4. Views Analysis
4.1 Viewing the Lower Yarra River Corridor

The way in which people experience and enjoy the Yarra River and its environs is intrinsically linked to how they view it. The visual connection of the viewer with the river - the water, the river banks and surrounding environment - informs their values and, further to that, their opinions about how those values should be protected and managed.

Introduction
This chapter provides an analysis of key views within the Lower Yarra River corridor, as another way of understanding the value of the river corridor and how people experience this environment.

The Lower Yarra River and its open space corridor are experienced from a variety of different locations including from:
- the river itself;
- the network of trails within the corridor (e.g. bike and pedestrian paths);
- key public use areas (e.g. picnic grounds and BBQ areas);
- broader open space areas within the river valley (e.g. sports fields and parklands);
- river crossings (e.g. road and pedestrian bridges);
- roads within or adjacent to the river corridor;
- topographic high points around the river corridor; and
- outside the corridor - distant elevated views from surrounding areas where the river provides a 'green-treed' backdrop.

Views are sensitive to changes within the natural and built environment of a landscape such as the Yarra River corridor. It is important to note that the clearest view of the riverside is often experienced from the opposite bank. This presents a particular challenge when considering planning controls as municipal boundaries generally occur at the centre of the river corridor. This Study presents the opportunity to apply an holistic approach across the municipalities within the study area to consider the impact that development is having on the river corridor.

Views Analysis
Many of the views within the corridor are dynamic, i.e. they are not from a specific viewpoint but are experienced while moving along the river’s edge by car, bike or foot, or along the waterway itself.

There are also a number of designated or promoted viewing locations within the Lower Yarra River corridor, such as the observation point at Dights Falls. These viewpoints have been identified as important in this study as they:
- are accessible by the public;
- are located on public land;
- are in more heavily used or trafficked areas;
- provide a view or views that are potentially exemplary, iconic or scarce within the Lower Yarra River corridor context.

The following elements have been considered and assessed as part of the views analysis:
- location and accessibility;
- visual description, including its structure or composition and aesthetic qualities;
- significance of the view;
- threats to the valued qualities of the view; and
- implications for planning controls, in relation to protection of the view itself and/or development considerations that may be more widely applied to the river corridor.

General Terms
View: A sight or prospect of some landscape or scene.
Panorama: An unobstructed view or prospect over a wide area, often in many directions.
Vista: A view or prospect, especially one that is framed and seen through a narrow avenue or passage.
4.2 Dynamic Views

Location and Accessibility
The Main Yarra Trail and Capital City Trail provide a shared pedestrian and bicycle access along the river corridor through the study area. Other local trail networks connect to the Main Yarra Trail, and these trails provide many different opportunities to view the river and experience the landscape of the wider river corridor. They are heavily used and a major resource for metropolitan Melbourne for both recreation and active transport.

The river is also experienced by boat; the depth of the Lower Yarra allows for a variety of boating activity including canoeing, kayaking or rowing as well as small and medium sized motor boats, all of which are popular ways to experience the river.

There are many places to experience the river by car. This includes the Yarra Boulevard as it winds its way through Burnley and Kew, the Monash Freeway, Alexandra Avenue in South Yarra and a number of vehicle bridge crossings. The railway corridor at Cremorne, Heyington and Hawthorn railway bridges also allow elevated views of the river corridor.

Description
Experiencing the journey of the river’s course, the landscape gradually transitions from its suburban setting into a more urban setting (if travelling downstream towards the city). The topography rises up from the expansive river flats and floodplains around Bulleen, through to the elevated areas of Kew, Hawthorn and Toorak, where the river banks form a distinct vegetated edge and backdrop to the corridor.

The Main Yarra Trail and Capital City Trail provides an immense variety of spatial experiences along the river’s course. The trail moves through floodplains, parklands and conservation precincts, and past institutional buildings and industrial areas. At times the river can only be seen through a screen of vegetation, or the trail is diverted away from the river; other times the trail follows the river banks directly. Bridge crossings open up panoramic views of the river corridor in both directions.

The Yarra River corridor can also be viewed from the waterway itself with a variety of motorised and non-motorised boating activities being popular within the Lower Yarra.

Significance
The range of landscapes and environments accessed along the river trails offer an exemplary viewing experience, of high regional significance. It is rare for a river in a metropolitan context to be almost entirely accessible by way of shared trails through linked open spaces, within a corridor setting that has, for the most, retained a naturalistic character.

Threats
Given the proximity of developable land to the river corridor in many locations, buildings or structures could potentially be visible from the river. Design and development must be managed to maintain the different landscapes and environments of the river. In particular, the protection of remnant vegetation, planting of new indigenous species and management of weeds is of high priority.

Planning Implications
On the whole, for all sections of the river, buildings, structures and fencing must be scaled, sited and designed to respect this sensitive environment and maintain the dominance of vegetation along the river corridor.
4.3 Road and Rail Bridge Crossings

Location and Accessibility

There are eleven road bridge crossings of the Lower Yarra:

- Hoddle Bridge at Punt Road
- Church Street Bridge
- MacRobertson Bridge at St Georges Road
- Gardiners Creek Bridge at the Monash Freeway
- Wallen Road Bridge
- Hawthorn Bridge at Bridge Road & Burwood Road
- Victoria Bridge at Victoria Street & Barkers Road
- Johnston Street Bridge
- Eastern Freeway Bridge in Kew
- Chandler Highway Bridge
- Burke Road Bridge.

These crossing points provide views of the wider river corridor setting within its suburban environment and, if travelling by car, a glimpse of the river itself. The road bridge views are also experienced by pedestrians as key crossing points between the parklands and trails on either side of the river.

The railway bridges at Cremorne, Hawthorn and Heyington also allow elevated views of the river.

Description

From these elevated points, longer-range views of the river within its busy urban setting are available, offering a different perspective to the one provided by the trails at the river’s edge. The views extend into the distance as river winds along its course in both directions. The views encompass the waterway corridor, riverside parklands and trails, and the rooftops and tree canopy across the adjoining neighbourhoods.

The elevated vantage point of the road bridges offers views of the river valley and its heavily vegetated corridor within its busy suburban settings.

Between Richmond, Kew and Hawthorn the steeper banks of the river create narrower bridge crossings. In contrast with Cremorne and South Yarra the gradual rise in the river banks increase the width these crossings. At Johnston Street and the Eastern Freeway views of the expansive network of open spaces of Yarra Bend and Studley Parks are afforded.

At all bridges, views along the river itself, upstream and downstream, are framed by the dense screen of trees that line its banks. Glimpses of the open spaces and parklands that lie beyond the river floodplains can be seen through the heavy vegetation of the low lying land along its banks.

Significance

The road bridges offer the opportunity to view the river from an elevated point. The momentary immersion in the naturalistic landscape of the river corridor is a distinctive contrast with the surrounding activity of the broader urban environment.

Threats

Given the proximity of developable land up to the river’s edge in many locations, buildings or structures could potentially be visible from the bridge crossings despite the heavy screen of riverside vegetation in these locations.

Planning Implications

Buildings, structures and fencing must be scaled, sited and designed to respect this sensitive environment and maintain the dominance of vegetation along the river corridor.

In some cases, performance standards, such as building heights, setbacks or site coverage controls may be required to manage the impact of development within high priority areas adjacent to the river corridor.
4.4 Pedestrian Bridges

**Location and Accessibility**

There are five pedestrian bridge crossings of the Lower Yarra: Walmer Street Bridge, Fairfield Pipe Bridge and Kane’s Bridge (Yarra Bend and Studley Parks), Collins Bridge (Gipps Street) and the Gardiners Creek Bridge. These crossing points provide views of the wider river corridor setting within its various suburban, urban and parkland environments. From these pedestrian bridges an immersive view of the river as a waterway corridor can be obtained. Pedestrian bridges also act as key connections between the different sections of the trail network on either side of the river.

**Description**

From these elevated points, close-range views of the waterway within its urban setting are available, offering a different perspective to the one provided by the trails at the river’s edge, or by the road bridges. The views extend into the distance as river winds along its course in both directions. The views encompass the waterway corridor, riverside parklands and trails, and the rooftops and tree canopy across the adjoining neighbourhoods.

In Richmond, Kew and Hawthorn the steeper banks of the river create higher bridge crossings. In contrast between Burnley and Toorak the gradual rise in the river banks and the greater width of the river in these areas creates a long bridge crossing. At the Gardiners Creek Bridge the crossing of the Yarra provides a distinct relief from the heavily modified environment surrounding the Monash Freeway. Bridges set within the extensive parkland of the river corridor creates a wide, vegetated corridor meaning that this sense of contrast in landscape around the river crossing is not as distinct as the other bridge locations.

At all bridges, views along the river itself, upstream and downstream, are framed by the dense screen of trees that line its banks. Glimpses of the open spaces and parklands that lie beyond the river floodplains can be seen through the heavy vegetation of the low lying land along its banks.

**Significance**

The pedestrian bridges offer exemplary views of the river from a close-range and elevated perspective. This allows panoramic views of the waterway itself, the riverside parklands or the adjoining built up areas where views through the tree canopy over rooftops are afforded.

The pedestrian bridges can provide a sense of momentary immersion in the naturalistic environment of the river corridor, as a distinctive contrast with the surrounding activity of the study area.

Owing to their impressive engineering and legacy in providing access to the extensive parklands of the Yarra River, many of the pedestrian bridges are of architectural and local historic significance.

**Threats**

At Gipps Street and Walmer Street, commercial, residential and other zoned land are in close proximity to the river corridor, and development is visible from the bridge, despite the heavy screen of riverside vegetation in these locations.

The Gardiners Creek Bridge is located adjacent to the Monash Freeway river crossing. Land to the south east of the bridge is subject to the Special Use Zone and future development could potentially be visible from the bridge.

The river corridor immediately adjoining the Fairfield Pipe Bridge and Kanes Bridge is included within public open space, and has limited potential for development. There is limited threat of development impacting on these viewing experiences.

**Planning Implications**

Buildings, structures and fencing must be scaled, sited and designed to respect and enhance the view experience afforded from these pedestrian bridges.
4.5 Other Viewing Locations

In addition to the bridge crossings and dynamic views of the river, a number of other viewing points exist throughout the Lower Yarra River Corridor.

These points provide views of the wider river corridor setting within its urban environment, as well as close and detailed views of the river and its banks. They are places that invite people to sit adjacent to the river and appreciate the waterway and its landscape corridor.

Within the Lower Yarra Corridor these locations consist of a mix of formal and more informal viewing points, within areas of open space accessed from the Main Yarra and Capital City Trails. In some locations viewing areas are specifically identified and are supported through the provision of seating, signage and other amenities. Other viewing locations are not formally designated but nonetheless provide a good opportunity to view the river.

Yarra Bend Park provides some of the most comprehensive views of the Yarra River in metropolitan Melbourne, owing to the extensive nature of the publicly accessible open spaces set upon elevated topography.

Dights Falls are a popular location for visitors to view and experience the Yarra River with amenities such as toilets, sheltered areas, seating and drinking fountains being provided in this area.

A number of other viewing points are provided within linear open space along the river corridor parallel to Alexandra Avenue and the Yarra Boulevard.

Other opportunities for viewing the Yarra River are provided within areas of formal open space along the Yarra River including:

- Loys Paddock Reserve
- Richmond Park
- Como Park North
- Yarra River Reserve
- Fairview Park.

Fairfield Boathouse within Yarra Bend Park offers numerous opportunities to sit and enjoy the river

Parkland along the Yarra River in South Yarra opposite Herring Island

Fairview Park, as viewed from Kevin Bartlett Reserve viewing point

Example of a Yarra River viewing point in South Yarra

Places to enjoy the Yarra River at Dights Falls