

# Suburban reach

## 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 Woi-wurrung 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.*

## Land use analysis

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

A near-continuous network of parklands along the river defines the character of this reach. The parklands include formal recreational spaces, bushland reserves, conservation areas and golf courses. The parklands are a focal point for community activity, enabling people to walk, play, canoe, picnic, cycle, sightsee and attend events. These parklands also have a vital role in protecting local communities from the impacts of flooding.

The creation of parklands has allowed a dense corridor of native vegetation to be retained, providing important habitat for native flora and fauna and connectivity for native wildlife. In many locations, this vegetation extends across private land. Investment in broad scale revegetation programs has resulted in extensive tree canopy cover and some of the highest biodiversity values along this part of the 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 Woi-wurrung people, including the Bolin Bolin Billabong, Banyule Flats, Yarra Flats, Garambi Baan (Laughing Waters), Tikalara Park and confluences with Mullum Mullum, Diamond and Merri creeks and Plenty River.

The suburban reach also features important historic cultural heritage sites. The Heidelberg School of Australian Impressionism began with the painting of the unique landscapes of the Yarra Flats. The Melbourne

modernist art movement that emerged from what is now the Heide Museum of Modern Art has made a significant and lasting contribution to international modernism. The rich agricultural heritage of the area continues at Petty's Orchard and examples of colonial settlement can be found at places like Pontville Homestead at Tikalara.

The main tributaries in the suburban reach include Anderson, Mullum Mullum, Diamond, Koonung, Darebin and Merri creeks and Plenty River, all of which provide vital biodiversity links into the catchment. These waterways are also noted for their recreational trails that connect neighbouring suburbs to the Main Yarra Trail that runs along the river from Templestowe to the city. This network of trails provides opportunities for transport, exercise, recreation and sight-seeing for residents and visitors, with benefits for community connection and wellbeing.

The Heidelberg Major Activity Centre is a focal point for increased development; supporting a range of commercial, residential and community land uses. Further upstream, Warrandyte, which has historical links dating back to 1851 when gold was discovered, is a thriving residential area and tourist and arts destination.

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.

### Existing projects in this reach include:

- *Heidelberg Structure Plan* is a strategic planning project to transform Heidelberg into a more vibrant, prosperous, connected and sustainable centre, with carefully managed development and strengthened connections to riverside parklands.
- *Yarra River – Bulleen Precinct Land Use Framework Plan* works within the regional framework established by the Yarra Strategic Plan. This project will guide future land uses and connections in this area of high cultural, environmental, landscape, recreation and tourism value, which includes the Bolin Bolin Billabongs, Banyule Flats, Heide Museum of Modern Art, Banksia Park and Warringal Parklands.
- Fitzsimons Lane upgrade in Eltham and Templestowe, is a roads project to upgrade intersections and improve traffic flow and safety for commuters.
- *Land Use Framework Plans* for four regions that overlap with the suburban reach – Inner Metro, Inner South East, Northern and Eastern – are being prepared under Action 1 of the implementation plan for *Plan Melbourne 2017-2050*. These plans, which include strategies for population growth, jobs, housing, infrastructure, major transport improvements, open space and urban forests, will inform the review and update of local planning schemes.

### North East Link

The North East Link is a new road link to connect the Eastern Freeway and the M80 Ring Road in Melbourne’s north-east, which will intersect the Yarra River and its parklands. Twin tunnels will be constructed below the riverbed along a north-south alignment, protecting the waterway and its environmentally and culturally sensitive surrounds.

As part of the North East Link’s approval, which included assessment under the *Environment Effects Act 1978*, the project has undertaken to recognise and align with relevant Yarra protection principles and have regard to the Yarra Strategic Plan. The project has been planned with involvement from the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, including in development of the project’s Urban Design Strategy.

While some open space and sporting facilities will be temporarily occupied or permanently required to build the North East Link, the project also presents opportunities to develop new community infrastructure, improve open space and connectivity and deliver stronger habitat links.

Works associated with the North East Link will include landscaping within the project area that will seek to maximise habitat value and connectivity for native fauna where suitable to the landscape and location. Tree planting may also be required outside the project boundary as part of the project’s strategy to achieve a net gain in tree canopy by 2045; planting sites along the river will be considered in consultation with relevant stakeholders.

Pedestrian and cycling improvements will also be provided in the vicinity of a new interchange to be constructed as part of the project at Manningham Road, Bulleen. The project’s Urban Design Strategy provides further guidance on revegetation and should be referred to as a guiding document.

New community soccer facilities will be delivered at Templestowe Road, sporting grounds and club facilities will be upgraded at Bulleen Park and the Freeway Golf Course will be retained as an 18-hole facility.

The existing Main Yarra Trail between Belford Road and Burke Road will also be upgraded and a new pedestrian and cycling bridge built across the river. Major works for North East Link are expected to start in 2021 with the road anticipated to open to traffic in 2027.

### Suburban Rail Loop





Suburban Rail Loop is a proposed 90 km orbital rail loop connecting metropolitan rail lines from the Frankston line through to the Werribee line, via Melbourne Airport, better connecting Victorians to jobs, retail, education, health services and each other. As well as delivering significant transport benefits, the loop provides an opportunity to plan the services, amenity and infrastructure Melbourne will need outside of the central city for future generations.

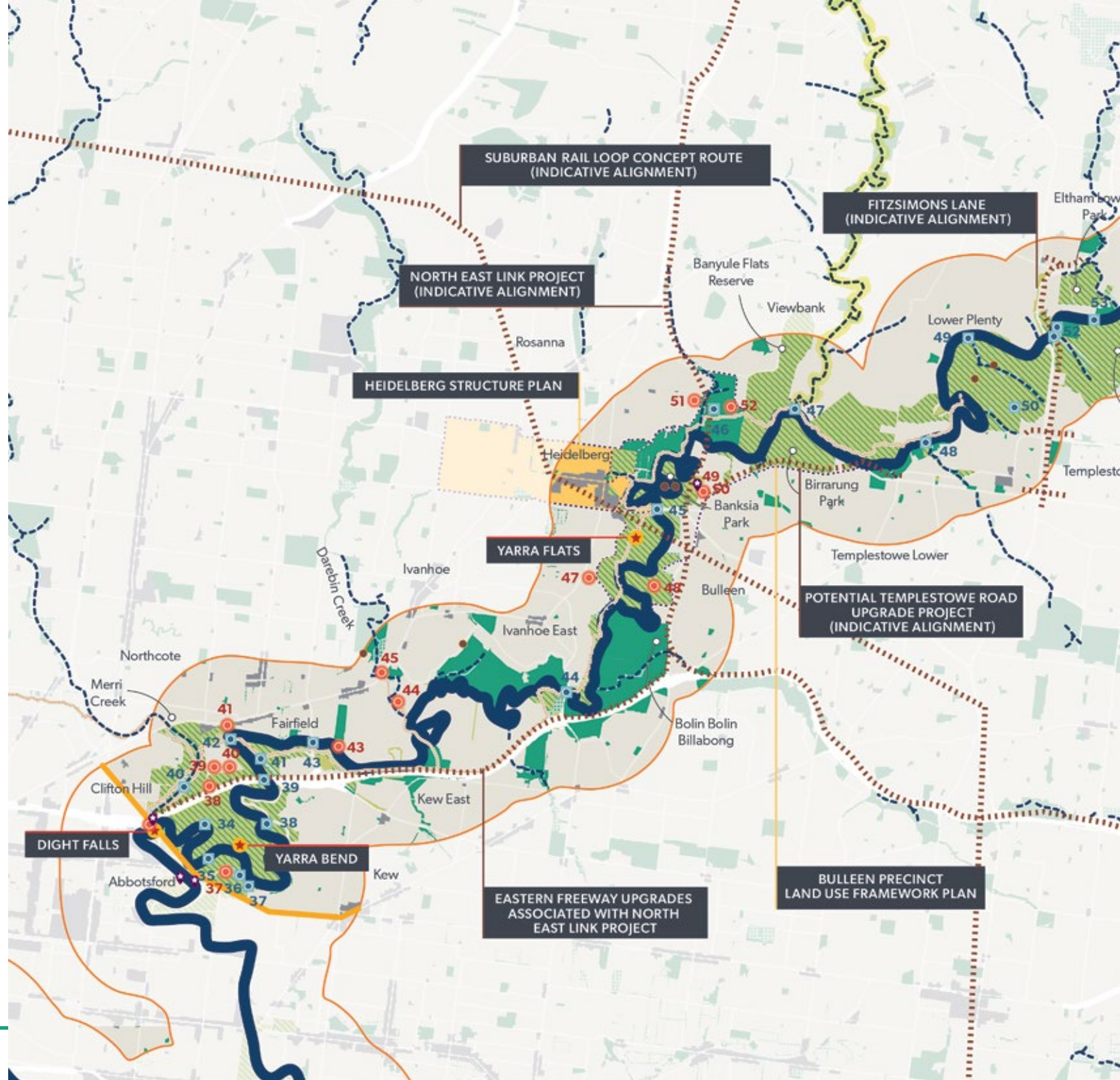
Suburban Rail Loop will be delivered in stages over several decades, with the first stage, SRL East, providing new stations and rail between Cheltenham and Box Hill. The broad alignment and precinct locations have been confirmed, which includes new underground stations at Cheltenham, Clayton, Monash, Glen Waverley, Burwood and Box Hill. Detailed planning for future stages of the project has not yet commenced. The indicative alignment of the Suburban Rail Loop intersects a number of major waterways including the Yarra River.

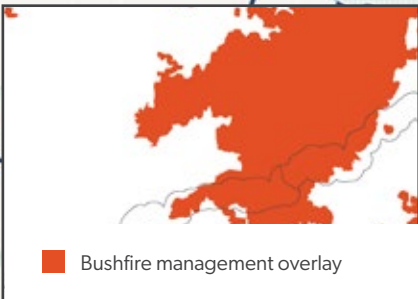
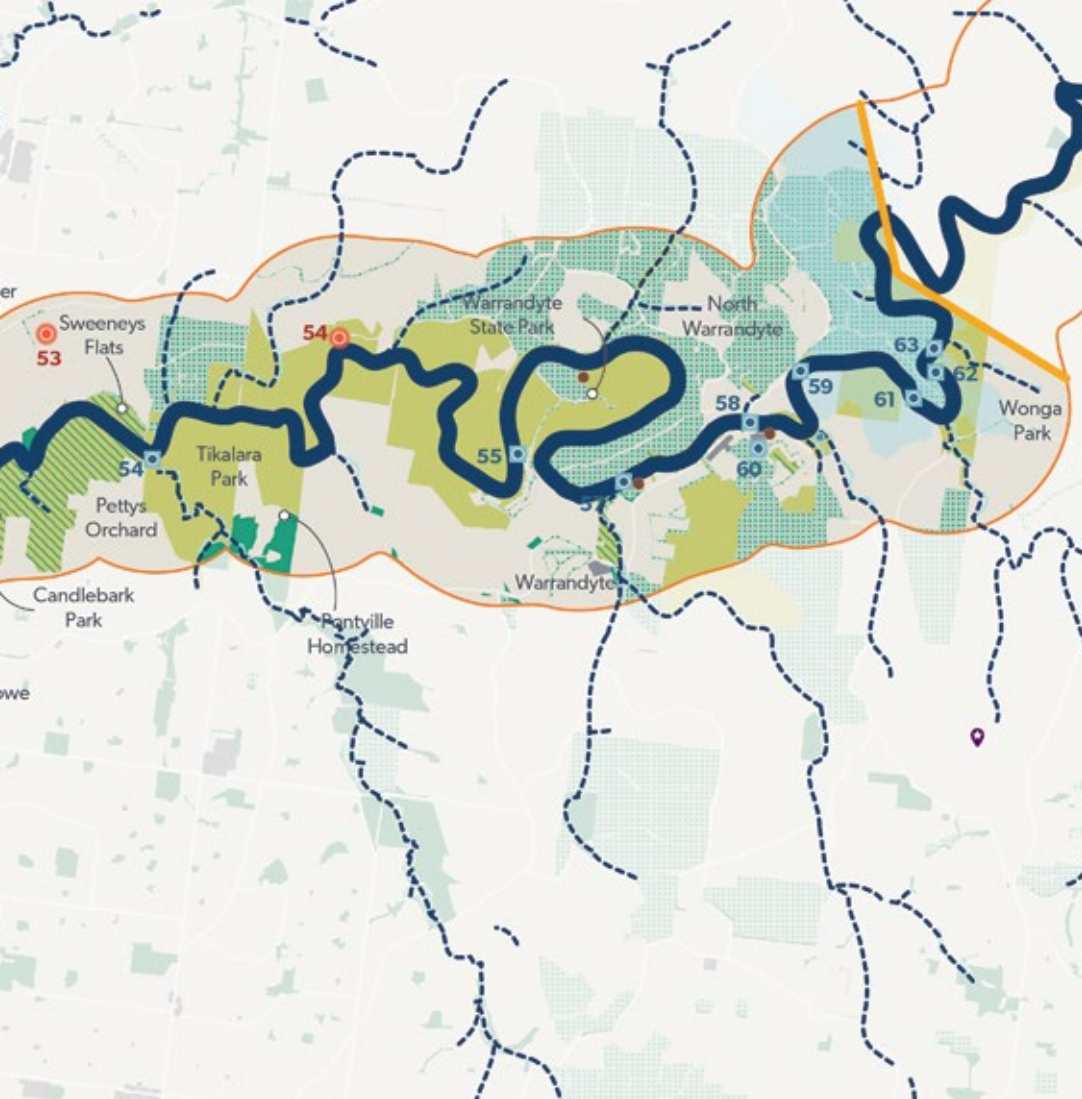
The *Suburban Rail Loop Act 2021* establishes the Suburban Rail Loop Authority to oversee the development and delivery of the project.

## MAP 9. SUBURBAN REACH CONTEXT

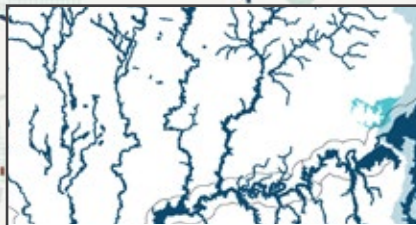
### Legend

-  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
-  Industrial & commercial zone
-  Urban forest
-  Municipal parkland
-  Yarra River land
-  Key area experiencing development
-  Precinct planning area boundary
-  Transport project (indicative only)
-  High-quality riparian vegetation





■ Bushfire management overlay



■ 100 year flood extent

## Wurundjeri sites of significance

- **Yarra Flats**  
Area of significant cultural resources: food, fibre, and medicine. It is also a meeting place with other Kulin groups.
- **Yarra Bend Park**  
Important Kulin meeting place and the site of the first Aboriginal Police Station and Aboriginal school.
- **Dights Falls**  
Birrarung crossing place where a canoe was not required.

## Key Views

34. Yarra Bend Park - Loop Area Golf House Lookout
35. Kanes Bridge viewing platform, Yarra Bend Park
36. Views at Studley Park
37. Caratis Christi Lookout, Studley Park
38. Grey Headed Flying Fox Viewing Platform, Bellbird picnic area, Yarra Bend Park
39. Eastern Freeway Bridge, Kew
40. Merri Creek Lookout, Yarra Bend Park
41. Wurundjeri Spur Lookout, Yarra Bend Park
42. Fairfield Pipe Bridge, Kew
43. Chandler Highway Bridge, Alphington
44. Burke Road Bridge, Ivanhoe
45. Banksia Street, Heidelberg
46. Views at Banyule Flats Reserve
47. Yarra River and Plenty River confluence, Viewbank
48. Finns Reserve suspension bridge, Templestowe
49. Westerfolds western-most Rapids Observation Point, Templestowe
50. Manor House viewing platform, Templestowe
51. Fitzsimons Lane, Templestowe
52. Candle Bark Park River Lookout, Templestowe
53. Diamond Creek Trail pedestrian bridge, Eltham
54. Tikalara Park viewing platform, Templestowe
55. Pound Bend Reserve tunnel viewing lookout, Templestowe
57. River view, Warrandyte
58. Kangaroo Ground-Warrandyte Road, Warrandyte
59. 100 Steps Lookout Platform, North Warrandyte
60. Views from trails, Warrandyte
61. River view, Osborne Peninsula
62. Jumping Creek Reserve viewing platform, North Warrandyte

## Tourist destinations include:

- Heide Museum of Modern Art, Bulleen
- Warrandyte township
- Warrandyte State Park

## Key community activities include:

- Twilight Sounds, Heidelberg
- Kids Arty Farty Fest and Grand Parade, Heidelberg
- The Trail Running Series, Yarra Bend
- Run Warrandyte, Warrandyte
- Warrandyte Festival, Warrandyte

63. Sculpture on river, Warrandyte
















## Heritage sites

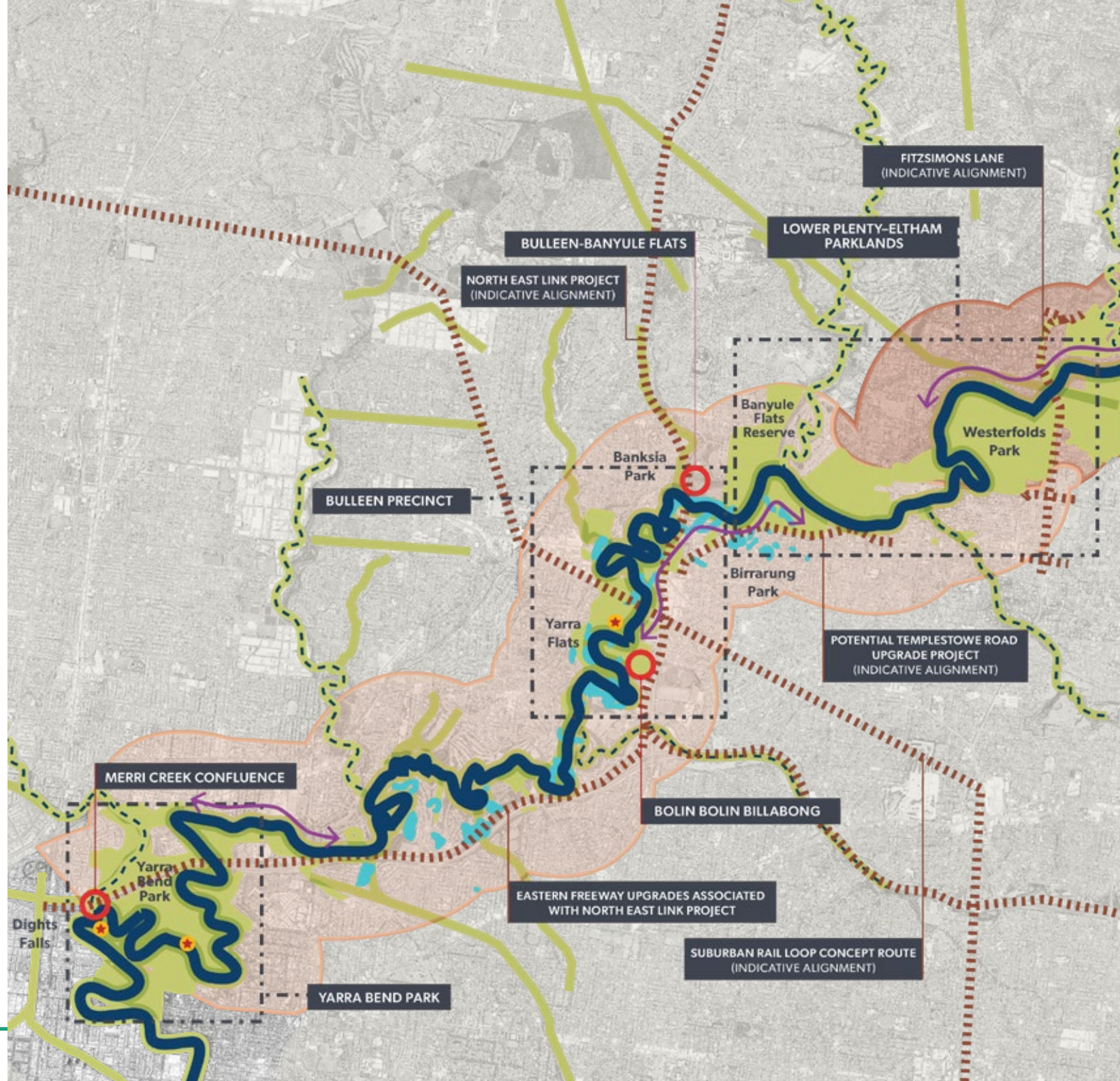
This reach of the Yarra is treasured for a number of other **heritage sites** such as:

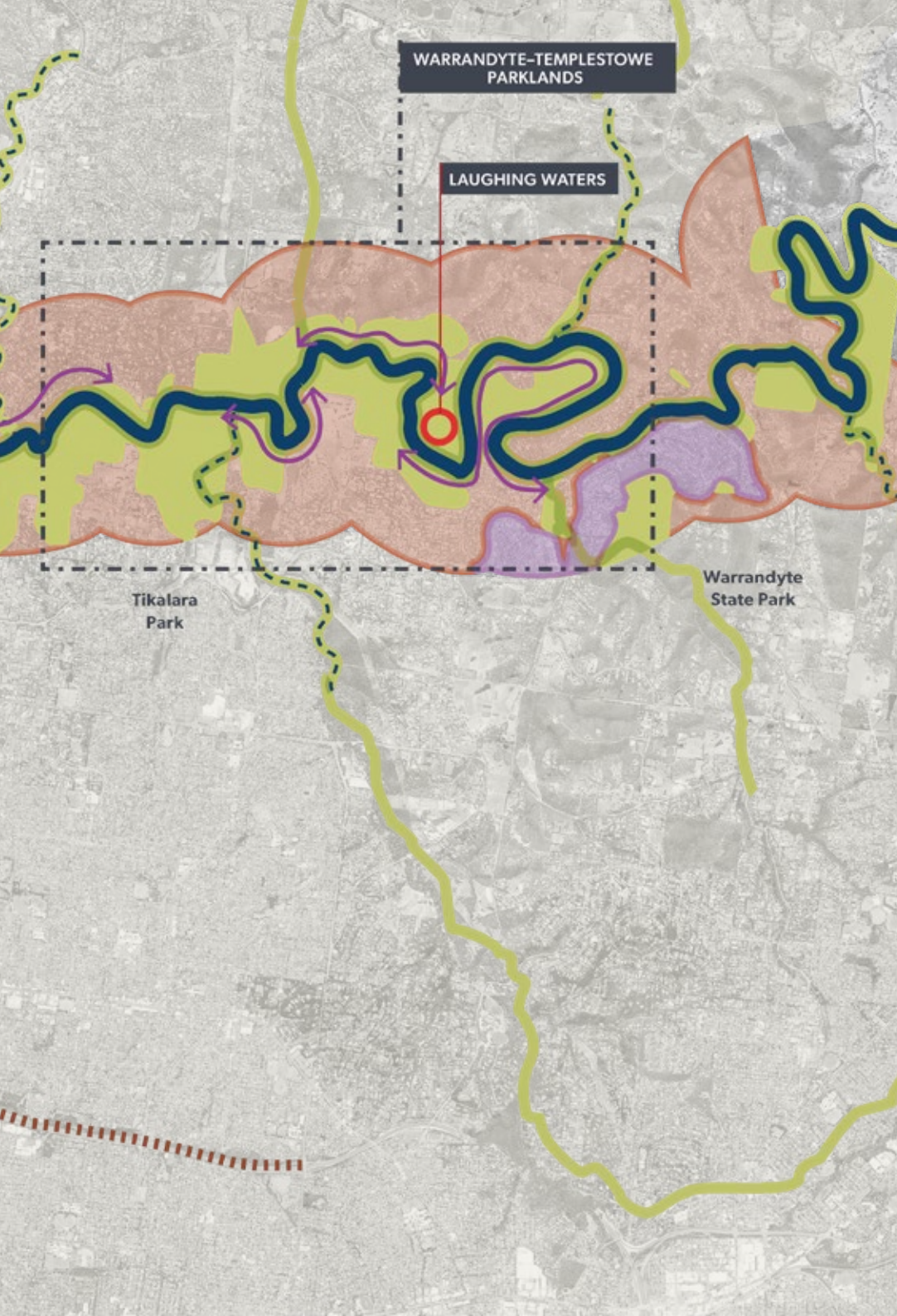
37. Studley Park Boathouse
38. Fairlea Women's Prison, Fairfield
39. Yarra Bend Golf Club House
40. Fairfield Infectious Diseases Hospital, Fairfield
41. Fairfield Boathouse, Fairfield
43. Alphington Swimming Pool
44. Napier Waller House, Ivanhoe
45. Tower Hotel, Alphington
47. Snelleman House, Ivanhoe
48. Bolin Bolin billabong, Bulleen
49. Heide I and Heide II, Bulleen
50. Yingabeal tree at Heide, Bulleen
51. Banyule Homestead, Heidelberg
52. Banyule Flats Reserve, Viewbank
53. Monsalvat, Eltham
54. Garambi Baan Laughing Waters Residency Projects, Laughing Waters

## MAP 10. SUBURBAN REACH FUTURE DIRECTIONS

### Legend

-  Wurundjeri site of significance
-  Reach boundary
-  Significant place
-  Wurundjeri area for protection
-  Improved access
-  Yarra Strategic Plan area
-  Yarra River
-  Priority tributary
-  Industrial & commercial zone
-  Yarra River land
-  Transport project (indicative alignment)
-  Biodiversity corridor
-  Bush residential
-  Township
-  Suburban





**Credit:** Melbourne Water,  
*River access at Westerfolds Park*



**Credit:** Melbourne Water,  
*Bolin Bolin Billabong, Bulleen*

Community priorities and values	Resulting land use directions for the suburban [S] reach:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expand the river’s local parklands and trails to improve continuous access, increase biodiversity and enhance river health.</li> </ul>	S 4, S 5, S 6, S 16, S 17, S 18 and S 22
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Celebrate our spiritual connection to the river and its surrounds.</li> </ul>	S 5 and S 6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish new habitat for endangered birds, fish and wildlife.</li> </ul>	S 2, S 3, S 12, S 13, S 18, S 19, S 22 and S 23
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> </ul>	S 4, S 5, S 16, S 17 and S 22
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborate to provide innovative immersive experiences with nature by expanding natural river tracks and creating environmental playgrounds along the corridor.</li> </ul>	S 2, S 4, S 5, S 6, S 16 and S 17
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore opportunities for community education and connection to Wurundjeri knowledge and cultural practice and significant sites.</li> </ul>	S 5 and S 7

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

### These are the suburban (S) land use directions.

Yarra River land		PO (Part 1)*
<b>S 1</b>	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 (Wilip-gin Birrarung murrn) Act 2017</i> . **	PO1, PO2, PO3, PO4
<b>S 2</b>	Protect and enhance native vegetation to provide habitat connections between conservation areas, and along the Yarra River and its tributaries.	PO1
<b>S 3</b>	Investigate new or strengthened protection measures for high-priority tributaries.	PO1
<b>S 4</b>	Design visitor facilities and boat launch sites to be sensitively incorporated into their natural surrounds.	PO3, PO4
<b>S 5</b>	Coordinate approaches to landscaping, wayfinding and the provision of visitor facilities to encourage people to view the Yarra River as one living and integrated natural entity.	PO3, PO4
<b>S 6</b>	Maintain diverse park landscapes that connect people to the variety of past uses and enable a wide range of visitor experiences.	PO2, PO3
<b>S 7</b>	Partner with Wurundjeri Woiwurrung 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		
<b>S 8</b>	Ensure development is screened from view from the Yarra River (and key viewing locations) by native tree canopy and understorey planting.	PO1, PO4
<b>S 9</b>	Ensure development is sited and designed to maintain and enhance the Yarra River's secluded and natural environment.	PO1, PO4
<b>S 10</b>	Implement planning controls to prescribe mandatory building heights and setbacks, to protect landscape and environmental values, and ensure new development is set back from adjoining parklands and conservation areas.	PO1, PO3, PO4
<b>S 11</b>	Design buildings to respect the Yarra River's sensitive landscape setting.	PO4
<b>S 12</b>	Protect and enhance native vegetation to provide habitat connections between conservation areas and along the Yarra River and its tributaries.	PO1
<b>S 13</b>	Investigate new or strengthened protection measures for high-priority tributaries.	PO1
<b>S 14</b>	Ensure development in flood affected areas is informed by the <i>Guidelines for Development in Flood Affected Areas</i> .	PO4

Warrandyte township		
<b>S 15</b>	Implement planning controls to prescribe mandatory building heights and setbacks to protect the Yarra River landscape corridor and ensure development maintains the heritage character of the township.	PO2, PO4
<b>S 16</b>	Ensure new development in the activity centre (on the Yarra River's southern side) creates a positive interface with the Yarra River landscape corridor and facilitates public access to the river where appropriate.	PO3, PO4
<b>S 17</b>	Improve public space and visitor facilities to enhance the Yarra River's role as a community focal point.	PO3
<b>S 18</b>	Plant additional native species to strengthen the riverbank environment and improve landscape character and views to the Yarra River from Yarra Street.	PO1, PO4
<b>S 19</b>	Encourage native planting to create links to the Yarra River's ancient ecology and cultural heritage.	PO1, PO2
<b>S 20</b>	Apply integrated water management principles to optimise water supply, improve water quality and enhance flood protection.	PO1
<b>S 21</b>	Ensure development in flood affected areas is informed by the <i>Guidelines for Development in Flood Affected Areas</i> .	PO4

Suburban		
<b>S 22</b>	Protect and enhance native vegetation – along biodiversity corridors, through parklands, private gardens and local street networks – to provide habitat connections between conservation areas and to enhance the community's sense of connection to the riverside environment.	PO1, PO3
<b>S 23</b>	Investigate new or strengthened protection measures for high-priority tributaries.	PO1
<b>S 24</b>	Implement planning controls to prescribe mandatory building heights and setbacks, to protect landscape and environmental values, and ensure new development is set back from adjoining parklands and conservation areas.	PO1, PO3, PO4
<b>S 25</b>	Design buildings to respect the Yarra River's sensitive landscapes and key views and ensure they sit below the height of the tree canopy.	PO4
<b>S 26</b>	Protect and reinforce a strong tree canopy across surrounding ridgelines to conceal views of buildings from the river and its parklands.	PO1, PO3, PO4
<b>S 27</b>	Apply integrated water management principles to optimise water supply, improve water quality and enhance flood protection.	PO1
<b>S 28</b>	Ensure development in flood affected areas is informed by the <i>Guidelines for Development in Flood Affected Areas</i> .	PO4



## Suburban reach – significant places



**Credit:** Melbourne Water, Yarra River, Warrandyte State Park

### Warrandyte – Templestowe parklands

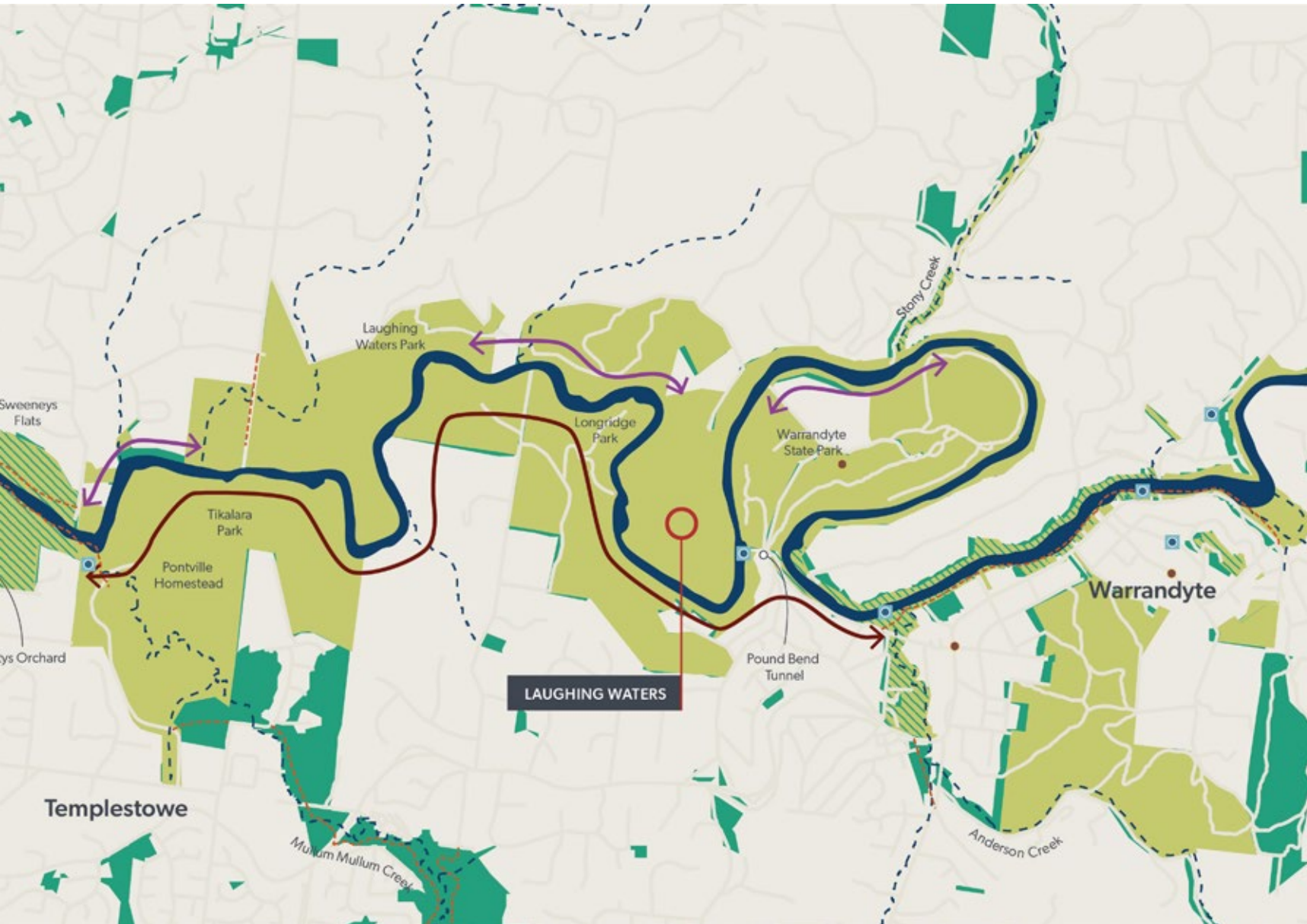
The public parklands between Warrandyte and Templestowe are of immense environmental, social, cultural and heritage value. These parklands present a range of opportunities to deliver on the community's aspirations in the suburban reach. The natural bushland character typical of these parklands supports local biodiversity and provides opportunities for the community to connect with nature. Tributaries including Andersons, Stony, Mullum Mullum and Diamond creeks, which flow through these parklands, provide important links for biodiversity and community access.

The Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation has nominated Garambi Baan (Laughing Waters) as an area for priority protection. This has been an important gathering place for tens of thousands of years as well as an important site for growing and harvesting food. Significantly, historic Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung iuk (eel) traps remain at the site and are actively maintained by the corporation with Parks Victoria.






#### Opportunities for future projects and alignment:

- Fill gaps in the network of parklands along the river and enhance activity nodes and connections between recreational trails through these parklands.
- Investigate opportunities for cross-river connections that will facilitate improved access to the river and parklands from local recreational trail networks. A key initiative includes Manningham City Council's project to extend the Main Yarra Trail from Tikalara Park to Warrandyte.
- Partner with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation to investigate ways to protect cultural values associated with Garambi Baan (Laughing Waters).
- Provide safe visitor access to the heritage-rich landscapes within Warrandyte State Park. Create new recreational trails and deliver interpretative signage to connect visitors with the mining heritage of the region.
- Protect and upgrade significant buildings and sites, such as Pontville Homestead and Pettys Orchard on the south side of the river, and Birrarung House and River Bend House in the Laughing Waters precinct on the north side. Investigate options for sensitive reuse to help fund restoration projects and protect heritage values in line with community expectations.
- Improve camping facilities at Longridge Park.





**Legend**

-  Cultural heritage sites
-  Community activities
-  Key views
-  Wurundjeri area of protection
-  Yarra River
-  Yarra River land
-  Municipal parkland
-  Greater Yarra urban parkland
-  Priority tributary
-  Recreational trail
-  Transport projects (indicative alignment)
-  Improved access
-  Extend Main Yarra Trail

**LAUGHING WATERS**

### 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 diverse range of Yarra River experiences. There is great potential to improve recreational trails and access, establish new habitat and broaden community enjoyment of the Yarra River through a range of experiences, including nature-based recreation. The Warringal Parklands and Banyule Flats on the northern side of the river are of state conservation significance due to the extensive stands of wetland vegetation and important waterbird populations.

### Opportunities for future projects and alignment:

- Improve connections to and between parklands and improve access and connection to the Yarra River. This includes consideration for pedestrian and cyclist bridge crossings proposed in the draft Yarra River – Bulleen Precinct Land Use Framework Plan, which will support regional access to the local area.
- Coordinate work across Murundaka and Montpellier wetlands and investigate opportunities to expand wetlands and coordinate works with neighbouring land managers and areas. Continue to work with the local community to support their stewardship role. Consider visitor access to the sites whilst maintaining strong environmental protection and enhancement programs.
- Rehabilitate land at the end of Bonds Road, removing weeds, revegetating riverbanks and creating river access and viewing opportunities.
- Develop a biodiversity and conservation management and improvement plan for the floodplain and riparian areas adjacent to the Yarra River, including investigating opportunities to protect and improve platypus and powerful owl habitats.
- 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.
- Improve opportunities for paddle sports at Westerfolds Park.
- Implement (priority) initiatives identified in *Nilumbik Shire Council’s Eltham Lower Park Masterplan (2008)* and additional landscape works and approved initiatives as reviewed in 2020.



Credit: Melbourne Water



Credit: Melbourne Water, Paddle course, Westerfolds Park





**Legend**

- Key tourist destinations
- Cultural heritage sites
- Community activities
- Key views
- Wurundjeri area of protection
- Yarra River
- Billabong
- Yarra River land
- Municipal parkland
- Greater Yarra urban parkland
- Priority tributary
- Recreational trail
- Main Yarra trail
- Transport projects (indicative alignment)
- Improved access
- Priority boat launch site
- Proposed bridge



### Yarra River – Bulleen Precinct

The Yarra River – Bulleen Precinct comprises the stretch of river through Lower Templestowe, Heidelberg and Bulleen, which is home to parklands and special places with distinct natural and cultural values, including the Bolin Bolin Billabong and the Heide Museum of Modern Art.

DELWP is currently preparing the Yarra River – Bulleen Precinct Land Use Framework Plan to guide future land uses and connections for the precinct. Informed by the protection principles in the Act and the Yarra 50 Year Community Vision, the plan will be complementary to the broader regional framework set out in the Yarra Strategic Plan. The framework plan will identify where future active sporting facilities can be located. It will also include consideration of development on private land adjacent to the river.

Bolin Bolin, meaning ‘place of many lagoons’ in Woi-wurrung language, is part of a highly significant cultural and ecological landscape of wetlands and floodplains. Under natural conditions these billabongs would fill with water when the Yarra, Birrarung, periodically overflowed its banks and reconnected with the surrounding country. Eels (iuk) and other fish would come into the billabongs with the flowing water, providing plentiful supply for the Woi-wurrung people when the flood waters receded. However, water extraction, channel erosion and modifications, as well as drought and climate change, have prevented many of these billabongs from filling each year as they would have in the past.

**Credit:** *Inge King*

Rings of Saturn by Inge King,  
Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne  
Commissioned through the Heide Foundation with significant  
assistance from Lindsay and Paula Fox 2005  
© Estate of Inge King

**Opportunities for future projects and alignment:**

- Deliver the North East Link, including an interchange at Manningham Road and a range of improvements to pedestrian and cycling paths and active sporting facilities, such as the Templestowe Road Soccer Facilities.
- Explore upgrade of Templestowe Road to cater for the current and future needs of all road users.
- Explore options to improve community facilities such as those identified in Manningham Council’s Yarra River Concept Plan 2019.
- Progress a new pedestrian and cycling bridge across the Yarra River at Yarra Street, Heidelberg and further downstream improve connections and infrastructure for the Main Yarra Trail and Darebin Creek Trail.
- Expand public parklands for recreational and conservation purposes, including protecting the environmental and cultural values of Yarra Flats and creating improved visitor facilities for the Heidelberg Artists’ Trail.
- Protect the environmental and cultural values of Banyule Flats.
- Protect the environmental and cultural values of the Bolin Bolin Billabong, including continued program of restoring natural water flow regimes into the billabong.
- Investigate opportunities to improve wetland watering regimes for Annulus, Banyule Flats and Bolin Bolin billabongs to meet ecological watering objectives, and to improve ecosystem services, as well as cultural and social values (as per *Healthy Waterways Strategy 2018*).

To inform the final framework plan for this precinct, the Minister for Planning has appointed the Yarra River – Bulleen Precinct Advisory Committee, requesting that the committee conduct public hearings and provide recommendations on a final land use framework.



**Credit:** Melbourne Water, Banyule wetlands, Bulleen



**Credit:** Melbourne Water, Bolin Bolin Billabong, Bulleen

## Yarra Bend Park

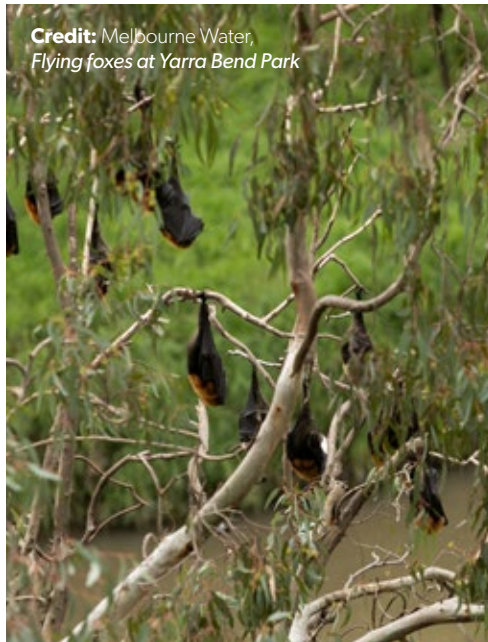
As the largest area of natural bushland near the city, Yarra Bend Park is important to both the river and Melbourne’s community. It is a key location for land and water-based recreation and includes the historic Fairfield and Studley Park boathouses as well as active recreational and sports facilities. This area is also home to a colony of nationally-threatened grey-headed flying-foxes.

Yarra Bend Park is an important Kulin meeting place and has been nominated as a site of significance by the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation. The park includes the site of the former Aboriginal

School and Aboriginal Police Station and the Merri Creek confluence, which is designated as a priority area for protection by the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people.

### Opportunities for future projects and alignment:

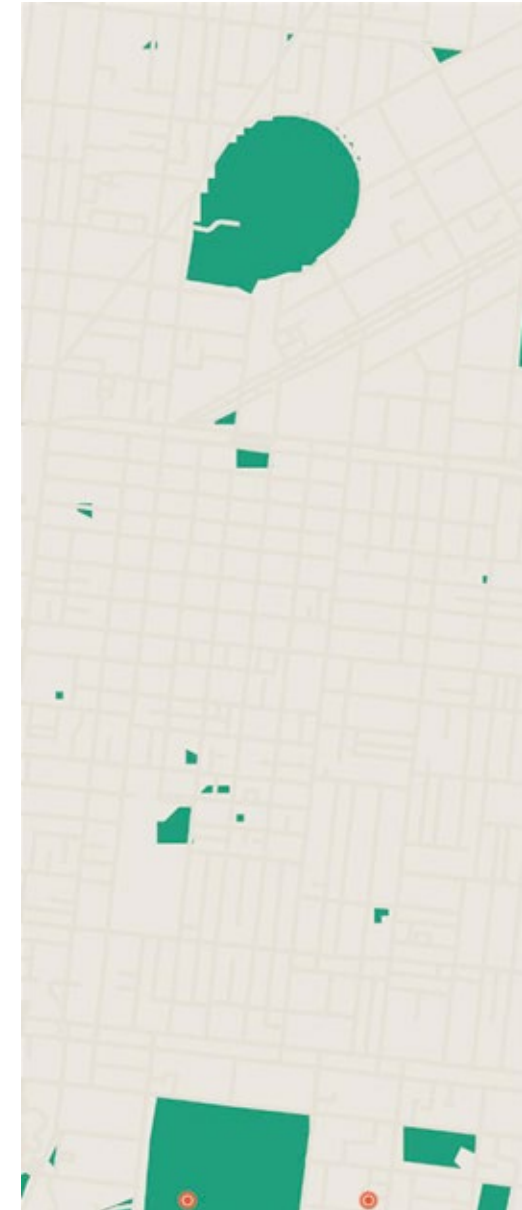
- Improve visitor facilities and educational information at the grey-headed flying-fox colony.
- Improve sporting facilities in the Fairlea precinct of the park.
- Improve infrastructure and facilities at key visitor locations.
- Enhance and protect existing vegetation and habitat links, particularly along the banks of the Yarra River and Merri Creek.
- Develop nature play areas to encourage families to connect with the environmental and cultural heritage values of the park.
- Partner with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation to investigate ways to protect the cultural values associated with Yarra Bend Park.



**Credit:** Melbourne Water, Flying foxes at Yarra Bend Park



**Credit:** Melbourne Water, Flying fox viewing platform, Yarra Bend Park





- Legend**
- Key tourist destinations
  - Cultural heritage sites
  - Community activities
  - Key views
  - Wurundjeri site of significance
  - Wurundjeri area of protection
  - Yarra River
  - Billabong
  - Yarra River land
  - Municipal parkland
  - Greater Yarra urban parkland
  - Priority tributary
  - Recreational trail
  - Transport projects (indicative alignment)
  - Improved access



# Inner city reach

## 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.*

## Land use analysis

The Yarra River is an iconic part of central Melbourne. It is a place where people of all backgrounds – locals and visitors – have come together for generations. For thousands of years the Yarra, Birrarung has been home to important cultural places for Traditional Owners, including Yarra Falls, confluences with the Maribyrnong River and Merri Creek, Dights Falls, and the sites where Federation Square and Yarra Park (including the Melbourne Cricket Ground [MCG]) are now located).

Colonial settlers arriving in the 1800s depended on the river, particularly as a harbour. There are many visible reminders of the Yarra's rich maritime history including goods sheds, cranes, dry docks, warehouses, wharves and vaults dotted along the lower part of the river.

Today a modern and growing cityscape weaves along and around these important sites. Surrounding the river, the booming city of Melbourne has emerged, now supporting diverse communities and the livelihoods of a 5 million-strong population. Parklands line much of the river today, providing a highly valued landscape setting within the dense urban environment. With population growth expected to put high demand on housing, infrastructure and development in the inner-city reach over the next 10 years, it is vital that the Yarra's parklands continue to provide respite from the city while protecting and strengthening urban biodiversity.

The Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne, which is adjacent to the river, is one of the world's leading botanic gardens and a centre of excellence for horticulture, science and education. The gardens are admired as a living work of art with picturesque vistas

extending over 38 hectares – across lakes, sweeping lawns and arrays of garden beds – providing a haven for local and overseas visitors. For over 170 years the gardens have contributed to Melbourne's liveability and witnessed the city's changing history, society and character while providing a home for major events and daily experiences.

The river in this reach supports a helipad that offers tours and charter flights and other air services. The river is also the focus for on-water events including the Moomba festival, rowing regattas, dragon boat racing and the Melbourne Festival.

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 river that support a range of commercial, residential and community land uses and are focal points for future development.

Parts of the inner city reach are experiencing significant change. New land uses and development are changing the built form and character of the Yarra River's edge. Change is intensified at the Docklands and Fishermans Bend urban renewal precincts, and is also occurring in other renewal areas in central Melbourne, Southbank, Northbank, South Yarra, Cremorne, Richmond and Abbotsford.




















**Existing projects in this reach include:**

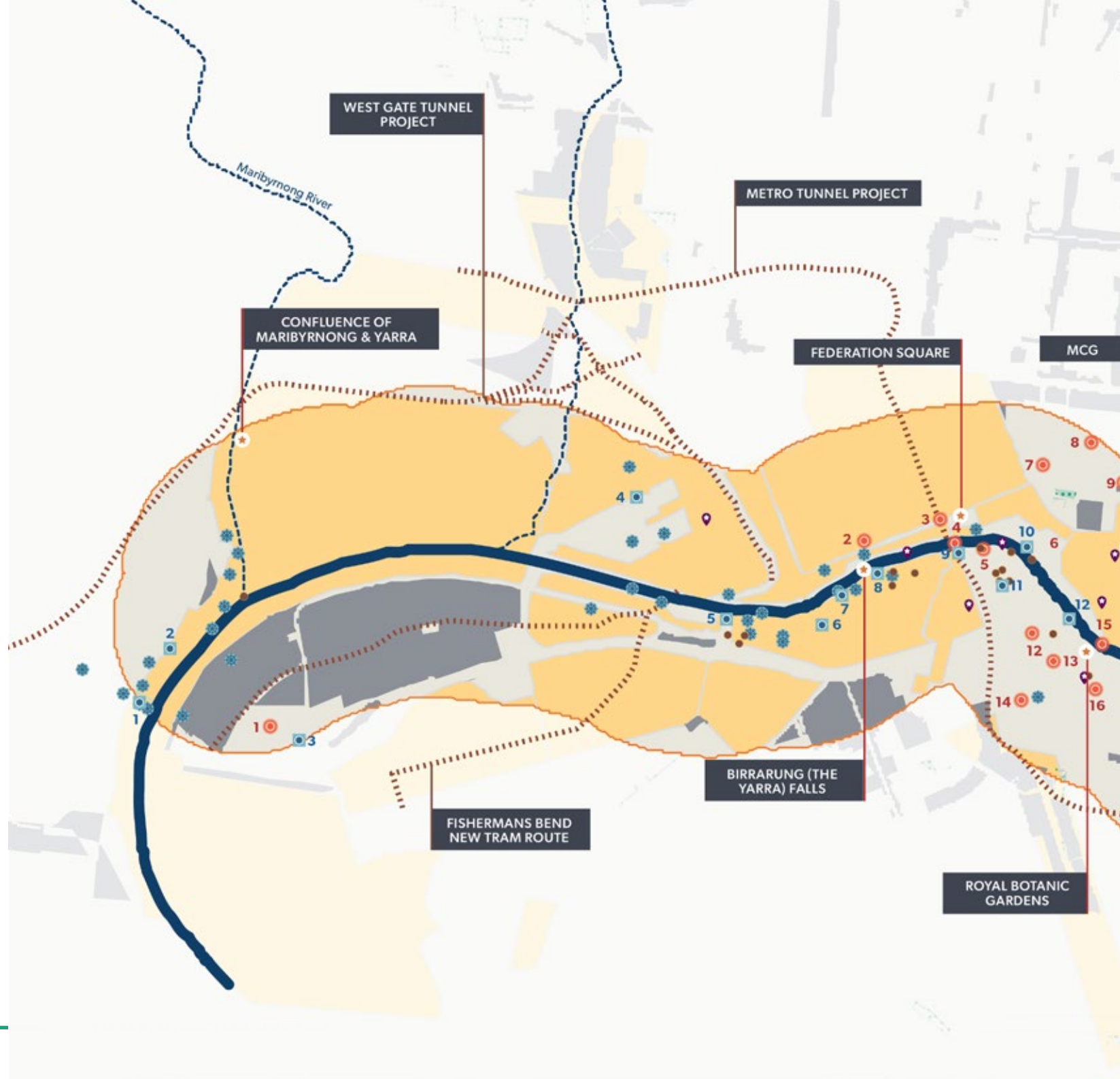
- Melbourne's Docklands is an urban renewal project reconnecting central Melbourne with its historic waterfront. Now two-thirds complete, it spans 200 hectares of land and water on the north side of the river and comprises residential, commercial, entertainment, sporting and events spaces. Designed to celebrate the waterfront, Docklands provides continual public access with 20–30 metre wide promenades for north-facing waterfronts and 6–20 metre wide promenades for south-facing waterfronts. Development plans are in place for the various precincts that front the river.
- *The Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne Gardens Master Plan 2020–2040* will guide changes at the gardens over the next 20 years. The master plan addresses the challenges of climate change, increased recognition of Aboriginal cultural values and protection of the State Botanical Collection.
- *Land Use Framework Plans* for two regions that overlap with the inner city reach – Inner Metro and Inner South East – are being prepared under Action 1 of the implementation plan for *Plan Melbourne 2017-2050*. These plans will inform the review and update of local planning schemes.
- Fishermans Bend urban renewal area is 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.
- The Metro Tunnel is nine kilometres of twin rail tunnels passing under the Yarra River. Five new underground stations will be constructed, with a completion date of 2025. The top of the twin tunnels is around 12 metres below the riverbed where it crosses under the river on the east side of the Princes Bridge.
- The West Gate Tunnel Project will deliver a vital alternative to the West Gate Bridge, providing a second river crossing, quicker and safer journeys, removing thousands of trucks off residential streets, improving pedestrian and cycling paths and creating new parklands.

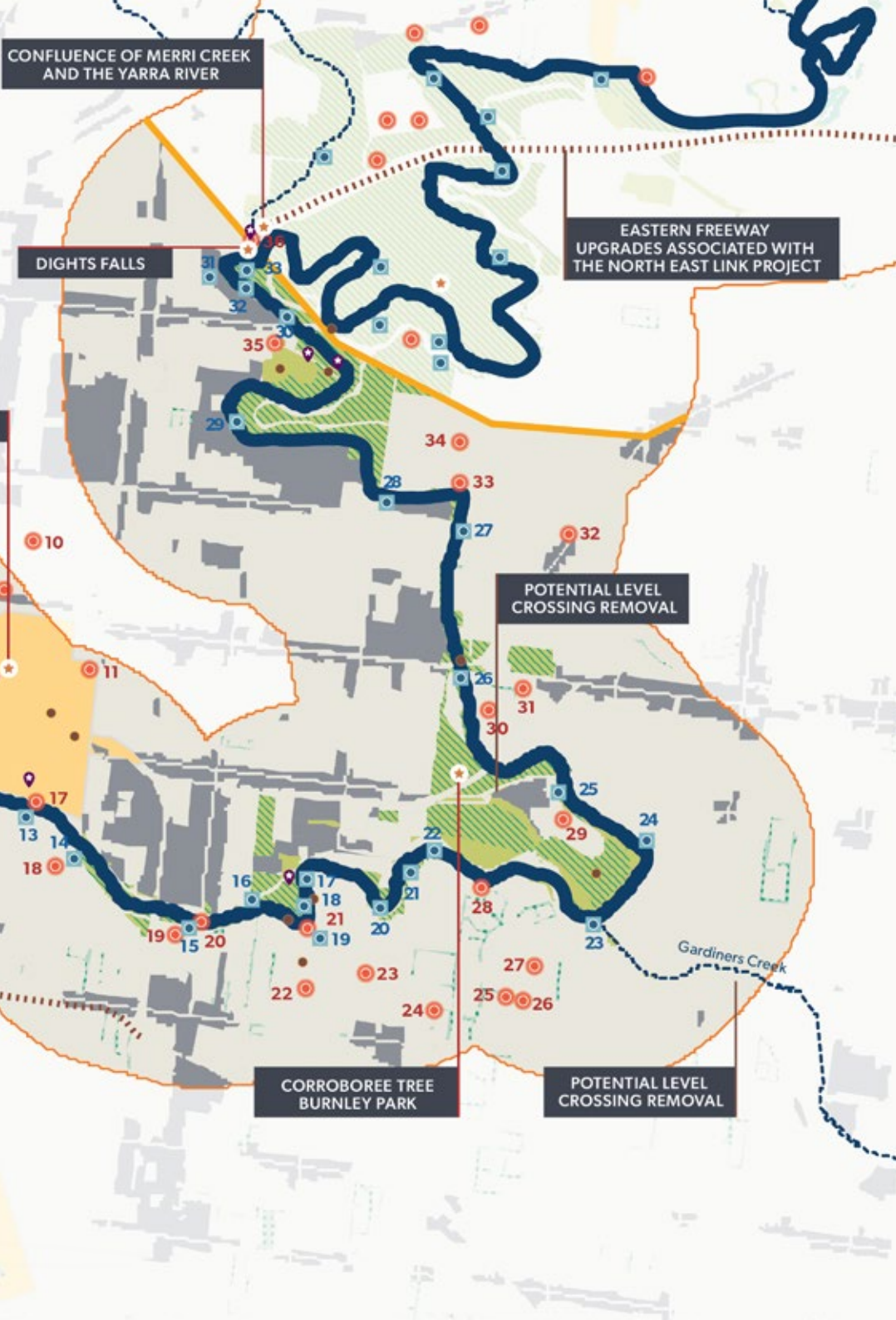


## MAP 11. INNER CITY REACH CONTEXT

### Legend

-  Key tourist destinations
-  Cultural heritage sites
-  Community activities
-  Key views
-  Maritime heritage site
-  Site of Aboriginal cultural significance
-  Recreational trail
-  Reach boundary
-  Yarra Strategic Plan area
-  Yarra River
-  Priority tributary
-  Other tributary
-  Industrial & commercial zone
-  Urban forest
-  Municipal parkland
-  Yarra River land
-  Key area experiencing development
-  Transport project (indicative alignment)
-  High-quality riparian vegetation





## Sites of Aboriginal cultural significance

- Confluence of Merri Creek and the Yarra**  
 Important camp site and meeting place for the Kulin.
- Dights Falls**  
 Birrarung crossing place where a canoe was not required.
- Confluence of Gardiners Creek and Yarra River**  
 These waterways provided food including plants, eels, fish, mussels and waterfowl as well as being traditional camping places.
- Corroboree Tree Burnley Park**  
 This huge, ancient, River Red Gum once served as a marker of clan territories, and also a place for gatherings and celebrations (corroborees).
- Royal Botanic Gardens**  
 The Tromgin lagoon, at what is now the Royal Botanic Gardens, was an important source of eels.
- MCG and Yarra Park**  
 Significant ceremonial ground used until the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people were displaced from Melbourne city.
- Federation Square**  
 Traditional meeting place of the Kulin.
- Birrarung (the Yarra) Falls**  
 Natural rock barrier formed a waterfall separating salty tidal water from the fresh water and provided a crossing point. The falls were blasted away in the 1880s to make way for Queens Bridge.

- Confluence of the Maribyrnong and Yarra rivers**  
 High-resource area in the swampy salt flats, with higher ground for meeting and trade with other Kulin groups.

## Key Views

- River views, Spotswood
- River views, Port Melbourne
- Viewing Platform - section of old Westgate Bridge, Westgate Park Picnic Ground
- River views from restaurants, Docklands
- Charles Grimes Bridge, Wurundjeri Way
- Spencer Street Bridge, Melbourne
- King Street Bridge, Southbank
- Queens Bridge, Melbourne
- River view, Princes Bridge
- Birrarung Marr, Melbourne
- River view, Queen Victoria Memorial Building
- Swan Street Bridge, Alexandra Avenue
- Morell Bridge, South Yarra
- Hoddle Bridge, Punt Road
- Church Street Bridge, South Yarra
- Richmond Park, Richmond
- Yarra River Reserve, South Yarra
- Herring Island viewing platform, Herring Island
- Como Park North, South Yarra
- Loys Paddock Reserve, Burnley
- Yarra River frontage, Alexandra Avenue
- MacRobertson Bridge, St George's Road
- Gardiners Creek Bridge, Monash Freeway
- Fairview Park, Hawthorn
- Wallen Road Bridge, Burnley
- Hawthorn Bridge, Bridge Road and Burwood Road
- Victoria Bridge, Victoria Street and Barkers Road
- Dickinsons Reserve-Walmer Street wetland foot bridge, Andrews Reserve Trail
- Collins Bridge, Gipps Street
- Johnston Street Bridge, Abbotsford
- Yarra Bend Park - Upper Loop Area - Dights Falls
- 'Wominjeka wall', Abbotsford
- Dights Falls, Abbotsford

## Cultural Heritage sites

1. West Gate Park, Port Melbourne
2. Customs House, Melbourne
3. Flinders Street Station, Melbourne
4. Princes Bridge, Melbourne
5. Boat sheds, Yarra Bank
6. Speakers' Corner, Yarra Bank
7. Treasury Gardens, East Melbourne
8. Fitzroy Gardens, East Melbourne
9. Mosslenoch, East Melbourne
10. Little Parndon, East Melbourne
11. Yarra Park, East Melbourne
12. Domain Parklands, Melbourne
13. Government House, Kings Domain, Melbourne
14. Shrine of Remembrance, Kings Domain, Melbourne
15. Alexandra Avenue, South Yarra
16. Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne
17. Morrell Bridge, South Yarra
18. Robin Boyd House, South Yarra
19. Melbourne High School, South Yarra
20. Church Street Bridge, South Yarra
21. Como Park, South Yarra
22. Como House, South Yarra
23. 42 Wallace Ave, Toorak
24. Trawalla, Toorak
25. Toorak House, Toorak
26. 22 St Georges Road, Toorak
27. Illawarra, Williamstown
28. Edzell, Toorak
29. Burnley College of Horticulture, Richmond
30. Invergowrie, Malvern
31. 1 Shakespeare Grove, Hawthorn
32. Kew Tram Depot, Kew
33. McIntyre House, Kew

34. Studley Park residential estate, Kew
35. Convent of the Good Shepherd, Abbotsford
36. Dights Falls, Abbotsford
37. Studley Park, Kew

## Maritime heritage sites

- Fishermans Bend timber wharves, Fishermans Bend
- Melbourne Steamship Building, Melbourne
- Dudley Street Victoria Dock, Docklands
- Flagstaff Gardens, Melbourne
- Port of Melbourne, West Melbourne
- Turning basin, Yarra River
- Yarra South Wharf
- Yarra Swinging Basin
- Queens Wharf, Melbourne
- The Island Diversion Cutting, Yarra River
- Australian Wharf, Docklands
- Duke & Orrs Dry Dock, South Wharf
- Sandridge Railway Line Bridge, Melbourne
- Former Port of Melbourne Authority Building, Melbourne
- Queens Warehouse, Docklands
- Mission to Seamen, Docklands
- Cargo sheds and wharves, Docklands
- Princes Walk Vaults, Melbourne
- Victoria Dock, Docklands
- Berth No 5. North Wharf, Docklands
- Coode Canal, Melbourne
- Polly Woodside, South Wharf
- Central Pier, Docklands

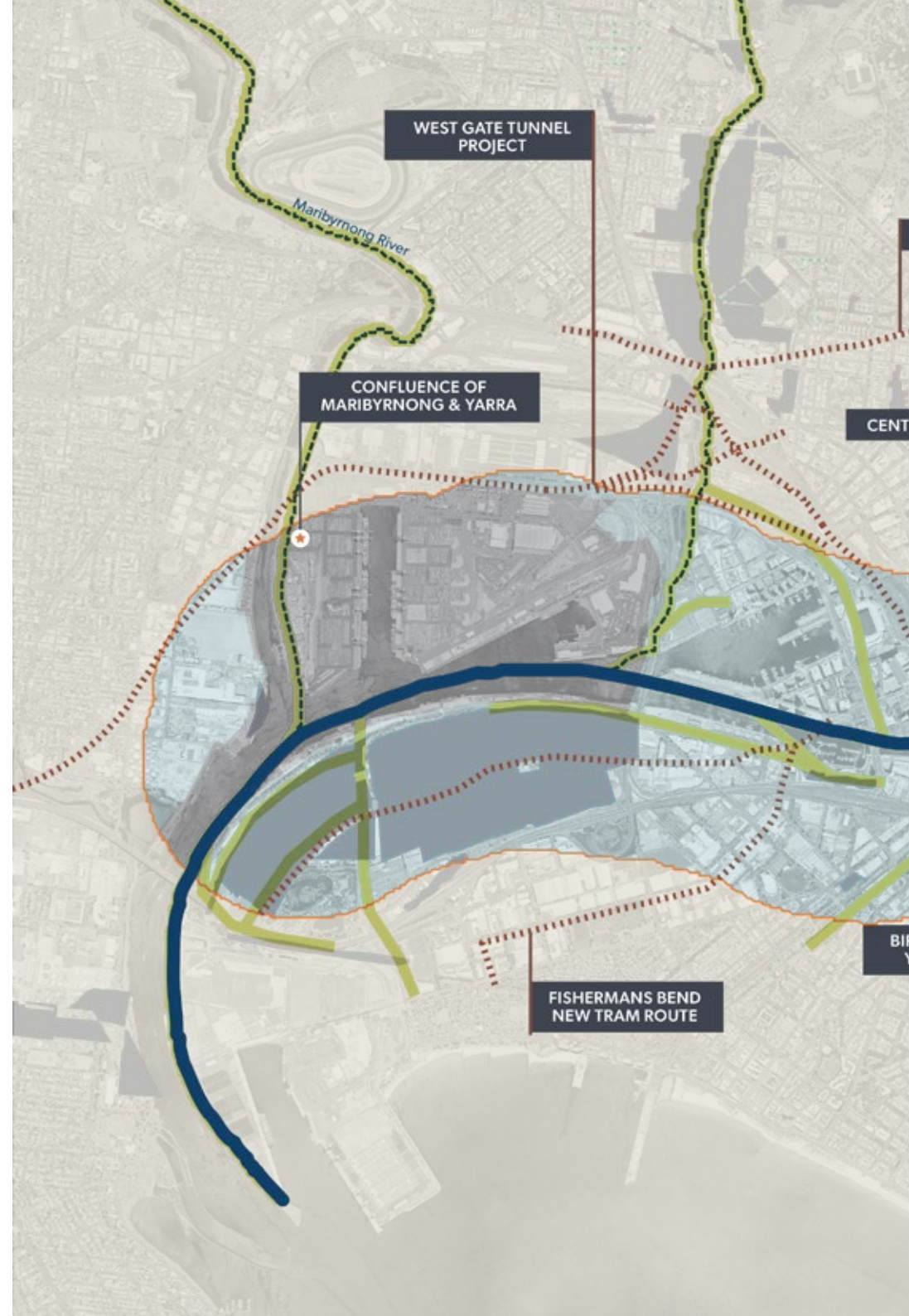
## Tourist destinations include:

- Dights Falls, Abbotsford
- Abbotsford Convent
- Collingwood Children's Farm, Abbotsford
- Herring Island, South Yarra
- Royal Botanic Gardens
- Melbourne Cricket Ground, East Melbourne

- Melbourne Sports Precinct, East Melbourne
- Alexandra Gardens
- Southbank
- Arts Precinct, Melbourne
- Docklands

## Key community activities include:

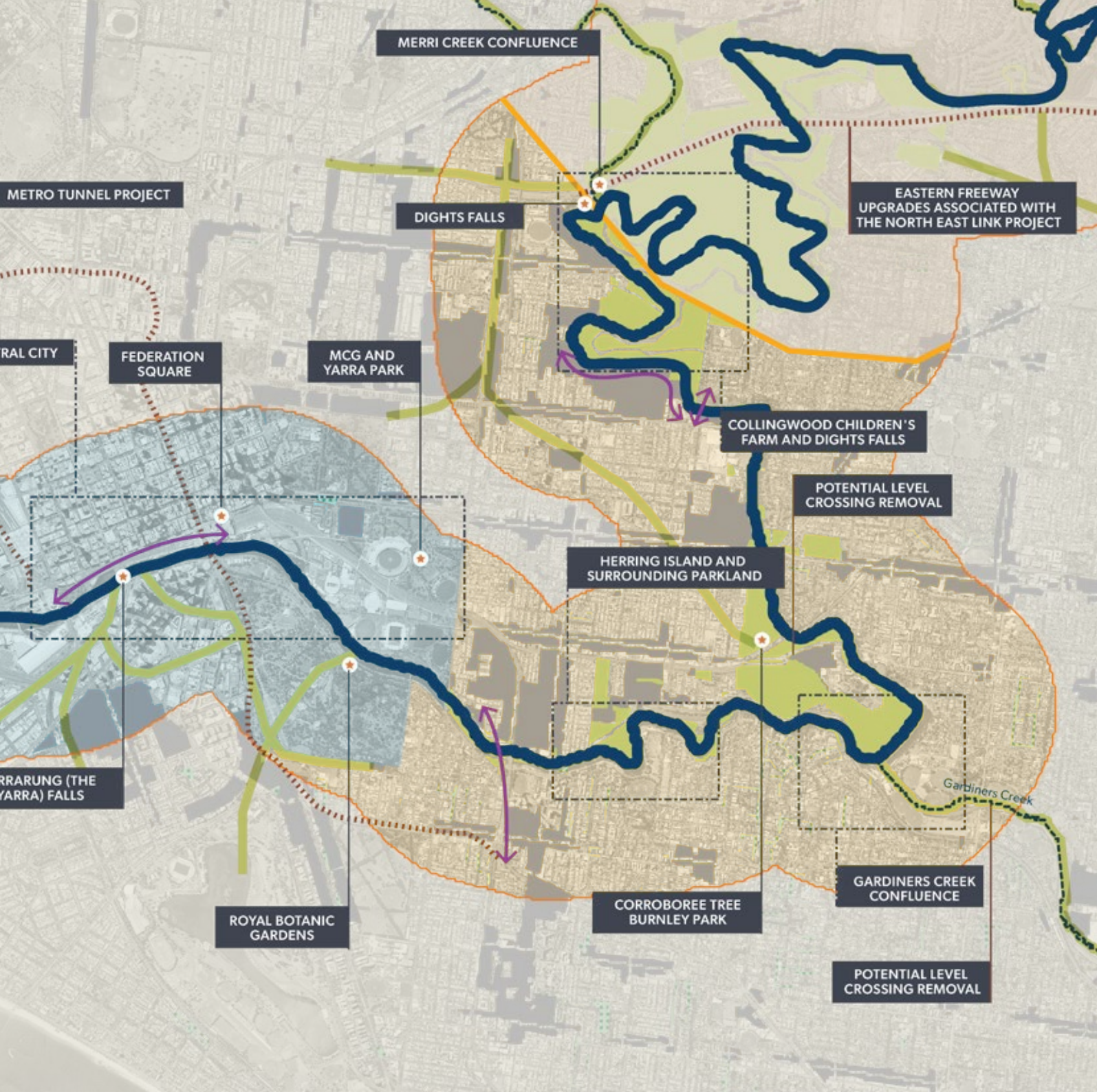
- Australian Open Festival
- Melbourne marathon
- Run to the G
- Australian Rules Football Grand Final
- Midsumma Festival, South Melbourne
- Mothers Day Classic Fun Run
- Australia Day Weekend, Melbourne
- Outdoor Cinema, Melbourne
- Herring Island Art Festival
- Sustainable Living Festival
- White Night, Melbourne
- New Years Eve Celebrations
- Richmond Football Club Family Fun Day, Richmond
- Carols at Como Park
- Inflatable Regatta, Yarra River
- St Patrick's Day at South Wharf
- Oktoberfest Street Party, Melbourne
- Night Noodle Market, Birrarung Marr
- Suitcase Rummage, South Melbourne
- River Graze Melbourne Food and Wine Festival
- Moomba Festival, Melbourne
- We Can Walk It Out annual walk/run for Women, the Tan Track
- Run for the Kids, Melbourne
- Yarra River Community Welcome Dinner, Melbourne
- Ice Slide on Southbank
- Burnley Half Marathon, Burnley
- Chinese New Year Regatta
- Australian Henley Regatta
- Head of the Yarra Regatta
- Vegan Mini Market, Abbotsford Convent
- Collingwood Children's Farm Farmers Market



## MAP 12. INNER CITY REACH FUTURE DIRECTIONS

### Legend

-  Site of Aboriginal cultural significance
-  Recreational trail
-  Reach boundary
-  Significant place
-  Yarra Strategic Plan area
-  Yarra River
-  Priority tributary
-  Industrial & commercial zone
-  Yarra River land
-  Transport project (indicative alignment)
-  Biodiversity corridor
-  Improved access
-  Urban
-  Port of Melbourne (excluded)
-  Central city



Community priorities and values	Resulting land use directions for the inner city [IC] reach:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Celebrate the river as the centrepiece of Melbourne, acknowledging its role in our history and how it drives the city's continued success.</li> </ul>	IC 5, IC 6, IC 7, IC 13 and IC 20
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> </ul>	IC 6 and IC 21
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> </ul>	IC 3 to IC 11, IC 17, IC 19 and IC 20
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expand our connected network of treasured Yarra parklands, creating better access and more spaces for relaxation and recreation.</li> </ul>	IC 2, IC 3, IC 9, IC 11 and IC 20
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Showcase the river as a place for sustainable and creative events, with a focus on culture, sport, ecology and education.</li> </ul>	IC 2, IC 5, IC 6 and IC 20
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> </ul>	IC 5, IC 6 and IC 20

### Directions for future land use and development in the next 10 years

The land use framework in the inner city 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 inner city (IC) land use directions.

Yarra River land		PO (Part 1)*
IC 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 (Wilip-gin Birrarung murrn) Act 2017</i> .**	PO1, PO2, PO3, PO4
IC 2	Manage Yarra River land to support a range of recreational opportunities that meet the needs of the community, improve access to the river and foster a sense of refuge from urban surrounds.	PO3, PO4
IC 3	Protect and enhance native vegetation to provide habitat connections between conservation areas, and along the Yarra River and its tributaries.	PO1
IC 4	Investigate new or strengthened protection measures for high-priority tributaries.	PO1
IC 5	Coordinate approaches to landscaping, wayfinding and the provision of visitor facilities to encourage people to view the Yarra River as one living and integrated natural entity.	PO3
IC 6	Partner with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation and Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation on their respective Country 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.

Urban		
<b>IC 7</b>	Protect and enhance native vegetation – along biodiversity corridors, through parklands, private gardens and local street networks – to provide habitat connections between conservation areas, and to enhance the community's sense of connection to the riverside environment.	PO1, PO3
<b>IC 8</b>	Select appropriate plant species to help restore ecological values, improve biodiversity and habitat, and contribute to urban cooling and greening.	PO1, PO4
<b>IC 9</b>	Investigate new or strengthened protection measures for high-priority tributaries.	PO1
<b>IC 10</b>	Apply integrated water management principles to optimise water supply, improve water quality and enhance flood protection.	PO1
<b>IC 11</b>	Provide additional open space and expand pedestrian and cycling trails to improve recreational opportunities and strengthen community connection to the river.	PO3
<b>IC 12</b>	Ensure development is set back from the river's edge and strengthen the vegetation buffer along the waterway to ensure tree canopies retain their dominance within the landscape. Ensure development is also set back from adjoining parklands and conservation areas to maintain views.	PO1, PO3, PO4
<b>IC 13</b>	Protect heritage buildings as important features of the Yarra River landscape.	PO2, PO4
<b>IC 14</b>	Ensure development in flood affected areas is informed by the <i>Guidelines for Development in Flood Affected Areas</i> .	PO4

Central City		
<b>IC 15</b>	Protect and enhance native vegetation – along biodiversity corridors, through parklands, private gardens and local street networks – to provide habitat connections between conservation areas, and to enhance the community's sense of connection to the riverside environment.	PO1, PO4
<b>IC 16</b>	Investigate new or strengthened protection measures for high-priority tributaries.	PO1
<b>IC 17</b>	Ensure new buildings are designed to complement the Yarra River's landscape and maintain views along the Yarra River.	PO4
<b>IC 18</b>	Minimise additional overshadowing of the Yarra River, its banks and adjacent public open space to maintain amenity year-round.	PO3, PO4
<b>IC 19</b>	Apply integrated water management principles to optimise water supply, improve water quality and enhance flood protection.	PO1
<b>IC 20</b>	Deliver parkland and promenade connections along riverbanks in the city centre, activating the Yarra while providing opportunities for relaxation and recreation.	PO3
<b>IC 21</b>	Partner with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation and Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation on their respective Country 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
<b>IC 22</b>	Ensure development in flood affected areas is informed by the <i>Guidelines for Development in Flood Affected Areas</i> and the <i>Good Design Guide for Buildings in Flood Affected Areas of Fishermans Bend, Arden and Macaulay</i> (as relevant).	PO4



## Inner city reach – Significant places



**Credit:** Collingwood Children's Farm, Collingwood Children's Farm and Abbotsford Convent on the bend of the Yarra River.

### 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 was constructed in the 1840s to provide water to the adjacent flour mill, one of the first in Victoria. The falls and the adjacent area around the confluence of Merri Creek is a site of significance and an area identified for protection by the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation.

Dights Falls is highly significant to the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people for its association with past ways of life and for its spiritual significance. For centuries the area has been used for meetings and ceremonies and continues to be the site of cultural gatherings today. Significantly, Dights Falls was also the first meeting point between colonists and the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung in 1803.

Dights Falls is also a site of state biological significance. This part of the river has high native fish richness and diversity, with 12 species of freshwater fish being recorded, including rare species such as spotted galaxias and pouched lamprey. Effective operation of the fishway, which is installed at the weir, is critical to the lifecycles of fish such as the Australian grayling and short-finned eel.

The former Convent of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd in Abbotsford was founded in 1863. The site, now known as the Abbotsford Convent, is a thriving arts, cultural and educational precinct. Together with the adjacent Collingwood Children's Farm (originally farmed by the Sisters of the Good Shepherd but now separately

managed), the convent is protected by a Heritage Overlay in the Yarra Planning Scheme.

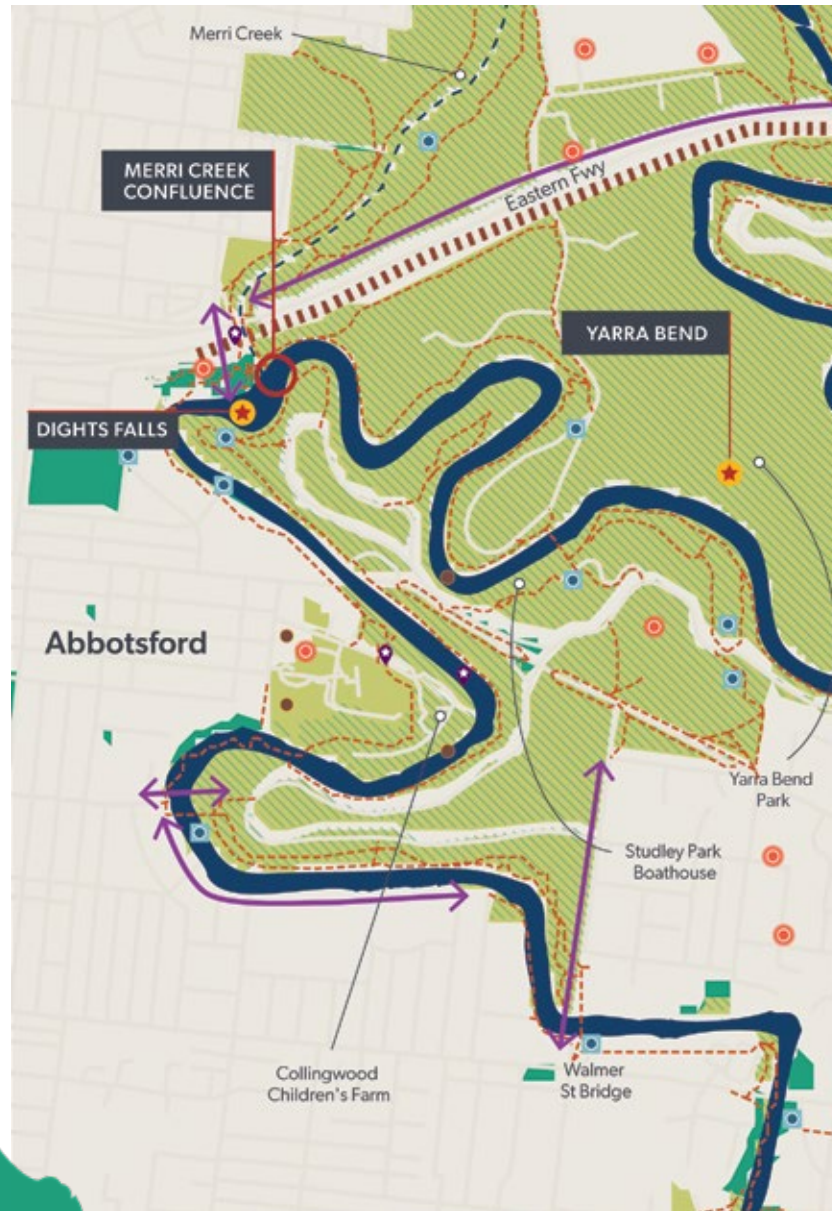
The Collingwood Children's Farm was established in 1979 on eight hectares of land between the convent and the Yarra River. The farm's mission is to provide positive opportunities and experiences through gardening and farming for people experiencing adversity. The farm is popular with families and young children who particularly enjoy the opportunity to encounter farm animals.

There is also a well-established community garden and monthly farmers' market. Recent proposals to improve the farm include a focus on regenerative agriculture and establishment of native food gardens that will support programs to raise community awareness of traditional agricultural knowledge systems and Aboriginal history.

#### Opportunities for future projects and alignment:

- Prepare an Abbotsford River Precinct Structure Plan for the river between Dights Falls and Victoria Street (Action 20 of the *Yarra River Action Plan*) to improve the Main Yarra Trail and provide safer access to the river for a wider range of users (and include all-abilities access). Partner with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation to identify and promote cultural and heritage values in the precinct.
- Expand and update visitor and education facilities for the Abbotsford Convent, Collingwood Children's Farm and Dights Falls and provide improved site interpretative information about the significance of these sites and their relationship to the Yarra River.
- Improve interpretation opportunities at Collingwood Children's Farm and support the ongoing partnership with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation to deliver this important caring for Country project.

- Enable Collingwood Children’s Farm and the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation to continue caring for the wellbeing of Country through the delivery of programs and projects to revegetate the Yarra River riparian zones and improve habitat connectivity.
- Explore opportunities to minimise impacts to the threatened grey-headed flying-foxes and birds that come into contact with the hanging slalom markers for white water kayaking.
- Improve connections between key sites, the river and the Main Yarra Trail, including providing all-abilities access at the Gipps Street and Walmer Street bridges and connecting the recreational trail between Gipps Street and Flockhart Street.
- Implement programs and projects to revegetate and maintain riparian zones and improve habitat connectivity. (See those outlined in the Yarra City Council’s *Native Vegetation Action Plan 2020–2024* and the Collingwood Children’s Farm landscape and vegetation management plan.)



**Legend**

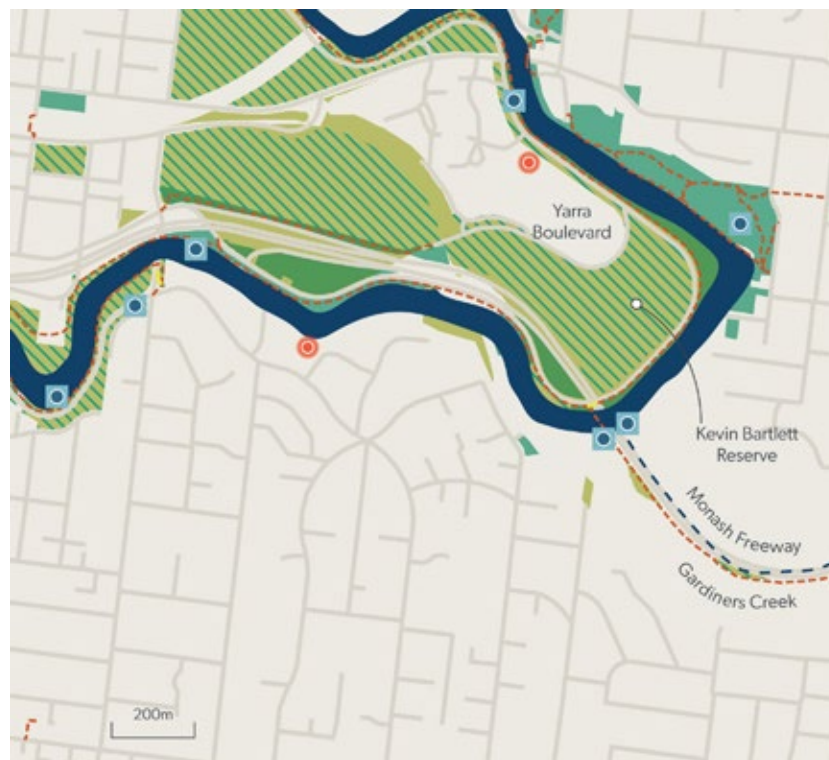
- ★ Key tourist destinations
- Cultural heritage sites
- Community activities
- Key views
- ★ Wurundjeri site of significance
- Wurundjeri area of protection
- Yarra River
- Yarra River land
- Municipal parkland
- Greater Yarra urban parkland
- Priority tributary
- Recreational trail
- Transport projects (indicative alignment)
- ↔ Improved access

### Gardiners Creek confluence

The confluence of Gardiners Creek with the Yarra River has been identified as a significant place in the inner city reach. The creek has been substantially modified by drainage works and construction of support structures for the Monash Freeway, with the resulting concrete channel and shading impacting significantly on the ecological values of the creek. While this impact will be long-lasting, it is possible that elements of the area’s environmental and cultural heritage could be reintroduced as a way of reinterpreting this important area.

#### Opportunities for future projects and alignment:

- Investigate options for improved environmental outcomes around the Gardiners Creek confluence. This includes implementing initiatives outlined in:
  - Stonnington City Council’s *Gardiners Creek Masterplan 2020*, which includes a revegetation strategy for the creek
  - Boroondara City Council’s *Urban Biodiversity Strategy 2013–2023*, which nominates this area as a potential biodiversity hotspot.
- Work with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation to provide interpretive information and artwork communicating the cultural heritage and historic significance of this area, both contemporary and pre-colonisation.
- Maintain and strengthen indigenous planting along the Yarra Boulevard and around the edge of Kevin Bartlett Reserve to improve habitat links.



#### Legend

- Cultural heritage sites
- Key views
- Yarra River
- Yarra River land
- Municipal parkland
- ▨ Greater Yarra urban parkland
- - - Recreational trail
- ↔ Improved access



Credit: Melbourne Water, Cyclist bridge across the Yarra River at the confluence with Gardiners Creek.

### Herring Island and surrounding parkland

Herring Island was created in 1928 by cutting a new river channel through the former Burnley quarry to help control flooding. With revegetation and other rehabilitation works, the island has become significant as a wildlife haven. Together with Burnley Harbour and its wetlands, McConchie Reserve and Loys Paddock further upstream, these parks and reserves provide important habitat in this stretch of the river. Herring Island, which also includes picnic grounds, a sculpture trail and art gallery, has the potential to be improved as a tourist attraction and to provide an opportunity for people to experience the Yarra in a relatively natural state, close to the city.

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

Opportunities for future projects and alignment:

- Investigate options to improve access to Herring Island and upgrade visitor facilities, including the sculpture park, and promote Herring Island as a place where visitors can connect with nature, heritage and culture for gatherings or events.
- Provide a greater sense of connection from Herring Island to Como House and north to Burnley Harbour, including interpretive information about the history of these sites and their connection to the Yarra River.
- Improve access to Burnley Harbour and wetlands, and Loys Paddock, and improve biodiversity values in these areas.



### Legend

- Cultural heritage sites
- Key views
- Yarra River
- Yarra River land
- Municipal parkland
- ▨ Greater Yarra urban parkland
- - - Recreational trail
- ↔ Improved access



Credit: Melbourne Water, Herring Island

## Central city

In the central city, between Punt Road and Docklands, the river passes numerous places of significance to Melbourne and the State of Victoria. This includes sports stadiums, the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain, Birrarung Marr and the arts precinct of Southbank.

Key sites of Aboriginal Cultural significance within the central city include: Federation Square, a traditional meeting place of the Kulin; the MCG in Yarra Park, a significant ceremonial ground that was used up until displacement of Aboriginal people from the city; and the Birrarung (Yarra) Falls near Queen Street, where a waterfall and natural rock barrier separated the river's fresh water from salt water, also providing a crossing place until it was blasted away in the 1880s. Significant sites on the southern side of the river include the Tromgin lagoon, at what is now the Royal Botanic Gardens, and the former Yarra Aboriginal Village Mission that was just east of the lagoon.<sup>16</sup>

The river plays a central role in Melbourne's daily life and provides an iconic backdrop for Melbourne's international profile. A significant number of projects, which are currently in the planning or implementation phases, will transform the river's landscape within central Melbourne.



Credit: Melbourne Water, *Dolphins in the Yarra River, central city.*

### These are some of the projects that will transform the river.

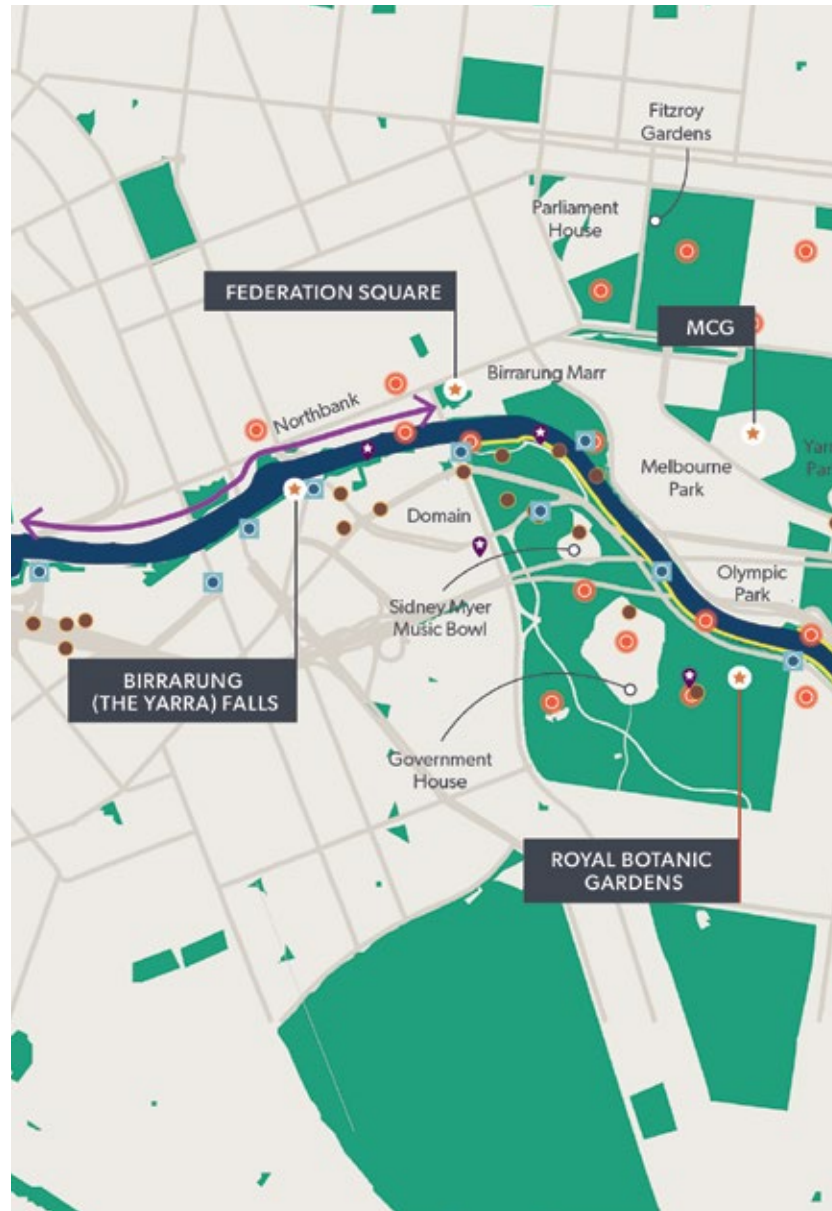
- Melbourne City Council's *Yarra River – Birrarung Strategy* (2019) is an overarching planning framework for the river between Punt Road Bridge and the Bolte Bridge. Organised around four themes of ecology, culture, place and movement, the strategy will guide collaborative actions and development. Strategic directions include: transforming the hard edges of the river banks with vegetation; collaborating with Traditional Owners to help tell the living culture story of their connection to the Birrarung; prioritising Northbank renewal to create an inviting destination adjacent to the city; and sustaining the civic focus by encouraging activation that supports an inclusive public waterfront.
- *Domain Parklands Master Plan 2019–2039* will guide sustainable management of the parklands located between the south bank of the river and one of the city's major thoroughfares, St Kilda Road.
- *Birrarung Marr Master Plan* (in preparation) will guide development, management and use of this important open space on the northern banks of the river.
- Southbank Promenade upgrades are improving this area as a key cultural and arts destination with new and expanded public spaces, extension of urban forest planting, management of commuter cycle traffic, new public art and protection of heritage elements.
- A review of Federation Square is considering ways to deliver a vibrant and attractive precinct with more public and commercial space, encouraging gatherings and providing better access to the river, transport links and sporting and cultural precincts.
- Victorian Planning Authority has prepared a planning framework for the Richmond to Docklands urban renewal precinct, covering the Southbank Arts Precinct and public spaces along the river.

- Melbourne Park, one of the premier sports venues in Melbourne and home of the Australian Open tennis championship, has recently completed its near \$1 billion redevelopment funded by the Victorian Government. The project includes better connections to public transport and the city, and easier movement into and within the precinct.
- The Royal Botanic Gardens *Melbourne Gardens Master Plan 2020–2040* will guide development of the gardens over the next 20 years. The master plan responds to a warming climate, increased recognition of Aboriginal cultural values, continued care for the State Botanical Collection, new public transport options (Anzac train station), and the evolving role the gardens play in the broader life and health of the city. New projects include enhancements at the gardens' entrances, with a new Birrarung Gate celebrating the Aboriginal landscape and increased recognition of the former connection to the Yarra River.

### Opportunities for future projects and alignment:

- Improve the connections between precincts for pedestrians and cyclists to ensure a continuous link from Richmond and South Yarra to the city, and similarly from the Docklands and Fishermans Bend precincts.
- Establish a series of well-connected public spaces along the river's edge between Birrarung Marr and Docklands, which are designed to celebrate its heritage and natural environment and foster a sense of reconnection of the river to the city.
- Set out a coordinated approach to design of the public realm across all precincts to create a sense of continuity along the river's frontage and to reduce visual clutter and support key views.
- Strengthen planting along the river's edge, along key catchment links and the surrounding street network, to enhance greening and biodiversity.

- Reintroduce a natural, riverside landscape character, where possible.
- Express the 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.
- Express elements of the river’s ancient landscape that are no longer visible in the city, such as Williams Creek (which flows under Elizabeth Street), 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.
- Investigate ways to activate and reinvigorate public areas where roadways, trainlines and existing buildings severely impact amenity and access along the river corridor.



**Legend**

- ★ Key tourist destinations
- Cultural heritage sites
- Community activities
- Key views
- ★ Site of Aboriginal cultural significance
- Yarra River
- Municipal parkland
- ⋯ Priority tributary
- Main Yarra trail
- ↔ Improved access