

Lower Yarra River Corridor Study

RECOMMENDATIONS REPORT
NOVEMBER 2016

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2016



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Acknowledgements

Traditional Owners

The Victorian Government proudly acknowledges Victoria’s Aboriginal community and their rich culture and pays respect to their Elders past and present.

This study acknowledges that the Birrarung (Yarra River) flows through the traditional land of the Wurundjeri people with the waterway, its natural landscape and key features having social, cultural and spiritual significance.

Project Participants

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning would like to thank all who have provided their input throughout this, and past local and regional studies. This appreciation is extended to the many heritage, cultural, community, planning, environmental, landcare groups and friends of the Yarra River who have contributed their information, knowledge, views and time over the life of this, and past studies.

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....

5

2. Values of the Lower Yarra River Corridor

17

3. River Interface Character Types Analysis

31

4. Views Analysis

40

5. Managing Development.....

53

6. Recommendations.....

67

Appendices

- Appendix A: Existing Planning Policy & Controls
- Appendix B: Planning Scheme Maps
- Appendix C: Guidelines for Development



1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Study

Waterways make a significant contribution to Melbourne’s landscape and liveability. Melbourne’s two main rivers are the Yarra and the Maribyrnong. The Victorian Government is committed to protecting both the Yarra and Maribyrnong Rivers from inappropriate development and safeguarding public access.

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) commissioned this study of the Lower Yarra River corridor to better understand and assess the need for new or amended planning controls and design guidelines for land in proximity to the Yarra River between Punt Road and Bulleen.

The objective of this study is to achieve consistent development outcomes along the Lower Yarra River to ensure that further development does not encroach on the river’s landscape, environmental, aesthetic, cultural and recreational values. Importantly, the study focusses on management of the interface between public and private land along the corridor.

The Lower Yarra River Corridor Study is being prepared in partnership with the City of Yarra, City of Stonnington, City of Boroondara and Melbourne Water.

Project Partners

Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning

City of Yarra

City of Stonnington

City of Boroondara

Melbourne Water

1.2 Study Products

This Report

This report is one of four key outputs for the Lower Yarra River Corridor Study. The full suite of documents is depicted in the diagram opposite.

This report outlines a brief history of planning for the Yarra River, documents the values of the Lower Yarra River corridor, and defines a series of river interface character types and important views within the study area.

It also includes detailed analysis of the Lower Yarra River corridor which underpins the proposed guidelines and controls.

The report concludes with the proposed implementation of the study, including planning scheme changes. This section outlines the objectives, controls and guidelines proposed to protect the river environs and guide development into the future.

The report is accompanied by a Municipal Toolkit for each Council area. The Toolkits will assist Councils to implement the study and contain detailed planning scheme recommendations by municipality.

Lower Yarra River Corridor Study Recommendations Report

1 x Volume

- Introduction
- Values of the Lower Yarra River Corridor
- River Interface Character Types Analysis
- Views Analysis
- Managing Development
- Recommendations
- Appendices
 - Existing Planning Policy & Controls
 - Planning Scheme Maps

Lower Yarra River Corridor Study Municipal Toolkits

3 x Toolkits

- New Directions for the Yarra River
- Project Background
- The Lower Yarra River Corridor in Yarra / Stonnington / Boroondara
- Existing Planning Scheme Provisions
- Planning Scheme Implementation Recommendations
- Appendices
 - Existing Planning Scheme Provisions
 - Planning Scheme Maps
 - Strategic Projects
 - Building Heights & Setbacks Analysis
 - (+ Other Appendices as required)
- NB. one per Municipality

1.3 Study Area

Broad Context

The study area, known as the 'Lower Yarra River corridor', is located between Punt Road, Richmond and Bulleen. It includes parts of three municipalities: Yarra, Stonnington and Boroondara, and contains substantial areas of public open space managed by Parks Victoria.

The study area:

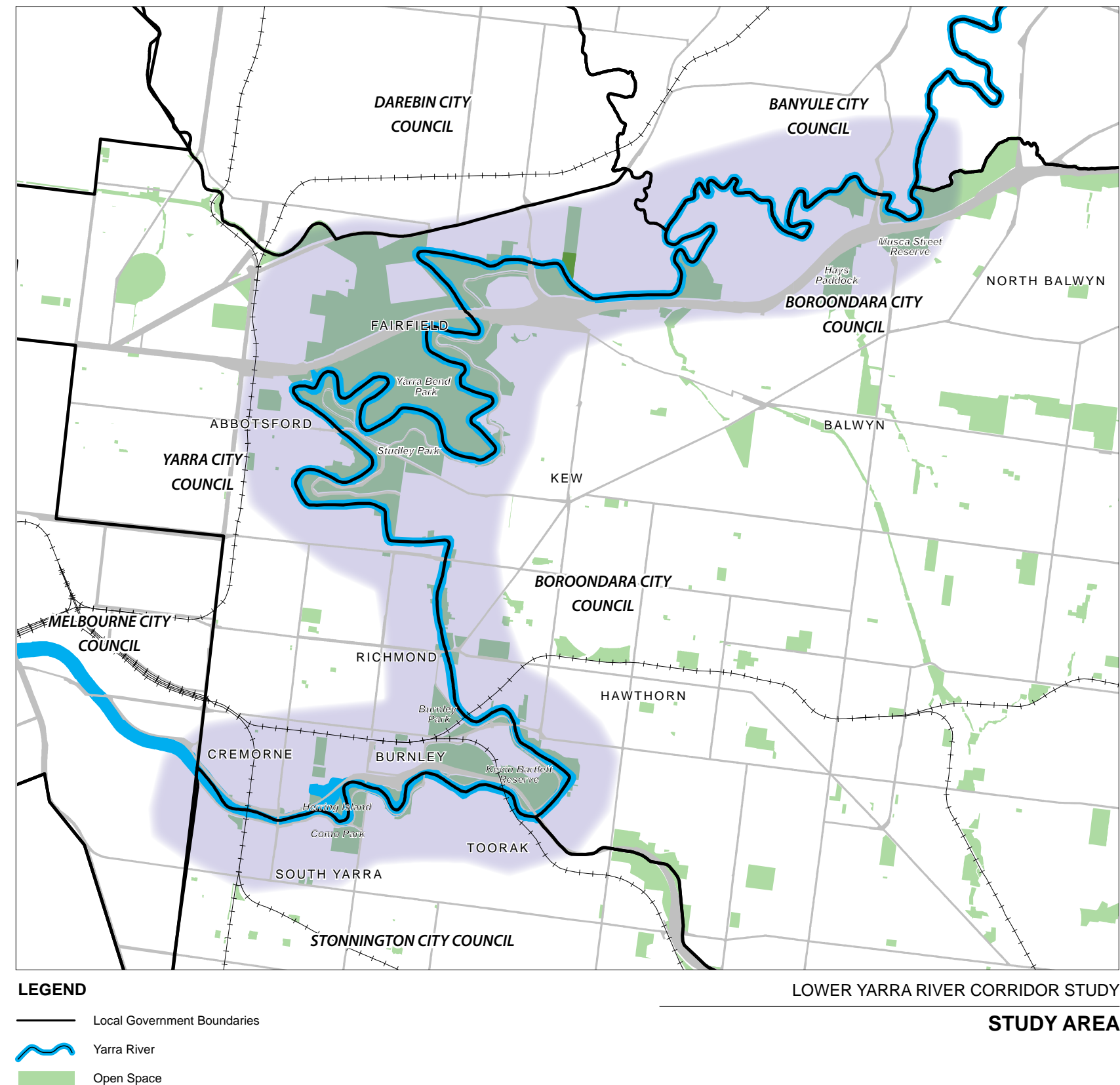
- Extends eastward from the municipal boundaries of Yarra and Stonnington at Punt Road (on the northern side and southern sides of the river respectively) - through to the eastern municipal boundary of the City of Yarra (on the northern bank) and the eastern-most part of the river within the City of Boroondara (on the southern bank).
- Includes the open space corridor that surrounds the river, and its urban and suburban interface.
- Includes all land adjacent to the Lower Yarra River open space corridor, including both public and private land.

Primary Focus

The extent of the study area has been further informed by:

- the topographical character of the surrounding landscape, including consideration of land up to the 'crest' of the surrounding hill slopes;
- the visibility of land and development from publicly accessible locations including the Main Yarra Trail, other walking trails, bridges, areas of open space, main road corridors, and the river itself;
- identified important views and viewsheds; and,
- the location and extent of existing zones and overlays in the relevant planning schemes.

These defining elements are illustrated on the study area map opposite.



1.4 Study Process & Approach

Study Process

Preparation of this report has involved a review of background documents, together with the relevant planning schemes, VCAT decisions and Planning Panel reports. Analysis of GIS information and photography (including aerial photography) has also informed the contents of this report, together with a detailed field survey, undertaken over the course of several days, by car, foot, bicycle and boat.

The process consisted of an assessment of the river corridor's:

- landscape character
- key views
- values
- threats and pressures
- existing policy and controls.

The study process was undertaken as four key stages. A summary of each stage is outlined as follows:

Stage 1: Project Inception

The preparation of the detailed program to complete the study was undertaken in this stage. This included meetings with the Project Reference Group comprising representatives from each Council and Melbourne Water.

Stage 2: Background Review & Analysis

Background research and investigation work was undertaken in this stage to define issues and opportunities for the study area. This included a detailed site survey and a review of all relevant concept plans, background documents and current planning scheme policies and controls.

Stage 3: Implementation Recommendations

Final recommendations, design guidelines and draft of proposed planning controls for each Council was completed in this stage. This report outlines the key findings of the study.

Next Stage: Planning Scheme Amendment & Consultation

The findings and recommendations of this study will be publicly exhibited through the Planning Scheme Amendment process, which will provide opportunities for all stakeholders and community to input into the form and content of final planning scheme controls.

Design Principles

Siting, massing and design of development needs to take account of the particular characteristics of the Yarra River corridor as a sub-area. While the method for this study focussed on visual assessment of the landscape, it used a holistic approach to consider all the area's values, including aesthetic values (both visual and non-visual), historic, environmental, scientific, social and other values.

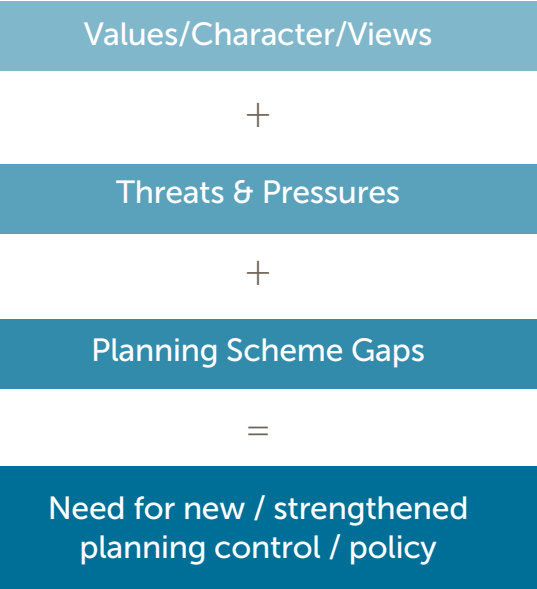
The following design principles, which have been applied in previous studies for the Yarra River and successfully tested in appeals tribunal and Planning Panel hearings, have underpinned the approach to this study:

- The Yarra River is valued and appreciated as much for the vegetation and parkland that dominate its corridor as for the presence of the waterbody itself
- The topographical character of the Yarra River is easily diminished by larger scale development sited too close to its banks
- There are a number of distinct river interface character types, i.e. areas of varying topographical, landscape and built form character, through which the Yarra River passes, each of which warrants a tailored policy approach
- Strong built form controls are likely to be necessary for sections of the river corridor, in order to maintain and enhance its valued qualities. Analysis of existing built form controls shows where these may need to be strengthened in some locations.

Approach

The approach adopted by this study to determine whether new or strengthened policy and controls are required for this section of the Yarra River can be summarised simply as:

- Understanding the values, character and views of the river
- Identifying the threats and pressures to these
- Examining the current approach to managing development and protecting vegetation in the study area, principally through the planning scheme, in order to determine the gaps in statutory controls
- Recommending ways in which these controls could be strengthened to protect the identified values, character and views.



1.5 Key Relevant Studies for the Yarra River Corridor

Several key studies have been undertaken in relation to development along the Yarra River corridor in general, and provide the background to this project.

Plan Melbourne: Metropolitan Planning Strategy (2013)

On 9 October 2013, the Premier, Minister for Planning and Minister for Transport launched Plan Melbourne, a 50 year planning strategy for metropolitan Melbourne.

Melbourne has some 7000 kilometres of waterways within its metropolitan boundaries which form an essential component of the city's open space network. They provide a sense of place and important habitat for maintaining biodiversity. The rivers and creeks of Port Phillip Bay and Western Port are popular recreational destinations for residents and tourists, with around 90 million visits each year.

The Plan recognises the need to continue to protect Melbourne's open space waterway corridors from inappropriate development to ensure that these significant values provided to Melbourne and its residents are maintained and enhanced over time. (Initiatives 4.2.4, 5.2.2 and 5.6.2).

The Plan will use the model approach to preparation of planning controls implemented by the Middle Yarra Study and the recent work for the Lower Yarra River and the Maribyrnong River. This will implement planning controls to protect Melbourne's metropolitan waterway corridors and be undertaken in partnership with local governments and key stakeholders.

The Plan identifies the need for this initiative to be completed in the short term (next four years) and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning has been tasked with leading this important initiative.

For further information about Plan Melbourne visit www.planmelbourne.vic.gov.au.

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

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

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

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

The Lower Yarra Concept Plans & Design Guidelines

A number of concept plans and design guidelines have been prepared for the Lower Yarra corridor over the last thirty years. These plans have informed the implementation of current planning scheme controls and the management of public land, including the creation of new public access to the river and the design of parklands. Some of the studies are listed as Reference Documents in the Planning Scheme, and include:

- *Lower Yarra River Concept Plan (Punt Road to Dights Falls)* (1986), MMBW
- *Lower Yarra River Landscape Guidelines (Punt Road to Dights Falls)* (1986), MMBW
- *Lower Yarra River Urban Design Guidelines* (1992), Kinhill
- *Lower Yarra River Future Directions Plan* (2001), Parks Victoria
- *Stonnington DDO3 Review* (2012 & 2014 update), Planisphere
- *Yarra Built Form Review* (2003), Planisphere
- *Yarra River Corridor Strategy* (2015), Planisphere

Waterway Management Reports

A number of reports have been completed to address issues of waterway management along the river corridor generally. These studies include:

- *Healthy Waterways Strategy* (2013) by Melbourne Water. This has specific reference to the Yarra River and provides a range of management actions.
- *A Cleaner Yarra River and Port Phillip Bay – A Plan of Action* (2012) by the Office of Living. This report specifically focuses on the Yarra River and provides a framework for State Government action.
- *Port Phillip and Westernport Regional River Health Strategy* (2005) by Melbourne Water includes directions for the Yarra River catchment.
- *Guidelines for Development in Floodprone Areas* (2005) by Melbourne Water provides guidelines for building siting and landscaping.
- *Yarra Catchment Action Plan* (1999) by Yarra Care, DNRE.



Plan Melbourne: Metropolitan Planning Strategy (2013)



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

1.6 Evolution of Controls relating to the Yarra River Corridor

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

Over the course of its history, the Yarra River corridor has faced various development pressures and threats to its landscape and environment. Formerly this was due to the location of industry or agriculture along the river's edge. From the second half of the twentieth century, the river's attractiveness for residential and commercial use also began to cause concern.

Earlier planning studies for the Yarra focussed primarily on environmental and recreational values – similar to other river corridors that were the subject of studies by the then Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW).

Creation of continuous corridors of open space and trail networks was a particular priority, and the MMBW began the process of reserving open space along the Yarra in the 1950s. This was the first step in addressing decades of environmental degradation along the river. The fact that government and agencies have continued to implement these past recommendations to the present day attests to the continuing relevance of these studies.

Public interest in environmental issues emerged strongly in the 1970s through organisations such as the Save the Yarra League, that campaigned for the preservation of the Yarra Valley. A Statement of Planning Policy issued in 1971 which set out conservation and recreation as planning objectives, was a landmark in the process of preserving the Yarra.

In 1980 the Age newspaper launched a public campaign to 'Give the Yarra a Go'. This led to the preparation of the first comprehensive plan for a major section of the river - Planning Opportunities along the Lower Yarra River from Punt Road to Dights Falls (1983).

Others plans for the Yarra River corridor soon followed: Concept Plan Lower Yarra River (Punt Road to Dights Falls) (1986), Lower Yarra River Landscape Guidelines (1988), Lower Yarra River Urban Design Guidelines (1992) and the Middle Yarra Concept Plan - Dights Falls to Burke Road (1990) and Burke Road to Watsons Creek (1993).

Recognition of the landscape significance of the Yarra River was more implicit than explicit in the original planning studies. Policies to protect the landscape values of the river have been evolving since the 1980s, reflecting the gradual emergence of accepted techniques for evaluating and protecting landscapes generally over the last 10-20 years in Victoria. Through consideration of landscape values, the later studies offer a more holistic view of the river corridor.

Significant milestones in the evolution of landscape protection in Victoria since the 1980s have included National Trust recognition of significant landscapes, the introduction by Councils of special zones to protect areas of landscape significance (e.g. Blackburn Lake area) and the inclusion in the Victoria Planning Provisions in the late 1990s of the Significant Landscape Overlay and Environmental Significance Overlay.

Since the early 2000s, assessment of landscape values at a regional scale has been progressed by the State Government's studies for coastal and rural areas of Victoria. These studies represent a further advance in the methodology for evaluation of landscapes and a wider appreciation of the importance of their protection and management among the community, planning profession and government.

This review provides an opportunity to examine the range of issues relating to the protection and management of the river corridor and its wider setting.

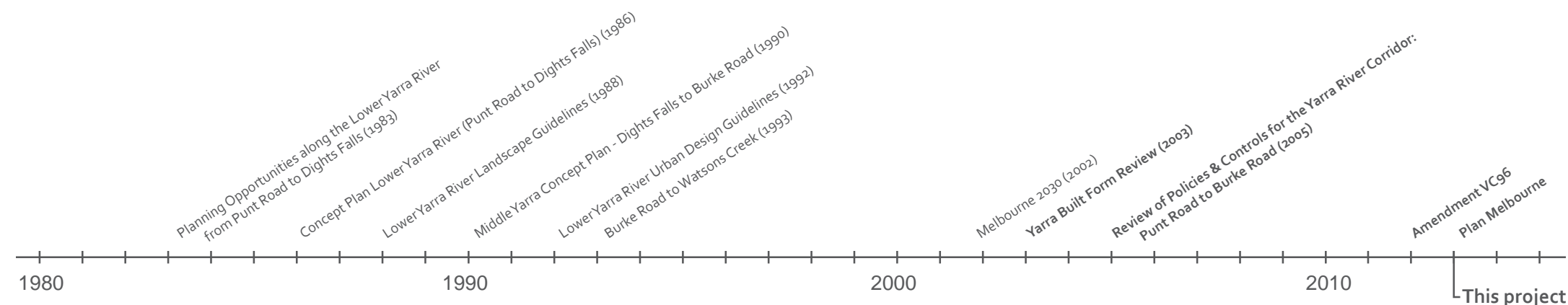


Yarra Falls, Collingwood, 1918

Source: www.aboriginalhistoryofyarra.com.au



Matt Golding, The Age Newspaper October 2012



A timeline showing the various policies developed for the Yarra River corridor since the 1980s

1.7 New Directions for the Yarra River

The Victorian Government has established a program of activity aimed at protecting the long term interests of the Yarra River. Commencement of the program was announced in August 2015 by the Minister for Planning.

The program is focused on establishing a dedicated Yarra River Trust and managing development impacts in the short term through implementing stronger planning policy and planning controls for areas along the Yarra River under immediate pressure from development.

Establishing the Yarra River Trust

The Victorian Government has committed to protecting Melbourne's iconic Yarra River from inappropriate development and promoting its amenity and significance by establishing legislation and a dedicated trust.

A Ministerial Advisory Committee was announced on 15 December 2015. The Committee is focused on providing advice to government on the role and responsibility of a future dedicated Trust and the form of legislative instruments required for it to be established.

The Committee commenced work in 2016 with a discussion paper to determine the river's long term needs, with advice to Government in late 2016 and a potential Trust established in 2017.

Implementing Stronger Policy and Planning Controls

The Victorian Government recognises that development pressures will continue in the short to medium term until a Trust is formed. To support effective decision making along the Yarra River while the above investigations progress, the Minister for Planning has approved a program that focuses on strengthening existing planning policy as it relates to the Yarra River. This includes finalising a range of studies (including this study) and implementing their recommendations via a suite of consistent planning controls within the Yarra River corridor between Richmond and Warrandyte – an area under the greatest pressure from urban development.

Strengthening State Planning Policy

On 12 August 2015, the Minister for Planning hosted a roundtable forum with council mayors and heads of Melbourne Water, Parks Victoria and the Port Phillip Catchment Management Authority, to outline the proposed actions the Victorian Government is taking to strengthen existing planning policy and controls for the Yarra River.

Councils and authorities were invited to collaborate with the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning in developing more effective and consistent planning controls for the Yarra between Richmond and Warrandyte.

On 17 September 2015, the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning hosted a workshop of senior planning practitioners from all councils, Melbourne Water, Parks Victoria and the Port Phillip Catchment Management Authority to discuss the components of a strengthened state planning policy, and to discuss the potential form and content of model planning controls. The feedback received through this workshop has been used to inform the development of strengthened State planning policy and input into the preparation of model planning controls for discussion and application within the Yarra River corridor, between Richmond and Warrandyte.

On 21 December 2015, Amendment VC121 was gazetted giving effect to a strengthened 'River corridor' and a new 'Yarra River Protection' sub-policy within the State Planning Policy Framework. The new 'Yarra River Protection' policy provides a strengthened basis and rationale for the protection of the whole of the Yarra River corridor to inform decision making.

Preparing Consistent Planning Controls: Richmond to Warrandyte

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning is progressing a program to finalise a number of studies and implement new and/or reformed planning controls for the Yarra River corridor between Richmond and Warrandyte. The program includes steps to:

- Finalise the Middle Yarra River Study recommendations and complete associated municipal toolkits for Banyule, Manningham and Nillumbik councils;
- Review planning controls implemented in the City of Boroondara under VC96 and strengthened those controls with appropriate setback distances;
- Implement the strategic findings of the City of Yarra's 'Yarra River Strategy'; and
- Prepare planning controls for areas adjacent to the Yarra River within the City of Stonnington.

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning is working in partnership with all councils to finalise the above work and progress a planning scheme amendment to implement agreed controls.

2. Values of the Lower Yarra River Corridor

2.1 THE VISION

“The Lower Yarra River will offer a variety of natural landscape settings and experiences in which its topography, banks and a continuous tree canopy are the dominant features in views of the river corridor.”

2.2 The River's Significance

Waterways play an important role in many aspects of daily life. They provide the foundation of complex ecosystems and support the region's productivity. They are also strongly linked to our sense of wellbeing as places of gathering, recreation and contemplation and popular recreational destinations for residents and tourists. Waterways are highly valued for their ecological importance, and provide water for drinking, industry and agriculture as well as critical ecosystem services such as nutrient cycling.¹

The Yarra River and its corridor is recognised in State policy as a significant open space, recreation, aesthetic, conservation and tourism asset for Metropolitan Melbourne.

As indicated above, its significance is linked to a wide range of values, which can be grouped under the following themes discussed in this section of the report:

- Geographical Context
- Topography
- Environment & Biodiversity
- Character & Amenity
- Cultural Heritage
- Open Space, Recreation & Access

A statement of significance has been prepared to encapsulate the values of the Yarra River corridor, taking into consideration the corridor's significance within its broader context. This was used to inform the corridor's vision for the future set out opposite at 2.1.

“The Yarra River and the landscape through which it passes have metropolitan significance as an environmental, aesthetic, cultural, recreation and tourism asset. The river corridor links parklands and reserves into a near-continuous vegetated landscape experience that provides a highly valued, secluded, natural environment, enjoyed by local and metropolitan communities.”

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

1

Melbourne Water, Healthy Waterways Strategy, 2013

2.3 Geographical Context

The Yarra River, and its corridor, is a significant natural asset and forms an integral component of the fabric of metropolitan Melbourne.

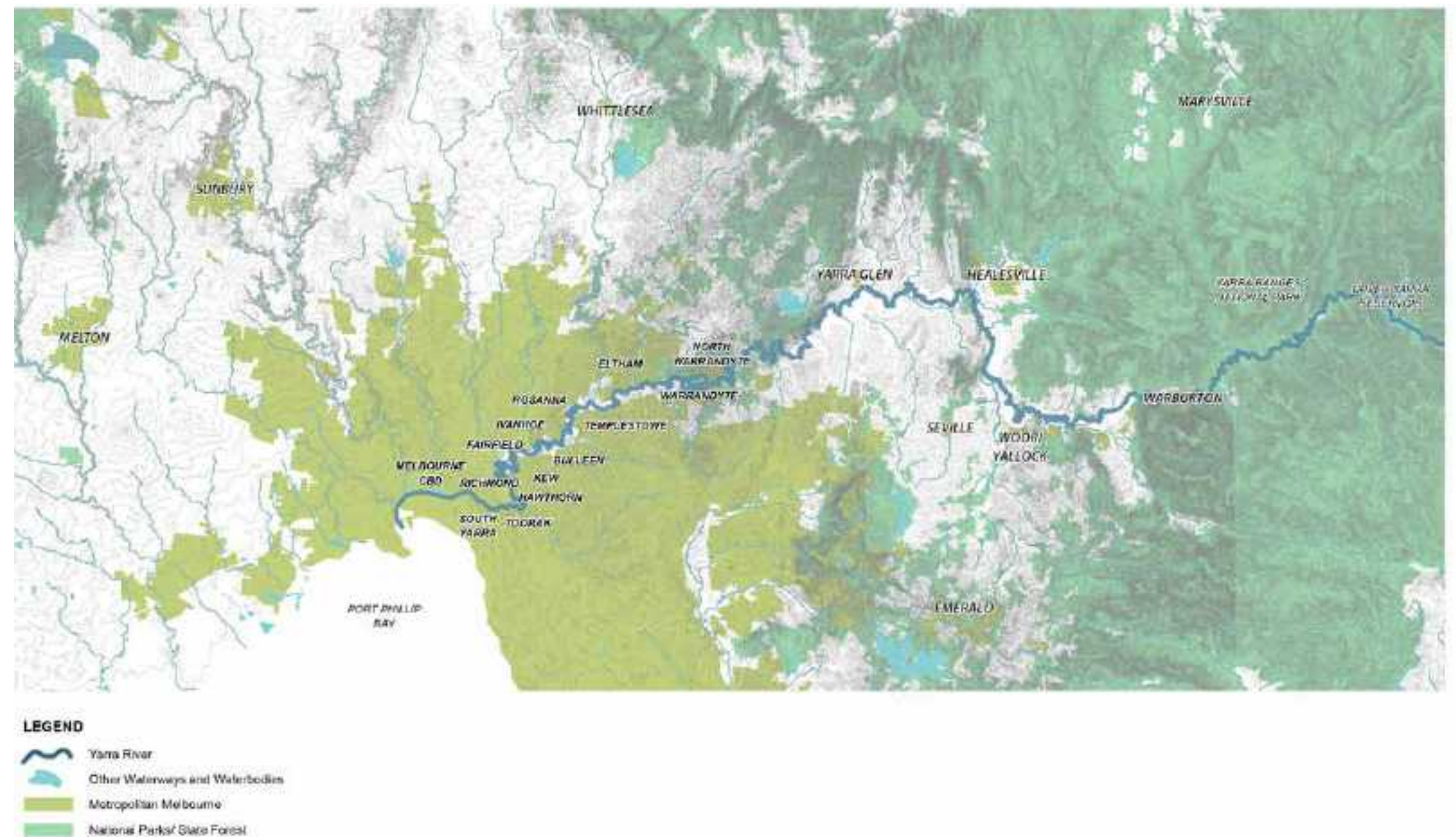
From its upper reaches located in the Yarra Ranges National Park, the Yarra River meanders 242 km from its source to mouth.

The river passes through the forested hills surrounding Warburton, the flat open farmlands abutting Woori Yallock, the undulating slopes of the Yarra Valley wine region, and the broad floodplains around Yarra Glen.

The river enters Melbourne's suburbs at Warrandyte where adjoining parklands and reserves contribute to the character and amenity of the corridor. As the river approaches inner Melbourne, it heads south from Fairfield, making a sharp turn to the west before passing along the southern side of the Melbourne CBD.

The river then flows out towards Port Phillip Bay through the Port of Melbourne and Hobsons Bay.

The Lower Yarra includes three of the river's major tributaries: the lower reaches of the Merri Creek, which enters the Yarra near Dights Falls; Darebin Creek, which enters the Yarra near the Latrobe Golf Course; and Gardiners Creek, which enters near to the crossing the Monash Freeway over the Yarra River.



2.4 Topography

Natural forces have continually shaped the river and its environment over thousands of years. The river in its current formation is approximately 4000 years old, having been formed by lava flows from the volcanic activity to west of present day Melbourne.

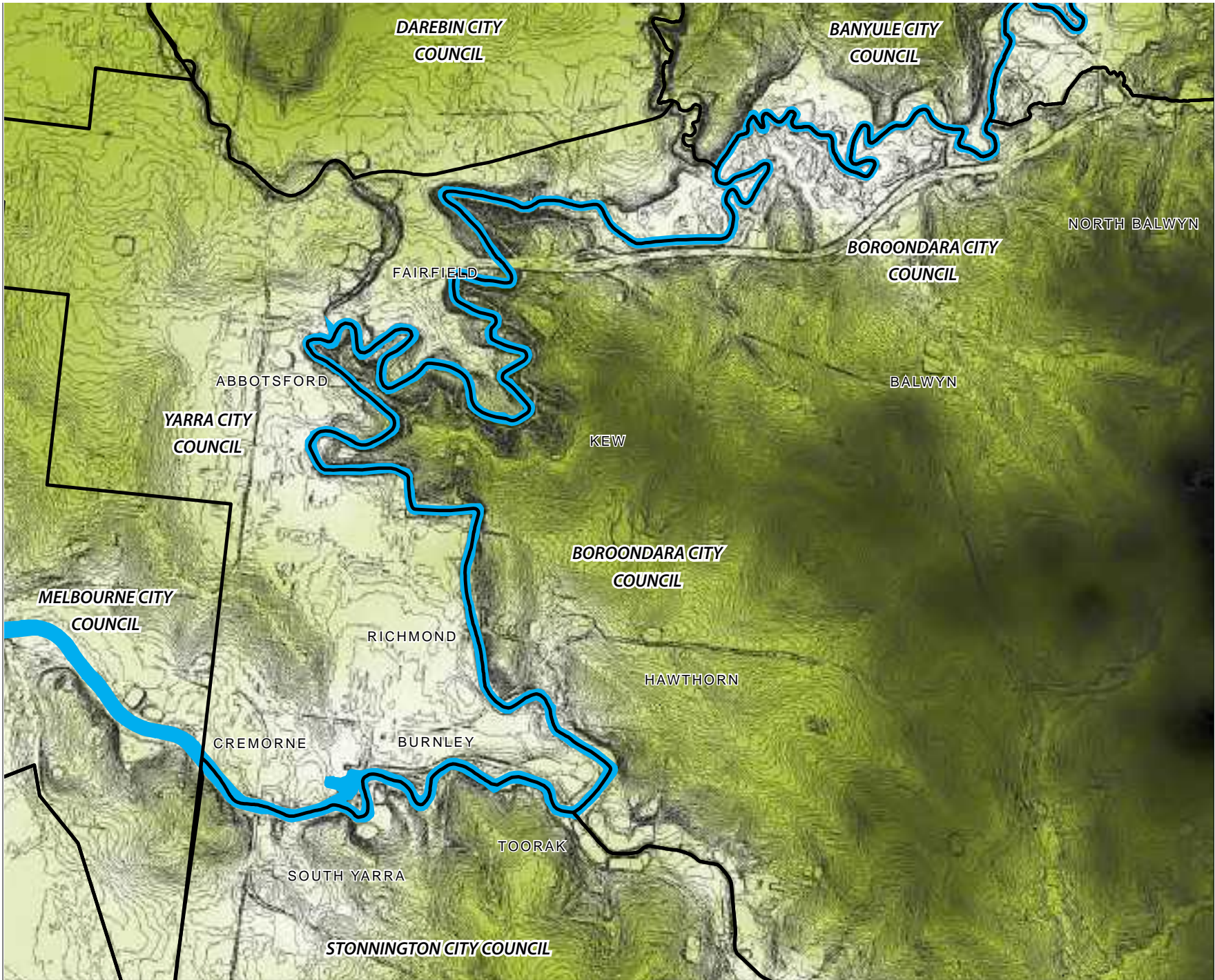
Lava flows over the last two million years initially blocked the river’s course, however, after thousands of years, the river carved its current path. The differences in elevation between the river’s banks mark the edge of the lava flow. Erosion caused by water and wind continue to affect the river today.

The topography of the river environment around the Lower Yarra comprises the flatlands on the western side of the river, which are part of the western volcanic plain, and the elevated rises to the south, north and east. These changes in topography are a defining feature of the river within the Lower Yarra, and are expressed in the different character types that have been identified.

Areas of elevated topography form a horizon of distant hills and ridgelines. Land slopes down towards the river corridor where the embankments then drop steeply down to the water’s edge.

In many areas the natural topography has been heavily modified, particularly along the main road corridors.

The Yarra River is not a particularly wide river, compared to rivers that define other cities in the world such as the Seine or the Thames. Notwithstanding this, throughout the river’s course within the context of metropolitan Melbourne, the Yarra is a significant topographical feature and point of distinction.



LEGEND		ALTITUDE (m)	
	Local Government Boundaries		40-50
	Yarra River		30-40
	Contours (1-5m)		20-30
			10-20
			110-110
			90-100
			80-90
			60-70

2.6 Environment & Biodiversity

The Yarra River corridor contains some of the most valuable flora, fauna, geological and geomorphological assets in metropolitan Melbourne. Indigenous vegetation and remnant riparian vegetation provide an important habitat for native fauna, nurture fragile flora species, contribute to the protection of water quality and flow regimes, and add to amenity/social values of the river corridor.

The Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation for Australia (IBRA) developed by the Australian Government Department of the Environment is endorsed by all levels of government as a key tool for identifying land for conservation under Australia's Strategy for the National Reserve System 2009-2030. The latest version, IBRA7, classifies Australia's landscapes into 89 large geographically distinct bioregions based on common climate, geology, landform, native vegetation and species information¹.

The Lower Yarra River corridor falls within the South Eastern Highlands (SEH) –Highlands-Southern Fall, Southern Volcanic Plain (SVP) Victorian Volcanic Plain (VVP) and South East Coastal Plain (SCP) – Gippsland Plain bioregions. The dominant ecological vegetation classes include Floodplain Riparian Woodland and Riparian Woodland, which run along the along the entire river corridor. As the river passes through Yarra Bend Park the surrounds of the Yarra River are dominated by Plains Grassy Woodland, Escarpment Scrubland, Escarpment Woodland, and Box Ironbark Forest.

Significant tracts of remnant native vegetation exist along the river corridor such as River Red Gums, Yellow Gums, River Bottlebrush, as well as the presence of significant grasslands and woodlands. These vegetation communities provide habitat for an extensive variety of reptile, fish, amphibian, and mammal species.

The river is home to significant fauna species such as the threatened Australian Grayling, Striped Legless Lizard and Platypus. The river's diverse and rich birdlife includes the Black-faced Cuckoo Shrikes, Willie-wagtails, Silvereyes and Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos. Further to this the river provides habitat for migratory birds, including seven species of migratory birds of international importance⁴.

Over 240 flora and fauna species have been recorded within the Lower Yarra River corridor, including some registered under international agreements and some listed under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act³. This equates to approximately 1/10 of the State's total number of identified flora species.

Yarra Bend Park is an important indicator of the study area's underlying ecology and is listed on the Register of the National Estate in recognition of its outstanding ecological values.

However, a large proportion of the study area contains vegetation classes classified as endangered or vulnerable. While remnant riparian plant communities are adapted to respond to natural disruptions from flooding and erosion, ongoing effort is required to balance destructive impacts from the surrounding city, including invasions of weeds, litter, urban development, and wear from recreational activities.



Yarra Bend Park



Abundant birdlife can be heard and seen along the river



Spotted marsh frog [http://yarraandbay.vic.gov.au/assets/freshwater-wildlife]

¹ Australia's Bioregion Framework, accessed from: <http://www.environment.gov.au/topics/land/nrs/science-maps-and-data/ibra/australias-bioregion-framework>

² Yarra Bend Environmental Action Plan, 2001

2.7 Character & Amenity

The Melbourne Water 2012 Community Perceptions Survey identified that 95% of people consider waterways as ‘very important’ to Greater Melbourne’s overall liveability.

Urban & Landscape Character

The general value ascribed to the Yarra’s ‘natural’ landscape character, despite the obvious presence of buildings, rebuilt river banks, power lines, and so on, relies heavily on indigenous vegetation. According to the 2003 *City of Yarra Built Form Review*:

Most people ... experience the river corridor not from the river and its banks, but from vantage points outside the corridor, or as they drive across the river on a bridge. What they see (or expect to see) is a line of trees, a heavily vegetated river corridor. They will rarely see the water itself, except perhaps as a glimpse amongst the trees. The expression of the river corridor as a corridor of vegetation, particularly of canopy trees, is most important.

This heavily vegetated river corridor underpins the distinctive character of surrounding suburbs including Kew, Hawthorn, Toorak and South Yarra. Even in areas where the river corridor has been subject to greater modification such as Richmond, Abbotsford and Cremorne, the presence of vegetation underpins the character of the river.

The Lower Yarra River corridor contains a variety of natural and modified landscapes, including reserves, parks, low density suburban dwellings, higher density urban development, industrial uses and floodplains. While parts of the study area are dominated by naturalistic landscapes, a river valley’s character is also shaped by, and reveals the character of, the land it passes through. So inevitably a river passing through an urban area will be shaped by, and reveal aspects of, the urban character. Similarly a river passing through a more isolated parkland setting will be shaped by its surrounding parkland landscapes¹.

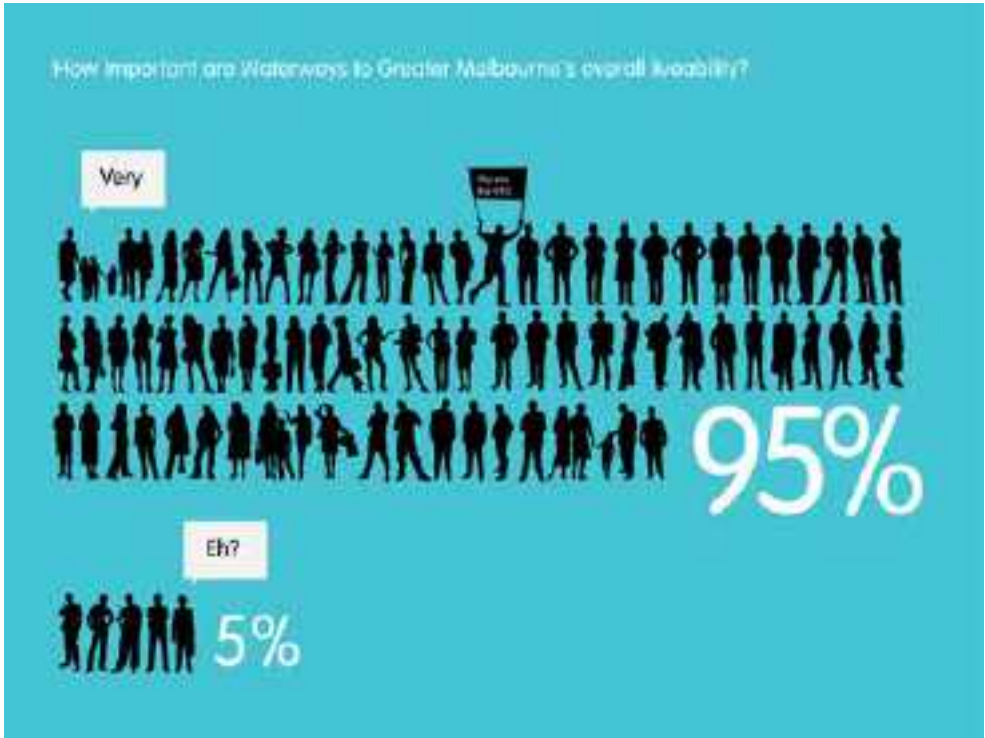
The character of the river corridor often differs from one side of the river to the other largely because of the area’s topography, and history of development/land use.

Within the Lower Yarra River corridor, these variations in character are described by the five ‘river interface character types’ ascribed to the study area (refer to Chapter 3 for detail).

Amenity

The extent of the remnant bushland and ‘leafy’ environment that provides habitat for wildlife and a secluded, peaceful haven for visitors, is a highly valued and unique asset contributing to the character and amenity of Melbourne’s northern and eastern suburbs.

The heavily vegetated river corridor provides a significant setting and backdrop for surrounding suburbs and activity centres as far out as Box Hill. Indeed, many real estate agents market the river’s ‘green-treed corridor’ as a point of difference to attract investment.



Source: Melbourne Water Community Perceptions Survey, 2012

1 Review of Policies & Controls for the Yarra River Corridor, 2005

2.8 Cultural Heritage

The Yarra River has been the ‘lifeblood’ of the region for tens of thousands of years. Over the last two centuries, it has played a pivotal role in the development of Melbourne. The landscapes that we see and experience today have been shaped by human values of the river over time.

Cultural heritage elements, which show the history of human interaction with the landscape, occur throughout the Lower Yarra River corridor and include features of European and Aboriginal heritage significance.

The river flows through Wurundjeri Country, part of the East Kulin Nation, and is known as Birrarung, meaning ‘place of mists and shadows’. For at least thirty thousand years prior to European settlement, it was the lifeblood of the community; an abundant source of fresh water, food and resources, and a focal point of daily existence. Spiritually, the river is a dreaming path and a point of deep connection to the land, and prior to European settlement, clans followed its course and camped on its banks throughout the year.

While the available data on Aboriginal heritage values is varied, scatters of stone artefacts, tools, and river red gum scars provide clues of an association with the river over a long period of time. Today, Aboriginal cultural heritage values are particularly associated with the waterway itself, and areas of natural landscapes which remain undeveloped. Key landscape features such as river confluences with its tributaries, including the Darebin, Merri and Gardiners Creeks, high points, and the Bolin Bolin Billabong, were important meeting places with other clans of the Kulin Nation and also have a high value for Aboriginal communities.

The entire Yarra River and its immediate environment is recognised as an area of Aboriginal heritage sensitivity. There are numerous sites of particular significance along the river, such as:

- Como Park North, which was the site of an aboriginal campsite and meeting place known as “Turruk”.
- The site of Melbourne High School was the camping ground of Derimut, a leader of the Yalukit-willam who formed a positive relationship with the European Settlers
- The confluence of the Yarra River and the Merri Creek which includes the burial place of Billibellary, a Ngurungaeta or clan headman, and the site of an early Aboriginal Protectorate.
- Scarred tree sites within parkland along the river in the City of Boroondara.

The discovery of the Yarra, and its fresh water, was crucial to the founding and subsequent development of Melbourne. The first European to appreciate the pristine beauty of the meandering waterway was Charles Grimes, Acting Surveyor General of New South Wales. During his exploration in 1803 he named it ‘Freshwater River’, with another member of the party, James Flemming, declaring it to be *“the most eligible place for a settlement that I have seen”*.

On the banks of the Yarra on 8 June, 1835 John Batman enacted his now infamous purchase of 600,000 acres of land with the local Kulin clans. Three months later, huts were constructed near the site of the present day Immigration Museum.

The river was the lifeblood for the fledgling colony, providing water, fertile land for farming and access. However, over the subsequent decades its role and value changed dramatically – it was a ready-made sewer and it gave early industries the water necessary in their processes. After a steady deterioration in water quality during the 19th century, measures have been undertaken over recent decades to clean up the river.

Features and places of European heritage value occur throughout the study area, including structures such as bridges, boat houses, former industrial sites, locations of social significance, and areas associated with the visual arts.

In addition, the study area contains a number of more modern places of heritage significance including Kew Cottages, former Willsmere Hospital, Fairfield Hospital, Dights Mill Site, former Convent of the Good Shepherd, Tay Cregan, Burnley Gardens, Edzell, Como House and Richmond Maltings. These sites and their mix of residential, industrial, institutional and recreational uses provide an important reflection of the area’s history and past land uses.

All of the sites listed above have been classified as heritage places of State significance and are listed on the Victorian Heritage Register.

Information Sources:

Yarra Riverkeeper Association [online] <http://www.yarrariver.org.au/>

Parks Victoria Parknotes: Yarra River Visitors Guide [online] <http://parkweb.vic.gov.au/>

Melbourne Water *History of the Yarra River* [online] Available at: <http://www.melbournewater.com.au/aboutus/historyandheritage/History-of-our-rivers-and-creeks/Pages/History-of-the-Yarra-River.aspx>

Yarra River Business Association [online] <http://www.yarrariver.info/history/>

Victorian Heritage Register [online] <http://vhd.heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/>

Yarra Valley Parklands Management Plan, 2002

Stonnington Thematic Environmental History

The Aboriginal History of Yarra [online] <http://aboriginalhistoryofyarra.com.au/sites-of-significance/>

Traditional areas in the City of Boroondara [online] <https://www.boroondara.vic.gov.au/our-city/community/indigenous-community>



An artist's impression of Batman's treaty with the local Kulin clans in 1835



Edzell House, Toorak (circa 1891)



Postcard image of Alexandra Avenue, 1911.

2.9 Open Space, Recreation & Access

The Lower Yarra River corridor is one of the most visited areas of regional open space in Melbourne, attracting over one million visits per year¹. The diverse range of landscapes offer a wide variety of recreational pursuits, providing health and wellbeing and social benefits for a broad cross-section of the community.

Open spaces associated with the Yarra River represent the largest and most important resource of parklands and green spaces in inner Melbourne, particularly in the more built-up areas, where the density of development is such that access to open space is limited. These areas of public parkland and open space are vital in contributing to the health and wellbeing of the community and the character of the local and regional landscape.

The Lower Yarra River open space corridor is readily accessible to a large proportion of Melbourne’s population, particularly for those located in the inner and eastern suburbs. Furthermore, wider metropolitan access to the corridor has been improved in recent years, with the development of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

The Lower Yarra River corridor comprises a series of regionally significant parks and reserves that extend along the Yarra River for approximately 16km, from Kew to South Yarra. Parklands and open space within the study area include land managed by Parks Victoria, local government, VicRoads, Melbourne Water and private land owners.

The Main Yarra Trail traverses the entire length of the study from Kew and Bulleen through to the West Gate Bridge to the north of the mouth of the river. This linear trail network connects the Lower Yarra River corridor to other areas of open space, schools, surrounding suburbs and the city; offering urban dwellers ready access to a unique naturalistic setting to enjoy their daily commute and other recreational pursuits.

A central objective of previous strategic planning of the river corridor has been to ‘develop a continuous linear trail network for non-motorised movement within the area, which will link with areas of open space upstream and downstream and facilitate cross-valley movement’ (1985 Lower Yarra River Development Plan, and repeated in later plans including Linking People and Spaces, 2002). While this has been largely successful with the development of the Main Yarra Trail and associated links, the linear trail network currently has some gaps and issues with connectivity with surrounding areas.

The open space corridor varies in width from substantial parklands, to narrow linear reserves at the river’s edge. Sports fields, playgrounds and golf courses dominate the lower reaches between Burke Road and Hoddle Street. The middle section of the corridor is primarily a linear park, which occasionally opens out to substantial areas of parkland (e.g. Yarra Bend Park) available for informal active and passive recreation.

In some sections public access to the open space corridor becomes more limited due to deviations in the course of the Main Yarra trail, or the presence of private property, golf courses or public institutions adjoining the river’s edge. As a result, some sections of the corridor are accessible only via the river itself.

A number of recreational facilities such as barbeques, picnic shelters, fishing jetties, viewing platforms and boardwalks, are provided at various locations along the rivers banks.

Increasing investment in public facilities, including recreation facilities continues to progressively improve the range of facilities and access options within the river corridor.

The cultural and environmental significance of many of these spaces is also recognised by heritage or environmental controls over buildings or structures within these spaces, the river banks, significant trees or the parklands themselves.

Key open space and recreation features along the river corridor are shown on the map on the following page. This includes the river’s parklands, walking trails, key public recreation nodes and facilities, and main access points. This network of features offers a wide range of economic, health and wellbeing, and social benefits for a broad cross-section of the community.

A number of key public recreation nodes exist along the river, which encompass significant tracts of parkland and provide views of the river and public access to its water. Four key nodes have been identified as shown on the map on the following page:

- Como Park and Herring Island, South Yarra
- Burnley Park and Kevin Bartlett Reserve, Burnley
- Studley Park and Yarra Bend Park, including Yarra Bend Golf Course, Kew and Fairfield
- Golf Courses and parklands of East Kew and Ivanhoe (within the Middle Yarra River study area).



Kayakers on the Yarra River

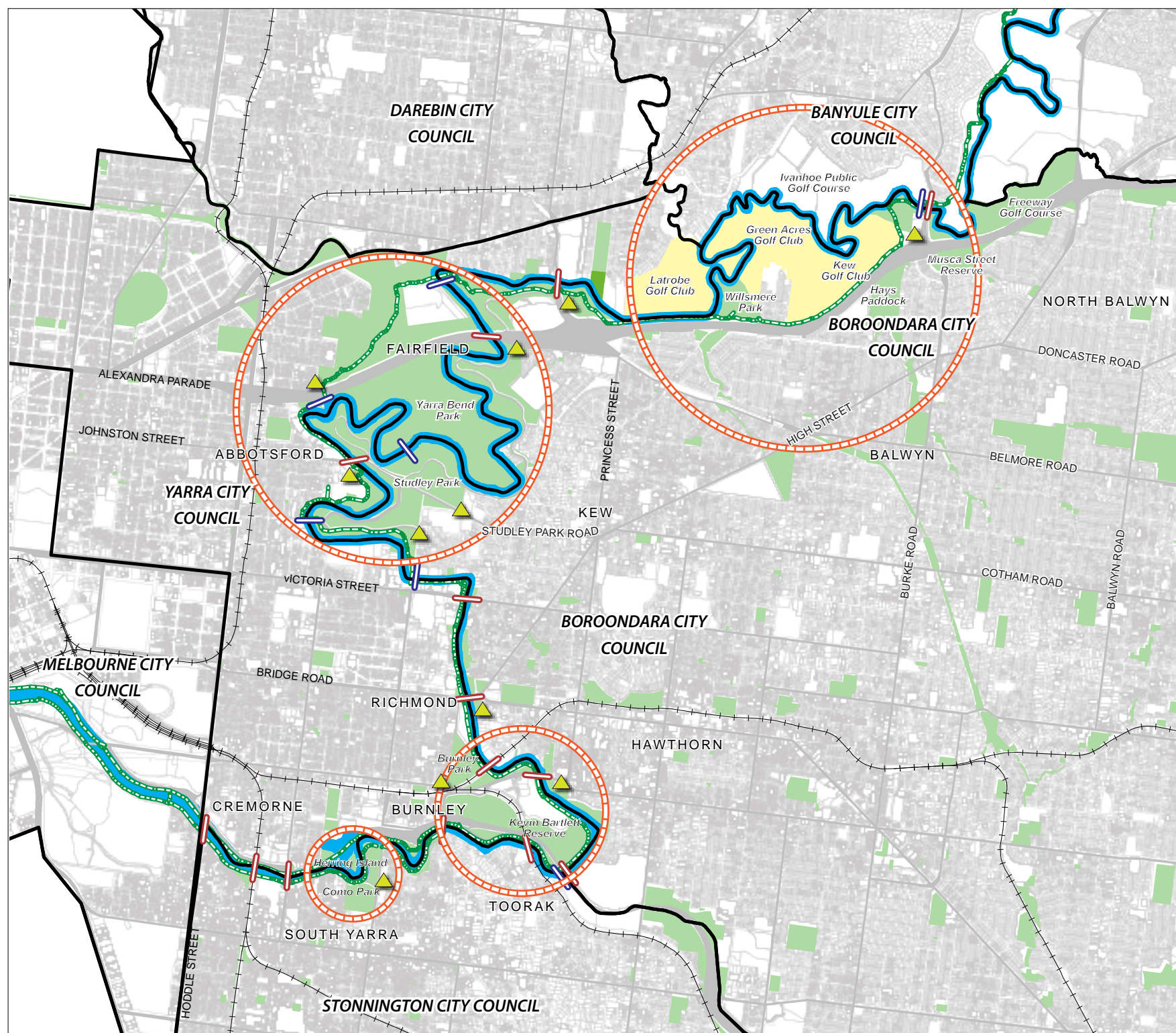


A section of the Main Yarra Trail near South Yarra












A river viewing point of the adjacent to the Main Yarra Trail

1 Yarra Valley Parklands Management Plan, 2002



LEGEND

- | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|---|-----------------------------|
|  | Local Government Boundaries |  | Main Yarra Trail |
|  | Yarra River |  | Key public recreation nodes |
|  | Open Space |  | Vehicular bridges |
|  | Private Golf Course |  | Pedestrian bridges |
| | |  | Key access points |





kms 2

LOWER YARRA RIVER CORRIDOR STUDY KEY OPEN SPACE & RECREATION FEATURES

2.10 Threats & Pressures

Threats to Built Form Character

Potential threats to the character of built form throughout the study area include:

- Built form that is highly visible along the ridgeline/skyline and surrounding hillslopes, as viewed from the Yarra River corridor and areas of public open space
- Bulky, heavily massed buildings
- Bold, bright colours and reflective finishes on buildings
- Large surface areas of white/off-white/light shades of colour
- Built form that is not substantially screened by vegetation
- Built form that does not respect the preferred building height for the area
- Built form that does not respect the heritage values of the local area
- Built form that is on and too close to the banks of the Yarra River
- High, solid fencing or gates
- Signage that is out of scale or character with the landscape.

Threats to Landscape Character

Potential threats to the landscape character of the study area include:

- Removal of significant indigenous vegetation
- Loss of mature vegetation and canopy trees
- Lack of vegetation/ landscaping
- Built form that penetrates the predominant tree canopy height
- Excessive disturbance to existing topography caused by cut and fill
- Large areas of hard paved surfaces, including driveways and car parking areas
- Proliferation of weeds.

Other Threats

A number of other threats are relevant to the study area, but are more appropriately addressed at a whole of catchment level or through another policy mechanism, and as such are not addressed in detail in this report. These threats include issues relating to water quality, flooding, erosion, vegetation protection and management, litter, and control of environmental weeds and pests.



All buildings visible from the river have the potential to impact upon its character, values and visual amenity. Buildings that are located atop ridgelines or finished in light coloured materials are particularly visible, even at a distance.

In some places the loss of vegetated screening between the river corridor and built form result in particularly visible built form.

3. River Interface Character Types Analysis

3.1 Lower Yarra River Interface Character Types

Analysis of the landscape river interface character types within the Lower 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 Lower 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 five ‘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 five different river interface character types, illustrated on the map on the following page, include:

- Type 1: Leafy Suburban
- Type 2: Urban Residential
- Type 3: Current & Ex-Industrial
- Type 4: Motorway
- Type 5: Parklands and Recreation

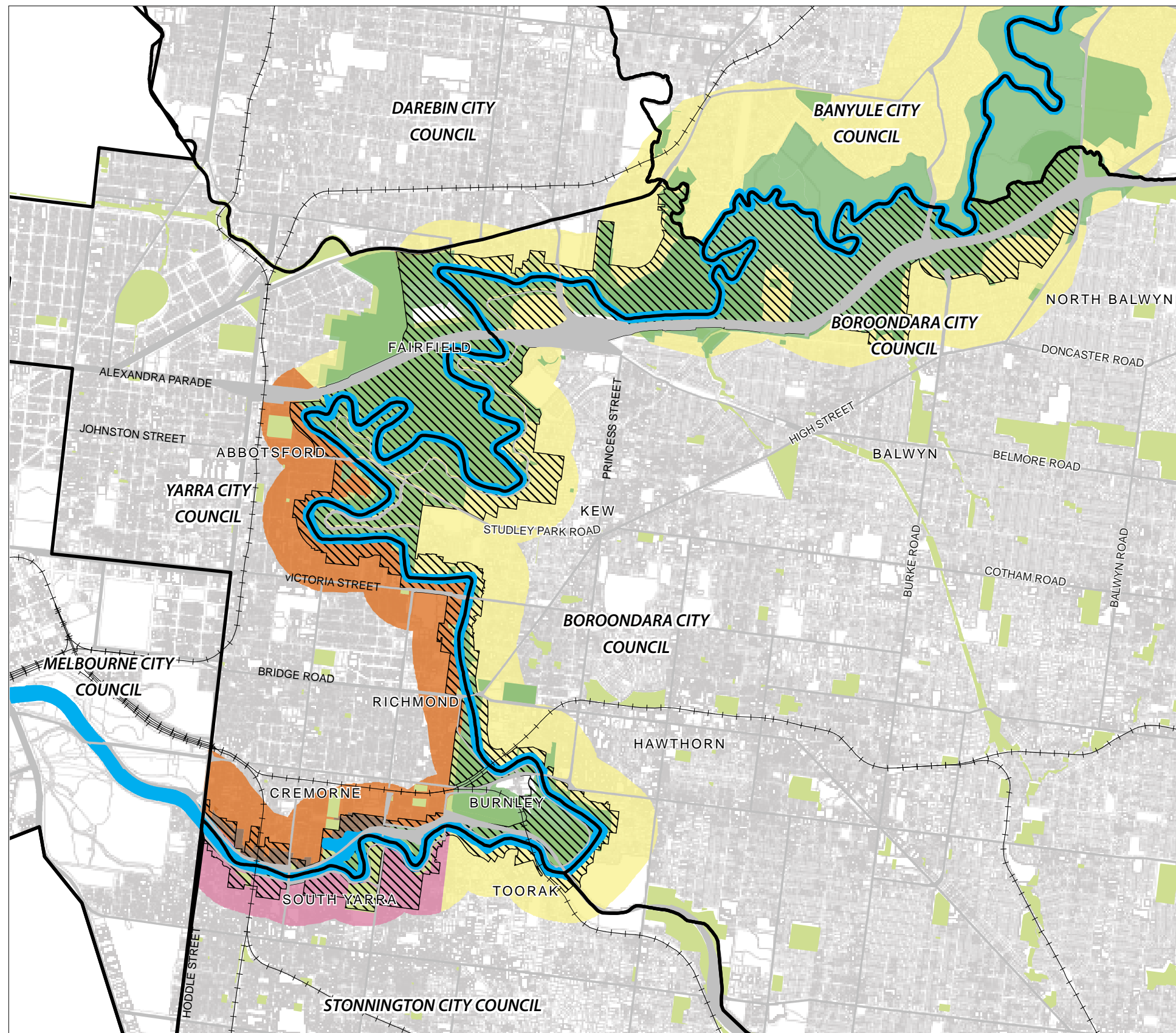
The characteristics of each type are outlined in detail, and address the following specific elements:

- 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 a canopy of mature trees and existing vegetation as the dominant visual element in all parts of the river corridor.
- Minimising the visual impact of buildings, structures, fencing and earthworks within the river’s landscape. 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 reflect the landscape character of the context.
- Protecting the natural landscape elements of riparian vegetation and bank topography.
- Ensuring that the design principles for the Lower 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 Lower Yarra corridor.

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



LEGEND

- Local Government Boundaries
- Yarra River
- Recommended Area of Management

Character Types

- Leafy Suburban
- Urban Residential
- Parklands and Recreation
- Current & Ex-Industrial
- Motorway

kms 2



LOWER YARRA RIVER CORRIDOR STUDY RIVER INTERFACE CHARACTER TYPES

3.2 Leafy Suburban River Interface Character Type



The Leafy Suburban river interface character type comprises established residential neighbourhoods along the river’s edge.

The 2005 ‘Review of Policy and Controls for the Yarra River Corridor: Punt Road to Burke Road’ identified residential neighbourhoods adjoining the river in Toorak, Hawthorn, Kew and Alphington as ‘Leafy Suburban’.

These neighbourhoods have a distinctively well-treed character, which complements the landscape character of the river corridor.

Key Features

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

- Established residential neighbourhoods, either adjoining the river directly or 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).
- Mostly single or double storey dwellings, often set spaciouly apart.
- Undulating topography which includes lower areas adjoining the river flats and steeper rises from the river’s edge.
- Main Yarra and Capital City Trails and public parkland providing access along the river’s edge.



Topography & Landscape

The river passes through higher ground in Toorak and parts of Hawthorn and Kew, where the land rises steeply from the river’s edge to the elevated, undulating topography of hilltops and ridgelines beyond. River flats feature prominently as the river passes through Hawthorn and East Kew, where residential neighbourhoods are located beyond the floodprone land at the river’s edge.

Gardens within this character type are well established with a mix of native and exotic species. Substantial trees and understory landscaping have matured to form a consistent and distinctive vegetative character. The tree canopy sits above the rooftops to form an almost continuous backdrop of vegetation for immediate and longer range views from the river and key viewing points.

However, there are also examples of newer development where vegetation has been removed and replaced with tennis courts, swimming pools and pavement, which has resulted in a distinctly reduced tree canopy backdrop in some locations.

Land Use & Built Form

Land is predominantly used for residential purposes, and comprises a mix of dwelling types generally set within established gardens.

There is a wide range of approaches to the siting and design of buildings within the immediate context of the river. For the most part, sensitive building siting and design has assisted in the retention of the river’s highly vegetated and naturalistic character. This includes maintaining a low site coverage to allow space for new planting and retention of existing trees on the site. Most buildings are 1-2 storeys in height and rooflines generally sit below the tree canopy. While built form is often visible, it is usually well screened by riverside vegetation.

Buildings are sited at a range of setbacks, reflecting the varied topography and floodprone nature of the land in some locations. Most buildings are at or beyond a setback of 30 metres, however, there are also instances of development set closer to the river, up to 10 metres from the river’s edge.

Several sites feature prominent buildings or hard landscaping, such as tennis courts, swimming pools and terracing, close to the river’s edge. These works have required excavation which results in substantial modification of the river’s natural topography and a loss of vegetation to screen development from the river. Some sites also feature high fences near to the river which are visually prominent and impact on the appearance of a continuous flow vegetation along the riverbank.

Pattern of Viewing

The character type is mostly viewed from via the Main Yarra Trail, the Yarra Boulevard, the extensive network of open spaces along this part of the river corridor, and from the waterway itself. Key viewing locations also include the road crossings of the Chandler Highway Bridge, Wallen Road Bridge, Walmer Street Bridge, Johnston Street Bridge, Victoria Bridge, Hawthorn Bridge and MacRobertson Bridge, as well as the Hawthorn and Heyington rail bridges.

Other Values

Other values associated with this landscape include:

- The Yarra River is the traditional land of the Wurundjeri people. The waterway and surrounding land continues to hold a high value to Aboriginal people today.
- The Heritage Overlay is applied extensively within this character type, and includes residential precincts and individual sites of heritage significance.
- Landscape, vegetation and environmental values are recognised and protected through the application of local Planning Scheme overlays.

Potential Threats to Values

In elevated areas, built form is particularly visible on the river banks and ridgelines. Existing issues include the removal of vegetation, buildings that occupy a high site area with little space for landscaing, use of light coloured or reflective materials and buildings that protrude above the predominant tree canopy height. Buildings or areas of hard landscaping constructed close to the river have had a significant impact upon its landscape quality. The trend for larger homes and subdivision can exacerbate these issues. In addition, construction of jetties or hard paving at the river’s edge to allow private access to the water can also impact upon the waterway environment.

Current Management

Land within this river interface character type is mostly zoned Neighbourhood Residential or General Residential, with a small area of Residential Growth Zone. Institutional uses are included in the Special Use Zone. A range of overlay controls apply to precincts and selected sites on both sides of the river, including the Design and Development Overlay, Significant Landscape Overlay, Environmental Significance Overlay and Heritage Overlay.

3.3 Urban Residential River Interface Character Type



The Urban Residential river interface character type comprises urban residential neighbourhoods in the southern part of the study area between Grange Road and Punt Road.

The Urban Residential river interface character type was identified in the 2005 *'Review of Policy and Controls for the Yarra River Corridor: Punt Road to Burke Road'* and includes residential neighbourhoods within South Yarra and parts of Toorak. These areas comprise large houses and multiple-unit developments on moderate to large blocks with scattered vegetation. Development is set on sloping topography and is highly visible from the river, but physically separated from the river and its parklands by Alexandra Avenue.

Key Features

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

- Established residential neighbourhoods, located immediately beyond the parklands and recreation areas along the river corridor.
- Mixed land uses and building typologies, as identified in the Stonnington *DDO3 Review* (2012), including mid-rise and high-rise apartments, larger single dwellings and townhouses.
- Mature trees and understorey planting which allows a visible tree canopy in most areas.
- Topography rising up from the Yarra River, to elevated, undulating ground beyond.
- Capital City Trail provides access along the southern side of the river.
- Formal parklands, recreation grounds, sports ovals and picnic areas along the river.
- Herring Island, which is undeveloped and retains a naturalistic character.
- Indigenous riparian vegetation replanting of the riverbank between Grange and Punt Roads.

Topography & Landscape

This character type is located on elevated ground, which includes prominent escarpments along Alexandra Avenue with ridgelines and hilltops in neighbourhoods beyond. The topography rises up gently from the edge of the river, to the flattened space of Alexandra Avenue, then rises more steeply to the elevated land of this character type.

Gardens within this character type are well established with significant plantings of native and exotic species. Canopy trees within parklands, along Alexandra Avenue and on some private properties, form a relatively consistent vegetative character. In most locations the tree canopy is a strong visual element, filtering views to buildings and rooftops.

At the same time, many sites support large scale buildings with a high site coverage and retain only small garden areas, which form the character of this urban environment.

Land Use & Built Form

Land is used for private dwellings which are mostly set within formal streetscapes. Buildings include large houses and multiple-unit developments on moderate to large blocks with scattered vegetation. Buildings are a mixture of heights ranging from single or double storey through to 16 storeys. Within the Forrest Hill Precinct, west of River Street, are several high scale apartment blocks. To the east, the pattern of the built form is more varied and gradually reduces in scale.

While substantial vegetation exists within this character type, many buildings are highly visible from the river. However, the roadway of Alexandra Avenue and the riverside open space corridor provides a sense of physical separation of buildings from the river's edge. This helps to retain the visual dominance of the waterway itself within this landscape.

On the southern side of Alexandra Avenue, the large grassed expanse of Como Park, as well as other small open spaces, provide a landscape setting to buildings beyond.

Pattern of Viewing

This character type is viewed on the southern side of the river from the Capital City Trail, Alexandra Avenue and the extensive network of open spaces which provide direct access to the river. It is also viewed from the Main Yarra Trail on the northern side of the river, in the City of Yarra, and from the Church Street Bridge, Cremorne Rail Bridge and the Monash Freeway.

Other Values

Other values associated with this landscape include:

- The Yarra River is the traditional land of the Wurundjeri people. The waterway and surrounding land continues to hold a high value to Aboriginal people today.
- There are numerous heritage listed sites and precincts within this character type, including significant examples of early apartment buildings. Melbourne High School is an iconic heritage building set within landscaped grounds.
- Alexandra Avenue is one of Melbourne's iconic boulevards, constructed in the early C20th.
- Landscape, vegetation and environmental values are recognised and protected through the application of local Planning Scheme overlays.

Potential Threats to Values

Threats to this section of the river corridor relate mostly to the siting and design of buildings. Given the steep topography, built form is particularly visible on the surrounding hillslopes and ridgelines. Existing issues include the use of reflective materials, colours and finishes which create contrast with the skyline, as well as buildings that protrude above the predominant tree canopy height. Removal of vegetation and reduction of the tree canopy can also be a threat to the landscape character.

Current Management

Land within this river interface character type is zoned General Residential, with some parcels of land subject to the Residential Growth Zone, Mixed Use Zone and Public Use Zone also within this character type. The Design and Development Overlay and Heritage Overlay also apply.

3.4 Current and Ex-Industrial River Interface Character Type



The Current and Ex-industrial river interface character type comprises intensely developed urban areas for industrial and associated uses, much of which is undergoing redevelopment.

This character type applies to industrial and commercial areas within Abbotsford, Richmond and Cremorne that have a distinctive character which is unique to this portion of the Yarra River Corridor. It has been identified in the 2003 *'City of Yarra Built Form Review'* and subsequent studies for the Yarra River corridor.

Key Features

Key features of the Current and Ex-Industrial river interface character type include:

- Established industrial, commercial and residential buildings, mostly located on the crestline of the Yarra River corridor.
- Mature trees and understorey planting along the river banks in many locations which contribute to a vegetated character and compliment Yarra Bend Park on the opposite banks.
- Mix of building styles, scales and heights, including many higher scale buildings constructed close to the river's edge.
- Land rising steeply from the river's edge to flat topography beyond.
- Capital City Trail providing access along the river's edge, with a mix of public and private access to the river.

Topography & Landscape

Land in this character type is generally flat and then drops steeply at the river's edge. The steepest section of river banks is in Abbotsford where the banks are up to 14 metres in height.

In many locations, buildings are constructed up to the crestline, at which point the steep bank topography flattens out. In some areas the crestline is only 15 metres from the river edge.

The banks are well vegetated in most locations, despite the dense urban environment beyond, contributing to the overall character of the river. This character type provides examples of significant human alterations to the river bank environment where large retaining walls have been constructed, such as at Trenerry Crescent and at the Carlton and United Brewery complex. In several locations there is a notable absence of vegetation at the river frontage.

At Dights Falls in Abbotsford, the Yarra River narrows and runs over an artificial weir built on a natural rock bar across the river.

Land Use & Built Form

Land is used for a mix of industrial, commercial and residential purposes. This area of the Yarra River corridor has undergone a transition from being predominantly industrial to a having a greater mix of commercial and residential land uses.

Buildings in this area are a mix of heights, ranging from one storey to over twelve storeys, and are generally built up to the crestline of the river corridor, adding to their visual prominence on the skyline. A high level of vegetation cover on the river banks screens views to buildings from the river in many locations.

Traditional industrial buildings feature mainly brick facades with simple functional architectural detailing. Some larger, former industrial buildings have been converted or extended for residential or office use. Architectural styles are mixed with new apartments featuring lighter or more reflective materials.

Pattern of Viewing

This character type is mostly experienced via the Capital City Trail, the Yarra Boulevard and the extensive network of open spaces along this part of the river corridor, particularly Yarra Bend Park on the opposite side of the river. Direct access to the river is also provided by local streets. The river can be observed from above at the Walmer Street Pedestrian Bridge, Gipps Street Bridge, Victoria Street Bridge, Johnston Street Bridge, Bridge Road Bridge and from the waterway itself.

Other Values

Other values associated with this landscape include:

- The Yarra River is the traditional land of the Wurundjeri people. The waterway and surrounding land continues to hold a high value to Aboriginal people today.
- Buildings in this character type tell a story of the importance of the Yarra River to Melbourne's industrial heritage, with built form, large retaining walls and red brick factory facades abutting the river's edge.
- The Heritage Overlay is applied industrial buildings and residential dwellings of heritage significance.

Potential Threats to Values

Key threats to this section of the river corridor relate mostly to the siting and design of buildings. There is ongoing pressure for development of higher scale buildings within close proximity to the river's edge, to take advantage of its scenic amenity. This has the potential to result in overdevelopment of the river banks, further loss of its natural landscape elements, and overshadowing of the river and open spaces. Given the low-lying and flat topography within the City of Yarra, buildings are particularly visible from the hillslopes and ridgelines on the opposite bank. Balancing the development expectation of land within this character type with retaining the natural landscape character of the river and the opposite bank is a challenge.

Current Management

A broad range of zone provisions apply to land within this river interface character type, reflecting the eclectic nature of land uses. This includes Industrial 1 & 3 Zones, Commercial 1&2 Zones, Public Use Zone and Priority Development Zone. Some small sections of the Neighbourhood Residential Zone and General Residential Zone are interspersed among this character type. A range of overlay controls apply to precincts and selected sites, including the Design and Development Overlay, Environmental Significance Overlay and Heritage Overlay.

3.5 Motorway River Interface Character Type



The Motorway river interface character type consists of a mix of land uses with development opportunities for taller built form along the river on land that adjoins the Monash Freeway.

The Motorway character type includes areas within Burnley, Cremorne and Richmond that adjoin the CityLink freeway, as identified in the 2003 *'City of Yarra Built Form Review'* and subsequent studies for the Yarra River corridor.

Key Features

Key features of the Motorway river interface character type include:

- Presence of the Monash Freeway.
- Highly modified river banks and river formation including Herring Island and Burnley Harbour.
- Mix of industrial, commercial and residential uses, immediately behind the motorway which feature varying building styles, scales and heights.
- Generally flat topography.
- Main Yarra Trail providing access along the river's northern edge.



Topography & Landscape

Land in this character type is generally low lying and flat, gradually rising up from the river's edge.

In this area the river banks and environs are highly modified, with motorway structures, retaining walls and the cantilevered Main Yarra Trail comprising much of the interface with the river. Consequently, there is a limited presence of trees and other river bank vegetation.

Patches of trees and smaller scale vegetation on the northern side of the motorway within the surrounding residential and commercial areas provide a green backdrop to the motorway in some sections.

The course of the Yarra River through this part of the corridor has been substantially modified. In 1929 a new river channel was cut at Burnley which created Herring Island and Burnley Harbour, to assist in navigation and flood mitigation.

Land Use & Built Form

The Monash Freeway presents a dominant interface with the river in this character type with sound barriers, retaining walls and elevated sections of roadway. Additionally, the Main Yarra Trail is cantilevered from the edge of the motorway over the water.

Beyond the Monash Freeway, land within Cremorne is used for a mix of industrial, commercial and residential uses. This area of the Yarra River corridor is undergoing a transition from being a predominantly industrial precinct to supporting a mix of commercial and residential land uses.

Buildings in this area are a mix of scales and styles. Traditional industrial buildings feature mainly brick facades with simple functional architectural detailing. Some larger, formerly industrial buildings have been converted or extended for residential or office use. New developments feature lighter and more reflective materials with extensive use of glass.

The former grain silos and Nylex clock are prominent heritage listed landmarks in this area and, in conjunction with other buildings in this location, tell the story of the industrial heritage of the Yarra River in Melbourne's development.

Higher scale development forms a strong built form edge and distinctive urban skyline along the northern bank of the river, as viewed from the southern bank and from longer range vantage points.

Pattern of Viewing

This character type is mostly experienced from the Capital City Trail and extensive network of open spaces and recreation areas along the southern river bank. It can also be observed from the Monash Freeway and the Main Yarra Trail on the northern river bank, the Church Street Bridge, Cremore Rail Bridge, the Punt Road Bridge and from the waterway itself.

Other Values

Other values associated with this landscape include:

- The Yarra River is the traditional land of the Wurundjeri people. The waterway and surrounding land continues to hold a high value to Aboriginal people today.
- The former grain silos and Nylex clock are listed on the Victorian Heritage Register.
- The Monash Freeway is a significant transport corridor for metropolitan Melbourne.

Potential Threats to Values

Key threats to this section of the river corridor relate to the potential for buildings to cast additional shadow across the waterway or southern banks of the river, beyond the shadow cast of existing buildings and freeway structure. The appearance of higher scale buildings on the skyline, as viewed from the opposite side of the river, and their impact on long range views to the CBD are also a key consideration.

Current Management

A variety of zones apply to land within this area reflecting the eclectic nature of land use within this character type. The primary interface of the Monash Freeway is within a Road Zone. The Industrial 3 Zone, Commercial 1 & 2 Zones, Public Use Zone and Comprehensive Development Zone form the bulk of land within the immediate backdrop of the river. These are interspersed with pockets of the Neighbourhood Residential and General Residential Zones.

3.6 Parklands & Recreation River Interface Character Type



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 throughout the Lower Yarra.

The Parklands & Recreation river interface character type comprises many formalised open spaces and recreation reserves that lie on the river's floodplain and its edge. These areas provide landscape buffer to urban all landscape character types within the corridor.

Key Features

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

- Locally and regionally significant open spaces of formalised parkland and recreation facilities.
- Pockets of naturalistic bushland within conservation areas.
- Strong sense of seclusion and remoteness from the city in many locations, which is a unique attribute for inner Melbourne.
- Areas of flat topography of the river's floodplains which have been set aside as parkland.
- Other places of steeper or undulating topography, some of which feature distinctive rock formations along the river's banks.
- Main Yarra Trail and Capital City Trail which provide access throughout the corridor.
- Historic Studley Park and Fairfield Boathouses and surrounding parklands.
- Dights Falls in Kew/Abbotsford, where the Yarra River narrows and runs over an artificial weir built on a natural rock bar across the river.
- Yarra Bend Park which is an extensive complex of parkland extending across the northern and southern banks of the Yarra River in Kew, Abbotsford and Fairfield. The park includes a number of active recreation fields and golf courses on the flats of the river and extensive tracts of natural bushland on the elevated topography of the park.
- Other key parklands and recreation facilities include Studley Park, Abbotsford Convent, Collingwood Children's Farm, Como Park, Herring Island, Burnley Harbour, Burnley Horticultural Gardens, Burnley Park and Kevin Bartlett Reserve.

Topography & Landscape

This character type comprises much of the flat topography within the river's floodplains. Parkland areas located beyond the river's edge have a more undulating topography. In several locations the riverbanks are steep and feature distinctive rock formations, such as the Deep Rock area in Yarra Bend Park.

Many parts of this character type comprise formalised parklands, for either active or passive recreation. These areas are all well-vegetated with mature trees, but retain little naturalistic character.

Other open spaces have a distinctly naturalistic character, where the parklands are informally designed, or feature areas of wilderness. This includes much of the parkland that comprises Yarra Bend Park, Studley Park and Herring Island. These parklands have a high conservation value.

Land Use & Built Form

This character type features a wide range of open spaces and conservation areas. This includes formalised parkland and recreation facilities (both private and public access), such as golf courses, tennis courts, sports ovals, picnic areas and playgrounds. It also includes the large areas of bushland within Studley Park and Yarra Bend Park, which provide an unparalleled opportunity for immersion within a natural environment only kilometers from Melbourne's CBD.

Buildings and structures are limited to amenity blocks and sports ground buildings. 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. Several formal recreation spaces have high chain wire fencing. In some locations buildings within the adjacent residential areas on higher ground are visible across parklands or through vegetation.

The Studley Park and Fairfield boathouse complexes feature architecturally and historically significant buildings set within a naturalistic parkland setting.

A number of publicly accessible jetties and boat landings sit within riverside open spaces, including the landings at the Studley Park and Fairfield boathouses. Generally these are constructed with natural materials such as timber and are modest in size. These structures typically extend a short distance (7m) into the river and sit beneath the crest of the riverbank under the tree canopy within scrubby understory vegetation. Boat landings for the various rowing clubs comprise structures with frontages to the river of as much as 40 metres in width.

Pattern of Viewing

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

Owing to the extensive nature of the Yarra Bend Park and its elevated topography, this parkland provides some of the most comprehensive views of the Yarra River in metropolitan Melbourne.

Other Values

Other values associated with this landscape include:

- The Yarra River is the traditional land of the Wurundjeri people. The waterway and surrounding land continues to hold a high value to Aboriginal people today. The confluence points of the Yarra River with the Darebin, Merri and Gardiners Creeks within this character type are of particular significance as meeting places and forming clan boundaries.
- The Yarra Bend Park includes a number of sites of high Aboriginal significance, such as the confluence of the Yarra River and Merri Creek which is commemorated by the Koori Garden on the western edge of the park.
- The Yarra Bend Park has been designated as open space since 1877 and is of metropolitan significance as the largest area of bushland in inner Melbourne, offering a unique sense of connection to a naturalistic landscape setting within the inner City.
- A variety of institutions were established in the park during the nineteenth century, including the Yarra Bend Lunatic Asylum and the Queen's Memorial Infectious Diseases Hospital. The legacy of these buildings remain throughout the park with historic buildings presently used by the Justice Department and NMIT Fairfield Campus.
- Throughout this period parts of the park's stunning natural landscapes were preserved leaving the largest area of remaining natural bushland in inner Melbourne.
- The Studley Park and Fairfield Boathouses are prominent examples of restored Edwardian architecture within a parkland setting and heritage listed. They serve as popular locations for boating and picnicking. Fairfield and Studley Park Boathouses are heritage listed buildings which have a high visitor attraction.
- Dights Falls are a popular location for visitors along the Yarra River with amenities such as toilets, sheltered areas, seating and drinking fountains being provided in this area.

- The Falls mark the point where salt water from the sea meets the fresh water of the Yarra River. They provide an excellent display of some of the geology of the area including marine sandstones and mudstones from 400 million years ago. They are named after Dight’s Ceres Mill, one of Melbourne’s oldest industrial sites.
- Other parklands have identified heritage significance, such as Burnley Gardens, Abbotsford Convent and Fairview Park.
- The numerous recreational facilities of these parklands are of high social and tourism value to the local area and beyond. This includes the golf courses, sports grounds, shared trails and boating facilities.
- Landscape, vegetation and environmental values are recognised and protected through the application of local planning scheme overlays.

Potential Threats to Values

New buildings or structures associated with the recreational function of parklands could potentially form a threat to their landscape character if they are of an inappropriate scale or design.

While it is accepted that occasional buildings relating to recreational access to the water are necessary to enhance the public use of the parklands, these should be carefully managed to avoid a proliferation of buildings or structures throughout the parkland or too close to the river’s edge.

Development outside of this character type within adjoining built-up areas could potentially affect the naturalistic character of parklands if it is of a scale and design that renders it highly visible from public spaces. In addition, buildings adjoining parklands could potentially overshadow public spaces or recreation trails.

Potential inappropriate access from private land onto public land could impact upon the environmental integrity of parklands. Fencing of public land must be appropriately designed so that it is not visually dominant in the landscape.

Access to parklands requires careful management. This includes inappropriate public access from private land and informal/ illegal access trails created through bushland. Access to some parts of parkland areas may also need to be restricted to protect conservation values.

Environmental management issues could also affect this character type, particularly weed infestation and river bank erosion.

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 Management Plan applies to Yarra Bend Park.

4. Views Analysis

4.1 Viewing the Lower Yarra River Corridor

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

Introduction

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

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

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

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

Views Analysis

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

There are also a number of designated or promoted viewing locations within the Lower Yarra River corridor, such as the observation point at Dights Falls. These view points have been identified as important in this study as they:

- are accessible by the public;
- are located on public land;
- are in more heavily used or trafficked areas;
- provide a view or views that are potentially exemplary, iconic or scarce within the Lower Yarra River corridor context.

The following elements have been considered and assessed as part of the views analysis:

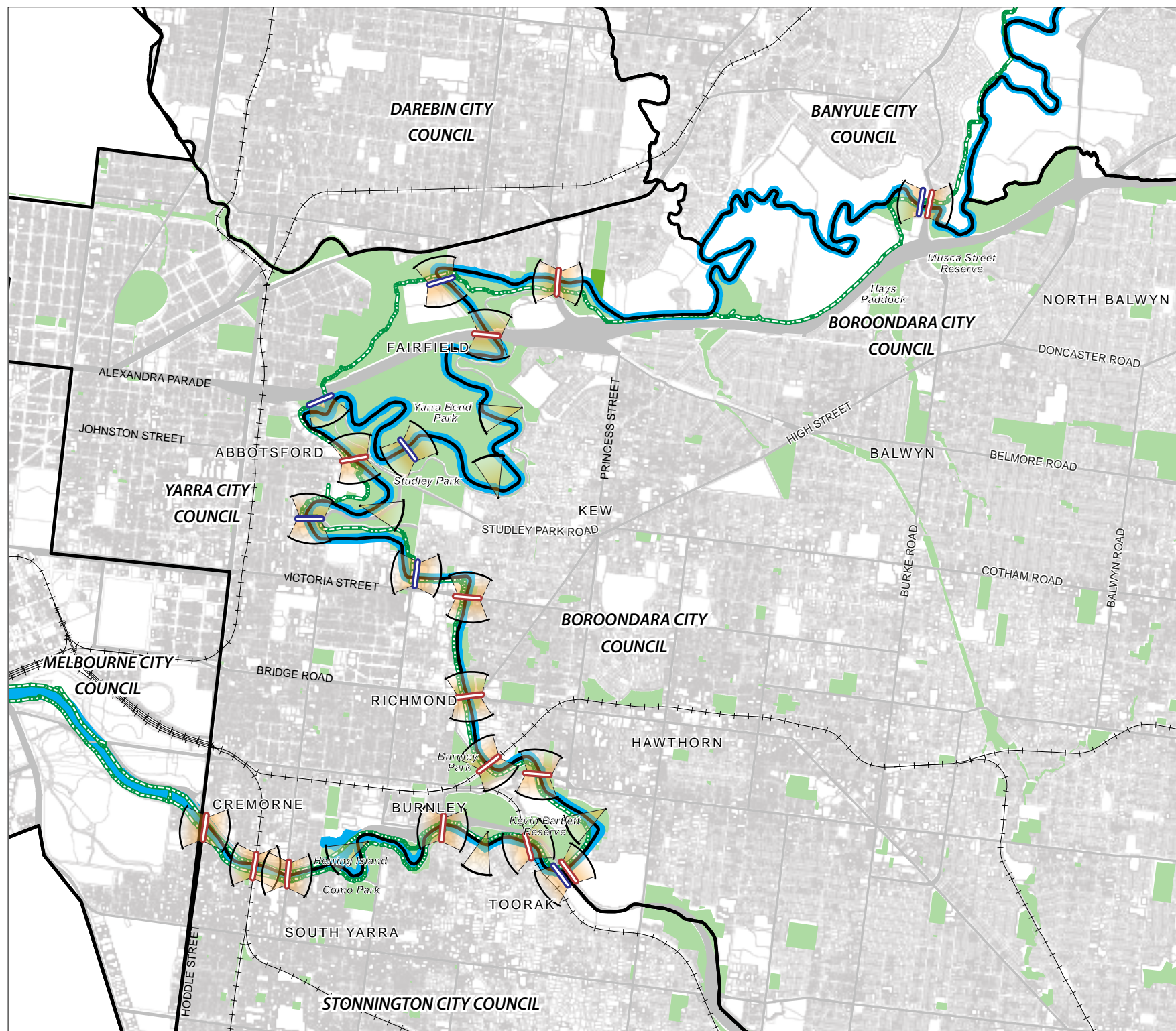
- location and accessibility;
- visual description, including its structure or composition and aesthetic qualities;
- significance of the view;
- threats to the valued qualities of the view; and
- implications for planning controls, in relation to protection of the view itself and/or development considerations that may be more widely applied to the river corridor.

General Terms

View: A sight or prospect of some landscape or scene.

Panorama: An unobstructed view or prospect over a wide area, often in many directions.

Vista: A view or prospect, especially one that is framed and seen through a narrow avenue or passage.



LEGEND

- Local Government Boundaries
- Yarra River
- Open Space
- Main Yarra Trail
- Vehicular Bridges
- Pedestrian Bridges
- Key Views



LOWER YARRA RIVER CORRIDOR STUDY
KEY VIEWING LOCATIONS

4.2 Dynamic Views

Location and Accessibility

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

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

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

Description

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

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

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

Significance

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

Threats

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

Planning Implications

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



Cyclist on the Main Yarra Trail in Abbotsford



The Yarra Boulevard



Herring Island boat launch



Canoeing on the Yarra River

4.3 Road and Rail Bridge Crossings

Location and Accessibility

There are eleven road bridge crossings of the Lower Yarra:

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

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

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

Description

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

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

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

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

Significance

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

Threats

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

Planning Implications

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

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



The Yarra River viewed from above on the Johnston Street Bridge



Example of visible high rise development adjacent to the River as seen from the Church St Bridge in South Yarra



The Yarra River viewed from the Church Street Bridge



Victoria St Bridge crossing the Yarra

4.4 Pedestrian Bridges

Location and Accessibility

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

Description

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

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

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

Significance

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

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

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

Threats

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

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

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

Planning Implications

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



The Fairfield Pipe Bridge crossing the Yarra River to the south of the Fairfield Boat House



Collins Bridge (also known as Gipps Street Bridge) crossing the Yarra



Walmer Street Bridge

4.5 Other Viewing Locations

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Parkland along the Yarra River in South Yarra opposite Herring Island



Places to enjoy the Yarra River at Dights Falls



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



Fairview Park, as viewed from Kevin Bartlett Reserve viewing point



Example of a Yarra River viewing point in South Yarra

5. Managing Development

5.1 Introduction

A consistent, corridor approach to managing the impact of built form and vegetation removal is critical to long term protection of the Yarra River.

Overview

This chapter draws from the research and analysis of earlier chapters to provide study-wide recommendations to strengthen the management of development within the landscape corridor of the Yarra River.

This chapter includes:

- An outline of the segments within the river corridor which help define the spatial extent for where strengthened planning controls may be applied.
- Recommended planning controls for consistent application throughout the Yarra River corridor.
- The general form and content that will inform the development of new and/or amended planning controls.
- Criteria for determining locally tailored mandatory height and setback requirements.

Chapter 6 'Recommendations' provides area specific detail outlining how the above is applied within respective planning schemes. Municipal Toolkits provide a summary of recommendations for each planning scheme and include the detailed analysis of each area where mandatory planning controls are proposed.

Areas Recommended for Management

An overview of the general area recommended for improved management via strengthened planning controls is shown on the map on the following page.

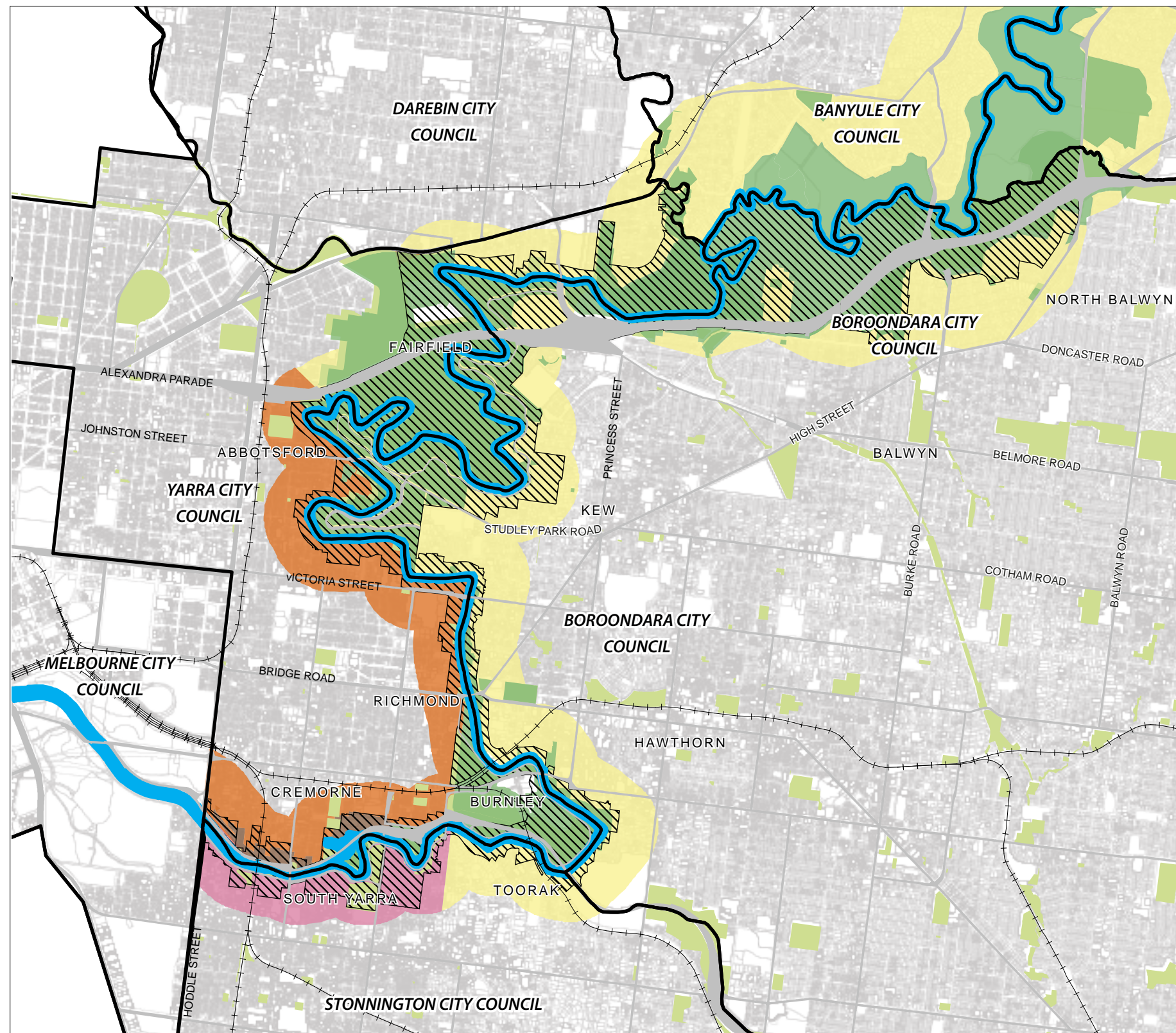
These areas comprise the following landscape segments (which are explained in detail in section 5.2):

1. The "Waterway Corridor" which comprises the river's immediate natural environment;
2. The "River Experience Corridor" encompassing the places where the river can be experienced from its banks and trails; and
3. The "Landscape Setting Corridor" taking in the wider landscape setting beyond, in some locations.

Recommended Planning Control Approach

The following planning controls are recommended to be applied within the Lower Yarra Corridor:

- Council to consider updating the Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) to include the content and outcomes of this study as part of a future review of the Local Planning Policy Framework.
- Apply the Design and Development Overlay (DDO) to private land adjacent to, or within close proximity to, the Yarra River, establishing mandatory building heights and setbacks from the river's edge, as well as other detailed discretionary design requirements.
- Apply the Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO) to land adjoining the river, to capture an area approximate to the recommended area of management, establishing consistent landscape, vegetation and other management requirements.
- Include a requirement within the proposed DDO or SLO for Melbourne Water to be the 'Recommending referral authority' for limited classes of development applications within a prescribed distance of the Yarra River.
- Consider the application of the Incorporated Plan Overlay (IPO) or the Development Plan Overlay (DPO) to public land or major development sites, requiring the completion of a master plan prior to approving new development.



LEGEND

- Local Government Boundaries
- Yarra River
- Recommended Area of Management

Character Types

- Leafy Suburban
- Urban Residential
- Parklands and Recreation
- Current & Ex-Industrial
- Motorway

0 1 2
kms



LOWER YARRA RIVER CORRIDOR STUDY RIVER INTERFACE CHARACTER TYPES

5.2 Defining River Corridor Areas for Planning

Overview

Areas recommended for strengthened planning control management within the Lower Yarra River corridor have been determined based on an assessment of their relationship to the river corridor segments of the Waterway Corridor, River Experience Corridor or Landscape Setting Corridor, shown in Figure 1, below.

Detailed cross-sectional diagrams (Chapter 6) have been prepared in different locations to explore the relationship of the topography, existing development, vegetation cover and other characteristics within the river's immediate and wider landscape to inform the application of planning controls.

This analysis helps to understand how the river and its surrounding landscape vary along its course, at different distances from the river, and what management strategies might be required to achieve the vision and objectives for the study area.

Waterway Corridor

The Waterway Corridor comprises the river itself, its banks and the immediate environment.

The direct river frontage is dominated by a naturalistic vegetation cover appropriate to a riverine environment, whether or not it is strictly 'natural' in the sense of being indigenous and self-seeded. The riverbanks, with their tree cover and understorey vegetation, frame and enclose the waterway to the extent that, when canoeing down the river, a sense of remoteness from urban activities can be achieved. Maintaining this vegetated corridor has been, and should remain, a prime objective of land management throughout the corridor.

For the length of the Waterway Corridor, State policy requires a vegetated buffer zone of 30 metres to be provided along each side of the river, which is outlined in Clause 12.05 'Yarra River Protection' and Clause 14.02-1 'Catchment planning & management' of the State Planning Policy Framework. Other policies and controls are also in place to protect the river's landscape and environmental values, discussed further in Section 5.4. A coordinated approach to the management of the Waterway Corridor is required in the future, including the setting of mandatory building setback and height controls.

River Experience Corridor

The River Experience Corridor comprises the fore- and middle-ground landscape that is viewed or experienced from the river, the Main Yarra trail and the adjoining parklands.

The viewsheds of the Main Yarra and Capital City Trails is particularly important because of the popularity of walking or cycling along the river. It differs from the waterway view shed to the extent that the trail is located at varying distances from the river with the river itself often not visible from the trail.

Because the experience of moving along the river and the trail is dynamic, the viewshed also is dynamic. At some locations on the trail, foreground vegetation obscures the horizon; at others there are open views. Even where this wider landscape is mostly obscured by foreground vegetation, progressive and intermittent glimpses of the wider landscape can be obtained from the trail. A photograph from a static viewpoint 'proving' that something is not visible behind the trees can be misleading in this respect.

When walking or cycling along the trail, or visiting the many areas of parkland, the experience is generally one of a naturalistically vegetated corridor. The success of this experience rests on the extent to which one feels enveloped in a continuous corridor of vegetation, a retreat from the hard surfaces and bustle of urban life. In reality, urban activity and development are often closer than one might expect, and urban reality breaks into the experience from time-to-time, such as when a major road crosses the corridor along its journey.

Clause 12.05, 'Yarra River Protection', acknowledges the need to protect the intrinsic value of the river's naturalistic setting, the importance of this environment in preserving the river's sense of place and landscape identity, and its recreational and environmental values. The Policy requires visual intrusion of built form within the river's environment to be minimised.

A key challenge of this study has been to document the qualities of the River Experience Corridor, and to propose measures that will protect and strengthen them. A number of management measures, such as setback lines, maximum building heights, vegetation protection, and siting and design guidance are needed to achieve this.

Currently, a range of discretionary or mandatory statutory controls relate to the River Experience Corridor, or in some locations, none at all. A coordinated consistent approach to planning control management across the River Experience Corridor is required, which should also include mandatory controls elements.

Landscape Setting Corridor

The Landscape Setting Corridor comprises the wider setting of the river corridor, defined by the ridgelines or skyline at the extremity of the viewshed and beyond.

In simple terms this refers to the horizon visible from the Main Yarra and Capital City trails, adjoining parklands or the Yarra River itself. Where the horizon is close in (up to 300-500m), it is likely also to be the edge of the River Experience Corridor. In some areas the horizon is part of Melbourne's developed suburban area, in others it is public land.

Within the Lower Yarra context, the Landscape Setting Corridor varies significantly. In some locations it is defined by well vegetated parklands or leafy suburban areas with a strong presence of tree cover. This includes areas such as Fairfield, Kew, Hawthorn and Toorak.

In other locations, the river's wider Landscape Setting Corridor is defined by the dense urban form of inner Melbourne. Long range views from elevated locations on the eastern and southern side of the river are afforded across the densely urbanised context of Richmond and Cremorne, through to the Melbourne CBD on the horizon. South Yarra on the southern banks is also a densely urbanised context for the river, within a strongly vegetated setting.

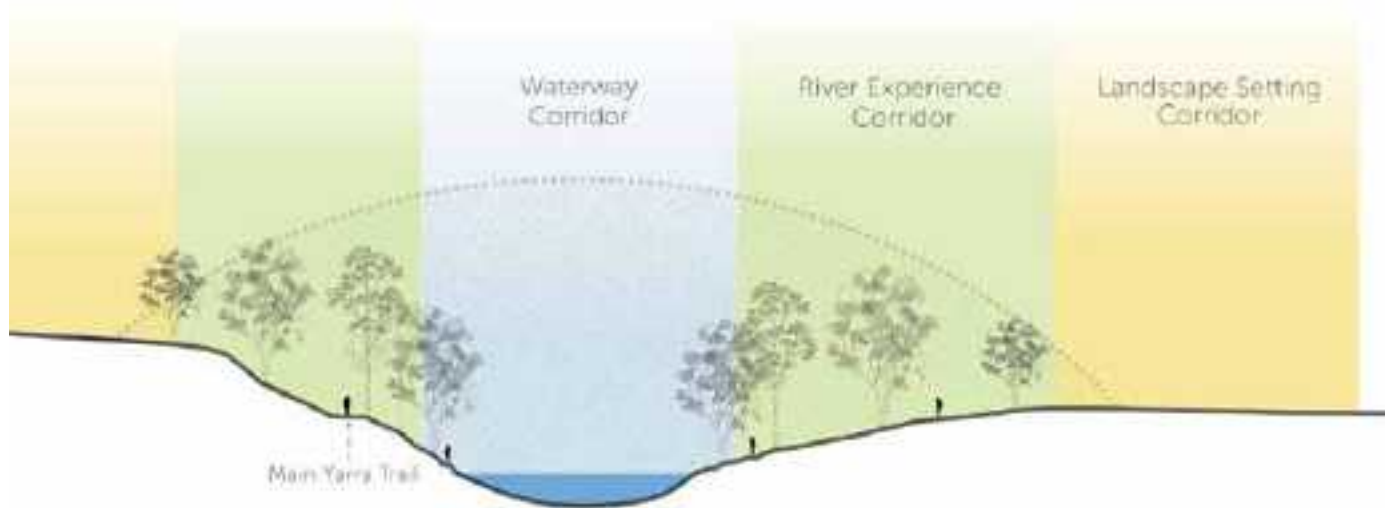


Figure 1: River Corridor Areas

5.3 Applying Consistent Overlay Controls

The Victorian Planning Provisions offer a number of options for statutory implementation. The findings of this study will be implemented through a suite of overlay controls that manage built form, landscape and environmental values.

Overview

The management of built form and its interaction with the landscape characteristics and values of the Yarra River reside in the application of appropriate 'overlay' controls within various planning schemes. The operation of these overlay controls need to work with the existing land use zones.

An analysis of existing planning controls has been undertaken across the Lower Yarra segment (Richmond to Fairfield) and the Middle Yarra segment (Ivanhoe to Warrandyte) to inform consideration of how consistent planning controls could be applied for the entire Yarra River corridor.

The following is an overview of planning controls within the Lower Yarra River corridor and the recommended provisions to address identified gaps.

Existing Zones and Overlays

An overview of the three planning schemes in the Lower Yarra study area, outlining the application of zone and overlay controls within each municipality, is detailed in **Appendix A**, and illustrated in map form in **Appendix B**.

Zones

Throughout the study area, a variety of land use planning zones apply to the Yarra River corridor.

The Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ) and the Public Conservation and Resource Zone (PCRZ) are generally used for a variety of Crown land reservations throughout the corridor.

Private land within the corridor is included in a range of zones, reflecting the complex land use patterns of the study area.

Residential areas are included within the Neighbourhood Residential, General Residential and Residential Growth Zones, depending on the degree of change designated in each location. Residential areas are mostly found in the northeastern, eastern and southern parts of the study area.

The western part of the study area comprises mostly Commercial or Industrial zoned land. There are also several large sites that are included within the Priority Development or Special Use Zones.

Recent changes introduced via new format residential zones has broadened the ability for a Planning Authority to vary a number of ResCode standards to suit the design requirements of a particular area, including controls on building height, setbacks, site coverage, permeability and landscaping. Within the General and Neighbourhood Residential Zones, these can be expressed as mandatory requirements.

The Neighbourhood Residential Zone also allows for a minimum lot size and maximum number of dwellings per lot to be set.

The application of detailed requirements through Residential Zone schedules has assisted in managing development pressures within the river's residential backdrop. Large areas within the River Experience and Landscape Setting Corridors are subject to mandatory maximum building heights of between 8m-10m through the residential zone schedules.

Commercial and Industrial Zones do not apply specific design requirements that relate to management of the river's landscape.

Overlay Controls

The river corridor's natural environment, which encompasses its landscape, topography and vegetation, is currently protected through a mixture of overlay controls. The following are specific to the Yarra River and its immediate environs:

City of Yarra

- Design and Development Overlay (DDO1) 'Yarra River Corridor Protection', inclusive of Merri & Darebin Creeks
- Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO1) 'Yarra River Environs'

City of Stonnington

- Design and Development Overlay (DDO3) 'Yarra River Skyline Area'
- Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO1) 'Yarra River and Valley Streamside Environment Area'

City of Boroondara

- Design and Development Overlay (DDO31) 'Yarra River Corridor Protection'
- Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO2) 'Yarra Valley Significant Landscape Area'
- Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO1) 'Yarra River Corridor Protection'

These controls also interact with a range of other planning controls which manage separate development issues, including:

- protecting heritage values
- managing the impact of floods
- specific development requirements for large strategic sites
- broad scale vegetation and biodiversity protection.

Control Gaps

The different DDO, ESO and SLO controls across the three council areas of the Lower Yarra present a varying set of objectives, permit triggers and decision guidelines. This has the potential to lead to inconsistent outcomes within the corridor.

Consistent planning controls are required across the corridor to achieve a holistic approach to managing development within the river's landscape, as envisaged by this study.

As Melbourne continues to grow, ongoing development pressure will be placed on land within the Lower Yarra River corridor. This study recommends stronger and more consistent built form controls be applied now, to avert the potential for inappropriate development to occur in the future.

ESO or SLO

The question of which is the most appropriate planning scheme tool - the Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO) or the Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO) - has been a point of discussion for some time.

The primary purpose of applying either overlay control relates to the need to protect the appearance of the landscape and maintain its environmental integrity, both of which have vegetation management as their focus.

Planning Practice Note No.7 'Vegetation Protection in Urban Areas' provides some direction on the application of both the ESO and the SLO. Practice Note No.7 suggests the application of the ESO and SLO within the following circumstances related to vegetation protection:

- Where there are environmental constraints on development, or where other important ecological values are identified such as coastal or riparian habitat, the use of an ESO may be appropriate. This overlay is usually applied if vegetation protection is part of a wider objective to protect the environmental significance of an area.
- The ESO may contain requirements for the construction of buildings and the carrying out of works as well as fence construction. It can also include requirements for subdivision and exemptions for the removal of vegetation.
- Where there is a need to identify, conserve and enhance the character of significant landscapes, the SLO may be used to protect vegetation in terms of its aesthetic or visual importance in the broader landscape and where vegetation is identified as an important contributor to the character of an area.
- The SLO may contain requirements for the construction of buildings and the carrying out of works as well as fence construction. A schedule must specify a permit requirement for the removal of vegetation.

Mandatory or Discretionary Provisions

Planning Practice Note 59 (June 2015) supports the use and application of mandatory provisions where there may be strong heritage value, character themes or a sensitive environmental location that require protection from inappropriate development and certainty of outcome through the setting mandatory requirements.

To this point, planning controls that have been applied through the different planning schemes within the river corridor between Richmond and Warrandyte have been general and discretionary in form, aimed at achieving appropriate development outcomes at a site by site basis on merit.

Over time the generic nature of these discretionary requirements has led to a number of negative outcomes with development encroaching on the Yarra River and its environs. The impact of this encroachment is most evident within the Richmond to Fairfield segment of the Yarra River corridor.

There are numerous instances of inappropriate development within the Lower Yarra River corridor, the potential future threat remains that this may continue while these inconsistent and discretionary DDO/ESO/SLO controls continue to apply.

This study proposes the introduction of targeted mandatory controls to ensure that the highly valued natural landscape and environment features of the Yarra River corridor are retained for the benefit of all Melbournians, now and into the future. It is proposed that the following built form aspects be set as mandatory provisions:

- overshadowing by new development of the banks and waters of the Yarra River;
- setting of maximum building heights for a given area measured from natural ground level; and
- setting a minimum building setback line from the Yarra River.

The above mandatory requirements should be consistently represented and applied throughout the corridor. These will be complemented by discretionary requirements that relate to the appearance of buildings and works within the viewshed of the Yarra River. This will provide clarity and certainty at the river’s edge, while allowing for a performance based approach for built form outcomes in its broader landscape setting.

These aspects, in addition to protecting vegetation, and other matters such as careful management of the impacts of landscaping or earthworks, are key to ensuring the long term protection of today’s landscape values within the Yarra River corridor.

Recommended Planning Controls

Principles for Applying New Controls

In reviewing and recommending changes to the application of planning controls across the entire study area, the following principles have been used:

- Controls should focus on the holistic protection of landscape values and the broader environmental values that have been identified in this and past studies.
- Controls should be based on managing development outcomes within the existing, underlying land use zone context.
- Content of controls should provide clear direction for development by including carefully crafted objectives, permit requirements and decision guidelines.
- Controls should be able to be applied consistently across all planning schemes to ensure the protection of overarching Yarra River values.
- Controls should present clear and consistent mandatory elements that are definable and measurable, and allow sufficient scope for other discretionary, performance based built form outcomes where appropriate.
- Controls should be able to be tailored to respond to the different local landscape characteristics and their interface with existing developed areas.
- Any tailoring of planning controls should be limited and not undermine the overall strategic intent or create inconsistency with broader planning control application.

Significant Landscape Overlay

The SLO is the preferred planning scheme tool to be applied to protect the broad landscape values of the Yarra River corridor.

The SLO is preferred over the ESO as it primarily designed to manage holistic landscape values and significance by protecting vegetation and guiding built form outcomes within significant landscapes – a core element of this study.

The SLO allows for a tailored statement of landscape significance to be included which sets out the values of the landscape. This is supported by clear objectives and decision guidelines, which are discretionary, to guide appropriate development outcomes across a broad area that includes both private and public land.

The SLO should be applied from the centreline of the Yarra River with its landward extent (ranging from around 100m to 400m).

The SLO will work to complement the application of the proposed DDO which will contain mandatory requirements and

provide greater certainty and direction for development of private land within close proximately to the Yarra River.

With regard to existing planning controls within relevant planning schemes, it is proposed that:

- Boroondara ESO1 is combined with SLO2 and converted to a new SLO control.
- Yarra ESO1 is converted to a new SLO control.
- Stonnington SLO1 is extended to include the recommended area of management and converted to the new schedule.

The proposed SLO control should be consistent across all three municipal planning schemes and provide local tailoring where appropriate within the ‘Statement of nature and key elements of landscape’ and the ‘Landscape character objectives to be achieved’.

Design and Development Overlay

The Design and Development Overlay (DDO) is the preferred planning scheme tool to be applied to specific areas of private land located within the ‘Waterway Corridor’ and ‘River Experience Corridor’ areas defined by this study.

The DDO control boundaries have been determined on an area by area basis with detailed assessment of the landscape characteristics and its susceptibility to being impacted by development. The details for each DDO area are contained within the municipal toolkits.

The DDO provides a high degree of flexibility in setting desired built form outcomes, in particular, establishing the maximum building height and minimum setback from the river’s edge, expressed as mandatory requirements. As the DDO cannot manage landscape, environmental and vegetation matters it is to be used in tandem with the SLO.

As a general rule, the DDO has not been applied to areas of public land as this study has not undertaken a detailed analysis of current and/or potential development opportunities to support the justification for mandatory planning provisions.

In a limited number of situations, the proposed DDO has been applied to areas of public land for the following reasons:

- Where public land forms a small spatial buffer between the Yarra River and private land;
- Where it helps clarify the spatial intent and application of the DDO; and
- Where ownership of land is in question and is zoned within a public zone.

Incorporated / Development Plan Overlay

In instances where significant development of an area, or development on public land is proposed, this study recommends that a Master Plan be prepared and implemented into a relevant planning scheme via either an Incorporated Plan Overlay (IPO) or a Development Plan Overlay (DPO), to complement existing controls.

The IPO and DPO are flexible tools that can be used to implement a plan to guide the future use and development of land identified in a strategic document. The IPO and DPO have two key purposes:

- to identify areas that require the planning of future land use or development to be shown on a plan before a permit can be granted; and
- to exempt a planning permit application from notice and review if it is generally in accordance with an approved plan.

An amendment to the relevant planning scheme would be required to implement either overlay option. This process would allow for appropriate input from the community and other interested parties.

Environmental Significance Overlay

The outcomes from this study have been based on a comprehensive assessment of landscape character, views and values which make up the Lower and Middle Yarra River corridor, to determine an area of significance for the application of amended and/or new planning controls. This study has utilised broad scale Ecological Vegetation Class and Biodiversity and Habitat mapping where it exists (mapped at a regional scale), to inform overall landscape assessment.

Ideally, the application of an Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO) should be based on a scientific assessment of environmental values such as the location and type of remnant riparian and other indigenous vegetation, which may include biodiversity and habitat assessment within the Yarra River corridor. The application of the ESO in this instance should be strategically applied to capture an appropriate area where those values have been identified and require ongoing protection.

To this end, such a study has not been undertaken for the whole of the Yarra River to support application of a specifically tailored and applied ESO. It is suggested that Melbourne Water in their capacity as manager of waterway health for the Yarra River progress a future study.

There is potential for such a process to consider the current Yarra ESO1 ‘Yarra River Environs’ and the Boroondara ESO1 ‘Yarra River Corridor Protection’ as guides to implementing a more defined ESO control.

On this basis it is proposed that Yarra’s ESO1 and Boroondara’s ESO1 be updated and converted to the Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO). The current drafting of these controls have a strong ‘landscape’ orientation, making the SLO a more appropriate tool.

Major Development Sites and Development on Public Land

Major Development Sites

There are several major development sites within the Lower Yarra corridor, of varying size and development potential. Each site has the capacity to significantly change the use and development fabric of land within a given area and in turn has the potential to contribute positively to its relationship and interface with the Yarra River.

This includes the Carlton and United Breweries site, land adjacent to Victoria Gardens in Richmond within the Comprehensive Development Zone, and other large sites in Cremorne.

To this end, this study has not sought to assess the future development potential of these sites. An assessment of the potential for development based on the current underlying planning zone conditions has been undertaken and recommendations provided, where relevant, aimed at reducing potential impact of development within the Yarra River corridor under current arrangements.

Any proposed future change to the use and development composition of such sites is best undertaken in a comprehensive manner where the merits of a proposal are considered holistically, taking into account the principles and objectives outlined within this study and other studies as appropriate.

Any future development outcome should ideally be explored through a Master Plan exercise, with the outcome implemented via an appropriate rezoning process and/or application of an IPO or DPO.

Public Land

Public land within the context of the Yarra River corridor generally comprises:

- Crown land;
- Land vested in or owned by a minister, government department, public authority or municipal council; or
- Land otherwise used for public purpose.

A general rule applied through all planning schemes is that a public land manager should be able to use and develop public land for a purpose relative to the reservation of that land and the particular statutory charter of the land manager under its governing legislation.

This study recognizes that all public land adjacent to the Yarra River is significant and is the prime contributor to the overall landscape significance setting of the broader corridor, regardless of whether that land has been set aside for conservation values, recreational values, or other public benefit reason.

The purpose of this study has been to assess the need for new or amended planning controls for private land in proximity to the Yarra River with a focus on managing the interface between public and private land.

Generally, a decision about whether to apply an overlay to public land will depend on the nature of the overlay and the land management legislation of the public land manager. Given the level of investigation, this Study does not recommend the application of the DDO over public land, but does support applying the SLO irrespective of land tenure.

The application of the DDO in this study is based on a detailed analysis of the development potential of land under a current zone and its potential for impact on the landscape significance of the Yarra River. This detailed assessment has lead to the need to establish mandatory heights, setbacks and other requirements to manage potential development impacts effectively. The numerous reservations of public land and potential development associated with its reservation status within the Yarra river corridor is difficult to assess and therefore the ability to determine appropriate mandatory requirements to support application of a DDO.

The proposed SLO is considered more appropriate in this instance as it provides for appropriate discretionary requirements for future development to be considered where a permit may be triggered under the relevant zone. These can be assessed against the principles and objectives of the Study and other elements of a planning scheme.

Should any future development be proposed for a segment of public land, this study recommends a master plan type exercise be prepared with the outcome potentially implemented via the application of an IPO or DPO.

Notice and Referral of Applications under both DDO and SLO

It is proposed that referral of applications be provided to ensure a range of issues regarding the health and amenity of the Yarra River are considered as part of any decision to develop land within either the proposed DDO and SLO controls.

Melbourne Water

Melbourne Water has responsibility for managing a broad range of water related functions under the Water Act 1989, as they relate to the Yarra River. At present, the planning scheme identifies a statutory referral role where one of a number of flood overlays and/or the Urban Floodway Zone applies to land or the waterway within the Yarra River corridor.

However, not all land adjacent to, or with direct access to the Yarra River is flood affected to generate a referral under clause 66 of the relevant planning scheme. Depending on the location, type or extent of proposed buildings and/or works, there may be potential for impacts on the health and waterway values of the Yarra River and its immediate environs which could include:

- impacts of erosion and sediment run-off either during or after construction;
- impacts of stormwater from hard stand areas within close proximity to the Yarra River;
- construction of buildings within the root zone of indigenous and riparian vegetation;
- removal and inappropriate replacement of riparian vegetation; and/or
- changes to topography of land and bank stability which may arise from inappropriately sited development, cut and fill or other landscape works.

This study proposes that Melbourne Water be considered a “Recommending referral authority” under section 55 of the Planning and Environment Act 1987. This referral should be limited to an area within 50 to 100 metres of the Yarra River.

In the first instance, the proposed referral should be included within the proposed Design and Development Overlay given the potential for development on private property and the close proximity of these properties to the Yarra River. There may be potential to extend this referral to the SLO to capture all land within the same distance parameters as mentioned above.

The proposed referral would require a specific reference at Clause 66.04 of the planning scheme linked to either the DDO or SLO. This approach will ensure that all relevant matters relating to an application’s impact on the health and amenity of the river is considered holistically, in addition to flooding issues, and that appropriate advice is provided to the Responsible Authority to allow it to make an informed decision.

Parks Victoria and/or Public Land Manager

Significant areas of public land within the Yarra River corridor share property boundaries with private land.

It is proposed that notice of an application under section 52(1) (c) of the Planning Environment Act 1987 be considered for applications for buildings and works where private land abuts public land.

Notice to the public land manager under either the proposed DDO or SLO is encouraged at the discretion of the Responsible Authority.

Adjoining Local Government

The Yarra River forms a municipal and planning scheme boundary for all areas between Richmond and Warrandyte.

Development proposed on one side of the river may be visible from the opposite bank within an adjoining municipality. Consideration could be given to providing notice of an application under section 52 (1)(c) of the Planning Environment Act 1987 to the adjoining municipality at the discretion of the Responsible Authority.

Such notice could be limited to major development proposals where there may be potential visual impacts from the opposing banks.

5.4 Planning Control Form and Content

Planning provisions to protect the Yarra River were first drafted 30 years ago. In that period, objectives and guidelines have evolved to respond to changing circumstances and the increasing sophistication of planning schemes.

This study seeks to build on the evolution of past studies and concept plans, retaining tried and tested policy, and making changes where they are needed and clearly justified.

This has included a systematic documentation and review of previous and existing Yarra River planning policies, strategies, overlay controls, VCAT and Planning Panel decisions and recommendations.

The following presents a synthesised set of objectives and decision guidelines that preserve the best of established policy, adapted to respond to particular issues identified within the Lower Yarra River corridor. These will be used to inform the development of new and/or amended overlay controls proposed by this study.

Objectives

Landscape and Environmental Values

- Protect and enhance the environmental, aesthetic, cultural, recreation and tourism values of the Yarra River corridor.
- Maintain the sense of seclusion that the Yarra River corridor provides.
- Protect sites and features of pre and post contact cultural heritage significance.
- Retain native vegetation, particularly established vegetation, mature vegetation and canopy trees on both public and private land along the Yarra River corridor.
- Retain and restore a continuous corridor of native vegetation along the waterway to provide for the movement of fauna, to enhance water quality and to contribute to the natural aesthetic of the river.
- Protect, rehabilitate and expand the Yarra River's corridor of riparian and indigenous vegetation using local indigenous species.
- Protect and enhance both terrestrial and aquatic habitat to allow the movement of wildlife within the Yarra River corridor.
- Minimise the impacts of introduced flora and fauna on indigenous species.
- Protect exotic vegetation which has heritage value or contributes to local landscape significance.
- Increase native vegetation cover throughout the Yarra River corridor.

Protecting Views

- Protect and enhance the vegetation dominated views of the Yarra River corridor, particularly from public areas such as roads, paths, bridge crossings and open space reserves.

- Protect and enhance the skyline vista when viewed from the Yarra River, its banks, adjacent parks and trails, and scenic viewpoints within the valley.
- Ensure buildings and other structures on visible hill slopes and skylines are subordinate to vegetation and views of development from the Yarra River are filtered through trees.
- Minimise the visual intrusion of development, particularly when viewed from public areas adjacent to the river, including the Main Yarra Trail, and the river itself.
- Ensure public views of buildings are filtered through vegetation and trees.

Built Form Siting and Design

- Ensure buildings are set back from the Yarra River and adjacent public open space.
- Ensure the height of buildings is set below the predominant tree canopy.
- Avoid light spill and overshadowing on the banks and water of the Yarra River, and its adjacent public open space.
- Site and design development so that it responds sensitively to the topographical and landscape character of the Yarra River corridor.
- Ensure that subdivision, lot layout and building development addresses the river appropriately and provides a positive interface with the open space along the Yarra River corridor.
- Ensure sufficient space is provided for the planting and growth of vegetation, including large canopy trees, in new development.
- Ensure buildings are appropriately scaled with elevations that are presented at a variety of heights and stepped back from the Yarra River.
- Ensure all development is designed with all external colours and finishes that are sympathetic to the natural landscape character setting.
- Ensure that development is designed to the highest architectural standards and that the treatment of all elevations and external finishes demonstrates a well- considered contextual response.
- Ensure external building materials and design details complement the landscape and built form character of the area.
- Avoid development within identified setbacks to protect and enhance the riparian zone.
- Provide adequate spacing between buildings to maintain and create views to the Yarra River and its corridor.
- Minimise impervious surfaces to allow for the filtration of water and retention and establishment of vegetation.

- Ensure fencing in close proximity to the Yarra River does not create contrast with its landscape setting.

River Health & Conservation

- Ensure that all buildings and works are set back from the river's edge.
- Protect natural landforms, natural stream geomorphology and geological formations of the Yarra River corridor, where practical.
- Protect and enhance the health of the Yarra River including water quality (inclusive of runoff) in stream and streamside habitats, geological features and indigenous riparian vegetation.
- Recognise the function of the Yarra River as part of a natural and urban drainage system.
- Ensure development does not compromise bank stability or result in increased erosion.
- Ensure development results in no net increase in the rate or quantity of stormwater, sediment or other pollutants entering watercourses or wetlands.
- Protect and strengthen the function of the open space corridor as a wildlife corridor.
- Protect and enhance habitats, including aquatic habitats, along the Yarra River corridor.
- Ensure development does not impede the river's natural watercourse character and floodplain capacity.
- Minimise the impacts of introduced flora and fauna on indigenous species and the potential for pest flora and fauna infestation in the Yarra River corridor.

Public Open Space & Access

- Protect and enhance the amenity of public areas.
- Provide attractive environments that are conducive to a range of tourism and recreational activities.
- Maintain and enhance public access to and throughout the Yarra River corridor including access to the river itself and shared use of water access locations.
- Maintain and improve linear public open space and pathways along the Yarra River corridor, connecting existing and proposed open space areas upstream and downstream of the Yarra River.
- Ensure commercial or intensive recreational facility development is located near other commercial or recreation uses to retain some secluded areas free from activity.
- Ensure the design of sporting and recreational structures complies with all other design and development objectives.

Permit Requirements

DDO Requirements

A permit should be required for all buildings, works and subdivision within the proposed DDO. A requirement for a permit should be extended to the construction of a swimming pool or tennis court associated with a dwelling.

It is proposed to include overshadowing requirements as a mandatory provision so that all new buildings will not cast any additional shadow over the banks and waters of the Yarra River, measured during the winter solstice (22 June).

Overshadowing of public open space during spring/autumn equinox period should be discouraged. Given the close proximity of private land to public open space it is recommended that this requirement be discretionary with any overshadowing assessed on a case by case basis, on merit.

It is proposed that all building heights and setbacks be expressed as mandatory requirements specific to each identified area.

Where existing buildings (partially or wholly) are located within a mandatory setback distance the following mandatory requirements should be placed on any application to partially or completely replace an existing building:

- the height of the proposed building is consistent with the height specified for the area;
- the proposed building does not reduce the existing setback of the previous building; and
- the footprint of the proposed building is limited to the current gross floor area.

Discretion should be afforded to the Responsible Authority to allow for a re-orientation of a building’s footprint to encourage an increased setback to be achieved and a better outcome from a visual impact perspective.

A permit should be required to construct a fence, within identified setback areas, with an exemption provided for simple rural post and wire, and timber rail type fencing. Where a permit is required, key considerations should include the height of the fence, its visual permeability and use of materials to avoid contrast with its local environment.

Site area coverage provisions should be included to limit built form and hard stand areas in a residential area as a discretionary requirement. This is to ensure that:

- the bulk and massing of hard stand areas and built form does not dominate the visual appearance of a particular area;
- unnecessary storm water run off is reduced; and
- retention and expansion of vegetated areas is encouraged.

A discretionary provision regarding the selection of building materials should be included to the effect that materials utilise non-reflective colours and finishes to avoid contrast with the surrounding landscape.

Appropriate consideration will need to be given to the potential impact future development associated with subdivision may create from the perspective of the Yarra River environs. No requirements are proposed to be specified in this instance as this study has not recommended minimum subdivision levels. The option to explore minimum subdivision levels is best investigated by relevant Councils using the broader strategic land use planning objectives of this study.

SLO Requirements

The proposed SLO schedule includes a statement which outlines the significance of the Yarra River at both the State, regional and local level, structured in the following way:

- Sets out a statement outlining the importance of the Yarra River at whole of river perspective;
- Sets out the landscape, environmental, cultural and social values of the Yarra River; and
- Provides an overview of the landscape values relevant to the spatial extent of the SLO within a particular municipal area.

The head provision of the SLO allows for limited permit requirement inclusions and the noting of exemptions from a planning permit. Within this context the following should be considered:

- Requirement to remove, destroy or lop native vegetation with a limited exemption for removal of exotic species of limited height and width.
- Exemption from a permit to construct a dwelling less than 6 metres in height above natural ground level.
- Requirement to construct a fence within 30 metres of the banks of the Yarra River with an exemption for post and wire, or post and rail construction.
- Requirement to construct / undertake buildings and works associated with a bicycle or shared pathway with appropriate exemptions for municipal or public authorities.

As the application of the SLO will affect both private and public land, it is proposed that an exemption be included for municipal and or public authorities who may be conducting waterway, stream or other type of works which are aimed at ensuring the ongoing health of the waterway environment.

Application Requirements

It is proposed that applications be accompanied by key information which will assist the Responsible Authority in making an informed assessment of a proposal.

Information that should be provided for an application will be based on the type of buildings and works proposed with any requirement at the discretion of the Responsible Authority. This should include:

- A written assessment demonstrating how the proposal meets the objectives and requirements of the DDO/SLO.
- The need for shadow diagrams or schedule of materials and finishes.
- A survey plan, prepared and certified by a suitably qualified surveyor accurately showing the location of proposed buildings and works measured to Australian Height Datum from natural ground level.
- A landscape plan which outlines the location, species type and quantity of vegetation to be removed, and any replacement vegetation, supported by a suitably qualified arborist’s report.
- How any earthworks and their impacts will be managed and what protections are to be provided regarding run off or to prevent erosion when close to the river’s bank.
- A survey plan, prepared and certified by a suitably qualified surveyor accurately showing proposed buildings and works both against proposed mandatory height and setbacks measured to Australian Height Datum measured from natural ground level.
- A visual impact assessment which may comprise cross-sectional diagrams, photo montages or a view shed analysis from agreed publicly accessible viewing points.

Decision Guidelines

Decision guidelines are used to inform the assessment of planning permit applications. They could include the following considerations to determine whether the objectives are being met.

Landscape and Environmental values

- The reasons for removing vegetation and whether there are other alternative options which do not require its removal.
- The effect of the removal of vegetation on the natural landscape character, habitat protection, wildlife movement and long term viability of remnant and revegetated areas.
- Whether sufficient vegetation and canopy trees of appropriate species are to be planted to replace the removal of the existing vegetation and mature canopy trees.

- Whether the location and extent of the buildings or works encroaches into the critical root zone of mature canopy trees.
- The ability for proposed vegetation species to be matched to the local plant communities.
- Whether mature, dead and dying native vegetation should be maintained as habitat for native fauna or removed to avoid a risk or safety hazard.
- Whether the spacing between buildings allows for the planting of appropriate vegetation and canopy trees to filter views of the development.
- The extent to which screening of existing and proposed buildings, structures and areas of hard surfacing contain appropriately scaled informal landscaping, suitable to the indigenous landscape character of the river corridor, particularly when visible from the waterway, Main Yarra Trail and areas of public open space.
- Whether the existing and proposed vegetation fronting the Yarra River will filter the majority views of the proposed development.

Protecting Views

- The visibility of any proposed buildings and works when viewed from the Yarra River and adjacent public open space, bicycle and shared paths and bridge crossings.
- Whether sufficient space is provided in front of and between buildings to allow for the planting and growth of vegetation, including large canopy trees.
- Whether the siting of buildings and works avoids the removal of existing riparian vegetation.
- Whether any earthworks will affect public views of the river corridor.

Built Form Siting and Design

- Whether the scale, form, siting and design of new buildings, including materials, colours and finishes, are sensitively integrated with the natural landscape setting of the river corridor.
- Whether buildings will protrude above the predominant tree canopy of a given area.
- The impact of any overshadowing by development:
 - on the banks of the Yarra River between 11:00am and 2:00pm on 22 June; and
 - on public open space between 11:00am and 2:00pm on 22 September.
- Whether any additional overshadowing of public open space can be avoided by redesigning or relocating a proposed building, or part thereof.

- Whether siting of proposed buildings impacts the river’s natural flood and watercourse characteristics.
- Whether any proposed garages and outbuildings ancillary to a dwelling are integrated into the overall design to minimise the appearance of built form impacting public views of the river corridor.
- Whether building elevations and podium levels need to be stepped back in keeping with the topography and natural landscape character of the Yarra River.
- Whether the location, bulk, outline and appearance of any proposed building or works are in keeping with or enhance the natural landscape character and appearance of the Yarra River.
- The need for additional landscaping or new vegetation screening to filter views of proposed buildings and works.
- The appropriateness of proposed materials and finishes for any proposed buildings and works.
- The need to minimise impervious surfaces to allow for filtration of water and retention and establishment of indigenous vegetation and canopy trees.
- The need to limit areas, (including tennis courts and swimming pools) and other impervious surfaces within the minimum setback distance specified in Table 1 of this schedule to allow for replanting and vegetation growth.
- Whether adequate spacing is provided between buildings to maintain and create views to the Yarra River and its corridor.
- Whether fences provided along the river frontage property boundary are low, visually permeable, and finished with tones and colours that blend in with its vegetated landscape setting.
- That views of development from the Yarra River and adjacent public open space, bicycle and shared paths and bridge crossings are minimised.
- The need for litter or gross pollutant traps at entry points to drains that serve large developments known to generate litter and sediment.

Public Open Space & Access

- Whether the location of boating infrastructure is consistent with the *Guidelines for Approval of Jetties 2011 Melbourne Water*, any requirements, plans or guidelines prepared by Parks Victoria or other public land manager.
- Whether bicycle and shared paths are well located, avoid unnecessary earthworks and vegetation removal and have good visibility to help increase safety for users.
- Whether private development results in the loss of, or creates inappropriate access to the Yarra River and its parklands.
- Whether opportunities exist to co-locate new buildings with existing buildings on public land, particularly at the banks of the Yarra River.

River Health & Conservation

- Whether any proposed earthworks and changes in the topography of the river corridor will detrimentally impact its local natural landscape character and environmental values.
- Whether fencing allows for the free movement of wildlife, minimises visual intrusion and limits impact on watercourse characteristics.
- Whether buildings and works are sufficiently set back from the banks of the Yarra River to ensure that:
 - The river’s natural flood and watercourse characteristics is not impacted.
 - The topography of the river and its banks are maintained as the dominant feature in the public views of the river corridor.
 - The existing riparian vegetation is protected and enhanced.

5.5 Establishing Mandatory Building Heights and Setbacks

Establishing mandatory heights and setbacks, tailored to suit the local landscape characteristics and context of an area, is critical to protecting the Yarra River corridor.

Overview

Determining appropriate building heights and setbacks within each part of the study area has been based upon two foundation principles of:

- Protection of the riparian zone - the 'waterway corridor', which is the river's immediate environment; and
- Siting and designing built form so that the topography, naturalistic landscape character, waterway scale and sense of seclusion of the 'river experience corridor' - the area within which the river is experienced from its banks and trails - is protected.

Other design parameters that also play a role in determining the interaction of built form within its landscape include setbacks from parklands and conservation areas, protection from overshadowing, site coverage, permeability and landscaping.

Chapter 6 'Recommendations' sets out the strategic intent of these design parameters for each part of the study area. The Municipal Toolkits provide the local level detailed analysis and recommendations for areas of private land adjoining and within close proximity to the river.

Waterway Corridor

Protection of the riparian zone

The State Planning Policy Framework at Clause 14.02-1 'Catchment planning and management' identifies the need to:

"Retain natural drainage corridors with vegetated buffer zones at least 30m wide along each side of a waterway to maintain the natural drainage function, stream habitat and wildlife corridors and landscape values, to minimise erosion of stream banks and verges and to reduce polluted surface runoff from adjacent land uses."

Melbourne Water guidelines encourage the establishment of a viable riparian vegetated environment to maintain healthy waterways. The guidelines include:

- Waterway Corridors – Guidelines for greenfield development areas within the Port Phillip and Westernport Region 2013*, Melbourne Water
- Constructed Waterways Framework, 2009*, Melbourne Water

River Experience Corridor

Siting built form so that the topography, naturalistic landscape character, waterway scale and sense of seclusion of the river are protected

Different building heights and setbacks will be appropriate in order to achieve the above principle, depending on the location and context.

Clause 12.05-2 'Yarra River protection policy' forms the basis for considering the interaction of built form and landscape along the river experience corridor, and includes the strategies of:

Maintain a sense of place and landscape identity by:

- Retaining a dominant and consistent tree canopy along the river corridor and within its broader landscape setting.
- Ensuring that the appearance of development is subordinate to the local landscape setting, with any views of development being filtered through vegetation.*

Ensure that development is designed and sited to maintain and enhance the river's secluded and natural environment by:

- Minimising the visual intrusion of development when viewed from major roads, bridge crossings, public open space, recreation trails and the river itself.*
- Ensuring that the siting and design of buildings avoid contrast with the local natural landscape and environmental character.*
- Ensuring building height is below the natural tree canopy and all development is set back a minimum of 30 metres, or greater, from the banks of the river.*

Appropriate building heights and additional setbacks have been determined for each section of the Yarra River based on the assessment criteria detailed on the following page. The criteria includes consideration of the existing landscape character and the future landscape directions for each part of the river.

The proposed building heights and setback distances allow an appropriate level of development to occur, reflecting the strategic direction of the underlying zoning.

A 'mandatory height' and a 'mandatory minimum setback line' has been recommended for each area within close proximity to and/or with direct frontage to the Yarra River.

Where existing development is located within the mandatory minimum setback line, allowance should be provided for appropriately designed and suitably scaled replacement of that existing building. Preferably, replacement buildings should be sited behind the identified setback line where it can be achieved.

Works should ideally be set back the same distance as buildings unless they are water dependant or required for river access, such as paths for pedestrians or cyclists, boat infrastructure and viewing platforms. Given the complexity surrounding this aspect, discretion should be afforded the Responsible Authority preferably with referral advice from Melbourne Water.

Criteria for Determining Building Setbacks & Heights

Existing Landscape Character

Criteria	Matters for Consideration
Natural landscape character	<div>The key aspects of the river’s natural landscape character, as defined by:</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The topography and gradient of the land• The vegetation cover of the river’s edge, banks and adjoining land• The formation of the river’s course and how this affects visibility of the river from viewing locations
Pattern of viewing	<div>How the river corridor landscape is viewed e.g. from recreation trails, parkland or bridge crossings, or only from the river itself</div>
Interaction of built form & landscape	<div>The existing pattern of development and the level of visibility of built form from viewing locations</div> <div>Whether existing development shows a consistent setback pattern and, if so, whether this pattern is appropriate and should be reinforced</div> <div>The extent to which views of a natural landscape horizon or skyline might be interrupted by buildings</div> <div>Avoidance of overshadowing of the river’s waterway and banks</div>

Future Landscape Directions

Criteria	Matters for Consideration
Strategic context	<div>How the strategic intent of the underlying zoning, overlay controls or policy may influence the level of development that could occur</div>
Desired outcomes	<div>Strategic objectives for future development in relation to the valued landscape character</div>

Recommendations

Criteria	Matters for Consideration
Setback reference point	<div>Ability to measure a setback through alignment with a property boundary to allow ease of administration in preparing and assessing development proposals</div>
Existing development	<div>Existing building heights, siting and setback patterns from the river</div> <div>Depth of sites fronting the river</div> <div>Street frontage setback requirements of sites adjoining the river and how this might influence building siting</div>
Recommended maximum building height	<div>Recommended overall maximum building height to ensure development reflects established landscape character, avoids overshadowing of the river and achieves desired outcomes for the location</div>
Recommended minimum building setbacks	<div>Recommended minimum setback from setback reference point - either represented as a numerical distance or through a contour reference</div> <div>Whether a property has sufficient depth to accommodate a reasonable level of development in view of the preferred setback from the river</div>

The Lower Yarra Context

The Yarra River is a unique asset to Melbourne as a near-continuous landscape corridor. However, there are also several locations where clusters of urban activity and built form are highly visible from the river. These clusters serve as ‘punctuation points’ along the river corridor, which is otherwise defined by its extensive vegetation and tree canopy cover rather than built form.

Within the Middle Yarra River corridor these ‘punctuation points’ include the Warrandyte Town Centre and the clustering of development on both sides of the river at Heidelberg and Bulleen. Within the Lower Yarra corridor, closer to the city centre, there are a greater number of ‘punctuation points’ that comprise more intense built form within the landscape as it becomes more urbanised, such as those at Abbotsford, Cremorne and South Yarra; the Lower Yarra is where the ‘city meets the river’.

Despite the highly urbanised setting of the Lower Yarra corridor, the waterway and banks of the Yarra River retain a strong naturalistic landscape character in many locations. This includes within the Parkland and Leafy Suburban character types, where the river retains a strong landscape character with an overall tree canopy presence, and buildings are screened by vegetation.

In more urban locations, such as within the Urban Residential, Current & Ex-Industrial and Motorway character types, built form is highly prominent in the river’s landscape, reflecting historic patterns of development, and the presence of major urban centres within this part of the river corridor. In these locations, visible buildings are also a part of the Lower Yarra River’s character.

Given the strategic land use direction and existing patterns of development within the Lower Yarra corridor, this study identifies a number of ‘urban nodes’ that strategically support a higher concentration of activity or mixed use development. In these locations, the interaction of land use and urban design policy may suggest (or has already resulted in) a higher or more visible scale of development. They include:

- CUB future mixed use area (Current & Ex-Industrial Area C)
- Victoria Gardens, Victoria Street & Trenerry Crescent (Current & Ex-Industrial Area A)
- Key strategic sites in Cremorne (Motorway Areas A & B)
- The Forest Hill precinct in South Yarra (Urban Residential).

Outside of these areas, a lower scale of built form is appropriate, both in terms of integration with the river environment and within the streetscape context.

Figure 2 below shows how the built form analysis criteria can be applied ‘on the ground’ and through the application of permit requirements within the relevant overlay control. The level of visible built form within the ‘waterway corridor’ and ‘river experience corridor’ is managed through establishing appropriate height and setback controls, either as mandatory or discretionary requirements, to respond to the river’s character in each location.

In some parts of the Lower Yarra corridor, there is a significant difference in the landscape character on each side of the river, and the level of visibility of buildings may vary considerably.

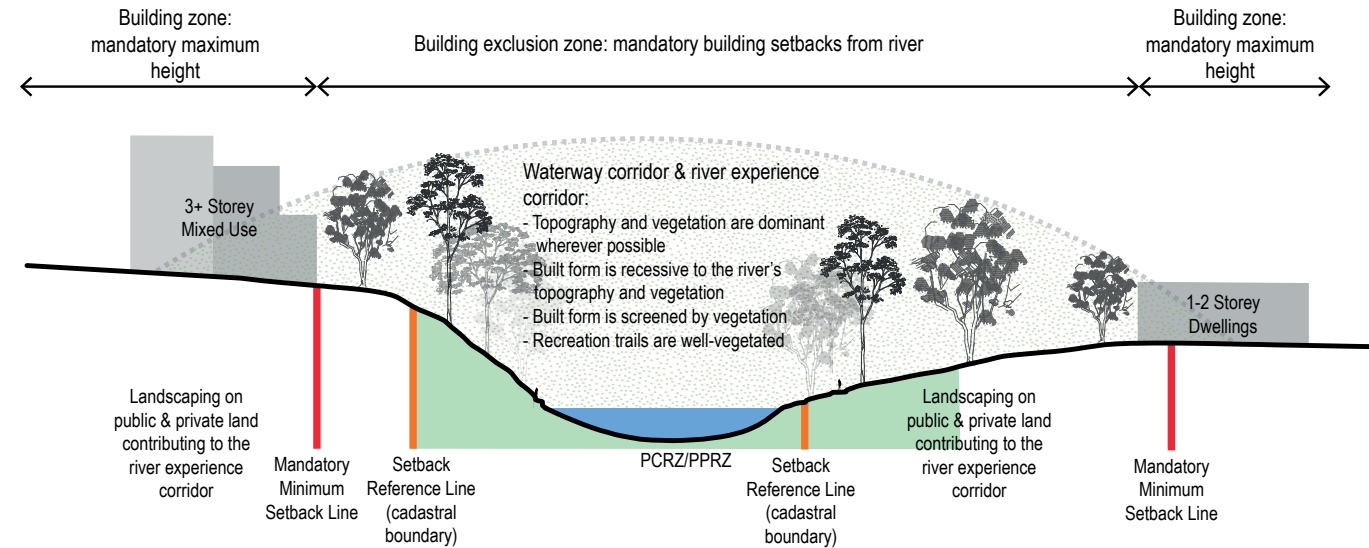


Figure 2: Defining Building Setbacks & Heights

Ground Level Building Setbacks

A range of ground level building setback distances are recommended for private land within the study area, which are detailed in general in Chapter 6 and assessed in more detail within each Municipal Toolkit. These setbacks have been determined based on the ‘Criteria for determining Building Setbacks and Heights’ outlined on the previous page.

Given the extent of developable land along at the river’s edge throughout much of the study area, in all instances, the greatest ground level setback distance reasonably possible has been recommended. This approach aims to limit further visual encroachment of development as experienced from the Yarra River, including both the waterway itself and public land adjoining the river.

Defining Building Setbacks

A mandatory minimum setback line has been applied to all private land abutting or with direct access to the Yarra River. The minimum mandatory setback line is defined as either a:

- consistent parallel distance, measured horizontally from the identified setback reference line; and/or
- a specific contour level measured to Australian Height Datum standards.

This is measured from the ‘setback reference line’ which relates to the closest cadastral/property boundary to the river’s edge, for ease of reference and administration. The minimum setback line and the setback reference line are illustrated in Figure 3.

In some circumstances the use of both a parallel distance and a contour level are proposed to provide a more naturalistic setback outcome. In these instances the application of a “which ever is greater” test will apply.

A range of options have been considered in determining how to measure setback distances. This approach has been found to be the most transparent and easily applied from a statutory planning perspective. Both forms of setback distances can be measured by a suitably qualified surveyor and shown on certified survey plans.

It is important to note that the proposed setbacks are a minimum behind which all new buildings must be sited. There may be other site specific factors which might require a greater setback to be achieved as determined by the responsible authority.

These may include, but are not limited to:

- A site’s exposure to flood, bushfire, landslip and other risk factors.
- Additional street and/or side boundary setbacks required by other parts of the planning scheme (such as amenity or neighbourhood character provisions).
- The need to locate a building behind a more defined vegetation line or the need to protect existing vegetation.
- Other site specific issues such as the topographic nature of the site, ability to dispose of waste water etc.

There are limited circumstances where new buildings would be acceptable within a minimum mandatory setback line. In some instances there may be existing buildings or works which are either partially or wholly located within the mandatory minimum setback area.

In these discreet circumstances the responsible authority, via the planning permit application process, will be provided limited discretion to consider:

- Replacement, alterations and additions to existing buildings partially or wholly within the minimum mandatory setback line; and
- Applications to construct a swimming pool, tennis court, outbuildings and other ‘works’ such as landscaping or earthworks.

Any proposed replacement, alteration and/or addition to an existing building must not:

- Exceed the maximum building height specified in the planning control;
- Reduce the existing setback of the building from the Yarra River; and
- Increase the existing gross floor area of the existing building.

Some discretion should be afforded to the Responsible Authority to consider the potential for an existing building within the setback area to be re-orientated, whereby an increased setback or a better outcome from a visual impact perspective may be achieved.

In these instances, an applicant should be required to justify why any proposed buildings and works cannot be relocated behind the mandatory minimum setback line.

This approach provides fairness for existing land holders while delivering long term benefits for the management and protection of landscape character and amenity values of the Yarra River corridor.

Other Options

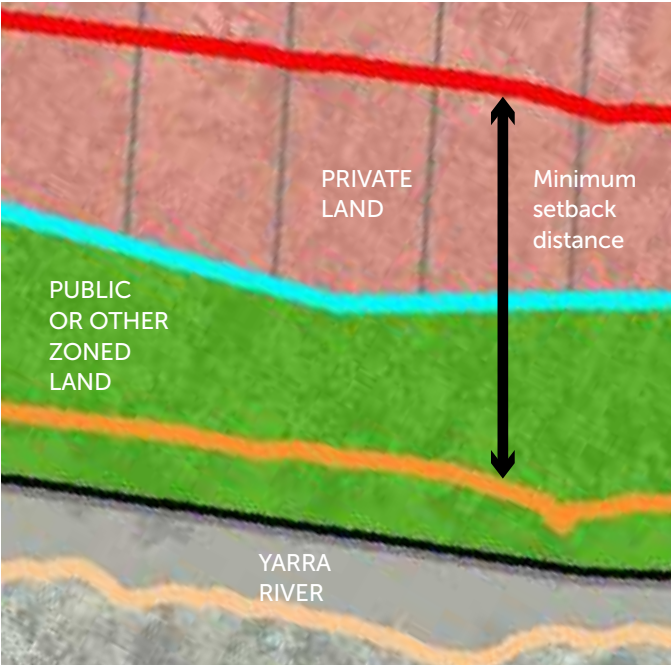
A number of different options for defining a minimum setback line and the setback reference line have been considered in the process of preparing the Inner-Middle Yarra River studies. These include:

- ‘Top of bank’. This is commonly used by Melbourne Water as a reference point, but is difficult to accurately reference in an overlay control schedule. Additionally, references associated with the river’s topographic features may change over time.
- ‘Break of slope’ or ‘crestline’, which is the point at which the river’s topography flattens out away from the bank. While this approach allows the control to be adjusted to reflect topographic variations, it is difficult for the line to be accurately referenced in a statutory context. Additionally, in some locations, there is no clear break of slope to be defined.

Figure 3: Measuring Building Setbacks

Example 1

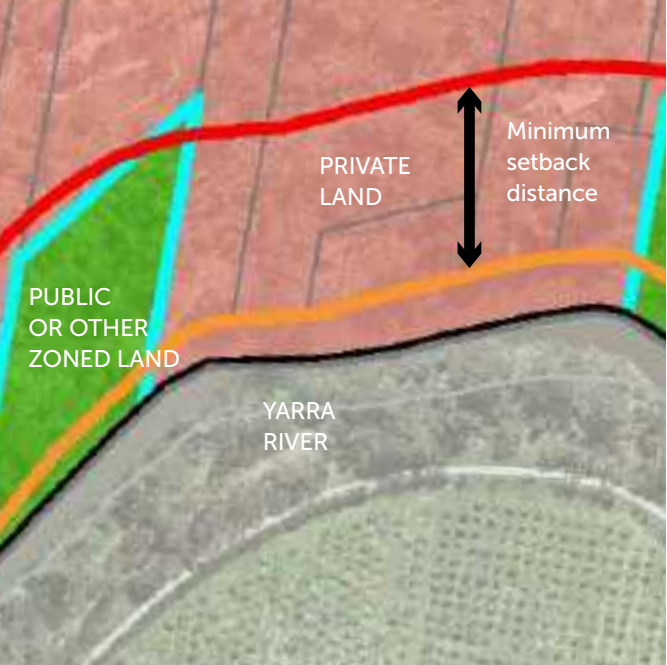
Public land separates private land from the Yarra River. Setback assessment includes all public land and private land from the closest cadastral boundary to the river’s edge.



- Setback Reference Line: established from the closest cadastral (property) boundary to the Yarra River
- Mandatory Minimum Setback Line: may be measured perpendicular to the Setback Reference Line or may be a contour reference

Example 2

Private land title extends to the edge or into the Yarra River. Setback assessment includes all land (and water as required) from the closest cadastral boundary from the river’s edge



Building Heights

Existing Statutory Context

A range of building height controls apply to different parts of the Lower Yarra River study area, as either discretionary or mandatory provisions, either through zone or overlay controls. Existing height controls include:

- Design and Development Overlays (DDO) set mandatory (and some discretionary) height controls relating specifically to the Yarra River environment within Cities of Yarra, Stonnington and Boroondara.
- General Residential Zone (GRZ) schedules which apply discretionary or mandatory controls ranging from 9m-12m
- Neighbourhood Residential Zone (NRZ) which applies a 8m (9m on a sloping site) mandatory control
- Residential Growth Zone (RGZ) within Hawthorn and Heidelberg which sets a discretionary height limit of 13.5m
- Other zones apply to extensive parts of the study area and do not specify height controls, including the Commercial 1 & 2 Zones (C1Z, C2Z), Industrial 1 & 3 Zones (IN1Z, IN3Z), Urban Floodway Zone (UFZ), Special Use Zone (SUZ), Public Use Zone (PUZ), Comprehensive Development Zone (PDZ) and Priority Development Zone (PDZ).
- The Heritage Overlay (HO) applies to various sites and precincts close to the river and while it does not set a specific height limit, could serve to restrict building heights if heritage conservation values are impacted

Approach

This study has made recommendations on preferred building heights for each part of the study area, based on the ‘Criteria for determining Building Setbacks and Heights’ outlined previously.

Current height controls applying to each part of the study area have been assessed to determine how they are effective in protecting the river’s landscape values to achieve the objective of Clause 12.05-2 ‘Yarra River Protection’ in the State Planning Policy Framework.

Clause 12.05-2 emphasises maintaining a dominant tree canopy and visually subordinate development within a naturalistic landscape setting. The landscape character assessment and views analysis undertaken as part of this study has shown that the pattern of development within the Lower Yarra River corridor is highly varied, and includes low-rise residential buildings of between 1-2 storeys, industrial buildings up to 3-4 storeys and high rise apartment towers up to 16 storeys.

Given the urbanised context of the Lower Yarra corridor, detailed controls that carefully manage further encroachment of built form into the river’s landscape have been prepared. These controls reflect the existing patterns of development and strategic land use direction of character type, while aiming to minimise additional visibility of built form wherever possible.

On this basis, for the Lower Yarra River corridor maximum building heights have been tailored for each section of the corridor as follows:

Leafy Suburban

A mandatory maximum building height of 8m or 9m (with a 1m allowance for a sloping site) is proposed for the Leafy Suburban character type (Toorak, Hawthorn, Kew and Alphington). This proposed height:

- Equates to the typical height of a suburban residential structure within the corridor.
- Ensures that future built form will sit well below the tree canopy.
- Would limit the appearance of building scale/mass on steeply sloping sites as seen from the opposite bank.
- Is consistent with the existing height controls of the NRZ and some areas of GRZ within the study area.

Sloping site allowances have been recommended for proposed building heights at or below 9m for residential areas across the corridor from Richmond to Warrandyte. A sloping site allowance is not recommended above this height, as this allowance should be considered within the overall mandatory height set out in the schedule to the DDO.

Urban Residential

A mandatory maximum building height of between 9m (10m on a sloping site) and 12m is proposed for the Urban Residential character type (South Yarra). This proposed height:

- Reflects the varied heights of existing dwellings and apartment buildings within this character type.
- Allows design flexibility to accommodate the variations changes within the of steeply sloping topography.
- Ensures that future built form will sit below the tree canopy.
- Is consistent with the existing height controls of the GRZ, introduced through Amendment C187 (and reflecting the outcomes of the City of Stonnington *DDO3 Review*).

Motorway

Discretionary height controls are proposed for the Motorway character type (Cremorne). In this location, land is separated from the river by the Monash Freeway. Therefore, the key considerations for built form are to:

- Avoid overshadowing of the river’s waterway and banks (as detailed on the following page).
- Create a positive skyline image, as viewed from the southern bank, avoiding the appearance of a solid wall of development.

In this character type, it is proposed that a mandatory requirement be established that new buildings must not cast any additional shadow over the banks and waters of the Yarra River, measured during the winter solstice.

Current & Ex-Industrial

Buildings within the Current & Ex-Industrial character type (Richmond and Abbotsford) are constructed in close proximity to the river’s edge and frequently of a high scale. For this character type, the proposed built form controls include building heights which range from an overall maximum of between 11m-25m and include upper level setbacks of varying distances. These have been set out for each location to reflect the local context of the river corridor and are expressed as mandatory and/or discretionary heights. These heights have been determined to:

- Avoid overshadowing of the river’s waterway and banks (as detailed on the following page).
- Minimise further visual intrusion of built form into the river corridor landscape, taking into consideration existing development patterns and strategic land use directions of each location.

Determining Buildings Heights & Upper Level Setbacks

Within the Current & Ex-Industrial character type stepped building heights and upper level setbacks are proposed at the river interface. These have been determined in each location to reflect the local context.

These built form controls have been determined through consideration of three key factors (as illustrated in Figure 4, below):

- Topography of the riverbank
- Width of the river
- Proximity to the river’s edge.

The recommendations of this study are based upon previous analysis and recommendations of the City of Yarra’s *Built Form Review* (2003) and the *Yarra River Corridor Strategy* (2015), updated to reflect the current methodology of the Yarra River planning controls program.

Topography of the River Bank

The riverbank is perceived as being relatively steep in the built-up areas of Richmond and Abbotsford, with a height of around 12-15m (refer to Figure 4). Any impression of topography being significant and the dominant landscape feature is diminished by buildings that approach or exceed these dimensions.

In order to retain the dominance of the river and the river bank, the front wall building height should be in proportion to the height of the riverbank. Visual analysis has shown that a ratio of front wall height facing the river (y) of up to 0.75 of the river bank height (x) is acceptable, provided that the front wall height of the building is set back. This would give an average front wall height of 11m in the Current and Ex-Industrial character type.

Width of the River: Front Wall

The width of the Yarra River in this location averages just over 30m. Through cross-sectional analysis it has been established that the front wall height of buildings located adjacent to the river need to be well under half the width of the river to maintain the dominance of the waterway, which is approximate with the previously determined 11m. It is recommended that this front wall height be implemented as a mandatory control.

Width of the River: Secondary Height

The height of buildings beyond the immediate interface with the river should also ensure that built form does not visually dominate the topography of the river banks or the apparent scale of the river. Cross-sectional analysis has determined that this height (noted in Figure 5 as ‘z’) should be less than two thirds of the average width of the river, which results in an overall building height of 18m. It is recommended that this secondary height also be implemented as a mandatory control.

Mandatory built form controls are recommended to apply to the parts of buildings that are most likely to impact on the character and visual amenity of the ‘river corridor experience’ area, which is determined to be a distance of 15-20m from the front wall facing the river.

Beyond 15-20m from the front wall facing the river, a preferred height of 5 to 6 storeys (equivalent to 18m) is proposed, being consistent with Clause 21.05 of the MSS. In some locations, a higher scale may be acceptable provided it is adequately set back so that it is not visible from the opposite bank.

There are a number of large sites within this character type, such as the Carlton and United Brewery site in Abbotsford, with an overall site depth of well beyond 15m. On these larger sites it is expected that Council would exercise its discretion regarding the height of built form further from the river, but would be guided by the preferred height as outlined in the MSS (and supported by this report). It is accepted that the height of built form has a decreasing visual impact upon the river and its banks, the further back it is located.

Proximity to the River: Upper Level Setbacks

The *Built Form Review* outlined an approach to overall building height and upper level setbacks based on an ‘angle of viewing’ and a ‘stepping down’ of building mass from an overall height to a frontage height of 11m by a gradient of 1 in 4. This was interpreted into the former DDO1 as an additional 1m of height for every 4m, stepping back from the building frontage.

This report recommends mandatory upper level setbacks, which ensure that the river and its banks remain the dominant feature of the landscape. Upper level setbacks above 11m (sb) and above 18m (usb) would help to ensure that built form above 11m is visually recessive.

Proximity analysis has been used to consider possible upper level setback distances. Distance away from the viewer is an important factor in assessing visual impact. The effect of distance on the ability to discern detail of built form elements, as well as the contribution of surrounding ‘visual noise’ in the wider vista or view, is critical.

The further the viewer is from the building, and the wider the view / vista or panorama, the less dominant or intrusive the built form will appear.

Viewing distances are site specific and have been determined through site visits and desk-based analysis. The visibility of built form in this character type can be described as follows:

Foreground: Begins at the viewer, assuming location at the river edge, and extends to approximately 30m. Detail in the landscape such as individual leaves, flowers etc. and the colour and texture of the landscape and structures are evident within this view plane.

For the Yarra River corridor the foreground of views should be dominated by vegetation, views of the river bank and views of the river itself.

Middleground: Within the Yarra River corridor context, the middleground view plane has been determined as beyond 30m, and extending to 50m. Colour and textures are still visible, but secondary to those within the foreground of views.

It is within this view plane that the majority of front walls of buildings would be located. Front walls of buildings up to a height of 11m would be clearly visible within this plane, but would be in proportion to the river and its banks, and would therefore not diminish or ‘visually overwhelm’ the topography of the corridor. This is aided by the fact that views within this plane are often screened by vegetation and topographical rises.

However, any visible built form elements above 11m in height have the potential to visually dominate, and overwhelm the topography of the river and its banks. As such, any building elements above 11m should be designed and sited to be visually recessive, with a substantial upper level setback being the most effective solution.

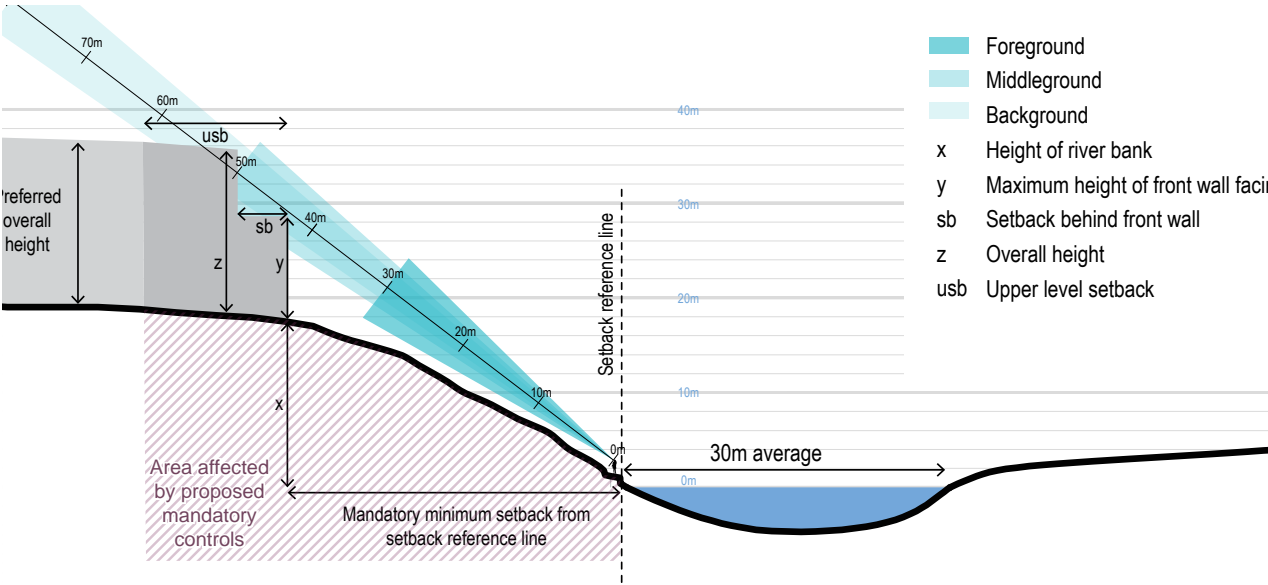
Background: Alterations in the background (beyond 50m) are less distinctive. Detail can be seen, but increasingly, colour and texture variation is seen as grouped into mass elements and secondary in nature.

Built form beyond 50m of the viewer, while still visible, has less visual impact on the immediate river environs, and the viewer’s experience of the river corridor.

Based on these considerations, it is concluded that:

- A minimum mandatory upper level setback of 5m should apply to those parts of buildings above 11m. This would ensure that the upper levels of buildings are within the background of views (due to the angle of viewing, though it is accepted that this distance varies according to local topographic conditions). It would result in those building elements up to 18m in height being visually recessive, and would ensure that built form does not dominate the topography of the river and its banks.
- A greater mandatory upper level setback of 10m apply to those areas currently defined by a lower scale of built form at the river’s interface.
- Further, any built form elements above 18m (if permitted) must adhere to a minimum mandatory setback of between 15-25m to ensure that built form is recessive and does not detrimentally impact upon the river corridor experience.
- In some locations, greater upper level setbacks for elements above 18m are required to ensure that built form is not visible from the opposite bank.

Figure 4: Viewing Distances & Upper Level Setbacks



Measuring Building Height & Setbacks

The measurement of building height based on natural ground level is an important component in ensuring overall building height remains within mandatory limits set by relevant planning controls. Using different measures may lead to development being much taller than anticipated, inappropriately impacting the Yarra River corridor.

Both the Victoria Planning Provisions and the Building Code of Australia use 'natural ground level' as a standard approach to measuring the proposed height of all built form. 'Natural ground level' is the ground level of a site before any works (such as filling and/or excavating) are undertaken to alter the naturally occurring contours of the land, based on Australian Height Datum standards.

The Victorian Building Authority's *Practice Note No.47* should be consulted if clarification is needed to define natural ground level in instances where it is difficult to ascertain, such as where cut and fill or other earthworks have previously been undertaken.

Building setback distances are measured from the setback reference line, on the horizontal, as shown in Figure 5, below.

Avoiding Overshadowing

Overshadowing considerations apply to the Motorway and Current & Ex-Industrial character types, which are located on the northern or western banks of the river and within areas and where future buildings could be of a scale that could cast shadow.

Avoidance of overshadowing the banks and waterway of the Yarra River has been a long held planning policy. To date this has predominately been an issue requiring management within the central business district of Melbourne and expressed as a prohibition within the Capital City Zone.

In December 2015, Amendment VC121 implemented a revised Yarra River protection policy at Clause 12.05-2 of the State Planning Policy Framework. On the matter of overshadowing, the policy identifies the need to:

"Avoid overshadowing of the river its banks and adjacent public open space to ensure that the amenity of the public realm is maintained year round"

As Melbourne has grown, pressure for larger, taller buildings, particularly within the Lower Yarra River corridor has occurred with overshadowing of public open space and the banks and waterway of the Yarra River becoming a greater issue.

To continue to reinforce the long standing policy the proposed DDO control should contain a mandatory requirement to the following effect:

New buildings must not cast any additional shadow over the banks and waterways of the Yarra River between 11am and 2pm on 22 June (winter solstice).

As noted in the previous section discussing establishing mandatory setback, the 'banks and waterways of the Yarra River' is challenging to define accurately for statutory application purposes, as the precise relationship between both varies considerably along the river's length.

The identification and use of a 'Setback Reference Line' (SRL) provides a consistent and measurable approach to define a point at which new overshadowing must not exceed. As previously discussed, the SRL uses a property based cadastral line which best reflects the location of the intersection of the banks and waterway of the Yarra River.

In some instances, there may be existing built form which currently overshadows the Yarra River. The proposed mandatory requirement will take this into account by providing allowance for new buildings to work within existing shadow extent, while ensuring that new impacts are avoided.

A variety of different types of public open space can be found throughout the Yarra River corridor. In some locations, particularly within the lower Yarra River corridor, some overshadowing of public open space is inevitable due to the close proximity of private land to public land and the nature of the topography in a given area.

To ensure overshadowing of public open space is taken into account, it is proposed that the DDO control contain a discretionary requirement to the following effect:

New buildings should not cast any additional shadow across any public open space between 11:00am and 2:00pm on 22 September.

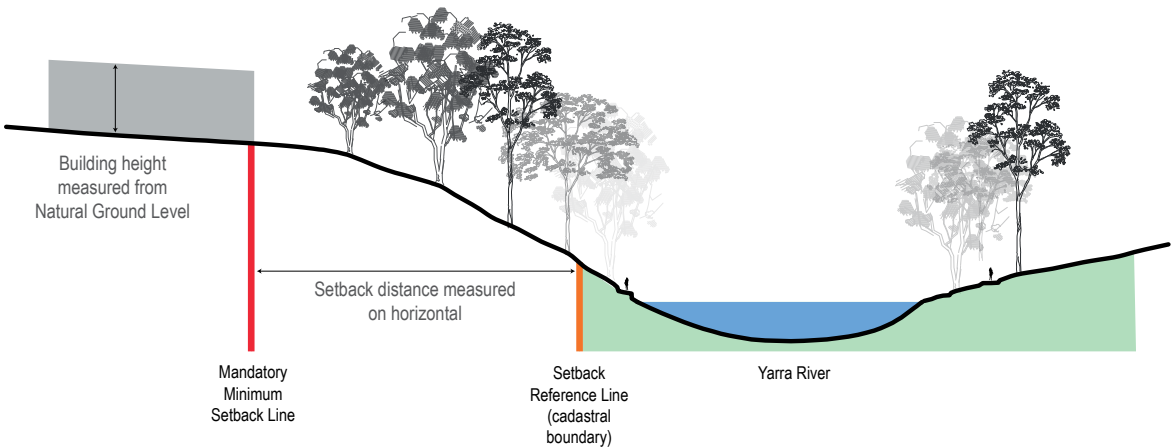
Ideally, no overshadowing of public open space should occur as a result of new development as this can have a negative affect on the environmental characteristics and enjoyment of that space, but may also affect the growth and habitat characteristics of an area.

The spring equinox provides a common test threshold used in planning practice. The above approach provides some flexibility to consider any proposed impacts on their merits and against the design objectives proposed within the new DDO control. Some issues worthy of consideration include:

- The duration of the proposed overshadowing – will it occur throughout the period, or for a short time.
- The type of public open space landscape being shadowed – whether it is densely vegetated, or open grassed areas, where consistent light may affect growth and development.
- Whether the area is regularly visited and/or a recreational area (e.g. playground, walking cycling trail etc).
- Whether the site being overshadowed has environmental or cultural values where solar access is critical to maintain those values.
- Whether a building can be redesigned to rearrange height and bulk to avoid overshadowing.

An application requirement to provide a shadow cast assessment outlining the impacts during the policy period should be included as part of both the DDO and SLO control where development may overshadow both public land and the banks and waterway of the Yarra River.

Figure 5: Measuring Building Heights & Setbacks



6. Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

Chapter 6 compiles the findings of the report spatially, by way of four sub-areas along the river’s course that have similar characteristics.

For each sub-area, all of the elements of the river - its values, character and views - are considered holistically. This ensures a coordinated approach to future management recommendations in each part of the river corridor.

The River Corridor Journey

The journey upstream along the Lower Yarra River corridor begins within the highly urban environment of Cremorne and South Yarra, and ends among the leafy suburban neighbourhoods and parkland of Fairfield, Alphington, East Kew and North Balwyn.

Travelling upstream from the western edge of the study area at Punt Road to Bulleen Road the in the east, the river winds through landscapes that tell the story of Melbourne’s early development, and the important role the Yarra River has played in the city’s evolution over time.

The inner urban areas of Cremorne, Richmond and Abbotsford are an important part of Melbourne’s industrial heritage. Industrial buildings constructed right at the river’s edge indicate the way in which the river has been previously valued as a resource for industry and commerce.

The opposite side of the river in South Yarra, Toorak, Hawthorn and Kew tell a different story; of the river as a place that has been highly valued for its scenic amenity, with many dwellings built close to its edge to take advantage of the waterway and riverside vegetation.

The large open space of Yarra Bend Park is a major recreational resource for inner Melbourne, as is the network of smaller, linked parklands on both of its banks.

Despite the density of development along river’s edge within the Lower Yarra context, the waterway itself retains a strongly naturalistic environment in most places, with heavy riverbank vegetation obscuring or filtering views to buildings and structures. In this regard, the river with its landscape corridor is of immense value to the people of Melbourne, and is a unique resource for a major capital city.

Sub-Areas

The journey along the Lower Yarra has been translated as four sub-areas, shown on the map opposite.

For each sub-area, recommendations are based upon an understanding of the values, character and key views of the river in that location.

Detailed cross-sectional analysis is used to show the typical experience of the river and its surrounding environment in each sub-area, exploring the relationship of the river’s natural landscape elements such as riverbank topography and vegetation, with existing and future built form.

The four sub-areas are:

1. Punt Road to MacRobertson Bridge

Includes the industrial areas of Cremorne and the Monash Freeway along the river’s northern edge and the inner urban residential area of South Yarra on higher ground on the southern bank.

2. MacRobertson Bridge to Hawthorn Bridge

The river flows through leafy suburban areas of Toorak and Hawthorn on the southern and eastern banks, and industrial and commercial areas of Burnley and Richmond on the western bank. Large areas of parklands create green links on both sides of the river.

3. Hawthorn Bridge to Dights Falls

Densely developed industrial, commercial and now residential areas of Richmond and Abbotsford have left a legacy of high scale buildings close to the river’s edge in some locations. On the opposite bank the leafy suburban areas of Hawthorn and Kew are interspersed among extensive parklands. Here the river has a distinctly different character on either side as a result.

4. Dights Falls to Bulleen

The river makes numerous twists and turns as it meanders through extensive areas of parkland and open space, which are interspersed with residential neighbourhoods set in leafy surrounds. The river has a strongly naturalistic character in this location.

Recommendations

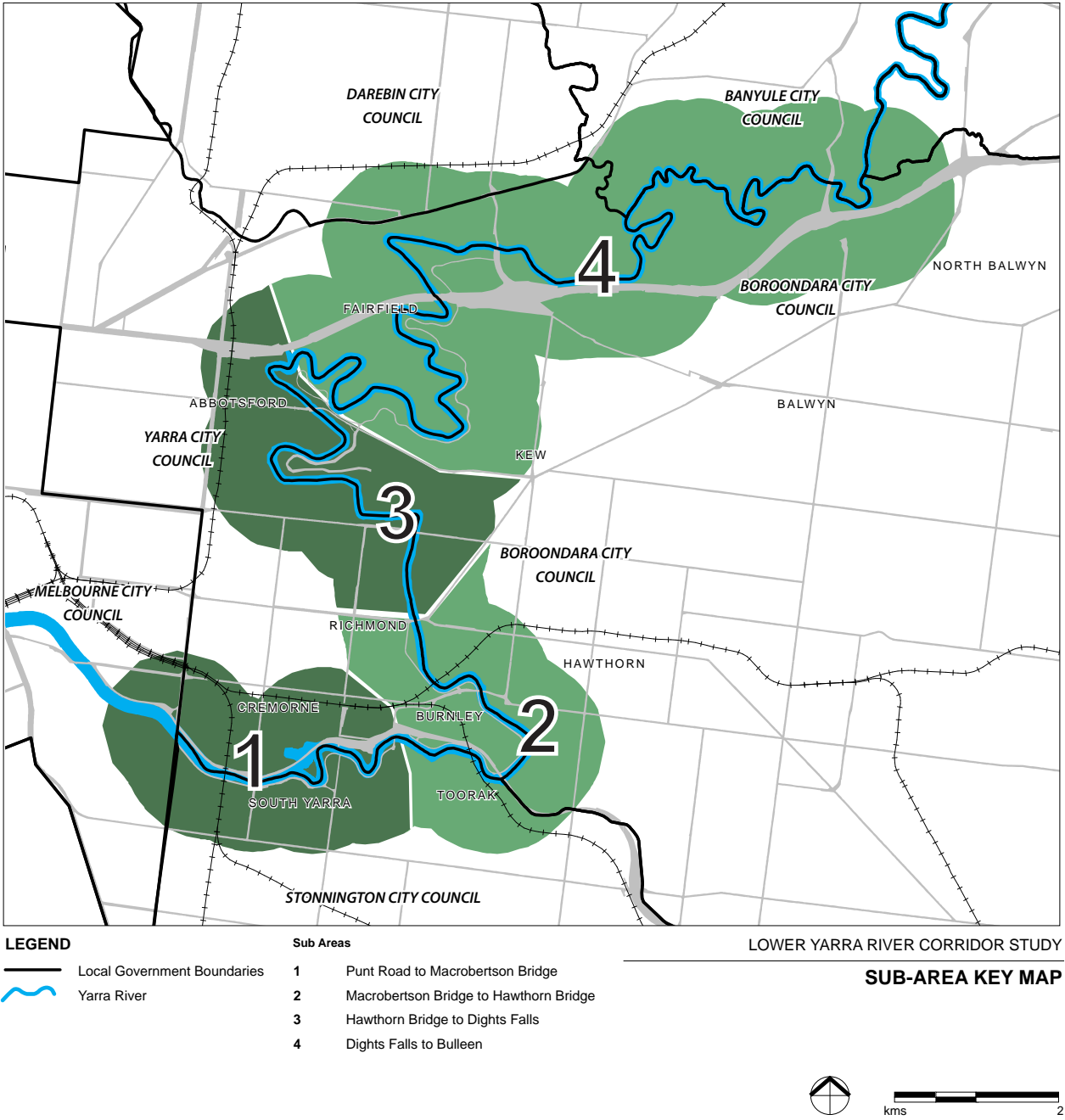
This chapter focusses on recommendations for the management of private land, where development is most likely and can potentially have the greatest impact upon the river’s immediate and broader landscape setting.

Further analysis has been undertaken within each sub-area to inform recommendations for design and development controls. This includes existing patterns of lot size, site coverage, permeability, building height and vegetation cover.

Design and development controls are provided for the various River Interface Character Types within each sub-area.

The existing suite of statutory controls applying to each part of the river has been considered, and recommendations are made for additional new controls or review of existing controls.

6.2 Sub-areas



6.3 Sub-area 1: Punt Road to Macrobertson Bridge

Values, Character & Pattern of Viewing

This western section of the study area comprises the industrial areas of Cremorne on the northern banks of the river and the residential areas of South Yarra on the southern banks.

The industrial areas of Cremorne are set on low-lying land. In many locations, the gradual transition away from industrial activity to a greater mix of land uses is leading to the construction of higher scale buildings along the river's edge. The Monash Freeway has been constructed immediately along the northern river bank, and in some locations is cantilevered out over the water.

The higher ground of South Yarra on the southern bank has been developed with impressive homes set in leafy surrounds since the early days of Melbourne's settlement. From the 1920s it became a popular location for the construction of flats, perched upon the higher ground and overlooking the river. Today, these buildings are protected through the Heritage Overlay.

This is the most urbanised landscape of the study area, with large scale built form highly visible within the river's environment. Notwithstanding, the riverbank is well vegetated in many places, due to the network of open spaces along the southern bank, and small areas of planting on the northern bank.

The Main Yarra Trail and the Capital City Trail provide a continuous link from Melbourne's CBD on both sides of the river.

The River Interface Character Types within this sub-area described in Chapter 3 are:

Parklands and Recreation River Interface (PPRZ)	Formal open spaces for active and passive recreation
Motorway (C1Z, C2Z, IN1Z, IN3Z, SUZ, PUZ, CDZ)	Industrial and commercial areas, some of which are transitioning to residential or mixed use
Current & Ex-Industrial, Motorway (C1Z, C2Z, IN1Z, IN3Z, SUZ, PUZ, CDZ)	Industrial and commercial areas, some of which are transitioning to residential or mixed use
Urban Residential (RGZ, GRZ)	Medium and higher density residential areas comprising large houses, walk-up flats and apartment towers

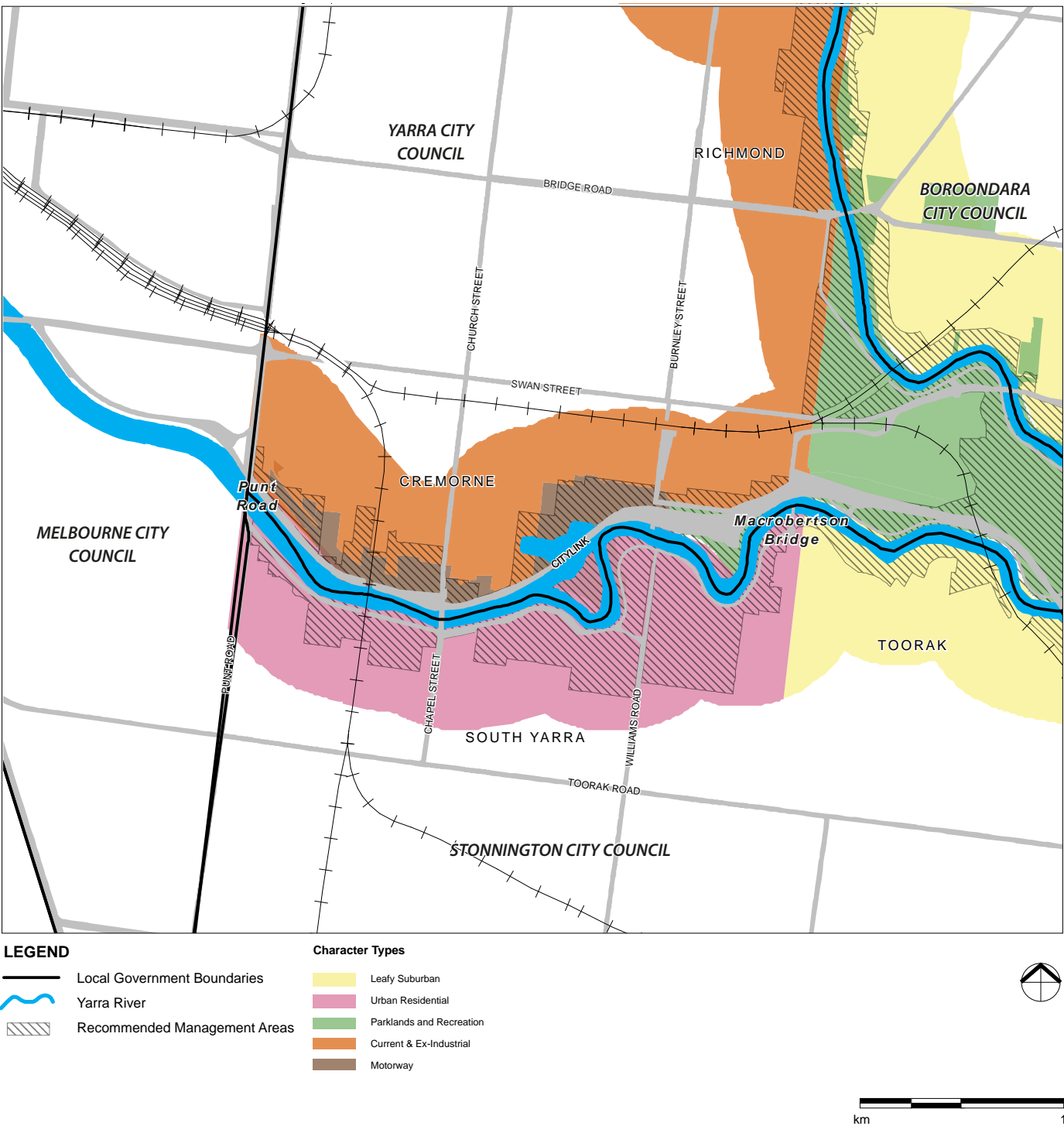
Important viewpoints within this sub-area, described in Chapter 4, are the Main Yarra Trail and Capital City Trail, road and rail bridge crossings and the parkland on the southern river banks.



Cremorne, northern river banks, view east from Chapel Street Bridge



Alexandra Avenue, South Yarra, southern side of river



Cross-Sectional Analysis

Landscape Setting Corridor

The aerial photo opposite and accompanying cross-sections show the river’s setting through Cremorne and South Yarra.

In this sub-area the river flows through low-lying industrial areas on the northern bank and residential areas on higher ground on the southern bank.

The topography is flat and expansive on the northern bank, with long range views to the Melbourne CBD. On the southern bank land rises up steeply to the ridgeline on the horizon which is developed with residential apartments and large houses, set within well-landscaped surrounds.

River Experience Corridor

The edge of the river on the northern bank is defined by the motorway, which is a significant element of urban infrastructure within the river’s landscape. The Capital City Trail also runs along the river’s edge. The river experience corridor is also formed by buildings close to the river bank, some of which are high in scale and have cast shadow over the Trail.

The southern edge of the river is defined by a long stretch of narrow parkland between the river bank and the roadway of Alexandra Avenue. Dwellings set within well planted gardens form the backdrop of views from the river.

In this sub-area, built form and infrastructure are dominant visual elements in the landscape. However, there is also a strong presence of greenery and tree canopies.

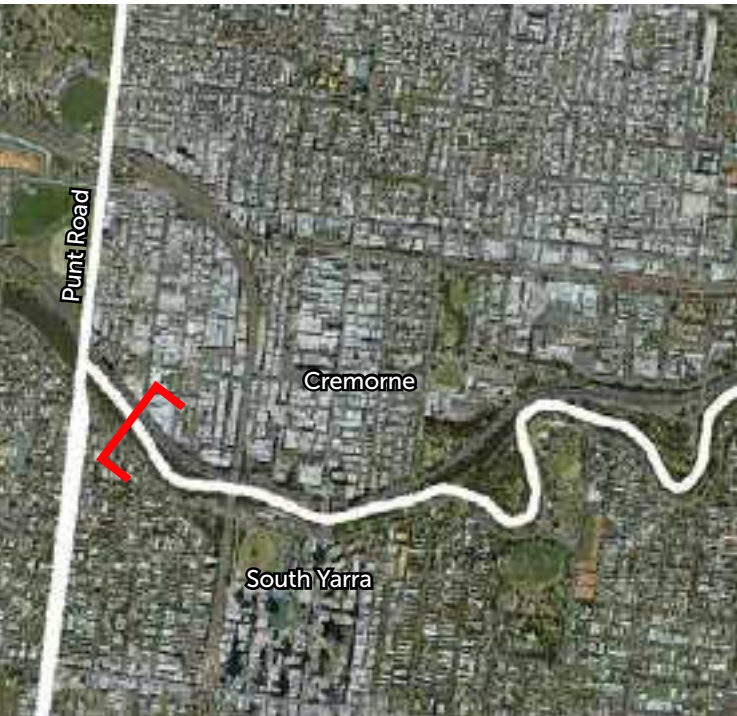
Waterway Corridor

The waterway has been compromised through the construction of the motorway which is cantilevered over the northern river banks. The motorway (as well as taller structures next to the river) overshadow the water in most places.

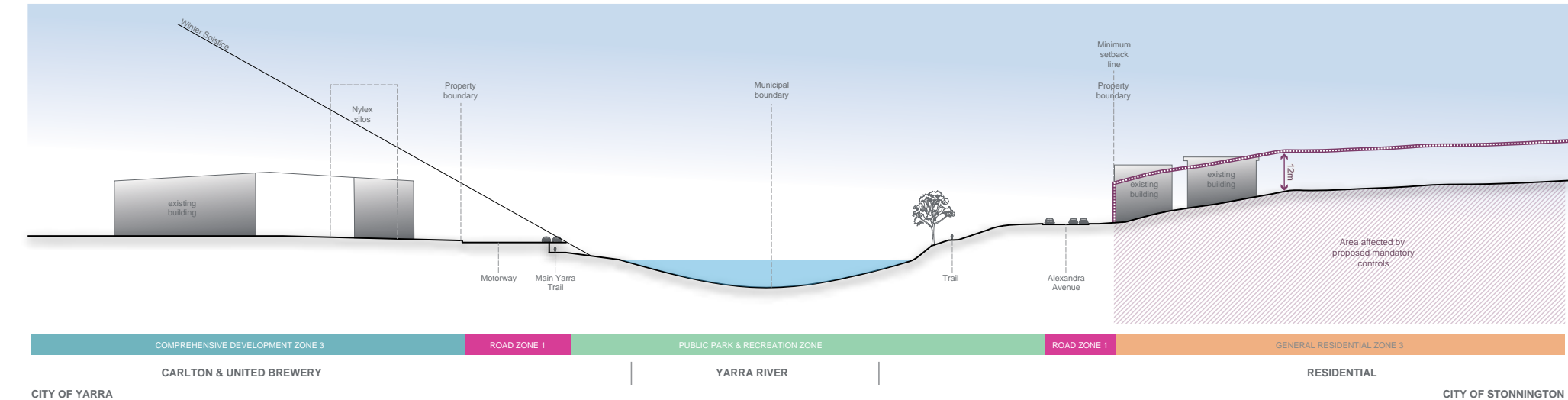
On the southern banks, patches of native vegetation exist and are being rehabilitated through new planting.

For the waterway itself, strengthening this corridor of indigenous vegetation is the most important objective.

Cross-Section Location



Section 1: South Yarra - Cremorne



River Corridor Management

Management of land in the river corridor is needed for both public and private land.

This is most critical in the Waterway Corridor and River Experience Corridor, shown on the map opposite as the 'area recommended for management'. In some locations on the southern side of the river, a buffer area extending into the Landscape Setting Corridor is also recommended for management, where development on higher ground could be visible from the river.

The recommended area of management for both public and private land is shown on the map and is also illustrated in the cross-section diagrams. The sections show the setback line for development. No development will be permitted between the river and the setback line.

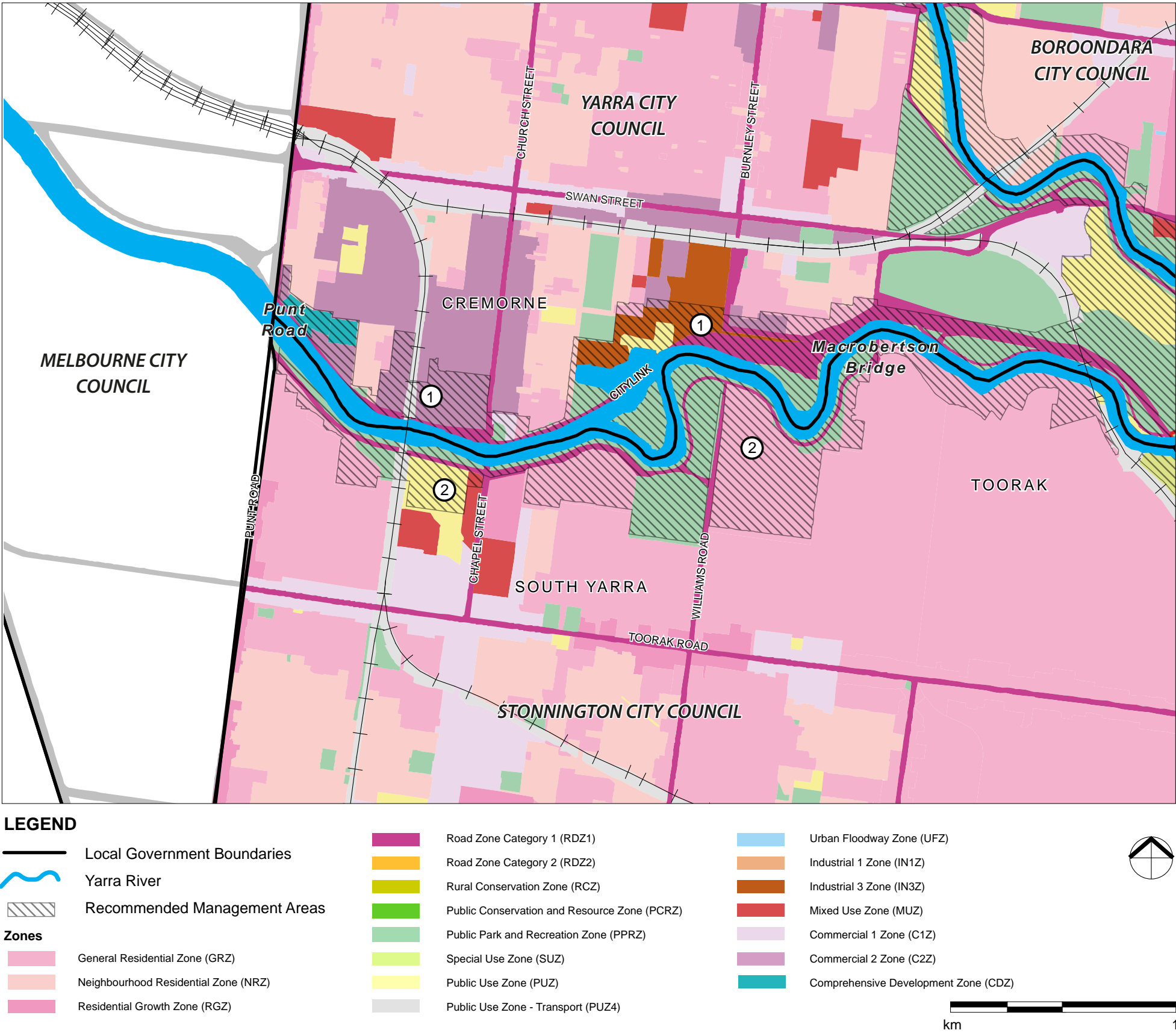
Managing Public Land

- Strategies for managing public land in this sub-area:
- Support the role of parkland in providing highly valued places for active and passive recreation.
 - Design buildings and structures that are visible from the river and the Main Yarra Trail as distinctive features of these spaces that respond to the sensitivity of the riverside landscape and environment.
 - Opportunities for planting of indigenous riparian vegetation and improvement of the tree canopy should be provided, where possible. The visual amenity of the shared path along the northern bank should also be improved as an intimate link with the water.

Managing Private Land

- Strategies for managing private land in this sub-area:
- Ensure that where built form is visible from the river, parklands or the Main Yarra Trail, it is carefully designed to provide a well-considered architectural response.
 - The presence of visible built form in longer range views from the southern side of the river should meet detailed design objectives, including: ensuring a high design quality in this visually prominent location; avoiding the appearance of a solid wall of development along the river.
 - Buildings on the northern bank must not overshadow the waterway, the shared trails or the southern bank.

Development outcomes and requirements are detailed for each Character Type in the following table.



Map Ref	River Interface Character Type & Location	Current Planning Controls	Desired Outcome	Recommended Development Requirements & Guidelines	Recommended Extent of Planning Control Area	Recommended Planning Controls
1	Motorway - adjoining the river in Cremorne Current & Ex-Industrial - north of Motorway	Yarra <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commercial 1 Zone Commercial 2 Zone Comprehensive Development Zone Industrial 3 Zone Environmental Significance Overlay Schedule 1 Yarra River Environs Design and Development Overlay Schedule 1 Yarra River Corridor Protection Heritage Overlay applied to individual sites and precincts 	New buildings do not overwhelm the width and scale of the waterway. The waterway, river banks and recreational trails are not overshadowed. New buildings contribute positively to the river's skyline along the northern bank and to avoid the appearance of a solid wall of development along the river. Elements of identified industrial heritage are retained.	Discretionary height limit applied with mandatory requirement that no additional shadow be cast across the banks or waterway of the river. Minimum setback requirement does not apply as area does not have direct frontage to river's edge.	Adjoins motorway and extends up to 280m into industrial and commercial areas, depending on street and site layout.	Yarra <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extend existing DDO1 further north to include sites that may cause overshadowing. Replace existing ESO1 with new SLO control.
2	Urban Residential - adjoining river in South Yarra	Stonnington <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residential Growth Zone Schedule 1 General Residential Zone Schedules 3, 4 & 5 Public Use Zone Design and Development Overlay Schedule 3 Yarra River Skyline Area Heritage Overlay applied to individual sites and precincts 	Naturalistic landscape setting of river and open spaces is strengthened. Further encroachment of built form into the river corridor is avoided. Tree canopy is retained and enhanced as the dominant visual element in the landscape. Encouraging the re-establishment of locally indigenous vegetation and trees.	Maximum building height of residential zones applied as mandatory control (with 1m provision for sloping sites): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> GRZ3 and GRZ4 'Residential Boulevards & Corridors' - mandatory 12 metres. GRZ5 'Residential Boulevards & Corridors' - mandatory 9 metres. RGZ1, 'Key Boulevards' - discretionary height limit of 13.5 metres. Building height to conform to natural ground level to reduce visual impact. Minimum setback requirement does not apply as area does not have direct frontage to river's edge. Use of reflective materials or bright/bold colours is avoided. Permit required to remove established trees. Planting of locally indigenous vegetation encouraged.	Extends approximately 200m from property boundary at the river frontage, depending on street and site layout	Stonnington <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply revised DDO3 to RGZ, GRZ & PUZ that sets mandatory height controls. Apply new SLO to all land up to the centreline of the Yarra River

6.4 Sub-area 2: Macrobertson Bridge to Hawthorn Bridge

Values, Character & Pattern of Viewing

Moving east from the Macrobertson Bridge, the river’s landscape character becomes more vegetated on both sides, and its natural elements more evident.

The topography of the southern banks in Toorak rises up steeply and buildings are perched along the ridgeline or, in some locations, the riverbanks have been excavated to allow development closer to the water.

In the eastern part of this sub-area in Hawthorn, the topography flattens out and buildings are nestled among heavy riverbank vegetation.

The western/northern side of the river in Burnley comprises flatter land which has been reserved as parklands and the Burnley Campus of Melbourne University.

Here the river corridor becomes more heavily vegetated, with a strong native tree canopy, this vegetation filters views to buildings in many places. The river becomes more of an enclosed space, due to the steeper sections of topography and thick riverside vegetation along its banks.

The River Interface Character Types within this sub-area described in Chapter 3 are:

Parklands and Recreation River Interface (PPRZ)	Formal open spaces for active and passive recreation
Leafy Suburban (NRZ, GRZ, RGZ, UFZ, C1Z, IN1Z, SUZ)	Residential areas adjoining river corridor and open spaces

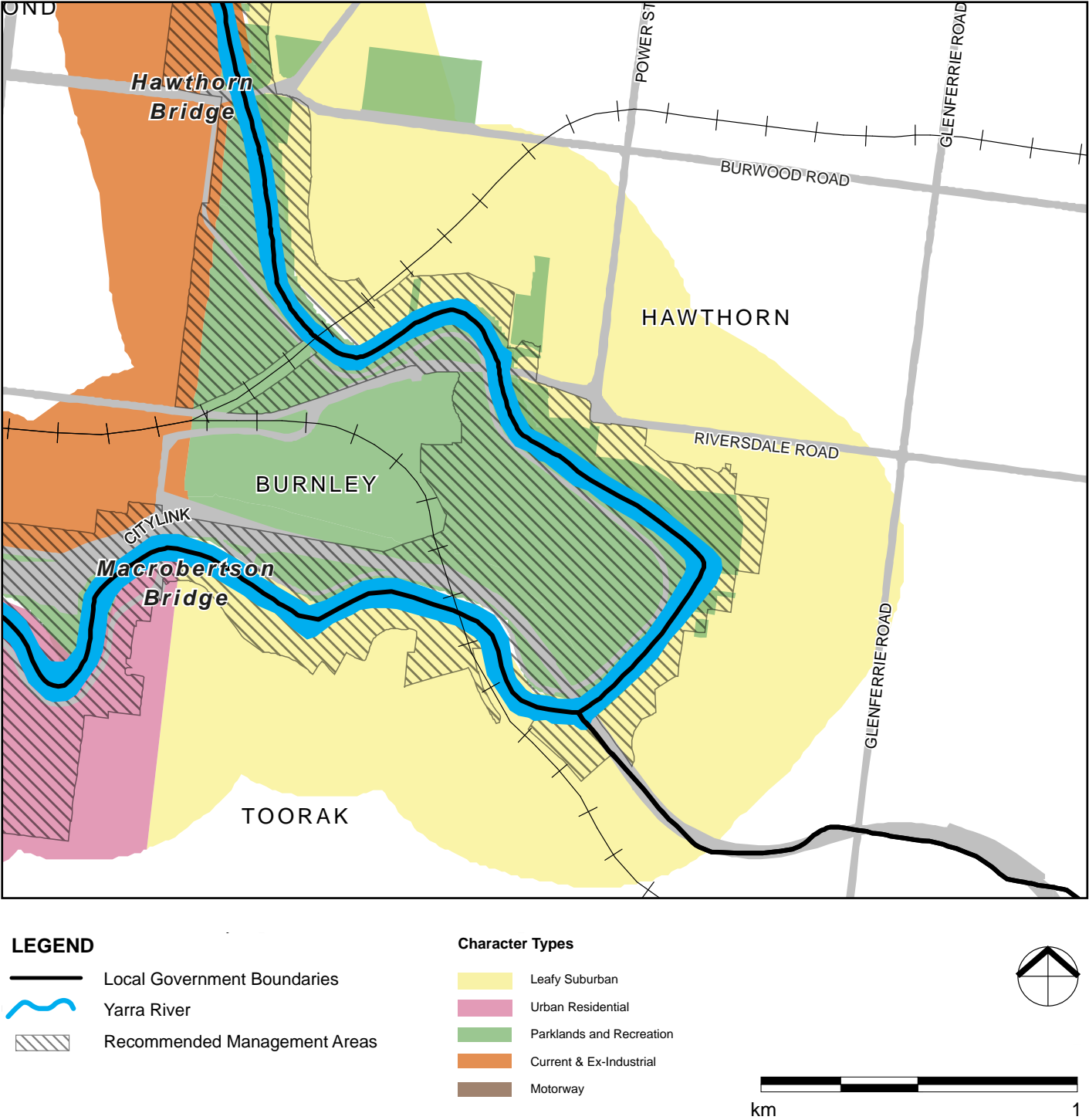
Important viewpoints within this sub-area, described in Chapter 4, are the Main Yarra Trail and Capital City Trail, road and rail bridge crossings and the parkland on both river banks.



Toorak, southern side of river, view south from Main Yarra Trail on northern bank



Hawthorn, eastern side of river, view south from Swan Street Bridge



Cross-Sectional Analysis

Landscape Setting Corridor

The aerial photo opposite and accompanying cross-sections show the river’s landscape setting as it winds from Toorak to Hawthorn, around the Burnley Gardens and Kevin Bartlett Reserve.

In this sub-area the topography is undulating, with the river banks rising up steeply to higher ground beyond. Adjoining areas to the south in Toorak and the east in Hawthorn are developed with leafy residential neighbourhoods which have a well-vegetated character and strong tree canopy.

Parklands in Burnley and Hawthorn provide a well-treed and open landscape setting for the river.

River Experience Corridor

The river experience corridor comprises the Main Yarra Trail which is located alongside the northern and western edge of the river, passing through the parklands in Burnley. Parklands in Hawthorn on the the eastern river banks also provide direct access to the water’s edge.

In this sub-area, the river banks are well vegetated which helps to create a more enclosed space and naturalistic river environment within this urban setting. Numerous dwellings are located close to the water’s edge, along the more elevated sections of the river banks and along the crestline are visible from the waterway. In most locations they are well screened by established vegetation and do not dominate the landscape.

However, in this part of the corridor there are also several institutional buildings and large scale dwellings in Toorak which are visually dominant due to their close proximity to the water’s edge, their imposing scale and a lack of screening vegetation.

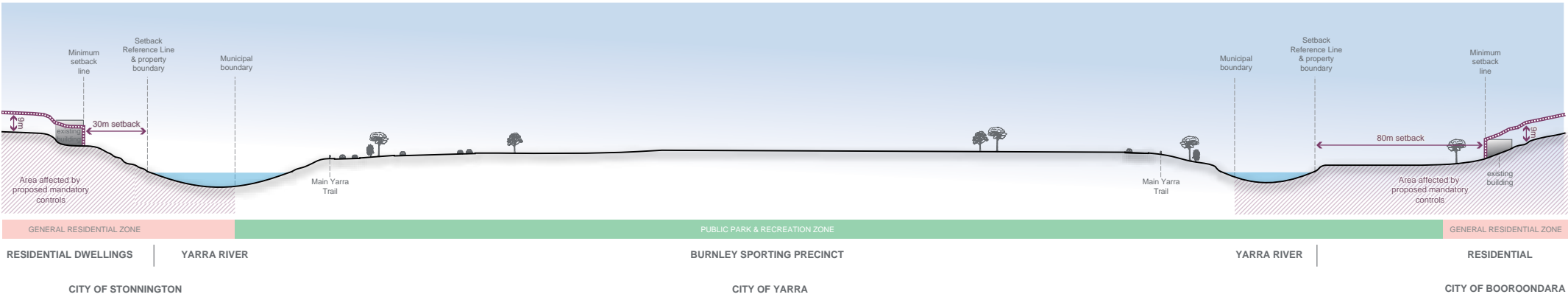
Waterway Corridor

For the waterway itself, maintenance of a continuous corridor of indigenous vegetation is the most important objective, to strengthen the natural landscape character and screen views to development.

Cross-Section Location



Section 2: Toorak - Hawthorn



River Corridor Management

Management of land in the river corridor is needed for both public and private land.

This is most critical in the Waterway Corridor and River Experience Corridor, shown on the map opposite as the 'area recommended for management'. In some locations, a buffer area extending into the Landscape Setting Corridor is also recommended for management, where there is a sensitive interface with the riverside spaces or parkland.

The recommended area of management for both public and private land is shown on the map and is also illustrated in the cross-section diagrams.

The sections show the setback line for development. No development will be permitted between the river and the setback line.

Managing Public Land

Strategies for managing public land in this sub-area:

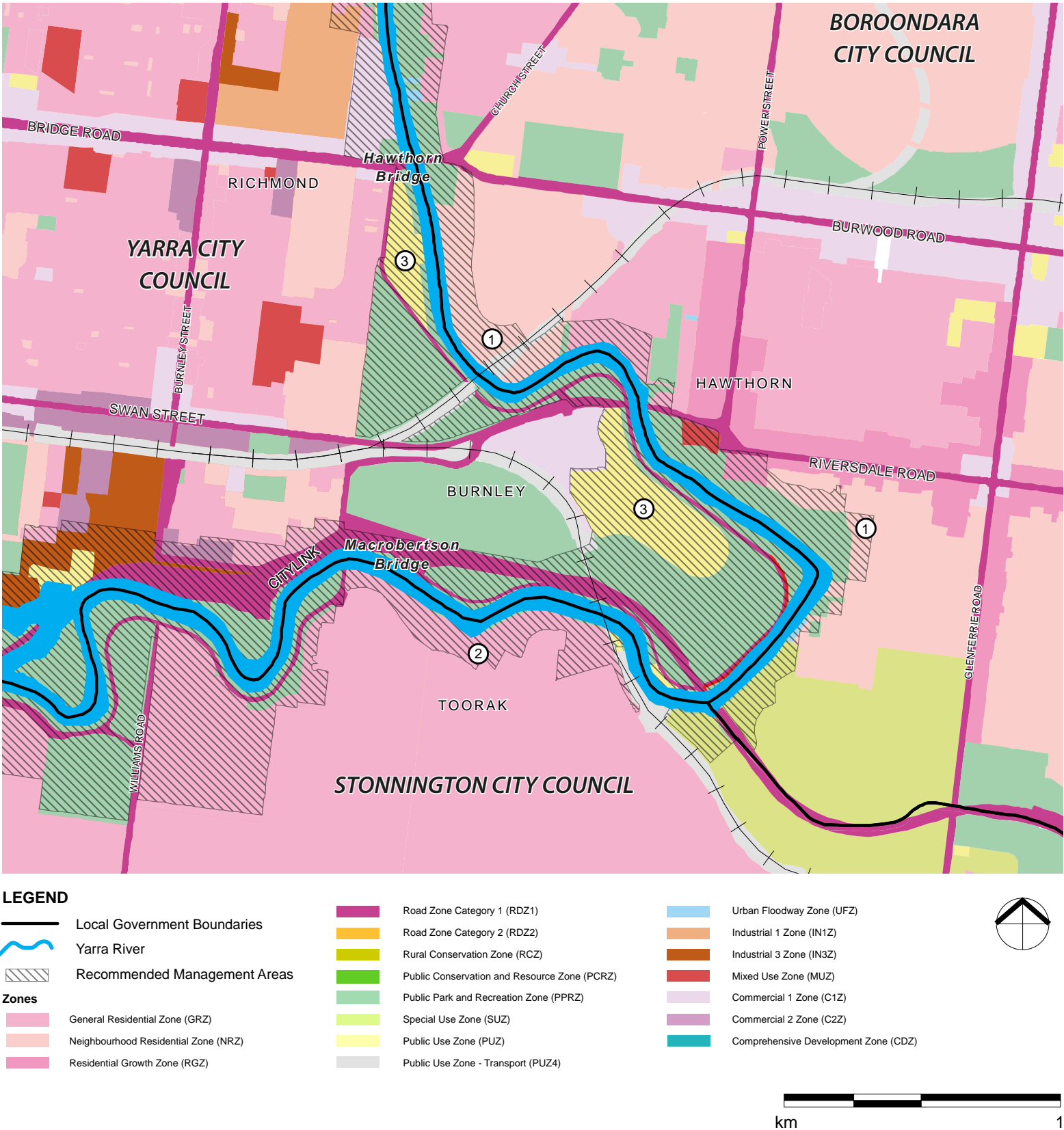
- Support the role of parkland in providing highly valued places for active and passive recreation.
- Design buildings and structures that are visible from the river and the Main Yarra Trail as distinctive features of these spaces that respond to the sensitivity of the riverside landscape and environment.
- Opportunities for planting of indigenous riparian vegetation and improvement of the tree canopy should be provided, where possible.

Managing Private Land

Strategies for managing private land in this sub-area:

- Ensure that where built form is visible from the river, parklands or the Main Yarra Trail, it is carefully designed to provide a well-considered architectural response.
- The presence of visible built form in longer range views from the northern/western side of the river should meet detailed design objectives, including: ensuring a high design quality in this visually prominent location; avoiding the appearance of a solid wall of development along the river.

Development outcomes and requirements are detailed for each Character Type in the following table.



Map Ref	River Interface Character Type & Location	Current Planning Controls	Desired Outcome	Recommended Development Requirements & Guidelines	Recommended Extent of Planning Control Area	Recommended Planning Controls
1	Leafy Suburban - adjoining river in Hawthorn	<p>Boroondara</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neighbourhood Residential Zone Schedule 3 Residential Growth Zone Schedule 1 Mixed Use Zone Public Use Zone Special Use Zone Urban Flood Zone Design and Development Overlay Schedule 31 Yarra River Corridor Protection Environmental Significance Overlay Schedule 1 Yarra River Corridor Protection Heritage Overlay applied to individual sites 	<p>Visibility of buildings from the river, adjoining parkland and the opposite bank is minimised.</p> <p>Strong landscaped edge to river to screen views to buildings is maintained.</p> <p>Further encroachment of built form into the river corridor is avoided.</p> <p>Tree canopy is retained and enhanced as the dominant visual element in the landscape.</p> <p>Further disturbance of riverbank topography is minimised.</p>	<p>Maximum building height of 9 metres applied as mandatory control (with 1m provision for sloping sites) to limit the appearance of building scale/mass as seen from the opposite bank.</p> <p>Permit required to remove established trees.</p> <p>Planting of locally indigenous vegetation encouraged.</p> <p>Minimum building setback of 30-80m from the property boundary fronting the river, responding to topography and location of existing buildings.</p>	<p>Extends up to approximately 160m from property boundary at the river frontage, depending on street and site layout.</p>	<p>Boroondara</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply updated DDO31 to NRZ, RGZ, MUZ, PUZ, SUZ & UFZ that sets mandatory height controls and minimum setback distances from the river. Replace existing ESO1 with new SLO and apply to all land up to the centreline of the Yarra River.
2	Leafy Suburban - adjoining river in Toorak	<p>Stonnington</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> General Residential Zones 8 & 11 Public Use Zone Special Use Zone Significant Landscape Overlay Schedule 1 Yarra River and Valley Streamside Environment Area Heritage Overlay applied to individual sites 	<p>Visibility of buildings from the river, adjoining parkland and the opposite bank is minimised.</p> <p>Strong landscaped edge to river to screen views to buildings is maintained.</p> <p>Further encroachment of built form into the river corridor is avoided.</p> <p>Tree canopy is retained and enhanced as the dominant visual element in the landscape.</p> <p>Further disturbance of riverbank topography is minimised.</p> <p>Improved access to the river where possible.</p>	<p>Maximum building height of 9 metres applied as mandatory control (with 1m provision for sloping sites) to limit the appearance of building scale/mass as seen from the opposite bank.</p> <p>Permit required to remove established trees.</p> <p>Planting of locally indigenous vegetation encouraged.</p> <p>Minimum building setback of 30m from the property boundary fronting the river, responding to topography and location of existing buildings.</p>	<p>Extends approximately 170m from property boundary at the river frontage, depending on street and site layout.</p>	<p>Stonnington</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extend existing DDO3 to GRZ, PUZ & SUZ that sets mandatory height controls and minimum setback distances from the river. Replace existing SLO1 with new SLO to all land up to the centreline of the Yarra River.
3	Parklands and Recreation - Melbourne University, Burnley Campus and Melbourne Girls College	<p>Yarra</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Use Zone 2 Design and Development Overlay Schedule 1 Yarra River Corridor Protection Environment Significance Overlay Schedule 1 Yarra River Environs Heritage Overlay applied to individual sites 	<p>Visibility of buildings from the river, adjoining parkland and the opposite bank is minimised.</p> <p>Strong landscaped edge to river to screen views to buildings is maintained.</p> <p>Further encroachment of built form into the river corridor is avoided.</p> <p>Tree canopy is retained and enhanced as the dominant visual element in the landscape.</p> <p>Further disturbance of riverbank topography is minimised.</p> <p>Improved access to the river where possible.</p>	<p>Maximum building height of 9 metres applied as mandatory control (with 1m provision for sloping sites) to limit the appearance of building scale/mass as seen from the opposite bank.</p> <p>Permit required to remove established trees.</p> <p>Planting of locally indigenous vegetation encouraged.</p> <p>Minimum building setback of 30m from the property boundary fronting the river, responding to topography and location of existing buildings.</p>	<p>Extends between approximately 120m and 190m from property boundary at the rivers edge depending on site layout.</p>	<p>Yarra</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extend existing DDO1 to PUZ that sets mandatory height controls and minimum setback distances from the river. Replace existing SLO1 with new SLO to all land up to the centreline of the Yarra River.

6.5 Sub-area 3: Hawthorn Bridge to Dights Falls

Values, Character & Pattern of Viewing

Further north beyond Hawthorn Bridge, the Yarra River passes through a variety of urban environments which have created a distinct contrast in the landscape character on either side of the river.

The western side of the river comprises the historic industrial areas of Richmond and Abbotsford which now form an intensely urbanised landscape. The topography in this area rises up steeply from the river's edge to a distinct crestline, beyond which it is generally flat. This area features established industrial, commercial and residential buildings, some of which are located within close proximity to the Yarra River corridor. There is a mix of building styles, scales and heights.

The eastern side of the river features expansive areas of parkland, including the Yarra Bend Park which is a large open landscape of predominantly native vegetation, as well as smaller open spaces of Pridmore Park and Creswick Street Reserve. These are interspersed with WELL-vegetated residential neighbourhoods of Hawthorn and Kew which adjoin the parkland and in some locations have a direct frontage with the river. While many dwellings are visible from the river, they are mostly well screened by vegetation.

In Hawthorn, the topography of the eastern banks is relatively flat. In Kew, the land rises up steeply to an undulating ridgeline. Many dwellings are constructed along the sloping riverbanks or located on the ridgeline.

Mature trees and understorey planting are located sporadically along the river banks on the western side. In some locations, buildings or infrastructure are constructed close to the river's edge. By contrast, the landscape of eastern banks within the Yarra Bend Park and public other open spaces is densely planted with a consistent tree canopy and thick understorey planting, which is the main visual element in the landscape on this side of the river.

The River Interface Character Types within this sub-area described in Chapter 3 are:

Parklands and Recreation River Interface (PPRZ)	Formal open spaces for active and passive recreation
Leafy Suburban (NRZ, GRZ, RGZ, UFZ, C1Z, IN1Z, SUZ)	Residential areas adjoining river corridor and open spaces
Current & Ex-Industrial (C1Z, C2Z, IN1Z, IN3Z, MUZ, SUZ, PUZ, PDZ)	Industrial and commercial areas, some of which are transitioning to residential or mixed use

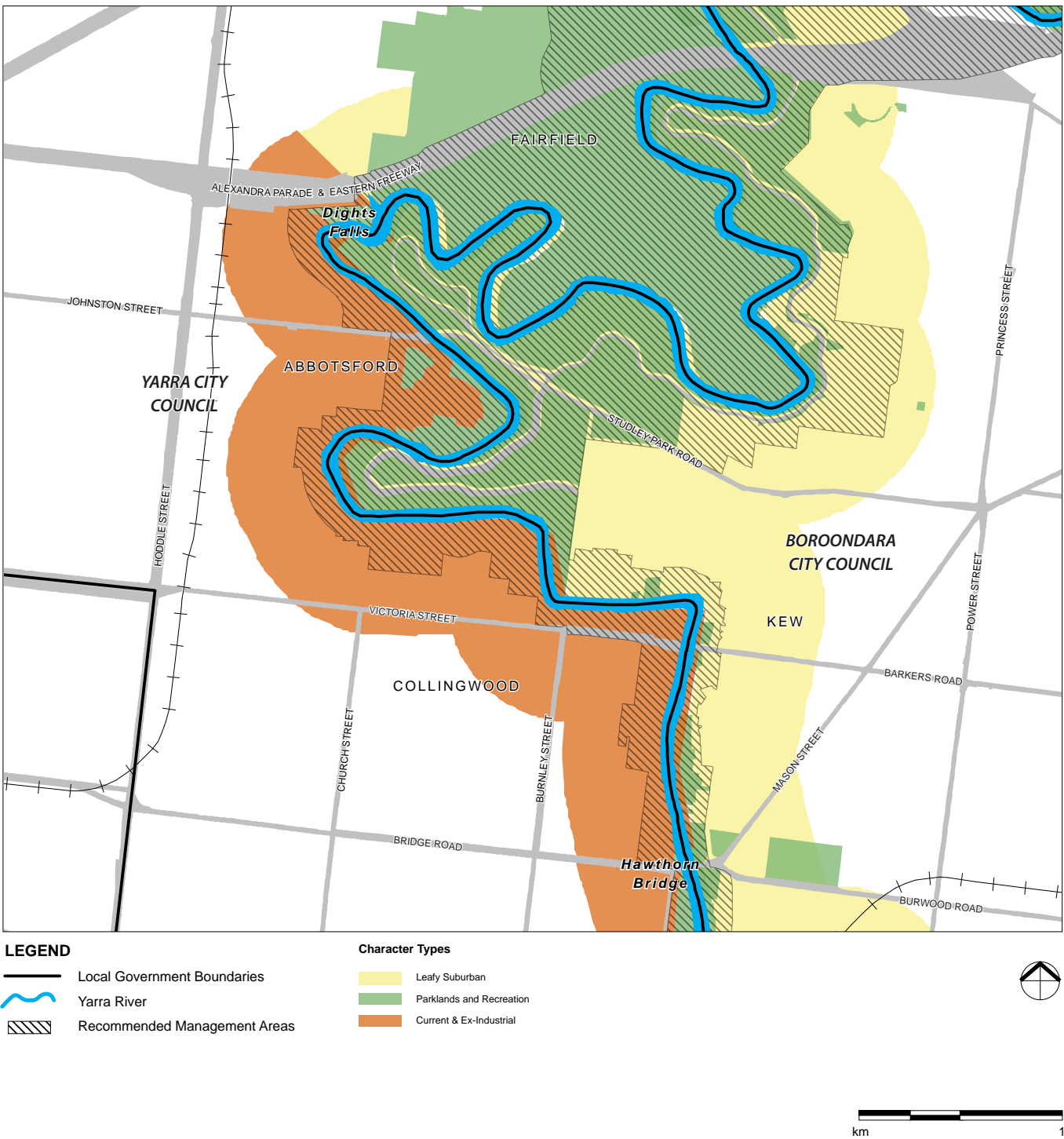
Important viewpoints within this sub-area, described in Chapter 4, are the Main Yarra Trail, pedestrian, road rail bridge crossings and the parkland on the eastern river banks.



Abbotsford, western side of river, looking north from Johnston Street Bridge



Kew, eastern side of river, looking north from Victoria Bridge



Cross-Sectional Analysis

Landscape Setting Corridor

The aerial photo opposite and accompanying cross-sections on this page and the following pages show the river's landscape setting as it flows through these urban and suburban landscapes and winds around Yarra Bend Park.

In the western and southeastern parts of this sub-area the topography of wider environment is generally flat. The topography becomes steeper and more undulating around Yarra Bend Park on the eastern side of the river.

Parkland areas and residential neighbourhoods are well vegetated with a strong tree canopy. The western parts of the sub-area are densely urbanised with little tree cover.

River Experience Corridor

This part of the river is accessed by the Main Yarra Trail, which crosses from the eastern to western banks in several locations, and parkland adjoining the river.

In this sub-area, built form and infrastructure are dominant visual elements on the western side of the river within the Current & Ex-Industrial character type. Many existing buildings are large in scale and constructed in close proximity to the river's edge. Future development must be carefully managed in order to avoid further visual intrusion into the river corridor, or casting shadow on the water and river banks.

Detailed cross-sections have been taken in multiple locations to determine appropriate building heights and setbacks, allowing consideration of the relationship of the urban areas on the western bank with the parkland and leafy suburban areas on the eastern bank.

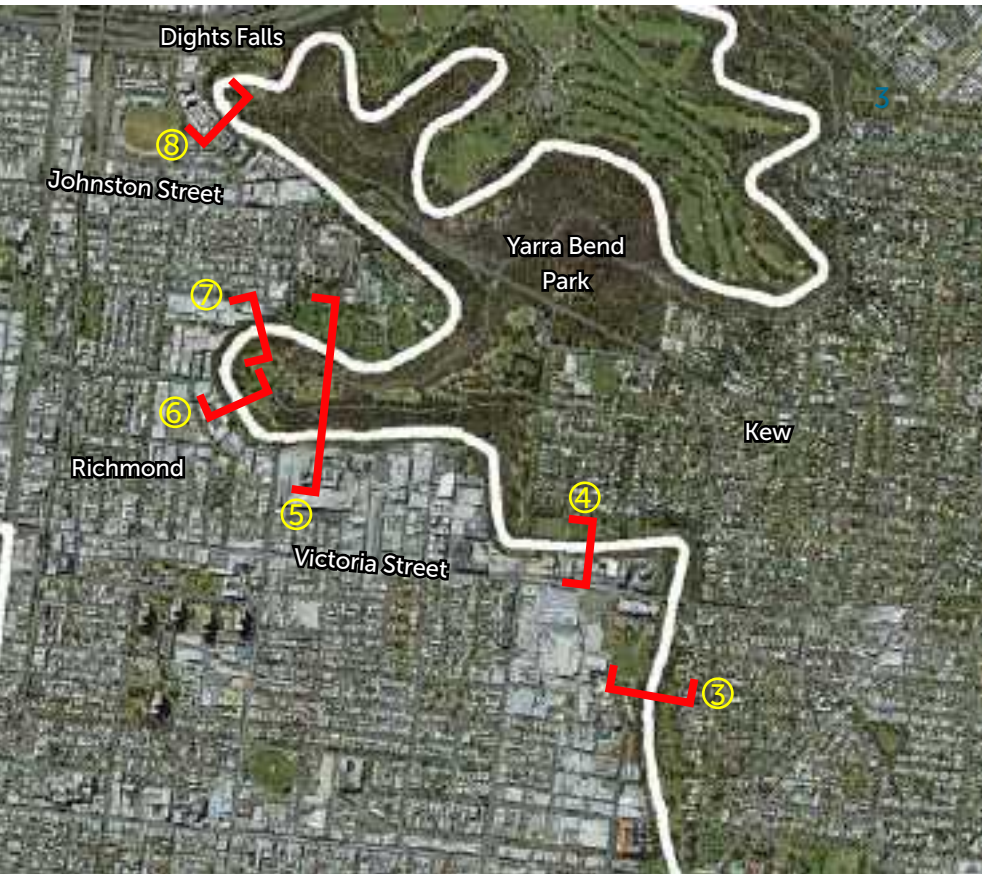
Waterway Corridor

The waterway has been compromised through modification of the river banks in some locations (on both sides of the river) and the construction of large retaining walls (in Richmond and Abbotsford). Several taller buildings overshadow the water.

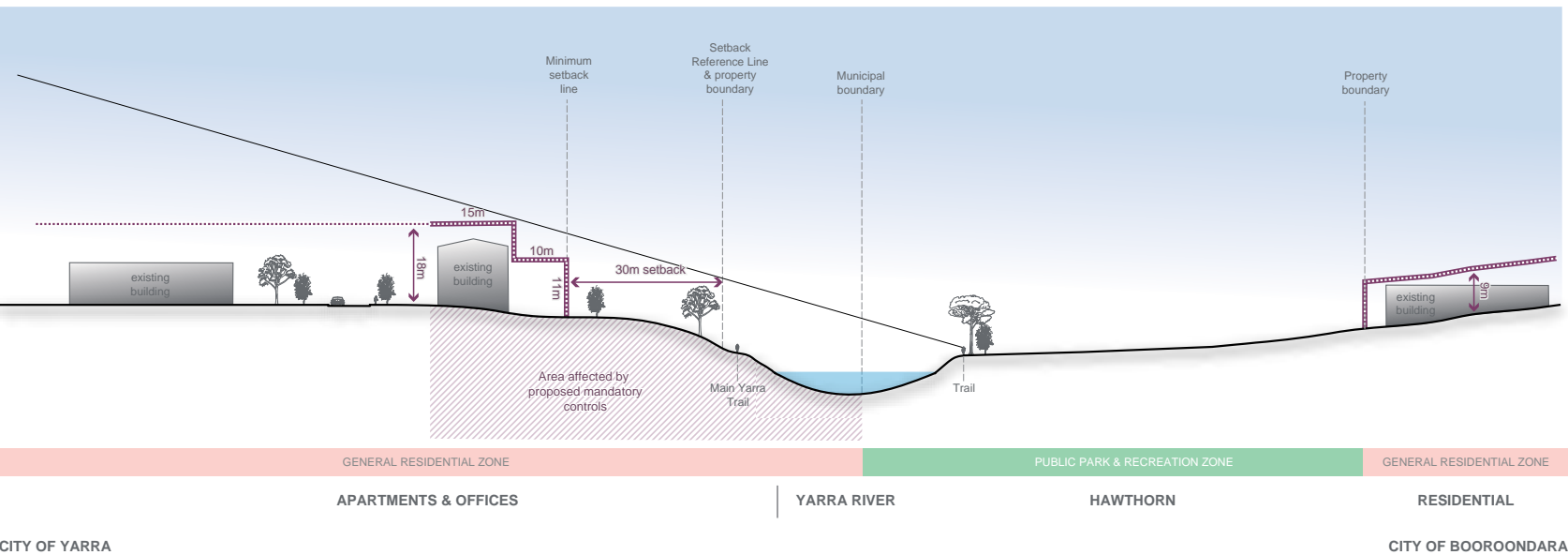
On the western banks, patches of native vegetation exist and should be rehabilitated through new planting.

For the waterway itself, maintenance and strengthening of a continuous corridor of indigenous vegetation, which in many places helps to screen views to buildings, is the most important objective.

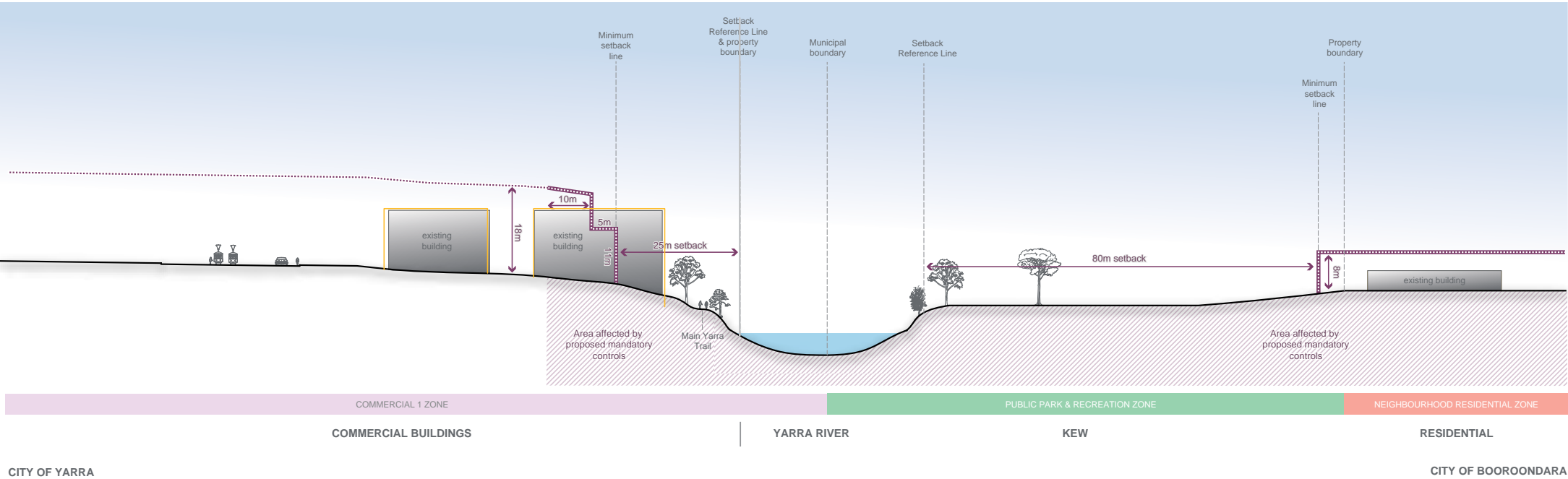
Cross-Section Locations



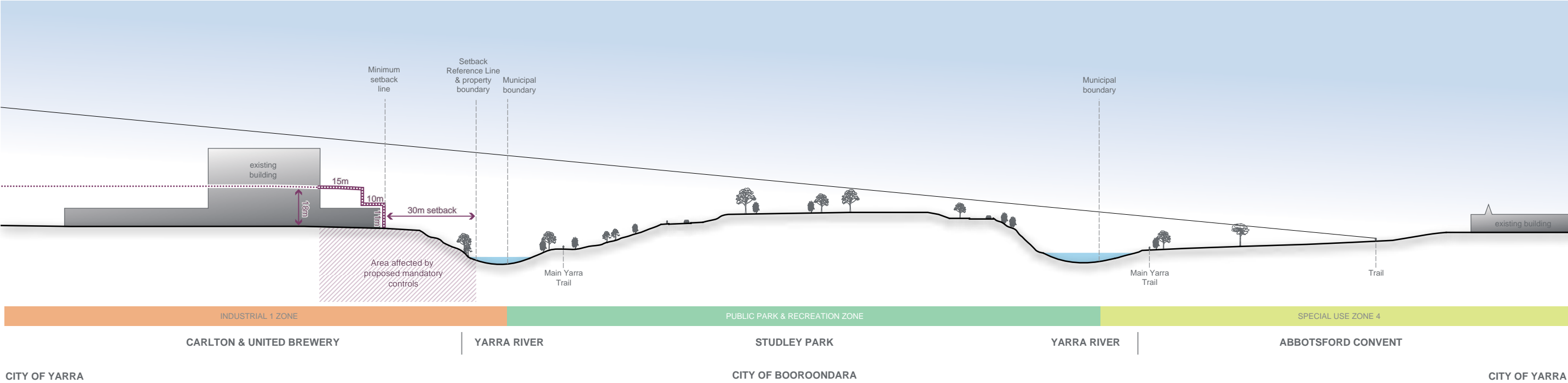
Section 3: River Street



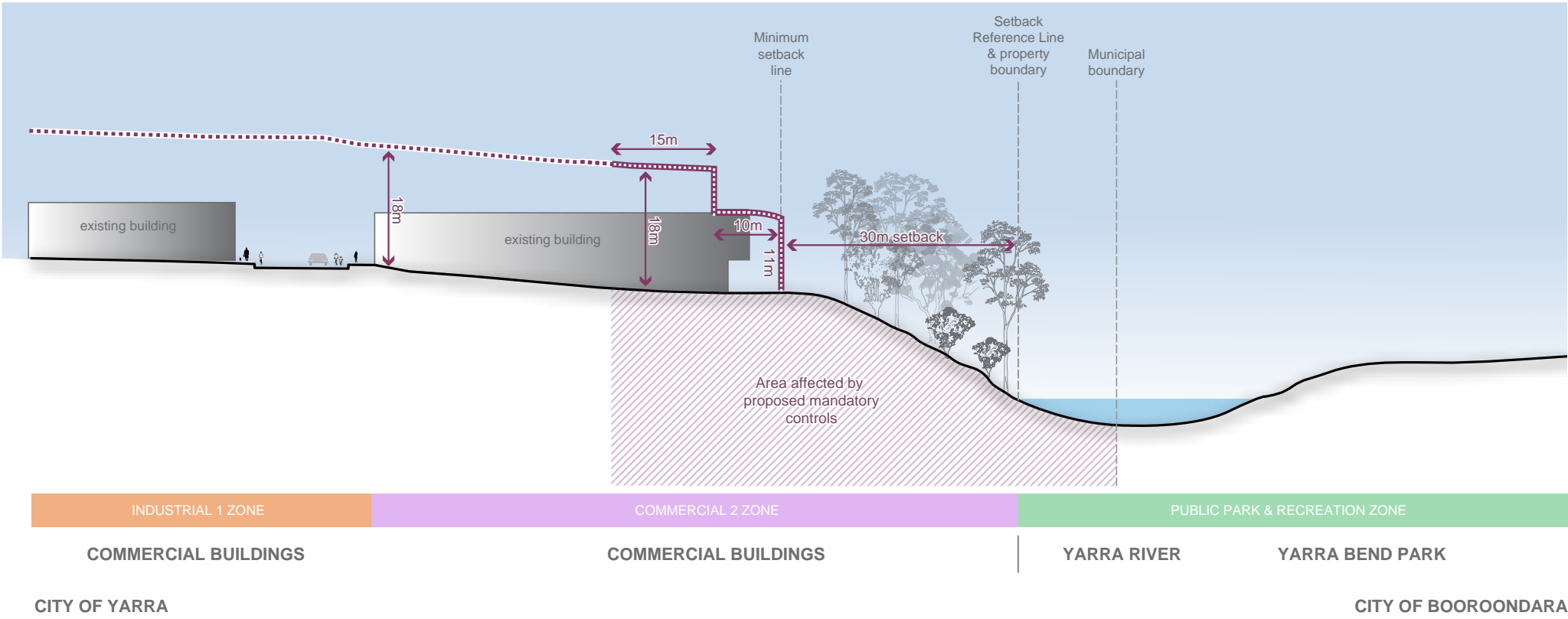
Section 4: Victoria Street



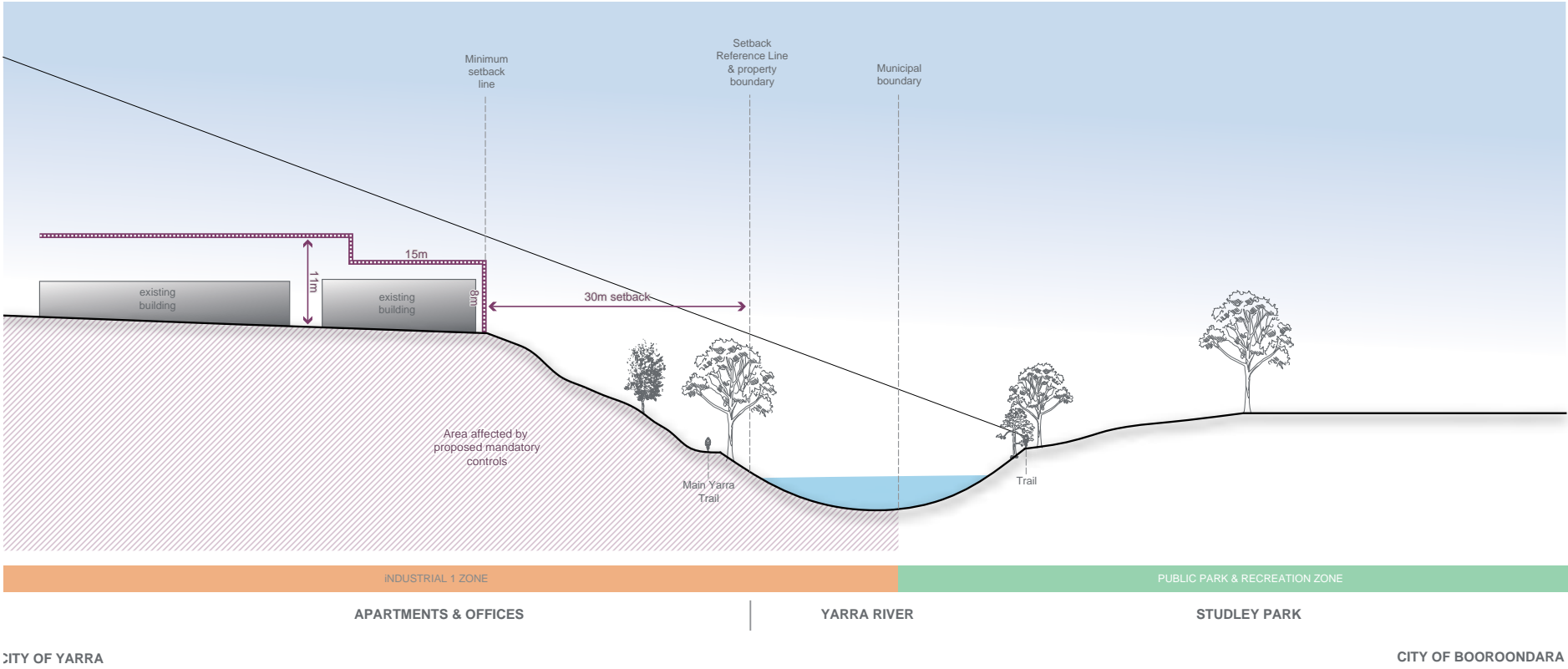
Section 5: Carlton & United Brewery - Abbotsford Convent



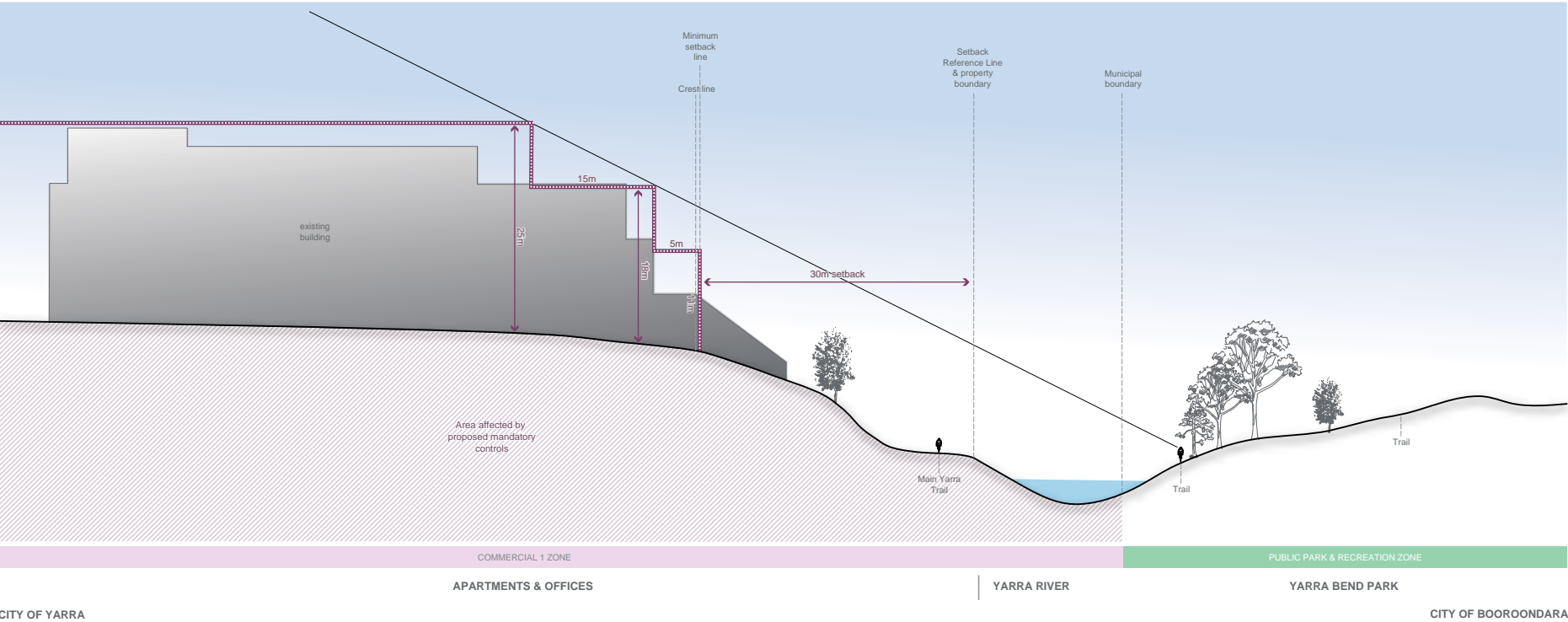
Section 6: Victoria Crescent (west)



Section 7: Marine Parade & Harper Street



Section 7: Trenerry Crescent



River Corridor Management

Management of land in the river corridor is needed for both public and private land.

This is most critical in the Waterway Corridor and River Experience Corridor, shown on the map opposite as the ‘area recommended for management’. In some locations on the southern side of the river, a buffer area extending into the Landscape Setting Corridor is also recommended for management, where development on higher ground could be visible from the river.

The recommended area of management for both public and private land is shown on the map and is also illustrated in the cross-section diagrams. The sections show the setback line for development. No development will be permitted between the river and the setback line.

Managing Public Land

Strategies for managing public land in this sub-area:

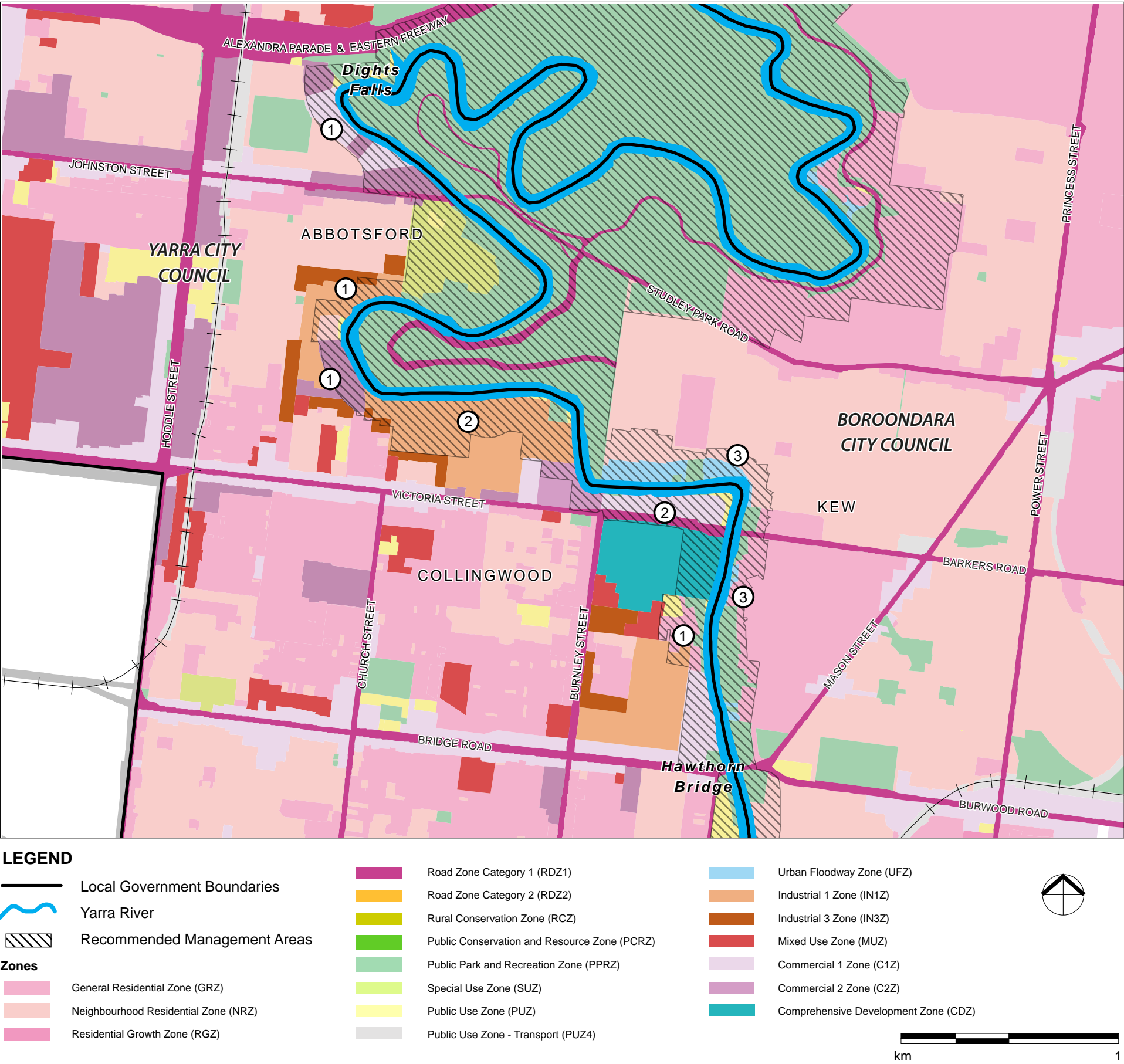
- Support the role of parkland in providing highly valued places for active and passive recreation.
- Design buildings and structures that are visible from the river and the Main Yarra Trail as distinctive features of these spaces that respond to the sensitivity of the riverside landscape and environment.
- Opportunities for planting of indigenous riparian vegetation and improvement of the tree canopy should be provided, where possible. The visual amenity of the shared path along the northern bank should also be improved as an intimate link with the water.

Managing Private Land

Strategies for managing private land in this sub-area:

- Ensure that where built form is visible from the river, parklands or the Main Yarra Trail, it is carefully designed to provide a well-considered architectural response.
- Higher scale built form in strategic development areas on the western side of the river should meet detailed design objectives, including: ensuring a high design quality in this sensitive environment and avoiding overshadowing of the waterway, the shared trails or the opposite bank.

Development outcomes and requirements are detailed for each Character Type in the following table.



Map Ref	River Interface Character Type & Location	Current Planning Controls	Desired Outcome	Recommended Development Requirements & Guidelines	Recommended Extent of Planning Control Area	Recommended Planning Controls
1	Current & Ex-Industrial - adjoining the river in Richmond and Abbotsford: <i>River Street</i> <i>Victoria Cres</i> <i>Marine Pde & Harper St</i> <i>Trenerry Cres</i>	Yarra <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commercial 1 & 2 Zones Industrial 1 & 3 Zones Environmental Significance Overlay Schedule 1 Yarra River Environs Design and Development Overlay Schedule 1 Yarra River Corridor Protection Heritage Overlay applied to individual sites and precincts 	<p>Elements of identified industrial heritage are retained.</p> <p>New buildings do not overwhelm the width and scale of the waterway.</p> <p>Natural topography of the river banks is retained.</p> <p>Further encroachment of built form into the river corridor is avoided.</p> <p>Strong landscaped edge to river and adjoining open spaces to screen views to buildings is maintained and strengthened.</p> <p>Tree canopy is retained and enhanced as the dominant visual element along the skyline.</p> <p>The waterway, river banks, riverside parkland and recreational trails are not overshadowed.</p>	<p>Maximum building height of between 11m and 25m and upper level setbacks of 5-15m applied as mandatory controls to respond to local context and avoid overshadowing.</p> <p>Permit required to remove established trees.</p> <p>Planting of locally indigenous vegetation encouraged.</p> <p>Minimum building setback of 30m from the property boundary fronting the river, responding to topography and location of existing buildings.</p>	Extends up to approximately 160m from property boundary at the river frontage, depending on street and site layout.	Yarra <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update building height and setback requirements of existing DDO1 to reduce potential for overshadowing and visibility of built form from river. Replace existing ESO1 with new SLO control.
2	Current & Ex-Industrial - adjoining the river in Richmond: <i>Victoria Street</i> <i>Carlton & United</i> <i>Breweries site</i>	Yarra <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commercial 1 Zone Industrial 1 Zone Priority Development Zone Environmental Significance Overlay Schedule 1 Yarra River Environs Design and Development Overlay Schedule 1 Yarra River Corridor Protection Heritage Overlay applied to individual sites and precincts 	As above.	<p>Maximum building height of 18m applied as a discretionary control to respond to local context and avoid overshadowing.</p> <p>Upper level setbacks of 5-10m.</p> <p>Permit required to remove established trees.</p> <p>Planting of locally indigenous vegetation encouraged.</p> <p>Minimum building setback of 25-30m from the property boundary fronting the river, responding to topography and location of existing buildings.</p>	Extends up to approximately 160m from property boundary at the river frontage, depending on street and site layout.	Yarra <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update building height and setback requirements of existing DDO1 to reduce potential for overshadowing and visibility of built form from river. Replace existing ESO1 with new SLO control.
3	Leafy Suburban - adjoining river in Hawthorn & Kew	Boroondara <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neighbourhood Residential Zone 3 General Residential Zone 1 & 3 Urban Flood Zone Environmental Significance Overlay Schedule 1 Yarra River Corridor Protection Design and Development Overlay Schedule 31 Yarra River Corridor Protection Heritage Overlay applied to individual sites 	<p>Visibility of buildings from the river, adjoining parkland and the opposite bank is minimised.</p> <p>Strong landscaped edge to river to screen views to buildings is maintained.</p> <p>Further encroachment of built form into the river corridor is avoided.</p> <p>Tree canopy is retained and enhanced as the dominant visual element in the landscape.</p> <p>Further disturbance of riverbank topography is minimised.</p>	<p>Maximum building height of between 8-9m applied as mandatory controls, consistent with height requirements of existing residential zones (with 1m provision for sloping sites), to limit the appearance of building scale/mass as seen from the opposite bank.</p> <p>Permit required to remove established trees.</p> <p>Planting of locally indigenous vegetation encouraged.</p> <p>Minimum building setback of 30-80m from the property boundary fronting the river, responding to topography and location of existing buildings.</p>	Extends up to approximately 160m from property boundary at the river frontage, depending on street and site layout.	Boroondara <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply updated DDO31 to NRZ, GRZ & UFZ that sets mandatory height controls and minimum setback distances from the river. Replace existing ESO1 with new SLO and apply to all land up to the centreline of the Yarra River.

6.6 Sub-area 4: Dights Falls to Bulleen

Values, Character & Pattern of Viewing

Upstream of Dights Falls, the low density residential areas of Alphington, Fairfield and Kew are set among the extensive Yarra Bend Park and have a distinctly leafy, well vegetated suburban character.

At Dights Falls the topography rises up relatively steeply from the river banks on both sides, to a gently undulating hinterland. Moving towards the floodplains of Bulleen, the topography becomes lower-lying and flatter.

There are a number of golf courses within the floodplain area parklands. As a result, this part of the study area has a largely undeveloped and naturalistic setting.

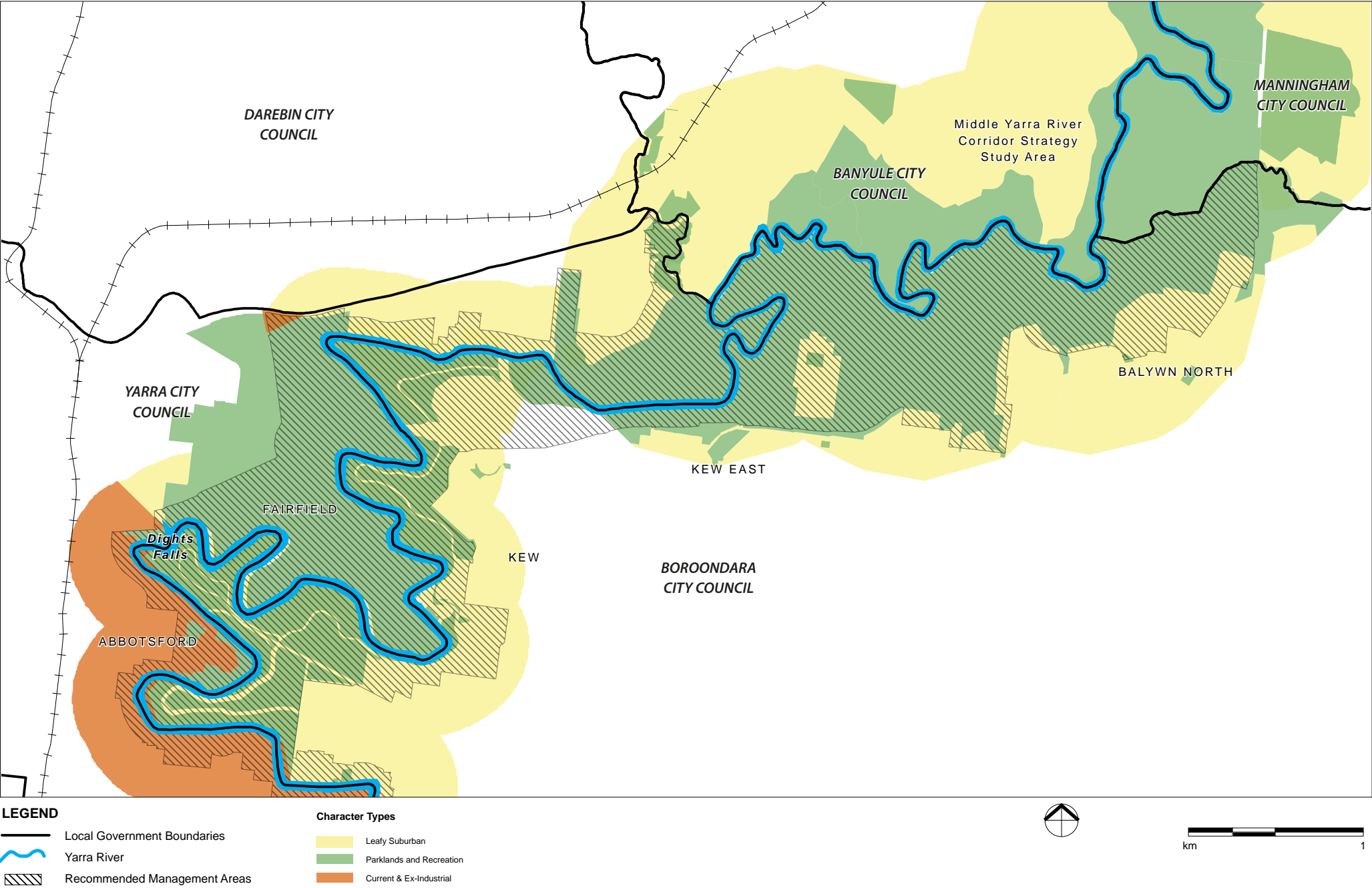
The River Interface Character Types within this sub-area described in Chapter 3 are:

Parklands and Recreation River Interface (PPRZ)	Formal open spaces for active and passive recreation
Leafy Suburban (NRZ, GRZ, UFZ, SUZ)	Residential areas adjoining river corridor and open spaces

Important viewpoints within this sub-area, described in Chapter 4, are the Main Yarra Trails, riverside parklands and golf courses and the bridge crossings at Chandler Highway, Burke Road and Bulleen Road.



Alphington, residential area northern side of river



Cross-Sectional Analysis

Landscape Setting Corridor

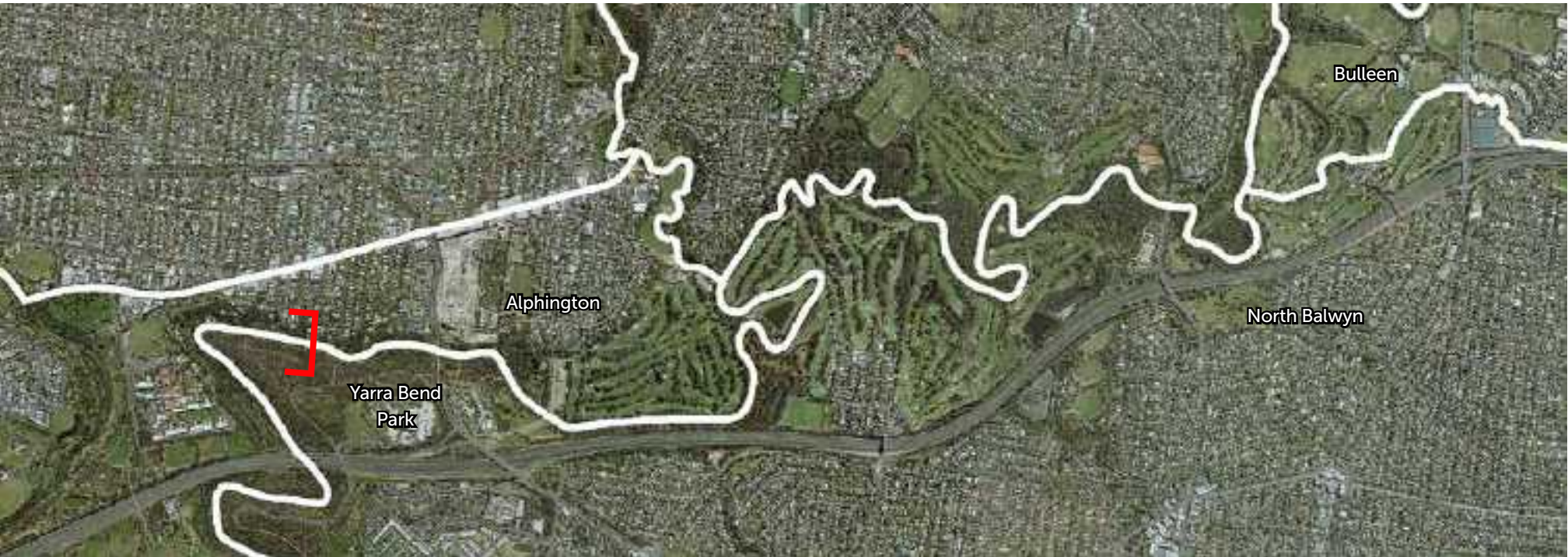
The aerial photo opposite and accompanying cross-sections show the river’s landscape setting as it winds from Dights Falls to Bulleen, around the extensive parklands and open spaces.

In this sub-area the topography of wider environment is undulating near Dights Falls, and the river banks rise up relatively steeply to higher ground beyond. Further east the land becomes flat and features wetlands and pockets of dense bush.

Interspersed among the parklands are pockets of leafy residential neighbourhoods which have a well-vegetated character and strong tree canopy.

For lots adjoining the river, the siting and design of new buildings, retention of the tree canopy and protection of the riverbank environment is of particular importance. On other sites located further away from the river, retention of the tree canopy will reduce the visibility of buildings from the river corridor and surrounding parkland areas.

Cross-Section Location



River Experience Corridor

The river experience corridor comprises the Main Yarra Trail which winds its way through the parkland on both sides of the river. Parklands along the river banks also provide direct access to the water’s edge.

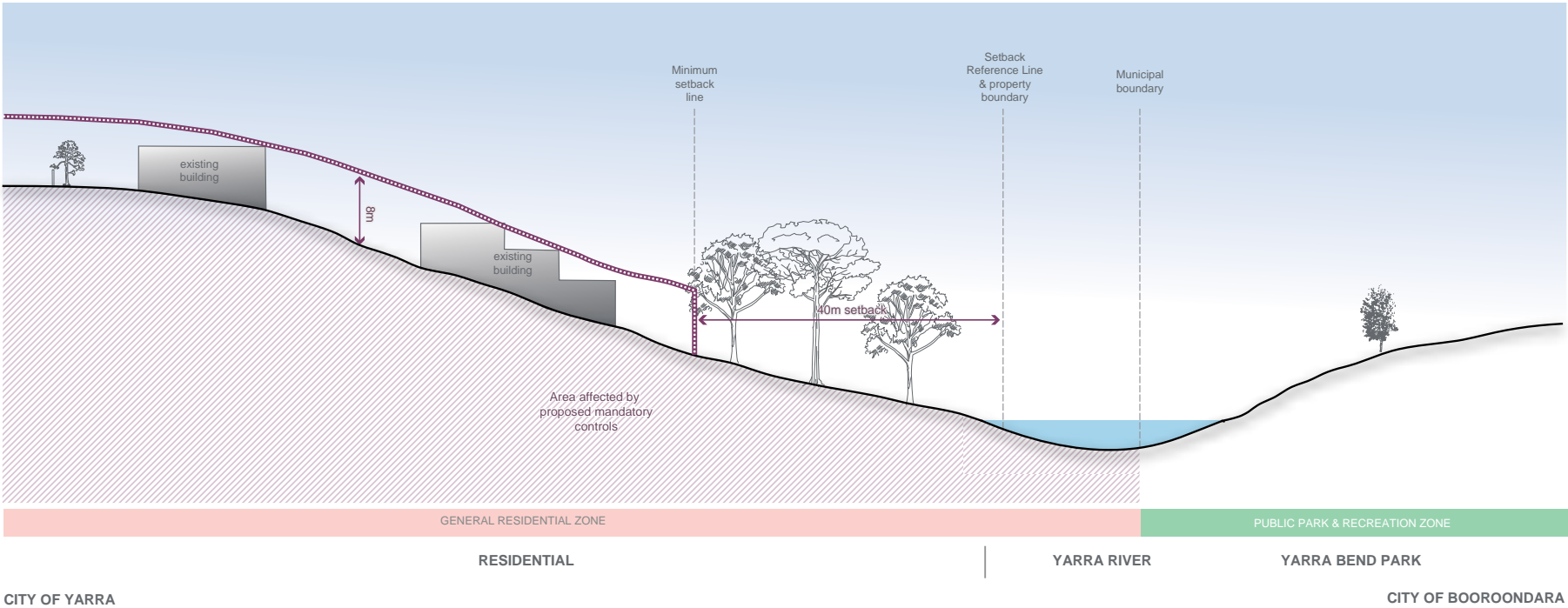
In this sub-area, the river banks are very well vegetated which creates an enclosed corridor space and strongly naturalistic river environment in many locations. Occasional dwellings located close to the water’s edge can be seen through the vegetation.

In this part of the corridor the former AMCOR site has presented an industrial use to the river’s edge; this will be redeveloped for residential use.

Section 8: Fairfield & Kew

Waterway Corridor

For the waterway itself, maintenance of a continuous corridor of indigenous vegetation is the most important objective, to strengthen the natural landscape character and screen views to development.



River Corridor Management

Management of land in the river corridor is needed for both public and private land.

This is most critical in the Waterway Corridor and River Experience Corridor, shown on the map opposite as the 'area recommended for management'. In some locations, a buffer area extending into the Landscape Setting Corridor is also recommended for management, where there is a sensitive interface with the riverside spaces or parkland.

The recommended area of management for both public and private land is shown on the map and is also illustrated in the cross-section diagrams.

The sections show the setback line for development. No development will be permitted between the river and the setback line.

Managing Public Land

Strategies for managing public land in this sub-area:

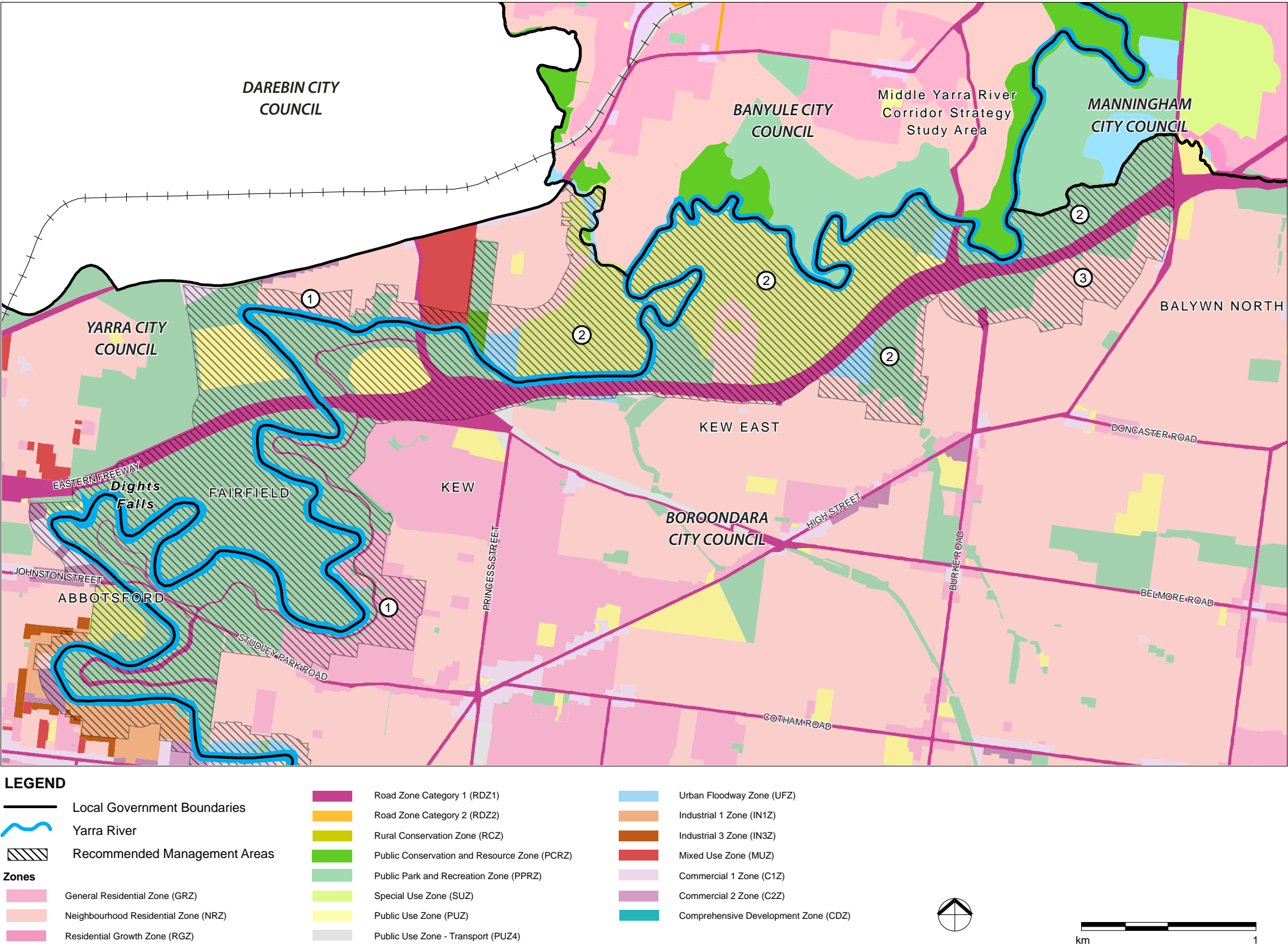
- Support the role of parkland in providing highly valued places for active and passive recreation.
- Design buildings and structures that are visible from the river and the Main Yarra Trail as distinctive features of these spaces that respond to the sensitivity of the riverside landscape and environment.
- Opportunities for planting of indigenous riparian vegetation and improvement of the tree canopy should be provided, where possible.

Managing Private Land

Strategies for managing private land in this sub-area:

- Ensure that where built form is visible from the river, parklands or the Main Yarra Trail, it is carefully designed to provide a well-considered architectural response.
- The presence of visible built form in longer range views from the northern/western side of the river should meet detailed design objectives, including: ensuring a high design quality in this visually prominent location; avoiding the appearance of a solid wall of development along the river.

Development outcomes and requirements are detailed for each Character Type in the following table.



Map Ref	River Interface Character Type & Location	Current Planning Controls	Desired Outcome	Recommended Development Requirements & Guidelines	Recommended Extent of Planning Control Area	Recommended Planning Controls
1	Leafy Suburban - adjoining river in Alphington & Kew	<p>Yarra</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neighbourhood Residential Zone 2 Environmental Significance Overlay Schedule 1 Yarra River Environs Design and Development Overlay Schedule 1 Yarra River Corridor Protection Heritage Overlay applied to individual sites <p>Boroondara</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> General Residential Zone 1 Urban Floodway Zone Environmental Significance Overlay Schedule 1 Yarra River Corridor Protection Design and Development Overlay Schedule 31 Yarra River Corridor Protection Heritage Overlay applied to individual sites 	<p>Visibility of buildings from the river, adjoining parkland and the opposite bank is minimised.</p> <p>Strong landscaped edge to river to screen views to buildings is maintained.</p> <p>Further encroachment of built form into the river corridor is avoided.</p> <p>Tree canopy is retained and enhanced as the dominant visual element in the landscape.</p> <p>Further disturbance of riverbank topography is minimised.</p>	<p>Maximum building height of 8-9 metres applied as a mandatory control, consistent with height requirements of existing residential zones (with 1m provision for sloping sites), to limit the appearance of building scale/mass as seen from the opposite bank.</p> <p>Permit required to remove established trees.</p> <p>Planting of locally indigenous vegetation encouraged.</p> <p>Minimum building setback of 40m from the property boundary fronting the river, responding to topography and location of existing buildings.</p>	Extends up to approximately 120m from property boundary at the river frontage, depending on street and site layout.	<p>Yarra</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply updated DDO1 to NRZ that sets mandatory height controls and minimum setback distances from the river. Replace existing ESO1 with new SLO and apply to all land up to the centreline of the Yarra River. <p>Boroondara</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply updated DDO31 to GRZ that sets mandatory height controls and minimum setback distances from the river. Replace existing ESO1 with new SLO and apply to all land up to the centreline of the Yarra River.
2	Parkland - golf courses & undeveloped floodprone land	<p>Yarra</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Special Use Zone Urban Floodway Zone Public Use Zone Environmental Significance Overlay Schedule 1 Yarra River Environs Design and Development Overlay Schedule 1 Yarra River Corridor Protection <p>Boroondara</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Special Use Zone Urban Floodway Zone Environmental Significance Overlay Schedule 1 Yarra River Corridor Protection Design and Development Overlay Schedule 31 Yarra River Corridor Protection Significant Landscape Overlay 2 	<p>Visibility of buildings from the river, adjoining parkland and the opposite bank is minimised.</p> <p>Strong landscaped edge to river to screen views to buildings is maintained.</p> <p>Encroachment of built form into the river corridor is avoided.</p> <p>Tree canopy is retained and enhanced as the dominant visual element in the landscape.</p> <p>Disturbance of riverbank topography is minimised.</p>	<p>Maximum building height of 8 metres applied as a mandatory control, reflecting height requirements of existing residential zones and undeveloped nature of these sites, to limit the appearance of building scale/mass as seen from the opposite bank.</p> <p>Permit required to remove established trees.</p> <p>Planting of locally indigenous vegetation encouraged.</p> <p>Minimum building setback of 100m from the property boundary fronting the river, responding to topography and location of existing buildings.</p>	Extends up to approximately 500m from property boundary at the river frontage, depending on street and site layout.	<p>Yarra</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply updated DDO1 to SUZ & UFZ that sets mandatory height controls and minimum setback distances from the river. Replace existing ESO1 with new SLO and apply to all land up to the centreline of the Yarra River. <p>Boroondara</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply updated DDO31 to SUZ & UFZ that sets mandatory height controls and minimum setback distances from the river. Replace existing ESO1 with new SLO and apply to all land up to the centreline of the Yarra River.
3	Leafy Suburban - adjoining parkland, without frontage to river	<p>Boroondara</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neighbourhood Residential Zone 3 Design and Development Overlay Schedule 31 Yarra River Corridor Protection Significant Landscape Overlay 2 Yarra Valley Significant Landscape Area 	Tree canopy is retained and enhanced as the dominant visual element in the landscape as viewed from the river.	<p>Maximum building height of two storeys (as per existing Neighbourhood Residential Zone).</p> <p>Permit required to remove established trees.</p> <p>Planting of locally indigenous vegetation encouraged.</p>	Extends up to approximately 1500m from property boundary at the river frontage, depending on street and site layout, to capture ridgeline.	<p>Boroondara</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove existing DDO31 from NRZ sites south of Eastern Freeway. Replace existing ESO1 and SLO2 with new SLO and apply to all land up to the centreline of the Yarra River.

6.7 Other Recommendations

Overview

Through the development of this study a number of other initiatives to enhance, protect and manage the Lower Yarra study area have become evident. They have been suggested by the project team, Council representatives and the community.

These initiatives lie outside of the built form recommendations that will be implemented through the planning scheme. They could be pursued through further strategic work or a range of non-statutory actions.

Public Access

Further work should review existing gaps in public access to the Yarra River in a number of locations through the study area. For example, the continuation of the Main Yarra Trail through Richmond where it is disrupted by development at the river's an opportunity for investigation.

This investigation should consider the options for public ownership or control to ensure path access and landscape improvements. These include the Public Acquisition Overlay (PAO) and / or open space land contribution under Clause 52.01 of the Planning Scheme. The strategic justification and funding for creating these links should be part of future open space planning by local and State agencies.

Open Space & Landscaping

A coordinated approach to the ongoing management and design of public open space within the Yarra River corridor is an important consideration.

While there is a distinct range of public spaces within the Lower Yarra study area, each with different functions and management, a consistent approach should nonetheless be taken to protection of landscape and environmental values across public space. This study recommends that Councils consider the application of the DPO to open spaces, so that masterplanned approach can be taken to their future design and development.

In addition, a corridor-wide strategic landscape framework is required to set criteria and guidelines for planting and design within each section of the river, to appropriately reflect the desired landscape character. These would provide a basis for coordinated action by relevant authorities and land owners, for both public and private land, to ensure a consistent landscape theme is achieved along the corridor.

Protecting Environmental Significance

This study has utilised regional scale Ecological Vegetation Class mapping to assist in gaining an understanding of the landscape. In undertaking this study it has been clear that understanding local environmental matters is critical to ensuring protection of existing habitat and riparian vegetation.

Ideally, the application of a future Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO) within the Yarra River corridor should be progressed based on a scientific assessment of environmental values, such as the location and type of remnant riparian and other indigenous vegetation, biodiversity and habitat. The ESO should be strategically applied to capture an appropriate area where environmental values exist and require ongoing protection.

It is suggested that Melbourne Water in their capacity as manager of waterway health for the Yarra River could progress such a study. There is potential for such a process to consider the current Banyule ESO1 'Yarra River, Plenty River & Darebin Creek' or the proposed Nillumbik ESO4 'Waterways' (Amendment C101) as guides to implementing a more defined ESO control for the Yarra River.

Cultural Heritage Values

The landscape of the study area tells the story of human interaction with the river over time. It is important that the history of the river is shared and celebrated and, where appropriate, reflected in its landscape today.

The Wurundjeri people have a strong spiritual connection with the river, which they know as 'Birrarung', through both tangible and intangible cultural values of the river's landscape. There is currently very little information and data contained within the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register about Aboriginal heritage sites along the Yarra River.

Available studies are archaeologically based, focussing only on tangible heritage elements, and now some 30 years old. Their coverage is also limited to small segments of the river.

Significant sites of the post-settlement history of the river are generally well represented through the application of the Heritage Overlay. However, there are numerous stories of how the river has shaped the formation of Melbourne and the suburbs through which it flows, which could be expressed in the river's landscape and spaces.

Developing an in-depth understanding of both the tangible and intangible cultural heritage values of the river is an important part of its protection. A holistic study of the river's cultural heritage, Aboriginal and post-contact, is required to ensure that all aspects of the river's diverse heritage can be appreciated.

A cultural heritage assessment of the river should identify significant sites or areas along its course where there are opportunities for heritage interpretation and expression of cultural values. This could be achieved through a range of means including place naming, display information, landscape design and planting selection, sound or visual art installations, or the use of spaces for particular cultural events, for example.

Appendix A: Existing Planning Policy & Controls

General Planning Policy & Controls for the Yarra River Corridor

Planning Scheme policy and controls apply to the entire Yarra River corridor at the State level.

In addition, the Planning Schemes of each municipality adjoining the river manages development at the local level.

Melbourne Water, Parks Victoria and the Department of Environment Land Water and Planning are responsible for management of open spaces alongside the river and issues of water quality.

Overview

The planning schemes for each municipality along the Yarra River include policy and controls for the river and its environs. Key policy and controls that apply are:

- State Planning Policy at Clause 11.04-8 River Corridors
- Policies regarding the river in the Municipal Strategic Statement or Local policies of each planning scheme
- A range of urban, rural and public zones that relate to uses or development along the river
- A range of overlay controls that relate to specific management issues for landscape, environment, flooding and built form, and providing for public acquisition.

The policy and controls that apply to land in the Yarra corridor generally are detailed here. An overview of how they apply to the three municipalities within the Lower Yarra Study area then follows.

State Planning Policy Framework

In 2012, Amendment VC96 introduced a specific State policy on River Corridors to the State Planning Policy Framework (SPPF), at Clause 11.04-8. This clause aimed to ‘protect and enhance the significant river corridors of Metropolitan Melbourne’.

On 21 December 2015, Amendment VC121 was gazetted giving effect to a strengthened River Corridors policy and a new ‘Yarra River Protection’ sub-policy within the State Planning Policy Framework. The new ‘Yarra River Protection’ policy provides a strengthened basis and rationale for the protection of the whole of the Yarra River corridor to inform decision making.

The new ‘Yarra River Protection’ policy provides a strengthened basis and rationale for the protection of the whole of the Yarra River corridor to inform decision making. The new policy clearly states the river’s significance and importance through a ‘statement of significance’ objective and the body of the policy structured around four key strategic policy principles and strategies to achieve the objective.

The new ‘River corridor’ policy has been relocated from its previous location at Clause 11 (Settlements) to Clause 12 (Environment and landscape values) supporting a refocusing of the State’s planning policy away from development within an urban setting, to one focused on protecting and enhancing its environmental and landscape setting. The new Yarra River protection policy is found at Clause 12.05 of the SPPF. The following is an extract:

Yarra River protection

Objective

Maintain and enhance the natural landscape character of the Yarra River corridor in which the topography, waterway, banks and tree canopy are dominant features providing a highly valued, secluded, natural environment for the enjoyment of the public.

Strategies

Strengthen the river’s natural environment, heritage and overall health by:

- *Protecting the river’s riparian vegetation, natural riverbank topography and flood management capacity.*
- *Ensuring development does not increase the rate or quantity of stormwater, sediment or other pollutants entering the river.*
- *Protecting and enhancing both terrestrial and aquatic habitats and their linkages along the river corridor.*

Maintain a sense of place and landscape identity by:

- *Retaining a dominant and consistent tree canopy along the river corridor and within its broader landscape setting.*
- *Ensuring that the appearance of development is subordinate to the local landscape setting, with any views of development being filtered through vegetation.*

Retain and enhance people’s enjoyment of the river and its environment by:

- *Planning for the river and its environs as a recreation and tourism resource.*
- *Ensuring linkages and public access to the river and its parklands are maintained, enhanced and new links created where appropriate.*
- *Avoiding overshadowing of the river, its banks and adjacent public open space to ensure that the amenity of the public realm is maintained year round.*

Ensure that development is designed and sited to maintain and enhance the river’s secluded and natural environment by:

- *Minimising the visual intrusion of development when viewed from major roads, bridge crossings, public open space, recreation trails and the river itself.*
- *Ensuring that the siting and design of buildings avoid contrast with the local natural landscape and environmental character.*
- *Ensuring building height is below the natural tree canopy and all development is set back a minimum of 30 metres, or greater, from the banks of the river.*

This amendment strengthened policy at the State level for the Yarra River, adding to policy at Clause 11.04-7 which identifies the river as a significant asset and Clause 11.03-1 which encourages public accessibility along waterways.

Another key policy in the SPPF that affects built form along the Yarra River is Clause 14.02-1 Catchment planning and management which specifies:

- *Retain natural drainage corridors with vegetated buffer zones at least 30m wide along each side of a waterway to maintain the natural drainage function, stream habitat and wildlife corridors and landscape values, to minimise erosion of stream banks and verges and to reduce polluted surface run-off from adjacent land uses.*

Local Planning Policy Framework

The Yarra River generally is identified as a key feature for municipalities in their the Municipal Strategic Statements (MSS), as an important environmental and recreational asset with landscape significance. An example of this is the City of Yarra’s Clause 21.07-2 Yarra River, Merri Creek & Darebin Creek.

Zones

A wide range of urban, suburban and public uses zones apply along the Yarra River corridor which set out controls regarding the use or development of land. The zones that apply to the Lower Yarra study area are described in broad terms below. This should be read in conjunction with the zones map provided in *Appendix B: Planning Scheme Maps*. More detail regarding each zone can be found within the review of the individual municipalities policy and controls, provided within this Appendix.

Public Park & Recreation Zone & Public Conservation & Resource Zone

The Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ) and Public Conservation and Resource Zone (PCRZ) relate to public land, and have been applied to large sections of the Yarra River corridor. The PPRZ recognises areas of public recreation and open space and protects areas of significance. The PCRZ focuses on the protection and conservation of the environment.

Land within the PPRZ is generally managed by Council, Parks Victoria, or a committee of management on behalf of the Crown. Land within the PCRZ is generally managed by Parks Victoria.

General Planning Policy & Controls for the Yarra River Corridor cont...

While many uses are allowed within these zones as of right, activities and development is usually limited by the statutory obligations of public land managers, the requirements of other relevant Acts and the zone controls. Important environmental assets, as well as recreational assets on the land, are also protected and enhanced for these reasons.

Residential Zones

In July 2014 new format residential zones replaced all Residential 1, 2 and 3 Zones in Victoria.

The new zones essentially seek to encourage varying levels of housing density and dwelling types across residential areas. They allow for schedules to be introduced that tailor development outcomes for different areas. Schedules can specify outcomes such as building height, setbacks, landscaping and site coverage.

The new residential zones are:

- Residential Growth Zone, which provides for housing growth by a mix of housing types that includes medium to higher density housing. This zone has a discretionary height limit of 13.5 metres, unless otherwise specified in a schedule.
- General Residential Zone, which will allow modest housing growth and housing diversity that respects the character of the neighbourhood. The discretionary 9 metre height limit of ResCode applies (or 10 metres on a sloping site) unless otherwise specified in a schedule.
- Neighbourhood Residential Zone, which restricts housing growth in areas identified for urban preservation. This zone has a 8 metres mandatory height limit (9 metres on a sloping site) and a maximum of two dwellings per lot, except where otherwise specified in the zone schedule.
- Mixed Use Zone, which provides for a range of residential, commercial, industrial and other uses which complement the mixed-use function of the locality. This zone provides for housing at higher densities.

The introduction and application of the new residential zones provides a timely opportunity for each council to consider which areas of the municipality have the greatest capacity to accommodate housing growth and change and to identify those locations with particular neighbourhood character, heritage and environmental values or poor amenity where future growth should be limited.

Much of the residential hinterland within the eastern section of the study area is located within the General Residential and Neighbourhood Residential Zones. There are small pockets of land identified for a greater residential density within the Residential Growth Zone and the Mixed Use Zone.

All residential zones trigger a permit to construct more than one dwelling built on a lot. The zones refer to ResCode (Clauses 54 and 55) which provides specific benchmarks for heights, setbacks and site coverage. The setbacks requirements of ResCode relate to neighbourhood character and restrict the extent of walls on boundaries for amenity purposes; it is not possible to consider river frontage setbacks under ResCode.

Commercial 1 & 2 Zones

The Commercial Zones are applied within the Motorway and Current & Ex-Industrial Character Types. They can provide for a wide range of commercial and mixed use development, including residential apartments, or offices, manufacturing, bulky goods retailing and other complementary uses. Many land uses do not require a planning permit.

Industrial 1 & 3 Zones

The Industrial Zone provide for a range of industrial and commercial uses. The Industrial 1 Zone allows for unlimited office floorspace, small supermarkets and associated retail shops. The Industrial 3 Zone provides for industries and associated uses in specific areas where special consideration of the nature and impacts of industrial uses is required or to avoid inter industry conflict and to allow limited retailing in appropriate locations.

Special Use Zone

The Special Use Zone (SUZ) applies to specific sites adjoining the river corridor. The purpose of the Special Use Zone (SUZ) is to recognise or provide for the use and development of land for specific purposes. Examples uses include private education centres, golf courses, sports grounds and utility and service installations.

Urban Floodway Zone

The Urban Floodway Zone (UFZ) is applied to small, discreet areas of the river corridor to allow for the free passage and storage of water. It is a highly restrictive control and prevents subdivision except where it will not result in an increase in the number or the creation of new lots entirely within the zone.

Overlays

Overlay controls located along the Yarra River typically implement a specific policy direction. They provide a permit trigger for particular uses or development, and may specify built form outcomes. Looking at the broader river corridor, including urban areas, the overlay controls in operation are described below. This should be read in conjunction with the various overlay maps provided in *Appendix A: Planning Scheme Maps*. More detail regarding each overlay can be found within the review of the individual municipalities policy and controls, provided within this chapter.

Design & Development Overlay

The purpose of the Design & Development Overlay (DDO) is to identify areas which are affected by specific requirements relating to the design and built form of new development. This has been applied along sections of the Yarra River to manage built form that interfaces with the river.

Significant Landscape Overlay

The Significant Landscape Overlay identifies, conserves and enhances the character of significant landscapes. It has been applied along some sections of the Yarra River to protect the corridor's landscape.

Environmental Significance Overlay

The Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO) aims to identify areas where development of land may be affected by environmental constraints and where identified environmental values need to be protected. The ESO is commonly applied along the Yarra River to areas of particular environmental significance.

Vegetation Protection Overlay

The Vegetation Protection Overlay (VPO) aims to protect vegetation, particularly native and significant vegetation. The VPO has been applied in some areas along the Yarra River to protect vegetation.

Heritage Overlay

The Heritage Overlay (HO) aims to conserve and enhance heritage places of natural or cultural significance. The overlay protects sites, built form and vegetation of heritage significance. This generally applies to specific properties along

the river, affecting buildings sited along the river, bridges or gardens and structures in open space. It may also be applied to sites of Aboriginal cultural heritage.

Land Subject to Inundation Overlay

The Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (LSIO) applies to land located within the 1 to 100 year flood storage or flood fringe areas. The purpose of this overlay is to ensure that development maintains the free passage and temporary storage of floodwaters, minimises flood damage, is compatible with the flood hazard and local drainage conditions, and will not cause any significant rise in flood level or flow velocity.

Public Land Management

The extensive areas of public land and Crown land within the study area are subject to individual public land management plans. These are administered by the relevant authority, which may include Melbourne Water, Parks Victoria or DELWP.

In most instances, for development on public land which is consistent with the relevant management plan and the zone provisions, a permit is not required. Generally overlay controls are not applied to public land.

Given the sensitive nature of the public land of the river corridor, the issue of whether additional planning scheme controls apply to public land is an important consideration.

City of Boorondara: Key Studies & Reports

Lower & Middle Yarra Concept Plans

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

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

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

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

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

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

The study applied the principles of landscape protection to the lower Yarra River by assessing the river’s values, distinguishing river interface character types and identifying planning objectives that are relevant to this section of the river.

Recommendations to protect and enhance the valued qualities of the corridor were made. This included non-statutory recommendations such as public land management and improved access, as well as a range of overlay controls in specific locations, including the Design and Development Overlay, Environmental Significance Overlay and the Significant Landscape Overlay.

Specifically, the study identified one distinct river interface character type within the Boroondara section of the Yarra River - Leafy Suburban, as well as the extensive parklands along the river’s edge.

Amendment VC96 (ESO1 & DDO31)

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

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

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

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

Specifically, VC96 introduced:

- Schedule 1 to the Environmental Significance Overlay which seeks to protect vegetation along the Yarra River corridor and provides guidelines for development.
- Schedule 31 to the Design and Development Overlay which seeks to protect and enhance the environmental values and landscape character of the Yarra River corridor through the application of mandatory height controls (9 metre height permit trigger and a mandatory height control of 9 metres in most instances, or up to 12 metres where Melbourne Water requires additional elevation for floodway management purposes).

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

Boorondara Planning Scheme: Policy & Controls

Municipal Strategic Statement

Boroondara City Council recognises in the MSS the significance of the Yarra River as a riverine environment and acknowledges Council’s role as a custodian of a portion of the river and its environs.

The MSS recognises the influence of built form on the natural environment and includes objectives to protect and enhance the value of the Yarra River and its adjoining parkland. Particularly, its vision is to contribute to the aesthetic and environmental attributes of the Yarra River Corridor.

The MSS at 21.05 ‘Heritage, Landscapes and Urban Character’ notes the dramatic landscape of the Yarra River as contributing a strong and distinctive sense of place for Boroondara. Further to this the MSS recognises the need to manage development on privately owned land to protect views from the River as well as protecting views towards the river. Clause 21.06 ‘Environment’, identifies the role of the Yarra River as a habitat corridor in the municipality with a high environmental value.

The MSS lists a number of reference documents. Of particular relevance are:

- Lower Yarra Concept Plan, Punt Road to Dights Falls (1986)
- Middle Yarra River Concept Plan, Dights Falls to Burke Road (1990)
- The Middle Yarra Concept Plan – Burke Road to Watsons Creek (1993)
- Lower Yarra River, Landscape Guidelines (1988)
- Lower Yarra River, Urban Design Guidelines (1992)

Local Planning Policy

The Neighbourhood Character Policy at Clause 22.07 aims to encourage new development that is consistent with the scale of existing buildings, protects and extends vegetation and canopy trees, and maximises views without detriment to the views from neighbouring properties.

The Cultural Heritage Conservation Policy at Clause 22.05 relates to many sites within the Yarra River Corridor. Clause 22.05 outlines the policy basis and objectives for cultural heritage sites controlled by a Heritage Overlay. It sets out detailed policies and objectives which aim to conserve heritage places and control new and existing development in areas of heritage and cultural significance.

Zones

Zones that apply to the study area within Boroondara City Council are described below. A zoning map is provided in *Appendix B: Planning Scheme Maps*.

Public Parks & Recreation Zone (PPRZ)

This zone covers large areas of public land along or near the Yarra River, including the Dickinson Reserve and FA Andrews Reserve in Kew, Yarra Bank Reserve and Fairview Park in Hawthorn. The PPRZ provides an almost continual buffer of highly vegetated parkland along the river (at varying widths). There are no specific siting or design requirements in this zone.

Urban Floodway Zone (UFZ)

The UFZ applies to various areas abutting the Yarra River corridor, including sites within the River Retreat, Young Street, Harrison Crescent, and Fairview Street areas. Use and development of land is limited in this zone and comprehensive review of how it might be affected by flooding is required.

Special Use Zone (SUZ)

The SUZ is applied to Scotch College in Hawthorn, which has a significant interface with the river. The schedule to the zone (SUZ1) identifies the land as a private education centre, with the purpose of ensuring orderly and proper use and development that does not detract from the amenity of the surrounding neighbourhood. There are no specific siting or design requirements in this zone.

Neighbourhood Residential Zone (NRZ)

The NRZ is applied to areas immediately adjoining the riverside parklands in the Fairview Street, Riversdale Court, Coppin Grove C, Harrison Crecent, Barkers Road B, Barkers Road C and Young Street areas. A maximum of two dwellings per lot may be constructed and a mandatory height limit of 8m (9m on a sloping site) applies. The schedule to the NRZ implements a permit requirement for dwellings on a lot less than 500m².

General Residential Zone (GRZ)

The GRZ applies through the suburbs of Kew and Hawthorn including areas immediately adjoining the river or riverside parklands. These areas are mostly included within schedule 3 to the GRZ, implementing a permit requirement for dwellings on a lot less than 500m². Building height requirements of ResCode apply (discretionary 10.5m height limit or 11.5m on a sloping site).

Several small areas are included in schedule 1 to the GRZ: which triggers a permit for a single dwelling on a lot small than 500m², and applies a discretionary 9m height limit or 10m on a sloping site.

Residential Growth Zone (RGZ)

The RGZ1 is applied to residential areas along Riversdale Road and Power Street in Hawthorn. The discretionary height limit of 13.5m applies.

Mixed Use Zone (MUZ)

The MUZ is applied to the former Hawthorn Tram Depot site in Wallen Road, Hawthorn, which allows for housing at higher densities, and a variety of commercial, industrial and residential land uses. A discretionary height limit of 9m applies and a permit is required for dwellings on a lot greater than 300m².

Special Use Zone (SUZ)

The SUZ Schedule 2 applies to the Scotch College campus, for the purpose of a private education centre.

Boornodara Planning Scheme: Policy & Controls cont...

Overlays

Overlay contols that apply to the study area are described below and shown on the map on the following page.

Design & Development Overlay

The purpose of the Design & Development Overlay (DDO) is to identify areas which are affected by specific requirements relating to the design and built form of new development. This has been applied along sections of the Yarra River to manage built form that interfaces with the river.

Schedule 31 (DDO31) Yarra River Corridor Protection

Schedule 31 to the DDO applies to land adjoining the Yarra River between Bulleen Road, East Kew and Gardiner’s Creek. The overlay is applied along the Yarra River frontage and adjoining properties, including areas of parkland, reserves and private property. The schedule specifically aims protect and enhance the environmental values and landscape character of the Yarra River corridor. The schedule sets a mandatory height limit of 9 metres (10 metres on a sloping site, or 12 metres to meet Melbourne Water requirements in floodprone areas).

Schedule 6 (DDO6) Hawthorn Tram Depot Design and Development Area

Schedule 6 to the DDO seeks to enhance and recognise the heritage significance of the Tram Depot building and the significance of the adjacent open space area of the Yarra River environs. The overlay sets guidelines relating to building form, colour and detailed design for buildings and works including a recommended building height of 33.3 metres.

Heritage Overlay

The Heritage Overlay (HO) aims to conserve and enhance heritage places of natural or cultural significance. The overlay protects sites, built form and vegetation of heritage significance.

The overlay is applies to various properties that have individual heritage significance as well as entire precincts that more collectively contribute to heritage signifigance, including: the Yarra Boulevard Precinct; Walmer Street Precinct; West Hawthorn Precinct and the Fairview Park Precinct. In addition to this many prominent buildings along the Yarra River corridor are covered by the Heritage Overlay including the Studley Park Boathouse and the Raheen Estate.

Significant Landscape Overlay

The Significant Landscape Overlay identifies, conserves and enhances the character of significant landscapes.

Schedule 2 (SLO2) Yarra Valley Significant Landscape Area

Schedule 2 has been applied to the surrounds of the Yarra River along the Eastern freeway between the Yarra Boulevard and Bullen Road, Kew. It includes the area of landscape significance ‘which extends from the river to the higher ridgelines’.

The statement of nature and key elements of landscape notes:

The special visual character of the area arises from its varied landforms, meandering river, wetlands and vegetation and the way buildings fit harmoniously into the landscape. Despite the variety of land uses within the area the dominance of the natural environment over urban land uses creates a strong consistent character throughout the valley.

Design objectives of SLO2 relate to protecting areas along the Yarra from visual intrusion and protecting and enhancing the skyline vista when viewed from the river, its banks, nearby parklands, bicycle trails, the Yarra Boulevard and scenic viewpoints. A permit is required for most buildings and works and to remove, destroy or lop a tree or vegetation.

Decision guidelines require consideration of buildings and works in relation to the sensitive riverine environment, and potential impact upon views of the area from the river, its banks, trails and parkland. They include consideration of:

- retaining or planting vegetation to screen views of buildings and structures from the river and viewing locations
- controlling the height of all buildings and structures
- ensuring building form, colour and detailed design is sensitive to the surrounding environment
- limiting built areas or impervious surfaces on the site.

Environmental Significance Overlay

The Environmental Significance Overlay identifies areas where the development of land may be affected by environmental constraints.

Schedule 1 (ESO1) Yarra River Corridor Protection

Schedule 1 has been applied along the Yarra River frontage and adjoining properties, including areas of parkland, reserves

and private property, between Bourke Road and Gardiners Creek.

The statement of environmental significance notes:

This section of the Yarra River corridor is one of Melbourne’s best known and loved locations. The corridor’s bushland characteristics and natural landscape character especially in Yarra Bend and Fairfield Park, are unique in an inner city location. The Yarra River corridor, parks and trails are accessed by a large number of residents from the surrounding suburbs and visitors alike.

Design objectives of ESO1 relate to protecting areas along the Yarra River from the loss of vegetation, maintaining linear parkland, protecting ‘the landscape qualities of the Yarra River corridor as a vegetation dominated corridor’ and to ‘protect and enhance the skyline vista when viewed from the Yarra River’ and other viewpoints. A permit is required for most buildings and works and to remove, destroy or lop a tree or vegetation.

Decision guidelines require consideration of buildings and works in relation to the sensitive riverine environment, and potential impact upon views of the area from the river, its banks, trails and parkland. They include consideration of:

- effects of vegetation removal on the landscape character and habitat value of the Yarra River corridor.
- ensuring building form, height, colour and detailed design is sensitive to the surrounding environment
- promoting the environmental values of the Yarra River corridor and the visual values of the Yara River Corridor through the design of buildings.

There is also a requirement to consider the design and siting of jetties, boat ramps and mooring facilities within the landscape context.

Vegetation Protection Overlay

The Vegetation Protection Overlay recognises, protects and preserves areas of vegetation that are of special significance, natural beauty, interests and importance.

Schedule 1 (VPO1) Willsmere Vegetation Protection Area

Schedule 1 has been applied to the large existing trees surrounding the Willsmere Historic Building which contribute to the setting and views of the area.

Design objectives of VPO1 relate to recognising the special landscape significance of the area and the Yarra Bend Park,

conservation of historical, visual, landscape or botanical significance and minimising the destruction of or damage to trees in the area. A permit is remove, destroy or lop a tree or vegetation shown as being significant on associated maps.

Land Subject to Inundation Overlay

The Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (LSIO) applies to land located within the 1 to 100 year flood storage or flood fringe areas. The purpose of this overlay is to ensure that development maintains the free passage and temporary storage of floodwaters, minimises flood damage, is compatible with the flood hazard and local drainage conditions, and will not cause any significant rise in flood level or flow velocity.

The LSIO is applied to low-lying land adjoining the river throughout the municipality, to varying distances from the river’s edge.

Stonnington City Council: Key Studies & Reports

Lower Yarra River Studies

The City of Stonnington has been considered in several of studies of the Lower Yarra River which were undertaken between 1988 and 2001. These studies focussed on a variety of issues including the protection of recreation, landscape and environmental values. Recommended implementation measures included public land management and planning scheme controls.

The Lower Yarra studies are:

- Lower Yarra River Concept Plan (Punt Road to Dights Falls), MMBW 1986
- Lower Yarra River Landscape Guidelines (Punt Road to Dights Falls), MMBW 1988
- Lower Yarra River Urban Design Guidelines, 1992
- Lower Yarra River Future Directions Plan, Parks Victoria 2001.

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

The State Government Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) commissioned Planisphere to review the policies and controls for the section of the Yarra River between Punt Road and Burke Road in 2005.

This study ('the 2005 Review') applied the principles of landscape protection to the Yarra River corridor by assessing the river's values, distinguishing broad river interface character types and identifying planning objectives that are relevant to this section of the river.

Recommendations to protect and enhance the valued qualities of the corridor were made. This included non-statutory recommendations such as public land management and improved access, as well as a range of overlay controls in specific locations, including the Design and Development Overlay, Environmental Significance Overlay and the Significant Landscape Overlay.

Specifically, the study identified two distinct river interface character types within the Stonnington section of the Yarra River - Urban Residential and Leafy Suburban, as well as the extensive parklands along the river's edge.

DDO3 Review (2012 & 2014 update)

Schedule 3 to the Design and Development Overlay (DDO3) was introduced to the Stonnington Planning Scheme to implement the 1986 *Lower Yarra River Concept Plan (Punt Road to Dights Falls)*. It applies to the Yarra River between Punt Road and Grange Road.

The 2005 Review recommended that further strategic landscape and built form character assessment for this part of the Yarra River be undertaken with a view to revising DDO3 to introduce stronger built form guidelines, including building height controls, into the Stonnington Planning Scheme. In particular, the report recommended further exploration of the impact of development on hill faces, skylines and ridgelines.

Planisphere was commissioned in 2012 to undertake this review of DDO3 and to assess the strategic justification for revised built form controls. The study analysed the river's landscape character in detail and identified five typologies within the broader 'urban residential' typology identified in the 2005 Review (shown on map, top right).

The study recommended height controls for each typology within the DDO3 area, and that these be introduced to the Planning Scheme as discretionary controls for public use land or public open space, and mandatory height controls for all other sites. It also recommended that the boundary of the overlay be expanded in several locations to encompass areas of elevated land. The study was reviewed in 2014 in order to align its recommendations with the introduction of the new format residential zones.

Of particular relevance to the preparation of the Lower Yarra River Study are the recommendations for Typology 1: Riverfront Apartments and Typology 4: River Ridgeline which are included in the revised DDO3.

Planning Scheme Amendments

Amendment C155

Amendment C155 proposed to implement the recommendations of the DDO3 Review. It was exhibited in 2012 and submissions were referred to a Planning Panel.

The Panel was generally supportive of the proposed changes to DDO3 and the strategic assessment undertaken in the DDO3 Review. The Panel supported the introduction of mandatory height controls through most of the study area, with the exception of the 12m and 9m height limit areas proposed between River Street and Como Park which it recommended be applied as discretionary controls.

The Panel considered that these areas have significant variations in topography, viewpoints and existing building scale that make it impossible to define an appropriate mandatory maximum height limit. Additionally, the Panel agreed that a number of existing high scale buildings in this area which exceed the proposed height limits are of a high quality and fitting to the varied context, therefore justifying the approach of a site by site assessment of appropriate building height.

Several changes to the objectives and decision guidelines of the proposed DDO were also recommended, particularly in relation to the assessment of proposals under discretionary height limits.

Amendment C187

Amendment C187 introduced the suite of new format residential zones to the Stonnington Planning Scheme. The new zones applied mandatory height controls to residentially zoned land across all of the study area through the zone schedules. The mandatory heights reflect the recommendations of the DDO3 Review, with the exception of a minor boundary re-alignment between DDO3-1 and DDO3-4, relating to the site at 61 Kensington Road, South Yarra.

Stonnington Yarra River Biodiversity Linkages Project

In 2010, Council commenced one of the biggest regeneration projects in Yarra River's recent history. In order to achieve the City of Stonnington's commitment to enhancing and improving biodiversity and habitat values, Council developed and approved the Yarra River Biodiversity Linkages Project, Master Plan in April 2010.

The Master Plan is broken into six project stages along a 3km stretch of the Yarra River that falls within the City of Stonnington from Grange Road to Punt Road. It aims to increase habitat connectivity, improve water quality and provide recreational and educational opportunities for the community to interact with Melbourne's landmark river. The works have included:

- Indigenous riparian revegetation (planting of over 110,000 plants).
- Construction of an ephemeral wetland system, bioretention garden and installation of a gross pollutant trap for stormwater treatment.
- Construction of a 3m wide pedestrian boardwalk made from recycled plastic.
- Construction of two river viewing platforms.

- Widening and upgrade of bicycle path and installation solar bike path markers.
- Increased recreational spaces for improved interaction with the Yarra River.

Stonnington Planning Scheme: Policy & Controls

Municipal Strategic Statement

Stonnington City Council recognises in the Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) the importance of the Yarra River as an important environmental resource which makes a significant contribution to the identity of Stonnington.

The Strategic Vision at Clause 21.03-2 recognises the Yarra River frontage, escarpment and skyline as one of the City’s key landmarks, views and vistas and that it is to be protected from intrusive development.

Clause 21.06-1 ‘Overall Urban Structure’ at ‘Built Environment and Heritage’, identifies the variety and distinctiveness of built form and its responsive relationship to the local topography as key features in the municipalities overall character and structure. Objective 1 aims to protect and reinforce the character of the Yarra River by managing the height and design of future development to enhance landmarks, views and visas, and requiring enhanced landscaping as part of new development. These goals will be achieved through the implementation of the appropriate zones and overlays.

Clause 21.07 -3 at ‘Open Space and Environment’, identifies the contribution of significant trees and landscape to the quality of Stonnington’s open space and natural environment. Objective 2 aims to protect significant trees and the landscape and environmental values of the Yarra River edge and escarpment through the protection of significant trees, minimising the visual intrusion of buildings besides waterways and the appropriate management of vegetation removal. These goals will be achieved through the implementation of the appropriate zones and overlays

The MSS lists a number of reference documents, including Review of Policies and Controls for the Yarra River Corridor, Punt Road to Burke Road, Consultant Report, June 2005.

Local Planning Policy

Neighbourhood Character

The Neighbourhood Character Policy at Clause 22.23 aims to encourage development that contributes to the preferred neighbourhood character of residential areas in the municipality. The policy includes specific direction for residential areas adjoining the Yarra River corridor and its floodplains.

The policy sets guidelines to minimise the visual impact of development on the Yarra River and its environs, design buildings to reflect the undulating topography in their form, scale and layout and minimise the need for cut and fill, and minimise site coverage and hard surfaces on sites adjoining sensitive river environs. Two neighbourhood character precincts adjoin the Yarra River:

Garden River Precinct, between Punt and Orrong Roads. The preferred future character for this precinct includes:

‘Buildings that contribute to the Yarra River and its landscaped setting, with innovative architectural styles set among Victorian, Edwardian and Interwar dwellings and well-planted, spacious gardens. New buildings of varying styles and scales are designed to complement and respect the river environs. Consistent front and side setbacks allow for substantial planting that contributes to the tree canopy, and softens the appearance of built form. Where adjoining or visible from the Yarra, buildings address both the street and the River’.

Garden Estate Precinct, between Orrong Road and the eastern study area boundary. The preferred future character for this precinct includes:

‘Large, high quality buildings set within spacious, landscaped gardens. Generous front and side setbacks allow space for substantial planting and canopy trees, which reinforces the leafy character of the precinct and contributes to the Yarra River landscape setting. New buildings or additions offer innovative and contemporary design responses while complementing the key aspects of building form and scale of the precinct. Where adjoining the Yarra, buildings address both the street and the River’.

Heritage

The Heritage Policy at Clause 22.04 relates to many sites within the Yarra River Corridor. Clause 22.04 outlines the policy basis and objectives for heritage sites (including settings) controlled by a Heritage Overlay. It sets out detailed

policies and objectives which aim to conserve heritage places and control new and existing development in areas of architectural, heritage and cultural significance.

Zones

Zones that apply to the study area within the City of Stonnington are described below. A zoning map is provided in *Appendix B: Planning Scheme Maps*.

Public Parks & Recreation Zone (PPRZ)

The Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ) applies to the linear parkland north of Alexandra Avenue and the river itself, as well as public open spaces such as Como Park and the Darling Gardens. The purpose of this zone is to ‘recognise areas for public recreation and open space, to protect and conserve areas of significance where appropriate, and to provide for commercial uses where appropriate’.

Land within the PPRZ is generally managed by Council, Parks Victoria, or a committee of management on behalf of the Crown. While many uses are allowed within these zones as of right, activities and development is usually limited by the statutory obligations of public land managers, the requirements of other relevant Acts and the zone controls. Important environmental assets, as well as recreational assets on the land, are also protected and enhanced for these reasons.

General Residential Zone (GRZ)

The majority of land within the study area is zoned General Residential. The purpose of this zone is ‘to encourage development that respects the neighbourhood character of the area’ and ‘to provide a diversity of housing types and moderate housing growth in locations offering good access to services and transport’.

There are thirteen schedules which apply within the General Residential Zone. To the west of Grange Road, GRZ3, GRZ4 and GRZ5 apply. To the east of Grange Road, GRZ5, GRZ8 and GRZ11 apply. The zones set a range of height limits:

- GRZ3 and GRZ4 ‘Residential Boulevards & Corridors’ - mandatory 12 metres
- GRZ5 ‘Residential Boulevards & Corridors’ - mandatory 9 metres
- GRZ8 ‘Garden Estate Precincts’ - mandatory 12 metres
- GRZ11 ‘Garden River and Garden Suburban Precincts’ mandatory 12 metres.

For all GRZ schedules, an additional 1 metre in height is allowed for a sloping site. This does not apply to:

- *An extension of an existing building or the construction of a new building that exceeds the specified building height which does not exceed the height of immediately adjacent buildings facing the same street.*
- *The rebuilding of a lawful building or works which have been damaged or destroyed.*

Additional height is also allowed as follows:

- *A lift overrun may exceed the above mentioned mandatory height requirements by no more than 1.2 metres.*
- *In areas subject to the Special Building Overlay or the Land Subject to Inundation Overlay, the maximum building height may be exceeded by no more than the minimum additional building height required by the overlay provisions.*

Special Use Zone (SUZ)

The SUZ is applied to St Kevin’s College in Toorak, which has an interface with the Yarra River and Gardiners Creek . The schedule to the zone (SUZ1) provides ‘for the use and development of education centres and recreation facilities potentially affected by floodwaters of the Yarra River’.

There are no specific siting or design requirements in this zone. Decision guidelines relate to flooding issues and visual impact upon adjoining residential areas.

Public Use Zone (PUZ)

The PUZ is applied to Melbourne High School in South Yarra, which is separated from the river by Alexandra Parade. The zone provides for the use of land for education.

There are no specific siting or design requirements in this zone.

Stonnington Planning Scheme: Policy & Controls cont...

Overlays

Overlay controls that apply to the study area are described below and shown on the map on the following page.

Design & Development Overlay

The purpose of the Design & Development Overlay (DDO) is to identify areas which are affected by specific requirements relating to the design and built form of new development. This has been applied along sections of the Yarra River to manage built form that interfaces with the river.

Schedule 1 (DDO1) Royal Botanic Gardens, City of Melbourne

Schedule 1 to the DDO seeks to ensure that the enjoyment of the Royal Botanic Gardens is not diminished by overshadowing or visual intrusion from any new buildings or works, and applies to the area of land between Alexandra Avenue and Toorak Road, between Punt Road and the rail corridor. The schedule includes a permit requirement for buildings over 12 metres in height.

Schedule 3 (DDO3) Yarra River Skyline Area

Schedule 3 to the DDO applies to land adjoining the Yarra River between Punt and Grange Roads. Design objectives of the control are:

- To protect areas along the Yarra River from visual intrusion caused by the inappropriate siting or appearance of buildings or works.
- To encourage development in keeping with the character and appearance of the area.
- To protect and enhance the skyline when viewed from the river or its banks, or the Yarra Boulevard in the City of Yarra, or from prominent scenic viewpoints within the valley environs.
- To encourage development consistent with any concept plan approved for the area.

The schedule includes a permit requirement for buildings over 6 metres in height, but does not apply maximum height limits.

Schedule 6 (DDO6) City Link Exhaust Stack Environs

Schedule 6 to the DDO seeks to ensure that the development of land around the City Link exhaust stack is not adversely affected by the operation of the stack. This overlay is circular

in shape and applies to land approximately within a 750m radius of the exhaust stack. The overlay extends across the study area east of Chapel Street through to Balmerino Avenue.

Schedule 7 (DDO7) Prahran/South Yarra and Windsor Activity Centre

The northern end of the Activity Centre has frontage to Alexandra Avenue, between Chapel and River Streets. Schedule 7 to the DDO specifies design requirements for each sub-area within the DDO; there are no height limits for this part of the DDO near the Yarra River. This DDO has now expired and is intended to be replaced with Schedule 1 to the Activity Centre Zone, which is awaiting Ministerial approval.

Schedule 8 (DDO8) Forrest Hill Precinct

Schedule 8 to the DDO applies to the Forrest Hill Precinct, located between Chapel and Yarra Street, south of Melbourne High School. The overlay seeks to implement design objectives to develop a predominantly higher density precinct where new buildings are of ‘a pedestrian friendly scale and design at ground level’. It sets a range of discretionary height limits within the precinct, up to 76 metres.

Three properties in the vicinity of the Yarra River are included within DDO8 in the precinct identified as ‘Chapel Street North’. The preferred character for this precinct is to ‘provide well designed new development that will reinforce but not dominate the gateway and boulevard role of the precinct’. There is a preferred maximum height of 38 metres.

Design objectives included within the DDO seek to ‘emphasise the important corner gateway site at Alexandra Avenue and Chapel Street through use of appropriate built form, setbacks, active frontages and landscape treatments’, while ‘avoiding an overbearing presence on the Melbourne High School building’.

Heritage Overlay

The Heritage Overlay (HO) aims to conserve and enhance heritage places of natural or cultural significance. The overlay protects sites, built form and vegetation of heritage significance.

HO122 applies to a large precinct between Punt Road and Chapel Street, the Alexandra Avenue Precinct. HO2 applies to the Melbourne High School Site. HO146 applies to the Rockley Road precinct in South Yarra.

Several individual buildings within the river environs are also included within the Heritage Overlay.

DDO8-1: Residential Areas Surrounding Activity Centres And Along Main Roads

DDO8 aims to increase residential densities and provide a range of housing types around activity centres and along main roads. It encourages a high standard of design outcomes which respond sensitively to their context, while providing an increase in development opportunity.

DDO8-1 applies to land zoned Residential Growth Zone Schedule 2 (RGZ2) on the west side of Bulleen Road immediately adjacent to land zoned Urban Floodway Zone.

DDO8-1 specifies a range of discretionary heights: for lot sizes greater than 1,800m² a maximum of 11m applies; for lots less than 1,800m² a maximum of 9m applies (10m on a sloping site).

Significant Landscape Overlay

The Significant Landscape Overlay identifies, conserves and enhances the character of significant landscapes.

Schedule 1 (SLO1) Yarra River and Valley Streamside Environment Area

Schedule 1 has been applied along the Yarra River frontage and adjoining properties, between Grange Road and Gardiners Creek. It includes the area of landscape significance ‘which extends from the river to the higher ridgelines’.

The statement of nature and key elements of landscape notes:

The special visual character of the area arises from its varied landforms, meandering river, wetlands and vegetation and the way buildings fit harmoniously into the landscape. The dominance of the natural environment over urban land uses creates a strong consistent character throughout the valley.

Design objectives of SLO1 relate to protecting areas along the Yarra from visual intrusion and maintaining the river as a ‘visual, conservation, ecological and recreation resource’. A permit is required for most buildings and works and to remove, destroy or lop a tree or vegetation.

Decision guidelines require consideration of buildings and works in relation to the sensitive riverine environment, and potential impact upon views of the area from the river, its banks, trails and parkland. They include consideration of:

- retaining or planting vegetation to screen views of buildings and structures from the river and viewing locations
- limiting building height to 9 metres above natural ground

- level (as a discretionary consideration)
- ensuring building form, colour and detailed design is sensitive to the surrounding environment
- limiting built areas or impervious surfaces on the site.

There is also a requirement to consider the design and siting of jetties, boat ramps and mooring facilities within the landscape context. There are requirements for building setbacks from the river’s edge.

Land Subject to Inundation Overlay

The Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (LSIO) applies to land located within the 1 to 100 year flood storage or flood fringe areas. The purpose of this overlay is to ensure that development maintains the free passage and temporary storage of floodwaters, minimises flood damage, is compatible with the flood hazard and local drainage conditions, and will not cause any significant rise in flood level or flow velocity.

The LSIO is applied to low-lying land adjoining the river between Punt and Grange Roads, to varying distances from the river’s edge.

Special Building Overlay

The Special Building Overlay (SBO) applies to small areas of land within South Yarra and Toorak which are prone to overland flooding. The purpose of the SBO is to set appropriate conditions and floor levels to address any flood risk to development. A planning permit is required for buildings and works and may result in a requirement for elevated floor levels.

Public Acquisition Overlay

Within the study area, the Public Acquisition Overlay (PAO) applies to small areas of land adjoining the western side of Punt Road and the northern end of Chapel Street which are reserved for the purpose of road widening. There are no areas of PAO within the study area which relate to the provision of open space or amenities relating to the Yarra River.

City of Yarra Council: Key Studies & Reports

Lower Yarra River Studies

The City of Yarra has been considered in several of studies of the Lower Yarra River which were undertaken between 1988 and 2001. These studies focussed on a variety of issues including the protection of recreation, landscape and environmental values. Recommended implementation measures included public land management and planning scheme controls.

The Lower Yarra studies are:

- Lower Yarra River Concept Plan (Punt Road to Dights Falls), MMBW 1986
- Lower Yarra River Landscape Guidelines (Punt Road to Dights Falls), MMBW 1988
- Lower Yarra River Urban Design Guidelines, 1992
- Lower Yarra River Future Directions Plan, Parks Victoria 2001.

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

The State Government Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) commissioned Planisphere to review the policies and controls for the section of the Yarra River between Punt Road and Burke Road in 2005.

This study ('the 2005 Review') applied the principles of landscape protection to the Yarra River corridor by assessing the river's values, distinguishing broad river interface character types and identifying planning objectives that are relevant to this section of the river.

Recommendations to protect and enhance the valued qualities of the corridor were made. This included non-statutory recommendations such as public land management and improved access, as well as a range of overlay controls in specific locations, including the Design and Development Overlay, Environmental Significance Overlay and the Significant Landscape Overlay.

Specifically, the study identified three distinct river interface character types within the City of Yarra section of the Yarra River - Urban / Industrial / Ex-Industrial, as well as the parklands along the river's edge.

Yarra River Corridor Strategy (2015)

The City of Yarra *Yarra River Corridor Strategy* ("the 2015 Strategy") was prepared by Planisphere on behalf of the City of Yarra in 2014-2015. The recommendations of the 2015

Strategy have been implemented through Amendment C195 on an interim basis, through an updated DDO1 and ESO1.

The 2015 Strategy identified four river interface character types within the City of Yarra, and set out detailed recommendations for future building siting and design.

This *Lower Yarra River Corridor Study* incorporates the detailed analysis and recommendations of the 2015 Strategy. The recommendations of the 2015 Steggy have been reviewed in regard to the recent changes to the State Planning Policy Framework (SPPF) and the current Yarra River planning controls program.

Findings from the *Lower Yarra River Corridor Study* will be used to update the planning controls introduced through Amendment C195. This will help to maintain a consistent approach to protecting the river within the City of Yarra in line with the recommendations for the other municipalities of the Lower-Middle Yarra river corridor.

Swan Street Structure Plan (2014)

The Swan Street Structure Plan (2014) is a high-level strategy document providing broad direction for future development of the Swan Street Study Area. The Structure Plan area is bound by Punt Road to the west, the Yarra River corridor to the south and Loyola Grove to the east. A point roughly halfway between Swan Street and Bridge Road was designated as the northern boundary. The entire section of the Yarra River corridor within the Swan Street Structure Plan area is edged by the Monash Freeway/Citylink Toll Road.

The Structure Plan is not intended to provide detailed considerations for every site within the study area, noting that detailed planning for many projects will need to be undertaken to better respond to the specific site context. The plan sets a direction for greater intensification and redevelopment of established areas across the Swan Street study area.

The areas of the study area closest to the Yarra River form part of six precincts:

- Punt Road (Precinct 5)
- Cremorne Mixed Use (Precinct 6)
- River Edge (Precinct 7)
- Cremorne South (Precinct 8)
- Church Street (Precinct 9)
- Barkly Avenue (Precinct 10).

The direction for each precinct includes different mixes of land use, built form and other attributes.

Within the Framework Plan, future preferred buildings heights vary from 2-3 storeys (9m) through to 10-12 storeys (36m).

This includes:

- 7-10 storeys (30m) at the Nylex Strategic Redevelopment Site
- 5-6 storeys (19m) along the Punt Road interface, and throughout much of the Church Street and Cremorne South Precincts
- Heights of 4 storeys (13m) for the majority of the remaining areas within the Cremorne Mixed Use, Cremorne South and Barkly Avenue precincts.

Yarra Business and Industrial Land Strategy (BILS, 2012)

The Yarra BILS (adopted in 2012) sets out the strategic direction for industrial land, including recommendations for sites with an interface to the Yarra River.

The Strategy notes that: '*many of Yarra's core industrial areas interface with the Yarra River which is remnant of traditional industrial development. The open space, recreation and landscape significance of the Yarra River corridor means that activities which complement these values such as offices, cafes and tourism oriented facilities should be preferred*'.

For all locations (aside from the industrial node in Burnley), the Strategy notes the changing role of these areas away from industrial land use. It notes that future land use directions, including residential, commercial and mixed use, have the potential to improve the interface of these areas with the river. It recommends master planning in many instances to address urban design, river access, interface issues and space for landscaping.

Johnston Street Local Area Plan (2015)

The Johnston Street Local Area Plan was adopted by Council in December 2015. The Plan is a high-level strategy document that gives direction for the future development of the Johnston Street Activity Centre.

The study area covers approximately 112 hectares and is situated across the suburbs of Abbotsford and Collingwood, generally bound by the Eastern Freeway, Smith Street, Vere Street and the Yarra River. A copy of the Precincts Plan has been included on the following page. The Plan focusses on the section of Johnston Street that extends east from Smith Street to the Yarra River, which is 1.8km in length.

The Plan seeks to accommodate a greater mix of activities including, residential, retail, offices and other commercial uses within the facilitate Johnston Street Activity Centre. Three precincts are situated in proximity to the Yarra River:

- Johnston Street East (Precinct 2)
- Trenerry Crescent (Precinct 7)
- Abbotsford Convent (Precinct 8).

Trenerry Crescent Urban Design Analysis & Masterplan (2015)

The Trenerry Crescent Urban Design Analysis and Masterplan provides a more detailed contextual analysis of the Trenerry Crescent Precinct, and is included in the Johnston Street Local Area Plan as Appendix C.

The masterplan provides direction for remaining development opportunities within the Trennery Crescent precinct. The masterplan notes that the *Yarra River Corridor Strategy* (2015) will form the basis for proposed built form controls along the Yarra River Corridor.

The masterplan notes that a number of sites within the precinct have already been recently developed and have limited scope for future development, however there are also number of sites that have significant development potential.

It sets guidelines for future development, including:

- Provide substantial setbacks from the river corridor - buildings to be set back from the from the crest line of the Yarra River
- Provide a transition in built form that steps away from the river interface - heights and setbacks of DDO1 are recommended to apply to river frontage
- Buildings could step up to a maximum upper level height of 6-8 (up to approximately 25m) storeys, with taller built form located towards the Trenerry Crescent interface, stepping down to a 3-4 storey street wall.

The masterplan does not specifically recommend that these be implemented as mandatory controls, rather it supports the introduction of mandatory controls via the work being undertaken to review DDO1.

The masterplan also aims to maintain public access along the corridor between private development and the river, maintain and maximise views to the Yarra River and ensure development responds to the heritage fabric of the precinct.

It includes visual impact analysis of built form from the Trenerry Crescent streetscape, but not from the river corridor.

Yarra Planning Scheme: Policy & Controls

Municipal Strategic Statement

The Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) identifies the Yarra River’s importance for recreation, nature conservation, its ecological values and landscape qualities. The Yarra River’s open space is regionally significant and recreational opportunities along the river corridor are provided at:

- Main Yarra Trail
- Fairfield Park Boathouse
- Yarra Bend Park
- Dights Falls
- Abbotsford Convent
- Collingwood Childrens Farm

Clause 21.03 includes two relevant maps: strategic framework plan and a residential development opportunities map.

The strategic framework plan identifies open space, the core industrial area and Victoria Street Major Activity Centre (MAC) which about the Yarra River. Bridge Road MAC and an existing and potential commercial and industrial area are also in close proximity to the river.

The residential development opportunities map identifies the following sites:

- Amcor and its neighbouring site
- Victoria Street East Precinct
- Victoria Gardens area
- Other sites on Victoria Street
- Area in River Street
- Richmond Maltings site

The Yarra River Corridor is to be reinforced as the key ecological and open space element of the urban framework and key vistas across the corridor maintained. The MSS recognises that there are distinct sections of the river some of which have a strong built form presence, such as where the Monash Freeway dominates, but stipulates that natural features should predominate. The river corridor’s topography can be visually undermined by larger scale development sited too close to its banks.

Local Policy

There is no local policy specifically for the Yarra River corridor.

Clause 22.03 Landmarks & Tall aims to maintain the prominence of Yarra’s valued landmarks and landmark signs. This includes the Skipping Girl sign, Victoria Street, Abbotsford and the Nylex sign, Harcourt Parade, Cremorne. Development should protect the views of these signs.

Clause 22.08 Protection of Biodiversity applies to ESO1, ESO2 and ESO3 areas, provides policy regarding the protection of biodiversity. The policy focuses on identified species of remnant vegetation. The policy includes objectives:

- To protect and enhance Yarra’s natural biodiversity.
- To protect the long term survival and viability of remnant vegetation.
- To ensure the survival of indigenous species.
- To minimise the impacts of introduced flora and fauna on indigenous vegetation.
- To manage sites to allow for the natural regeneration of indigenous vegetation.

The policy includes a list of preferred indigenous plants.

Clause 22.11 Victoria Street East Precinct Policy affects a number of key development sites in Yarra and includes policy regarding the interface with the Yarra River.

Clause 22.12 Public Open Space Contribution policy applies to residential and mixed use proposals to provide public open space for new residential development. It identifies when and where land contributions for public open space are preferred over cash contributions. This includes a number of areas that about the Yarra River.

Zones

Zones that apply to the study area within the City of Yarra are described below. A zoning map is provided in Appendix B: Planning Scheme Maps.

Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ)

The PPRZ applies to large areas of open space along the river corridor, including Yarra Bend Park, linear reserves along the river, small open spaces and golf courses. Land included in the PPRZ provides an extensive buffer of highly vegetated parkland along the river (at varying widths). There are no specific siting or design requirements in this zone.

Neighbourhood Residential Zone (NRZ)

The NRZ is applied to residential areas in Fairfield, Richmond and Cremorne adjoining the river.

A maximum of two dwellings per lot may be constructed and a mandatory height limit of 8m (9m on a sloping site) applies. The schedule to the NRZ implements a permit requirement for dwellings on a lot less than 500m².

Urban Floodway Zone (UFZ)

A large parcel of land in Fairfield is included within the UFZ. Use and development of land is limited in this zone and comprehensive review of how it might be affected by flooding is required.

Industrial 1 Zone (IN1Z)

Parts of Abbotsford and Richmond are included in the Industrial 1 Zone.

The IN1Z provides for a range of industrial and commercial uses, which have been recently expanded with the zone reform program to include unlimited office floorspace, small supermarkets and associated retail shops.

Industrial 3 Zone (IN3Z)

The IN3Z applies to large sites and precincts in Cremorne. The IN3Z provides for industries and associated uses in specific areas where special consideration of the nature and impacts of industrial uses is required or to avoid inter industry conflict and to allow limited retailing in appropriate locations.

Commercial 1 Zone (C1Z)

The C1Z is applied to commercial areas of Richmond and Abbotsford. The C1Z allows a wide range of commercial and mixed use development, including residential apartments, and many land uses no do not require a planning permit.

Commercial 2 Zone (C2Z)

The C2Z is applied to commercial and light industrial areas of Richmond, Abbotsford and Cremorne. This zone provides for offices, manufacturing, bulky goods retailing and other complementary uses.

Public Use Zone (PUZ3)

Special policy and controls are applied to Public Use Zone Schedule 3 (PUZ3) land which is part of the Crown Allotment 133G, Parish of Jika Jika, situated in Yarra Bend Road (referred to in this study as ‘Forensicare’). This includes an incorporated plan titled *Victorian Institute of Forensic Psychiatry Concept Plan* (1997) which encourages the reuse of buildings and some built form of 2 storeys. The schedule requires no permit for use or development generally in accordance with the concept plan. Before any use commences or building or works are constructed, an overall development plan generally in accordance with the concept plan must be approved by the authority. This includes a building development plan, landscape management plan, drainage management plan and elevations showing the location, type, design, height, colour and materials of all buildings and works, including proposed lighting.

Special Use Zone (SUZ)

Schedule 1 to the Special Use Zone (SUZ1) applies to Latrobe Golf Course and aims to provide for a private golf course and ancillary purposes.

SUZ4 applies to Abbotsford Convent and aims to provide for the development and management of the site primarily for arts, culture, education, tourism and parkland uses and implement the Abbotsford Convent Masterplan (2004). A planning permit is required to construct a building situated outside the defined building envelope plan contained in the Master Plan.

Yarra Planning Scheme: Policy & Controls cont...

Comprehensive Development Zone (CDZ)

The Comprehensive Development Zone (CDZ) applies to Victoria Gardens and its Schedule (CDZ1) gives effect to Victoria Gardens - Building Envelope and Precinct Plan and Precinct 3 Plan – Warehouse Area, an Incorporated document.

The plan includes a Yarra environs precinct (a width of approximately 5 metres along the river frontage) that must only be developed for pedestrian and bicycle linkages, boat landings, boardwalks, terraces, decks, seating and ancillary works and public recreational facilities.

CDZ3 applies to the Richmond Maltings site which is separated from the river by CityLink. It gives effect to the *Planning and Design Principles for the Richmond Malting Site, Cremorne - November 2007*, an incorporated document which includes building envelopes and height limits as well as policy to: ‘strengthen the built form edge to the Monash Freeway and the Yarra River while allowing for access to sky and long distance views’.

These sites are currently not included in DDO1 Yarra River Corridor Protection.

Priority Development Zone (PDZ1)

The Priority Development Zone - Schedule 1 (PDZ1) applies to the Victoria Street East Precinct at Yarra Gardens / Shamrock Street North. It gives effect to the Yarra Gardens Precinct Plan – December 2009, an Incorporated Plan. The overlay specifies a number of requirements including a legal agreement and plans to be submitted with the application e.g. acoustic plan, transport plan. The precinct plan includes detailed policy about the river, setback and height controls and requirements for public access along the river frontage.

These sites are currently not included in DDO1 Yarra River Corridor Protection.

Overlays

Overlays that apply to the study area within the City of Yarra are described below. A set of overlay maps are provided in Appendix B: Planning Scheme Maps.

DDO1: Yarra River Corridor Protection

Design and Development Overlay (DDO1) ‘Yarra River Corridor Protection’ is an interim control introduced through Amendment C195 and due to expire 31/12/17. This Amendment implemented the recommendations of the 2015 Strategy, and updated the former DDO1 which had applied to the length of the river.

The current DDO1 is applied to all land, both private and public, along the river. It also includes the tributaries of the Merri & Darebin Creeks.

DDO1 includes a Statement of significance for the river and detailed design objectives relating to the appearance of built form within the river’s sensitive landscape. It focuses upon retaining the natural elements of the river’s environment, such as riparian vegetation and riverbank topography, as the dominant visual elements in the landscape.

DDO1 sets a range of mandatory and discretionary setbacks and height controls for sites and precincts adjoining, or in close proximity to, the river. Decision guidelines relate to the level of visibility of a development within the landscape, the retention of riparian vegetation and natural river bank topography, and the provision of new vegetation to screen development.

ESO1: Yarra River Environs

The Environmental Significance Overlay Schedule 1 relates to the Yarra River Environs and applies to all land adjoining the river, both public and private.

The current Schedule 1 (ESO1) ‘Yarra River Environs’ was also introduced through Amendment C195 as an interim control. ESO1 does not include the Merri and Darebin Creek tributaries.

Permits are required for specified buildings, works and vegetation removal. Environmental objectives include:

- Protect indigenous vegetation and wildlife habitats throughout the corridor.
- Conserve water quality and capacity.
- Protect the sensitive ecosystem and enhance the ecological features of the river corridor.

Decision guidelines relate to retaining the landscape character of the river, and its natural elements of bank topography, riparian vegetation and habitat. Additionally, reference is made to the *Middle*

Yarra Concept Plan - Dights Falls to Burke Road (1990), the *Middle Yarra Concept Plan - Dights Falls to Burke Road* (1986) and the 2015 Strategy.

Development Plan Overlay (DPO3)

The DPO3 applies to the Botanica Business Park in Swan Street, Burnley. It requires a development plan to be prepared before a permit is granted to subdivide the land. The development plan must include three-dimensional views from the Yarra River of the proposed development. In accessing the development plan, the responsible authority is expected to consider the views from the Yarra River.

This site is currently not included in DDO1 Yarra River Corridor Protection.

Development Plan Overlay (DPO11)

The DPO11 applies to the Amcor site. It includes requirements the preparation of a development plan which relate to the built form interface.

The overlay requires a Section 173 agreement that ensures the following will be provided:

- First 30 metres of land from the river (measured from the edge of the river bank) for maintaining ongoing public access and landscape values and protecting riparian vegetation along the river.
- A pedestrian and bicycle path along the Yarra River frontage, connecting to existing accessways.

The overlay includes building heights which are preferred (closer to Heidelberg Road) and maximum (closest to the river). The maximum building height fronting the river is 2 storeys, setback from the crest line. Up to 14 storeys is preferred at the corner of the site where Heidelberg Road and Chandler Highway intersect.

This site is currently not included in DDO1 Yarra River Corridor Protection.

Heritage Overlay (HO)

The HO applies to numerous sites along the river corridor including:

HO9 Abbotsford Convent

HO12 Former Pheonix Biscuit Co. complex

HO48 Dights Mill site

HO70 Amcor site

HO229 Hawthorn Bridge

HO239 Church Street Bridge

HO262 MacRobertson Bridge

HO281 Hoddle Bridge

HO287 Wallen Road bridge

HO292 Victoria Bridge, Kew

HO297 Hawthorn Railway bridge

HO298 Corroboree Tree at Burnley Gardens

HO299 The Boulevard Parklands

HO303 Fairfield Hospital

HO306 Burnley Gardens

HO307 Yarra River Protectorate Station site

HO353 Skipping Girl Vinegar Sign

Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (LSIO) & Special Building Overlay (SBO)

The LSIO applies along length of the Yarra River corridor, to land located within the 1 to 100 year flood storage or flood fringe areas. The purpose of this overlay is to ensure that development maintains the free passage and temporary storage of floodwaters, minimises flood damage, is compatible with the flood hazard and local drainage conditions, and will not cause any significant rise in flood level or flow velocity. The LSIO is applied to low-lying land along the river, at varying distances from its edge.

The SBO applies to a small section of residential land between Alphington Street and Coate Park, Alphington. This overlay aims to ensure the free passage of water in urban areas liable to inundation from overland flows.

Public Acquisition Overlay (PAO2)

PAO2 has been applied for the creation of a continuous linear park / trail system adjacent waterways. It covers land directly abutting the Yarra River between Gipps and Walmer Streets. This addresses a strategic gap in the Main Yarra Trail on the City of Yarra side of the river. It also applies to land along Darebin Creek from the Yarra River.

VCAT & Planning Panel Decision Findings

Key VCAT Cases & Planning Scheme Amendments

A number of decisions by the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) and Panels regarding planning scheme amendments have been considered in relation to the study. These cases will assist in understanding existing practices regarding the issues associated with development along rivers and aim to achieve best practice through learnings. The following VCAT cases and amendments have been identified as relevant:

- 647-649 Victoria Street, Abbotsford proposal fronting the Yarra River
- Stonnington Planning Scheme Amendment C155 which updates DDO3 which provides built form controls along the Yarra River
- Fisher Parade, Ascot Vale proposal fronting the Maribyrnong River
- Buckingham Drive, Heidelberg proposal adjacent to the Banyule Creek, near its confluence with the Yarra River
- Coppin Grove, Hawthorn proposal of residential dwellings fronting the Yarra River
- State & Boroondara Planning Scheme Amendment VC96 which provided State policy for river corridors and implemented interim ESO & DDO controls (with a mandatory height limit) along Boroondara’s section of the Yarra River
- Honeywell large scale, mixed use proposal on Victoria Street at a key site along the City of Yarra’s section of the Yarra River
- Yarra Street, Warrandyte proposal for advertising signage at a site fronting the Yarra River

While some of these decisions are concerned with the Maribyrnong River and other sections of the Yarra River and its tributaries, they are of relevance to the future management and planning of the Lower Yarra River section.

647-649 Victoria Street, Abbotsford Proposal (2016)

In 2016 a VCAT case¹ was held in relation to a proposal to construct a 9 storey ‘U’ shaped, mixed use building which has frontages to Walmer Street and the Yarra River.

The Tribunal considered the requirements of DDO1, which applies a discretionary 18 metre height control for those parts of the site 15 metres beyond the mandatory minimum setback line. The upper four levels of the building, and the roof top plant exceeds the 18 metres and reach an overall height excluding the roof top plant of 33 metres (44.82 metres AHD).

Objectors, including Melbourne Water and the Yarra Riverkeeper, raised a number of issues relating to the development setback from

the Yarra River, the size and scale of the building and its visibility when viewed from the river, the riverside public realm and the northern side of the river.

The Tribunal considered the site’s interface with the river in terms of built form visibility and public spaces surrounding the building, in balance with the identification of the site in the Victoria Street Structure Plan (2010) as a ‘substantial change area’ with ‘significant development potential’.

The Tribunal found that the proposed scale of built form complied with the mandatory and discretionary requirements of DDO1 and was consistent with objectives of DDO1. It found that the proposed built form would not be excessive in this context and noted that *“the design objectives do not seek invisibility but do ask for buildings of a high architectural standard demonstrating a positive interface with the Yarra River and the natural landscape and environment character”*.

However, the Tribunal required an improved design response at the ground level to provide an appropriate public realm interface with the river. This included provision of adequate publicly accessible open space, a reduction in privatised open space, and adequate space for the planting of substantial vegetation.

Stonnington Amendment C155 (2013, lapsed)

Amendment C155 to the Stonnington Planning Scheme proposed to update Stonnington DDO3 which applies along the Yarra River. While supporting the intent and scope of the revised DDO, the Panel did not support the full extent of the proposed mandatory height controls.

The Panel found that it is impossible to identify a maximum height for universal application where there are major variations in topography and viewpoints from site to site. This outcome demonstrates the challenges of setting specific development controls across a complex environment, such as the river corridor.

The Panel also concluded that the Melbourne High School site should be included in the DDO area. The Panel recognised that while the site is exempt from Planning Scheme control, it is appropriate for Council to provide guidance for development and seek to influence a site’s development. This outcome is of relevance to the many sites within public control across the Lower Yarra Study area.

Fisher Parade Proposal (2013)

This controversial VCAT case² related to Council’s failure to make a decision regarding a four storey building along the Maribyrnong River.

2 BMG Architects v Moonee Valley CC [25 September 2013], VCAT reference number P3563/2012

In this case, Melbourne Water raised concerns about the interface of the development to the river, acknowledging that the proposed 12m set back was not sufficient. They suggested that a 20m set back (at a minimum) from the river should be imposed to allow for riparian planting and allow access for the appropriate management of the waterway system.

Although the provisions of Clause 14.02 ‘Water’ specify a 30m vegetated buffer zone from waterways, Melbourne Water was willing to compromise with the provision of a 20m buffer.

VCAT believed that the 20m buffer was arbitrarily appointed and called for a redesign of the whole development to interface more appropriately with the river. It also highlighted that Clause 14.02 is not a planning scheme control, rather it sits within a State policy context.

VCAT suggested an alignment of the Planning Scheme with the Water Act (1989) to allow for more consistent decision outcomes. Additionally it called for a systematic process to notify referral authorities when there are cases involving developments within proximity to a river bank. VCAT deemed the development inappropriate given its context and relationship to the river.

Buckingham Drive Proposal (2013)

Situated in close proximity to the heritage protected Banyule Flats with views to the Yarra River Corridor, this proposal involved the development and subdivision of three dwellings and removal of native vegetation. It was initially refused by Council and subsequently appealed at VCAT³.

The site fronts Banyule Creek and is subject to a number of overlays including Banyule ESO4, SLO1 and HO13. Alongside the numerous statutory controls, the site is also constrained by its geographic and environmental context.

VCAT acknowledged that while the subject site was appropriate for more intensive development, it also presented a number of difficulties in regard to its physical and strategic context. Primarily it did not respond to its immediate surroundings especially in addressing the interface with the river corridor. Furthermore it had the potential for the development to be observed from long-range views, given its prominent location on the top of an escarpment.

Strategic considerations were balanced between development opportunities and environmental values. It was ruled that the proposed development was not located within an area that supported urban consolidation. Instead a restrained approach was required to ensure that core environmental values are maximised. VCAT contended that a better outcome would involve a reduced set back from the escarpment boundary and suitable landscaping to reduce visual bulk. On this basis, the decision of the Council was

3 Banyule Management Pty Ltd v Banyule CC [23 September 2013], VCAT reference number P3243/2012

upheld and no permit was granted.

Coppin Grove Proposal & Amendment VC96 (2013)

In 2013, a VCAT case⁴ was held regarding a proposal for three dwellings fronting the Yarra River in the backyard of 12 Coppin Grove, Hawthorn.

During the VCAT hearing, Amendment VC96 was gazetted to introduce State policy on River Corridors, at Clause 11.04-8. This clause aims to ‘protect and enhance the significant river corridors of Metropolitan Melbourne’. It also introduced mandatory controls into the Boroondara Planning Scheme. These changes were based on the ‘Review of Policy and Controls for the Yarra River Corridor’ report by DSE (2005), and reflected the additional work undertaken by DPCD in 2010.

The 2005 DSE report is now a State level reference document.

VC96 introduced a DDO and an amended ESO as interim provisions to the Boroondara Planning Scheme. The DDO refers to the objectives and guidelines of ESO1. It includes a 9 metre height permit trigger and a mandatory height control of 9 metres in most instances, or up to 12 metres where Melbourne Water requires additional elevation for floodway management purposes. The ESO provides detailed policy for the corridor.

In response to Amendment VC96, revised plans were prepared, reducing the number of proposed dwellings to two and reducing the height to comply with the new DDO height control of 9 metres.

However, the Tribunal refused the revised proposal, concluding that the scale, mass and appearance of the revised proposal was visually intrusive rather than subordinate to landscaping and the extent of earthworks excessive, and that it was not consistent with the new State policy.

The Tribunal found that the interim DDO and ESO controls were not clearly worded and did not adequately reflect the intention of their objectives, nor the State policy.

Honeywell Proposal (2010)

In 2010, a VCAT case⁵ was held in response to opposition regarding Council’s decision to approve a large scale, mixed use development consisting of three towers ranging from nine to eleven storeys adjacent to the Yarra River. The site was subject to interim DDO4 of the Yarra Planning Scheme which introduced discretionary height limits.

4 Watkins v Boroondara CC (includes Summary)(Red Dot) [2013] VCAT 824 (10 May 2013), VCAT reference number P1904/2012

5 Colquhoun & Ors v Yarra CC [2010] VCAT 1710, VCAT reference numbers P1204/2010, P1340/2010, P1345/2010

1 Victoria Gardens Developments Pty Ltd v Yarra CC [2016] VCAT 1045

VCAT & Planning Panel Decision Findings cont...

The Tribunal found this DDO, which expired in 2011, to be unclear and ineffective. The Tribunal approved the proposal, which breached the preferred maximum height limits, as it was considered to be consistent with State and local policy.

The Tribunal commented that the DDO was not clearly worded and that the built form parameters specified by its controls did not reflect its objectives.

Yarra Street Proposal (2005)

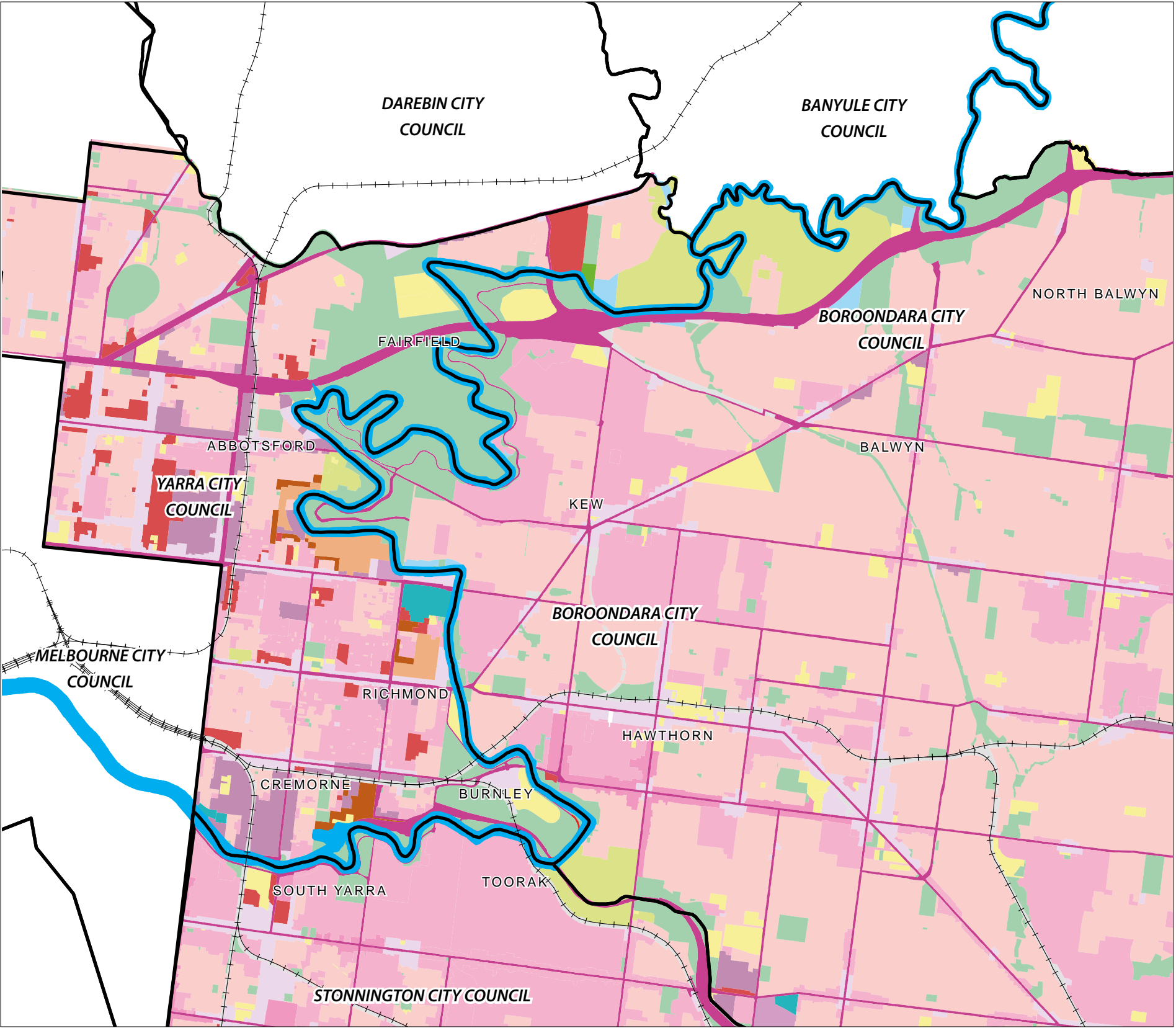
This VCAT case⁶ relates to Council’s refusal to grant a permit for retrospective approval of five advertising signs for a café/art gallery. The site backs onto the Yarra River with a 10m slope from Yarra Street down to the river. The site is affected by an HO and an ESO and land to the north of the site falls within the PCRZ.

Council ruled that the proposed number of signs was excessive and not in keeping with the high amenity value of the surrounding area. It also noted the signs did not respect the heritage or natural environment and adversely affected the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

VCAT also deemed the five signs to be excessive, however granted permission for two signs on the Yarra Street frontage. The other existing signs facing the Yarra River were required to be removed.

6 Turnbull v City of Manningham [21 April 2005], VCAT reference P3614/2004

Appendix B: Planning Scheme Maps



LEGEND

Local Government Boundaries

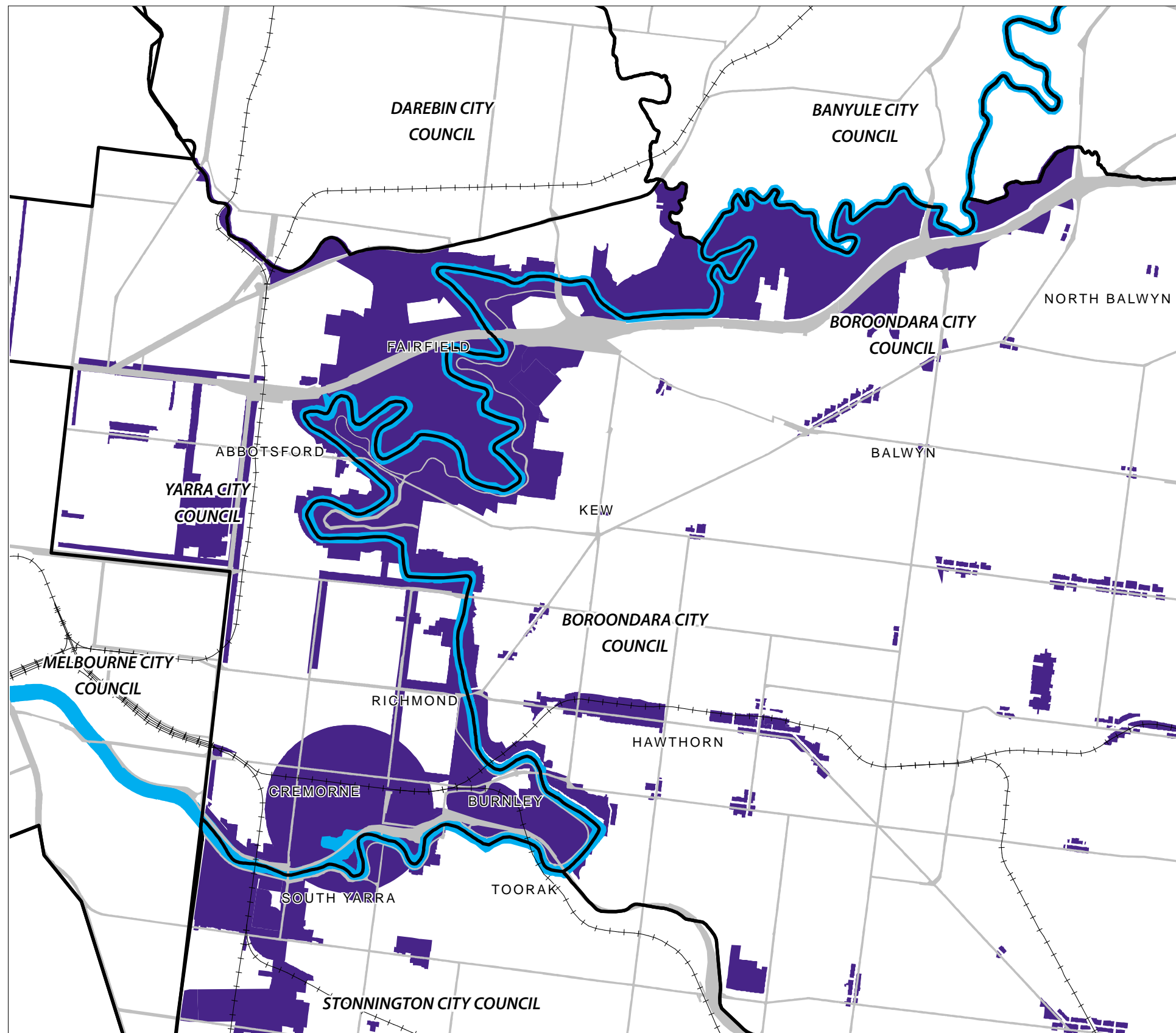
Yarra River

Zones

General Residential Zone (GRZ)	Road Zone Category 1 (RDZ1)	Urban Floodway Zone (UFZ)
Neighbourhood Residential Zone (NRZ)	Road Zone Category 2 (RDZ2)	Industrial 1 Zone (IN1Z)
Residential Growth Zone (RGZ)	Rural Conservation Zone (RCZ)	Industrial 3 Zone (IN3Z)
	Public Conservation and Resource Zone (PCRZ)	Mixed Use Zone (MUZ)
	Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ)	Commercial 1 Zone (C1Z)
	Special Use Zone (SUZ)	Commercial 2 Zone (C2Z)
	Public Use Zone (PUZ)	Comprehensive Development Zone (CDZ)
	Public Use Zone - Transport (PUZ4)	

LOWER YARRA RIVER CORRIDOR STUDY

EXISTING PLANNING ZONES



LEGEND

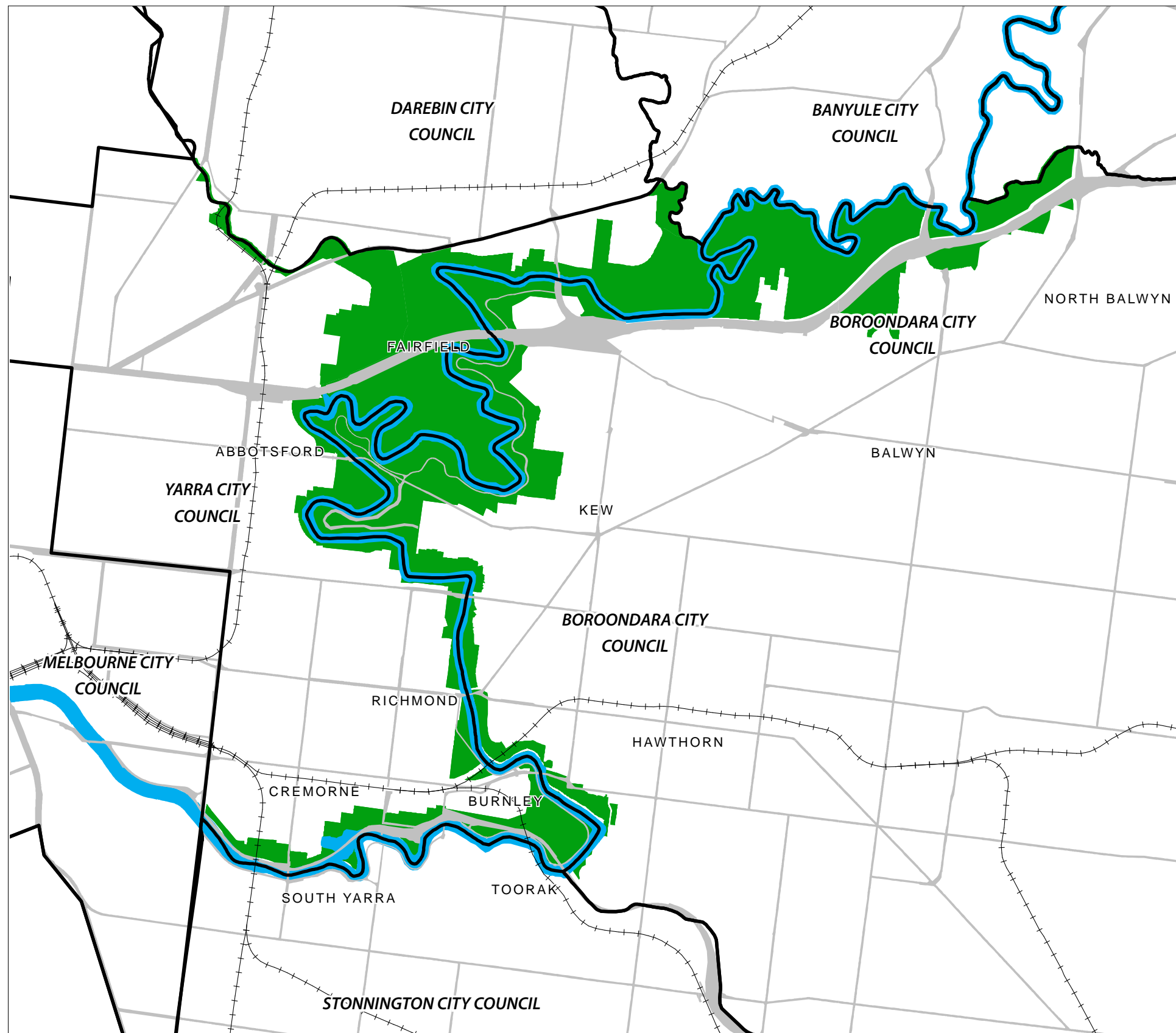
- Local Government Boundaries
- Yarra River
- Design and Development Overlay

LOWER YARRA RIVER CORRIDOR STUDY

DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT OVERLAY



kms 2



LEGEND

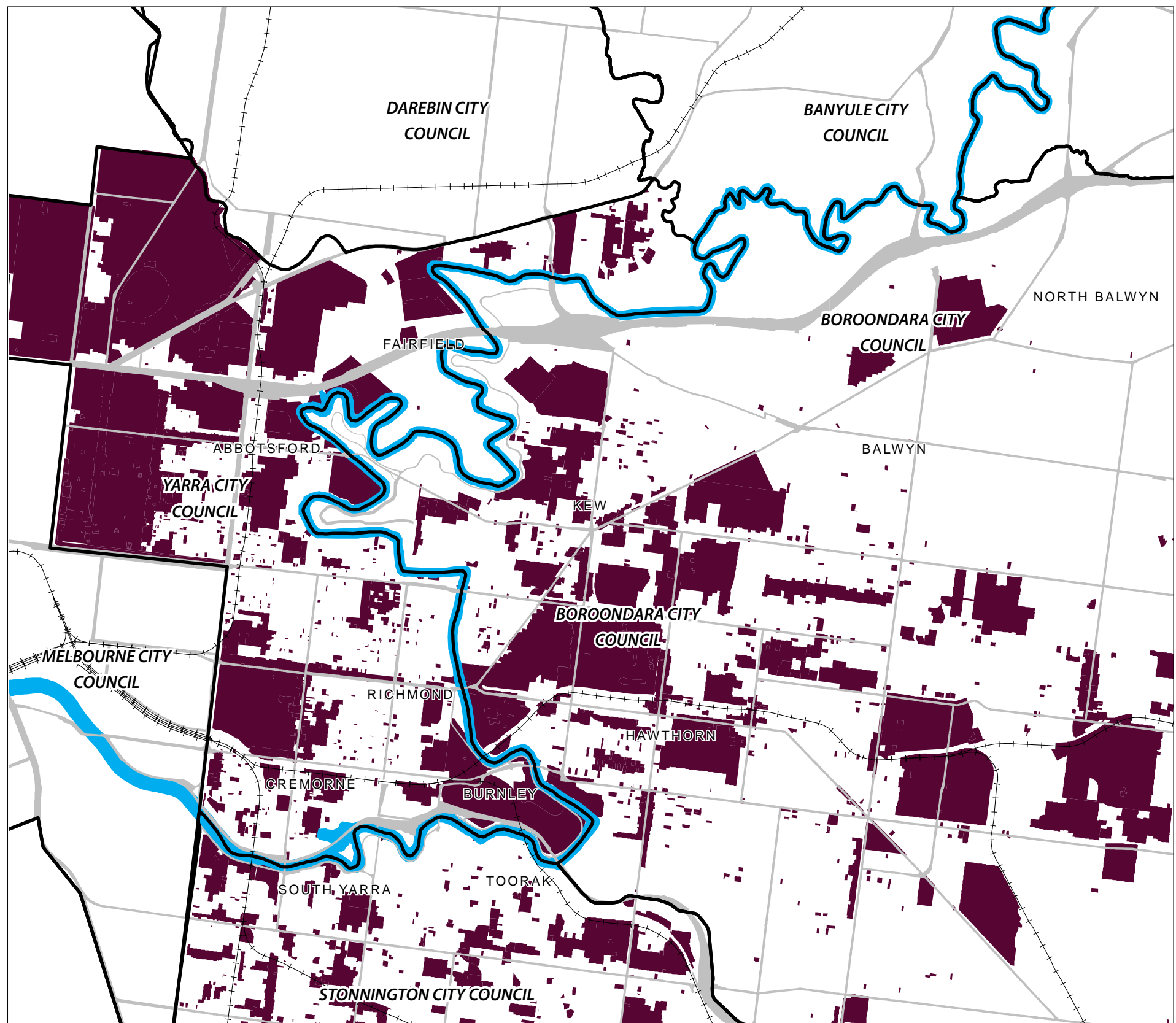
- Local Government Boundaries
- Yarra River
- Environmental Significance Overlay

LOWER YARRA RIVER CORRIDOR STUDY

ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE OVERLAY



kms 2



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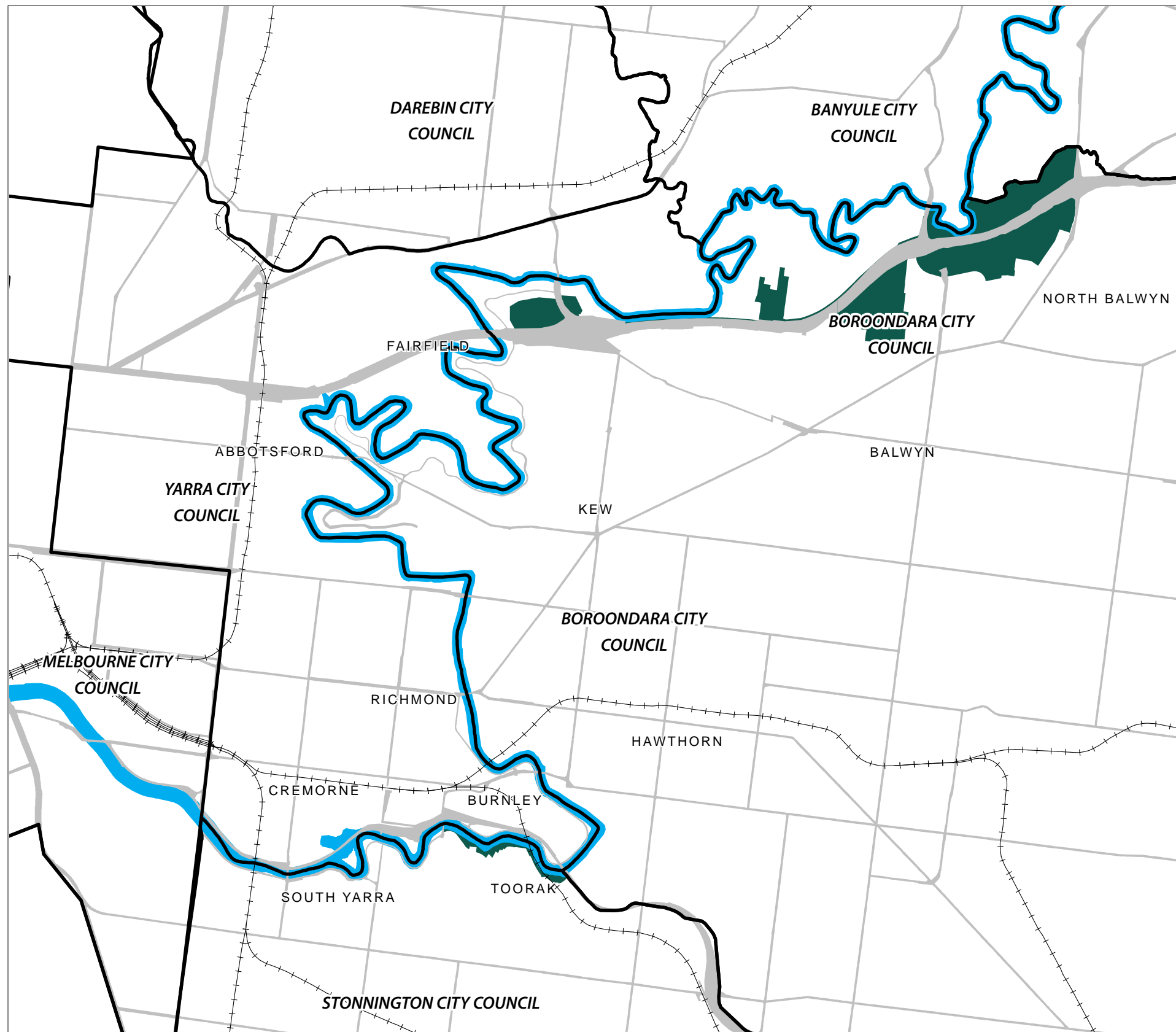
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- Yarra River
- Heritage Overlay

LOWER YARRA RIVER CORRIDOR STUDY




HERITAGE OVERLAY



kms 2




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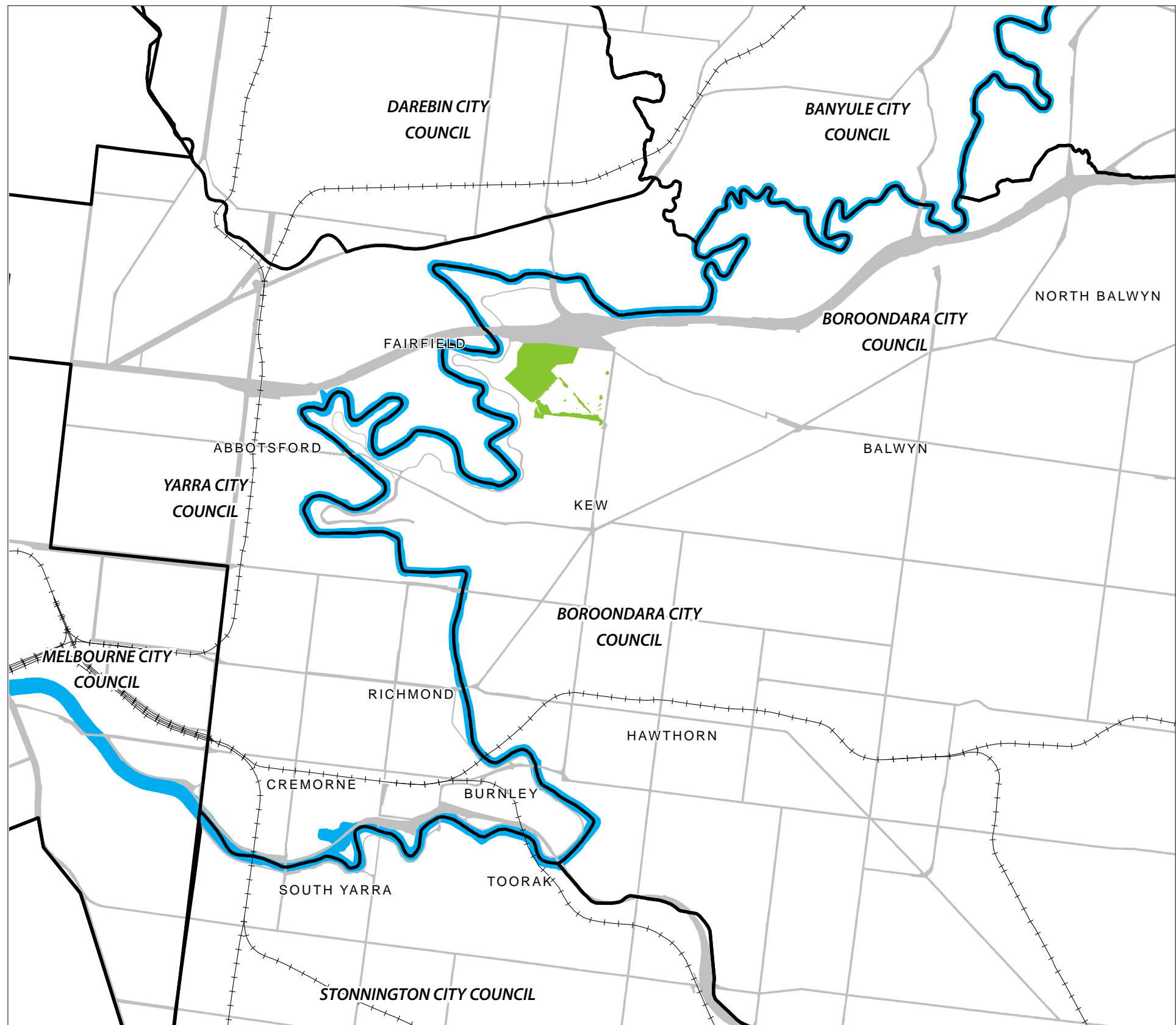
-  Local Government Boundaries
-  Yarra River
-  Significant Landscape Overlay

LOWER YARRA RIVER CORRIDOR STUDY




SIGNIFIANT LANDSCAPE OVERLAY



 2
kms



LEGEND

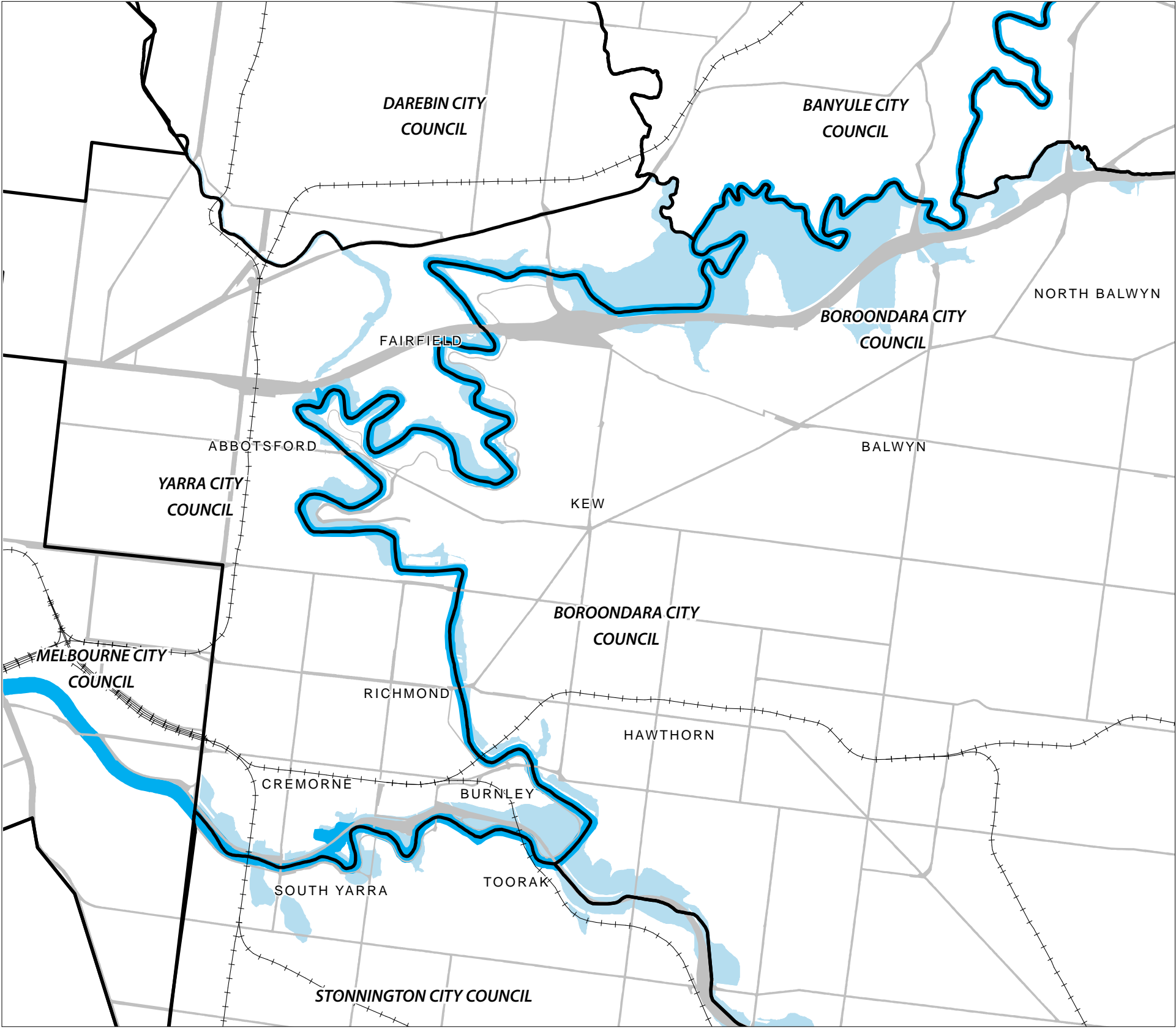
-  Local Government Boundaries
-  Yarra River
-  Vegetation Protection Overlay

LOWER YARRA RIVER CORRIDOR STUDY

VEGETATION PROTECTION OVERLAY



 2
kms



LEGEND

- Local Government Boundaries
- Yarra River
- Land Subject to Inundation Overlay

LOWER YARRA RIVER CORRIDOR STUDY

LAND SUBJECT TO INUNDATION OVERLAY



Appendix C: Guidelines for Development

Guidelines for Development within the Middle Yarra River Corridor

The following guidelines have been derived from a review of previous policy documents relating to the Yarra River corridor and further developed through the analysis and field work undertaken during this study. They implement the objectives that have been established and respond to the corridor’s threats and pressures. The majority of guidelines are recommended for inclusion in the proposed overlay controls.

Vegetation & Landscaping

Retain native vegetation, particularly established vegetation, mature vegetation and canopy trees on both public and private land along the Yarra River corridor.

Avoid vegetation removal wherever possible, including mature, dead and dying vegetation that provides habitat for significant fauna, except where risk or safety hazard requires removal.

Replace environmental weeds with indigenous vegetation.

When removing weeds for replacement with indigenous species, avoid erosion and design and phase the removal and the replacement planting so as to maintain adequate screening of buildings and works in the river interface.

Encourage the gradual phasing out of exotic vegetation and replacement with indigenous species, except where exotic vegetation:

- has recognised heritage or landscape significance;
- provides for recreation activities (for example, grasses for ovals); or
- is non-invasive and located outside the riparian zone and contributes to neighbourhood character objectives.

Provide permeable surfaces and minimise site coverage, to allow for water absorption and to support vegetation.

Provide adequate separation between any new development and the river frontage property boundary to allow sufficient space for the planting of indigenous vegetation, including canopy trees.

Screen existing and new buildings, structures and areas of hard surfacing with appropriately scaled informal landscaping, suitable to the indigenous landscape character of the river corridor, particularly when visible from the waterway, Main Yarra Trail and areas of public open space.

Ensure fences provided along the river frontage property boundary are low where practical, visually permeable, and finished with tones and colours that blend into the vegetation.

Avoid high, solid fencing that encloses and conceals the river frontage property boundary.

Where retaining walls are required, materials and facings should complement the landscape setting and be softened with appropriate screen planting.

Where terracing is required, it should be constructed of natural materials that complement the riverine environment, and landscaped with appropriate indigenous species.

Provide a landscaping plan to accompany any application for new development that demonstrates:

- protection and enhancement of the river corridor’s vegetation dominant character;
- how erosion will be controlled;
- how ground disturbance will be minimised;
- how stability will be managed or improved;
- protection and rehabilitation of natural landforms;
- how the rate and quality of stormwater leaving a property will be controlled and pollutants filtered;
- the identification and protection of any significant vegetation;
- use of locally indigenous vegetation, including the replacement of any environmental weeds; and,
- use of appropriate approaches to ground preparation and vegetation retention and planting.

Built Form & Development

Siting, Height & Form

Relate the siting, scale, bulk and massing of development to the width and scale of the waterway and river banks.

Set back buildings from the river edge property boundary. Minimum setbacks for most private and some public land are specified in the Municipal Toolkits, a key output of this study.

Avoid buildings, including fences, in the riparian vegetation corridor.

Demonstrate that structures which must be located in the riparian corridor (such as paths, jetties, boat ramps and mooring facilities) do not cause adverse impacts including:

- disturbing remnant indigenous vegetation;
- detracting from the landscape character of the corridor; or,
- reduced enjoyment of users of the river and river corridor.

New buildings must not exceed 8 metres in height unless the slope of the natural ground level at any cross section wider than 8 metres of the site of the building is 2.5 degrees or more, in which case the height of the building must not exceed 9 metres.

Orientate buildings toward the river corridor, where appropriate.

Ensure that the siting of new development provides separation between buildings, to allow for views of the river landscape from public areas, including nearby streets.

The siting and massing of buildings should avoid obscuring views of the river corridor from public areas such as the Main Yarra Trail, public parks, bridge crossings and scenic viewpoints.

Materials & Design Detail

Design buildings, including advertising signage, jetties, boat ramps and mooring facilities, to minimise visual intrusion into the landscape.

Utilise materials, colours and finishes that complement those occurring naturally in the area e.g. dark, muted colours and matt finishes, and lighter colours above the skyline.

Use non-reflective materials and finishes which reduce distant visibility.

Avoid visually dominant, sheer and unarticulated elevations.

Blank walls should be avoided for façades fronting the river. Consideration should be given to providing balconies or other design features, which break up the surface and provide visual interest.

Lighting incorporated into new development should use a white based light source. Yellow coloured lighting is discouraged.

Lighting should be designed to minimise light spill.

Light fittings and bases should be muted natural colours, and be finished with graffiti proof paint.

Car Parking Design

Car parking areas should incorporate a water detention system to limit runoff.

Car parking areas should be located away from the river frontage, and should not be visible from the river frontage.

Accessways and car parking areas should have permeable surfaces.

Boat Infrastructure

Boat infrastructure should be sited, designed and constructed according to Melbourne Water’s *Guidelines for Approval of Jetties* (2011).

New jetties, boat ramps and mooring facilities should be avoided.

Jetties, boat ramps and mooring facilities must not require the removal or destruction of any indigenous vegetation.

Boat infrastructure should be designed and sited to enhance the natural landscape character of the immediate riverside environs.

Boat infrastructure should enhance the enjoyment of all users of the river and the Yarra River corridor and avoid detracting from other users access to the river.

Boat infrastucture should be designed and constructed in a manner that avoids destabilisation of the waterway bed and bank stability.

Boat infrastructure should minimise intrusion into the waterway and be constructed of durable timber or concrete in natural, muted colours.

Boat landings should be located parallel to the water’s edge.

River Health & Conservation

Ensure no further fill of flood-prone land.

Minimise cut and fill of embankments.

Avoid major earthworks.

Avoid development on land at risk of flooding or in proximity to the river.

Control development to minimise erosion potential and adverse impacts on river bank stability.

Provide stormwater management plans for large developments.

Ensure that development, including the planting or removal of vegetation, does not adversely impact the environmental values of the river corridor through:

- erosion;
- pollution of the local and regional waterways via the stormwater systems; and
- ground disturbance and instability of the natural landform.

Protect and manage areas surrounding sites of known environmental or cultural heritage significance in a manner which enhances significance and, on public land, provides opportunities for education and interpretation.

Avoid disturbance of sites known or likely to contain Aboriginal cultural heritage.

Ensure development avoids or minimises impacts that may degrade sites of environmental or cultural heritage significance.

Open Space, Amenity & Access

Shared paths should be sited, designed and constructed according to Melbourne Water’s *Shared Pathways Guidelines* (2009).

Develop and maintain shared bicycle / pedestrian trails along the river bank, subject to standards for flood protection and objectives for the protection of sites of environmental or cultural heritage significance.

Provide and maintain shared trails that do not adversely affect the ability of waterways, drains and floodways to convey flood flows.

Provide appropriate directional signage and signage informing path users of upcoming potential hazards throughout the trail network.

Develop and maintain a hierarchy of trails which includes unsealed, pedestrian-only paths, particularly on public parkland.

Consider visitor experience and public safety in public access areas and trails.

Ensure that development provides passive surveillance of public areas.

Ensure development maintains sunlight to public spaces and does not increase overshadowing of the river and the Main Yarra Trail.

Other

The views of public authorities on use and development must be obtained as appropriate (e.g. Melbourne Water, Parks Victoria etc.).

Ensure structure planning of nearby activity centres considers the impacts of development and landscaping on the river corridor.