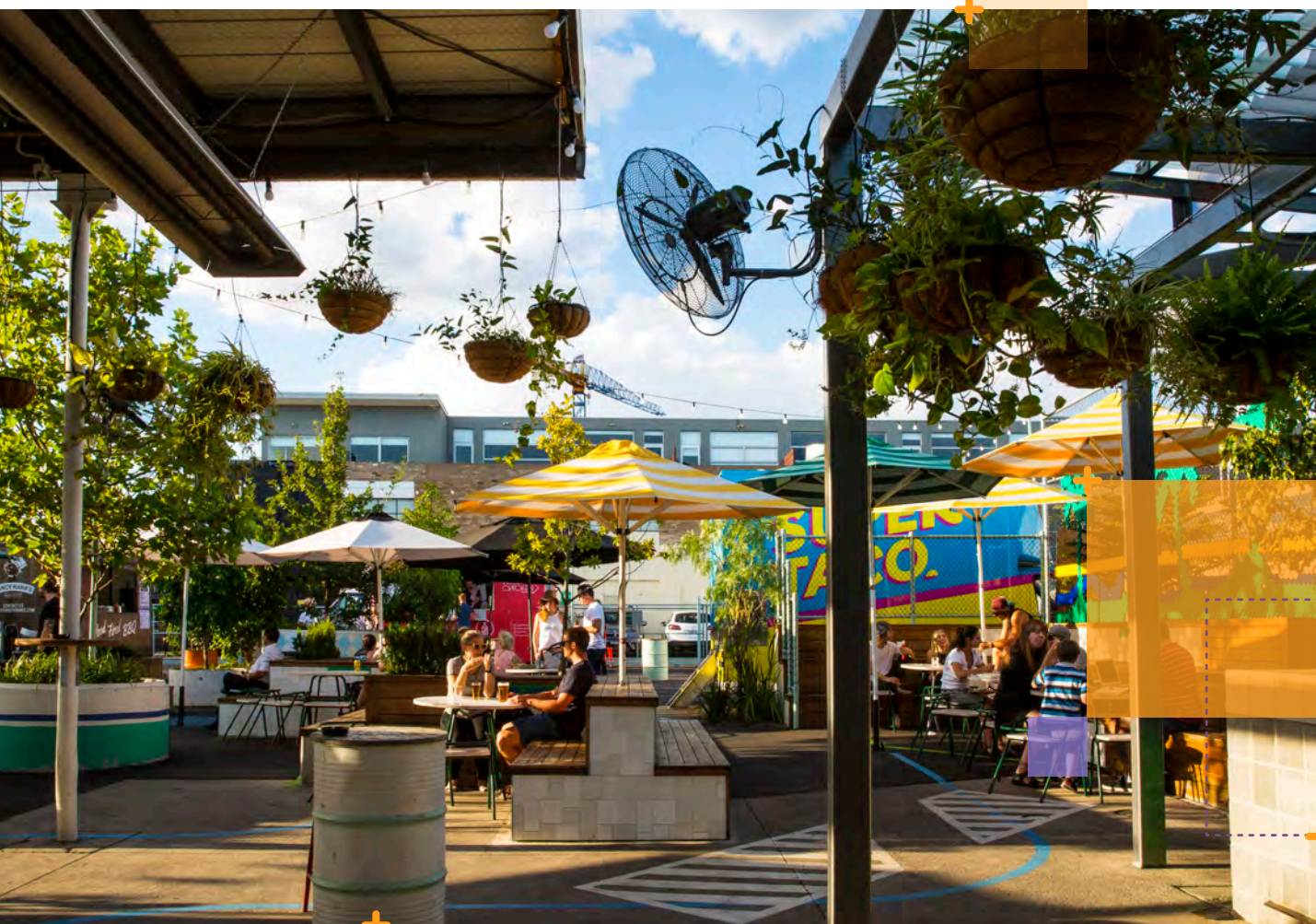


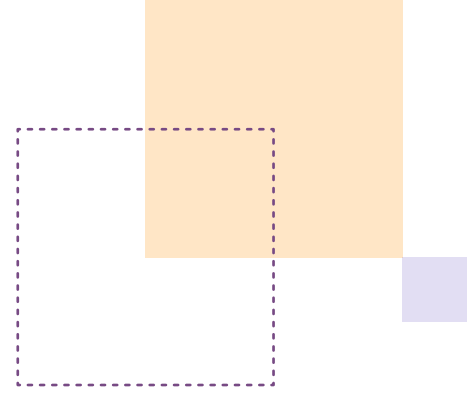
# CHAPTER 07 LIVEABILITY



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

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





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

The Northern Metro Region’s distinctive and diverse landscapes are formed around the corridors of its waterways, including the Yarra (Birrarung), Plenty and Maribyrnong rivers. Its green wedges and regional open spaces have high recreational and biodiversity value. The region has high cultural significance for Aboriginal people and a rich post-European settlement heritage.

## State of play

### Landscapes and biodiversity

The diverse landscapes of the Northern Metro Region range from the rolling hills in the region’s east to the volcanic plains in the west. The region’s landscapes are defined by waterways, remnant forests, grasslands and woodlands, volcanic cones and incised valleys. They are integral to its character and sense of place.

The region’s key landscapes and biodiversity areas are described in **Table 12**.

While much of the Northern Metro Region’s biodiversity has been altered through urbanisation, there are many important natural assets that support biodiversity and provide critical habitat for the survival of some of our most threatened species.

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

LANDSCAPE AND BIODIVERSITY AREA	SIGNIFICANCE, PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT
<b>Waterways</b>	The Yarra River flows into Melbourne from the Yarra Ranges, winding its way along the region’s southern boundary from Christmas Hills to Ivanhoe. The region’s major waterways of the Plenty River, Maribyrnong River, Moonee Ponds Creek, Diamond Creek, Merri Creek and Darebin Creek all flow into the Yarra River. Other waterways include Jacksons, Kalkallo, Emu and Steele creeks. The region’s waterways are an important aspect of its landscape and biodiversity, and offer the opportunity for regional habitat and parkland connections.
<b>Regional parks</b>	The Northern Metro Region’s north and north-east contain large areas of passive open space such as Quarry Hills Parkland, Plenty Gorge Park, the Organ Pipes National Park and Kinglake National Park which protect biodiversity and offer a connection to the underlying landscape.
<b>Biodiversity areas</b>	Sensitive ecosystems exist within grassy eucalypt woodlands throughout the region’s green wedges. Craigieburn Grasslands, Merrifield/Kalkallo retarding basin and land conserved around water reservoirs offer areas of high biodiversity value. Substantial areas of river red gums are also scattered across the landscape.  The region’s waterways and green wedges provide highly significant areas of habitat for regional biodiversity, including endangered species such as the Growling Grass Frog and the Golden Sun Moth.



## Aboriginal cultural heritage

The lands that now make up the Northern Metro Region feature places and waterways of cultural significance and continuing connection for Traditional Owners as shown in **Figure 17**. The Wurundjeri people, represented by Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation and as a Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP), have a responsibility for the protection and management of cultural heritage assets under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*.

The Taungurung people, represented by the Taungurung Land and Waters Council, are the recognised Traditional Owners of the lands to the north-east outside the Northern Metro Region boundary and have interest in the boundary area as shown in **Figure 17**.

The Yarra River has served and cared for people living in what we now call the Northern Metro Region for thousands of years. It is a sacred natural asset whose uncompromised health is everyone's responsibility (DELWP, 2018b). The Yarra River is paramount to the life of the Northern Metro Region and Melbourne. It is one of a number of waterways in the Northern Metro Region that is highly valued by the community and has continued significance for Traditional Owners.

The Yarra River is central to the lands of the Wurundjeri people. The *Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murrn) Act 2017* sets the foundation for Traditional Owner management of the river and its lands, and delivery on the aspirations of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation's *Nhanbu narrun ba ngargunin twarn Birrarung (Ancient Spirit & Lore of the Yarra)* water policy.

## Heritage and visitor places

Protected heritage sites tell the story of the early European settlement and pastoral activity, including Ned Kelly's birthplace at Beveridge, Mickelham School and Post Office, Victoria Bridge at Kalkallo and Emu Bottom Homestead. Historic infrastructure such as the Yan Yean and Maroondah water supply systems and the Preston Tramway Workshops represent early phases of Melbourne's development.

Key visitor places in the Northern Metro Region's rural areas include Montsalvat artists' colony in Eltham, St Andrews weekend market and Rupertswood Mansion in Sunbury. Within urban areas, the region is renowned for its lively cultural precincts in Brunswick, Northcote, Preston and Thornbury which support numerous arts and creative industries. Creative places and spaces across the region contribute to its vibrant neighbourhoods and sense of place. Important community gathering places include the CERES environmental park in Brunswick, Preston Market, Westgarth Cinema and Thornbury Picture House.

Heritage protection is provided to individual properties, streets and precincts within the region and these places are integral to its character and identity today. There are over 100 places of state heritage significance listed on the Victorian Heritage Register, as shown in **Map 7**. These include a wide range of sites: major infrastructure, such as the Yan Yean water supply system; homesteads, pastoral runs and farm buildings, such as Emu Bottom Homestead and Rupertswood Mansion, Sunbury; stone bridges, trestle bridges and railway viaducts; churches, schools, civic buildings; and residential development including the Mount Eagle Estate, Eaglemont, designed by Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin.

**FIGURE 17. Northern Metro Region Aboriginal cultural heritage**

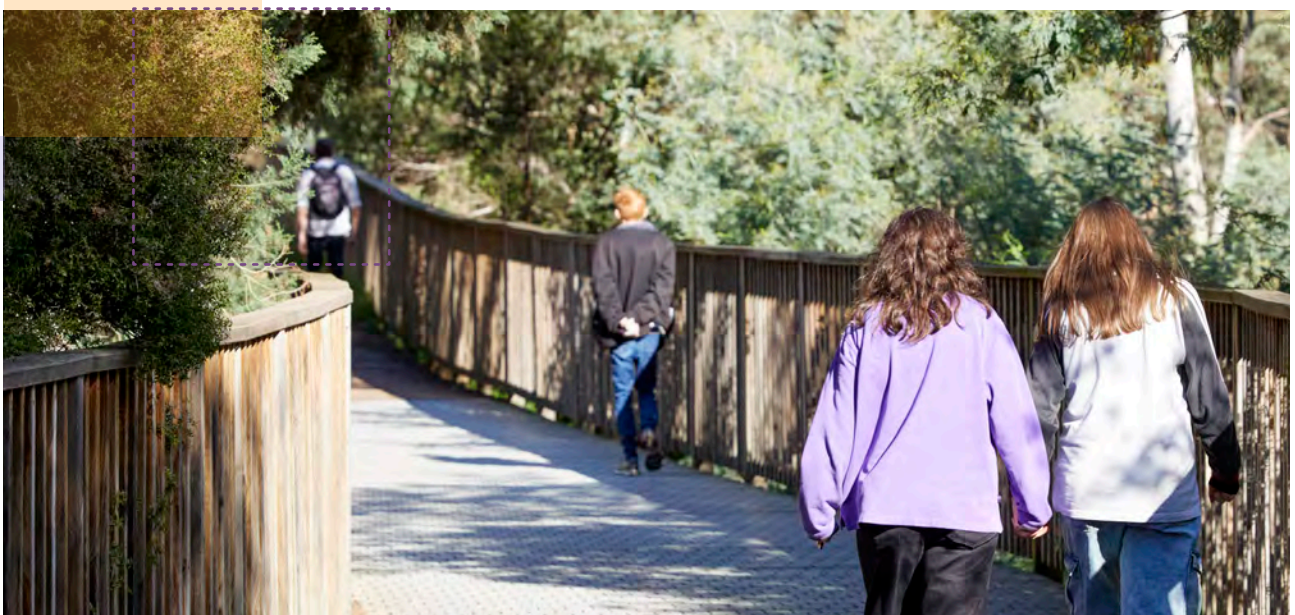
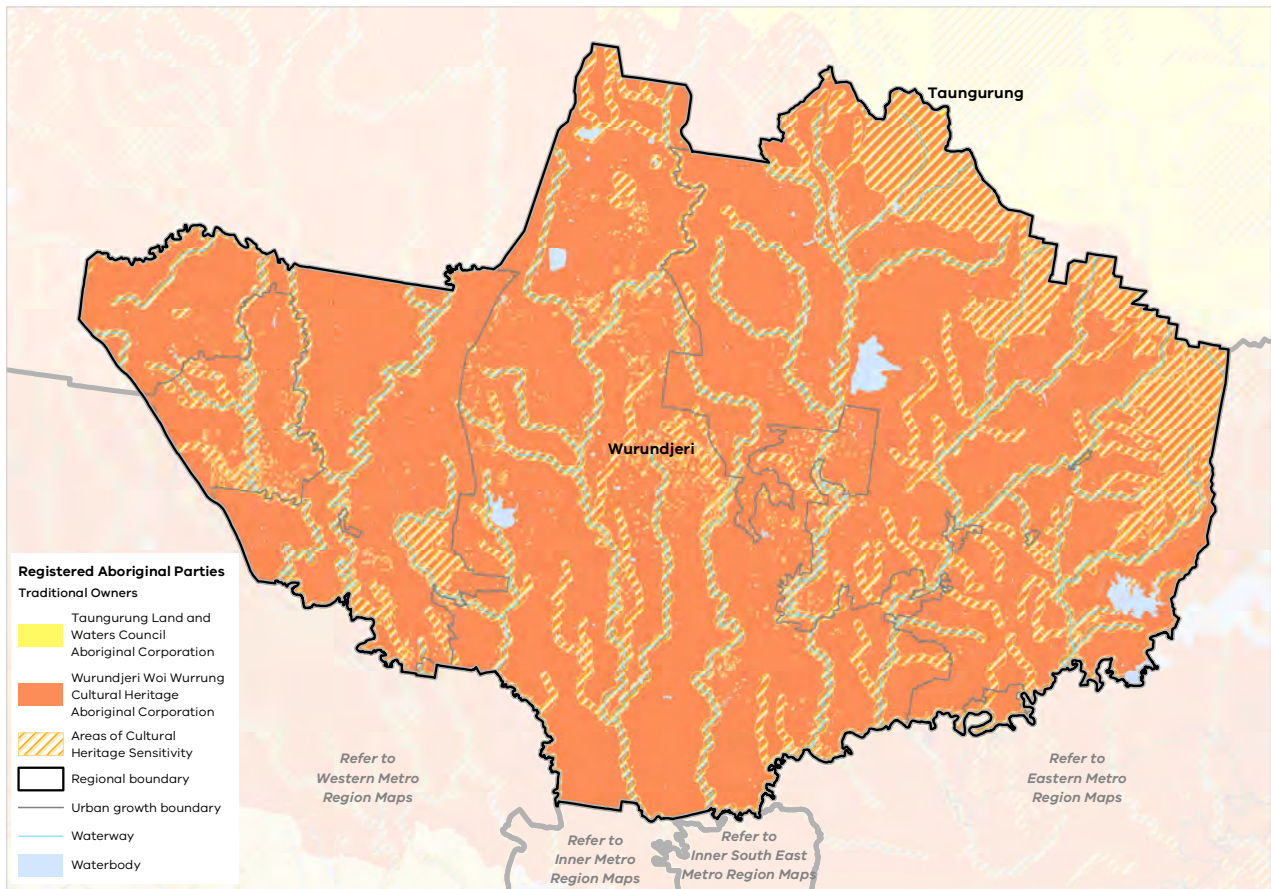
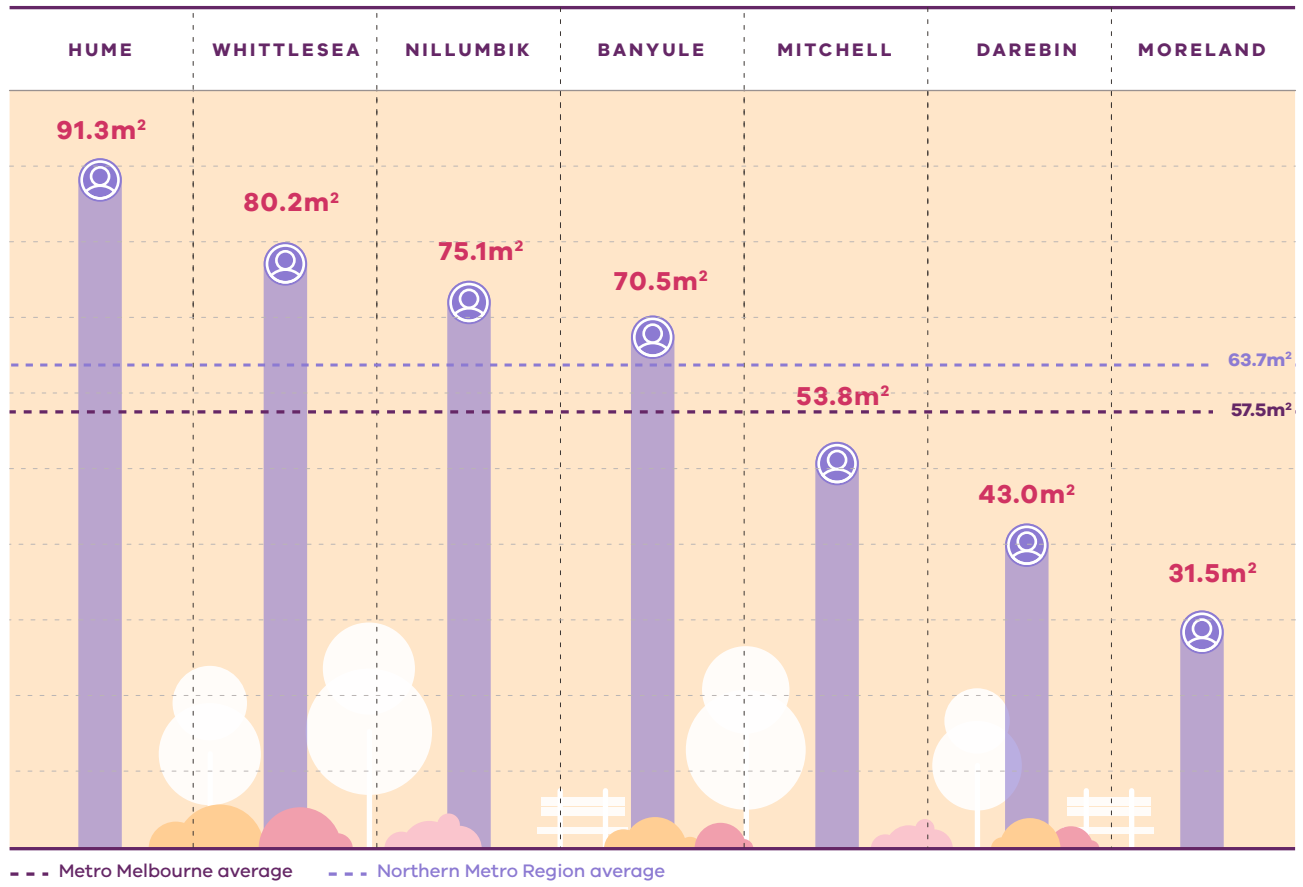


Photo credit: Tim Bell Studio

FIGURE 18. Open space per person for Northern Metro Region LGAs



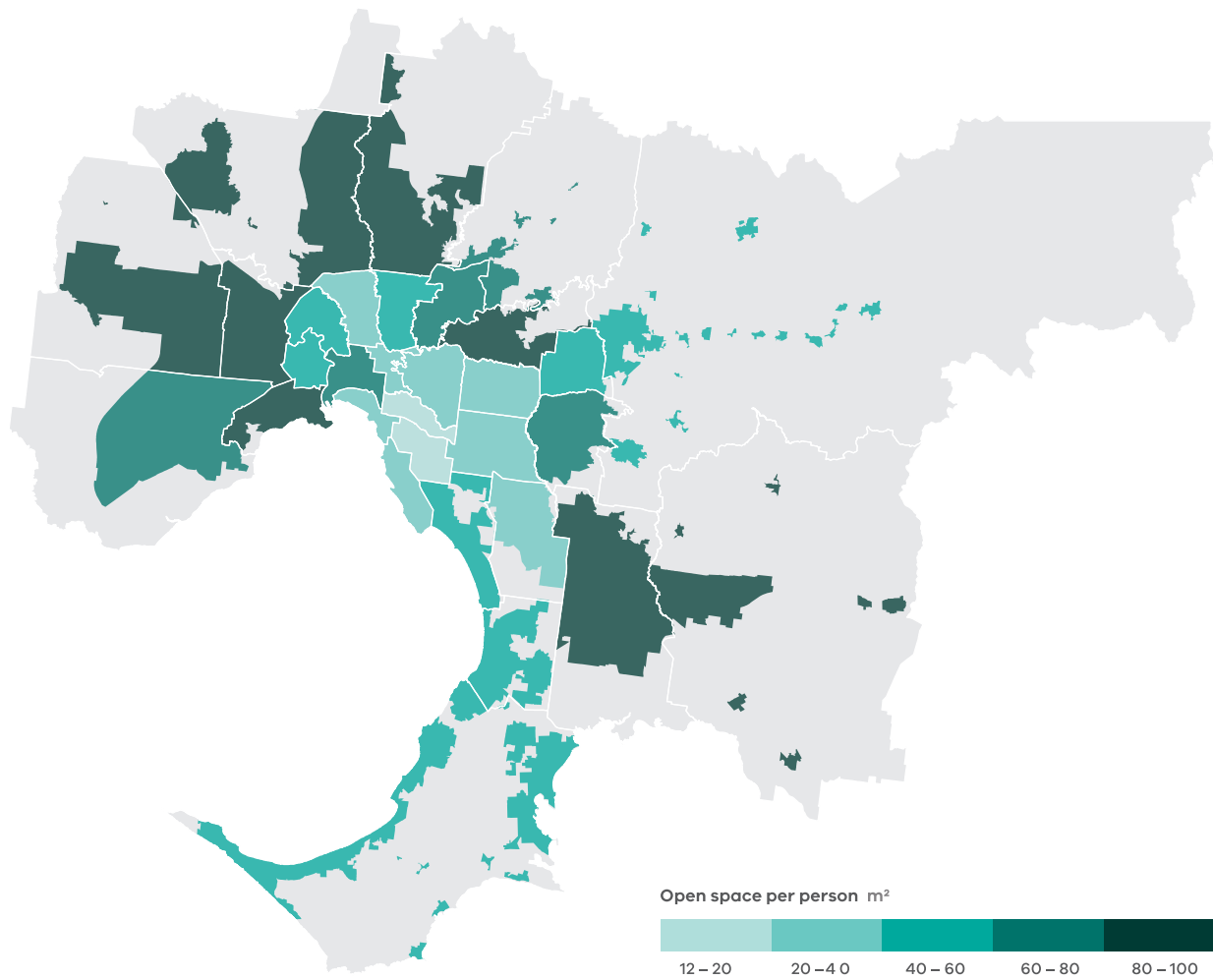
Source: Victorian Planning Authority (2017) *Metropolitan Open Space Network: Provision and Distribution*, State of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia.

### Open space and regional trails

Residents of the Northern Metro Region have varying levels of access to open space depending on where they live. Nillumbik, Hume, Banyule and Whittlesea provide between 70 and 91 square metres per capita, much higher than the metropolitan average of 57.5 square metres. However, the inner LGAs of Moreland and Darebin offer much less open space per capita of 31.5 square metres and 43 square metres respectively. Mitchell LGA is also below the metropolitan average providing 53.8 square metres per capita (Figure 18) (VPA, 2017). Open space per person across metropolitan Melbourne is shown in Figure 19. While the quantity of open space is one measure of provision, the function, mix, quality, accessibility and proximity of open space also need to be considered.

The Northern Metro Region contains large areas of passive open space including Quarry Hills Parkland, Plenty Gorge Park and Kinglake National Park. Within the region's green wedges and growth areas, waterways such as Deep Creek, Jacksons Creek, Merri Creek and Emu Creek form existing and potential open space corridors. Within the inner areas, regional open spaces are formed along the Darebin and Merri creeks and the Yarra and Plenty river corridors.

Passive regional open space in outer LGAs, such as Whittlesea and Nillumbik, is not well served by public transport.

**FIGURE 19.** Open space per person for metropolitan LGAs

**Source:** Data from the Victorian Planning Authority Metropolitan Open Space Network portal, 2016

**Note:** only areas within the UGB were calculated and mapped in this figure. Areas outside the UGB are shown in grey.

*Open Space for Everyone: Open Space Strategy for Metropolitan Melbourne 2020* identifies several major initiatives for the Northern Metro Region through its Suburban Parks Program:

- Creation of the Jacksons Creek Parklands, to extend from Diggers Rest to Sunbury and link up land across an area of around 1000 hectares, creating new open space and trail connections and areas for biodiversity
- Creation of the Upper Merri Creek Parklands, planned to extend from Campbellfield to Beveridge, which will also link up land across a significant area for recreation and biodiversity connections
- Feasibility study for the proposed 1000 hectare Wallan Regional Park, which will consider potential linkages with the proposed Upper Merri Creek Parklands
- Creation of the Quarry Hills Regional Park, which contains significant biodiversity, geological, cultural heritage and landscape values (project under development with Whittlesea LGA)
- Completion of the Plenty River Trail, including an extra 17 kilometres of walking and cycling trail from Mernda to the Western Ring Road at Greensborough
- Northern metropolitan trails project, encompassing new cycling and walking trails in the Banyule, Nillumbik, Whittlesea, Hume and Darebin LGAs.

There are several regional walking and cycling trails in the Northern Metro Region, some of which cross through the region or connect to adjoining regions, such as the Main Yarra Trail and Capital City Trail.

## Regional strengths

- There are significant opportunities to work with Traditional Owners to protect and enhance the region's unique landscapes, cultural heritage, environmental assets and biodiversity values, including its waterway corridors and green wedge areas.
- Well-established open space networks of regional, state and national parks throughout the region preserve a rich biodiversity.
- There is potential for increased tourism and cultural development which will assist in creating vibrant, attractive urban environments.

## Regional challenges

- Additional open space is required to meet the needs of the future population.
- Improved access to open space, particularly by walking, cycling and public transport will foster opportunities for more active living.
- Ongoing protection of the region's natural, built and cultural heritage is essential, given the pressure for development.

## Directions and strategies

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

<b>Direction 17</b>	Protect and enhance the region's network of waterway corridors
<b>Direction 18</b>	Protect and enhance the landscapes and biodiversity of the Northern Metro Region
<b>Direction 19</b>	Strengthen the network of open spaces and trail connections across the Northern Metro Region
<b>Direction 20</b>	Create a legacy of great civic places

Each direction is implemented through regionally-specific strategies identified in this LUFP.

**Map 7** shows how liveability will be enhanced across the Northern Metro Region by 2050 as a result of these directions and strategies, together with Plan Melbourne and other strategies and initiatives as outlined in **Appendix 01**.

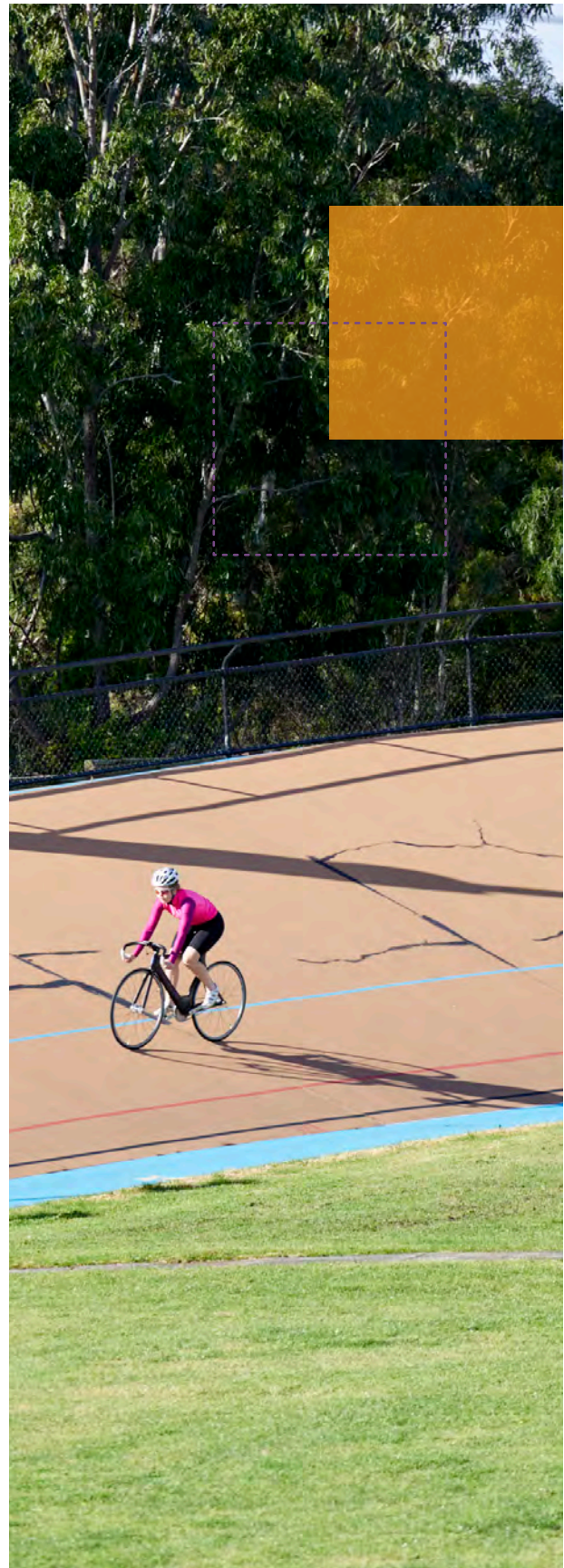


Photo credit: Tim Bell Studio








**MAP 7. Northern Metro Region liveability 2050**

**Precincts and Activity Centres**

-  Metropolitan activity centre
-  Major activity centre
-  Victorian Heritage Register Site
-  Community/tourism site
-  Areas of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Sensitivity






**Transport**

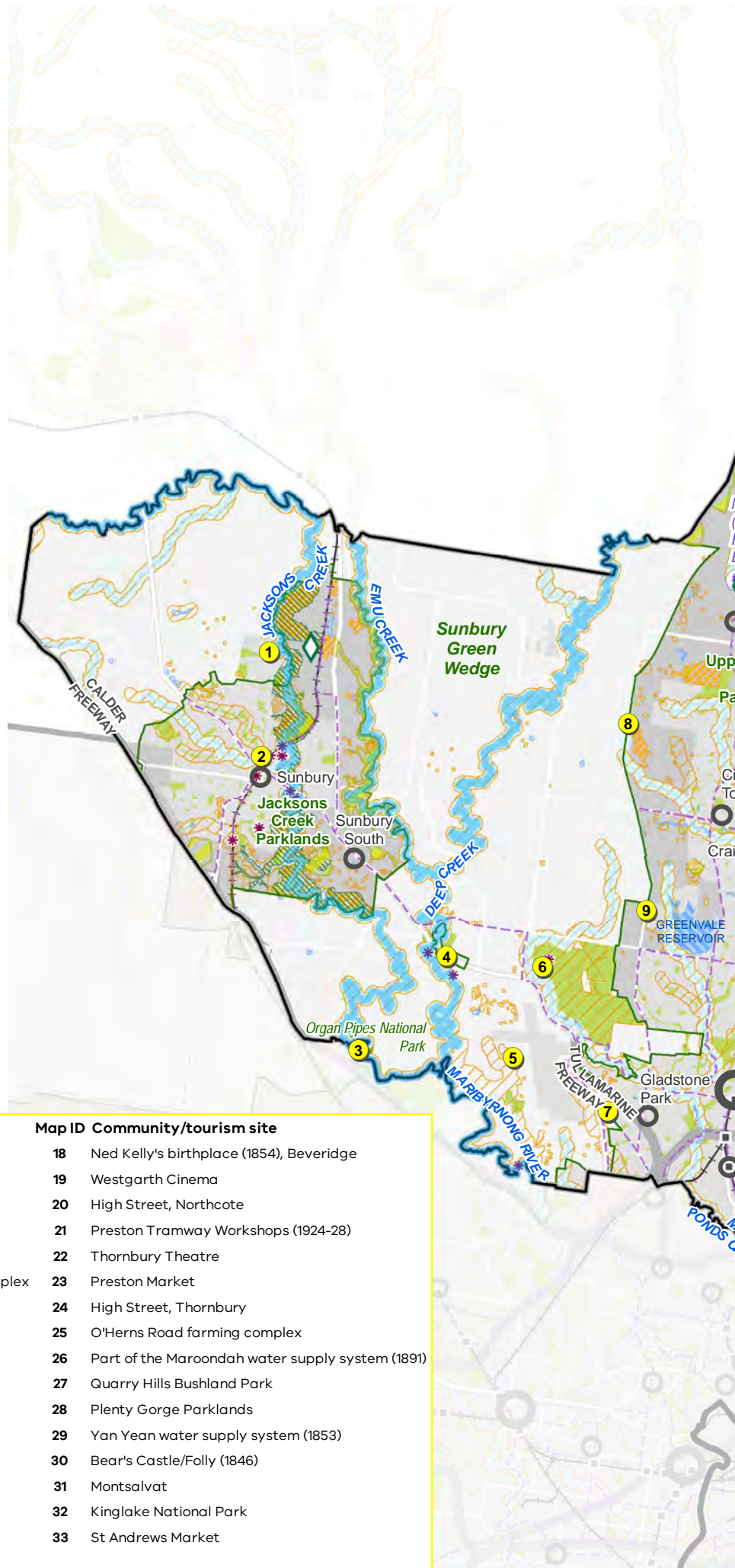
-  State-significant road corridor
-  Road network
-  Train station
-  Rail network
-  Strategic Cycling Corridor

**Environment**

-  Conservation areas in the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy
-  Conservation reserve - proposed
-  National park/state park
-  Regional park - expanded/improved
-  Future regional active open space
-  Public open space
-  Yarra River land
-  Landscape values within growth corridor
-  Wetlands
-  Water's edge parkland
-  Waterway and waterway corridor
-  Reservoir
-  Waterbody

**Land use/Administration**

-  Regional boundary
-  Green wedge land
-  Growth area
-  Urban area
-  Urban growth boundary



**Map ID Community/tourism site**

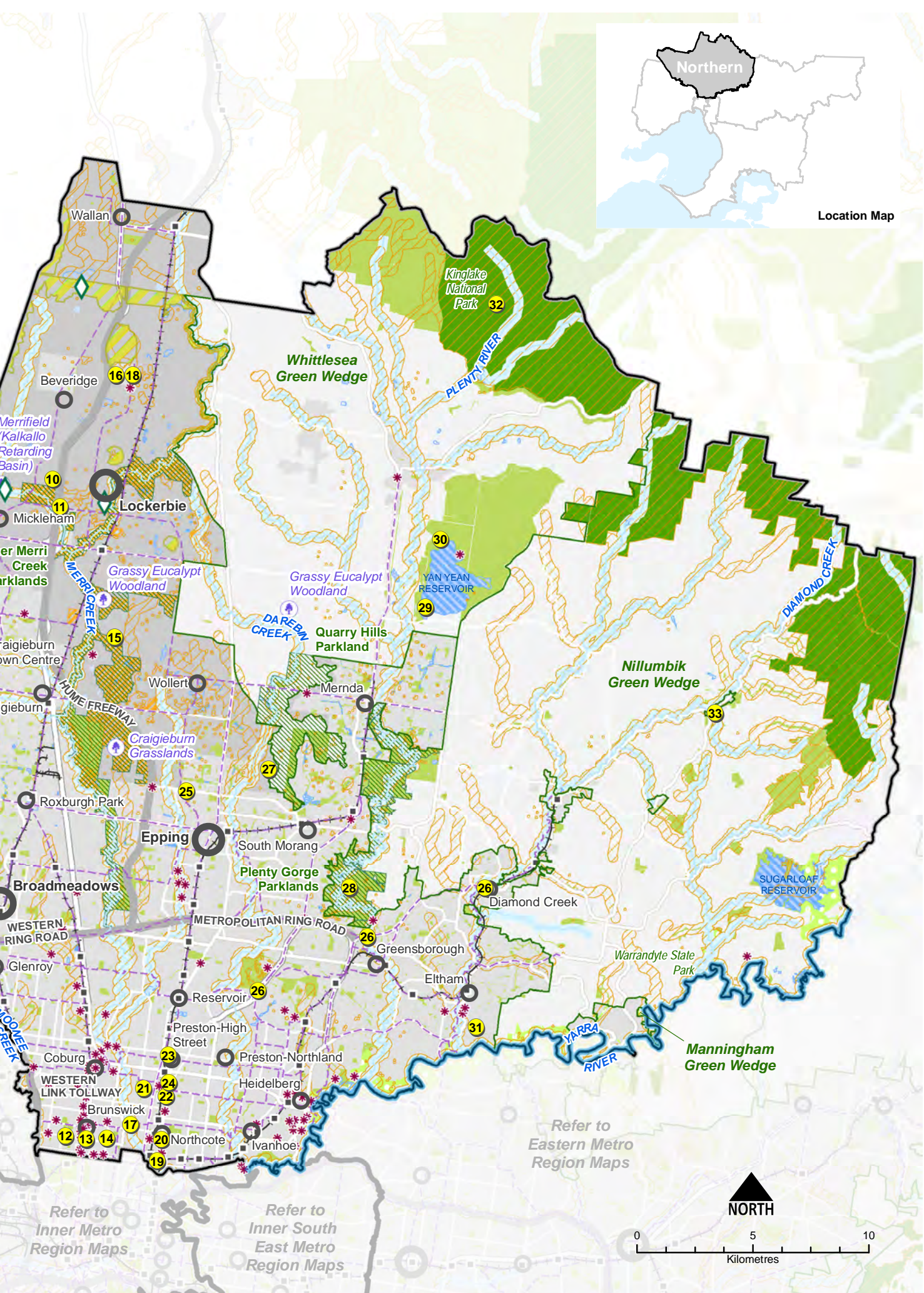
- 1 Emu Bottom Homestead Sunbury
- 2 Rupertswood Mansion
- 3 Organ Pipes National Park
- 4 Alistair Clarke Rose Garden Bulla
- 5 Melbourne Airport
- 6 Woodlands Historic Park and Homestead Complex
- 7 Urbnsurf Surf Park, Tullamarine
- 8 Mickleham State School No. 1051
- 9 Mickleham former post office
- 10 Victoria Bridge, Kalkallo
- 11 St John's Presbyterian Church, Kalkallo
- 12 Sydney Road, Brunswick
- 13 Mechanics Institute, Brunswick
- 14 Lygon Street, Brunswick
- 15 Summerhill Homestead and Outbuildings
- 16 Former Catholic church, Beveridge
- 17 CERES Community Environment Park

**Map ID Community/tourism site**

- 18 Ned Kelly's birthplace (1854), Beveridge
- 19 Westgarth Cinema
- 20 High Street, Northcote
- 21 Preston Tramway Workshops (1924-28)
- 22 Thornbury Theatre
- 23 Preston Market
- 24 High Street, Thornbury
- 25 O'Herns Road farming complex
- 26 Part of the Maroondah water supply system (1891)
- 27 Quarry Hills Bushland Park
- 28 Plenty Gorge Parklands
- 29 Yan Yean water supply system (1853)
- 30 Bear's Castle/Folly (1846)
- 31 Montsalvat
- 32 Kinglake National Park
- 33 St Andrews Market



Location Map



Wallan  
Beveridge  
Merrifield (Kalkallo Retarding Basin)  
Mickleham  
Lockerbie  
Craigieburn  
Wollert  
Roxburgh Park  
Epping  
Broadmeadows  
Glenroy  
Coburg  
Brunswick  
Northcote  
Ivanhoe

Whittlesea Green Wedge  
Grassy Eucalypt Woodland  
DAREBIN CREEK  
Quarry Hills Parkland  
Mernda  
Plenty Gorge Parklands  
South Morang

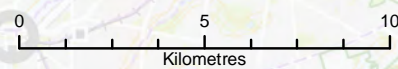
Kinglake National Park  
PLENTY RIVER  
YAN YEAN RESERVOIR  
Diamond Creek  
Greensborough  
Eltham

Nillumbik Green Wedge  
DIAMOND CREEK  
SUGARLOAF RESERVOIR  
Warrandyte State Park  
Manningham Green Wedge

Refer to Eastern Metro Region Maps

Refer to Inner Metro Region Maps

Refer to Inner South East Metro Region Maps



## **DIRECTION 17.** **Protect and enhance the region's network of waterway corridors**

The rivers, creeks and drainage easements in the Northern Metro Region provide the opportunity to create a connected network of waterways, linking green spaces, wetlands and biodiversity areas. Part of this network already exists, as shown in **Map 7**. These natural features provide habitat for significant native flora and fauna including frog and fish species. They also have landscape, social, amenity and cultural heritage values. They also provide places for a diverse range of recreation and leisure experiences and an opportunity to connect with others and with nature.

Waterways need to be maintained and developed as movement and recreational corridors while protecting their environmental values and role as natural drainage systems.

The Metropolitan Trail Network connects the Moonee Ponds, Westbreen, Edgars, Darebin and Merri creeks to Quarry Hills Regional Park. In other parts of the region, Deep, Emu, Jacksons and Kalkallo creeks could offer additional waterway links to form part of the regional open space and biodiversity network. The Yarra River is a key waterway corridor in the southern part of the region.

Regional strategic projects, such as the *Healthy Waterways Strategies (Yarra and Maribyrnong)*, identify the need to protect the values of these waterways from urban development, from headwater streams to lower reaches, and recognised significant wetlands.

The Yarra River is paramount to the life of the Northern Metro Region and Melbourne. The *Yarra River Action Plan* and the *Yarra River Protection (Willip-gin Birrarung Murrn) Act 2017* recognises the Yarra River, and the many hundreds of parcels of public land it flows through, as one living, integrated natural entity for protection and improvement.

The *Waterways of the West Action Plan* (to be released in 2021) is a plan to protect and rehabilitate rivers, creeks and their parklands, including the Maribyrnong (Mirrangbamurn) and Moonee Ponds (Moonee Moonee) catchments within the Northern Metro Region.

**STRATEGY 55.** Protect and enhance the interconnected network of waterway and habitat corridors in the region and the diverse landscape, cultural, biodiversity and community values they provide.

**STRATEGY 56.** Retain natural wetlands and natural drainage networks in the planning of new greenfield neighbourhoods to achieve significant liveability and biodiversity outcomes and build resilient, sustainable, and liveable communities.

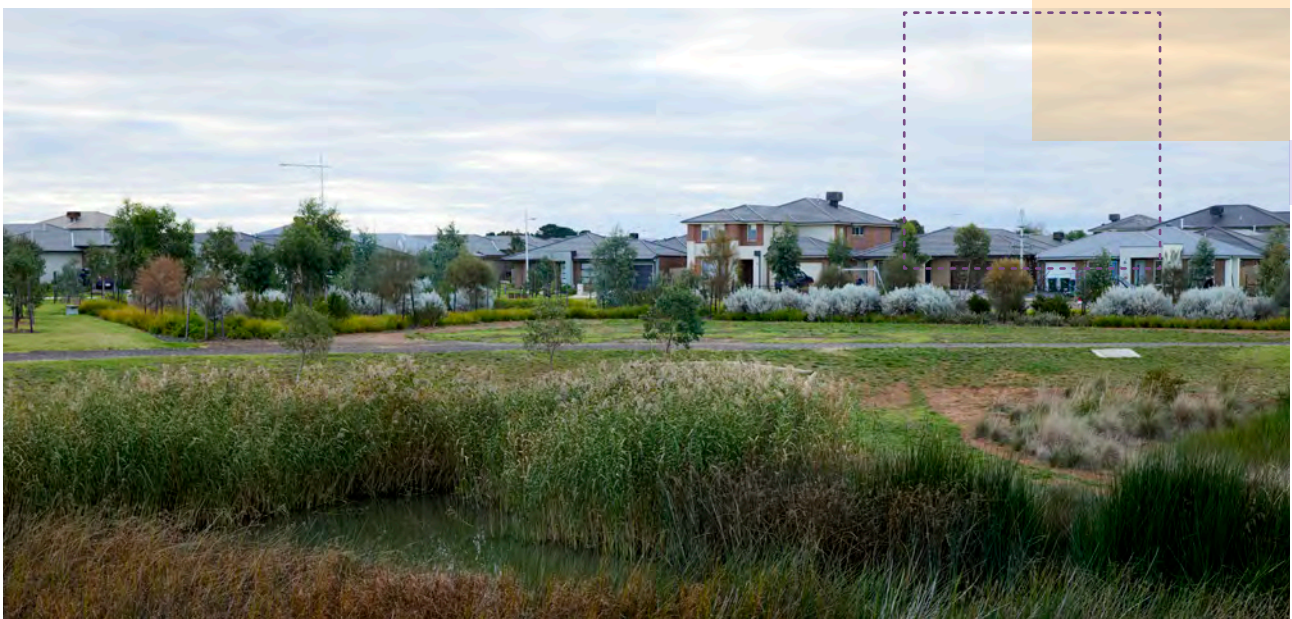


Photo credit: Tim Bell Studio

**DIRECTION 18.****Protect and enhance the landscapes and biodiversity of the Northern Metro Region**

The Northern Metro Region's natural assets and green wedges form the basis of its amenity and biodiversity values. A healthy natural environment provides life-sustaining services for humans and biodiversity. It underpins many of the activities that are fundamental to economic prosperity, and people's physical and mental health (DELWP, 2017d). The region's landscapes are also a key aspect of its sense of place and regional distinctiveness.

As part of supporting ecosystem resilience in a changing climate and reducing potential impacts from urban encroachment, a range of planning policies and protections apply to the Northern Metro Region's green wedge areas. The landscape values of the region's waterways, wetlands, ridgelines and key view corridors should also be protected from the visual impact of development or infrastructure.

The Melbourne Strategic Assessment is an agreement with the Commonwealth to set aside land with the highest biodiversity values from urban development within the Northern Growth Corridor. These Conservation Areas are listed in the *Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for Melbourne's Growth Corridors 2013* and protected through Commonwealth legislation (shown on **Map 4**). Their biodiversity values are managed for the long-term through the precinct structure planning process to preserve their intrinsic conservation and biodiversity values.

Preserving conservation areas of a sufficient size to support diverse species (and which are linked to other conservation areas) is often critical to biodiversity outcomes.

Within the Northern Growth Corridor areas of Lockerbie, West Beveridge, Mickleham and Wollert, important landscape features should be retained and protected, including:

- Views to the hills and ridgelines that flank the Northern Growth Corridor to the west, north and east
- Distant views from the growth corridor to the Great Dividing Range to the north and north-east
- Red volcanic cones at Mount Frazer and Bald Hill, and the protection of vistas to these features from a range of vantage points across the Northern Growth Corridor
- The natural drainage system across the Northern Growth Corridor, which includes the Merri, Kalkallo and Darebin creeks.

Key landscape features of Sunbury/Diggers Rest include:

- Jacksons Hill, Mount Holden and Burke Hill in the established part of Sunbury or outside the Urban Growth Boundary
- The combination of steep hills, incised valleys and escarpment edges and elevated plateaus that provides a unique natural setting for Sunbury
- Emu Creek and its tributaries, which flank the eastern edge of Sunbury, and Jacksons Creek, which traverses Sunbury/Diggers Rest; both of which have deeply incised valleys and support tributaries and wetlands
- The semi-rural character to the main approach roads to Sunbury and Diggers Rest.

A 1200 hectare Grassy Woodland Reserve outside the Urban Growth Boundary, southwest of Whittlesea, will be created to protect highly valuable Grassy Eucalypt Woodland (DEPI, 2013). This reserve will be assembled over time through land acquisition.

Within urban areas, waterways and parklands provide key habitat links and places of recreation. It is essential that infrastructure and urban renewal projects enhance and link these areas. For example, protection and enhancement of the Darebin Creek within the Northland Urban Renewal Precinct should be prioritised in planning and development, as well as protection and enhancement of wetlands and vegetation in and around the La Trobe NEIC.

**STRATEGY 57.** Work with Traditional Owners to protect and enhance the landscape and conservation values of the distinctive hills and ridgelines, volcanic cones, waterways and grasslands of the Northern Metro Region and integrate these features into growth area planning.

**STRATEGY 58.** Ensure the design of new development within the region's green wedges and growth areas responds to its landscape biodiversity values. Provide adequate buffers from areas of landscape or biodiversity sensitivity, including the rural character of land adjoining the Urban Growth Boundary.

## **DIRECTION 19.** **Strengthen the network of open spaces and trail connections across the Northern Metro Region**

*Open Space for Everyone: Open Space Strategy for Metropolitan Melbourne 2020* establishes a vision of Melbourne as a city with a valued network of open spaces that are accessible to all, connected at the local and landscape scales. It focuses on innovation and adaptability in providing for a diversity of open spaces to meet the needs of the community, while protecting and optimising the region's existing open space assets. The strategy identifies opportunities to make better use of existing open space, including ways that existing public land could be opened up for broader recreational use.

Within the region's greenfield growth areas, integrated planning of active and passive open space networks can play a key role in protecting environmental, heritage and drainage values. Regional parklands can provide for a range of recreation needs of the community and help to establish the liveability and 'sense of place' of the growth areas.

Opportunities to use new open space to improve pedestrian access and recreational trail connections should be prioritised wherever possible, including linking existing open spaces or opening site frontages to a waterway or parkland.

Melbourne Water's proposed upgrade of the retarding basin at Kalkallo offers the potential for a regional recreation opportunity and conservation site in Melbourne's north, in addition to its primary role in floodway management.

With the inner LGAs of the Northern Metro Region offering relatively less open space per capita and the population forecast to increase, strategies are needed to better use existing open space to meet future demand for recreation opportunities. This could include high-quality maintenance of existing parks, targeted upgrading of facilities to meet current needs and improved connections to regional open spaces.

Options to create new public space within inner urban areas include re-purposing surplus public land, reclaiming road space, using rooftop space or providing open space within large redevelopment sites or urban renewal precincts. In some instances, new open spaces will be of a small scale and may also be privately owned or managed. It is essential that new open spaces are created in a meaningful way, with high design and amenity standards and as a positive contribution to the broader open space network.

Larger open space land holdings, such as golf courses, pipe tracks, easements and land used for public purposes such as schools, universities or cemeteries, may provide opportunities to address open space shortfalls in the region, by providing community access at times and in ways that do not jeopardise their primary purposes.

The proposed regional open spaces and trail connections identified in the Suburban Parks Program and Northern Regional Trails Strategy will significantly improve the regional network of open spaces and trail corridors. The draft *Yarra Strategic Plan* also addresses many of these movement, recreation and environmental challenges as part of continuing to develop this major river corridor.

**STRATEGY 59.** Increase access to a range of quality regional and local open space throughout the region.

**STRATEGY 60.** Identify opportunities to expand and better link the open space network through linear open space and trail connections and improved public transport accessibility.

**DIRECTION 20.****Create a legacy of great civic places**

There is a proud legacy of great civic places and precincts in the Northern Metro Region. Many activity centres, both large and small, include formal and informal places with high civic and natural values that help people better understand, orientate within, meet and enjoy the areas in which they live and visit.

The Northern Metro Region has places that provide public benefit and amenity including Sydney Road in Brunswick, Preston Market and High Street, CERES Community Environment Park, Hume Global Learning Centre in Broadmeadows, Plenty Gorge Parklands and Yan Yean Reservoir, Sunbury Town Centre and smaller towns such as Whittlesea and St Andrews. As the La Trobe NEIC develops it is expected to become a much-loved civic precinct.

St George's Road is an established boulevard through the region's inner suburbs which provides a wide, dedicated shared trail which is separated from car traffic and planted with avenue trees. Aitken Boulevard will be designed as a high amenity north-south roadway between the future Lockerbie Metropolitan Activity Centre and Mickleham, Beveridge and Craigieburn major activity centres.

The Northern Metro Region's rich cultural heritage provides a strong legacy for creating distinctive places which foster community pride and a sense of place. The region's post-settlement heritage has intrinsic value for residents and visitors as a symbol of a shared history and community-building. While extensive heritage controls are applied throughout the region, there are places and precincts of significance that still require protection and local councils are working to achieve this.

Ongoing population increases and economic growth presents a risk that assets from the early post settlement era are demolished or destroyed. In new suburbs there is an opportunity to protect and integrate these assets and provide a point of difference. In green wedge areas, assets should be preserved and, where relevant, recognised and celebrated as visitor attractions.

State and local government have a role to play in creating high-quality public places when planning for centres and other public areas for the longer term-through structure planning or precinct planning. Well designed public spaces, and utilising natural features to create a strong sense of place, should be integral to the future planning of Broadmeadows, Epping and Lockerbie as metropolitan activity centres. As these places are developed, a key consideration should be to provide an enduring civic legacy for future generations.

**STRATEGY 61.** Protect places and spaces that have high civic or public value, and which contribute to people's understanding, interaction and enjoyment of the region.

**STRATEGY 62.** Ensure future planning for activity centres utilises natural features and public spaces to create a strong sense of place.

**STRATEGY 63.** Recognise the different layers and aspects of the region's history in the design of new buildings, public spaces, infrastructure and public artwork.

**STRATEGY 64.** Support the development of Aitken Boulevard as a high-quality active transport link with high pedestrian and cycling amenity.

**ACTIONS –  
Liveability**

**ACTION 11.** Develop a plan to implement a publicly owned and managed network of regional trails and open spaces across the region's growth corridors, utilising its natural drainage system where possible to link open spaces, biodiversity areas, waterways and urban areas.

**ACTION 12.** Prepare a regional biodiversity strategy to protect, manage and enhance habitat corridors and increase their interconnectivity across urban and rural areas.

**ACTION 13.** Review local planning schemes in the Northern Metro Region to ensure protection and enhancement of the landscape and biodiversity values of the region.