5. This attractive green track ends abruptly at busy Arthurton Road where you again cross the creek. Turn left along the road bridge and immediately left again onto a shared track heading downhill to rejoin the main shared track, turning left to pass under the bridge.

6. Almost immediately you are at the creek-side entrance to CERES Environmental Park. Explore CERES and be amazed at the sustainable solutions they suggest. Option: You could return to the City from CERES: at the front gate in Roberts Street turn left, then right at Blyth Street. From here you can see the Tram 96 terminus at the Nicholson Street intersection.

7. To return to Rushall Station, retrace your steps from CERES creek side entrance and turn right onto the shared track, this time going under the bridge so you are now on the opposite side of the creek to your outward journey. A short track immediately on your left leads through a few trees to the creek and some bench seats, another pleasant place for a break.

8. Signs along this part of the creek record some of the early history of the area such as a very interesting story associated with the parts and usage of the amazing crane that is a functional litter trap. The remains of the retaining wall from the 1880s Wales Street bluestone quarry can be seen just before Kirkdale Park (which has seats, shelter, barbecue, toilets and swings) and before the next bridge you can see the remains of an old weir in the creek below where the water rushes between the narrow walls.

9. Pass the bridge (that leads to the wetlands) and now you are on the track you set out on.

10. Go under the St Georges Road bridge and walk gently uphill. Turn right over the bridge then right again along the track beside creek. Follow the Merri Creek Trail signs back to Rushall Station.

Future Walk from Rushall Station
Merri Creek Trail to Dights Falls (3km one way). Follow the signs through beautiful parkland to the junction of Merri Creek and the Yarra River.

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Merri Creek

Summary

In the heart of inner suburban Melbourne, this trail passes through areas of trees and wetlands giving an unexpected sense of bush only a few kilometres from the CBD. The walk passes relics of earlier times when bluestone was quarried in this area and leads to CERES, a fascinating place dedicated to community and environmental initiatives, well worth visiting.

Distance: About 5km (plus walk around CERES); or 3.2km one way (96 tram to City from CERES).

Time: About 2 hours.

Level of difficulty: Easy.

Melway map: 30 D11; and Darebin Council Merri Creek Trail map (phone 03 8470 8470).

Track surfaces: Mostly sealed surfaces. Area between Merri Creek Wetlands and Arthurton Road is unsealed. Suitable for prams in dry weather, however prams should not cross the creek (see Step 4) after rain.

Facilities: Seats at intervals; toilets at Sumner Park, Kirkdale Park, CERES; water fountain/tap at Sumner Park; barbecues at Sumner Park and Kirkdale Park; café at CERES.

CERES Environmental Park: Open: 9am-5pm during Winter and 9am-6pm during Summer. Market: 9am-1pm Wednesdays and Saturdays. Free entry. Information: ceres@ceres.org.au Phone: 03 9387 2609.

Best season: Spring, Summer and Autumn.

Mobile phone coverage: Good.

Dogs: Permitted on leash.

Hazards: The tracks are shared with bicycles so keep to the left on the path, be alert and considerate of other users. Watch children on the path near the creek.

Car parking: Very limited.

Public transport:
Train: Epping Line to Rushall Station. Or bus: Route 250 Latrobe University to Garden City, get off at Rushall Station or route 253 Northland to Garden City, get off in Rushall Crescent and walk across to the railway station. Both buses may be taken from the corner of Lonsdale and Exhibition Street in the City. Buses run every day.
Walking Notes

1. Turn left out of the station and left again to go through the rail underpass then turn right to cross the bridge over Merri Creek, following the Merri Creek Trail Ceres 2.3km sign. Keep following the signs. At the first street turn left (McLachlan Street) and left again at Cunningham Street, then right when you reach the creek. The path goes under the metal railway bridge and soon you will see wooden steps leading down to a pleasant picnic ground beside the creek with tables and shady trees. Prams can access this area by walking another 200m on the concrete path before turning hard left down a gravel path. Walk up this path to rejoin the main track.

2. The path leads you to a road bridge across the creek at St Georges Road. Turn left along the footpath beside the road, pass the steep track on your left (marked Pedestrians Only) and turn left onto the shared track which loops more gently down and back under the road bridge. The creek is now on your right.

3. This part of the trail is pleasantly green and opens to Sumner Park with its sports ground, pavilion (with toilets behind), a barbecue and a water tap. The only seats are benches beside the pavilion and on a Saturday morning you can stop to watch children learning soccer skills.

4. The Merri Creek Wetlands are on the other side of the creek so cross the bridge soon after Sumner Park, turn left and then take the right fork up the hill. Go through the gate on your right to find a very pretty bushland setting, a perfect place for a break (no seats) – but it is a wetland so it will be wet underfoot after rain. Return to the bridge exit (do not cross the bridge), turn away from the City so that the creek is on your left and follow the firm dirt track (suitable for prams except after heavy rain) through a lovely bush area. Prams should not visit the wetlands but, after crossing the bridge, turn left through the bush area.