

Credit: Melbourne Water,
Yarra Valley

PART 2 – **LAND USE FRAMEWORK**



Overview: the Yarra River at the centre of planning

This second part of the Yarra Strategic Plan, Part 2 – land use framework, complements the collaborative actions set out in Part 1. The framework covers the Yarra River’s 242 km long corridor, setting broad direction for future land use and development to protect the river and its significant values. These directions are intended to give effect to the plan’s four performance objectives, the Yarra River 50 Year Community Vision and *Nhanbu narrun ba ngargunin twarn Birrarung (Ancient Spirit & Lore of the Yarra)*.

Where required, directions will be translated into the Victoria Planning Provisions and become part of municipal planning schemes – meaning that relevant decision making on land use and development is consistent with the land use framework.

Purpose of the land use framework

The land use framework delivers on the intent of the Act and also reflects the unique characteristics of the Yarra River. The objectives of the framework are:

- to provide an overview of the Yarra River, giving spatial context to the significant places and projects, and directions for future land use
- to identify priority actions at a whole-of-river scale that strengthen statutory protections or extend protections to new areas
- to provide broad direction for land use and development that reflects the diversity across each of the four reaches
- to strengthen protections for riparian and biodiversity values across private and publicly owned lands
- to recognise significant places where localised planning opportunities and future projects will complement the Yarra Strategic Plan and align with its performance objectives.

A framework with a regional approach

The directions for future land use and development are broad and purposefully high level and, where necessary, will be translated into specific planning provisions to:

- enable appropriate statutory mechanisms, such as planning policies or controls, to be determined at a state, regional or local level
- provide high-level guidance for places of regional significance to guide precinct or local scale plans, such as the *Yarra River – Bulleen Precinct Land Use Framework Plan*
- allow responsible public entities with obligations under the *Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murrn) Act 2017*, the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and other relevant acts to make informed and aligned decisions at a local level
- operate at three distinct scales – whole-of-river, reach and a local scale – enabling the Yarra to be protected as one living and integrated natural entity, while also recognising the myriad of landscapes and environments, with differing degrees of development, access, land use and management. Each scale includes spatial plans, discussion of significant values and directions and/or opportunities relevant to the area (see **Figure 3**).

Development of the land use framework has drawn on the experience of developing and implementing the many existing planning studies, strategies and projects in the Yarra corridor. The framework is designed to operate at a regional level, however it also informs planning policies, provisions and controls at local levels (see **Figure 4**). The framework does not take the place of other strategies, frameworks and policies, but operates in conjunction with existing statutory protections to ensure that the Yarra is managed as one living and integrated natural entity.

Implementation of the framework

The land use framework will be given effect in planning schemes through a state-led planning scheme amendment process in consultation with councils and the broader Yarra Collaboration Committee. This will occur through a staged delivery process.

Stage 1 – Giving initial effect to the Yarra Strategic Plan

Clause 12.03-1R ‘Yarra River Protection’ of the Victoria Planning Provisions will be updated, relevant land use directions translated into planning schemes, and the Yarra Strategic Plan referenced as a background document. This will occur following approval of the plan.

Stage 2 – Whole-of-river actions and reach-based directions

Future stages of implementation will deliver the whole-of-river actions and reach-based directions for land use and development, giving place-based effect to the land use framework, ensuring the values of the river are protected and the 50 Year Community Vision can be realised. Delivery will be multi-staged and occur iteratively across the life of the plan through state–local government joint projects.

Where implementation of the framework requires additional strategic work to be undertaken, it will be completed prior to further planning scheme amendments being progressed.

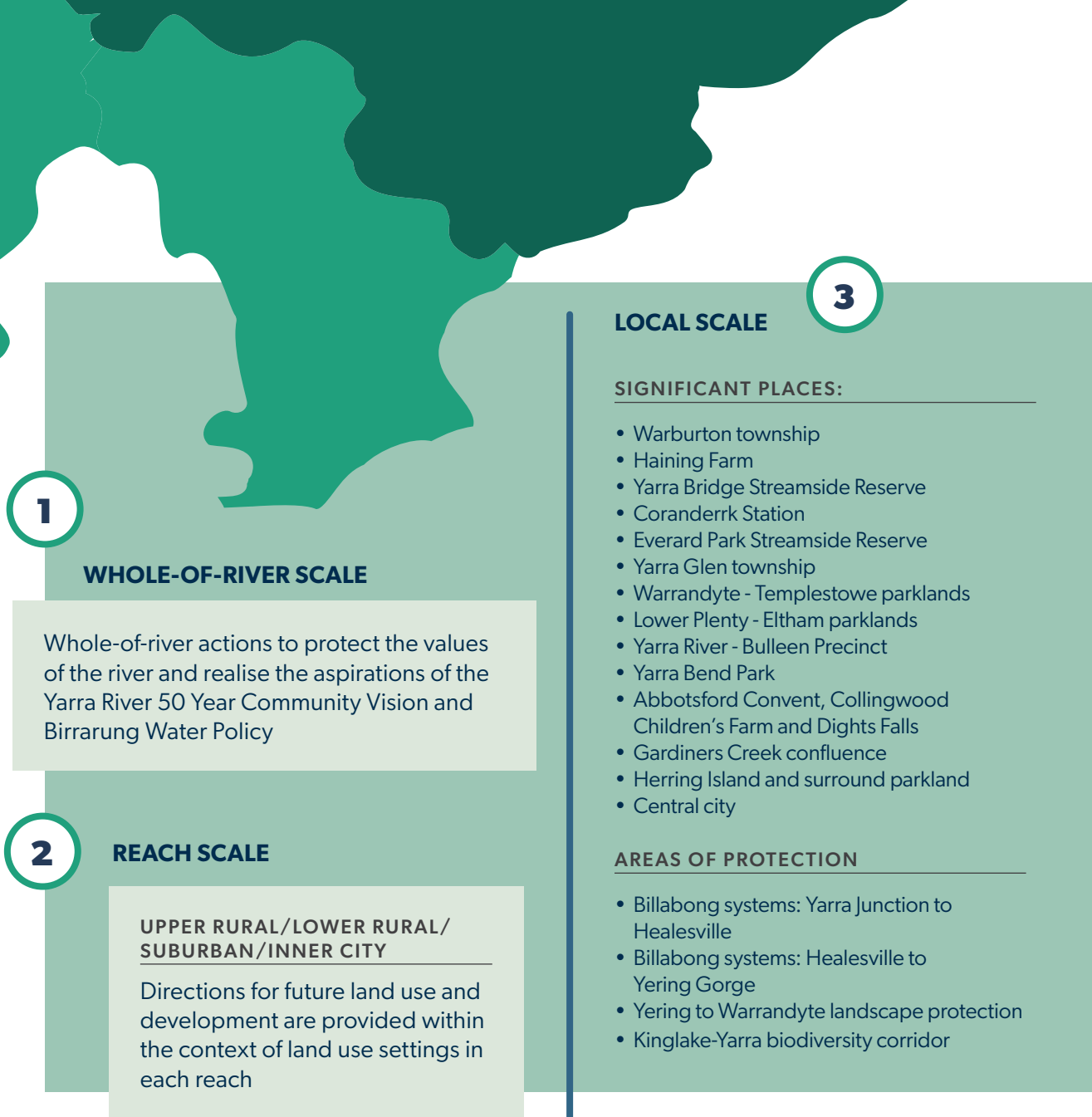


FIGURE 3. Land use framework spatial hierarchy



Credit: Melbourne Water, Yarra River inner city reach

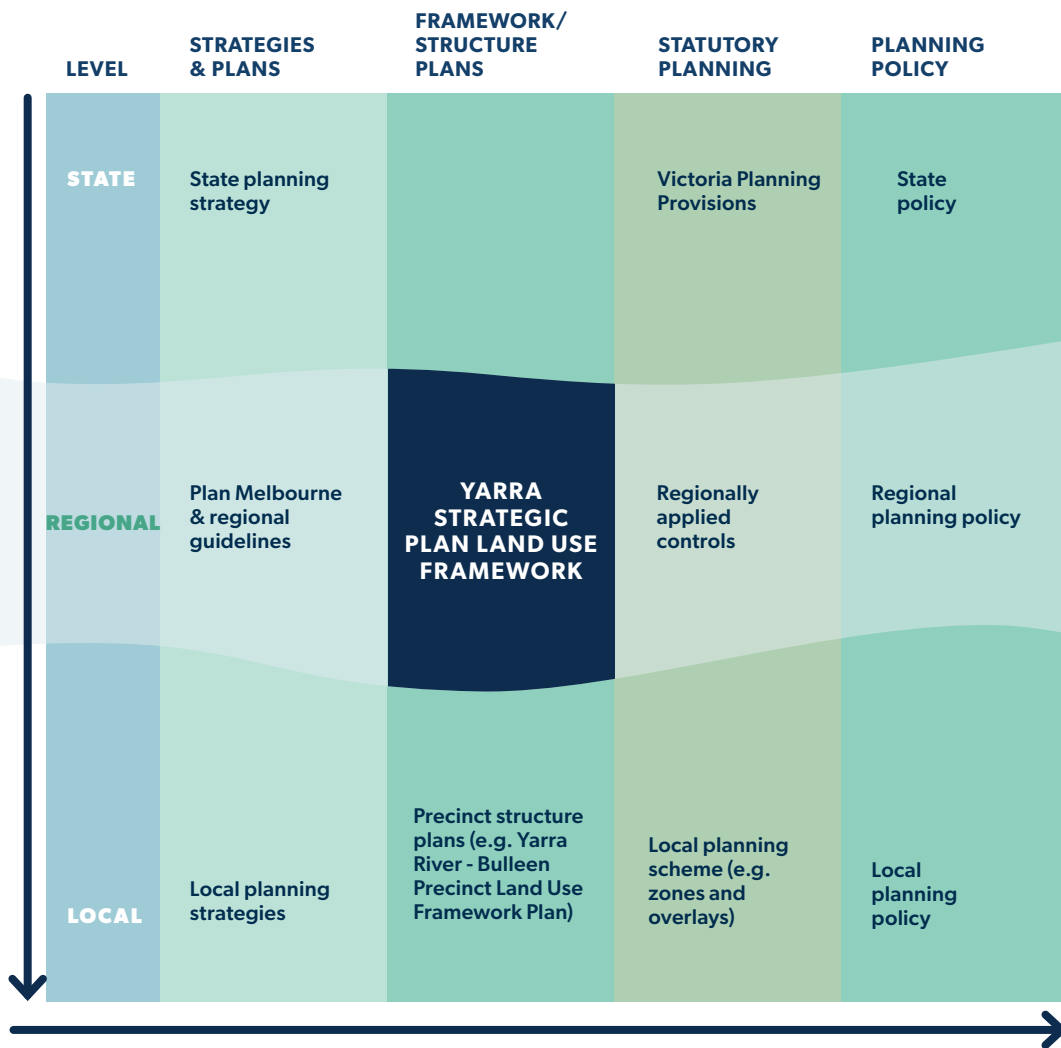


FIGURE 4. The Yarra Strategic Plan sits at a regional level in the state planning framework



Credit: Melbourne Water, Yarra at Warburton



Whole-of-river actions

The Yarra's landscapes are distinct and valued for their scenic, environmental, social, cultural and economic values. Planning controls are needed to protect those values and landscapes and to ensure that any development respects the river and its environs. A coordinated approach to planning controls for the whole-of-river will align land use and development to the community's long-term vision and protect the river's significant values into the future.

Permanent planning controls

In 2017 the Minister for Planning introduced interim planning controls between Richmond and Warrandyte to address the critical need to protect the urban reaches of the Yarra River from inappropriate development. Consistent planning overlays to manage development and protect the Yarra's landscape were made permanent by Amendment VC197 in April 2021 across the Banyule, Boroondara, Manningham, Nillumbik, Stonnington and Yarra planning schemes.

The permanent planning controls prescribe maximum building heights and minimum development setbacks and deliver tougher vegetation removal controls to support protection of the Yarra's natural landscape character. They ensure that new development avoids encroachment and overshadowing, delivering lasting protection for the Yarra's landscape and environmental values.

In recognising the significant landscape of the Yarra River and its parklands, the controls are a key mechanism in achieving the intent of the Yarra Strategic Plan in suburban areas. In addition, a suite of further whole-of-river planning actions will be delivered through a coordinated program as part of the Yarra Strategic Plan. The following projects will be undertaken through state-led projects in partnership with the Yarra Collaboration Committee.

1. New controls from Warrandyte to Warburton

New controls will be developed to streamline planning protections for the lower and upper rural reaches between Warrandyte and Warburton. Drafting of these controls will employ a similar landscape assessment approach that informed development of the permanent planning controls in the suburban reaches.

2. Coordinated approach to landscape design and native planting

To assist with the interpretation of planning controls, new guidelines will be prepared to provide advice on how landscape design and native planting can be achieved at the river's interface to deliver on the requirements of the planning controls. The guidelines will take into consideration the bicultural landscape and climate change resilience.

3. Strengthening the protection of the Yarra River's heritage values

The Yarra River is home to many thousands of sites of cultural significance. In line with the Act, Aboriginal tangible and intangible cultural values and other cultural and heritage values will be recognised and protected through the introduction of new or amended protection mechanisms such as the Heritage Overlay that is used to protect sites of significance. Part 1 of this plan includes actions under Performance Objective 2 to increase understanding and awareness of cultural heritage.

4. Strengthening protections for riparian and biodiversity values

The Yarra River corridor, as well as its tributaries and green spaces, provide vital habitat and connectivity for native animals and plants, with over one-third of Victoria's animal species found in the Yarra catchment. Many of these areas have existing protections; however, some lack the necessary control measures to protect against future development and disturbances (see Part 1, Performance Objective 1, Action 10).

Four 'new areas for protection' have been identified.

- Yarra Junction to Healesville billabongs and wetlands (page 96)
- Healesville to Yering Gorge billabongs and wetlands (page 108)
- Yering to Warrandyte landscape protection (page 109)
- Kinglake to Yarra biodiversity corridor (page 110).

For the four 'new areas for protection' the suitability of planning mechanisms or other options to provide protection will be investigated. In addition to these sites, further assessment will be undertaken to identify other areas of high biodiversity value requiring protection from disturbance, and needing the introduction and/or an update of appropriate planning controls, such as the Environmental Significance Overlay.

Land use analysis

A land use analysis has been undertaken to understand existing land uses, anticipated threats and pressures (e.g. population growth and climate change); identify values of the reach; and understand how Traditional Owners' aspirations and the community vision can be achieved.

The analysis aligns with the relevant requirements set out in Section 21 of the Act. (Further detail on the current state analysis can be found in the Yarra Strategic Plan Map Book.)¹⁵

Achieving the community vision

Each reach has its own specific community vision, priorities and values that 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 242 km 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 that has been declared for protection under the *Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murrn) 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 that 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.

Relevant directions for land use and development will be given effect through translation into the Planning Policy Framework. For further details on how this will occur see page 68.

New areas for protection

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

- *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, which provides the legal framework for Victoria's planning system
- *Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018*, which declares all land within 200 m of the edge of named waterways and land within 50 m of registered Aboriginal cultural heritage places as having potential cultural sensitivity
- *National Parks Act 1975 and Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978*, which apply to forested areas and many of the parklands
- Victoria Planning Provisions, including zones and overlays.

To realise the aspirations of the community vision and the *Nhanbu narrun ba ngargunin twarn Birrarung (Ancient Spirit & Lore of the Yarra)*, and to deliver on the requirements of the Act, the Yarra Strategic Plan identifies new areas for protection. Protecting these areas through statutory planning measures will help safeguard against future pressures and ensure that the Yarra River is respected as a sacred natural living entity.

The four new areas for protection (outlined in the whole-of-river planning direction number 4 on page 71) have been selected by:

- Working with the Yarra Collaboration Committee and undertaking an assessment of each reach to identify areas with high environmental, landscape and cultural value. This included:
 - analysis of relevant reports and information
 - analysis of current state values mapping
 - incorporation of community feedback
 - consideration of habitat connectivity and strategic links within the corridor.
- Assessing future threats to these values and preliminary review of the effectiveness of existing protection mechanisms including:
 - assessment of the rate of change and trajectories (including climate change and population growth)
 - assessment of current protection mapping
 - analysis of planning scheme provisions allowable uses.
- Considering the full range of protection mechanism required to manage threats and protect values for future generations including:
 - whether values have been identified
 - whether protection currently exists and whether it is adequate. If protection exists but is not considered adequate in light of future threats, consider improvement. If no protection exists, propose new area for protection.

In addition to the new areas for protection, the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people have identified sites of significance and areas for protection. These places have values that are known to Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people and are still semi-accessible to people today. There are also more places that are yet to be investigated that retain their cultural value and significance, some of which occur within the four new areas for protection. This overlap in sites and areas for protection will need to be managed in partnership with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people.

Respecting significant places

Significant places have been identified to recognise their regional significance and to outline opportunities at a local scale. These places were identified in partnership with the Yarra Collaboration Committee and reflect community feedback throughout the development of the plan. They contribute to biodiversity, improve the parklands network and access to the river, protect cultural heritage and provide opportunities that improve, embrace and respect the Yarra.

Improvement and investment opportunities for each significant place are outlined and will guide delivery of future projects that align with the performance objectives of the Yarra Strategic Plan.

The land use framework identifies 14 significant places:

- Warburton township (page 90)
- Haining Farm, Launching Place (page 92)
- Yarra Bridge Streamside Reserve, Woori Yallock (page 93)
- Coranderrk Station, Healesville (page 94)
- Everard Park Streamside Reserve, Healesville (page 95)
- Yarra Glen township (page 106)
- Warrandyte – Templestowe parklands (page 120)
- Lower Plenty – Eltham parklands (page 122)
- Bulleen Precinct (page 124)
- Yarra Bend Park, Fairfield and Kew (page 126)
- Abbotsford Convent, Collingwood Children’s Farm and Dights Falls (page 136)
- Gardiners Creek confluence, Hawthorn and Toorak (page 138)
- Herring Island and surrounding parkland, Richmond (page 139)
- Central city, Melbourne (page 140).



Credit: Frank Pierce, *Powerful Owl in tree hollow, Bend of Islands*



Credit: Melbourne Water,
Kookaburra

Maps supporting the land use framework

The Act calls for the land use framework to include spatial plans for the Yarra Strategic Plan area. The maps that follow, provide the broader whole of river context for the plan.

Map 2 is a whole of river map outlining the Yarra River corridor, emphasising its catchment boundary, priority tributaries, billabongs, Yarra River land, parkland, open space and urban forest. This map provides context for performance objectives 1 and 4 (1, a healthy river and lands, and 4, protecting the natural beauty of the Yarra River corridor).

Map 3 examines the whole of the Yarra from a perspective of cultural and community importance. This map emphasises parkland and open space as well as sites of Aboriginal and cultural heritage, areas in which community activities tend to take place, and areas of attraction and tourism. This map also supports performance objectives 2 and 3 (performance objective 2, a culturally diverse corridor, and performance objective 3, quality parklands for a growing population).

Additional whole of river maps provide context for projected climate change impacts, flood and bushfire risks. Climate change modelling projects increased temperatures and decreased long-term average rainfall. Drier conditions will increase bushfire risk and periods of extreme fire danger, especially in the Yarra Valley and the upper reaches of the river. Climate change projections also indicate an increased frequency of higher intensity rainfall events, resulting in more floods, including those known as one in 100 year flood events. In the inner city reach, closer to the bay, these floods will be exacerbated by rising sea levels.

The increasing frequency of flood events will pose hazards to people, infrastructure and the delivery of essential services, causing substantial damage to property and infrastructure as well as placing the health and safety of people at risk. Whole of river maps setting out flooding and bushfire risks can be seen inlaid on **Map 2**, and in **Appendix H** and **Appendix I**.

The four distinct reaches

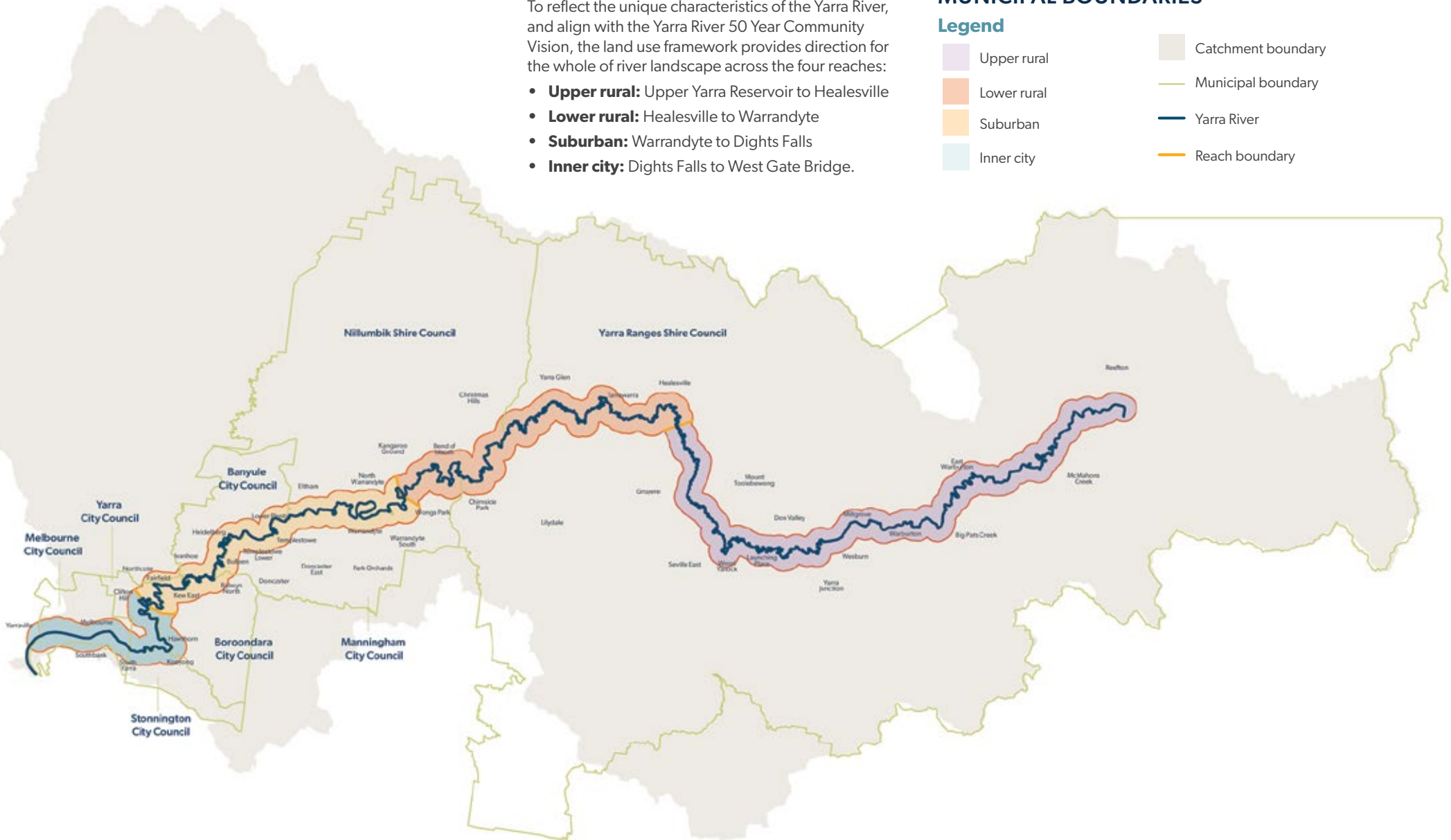
To reflect the unique characteristics of the Yarra River, and align with the Yarra River 50 Year Community Vision, the land use framework provides direction for the whole of river landscape across the four reaches:

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

MAP 1. REACH AND MUNICIPAL BOUNDARIES

Legend

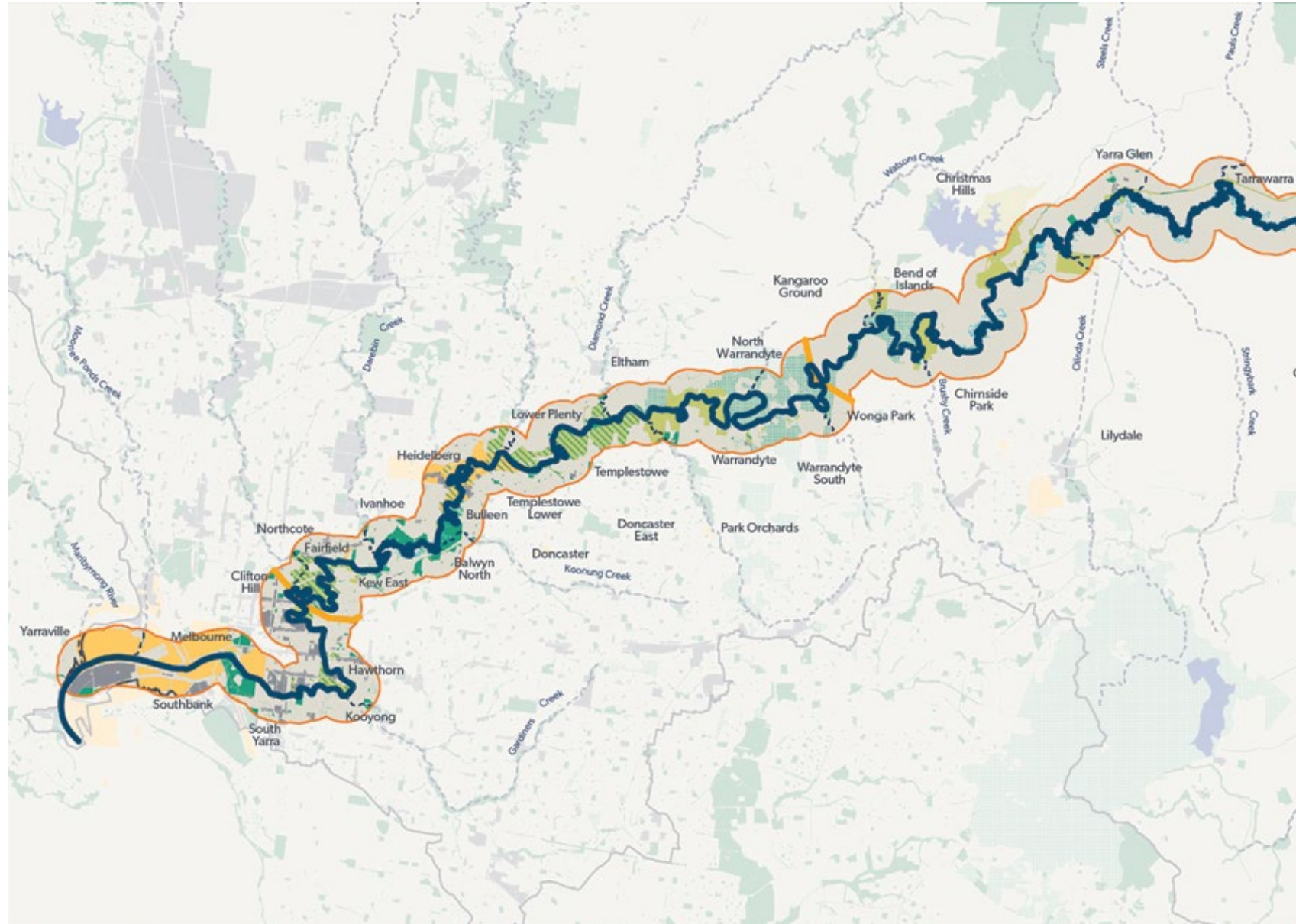
	Upper rural		Catchment boundary
	Lower rural		Municipal boundary
	Suburban		Yarra River
	Inner city		Reach boundary

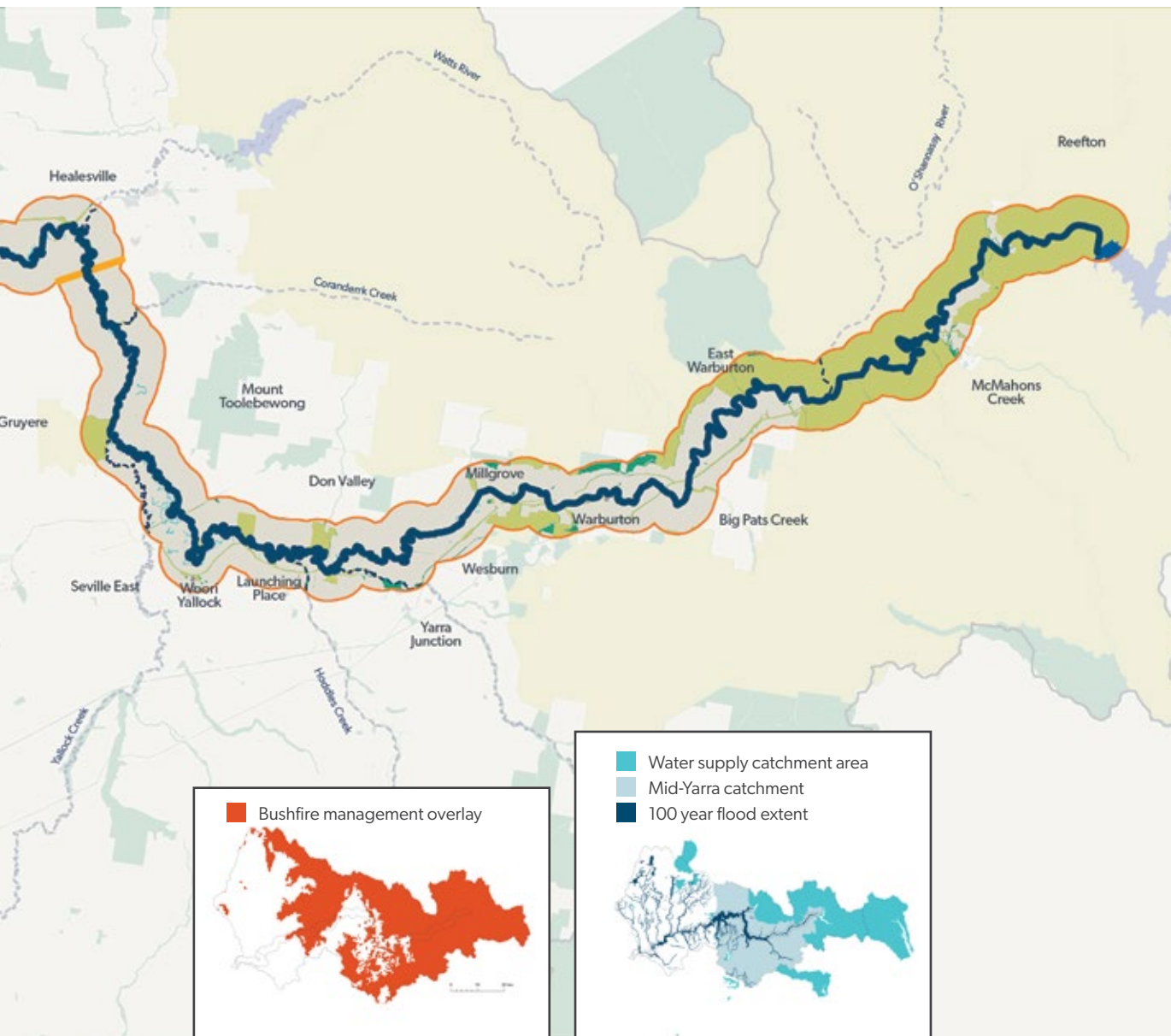


MAP 2. THE YARRA, ONE LIVING AND INTEGRATED NATURAL ENTITY

Legend

-  Reach boundary
-  Yarra Strategic Plan area
-  Billabong
-  Yarra River
-  Priority tributary
-  Catchment boundary
-  Industrial and commercial zone
-  Greater Yarra urban parkland
-  Key area experiencing development
-  Yarra River land
-  Open space
-  Urban forest





Notes

These notes apply to all maps in the land use framework.

Key views: Includes viewpoints (to and from) that offer a special place to experience the river. These include viewing platforms, lookout points and other key locations. Sourced from online engagement, Parks Victoria Asset Map, Lower Yarra River Corridor Study, Stonnington Yarra River Biodiversity Project, Middle Yarra River Corridor Study, Yarra River Social Research Report, Visit Yarra Valley Tourist Map, and site surveys (see more detail on reach maps).

Billabong: A type of wetland formed when the path of a creek or river changes, leaving the former branch with a dead end. Sourced from Melbourne Water spatial dataset.

Priority tributaries: Main rivers and creeks that flow into the Yarra River. Sourced from Melbourne Water, 2020. Additional tributaries may be identified as priority during implementation.

Key area experiencing development: Areas with the potential for urban revitalisation or renewal that may interface with the Yarra River. Sourced from Plan Melbourne, DELWP major residential redevelopment sites spatial dataset and local council mapping for major infrastructure projects and activity centres.

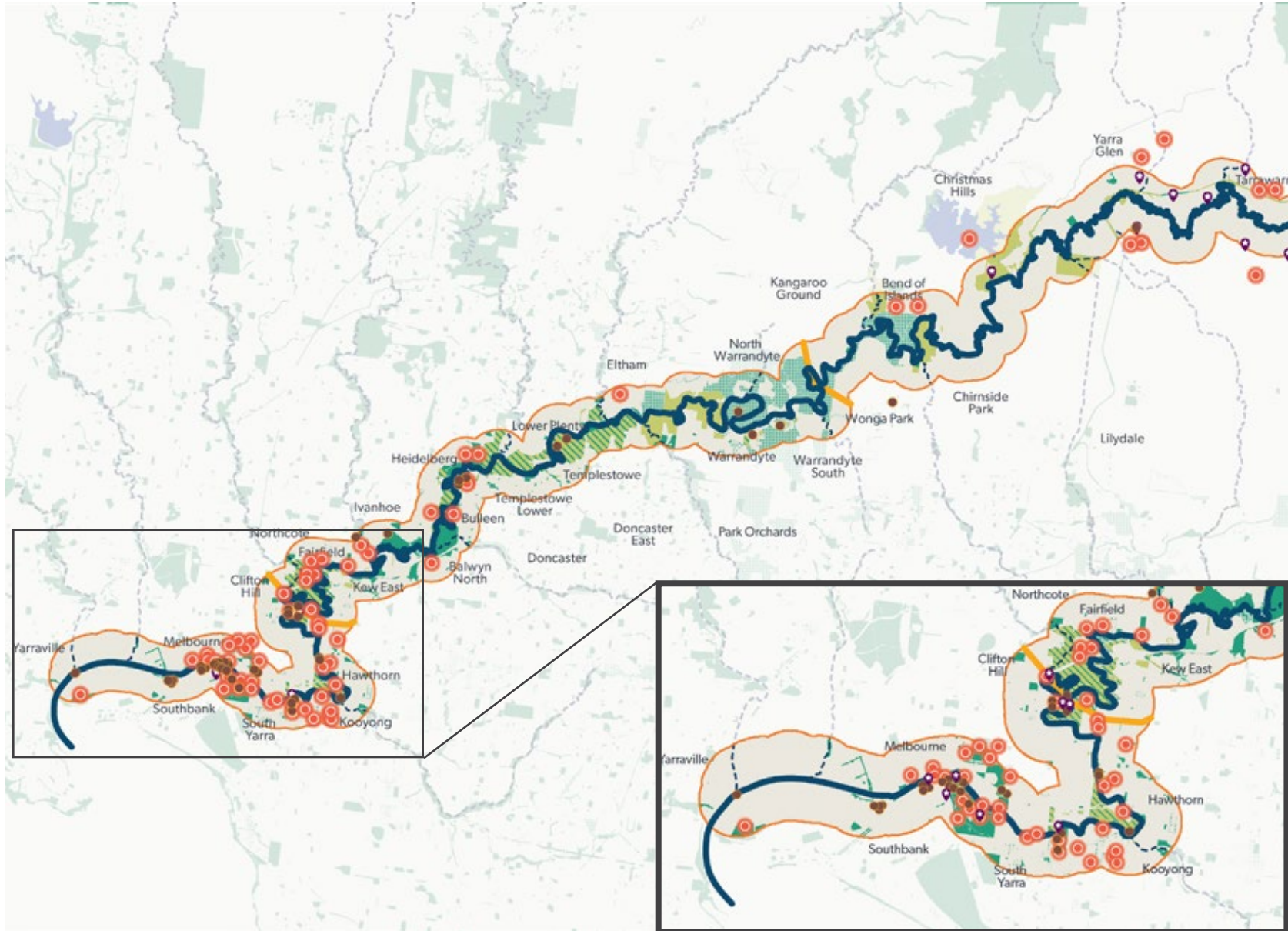
Urban forest: The Yarra River and its parklands combine with street trees, private gardens and vegetation along transport corridors and other waterways to form a critical part of Melbourne's developing urban forest. Map 2 illustrates 50% and above percentage cover by any tree in the reaches along the corridor. Sourced from DELWP, 2014 spatial dataset. Note that in urban areas, local government is increasing tree canopy in the streetscape through strategic urban forest planning. This level of detail cannot be shown on maps at a regional scale.

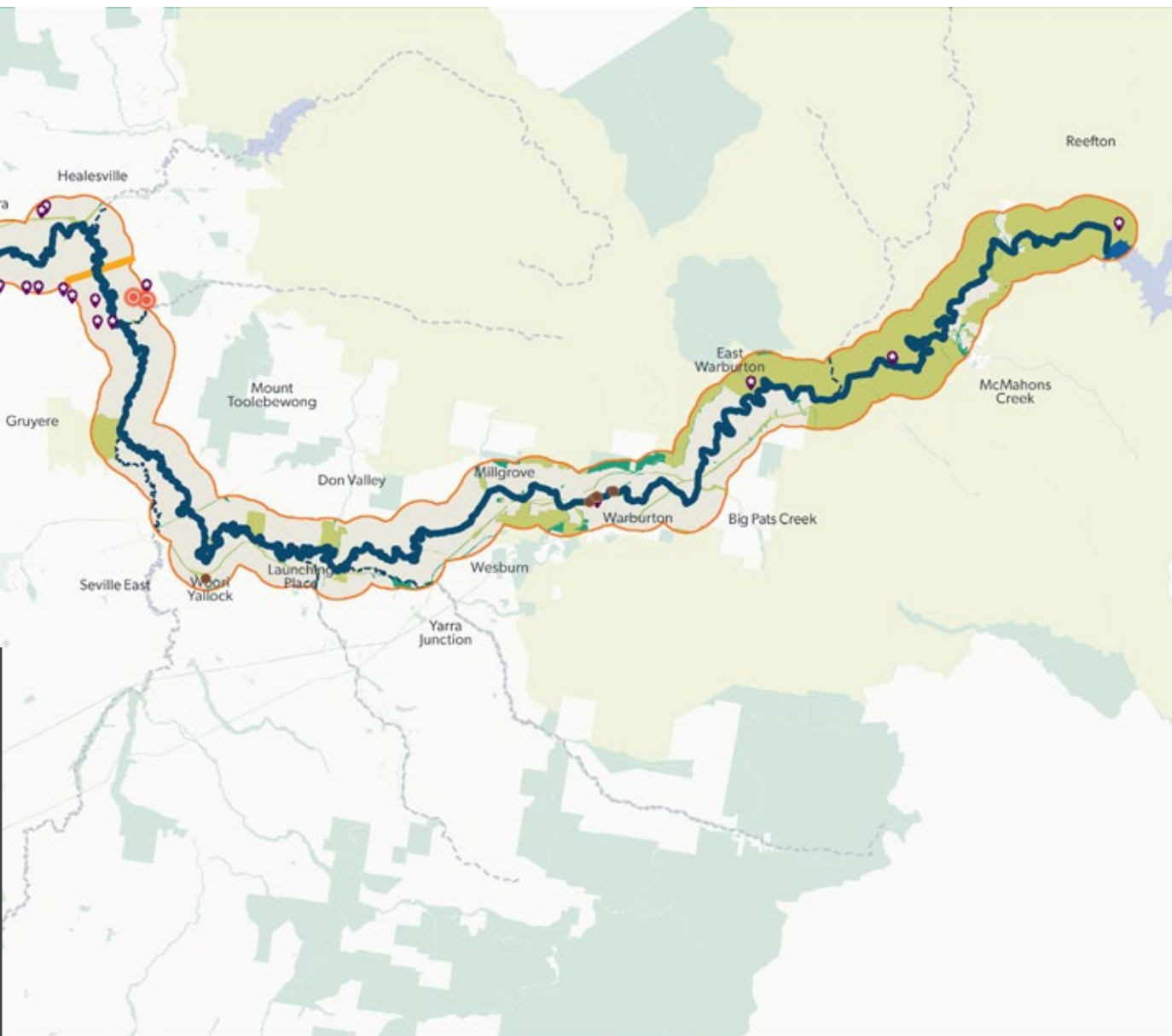
Bushfire Management Overlay: Planning scheme overlay applied to areas where there is potential for extreme bushfire behaviour including crown fire, extreme ember attack and radiant heat. Sourced from the Victorian Government, in partnership with the CFA and CSIRO.

MAP 3. THE YARRA, CULTURAL AND COMMUNITY IMPORTANCE

Legend

-  Reach boundary
-  Yarra Strategic Plan area
-  Yarra River
-  Priority tributary
-  Greater Yarra urban parkland
-  Yarra River land
-  Open space
-  Urban forest
-  Cultural sites
-  Community activities
-  Key tourist destinations





Notes

These notes apply to all maps in the land use framework.

Open space: Includes municipal open space and state government owned parklands. Sourced from VEAC Metropolitan Melbourne Open Space Inventory (see more detail on reach maps).

Community activity site: Includes sites where cultural events, festivals, markets and sports events occur. The listed activities and sites should be considered as indicative of the types of use that occur along the Yarra and may change in the future. Sourced from Melbourne Water spatial dataset.

Key tourist destination: Activities, wineries, natural features and precincts in the corridor that are tourist destinations have been identified using local council data and research.

Cultural heritage site: Aboriginal cultural heritage sites and historic heritage sites. Sourced from Yarra River Cultural Heritage Scoping Study, 2018. Not all sites that have Aboriginal cultural significance are formally listed as cultural heritage sites, however they are culturally significant to Traditional Owners and require appropriate protection.







Stormwater catchments: highlight areas where integrated water management (IWM) principles be applied to reduce stormwater run-off and protect water quality in the river. Sourced from *Healthy Waterways Strategy*.

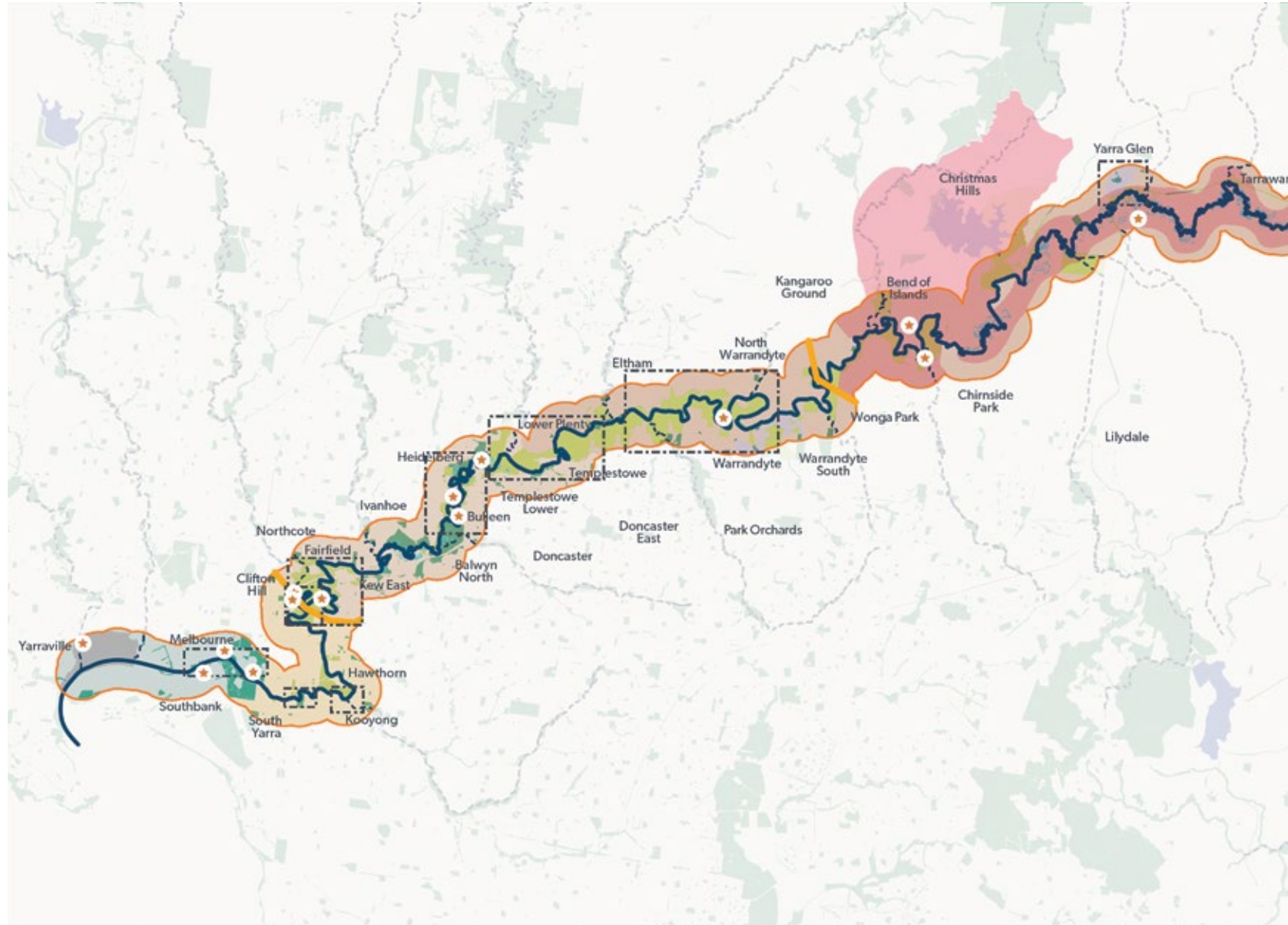
MAP 4. WHOLE OF RIVER LAND USE SETTINGS

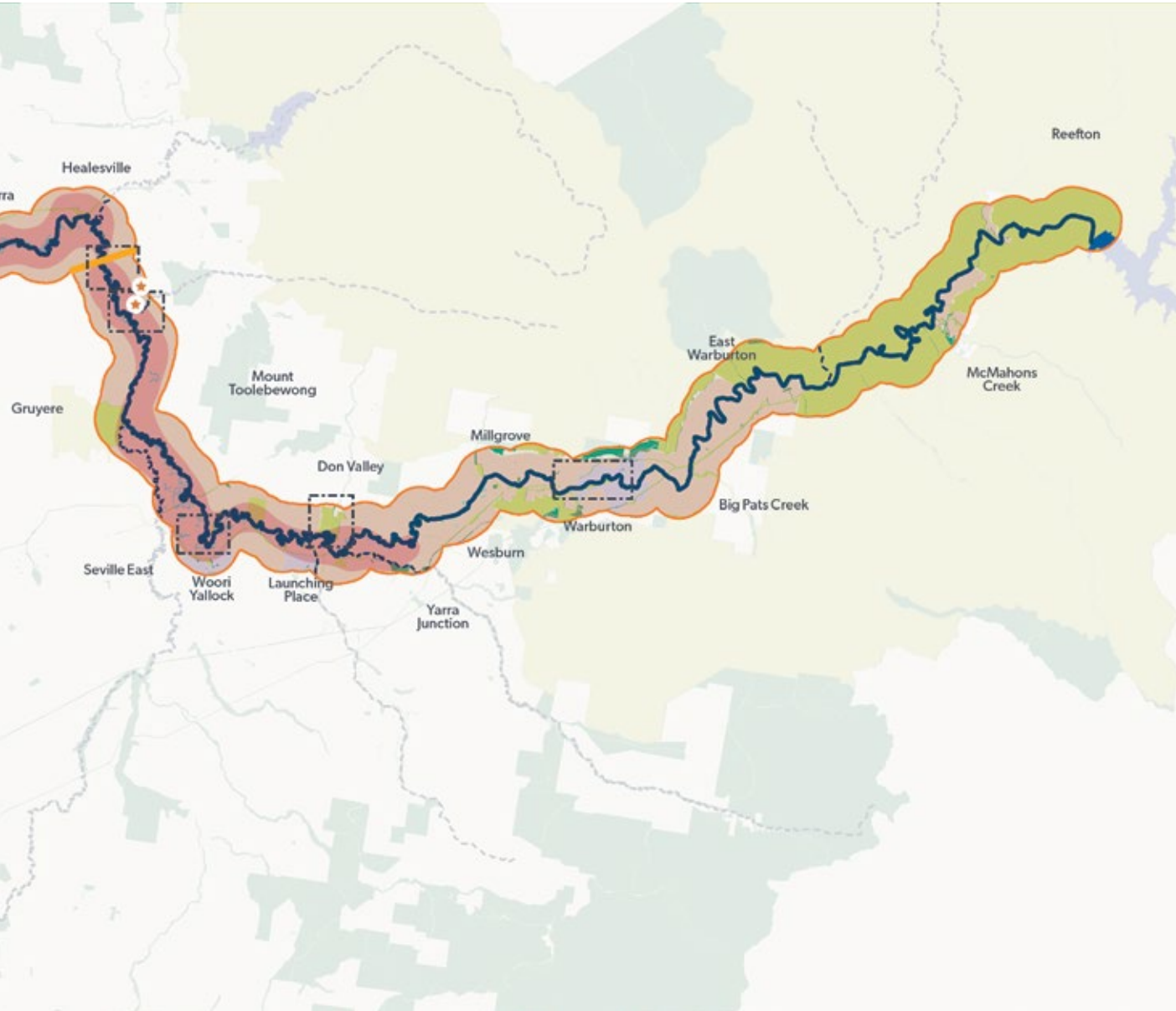
Legend

-  Reach boundary
-  Yarra Strategic Plan area
-  Yarra River
-  Priority tributary
-  Yarra River land
-  Open space
-  Billabong
-  Area of protection
-  Greater Yarra urban parkland
-  Site of Aboriginal cultural significance
-  Significant places

Land Use

-  Bush residential
-  Central city
-  Port of Melbourne (excluded)
-  Suburban
-  Township
-  Urban





Credit: Lachie Badura,
Haining Farm, Launching Place

Upper rural reach

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.

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 river is enclosed by the Yarra Ranges National Park and State Forest. Tall Eucalypt forests, filled with wildlife, meet the river in many locations providing significant ecological values.

Between Warburton and Healesville, the terrain opens out and agricultural areas become more expansive. While there are areas of high biodiversity, in many locations the river's ecological value has been depleted by farming and grazing activity close to the river's edge.

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

Public access to the river is limited to small parks and conservation areas where public land adjoins the river, short sections of recreational trails and walking tracks within adjacent 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 from Healesville to the Lilydale–Warburton Rail Trail.

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

The mid-Yarra catchment, which extends through the upper and lower rural reaches is Melbourne's largest open drinking water supply catchment.

Key considerations for this reach are protecting its significant cultural, environmental and landscape values, improving habitat corridors, protecting the riverbank, billabongs and floodplains, and minimising impacts of land use or development on sensitive flora and fauna.

Warramate Hills Nature Conservation Reserve is located in this reach and contains one of the last remaining areas of undisturbed bush in the Yarra Valley. It is home to more than 200 species of trees, shrubs and grasses and provides habitat for native birds, reptiles and mammals including the endangered tree goanna. The reserve is managed by Parks Victoria and requires improvements to visitor infrastructure including car parking and walking trails and tracks.

Maximising opportunities for community connection to the river is an important consideration for the upper rural reach.

Fire and flood risks need to be carefully managed and planning scheme overlays for Bushfire Management and Land Subject to Inundation apply to large areas of this reach.

Prior to council amalgamations, the *Upper Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges Regional Strategy Plan* was prepared by the Upper Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges Authority to enable increased protection for the special features and character of the region including the former shires of Healesville, Lilydale, Sherbrooke and Upper Yarra.

Following council amalgamations and the introduction of new format planning schemes in the 1990s, the requirements of the Regional Strategy Plan that could not be readily implemented under the standard Victoria Planning Provisions were integrated into the Planning Scheme at Clause 51.03 – Upper Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges Strategy Plan and given legislative weight through the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*. Clause 51.03 is unique to the Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme and provides strong protections for the region’s unique values.

Existing projects in this reach include:

















- The Yellingbo (Liwik Barring) Landscape Conservation Area is being established to assist in the conservation of the area’s significant biodiversity and ecological values, and a number of threatened species including the critically endangered helmeted honeyeater and the lowland Leadbeater’s possum. It will also result in improved water quality and river health. The project area is made up of approximately 3,000 hectares of existing public land reserves and Crown water frontages along waterways across a broad area from Healesville in the north to Cockatoo in the south. This includes in the Yarra Strategic Plan area, the Yarra River between Millgrove and Healesville, and along tributaries of the Yarra including Little Yarra and Don rivers, Hoddles, Woori Yallock and Coranderrk creeks. The *Yellingbo (Liwik Barring) Landscape Conservation Area 10-year Plan* sets out actions and directions for the continued and future management of the area.
- Haining Farm is a collaborative project involving Parks Victoria, Greening Australia, Zoos Victoria, DELWP, Melbourne Water and the community, to transform this former educational dairy farm into a public park, with habitat for endangered native species.



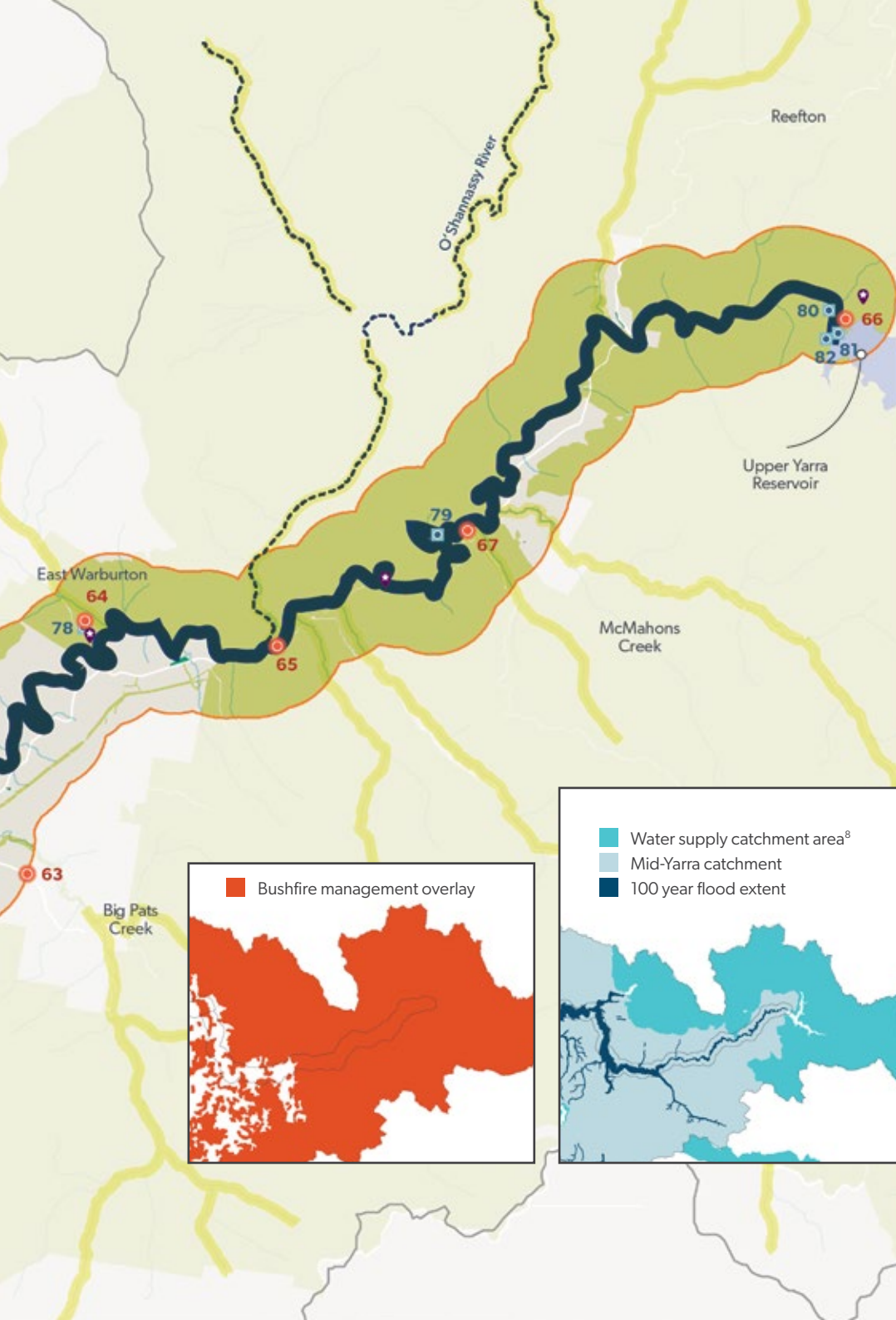
Credit: Melbourne Water,
Wedge-tailed eagle, upper rural reach

MAP 5. UPPER RURAL REACH CONTEXT

Legend

-  Key tourist destinations
-  Cultural heritage sites
-  Community activities
-  Key views
-  Wurundjeri site of significance
-  Recreational trail
-  Reach boundary
-  Yarra Strategic Plan area
-  Stormwater catchments
-  Billabong
-  Yarra River
-  Priority tributary
-  Other tributary
-  Municipal parkland
-  Yarra River land
-  High-quality riparian vegetation





Wurundjeri sites of significance

- **Coranderrk Station** 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
- **Coranderrk Aboriginal Cemetery**, is located on former lands of Coranderrk Station.

Key views

70. River view, Launching Place
71. River view, Yarra Junction
72. Swing Bridge, Warburton
73. Brisbane Bridge, Warburton
74. Bramich Bridge, Warburton
75. River view, Warburton
76. River and redwood trees, Warburton
77. River view, Warburton
78. Redwood Forest, Cement Creek
79. Viewing platform, tunnel entrance, Big Peninsula Picnic Area, McMaho's Creek
80. Brimbonga Outlet Lookout, Upper Yarra Reservoir Park
81. Lower Reservoir Lookout via Bridge Crossing, Upper Yarra Reservoir Park
82. Upper Reservoir Lookout, Upper Yarra Reservoir Park

Heritage sites

This reach of the Yarra is treasured for a number of other **heritage sites** such as:

58. Coranderrk Aboriginal Cemetery, Healesville
59. Wanderstore, Launching Place,
60. Yarra Junction War Memorial, Yarra Junction
61. Inverarity Mill, Millgrove
62. Alpine Retreat Hotel, Warburton
63. Ezards Sawmill, Big Pats Creek (near Warburton)
64. Cement Creek plantation (near Warburton)
65. Cumberland Scenic Reserve, Warburton East
66. Upper Yarra Dam
67. Big and Little Peninsula Tunnels, McMaho's Creek

Tourist destinations include:

- Big and Little Peninsula Tunnels, Warburton
- Cement Creek Redwood Forest
- Warburton Township
- Upper Yarra Reservoir Park
- The Riverstone Estate, Coldstream
- Soumah of the Yarra Valley, Gruyere
- Hanrahan Vineyards, Gruyere

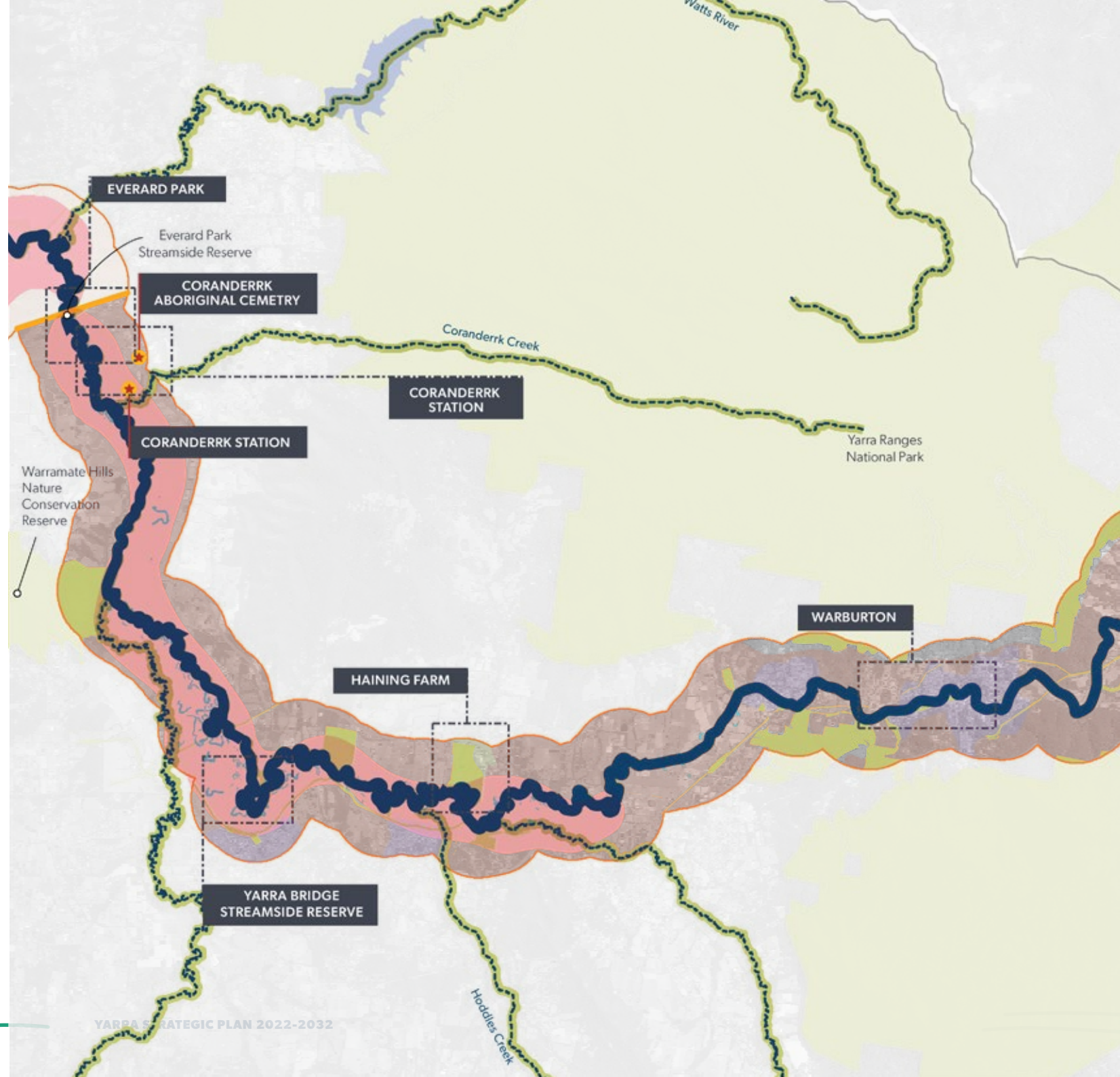
Key community activities include:

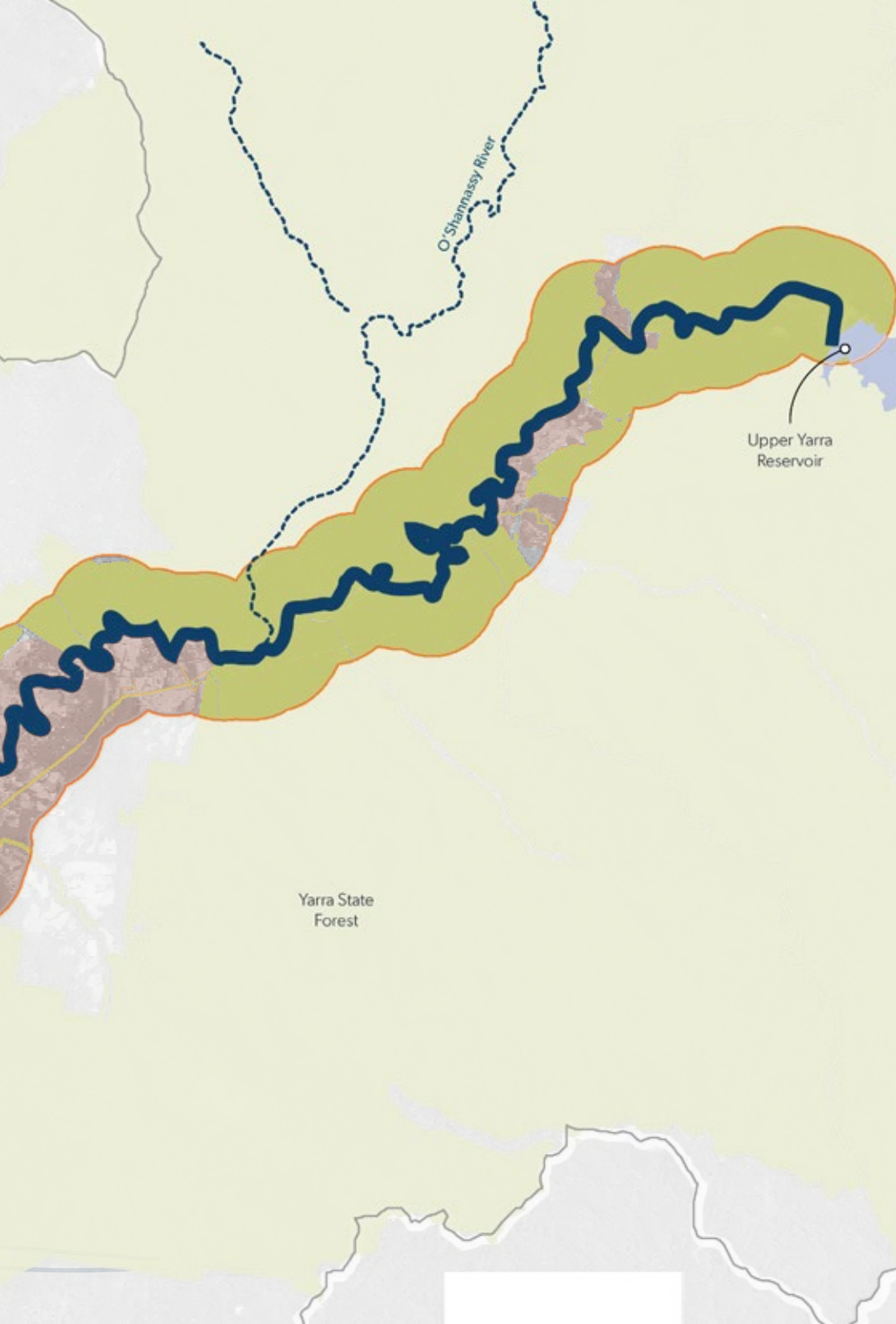
- Woori Open Day, Woori Yallock
- The River Folk Festival, Warburton
- Warburton Trail Festival, Warburton
- Warburton Market, Warburton

MAP 6. UPPER RURAL FUTURE DIRECTIONS

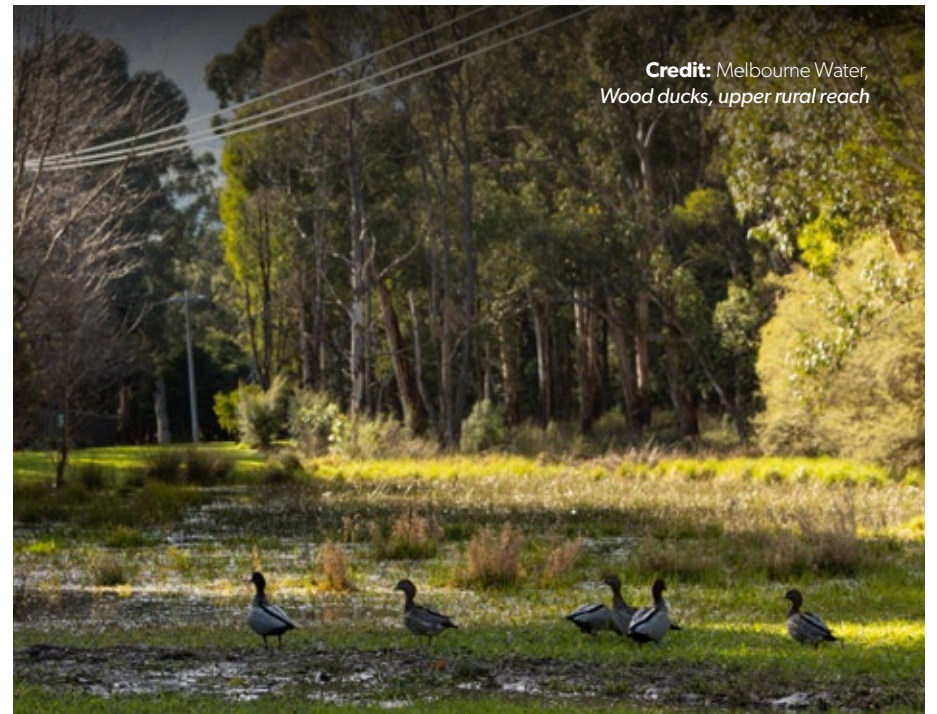
Legend

-  Wurundjeri site of significance
-  Reach boundary
-  Significant place
-  Area of protection
-  Yarra Strategic Plan area
-  Yarra River
-  Priority tributary
-  Yarra River land
-  Biodiversity corridor
-  Bush residential
-  Township





Credit: Melbourne Water,
Yarra River, upper rural reach



Credit: Melbourne Water,
Wood ducks, upper rural reach

Community priorities and values	Resulting land use directions for the upper rural [UR] reach:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote and celebrate local cultural heritage through collaboration and community education. 	UR 2 and UR 7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop new opportunities around local tourism, including river-based learning. 	UR 3, UR 4, UR 15, UR 16 and UR 17
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Celebrate and promote opportunities for people to immerse themselves in the unique landscape, local wildlife and incredible biodiversity. 	UR 2, UR 3, UR 4, UR 5, UR 9, UR 11, UR 12, UR 16 and UR 17
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide an expanded river access network for recreation and social connection. 	UR 3 and UR 16
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foster healthy local ecosystems for the river, its wetlands and billabongs, which are recharged through environmental flows. 	UR 5, UR 6, UR 9, UR 10 and UR 11
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with local farming communities to ensure sustainable water use. 	UR 8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Celebrate personal connections to the river. 	UR 2, UR 4 and UR 16

Directions for future land use and development 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 and the *Nhanbu narrun ba ngargunin twarn Birrarung (Ancient Spirit & Lore of the Yarra)*.

These are the upper rural (UR) land use directions.

Yarra River land		PO (Part 1)*
UR 1	Ensure decision making for land use, development and land management is guided by the Yarra Protection Principles set out in the <i>Yarra River Protection (Wilipgin Birrarung murrn) Act 2017</i> .**	PO1, PO2, PO3, PO4
UR 2	Work with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation on flora and fauna assessments to inform restoration and strengthen critical habitat, vegetation and cultural corridors.	PO1, PO2
UR 3	Create unobtrusive bushwalking tracks, where appropriate, to allow people to connect to the Yarra River.	PO3
UR 4	Ensure the siting and design of new public buildings and infrastructure complements the Yarra River's natural landscape setting and respects key view points.	PO4
UR 5	Protect and enhance native vegetation to provide habitat connections between conservation areas, and along the Yarra River and its tributaries.	PO1
UR 6	Investigate new or strengthened protection measures for high-priority tributaries.	PO1
UR 7	Partner with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation to investigate ways to reflect and celebrate the story of the ancient Yarra River and its people in the design and landscaping of public spaces and parklands.	PO2, PO3

*Alignment with performance objectives in Part 1 ** Decision making can be supported by applying the decision-making framework outlined in Appendix E.

Bush residential		
UR 8	Encourage sustainable land management practices to protect the health of the Yarra River and its tributaries, while supporting the livelihood of farming communities.	PO1, PO4
UR 9	Protect and enhance native vegetation to provide habitat connections between conservation areas and along the Yarra River and its tributaries.	PO1
UR 10	Investigate new or strengthened protection measures for high-priority tributaries.	PO1
UR 11	Protect, rehabilitate and re-engage floodplains, wetlands and billabongs to sustain and enhance their natural, cultural and spiritual values and minimise water quality impacts (including Yarra Junction to Healesville billabongs and wetlands).	PO1, PO2
UR 12	Ensure the siting and design of new buildings and infrastructure complements the Yarra River's natural landscape setting and respects key view points.	PO4
UR 13	Avoid development in the floodplain.	PO4
UR 14	Ensure development in flood affected areas is informed by the <i>Guidelines for Development in Flood Affected Areas</i> .	PO4

Warburton township		
UR 15	Apply permanent planning controls to manage building heights and setbacks to protect the Yarra River landscape corridor and ensure development maintains the heritage character of townships.	PO4
UR 16	Apply permanent planning controls to ensure new development creates a positive interface with the Yarra River landscape corridor and facilitates public access to the river where appropriate.	PO4
UR 17	Improve native planting along the bank of the Yarra River to restore and enhance the natural environment.	PO1
UR 18	Investigate new or strengthened protection measures for high-priority tributaries.	PO1
UR 19	Apply integrated water management principles to optimise water supply, improve water quality and enhance flood protection.	PO1
UR 20	Ensure development in flood affected areas is informed by the <i>Guidelines for Development in Flood Affected Areas</i> .	PO4



Credit: Melbourne Water, Yarra River, upper rural reach

Upper rural reach – Significant places



Credit: Melbourne Water,
Bridge crossing at Warburton, upper rural reach

Warburton township

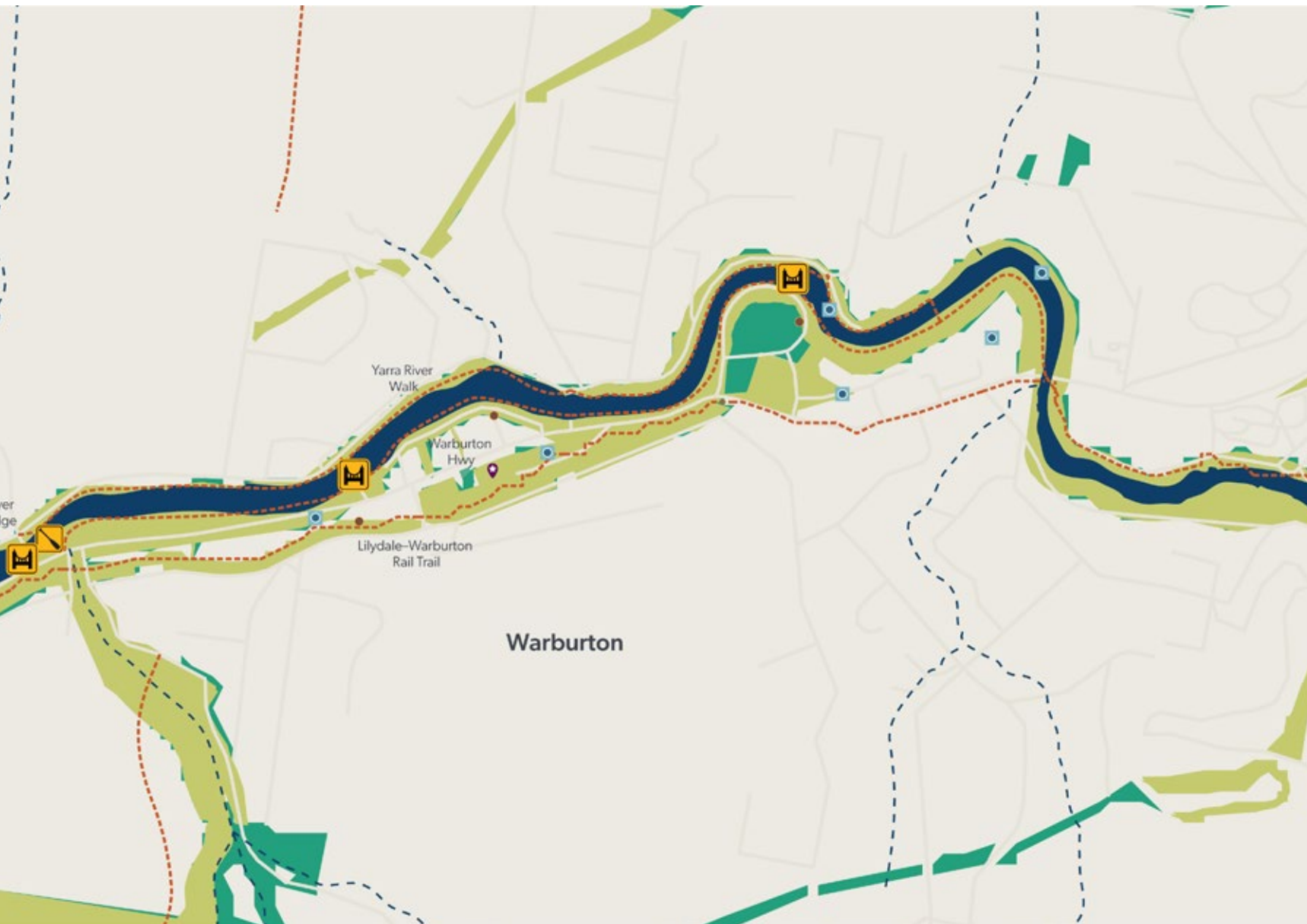
Warburton is significant as the largest township in the upper rural reach and the gateway to the Yarra Ranges National Park. It is a historic rural township with significant character and cultural values. Established around the Yarra River, it provides opportunities for direct experiences of the river's environment.

Development of tourism is recognised as a priority in the Yarra Ranges' Economic Development Strategy 2012-2022, with the natural beauty of the river and surrounding environment a key feature. The Warburton Place Plan (in preparation) will guide Council's directions and actions over the next 20 years, ensuring that the town's future matches the values and culture of the area.











Opportunities for future projects and alignment:

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





Legend

-  Key tourist destinations
-  Community activities
-  Key views
-  Yarra River
-  Yarra River land
-  Municipal parkland
-  Priority tributary
-  Recreational trail
-  Priority boat launch site
-  Bridge

Haining Farm

Haining Farm is a 59 hectare property at the confluence of the Yarra and Don rivers in Launching Place managed by Parks Victoria. The property was gifted by Sir John T Reid in 1974 to the Victorian Conservation Trust for the people of Victoria to use as an environmental study park to introduce school children to rural life. Parks Victoria is currently implementing the final plan for the site to transform this former dairy farm into a new public park providing habitat for two of Victoria’s most threatened species, with opportunities for community access and education.

The aim is to provide an immersive experience, where visitors can interact with nature, see threatened species such as the helmeted honeyeater and lowland Leadbeater’s possum, and can learn the stories of the Wurundjeri Woiwurrung and the trials and tribulations of farming a flooding landscape.

Opportunities for future projects and alignment:

- Ensure efforts to increase visitation and river access are balanced against conserving ecological values.
- Develop community, education and commercial activities that contribute to the vision for environmental, social, heritage and farming history values of the area.
- Continue habitat restoration and maintenance along the waterways within and adjacent to the farm, including control of weeds and pest species.
- Develop and upgrade recreational trails and access points to the water, including connection to the Lilydale–Warburton Rail Trail.



Legend

- Key views
- Yarra River
- Billabong
- Yarra River land
- Municipal parkland
- Priority tributary
- Recreational trail
- ↔ Improved access



Credit: Lachie Badura,
Revegetation works, Haining Farm

Yarra Bridge Streamside Reserve

Yarra Bridge Streamside Reserve is an area of about 12 hectares of declared Yarra River land, just north of Woori Yallock managed by Parks Victoria. It is a significant place in the upper rural reach as it provides direct access to the river and contains one of the few billabongs in this reach that is on public land. It has a bushland character with views across picturesque farmland. Its walking tracks are well used by the community, but are in need of upgrading. The billabong provides important habitat for native wetland species, but it is at risk from pest plants and animals, especially deer. The reserve has significant potential as a place for the community to experience and enjoy the river and as a key site for billabong enhancement.

Opportunities for future projects and alignment:

- Improve environmental conditions by controlling weeds and pest species, implementing watering plans, protecting significant trees and improving habitat structure with supplementary planting (aligns with initiatives in the *Healthy Waterways Strategy* and *Yellingbo (Liwik Barring) Landscape Conservation Area 10-year Plan*).
- Upgrade recreational trails and improve visitor access and facilities.
- 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.
- Review existing planning scheme controls to include additional direction to protect and strengthen the environmental and landscape values of the river edge, park and billabong.
- Ensure efforts to increase visitation and river access are balanced against conserving ecological values.



Legend

- Key views
- Yarra River
- Billabong
- Yarra River land
- Municipal parkland
- - - Priority tributary
- - - Recreational trail
- ↔ Improved access

Coranderrk Station

The Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation has nominated Coranderrk Station as a site of significance. The station 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.

Originally covering over 1960 hectares, the station extended from Watts River along the Yarra to just past Coranderrk Creek and east to the slopes of Mount Riddell. Coranderrk operated as a successful agricultural enterprise until its untimely closure by the state in 1924. From the 1890s portions were carved off the holding, and after the last Kulin resident died in 1944, the remaining reserve was divided up for soldier re settlement.

In the 1990s, 80 hectares on which stood the only surviving building – the original manager’s residence – was purchased and provided to Traditional Owners. 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. Coranderrk Station and the nearby cemetery are recognised as nationally significant heritage sites. Other 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 cultural centre.

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 (Liwik Barring) Landscape Conservation Area 10-year Plan* and *Healthy Waterways Strategy*.
- Provide information about the site’s history and heritage to educate the community about the impact of colonial settlement upon Traditional Owners and other Aboriginal Victorians.

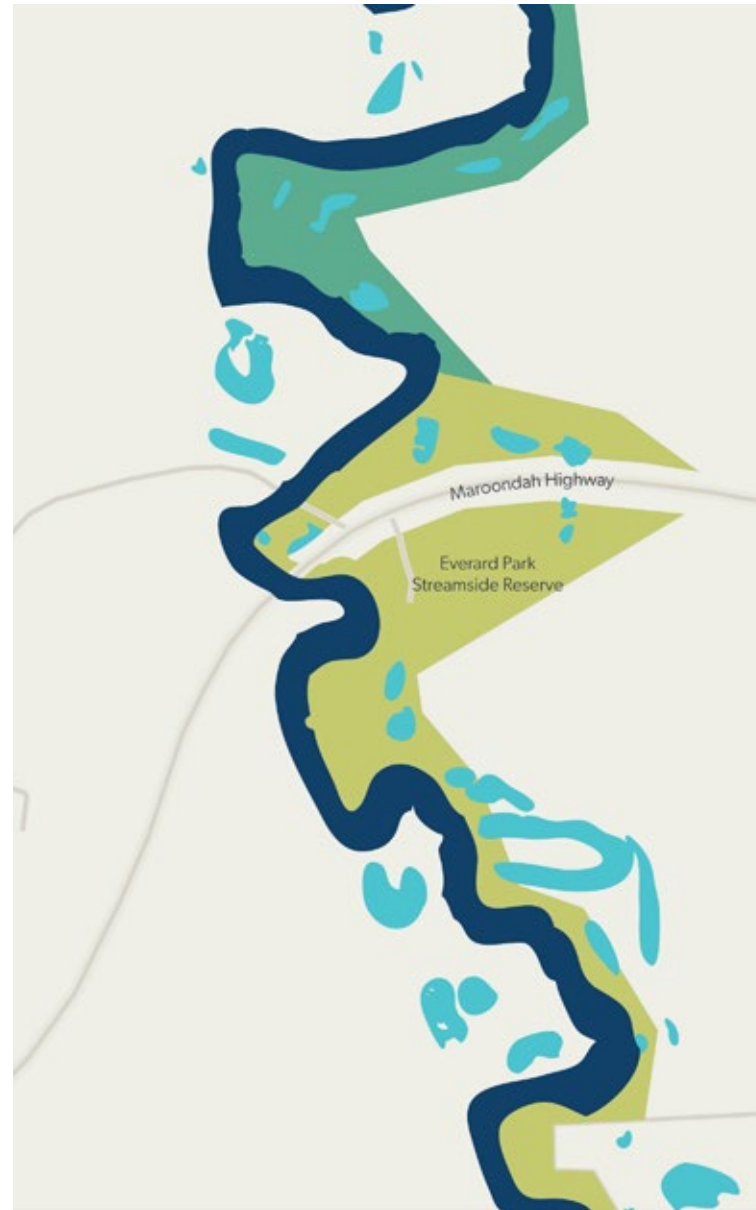


Everard Park Streamside Reserve

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 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 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 river.

Opportunities for future projects and alignment:

- Support the ongoing environmental management of the park by implementing initiatives outlined in the *Yellingbo (Liwik Barring) Landscape Conservation Area 10-year Plan*.
- Provide additional visitor facilities, including information about the site's history and heritage, toilets and enhanced access and trails.
- Improve directional signage to the park from the Maroondah Highway.
- 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 river and park.
- Ensure efforts to increase visitation are balanced against conserving ecological values.



Legend

- Yarra River
- Billabong
- Yarra River land
- Municipal parkland

Upper rural reach – New areas for protection

Billabong systems: Yarra Junction to Healesville

The Yarra River's floodplains in the upper rural reach include many billabongs with high environmental, cultural and landscape value. The billabong systems are identified as a new area for protection because 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 private land that is used for farming and has no public access.

Opportunities for future projects and alignment:

- Investigate with landowners the suite of options for protecting billabongs and improving their hydraulic connection, and implementing initiatives outlined in the *Healthy Waterways Strategy 2018* and the *Yellingbo (Liwik Barring) Landscape Conservation Area 10-year Plan*.
- Prepare a landscape assessment that integrates the natural and cultural values of this area. This will include mapping the billabongs and other features that have high environmental, landscape and cultural importance.
- Protect and celebrate the cultural values of areas around the confluences of Little Yarra River and Hoddles Creek.
- Strengthen planning scheme controls to reflect environmental, landscape and cultural values associated with the significant billabong systems of the upper rural reach.
- Partner with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation to investigate ways to protect cultural values associated with Coranderrk Station.





Credit: Tim Brown,
Billabongs around Everard Park Streamside Reserve

Lower rural reach

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 while 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.

Land use analysis

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

Within this reach native vegetation has been cleared in many places and the floodplains drained to support agriculture. 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 Healesville, 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, Bend of Islands and Yering Station.

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

The Yarra Valley Trail project is building a shared trail from Lilydale to Healesville via Yarra Glen using the existing railway corridor. Stage 1A from Lilydale to Yering Station opened in 2020. Stage 1B, connecting Yering to Yarra Glen, will feature new and repaired bridges, along with a new bridge over the Yarra River. The second stage of the trail will

connect Yarra Glen to Healesville, while the third stage will connect Healesville to the Warburton Rail Trail, joining the two major trails in a loop creating a unique recreational and cultural experience in the Yarra Valley.

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

This area provides around 142,000 ha of catchment for water harvesting. Water at Yering Gorge is diverted (through the 'offtake') into Sugarloaf Reservoir, north of the river. Around 33 per cent of this land is zoned for primary production, 20 per cent for residential and 23 per cent for conservation. To maintain excellent drinking water quality in the mid-Yarra catchment it is essential to reduce the risks of contaminants entering waterways now and into the future.

Fire and flood risks need to be carefully managed and planning scheme overlays for Bushfire Management and Land Subject to Inundation apply to large areas of this reach. The Land Subject to Inundation Overlay also applies to the river and its tributaries, requiring management of flood risk within the river's immediate environs.




















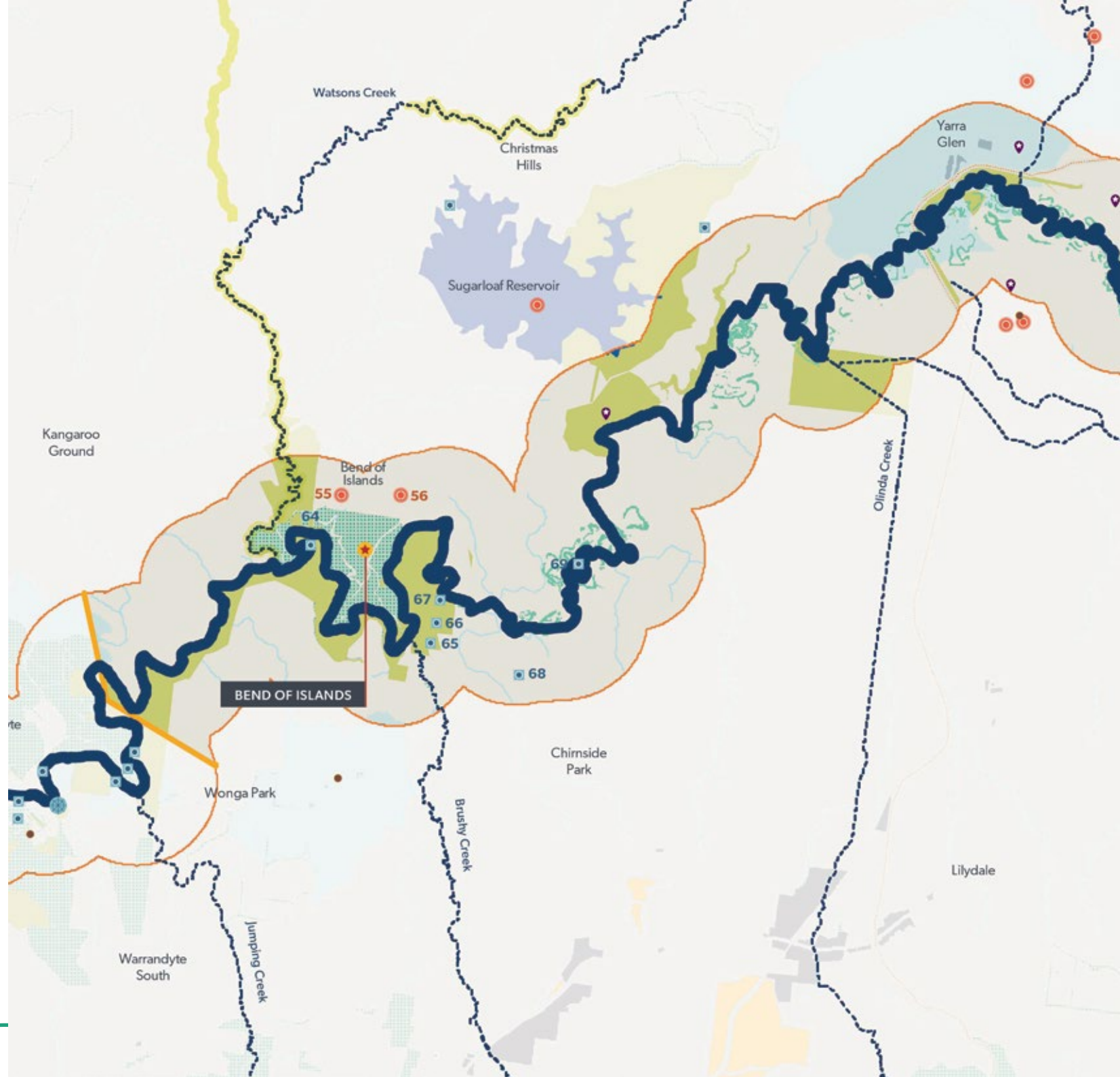


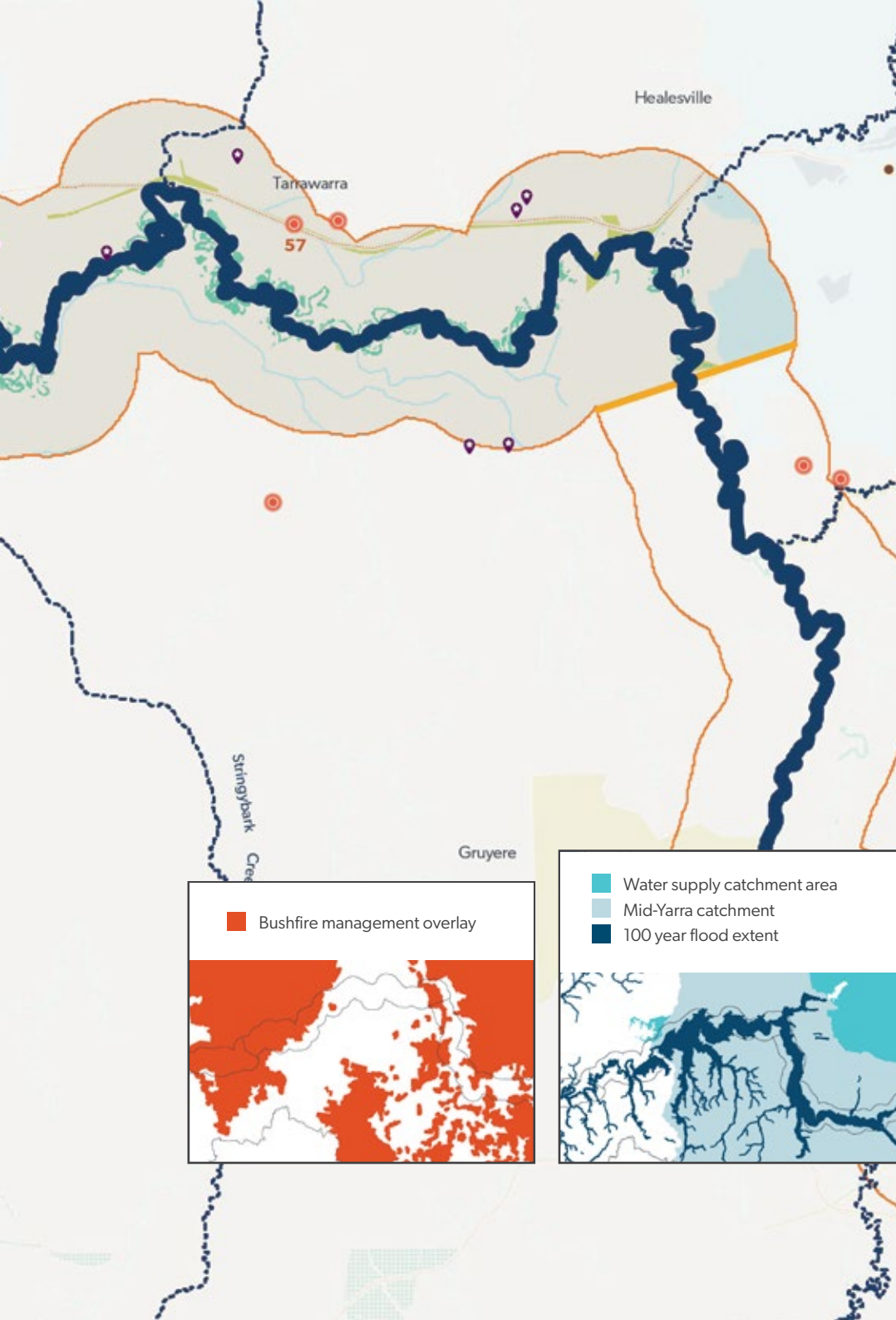
Credit: Melbourne Water,
Yarra Valley, lower rural reach

MAP 7. LOWER RURAL REACH CONTEXT

Legend

-  Key tourist destinations
-  Cultural heritage sites
-  Community activities
-  Key views
-  Wurundjeri site of significance
-  Recreational trail
-  Reach boundary
-  Yarra Strategic Plan area
-  Stormwater catchments
-  Billabong
-  Yarra River
-  Priority tributary
-  Other tributary
-  Urban forest
-  Municipal parkland
-  Yarra River land
-  High-quality riparian vegetation





Wurundjeri sites of significance

Bend of Islands
Environmental Living Zone where landowners are required to maintain and manage the environmental and cultural values of the land.

Key views

- 64. Warrandyte Gorge, Wonga Park
- 65. Lower Homestead Road, Wonga Park
- 66. River view, Wonga Park
- 67. Lookout, Warrandyte State Park
- 68. Lookout, Chirnside Park, off Carnoustie Crescent
- 69. View from the river, Christmas Hills

Heritage sites

This reach of the Yarra is treasured for a number of other **heritage sites** such as:

- 55. Neil Douglas & Helen (Abbie) Heathcote house, Bend of Islands
- 56. Burns house, Bend of Islands
- 57. The Elms Slab Cottage, Tarrawarra

Tourist destinations include:

- Yering Gorge Bushland Reserve, Christmas Hills
- Yering Station, Yarra Glen
- Lubra Bend Garden, Yarra Glen
- TarraWarra Estate, Yarra Glen
- TarraWarra Museum of Art, Yarra Glen
- Maddens Rise, Coldstream
- Dominique Portet Winery, Coldstream
- Zonzo Estate, Yarra Glen
- Yarra Valley Racing, Yarra Glen
- Tarrawarra Abbey, Tarrawarra

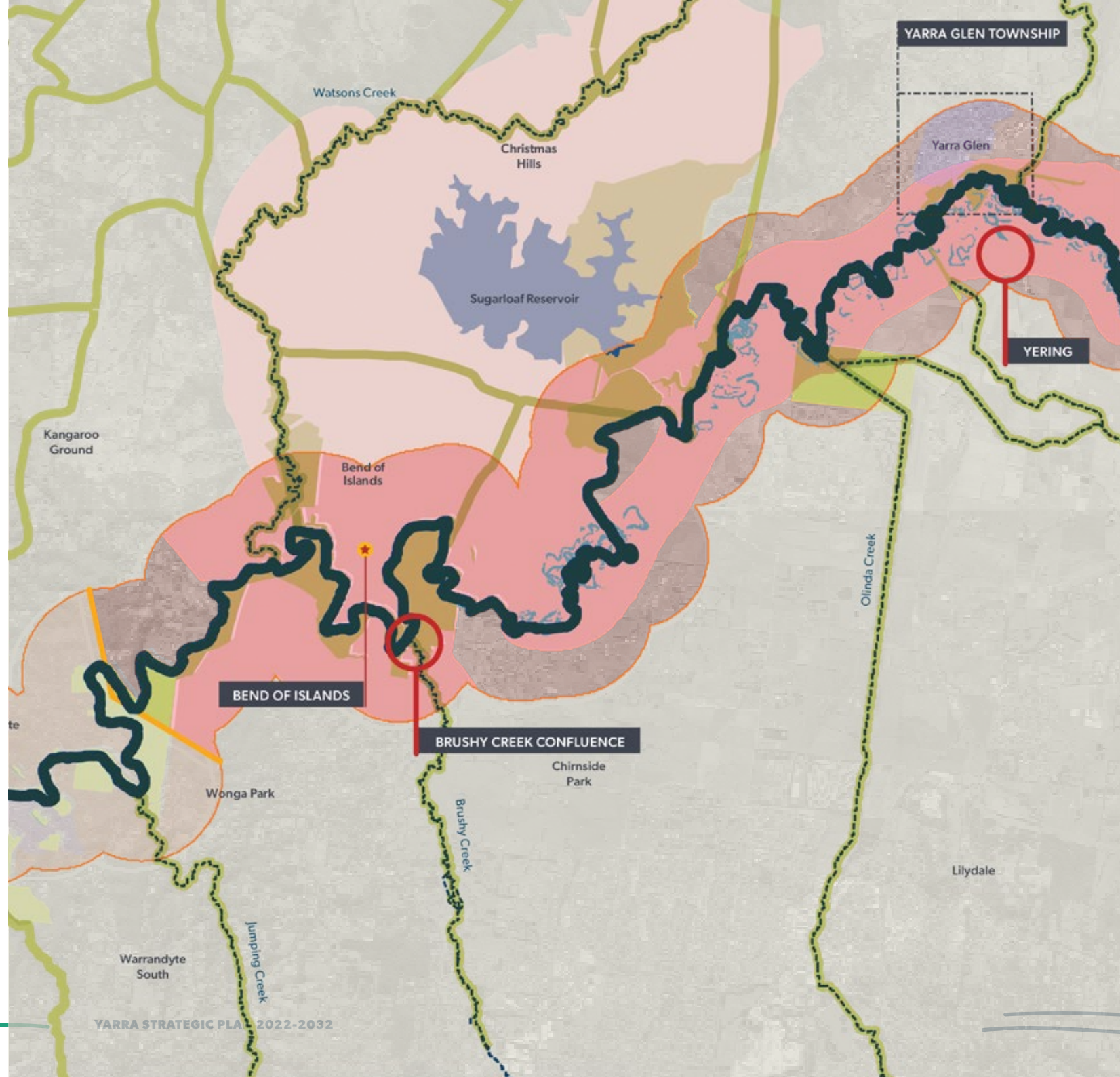
Key community activities include:

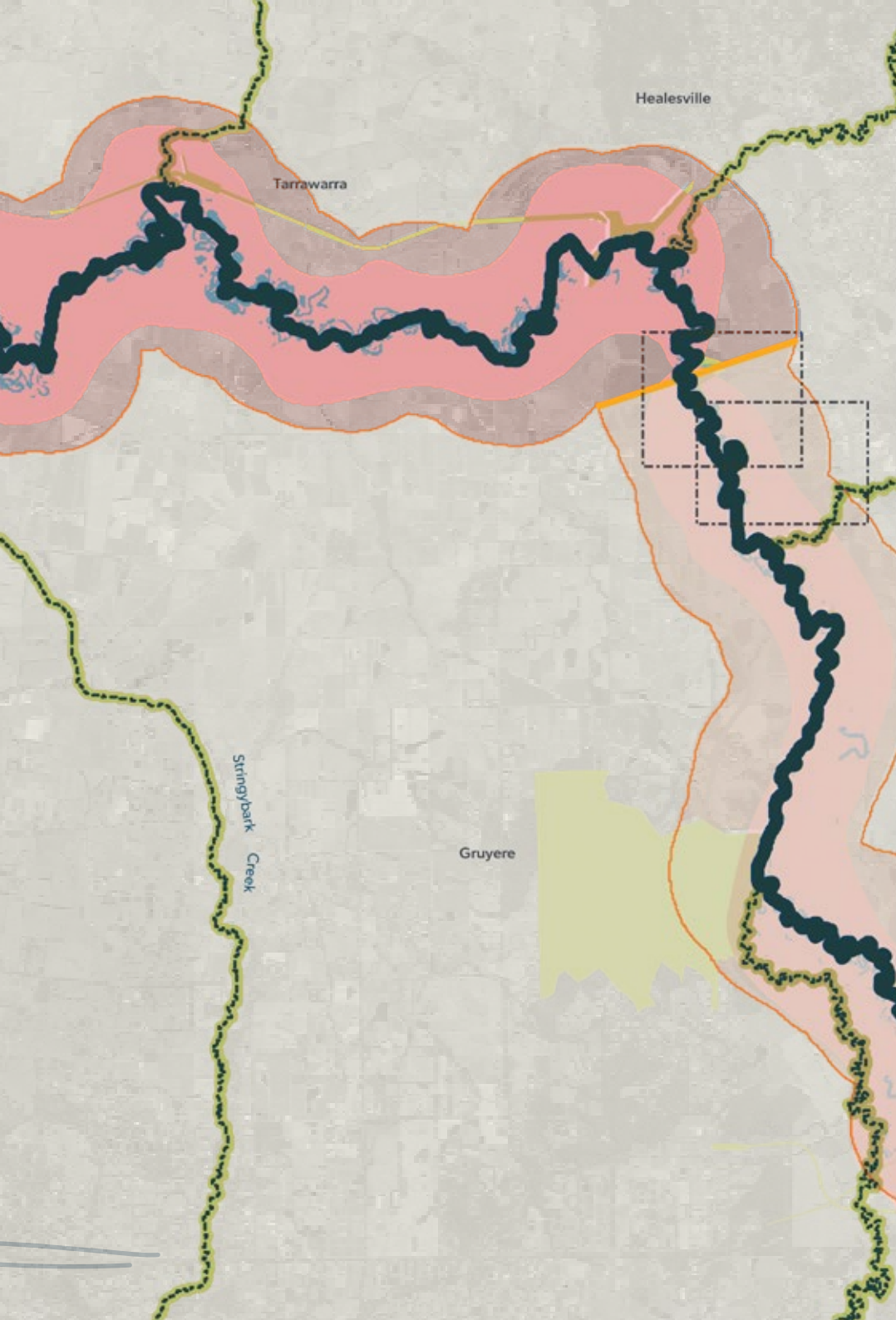
- Yarra Valley Farmers Market, Yering Station

MAP 8. LOWER RURAL REACH FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Legend

-  Wurundjeri site of significance
-  Recreational trail
-  Reach boundary
-  Significant place
-  Area of protection
-  Wurundjeri area for protection
-  Yarra Strategic Plan area
-  Yarra River
-  Priority tributary
-  Industrial & commercial zone
-  Yarra River land
-  Biodiversity corridor
-  Bush residential
-  Township





Credit: Melbourne Water,
Lower rural reach



Credit: Melbourne Water,
Rural land, Yarra Valley

Community priorities and values	Resulting land use directions for the lower rural [LR] reach:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve community access at sensitive locations to enrich local connections, while protecting the region’s natural environment. 	LR 2, LR 3, LR 4, LR 12 and LR 16
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring improved biodiversity to our local area, enhancing indigenous vegetation, animal, insects and fish in our habitat corridor and surrounding billabongs. 	LR 2 and LR 4 to LR 11
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foster and support sustainable agricultural practices that exist in harmony with the river and its lands. 	LR 8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people to protect and enhance knowledge of local cultural values and sites. 	LR 2, LR 7, LR 11 and LR 16
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore innovative tourism opportunities around activities such as education, cultural heritage and fishing to showcase rural river experiences. 	LR 3, LR 4, LR 12 and LR 16
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preserve the rural and bush character of the river and its landscapes through collaboration and careful management of future development. 	LR 4 to LR 15

Directions for future land use and 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 and the *Nhanbu narrun ba ngargunin twarn Birrarung (Ancient Spirit & Lore of the Yarra)*.

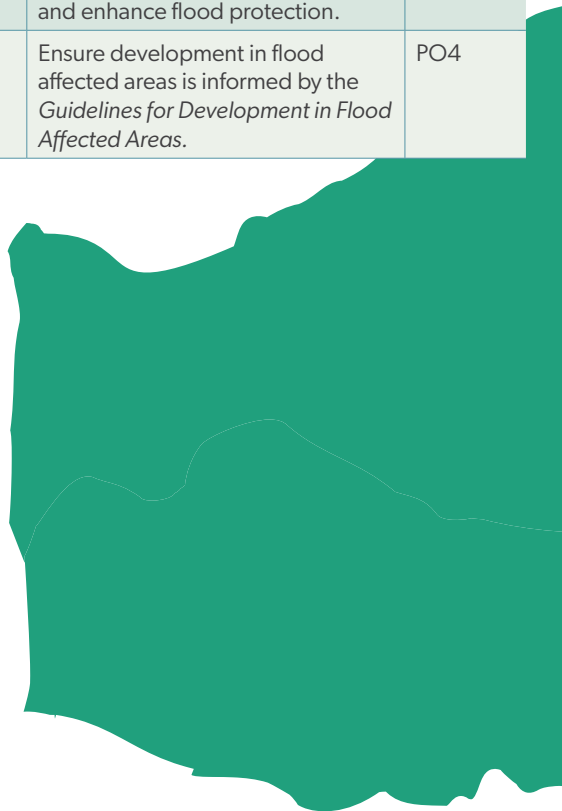
These are the lower rural (LR) land use directions.

Yarra River land		PO (Part 1)*
LR 1	Ensure decision making for land use, development and land management is guided by the Yarra Protection Principles set out in the <i>Yarra River Protection (Wilipgin Birrarung murrn) Act 2017</i> .**	PO1, PO2, PO3, PO4
LR 2	Work with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation on flora and fauna assessments to inform restoration and strengthen critical habitat, vegetation and cultural corridors	PO1, PO2
LR 3	Create unobtrusive recreational trails, where appropriate, to allow more people to access and connect to the Yarra River.	PO3
LR 4	Ensure the siting and design of new public buildings and infrastructure complements the Yarra River’s natural landscape setting and respects key view points.	PO4
LR 5	Protect and enhance native vegetation to provide habitat connections between conservation areas, and along the Yarra River and its tributaries.	PO1
LR 6	Investigate new or strengthened protection measures for high-priority tributaries.	PO1
LR 7	Partner with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation to investigate ways to reflect and celebrate the story of the ancient Yarra River and its people in the design and landscaping of public spaces and parklands.	PO2, PO3

*Alignment with performance objectives in Part 1 ** Decision making can be supported by applying the decision-making framework outlined in Appendix E.

Bush residential		
LR 8	Encourage sustainable land management practices to protect the health of the Yarra River and its tributaries, while supporting the livelihood of farming communities.	PO1, PO4
LR 9	Protect and enhance native vegetation to provide habitat connections between conservation areas, and along the Yarra River and its tributaries.	PO1
LR 10	Investigate new or strengthened protection measures for high-priority tributaries.	PO1
LR 11	Protect, rehabilitate and reengage floodplains, wetlands and billabongs to sustain and enhance their natural, cultural and spiritual values and minimise water quality impacts (including Healesville to Yering billabongs and wetlands).	PO1, PO2
LR 12	Ensure the siting and design of new buildings and infrastructure complements the Yarra River's natural landscape setting and respects key viewpoints.	PO4
LR 13	Avoid development in the floodplain.	PO4
LR 14	Ensure development in flood affected areas is informed by the <i>Guidelines for Development in Flood Affected Areas</i> .	PO4
LR 15	Ensure private land around the Watsons Creek confluence and Maroondah Aqueduct supports the habitat and biodiversity of the Warrandyte–Kinglake corridor.	PO1, PO4

Yarra Glen township		
LR 16	Refer to the opportunities for future projects and alignment for Yarra Glen township on page 106.	PO1, PO2, PO3, PO4
LR 17	Apply integrated water management principles to optimise water supply, improve water quality and enhance flood protection.	PO1
LR 18	Ensure development in flood affected areas is informed by the <i>Guidelines for Development in Flood Affected Areas</i> .	PO4



Credit: Melbourne Water,
Overlooking the Yarra River, Yering

Lower rural reach – Significant places



Credit: Melbourne Water,
Flooding at Yarra Glen in 2010

Yarra Glen township

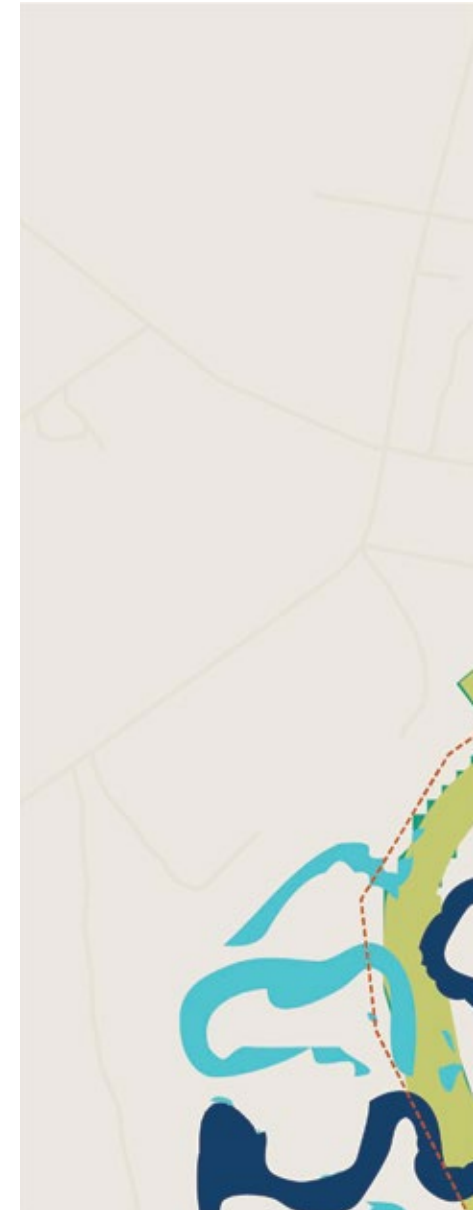
Yarra Glen is a rural town on the Melba Highway and is the only town in the lower rural reach. Several sites of notable cultural and heritage value include the historic station and tourist railway (currently under restoration), the Yarra Glen Recreation Reserve and the Murrup Brarn Yarra Flats billabongs. Two rural properties that provide a link to the history of the township and agricultural development in the area are Yering Station settled in 1836, and Gulf Station established in 1854 and now run by the National Trust.

There are several open spaces along the Yarra River at the entry point to the township, with the Recreation Reserve being a popular access point to the river.

Works are underway on the first stage of the Yarra Valley Trail, connecting Lilydale to Yarra Glen, with the second stage proposed to continue through to Healesville.

Opportunities for future projects and alignment:

- Strengthen the natural riparian environment through additional planting of appropriate species along the river.
- Enhance the Yarra River crossing on the Melba Highway as a gateway to the township and an important view to the river.
- Establish and upgrade recreational trails to connect each of the riverside spaces and connection to the township.
- Upgrade river access and experiences around the priority boat launch site at Yarra Glen Recreation Reserve, giving consideration to canoe trail and precautions at times of low flow.
- Partner with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation to investigate ways to protect cultural values associated with Yering Station.
- Strengthen connections between the township and the river by integrating and interpreting Yarra Glen's heritage with the planning and design of new public spaces and buildings.
- Apply permanent planning controls to protect the Yarra River landscape corridor.
- Apply integrated water management principles to all development to optimise water supply, improve water quality and enhance flood protection for the township.





Legend

- Yarra River
- Billabong
- Yarra River land
- Municipal parkland
- Recreational trail
- Improved access
- Key views
- Key tourist destinations
- Priority boat launch site

Lower rural reach – New areas for protection



Credit: Melbourne Water, Billabong at Spadoni's Reserve, Yering

Billabong systems: Healesville to Yering Gorge

The Yarra River's floodplain in the lower rural reach includes many billabongs with high environmental, cultural and landscape value. The billabong systems are identified as an area for protection because they are at risk from restricted or reduced water flow, weed and pest invasion, land clearing and grazing by stock. These billabongs are mostly located on private land used for farming, with no public access.

There are limited areas of public land along this reach of the river. One exception is Spadoni's Nature Reserve and the adjacent Yering Bushland Reserve, which retain some billabongs. Spadoni's Nature Reserve also contains a stand of Buxton gum (*Eucalyptus crenulata*), considered to be of national botanical significance. The reserve is where Olinda and Stringybark creeks discharge into the Yarra, both of which are significantly modified to drain the adjacent farmland and urban areas upstream. As a result, water quality in these creeks is poor, which affects water quality in the Yarra.

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 in the Murrup Brarn Yarra Flats Billabong Reserve commemorates this historical event.

Opportunities for future projects and alignment:

- Investigate with landowners the suite of options for protecting billabongs and improving their hydraulic connection (aligns with initiatives outlined in the *Healthy Waterways Strategy*).
- To mitigate the risk of further degradation and to improve habitats associated with these billabong systems, set targets and invest in revegetation and habitat protection to establish a wide mature cloak of indigenous vegetation encompassing the billabongs and wetlands and providing critical habitat for native animals and birds.
- Partner with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation to prepare a landscape assessment that integrates the natural and cultural values of this area. This includes mapping the billabongs and other features that have high environmental, landscape and cultural importance.
- Identify opportunities to reconnect billabongs to the river, naturalise lower reaches of creeks and re-establish riparian habitats to improve water quality of discharges into the Yarra.
- Partner with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation to investigate ways to protect cultural values associated with the billabongs between Healesville and Yering Gorge.
- Strengthen planning scheme controls to protect and improve environmental, landscape and cultural values associated with the billabong systems of the lower rural reach.

Yering – Warrandyte landscape protection

The area between Warrandyte and Yering Gorge Bushland Reserve includes important landscapes around Kangaroo Ground, Yering Gorge and Wonga Park that have high scenic, environmental and cultural value. The area also has good quality agricultural land and highly valued scenic rural landscapes. It is designated as a new area for protection to ensure permanent protection in the planning scheme.

Sites of significance nominated by the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation in this area for protection include the Bend of Islands and the confluence of Brushy Creek. Barngeong birthing site is a gorge at the confluence of Brushy Creek. This is the Wurundjeri birthing and female initiation site and where Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung leader and internationally acclaimed artist William Barak (1824–1903) was born. Other places of importance in the area include the Neil Douglas Natural Features Reserve, which is across the river from Wittons Reserve.

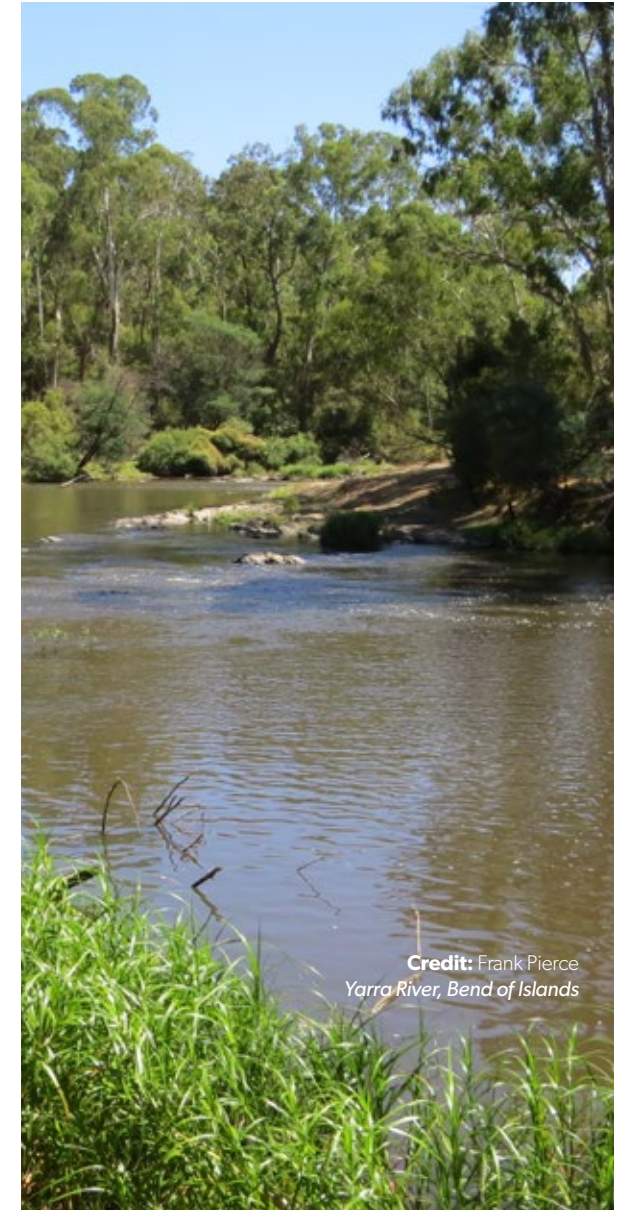
Opportunities for future projects and alignment:

- Enhance opportunities to view and experience important landscapes by boat or on foot and provide additional interpretive information about the significance of these sites at visitor access points. Ensure efforts to increase visitation are balanced against conserving ecological and cultural values.
- Partner with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation to investigate ways to identify and protect cultural values associated with Bend of Islands and the Brushy Creek confluence. This may include designating days when these places are closed off to the public to allow use by Traditional Owners for cultural purposes.

- Using the approach to planning controls implemented to protect the Yarra between Richmond and Warrandyte, apply permanent planning controls in the Nillumbik and Manningham planning schemes to ensure protection of the Yarra to the Yarra Ranges municipal boundary.
- Investigate the effectiveness of planning controls and land management practices for protecting and enhancing the role of tributaries as biodiversity corridors for this section of the river (includes Brushy Creek and Jumping Creek).



Credit: Frank Pierce, *Lyrebird, female with curved tail associated with breeding, Bend of Islands.*



Credit: Frank Pierce
Yarra River, Bend of Islands

Kinglake–Yarra biodiversity corridor

The Kinglake–Yarra biodiversity corridor is identified as an area for protection as it is essential for the long-term biodiversity of the Yarra’s natural environs downstream of Yering Gorge, replenishing the river as it journeys on to the city.

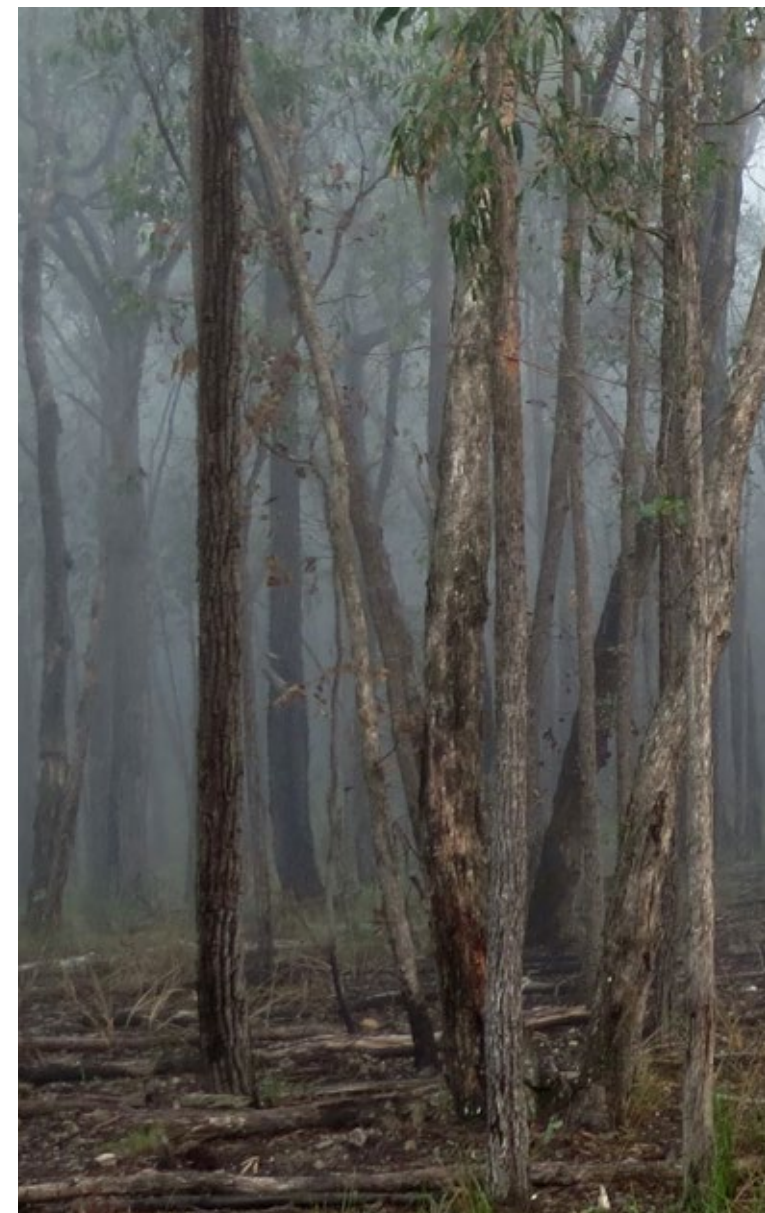
The corridor is bound to the west by riparian vegetation along Watsons Creek and to the east along the escarpment. It encompasses Sugarloaf Reservoir and supports areas of very high biodiversity, with rare habitats, plants and animals, including brush-tailed phascogale, slender-tailed dunnart, powerful owl, galaxias and threatened orchid species. It facilitates a vital connection with the Kinglake National Park for animals, such as lyrebirds, and provides an avenue for recovery following bushfires.

Existing planning controls for the corridor include an Environmental Significance Overlay and a Special Use Zone 2 (Environmental Living). The environmental living zone, which covers the Bend of Islands locality, provides a unique example of ‘residential conservation’, which ensures that native flora and fauna are protected by strict regulations prohibiting the introduction of non-indigenous plants and the keeping of pets or livestock including cats, dogs, horses or cattle.

Strong community support and involvement has protected and enhanced the biodiversity of this area by protecting the biodiversity hotspots, restoring degraded land and managing pest plants and animals, including deer, which are increasingly threatening biodiversity. Councils, government agencies and private landholders work collaboratively through initiatives such as the Rivers to Ranges project and the Sugarloaf Link project. By controlling development, managing invasive species, improving the habitat quality and facilitating the movement of wildlife, it is expected that numbers of native species using the corridor will increase over time.

Opportunities for future projects and alignment:

- Define a workable boundary of the biodiversity corridor through a process of consultation with landowners and key stakeholders including Nillumbik Shire Council.
- Investigate the effectiveness of planning controls and land management practices for protecting and enhancing the Yarra–Kinglake biodiversity corridor, including assessment of current conditions and comparison with previous studies.
- Support ongoing advocacy, education, pest eradication and rehabilitation work by the community, council and state government agencies. This includes continued investment in projects such as the Sugarloaf Link project to manage weed and pest invasion.
- Resourcing the implementation of the Bend of Islands Land Management Plan and, where appropriate, promote as a model for other residential conservation initiatives.





Credit: Frank Pierce
Box-ironbark woodland in the Yarra-Kinglake biodiversity corridor