

Maribyrnong River

Visitors Guide

The Maribyrnong River, which rises on the northern slopes of the Macedon Ranges and joins the Yarra near Port Phillip. Aboriginal tribes frequented its banks for thousands of years. It was a vital part of Melbourne's industrial development and now has strong links with the city's vibrant multicultural communities and great importance for recreation. The river was known as the Saltwater before its present name, said to come from Aboriginal words meaning "I can hear a ringtail possum", came into common usage early in the 20th century.

Things to see and do

Many people will encounter the Maribyrnong at Keilor where it almost circles Horseshoe Bend Farm and rings the main Brimbank Park. This stretch offers good canoeing, and there are three ponding points for fishing with a hand net. The park has barbecues, picnic tables and shelters. A shared cycle/walking path links the park to Footscray.

Very little remains of the Riverview Teagardens near Canning Reserve at Cordite Avenue. Today, there is a boat landing at Canning Reserve. An unspoilt section of the river takes a wide sweep around Commonwealth land.

Parklands on either side of the river include Maribyrnong Park and Fairbairn Park, where there are boat landings and picnic facilities. Pipemakers Park, reached from the river, is the site of a former meat canning works and later a pipe factory, and now the location of the Living Museum of the West.

The river flows past Footscray Park with Scotchman's Hill offering views of Flemington Racecourse.

Just downstream from Dynon Road Bridge you can board a pleasure boat for a leisurely trip up the river. From here on the river passes through the industrial area of Footscray with historic jetties and bridges before it joins the Yarra at Fishermans Bend.

Fishing is popular from jetties and fishing platforms alongside parks and reserves on either side of the river.

Popular events held along the Maribyrnong River include the Moonee Valley Festival, the Henley Rowing Regattas and the world famous Melbourne Cup.

How to get there

The Maribyrnong River Trail mainly follows the river bank, sometimes both banks, with occasional links along quiet side streets. It runs 23 km from Footscray to Brimbank Park.

The river can be accessed from Footscray Park, near Ballarat Road; Fairbairn Park at Newsom Street; and Riverside Park at the Boulevard.

For the southern section, enter parkland off Buckley Street via either Lily Street or Riviera Road, at Canning Reserve (Old Canning Street) or Grimes Flat, White Street or Rhonda Street.

On the west bank, access the river from Pipemakers Park, Van Ness Avenue or Cranwell Park Reserve, Cranwell Street.

Facilities

The Maribyrnong Valley is a popular recreational corridor. Bicycle tracks follow its banks, crossing the river via pedestrian bridges at several points.

Boat landings are at:

- Henderson House Landing, Footscray
- Footscray Wharf
- Lynch's Bridge Jetty, Kensington



- Flemington Racecourse Jetty, Flemington
- Fairbairn Park Jetty, Ascot Vale
- Maribyrnong Park Landing, Moonee Ponds
- Henley Landing, Moonee Ponds
- Footscray Park Jetty, Footscray
- Canning Reserve, Avondale Heights
- · Pipemakers Park, Maidstone

Fishing platforms are at::

- Newell's Paddock Reserve
- Footscray Park and Maribyrnong Boulevarde
- Fairbairn Park, Maribyrnong Park, Aberfeldie Park
- Riverside Park, Footscray
- · Pipemakers Park, Maribyrnong
- Brimbank Park

Heritage

Some of Australia's most important Aboriginal archaeological sites are located in the Maribyrnong River Valley. In 1940, a 15,000 year old Aboriginal skull was found during excavation of a sand pit, on Dry Creek near the Maribyrnong River in Keilor. Evidence of campsites which formed part of one of the oldest human habitations in Australia.

Charles Grimes and James Fleming surveyed the river in 1803. Later, the Gold Rush brought an influx of people to Melbourne with and industries like meatworks and gun powder factories developed along the river causing major pollution.

Commercial passenger boats began operating along the Maribyrnong in 1896, and a Wine Hall, was established near the river in Essendon.

Nearby, the Riverview Teagardens began operation in 1909. The gardens and associated pleasure cruises were very popular in the 1920s and 30s, but closed during the war and did not regain their popularity afterwards.

The Living Museum of the West at Pipemakers Park has a great deal of pictorial and printed information on the history of the Maribyrnong River Valley.

Vegetation

Parks like Footscray Park, Maribyrnong Park and nearby reserves have been planted with exotic trees, while at Brimbank Park native vegetation can be seen along the river. Upstream, the rich river flats on the east bank were used for market gardening until 1983.

Caring for the river

Parks Victoria is committed to keeping Victoria's rivers and bays clean. Litter traps have been installed along the Maribyrnong River to prevent litter entering the river from stormwater drains and ending up in Port Phillip Bay.

- If you're on the water, don't exceed the 5 knot (9km/h) speed limit and keep a careful watch for other river users.
- Remember that all native plants and animals are protected by law.
- Swimming is not permitted along the Maribyrnong.
- Please take all rubbish away with you, and if possible recycle it.
- Jumping or diving from bridges or trees is not permitted.

Further information

For more information on the Maribyrnong River, call the Parks Victoria Information Centre on 13 1963.

