Strategic Projects

Recognition of the environmental, recreational, landscape and aesthetic values of the Yarra River corridor have been evolving over the last 30 years.

Several key studies have been completed in relation to development within this section of the river corridor, and provide the background to this project.

**Lower & Middle Yarra Concept Plans**

The Melbourne & Metropolitan Board of Works commissioned several concept plans in the 1980s and 1990s for the Yarra River corridor, for various sections between Punt Road, Richmond to Watsons Creek in Warrandyte. They are:

- Lower Yarra Concept Plan, Punt Road to Dights Falls (1986)
- Middle Yarra River Concept Plan, Dights Falls to Burke Road (1990)
- Middle Yarra Concept Plan - Burke Road to Watsons Creek (1993)

These studies recommended a range of implementation measures including public land management and planning scheme controls. They formed the basis for numerous planning controls along the river corridor which are in operation today, through the creation of Streamside Environment Areas, Floodway Management Areas, Yarra Valley Backdrop Areas and Yarra Viewshed Areas.

Within Boroondara, they were the basis for the application of the Significant Landscape Overlay Schedule 2: Yarra Valley Significant Landscape Area.

**Review of Policies & Controls for the Yarra River Corridor: Punt Road to Burke Road (2005)**

The State Government Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) commissioned Planisphere to review the policies and controls for development within the lower Yarra River in 2005.

The Study applied the principles of landscape protection to the lower Yarra River by assessing the river’s values, distinguishing river interface character types and identifying planning objectives that are relevant to this section of the river. Recommendations to protect and enhance the valued qualities of the corridor were made. This included non-statutory recommendations such as public land management and improved access, as well as a range of overlay controls in specific locations, including the Design and Development Overlay, Environmental Significance Overlay and the Significant Landscape Overlay.

The Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) undertook a follow-up project to implement the 2005 DSE report in 2010. This included consultation with Councils and development of draft planning scheme changes for the four municipalities, including overlays.

2005 Review of Policies and Controls for the Yarra River Corridor: Punt Road to Burke Road
Amendment VC96 (ESO1 & DDO31)

Amendment VC96 introduced interim mandatory height limits and vegetation controls along the Boroondara River frontage through the introduction of an Environmental Significance Overlay and a Design and Development Overlay. In addition, the amendment also introduced a new State Planning Policy (Clause 11.04-8) to ‘protect and enhance the significant river corridors of Metropolitan Melbourne’.

The Amendment was based on the ‘Review of Policy and Controls for the Yarra River Corridor: Punt Road to Burke Road’ report by DSE (2005), and reflected the additional work undertaken by DPCD in 2010.

The Amendment was introduced in response to a VCAT hearing regarding a proposal for three dwellings fronting the Yarra River at the rear of the site at 12 Coppin Grove, Hawthorn. This application raised the issue of the lack of clear controls within the Planning Scheme to manage building siting and design and vegetation protection along the river corridor.

Amendment VC96 represents a significant step towards stronger planning policy and controls for the Yarra River corridor, and has since formed the basis for the implementation of built form management and vegetation protection controls along the river.

Specifically, VC96 introduced:

• Schedule 1 to the Environmental Significance Overlay which seeks to protect vegetation along the Yarra River corridor and provides guidelines for development.

• Schedule 31 to the Design and Development Overlay which seeks to protect and enhance the environmental values and landscape character of the Yarra River corridor through the application of mandatory height controls (9 metre height permit trigger and a mandatory height control of 9 metres in most instances, or up to 12 metres where Melbourne Water requires additional elevation for floodway management purposes).

The policy and controls were made permanent through Amendment C210 in 2015.