



# MERRI RIVER PARKLANDS FRAMEWORK

**APPROVAL DATE: 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2020**

## **DOCUMENT CONTROL**

Document Title:	<i>Merri River Parklands Framework 'Connecting the Merri'</i>
Policy Type:	<i>Council</i>
Responsible Branch:	<i>City Growth</i>
Responsible Officer:	<i>Director City Growth</i>
Document Status:	Adopted
Approved By:	<i>Council</i>
Adopted Date:	<i>3<sup>rd</sup> August 2020</i>

# MERRI RIVER PARKLANDS FRAMEWORK

---

## **Acknowledgements:**

Warrnambool City Council is honoured to have an important custodian role in partnership with Eastern Maar Citizens in looking after Country. Warrnambool City Council is proud of our Maar heritage and story. We acknowledge the Maar people and celebrate their rich, diverse and ongoing contribution to us all.

This document was supported by an internal reference group from the City Growth Directorate. Contributions in the form of peer review were also made by Trent Wallis of RMCG through the Waterway Management Twinning Program, and by consultants from Utilis and Blom Design through the Merri River Planning Project. Credit for the map in Figure 1 is to Erin Marslen of Blom Design.

# MERRI RIVER PARKLANDS FRAMEWORK

---

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework to guide planning and management around the public open space corridor associated with the Merri River in Warrnambool.

### 1.2. Definitions

<b>Open Space</b>	Publically owned land set aside for leisure, recreation, and nature conservation purposes. It includes pockets of natural landscape within the urban area, sports reserves, and areas of high scenic, cultural or conservation value.
<b>Framework</b>	A document that outlines a set of principles or objectives to guide ongoing decision making and policy development
<b>Merri River</b>	The central stem of the Merri River within the Warrnambool City boundary and key tributaries where they contribute to the values of the corridor (refer Figure 1 over page)
<b>Merri River Parklands</b>	The collection of current and future public open spaces connected along the main stem of the Merri River in Warrnambool, as referenced by this policy (refer Appendix 1 conceptual diagram).
<b>Development</b>	Man-made structures, features and facilities and surrounding open space, including houses, buildings, and park facilities such as barbeque shelters, toilets, roads, paths, play spaces etc.

## 2. REFERENCES

### 2.1. Internal Council Documents

- Warrnambool Open Space Strategy (2014)
- Municipal Strategic Statement
- Warrnambool 2040
- Warrnambool Health and Wellbeing Plan (2018)
- Green Warrnambool (2018)
- Any Council-adopted Master Plan, Open Space Precinct Plan, or Landscape Concept Plan relevant to the Merri River Parklands

# MERRI RIVER PARKLANDS FRAMEWORK

## 2.2. External References

- Merri River Alliance Network Vision and Objectives
- Merri Estuary Management Plan (GHCMA 2008)
- Making a Difference (MAD) for the Merri (Merri River Landcare Network)
- Glenelg Hopkins Waterway Strategy (GHCMA, 2014-2022)
- Glenelg Hopkins Regional Catchment Strategy (GHCMA, 2013-2019)
- Water for Victoria, Water Plan (Victorian Government, 2016)



**Figure 1.** The main stem of the Merri River in Warrnambool.

# MERRI RIVER PARKLANDS FRAMEWORK

---

## 3. POLICY

### 3.1. Policy Statement

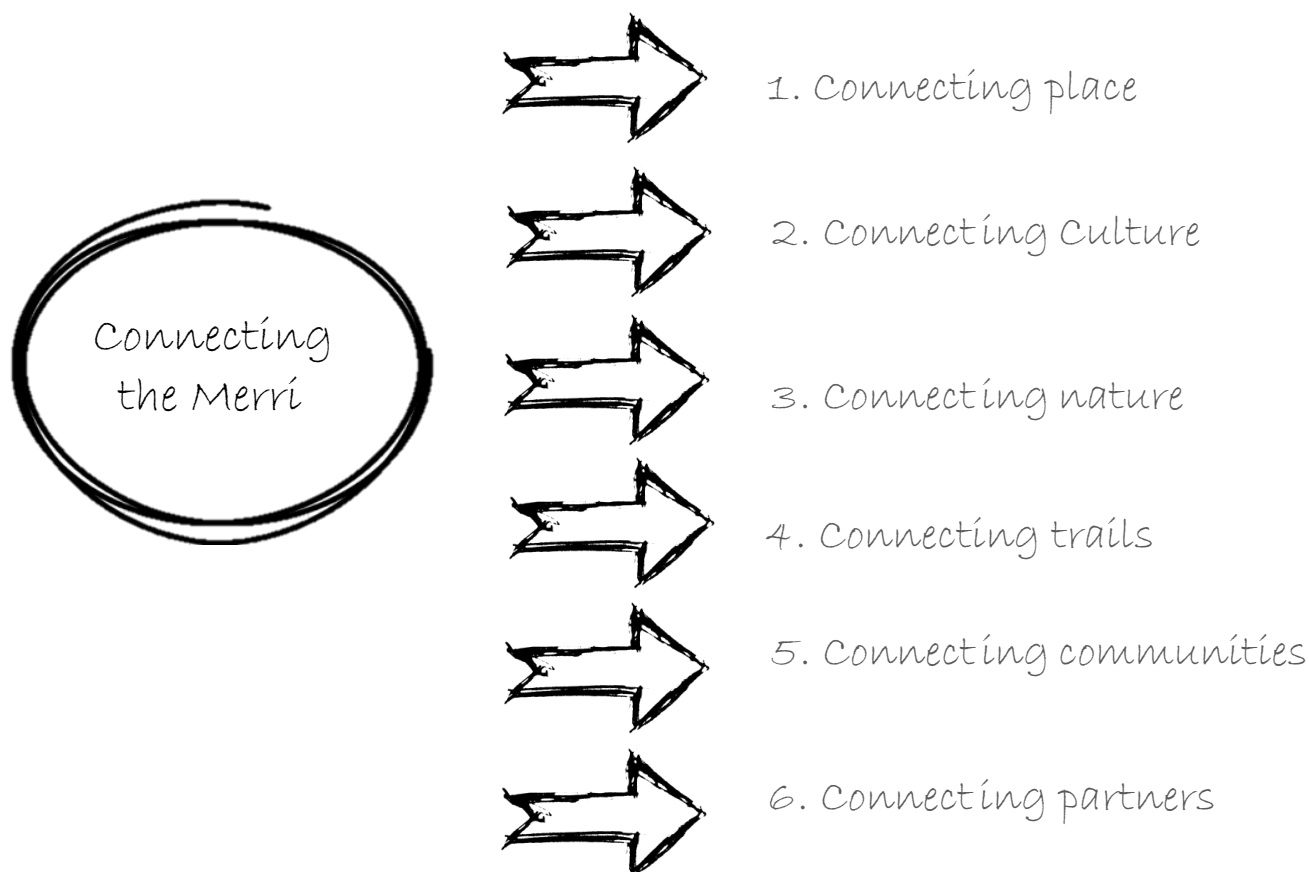
The Merri River Parklands framework recognises the important future role of the Merri River in providing a major public open space corridor in Warrnambool. It sets the vision, objectives and principles to guide future decision making in relation to the planning and management of the river corridor.

### 3.2. Vision

The Merri River corridor will form a series of connected and accessible parklands and trails through Warrnambool, that support the long term health of the river, as well as active river and riverside transport, nature-based recreation and events, and wildlife movement.

### 3.3. Objectives

The framework focuses on improving connections within and to the Merri River corridor ("Merri Connections"):



# MERRI RIVER PARKLANDS FRAMEWORK

---

The objectives of the Merri River Parklands framework are:

1. To develop an integrated network of quality public open spaces connected along the Merri River through Warrnambool *CONNECTING PLACE*
2. To support the open space needs of the growing population of Warrnambool by providing an accessible central corridor for tourism, recreation, social gatherings and connection with nature *CONNECTING COMMUNITY*
3. To value and respect the cultural landscape and connection to the river by the Traditional Owners *CONNECTING CULTURE*
4. To re-establish a 'green spine' through the city that contributes to waterway and catchment health, wildlife movement, and climate change impact mitigation *CONNECTING NATURE*
5. To develop connected riverside trails that support active transport, tourism, water-based sports, walking and cycling based events *CONNECTING TRAILS*
6. To engage in mutually beneficial partnerships that contribute to the vision of this framework *CONNECTING PARTNERS*

## 3.4. Guiding Principles

Any development or projects associated with the Merri River and adjoining parklands will comply with the following principles:

**PRINCIPLE 1:** Revegetation of the river corridor must include indigenous species that reflect modelled Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVCs) or native species known to have previously grown in the area

**PRINCIPLE 2:** Gaps in parkland connectivity will be actively addressed where appropriate and as the opportunities arise

**PRINCIPLE 3:** Development within (and adjoining) the river corridor should not detract from the river's natural, landscape, heritage and cultural values

**PRINCIPLE 4:** Ecological restoration of the river corridor in the urban area will be compatible with social and recreational use and consider ongoing maintenance requirements and the safety of river and parkland users

**PRINCIPLE 5:** Significant view lines and valued landscapes will be preserved where practical

**PRINCIPLE 6:** The cultural values of the Traditional Owners will be respected and considered in planning and activities undertaken along the Merri

# MERRI RIVER PARKLANDS FRAMEWORK

---

**PRINCIPLE 7:** The corridor will be accessible and reflect the needs of a diverse range of users

**PRINCIPLE 8:** Infrastructure with the river corridor should be well-designed and fit-for purpose, and considering the risks and future impacts of flooding and climate change

**PRINCIPLE 9:** Sensitive uses of the corridor, including recreation, events and tourism will be supported in appropriate locations within the corridor

**PRINCIPLE 10:** Planning decisions will be compatible with other relevant policy, including the Warrnambool Open Space Strategy, Green Warrnambool Plan, and Warrnambool 2040 Community Plan.

# MERRI RIVER PARKLANDS FRAMEWORK

## APPENDIX 1. Concept diagram of parklands included in the framework

