

3. New Crossing Place, Seymour



The Goulburn River runs along the southern and western sides of the Seymour. Parklands on the Seymour side of the river extend from the Emily Street bridge downstream to Whiteheads Creek. The park includes floodplains and old river courses and billabongs, with ancient redgums and forest patches containing Koalas, many possums and gliders, bats, wallabies and a diversity of bird life. The New Crossing Place became the main crossing on the river from the 1830s. An all-abilities walking track runs through the park, and is accessible from several roads off Emily St.

This park is on the land of the Taungurung People, and the lands along the Goulburn River and its tributaries are areas 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 Reserve, Goulburn River and the Goulburn River Trail have several access points off Emily Street with car parking:

Old Hume Highway to Old Goulburn River Bridge

Manners Street to Lions Park and boat ramp

Robert Street to Rotary Park

Bolton Street to Reserve downstream to Whiteheads Creek

Walking Tracks

The Goulburn River Trail is a lovely long walk following the ancient redgums and forest patches along the Goulburn River from the Emily Street/Tooborac Road bridge downstream to the Whiteheads Creek junction. The Trail is divided into sections marked with points on the map and walking distances below:

Upstream from Old Highway Bridge on Old Hume Highway to Tooborac Road bridge (points 2 to 1 on map): 1380m. This section of the track is on the floodplain of the Goulburn River. It crosses an old river course with some magnificent Red Gums just upstream from the bridge. Further upstream, the track passes rapids formed by a band of ancient hard rocks (possibly metamorphic rock). It is a there-and-back walk from the Old Hume Highway; there is no access at the bridge end.



Old Highway Bridge to Boat Ramp in Lions Park at the end of Manners Street (points 2 to 3): 1050m. This section of the track is also on the river floodplain, with some old billabongs and many grand old riverbank trees. Plantings over the past 25 years create an avenue through to an original forested area and the boat ramp at Lions Park. The back of Lions Park rises onto the older and higher terraces of *Shepparton Formation* (see Landform and Geology below). A track through Lions park leads up to the town and toilets.

Boat Ramp to Robert Street/Rotary Park (points 3 to 4): 640m. The track passes an island created by loop of the river at Lions Park, enters another small forested area and crosses some other recent meanders of the river. The track then rises onto the higher terraces at Rotary Park. Recent erosion of the higher terraces associated with historical changes in the river course can be seen at the end of Robert Street.

Hanna Street (points 4 to 5): 250m beside the road with one huge Red Gum.

Bolton Street to Whiteheads Creek ((points 5 to 6): 430m. The track remains on the higher terraces through to the junction with Whiteheads Creek. The adjoining paddocks have some fine old trees.

	Some tracks are sealed but most are gravel. The tracks are generally flat and level and suitable for all abilities. The track down the slope from toilets in Manners Street to Lions Park is too steep without assistance. The fishing platform at the boat ramp is accessible, but the second at the end of Manners Street (behind the large red gum) is not. The crossing over an old river course behind Royal Hotel may require assistance. The track along Hannah Street is rough and starts with a road crossing and curbing to be crossed or avoided.
	Seats are available along the walking trail. Picnic tables and barbecues are in the mowed grasslands of Lions Park and Rotary Park.
	Toilets are on Manners Street behind Lion Parks, in Apex Park on the junction of Emily, Tallarook and High Streets near the Seymour Information Centre, and in Kings Park.

Landform and Geology

The Goulburn River has cut wide valleys through the hills of ancient sedimentary rocks downstream from Trawool. A band of ancient hard rock is still visible as rapids upstream from the old bridge (probably part of the metamorphic rocks across Manse Hill). In the past, the river was very active, and carried gravels from the mountains including the distinctive *White Hills Gravels* (now only visible on a few rises around Seymour but abundant at Mangalore NCR) and later the clays, silts and gravels known as the *Shepparton Formation*. This formation covered the floors of the Goulburn Valley and its tributaries over the past 4-5 million years. More recently, the Goulburn River and tributaries have cut new courses and floodplains through the *Shepparton Formation*. Seymour is built on the higher terraces of the *Shepparton Formation* and surrounding hills.

The river is now much slower moving and generally carries clay and silts rather than heavier gravels. The Aboriginal occupants of the land and earlier Europeans would have seen river flows that fluctuated widely with the seasons with low levels in drier summers. Current river flows are more regulated, with high and cold flows coming out of Eildon Reservoir during warmer months to carry irrigation water downstream.

This regulation has not stopped the occasional floods through Seymour. Heavy rains will cause flooding of the Goulburn River onto the higher terraces with erosion into the *Shepparton Formation*. An early survey of Seymour in 1843 shows the river looping around the back of Lions Park. Since then, the river has changed course and now runs straight through to the end of Robert Street

where it is cutting into the *Shepparton Formation*. Similar changes can be seen in maps of Goulburn Park (NT04) and Horseshoe Lagoon (NT07).

Construction of the causeway and bridge around 1966 blocked the floodplain and focused the energy of floods, leading to some erosion of the riverbank downstream opposite Sugarloaf Creek. Wooden groynes near the end of Robert Street, rock groynes opposite Sugarloaf Creek and extensive use of basalt boulders are some of the works used to control erosion of the river banks from the 1950s.

Whiteheads Creek has a small catchment but with steep slopes (part of the metamorphic aureole around the granite country) and a bottleneck caused by a low hill near Oak Street in Seymour. Heavy rain in this landscape can cause flash flooding through the town.

Vegetation

Before Europeans, the floodplains and terraces were all woodland with large old Red Gums, a variety of shrubs and tussocks of grasses and sedges. The floodplains have sandy soils with [Floodplain Riparian Woodlands and Wetlands](#) along the river and [Creekline Grassy Woodland](#) along Whiteheads Creek. The higher terraces are on heavier soils of [Plains Grassy Woodland](#). All these communities are Endangered due to the clearing of the rich plains and river country.

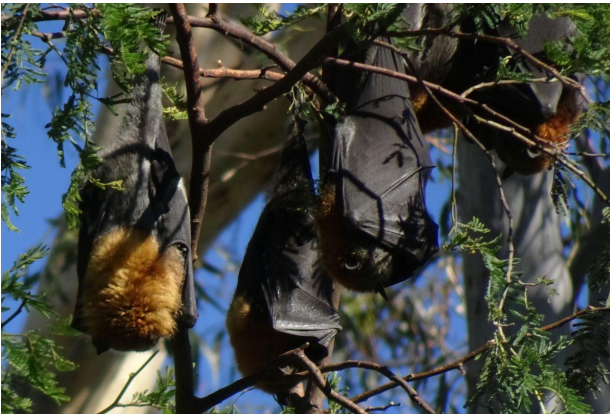
Large old Red Gums are a big feature of the Park. Clearing of the river floodplain and terraces has meant that most of these trees are restricted to the very edges of the riverbank, with many overhanging the river. Silver Wattles and River Bottlebrush also grow here. The Park has two small areas of more forested land upstream and downstream from Lions Park, with more Silver Wattles, Tree Violets and Kangaroo Apples. Some magnificent paddock trees are also visible from the walking tracks, particularly the northern section to Whiteheads Creek.

Plantings by the Council and volunteers over the past 25 years have created patches of new native bushland back from the riverbank. It will take more than 150 years for these younger trees to mature and provide good habitat for wildlife. The plantings are a great investment for future generations.

Wildlife

The Goulburn River and its tributaries support a range of native fish (including Golden Perch, Silver Perch, Murray Cod, Trout Cod, Macquarie Perch, Freshwater Catfish), crayfish, turtles, Platypus and Rakali (Water Rats). Aquatic vegetation, scour holes and dead trees that fall into the river provide a surface for waterbugs and high-quality habitat for adult and juvenile fish and other animals. River Red Gums shade the river. Leaves that fall from the trees provide the carbon that supports aquatic food webs,

The old riverbank trees with their spreading branches and hollows also provide roosts, shelter and food for mammals including Koalas, Brush-tailed and Ring-tailed Possums, and Sugar Gliders and Squirrel Gliders (endangered) that move along the tree corridor and feed on the Silver Wattles in winter. In summer, Little Red and Grey-headed Flying Foxes often move into trees on the riverbank, emerging at dusk sometimes in big numbers. They are disturbed by walkers so their roosts should be avoided. Black Wallabies find harbour in the small forest patches.



Many birds use the waterways, riverbanks and riverbank trees, including ducks and moorhens, egrets, herons, cormorants and Azure Kingfishers, as well as a variety of more terrestrial species including Sacred Kingfishers, Dollarbirds, Little Friarbirds and many others that move here to breed over Spring and Summer. Barking Owls are an endangered species that use large tree hollows in quiet parts of the river but are likely to hunt around Seymour.

Several frogs and reptiles benefit from shallow vegetated habitats at the edge of the river channel and in adjacent wetlands. In early summer, swarms of cicadas emerge onto the trees to join all the many other insects and spiders living on the branches and leaves.

The riverbank in Seymour is part of a long corridor of waterways extending from the mountain forests to the Murray. Many of the species of fish, birds and mammals that live along the Goulburn River corridor are endangered in Victoria and Australia. For this reason, protection and plantings along this riverine habitat is important for their survival into the future.

Aboriginal history

[The Taungurung First Nation people](#) are the Traditional Owners of a large part of central Victoria and “lived on this Country for more than a thousand generations. The Taungurung people are many clans sharing one language and deep spiritual connection with Country.”

These days we can only try to imagine the lives of Aboriginal people along the river and among the ancient Red Gum woodlands. Life would have been rich, peaceful and quiet, with swimming holes and sandy beaches and an abundance of food from the woodlands, swamps and river. Canoe trees were recorded along the river. In 2015, a canoe scar tree was created by Taungurung people in a large old redgum near the boat ramp in New Crossing Place – see [video](#).

The land along the Goulburn River and its tributaries are listed as areas of [Aboriginal cultural heritage sensitivity](#).

Under the 2018 [Taungurung Recognition and Settlement Agreement](#), the [Natural Resource Agreement](#) particularly recognises the special association Taungurung people have with the

Goulburn River and the [Land Use Activity Agreement](#) provides the Taungurung with a say in the use and management of the land.

History after colonisation

Hume and Hovell crossed the Goulburn River close to Camp Hill near Tallarook in 1824 and this was later proposed as the main route across the river. Major Mitchell's expedition crossed the river near Tahbilk in October 1836 and this became the first crossing place for the route from Melbourne to Sydney (the "Old Crossing Place"). A shorter route crossing the Goulburn near the junction with Sugarloaf Creek was reported in 1837 and became the "New Crossing Place".

By 1839 a punt was operating at the end of a track that became Manners Street, with a ford around the bend upstream. Hotels either side of the river operated punts until the government moved the punt to where the old bridge now stands.



The bridge on the Old Hume Highway was originally built in 1862, replaced in 1892, and strengthened in the Second World War to carry heavy equipment. In 1966 the current causeway and bridges were built over the Goulburn River and some of the old river channels. The construction of the Hume Freeway bypass of Avenel and Seymour began in 1977 and was opened in 1982. The old bridge was closed to traffic in 1987. This bridge is gradually falling apart despite efforts to protect it.

Stories from the 1920s tell of a swimming in an old river channel to an island behind the Royal Hotel which has now silted up, and a constructed swimming area with towers and slides behind the Prince of Wales. River groynes were built 1950s/60s.

Stories from the early 1920s also talk of "Chinamen's Gardens" with produce sold around town. The Gardens were on the floodplains near Goulburn Park (now the quarry) and near the Old Hume Highway (the site of the winery and current commercial vegetable gardens).

The New Crossing River Reserve was opened by the Lands Department in 1982.

Management

The Reserve is Crown land managed by Mitchell Shire Council. The waterway is managed by the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority.

The Goulburn River is a Heritage River under the Heritage River Act 1992, as recommended by the Land Conservation Council in 1994. The Act provides for the protection of environmental,

Traditional Owner, recreation, cultural and economic values, and prescribes how the river is to be managed.

The Crown land in the park is included in the [Taungurung Recognition and Settlement Agreement](#) that recognises the special association Taungurung people have with the Goulburn River. The [Land Use Activity Agreement](#) provides the Taungurung people with a say in its use and management.

Further information

Mitchell Shire website has links to places of interest in New Crossing Place:

<https://www.mitchellshire.vic.gov.au/our-region/parks-and-playgrounds/new-crossing-place-lions-park-seymour> only covers part of the New Crossing Place

<https://www.mitchellshire.vic.gov.au/our-region/parks-and-playgrounds/rotary-park-seymour>

<https://www.mitchellshire.vic.gov.au/points-of-interest/goulburn-river-trail> link to Walking Map at <https://walkingmaps.com.au/walk/5555>

<https://www.mitchellshire.vic.gov.au/points-of-interest/old-goulburn-river-bridge>

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>

Land Conservation Council <https://www.veac.vic.gov.au/digital-archive/investigation/melbourne-area-district-2-review>.

Victorian Environmental Water Holder. <https://www.vewh.vic.gov.au/rivers-and-wetlands/northern-region/goulburn-river>. Information on the values of the river and on environmental flows.

Goulburn Broken CMA Waterways Management.

<https://www.gbcma.vic.gov.au/our-region/waterway-floodplain-management/waterways>.

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 for their assistance and support. Information was obtained from a report to Council by Peter Mitchell. Seymour Historical Society assisted with the history section.

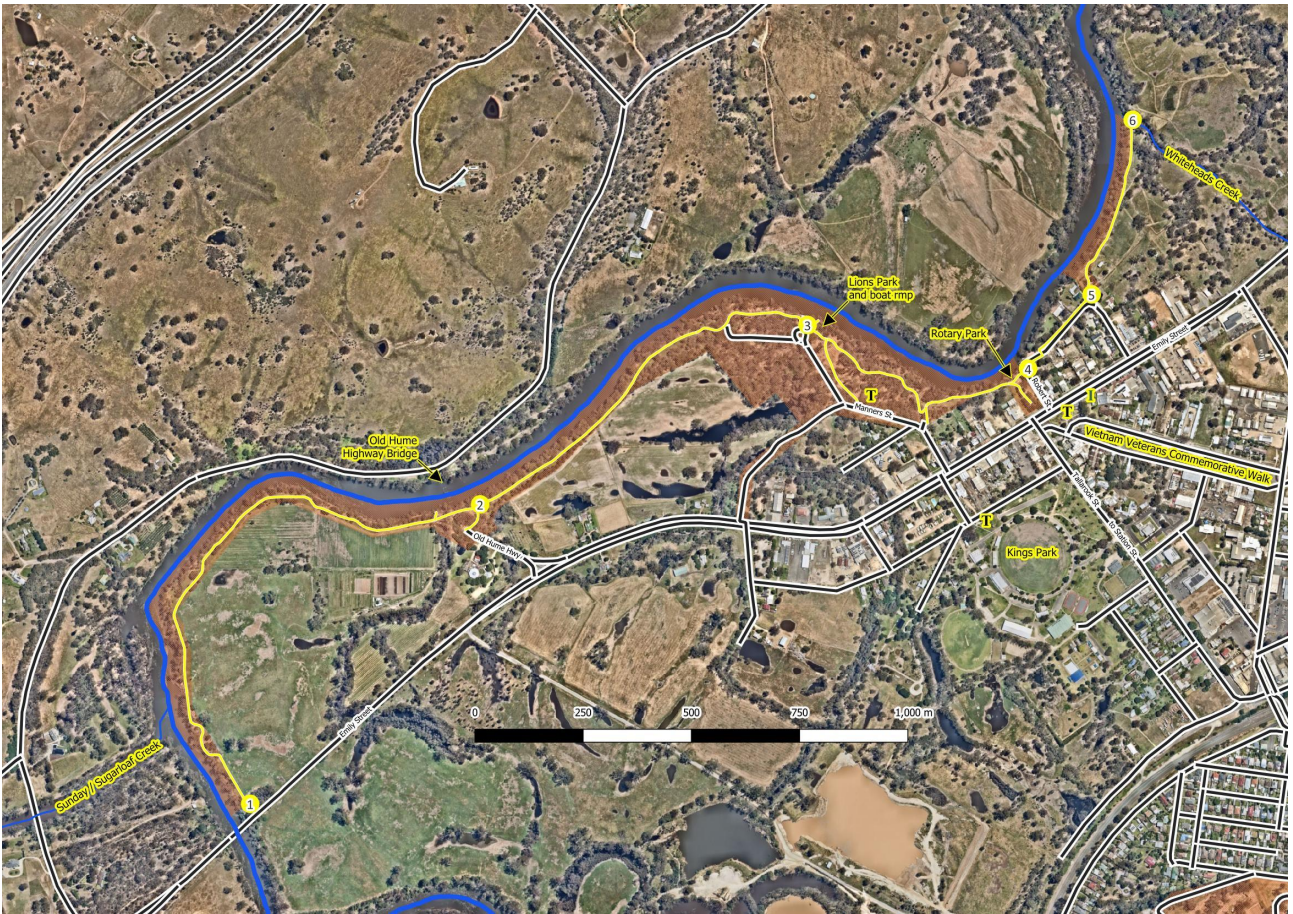
Author: Peter Mitchell

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 the Goulburn River waterfronts in Seymour, please contact us at <https://www.beam.org.au/contact>.



New Crossing Place in Seymour



	New Crossing Place		Goulburn River		Other waterways		Information
	Roads		Walking tracks		Track numbers		Toilets

