

BARWON RIVER TRAIL

The future 2.5m wide sealed shared pedestrian/cycle path link will eventually extend from Buckley Falls Park (and the existing trail) through to the Geelong Ring Road and a future bridge across the river. The sealed shared trail is to be located along the upper escarpment to maximise connection to residential and recreational areas while meeting all ability access requirements. The trail will be developed in stages, subject to funding, and many sections will remain as unsealed paths until the level of use requires upgrade of the surface.

MOUNT BRANDON PENINSULA

New facilities to be established at the existing open space along Rivergreen Drive to provide passive recreation opportunities and improve public access to open space and the river including:

- [7] Extend the future Barwon River Trail along the existing unsealed track at the top of the escarpment. Longer term the path will be upgraded to provide a more direct link to the new picnic area at Gully 19.
- [8] Provide a 1.5m wide unsealed path down to Baums Weir.
- [9] Retain fat open mown grass area (min 100 x 60m) and top dress and improve grass surface for informal ball games and informal recreation.
- [10] Revegetate to establish a graded transition of parkland planting consisting of scattered indigenous overstorey trees and shaded grassy indigenous groundcover to retain sight lines.
- [11] New elevated viewing and seating area looking west along the Barwon River.
- [12] Protect and provide interpretation of historic mill races and foundations along the river bank.

MAIN PICNIC AREA

Establish a new picnic area adjoining the Barwon River at Mount Brandon. Facilities will include:

- [13] A small public car park (20-30 spaces) at the end of Orchard View Court.
- [14] New picnic tables and longer term, as the area becomes more popular a public toilet, electric BBQ and playground facility will be provided in keeping with the natural character of the area.
- [15] Stairs to a river access and fishing platform.

BARWON RIVER BRIDGE

As outlined in the Barwon River Parklands Strategy, a new pedestrian/cycle bridge across the river downstream of the Ring Road will eventually link the existing open space and future shared trail network on the north and south banks. The bridge will complete the Barwon River Trail loop on foot, through to Barwon Paper Mill, Pymforde Common, Red Gum Island, Queens Park and back to Buckley Falls Park (completion of these works is subject to future State Government funding).

RIVERSIDE WALKING TRACK

The existing informal bush tracks along the river are to be retained as a natural surface. This is to ensure they retain a bushland wilderness feel and minimise impacts on cultural heritage and sensitive habitats along the Barwon River.

- [16] Establish new sorts of natural design at carefully located key river viewing points.
- [17] Install signage to existing riverside bush tracks.

CULTURAL HERITAGE

The Mount Brandon Peninsula and Barwon River is of cultural significance to the Waa-laung. There are several registered sites of archaeological significance and management of works and protection of cultural heritage will be informed by the development of a Cultural Heritage Management Plan.

The area is also known as the site of the Barabool Flour Mill which dates from the 1890's, before the Barwon Paper Mill. The only visible remains of the mill are the water race immediately downstream of Baums Weir however there are probable sites identified for the actual mill, jam factory and cottage runs which are all associated with the site. The Barwon River upstream of Buckley Falls was also the primary source of fresh water in the Geelong area. The lower weir constructed in 1917 was part of the first water supply scheme for Geelong.

COMMUNITY GROUPS

The Friends of Buckley Falls are a voluntary group who have been engaged in weed control and revegetation operations on a continuous basis for over 25 years (1984). This work has played a major role in protection of the significant remaining vegetation and transformation of the other degraded weed infested sections of the park into the significant bushland reserves found today.

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ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES

There are sections of remnant natural indigenous riparian vegetation including scattered Red Gums and areas of Tangled Lignum around the Mount Brandon Peninsula, Macarthur Peninsula and the Barwon River. While not indigenous, these areas provide an important contribution to landscape character and will be maintained where possible and additional indigenous trees can be planted to maintain habitat values.

The new reserve is designed to provide sufficient area to protect and improve environmental values along the river while providing for increasing levels of recreation and community use associated with adjoining residents, developers and visitors arriving via the Barwon River Trail.

Over 100 bird species have been recorded in areas along the Barwon River and the dense undergrowth along the bank, areas of prickly shrubs and mature River Red Gums provide critical habitat, nesting and feeding areas. Other mammals known to occur in the area include macarthur Kookas, Brush-tailed Possum, Ringtail Possum, Bass, Yellow Bats and the occasional Black Wallaby. There is an existing flat grassy population which occupy the river upstream and downstream of Baums Weir and this area provides an important seasonal edge during dry years. The Barwon River in this area is also home to a range of snakes, lizards, fish, oysters and frog species and the constructed wetlands in adjoining areas provide an important habitat for the threatened Growling Grass Frog.

OVERALL DESIGN INTENT

The following draft objectives were developed in consultation with the local community as part of the Barwon and Macarthur River Reserves Plan 2006 and are consistent with the overall Barwon River Parklands Strategy.

- Identify, retain and protect existing indigenous and early European uses of cultural heritage significance.
- Protect and improve environmental values along the Barwon River progressively controlling exotic weeds, encouraging natural regeneration with indigenous revegetation in accordance with prevailing Ecological Vegetation Class.
- Continue the revegetation using local indigenous species to improve buffer zones between residential development and proposed informal recreational areas and the high value habitat areas along the Barwon River.
- Establish a shared path linking to new open space and residential areas at Mount Brandon Peninsula to Buckley Falls Park and the existing Barwon River Trail.
- Continue staged development of passive recreation facilities and improvements in public access to open space including picnic facilities, viewing/seating areas, a playground, toilet facilities and surface improvements in flat open grassed informal recreation areas.
- Continue to assess and improve large open grass areas away from the Barwon River to minimise maintenance costs and potential weed invasion until required as open space for future residential community and visitor use.
- Provide a new bridge crossing of the Barwon River downstream of the Ring Road to complete the return loop for the Barwon River Trail (subject to State Government funding).

STAGE 1 WORKS

The initial stages of works involve connecting the new public parkland area at Mount Brandon Peninsula to Buckley Falls Park and the existing Barwon River Trail network. The proposed works will involve the construction of a new sealed shared trail link from Buckley Falls car park up and around the eastern gully (Old Flour Mill Road) which will also provide critical fire access. The existing informal track along the Barwon River will be retained and linked to a new unsealed path to Baums Weir and the existing Buckley Falls stairs, enabling completion of a return walking access.

- [1] New sealed 2.5m wide shared trail with all ability hardwood timber handrail. The trail will also provide critical fire access and fire access to the rear of existing private properties.
- [2] New culvert/egg crossing with timber handrail over the stormwater outfall from Old Flour Mill Road.
- [3] Secondary sealed path link to Old Flour Mill Road.
- [4] New 1.5m wide unsealed trail link to the lower weir lock-out and Buckley Falls stairs alignment (subject to further cultural heritage assessment).
- [5] New 1.5m wide unsealed path link to Rivergreen Drive.
- [6] Install vehicle control at the end of Highett Road and longer term formalise existing unsealed car parking (approx 16 spaces).

- DRAWING KEY**
- EXISTING VEGETATION
 - PROPOSED REVEGETATION AND SCATTERED OVERSTOREY TREES
 - MOWN GRASS
 - SLASHED GRASS AND INDIGENOUS REVEGETATION
 - EXISTING UNPAVED WALKING TRACK
 - NEW ASPHALT SHADED PATH
 - NEW UNPAVED WALKING TRACK
 - EXISTING FENCE
 - EXISTING LOOK OUT POINT
 - POTENTIAL INTERPRETIVE SIGNS
 - CATWALK
 - NEW PICNIC/SEATING AREA
 - EXISTING ESCARPMENT / CLIFF