4. Views Analysis
4.1 Viewing the Middle 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 Middle Yarra River corridor, as another way of understanding the value of the river corridor and how people experience this environment.

The Middle Yarra River and its open space corridor are experienced from a variety of different locations including:

- from the river itself;
- from the network of trails within the corridor (e.g. bike and pedestrian paths);
- from key public use areas (e.g. picnic grounds and BBQ areas);
- from broader open space areas within the river valley (e.g. sports fields and parklands);
- from river crossings (e.g. road and pedestrian bridges);
- from roads within or adjacent to the river corridor;
- from topographic high points around the river corridor; and
- from 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 legislative boundaries generally change at the centre of the river corridor. This Study presents the opportunity to apply a 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 view point but are experienced while moving on or adjacent to the river from a boat, bike or while walking.

There are also a number of designated or promoted viewing locations within the Middle Yarra River corridor, including the rapids observation point at Westerfolds Park and the viewing platform near Fitzsimons Lane. Nine key locations from which the river is viewed have been documented as part of this study. These viewpoints have been chosen 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 Middle 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 provides a shared pedestrian and bicycle access along most of the river corridor in the study area, up to its end in Tikalara Park. Other local trail networks connect to the Main Yarra Trail and there is also a network of trails through the Warrandyte township and State Parks. 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 recreational resource for metropolitan Melbourne. It is important to note that the clearest view of the riverside is often experienced from the opposite bank.

The river is also experienced by boat; the shallow depth of the Middle Yarra only allows for canoeing, kayaking or rafting, all of which are popular activities. Although fewer people experience the river in this way, it is perhaps the most significant viewing opportunity, where the river in its most natural state can be experienced and the most isolated locations explored. While this study did not include a survey of the river by boat, the significance of this viewing experience has also been taken into consideration.

There are also a few places to experience the river by car. This includes The Boulevard in Ivanhoe, several roads in Warrandyte and the four vehicle bridge crossings.

Description
Experiencing the journey of the river’s course, as described at the start of this Section, one can see how its landscape gradually transitions from its suburban setting into a more natural state (if travelling upstream away from the city). The topography rises up from the expansive river flats and floodplains around Kew and Bulleen, through to the elevated areas of Warrandyte, where the river banks form a distinct vegetated edge and backdrop to the corridor. The vegetation changes too as one moves along from the heavy River Red Gum forests to lighter forests dominated by Manna Gums.

The Main Yarra Trail provides an immense variety of spatial experiences along the river’s course. The trail moves through floodplains, parklands, conservation areas, former pastoral land, swamps and woodlands. 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.

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 its highly 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 Viewing Location 1: Road Bridge Crossings

Location and Accessibility
There are four road bridge crossings of the Middle Yarra: Burke Road, Kew; Banksia Street, Heidelberg; Fitzsimons Lane, Templestowe; Kangaroo Ground-Warrandyte Road, Warrandyte. 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.

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

At Burke Road, Banksia Street and Warrandyte, commercial, industrial or residential zones are in close proximity to the river corridor, and development could potentially be visible from the bridge, despite the heavy screen of riverside vegetation in these locations.

The river corridor immediately adjoining Fitzsimons Lane is included within public open space, and the higher ground to the north is zoned for low density residential or rural conservation. There is limited threat of development impacting on this viewing experience.

Threats
At Burke Road, Banksia Street and Warrandyte, commercial, industrial or residential zones are in close proximity to the river corridor, and development could potentially be visible from the bridge, 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. Specific recommendations will be developed during the subsequent stage of the project.

Example of visible commercial development and car parking areas
4.4 View Point 2: Pedestrian Bridge, Yarra River & Plenty River Confluence

Location and Accessibility
A timber bridge crossing along the Main Yarra Trail provides an opportunity to view the point of confluence of the Yarra River and Plenty River.

Description
From the elevated vantage point of the pedestrian bridge, immediate range views are afforded of the Plenty River corridor as it flows into the Yarra.

Both river corridors are heavily treed with mature eucalypts, including River Red Gums and Manna Gums, as well as dense understory vegetation. While the topography is flat in this location, the heavy vegetation of the river corridors limits the range of viewing.

Longer-range glimpses of nearby open spaces and parklands that lie beyond on the flat topography of the river’s floodplains can be seen along the pathway in the westerly direction. The Rosanna Golf Course is to the north-east, and the brightness of the greens can also be seen through the trees, contrasting with the muted grey-green of the native vegetation.

Given the enclosed nature of this view and the extensive parklands surrounding this location, there are no visible buildings beyond the screen of vegetation.

This is a busy part of the Main Yarra Trail and its is well used by walkers and cyclists of all ages and abilities. Here the Main Yarra Trail connects to the Plenty River Trail and residential areas to the north of the river.

Significance
This point of confluence of the two rivers is a significant location along the corridor, and traditionally it was an important meeting place for the Wurundjeri people.

The enclosed nature of this part of the journey contrasts with the expanse of parklands to the west of the bridge, and the openness of the trail alongside the river corridor further east.

Threats
Most land surrounding this viewing location is zoned for public use and unlikely to be developed. The Golf Course is zoned Special Use. Any additional buildings, structures or recreational infrastructure that are highly visible due to their scale or colour would threaten the significance of this viewing location. Removal of vegetation and weed proliferation is also a potential threat.

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. Specific recommendations will be developed during the subsequent stage of the project.
4.5 View Point 3: Suspension Bridge, Finns Reserve, Templestowe

Location and Accessibility
The suspension bridge near Finns Reserve in Templestowe provides access to the Main Yarra Trail. It is a popular crossing point for pedestrians and cyclists, and an opportunity to view the river for the many visitors to the Wombat Bend All Abilities Playspace.

Description
The suspension bridge provides a 360 degree panoramic view of the river and its environs.

This includes an immediate view of the river’s meandering course as it disappears around another bend, both upstream and downstream. In this part of the Yarra, the river banks rise gently and are heavily vegetated with mature, tall eucalypts and undergrowth. Upstream from the bridge the waters are calm; downstream, on the other side of the bridge, a series of large boulders in the river bed make the waters swirl and churn.

The southern banks rise to flat topography which extends for a considerable distance and provides for formal parklands with playgrounds and amenities, and these can be glimpsed through the heavy riverbank vegetation. Just beyond the northern banks, the topography rises more sharply and there are no views beyond this cresteine.

From the elevated point of the bridge, the rooftops of houses on distant ridgelines upstream and downstream can be seen.

With the many people crossing the river here, the suspension bridge is a busy spot in the river’s course. However, the vantage point of the bridge also reveals the real nature of the river as it would be experienced upon the water. Despite the activity, there is a strong sense of calm and tranquillity. The river within its natural environment is the presiding experience, and the distant buildings or activity are secondary elements.

Significance
The suspension bridge is an iconic and exemplary viewing experience of the Middle Yarra. The bridge itself is a beautiful sculptural element; the views from the bridge are highly characteristic of the river in its bushy, suburban setting. The bridge is one of the few opportunities for the visitor to experience the river itself (without travelling on the water), rather than from the banks.

Threats
The river at this point is generally buffered by land zoned for public use, or not directly visible from the bridge. However, buildings within residentially zoned land may be visible in the distance. Buildings that are highly visible due to their height or colour would threaten the significance of this view. Removal of vegetation is also a potential threat.

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. Specific recommendations will be developed during the subsequent stage of the project.

A highly visible dwelling, located east of the suspension bridge.
View Point 4: Rapids Observation Point, Westerfolds Park

Location and Accessibility
The rapids observation point at Westerfolds Park is a popular spot for walkers and cyclists to stop and take a break, and see the rapids below.

Description
The observation point provides an immediate range view of the rapids which are formed by a series of large boulders that lie across the riverbed.

The sight and sound of the moving, crashing water and the pedestrian and bike traffic of the pathway create a high energy location. There is a small paved area with seating and information signage.

The view is limited to the immediate foreground of the river across to the northern bank; there is only a limited view of the river corridor in either direction from this point.

The river banks in this location rise gently on either side. The bank on the northern side has a slightly higher elevation and is covered in heavy bush. Land on the northern bank is zoned Rural Conservation and there is minimal development, with no visible buildings.

Exemplary, Iconic or Scarce
The rapids observation point is a distinctive viewing experience of the Main Yarra Trail.

Threats
The river at this point is buffered by land zoned for public use on the southern side. On the northern side, within the rural conservation zone, buildings that are visible from this point could potentially be constructed.

Planning Implications
Buildings, structures and fencing (within the park and on the opposite bank) 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. Specific recommendations will be developed during the subsequent stage of the project.
View Point 5: Pedestrian Bridge to Diamond Creek Trail

Location and Accessibility
The pedestrian bridge from the Main Yarra Trail to the Diamond Creek Trail provides another opportunity for elevated, longer range views of the river corridor. The bridge is located just west of the confluence with the Diamond Creek at Eltham. Like other parts of the trail network, it is heavily used by pedestrians and cyclists.

Description
The bridge provides a 360 degree panoramic view of the river and its environs.

A longer-range view of the river is afforded here, being in a relatively straight stretch of its course. In this part of the Yarra, the river banks rise gently and are heavily vegetated with mature, tall eucalypts and undergrowth. Land flattens out into the surrounding parkland on either side of the river.

On the northern side, expansive grassed verges of residential properties and the former Leinster Farm which have a formal landscape quality are visible through the riverbank trees. On the southern side, Candlebark Park is natural and bushy.

There are no buildings visible from the bridge. At this point the river is wide and the waters are calm. This is a peaceful setting.

Significance
The Diamond Creek pedestrian bridge is a unique viewing experience of the Middle Yarra. The views from the bridge are highly characteristic of the river in its bushy, outer suburban setting. The bridge is one of the few opportunities for the visitor to experience the river itself (without travelling on the water), rather than from the banks.

Threats
Land on the northern banks is zoned Low Density Residential and properties have direct frontage to the river. The scale and siting of development here is critical to the retention of the river’s landscape setting. Buildings that are highly visible due to their height or colour would threaten the significance of this view.

On the southern side, land is included in the Public Conservation and Resource Zone and subject to public land management strategies.

Removal of vegetation, planting of exotic species or proliferation of weeds are also potential threats.

Planning Implications
Buildings, structures and fencing must be scaled, sited and designed to respect this sensitive environment and maintain the natural, undeveloped character of the riverbanks and 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. Specific recommendations will be developed during the subsequent stage of the project.
View Point 6: Mullum Mullum Creek Viewing Platform

Location and Accessibility
A timber viewing platform on the Main Yarra Trail offers an opportunity to view the point of confluence of the Yarra River and Mullum Mullum Creek.

Description
The Main Yarra Trail winds past the elevated ground of Petty’s Orchard and gently down the river banks to this point, where an expansive view of the confluence with the Mullum Mullum Creek opens up.

Beyond this point is Tikalara Park, located on the floodplains of the Mullum Mullum Creek.

Immediate range views are afforded of the Mullum Mullum Creek and the Yarra downstream; the view upstream of the Yarra is longer in range, until the river takes its next bend.

Both corridors are heavily treed with mature eucalypts, including River Red Gums and Manna Gums, as well as dense understory vegetation. The vegetation screens views to land beyond the banks and there is no development visible from this point.

This is a less trafficked part of the Main Yarra Trail and a tranquil environment.

Significance
The confluence is another special place in the river’s journey, the name Tikalara meaning ‘meeting place’ in the Wurundjeri language.

The expansive nature of this part of the journey contrasts with the sense of enclosure of the trail that accesses this point.

Threats
Land surrounding this viewing location is zoned Public Conservation and Resource Zone or Rural Conservation Zone. Any additional buildings, structures or recreational infrastructure that are highly visible due to their scale or colour would threaten the significance of this viewing location.

Removal of vegetation, planting of exotic species and weed proliferation are also potential threats.

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. Specific recommendations will be developed during the subsequent stage of the project.
View Point 7: Warrandyte State Park, Pound Bend

Location and Accessibility
The Pound Bend tunnel is located within the western section of the Warrandyte State Park. The park is accessed by car and includes a viewing platform at the tunnel, walking tracks, picnic areas and information. This is a popular visitor destination.

Description
Pound Bend forms a significant deviation in the river’s course, where the river turns back on itself. The tunnel was constructed in 1870 by the Evelyn Gold Mining Company to improve the prospect of alluvial gold mining in the area from which the water was diverted.

Today, Pound Bend is a popular visitor destination where the river in a relatively natural state can be appreciated, as well as the impact of Warrandyte’s gold mining heritage upon the surrounding environment.

The viewing platform offers a view of the tunnel and a short range vista downstream to the next bend in the river’s course. Walking trails in the park also offer numerous short distance views. In this section of the river, the banks rise up gently from the water’s edge and are heavily covered with tall eucalypts and dense scrub. Due to the deforestation that occurred during the gold rush era, the vegetation is relatively young.

The water of the open section of the river is calm. At the tunnel opening, the diverted water flows quickly over rocks, creating a small rapid.

At the point of the tunnel, no buildings on the other side of the river are visible. From other parts of the park there are occasional buildings or structures such as radio towers visible in the distance.

Located away from roads and traffic noise, the Warrandyte State Park offers peaceful viewing experiences of the river.

Significance
The Pound Bend tunnel is a unique part of the Yarra, and a rare glimpse into the rich gold mining heritage of the area. Other views in the State Park offer a rare immersion into the river environment in a relatively natural state, within the context of the outer suburban setting of Warrandyte.

Threats
The Warrandyte State Park and land on the other side of the river to the north and east are zoned LDRZ. Development in these areas has had a minimal impact upon the State Park to date, however, it is possible that future buildings or structures could be visible from this location, despite the heavy screen of riverside vegetation. Buildings that are highly visible due to their height or colour would threaten the significance of views from the State Park. Removal of vegetation is also a potential threat.

Planning Implications
Buildings, structures and fencing within the State Park and adjoining LDRZ areas 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. Specific recommendations will be developed during the subsequent stage of the project.

View Point 7: Warrandyte State Park, Pound Bend

Pound Bend viewing platform and walking trails
View Point 8: Warrandyte Town Centre

Location and Accessibility

There are numerous views of the river corridor within the Warrandyte township setting. Views are available when travelling through the township along the Ringwood-Warrandyte Road, which runs parallel to the river and offers views of the water through the heavily treed banks. Everton Drive to the west of the town also offers dynamic, panoramic views of the river by car. The extensive network of trails on the river’s southern edge offer numerous short range views of the river for pedestrians and cyclists. Crossing the river at the Kangaroo Ground-Warrandyte Road bridge, for both cars and pedestrians, reveals a wide, relatively long range panoramic view of the river corridor.

Description

Views along the river, upstream and downstream, are framed by the dense screen of tall eucalypts that line its banks. On the southern bank, views include the buildings of the township and outerlying residential areas, the busy trails and riverside activity. On the northern side the heavily treed banks rise up steeply to a high ridgeline and form a distinctive backdrop to the town. Outside of the town centre of Warrandyte, the northern banks are free from visible buildings. Within the town centre, buildings can be seen nestled among the trees of these northern banks and are constructed along the ridgeline.

The trails along the river’s southern banks, from this low point at the water’s edge, are short in range as the river winds along its course in both directions. From here, river access can be gained for boating or swimming. A network of parklands and shared trails extend along the river’s southern banks.

From the roads that run parallel to the river at a higher elevation, glimpses of longer range views along the river’s corridor are afforded through the heavy vegetation along its banks.

The elevated vantage point of the Kangaroo Ground-Warrandyte Road bridge offers panoramic, longer range views of the river corridor, township buildings and activity of the wider setting. These views are framed by the extensive tree canopy on either side of the river. This point also provides a clear and expansive view the water itself, which flows calmly downstream until rapids form over rock formations near the base of the bridge.

Significance

The views of the river afforded throughout Warrandyte are an iconic and intrinsic part of the township’s character and essential to the township’s value as a visitor destination. The strong historical connections of the river to the development of Warrandyte can be appreciated as a part of these viewing experiences.

This is a rare opportunity to witness the river in a relatively naturalistic setting, from numerous vantage points. At the same time, Warrandyte is the only location on the river corridor where urban development meets the river, outside of inner Melbourne.

Threats

Given the proximity of commercial and residential zoned land to the river corridor, a lot of buildings are visible from the river corridor. Buildings are generally well designed and respectful of this sensitive environment in terms of their height and detailed design. However, there are several instances of inappropriate use of colours or materials that should be avoided in the future.

Threats to these views include inappropriate development (in terms of scale, form or detailed design), vegetation removal and excessive alteration of the natural topography through cut and fill.

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 and the historic townscape setting.
View Point 9: Warrandyte State Park, Jumping Creek Reserve

Location and Accessibility
Jumping Creek Reserve, part of the eastern section of the Warrandyte State Park, is accessed by car and includes a viewing platform, walking tracks, picnic areas and information.

Description
The viewing platform and walking trails offer numerous short ranges vistas upstream and downstream along the river to the next bend in its course. In this section of the river, the banks rise gently up from the water’s eastern edge and more sharply from the western edge. The river banks are heavily covered with tall eucalypts and dense scrub. On the facing ridgeline to the west, the low profile of houses can be seen. While these are of dark colours or muted tones, and set low into the ridgeline, their presence diminishes from the sense of remoteness that would otherwise be experienced in this place. Located away from roads and traffic noise, and with a lower visitor presence than other sections of the Warrandyte State Park, Jumping Creek Reserve offers peaceful viewing experiences of the river in a relatively natural environment.

Significance
Views from Jumping Creek Reserve offer a rare immersion into the river environment in a relatively natural state, away from the activity of the Warrandyte township.

Threats
As part of the Warrandyte State Park, the reserve is offered protection through inclusion in the PCRZ and designation as a State Park. Land over the river to the west is zoned LDRZ or RCZ. Development in these areas could be visible from this location, particularly if located on the ridgeline, despite the heavy screen of riverside vegetation. Buildings that are highly visible due to their height or colour would threaten the significance of views from the State Park. Removal of vegetation is also a potential threat.

Planning Implications
Buildings, structures and fencing within the State Park and public properties on the other side of the river must be scaled, sited and designed to respect this sensitive environment and maintain the dominance of vegetation along the river corridor.