

Below is a set of actions for priority work along the Maribyrnong River to preserve and enhance its preferred character. These actions relate to the entire length of the river from the Organ Pipes National Park to the river mouth. They include capital works, planning scheme amendments, enlarging the open space corridor, further detailed planning, improved governance and community engagement.

Some of these actions are already underway. Others will commence over the next five years. Many reflect recommendations listed in a previous consultant report released in April 2006. Proposed timeframes for the commencement of these actions are as follows:

**Immediate** – underway or will commence within 12 months

**Short term** – will commence within 1-2 years

**Long term** – will commence within 2-5 years

### 3.1 ENLARGE THE OPEN SPACE CORRIDOR

A critical issue for the management of the river valley is how much land should be managed as public open space along the river.

#### **Create linked parkland along the river**

Creating linked parklands along the Maribyrnong River Valley is an important aim of *Melbourne 2030*. It is also a long-term aim of Parks Victoria's 2002 strategy, *Linking People and Spaces*.

Significant progress has been made in recent years to extend public open space along the river. For example:

- > redevelopment of the disused abattoir site in Kensington and Footscray in the 1990s created river parkland and wetlands
- > development of Edgewater Estate on the old ammunition factory site in Footscray created a riverside park
- > the River Valley Estate development in Sunshine includes a riverside park and footbridge
- > the Afton Street Conservation Park is being developed as a wetlands and public park.

Further redevelopment of the Defence Site Maribyrnong over the next few years offers the prospect of even greater river access, nature conservation and continuous public open space.

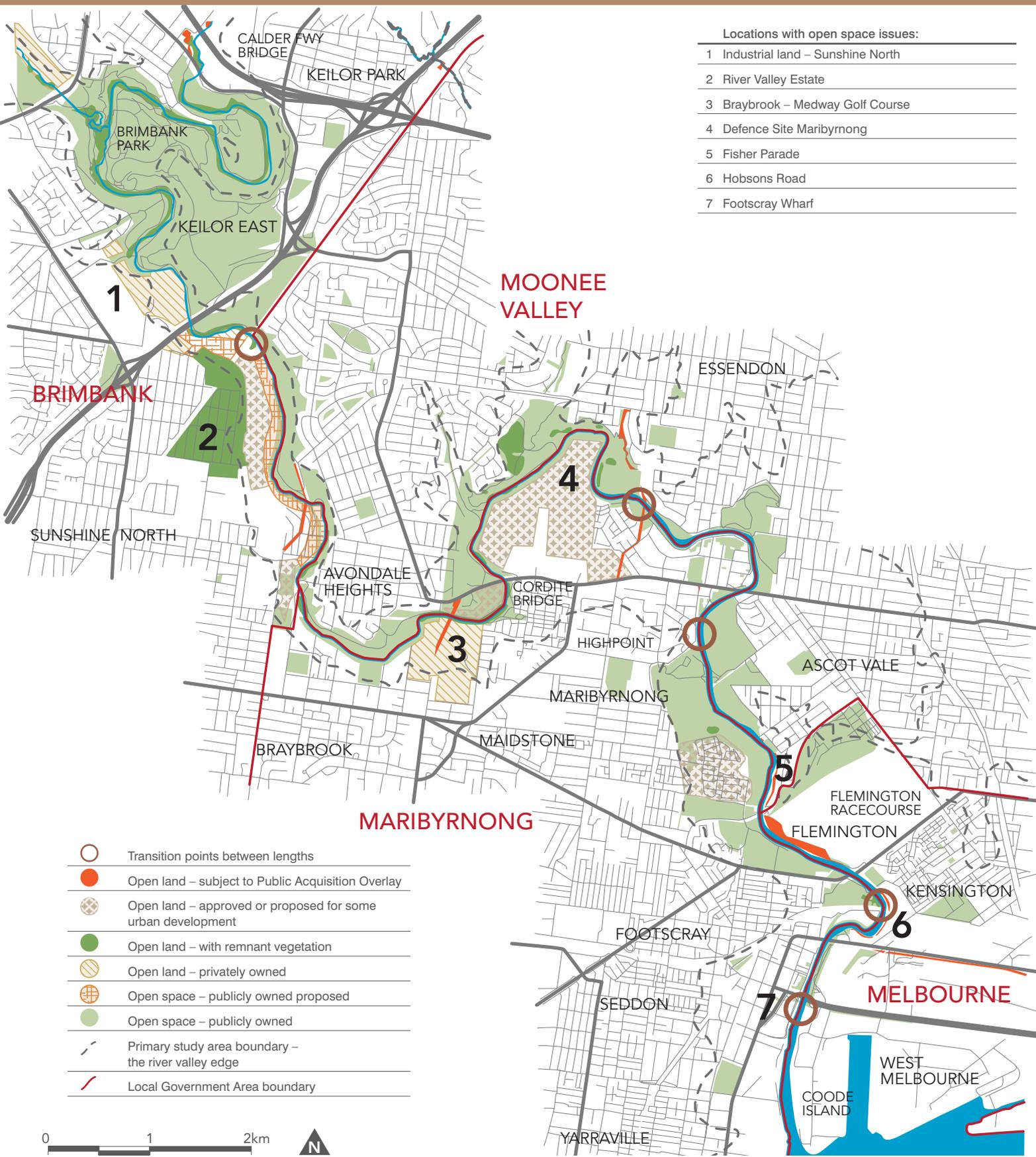
To date, the creation of public open space along Maribyrnong River Valley has largely been a by-product of urban development on privately-owned land. While this strategy is generally appropriate for the preferred character of the lower lengths of the river it is affecting the 'natural' character of the upper lengths of the river with the conversion of open space to urban housing.

Although significant residential development is already underway in the upper lengths of the river, further development in the valley should be avoided and efforts should be made to directly acquire the remaining escarpment land for public open space. However, given the financial constraints faced by councils seeking to acquire riverside frontages, other sources of funding for land acquisition need to be investigated.

# Map 3: Open spaces

Locations with open space issues:

- |   |                                  |
|---|----------------------------------|
| 1 | Industrial land – Sunshine North |
| 2 | River Valley Estate              |
| 3 | Braybrook – Medway Golf Course   |
| 4 | Defence Site Maribyrnong         |
| 5 | Fisher Parade                    |
| 6 | Hobsons Road                     |
| 7 | Footscray Wharf                  |





### **Enhance public amenity at the Port of Melbourne and Footscray Wharf**

A strategic planning process for the Port of Melbourne has been underway since 2002.

Released in August 2009, the *Port of Melbourne Port Development Strategy* provides clear direction on how the Port of Melbourne Corporation (PoMC) will address the rapidly changing requirements of managing Australia's largest container and general cargo port over the next 30 years.

Also released in August 2009, *Port Futures* identifies the critical need to facilitate port planning and protect ports from encroachment by surrounding sensitive uses as well as protecting neighbouring communities from the impacts of port operations. It proposes a range of initiatives to strengthen and streamline planning processes and protections.

Within the Footscray Wharf length, PoMC owns a narrow strip of river frontage land on the western side between Footscray Road and Youell Street. The future of the Footscray Wharf has been the subject of extensive discussions between PoMC and Maribyrnong City Council.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the parties was agreed in late 2006, covering Port of Melbourne and adjoining land between Napier and Francis Streets.

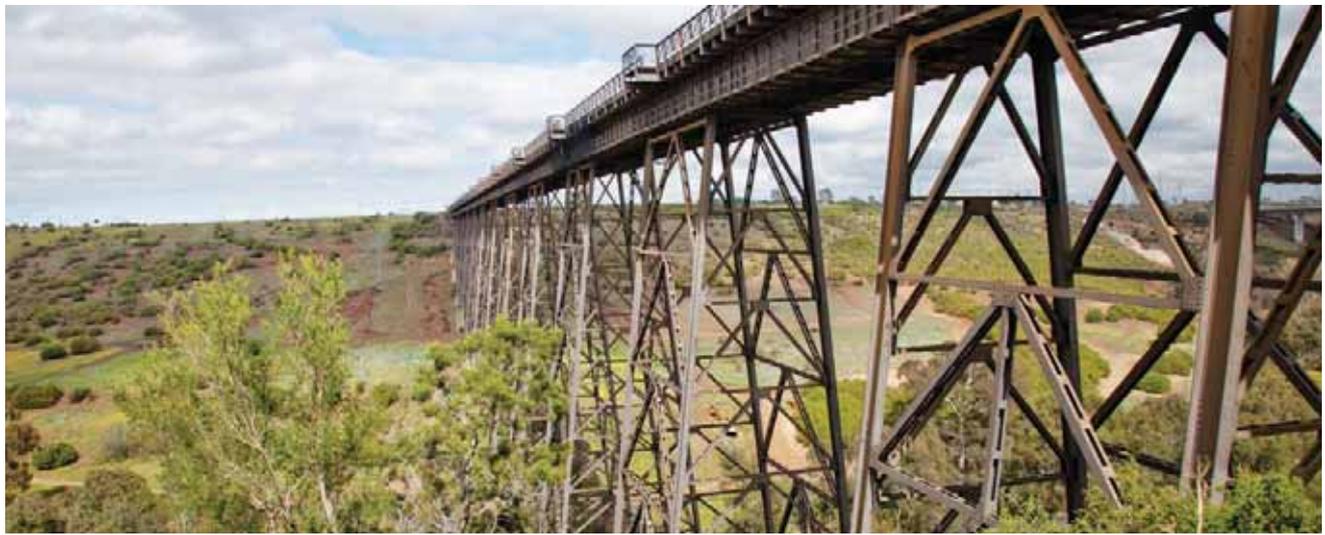
The MoU provides for public use of Footscray Wharf on the basis that PoMC has secured the Anne Street Pier in Williamstown for Port services. The intention is for redevelopment of Footscray Wharf to improve public amenity. A commercial marina is the preferred use subject to commercial viability, mooring capacity and public benefit. The shared trail along this stretch of the river will be retained near the wharf.

The MoU also provides for consideration of improved landscape treatment to enhance the appearance and function of Port of Melbourne and industrial areas to the south, retention of the freight rail line, upgrading of the riverfront at the end of Francis Street, and further investigation of a non-riverfront bike path route between Napier and Francis Streets.

Within the Port length of the river, which encompasses the Coode Island chemical storage facility and container terminal on the east bank and Yarraville wharves and industries such as CSR and Mobil on the west bank, public access is not possible.

South of Footscray Wharf, the preferred route for a shared path linking the Maribyrnong Trail and the Bay Trail has been defined and is under construction. Ideally, this link would follow the western bank of the river but as this is not possible due to Port of Melbourne operations, an alternative inland route has been identified with provision for landscaping and connections and views to the river.

There is also an opportunity to maximise views of Port of Melbourne activities, including spectacular night-time views of illuminated port and industrial activity.



### **Investigate an Upper Maribyrnong Linear Park**

Creating an open space link between Brimbank Park and the Organ Pipes National Park is a long term priority in the Parks Victoria's 2002 strategy, *Linking People and Spaces*.

In 1991, Melbourne Water suggested a boundary for this proposed linear park in its *Upper Maribyrnong Concept Plan* but the recommendations, including areas recommended for public acquisition, were not acted on.

Due to the length of time since this study was done, it is necessary to review these recommendations carefully to see whether the suggested boundary is still appropriate and determine the objectives of a future open space link.

### **Undertake strategic planning in Sunshine North**

There are sites of significant vegetation on the basalt plain adjacent to the Maribyrnong River Valley in Sunshine North. The valley slopes in these areas are steep and also contain remnant escarpment vegetation.

Riverside open space would normally be created by negotiating the transfer of land as an 'open space contribution' when it is developed. However this approach may not be sufficient to protect significant vegetation in this area and prevent further development on the escarpment.

Resolution of open space and native vegetation issues in Sunshine North is important to protect the valued characteristics of the river corridor in this area and its significant native vegetation. Detailed planning has been undertaken with the completion of the Brimbank Escarpment Study in March 2009 in areas of Sunshine North to address open space issues along the river between Orbital Drive and Balfour Avenue, including the remaining undeveloped section of the River Valley Estate.

Some public acquisition of land will be necessary to ensure the long term protection of areas of native vegetation and to maintain the remaining escarpment land free of urban development. Other mechanisms, such as licences and agreements, also need to be investigated and may form part of an overall solution.

While it is no longer feasible to acquire a wide public open space corridor in areas currently undergoing (or approved for) residential development, it is appropriate that buildings are set back as far as practicable to maintain the open landscape area alongside the waterway.

### **Complete detailed planning for the Defence Site Maribyrnong**

Detailed planning for the Defence Site Maribyrnong will occur when the land is officially transferred from the Federal Government to VicUrban following extensive site remediation.

In April 2009 the Victorian Premier, John Brumby, announced a Federal-State partnership to build a new suburb on the site comprising more than 3,000 new homes. This development will open up three kilometres of river frontage to the public. Key open space issues that need to be considered as part of this development are:

- > panoramic views over the river valley and linking areas of open space into one continuous valley landscape
- > trail links from these high vantage points down into and across the valley and connecting these to riverside trails
- > protecting and enhancing biodiversity
- > making the terracing escarpment a significant landscape feature and using it as a natural boundary, defining a more secluded riverside landscape along the valley floor
- > integrating the heritage of the site (buildings and landforms) into wider parkland accessible by walking and cycling from both sides of the river
- > investigating the potential for a pedestrian/bicycle bridge to connect the trail system and parks on the opposite bank
- > investigating the potential for riverside activity nodes such as rowing boat and canoe/kayak landing facilities
- > resolving what to do with the levee bank at the flood-prone 'horseshoe bend' taking account of flooding, site remediation and redevelopment – whether to remove it or retain it as a landscape feature and screening element
- > complete a major 3km gap in the linear trail along the Maribyrnong side of the river.

Part of the challenge of the Defence Site Maribyrnong redevelopment will be to optimise the recreation and conservation potential of this part of the river. VicUrban and Maribyrnong City Council have already identified the need for an Urban Design Framework to consider the balance between enhancing views to the river and retaining the secluded feeling of the area.

### **Investigate open space options between Canning Street rock ford and Waterford Green**

Open space along the southern bank of the river between the Canning Street rock ford and Waterford Green in Maidstone (immediately south of Cordite Avenue) needs to be reviewed to ensure long term security of access.

This will become increasingly important as the Defence Site Maribyrnong is redeveloped and the river frontage is opened up north of Cordite Avenue. While the only gap in public access is the eastern frontage of the Medway Golf Club, some river frontage land in the vicinity of Burke Street (west of Cranwell Park) is in private ownership, which means long term public access is not guaranteed. Potential expansion of existing open space also needs to be considered in this location with a view to protecting the valley escarpment.

### **Increase public open space at Fisher Parade and Hobsons Road**

As properties are being redeveloped along Fisher Parade, a strip of private land adjacent to the river is being transferred to public ownership. This is being achieved through negotiations between Moonee Valley City Council and developers.

River frontage in the vicinity of Flemington Racecourse and Hobsons Road is now in public ownership and opportunities to enlarge the amount of public open space along this frontage should be sought.

## Enlarge the open space corridor

Action	Responsibility	Priority
1. Investigate the boundaries for the proposed Upper Maribyrnong River Linear Park as part of developing the <i>Green Wedge Management Plans</i> .	Hume and Brimbank City Councils, DSE, Parks Victoria	Immediate – Brimbank Short term – Hume
2. Undertake detailed strategic planning in Sunshine North between Orbital Drive and Balfour Avenue, to establish preferred land uses and identify areas of open space and native vegetation to be protected.	Brimbank City Council, DPCD, DSE	Immediate (underway)
3. Investigate mechanisms to protect remaining, undeveloped Brimbank escarpment land including seeking funds for acquisition for public open space.	DPCD, DSE, Brimbank City Council	Immediate
4. Following disposal of the Defence Site Maribyrnong by the Federal Government, prepare an integrated landscape and development strategy for future development of the entire site. This strategy must ensure public open space is set aside along the entire length of the river corridor.	Maribyrnong City Council, DPCD	Immediately following disposal of site by the Federal Government
5. Seek funding options for the acquisition, from the Medway Golf Club, of a narrow strip of land suitable for a shared path alongside the river, east of the footbridge.	DSE, DPCD, Maribyrnong City Council	Immediate
6. Review open space provision and ownership between Cranwell Park and the rock ford with a view to enlarging public open space to protect the escarpment and transferring any private river frontage land to public ownership.	Maribyrnong City Council, DSE, DPCD	Short term
7. Investigate the optimum non-riverfront route for a shared path south of Lyons Street linking the Maribyrnong Trail with the Bay Trail south of the West Gate Bridge.	Maribyrnong City Council, PoMC	Completed
8. Upgrade landscaping and access where there is public access to the river at the eastern end of Francis Street.	PoMC, Maribyrnong City Council	Short term
9. Investigate opportunities for landscape treatment of the riverfront and improvements to local amenity, transport and access between Lyons Street and Francis Street on the western side.	PoMC	Short term
10. Seek opportunities to provide spectacular views of Port activities, consistent with safety and security requirements, on both sides of the river.	PoMC	Short term

# Map 4: Open space actions

