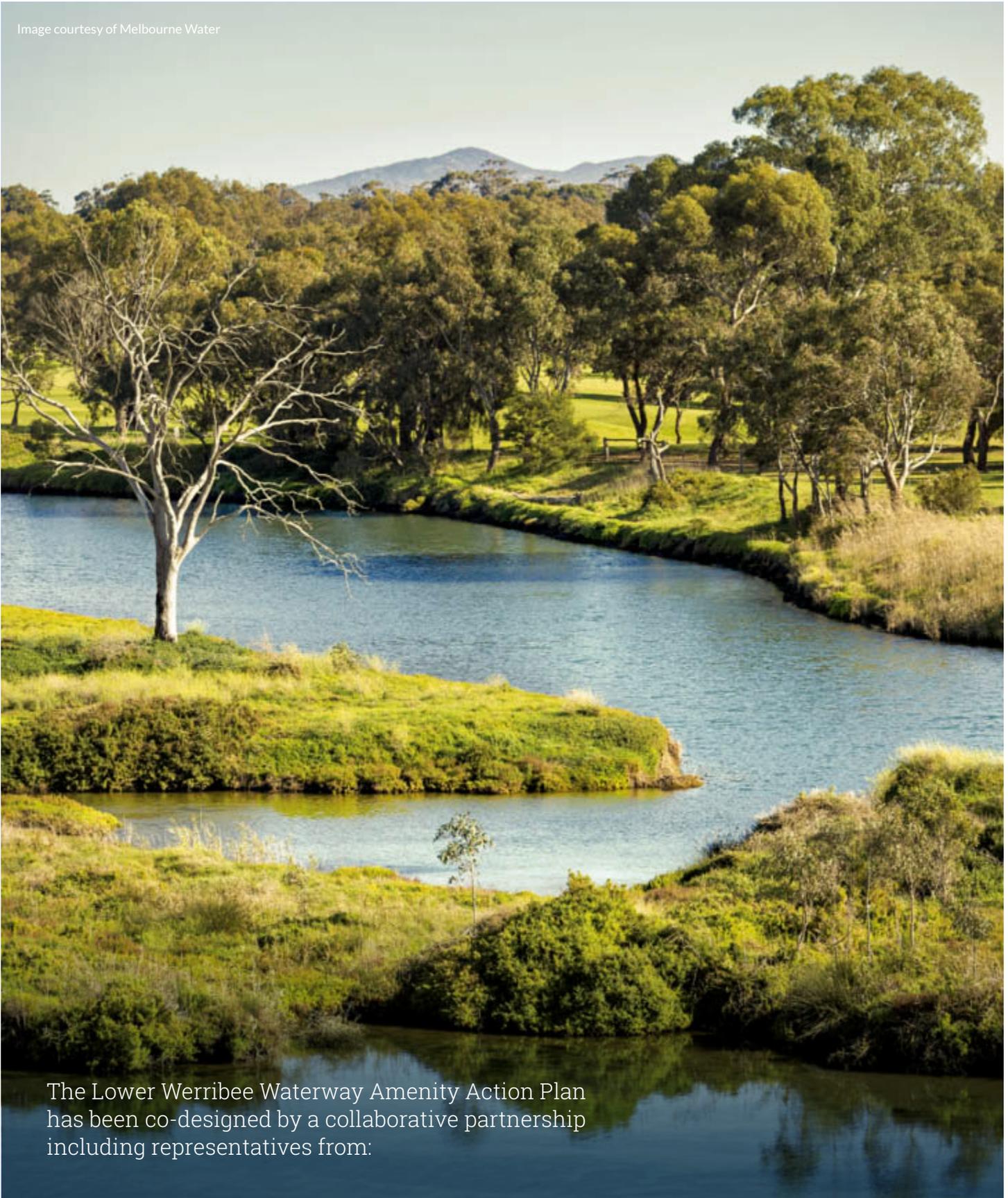


# Lower Werribee Waterway Amenity Action Plan

January 2022

Image courtesy of Melbourne Water



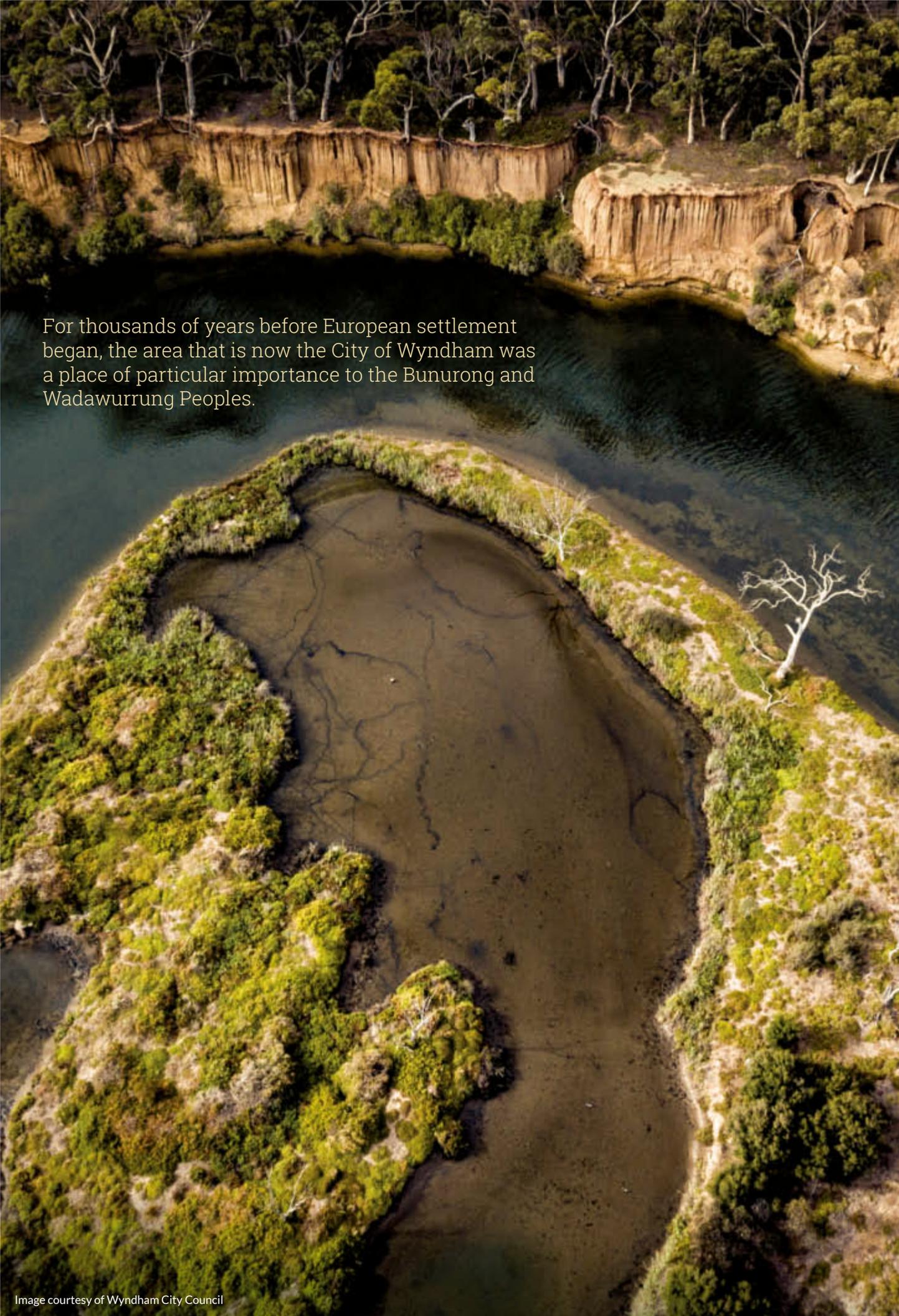
The Lower Werribee Waterway Amenity Action Plan has been co-designed by a collaborative partnership including representatives from:



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For thousands of years before European settlement began, the area that is now the City of Wyndham was a place of particular importance to the Bunurong and Wadawurrung Peoples.

## Wadawurrung foreword

**Wirribi means spine, as the shape of the river is like a spine, Wirribi Yaluk means the Werribee River. The river starts in the Great Dividing Ranges.**

The Wadawurrung People who lived and were responsible for caring for this part of Country were the Marpeang bulluk group of the Wadawurrung. For thousands of years before European settlement began, the area that is now the City of Wyndham was a place of particular importance to Wadawurrung People.

The boundaries between different social groups were commonly marked by

natural features such as streams or mountain ranges. Wirribi Yaluk was a boundary between the estates of the Wadawurrung and the Bunurong language groups. Wadawurrung Country stopped at Wirribi Yaluk. If you crossed the river at Wirribi you entered into the Country of the Bunurong.

There was cultural respect, and authority in regards to the shared values of Wirribi Yaluk when there was a boundary. You only crossed your boundary by invitation via a message stick that would carry burnt markings to advise you when you were invited to the other group's Country.

When you arrived you would be cleansed and smoked, this was a Cultural practice by each group. The smoking is about cleansing your feet of your Country, cleansing of your spirit so you do not bring bad spirit or harm onto others Country and the smoking lets our ancestors and creator know we have visitors on Country, we ask them to watch over our visitors while on Country. We ask of visitors to respect and have no greed or do no harm. We therefore ask that you respect and care for the waters of Wirribi Yaluk, and the animals, vegetation and birds that find refuge in this corridor, and support the aspirations of this Plan.

## Foreword of the Bunurong people's Country

**Wirribi Yaluk forms the Western most boundary of the Bunurong people, but these boundaries are not as Europeans understand them now, they are where people's connection to place changes within the cultural landscape.**

This place marks a shared boundary with the Wadawurrung people. The Wirribi Yaluk bordered two Bunurong clans at the threshold of European colonisation, the Kurung-Jang-Balluk and Yalukit Willam, both groups were severely affected by early European colonisation. If you lose enough of something, what little you have left becomes so much more important. The Bunurong people were amongst the first Indigenous people in Victoria that were involved in cross-cultural entanglements with

Europeans, and although they were reduced to just a handful of individuals by the mid-1800s, they are still here, and continue to maintain our cultural obligations to care for the people, the flora and fauna, the lands and the waters within the Bunurong cultural landscape, which is alive with our stories.

The Wirribi Yaluk along with the other major waterways within Bunurong Country demonstrate the flow of life, health and purpose. Bunurong Elders today liken these waterways to a life's journey, from the merest trickle of moisture in the rain, flowing into a creek, to the fast clear rush of a large river that eventually flows to its end at the sea. Bunurong people are saltwater people and this connection between the sea and the hinterland is important.

The use of resources along the river followed a seasonal pattern that ebbed and flowed with people's needs. These resources were shared between the Wadawurrung and the Bunurong people and were mostly harvested in a sustainable way that allowed for future generations to also enjoy these important places. These resources have changed today, but rivers flow with the life force of Country and after heavy rain they cleanse the debris to eventually make the water clear and clean again.

Please join the Bunurong people in creating a future for all our children by helping to care for Country in a way that is more sustainable and that recognises the deep connection of Traditional Owners to this cultural landscape.

### A note about Language

In this document *Wirribi Yaluk* is used, being the Wadawurrung name for the Werribee River. The Bunurong word for creek is *Yallock*, and the Bunurong Traditional Owners have kindly supported the use of *Yaluk* in this document for simplicity. *Nerm* is the name for Port Phillip Bay for both Bunurong and Wadawurrung and Traditional Owners.

We acknowledge the Bunurong and Wadawurrung Peoples, the Traditional Owners of the east and west side

of Wirribi Yaluk respectively, and their Elders past and present as the original custodians of this region's lands and waters. We pay our respects to these Peoples past and present and to the ongoing living culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.



# 1. Introduction

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The Werribee Plains, through which Wirribi Yaluk (the Werribee River) now passes, has long been environmentally managed by the Bunurong Peoples and the Wadawurrung Peoples, to the east and west of Wirribi Yaluk respectively, and they continue as Traditional Owners for these lands and waters today.



Image courtesy of Melbourne Water

The movement to acknowledge and understand waterways as living and integrated natural entities, as demonstrated through the Draft *Yarra Strategic Plan 2020*, has led to enhanced appreciation of rivers in Melbourne's west and the need to protect their inherent natural and cultural values.

The beautiful and majestic Wirribi Yaluk lacks broad awareness of the value it provides and potential it offers to the surrounding community and visitors from afar. In a precinct with a fast growing population, need for additional green space, and a drying climate, the Wirribi Yaluk and its open spaces are a vital refuge.

The Lower Werribee Waterway Amenity Action Plan is an action of the *Waterways of the West Action Plan 2021*, which aims to improve waterway amenity to meet community expectations.

While it boasts a number of recent investments and well established landmarks, the Lower Wirribi Yaluk still suffers from a lack of access, connectivity, activity and visibility. It is an ideal location to test and demonstrate collaborative leadership to achieve multiple benefits (social, environmental, and economic) for the waterway and its community.

Natural assets such as waterways and open spaces have been crucial to community wellbeing during Covid-19 lockdowns as highlighted in the Victorian Government's new *Open Space for Everyone Strategy, 2021*. Our post-pandemic economic recovery can also be aided by building on visitation and activation of the river and parks.



Our vision: the Lower Wirribi Yaluk and its open spaces form the blue-green spine of Melbourne's West; it is connected, green and welcoming. The river attracts people from near and far to enjoy a rich variety of linked activities, and natural, wild spaces of escape, where they can learn about Country and how to care for it alongside the Bunurong and Wadawurrung Traditional Owners. The well-designed spaces bring communities together and support them to be healthy, active and deeply connected.

### 1.1 What we're trying to achieve

The Lower Werribee Waterway Amenity Action Plan, through a collaborative partnership of Traditional Owners, government and community organisations, articulates a strategic vision for improved amenity, cultural values, community access and activation along the Lower Wirribi Yaluk, and provides a prioritised action plan to achieve this vision.

The Lower Werribee Waterway Amenity Action Plan (the Plan) aims to:

- Respect and enable Bunurong and Wadawurrung Traditional Owner custodianship and longevity of traditional ecological knowledge
- Protect the unique values of the Lower Wirribi Yaluk and deliver on ground improvements for the community

- Promote Wirribi Yaluk and its open spaces as fantastic places to visit, and boost increased awareness and activation
- Identify short and longer-term opportunities for amenity improvements align these to existing strategies
- Realise multiple benefits from each related project, to improve social, environmental and economic outcomes for the precinct
- Build and showcase strong partnerships and ways of working together between multiple land and waterway managers

The Plan aligns with the *Waterways of the West Action Plan 2021* and its recommendations to improve amenity and waterway health in Melbourne's West.

### 1.2 Approach to developing the Plan

The Plan has been co-designed by a collaborative partnership including representatives from:

- Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation
- Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
- Melbourne Water
- Parks Victoria
- Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation
- Werribee Open Range Zoo
- Werribee River Association
- Western Melbourne Tourism Inc.
- Wyndham City Council

Additional key stakeholders who have been consulted in the development of the Plan include: Southern Rural Water; Greater Western Water; and Werribee Park Golf Club.

The partners have worked together to build inter-organisational trust and develop productive, enduring relationships to realise the shared vision.

The Plan is a supporting document to complement existing corporate plans and strategies. The Plan can support work towards our strategic objectives and is intended to be used to:

- Deliver on-ground improvements to amenity, access and activation
- Involve communities in delivery of actions
- Guide investment in capital works and operational plans
- Be used in building business cases and support funding applications

- Advocate for broader resources and promote awareness of Wirribi Yaluk
- Sustain ongoing collaboration between partners

### 1.3 What is already being done

Collectively, the project partners invest hundreds of thousands of dollars into Lower Wirribi Yaluk annually. Longstanding and ongoing community programs also give countless volunteer hours of community time to the improvement of the river and open space corridor.

The following works are underway or coming soon and demonstrate the level of commitment by the partners to enhancing the profile of the Wirribi Yaluk and its parks for all to enjoy.



Image courtesy of Werribee River Association

Work underway	Lead delivery partner
K Road Cliffs Masterplan works including parking, lookout and picnic areas	Wyndham City Council
Community revegetation programs focussed on Werribee River Park	Werribee River Association
'Visit Werribee and Surrounds' campaign to drive new visitation and build awareness of the region	Wyndham City Council
Strategic directions planning for Werribee Township Regional Park	Parks Victoria, DELWP
New river access and kayak landing at Werribee River Park	Melbourne Water, Parks Victoria, DELWP
Riparian revegetation works near Davis Creek (a Healthy Waterways Strategy priority area)	Melbourne Water
Werribee Open Range Zoo redevelopment including expanded and immersive visitor facilities and habitats	Werribee Open Range Zoo, Victorian Government
Secure gate and entry road upgrades at Werribee River Park	Parks Victoria, DELWP
Completion of the shared path connection beneath Maltby Bypass, closing a gap in the river trail	Development Victoria, Wyndham City Council
Community-led 'Be Waterways Smart' educational program, Litter Blitz, and Citizen Science projects	Werribee River Association

## 2. The Lower Werribee area

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The Lower Werribee Waterway Amenity Action Plan encompasses the Wirribi Yaluk corridor and adjacent public open space (current and future) from the western edge of the future Werribee Township Regional Park to the river mouth at Nerm (Port Phillip Bay).

The Bunurong and Wadawurrung Peoples are the Traditional Owners of the Werribee Plains, through which Wirribi Yaluk now passes, and continue as the primary guardians, keepers and knowledge holders of Aboriginal cultural heritage for these lands and waters today.

The area encompasses urban and rural landscapes, shifting from a wooded riverine corridor upstream, to a broad, open estuary at the river mouth. Much of the surrounding area has been cleared of natural vegetation and has been developed for residential or agricultural activity. These uses have contributed to a level of erosion, increased nutrient levels, and loss of habitat for aquatic life. Challenges for waterway health include the impacts of urban growth and the need to balance environmental and economic outcomes, given the high water demands for agriculture. Streamflow is a major issue, given the catchment's comparatively low rainfall, and reduced flows are worsened by the impacts of climate change.

At the north of the study area, at the confluence with Davis Creek the Wirribi Yaluk flows through established suburban reaches and contains stretches of open water above the Werribee Diversion Weir. It then passes through sections of riffles and islands before flowing through the Werribee Township and residential development under construction at Riverwalk Estate.

South of the Princes Freeway is the Werribee South Green Wedge Zone, containing the Werribee Open Range Zoo, Mansion, and Werribee Park. Downstream on the east side of the river the 3,100ha Werribee Intensive Agriculture Precinct dominates the landscape with market gardens; while the west bank contains Werribee River Park and the 10,500ha Western Treatment Plant. At the river mouth the estuary forms the eastern boundary of a large Ramsar-listed wetland system.

## 2.1 Land ownership and management

The project partners acknowledge the Bunurong Traditional Owners and Wadawurrung Traditional Owners' rights and obligations to care for Country, and their deep and continuing connection to Country and Wirribi Yaluk.

The waterway and its banks have been managed by Melbourne Water since 2005, when Melbourne Water's boundaries were extended to include the Wirribi Yaluk catchment.

Large areas of Crown Land adjacent to the waterway corridor are managed by Parks Victoria (such as the Werribee River Park) and the Werribee Open Range Zoo. Some private land is in the process of being acquired and reserved by DELWP for the future Werribee Township Regional Park.

Major areas of open space are also owned by Wyndham City Council, including Presidents Park, Wyndham Park and Chirnside Park. Other land remains Crown land without a designated manager, such as the land on the east side of the river between K Road Cliffs and the river mouth. The Plan highlights the need for further assessments to resolve some areas of land ownership and management to enable future improvements.

Large portions of the site contain planning overlays, including Heritage and Significant Landscape overlays. Actions or works in these areas may require additional approvals under the planning system. Many actions involve works in proximity to the waterway which will require Cultural Heritage Management Plans with associated conditions or recommendations. Project partners and agencies delivering any works are responsible for ensuring all appropriate project approvals are in place.

The area encompasses urban and rural landscapes, shifting from a wooded riverine corridor upstream, to a broad, open estuary at the river mouth.

The Werribee region is experiencing rapid growth and change. Planning for the lower Wirribi Yaluk corridor should consider the potential impacts of metropolitan Melbourne's urban growth and long term infrastructure requirements to ensure major projects in the region protect and enhance the values of the waterway and its open spaces into the future.



# 2.2 Landscape character description





### 1 Davis Creek Reach – suburban character

Established housing to the east fronts onto the linear open space which is mostly mown grass with some new tree planting but few facilities. It is a popular spot for locals to go down to the river edge. The trail runs parallel to the street while a generally narrow vegetated strip hugs the river banks, including majestic remnant River Red Gums. Just downstream of the Riverbend Historical Park, the Diversion Weir creates a wide open pool in the river suitable for canoeing.



### 2 Future Regional Park Reach – developing character

This area includes land to be acquired for the planned Werribee Township Regional Park (WTRP). The open, cleared land surrounding WTRP is planned for residential development subject to Precinct Structure Plans. To the south of WTRP is the existing Presidents Park, the largest open space in Werribee catering to a variety of active recreation and dog off-lead areas. The river is shallow below the Diversion Weir and widens to include a series of wooded islands.



### 3 Manorvale Reach – suburban character

Between Heaths Road and Cottrell Street, the river flows through the Manorvale area where established housing backs onto the linear open space, creating areas of poor surveillance, but also some high quality natural experiences. The open space contains mostly mown lawns. The path network in this area is well connected, with trails on both sides of the river, and is popular with local walkers.



### 4 Werribee Township Reach – urban character

The township lends an urban character with some buildings starting to address the river, which flows through an incised valley with rail and road crossings above. The recently upgraded Wyndham Park is a hub for a great range of open space activities, connected to the town via pedestrian bridges. Further along, Chirnside Park is a historical home of sporting activity and includes Bungey's Hole; the site of the historic Werribee Swimming Pool and a spot with great potential for an enhanced river experience.



### 5 Riverwalk Reach – developing character

Downstream of Chirnside Park the river is shallow, flowing between riffles, with well vegetated banks. Before the Princes Freeway the trail climbs the east escarpment to meet the Federation Trail and pipe bridge. A corner of light industry on the east side creates a poor interface to the river, with opportunity to improve fencing and landscape treatments. The large area of suburban development under construction at Riverwalk Estate will provide future open space and access (Yannyeweann Park) on the west side of the river.



### 6 Tourism Precinct Reach – Peri-urban character

South of the Princes Freeway, the Tourism Precinct contains popular destinations including the Werribee Open Range Zoo, Mansion and Rose Garden. The area combines visitor facilities and the surrounding agricultural character, with limited connection to Wirribi Yaluk. Extensive revegetation and majestic River Red Gums characterise the river flats through this reach. Just downstream the stunning K Road Cliffs, provide elevated views over the winding river, and are a popular destination for birdwatching and fishing.



### 7 River Regional Park Reach – open space character

On the east side of Wirribi Yaluk, the Werribee River Park entrance road, carpark, and trails feel remote. Dramatic open views to the south are revealed upon approach to the escarpment where a ramp connects down to a bridge crossing to the Tourism Precinct. Trail connections further south are limited by the adjacent Western Treatment Plant, which contains vast fields and treatment lagoons as well as Ramsar listed wetlands. The river is inaccessible in this section although some bird watching is allowed by permit.



### 8 River Mouth Reach – agricultural character

The South Werribee irrigation district is dominated by flat agricultural fields with little tree canopy. The river edge is not accessible as it transitions from the high escarpment at K Road Cliffs to the low salt marsh downstream. The wide estuary at the river mouth offers stunning views to the You Yangs and out over Nerm. The spot is popular for boating and fishing with good park and picnic facilities at JD Bellin Reserve. Fragile wetlands at Graham's Reserve support abundant birdlife.



Image courtesy of Wyndham City

### 2.3 Cultural heritage

The land on the west side of Wirribi Yaluk within the project area is Wadawurrung Country and the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation (WTOAC) is the Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) for these lands and waters. The land on the east side of Wirribi Yaluk within the project area is Bunurong Country and the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (BLCAC) is the RAP for these lands and waters. The lands and waters were essential to Bunurong and Wadawurrung Peoples' survival and culture; they were and are important meeting places and contain sites of high significance and sensitivity.

Both Bunurong and Wadawurrung Traditional Owner groups share a common and deep concern for caring for this Country, and for healing and renourishing its lands and waters from the ravages of colonisation and urbanisation. Healing, cleansing and purifying the waters is essential not just for the Yaluk but for all humans, animals and vegetation who access these waters, as well as for the ecological systems of Nerm that receives these waters.

To the Bunurong and Wadawurrung Peoples, their cultural heritage is both tangible and intangible, and possessing a temporality since time immemorial

and into the future. It is a living cultural heritage, deeply intertwined with their respective Country's lands, waters, seas, skies and beyond, and is not a static heritage.

The project partners recognise the need for further understanding of cultural values to better inform recommendations relating to cultural amenity and awareness. A Cultural Values Assessment for the river corridor would help to identify opportunities to embrace, celebrate and interpret cultural heritage in appropriate ways and locations.

## 2.4 Local population

The City of Wyndham has a large and fast growing population at Melbourne's south-western edge, estimated at 270,478 residents in 2019. It experienced the highest population growth in Victoria in 2020, emphasising the need for a plan to enhance open space and waterway amenity for this community. The Werribee neighbourhood itself has a projected 2021 population of 55,851 people, expected to increase to 98,900 by 2041.<sup>1</sup>

Based on 2016 census data, Wyndham has a predominantly young population with 58% of residents aged 35 years or below, with the majority of households being young families with children. Wyndham has a diverse, multicultural community, with almost half of residents born overseas, and originating from 162 different countries.<sup>2</sup>

Wyndham has a diverse, multicultural community, with almost half of residents born overseas, and originating from 162 different countries.

The growth areas of Wyndham consist mostly of single family houses on small lots with minimal private open space.

This makes access to public open space and waterways ever more important for community health and wellbeing. There are fewer hectares of public open space per 1,000 population in Wyndham compared to other Melbourne growth areas, also pointing to the need to maximise access to existing space.

Through the development of the *Wyndham City Plan (2013)*, *Quality Community Plan (2007)*, *Wyndham's Leisure Strategy (2013)* and *Wyndham Community Health, Wellbeing and Safety Plan (2013)* the Wyndham community identified 'accessing quality and safe open space' as a top priority.<sup>3</sup>

City of Wyndham residents are comparatively less physically active than the Greater Melbourne average:<sup>4</sup>

- 55% of Wyndham residents are not reaching physical activity guidelines and one in five do not participate in physical activity at all.
- The proportion of Wyndham residents suffering from chronic conditions is substantially greater compared to most Greater Melbourne municipalities.
- Mental wellbeing is significantly lower than the Victorian average.

City of Wyndham residents most frequently choose to participate in non-organised physical activities:

- Almost 70% of physically active residents choose non-organised activities such as walking, running, cycling, etc.
- Opportunities for these non-organised physical activities feature strongly in the *Active Wyndham Strategy* and the *Wyndham 2040 Vision*.



Image courtesy of Wyndham City

1. .id, City of Wyndham Population Forecast, [Population forecast \(id.com.au\)](#)
2. Snapshot of Wyndham [Wyndham Snapshot – Quarter 1 2021.pdf](#)
3. *Wyndham Open Space Strategy 2045*, page 2
4. *Lower Werribee River Recreation Plan, 2020*

## 3. Strategic context

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### 3.1 Related policy, strategies and plans

There are a number of related plans and strategies which address the Lower Wirribi Yaluk in a broader context, and are relevant to improving amenity. Efforts have been made to ensure the Plan is consistent with the overarching strategic context and supports the broad objectives of land and waterway managers in the precinct. The documents referenced below have helped inform and shape the Plan.



### Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation

The Bunurong Peoples aim to preserve and protect the sacred lands and waterways of our ancestors, their places, traditional cultural practices, and stories.

The Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation does not presently have a Country Plan.

### Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation

The *Wadawurrung Paleert Tjaara Dja: Healthy Country Plan 2020* contains the Vision: 'All people working together to make Wadawurrung Country and Culture strong.' *Paleert Tjaara Dja 2020* outlines Wadawurrung key values, threats to these values, and three main programs with associated strategies to protect and enhance these values.

The values include 'Yaluk – waterways, rivers, estuaries and wetlands' and 'Wadawurrung cultural sites and places'. The Plan aligns with a number of the Strategies in the Healthy Country Plan, including:

**Program:** Taking care of country and waters

**Strategies:** Caring for country; Cultural values management; Representation on planning boards, committees and advisory groups.

**Program:** Strengthening Wadawurrung Corporation

**Strategies:** Partnerships and stakeholder engagement





Image courtesy of Melbourne Water

### Department of Environment Land Water and Planning (DELWP)

DELWP is focused on creating a liveable, inclusive and sustainable Victoria with thriving natural environments – where the community is at the centre of everything it does. DELWP's seven portfolios cover Climate Change, Environment and Resource Recovery, Water, Land Management, Planning, Energy and Emergency Management.

DELWP recognises and supports the self-determination of Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Victorians through

Pupangarli Marnmarnepu 'Owning our Future' Self Determination Strategy 2020–2025.

The upcoming Central and Gippsland Sustainable Water Strategy (SWS) is a long-term plan developed to secure a sustainable supply of water in the region.

It focuses on efficiency, making better use of all sources of water, and improving the way water is shared and distributed.

DELWP strategies and plans related to this Plan include:

- *Waterways of the West Action Plan, 2021*
- *Central Region Sustainable Water Strategy, 2006*
- *Central and Gippsland Sustainable Water Strategy, in development*
- *Open Space for Everyone, Metropolitan Open Space Strategy, 2021*
- *Waterways of the West Ministerial Advisory Committee Discussion Paper, 2019*
- *Plan Melbourne 2020–2050*
- *Water for Victoria, 2016, with Chapters 5 addressing Resilient and liveable cities and towns and Chapter 7 Recognising recreational values*
- *Pupangarli Marnmarnepu 'Owning our Future' Self Determination Strategy 2020–2025*
- *Integrated Water Management Forums, Werribee Strategic Directions Statement, 2018*
- *Port Phillip Bay Environmental Management Plan 2017–2027*

## Melbourne Water

Melbourne Water delivers its strategic vision of enhancing life and liveability through three pillars: healthy people, healthy places and healthy environment.

While traditional services of safe drinking water, sewerage, flood and drainage are essential to our city and region, they also provide a fundamental contribution to Melbourne's liveability. Melbourne Water aims to deliver these services in a way that realises multiple benefits for the community, with a strong focus on providing amenity and liveability outcomes such as recreation, active transport, urban cooling, sense of community, and sense of place. Melbourne Water continuously adapts its services to community expectations and recognises that enhanced amenity, including access to green space and waterways underpins peoples' physical and mental health, and wellbeing. These social values are further defined and emphasised in the *Healthy Waterways Strategy 2018*.

The upcoming strategy *Water for Life* is being developed collaboratively by Greater Melbourne's urban water corporations and recognises the opportunity to plan for and deliver multiple benefits for the community as we take action to secure water supplies for all users.

Related strategies, projects and programs include:

- *Healthy Waterways Strategy, 2018*
- *Water for Life, Greater Melbourne Urban Water System Strategy, in development*
- *Lower Werribee River Recreation Plan, 2020*
- *Western Treatment Plan Future Land Use Plan, in development*
- Melbourne Water Urban Cooling Program
- Greening the Pipeline Project

## Parks Victoria Projects

Healthy Parks Healthy People is a global movement which is helping communities around the world realise the health and wellbeing benefits of spending time in parks and nature. Parks Victoria's aim is to unlock the power of nature and parks for their preventative and restorative health and wellbeing benefits, while conserving biodiversity.

Growing scientific evidence and generations of traditional knowledge show that spending time in nature is good for our mind, body and soul. Community groups, schools, governments, health authorities and recreational organisations worldwide are tapping into the healing power of nature. Victoria's stunning parks, coastlines, forests and mountains play an important role in fostering happy, healthy and active communities. Conserving parks for present and future generations provides inspirational and therapeutic settings that foster lifelong connections with nature and each other. Parks that are valued and maintained are also fundamental to economic growth and vibrant and healthy communities. Parks Victoria is also committed to partnering with Traditional Owners by supporting Aboriginal people to be decision-makers and have an active role in the management of Country and preservation of their living culture.

Related plans include:

- *Healthy Parks Health People Framework, 2020*
- *Werribee River Park - Strategic Directions Plan, 2021*
- *Werribee Township Regional Park Strategic Directions Plan, in progress*

## Visitor Economy

The *City of Wyndham Tourism Research Report* found that visitation to Wyndham has grown substantially, doubling between 2008 and 2017. All markets (domestic daytrip, overnight and international overnight) have grown but growth in domestic daytrips has largely driven the increase. Nature based assets and attractions were highlighted as a key strength in the visitor survey results, and analysis found that existing nature-based tourism assets could potentially be further leveraged through product development and promotion to increase patronage.

The Werribee Tourism Precinct includes iconic attractions and is a tourism draw card for the area, including: Werribee Park, Rose Garden & Mansion, Werribee Open Range Zoo, National Equestrian Centre, Mansion Hotel & Spa; Shadowfax Winery; Werribee Park Golf Course; Western Treatment Plant; and the Refectory. The Precinct hosts a wide range of major events throughout the year, with the potential to better leverage these to connect people to Wirribi Yaluk.

It is estimated that in 2014–15 the Precinct attracted over 1.1 million visitors to the region, and that the Precinct's gross contribution (from operations and tourism) to the Victorian economy was \$224.0 million (\$88.2 million in direct contribution and \$135.8 million in indirect contribution). The Precinct also contributed 1,023 jobs.<sup>5</sup>

The recently launched Visit Werribee & Surrounds program promotes activities and destinations in Werribee Township and the Tourism Precinct, including activities along the Wirribi Yaluk, such as kayaking at K Road Cliffs.

- *City of Wyndham Tourism Research Report, 2018*
- *Werribee Tourism Precinct, Economic Contribution Study, 2015*
- <https://www.visitwerribee.com/>

Conserving parks for present and future generations provides inspirational and therapeutic settings that foster lifelong connections with nature and each other.

5. Ernst & Young, 2015, *Werribee Tourism Precinct, Economic Contribution Study*

### Werribee Open Range Zoo

Straddling the river, the Werribee Open Range Zoo (WORZ) has contributed significantly to the revegetation of the river corridor, and has potential to further immerse visitors in the river environment.

Expansion of WORZ will deliver a world-class experience, with a purpose-built new elephant sanctuary, a Sky Safari gondola, a waterhole precinct, and expanded facilities and landscapes for many animals. The Victorian Government's \$84 million funding means Zoos Victoria can develop a haven for visitors and animals alike, creating jobs and ensuring a world-class attraction in the West for locals and tourists. The expansion will provide immersive experiences for visitors, connecting them with animals in a meaningful way and educating a larger audience about Zoos Victoria's conservation work. It is an opportunity to connect them to the natural environment of the waterway and the river corridor.

The expansion will create almost 350 local jobs and increase the number of visitors and tourists from more than 680,000 in 2018/19 to one million annually. Once completed, WORZ is expected to contribute over \$17.8 million annually to the Victorian economy.

### Werribee River Association

Werribee River Association (WRA) has led community involvement in environment and sustainability issues in the Wirriby Yaluk catchment for forty years. WRA began in 1981, led by a group of vocal community members concerned about the degradation of the Wirriby Yaluk and the impacts of urbanisation. The organisation has grown to become a professional environmental agency, with a small team of staff working with hundreds of community volunteers, and in partnership with dozens of stakeholders. Werribee River Association also hosts the Werribee Riverkeeper, part of an International Alliance of Waterkeepers.

WRA were instrumental in advocating for the establishment of the Waterways of the West initiative, and played a key role in shaping the Healthy Waterway Strategy 2018, Werribee Catchment. Their programs include two Landcare and four Litter Blitz groups, education in schools and the community, guided tours, 'come and try' on-waterway days, and water quality monitoring.

Related Strategies include:

- *Werribee River Association Strategic Plan, 2019-2024*
- *WRA Contributory Statement LWWAAP, 2021*

### Western Melbourne Tourism

Western Melbourne Tourism Inc (WMT) is an urban regional tourism board incorporated for the purposes of developing a stronger more competitive tourism sector in Melbourne's west. Melbourne's west embraces the municipal areas of Brimbank, Hobsons Bay, Maribyrnong, Melton, Moonee Valley and Wyndham councils.

The role of the board provides strategic support to grow the recognition and contribution of visitors to the region's economy, supporting our local visitor economy businesses and promoting the attributes that make Melbourne's west a compelling place to visit.

In partnership with member Councils and industry partners (including Wyndham CC and Parks Victoria) WMT has commissioned a range of previous research and strategic reports. This includes leading the development of a subregional destination visitor plan for Melbourne's west as part of the larger Greater Melbourne Destination Management Visitor Plan project in 2018. The plan highlighted how the natural assets of Melbourne's west are significantly undervalued.

More recently WMT is working closely with Councils and State government to navigate the region's visitor economy through recovery from the Covid pandemic.

### Wyndham City Council

Equitable access to quality open space that meets the needs of residents is a key priority of the community and Council. This theme is at the forefront of conversations, whether it be as part of the annual budget planning process, through the Wyndham 2040 refresh, or in everyday conversations with our residents.

This is even more important as we emerge from the lockdowns and restrictions of COVID-19, with residents spending more time in their local area rediscovering their neighbourhoods. Wyndham's open spaces are being used for a range of functions – events, hospitality, tourism, exercise, and public gatherings. A strong network of quality open spaces has never been more important. This is a commitment outlined in the Wyndham Open Space Strategy, which states: "we will provide an accessible and well-connected open space network which contributes to the social interaction, health and wellbeing of our community and protection of our natural and cultural environment now and into the future".

The Wirriby Yaluk is a vital asset in Wyndham's open space network. Key strategies that under-pin planning for Wyndham's open spaces and link to the development of this Plan include:

- *Wyndham Coast and Marine Management Plan, 2020-2025*
- *Wyndham Open Space Strategy, 2045*
- *Wyndham Play Space Strategy, 2030*
- *Wyndham Active Transport Strategy, 2020*
- *K Street Cliffs Masterplan, 2019*
- *Draft Chirnside Park Masterplan, 2020*
- *Presidents Park Masterplan, 2020*
- *Riverwalk Estate Development Plan, 2010*
- *West Trails – Western Metropolitan Regional Trails Strategic Plan, 2017*
- *City Forest and Habitat Strategy, 2017-2040*
- *Werribee River Shared Trail Strategy, 2013*
- *Werribee South Green Wedge Policy and Management Plan, 2016*
- *Greening the Pipeline project*

### 3.2 Community engagement

The Wyndham and Werribee community have provided their views and ideas on the importance of waterway amenity along Wirribi Yaluk through previous community consultation and engagement forums including: *Healthy Waterway Strategy 2018*, *Waterways of the West Discussion Paper 2019*, and *Lower Werribee River Recreation Plan 2020*.

Wyndham City Council have also conducted many local community engagement activities in recent years through which the community have expressed a desire for dramatically improved amenity and condition of their waterways.

Direct community engagement was not undertaken specifically for this Plan to avoid the risk of 'consultation fatigue', and the partners have instead drawn directly on the recent engagement to develop themes and actions which directly address community priorities. There will be future opportunities for community engagement in the planning and delivery of specific projects during the implementation period of the Plan.

#### Consultation outcomes from the Lower Werribee River Recreation Plan

Past consultation shows that City of Wyndham residents value the recreation and leisure opportunities provided by the Wirribi Yaluk and surrounding environs, with the following features being most regularly mentioned:

- The natural beauty, being amongst nature and away from built environment
- Nature and bird watching
- Peacefulness, quietness/remoteness and serenity.
- The need for facilities including public toilets, walking tracks, parks and playgrounds.



Image courtesy of Melbourne Water

In community engagement for the *Wyndham City Council 2040 Vision*, Wyndham's parks and open space were frequently mentioned as places people loved to spend time. The most common nature-based activities people listed along the Lower Wirribi Yaluk included:

- **Walking** • existing trails for walking/running
- **Picnicking** • Wyndham Park, Presidents Park, Werribee Mansion and Werribee South
- **Cycling and mountain biking** • existing paths and further afield using the Federation Trail
- **Canoeing/kayaking** • in the southern and northern parts of the study area

- **Fishing** • at K Road Cliffs, the Diversion Weir wall, and eastern part of Werribee River Park
- **Bird watching** • K Road Cliffs, Werribee River Park and the Western Treatment Plant.

#### What does this mean for the Plan?

Actions could create and link various destinations and experiences along the length of Wirribi Yaluk – places of grandeur, places to gather, places for solitude, places to feel immersed in nature, places to undertake physical activity and opportunities to learn about the history and environment of Lower Wirribi Yaluk and surrounds.



## 4. The Action Plan

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### 4.1 Vision

The Lower Wirribi Yaluk and its open spaces form the blue-green spine of Melbourne's West; it is connected, green and welcoming. The river attracts people from near and far to enjoy a rich variety of linked activities, including a leading trail destination and world-renowned bird watching.

It also provides natural, wild spaces for people to escape to, where they can learn about Country and how to care for it alongside the Bunurong and Wadawurrung Traditional Owners. The well-designed spaces bring communities together and support them to be healthy, active and deeply connected.



## 4.2 Key themes

The Plan is structured around the following key themes which will improve aspects of amenity, access and activation. Actions will achieve multiple benefits, also contributing to other environmental and economic outcomes, such as integrated water management initiatives which provide sustainable water use as well as urban cooling and amenity benefits. Actions were identified which addressed one or more of these themes.

High priority actions are highlighted in this section of the report. A full list of actions is provided in Appendix A Implementation Plan.

Note: all actions are subject to availability of funding.

1. **Connectivity and access...** link, loop, launch
2. **Recreation and activities...** gather, relax, play
3. **Natural and cultural amenity...** embrace, immerse, protect
4. **Engaging community...** consult, support, empower
5. **Tourism and visitor experience...** invite, include, expand



# 1. Connectivity and access

LINK  
LOOP  
LAUNCH



Image courtesy of Wyndham City

## Context

Trails and shared paths are the most popular facilities used for informal recreation and exercise, and are vital to the community's ability to walk, jog and cycle in open space and connect to the river corridor. Paths link points of rest, beauty and interest and encourage people to experience the health and wellbeing benefits of being physically active and immersed in nature. A connected trail network also has substantial economic potential for the Lower Wirribi Yaluk, with many people travelling to use trail networks, and potentially visit multiple regional destinations.

Access to the waterway via paths, platforms, ramps and launches is vital for people's ability to connect with the water and participate in on-water activities such as kayaking. The growing demand for recreation on and along the waterway will continue with population growth, and is in keeping with informal recreation trends in the Wyndham area.

## Current conditions and opportunities

While long sections of established shared paths and trails exist along the river (and recent upgrades near Werribee township mean both sides of the river are connected there with multiple pedestrian bridge crossings), there remain gaps in the trail network, preventing movement along the length of the waterway corridor and limiting connectivity and community access.

Notable gaps exist at: the Riverwalk Estate and beneath the Maltby Bypass; to the south of Old Boundary Road on the west side; and south of K Road Cliffs on the east side of the river. These gaps are also identified in related active transport and trail strategies for the region.<sup>6</sup>

There are limited locations where people are able to access the river's edge, or participate safely in fishing or kayaking/canoeing. Some activity in informal locations has led to bank erosion and damage to vegetation. Existing formalised locations are at Riverbend Historical Park, where the fixed platform is not ideal for kayaks, and at Werribee South boat ramps, where at times heavy boat use and vehicular traffic can hamper access to recreational kayaking/canoeing. Increased environmental flows in the river are needed to achieve continuous inundation and better on-water connectivity. The Plan identifies key locations for new and upgraded launch and landing locations.

## High priority actions

- **A1** Advocate for, plan, design and deliver, fully connected trail network along the length of the river and to nearby trails (also refer to specific locations at actions E1, E12, and F2.)
- **A5** Prepare a coordinated wayfinding signage strategy for the length of the river to better support visitation, use and access, including trail grading and online information.
- **A13** Advocate for increased environmental flows through the Sustainable Water Strategy to also deliver cultural, recreational and amenity benefits.

Provide improved and new river access points to support on-water and beside water recreation including:

- **B3** Davis Creek
- **C2** Riverbend Park
- **D2** Bungey's Hole
- **F4** K Road Cliffs

6. Wyndham Active Transport Strategy, 2020 and West Trails – Western Metropolitan Regional Trails Strategic Plan, 2017



Image courtesy of Parks Victoria

## 2. Recreation and activities

GATHER  
RELAX  
PLAY



Image courtesy of Melbourne Water

### Context

Park facilities such as picnic spaces, seating, playgrounds, and associated amenities allow for community use and enjoyment of open space. Increasing preference for informal recreation over organised sport means there is growing demand for a variety of activities to be offered and supported in open space through flexible and multi-use facilities.

Quality, accessible facilities and well-designed spaces make parks feel welcoming and safe, thereby attracting more diverse park-users and encouraging higher levels of outdoor activity. Spaces for gathering and exercise in open space are critical to health and wellbeing, especially in the wake of Covid-19, and support community building and connection.

Quality, accessible facilities and well-designed spaces make parks feel welcoming and safe.



Image courtesy of Parks Victoria

### Current conditions and opportunities

While some parks along the river such as Wyndham Park have recently upgraded facilities and offer high quality spaces, some other open spaces are unimproved and do not feel inviting, but have great potential based on the river environment and residential catchment. These include open space near Davis Creek and Riverbend Historical Park.

There is also the potential to further activate and increase visitation to areas south of the Princes Freeway, which are difficult to access. Challenges exist around maintaining facilities in remote, unsecured locations such as Werribee River Park, which is subject to vandalism.

### High priority actions

Provide major open space upgrades to key parks including:

- **B3** Formalise river access at Davis Creek confluence for on-water activity and provide improved local park facilities
- **C1** Prepare and deliver a landscape plan for Riverbend Historical Park to address open space needs for expanded park facilities and trail head
- **D1** Formalise river access and improve landscape character at Bungey's Hole to support on-water activity and open space enjoyment in keeping with Chirnside Park Masterplan.
- **E4** Provide new entry node and park facilities to Werribee River Park, including toilet, signage etc. in keeping with the Masterplan refresh

Where major upgrades are required consider possible interim improvements to enhance safe and convenient community access to riparian open spaces.

### 3. Natural and cultural amenity

EMBRACE  
IMMERSE  
PROTECT



Image courtesy of Werribee River Association

#### Context

The distinctive character of Wirribi Yaluk, from its remarkable remnant trees to stunning red clay formations at K Road Cliffs and unique salt marsh estuary, provides a beautiful landscape for learning, escape and relaxation. The condition of the river environment contributes to people's appreciation and enjoyment; its amenity. The opportunity to see a diversity of flora and fauna (and maybe even a platypus) offer pleasure and excitement. Aspects which can impact negatively on natural amenity include pollution and litter. A lack of vegetation and cooling shade can also limit use and enjoyment of open space, as highlighted in *Water for Victoria 2016* plan, which contains actions around cooler, greener cities and resilient and liveable cities.

The rich aboriginal heritage of the ancient Wirribi Yaluk and post-colonial history also contribute to the amenity of the river corridor. Opportunities to enhance this include educational and interpretive stories to increase cultural heritage awareness and appreciation. Prioritisation of environment and cultural flows is also critical to Bunurong and Wadawurrung Traditional Owners involvement and management of the waterway.

#### Current conditions and opportunities

Sections of riparian vegetation are very narrow and can be widened through revegetation of indigenous species to enhance the 'naturalness' of the adjacent open spaces. Integration of stormwater management and water retention in open spaces would also contribute to urban cooling. Creating protected 'wild places' for discovery and play is another great opportunity for improving natural amenity and engaging locals through community plantings. There are large areas of exposed lawn and lengths of path without any shade. Extensive canopy tree planting can offer shade, urban cooling and improve the attractiveness of the area.

There is some disparate signage along the river with environmental and heritage information. There is the need for a well-designed, consistent interpretive signage program/ trail which draws community and visitors along on a journey, subject to appropriate cultural heritage management.

#### High priority actions

- **A2** Prepare a Cultural Values Assessment (CVA) with Bunurong and Wadawurrung Traditional Owners to guide cultural amenity actions including input on cultural flows and appropriate strategies for language, stories and interpretation.
- **A3** Increase canopy tree planting along exposed and un-shaded sections of trail / shared path.
- **A4** Widen the riparian strip through revegetation to enhance natural amenity and habitat corridor, using varied indigenous plant palette.
- **A13** Advocate for increased environmental flows through the Sustainable Water Strategy to also deliver cultural, recreational and amenity benefits.



Image courtesy of Nick Alderson

## 4. Engaging community

CONSULT  
SUPPORT  
EMPOWER



Image courtesy of Werribee River Association

### Context

Open spaces and waterways are well-loved and protected when active community groups are involved in their planning, creating a strong sense of ownership. And in turn, locals who participate in community action enjoy an improved sense of wellbeing and belonging. Involving a diverse range of community members, and intentionally engaging with harder-to-reach groups, such as CALD (culturally and linguistically diverse) communities and people of all abilities, can bring great value in improving their sense of belonging and awareness of the natural values around them, further enriching places for everyone.

Supporting community organisations and groups, drawing on their knowledge, skills and commitment, results in collective impact, beyond what government agencies can achieve alone.

Their efforts and activities also contribute to the safety and attractiveness of spaces, as well as a richness of experience, knowledge and history of the local area.

### Current conditions and opportunities

The Wyndham 2040 Community Vision contains the objective 'Our City is home to engaged and informed residents who use their skills, knowledge and passion to effectively work together and advocate for the needs of the community'. Contributors to the Vision said they 'want more engagement at the local level and increased ways to contribute effectively on issues affecting their local area'.<sup>7</sup>

Wyndham residents volunteer less on average than other Victorians (13.9% compared to 17.6% of the Melbourne population). The reasons are complex but include typically lower participation rates from groups predominant in Wyndham

including recently arrived residents; CALD communities; people caring for children; people living with a disability.<sup>8</sup> This indicates there is the potential to expand on community action and participation in environmental programs.

Extensive existing community participation and education programs are coordinated by active organisations such as Werribee River Association and multiple Friends groups, and these require ongoing financial support. Waterwatch and citizens science programs also offer great potential for increased awareness and community involvement.

### High priority actions

- **A16** Actively support community groups in their delivery of natural environment programs such as revegetation and litter projects to deliver improvements in priority locations.
- **A19** Partner with programs that engage diverse communities to enhance awareness, including educational programs with local schools.
- **A20** Enhanced and coordinated communication to the community about improvements underway to the river and its environs.



Image courtesy of Werribee River Association

7. Wyndham 2040 Community Vision

8. Wyndham Volunteering Strategy 2019–2024, Pg 8

## 5. Tourism and visitor experience

INVITE  
INCLUDE  
EXPAND



Image courtesy of Zoos Victoria

### Context

Increased visitation and activation of open space through tourism can have many positive flow-on effects for a community including: increased safety and perceptions of safety; enhanced community pride and reputation; attraction of increased government support and funding; boosts for local economy, businesses and jobs. Enhanced facilities can also be enjoyed by local community members, encouraging them to spend more time being active outdoors and appreciate their local environment.

### Current conditions and opportunities

The Lower Wirribi Yaluk precinct has great potential to improve its attractiveness as an eco-tourism destination, both regionally and nationally, but requires investment in quality facilities to support this growth. Amenity investment should focus first on meeting local visitation needs with an eye to expand a variety of regional offerings over time. The funded expansion of the Werribee Open Range Zoo will draw many more visitors, presenting the opportunity to connect them with other experiences along the river.

The area offers world-class bird-watching with the Ramsar listed wetlands at the river mouth, and at the adjacent Western Treatment Plant. Expanding the bird-watching offer for visitors could have broader economic benefits and in turn attract greater funding for facilities and environmental improvements.

Similarly, a fully connected trail network can attract many walkers and cyclists to participate in extended journeys.

There is also the potential to leverage the existing 'cultural capital' of the Werribee Tourism Precinct which boasts iconic tourism draw cards such as the Zoo, and the Werribee Mansion and Rose Garden. The precinct's range of events could be expanded to incorporate better connections to the river. Existing Council tourism programs and business groups provide a platform for enhanced promotion, along with the new 'Visit Werribee & Surrounds' program.

The area offers world-class bird-watching with the Ramsar listed wetlands at the river mouth, and at the adjacent Western Treatment Plant.



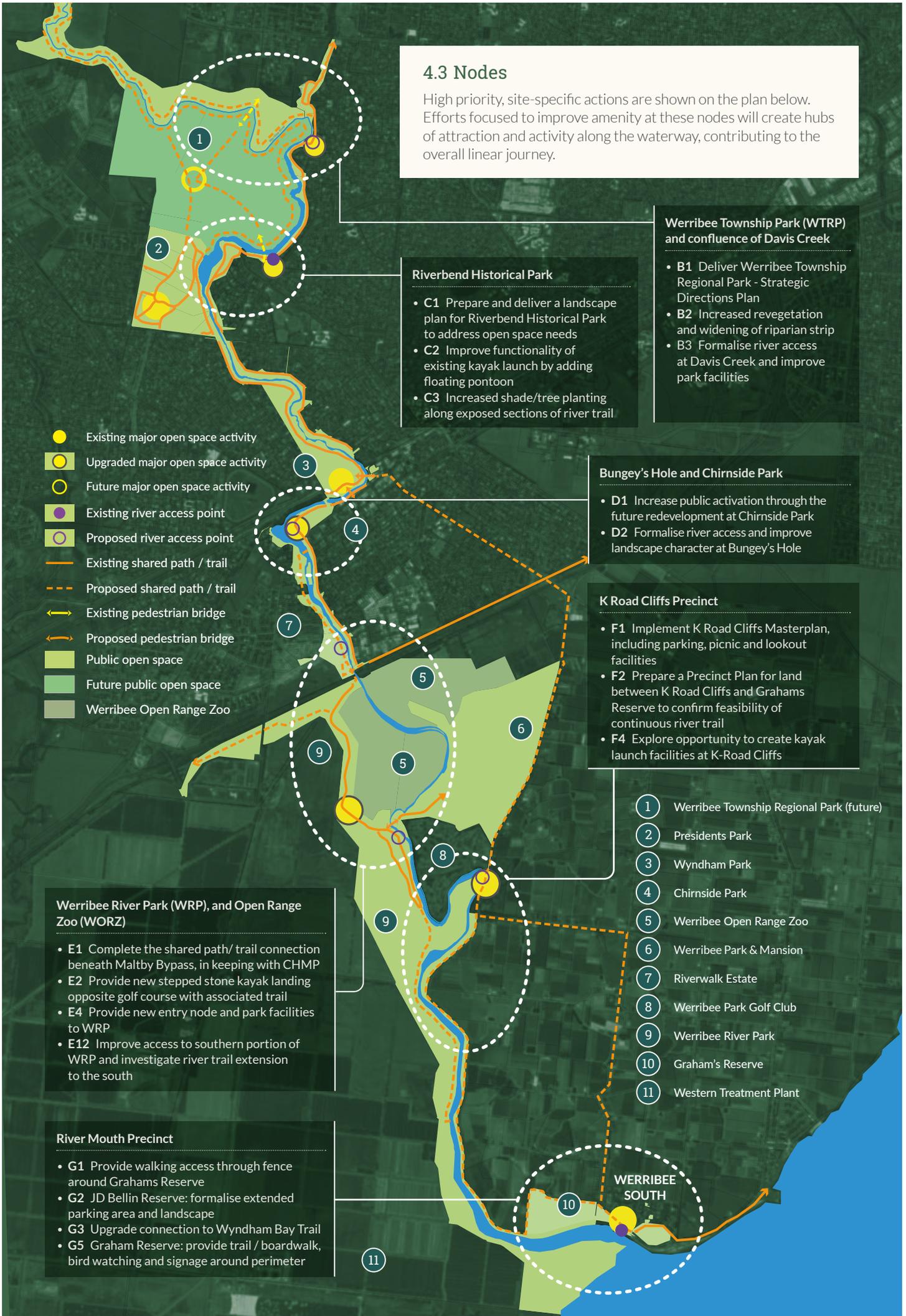
Image courtesy of Melbourne Water

### High priority actions

- **A6** Develop a 'River Guide' with online and printed content to promote destinations, access and experiences.
- **A7** Actively seek out and support commercial opportunities, such as boat hire and pop-up food / cafes (potentially at Werribee South, K Road Cliffs, and Bungey's Hole) to enhance the linear journey and support post-Covid economic recovery.
- **A17** Coordinate communications and media efforts to promote Wirribi Yaluk.
- **A18** Work with Werribee Park Tourism Precinct Group to align efforts on tourism opportunities along the river.

### 4.3 Nodes

High priority, site-specific actions are shown on the plan below. Efforts focused to improve amenity at these nodes will create hubs of attraction and activity along the waterway, contributing to the overall linear journey.



- Existing major open space activity
- Upgraded major open space activity
- Future major open space activity
- Existing river access point
- Proposed river access point
- Existing shared path / trail
- - - Proposed shared path / trail
- ↔ Existing pedestrian bridge
- ↔ Proposed pedestrian bridge
- Public open space
- Future public open space
- Werribee Open Range Zoo

**Riverbend Historical Park**

- C1 Prepare and deliver a landscape plan for Riverbend Historical Park to address open space needs
- C2 Improve functionality of existing kayak launch by adding floating pontoon
- C3 Increased shade/tree planting along exposed sections of river trail

**Werribee Township Park (WTRP) and confluence of Davis Creek**

- B1 Deliver Werribee Township Regional Park - Strategic Directions Plan
- B2 Increased revegetation and widening of riparian strip
- B3 Formalise river access at Davis Creek and improve park facilities

**Bungey's Hole and Chirnside Park**

- D1 Increase public activation through the future redevelopment at Chirnside Park
- D2 Formalise river access and improve landscape character at Bungey's Hole

**K Road Cliffs Precinct**

- F1 Implement K Road Cliffs Masterplan, including parking, picnic and lookout facilities
- F2 Prepare a Precinct Plan for land between K Road Cliffs and Grahams Reserve to confirm feasibility of continuous river trail
- F4 Explore opportunity to create kayak launch facilities at K-Road Cliffs

**Werribee River Park (WRP), and Open Range Zoo (WORZ)**

- E1 Complete the shared path/ trail connection beneath Maltby Bypass, in keeping with CHMP
- E2 Provide new stepped stone kayak landing opposite golf course with associated trail
- E4 Provide new entry node and park facilities to WRP
- E12 Improve access to southern portion of WRP and investigate river trail extension to the south

**River Mouth Precinct**

- G1 Provide walking access through fence around Grahams Reserve
- G2 JD Bellin Reserve: formalise extended parking area and landscape
- G3 Upgrade connection to Wyndham Bay Trail
- G5 Graham Reserve: provide trail / boardwalk, bird watching and signage around perimeter

- 1 Werribee Township Regional Park (future)
- 2 Presidents Park
- 3 Wyndham Park
- 4 Chirnside Park
- 5 Werribee Open Range Zoo
- 6 Werribee Park & Mansion
- 7 Riverwalk Estate
- 8 Werribee Park Golf Club
- 9 Werribee River Park
- 10 Graham's Reserve
- 11 Western Treatment Plant

**WERRIBEE SOUTH**

## 5. Implementation

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The Lower Werribee Waterway Amenity Action Plan partners commit their best endeavours to deliver on the actions in the Plan, and to collectively work towards and advocate for outcomes to achieve the shared vision. Our existing investment and works underway demonstrate our commitment to Wirribi Yaluk.

Image courtesy of Werribee River Association

### 5.1 Responsibilities

Each action will be led by an agreed delivery partner, according to the land manager, asset owner and resourcing regimes, and likely supported by multiple other partners across the group. Roles will vary according to each project; one partner may deliver a capital project while another takes over ongoing management and maintenance of assets.

All members commit to contributing shared efforts to support project implementation and champion these actions.

### 5.2 Funding

Some actions in the Plan have funding available through existing programs, while others may be able to be funded through future planning cycles. Some actions will be possible through joint financial contributions by the partners.

Longer term actions will generally require funding from new sources, be it grant opportunities or budget commitments negotiated with multiple partners. Joint funding applications are just one option and help to demonstrate a collaborative approach and collective impact. This coordinated governance approach can give requests for investment greater weight and likelihood of success.

The Plan will be used to support business cases and funding applications to justify investment and demonstrate the value and benefits of improved amenity.

### 5.3 Advocacy

Multiple actions in the Plan advocate for outcomes that contribute to enhanced amenity and community enjoyment, such as water quality, litter, and planning controls. The partners will work together to advocate for our shared vision, and to realise multiple benefits through our related action, strategies and policy work.

### 5.4 Ongoing collaboration

The Plan includes both short and long term actions, to be delivered over an expected 10 year period. Ongoing collaboration between the partners will be essential to ensure the future implementation of the plan. The project group will continue to work together to implement the Plan and report annually on our progress. Annual reports will include updates on projects underway or complete, and provide an opportunity to assess any arising or changing priorities for investment.

As land and waterway managers caring for Wirribi Yaluk, we commit our enduring efforts to realise our vision and see community and life thriving along our magnificent river. Together we will protect and enhance the lower Wirribi Yaluk.



## 6. Appendix A – Implementation plan

### Overall actions

#	Action	Priority	Cost \$-\$\$\$	Time frame
A1	Advocate and plan for fully connected Werribee River Trail along the river and to nearby trails such as the Federation Trail.	Very high	\$	Short
	Delivery of connections in Werribee River Trails – (refer site specific actions at gap locations, E1, E12 and F2.)	Very High	\$\$\$	Medium
A2	Prepare a Cultural Values Assessment (CVA) with BLCAC and WTOAC to guide cultural amenity actions including input on cultural flows and appropriate strategies for language, stories and interpretation.	Very high	\$	Short
	Implement priority recommendations from the CVA.	Very high	\$\$\$	Medium
A3	Increase canopy tree planting along exposed and un-shaded sections of trail / shared path.	Very high	\$\$	Short
A4	Widen the riparian strip through revegetation to enhance natural amenity and habitat corridor, using varied indigenous plant palette.	Very high	\$\$	Short and ongoing
A5	Prepare a coordinated wayfinding signage strategy for the length of the river to better support visitation, use and access, including trail grading and online information.	Very high	\$	Short
	Deliver wayfinding signage.	High	\$\$	Medium
A6	Develop a 'River Guide' with online and printed content to promote destinations, access and experiences.	High	\$	Medium
A7	Actively seek out and support commercial opportunities, such as boat hire and pop-up food / cafes (potentially at Werribee South, K Road Cliffs, and Bungey's Hole) to enhance the linear experience and support post-Covid economic recovery.	High	\$	Short
A8	Support litter prevention measures in keeping with Wyndham Waste and Litter Strategy, and investigate development of a Werribee River Litter Action Plan.	High	\$\$	Medium
A9	Support incorporation of IWM into all planning and design of open spaces and new development wherever possible including use of recycled water for irrigation.	High	n/a	Ongoing
A10	Incorporate use of indigenous place names (pending CVA outcomes).	Medium	\$	Medium
A11	Integrate Traditional Owner knowledge into plant selection for revegetation (pending CVA outcomes).	Medium	\$	Medium
A12	Explore opportunities for a river based arts festival/events program.	Medium	\$\$	Medium

## Advocacy actions

#	Action	Priority	Cost \$-\$\$\$	Time frame
A13	Advocate for increased environmental flows through the Sustainable Water Strategy to also deliver cultural, recreational and amenity benefits.	Very High	n/a	Short
A14	Advocate for support and delivery of the Werribee System Reconfiguration project through the IWM Forum to unlock water from irrigation for increased environmental and cultural flows.	High	\$	Medium
A15	Advocate for amendments to planning controls where appropriate to better protect the landscape character, views, and amenity of the river corridor from the impacts of development.	Medium	\$	Medium

## Operational / business actions

#	Action	Priority	Cost \$-\$\$\$	Time frame
A16	Actively support community groups in their delivery of natural environment programs such as revegetation and litter projects to deliver improvements in priority locations.	Very High	\$	Short and ongoing
A17	Coordinate communications and media efforts to promote the Werribee River.	High	\$	Short
A18	Work with Werribee Park Tourism Precinct Group to align efforts on tourism opportunities along the river.	High	n/a	Short and ongoing
A19	Partner with programs that engage diverse communities to enhance awareness, including educational programs with local schools.	High	\$	Short and ongoing
A20	Enhanced and coordinated communication to the community about improvements underway to the river and its environs.	High	\$	Short and ongoing
A21	Improve collaboration between land managers through ongoing Working Group activities.	High	\$	Short and ongoing
A22	Integrate and identify links in alignment with the <i>Open Space for Everyone Strategy 2021</i> .	Medium	n/a	Short
A23	Clarify safety / status of swimming in the river, and investigate potential supervision through lifeguard program at key locations.	Low	\$\$	Long

## Werribee Township Regional Park and Davis Creek Precinct

#	Action	Priority	Cost \$-\$\$\$	Time frame
B1	Prepare Werribee Township Regional Park - Strategic Directions Plan.	Very High	\$	Short
	Establish WTRP including two main visitor nodes, supporting visitor infrastructure and cultural and environmental outcomes.	Very High	\$\$\$	Medium
B2	Increased vegetation and widening of riparian strip along the river.	Very High	\$	Short
B3	Formalise river access at Davis Creek confluence for on-water activity and provide improved local park facilities.	High	\$\$	Medium
B4	Increased shade/tree planting around picnic areas and shared path along Riversdale Road.	High	\$	Short
B5	Extend Werribee River Trail / shared path on north side of river.	High	\$\$\$	Short
B6	Provide new pedestrian bridge crossing into WTRP (at south end of Davis Road).	High	\$\$\$	Long
B7	Extend Werribee River Trail / shared path on south side of river.	Medium	\$\$\$	Medium
B8	Provide new pedestrian bridge crossing of Davis Creek.	Medium	\$\$\$	Long
B9	Investigate use of recycled water for WTRP to increase amenity and reduce dependence on river water as park is established.	Low	\$\$\$	Long

## Riverbend Historical Park Precinct

#	Action	Priority	Cost \$-\$\$\$	Time frame
C1	Prepare a landscape plan for Riverbend Historical Park to address open space needs for expanded park facilities and trail head.	Very high	\$	Short
	Deliver landscape improvements to Riverbend Historical Park per endorsed plan.	Very high	\$\$	Short
C2	Improve functionality of existing kayak launch by adding floating pontoon.	Very high	\$\$	short
C3	Increased shade/tree planting along exposed sections of river trail, south to Heaths Road.	Very high	\$	Short
C4	Establish visitors centre and central facilities hub for WTRP.	High	\$\$\$	Medium
C5	Investigate potential amenity improvements to heritage Diversion Weir and Offtake Channel.	High	\$	Medium
C6	Investigate feasibility of establishing a Community Environmental Centre as part of the WTRP central hub.	Medium	\$	Medium
C7	Consider potential uses and improvements to large open lawn area west of Riverbend Park.	Medium	\$\$	Long
C8	Investigate provision of new pedestrian bridge crossing to connect to future WTRP.	Medium	\$\$\$	Long

### Bungey's Hole and Chirnside Park Precinct

#	Action	Priority	Cost \$-\$\$\$	Time frame
D1	Investigate opportunities to increase public activation at Bungey's Hole through the future redevelopment of the Bowls Club Pavilion.	Very high	\$	Short
D2	Formalise river access and improve landscape character at Bungey's Hole to support on water activity and open space enjoyment in keeping with Chirnside Park Masterplan.	High	\$\$	Medium
D3	Review interface of Chirnside Park and Werribee River Trail in line with CPTED principles.	High	\$\$	Short
D4	Improve Bungey's islands for natural trails and picnic spots through revegetation and 're-wilding'.	High	\$\$	Short
D5	Investigate delivery of recycled water to Chirnside Park to improve amenity and reduce reliance on river water.	Medium	\$\$\$	Long
D6	Provide new pedestrian bridge near Synott Street to improve trail connectivity.	Medium	\$\$\$	Long

### Riverwalk, River Park, Zoo and Mansion Precinct

#	Action	Priority	Cost \$-\$\$\$	Time frame
E1	Complete the shared path/ trail connection beneath Maltby Bypass, in keeping with recommendations in the CHMP.	Very High	\$\$	Short
E2	Provide new stepped stone kayak launch on west side (opposite golf course) with associated trail.	Very High	\$\$	Short
E3	Provide secure gate entry to WRP off William Thwaites Drive and provide directional signage to WRP.	Very High	\$\$	Short
E4	Provide new entry node and park facilities to WRP, including toilet, signage etc in keeping with Masterplan refresh.	Very High	\$\$\$	Medium
E5	Improve quality of landscape and vegetation through WRP.	Very High	\$\$	Short
E6	Seal entrance road into WRP and carpark area.	High	\$\$	Medium
E7	Through WORZ Redevelopment investigate additional accessible river access points and interpretive stories.	High	\$\$	Medium
E8	Seal path connection on east side of river from pipe bridge crossing to Federation Trail.	High	\$	Medium
E9	Continue to revegetate riparian strip and land within WORZ and provide improved stormwater management, embankment stabilisation, and river amenity.	High	\$\$	Medium
E10	Through development approval process and open space plan for Riverwalk Estate, prioritise river access points / facilities for Yannyeveann Park (between Vineyard Tce and Maltby Bypass).	High	\$\$	Medium

### Riverwalk, River Park, Zoo and Mansion Precinct continued

#	Action	Priority	Cost \$-\$\$\$	Time frame
E11	Convert Farm Road bridge into bike/pedestrian crossing – future car access not permitted.	High	\$\$	Short
E12	Improve access to southern portion of WRP south of Old Boundary Road, and investigate river trail extension to the south with potential new crossing.	High	\$\$\$	Medium
E13	New western entry point to WORZ from WRP, including future carparking and arrival facilities.	High	\$\$\$	Long
E14	Investigate potential for eco-camping on river flats within WRP and/or 'glamping' associated with WORZ.	Medium	\$	Long
E15	Future active recreation use on open space on south side of Princes Fwy to better activate underutilised land.	Medium	\$\$	Medium
E16	Investigate a new kayak landing at Church swimming hole, with connection to Orchard.	Low	\$\$	Long
E17	Support planning for future trail extension from Federation Trail to Geelong.	Low	\$	Long

### K Road Cliffs Precinct

#	Action	Priority	Cost \$-\$\$\$	Time frame
F1	Implement K Road Cliffs Masterplan, including drainage, parking, picnic and lookout facilities.	Very High	\$\$\$	Short
F2	Undertake a land values due diligence assessment to determine appropriate reservation for the unreserved crown land between K Road Cliffs and Grahams Reserve and land manager.	Very High	\$	Short
F3	Prepare a Precinct Landscape Plan for land between K Road Cliffs and Grahams Reserve to confirm feasibility of trail on east side of river.	Very High	\$	Short
	Deliver trail on east side of river (subject to feasibility in Precinct Plan).	High	\$\$\$	Long
F4	Install wayfinding signage to connect visitors to cafe and other amenities available at WGC and Werribee Park.	High	\$\$	Short
F5	Explore opportunity to create kayak launch facilities at K-Road Cliffs.	High	\$	Medium
	Deliver kayak launch subject to feasibility and funding	High	\$\$	Medium
F6	Provide off-road shared path along K Road from Princes Fwy to Cliffs.	High	\$\$\$	Medium
F7	Provide off-road shared path along K Road and Diggers Road from Cliffs to Werribee South.	Medium	\$\$\$	Medium
F8	Work with WGC to revegetate and widen riparian strip along length of golf course.	Medium	\$	Medium

## River Mouth Precinct

#	Action	Priority	Cost \$-\$\$\$	Time frame
G1	Provide walking access through fence around Grahams Reserve.	Very High	\$	Short
G2	JD Bellin Reserve: formalise extended parking area and landscape - integrated with Better Boating Victoria boat ramps project.	Very High	\$\$	Short
G3	Upgrade Wyndham Bay Trail connection between Grahams Reserve and Wyndham Harbour including rest stops.	High	\$\$\$	Medium
G4	Saltmarsh revegetation to mitigate coastal erosion and improve amenity of river edge.	High	\$	Short
G5	Graham Reserve: provide trail / boardwalk, bird watching and signage around outside perimeter, with parking on Diggers Road.	High	\$\$	Medium
G6	Support potential commercial activity for water based experiences and food/beverage - eg. kayak hire and tours, pop-up cafes.	High	\$	Medium
G7	Investigate potential for trail and bird-watching access through WTP at eastern edge.	Medium	\$	Long
G8	Provide second canoe launch with signage at JD Bellin Reserve at safer location, away from motorised boat ramp.	Low	\$\$	Medium



Note: all actions are subject to funding availability

### Timeframes used (approximate)

Short Term	1-2 years
Medium Term	3-5 years
Long Term	6-10 years

### Indicative Costs

\$	relatively low cost
\$\$	medium cost
\$\$\$	high cost

### Acronyms used

Organisations	Acronym
Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation	BLCAC
Dept Land Environment Water & Planning	DELWP
Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation	WTOAC
Werribee Park Golf Club	WGC
Werribee River Association	WRA
Werribee Open Range Zoo	WORZ
Wyndham City Council	WCC
Locations	Acronym
Werribee Open Range Zoo	WORZ
Werribee River Park	WRP
Werribee Township Regional Park	WTRP
Western Treatment Plant	WTP
Other	Acronym
Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design	CPTED
Cultural Heritage Management Plan	CHMP
Cultural Values Assessment	CVA
Integrated Water Management	IWM



Image courtesy of Werribee River Association



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