



Aqueduct Park proposal

Barwon Water plans to establish a 66-hectare park around the heritage-listed Barwon River Ovoid Sewer Aqueduct in Breakwater.

For many years, Barwon Water has been investigating options for improving public access to the riverside land while balancing the heritage values of the aqueduct and the need for public safety.

Under the Aqueduct Park proposal, the community would enjoy the environmental and recreational values of the Barwon River, as well as the significant history of the aqueduct.

Access under the structure (on both land and water) has been prohibited since 1995 due to the risk of falling concrete.

Barwon Water's plan involves removing some aqueduct spans (subject to Heritage Victoria approval) to allow safe access to the river and bank. The majority of the historic structure would be retained.

This would unlock a section of the Barwon River that has been closed to the public for more than 20 years and allow increased recreational use of the river.

The parkland proposal also provides for walking tracks, viewing platforms, interpretative signage and seating on the north side of the river.

Barwon Water has worked closely with the Barwon River Parklands Steering Committee, Heritage Victoria and other agencies on the proposal.

Barwon Water is also seeking feedback from the broader community and key stakeholders, including the Wadawurrung, recreational, environmental and heritage groups, to inform the proposal.

Consultation will open from mid-January, 2017, through to early March, 2017.

Historical overview

Constructed between 1913 and 1915, the 756-metre long aqueduct served as the main sewer to Barwon Water's Black Rock Water Reclamation Plant until 1992.

The aqueduct was added to the Victorian Heritage Register in 1991 as a significant example of early engineering design using reinforced concrete.

It is also significant for its architecture, derived from the Firth of Forth Bridge in Scotland, and as a remnant of one of Victoria's earliest sewerage systems.

Although repairs were undertaken throughout its operational life, the structure continued to disintegrate, with steel reinforcing corroding and concrete breaking off.

Engineering studies have concluded public access is only possible if parts of the more dangerous section are removed.

The parkland project would allow the community to share significant heritage and biodiversity values of the area.



Construction of the Barwon River Ovioid Sewer Aqueduct.

Timeline

Late-January to February, 2017:

Community and stakeholder consultation.

Late-February, 2017:

Finalise proposal based on community and stakeholder feedback.

March to June, 2017:

Seek approval from Heritage Victoria for the proposed safety works to the Aqueduct.

Mid-2017:

Submit Aqueduct Park proposal to Barwon Water Board for approval.

Mid-late 2017:

Complete detailed engineering, environmental and other approvals.

2018:

Work commences.

For further information

Please visit yoursay.barwonwater.vic.gov.au/aqueduct-park or telephone Barwon Water on 1300 656 007.



For further information

PO Box 659 Geelong Victoria 3220 | 📞 1300 656 007 | ✉ info@barwonwater.vic.gov.au
www.barwonwater.vic.gov.au

A New Park for Geelong

As part of implementation of the Barwon River Parklands Strategy, a new 66 hectare park is being planned for the north bank of the Barwon River between Tucker Street and Boundary Road in Breakwater.

Located at the site is the heritage-listed Barwon River Ovoid Sewer Aqueduct, which spans 756m across the Barwon River.

The Aqueduct Park project aims to:

- Conserve and promote the historically significant Aqueduct structure, while improving public safety.
- Restore public access along the Barwon River and northern bank.
- Provide for a range of low-impact recreational activities and staged-development of visitor facilities.
- Protect the biodiversity, cultural heritage and floodplain values of the park.

History of the Aqueduct

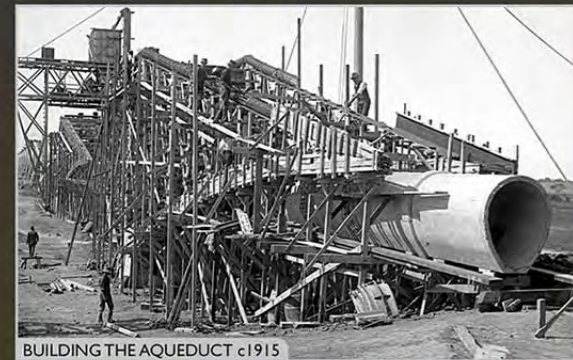
The Ovoid Sewer Aqueduct was constructed between 1913 and 1915 as part of Geelong's first sewerage scheme. At the time of construction it was one of the largest concrete structures in Australia and noted for its innovative concrete reinforcing system. Today the Aqueduct's historical significance is recognised through its listing on the Victorian Heritage Register and protection through the Heritage Act 1995.

The Aqueduct was decommissioned in 1992 due to concerns about its structural integrity. Access under the structure on the Barwon River and its banks has been prohibited since the mid 1990's, with falling concrete from the decaying structure a constant threat to public safety. Numerous engineering investigations and rehabilitation trials have been undertaken over the last twenty years. Repair and reuse of the structure is not feasible.

The Aqueduct will continue to be managed as a 'noble ruin'. Interpretive signage and promotion of key viewing points will be used to highlight its magnificent architecture and contribution to the history of Geelong.

Cultural Heritage

The Wadawurrung people's history with the Barwon River and the site pre-dates the Aqueduct by thousands of years. Liaison with the Wadawurrung to investigate indigenous cultural heritage values present and appropriate ways to recognise and protect these will be a key step in planning for the park.



BUILDING THE AQUEDUCT c1915

Environmental Values

The majority of the park is part of the natural Barwon River floodplain. While historically used for grazing it has now regenerated and contains large areas of Lignum swamp and wetlands that provide habitat for rare and threatened bird species, frogs, fish and small mammals.



LIGNUM SWAMP AND WETLANDS

BARWON RIVER

Opening the park

Barwon Water owns the Aqueduct and over 60 hectares of surrounding floodplain. It has developed the Aqueduct Park proposal in collaboration with the Barwon River Parklands Steering Committee. Barwon Water intends to deliver the project and will continue to collaborate with other public land managers to determine future management arrangements.

Future visitor facilities

Initial visitor facilities will focus on establishing trail access to the Barwon River and key viewing points to the Aqueduct. As use of the park increases over time, additional visitor facilities could be considered including additional walking trails and circuit tracks, fishing platforms and canoe landings.

Proposed features of the new park include:

STAGE 1

- 1 Prepare a Cultural Heritage Management Plan in partnership with the Wadawurrung.
- 2 Install steel supports to the underside of the Aqueduct to reduce risk of collapse.
- 3 Remove the Aqueduct spans across the Barwon River to restore safe public access along the river and for future walking/cycling trails along the north and south banks.
- 4 Replace existing Aqueduct safety fencing and install safety fences on Goat Island.

STAGE 2

- 5 Improve vehicle control and install park entry signage at Boundary Road and Tanner Street in partnership with City of Greater Geelong.
- 6 Improve access to the Barwon River and establish unsealed walking trail access from Boundary Road to Tucker Street and along the Barwon River.
- 7 Establish an elevated Aqueduct lookout point.
- 8 Develop and install interpretive signage to illustrate the historical significance of the Aqueduct at key viewing points.
- 9 Continue weed control and biodiversity programs.
- 10 Liaise with adjoining landholders to secure park boundary fencing and investigate revegetation opportunities.
- 11 Establish a small Aqueduct viewing area and path link to the Barwon River from Tanner Street.
- 12 Establish walking trail access from corner of Tucker and Leather Streets.
- 13 Replace fishing platforms/canoe landings.
- 14 Establish unsealed walking trail from Tanner Street.

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

- 15 Investigate connecting the park to the existing Barwon River Trail via Tucker Street and Gundog Lane in partnership with City of Greater Geelong.
- 16 Replace the Aqueduct security fencing and signage on the south bank. (timing to be coordinated with establishment of the Barwon River open space corridor as part of Keystone Business Park).
- 17 Develop heritage trail interpretive signage for the Barwon River indigenous cultural heritage values, the Aqueduct, Sunnyside Woolscour, the Breakwater and heritage listed properties in Tanner Street.
- 18 Investigate establishing unsealed walking trail to complete the eastern walking path loop.



Recreational access

Over 5km of walking tracks are planned for the park. The majority of these will follow existing maintenance access tracks. Opening access along the river and the northern bank will enable water-based activities such as boating and fishing.

The park will be accessible from the existing Barwon River Trail at Belmont Common via Gundog Lane and Tucker Street. Existing footpaths along Boundary Road provide access from residential areas of St Albans Park, Whittington and Breakwater. There is public transport access to the site via bus route 40 on Leather Street.



WALKING TRACKS



VIEW OF PROPOSED WORKS FROM NEAR TANNER STREET

Drawing Key

- Existing Ovoid Aqueduct
- Span to be removed
- Existing shared trail
- Upgrade existing unsealed access path
- New walking path
- Future walking path opportunities
- Roadside trail access
- Fishing platform/canoe landing
- Parking
- Interpretive signage
- Viewing points

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View from south east bank during Barwon River floods – September 1916



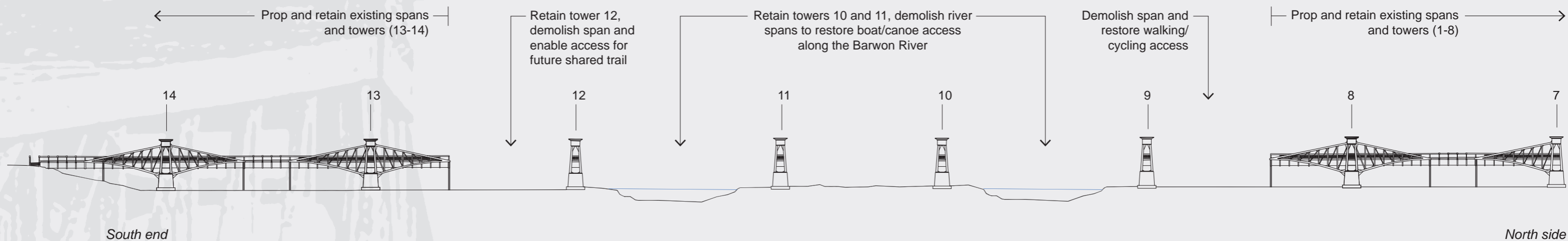
View A from near Tanner Street – Existing Conditions

Refer to Sheet 1 for view location

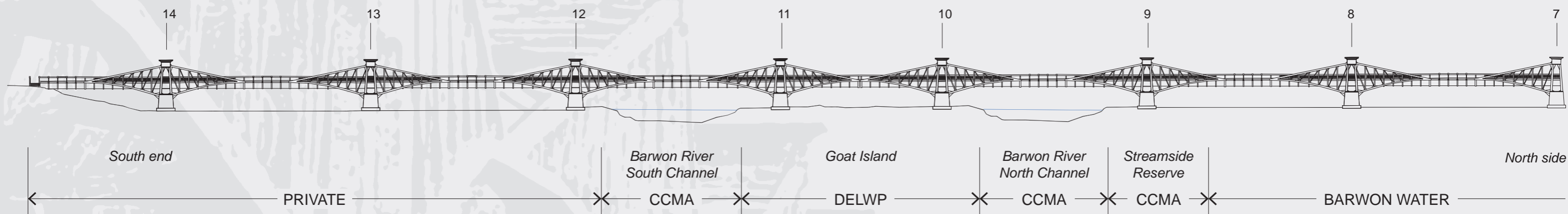


View A from near Tanner Street – Proposed Works

Refer to Sheet 1 for view location



Proposed Aqueduct Works



Existing Land Management



View B from the east near Barwon River – Existing Conditions

Refer to Sheet 1 for view location



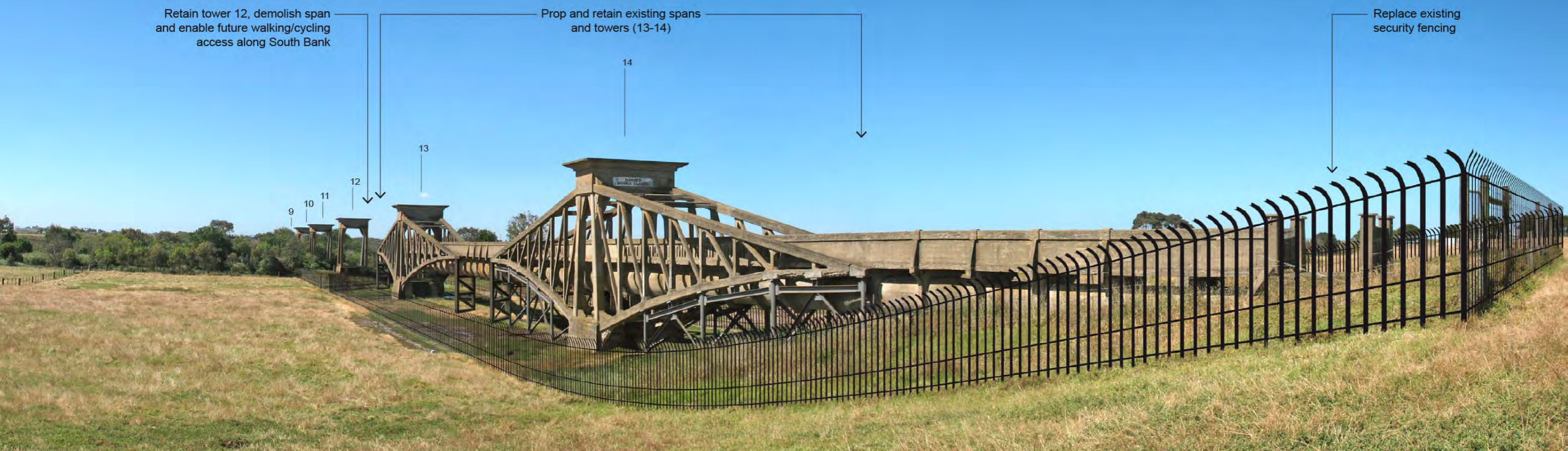
View B from the east near Barwon River – Proposed Works

Refer to Sheet 1 for view location



View C from South Bank – Existing Conditions

Refer to Sheet 1 for view location



View C from South Bank – Proposed Works

Refer to Sheet 1 for view location

RENEW A VISION

Strategic Directions Plan

A well - connected, diverse and healthy water way parkland, that balances recreation and conservation, and provides for everyday enjoyment of nature, and community liveability and well - being.

KEY GOALS

An enhanced and resilient open space network that:

- protects the natural environmental and cultural values of the Parklands and the Barwon River.
- protects and enhances environmental values of the river and its floodplain, wetlands and estuary, and connects communities with natural settings.
- is accessible and reflects the needs of a diverse community.
- provides open space for growing communities and future generations.
- provides a diversity of quality recreational opportunities and settings for enjoyment, social connection and wellbeing.
- increase awareness and appreciation of nature and cultural heritage.
- responds and adapts to the challenges of climate change.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

Consistent with Healthy Parks Healthy People and the G21 Environment Pillar, the key strategic directions for the Barwon River Parklands include:

Expanding a connected network

Environmental values at Lake Connewarre and lack of public land in some areas mean development of an off road link between Geelong and Barwon Heads may take many years to achieve. Community consultation completed in 2009 indicated completion of shorter more frequently used looped paths was the highest priority. Projects to expand the trail and open space network include:

- 1 Establish trail links west from Buckley Falls Park to new open space areas at Mt.Brandon including staged development of new recreation facilities and environmental rehabilitation.
- 2 Investigate integration of pedestrian and cycle access across the Barwon River at the Geelong Ring Road bridge.
- 3 Investigate future opportunities to expand open space along the north side of the River enabling completion of an off road trail loop back to Baum Weir and Fyansford Common.
- 4 Improve access to the Barwon River at Pakington Street.
- 5 Investigate improved on and off road trail links from the Barwon River to the existing Bellarine Rail Trail including upgrade of Wal Whiteside Walk.
- 6 Investigate improved links to existing Waurin Ponds Creek Trail.
- 7 Investigate improved on and off road links along the Barwon River at Barwon Heads as part of the Round the Head Trail.

Strengthening and promoting features of the Barwon River Parklands

- 8 Investigate opportunities for development of new heritage trails and interpretation for significant sites in new and existing parks and along the Barwon River Trail.
- 9 Promote the Barwon River Parklands and major events on key regional tourism routes.
- 10 Investigate establishment of a Regional Sustainability Education Centre.

Strengthening connections with nature

- 15 Improve public access to the Lake Connewarre State Game Reserve at Ash Road, McCorkhell Reserve, Moolap Station Road and Taits Point through to Hospital Swamps.
- 16 Investigate a canoe/kayak link between Geelong and Barwon Heads.
- 17 Investigate opportunities to undertake floodplain rehabilitation works and improve habitat corridor values and buffers to adjoining future development.
- 18 Develop new boardwalks and signage to protect significant vegetation and habitat areas at Moonah Park while providing walking and fishing access along the Barwon River.

Revitalising the existing network

Use the Healthy Parks Healthy People philosophy to provide a new framework within which to revitalise and plan settings, facilities, programs and services. Provide investment to maintain and improve the quality and diversity of the existing network incorporating Environmental Sustainable Design (ESD) and universal access through design principles for new infrastructure and facilities. Implement the statewide Active in Parks Program.

- 19 Continue staged woody weed control at Frederick Morton Reserve.
- 20 Develop new nature based playscapes at Barwon Valley Park and Frank Ellis Reserve, Barwon Heads and longer term in new parklands at Mt.Brandon and Armstrong Creek.
- 21 Rehabilitate the Former Geelong Junior Motorcross Site including environmental restoration and provision for community events. Improve links around Belmont Common to complement the new Criterion Track.
- 22 Establish an off road shared trail link from Barrabool Road to the Belmont Common Boat Ramp.
- 23 Investigate improved circuit walking trails and facilities at Ocean Grove Spit.



Planning the next wave of regional open space expansion

- 11 Establish new linear open space reserves along the Moorabool River. As development proceeds undertake staged establishment of trail links, recreation facilities and environmental rehabilitation north from Fyansford Common along the Moorabool River through to the existing Ring Road Trail.
- 12 Establish new parkland at the Ovoid Sewer Aqueduct Reserve including restoration of public access along the river and resolution of the future of the aqueduct structure and reserve. Continue environmental rehabilitation and undertake staged development of new circuit walking paths, with improved river access for fishing and canoeing.
- 13 Establish new linear open space reserves along the Barwon River at Armstrong Creek. Undertake staged establishment of trail links, recreation facilities and environmental rehabilitation with links through to Belmont Common along the River.
- 14 As part of long term future planning for a new east-west link road across the Barwon River consider opportunities for integrated pedestrian and cycle access to improve direct links between Armstrong Creek and St. Albans Park-Leopold and a new trail loop back to the Ovoid Sewer Aqueduct reserve along the north bank.

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