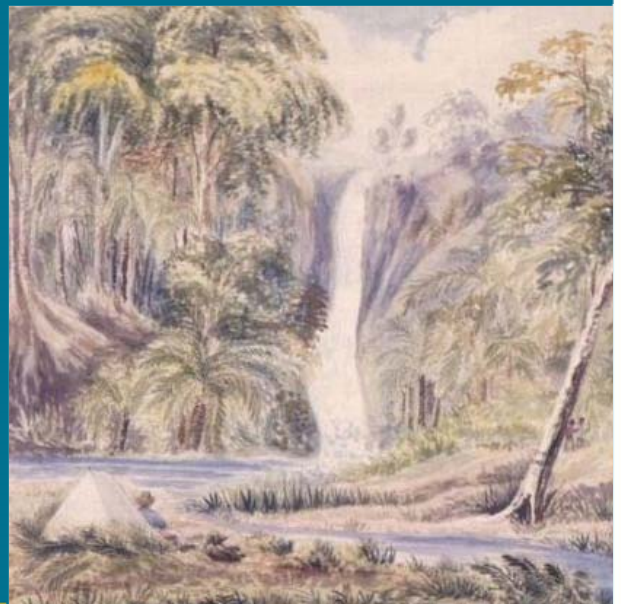


# YARRA RIVER (BIRRARUNG) CULTURAL HERITAGE SCOPING STUDY

Final report  
28 August 2018

Prepared for  
Melbourne Water



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**Report Register**

This report register documents the development and issue of the report entitled Yarra River Cultural Heritage Scoping Study undertaken by Context in accordance with our internal quality management system.

Project No.	Issue No.	Notes/description	Issue Date	Issued to
2276	1	Draft	11 April 2018	Helen Knight, Melbourne Water
2276	2	Draft final	12 July 2018	Helen Knight, Melbourne Water
2276	3	Draft final	26 July 2018	Helen Knight, Melbourne Water
2276	4	Final	28 August 2018	Helen Knight, Melbourne Water

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Yarra River Protection (*Wilip-gin Birrarung murrn*) Act 2017, identifies the Yarra River and the many hundreds of parcels of public land it flows through as one living, integrated natural entity for protection and improvement. The cultural and heritage values of the Yarra are one of four key elements that will guide Melbourne Water's development of the Yarra Strategic Plan.

There are many thousands of sites of cultural significance identified within the study area and many of those are protected on various heritage registers. This Cultural Heritage Scoping Report provides a desk-top review of historical sources and heritage registers for the study area, defined as one kilometre either side of the river.

It should be noted that this has been prepared prior to engagement with the Traditional Owners, and it is expected that other approaches to understanding the Yarra River will arise from that process. Throughout the document it is made clear that Traditional Owner engagement will inform the next stage of this work.

A framework of historical themes has been prepared for the Yarra River, following a wide reading of documentary sources, maps and other historical material, and by surveying the kinds of places that exist along the Yarra which are already listed on heritage registers. A narrative of the 'river in history' forms part of this report together with a list of places that respond to the historical themes developed.

Some quantitative analysis of the numbers of known cultural heritage sites is provided, along with a short narrative of the types of sites found within the four reaches of the Yarra. Several 'snapshot' case studies are given for each reach, providing an indication of the wide variety of sites that exist.

Some key findings include:

- There are 179 recorded Aboriginal archaeological and cultural sites along the Yarra River.
- Of the approximately 2777 recorded sites within the study area, about half of these are local Heritage Overlays.
- There are nearly 1000 sites recorded on the Victorian Heritage Inventory of historic archaeological places.
- The presence of several nationally significant places within the Study Area may provide significant opportunities for cultural heritage.

Some recommendations include:

- Undertake gap or thematic heritage studies in areas or within municipalities where numbers of recorded sites are relatively low.
- There are some places that may lend themselves to rich narratives, further interpretation and story telling about the Yarra including Coranderrk, Abbotsford Convent, Bolin Bolin billabong and Laughing Waters.
- Revisiting the 'Heritage River' idea as an initial step in understanding the Yarra River as a regional landscape and the cultural heritage values of particular parts.
- Undertaking landscape-wide studies to inform the identification, documentation and protection of places of cultural value.

A workshop for heritage practitioners from partner organisations and representatives from community heritage groups was held on 6 August 2018. The information gathered at the workshop will assist Melbourne Water in the preparation of the Yarra Strategic Plan. Cultural heritage is one of several areas of strong community interest in developing the 50-year vision for the Yarra.

The desired outcomes of the workshop were:

- To share work to date on the cultural heritage of the Yarra.
- To update our understanding of cultural heritage programs and studies in the study area.
- To understand future work and resources that may be needed to conserve and manage the heritage values of the Yarra.
- To explore the opportunities that a regional scale study would present.

The findings of the workshop are presented in Chapter 4 and further detail is in Appendix D.

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Acknowledgements

The Yarra River Cultural Heritage Scoping Study (the Study) was carried out with funds made available by Melbourne Water as part of the Yarra River Strategic Plan. The contribution of the following people and organisations to the completion of the Study are gratefully acknowledged.

Helen Knight, Land Liveability and Stewardship, Melbourne Water

Paul Balassone

Penelope Spry

*Other Melbourne Water staff as advised*

*Melbourne Water GIS mapping*

### 1.2 Purpose and scope

#### The Act

The Yarra River Protection (*Wilip-gin Birrarung murrn*) Act 2017, identifies the Yarra River and the many hundreds of parcels of public land it flows through as one living, integrated natural entity for protection and improvement. This landmark legislation provides the basis for future care and protection of the Yarra.

#### Yarra Strategic Plan

Yarra River Action Plan<sup>1</sup> detailed actions to ensure the long-term protection of the Yarra River, and its environs and parklands. This Action Plan nominated Melbourne Water as the lead agency for the development of a 50-year Community Vision for the Yarra, which will become the foundation for an overarching Yarra Strategic Plan (YSP).

The four key elements that will guide Melbourne Water's development of the YSP include:

- the overall environmental health of the river (waterway and riparian land)
- community use, access and amenity of the river and parklands
- the river's landscape setting and interface of the river corridor with adjacent land use
- cultural and heritage values

This report is concerned with the cultural and heritage values of the Yarra.

#### Consultation summary

Through community engagement activities in 2017, visions for the whole of the Yarra River and for each of the four 'reaches' have been distilled (Appendix A). These emphasise the relationship between the river as an entity and its community; and its value as a place of refuge, recreation, learning and livelihood. Enhancing biodiversity and environmental health is paramount in the Upper Rural reach whilst the Lower Rural reach emphasises custodianship through farming, recreation and learning. The Suburban Reach acknowledges the responsibility of private owners and the balance of natural ecosystems and recreational activities, whilst the Inner Reach is emphasised as a place of connection spiritually and physically.

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, Yarra River Action Plan, Wilip-gin Birrarung murrn, 2017

These inspiring community visions connect with the idea of cultural heritage as both valued places and as opportunities to understand more about the Yarra. Many places will have a spatial dimension, but other places may be less able to be defined in this way.

Culturally significant places include both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal or ‘settler’ places.

- The purpose of the Study is:
- To provide a narrative of the key historic activities and themes relating to the Yarra River.
- To identify the broad scale patterns of places of cultural heritage significance within the Study Area defined as 1.0 km each side of the Yarra River
- To identify gaps in cultural heritage knowledge through consultation with knowledge holders and Traditional Owners
- To make recommendations for future work required in identifying and managing places of cultural significance.

A heritage practitioner’s workshop was held in August 2018 to discuss topics around ‘Where to for the cultural heritage of the Birrarung?’ Small group discussion was focussed on four topics, with questions and prompts including:

- Knowing our heritage and culture
- Protecting our heritage and culture
- Collaborating and supporting heritage and culture
- Appreciating and promoting heritage and culture

This session was a whole group discussion focusing on aspirations that have come out of the community engagement so far. Participants were prompted to explore aspirations in relation to cultural heritage across the entire study area. The findings are included in Chapter 4 and further detail of the workshop is provide in Appendix D.

### 1.3 Limitations and constraints

This draft report provides a desk-top review of historical sources and heritage registers. It is a first step in understanding the wealth of cultural heritage that is the Yarra River. Further stages of this work will include engagement with Traditional Owners to establish an approach to understanding the cultural heritage of the Birrarung from their perspective.

There are many thousands of sites of cultural significance identified within the Study Area and many of those are protected on various heritage registers.

This desk top review has used spatial mapping to identify those sites already known. Where spatial mapping has not been available, such as for the National Trust landscapes, manual checking of the location has been done to determine whether the site is in the Study Area. This may not be entirely accurate, but adequate for the purposes of high level analysis.

### 1.4 Abbreviations

The following abbreviations have been used in the report:

ACHRIS Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Register Information System

CHL Commonwealth Heritage List

DELWP Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning

HO Heritage Overlay

NHL National Heritage List

MMBW Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works

NHL National Heritage List  
PROV Public Record Office Victoria  
PV Parks Victoria  
RHSV Royal Historical Society of Victoria  
Rs Reserve files  
RNE Register of the National Estate  
SLV State Library of Victoria  
TO Traditional Owner  
VGG Victorian Government Gazette  
VHI Victorian Heritage Inventory  
VHR Victorian Heritage Register  
VPRS Victorian Public Record Series

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## 1.5 Study area

The extent of the Study Area is the course of the Yarra River, and approximately 1.0 km on either side of the banks. The river is divided into four reaches for the purposes of the study, as shown on the plan opposite.

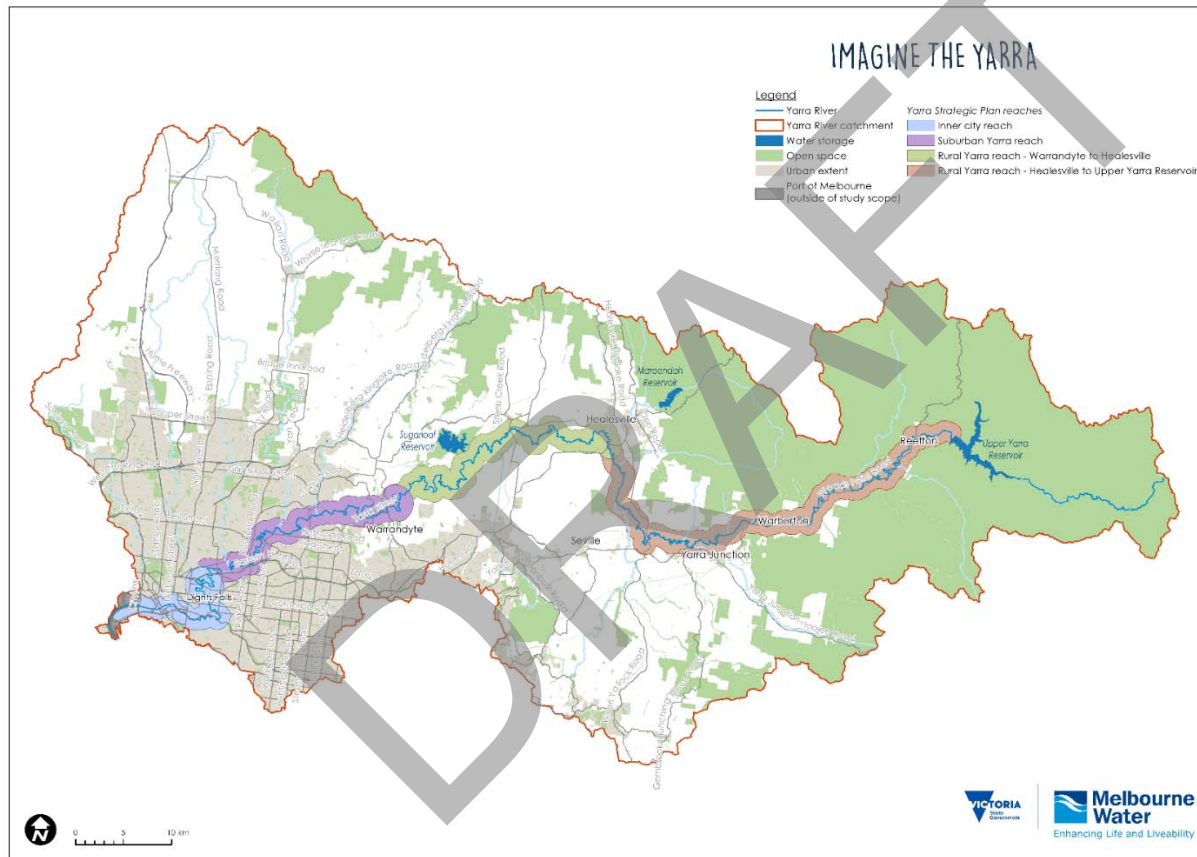


Figure 1. Yarra River (Birrarung) strategic plan study area. (Melbourne Water)

## 2.0 YARRA RIVER HISTORY

### 2.1 Framework of historical themes

A framework of historical themes has been prepared for the Yarra River. Thematic frameworks are a standard tool of current heritage practice and are used to categorise, contextualise and assess all kinds of heritage places. This framework is based on the document *Victoria's Framework of Historical Themes* (Victorian Themes), which was developed for Heritage Victoria in 2010.<sup>2</sup> A comparison of the 9 Victorian Themes with the 9 Yarra River Themes is shown in Table 1 below. It is envisaged that this framework will serve as a useful tool to better understand the historical context of the heritage places that are located along the four designated reaches of the Yarra River.

This framework has been developed following a wide reading of documentary sources, maps and other historical material, and by surveying the kinds of places that exist along the Yarra which are already listed on the VHR and local heritage overlays. Most identified heritage places fit with one sub-theme being the primary historical association. Yet there are some complications that arise with this simple systematic approach. Some places may be difficult to categorise because they have more than one primary historical association, and these may be conflicting rather than complimentary associations. Indeed, some places, for example Dights Falls or the Royal Botanic Gardens, may have multiple important themes.

The incorporation of Aboriginal heritage places into the thematic framework is also problematic as the framework has been prepared from the perspective of the 'post-settlement' period and because the preparation of the framework precedes the planned consultation sessions with the Traditional Owner groups for the Yarra River area. The outcome of those sessions may in fact result in an alternative modelling of heritage place types that doesn't necessarily fit with the draft framework presented here. Consultation with the Traditional Owner groups will be reported on in the final report.

Table 1: Comparing Victorian themes with Yarra River themes

Victorian Historical Themes	Proposed Yarra River historical themes
Shaping Victoria's environment	Water and life Understanding and conserving the river
Peopling Victoria's places and landscape	Settling
Connecting Victorians by transport and communications	Building a well-serviced city
Transforming and managing the land	Settling
Building Victoria's industries and workforce	Developing industries
Building towns, cities and the Garden State	Suburban development
Governing Victorians	Civic and political expression
Building community life	Establishing communities
Shaping cultural and creative life	The inspiring river Appreciating and enjoying the river

<sup>2</sup> Heritage Victoria 2010. *Victoria's Framework of Historical Themes*. Heritage Council of Victoria, Melbourne.

Table 2: Summary of themes and sub-themes for the Yarra River

The various reaches of the Yarra, as defined by the map in Section 1, can be better understood in terms of their historical themes. Some themes apply to the entire length of the river, while other themes and sub-themes are more specifically located. The following table presents an outline of historic themes as they relate to the four reaches of the Yarra.

Yarra River historic themes	Sub-themes	Reaches
Water and life	Living on Country	1, 2, 3, 4
	The endurance of Aboriginal heritage	1, 2, 3, 4
Settling	Exploring and surveying	1, 2, 3, 4
	Invasion and dispossession	1, 2, 3, 4
	Farming and grazing	1, 2, 3, 4
	Orchards, vineyards and market-gardening	1, 2, 3
Developing industries	Factories	1, 2, 3
	Brick-works and quarries	1, 2, 3
	Gold-mining	2, 3
	Timber-cutting	1, 2, 3, 4
Building a well-serviced city	Providing a water supply	1, 2, 3, 4
	Setting aside public reserves	1, 2, 3
	Facilitating transport	1, 2, 3
	Altering and adapting the river	1, 2
	Establishing institutions	1, 2, 3
Suburban development	Shaping the suburbs	1, 2
	The river as a class divide	1, 2
	Living on the fringes	1, 2
Civic and political expression	Civic celebrations and commemorations	1
	Memorials	1, 2, 3, 4
	Taking political action	1, 2
Establishing communities	Workers' towns and settlements	1, 2, 3, 4
	Staff accommodation	3, 4
The inspiring river	Perceptions of the river	1, 2, 3
	Encouraging creative endeavour	1, 2
	Architecture and landscape design	1, 2, 3
Appreciating and enjoying the river	Creating parks and gardens	1, 2, 3, 4
	Recreation and sport	1, 2, 3
	Holidays and tourism	2, 3, 4
Understanding and conserving the river	Protecting Melbourne's water supply	2, 3, 4
	Coping with fire and flood	1, 2, 3, 4
	Nature conservation	1, 2, 3, 4



Table 3: Places associated with the Yarra River themes

Yarra River Historical Themes	Sub-themes	Examples of types of places
1. Water and life	Living on Country	camping grounds meeting places scar trees
	1.2 The endurance of Aboriginal heritage	archaeological sites earthen / clay ovens ochre pits fishing spots fish traps initiation sites places with spiritual significance burial sites tracks middens
2.Settling	2.1 Exploring and surveying	landing sites survey markers expedition routes survey camps blazed trees
	2.2 Invasion and dispossession	contact sites sites of conflict camping sites sites of missions and reserves court houses lock-ups
	2.3 Farming and grazing	homesteads homestead gardens farm buildings oast houses stables early roads stock routes butter factories former fence lines trees
	Orchards, vineyards and market gardens	packing sheds irrigation systems wine-press buildings
3. Developing industries	Factories	mills industrial complexes wool-scouring works boiling-down works

Yarra River Historical Themes	Sub-themes	Examples of types of places
		buildings with hydraulic lifts. ship-building sites
	Brick-works and quarries	brick works quarries clay pits
	Gold-mining	tracks and travel routes coach roads hotels miner's huts mining sites former diggings mullock heaps settlement sites
	Timber-cutting	timber mills settlement sites timber camps timber tramways timber tracks forester's huts railway sidings
<b>4. Building a well-serviced city</b>	Providing a water supply	water supply infrastructure hydraulic lifts channels weirs reservoirs reservoir parks storage dams
	Setting aside public reserves	public parks riverbank reserves riverside plantings
	Facilitating transport	roads bridges railways jetties hotels and lodging houses freeways
	Altering and adapting the river	public parkland artificial islands reclaimed wetlands embankments
	Establishing institutions	mental asylums immigrant depots hospitals schools convents monasteries
	Defence	Batteries Defences

Yarra River Historical Themes	Sub-themes	Examples of types of places
		Military barracks Military training grounds Military camps
<b>5. Suburban development</b>	Shaping the suburbs	street layouts subdivision plans housing estates
	The river as a class divide	mansions villas workers' cottages schools factories
	Living on the fringes	riverbank sites campsites
<b>6. Civic and political expression</b>	Civic celebrations and commemorations	riverbank sites city landmarks city thoroughfares parkland symbolic trees sites of commemoration
	Memorials	Pioneer memorials War memorials Institutional memorials Memorial trees Aboriginal memorials
	Taking political action	speakers' podiums sites of political action sites of strike action protest camps public parks and gardens
<b>7. Establishing communities</b>	Workers town and settlement s	workers' housing
	Company towns	community buildings parks
<b>8. The inspiring river</b>	Perceptions of the river	viewing spots beauty spots
	Encouraging creative endeavour	artists' camps artists' colonies artists' studios art galleries artists' trails
	Architecture and landscape design	houses flats gardens
<b>9. Appreciating and enjoying the river</b>	Creating parks and gardens	parks gardens

Yarra River Historical Themes	Sub-themes	Examples of types of places
		bandstands and rotundas kiosks walking tracks caretakers houses'
	Recreation and sport	sports grounds boat sheds golf courses swimming enclosures children's playgrounds bike tracks race courses
	Holidays and tourism	camping sites fishing spots hotels and guesthouses tourist railways tearooms picnic grounds
<b>10. Understanding and conserving the river</b>	Protecting Melbourne's water supply	water supply catchment reserves caretakers' huts aqueducts experimental forestry plantations reservoir filtration systems
	Coping with fire and flood	High water level and flood markers flood mitigation systems fire towers fire brigades memorials to bushfire victims
	Nature conservation	national parks state parks nature reserves nature walks bushland reserves roadside vegetation significant indigenous trees

## 2.2 Yarra: The river in history

### Introduction

The following historical narrative of the Yarra River is based around the historical themes identified in Section 2.1. It is not intended to be a comprehensive or chronological account of the Yarra River, but instead examines some key themes that can be seen to encapsulate the story of the river since the beginnings of permanent European settlement in Victoria. This narrative is intended to provide a context for some of the heritage places in the various reaches of the Yarra.

*Note: that some of the images used in the following history have not been cleared for copyright and these are marked as such. If this report is to be published or made available on in a digital format online all images will need to have permissions cleared.*

### 1. Water and Life

#### Living on Country

The River Yarra has shaped Aboriginal cultural life for time immemorial. Known as *Birrarung* ('river of mists and shadows') to the Wurundjeri and the wider Kulin Nation, the Yarra is a significant life force for the Wurundjeri and carries great significance for Aboriginal cultural life in the Melbourne area and in the country north-east of Melbourne. Other member groups of the Kulin Nation, namely the Boon Wurrung (Bunurung) as well as the Taungurung, at times accessed, occupied and travelled through the Yarra Valley and the Yarra watershed. One Boon Wurrung clan, the Yallukit willam, claimed the area at the mouth of the Yarra as their traditional country.<sup>3</sup>

Over time the river has witnessed changing sea levels – with the river originally following a course across the dry bed of Port Phillip Bay – and has changed course, at one time emptying into the Carrum Swamp, and in more recent geological time having an outflow at Port Melbourne. The age-old stories associated with the ancient river have been carried in oral memory by the Wurundjeri for thousands of generations and provide Aboriginal custodians with the bedrock of their cultural knowledge.

As well as being a central element in cultural and spiritual life, the Yarra River, together with its many tributaries and remnant lagoons, is an important resource for Aboriginal people: it is a source of fresh water and food (prized for its fish and short-finned eels); its flood-prone banks have provided grasses used in traditional crafts and its rich river flats have sustained varied food sources, including yams. The vegetation on its banks has been used for medicinal purposes, have and has been used to cut bark for canoes and timber for various tools. Clay and ochre found in its banks have been used in painting and for ceremonial use.

The Wurundjeri managed the country along the Yarra and in the wider Yarra Valley with routine land-clearing carried out by regular and carefully managed firing, which generated new pasture for grazing animals. Early European settlers frequently likened the Melbourne area to a 'gentleman's park' on account of the open spaces of grassland interspersed with large trees. This well-balanced but fragile relationship of humans with nature was severely impacted by the arrival of Europeans, who brought with them very different ways of managing the river's water supply and the rich biodiversity of the river and its banks.

#### The endurance of Indigenous culture

For the Kulin nation, the Yarra River (*Birrarung*) represents an important connection to Country, and the Wurundjeri serve as active custodians of the river and its banks. Suffering the devastating impact of European settlement, the Yarra River provided a means of survival for

<sup>3</sup> Meyer Eidelson 2015, *The Yallukit willam: The river people of Port Phillip*, City of Port Phillip.

many Aboriginal people through the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Its banks offered shelter and refuge.

From 1837 to 1839, George Langhorne took charge of the Anglican Mission for Aborigines that was established on an 895-acre site on the south bank of the river at South Yarra. It included the traditional Aboriginal fishing spot on the Yarra, known as *Tromgin*, located in the present-day Royal Botanic Gardens. After the closure of the mission, George Augustus Robinson arrived at Port Phillip as the newly appointed Chief Protector of the Aborigines. He lived for a short time at the police paddock (now Yarra Park) before settling at 'Tivoli' (or 'Terneet'), close to the river bank at South Yarra.

Through the 1840s and 1850s, many of the Wurundjeri, or 'Yarra Yarra tribe' as they were known by settlers, were moved across the river to the Merri Creek Aboriginal Reserve, situated between the Merri Creek and the Yarra, close to present-day Collingwood. The reserve was managed by William Thomas. The Wurundjeri at this time moved between Melbourne and the Yarra Valley where they had many camping places, including those at Kew, Bulleen, Heidelberg, Warrandyte, Yarra Glen and Yering. European settlers referred to the Wurundjeri as the 'Yarra Tribe' because they closely identified with the Yarra and camped at many places along its length, in both its upper and lower reaches. The extensive Crown land reserves along the Yarra in Melbourne were also used as camping and meeting places for Aboriginal people in the 1840s and 1850s. A new Aboriginal reserve at Pound Bend, Warrandyte, was set aside in 1852 but this was short-lived.<sup>4</sup>



Figure 2. Parish plan of Nillumbik, c.1855, showing the short-lived Aboriginal reserve that spanned the Yarra River from Warrandyte to Eltham in the early 1850s. (State Library of Victoria)

In 1863, Elders of the Wurundjeri and the Taungurung selected a site for a new government Aboriginal reserve at a traditional camping ground at the junction of the Yarra and the Coranderrk Creek (also known as Badger Creek), near Healesville. Other Aboriginal people were also moved to Coranderrk, including a number of Boon Wurrung as well as other Aboriginal people from other parts of Victoria, including Dja Dja Wurrung children who had been removed from their parents at Mt Franklin. For several decades, Coranderrk was celebrated as a 'model' Aboriginal reserve. Aboriginal people continued to practise their culture, and produced fine artworks and crafts, while operating a productive and prize-winning

<sup>4</sup> Isabel Ellender 1994, 'The Aboriginal Heritage of the Shire of Eltham', prepared for the Shire of Eltham, p. 15; Monument Australia website.



farm. Coranderrk was closed in 1924 and most of the remaining residents were moved to Lake Tyers Aboriginal Reserve, but many descendants of Coranderrk residents continue live in and around the Healesville area.

Many places along the Yarra River are significant for their strong association with Aboriginal heritage, such as the Royal Botanic Gardens, the Domain, Yarra Park, Dights Falls, Bolin Bolin swamp, the Banyule wetlands, and the former Yering station. There is a dwindling number of scar trees or canoe trees remaining in the Melbourne area.



Figure 3. *Aborigines at the Falls* 1837. (National Library of Australia, Bib Id 2433212)



Figure 4. *Outside 'Tivoli' (aka 'Terneet') on river at South Yarra, the home of G.A. Robinson, the Chief Protector of Aborigines, c.1847* (Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW, ref. ML 330)



Figure 5. *Demonstration of fire-making at Coranderrk Aboriginal Reserve in the 1880s.* (Illustrated London News, 1880s)

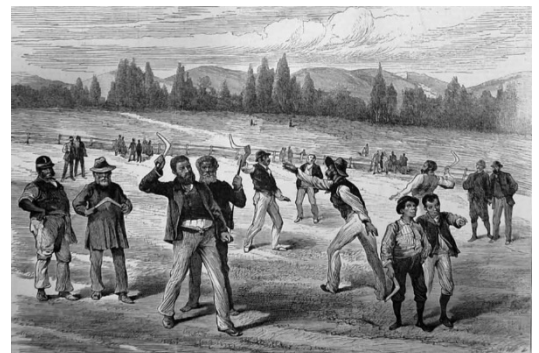


Figure 6. *Boomerang-throwing at Coranderrk, 1880s.* (Illustrated London News)

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## 2. Settling

### Exploration and surveying

The Yarra River was the chief means of arrival to the place that is now Melbourne. In 1803, Charles Grimes had set off on an exploratory trip from the short-lived Sorrento convict settlement; he sailed up the Yarra as far as Dights Falls. A gardener named James Fleming, who had accompanied him on this trip, recorded in his diary: 'The most eligible place for a settlement that I have seen is on the Freshwater [Yarra] River'.<sup>5</sup> Two decades later, in 1835 a party of settlers came across a half-buried tin pot, which was thought to date to an earlier exploratory expedition – possibly that associated with Grimes and his party in 1802-03.

When John Batman came up the Yarra River in June 1835, he penned in his diary 'This will be the place for a village – the natives on shore'. He claimed ownership of 600,000 acres through a 'treaty' he purported to have made with the Wurundjeri, which was supposedly settled at the junction of the Yarra River and the Merri Creek. In search of new pastoral land, he set off on an exploratory trip, acquainting himself with the vast estate that he claimed for himself and the Port Phillip Association. Full of self-importance, he imposed his own name on the chief river, calling the Yarra the 'Batman River'.<sup>6</sup> When his rival John Pascoe Fawkner arrived a few months later, he called the river the 'Yarra Yarra', following the advice of John Wedge, who heard Aboriginal people using those words at the river and mistakenly thought that the river was called 'Yarra Yarra' (meaning in fact, 'flowing'). The river itself became central in the contested claims of the two founders.

The Yarra River was the *raison d'être* for the pastoral settlement at Port Phillip, providing a much needed and reliable water supply as well as rich river flats. Early settlers established themselves along its banks, close to the point of 'The Falls', which was a rocky ledge that separated the salt water from the estuary from the more valuable fresh water. Batman selected the high point of Batman's Hill at the western extremity of the fledgling settlement, while Fawkner established a hotel close to the river bank.

When Robert Hoddle surveyed the town of Melbourne in 1837, he laid out the town grid in line with the course of the Yarra along a fairly straight stretch in the vicinity of The Falls. Although the river defined the position of the township of Melbourne, the city grid was not oriented towards the river but instead was inward-looking. For new arrivals to Melbourne in the nineteenth century, the Yarra River was a critical and dominant reference point. It was central to new arrivals' understanding of, and mapping of, the new country.

A number of the early colonial administrators of the settlement were based, some albeit only briefly, in the large government reserve and police paddock occupying an extensive Crown land reserve on the north bank of the Yarra in the vicinity of what is now Yarra Park (and the Melbourne Cricket Ground), including Police Magistrate Captain William Lonsdale (along with the Mounted Police barracks and the Native Police camp), the Aboriginal Protector George Augustus Robinson, and William Buckley. The Superintendent of the Port Phillip District, Charles Joseph La Trobe, occupied an adjacent, more elevated freehold allotment at 'Jolimont', where he built a home and laid out a garden.

The river itself was the subject of various exploratory expeditions. Hoddle set off in 1845 to map the course of the Yarra, from Port Phillip Bay to the ranges in the north-east, and to

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<sup>5</sup> Fleming, Diary, 26 February 1803, quoted in J.J. Shillinglaw 1878, *Port Phillip, First Survey and Settlement*, Government Printer, Melbourne.

<sup>6</sup> James Bonwick 1973, *John Batman: The founder of Victoria*, Wren Publishing Pty Ltd, Melbourne (first published 1867), pp. 23, 24.



locate its source. The City of Melbourne carried out its own investigation of stream flow measurements in the upper reaches of the river in the late 1840s to assess the viability of the Yarra River (as compared to other streams) as a potential water supply for Melbourne.<sup>7</sup>



Figure 7. Robert Hoddle (with Henry Short), *Starvation Creek, near the source of the Yarra Yarra*, 1845; 1860. (State Library of Victoria, Accession no. H2002.119)

### **Invasion and dispossession**

Aboriginal people co-existed with the new settlers to varying degrees for the first few years of the Port Phillip settlement, including Boon Wurrung husband and wife, Benbow and Kitty, who lived in a hut below John Batman's house on Batman's Hill, a mere stone's throw from the river. The Boon Wurrung leader Derrimut was a companion of John Pascoe Fawkner's, the two often going fishing together on the Yarra. Squatters and farmers used Aboriginal men and women as labourers and servants, for example at various estates in the Heidelberg district and at Ryrie's Yering Station at Yarra Glen.<sup>8</sup>

The arrival of permanent pastoral settlers from Van Diemen's Land in 1835 marked the beginning of a destructive process of social, political and cultural persecution of the Indigenous landowners by the newcomers. Ultimately, Aboriginal people lost their land and access to their waterways while settlers claimed the best land for their own use. Settlers asserted a political and moral right to occupy land and to control the waterways for 'productive' purposes. By the early 1850s, the Yarra was transformed into a busy transport route for shipping and as a drain for the effluent of the rapidly growing settlement. Its banks were denuded and its water was contaminated with filth.

Displaced and dispossessed of their traditional lands and forced to live on the margins of the settlement, Aboriginal people suffered from introduced diseases, poor nutrition, alcoholism, cultural disintegration, low fertility and a high rate of death. In 1840, Aboriginal people in Melbourne were prohibited from entering the town proper and were confined to the southern bank of the Yarra.<sup>9</sup> They were subject to violent attacks by white settlers; one recorded

<sup>7</sup> R.C. Seegar 1941, 'Melbourne's Early Water Supply'.

<sup>8</sup> For Heidelberg, see Context 2018, 'Banyule Thematic Environmental History', draft report prepared for the City of Banyule.

<sup>9</sup> Eidelson 2015, p. xx.

massacre of Wurundjeri people, for example, occurred at Yering, near Yarra Glen, in 1840.<sup>10</sup> Aboriginal people from more distant parts of the settlement were incarcerated at the Melbourne gaol; two Aboriginal men from Tasmania were the first people sentenced to be executed in Melbourne in 1842. Outside Melbourne, Aboriginal people retaliated against the settlers on the Yarra by stealing stock and vegetables; one settler at Heidelberg complained in 1849 that Aboriginal people were burning his 'enclosed paddocks'. In one case, the police seized a large number of weapons from a large meeting of Aboriginals on the Heidelberg Flats, who were presumably plotting an attack.<sup>11</sup> There were measly concessions. In 1850, when a toll was imposed for crossing the newly completed Princes Bridge, Aboriginal people were exempted from paying it. The river remained a key travel route for Aboriginal people, and a means of access to less settled country further upstream to the north-east.

Aboriginal people were moved to various Aboriginal reserves along the river – first to Langhorne's Aboriginal Mission, South Yarra (1837–1839); then to Merri Creek, near Collingwood (1846–1852); and then to Coranderk Aboriginal Reserve (1863–1924), near Healesville. Here they were granted some opportunity for cultural expression, but also faced severe regulation to their behaviour and lifestyle and suffered gross restrictions to their civil rights. Through the nineteenth century, Aboriginal people were frequently incarcerated at the Yarra Bend Asylum (1848) in the mid-nineteenth century and were probably also amongst the inmates at the Kew Lunatic Asylum (1871).

### **Grazing and farming**

Settlers with sufficient capital who arrived at Port Phillip in the late 1830s and early 1840s took up land on the rich river flats alongside the Yarra River as pastoral leasehold. Here they 'squatted' on Crown Land until the colonial government made provision for the granting of limited freehold title in the late 1840s. Close to the town centre, Benjamin Baxter took up a pastoral run on the south side of the river in the early 1840s that extended through present-day Port Melbourne and South Melbourne. John Gardiner laid claim to a large cattle run at the intersection of the Yarra and Gardiner's (or Kooyongkoot) Creek at present-day Hawthorn from 1838 and in 1842 he moved upstream to 'Kangaroo Park' at Yering. Brown's 'Como' estate in South Yarra operated as a cattle station in the 1840s. Several pastoralists, including William Hawdon, R.A. Browne, Lemuel Bolden and others, were established at Heidelberg in the 1840s, while James Dawson took up a cattle run near Eltham. From the town centre and upstream until Heidelberg, pastoral settlers preferred the higher east side of the Yarra, but upstream from Heidelberg no distinction was made.

Early settlers built rough dwellings from local timber, or from stone or brick. Shepherds who were employed to watch stock often lived in primitive one-room huts. The squatters established their properties as self-sufficient entities, with a dairy herd and often with a productive garden watered by the river. Some land was subdivided under the Selection Acts in the 1860s.

Farmers took up smaller land holdings from the 1840s, with the banks of the Yarra being a preferred location. The lower reaches however were soon found to be prone to flooding and presented the risk of stock loss and property damage. In 1844, F.W. Unwin was granted a 'special survey' (which permitted occupation before survey) of 5120 acres of coveted river flats and lagoons at Bulleen. Outside of Melbourne, the Yarra Valley was regarded as prized farming land and modest establishments such as Gulf Station, near Yarra Glen, prospered.

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<sup>10</sup> Add ref.

<sup>11</sup> Context 2018, p. 17.



*Figure 8. Eugene von Guerard's painting of Mr Perry's Farm on the Yarra, near Fairfield, 1855. (Artnet)*



*Figure 9. 'Rourke Bridge' farm on the Yarra at Healesville, photographed by Charles Nettleton, c.1870s. (State Library of Victoria Accession No: H84.79/1)*

### Orchards, vineyards and market-gardens

The Yarra has been used as a source of water supply (including for irrigation schemes) by orchardists and vigneron since the mid-1830s, and this use was particularly notable along the stretch of river between Heidelberg and Healesville. Perry Bros. established the famed orchard 'Fulham Grange' on the Yarra at Fairfield in the 1840s. In the twentieth century, a number of orchards continued to operate in the outer suburbs of Melbourne, including Warrandyte, Templestowe and Wonga Park.

Market gardens were quickly established to feed the new settlement. Many Chinese immigrants who had been lured to Melbourne during the gold rush in the 1850s successfully turned their hands to market gardening. In the late nineteenth century, Chinese-run market gardens were operating on the river bank at Abbotsford, Burnley, Ivanhoe and Heidelberg, where vegetable crops were watered using pumps direct from the Yarra.

Vineyards were commonplace on the early estates of the Heidelberg district in the 1840s and 1850s, but these were small-scale operations restricted to home consumption. Charles Maplestone of Ivanhoe had some success as a prize-winning vigneron in the 1860s. Several immigrant Swiss vigneron settled in the cooler climate of the Yarra Valley, around Yarra Glen and Healesville, in the 1850s and 1860s, including brothers Paul and Hubert de Castella, and Guillaume de Pury. They had emigrated from the town of Neuchâtel, Switzerland, which was also the home town of Sophie La Trobe (née Montmollin), the wife of the Governor of Victoria, C.J. La Trobe. It is believed that La Trobe had directly encouraged his fellow countrymen to settle in the Yarra Valley as wine-growers.



Figure 10. Scene at 'Yeringberg', gathering grapes 1875. (State Library of Victoria Accession No H29754)



Figure 11. Photo by Frederick Kruger, 'Scene on the Yarra Yarra Flats' (probably Yarra Glen), 1880s. (State Library of Victoria Accession No. H39614/15)

After a period of success, the winemakers of the Yarra Valley were forced to cease production following a devastating outbreak of phylloxera in the 1890s. Most operations were abandoned and land-owners turned to farming. A resurgence in wine-making in the 1970s, however, has led to enormous growth in wine production in the region.

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### 3. Developing industries

#### Mills and factories

Early industrial activity on the Yarra was dominated by extractive operations such as clay pits for brick-making and boiling-down works and fellmongeries that extracted by-products from animal carcasses. The Yarra provided the copious amounts of water that were needed to fill the large vats and also provided a means of waste disposal. Other industrial processes that used the river included abattoirs, tanneries and wool-washing. Melbourne's first gasworks were established on the riverbank in the 1850s, although water-use was not a necessary component of this operations. Secondary industries were developed more steadily from the 1850s and included the production of food and drink, such as breweries and cordial factories.

For many decades, noxious industrial operations along the Yarra relied on the river as a drain for their waste material. A government inquiry into Noxious Trades on the Yarra was heard in the early 1870s. The waters of the Yarra River were also utilised to power mills (for example Dights Mill from 1837) and to power hydraulic lifts in multi-storey city buildings (from the 1880s).

Access to river transport and drainage was critical for early industries and many factories were established on the banks of the Yarra in inner Melbourne, notably at South Melbourne and Richmond. Heavy industry was concentrated at Fishermans Bend, including dry docks, and motor vehicle and aircraft manufacture.

Manufacturing boomed in Melbourne in the 1920s and inner areas close to the Yarra were developed for this use, for example at the Doonside estate in Richmond. Outside of the inner city, large manufacturing operations on the river-front included the Australian Paper



Manufacturers Ltd (later Amcor) at Fairfield, developed from 1919, and the Sanitarium Health Food Factory at Warburton, established in 1925. Aside from the Sanitarium factory, there was a distinct lack of heavy industry, or indeed light manufacturing, along the river valley north of Heidelberg.

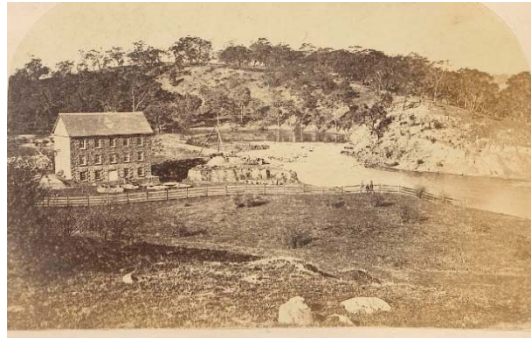


Figure 12. Photograph by Charles Nettleton, *Yarra Yarra Falls and the Paper Mills, Dights Falls*. (National Gallery of Australia)



Figure 13. Saw mill at Warrandyte. (from Edwin Brady, *Australia Unlimited*, 1918)

### Brick-works and quarries

Brickworks were established on the south bank of the Yarra, from at least the 1840s, near the present-day Alexandra Gardens. Other early brickworks were located on the river bank at Richmond, Prahran, Clifton Hill and Bulleen.<sup>12</sup>

There was a number of quarries close to the river, usually bearing basalt. A large quarry pit was in existence at Burley into the mid-twentieth century.

### Gold-mining

In the 1840s, gold was found in the streets of central Melbourne and at Richmond.<sup>13</sup> At the peak of the gold rush in the 1850s, larger quantities were found further upstream at Anderson's Creek (Warrandyte); here in the 1870s the Pound Bend Tunnel was created to remove a near-circular bend of the river and so to expedite mining operations on the riverbed.

Would-be gold-miners arrived in large numbers in Melbourne in the 1850s. The Yarra River was their first point of reference and the place for immigrants to find support – initially at 'Canvas Town' on the south bank of the Yarra and later at the Immigrants' Depot. During the gold rush an open-air market, known as the Rag Fair, operated close to the wharves, where hopeful diggers could offload the unsuitable belongings they had brought from home and stock up on heavy boots, and picks and shovels.<sup>14</sup>

Supplies for mining settlements were transported via the Yarra River from Launching Place. Gold-mining continued on a small scale at Warrandyte and on a larger scale on the Warburton–Reefton reef. Warburton also used as a miner's base as it marked the commencement of the Yarra Track, which was used as a route for miners who were heading north-east to Woods Point and more distant gold fields.

<sup>12</sup> See ref in Blainey, *History of Victoria*, revised edition.

<sup>13</sup> Robyn Annear, *eGold* website: <http://www.egold.net.au/biogs/EG00201b.htm>

<sup>14</sup> McCombie 1858, *The History of the Colony of Victoria*, p. xx.



Figure 14. Two miners at the Republic Gold Mine, Warburton, photographed in 1889 by John Steel. (State Library of Victoria, Accession No. H32939/59)



Figure 15. Bill Hussey panning for gold at Warrandyte in the 1930s (Warrandyte Historical Society - COPYRIGHT)

### Timber-cutting

Timber-cutting was a routine operation in the early settlement, and later across the ever-expanding suburbs, chiefly to facilitate road construction and to clear land for building. Despite laws against tree-felling in Melbourne's parklands, there was much indiscriminate removal of trees. Many decried the 'wanton removal' of fine timber from the Melbourne's river bank reserves in the nineteenth century as well as from the water supply catchment in the Upper Yarra Valley. Local timbers were used in construction and bridge-building, and for making furniture. The celebrated cabinet-maker, George Thwaites of Collins Street, crafted furniture from River Red Gum felled in central Melbourne in the 1840s.<sup>15</sup> Planks of River Red Gum were also used to line the early roadways in the era before road macadamisation.

A thriving timber-cutting industry developed in the Yarra Valley from the nineteenth century. This led to the establishment of a number of timber mill settlements, including Warburton and Millgrove, and was the means of economic survival for many Upper Yarra towns, including Healesville. Mountain Ash (*Eucalyptus regnans*) from the Yarra Ranges was a prized commercial timber that was vital in building the suburban housing of the interwar and interwar period. Trestle tramways and road bridges were constructed to transport logs out of the forest. Much timber was also transported downstream via barges on the river. The 1939 Black Friday bushfires took its toll on the timber-cutting industry in the Yarra Ranges, with a number of timber workers losing their lives in the fire.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Robert La Nauze, *Made to Order* (2017), p. xx.

<sup>16</sup> Lachlan Fraser 1997, *Warburton Walk: A self-guided history tour*, Highland Fling Publishing, Warburton, p.19.

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#### 4. Building a well-serviced city

Human activity has shaped the Yarra and its environs for thousands of years. Aboriginal people used the banks of the river for building ovens and for clay pits and transformed the riverbank vegetation through seasonal burning and the sustainable use of timber. The impact of European settlers from the 1830s and 1840s was dramatic and transformative.

##### **Providing a water supply**

The Yarra and its tributaries have been a source of fresh water for thousands of years. Since white settlement, the Yarra has supplied Melbourne with water for drinking, washing, irrigation and industrial purposes. Fresh water pumped from the Yarra in the 1840s and 1850s was sold from water carts at exorbitant prices. The first piped water supply in Melbourne was engineered at Forrest Hill, South Yarra, by the South Yarra Water Works Company in 1855, which transported Yarra water to homes as far away as Brighton.<sup>17</sup> Piped Yarra River water was connected to an outlet in Flinders Street by the pioneering engineer James Blackburn in the late 1840s, but the poor quality of the river water and other difficulties did not see this scheme succeed. From c.1857 another pipe drew water from the Yarra to an iron water tank, placed on a high tower for gravitational benefits, which was situated on the elevated corner of Victoria Street and Hoddle Street, and this was used in emergencies and for fire-fighting in the central city.<sup>18</sup>

Piped water has been supplied on a vast scale to the City of Melbourne through the visionary engineering of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) and earlier government water authorities. To secure the purity of Melbourne's water supply into the future, a large area of the Yarra River catchment was reserved by the Victorian Government in 1872, against the vocal opposition of timber-cutters. As a means of augmenting the Yan Yean supply (established in 1857), the MMBW tapped the Yarra supply by building a weir at the Watts River, near Healesville, in the 1890s. This was fed overland via the Maroondah Aqueduct, which skirts close to the course of the Yarra River in some parts and joins the Yan Yean system at South Morang. In 1926, the MMBW completed the Maroondah Dam at Healesville, which greatly augmented the water supply to Melbourne. The Upper Yarra Dam at Reefton was completed in 1957 and the Sugarloaf Reservoir, near Kangaroo Ground, was built in 1980.

<sup>17</sup> Report from *The Select Committee of the Legislative Council on the South Yarra Water Works Company's Incorporation Bill; Together with the Proceedings of the Committee and Minutes of Evidence*, The Herald Job Printing Office, Melbourne, 1855.

<sup>18</sup> Dingle and Doyle 2005, *Yan Yean: Melbourne's early water supply*.



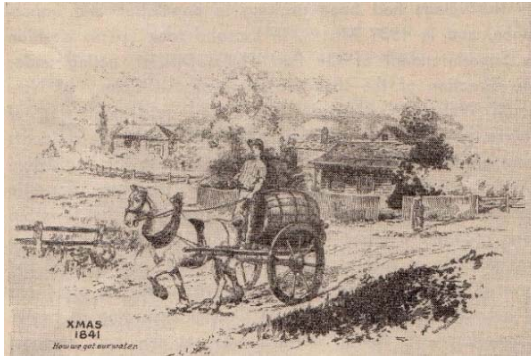


Figure 16. 'How We Got our Water in the pre-Yan Yeanite era' from a sketch by Robert Russell, 1841. (State Library of Victoria, Accession No. H24493)



Figure 17. Warburton Waterworks Trust, from a photo by Eavn Luby in 'An Album of Views in Victoria', dated 1919. (State Library of Victoria, Accession No. H2014.83/20)

The Yarra River has also provided a direct water supply to many outer suburban areas and country towns, including Warrandyte which remained on river supply until the 1970s. Outside of Melbourne, water supplies drawn from the Yarra River were located in towns that were in the jurisdiction of the State Rivers and Water Supply.

### Facilitating transport

The Yarra was the first port of call for all new arrivals up until the early to mid-twentieth century. The Yarra also served as an arterial for the early settlement, enabling the transportation of people and goods to the town centre from sailing ships arriving at Port Melbourne, and directly from craft and off loading at the Yarra-side wharves. The bluestone warehouses of Flinders Lane and adjoining laneways attest to this early shipping trade. The river also served as a means of local transportation, ferrying passengers upstream to Richmond, Hawthorn and Kew.

The Yarra also impeded communication and thus was spanned by many bridges, such as Princes Bridge, the Johnston Street Bridge, Victoria Bridge, Chandler Highway Bridge, Morrel Bridge, Spencer Street Bridge and the Church Street Bridge. In the nineteenth century, products such as timber were transported downstream to Melbourne from the upper Yarra Valley.

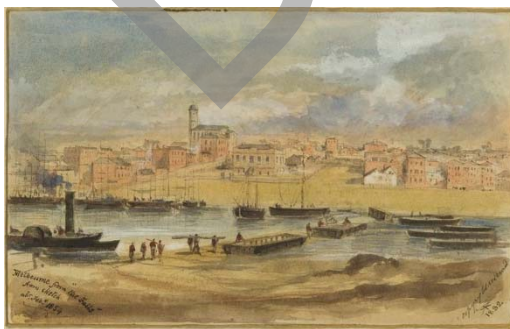


Figure 18. Melbourne from the Falls, 1854, from an earlier sketch by Robert Russell. (State Library of Victoria)



Figure 19. Johnston Street Bridge, looking towards the high ground of Kew, c1857-1876 (Yarra Library Service – COPYRIGHT)



### Setting aside public reserves

The amenity of the Yarra Bank led to the reservation of water frontage for public use. In the 1850s a government ruling stipulated that 50 feet of riverbank be reserved on either side of the river. In the second half of the nineteenth century, large areas of Crown land fronting the Yarra River in metropolitan Melbourne area were assigned to a range of public purposes, including police paddocks, government horse paddocks, farmers' commons, parks and gardens, and government institutions.

### Establishing social institutions

Large areas of Crown land with river frontage provided the necessary space for public institutions in Melbourne – one of the earliest being the immigrants depot on the south bank of the Yarra. A number of river-front institutions were places of incarceration, including the Yarra Bend Asylum, Kew Lunatic Asylum, Fairfield Infectious Diseases Hospital and Fairlea Women's Prison. Their purpose – to remove and contain the criminal, the mentally ill, those with contagious diseases, and other 'undesirables' from who posed a danger to society – was aided by the natural barrier imposed by the river. Many inmates nonetheless escaped, and some were drowned in the process. Some religious institution also effectively operated as places of incarceration, such as the notorious Magdalen Asylum for Fallen Women in Abbotsford (Abbotsford Convent). A number of girls were drowned in the Yarra in an effort to escape the drudgery of the Abbotsford Convent in the early decades of the twentieth century.<sup>19</sup>

### Defence

The siting of Melbourne on the Yarra only a few miles from the river's mouth gave the river considerable strategic importance in the nineteenth century. The Crimean War of the 1850s triggered the earliest moves at establishing defences in Melbourne, with the instalment of cannon and a battery established at Sandridge (Port Melbourne) near the mouth of the Yarra. A rifle range was established at nearby Fishermans Bend in the 1860s. Victoria Barracks, which served as Australia's military headquarters until 1958, was established in the late 1850s on St Kilda Road, not far from the river.

During World War I, parts of the Domain were given over to various war-time needs. There was a Signallers' Camp as well as other military training. The Engineers' Depot on the Yarra Bank was where thousands of provisions were processed by the Red Cross. Military training also took place at Fishermans Bend, and at locations in Heidelberg.

During World War II, Fishermans Bend was once again used for military purposes. Here there was an enlistment depot and well as the headquarters of the Woman's Army Auxiliary. This was also the site of large-scale manufacturing and trialling of Australia (and British) military aircraft.

### Altering and adapting the river

The Yarra has been subject to a great many alterations and changes throughout the settlement period, including widening the banks, stabilising the embankments, de-snagging, dredging, deepening, and other 'improvements'. Various tributaries of the Yarra have also been altered through their use for Melbourne's water supply. The major changes made to the Yarra, however, were the engineered re-alignments of its course that were carried out in the 1880s and in the early 1900s. In the 1880s, in order to reduce the meanderings of the Yarra downstream from the central city, and to make the river more efficient and direct as a shipping route from Sandridge (Port Melbourne) to the wharves, the course of the river was altered in accordance with plans drawn up by British engineer Sir John Coode. This involved destroying the low rocky barrier known as 'The Falls', which spanned the river west of Queen Street, and cutting a new direct route to Port Melbourne; this replaced the unwieldy loop known as

<sup>19</sup> Add ref, c.1910s.

Fishermans Bend that was so inefficient for shipping, and so created the present-day Coode Island. The river was also extensively dredged, deepened and widened in the late-nineteenth and twentieth century.

A second significant alteration to the course of the Yarra was carried out in the early 1900s to a design by Italian-born engineer Carlo Catani, who had been appointed to the Public Works Department in Melbourne. Like Sir John Coode, Catani was motivated by improving the river's efficiency, but there was also a significant motive here for improving the aesthetic of the river and its immediate environs in central Melbourne with the corresponding re-design of the civic precinct of the Royal Botanic Gardens, the King's Domain, and Alexander Avenue. The course of the Yarra was altered, with the large *Tromgin* waterhole, formerly sitting within a bend of the river, converted to a picturesque lake. In the 1960s, another bend of the river in South Yarra was cut off, creating Herring Island.

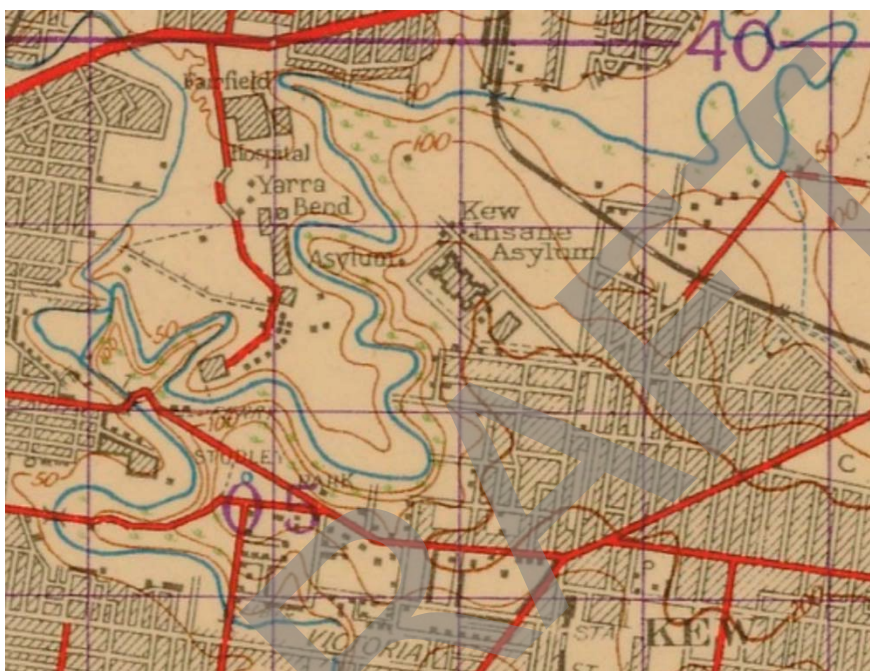


Figure 20. Army map of Melbourne, 1935, showing the proliferation of institutions in the vicinity of Yarra Bend. (State Library of Victoria)

Albert Park Lake is a remnant, albeit significantly altered, of the network of swamps that once lined the course of the Yarra. So too are the waterholes at Kew and Bolin Bolin (Bulleen). Some areas of former swampland alongside the Yarra River have been transformed into public parkland, such as Como Park in South Yarra and Gosch's Paddock on Punt Road.

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## 5. Suburban development

### Shaping the suburbs

The Yarra River, as a vital resource for settlers, has defined the extent and the push of suburban development to the north-east, while at the same time the meandering nature of the river and the topography of the river valley has constrained the possibility of laying down neat grid-like suburbs. While the river valley formed a north-easterly arterial of growth and development for the growing city, the patterns of subdivision and suburban expansion become noticeably less regimented and increasingly organic in nature as the river heads to the north-east.

Land selection up to 8 miles out from Melbourne saw early townships formed in the 1870s and 1880s.



Figure 21. Studley Park Estate, Kew.c.1880s. (collection of Kew Historical Society) – **PERMISSION NEEDED**

Suburban development along the Yarra River followed the ebbs and flows of supply and demand for housing in Melbourne, echoing the broader pattern of suburban development in the city. Workers' housing was thrown up on the low flood-prone river flats in Richmond and Collingwood from the 1840s. Much of this housing was poorly built and tenanted, rather than owner-occupied, providing accommodation for factory workers, labourers and servants. Hotels were plentiful in most working-class neighbourhoods. The boom of the 1880s saw a number of speculative residential developments close to the river in inner and middle suburban Melbourne, including as far north as Ivanhoe and Heidelberg. Many of the residential estates developed near the river offered highly desirable housing blocks, for example at Kew, Hawthorn and Alphington. The turn of the twentieth century saw the rise of the Garden Suburb movement, which was particularly evident in Ivanhoe and Eaglemont where the natural landscape inspired more organic street layouts, notably in the case of the Mont Eagle and Glenard Estates. The interwar period saw the rise of the smaller, single-storey detached bungalow, which was built extensively through the middle suburbs through the easy credit provisions offered by the State Savings Bank of Victoria. In the postwar period, many of the more affordable outer suburban areas became popular for project homes. In the latter part of the twentieth century, outer-ring suburbs along the Yarra, including Templestowe and Wonga



Park, which had formerly been taken up by farms and orchards, were developed for larger, more luxurious homes set on large blocks. In the former industrial suburbs of Richmond and Abbotsford, riverside factories and warehouses that had become obsolete by the 1990s have more recently been adapted for residential living.

The river shaped the physical development of the suburbs (and country towns) by influencing the form and types of structures that were built, as well as the layout of streets, the naming of places and streets, and in the broader mental imagining of the place. Streets such as Coppin Grove in Hawthorn and the Boulevard in Kew follow the contours of the river bank, while Bradleys Lane in Warrandyte runs along the middle of a narrow peninsula of the river. All through the riverside suburbs are recurring street names that refer to the river – most commonly, Yarra Street and River Street – or take inspiration from the picturesque-ness of the setting – such as View Street, Vista Grove, Panorama Drive, Scenic Drive, Greenslopes Drive in Templestowe, and the more lyrical Laughing Waters in Eltham.

### **The river as a class divide**

In nineteenth-century Melbourne, the Yarra River became a symbolic divide between the working-class and the middle class. The predominantly working-class tenements on the low north side of the river in Richmond, which was swampy in parts and largely denuded of trees, were crowded cheek-by-jowl along narrow streets and laneways. This contrasted sharply with the gentle undulating country south of the river in South Yarra and Toorak, the heartland of the wealthy, conservative Establishment, where extravagant homes were laid out on generous acreages in landscaped settings. This was the bastion of power and influence that left-wing historian Manning Clark dubbed as ‘Yarraside’. This loosely disguised location demonstrates how the Yarra is deeply enmeshed in Melbourne’s social history and embodies the privileges of those residing south of the river.<sup>20</sup> The popular descriptor ‘south of the river’, however, only strictly applies south of Richmond and Burnley after which the river’s course sweeps northwards and instead creates an east–west divide.

The Yarra was by no means a clear-cut line between the haves and the have-nots. There was some blurring of the boundaries; for example, there were servants and workers living in humble dwellings in South Yarra and Toorak, and a handful of wealthy merchants and industrialists living on the north side. The legacy of this class divide is clearly evident, however, in the concentration of private schools in a cluster of middle-class suburbs close to the south and east bank of the Yarra: at South Yarra, Toorak, Kew and Hawthorn. The story of John Wren, fictionalised as ‘John West’ in Frank Hardy’s historical novel *Power Without Glory* (1950), highlights the class divide presented by the Yarra, and tells the story of how one man crossed that divide, physically and metaphorically, with Wren rising from being an SP bookie living in the Collingwood slums to being a close friend of the Catholic Archbishop Dr Daniel Mannix in middle-class Kew.

### **Living on the fringes**

While the wealthiest Melburnians were living in river-front suburbs in a salubrious setting of established gardens with plentiful servants and the latest in domestic technology, the poorest people in Melbourne often went homeless. The length of the river bank, stretching from the city through to Richmond and Kew, attracted the homeless, the destitute, the misfits and the eccentric, who found refuge in public parkland or bushland. The river and its adjoining waterholes also provided a rudimentary washing facility for those with no other means. The proliferation of Crown land along the river was advantageous to those with seemingly no other means of shelter, although various laws were introduced by local councils to stop the practice of sleeping in the parks. At times of great economic hardship, for example during the 1890s depression, those with nowhere to go would camp on the Yarra bank.<sup>21</sup> Through the

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<sup>20</sup> C.H.M. Clark 1987, *A History of Australia*, vol. 6, Melbourne University Press, Carlton.

<sup>21</sup> Trove, 1890s.

nineteenth century and into the 1920s, there were a large number of deaths along the Yarra, attributed to drowning (both accidental and suicide), exposure and infanticide.

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## 6. Civic and political expression

### Civic celebrations and commemorations

The Yarra River has played an important role as a site of public expression in a range of civic celebrations and commemorations. The river is central to the historical identity of Melbourne in its role as the stage for the city's significant historical celebrations, notably the 'founding of Melbourne' in 1835 by the two rival founders: John Batman and John Pascoe Fawkner. One of the earliest civic celebrations in Melbourne was a regatta on the Yarra held in 1839 to mark the fourth anniversary of the founding of the settlement. A decade later, the opening of the new Princes Bridge over the Yarra in 1850 marked the jubilant celebration of Separation of Port Phillip from New South Wales. Another official declaration of Separation held later that year by the then Superintendent C.J. La Trobe took place under the shade of a pre-settlement River Red Gum (known as the 'Separation Tree') alongside the billabong, *Tromgin*, which adjoined the Yarra in the Melbourne Botanic Gardens.

Royal visits to Melbourne, including those of Prince Alfred (1867) and the Duke and Duchess of York (1901), attracted enormous public attention and associated public events were generally held close to the Yarra River. The Yarra was represented at these events as an important symbol of the city, closely bound up in Melbourne's 'discovery' and 'foundation'. The Federation Arch erected in 1901 on Princes Bridge made a triumphant statement about the rise of the new nation (see image below). During the Victorian centenary celebrations of 1934-35, many of the festive events centred around the Yarra, highlighted by a spectacular display of fireworks of an unprecedented scale on the Yarra Bank. Publicity for the centenary celebrations included a promotional poster depicting a giant image of a heroic but ghost-like John Batman poised on the south bank of the river (see image below).

Anzac Day marches in Melbourne, held annually since the 1930s, follow a route from the city to the Shrine, across the Yarra at the Princes Bridge. Since its inauguration in the 1950s, the Moomba festival has also been focused on and around the river and its banks.



Figure 22. Sketch depicting the opening of Princes Bridge, Melbourne, and declaration of Separation from New South Wales, November 1850. (State Library of Victoria Accession No. H2091)



Figure 23. The triumphant 'City Arch' erected on Princes Bridge in 1901 to welcome the Duke and Duchess of York for the opening of Federal Parliament. (National Gallery of Victoria)



Figure 24. Australian postage stamp issued for the Centenary of Victoria, 1934, depicting an Aboriginal man on the south bank of the Yarra. (private collection)



Figure 25. John Batman on the Yarra: promotional poster created by Percy Trompf for the Victorian Centenary Celebrations, 1934-35. (State Library of Victoria, Accession no. H90.105/29)

## Memorials

With the Yarra so integral to the history of British settlement in Victoria, and specifically to the history of Melbourne, the riverbank has been a favoured site for a great variety of memorials. The south bank of the river has been the setting for significant memorials to C.J. Latrobe ('Temple of the Winds', 1873) and John Batman (obelisk erected 1923; now removed), while the Domain is dotted with a large number of memorials to royalty, military leaders and others. Several pioneer burial grounds were located on the Yarra River, including two early cemeteries at Heidelberg.

In the 1920s there was a widespread movement to erect war memorials to the men and women who had lost their lives in World War I. Many of these memorials are close to the river, including the Kangaroo Ground war memorial tower (1926) built by the Shire of Eltham. The prominently sited Shrine of Remembrance (1934), erected by the people of Victoria as a 'national memorial', was built in the Domain over the site of an earlier Aboriginal burial ground.

The pre-settlement landscape around the river was also celebrated, and the parklands and reserves along the river valley allowed much of the old landscape to be inadvertently preserved. A number of lost pre-settlement trees have been memorialised, including what is left of the canoe tree in the Fitzroy Gardens and the dying Separation Tree at the Royal Botanic Gardens. In the Fitzroy Gardens, artist Olga Cohn was commissioned to create an artwork with a River Red Gum stump in the 1930s, and here she carved out an intricate scene depicting a myriad of fairyland figures.

Aboriginal people have also been remembered. There is a small memorial at the site of the former Warrandyte Aboriginal Reserve and memorial to the massacre site at Yering Station, near Yarra Glen. In 1985 the remains of 35 Aboriginal people from across Victoria (whose remains had been returned from various collecting institutions) were laid to rest in the Domain.

## Taking political action

The river has borne witness to key moments of political action in Melbourne. Speakers' Corner on the Yarra Bank near Melbourne Park (formerly Flinders Park) played an important function as a site of political protest in Melbourne from at least the 1890s. In the early 1900s, the labour and socialist movements increased their use of this platform to reach a larger audience. Speakers' Corner was influential as a platform for the anti-conscription movement in 1916-17,



for women's rights, and for the Communist Party of Australia. In 1917, anti-conscription activists on the Yarra Bank roused a crowd of thousands to sing in unison the banned peace anthem, 'I Didn't Raise My Boy to Be a Soldier' – the rationale being that the police would be unable to arrest everybody at the same time.<sup>22</sup>

Civil rights for Victoria's Aboriginal people were espoused from Speakers' Corner in the 1930s and 1940s. Decades earlier, in the 1880s, Aboriginal Elder William Barak had led a protest of his people at the Coranderrk Aboriginal Reserve on the Yarra River near Healesville, requesting the reappointment of John Green. And campaigning against the threatened closure of the reserve. The Yarra Bank has been a site of other political action for Aboriginal rights to justice, including a 'Pay the Rent' demonstration in 1988 and a 'Sea of Hands' in the Alexander Gardens for Reconciliation in 1999. In 2006 there was a long-running sit-in protest for the recognition of Aboriginal sovereignty in the Domain.

Other political demonstrations in Melbourne have also taken place in the Treasury Gardens and Alexandra Gardens.



Figure 26. Large crowds attend an anti-conscription rally, Yarra Bank, 1917. (University of Melbourne Archives)



Figure 27. Elma O'Mara of the Communist Party of Australia, speaking at the Yarra Bank on International Women's Day, 1963. (University of Melbourne Archives)

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<sup>22</sup> trove 1916-17.



## 7. Establishing communities

### **Workers' towns and settlements**

The development of Melbourne's water supply system necessitated large contingents of workers who often were accommodated on site at workers' settlements and towns. Most of the largest workers' settlements were not near the Yarra, but close to the Plenty River. By from the 1890s, when the Yarra was tapped as a supplement to the Yan Yean supply, a number of construction projects took place near the Yarra.

The construction of the Maroondah Aqueduct in the 1890s necessitated workers camps that moved along the length of the works over the course of construction, and at times this was close to the Yarra River. The largest works projects on or near the Yarra were the Maroondah Dam project in the 1920s and the construction of the Upper Yarra Dam in the mid-1950s. A workers' town, known as Rawson, was established for the construction of the Thompson Dam in the 1970s. This provided detached housing for workers, and was well serviced with a sports ground, dining hall, shop and other facilities. Following completion of the Thompson Dam, this town site has been adapted for holiday accommodation. The construction of the Sugarloaf in the 1970s also saw the development of workers' camps.

### **Staff accommodation**

A number of permanent staff employed by Melbourne's water supply authority, the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works, known as 'the Board', lived in staff housing. This included the caretaker at Maroondah Dam and the individual caretakers who lived in rudimentary huts along the length of the Maroondah Channel from the 1890s and the O'Shannassy Aqueduct from the c.1920s.<sup>23</sup> The MMBW's 'O'Shannassy Lodge' at Warburton would most likely have been staffed by a permanent live-in housekeeper.

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<sup>23</sup> Context Pty Ltd 2009, 'Regional Water Supply Heritage Study: Melbourne Region', p. 30.

## 8. The inspiring river

### Perceptions of the river

The Yarra River, or *Birrarung*, is central to the living and age-old cultural traditions of the Wurundjeri and the Boon Wurrung. Along its length, from its source in the Yarra Ranges north-east of Melbourne to its emptying into the sea at Port Phillip Bay, the Yarra is interwoven with stories about the river's formation and function, and this has long been expressed in Indigenous art and music. By contrast, for new settlers arriving to Melbourne from the mid-1830s, the river was chiefly seen as performing a functional role: in enabling (and often obstructing) the transportation of goods and people, as providing fresh water and fish, and as a key reference point in the layout of the settlement.

The function of the Yarra in the vicinity of the central city was seen in utilitarian rather than aesthetic terms; it was not thought by many to provide a desirable outlook. Indeed, many viewed the Yarra with contempt. It was widely described as dreary, gloomy and murky, and lacking the noble bearing of the Thames, the Seine or the Mississippi. Furthermore, the Yarra had a dark side, the haunt of criminals and ne'er-do-wells, and the scene of many cases of suicide and infanticide through the nineteenth century and into the twentieth. Its periodic flooding in the early decades was dangerous and fearful, reminding settlers that the river was wild and untamed.

Yet although habitually derided, the river also drew much praise from those with a romantic sensibility who were eager to see beauty and majesty in the place. Some of the earliest European artworks of the Yarra – for example, the water colour sketches by surveyors Robert Russell and Robert Hoddle in the 1840s and 1850s – portray a place of great beauty, the river banks rich with vegetation and the river painted blue rather than brown. Upstream, away from the unsavoury industry activity of the central city, the Yarra was looked upon in more favourable light. James Bonwick, for example, wrote of the joys of walking along the Yarra at Hawthorn in the 1850s.<sup>24</sup> Over time, the Yarra River became a source of inspiration for writers and visual artists, and many artists made their homes close to the river. The artist Eugène von Guérard viewed Yarra Bend from the tower of his Victorian residence in Gipps Street, East Melbourne, and painted a romantic impression of the scene.



Figure 28. A romantic view of the wooded banks of the Yarra c.1880s, looking to the high ground of South Yarra in the distance (Stonnington History Centre – COPYRIGHT)

<sup>24</sup> James Bonwick 1856, *A Sketch of Boroondara*, p. xx.

### Encouraging creative endeavour

In his perceptive and ground-breaking work, *Landscape and Memory* (1995), British historian Simon Schama examined the ways in which rivers, as part of the wider cultural landscape of the imagination, were a source of inspiration to nineteenth-century poets, painters and composers.<sup>25</sup> Settlers who arrived in Melbourne in the nineteenth century from the Old World of Europe brought with them inherited ideas about landscape beauty, about symbolism in the landscape, and the deeper cultural meanings imbedded in a view. These inherited understandings were the reference material with which settlers made sense of the landscape of the New World, including the Yarra River and its environs. They brought with them, for example, understandings about how rivers inspired creative endeavour, notably for example the Thames in London.<sup>26</sup> In colonial Victoria, the Yarra River featured predominantly in nineteenth-century paintings of Melbourne, including works by the celebrated artists Henry Gritten, Louis Buvelot, Nicholas Chevalier and Eugène von Guérard. The Yarra also featured in colonial poetry.<sup>27</sup> The river also inspired choices for placenames, and along the Yarra, comparisons with the Thames in London inspired aspirational English names for the Melbourne suburbs of Kew and Richmond.

In the 1880s, the river landscape was recaptured by fresh eyes by the members of the Heidelberg School, a group of avant-garde artists who include Frederick McCubbin, Walter Withers, Arthur Streeton and Tom Roberts. In the context of a wider mood of rising nationalism in Australia, this group of impressionists captured for the first time the special quality of the Australian light and the distinctive grey-green tones of the Australian bush. They were based for some time at Eaglemont and collectively painted many views of the Yarra. The river landscape was central to the Heidelberg School and many of its members lived along the river at different times, including Frederick McCubbin (at South Yarra), Arthur Streeton, Charles Condor and Tom Roberts (at Eaglemont), Walter Withers (at Heidelberg and Eltham), and E. Phillips Fox (at Eaglemont). Later artists also resided close to the river, including Max Meldrum at Kew, Napier and Christian Waller at Ivanhoe, and the influential Heide circle at Bulleen, which included John and Sunday Reed, and Sidney Nolan.

<sup>25</sup> Simon Schama 1995, *Landscape and Memory*, Harper Collins, London.

<sup>26</sup> See, for example, Peter Ackroyd 2016, *The Thames*, London.

<sup>27</sup> Richard Howitt 1845, 'To the River Yarra' in *Impressions of Australia Felix*; Thomas Edwin Holtham 1894, *On the Yarra Banks: Lyric Chimes and other Poems*, McCarron, Bird & Co., Melbourne.



*Figure 29, Louis Buvelot, Winter Morning near Heidelberg, 1866. (National Gallery of Victoria)*

In the mid to late twentieth century, artists continued to be drawn to the river valley, for example at Eltham and Warrandyte. It would seem that a disproportionate number of Melbourne's notable artists have made their home along the Yarra and found inspiration in the river setting.

The National Gallery of Victoria, built to hold the State's significant collection of international and Australian artworks, was built on the south bank of the Yarra in the 1960s. It is likely that the architect Roy Grounds took inspiration from the riverside [location in his design for](#) two key water features of this building: the moat along St Kilda Road and the waterwall at the building's entrance.





Figure 30. Henry Gritten, *View across the Yarra*, 1864. (State Library of Victoria)



Figure 31. Nicholas Chevalier, *The Yarra River at Studley Park, Kew*, 1864 (State Library of Victoria)



Figure 32. 'Coming of Spring', by Frederick McCubbin, 1912. (National Gallery of Australia)



Figure 33. Walter Withers, 'Moonrise over the Yarra' (Paintings)

### Architecture and landscape design

The physical landscape of the Yarra River and its river banks, particularly the elevated south and east banks in suburban Melbourne, provided inspiration and encouraged endeavour and innovation in the fields of architecture and landscape design. From the mid-nineteenth century, wealthy settlers in Melbourne sought a prime location on high land, in suburbs such as Toorak, South Yarra, Hawthorn and Kew, where they built grand homes that stood as testaments to their colonial success. Here, the coveted real estate on the river's high banks to the south and east was used to showcase fashionable taste in architecture and garden design, but at the same time was a clear statement about economic and political power, and social advantage. Typically, these mansions and villas emphasised the vertical, gaining additional height on their elevated land with a double-storey or an elaborate tower. In the 1870s and 1880s, the Italianate style was favoured, which as well as providing height and mass, drew cultural associations with the imagined picturesque landscape of the Old World.<sup>28</sup> Those riverside residences in Melbourne that lacked elevation were nevertheless inspired by the pleasant setting of the house amidst lightly timbered undulating country. This appealed to the inherited colonial idea of a rural arcadia and of the ideal of 'rus en urbe'.<sup>29</sup> Nineteenth-century private gardens along the river

<sup>28</sup> Timothy Hubbard 2003, 'Towering above all: The Italianate villa in the colonial landscape', PhD thesis, School of Architecture and Building, Deakin University.

<sup>29</sup> Davison 1978, *The Rise and Fall of Marvellous Melbourne*.



typically favoured exotic plantings, with a variety of ornamental trees gracing the grounds of large estates.

In the twentieth century, private residences and gardens in the vicinity of the Yarra River turned to the natural environment and to functionality and lifestyle as key influences. Pivotal modernist architect Robin Boyd led the way in Australian home design from the 1950s to the 1970s. The designs of Boyd and his fellow collaborators in Warrandyte, Eltham and Ivanhoe were closely engaged with their location and reflected a new sensibility to the Australian environment. A high concentration of architect-designed homes were also built in close proximity to the river at Studley Park, Kew, in the 1950s to the 1970s. One example is the home of architect Peter McIntyre (1955), boldly perched on the steep riverbank at Studley Park, showing a degree of raw exposure to the natural environment.

A closer engagement with the natural environment saw the burgeoning of mud brick construction in the riverbank suburb of Eltham in the 1960s and 1970s, demonstrated in the work of Alistair Knox and others. Also, at Eltham, the avant garde architect and painter Justus Jorgensen had commenced construction of the historicist complex of buildings at 'Montsalvat' (from 1934) as an artists' colony. This eclectic but unified collection of buildings were built from recycled materials and used a range of traditional building methods, including adobe.

Many homes of the wealthy in Toorak were remodelled or rebuilt in the early to mid-twentieth-century and their owners commissioned leading garden designers, such as Edna Walling and Ellis Stones, who both worked extensively in more affluent residential areas close to the Yarra River – including at Ivanhoe and Eaglemont.



Figure 34. Architect Peter McIntyre's house at Kew, built in 1955. (State Library of Victoria Accession No. H91.244/3561)



Figure 35. Modern house in Studley Park, Kew. (Context)

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## 9. Appreciating and enjoying the river

### Creating parks and gardens

Large areas of public land on the banks of the Yarra in suburban Melbourne were set aside in the second half of the nineteenth century, which enabled the reservation of extensive public parks and gardens, notably the Royal Botanic Gardens, the Domain, Yarra Park, Studley Park, and Yarra Bend Park. Much of this river-front parkland was adjacent to the densely settled

working-class suburbs of Collingwood and Richmond, and the timbered landscaped provided stark relief to the crowded streets and factories close by. A privately-run pleasure garden, Cremorne Gardens in Richmond, which operated in the 1850s, relied on the river as a point of access. Further to the north-east, notable reserves along the Yarra included Banyule Flats, Heidelberg Park, Warrandyte State Park and Yarra Ranges State Park (now Yarra Ranges National Park). Additional areas of public parkland alongside or in close proximity to the Yarra River were created in the twentieth century by both local municipalities and the Victorian Government. Examples include Wilson Reserve in Ivanhoe.<sup>30</sup> In the mid-1980s a new public park was created on former swamp lands close to the mouth of the Yarra at Fishermans Bend, which has restored some of the indigenous vegetation of pre-settlement landscape.

Public gardens were places of scientific endeavour as well as places of beauty and repose. The Melbourne Botanic Gardens, established in 1846, became under Ferdinand von Mueller an important collection of classified plants from around the world. Mueller also established the Friendly Society's Garden on the opposite side of the river as well as a zoo. The Survey Paddock in Richmond was given over to the Horticultural Society of Victoria in 1866 to be developed as the Burnley Gardens (now part of Burnley College of Horticulture). The public gardens laid out close to the river had the all-important benefit of a water source. For a brief period, the Botanic Gardens were supplied with water from a pipe from Dights Falls.



*Figure 36. Snowden Gardens at Princes Bridge, Melbourne, from a Rose postcard, 1918. (State Library of Victoria Accession No. H96.200/396)*



*Figure 37. The lower lawn of the Domain Parklands, Melbourne. (Context)*

## Recreation and sport

The Yarra River and its vast floodplain was a chief factor in the reservation of large areas of land in Melbourne for public recreational purposes in the nineteenth century. The legacy of this public estate is an extensive network of parks, playing fields, public gardens, golf courses and nature reserves. It is unlikely that any other city in the world had as many high standard public golf courses (Kew, Yarra Bend, Studley Park, etc) located at such close proximity to the central city.

The Yarra provided many 'beauty spots' upstream from Melbourne, and these places were also in many cases set aside for public enjoyment. Weekends and holiday periods saw large numbers of pleasure-seekers visit Studley Park in Kew and the countryside setting of Heidelberg. The Yarra itself was also popular for boating and bathing. The first swimming baths in Melbourne opened in the 1850s in an enclosure on the Yarra bank. In the early twentieth century, there were a number of well patronised summer-time bathing spots, for example at Kew, Alphington, Ivanhoe, Heidelberg and Warrandyte. Upstream from the industrial precinct of Richmond, the Yarra was a haven for pleasure craft. Rowing and yachting

<sup>30</sup> Boyle 1991.

events were held in the central city area, with the Henley-on-Yarra Regatta being an annual sporting and social event, as well as downstream of the wharves in the nineteenth century, amidst the activity of shipping and industry.<sup>31</sup> Boating regattas were held and ferries conveyed passengers to the Cremorne Gardens; the Hawthorn Tea Gardens; Studley Park, Kew; and Rudder Grange at Fairfield.



Figure 38. *Swimming Pool, Fairfield, c.1930s. (State Library of Victoria Accession No. H25287)*



Figure 39. *Canoeing at Warrandyte, c.1930s (Yarra Valley Regional Library Service – COPYRIGHT)*

Melbourne's city gardens, including the Fitzroy, Treasury Gardens and the Botanic Gardens, were all close to the river and these became popular places of resort in the nineteenth century.

### Holidays and tourism

Further upstream, the country towns of Warburton, Yarra Glen, Healesville, and Launching Place were popular with holiday-makers from the late nineteenth century. Here, the Yarra River was a popular place for recreational and sporting activities, including camping, fishing, boating, bushwalking and picnicking. Hotels and guest houses in the hill towns were busy in the summer season, reaching a heyday in the interwar years. During the Easter holiday break in 1928, Healesville attracted more visitors than anywhere else in Victoria.<sup>32</sup> Bushwalking and 'camping out' enjoyed great popularity in the interwar years, and in the Upper Yarra Valley this was encouraged by the opening of a walking track from Warburton to Walhalla in 1906.

The MMBW also provided a holiday resort close to the Yarra which it offered its councillors (who were the appointed from the relevant local municipalities across Melbourne) and to other dignitaries. Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh famously stayed at the O'Shannassy Lodge in 1954, where they enjoyed a quiet break from the Melbourne royal tour.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Context 2017, *Life on the Bend: A social history of Fishermans Bend, Melbourne*, prepared for the Fishermans Bend Taskforce, p. xx

<sup>32</sup> Catherine Turnbull (ed.) 2002, *Favourite Escapes to the Outer East*, p. 35.

<sup>33</sup> Deborah Tout-Smith, 'O'Shannassy Lodge' in Griffiths, *Secrets of the Forest*, 1992, pp. 185-89.





Figure 40. Grand Hotel, Yarra Glen, photographed by Colin Caldwell in 1949. (State Library of Victoria Accession No. H84.276/7/41A)



Figure 41. The Alpine Retreat Hotel, Warburton, c.1950s. (from a tourist brochure, c.1950s)

Apart from active recreation, the river environs encouraged quiet contemplation, and various religious institutions established on or near the river encouraged prayer and solitude. The Carmelite Convent in Stevenson Street, Kew, and Tarrawarra Abbey, near Yarra Glen, were both traditionally 'closed' Catholic orders, but have also offered respite for guests through spiritual retreats.

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Figure 42. Image: A rustic view of the Yarra at Warburton, from *Punch* (Melbourne), 12 December 1911, p. 19.

## 10. Understanding and conserving the river

### **Protecting Melbourne's water supply**

The Yarra River was not initially part of the Melbourne water supply that was derived from the headwaters of the Plenty River in 1857, with the construction of the Yan Yean reservoir in 1857, and with the extension of that system in the 1880s to capture two of the tributaries of the Plenty, the Watts River and Silver Creek. It was quickly realised however that augmentation to the water supply would be needed and in the 1870s, a large area of forest in the Yarra Ranges, including the headwaters of the Yarra River and its upper catchment area was reserved for future water supply purposes. This was strongly opposed by many of those working in the timber industry, who saw the alienation of the forest as posing an unfair restriction on available timber resources. The Water Supply Department, and later the Melbourne & Metropolitan Board of Works (established in 1891), continued to maintain the importance of keeping the Yarra catchment (now within the Yarra Ranges National Park) free from human contamination.

In 1891, the newly formed MMBW set about constructing a weir on the Watts River, a tributary of the Yarra, at Healesville. From here an aqueduct was constructed from the Watts weir to South Morang, which fed the Yarra water into the Plenty water supply. In 1927 the Maroondah Dam was completed, which boosted Melbourne's water supply at a critical time of extensive suburban expansion. A further expansion came in 1957 with the construction of the massive Upper Yarra Dam at Reefton.

Additional weirs and dams were added to the system through the twentieth century and each component was carefully managed to maintain water security and purity. Improvements to filtration and water quality, and experiments in the use of different timbers in the catchment area, were developed through the twentieth century. Melbourne's water supply remains a closed catchment and due to astute management continues to be one the finest water supplies in the world.



*Figure 43. Senior Constable C. Moss reading the river gauge at Warrandyte, 1971. (State Library of Victoria, Picture Collection Accession No. RWP/29830)*



### Coping with fire and flood

The early settlers faced a number of catastrophic floods in the first decades of Melbourne's development, which caused enormous property damage and some loss of life. Notable floods were in 1842, 1863 and 1891. From the 1850s, engineers were intent on solving the problem of potential flooding and taming the river's natural cycles. Through the 1880s, extensive dredging and widening was carried out, and the rocky barrier across the river at Queen Street, known as The Falls, was destroyed to improve the flow. Additional flood mitigation works were carried out through the early twentieth century, but a major flood of the lower Yarra in 1934 highlighted the continuing problem. The Sugarloaf Reservoir, built in the 1970s, has aided flood prevention downstream.

The Yarra River catchment is highly prone to bushfire, largely owing to the dominant forest of Mountain Ash (*Eucalyptus regnans*) which rejuvenates through fire. Aboriginal people fired the land on a regular basis to manage the risk of large outbreaks. There have been a number of destructive bushfires within the catchment area – for example in 1926 and the devastating Black Friday bushfires of 1939, when a number of timber workers in the Yarra Valley lost their lives. More recently, the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires caused major damage to the Yarra catchment area.

### Nature conservation

Melbourne was dramatically transformed by the 1850s with the arrival of large numbers of gold-rush immigrants, and the rapid construction of roads, housing and other urban infrastructure. The Yarra River and the river flats were severely compromised. Much of the native vegetation lining the banks was removed; the river became a drain for the city's waste; and stock fouled the adjacent billabongs and waterholes. The early reservation of large areas of riverbank land in Melbourne in the 1850s protected some parts of the river environment, but much of this land, although designated as parkland (e.g. the Domain, the Botanic Gardens and Yarra Park), was largely denuded of its native vegetation and re-landscaped according to prevailing fashions. Much of the large Yarra Bend reserve, however, remained bushland through the nineteenth century and into the twentieth. In the 1860s, a large area of riverbank at Studley Park, Kew, was reserved as public recreation with the vision that it would be preserved as natural bushland.

The early administrators of Melbourne's water supply were committed to maintaining a pristine catchment environment. This inadvertently meant the protection of the natural environment, although this was not their primary motivation. Through the twentieth century, however, greater interest developed in the protection of the natural ecosystems within Melbourne's water supply catchment. As well as new understandings about stream flow in the catchment being augmented from an untouched forest floor, the protection of the natural flora and fauna became important in its own right. Building on long-standing research in forestry practice, the MMBW developed a strong interest in conservation from the 1970s.

By the mid-twentieth century, the ecological health of many of the riverside reserves in Melbourne were compromised or threatened by land-use policies, and local resident groups sought to have these areas protected. From the 1960s, there were successful local campaigns, for example, to save the Warringal Flats at Heidelberg and the bushland at Warrandyte (now Warrandyte State Park). Upstream from Eltham at the Bend of Isles, local residents campaigned in the 1970s for stringent protection of the Yarra River and were successful in the declaration of the Bend of Isles Environmental Living Zone in the 1970s; this prohibits introduced fauna such as dogs and cats and relies on sustainable sewerage methods. Further upstream in the area around Yarra Glen and Healesville, the National Trust of Australia (Vic.) was instrumental in recognising the natural heritage significance of the Yarra Valley in identifying this area as a 'classified landscape' in the 1970s. Downstream, in the city and suburbs of Melbourne, efforts have been made to improve the water quality of the Yarra. There was a 'Clean up the Yarra' campaign in the early 1970s and the successful 'Give the Yarra a Go' campaign, run by the *Age* newspaper in the early 1980s.

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## 3.0 CULTURAL HERITAGE SITES

### 3.1 Introduction

This draft report presents some high-level findings on places of cultural heritage value in the study area using the heritage registers listed in Section 3.2. For the Heritage Overlay, Victorian Heritage Register and the Victorian Heritage Inventory the places have been generated from spatial data and are accurate for the study area. For the Register of the National Estate, these sites are not accurate for the study area but only for the LGA boundary, which is the filter that can be applied to the search criteria.

#### Community views

Community views on protecting the Yarra River (Birrarrung) provide some key messages about natural and cultural heritage. Strongest of these messages is about the role of Traditional Owners as stewards. For the whole of the river the need to include, involve and acknowledge TOs as custodians, holders of knowledge and storytellers of the Birrarung is very strong. The identification and protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage sites is part of this approach.

Secondly the need to protect the river from inappropriate development ranked highly with the community, especially within the suburban reach. Management of the river environs and planning controls of which heritage is one useful tool featured highly as concerns. The need to protect and manage the many cultural heritage sites within the study area is seen as important.

Overall cultural heritage identification and protection ranked in the middle range of the issues that concerned respondents. Top of the rankings is the environmental health of the river with cultural heritage ranking just above infrastructure and access.<sup>34</sup>

#### Summary narratives

This section contains a short summary narrative of particular sites in each of the four reaches. These are arranged as a short overview, a snapshot of representative sites and several case studies as illustrations.

### 3.2 Indicative sites

This draft report includes a summary of sites obtained from the following sources:

- Victorian Heritage Register (VHR)
- Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register (ACHRIS)
- Heritage Overlays (HO)
- Victorian Heritage Inventory (VHI)
- Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Register (ACHRIS)
- National Trust of Australia Victoria (NTAV)
- National Heritage List (NHL)
- Commonwealth Heritage List (CHL)
- Register of the National Estate – a non-statutory archive, (RNE)
- Parks Victoria – assets filtered for historic/archaeological feature/place

In addition to the above, spatial mapping using the following datasets has been used:

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<sup>34</sup> Protecting the Yarra River (Birrarrung) Community Views, 2017

- Heritage Rivers
- Tourist Railway
- Area of Cultural Heritage Sensitivity –200m either side of the entire length of the Yarra River and its creeks.
- Local heritage studies – have been referenced in Appendix B.

The following section identifies some high-level findings on the distribution, patterns and nature of the sites found in each of the four reaches. This has been tabulated by municipality to give some approximate distribution in each of the seven LGAs. Cultural heritage registers consulted and those tabulated via GIS mapping are arranged by LGA.

Table 4 Cultural heritage sites

LGA	HO	VHR	VHI	NTAV Landscape	NTAV Trees	CHL	NHL	Parks Vic	Other
Banyule	104	12	7			1		7	
Boroondara	195	21	2	2	23				
Manningham	85	8	10	4	6				Heritage River
Melbourne	452	158	923			1	4	21	
Nillumbik	44	1	0				1	6	Heritage River
Stonnington	115	24	2						
Yarra	331	35	33				1	3	
Yarra Ranges	59	2	7					67	Heritage River Tourist railway
Total	1385	261	984	6	29	2	6	104	

Table 5 Aboriginal cultural heritage sites

ACHRIS (Aboriginal Heritage Register)

Locality	Reach	Number of sites
South Wharf to Abbotsford	Inner urban	30
Abbotsford to Heidelberg	Suburban	37
Heidelberg to Warrandyte	Lower rural	43
Warrandyte to Yarra Glen	Lower rural / upper rural	30
Yarra Glen to Warburton	Upper rural	19
Warburton to Upper Yarra Reservoir	Upper rural	1
Total		179

Table 6 Register of the National Estate<sup>35</sup> places recorded

RNE (Register of the National Estate)

Locality	Reach	Number of sites
Banyule	Suburban	21
Boroondara	Suburban	123
Manningham	Suburban / Lower rural	54
Melbourne	Inner urban	709
Nillumbik	Suburban/Lower rural	25
Stonnington	Suburban	84
Yarra	Inner urban	317
Yarra Ranges	Upper rural	103
Total		1436

\*RNE sites have not been filtered for the study area but by LGA boundary. The total number of sites will therefore be overrepresented by this table.

A table of indicative places is shown in Table 7. The places have been selected to be representative of place type, locality (LGA), historical theme (as per table above), historical time period and relevant reach of the river.

The places listed have been drawn from a wide range of research and existing heritage listings and are arranged alphabetically with colour representing the various reaches.

<sup>35</sup> The Register of the National Estate is a non-statutory archive of places. The Register of the National Estate is a list of natural, Indigenous and historic heritage places throughout Australia. From 19 February 2007 the Register has been frozen, meaning that no places can be added or removed, but continues to be a repository of information on places, sometimes not recorded elsewhere.



Colour code	Reach
	Inner urban reach
	Suburban reach
	Lower rural reach
	Upper rural reach

Table 7 Indicative sites in the study area

Place	LGA	Listing	Theme/s	Period	River reach
Alexandra Avenue, Melbourne-South Yarra	Melbourne		4.3, 4.4, 6.1		1
Alphington Swimming Pool, Alphington	Yarra		8.2	1920s	2
Alpine Retreat Hotel, Warburton	Yarra Ranges	HO	8.3	c.1920s	4
Balance, Yeringberg	Yarra Ranges	HO	2.3, 2.4	1860s+	3
Banyule homestead, Heidelberg	Banyule	VHR	2.2, 2.3	1840s	2
Banyule Flats Reserve, Heidelberg	Banyule	VHR	4.2, 9.3		2
Boat sheds (group), Yarra Bank, Melbourne	Melbourne		4.2, 8.2		1
Bolin Bolin billabong, Bulleen	Manningham		1.1, 1.2, 9.3	n.a.	2
Boral brickyard, Bulleen	Manningham		3.2	c.1880s	2
Burnley College of Horticulture	Yarra	VHR	4.2, 4.5, 9.3		1
Burns house ('Kangaroo'), Bend of Isles	Nillumbik	VHR H2314	7.2, 7.3	c.1970s	3
Bryant and May industrial complex (former), Cremorne	Yarra	VHR 0626	3.1	c.1900s	1
Camping site, Yering Station, Yarra Glen	Yarra Ranges		2.2		3
Canoe tree at Heide, Bulleen	Manningham		1.1, 4.2	n.k.	2
Cement Creek plantation	Yarra Ranges	HO	9.1	c.1930s	3
Church Street Bridge, Richmond-South Yarra	Yarra/Stonnington	VHR H1917	4.3	1924	1
Como, South Yarra	Stonnington	VHR	2.2, 2.3, 7.3	1850s+	1
Como Park, South Yarra	Stonnington		4.2, 4.4, 8.1, 8.2		1

Place	LGA	Listing	Theme/s	Period	River reach
Convent of the Good Shepherd (former), Abbotsford	Yarra	VHR H0951	2.4, 4.5	c.1860s	1
Coranderk Aboriginal Cemetery, Badger Creek	Yarra Ranges	VHI	2.2	[1860s]	3
Coranderk Aboriginal Reserve (former), Badger Creek	Yarra Ranges	NHL, HO	1.1, 1.2, 2.2, 2.3	[1863]	3
Cumberland Scenic Reserve, Warburton	Yarra Ranges	HO	4.2, 9.3	1920s	4
Customs House, Melbourne	Melbourne	VHR	4.3	c.1856	1
Denton Hat Mills (former), Abbotsford	Yarra	VHR H0815	3.1	C1886	1
Dights Falls, Collingwood	Yarra		2.1,	1802+	1
Dights Mill (former) site, Collingwood	Yarra	VHR H1522	3.1	1837	1
Domain Parklands, Melbourne	Melbourne	VHR H2304	2.2, 3.1, 4.2, 6.1, 6.2, 7.2, 8.1		1
Doonside industrial precinct, Richmond	Yarra	HO	3.1	1930s	1
Edzell, Toorak	Stonnington	VHR H0691	7.3	c.1890s	1
Ezards Sawmill, Starlings Gap	Yarra Ranges				3
Gulf Station, Melba Hwy	Yarra Ranges	VHR	2.3	c.1840s	3
Factory, Gough Street, Cremorne	Yarra		3.1	c.1920s	1
Fairfield Boathouse, Fairfield	Yarra		8.2		2
Fairfield Infectious Diseases Hospital, Fairfield	Yarra	VHR H1878	4.5	c.1900s	2
Fairlea Women's Prison (former), Fairfield	Yarra	VHR H1552	4.5		2
Fitzroy Gardens, Melbourne	Melbourne	VHR	4.2, 5.3, 6.1, 6.2, 7.1, 8.1		1
Flinders Street Station, Melbourne	Melbourne	VHR	4.3		1
General Motors Holden, Fishermans Bend	Melbourne	VHR	3.1	1930s	1
Government House, Melbourne	Melbourne	VHR	4.2, 7.2	1873-76	1

Place	LGA	Listing	Theme/s	Period	River reach
Heide I and Heide II, Bulleen	Manningham	VHR H0687, H1494	7.1, 7.2	c.1940s	2
Hoddle Falls, Upper Yarra			2.1, 4.2		4
House, 22 St Georges Road, Toorak	Stonnington	HO	7.3	1937	1
House, 42 Wallace Ave, Toorak (Marcus Martin)	Stonnington	VHR H1806	7.3	c.1930s	1
House, 1 Shakespeare Grove, Hawthorn	Boroondara	HO	7.2, 7.3	c.1880s	1
Illawarra, Toorak	Stonnington	VHR H0701	7.3	c.1870s	1
Inverarity Mill, Millgrove	Yarra Ranges	HO	4.4		4
Invergowrie, Coppin Grove, Hawthorn	Boroondara	VHR H0195	7.2, 7.3	1846	1
John Wren house (former aka Studley House), Xavier preparatory school, Studley Park	Boroondara	VHR H0789	5.2, 7.3	1857	1
Kew Tram Depot, Kew	Boroondara		4.3, 7.1		1
Little Parndon, Gipps Street, East Melbourne	Melbourne	VHR H0056	7.3	c.1860s	1
Massacre site, Yarra Glen	Yarra Ranges		2.2	c.1840	3
McIntyre House, Kew	Boroondara	VHR	7.2, 7.3	1950s	1
Melbourne Boys' High School, South Yarra	Stonnington	VHR H1636	4.5	c.1918	1
Montsalvat, Eltham	Nillumbik	VHR H0716	7.3	1930s	2
Mont Eagle Estate, Eaglemont	Banyule	VHR	5.1, 7.3	c.1912	2
Morrell Bridge, South Yarra	Stonnington	VHR	4.3, 7.2	1899	1
Mosspennoch, East Melbourne	Melbourne	VHR H0420	7.3	C.1870s-80s	1
Napier Waller house, Ivanhoe	Banyule	VHR	7.2, 7.3		2
Neil Douglas & Helen (Abbie) Heathcote house, Bend of Islands	Nillumbik	HO	7.2, 7.3, 9.3	1970s	3
Notre Dame Abbey, Tarrawarra	Yarra Ranges	HO	2.3, 2.4, 4.5	c.1918; 1957+	3
Nylex sign, Richmond	Yarra	VHR	3.1	c.1950s	1

Place	LGA	Listing	Theme/s	Period	River reach
Old Federal Mill, McMahon's Creek	Yarra Ranges	VHR H1822	3.4		4
Pound Bend gold diversion tunnel, Warrandyte	Manningham, Nillumbik	VHR H1260	3.3	c.1860s	2
Princes Bridge, Melbourne	Melbourne	VHR	4.3, 6.1	1888	1
Robin Boyd house, Walsh Street, South Yarra	Melbourne	VHR H2105	7.3	c.1950	1
Racecourse public housing estate, Richmond	Yarra	HO	5.1	1942	1
Robur Tea Building, South Melbourne	Melbourne	VHR	3.1, 7.2	c.1880s	1
Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne	Melbourne	VHR	1.1, 1.2, 4.1, 4.2, 8.1, 9.3		1
Ryrie's station, Healesville	Yarra Ranges		2.2, 2.3, 2.4	c.1840s+	3
Quarries Park, Clifton Hill	Yarra	HO	3.2, 4.2, 8.1		1
Site of mass burial (Shrine of Remembrance)	Melbourne	VHR	1.1	n.k.	1
Sanitarium Health Foods, Warburton	Yarra Ranges	VHR H0619	3.1	1930s	4
Sherren House (St Catherine's School), Toorak	Stonnington	VHR	5.2, 7.3		1
Snelleman House, East Ivanhoe (Peter McIntyre)	Banyule	VHR H2282	7.2	c.1950s	2
Speaker's Corner (former site), Melbourne	Melbourne		6.2	c.1890s+	1
Spotswood Pumping Station, Spotswood	Hobsons Bay	VHR H1555	3.1, 4.1	c.1891	1
Sugarloaf Reservoir	Nillumbik		1.1, 4.1, 4.4		3
Studley Park, Kew	Boroondara		4.2, 8.1, 8.2, 9.3		1
Studley Park residential estate, Kew	Boroondara		6.3	c.1950s-60s	1
The Boulevard, Kew	Boroondara		4.3	c.1933	1
The Elms slab cottage, Tarrawarra	Yarra Ranges	HO	2.2, 2.3, 2.4	c.1840+	3
The Island, Thompson Bend, Warrandyte	Manningham		4.4, 9.3	c.1860s+	2

Place	LGA	Listing	Theme/s	Period	River reach
Tower Hotel, Alphington	Darebin	VHR	4.3		2
Toorak House, Toorak	Stonnington	VHR H0207	7.3, [+ admin]	c.1850	1
Trawalla, Toorak	Stonnington	VHR H0209	7.3	c.1870s	1
Treasury Gardens, Melbourne	Melbourne	VHR	4.2, 5.3, 6.2, 8.1	1860s	1
Upper Yarra Dam	Yarra Ranges	HO	9.1	1957	4
Yarra Bend Golf Club House	Yarra		8.2	c.1920s	1
Yarra Bend Lunatic Asylum (former site of)	Yarra	VHR	4.2, 4.5	1848	1
Yarra Bridge, Healesville	Yarra Ranges		1.2, 4.3		3
Yarra Glen to Healesville narrow gauge railway (trestle bridges)	Yarra Ranges	HO	4.3, 8.3		3
Yarra Junction war memorial, Yarra Junction	Yarra Ranges	HO	6.1	c.1920	3
Yarra Park, East Melbourne	Melbourne	VHR H2251	1.2, 2.2, 4.2, 8.1, 8.2	all	1
Yarra Ranges National Park	Yarra Ranges		4.2, 7.3, 8.1, 9.1		3, 4
Yarra Track (Yarra Glen – Healesville section)	Yarra Ranges	HO	3.3, 4.3, 8.3	c.1860s	3
Yering Station, Yarra Glen	Yarra Ranges		2.2, 2.3, 2.4	c.1850s	3
Yarra Yarra hydraulic gold sluicing company, Warburton	Yarra Ranges	HO	3.3		4
Wanderstore (holiday house), Launching Place	Yarra Ranges	HO	8.3	c.1920s	4
Warringal Parklands Heidelberg	Banyule	VHR	3.4, 4.2, 9.3		2
Warrandyte State Park, Warrandyte	Manningham		3.3, 4.2, 9.3	[1975]	2
West Gate Park, Fishermans Bend	Melbourne		8.1, 9.3	1984	1
Wertheim Piano Factory (former), Richmond	Yarra	VHR H2165	3.1	c.1910	1
Windsor Hotel (former hydraulic life), Melbourne	Melbourne	VHR	3.1	c.1880s	1



### 3.3 Inner urban reach (South Wharf to Abbotsford)

The inner urban reach takes in the Cities of Melbourne and Yarra to the north of the river and part of the inner suburbs of Boroondara and Stonnington to the south. Places in the inner urban reach are very diverse in theme, place type and period. This reach is notable for the two major river diversions that altered the course of the Yarra at Coode Island and at the Royal Botanic Gardens and Alexandra Avenue.

#### 3.3.1 Aboriginal places

There is a heavy concentration of recorded sites around South Wharf, whereas downstream the landforms are significantly altered and built over. There is a greater density of recorded sites in the urban areas as a result of the greater number of Cultural Heritage Management Plans completed. Clusters of sites are also recorded around Burnley and Abbotsford, where the most common type of Aboriginal site is a low-density artefact scatter. This indicates the potential for Aboriginal sites to exist even in heavily built up areas where nineteenth century urban development exists. There are also several scarred trees within parklands close to the city centre.

#### 3.3.2 Representative sites

##### ***Parklands***

Within the City of Melbourne, cultural heritage sites include the extensive public parklands of the Treasury and Fitzroy Gardens, the Domain and the Royal Botanic Gardens. Parklands also feature in Burnley with the gardens of the Victorian Horticultural Society (now part of Melbourne University).

The Domain Parklands, Sidney Myer Music Bowl and the MCG are represented on the National Heritage List.

Parks Victoria include amongst their heritage places the sites of Herring Island and its environmental sculptures.

##### ***Industrial sites***

Within the suburbs of Abbotsford, Richmond and Collingwood are large numbers of industrial places, many of which are taking on new lives through residential conversions. Early industry on the Yarra is represented by the historic sites at Dights Falls.

Larger industries such as General Motors Holden made their mark in the early twentieth century at Fishermans Bend.

The diversion of the Yarra at Coode Island altered the way in which industrial places related to the river front.

##### ***Private houses***

On the south side of the Yarra there is a different pattern of heritage place with large numbers of nineteenth century private houses within the suburbs of Toorak, South Yarra, Kew and Hawthorn.

The Studley Park residential area in Kew is populated with fine examples of mid twentieth century residential architecture that take the varied topography and views of the Yarra as part of their design inspiration.

##### ***Institutions***

On both sides of the Yarra large, former-institutions occupy extensive river frontages, including the Convent of the Good Shepherd at Abbotsford (on NHL) and the Willsmere and Yarra Bend Asylums (on VHR).

The Victoria Barracks in St Kilda Road is on the Commonwealth Heritage List.

***Historic archaeological sites***

The entire central city area is well studied in an archaeological sense, and sites that represent the early development of the central city and its river infrastructure are evident in the archaeological record. This is reflected in the comprehensive and dense mapping of Heritage Inventory sites in this area.

**3.3.3 Case studies*****Horticultural Society of Victoria experimental garden, later Burnley Gardens******The Boulevard Burnley, City of Yarra, H2052***

*The Burnley Gardens is associated with the theme of building a well-serviced city and creating parks and gardens.*

Burnley Gardens contains a wide variety of ornamental tree species. Of note are a cork oak and a very large Queensland kauri (NTAV). Other mature trees include Canary Island pine, Queensland lace bark and coast redwood amongst others. The Centenary Centre, located near the Boulevard entrance, is a converted milking shed dating from the interwar period, when the Department of Agriculture kept a dairy herd on the site.



Figure 44. Figure 44. Former Horticultural Society of Victoria experimental garden, later Burnley Gardens. (VHD)

***The former Convent of the Good Shepherd,  
1 St Heliers St, Abbotsford, NHL, H0951, H09***

*The Abbotsford Convent is associated with the theme of building a well-serviced city and establishing institutions.*

The Abbotsford convent site is on a natural peninsula in a bend of the Yarra River. The cultural landscape of the convent is like a miniature township or village that reflects the diverse and changing activities that enabled the convent community to be self-sufficient. The site is dominated by a complex of eleven buildings constructed between 1868 and 1908. They include picturesque ecclesiastical, residential, educational and utility buildings constructed in brick in a gothic revival style and set within ornately landscaped grounds.



Figure 45. Abbotsford Convent and grounds. (VHD)

***Corroboree tree Burnley Parklands Burnley  
City of Yarra, HO298***

*The Corroboree tree is associated with the theme of water and life, living on country.*

This tree is said to be the site of Aboriginal ceremonies. As such, it has considerable social significance as one of the few identified non-archaeological sites of significance to Aboriginal people in the Melbourne metropolitan area. It is a dead river red gum with a distinctive 'scar' on the side, situated within Richmond Park.



Figure 46. Corroboree tree Burnley Parklands, Burnley. (HERMES)



### 3.4 Suburban reach (Alphington to Warrandyte)

The suburban reach takes in the municipalities of Banyule and Nillumbik on the north side of the river and Boroondara and Manningham to the south. This is an area of extensive river floodplains and remnant billabongs co-existing with residential areas. Banyule and its suburbs are particularly strong in their proximity and relationship to the river. In Nillumbik and Manningham there are several sites of early farming properties. The sites of the Yarra Protectorate, Native Police Corps headquarters and associated Aboriginal burials at Yarra Bend Park mark significant post-contact Aboriginal places in metropolitan Melbourne.

#### 3.4.1 Aboriginal places

The Bolin Bolin billabong at Bulleen, Banyule Flats Reserve and Warringal Parklands at Heidelberg are important places to the Wurundjeri community.

A canoe tree stands at Heide Art Gallery, Bulleen and a significant number of scarred trees are found at Rosanna Golf Club and in the Mullum Mullum Creek and Plenty River catchment.

A substantial number of sites are clustered in the Heidelberg area, particularly on the eastern side of the Yarra and in Yarra Bend Park, Fairview Park and Studley Park.

The Merri Creek Aboriginal school reserve and the Yarra River Aboriginal protectorate are key historic sites.

#### 3.4.2 Representative sites

##### ***Recreational sites***

Sites related to swimming in the Yarra at Alphington, the Deep Rock swimming hole in Yarra Bend Park and boating at Fairfield Boathouse are part of the recreational theme of the inner urban reach.

Laughing Waters at Eltham celebrates a particularly special part of the Yarra that is associated with swimming. It also retains a number of artefact scatters and scarred trees.

The Banyule Flats Reserve and Warringal Parklands are important cultural heritage recreational places and are associated with the paintings and artists of the Heidelberg School.

Yarra Bend Park, Dights Falls and Studley Park contain historic and archaeological sites.

##### ***Institutions***

Institutions in Yarra Bend Park include the Infectious Diseases Hospital and Fairlea Women's Prison at Fairfield.

##### ***Residential areas***

Several extensive residential areas of Eaglemont, Ivanhoe and Heidelberg are on the Heritage Overlay including the Glenard and Mount Eagle Estates as part of the Walter Burley Griffin-designed estates.

Heide I and II at Bulleen are sites of importance as residences and now a modern art gallery celebrating Australian artists of the twentieth century.

##### ***Farming complexes***

Banyule Homestead at Heidelberg is associated with early nineteenth century settlement and others such as Viewbank Farm at Viewbank and Pontville at Templestowe represent rare glimpses into an almost vanished agricultural history of this part of the Yarra.

These sites retain associated agricultural landscapes as well as buildings and archaeological remains.

### 3.4.3 Case studies

#### ***Pontville, 16 Briar lane and 1c Homestead Road Templestowe City of Manningham, H7922-0122 (and VHR H1395)***

*Pontville is associated with the theme of settling and farming and grazing.*

Pontville is archaeologically important for the below ground remains contained within the archaeological deposits of Newman's turf hut and the subsequent homestead and farm buildings. The structures, deposits and associated artefacts are important for their potential to provide an understanding of the conditions in which a squatting family lived in the earliest days of the Port Phillip settlement. The survival of sites associated with early pastoral settlement in Victoria which have not been subsequently disturbed is rare.



Figure 47. Pontville, Templestowe. (VHD)

#### ***Adobe house, outbuilding, Boomerang house and bathing shed 195 Laughing Waters Road Eltham, Shire of Nillumbik, HO111***

*The buildings and landscape are associated with the theme of the inspiring river, architecture and landscape design.*

The buildings at Laughing Water, both individually and as a complex, are historically significant for their close association with the nationally known landscape designer, Gordon Ford and for their evocation of the 'Eltham lifestyle'. The complex is in continuing use by those associated with the art and design community.



Figure 48. Boomerang house Laughing Waters Road. (Eltham District Historical Society)



***Murray Griffin house, 52 Darebin Street Heidelberg***

***City of Banyule, H1324***

*Murray Griffin house is associated with the theme of Suburban Development and shaping the suburbs.*

The Murray Griffin house is a six-roomed residence designed by Walter Burley Griffin built in 1922 for the family of artist Vaughan Murray Griffin. The house was built using Griffin's patented knitlock system. The house was occupied by the noted artist Vaughan Murray Griffin from 1922 to 1939.



Figure 49. Knitlock house, 52 Darebin Street Heidelberg. (VHD)

### 3.5 Lower rural reach (Wonga Park to Healesville)

The lower rural reach takes in the Shire of Nillumbik to the north of the Yarra River and part of the Shire of Yarra Ranges. Warrandyte, Yarra Glen and Healesville are the major town centres. This reach includes a large section of 'heritage river' at Warrandyte and several additional small sections also with this designation leading towards Healesville. Heritage rivers<sup>36</sup> or particular parts of rivers and river catchment areas in Victoria were designated where there was considered to be significant nature conservation, recreation, scenic or cultural heritage attributes.

#### 3.5.1 Aboriginal places

Within the lower rural reach is the Coranderrk Aboriginal reserve at Healesville (NHL).

A camping site at Yering Station, and a massacre site at Yarra Glen are associated with the invasion and dispossession of Aboriginal people.

The Warrandyte within the lower rural reach area has recorded sites in a moderate to low density comprising mainly artefact scatters and scarred trees.

The area around Bend of Islands, including the confluence of the Yarra River with Oxley Creek, has a group of small artefact scatters.

Yarra Glen has several sites including artefact scatters and scarred trees.

#### 3.5.2 Representative sites

##### ***Farming Complexes***

Several farming complexes including Yering Station at Yering, Rylie's Station at Healesville are important sites.

The vernacular farm buildings at The Elms Tarrawarra and Gulf Station are reminders of early settlement and pastoral activities associated with the lower rural reach.

##### ***Landscapes and trees***

There are significant landscapes and trees within the Yarra Valley with the National Trust classifying several of these. The upper Yarra River is of cultural importance for the scenic beauty of the river and its environs stretching from the headwaters of the river in the east to the western end of Warrandyte State Park and including the flood plain of the Yarra Valley (NTAV).

##### ***Transport and tourism***

The Yarra Valley tourist railway stretches between Yarra Glen, Coldstream and Healesville, reviving a nineteenth century line from Lilydale and containing a significant timber trestle bridge over the flood plains.

##### ***Water supply sites***

The lower rural reach is the start of the major water supply infrastructure sites in the Yarra Ranges. It includes the nineteenth century Watts River system and the early twentieth century Maroondah water supply system.

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<sup>36</sup> Heritage Rivers Act 1992 (Victoria)

### 3.5.3 Case studies

#### ***Mount Lofty landscape, lower Homestead Road Wonga Park.***

##### ***City of Manningham, HO103***

*The Mount Lofty landscape is associated with the theme of the inspiring river – perceptions of the river.*

The Mt. Lofty landscape has significance for the views to and from Mt. Lofty, where from the peak the geological history of the Upper Yarra Valley is laid out. The landscape retains a view of the Yarra River rapids and the rock face near the Yarra River gorge near Wonga Park. The natural river landscapes are set within an historic pastoral landscape of open paddocks and mature pine and cypress windbreaks (HERMES).



Figure 50. Mount Lofty landscape, Wonga Park, 1996. (HERMES)

#### ***Former Gardinerville Homestead 215-217 Victoria Road Yering***

##### ***Shire of Yarra Ranges, H7922-0471***

*The former Gardinerville homestead is associated with the theme of settling, invasion and dispossession and farming and grazing.*

John Gardiner established the 15,000-acre Mooroolbark Run in January 1838 and built a stone house named Kangaroo Park adjacent to the Yarra River. The site contains subsurface artefact scatter, which may be associated with the first residence of the property and the first residence of the Yarra Valley.



### ***Pound Bend Gold Diversion Tunnel***

***Pound Bend Road, Warrandyte and Kangaroo Ground – Warrandyte Road North  
Warrandyte, City of Manningham and Shire of Nillumbik, VHR1260***

*The Pound Bend Gold Diversion Tunnel is associated with the theme of developing industries and gold mining.*

The Pound Bend Gold Diversion Tunnel is a river diversion excavated in 1870. The tunnel was used to truncate a long section of the original river course and the dry river bed was extensively worked for gold. Water diversion and sluicing are important key ingredients in an understanding of gold mining technology as it was employed in mountainous country where water was plentiful and perennial.

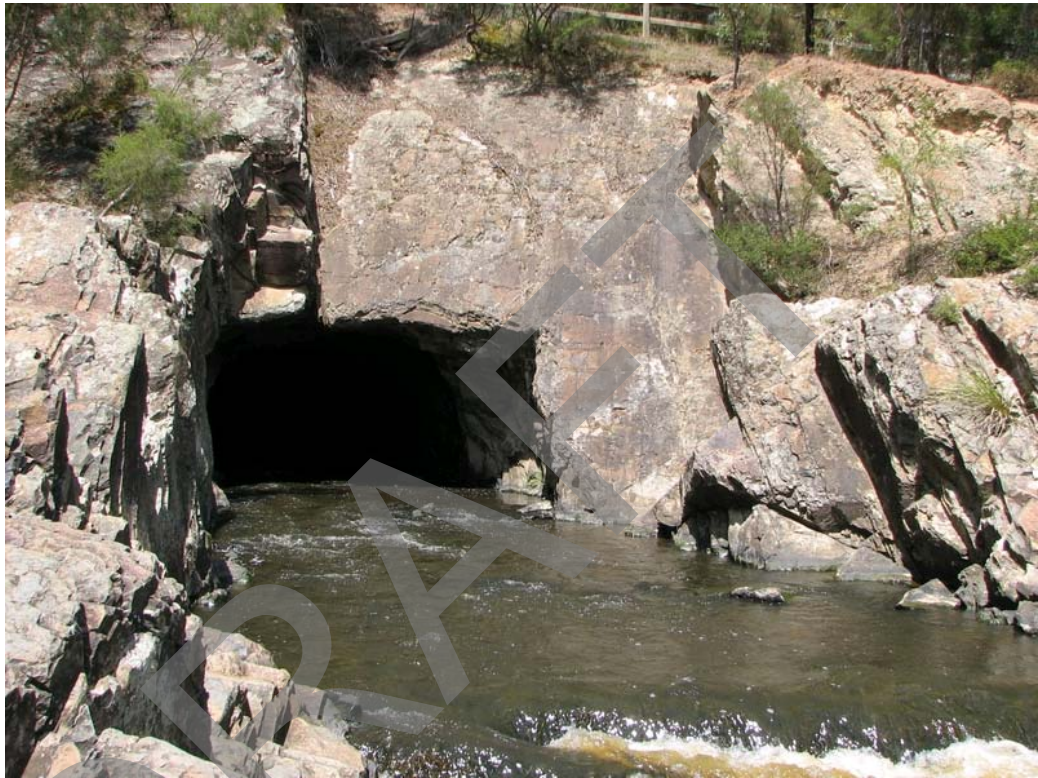


Figure 51. Pound Bend diversion tunnel, Warrandyte. (VHD)

## **3.6 Upper rural reach (Healesville to Upper Yarra)**

From Healesville to Upper Yarra the river bisects the Shire of Yarra Ranges with its extensive areas of public land, either National Park or closed water catchment. Warburton is the main urban area. This reach has two sections declared as Heritage River, including east of the Watts River to Woori Yallock Creek and from Woori Yallock to beyond Walkers Creek at Warburton. The Yarra Ranges National Park encompasses a large section of this reach and is home to a multitude of heritage sites managed by Parks Victoria.

### **3.6.1 Aboriginal places**

Very few sites are recorded in this reach apart from a conflict site. This is likely to indicate that much of the country is remote and forested and that few investigations have taken place, rather than as a lack of places.

### **3.6.2 Representative places**

***Water supply sites***

The O'Shannassy aqueduct trail within the Yarra Ranges National Park follows the line of the historic channel from Woori Yallock to East Warburton where the O'Shannassy weir is located.

Early small water supply systems of Badger and Donnelly's weirs provide insights into Melbourne's water supply system before the Maroondah, O'Shannassy and Upper Yarra dams were integrated.

The Upper Yarra Dam constructed in the mid twentieth century is at the headwaters of the Yarra and represents a major engineering achievement by the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works (now Melbourne Water). There are many historic sites associated with the construction of the dam and the earlier forestry and goldmining activities.

### ***Mining and sawmilling***

A large number of sites are associated with industries of gold mining. The Yarra Track celebrates the road the gold miners took to the Woods Point diggings.

The Cambarville township site within the Yarra Ranges National Park is associated with timber cutting and saw-milling of the Mountain Ash forests.

### ***Tourism***

The river at Warburton has been part of tourism since the nineteenth century, and the town retains aspects of this history in its hotels such as the Alpine Retreat and guest houses. The Yarra Ranges National Park plays a big role in tourism and the interpretation of historic sites since its establishment in 1995.

### **3.6.3 Case studies**

#### ***Reefton Township Site, Warburton-Woods Point Road, Reefton Shire of Yarra Ranges, HO396***

*Reefton township site is associated with the theme of developing industries and gold mining.*

Reefton township site has local significance as one of the former goldmining towns in the Upper Yarra area. Goldfield remains include the battery site and the remains of sluicing, water races and mine dumps. The township area has several features including a gold battery site, a dam and shed containing the battery. There are extensive remains throughout the surrounding bush including water races, tracks and areas of diggings.



*Figure 52. Reefton township site with hotel on left. (Mattinbgn/CC-BY-SA-3.0)*



***Sanitarium Health Food Company & Adventist Hospital***

***3485 Warburton Highway, Warburton, VHR619***

*The Sanitarium Health Food Co. is associated with the theme of developing industries and manufacturing and with building a well-serviced city and establishing institutions.*

The Sanitarium Health Food company Factory complex is a skilful assembly of contrasting geometric, brick-clad forms and an early example of European modern architecture. The buildings and their rural setting reflects the health and fitness philosophy of the Seventh Day Adventist church, providing an insight into the historical importance of the church's missionary work and its role in the development of the Australian health food industry.



Figure 53. Sanitarium Health Food Co. hospital building. (HERMES)

***Upper Yarra Dam and reservoir park***

***Shire of Yarra Ranges, HO314***

*Upper Yarra dam and reservoir park is associated with the theme of Building a well-serviced city, providing a water supply and sewerage, and setting aside public reserves.*

The Upper Yarra dam wall, constructed of earth and rock fill, was the highest dam of its type in the southern hemisphere when completed in 1957, and one of the first of Melbourne Water's dams to be constructed without a concrete corewall. The completion of the dam in 1957 coincided with the centenary of Melbourne's water supply system, beginning with the building of the Yan Yean Reservoir in 1857. The Mt Little Joe tunnel and the Upper Yarra diversion tunnel together represented a major piece of engineering. The reservoir and associated park are valued by the community as a popular place for picnics and sightseeing, with spectacular views of the surrounding forested catchment, extensive stretch of water and landscaped park visible from the visitor's viewing platform.

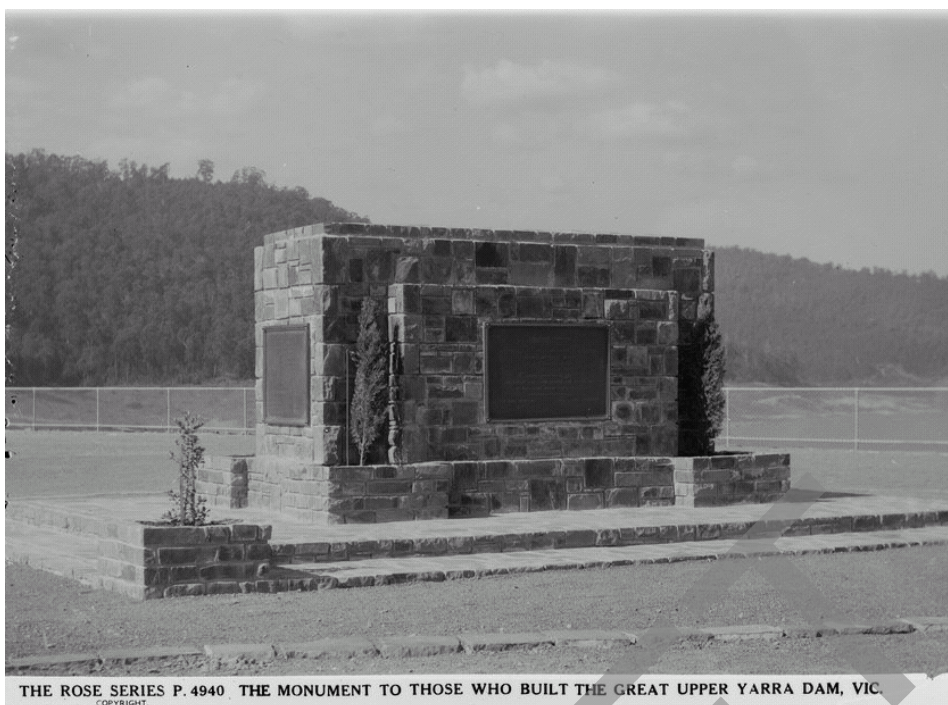


Figure 54. Upper Yarra dam monument. (SLV)



Figure 55. Upper Yarra Dam, 2007. (M1rtyn at en.wikipedia)

## 4.0 KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 4.1 Introduction

This scoping report provides a snapshot of the extraordinarily rich cultural heritage of the Yarra River. There are thousands of identified sites, including Aboriginal places, HO, VHR and VHI sites along the length of the river. While the inner urban and suburban reaches have been well covered in local heritage and archaeological studies, Aboriginal sites tend to be recorded unevenly across the study area. This section draws together some observations from the pattern and distribution of sites. It also provides a summary of the gaps in knowledge moving forward, and some opportunities that could be incorporated into the Yarra River Strategic Plan.

### 4.2 Key findings

#### Local heritage

- Of the approximately 2777 recorded sites within the study area, about half of these are local Heritage Overlays.
- The City of Melbourne has the highest number of places and sites in the study area, accounting for more than half of all those recorded. This is a result of the area being very well covered by heritage studies.
- The City of Yarra has the next highest number of sites, at just over 400.
- The Shire of Nillumbik has the lowest recorded number of cultural heritage sites in the study area.

#### Historic archaeology

- There are nearly 1000 sites recorded on the Victorian Heritage Inventory, the majority of which are in the City of Melbourne. This result reflects the significant amount of archaeological investigation undertaken within the city.
- Elsewhere in the other three reaches, archaeological sites are more sparsely represented.
- This is highly likely to mean that there are large areas of the upper rural reach, for example that have not been accessed or studied.

#### Public land

- The Shire of Yarra Ranges has the highest number of places and sites on public land, largely managed by Parks Victoria.
- Melbourne Water has a significant number of heritage assets, primarily in the upper rural reach within the Shire of Yarra Ranges.

#### National heritage

- The presence of several nationally significant places within the Study Area may provide significant opportunities for cultural heritage.
- The Domain Parklands, the Abbotsford Convent and Coranderrk represent very different threads of important narratives that demonstrate different heritage values. The histories of these places are demonstrations of shared heritage.
- A level of cultural sensitivity has been afforded to Coranderrk Station indicating that this area has a very high significance to the Aboriginal community.



### Aboriginal sites

- The ACHRIS search revealed a total of 179 recorded Aboriginal archaeological and cultural sites along the Yarra River. This was dominated by scarred trees (80) and artefact scatters sites (64) with a range of Low Density Artefact Distributions (LDADs) (27)
- Smaller numbers of other sites such as earth mounds (3), Aboriginal historic places (2), a cemetery (1), a burial (1) and a conflict site (1) have also been included in the database.
- A reasonable number of sites within the two-kilometre-wide study area fall outside of the zone of archaeological sensitivity, indicating that the zoning is a broad management tool, and is not a clear reflection of the actual potential sensitivity along the study area.
- The lower number of recorded in the upper reaches of the Yarra is unlikely to be a reflection of the Aboriginal use of the landscape and is more likely to result from a lower quantity of data and archaeological investigations.
- It is probable that further in-depth assessment and analysis of landforms in the upper catchment will still reveal an intensive use of the Yarra River corridor along its entire length.
- Known concentrations of Aboriginal sites or places of importance to Aboriginal people are at:
  - Banyule Flats and Warringa Parklands
  - Bulleen, Bolin Bolin billabong
  - Burnley Park and Fairview Park
  - Lower Plenty and Plenty River catchment at Templestowe
  - Healesville, Coranderrk
  - Merri Creek and Yarra River confluence
  - Rosanna Golf Club
  - Warrandyte, near Bend of Islands
  - Yarra Glen

### 4.3 Practitioners' workshop

A workshop for cultural heritage practitioners from partner organisations and representatives from community heritage groups was held on 6 August 2018 at the Royal Historical Society of Victoria. The purpose of the workshop was to provide information on the cultural heritage component of the Yarra Strategic Plan undertaken to date, and to gather information about the work of various organisations on the cultural heritage of the Yarra. Details of attendance and the workshop agenda are included at Appendix D.

Discussion was based around four topics based around the theme of 'Where to for the cultural heritage of the Birrarung?'

- Knowing our heritage and culture
- Protecting our heritage and culture
- Collaborating and supporting heritage and culture
- Appreciating and promoting heritage and culture

A summary of the notes from the workshop is included below, arranged through achievements and opportunities and finally through some broad aspirations. The material collected is arranged for state agencies, local government and community organisations.

## Achievements

### *State agencies*

Most organisations recognise Aboriginal cultural heritage through formal statements or memorandums of understanding and reconciliation plans.

The Department of Environment Land, Water and Planning is currently instigating a broad-based study of the Yarra in its suburban reach. This will include specialist studies for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultural heritage.

Parks Victoria has long established processes and procedures for engagement with Traditional Owners. It also has access to in-house heritage advice and the ability to engage consultants. Its resources include many management plans for heritage places. Their cultural heritage activities are concentrated around national and state listed places rather than local places. Parks Victoria also provides support to many Friends groups who look after heritage places. They have cultural heritage information available on PARKWEB and through a program of interpretative signage at sites. Cultural Heritage Management Plans held by Parks Victoria are a significant resource.

Heritage Victoria provides advice to land managers on aspects of cultural heritage, primarily around permits and consents. Heritage Victoria initiated collaboration across government agencies through asset management forums as a means of encouraging cross-agency collaboration. These forums have not been active for a few years.

Melbourne Water has well established procedures around compliance, permits and consents for major works.

The Royal Botanic Gardens is researching the lower Yarra habitat with a view to establishing an area in the gardens that represents this landscape.

Documentary collections for the Yarra are extensive, and there is collaboration between the State Library of Victoria and local historical societies in conserving and making information accessible.

### *Local government*

Most municipalities have some type of cultural heritage advice, and/or a heritage strategy.

The Shire of Yarra Ranges emphasises cross-council actions in their Creative Communities Strategy, providing provides grants and support for at least four community history groups with strong links to the Yarra. It also has a key partnership with Traditional Owners for the Wandoo Estate.

The City of Melbourne is developing a body of knowledge about pre-contact natural history, plant communities, fauna and geomorphology in order to apply this to new landscape design and site repair.

The City of Yarra is interested in engaging younger generations in history and culture through the use of different media.

Banyule and Nillumbik have publications promoting the natural history of the Yarra.

### *Community organisations*

The National Trust of Australia (Victoria) has a series of expert advisory committees to assist them in their work. They collaborate with communities in the identification, recording and protection of significant trees.

Many Friends groups provide important work in their local areas, often through environmental actions that overlap with cultural heritage. Friends groups can themselves form part of the social history of the Yarra as they continue to advocate and work for its protection and management.



There are many events that celebrate aspects of the Yarra's history including Moomba, Open House, heritage walks, National Trust community heritage festival and local tours organised by historical societies.

## Opportunities

### ***Commonwealth government***

A National Heritage listing for the Yarra could form a project for understanding a range of different values and filling gaps in knowledge about the Yarra. It also provides a mechanism for collaboration across different organisations and municipalities.

### ***State agencies***

The value of a whole of catchment approach across state agencies is recognised as necessary for the protection of environmental values and for the understanding and protection of Aboriginal cultural values. This is particularly important when there are major works proposed e.g. freeway construction.

The engagement of local regions is critical to Parks Victoria's approach to cultural heritage. When places are uncovered by fire or other means, Parks Victoria recognises a need for fast-tracked recording and investigation. They acknowledge that local heritage sites on public land could receive more attention, given additional resources to deal with them.

Melbourne Water would like to further promote cultural heritage, and to shift from due diligence and risk management to the promotion of opportunities that arise, particularly as part of their operations e.g. sewer construction and archaeology.

### ***Local government***

Aboriginal cultural heritage studies have tended to be site-based rather than broader in scope, and there are opportunities for further work in this area.

There are many local heritage studies but it is not known how effectively these address the Yarra as a formative influence on the development of listed places. Council-owned heritage places generally are well documented but there is often a need to update older information. Many listed heritage places might benefit from added information about their relationship to the Yarra.

There is a need for enhanced interpretation of key sites along the Yarra. There is also a cautionary note that interpretation signs can be expensive to implement and to maintain. Examples included the need for interpretation of industrial sites in the Abbotsford and Burnley areas and the ageing Heidelberg Artists Trail signage. There is an opportunity to engage with art and design in relation to the Yarra, a theme that could encompass different municipalities.

For private property extending to the riverbank there may be a need to clarify planning protection and to have some consistency across municipalities.

The City of Melbourne is interested in applying cultural heritage knowledge in management and design of urban landscapes. It has also identified the opportunity for interpretation along bike trails.

Yarra Ranges Shire is aware of a significant gap in their archaeological knowledge of the upper reaches of the Yarra.

There is a need to implement existing heritage study recommendations for the Shire of Nillumbik

Stonnington have identified a need to understand more about archaeology, both Aboriginal and historic. The exhibition of archaeological items is one way of assisting in the promotion of local cultural heritage sites.

***Community organisations***

The Heidelberg Historical Society notes the importance of local names for places along the Yarra.

**Aspirations**

The following is a summary of the final wrap-up session from the workshop where participants were asked to think broadly about some key aspirations for the Yarra. The discussions emphasised the need for increased knowledge and collaboration.

***Increased knowledge***

There is enthusiasm around increasing knowledge of cultural heritage sites from an Aboriginal perspective.

- Understanding Traditional Owner values and aspirations and including these in place making, interpretation and landscape planning.
- There is a strong desire for the inclusion of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal heritage values to be represented in the documentation of listed places.
- Many state and locally listed places could be understood better in relation to a Yarra River theme.

***Collaboration***

There is an enthusiasm for collaborative projects that can be undertaken across jurisdictions. The instigation of a National Heritage List nomination for the Yarra could be a suitable project that both engages across many organisations and is a mechanism for building knowledge.

There is also enthusiasm for regional projects that engage across different jurisdictions e.g.

- interpretative projects using a range of techniques for a wide audience.
- rehabilitation projects that may also include re-creation of river landscapes.
- co-ordinated strategic planning that recognises the cultural heritage values of the Yarra.
- A mechanism for State agencies to work together.

**4.4. Recommendations**

The Yarra Strategic Plan could deliver the following high-level actions as part of the cultural and heritage values component.

- Investigate the level of support for a National Heritage List nomination for the Birrarung, including the whole Yarra corridor. NHL sites within this area already include the Domain Parklands, Abbotsford Convent and Coranderrk.
- In collaboration with local municipalities, Parks Victoria and Heritage Victoria, undertake a pilot program to add Aboriginal values to some selected state-listed sites.
- In collaboration with other agencies, identify several key sites where an interpretative program could be developed that could deliver a vibrant and rich narrative of the Yarra.

## 5.0 REFERENCES

### 5.1 Primary sources

#### Maps and plans

*Historic maps and plans provide important documentary evidence of the river's history. Key collections include the parish plans and the early MMBW detail plans (for the inner suburban area). The Historic Plans Collection at PROV has extensive holdings that are not undigitised, but would hold important early plans of the Yarra. Early maps and plans of Melbourne, including early editions of the Melways street directories, show the rising level of development and changes in land-use on the riverbank.*

Geological Survey of Victoria, 1860s (State Library of Victoria).

Historic Plans Collection, microfiche copy VPRS 15899 (PROV)

Hoddle, Robert 1837. Plan of Melbourne (State Library of Victoria).

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Parish plan of Tarrawarra (State Library of Victoria).

Parish plan of Yering (State Library of Victoria).

Parish plan of Warrandyte (State Library of Victoria).

'Ringwood', Australian Section, Imperial General Staff, 1935 (State Library of Victoria).

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#### Archival sources (government)

*PROV holds an extensive collection of official records relating to the Yarra River. Key collections include the MMBW Historical Records Collection (also known as the 'Seegar collection') and the records of the Melbourne Harbour Trust Commissioners. PROV also hold records of the Yarra Improvement Trust of the late 1890s, who were responsible for altering the course of the river; Crown Land Occupation files that detail leases granted for industrial uses on the riverbank; Crown Land Reserve files; and Inquest Deposition Files, relating to drownings in the Yarra. In addition, PROV holds voluminous records of government buildings, schools, bridges and other structures that relate to the river.*

DELWP. Studley Park Rs file.

DELWP. Yarra Bend Park, Rs file.

DELWP. Yarra Park Rs file.

DELWP. Reserve files – check parish plans for g of available files – Warburton, Heidelberg, Kew, etc.

Inquest Deposition Files, VPRS 24, PROV.

Crown Land Occupation Files, PROV.

Melbourne Harbour Trust Commissioners. VPRS 8361, PROV

MMBW Historical Records Collection, VPRS 8609, PROV.

Yarra River Improvement Trust. VPRS 11350, PROV.

### Acts of Parliament

The Yarra River Protection (*Wilip-gin Birrarung murrn*) Act 2017

Heritage Rivers Act 1992

### Archival sources (other)

*The range of archival sources with relevance to the Yarra River is extensive. Some examples are given below.*

Album of Victorian Views (includes Kruger photos), SLV, c.1880-1885

An Album of Views of Victoria. MS xxx, SLV.

Grimwade, Russell. Papers, University of Melbourne Archives.

Selby, Isaac. Papers, RHSV.

Commercial Travellers Association, Melbourne University Archives.

Reminiscence of a visit to Victoria, Australia, August 1889 Part II. John Steel 1870?-1896, photographer.

### Newspapers and periodicals

*Newspapers are a wealth of information about all aspects of the river's history and can be easily searched through the Trove collection of digitised newspapers available through the National Library of Australia. Periodicals such as Living City, published by the MMBW, contain articles about the Yarra in history and developments through the 1970s and 1980s.*

*Age.*

*Argus.*

*The Emu.*

*The Gum Tree.*

*Heidelberg Guardian.*

*Living City.*

*Park Watch.*

*Punch* (Melbourne).

*Victorian Agricultural and Horticultural Gazette.*

*Victorian Naturalist.*

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Victorian Places: <http://www.victorianplaces.com.au/>

Walking Melbourne:

<http://www.walkingmelbourne.com/forum/viewtopic.php?f=23&t=7382>

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A Maps

A1 Heritage Overlay and Victorian Heritage Register

Mapping prepared by Melbourne Water

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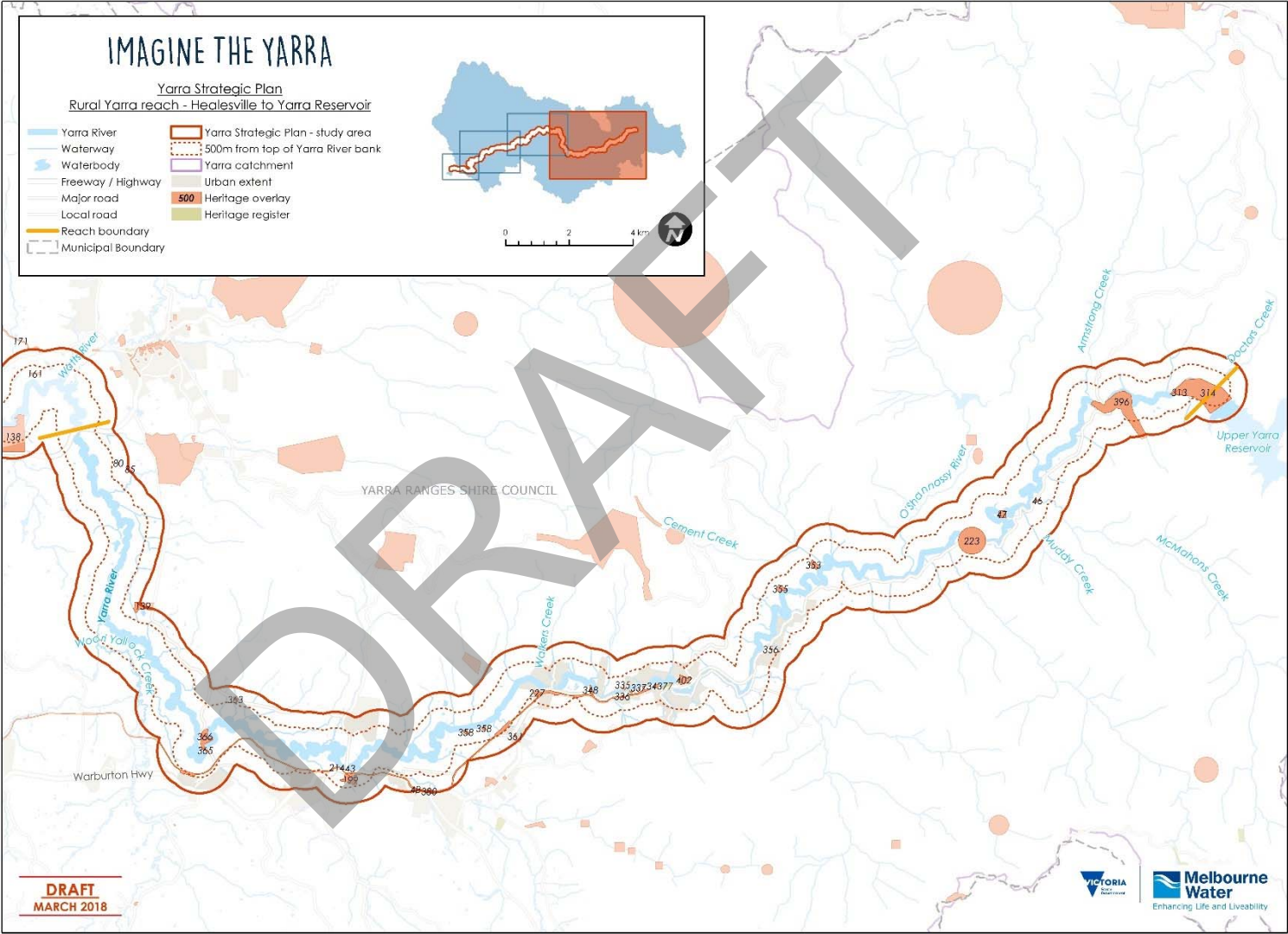










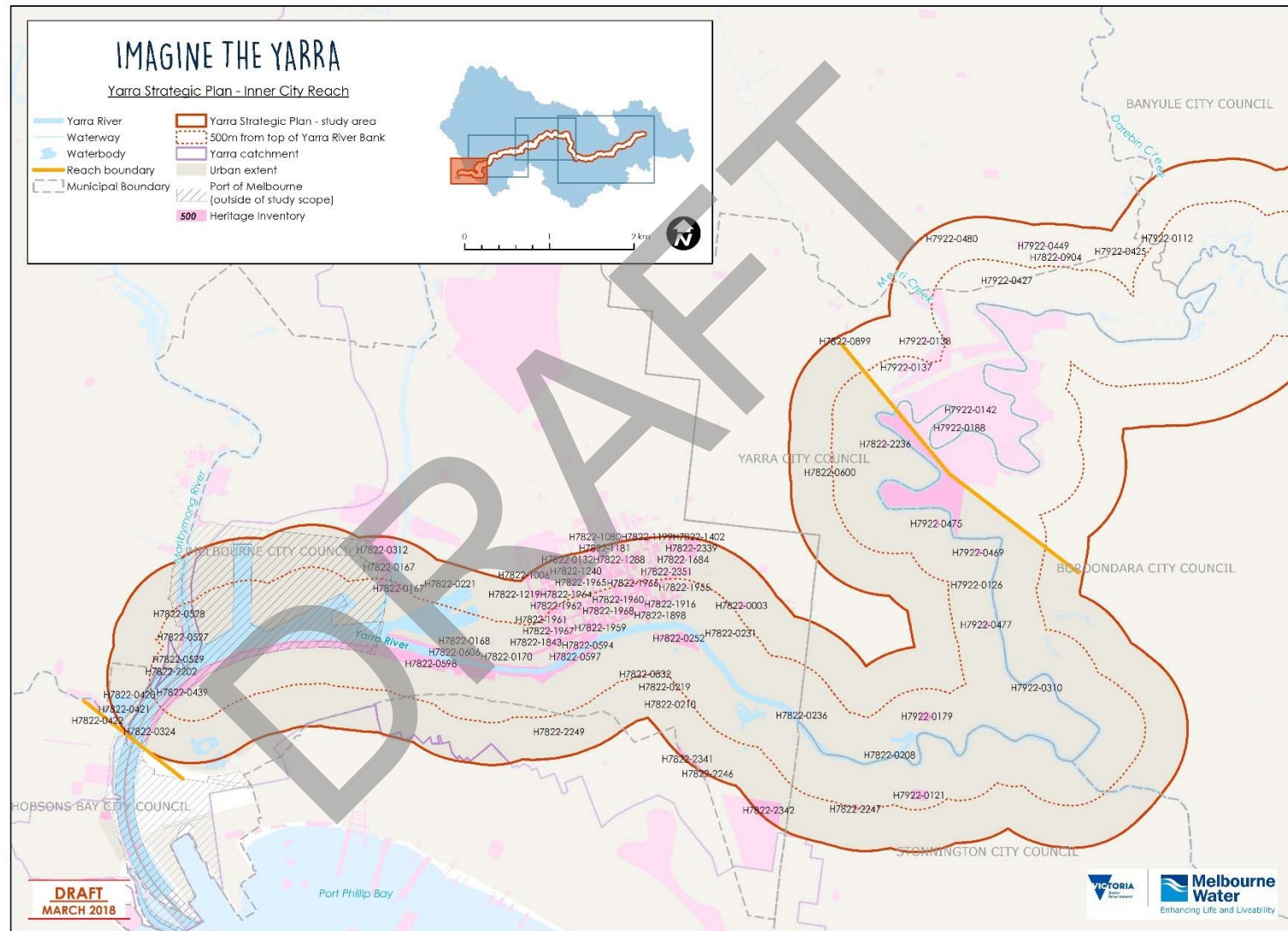


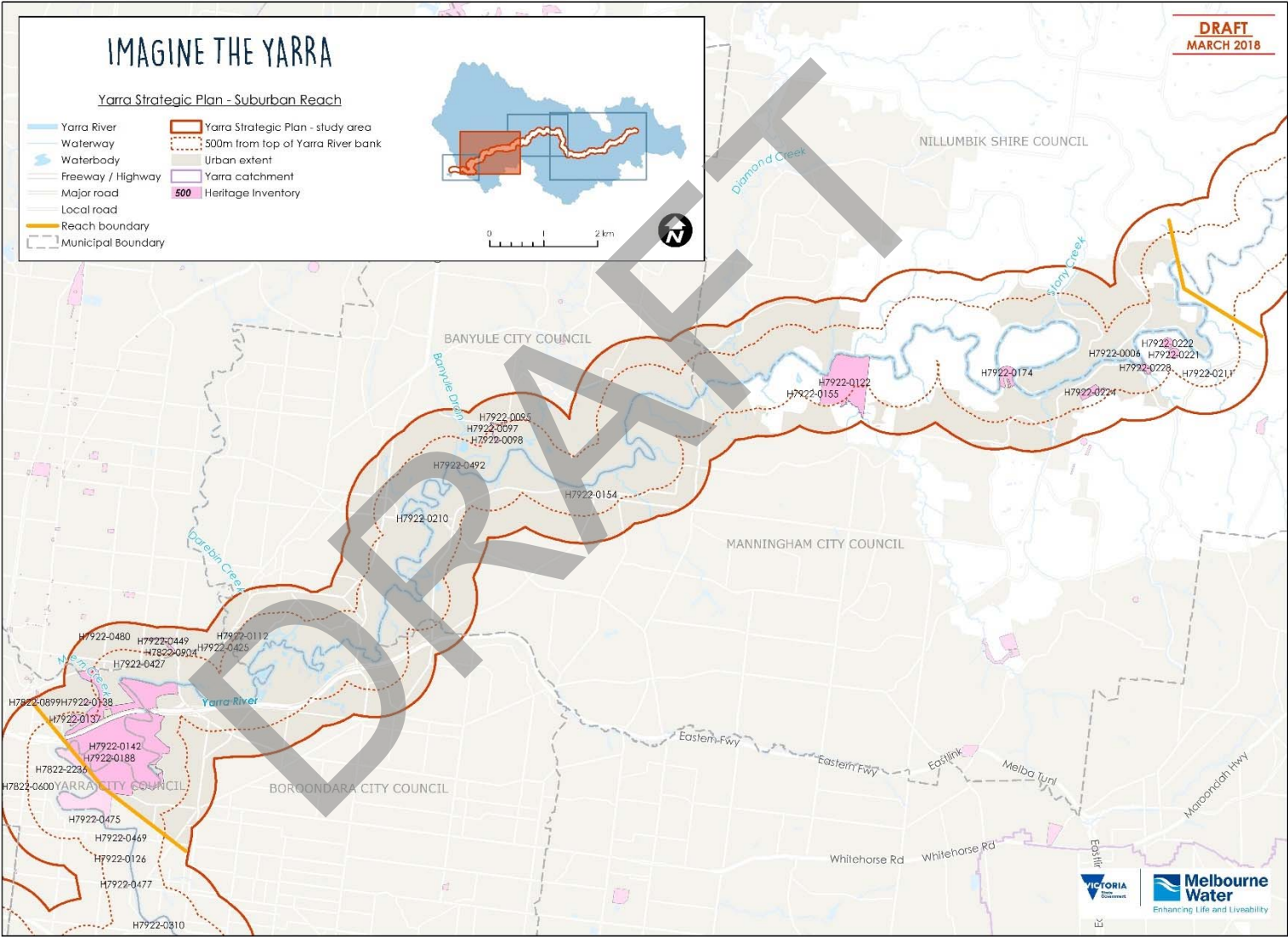
## A2Heritage Inventory

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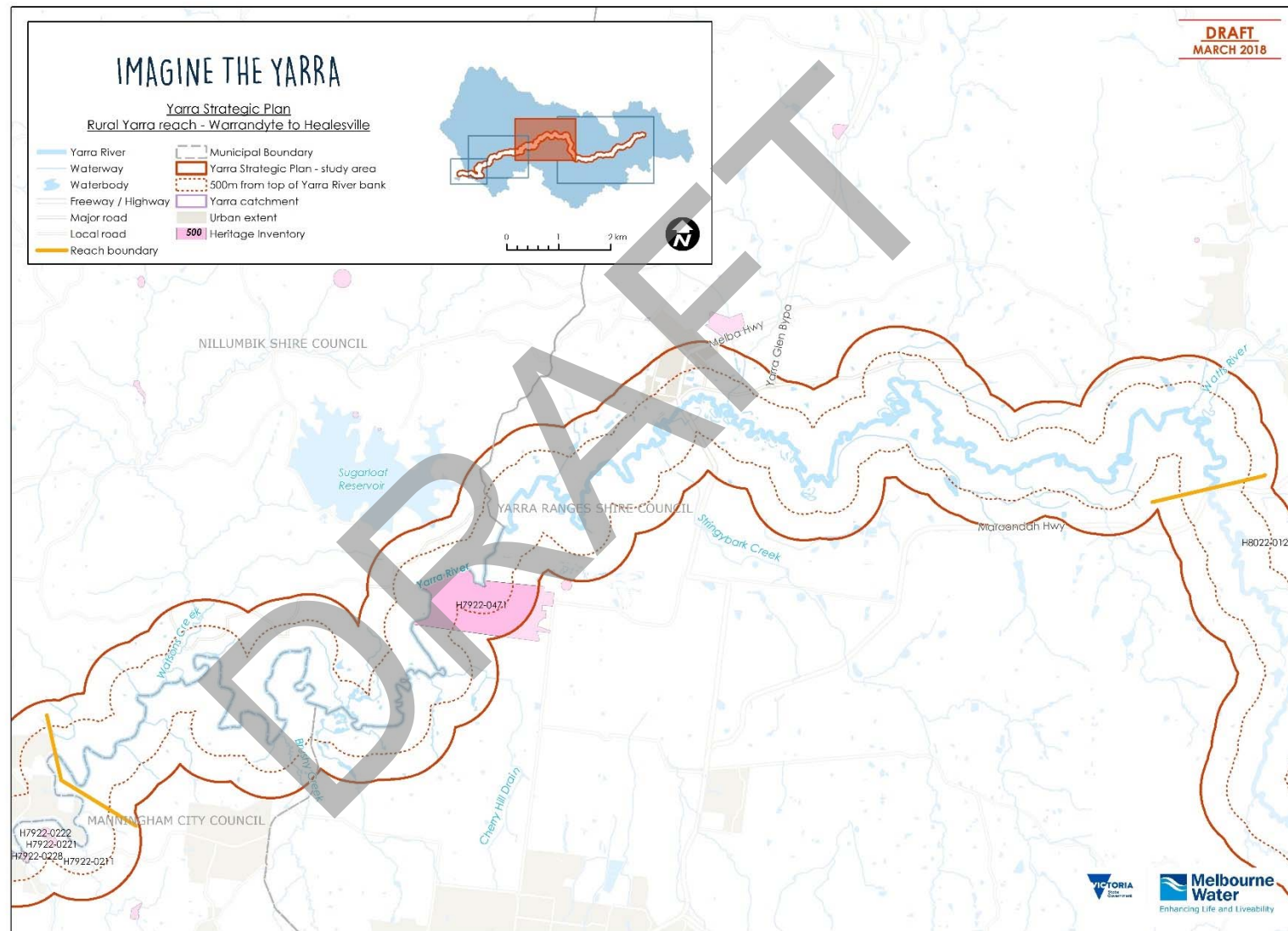


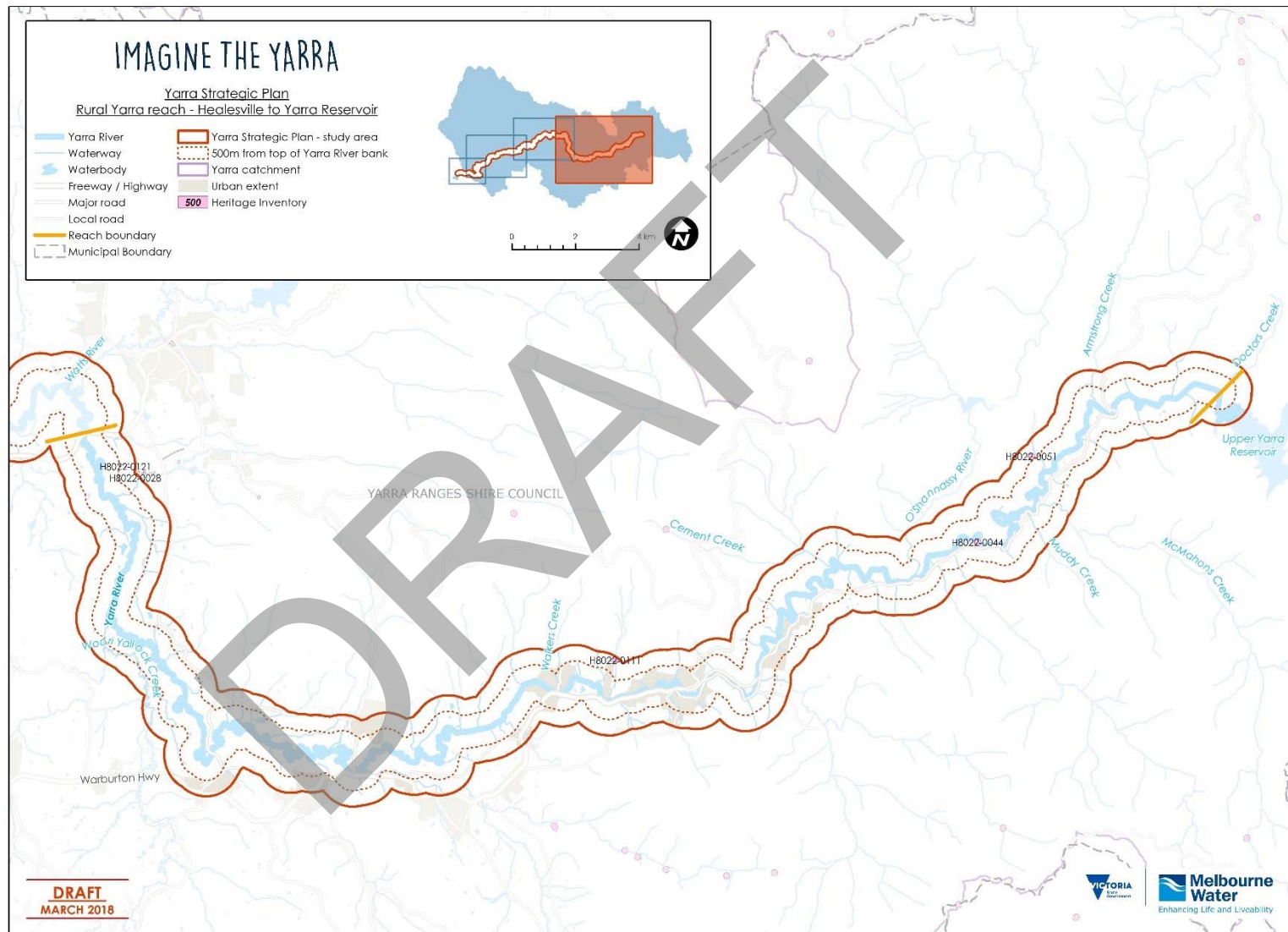






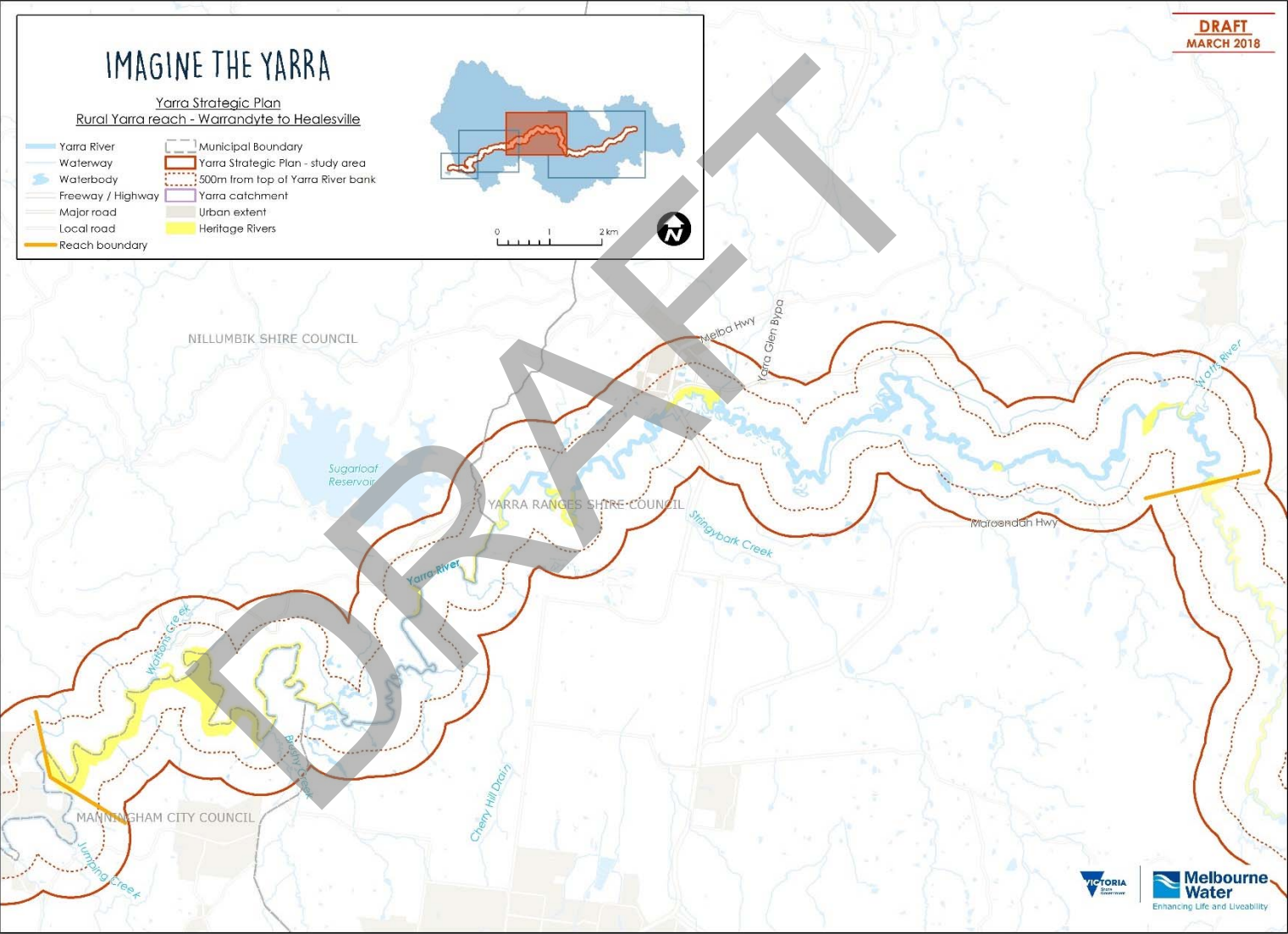






A3Heritage rivers

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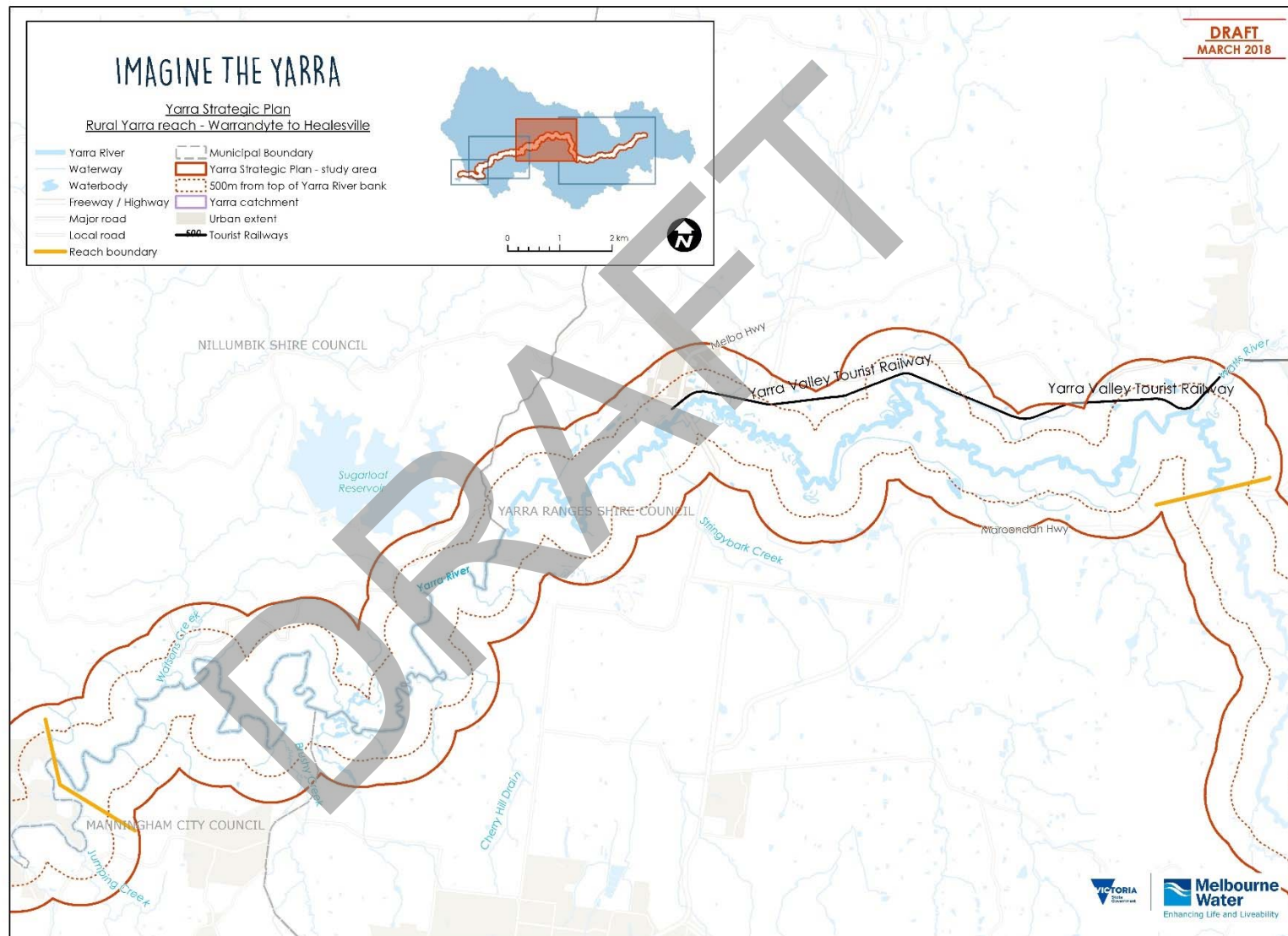






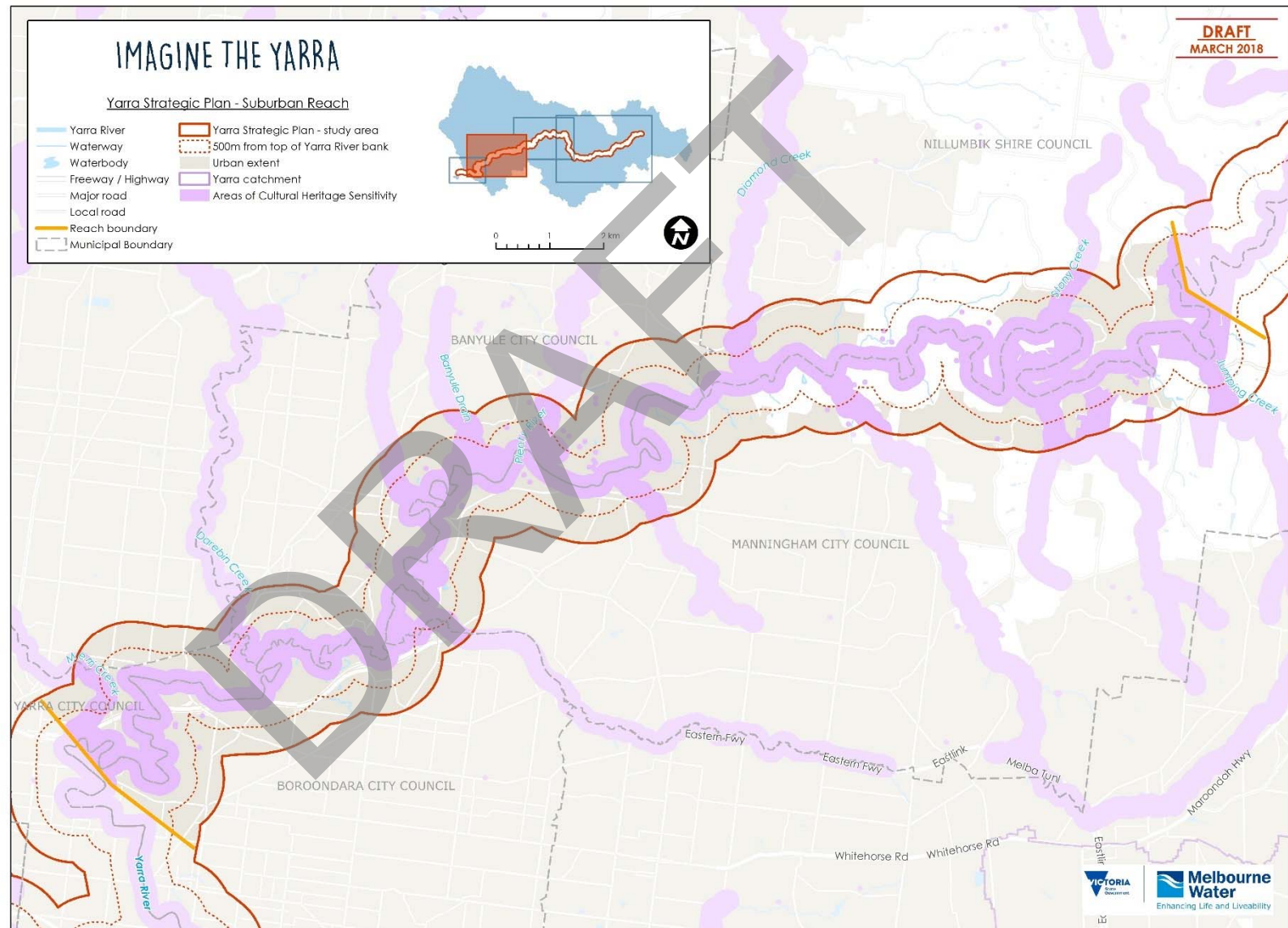
A4 Tourist railway

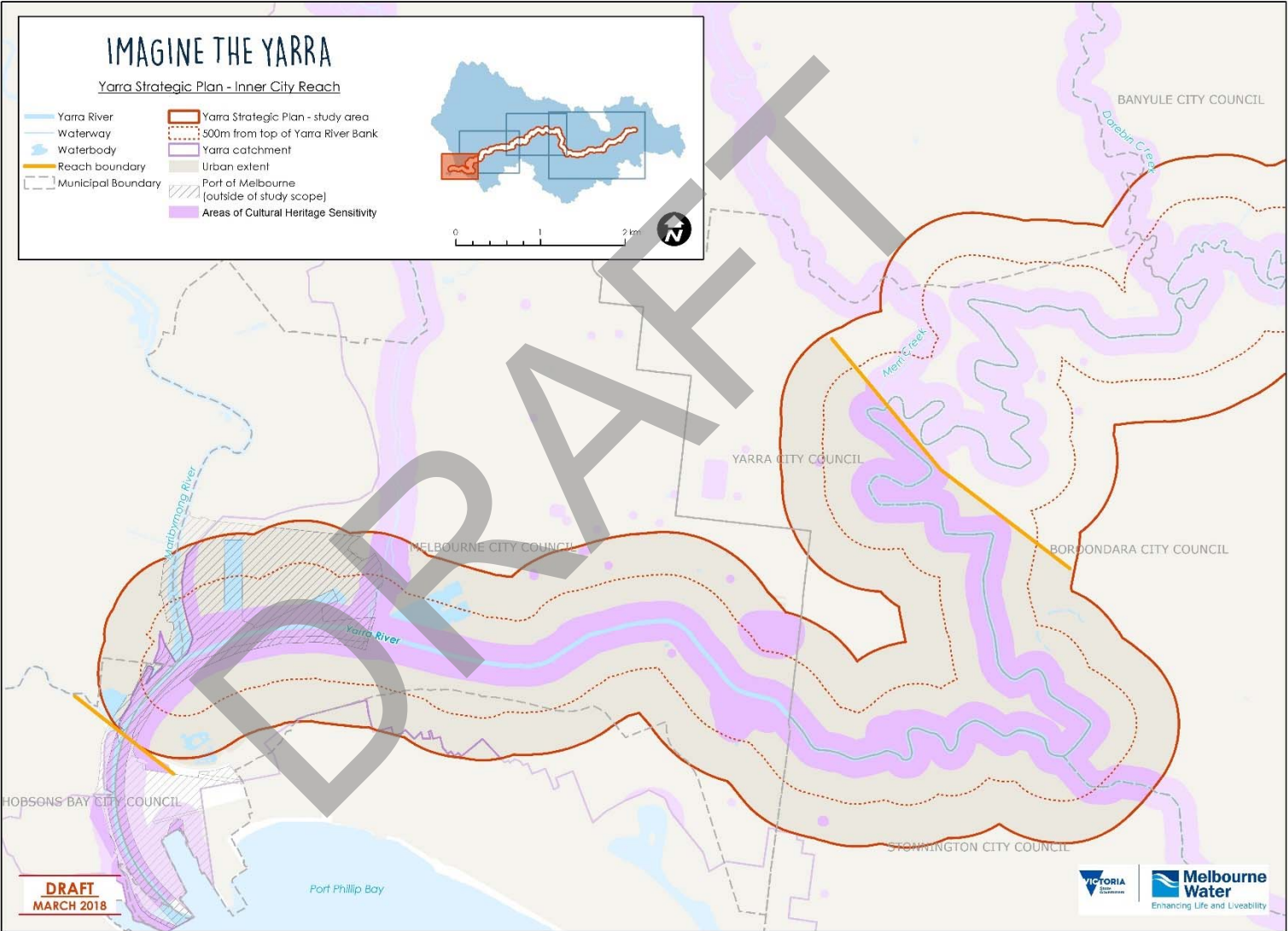
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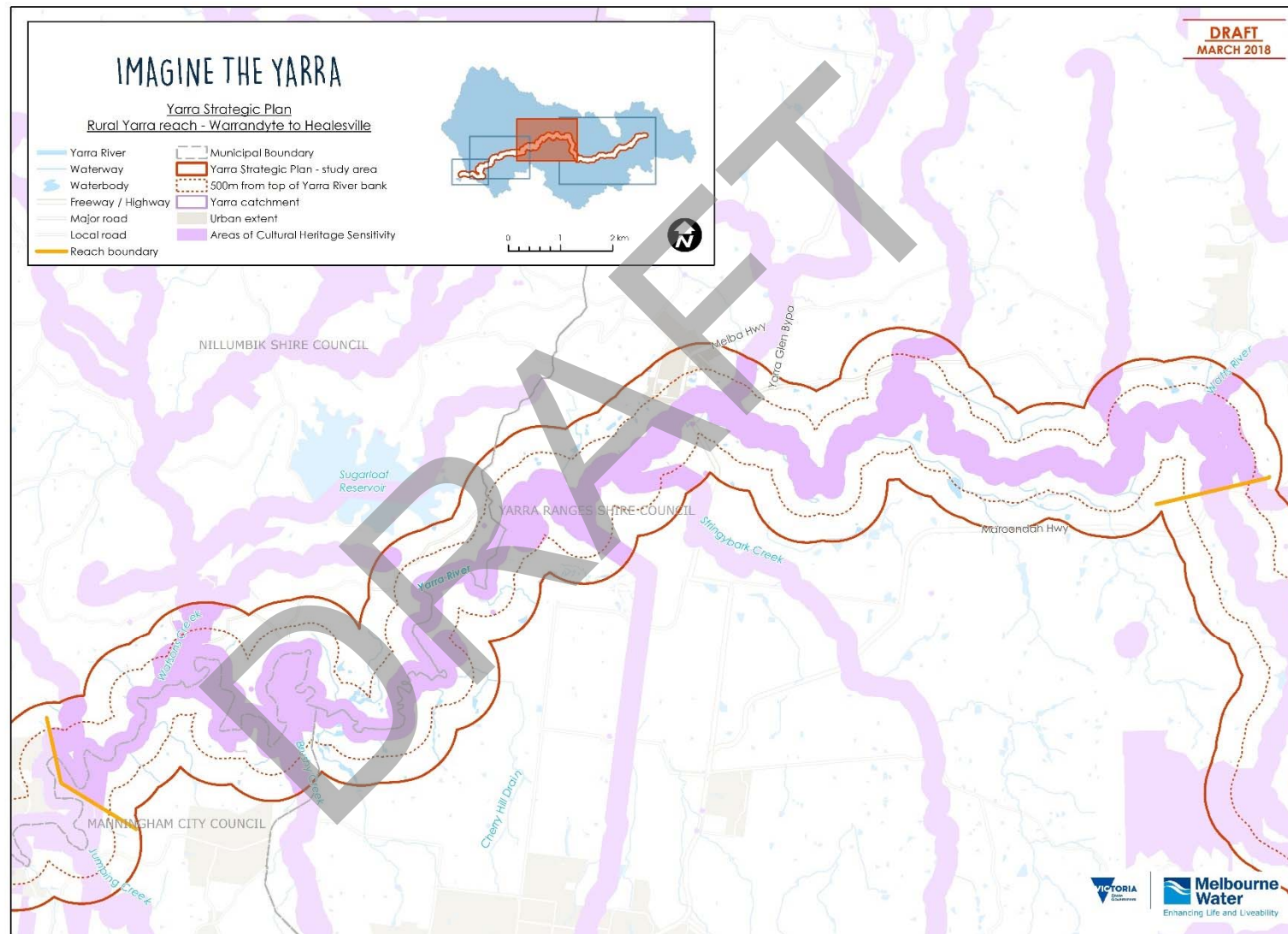
A5 Cultural heritage sensitivity

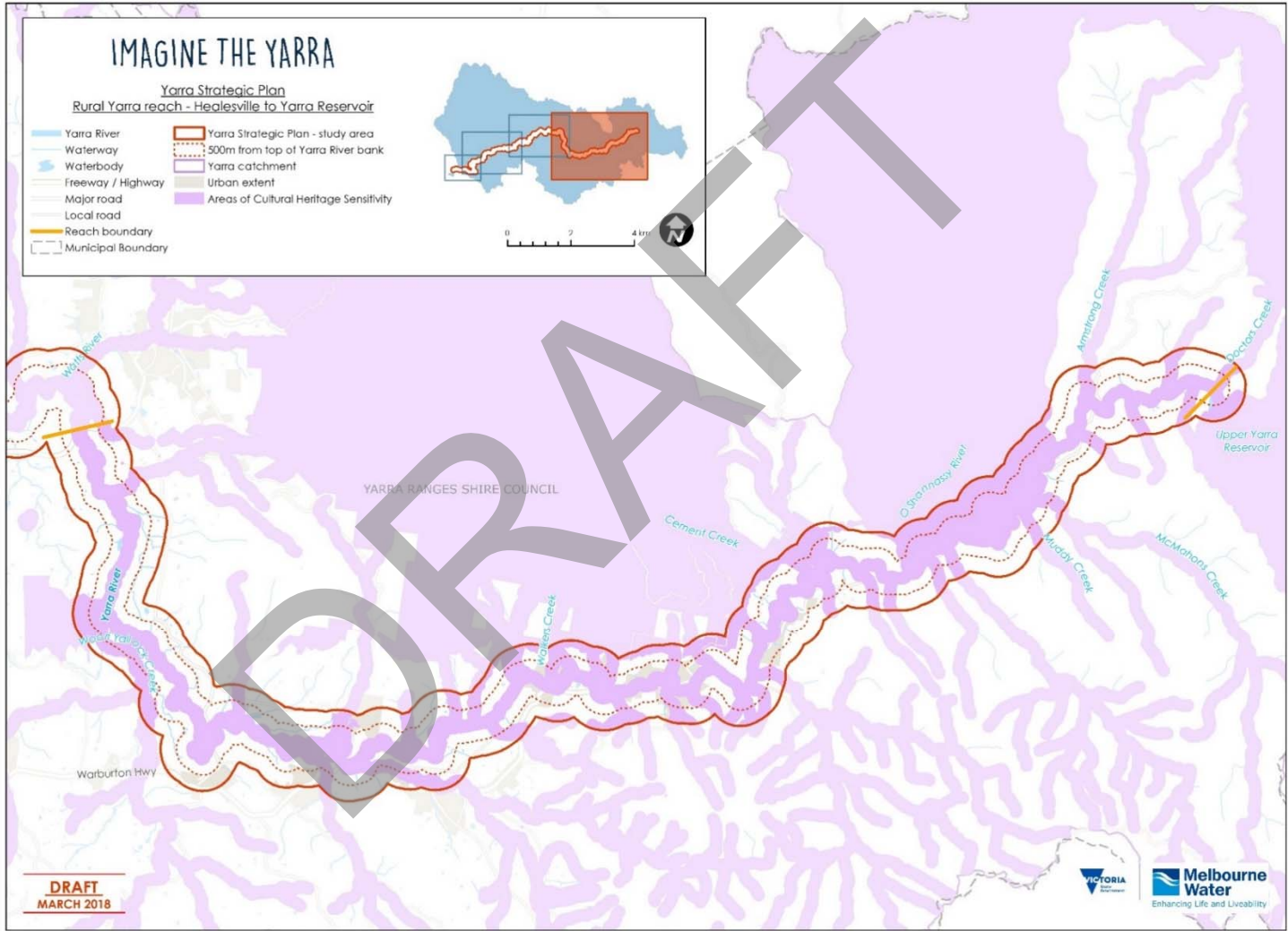
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## Appendix B Heritage studies by municipality

## B1 Banyule

Heritage study	Sites studied	Comment
Austral Heritage Consultant, Aboriginal Heritage Study 1999.	This study documents Banyule's Aboriginal archaeology (the site types and locations) as well as planning issues and recommendations.	Council resolved not to adopt recommendations of this study which related to amendments to the planning scheme but chose to liaise with Department of Infrastructure and AAV to determine the most appropriate way to protect sites of Aboriginal cultural heritage significance in the planning scheme.
Allom Lovell & Associates and John Patrick Pty Ltd, Heritage Places Study, 1999.	Post contact sites	This study comprises volumes 1-5, and includes An Urban History, Building Citations, Landscape Citations, Heritage Areas and Summary of Recommendations & HO Schedule.
Graeme Butler, Heidelberg Conservation Study, prepared for the City of Heidelberg 1985.	Post contact sites	This study identifies 182 heritage places located within the former City of Heidelberg.
Context Pty Ltd, Banyule Heritage Review, 2012	Post contact sites	This study identifies 182 heritage places located within the former City of Heidelberg.
Banyule Heritage Guidelines, 2005	Glenard Estate	The Glenard Estate precinct is in close proximity to the Yarra River, significant for its innovative planning by architect Walter Burley Griffin in 1916.
	Mount Eagle Estate	The Mount Eagle Estate precinct is within the study area and is significant for its association with Walter Burley Griffin, as well as for historic, social and aesthetic reasons.
	Marshall Street/Sherwood Grove/Thoresby Avenue	The Marshall St/Sherwood Gr/Thoresby Ave precinct is within the study area and is significant for its capacity to demonstrate the stylistic characteristics of middle class houses erected predominantly during the first two decades of the twentieth century.
Ellender, I, 'The Plenty Valley Corridor: Archaeological Survey of Aboriginal Sites', prepared for the Ministry for Planning & Environment 1989.	Pre-contact Aboriginal sites	This report studies Aboriginal sites identified within the Plenty Valley corridor and protected under the Archaeological and Aboriginal Relics Preservation Act 1972 (now Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006).

# CULTURAL HERITAGE SCOPING STUDY

Heritage study	Sites studied	Comment
Gasparetto, N & Levi, C, 'Saxam Homestead - Heritage Assessment', prepared for the City of Banyule 2011.	Individual place assessment	
Melbourne Parks and Waterways, 'Lower Plenty River Concept Plan', October 1994.	Concept plans	As a major tributary of the Yarra, the Plenty River retains many elements of Aboriginal cultural significance as well as European historical sites. This plan supported the Melbourne Parks and Waterways Program which was aimed at rejuvenating and improving Melbourne's waterways; it does not identify heritage places but rather proposes strategies and processes for managing the River's assets, features and uses including flora and fauna, cultural and visual features, land use and public utilities etc.
Lower Darebin Creek Concept Plan, March 1995	Concept plans	A coordinated planning and management approach for the Creek, as opposed to the former efforts of the individual councils. Again, this document does not identify heritage places explicitly, but does include a background document identifying 'important resources' of the area
Middle Yarra River Concept Plan, Falls to Burke Road, August 1990	Concept plans	Ten management zones, with recommendations for specific sites within each including rehabilitation and conservation of wetlands and riparian bushland, maintain views to the surrounding landscape, development of the Yarra Boulevard as a scenic roadway.
The Glenard Estate and its Parks, 2008	Management policies	A brochure proposing a management system for Glenard Estate
The Middle Yarra Concept Plan - Burke Road to Watsons Creek, December 1993	Concept plans	This concept plan sets out how this reach of the Yarra should be planned to 'make the most' of its values and potentials.
Michael Smith & Associates and Ian Wight Planning & Heritage Strategies, 'The Mount Eagle Estate Common Parks Conservation Management Plan', prepared for The Griffin Estates Heritage Association and Banyule City Council 2011.	Management policies	

Heritage study	Sites studied	Comment
Weaver, F, Plenty Valley Corridor: The Archaeological Survey of Historic Sites, for the Ministry for Planning & Environment 1989.	Pre-contact Aboriginal sites	
Weaver, F, Lower Plenty River Archaeological Survey prepared for Board of Works 1991.	Pre-contact Aboriginal sites	
Weaver, F, Report as part of the Lower Darebin Creek Concept Plan Banyule, 1991.	Pre-contact Aboriginal sites	



## B2Boroondara

Much of Hawthorn and part of Hawthorn East is within the study area for this project, and the north-western boundaries of Kew and Kew East are formed by the Yarra River. Camberwell, Canterbury and Surrey Hills area outside the study area.

Heritage study	Sites studied	Comment
Lovell Chen, Kew and Hawthorn Further Investigations - Assessment of Specific Sites, prepared for the City of Boroondara 2014.	Post contact sites	41 places were assessed, with half of these recommended in Context's 2010 Hawthorn Precincts Study, and the other half recommended in Lovell Chen's 2010 Assessment of Heritage Precincts in Kew report.
Context, Hawthorn Heritage Precincts Study, prepared for the City of Boroondara 2012.	West Hawthorn Village, Manningtree Road area, Glenferrie Road Commercial Precinct, Wattle Road environs	
Lovell Chen, Kew Junction Commercial Heritage Study, prepared for the City of Boroondara, 2013.	Kew Junction commercial area	
Lovell Chen, Assessment of Heritage Precincts in Kew, prepared for the City of Boroondara, 2013.	9 precincts	
Lovell Chen, Review of B-graded buildings in Kew, Camberwell and Hawthorn, prepared for the City of Boroondara, 2007, Revised 2007 and 2009.	Post contact sites, mainly residential	
Pru Sanderson Design Pty Ltd, City of Kew Urban Conservation Study, commissioned by the Victorian National Estate Committee & the City of Kew, 1988.	Post contact sites	

## B3Manningham

Heritage study	Sites studied	Comment
Context, City of Doncaster and Templestowe Heritage Study, prepared for the City of Doncaster & Templestowe 1991.	Mainly post contact sites, with some identification of remnant vegetation and pre-contact Aboriginal sites	Recommended places are listed by theme in this study. Theme 1.01 relates explicitly to places associated with the Yarra River, though many other recommended places are located within the study area under alternate themes. Approximately 250 places were identified in total.
Peterson, R, Heritage Study Additional Sites Recommendations, prepared for the City of Doncaster & Templestowe 1993.	Post contact sites	Research was undertaken for 26 places in total, with several notable mid-century houses recommended, including Merchant Builders housing and Cocks & Carmichael designs.
Kellaway, C, Doncaster & Templestowe Heritage Study – Additional Historical Research, prepared for the City of Doncaster & Templestowe 1994.	Post contact sites	Additional historical research confirmed and proposed changes in levels of significance, and suggested inspections to confirm these changes. Research was undertaken for 65 places in total.
John Patrick Pty Ltd, 'Heritage Garden & Significant Tree Study – Stage 2 Report Garden and Tree Assessment', prepared for the City of Manningham 2006.	Trees and gardens	This study identified a total of 70 tree citations and 10 garden citations, relating to properties warranting protection in the planning scheme.

## B4 Melbourne

Heritage study	Sites studied	Comment
Lovell Chen, City of Melbourne Heritage Review, prepared for the City of Melbourne 2015.	Heritage policy review Post contact sites	
Goad, P et. Al., City of Melbourne Central Notable Buildings Citations, prepared for the City of Melbourne 1993.	Post and pre-contact sites	The study comprises three components: annotated bibliography of publications on Melbourne's development, an environmental history of Melbourne and an updated Central City Heritage Study including recommended individual places and precincts.
Butler, G, Little Bourke Precinct Study, prepared for the Ministry for Planning & Environment 1989.	Little Bourke Precinct	
Butler, G, Flemington/Kensington Conservation Study, prepared for the City of Melbourne 1985.	Post contact sites	
Butler, G, et. Al., Melbourne Central Activities District Conservation Study, prepared for the City of Melbourne 1985.	Archaeological potential	
Gould, M, East Melbourne & Jolimont Conservation Study, prepared for the City of Melbourne 1985.	Post contact sites	
Butler, G, North & West Melbourne Conservation Study, prepared for the City of Melbourne 1983.	Post contact sites	
Allom Lovell Sanderson, South Melbourne Urban Conservation Study, prepared for the City of South Melbourne 1987.	Post contact sites	

## B5 Nillumbik

The following heritage studies have been completed between 1992 and 2009 but are not available online. A search on the HERMES database returned a total number of 146 places that have been assessed and recommended for inclusion on the Heritage Overlay of the Nillumbik Shire Planning Scheme. More detailed investigation is required to ascertain the relationships between these places and the Yarra River and their associated significance.

Heritage study	Sites studied	Comment
HLCD Pty Ltd, Shire of Nillumbik Heritage Gap Study Framework – a framework for the assessment of places of potential significance in the Shire of Nillumbik, prepared for the Shire of Nillumbik 2009.	Post contact sites	
Butler, Graeme and associates, Heritage Assessments Shire of Nillumbik C13, prepared for the Shire of Nillumbik 2006.	Post contact sites	
Butler, Graeme and associates, Nillumbik Shire Heritage Study Stage 2: Shire of Eltham Heritage Study 1992 Revision, prepared for the Shire of Nillumbik 2001.	Post contact sites	
Butler, Graeme, and associates, Nillumbik Shire Heritage Study Stage 2, Significant Places, prepared for the Shire of Nillumbik 1997.	Post contact sites	
Butler, Graeme and associates, Nillumbik Shire Heritage Study Stage 1, Review, Heritage Survey and Environmental History, 1996.	Post contact sites	
Gould, M, Shire of Whittlesea Heritage Study, prepared for the Shire of Whittlesea 1992.	Post contact sites	
Bick, David, Shire of Eltham Heritage Study, prepared for the Shire of Eltham 1992.	Post contact sites	

## B6Stonnington

Heritage study	Sites studied	Comment
Raworth, B Heritage Overlay Gap Study Final Report, prepared for the City of Stonnington 2009.	Post contact sites	
Raworth, B, Heritage Review Sites for Additional Planning Control Malvern and Prahran, prepared for the City of Stonnington 1996.	Post contact sites	
Nigel Lewis Richard Aitken PL, City of Malvern Heritage Study, prepared for the City of Malvern 1992.	Post contact sites	Most of the places in these documents will be outside of the study area – further investigation needed.
Laceworks Landscape Collaborative, Malvern Urban Character Study, prepared for the City of Malvern 1989.	Post contact sites	
Context, City of Prahran Conservation Review, prepared for the City of Prahran 1993.	Post contact sites	
Lewis, N, Prahran Character and Conservation Study, prepared for the City of Prahran 1992.	Post contact sites	
Curtis, J, Toorak Residential Character Study, prepared for the City of Prahran 1991.	Post contact sites – residential	
Lewis, N, Prahran Conservation Study, prepared for the City of Prahran 1983.	Post contact sites	



## B7Yarra

The following studies have formed the basis of planning scheme amendments which have extended the heritage overlay:

Heritage study	Sites studied	Comment
Context, Heritage Gaps Central Richmond, prepared for the City of Yarra 2014.	Post contact sites	The City of Yarra Heritage Gap Study: Central Richmond identified and assessed places and precincts of heritage significance within central Richmond, defined as the area bounded by Bridge Road, Swan Street, Church Street and the Yarra River. As a result of this study, 11 precincts and 19 individual places were recommended for protection in the Heritage Overlay. In addition, revisions were suggested for place citations and/or mapping of eight individual places and one precinct already on the Heritage Overlay.
Context, Review of 17 Heritage Precincts, prepared for the City of Yarra 2014.	Post contact sites	This study reviewed 17 precincts proposed by the 2009 'City of Yarra Heritage Gap Study: Stage 2', by Graeme Butler and Associates. The precincts were reviewed to ensure the recommendations were consistent with current guidelines and reflect the changes within the municipality since 2009. The outcome of Context's investigations resulted in the refinement or abandonment of a number of proposed precincts. Where appropriate, individually significant places were assessed individually or as serial listings. The outcome was a series of recommendations for heritage protection with a strong and clearly set out strategic basis.
Context, 'Abbotsford & Collingwood Review of Predefined Areas', prepared for the City of Yarra 2015.	Post contact sites	
Butler, G, City of Yarra Heritage Gaps Review 1, prepared for the City of Yarra 2012.	Post contact sites	
Lovell Chen, City of Yarra Heritage Gaps Review 2, prepared for the City of Yarra 2012.	Post contact sites	
Butler, G, City of Yarra Heritage Gaps Stage 1, prepared for the City of Yarra 2009.	Post contact sites	

# CULTURAL HERITAGE SCOPING STUDY

Heritage study	Sites studied	Comment
Butler, G, City of Yarra Heritage Gaps Stage 2, prepared for the City of Yarra 2008.	Post contact sites	
Butler, G, City of Yarra Heritage Review, prepared for the City of Yarra 2007.	Post contact sites	
Butler, G, City of Yarra Heritage Gaps, prepared for the City of Yarra 2004.	Post contact sites	
Allom Lovell, City of Yarra Heritage Review, prepared for the City of Yarra 1998.	Post contact sites	
Ward, A, Collingwood Conservation Study, prepared for the City of Yarra 1995.	Post contact sites	
Allom Lovell, Fitzroy Urban Conservation Study Review, prepared for the City of Fitzroy 1992.	Post contact sites	
Ward, A, Collingwood Conservation Study, prepared for the City of Collingwood 1989.	Post contact sites	
O'Connor, J, Richmond Conservation Study, prepared for the City of Richmond 1985.	Post contact sites	
Butler, G, Northcote Urban Conservation Study, prepared for the City of Northcote 1982.	Post contact sites	
Jacobs Lewis Vines, South Fitzroy Conservation Study, undertaken for the City of Fitzroy 1979.	Post contact sites	
Jacobs Lewis Vines, North Fitzroy Conservation Study, undertaken for the City of Fitzroy 1978.	Post contact sites	

## B8 Yarra Ranges

Heritage study	Sites studied	Comment
Lovell Chen, Yarra Ranges Council Healesville Heritage Project, prepared for Yarra Ranges Council 2013.	Post contact sites	The study area for this report is the Healesville/Chum Creek area. The recommended Healesville Commercial Precinct includes 57 properties, with 7 already individually included in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay. The recommended Symons Street Residential Precinct includes 37 properties, with one already individually included in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay. Out of Stages 2 and 3, 15 properties are recommended for individual Heritage Overlay controls.
Context, Warburton Open Space Facilitation, prepared for the Shire of Yarra Ranges 2004.	Community consultation	Facilitation of a large community meeting to consider open space planning issues along a section of the Yarra River at Warburton.
Context, Shire of Yarra Ranges Heritage Study Stage 3, prepared for the Shire of Yarra Ranges 2005.	Post contact sites	Review of the recommendations arising from the Independent Panel Report on the Yarra Ranges Heritage Study Amendment C16 (Part 2). This review focussed on identification of heritage places requiring additional research to resolve their status, and undertaking that research as required. The study also included research places in the Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme Heritage Overlay (HO) which had limited or no documentation.
Context, Shire of Yarra Ranges Heritage Study Stage 2, prepared for the Shire of Yarra Ranges 2000.	Post contact sites	Stage 2 of the Yarra Ranges Heritage Study included detailed field investigation, research and assessment of the heritage significance of a wide range of historic places throughout the Shire.
Context, Shire of Yarra Ranges Heritage Study Stage 1, prepared for the Shire of Yarra Ranges 1999.	Post contact sites	The rich and diverse heritage of the Yarra Ranges Shire was revealed through Context's consultative approach to this study. Community workshops, advertisements and a competition revealed a wealth of knowledge about local heritage. Careful analysis by themes and further consultation helped set priorities for Stage 2.

## Appendix C Aboriginal Archaeological Sites

### Overview

The following discussion is based on information extracted from a search of the ACHRIS database covering a 2km wide study corridor centred on the Yarra River from the Port Phillip Bay to the Upper Yarra Dam.

The search revealed a total of 179 recorded Aboriginal archaeological and cultural sites along the Yarra River. This total was dominated by scarred trees (80) and artefact scatters sites (64) with a range of Low Density Artefact Distributions (LDADs) (27) also contributing to the total. Smaller numbers of other sites such as earth mounds (3), Aboriginal historic places (2), a cemetery (1), a burial (1) and a conflict site (1) have also been included in the database.

A key observation about the search results is the general distribution of recorded sites which are heavily concentrated at the suburban, western end of the catchment, with fewer sites recorded in the upper catchment towards the east. This distribution is most likely to be due to the frequency of archaeological assessment projects rather than a reflection of the use of the landscape by Aboriginal people (see discussion below).

The eastern-most recorded archaeological site occurs at East Warburton; approximately 19km west of the Upper Yarra Reservoir, with the single conflict site noted in close proximity to the Upper Yarra Dam.

The western-most sites occur at South Wharf with all the landforms downstream from there to Port Phillip Bay, having been heavily built out.

Recorded sites show clusters of occurrences around Melbourne CBD, Burnley, Abbotsford, Heidelberg, Rosanna East/Templestowe, Bend of Islands and Yarra Glen, with lower density occurrences in between. In very approximate distance terms along the river the following overall distribution occurs:

South-Wharf to Abbotsford (c15km)—30 sites

Abbotsford to Heidelberg (c15km)—37 sites

Heidelberg to Warrandyte (c21km)—43 sites

Warrandyte to Yarra Glen (c31km)—30 sites

Yarra Glen to Warburton (c44km)—19 sites

Warburton to Upper Yarra Reservoir (c28km)—1 site

There is a clear reduction in density upstream from Warrandyte with a cluster of recorded sites at Bend of Islands and another at Yarra Glen; the remainder of the distribution comprises sporadic occurrences and diminishes towards the east.

### Why this distribution?

The lower number of recorded sites towards the upper end of the catchment is unlikely to be a reflection of the Aboriginal use of the landscape, and is more likely to be an artefact of the data collection methods.

Many of the records for sites in the upper end of the catchment contain data transferred from the former Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Information System (VAHIS) into the current ACHRIS system. Many of these records retain the older, hard-copy site cards recorded from the 1980s and 1990s—indicating that there has been little archaeological survey in the upper catchment for some time. This is likely to be due to the key drivers for archaeological surveys, commercial and infrastructure development, being largely absent from the upper catchment.

The greater density of recorded sites in the urban and suburban areas is mainly a reflection of the development-driven nature of archaeological assessment and the preparation of Cultural

Heritage Management Plans (CHMPs). It is not necessarily a reflection of there being more sites, but an indication of the frequency of assessment.

Of note in ACHRIS is the inclusion of the sensitivity zoning along all of the Yarra River. This zoning is approximately 200m wide on either side of the waterway and is earmarked by Aboriginal Victoria as being sensitive for cultural and archaeological sites. A reasonable number of sites within the 2km wide study area fall outside of that zone of sensitivity indicating that the zoning is a broad management tool, and is not a clear reflection of the actual potential sensitivity along the study area.

### Scarred trees

Scarred trees, being the highest occurrence of cultural sites recorded along the Yarra River, have been identified generally in groups and currently remain mostly in open parkland and golf courses. Notable locations where scarred trees exist include the park adjacent to the MCG (3 trees), Burnley golf course, Studley Park, Kew Gardens (5 trees), Rosanna Golf Club and Plenty Creek (26 trees), Tikalara Park (6 trees), Laughing waters swimming hole (4 trees) and Yarra Glen (4 trees).

The most substantial grouping here are the 21 scarred trees in the vicinity of the Rosanna Golf Club at the confluence of the Plenty River, along with the Yarra Valley Parklands and along the south-west fringe of the adjacent suburb to east. This is a large and significant grouping within an area of approximately 2km diameter. Adding to this group are another five scarred trees and artefacts scatters further upstream, up Plenty Creek within another 1km.

While there are other clusters of scarred trees and artefact sites along the Yarra, this particular concentration at Rosanna Golf Club and Plenty Creek, along with the associated artefact scatters at Lower Plenty and also across the river at the northern end of Templestowe, suggest a concentrated zone of Aboriginal cultural activity and occupation.

No scarred trees have been recorded on ACHRIS in the Botanic Gardens.

### Site clusters

Sites close to the CBD include five artefact scatters, four scarred trees and nine low-density artefact distributions (LDADs). While the scar trees all have parkland settings (one in Carlton Gardens and three in the park near the MCG as noted above) the artefact sites are more associated with urban development sites such as the residential tower in Alston Lane/Little Lonsdale Street, the Union Tower in Little Lonsdale Street and the David Jones redevelopment site in Little Bourke Street. These sites mainly indicate that Aboriginal archaeological sites have the potential to survive in the CBD despite the intense levels of development.

The Burnley area around the golf course and the University of Melbourne campus, Burnley Park and Fairview Park (across the river) is home to five of the scarred trees as noted above. The absence of any recorded artefacts sites in this area is most likely a reflection of the absence of archaeological assessment rather than an absence of sites. It is highly likely that the peninsula of land in this bend in the river would have been a well-used resource zone.

A cluster of sites have been recorded around Abbotsford – within an area 1.5km in diameter – mainly centred on Yarra Bend Park, Dights Falls and Studley Park. These sites include includes six artefact scatters, three scarred trees and two historic places. The Dights Falls area (including the broader confluence of the Yarra River and Merri Creek) is noted as being a significant location for pre-contact and post-contact ceremonies, gatherings, burials and for providing natural resources. Its historical associations are with the mid-nineteenth century Merri Creek Aboriginal School Reserve site and the site of the former Yarra River Aboriginal Protectorate.

A substantial clustering of sites is located around the Heidelberg area. While sites occur on both the east and west reaches of the Yarra either side of Heidelberg, the main clustering is on the eastern side—as outlined above in the discussion about the scarred trees and artefact sites around the Rosanna Golf Club. There is a lower density distribution of sites intermittently



from Ivanhoe East/ Kew North through to Heidelberg, continuing (in a straight line) for 6 km to Lower Plenty. This scattering of recorded sites continues to comprise scarred trees and artefact scatters.

The Warrandyte area has recorded sites mainly within a distance of approximately 6km to the west in a moderate to low density. These sites also comprise mainly artefact scatters and scarred trees. Many of the sites in the vicinity of Laughing Waters Swimming hole are records transferred from VAHIS and contain little transcribed data. A key concentration of the recorded sites in this area is on Mullum Mullum Creek where there is a scattering of 6 scar trees and a low-density artefact distribution containing approximately 25 identified artefacts over an area of c500m. The density and number of sites further up the Mullum Mullum Creek indicates a high level of use of this creek corridor suggesting that it had a high level of resources or was a key landscape link between catchments.

Diamond Creek, nearby to Mullum Mullum Creek also demonstrates similar key components of cultural occupation with two scar trees and three artefacts scatters – recorded in Falkner Reserve. This set of records contains little information as they are older VAHIS records with minimal data transcription.

The area around Bend of Islands, including the confluence of the Yarra River with Oxley Creek, has a group of ten small artefact scatters, five of which are in close proximity suggesting a concentration of activity at the confluence of the watercourses—a likely correlation with a range of aquatic resources. Notable is the relative absence of scarred trees but the presence of three earth mounds. While these mounds are not interpreted in the site cards—they are only recorded as ‘mounds’—typically they might be expected to be ovens or associated with shell midden accumulation or burials.

Another distinctive clustering of sites is around the Yarra Glen area where there are five artefact scatters and four scarred trees. Once again, the data for the five artefact scatters is cursory at best with each site card registering only an estimate of artefact numbers ranging from 10 to 100 artefacts. Regardless of the vagaries of the site data, these records again indicate a concentration of activity—either for assessments or for Aboriginal occupation.

A burial site is noted in the ACHRIS records. This record is actually for the Coranderrk Cemetery and is noted as being a historic place where Aboriginal people have been interred in the past and is separately noted in records as having ancestral remains as well. However, the records relating to these burials and ancestral remains are closed to public access and therefore no further information is available. A similar level of cultural sensitivity has been afforded to a record for Coranderrk Station indicating that this area has significance to the Aboriginal community and will warrant close consultation if further information about this area is required.

The conflict site is noted as being the “Upper Yarra Skirmish” although no detail is provided in the description of this beyond it being a historical event.

### Summary

The range of data indicates that the Yarra River was a well occupied zone with a notable number of recorded occurrences of evidence for Aboriginal occupation including artefact scatters and scarred trees. The prevalence of sites is most likely related to the mechanics of undertaking assessment for development within the urban and suburban areas and is unlikely reflect the actual land usage. It is probable that further in-depth assessment and analysis of landforms in the upper catchment will still reveal an intensive use of the Yarra River corridor along its length.

### Gaps

Key gaps in our understanding of the Aboriginal cultural heritage of the Yarra River catchment are mainly around the need for further detailed review of the background reporting on these sites—site cards, CHMP reports and further records digging for those sites not adequately recorded due to VAHIS data transfer. A more in-depth review will allow some refinement of

the general statements made above and could be tied to other ethnographic and anthropological data for a refined picture.

Another notable gap from our understanding of the Aboriginal cultural heritage of the Yarra River catchment is an assessment of the cultural values of the study area by the Aboriginal community. The Traditional Owners of the Yarra River catchment have the cultural knowledge to provide a deeper understanding of the intangible cultural values of the area including how people viewed and used the landscape, spiritual links and mythologies. Consultation with the Aboriginal community on the cultural values of the study area would provide a more complete picture of the Aboriginal heritage values.

DRAFT

## Appendix D Cultural heritage practitioner's workshop

A workshop for heritage practitioners from partner organisations and representatives from community heritage groups was held on 6 August, 2018, at the Royal Historical Society of Victoria.

### **Purpose & outcomes**

The purpose of the workshop was to provide information on the cultural heritage component of the Yarra Strategic Plan undertaken to date, and to gather information about the cultural heritage of the Yarra.

The information gathered at the workshop will assist Melbourne Water in the preparation of the Yarra Strategic Plan. Cultural heritage is one of several areas of strong community interest in developing the 50-year vision for the Yarra.

The desired outcomes of the workshop were:

- To share Context's work to date on the cultural heritage of the Yarra.
- To update our understanding of cultural heritage in the study area.
- To understand future work and resources that are needed to conserve and manage the heritage values of the Yarra.
- To explore the opportunities that a regional scale study would present.

### **Invitations & attendances**

Invitations were sent to:

Cultural heritage officers from the 8 municipalities: Banyule, Boroondara, Manningham, Melbourne, Nillumbik, Stonnington, Yarra, Yarra Ranges,

National Trust of Australia (Victoria)

Heritage Victoria

Parks Victoria

Other Yarra Strategic Plan partner agencies: VicRoads, Victorian Planning Authority, DEDJTR, Port Phillip & Westernport CMA

Wurundjeri Tribe Council

Melbourne Water heritage & regional services teams

Selected historical societies (Heidelberg, Kew & Geoff Lacy, author)

There was a total of 20 attendees (list attached). There was a good representation of organisations from across the length of the study area, State Government and community historical society representation.

### **Agenda**

#### ***Setting the scene***

The workshop commenced with presentations on the project background and work to date. This included Melbourne Water providing an overview of the Yarra Strategic Plan project and the role of cultural & heritage values, and Context presenting the draft framework of historical themes, key sites of significance in each reach and the level of knowledge and protection of heritage places through local studies and planning schemes.

#### ***Where to for the cultural heritage of the Birrarung?***

Small group discussion was focussed on four topics, with questions and prompts as follows :

#### **Topic 1 - Knowing our heritage and culture**

- Is there an environmental history for your municipality?
- Are there heritage studies that cover the study area of the Yarra Strategic Plan?
- Are you aware of particular gaps in heritage study coverage for the study area?
- Does your organisation engage with Traditional Owners about cultural heritage?
- Are Council owned heritage assets within the study area documented?
- Are there plans to address any gaps in information?
- What do you think are the most significant sites in your area that reflect the river's history?

### **Topic 2 – Protecting our heritage and culture**

- Are documented heritage places in the study area protected in the planning scheme?
- Do protected places have a statement of their heritage values?
- Does Council have a heritage policy and is it effective in managing heritage values?
- Does Council have any heritage guidelines or other strategies to manage cultural heritage within the study area?
- Are Council's heritage responsibilities co-ordinated with other areas such as asset management, environment, etc.?
- Are there any plans to address gaps in protection or management?

### **Topic 3 – Collaborating and supporting heritage and culture**

- Does your organisation have access to specialist cultural heritage advice and assistance?
- Does your organisation have a reconciliation plan or other strategy that addresses Aboriginal cultural heritage?
- Is your organisation aware of programs that can provide assistance for cultural heritage?
- Does your organisation support any heritage-related organisations such as historical societies, community heritage or environment groups with an interest in the Yarra River?
- Has your organisation undertaken any collaborative cultural heritage projects with other organisations within the Yarra study area?
- What do you think your organisation could do to improve their support for heritage culture?

### **Topic 4 - Appreciating and promoting heritage and culture**

- Is information on cultural heritage held by your organisation accessible to the public?
- Are there any programs within your organisation for the communication or interpretation of the cultural heritage of the Yarra?
- Does your organisation hold events that promote or celebrate the cultural heritage of the Yarra?
- Does your organisation have any publications or resources that promote the history of the Yarra?
- What do you think your organisation could do in the future to assist in the promotion of heritage culture?

Key observations and points from discussions were shared with the group at the conclusion of this session.

#### Attendees

Organisation	Representative
City of Banyule	Nicola Rooks
City of Boroondara	Nick Brennan
City of Melbourne	Ros Rymer
City of Melbourne	Tanya Wolkenberg
City of Stonnington	Alison Blacket
City of Yarra	Richa Swarup
Shire of Yarra Ranges	Gaby Haynes
Heritage Victoria	Jason Close
Melbourne Water	Penelope Spry
Melbourne Water	Paul Balassone
Melbourne Water	David Voce
National Trust	Jessica Hood
Parks Vic	Catherine Bessant
Victorian Planning Authority	Pamela Neivandt
Heidelberg Historical Society	Janine Rizzetti
Heidelberg Historical Society	Jenn Burgess
Kew Historical Society	Judith Scurfield
Kew Historical Society (& State Library Victoria)	Sarah Ryan
RHSV	Ian Wight
Author (Still Glides the Stream)	Geoff Lacey

#### Melbourne Water & Context

Melbourne Water	Helen Knight
Melbourne Water	Karla Vaughan
Melbourne Water	Sasha Johnson
Melbourne Water	Philippa Day
Context	Louise Honman
Context	Helen Doyle
Context	Jess Antolino