

Yarrowee River and Tributaries

River Corridor Masterplan Summary Report

City of Ballarat

THOMSON HAY LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS
in collaboration with Roger Thomas

June 2020

THOMSON HAY
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

Acknowledgement of Country

We respectfully acknowledge the Wadawurrung people, the traditional custodians of the land in which the Yarrowee River and tributaries flow. We recognise our continuing responsibility to care for country at these sites. We pay our respects to Elders past, present, and future and acknowledge their spiritual connection to Country.

Lead Organisation

City of Ballarat

Funding Partner Organisations

Central Highlands Water
Department of Environment, Land Water and Planning

Stakeholder and Community Engagement

Stakeholder and community engagement was an important part of this project. We would like to thank the following groups and the individual community members for their contribution to our project:

- Bunanyung Landscape Alliance
- Leigh Catchment Group
- Friends of Canadian Corridor
- Ballarat Environment Network
- Castlemaine Goldfields Pty Ltd (Ballarat Gold Mine)
- Federation University

The following organisations have guided, reviewed, contributed and commented on this report:

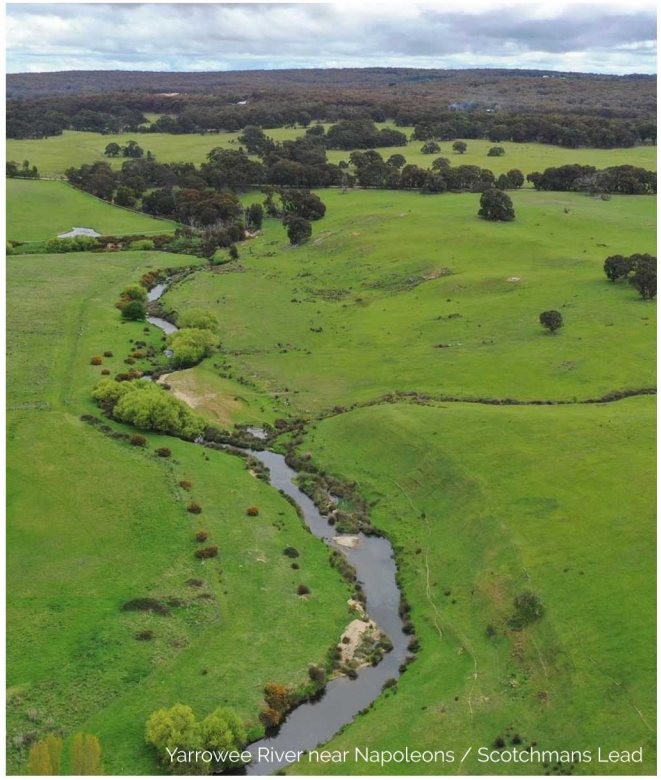
- City of Ballarat
- Central Highlands Water
- Corangamite CMA
- DELWP

Project Design Team

This project was led by Thomson Hay Landscape Architects in collaboration with Roger Thomas (naturalist consultant).

Contents

Vision 3
About the Plan 4
Recommendations. . . . . 5 - 6
Priority Projects. 7



Yarrowee River near Napoleons / Scotchmans Lead

Vision

The next 25 years

The Yarrowee River and Tributaries: River Corridor Master Plan 2020 expresses a vision for the river corridor for the next 25 years. It is designed to protect, enhance and harness this valued community asset, building on the success of ongoing community engagement that has informed restoration and improvement works over the past 25 years.

A vision for the Yarrowee River Corridor

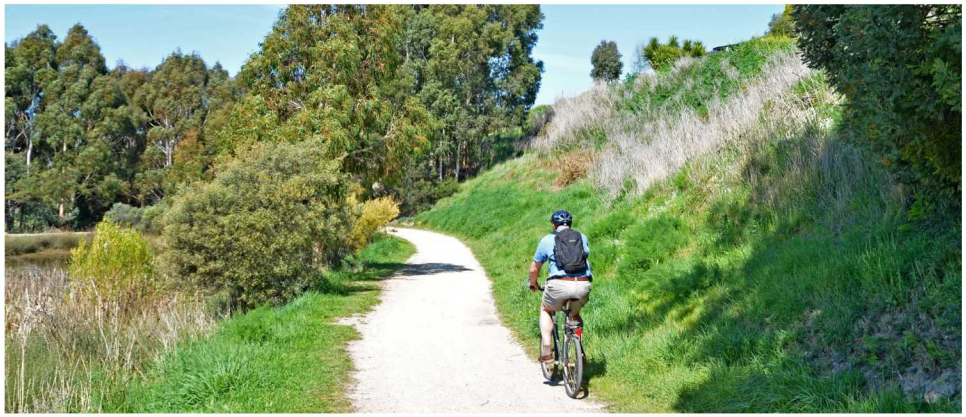
An accessible and welcoming open space that brings people together to connect with each other and enjoy health and wellbeing activities. A beautiful place that supports a healthy environment and ecosystem and encourages people to connect with nature. A unique place with a strong identity that celebrates the richness of Ballarat's heritage and people from our indigenous origins until today. A special place that our whole community is proud of.

Improving liveability and the sustainability of our city

Improving our waterways environment will provide significant social and health and wellbeing benefits for locals and visitors as well as ecological and environmental benefits by:

- Improving access to recreation and active transport options and enhancing the experience of users
- Improving ecosystem biodiversity, improving regeneration of indigenous vegetation and enhancing the landscape character of the corridor
- Improving water quality and enhancing habitat
- Minimising the impact of sludge and contamination movement down the catchment
- Improving access and amenity and increasing active recreation and socialising opportunities for the community
- Minimising damage caused by development, improving the ecological and environmental health of the corridor and supporting access to the open space corridor
- Encouraging community ownership of this valued community asset
- Ensuring sustainable management and improving the function, habitat and biodiversity health, amenity and aesthetics of the waterways







About the Plan

Introduction

The Yarrowee River and Tributaries: River Corridor Master Plan 2020 (the Plan) is informed by engagement with stakeholders and the Ballarat community, an analysis of the existing condition of the waterway and an evaluation of improvement works undertaken over the past 25 years. It will guide decisions about the future development, management and maintenance of the corridor, including funding and resource allocation. The Plan:

- Expresses a vision for the future of the river corridor focused on benefits to the community
- Addresses current and future issues and challenges, from significant residential development and population growth to climate change and a projected increase in stormwater flows
- Identifies areas with limited access, poor connections, degradation of the waterways and vegetation, and low quality amenity
- Outlines recommendations for action grouped under eight themes
- Includes a Master Plan for each of five Reaches identified: Northern, Central, Southern, Rural and Tributaries
- Identification and design development of 4 priority projects

Project area

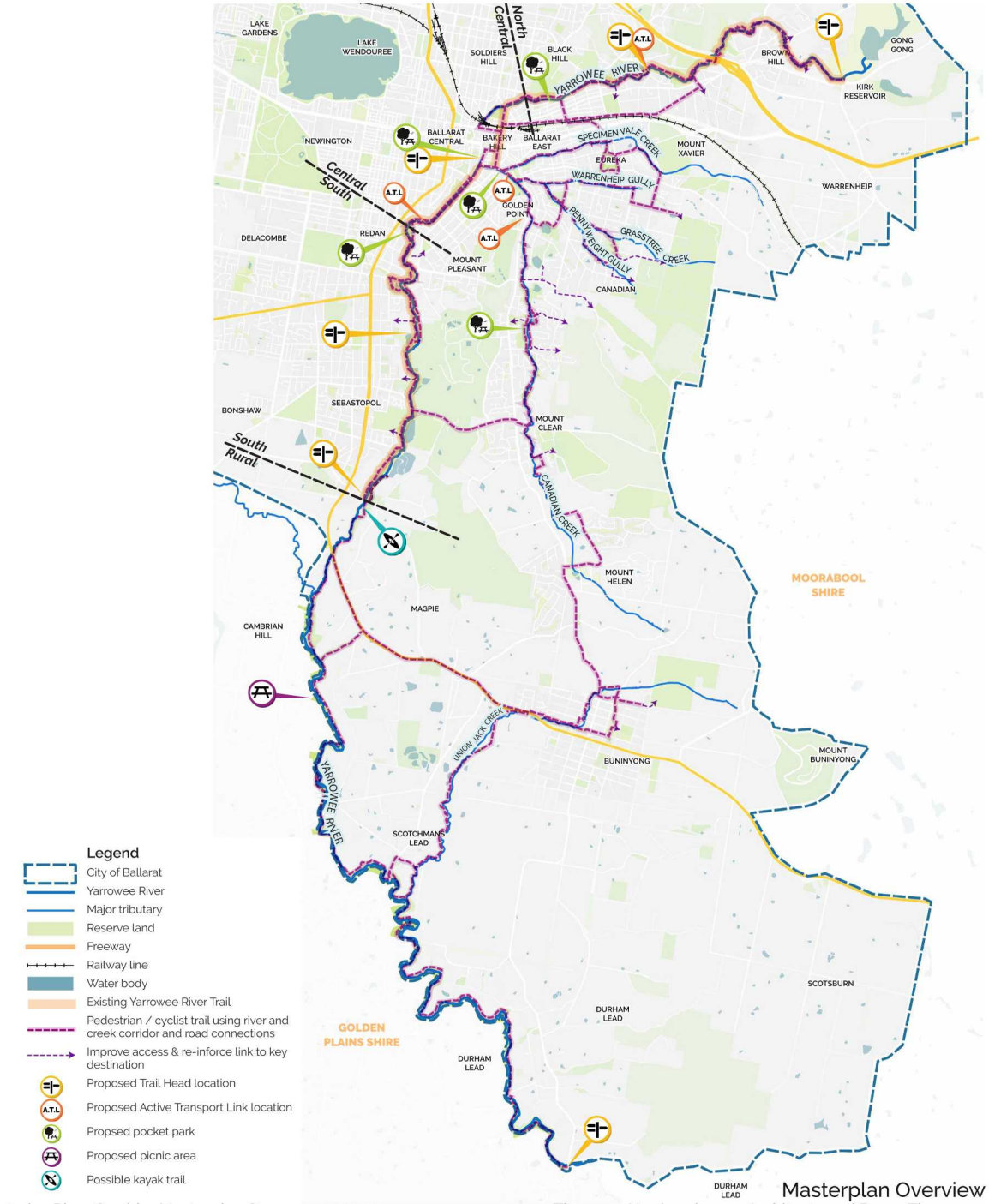
The project area covers the waterways - 38km of the river and over 35km of tributary creeks that flow into it - and the adjacent reserve land (see map on this page).

Strategic alignment

The Plan aligns with City of Ballarat strategic documents including the Ballarat Strategy (2015), the Urban Forest Strategy, Greening Ballarat and the Ballarat City Integrated Water Management Plan.

Project process and consultation

- Extensive analysis of the existing condition of the project area (including site visits)
- Evaluation of the works undertaken as part of the Landscape Master Plan and Management Plan developed in 1995
- Establishment of a Project Working Group
- Engagement with stakeholders and the Ballarat community
- Development of key recommendations
- Undertake detailed design for priority projects



Masterplan Overview

Recommendations for Action

The plan outlines recommendations for both general and site-specific actions which are grouped under the following eight themes.

1. Access and trails (pedestrians and cyclists)

To improve access to recreation and active transport options and to enhance the experience of users, recommendations include:

- Improve existing connections and create new connections between the river and tributaries as well as links to nearby key natural and built assets
- Create active transport links that allow people to walk or ride into the CBD or connect to key services (train station, schools, shops)
- Upgrade existing trails, including improving accessibility, improving connectivity across waterways and upgrading to shared pathways in high use areas
- Develop new trails, including local loop trails in high use areas and around features of interest and long loop trails to link suburbs and townships
- Increase opportunities for users to interact safely with water
- Provide high quality visitor infrastructure, amenity and safety
- Provide high quality visitor experiences by developing themed trails

2. Rehabilitation, revegetation and vegetation management

To improve ecosystem biodiversity, improve regeneration of indigenous vegetation and enhance the landscape character of the corridor, recommendations include:

- Implement ongoing programs of proactive weed, pest, grazing and erosion control
- Implement ongoing land management, planting and maintenance programs
- Develop in-stream bed and bank naturalisation programs

3. Water quality and wetlands

To improve water quality and enhance habitat and amenity, recommendations include:

- Improve litter control and prevention measures
- Increase opportunities to improve environmental flows
- Protect and enhance existing wetlands and develop new off-stream wetlands
- Retain, protect and enhance existing billabongs

4. Sludge and contaminated sites

To minimise the impact of sludge and contamination movement down the catchment, recommendations include:

- Develop a sludge and contamination management plan
- Investigate gold recovery and rehabilitation options and the capping of contaminated sites



Yarrowee River instream vegetation at Ditchfield Bushland Reserve



Recommendations continued

5. Recreation and parks

To improve access and amenity and increase active recreation and socialising opportunities for the community, recommendations include:

- Upgrade facilities at major trailheads
- Develop pocket parks in areas of underused open space along the corridor, new picnic facilities at key sites and new recreation and fitness facilities

6. Land tenure and future land development

To minimise damage caused by development (especially on flood prone land), improve the ecological and environmental health of the corridor and support access to the open space corridor, recommendations include:

- Ensure planning policy supports key recommendations in this Plan
- Review and develop planning controls specific to the waterways

7. Community engagement and education

To encourage community ownership of this valued community asset, recommendations include:

- Support engagement and participation by the community, with specific engagement with groups such as the Wadawurrung people, landcare groups schools and local artists
- Develop a strong Yarrowee River brand
- Promote awareness, knowledge and understanding of the river environment

8. Sustainable management of waterways

To ensure sustainable management and improve the function, habitat and biodiversity health, amenity and aesthetics of the waterways, recommendations include:

- Ensure the City of Ballarat waterways management team is appropriately resourced and trained
- Encourage and support local land management groups to continue their work
- Encourage and support collaboration and partnerships with stakeholders
- Identify areas of Aboriginal cultural heritage sensitivity
- Develop and implement catchment management principles and an emergency management strategy



Aerial view of the Yarrowee River near CHW wastewater treatment ponds

Priority Projects

Priority Projects have been selected for further development by City of Ballarat and the Project Working Group from the recommended actions.

These projects allow for small scale testing of ideas along the waterways to develop best practice model projects that may be applied elsewhere. Each of the Priority Projects includes a concept plan, a vision, detailed description and benefits and suggested staging.

These projects provide a 'ready-to-go' brief suitable for funding application or further detailed design for short term delivery.

The four Priority Projects are:

1. Trailheads, signage and interpretation.
   - Southern trailhead at Dowcra Street
   - Prest Street lookout
2. Sunnyside Mill Parklands
3. Revitalisation of Redan Wetlands.
4. Rural Trail Extension - upgrade reserve from Dowcra Street to Midland Highway

