floodplains and billabongs on Yarra River land that are inundated to meet environmental and cultural objectives
- maintenance of water quality condition targets as identified in the *Healthy Waterways Strategy*.

#### A culturally diverse river corridor:

- number of on-Country and river-based learning opportunities supported on Yarra River land
- recording of cultural values along the Yarra River corridor
- opportunities to celebrate the Yarra River's rich heritage and culture.

#### Quality parklands for a growing population:

- extent of access for all abilities to the Yarra River and its parklands
- number of sites with partnership arrangements with Traditional Owners
- number of additional walking trails, bicycle paths and on-water access points.

#### Protecting the natural beauty of the Yarra River corridor:

- number of sites with improved access and experience for the community
- number of new buildings and infrastructure that are designed to complement the Yarra River's landscape and maintain views along the Yarra River.

These targets will be included in the final plan. They will be developed using input provided by the community during public engagement.





## PART 2

# LAND USE FRAMEWORK

# LAND USE FRAMEWORK

## The Yarra River at the centre of planning

The Yarra Strategic Plan provides a regional framework for land use planning and decision-making on both public and freehold private land at a local level. The framework complements the collaborative actions set out in Part 1 by ensuring all activities within the corridor align with the performance objectives in the next 10 years.

### Purpose of the land use framework

The land use framework sets out the spatial directions for the Yarra Strategic Plan, as required by Sections 20 and 21 of the *Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murron) Act 2017* (the Act).

To deliver on the intent of the Act, while also reflecting the unique characteristics of the Yarra River, the land use framework provides direction at a whole-of-river scale and within each of the four reaches.

Preparation of the land use framework has drawn from the many existing studies, strategies and projects occurring within the corridor. The framework aims to strengthen and coordinate existing work and fill gaps where required. Relevant responsible public entities will align their business-as-usual activities to the recommendations of the land use framework in order to deliver outcomes for the Yarra Strategic Plan.

### Application of the land use framework

Once the Yarra Strategic Plan is finalised, Clause 12.03-1R 'Yarra River Protection' of the Planning Policy Framework found in the Victoria Planning Provisions will be updated, and the final Yarra Strategic Plan will be referenced or incorporated in planning schemes.

The Yarra Strategic Plan will:

- be used in the planning system to provide regional planning policy and strategic direction for all land within the Yarra Strategic Plan area
- require that changes to a planning scheme (amendments) or a proposed development (permits) must consider the Yarra Strategic Plan and be consistent with its strategic objectives.

## Whole-of-river directions

The Yarra River contains various extensive and distinct landscapes that are valued for their scenic, environmental, social, cultural and economic value.

Planning controls should seek to protect those values and ensure that any development respects the Yarra River and its environs. A lack of consistently applied planning controls throughout the Yarra River's varied reaches, and across municipalities, will undermine the ability of the Yarra Strategic Plan to achieve the community's long term vision and contribute to poor long term outcomes, which threaten the river's significant values.

In 2017, the Minister for Planning implemented interim planning controls between Richmond and Warrandyte recognising the urgent need to protect the suburban areas of the Yarra River from further inappropriate development – ahead of the passing of the Act and development of the Yarra Strategic Plan. The interim planning controls, for the first time, brought a consistent approach introducing mandatory height, setback and overshadowing controls along with consistent vegetation protection across six suburban municipalities.

The Yarra Strategic Plan recommends the following **whole-of-river planning directions** be progressed to ensure the values of the river are protected and the 50 year community vision can be realised. These include:

- Refine and introduce permanent design and development and landscape management controls between Richmond and Warrandyte which continue to prescribe mandatory maximum building heights, minimum development setbacks and overshadowing controls, and strengthened vegetation controls for all new development.
- Prepare new planning controls which extend upstream from Warrandyte to the Yarra Ranges, employing the approach used in the preparation of strengthened controls already applied between Richmond and Warrandyte.

- Review the Yarra River's heritage values and protections and update or introduction of new planning controls, such as the Heritage Overlay, to protect sites of significance.
- Identify areas of high riparian and biodiversity value requiring protection from disturbance and introduction and/or updating of appropriate planning controls such as the Environmental Significance Overlay to these or other high-priority revegetation sites.
- Develop new guidelines to support appropriate landscape design and native planting at the river's interface to ensure a consistent approach to protect and enhance the riverbank environment.

## The Yarra River's four distinct reaches

To reflect the unique characteristics of the Yarra River, and align with the Yarra River 50 Year Community Vision, the land use framework provides direction across the four reaches:

- **Upper rural:** Upper Yarra Reservoir to Healesville
- **Lower rural:** Healesville to Warrandyte
- **Suburban:** Warrandyte to Dights Falls
- **Inner city:** Dights Falls to Westgate Bridge.

Each reach is guided by its own 50 year community vision. The land use framework acknowledges the unique characteristics of each reach and includes some or all of these five elements: current state land use analysis, achieving the community vision, directions for future land use and development, existing and new areas for protection, and celebrating significant places.

### Current state land use analysis

We have undertaken current state analysis to understand existing land use, anticipated threats and pressures (e.g. population growth and climate change); identify values; and to understand how we can achieve the community vision.

The analysis was informed by the elements of the land use framework, articulated in Section 21 of the Act. Further detail on the current state analysis can be found in the *Yarra Strategic Plan Map Book*.<sup>18</sup>

### Achieving the community vision

Each reach has its own community vision, priorities and values which define the community's aspirations for the reach in 50 years. The directions set out in the land use framework respond to the community's aspirations and outline the objectives for both private and public land in the next 10 years.

### Directions for future land use and development

The 242km Yarra River corridor features a myriad of landscapes and environments, with differing degrees of development, access, land use and management.

To reflect these diverse characteristics and manage the increasing pressures on the Yarra River corridor, directions for future land use and development have been categorised into six land use settings. **All activities occurring within the Yarra Strategic Plan area must adhere to the directions set out by the relevant land use settings.**

Land use settings include:

**Yarra River land** – comprised of publicly owned land which has been declared for protection under the *Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murron) Act 2017*. The role of Yarra River land is to support the health of the Yarra River and, where appropriate, allow people to access the river in its most natural state.

**Bush residential** – privately owned land used for agriculture, rural residential properties and agritourism, with many land parcels having direct frontage to the Yarra River. The low level of development on bush residential land will allow for the restoration of a continuous corridor of native vegetation along the Yarra River and its tributaries.

**Townships** – historic townships are focal points in the upper and lower rural reaches for community access to the Yarra River, commercial activity and tourism.

**Suburban** – comprised primarily of residential neighbourhoods, through which the Yarra River and its parklands form a continuous landscape corridor that will be protected and strengthened.

**Urban** – more intensely developed areas in the inner city reach that include a mix of established residential neighbourhoods, retail activity centres and key employment precincts undergoing significant redevelopment. Managing development and strengthening the Yarra River's landscape values are key directions for this land use setting.

**Central city** – within the CBD the Yarra River is a focal point with views along the corridor framed by linked parklands, promenades and surrounding buildings.

The directions for each land use setting will be translated into the Planning Policy Framework, at either the regional or local level.

### Existing and new areas for protection

There are currently many forms of statutory protection in place to manage the different values of the Yarra River. They are implemented through legislation and the planning system and include:

- the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, which provides the legal framework for Victoria's planning system
- the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*, which declares all land within 200m of the edge of all waterways as having potential cultural sensitivity
- the *National Parks Act 1975 and Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978* which apply to forested areas and many of the parklands
- planning scheme overlays such as the Heritage Overlay, Environmental Significance Overlay and Significant Landscape Overlay
- land use zones such as the Green Wedge Zone, Rural Conservation Zone, Neighbourhood Residential Zone and Public Conservation and Resource Zone.

To realise the community's vision and deliver on the requirements of the Act, new areas for protection have been identified for the Yarra River. These areas will help to safeguard against future pressures and ensure that the Yarra River is respected as a sacred natural entity.

The new areas for protection have been selected by:

- identifying areas with high environmental, landscape and cultural value
- assessing future threats to these values and reviewing the effectiveness of existing protections
- considering the range of protection mechanism required to manage threats and protect values for future generations.

### Celebrating significant places

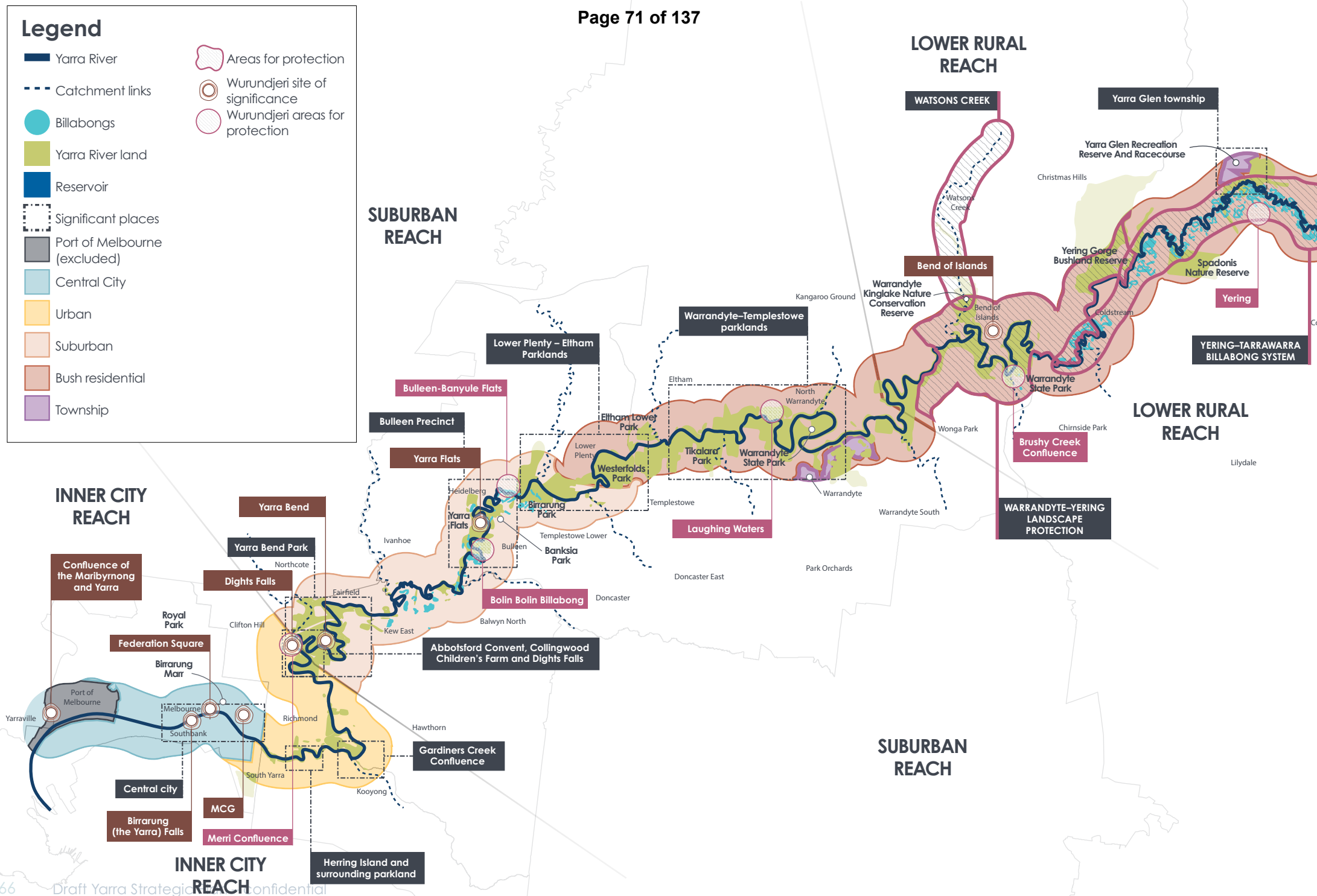
Significant places have been identified to celebrate their regional significance. They contribute to biodiversity, improve the parklands network and access to the Yarra River, protect cultural heritage and expand activation options that embrace and respect the Yarra River.

Recommendations for the significant places will complement the whole-of-river actions and the directions for future land use and development. They include opportunities for future projects and investment, and may also set out changes to local planning schemes, where required.



### Legend

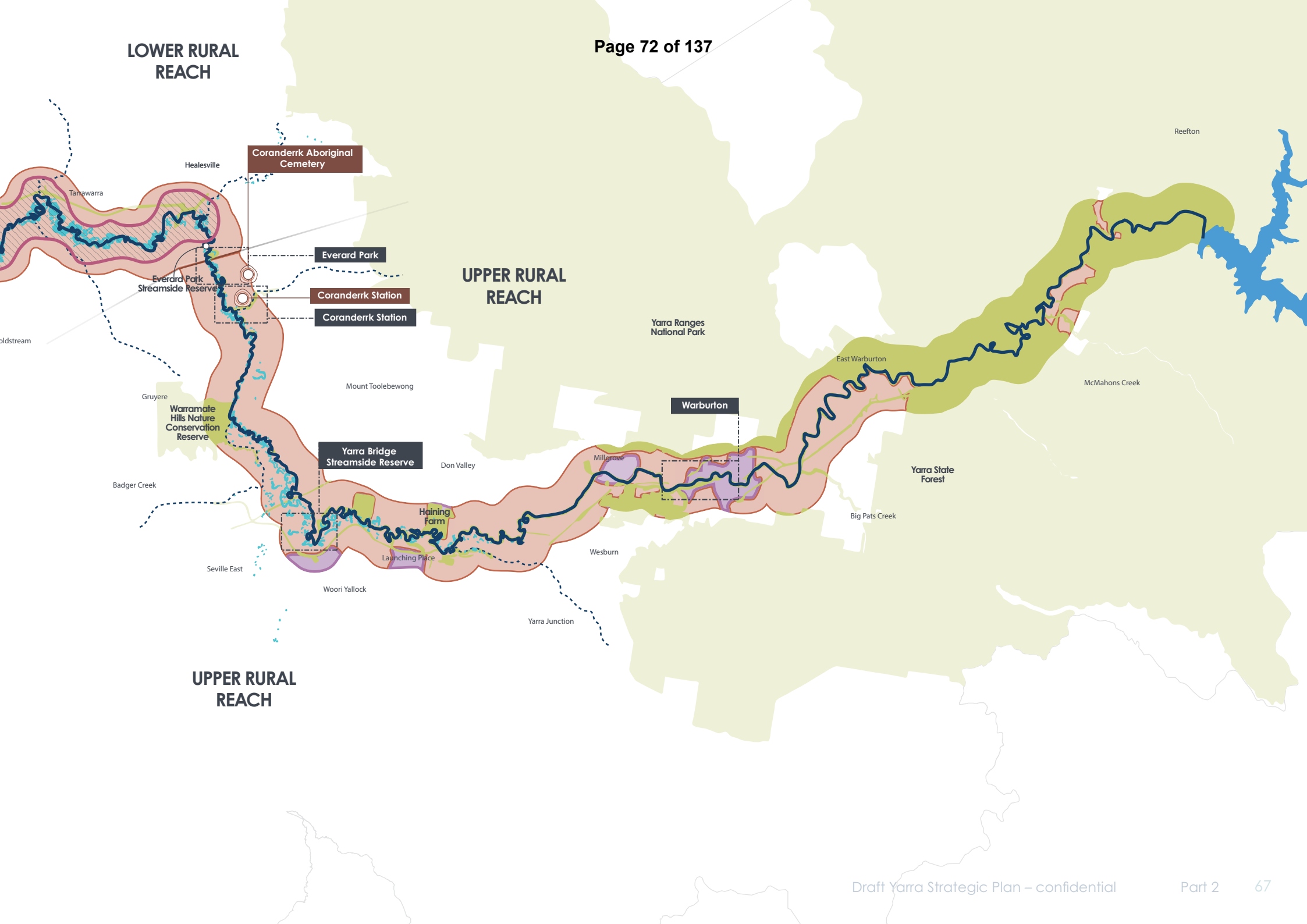
-  Yarra River
-  Catchment links
-  Billabongs
-  Yarra River land
-  Reservoir
-  Significant places
-  Port of Melbourne (excluded)
-  Central City
-  Urban
-  Suburban
-  Bush residential
-  Township
-  Areas for protection
-  Wurundjeri site of significance
-  Wurundjeri areas for protection



**LOWER RURAL REACH**

**UPPER RURAL REACH**

**UPPER RURAL REACH**





# THE UPPER RURAL REACH

## CURRENT STATE LAND USE ANALYSIS

The Yarra River in the upper rural reach is surrounded by a magnificent landscape of mountains, valleys, forests and floodplains.

Upstream of Warburton, the Yarra River is enclosed by the Yarra Ranges National Park and State Forest. These protected forests are filled with wildlife and meet the Yarra River's edge in many locations. As a result, this section of the Yarra River has significant ecological values.

Between Warburton and Healesville, the topography opens out to flatter terrain and agricultural areas become more expansive. Development on private land adjoining the Yarra River is more prevalent in this area. While there are areas of high biodiversity, in many locations the Yarra River's ecological value has been depleted by farming and grazing activity close to the river's edge.

Rural townships including Yarra Junction, Woori Yallock, Millgrove and Warburton are hubs of community and commercial activity within the rural landscape.

Public access to the Yarra River in the upper rural reach is limited to small parks and conservation areas where public land adjoins the river, short sections of recreational trails and walking tracks within protected forests. Access to the water for paddling is popular and there are several boat launch sites. The proposed Yarra Valley Trail will provide new connections through this reach from Healesville to the Lilydale-Warburton Rail Trail.

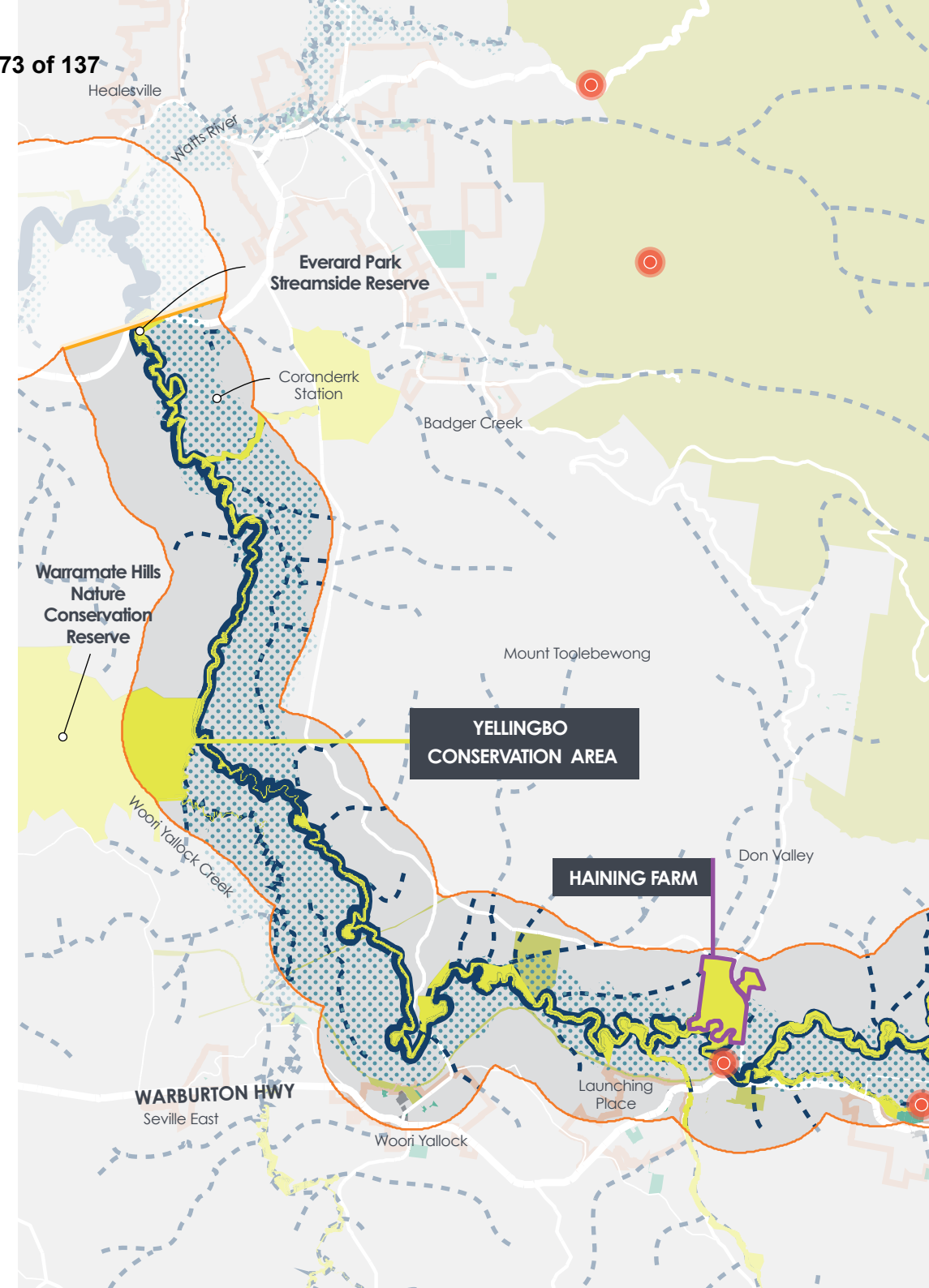
Coranderrk is a place of cultural significance to the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung people and is protected as a site of national heritage significance.

Key considerations for this reach are protection of its significant cultural, environmental and landscape values, improving habitat corridors, protection of the riverbank, billabongs and floodplains, and minimising impacts of land use or development on sensitive flora and fauna. Maximising opportunities for community connection to the Yarra River will also be an important outcome.

The Bushfire Management Overlay and Land Subject to Inundation Overlay apply to large areas of this reach, meaning that fire and flood risk needs to be carefully managed.

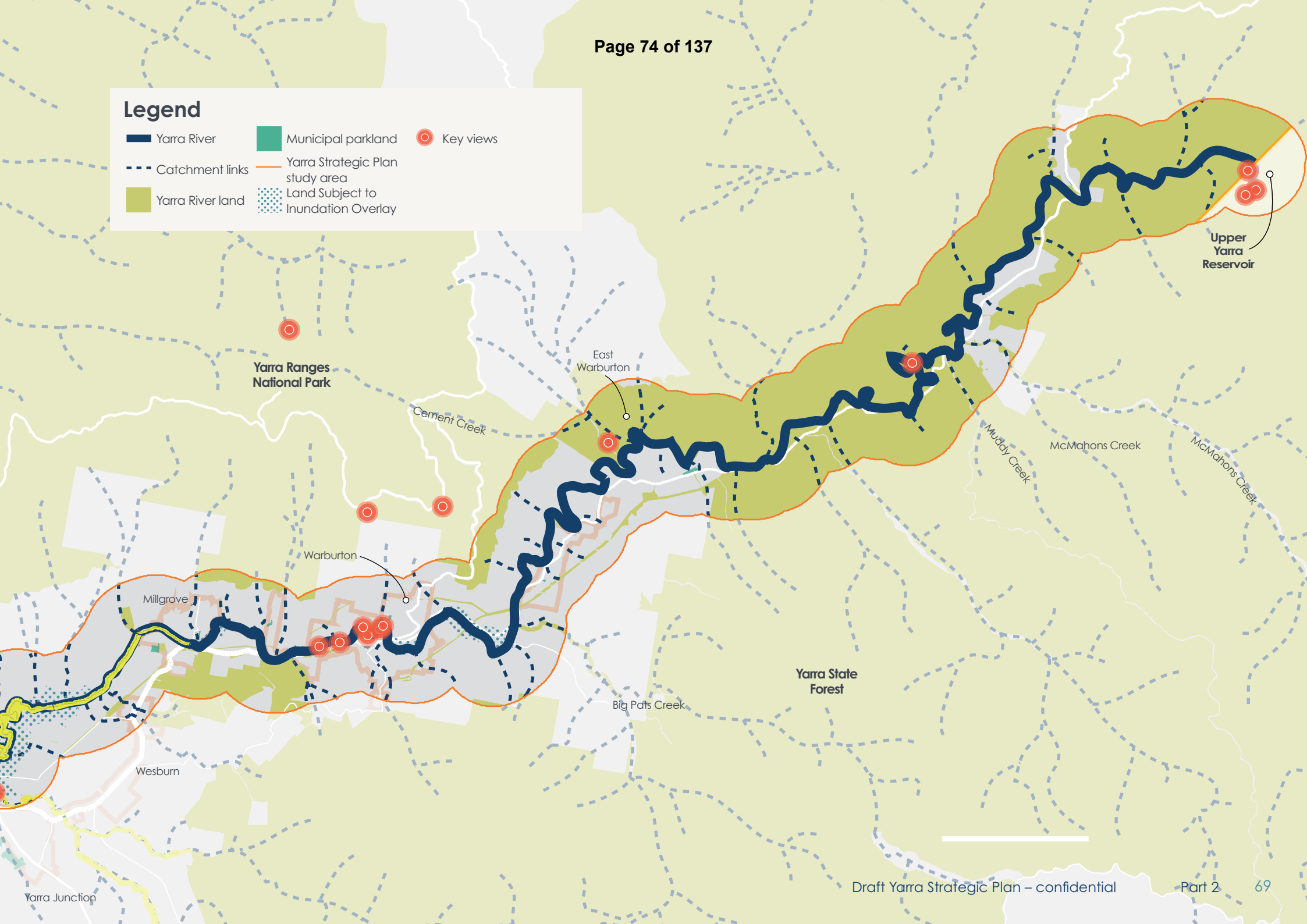
Existing projects in this reach include:

- Yellingbo Conservation Area – aims to re-establish conservation links on public land extending from the Little Yarra River tributary and along the Yarra River between Millgrove and Maroondah Highway. The project will improve biodiversity, landscapes, waterway health and recreation opportunities.
- Haining Farm – a community use and education area, undergoing a transformation from educational dairy farm to a biodiversity hub.



### Legend

	Yarra River		Municipal parkland		Key views
	Catchment links		Yarra Strategic Plan study area		
	Yarra River land		Land Subject to Inundation Overlay		



## ACHIEVING THE COMMUNITY VISION FOR THE UPPER RURAL REACH

### YARRA RIVER UPPER RURAL REACH 50 YEAR COMMUNITY VISION

Goodness flows from the top down.

Careful and innovative management of our Yarra River, Birrarung, and its neighbouring lands ensures the natural replenishment of local billabongs and wetlands and supports a continuous envelope of spectacular indigenous vegetation.

Our Yarra River, Birrarung, supports employment and the social and economic wellbeing of local communities. Those communities and their landholders provide a valuable connection with the natural environment and the water.

The potential of our reach's biodiversity is fostered and enhanced by our enthusiastic local custodians, supporting the environmental health of the entire Yarra River, Birrarung.

Priorities and values:

- Promote and celebrate local cultural heritage through collaboration and community education.
- Develop new opportunities around local tourism, including river-based learning.
- Celebrate and promote opportunities for people to immerse themselves in the unique landscape, local wildlife and incredible biodiversity.
- Provide an expanded river access network for recreation and social connection.
- Foster healthy local ecosystems for the river, its wetlands and billabongs, which are recharged through environmental flows.
- Work with local farming communities to ensure sustainable water use.
- Celebrate personal connections to the river.

## In the next 10 years

The land use framework in the upper rural reach sets out future directions for private and public land over the next 10 years. This will assist in achieving the Yarra Strategic Plan performance objectives and ultimately the aspirations of the 50 year community vision.

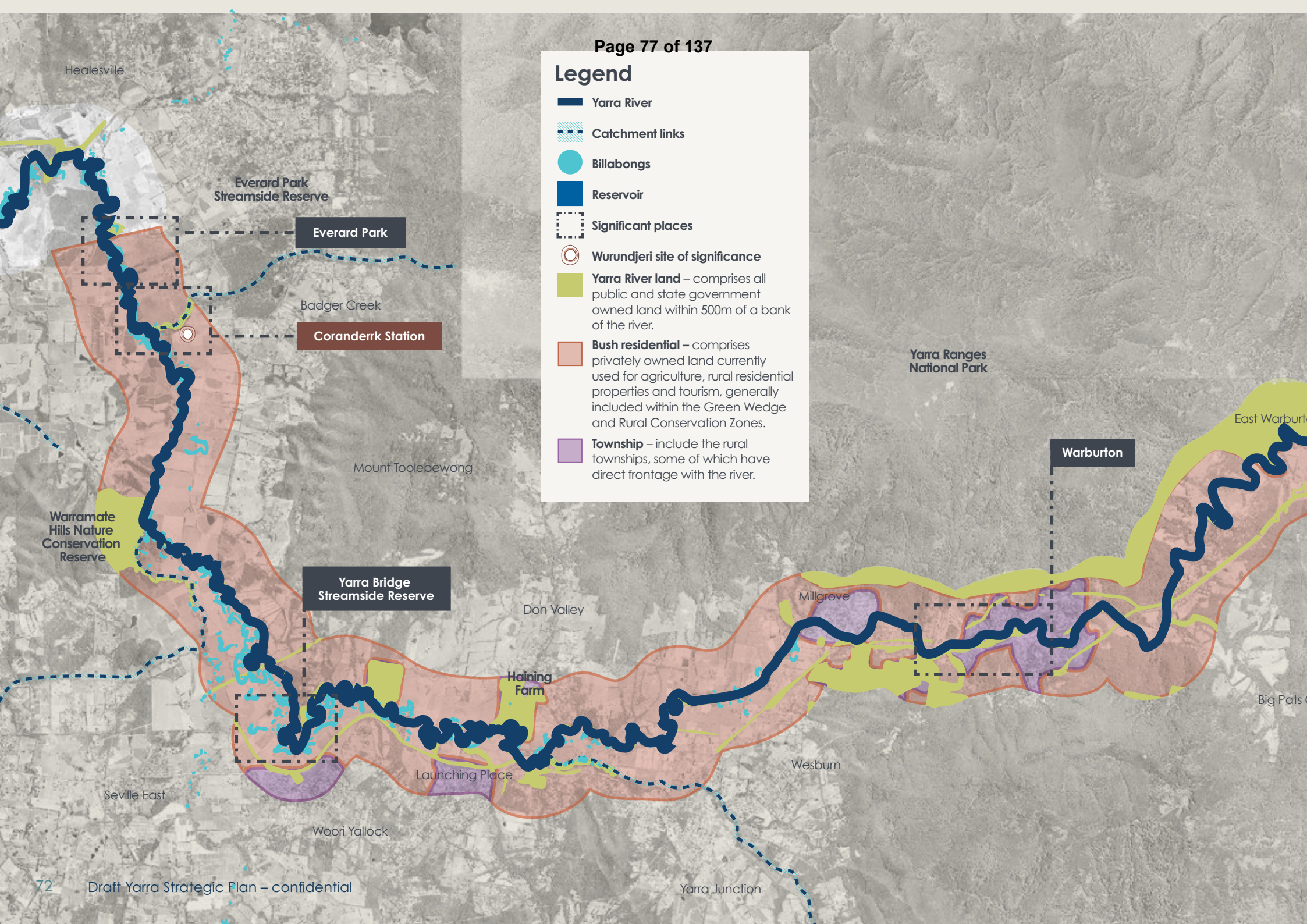
The land use framework aims to:

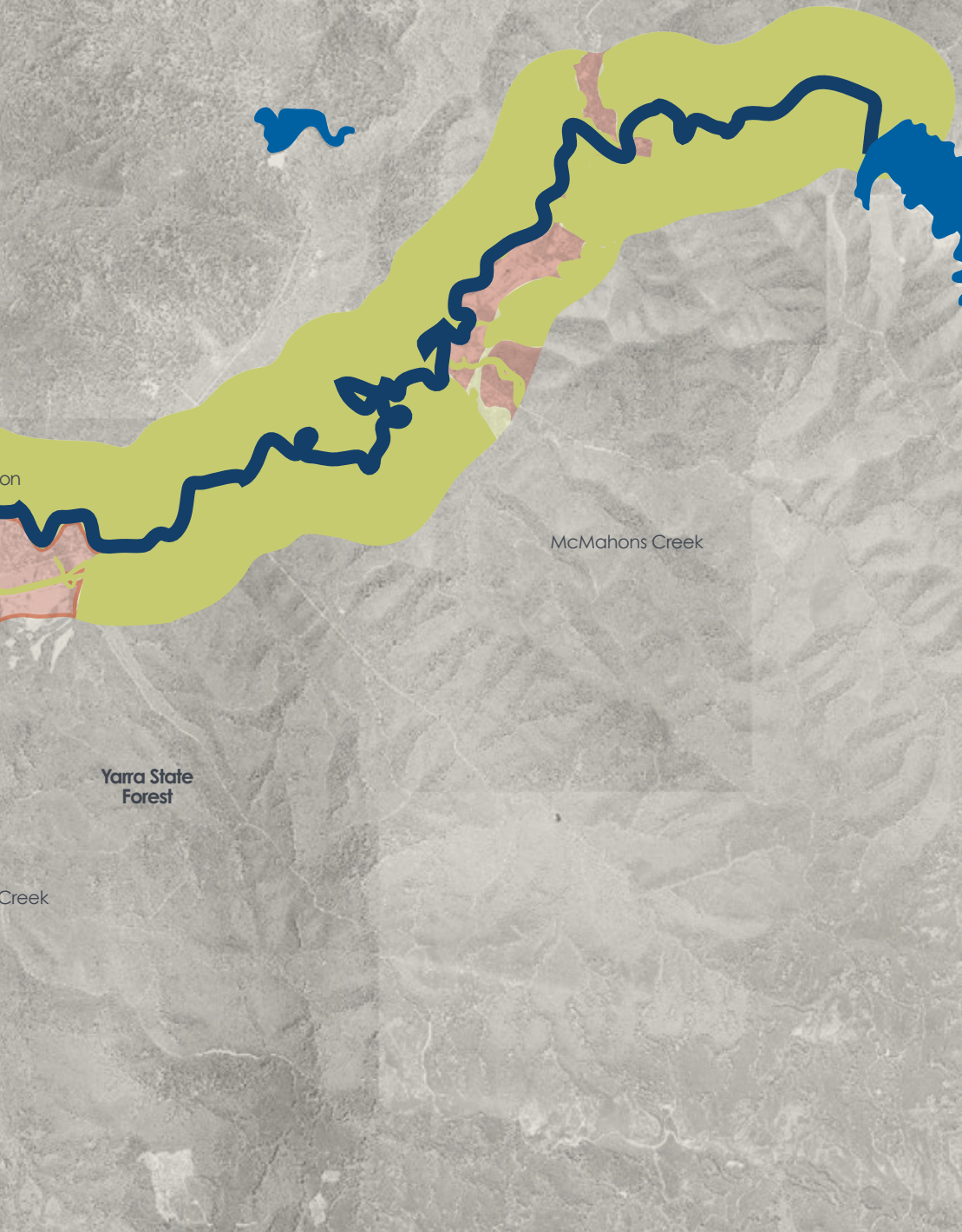
- protect the forests and wilderness areas that form a significant part of the upper rural reach
- restore and protect depleted sections of the riverbank environment and establish a continuous vegetation buffer along the Yarra River's edge
- strengthen vegetation across the broader landscape and along tributaries, between public and private land. New landscape guidelines will provide guidance for the implementation of stronger planning controls and enable a consistent approach to planting
- improve opportunities for the community to experience the Yarra River, focusing on existing open spaces and townships along the Yarra River in the immediate term and investigating options to expand Yarra River access in the future, by land or water
- minimise impacts to the Yarra River's rich cultural, environmental and landscape values through the review and update of relevant overlays. Specifically:
  - implementation of mandatory maximum building heights and minimum setbacks
  - updates to existing heritage protection
  - updates to existing environmental and landscape protection to reflect the Yarra River's significant features
- protect sites of significance and areas for protection identified by the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation as captured in the significant places.



### Legend

- Yarra River
- Catchment links
- Billabongs
- Reservoir
- Significant places
- Wurundjeri site of significance
- Yarra River land – comprises all public and state government owned land within 500m of a bank of the river.
- Bush residential – comprises privately owned land currently used for agriculture, rural residential properties and tourism, generally included within the Green Wedge and Rural Conservation Zones.
- Township – include the rural townships, some of which have direct frontage with the river.





## DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

### Yarra River land

- Use Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation's flora and fauna assessments to inform restoration and strengthen critical habitat, vegetation and cultural corridors.
- Create unobtrusive bushwalking tracks, where appropriate, to allow people to connect to the Yarra River.
- Ensure new public buildings and infrastructure are designed to complement the Yarra River's natural environment. Siting should avoid encroaching on key view points.
- Apply Yarra Protection Principles, set out in the *Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murrn) Act 2017*, to all development on Yarra River land.

### Bush residential

- Encourage sustainable land management practices to protect the health of the Yarra River and its tributaries, while supporting the livelihood of farming communities.
- Protect native vegetation across rural and bush residential land to provide habitat connections between conservation areas and along the Yarra River and its tributaries.
- Protect, rehabilitate and reengage floodplains, wetlands and billabongs to sustain their natural, cultural and spiritual values and minimise water quality impacts.
- Ensure new buildings or infrastructure are designed to complement the landscape. Siting should avoid encroaching on key view points.
- Buildings are to avoid encroachment on the floodplain and its sensitive features.
- Development in flood affected areas should refer to the *Guidelines for Development in Flood Affected Areas*.

### Townships

- Maintain the heritage character of the township and implement mandatory controls for building heights and setbacks from the Yarra River's edge.
- Design new development to encourage an appreciation of the Yarra River environs. This includes buildings that are sited to face, and facilitate public access to, the Yarra River.
- Improve native planting along the bank of the Yarra River to restore and enhance the environment.
- Apply integrated water management principles to all development to maximise stormwater capture and reuse, and limit runoff into waterways.
- Development in flood affected areas should refer to the *Guidelines for Development in Flood Affected Areas*.

## Warburton

Warburton is significant as the largest township in the upper rural reach and the gateway to the Yarra Ranges National Park. It is a historic rural township with significant character and cultural values. Established around the Yarra River, it provides opportunities for direct experiences of the Yarra River's environment. There is an opportunity for Warburton to expand its current tourism role, with plans under development for a world-class mountain biking hub and a priority recreational boat launch at Mayer Bridge. Warburton will also be connected to the proposed Yarra Valley Trail via the existing Lilydale-Warburton Rail Trail.

### Opportunities for future projects and alignment:

- Develop Warburton as a destination for nature-based tourism and active recreation.
- 1 Enhance opportunities to experience the Yarra River at Warburton by upgrading the Yarra River Walk circuit trail and connections between the different public spaces along the Yarra River, as well as providing visitor facilities as required.
- 2 Provide a new all-abilities Yarra River access point at Mayer Bridge.
  - Provide interpretive information at key locations to share stories of the Yarra River's history and environment.
- 3 Protect views to the Yarra River from the Warburton Highway and the Lilydale-Warburton Rail Trail.
  - Strengthen the riverbank environment through additional planting of appropriate species.
  - Amend existing planning scheme controls to ensure that buildings present a positive interface with the Yarra River and its adjoining parklands, provide adequate setbacks for planting and allow for the creation of public access to the Yarra River where appropriate.





**Legend**

- Yarra River
- Catchment links
- Yarra River land
- Municipal parkland
- Greater Yarra Urban Parkland
- Existing recreational trail
- Key views
- Priority boat launch site

**10 YEAR PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES**

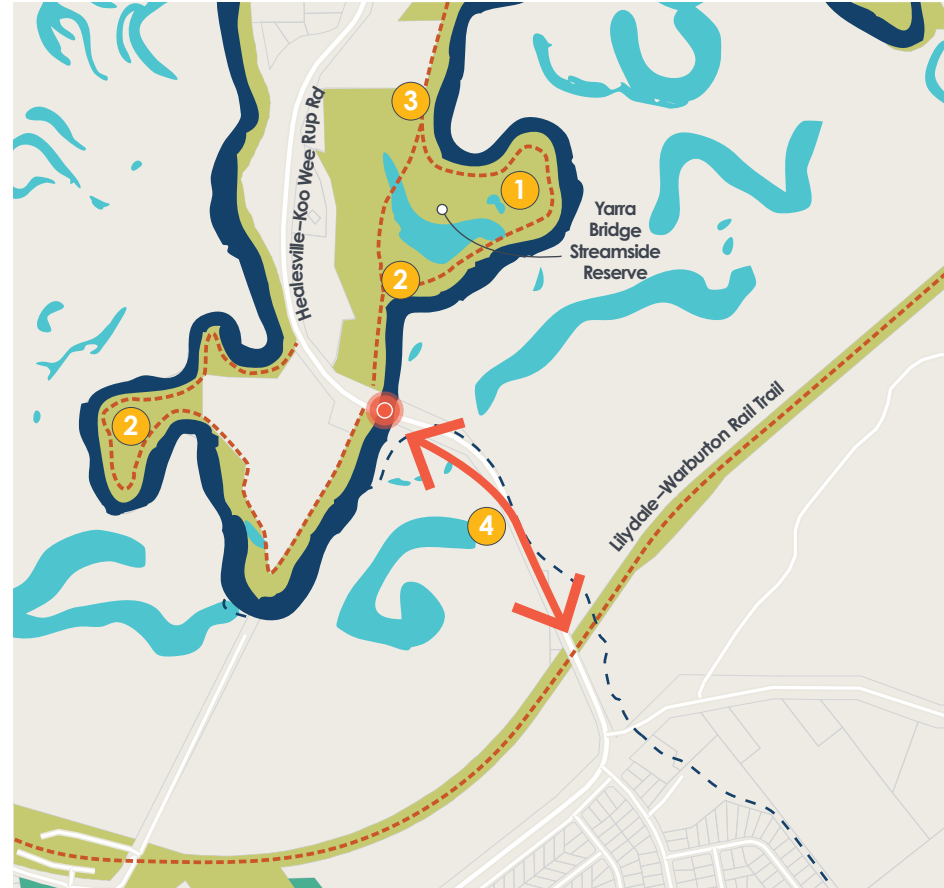


## Yarra Bridge Streamside Reserve

Yarra Bridge Streamside Reserve is a small open space of declared Yarra River land, just outside Woori Yallock. It is a significant place within the upper rural reach as it provides direct Yarra River access and contains an important billabong. It has a bushland character with views across picturesque farmland. Its walking and mountain bike tracks are well used by the community, but in need of upgrading. The Yarra River edge and environmental condition of the reserve also require improvement. The Yarra Bridge Billabong located within this reserve is an important habitat for native wetland species, but it is at risk from pest animals and plants. The reserve has significant potential as a place for the community to experience and enjoy the Yarra River and as a key site for billabong enhancement.

### Opportunities for future projects and alignment:

- Improve environmental management by removing weeds, protecting significant trees and revegetating the riverbank including implementing initiatives outlined in the *Healthy Waterways Strategy and Yellingbo Conservation Area Draft 10 Year Plan* for this streamside reserve.
- 1 Improve management and enhancement of the Yarra Bridge billabong.
  - 2 Upgrade recreational trails and access points to the water.
  - 3 Formalise recreational trails to provide sustainable use in designated locations.
  - 4 Improve connections to Woori Yallock and the Lilydale-Warburton Rail Trail for pedestrians and cyclists as part of the Yarra Ranges Council's Yarra Valley Trail project, which will fill the gap between Healesville and the Lilydale-Warburton Rail Trail.
- Review existing planning scheme controls to include additional direction to protect and strengthen the environmental and landscape values of the Yarra River edge, the park and the billabong.



### Legend

- Yarra River
- Billabongs
- - - Existing recreational trail
- Key views
- - - Catchment links
- Yarra River land
- ↔ Improved access

10 YEAR PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

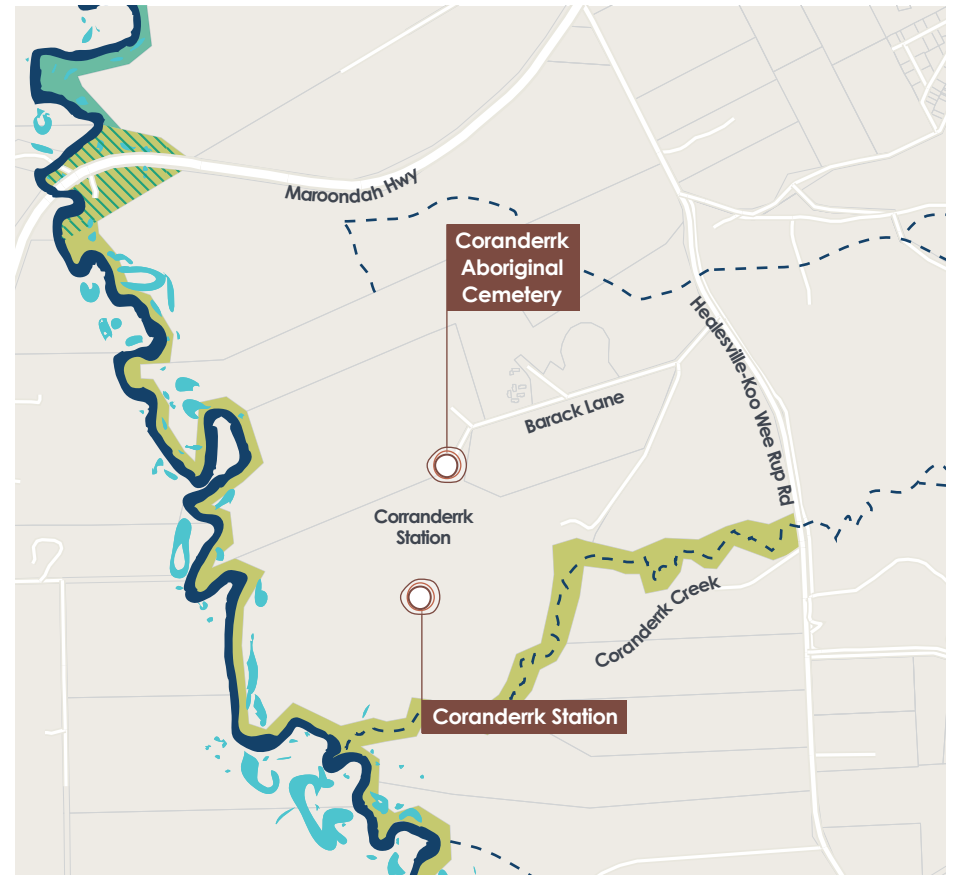


## Coranderk Station

Coranderk has been nominated as a site of significance by the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation. The site was procured by Ngurungaeta Simon Wonga and his cousin William Barak, for the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung people (the Traditional Owners) and other Aboriginal people who were displaced from their homelands, and established as a reservation for Aboriginal people in 1863. Coranderk operated as a successful agricultural enterprise until its untimely closure by the state in 1925. Today it is managed by members of the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung community, and has benefited from significant revegetation, as well as ongoing sustainable land management initiatives. Coranderk Station and the nearby cemetery are recognised as a nationally significant heritage sites. Small portions of the original Station footprint have been returned to the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung community, including the Army School of Health and Galeena Beek. It is important to recognise that while these sites technically lie outside the 1km Yarra River corridor, culturally they are highly significant for the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung people.

### Opportunities for future projects and alignment:

- Provide support for ongoing environmental management initiatives and site maintenance to continue the rehabilitation of the land by implementing initiatives outlined in the *Yellingbo Conservation Area 10 Year Plan*.
- Provide information about the site's history and heritage to educate the community about the impact of European settlement upon Traditional Owners and other Aboriginal Victorians.



### Legend

- Yarra River
- Billabongs
- Catchment links
- Yarra River land
- ⊙ Wurundjeri site of significance

10 YEAR  
PERFORMANCE  
OBJECTIVES



### Everard Park Streamside Reserve

Everard Park is one of the few formal Yarra River access points in the upper rural reach and therefore nominated as a significant place. It is a popular place to access the Yarra River for picnicking, fishing and swimming and there is potential for it to have wider visitation, given its location on the Maroondah Highway. The park has benefited from recent planting and installation of new facilities (picnic tables and fencing), however the Yarra River's bank is degraded in some locations. Further improvements could expand the reserve's potential as a location to enjoy and learn about the Yarra River.

#### Opportunities for future projects and alignment:

- Support the ongoing environmental management of the park by implementing initiatives outlined in the *Yellingbo Conservation Area Draft 10 Year Plan*.
  - Provide additional visitor facilities, including information about the site's history and heritage.
- 1 Improve directional signage to the park from the Maroondah Highway.
  - 2 Create a dedicated access point to the water.
- Review existing planning scheme controls to include additional direction to protect and strengthen the environmental and landscape values of the Yarra River edge and the park.

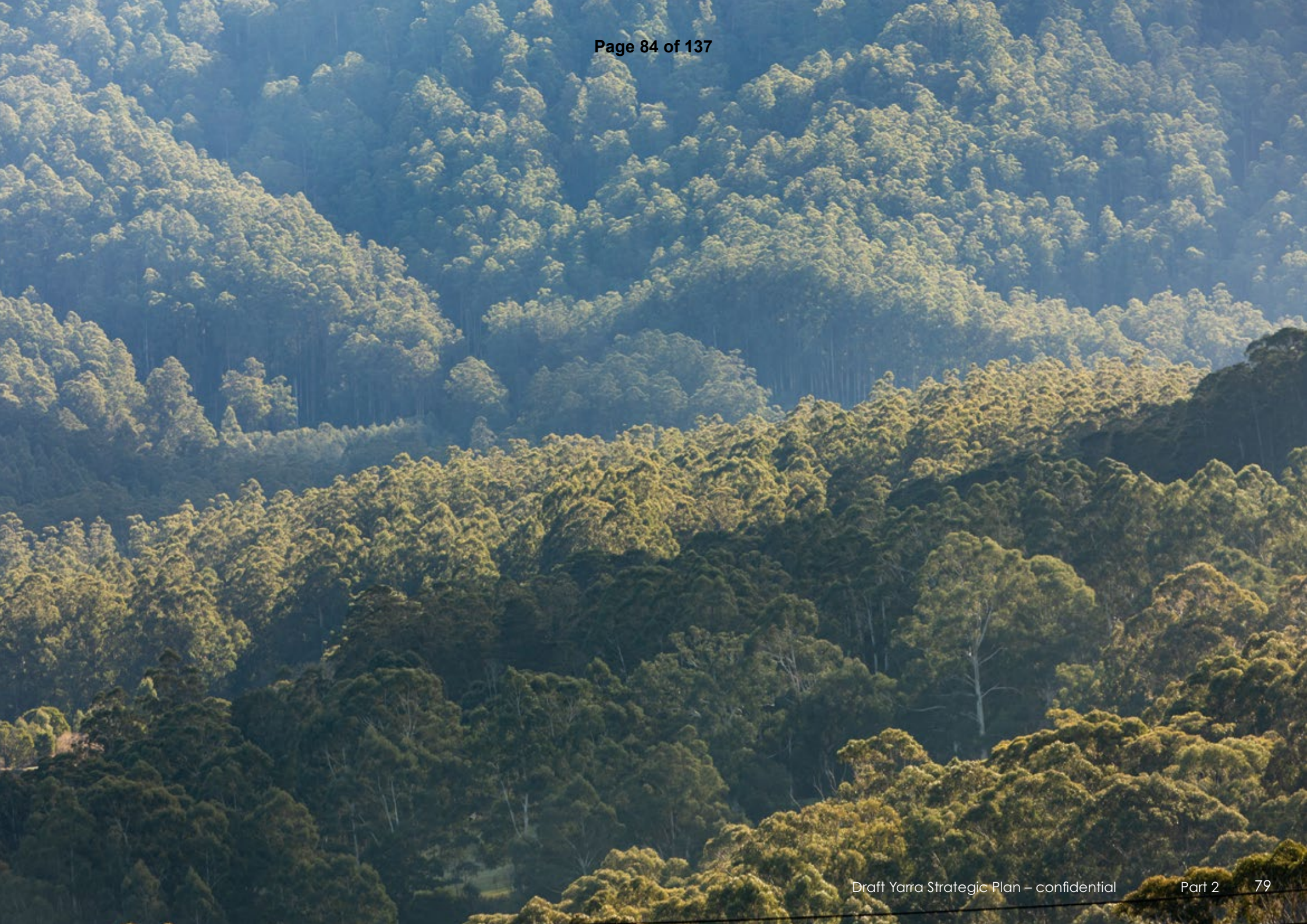


#### Legend

- Yarra River
- Billabongs
- Municipal parkland
- Yarra River land

#### 10 YEAR PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES





# THE LOWER RURAL REACH

## CURRENT STATE LAND USE ANALYSIS

The open and expansive landscape of the lower rural reach is framed by mountain ranges. The rich soils of the Yarra River's floodplains support diverse land uses such as farming, agritourism and viticulture.

Within this reach native vegetation has been cleared in many places along the Yarra River corridor. The rehabilitation of natural habitat and preservation of significant landscapes is, therefore, a priority. This includes the enclosed corridor of native vegetation between Warrandyte and Yering, and significant clusters of billabongs between Yering and Tarrawarra, all of which have high environmental, cultural and landscape value.

Sites of particular ecological and cultural significance to the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung people include the Brushy Creek confluence, Yering and Bend of Islands.

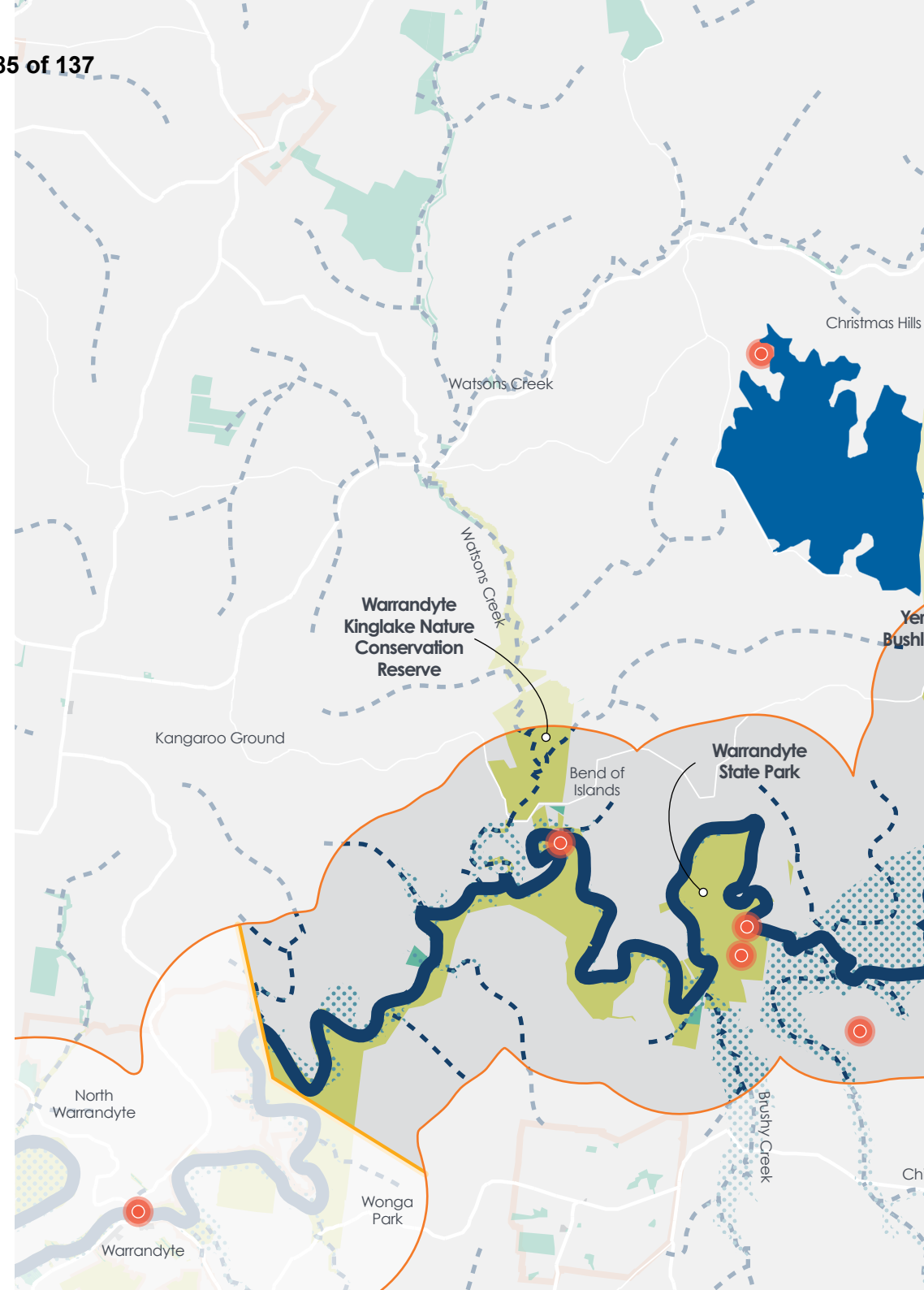
As access to the Yarra River is limited in this reach, it is important to enhance opportunities for the community to experience the Yarra River, where appropriate. This includes access locations at Warrandyte State Park, Yarra Glen and Spadonis Nature Reserve, which all have bushwalking tracks and boat launches.

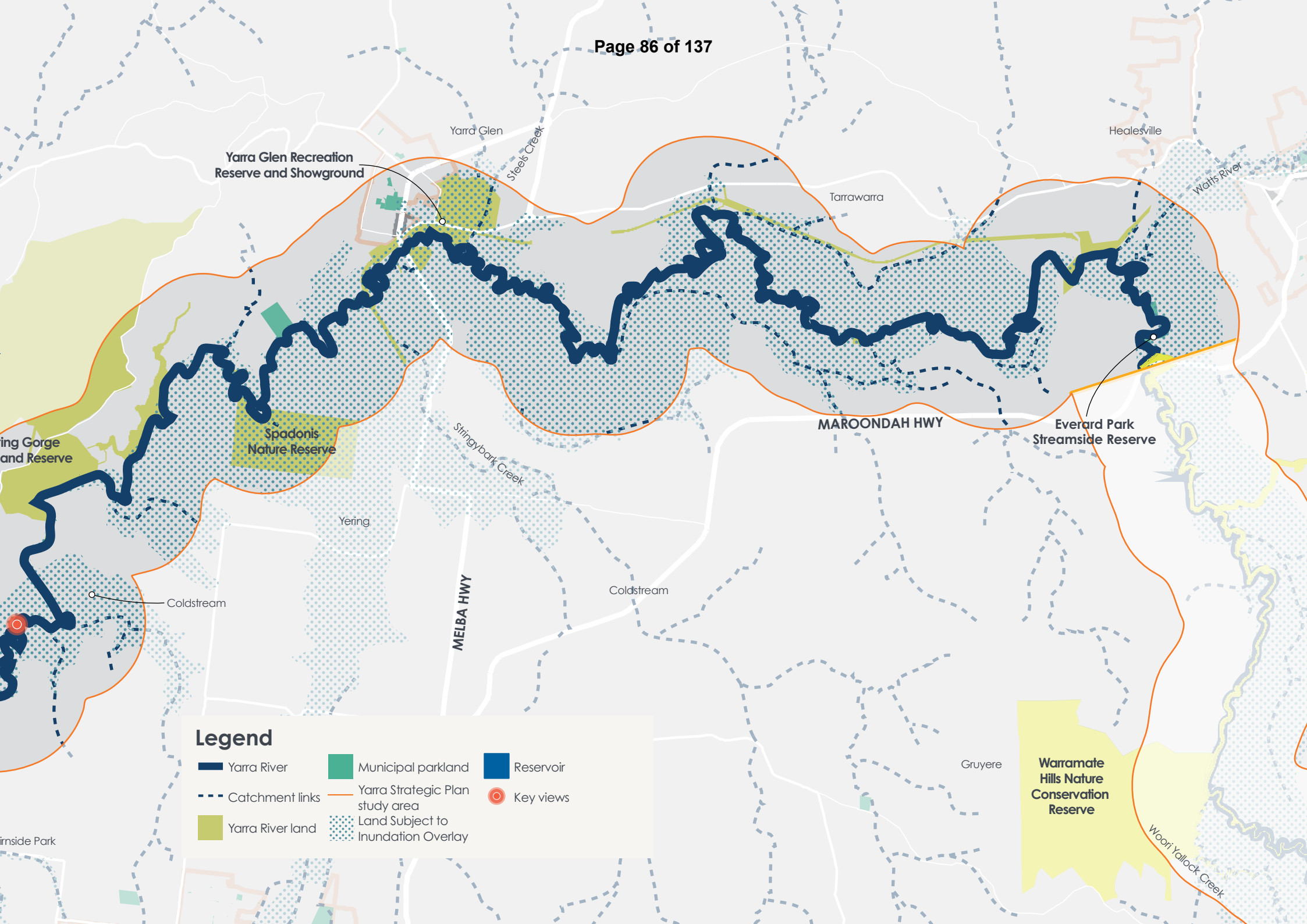
Within this reach, the community's journey along the Yarra River will be primarily on the water. The proposed Yarra Valley Trail will provide new connections from Lilydale to Healesville via Yarra Glen along the former railway easement and connect to the Lilydale-Warburton Rail Trail.

The historic township of Yarra Glen is the only urban area in the lower rural reach and a hub of community and commercial activity.

The Bushfire Management Overlay and Land Subject to Inundation Overlay apply to large areas of this reach, meaning that fire and flood risk needs to be carefully managed.

The Land Subject to Inundation Overlay also applies to the Yarra River and its tributaries, requiring management of flood risk within the Yarra River's immediate environs.





**Legend**

- Yarra River
- Catchment links
- Yarra River land
- Municipal parkland
- Yarra Strategic Plan study area
- Land Subject to Inundation Overlay
- Reservoir
- Key views

## ACHIEVING THE COMMUNITY VISION FOR THE LOWER RURAL REACH

### YARRA RIVER LOWER RURAL REACH 50 YEAR COMMUNITY VISION

From Healesville to Warrandyte, our Yarra River, Birrarung, and its surrounding environment is embraced and cared for through a deep understanding and sense of custodianship, the way the Wurundjeri have always done.

It is embraced by a wide, mature cloak of indigenous vegetation through the flats, filled with the sights and sounds of native animals and birds.

Our Yarra River, Birrarung, is home to happy farmers, making a living and caring for the river and its lands.

People visit the river in key locations to meet and play in, on and beside the water whilst learning about its rich history, its Wurundjeri carers and incredible environmental values.

From Yering Gorge, our Yarra River, Birrarung, is continuously replenished by plants and animals from Kinglake and beyond, joining the river on its journey to the city.

#### Community priorities and values

- Improve community access at sensitive locations to enrich local connections, whilst protecting the region's natural environment.
- Bring improved biodiversity to our local area, enhancing indigenous vegetation, animal, insects and fish in our habitat corridor and surrounding billabongs.
- Foster and support sustainable agricultural practices which exist in harmony with the river and its lands.
- Work with the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung people to protect and enhance knowledge of local cultural values and sites.
- Explore innovative tourism opportunities around activities such as education, cultural heritage and fishing to showcase rural river experiences.
- Preserve the rural and bush character of the river and its landscapes through collaboration and careful management of future development.

## In the next 10 years

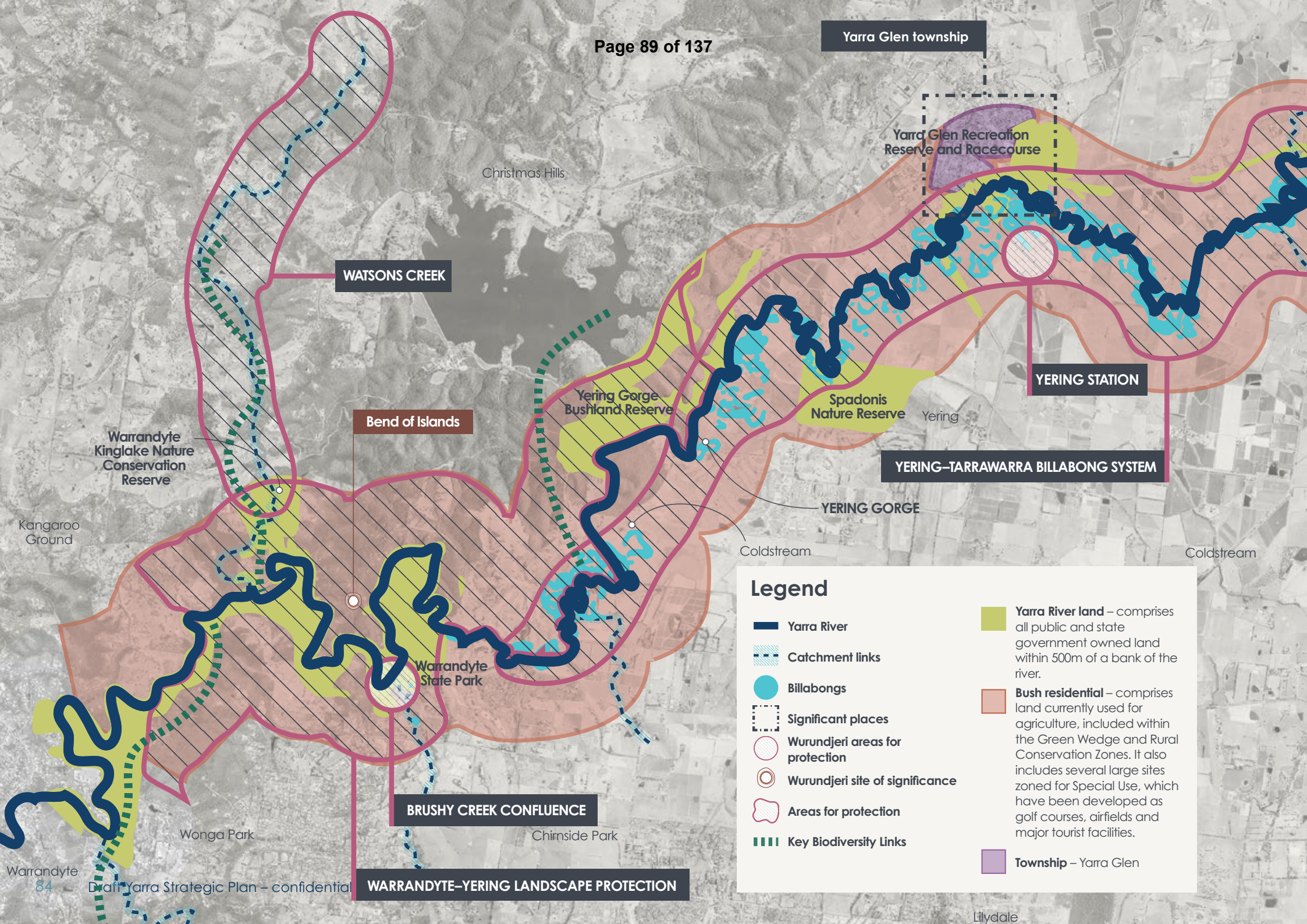
The land use framework in the lower rural reach sets out the future directions for private and public land over the next 10 years. This will assist in achieving the Yarra Strategic Plan performance objectives and ultimately the aspirations of the 50 year community vision.

The land use framework aims to:

- restore depleted sections of the riverbank environment and establish a continuous vegetation buffer along the Yarra River's edge
- strengthen vegetation across the broader landscape and along tributaries, between public and private land to create habitat corridors for biodiversity. New landscape guidelines will provide guidance for the implementation of stronger planning controls and enable a consistent approach to planting
- improve opportunities for the community to experience the Yarra River, focusing on existing open spaces along the Yarra River in the immediate term and investigating options to expand Yarra River access in the future, by land or water
- implement new protection for billabong systems across the reach and landscapes between Warrandyte-Yering, which are currently without statutory protection, and support conservation initiatives in the Watsons Creek corridor
- minimise impacts to the Yarra River's rich cultural, environmental and landscape values through the review and update of relevant overlays. Specifically:
  - implementation of mandatory maximum building heights and minimum setbacks
  - updates to existing heritage protection
  - updates to existing environmental and landscape protection to reflect the Yarra River's significant features
- protect sites of significance and areas for protection identified by the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation as captured in the significant places.

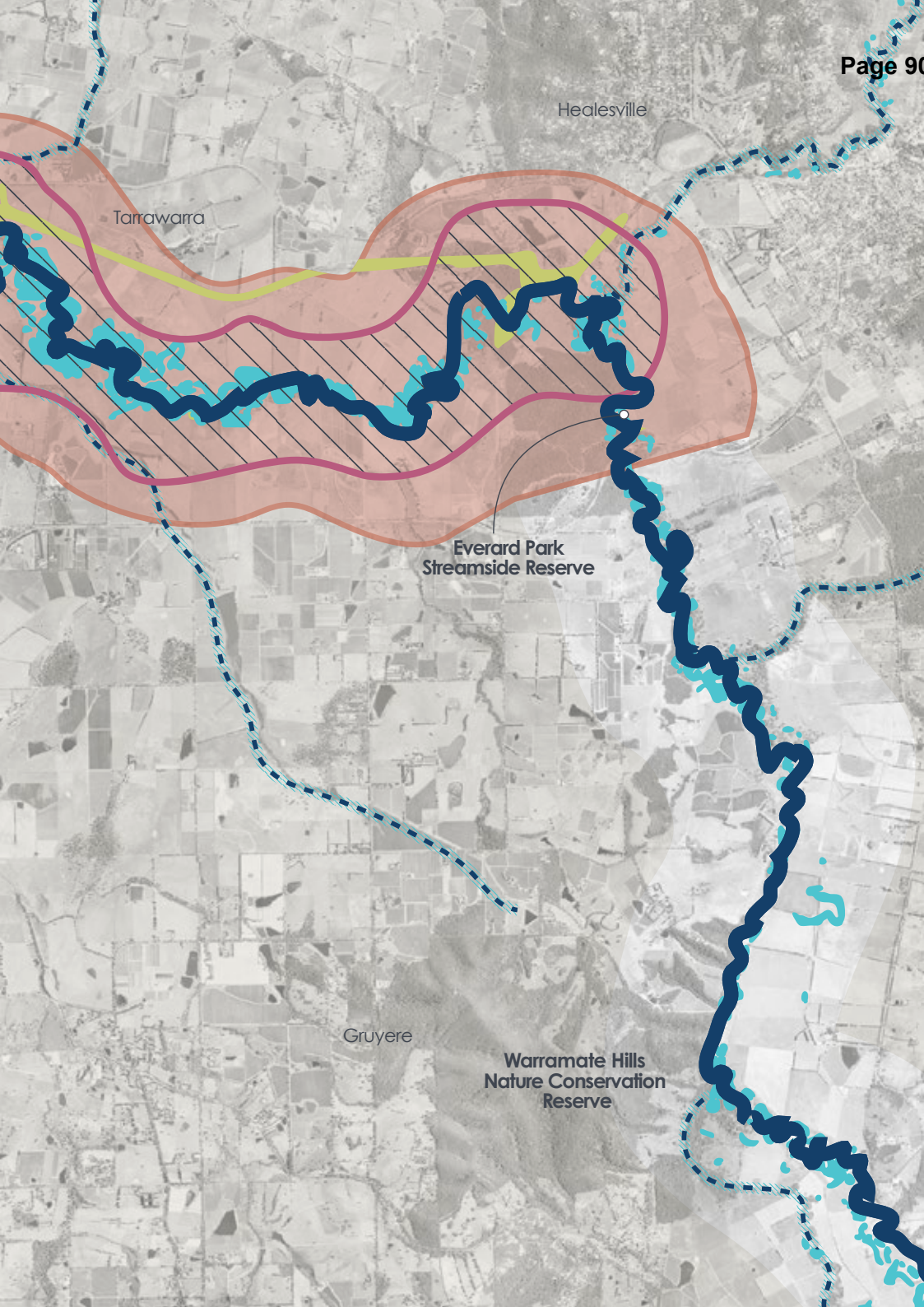






### Legend

- Yarra River
- Catchment links
- Billabongs
- Significant places
- Wurundjeri areas for protection
- Wurundjeri site of significance
- Areas for protection
- Key Biodiversity Links
- Yarra River land – comprises all public and state government owned land within 500m of a bank of the river.
- Bush residential – comprises land currently used for agriculture, included within the Green Wedge and Rural Conservation Zones. It also includes several large sites zoned for Special Use, which have been developed as golf courses, airfields and major tourist facilities.
- Township – Yarra Glen



## DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

### Yarra River land

- Use Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation's flora and fauna assessments to inform restoration and strengthen critical habitat, vegetation and cultural corridors.
- Create unobtrusive bushwalking tracks, where appropriate, to allow people to connect to the Yarra River.
- Ensure new public buildings and infrastructure are designed to complement the Yarra River's natural environment. Siting should avoid encroaching on key view points.
- Apply Yarra Protection Principles, set out in the *Yarra River Protection (Willipgin Birrarung murron) Act 2017*, to all development on Yarra River land.

### Bush residential

- Encourage sustainable land management practices to protect the health of the Yarra River and its tributaries, while supporting the livelihood of farming communities.
- Protect native vegetation across rural and bush residential land to provide habitat connections between conservation areas, and along the Yarra River and its tributaries.
- Protect, rehabilitate and reengage floodplains, wetlands and billabongs to sustain their natural, cultural and spiritual values and minimise water quality impacts.
- Ensure new buildings or infrastructure are designed to complement the landscape. Siting should avoid encroaching on key viewpoints.
- Buildings are to avoid encroachment on the floodplain and its sensitive features.
- Ensure private land around the Watsons Creek confluence supports the habitat and biodiversity of the Warrandyte-Kinglake corridor.
- Development in flood affected areas should refer to the *Guidelines for Development in Flood Affected Areas*.

### Yarra Glen township

- Refer to the detailed recommendations for Yarra Glen township on the following page.
- Development in flood affected areas should refer to the *Guidelines for Development in Flood Affected Areas*.



### Yarra Glen township

Yarra Glen is a characterful rural township on the Melba Highway and is the only township in the lower rural reach. There are several sites of notable cultural and heritage value located around the Yarra River: the historic station and tourist railway (currently under restoration), the Yarra Glen Recreation Reserve and the Murrup Brarn Yarra Flats wetlands. There are several open spaces along the Yarra River at the entry point to the township, with the Recreation Reserve being a popular Yarra River access point.

#### Opportunities for future projects and alignment:

- Strengthen the riverbank environment through additional planting of appropriate species along the Yarra River's edge.
- 1 Enhance the Yarra River crossing on the Melba Highway as a gateway to the township and an important view to the Yarra River.
- 2 Improve access to the Yarra River from the town and establish/upgrade walking trails to connect each of the riverside spaces.
- 3 Upgrade Yarra River access and experiences around the priority boat launch site at Yarra Glen Recreation Reserve.
- 4 Include opportunities for cultural interpretation of Yarra Glen's heritage in future planning and design of public spaces and buildings.
- Investigate the need for strengthened planning controls to protect the Yarra River's landscape setting.
- Apply integrated water management principles to all development to maximise stormwater capture and reuse, and limit runoff into waterways.



**Legend**

Yarra River	Yarra River land	Existing recreational trail	Key views
Billabongs	Municipal parkland	Improved access	Priority boat launch site

**10 YEAR PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES**



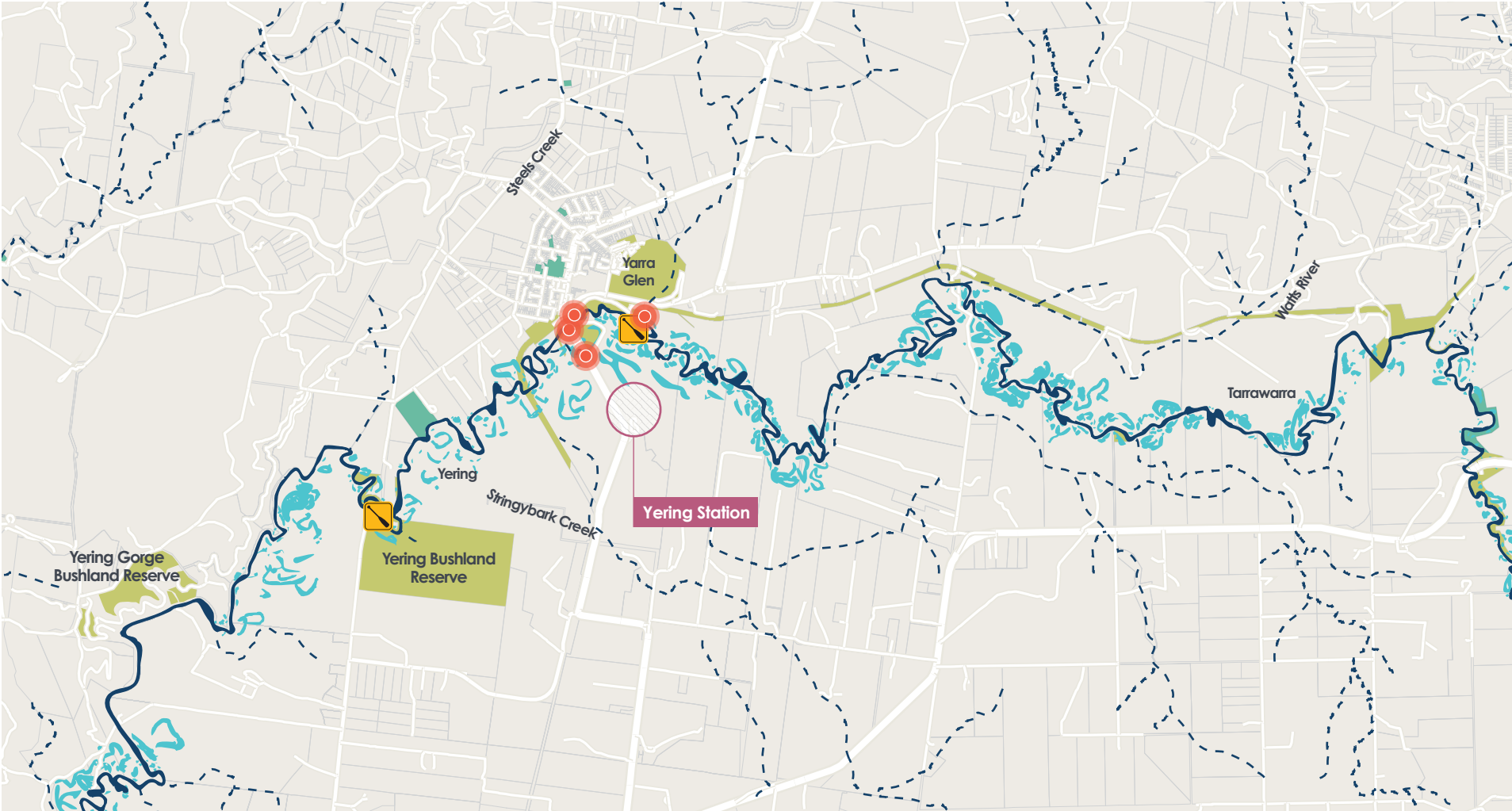
### Billabong systems: Yering and Tarrawarra

The Yarra River's floodplains in the lower rural reach include many billabongs with high environmental, cultural and landscape value. The billabong systems are identified as a new area for protection as they are currently at risk from restricted or reduced water flow, weed and pest invasion, land clearing and cattle movement. Most of the billabongs are located on privately owned land which is used for farming and has no public access.

In addition to the important billabong systems, Yering Station has been identified by the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation as an area for protection. The station is the site of a battle between Wurundjeri warriors and the Border Police in 1840. A memorial plaque within the wetlands commemorates this historical event.

### Opportunities for future projects and alignment:

- Investigate with landowners the suite of options for protecting billabongs. Implementation of initiatives outlined in the *Healthy Waterways Strategy* may also be considered.
- Prepare a landscape assessment that integrates the natural and cultural values of this area. This will include mapping the billabongs and other features of the Yarra River which have high environmental, landscape and cultural importance.
- Strengthen planning scheme controls to reflect environmental, landscape and cultural values associated with the significant billabong systems of the lower rural reach.
- In partnership with the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, investigate ways to protect cultural values associated with Yering Station.



**Legend**

Yarra River	Yarra River land	Priority boat launch site
Catchment links	Municipal parkland	Wurundjeri area for protection
Billabongs	Key views	

**10 YEAR PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES**



### Warrandyte–Yering landscape protection

The area between Warrandyte and Yering Gorge Bushland Reserve (refer to map on page 82) includes important landscapes around Kangaroo Ground, Yering Gorge and Wonga Park that have high scenic, environmental and cultural value. It is designated as a new area for protection as it currently has no formal protection in the planning scheme, unlike the remainder of the Yarra River corridor downstream to central Melbourne.

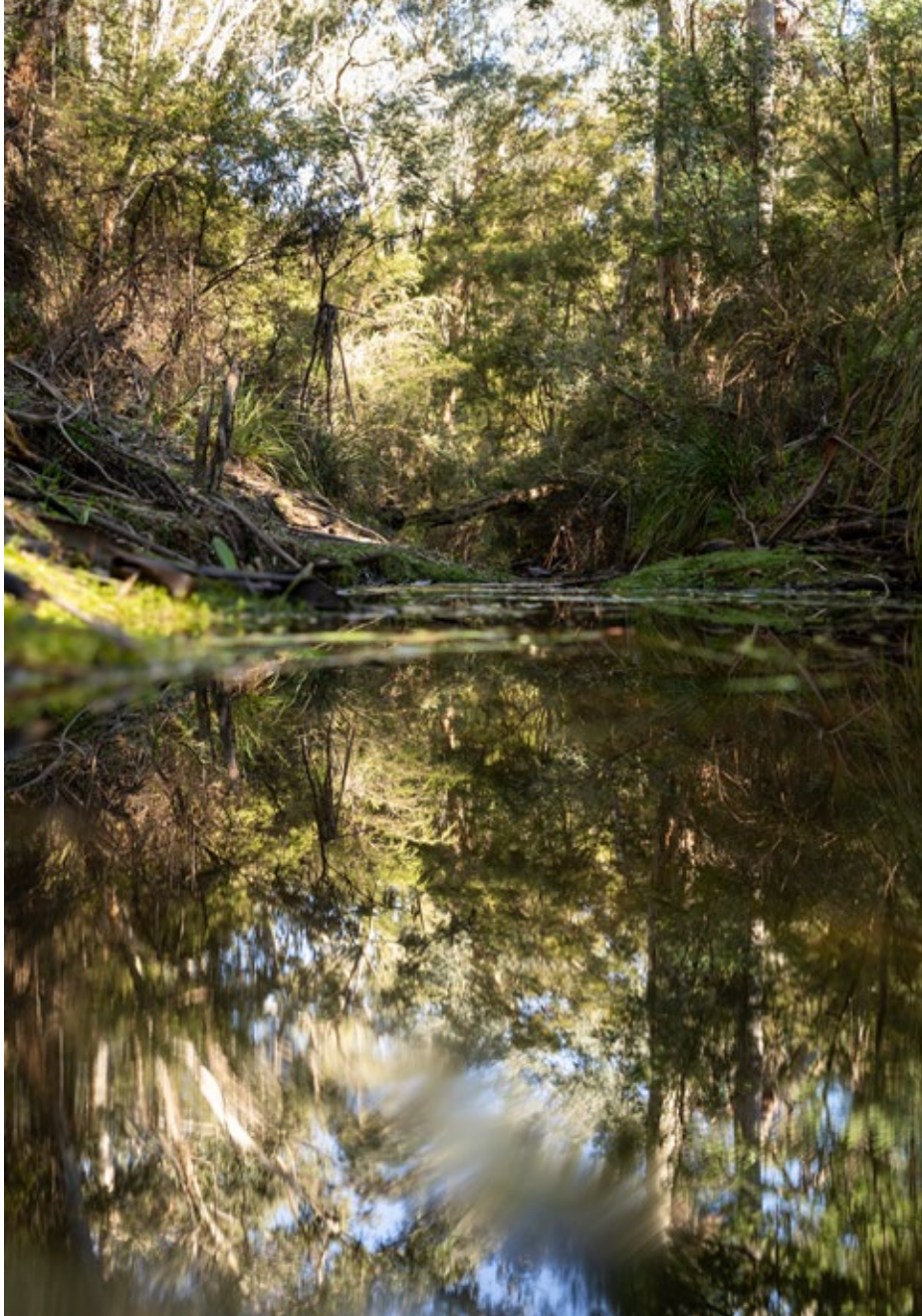
The Bend of Islands environmental living zone, located within this area, has been nominated by the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation as a site of significance. This is due to its high environmental and cultural values, which are protected through strict planning regulations (which prohibit non-native plants and animals), and its close proximity to the Yarra River. Downstream is the location of William Barak's birthing tree on the banks of Brushy Creek, which has been nominated by the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation as an area for protection.

### Opportunities for future projects and alignment:

- Enhance opportunities to view and experience important landscapes by boat or on foot.
- Provide additional interpretive information about the significance of these sites at visitor access points.
- Extend the Yarra River planning controls (Significant Landscape Overlay and Design and Development Overlay) within Nillumbik and Manningham Planning Schemes to the Yarra Ranges municipal boundary.
- In partnership with the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, investigate ways to protect cultural values associated with Bend of Islands and the Brushy Creek confluence.

10 YEAR  
PERFORMANCE  
OBJECTIVES





### Watsons Creek biodiversity corridor

The Watsons Creek biodiversity corridor (refer to map on page 82) supports many threatened flora and fauna species. It is designated as a new area for protection as it acts as a significant habitat link between the Yarra River and the Kinglake Ranges, and across to the Great Dividing Range. The high-quality vegetation along the Watsons Creek corridor helps to replenish the Yarra River as it journeys on to the city.

The corridor has been created by restoring degraded land and managing pest plant and animal species. This work has been achieved by councils, state government agencies and private landholders working collaboratively through the Rivers to Ranges project (which finishes in 2020) and the Sugarloaf Link project.

### Opportunities for future projects and alignment:

- Protect and strengthen the Watsons Creek biodiversity corridor by implementing the *Healthy Waterways Strategy* recommendations for catchment links.
- Support ongoing advocacy, education and rehabilitation work by council, state government and community. This includes implementation of the Sugarloaf Link project by Nillumbik Shire Council, in partnership with other state government agencies and Landcare groups, to manage weed and pest invasion.

10 YEAR  
PERFORMANCE  
OBJECTIVES





# THE SUBURBAN REACH

## CURRENT STATE LAND USE ANALYSIS

The Yarra River in the suburban reach flows through bushland, parkland, rural areas and residential neighbourhoods. Its landscapes include steep gorges around Warrandyte, which flatten out to the broad floodplains and clusters of billabongs of the Chandler Basin, downstream of the Plenty River confluence.

A near-continuous network of parklands along the Yarra River's edge defines the character of this reach. The parklands include formal recreational spaces, golf courses, bushland reserves and conservation areas. The parklands are a focal point for community activity, encouraging people to walk, play, canoe, picnic, cycle, mountain bike, camp, sightsee and attend events along the Yarra River. They also serve to protect local communities from flooding.

The creation of parklands has allowed a dense corridor of vegetation to be retained along the Yarra River's edge, and this extends across private land in many locations. Community groups have undertaken broad scale revegetation programs. As a result, the suburban reach has extensive tree canopy cover and some of the highest biodiversity values of the Yarra River.

In addition to providing a vital refuge from the city, the parklands are home to numerous sites of ecological and cultural significance to the Wurundjeri Woiwurrung people, including the Bolin Bolin Billabong, Bulleen-Banyule Flats, Yarra Flats, Laughing Waters, Tikalara Park and confluence points with the Mullum Mullum and Merri creeks.

The suburban reach also features important postcolonial cultural heritage sites. The Heidelberg School of Australian Impressionism began with painting the landscapes of the Yarra Flats and the Melbourne Modernists movement emerged from what is now Heide Museum of Modern Art. The agricultural heritage of the area continues at Petty's Orchard and examples of early European settlement can be found at places like Pontville Homestead at Tikalara.

The Main Yarra Trail provides a connection through the parklands from Templestowe into the Melbourne CBD. The main tributaries in the suburban reach include Diamond Creek, Plenty River, Darebin Creek and Merri Creek, all of which have recreational trails connecting to the Yarra River. The tributaries provide vital biodiversity links into the catchment.

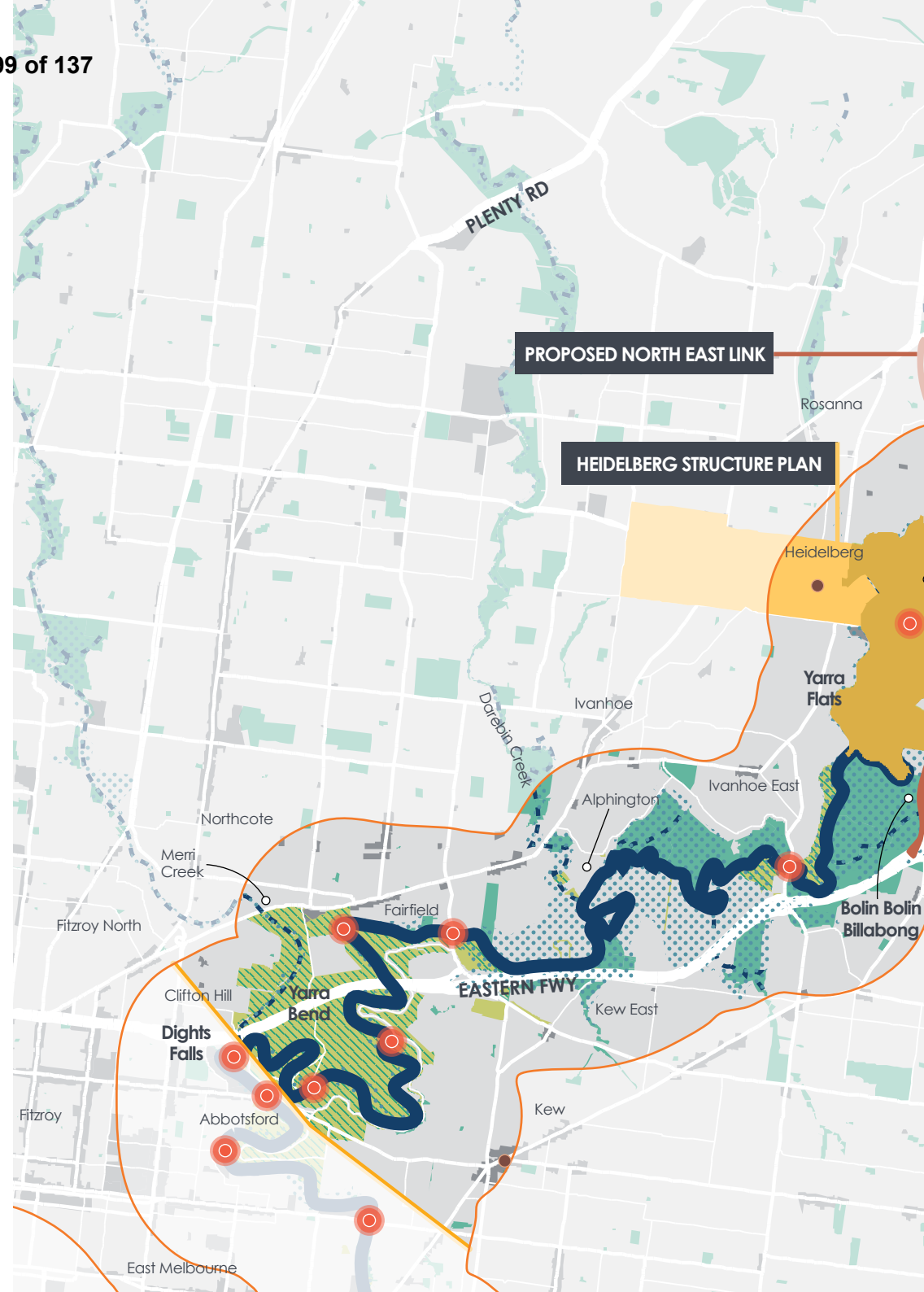
The Heidelberg Activity Centre and the Warrandyte township are both located within the study area. These places are focal points for increased development within the suburban reach and support a range of commercial, residential and community land uses.

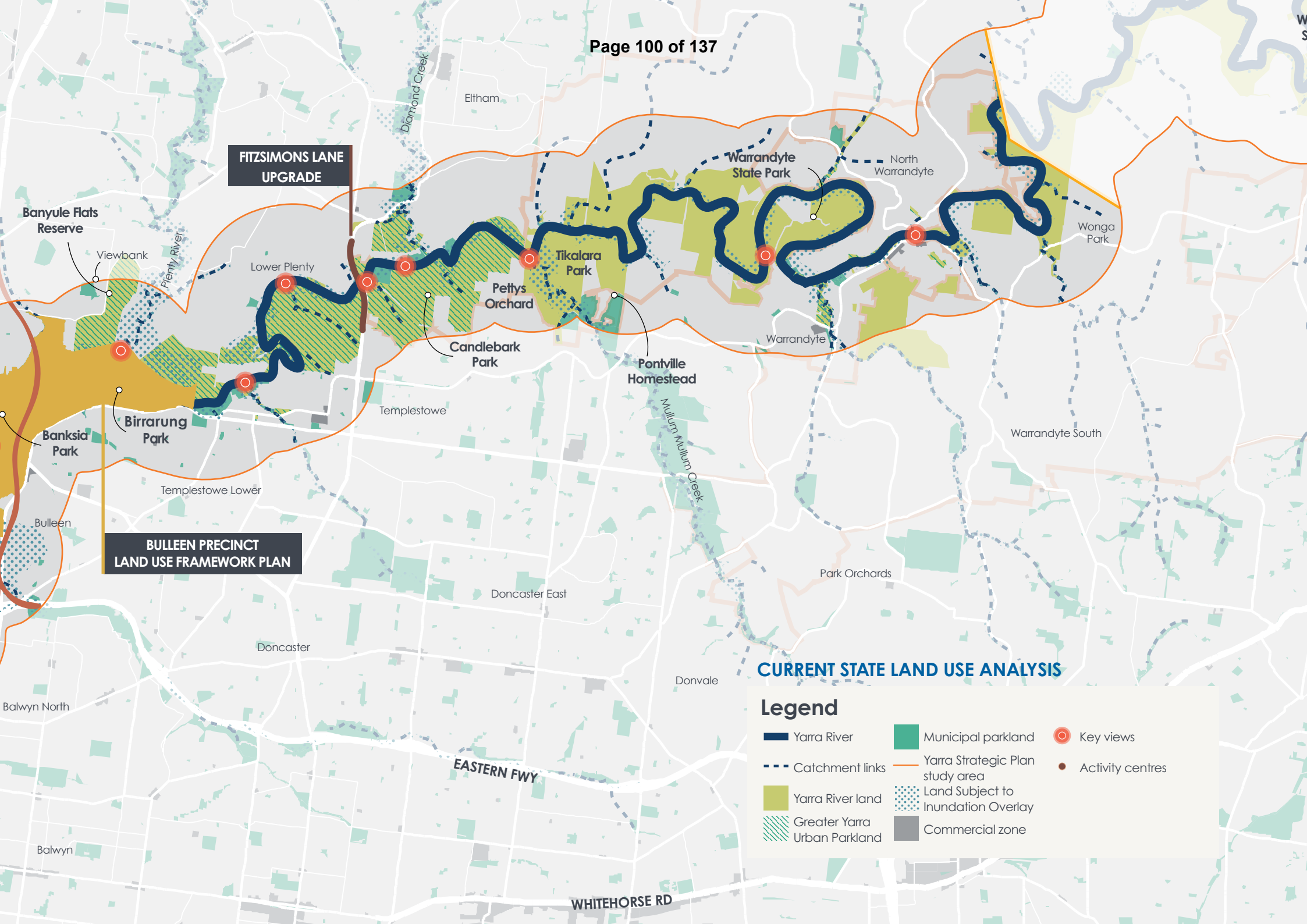
The Bushfire Management Overlay and Land Subject to Inundation Overlay apply to large areas of this reach, meaning that fire and flood risk needs to be carefully managed.

Existing projects in this reach include:

- Heidelberg Structure Plan – current planning projects aim to better connect the Heidelberg Activity Centre (a major focus for growth in close proximity to the Yarra River) to riverside parklands and manage the impact of future development on the Yarra River.
- Yarra River – Bulleen Precinct Land Use Framework Plan – this project aims to manage land uses in this area of high cultural, environmental, landscape, recreation and tourism value, which includes the Bolin Bolin Billabong, Banyule Flats, Heide Museum of Modern Art, Banksia Park and Warringal Parklands.
- Proposed North East Link – a major infrastructure project which crosses Yarra River land to provide connection between the M80 Ring Road and an updated Eastern Freeway.
- Fitzsimons Lane, Eltham and Templestowe – a Major Roads Project to improve congestion and safety for commuters.







**FITZSIMONS LANE UPGRADE**

**BULLEEN PRECINCT LAND USE FRAMEWORK PLAN**

**CURRENT STATE LAND USE ANALYSIS**

**Legend**

Yarra River	Municipal parkland	Key views
Catchment links	Yarra Strategic Plan study area	Activity centres
Yarra River land	Land Subject to Inundation Overlay	
Greater Yarra Urban Parkland	Commercial zone	

## ACHIEVING THE COMMUNITY VISION FOR THE SUBURBAN REACH

### YARRA RIVER SUBURBAN REACH 50 YEAR COMMUNITY VISION

Our Yarra River, Birrarung, provides a continuous network of protected parklands, providing inclusive access to all.

A covenant of custodianship is adopted by private landowners along the reach, embedding a culture of respect and responsibility for river values.

The river corridor provides a healthy natural environment, enabling swimming, relaxation and other recreational activities. Importantly, it also supports a flourishing natural ecosystem, including networks of billabongs and wetlands, for indigenous plants and animals to thrive.

This is a valued place of connection to Wurundjeri culture and community, with a network of hubs of learning, play and celebration. It benefits from a united and integrated approach to governance and land management, guided by the wisdom and practices of Traditional Owners, keeping culture not just in the past but alive into the future.

#### Community priorities and values

- Expand the river's local parklands and trails to improve continuous access, increase biodiversity and enhance river health.
- Celebrate our spiritual connection to the river and its surrounds.
- Establish new habitat for endangered birds, fish and wildlife.
- Employ collaborative planning processes for development to ensure changes are for the benefit of the river and the advantage of all in the community, not just the few.
- Collaborate to provide innovative immersive experiences with nature by expanding natural river tracks and creating environmental playgrounds along the corridor.
- Explore opportunities for community education and connection to Wurundjeri knowledge and cultural practice and significant sites.

## In the next 10 years

The land use framework in the suburban reach sets out the future directions for private and public land over the next 10 years. This will assist in achieving the Yarra Strategic Plan performance objectives and ultimately the aspirations of the 50 year community vision.

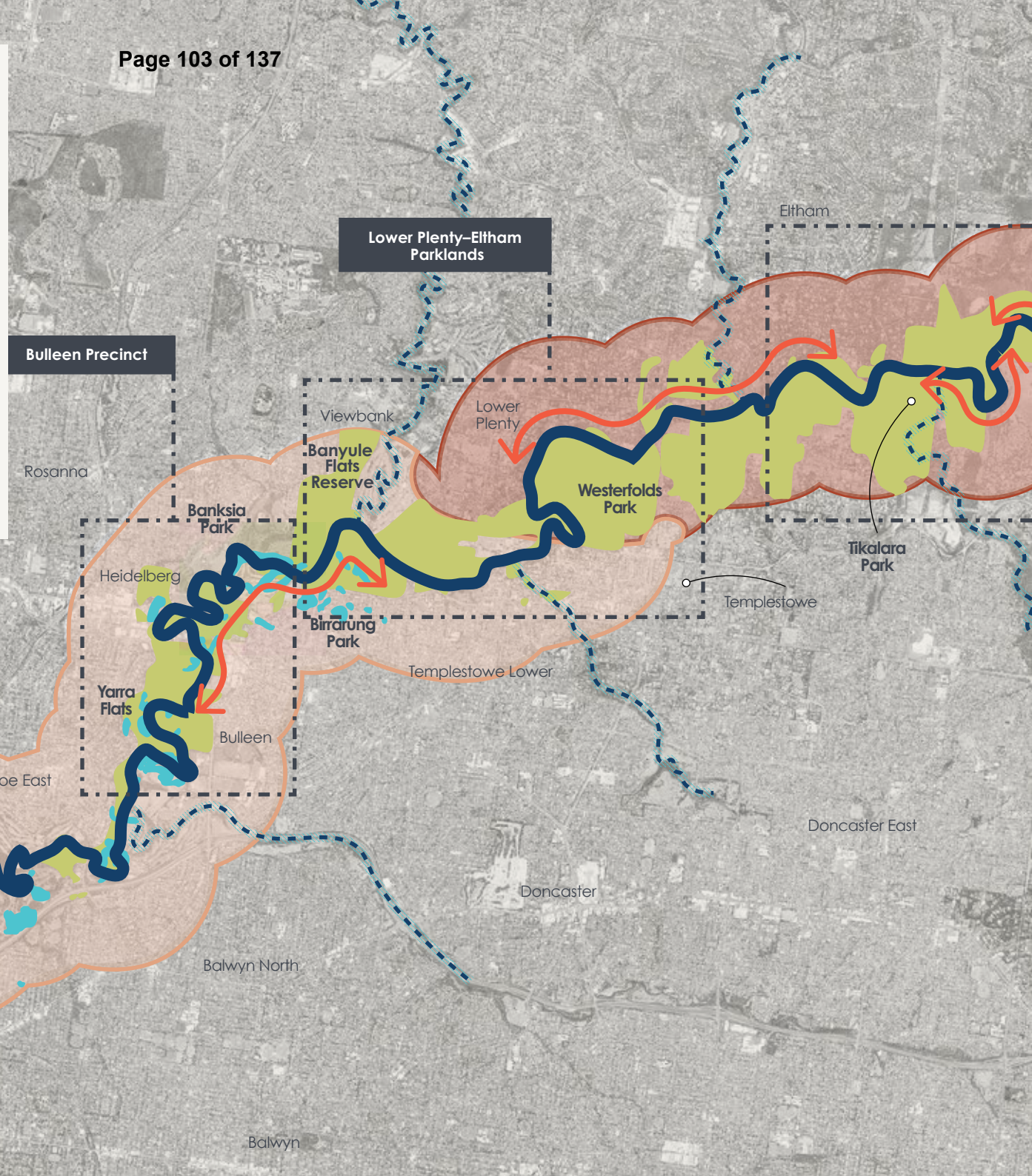
The land use framework aims to:

- minimise impacts to the Yarra River's rich cultural, environmental and landscape values through the review and update of relevant overlays. Specifically:
  - the review and introduction of permanent controls which prescribe mandatory maximum building heights and minimum setbacks
  - updates to existing heritage protection.
- strengthen the vegetation buffer along the Yarra River, between public and private land, while maintaining a diversity of landscapes through the parklands. New landscape guidelines will provide guidance for the implementation of stronger planning controls and enable a consistent approach to planting
- promote opportunities to extend and link parklands when land becomes available, improve recreational trails along the Yarra River and its tributaries and improve community infrastructure
- protect sites of significance and areas for protection identified by the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation as captured in the significant places.



# Legend

-  **Yarra River**
-  **Catchment links**
-  **Billabongs**
-  **Significant places**
-  **Yarra River land** – comprises all public and state government owned land within 500m of a bank of the river.
-  **Bush residential** – comprises land currently used for agriculture, included within the Green Wedge and Rural Conservation Zones, and land within the Low Density Residential Zone, which supports rural residential properties.
-  **Township** – encompasses a township which was settled on the river during the 1850s Gold rush, and is now contained within the extent of Metropolitan Melbourne.
-  **Improved access**
-  **Suburban** – comprises suburban neighbourhoods within residential zones, as well as large sites within the Public Parks and Recreation Zone, Special Use Zone and Urban Floodway Zone.



**Yarra Bend Park**

**Bulleen Precinct**

**Lower Plenty–Eltham Parklands**

**Banyule Flats Reserve**

**Banksia Park**

**Westerfolds Park**

**Tikalara Park**

**Heidelberg**

**Birrarung Park**

**Yarra Flats**

**Bulleen**

**Ivanhoe**

**Ivanhoe East**

**Templestowe Lower**

**Templestowe**

**Northcote**

**Fairfield**

**Doncaster East**

**Clifton Hill**

**Dights Falls**

**Yarra Bend Park**

**Kew East**

**Balwyn North**

**Doncaster**

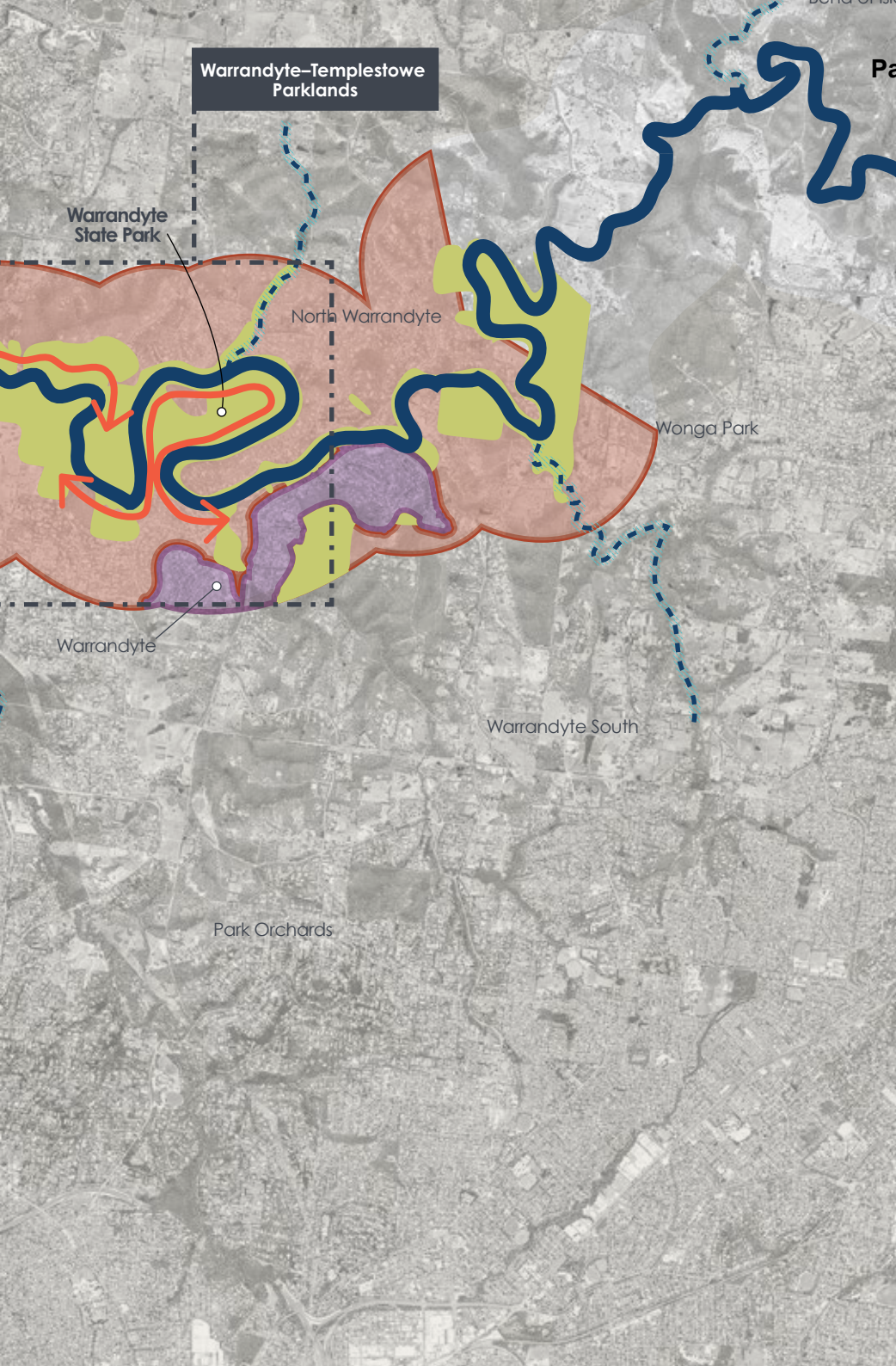
**Fitzroy**

**Abbotsford**

**Kew**

**Balwyn**

**Eltham**



## DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

### Yarra River land

- Ensure the existing landscape corridor along the Yarra River is protected and reinforced as a vital habitat link and place of refuge.
- Design visitor facilities and boat launch sites to be sensitively incorporated into their natural surrounds.
- Apply Yarra Protection Principles, set out in the *Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murrnong) Act 2017*, to all development on Yarra River land.
- Ensure a coordinated approach to landscaping, wayfinding and the provision of visitor facilities to encourage people to view the Yarra River as one living entity.
- Maintain diverse park landscapes to connect people to the variety of past uses and enable a wide range of visitor experiences.

### Bush residential

- Ensure development is screened from view from the Yarra River (and key viewing locations) by a canopy of native trees and understorey planting.
- Ensure development is sited and designed to maintain and enhance the Yarra River's secluded and natural environment.
- Ensure development is set back from the Yarra River's edge to protect and strengthen a continuous corridor of native vegetation along the Yarra River and to maintain corridor views. Development must also be set back from adjoining parklands and conservation areas to protect the natural landscape.
- Design buildings to respect the Yarra River's sensitive landscape setting.
- Protect and strengthen native vegetation across rural and bush residential land to provide habitat connections between conservation areas and along the Yarra River and its tributaries.
- Development in flood affected areas should refer to the *Guidelines for Development in Flood Affected Areas*.

### Warrandyte township

- Ensure new development in the activity centre (on the Yarra River's southern side) is sited and designed to face the Yarra River and enhance the popular River Reserve.
- Improve public space and visitor facilities to enhance the Yarra River's role as a community focal point.
- Plant additional native species to strengthen the riverbank environment and improve views to the Yarra River from Yarra Street.
- Encourage traditional planting to tell the story of the ancient Yarra River's ecology and cultural heritage.
- Development in flood affected areas should refer to the *Guidelines for Development in Flood Affected Areas*.



## Suburban

- Enhance the sense of connection to the riverside environment by expanding the cover of native vegetation along the Yarra River through parklands, private gardens and the local street network.
- Ensure future development is set back from the Yarra River to protect and strengthen a continuous corridor of native vegetation along the river. Development must also be set back from adjoining parklands and conservation areas.
- Design buildings to respect the Yarra River's sensitive landscapes. Ensure buildings are designed to sit below the height of the canopy.
- Protect and reinforce a strong tree canopy across surrounding ridgelines to conceal views of buildings from the river and its parklands.
- Ensure buildings are designed to sit below the height of the tree canopy and all development is appropriately set back from the banks of the Yarra River.
- Development in flood affected areas should refer to the *Guidelines for Development in Flood Affected Areas*.







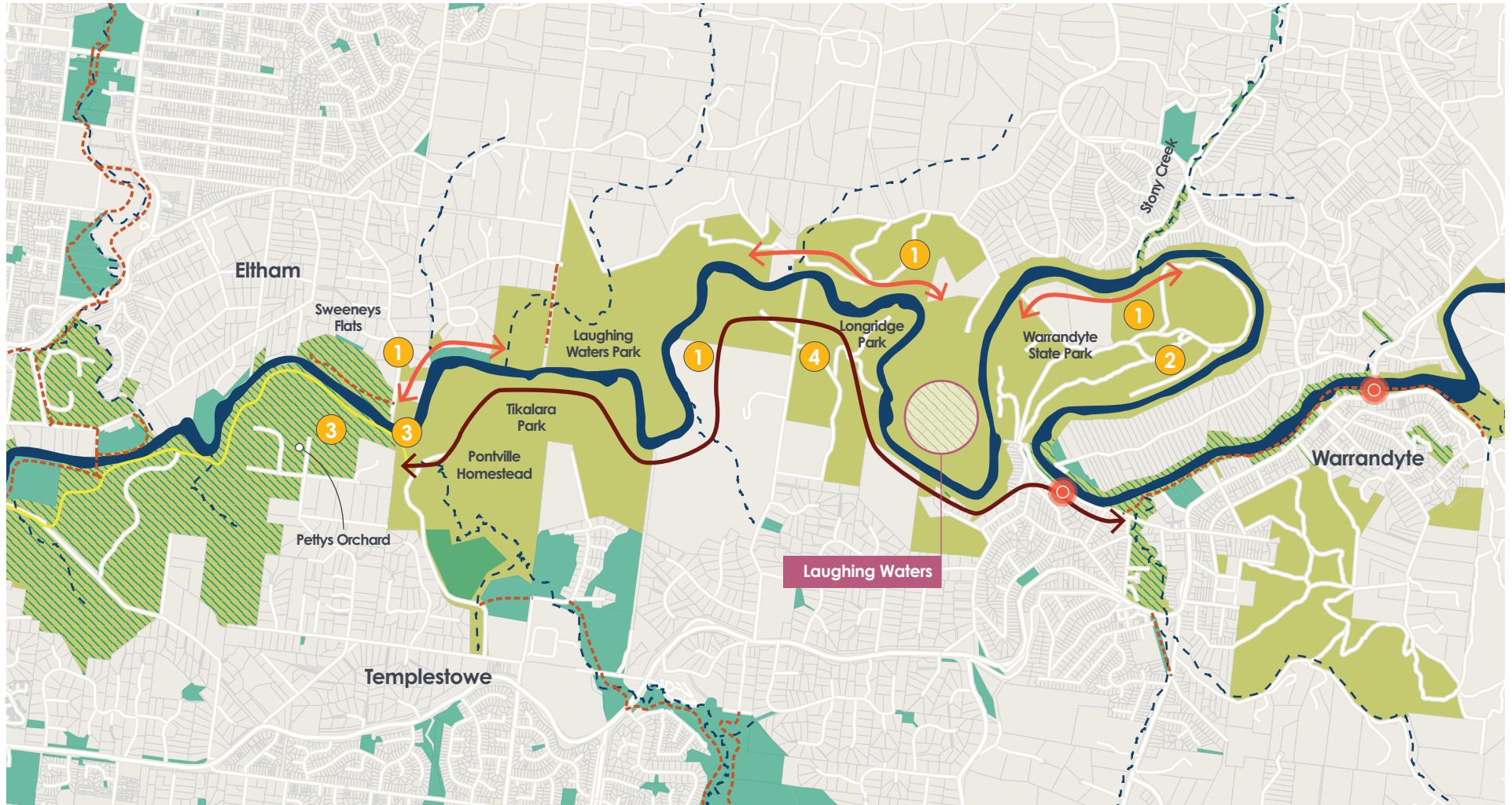
## Warrandyte–Templestowe parklands

This series of parklands between Warrandyte and Templestowe is of immense environmental, social, cultural and heritage value, with opportunities to deliver on each of the community's priorities and values for the suburban reach. The natural bushland character present across most of these parklands supports local biodiversity and provides opportunities for the community to connect with nature.

The Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation has nominated Laughing Waters as an area for priority protection due to the presence of historic eel traps which are actively maintained by the corporation with Parks Victoria.

### Opportunities for future projects and alignment:

- 1 Fill gaps in the parklands and recreational trail network to provide a continuous open space corridor. Investigate opportunities for cross-river connections that will facilitate improved links to the Yarra River from local recreational trail networks. A key initiative is the current City of Manningham project to extend the Main Yarra Trail from Tikalara Park to Warrandyte.
- 2 Provide safe access to the heritage-rich landscapes within Warrandyte State Park. Identify and manage all mine shafts, create new recreational trails and deliver interpretative signage to connect visitors with the mining heritage of the region.
- 3 Protect and upgrade significant buildings and sites (e.g. Pontville Homestead, Pettys Orchard and Laughing Waters precinct). Investigate options for sensitive reuse to help fund restoration projects in line with the future directions plan and community expectations.
- 4 Improve camping opportunities at Longridge Park.
  - In partnership with the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, investigate ways to protect the cultural values associated with Laughing Waters.



**Legend**

Yarra River	Greater Yarra Urban Parkland	Main Yarra Trail	Key views
Catchment links	Municipal parkland	Improved access	Wurundjeri area for protection
Yarra River land	Existing recreational trail	Extend Main Yarra Trail	

**10 YEAR PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES**

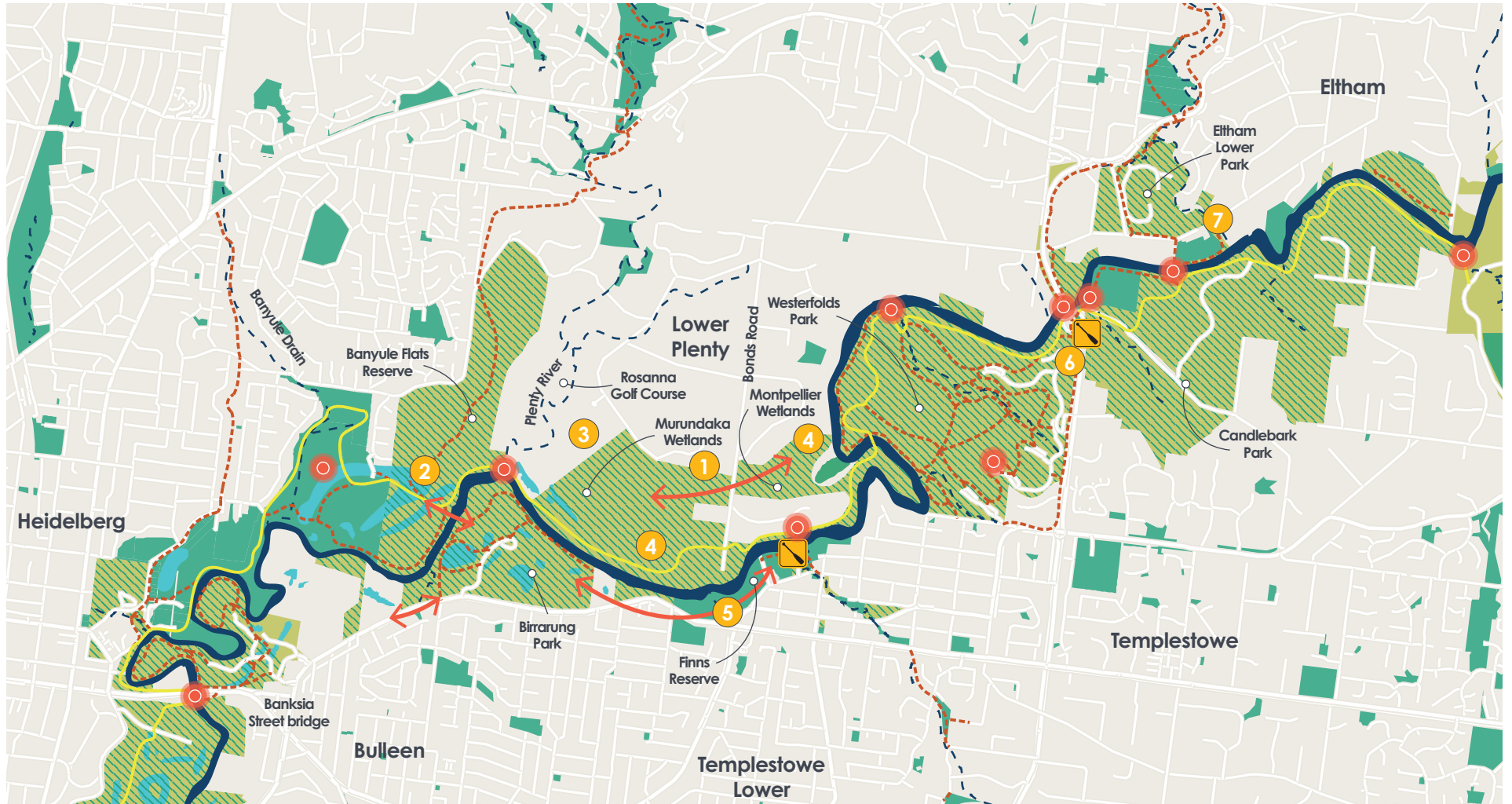


## Lower Plenty–Eltham Parklands

This section of the suburban reach includes a network of parklands and conservation areas with high environmental and cultural value. Connected via the Main Yarra Trail, the parklands are an important recreational asset, offering a great range of Yarra River experiences. There is great potential to improve recreational trails and access, establish new habitat and offer new experiences for community enjoyment of the Yarra River and nature-based recreation.

### Opportunities for future projects and alignment:

- 1 Improve connections to and between parklands, and improve access and visual connection to the Yarra River.
- 2 Investigate potential for a bridge crossing near Birrarung Park to create a circuit trail between the Finns Reserve and Banksia Street bridges.
- 3 Protect the significant environmental, cultural and landscape values of the Plenty River and its confluence with the Yarra River, located within the Rosanna Golf Club site.
- 4 Develop a masterplan for Murundaka and Montpellier wetlands to coordinate work across both sites. Enable the broader community to access and enjoy these sites through the establishment of basic visitor facilities. Work with the community to support and expand their stewardship role.
- 5 Rehabilitate land at the Yarra River access point at Bonds Road. Remove weeds, revegetate the banks of the Yarra River and create access or viewing opportunities.
- 6 Implement proposals for the Westerfolds recreational and paddle sports hub.
- 7 Implement initiatives identified in Nillumbik Shire Council's Eltham Lower Park Masterplan Review.



### Legend

Yarra River	Yarra River land	Existing recreational trail	Key views
Catchment links	Greater Yarra Urban Parkland	Main Yarra Trail	Priority boat launch site
Billabongs	Municipal parkland	Improved access	

### 10 YEAR PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

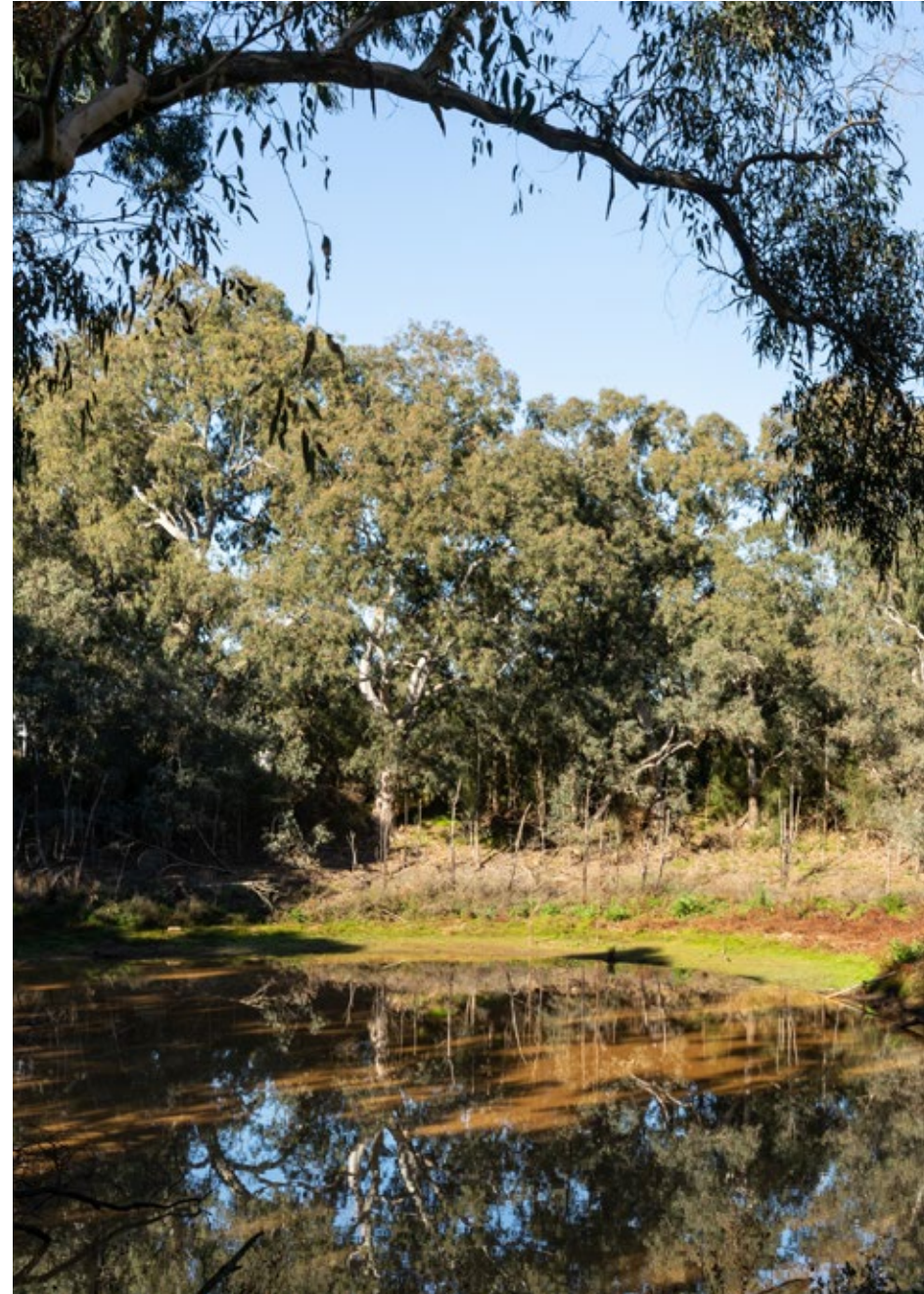
## Bulleen Precinct

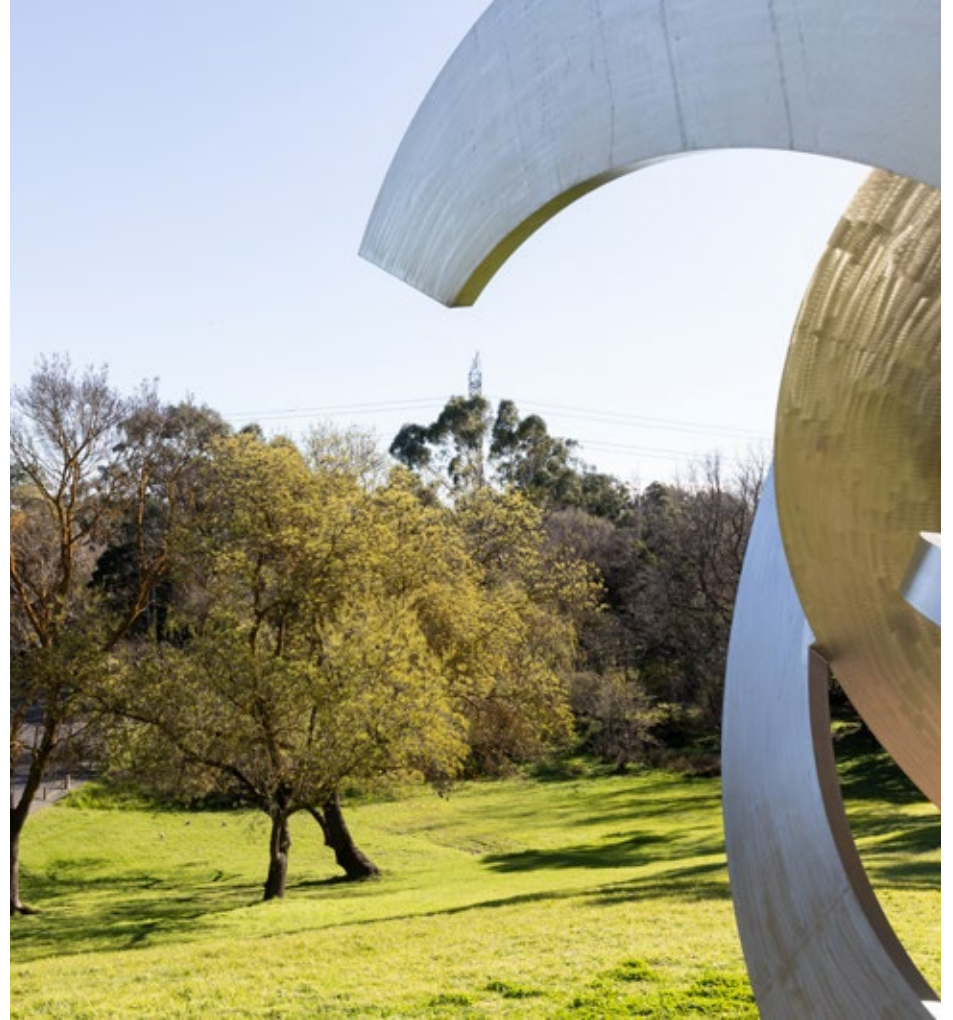
The Bulleen Precinct comprises the stretch of the Yarra River through Lower Templestowe, Heidelberg and Bulleen which is home to parklands and distinctive places of natural and cultural value. The Victorian Government is currently preparing the Yarra River – Bulleen Precinct Land Use Framework Plan to outline a vision and principles to guide land use over the long term.

The Yarra Strategic Plan has identified areas for future projects and investment in this precinct:

- Yarra Flats: protection of environmental and cultural values of the Yarra Flats and improved visitor facilities for the Heidelberg Artists' Trail.
- Banyule Flats: protection of environmental and cultural values.
- Bolin Bolin Billabong: protection of environmental and cultural values. Continued program of restoring natural water flow regimes into the billabong.

The Yarra River – Bulleen Precinct Advisory Committee, appointed by the Minister for Planning, will conduct public hearings following the finalisation of the Minister's assessment of the environmental effects of the North East Link Project.





10 YEAR  
PERFORMANCE  
OBJECTIVES







## Yarra Bend Park

As the largest area of natural bushland near the CBD, Yarra Bend Park is important to both the Yarra River corridor and Melbourne's community. It is a key location for land and water-based recreation and includes the historic Fairfield and Studley Park boathouses, recreational, and sports facilities. It is also home to a colony of nationally-threatened Grey-headed Flying-foxes.

Nominated as a site of significance by the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation as an important Kulin Nation meeting place, the park includes the site of the first Aboriginal School and Aboriginal Police Station. Within Yarra Bend Park, the Merri Creek confluence is designated as a priority area for protection by the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation as an initiation place.

### Opportunities for future projects and alignment:

- Improve infrastructure and facilities at key visitor locations.
- 1 Improve visitor facilities and educational information at the Grey-headed Flying-fox colony.
- 2 Improve sporting facilities in the Fairlea Precinct of the park.
- 3 Enhance and protect existing vegetation and habitat links throughout the park, particularly along the banks of the Yarra River and the Merri Creek tributary.
- Extend native riverbank planting into adjacent areas such as the sports precinct and the local street network immediately beyond the park.
- Develop a nature play area to encourage families to connect with the environmental and cultural heritage values of the park.
- In partnership with the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, investigate ways to protect the cultural values associated with Yarra Bend Park.



### Legend

Yarra River	Yarra River land	Existing recreational trail	Key views
Catchment links	Greater Yarra Urban Parkland	Main Yarra Trail	Wurundjeri area for protection
Billabongs	Municipal parkland	Improved access	Wurundjeri site of significance

### 10 YEAR PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

# THE INNER CITY REACH

## CURRENT STATE LAND USE ANALYSIS

For locals and visitors alike the Yarra River is an iconic symbol of central Melbourne – a place where people of all backgrounds have come together for generations. Today, a modern and growing cityscape surrounds numerous places of Aboriginal significance, which now have shared values for the community, including: Yarra Falls, confluence points with the Maribyrnong River and Merri Creek, Yarra Bend, Dights Falls, Federation Square and the MCG.

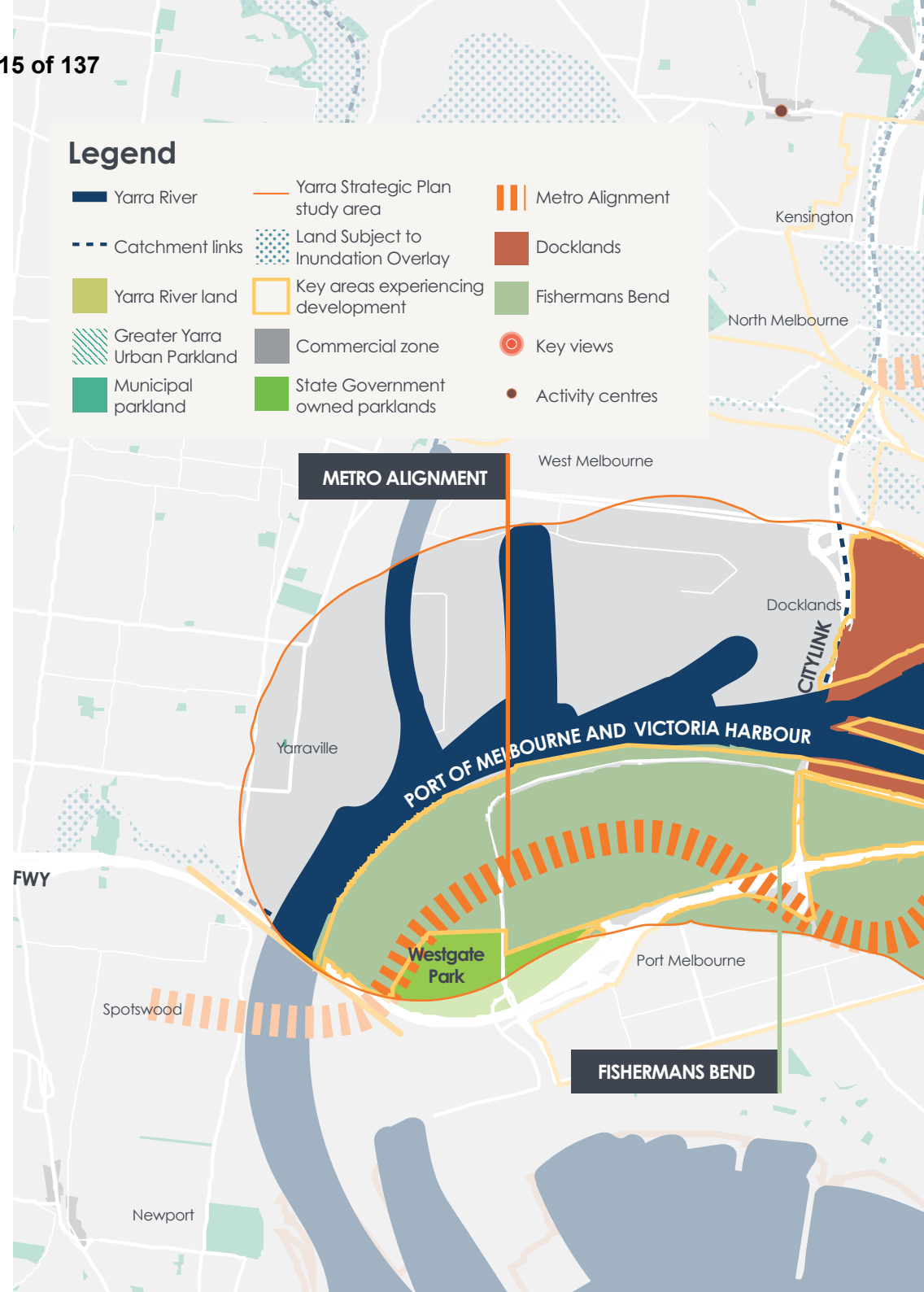
Parklands line much of the Yarra River's edge and provide a highly valued landscape setting within the dense urban environment. With the expected population growth and development in this reach over the next 10 years, it is vital that the plan provides for quality parkland to foster a sense of respite from the city and strengthen urban biodiversity. Access is available on both sides of the Yarra River along the popular Main Yarra and Capital City trails.

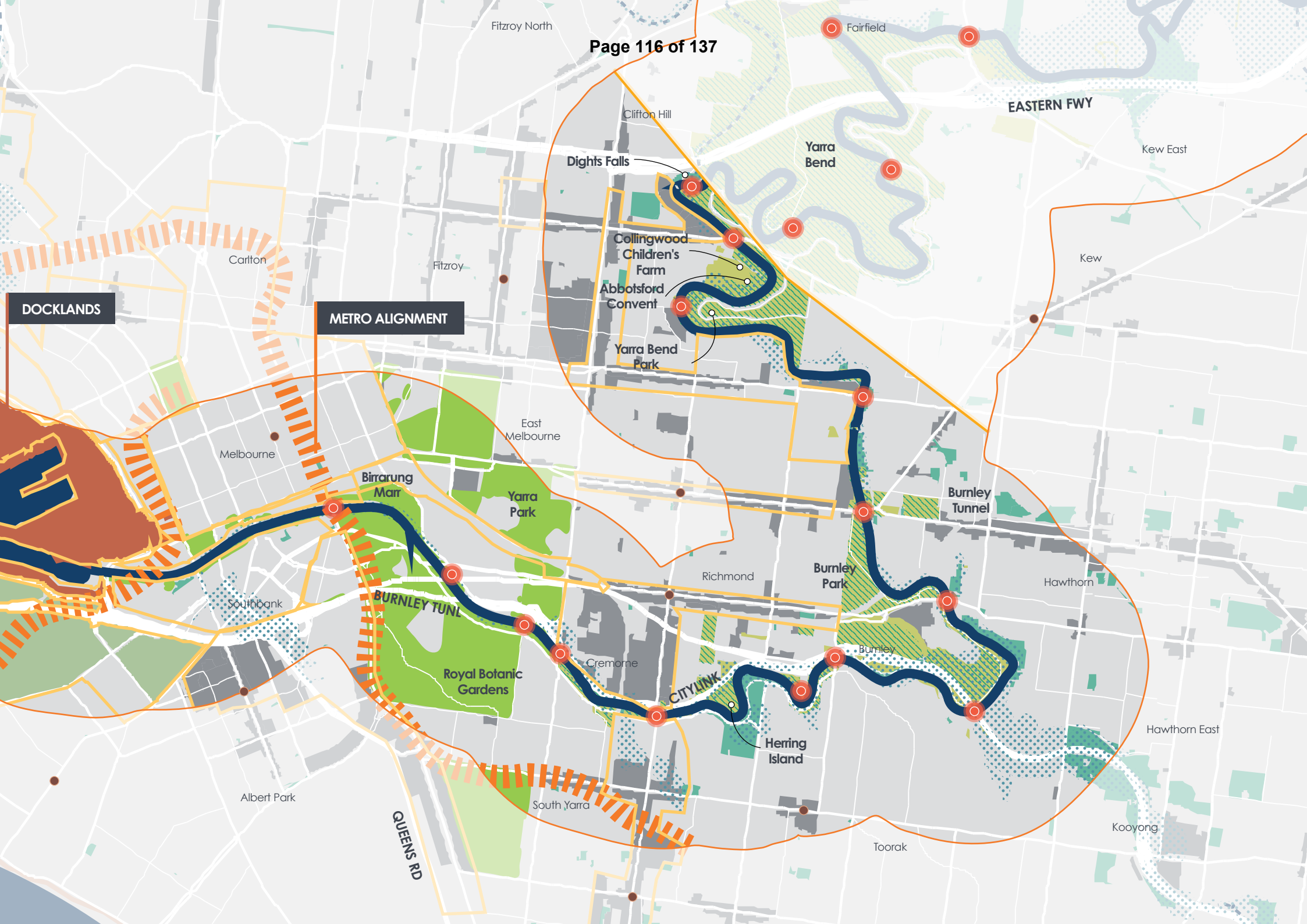
There is a mix of land uses in this reach, including extensive areas designated for commercial activity. *Plan Melbourne* identifies a number of activity centres near the Yarra River which are focal points for increased development and support a range of commercial, residential and community land uses.

The inner city reach includes key areas experiencing development, meaning significant changes in land use and development at the Yarra River's edge will take place. The largest of these are Docklands and Fishermans Bend; other urban renewal areas include central Melbourne, Southbank, Northbank, South Yarra, Cremorne, Richmond and Abbotsford.

Existing projects in this reach include:

- Docklands – now two-thirds complete and with a projected completion date of 2025, Docklands spans 200 hectares of land and water on the north side of the Yarra River and comprises residential, commercial, entertainment, sporting and events spaces. It has attracted more than \$12 billion in private investment to date.
- Fishermans Bend urban renewal area – Australia's largest urban renewal project covering approximately 480 hectares on the south side of the Yarra River. By 2050, it will be home to approximately 80,000 residents and provide employment for up to 80,000 people.
- Metro Tunnel – 9km twin rail tunnels passing under the Yarra River and five new underground stations will be constructed, with a completion date of 2025.





DOCKLANDS

METRO ALIGNMENT

BURNLEY TUNN

CITYLINK

EASTERN FWY

QUEENS RD

## ACHIEVING THE COMMUNITY VISION FOR THE INNER CITY REACH

### YARRA RIVER INNER CITY REACH 50 YEAR COMMUNITY VISION

Our Yarra River, Birrarung, is a thriving river for our thriving city.

It provides a unique place of transition, both spiritually and physically. Here the river and its treasured banks and backdrops are Melbourne's meeting place; an inclusive and iconic place for connection, celebration, recreation and learning.

Our love for its vast and expanding green spaces and clean waters provide a healthy habitat for all.

#### Community priorities and values

- Celebrate the river as the centrepiece of Melbourne, acknowledging its role in our history and how it drives the city's continued success.
- Position the river as a symbol of learning and respect for Aboriginal culture, deepening community understanding of the sacred role it plays for Traditional Owners.
- Foster innovative urban waterway and open space planning to ensure the needs of our growing city are balanced with the future environmental health of the river.
- Expand our connected network of treasured Yarra parklands, creating better access and more spaces for relaxation and recreation.
- Showcase the river as a place for sustainable and creative events, with a focus on culture, sport, ecology and education.
- Position the river as an environmental educator, helping communities better understand its role in keeping Victoria healthy in the past, present and into the future.

## In the next 10 years

The land use framework in the suburban reach sets out the future directions for private and public land over the next 10 years. This will assist in achieving the Yarra Strategic Plan performance objectives and ultimately the aspirations of the 50 year community vision.

The land use framework aims to:


- celebrate the role of the river as the centrepiece of Melbourne's CBD
- in other parts of the reach, enhance the Yarra River as an urban wilderness or place of refuge within the busy urban environment
- strengthen the vegetation buffer along the Yarra River, between public and private land. New landscape guidelines will provide guidance for the implementation of stronger planning controls and enable a consistent approach to planting
- manage the impacts of development pressure upon the Yarra River's rich cultural, environmental and landscape values through the review and update of relevant overlays. Specifically:
  - the review and introduction of permanent controls which prescribe mandatory maximum building heights and minimum setbacks
  - updates to existing heritage protection.
- provide opportunities for interpretation and expression of the Yarra River's ancient landscape and cultural values, including those of all Traditional Owner groups
- protect and strengthen biodiversity hotspots and habitat links
- protect opportunities to extend and link parklands when land becomes available
- improve opportunities for the community to enjoy the Yarra River. This should include improving recreational trails, ensuring access for all abilities, allowing adequate space to accommodate slow traffic as well as commuters, and completing missing recreational trail connections
- protect sites of significance and areas for protection identified by the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation (as outlined in the significant places).

# Legend

 Yarra River

 Catchment links


 Significant places


 Port of Melbourne (excluded)

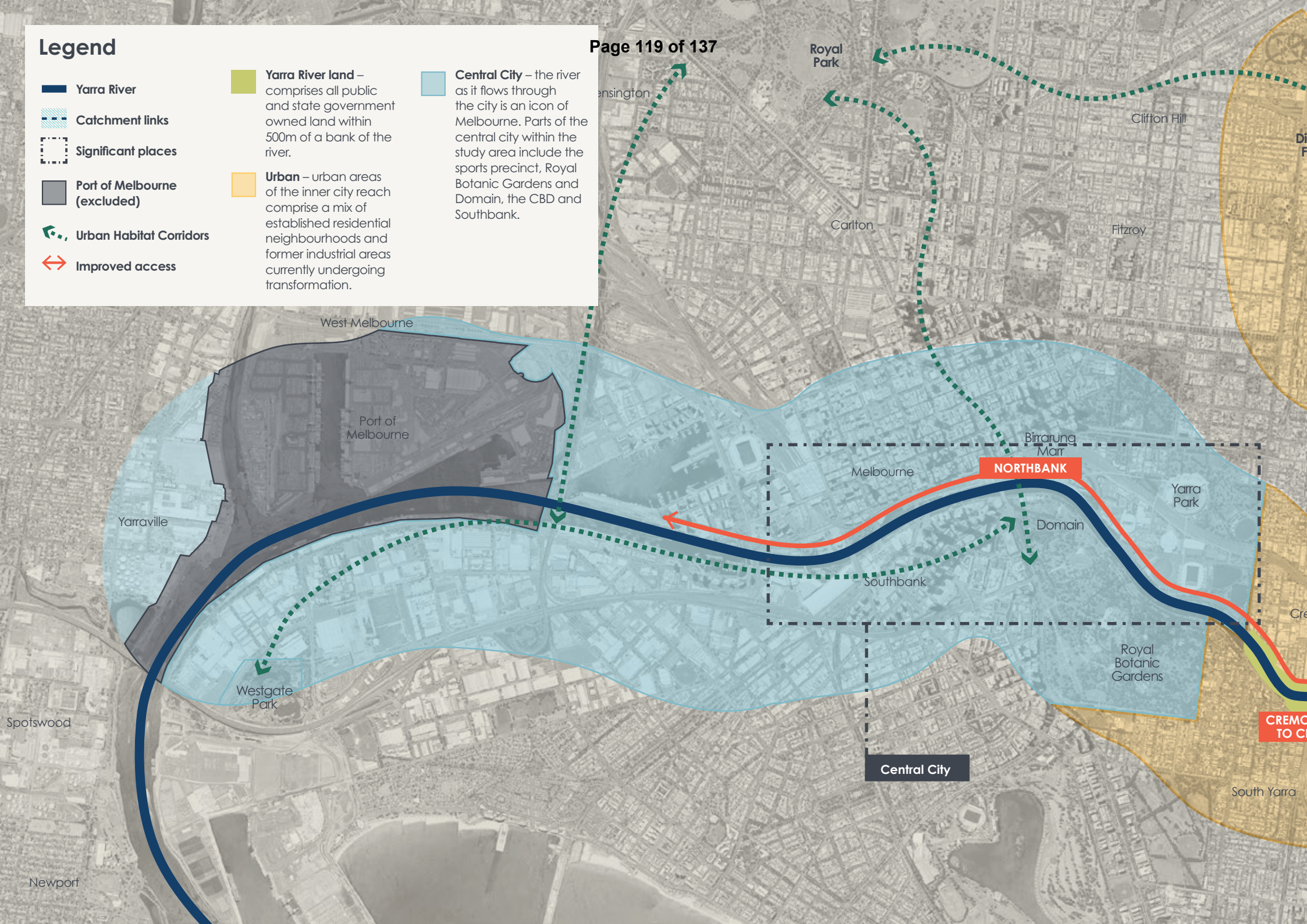
 Urban Habitat Corridors

 Improved access

 **Yarra River land** – comprises all public and state government owned land within 500m of a bank of the river.

 **Urban** – urban areas of the inner city reach comprise a mix of established residential neighbourhoods and former industrial areas currently undergoing transformation.

 **Central City** – the river as it flows through the city is an icon of Melbourne. Parts of the central city within the study area include the sports precinct, Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain, the CBD and Southbank.



West Melbourne

Port of Melbourne

Yarraville

Westgate Park

Spotswood

Newport

ensington

Royal Park

Carlton

Clifton Hill

Fitzroy

Birrarung Marr

Melbourne

**NORTHBANK**

Yarra Park

Domain

Southbank

Royal Botanic Gardens

**Central City**

South Yarra

**CREM TO C**



## DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

### Yarra River land

- Manage Yarra River land to support a range of recreational opportunities that meet the needs of the community, improve access to the Yarra River and foster a sense of refuge from city life.
- Strengthen habitat links along the Yarra River corridor and tributaries. This can be achieved through riverbank restoration and revegetation, expanding the urban forest through adjoining street networks and creating biodiversity hotspots on available Yarra River Land.
- Provide interpretive information and traditional planting to tell the story of the ancient Yarra River's ecology and cultural heritage, and how it has changed over time.
- Apply Yarra Protection Principles, set out in the *Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murron) Act 2017*, to all development on Yarra River land.
- Ensure a coordinated approach to landscaping, wayfinding and the provision of visitor facilities to encourage people to view the Yarra River as one living entity.

### Urban

- Improve the cover of native vegetation along the Yarra River through parklands, private gardens and the local street network to enhance the community's sense of connection to the riverside environment.
- Select appropriate plant species to help restore ecological values, improve biodiversity and contribute to urban cooling and greening.
- Apply integrated water management principles to all development to maximise stormwater capture and reuse, and to limit runoff into waterways.
- Expand the recreational trail network and provide additional open space to support community connection to the Yarra River.
- Ensure development is set back from the Yarra River's edge to strengthen the vegetation buffer along the waterway and ensure tree canopies retain their dominance within the landscape. Development must also be set back from adjoining parklands and conservation areas to maintain views.
- Protect heritage buildings as important features of the Yarra River landscape.
- Development in flood affected areas should refer to the *Guidelines for Development in Flood Affected Areas*.



## Central city

- Ensure new buildings are designed to complement the Yarra River's landscape and maintain views along the Yarra River.
- Avoid overshadowing of the Yarra River, its banks and adjacent public open space to maintain amenity year-round.
- Ensure development of sites adjoining the Yarra River contributes to a continuous recreational trail network and additional open space to support connectivity and community recreation.
- Apply integrated water management principles to all development to maximise stormwater capture and reuse, and limit runoff into waterways.
- Line the Yarra River's banks with parklands or pedestrian promenades to provide opportunities for relaxation, recreation and activation in the city centre.
- Reflect the story of the ancient Yarra River and its Traditional Owners in the design and landscaping of public spaces and parklands.
- Development in flood affected areas should refer to the *Guidelines for Development in Flood Affected Areas*.

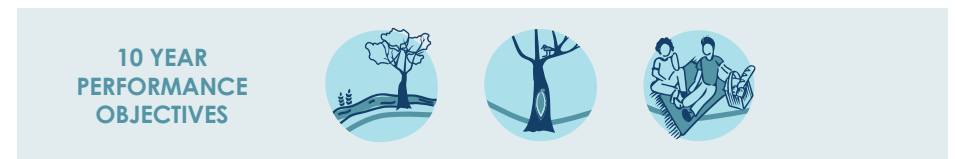
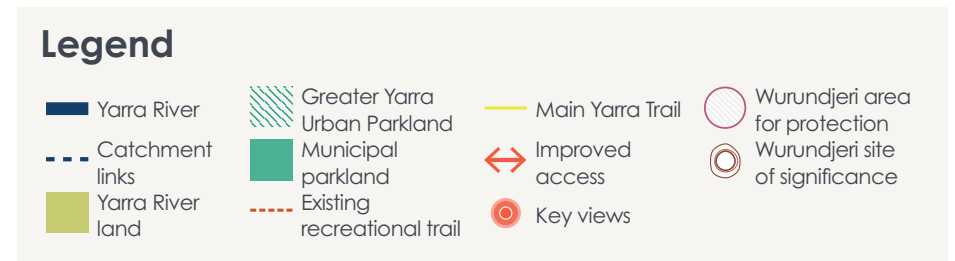


## Abbotsford Convent, Collingwood Children’s Farm and Dights Falls

Abbotsford Convent (a nationally significant heritage site), Collingwood Children’s Farm and Dights Falls are key sites of cultural, environmental and historical significance within the inner city reach. Together they form a major community and cultural hub, with significant opportunity for improvement. Dights Falls has been nominated as a site of significance by the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation. The falls were an important river crossing.

### Opportunities for future projects and alignment:

- 1 Expand and update visitor facilities for the Abbotsford Convent, Children’s Farm and Dights Falls as required. Provide improved information about the significance of these sites and their relationship to the Yarra River.
- 2 Improve connections between these key sites, the Yarra River and the Main Yarra Trail. Provide all abilities access at the Gipps Street and Walmer Street bridges.
- 3 Prepare an Abbotsford Precinct Structure Plan (Action 20 of the *Yarra River Action Plan*). This will have a particular focus on recognising and promoting Traditional Owner cultural heritage values, continuity of the Main Yarra Trail and opportunities to provide safe access to a wider range of users (all abilities access). The plan should also articulate how a change of use at the Carlton United Brewery site could achieve the community vision.
- 4 Introduce public access to the Yarra River and connect the recreational trail network between Flockhart Street and Gipps Street.
  - Revegetate and maintain riparian zones. Engage with the community to undertake land management.



## Gardiners Creek Confluence

Gardiners Creek is the only existing tributary of the Yarra River in the inner city reach and therefore identified as a significant place (the Moonee Ponds Creek and Maribyrnong River downstream of Docklands are outside of the study area and the former Williams Creek in central Melbourne is now the Elizabeth Street drain). Gardiners Creek has been substantially impacted by surrounding infrastructure and this section of the creek has been concreted. While this impact will be long-lasting, it is possible that elements of the waterway's environmental and cultural heritage could be reintroduced as a means of reinterpreting this important confluence.

### Opportunities for future projects and investment:

- 1 Investigate options for improved environmental outcomes around the Gardiners Creek confluence. This includes implementing initiatives outlined in:
  - City of Stonnington's *Gardiners Creek Masterplan 2019* which includes a revegetation strategy for the creek
  - City of Boroondara's *Urban Biodiversity Strategy 2013–2023* which nominates this area as a potential biodiversity hotspot
- 2 Work with the Traditional Owners to provide interpretive information or artwork about the cultural heritage of these waterways, both contemporary and pre-European settlement.
- 3 Maintain and strengthen indigenous planting along the Yarra Boulevard and around the edge of Kevin Bartlett Reserve to improve habitat links.
  - Ensure planning controls provide adequate setbacks and height controls to protect the Yarra River's landscape setting.



### Legend

- Yarra River
- Yarra River land
- Municipal parkland
- Main Yarra Trail
- - - Catchment links
- ▨ Greater Yarra Urban Parkland
- - - Existing recreational trail
- Key views



**10 YEAR PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES**

## Herring Island and surrounding parkland

Herring Island is an artificial island that was created in 1928 due to the construction of a new river channel and dredging. Since then, the island has become significant as a wildlife haven. The island also features a sculpture trail and picnic grounds. Herring Island has the potential to be improved as a tourist attraction and to provide an opportunity for people to experience the Yarra River in a relatively natural state, close to the city. On the northern bank, Loys Paddock and Burnley Harbour wetlands are pockets of bushland on the Yarra River's bank. Burnley Harbour is of historical interest as a former quarry.

The City of Stonnington's *Yarra River Biodiversity Linkages* project has seen extensive replanting along this section of the Yarra River's bank, as well as stormwater management, viewing platforms and interpretive information.

### Opportunities for future projects and investment:

- 1 Investigate options to improve access to Herring Island and promote the island as a biodiversity hotspot. Upgrade visitor facilities, including the sculpture park, and promote Herring Island as a place where diverse communities and visitors can connect with nature, heritage and culture for gatherings or events.
- 2 Provide a greater sense of connection from Herring Island to Como House, including interpretive information about the history of these two key sites and their connection to the Yarra River.
- 3 Improve access to Burnley Harbour and wetlands, and Loys Paddock. Support the role of these locations as biodiversity hotspots.

**Legend**


**10 YEAR PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES**



## Central city

The Yarra River corridor through the central city, between Punt Road and Docklands, passes numerous places of significance to Melbourne and the State of Victoria. This includes the MCG and sports precinct, the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain, Birrarung Marr and the arts precinct of Southbank.

The Wurundjeri Woi wurrung people have identified key sites of significance within the central city: Federation Square, which is a traditional meeting place of the Kulin Nation; the MCG, which is a significant ceremonial ground that was used up until the people's displacement from the city; and the Birrarung Falls near Queen Street, where a waterfall and natural rock barrier that separated the river's fresh water from salt water existed and was used as a crossing place until it was blasted away in the 1880s.

Several projects are currently in the planning or implementation phases which will transform the Yarra River's landscape within central Melbourne.

The City of Melbourne's *City River Strategy* provides an overarching planning framework for the Yarra River between Punt Road Bridge and the Bolte Bridge. It sets out strategic directions for the Yarra River through central Melbourne and encompasses cultural heritage, biodiversity and water quality, pedestrian connectivity, public space amenity and accessibility. Key priorities are to embrace Aboriginal culture and heritage, develop the 'Northbank Greenline' linear park and restore the natural landscape with biodiversity hotspots.

Other major projects underway by the City of Melbourne include:

- *Domain Parklands Masterplan* which will guide sustainable management the parklands that sit between the south bank of the Yarra River and one of the city's major thoroughfares, St Kilda Road.
- *Birrarung Marr Masterplan* implementation which guides the development, management and use of Melbourne's first major open space on the northern banks of the Yarra River.
- Works to upgrade Southbank Promenade as a key cultural and arts destination: new and expanded public spaces, extension of urban forest planting, management of commuter cycle traffic, new public art and protection of heritage elements.

The Victorian Government is undertaking Stage 3 of the Melbourne Park redevelopment, to upgrade the state's premier sports destination with improved facilities, connections and public realm design.

The Victorian Government is preparing a framework plan for the Richmond to Docklands corridor. This plan will set out directions to guide future investment in the public realm and the precinct's major facilities.

Draft Yarra Strategic Plan – confidential

## Opportunities for future projects and investment:

- Support and implement the current projects underway to improve the function and amenity of the central city's diverse Yarra River precincts.
- Improve the connections between each precinct for pedestrians and cyclists to ensure a continuous link from Richmond and South Yarra into central Melbourne. Provision should be made for both slow traffic and alternative routes for commuters on Flinders Street, Southbank Boulevard and City Road.
- Prepare a masterplan to guide public or partnership investments (between Birrarung Marr and Docklands) to improve this precinct. This would see a series of well-connected public spaces along the river's edge that are designed to celebrate its heritage and natural environment, and foster a sense of reconnection of the Yarra River to the city.
- Set out a coordinated approach to design of the public realm across all precinct to create a sense of continuity along the Yarra River's frontage and to reduce visual clutter and support key views.
- Strengthen planting along the Yarra River's edge, along key catchment links and through the surrounding street network to enhance the greening and biodiversity of the Yarra River's landscape and surrounding urban spaces.
- Reintroduce a natural, riverside landscape character including a riparian zone, where possible.
- Express the Yarra River's rich history and many stories through interpretive information, public realm design, art and planting.
- Work with Traditional Owners to protect significant places and increase the visual presence of their cultural heritage within the Yarra River's environment.
- Express elements of the Yarra River's ancient landscape which are no longer visible in the city, such as the Williams Creek (which flows under Elizabeth Street), the Botanic Gardens lagoon which was once a part of the Yarra River, the wetlands that existed within the Docklands area and the Birrarung (Yarra River) Falls.
- Improve the use and navigation of the Yarra River as a transport corridor and place for water-based recreation:
  - Establish appropriate landings and facilities for commercial and recreational vessels.
  - Investigate the feasibility of a seasonal or peak period commuter service between Victoria Harbour and the Hoddle Street Bridge.
  - Improve rowing infrastructure through new landing stages.
  - Support a civic focus by encouraging activation that offers broader inclusion and supports a public waterfront.

Planning scheme implementation:

- Review planning policies and planning scheme controls within the City of Melbourne to ensure the Yarra River is appropriately protected.



**Legend**

Yarra River	Municipal parkland	Main Yarra Trail	Wurundjeri site of significance*
State Government owned parklands	Existing recreational trail	Key views	Improved access

**10 YEAR PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES**



\* Acknowledging the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung people's consideration of this location as a site of significance, no Traditional Owner Group/s have yet been formally recognised for this area of land by the State of Victoria.







# USEFUL NAMES AND ABBREVIATIONS

<b>Birrarung Council</b>	Established by the <i>Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murron) Act 2017</i> to provide advice to the Minister for Water in relation to any land use or development that may impact Yarra River land. The council will act as the voice of the river and report annually to the Minister on the implementation of the Yarra Strategic Plan.
<b>DELWP</b>	The Victorian Government Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning.
<b>EPA</b>	Environment Protection Authority Victoria.
<b>Greater Yarra Urban Parklands (GYUP)</b>	Includes Yarra River land that is used as public open space or as a park, within a municipal council district and within an urban growth boundary. It also includes any other land that the landowner agrees may be covered, which is within an urban growth boundary specified in a planning scheme.
<b>New areas for protection</b>	To realise the community's vision and deliver on the requirements of the Act, new areas for protection have been identified for the Yarra River. These areas will help to safeguard against future pressures and ensure that the Yarra River is respected as a sacred natural entity. These are areas not covered by existing statutory protections.
<b>Port Phillip and Westernport region</b>	The Port Phillip and Westernport region is a 1.3 million hectare area that is home to over 4.5 million people and boasts some of Victoria's most productive farming lands, spectacular parks, picturesque landscapes and diverse natural ecosystems.
<b>PPWCMA</b>	The Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority.
<b>Responsible public entities</b>	Within the Yarra Strategic Plan, this includes Melbourne Water, Parks Victoria, Victorian Planning Authority, VicRoads, PPWCMA, any committee of management of Crown land in the Yarra River Lands, any Traditional Owner Management Boards and the following local councils: Banyule, Boroondara, Manningham, Melbourne, Nillumbik, Stonnington, Yarra and Yarra Ranges.
<b>Significant places</b>	Identified based on their regional significance and their potential to contribute to biodiversity, improve the parklands network and access to the river, protect cultural heritage and expand activation options that embrace and respect the river. Significant places provide guidance for responsible public entities to help them align their business as usual activities to deliver the outcomes of the Yarra Strategic Plan.
<b>Yarra Collaboration Committee (YCC)</b>	Composed of eight local councils (Banyule, Boroondara, Manningham, Melbourne, Nillumbik, Stonnington, Yarra, Yarra Ranges); the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning; Parks Victoria; Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority; VicRoads; Transport for Victoria; and Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation.
<b>Yarra Ministerial Advisory Committee (Yarra MAC)</b>	The Minister for Planning and the Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water established the Yarra MAC in December 2015. Its purpose was to provide independent advice to government about improving governance arrangements for protecting the Yarra River.

<b>Yarra River 50 Year Community Vision</b>	The <i>Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murrong) Act 2017</i> called for the development of a long-term community vision to form the basis of the Yarra Strategic Plan. Using feedback received from over 2500 Victorians, a representative group of 24 community members wrote the vision in February 2018.
<b>Yarra River Action Plan</b>	Outlines 30 recommendations that aim to protect and enhance the Yarra River.
<b>Yarra River land/s</b>	Yarra River land is the Yarra River, including its bed, soil and banks as well as publicly managed land within 500m of a bank of the river.
<b>Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murrong) Act 2017</b>	Provides a whole-of-corridor policy and planning framework for the Yarra River. Outlines the contents of the Yarra Strategic Plan and Land Use Framework.

## GLOSSARY

<b>Activity centres</b>	Community hubs where people shop, work, meet, relax and also often live. They can range in size, from local neighbourhood shopping strips to centres that include universities and major regional shopping malls.
<b>Agritourism</b>	A type of tourism involving an agricultural experience such as a farm stay, educational tour or food experience.
<b>Amenity</b>	Used here to describe the aspects of rivers or landscapes that enhance community wellbeing. Amenity can depend on factors such as the cleanliness of the waterway and surrounds, the ability to access the waterway, and the quality and extent of open space.
<b>Billabong</b>	A body of water, like a large pond, that is left behind when a river changes direction. Billabongs fill with water seasonally and are usually dry for the majority of the year.
<b>Biodiversity</b>	The number and variety of plants, animals and other living things, including micro-organisms, across our land, rivers and oceans. It includes the diversity of their genetic information, the habitats and ecosystems in which they live and their connection with other life forms.
<b>Birrarung</b>	The Woi wurrung language word for the Yarra River, meaning 'river of mists and shadows'.
<b>Building Code of Australia</b>	Contains technical provisions for the design and construction of buildings and other structures.
<b>Bushfire Management Overlay</b>	Applies to land that may be significantly affected by a bushfire. The overlay triggers the need for a planning permit for certain developments and requires new developments to include appropriate bushfire protection measures.
<b>Catchment</b>	An area of land where all run-off from rainfall drains into one river system.
<b>Clan</b>	A close-knit group of interrelated families. Clan groups share a common language and kinship system.

<b>Community</b>	Includes individuals, public and private landholders, community groups and business owners.
<b>Confluence</b>	The place where two waterways join.
<b>Country</b>	Traditional Aboriginal culture revolves around relationships to the land and water. For Traditional Owners, Country is part of who they are, just as they are a part of it.
<b>Covenant</b>	A statutory agreement that is included on a land title to stipulate a behaviour which the landowner must perform, such as protecting native vegetation.
<b>Crown land</b>	Crown Land, or Public Land, is generally defined as land held by/vested in/or owned by DELWP and other government departments, public authorities, commonwealth and local governments.
<b>Cultural Flows</b>	Water entitlements that are owned by Indigenous Nations to improve the spiritual, cultural, environmental, social and economic conditions of those Indigenous Nations. (MLDRIN)
<b>Cultural heritage</b>	The legacy of physical artefacts and intangible attributes of a group or society that are inherited from past generations, maintained in the present and bestowed for the benefit of future generations. In this document cultural heritage refers to both Indigenous and postcolonial heritage.
<b>Custodian</b>	A person who has responsibility for taking care of or protecting something.
<b>Design and Development Overlay</b>	A planning control that is applied to land that requires a specific design treatment. The purpose of the overlay is to give direction to the specific design and built form requirements.
<b>Elder</b>	An Aboriginal Elder is someone who has gained recognition as a custodian of knowledge and lore, and who has permission to disclose knowledge and beliefs.
<b>Environmental flows / environmental water / water for the environment</b>	Water managed and allocated to improve or maintain the health of rivers and wetlands – including the plants and animals that depend on them.
<b>Environmental Significance Overlay</b>	A planning control ensures that the development of land does not affect identified environmental values and qualities of an area.
<b>Floodplain</b>	Land subject to overflow during floods, which is often valued for its ecological properties.
<b>Greater Melbourne</b>	Also known as metropolitan Melbourne, Greater Melbourne is the geographical area that defines Melbourne as a city and the capital of the State of Victoria. Spanning over 9990 km <sup>2</sup> , Greater Melbourne is home to around 4.9 million people.
<b>Gross pollutant traps</b>	Designed to intercept the flow of water and catch any litter or debris. Gross pollutant traps are installed to catch stormwater pollution before it enters waterways. They act like a filter, retaining litter but allowing water to flow through.
<b>Habitat corridors</b>	Connections across the landscape that link areas of habitat. They support natural processes that occur in a healthy environment, including the movement of species to find resources. Corridors can contribute to the resilience of the landscape in a changing climate and help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by storing carbon in native vegetation. They can also support multiple land uses such as conservation, farming and forestry.

<b>Interpretive information/signage</b>	Signage that helps to create a narrative for a place. It aims to generate a positive user experience by educating its audience on aspects of historical, heritage or environmental importance.
<b>Invasive species</b>	A species occurring as a result of human activities, beyond its normal distribution, which threatens environmental, agricultural or other social resources by the damage it causes. Invasive species can include diseases, fungi, parasites, feral animals, insects and weeds.
<b>Kulin Nation</b>	Refers to the Traditional Owners of the Port Phillip region. The Kulin Nation is made up of five language groups: Boonwurrung (Boon-wur-rung), Dja Dja Wurrung (Jar-Jar-Wur-rung), Taungurung (Tung-ger-rung), Wathaurung (Wath-er-rung), Woi wurrung (Woy-wur-rung), commonly known as Wurundjeri. Their traditional territory extends around the Port Phillip and Western Port bays.
<b>Land use</b>	The purpose for which land is used. This includes the production of goods (such as crops, timber and manufacture) and services (such as defence, recreation, biodiversity and natural resources protection).
<b>Land use framework</b>	Sets out the directions for the future use and development of land in the Yarra Strategic Plan area and identifies areas for protection.
<b>Land use planning</b>	The process of regulating the use of land in an effort to promote more desirable social and environmental outcomes as well as more efficient use of resources.
<b>Liveability</b>	Reflects the wellbeing of a community, and the many characteristics that make a place somewhere people want to live. A liveable city or region meets the basic social, environmental and economic needs of its people. It also addresses community values and preferences for amenity, wellbeing and a sense of place.
<b>Nationally significant heritage site</b>	A site on the National Heritage List, which has been established to list places of outstanding heritage significance to Australia. It includes natural, historic and Indigenous places that are of outstanding national heritage value to Australia.
<b>New areas for protection</b>	New areas for protection outlined in the Yarra Strategic Plan's land use framework to safeguard against future pressures and to ensure the Yarra River is respected as a sacred natural entity.
<b>On-water access/journeys</b>	Journeys taken by boat, canoe, kayak or other water craft.
<b>Open space corridor</b>	Publicly owned land that is set aside primarily for recreation, nature conservation, passive outdoor enjoyment and public gatherings. This includes public parks, gardens, reserves, waterways, publicly owned forecourts and squares.
<b>Planning controls</b>	Planning controls explain the standards and restrictions for new development. Planning controls may apply to a location (suburb, street or single lot), particular types of development (dwellings, villas) or a component of the development (provision of car parking, control of stormwater).
<b>Planning Policy Framework</b>	The State Planning Policy Framework (SPPF) is a key part of the Victorian planning system and the Victoria Planning Provisions. It sets the key policy direction for state planning issues.

<b>Planning scheme</b>	Planning schemes set out policies and provisions for the use and development of land. A planning scheme covers each local council area in Victoria and some special planning areas.
<b>Public Acquisition Overlay</b>	Used to identify land which is proposed to be acquired by a public authority, reserve land for a public purpose and to ensure that changes to the use or development of the land do not prejudice the purpose for which the land is to be acquired.
<b>Reconciliation</b>	Reconciliation aims to build respect, trust and positive relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the wider Australian community.
<b>Revegetation</b>	The process of replanting and rebuilding the soil of disturbed land.
<b>Re-water</b>	Supplying water to a wetland or billabong manually to mimic natural processes.
<b>Riparian</b>	Land or vegetation that adjoins a river, creek, estuary, wetland or lake.
<b>Septic tanks</b>	An underground chamber through which domestic wastewater flows for basic treatment. Homes that are not connected to a reticulated sewage system must rely on a septic system to treat the sewage on-site.
<b>Setbacks</b>	In land use, a setback is the minimum distance which a building or structure must be set back from a street, river or other stream, shore or floodplain, or any other place which is deemed to need protection.
<b>Sewage</b>	Wastewater produced from households or industry.
<b>Sewerage</b>	The pipes and plant that collect, remove, treat and dispose of sewage.
<b>Significant Landscape Overlay</b>	A Significant Landscape Overlay is a planning scheme tool for protecting and managing significant landscapes. This overlay can require a permit to construct a building, carry out works, construct a fence, and remove, destroy or lop any vegetation.
<b>Significant places</b>	Identified to celebrate their regional significance. They contribute to biodiversity, improve the parklands network and access to the Yarra River, protect cultural heritage and expand activation options that embrace and respect the Yarra River.
<b>Stormwater</b>	Runoff from urban areas. The net increase in stormwater runoff has been caused by the introduction of more impervious surfaces such as roofs and roads within urban developments.
<b>Traditional Owners</b>	People who, through membership of a descent group or clan, are responsible for caring for particular Country.
<b>Tributary</b>	A stream or river that flows into a larger waterway.
<b>Understory planting</b>	Plant life growing beneath the forest canopy without light penetrating it to any great extent, but above the forest floor.
<b>Urban forest network</b>	The care and management of tree populations in urban settings for the purpose of improving the urban environment.

<b>Urban growth boundary</b>	The urban growth boundary (UGB) applies around the urban areas of Metropolitan Melbourne. The purpose of the boundary is to direct urban growth to areas best able to be supplied with appropriate infrastructure and services and protect other valuable peri-urban land (and environmental features) from urban development pressures. (For more information visit <a href="http://www.vpa.vic.gov.au">www.vpa.vic.gov.au</a> )
<b>Urban renewal precincts</b>	Industrial areas, often old, that are no longer being used for their original purpose, that could benefit from redevelopment. Urban renewal precincts focus development in areas that can leverage existing and planned infrastructure, particularly transport and government landholdings.
<b>Wastewater</b>	Water that has had its quality affected by human influence, deriving from industrial, domestic, agricultural or commercial activities.
<b>Waterway condition / waterway health</b>	An umbrella term for the overall state of key features and processes that underpin functioning waterway ecosystems (such as species and communities, habitat, connectivity, water quality, riparian vegetation, physical form, and ecosystem processes such as nutrient cycling and carbon storage).
<b>Waterways</b>	Rivers, creeks and streams, their associated estuaries and floodplains (including floodplain wetlands) and non-riverine wetlands.
<b>Wetlands</b>	Inland, standing, shallow bodies of water, which may be permanent or temporary, fresh or saline.
<b>Woi wurrung</b>	The language of the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung people.
<b>Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation</b>	The Registered Aboriginal Party representing the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung people whose Country includes the Yarra River corridor and its tributaries.
<b>Wurundjeri Woi wurrung people</b>	The Wurundjeri Woi wurrung people take their name from the Woi wurrung language word 'wurun' meaning Manna Gum ( <i>Eucalyptus viminalis</i> ) which is common along 'Birrarrung' (Yarra River), and 'djeri', the grub commonly found within the tree.
<b>Yarra catchment</b>	<p>The Yarra catchment is a geographical area that lies north and east of Melbourne, covering an area of about 4,046 square kilometres.</p> <p>It is home to more than one third of Victoria's population and native plant and animal species, and land use varies from protected forests and rural areas to urban development and established industry.</p>
<b>Yarra Protection Principles</b>	Outlined in the <i>Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gjin Birrarung murrn) Act 2017</i> . According to the Act, all responsible public entities must have regard for the protection principles.
<b>Yarra River corridor</b>	The water body and the public parklands and public open spaces connected with the Yarra River.
<b>Yarra Strategic Plan area</b>	Includes Yarra River land and land of any kind that is located within one kilometre of a bank of the Yarra River.

# ENDNOTES

- 1 Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation is the registered Aboriginal party for the Yarra River upstream of Dights Falls in Abbotsford.
- 2 See the engagement report (in development).
- 3 Victorian Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, 2017, 'Guidelines for Assessing the Impact of Climate Change on Water Supplies in Victoria', accessed on 26 July 2018: [www.delwp.vic.gov.au](http://www.delwp.vic.gov.au)
- 4 *State of the Yarra and Its Parklands 2018* <https://www.ces.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/SoY-2018.pdf>
- 5 *Plan Melbourne 2017-2050*
- 6 .id Consulting demographic report (publication TBC).
- 7 2019, 'State of the Yarra and Its Parklands', Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability Victoria website, accessed March 2019: [https://www.ces.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/SoY\\_Front\\_Working\\_Document\\_20\\_03\\_19\\_F.pdf](https://www.ces.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/SoY_Front_Working_Document_20_03_19_F.pdf)
- 8 *Yarra River Action Plan* <https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/policy-and-strategy/waterways-planning/yarra-river-protection>
- 9 The area covered by the plan includes Crown land along the Yarra River that is mostly reserved under the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978*, including several metropolitan parks, as well as parts of the Yarra Ranges National Park and Warrandyte State Park under the *National Parks Act 1975*. The area also includes land owned and managed by various municipalities. The river between Warburton and Warrandyte is recognised as a heritage river under the *Heritage Rivers Act 1992*. Various entities are responsible for managing the land, including DELWP, Parks Victoria, Melbourne Water, Yarra Ranges Council, Nillumbik Shire Council, City of Manningham, City of Boroondara, City of Banyule, City of Stonnington, City of Yarra and City of Melbourne.
- 10 The Yarra Strategic Plan complies with the requirements outlined in Section 45 of the *Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murrn) Act 2017*, which dictate that the plan must not be inconsistent with other Acts, purposes of reservation, management plans and accepted recommendations that apply to the land covered by the plan.
- 11 Excluded land is defined as the Port of Melbourne (as defined in the *Port Management Act 1995*), and any land within a special water supply catchment area listed in Schedule 5 of the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*.
- 12 Where Crown land parcels abutting the river extend beyond the 500 metres covered by the declaration, the entire parcel has been declared as Yarra River land.
- 13 Excluded land is defined as i) the Port of Melbourne (as defined in the *Port Management Act 1995*), ii) any land within a special water supply catchment area listed in Schedule 5 of the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*, iii) land that is privately owned, iii) land that is owned by a municipal council.
- 14 The 15 state and local government agencies with management responsibilities along the river corridor are referred to in the *Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murrn) Act 2017* as responsible public entities.
- 15 This does not apply in relation to a declared project within the meaning of the *Major Projects Facilitation Act 2009*.
- 16 *Yarra River Action Plan* <https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/policy-and-strategy/waterways-planning/yarra-river-protection>
- 17 Established under the *Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murrn) Act 2017*, the Birrarung Council were appointed by the State Government in September 2018 to act as a voice for the river and provide independent advice to the Minister for Water on the protection and improvement of the Yarra River landscape, including the development, operation and effectiveness of the Yarra Strategic Plan.
- 18 [https://s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/hdp.au.prod.app.mw-yoursay/files/8815/3871/6529/Yarra\\_Strategic\\_Plan\\_Map\\_Book\\_October\\_2018.pdf](https://s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/hdp.au.prod.app.mw-yoursay/files/8815/3871/6529/Yarra_Strategic_Plan_Map_Book_October_2018.pdf)

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