

## 5.4 Avalon

Melling Bridge to junction of Harcourt Werry Drive and Taita Drive

*Objective: enhance recreation experience with planting for screening and spatial variety, and improve visual connections to the river.*

The river corridor is open and fairly bland with a "managed" character. The western escarpment dominates and the open sports fields on the western bank provide little buffering from urban areas. The road, which runs between the stopbank and the river, dominates much of the experience on the eastern bank. There are areas of successful planting screening the road, with some gently undulating landforms on the berms. Stretches of dense willow plantings block visual connections with the river. The willows are punctuated by road-sized openings giving access to the water. There are some opportunities to walk through the willows. Both banks are well used for public recreation, with organised sport occurring on the eastern bank and walking on the western bank. There are several historic sites along the river in this area, including Maraenuka pa, a Maori river crossing point, Motutara pa, the site of the old Belmont

railway station, fossil forest remains and an old groyne.

This reach is also important for recreation, with a wide variety of facilities including golf courses, sports fields, and dog obedience, pony, croquet, and tennis clubs. Belmont domain is well used by the local community for a variety of recreational and community activities. There are several rafting entry/exit points along the river. There is also an underpass beneath State Highway 2 linking the river with the communities on the western hills.

Encroachment by private landowners has restricted access along the western bank at Belmont.

There are numerous opportunities through this reach to improve the river berms both visually and for informal recreation.

### **Key Proposals:**

- ***On both berms, screen roads with further blocks of eco-sourced native planting, while recognising that it is important to maintain open stretches for visual access, and create special interest areas adjacent to access tracks.***
- ***On the eastern bank, use planting to improve spaces linked to access points along the river. Improve visual connection to the river with gaps in the vegetation and by pruning willows. Rationalise vehicle access.***
- ***On the western bank, improve visual and physical access to the river with gaps in willow plantings and pruning.***