

3. River Interface Character Types Analysis

3.1 Middle Yarra River Interface Character Types

Analysis of the landscape river interface character types within the Middle Yarra Corridor is the first step in understanding how the river's environment and landscape can be protected and managed into the future.

Introduction

The landscape, topographic and built form character of the Middle Yarra River corridor has been documented through research, field surveys and analysis of mapping data and aerial photography.

The study area has been divided into six 'river interface character types' based on areas of common landscape, built form and topographical characteristics. In some cases, a particular river interface character type may occur more than once, in a separate geographical location. The six different river interface character types, illustrated on the map on the following page, include:

Type 1: Leafy Suburban

Type 2: Bush Residential

Type 3: Rural Environment

Type 4: Warrandyte Township

Type 5: Parklands and Recreation

Type 6: Yarra River Conservation

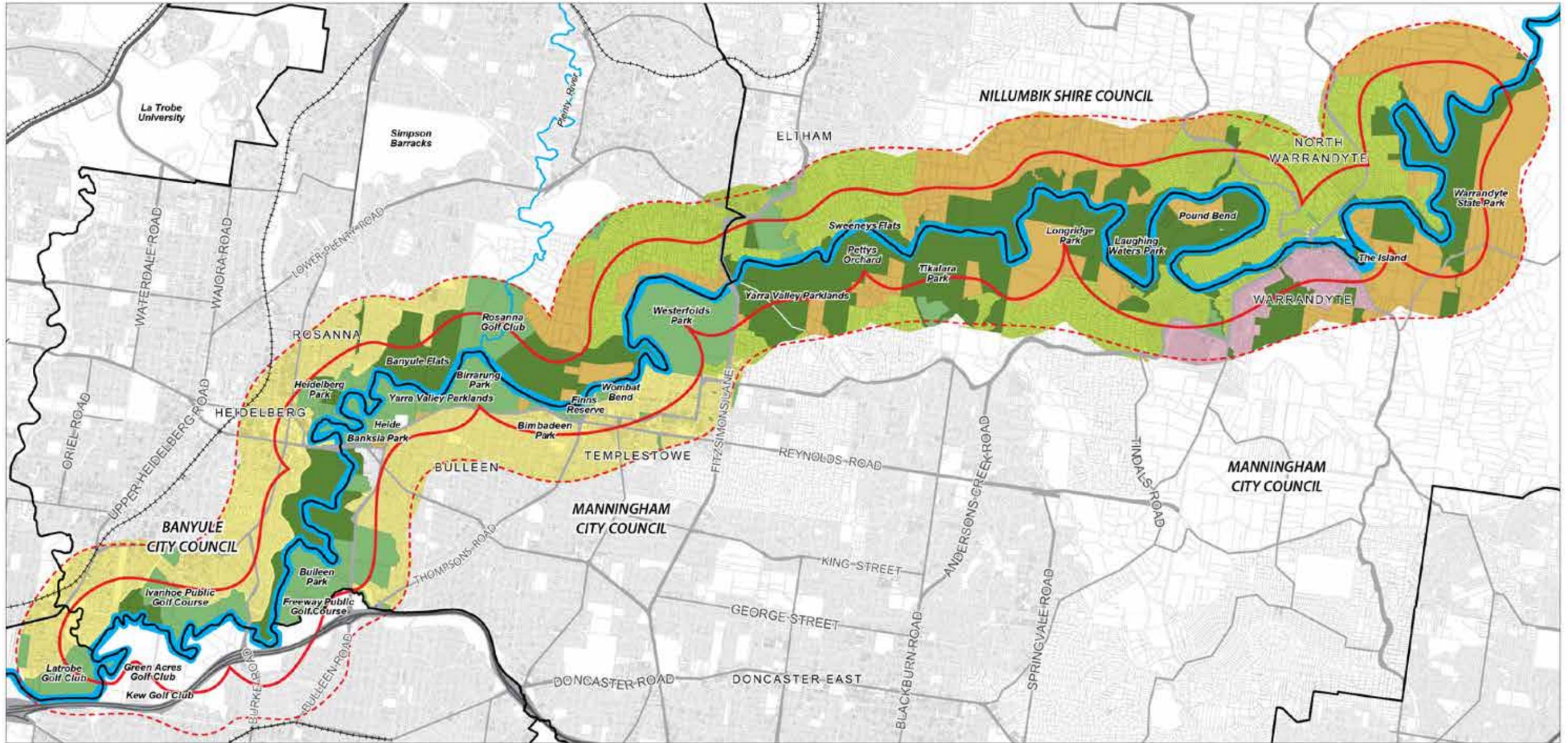
The characteristics of each type are outlined in detail, and address the following specific elements:

- Key Features
- Topographic & Landscape Character
- Land Use & Built Form
- Pattern of Viewing
- Other Values
- Potential Threats to Values
- Current Management

This chapter identifies a number of issues that can be addressed through the planning scheme which include:

- Maintaining vegetation as the dominant visual element in all parts of the river corridor.
- Buildings, structures or fencing that are visible from the river which can have an impact upon its landscape character and environment. This is a key consideration where developable land is located near or adjacent to the river environment.
- Where buildings, structures or fencing are visible from the river, ensuring they are designed to be 'immersed' within the landscape.
- Ensuring that the design principles for the Middle Yarra River corridor as a whole landscape are consistent across each municipality and implemented through the three planning schemes as relevant to that area.
- Ensuring that the approach to management of public land is also consistent with the overall vision for the Middle Yarra corridor.

This analysis informs the desired siting and design outcomes for new buildings, structures and fencing (e.g. setbacks, height, site coverage etc.) that are discussed in the following chapters.



LEGEND

- Local Government Boundaries
- Yarra River
- Other Waterways
- Study Area (Primary Focus)
- Study Area (Broader Context)

Character Types

- River Interface Character Type 1: Leasty Suburban
- River Interface Character Type 2: Bush Residential
- River Interface Character Type 3: Rural Environment
- River Interface Character Type 4: Warrandyte Township
- River Interface Character Type 5: Parklands and Recreation
- River Interface Character Type 6: Yarra River Conservation

MIDDLE YARRA RIVER CORRIDOR STUDY
RIVER INTERFACE CHARACTER TYPES



3.2 River Interface Character Type 1: Leafy Suburban



The Leafy Suburban river interface character type comprises established residential neighbourhoods away from the river's edge, beyond the buffer of open parklands that surround this part of the Yarra corridor.

The Leafy Suburban river interface character type forms a continuation of the area identified in the Yarra River Review 2005 that included residential neighbourhoods within Kew, Ivanhoe, Alphington and Fairfield. These areas have a distinctively well-treed character, which complements the landscape character of the river corridor.

The Leafy Suburban river interface character type includes areas to the north and south of the river, extending for some distance beyond the immediate interface with the river's edge or parklands. North of the river are the neighbourhoods, within the City of Banyule, Ivanhoe, Heidelberg and Viewbank. South of the river, it includes residential neighbourhoods of Bulleen and Templestowe within the City of Manningham.

Key Features

Key features of the Leafy Suburban river interface character type include:

- Established residential neighbourhoods, mostly located immediately beyond the parklands and recreation areas along the river corridor
- Mature trees and understorey planting throughout private and public land (of exotic and native species), which creates a consistent tree canopy throughout each neighbourhood - described as the 'Yarra Backdrop Areas' in the Middle Yarra Concept Plan (1990)
- Single dwellings, one-two storey in scale, set spaciouly apart
- Flat topography of the Yarra River flats, rising up to higher ground beyond
- Main Yarra Trail providing access along the northern side of the river, limited trail access on the southern side
- Adjacent to formal and informal parklands, recreation and sports grounds, picnic areas along the river
- Areas of undeveloped land used for horse agistment.

Topography & Landscape

The Leafy Suburban river interface character type lies on higher ground beyond the river flats, which extend for some distance

on either side from the river corridor and comprise the buffer of parkland and recreational areas. This includes the prominent ridgelines and hilltops to the north of the river of Ivanhoe, Eaglemont and Heidelberg, Mount Eagle being a prominent hilltop that is close to the river, and south of the river, the elevated land in Bulleen and Templestowe.

Within the eastern part of Templestowe, the Leafy Suburban river interface character type extends close to the river corridor where the river's edge is formed by higher ground.

Gardens within the Leafy Suburban areas are generally formally planted with exotic or native species. Canopy trees and understorey landscaping have matured to form a consistent and distinctive vegetative character within the streetscapes and neighbourhoods. Within the older neighbourhoods of Ivanhoe, Heidelberg, Rosanna and Viewbank, the vegetative and landscape character is particularly strong.

The tree canopy of the Leafy Suburban areas sits above the rooftops to form an almost continuous backdrop of vegetation to immediate and longer range views from the river. The cumulative effect of this planting is most evident along the ridgelines of the hills forming the river valley, which are highly visible in the wider area and form a distant skyline of vegetation.

Land Use & Built Form

Both built form and vegetation are the main visual elements of the Leafy Suburban river interface character type. Land is predominantly used for private dwellings. Buildings are single or double storey and set mostly within formal streetscapes.

Mostly, buildings are only visible from the river corridor across the parkland or cleared pastoral land of the floodplain, stepping up the hillslope to the ridgeline. However, on the higher ground of Templestowe, built form close to the river's edge is more evident.

While some dwellings are of a reasonably large scale, their location at some distance from the river means that they do not visually intrude upon the river corridor itself. In some instances, use of stark colours or reflective materials are highly visible and incongruous with the more natural, undeveloped character of the bushland and parkland areas. In particular, the use of white, lighter colours or blue finishes, particularly when located below the skyline, are visually intrusive in this setting.

Building siting and design within many parts of these areas has assisted in the emergence of the highly vegetated character. This includes a low site coverage allowing space for new planting, retention of existing trees and building height retained below the height of the predominant tree canopy.

The built-up character of the Leafy Suburban areas forms an edge to the more open and naturalistic setting of the Parklands and Recreation river interface character type. It is important that new buildings are designed to sit comfortably within

the wider riverside setting in terms of their form, scale and detailed design, and most importantly, their contribution to strengthening of the tree canopy.

Pattern of Viewing

The Leafy Suburban river interface character type is mostly experienced via the Main Yarra Trail and the extensive network of open spaces and recreation areas along this part of the river corridor. Direct access to the river is also provided by many roads. Some roads offer views to the river flats, such as The Boulevard in Ivanhoe.

Other Values

Other values associated with this landscape include:

- The Yarra Valley is the traditional land of the Wurundjeri people. The waterway and surrounding land continues to hold a high value to Aboriginal people today.
- Upon European settlement, this part of the Yarra began a long history of farming, grazing and orcharding.
- Landscape, vegetation and environmental values are recognised and protected through the application of local Planning Scheme overlays.
- The iconic art deco 'Riverside Estate' of North Balwyn is protected through the Heritage Overlay within the City of Boroondara.
- In Ivanhoe, State heritage listed subdivisions by Walter Burley and Marion Mahoney Griffin sought to emulate the landscape and urban design of the English Garden City movement. Views from these areas to the vegetation of the river corridor are protected.

Potential Threats to Values

Key threats to this section of the river corridor relate mostly to the siting and design of buildings. Given the openness of the Yarra River flats, built form is particularly visible on the surrounding hillslopes and ridgelines. Existing issues include the use of light materials, colours and finishes below the skyline, as well as buildings that protrude above the predominant tree canopy height. The trend for larger homes and subdivision can exacerbate these issues.

Current Management

Land within this river interface character type is zoned Residential 1 or Residential 3, which applies to large areas of Bulleen and Templestowe. Within the Residential 3 zone building height is restricted to 9m or 10m on a sloping site. A range of overlay controls apply to precincts and selected sites on both sides of the river.

3.3 River Interface Character Type 2: Bush Residential



The Bush Residential river interface character type comprises low density residential areas within parts of Templestowe, Lower Plenty, Eltham, North Warrandyte and Warrandyte that have a distinctly bushy and 'natural' character.

The Bush Residential river interface character type features a strong landscape setting of tall native canopy tree cover, where buildings are nestled into the hilly topography and bushy environment.

Some parts of the Bush Residential river interface character type are located adjacent to the river corridor, while others are set back behind parkland or bush conservation areas. While these residential areas are of varying development densities, they all have a consistent naturalistic landscape quality.

Key Features

Key features of the Bush Residential river interface character type include:

- Spacious character, varied or hilly topography and the bushy, native landscape of the wider Yarra River environs
- Mature native trees and understorey planting throughout private and public land which creates a consistent tree canopy and native vegetation theme throughout each neighbourhood
- Established residential neighbourhoods with large lots and a low density of development
- Single dwellings, one or two storey in scale, some being large and solid in appearance, others constructed in muted tones that complement the environment
- Views to Mt Dandenong and the Yarra Ranges from elevated points of North Warrandyte
- Main Yarra Trail and other local trail networks providing river access
- Adjacent to informal parklands and bush conservation areas along the river.

Topography & Landscape

The Bush Residential river interface character type features varied topography. While many sections very hilly there are also areas adjoining sections of river flats.



This character type has a distinctive spacious character, particularly closer to the river corridor. The highly vegetated landscape features narrow, often steep, winding roads. Buildings are nestled or hidden amongst the tall tree canopy. There is a distinctively naturalistic landscape character of remnant vegetation and indigenous or native planting. It is essential that this planting theme is maintained.

Groups of large old River Red Gums define the character of some areas such as Fitzsimons Lane and Porter Street. Parts of this area are on highly elevated ground, offering views across to Mt Dandenong and the Yarra Ranges.

Land Use & Built Form

Many buildings are sensitively designed to sit comfortably within this naturalistic landscape setting. Frequently, buildings appear 'immersed' within the bushy, hilly environment, due to their low profile and use of muted, natural tones. Occasionally, buildings have a more solid appearance, constructed of brick and with garages fronting the street.

From most parts of the river corridor, buildings within this river interface character type are not visible, or only distant roof forms can be seen. In most locations, there is a buffer area of parkland or conservation area from the river itself. In some locations properties have direct frontage to the river, and the design of buildings on these sites will be a critical consideration.

Building siting and design within many parts of these areas has assisted in the emergence of the highly vegetated character. This includes a low site coverage allowing space for new planting, retention of existing trees and building height retained below the height of the predominant tree canopy.

Buildings on the elevated northern bank of the river in North Warrandyte are visible from the town, with houses nestled among the dense vegetation and perched up on the ridgeline. Buildings are also located on the ridgeline opposite the Warrandyte State Park, east of the town centre, and are visible from viewing locations within the park.

Pattern of Viewing

The Bush Residential river interface character type is experienced via the Main Yarra Trail, and the extensive network of parkland and conservation areas along this part of the river corridor. In some locations, direct access to the river is also provided by local roads and informal tracks.

As mentioned above, parts of this area are on highly elevated ground, offering long range views across to Mt Dandenong and the Yarra Ranges.

Other Values

Other values associated with this landscape include:

- The Yarra Valley is the traditional land of the Wurundjeri people. The waterway and surrounding land continues to hold a high value to Aboriginal people today.
- Upon European settlement, this part of the Yarra began a long history of farming, grazing and orcharding.
- Landscape, vegetation, environmental and cultural heritage values are recognised and protected through the application of local Planning Scheme overlays.

Potential Threats to Values

Within this river interface character type, it is particularly important that built form is designed to remain visually recessive to the dominant landscape character. Key threats to this section of the river corridor relate mostly to the potential loss of mature vegetation and canopy trees. Existing threats include buildings and streetscape treatments with an 'urban' style appearance, including bulky, heavily massed buildings, formal garden landscaping, exotic vegetation and large areas of hard paved surfaces including driveways and car parking areas. High, solid fencing is also a potential threat to the existing character of this river interface character type in particular.

Current Management

Residential areas within this character type are zoned Low Density Residential Zone. A range of overlay controls apply to precincts and selected sites on both sides of the river.

3.4 River Interface Character Type 3: Rural Environment



The Rural Environment river interface character type comprises low density rural residential and conservation areas within Lower Plenty, Eltham, Warrandyte and North Warrandyte. They have a predominantly rural character and strong landscape setting.

The Rural Environment river interface character type is located directly adjacent to the bush conservation areas of the river corridor. With a low density of development, hilly topography and many mature, native canopy trees, this area has a strong naturalistic landscape character.

Key Features

Key features of the Rural Environment river interface character type include:

- Spacious character, hilly topography and the bushy, native landscape of the wider Yarra River environs
- Low density rural residential and large 'lifestyle' properties
- Areas of cleared pastoral land, as well as areas of heavy native vegetation with mature native trees and understorey planting
- Main Yarra Trail providing access along the northern and parts of the southern sides of the river
- Adjacent to extensive bush conservation areas along the river and Warrandyte State Park.

Topography & Landscape

The Rural Environment river interface character type features varied topography. While many sections very hilly there are also areas adjoining sections of river flats.

This river interface character type has a distinctive spacious character, particularly closer to the river corridor. The highly vegetated landscape features narrow, often steep, winding

roads. There is a distinctively naturalistic landscape character of remnant vegetation and endemic or native planting. While buildings are sometimes large in scale, they are generally of a low profile and nestled among the tall tree canopy. It is essential that this planting theme is maintained.

Land Use & Built Form

There is a range of building styles within this river interface character type. Many dwellings are of a low profile and constructed of natural, muted tones, thereby appearing to be immersed within the landscape. Occasional large 'lifestyle' properties are more visible within the landscape, due to their scale and the colour or reflectivity of their materials. Development also includes rural structures and horse ménages. While some lots front directly onto the river corridor, mostly buildings are obscured from view from the river corridor.

Overall, the low density of development allows for the landscape character to be the dominant visual element.

Pattern of Viewing

The Rural Environment river interface character type is mostly experienced via local roads that wind their way around the hilly topography and down to the river. There are also sections of the river accessed by the Main Yarra Trail, and the extensive network of parkland and conservation areas along this part of the river corridor. Direct access to the river and the Warrandyte State Park is also provided by many roads and informal tracks through driving through these areas.

Other Values

Other values associated with this landscape include:

- The Yarra Valley is the traditional land of the Wurundjeri people. The waterway and surrounding land continues to hold a high value to Aboriginal people today.
- Upon European settlement, this part of the Yarra began a long history of farming and grazing.
- Areas around Warrandyte have been shaped by the gold rush history.
- Landscape, vegetation, environmental and cultural

heritage values are recognised and protected through the application of local Planning Scheme overlays.

Potential Threats to Values

Within this river interface character type, the scale, siting and detailed design of buildings and infrastructure is a key consideration. This includes new dwellings, sheds, barns, orchard netting or horse ménages etc. While productive rural landscapes and associated buildings and structures are an important part of the character of rural areas, if poorly designed or located they can potentially detract from this valued character.

This is of particular importance for buildings or structures on higher ground that are visible across the low lying open spaces, or upon ridgelines that are visible within the wider area. Muted colours and tones that help to minimise the visual presence of buildings and structures will be preferred. High, solid fencing or gates is also a potential threat to the existing character of this river interface character type.

Current Management

Land within this river interface character type is included within the Rural Conservation Zone. A range of overlay controls apply to precincts and selected sites on both sides of the river.



3.5 River Interface Character Type 4: Warrandyte Township



The Warrandyte Township river interface character type comprises the historic town centre of Warrandyte and surrounding residential areas, on the southern banks of the river.

As a historic township established on the river's edge during the 1850s gold rush, Warrandyte is now a place where the river within its metropolitan setting once again has an urban, built-up interface. The natural bush environment, winding roads and characterful buildings of Warrandyte create a unique environment that is a popular tourist destination. The surrounding neighbourhoods have a strong landscape setting of a tall native canopy tree cover, where buildings are nestled into the hilly topography and bushy environment. The Warrandyte State Park surrounds the township to the east and west.

Key Features

Key features of the Warrandyte Township river interface character type include:

- Hilly topography and the bushy, native landscape of the wider Yarra River environs
- Established residential neighbourhoods at varying densities, ranging from typical suburban densities to large residential allotments
- Many dwellings, one or two storey in scale, sensitively designed to appear 'immersed' within the surrounding bush environment and follow the contour of the land
- Historic Warrandyte township with heritage and character buildings that have direct river frontage
- The Warrandyte State Park which surrounds the township, including Pound Bend
- Shared trail networks providing river access and busy linked open spaces along the river's edge.

Topography & Landscape

The Warrandyte Township river interface character type features varied topography. While many sections very hilly there are also areas adjoining sections of river flats.

This river interface character type has a distinctive bushy character throughout, and particularly closer to the river corridor. The highly vegetated landscape features narrow, often steep, winding roads. Buildings are nestled or hidden amongst the tall tree canopy. There is a distinctively naturalistic landscape character of remnant vegetation and endemic or native planting. It is essential that this planting theme is maintained.

Land Use & Built Form

The main street of Warrandyte (Yarra Street) has a semi-rural village character, within a highly vegetated landscape setting. The river corridor runs alongside the main street and is a key aspect of the town's character. Properties on the northern side of the street form the interface with the river and its network of open spaces. There are many car parks along the river's edge in the commercial areas.

Building styles along the main street are varied. There are many Victorian era buildings, which are an integral part of Warrandyte's character. A number of contemporary buildings employ bright colours which should be avoided. Dark red, dark green and pale yellow work well in the main street. The new Warrandyte Community Centre is a great example of contextually responsive design and sets a useful precedent for the area, with use of natural materials and muted colours.

Within residential neighbourhoods, many buildings are sensitively designed to sit comfortably within this naturalistic landscape setting. Frequently, buildings appear 'immersed' within the bushy, hilly environment, due to their low profile and use of muted, natural tones.

Occasionally, buildings have a more solid appearance, constructed of brick and with garages fronting the street. This type of development is out of character and should be avoided. In some locations properties have direct frontage to the river, and the design of buildings on these sites will be a critical consideration.

Building siting and design has assisted in the retention of the area's highly vegetated character. This includes a low site coverage allowing space for new planting, retention of existing trees and building height retained below the height of the predominant tree canopy.

Pattern of Viewing

The Warrandyte Township river interface character type is experienced via the main through roads, local road network, the many shared trails and the extensive network of parkland, conservation areas and recreation spaces along this part of the river corridor. In the Warrandyte township, Yarra Street and Everard Drive run directly alongside the river's edge and the river can be seen when travelling by car. In other locations, direct access to the river is also provided by local roads and informal tracks.

Other Values

Other values associated with this landscape include:

- The Yarra Valley is the traditional land of the Wurundjeri people. The waterway and surrounding land continues to hold a high value to Aboriginal people today.

- Upon European settlement, this part of the Yarra began a long history of farming, grazing and orcharding.
- Warrandyte was the scene of the first gold discovery in Victoria, in 1851. The historic Warrandyte township is a popular visitor destination.
- Landscape, vegetation, environmental and cultural heritage values are recognised and protected through the application of local Planning Scheme overlays.

Potential Threats to Values

Within this river interface character type, it is particularly important that built form is designed to remain visually recessive to the dominant topographic and landscape character. Key threats relate mostly to the over-development of lots and potential loss of mature vegetation and canopy trees as a result.

Significant potential threats relate to buildings and streetscape treatments with an 'urban' style appearance, such as: bulky, heavily massed buildings; the use of bright colours and materials; painting of brick or stonework; formal landscaping with extensive lawns and exotic vegetation; large areas of hard paved surfaces including driveways and car parking areas; high, solid fencing and gates.

In the town centre, buildings should protect the strong heritage and character values. The interface of commercial areas, recreation areas and car parks near the river is also a key factor for consideration. Areas for public space or events need to be preserved as a part of the town's character.

Signage is also an important consideration within the streetscape, including advertising and directional signage. Adequate information must be provided for visitors to Warrandyte, while ensuring that signs reflect the semi-rural character.

The potential visibility of buildings on the northern banks of the river, due to vegetation removal or bulky, inappropriate design, is a key consideration.

Current Management

Residential areas within this river interface character type are zoned Residential 1 and Commercial 1. A range of overlay controls apply to precincts and selected sites on both sides of the river.

3.6 River Interface Character Type 5: Parklands & Recreation



The Parklands & Recreation river interface character type comprises the extensive network of open spaces and recreation reserves along the river's edge, which are located within the western half of the study area, from Burke Road to Eltham.

The Parklands & Recreation river interface character type comprises the many formalised open spaces and recreation reserves that lie on the flat land of the river's floodplain, and follow the river corridor within its broader suburban setting. They provide an invaluable buffer of landscape and vegetation to the residential areas of the Leafy Suburban river interface character type (and in some instances Bush Residential river interface character type) that lie beyond the riverside open spaces.

Key Features

Key features of the Parklands & Recreation river interface character type include:

- Flat topography of the river's floodplains, with many wetlands and billabongs
- Locally and regionally significant open space network of formalised open spaces and recreation facilities including golf courses, sports ovals (both private and public access), picnic areas and playgrounds
- Main Yarra Trail providing access along the northern and parts of the southern sides of the river
- Heide Museum of Modern Art and surrounding parklands
- Landscape and vegetation buffer between river corridor and residential areas beyond.

Topography & Landscape

The Parklands and Recreation river interface character type features flat topography alongside the river banks, being located within the river's floodplains which are unsuited for development. For areas within this river interface character type further beyond, the topography is undulating.

Many parts of this river interface character type comprise

formally designed open spaces, for active or passive recreation. Some places comprise land formerly used for farming. These areas are all well-vegetated with mature trees, however the river environs do not have a naturalistic character.

In other parts, the river interface character type has a distinctly more naturalistic, bushy character, where the parklands are informally designed, or feature areas of wilderness. This includes Westerfolds Park and Birrarung Park. There are also a number of large wetland areas, some of which are ephemeral and only fill after periods of rain.

Land Use & Built Form

Buildings and structures within this river interface character type are those ancillary to the recreational role of the spaces, such as amenity blocks, sports ground buildings or seating and high chain wire fencing. There are also playgrounds and picnic ground structures such as seats and shelters. The buildings and structures are generally well-designed and suited to the recreational role of these spaces.

The Heide Museum complex features a number of architecturally significant buildings set within formally designed gardens parklands. In Westerfolds Park, the 'Manor' is a historic landmark.

In some locations buildings within the adjacent residential areas on higher ground are visible across parklands or through vegetation.

Pattern of Viewing

The Parklands and Recreation river interface character type is experienced via the Main Yarra Trail, and other connecting trails or pathways throughout the open spaces. There is also vehicular access to the recreation reserves.

Other Values

Other values associated with this landscape include:

- The Yarra Valley is the traditional land of the Wurundjeri people. The waterway and surround land continues to hold a high value to Aboriginal people today.
- Upon European settlement, this part of the Yarra began a long history of farming and grazing.
- This section of the Yarra corridor is classified as 'Riparian Floodplain Woodland' and 'Grassy Woodlands' and features River Red Gum and Manna Gum wetlands.
- While significant clearing of vegetation has resulted in loss

of habitat, these parts of the river corridor are still home to a wide range of flora and fauna. This includes insects, birds, frogs, wombats and platypus.

- Wetland areas in particular support a high diversity of species, including wetland birds. Westerfolds Park is home to a population of Eastern Grey Kangaroos.
- This part of the Yarra River, including Heide, was a popular location for artists of the Heidelberg School, and the artist's trail provides interpretive signage and images of paintings.
- The recreational, environmental and cultural attractions of the Parklands and Recreation river interface character type are of high local and regional significance to the people of Melbourne.
- Environmental and cultural heritage values are recognised and protected through the application of local Planning Scheme overlays.
- Banyule Council is currently pursuing a State heritage register listing for Warringal Parklands.

Potential Threats to Values

As public parklands, there is limited new development occurring in this river interface character type. However, new buildings or structures associated with its recreational function could potentially form a threat to its character through inappropriate scale or detailed design. Public land managers must ensure that buildings and structures are designed to remain visually recessive to vegetation, and, where visible from the river's edge, designed to complement the naturalistic environment of the river corridor.

Environmental management issues could also affect the character of this river interface character type, particularly the issue of weed infestation. Development outside of the river interface character type within adjoining built-up areas could potentially affect the naturalistic character of these riverside spaces.

Current Management

Land within this river interface character type is mostly included in the Public Parks and Recreation Zone. There are small areas within the Urban Floodway Zone. A range of overlay controls apply to precincts and selected sites on both sides of the river. Management plans also apply to some public parks.



3.7 River Interface Character Type 6: Yarra River Conservation



The Yarra River Conservation river interface character type comprises the many discrete areas of bushland or conservation reserves along the river's edge, which are located throughout the study area.

The Yarra River Conservation river interface character type includes all land zoned within the Public Conservation and Resource Zone that is set aside for retention as bushland or wetlands. These areas are located at various points along the length of the Middle Yarra Corridor where the river is retained in its most natural setting. Most are accessible to the public as parklands or designated State Parks. They provide an invaluable habitat for the range of flora and fauna along the river's course, and are also a heavily landscaped buffer to residential areas beyond.

Key Features

Key features of the Yarra River Conservation river interface character type include:

- Flat topography of the river's floodplains, with many wetlands and billabongs, rising to the steep river banks at Eltham and Warrandyte
- Locally and regionally significant open space network of parklands and conservation areas
- Important habitat areas for numerous of flora and fauna species
- Discreet and minimal visitor facilities such as picnic areas and amenities
- Main Yarra Trail providing access along the northern and parts of the southern sides of the river
- Landscape and vegetation buffer between river corridor and residential areas beyond.

Topography & Landscape

The Yarra River Conservation river interface character type features flat topography around the river's floodplains in the western and central part of the study area, with many wetlands and billabongs. The topography rises towards Eltham and

Warrandyte, where the river banks are steep and the corridor more enclosed. For areas within this river interface character type further beyond the river, the topography is undulating.

This river interface character type comprises areas of natural bush and wilderness, some of which are included in parklands such as the Banyule Flats, Tikalara Park, Sweeny Flats and Yarra Valley Parklands. In the east is the Warrandyte State Park. These areas are all well-vegetated with mature trees, and the river environs have a distinctly naturalistic character. Around Warrandyte, heavy vegetation clearing during the gold mining days means that vegetation is relatively young.

Land Use & Built Form

There are limited buildings and structures within this river interface character type, which are those ancillary to the recreational role of the spaces, such as informal picnic grounds and amenity blocks.

In some locations buildings within the adjacent residential areas on higher ground are visible across parklands or through vegetation.

Pattern of Viewing

The Yarra River Conservation river interface character type is experienced via the Main Yarra Trail in the western part of the study area. Towards the east there is no continuous trail network. There is vehicular access to the conservation reserves and walking trails within the reserves.

Other Values

Other values associated with this landscape include:

- The Yarra Valley is the traditional land of the Wurundjeri people. The waterway and surround land continues to hold a high value to Aboriginal people today.
- Upon European settlement, this part of the Yarra began a long history of farming and grazing.
- The western section of the Yarra corridor within the study area is classified as 'Riparian Floodplain Woodland' and 'Grassy Woodlands' and features River Red Gum and Manna Gum wetlands.
- Around Warrandyte, there is a variety of eucalypts present, including Red Box, Red Stringybark and Longleaf Box which dominate the hill tops. Large Manna Gums line the river. There is also a diversity of mid-storey and ground

storey plants.

- These parts of the river corridor are home to a wide range of flora and fauna. This includes insects, birds, frogs, wombats and platypus.
- Wetland areas in particular support a high diversity of species, including wetland birds.
- The recreational, environmental and cultural attractions of the Yarra River Conservation river interface character type are of high local and regional significance to the people of Melbourne and recognised and protected through the application of local Planning Scheme overlays.
- Banyule Council is currently pursuing a State heritage register listing for Banyule Flats.

Potential Threats to Values

As conservation areas under public management, there is limited new development occurring in this river interface character type. However, new buildings or structures associated with its recreational function could potentially form a threat to its character through inappropriate scale or detailed design. Public land managers must ensure that buildings and structures are designed to remain visually recessive to vegetation, and sited away from the river's edge.

Environmental management issues could also affect this river interface character type, particularly the issue of weed infestation. Development outside of the river interface character type within adjoining built-up areas this is highly visible from the river could potentially affect the naturalistic character of these riverside spaces.

Current Management

Land within this river interface character type is mostly included in the Public Conservation and Resource Zone. Management plans will also apply to public parks. A range of overlay controls apply to precincts and selected sites on both sides of the river.

