

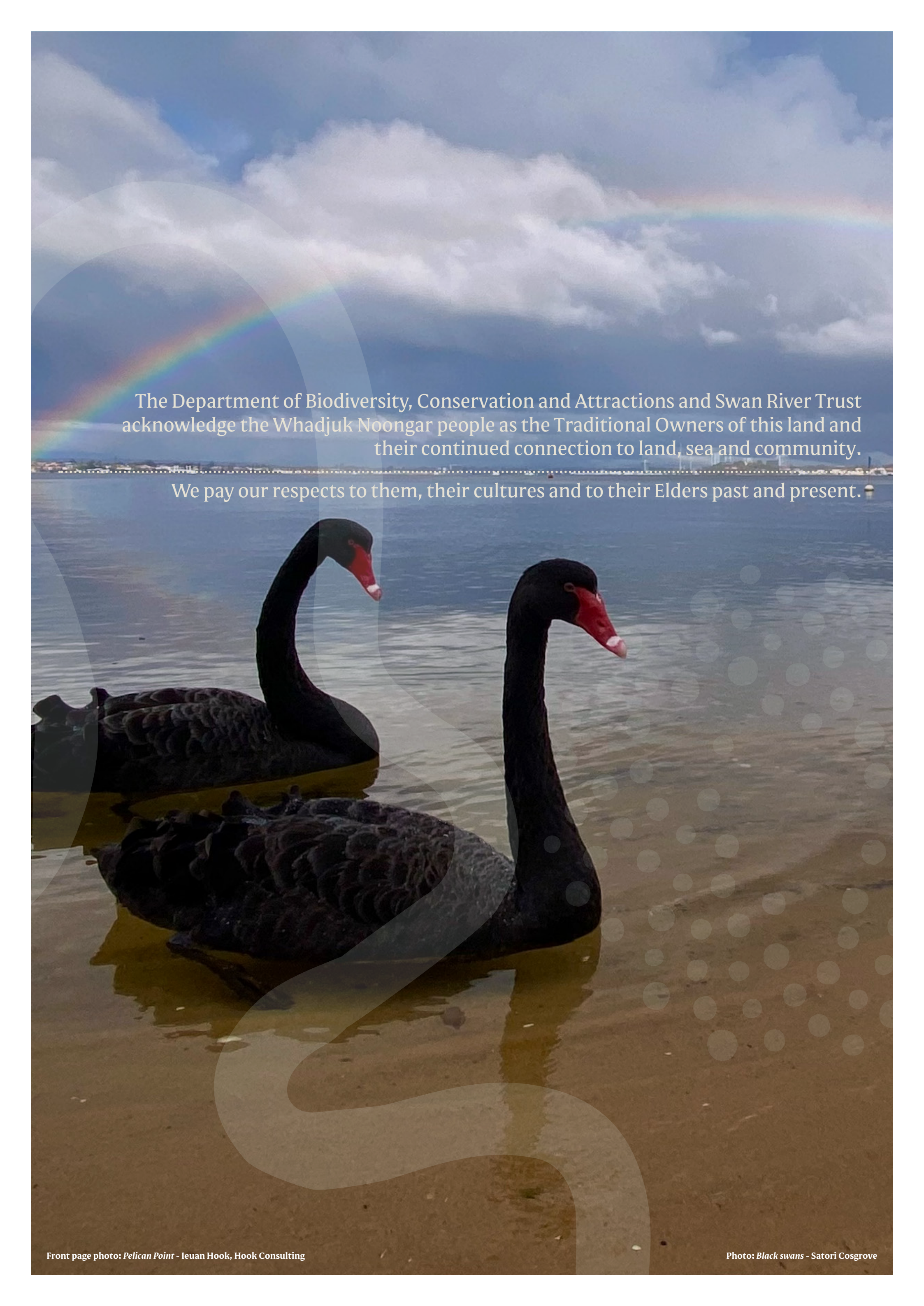


Department of Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions

Dootanboro (Melville Water) Locality Plan

March 2026





The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions and Swan River Trust acknowledge the Whadjuk Noongar people as the Traditional Owners of this land and their continued connection to land, sea and community.

We pay our respects to them, their cultures and to their Elders past and present.

Introduction



Photo: Milyu Nature Reserve - DBCA

The Dootanboro (Melville Water) Locality Plan

The Derbal Yirragan Djarlgarro (Swan Canning river system) is a complex and dynamic natural landscape. In addition to its fundamental ecological values and important floodplain function, it is valued for its landscape and scenic qualities, cultural and heritage significance, and focus for various recreation and tourism activities. While considering the river as this larger natural system, it is also acknowledged that its characteristics and identity change depending on the locality. To ensure the consideration and preservation of these unique attributes, locality plans have been developed for sections along the Swan Canning development control area (DCA).

The Dootanboro (Melville Water) Locality Plan (the Plan) contains locality-specific policy statements to ensure that land use, design and development approaches respond to the environmental, cultural, heritage and social values of the Dootanboro (Melville Water) section of the river system. The Plan also brings together 'on' and 'off' water considerations to direct appropriate protection, restoration and activation of the river and its foreshores.

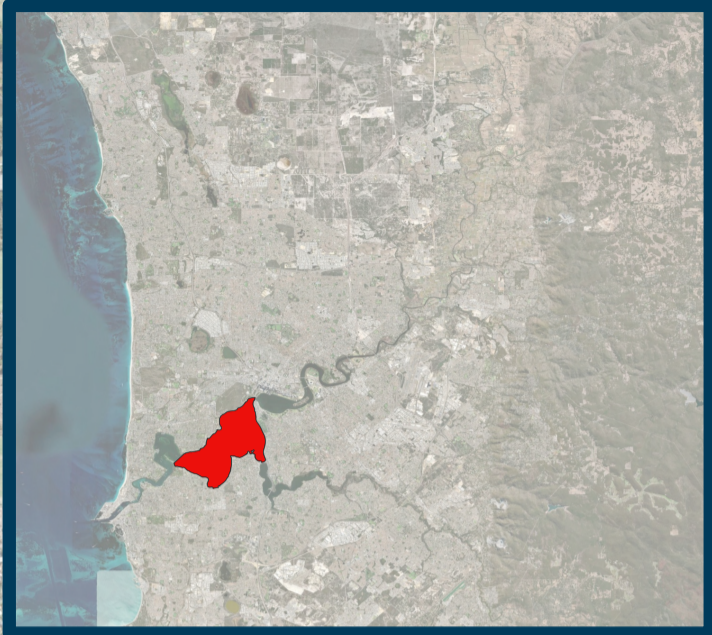
The Plan has been developed to achieve the objectives and principles of the *Swan and Canning Rivers Management Act 2006* (SCRM Act) and is policy developed and published pursuant to the SCRM Act to support consistent and integrated planning,

decision-making and management outcomes in relation to the river system. It is to be read in conjunction with *Corporate Policy Statement No. 52: Planning for Localities along the Swan Canning Development Control Area*.

The Plan is supported by a separate Dootanboro (Melville Water) Action Plan that aims to guide planning and works in the locality. The actions should be delivered when opportunities present.

The extent of the Dootanboro (Melville Water) locality is identified in Figure 1 (next page) and includes land within the local governments of City of Nedlands, City of Melville, City of Perth, and City of South Perth. The policy statements apply to land within, abutting and affecting (including ecologically and visually) the DCA and includes public and private land.

Policy Area



The Dootanboro (Melville Water) locality extends from Dyoondalup (Point Walter), Bicton (excluding the Point Walter spit) and Point Resolution, Dalkeith to the Canning Bridge and Narrows Bridge.



Figure 1 – Dootanboro (Melville Water) Locality

Landscape Description



Broad expanses of water, being the widest part of the river, characterise this locality. This allows extensive views of the residential suburbs either side of the river and long views across the water to the Perth central business district, Mount Eliza and Kings Park. This area is less sensitive to scale than Blackwall Reach because it has a much more open visual character. Winds blown across the long fetches of Dootanboro (Melville Water) can create significant wind waves on the Applecross and Kwinana Freeway foreshores.

The river and foreshore in this locality are intensively used for commercial, recreational, transport, nature and water-based activities. The locality also contains some of the most important waterbird habitats in Western Australia, namely the Alfred Cove, Pelican Point, and Milyu Nature Reserves and associated Swan Estuary Marine Park. These are crucial sites for sheltering, roosting, feeding and breeding, and collectively support a rich and seasonally highly abundant number of waterbird species. Migratory wader species listed in the annex to the Japan Australia Migratory Bird Agreement (JAMBA) and China Australia Migratory Bird Agreement (CAMBA) also utilise these locations. The tidal sections and seagrass meadows at Milyu and Pelican Point are important fish nurseries and feeding areas.

Residential development is the predominant land use on both sides of the river, with foreshore reserves extensively developed for active and passive recreation interspersed with pockets of local vegetation. Conservation areas, such as Kings Park, the Swan Estuary Marine Park, and the Alfred Cove, Pelican Point, and Milyu Nature Reserves, are important natural landscape elements in this locality. The locality is also notable for several commercial, institutional and recreational landmarks, including Sunset and Heathcote precincts and The University of Western Australia. Dootanboro (Melville Water) is a significant

water-based recreation area and includes numerous popular access points to the river, notably at Dyoondalup Point Walter Reserve, Matilda Bay, JH Abrahams Reserve and Mill Point Reserve. Several recreational and boating clubs exist, including Perth Flying Squadron, Nedlands, Royal Perth and South of Perth yacht clubs. Public access along the foreshore can be impacted by the location of infrastructure related to the clubs.

The northern half of Dootanboro (Melville Water), from Point Resolution to Narrows Bridge, includes natural features such as steep outcrops of coastal limestone along Dalkeith and Kings Park, and low-lying reclaimed areas that form the flat open parklands that are a significant landscape character along the foreshore extending from Nedlands to Matilda Bay. Point Resolution, the Sunset Heritage Precinct, Pelican Point and Kings Park contribute to the predominantly natural landscape character of the foreshore areas on this side of Dootanboro (Melville Water). Pelican Point supports a breeding population of red-capped plover (*Charadrius ruficapillus*) and black-winged stilt (*Himantopus leucocephalus*) and historically was an important breeding site of the Australian fairy tern (*Sternula nereis nereis*). The site is an important feeding area and night roost for trans-equatorial migratory shorebirds and the Australian fairy tern during the summer months.

The suburban landscape character is evident in suburbs such as Dalkeith, Nedlands and Crawley. Large residences are set on the elevated limestone embankment at Dalkeith, whereas the houses are less prominent at Nedlands due to the low elevation. Crawley supports higher density housing. Continuous public access is provided along most of the foreshore. However, narrow and privately owned foreshore reserves restrict public access to some sections of the river in Dalkeith.

Landscape Description



Photo: Matilda Bay - DBCA

On the southern side of Dootanboro (Melville Water), from Dyoondalup (Point Walter) to Canning Bridge, there are open parkland and suburban landscape characters. The parkland elements are mainly large flat plains of infilled foreshore at Attadale Reserve, Tompkins Park, Melville Beach and Jeff Joseph Reserve, with pockets of remnant vegetation. Alfred Cove A-class Nature Reserve is an extensive estuarine salt marsh with sedge communities that provides an important natural element to the landscape. Birdlife Australia has recorded 147 bird species in the Alfred Cove area in the past five years. The mudflats and sandbars of the Swan Estuary Marine Park host trans-equatorial migratory birds from approximately August to early April.

In sharp contrast, the built urban form directly abuts the Derbal Yirragan (Swan River) at Point Dundas/Majestic Close, where a boardwalk adjacent to limestone walls provides the only public access along this section of foreshore. In Applecross, the suburban landscape character fronts a very narrow foreshore at Fraser Road, Melville Beach Road and Canning Beach Road. The riparian vegetation is an important feature in this area, providing a natural element to the surrounding urban land use.

The western and eastern sides of Canning Bridge are characterised by mixed commercial and residential developments. The area is a high-density urban node that includes high-rise apartments that dominate the landscape and are a prominent feature in viewscales. Foreshore areas are narrow and limited in this location, apart from the Canning Cloister Foreshore.

Most of the Dootanboro (Melville Water) foreshore has continuous public access. However, the extent of the reserve varies from a wide public recreation node at Dyoondalup (Point Walter) to being very narrow in parts of Applecross and near Canning Bridge, where the foreshore reserve has been constrained by urban development.

On the eastern side of Dootanboro (Melville Water), the major transport infrastructure of the Kwinana Freeway, Canning Highway and Perth-Mandurah railway dominate the foreshore landscape and have isolated Dootanboro (Melville Water) from the adjoining residential areas of South Perth and Como. Milyu Nature Reserve is a very narrow riparian area adjacent to the Kwinana Freeway. The revegetated reserve appears as a natural landscape element and is important in reducing the visual impact of the freeway from the river. Public access provisions for this side of Dootanboro (Melville Water) are limited to the freeway pedestrian overpasses and a very well used principal shared path, which runs the western side of the freeway and is heavily constrained by limited space. The foreshore is low-lying and predominantly reclaimed land associated with construction of the Kwinana Freeway and Narrows Bridge.

Locality-specific Policy Statements

The policy statements are locality-specific. They support achievement of the key principles and policies as outlined in *Corporate Policy Statement No. 52: Planning for Localities along the Swan Canning Development Control Area*.





Photo: Alfred Cove Nature Reserve - DBCA

Protect and restore the river system

- 2.1 Ensure the natural conservation values of nature reserves and marine parks are protected and enhanced, including Alfred Cove, Pelican Point, Milyu and Matilda Bay, particularly bird nesting, feeding and roosting areas and habitat for migratory birds and threatened species.
- 2.2 Encourage the restoration of natural riparian landforms, such as small sandy embayments and seasonally inundated riparian zones.
- 2.3 Link remnant wetland areas with plantings of local species and extend vegetation to include areas that are impacted by significant winter inundation.
- 2.4 Remove weeds and improve vegetation condition using local plant species.

Protect and restore foreshore vegetation

- 2.5 Restore riparian vegetation, particularly where it is absent or very constrained, including Attadale Reserve, Lucky Bay to Point Dundas, Waylen Bay, Canning Bridge Road (Applecross) and along the Kwinana Freeway (South Perth/Como), and at the lower infilled foreshore of Paul Hasluck Reserve and JH Abrahams Reserve.

- 2.6 Use local vegetation species within the foreshore reserve, including for landscaping.

Establish and maintain foreshore reserves

- 2.7 Enhance the interface with and connection to the river with shoreline treatments that improve environmental outcomes, improve community access and achieve high-quality amenity outcomes, where possible.
- 2.8 Realign and narrow roads that are located within or abutting constrained sections of Regional Open Space reserve to optimise provision of foreshore space, slow down traffic and provide for active transport opportunities, such as along Canning Beach Road (Applecross) and Melville Beach Road (Applecross). Relocate roads outside of the Regional Open Space reserve where possible, particularly where there is an expected increase in population density in the area and anticipated increase in users of the reserve.

Increase resilience to climate change

- 2.9 Ensure that buildings within the foreshore are appropriately set back to protect from flooding and other infrastructure within the reserve is set back or designed to accommodate some inundation to allow natural river foreshore flooding processes to occur.



Photo: Australian fairy terns - Claire Greenwell

Increase resilience to climate change cont.

- 2.10 Relocate foreshore leases and associated buildings that are vulnerable to climate change impacts, including storm surge damage, where possible, or grant leases for a reduced term to allow for future relocation or increased setbacks.
- 2.11 Adapt the stormwater system to accommodate sea/estuary level rise. Use water sensitive urban design approaches to retrofit the system, including addressing piped river outlets that will become partially or completely submerged.

Implement water sensitive design

- 2.12 Improve the quality of stormwater entering the foreshore. Implement water sensitive urban design, with the aim of incorporating at-source stormwater systems and overland flow through vegetated systems within the development footprint and within the catchment, instead of using end-of-pipe stormwater systems within the foreshore reserve. Retrofit stormwater/drainage pipes and trapezoidal drains where possible, such as converting the existing drain next to Atwell House to a living stream and constructing a biofilter at the Haig Road (Attadale) drainage outlet.
- 2.13 Demonstrate in planning and development proposals how groundwater levels and dewatering volumes and water quality treatment requirements will be met when excavation is proposed that may intersect groundwater.

- 2.14 Implement nutrient, pesticide and irrigation industry best practice for grassed areas in proximity to the river, particularly active playing surfaces and where the depth to groundwater is less than 1 metre, including Richardson Park, Comer Reserve, Troy Park, Tompkins Park and Charles Court Reserve. Establish buffers of local vegetation between the waterway and active recreation areas. Locate new active recreation spaces outside of the DCA.
- 2.15 Replace lawn turf located within the DCA but outside of parkland and active recreation nodes with local plants to reduce the demand on irrigation water sources and ensure best use of available irrigation water.

Minimise dredging and channel disturbance

- 2.16 Not support reclamation of the river, except for beach renourishment and strategic wildlife projects.
- 2.17 Understand and retain erosion and deposition patterns and the sediment cell balance.

Retain and conserve cultural significance and heritage values

- 2.18 Retain and conserve elements of heritage significance that contribute to the landscape setting of the river, including places entered on the State Register of Heritage Places or in the Local Government Heritage List or Local Heritage Survey, such as Sunset Hospital and Heathcote Hospital precinct.
- 2.19 Integrate Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal heritage into the foreshore design narrative.
- 2.20 Use Whadjuk Noongar names across the locality, such as Dootanboro (Melville Water), Dyoondalup (Point Walter) and Goolugatup (Heathcote), with naming to be informed by appropriate Noongar knowledge holders.





Photo: Blue Boatshed - Tourism Western Australia

Maintain the rivers and their foreshores as a community asset

- 2.21 Ensure clubs using foreshore land incorporate an uninterrupted, safe public access corridor along the river's edge and sufficiently set back structures.
- 2.22 Consolidate active recreation areas and club facilities, with a preference for shared facilities. Clubs are to demonstrate a community benefit. Where clubs are over-capacity and require expansion, they are to be relocated away from the foreshore to provide adequate facilities, unless there is a functional need to be located adjacent to the river.
- 2.23 Ensure that in-river uses are appropriate to the gazetted marine safety restrictions, complement the abutting land uses and comply with any established carrying capacities.

Maintain a sense of place

- 2.24 Enhance recognition of the values of the nature reserves and marine parks.
- 2.25 Enhance connections to the river and foreshore, such as through wayfinding, from nearby community or activity centres. Particular attention should be given to Moreau Mews (Applecross) and Broadway (Nedlands).

Secure public access to the rivers and their foreshores

- 2.26 Address gaps in and improve the public access path network around the foreshore, including between Point Resolution and Otto Point Reserve and on the riverside of yacht club and community club buildings.

- 2.27 Account for the environmental values, terrain and landscape amenity of the foreshore reserve when providing public access. Universal access (wheelchair accessible) paths are to be provided where possible and appropriate, based on site conditions. Access paths may not be possible if construction would result in unacceptable ecological impacts due to fill requirements. A trail is preferred in some areas due to the topography or environmental sensitivities, such as at Point Waylen, Point Resolution Reserve, Dyoondalup Point Walter Reserve and Sunset Heritage Precinct escarpment.
- 2.28 Move pathways away from the river's edge to create space for natural foreshore treatments and riparian vegetation restoration.
- 2.29 Encourage the incorporation of a bicycle lane (or other appropriate facility) within road reserves adjacent to the foreshore, including as part of road pavement rehabilitation and resurfacing projects, where appropriate. Refer to *Planning and Designing for Active Transport in Western Australia: All Ages and Abilities Contextual Guidance* for recommendations on appropriate bicycle facilities based on road function.

Provide opportunities for water transport

- 2.30 Recognise the importance of the river for commuting, recreation, tourism and leisure, as well as its conservation and amenity values. New jetties are to be a sensitive design and built form to complement the river landscape, and link to the public access path network.



Establish linkages and ecological corridors

- 2.31 Protect foreshore vegetation and enhance the corridor of vegetation that abuts the river with local plant species, including sedge banks and habitat trees, to create a continuous vegetated corridor through the locality.
- 2.32 Enhance or create ecological linkages and strategic connections for local fauna between natural areas.

Complement the river landscape through sensitive design and built form

- 2.33 Integrate vegetation with development to minimise the contrast between the natural and built elements of the landscape, particularly where there is no road interface, and retain ridgeline and escarpment vegetation and its backdrop to the waterway.
- 2.34 Consider reduced setbacks to the Regional Open Space reserve in the Canning Bridge Activity Centre Plan area, where the required average setback can still be achieved, any ground floor spaces within the standard setback area are activated and publicly accessible, and a community benefit can be demonstrated.
- 2.35 Request that increases in development density abutting the Regional Open Space reserve incorporate adequate foreshore reserves and appropriate building setbacks and maximum heights. Proposals should be accompanied by:
 - i. Broad strategic recreation (passive and active) and public open space planning that demonstrates the foreshore reserve remains a place for conservation and enjoyment

of nature. Active recreation spaces that respond to the needs of the growing community (as a result of increasing density) are to be provided outside of the foreshore reserve.

- ii. Design guidelines that detail appropriate setbacks to the foreshore based on maximum building heights to maintain or improve the visual landscape character of the river.
- 2.36 Ensure that waterlines and ridgelines remain the dominant visual elements of the river landscape. Avoid major changes to natural ground levels or the erection of structures that dominate cliff faces or the foreshore. Ensure development is adequately set back to preserve and complement natural landforms, particularly along the Dalkeith escarpment. Construction methods are to minimise disturbance of slopes, including cut/fill and use of retaining walls. Geotechnical reports may be required to accompany development applications.
- 2.37 Locate car parking within the foreshore reserves as far as possible from the river's edge, including relocating bays such as at Lucky Bay, Charles Court Reserve, Dyoondalup Point Walter Reserve and JH Abrahams Reserve. Where the foreshore is constrained, parking (apart from ACROD bays) should be located outside of the foreshore reserve.
- 2.38 Protect riverbanks in their natural state, maintaining and restoring the shoreline to conserve its ecological values. Where riverbank stabilisation is necessary, soft foreshore stabilisation approaches should be used. Avoid installing revetments and river walls, where possible. Rock material used for foreshore works is to be limestone.



Photo: Matilda Bay - Mark Thornley

Activate the foreshores

- 2.39 Ensure that commercial development within the foreshore reserve has a community focus, is small-scale, occurs within established commercial nodes or locations as identified in 2.42, enhances the natural character of the foreshore, and ideally delivers multiple benefits or services. The established commercial nodes in this locality are Goolugatup Heathcote Reserve, Matilda Bay Reserve, Tawarri and Dyoondalup Point Walter Reserve. Set back development from the river's edge as much as possible.
- 2.40 Ensure that activation of the foreshore is temporary/pop-up, unless confined to an existing commercial node. Enhance the use of the foreshore for public events where appropriate. Events should be of a scale appropriate to the available facilities, including parking, and amenity considerations.
- 2.41 Locate and manage proposals involving fireworks or drone light shows to avoid impacts on the Swan Estuary Marine Park, Alfred Cove A-Class Nature Reserve, and the fauna they support, including migratory birds. Fireworks and drone light shows will not be supported in proximity to Alfred Cove Nature Reserve, Troy Park and Tompkins Park.
- 2.42 Consider small-scale community and food and beverage development within the Canning Cloister Foreshore associated with the Canning Bridge Activity Centre Plan area and at a location within the Attadale-Alfred Cove foreshore, where it can be demonstrated that the community's enjoyment of the river environment will be enhanced and is consistent with the foreshore purpose of the reserve. The site should be well connected to the principal shared path network.
- 2.43 Applicants are to prepare an overarching context analysis to support proposed new or expanded commercial development that considers the broader foreshore and river uses to ensure a diversity of public facilities and experiences.
- 2.44 Locate lease areas an appropriate distance from the edge of the river, accounting for the site context, land use and development scale. This includes realigning and setting back the riverside boundary of an existing lease area as part of any redevelopment of the site.
- 2.45 Restrict over-water commercial development to the established location at the terminus of Broadway (Crawley). Boutique short-stay accommodation in conjunction with food and beverage and community uses may be considered at this site.



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