

The Yarra Bend Park Strategy Plan is approved for implementation. Its purpose is to direct the management and development of the Park until the Plan is reviewed. A Draft Plan for the area was published in July 1998. The submissions received have been considered in developing this approved Plan.

Copies of the Plan can be obtained from:

Parks Victoria
378 Cotham Road
Kew VIC 3101

For further information on this plan please contact:

Parks Victoria Information Centre
Phone 13 1963

YARRA BEND PARK STRATEGY PLAN



April 1999

© Crown (State of Victoria) 1998

A Victorian Government Publication. This publication is copyright. No part may be reproduced by any process except in accordance with the provisions of the *Copyright Act 1986*.

Published in April 1999 by Parks Victoria
378 Cotham Road, Kew, Victoria 3101.

Cover: Studley Park Boathouse

Printed on recycled paper to help save our natural environment

FOREWORD

Yarra Bend Park is a rich bushland oasis with contrasting riverine and landscaped settings, located within the densely populated inner suburbs of Melbourne. The winding river valley is the major focus of the park, supporting valuable flora and fauna links between the Yarra River and Merri Creek Valley. Melburnians and tourists alike can explore a range of experiences within the park from seclusion amidst a tranquil river environment to busy picnic settings and active sports. The Studley Park Boathouse and the 18 hole public golf course feature prominently as recreational attractions for many visitors. The park's Koori and post settlement history overlays its environmental and recreational values enhancing the importance of this park to both the local and regional population.

This plan provides the strategic direction for management of the park over the next 5 years. It identifies the diverse values and provides a management framework focused on sustaining the environment within a climate of increasing visitation and recreational demands.

The plan has been developed in consultation with the community and their contribution is gratefully acknowledged. The continued participation and support of the wider community is essential to achieve the long term aim of ensuring this natural bushland setting within inner Melbourne is protected and enhanced, and maintains its current diverse appeal.

Mark Stone
Chief Executive
Parks Victoria

The Hon Haddon Storey
Chairperson
Yarra Bend Trust

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

HISTORY

In 1933, the Kew & Heidelberg Lands Act established the Yarra Bend Park Trust to manage and administer the Park. In March 1997, the Yarra Bend Park Trust entered into a Management Services Agreement with Parks Victoria to manage the day to day operation of Yarra Bend Park on behalf of the Trust and to update the 1990 Management Plan through the preparation of this five year Strategy Plan.

THE PARK CONTEXT

The Park is located some 6km to the north-east of central Melbourne, in the heart of densely populated inner suburbs. Yarra Bend Park serves both local and regional open space markets. Within the region, the Park provides a unique setting and experience. The informal Australian bushland setting, the picnic areas and the River allow Yarra Bend Park to offer a great range of recreation experiences within the region.

THE STRATEGY PLAN

This strategy plan builds on the existing 1990 Yarra Bend Park Management Plan, which set a clear direction for much of the Park at the time.

The main objectives of this Strategy Plan are:

- to identify key future strategic directions for the management of Yarra Bend Park;
- to outline key actions which need to be implemented over the next five years;
- to identify the main strategies for the implementation of the Strategy Plan.

The Strategy Plan is to be read in conjunction with the Environmental Management and the Heritage Conservation Plans for the Park. These provide significant additional detail in relation to environmental and cultural heritage matters.

THE VISION

The vision developed for the park through this plan states:

Yarra Bend Park will be known throughout Melbourne as the bushland park in the city. It will sustain a diverse environment and play an important habitat role in the Yarra corridor. Its variety of landscape and natural elements, with the river as its central focus, accommodates a range of leisure pursuits from bushland seclusion and isolation, to recreation and organised sports. Interpreting the Park's rich cultural history and environmental importance will add to the many reasons people will return to enjoy this regional parkland.

PARK VALUES

Values for each element of the park have been established as a basis for the strategic directions.

ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES

- Yarra Bend Park is a vital link in the fauna corridors of the Yarra and Merri Creek Valleys.
- Approximately 100 hectares of the Park is covered by indigenous vegetation of varied quality and contains 117 significant flora species.
- It provides habitat for 193 fauna species, including some registered under international agreements and some listed under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act.

VISITOR VALUES

- The Park offers a diverse and extensive bushland within only 6 kilometres of the city centre.
- It offers a wide range of facilities catering for activities from walking, picnicking, cycling and pleasure boating to golfing, arts activities, fishing and organised sports.

LANDSCAPE VALUES

- The deep and winding river valley, 12 km long within the Park, provides opportunities for seclusion and a sense of isolation from the urban surrounds.

CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUES

- The Park's rich cultural history, both Koori and post-settlement, is a significant element of the Park.
- It is the largest remaining area of natural bushland within inner Melbourne.

PARK WIDE STRATEGIES

Strategies have been developed for the Park in general and for each zone within the park. The strategies have been based around the established character of each zone of the park. An overview of the most significant strategies follows.

RISK MANAGEMENT

The actions and strategies contained in the 1997 Risk Evaluation and Assessment report will be undertaken to ensure a safe environment for Park visitors and staff.

THE ENVIRONMENT

The greatest concentration of resources will go into protecting and enhancing the areas of important environmental value. The day to day implementation of these strategies will be guided by the detailed Environmental Management Plan (EMP) for the Park. This EMP addresses:

- *The River and riparian areas;*
- *Existing vegetation management;*
- *Weed control;*
- *Revegetation;*
- *Pest animals;*
- *Habitat management and enhancement*

Yarra Bend Park contains areas of both high and low environmental values. Consequently, environmental management strategies reflect the environmental values of individual areas and ensure the maintenance of flora and fauna diversity within the Park. Strategies will concentrate on:

- improvement of the riparian zone;
- species specific habitat improvements;
- revegetation and weed control within areas of high environmental value;
- continuing pest animal control.

VISITOR MANAGEMENT

A 20% increase in visitor numbers to the Park is expected by the year 2007. The Park can absorb this increase, provided the additional visitors are directed into areas where the increased use can be accommodated without negative impact on the environment.

With the implementation of the strategies contained in this Plan, increases in visitation are expected in:

- the Ovals and Loop Road area, (including Deep Rock and the Golf Course Reception Centre);
- Andrews Reserve area; and
- The Studley Park Reception and Par 3 Golf Course areas.

A reduction in the proportion of Park users is expected at Studley Park.

The park will focus on the following visitor groups to broaden its attraction:

- family groups with children;
- tourists;
- large social groups;
- river users; and
- diverse cultural groups.

Visitor Facilities

- Recent upgrades have seen an improvement in the Park's facilities but further work is required to upgrade seating, viewing points and drinking taps.
- The creation of a significant new picnic and playground area at Deep Rock will relieve pressure on existing high use areas in the Park and diversify the range of visitor facilities.

Sports Facilities

- Sports facilities will remain an element of the Park where demand remains strong and facilities can be maintained to an acceptable standard.
- Maintaining the 18 hole golf course to a high standard and maximising its use will see its attraction broaden.
- The rationalisation of sports grounds from 13 to 7 will better reflect current demand.

PROGRAMS AND MARKETING

- Programs will be developed within the Park to increase the range of recreation opportunities available and the range of users.
- The Park's profile and use, particularly to new and under-represented users groups, will be improved through the development of specific marketing and signage strategies.
- The underdeveloped markets of overseas and national tourists is a targeted strategy.

ACCESS AND CIRCULATION

Access and circulation will be improved through:

- upgrading of entry points to the Park;
- development of looped trails from major visitor use areas;
- establishing a hierarchy of paths and trails; and
- controlling access points and number of informal trails.

CULTURAL HERITAGE

Strategies for managing the Park's important cultural history will be based on an acknowledgment and respect of significant former occupations and uses of the Park areas, and the adoption of conservation policies as recommended in the Yarra Bend Park Cultural Heritage Management Plan.

IMPLEMENTATION

Support for Friends groups in their efforts to improve the Park's environment will be continued.

Priorities for implementation will address:

- ensuring public safety and security;
- protecting and enhancing existing environmental values and diversity;
- improving the quality and diversity of visitor experience.

Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	IV
1 BACKGROUND	1
1.1 Regional and Visitor Context	1
1.2 Management, Trust and Parks Victoria	2
1.3 Planning Process	2
2 STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS	3
2.1 Vision	3
2.2 Park Values	3
2.3 Guiding Principles	4
3 PARK WIDE STRATEGIES	6
3.1 Risk Management	6
3.2 The Environment	6
3.3 Visitor Management	9
3.4 Marketing & Information	12
3.5 Access and Circulation	14
3.6 Cultural Heritage	14
3.7 Park Character & Settings	15
4 ZONE STRATEGIES	19
Zone 1 Yarra River Management Zone	19
Zone 2 Westfield / Fairlea Management Area	19
Zone 3 River Bend Management Area	21
Zone 4 Golf Course Management Area	23
Zone 5 Trig Point Management Area	24
Zone 6 Willsmere Management Area	25
Zone 7 Studley Park Management Area	26

5	IMPLEMENTATION	30
5.1	Management Resources	30
5.2	Consultation and Coordination	30
5.3	Priorities	30
5.4	Implementation Phases	30
5.5	Monitoring and Review	31
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	32

Maps

Map 1	Key Initiatives	End of Plan
Map 2	Indigenous Vegetation Condition & Geological Features	End of Plan
Map 3	Park Management Zones	End of Plan

1 BACKGROUND

Parks Victoria, in conjunction with the Yarra Bend Park Trust, commissioned the preparation of a Strategy Plan to provide a five year strategic framework for the future directions of Yarra Bend Park. This strategy plan builds on the existing 1990 Yarra Bend Park Management Plan, which set a clear direction for much of the Park at the time. In the intervening seven years however, significant changes have occurred and this Strategy Plan is aimed at reviewing the previous work to chart the direction of the Park over the next five years.

The main objectives of this Strategy Plan are:

- to identify key future strategic directions for the management of Yarra Bend Park;
- to outline key actions over the next five years;
- to identify the main strategies for the Park.

The Strategy Plan draws together and is to be read in conjunction with the Environmental Management and the Heritage Conservation Plans for the Park. These provide significant additional detail in relation to environmental and cultural heritage matters.

1.1 REGIONAL AND VISITOR CONTEXT

1.1.1 THE PARK WITHIN THE REGION

The Park is located 6km to the north-east of central Melbourne, in the heart of densely populated inner suburbs. Public transport to the Park is limited and concentrated on the main roads.

Yarra Bend Park serves both local and regional open space markets. Within the region, the park provides a unique park setting and experience. Though the central Melbourne region appears well served with open space, most of the parkland offers very formal European and Victorian era landscapes, which accommodate a limited range of recreation opportunities. The informal Australian bushland setting, the picnic

areas and the River allow Yarra Bend Park to offer a greater range of recreation experiences within the region. Royal Park to the west, Darebin Parklands to the north-east, Bundoora Park to the north and further east, Yarra Valley Parklands, are significant regional parks having overlapping user catchments with Yarra Bend Park.

Fairfield Park and Quarries Park, located adjacent to Yarra Bend Park provide local park environments and children's playgrounds. Fairfield Boathouse is a major metropolitan attraction and the amphitheatre at Fairfield Park a significant regional facility.

1.1.2 THE PARK CATCHMENT

Yarra Bend draws 46% of its visitors from the local area (defined as within 5km of the centre of the Park.) Eleven percent of Melbourne's population (344,000 people) live within this catchment.

Some key demographic features of the park catchment are:

- large proportions of households with no children (either single or couple only households);
- a significant proportion of people from non-English speaking backgrounds (particularly in the City of Yarra);
- the local park catchment has a much smaller proportion of young people than Melbourne does generally and a higher proportion of the 20-29 age group. This is reflected in the large proportion of dwellings which are apartments, flats and units with nearly one third of the local catchment living in this type of home;
- one third of all Melbourne's overseas tourists stay within the local catchment of the park but just 1% of park visitors are overseas tourists.

1.1.3 CURRENT PARK VISITORS

With a significant proportion of visitors coming from the immediate surrounding areas, the Park clearly has an important role to play in providing local open space opportunities.

Yarra Bend's visitor profile differs from aggregated visitor data for metropolitan parks managed by Parks Victoria in several ways.

The park attracts a higher proportion of people in the 20-29 and over 60 age groups and a lower proportion of people aged between 30-39 years. Families with children are typically a significant visitor group to metropolitan parks, but both the local catchment and the park visitation reflects a much lower proportion of families with children.

Other characteristics of the visitor profile indicate Yarra Bend visitors are generally highly educated with a significant proportion in professional or management positions. Indicative of the features of the park, visitors have a strong sports and fitness focus.

The majority of people visit the park in small groups using walking tracks, interacting with the river, and visiting the Studley Park and Loop Road area.

1.1.4 RECREATION ACTIVITIES

The Park currently offers a range of water and land based recreation and sporting opportunities from canoeing, rowing and fishing to cycling, jogging, team sports such as cricket, competitive fly fishing and golf, through to the less active pastimes of picnicking and playing with children. The most popular activities undertaken at Yarra Bend Park however, are walking and walking the dog.

The Park's terrain and layout have seen it become popular for off-road cycling and on-road triathlon cycling training. Some popular activities have not appeared in the Park and could be catered for in the future. The potential for the Park to accommodate more sporting competitions in cycling, triathlon and biathlon events and less strenuous fun runs could be further developed.

1.2 MANAGEMENT, TRUST AND PARKS VICTORIA

In 1933, the Kew & Heidelberg Lands Act established the Yarra Bend Park Trust to manage and administer the Park. The Trust comprises one councillor from each of the three adjoining municipal councils, Yarra, Boroondara and Darebin, together with 4 persons appointed by the Victorian Government.

In March 1997, the Yarra Bend Park Trust entered into a Management Services Agreement with Parks Victoria. Under this Agreement, Parks Victoria was given the responsibility of managing the day to day operation of Yarra Bend Park on behalf of the Trust. The Agreement also required Parks Victoria, in consultation with the Trust, to update the 1990 Management Plan through the preparation of this five year Strategy Plan.

1.3 PLANNING PROCESS

The planning process for the Strategy Plan involved three key stages, these being;

- research and analysis,
- defining the strategic framework, and,
- development of the specific strategies and final plan.

Consultation with management and community stakeholders and the wider community was integral to each stage in the process.

2 STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

2.1 VISION

Yarra Bend Park will be known throughout Melbourne as the bushland park in the city. It will sustain a diverse environment and play an important habitat role in the Yarra corridor. Its variety of landscape and natural elements, with the river as its central focus, accommodates a range of leisure pursuits from bushland seclusion and isolation, to recreation and organised sports. Interpreting the Park's rich cultural history and environmental importance will add to the many reasons people will return to enjoy this regional parkland.

2.2 PARK VALUES

The major values of the Park are summarised below:

Environmental Values

Yarra Bend Park has important environmental values due to its primary role in the fauna corridors of the Yarra and Merri Creek Valleys, providing an important link in the network of local, regional and national habitat corridors. As well as a plethora of invertebrate species, the Park provides habitat for a total of 193 observed species, including:

- 7 bird species listed under JAMBA and CAMBA (Japanese/Chinese Migratory Bird Agreement, respectively);
- 5 bird and 1 fish species listed under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act;
- two fish species which are vulnerable in Victoria and four that are rare in Victoria; and
- 14 fauna species listed as rare or threatened by Department of Natural Resources and Environment.

In relation to flora, approximately 100 hectares of the Park is covered by indigenous vegetation of varied quality. One hundred and seventeen significant flora species are present, 68 being of local importance and 49 of regional importance. The most extensive

vegetation type, namely Valley Forest, is regionally significant.

Additionally, it is situated on the interface of two geological types and provides a number of clearly observable geological formations.

Visitor Values

The Park's key value is its unique offering of diverse and extensive bushland within only 6 kilometres of the city centre. This juxtaposition of extensive areas of indigenous vegetation in the midst of highly urbanised surrounds, the "bushland in the City", is one of the most valued characteristics of the Park. The bushland character provides a sense of tranquillity and the opportunity for seclusion and isolation in some areas of the Park.

Within this overall character, a wide range of experiences are available, including walking, cycling, pleasure boating, canoeing, picnicking, barbecuing, socialising, relaxing, formal or organised sports, nature studying, environmental activities, fly casting, playing, dog-walking, golfing, arts activities, orienteering, fishing, sightseeing and many more.

Supporting this diversity of experience is a wide range of facilities including an extensive trail network, picnic and barbecue facilities, 18 hole and 9 hole par 3 golf courses, boathouse, kiosks and restaurant, extensive active sports fields, fly-casting pool and a myriad of other facilities.



Landscape Values

The landscape qualities of Yarra Bend Park set it clearly apart from other parks in Melbourne. The meeting of the western basalt plains with the silurian mudstones of the eastern suburbs results in a landscape of dramatic contrasts.

The River is the major focus of Yarra Bend, connecting the Park to the rest of Melbourne. The deep and winding river valley, 12 km long within the Park, provides opportunities for seclusion and a sense of isolation from the urban surrounds.

High above the river, dominating cliffs provide commanding views of the city skyline. Interspersed with this complex landscape is a wide variety of open spaces, from small clearings in bushland, through open grassland areas to large sports fields and golf courses.

Extensive areas of indigenous vegetation contrast sharply with the urban surrounds. Additionally, small pockets of historic exotic plantings create attractive highlights in the landscape.

Cultural Heritage Values

The Park's rich cultural history, both Koori and post-settlement, is a significant element of the Park. It is the largest remaining area of natural bushland within inner Melbourne. Studley Park has remained so due to its reservation for recreation purposes since 1877. It is significant for the accommodation provided to late nineteenth century public institutions, as well as its association with a number of notable 19th century artists. The former Burns boathouse (now Studley Park boathouse) is the oldest on the Yarra, and possibly Victoria, and has been in continuous use since 1863.

2.3 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Parks Victoria's and the Yarra Bend Trust's strategic approach to responding to the issues facing the Park and realising this Vision will be underpinned by the following guiding principles:

Natural Environment

- The natural environment of the park will be protected and maintained commensurate with the environmental values of individual areas.
- The natural environment will be protected to maintain its important role in the Yarra Valley and Merri Creek habitat corridors.
- The diverse range of ecotypes and natural features throughout the Park will be protected.

Park Character

- The distinctive character of the Park will be reinforced by:
 - maintaining and enhancing the "bushland in the City" character; and
 - retaining an appropriate balance between informal recreation and active sporting facilities that support a diversity of Park uses.
- The river's central role in the Park will be reinforced by improving access to and use of the river.
- The unique built form and landscape character of the Park will be reinforced through specific guidelines for the design of new elements within the Park.

Park Visitors

- The Park will provide a range of experiences that is balanced between offering opportunities for seclusion and isolation with recreation and organised sports.
- The facilities required to support a diverse range of experiences throughout the Park will be appropriate in quality, number and diversity to support the needs of existing and new visitors. This includes facilities for passive and informal recreation (such as walking, cycling and dog-walking) as well as active and formal recreation (such as organised sport and golf.)
- The Park will accommodate a greater number of visitors from a wider area of Melbourne in an environmentally sustainable way. This will mean dispersing use to specific areas that have the capacity for increased visitation.

Cultural Heritage

- The remaining elements of the Park's Koori and post-European settlement history will be protected and the natural and cultural history of the

Park made accessible to visitors through interpretation, information and promotion, where appropriate.

Management

- Clearly defined and sustainable priorities for resource allocation will underpin Park management actions. This prioritisation will apply to the maintenance and protection of areas of recognised environmental importance, as well as the provision of visitor services.
- Community involvement will be encouraged, supported and guided for the benefit of the Park and community.

Map 1, The Strategy Plan, shows the key strategies for the Park.



3 PARK WIDE STRATEGIES

The Park Values and Guiding Principles provide a base from which detailed objectives for Environmental Management, Visitor Management and Cultural Heritage Management can be developed to guide strategies in each of these key areas.

This section describes the various strategies that apply to the Park as a whole, while Section 4 describes strategies for individual zones. Strategies related to the Yarra River are dealt with in detail in that section also.

3.1 RISK MANAGEMENT

A comprehensive Risk Evaluation and Assessment has been carried out for the Park in 1997. The actions and strategies contained in this report will be undertaken to ensure a safe environment for Park visitors and staff.

3.2 THE ENVIRONMENT

While the Park contains a number of areas of high environmental value (refer Map 2, Vegetation Condition & Geology), the remaining areas of the Park are of lower environmental value. Consequently, environmental management strategies need to reflect the environmental values of individual areas and ensure the maintenance of flora and fauna diversity within the Park.

With a total area of 233 ha and approximately 100 ha of indigenous vegetation, the Park's bushland is distributed mostly as a linear strip, roughly following the course of the Yarra River and Merri Creek. It acts as both a reservoir for fauna and a corridor for local, regional and national fauna movement. Additionally, it is an important resource as a seedbank of local provenance seeds, enhancing the genetic diversity of the region.

3.2.1 ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS

There are a number of threats to the indigenous flora and fauna values of the Park, including:

- **Weed invasion**, which reduces the opportunities for regeneration of indigenous flora through competition and altered environmental characteristics, such as soil and light penetration. Additionally, weeds can act as a harbour for pest animals such as foxes and rabbits.
- **Exotic animals** in the Park create a threat to conservation potential. The threats come from animals which have found their way into the environment and are living in the wild, including rabbits, foxes, feral cats and dogs, exotic birds, introduced fish and feral bees and wasps. Threats exist also from uncontrolled companion animals brought to the Park.
- **Soil erosion** and compaction is a significant issue in the Park due to the fragile erodible soils and the levels of use found within particular areas of the Park.
- **Stormwater drainage** from roads and the urban surroundings enters the Park in a number of locations and carries unnaturally high nutrient loads and other toxins.
- Wood removal and visitors gaining access to the bank have caused occasional **damage to vegetation**.
- **Uncontrolled fire** can result in increased weed invasion, loss of hollows for dependant species and stimulates both weed and indigenous species seed germination.
- While **flooding** is a natural process, the increase due to urbanisation upstream, as well as other catchment management regimes, (including desnagging and removal of flood zones,) has increased the impact within the Park and particularly increases river bank erosion.

3.2.2 STRATEGIES

The areas of quality vegetation condition are identified on Map 2. The greatest concentration of resources will go into protecting and enhancing these areas along the lines defined in the strategies that follow. It should be noted that the

day to day implementation of these strategies will be guided by the detailed Environmental Management Plan (EMP) for the Park. This EMP addresses:

- *The River and riparian areas;*
- *Existing vegetation management;*
- *Weed control;*
- *Revegetation;*
- *Pest animals;*
- *Habitat management and enhancement.*

Yarra River and Merri Creek

- Concentrate effort on improving the quality of the riparian zone vegetation through the entire Park, reinforcing the substantial vegetative edge along both sides of the River. Commence enhancement from the areas of most intact vegetation.
- Encourage the development of a species-specific strategy for the protection and habitat improvement of the Australian Grayling (*Prototroctes maraena*).
- In relation to storm-water outlets within the Park, liaise with adjacent local government authorities to improve water quality in the Yarra and Merri Creek, particularly through the installation of silt and litter traps on all inlets. In appropriate drainage lines, create wetland systems for silt and nutrient stripping at stormwater inlet points.
- Work with Melbourne Water to ensure that the bed and banks of the River are managed to maximise habitat potential by retaining snags and submerged habitat objects in the River unless they pose a direct threat to water based recreational uses. Where such risk occurs, negotiate removal of snags only to the extent required to reduce the risk to a manageable level, while retaining habitat.
- Work with Melbourne Water and the City of Yarra to remove woody weed species along the waterways, particularly Willows. Ensure removal methods create the minimum negative impact on the banks and that replacement plantings are carried out with indigenous species.
- Liaise with Melbourne Water to develop emergency procedures for the occurrence of pollution spills.
- Ensure the Golf Course maintenance contract specifies that fertiliser

regimes do not unnecessarily add to the nutrient load in the River.

- Protect popular fishing sites and viewing locations from degradation through the construction of trails, boardwalks and decks to specific locations that are designed to accommodate higher usage.
- Accommodate a relatively frequent occurrence of dog access locations to the river which are reinforced with light timber decking to prevent erosion.
- Reinforce the River bank only in locations where important assets are located. Such protection will be carried out in an environmentally and aesthetically sympathetic manner.
- Manage canoeing and other water-based activities to defined entry/exit points on the River.

Flora and Fauna

- Concentrate resources on the regeneration, restoration and enhancement of bushland within existing areas of high environmental value. Focus on the broader riparian areas as a fauna corridor through the Park.
- Prepare grass management plans for all native and exotic grassland areas, ensuring these recognise grassland importance for faunal habitat.
- Manage all areas of basalt plains grassland according to the requirements of the Action Statement as part of the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act.
- For areas designated to be removed from sporting or similar open uses, target revegetation at the establishment of the upper storey species, rather than developing a full compliment of species at all levels.
- Maintain the genetic integrity of vegetation communities by using local provenance seed in all revegetation works.
- Continue to work with Vicroads to reduce the weed seed source along the Boulevard and to develop the "bushland" experience along the Boulevard with additional revegetation.
- Protect areas of culturally important exotic vegetation (see Cultural Heritage Strategies for further detail)
- Develop species specific strategies for the protection of habitat for

species listed under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act, as well as those listed under JAMBA/CAMBA. Where necessary, carry out additional research to determine the specific utilisation of the Park by these species.

- Implement the species Action Statement for the Regent Honeyeater.
- Maintain the wetland revegetation area in the vicinity of the Park Depot as one area within the Park that is a complete sample of pre-contact vegetation community.

Pest Plants and Animals

- The weed management strategy will address, in order of priority:
 - weed control in the designated areas of high value;
 - targeting of weeds designated as posing the greatest threat to biodiversity within each management area;
 - targeting of woody weeds in areas of lower environmental significance to minimise the adverse visual impact on the Park. Such weeds include Boneseed, Gorse, Blackberry, Willow, Boxthorn, Pines, Box Elders, Ash trees and Elms;
 - revegetating areas occupied by weeds that are possible to control, such as Kikuyu.
- Involve community and environmental interest groups in weed management according to the priorities established in the Environmental Management Plan.
- Develop a range of management actions to control pest animals such as rabbits, foxes and feral cats.
- Continue the current eradication programs for rabbits and explore methods of minimising re-infestation from adjacent areas.

Fire Hazard Management

- Prepare and annually update a fire action plan that details emergency responses for fire control in or near the Park.
- Monitor and assess the effectiveness of controlled burns as a method of fire risk management and their consequent impact on vegetation.

Geology

- Protect declared and significant geological and geomorphological sites of interest from inappropriate development or change. (Some sites are already on the State Register.)
- Promote the educational values of the Park's geology to educational institutions.

Research

- Seek opportunities for further co-operative land management research and exploration with educational institutions, both secondary and tertiary.
- Establish clearly identifiable research needs and priorities for the Park that can be marketed to educational institutions in a way that will maximise the acceptance and uptake of the research opportunities.
- Ensure all land management works carried out on the site are monitored and recorded for effectiveness to allow a knowledge base to be established in relation to urban bushland management. Where appropriate, use land management initiatives as opportunities for researching or trialing different methodologies to add to the knowledge base.



3.3 VISITOR MANAGEMENT

3.3.1 EXISTING VISITOR GROUPS

A number of visitor groups can be identified from recent visitor research undertaken within the park (Yann Campbell Hoare Wheeler 1997). The major groups are:

Recreation Users

This group makes up 40% of park users who visit the park to be with family and friends, picnic, walk and to play with children.

Passive Users & Nature Lovers

The park's environmental qualities provide a strong motivation for many visitors who are attracted to the scenery, views and the experience of communing with nature.

Sporting Users and Fitness Seekers

The park provides for a diverse range of sports and fitness activities including team competition, golf, fly casting, cycling, running and training for athletic competitions.

Studley Park Boathouse Visitors

Visiting the Boathouse features strongly in peoples experience with 60% of visitors having been to the area in the past 12 months.

3.3.2 FUTURE VISITOR GROUPS

The visitor profile of Yarra Bend Park strongly reflects that of the local catchment, particularly from suburbs in Boroondara. The Park will continue to attract a large proportion of visitors from these areas. However, there is scope for other visitor groups, which are not well represented at present, to use the Park thus broadening its attraction to a wider regional area. These groups are:

Family Groups with Children

At present a high proportion of Yarra Bend Park visitors come from families without children. Creating an attraction for this group in the community could

see the park attracting visitors from a wider regional catchment.

Tourists

This group currently makes up only a very small proportion of Yarra Bend Park users. It is likely that the park attracts many 'drive through' tourists viewing the scenery from cars and buses who have not been captured by the visitor research. The position of the park close to the city providing the 'bushland in the City' experience could, in the future, see the park well placed as one of Melbourne's tourist attractions.

Large Social Groups

Large groups do not make up a high proportion of visitors to Yarra Bend Park. Attracting large social groups will diversify the range of visitors to the park providing a picnic and barbecue location close to the City.

River Users

A significant proportion of visitors have direct contact with the river. There is scope for further increasing the visitor experience with the river by promoting river activities as one of the main reasons for visiting the park.

Local Diverse Cultural Groups

The local Park catchment has high proportions of people from other cultures. Research indicates these groups are traditionally not frequent park users. However, the park could broaden it's attraction to these diverse groups through active promotion strategies.

3.3.3 FUTURE VISITOR NUMBERS

A 20% increase in visitor numbers to the park is expected by the year 2007. The park can absorb this increase, providing the additional visitors are directed into areas where the increased use can be accommodated without negative impact on the environment. The estimate is based on:

- an expected increase simply due to growing park use by the community;
- the proposed improved facilities generally;
- promotion as a tourist venue;
- the development of the Deep Rock Picnic and playground facilities; and

- the development of commercial facilities at the 18 hole golf course and Studley Park Reception Centre.

With the implementation of the strategies contained in this Plan, increases in visitation are expected in:

- the Ovals and Loop Road area, (including Deep Rock and the Golf Course Reception Centre);
- Andrews Reserve area; and
- The Studley Park Reception and Par 3 Golf Course areas.

A reduction in the proportion of park users is expected at Studley Park, an area already under significant environmental pressure from current visitor levels. Parking capacity will remain as a limitation to visitor numbers here.

3.3.4 VISITOR FACILITIES

The standard of visitor facilities within Yarra Bend Park generally does not meet the basic standard established by Parks Victoria in terms of the quality, location and number of facilities provided. Although much of the park facility infrastructure is old, a \$1m upgrading of facilities in 1997 has seen a marked improvement in the quality of visitor amenities.

The most frequently used facilities within the park are walking tracks (see Section 3.2 Access & Circulation), the Yarra River and Studley Park Boathouse, The other food service facilities are well used followed by toilets and picnic facilities.

It is recognised that one of the popular activities undertaken at Yarra Bend Park is walking the dog. "Dog off lead" areas will be provided south of Westfield, the Fairlea sports fields and Collins oval, while the remainder of the park will be designated as "Dog on lead".

The following facilities have been highlighted to be addressed as part of the Strategy Plan:

Toilet Facilities

- Rationalise the provision of toilet facilities throughout the park to ensure they are located appropriately and are easily accessible to high use areas.
- Improve the quality of toilet facilities.

- Address the frequent inappropriate use of male public toilet facilities throughout the park.

Picnic Facilities

- Improve existing picnic facilities to bring them to an acceptable standard.
- Increase the number and range of picnic facilities including shelters at selected sites to increase the park's capacity and to cater to a wider variety of users.

Playgrounds

- Increase the number and improve the quality of playgrounds at selected locations in the park, including the development of a significant playground of regional attraction.
- Ensure a range of children's ages and play experiences are catered for in playground design.
- Ensure playground design considers the need for shade and seating, as well as accommodating people with disabilities.

Accessibility

(See Section 3.5 Access & Circulation)

Walking & Cycle tracks

(See Section 3.5 Access & Circulation)

Viewing points

- Create a range of accessible viewing points throughout the park at strategic locations where views of Melbourne City and the bushland setting are best highlighted.
- Create short stay parking places at a number of identified viewing locations on roads throughout the park.
- Provide seating and interpretation material at selected viewing locations.

Park Amenities

- Upgrade seating throughout the park particularly on trails at points of scenic interest.
- Increase the number of drinking taps throughout the park located along trails at points close to existing water service locations.
- Provide bins in areas adjacent to food outlets with a "Carry In Carry Out" policy adopted for other areas of the park.

Companion Animals

- Designate the entire Park as “Dogs on lead”, except for designated “Dogs off lead” areas including:
 - south of Westfield;
 - Fairlea sports fields; and
 - Collins Oval.
- Provide facilities for owners to retrieve and remove dog droppings. Such facilities will be incorporated at all dogs-off-lead areas and along the main trail network.
- Dog access to the river should be encouraged only in those areas designed to accommodate them where minimum damage to the river banks will result.
- Work with adjacent local governments to improve community understanding of the importance of responsible pet ownership.
- Work with the local community, especially local dog groups, to educate park users about dog policy.

3.3.5 SPORTS FACILITIES

Sports facilities are an important element of Yarra Bend Park adding to its ambience and encouraging a diverse range of visitors to the park. Concentrated in the Westfield, Fairlea and Loop Road Areas, the facilities have a long history in the park. The formal sports of golf, (with both the 18 hole course and Par 3 course,) cricket (turf and concrete wickets), soccer and fly casting, as well as canoeing and kayaking on the river are accommodated. Cycling and orienteering events also take place within the park.

Sports facilities should remain as an element of the park where demand remains strong and facilities can be maintained to an acceptable standard.

18 hole Golf Course

- Maintain the course to a high playing standard to ensure it's ongoing success and attraction to a Melbourne wide and broader catchment.
- Maximise use of the course through development of a targeted marketing strategy.
- Work with the Golf Course management to ensure the Golf Course development achieves the

aim of attracting more golfers and meeting a broader range of visitor needs than is currently provided for.

9 hole Par 3 Course

- Maintain the course to an acceptable playing standard.
- Develop a marketing strategy for the course.
- Investigate additional recreational opportunities for the area

Sports Grounds

- Rationalise the number of sports grounds from 13 to 7 to reflect current demand and seize the opportunity to create additional unstructured areas within the park.
- Improve the quality of the sports grounds in poor condition through negotiation with current sports ground users.
- Explore the potential of the sports grounds to accommodate a wider range of seasonal sports.

Ropes Course

- Seek interest from outside organisations to upgrade and manage the Ropes Course to an acceptable safety standard. If no interest can be established, remove the course.

Studley Point Loop Road Cycling Circuit

- Further promote the Studley Point Loop Road to bicycle clubs and organisations as a venue for competitive cycling events promoting events widely across the park.

Fly Casting Pool

- Negotiate with Red Tag Fly Fishers to develop the site with additional facilities available for club and community use. The club's plans for some additional facilities in the area would further enhance the area, with the provision of a rotunda and picnic/barbecue facilities.

Bicycle Usage

Demand on the park as a venue for informal sports activities and most particularly for training has increased as community interest in mountain bike and general cycling has increased. Fitness activities are very popular with park visitors, with the park's terrain offering physical challenges and an environment

not found elsewhere as close to Melbourne. Complicating this however is the detrimental impact uncontrolled mountain bike use can have on the environment and the safety of trail and track users.

- Work with local mountain bike clubs to develop a strategy for reducing off road impact on Yarra Bend Park.
- In conjunction with local clubs, identify an acceptable trail system within the park suitable for off-road mountain bike use and promote that system to direct use away from sensitive park areas.
- Explore with Vicroads the potential to promote the Boulevard as a training and competition venue for cyclists, with due regard to traffic and risk issues.

3.3.6 PROGRAMS

There is opportunity for programs to be better developed within the Park thereby increasing the range of recreation opportunities available.

Community Events

- Develop an annual calendar of activities through promotion of the park's venues to local government and community groups.
- Promote the natural lawn amphitheatre at Deep Rock and the Loop Road area for large community events, such as musical performances, plays and films.

Camping

- Investigate opportunities for controlled group camping within the Park to add to the diversity of recreation experience provided. Possible sites include the River at Fairlea and River View, as well as north of Bellbird.
- Camping opportunities should be packaged with other activities throughout the park to make them attractive for community group use.

3.4 MARKETING & INFORMATION

Marketing of the Park and provision of information through signage and promotional material will assist in

developing its profile and use, particularly to new users groups.

3.4.1 SIGNAGE & INFORMATION

- Develop a Park-specific signage strategy, using Parks Victoria standards, throughout the Park addressing directional and orientation signage needs.
- Improve existing points of entry with clearly identified 'gateways', preceded by appropriate tourist signage on main roads.
- Clearly identify the Park in Melbourne street directories with entry points more clearly marked.
- Develop a park-specific interpretive signage strategy for the Park, using Parks Victoria standards and accommodating the individual opportunities for interpretation identified throughout this plan.
- Within the overall Parks Victoria information and marketing strategy, develop a park-specific information plan addressing the most effective medium for information dissemination/provision throughout the Park and for specific elements (eg. the use of "Park Notes" as opposed to interpretive signage in situ for particular environmental or cultural elements.)

3.4.2 CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES

Yarra Bend Park has enormous potential to provide a range of events and activities that will raise the profile of the park and increase awareness of the diversity of activities and attractions.

- Develop a calendar of activities that:
 - is consistent with the vision for the park;
 - is coordinated with existing tourism bodies to avoid clashes with existing events in Melbourne.
- Focus events on potential new market groups and the surrounding community.
- Link with surrounding Councils to promote and encourage the park to be used as an event venue.

3.4.3 ATTRACTING NEW VISITORS

Successful marketing of Yarra Bend Park must be based on the understanding of the market. Each of the target markets identified requires a targeted campaign.

Develop a detailed visitor strategy, incorporating at least the following strategies:

National and Overseas Tourists

For the overseas tourist market (especially overseas short-stay tourists who are 'time poor' and cannot travel further from Melbourne), it is important to build the image of the park with emphasis on the two Melbourne icons of:

- the Studley Park Boathouse and Yarra Bend Golf Course; and
- the Park's Australian bushland setting.
- Develop a promotional strategy for the park in liaison with regional, State and National tourist agencies.

Families with Children

- Creation of a new playground area at Deep Rock, well away from the river should prove an attraction to parents with young children who may not visit the park because of their safety concerns with the river.
- Explore private sector interest in establishing a hire service for 'all terrain' strollers, as terrain throughout the park varies.
- Provide families with an alternative to Fairfield Park.

Local Diverse Cultural Groups

Encourage cultural groups to visit the park by:

- Promoting a park through:
 - . non-English media (newspapers, radio);
 - . local and regional cultural social groups;
- exploring the introduction of culturally specific activity zones eg. boules, bocce.

Large Social Groups

It is important to consider the needs of the organisers of large social gatherings.

The park should be promoted to large groups through:

- Liaison and co-ordination with surrounding municipalities;
- Promotion to regional businesses;
- Periodic 'interest' stories in local newspapers.

River Users

- Ensure the calendar introduces a number of events that focus on the river.
- Investigate the establishment of a boat link between Studley Park Boathouse and Fairfield Boathouse.

Cross Selling to Existing Park Users

In addition to attracting new visitors to the park, the marketing strategy should also address "cross selling" the various activities offered in the park to existing users. This can partly be addressed through increased brand awareness, whereby existing and potential users will become aware that Yarra Bend Park offers diversity.

The recent introduction of a Ranger Centre at Studley Park is a step in this cross selling process. Other initiatives could include:

- Investigation of the private sector utilising the river for transporting groups;
- Developing a database of inquiries to enable mailing of event information to those who have expressed interest in specific areas;
- Distribute the Calendar of Activities through the Ranger Centre.

3.4.4 EDUCATION

The Park is a rich resource for environmental and other forms of education for students at primary, secondary and tertiary levels.

- Promote the use of the park for such educational purposes, concentrating particularly on environmental education.
- Develop partnerships with secondary and tertiary institutions that can partake in research and/or land management programs within the park.

3.5 ACCESS AND CIRCULATION

The degree of access throughout the Park will differ according to the particular setting's role and the environment's capacity to accommodate access.

Strategies

- Develop clearly identifiable entry points to the Park from all pedestrian, cycle and vehicle entries.
- Develop loop trails from major visitor use areas and provide adequate signage and information to encourage use.
- Establish a hierarchy of paths and trails with the design, construction and maintenance appropriate to the level of use intended and reinforcing the creation of a variety of visitor experiences on the different trail types. The range of path types would include:
 - the Main Yarra Trail as a 2.5m wide bitumen or concrete dual use pathway;
 - main Park trails, in high use areas, surfaced in gravel;
 - low key access trails, the dominant trail type distributed through the Park, with earth or mulch surfacing as required by the specific situation.
- Control access points in isolated areas and reduce the excessive number of informal trails.
- Protect river banks as far as possible by defining pathways some metres back from the edge. In popular viewing locations, control access to the banks with appropriate fencing and timber decking where necessary.
- Provide access for people with disabilities at the future Deep Rock development, the Golf Course Loop Road and Studley Park boathouse area.
- Provide informal stopping and resting points along all major pathways, particularly the Yarra Trail, to take advantage of views and landscape qualities of particular areas.
- Maintain and promote the Boulevard's role as:
 - a key tourist route to and through the Park; and
 - a cycling, walking and running venue.

- Design disabled and frail aged access into the Park to ensure:
 - a range of park environments is accessible, including the river's edge;
 - appropriate surfacing and contours.
- Provide parking for the disabled and frail aged at major parking areas throughout the Park.
- Ensure disabled and frail aged access is accommodated in the design of all new visitor facilities.

3.6 CULTURAL HERITAGE

3.6.1 ABORIGINAL HISTORY

Yarra Bend is the site of the first Aboriginal Protectorate and Mission in the Melbourne, established in 1837. (It has been nominated for inclusion on the Register of the National Estate). This was for the "containment" of the Aboriginal community, and served to both protect and assimilate the native community of the district. It was where the Koori's could continue a traditional form of lifestyle near the city without fear of attack from settlers.

The details of Yarra Bend's pre-contact significance, and the values derived from Aboriginal tradition have not been determined. Additionally, the area has not yet been fully surveyed for aboriginal archaeological sites.



3.6.2 EUROPEAN HISTORY

Yarra Bend Park’s long history with the creation of public open space and recreational facilities close to the city is manifest particularly in Studley Park and also represented in a number of existing buildings (several of which are included on the Register of the National Estate). The park is also significant for its association with the development of a range of public institutions from the mid-1800’s and early 1900’s. The most notable of these was the Yarra Bend Lunatic Asylum which is evident in exotic plantings that once formed part of its expansive gardens. The park is significant also for its connection with a range of notable artists who were drawn to the area in the 19th Century.

3.6.3 STRATEGIES

The following strategies define the framework for managing the Park’s important cultural history. The detail of specific management actions to achieve these strategies is part of the Yarra Bend Park Cultural Heritage Management Plan.

- Acknowledge and respect significant former occupations and uses of the park areas through:
 - adoption of conservation policies as recommended in the Yarra Bend Conservation Plan 1998;
 - retention and conservation of identified significant physical remnants in accordance with Burra Charter principles and practices;
 - provision of interpretive opportunities of culturally significant aspects and former occupations of the park area;
 - planning and development of new and renewed park facilities which is sensitive to both remnant physical and site cultural values.
- Consult with appropriate local Aboriginal community representatives in the development

of management strategies and directions for identified sites of Aboriginal Significance within the park.

- Comply with the requirements of the Heritage Act 1995 and the Archaeological and Aboriginal Relics Preservation Act 1972 in respect to archaeological finds deriving from site excavations associated with park development and activity.
- Retain and enhance the traditional landscape character variety and recreation mix and uses of the Park.
- Provide interpretive information to Park visitors to help in the appreciation of cultural values.

3.7 PARK CHARACTER & SETTINGS

The overall character of the various parts of the Park contribute significantly to its attractiveness to users. This character is contributed to by the natural landscape, the human modified landscape and the various built elements that occur throughout the Park. These include park buildings, fences, roadways, park furniture, shelters, signs and many other structures. Protection and enhancement of the existing attractive park character requires a clear direction in relation to these elements from an “aesthetic” point of view, as well as the environmental and visitor management perspectives outlined elsewhere.

The following list outlines the general character to be aimed at in the management of the Park, with the intent being to provide a diverse range of environmental settings that reinforce the intrinsic attractiveness of the Park. The “Zones” named are defined in Map 3, Management Zones and are broadly consistent with the zones used in the 1990 Management Plan.

<i>Management Zone</i>	<i>Zone Character</i>
Zone 1 Yarra River Management Zone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retain and reinforce the original woodland character of the river valley.
Zone 2 Westfield/Fairlea Management Area 2A Westfield	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain the existing mixed landscape

Management Zone	Zone Character
	character.
2B <i>Merri Creek Valley & Escarpment</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve views and vistas from Yarra Bend Road and Heidelberg Road, while providing screening to picnic areas. • Reinforce open woodland character of indigenous species on the “plateau” area, incorporating sports fields, with denser vegetation on the escarpment and within the Merri Creek valley itself. • Maintain Yarra Bend Road as a high quality scenic road providing excellent views to the City skyline.
2C <i>Fairlea</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforce the mixed character of open sporting parkland on the upper plateau and riparian woodland along the Yarra River. • Screen the freeway and install indigenous plantings through the area to assist fauna movement across the plateau between the valleys.
Zone 3	
River Bend Management Area	
3A <i>Deep Rock</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a highly maintained exotic turf picnic area, with open woodland plantings of indigenous trees.
3B <i>River View</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforce the wetland area to provide an environmental example of the type of plant community that would have been typical of flood plain sections of the Park.
3C <i>Golf Course Loop Road</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain the existing exotic plantings as the visual framework for an area of well maintained lawns and a picturesque sports field with bluestone features.
Zone 4	
Golf Course Management Area	
4 <i>Golf Course/Development</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retain the existing mixed exotic and indigenous plantings to provide an attractive setting along the river, as well as habitat opportunities between the fairways and along the River.
Zone 5	
Trig Point Management Area	
5 <i>Wurundjeri Spur – Trig Point</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain the existing bushland character of the area with additional revegetation and erosion control measures.
Zone 6	
Willsmere Management Area	
6A <i>Hairpin Bend</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retain the existing bushland character on the escarpment and reinforce where necessary with revegetation.
6B <i>Wills Street/Willsmere Precinct</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retain the excellent views from this area through the maintenance of the open woodland character. The area will be

Management Zone	Zone Character
	maintained as a wild area of the Park, with long grass and predominantly indigenous tree and shrub plantings.
6C <i>Bellbird</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage the area to provide a quality mown turf area in a bushland setting, with formalised access to the river. Additional indigenous plantings will provide a greater buffer to the Boulevard to the east.
Zone 7	
Studley Park Management Area	
7A <i>Studley Park Boathouse Precinct</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain the series of picnic and barbecue areas on the river banks, linked by paths and a carpark, with the Kiosk and Restaurant forming the focus of the precinct. Retain the predominantly indigenous bushland character, while preserving the exotic plantings around the boatshed and picnic area.
7B <i>Studley Park Lower Bushland</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain and enhance the better quality natural areas on the slopes and retain the bushland character of the flats, without creating a major requirement for high levels of revegetation or weed management through the zone.
7C <i>Studley Park Upper Bushland</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reinforce the “bush in the city” concept at this important visual entry to the Park, with a complete range of upper, middle and under-storey species.
7D <i>Studley Point Loop Road</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reinforce the areas of high quality bushland on the ridge and slopes. Provide an appropriately designed lookout area to capitalise on the excellent views from the centre of the loop road, linking through path systems to the lower areas adjacent to the River.
Zone 8	
Lower Yarra Management Area	
8A <i>Par 3 Golf Course, Studley Park Receptions & Norris Reserve</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As senescence occurs, promote the gradual reversion of the area to dominantly indigenous bushland. Retain the Par 3 Golf Course to provide an attractive recreational environment with excellent views. The Café redevelopment will provide a modified landscape, with a mix of indigenous, native and exotic species appropriate to a higher use and higher maintenance zone.
8B <i>Andrews Reserve</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retain the open parkland character of the picnic areas. To the south and east,

Management Zone	Zone Character
8C <i>Dickinson Reserve</i>	<p>reinforce a more indigenous character, blending into the adjacent Dickinson Reserve vegetation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforce the existing high quality vegetation in the area.
Zone 9 The Boulevard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The unique character of the Boulevard will be reinforced, particularly in relation to driving through the bush and the built elements of stone retaining walls and the like. Vegetation along the Boulevard will reinforce the “bush in the City” concept, with revegetation where necessary and removal of pest plants where required.

3.7.1 STRATEGIES

In relation to the overall park character, the following strategies will be applied:

- All works will harmonise with the existing character of the Park, including:
 - . adopt materials, colours and styles that are natural, appropriate and in character with Park;
 - . where appropriate, building styles should be sympathetic with the Golf House and/or Boat house;
 - . roadways will only be wide enough to accommodate the required traffic at slow speeds and materials will be in keeping with the character of the older existing roads in the Park.
- Provide for significant views into the Park from adjacent roadways by controlled use of planting to create vistas, while providing other areas that are screened from roads.
- For security reasons, wherever possible, design car parks to allow clear views of cars from adjacent areas.
- Design all revegetation and path works to minimise the visual intrusion of surrounding urban development.
- Design all built elements to optimise the balance between initial capital development costs and recurrent maintenance costs.

4 ZONE STRATEGIES

These key actions and strategies have been developed to address issues that are specific to the individual zones in the Park. The location of the zones described is shown on Map 3.

ZONE 1 YARRA RIVER MANAGEMENT ZONE

Role:

- *To provide the environmental "backbone" for the Park.*
- *To be part of the overall fauna movement corridor of the Yarra Valley.*
- *To be one of the key recreation attractions in the Park.*

Key Strategies: Environmental Management

- Reinforce the important role of the fauna corridor through enhancement of the riparian vegetation throughout the Park.
- Create a broad indigenous vegetation band along the full length of the river on both banks. Concentrate revegetation efforts on upper and middle storey species, while seizing opportunities in areas with existing good quality lower storey species to reinforce the diversity they create.
- Work with local government and Melbourne Water to maximise the water quality in the river.
- Encourage appropriate authorities (local government, Melbourne Water) to install silt and litter traps in the storm-water systems leading into the river.
- Wherever possible, formalise and reinforce viewing and access areas to the river to minimise erosion damage.
- Develop an education campaign for fishermen to encourage responsible river use and access. Promote use by them of the reinforced viewing and access areas.

Visitor Management

- Promote appropriate recreational use of the River by:

- further developing viewing and access points to the River;
- more actively promoting the profile of the River through all interpretive and directional information;
- investigating the commercial viability of one way rowing boat hire or Ferry service between Fairfield and Studley Park Boathouses (subject to economic and environmental feasibility studies, particularly in relation to noise, wash and snag issues);
- promoting club use of the River and access amenities; and
- promoting water based competition on the River.
- Promote use of the river to local, national and international (tourist) users.
- Explore and promote opportunities for water based sporting activities within the Park.
- Create a clear and well promoted link to Dights Falls from the Deep Rock area.
- Explore with Melbourne Water and the City of Yarra opportunities for water based recreation at Dights Falls.

ZONE 2 WESTFIELD / FAIRLEA MANAGEMENT AREA

2A WESTFIELD

Role:

- *To provide the major northern entry to the Park.*
- *To be a focus for accommodation of large group picnic and barbecue activities, with a strong connection to Fairfield Park.*
- *To be a key orientation and information dissemination point.*
- *To form part of the Main Yarra and Merri Creek Trails.*

Key Strategies: Environmental Management

- Through liaison with the City of Darebin, promote co-operative and consistent land and visitor management and a vehicular

access link between Yarra Bend Park and Fairfield Park.

Visitor Management

- Improve the quality of the entrance experience with a substantial landscape development of the entrance roadway to the Golf Course Loop Road, addressing:
 - the sense of entry and orientation;
 - traffic and parking issues;
 - potential relationships to Fairfield Park; and
 - the view potentials.
- Investigate potential to share use of carpark in northern portion of former Fairfield Hospital site with future user and/or Fairfield Park.
- To increase use of the Park by large social groups and families, upgrade Westfield picnic area to better accommodate large group use.

Cultural Heritage Management

- Maintain exotic vegetation in the picnic area as part of the landscape heritage of the area.

2B MERRI CREEK VALLEY & ESCARPMENT

Role:

- *To support the continuity and quality of the Merri Creek habitat corridor.*
- *To provide high quality trail experiences with some of the best views to the City.*
- *To provide for "Dogs off lead" in a defined area of the Park.*

Key Strategies:

Environmental Management

- Continue extension of indigenous escarpment vegetation along the valley, maintaining view corridors from the upper plateau.
- Continue intensive weed control of fennel on the escarpment, as well as addressing the scattered occurrences of other weed species.

Visitor Management

- Improve the surrounds of sports fields in the zone with amenity plantings and seating.
- Increase the density of vegetation along the freeway margin at the southern end of the precinct.

- Review the future of the pavilion amenities in light of the establishment or otherwise of a viable sporting use of the adjacent oval.
- Remove the infrequently used soccer ground and revegetate with indigenous woodland plantings.
- Develop additional specific viewing locations along the escarpment trail (Main Yarra Trail.)
- Improve the amenities along the trail including seats and drinking fountains, particularly at these strategic viewing locations.
- Promote the area as one for "Dogs off leads" on the upper plateau area. Install facilities for dog owners to remove droppings from the Park.
- Promote the trail links to Dights Falls and the Merri Creek Trail.

Cultural Heritage Management

- Preserve and interpret remnant gate pillar from the entrance to the Yarra Bend Asylum Infirmary (included on the State Heritage Register).
- Provide interpretive information about the previous occupations of the site, including the Aboriginal Protectorate, Yarra Bend Lunatic Asylum, The Infectious Diseases Hospital, and Fairlea Women's Prison.

2C FAIRLEA

Role:

- *To continue active sports while providing for a more diverse range of recreation activities.*
- *To reinforce fauna link between Merri and Yarra valleys and form part of the trail link between the two.*
- *To provide a central management point and public interface for the Park.*
- *To provide opportunity for a community involvement focal point for the Park*

Key Strategies:

Environmental Management

- Implement revegetation of the Yarra bank area, east of the former Fairfield hospital, concentrating on upper storey plantings to create an open woodland character, with an understorey of exotic grasses.

- Continue weed control, concentrating on:
 - . blackberry thickets;
 - . furze;
 - . Serrated Tussock; and
 - . other sporadic occurrences of weed species.
- Formalise a small number of viewing points along the river bank pathway to encourage access to the river at specifically protected or reinforced areas.
- Increase upper and middle storey vegetation along the edge of the Eastern Freeway to provide avi-fauna habitat and visual buffering from the freeway.
- Manage the new plantings to the south of the former Fairlea Hospital site to maximise the area's potential to provide for a fauna corridor. As far as possible within the constraints of the adjacent sports fields, increase the upper canopy plantings along the south side of the access road.

Visitor Management

- Promote new Park Office location through clear signage.
- Promote Fairlea sports ovals as designated "dog off lead" area.
- Provide interpretive signage at the fly fishing pool to inform other visitors of its use and times of use.
- Support the development of the additional facilities proposed by the Red Tag Fly Fishing Club, subject to suitable lease and management arrangements.
- Retain the larger Fairlea oval and pavilion for active sport.
- Revegetate the smaller eastern oval and link to the Fly Fishing Pool enhancement proposals.
- Establish a connecting trail from the Yarra Valley to the Merri Creek.
- Monitor the effectiveness of screening vegetation for the Fairfield Psychiatric facility to ensure the minimum visual intrusion on the Park.

Cultural Heritage Management

- Determine an appropriate, park related use for the remaining "Fairlea" building or otherwise remove it and revegetate the area.

- Provide interpretive information about the Pipe Bridge, its history and use.

ZONE 3 RIVER BEND MANAGEMENT AREA

3A DEEP ROCK

Role:

- *To provide a new passive recreational focus, primarily catering to families with children.*
- *To continue support for active sports use, but with rationalised playing fields.*
- *To provide relief for visitor pressure on other areas, particularly the Loop Road.*
- *To provide an accessible gateway to Dights Falls.*
- *To provide an opportunity for occasional large events.*

Key Strategies:

Environmental Management

- Increase river margin vegetation.
- Continue to control weeds in the river margin areas, concentrating on infestations, which reduce the biodiversity of these areas.
- Install additional woodland plantings around proposed picnic area and between retained ovals and proposed picnic area.
- Enhance freeway edge plantings to maximise screening effect.
- Formalise pathway connecting Dights Falls to the Golf Course Loop Road area to prevent further erosion.

Visitor Management

- To increase use of the Park by family groups with children, prepare a concept plan for the development of a new picnic facility at Deep Rock, incorporating the lower open space and the "Cricket Oval" (south of the existing carpark area.) The concept plan should include:
 - . a large scale playground;
 - . an extended carpark area;
 - . seating, limited picnic tables and a drinking fountain;
 - . barbecue and picnic facilities;

- . picnic shelters in the lower open space;
- . new toilet facilities to Parks Victoria standards;
- . revegetation of the picnic area site to create shade and areas of seclusion.
- Develop a series of loop trails connecting to Dights Falls, Kaners Bridge and the remaining ovals.
- Enhance the natural amphitheatre at the south end of the lower Deep Rock picnic area for use as a low intensity and frequency venue for outdoor community theatre and music events. Market the venue to the local and wider community.
- To further promote the profile of the River, develop reinforced river viewing points to provide access without degradation of the banks.
- Investigate with Vicroads the potential to install noise barriers along the Freeway edge from the cutting to west of the Park.

Cultural Heritage Management

- Provide interpretive information about the history of The Deep Rock Swimming Club - the precursor for organised recreational activities and facilities in Yarra Bend Park.
- Repair remnant foundation stone.
- Conserve Pioneer Memorial Stones (currently in the park depot) for possible future use, as an element for interpretive purposes.
- Provide interpretive information and directional signage to the Koori Garden area.
- Liaise with the City of Yarra to provide signage from Dights Falls to the Deep Rock picnic area.

3B RIVER VIEW

Role:

- *To provide an area of quiet access to the River flood plain.*
- *To provide an example of basalt plains vegetation community readily available to visitors.*

Key Strategies: Environmental Management

- Target environmental management to protect and enhance the limited areas of high conservation importance along the river bank.

- Particularly address weed control for Serrated Tussock and Kikuyu.
- Formalise the walking trail along the river bank with a mulched surface.
- Continue to support the wetland area as an example of pre-contact grassy woodland and floodplain wetland vegetation associations.

Visitor Management

- Install small interpretive shelter at the wetlands and provide directional signage from Yarra Bend Road.
- Provide signage to the river bank walking trail from the Wetlands.
- Support the use of the remaining building by the existing arts group.
- Formalise the trail system and clearly signpost the link through to the river, under the Freeway and to Fairfield Boathouse.
- Rationalise the size of the Park Depot, remove the former Park Office and revegetate the site to improve visual and physical links to the River.

3C GOLF COURSE LOOP ROAD

Role:

- *To continue to provide a major passive recreational focus for northern side of river, accommodating increased use generated by the proposed reception centre and associated facilities.*
- *To provide a location for enhanced river access.*
- *To form a central starting point for links to other popular Park areas and attractions.*
- *To retain an obvious link with the cultural heritage of the area, with its exotic vegetation, historic parkland character and formal sports fields in the treed setting.*
- *To provide potential for special events in the historic setting.*

Key Strategies: Environmental Management

- Create formalised river viewing/access point in the form of timber decking to the river's edge. Provide adequate signage to encourage use. Link with pathway

to Loop road to ensure accessibility for all.

- Increase the density of riparian vegetation with selective revegetation with predominantly upper canopy species. Include some pockets of middle and lower storey vegetation to maintain diversity in the riparian edge.
- Continue weed control strategy for riparian zone, concentrating on woody species that affect the visual quality of the “bushland” setting.
- Protect bank revegetation area east of Kanes Bridge.

Visitor Management

- Improve car parking in the area through subtle formalising of existing parking spaces.
- Improve parking for disabled visitors.
- Upgrade picnic and barbecue facilities in the upper field area above Corben Oval, including addition of picnic tables, seating, formal picnic shelters, barbecues and drinking fountains to the area.
- Rationalise the number of existing toilet blocks by removing the western one and upgrading the Corben Oval toilet facilities.
- Install drinking fountains at appropriate sites throughout area.
- Develop access and circulation strategy for the Loop Road area that:
 - improves and formalises the path system throughout the area to minimise environmental impact; and
 - accommodates access for people with disabilities to the picnic areas and Kane’s Bridge.
- Retain Corben Oval for formal sporting activities and social matches.

Cultural Heritage Management

- Maintain the Loop Road area as the primary site of exotic vegetation within the Park, reflecting the cultural heritage of the area, as well as the formal and traditional parkland character these plantings create.
- Develop a specific cultural heritage plant management strategy for the area that addresses the inevitable decline of the existing plantings and

establishes a methodology for their replacement over time.

- Protect and maintain existing stone walls and steps through the area.
- Develop interpretive signage detailing the European and Koori history of the site.

ZONE 4 GOLF COURSE MANAGEMENT AREA

4 GOLF COURSE & FACILITIES

Role:

- *To provide a quality 18 hole golf course and high quality associated facilities catering for golf course and general park users.*
- *To provide a quality commercial driving range as part of diversifying recreation opportunity.*
- *To provide a commercial focus on the northern side of the river for golfers and other Park users.*
- *To contribute to the habitat values of the Park, both along the River and within the course.*

Key Strategies: Environmental Management

- Increase the indigenous vegetation along the river margin and within the golf course.
- Continue pest plant and animal control.

Visitor Management

The Yarra Bend Trust has entered into a agreement to develop the existing golf facilities with a Function Centre, Restaurant, Kiosk, Pro shop and driving range. The development will be integrated into the Strategy Plan as follows:

- As part of Golf Course Development, remove Long Oval and its associated pavilion at the north end.
- Liaise with Golf Course developer to ensure function centre parking does not impinge on Loop Road Area picnickers.
- Build on the popularity of the Golf Course to attract new golfers by

marketing the new development as a key tourist focus with:

- . improved pro-shop and golf facilities;
- . commercial function facilities; and
- . commercial driving range.
- Develop a strategy to encourage an increase in mid-week patronage.

Cultural Heritage Management

- Develop a heritage landscape and tree replacement strategy for the historical Asylum period landscape elements.
- Perform repair works to reverse deterioration to the architecturally notable Yarra Bend Golf Course Club House (on the Register of the National Estate, and classified by the National Trust).

ZONE 5 TRIG POINT MANAGEMENT AREA

5A WURUNDJERI SPUR – TRIG POINT

Role:

- *To be a high quality entry point and introduction to park from the north-east.*
- *To provide a passive, low key area with trails to Trig Point viewing area, an experience of the river and peaceful recreation opportunities.*
- *To provide a link to Fairfield Park from the east.*
- *To contribute to the habitat values of the Park, with environmental management particularly concentrating on the Yarra fauna corridor.*

Key Strategies:

Environmental Management

- Revegetate the high use area near the Pipe Bridge access point, and the informal tracks along the riverbank to Chandler Highway Bridge.
- Continue revegetation concentrating on upper and middle storey species.
- Implement weed control commensurate with the

environmental importance of the varying areas, focussing on:

- . mature Boneseed stands;
- . large infestations of Serrated Tussock.
- Provide signage to encourage responsible trail use in the area.

Visitor Management

- Develop appropriate 'Front Door' for the Park with entry and directional signage at the Chandler Highway and Boulevard intersection, including improved "lead up" signage.
- Investigate the potential for Trig Point to act as a low key visitor viewing point, with a safe road crossing point on the southern straight section of road and low key steps and pathways to the Point from that side.
- Discourage pedestrian access to Trig Point at the Boulevard bend.
- Clearly identify access to Fairfield Boathouse from the Trig Point area, with appropriate signage (in association with the City of Yarra).
- Develop signage on Main Yarra Trail to Fairfield Boathouse (in association with the City of Yarra).
- Formalise kerbside car parking adjacent to the path to the Pipe Bridge to open up pedestrian access to Fairfield Park and Boathouse from the east.
- Provide enhanced landscape and visitor amenities (seating and drinking fountain) at the viewing point on the Wurundjeri Spur side of the Boulevard.

Cultural Heritage Management

- Develop low key interpretive signage installation at Trig Point lookout, describing the importance of the Trig Point, as well as the various views and vistas available from the area.
- Develop interpretive signage at the Pipe Bridge (in association with City of Yarra), highlight the past and present importance of the pipe bridge.

ZONE 6 WILLSMERE MANAGEMENT AREA

6A HAIRPIN BEND

Role:

- *To provide continuity in the Yarra riparian flora and fauna corridor.*
- *To accommodate passive low level recreational use.*

Key Strategies:

Environmental Management

- Revegetate the cleared (and thin areas) with upper storey vegetation.
- Revegetate erosion areas within the zone, using middle and upper storey species.
- Continue weed control strategy concentrating on species affecting biodiversity.
- Remove the remaining vestiges of the former carpark off the Boulevard and revegetate with upper storey species.

Visitor Management

- Maintain the current low use trail along the river margin.
- Encourage visitors keeping to the trail by surfacing it with crushed rock or mulch as appropriate to the location, grade and soil stability.

6B WILLS STREET / WILLSMERE PRECINCT

Role:

- *To provide a local park facility on the edge of the Park to reduce pressure on more sensitive environmental areas closer to the River.*
- *To provide a low intensity bushland walking experience.*
- *To contribute to the bushland character of the Boulevard tourist route.*

Key Strategies:

Environmental Management

- Reinforce, through revegetation, an open woodland character in the area above the Boulevard to form a visual and physical buffer to Willsmere. Revegetation to consist of indigenous upper storey species, with exotic lower storey species.

- Control weeds in the zone, concentrating on woody species that affect the visual qualities of the woodland.

Visitor Management

- Install signage to the low key trail through the upper eastern portion of the zone to encourage use and linking to the other trail networks of the park.
- Provide seating at strategic points along the trails to take advantage of the exceptional views.
- Promote the trail between the Willsmere and Bellbird areas.

6C BELLBIRD

Role:

- *To provide a low intensity picnic and barbecue area in a bushland setting.*
- *To provide a major point of contact with river, particularly for water based activities.*
- *To form part of the Yarra riparian flora and fauna corridor.*

Key Strategies:

Environmental Management

- Implement extensive revegetation of the open area of Bellbird, creating a woodland character with areas of seclusion as well as open gathering areas for larger groups.
- Harden the riverside walking trail with gravel and/or mulch surfacing as appropriate to the level of use.
- Control weeds in the zone, concentrating on those that affect biodiversity in the areas of vegetation in good condition, and on woody species that affect the visual quality of the area in other locations.

Visitor Management

- Reinforce canoe/craft launching facilities at the site with signposting.
- Promote use of the area by canoe clubs and the like.
- Investigate with Vicroads the opportunities to re-configure the entrance and exits to Bellbird to maximise traffic visibility and safety, including the provision of a right turn lane for traffic entering from the north.

- Install more seating throughout Bellbird Picnic Area with views to the river.
- Establish directional signage within the area.
- Develop simple loop trail around the Bellbird area and identify links to longer walks along the River.

ZONE 7 STUDLEY PARK MANAGEMENT AREA

7A STUDLEY PARK BOATHOUSE PRECINCT

Role:

- *To continue to be the historic focus and heart of park, providing a destination for tourists, an introduction to the Park and interpretive information.*
- *To provide for socialising recreation at a restaurant/kiosk close to the river in a bushland setting.*
- *To provide for picnic and barbecue passive recreational opportunities.*
- *To be the focus of commercial water based activities.*
- *To contribute to the Yarra flora and fauna corridor.*

Key Strategies:

Environmental Management

- Manage the existing indigenous and exotic vegetation to accommodate the high intensity visitor usage.
- Revegetate as necessary with upper and middle storey species to reinforce the site's bushland character.
- Address the weed control and erosion issues along the river bank by implementing revegetation and directing and controlling visitor access to specifically reinforced (eg. decked) locations.

Visitor Management

- Further develop the park information centre to act as the main information source on Yarra Bend Park. Promote it as the directional information centre for the Park with clear directions to the various loop trails available from the site.

- In liaison with the leasee on the site, develop a marketing plan for Studley Park focussing on local, national and international visitors.

Cultural Heritage Management

- Adopt 1992 Conservation Analysis and Plan (Lewis/Aitken) recommendations as the basis for the conservation actions for the Studley Park Boathouse.
- Maintain Kanes Bridge in functioning condition, to current appearance.



7B STUDLEY PARK LOWER BUSHLAND

Role:

- *To provide an environmental "example" for visitors (tourists) supporting the "bush in the city" experience.*
- *To provide a contrasting visitor experience adjacent to the more intensive Boathouse precinct.*

Key Strategies:

Environmental Management

- Harden the primary trails through the area with gravel and/or mulch surfaces to reduce erosion damage.
- Close and revegetate the minor trails through the area.
- Close off and revegetate erosion areas.
- Control spread of weed species affecting biodiversity, such as Wandering Jew, Angled Onion and Ivy.

Visitor Management

- Clearly sign the trail connections to Studley Park Boathouse precinct, as

well as the wider trail network in the area.

- Develop interpretive signage and other material on the important environmental features of this area of the park.
- Encourage access along the Boulevard to Bellbird and close off steep trail down the escarpment.

7C STUDLEY PARK UPPER BUSHLAND

Role:

- *To provide a high quality visual entry point and introduction to Park from east.*
- *To form part of the Park's environmental resource for habitat provision.*

Key Strategies:

Environmental Management

- Remove the existing buildings and exotic species on site and revegetate the area to open bushland (with indigenous species).
- Manage the area of good quality vegetation to protect its diversity.
- Control weed species through the area, concentrating on species threatening the biodiversity of the area.

Visitor Management

- Improve the trail connections to Studley Park Boathouse and investigate creating a safe crossing point on the Boulevard.
- Sign the area to create Park awareness by Studley Park Road users.

7D STUDLEY POINT LOOP ROAD

Role:

- *To form part of the Park's environmental resource for habitat provision.*
- *To provide a high quality viewing point facilitating exceptional views over the Park and to the City.*
- *To provide low intensity access to Dights Falls and the Yarra's edge.*

Key Strategies:

Environmental Management

- Undertake an environmental risk assessment to determine the optimum location for an elevated viewing point in the centre of the Loop Road.
- Develop and manage the viewing point to minimise impact on this area of important vegetation.
- Maintain and continue the recent revegetation programs carried out at Galatea Point and Studley Point.
- Continue weed control concentrating on species affecting biodiversity in the area.

Visitor Management

- To increase public use of the area, develop seating facilities at key locations.
- Improve signage to viewing areas.
- Improve the landscape setting around the historic marker.
- Encourage use of the Loop Road for cycling events and promote these throughout the Park as spectator events.
- Formalise the trail from the Loop Road to Dights Falls.
- Improve the entrance to Galatea Point.
- Develop a loop walk around Studley Point, providing low key seating in good viewing locations.

Cultural Heritage Management

- Continue to preserve ruins of the pumping station.
- Add to interpretive information about the site's history, including the pumping station.
- Retain pumping station related surviving landform and access track.
- Conserve the remnant earlier Johnson Street Bridge bluestone abutment, and retain landform of eastern approach road cutting and alignment.
- Provide interpretive information about Bridge history (along with other river crossings).
- Conserve Explorers Memorial Cairn, and provide interpretive information about related historical events.

**ZONE 8
LOWER YARRA MANAGEMENT
AREA**

**8A PAR 3 GOLF COURSE,
STUDLEY PARK
RECEPTIONS & NORRIS
RESERVE**

Role:

- To contribute to the diversity of recreational opportunities in the Park including:
 - Par 3 Golf Course
 - Commercial development.
- To provide a main entry point to the Park and tourist access to the Boulevard.

**Key Strategies:
Environmental Management**

- As senescence of existing exotic vegetation occurs, revegetate Norris Reserve with Yellow Gum Woodland species so that it reinforces the overall landscape character of the Park to travellers on Studley Park Road.
- Close and revegetate the trails and erosion areas on the escarpment below the Boulevard.
- Reinforce bushland vegetation around the sloping banks of Collins Oval.

Visitor Management

- Provide clear signage on Studley Park Road at Walmer Street to formalise this as an important Park entry point.
- Upgrade the upper car park to a higher standard.
- Support the redevelopment of the Café and promote the development of further associated and compatible commercial uses on the adjacent Arthur Rylah Oval or fish hatchery sites to add to the range of recreation opportunities in the Park.
- Prepare a plan for the long term upgrading of the Par 3 golf course which ensures its viability over the next ten years.
- Promote the Collins Oval area as a Dogs off Lead site for the southern end of the Park.

8B ANDREWS RESERVE

Role:

- To provide a recreation node on the Yarra Trail.
- To provide improved recreational opportunities for residents of the dense urban areas to the south and south-west.
- To continue to provide a local park function.

**Key Strategies:
Environmental Management**

- Maintain the exotic vegetation character of the main park area north of Collins Bridge.
- Continue weed control in the zone, with emphasis on the extensive woody species including Elms and other exotic trees.
- Close and revegetate existing eroded tracks.

Visitor Management

- Develop picnic facilities at the reserve, suitable for moderate sized groups.
- Subject to investigations as to the feasibility of developing toilet facilities above the flood plain at Andrews Reserve:
 - . develop barbecue facilities; and
 - . investigate the potential to develop a small carpark off the Boulevard.
- Through the addition of signage and improved path layout, encourage visitors who use Collins oval to cross the Boulevard on the straighter section to the south-east.
- Install facilities for dog owners to remove droppings from the Park.
- Encourage the City of Yarra to regularly monitor the safety of Collins Bridge.
- Install drinking fountains at appropriate sites adjacent to the Main Yarra Trail.
- Provide bicycle parking facilities adjacent to the Main Yarra Trail.
- Appropriately sign the Park as a rest stop along the Trail.
- Provide signage to river access ramp.
- Provide park information shelter.

- Work with the City of Yarra to improve the aesthetic quality of the Collins Bridge entry to the Park.

8C DICKINSON RESERVE

Role:

- *To form part of the Park's environmental resource for habitat provision.*
- *To provide a local park facility.*
- *To be part of the Main Yarra Trail connection through the Park.*
- *To provide a quality entrance point to the Park from the south.*

Key Strategies:

Environmental Management

- Maintain and protect the high quality vegetation in this area.
- Continue weed control, concentrating on the Hawthorn infestations and species affecting biodiversity, such as Angled Onion.
- Revegetate with upper storey species in weed eradication zones and areas of sparse indigenous vegetation cover.
- Formalise and rationalise the network of trails through the area. Close and revegetate redundant trails.
- Work with cyclists to encourage responsible Park use.

Visitor Management

- Provide low key picnic facilities appropriate to the area's local park role.
- Encourage the responsible authorities to review the surfacing of the Walmer Street Bridge to ensure safety of cyclists and pedestrians.

ZONE 9 THE BOULEVARD

Role:

- *To provide a high quality scenic drive through inner Melbourne.*
- *To form part of the Park's tourist circulation route.*

Key Strategies:

Environmental Management

- Work with Vicroads to increase the indigenous vegetation edge to the Boulevard.

Visitor Management

- Promote the Boulevard as a tourist drive through at a variety of tourist information sources.
- Develop a signage strategy for the Boulevard to clarify parking locations, viewing points and other facilities.
- Create clear and visually strong entry points to the Boulevard at the northern and southern ends.
- Liaise with VicRoads regarding any proposals for the Boulevard which address improved safety for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists.
- Explore the potential of the Boulevard as a venue for sporting events such as fun runs, cycling, triathlons and biathlons.

Cultural Heritage Management

- Encourage Vicroads to conserve the structures associated with the original Boulevard - including retaining walls and edging.
- Provide interpretive information about this depression era work-creation initiative.

5 IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of the Yarra Bend Park Strategy Plan has in some ways already begun, through the process of preparing the plan. The detailed implementation of this Plan over its 5 year life will require clear priorities and phasing, as well as monitoring and assessment over time.

5.1 MANAGEMENT RESOURCES

The allocation of resources to the tasks and strategies outlined in this Plan is the domain of the Park Business Plan. This document will be prepared annually by Park Management and will address:

- financial management and priorities for the coming year;
- allocation of recurrent and capital budgets in accordance with key strategies and priorities;
- applications for specific purpose grants;
- review of service contracts.

5.2 CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

In addition to these important areas of Business Planning, the direction of community involvement in the Park is vital. This reflects not only the “ownership” benefits of community involvement but the reality of a situation of limited resources.

The Park will continue to support Friends Groups in their efforts to improve the environmental qualities of the Park and direct those energies and involvements to support the priorities set out in this Strategy Plan. The Park will continue to consult and coordinate works with the various other bodies with responsibility and/or interest in the Park, including:

- City of Boroondara;
- City of Darebin;
- City of Yarra;
- Melbourne Water; and
- Merri Creek Management Committee.

5.3 PRIORITIES

From the strategies and tasks set out in this Plan, it is clear that a number of key areas must be addressed to achieve the high quality of Park envisaged for Yarra Bend. In principle, the implementation of this Strategy Plan will address the following areas of need:

- ensuring public safety and security within the Park;
- protecting and enhancing the environmental diversity and values of the Park;
- improving the quality and diversity of the visitor’s experience in the Park.

From those principles, the strategies that will be given priority in the implementation of the Plan will be those that address:

- implementation of the recommendations contained in the Risk Management Assessment prepared for the Park;
- implementation of the environmental management strategies, particularly in relation to the River and areas of high quality vegetation;
- upgrading the existing services and facilities that provide the most benefit to the greatest number of visitors; and then
- broadening or diversifying the recreation opportunities through the implementation of new services and facilities.

5.4 IMPLEMENTATION PHASES

While the Park enjoys a reasonably consistent income level, this income leaves limited scope for the sort of significant capital improvements and initiatives outlined in this Plan. Because of the unpredictable availability of specific grants and other income sources, and the consequent effect on the implementation time-line, phases of implementation are proposed as follows:

Phase 1

- Address risk management across the Park, implementing the priority initiatives of the Risk Evaluation and Assessment Report.

- Implement the environmental initiatives that concentrate on:
 - protection and enhancement of areas with highest environmental values;
 - protecting and extending the riparian corridors;
 - addressing the key threats to high quality environmental areas and the environmental diversity of the Park, such as trail and bank erosion, weed invasion etc.
- Upgrading of the existing services and facilities to acceptable standards, concentrating firstly in the key visitor use areas before broadening the upgrading to lesser used portions of the Park. Such upgrading will include:
 - toilets;
 - shelters;
 - tracks;
 - signage;
 - picnic facilities;
 - fencing;
 - playgrounds.
- Accommodation and support for the Golf Club redevelopment project which is an initiative that provides a significant upgrade to facilities and services to all Park users.

Phase 2

- Continue to implement environmental management initiatives.
- Continue (to completion) the upgrading of the existing visitor facilities and services.
- Commence the Deep Rock family picnic area proposal, with early works of plantings and simple picnic facility additions.

Phase 3

- Continue to implement environmental management initiatives.
- Complete the Deep Rock family picnic area with further facilities and the regional playground.

5.5 MONITORING AND REVIEW

Regular monitoring and review of this Plan is fundamental to its success. Monitoring of the direction set by the strategies and review of their implementation allows the Plan to be a document that can react to changed conditions and sometimes changing needs.

To ensure the continuing relevance of the Plan therefore, the following will occur:

- An annual Business Plan will be prepared by Park Management that identifies:
 - critical needs and priorities for the coming year;
 - a review of progress against aims for the previous year;
- An environmental assessment, based on the process established in the Environmental Management Plan.
- Ongoing monitoring of visitor numbers to allow control and direction of visitors to the various designated parts of the Park.
- Regular visitor feedback on the performance of the Park through the Customer Satisfaction Monitor surveys, together with a specific response to identified needs or concerns within the Business Plan.
- Regular feedback and review with community and 'friends' groups involved in the Park.

In addition to these procedures, it is crucial that the Strategy Plan be reviewed at the end of a 5 period to ensure Park Management is best placed to respond and adapt to changing needs and requirements environmentally, socially and economically.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Building Services Agency, *Ex-NPS Toilet Facilities – Building Condition Assessment*, August 1997.

Building Services Agency, *Strategic Facility Assessment*, August 1997.

Chris Dance Land Design & Fulcrum Town Planners, *Yarra Bend Fairfield Area Development Opportunities*, February 1997.

KPMG Management Consulting Pty Ltd, *Melbourne Riverlands – Regional Tourism Development Plan Final Report*, February, 1997.

Leigh and Orange Consultants, *Proposed Golf Centre at Yarra Bend Golf Course for Mr Bruce Riley*.

Marsh & McLennan, *Yarra Bend Park Risk Management Report*, July 1997.

Melbourne Parks and Waterways, *Brimbank Park and Horseshoe Bend Farm Setting Plan*, November, 1996.

Ministry for Planning and Environment, *Lower Yarra River Concept Plan 1986*.

Ministry for Planning and Environment, *Middle Yarra River Concept Plan*.

Parks Victoria, *Yarra Bend Park Heritage Conservation Plan*, Planning and Development Division, December 1998.

Parks Victoria, *Yarra Bend Park, Environmental Management Plan*, December, 1998.

Tourism Victoria, *Strategic Business Plan 1997-2001 Building Partnerships*.

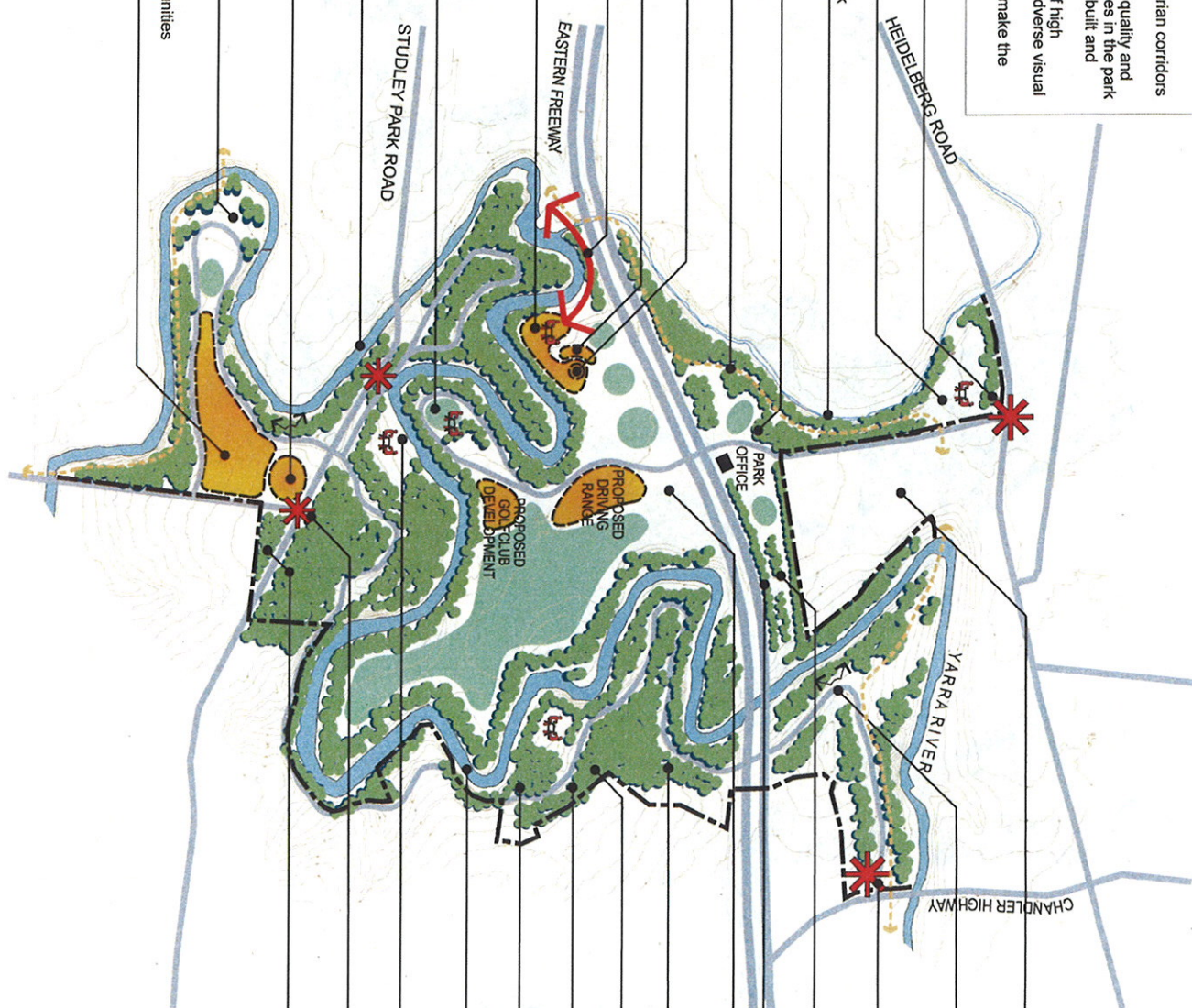
Yarra Bend Park Trust, *Yarra Bend Park Management Plan*, 1990.

Yarra Bend Park Trust, *Yarra Bend Park Progress Report*, December 1996.

KEY PARK WIDE INITIATIVES

- Protect and enhance the quality of the riparian corridors through the Park
- Concentrate resources on maintaining the quality and diversity of the existing environmental values in the park
- Protect culturally significant features, both built and natural
- Implement weed control to protect areas of high environmental value and to minimize the adverse visual impact of woody weeds in other areas
- Implement risk management strategies to make the park safe for visitors

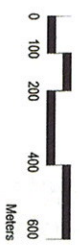
- Improve entry point and entrance road
- Increase picnic and BBQ facilities
- Reinforce fauna corridor along Merri Creek
- Remove and revegetate northern oval
- Develop viewing points along Yarra Trail
- Develop large playground
- Extend car park
- Improve connection to Dights Falls
- Develop area with picnic facilities
- Improve quality of picnic facilities in Golf Course Loop area
- Reinforce Yarra fauna corridor
- Promote compatible use of oval
- Develop as picnic and recreation focus and stopping point on Yarra Trail
- Investigate additional recreational opportunities and upgrade golf course over time



- Promote links with Fairfield Park
- Develop safe parking and access
- Develop improved entry to park
- Accommodate improved facilities at Fly Fishing Pool
- Improve buffering to freeway
- Minimize size of depot and create improved Access to river area
- Open woodland vegetation
- Provide seating at strategic locations on path
- Improve entry signage and safety
- Revegetate open area
- Install additional seating
- Reinforce Yarra fauna corridor
- Further develop Park Information Center
- Reinforce entry point to Park
- Revegetate in long term

LEGEND

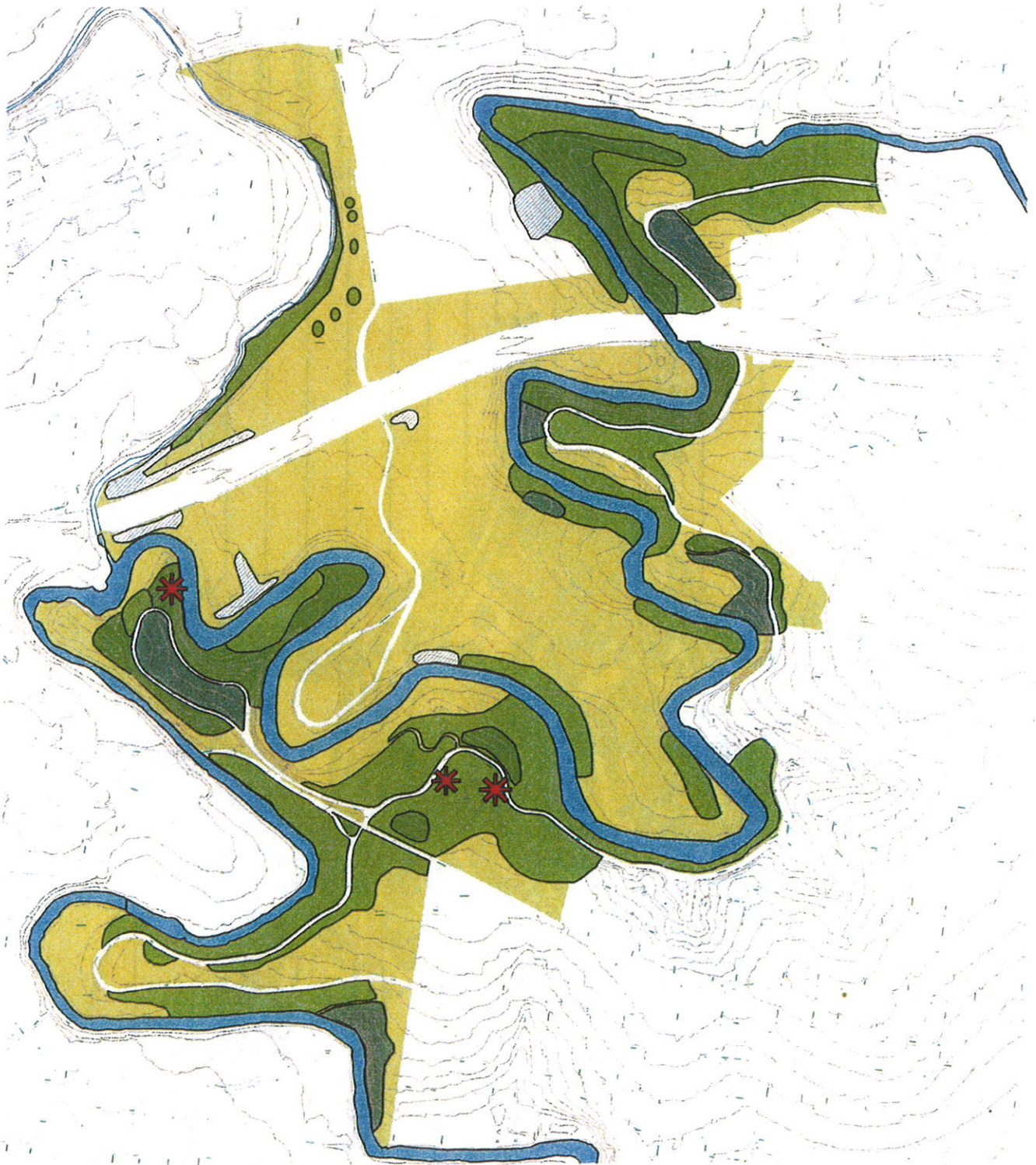
- Park boundary
- Main Entry Points
- Viewing Points
- Main Picnic Area



Map 1
Key Initiatives
Yarra Bend Park
Strategy Plan






September 1998
 MDG Landscape Architects
 Jan Bruce and Associates





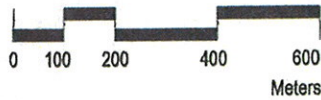
LEGEND

INDIGENOUS VEGETATION CONDITION

-  Very Good to Good
-  Good to Fair
-  Fair to Poor
-  Other
-  Revegetation Areas

GEOLOGY

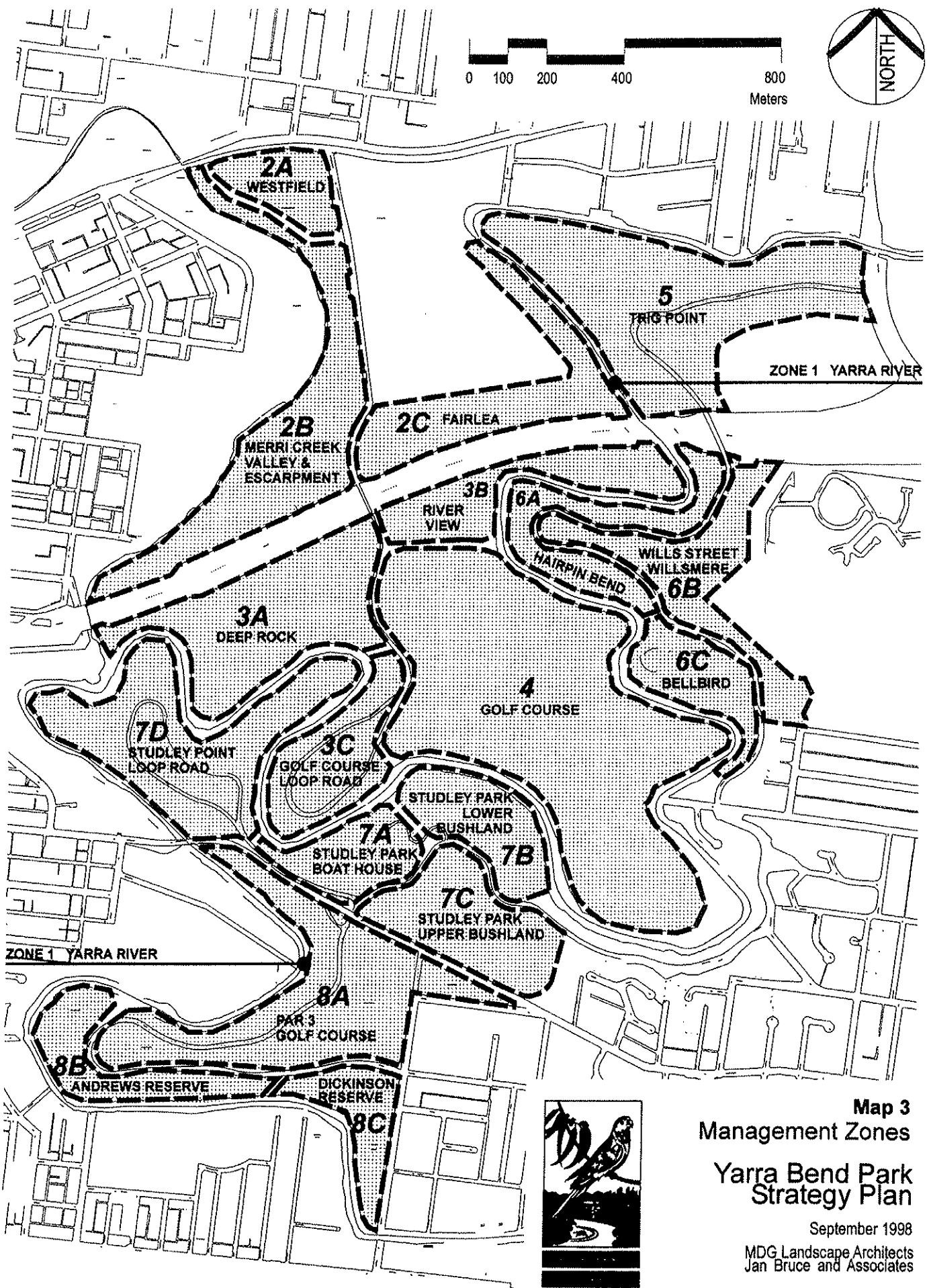
-  Sites of Geological Significance



Map 2
Indigenous Vegetation Condition
and Geological Features
Yarra Bend Park
Strategy Plan

September 1998

MDG Landscape Architects
 Jan Bruce and Associates



Map 3
Management Zones

Yarra Bend Park
Strategy Plan

September 1998

MDG Landscape Architects
Jan Bruce and Associates

