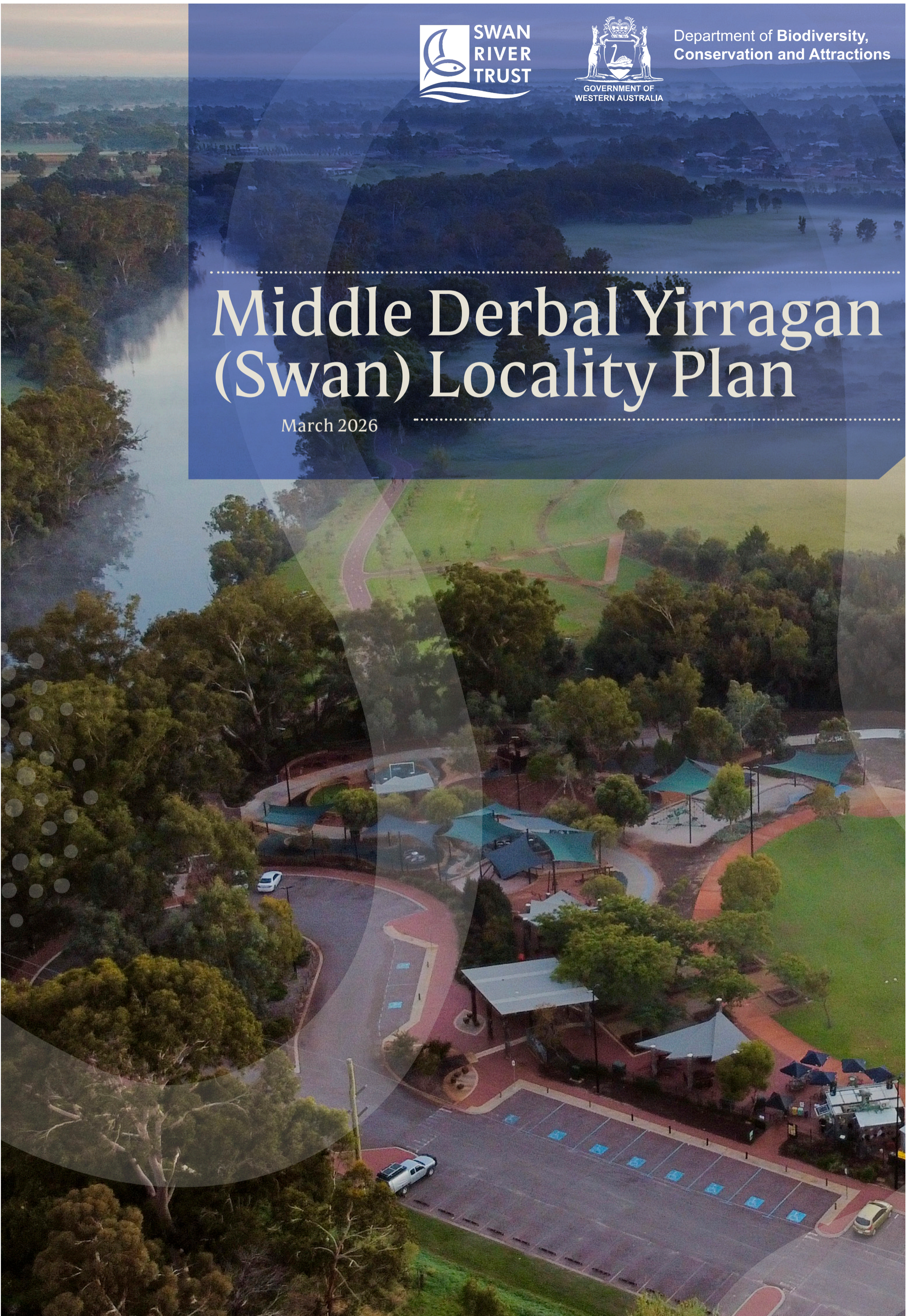




Department of Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions

Middle Derbal Yirragan (Swan) 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: Barkers Bridge - DBCA

The Middle Derbal Yirragan (Swan) Locality Plan

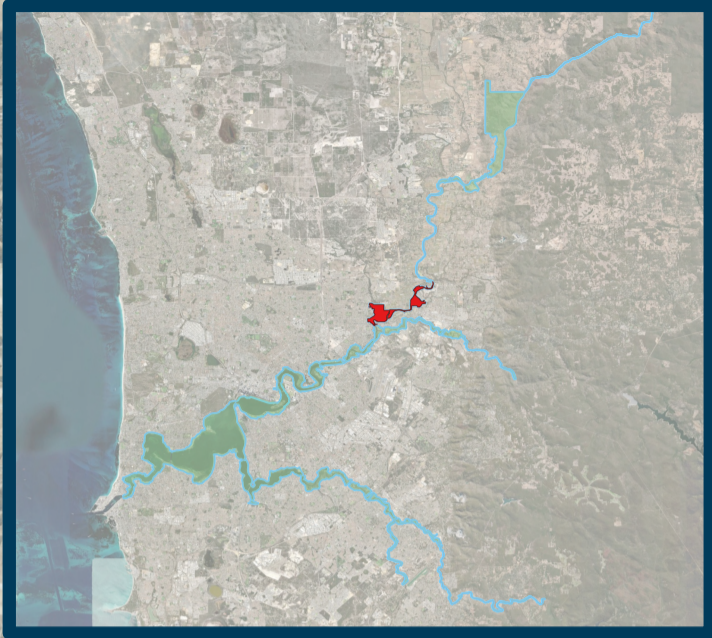
The Derbal Yirragan Djarlgarro (Swan Canning river system) is a complex and dynamic natural landscape. In addition to its fundamental ecological values and important floodplain function, it is valued for its landscape and scenic qualities, cultural and heritage significance, and focus for various recreation 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 Middle Derbal Yirragan (Swan) 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 middle Derbal Yirragan (Swan) 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 Middle Derbal Yirragan (Swan) Action Plan that aims to guide planning and works in the locality. The actions should be delivered when opportunities present.

The extent of the middle Derbal Yirragan (Swan) locality is identified in Figure 1 (next page) and includes land in the local governments of City of Swan and Town of Bassendean. 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 middle Derbal Yirragan (Swan) locality extends from the Guildford Road Bridge to the Reid Highway crossing.

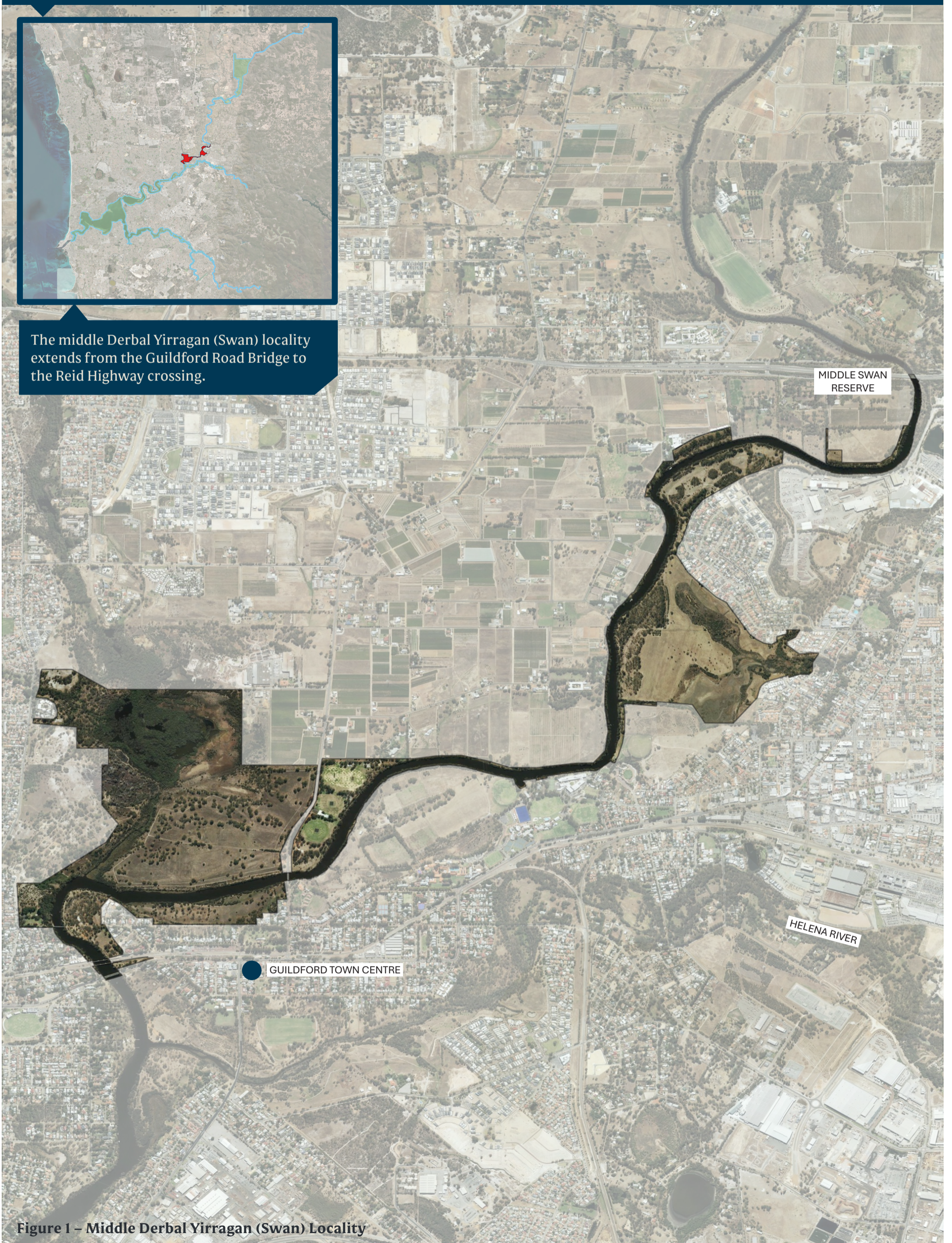


Figure 1 – Middle Derbal Yirragan (Swan) Locality

Landscape Description



Photo: Reg Bond Reserve to Mandoon Estate - Tourism Western Australia

The river channel is relatively narrow and has several tributaries draining from the surrounding lands, notably Bennett Brook and Blackadder Creek. Riparian vegetation is mainly rushes, paperbarks and sheoaks, with occasional stands of flooded gum. The surrounding landform includes steep embankments at Success Hill and the Midland Brick site and flat floodplains at Viveash and Caversham.

Historical land use has resulted in a very narrow extent of riparian vegetation along the banks of the river. Although degraded in some places, with no transition between the riparian zone and the adjoining land uses, the local vegetation is an important element of the natural landscape character of the locality.

Residential development, including medium-density housing at Woodbridge and urban infill at Viveash, contributes suburban landscape character elements. However, development is generally set back from the river. There is a distinctive built heritage landscape at Guildford Historic Town. The old townsite has many nineteenth century houses and heritage buildings. Many of the old buildings occur within the floodplain, which has remnant mature flooded gums and riparian vegetation. The floodplain understorey often consists of exotic pasture grasses, creating an open parkland element adjacent to the river.

Caversham is an extensive area of rural landscape character. Vineyards are a prominent feature and are a significant contributor to the tourism and commercial value of the Swan Valley. The vineyards, orchards, large blocks, rural fences and farm buildings create the local rural landscape identity. Properties that are immediately adjacent to the river have a narrow strip of remnant riparian vegetation. The rural landscape character provides some significant views, particularly the panoramic view of Woodbridge House and vineyards and the natural landscape at the confluence of Bennett Brook and the Derbal Yirragan (Swan River).

There are several historic buildings along the foreshore, as well as tourist facilities and wineries that contribute to the landscape of the area. Public access to the river and foreshore is not continuous due to historic land use, the landform and private properties extending into the floodplain or to the edge of the river embankments. Public active and passive recreation areas include Success Hill, Fish Market and Lilac Hill Reserves and the Swan Regional Riverside Park. There is also a designated bare-foot water ski area on the river at Lilac Hill.

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*.

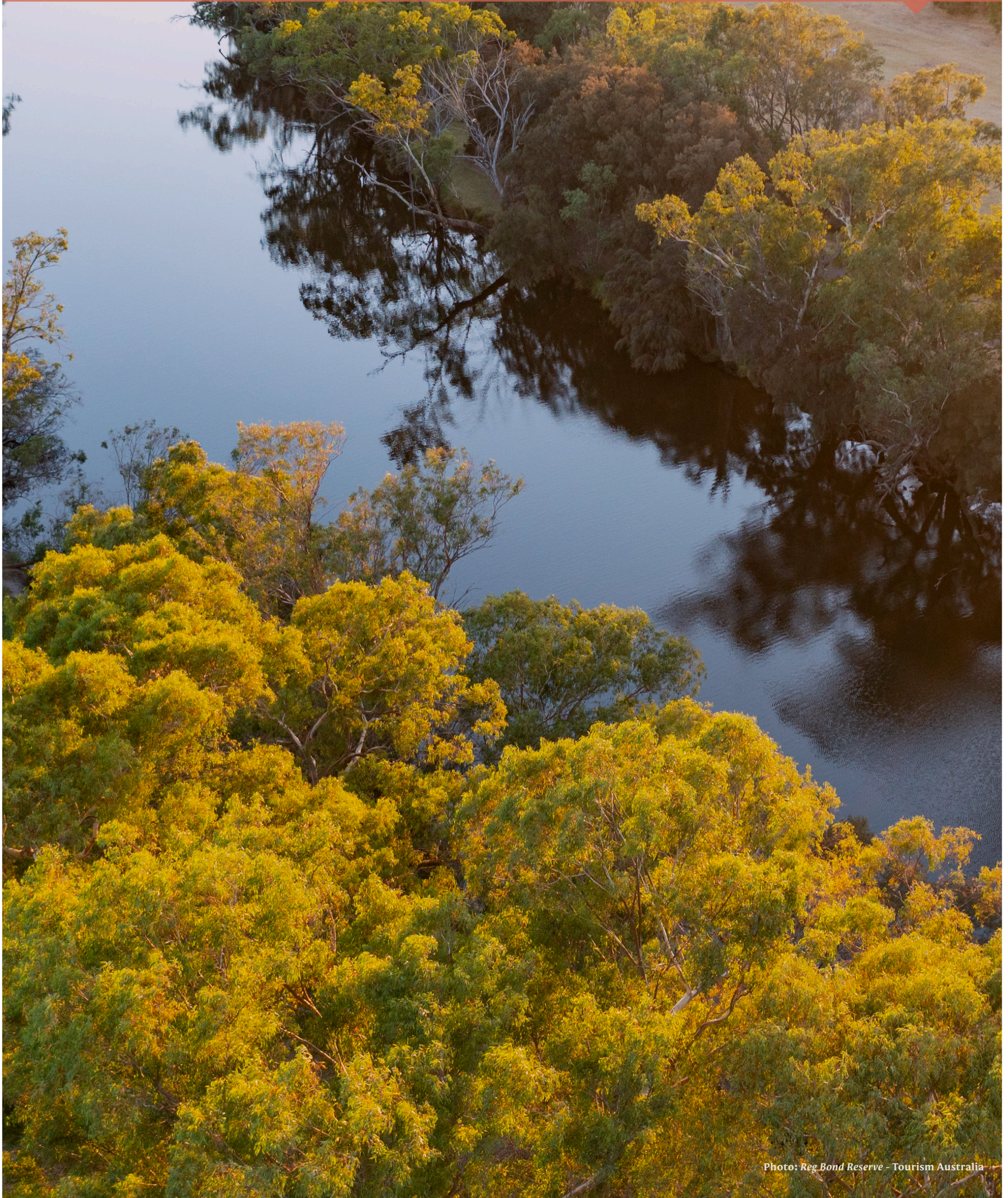


Photo: Reg Bond Reserve - Tourism Australia



Photo: Grogan Swamp - DBCA

Protect and restore the river system

- 5.1 Ensure land use and development enhances the natural environment of the river and the surrounding foreshore, protects local vegetation, wetlands and waterways and appropriately manages soils and water resources.
- 5.2 Protect the natural landform surrounding the river from earthworks (including filling of the floodplain), clearing and other intrusions that may destabilise the landform or impact on the functions and characters of the river landscape.
- 5.3 Maintain and increase opportunities for natural foreshore ecological and hydrological functions by using soft foreshore stabilisation approaches. Alternative approaches will be considered on a site-by-site basis, where considered planning and technical justification is provided.
- 5.4 Retain all remaining Guildford and Swan complex vegetation and preserve local natural areas.

Protect and restore foreshore vegetation

- 5.5 Protect and retain riparian vegetation, including trees, on the riverside of development.
- 5.6 Restore local riparian vegetation so it appears as a green band when viewed from the river, particularly near Success Hill, Bennett Brook and Viveash floodplain and where weeds, pasture grasses and extensive historical clearing have degraded the riparian floodplain vegetation.
- 5.7 Revegetate riverbanks with local species and undertake succession planting. Encourage the establishment of a

minimum 30-metre-wide vegetated riverbank corridor on each side of the channel.

Establish and maintain foreshore reserves

- 5.8 Increase the width of existing foreshore reserves, where appropriate, to allow for safe public access at the top of a slope or for maintenance access, to retain riparian vegetation or a landscape feature, create a sense of place or provide a visual buffer.
- 5.9 Ensure that increases in development density, rezoning and subdivisions incorporate adequate foreshore and public open space reserves.

Increase resilience to climate change

- 5.10 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.
- 5.11 Consider the predicted future changes in salinity of the river and select local plant species accordingly for foreshore revegetation projects.



Photo: Bennett Brook - City of Swan

Implement water sensitive design

- 5.12 Maintain and restore natural hydrology, such as maintaining natural groundwater springs (such as at Success Hill), perched water flows to the river and seasonal flooding of floodplains and wetlands.
- 5.13 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.
- 5.14 Ensure that wastewater management systems for development proposals in unsewered areas contribute to improved water quality entering the river system.

- 5.15 Implement nutrient, pesticide and irrigation industry best practice for grassed areas in proximity to the river, particularly active playing surfaces and where depth to the groundwater is less than 1 metre, including Lilac Hill Playing Fields. Establish buffers of local vegetation between the waterway and active recreation areas. Locate new active recreation areas, for example ovals, outside of the DCA.

Minimise dredging and channel disturbance

- 5.16 Protect and maintain the natural function and form of the river channel, including protecting riverbanks in their natural state.
- 5.17 Design any new jetties to be public use, fixed structures that abut or align with the riverbank and do not require dredging because the river channel is relatively narrow at this location.

Retain and conserve cultural significance and heritage values

- 5.18 Enhance connections to the river and foreshore from the Guildford Historic Town centre, such as through wayfinding, to acknowledge its significant historic connections.
- 5.19 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.
- 5.20 Integrate Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal culture and heritage into the foreshore design narrative.
- 5.21 Use Whadjuk Noongar names across the locality, with naming to be informed by appropriate Noongar knowledge holders.

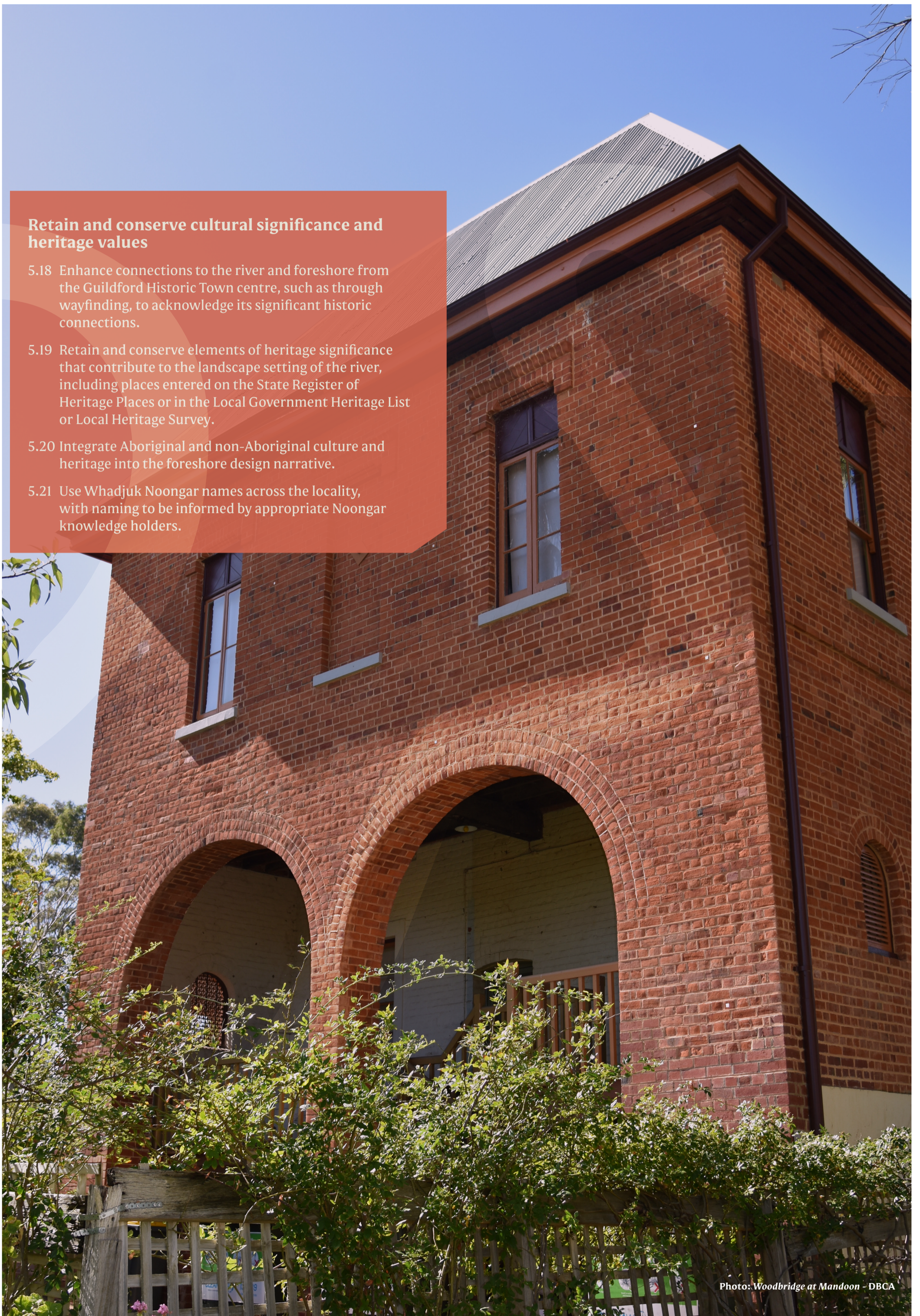




Photo: Woodbridge Riverside Park - Alison McGilvray

Maintain the rivers and their foreshores as a community asset

5.22 Establish a continuous foreshore reserve throughout this locality through planning and decision making.

Maintain a sense of place

5.23 Protect the natural landscape riparian elements, such as flat floodplains, wetlands, silty banks and raised embankments, including by ensuring adjoining land uses are set back from the river's edge and do not visually dominate the foreshore or river.

5.24 Conserve the historic and heritage values of the Swan Valley through protection of its unique natural landscape and rural character.

Secure public access to the rivers and their foreshores

5.25 Provide a safe and accessible public open space network. Pathways within the floodplain are to be at-grade, acknowledging that they may be inundated, and set back from the river's edge to create space for soft foreshore treatments and riparian vegetation restoration.

5.26 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.

- i. Respond to the site and local context in the design;
- ii. A trail is preferred in some areas due to the topography or environmental sensitivities; and
- iii. Access to the water may not always be ecologically appropriate or practical.

5.27 Enhance the use of the river for kayaking and canoeing, where appropriate. Consider the incorporation of launching or short-term tie-up facilities for kayaks and canoes within public jetty design.

Provide opportunities for water transport

5.28 Ensure that water transport in this locality is leisure and tourism focused, rather than commuter, using low-wash, low-speed and shallow-draft vessels.

Establish linkages and ecological corridors

5.29 Restore tributaries and drains and promote biodiversity and habitat complexity through planting local over-, middle- and under-storey species.

5.30 Establish and enhance ecological linkages along the Derbal Yirragan (Swan River), Bennett Brook and Blackadder Creek and between areas of local bushland, wetlands and waterways.



Complement the river landscape through sensitive design and built form

- 5.31 Not support private development or subdivision of land within the floodway.
- 5.32 Maintain appropriate built form by:
 - i. Ensuring that development complements the valley landform.
 - ii. Ensuring that development complements the historic landscape qualities of the river at Guildford.
 - iii. Protecting and maintaining the heritage buildings and infrastructure that are important landscape elements of the Derbal Yirragan (Swan River), particularly at Guildford, Woodbridge House and Caversham.
 - iv. Ensuring that new development is adequately set back from the foreshore so that waterlines and ridgelines are the dominant visual element of the river.
 - v. Protecting riverbank vegetation and enhancing the vegetation corridor that abuts the channel.
 - vi. Addressing foundation stability within the lot and set back from the top edge of the river embankment so that it does not contribute to global instability of the riverbank, particularly between the Guildford rail bridge and Success Hill Reserve.
 - vii. Ensuring construction methods minimise disturbance of slopes, including cut/fill and use of retaining walls, and do not encroach on the foreshore. Geotechnical reports may be required to accompany development applications.

- 5.33 Ensure development is appropriately located, designed, scaled and landscaped and existing vegetation retained to enhance the unique landscape character of the Swan Valley.

Activate the foreshores

- 5.34 Ensure that activation in foreshore areas impacted by the floodway is temporary, such as pop-up facilities and events. Minor community amenities that can be inundated, such as nature-play, picnic facilities and pathways, may be accepted within the floodway.
- 5.35 Enhance passive recreation at existing park nodes by providing public facilities that enhance the community's enjoyment of and connection to the river environment, with a focus on nature-based activities. Temporary food trucks/ café vans may be considered at Success Hill Reserve and Woodbridge Riverside Park.



Department of Biodiversity,
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17 Dick Perry Avenue, Kensington 6151

Locked Bag 104, Bentley DC, WA 6983

Phone: (08) 9278 0900

Web: www.dbca.wa.gov.au

Email: rivers.planning@dbca.wa.gov.au