

Bromfield Street weir: Why remove it?

BACKGROUND

The Bromfield St weir on the Merri River (BELOW) was constructed in 1907 as part of the Merri scheme to supply town water to Warrnambool. This scheme was decommissioned in 1939. It is now a redundant asset.



The weir is used for recreational fishing but presents an impassable barrier to migrating fish. The site also presents a significant risk to public safety due to its accessibility and lack of maintenance.

FISH MIGRATION

Fish passage along waterways is critical to the survival of native fish. Species of both fresh and saltwater fish move within waters at different times to access food and shelter, to avoid predators and to breed and complete their life cycle.



*ABOVE: Tupong migrate between marine and freshwater environments to complete their life cycle. (Photo Neil Armstrong)
 BELOW: Black bream move into the upper reaches of rivers around spawning time (Hindell et. al. 2007) (Photo: GHCMa)*



GREATER RECREATIONAL ACCESS

By removing the weir structure, it opens the waterway up for recreational activities such as fishing, kayaking and paddleboarding. Removal of the weir links with other precinct improvement projects, including the Merri Connections and Rivers of Warrnambool projects, which have access structures such as jetties and pontoons, and revegetation works in them.



BIODIVERSITY IMPACTS

A range of projects are underway to improve habitat and biodiversity in the Merri River. The presence of a major fish barrier on the river limits the value of these projects.



LEFT: Fish Hotels" are one example of habitat enhancement works along the Merri which assist with fish numbers increasing in the waterways

PUBLIC SAFETY

The weir is easily accessible and poses a significant risk to public safety due to its age, height, slippery surfaces, deep water and thick mats surface/floating mats of Azolla sp.



Residential development north of the Merri River will increase visitation to the site. The North of Merri River Development Contributions Plan outlines plans to develop the area north of the weir for recreational amenity (Mesh Pty. Ltd, 2011)

Bromfield Street weir: Why remove it?



ABOVE: An artist's impression of the Merri River with the weir in place (LEFT) and after its removal (RIGHT). Waterway modelling shows river heights will change less than 1.5m but allow greater natural flows.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE WEIR IS REMOVED?

Removing the weir will better connect a naturally flowing waterway with the community of Warrnambool and allow its full benefit to be realised. It supports the vision and planning of connecting the Merri as highlighted in the Warrnambool City Council's *South of the Merri Open Space Precinct Plan*, the *Merri River Parklands Framework*, and the *Warrnambool 2040* community strategy.

The removal will make the river more accessible for recreational activities, for nearby landholders and the wider community. Additionally, it will remove a physical barrier impairing the movement of aquatic animals.

CONCERNS? QUESTIONS?

Contact Glenelg Hopkins CMA
Tel: 03 5571 2526
Email: ghcma@ghcma.vic.gov.au