

Fact sheet

SNAPSHOT OF WERRIBEE RIVER

HISTORY

- Has been known by four names:
 - Arndell (1824) – Explorers Hume and Hovell, camped by the river, named it after Hovell's father-in-law.
 - Peel (1835) – Surveyor John Helder Wedgeb rediscovered the river and named it peel.
 - Ex (1835) – Wedgeb soon renamed it the Ex. The Exford, an early crossing place on the river, is derived from this name, as is Exford Weir.
 - Werribee - Its current name is derived from the Aboriginal words Weariby (meaning spine or backbone) and Yallock (stream)
- Aboriginal people inhabited rivers and creeks in the area at least 30,000 years ago.
- The Werribee forms the natural boundary between areas occupied by the Woi Wurrung and Boon Wurrung clans.
- First European settlement took place in the mid-1830s

PLANTS AND ANIMALS

- Species including:
 - 130 plants
 - 30 fish
 - 190 birds
 - Six frogs
 - Six reptiles
 - Eight mammal

GEOGRAPHY

- Originates in the Wombat State Forest and flows for 110 kilometres south-east of Ballan, Bacchus Marsh and Werribee to the north-west shores of Port Phillip Bay
- The Lerderderg River, a major tributary of the Werribee, is one of two Victorian Heritage Rivers, and the only 'representative river' in the Port Phillip and Westernport region
- Annual rainfall ranges from 1000 mm at the headwaters to about 450 mm on the plains near Melton and Werribee

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