



IMAGINE  
THE YARRA

# DRAFT YARRA STRATEGIC PLAN

## PUBLIC CONSULTATION

### SUBMISSION COVER SHEET

<b>Submission Number:</b>	214688
<b>Name (Individual/Organisation):</b>	Individual
<b>Attachments:</b>	Attachment 1 – Survey submission
	Attachment 2 – Written submission



## **New Form submission on Help us shape the final 10-year strategic plan for the Yarra River**

Hi [YarraStrategicPlan@melbournewater.com.au](mailto:YarraStrategicPlan@melbournewater.com.au)

There has been a submission on [Help us shape the final 10-year strategic plan for the Yarra River](#) through Engage Victoria

A copy of the submission is provided as below:

### **Part 1: Working toward the Community Vision**

**1a. Do the four, 10-Year Performance Objectives adequately reflect the 50 Year Community Vision?**

Somewhat

**1b. Please outline your reasoning for this opinion (optional)**

They haven't been taken back out to the community

**2a. Are the actions identified to deliver the 10-Year Performance Objectives achievable, realistic and measurable?**

Many are ill defined and do not have the requisite technical analysis to be able support them

**2b. Please outline your reasoning for this opinion (optional)**

This strategy has suffered many staff changes along the way and it appears that undue

influence by members of the YCC have influenced the outcome to be more like a business as usual scenario just repackaged

**3a. Which specific actions do you think will be easiest or most challenging to deliver?**

The easiest is the finalisation of the planning controls on the urban reaches , the hardest will be engaging and obtaining support of the rural community

**3b. Why do you think this?**

The Rural community have not had a significant voice at the table - except for few fleeting and orchestrated workshops

**4. What do you/ your organisation think is the greatest opportunity the Yarra Strategic Plan presents? Please rank the following statements in order of importance from 1 -4**

Improving water quality of the Yarra River and protecting land, floodplains and billabongs - 4

Acknowledging, protecting and commemorating the rich heritage of the Birrarung - 1

Improving the river's parklands to support community wellbeing - 2

Protecting the significance of the Yarra River's landscapes and views - 3

**5. Do you feel the draft Yarra Strategic Plan has put appropriate actions in place to ensure delivery on the aspirations of Traditional Owners?**

No

**6a. Are there key priority areas of land you think should be added to the parkland network along the Yarra River?**

Yes

**6b. If you answered Yes, where are these key priority areas of land and why do you think they should be added?**

Need to think ahead 40-50 years when there is insufficient activity nodes on the upper rural reaches

## **Part 2: Land Use framework**

**7. The Land Use framework aims to put the Yarra River at the heart of future planning and development decisions. What is your / your organisation's view about the Land Use framework?**

Its still needs work - particularly identifying future needs and having a robust land capability assessment for proposed uses

**8a. Do you believe the Land Use directions will support the 50 Year Community Vision?**

Somewhat

**8b. Why do you think this?**

Again more work is needed to get protective controls and bring the landowners along with us

**9a. Do you agree with the Land Use directions for the Yarra River?**

Somewhat

**9b. Please outline your reasoning for this opinion (optional)**

The work is incomplete

**10a. Do you believe that the 13 significant places identified for the river corridor reflect the most regionally significant locations?**

Unsure

**10b. Why do you think this?**

I think there may be a lot more

**11. Do you agree with the opportunities identified for the significant places that you connect with?**

Unsure

**12. Do you have any further ideas about how the Plan may provide for the cultural/spiritual/environmental care and protection of the Yarra River over the next ten years, whilst also working toward achieving the 50 Year Community Vision?**

The Governance arrangement needs tightening to be more accountable and under heads of agreement. Further an ongoing engagement with community on the progress and future the initiatives needs to be established to close the consultative loop and retain ratification. The need for the provision of extra initiative funds (State) to facilitate this strategy and programs is going to be critical as most of the agencies and organisations are all under severe financial pressure

**13. Finally, what are your overarching thoughts and feelings about the Yarra Strategic Plan?**

The draft is surprisingly underdone and isn't forward looking enough. The lack of finite inputs on issues from the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung is disappointing. The document believe does not meet the requirements of the Act and needs a lot of work

## **Contact Details**

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**Upload your submission here**

[Yarra Strategy - ██████████\\_comments\\_.pdf](#)

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*The Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murron) Act (the Act) requires:*

- *all submissions to be made available for inspection by the public (s24(1)(b))*
- *the lead agency must make a copy of all public submissions on a draft Yarra Strategic Plan, made to the lead agency, available for public inspection - s24(2)*

All submissions will therefore be made available to the public in accordance with the Act.

Melbourne Water, as lead agency, and or DELWP will publish a copy of your submission, in its entirety, on the Imagine the Yarra website or other Victorian Government website/s as required.

In providing your feedback by written submission you agree that the lead agency may provide a copy of your submission, to affected Local Councils, Government Agencies, Panel (if required) and other submitters.

Your submission may also remain on external servers, even after the period of consultation closes and DELWP has removed the relevant pages from the Engage Victoria website.

**Text will be redacted in submissions to remove personally identifying details, and to comply with the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)*.**

Should you need to correct the information you provided or gain access to your submission, please contact us via email at: [YarraStrategicPlan@melbournewater.com.au](mailto:YarraStrategicPlan@melbournewater.com.au)

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Yes

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The Engage Victoria Team

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## Draft Yarra Strategic Plan - Submission by [REDACTED]

The Strategy process started with so much hope for a bold vision and collaborative plan to improve the lands and their management along the Yarra Corridor from Port Phillip Bay through to the Upper Yarra Dam. Whilst the process was long and with some consultation, the end result is a severe disappointment. It is almost as though a significant number of the parties involved in the Yarra Consultative Committee have conspired to water down any significant levels of commitment that would involve increased investment in the quality of outcome for the Yarra lands under public use be they Crown land and Parks, Municipal and Drainage Reserves or simply Municipal Reserves. The outcome appears to be so much more about a Business as Usual Approach, albeit repackaged, when it could have been something far more visionary and expansionary. The Strategy does not contain any significant inputs beyond basic principles from the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people, possibly as a result that the tribe preferring not to be actively engaged in the public consultation process. The document is deficient for this, as this would be the only real new thing in the whole Strategy exercise.

The private land holders who manage Yarra Lands , both inside the urban growth boundary and those outside in the rural and upper reaches, who either abut Crown lands or have freehold to the river, don't appear to have been effectively engaged in the process and certainly not for the compilation of the Strategy Document. This is a gap.

There was some display of disagreement along the way with some landowners adverse to the notion that Crown land adjacent to rural properties should not be open to public use or protection, but more as an adjunct to a private use.

The document seems to be founded in the overall principle of the Yarra lands and corridor being predominantly for the humanistic needs rather than a balance of conservation and selective non damaging uses. With the population of Melbourne burgeoning towards 8 million people, the River and its corridor are likely to become over utilised and as a result degraded.

The Yarra River has been subjected to numerous changes in the Urban reaches that have affected the rivers morphology, tract and ecology. Further in the rural reaches, there has also been significant historical interventions that have significantly impacted on the river and the associated floodplain billabongs. Some of these have not been referred to in the Strategy.

### Part 1 Working together to deliver the community's vision

Page	Section	Comment
P43	Future management	Having a collaborative management arrangement sounds fine – but there needs to be an underpinning Heads of Agreement to ensure that the commitments don't dissolve or shift with time or political changes. <b>Note, there are no binding elements in this Plan</b>
		Funding – with the constant pressure on budgets for all agencies and also Municipalities, it is hard to see how

Page	Section	Comment
		Commitment at the Agency/Council Budget is made for deliverables.
		The waiver for the projects under the major Transport Facilitation Act 2009 – incl NELP – is a major issue – one project can have devastating impacts on the Yarra directly and indirectly
44	Principles - Environment	Support the notion of a net gain even though this is likely to be challenged by user populations
44	Principles - Recreation	Recreational principles - great care is needed not to over load the river with unfettered recreation. There are areas that should be closed to all but management access. There are also areas where mountain bike riders are destroying the lands and environmental values. Maybe there needs to be regulations sought for the Yarra Lands.
44	Principles – Management	Perhaps a rewording is need – instead of “best outcomes beyond compliance” replace with <i>outcomes shown to exceed base compliance</i>
45	Our framework for collaborative action	Priority projects – It is astounding and disappointing that priority projects have not been established for the first 3-5 years given the length of time that the strategy has been in development. Does this speak for an inability to attain guarantees for funding of initiatives from the contributory agencies and or organisations? Here in lies a problem, particularly with Councils who work on annual budgets determined by Councillors and Agencies who rely upon budgets either through the State Budget or annual approval processes. The Government needs to a projected three-year initiative budget for the Strategy to underpin the key priority initiatives. Mechanisms also need to be put in place so that organisation representative members of the YCC have a delegation from their respective organisations to commit to funding arrangements for projects. Without this, coordination will fail.
45	Lead Agency	Why has a lead agency not been selected at this draft stage? If it is to be DWELP then that would understandable. There may be issues with getting the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung working with one of the agencies. Many of the community’s responses to this Draft Strategy may vary if it were to be a particular agency – say Melbourne Water Corporation. Again, the Government needs to provide a lead on this matter.
45	10-year Actions	Without a guaranteed funding initiative from Government to stimulate over the next 10 years, albeit for a \$ for\$ basis of investment, there is little likelihood for a lift in expenditures to achieve the improvement program. With all agencies and Councils under significant budget pressures, it is hard to find additional funds beyond the current approved budgets.
48	Performance Objectives	

Page	Section	Comment
	Objective 1 – Healthy Rivers and Land	<p><i>Restore billabongs and wetlands by increasing water for the environment</i> – There is a basic misunderstanding about the changes wrought on the Yarra by the water diversion system. Using environmental flow release to enable engagement of floodplains and their associated billabongs and wetlands is very hard to achieve upstream of Plenty river Junction. There has been a consequence of historic stream desnagging and channel changes upstream of Henley Gorge through to Millgrove and this in coincidence of the formation of the upper Yarra Dam and O’Shannassy Dam have changed the relationship of flows to the bank full discharge stage of the waterways. Essentially the bank full discharge stage of the Yarra River main stem now the equivalent of a 5-year ARI flow compared to a 1.5 Year ARI flow previously. Using Environmental flow releases to achieve this is wasteful and also brings the prospect of litigation by farmers over flooding of their lands unnaturally (as in the Goulburn River). Environmental flows are more valuable for the freshes during the balance of the year. It may be possible to achieve some inundation of billabongs and wetlands by piggy backing on a natural rainfall event. Most of the billabongs have been long alienated and do not serve the normal riverine ecology function of providing inputs back to the river or providing for off stream refugia. Most of the upper Yarra billabongs drain quite quickly into their substrates. There are very deep sand lenses across the floodplains.</p>
48	Objective 1 – Healthy Rivers and Land	<p><i>Strengthen the Terrestrial and Aquatic habitat corridors... to support biodiversity.</i> – This is a key action that supports Cultural flows and rights to have cultural use of the river plus sustain the river. Importantly the manner in which MWC conducts water supply harvesting in the upper catchment and tributaries is having a significant impact on the Health of the river. With over 80% of the Mean Annual Flow harvested at Millgrove – this means that not is the flow regime affected but the organic material flux is also similarly impacted, this affecting the rivers capacity to sustain a robust and highly productive ecosystem. Further the impacts of harvesting from Badgers Creek, Graceburn Creek and Watts River and Yering Pumping Station, are all having deleterious impacts on the health of those waterways and their support of the Yarra Rivers health. Fish numbers are low and overall production low. Catching a fish for either recreation or cultural needs is severely impacted.</p> <p>This also brings into question the <b>passing flows</b> dilemma as distinct from that of the Environmental Flow releases. Currently the passing flow arrangements at the impoundments and all tributary diversions are based on an arbitrary allowance set many years ago by an inexact process. This process was flawed and does not meet more enlightened</p>

Page	Section	Comment
		<p>Environmental flow assessments. There is a real issue about establishing a cultural flow or a minimum environmental assessed passing flow properly based in science.</p> <p>The assignation of the Gardiners Creek area as a site for improved terrestrial and aquatic linkages is puzzling – although it may be culturally significant, stream channelisation and occupation for other uses seems to preclude this area from anything closes to successful.</p>
48	Objective 1 – Healthy Rivers and Land	<p><i>Clean Water</i> – this is a problematic area that needs a far broader suite of actions from many agencies. It starts with post European clearing of the land for agriculture – leading to channel incision and sediment production. The Yarra is defined by its soils and geology – most of which when disturbed produce sediment and turbidity. The as of right use of land for a range of agricultural pursuits exacerbates this. Urbanisation is similarly devastating, through all stages of construction development, building development and occupation. The current suite of land disturbance controls is totally ineffective! Further, the discharge of nutrients and pesticides is rampant from the rural areas, affecting water quality and ecology.</p> <p>The issue of poorly operating septic tanks can be found in some key areas only. Addressing water quality is a gigantic task and one that involves many parties. Some issues like rural sediment and pesticides seems almost intractable and so great care needs to be assigned as to the likelihood of success of mitigation programs. Providing reticulated sewage to all rural properties is not economically feasible, but programs in targeted areas should reduce some of the impacts, particularly in sewer backlog areas. Yarra Ranges is particularly challenged by a large number of poorly performing septic systems.</p> <p>It must also be remembered that the catchment has a lot of animals that contribute to the bacterial quality of the waters. Again, programs to address this are only partially successful. The programs to achieve success for clean waters is a massive undertaking and one that must be spread across a number of agencies and sectors. As success is likely to be lower than that desirable, caution needs to be made in assigning prescriptions.</p> <p>The objective lacks definition as to what elements or parameters in WQ are required to be improved and most of the actions are generic and have been tried before with little impact.</p> <p>Melbourne Water has some programs mainly dealing with new developments but, is struggling to make an impact on rural nutrients and pesticides, litter, road and freeway runoff, existing urban area runoff and land disturbance impacts.</p>

Page	Section	Comment
		There are also key treated sewage treatment plant discharges to the Yarra r that need to be removed. Some of the actions seem like a BAU approach – unlikely to attain any success
49	<b>Swimming in the Yarra</b>	Swimming in the Yarra is a laudable goal and should be made achievable at multiple sites including Woori Yallock, Yarra Junction, Warburton, Eltham and Wonga Park. This should be attainable for periods of low flow post 7 Days after a rainfall event. Due to the nature of heavily populated areas, it's likely to remain unachievable for all areas adjacent to the urban precincts.
52	<b>Performance Objective 2</b>	A Culturally diverse river corridor
		Support the generalised actions with regards to the traditional land owners values and programs – needs more finite actions
		Is there something missing? – the significant story of the post European history - without this there is a gap and a lack of appropriate balance
54	<b>Performance Objective 3</b>	<i>Improved Community access to the river by connecting regional trail networks</i> – we have to be careful not to seek to have a trail the full length of the river – some can be via rail links and old water supply systems. Otherwise, the river is over accessed and conservation balance is lost. There are also many gaps in the Yarra Lands with many areas of alienated frontages.
		<i>Extend the parkland network to cater for a growing network</i> – agree with the sentiment but the strategy fails badly in this detailing this area. Given the time of development, it should have been possible to identify that there is a huge need to provide for more focus activity nodes – both small and large on the Yarra. With a growing population the demand is going to rapidly exceed the supply. The final draft must Identify key nodes for future investigation – not just say that further investigations will be done.
		<i>Improve on water access by constructing all abilities canoe kayak access</i> - again we need to be careful. There are areas that are not suitable for watercraft at all – i.e. upstream of Warburton east. Further is a flows problem where for significant parts of the late summer and autumn period the base flows are insufficient to safe enable passage without severe safety risks for inexperienced paddlers.
56	<b>Performance Objective 4</b>	<i>Protecting the natural beauty of the Yarra River Corridor</i>
		<i>Enhance the rivers landscape and views by improving public access, viewing locations and user experiences.</i> This is a worrying section that does not strike an appropriate conservation human use balance. There must be segments that are retained for their intrinsic, conservation and

Page	Section	Comment
		<p>Ecological values alone. This also seems to fly in the face of the Indigenous water lore.</p> <p>(9) The reestablishment of a lower Yarra Dredging program is of concern – all very expensive with little benefit. Its causes a huge array of logistical and environmental issues, let along the huge cost. This needs to be reworked to check the reality.</p>
	Targets	Targets
		<p>The targets have not been subject to any rigour and will need more definition and tightening to be measurable e.g. Maintenance of water quality targets – mission impossible</p>

## Section 2 – Land Use Framework

The overall intent of this section is relatively good with respect to current interim or existing controls. The Planning system has incorporated most of the controls from the Upper Yarra and Dandenong Ranges Authority apply to the upper rural reaches and these should be retained and reinforced. No mention is made of these controls in the land use and planning controls analysis. The identification of significant places is one level of assessment, but there should be an assignment of a land use capability to each area, so that appropriate balance of protection and use zones can be applied. A simplified breakdown may contain a primary access zone (at waters access and or paths alongside the river), secondary access zone (low level of access at a distance and environmental values protected), critical low use and conservation zone protection zone, a critical cultural and heritage zone and a river process or ecology zone. This fundamentally starts to guide appropriate levels of activity and uses or indeed, protection and rehabilitation of natural values. It will also indicate inappropriate activities like continuous trails along the narrow river reserves in flood prone area such as the Yering and Healesville pondages and where there are still private freehold frontages.

Page	Section	Comment
72	Yarra River 50-year Vision	<p>Lofty goals some of which have potential impediments E.g. – replenishing Billabongs – very hard to achieve with certainty and with Environmental flows – Most are alienated through the significant hydrologic and channel changes – see earlier comments.</p> <p>The expansion of the river access network needs to be conducted very carefully and not to intrude into areas set aside for ecology and river processes</p> <p>River diversions are reducing due to changes in the types of farms</p>
73	The next 10 years	It is hard to see how planning controls for planting guideline implementation will work – seems to be the wrong mechanism
73		<p>What existing and landscape protection are there that are effective?? Need to think in the area of Yarra River Environmental Significance Protection Overlay for all areas outside of the Urban Growth Boundary - to protect the landscape and ecosystems plus bed and banks plus a minimum 30m either side of the top of bank from adverse impacts of clearing etc. There are many freehold landowners who do not agree with the implementation of this strategy. The new ESO (Yarra River Environments) should extend beyond Yarra Lands into the private freehold even though the majority of this land is in Green Wedge Zones. There is a need to control aberrant activity by landowners. New areas for protection may include in river values such as Billabongs</p>

Page	Section	Comment
		and wetlands, large woody debris zones, old trees areas, key geomorphological features (e.g. natural river levees) and key habitat zones for a range of species and key fish recruitment areas
Pp75	Bush Residential	This is contrary to the formal planning zones in the Planning Schemes and we need to find a better inclusive name – most of this land are under Green Wedge zonings - maybe call it Green Wedge Conservation living zones
	Floodplain lands	Developments in the floodplains is a statutory responsibility of MWC – this needs to be acknowledged - and MWC has some different approaches to than that set out in the <i>Guidelines for Development in Flood Affected Areas</i>
	Townships	The township of <b>Warburton</b> is classic example of where there is over development of infrastructure and facilities in the river zone. It attracts a high usage that is degrading the riverine environment and also aberrant behaviours. The developments come from a range of early eras and have turned their backs on the river, being more focused on the road and what used to be extensive timber railway sidings River plantings have been removed and altered. Boat launching at the Mayer Bridge ignores the significant hazards of the dangerous sharp rocky gorges downstream that become extremely exposed under summer autumn base passing flows. The threat of the development of the Sanitarium site and a demand from the developer to occupy more crown land needs to be revisited.
		<b>Yarra Bridge Reserve.</b> This site is under extreme over use pressures with the site being degraded by peak use in the swimming season it is extremely small and has limited water access capability. The billabong is alienated by the changes in the Rivers hydrological regime and only gets flows in events well above the 5year ARI. It is also an area under use by Rakali and Platypus. Care needs to made in increasing the use of this area. As Crown land the area is not controlled by the Planning Schemes. The site is also subject to aberrant behaviours and vandalism. Much previous rehabilitation work has been impacted by this.
		<b>Coranderrk Station.</b> Support the initiatives but sound a word of caution that multiple previous works have been lost due to lack of follow up management
		<b>Everard Park</b> – the river bed and banks are dynamic in this location with natural movements being observed. Care must be taken not to exacerbate this natural regime of channel change, particularly on tight eroding bend with provision of canoe access. Again, this site is Crow Land and therefore outside of the controls of the planning scheme.
Pp82	The Lower Rural Reach	The key issue here is that the majority of the River is alienated from the public access with few areas of Crown Reserve. It may be possible to negotiate some limited access

Page	Section	Comment
		to some private lands owned by enlightened people. This needs further discussion. The key issue in this reach is the myriad of old course and Billabong – all on private freehold and alienated from the river flooding processes by changes in Hydrology and past river clearing activities. There has been extensive revegetation works along the river and some stabilisation works. Generally, the frontages are used predominantly for grazing and many landowners have supported MWC’s fencing and revegetation programs. Few opportunities exist to create new activity nodes in this reach except maybe a renegotiation of utilage of the frontage at the Yarra Glen Pony Club site on Yarra View Road.
		Again, planning guidelines are unlikely to foster revegetation of key linkages
85	Next 10 years	Query the ability to attain planting and revegetation via the planning scheme -an ineffectual mechanism
		Protecting the billabong system – there is no physical threats to these. Many are old and most are on freehold land. Re-establishing Hydraulic connectivity is hard for most – due to the alienation processes discussed previously – need a 5-year ARI event equivalent and ENV flows area a wasteful way of achieving this. The proposal for an ESO for River ecology, vegetation and processes should be extended to cover these.
		Spadonis Reserve is very flood prone being in a depressed landscape and an old sub catchment junction
87	Directions for Future Land Use	
		<b>Yarra River Lands</b> Question the need to ensure public buildings and infrastructure are designed to complement the Yarra rivers natural landscape – there is unlikely to be any public buildings as this is mostly in a very deep floodplain created by Yering Gorge There is little opportunity create unobtrusive bushwalking tracks to allow people to connect to the Yarra – its is predominantly private freehold land
		<b>Bush Residential</b> – its hardly bush or residential -it’s a flat floodplain predominantly except for the Green wedge and higher land of the Christmas Hills on the north side – all heavily controlled at low density development – can we rename this to something more appropriate – low intrusion Yarra Corridor lands
		<b>Yarra Glen Township</b>
		Yarra Glen has always turned its back on the Yarra – a historical artefact of needing to be higher than the 100Year ARI flood level – linkages are poor and the opportunities for enjoyment of a wider spectrum is low – mainly devoted to sporting and agricultural show set ups – is a poor area for high end visitor use. The boat launch area on the point bar is off poor quality due to the dynamic river channel processes

Page	Section	Comment
		The adoption of an ESO for River Ecology and Landscape Protection is desperately needed
		<b>Billabong Systems</b>
		The majority of these exist on the private freehold and whilst an ESO may cover these – we have to remember the process of alienation has been long in the making – many are rarely flooded on an annual basis due to channel changes and changes in the Yarra Hydrological regime. Care needs to be taken in trying to reengage all of these as most have not been wetted for many years – last decent flooding was in 2004-5 when 2 x 5-year ARI events coincided over a 2-week period. Some have voluntarily been incorporated into stream frontage site sites through MWC’s stream frontage management program. It will be hard to achieve significant engagement through environmental flows. Each Billabong has its own unique connectivity regime and this needs to be understood in detail before a generalised control is considered. Many do not serve as a key riverine ecology process like many norther billabong systems – too dry for too long and have no fish breeding or organic storage and water quality management role.
92		<b>Warrandyte - Yering Landscape protection</b>
		Increase ability to experience by Boat – seek an arrangement with Scouts Australia to use the Clifford Park Boat ramp site – its fantastic Care needs to be taken to increasing canoe traffic as there are sections of high-risk rapids and rock bars which are dangerous, e.g. Yering Gorge and Wonga Park Gorge areas - certainly not areas for novices There needs to be a review of the flows through this area particularly in the Summer Autumn period – low flows and the diurnal flow rates due to off peak pumping at Yering Gorge PS – the river has two flow or steeped regimes a low flow and a slightly increased flow. This controls the flows over key rock bars and rapids – too low is very dangerous
93		<b>Watsons Creek Biodiversity Corridor</b>
		Don’t know that the vegetation in the Watson Creek corridor replenishes the Yarra R much – a bad description – there are only small flow contributions Support the intent – but MWC’s Operations at Winneke have had serious impacts from spills and discharges. The area still needs more work to finish off the massive revegetation and weed program from the confluence back up to the Eltham Road. Deer are also rampant in this area. The lower backwater area near the confluence is an important platypus refugia area

## The Suburban Reach

The key issue in this reach is the high level of access uses – many small areas are subject to degrading influences from high usage levels. It is suggested that some additional nodes be developed for a controlled level of use – such as Pound Bend, Longridge park and Tikilara Park which are currently under utilised or developed. This of course requires investment by PV. Of course, we must also balance the usage with the need to conserve and protect.

A major issue is the desire for continuous access – simply some of the steep terrain will not allow this and there are areas where mountain bikers are degrading the fragile bushland on terrain that cannot absorb the pressure. Again, there needs to be a more detailed Land capability analysis to ascertain the ability of the land systems to be able to adsorb the uses spectrum.

The ability to establish “new” habitat for fish etc is limited – by wetted depths due to reduced flows, multiple pre-existing rock controls along the river and lack of large woody debris – significant past desnagging. Its hard to see how this can be effectively increased.

The notion of an environmental playground is strange – is this an oxymoron? We need to explain what this is – is it an area where we allow the environment to be degraded over time??

Page	Section	Comment
	<b>Directions for land uses</b>	Support the interim planning controls and for them to be formalised
		Not only need diverse park landscapes but need to have a balance of land uses based on capability to withstand use pressure and or to ensure a solid conservation ethic rather than a human centric utilisation
	<b>Bushland Residential</b>	Please find a better term Conservation Living??
		Need to tackle some very prominent gauche developments that stand out – e.g. Warrandyte - need view line mitigation to screen very prominent residences and other buildings
	<b>Warrandyte Township</b>	It is hard to get old development to be reoriented to face the river. Given the 100 Year ARI flood levels the development is limited – there few sites that could be redeveloped
		Improving public space and visitor facilities – this is very hard as the available footprint area is very limited – Suggest that minimal further facilities is a way to control overuse potential
		Revegetation / Planting of the River bank – there has been multiple revegetation programs – all with varying success – the pressure from use and lack of maintenance has not helped establishment. Most batters are too steep for successful planting
	<b>Suburban</b>	The institution of planning controls is critical. However, retention of vegetation screening will be hard given the Bushfire hazards of the area. This will be hard to achieve of private frontages without a support program to landowners

		The impending climate change is already impacting on the vegetation communities with significant loss of some species as drying occurs in the Humevale formation. Retention of higher canopy trees such as <i>E. melliodora</i> is going to be a challenge.
	<b>Warrandyte Templestowe Parklands</b>	Cross river Connections will be hard to achieve and likely to be very expensive due to the flood heights and the distances.
		Support sensitive development of Laughing Waters, Pontville homestead Tikilara and Petty's Orchard
		Are needed on canoeing some of the sections as rock bars and rapids are dangerous in low flow conditions
	<b>Lower Plenty – Eltham parklands</b>	Support rehabilitation initiatives for Montpellier and Muri=unduke wetlands but suggest hydrological changes may make this hard to achieve
	<b>Bulleen Precinct</b>	Reengagement of the Bolin Bolin and Annulus billabongs may be hard due to significant hydrological changes – see previous discussions. Bolin Bolin is likely to be impacted by the NELP impacts on groundwater
	<b>The Chandler Gorge /Yarra bend Park</b>	And important area where private land encroaches on the north side – need to establish agreements with private owners about rehabilitation of the frontages – need a support scheme