

Second Year Snapshot

Lower Werribee Waterway Amenity Action Plan

Stakeholders at the launch of the Werribee River Guide website and brochure, June 2023 at Western Treatment Plant.



Photo courtesy Imran Kashem, Westend Business Hub

The Lower Werribee Waterway Amenity Action Plan (LWWAAP), 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 Werribee / Wirribi Yaluk, and provides a prioritised action plan to achieve this vision.



The LWWAAP can be found on Melbourne Water's website, along with annual updates.

2023-2024

1. Cultural Connections

The LWWAAP and its project partners recognise the need for further understanding of cultural values to identify the opportunities to embrace, celebrate and interpret cultural heritage in appropriate ways and locations.

The project partners have engaged traditional owners - for Wadawurrung Country, the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation (WTOAC) and for Bunurong Country, the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (BLCAC), for multiple projects outlined in the plan.

Wyndham City Council engaged the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation in the planning for a Lower Werribee River shared user path feasibility plan, to ensure that the preferred trail alignment considers significant cultural landscape features and locations and minimises impacts on these sites.

Council has also worked to develop and implement Cultural Heritage Management Plans at K Road Cliffs, Werribee South Beach and Bungies Holes as part of planning and upgrade works. Interpretive signage will be installed at K Road Cliffs to tell the story of the site from an Aboriginal perspective, developed in partnership with the Bunurong Land Council.

Work is progressing on a Werribee River Experience framework & signage to support greater knowledge sharing of Traditional Owner cultural values.

A Cultural Values Assessment was completed by WTOAC in late 2023. The assessment has provided WTOAC with a record of cultural values, tangible and intangible, for the Wirribi Yaluk (Lower Werribee River). This record can be used by WTOAC to share knowledge with LWWAAP partners as appropriate to inform cultural amenity and other land use planning and activation actions in the LWWAAP



Walk on Wadawurrung Country near Riverwalk Estate. Photo courtesy of Werribee River Association.

Achievements in 2023-24

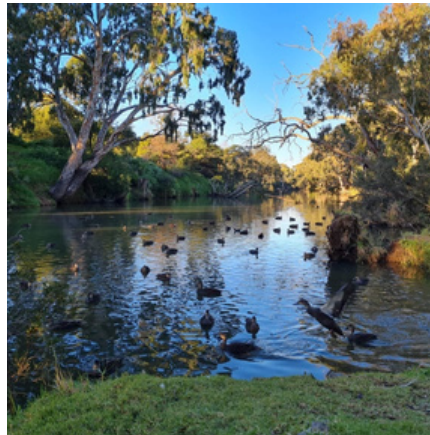
The Lower Werribee Waterway Amenity Action Plan (LWWAAP) was endorsed by all partners in January 2022 and launched April 2022. The actions in the Plan cover a 10 year period. Ongoing collaboration between the partners is essential to ensure the future implementation of the plan.

The first Annual Plan was developed in April 2023. This Second Year Snap Shot covers the following period between May 2023 to June 2024, highlighting the following key themes.

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|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1.Cultural Connections | 5.Community Involvement |
| 2.Connectivity | 6.Advocacy |
| 3.Recreation | 7.Communications & Media |
| 4.Environment (and Alternative Water) | 8.Tourism |
| | 9.Governance |

The collaborative approach between multiple land and waterway managers along the Wirribi Yaluk presents a new model for planning and delivering improved amenity for community health and wellbeing.

Wirribi Yaluk is a vital blue-green spine in a rapidly growing area lacking in parks and open space.



Photos top to bottom, left to right: Werribee River Trail extends into Werribee River Park, Cocoroc; Werribee River near Manorvale Parade; Sunset at K Road Cliffs; Grahams Reserve wetlands at the estuary of the Werribee River, in Werribee South; printed brochure of the Werribee River Guide; stakeholders meet at the newly constructed launching facility opposite the Werribee Golf course.

2. Connectivity

Connectivity is key to supporting tourism, community involvement, recreation, active transport and nature connection. The LWWAAP plan articulates a range of works to enhance connection and community access.

A feasibility study exploring opportunities to create a shared user path adjacent to the Werribee River between the K Road Cliffs and Grahams Wetland Reserve has been undertaken by Council. The project was funded under a Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) grant and explores the potential to improve public access to Crown Land sites managed by a range of State Government agencies.

Upcoming work will entail preparation of a prospectus to be used for advocacy purposes. LWWAAP partners anticipate this trail will entail significant commitment from all levels of government.

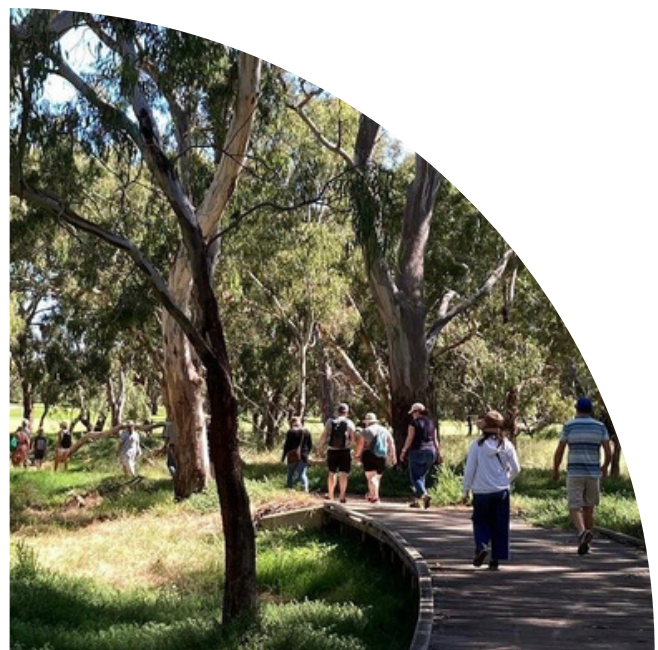
Wyndham City secured funding from DEECA for a River access and creek crossing feasibility study at Davis Creek confluence.

This study will support the future planned Werribee Township Regional Park, a large-scale project in the planning phases, managed by Parks Victoria.

The pedestrian bridge between Werribee River Park and Werribee Park precinct was damaged by the flooding events in the spring of 2022 and Parks Victoria were forced to close this important connection. Technical assessments have followed, with some site preparations being undertaken to bring in machinery.

Parks Vic anticipate repair works will occur when the river is at its lowest flow, in mid-summer 2024-2025.

Council has continued to develop plans for road upgrade works in K Road in 2025-26. Works include a shared user path from Duncans Road to K Road Cliffs, greatly improving walking and cycling access to this section on the Werribee River.



Photos left to right: Views across the lower Werribee River toward the Werribee South agricultural lands where a feasibility study is being undertaken, for a Werribee River Trail extension from the existing trail, right down to the bay trail; Boardwalk at Werribee Park that links to the pedestrian crossing currently under repair. Photos courtesy of Werribee River Association.

3. Recreation

Kayaking on the Werribee River, upstream of the Werribee weir and Riverbend Historical Park boating access point that is being re-developed.



The Lower Werribee River offers multiple recreational opportunities, for walking, cycling, kayaking, fishing, birdwatching and passive enjoyment by the river.

Wyndham City Council has commenced the concept design at Riverbend Historic Park that will see this park transformed into a district park, with multiple facilities.

Melbourne Water are working closely with Wyndham City in designing a pontoon to replace the current concrete platform at Riverbend Historical Park, that supports kayak and canoe access onto the river.

The opening of a new entrance to Werribee River Park has been delayed, overshadowed by vandalism and crime. Additional funding was

secured from Melbourne Water and DEECA to support CPTED - A Crime Prevention Through Environment Design approach to this new entrance, that has included resealing the roadway, better automated gates, rocks along the road border, concrete barriers at strategic locations, and new fencing.

Signage to Werribee River Park will need to be developed and installed once the park is open again, enhancing access for the public.

Parks Victoria has multiple personnel working on the future Werribee Township Regional Park. Following a public engagement process in 2022, now guided by a Strategic Directions Plan, various surveys are being undertaken to prepare for the delivery of this park.



Photos: Entrance at Werribee River Park, off William Thwaites Drive, where security has played a pivotal role in its design and delay in re-opening to the public. Photos courtesy of Parks Victoria.

4. Environment

The regeneration and urban cooling plantings in the Lower Werribee River have included works by Werribee River Association, Melbourne Water, Wyndham City Council, Parks Victoria, Zoos Victoria and Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation.

Highlights of revegetation works include: The Werribee River, Riversdale Drive riparian vegetation project has transformed a one hectare area of mown grass into a very natural riparian landscape. This project has successfully widened the riparian corridor, utilising a vegetation species palette that aligns with what would have existed pre-European settlement.

Melbourne Water also undertook a complimentary project at the same site, where large woody debris was installed to further enhance in-river habitat at this location, and a small area of erosion was stabilised. Both projects considered the local amenity value and retained the community's access to a well-loved fishing spot.

Council has commenced construction works at K Road Cliffs including major drainage works to prevent storm water run off from eroding the fragile cliff face. Works include the construction of a new drainage outlet into the Werribee River.

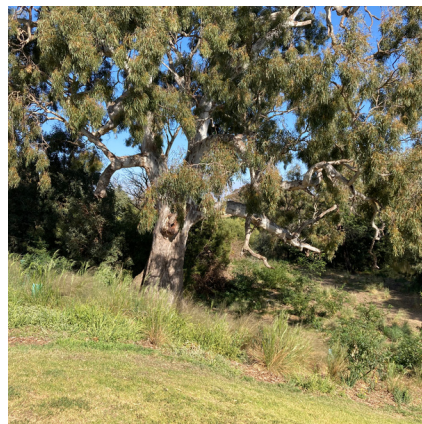
A partnership agreement between Werribee River Association and Melbourne Water was signed in 2024, supporting a lower Werribee River Litter Action Plan, funded by DEECA.

Werribee River Association undertook a robust planting program, together in partnership with Wyndham City, widening riparian areas along the Lower Werribee, close to shared trails and at Presidents Park.

DEECA's More Tree for a Cooler Green West program supported multiple partners with further funding including Werribee Open Range Zoo's planting along the river's edge.

Wadawurrung Traditional Owner Aboriginal Corporation and Werribee River Association undertook extensive plantings on behalf of Parks Victoria at Werribee River Park. LWWAAP partners and stakeholders met for a site tour in late 2023 to assess these extensive plantings works in the park.

Green Links Grants funding was awarded in 2024 to two projects adjacent to the Werribee River - Werribee River Association to undertake revegetation works within the Werribee River Regional Parklands; and Wyndham City Council for a revegetation and protection of cultural site project at Tarneet Islands (Werribee River).



Photos left to right: Riversdale Drive riparian area along the Werribee River, before the vegetation project; and after the vegetation project undertaken by Melbourne Water; fishing is popular at various locations along the lower Werribee River. Photos courtesy of Melbourne Water and Werribee River Association.

5. Community Involvement

River FEST at Wyndham Park was Werribee River Association's inaugural river themed festival.



The Lower Werribee River provides multiple nodes for engagement and involvement – along the banks, in the neighbouring parklands, and at community planting events and festivals. The LWWAAP endorses these programs, and identifies the need for further development.

Werribee River Association continued to deliver a program of community engagement activities, funded by DEECA, and modelled on the Waterways of the West CALD Toolkit.

Werribee River Association hosted River FEST, a celebration for World Rivers Day, on Sunday 24 September 2023 in Wyndham Park, that was attended by over 2,000 people and provided the perfect platform to showcase the Werribee River. This inaugural festival celebrating Werribee River had multiple funding partners. Funding for future festival events has been sought, but not yet secured.

Parks Victoria is working with community groups at Werribee Park Farm; and Zoo's Victoria's guides and volunteers also support enviro-themed education.

Werribee River Association host a monthly conservation group - Friends of the Lower Werribee and Wyndham City held a large community planting event at Presidents Park for Reconciliation Week in 2023.

The Green Living Series and Wyndham Learning Festival also offer good community involvement, across nature-based themes.



River FEST on Sunday 22 September 2023 appealed to families, and included music, workshops, stalls & the platypus mascot. Photos courtesy of Werribee River Association

6. Advocacy

There is ongoing advocacy by project partners for the delivery of the LWWAAP actions and outcomes.

Parks Victoria's extensive major projects will need government support to ensure they come to fruition.

The need to improve the Maltby bypass pedestrian access across the river and into Werribee River Park continues to be a priority for the group.

Water quality and water security issues, and working collaboratively with the farming community was highlighted during the Werribee South Farming Forum in mid 2023.

PAST Advocacy includes:

- Contributed to the Central and Gippsland Region Sustainable Water Strategy for improved water quality of recycled water, increased environmental flows, improvements to stormwater and platypus habitat.
- Submissions to the Essential Services Commission for adequate funding of water services.
- Discussion with Southern Rural Water regarding their environmental obligations.
- LWWAAP representation in the development of Melbourne Water's Werribee River Estuary Management Plan.



7. Media & Comms

Communicating the values of the Werribee River is a shared outcome.

Project partners have supported the promotion of the Meet Me by the River website, dedicated to promotion of the key nodes and activities, along the river. All partners and various stakeholders attended the official launch in June 2023.

Western Melbourne Tourism offers tourism marketing services for the region, particularly through their communications and digital media channels. They have undertaken research into the Indian diaspora, with intention to enhance their visitor experience.

Wyndham City marketing team support major event promotion, and activities for families within the riverine precinct.

Melbourne Water's marketing team use quarterly seasonal themes to communicate conservation and water literacy values.

Werribee Open Range Zoo is a major tourism attraction, with annual visitation of 800,000. Their river viewing platform is known for platypus sightings.

Partner agencies identify the need to widen the communications about seasonal water flows, and to continue to explore how to work more collaboratively on shared communications to benefit the LWWAAP priority areas.

Stakeholders gather for the launch of the Werribee River Guide website and pamphlet, held June 2023, supporting both greater access and advocacy for the river. Photo courtesy of Werribee River Association.

8. Tourism

Development of key river nodes is a priority to grow tourism along the Werribee River. Council has explored the tourism potential of several sites along the Werribee River.

Research indicates there may be a visitor demand for small electric boat hire and catered picnics and food trucks in riverside locations in Werribee South.

Wyndham City works with Parks Victoria in leading major events in the Werribee Park precinct, right on the doorstep of the river. Events such as the Children's Week Picnic and Werribee State Rose & Garden Show are major attractions and support conservation values.

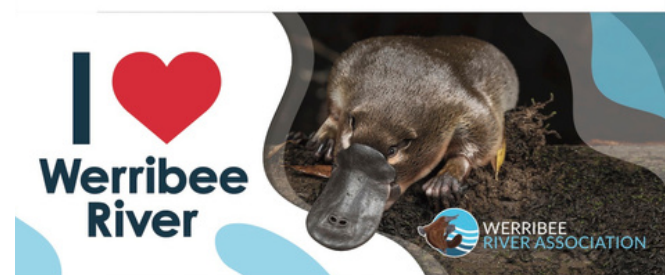
The Meet Me by the River Guide highlights the riverine nodes and attractions, and 3000 brochures have been distributed this past year.



9. Governance

Melbourne Water has been responsible for the coordination of the LWWAAP Implementation group, with stakeholder meetings online and in person. The coordination was handed over to Werribee River Association, to coordinate the future collaborations until June 2026.

Multiple LWWAAP partner agencies have MOU's with each other, and identify the need to continue working as a collaboration group to support the delivery of the LWWAAP.



Photos left to right: The printed Werribee River Guide - Meet me by the River; I Love Werribee River sticker developed by the Werribee River Association.



Picture creation of proposed works for the Werribee Township Regional Park. Picture courtesy of Parks Victoria.

Visit the Story map

[Lower Werribee Waterway Amenity Action Plan \(arcgis.com\)](https://arcgis.com)