

20. Kilmore Creek Reserve



Kilmore Creek is a long linear reserve that runs through the centre of Kilmore. It includes **Hudson Park**, the **Kilmore Creek Heritage Art Walk** and the **Taylor Reserve** off Victoria Pde. Walking tracks run upstream through old bushland remnants, revegetated grasslands, and parklands among the old streamside trees in the upper reaches of the creek. Nearby, the Kilmore Hospital Reservoir on Anderson St is a small gem with a short walk around the lake and a long history in the town.

Kilmore Creek is on the land of the Taungurung People and is an area of [Aboriginal cultural heritage sensitivity](#). We acknowledge their Elders past and present and emerging, and their care of Country over many millennia. We ask that all people respect this ancient heritage and care for the land we now share.

Directions

The Kilmore Creek walking tracks have been divided into ten sections. The lower sections of Kilmore Creek (sections 1 to 2) are largely inaccessible. Sections 4 to 6 are easily reached just behind Sydney Street through to Rutledge Street. Sections 7 and 8 can be reached by several roads including Green Street but have no walking tracks. Section 9 is accessible along Natures Run and other streets through to Centenary Drive. Section 10 is under development.

Walking Tracks

1. Downstream Northern Highway to Willowmavin Road: Downstream, Kilmore Creek is either in a very narrow easement or on private land and is only accessible at the Sydney Street and Willowmavin Road bridges.

2. Northern Highway to Union Street: The section from the Northern Highway bridge north to Union Street is rough with no tracks. Some parts are on private land, mostly defined by fences. An old quarry is on the edge of basalt flows above the east side of the creek.

3. Union Street to Bourke Street (430m): The Taylor Reserve has a concrete path adjacent to Victoria Street on the east side of the Creek opposite the town centre, with a walk up Mill Street to the shops. Patrick Street on the west side has no footpath. The Kilmore Heritage Art Walk begins here with 2 interpretive panels are of aboriginal history. At Bourke Street, cross the bridge.

4. Bourke Street to Skehan Place (200m): The Kilmore Heritage Art Walk continues with artworks and information boards on history and natural history. The track is a well-formed gravel that runs between the creek and Bowling Club, then along the bottom edge of Hudson Park. Toilets are available up Skehan Place.

4a. Foote Street link: From the end of Skehan Place, a track crosses the creek with a steep climb to Foote Street.



5. Skehan Place to Rutledge Street (600m):

The Heritage Art Walk continues upstream through the Kilmore Leisure Centre carpark and around the model railway. It crosses a bridge with small rail tracks over the creek and continues upstream through Apex Park. This is a much more natural area of Kilmore Creek enhanced with plantings and sculptures between the creek and Ryans Road. The end of this section up to Ryans Road is steep and only a rough roadside connects to the footpaths on Rutledge Street.



5a. Kilmore Hospital Reservoir: Turn left up Rutledge Street/Anderson Street about 90 metres and left again through a gate. A rough track runs over the dam wall and under old pine trees around to a wet forested area at the top of the reservoir. This is a great spot for water birds. The rest of the route on the opposite side of the Reservoir crosses golf tees and greens and it may best to return past the pines.

6. Sam De Gabrielle Memorial Reserve (Rutledge Street upstream): Friends of Kilmore Creek and Mitchell Shire Council have enhanced this bare open grassland with plantings of native trees and shrubs along the creek. Good gravel paths loop across a bridge through the Reserve. Upstream, the track ends at Lumsden Street.

7. Lumsden Street to Green Street: The Parade runs through to Allen Street but the creekline reserve is open slashed grasslands with no tracks and wet underfoot after rain. Hopefully a track through here will link the upper and lower sections of the Kilmore Creek Track.

8. Green Street upstream: Kilmore Creek branches above Green Street. The *official creek* comes in from the western side, crossing the old Heathcote Railway embankment and Tootle Street down to the junction near Green Street. This section has no tracks. The *real Kilmore Creek* comes from the east. This section also has no tracks until Nature's Run.

9. Natures Run to Centenary Drive (850m): A good gravel walking track near the start of Natures Run follows the north bank of the real creek upstream, with a branch across the creek to the north end of Graves Street. After Black Duck Crossing, a concrete path continues upstream to Centenary Drive. There are more paths on the south side of the creek. This section of the creek has many beautiful gnarled old Manna Gums and Swamp Gums, with an understorey enhanced with plantings of native shrubs and ground cover. Hopefully the enhancement work will continue through to Centenary Drive, making this a lovely bushland walk.

9a. Ridgeline Track (350m): Shortly after Black Duck Crossing, a good gravel track branches uphill past two dams/retention basins to Natures Run. Across the road, a steep concrete path continues up a corridor of native plantings to the top of a ridgeline with stands of tall trees including Yellow Box and Long-leafed Box. The fate of this patch of forest is uncertain.

10. Upstream (Centenary Drive to past Quinns Road): Several waterways rise in the paddocks and hills east of Quinns Road and south of McIvors Road. They come together just upstream from Centenary Drive. This area is under development and the fate of the streams and possible walking tracks through to the corridor of ancient trees along Quinns Road and Monument Hill is uncertain.



Sections with concrete paths are accessible to all abilities. Gravel tracks in other sections are well made but may be rough with small washouts in places and some steep places note above. The upstream end of the Kilmore Heritage Art Walk is steep and not accessible to all abilities and steep side tracks are even less accessible.



Picnic facilities are available in Hudson Park (Section 4) and coffee shops are in Sydney Street.



Toilets are available on Skehan Place at the top corner of Hudson Park (Section 4).

Landform and Geology

Kilmore lies between the old *Humevale Siltstones* of Monument Hill and the much more recent basalt flows from a volcanic vent on the south-west edge of Kilmore. Edges of the basalt flows are evident in the steep climbs on roads west from Sydney Street (such as the end of Lancefield Road) and the old quarry north of Union Street.

Kilmore Creek begins as many several small waterways across the broad volcanic plains south and east of Kilmore that flow together into the narrow Kilmore valley. The Creek cuts between the old sediments and newer basalts and then through the basalts north of Union Street where there is an old basalt quarry. The valley has a narrow floodplain of recent sediments.

The stream has incised into these sediments and the banks have eroded to a small extent. Over time and with the placement of weirs and rocks, the creek is settling into a meandering chain-of-ponds creek. Upstream from Centenary Drive, the erosion gullies across the wider plains are much more severe. This area is being subdivided and work will be needed on these eroded gullies.

Most of Kilmore township is in the catchment of Kilmore Creek. As Kilmore grows, the proportion of hard surfaces in the catchment will increase, increasing the amount and power of runoff with risks of flooding and erosion.

Vegetation

Early pictures show that most of the trees in the Kilmore Creek Valley were removed by 1856. Introduced deciduous trees were planted in local parks and, most recently, many native trees and shrubs have been planted along the creekline. The Kilmore Creek corridor is now a mix of cleared grasslands and parklands, areas of revegetation and scattered remnants of bushland with some of the original diversity of species and a few of the original trees.

The areas in and around Kilmore have been broadly mapped as [Herb-rich Foothill Forest](#) but this belies the actual diversity of the area. The land along the creek is [Riparian Forest](#) with some [Swampy Riparian Woodland](#) (Status: Endangered) in the flatter upstream sections of the creek.

The opening up of the canopy and farming of the land means that most of the upstream communities are struggling and need revegetation with a wider diversity of plants.

The slopes adjacent to the Creek were probably Herb-rich Foothill Forest but are now open grasslands and residential developments. The Ridgeline (9a) is a remnant of [Grassy Dry Forest](#) which has probably been selectively logged and then regenerated and replanted. Quinns Road has the most intact of the original Herb-rich Foothill Forest in the Kilmore Creek valley linking with the forests on Monument Hill.

Sections 1 to 4: the creek frontage is squeezed between the creek, roadways and Hudson Park. Council and community plantings have created a dense layer of eucalypts and tall wattles with plantings of shrubs and Common Tussock-grass stabilising the banks.

Section 5: the land upstream from Skehan Place to Rutledge Street between the creek and Ryans Road is in the most natural condition of the creekline. Manna Gums, Narrow-leaved and Broad-leaved Peppermint and Backwoods provide shading over areas of native grassland with wildflowers in Spring.

Section 6: Sam DeGabrielle Reserve was open mowed grasslands but patches along the creek were planted by the Council and community groups from the early 2000s. Natural regeneration is also happening in un-mowed areas on the steep banks, rock works and in an old quarry.

Sections 7 and 8: upstream from the plantings in the Sam De Gabrielle Reserve are sections of degraded and uncared for grasslands with a few trees along the creek (and no track).



Section 9: from the bridge at the start of Natures Run through to Centenary Drive, the creekline meanders have many ancient Messmates, Swamp Gums and Manna Gums, some healthy, some in poor condition. Plantings of trees and understorey will hopefully mature into a healthier riparian woodland that will protect the old trees.

Section 9a: Ridgeline Track climbs to a diverse forest with Mugga Ironbark, Long-leaved Box and Yellow Box, mostly older regrowth. The area has an interesting native understorey and ground

layers. The future of this patch of forest is uncertain but it is becoming an island of bush surrounded by residential development.

Section 10: the Kilmore South East Development Area is currently open grasslands with a few lines of old trees along water courses to the north and tiny remnant of [Swampy Riparian Woodland](#) with Swamp Gums near Quinns Road. Quinns Road has significant roadside vegetation including many large old trees and a diverse if weedy understorey. It provides a habitat link across the open farmlands to Monument Hill.

As well as threatened ecosystems, up to eight threatened species may also occur along the corridor, although this is unlikely in the highly modified environment. Yarra Gum (*Eucalyptus yarraensis*) is potentially present in the vicinity of Kilmore Creek.

Plant lists are in preparation.

Wildlife

Kilmore Creek and its environs is a wonderful linear corridor running through the town, with links to Quins Road and Monument Hill. Care of the old trees and more plantings are needed to enrich this corridor and maintain the health of the creek.

Despite its proximity to the township of Kilmore, a wide variety of animals have been seen along the Kilmore Creek corridor. Platypus and Rakali (Water Rat), several wetland birds, frogs, yabbies and shrimps have all been listed indicating that the creek is in reasonably good condition at least in some sections. Common Long-necked Tortoises are likely to occur along the creek. Care of water quality is a must if these species are to survive.

Beside the creek, mammals listed include Echidnas, Grey Kangaroos and Brush-tailed Possums and a few oddballs such as introduced ferrets! Over 70 birds have been recorded from small bush birds to wetland birds to eagles, kites and falcons, reflecting the diversity of habitats along the creek. Adding to the lists are a very wide diversity of insects.

Species lists are in preparation.

Aboriginal history

The Streamside Reserve is on the land of the Taungurung people. The hills, valleys and waterways were once the exclusive domain of the *nira balug*, one of the nine clans of the Taungurung people. The Aboriginal name for Kilmore Creek was *mumillinuck*.

“Kilmore Creek” is a corridor of [Aboriginal cultural heritage sensitivity](#) but paradoxically this does not include the “real” creekline running east adjacent to Nature’s Run.

Sadly, a common reflection among early settlers from the 1840s was how fast the Aboriginal people succumbed after white occupation (Tucker 1988, p22).

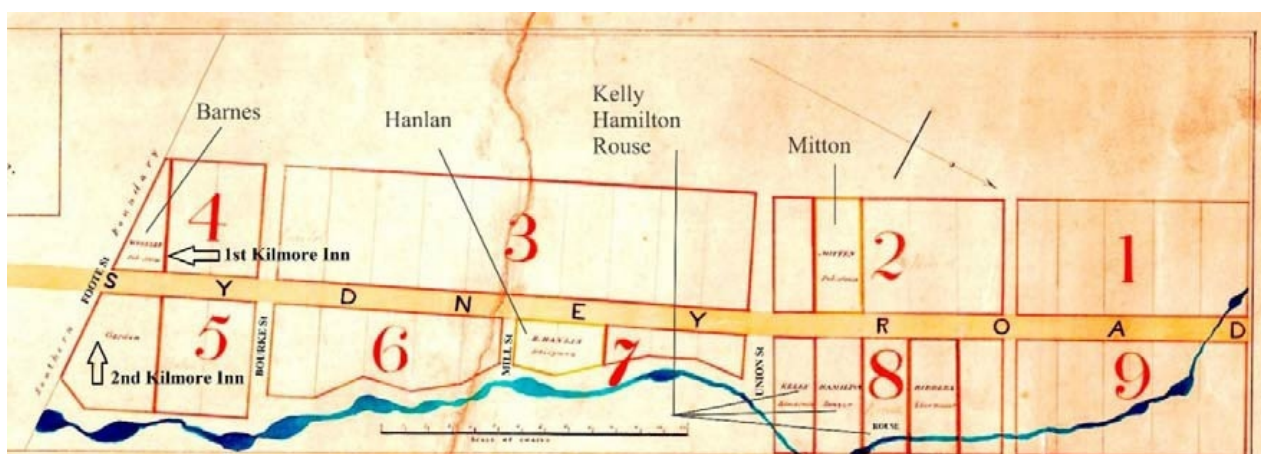
History after colonisation

John Batman arrived in Port Phillip in June 1835 and was followed north by more “squatters” and thousands of sheep and cattle that extended north into the hills behind Wallan. Overlanders also started to arrive from New South Wales with their sheep and cattle in January 1837. Governor Bourke in Sydney moved quickly to allow settlers to rent “Crown land” in the Port Phillip area from June 1837.

By 1839, Sydney Road was carrying a “gigantic inland commerce between the Colonies of New South Wales and Australia Felix.” “Kilmore Creek was a natural stopping place” with “well-known water holes” where the water was spring fed, permanent and ideal for travellers.

In 1841, nine “Special Surveys” – areas of 8 square miles – were set up for sale across Victoria. William Rutledge purchased one of these “Surveys” that extended north from Foote Street/Lancefield Road to Boundary Road/Willowmavin Road between East Street/Kellys Lane and Kurkuruc Creek. He subdivided the land into small tenant farms (up to 62 acres) and town lots in the township he named Kilmore. The surrounding country was larger holdings (stations occupied by “squatters”) and some small tenant farms.

The first Kilmore Inn was established in 1841 and the hamlet of Kilmore established by 1843. The map shows that the creek below the town in 1848 was through public, possibly common land, but enters private land downstream from Union Street (Kilmore Estate Map 1848, published in *Kilmore Connections* Sept. 2023). Upstream from Foote Street, the official Kilmore Creek is on Crown land. The real Kilmore Creek to the east ran through private land until recently.



Kilmore Creek was originally “a beautiful valley clothed in thick sward of grass over which winter floods glided. It was not until the arrival of stock that the creek began to form” (McNab 1908, in Knight and Thom, pp3-5). Kilmore Creek in the town was probably used for grazing and watering stock. The Crown land upstream was used by stock until quite recently.

From the early 1840s many businesses started up including flour mills, tanneries, cooperages, breweries and other industries, and they began discharging waste into the creek. More recently, milk and bacon factories were particularly noted for polluting the creek into at least the 1940s. At the same time, several small market gardens were set up on the creek flats, although they may have preferred to use cleaner bore water.

In 1860, old photos show a large hotel and adjoining gardens and a rotunda sloping to the creek. The hotel was demolished and Moore Park (later Hudson Park) was established on the site in 1912.

Works along the waterway have transformed Kilmore Creek back towards a healthier waterway. Weirs were constructed (possibly in the 1960s) and rocks were placed to control erosion. Time and revegetation through the town has enhanced the creekline and protected the bed and banks of the creek. Walking tracks have changed how the creek is now used by people.

The Kilmore Structure Plan 2016 identified the value of the Kilmore Creek corridor and the need to prepare a Landscape Master Plan. The [Kilmore Creek Precinct Landscape Master Plan](#) was produced in 2021.

During the subdivision of private land along Nature's Run since 2000, land along the "real" Kilmore Creek was reserved as open space with a network of pathways. The Kilmore South East Development Area further upstream will hopefully include natural corridors following several branches of Kilmore Creek up to the bushland corridor along Quinns Road.

Management

This Reserve Note only refers to the public and publicly accessible land along the Kilmore Creek corridor. Most of this land is managed by Council, with a few other parts being privately owned or managed directly by the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action. Works on the waterway are managed by Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority.

Land use and the networks of walking tracks are evolving as Kilmore grows. The [Kilmore Creek Landscape Masterplan](#) sets out a vision for the waterway including future management responsibilities and walking tracks that fill in the gaps north of Union Street and along both upstream branches of Kilmore Creek from Green Street. Proposals for the [Wallan to Heathcote Rail Trail](#) include a diversion from Willowmavin Road through the town along the creekline corridor to the Northern Highway.

The Crown land sections of the creekline are included in the [Taungurung Recognition and Settlement Agreement](#). Most of Kilmore Creek is a corridor of [Aboriginal cultural heritage sensitivity](#).

Further information

Mitchell Shire Council:

Hudson Park: <https://www.mitchellshire.vic.gov.au/our-region/parks-and-playgrounds/hudson-park>

Heritage Art Walk: <https://www.mitchellshire.vic.gov.au/points-of-interest/kilmore-creek-heritage-art-walk> links to walking trail map at <https://walkingmaps.com.au/walk/5544> between Union Street and Lumsden Street. **The walking tracks now continue upstream to**

View of Kilmore Hospital <https://www.mitchellshire.vic.gov.au/points-of-interest/kilmore-hospital>

Taylor Reserve: <https://www.mitchellshire.vic.gov.au/our-region/parks-and-playgrounds/taylor-reserve>. This Park is between Victoria Parade and Kilmore Creek from Union Street to Bourke Street (Section 3 above).

Kilmore Creek Landscape Masterplan 2021 at <https://engagingmitchellshire.com/kilmore-creek-masterplan>.

Wallan to Heathcote Rail Trail Feasibility Study at <https://engagingmitchellshire.com/wallan-to-heathcote-rail-trail>.

Kilmore Historical Society at <http://www.kilmorehistory.info/>. A rich source of information on local history. Kilmore Estate Map 1848 is from State Library of NSW, *A plan of the Estate of Kilmore, 1848*, M3 823.1/1848, published in *Kilmore Connection* September 2023.

Maya V. Tucker (1988). *Kilmore on the Sydney Road*. Shire of Kilmore.

Heather Knight and Graeme Thom editors (2007). *Kilmore. Those that came before*. Kilmore Historical Society.

Taungurung Land and Water Council at <https://taungurung.com.au>. Taungurung Recognition and Settlement Agreement at <https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/your-rights/native-title/taungurung-recognition-and-settlement-agreement>

Friends of Bendigo-Kilmore Rail Trail: proposed Heathcote to Wallan Rail Trail: <https://bendigokilmorerailtrail.com/possible-extension>

Goulburn Broken CMA Revegetation Guide: information on different ecological vegetation communities, plant communities and plants in the Sugarloaf zone at <https://www.gbcma.vic.gov.au/revegetation/zones/sugarloaf>

Acknowledgements

This Reserve Note was prepared by BEAM Mitchell Environment Group. Thanks to Mitchell Shire Council and Kilmore Historical Society for their assistance and support.

Author: Peter Mitchell

Version: 1 19 May 2024

These notes are a work in progress. If you have any comments or additional information on the nature and ecological history of Kilmore Creek, please contact us at <https://www.beam.org.au/contact>,



Kilmore Creek Reserves



 Kilmore Creek reserves	 Walking tracks concrete	 Kilmore Creek sections
 Creeks and gullies (approx)	 Walking tracks gravel	
 Roads	 Walking tracks steep	

