

# headspace

multicultural centre for health & emotional wellbeing

context study





## Headspace

Multicultural centre for health &  
emotional wellbeing

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This booklet aims to give a better understanding of the project context, its qualities, challenges and features. The area and site itself were discovered through the numerous site visits and explorations in and around Melbourne during the initial phase of the project process. The suburb of Footscray was chosen based on its high relevance in terms of responding to the desired user groups and context outlined in the preliminary work for the project while the site itself was located based on a process of evaluation of the envisioned criteria, especially related to the presence of natural features, accessibility and surrounding activity. Finding a site that could allow for a good balance between active and quiet, public and private zones, while encouraging the right type and amount of interest in the project has been particularly important for final choice of site, and this selection process is discussed further in the process booklet. The contextual relevance of the project has remained of importance throughout the design process and thus the cultural identity of Footscray today as well as its envisioned future has continuously informed decisions made along the way.



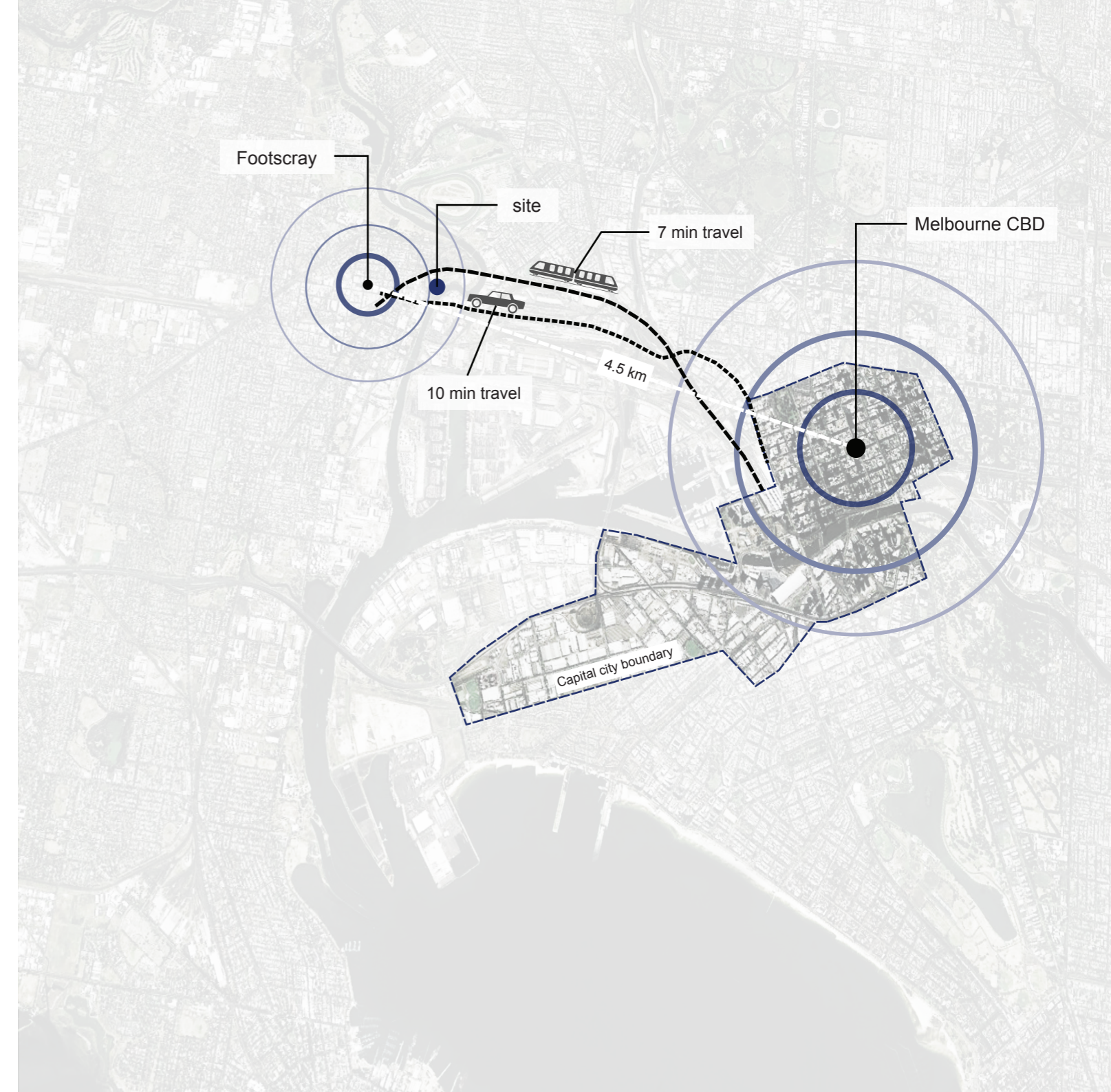
## Footscray in the city picture



### An activity centre in transition

Situated less than 5 km from the Melbourne CBD, the suburb of Footscray forms part of the larger city of Maribyrnong. Traditionally referred to as the 'heart of the west', Footscray boasts a history of diverse mixed use and development that has left traces, turning it in to the vibrant and multicultural activity centre it is today. Melbourne's early industrial history is prominent here; old wharves and warehouses are clearly visible, and there is a coalition of industrial uses mixing with commercial activity and medium-density housing. Footscray has maintained its traditional working class identity as successive waves of skilled migrants have settled here over the recent years. The affordability of housing and proximity to central locations in Melbourne has caused the popularity of living in Footscray to rise, especially among young and ethnically diverse adults.

Footscray is the last remaining inner city area within very close proximity of the Melbourne CBD that still has major potential for expansion of city related functions. Large areas previously used in the manufacturing industries have become available, and thus the opportunity for new development and expansion of Melbourne is not being ignored. Footscray's streetscape is currently transitioning, with significant apartment developments now defining the skyline and new commercial and retail developments under construction and in planning stages. The area is rapidly emerging as the key destination of the inner west and its population of 14100 residents is expected to double over the next 20 years.





## RELIGION

PEOPLE WITH A RELIGION

65.5%

CATHOLIC  
21%

BUDDHIST

13%



FOOTSCRAY MELBOURNE

ISLAM

6.3%



FOOTSCRAY MELBOURNE



## ETHNICITY

RESIDENTS BORN OVERSEAS

49.3%

OVERSEAS BORN POPULATION  
ARRIVED IN FOOTSCRAY AFTER 2001

36.4%



ONLY SPEAK ENGLISH AT HOME

38.3%



INDIGENOUS PERSONS

48





## Footscray in the city picture

### Zone explanations:

#### Commercial zone 1:

- Vibrant mixed use commercial centres for retail, office, business, entertainment and community uses.
- Residential uses at densities complementary to the role and scale of the commercial centre.

#### Commercial zone 2:

- Commercial areas for offices, appropriate manufacturing and industries, bulky goods retailing, other retail uses, and associated business and commercial services.

#### Mixed use zone:

- A range of residential, commercial, industrial and other uses which complement the mixed-use function of the locality.
- Housing at higher densities.

#### Industrial zone:

- Manufacturing industry, the storage and distribution of goods and associated uses in a manner which does not affect the safety and amenity of local communities.

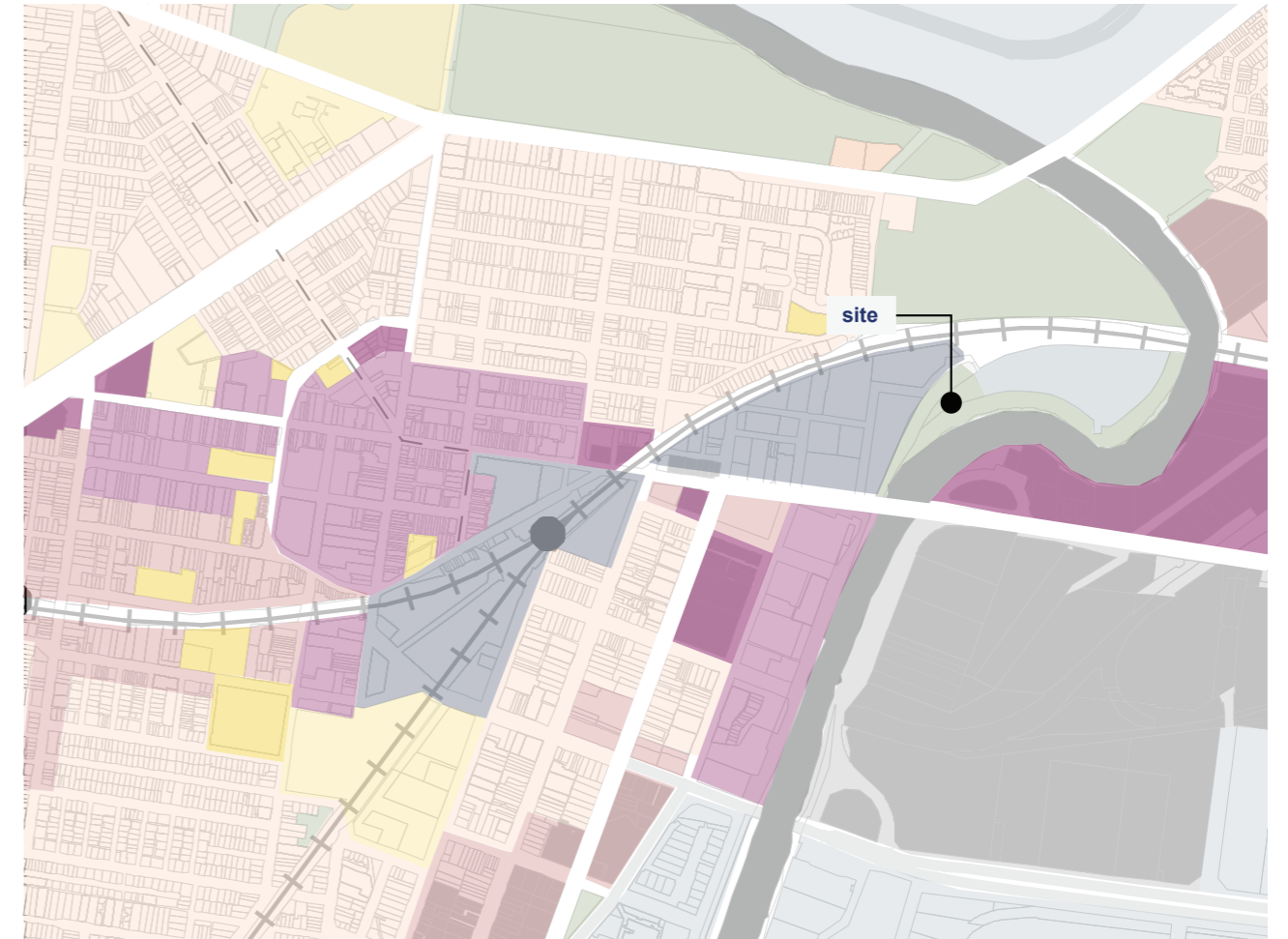
#### Public park and recreation zone:

- Protect and conserve areas of significance where appropriate.
- Commercial uses where appropriate.

### Visions for development in Footscray

The future sees Footscray playing a major metropolitan role as the only activity centre that is close to the major industrial nodes of the city and the Port of Melbourne, while near enough to the Melbourne CBD to embrace its higher-level administrative functions. The city of Maribyrnong is promoting the new character of Footscray as an inner city destination to work, play and invest.

The planning schemes for Footscray reveal much information about the city's future plans and intended characters of different areas. The centre of Footscray and the riverside precinct are zoned as commercial areas that will develop further in the following years. Especially is the activity along the Maribyrnong at the riverside precinct expected to grow, turning this area in to a pleasurable commercial marina with spectacular views of the Melbourne skyline. The current north-eastern industrial & mixed uses across the river from the project site are seen as areas for potential future urban habilitation and is thus zoned as a commercial precinct. Most interesting, however, is to point out the areas marked as priority development zones. Current works are already taking place at the railway precinct, with the new Footscray station under construction, while the area directly west of the project site is awaiting immediate future revitalisation as large industrial properties are sold to residential and commercial investors - transforming this part of Footscray in to an extension of the CBD



Footscray designated land uses



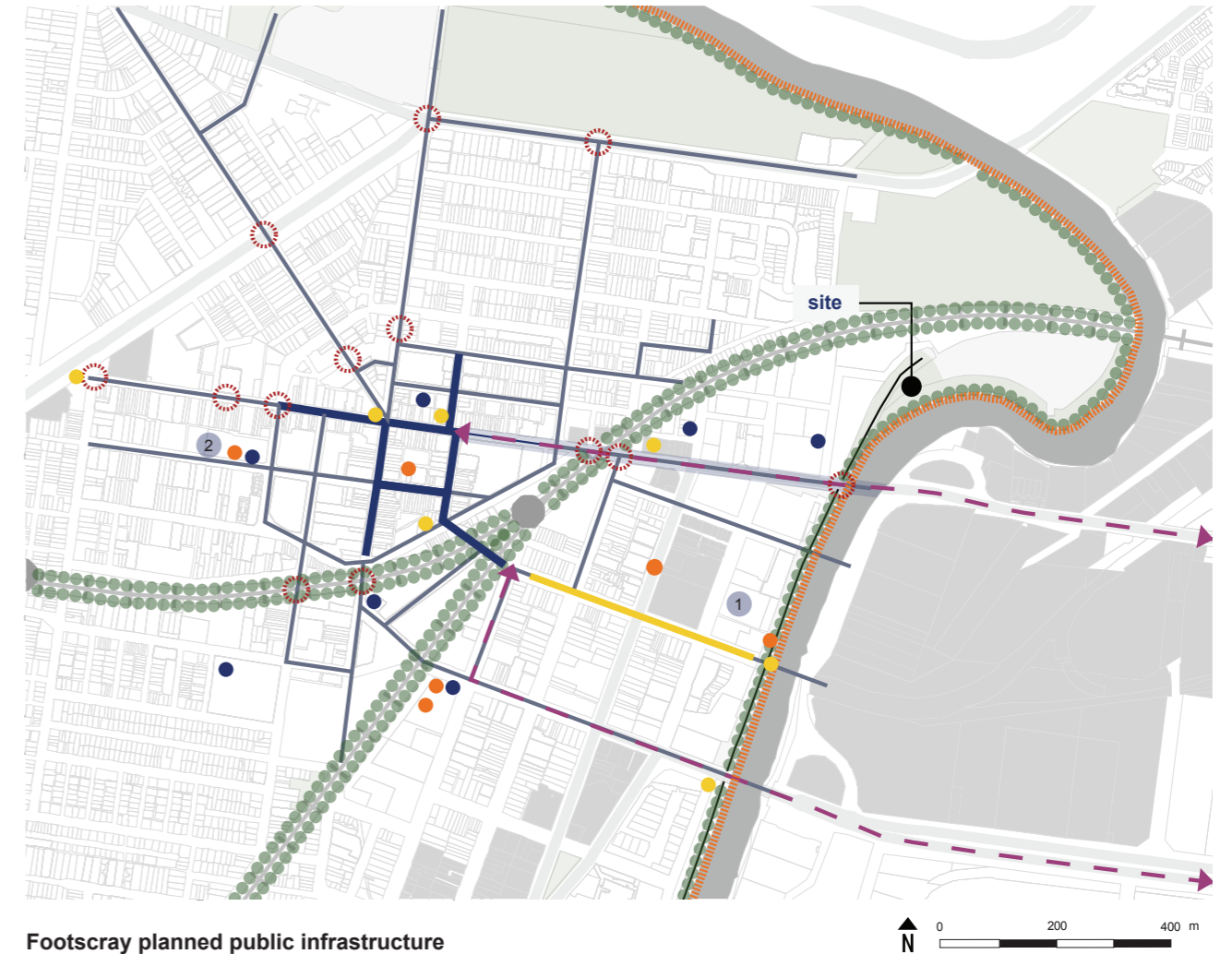


## Footscray in the city picture

### Visions for public infrastructure

Footscray envisions that significant increase in population will put pressure on community infrastructure, open space and recreation within the city. New development should therefore contribute to the creation and/or enhancement of public open spaces and public realm and informal recreation activities should integrate with residential, retail and office developments within the CAA to provide opportunities for social interaction between all community members. In order to reach the goal of a prosperous public realm Footscray is faced with confronting the challenges of contaminated land, noise and air pollution from traffic and industrial uses and dispersed land uses that discourage walking and cycling. The future streets in Footscray will prioritise pedestrian access and connectivity within the city; encouraging workers, residents and visitors to roam and explore. The centre is green with large established street trees and high quality public realm environments while the river and its green spaces are a key attraction, providing enhanced recreational and conservation opportunities.

Footscray remains a place for possibilities and discovery. The cultural diversity that has long been a feature of Footscray continues contributing to the variety of experiences on offer and the future hopes to put Footscray's creative heart on display making it one of the most livable and exciting centres in Melbourne. Footscray wants to encourage artistic talent, professional and amateur alike, and the 'business' of art and culture. Overall, according to the Footscray Urban Design Framework; "the Footscray of 2030 is safe, arts, edgy, affordable, regional, diverse/mixed and multicultural".



Footscray planned public infrastructure

- |  |                                      |  |  |
|--|--------------------------------------|--|--|
|  | Good conditions for pedestrians      |  | Proposed public art                    |
|  | Proposed improvement for pedestrians |  | Potential plaza                        |
|  | Proposed improved crossing           |  | Existing or planned community facility |
|  | Proposed new tram lines              |  | Footscray community arts centre        |
|  | Proposed greening                    |  | Footscray library                      |
|  | Existing pedestrian/bicycle trail    |  | Proposed reduced through traffic       |





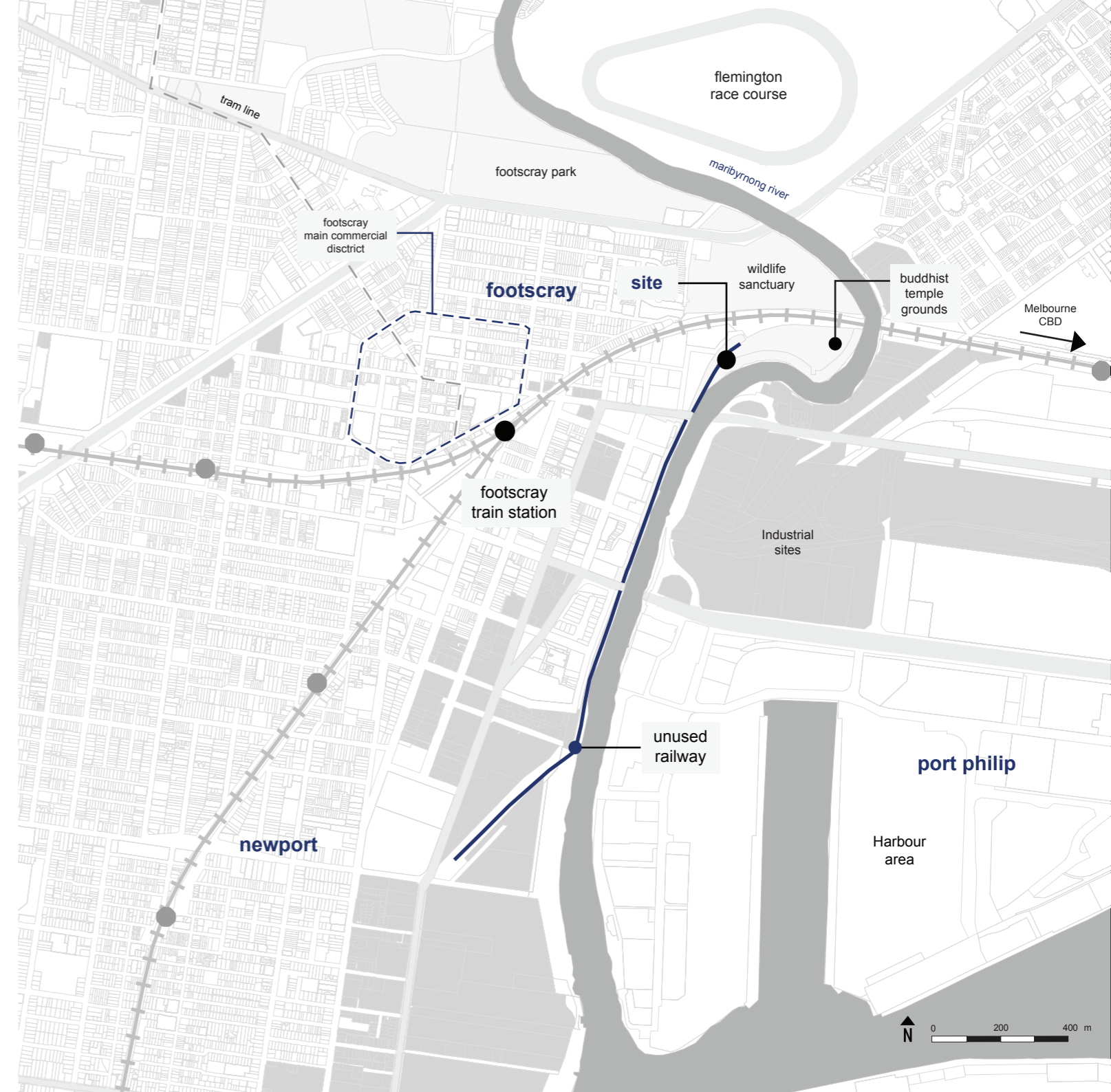


## the site in Footscray



Footscray is characterised by a gently undulating landscape, which slopes down towards the Maribyrnong river. The chosen project site is located close to the banks of the river from where you experience views of the port of Melbourne, Docklands and the Melbourne city skyline to the east. The site's proximity to the centre of Footscray and its increasingly active riverside precinct is short, yet the natural features of the area become increasingly present as one continues north from here. Following the pedestrian trails along the river one encounters the peculiar site of a Buddhist temple, a train line serving suburban and regional trains to and from Melbourne, and a large wild life sanctuary before eventuating at Footscray park, an area well used for leisure and sports by inhabitants of Footscray as well as surrounding suburbs.

An interesting feature of the riverside precinct, and indeed what lead to the discovery of the site itself, is the presence of a railway freight line running directly along the Maribyrnong. As the rail line passes under the overpass at Hopkins street it diverts from the river and continues up in to the forested areas before reaching its end approximately 200 metres from the main train transit lines. While the line would appear intact when witnessing it going through the riverside precinct, the grass overgrowing the northern parts of it reveal its lack of use.





the site in Footscray









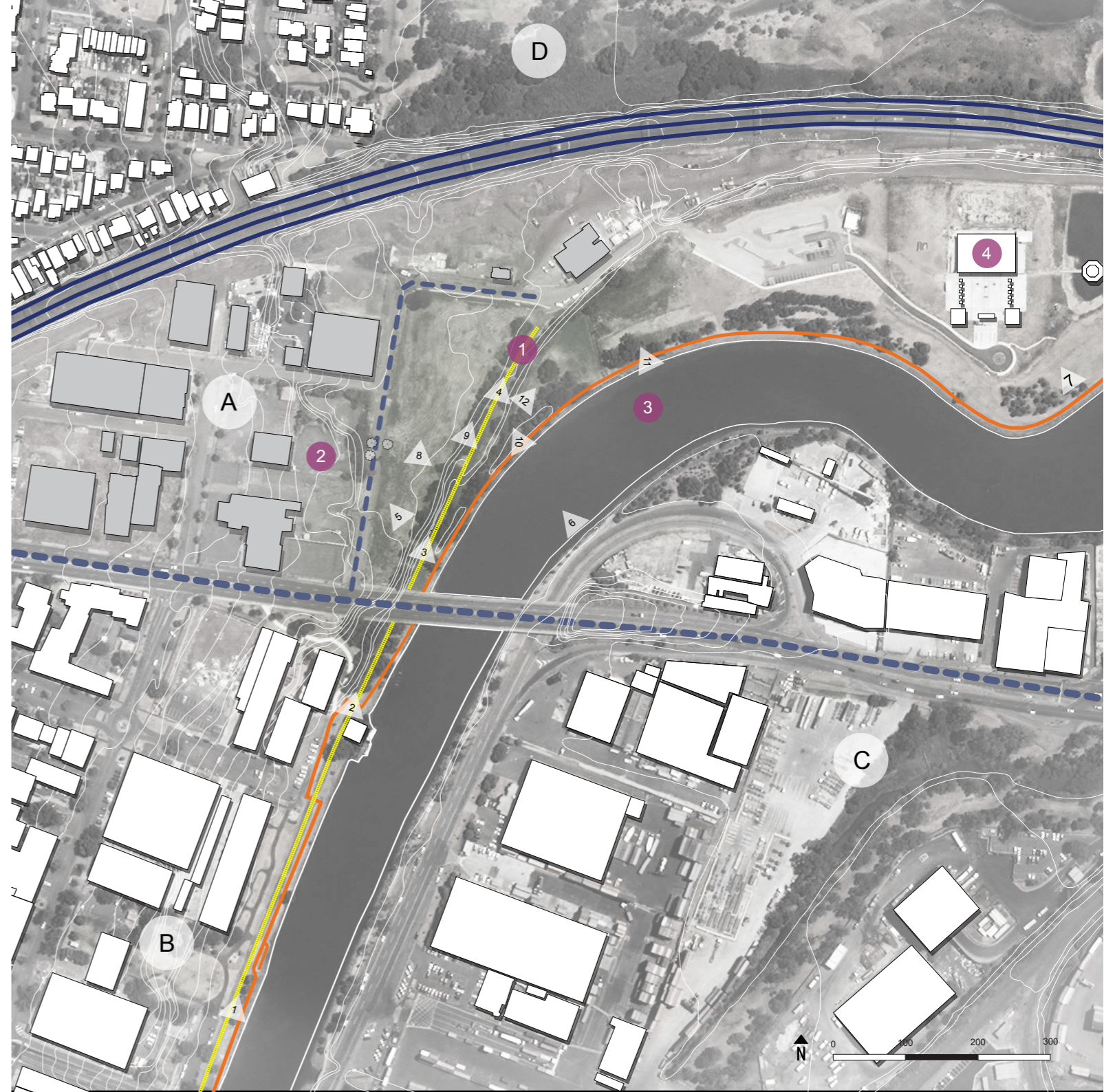
Existing context:

The map on the right points out important elements within the existing site context. Some particular features are outlined in further detail within the following pages.

Context features:

- 1 The railway
- 2 The Joseph Road precinct
- 3 The Maribyrnong river valley
- 4 The Heavenly Queen temple

-  pedestrian and cycle track
-  disused railway
-  railway lines Melbourne-Footscray
-  car access Melbourne-Footscray and site
-  industrial plots to be demolished
-  picture location





context features



image source: Footscray Star Community

### 1: The railway

The railway line that led to the discovery of the chosen site has remained an element of curiosity. Some research reveals that 'The Footscray riverside action group' has demonstrated against the removal of railway line which was previously commenced by VicTrack - the current railway network. According to the Footscray Star Community webpage residents persist that the line has become an integral important part of the public open space. The line which was built over a century ago service industry along the riverfront from Footscray to Yarraville is a remnant of the city's industrial past and is therefore of historical significance (Footscray Star Community, 2014).

Following general opinion, preserving the railway line's memory is therefore something that should be considered and implemented within the project. As the rails have in fact been damaged at many sections it is possibly not its expression and look but rather the line it has created which so perfectly slopes up the landscape that maintains value. Leading from more urban quarters and in to the woods the train line represents a sense of transition and has potential to be used as a pedestrian link between the project and the city's central riverside precinct.







## 2: The Joseph Road precinct

The southwestern portion of the Joseph Road precinct comprises approximately 10 hectares of private landholdings that are currently used for a combination of light industry and commercial uses. The area has functioned as a likely dumping ground for nearby tanneries in the 1940s and '50s and was the site of a glue factory 100 years ago. The precinct's current objective is to develop a vibrant, mixed use area here consisting of a diverse range of higher-density housing development accommodating approximately 4,000 dwellings, a viable mix of commercial, retail, community, entertainment and recreation land uses, implying a wide range of employment opportunities to complement the role of central Footscray.

The vision for the Joseph Road Precinct has developed since the Minister for Planning rezoned the Precinct in 2009 to the Priority Development Zone. While the Precinct is currently drawing interest from major private sector developers little activity has occurred in the past three years and specific knowledge about expected building blocks and footprints are unattainable. For this reason the project bases itself freely upon the most recent visions presented by the city of Maribyrnong.

The Joseph Road Precinct Urban Framework Plan was prepared by the city of Maribyrnong in 2013 to assist the redevelopment of the Joseph Road precinct. According to this framework the city of Maribyrnong hopes to establish:

- A robust urban character with high quality architecture and urban design.
- Pedestrian access and connectivity between the river, nearby public open spaces, Footscray Station, the core retail in Footscray and nearby residential development.
- An active, attractive and accessible riverfront with improved public recreation opportunities and high amenity public spaces.
- An upgraded street and pathway network with improved pedestrian and cyclist connections to areas beyond the precinct.
- The inclusion of community facilities and housing affordability.
- An active street life of cafes, restaurants, parks and plazas and waterway activities.

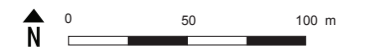
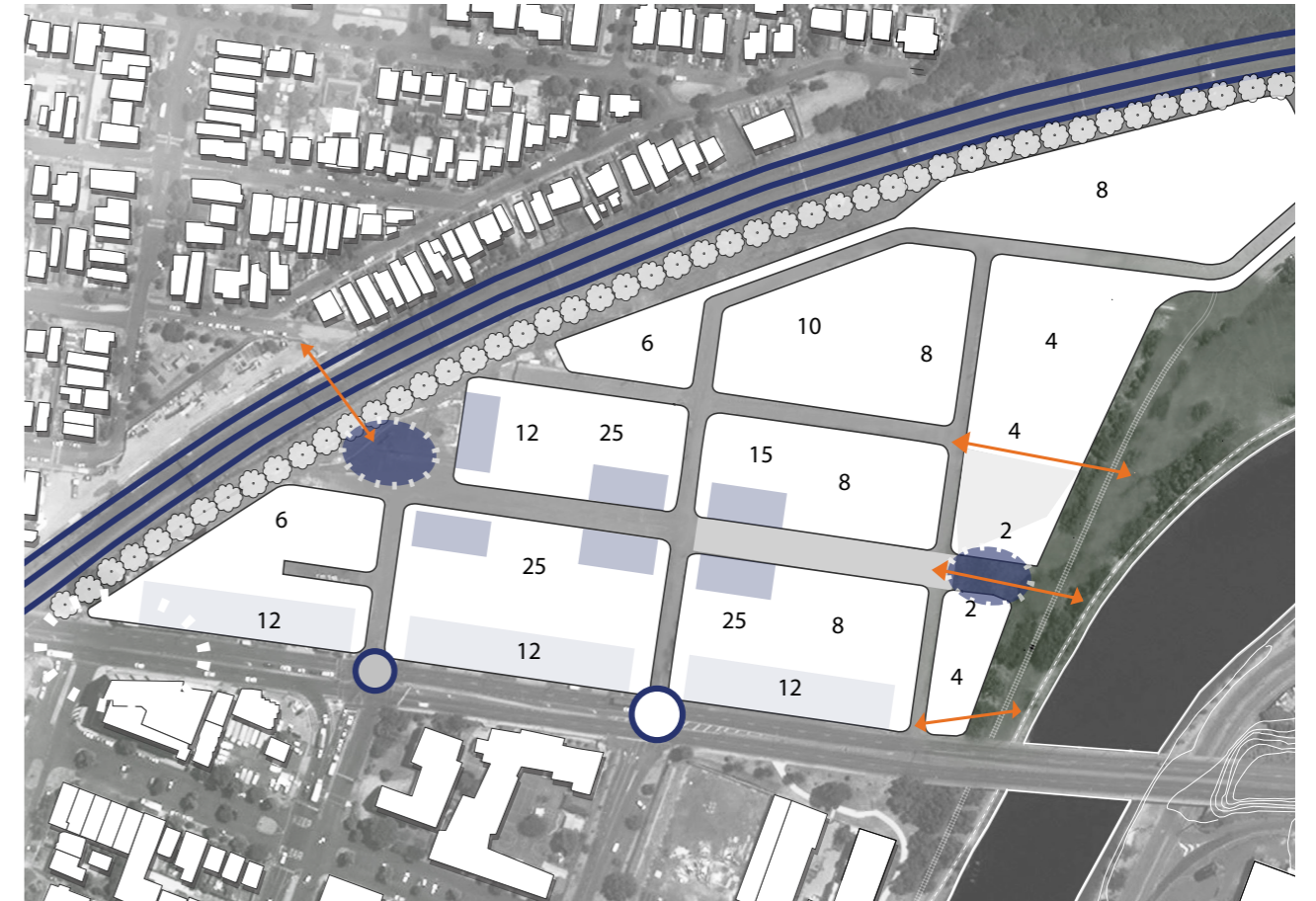






context features

Footscray vision image



Development vision for the Joseph Road precinct

- 2-25 preferred maximum building height
- active frontage (retail, entertainment)
- active frontage (showroom, office)
- pedestrian connection
- proposed new street
- proposed pedestrian plaza
- proposed main entry to precinct
- proposed secondary entry to precinct





### 3: The Maribyrnong river valley

Originally home to the indigenous tribe of the Wurundjeri people, the Maribyrnong river has since the arrival of the Europeans a little over 200 years ago played a major role in the occupation and development of western Victoria. During the second half of the 19th century much of Melbourne's industry was located along the Maribyrnong River and the river became severely degraded. With the closure of many industries since the 1960s and 1970s, however, large areas of riverfront land were opened up to form parkland and residential estates.

The Maribyrnong river valley guidelines, published by the city of Maribyrnong, describe the present Maribyrnong River as one of Melbourne's most treasured and well-used leisure and recreation areas. The council's visions involve maintaining a healthy, vibrant river with quality open space, good walking and cycling trails and sensitive development that protects the Maribyrnong's natural and urban features. Melbourne's early industrial history is especially prominent along the river's length through Footscray. A mix of land uses currently adjoin the river ranging from heavy industry on the eastern bank through to warehousing, medium density housing and the Footscray Community Arts Centre on the western bank. The Maribyrnong river valley guidelines encourage the celebration of industrial heritage as well as the transition from a natural to an urban river at Footscray. The transition along the river is noticeable at the Joseph road precinct; continuing north of the project site the river is dominated by a natural landscape while walking south, one would encounter the soon to develop commercial marina of the south-western river bank.

The city council proposes a high level of activity and use should be accounted for while maintaining a pedestrian scale along the rivers edge in Footscray. Suggestions are made for consideration of riverside recreational offers such as cafés and other facilities to develop wherever they complement the local environment and create a direct relationship with the river.

Some general ambitions for the river include:

- Maintaining good visual accessibility of access links and active frontages to the riverside promenade.
- Enlarging the open space corridor and creating a linked parkland along the river.
- Pedestrian and bicycle priority with limited visitor and service vehicle access to the riverfront.
- Avoiding development backing up on the river.
- Maintain and promote cultural heritage.
- Consolidate intensive recreational or tourism use in activity nodes.
- Protect and enhance the landscape character of the river valley including indigenous vegetation and biodiversity.







#### 4: The Heavenly Queen Temple

The Heavenly Queen temple is the second, and largest, Buddhist temple in Australia devoted to the Chinese seafarers' deity. Financed by donations within the large Vietnamese and Chinese communities in Footscray the temple complex has been a decade in the making. Today the first phase of the build has been completed, which includes the ornately decorated main temple, a 250-tonne stone entrance gate, kitchen and restaurant, all in the traditional Chinese architectural style. A 16-metre gold plated statue of the Heavenly Queen of Mazu, made and shipped from Nanjin, China, has also been erected as a centerpiece on the site. The statue has been named the 'Guardian of Footscray' and enchants train commuters travelling on the nearby railway line running to and from Melbourne.

While the sight of such an elaborate place of Buddhist devotion is rare to spot in Australia, there are more than 1500 temples devoted to the Heavenly Queen worldwide. The Heavenly Queen was allegedly born in Meizhou Island in Fujian Province during the Sung Dynasty in China and became a legend after saving and helping many people as well as saving fishermen with warnings of rough seas. She is said to protect those who travel by boat and is therefore worshiped by the overseas Buddhist migrants that have settled in Footscray.

The second stage of the build on the temple grounds is currently commencing and will include a memorial hall, drum tower, secondary temple, bell tower, lake pavilion and extensive Chinese gardens. All works are expected to complete by 2019 after which the Heavenly Queen society expects hundreds of devotees to visit each week, along with school groups and visitors. President of the society, William Tsang, denotes that it would be a temple for everybody, not just their devotees. "It's not only a temple for the Chinese community. We want to share this ... building with all our fellow Australians. I believe we'll have a lot of tourists from here and overseas" he states. (Herald Sun, 2013)





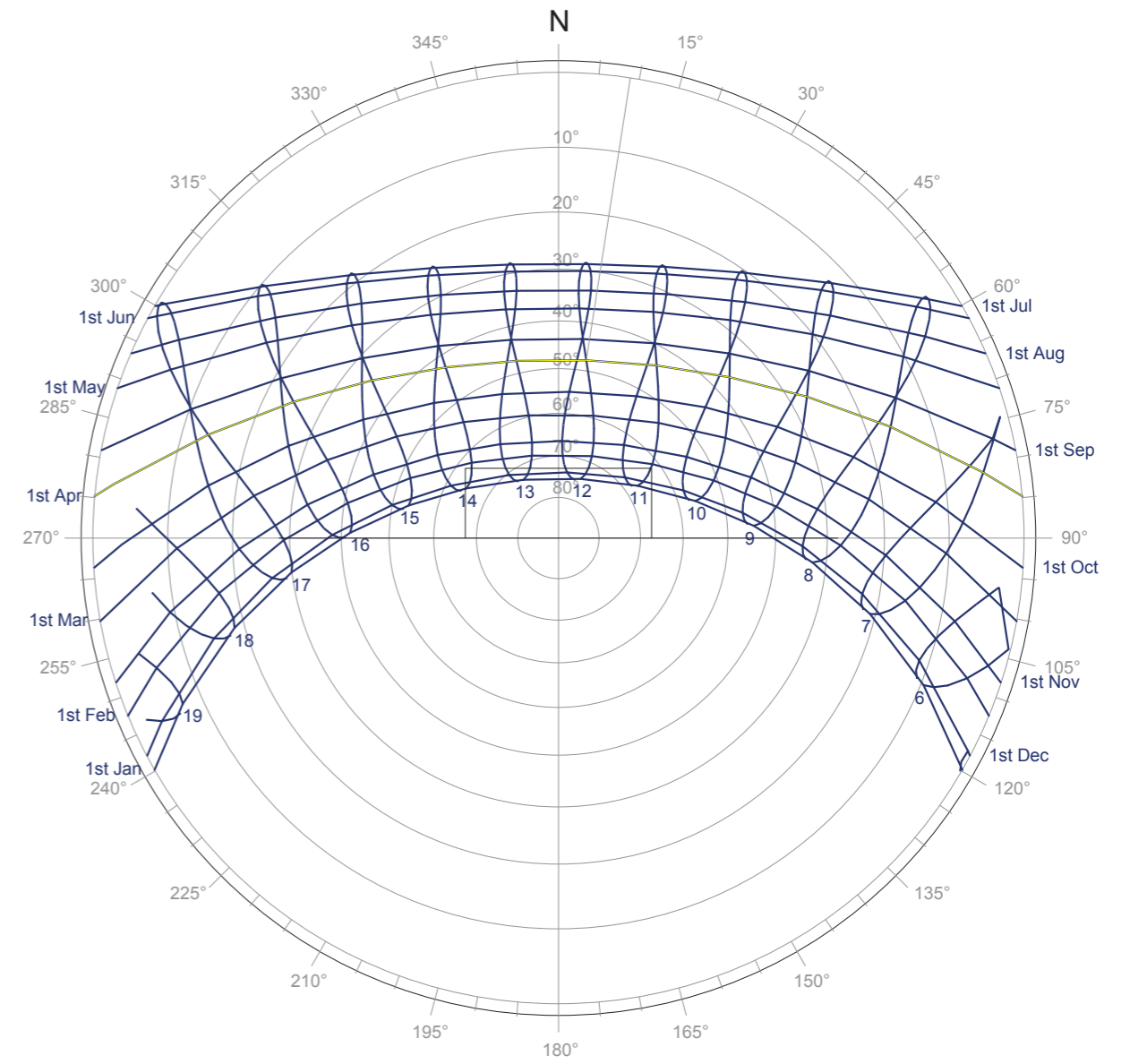
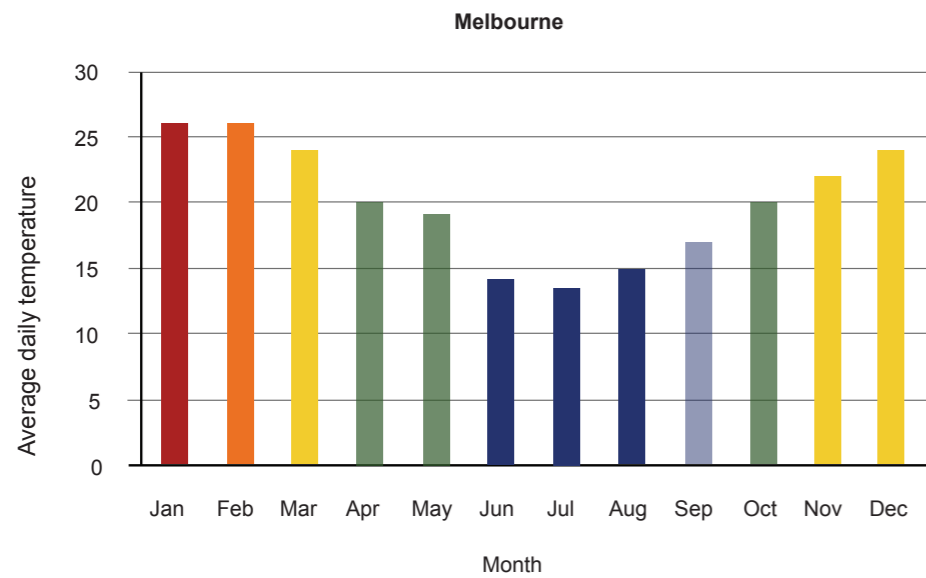
site impressions





climate 

Melbourne enjoys a temperate climate with warm to hot summers; mild, temperate springs and autumns; and cool winters. Temperatures average 25°C in summer and 14°C in winter.





## SOURCES



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- 2 Herald Sun, 'First stage of Heavenly Queen Temple in Footscray now complete', 2013, retrieved 26 February 2014, <<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/leader/west/first-stage-of-heavenly-queen-temple-in-footscray-now-complete/story-fngnmj7-1226645524770>>
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- 4 Maribyrnong City Council, 'Footscray Skyline Study', 2012, retrieved 15 January 2014, <[http://www.maribyrnong.vic.gov.au/Files/FINAL\\_SkylineRevRpt-181212a.pdf](http://www.maribyrnong.vic.gov.au/Files/FINAL_SkylineRevRpt-181212a.pdf)>
- 5 Maribyrnong City Council, 'Footscray Structure Plan', 2014, retrieved 15 January 2014, <[http://www.maribyrnong.vic.gov.au/Files/Adopted\\_Footscray\\_Structure\\_Plan\\_Red.pdf](http://www.maribyrnong.vic.gov.au/Files/Adopted_Footscray_Structure_Plan_Red.pdf)>
- 6 Only Melbourne, 'Melbourne guide: Heavenly Queen Temple', retrieved 26 February 2014, <[http://www.onlymelbourne.com.au/heavenly-queen-temple-mazu#.U7\\_uKah5EXw](http://www.onlymelbourne.com.au/heavenly-queen-temple-mazu#.U7_uKah5EXw)>
- 7 State Government of Victoria: Priority Development Panel, 'Joseph Road Precinct Footscray: Response to request for advice', 2009, retrieved 21 January 2014, <[http://dsewebapps.dse.vic.gov.au/shared/ats.nsf/%28attachmentopen%29/8A19658D4E46C51BCA257A6700163296/\\$File/Joseph+Road+Footscray+PDP+Repopr.pdf?OpenElement](http://dsewebapps.dse.vic.gov.au/shared/ats.nsf/%28attachmentopen%29/8A19658D4E46C51BCA257A6700163296/$File/Joseph+Road+Footscray+PDP+Repopr.pdf?OpenElement)>
- 8 Victoria Department of Planning & Community Development, 2010, 'Maribyrnong River Valley: Design Guidelines', State Government of Victoria.

### Map data:

State Government Victoria <<http://www.land.vic.gov.au/>>  
Bing maps <<http://www.bing.com/maps/>>  
Ecotect