

PLACE

Melbourne's river is a defining feature of the city's identity. The Yarra River, Birrarung, and its banks are an attractive complement to the central area, offering important open space amenity, a diversity of uses and new economies that are welcoming to all.

The character and use of the Yarra River, Birrarung, has evolved significantly over the last 200 years. Historically, the river west of the now removed falls, near Queens Bridge, was where boats docked. While the east was characterised by soft, landscape edges with access to fresh water. These conditions of maritime docks to the west and parkland edges to the east are still evident today, though the central city waterfront has transformed to be home to a range of major recreational, cultural and hospitality destinations.

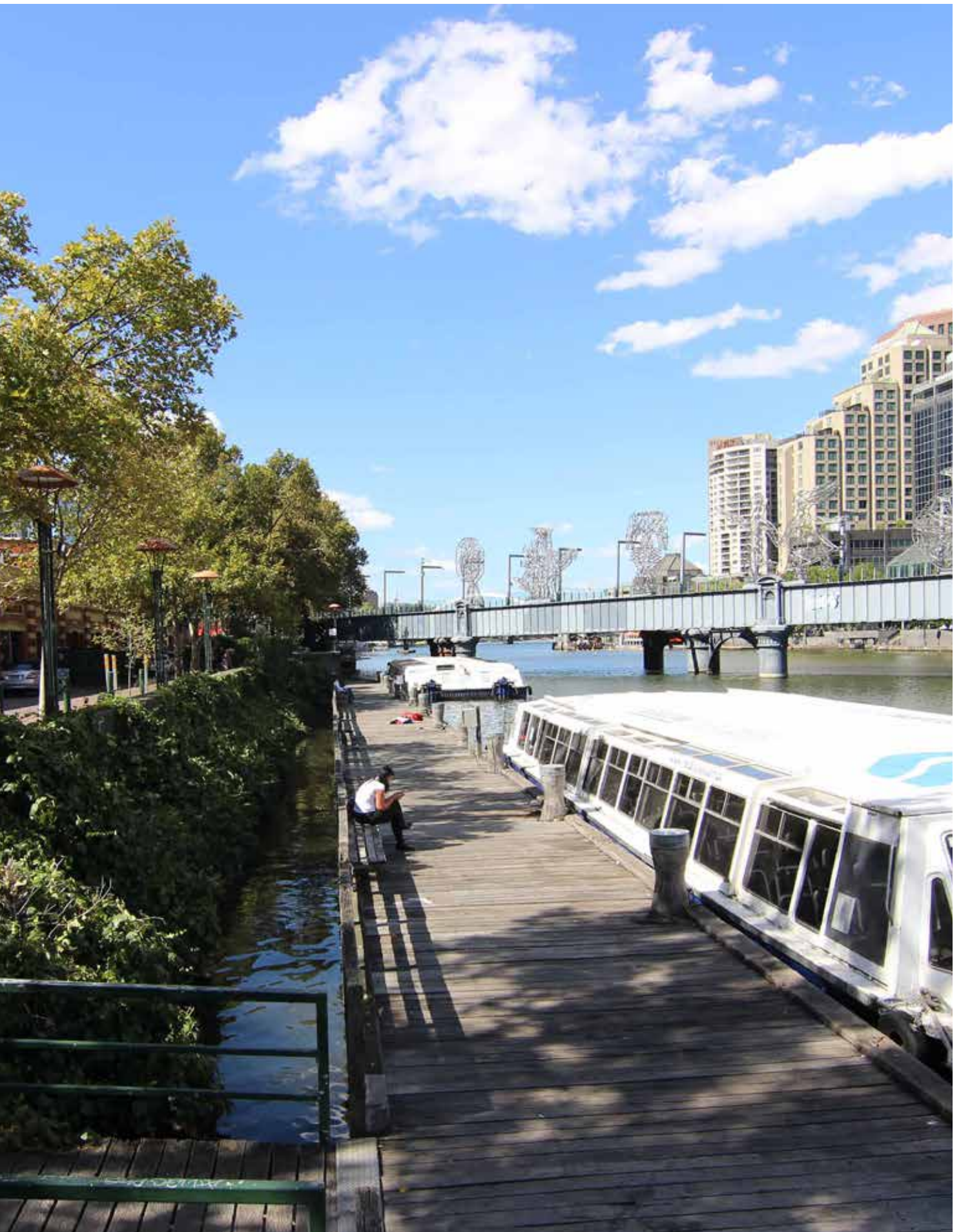
The Yarra River, Birrarung, is identifiable by its distinctive features of the parks, bridges, vaults, railway viaduct structures, sweeping city views and numerous historical sites. It is important to respond and celebrate these aspects while ensuring river use remains relevant to today's lifestyles. It is vital for our economy that the inner city river continues to emerge as a vibrant, creative and well activated destination, unique to Melbourne. A riverfront with a distinctive, locally authentic character that promotes its past and present will build a genuine and memorable city identity.

Key place challenges are defined below:

- Northbank stands out as a broad area of poor definition and inconsistent quality that weakens a strong, attractive identity for the City.
- Limited day to day activation of the central riverfront.
- Balancing public access to the riverfront with private commercial activations.
- Range of treatments, furniture, signage types, contributing to a lack of consistency and clarity.
- Diversity of landowners impacting the management and conditioning of riverfront areas.



Image 42. View of Banana Alley looking towards Sandridge Bridge.



STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS



Image 43. Artist's impression of possible improvements to Batman Park.

Illustrative for discussion purposes only.

7. INVITING

Prioritise Northbank renewal to create an inviting destination adjacent to the City.

Northbank is located on the doorstep of the City, yet has been long perceived as the unattractive counterpart to the southern bank. Southbank Promenade and Crown Casino river frontage feature sunny, active, highly pedestrianised, public spaces. These contrast markedly with areas along Northbank, where public spaces and pathways are generally of a lower quality, removed from active frontages and more prone to safety and security issues.

In recent decades, Melbourne has sought to re-embrace the Yarra River and the completion of Birrarung Marr and Federation Square, has raised the profile of the northern bank of the river. However Northbank, from Spencer Street to St Kilda Road, covering Banana Alley, Enterprize Park and Batman Park needs significant improvements. The poor and inconsistent quality of the public realm, lack of active frontages and connectivity issues create a highly underwhelming experience, out of step with this location.

The rail viaduct is a defining characteristic of the Northbank, however the studios along Rebecca's walk and at-grade parking underneath the rail structures, detract from the amenity and activity potential of the surrounding park spaces. The general presentation of the park is also in need of improvement to increase opportunity for use as a safe public space for the surrounding community. The Aquarium and Immigration Museum are the main public attractors to this area, yet these have limited relationship and poor connection to the riverside setting, due to access and orientation issues.

Northbank plays a prominent role in contributing to Melbourne's identity. As further development occurs and the central city population increases, there is growing demand for quality and high amenity parkland in this area. There are modest improvements currently planned for Enterprize and Batman Parks, however, we recommend making Northbank a priority of major investment, enabling much needed public realm improvements of this highly visible asset to the central city.

Interventions could include widening the pathways so that they are broad, well-lit and have visible destinations; bold changes to surrounding intersections; protecting remaining areas of sunlight in open spaces; and major design modifications to Enterprize and Batman Parks. A concerted focus on this particular area of the Yarra River, Birrarung, would reinforce the central, urban riverfront as an inviting, attractive asset of Melbourne.

Action 12: Work with the Victorian Government and adjacent landowners to develop an agreed design, and deliver improvements to the central city Northbank area.

NORTHBANK AS A FUTURE GREENLINE



Image 44. Artist's impression of possible improvements to Northbank's spaces, connecting them and providing a series of memorable experiences.



Banana Alley Vaults

Flinders Walk

Images are illustrative for discussion purposes only.



Image 45. Chicago riverwalk. Photo by Angie McMonigal; Courtesy of the Chicago Architecture Center.

Project exemplar

Chicago Riverwalk, Illinois, USA

Scale: 2km long, 60-80m wide

Timeline: 1990-2009 (Phase 1), 2010-2015 (Phase 2),
2016-onwards (Phase 3)

The Chicago River was once an under utilised, polluted shipping channel. To enhance the experience of living, working and visiting Downtown Chicago, major redevelopment of the 2km inner city riverfront was undertaken. A new, expanded riverwalk was created that offers four character areas, featuring distinct urban landscapes and activities.

The Chicago riverfront now provides a broad range of attractions: outdoor bars and restaurants, children's play areas, museums, pier fishing, boating, kayaking, public art and bird-life, amongst a harmonious blend of nature and an urban cityscape.

The Chicago Riverwalk has taken some time to be realised. Decades of planning was undertaken before the physical Riverwalk began to take shape in 2001. Funding for the many improvements came from multiple sources, including federal and state/local budgets.

The final result is that Chicago is no longer embarrassed by the state of its river – they embrace it. The successful transformation of Chicago's riverfront offers many insights for our city riverfront, highlighting the future possibilities and potential multiple benefits of investment.

8. MULTI-FUNCTIONAL

Celebrate character areas and encourage new economies: a range of high quality civic, educational, cultural, hospitality and water dependant uses.

Successful urban environments are defined by well used, high quality, plentiful and diverse spaces and activities. Places and spaces along the inner city river have a distinct identity and offer a mix of sensory experiences, ranging from the openness of the eastern parklands to the more intimate setting along Flinders Walk, where cafes and bars echo the character of the city's laneways. Downstream of Queens Bridge is dominated by larger-scale uses including the Melbourne Exhibition and Convention Centres, large businesses and residential complexes that transition into the Docklands precinct.

A range of uses

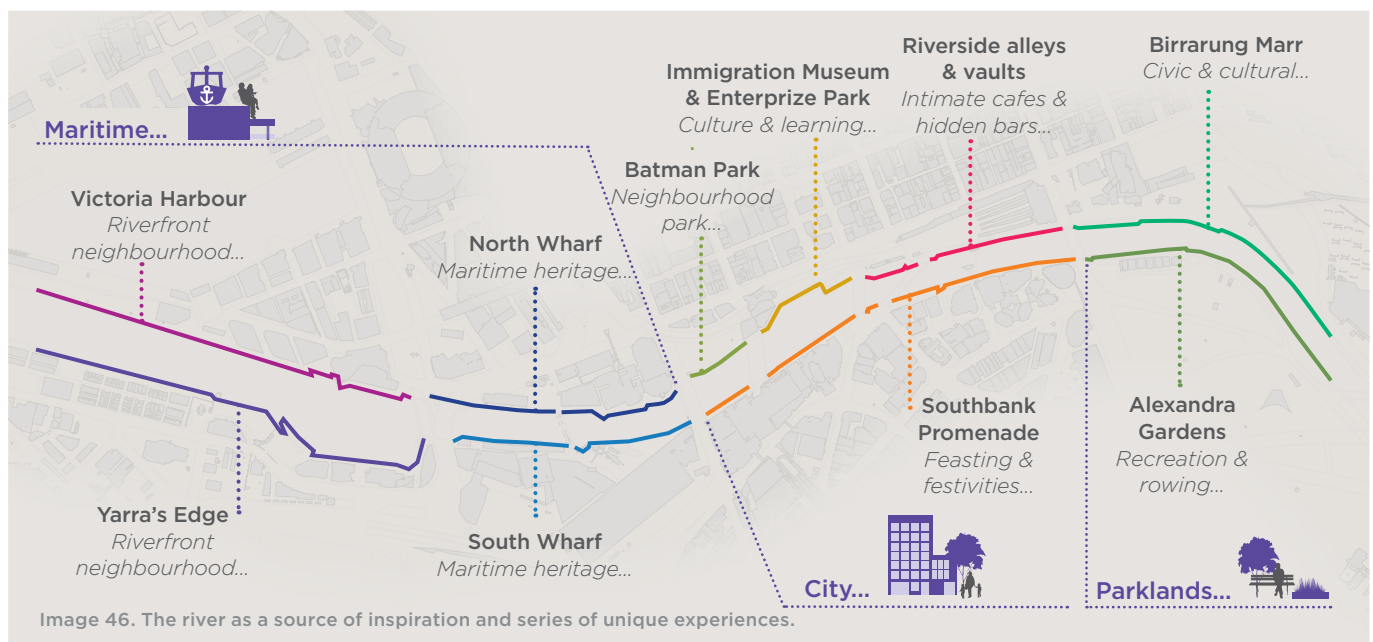
Looking to the future, the Yarra River, Birrarung, should offer an even greater diversity of uses for extended times of the day and appeal to broad sections of the community, including locals, visitors, old and young. Currently parts of the riverbank are largely focused on drinking and eating venues. There lies the potential for new economies offering broader interest and better use of the river location, such as creative and water dependant industries. The rich history of the Yarra River, Birrarung, could provide place based education opportunities. There is also a need for more play and picnic spaces to attract family groups. These could be complemented by maritime and nature learning opportunities.

Diverse character areas

As opposed to a homogenous corridor, the Yarra River, Birrarung, should build on the series of unique districts with their own distinct character, spatial definition and function. Currently there are at least ten different areas with their own distinctiveness and character that punctuate the journey along the river, offering many layers of experience. These areas could be improved and identified as distinct areas in order to attract patronage to support the functions therein and could be broadly grouped into three main urban settings of Maritime, City and Parklands. Refer Activation Plan pages 46-47 for detailed area descriptions.

Policy 7: Encourage a range of civic, educational, cultural, hospitality and water dependant uses that complement a focus on high quality public spaces.

Policy 8: Build on diverse character districts to create a series of unique, locally authentic experiences.



Guiding principles for built form activation proposals in the river corridor

The City of Melbourne are regularly in receipt of built form proposals to activate the riverfront. To inform the planning, assessment, selection and approval of these proposals we provide the following key guiding principles. These are in addition to any statutory requirements.

1. Authentic to the river context

Consider how proposals can better elevate experience of the unique river context and be consistent with the vision and strategic directions for the river.

2. Public

Sustain the Yarra River, Birrarung, as being first and foremost a public place for people to enjoy, with key pedestrian movement zones, bridge landings, key views and waterfront features kept free of obstructions.

3. Diversity of activities


Contribute to achieving a well-balanced distribution of activation uses across the entire central city riverfront area and avoid excessive repetition or discord between neighbouring activities.

4. Visual accessibility

Maintain openness to the river as much as possible and ensure views to the water from adjoining riverbank areas are not concealed over long distances.

5. Generosity, access and inclusion

Provide universal accessibility to all areas of any activation venue. A minimum public pathway width of 2.5 to 3m (where existing conditions allow) is also to be maintained, along the river edge, and kept clear of obstacles.

 Zone to be kept clear of obstacles (objects, people queuing...)



6. Integrated

Complement the surrounding built form and public realm, particularly in relation to sensitive planting, cultural works and heritage elements. Activation proposals must not involve tree removals or additional carparking in waterfront areas. Service areas also to be discreetly integrated to ensure public realm areas are not compromised.

7. Comfort and safety

Public interfaces of any proposal must enhance the nominated site's spatial qualities, contributing to the use, activity, safety and interest of the public realm. Activation proposals must not cause additional shadowing impacts between 11am-2pm or contribute noise/light pollution that disturbs surrounding residential areas.

8. Environmentally responsive

Minimise the environmental impact with sustainable management and maintenance practices. Initiatives to improve the waterfront environment, such as contributing to river cleaning, are also encouraged.

9. Design excellence

Invest in creativity and expert design to ensure every intervention is high quality, sustainable and memorable, elevating the visitor experience.

9. PUBLIC

Sustain the civic focus by encouraging activation that supports an inclusive, public waterfront.

The Yarra River, Birrarung, is a public arena for many of the activities that contribute to the life of the City. However, some events or commercial uses limit public access to the riverfront. Given the special inherent qualities of the river, we promote the Yarra River, Birrarung, being first and foremost a public place for people and recommend generous public access and pathways along the banks. This is currently compromised in some locations with pedestrian passage constrained by adjoining commercial activities. Numerous private developments along the city riverfront also turn their back to the river. The Northbank is particularly vulnerable to the incidence of this given the southern aspect.

We advocate for a balanced approach to activation and commercialisation along the banks. We recommend the river's legibility as a public place be elevated, so that it can be enjoyed by everyone without expense. The significant value of the river must be upheld and every intervention must be of the highest quality to deliver memorable and delightful experiences to tourists and residents.

Activities that support a public waterfront

The commercial function and economy generated by the river is important. However, this should not compromise the public benefit of the river experience and amenity. For instance, in the right locale, privately funded, floating infrastructure such as a bar or swimming pool could be good temporary additions. The inclusion of activities and uses that have the potential to have substantive positive impact and influence, with minimal adverse consequences should be supported.

A balanced approach which distributes commercial operations, allowing room for other activities to diversify the riverfront experience is encouraged. There is much scope to particularly increase activation of Queensbridge Square on the Southbank and the areas beneath the rail viaduct on Northbank. *The Activation Plan* on page 46 illustrates priorities, ideas and a preferred spatial distribution for future activation nodes along the central city area of the Yarra River. Specific *Guiding principles* for activation proposals are discussed in detail on the opposite page.

Riverfront buildings and landscapes

The relationship of surrounding developments immediate to the river environs has a significant impact on the use of these spaces and the behaviour of users within them. On water and water edge activities, events and uses should be orientated and designed for public use. The Aquarium is an inward oriented development that takes little advantage of its prime location adjacent to the river edge. Future riverfront developments should be required to feature active frontages that welcome the public and embrace the riverside location. All landscapes in riverfront developments should also be publicly accessible.

Carparking and helicopter facilities

Incompatible uses that, on a regular basis are detrimental to the river environment by way of noise, disturbance, erosion, discharge of air pollutants should be discouraged. There remains numerous instances of visible private carparking immediate to the inner city riverfront. The Helipad at Batman Park also incurs adverse impacts on the experience and amenity of this important green space. A general reduction to all carparking, particularly at-grade, visible facilities from this key people zone is critical and safe alternative locations for helipads must be explored as development of the riverfront continues to evolve.

Policy 9: Ensure unrestricted public riverfront access.

Policy 10: Encourage riverfront buildings to address the water with physical openings and active edge uses.

Policy 11: Discourage helicopter facilities and carparking along riverfront areas and work to minimise ambient noise.

Policy 12: Promote activities that support a public, safe and attractive riverfront.

Action 13: Develop a long term program of high quality events and activities that align with *The Activation Plan* and work towards transforming key locations of the riverfront into vibrant, safe and inclusive destinations.

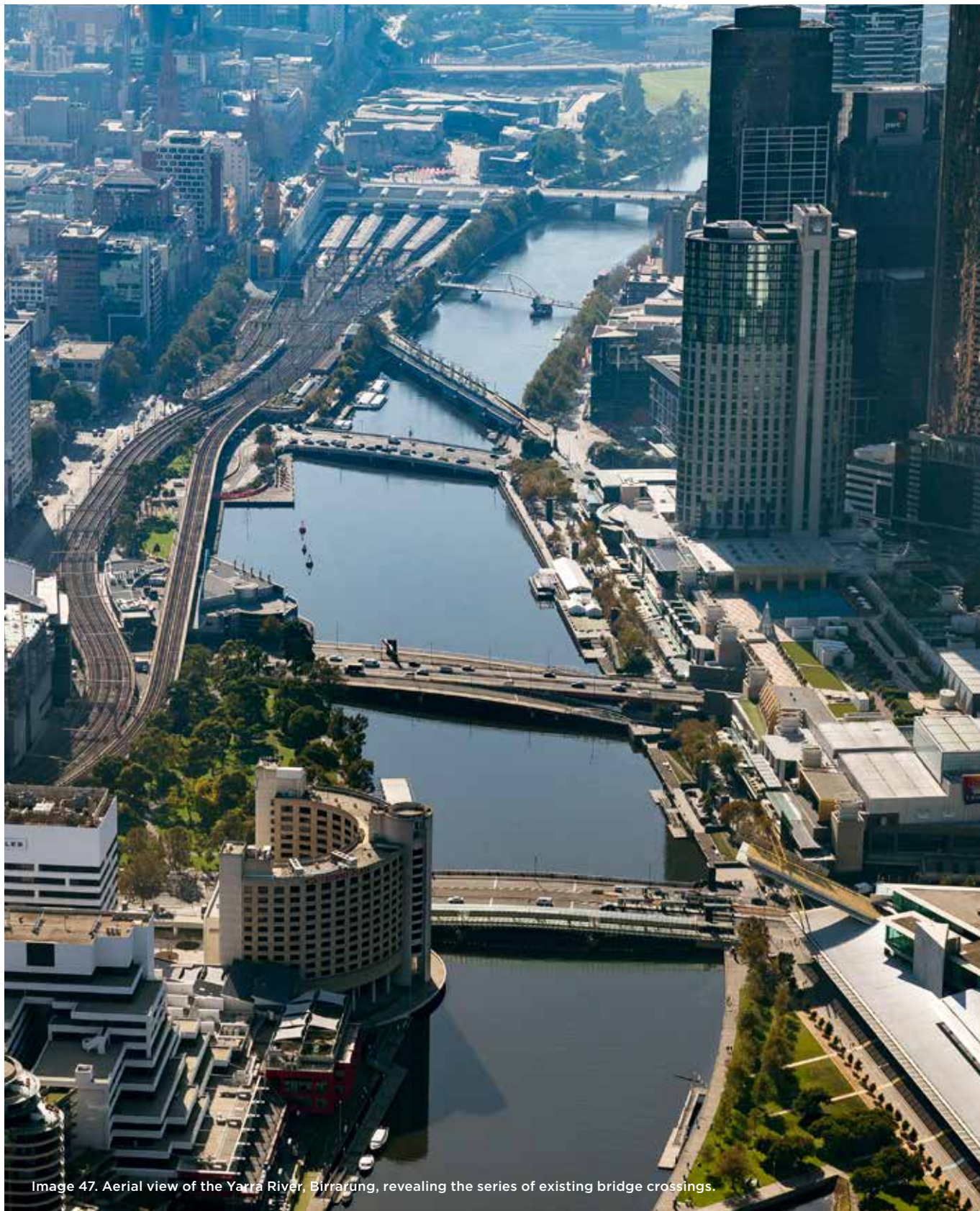


Image 47. Aerial view of the Yarra River, Birrarung, revealing the series of existing bridge crossings.

10. LEGIBLE

Rationalise clutter and on-water infrastructure to ensure unobstructed views and vistas.

The role of rivers in a city context could be likened to urban parks in terms of providing essential elements of fresh air, trees and green space, openness and relief from the intensity of urban life. Waterfront clutter and on-water infrastructure should not detract from the elemental qualities of this unique, natural setting, nor undermine the peaceful amenity of the area. It is important that we preserve our riverfront, acknowledging its significance and are accordingly discerning about what structures and objects are placed within the confines of this natural asset.

There is a myriad of signage and ad hoc placement of outdoor seating, bins and light poles, adversely impacting pedestrian flow, which collectively weaken the legibility and overall attraction of the waterfront asset. Floating, on-water infrastructure such as bars, boats under repair, pontoons and expansive berthing areas also compete with uses on the banks and most importantly obstruct clear views of the riverfront. There are also numerous at-grade parking areas immediate to waterfront areas, particularly along the Northbank.

Riverbank clutter

The placement of objects (signage, bins, light poles) or structures (floating bars, booking kiosks) should be well integrated with the environs, have a clear, beneficial purpose. Key pedestrian movement zones, key vistas and views of key elements (heritage, public art etc) are to be kept free of obstruction. This concerns selectively rationalising electrical service cabinets and bins, consolidating light poles and introducing better placement of street furniture to de-clutter the riverfront. Private activities must manage storage needs such as tables, chairs, barrels on-site. In addition, the location of floating bars and other on-water infrastructure should be minimised or effectively dispersed so as not to dominate an area or obstruct public access to the water's edge for long distances, as previously mentioned on page 42.

Bridges over the river

The panoramic views provided by bridges is a positive part of the river experience. Bridges are also highly visible elements in the river landscape and therefore the location of bridges, their height and alignment to minimise expanse and maximise the environmental and visual experience of users is key to the riverfront experience.

There are currently nine cross-river links within the central city area. In the future, there is potentially a need for one to two additional bike and pedestrian crossings over the inner city river area to support enhanced connectivity and use. A potential pedestrian and bicycle bridge between Birrarung Marr and Domain Parklands would provide connection between major parkland assets. The proposal for a bridge across to Fisherman's Bend on the Collins Street axis will also offer critical connectivity between the City, Docklands and this new community. The design and location however must be sensitively resolved to respect the local context and environment, particularly with regards to viewsheds, on water usage and additional overshadowing.

Riverfront signage and treatments

To improve the legibility of the corridor, co-ordinate signage, treatments and evoke an authentic, local character, the development of technical guidance for the riverfront is recommended. This would offer clear and consistent direction on a base palette of preferred materials, signage, landscaping and details that recognise the unique location and are visually cohesive and recessive.

This could include treatments which accord with each character area and may be addressed through additions to the City of Melbourne Design Standards. As a basis, in the interim the selection of materials is to be guided by the Docklands Design and Construction Standards for Public Infrastructure Works, the Docklands Public Realm Plan and the City of Melbourne Design Standards.

Policy 13: Rationalise existing and proposed clutter to ensure unobstructed appreciation to identified views and landmarks.

Policy 14: Consider impact on views in design and location of additional bridges only where cross river connectivity is critical.

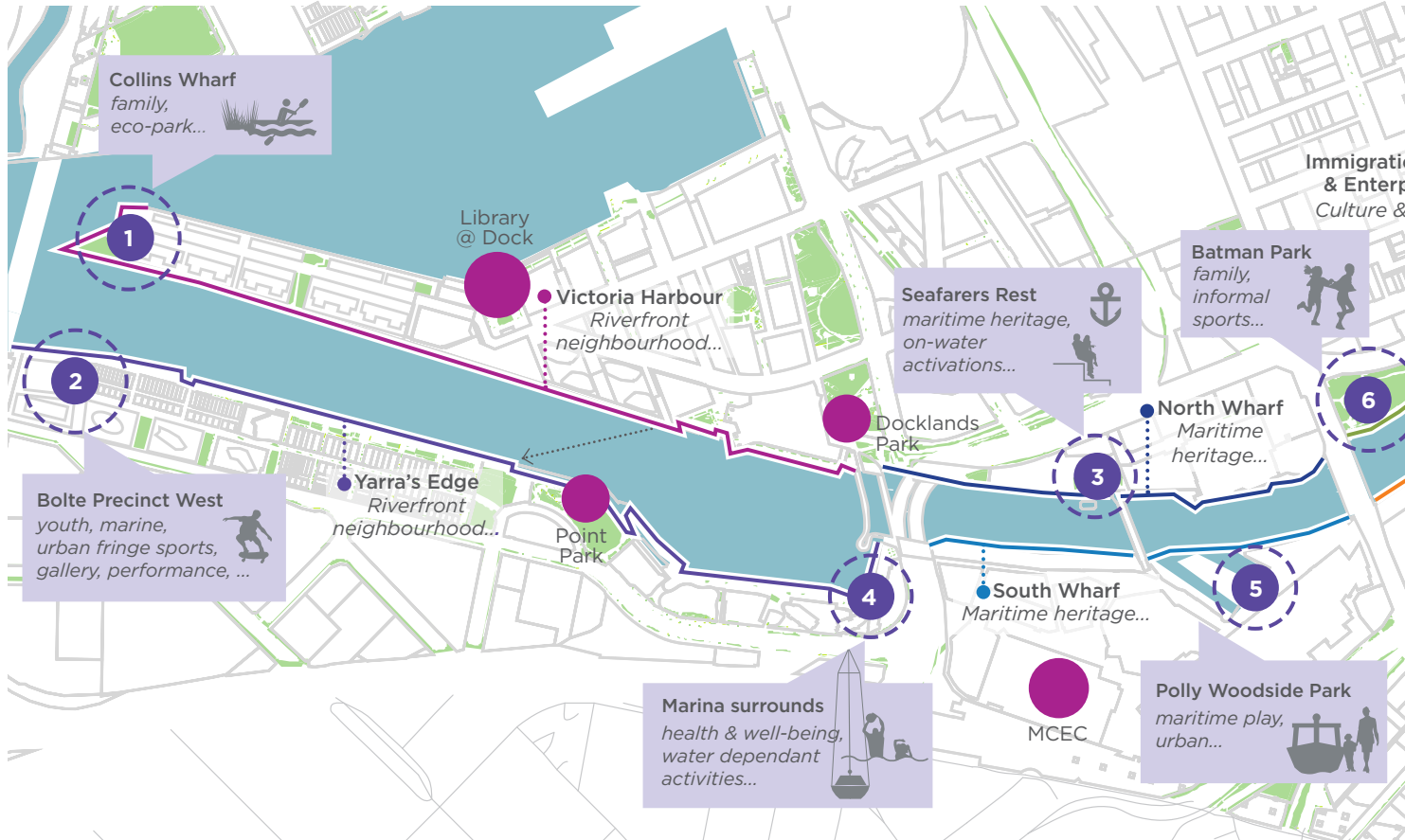
Action 14: Incorporate within the City of Melbourne Design Standards relevant technical guidance for riverfront treatments and signage to establish a consistent palette.

Action 15: Work with the Victorian government to deliver general maintenance upgrades - decluttering, graffiti removal, street furniture, lighting etc.

Action 16: Investigate the location, purpose and need for a new bridge to improve pedestrian and bicycle access between Birrarung Marr and Domain Parklands and, if supported, work with the Victorian Government to fund and deliver.

ACTIVATION PLAN

Illustrative plan of the priorities, ideas and preferred spatial distribution for future activation nodes along the central city area of the Yarra River, Birrarung.



Character area descriptions

Maritime...

Yarra's Edge and Victoria Harbour

● Riverfront neighbourhood...

Bathed in sunlight and the site of a future tram bridge, the area holds much potential for additional public, water dependant activities such as an urban beach/swimming pool (privately funded). Community and ecological interventions are encouraged to complement the commercial nature of this area.

Priority activation nodes: 1 2 4

North Wharf and South Wharf

● Maritime heritage...

This precinct holds great potential as a destination for authentic maritime elements that offer insights to the maritime history. Activities introduced to the precinct should honour and build upon this focus. The Polly Woodside and sunlit grassed area nearby could be reinvigorated with more direct access routes. Adjoining the restored heritage sheds, there also lies the opportunity for complementary on water activities that sit below wharf height.

Priority activation nodes: 3 5

City...

Batman Park

● Urban park...

This area holds great potential as an excellent urban park space with attractions for all ages, supporting the high residential, worker and visitor population immediate to this zone. Create opportunities for families and children to stay and play in the precinct. Phase out helicopters as the noise and wind gusts compromise the park experience. Offer opportunity for informal sporting activity, bbqs and picnics.

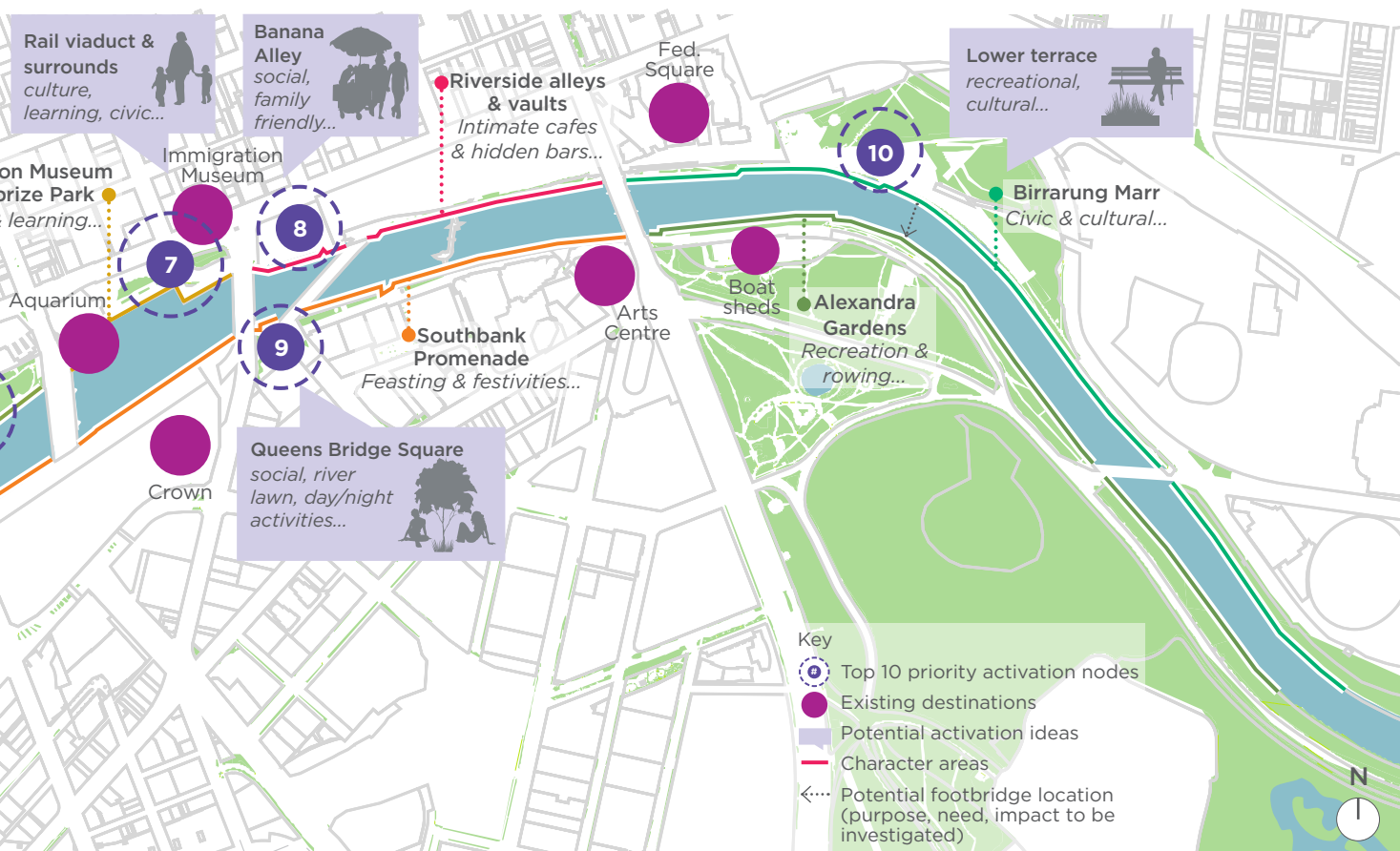
Priority activation node: 6

Immigration Museum and Enterprise Park

● Culture and learning...

An area to reimagine the river's edge, connecting the Immigration Museum to the river alongside activating both the rail viaduct undercroft and the park with a meaningful cultural education program. Bring the colour, creativity and activity that happens within the Museum outside for all to enjoy and provide greater activation at the Aquarium to make the area a must visit destination.

Priority activation node: 7



Riverside alleys and vaults

● *Intimate cafes and hidden bars...*

Characterised by an intimate, urban character, this portion of the river is a key arrival point and needs to provide ample room for people to clearly experience the unique riverside environment. Commercial uses should purposefully catalyse activity in this zone, without compromising public riverfront areas and critical movement zones. The mix of offerings could also be complemented with family friendly food and beverage and boutique retail.

Priority activation node: 8

Southbank Promenade

● *Feasting and festivities...*

Southbank Promenade is one of the city's busiest public spaces featuring a notable concentration of waterfront dining and drinking, arts and cultural venues. The opportunity afforded by the northern aspect and ready population should be further maximized. Pockets of sunlit, lawn space should be retained and new civic areas created in the most populated areas, such as nearby Evan Walker Bridge. Queens Bridge Square also holds much potential for improved amenity and recognition of its important cultural location.

Priority activation node: 9

Parklands...

Birraring Marr

● *Civic and cultural...*

A highly valued cultural precinct and well-designed urban landscape, this is a place for both peace and quiet, alongside public events. Aboriginal history and connection to place is represented in the native landscaping and public art located throughout Birrarung Marr. The views of the city, Arts Centre, river and Alexandra Gardens must also be protected. Future activations should support the area's civic and cultural focus, and enable day to day activation to complement the calendar of larger public events.

Priority activation node: 10

Alexandra Gardens

● *Recreation and rowing...*

This area is characterised by openness, featuring vast lawn areas, palm trees, ornamental shrubs and the historic rowing boathouses along the river. The gardens also include areas that accommodate some of the city's events. As a rare landscape oasis so close to the City, this area should continue as a precinct primarily for recreation. Commercial activities in this zone would detract from the amenity of the parkland environment and are readily available in the adjoining Southbank precinct.

MOVEMENT

Spacious public spaces connect the river creating an important destination and place to enjoy the journey away from the the intensity and rush of the urban centre. Through improved access to and along the waterfront, the river will provide the natural complement to the fast pace of the City and Southbank.

The Yarra River, Birrarung, offers a unique setting and being lineal in nature is a key drawcard for many users wishing to both connect with other destinations and enjoy the river environs. Consequently, the waterfront currently accommodates significant volumes of both pedestrians and cyclists. These two broad categories of users, have very different needs and expectations. The intensity and movement patterns vary greatly across and within these groups. As such, conflict between users sometimes occurs and consequently the overall experience of the waterfront is negatively impacted. The fundamental issue is that the riverfront is currently pressured to accommodate both 'place' and high speed, commuter functions within a constrained environment.

Despite the attraction of the river environs, surrounding rail and road infrastructure hinder easy access to and enjoyable movement along the river. Northbank has a particularly poor level of connectivity due to numerous major traffic barriers. The physical conditioning of pathways, limited extent of universal accessibility and the lack of coherent wayfinding and signage is a further compounding issue. A notably challenged pedestrian setting exists between the Yarra River, Birrarung, and Docklands. The lack of easy and intuitive access means that few Docklands workers and residents venture down to the riverfront.

Key movement challenges are defined below:

- Many cyclists travel at speed, despite signage to slow down, with numerous modal conflict sites, particularly along Southbank Promenade and Crown Casino.
- Poor level of pedestrian connectivity due to major traffic barriers along Northbank.
- Poor physical pathway conditions, numerous pathways with steep gradients and varied light conditions.
- Constrained access to the riverfront from the Central City, especially to Northbank west.



Image 48. View of the Williams Street roadway adjoining the river near Ent



erprize Park and the Immigration Museum.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

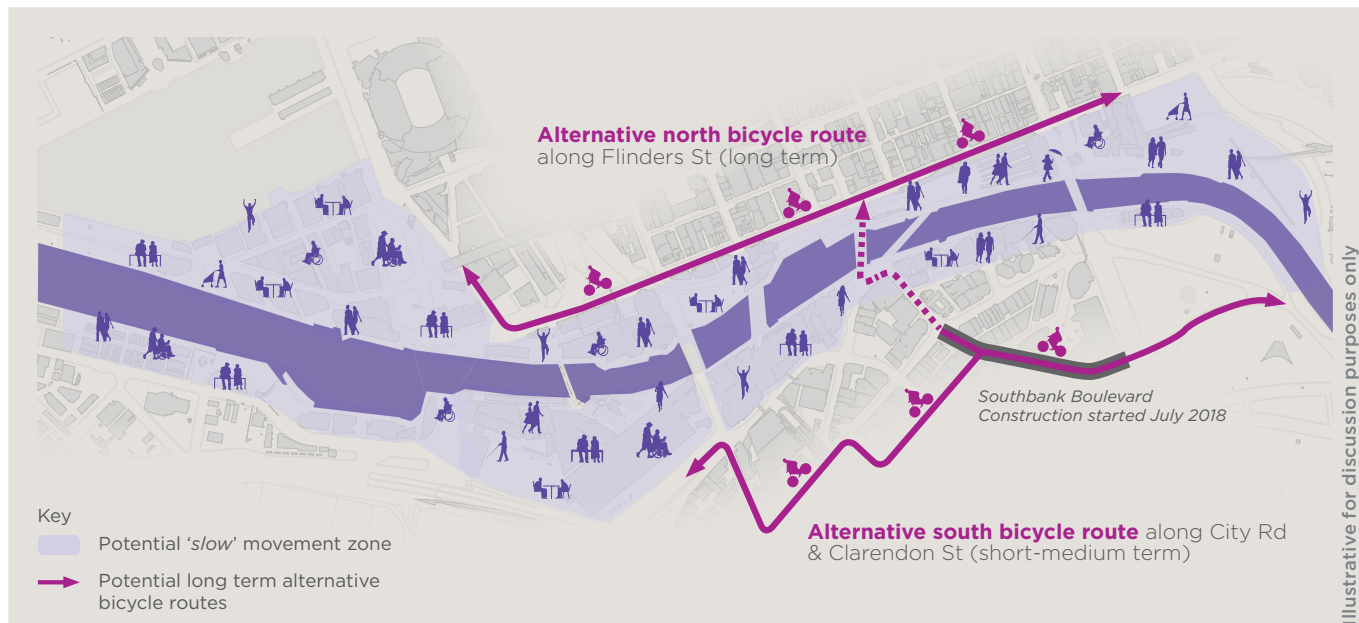


Image 49. Potential locations for alternative north and south bicycle routes.



Image 50. Commuter cyclists along Southbank



Image 51. Illustrative image of future alternative bicycle route along Southbank Boulevard and Dodds Street.

11. SLOW

Distinguish the river as a slower paced environment by creating safe, alternative north and south bicycle routes.

The riverfront is an important recreational asset of natural beauty, a place to wander, rest and observe. It is important that these values are protected by addressing movement issues along the riverfront. The main cause of modal conflict is the mixing of high speed, commuter cyclists with slow speed, recreational users.

The spatial constraints of the riverfront further exacerbate this issue. The location of Flinders Street and surrounding road infrastructure to the west, has created a particularly narrow, Northbank river corridor for movement and access. Current pathways, as narrow as 2m along Flinders Walk, are too restrictive for the passage of multiple modes. Also, unlike other cities that feature expansive waterfront areas, Melbourne's typical river corridor width doesn't allow for separate cycle pathways, away from key pedestrian areas.

The river is a key destination that primarily functions as a 'place' rather than a movement corridor. We recommend promoting travelling along the river and its edges at a slower pace, enabling time to appreciate the key views and diverse spaces. This would be consistent with the 5 knot zone (fast walking speed) already defined for the waterways.

However, it is important to acknowledge that the Yarra River, Birrarung, corridor has long been seen as a commuter cycling route, identified in strategic documents and with significant improvements made to riverfront cycle paths leading to the city. To achieve a slower paced, river environment, safe, alternative commuter cycle routes would need to be provided. The future design of river promenade spaces should also look to support this idea of a meandering journey through considered landscaping arrangements that set visual cues to slow cyclists.

An alternative Northbank bicycle route

We propose interrogation into a safe, comfortable, and connected alternative bicycle route on the northern, central city side of the river to provide a viable, preferable alternative to the river promenade for fast cyclists. The alternate route must offer: connectivity (easy access to other routes); efficiency (offers a quick journey with minimal delays); and safety (separation between vehicles and pedestrians).

A potential future route for cyclists, particularly commuter cyclists, could be Flinders Street via Batman Avenue. This would address the poor level of connectivity from Northbank West through to Banana Alley. Flinders Street holds great potential to be an optimal alternate route because it is not a local route; there is a current lack of east-west connections in the southern portion of the central city; it features a flatter, topographical alignment; and Flinders Street holds the opportunity for complete separation from vehicles, alongside better connectivity with key cycling routes in the south-west such as Harbour Esplanade.

While requiring significant changes to the existing streetscape, Flinders Street holds the potential for a long term solution of the issue, rather than ongoing management of conflict between modes.

An alternative Southbank bicycle route

The investigation into an alternative Southbank Promenade route diverting from along the waterfront to alternately follow Alexandra Avenue, City Road to Clarendon Street has been proposed by numerous policy documents. These include the Southbank Structure Plan 2010 and the Bicycle Plan 2016-2020 which introduces the action of a long term preferred alternative bike route, including the provision of separated bicycle lanes running the length of City Road and Clarendon Street. Major upgrade works to Southbank Boulevard and Linlithgow Avenue are currently underway, however, to complete the route requires delivery of the Alexandra Avenue, City Road and Clarendon Street segments.

Action 17: Further investigate the feasibility and deliver Flinders Street bicycle lanes.

Action 18: Continue delivery of the alternative Southbank commuter cycle route, including Alexandra Avenue, City Road, Kavanagh Street and Clarendon Street segments.

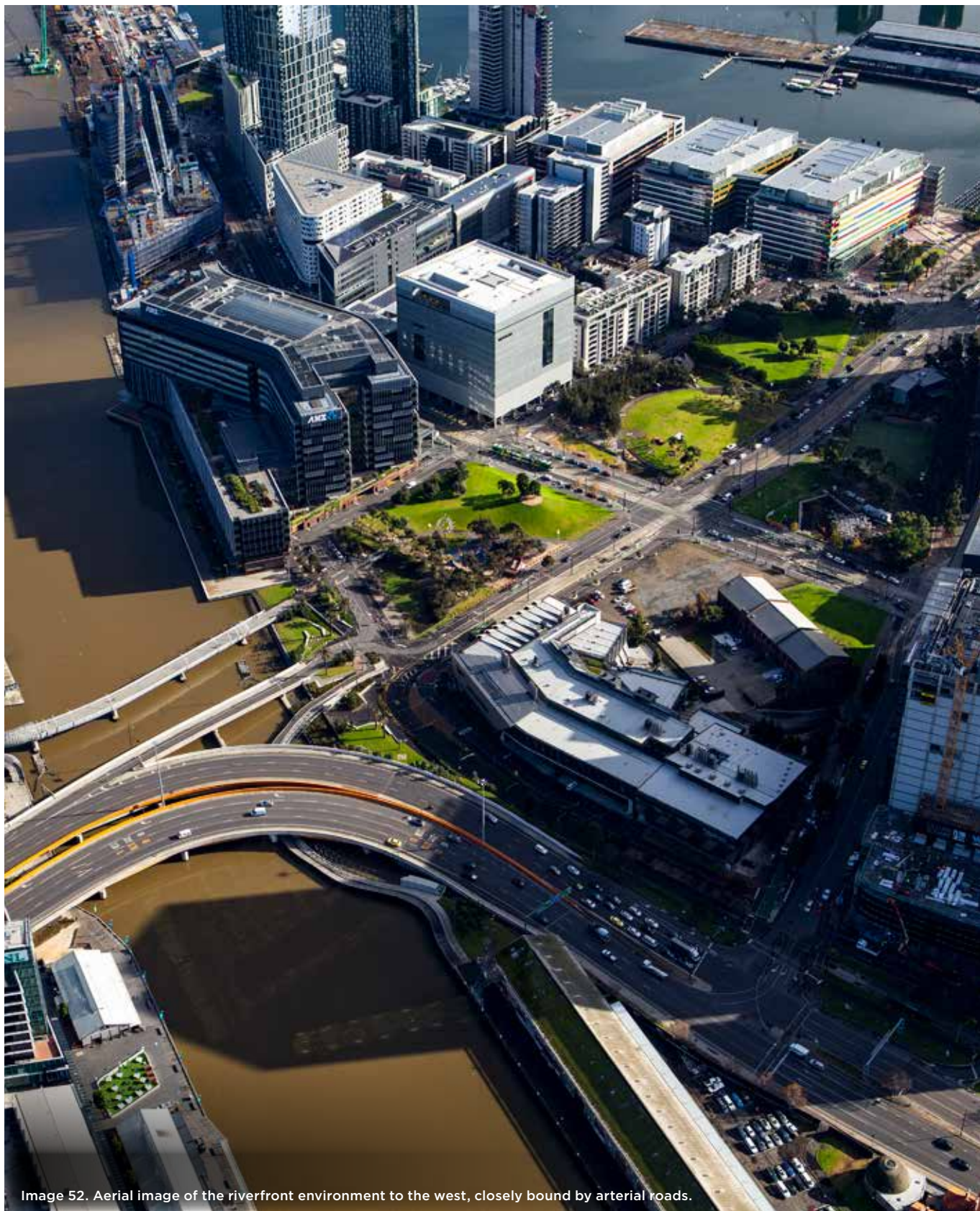


Image 52. Aerial image of the riverfront environment to the west, closely bound by arterial roads.

12. INTEGRATED

Better integrate pathways along and leading to the riverfront, particularly to the north-west.

Easy and direct access from the central city to the river and continuous movement along the riverfront is impeded by the traffic focus of key surrounding routes. The positioning of major road connections, substantial developments, and car parks has compromised access along and to the riverfront area.

The riverfront location is a key asset of Docklands, however major road infrastructure and poor wayfinding creates a sense of disconnection between Docklands and the Yarra River, Birrarung. Wurundjeri Way is a major hindrance to access with the complex road arrangement and speed of traffic also detracting from the amenity of the area. Pedestrian crossings are far apart and the alignments provide extended crossing times and distances. Siddeley Street is currently not a safe alternative due to the vehicular traffic and bluestone paving making this a hazardous option.

Batman and Enterprize Park are particularly disconnected with notable gaps to continuous east west movement along the riverfront. Bound on all sides by the barriers of two major arterial roads and two overhead rail viaducts, this physical and visual disconnect from the city discourages park use. Particularly at Williams Street, a quality walking environment is impeded by “dog-leg” crossings, multiple crossing stages and vehicle dominance, creating an inhospitable pedestrian environment.

Barriers to integrated access

Flinders, Williams, King and Spencer Streets, Wurundjeri Way and the railway corridor currently act as visual and physical barriers to integrated access to and along the riverfront. Converting, where possible, the conditions of these mini motorways into more pedestrian friendly environments that feature improved visual and physical qualities would vastly improve access to and along the riverfront. This aligns with City of Melbourne’s current work to transform Southbank Boulevard and Dodds Street into a pedestrian friendly place and improve connectivity between the Domain Parklands and the Yarra River, Birrarung.

Some minor interventions, offering immediate resolution, could be made at Queensbridge Street, Kings Way, Spencer and Russell Streets. This could include planting trees, widening kerbs and realigning paths to create more direct crossings. More long-term, major transformations could include changing the free flow arrangement at Queen’s Bridge and Williams Street to remove the multiple western lanes. This would enable extension of Enterprize Park and Customs Square creating better connectivity to and along the riverfront. Closing the northbound vehicle lane of Market Street adjacent to the Immigration Museum to better integrate the museum and riverfront should also be explored.

The possibility of lowering Wurundjeri Way to create a safer, higher amenity and more direct pedestrian link across to Docklands is also worth encouraging. Noting Wurundjeri Way is an important heavy vehicle route and popular alternative to the CityLink Tunnel and Bolte Bridge. Also any proposed changes would need to be assessed and approved by VicRoads.

The decking of the Jolimont railyards and extension of Russell Street as a means of providing a stronger connection between the central city and the river is a further long held idea that we continue to advocate for, requiring substantial public and private investment.

Policy 15: Better integrate pathways along and leading to the riverfront by creating direct pedestrian crossing arrangements and amenity improvements.

Policy 16: Advocate to the Victorian Government to investigate the potential to lower Wurundjeri Way and create a seamless waterfront link.

Action 19: Work with the Victorian Government to deliver amenity improvements and better pedestrian crossing arrangements along key waterfront desire lines of Queensbridge Street, Kings Way, Spencer Street and Russell Street/Hosier Lane.

Action 20: Work with the Victorian Government to investigate future reconfiguration of and deliver improvements to the Williams and Flinders Street intersection.



Image 53. Access along Northbank from Princes Bridge is not universally accessible.



Image 54. The ground surface and level changes create challenging access arrangements from Les Erdi plaza down to Banana Alley.

13. ACCESSIBLE

Raise the quality and universal accessibility of riverfront pathways.

The maintenance, conditioning and safety of pathways varies considerably along the Yarra River, Birrarung, corridor. The materials and detailed design of the pedestrian environment in some areas is of a high quality, however the linking areas adjoining these spaces is generally poor. There are also some materials not fit for purpose. For instance the precast pavers are not sufficient for events loading and others offer limited environmental benefit.

Numerous pathways and bridges along the river feature challenging level changes, both limiting access for all and creating safety hazards. Examples include disappearing edges, excessive crossfalls which do not meet accessibility standards and vertical access issues. Access between the western footpath of St Kilda Road and the river's edge is currently limited to a series of staircases. Along Flinders Walk there are also several areas within the steep gradient category, that are steeper than 1:14. The journey down to Banana Alley from the eastern approach involves a particularly steep grade on an uneven surface (Refer Figure 54).

Universal accessibility

Universal accessibility to and along the water's edge, including access for people with physical limitations, needs to be provided. All walkways must meet accessibility standards. A series of access improvements, including universally accessible ramps, walkways and elevators are needed in numerous areas to ensure easy access for everyone, and to improve the function and commercial viability of the riverfront. Key riverfront access points that should be prioritised for better accessibility include addressing the steep transition from Banana Alley to Les Erdi Plaza and access from the north-western side of Princes Bridge down to Flinders Walk.

Pathway widths, physical conditioning and maintenance

After decades of wear and tear there are numerous pathways along the riverfront due for renewal. Existing tree placement, bins, bollards, light poles, stairs, bridge landings often reduce useable circulation space and visibility in key areas and the worn condition negatively impacts the riverfront experience. Areas where pathway capacity is critical include where pedestrian flows are intense in peak periods. Buskers, particularly along Southbank Promenade generate large crowds that impact pedestrian movement and flow.

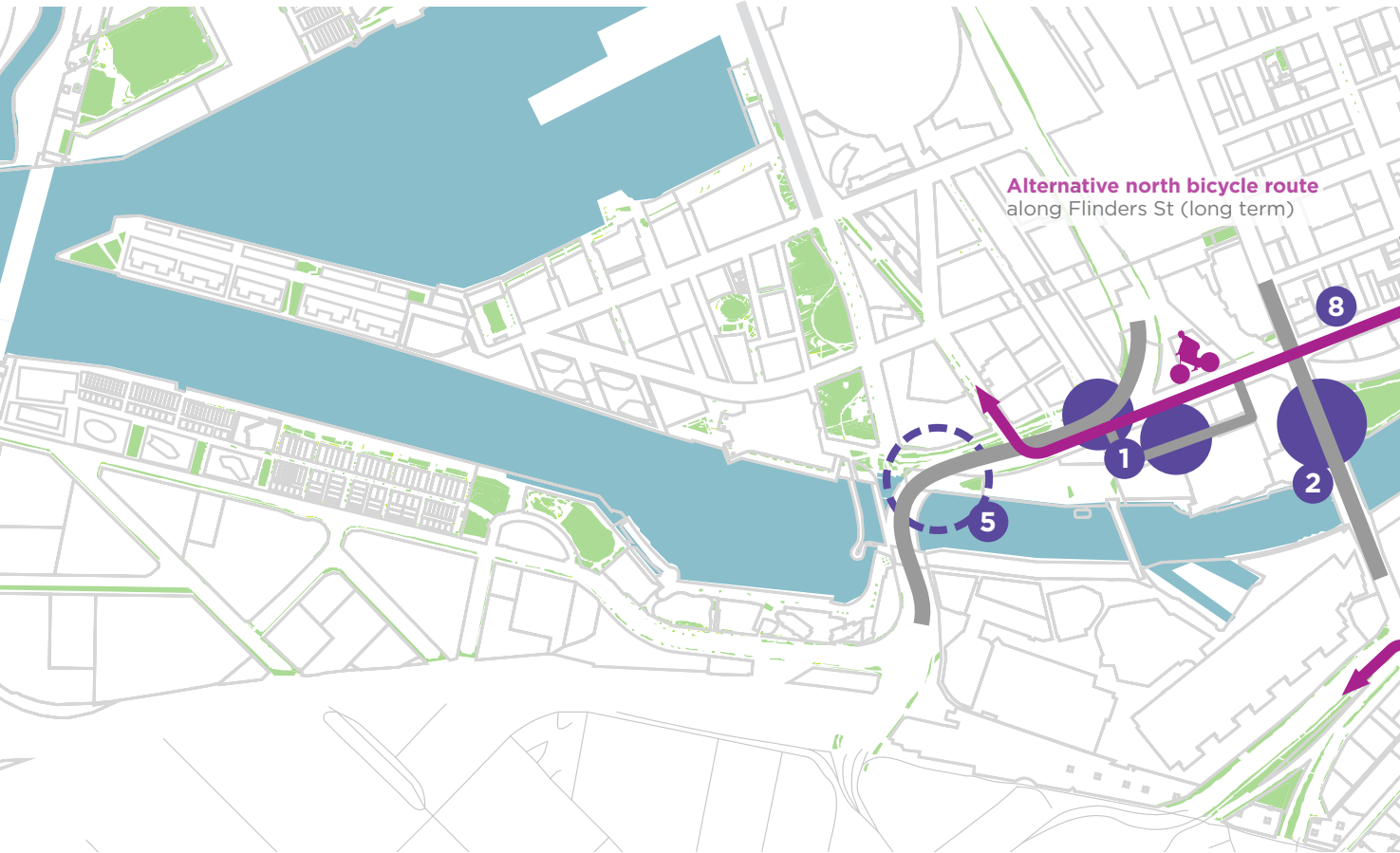
A detailed audit of existing conditioning and capacity issues is recommended and then staged renewal of paving, lighting and street furniture with material selection and furniture placement coordinated by a technical guide for waterfront treatment (refer discussion on page 45).

Policy 17: Advocate for universal accessibility to ensure the river environment safely caters for everyone.

Action 21: Undertake a detailed audit of existing conditions and work with the Victorian Government to develop a coordinated maintenance and physical upgrade program.

MOVEMENT PLAN

Illustrative plan of improvements to city routes leading and immediate to the riverfront.



Potential minor changes

Investigate and deliver streetscape improvements...

- 1

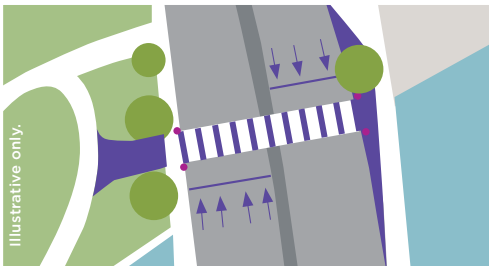
Wurundjeri Way and Siddeley Street
Better crossing arrangements and amenity improvements...
Advocate for shorter signal waiting times and more direct pedestrian crossing arrangements at Flinders Street. Improve pedestrian and bicycle conditions on Siddeley Street.
- 2

Spencer Street
Better crossing arrangements and amenity improvements...
Improve crossing alignment between Northbank west and Batman Park. Provide kerb outstands and additional street trees.

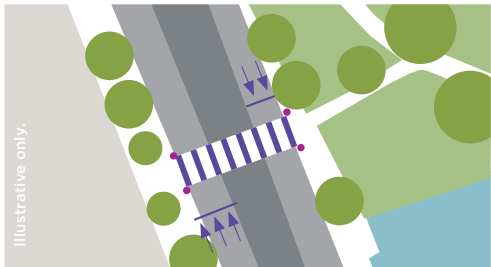
- 3

King Street
Better crossing arrangements...
New signalised crossing between Batman Park and Enterprise Park, aligned directly with existing pathways through the park.
- 4

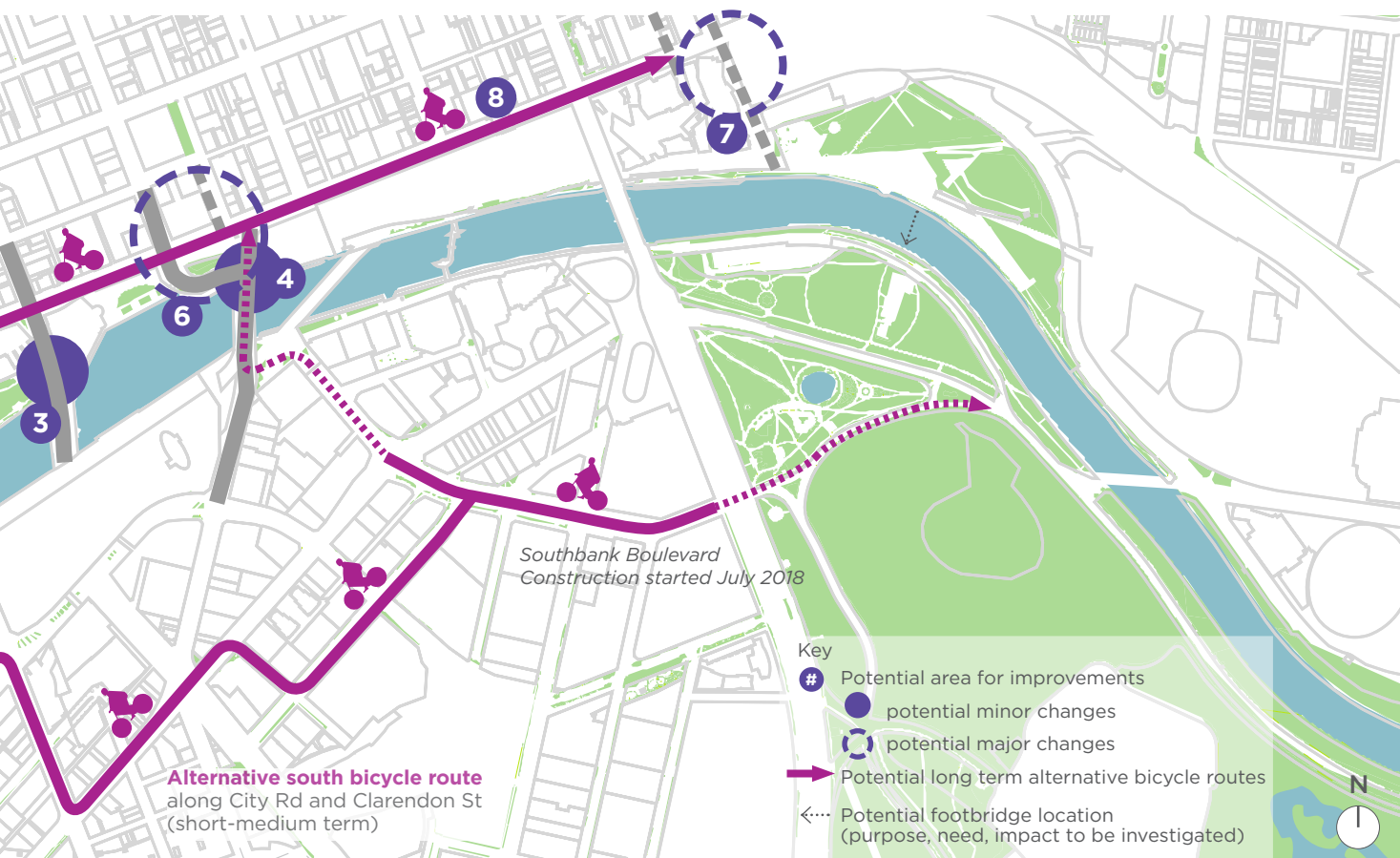
Williams Street
Better crossing arrangements...
New signalised crossing aligned directly between Enterprise Park and Banana Alley, eliminating the three stage crossing.



Spencer Street improvements



King Street improvements



Potential major changes

Investigate options, feasibility and deliver...

- 5 Wurundjeri Way**
Potential undergrounding arterial road...
Investigate the potential to lower Wurundjeri Way and create a seamless waterfront link.
- 6 William Street**
Potential reconfiguration Williams and Flinders St...
Currently slow, staged and indirect crossing journey. Investigate changing the free flow arrangement to extend Enterprise Park and create a better relationship between the riverfront and Immigration Museum.
- 7 Russell Street**
Extension to connect with Birrarung Marr...
As a longer term aspiration, advocate for decking of exposed rail infrastructure adjoining the river to achieve a long-term continuous public ground plane.
- 8 Flinders Street**
Safe, alternative northbank bicycle route...
An initial desktop investigation has been completed, which deemed Flinder Street as the most optimal alternative route.



William Street existing conditions



William Street future opportunities

IMPLEMENTATION

The successful delivery of a renewed central city riverfront will require coordination and funding across a number of different stakeholders.

The Yarra River - Birrarung Strategy ambitiously imagines the future river. It sets out a range of exciting opportunities that will take time, through staged implementation, and collective input to achieve.

This document will be the basis for working with key stakeholders, including the Victorian Government, and key landowners on initiatives identified.

The City of Melbourne will commit operational and capital funds to deliver the actions. However, some of these projects will require collaboration, approval and co-funding from the Victorian Government or other partners.

This chapter provides a summary of the strategy:

- in 17 policies and
- in 21 actions, including research, engagement, design and delivery.



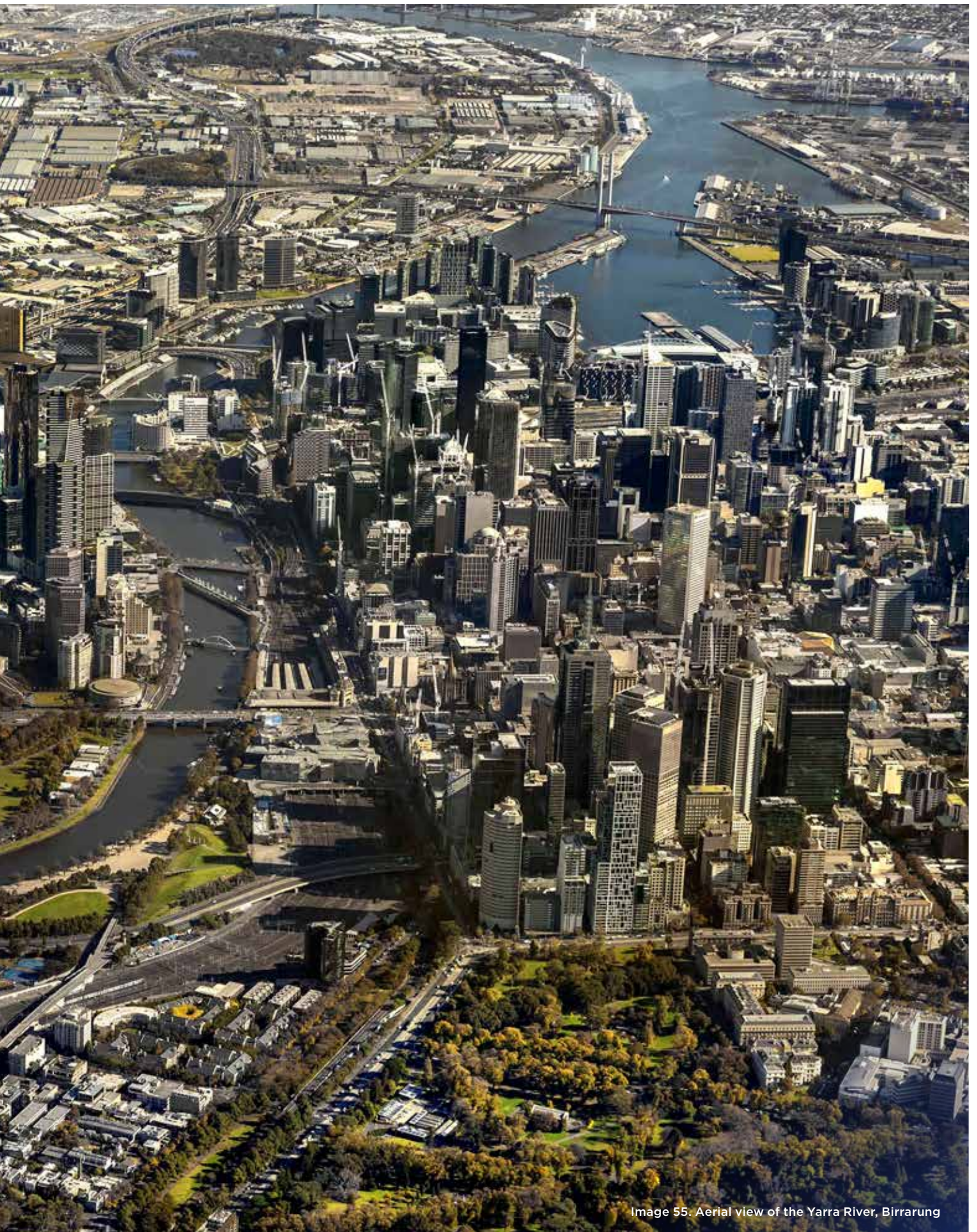
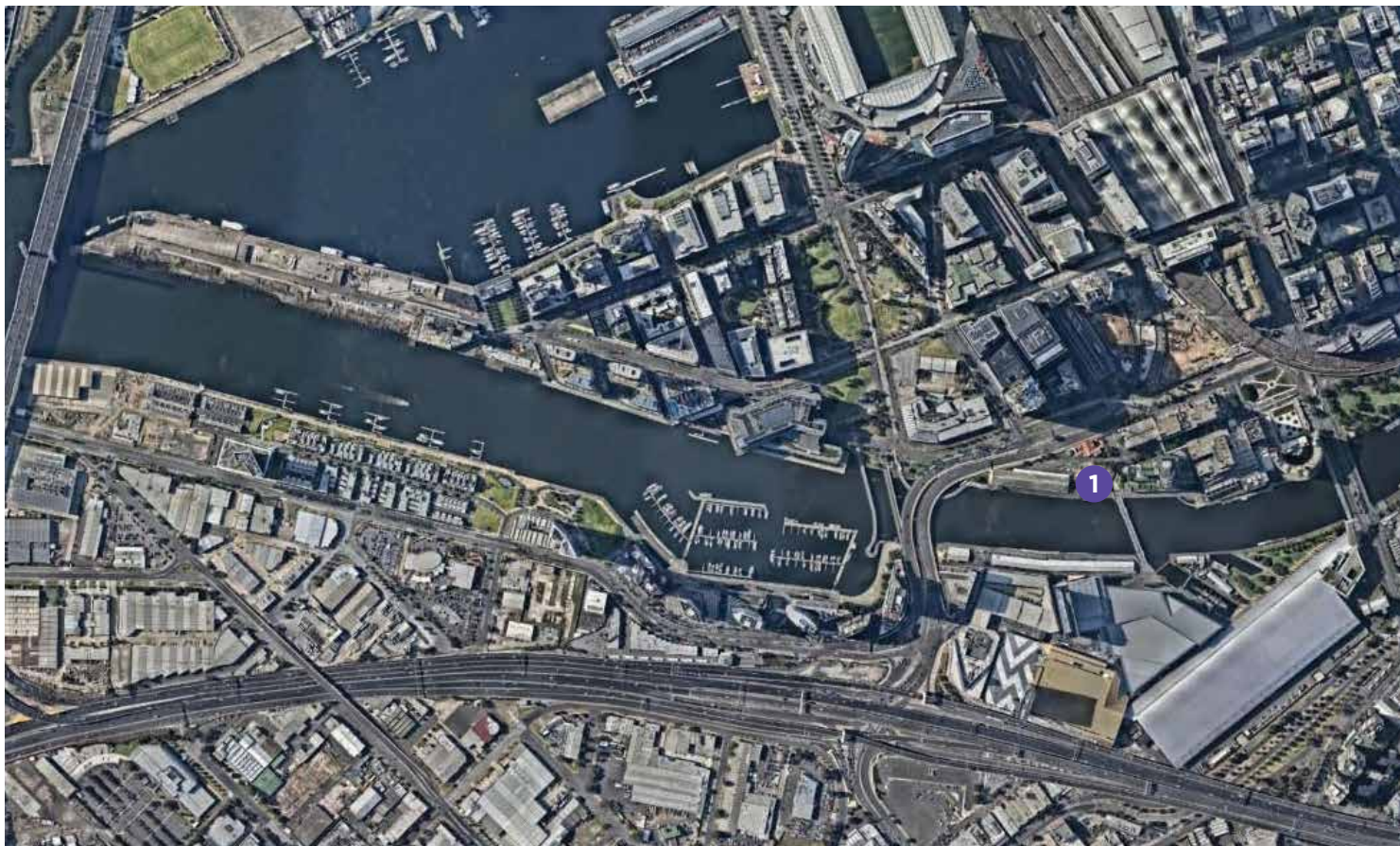


Image 55. Aerial view of the Yarra River, Birrarung

CURRENT CAPITAL WORKS



Projects underway

Budget approved and works underway or set to commence in next 1-2 years.

- 1 Seafarers Rest Park - a new open space**
A \$1 million project adding 3500 sqm of open space to the riverfront in Docklands
- 2 Enterprize Park - public space improvements**
Green space in the park is proposed to increase from 1650 sqm to 2690 sqm. A budget of \$2 million is available for design and construction of this phase of works.
- 3 Southbank Promenade Stage One - promenade revitalisation**
Revitalising a 300 metre section of Southbank Promenade from Princess Bridge to Evan Walker Bridge. 2019/20 budget: \$5.1 million.
- 4 Southbank Boulevard and Dodds Street - Revitalising public space**
The transformation of Southbank Boulevard will add 2.5 hectares of new public open space and neighbourhood parklands to Melbourne's most densely populated suburb. Due for completion in 2020. 2019/20 budget: \$11.9 million to finalise Stage 1 of the \$47 million project.
- 5 City Road - streetscape upgrades**
City Road: \$2 million in Capital Works in the next two years for streetscape transformation works. This is a longer term project with a cost of \$35 million identified.

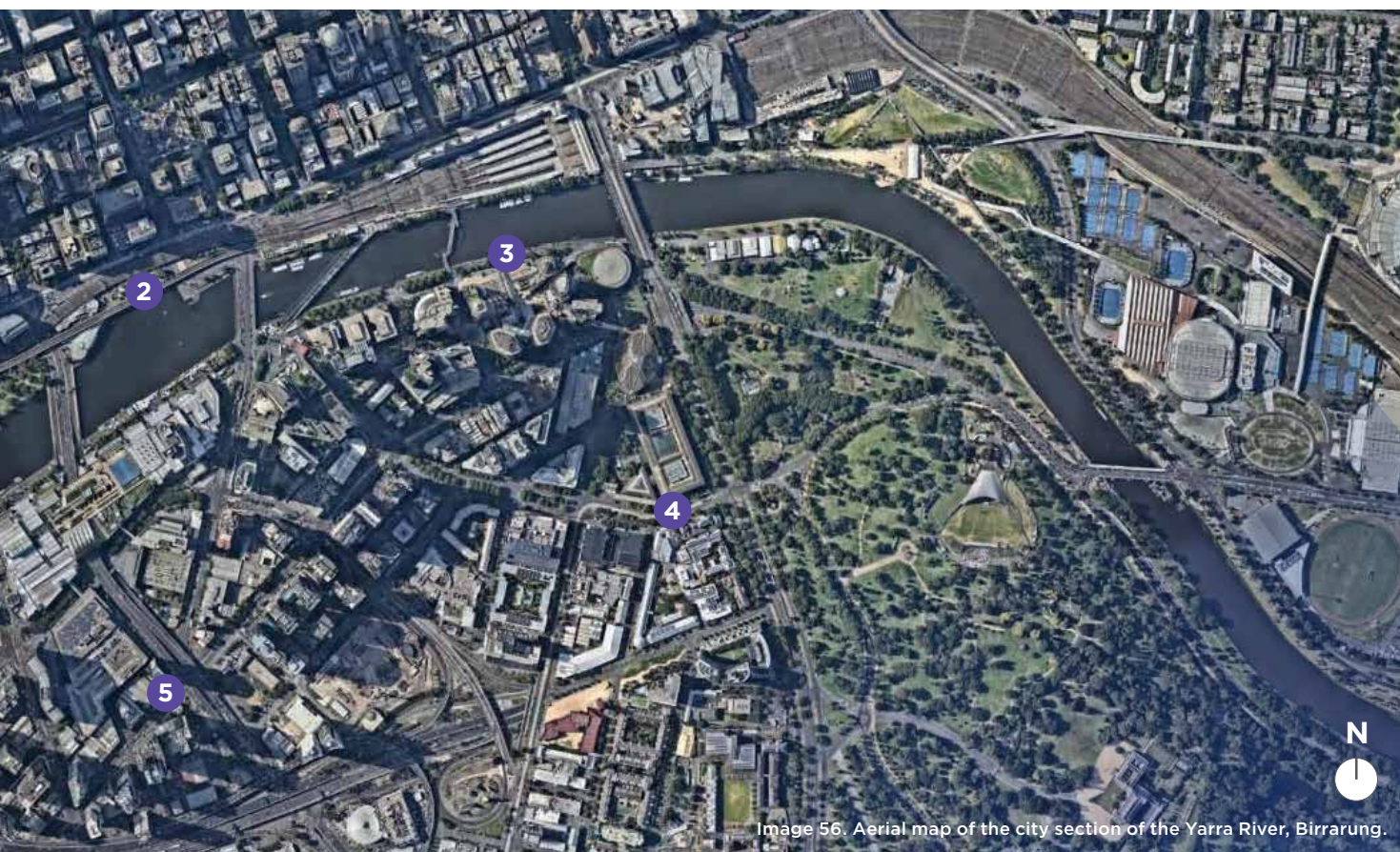




Image 58. Queensbridge Square.

POLICY SUMMARY

Ecology	
1	Encourage riparian greening along the Yarra River, Birrarung, including existing river banks.
2	Encourage a native and resilient planting palette along the Yarra River, Birrarung, promoting nature in the City.
3	Encourage riparian habitats in urban parks edging the Yarra River, Birrarung.
4	Encourage Sponge City strategies in the public realm and private development adjacent to the river.
5	Encourage initiatives in the city reach of the river to improve water quality in collaboration with Melbourne Water including filtration of water runoff.
Culture	
6	Advocate for Maritime Heritage to be considered in planning and design for key opportunity areas. Encourage interpretation and a connected network between heritage precincts through a city wide strategy (refer action 10).
Place	
7	Encourage a range of high quality civic, educational, cultural, hospitality and water dependant uses that complement a focus on high quality public spaces.
8	Build on diverse character districts to create a series of unique, locally authentic experiences.
9	Ensure unrestricted public waterfront access.
10	Encourage waterfront buildings to address the water with physical openings and active edge uses.
11	Discourage helicopter facilities and carparking along riverfront area and work to minimise ambient noise.
12	Promote activities that support a public, safe and attractive riverfront.
13	Rationalise existing and proposed clutter to ensure unobstructed appreciation to identified views and landmarks.
14	Consider impact on views in design and location of additional bridges only where cross river connectivity is critical.
Movement	
15	Better integrate pathways along and leading to the riverfront by creating direct pedestrian crossing arrangements and amenity improvements.
16	Advocate to the Victorian Government to investigate the potential to lower Wurundjeri Way and create a seamless waterfront link.
17	Advocate for universal accessibility to ensure the river environment safely caters for everyone.

ACTIONS SUMMARY

Timeframe assessment

- Short term 2020 - 2025
- Mid term 2025 - 2035
- Long term 2035 +

Cost assessment

- Low up to \$300,000
- Medium \$300,000 to \$3 million
- High \$3 million +

ACTIONS		TIMEFRAME	COST	POTENTIAL COLLABORATIONS
Ecology				
1	Deliver a trial project of riparian vegetation on the river bank in collaboration with State Government.	Short	Medium	Parks Victoria; Royal Botanical Gardens
2	Deliver a trial project for floating vegetation in the Yarra River, Birrarung, in collaboration with State Government.	Short	Medium	Parks Victoria; Melbourne Water
3	Develop a plan for interpretive signage highlighting the natural river environment in collaboration with Parks Victoria and Royal Botanic Gardens.	Mid	Low	Parks Victoria; Royal Botanical Gardens
4	Address planning scheme gaps regarding sunlight protection to the Yarra River, Birrarung, and adjacent public spaces. (outside Capital City Zone).	Mid	Medium	Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
5	Develop urban design guidelines for flood prone areas across the municipality in the public and private realm.	Short	Low	Melbourne Water; Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
Culture				
6	Establish a Memorandum of Understanding for future engagement with each of the Traditional Owner groups.	Short	Low	Traditional Owner Groups
7	Develop an Aboriginal Cultural Narrative of the city section of the Yarra River, Birrarung, in collaboration with Traditional Owner groups.	Short	Low	Traditional Owner Groups; Aboriginal Victoria; Birrarung Council
8	Research the pre-contact landscape character and botanical aspects of the Yarra River Birrarung, including the landscape management aspects to establish a reference planting guide.	Short	Low	Traditional Owner Groups; Aboriginal Victoria; Birrarung Council
9	Identify underrepresented sites of significance and culturally significant species for the Yarra River, Birrarung, in collaboration with the Traditional Owner groups and explore opportunities to reintroduce these to the river.	Short	Low	Traditional Owner Groups; Aboriginal Victoria; Birrarung Council
10	Develop an interpretation strategy including storytelling and signage for the Yarra River, Birrarung, on the basis of the Aboriginal cultural narrative, maritime trading heritage and shared post contact history.	Short	Low	Traditional Owner Groups; Aboriginal Victoria; Birrarung Council
11	Explore opportunities for creative installations that position the river as an environmental educator, elevating understanding of aboriginal culture in the past, present and into the future.	Short	Low	Traditional Owner Groups; Aboriginal Victoria; Birrarung Council

ACTIONS		TIMEFRAME	COST	POTENTIAL COLLABORATIONS
Place				
12	Work with the Victorian Government and adjacent landowners to develop an agreed design, and deliver improvements to the central city Northbank area.	Mid	High	Parks Victoria; Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
13	Develop a long term program of high quality events and activities that align with The Activation Plan and work towards transforming key locations of the riverfront into vibrant, safe and inclusive destinations.	Short	Low	Parks Victoria; Yarra River Business Association
14	Incorporate within the City of Melbourne Design Standards relevant technical guidance for waterfront treatments and signage to establish a consistent palette.	Short	Low	Parks Victoria
15	Work with the Victorian government to deliver general maintenance upgrades - decluttering, graffiti removal, street furniture, lighting etc.	Mid	High	Parks Victoria, Victrack
16	Investigate the location, purpose and need for a new bridge to improve pedestrian and bicycle access between Birrarung Marr and Domain Parklands and, if supported, work with the Victorian Government to fund and deliver.	Mid	High	Parks Victoria; Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
Movement				
17	Further investigate the feasibility and deliver Flinders Street bicycle lanes.	Mid	Medium	Department of Transport
18	Continue delivery of the alternative Southbank commuter cycle route, including Alexandra Avenue, City Road, Kavanagh Street and Clarendon Street segments.	Mid	High	Department of Transport
19	Work with the Victorian Government to deliver amenity improvements and better pedestrian crossing arrangements along key riverfront desire lines of Queensbridge Street, Kings Way, Spencer Street and Russell Street/Hosier Lane.	Mid	High	Department of Transport
20	Work with the Victorian Government to investigate future reconfiguration of and deliver improvements to the Williams and Flinders Street intersection.	Mid	High	Department of Transport
21	Undertake a detailed audit of existing access conditions and work with the Victorian Government to develop a coordinated maintenance and physical upgrade program.	Short	Medium	Department of Transport

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