

CHAPTER 07 LIVEABILITY

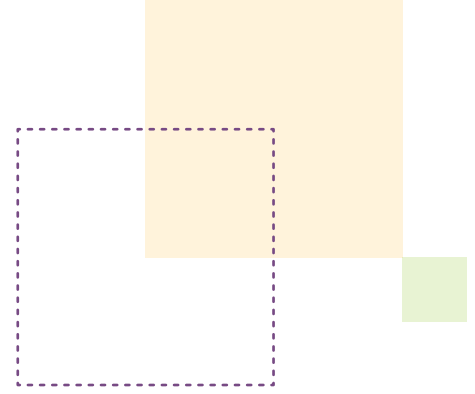


Plan Melbourne Outcome 4:
Melbourne is a distinctive and
liveable city with quality design
and amenity

'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.



Photo credit: Tim Bell Studio



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 Western Metro Region is renowned for its distinctive and varied landscapes, which have high amenity, tourism and biodiversity values. The region has high cultural significance for Aboriginal people and a rich post-European settlement heritage. Its regional-scale open spaces and biodiversity areas include major waterways, the Port Phillip Bay coastline and grasslands of the Western Plains. It is vital that places of natural and cultural value are protected into the future. This is particularly important given the projected population growth in the region whereby these places may come under increasing pressure either for visitation or redevelopment.

State of play

Landscapes and biodiversity

The Western Metro Region is defined by its open and flat topography which is punctuated by volcanic hills and cones, rivers, creeks and valleys. Mountain ranges define the region’s northern extent, with the coastline of Port Phillip Bay defining the region to the south.

The region’s key landscapes and biodiversity areas are described in **Table 13**.

TABLE 13. Key landscapes and biodiversity areas in the Western Metro Region

LANDSCAPE AND BIODIVERSITY AREA	SIGNIFICANCE, PROTECTION, AND MANAGEMENT
Port Phillip Bay coastline	The region’s coastline features beaches at Williamstown, Newport and Altona, wetlands, estuaries, cliffs and coastal reserves. Places of high significance include Truganina Coastal Parklands, Cheetham Wetlands and Point Cook Coastal Park and Marine Sanctuary.
Wetlands	The Cheetham Wetlands and Western Treatment Plant form part of the Port Phillip Bay (Western Shoreline) and Bellarine Peninsula Ramsar Site which is recognised as a wetland of international significance.
Victorian Volcanic Plains	<p>The Victorian Volcanic Plains is a widespread area of natural temperate grasslands which stretch from Melbourne to the South Australian border and encompass the northern and the western parts of the Western Metro Region.</p> <p>The plains are home to the contiguous Western Plains Grasslands ecosystem. They are the largest remnant of volcanic plains grasslands in Australia which also include ephemeral wetlands, waterways, red gum swamps, rocky knolls and open grassy woodlands. The Western Grasslands Reserve has been set aside to protect this highly valuable ecosystem and will eventually total 15,000 hectares.</p>
Mountain foothills and volcanic cones	The topography rises up in northern parts of the region into the foothills of the Toolern Vale Hills and the Pyrete Range. Volcanic cones of Mount Cottrell, Mount Kororoit and Mount Atkinson punctuate the flat topography of the volcanic plain. These elevated areas provide expansive views across Melbourne and Port Phillip Bay.

LANDSCAPE AND BIODIVERSITY AREA	SIGNIFICANCE, PROTECTION, AND MANAGEMENT
Waterways	<p>The Western Metro Region features a network of creek corridors throughout its green wedges, growth corridor and urban areas.</p> <p>The five major natural waterways that run through the Green Wedge are the Laverton Creek, Skeleton Creek, Lollypop Creek, Little River and Werribee River.</p> <p>These waterways provide significant habitat for land and aquatic species, such as the Growling Grass Frog, and in many places form part of the existing, or potential future, connected open space system through existing urban areas, green wedges and growth areas.</p> <p>The open spaces formed around the landscape features of the Maribyrnong and Werribee river corridors and the coastline of Port Phillip Bay are identified in Plan Melbourne as regionally-significant networks of water's edge parklands.</p>
Werribee River	<p>The Werribee River is also a significant ecosystem which features river red gums, the Graham's Reserve estuary, the K Road Cliffs, and spectacular views across its flood plain to the You Yangs and Brisbane Ranges.</p> <p>The Growling Grass Frog inhabits a section of the growth corridor along the lower Werribee River. Land will continue to be acquired where possible to create a 15,000 hectare parkland to protect and manage this landscape.</p>
Forested areas	<p>Areas of heavily vegetated forest exist within the region, located across hilltops or near waterway corridors. These forested areas are important enclaves of remnant indigenous vegetation. Forested areas also include a section of the Lerderderg State Park which is located within the western part of the region.</p> <p>Other areas which have federal or state protected flora and fauna include Djerriwarrh Creek, Toolern Vale Hills and Long Forest Flora and Fauna Reserve which contain important remnant native Mallee vegetation.</p>

The waterways, numerous small tributaries and wetland areas of the Western Metro Region include areas of cultural heritage and provide habitat for significant native flora, native frog and fish species, and other fauna. Waterways ultimately discharge into Port Phillip Bay, including the Western Shoreline internationally recognised Ramsar wetlands. This necessitates a high level of control over the quality and quantity of surface water and discharge. Opportunities exist to create biodiversity corridors between waterways, utilising public or private land.

Waterways in the region's urban areas have been heavily impacted by development and industry which has resulted in the loss of habitat and contamination in some areas. The *Waterways of the West Action Plan* (to be released in 2021) is a plan to protect and rehabilitate rivers, creeks and coastal wetlands, including the Maribyrnong (Mirrangbamurn), Moonee Ponds (Moonee Moonee) and Werribee (Wirribi Yaluk) catchments and their parklands.

It will include a community-developed vision, promote the waterways' amenity and significance and ensure the Traditional Owners are included

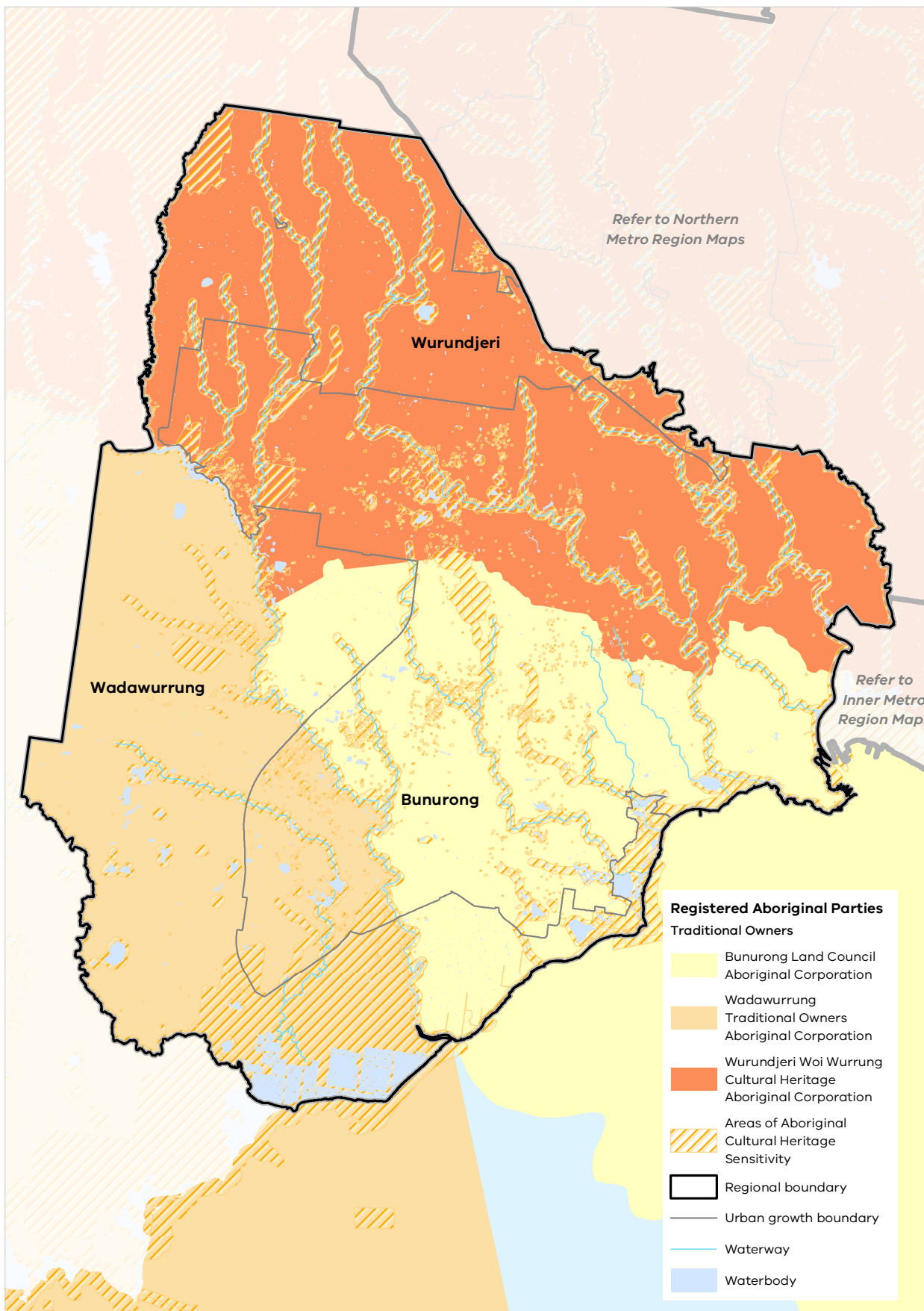
in management and planning. It will identify opportunities for revegetation, improved open space and new connections.

Aboriginal cultural heritage

The lands that now make up the Western Metro Region feature places and waterways which have cultural significance and continuing connection for Traditional Owners, illustrated in recognised locations of Cultural Heritage Sensitivity (Figure 19).

The Wadawurrung people, represented by the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation, are the recognised Traditional Owners of the southwest part of the Western Region. The Wurundjeri people, represented by Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, are the recognised Traditional Owners of the north of the region. The Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation are the recognised Traditional Owners of the southeast part of the region. As Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs), these corporations have responsibilities to protect cultural heritage assets under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*.

FIGURE 19. Western Metro Region Aboriginal cultural heritage



Heritage and visitor places

Heritage sites in the Western Metro Region mark historic and culturally significant events and places, reflecting the region's diversity and providing a range of cultural experiences. Key cultural assets that contribute to the character of the region include the Werribee Mansion, Overnewton Castle and historic Keilor Hotel, Jack's Magazine and the 19th century streetscapes and maritime heritage of Williamstown. The region's industrial and agricultural legacy, as well as its gateway role to pastoral areas in regional Victoria, is reflected in heritage-protected places such as its historic factories, bridges and infrastructure. Early hotels, which began their lives as wayside stops or places of accommodation for travellers, are still evident today. The highly distinctive dry stone walls and European 'shelter belts' (lines of large-scale trees to protect against the wind) criss-cross the remaining areas of rural landscape, representing its agricultural history. The inner western suburbs also feature riverside industrial development, Victorian villa housing and strip shopping streets integrated with railway stations and prominent hotels.

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 110 places of state heritage significance listed on the Victorian Heritage Register, as shown in **Map 7**. These include a wide range of sites: major water infrastructure for metropolitan Melbourne of the Main Outfall Sewer, water supply systems and tanks; homesteads, pastoral runs and farm buildings, such as Eynesbury Homestead and Werribee Mansion; stone bridges, trestle bridges and railway viaducts; churches, schools, civic buildings; factories and warehouses; residential development.

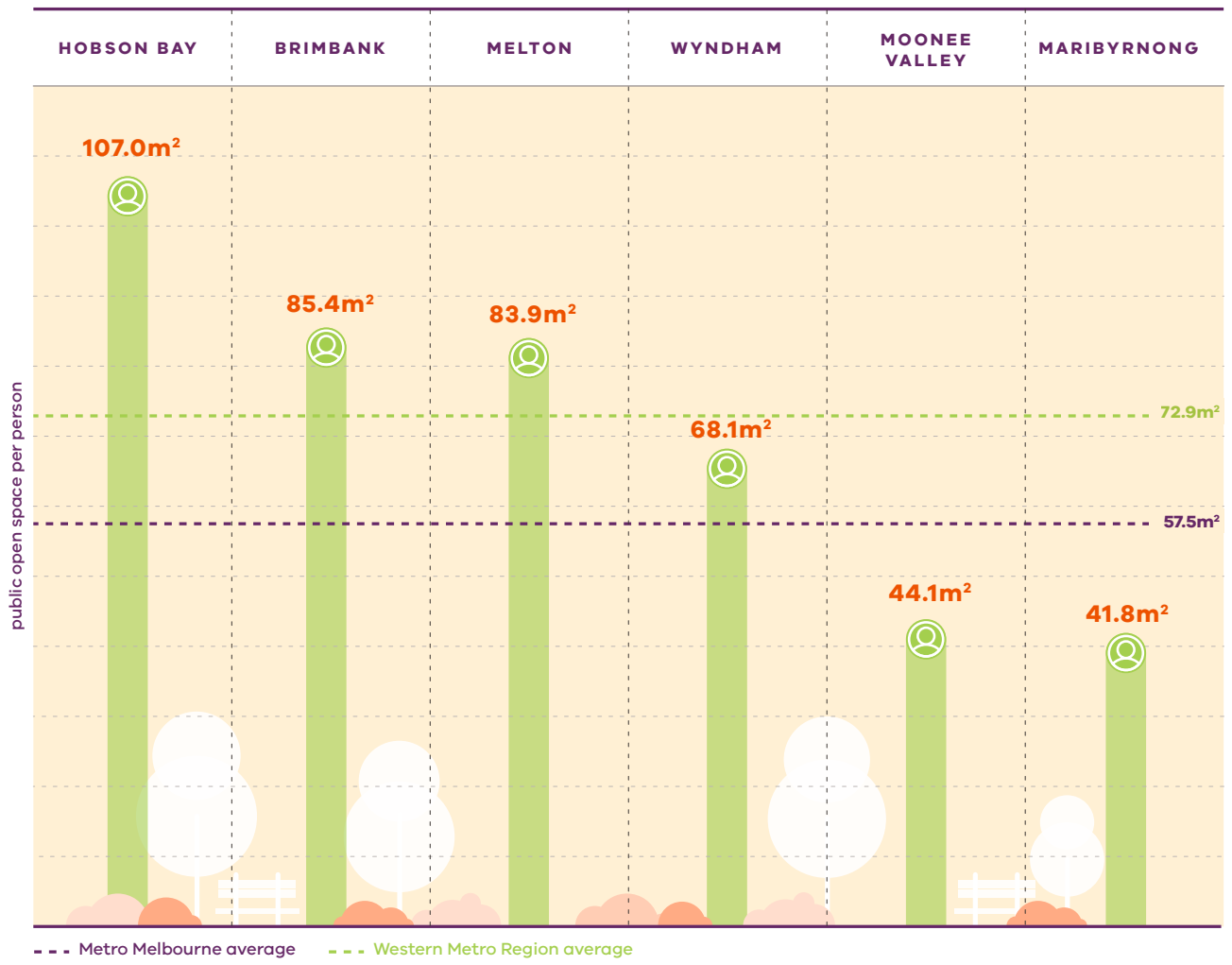
The cultural heritage of the region contributes to its sense of place and provides opportunities for developing the visitor economy. Tourism assets include Werribee Zoo, Werribee Township Regional Park, Scienceworks, Seaworks, The Substation in Newport and the beaches of Altona, Williamstown and Point Cook. The Ramsar wetlands at Western Treatment Plant is a significant nature-based tourism asset for the region.

Arts and creative activities provide opportunities for community expression, innovation and improved health and wellbeing. Emerging creative hubs include a range of events, places and spaces, such as the Wyndham Arts Incubator, the Clocktower Centre, Hunt Club Community Arts Centre and Gallery and the Footscray Community Arts Centre. There are opportunities for the Western Metro Region to continue to expand its vibrant arts and cultural community; this is particularly important in creating a sense of community and place within the new growth area neighbourhoods.

Open space and regional trails

The Western Metro Region provides for an average of 72.9 square metres of public open space per person, which is greater than the metropolitan average of 57.5 square metres. However, there are significant differences in provision of open space between each LGA, ranging from 107 square metres per person in Hobsons Bay LGA to 41.8 square metres within Maribyrnong LGA. Open space per person for the Western Metro Region LGAs is shown in **Figure 20**. Open space per person across metropolitan Melbourne is shown in **Figure 20**.

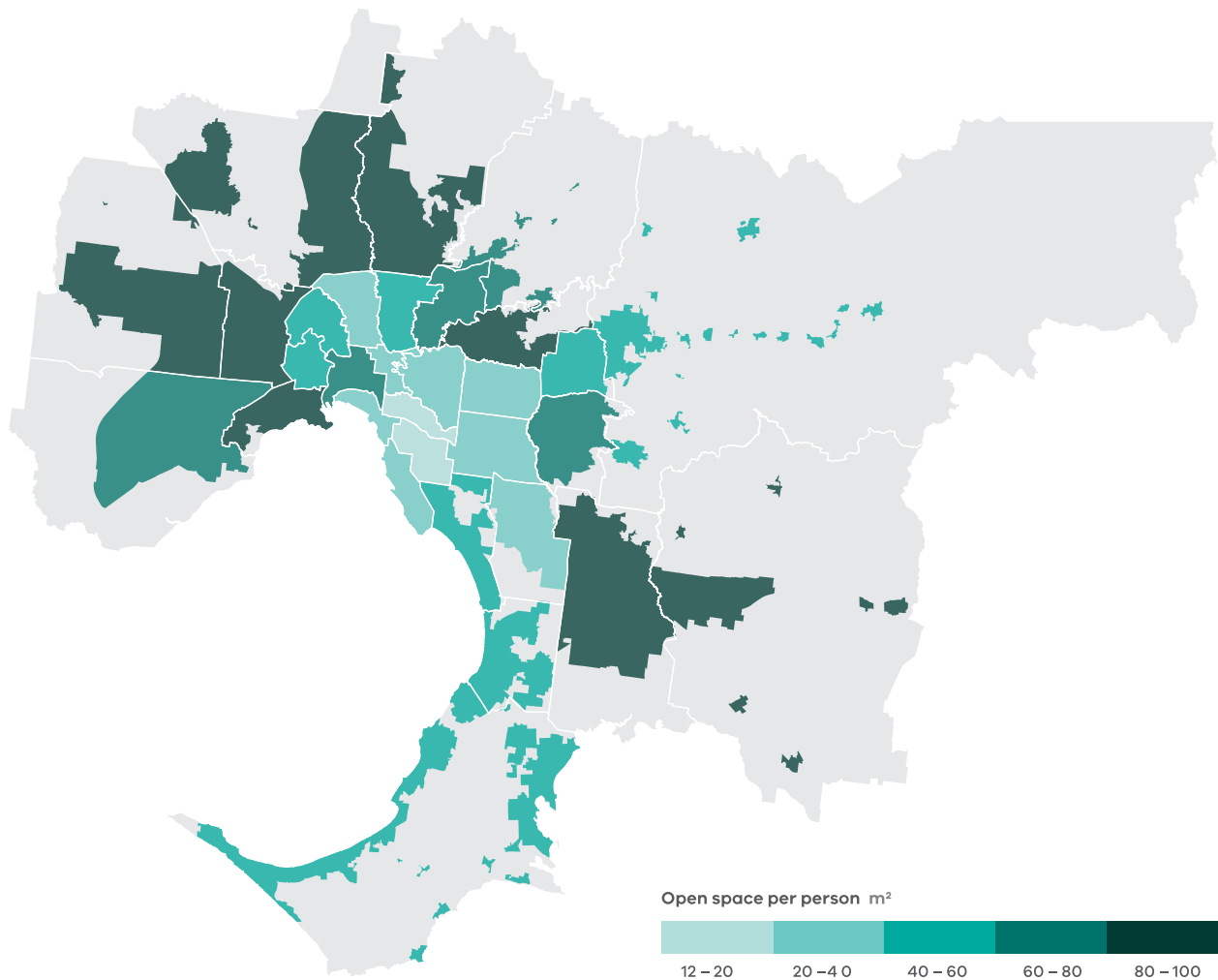
FIGURE 20. Open space per person for Western Metro Region LGAs



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



Photo credit: Tim Bell Studio

FIGURE 21. 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.

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.

There are several major projects underway to improve open space opportunities and link open space networks across the Western Metro Region.

The Greening the Pipeline project will create a new 27-kilometre parkland along the heritage-listed Main Outfall Sewer between Spotswood and Werribee, which currently comprises the Federation Trail. The project is being undertaken in sections and aims to ultimately transform the reserve into a green corridor, community space and active transport connection. The pilot section at Williams Landing has been completed.

The metropolitan open space strategy *Open Space for Everyone: Open Space Strategy for Metropolitan Melbourne 2020* identifies additional regional open space initiatives for the Western Metro Region:

- Through the suburban parks program, land will continue to be acquired to create proposed new regional parklands to support growing communities: Toolern Regional Park at Melton (110 hectares); Werribee River Park at Wyndham (276 hectares); Kororoit Creek Regional Park (260 hectares, including both grasslands conservation areas and active open space); and Werribee Township Regional Park (340 hectares)
- Zone 5 of the Greening the Pipeline project, a 3.8 kilometre section between Lawrie Emmins Reserve and Skeleton Creek in Wyndham
- Opportunities for improved open space and connections of significant waterways identified in *The Waterways of the West Action Plan*

- A review of public racecourses which will examine ways of optimising the public use of this land for other recreational opportunities including Moonee Valley and Flemington racecourses.

The Western Metro Region has an extensive network of interconnected trails located along creek corridors, freeway reservations and the coastline which are used for commuting and active recreation. Local councils within the region have identified opportunities to improve the trail network through the *West Trails Strategy*. A key priority is to improve the Federation Trail as a major east-west cycling route that connects Werribee to the CBD and joins with other north-south links such as the Werribee River Trail and Kororoit Creek Trail.

Regional strengths

- The region's character is defined by its distinctive landscapes and environmental assets of volcanic plains and cones, grasslands, waterways, clusters of forest, wetlands and coastline.
- There are significant opportunities to work with Traditional Owners to protect and enhance the region's landscapes, cultural heritage, environmental assets and biodiversity values.
- Significant potential exists for tourism and cultural development to create vibrant, attractive urban environments.
- The region's open space and trail network could be expanded and better connected around its waterways and coastline, and through growth areas.

Regional challenges

- Additional open space is required to meet the needs of the growing population, as well as improved access to open space, particularly by walking and cycling.
- Ongoing protection of the region's natural, built and cultural heritage is essential, given the pressure for development, particularly in growth areas.
- There is a lack of access to and diversity of community and cultural facilities to meet the needs of the region's communities and visitors.
- Improved parks and walking and cycling networks are needed to give people better access to the region's natural environment and to promote active living.

Directions and strategies

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





Direction 17	Draw on the region's cultural heritage to create its future sense of place and identity
Direction 18	Protect and enhance the landscapes and biodiversity of the Western Metro Region
Direction 19	Strengthen the open space network to support community access and connection to nature
Direction 20	Create a legacy of great public spaces

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






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

MAP 7. Western Metro Region liveability 2050

Precincts and Activity Centres

-  Metropolitan activity centre
-  Major activity centre
-  Victorian Heritage Register Site
-  Community/tourism site






Transport

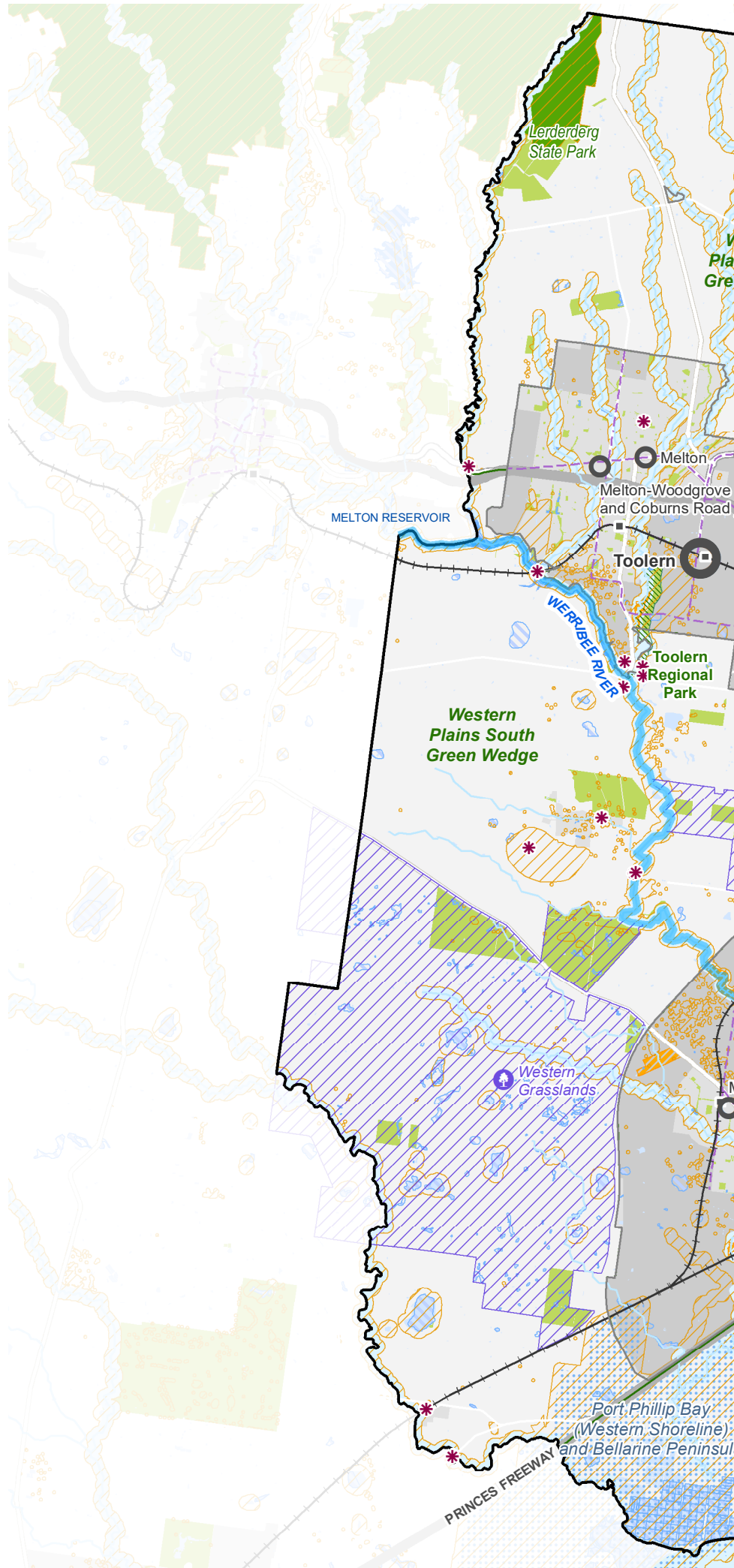
-  State-significant road corridor
-  Road network
-  Train station
-  Rail network
-  Strategic Cycling Corridor

Environment

-  Conservation areas in the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy
-  Conservation reserve - emerging
-  National park/state park
-  Western Grassland Reserve
-  Regional Park - expanded/improved
-  Regional Park - proposed
-  Future regional active open space
-  Public open space
-  Marine/coastal national parks and reserves
-  Greening the Pipeline reserve - under construction
-  Landscape values within growth corridor
-  Wetlands
-  Ramsar wetlands
-  Water's edge parkland
-  Waterway and waterway corridor
-  Wastewater treatment plant
-  Reservoir
-  Waterbody
-  Areas of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Sensitivity

Land use/Administration

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



Location Map

Map ID	Community/tourism site
1	Western Treatment Plant
2	Werribee Park Mansion
3	Point Cook RAAF Museum and Air Base
4	Werribee Zoo
5	Werribee Township Regional Park
6	Altona Beach
7	Williamstown Beach
8	Seaworks
9	Historic Williamstown
10	The Substation
11	Scienceworks
12	Footscray Wharf
13	Footscray Community Arts Space
14	Footscray Park
15	Flemington Racecourse
16	Jack's Magazine
17	Moonee Valley Racecourse
18	Brimbank Park
19	Keilor Village and Overnewton Castle
20	Organ Pipes National Park



DIRECTION 17. **Draw on the region's cultural heritage to create its future sense of place and identity**

The Western Metro Region's rich cultural heritage provides a strong legacy for creating distinctive places which foster community pride and a sense of place.

For the Wadawurrung people, partnerships in Caring for Country must be guided by principles that include: respect and acknowledgement for Wadawurrung Traditional Owners' cultural, ancestral, spiritual and historical connections to Country; Wadawurrung people's right to access and care for Country as an expression of their cultural obligation, responsibilities connectedness, well-being and as their economic basis; and that Country is interconnected, alive with dreaming and creation stories, imprinted with cultural values and social history – there is no separation between cultural and natural resources and people.

Further engagement with Traditional Owners is important to fully recognise the cultural significance of places and landscapes (such as the Maribyrnong River, Kororoit Creek, Laverton Creek, Skeleton Creek, Lollypop Creek, Stony Creek and Moonee Ponds Creek). Places will be protected by collaborative efforts between new and existing stakeholders and all tiers of government (including Aboriginal Victoria and catchment management authorities).

The *Waterways of the West project* will enable Traditional Owners to play a key role in determining the ongoing management of these environments. It will also set the foundation for the integration of waterways into the urban environment as linked parkland and amenity corridors, and for establishing future planning controls to protect them from development impacts.

The post-European settlement heritage of the Western Metro Region is also an integral aspect of its environment and reflects a diversity of social values and customs. The region's legacy of agriculture and industry, as well as its role as a gateway to western Victoria, can be seen in the port facilities, historic factories, warehouses and silos which remain today.

Planning for places of cultural heritage sensitivity and post-settlement heritage is vital given the pressure for urban expansion and redevelopment across the region.

Providing community gathering places and spaces for festivals and events will further activate local areas. Alongside their intrinsic value, cultural assets and events also enhance the visitor economy and add to the vibrancy of the Western Metro Region. The region's history needs to be protected for the way it contributes to a sense of place as well as visitor economy opportunities.

STRATEGY 65. Reflect the different layers and aspects of the region's history in the design of its major buildings, new communities and public spaces.

STRATEGY 66. Support places of assembly and multi-use community spaces to provide for community gatherings, festivals, arts and events in the established urban areas and the growth areas.

STRATEGY 67. Work with Traditional Owners, stakeholders and government to identify and protect places of cultural heritage significance.

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

The distinctive and diverse landscapes of the Western Metro Region – volcanic plains and cones, grasslands, mountain ranges, remnant forests, waterways and coastline – contribute to its character and liveability, its biodiversity and the health and wellbeing of its residents.

Throughout the region, the cultural and environmental values of its landscapes and biodiversity areas should be protected from the visual impact of development or infrastructure. While many of the key landscapes in the region, including large areas of grasslands, major waterways and the coastline, are protected through existing legislation and planning policy, some aspects of the landscape and environmental significance require greater protection and management.

The region's four green wedge areas of the Western Plains North, Western Plains South, Werribee South and Sunbury (part) contain a mix of non-urban uses providing important natural resources, food resources, essential infrastructure and industries, as well as lifestyle housing options and recreational assets. These natural landscape features and parts of the green wedge areas have high amenity and biodiversity values that must be protected.

The Western Growth Corridor contains extensive sites of significant biodiversity value. The Melbourne Strategic Assessment is an agreement with the Commonwealth to set aside land with the highest biodiversity values from urban development within Melbourne's growth corridors. 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 Western Growth Corridor large areas of habitat remain for threatened fauna species of the Golden Sun Moth, Growling Grass Frog and Striped Legless Lizard. Nationally important plants such as Spiny Rice Flower and Large Fruit Groundsel have been identified. Habitat set aside for these species includes the key waterways of the Werribee River, Kororoit Creek and its tributaries, and Lollypop and Davis creeks, as well as Deanside Wetlands and Point Cook Swamp.

Areas of significant grasslands have also been identified. While some are currently protected within reserves or by planning overlays, a much wider area of protection will be achieved in the future through the creation or extension of grasslands reserves. This includes the Western Grasslands Reserve and Kororoit Creek Regional Park Grasslands Reserve.

Important landscape features within the growth corridor should also be protected into the future and incorporated into the design of new neighbourhoods. This includes:

- The region's waterways which form a natural drainage system and the spine of the open space network connecting different parts of the corridor in both visual and landscape terms. The Werribee River and Kororoit, Skeleton/Dry, Davis and Lollipop creeks are particularly important
- Volcanic cones of Mount Atkinson and Mount Cottrell which are important landscape features within the Western Volcanic Plain. Urban areas will benefit from vistas to these features from a range of vantage points
- Distant views to the CBD, You Yangs, Brisbane Ranges and the Great Dividing Range
- Finer grained and recurring elements across the landscape such as dry stone walls and original 19th century mile grid subdivision pattern which should be incorporated into the new urban landscape where possible
- Retention of the rural character of areas adjoining the UGB. Planning and design along this interface must ensure activities do not adversely impact the function or amenity of the rural edges
- Incorporation of natural wetlands in the planning of new greenfield neighbourhoods.

The *Healthy Waterways Strategy 2018-28* is a shared strategy across Melbourne Water, state and local government, water corporations and the community and provides direction towards a regional vision for the health of rivers, estuaries and wetlands in the Port Phillip and Western Port region. It has identified a need to review planning protection of environmental and amenity values for waterways, including around wetlands and headwater streams (Melbourne Water, 2018). The strategy has nominated priority waterways for revegetation to improve waterway health and biodiversity values. Throughout the region, waterways make an important contribution to the sense of place across urban areas, green wedges and growth areas.

The alignment of the OMR road corridor will also affect waterways and flood plains and the passage of fauna through the landscape. These issues will need to be considered in development of stormwater systems servicing the Western Growth Corridor and the management of waterways.

It is important to maintain efforts to support ecosystem resilience in a changing climate including reducing potential impacts from urban uses and providing buffers where possible.

- STRATEGY 68.** Work with Traditional Owners to protect and enhance the landscape qualities and biodiversity of the region's volcanic plains and cones, grasslands, waterways and waterway corridors and coastline.
- STRATEGY 69.** Create breaks for vegetation and biodiversity in urban areas and along waterways and natural drainage networks to foster biodiversity links and provide an opportunity for escape to nature.
- STRATEGY 70.** Encourage the design of new buildings or neighbourhoods within green wedge areas and growth corridors to respond to the region's natural landscape features such as waterways and ridgelines.
- STRATEGY 71.** Maximise the opportunity to enhance the sense of place by incorporating the region's waterways into the design of new communities or urban renewal sites in established urban areas.
- STRATEGY 72.** Retain natural wetlands in the planning of new greenfield neighbourhoods to achieve significant liveability and biodiversity outcomes.
- STRATEGY 73.** Retain the rural character of land adjoining the UGB and provide buffers from areas of landscape or biodiversity sensitivity.

DIRECTION 19.

Strengthen the open space network to support community access and connection to nature

Plan Melbourne envisages a network of accessible, attractive and connected parklands, river corridors and green wedge areas, with shared trail networks. New parklands and cycling trails across the Western Metro Region will help achieve this vision.

Open Space for Everyone: Open Space Strategy for Metropolitan Melbourne 2020 envisions Melbourne as a city with a valued network of open spaces accessible to all, connected at the local and landscape scales. It focuses on innovation and adaptability to provide a diversity of open spaces that meet the needs of the community, while protecting and optimising the region's existing open space assets.

Current initiatives and investment in the region's open space network will increase the amount and quality of open space and improve connections across the shared trail network. This includes improved integration of the region's waterways and Port Phillip Bay coastline within the open space network, new or improved regional parks, and smaller open spaces in activity centres.

An integrated open space network plays a vital role in preserving the region's natural features, character and heritage, sustaining biodiversity, and nourishing healthy waterways.

Within the Western Growth Corridor, significant opportunities exist to create new active and passive recreation areas to address the open space needs of the broader region. Waterway corridors can serve as important environmental and recreational connections through the growth areas. Where possible, creation of new open space should optimise pedestrian access and recreational trail connections, link existing open spaces or open site frontages to a waterway or parkland.

The proposed Western Grassland Reserves will provide significant passive open space opportunities. Public access to these reserves will focus visitors into areas where the impact on biodiversity can be minimised.

- STRATEGY 74.** Facilitate and deliver major new investments in the regional active and passive open space network to respond to increased population and growth.
- STRATEGY 75.** Support the regional role of Port Phillip Bay, the green wedge areas, waterways and regional parklands as major open space and recreational assets for liveability, wellbeing and biodiversity.
- STRATEGY 76.** Extend the local and inter-regional trail network to connect open spaces with activity centres, residential neighbourhoods and the broader active transport network.
- STRATEGY 77.** Ensure urban renewal areas incorporate and provide for open space and recreational opportunities to support the future population in the area.

DIRECTION 20.

Create a legacy of great public spaces

Established areas of the inner west feature many well-loved public spaces, streets and precincts. This includes the Footscray Gardens, Mall and Market, Yarraville village and the Maribyrnong river frontage. Outer areas of Melton and Werribee also have vibrant town centres with key civic and community uses, a pedestrian-focused environment and distinctive character.

Creating distinctive places which foster community pride and a sense of place is essential in new design. This includes renewal of established urban areas, the construction of new transport infrastructure or the planning of new communities within the growth areas. The region's valued heritage and landscapes should be protected, celebrated and integrated into new design as key aspects of regional difference.

Existing and future activity centres in the Western Metro Region should be planned to support active and vibrant streetscapes and public spaces. The region's state-significant health and education precincts also have the potential to foster campus style development around walkable and attractive neighbourhoods.

State and local government have a role to play in creating high-quality public places when planning for centres and other public areas in the longer term through structure planning or precinct planning. Enhancing and creating great public spaces and streets should be integral to the future planning of Sunshine NEIC, Werribee NEIC, Footscray and the future Toolern Metropolitan Activity Centre and all major activity centres.

In planning for new communities in growth areas, a sense of place will be enhanced through the design of precincts around and orientated towards existing landscape or cultural features. This includes waterways, biodiversity corridors, volcanic cones, open spaces, grasslands and views to the You Yangs, Brisbane Ranges or Melbourne's CBD.

Town centres at Tarneit, Sayers Road and Leakes Road (Rockbank) adjoin, or are close to, waterways and can be designed to integrate these waterways into the character of the town. Waterways also provide opportunities for recreational trail connections between communities.

Within existing urban areas, large redevelopment sites should incorporate high-quality urban design and allow for pedestrian streets, open spaces and urban greening.

Major roads and streets can be designed as boulevards or green streets to enhance the sense of place in town centres, gateways or key neighbourhood connections. Design treatment could include wider cross-sections to allow for canopy tree planting, water sensitive urban design (WSUD) and adequate space within medians for separated pedestrian and cycle traffic.

Potential opportunities for creation of new boulevards in the Western Metro Region include:

- North-south connections between Wyndham and Melton via Hopkins and Tarneit roads
- East-west connections via Leakes and Dohertys Roads, Taylors Road and Hume Drive in Tarneit
- A boulevard link from Sunshine and Footscray to central Melbourne via the Ballarat Road corridor.

STRATEGY 78. Identify, enhance and protect existing places and spaces that have high civic or public value, and which contribute to people's understanding, interaction and enjoyment of the region.

STRATEGY 79. Identify opportunities for smaller parks and plazas within all activity centres, and the creation of active street spaces that foster outdoor life and a sense of community connection.

STRATEGY 80. Enable the creation of new public spaces and active streetscapes within the planning and design of future town centres, such as Toolern Metropolitan Activity Centre.

STRATEGY 81. Facilitate the creation of active streets, new urban spaces and urban greening within the redevelopment of urban renewal sites within established urban areas.

ACTIONS – Liveability

ACTION 12. Develop a plan to implement a publicly owned and managed network of regional trails and open spaces across the region's growth corridor, using its natural drainage system where possible to link open spaces, biodiversity areas, waterways and urban areas.

ACTION 13. Prepare a regional biodiversity strategy to protect, manage and enhance habitat corridors and increase their interconnectivity across urban and rural areas.

ACTION 14. Review local planning schemes in the Western Metro Region to ensure protection and enhancement of the landscape and biodiversity values of the region.



Photo credit: Tim Bell Studio