



IMAGINE
THE YARRA

DRAFT YARRA STRATEGIC PLAN PUBLIC CONSULTATION

SUBMISSION COVER SHEET

Submission Number:	215050
Name (Individual/Organisation):	Individual
Attachments:	Attachment 1 – Written submission

SUBMISSION

16th March 2020

[REDACTED]

Draft Yarra River Strategic Plan – Lower Rural Reach

Revision B 28th March, 2020.

[REDACTED]

I have viewed the above Draft and would like to make the following comments in regard to the ongoing Land Management of the

- Neil Douglas Conservation Reserve on the peninsular of the Yarra River,
- Bend of Islands
- Lower Rural Reach as identified in the above Strategy Plan.

Firstly in regard to the Neil Douglas Conservation Reserve, the importance of ongoing protection & conservation is vital.

- The Conservation Reserve is currently managed by the Committee of Management of BICA & Melbourne Water oversees ongoing periodic weed control.
- The Conservation Reserve is surrounded by the Yarra River & the Brushy Creek confluence is on the other side of the River, which has been identified by the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people as a sacred women's aboriginal heritage site.
- The Neil Douglas Conservation Reserve is important to the community of the Bend of Islands. BICA volunteers have carried out Land Management work in the Reserve in association with the local Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people. Work included weed control, mapping of significant hollow trees, thinning of Burgan in areas of significant vegetation, guarding of natural regeneration of indigenous Black Wattles, monitoring of Powerful Owls & Eucalyptus identification.
- BICA is committed to minimizing any adverse impacts on indigenous flora & fauna of the Conservation Reserve by encouraging only passive use in such a residential conservation area. Whittons Reserve on the other side of the river is a highly utilised active recreational area. There are potential adverse environmental impacts from these high impact activities, including dogs accessing the Conservation Reserve & impacting on the native wildlife. Disturbance to indigenous flora & fauna to be managed by passive use in such a high conservation area.
- With a considerable river frontage on the Neil Douglas Reserve, litter collects & weed species can easily establish. Periodic inspections and cleanups are required. The local community assist in this with occasional Landcare activities

& the annual “Cleanup Australia Day” organised by BICA. However the Reserve requires more comprehensive management to protect the conservation values. This should include ongoing control of environmental weeds & feral animals.

The Conservation Reserve is part of the **Bend of Islands** in the Shire of Nillumbik, zoned Special Use Zone 2 under the Shire of Nillumbik Planning Scheme. **The Bend of Islands** is situated on 634 hectares of natural bushland along the Yarra River & the zoning combines environmental conservation values with residential use in the area. There are about 120 houses and the community of about 300 residents have the responsibility to observe the planning regulations of the Shire which includes restricted clearing for only buildings, driveways & home vegetable garden on their property, only indigenous plantings & prohibits the keeping of domestic pets or livestock including dogs, cats, horses, cattle, goats.

Understandably therefore, the conservation & protection of the indigenous flora & fauna of the Bend of Islands & its Yarra River edges & environs is of prime concern.

The Lower Rural Reach of the Draft Yarra Strategic Plan extends from Healesville to Warrandyte including the Bend of Islands. I commend the involvement of the Traditional Owners, the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people in drawing up the ‘Performance Objectives’ of the Draft Yarra Strategic Plan. I praise their commitment to protecting the Yarra River “as a continual entity & a living force from source to sea”..

However in areas where rich soils of the Yarra River’s flood plain between Yering to Tarrawarra support farming & grazing, right to the river edge, there is loss of the indigenous vegetation to the natural billabongs, resulting in soil erosion to the river edge & the loss of the natural habitat. It is important to fence off & restore the river banks with indigenous plants & provide a continuous healthy river ecosystem. This may be politically difficult to achieve but with the right incentives & compensations, the relevant land owners & govt. bodies should be able to achieve this goal.