

# Charting the Yarra

**A REVIEW OF 40 YEARS OF REPORTS AND PLANS FOR  
THE YARRA RIVER CORRIDOR**



ABOUT THE YARRA RIVERKEEPER ASSOCIATION

The Yarra Riverkeeper Association is the voice of the river. Over the past 10 years we have established ourselves as the credible community advocate for the Yarra. We tell the river’s story, highlighting its wonders and its challenges. We monitor its health and activities affecting it. We run educational events and river tours, and give informative presentations to schools, community groups, the authorities and businesses. We work closely with numerous government bodies and NGOs and advocate directly and through the news media for river care.



You can join the Yarra Riverkeeper Association at [yarrariver.org.au](http://yarrariver.org.au)

For links to the reports (and other relevant reports) referred to in *Charting the Yarra* that are available online, visit our websites. [actfortheyarra.org.au](http://actfortheyarra.org.au) and [yarrariver.org.au](http://yarrariver.org.au).

ABOUT ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AUSTRALIA

Environmental Justice Australia is the environment’s legal team. We use the law to protect our environment, and we work to change our laws to make sure they protect the right of all Australians to clean air, clean water and healthy ecosystems. [envirojustice.org](http://envirojustice.org).



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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All photographs by Andrew Kelly, except for p. 4 Ursula Chandler and p. 34 Ian Penrose, or as otherwise acknowledged in the caption.

FRONT COVER:

Melbourne and the Yarra had come a long way when this isometric drawing was made in 1866. And together the city and its river have come a lot further since. To view the drawing online — and zoom into see the extraordinary detail — go to [www.yarrariver.org.au/1866Melbourne](http://www.yarrariver.org.au/1866Melbourne). *Courtesy: State Library of Victoria*

BACK COVER:

The Yarra River at Richmond with Herring Island, 1933, taken by Airspy. The island and riverbank has been transformed by indigenous planting — and the addition of a freeway along the north bank of the river. If you stand in the middle of Herring Island, you could be deep in the bush — apart from the hum of the freeway in the background. *Courtesy: State Library of Victoria*

The Yarra River — Melbourne’s greatest natural asset — suffers from fragmented management and from inconsistent planning.

Our river is under intense and increasing pressure from population growth. The green and natural river corridor is squeezed and invaded.

We need to give the river strong and coordinated management from the mountains to the bay.

ANDREW KELLY, YARRA RIVERKEEPER

CONTENTS

Three key points from this review	3	Yarra Act and trust	30
Introduction	4	Planning above Warrandyte:	
Scope	7	Green Wedges above Warrandyte	32
Planning – the Melbourne context	8	Planning below the city: the port	32
Planning – the river corridor	10	Conclusion	35
Current development pressures		References	36
in the Yarra corridor	22		





The traffic shuttles across the Johnston Street Bridge between Abbotsford and Kew. Beneath the bridge, there is this surprisingly still and beautiful green space — the river's corridor.

## THREE KEY POINTS FROM THIS REVIEW

In this review, over 40 years of reports on the Yarra corridor have been analyzed and, while many good reports have been written and many good recommendations made, many of those recommendations have not been implemented, to the river's and Melbourne's detriment. Three key issues facing the river have surfaced in this review.

### 1. Fragmentation

The management of the Yarra is fragmented. Management and planning responsibility is fragmented by division into local council areas, and the borders of council areas often fall on the waterway itself. Without clear authority on both banks, councils are hesitant to manage for the river itself. Often the development that most effects the appreciation of the river from one bank is what exists on the other bank. Functional responsibilities are fragmented, which makes effective and concerted action difficult. Divided responsibilities lead to an enervation of decision making as authorities narrowly define their responsibilities.

### 2. Inconsistencies

The fragmentation leads different authorities to make different decisions along the River. Planning on one side of the river does not reflect planning decisions on the other side, and decisions upstream do not reflect those being made downstream.

### 3. Continuity

The river has suffered from a lack of continuity in decision making. Good reports are written, good recommendations are made, but a change in government emphasis or a change in government means these recommendations are often never implemented.





Andrew Kelly, the Yarra Riverkeeper. Andrew patrols the river in the Yarra Riverkeeper Association's boat, taking all sorts of people who study, or are concerned about, the river on trips that help give them a unique insight into the river and the challenges it faces. The Association is the credible and authoritative voice for the River. Founded in 2005, it is an independent community of citizen-advocates that works solely in the interest of the river.

## INTRODUCTION

Many plans have been written for the Yarra River corridor since the first one almost 50 years ago – *State Planning Policy No. 4 'Yarra River'*, which was published in 1971. Of the many plans produced, those that focus on urban planning are but the smaller part of the many reports on the river and its catchment – from reviews of migratory pathways to biodiversity plans aiming to better connect green spaces on the river's tributaries.

This ongoing, substantial planning effort reflects the passion Melburnians and those living in the Yarra Valley feel for their river. It also reflects the vital role of the river in the founding and growth of the City of Melbourne and the State of Victoria.

This study reviews the urban planning reports that explicitly focus on the river corridor, its parklands, and its naturally vegetated banks. This study finds strikingly common themes in those reports and it provides an overview of the collective effectiveness of those reports.

The planning reports focus on the river's corridor from Princes Bridge upstream to Warrandyte (although one plan did extend as far downstream as Spencer Street Bridge). Above Warrandyte, the planning for the river becomes part of the broader planning for the Green Wedges, and the focus moves away from the river corridor.

Downstream from Princes Bridge (Swanston Street) to Bolte Bridge, the river's banks are no longer a vegetated corridor. Instead, they are an almost entirely built environment. Planning for this river reach is written in the context of other planning documents for the City of Melbourne. And downstream from the Bolte Bridge, the river is predominantly the province of the Port of Melbourne Corporation.

Today, Melbourne and its river are under immense pressure from an exploding population. Melbourne is the fastest growing capital city in Australia – by 2050 the greater Melbourne area is predicted to hold 9 million people. This growth pressure generates plans to grow the inner city, where there is already adequate infrastructure. So the gaps and interstices of the city are being filled in with urban renewal and with 'brownfield' development. Many low-rise, former industrial sites with open areas of habitat – sometimes actual river frontage – are being replaced by high-rise apartments.

A key selling point for developments on the rivers and creeks of inner Melbourne is the natural environment – even when the construction itself reduces the sense of that environment. For example, at 'Sanctuary' a development upstream of the Victoria Street Bridge, on the former Honeywell site, low-rise buildings occupying part of the site have been replaced by 586 apartments in three towers, the tallest of which is 11 storeys high. Almost the entire site is covered in buildings and hard surfaces. Yet Sanctuary's marketing focuses significantly on the riverside setting. The 'Sanctuary' development (Hamton, 2015) is sold under the banners 'Naturally sanctuary', 'absolute Yarra River frontage', 'an exquisite riverland location' and 'a beautiful bushland setting, as well as simply extraordinary views of the river, treetops and city'.

Certainly, many of the apartments must have a delightful outlook, but have they helped degrade what they enjoy? Are they in line with the recommendations of the planning reports for the river corridor?

A key 2005 report, *Review of Policies and Controls for the Yarra River Corridor: Punt Road to Burke Road – Consultant's Report*, was never implemented. Now in 2015, ten years later, the value of that *Review* is being

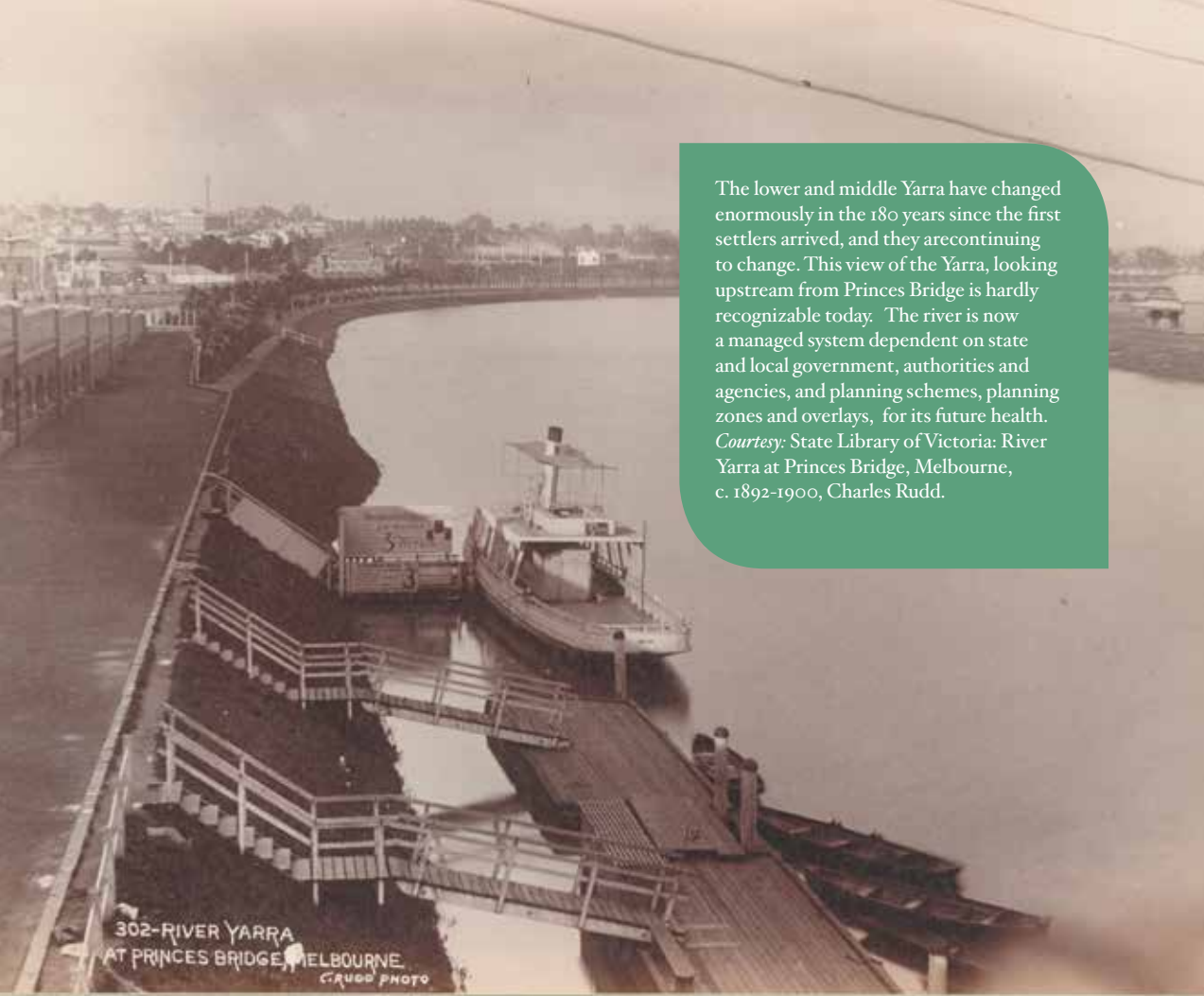
recognised and it is being included as a reference document in the State Planning Policies.

Although many good plans have been written and much effort has been expended on riverside planning, the implementation of the planning has proceeded in fits and starts – with long gaps between reports, and between the initiation of a report and the final launch of the approved report. Also, reports and recommendations have simply become stuck in the planning process, and have never been finalized.

Similarly, much of the planning happens as a form of crisis management in response to a threat to the river corridor. Too much of the planning is reactive instead of proactive. Although there have been many excellent recommendations in reports, many of the recommendations have not been implemented. Yet, the need for stronger planning controls and for coordinated management stand out as consistent and repeated themes over the years and across the reports. And still, there is an ongoing need for coordination: both between the many authorities that govern the river, and along the length of the river.

A considered reading of the reports shows a clear need for a single proactive authority that is able to commission reports and implement them; an authority that can take an overview of the river and coordinate the many agencies to deliver the long-term vision heralded in that first plan back in 1971; an authority that can protect the parklands of the river, improve the ecology of the riverine corridor and deliver the open spaces – the 'natural sanctuaries' – that a growing Melbourne needs and will soon need even more; an authority that can help ensure the river is able to deliver the ecosystem services it has managed to deliver so well: providing drinking water from the Upper





The lower and middle Yarra have changed enormously in the 180 years since the first settlers arrived, and they are continuing to change. This view of the Yarra, looking upstream from Princes Bridge is hardly recognizable today. The river is now a managed system dependent on state and local government, authorities and agencies, and planning schemes, planning zones and overlays, for its future health. *Courtesy: State Library of Victoria: River Yarra at Princes Bridge, Melbourne, c. 1892-1900, Charles Rudd.*

Yarra; removing storm water from all along the catchment; and cooling the city and its suburbs in hot weather. The need for this sort of river authority has been clear since the first report in 1971 and has been articulated in almost every report since 1978. Time passes – all too quickly.

But good things are happening. The current state government is developing a Yarra River Protection Act including a Yarra Trust, with \$1million allocated to it in the 2015 budget. The Yarra Riverkeeper Association has long advocated for a one-river authority, and for a model like the one being developed.

The proposed Trust and Act need to provide strong, co-ordinated planning for the River.

Recent advances in water sensitive urban design (known as WSUD) mean that the issues of planning and water are much more integrated. The proposed Trust will be able to take a catchment-wide view of planning and be able to integrate water and planning issues for the benefit of the River, its tributaries, and the bay.

There are other Acts and Trusts that help manage rivers around the world. The Yarra Riverkeeper Association is now preparing a report that will review these international models and seek to identify key features to be included in the Yarra River's Act and Trust so as to best meet the needs of the River's corridor.

## SCOPE

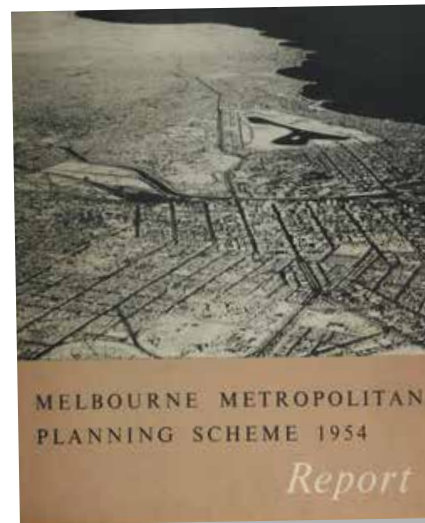
This report is a review of the many planning reports that focus on the Yarra River corridor – that is, the green spaces through which the river flows. (This report does not review reports on topics other than planning.)

The core planning work on the Yarra consists of a series of reports from the 1970s through to the 1990s, with a few following on since then. All the key reports have been found and read. However, some of the studies and interim reports could not be found. For links to the reports available online, see our websites [actfortheyarra.org.au](http://actfortheyarra.org.au) and [yarrariver.org.au](http://yarrariver.org.au).

The reports reviewed focused explicitly on the Yarra River corridor. They focused on different sections of the river, beginning in the CBD and rolling out progressively upstream. This planning work was triggered by increasing development in the Yarra corridor, including urban renewal and facility development. That development triggered the realisation that there was an opportunity to create and preserve vital open space.

The Yarra River is an iconic part of Melbourne's identity, here it is one winter morning in Kew. The city is where it is because of the river and its geography. The founders of Melbourne erected their tents where there was a constant supply of fresh water — above the rocks and rapids that once lay where Queens Bridge now crosses the river.





## PLANNING – THE MELBOURNE CONTEXT

The first plan for Melbourne was the *Report of the Metropolitan Town Planning Commission*, published in 1929. The plan recognized the importance of open space in the city and the value of Melbourne's waterways as an open space network. The plan was never implemented due to the 1930s depression and the war that followed. In 1949, the Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works (since 1992, Melbourne Water) was placed in charge of planning for Melbourne. In 1954, it released the *Melbourne Metropolitan Planning Scheme*. This was the first significant over-arching plan for Melbourne. The plan focused on the issues in inner city slums and

on the lack of infrastructure in the outer suburbs. The plan – like every plan that followed – acknowledged the importance of open space in a growing city (1954, p. 77):

It is now universally recognised that facilities for relaxation and exercise outdoors are an essential part of urban living, and that the provision of these facilities is a responsibility of civic administration. The love of the outdoors is an inherent characteristic of the Australian people. The reservation of space sufficient to permit all sections of the community, whatever their age and inclination, to indulge in such healthy pastimes is therefore a very important function of a planning scheme.

The plan – also like every plan that followed – acknowledged the importance of the Yarra to Melbourne's open spaces. It recommended (1954, p. 78):

A series of radial parks, mostly along the valleys of the River Yarra and the various creeks and watercourses, joining the larger park areas and thus affording the opportunity not only for field sports, but also a place for walking, riding and cycling within easy distance of the home.

This plan was updated in 1971, with *Planning Policies for the Melbourne Metropolitan Region* in which the concepts of 'green wedges' and 'growth corridors' were developed. The plan's (1971, p 1) introduction made particular mention of the Yarra:

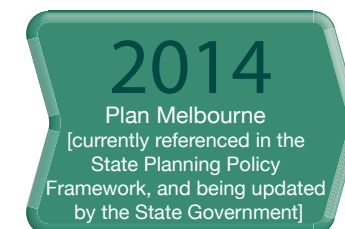
Already this significant physical feature of Melbourne has warranted the special attention of the Government in that a 'Statement of Planning Policy' has been promulgated to secure its conservation and improvement.

The plan (1971, p. 5) noted the contemporary problems of the River:

Because of its particular geography and variation in local topography, problems of flooding and pollution through waste disposal into its waters are increasing, as urban growth in its environs accelerates. These problems mean that special management measures are imperative if the river is to be maintained as a social and recreational attribute and the waters that flow into it from its extensive catchment

are to be kept within manageable bounds. Incidence of flooding will tend to increase as run-off of stormwater is accelerated by urban development, and pollution from such development will, unless properly controlled at source, create serious problems to the environmental character of the river. Already evidence of these manifestations of urban growth is apparent, and strict measures and controls will be necessary in the future to avoid these problems.

Many of these problems remain problems today.



A timeline of key plans for Melbourne



PLANNING – THE RIVER CORRIDOR

The Statement of Planning Policy No. 4 River Yarra and the Lower Yarra Advisory Committee

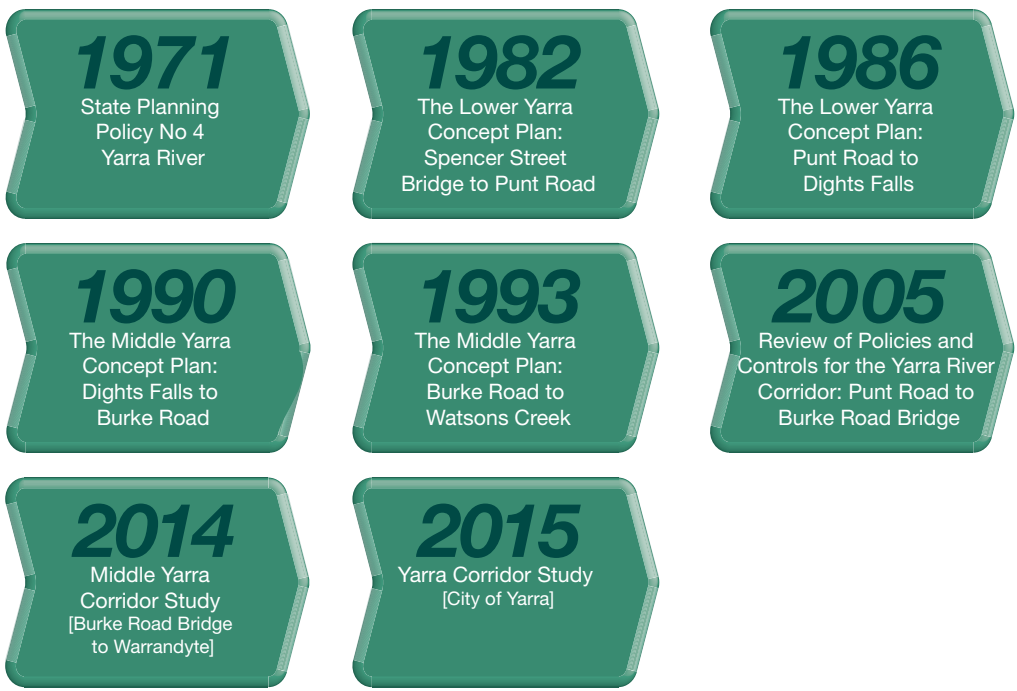
The first planning policy specifically for the river was the *Statement of Planning Policy No. 4 River Yarra* published in 1971 by the Victorian Government. This report set the stage for future planning on the River: ‘the River Yarra and its immediate environs shall be planned primarily as an open space system for nature conservation and recreation’.

From the river’s source to Warrandyte, the report applied to the entire catchment while from Warrandyte to Port Phillip Bay, it applied to the river corridor (1971, p. 2). The report set the tone of future documents stating the river had ‘long been taken for granted and has suffered accordingly’.

Importantly, in the context of this report, it said (1971, p. 21):

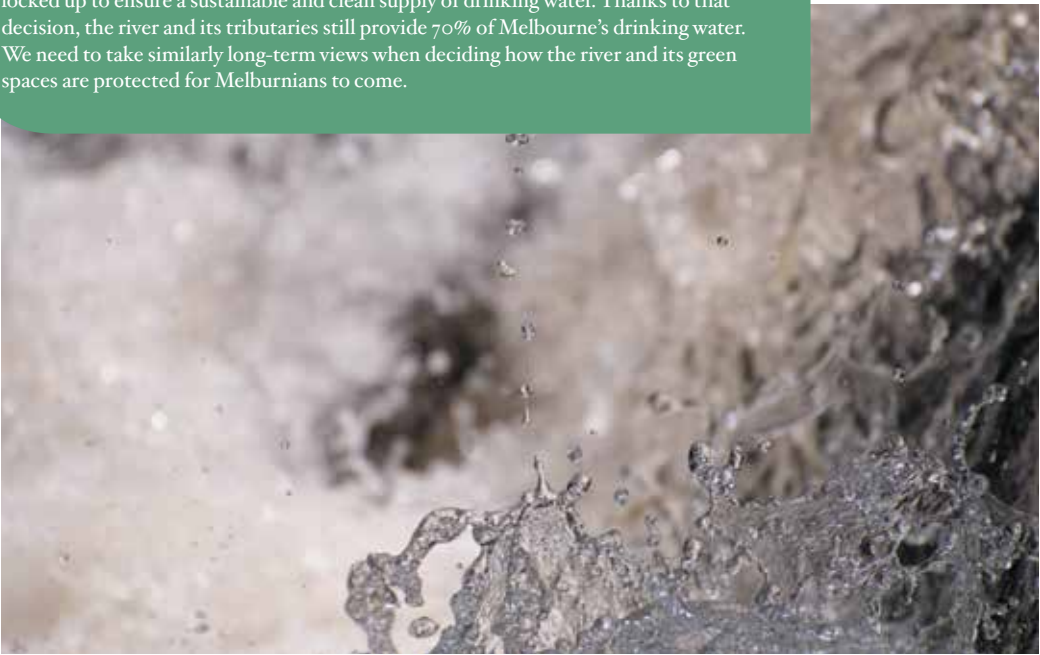
... the control and management of the River Yarra must be all embracing and properly co-ordinated... If control is divided without co-ordination, the inappropriate activities in one part of the system will adversely affect activities in other parts.

One of the key threats perceived at that time was ‘public utility mains and installations and service facilities such as rubbish dumps’ (197a, p. 13). The river corridor was yet to be seen as attractive enough for residential development. Rather it was seen more as a location of convenient open space in which to put unattractive infrastructure. This was also the first time the term ‘green wedge’ was used and it was used in relation to the Yarra River and Valley. The formal statement of the policy’s ambition (1971, p. 24) was:



A timeline of Yarra river corridor plans.

Crystal clear and clean as can be, this is the water in the Upper Yarra. In 1888, in an inspiring piece of long-term planning, the land at the headwaters of the Yarra River was locked up to ensure a sustainable and clean supply of drinking water. Thanks to that decision, the river and its tributaries still provide 70% of Melbourne’s drinking water. We need to take similarly long-term views when deciding how the river and its green spaces are protected for Melburnians to come.



**2.1** The River Yarra and its environs shall be identified through appropriate planning measures as one of the most significant features in the Melbourne metropolis.

Also, the policy (1971, p. 24) cautioned:

**3.2** The intensification and expansion of urban development in the metropolitan area are likely, without adequate safeguards, to cause further deterioration in conditions which have resulted from ill-considered, adverse or excessive exploitation of the River and its environs.

In the section on implementation of planning policies the statement said that special attention must be given to (1971, p. 24):

**4.1** An efficient system of management designed to ensure co-ordination of land use planning and all forms of development on private and public land.

The report’s call for coordinated management to protect a river under threat from overdevelopment is a theme that comes up repeatedly in the planning reports over the next nearly 40 years.

A number of strong government initiatives came out of this 1971 policy. They reflect the importance the government of the day placed on the Yarra River’s role in the life of the city. The initiatives included the formation of a Steering Committee for the Lower Yarra drawn from state and local governments and local interest groups. From that committee, a Lower Yarra Advisory Committee was created with a delegation of powers and responsibilities from the MMBW. The committee drafted a concept plan for the Yarra. The government formed a Cabinet Subcommittee to ensure the ‘implementation of the proposed concept plan’ and to review the progress the

various authorities made in implementing their relevant programs.

### The 1978 Lower Yarra Assessment

In 1978, the MMBW published a report the *Lower Yarra Study: An Assessment of Environmental Opportunities*.

As a step toward preparing a concept plan, the Advisory Committee after reviewing the *Lower Yarra Study*, issued an interim report in October 1980 for public comment. In the report, the Port Phillip Bay zone and the Port of Melbourne zone below Spencer Bridge were separated from the concept plan. Those zones were recognised as being the responsibility of the Port of Melbourne Authority. (The Authority wrote a *Landscape and Public Access Strategy*, which was released in 1980.)

The advisory committee noted that the previous report had divided the lower Yarra into zones based on landscape character. This has become an increasingly sophisticated feature of planning on the Yarra. The committee reported that: notable views should be preserved; there should be more open space, especially where the surrounding suburbs lack open space; and wildlife should be encouraged. The report mentioned the need for a continuous pathway along the river's banks. On the question of management, the committee noted that 'The present situation is a complex one in which many statutory authorities impinge on the river and its environs' and emphasized the need 'to co-ordinate projects'. (1980, p. 24)

### The Lower Yarra Concept Plans

The Cabinet subcommittee, formed in response to *Planning Statement No. 4*, directed the MMBW to prepare a concept plan for the river between Spencer Street Bridge and Punt Road. The MMBW's brief to the consultants included the need

'to secure a coordinated approach to the implementation of the concept plan proposals by the various bodies'. Again the need for coordination of the various authorities comes to the fore.

The first of the lower Yarra concept plans was finally released in 1982; it covered the area from Spencer Street Bridge to Punt Road. The concept plan formalized the work of the Lower Yarra Study (MMBW 1978) and made them planning objectives. The plan emphasised the need for unused and neglected land to be transformed into landscaped open space, and the need to connect the hinterland to the river.

The concept plan developed the idea of a series of zones for the Yarra as a way of defining landscape character. The idea of zones would be developed and refined over the next 50 or so years in following reports. There was an emphasis on the visual landscape of the river on 'views and prospects' as a key virtue of the river that needed protection. The Concept Plan noted Governor La Trobe's exceptional planning in setting aside land on both sides of the river above Princes Bridge as parkland, which would normally have been used for commercial purposes in the 'early days of a growing city'. The concept plan provided a detailed list of recommendations ordered into a list of priorities.

The concept plans were rolled out upstream over the next 15 years.

The second part of the *Lower Yarra Concept Plan* was published in 1986 and covered from Punt Road to Dights Falls. This was a focused report with the fundamental objective of developing a 'linear parkland that will connect with existing and proposed parkland' (1986, p. 2). This report achieved many of its aims: conservation; enhancing the visual quality of the River; and increasing water-based recreation.



Imagine if Australian fur seals from the colony in Port Phillip Bay were regular visitors to the Yarra River. In 2014, this one came upstream as far as Hawthorn, where it caught an eel. With better planning, we can protect and even improve the river's water quality to encourage native animals to return.

But a key (perhaps the key) objective of the plan was to 'provide cycle and pedestrian access along one or both banks ... all the way from Punt Road to Dights Falls'. This work was undertaken by the MMBW and has been one of the outstanding successes of planning in Melbourne. Bicycle Victoria has actively and successfully lobbied for the path's extension. Dual use pathways along the river are now challenged by their own popularity, with large numbers of commuter cyclists sometimes reluctant to share with pedestrians, as they compete with themselves and others using various fitness apps.

### The Middle Yarra Concept Plans

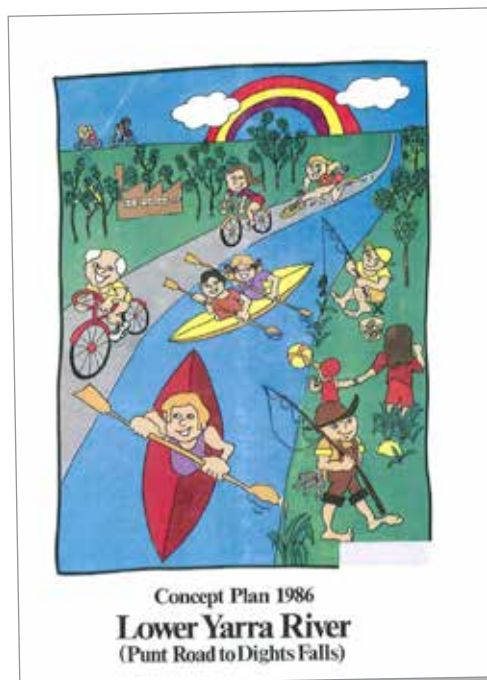
The *Middle Yarra Concept Plan: Dights Falls to Burke Road* followed in August 1990 and then in December 1993 the last of the 'Concept Plans' was published: the *Middle Yarra Concept Plan: Burke Road to Watsons Creek*. In a qualified tone, (1990, p. 5 – emphasis added) it described itself 'as a vision for the future of the Middle Yarra':

*Eventually, concept plans will co-ordinate the planning and development of continuous parkland all away along the Yarra River ... The Middle Yarra Concept Plan describes how the area **should be** planned and managed ... Planning controls have also been **prepared** ...*

In between these two plans in 1992, the MMBW was combined with a number of smaller water authorities and rebranded as Melbourne Water. In 1994, Melbourne Parks and Waterways, which had responsibility for the Yarra River, was separated from Melbourne Water. In 1996, it became part of Parks Victoria.

The *Middle Yarra Concept Plan: Dights Falls to Burke Road* (1990, Foreword) emphasised the significance of appropriate planning along the Yarra in the context of growing pressures for access to open space and unplanned growth and development:





As the city's population grows and leisure takes on greater significance, the number of people coming to the middle Yarra will increase. Most of us take for granted that it will always be a beautiful place to visit. However in recent years the Middle Yarra has become so popular that unplanned growth and development could threaten the very thing that makes this area so special.

This reiterated the themes of earlier reports that population growth along with green and brownfield development was squeezing the river and the city's open spaces – which, perhaps ironically, were more in demand in the areas of growth.

The objective of the plan were summarised in the Foreword as:

The plan is part of the Government's wider commitment to making a linear open space system along the Yarra from Mt Lofty to the central city by connecting parklands along the river.

The plan was placed on exhibition in September 1988 and the concept plan was reviewed and changed following a public hearing at which submissions were considered. The 'Summary' stated (1990, p. 5):

The controls have now been gazetted as amendments to the relevant planning schemes.

The plan noted that (1990, p. 7):

Management of open space elsewhere in the concept plan area should be co-ordinated between agencies to prevent excessive duplication and to ensure compatible development between public and private facilities.

The plan looked at four objectives: conservation, recreation, landscape and floodplain management.

The plan made a strong statement that 'Every effort should made to purchase river frontage land whenever and wherever practicable' (1990, p. 24). And it went on to say (1990, p. 29):

It is essential that the management of open space throughout the concept plan is co-ordinated ... It is also essential that developments both up and downstream of the concept plan area are co-ordinated.

The Foreword noted (in a rather qualified way) that:

Some of the recommendations contained in the plan have already been implemented or are being implemented now. A management plan is being prepared for Yarra Bend Park, improvements have been undertaken at Fairfield Park in Northcote and at Merri Park in Collingwood and the Main Yarra Trail is nearing completion. This section

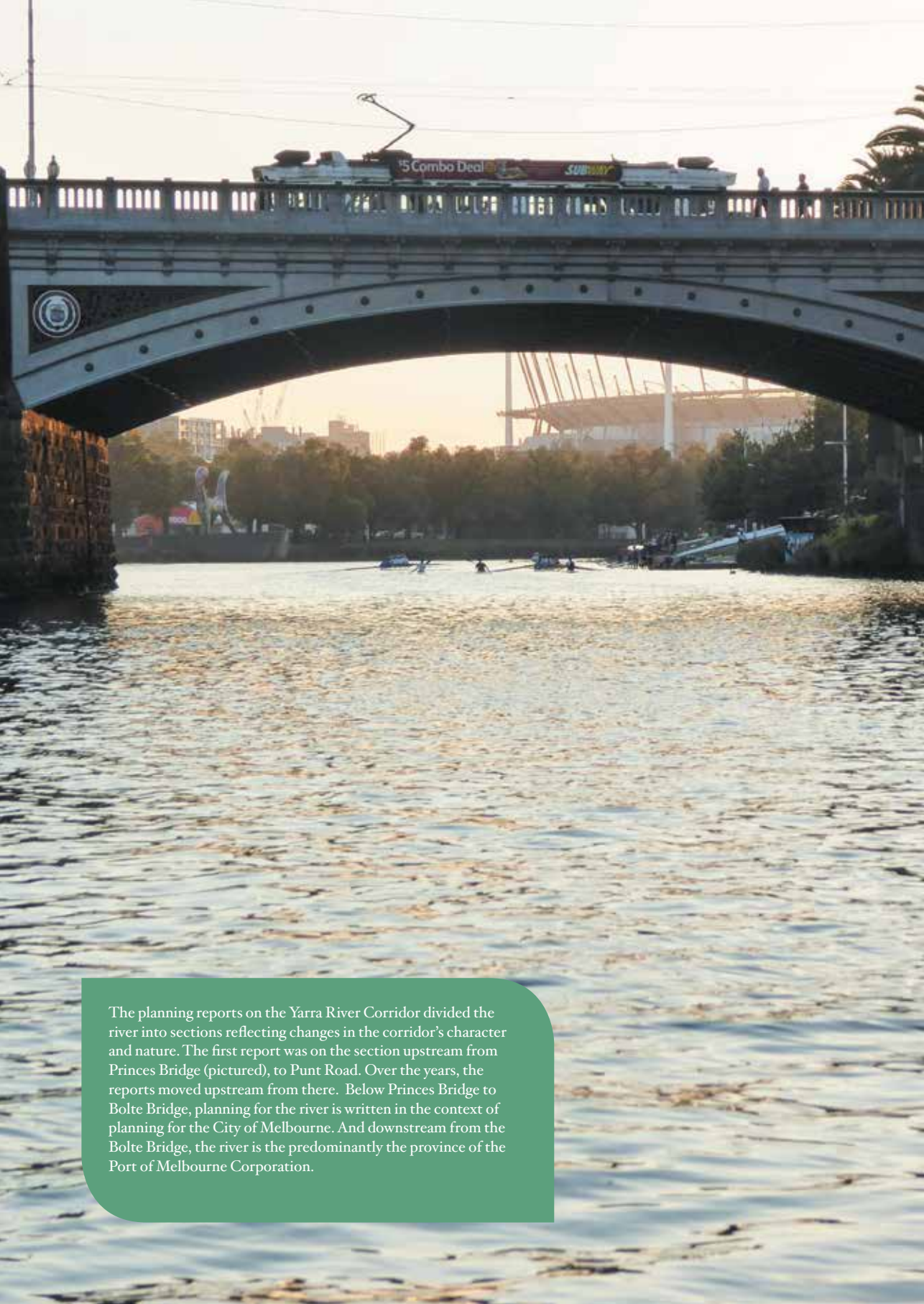
of the trail will enable cyclists to ride from the city to the metropolitan park and to connect with the Merri Creek Trail.

*The Middle Yarra Concept Plan – Burke Road to Watsons Creek*, published in 1993 followed, using the same themes as the 1990 report. Interestingly, as a mark of the changing planning context, it was not published by the MMBW but by Melbourne Parks and Waterways, an enterprise of the Melbourne Water Corporation. The report reiterated the same general aim of a continuous system of open space along the river for recreation and conservation, and itemised similar

This little pied cormorant takes a break on one of the Parks Victoria's litter traps. The traps help Parks Victoria remove tonnes of litter from the river each year. Even so, more litter gets through. One of the main risks to birds and animals is the tiny pieces of plastic – microplastics – formed as large plastic items break apart. The trouble with microplastics is that many animals eat them and then can carry them around inside for much of the rest of their lives. The large surface areas of microplastics also make them ideal sites for pollutants to settle.







The planning reports on the Yarra River Corridor divided the river into sections reflecting changes in the corridor's character and nature. The first report was on the section upstream from Princes Bridge (pictured), to Punt Road. Over the years, the reports moved upstream from there. Below Princes Bridge to Bolte Bridge, planning for the river is written in the context of planning for the City of Melbourne. And downstream from the Bolte Bridge, the river is the predominantly the province of the Port of Melbourne Corporation.

specific objectives. However, for the first time, wetlands were a particular focus of the report as there are key billabong systems along this section of the river.

The report highlights issues that are currently still being ineffectively dealt with – for example: the runoff of clay and silt from subdivision and building operations. Specific recommendations on a site-by-site basis form a sizeable part of the report (1993, Foreword).

New planning controls have been introduced into the Local Planning Schemes to regulate the use and development of the Middle Yarra Valley region. The concept plan is also incorporated into the local planning schemes. These kind of controls have previously been introduced for areas downstream of Burke Road ...

The report said the cost of implementation would be up to \$25 million and 'it is clear the works need to be staged over many years so this amount of money can be budgeted' (1993, p. 56). However, it is not clear how many of the recommendations were implemented. Nor is it clear how many of those that were implemented were a result of the concept plan. The plan did not spell out how such a budget would be managed over a period of time. The Plan identified the large number of entities with management responsibilities and noted that 'While the Department of Planning and Urban Growth and the Department of Conservation and Environment have responsibility for strategic planning of the area they do not have management responsibilities.' (1993, p. 56) And then added, 'However is it essential that planning be co-ordinated closely with management.'

The report examined the effectiveness of the special conservation zone and is worth quoting at length and to remember in the context of developments since 1993 (p. 56):

The future of the special conservation zone was reviewed during the preparation of this concept plan. The zone was put in place in 1975 as a holding mechanism to prevent further subdivision and inappropriate development that would have had a detrimental visual impact on the Park.

This zone has been reasonably successful in achieving this purpose, in contrast to some nearby residential zones where recent development has had negative effect on the park environment. The new Yarra Valley Environs zone is a replacement for the special conservation zone as a permanent, semi-rural type of classification. This zone will no longer be a temporary holding mechanism ...

This was the last of the 'concept plans' and the reports that followed included the phrase 'river corridor' in their titles and were written largely in the context of urban renewal on brownfield sites – especially in the City of Yarra.