

The Merri Creek Trail:

- Is a 20 km off-street shared path that follows Merri Creek, running from Dights Falls in the City of Yarra to the Western Ring Road. About 13 km of this path are located within the City of Moreland;
- Links to the Capital City Trail to provide connections to many inner city suburbs;
- Is part of the Principal Bicycle Network between Bell Street and the Western Ring Road;
- Is identified as a SmartRoads support route between St Georges Road, Fitzroy North and Bell Street, Coburg;
- Includes sections administered by Yarra City Council, downstream from Rushall Railway Station, and a section from St Georges Road to Merri Creek Primary School, and by Darebin City Council, from Rushall Railway Station to St Georges Road, and from Moreland Road to Harding Street;
- Is valued as a pathway through attractive open space areas, and used by a mix of pedestrians, including dog walkers, and cyclists;
- Runs through areas of Aboriginal and post-contact cultural heritage and areas of environmental significance;
- Has the potential to provide an off-street route out of suburban Melbourne with future extensions of the path via parkland adjacent to the Merri Creek located in the City of Hume.

Role of the Merri Creek Trail in the bicycle network

The Merri Creek Trail provides a high quality trail that links attractive destinations, such as Coburg Lake and CERES. These qualities make it an ideal place for recreational walking, cycling and passive recreation.

However, these same qualities make it a poor choice as a commuter cycling route. The path has a meandering alignment and attracts groups of pedestrians and dog walkers.

Council's vision for the Merri Creek Trail is to strengthen and enhance this trail as a recreational cycling route. Council does not support the development of this route as a high capacity facility for commuter use.

Significant volumes of high-speed cyclist traffic will reduce the amenity of the parkland for other path users. To reduce conflict between cyclists and other path users Council will develop alternative on-road cycling routes that are attractive to cyclists wanting to ride fast. Projects to support commuter cycling in Brunswick East include cyclist safety upgrades for Nicholson, Holmes and Lygon Streets, and the East Brunswick Shimmy.

To strengthen the role of the Merri Creek Trail as a recreational path, Council will implement the recommendations of the Merri Creek Trail Review, a comprehensive safety audit conducted with the assistance of neighbouring Councils. This safety audit has identified several areas where the path requires upgrades to minimise flood risks. In many places the path is far narrower than the 3.0m–4.0m recommended width for a recreational trail. This has led to conflict between pedestrian and cycling path users.

To minimise these conflicts and address safety issues, Council will implement the recommendations of the Merri Creek Trail Review, progressively realigning and widening the path over the life of this strategy.

In addition to safety upgrades, Council will advocate for an upgraded link between the Merri Creek and Capital City Trails. This project is likely to involve construction of a new bridge in the cities of Yarra and Darebin, and will require significant financial support from the state government.

The Merri Creek forms a barrier for people wishing to travel east–west. Most traffic is funnelled over one of five busy road bridges at Newlands Road, Murray Road, Bell Street, Moreland Road and Blyth Street. The shared path bridges associated with the trail provide opportunities for new east-west cycling routes, which in some cases may be more direct than the on-road alternative. Projects such as the High Street to Puckle Street route seek to build on this strength to create a new *green link* between activity centres.

Actions to improve the Merri Creek Trail

Upgrades to the Merri Creek Trail seek to:

- Implement the recommendations of *Merri Creek Trail Review 2007*;

- Better manage flood risks by upgrading the path in stages to meet the standards outlined in *Melbourne Water Shared Pathways Guidelines*;
- Reduce path gradients to make the path accessible to all pedestrians, including wheelchair users, and to provide a safer riding experience for less confident cyclists;
- Preserve areas of aboriginal cultural heritage, post-contact heritage and environmental significance;
- Better manage potential conflict between cyclists and pedestrians by widening the path to 3m wide. This width allows:
 - A cyclist towing a trailer to pass another cyclist also towing a trailer, or a pedestrian with a pram;
 - A cyclist to pass two pedestrians walking side by side without leaving the path.

This width allows for pedestrians and cyclists to safely share the path, whilst preserving the natural beauty of the area that makes it an attractive place to visit.

To achieve this, Council proposes projects totalling an estimated **\$4.9 million**.

A detailed list of works for projects along Merri Creek outlined below.

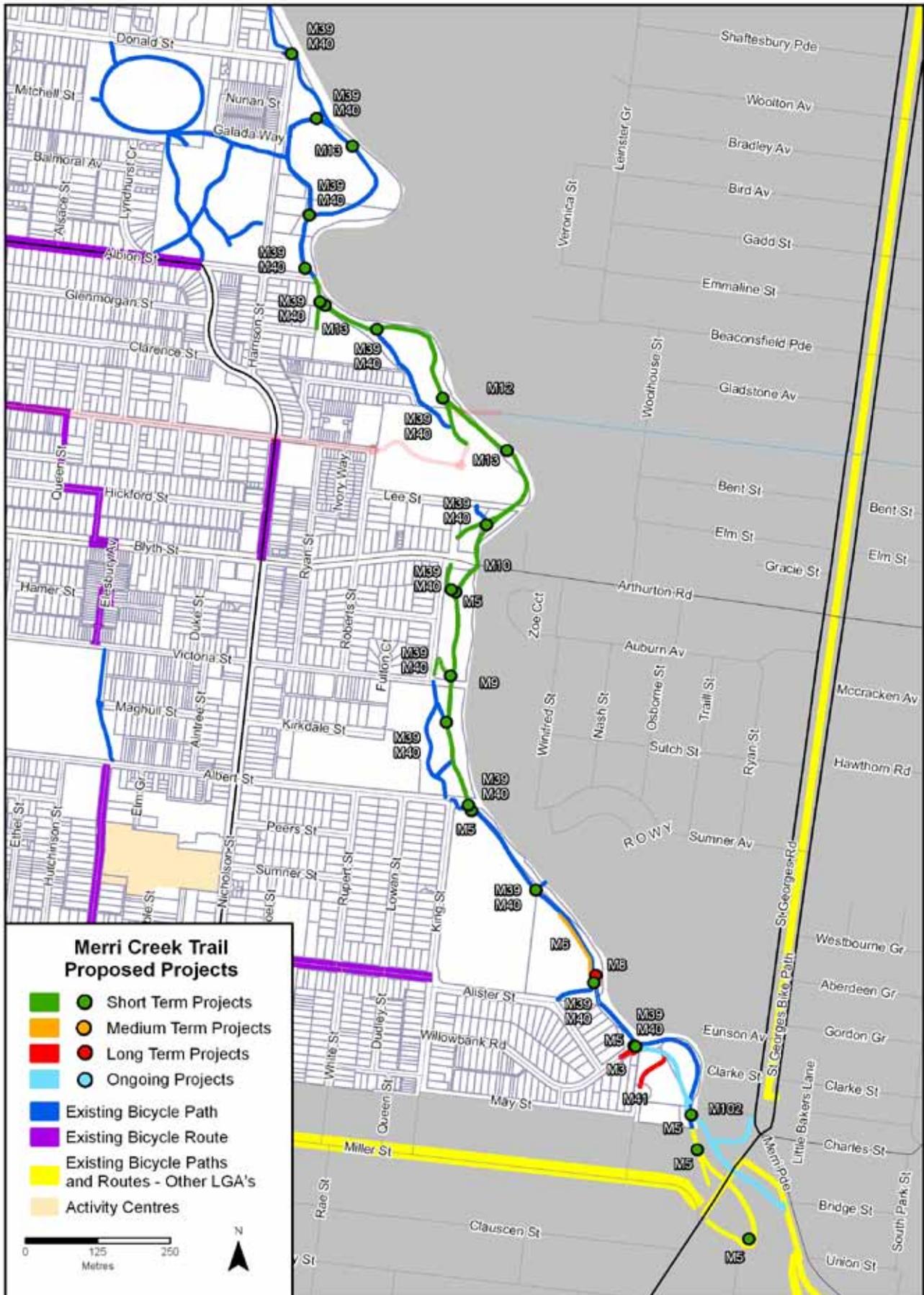
Advocacy actions

Project ID	Project Description	Estimated Cost (\$,000s)	Estimated Staff Time cost (staff days)	Responsibility
M100	Advocate for Hume and Whittlesea Councils to extend the Merri Creek Trail further north, and construct access paths to link the Merri Creek Trail to nearby railway stations and activity centres in their municipalities.	N/A	20	Councillors, Transport Team
M38	Work with the Merri Creek Management Committee, Friends of Edgars Creek and the Aboriginal community, to balance the needs of pedestrians and cyclists with the requirements of habitat and cultural heritage protection along the Merri Creek Corridor.	N/A	20	Councillors, Transport Team, Open Space Team
M102	Advocate for VicRoads, Parks Victoria, the Cities of Darebin and Yarra to construct a path between the Merri Creek and Capital City Trails. An indicative design is included in the <i>Merri Creek Trail Review</i> . p 87-91. The path would provide links to existing paths near Merri Parade, Northcote; include access from St Georges Road and access to Merri Creek Primary School.	N/A	100	Councillors, Transport Team, Open Space Team

Merri Creek Trail – The Whole Path

Project ID	Project Description	Estimated Cost (\$,000s)	Time scale	Eligible for External Funding?
M5	Install flood depth marker signs at selected locations to advise of potential flood risks.	5	Short	SmartRoads
M13	Install pedestrian safety fencing and handrails in selected locations along the Merri Creek Trail, to provide access for path users of all abilities, and to protect steep river banks.	20	Short	SmartRoads
M39	Install cyclist and pedestrian way-finding signs along Merri Creek Trail identifying nearby roads, and providing directions to schools and other nearby points of interest.	10	Short	SmartRoads
M40	As part of broader bicycle signage strategy, install shared path code of conduct signs along the Merri Creek Trail to encourage: Cyclists to ring their warning bells; Cyclists to slow down near groups of pedestrians; Dog walkers to keep their pets under control.	5	Short	SmartRoads

Merri Creek Trail at Brunswick South East – Capital City Trail to CERES



Highest Priority projects

Project ID	Project Description	Estimated Cost (\$,000s)	Time scale	Eligible for External Funding?
M7	Design an upgraded path and reconstruct the Merri Creek Path between Alister and Albert Streets. The upgraded path to be built as a 3.0m wide x 450m long concrete shared path. This project includes reconstruction of a boardwalk to reduce its gradient and to make the path wheelchair accessible.	400	Short	SmartRoads
M9	Construct a 435m long x 3.0m wide concrete shared path from Albert to Blyth streets (Arthurton Road), to increase path capacity, create opportunities for riparian zone revegetation, and reduce flood risks.	94	Short	SmartRoads
M10	Realign and widen Merri Creek Trail to 3.0m near the Blyth Street underpass. These works will increase capacity and improve sight lines. This will involve modification to the existing retaining wall and replacement of hand rails.	300	Short	SmartRoads
M12	Design and construct a 750m long x 3.0m wide concrete path between Blyth Street (Arthurton Road) and Albion Street (past CERES) to increase path capacity, create opportunities for riparian zone revegetation, and reduce flood risks.	378	Short	SmartRoads

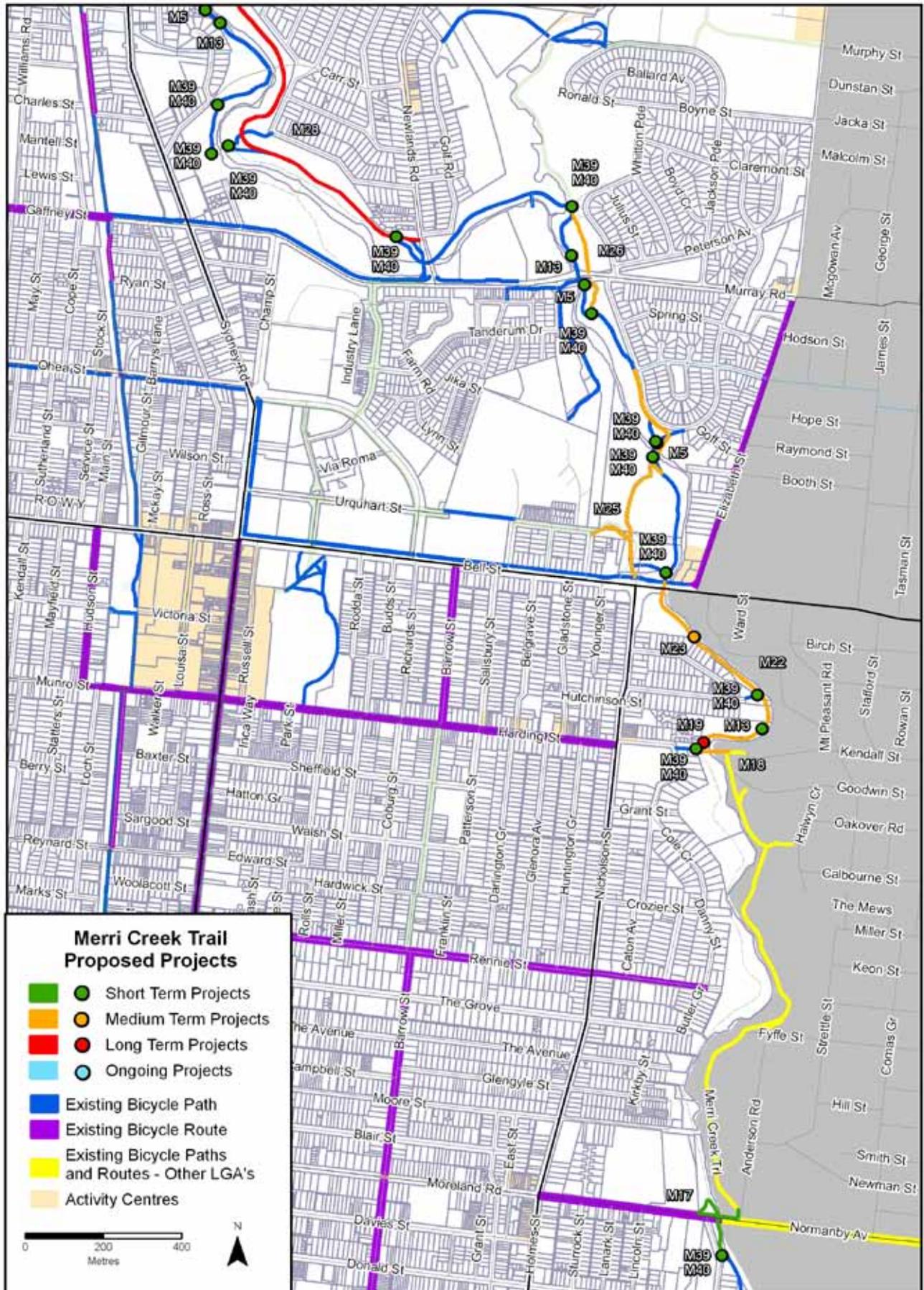
Medium priorities

Project ID	Project Description	Estimated Cost (\$,000s)	Time scale	Eligible for External Funding?
M6	Relocate 230m of safety fencing between the Sumner Park soccer field and the Merri Creek Path to provide additional clearance for path users.	35	Medium	SmartRoads

Long term projects

Project ID	Project Description	Estimated Cost (000's)	Time scale	Eligible for External Funding?
M3	Construct an access path between Willowbank Road and Merri Creek Path. This may involve steps, with bike guttering and handrail.	17	Long	SmartRoads
M41	Construct an access path between Ida Street and Merri Creek Path. This may involve steps, with bike guttering and handrail. The path will provide an access route between Merri Creek Primary School and Merri Creek Trail.	17	Long	SmartRoads
M8	Install a hydraulic-operated flood barrier north of Alister Street to close the Merri Creek Trail between Alister and King Streets, and re-direct path users to an alternative route using surrounding streets during flood events.	100	Long	SmartRoads

Merri Creek Trail at Brunswick East – CERES to Coburg Lake



Highest priority projects

Project ID	Project Description	Estimated Cost (\$,000s)	Time scale	Eligible for External Funding?
M17	Upgrade the Merri Creek Path where it meets Moreland Road (Normanby Avenue). Upgrades include a new access path via Cara Street between Moreland Road and the Merri Creek Trail, installation of a refuge island on Moreland Road and relocation of road signs.	20	Short	SmartRoads

Medium priorities

Project ID	Project Description	Estimated Cost (\$,000s)	Time scale	Eligible for External Funding?
M18	Replace the suspension bridge between Harding Street, Coburg, and Kendall Street, Thornbury. The replacement bridge works will widen the bridge deck to create additional path capacity, reduce the gradient of approach paths and improve access for larger bikes.	500	Medium	SmartRoads
M22	Construct a 700m long x 3.0m wide concrete path between the Harding Street bridge and Bell Street underpass to increase path capacity, improve sight lines, create opportunities for riparian zone revegetation, and reduce flood risks.	330	Medium	SmartRoads
M23	Reconstruct, widen and reduce the gradient of the timber boardwalk in Bowden Reserve (just south of Bell Street).	50	Medium	SmartRoads
M25	Design and construct a replacement for the De Chene Reserve bridge. The replacement bridge will be 3.0m wide or greater and include access paths totalling 700m to link the bridge to Urquhart, Nicholson and Meadow Streets. All access paths to be built above the 1:10 ARI and follow low gradient routes (this route links Coburg and Preston Activity Centres and is likely to be popular with cargo bikes).	900	Medium	SmartRoads
M26	Design and construct a 300m long x 3.0m wide concrete path that provides access paths to Murray Road, and can be used as an alternative route during flood events affecting the Murray Road underpass.	70	Medium	SmartRoads

Long term projects

Project ID	Project Description	Estimated Cost (\$,000s)	Time scale	Eligible for External Funding?
M19	Install a hydraulic operated flood barrier during flood events, north of the Harding Street bridge to close the Merri Creek path between Harding Street and Bell Street. This project also includes installation of detour signs on surrounding streets.	100	Long	SmartRoads

Long term projects

Project ID	Project Description	Estimated Cost (\$,000s)	Time scale	Eligible for External Funding?
M28	Design and construct a 1 km long x 3.0m wide concrete path between Newlands Road and Bakers Road on the eastern bank of Merri Creek. This path replaces a path on the western bank that is subject to flooding.	444	Long	SmartRoads
M32	Design and construct a new pedestrian bridge over the Merri Creek near Queens Parade, Fawkner. This bridge project also involves construction of 3.0m wide x 300m long access paths to nearby roads to facilitate east-west movements.	565	Long	SmartRoads
M33	Design and construct a 1.25km x 3.0m wide concrete shared path on the eastern bank of the Merri Creek between Bakers Road and Queens Parade. This path extends recreational loops surrounding Coburg Lakes.	580	Long	SmartRoads