

LOXTON RIVERFRONT DEVELOPMENT MASTERPLAN



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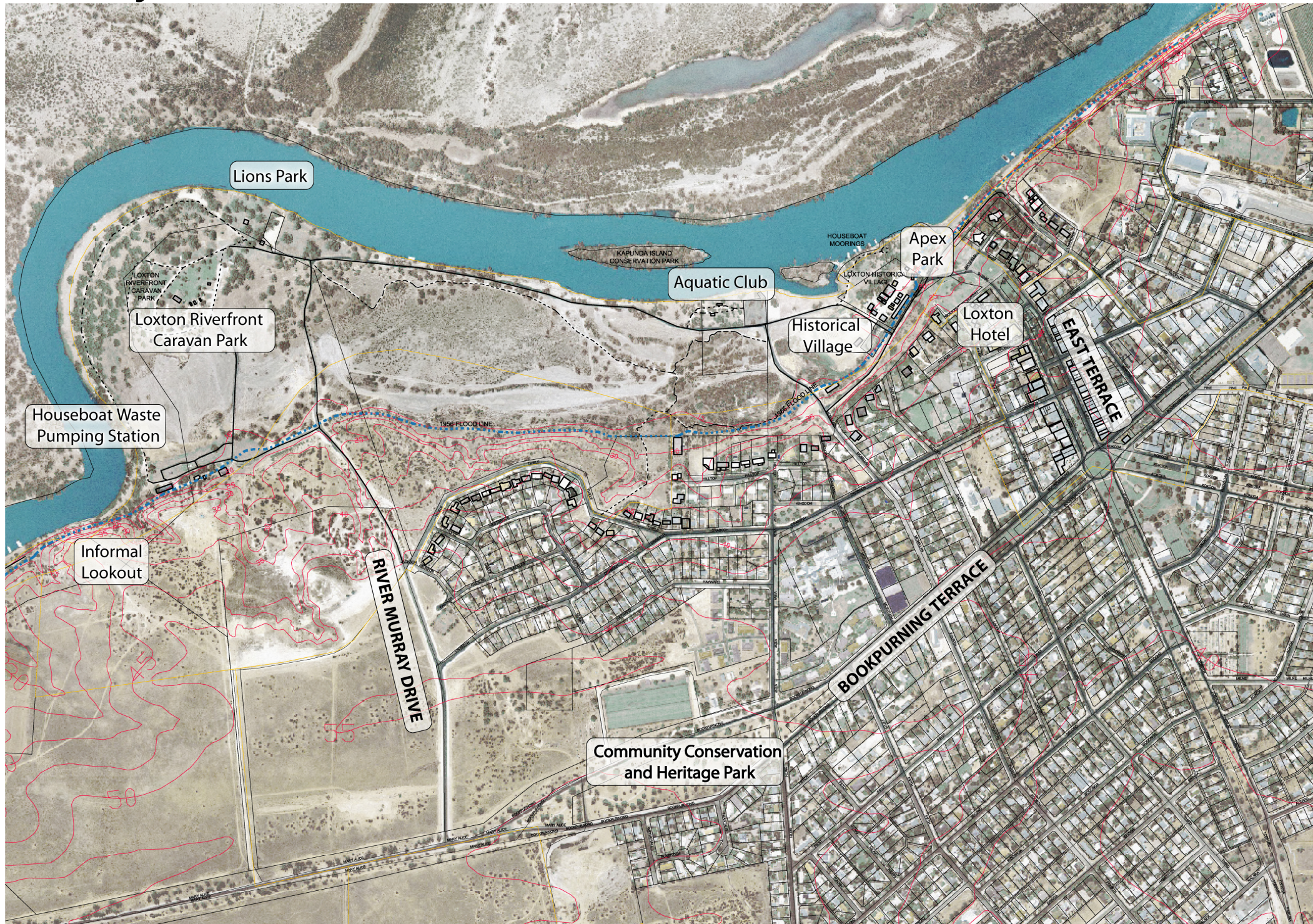
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1.1 Study Area



INTRODUCTION

1.2 Project Background

The history of development of Loxton was closely linked to its role as a river town. The River Murray provided one of the main points of access for freight and passengers into and out of the Town and the district. These days the riverfront is one of the key recreational and visitor destinations for Loxton and the region.

The town centre is focused on the East Terrace business precinct. However there is a steep incline and it is some distance from the riverfront.

The District Council of Loxton Waikerie has established the Loxton Riverfront Development Committee to prepare an overall development concept for the riverfront and associated areas. The Committee includes representatives from Council, the community and business with a direct interest in the success and development of the riverfront.

The Masterplan provides a framework for the future development of the Loxton Riverfront Precinct establishing a clear action plan to guide council's activities

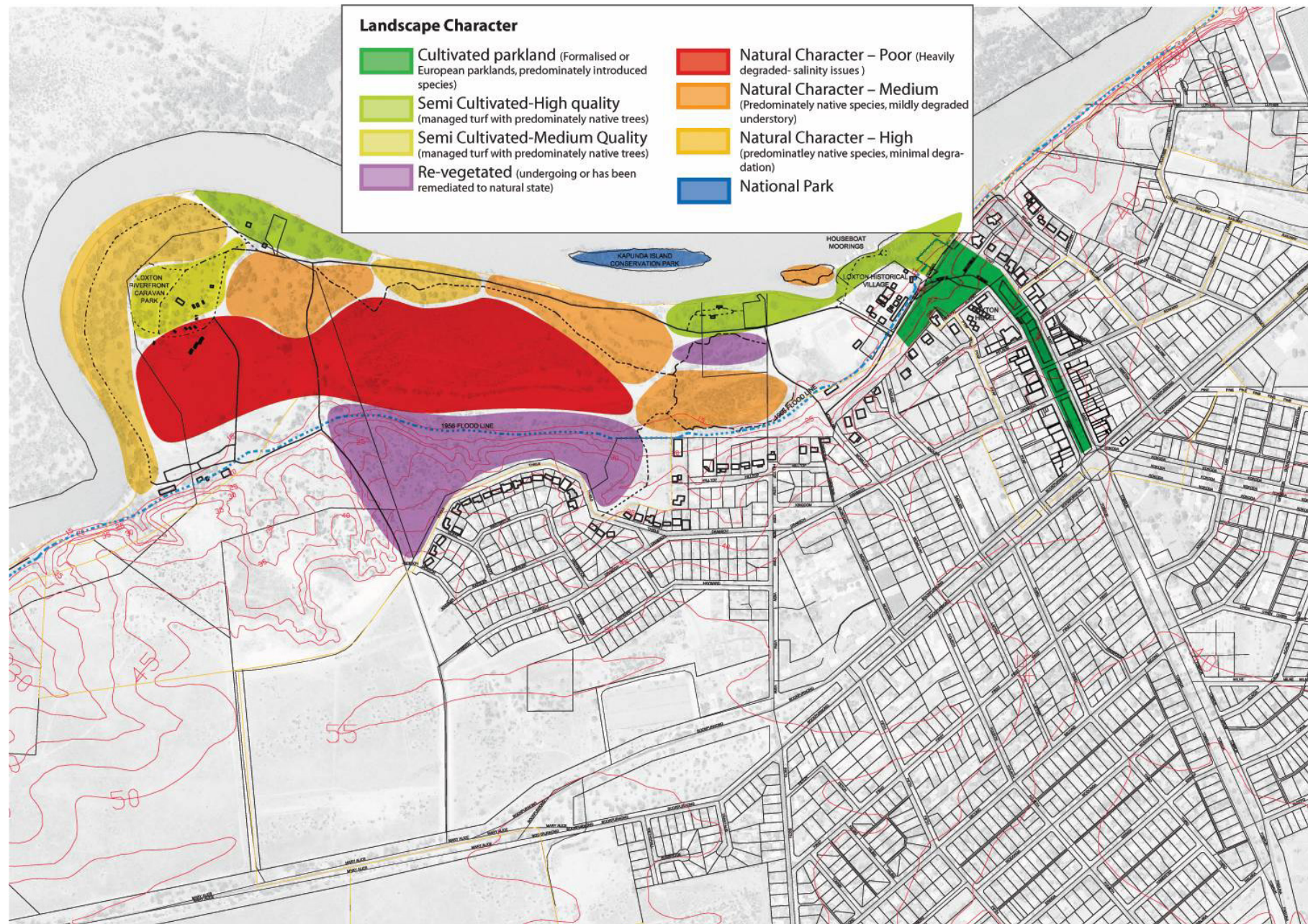
1.3 Project Objectives

Council and the development Committee have set a number of objectives for this Masterplan;

- Delineation of areas for appropriate development, conservation recreation and cultural enhancement – the creation of an overall structure and activity plan
- The development of specific concepts for each of these sub-precincts and activity areas
- The development of an integrated access and parking strategy (vehicles, pedestrians, cycles, buses) for the riverfront and improved access between key components of the town centre, the western entrance and the riverfront
- Improvements to public spaces and open space through an integrated plan covering the pedestrian environment, lighting, furniture, landscape design, public art and cultural expression
- Opportunities for an integrated pedestrian/bicycle network and interpretative walking trails
- A thorough strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats (SWOT) analysis of the area
- Investigation and identification of business/tourism related facilities or infrastructure that might form the centre piece of the improved integration of East Terrace with the riverfront
- Consideration of the location and nature of new boat mooring and associated facilities and possible river edge boardwalks
- Integration and development of the caravan park's development strategy
- The management of periodic flood events in the design and layout of the master plan
- Conservation rehabilitation and interpretation of native vegetation and the development of improved nature walks
- The preparation of a prioritized implementation strategy which identifies an action plan with cost estimates, funding opportunities, implementation responsibilities, timelines and partners

SITE ANALYSIS

2.1 Landscape Character



Landscape character within the study area is diverse; ranging from highly cultivated parklands to natural bush settings. A large area in the centre of the site is degraded and appears to be salt affected. In contrast to this there are large tracts of picturesque natural environments along the rivers edge, characterised by mature stands of eucalypts.

Both the Lions and Apex parks offer a more cultivated environment of managed turf and mature trees, these areas are generally well maintained but lack vegetation diversity and interest.

A large zone of salt affected floodplain dominates the South Western region adjacent the cliffs, revegetation efforts have had limited success and vegetation is immature and appears to be struggling. Further up the cliff face revegetation has been more successful and is growing well, it is anticipated that over time it will mature to create a natural bushland setting.

Within the caravan park there are managed turf areas for camping and some tree planting has been undertaken, however specimens are immature and species chosen will have limited growth potential due to the salinity.

Generally the area has a lot of weeds and there is inconsistency in maintenance and presentation of the various landscape settings. There is an opportunity to strengthen and consolidate the natural rivers edge environment and implement new planting strategies to those areas that are heavily degraded.

2.2 Recreation and Visitor Facilities

The Loxton Riverfront area is the focus point for key recreation and tourism activity in Loxton. Attractions include

The Loxton Historical Village

This facility is well maintained and has several significant historical items within its collection. It consists of a mixture of genuine and replica historical buildings in a main street setting.

Physically the links between the village and the surrounding areas are weak. It is fenced with a functional cyclone wire fence and there is little clue to what lies beyond this from the outside. The entrance area and car park is not apparent from East Terrace and could be better located to attract passing visitors.

The village provides a great foundation to build upon and there is scope to modernise the 'story telling' aspect of the museum with new methods of interpretation and activities.

Parklands

The riverfront precinct is largely disposed of as a mixture of parklands. There are two main picnic areas being the Lions and Apex Parks. Both offer toilets, BBQs and shelters, though the current facilities are disparate in quality and presentation and there is no consistent approach to the appearance and quality of the visitor facilities.

Playground equipment is limited to the Lion's Park and there is scope to upgrade the experience for children throughout the whole area.

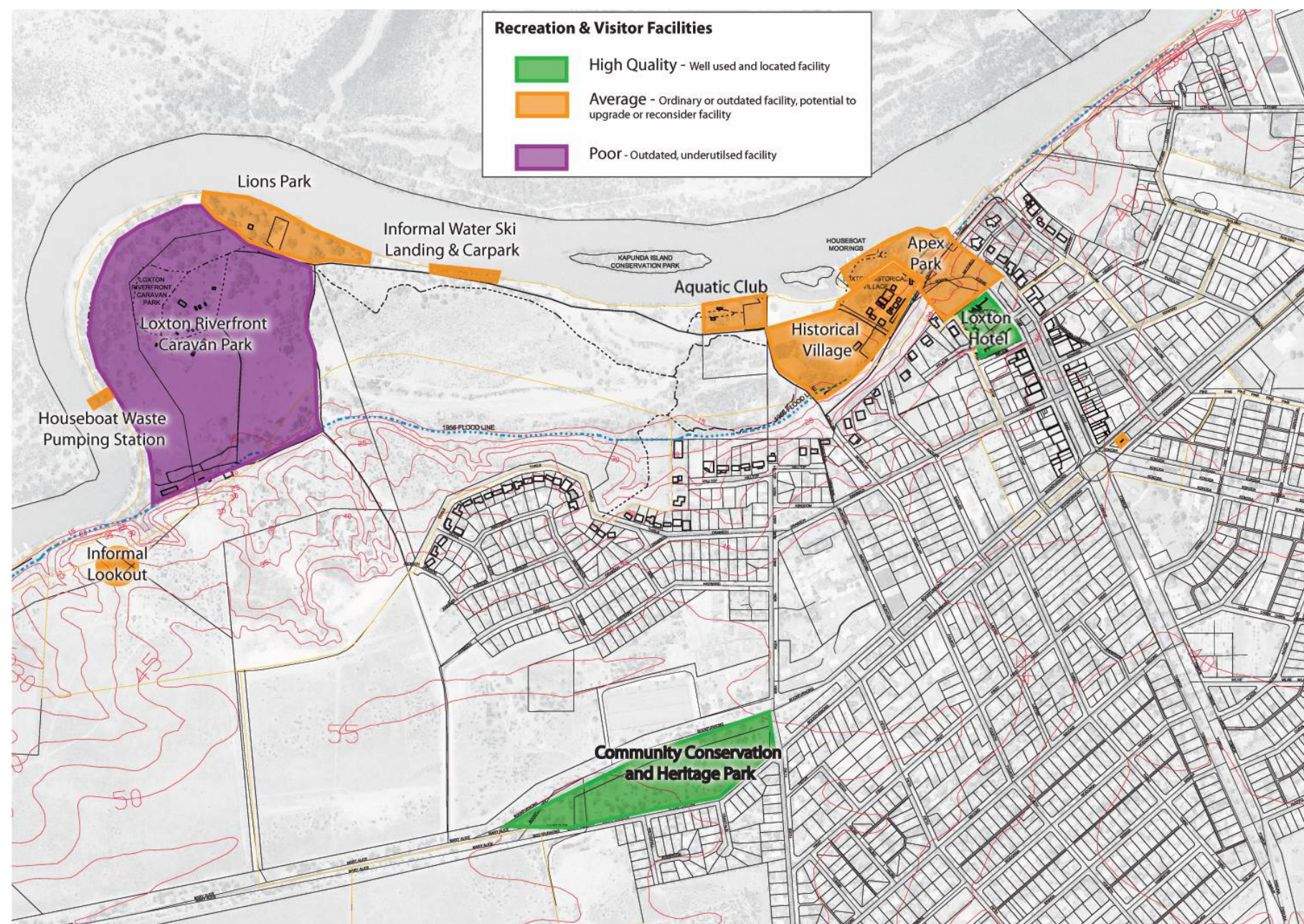
Recreational walking and cycling activity is not adequately catered for and there is only a short stretch of walking trail, there is an opportunity to strengthen pedestrian access within this scenic area and improve links to attractions within the town.

Aquatic Club

The Aquatic Club consists of two boat ramps and pontoon, a large car parking area and a toilet block with clubrooms above. There is also a picnic area and BBQs. Whilst the area functions very well, the general presentation of facilities is tired and there is scope to upgrade the experience offered for spectators and improve safety.

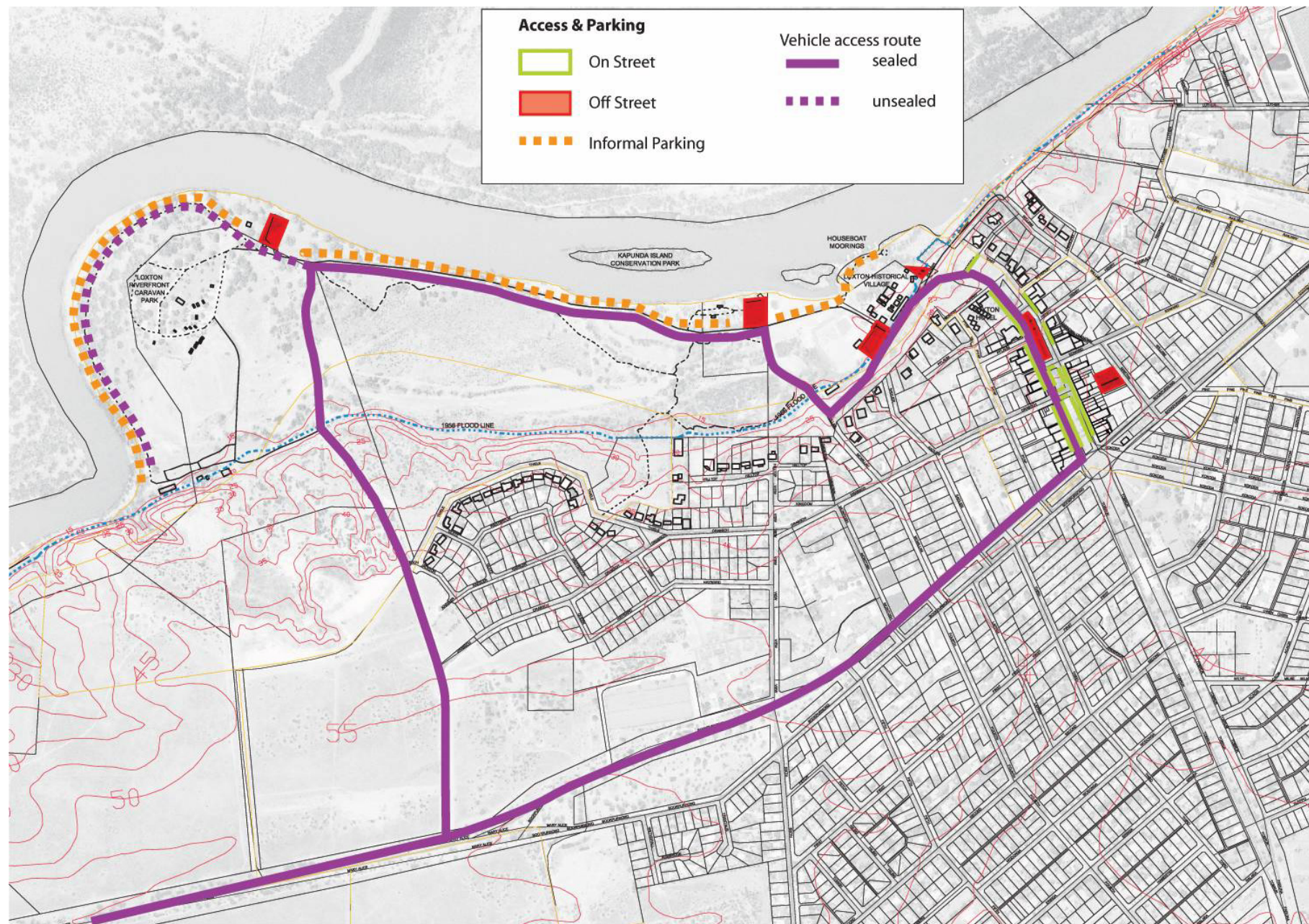
Caravan Park

Loxton Riverfront Caravan Park currently offers camping and cabin accommodation for visitors. There is also a large 'permanents' section for caravans. There is significant scope to upgrade both the appearance and nature of the facility to a higher standard.



SITE ANALYSIS

2.3 Access and Parking



Car Parking

The area is currently serviced by several off road car parks at key locations and a series of informal 'pull off' bays along the riverfront.

Whilst it appears that there is adequate capacity at present the general appearance and linkages between car parks and activity centres needs to be strengthened. There is limited opportunity for coach parking at present except within the historical village car park.

Informal parking activity along the riverfront may be having a detrimental effect on some vegetation. A balance between accessibility for recreational uses and conservation needs to be considered.

Vehicle Access

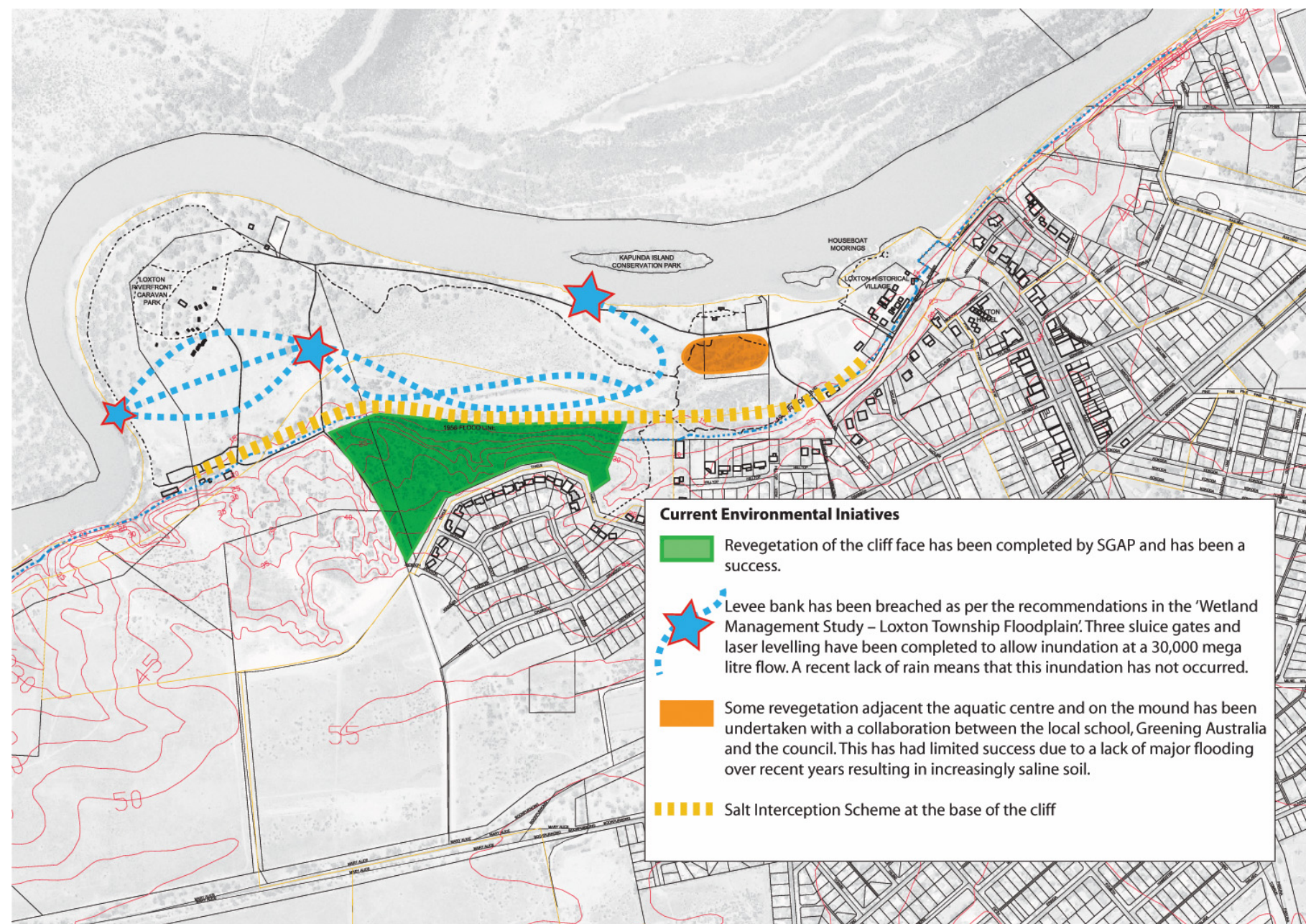
Road quality is varied throughout the precinct. Sealed roads are generally of a good quality and well maintained. There are a series of informal tracks and gravel roadways that service the western end of the study area and the houseboat moorings adjacent Apex Park.

Directional signage is limited and it is not clear from Bookpurnong Terrace or the end of East Terrace that there is a scenic riverfront drive. Key intersections and decision points are poorly signposted and often confusing to navigate.

2.4 Environmental Issues

Several environmental initiatives have been undertaken by the council and community groups that are outlined in the map to the left.

There are broader environmental issues that directly affect this area but are not within the scope of this study. What this study does raise is an opportunity to review the current initiatives and approaches to ensure best possible outcome for the floodplain environment. A master planned approach will also ensure that future developments to the area do not have a detrimental effect on the natural features of the site and allow scope to revise existing developments and mitigate any detrimental affects that they might be having.



SITE ANALYSIS

2.5 Pedestrian Environment

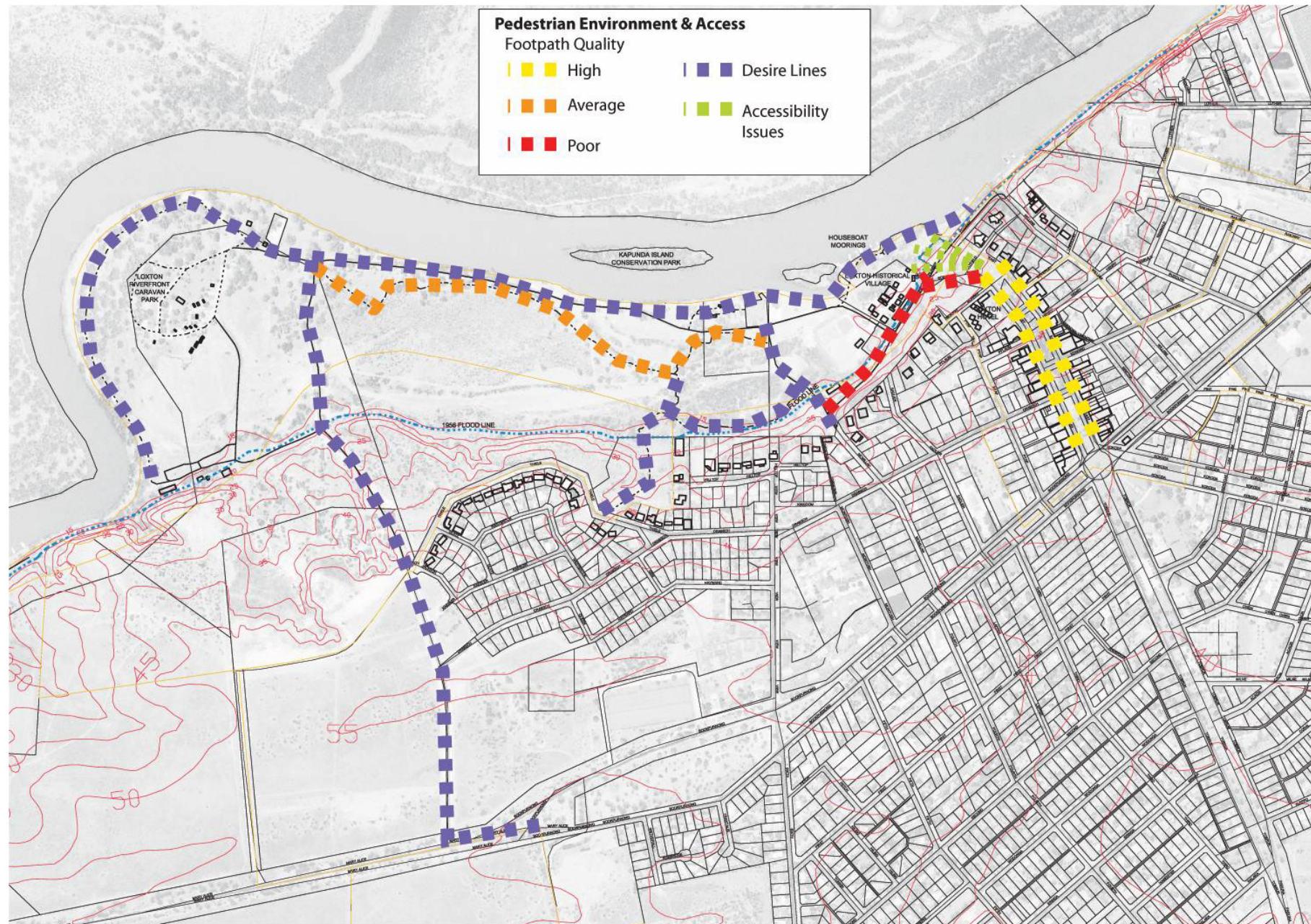
The quality of the pedestrian environment varies considerably throughout the study area.

Linkages between key activity nodes are generally poor and unclear.

There is an informal path along the rivers edge that is disjointed and unsafe in some sections, quite often pedestrians are forced onto the roadways.

Steep terrain in some sections creates a hazard for pedestrians and limits access to the riverbank.

There are significant scenic assets throughout the area that are not accessible to pedestrians and cyclists.



3.1 Consultation Strategy

An integral part of gathering the ideas, issues and developing the opportunities has been consultation with the broader community. Consultation occurred with three sectors of the community including:

- Interviews and meetings with key stakeholders
- A workshop with key stakeholders and the community
- Input from students at the local schools

A range of creative and innovative ideas eventuated from the consultation process. The process has enabled invaluable local knowledge to be incorporated into the final design. Using local knowledge provides for community ownership of outcomes and can help avoid repeating mistakes.

3.2 Values

The environmental attributes of the area and access to the Riverfront are of overwhelming value to the community consulted. Two thirds of all responses indicated a healthy river environment, trees and scenery and access to the river – by car and walking and for recreation as key features of value. Other qualities of the area which were identified included, views of the River Murray; local parks and green areas; Loxton Historical Village; panoramic vistas and the proximity of the riverfront to the Loxton main street.

3.2 Key Issues

Interestingly the most frequently mentioned issue associated within the Loxton Riverfront Area is the salinity and environmental issues. Other issues included.

- Access to the Riverfront area
- Poor public amenities (toilets, shelter, picnic spots)
- Improved access and parking for cars, buses, boats and houseboats,
- Need for a wharf/tie up point for larger boats.
- Poor signage from town entry points to the river
- Need for more walking and bicycle trails
- Need for increased visitation
- Long term viable solutions for the Loxton Historical Village
- Steep access from the main street to the river
- Lack of accommodation styles (eco-lodge or eco-cabins)
- Lack of range of after hours activities (things to do at night)
- Lack of Red Gun style coffee shop
- Improved Communications for tourists who land on Loxton River Banks

3.3 Key Opportunities

The most popular opportunities identified through the consultation process involve the development of a sense of place for the Riverfront. A range of ideas have been identified to improve the sense of place of the riverfront including:

- Provision of mooring facilities for passing houseboats and larger tourist boats
- Development of a Café/gallery/visitor retail facility as part of the Visitor Information Centre
- Further development of interpretative boardwalks and walking trails.
- Removal of weeds and revegetation
- Revegetation of degraded sections of the riverbank
- Protecting significant trees from damage
- Removal of obsolete signage and visual clutter
- Creation of dual entry points to the Loxton Historical Village
- Reinterpretation of the Lions Park as a river themed adventure playground
- Provision of cycle paths
- Development of a mix of 'natural' and 'formal' river edge landscapes
- Assessment of market demand for different styles of accommodation

URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Protect and enhance the floodplain and recognise its role within the broader River Murray strategies

- Implement professionally designed and staged revegetation programs
- Devise an integrated stormwater and wetland management strategy
- Ensure Loxton Riverfront Caravan Park master planning is consistent with a sustainable floodplain strategy
- Rationalise the network of informal tracks and access points.

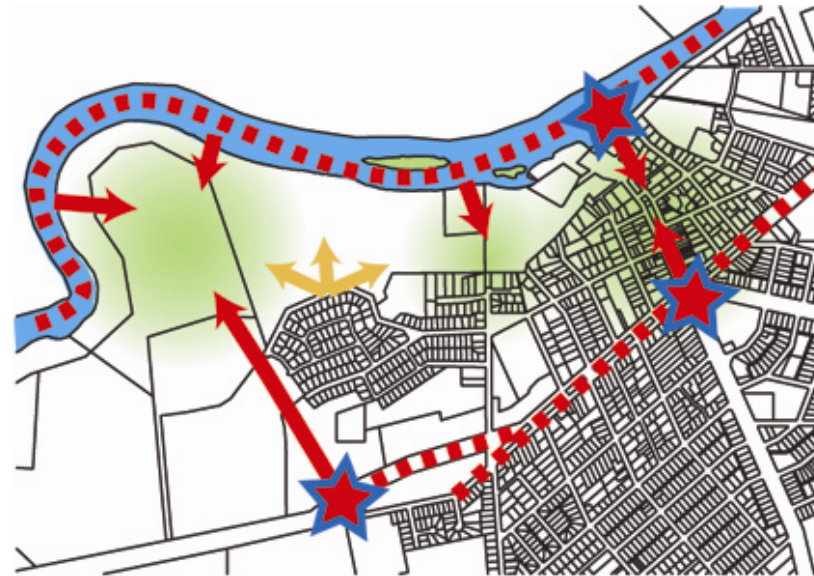


Maintain and develop visitor and recreation opportunities

- Create a new riverfront focal point incorporating:
 - Café
 - Visitor Information
 - Historical village entry/ pay point
 - Commencement point for interpretive recreation trails
 - Town centre moorings for short term, visitor boat parking
- Seek funding for and establish a development strategy for Loxton Historical Village in collaboration with a professional museum designer and the Loxton Historical Village Committee
- Create an Aquatic Club Masterplan to facilitate:
 - Improved spectator facilities
 - Upgrading of recreational boating facilities in line with appropriate standards
 - Upgrading and landscaping of the car / boat trailer parking area
- Upgrade the Lions Park into a purpose designed, river themed adventure playground and family zone. This could include:
 - Child safe water features and activities
 - Sheltered picnic and BBQ areas
 - Play spaces tailored for varying age groups.

Welcome and guide visitors from the river and road

- Create gateways at the intersections of Bookpurnong Terrace with Murray River Drive and East Terrace
- Develop a new Visitor Information Centre as a part of the riverfront focal point
- Improve signage to direct and guide visitors.
- Create a river edge gateway with new mooring facilities adjacent the proposed riverfront focal point
- Establish a scenic lookout & picnic point on Thiele Avenue.



Create an integrated landscape and movement strategy

- Provide orientation points and clear direction throughout the road network
- Develop integrated pedestrian and cycle trails with cultural and environmental themed interpretive signage and artworks
- Generate differentiated landscape themes appropriate to each precinct
- Establish a car parking management strategy that:
 - services the specialist needs of recreational users
 - Rationalises informal parking
 - Introduces landscaping guidelines
- Institute a public artworks strategy
- Create a consistent theme for all structures within the riverfront precinct. I.e. lighting, street furniture, toilet blocks, shelter and BBQ facilities.



Masterplan

MASTERPLAN

5.1 Masterplan

The Urban Design Principles outlined in the previous chapter give a basis from which to develop a comprehensive Masterplan for the riverfront area.

The overall design concept for the Masterplan is to provide a series of well designed and exciting activity nodes that are linked by clear and accessible pedestrian and vehicular pathways.

It is intended that each of these nodes will have unique design characteristics but ultimately form part of an attractive and cohesive riverfront development that is distinctive from other Riverland towns.

A key feature of the design is the Riverfront Focal Point which will energise the riverfront end of East Terrace, link the town to the river and contain a new Visitor Information Centre. The focal point will act as an orientation point for visitors to the town and also contain a café.

5.2 Precinct Structure Plan

A precinct structure plan has been created to delineate appropriate areas for development and conservation as depicted in the figure below. Each precinct can be broadly characterised as;

River walk – A proposed scenic pedestrian and cycling trail that links key activity nodes and natural attractions of the riverfront area. It will run along the rivers edge from the Riverfront Focal Point to the caravan park and consist of a series of paths and boardwalks that are lit by night.

Visitor Focal Point

The aim of the planned Riverfront Focal Point is to create a visually prominent and welcoming entrance to the riverfront area that links the town centre to the river and provides a clear and accessible orientation point for visitors to Loxton.

The Aquatic Club is a community based club that services local water sport enthusiasts. The aim is to develop this into a dual purpose community facility that services the Aquatic Club and acts as a rest and orientation point on the River Walk

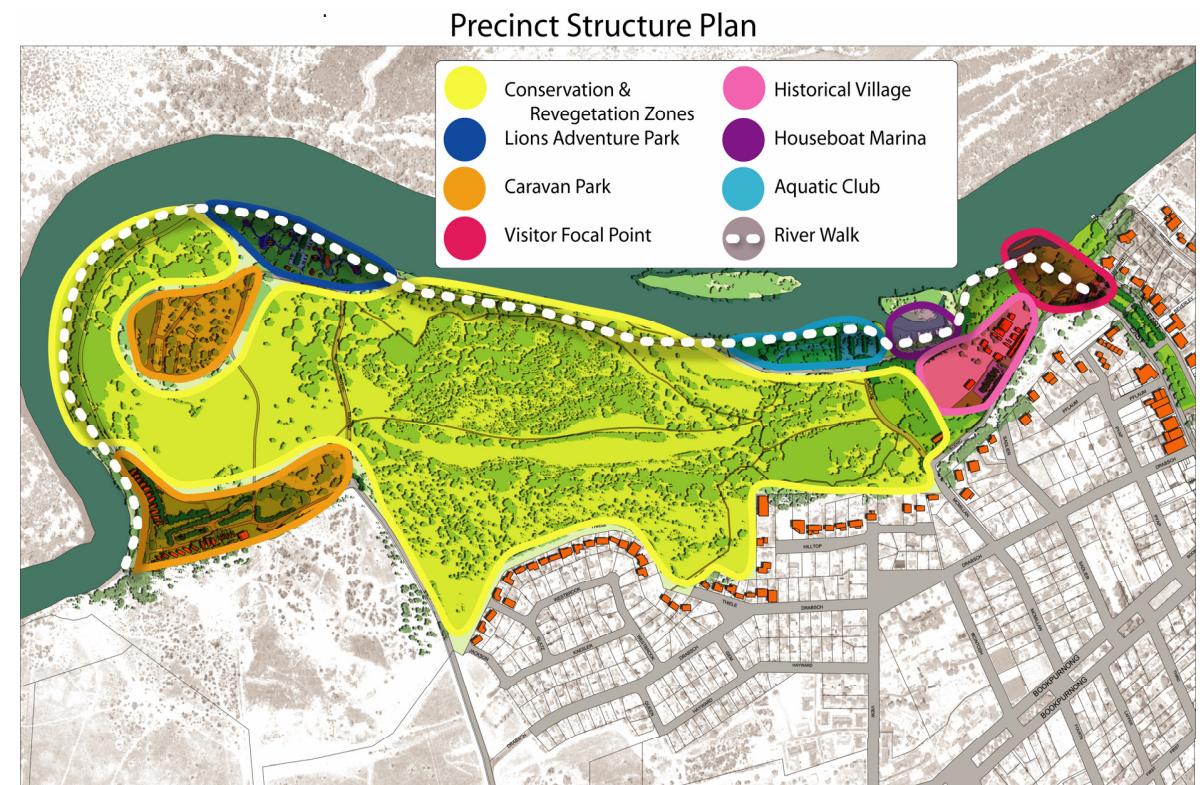
Houseboat Marina – A proposed sheltered marina facility that provides permanent (licensed) and short term moorings for houseboats is to be created south of Snake Island.

Historical Village – This is community run history museum consisting of a series of historical buildings in a street like setting. It is the aim of the Masterplan to improve linkages and external presentation of the museum.

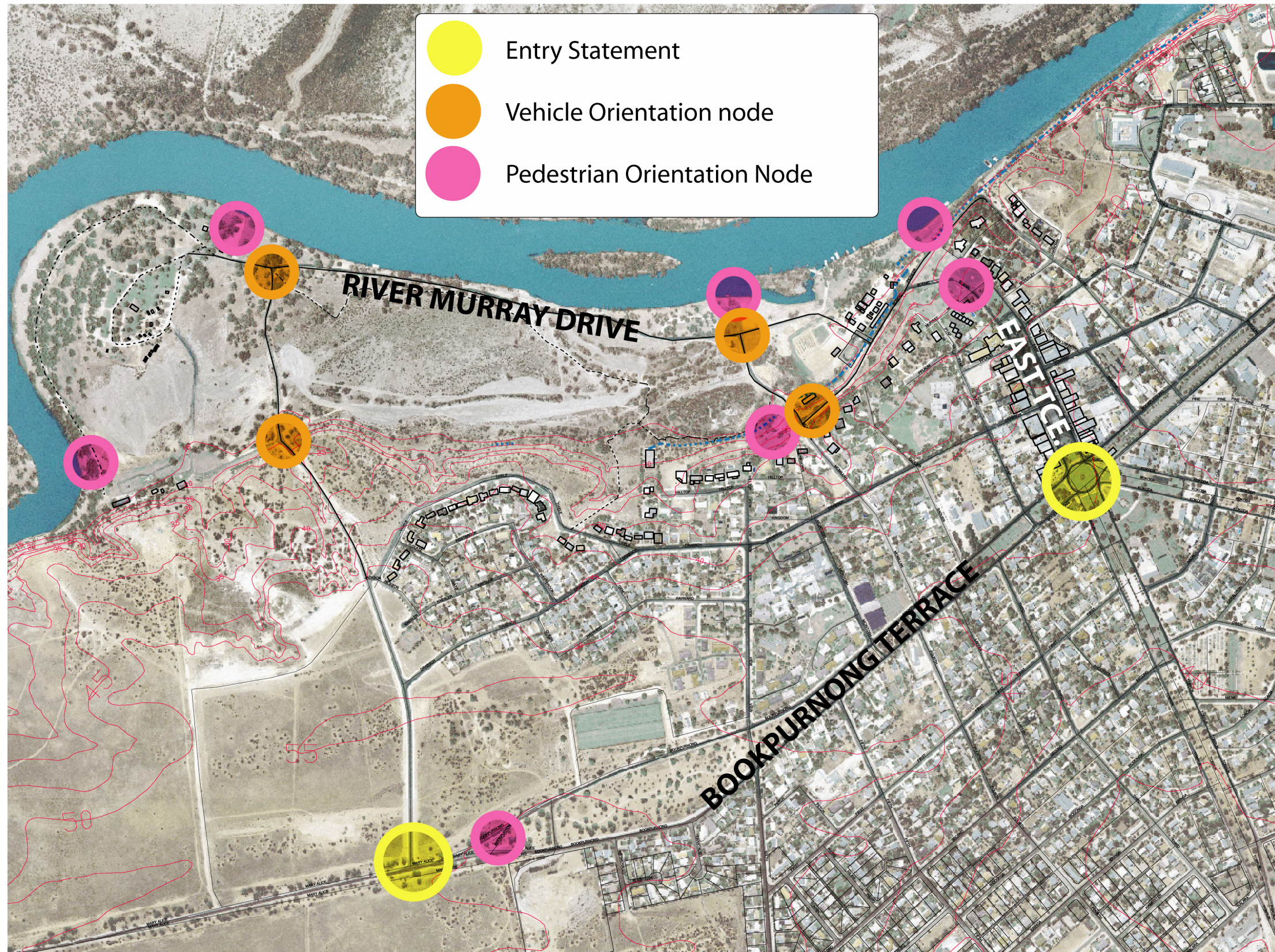
Lions Adventure Park – An exciting and adventurous water based park is planned for this area that will cater to all age groups and provide a family picnic spot.

Caravan Park – The Loxton Riverfront Caravan Park provides a mixture of camping and cabin accommodation for tourists and some permanent van parking. This Masterplan defines the long term development of the park.

Conservation Zones – These areas are to be revegetated or protected and will be interlinked with a series of nature based walking and cycling trails with interpretive signage.



Orientation



MASTERPLAN

5.3 Accessibility

Pedestrian & Cyclists

A crucial element of the pedestrian and cycling strategy is the introduction of a River Walk. This will run the entire length of the river bank, starting from the visitor focal point and terminating at the South Western end of the caravan park. It is proposed that this walk be a feature trail and consist of a series of boardwalks, bitumen and gravel paths and be lit at night.

Some work has been completed in creating a pedestrian trail through the floodplain and there is an opportunity to reinforce this with linking trails that loop throughout the floodplain and link with the river walk and town. QED proposes that these trails be of differing lengths and difficulty to allow for users of varying levels of ability to experience the trail.

Consideration needs to be given to the materiality and width of the routes to ensure their suitability for shared use for cyclists and walkers. It is our suggestion that a mixture of coloured bitumen and compacted sand with timber edging be used. Wherever possible trails should be positioned near trees, where this is not possible new trees should be planted adjacent the track.

Signage and Way finding

Directional and visitor signage throughout the riverfront area is often inconsistent, cluttered and in some cases non-existent. Reviewing existing signage at intersections, road verges and attractions and removing/ replacing it with a consistently themed suite of directional signage will enhance the experience for visitors by providing attractive and clear pathways to attractions.

Vehicular - QED proposes the introduction of new entry statements to direct travellers from Bookpurnong Terrace and alert them to the attractions beyond. Due to the circuitous route and the large number of intersections within the riverfront precinct it is proposed that these entry statements be reinforced by the introduction of orientation nodes at intersections indicated in the Orientation diagram to the left.

These orientation nodes will be a minor version of the main entry statements and provide clear and attractive directional signage to riverfront attractions.

Pedestrian and cyclists - A series of orientation points will be located at activity nodes throughout the riverfront. It is expected that these nodes will contain information regarding distances travelled, possible routes and interpretation of the environment or cultural aspects of the environment. In addition, a system of route markers positioned along the trails will be developed to reassure walkers/ cyclists during their journey. Potential locations for orientation points are located on the diagram to the left.

Parking

The area is currently serviced by several off road car parks at key locations and a series of informal 'pull off' bays along the riverfront. It is the intention of this Masterplan that informal car parking along the riverfront be minimised to reduce erosion and the spread of weeds within sensitive areas.

On Road Parking Strategy - Indented parking bays servicing key activity zones and scenic locations are proposed along the length of River Murray Drive. Informal access to the riverbank and conservation zones will be restricted by timber bollards on the verge.

Off Street Car parking - There is sufficient capacity within existing off street car parking located at the Historical Village, Aquatic Club and Lions Park to cater for the current needs of the area. However the appearance of these car parks is generally poor and often denuded of vegetation.

It is proposed that existing car parks undergo revegetation of the edges and where appropriate introduce tree planting and green islands. Car parking at the proposed Lions Adventure Park has a new safe crossing point to reduce traffic speed.

Visitor Focal Point Car Park - The visitor focal point will be serviced by a reconfigured car park at the end of East Terrace. This car park will provide parking for visitors to the Information Centre and the café. It will also provide a coach drop off point. It is anticipated that only drop off will occur here and coaches will continue to use the storage bays at the Historical Village.

5.4 Conservation Strategy

In 1998 council commissioned a report by ID&A River and Catchment Management Consultants to examine options and the preferred actions for the wetland and terrestrial areas of the Loxton Township Floodplain area.

One of the recommendations of the report was to construct a new culvert to increase flooding within the conservation zone. With the construction of the culvert there is an expectation that flooding within the area will increase but the extent will not reach the levels of pre-levy construction. Floods prior to the construction of the levy generally occurred at every 1 in 2 years and with the construction of the levy this has increased to 1 in 12 years. With the reduction in the level where the water will overtop the levee from 100,000 ML/d to 30,000 ML/d there would be an expectation that flooding will occur every 4 to 5 years. It might be expected that an increased flood regime may increase the potential for revegetation success. However despite the commencement of a salt mitigation scheme it is expected that vegetation planted on the site may not be able to be fully established due to the existing soil salinity and that this situation may not change in the near future.

Therefore QED recommends that the conservation and revegetation strategy target those areas where success will be higher and ensure establishment of these species. There should be a wait and see approach taken for the central degraded area to at least allow for natural flooding to occur. It is recommended to trial a number of species within the highly saline areas particularly *Melaleuca halimiflora* and the Chowilla Plains Green Box species to identify the most successful approach.

QED is of the view that creation of a permanent wetland is not feasible within the floodplain due to:

- Unknown stormwater quantities
- Stormwater that is currently piped to the site is not substantial enough to allow permanent water
- Increased soil salinity issues around the wetland if the area is not naturally flooded

The continuing use of the natural wetlands for stormwater management will require ongoing monitoring to ensure that this practise is not environmentally detrimental to the area and the vegetation.

5.4 Landscape Guidelines

Plant species of local provenance to be used where ever possible and should include:

Riverfront - large trees to provide shade, enhance amenity and environmental value and allow access to the river edge.

Trees

Eucalyptus camaldulensis
Eucalyptus largiflorens

Natural Character Areas - diverse use of species from trees, shrubs and groundcovers

Shrubs & Ground Covers

Acacia oswaldii
Melaleuca lanceolata
Enchyleana tomentose
Lavatera plebeian
Atriplex stipitate
Carpobrotus rossii
Maireana brevifolia
Maireana pyramidata
Sarcornia sp.
Dodonea viscosa
angustissima

Trees

Eucalyptus camaldulensis
Eucalyptus largiflorens

Caravan Park - medium sized trees for shade and improved amenity, low growing shrubs to provide diversity of form.

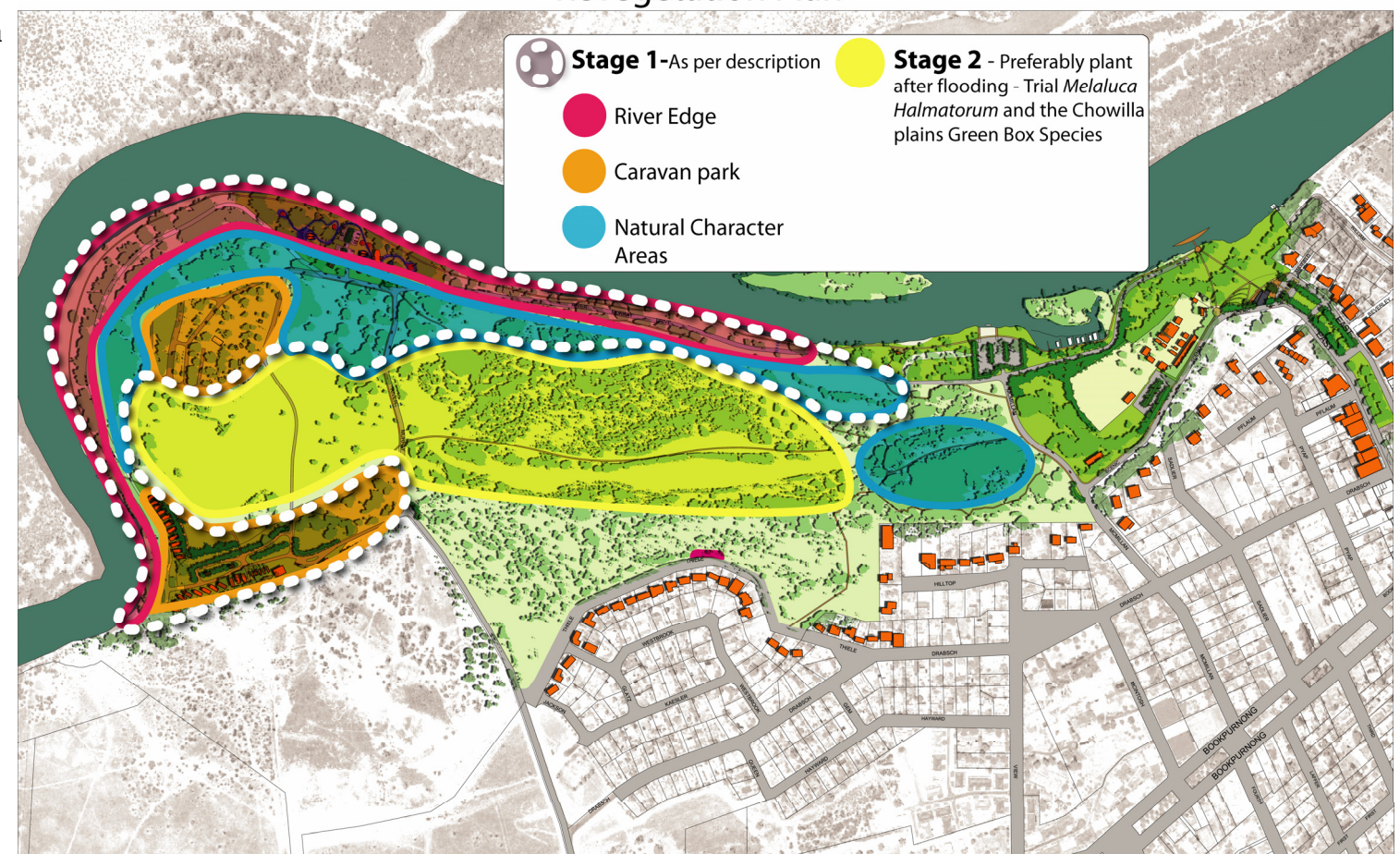
Trees

Casuarina pauper
Callitris gracilis
Eucalyptus camaldulensis
Eucalyptus largiflorens
Eucalyptus cyanophylla
Eucalyptus socialis
Myoporum platycarpum

Shrubs

Acacia brachybotrya
Acacia nyssophylla
Acacia oswaldii
Dodonea viscosa angustissima
Melaleuca lanceolata
Pittosporum phyllaeoides
Atriplex stipitate
Carpobrotus rossii
Maireana brevifolia
Maireana pyramidata
Sarcornia sp.

Revegetation Plan



MASTERPLAN



Eucalyptus largiflorens
Acacia nyssophylla



Atriplex stipitata
Melaleuca lanceolata



Eucalyptus camaldulensis
Sarcornia sp.



5.6 Cultural and Public Art Strategy

There are significant opportunities along the proposed Riverfront Development to introduce public artworks and cultural themes to tell the stories of Loxton and the River Murray. Some suggested themes are as follows:

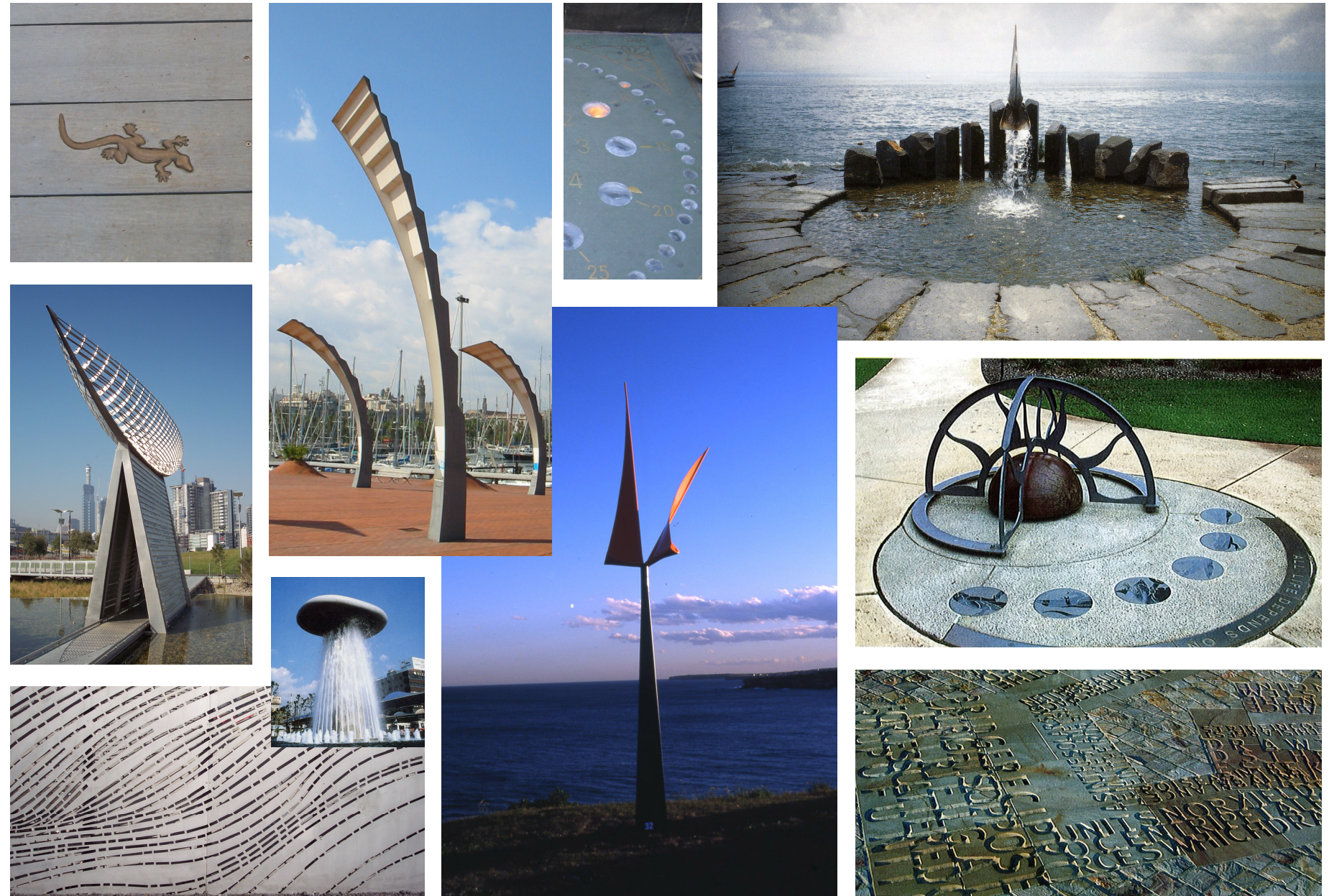
Indigenous history - Dreamtime stories and bush tucker interpretative tours and signage.

Environmental/ Ecological – Including public art pieces and interpretive signage on River Murray issues such as irrigation and salinity and local environmental strategies/ and programs.

European Settlement – There is an opportunity to further interpret the stories of early European settlement in conjunction with the Historical Village.

Boaties – Interpretation of the paddle steamer trade history and current recreational boating activities including water sports and fishing.

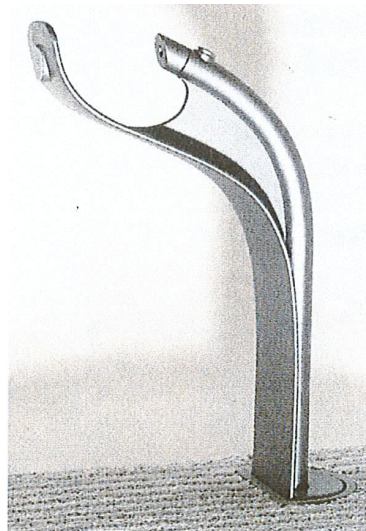
River – Could include stories of flooding and water movement through the area.



MASTERPLAN

5.7 Materials, Structures & Surfaces

Suggested Materials Palette



Materials used throughout the riverfront precinct need to have several characteristics including:

Consistent Themes – This includes a consistent approach to colour, materials and form and may include a mix of tailor made and standard elements. Potential themes should be inspired from the surrounding landscape, culture and the river.

Submersible & Hard Wearing – Both the materials used and the fixings need to be able to withstand periodic flooding with minimal maintenance/ remediation work. They also need to be able to withstand the harsh environment and climate and potential vandal attacks.

Contemporary and stylish – It is desirable that all new elements will be reflective of the bold, revitalised new riverfront precinct, and have a contemporary feel that reinforces Loxton's image as a lively, growing town.

Contextual – Elements need to be complementary to the surrounding natural and built environment.





Entry Statement

LOXTON RIVERFRONT DEVELOPMENT

DETAILED PRECINCT CONCEPTS

6.1 Entry Statements

Integral to the success of the Riverfront Masterplan will be the development of an impressive entry statement at the intersection of Bookpurnong Terrace and East Terrace that will direct and entice visitors through the Town Centre and down to the proposed Riverfront Focal Point.

Proposed is an avenue of Eucalypts in the median and along the road verge that will be integrated with existing street trees in a succession planting strategy. This will provide a striking framework for low plantings, water jets and animated night lighting that will create a sense of movement and energy and hint at the rivers presence beyond.





Riverfront Focal Point

LOXTON RIVERFRONT DEVELOPMENT

DETAILED PRECINCT CONCEPTS

6.2 Riverfront Focal Point

The aim of the Riverfront Focal Point is to create a visually prominent and welcoming entrance that energises the northern end of East Terrace, links the town centre to the river and provides a clear and accessible starting point for visitors to explore the attractions of Loxton.

Key Features of the design are:

Embrace the view - A large sweeping deck at the end of East Terrace allows people to park the car and take in the impressive view of Apex Park and the River Murray.

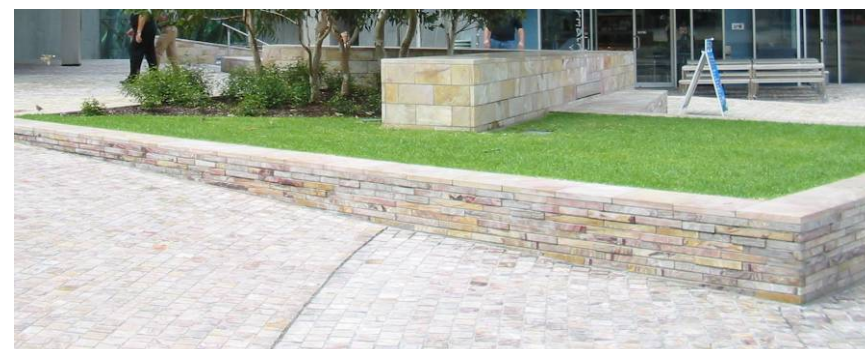
Visitor Information Centre/ Cafe - A new building containing a Visitor Information Centre and café with alfresco dining decks overlooking the river will be situated to the west of East Terrace. Design of the building will be contemporary, elegant and airy and will embrace the steep slope of the site and showcase local materials and building vernacular.

Linkages - A series of gentle pedestrian ramps curve down the hill between the town and the river providing easy access from East Terrace to the Historical Village, new Town Wharf and River Front Walk

Orientation - New signage positioned adjacent to and within the new Visitor Information Centre will orientate people to the attractions of the Loxton Riverfront and provide a map of walking and cycle trails throughout the floodplain including the new River Front Walk.

New Town Wharf - Wharf facilities designed to accommodate short term houseboat, cruising and tourist based river traffic will form a part of the new visitor focal point. Adjacent the wharf will be a visitor information bay directing visitors to attractions and services within the town and along the floodplain.

Shuttle Bus - A community run shuttle service, accessed by a phone or intercom at the wharf, would allow river visitors to access retail services within the town and have their goods safely delivered to their boat.





BEFORE AND AFTER
PERSPECTIVE VIEWS - LOOKING WEST

DETAILED PRECINCT CONCEPTS

6.3 Visitor Information Centre

A key design feature of the new Riverfront Focal Point is the introduction of new Visitor Information Centre/ Café building to the West of East Terrace. This building is fundamental to refocusing visitor and recreational activity into a single location and providing a clear and inviting entry point to the attractions of Loxton.

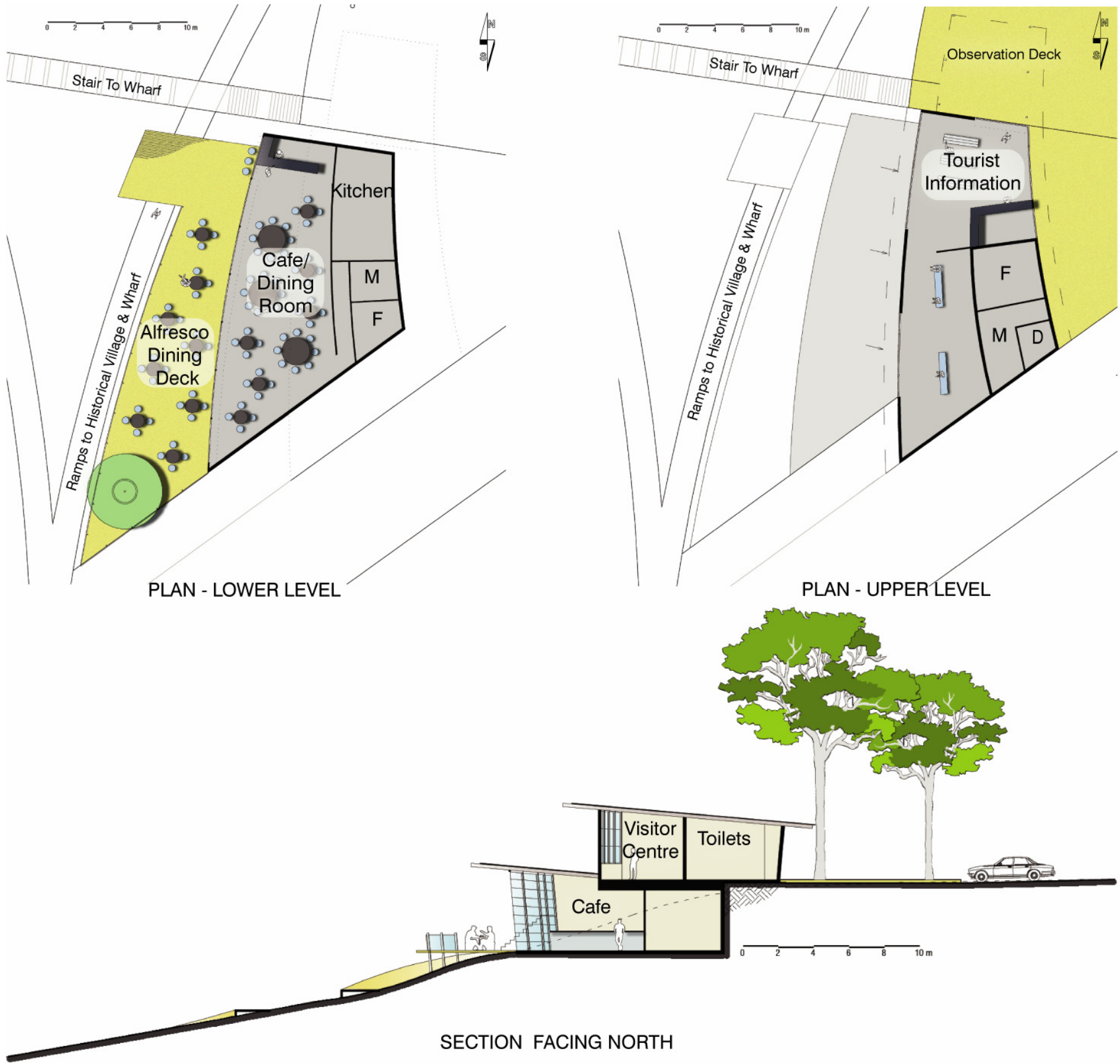
Key features of the building include:

Tourist Information Office – Situated on the upper level is a new tourist information office with interactive displays of local attractions and history. It is anticipated that this could also act as a new entry office/ pay point to the Historical Village.

Visitor Retail – Adjacent to the tourist information facility will be a visitor retail area that can double as gallery space that can be used by local artists or as display space for cultural events in the Riverland.

Café/ restaurant – This will be located on the lower level and seat up to 70 diners both internally and on the adjacent alfresco dining deck. Both the style and product offered by this café should provide a point of difference from other dining establishments in the town. Ultimately it should be a showcase for local produce and wine and offer both formal and informal dining opportunities.

Iconic Design – This building is the foundation to promoting Loxton’s image as an exciting and desirable place to visit and as such, needs to be a high quality and contemporary design. QED propose to subtly insert the building into the slope of the hill, maintaining existing vistas from the town. The building will be a lightweight and unimposing structure that relies heavily on the use of local stone, timber and glass and is complementary to the existing built form in the town.





Historical Village

LOXTON RIVERFRONT DEVELOPMENT



DETAILED PRECINCT CONCEPTS

6.4 Historical Village

The Loxton Historical Village is a key attraction within the Riverfront Precinct. This facility is well maintained and has several significant historical items within its collection. It consists of a mixture of genuine and replica historical buildings in a main street setting. As a part of the broader riverfront strategy there is an opportunity to refresh this attraction to ensure its relevance and viability to future generations.

Key Features include:

Linkages – A new entry point linked to the proposed Visitor Information Centre with a series of ramps will provide a more prominent and inviting entrance. A tokenised entry system could also be introduced with tokens available at the new Visitor Information Centre. This would have the additional benefit of reducing staffing pressures and operational costs.

Story Telling – An opportunity exists to apply for funding with the History Trust of South Australia to engage a professional museum designer with the aim of creating story based displays that have a modern and interactive approach to the interpretation of the exhibits.

External Presentation – Current fencing styles are uninviting and not reflective of its function as a tourist attraction. Fences visible from the Visitor Focal Point should be replaced to reflect the quality of the adjacent landscape treatment, potentially using a mixture of stone with artistic infill panels. All other fencing could be softened with screening planting and artworks.

New eucalypt tree planting will soften the appearance of the existing bitumen car park. Car parking closer to the entrance will be reconfigured with a new entry point and edge treatment.

Cultural Program – A programme of live theatre, bands and outdoor cinema nights could enliven the village at night. There is potential to theme these nights in line with other cultural programs running in the town and the Riverland.



New Eucalypt trees to be planted in the car park.



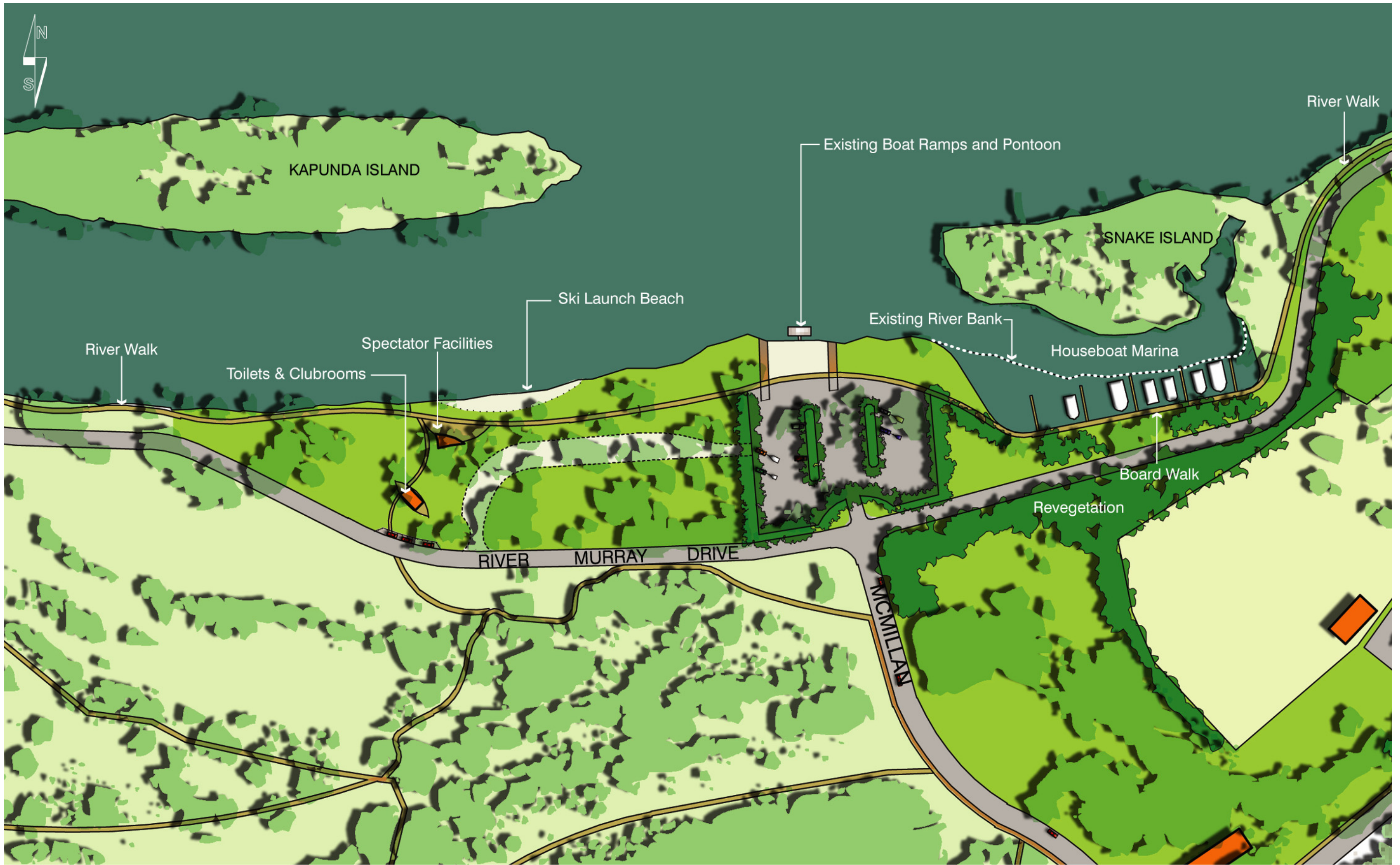
Fences visible from the Riverfront Focal Point are to be replaced.



The main street of the Historical Village.



Screening plants will be used to soften the fences



Aquatic Club & Houseboat Marina



DETAILED PRECINCT CONCEPTS



6.5 Houseboat Marina

Houseboat moorings are currently catered for with an informal arrangement at the western end of Apex Park. As a part of this study we propose to create a managed mooring facility behind Snake Island.

This will require some excavation of the river bank and formalising the edge conditions with a deck. The area has few trees at present. New tree planting can be introduced with minimal disturbance to the environment. However careful environmental and hydrological analysis will be required prior to commencement of this project.

The provision of a formal mooring facility means that both long term and short term visitors can use the facilities and any detrimental effects to the environment (waste, tying up on trees) can be minimised and managed. It also provides an incentive for houseboat based tourists to stop in Loxton overnight and explore the local attractions.

It is recommended that council take the opportunity to formalise arrangements with the more permanent users through a licensing arrangement to ensure that standards, tenure and costs can be managed.

In addition, it is proposed that Snake Island undergo revegetation to provide further amenity to marina users and an additional interest point along the proposed River Walk.

6.6 Aquatic Club

The aquatic club is a community based club that services local water sport enthusiasts. Facilities include two boat ramps, a large car park, toilets and picnic facilities for spectators.

Key Features include:

Car Park & Boat Ramps – With the exception of new plantings, functional arrangements are to remain as they are as they currently function well and members are happy with the layout.

Ski Launch & Spectators - New spectator facilities and a launch beach for skiers will be re-located approximately 40 m down stream from the original facilities. This improves safety for skiers by reducing conflict between launching skiers and the boat ramps.

Amenities – A new activity centre will be created adjacent the new launch beach. This will contain new toilets/ change rooms, BBQs, shelter and power. It is anticipated that will be a dual purpose node that services the Aquatic Club members and also act as a rest/ picnic stop for recreational users.

Clubrooms – Subject to funding and development approvals, there is an opportunity to construct new clubrooms on top of the relocated toilet block. In the interim, the existing clubrooms could be refurbished to improve their presentation and safety.

River Walk - It is intended that the Aquatic Club will form a key node in the proposed River Walk and act as a rest and orientation point for pedestrians and cyclists with new interpretive signage.

Revegetation – New plantings around the edges and within the car park will soften the visual impact of the vast expanse of bitumen. River banks (exempting the launch beach) will be revegetated with native species to minimise erosion and improve the appearance of the area.



Lions Adventure Park

LOXTON RIVERFRONT DEVELOPMENT

DETAILED PRECINCT CONCEPTS

6.7 Lions Adventure Park

It is proposed that the Lions Park be upgraded into a high quality and unique river themed adventure park featuring custom-made equipment and water features. Locating this type of activity in the Lions Park will energise the western end of the floodplain and provide positive links with the Loxton Riverfront Caravan Park.

Key Features of the design are:

Mini Murray – A continual stream of water activities mimicking the curves of the Murray will run through the entire park with 'dry' activity zones linked to it. This could be formed of shallow rock pools, mini rapids and animated fountain jets set flush into the ground.

Mounding – Low mounds planted with turf and hardy plants snaking around the 'Mini Murray' will form sculptural elements for children to play imagination based, unstructured games.

Mini Murray Princess – A replica paddle steamer will provide a 'fort' like structure and act as a centrepiece to the park with flying foxes zooming out of the hull of the boat.

Swings and Roundabouts – A series of structured 'dry' activities targeted at different ages and skill levels such as swings, climbing frames, tyre mounds and oscillating platforms will be located along the Mini Murray. A fenced toddlers park will be located adjacent the picnic facilities and car park.

Amenities – Existing toilet facilities and BBQs need to be replaced/refurbished and additional shelters provided. There is a potential to theme these elements to the surrounding play spaces.

Car Parking – Revegetation and tree planting are proposed in the existing car park to soften the visual impact and provide increased amenity for users. Pedestrian safety has been improved with the introduction of green islands and a central crossing point to the car park.





Loxton Riverfront Caravan Park



LOXTON RIVERFRONT DEVELOPMENT

6.8 Caravan Park

Existing Strategy

A Masterplan for the Loxton Riverfront Caravan Park has been prepared as per the lease conditions set by Council. This Masterplan states the following broad objectives

1. Move tourist operations of the caravan park to the new section and make it the feature section of the park. *(It is our understanding that this refers to higher ground in the southern portion of the park)*
2. Retain the lower section for tourist overflow, permanents and annuals.
3. Make the Caravan Park a 'family park' rather than rely on the retirement and stop over market. Occupancy has been traditionally flat during the summer period.
4. Achieve AAA Tourism 4 star rating in 2005-06-08
5. Make the park as flood proof as possible.

Whilst we agree with the broad strategy of consolidating the facilities on higher ground and improving the quality of the experience offered, there is an opportunity to address issues and revise strategies as part of the Riverfront Development Strategy inline with the objectives of the Riverland Strategic Integrated Tourism Plan.

Riverland Strategic Integrated Tourism Plan

The Riverland Strategic Integrated Tourism Plan provides a clear snapshot of where the future of accommodation in the region lies. Some points and recommendations raised in the paper include:

- There exists a lack of accommodation choice within the region
- There needs to be an increase in 'points of difference' with respect to accommodation
- There is a strong caravanning and camping culture within the region
- The region should look for opportunities in natural riverfront settings to develop different accommodation styles, more specifically quality cabin style developments in a natural setting.

There is a strong opportunity for the Loxton Riverfront Caravan Park to embrace the directions that are set out in the report and explore partnership and funding opportunities to develop the Caravan park as a key site within the broader tourism strategy for the Riverland Region.

Issues & Challenges

Unmanaged Land Fill

Landfill is being dumped on site to create higher ground for the introduction of river view cabins. It is QED's view that this type of fill activity will result in unstable ground that may not be suitable for building upon, may incorporate unsound environmental practices and create a potential hazard in the event of flooding. There may also be unforeseen environmental implications to changing the topography of the floodplain by restricting overland flows and create additional stress on native vegetation.

Landscape & Environment

At present the Caravan Park has a mix of landscape types, grassed areas for camping, salt affected grassland and significant stands of mature red gums on the northern section of the park.

More recently exotic tree species have been planted in the newer southern section of the park. These plantings are in poor health and struggling to grow. QED is of the view that the planting of exotic species is inappropriate and has a limited chance of success in such a salt affected environment.

Opportunities and Recommendations

An opportunity exists for the Loxton Riverfront Caravan Park to pursue tourism related funding opportunities by revising the existing Masterplan to tighten up existing strategies and timelines. Our recommendation is that the following actions be incorporated as a part of this revision.

- Mitigate any further adverse affects of landfill by preparing a detailed civil engineering design that clearly delineates areas of fill and an appropriate and environmentally sound placement process.
- Engage an urban designer/ architect to prepare a design strategy to guide future development. This will ensure that new buildings are complementary to the broader riverfront strategy and their unique setting.
- Develop a comprehensive landscape strategy that complements environmental recommendations for the adjoining floodplain area. It is important that native species are used wherever possible and that planting locations are carefully considered and planned within this broader context. This will have several benefits;
 - Increased success rate of planting
 - Improved health of the overall floodplain environment
 - Improved quality and continuity of landscape character

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

7.1 Implementation Strategy

Due to the extensive works that have been proposed as a part of the Masterplan QED suggest a staged approach to implementation focused on three key priorities.

Strategies have been prioritised into three stages that spread costs over a 5-10 year period without compromising the design and to gain maximum early impact.

- Stage 1 Goal : Welcome and Guide visitors
- Stage 2 Goal : Visitor and Recreational Destinations
- Stage 3 Goal : Visitor Infrastructure

Refer to the tables to the right for a breakdown of staging and costs for each precinct.

Loxton has a long history of strong community involvement through organisations such as Lions and Apex. The maximum community value can be achieved for this project by the continued involvement of these and other groups. However some level of involvement of commercial contractors will be necessary for most strategies

7.2 Potential Funding Partners

Potential sources of funding are outlined as follows;

Visitor Focal Point

Commonwealth -

- Australian Tourism Development Program
- Regional Assistance Program/ Regional Partnerships

State -

- South Australian Tourism Commission(SATC) – Tourism Development Fund
- Planning SA – Places for People
- Riverland Regional Development Corporation
- Country Arts Trust

Interpretive Trails

Commonwealth -

- 'Sharing Australian Stories' fund

Conservation and Environmental Programs

Commonwealth -

- Community Water Grants – Australian Government Water Fund
- Australian Government Environment Fund

Boating And Mooring Facilities

State –

- Boating Facilities Fund



STAGE 1 GOAL: WELCOME & GUIDE VISITORS

Strategies	Element	Component	Total (incl Fees/Cont)
1. Riverfront Focal Point			
	Viewing Deck/ Car Park/ Median Planting	Viewing deck Car park modifications Median landscaping	228000
	Visitor Information Centre Café	Visitor Centre Public Toilet Café Café deck Service Drop-off	1261200
	Road Closure/ Access Ramps/ Town Wharf	Road removal and landscaping Access ramps and stairs Town wharf	747600
		Riverfront Focal Point	2236800
2. Entry Statements/ Directional Signage/ Orientation Nodes			
	East Terrace Entry Statement	Tree planting Roundabout water feature Roundabout planting	230400
	Directional Signage		240000
	Orientation Nodes (4 off)	Landscaping Signage	48000
		Entry Statements/ Directional Signage/ Orientation Nodes	518400
3. Historial Village Entry Plaza			
	Entry Plaza	Landscaping Plaza Entry Structure	63600
	Artwork Boundary Fence		60000
	Redevelop Car Park	Landscaping Car Park	30000
		Historial Village Entry Plaza	153600
4. Riverwalk & Artwork Strategy			
	Riverwalk	Path (assumes community labour) Lighting Furnitutre	459000
	Artwork Strategy		120000
		Riverwalk & Artwork Strategy	579000
5. Caravan Park Concept Plan			
	Concept Plan Preparation		10000
			10000
STAGE 1 GOAL: WELCOME & GUIDE VISITORS - COST ESTIMATE			\$3,497,800

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

STAGE 2 GOAL: VISITOR & RECREATION DESTINATIONS

Strategies	Element	Component	Total (incl Fees/Cont)
1. Lions Adventure Park Environs (assumes community labour input)			
	Murray Water trail	Water Trail Water Features Toddlers	300000
	Adventure Play Equipment	Mini Murray River Queen Flying Fox Play Zone Equipment	72000
	Ancillary Infrastructure	Toilet Block Car Park Upgrade Shelters & BBQs Landscaping	228000
		Lions Adventure Park Environs	600000
2. Aquatic Club Environs (Assumes club labour input)			
	Ski Launch & Spectators	Launch Beach Toilets/Change Rooms Shelters BBQs	174000
	Club Rooms	Club Responsibility	0
	Car Park Upgrade & Landscaping	Landscaping Car Park Modification	144000
		Aquatic Club Environs	318000
3. Houseboat Marina			
	Form Marina	Mobilization costs Dredging Lanscaping Mooring berths	240000
		Houseboat Marina	240000
4. Revegetation Strategy			
	Supply of Plants		60000
		Revegetation Strategy	60000
STAGE 2 GOAL: VISITOR & RECREATION DESTINATIONS			\$1,218,000

STAGE 3 GOAL: VISITOR INFRASTRUCTURE

Strategies	Element	Component	Total (incl Fees/Cont)
1. Pedestrian & Cycle Networks/Interpretative Signage (assumes community labour input)			
	Pedestrian & Cycle Network	Improving Existing Network Extending Network	120000
	Interpretive Signage	Design and Implementation	120000
		Pedestrian & Cycle Networks/Interpretative Signage	240000
2. Road Network & Parking Improvements (Assumes community labour input)			
	Road Improvements	Bollard edging Road Works	420000
		Road Network & Parking Improvements	420000
3. Scenic Lookout			
	Lookout Platform & Car Park	Lookout Platform Car Park Lanscaping	103200
		Scenic Lookout	103200
4. Caravan Park Progressive Implementation			
	Implementation by Operator		0
		Caravan Park Progressive Implementation	0
STAGE 3 GOAL: VISITOR INFRASTRUCTURE			\$763,200
TOTAL IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM			\$5,479,000

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

7.1 Community Feedback Summary

Feedback was sought from the community after a public presentation at which the final Masterplan was launched. A response sheet was mailed out to residents and businesses within the study area to gather their views and opinions on the outcomes from the study. In addition, the final plans and report were available for public viewing at the Loxton office of the Loxton Waikerie Council chambers along with additional response sheets.

Community support for the project was largely positive, with a general air of enthusiasm and excitement at the concepts proposed and a determination to proceed as soon as possible on the implementation stage. A detailed summary of the community responses is provided in Appendix A.

The response form asked respondents to rate the importance of key aspects of the Masterplan and then an average was taken to rate the importance of each issue.

Respondents were asked to rate which urban design principles they considered to be of most importance. Encouragingly all principles were rated fairly evenly with 'create an integrated landscape and movement strategy' rating the highest and 'maintain and develop visitor and recreation opportunities' deemed to be of the least importance.

Similarly respondents were also asked to rate the importance of suggested improvements in the 8 key Loxton Riverfront precincts. This question produced a much more conclusive result with the Riverfront Focal Point and visitor information centre and café deemed to be of highest importance and the entry statements, Aquatic Club and houseboat marina and historical village deemed to be of the lowest importance.

Some concerns were raised regarding the introduction of native eucalypt trees in the median strips as a design feature of the entry statements and leading into the visitor focal point. Changes have been made to reflect the communities concerns and to integrate the proposed Eucalypt trees with existing trees with a succession planting strategy. QED stands by its recommendation to use eucalypts as they will provide a stunning natural feature when

mature, create opportunity for tourist branding of Loxton as a 'river town', create positive environmental outcomes and provide a visual cue to passing traffic of the riverfront context to Loxton.

Overall, the outstanding contribution from the community throughout the whole project has led to an excellent design result that is a good representation of the community's priorities for this important public place. QED feels that the comprehensive community consultation process and enthusiasm from the locals has led to the majority of respondents feeling very positive and enthusiastic about the direction of the Masterplan. It is clear that the community wishes to see an early commencement of the high priority projects.

APPENDICIES

Appendix A – Master Plan Response Sheets

APPENDICIES

Master Plan Response Sheets

Q1. What is your interest in Loxton –

- Own a property in Loxton – 54% (32/59);
- Resident of Loxton – 78% (46/59);
- Own a business in Loxton – 10% (6/59);
- Regular Visitor to Loxton – 8% (5/59);
- First time visitor to Loxton – 0% (0/59);
- Other – 0 (0/59).

Q2. Please prioritise the following Urban Design Principles in your order of preference 1 to 4 where 1 (highest priority principle) – 4 (lowest priority principle) in the boxes below.

- Protect and enhance the floodplain and recognise its role within the broader River Murray Strategies. – 155 / 236, Av = 2.63
- Welcome and guide visitors from the river and road. – 133 / 236, Av = 2.25
- Create an integrated landscape and movement strategy. – 167 / 236, Av = 2.85
- Maintain and develop visitor and recreation opportunities. – 118 / 236, Av = 2.00

Q3. How would you rate the improvements suggested in the 8 Key Loxton precincts?

Precinct No. / Name	Average Vote	Importance
1. Entry Statements	3.5	5
2. Aquatic Club & Houseboat Marina	3.5	5
3. Loxton Riverfront Caravan Park	3.85	3
4. Riverfront Focal Point	4.10	1
5. Visitor Information Centre & Cafe	4.00	2
6. Lions Adventure Park	3.66	4
7. Historical Village	3.5	5

Q4. Do you have any further feedback?

General Comments:

- Cant wait to see it all happen;
- Let's do it!
- Love the integrated approach to such a huge area;
- I believe these plans will be effective for tourists and will definitely improve the area and have a positive impact;
- Any blueprint adopted must then be implemented without tampering by well meaning locals;
- Some of the improvements suggested are fine as long as my rates don't go up;
- I like the idea of having an overall integrated plan for the riverfront;
- Do it all at once so it doesn't get lost in the system;
- Need somewhere to have breakfast, utilise the view of the river;
- I would like to congratulate the council on allowing full community participation in the designing process involved in the riverfront development;
- The sooner this development plan can get started the better! Its an excellent plan to focus on our natural attribute, the river;

Proposed Café:

- Café that's open all day everyday like the pub or club;
- I think the café will be a good idea, and the structure will look awesome - 5;
- Opening hours later then 5pm – 7;
- Not native food, decent food - 4;
- Make sure attracting young people

Environmental Concerns:

- Emphasis on water flow around Snake Island;
- Storm water, effective use;
- Any landscaping changes I request that where at all possible that native trees be left un-disturbed;
- To plant and beautify the conservation zone;
- Only hesitation is the safety of the gum trees;

Infrastructure Comments:

- Really important to have paths along the river;

- Have concerns about the close proximity of the boat ramps to take off;
- Proposed closing of H/U building causing 6 people to lose their jobs is not good;
- Currently Loxton does not have a wharfing facility, nor an adequate recreational boat launching facility, need upgrade ASAP - 3;
- Opposed to 'doing away' with art gallery building;
- Opposed to amount of signage / eucalyptus trees affiliated with the roundabout / leave it as it is - 8;

Walking trails upgraded;

- Excellent ideas – need a small play area;
- Proposed marina will have silting problems – 2;

Historical Village:

- More events at the historical village, like old persons concert - 5;
- Tours at historical village, dressed up, more information - 2;
- Hold more open days – 4;
- Have a river or stream running through the village;
- Historical village stay the way it is, don't make it modern it will ruin it;
- Car parking issues with historical village;

Other Recreational / Information Facilities:

- Prefer visitor information centre building to remain as is, better for visitors entering town from all roads - 4;
- I question the location of the lookout on Thiele Avenue, preferred site is above Habels Bend, closer to the river;
- Make Lions adventure park more fun, better rides – 2;
- Aquatic area at the riverfront is an excellent idea, maybe include areas like this further down the for youth as well;
- Better BBQ facilities - 4;
- More nightlife for the youth;
- Don't make Lions park to glitzy, make it an easy target for vandalism;

Caravan Park:

- You need to change the caravan parks ideas if the town is to benefit from the influx of expected tourists;
- If you want to fill up the caravan park make the tariffs more affordable;