

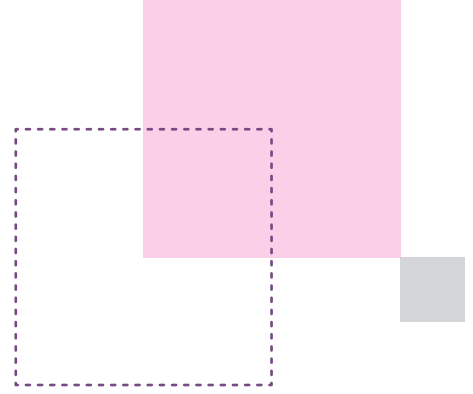
CHAPTER 07 LIVEABILITY



**Plan Melbourne Outcome 4:
Melbourne is a distinctive and
liveable city with quality design
and amenity**

‘Liveability’ is about the things that enhance people’s quality of life. For many years Melbourne has been regarded as one of the world’s most liveable cities due to its social and economic stability, diverse communities, distinctive heritage, high level of amenity and the opportunities it provides for a rich social and cultural life.





Plan Melbourne aims to maintain and extend the city's liveability by celebrating its culture, diversity and distinctiveness. The challenge ahead is to design and plan for a future city that protects the best aspects of the natural and built environment, supports social and cultural diversity, and creates a strong sense of place.

The Inner Metro Region is the historic and cultural centre of Melbourne. It is defined by its location around Port Phillip Bay and the confluence points of the Yarra River (Birrarung), Maribyrnong River and the Moonee Ponds Creek. The region has high cultural significance for Aboriginal people who have lived on this land for tens of thousands of years. As the place of the first European settlement of Melbourne the region has a great legacy of heritage buildings and streetscapes. The identity of the region is being continually redefined by new design and development and the influences of its many different cultural groups and changing population.

State of play

Landscapes and biodiversity

The Inner Metro Region is nestled between the paths of the Yarra and Maribyrnong rivers, the Merri, Darebin, Moonee Ponds and Elster creeks, and the Port Phillip Bay coastline. These water systems define the region's urban setting.

While landscapes of the Inner Metro Region have been significantly altered since European settlement, elements of its pre-settlement landscapes are still evident in its topography, waterways and coastline. These landscape features are complemented by constructed landscapes such as the region's iconic parks and gardens.

The region's various landscape elements, both natural and human-formed, are integral to its amenity, character, culture and environment. They provide opportunities for respite and escape, connect trails and habitat corridors and are important recreation assets.

The region's key landscapes and biodiversity areas are described in [Table 12](#).

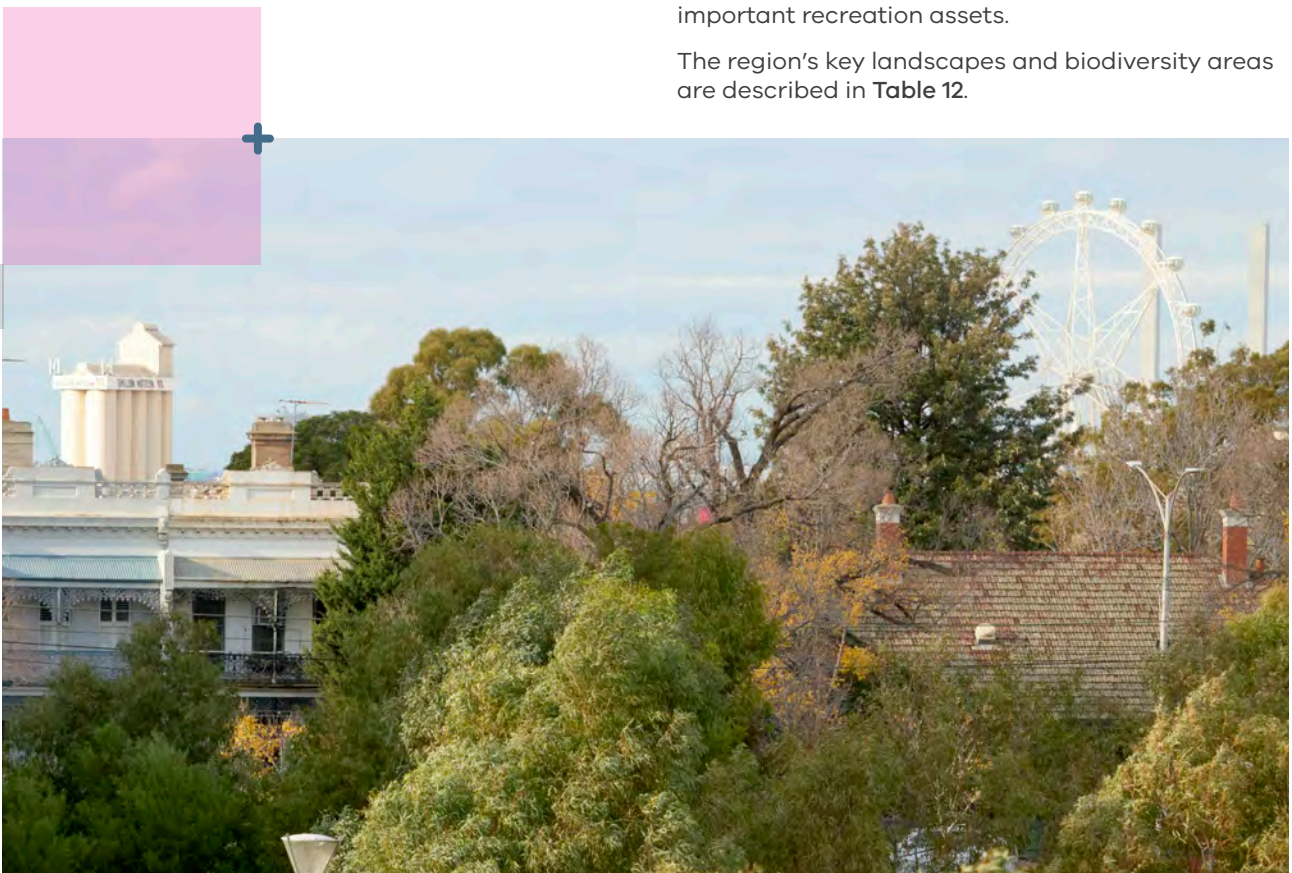


Photo credit: Tim Bell Studio

TABLE 12. Key landscapes and biodiversity areas in the Inner Metro Region

LANDSCAPE AND BIODIVERSITY AREA	SIGNIFICANCE, PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT
Port Phillip Bay coastline	<p>The Port Phillip Bay coastline of the Inner Metro Region extends from the Port of Melbourne to Elwood Beach.</p> <p>The coastline provides a range of functions: port facilities for freight and passenger shipping; recreational sailing and boating; a major open space corridor including playgrounds and recreation areas; an important cycling and pedestrian corridor; a place for festivals and events.</p> <p>A considerable amount of native vegetation exists along the foreshore which has regional ecological significance. The coastline also features stands of exotic Canary Island date palms and Norfolk Island pines, formal parks and expansive open lawns. The Inner Metro Region's coast and waterways have been heavily impacted by European settlement and urbanisation. There is a strong community and government commitment to their ongoing rehabilitation.</p>
Waterways	<p>The Yarra River flows into Melbourne from the Yarra Ranges, winding its way past Clifton Hill, Abbotsford and Richmond before changing course at Burnley to pass through the CBD, and ultimately meeting Port Phillip Bay. The Maribyrnong River and the Moonee Ponds Creek form in the hinterland to the north and west of Melbourne and discharge into the Yarra River at its delta. The Merri Creek meets the Yarra River at Dights Falls and the Darebin Creek in Alphington.</p> <p>The Yarra River corridor is iconic to central Melbourne and offers a natural break for residents, workers and visitors alike. It contains active recreation trails, is used by commuters, and is often a place for quiet reflection, particularly within its many parklands: the Yarra Bend Park, Dights Falls, Burnley Park, Birrarung Marr and the Royal Botanic Gardens.</p> <p>Elster Creek is a significant watercourse through the southern part of the region that now forms the Elwood Canal.</p>
Wetlands	<p>Wetlands that existed prior to European settlement have now mostly been reclaimed, including the 'Blue Lake' to the west of the CBD (near where Southern Cross Station stands today) which supported teeming birdlife and abundant food. Today, Albert Park Lake remains as a remnant of a former wetland and a reminder of the ancient landscape. Parts of the lake system at the Royal Botanic Gardens are remnants of a natural wetlands system of the Birrarung.</p>
Yarra Bend Park and Royal Park	<p>Yarra Bend Park and Royal Park contain the largest areas of natural bushland in the region and are a haven for urban wildlife. Other smaller areas of biodiversity form 'hotspots' throughout the urban area. Many are linked by habitat corridors along waterways.</p>
Formal gardens	<p>The Inner Metro Region contains numerous formal gardens, some of which attract high visitation. These gardens serve an important role in the display of botanical species and are also integral habitat connections. Many support significant old trees, some of which pre-date European settlement. They offer an important opportunity for refuge in the city and a sense of connection to the region's underlying landscape.</p> <p>Formal gardens include: the Kings Domain and Royal Botanic Gardens; the Fitzroy, Treasury and Carlton Gardens in the City of Melbourne; Alma Park, Catani Gardens and St Kilda Botanical Gardens in the City of Port Phillip; Burnley Gardens and Edinburgh Gardens in the City of Yarra.</p>

Aboriginal cultural heritage

The Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people of the Kulin Nation, represented by the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, are the recognised Traditional Owners of the northern part of the Inner Metro Region. The Bunurong people are the recognised Traditional Owners of the southern part of the region, represented by the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation. As Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs), both have responsibilities to protect cultural heritage assets under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*.

The lands that now make up the Inner Metro Region feature places and waterways that have cultural significance and continuing connection for Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Victorian communities, which is illustrated in the recognised locations of Cultural Heritage Sensitivity (**Figure 18**). Support should be provided to Traditional Owners to protect and manage these cultural heritage sites, cultural landscapes and waterways.

Publicly known sites of cultural significance in the Inner Metro Region include the Birrarung (Yarra River), Yarra Park, Birrarung Marr, Bunurong Corroboree Tree (the 'Ngargee' Tree, Albert Park), Kulin Nation Gathering Place (MCG), The Moreton Bay Fig Tree (Carlton Gardens), pre-colonial Red River Gums (University of Melbourne) and Birrarung Wilam (campsite on the Birrarung).

Fitzroy is an important location for Aboriginal people in the region and this is noted by significant cultural sites and activities such as the Stolen

Generations Marker, the Smith Street Dreaming Festival and the use of Woi Wurrung language to name the Bargoonga Nganjin community space in North Fitzroy.

Key strategic work in the region includes the draft *Yarra Strategic Plan*, which sets out the foundation for achieving the Yarra River 50 Year Community Vision and delivering on the aspirations contained in the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation's *Nhanbu narrun ba ngargunin twarn Birrarung (Ancient Spirit and Lore of the Yarra)* water policy and in line with the *Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murrong) Act 2017*.

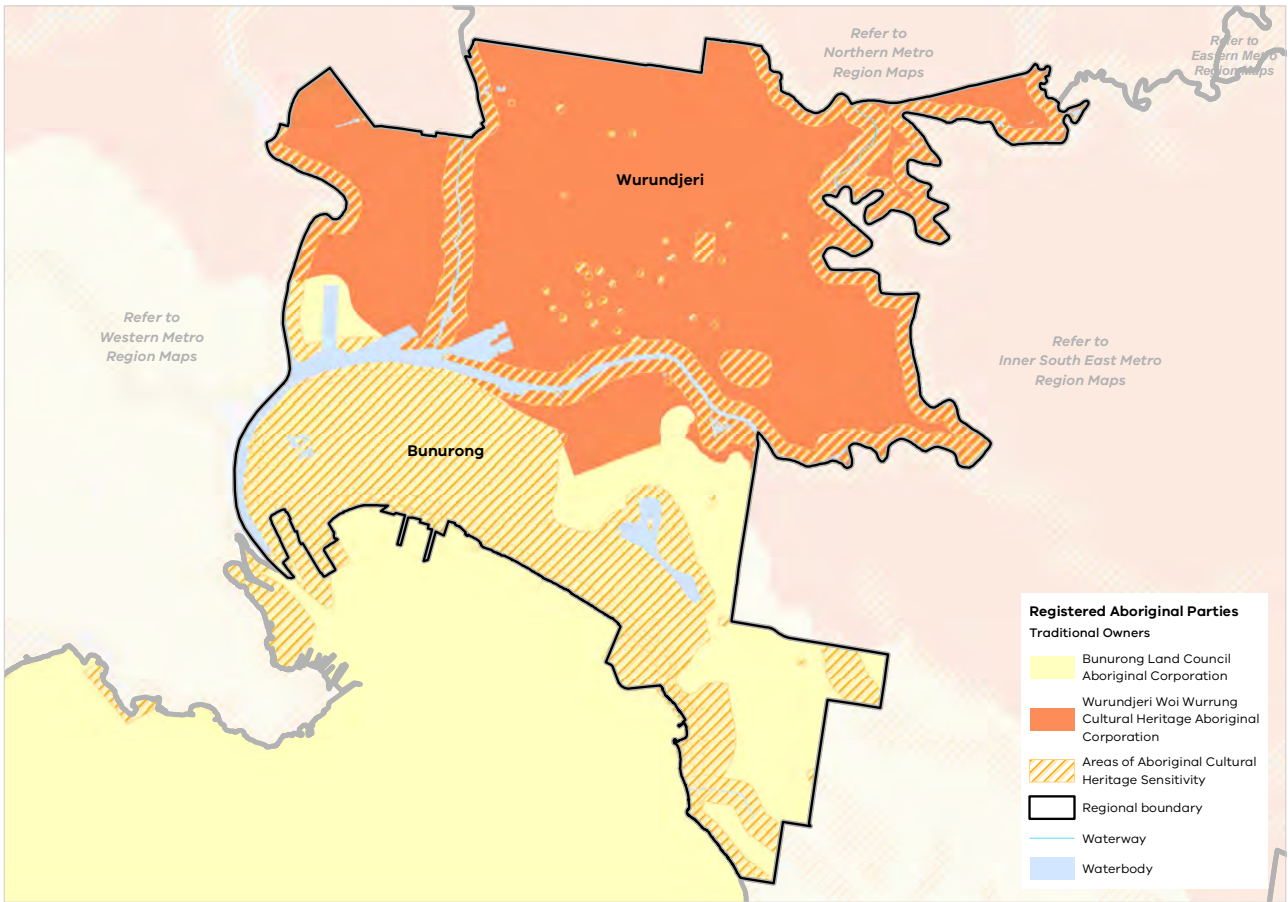
The *Waterways of the West Action Plan* (to be released 2021) will ensure that Traditional Owners are included in future management and planning of all other waterways within the region.

The Inner Metro Region is home to a number of regionally-significant Aboriginal cultural heritage organisations including the Wilin Centre for Indigenous Arts and Cultural Development and Wilin Garden (Faculty of the VCA and MCM, University of Melbourne), Bunjilaka Aboriginal Cultural Centre (Melbourne Museum) and the Koorie Heritage Trust (Federation Square).



Photo credit: Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions

FIGURE 18. Inner Metro Region Aboriginal cultural heritage



Post-European settlement heritage

The Inner Metro Region has a rich legacy of post-European settlement heritage, being the first part of Melbourne settled by Europeans from 1835.

The CBD is laid out on the Hoddle Grid on the northern banks of the Yarra River. This distinctive urban structure provided the foundations for the city's now renowned laneway network, which is woven between the grid's expansive street blocks and sets the scene for a vibrant city life.

The early city on the river soon expanded to a ring of adjacent suburbs including Fitzroy, Carlton, North and South Melbourne, Middle Park, Kensington and Richmond. The bayside suburb of St Kilda was populated as a holiday destination. The low-lying flats of the Yarra River were established as Melbourne's early industrial areas, including Collingwood, Abbotsford, Southbank and Fishermans Bend.

The Inner Metro Region contains numerous buildings of national, state and regional significance, and many are included on the National Heritage List or the Victorian Heritage Register. They reflect all aspects of the city's evolution since European settlement. They include much-loved landmarks such as Flinders Street Station, the National Gallery of Victoria, the State Library, the silos and Nylex clock of the Richmond Maltings site, and the Rippon Lea Estate. The Royal Exhibition Building is included on the UNESCO World Heritage List as a site of international cultural significance.

Heritage overlays are applied extensively to precincts and sites of local significance throughout the region, demonstrating the important role heritage plays in defining the region's identity and character. These include: the streets of Victorian-era workers' cottages, grand terraces, Californian bungalows or Art Deco flats; intact historic commercial streetscapes which define many of the region's activity centres; the modern skyscrapers of Melbourne's CBD and St Kilda Road; the civic institutions of town halls, schools, court houses and libraries; maritime features of the Yarra River delta and the bay; parks, gardens and trees; and infrastructure such as bridges, stations, tram stops and light poles.

The Inner Metro Region's cultural heritage is also defined through present-day cultural precincts which reflect the various immigrant groups that have made the region home: the Vietnamese community based around Victoria Street in Richmond; the Jewish community in Balaclava and St Kilda; Little Bourke Street's Chinatown; the Greek precinct around Lonsdale Street; and the Italian community around Lygon Street in Carlton.

Creativity, culture and entertainment

The Inner Metro Region's unique urban environment, comprising a rich cultural and built heritage, tourism assets, high-quality urban and architectural design and creative neighbourhoods, attracts new residents and a growing number of visitors.

The region is home to many of Melbourne's iconic cultural and entertainment institutions that anchor the state's global profile and reputation for cultural achievement. An annual calendar of major art and entertainment events attracts local, interstate and international visitors and contributes to the liveability of the region.

The clustering of key assets in the sports precinct (which also holds entertainment events), Melbourne arts precinct and St Kilda Road performing arts precinct contribute to a vibrant and internationally recognisable city. Key assets include:

- National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) on St Kilda Road
- Federation Square (which houses The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia, and Australian Centre for the Moving Image)
- Australian Centre for Contemporary Art
- Melbourne Theatre Company
- Malthouse Theatre
- Ballet Victoria
- Hamer Hall
- Sidney Myer Music Bowl
- Exhibition Centre
- Princess Theatre
- Comedy Theatre
- Her Majesty's Theatre
- Regent Theatre
- Immigration Museum
- Queen Victoria and South Melbourne markets
- State Library of Victoria
- Royal Botanic Gardens
- Shrine of Remembrance
- St Kilda Pier
- Station Pier
- Palais Theatre
- Abbotsford Convent
- Collingwood Children's Farm.

The region also features multi-use outdoor spaces that accommodate a range of entertainment uses including:

- Melbourne Park
- Birrarung Marr

- Albert Park
- St Kilda foreshore
- Flemington Racecourse
- Federation Square Swanston Street forecourt.

These larger venues and spaces are supported by a network of small- to medium-sized performing arts and music venues, studios, galleries, exhibition spaces and multi-use and outdoor sites. These spaces contribute to the development of artistic, creative and educational innovation. Clustering of live music and performing arts venues in Brunswick, Fitzroy, Collingwood, Abbotsford, Melbourne City, Richmond and St Kilda also contribute to distinctive and creative neighbourhoods, places and precincts.

The Inner Metro Region’s creative industries – spanning arts, culture, screen, design, publishing and advertising – are nationally recognised. Prominent broadcasting, film and sound recording, and specialised design services sectors are located in Docklands, South Melbourne and Richmond/ Cremorne. Melbourne is listed as a UNESCO City of Literature, demonstrating the significance of its literary culture. Creative organisations and artists enrich the liveability of places and spaces through cultural expression and are integral to the development of vibrant communities and a sense of place.

While the Inner Metro Region features a breadth of creative and entertainment assets, the accessibility

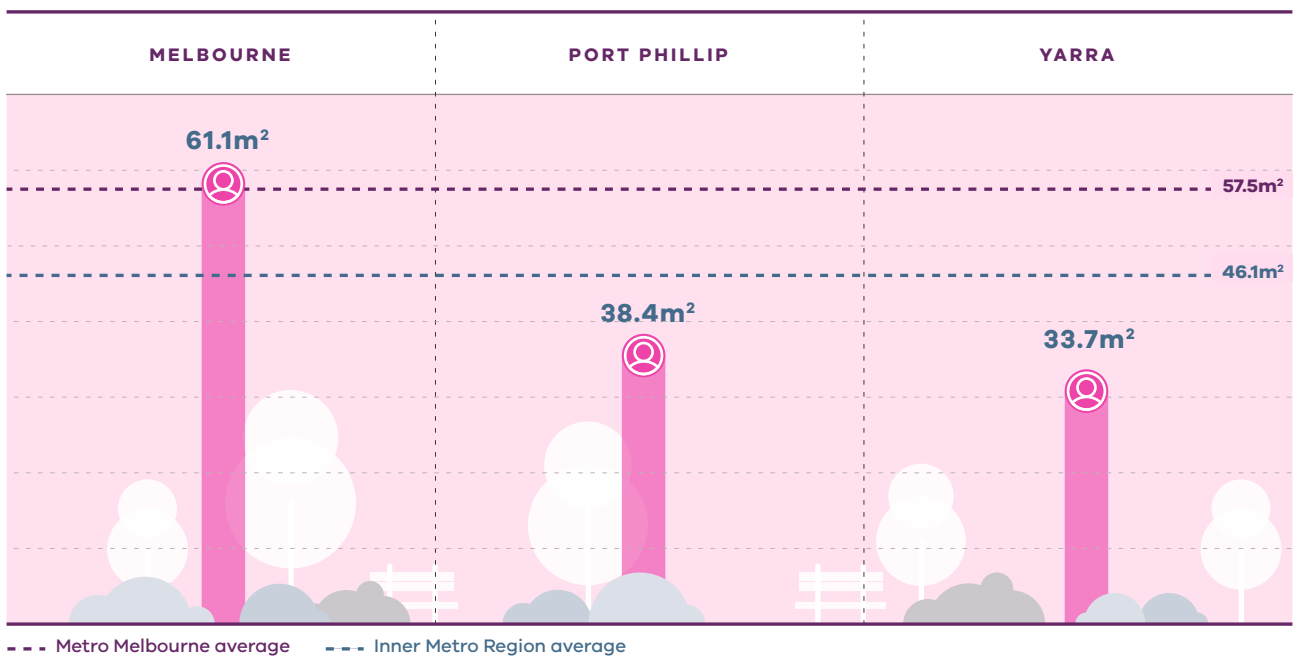
and safety of venues and streets continues to be a priority. Key performing arts assets in locations such as Sturt Street in the Melbourne LGA, require greater connection with the wider Melbourne Arts Precinct. Land prices and urban densification continue to be a challenge for retaining creative small organisations, micro businesses and sole practitioners in the region.

Open space and regional trails

The Inner Metro Region provides for an average of 44 square metres of public open space per person (as defined as land that is publicly owned and provided for outdoor recreation), which is below the metropolitan average of 57.5 square metres (Victorian Planning Authority, 2017). There is high variation in open space provision across the region. Melbourne LGA provides the highest level of open space per person, at 61.1 square metres; Yarra LGA provides 38 square metres and Port Phillip LGA provides 33 square metres (Figure 19). This reflects the presence of the major state and regional open spaces in the Central City.

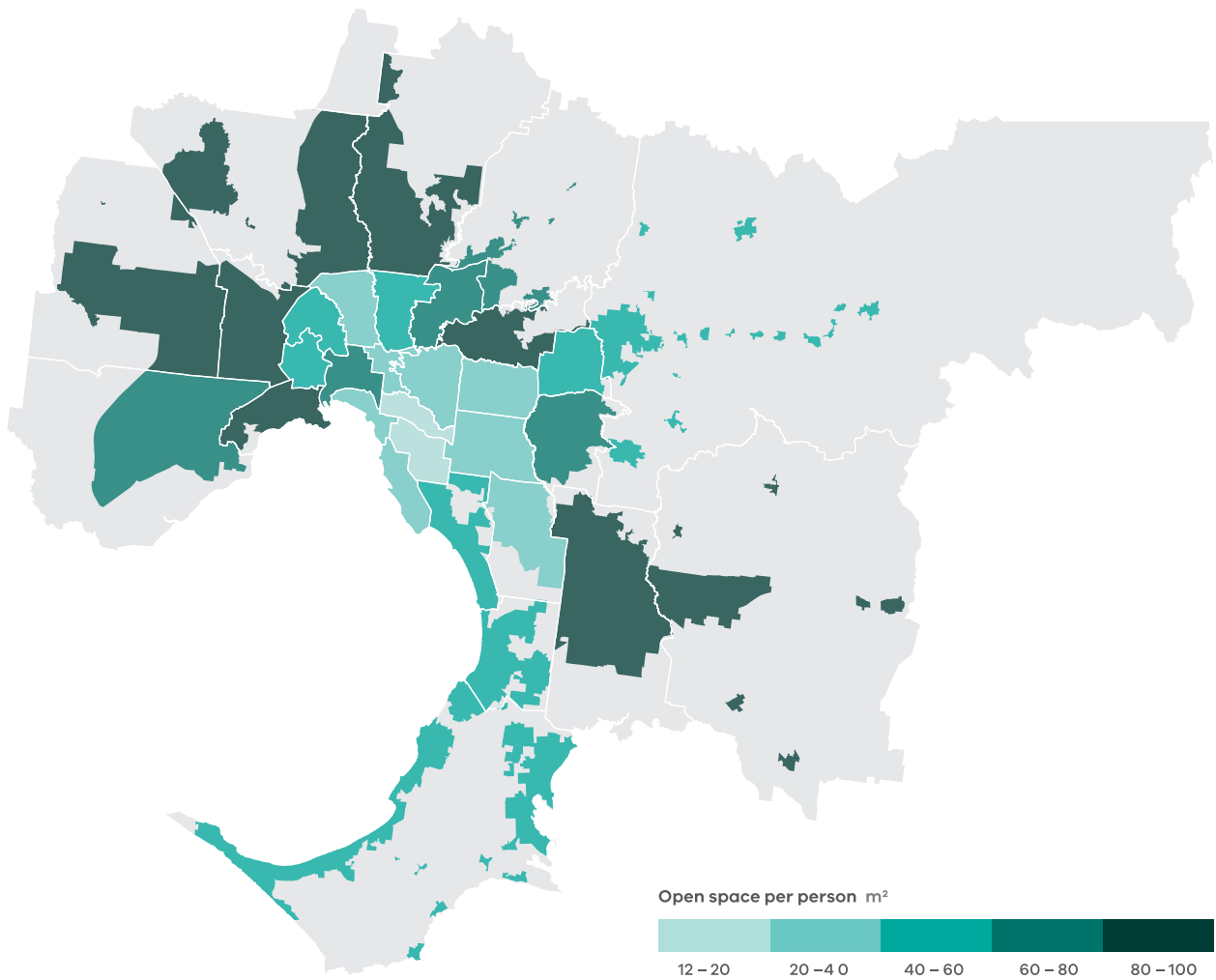
Open space per person across metropolitan Melbourne is shown in Figure 20. While the quantity of open space is one measure of provision, the function, mix, quality, accessibility and proximity of open space also need to be considered.

FIGURE 19. Open space per person for Inner Metro Region LGAs



Source: Victorian Planning Authority (2017) *Metropolitan Open Space Network: Provision and Distribution*, State of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia.

FIGURE 20. Open space per person for metropolitan LGAs



Source: Data from the Victorian Planning Authority Metropolitan Open Space Network portal, 2016
Note: only areas within the UGB were calculated and mapped in this figure. Areas outside the UGB are shown in grey.



Photo credit: Tim Bell Studio



Photo credit: Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions/ Lynton Crabb

The Inner Metro Region has an established network of regional open spaces, many of which were created soon after Melbourne's settlement and are of high cultural significance. This includes numerous parklands, formal gardens and other types of urban public space such as the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain, Fitzroy Gardens, Carlton Gardens, Edinburgh Gardens, Yarra Bend Park, Fawkner Park, Albert Park and Royal Park.

Major open spaces within the region are also located along its waterway corridors of the Yarra River, Maribyrnong River, and the Moonee Ponds, Merri and Darebin creeks, as well as Port Phillip Bay coastline and foreshore.

The Inner Metro Region features numerous smaller, incidental open spaces which make an important contribution to the broader public realm. This includes urban plazas such as those at Queen Victoria Market, quasi-public space within private development interfaces, forecourt spaces to public buildings, parklets and transport corridors. Increased use of footpaths and road space for outdoor dining is also expanding and diversifying the region's open space provision.

The Inner Metro Region has an extensive network of interconnected trails located along waterway corridors, freeway reservations and the coastline, and through its major parklands, which are used for commuting and active recreation. The Capital City Trail circles through Melbourne and Yarra LGAs, the Main Yarra Trail connects the Central City to the eastern suburbs and the Bay Trail connects the beachside suburbs to the CBD via the Port Melbourne light rail corridor.

As the region's population and development densities continue to grow, provision of open space and recreation facilities that serve residents and visitors will become increasingly important. There are several major projects underway to improve open space opportunities in the region and link open space networks:

- Establishment of the Greater Yarra Urban Parklands which comprises public land along the Yarra River corridor
- The redevelopment of the Richmond to Docklands renewal precinct, the St Kilda Road Arts Precinct, and the emergence of the Fishermans Bend, Arden and Macaulay urban renewal precincts will all see the creation of new public space assets
- Southbank Boulevard Upgrade, which will introduce 2.5 hectares of new public space.

Regional strengths

- The region features significant landscapes, habitats and biodiversity corridors including Port Phillip Bay, the Yarra River and its estuary, extensive urban waterway systems and large areas of remnant vegetation in Royal and Yarra Bend Parks.
- There is a well-established open space network which includes informal and formal parklands, recreational trails and gardens.
- The region's role as a premier location for tourism, events, sport, recreation, the arts and culture is a key aspect of its liveability.
- The region supports a rich creative and cultural life which is the foundation of its liveability and amenity, and integral to the regional economy.
- Numerous heritage buildings, streetscapes and precincts create a distinctive regional identity.

Regional challenges

- There is a lack of available land to provide additional open space for growing resident and worker populations.
- Ongoing protection of the region's natural, built and cultural heritage is required, given the pressure for development.

Directions and strategies

The directions identified to achieve the 2050 vision for the Inner Metro Region in terms of liveability and Outcome 4 of Plan Melbourne are:






Direction 16	Draw on the region's culture and heritage to create a rich and layered urban environment and distinctive places
Direction 17	Strengthen the network of open spaces and trail connections to support outdoor life, active recreation and connection to nature
Direction 18	Create a legacy of great streets and public spaces that serve the needs of visitors, residents and businesses
Direction 19	Protect the region's landscapes and biodiversity

Each direction is implemented through regionally-specific strategies identified in this land use framework plan.






Map 6 shows how liveability will be enhanced across the Inner Metro Region by 2050 as a result of these directions and strategies, together with Plan Melbourne and other strategies and initiatives as outlined in Appendix 01.

MAP 6. Inner Metro Region liveability 2050

Precincts and Activity Centres

-  Central city
-  Major activity centre
-  Central Business District
-  Victorian Heritage Register Site
-  Community/tourism site



Transport

-  State-significant road corridor
-  Road network
-  Train Station
-  Rail network
-  Strategic Cycling Corridor

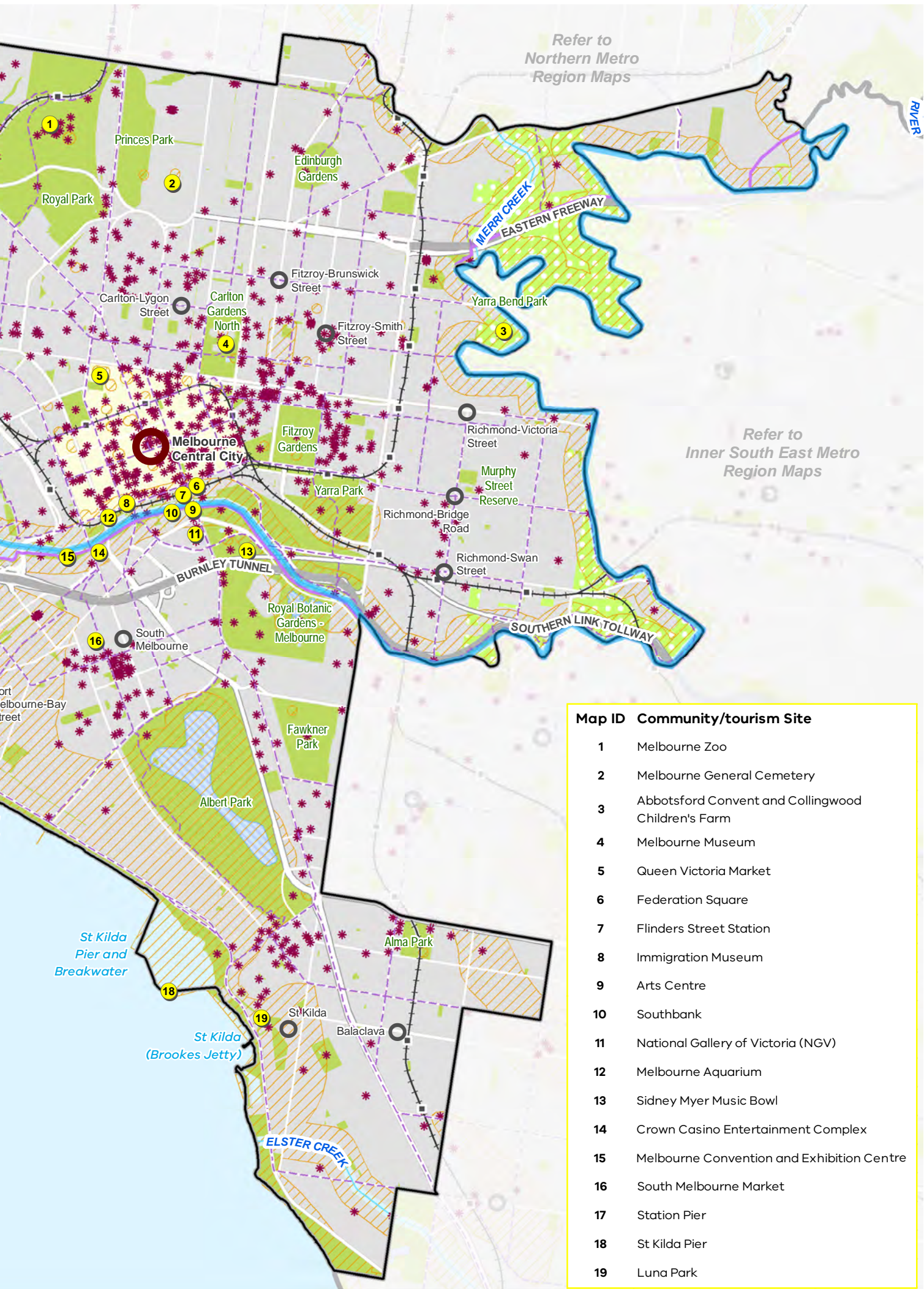
Environment

-  Public open space
-  Marine/coastal national parks and reserves
-  Yarra River Land
-  Wetlands
-  Water's edge parkland
-  Waterway and waterway corridor
-  Waterbody
-  Existing regional trails
-  Areas of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Sensitivity

Land use/Administration

-  Regional boundary
-  Urban area





Refer to
Northern Metro
Region Maps

Refer to
Inner South East Metro
Region Maps

Map ID	Community/tourism Site
1	Melbourne Zoo
2	Melbourne General Cemetery
3	Abbotsford Convent and Collingwood Children's Farm
4	Melbourne Museum
5	Queen Victoria Market
6	Federation Square
7	Flinders Street Station
8	Immigration Museum
9	Arts Centre
10	Southbank
11	National Gallery of Victoria (NGV)
12	Melbourne Aquarium
13	Sidney Myer Music Bowl
14	Crown Casino Entertainment Complex
15	Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre
16	South Melbourne Market
17	Station Pier
18	St Kilda Pier
19	Luna Park

DIRECTION 16.**Draw on the region's culture and heritage to create a rich and layered urban environment and distinctive places**

Across the Inner Metro Region, Aboriginal and post-European settlement cultural heritage assets and distinctive landscapes continue to be recognised, protected and celebrated, supporting the region's vibrancy.

The region's rich cultural heritage provides a strong legacy for creating urban places which foster community pride and a sense of place. This drives demand for redevelopment and densification, meaning places can change rapidly, and be impacted by crowding, competition for space and reduced liveability.

Engagement with Aboriginal communities is needed when planning for places in the Inner Metro Region, and particularly places of Aboriginal cultural heritage and ongoing cultural significance. Their ongoing management and protection should be a collaborative process between Traditional Owners, existing stakeholders and all tiers of government. This should focus on celebrating and reinforcing Aboriginal cultural values and requires cultural sensitivity, collaboration and acknowledgment that competing interests may arise around the protection of significant landscapes. Cultural heritage interpretation and Indigenous art and design can be found across the Inner Metro Region. The presence of visual markers in the region is crucial for residents and visitors to understand the pre-colonial history of the region and the ongoing cultural significance of Country to Traditional Owners.

The region's post-settlement heritage has intrinsic value for residents and visitors as a symbol of a shared history and community building. While extensive heritage controls are applied throughout the region, there are places and precincts of significance that require protection and local councils are working to achieve this aim.

Heritage management also includes facilitating innovative, adaptive re-use of heritage buildings and investigating opportunities for interpretation of heritage places to broaden the community's understanding of their significance. Planning in the Inner Metro Region will need to consider the evolving nature of heritage management and the identification of sites that are not yet formally recognised in the planning system yet have significant cultural and social importance for communities.

Protecting and supporting land uses for the region's rich array of cultural activity and creative industries will enable the Inner Metro Region to build on and maintain its reputation as a cultural and innovative city for locals and visitors.

STRATEGY 64. Engage with Aboriginal communities to incorporate cultural heritage, design and stories into built and natural environment.

STRATEGY 65. Reflect the different eras, layers and aspects of the region's history in the design of contemporary buildings, public spaces, infrastructure and public artwork where appropriate.

STRATEGY 66. Ensure the ongoing identification and protection of heritage places, precincts and streetscapes and support their adaptive re-use where appropriate, particularly for creative and cultural uses.

DIRECTION 17.**Strengthen the network of open spaces and trail connections to support outdoor life, active recreation and connection to nature**

Plan Melbourne envisages a network of accessible, attractive and connected local areas where linear parklands, river corridors, coastline and associated shared trail networks form critical regional assets.

For the Inner Metro Region, provision of quality open space has numerous benefits: ensuring access to nature and recreation; opportunities for social connection; increased neighbourhood amenity; cooling and greening of the urban environment.

Expanding the open space network to meet the needs of a growing population, particularly in Yarra and Port Phillip LGAs where a shortfall of open space currently exists, will be an ongoing challenge within the Inner Metro Region due to high land values and competition for land for residential and commercial uses.

The recently released *Open Space for Everyone: Open Space Strategy for Metropolitan Melbourne 2020* sets out a vision for Melbourne as a city with a valued network of open spaces accessible to all, connected at the local and landscape scales. It focuses on innovation and adaptability in providing for a diversity of open spaces to meet the needs of the community, while protecting existing open space assets.

Within the Inner Metro Region, an innovative approach to optimising use of existing open space or acquiring new open space will be required. This will include high-quality maintenance of existing parks, upgrading facilities to meet current needs and investigating sharing of different types of spaces for broader public use, such as school or university grounds, golf courses or cemeteries. Options to create new public space include repurposing surplus public land, reclaiming road space, using rooftop space or the contribution of open space within large redevelopment sites or urban renewal precincts. Consultation with respective facilities should be explored on a case-by-case basis and consider site context and local circumstances.

In many instances, new open spaces within the region will be of a small scale and may also be privately owned or managed. It is essential that new, quality open spaces are created in a meaningful way, with high design and amenity standards and as a contribution to the broader open space network. Opportunities to use new open space to improve pedestrian access and recreational trail connections, link existing open spaces or open a site frontage to a waterway or parkland should be prioritised wherever possible.

STRATEGY 67. Make better use of the existing open space network through ongoing investment to ensure it meets community needs.

STRATEGY 68. Establish new open spaces within large development sites and urban renewal precincts that contribute to the regional open space network.

STRATEGY 69. Create safe and efficient links between public spaces and the shared trail network.

STRATEGY 70. Investigate opportunities to repurpose existing public land, such as easements, as part of the open space network.

STRATEGY 71. Utilise the region's open space network to strengthen its tree canopy and urban greening, aided by water sensitive urban design and stormwater harvesting.

DIRECTION 18.**Create a legacy of great streets and public spaces that serve the needs of visitors, residents and businesses**

The Inner Metro Region is defined by its diverse public spaces, quality design, grand boulevards, characteristic neighbourhoods and atmospheric laneways.

Preservation and adaptation of the region's highly valued built heritage, coupled with the creation of a new architectural legacy through excellence of design, will reinforce a strong sense of place and identity. The value of ensuring high design quality, preserving the region's heritage and protecting its landscapes must be recognised and balanced with increasing development pressures. The public realm must also be designed to accommodate all ages, cultures and levels of mobility.

Boulevards and other major tree-lined streets are a defining characteristic of the Inner Metro Region. The grand boulevards of St Kilda Road, Royal Parade, Victoria Parade and Beaconsfield Parade are iconic streetscapes. The St Kilda Road boulevard and its framing of the Shrine vista from the Central City has a ceremonial function. The creation of new boulevards has the potential to further expand the network, as envisaged in Plan Melbourne. These boulevards will play an increasingly important role in the future by enhancing local distinctiveness and offering a high amenity streetscape experience. They include:

- The redesign of existing major roadways such as Southbank Boulevard, City Road and Sturt Street
- A proposed new boulevard from the Central City to Footscray, along the Ballarat-Flemington Road corridor
- The 'Shrine to Sea' project which will create a boulevard connection between Domain Gardens and Port Phillip Bay along Albert and Kerferd roads
- Harbour Esplanade which is a key boulevard created within the Docklands urban renewal precinct
- Station Pier and surrounds, including improved linkages to the CBD, given its important role for tourism and as a passenger ship terminal
- Other major streets offering potential future or ongoing improvement as boulevards such as St George's Road, Queens Road, Kings Way and Dandenong Road.

The St Kilda Junction is a major intersection of roadways and future boulevards, which includes land within three municipalities. Redesign of this road space is an important consideration to improve its amenity, appearance and pedestrian connectivity.

Maintaining the green character of streets and boulevards with well-established street trees will contribute to the amenity within the Inner Metro Region. Designing streets to harvest stormwater will assist in strengthening the tree canopy and lower-storey vegetation. The strategic placement of underground powerlines in key locations will enhance the streetscape character and tree canopy.

The design of new development and public places must make a positive contribution to the region's valued character. This is reflected in the various urban design strategies prepared by each municipality, which aim to achieve outcomes such as ensuring buildings are an appropriate scale for the local context, preserving sunlight access to public streets and spaces, minimising the impact of car parking and making a positive aesthetic contribution to the street.

- STRATEGY 72.** Identify, enhance and protect existing places and spaces that have high civic or public value, and which contribute to people's understanding, interaction and enjoyment of the region.
- STRATEGY 73.** Ensure that future planning of the region's precincts, activity centres and urban renewal areas enhances and celebrates their distinctive assets, heritage and local character.
- STRATEGY 74.** Upgrade key pedestrian streets and public spaces within each activity centre to foster their civic and community role and to ensure they are accessible and inclusive. Within urban renewal precincts, create new pedestrian streets and public spaces to serve this role.
- STRATEGY 75.** Encourage road space allocation to prioritise pedestrian movement and spaces within key streets in activity centres and employment precincts.
- STRATEGY 76.** Identify opportunities to expand the network of boulevards through the region, creating high amenity, green streetscapes that prioritise sustainable and active transport modes.
- STRATEGY 77.** Ensure the public realm design of the Inner Metro Region's night-time precincts promotes a high level of safety and amenity.



DIRECTION 19. Protect the region's landscapes and biodiversity

The waterways and coastline of the Inner Metro Region underpin its biodiversity, identity and cultural heritage. Strategies to address urban forests, urban ecology and healthy ecosystems have been developed by local councils in the Inner Metro Region to identify, protect and enhance the region's unique biodiversity. Engaging with Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Victorians to include Aboriginal values and traditional ecological knowledge in biodiversity planning and management is an essential part of protecting and enhancing the region's landscapes and biodiversity.

The *Healthy Waterways Strategy 2018-28* is a shared strategy across Melbourne Water, state and local government, water corporations and the community. It provides a regional vision for the health of rivers, estuaries and wetlands in the Port Phillip region. The strategy identifies a need to review planning protection of environmental and amenity values for waterways, particularly urban waterways with a highly degraded environmental condition (Melbourne Water, 2018). It nominates priority waterways for revegetation to improve waterway health and biodiversity values.

The Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation's *Nhanbu narrun ba ngargunin twarn Birrarung (Ancient Spirit and Lore of the Yarra)* water policy, together with the implementation of the *draft Yarra Strategic Plan*, will enable Traditional Owners to play a key role in determining the ongoing management and protection of the Birrarung (Yarra River) and environs. These policies include actions to improve the overall environmental health of the river, enhance community access to the river and adjoining parklands, improve development interfaces with the river, and recognise cultural and heritage values.

Strategic planning for the Inner Metro Region's other major waterways through the *Waterways of the West Action Plan* – in particular, Moonee Ponds Creek, Maribyrnong River and the Merri Creek – will support their ongoing recognition, protection and contribution to the region's natural and urban environment. Consideration will be given to the riparian vegetation, natural riverbank topography, terrestrial and aquatic habitat, the impact of development on stormwater flows and the ability to function as landscape spines within a larger, regional and inter-regional network of biodiversity and open space corridors.

Opportunities to restore sections of covered or lined waterways to natural or near natural condition should be explored to improve amenity and potentially provide stormwater benefits by reducing peak flows and increasing flow duration. This includes the lower section of the Moonee Ponds Creek and the Elwood Canal, which are channellised, and the Williams Creek which currently runs under Elizabeth Street in Melbourne's CBD.

Green spaces are a key component of thriving biodiversity, healthy ecosystems, and a society connected to nature. As the potential to provide new green spaces is limited, efforts to improve biodiversity outcomes should enhance existing areas of vegetation and better link disparate patches of habitat across the region. Enhancing the extent and coverage of native habitat will improve protection and free movement of wildlife, while increasing overall vegetation and canopy coverage. There may be opportunities to achieve this by improving links between Royal Park and Yarra Bend (potentially via Park Street), and along the Yarra River corridor to its estuary and Port Phillip Bay. New habitat links within urban renewal areas, such as Fishermans Bend, will also assist in creating opportunities for improved biodiversity.

Streets, linear parks and transport corridors also provide opportunities for linking and greening. Other areas of focused biodiversity and habitat plantings include public and private green spaces, parks and reserves and private gardens.

STRATEGY 78. Work with Traditional Owners to plan, manage and protect assets and places of high cultural, landscape and biodiversity value.

STRATEGY 79. Ensure the siting and design of new buildings and infrastructure responds to the region's significant landscape features.

STRATEGY 80. Reinvigorate and restore urban waterways, recognising their important role in providing biodiversity, open space, water management and movement corridors.

ACTIONS – Liveability

ACTION 7. Develop and implement an Indigenous design approach to incorporate Aboriginal cultural heritage, design and stories into the region’s built and natural environment. This process will involve extensive collaboration and engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across the region. This could be a pilot project suitable for other regions.

ACTION 8. Work with Traditional Owners and research organisations to develop specific and measurable actions to increase biodiversity and resilience of urban ecosystems, particularly those that do not have high biodiversity value.



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