



Merri-bek
City Council

COUNCIL AGENDA

Wednesday 8 February 2023

Commencing 7 pm

**Council Chamber, Merri-bek Civic Centre
90 Bell Street, Coburg**

Language Link

This is the Agenda for the Council meeting.
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ਏਜੰਡੇ ਦੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਆਈਟਮ ਬਾਰੇ ਮਦਦ ਲਈ,
ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ 9280 0751 ਤੇ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।

Acknowledgement of the traditional custodians of the City of Merri-bek

Merri-bek City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people as the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waterways in the area now known as Merri-bek, and pays respect to their elders past, present, and emerging, as well as to all First Nations communities who significantly contribute to the life of the area.

Information about Council Meetings

These notes have been developed to help people better understand Council meetings. All meetings are conducted in accordance with Council's Governance Rules.

WELCOME The Mayor, who chairs the meeting, formally opens the meeting.

APOLOGIES Where a Councillor is not present, their absence is noted in the minutes of the meeting. Council may also approve leaves of absence in this part of the meeting.

DISCLOSURES OF CONFLICTS INTERESTS A Councillor has a duty to disclose any direct or indirect financial or other interests, they may have in any matter to be considered by Council that evening.

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES The minutes of the previous meeting are put before Council to confirm the accuracy and completeness of the record.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND OTHER MATTERS At each Council Meeting provision of 10 minutes will be made in the Agenda for the Mayor and Councillors to acknowledge and recognise achievements of local individuals and organisations; and raise matters considered important to Council.

PETITIONS Council receives petitions from citizens on various issues. Council formally accepts petitions at Council meetings.

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME This is an opportunity (30 minutes), for citizens of Merri-bek to raise questions with Councillors.

COUNCIL REPORTS Council officers prepare detailed reports, which are considered by Councillors and a Council position is adopted on the matters considered. The Mayor can invite firstly Councillors, secondly Officers, and then citizens in attendance to identify Council reports which should be given priority by the meeting and considered in the early part of the meeting.

NOTICES OF MOTION A motion which has been submitted to the Chief Executive Officer no later than 12 pm (noon) 10 business days prior to the meeting which is intended to be included in the agenda. The motion should outline the policy, financial and resourcing implications.

NOTICE OF RESCISSION A Councillor may propose a motion to rescind a resolution of the Council, provided the previous resolution has not been acted on, and a notice is delivered to the CEO or delegate setting out the resolution to be rescinded and the meeting and date when the resolution was carried. If a motion for rescission is lost, a similar motion may not be put before the Council for at least one month from the date it was last lost, unless the Council resolves that the notice of motion be re-listed at a future meeting.

FORESHADOWED ITEMS This is an opportunity for Councillors to raise items proposed to be submitted as Notices of Motion at future meetings.

URGENT BUSINESS The Chief Executive Officer or Councillors, with the approval of the meeting, may submit items of Urgent Business (being a matter not listed on the agenda) but requiring a prompt decision by Council.

CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS Whilst all Council meetings of Council are open to the public, Council has the power under the *Local Government Act 2020* to close its meeting to the public in certain circumstances which are noted where appropriate on the Council Agenda. Where this occurs, members of the public leave the Council Chamber or Meeting room while the matter is being discussed.

CLOSE OF MEETING The Mayor will formally close the meeting and thank all present.

NEXT MEETING DATE The next Council meeting will be held on Wednesday 8 March 2023 commencing at 7 pm, in the Council Chamber, Merri-bek Civic Centre, 90 Bell Street, Coburg. The next Planning and Related Matters meeting will be held on Wednesday 22 February 2023 commencing at 6.30 pm.

WELCOME

1. APOLOGIES/LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Mayor, Cr Panopoulos has requested a leave of absence from 10 August to 10 September 2023 inclusive.

2. DISCLOSURES OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

3. MINUTE CONFIRMATION

The minutes of the Council Meeting held on 7 December 2022 and the Special Meetings held on 13 and 19 December 2022, be confirmed.

4. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND OTHER MATTERS

5. PETITIONS

- | | | |
|-----|---|---|
| 5.1 | PETITION TO IMPROVE THE CORNER OF JOHN AND ST PHILLIP STREETS, BRUNSWICK EAST | 6 |
|-----|---|---|

6. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

7. COUNCIL REPORTS

- | | | |
|------|--|-----|
| 7.1 | LIBRARY HOURS TRIAL | 10 |
| 7.2 | OPPORTUNITIES TO INFLUENCE BETTER QUALITY DEVELOPMENTS IN MERRI-BEK CITY COUNCIL | 15 |
| 7.3 | NORTHERN REGIONAL TRAILS STRATEGY 2022 - MERRI-BEK ADOPTION | 45 |
| 7.4 | TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR COCOA JACKSON LANE, WARBURTON STREET AND HORNE STREET, BRUNSWICK - RESPONSE TO NOTICE OF MOTION | 169 |
| 7.5 | SUBURB BOUNDARY REALIGNMENT - 119A AND 121 LYGON STREET BRUNSWICK EAST | 198 |
| 7.6 | COUNCIL ACTION PLAN 2022-23 - SECOND QUARTER PERFORMANCE REPORT | 203 |
| 7.7 | FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT REPORT FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022 | 238 |
| 7.8 | CONTRACT VARIATION: RFT-2021-217 – WALLACE RESERVE NORTH AND SOUTH REFURBISHMENTS | 250 |
| 7.9 | CONTRACT AWARD RFT-2022-333 CONCRETE AND DRAINAGE WORKS | 255 |
| 7.10 | GOVERNANCE RULES REVIEW PROCESS | 260 |

7.11	GOVERNANCE REPORT - FEBRUARY 2023 - CYCLICAL REPORT	267
8.	NOTICES OF MOTION	
8.1	BOX FOREST ROAD IMPROVEMENTS - NORTHERN MEMORIAL PARK	304
8.2	PUBLIC TOILETS IN RESERVES	305
9.	NOTICE OF RESCISSION	
	Nil	
10.	FORESHADOWED ITEMS	
	Nil	
11.	URGENT BUSINESS	

5. PETITIONS

5.1 PETITION TO IMPROVE THE CORNER OF JOHN AND ST PHILLIP STREETS, BRUNSWICK EAST

A petition has been received containing 113 signatures requesting Council improve the corner of John and St Phillip Streets, Brunswick East and install a bike pump on the verge.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Receives the petition, requesting Council improve the corner of John and St Phillip Streets, Brunswick East and install a bike pump on the verge.
2. Refers the petition requesting Council improve the corner of John and St Phillip Streets, Brunswick East to the Director City Infrastructure for consideration and response.

Attachment/s

- 1 [↓](#) Petition - Improve the corner of John and St Phillip Streets, Brunswick East - Signatures redacted D22/581739

Subject: FW: Petition to improve the at the corner of John and St Phillip St Brunswick East
Attachments: Signed Petition Cnr John and St Phillip verge.pdf

Dear Council

Please find attached our local petition to improve the verge at the corner of John and St Phillip St Brunswick East.

We have collected 113 signatures on the attached document which follows this email.

Corner of John and St Phillip St - Improving the Verge - Petition

What do we want:

We request the Council removes the **asphalt on verge, as marked below in 4 locations**. This will still allow access to car doors & people & allow planting with low growing (less than 1 metre) native plants, flowers and herbs (no large trees will be planted).

We also request the Council **install a bike pump on the verge**. The community has been providing a bike pump on the verge for some years, but they are plastic and don't last. The bike pump is very popular and heavily used.

Why?: This area used to be factories, so there is very little vegetation in the area & lots of asphalt. Therefore it is very hot in summer. Water has nowhere to go and pools on the footpath in winter.

The bike pump is located on the 'Brunswick Shuffle' and local cyclists have become accustomed to having a bike pump at this location. A Council bike pump and repair station would be ideal.

Where?: Either side of the **corner of John St and St Philip St Brunswick East**. The plants will be purchased and maintained by residents of 1 John St, which fronts on this verge area.

Bike pump location



St Phillip St (1)



St Phillip St (2)



John St (3)



John St (4)



Corner of John and St Phillip St - Improving the Verge - Petition

I support the proposal to green the corner of John and St Phillip St Brunswick East and installation of a bike pump on the verge.

	Name	Address	Any comments?
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7. COUNCIL REPORTS

7.1 LIBRARY HOURS TRIAL

Director Community Eamonn Fennessy
Cultural Development

Officer Recommendation

That Council confirms the current trial opening hours for Merri-bek Libraries as outlined in this report will become permanent, effective immediately.

REPORT

Executive Summary

Following community engagement, Council endorsed a trial of proposed new library opening hours at the February 2021 Council meeting. The trial hours were introduced in May 2021. The trial of the new opening hours was interrupted by library closures and vaccine mandates during 2021, and the trial was extended into 2022 when service interruptions ceased.

Library use figures from 2022 have been reviewed for this report. Libraries have been well utilised during the additional hours added during the trial. The recommendation is to confirm the trial library hours as the permanent library opening hours effective immediately.

Previous Council Decisions

Library Hours Trial – 10 February 2021

That Council:

1. *Endorses a trial of new hours for Moreland Libraries as follows:*
 - *Brunswick and Coburg Libraries opening at 9 am rather than 10 am Monday – Friday;*
 - *Campbell Turnbull Library opening at 1pm rather than 11 am on Monday; at 10 am rather than 11 am Tuesday – Friday, and closing at 5 pm rather than 5.30 pm on Mondays and Thursdays;*
 - *Fawkner Library opening at 10 am rather than 11am Monday – Friday and closing at 5 pm rather than 5.30 pm Monday and Thursday.*
2. *Receives a report at the July 2021 Council meeting evaluating the trial.*

1. Policy Context

A review of Library Opening Hours is an action identified in the Library Services Strategy 2019, Key priority 5 – Place – Planning and advocating for quality flexible spaces for our community to learn, discover and connect.

The Library Services Strategy is aligned with the Council Plan 2017-2021 in relation to Connected Communities Key Priority1.

Achieve higher levels of social cohesion for our multicultural, established and newly arrived community, by fostering opportunities for shared learning and celebration.

Specifically, Council Action Plan deliverable C1d Library Services Strategy 2019: Fostering community connectedness; lifelong learning, creativity and wellbeing Action 2: Undertake community consultation, costings and benchmarking regarding library opening hours.

The Library Hours Trial is aligned with the Council Action Plan 2021-2025 – Theme 4: Vibrant Spaces and Places in Merri-bek. Strategic Objective - To create welcoming, unique spaces and places across Merri-bek that attract and connect everyone, improving access to community facilities and affordable housing and encouraging vibrant artistic, social and economic activity.

2. Background

A review of Merri-bek's Libraries was undertaken in 2018 and these findings informed the Library Services Strategy 2019. The review identified that the total number of opening hours offered in Merri-bek represented a high level of community access, but a common theme was that some users found the mid-morning opening times (10am) restrictive as those times do not fit easily with common routines such as school drop-offs. Users also commented that more accessible opening hours are needed for people who are studying.

Beyond a Quality Service: Strengthening the Social Fabric: Standards and Guidelines for Public Libraries, second edition 2012, defines the objective of library opening hours as 'to open at times which enable members of the community to make the most effective use of the library service and to ensure that the library's resources and services are as widely available as possible'.

A 2018 survey of library members and non-members was undertaken requesting feedback about library opening hours. The survey findings were considered alongside benchmarking of Victorian public libraries, usage statistics, and operational requirements to develop the proposed extended library opening hours.

The trial opening hours introduced in 2021 provide an additional 15 hours of library access per week across Merri-bek's libraries. The additional 15 hours of operation can be delivered within existing budgets through minor operational changes.

The trial opening hours introduced in 2021 are:

Campbell-Turnbull

	Current	Previously
Monday	1-5pm	11am-5:30pm
Tuesday	10am-8pm	11am-8pm
Wednesday	10am-5pm	11am-5pm
Thursday	10am-5pm	11am-5:30pm
Friday	10am-5pm	11am-5pm
Saturday	10am-1pm	10am-1pm
Sunday	CLOSED	CLOSED
Totals	38 Hours	37 Hours

Fawkner

	Current	Previously
Monday	10am-5pm	11am-5:30pm
Tuesday	10am-8pm	11am-8pm
Wednesday	10am-5pm	11am-5pm
Thursday	10am-5pm	11am-5:30pm
Friday	10am-5pm	11am-5pm
Saturday	10am-1pm	10am-1pm

Sunday	CLOSED	CLOSED
Totals	41 Hours	37 Hours

Brunswick

	Current	Previously
Monday	9m-8pm	10am-8pm
Tuesday	9m-8pm	10am-8pm
Wednesday	9m-8pm	10am-8pm
Thursday	9m-8pm	10am-8pm
Friday	9m-6pm	10am-6pm
Saturday	9am-4pm	9am-4pm
Sunday	1-5pm	1-5pm
Totals	64 Hours	59 Hours

Coburg

	Current	Previously
Monday	9m-8pm	10am-8pm
Tuesday	9m-8pm	10am-8pm
Wednesday	9m-8pm	10am-8pm
Thursday	9m-8pm	10am-8pm
Friday	9m-8pm	10am-8pm
Saturday	9am-4pm	9am-4pm
Sunday	1-5pm	1-5pm
Totals	66 Hours	61 Hours

New Hours for Glenroy Library at Glenroy Community Hub

	Current	Previously
Monday	9m-8pm	10am-8pm
Tuesday	9m-8pm	10am-8pm
Wednesday	9m-8pm	10am-8pm
Thursday	9m-10pm	10am-10pm
Friday	9m-6pm	10am-6pm
Saturday	9am-4pm	9am-4pm
Sunday	1-5pm	1-5pm
Totals	66 Hours	61 Hours

During 2022, Merri-bek's libraries operated with the trial hours as approved by Council in 2021. When the new Glenroy Library opened in the Glenroy Community Hub in March 2022, its opening hours were updated to align with the 9am openings being trialled at Brunswick and Coburg Libraries.

During 2022, almost 30,000 additional library visits were made during the earlier opening times. There were no negative responses or complaints received from the community regarding the earlier opening times.

3. Issues

Community implications

There are varying requirements amongst our diverse community, using a new approach to community engagement enabled more input from those who do not currently use the library but may do so if the hours were more suitable.

Usage implications

The Campbell Turnbull Library has a minor increase (one hour) in opening hours over a slightly different pattern of operation. While the Campbell Turnbull Library is well-loved, it has lower attendance than other Merri-bek libraries. It is anticipated the new opening hours will enable more people to visit.

The current trial opening hours have made all libraries more accessible to members of the community, including current library users and those who have not used the library in the past.

Merri-bek Libraries continue to offer a 24/7 library service with an extensive range of eResources available online.

Human Rights Consideration

The implications of this report have been assessed in accordance with the requirements of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities.

Specifically, Section 15 Freedom of Expression; the freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas will be enhanced by increased hours of operation of public libraries in Merri-bek.

4. Community consultation and engagement

The following community consultation was undertaken prior to March 2020 and was therefore not impacted by COVID-19 restrictions.

- 2018 survey of users and non-users;
- Online platforms such as Good Karma networks;
- In person discussions in the community;
- Observations and in person discussions at the libraries;
- Feedback and observations from library staff.

The Libraries Advisory Committee recommended the proposed library opening hours at their meeting on 25 February 2020 and noted that the proposed earlier opening times would be appreciated by the community.

Affected persons rights and Interests

Before making a decision that affects a person's rights, Council must identify whose rights may be directly affected and provide an opportunity for that person (or persons) to convey those views regarding the effect on their rights and consider those views.

As public libraries are a service for the whole community, consideration was given to ensuring that a wide range of community members were able to input into the library hours proposal. In particular, effort was made to connect with community members who do not currently use the library to hear and consider their views, through in person discussions in shopping centres, community spaces and online forums not associated with libraries.

5. Officer Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Council officers involved in the preparation of this report have no conflict of interest in this matter.

6. Financial and Resources Implications

New Signage will be required at Campbell-Turnbull, Coburg and Fawkner Libraries. This cost can be accommodated within the library budget

There is no operational cost implication related to making the trial library opening hours permanent.

7. Implementation

During 2022, 30,000 library visits were made during the trial of earlier opening times. This additional service is able to be delivered within the current library budget. On approval, continuation of the new library hours will be advertised to the public via social media, website and e-newsletter. Signage will be updated as required.

Attachment/s

There are no attachments for this report.

7.2 OPPORTUNITIES TO INFLUENCE BETTER QUALITY DEVELOPMENTS IN MERRI-BEK CITY COUNCIL

Director Place and Environment Joseph Tabacco

City Development

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Note it has continually sought to influence better quality developments in Merri-bek City Council over many decades through improvements to the Planning Scheme and/or planning process including adoption of:
 - a) The Moreland Apartment Design Code;
 - b) Good Design Advice Sheets;
 - c) Planning Scheme Amendment to the Moreland Planning Scheme to increase tree canopy and landscaping outcomes;
 - d) Continued advocacy and leadership for Environmentally Sustainable Design, such as Towards Zero Carbon in Planning;
 - e) Design Excellence Scorecards; and
 - f) Various amendments to the Moreland Planning Scheme by introducing Design and Development Overlays that provides specific built form and design guidelines.
2. Undertake further work on how to influence better quality developments in Merri-bek City Council by:
 - i. Investigating, developing and trialling a process model that encourages better quality, planning scheme compliant two dwelling development, while maintaining public notice and rights of review to VCAT;
 - ii. Proceed with a 12-month trial period of the new process model as described in resolution 2i.
 - iii. Update Council's current Good Design Advice sheets; and
 - iv. Commission the preparation of examples of better-quality medium density developments.
3. Note the proposal to refer the making of the current temporary fixed-term Urban Design Officer position permanent for consideration as part its 2023/2024 budget process, in order to maintain the resourcing capacity for expert urban design advice on medium density development applications.

REPORT

Executive Summary

The Victorian Planning legislative framework confines both Council and VCAT to deciding whether a planning permit application will produce *acceptable* outcomes. This report discusses options available to Council. Over many decades Council has strived to encourage development that achieves better than acceptable outcomes. This report explores what other levers are available to Council to go beyond the Planning Scheme.

Merri-bek City Council has sought to be a leader in the planning industry by continually pursuing improvements to planning and development outcomes for the community by exploring past initiatives such as the Moreland Apartment Design Code, Towards Zero Carbon in the Planning Scheme, Good Design Advice Sheets and the Design Excellence Scorecards, which continues to operate within existing resources. Additionally, the Moreland Planning Scheme has been amended through incorporating improved landscaping outcomes and introducing Design and Development Overlays that provide specific built form and design guidance. Regular monitoring of the Planning Scheme continues to be undertaken in the pursuit of improving the quality of developments at Merri-bek.

A review of other Councils, both locally and interstate, reveals a range of initiatives that have been undertaken to improve the quality of developments. Common initiatives include:

- design review panels;
- design competitions;
- award programs; and
- presenting case studies/development typologies to promote good design outcomes.

To inform this report, officers have explored models that seek to elevate the quality of developments either to design excellence or better-quality having regard to how best to influence a larger number of development proposals in Merri-bek.

Upon review of various models and current development activity, it is evident that Council would have the most impact in seeking to influence better-quality benchmark for a larger proportion of development, as opposed to pursuing further initiatives that seek a design excellence benchmark for a now much smaller number of major development projects occurring in Merri-bek.

New initiatives targeting multi-dwelling developments (representing approximately 30% of all planning applications) has the potential to deliver better-quality private developments at a larger scale. The recommendations of this report seeks to positively influence medium density development by updating Council's good design advice sheets and commissioning the preparation of higher-quality design examples of medium density developments to provide clear guidance on Council's expectations of better quality. In addition, the development and trial of a process model that encourages better quality, planning scheme compliant, two dwelling development is recommended.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DECISIONS

The following previous Council decisions are of relevance to Council's past work in seeking to influence better quality development:

- Moreland Apartment Design Code (Council Report DED70/15 – 12 August 2015)
- Various amendments to the Moreland Planning Scheme by introducing Design and Development Overlays that provides specific built form and design guidelines.
- Better Planning and Development Outcomes (Council Report DED25/18 – 9 May 2018), which resolved (amongst other things) to support:
... a 12 month trial of an additional urban design officer to provide design advice in relation to development applications and pre-application meetings, subject to its inclusion in the adopted 2018/2019 Budget.
- Amendment to the Moreland Planning Scheme to increase tree canopy and landscaping outcomes (Council Report DCF22/20 – 10 June 2020)
- Amendment C190 incentivising two lot dwelling applications through a streamline permit process (Council report 8.1 – 3 November 2021)
- Towards Zero Carbon in Planning (Council Report 7.8 – 8 December 2021)

- Design Excellence Scorecard - Trial Outcomes and Recommendations (Council Report 7.2- 2 February 2022). The Council resolution included:

Receive a report in the second half of 2022 outlining further ways in which better quality developments can be encouraged and bad quality developments can be discouraged in Moreland (Merri-bek), including information on what initiatives other Councils have undertaken to improve the quality of development.

This report focuses on this resolution, seeking to explore further ways to influence better-quality developments in Merri-bek.

1. Policy Context

Victorian Planning Legislative Framework

The Victorian Planning legislative framework confines both Council and VCAT to deciding whether a planning permit application will produce acceptable outcomes in terms of the Planning Policy Framework, the purposes and decision guidelines of the zone and overlays and any other decision guidelines in Clause 65.

In seeking to encourage development that achieves better than acceptable outcomes for the Merri-bek community, Council must look to other levers beyond the Planning Scheme.

Council Plan

The Council Plan 2021-2025 includes themes and strategies that seek to elevate the quality of development in Merri-bek, including Strategy 4.8:

Influence the delivery of better-quality private developments through providing clearer guidance for environmentally responsive design, promoting and negotiating improved quality of development through the planning permit application process.

2. Background

What is Council currently doing to achieve better quality developments?

Council has continually sought State Government support for Planning Scheme improvements over many decades. There have been numerous Council decisions that explored better quality developments. Of relevance is the Design Excellence Scorecard (the Scorecard), Amendment C190 and the Designing our Neighbourhoods project.

Design Excellence Scorecards

The Scorecards were developed in 2018 in consultation with Councillors, Council's (then) Urban Environment Committee and key industry stakeholders and were adopted by Council in February 2019 (Council Report DCF3/19) for a 12-month trial period.

The trial was extended twice and adopted on a permanent basis in February 2022 subject to further enhancements to the Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) criteria, and changes to officer delegations so that Scorecard applications can be decided at a Planning & Related Matters Council Meeting (Council Report 7.2).

The Scorecards are a voluntary tool for planning permit applications which establish a benchmark for design excellence of medium and high-density developments in Merri-bek.

There are two scorecards, one for apartment development and the other for multi-dwelling developments. The scorecards operate in parallel to the planning application process at little to no ongoing implementation cost to Council. Since adoption in February 2019, seven developments managed to achieve the design excellence benchmarks of the Scorecards and only one of them relates to medium density development. These applications represent a small proportion of the approximately 1400 planning applications that are determined by Council each year.

The trail of the scorecards also positively influenced many other developments that sought to lift the bar in achieving some but not necessarily all of the requirements of the scorecards with higher levels environmental sustainability, accessible apartments, quality design and materials as well as other public benefit, including new public spaces and affordable housing. Outcomes that have been achieved across the seven Scorecard compliant projects include:

- 36 affordable housing dwellings;
- 285 dwellings meeting accessibility standards (104 more dwellings than what was required under the Planning Scheme);
- An average 7.5 star energy rating;
- All gas free dwellings and a contribution of 145kw of Solar PV; and
- Community benefits that have included upgraded streetscapes, new pedestrian connections and a commercial tenancy that is to be leased to a social enterprise.

The removal of officer delegation, when adopting the Scorecard on a permanent basis in February 2022, has further reduced the incentive for permit applicants to commit to achieving the Scorecard requirements which go beyond the acceptable requirements in the Planning Scheme. No new projects seeking to achieve the scorecards have been received since the removal of officer delegation. It appears that the additional investment required for commitment to higher levels of design quality, ESD, accessible apartment and deliver other public benefit, such as social and affordable dwellings is no longer being realised when faced with the uncertainty of a potential unfavourable decision at a Council meeting. **Attachment 1** includes the Design Excellence Scorecard - Guidelines

Amendment C190 - Better Outcomes for Two Dwellings on a Lot

As part of the adoption of the Medium Density Housing Review at the 10 October 2018 Council meeting (Council Report DED63/18), a recommendation of Council was to investigate the potential to incentivise applicants to design fully compliant and improved quality lower density developments. Amendment C190 is a response to this resolution.

Planning Scheme Amendment C190 proposed a change to the Planning Scheme to improve the quality of two dwelling developments by establishing a streamlined planning assessment process for proposals which are fully compliant with planning provision and go further by delivering best practice ESD and accessible homes for future Merri-bek residents. The amendment sought to streamline this form of development by expanding the existing 'Vic Smart' 10-day permit process with planning scheme compliant applications being exempt from public notice, objections and review to VCAT.

Amendment C190 was exhibited in 2020, and an expert independent Planning Panel hearing was conducted in October 2020. After hearing all submissions in support and opposed to the amendment, the Panel provided its report in December 2020, supporting the amendment subject to minor changes.

Subsequent to the Panel's consideration of the amendment, the State Government released its Better Regulation Review which included a proposed new Vic Smart Plus package whereby applications would not be exempt from public notice. This pathway is yet to be implemented by the State Government.

At the Council meeting on 8 December 2021, Council resolved to defer its decision as the State Government is contemplating introducing a Vic Smart Plus planning permit application pathway.

Designing our Neighbourhoods

This project will review planning policy related to the features and design of residential areas. The project aim is to provide planning direction that helps to achieve safe, pleasant, and inviting neighbourhoods.

In July and August 2022 we asked our community what they valued about their street or neighbourhood. Feedback from the community included that vegetation, built form and streetscapes are the most highly valued characteristics in neighbourhood design. The next stage of this project is taking the community feedback to consider how it could be translated into updated planning scheme requirements with further community consultation to follow.

What initiatives have other Councils undertaken to improve quality of developments?

A review of better-quality design initiatives by other Councils, both locally and interstate, reveals a range of initiatives that have been undertaken. Common initiatives include:

- A. design review panels whereby a panel of experts come together to provide design advice;
- B. design competitions, whereby an independent panel of design professionals selects the successful design based on an agreed set of design related selection criteria;
- C. presenting design excellence awards in various categories; and
- D. presenting high quality development case studies or exemplars to showcase good design outcomes.

It is noted that the current Council initiatives operate within the existing resources, whereas many of the initiatives that other Councils have undertaken, require recurrent funding for ongoing implementation.

This report seeks to explore further ways that Merri-bek City Council can continue to influence better quality developments in the community.

3. Issues

An objective of the Council Plan 2021-2025 is to influence the delivery of better-quality developments in Merri-bek. The initiatives that Council has adopted so far, as discussed in Section 2, has sought to implement this objective within existing resources.

Matters to consider in influencing better-quality developments are how to influence at a larger scale and what benchmark is being sought (i.e. design excellence or better quality).

Type of applications and benchmark

A review of Council's planning data in **Attachment 2** highlights that the number of multi-dwelling applications remains a common application type with more than 400 multi-dwelling applications being received annually compared to a now reduced number of 15 major applications annually for developments where estimated cost is more than \$7 million.

Of the 400 multi-dwelling applications, approximately 200 of these applications are for two dwellings on a lot. It is considered that targeting the multi-dwelling applications will have the greatest impact in delivering better quality developments at a larger volume across the municipality.

Council would also need to consider the benchmark that is being sought to elevate the quality - i.e. whether Council is striving for 'better' quality which is exceeding the Planning Scheme requirements, or 'excellence' which is industry leading.

Initiatives to elevate quality of development

Awards and design competitions initiatives

Initiatives that promote design excellence include awards programs for private developments and design competitions for projects on Council land. The benefits of these models are having inputs of additional advice from various experts and showcasing developments that raise the profile of design excellence in Merri-bek.

The cost and resourcing associated with commissioning and administering processes for the provision of additional independent external design are not insignificant and need to be factored against the extent of developed projects that are potentially influenced.

Design competitions in particular are best suited for large scale applications noting that Council already has resolved the Design Excellence Scorecards tool to promote clear expectations of design excellence. Therefore, these initiatives are not recommended.

Architectural Design Review Panel initiatives

Architectural Design Review Panel (Panels) operate in a limited number of other Councils across Australia and through the Office of the Victorian Government Architect (OVGA). Relevantly, Council did establish the Coburg Design Review Panel which ceased in June 2016, due to a combination of the reduced development demand within central Coburg and the cost/resource burden of continuing the Panel.

Panels commonly only consider major planning applications of between 2 and 4 applications a month, generally comprise 3 or 4 members, and are only advisory in nature. Resourcing for Council, which would involve meetings and the associated costs for experts translated to a cost per application of between \$9,000 to \$15,000 or approximately \$96,000 to \$144,000 annually based on a panel that meets once per month.

Design Review Panels which influence, only a handful of applications at significant cost and resourcing are therefore not recommended.

The use of the current (temporary) in-house Urban Designer advice process is recommended over Architectural Design Review Panels. Inhouse expert Urban Design advice provides greater flexibility on the timelines of advice including the capacity to provide advice earlier in the planning process, when there is greater opportunity for changes to be made.

Better quality Initiatives

The better-quality initiatives are recommended as they focus on influencing a larger proportion of planning applications including two dwelling developments. In the model two dwelling development initiative, projects are designed at the outset to achieve full compliance with the residential development standards of the Planning Scheme, while also delivering best practice environmentally sustainable and accessible homes for future Merri-bek residents. The initiative would also seek to improve the architecture and quality of materials used. This initiative could be implemented while awaiting the outcomes of State Government Planning reform, including the introduction of the VicSmart Plus pathway.

Two complimentary initiatives would be to update Council's good design advice sheets and commission examples of developments that Council considers as better-quality multi-dwelling developments. This would provide clear guidance to the developers on the expectations of what is better quality development.

Currently, the Medium Density Design Excellence Scorecard also seeks to lift the quality of medium density applications. However, since its adoption in 2019 only one medium-density development has met the Scorecard. It appears that the high benchmark of 'design excellence' sets too great a challenge and with too little incentive for the development industry to seek to achieve the Scorecard.

This highlights a potential for Council to look at other ways to influence the quality of medium density applications to a more achievable 'better' quality benchmark that still exceeds the Planning Scheme requirements.

With the current standard planning application process, these applications generally take 3 to 5 months for a decision to be issued and more than twice that length of time if a VCAT review is lodged. Much of this time is spent in the request to submit further information and in negotiating changes to improve the level of compliance with the residential development standards of the planning scheme and deliver 'acceptable' outcomes. The benefits of the better-quality initiatives will be to streamline the planning process by mandating pre-applications meetings where planning requirements and issues i.e. Urban Design, ESD and traffic are addressed upfront. This can result in the lodgement of a complete and compliant planning application leading to a quicker planning assessment and decision-making. Public notice and third-party rights will continue to be part of the process. **Attachment 3** provides an example of the application process of this model. Unlike Amendment C190 which delivers potential resource savings via the simplified Vic Smart process, this faster decision-making model would need to be incentivised through resourcing with a dedicated Urban Planner to review this stream of applications and continuing the employment of an additional Urban Designer for internal advice on medium density applications.

Having compared various initiatives and noting that multi-dwelling applications are the largest contributor of planning applications, it is considered that implementing the better-quality initiatives will be the most efficient and effective way to positively influence a larger scale of development in Merri-bek.

Human Rights Consideration

The implications of this report have been assessed in accordance with the requirements of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities. In particular, the rights to freedom of expression and to take part in public life have been taken into consideration.

Public notice and third-party rights will continue to be part of the process in all models outlined in this report.

4. Community consultation and engagement

Once the trial of a process that encourages better quality, Planning Scheme compliant two dwelling proposals has been developed and prior to implementation, Council officers will engage with the community and the regular permit applicants to provide information about the model. Subsequently, a 12-month trial period is recommended to understand the interest and the success of the model.

Affected persons rights and interests

Public notice and third-party review rights at VCAT will remain as part of the recommended initiatives.

5. Officer Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Council officers involved in the preparation of this report have no conflict of interest in this matter.

6. Financial and Resources Implications

The financial and resources needed to support the better-quality initiatives will be as follows:

- For the 12-month trial period of the two dwelling process model, existing resources within the Urban Planning Unit can be utilised to review the stream of applications under this initiative. Should this be successful, and dependant on the number of applications being lodged in this stream, additional resourcing for a dedicated Band 5 Urban Planner (current salary range \$79k to \$90k) may be directed for consideration as part of Council's 2024/25 budget process.

- The current temporary additional Urban Designer role established to increase team capacity for review of medium-density developments ends this financial year. The continuation of this position in a permanent capacity at a salary range of \$93,000 to \$102,000 is proposed to be referred to the 2023/24 Council budget process.
- During the trial period, existing resources within the Sustainable Built Environment team can be utilised to provide paid ESD certification at the pre-application stage for applications under this model. The ESD certification will ensure that there are agreed ESD outcomes which will be delivered through the planning application process. The fee for the certification could be established via the 2023/24 budget process and determined through a benchmarking exercise and included in Council's draft Fees and Charges schedule. An online portal system would also be required to lodge and track this service which can be created using existing resources. Should this service be successful, dependent on the number of applications lodged, an additional resource for a dedicated ESD officer may be directed for consideration as part of the 24/25 budget process.
- Updating of the good design advice sheets can be accommodated within existing resources.
- A tender process would be followed, to select suitable architects that would assist with creating examples of medium density development to showcase better quality developments. Engaging an architect/s is estimated to cost between \$30,000 and \$50,000. Once architect/s have been chosen, the work to publish the content can be accommodated within the existing resources. The budget allocation for this component of the project, would need to be considered as part of 23/24 budget process.

7. Implementation

Should the officer recommendation be supported, Council officers will:

- a) Commence investigating and developing a model that encourages better quality and compliant two dwelling development, in Quarter 1 of 2023
- b) Commence the update good design advice sheets, in Quarter 2 of 2023;
- c) Engage an architect to provide examples of developments that Council considers as better quality multi-dwelling developments in the Quarter 3, of 2023, subject to funding in the budget;
- d) Road test the model with regular permit applicants and community groups in Quarter 4 of 2023 and prior to the implementation of a 12 month trial, commencing 2024;
- e) Finalise guidance material (i.e. example development typologies) to support the 12 month trial, commencing 2024;
- f) Promote the model with the support of the Communication Unit in 2024; and
- g) Evaluate and measure the success of the trial including any resourcing implications in Quarter 1 of 2025.

Attachment/s

1	Design Excellence Scorecard - Guidelines	D22/454126
2	Type of applications in Merri-bek	D22/499658
3	Standard process vs better quality compliant two dwellings on a lot model process	D22/499664

Moreland Design Excellence Scorecard

Guidelines for Applicants
June 2022



Moreland City Council



Contents

Pg.03	Introduction
	What is the Design Excellence Scorecard
Pg.04	The need for a Design Excellence Scorecard
	The Value of Good Design
Pg.05	The Scorecard Explained
	How to Qualify
Pg.06	Operation of the Scorecard
	Application Requirements
Pg.07	Guidelines for the High-Density Development Scorecard
Pg.07	• Building Design and Materials
Pg.09	• ESD and Building Performance
Pg.11	• Building Accessibility
Pg.11	• Community Benefit
Pg.14	Guidelines for the Medium-Density Development Scorecard
Pg.14	• Building Design and Materials
Pg.15	• ESD and Building Performance
Pg.16	• Building Accessibility
Pg.17	• Community Benefit
Pg.18	Glossary

Introduction

This document outlines the purpose and operation of the Moreland Design Excellence Scorecard (the Scorecard).

It provides background information to explain each section of the Scorecard and defines Design Excellence in the City of Moreland.

This document aims to provide information to planning permit applicants, architects, designers, planners and the local community.

Supplementary information is provided for each section of the scorecard, with links provided to relevant websites that contain further information on technical expressions or concepts.

It includes information on how the Scorecard operates, while a glossary at the end of this document provides definitions for a range of terms.

What is the Design Excellence Scorecard?

The Moreland Design Excellence Scorecard is a tool that establishes a benchmark and defines design excellence in the City of Moreland. It seeks to improve the design quality and liveability of medium and high-density development above the baseline requirements of the Moreland Planning Scheme.

There are two Scorecards, one for medium density (townhouse/multi-unit) developments and one for high density (apartment) developments.

Participants in the voluntary scorecard process are provided with a range of benefits from Council, in exchange for significantly improved development outcomes for the community.

The Scorecard focuses on the enhancement of four key areas:

1. Building design and materials;
2. ESD and building performance;
3. Building accessibility; and
4. Community benefit.



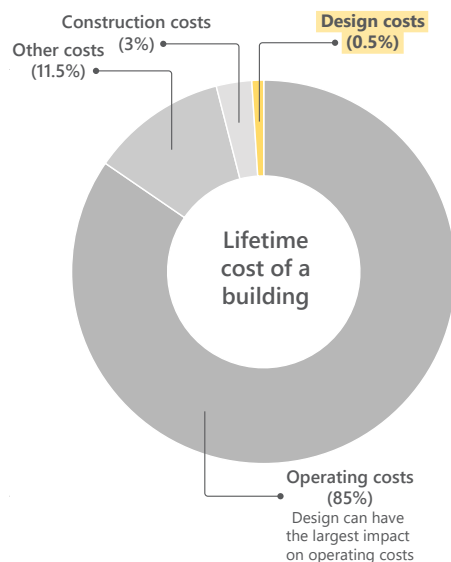
Each component of the Scorecard goes above minimum Planning Scheme expectations, but it is only where a proposal satisfies all four of these components that it is considered to achieve design excellence and is compliant with the requirements of the scorecard.

The need for a Design Excellence Scorecard

Moreland is undergoing significant growth and diversification, with the local population forecast to reach 250,000 people by 2036, requiring the construction of over 38,000 homes. This growth will require us to change the way we design and develop our neighbourhoods.

The Victorian Planning System has created an environment that seeks acceptable rather than excellent planning and design outcomes.

The Scorecard seeks to establish an aspirational benchmark for design quality, rather than accept a minimum standard.



Source: Government Architect NSW

The Value of Good Design

Design excellence is inseparable from quality planning outcomes and should be at the forefront of all robust planning processes.

Design is both a process and an outcome, it comes in many forms and is defined by much more than how something looks. High-quality design has the potential to shift negative perceptions of growth through the creation of both fit for purpose and inspiring environments.

Good design is essential in developing communities with a sense of civic pride, improved quality of life and equal opportunity. While for state and local governments, good design can help reduce public expenditure in areas such as healthcare and crime prevention while boosting economic productivity.

Design represents less than 1% in the lifetime cost of a building, but it is through the design process that the largest impact can be made on both construction and operating costs.

High-quality design and innovative policy tools create value through the planning and construction process. It is this value that can be transferred from a permit applicant to the community via Council.

The development that we facilitate now will impact positively, or negatively on the Moreland community. It is critical that we acknowledge the long-term permanence of design quality decisions that we make today.

The Scorecard Explained

There are two Scorecards, one for medium density (townhouse/multi-unit) developments and one for high density (apartment) developments.

Ensure you select the applicable Scorecard, depending on your proposal.

The following pages seek to assist permit applicants in understanding the technical content within each section of the scorecard.

It also provides a rationale for why certain aspects have been included, or why they are expressed in the manner they are.

If there is anything that requires further clarification, permit applicants should contact Council's Statutory Planning Unit on 9240 1111.

How to Qualify

Arrange a pre-application meeting. While not mandatory, this will increase the likelihood of qualifying for the Scorecard and save time during the application process.

Ensure your application meets the objectives of the Moreland Planning Scheme and has in principal support by Council officers.

Undertake pre-lodgement consultation with surrounding properties and key stakeholders. **This must comprise, as a minimum, letterbox drops to the surrounding properties with a letter that references the availability of plans, a key contact person and an opportunity for a consultation meeting to discuss the proposal and provide feedback in advance of the application's lodgement with Council. The key contact person must be available for discussion and resolution of issues throughout the planning process.**

Submit a completed Scorecard (see reverse) along with all supporting documentation and a written declaration that pre-lodgement consultation has been completed.

The Design Excellence Scorecard must be met (with any conditions agreed to in writing) prior to Council's public notice of the application.

Operation of the Scorecard

Participants in the scorecard process may nominate themselves or could be encouraged to participate by Council Officers. The Design Excellence Scorecard must be met (with any conditions agreed to in writing) prior to Council's public notice of the application.

It is important to note that all participants in the scorecard process must apply for a planning permit through a standard application process.

Public notice and Planning Information and Discussion meetings (PIDs) will continue to enable Councillors to discuss proposals with permit applicants and objectors. PIDs will occur as part of all Scorecard applications that have five or more objections.

If a Scorecard application exceeds height guidance or has objections from 10 or more different properties, an application may proceed to a Planning and Related Matters meeting, unless the application is for less than 4 dwellings.

Applications are subject to third party appeal rights, and decisions may be reviewed at VCAT.

To incentivise participation in the scorecard process, development proposals that satisfy the requirements of the planning scheme, as well as the voluntary requirements of the scorecard will be guaranteed to receive:

- An opportunity for additional pre-application meetings with Council Officers free of charge;
- The Council Officer who attended the pre-application meeting assessing the application where possible;
- Support through the application process from a Senior Planner and a Planning Coordinator;
- An additional meeting post-decision to facilitate the finalisation of documents for endorsement. Timelines for endorsement of documents will be confirmed at these meetings; and
- A Scorecard logo that can be used as part of marketing and promotional material.

Application requirement

To participate in the scorecard process, permit applicants must provide a written response that demonstrates how the proposal responds to each of the scorecard requirements, and declare that pre-lodgement consultation has been completed.

If the permit applicant amends a permit after approval, any reductions in design quality and Scorecard commitments may be assessed at a Planning and Related Matters Council meeting.

HIGH-DENSITY APPLICATIONS

Part 1: Building Design and Materials

Part 1 of the scorecard relates to the design quality of the proposal and the materials that are intended to be used.

This section of the scorecard will be evaluated by the Moreland Urban Design Team in consultation with the assessing Planning Officer.

1. Development must demonstrate excellence in architectural design including contextual response, form, articulation and materiality.

This requirement ensures that the permit applicant addresses each of the above aspects that Council considers essential in quality building design.

Council acknowledges that the opportunities presented by each site are unique and that successful design proposals may vary significantly.

Metrics or specific design standards have not been included within this section so that the scorecard does not become overly prescriptive.

Applicants may seek further guidance from the Urban Design Guidelines for Victoria:
<https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/policy-and-strategy/urban-design/urban-design-guidelines>

2. Development must incorporate public-private interfaces which positively respond to the immediate context in a sensitive, attractive and engaging manner

This requirement ensures that applicants consider the way in which the proposal interacts with the streets, paths and open spaces that surround it.

The arrangement of uses, the location of services and the use of considered materials should combine to create high-quality interfaces.

Where services must be provided at street level, they should be designed to minimise their impact on the streetscape and should be an integrated façade feature. Large areas of blank, inactive facades should be avoided.

The design and operation of waste collection facilities should be considered at the start of the planning permit process to ensure successful integration into the built outcome.

Car parking structures should be located below ground or sleeved by active uses. Where possible, car parking structures at street level should provide a minimum ceiling height of 3.5m to allow for adaptation to other uses over time.

Projections into the public realm should contribute to the human scale of the streetscape and provide adequate weather protection to pedestrians. Where communal facilities or open spaces are provided (at the street or upper levels), they should be designed to encourage passive surveillance of the public realm.

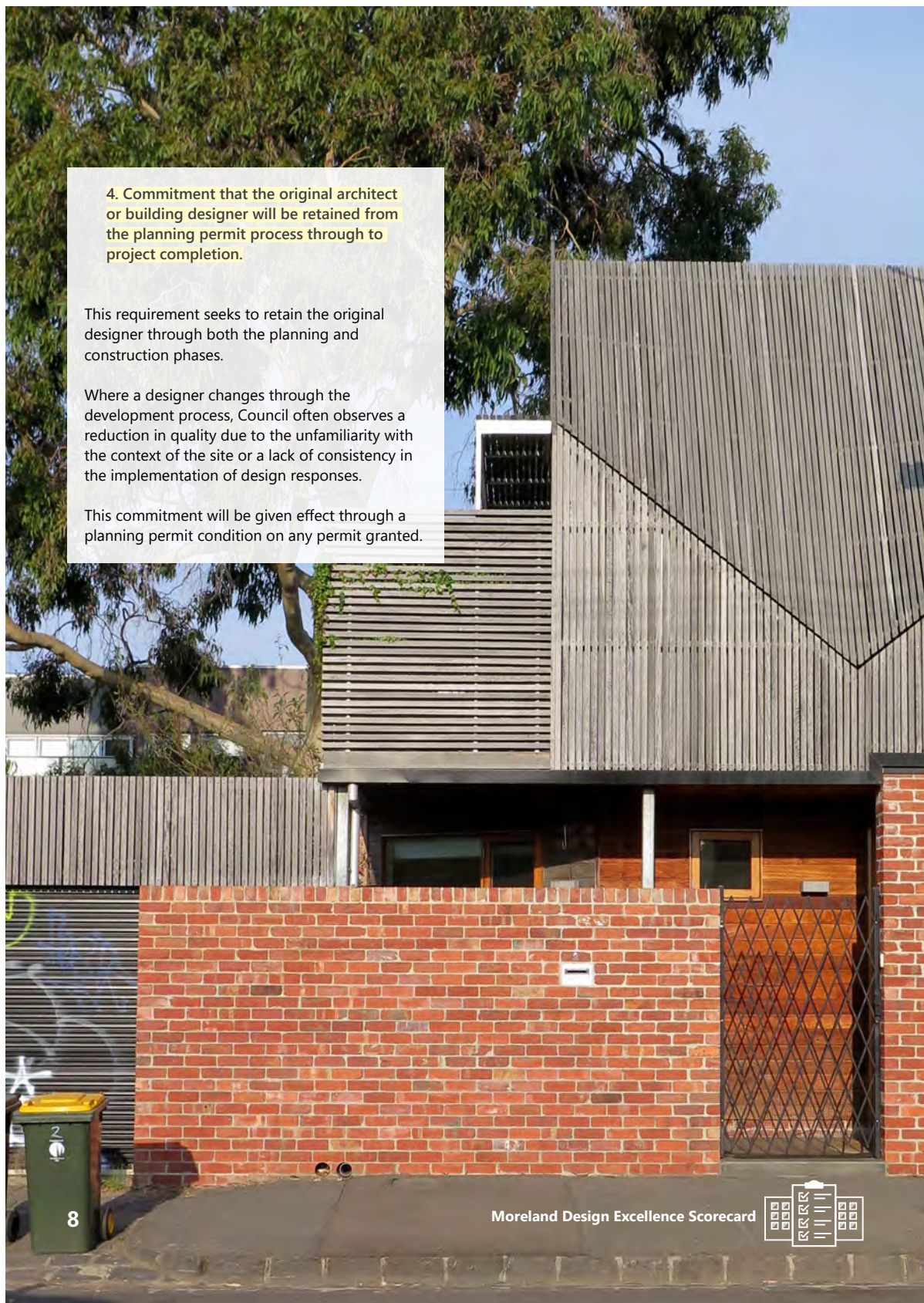
3. The permit applicant must provide a detailed materials schedule and appropriately scaled elevations of all public-private interfaces.

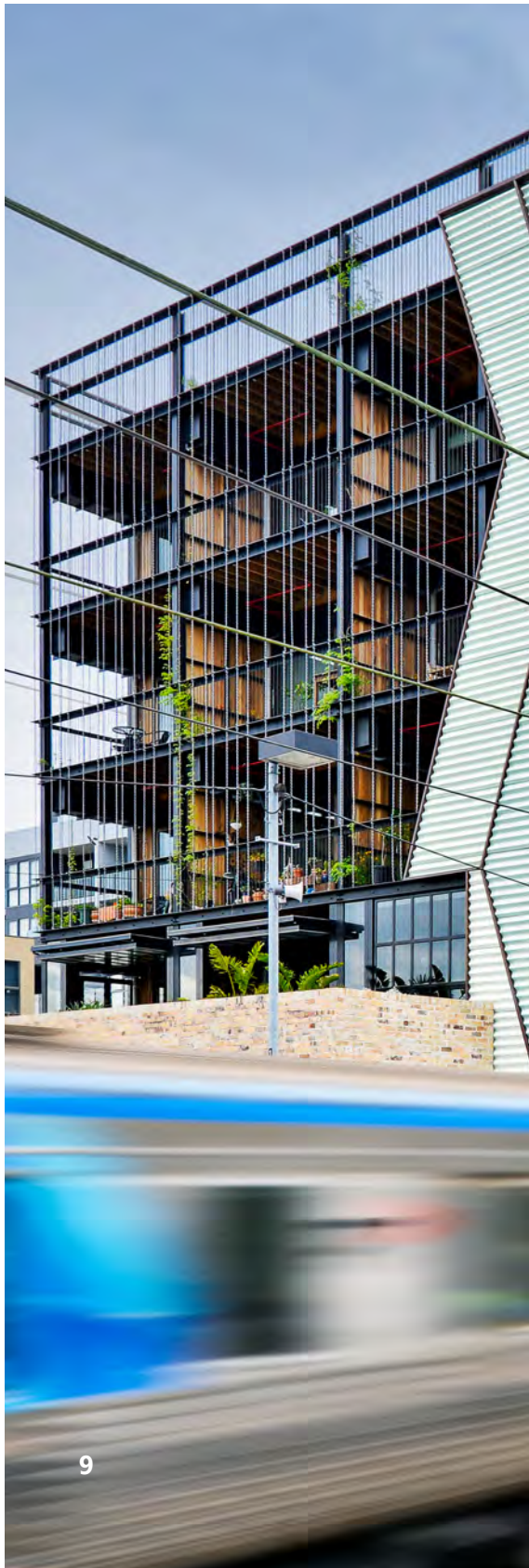
This requirement encourages the permit applicant to consider the detailed design of interfaces and the use of materials at the start of the planning permit process.

A detailed materials schedule should include highly durable and low maintenance materials for the upper levels. With finer grain, more visually engaging materials at the ground plane.

Applicants should consider the use of materials from sustainably managed sources, low embodied energy materials and recycled materials.

Elevations of public-private interfaces at a scale of 1:50 should be included with all scorecard applications. This allows the assessing Council Officer to make a more informed decision on the proposed treatment of public-private interfaces.





9

Part 2: ESD and Building Performance

Part 2 of the scorecard relates to environmentally sustainable design and the efficient operation of a development.

This section of the scorecard will be evaluated by the Moreland ESD Team in consultation with the assessing Planning Officer.

1. The development must achieve a BESS score of 70% (any innovation points must be approved by Council officers).

The Built Environment Sustainability Scorecard (BESS) is an assessment tool created by local governments in Victoria.

It assists builders and developers to show how a proposed development demonstrates sustainable design. BESS is simple to use and is provided free of charge online.

A BESS report should be attached to the planning permit application to show how the development meets sustainable design objectives.

For further information, please see:
<https://bess.net.au/>

2. A rooftop with a mix of communal open space, landscaping and solar PV. Alternatively, a rooftop with maximised solar PV may be provided.

Landscaped rooftop spaces provide high amenity areas for residents and provide some level of thermal insulation, reduced stormwater runoff and biodiversity value.

Co-locating communal open space and landscaping helps to assist in the upkeep of vegetation through passive surveillance.

The permit applicant must demonstrate that rooftop areas not occupied by mechanical plant or circulation space are dedicated to landscaping, open space or solar panels.

If no open space or landscaping is provided on the rooftop, all areas not occupied by mechanical plant should be dedicated to solar panels. On-site renewable energy generation not only provides environmental benefits, it can provide significant financial savings either through individual household bills or for collective body corporate costs.

3. Provide gas-free dwellings (some gas fittings may be justified for non-residential uses).

Many households are choosing to disconnect from the gas grid as usage costs increase and the environmental impacts of extraction become more well known.

Modern heat pump hot water and split system air-conditioning systems are more efficient than gas appliances, providing substantial financial savings for households.

Many Australian kitchens are fitted with gas stovetops which is perceived to be the market preference. However, with gradual improvements in induction cooktop technology, several local developments with strong environmental credentials are choosing to go gas-free.

An electrified home, potentially subsidised by rooftop solar is an economical and environmentally conscious choice that enables residents to divest from fossil fuels.

Exemptions for gas fittings may be justified by the permit applicant for non-residential uses such as cafes or restaurants.

4. 7.5 star NatHERS average.

The Nationwide House Energy Rating Scheme (NatHERS) is a star rating system (out of ten) that rates the energy efficiency of a home, based on its design and construction materials.

The minimum requirements provided by the scorecard set a best-practice standard for residential development that will create more comfortable homes and help residents reduce their reliance on artificial heating and cooling.

The ease of achieving a high rating for different dwellings can vary greatly depending on orientation. Because of this, Council requires a NatHERS average rather than a minimum across all dwellings in the permit application.

10

Higher-density developments are required to achieve a 7.5 star NatHERS rating due to the increased thermal mass and the insulating nature of stacked dwellings.

For further information on NatHERS, please see:

<http://www.nathers.gov.au/>

5. Electrical infrastructure capable of supplying:

- 12 kWh of energy for charging during off peak periods; and
- A minimum level 2 (mode 3) 7kW, 32Amp single phase EV charging outlets to all residential car parking spaces

EV infrastructure and cabling must be provided.

Industry, including the car industry, have identified that electrical vehicle (EVs) are the way of the future to meet the growing need to address car emissions contribution to climate change, with many car manufacturers outlining plans to phase out conventional fuel vehicles.

The availability of charging infrastructure is key to accelerate EV uptake particularly in new apartment buildings where retrofitting is costly. When charged with 100% renewable electricity, EVs may be considered zero emissions vehicles. With zero or low tailpipe emissions, EVs also contribute towards improved air quality.

Load management is a key element that supports a cost effective and stable EV charging system and can be facilitated in various forms; from simple timers to a more sophisticated smart and dynamic controlled system. Incorporating a load management system within a development reduces the maximum electricity demand to a building and provides better grid stability.

To align with 'Zero Carbon Metrics for Development Guidelines' the applicant must demonstrate EV infrastructure is specified and designed in accordance with Zero Carbon Moreland EV Guidelines METRIC 2: Apartments which can be found in the following link:

https://morelandzerocarbon.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/MZCDG_EV_INFRASTRUCTURE.pdf

Moreland Design Excellence Scorecard



Part 3: Building Accessibility

Part 3 of the scorecard relates to the level of building accessibility so that residents of all mobilities can enter a dwelling and move around within it. This requirement also relates to the cost-effective adaptation of housing so that dwellings can be responsive to the changing needs of residents.

This section of the scorecard will be evaluated by the assessing Planning Officer.

1. The applicant must demonstrate that 75% of apartments (rounded to the nearest whole dwelling) meet the accessibility requirements of Standard B41 from Clause 55.07-7 or D17 from Clause 58.05-1 of the Moreland Planning Scheme.

While the Planning Scheme requires 50% of dwellings to comply with minimum accessibility standards, the Scorecard seeks to lift this bar to improve access for a larger proportion of dwellings.

For applicants to complete this requirement of the scorecard, the plans must include all relevant dimensions to demonstrate compliance.

For further information on how to meet these requirements refer to:
https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0030/80994/Apartment-Design-Guidelines-for-Victoria_August-2017.pdf

Part 4: Community Benefit

Part 4 of the scorecard relates to the provision of community benefit in exchange for the incentives provided by Council.

It should be noted that these contributions are in addition to any existing open space or development contribution levies.

This section of the scorecard will be evaluated by the assessing Planning Officer in collaboration with the social planning, urban design and open space teams where necessary.

The applicant must provide one of the following, which should be secured through a Section 173 Agreement or other appropriate provision:

1. An affordable housing contribution equivalent to at least 3% of the dwelling yield (rounded to the nearest whole dwelling) offered at a 75% discount from market value.

In 2018, the Planning and Environment Act was amended to:

- Include a new objective, "to facilitate the provision of affordable housing in Victoria" and;
- Provide a definition of affordable housing: "housing, including social housing, that is appropriate for the housing needs of very low, low, and moderate-income households".

The amendments to the Act also confirmed the use of a Section 173 agreement as the appropriate tool for voluntary affordable housing agreements.

To fulfil this requirement of the scorecard the permit applicant must deliver the agreed number of dwellings to a registered housing provider below market rate; or provide an equivalent cash-in-lieu contribution to Moreland Affordable Housing Ltd via the Moreland Housing Reserve.

The contribution should be equivalent to 3% of the yield at a 75% discount from market value. A high proportion of dwellings could be provided at a lower discount, or a lower proportion of dwellings could be gifted.

Housing that is appropriate for the needs of very low and low-income household are considered by Council to be a more significant contribution.

For further information on Moreland Affordable Housing Ltd, please see:

For more information on affordable housing in Moreland see:
<https://www.moreland.vic.gov.au/building-and-business/planning-and-building/strategic-planning/strategic-planning-projects/affordable-housing/>

For further information on affordable housing policy updates in Victoria, please see:
<https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/policy-and-strategy/affordable-housing> and
<https://www.vic.gov.au/homes-victoria>

2. Significant upgrade of existing community infrastructure or the delivery of new community infrastructure.

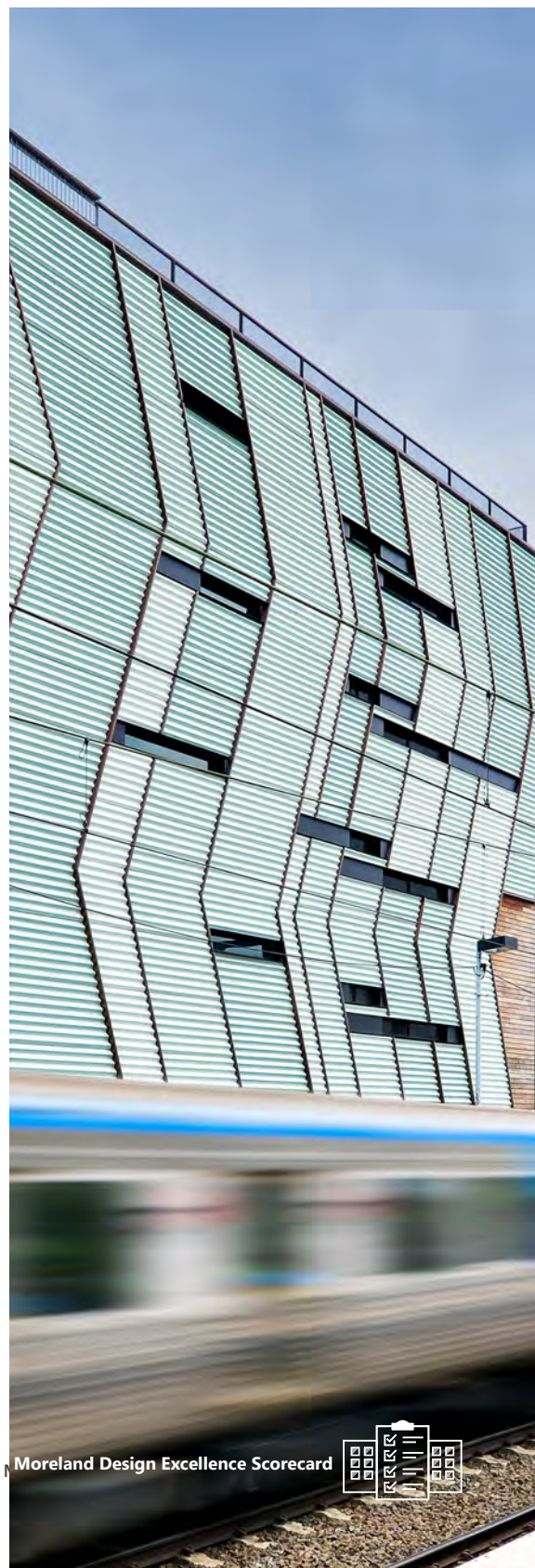
This requirement seeks to ensure that our community infrastructure is appropriate and accessible for our ever-changing local communities.

Community infrastructure is the public spaces or places that deliver services or provide opportunities for activities to the local community. Examples include community meeting rooms, childcare, community gardens, open spaces and early years services.

As the population of Moreland continues to grow, community infrastructure that is well located and fit for purpose is an increasingly essential part of our local neighbourhoods.

Permit applicants will be able to deliver community infrastructure on-site or provide cash-in-lieu funding for new or upgraded facilities off-site.

The acceptable level of upgrade or contribution of community infrastructure will be determined by the proposed dwelling yields and the size and location of the site.





3. A substantially improved public pedestrian environment, delivered by the permit holder at their cost. The scope of works must be commensurate with the scale of the development and may include a combination of the following:
Facilities (such as seating, drinking stations) for public use;

- Widened public footpaths;
- A landscaped park or plaza;
- Publicly accessible pedestrian links that enhance connectivity;
- Pedestrian crossings;
- Water Sensitive Urban Design public realm treatments.

This requirement seeks to encourage substantial public realm upgrades in the immediate vicinity of the site.

The renewal of large industrial sites for residential development provides an opportunity for significant upgrades to the public realm.

Ageing commercial areas or transitioning industrial areas often require ongoing investment in the public realm to create high quality places.

The acceptable level of upgrades to the pedestrian environment will be determined by the proposed dwelling yields, the size of the site and the complexity of the site context.

4. Another significant community benefit not listed, to the satisfaction of Council officers.

This category encapsulates any other significant community benefit not captured by the above options. Examples might include 100% National Disability Insurance Scheme housing, substantial Creek Planting Upgrades, etc.

If you have a proposed community benefit that may fit within this category, please discuss with Council planning officers.

MEDIUM-DENSITY APPLICATIONS

Part 1: Building Design and Materials

Part 1 of the scorecard relates to the design quality of the proposal and the materials that are intended to be used.

This section of the scorecard will be evaluated by the Moreland Urban Design Team in consultation with the assessing Planning Officer.

1. Development must respond to its context and demonstrate high quality design, including form, articulation, and materiality.

This requirement ensures that the permit applicant addresses each of the above aspects that Council considers essential in quality building design.

Council acknowledges that the opportunities presented by each site are unique and that successful design proposals may vary significantly.

Metrics or specific design standards have not been included within this section so that the scorecard does not become overly prescriptive.

Applicants may seek further guidance from the Moreland Good Design Advice Sheets: <https://www.moreland.vic.gov.au/globalassets/website-moreland/areas/building-business/planning-and-building/planning/the-good-design-advice-sheets---full-document.pdf>

2. Development must incorporate public-private interfaces which positively respond to the immediate context in a sensitive, attractive and engaging manner.

This requirement ensures that applicants consider the way in which the proposal interacts with the streets, paths and open spaces that surround it.

The arrangement of uses, the location of services and the use of considered materials should combine to create high-quality interfaces.

Where services must be provided at street level, they should be designed to minimise their impact on the streetscape and should be an integrated façade feature. Large areas of blank, inactive facades should be avoided.

The design and operation of waste collection facilities should be considered at the start of the planning permit process to ensure successful integration into the built outcome.

Car parking and associated structures should not dominate the streetscape.

Facades should be designed to encourage passive surveillance of the public realm.

3. The permit applicant must provide a detailed materials schedule and appropriately scaled elevations of all public-private interfaces.

This requirement encourages the permit applicant to consider the detailed design of interfaces and the use of materials at the start of the planning permit process.

A detailed materials schedule should include highly durable and low maintenance materials for the upper levels. With finer grain, more visually engaging materials at the ground plane.

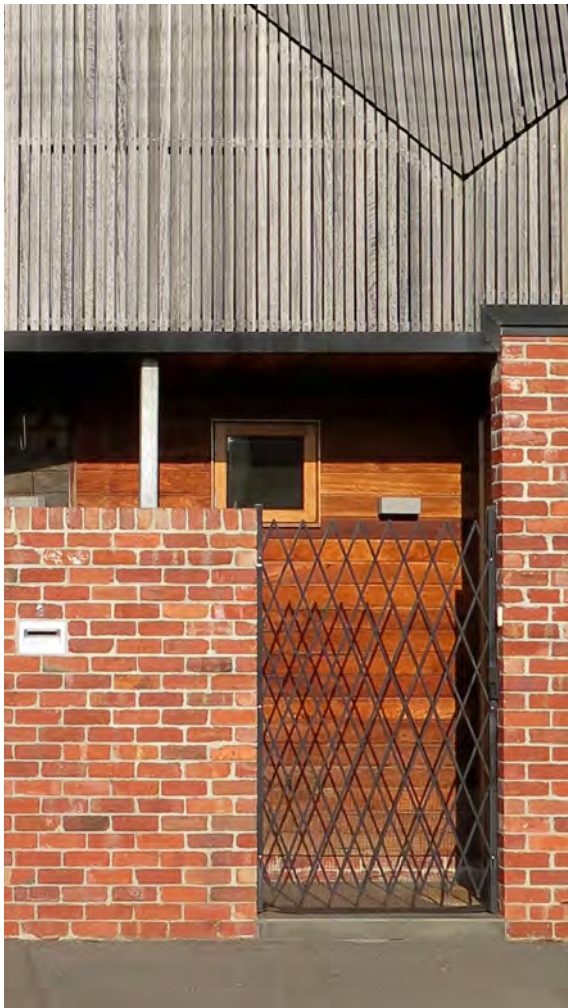
Applicants should consider the use of materials from sustainably managed sources, low embodied energy materials and recycled materials. Elevations of public-private interfaces at a scale of 1:50 should be included with all scorecard applications. This allows the assessing Council Officer to make a more informed decision on the proposed treatment of public-private interfaces.

4. Commitment that the original architect or building designer will be retained from the planning permit process through to project completion.

This requirement seeks to retain the original designer through both the planning and construction phases.

Where a designer changes through the development process, Council often observes a reduction in quality due to the unfamiliarity with the context of the site or a lack of consistency in the implementation of design responses.

This commitment will be given effect through a planning permit condition on any permit granted.



Part 2: ESD and Building Performance

Part 2 of the scorecard relates to environmentally sustainable design and the efficient operation of a development.

This section of the scorecard will be evaluated by the Moreland ESD Team in consultation with the assessing Planning Officer.

1. The development must achieve a BESS score of 65% (any innovation points must be approved by Council officers).

The Built Environment Sustainability Scorecard (BESS) is an assessment tool created by local governments in Victoria.

It assists builders and developers to show how a proposed development demonstrates sustainable design. BESS is simple to use and is provided free of charge online.

A BESS report should be attached to the planning permit application to show how the development meets sustainable design objectives.

For further information, please see:
<https://bess.net.au/>

The development must also include all of the following:

- 2. Provide solar PV across the development that is an average of:**
- **3kW for each one or two bedroom dwelling;**
 - **An additional 1kW per additional bedroom**

Medium density developments (townhouses, units and dual occupancies) have the potential to achieve net zero emissions with a combination of solar PV, good thermal performance, energy efficient services and behavioural awareness.

Incorporating on-site solar PV systems during the planning approval stage elevates issues that can arise later in the building stage that can impact the efficiency of a system. This includes considering roof design by ensuring sufficient space and area, shape and orientation of the solar PV panels, and overshadowing of the solar PV panels by structures or trees.

Applicants must include on-site renewable energy in the form of solar PV systems as per METRIC 1: Medium Density Development (townhouse and standalone dwellings) which can be found in the following link: https://morelandzerocarbon.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/MZCDG_SOLAR_PV_SYSTEMS-1.pdf

The metric requires roof design to be 'solar friendly' and must be considered at initial design stages.

3. Gas-free dwellings.

Many households are choosing to disconnect from the gas grid as usage costs increase and the environmental impacts of extraction become more well known.

Modern heat pump hot water and split system air-conditioning systems are more efficient than gas appliances, providing substantial financial savings for households.

Many Australian kitchens are fitted with gas stovetops which is perceived to be the market preference. However, with gradual improvements in induction cooktop technology, several local developments with strong environmental credentials are choosing to go gas-free.

An electrified home, potentially subsidised by rooftop solar is an economical and environmentally conscious choice that enables residents to divest from fossil fuels.

4. 7.5 star NatHERS average.

The Nationwide House Energy Rating Scheme (NatHERS) is a star rating system (out of ten) that rates the energy efficiency of a home, based on its design and construction materials.

The minimum requirements provided by the scorecard set a best-practice standard for residential development that will create more comfortable homes and help residents reduce their reliance on artificial heating and cooling.

The ease of achieving a high rating for different dwellings can vary greatly depending on orientation. Because of this, Council requires a NatHERS average rather than a minimum across all dwellings in the permit application.

Medium density developments are afforded a slightly lower NatHERS requirement than high-density developments, given the difficulty in regulating temperatures across multi-level dwellings with open plan layouts.

For further information on NatHERS, please see: <http://www.nathers.gov.au/>

5. Each dwelling to be designed to be Electric Vehicle (EV) ready by:

- Including infrastructure and cabling to each garage that can support level 2 (mode 3) 32Amp EV car charging;
- Including a load management system to ensure EV charging occurs outside of peak electricity demand hours.

Industry, including the car industry, have identified that EVs are the way of the future to meet the growing need to address car emissions contribution to climate change, with many car manufacturers outlining plans to phase out conventional fuel vehicles.

When charged with 100% renewable electricity, EVs may be considered zero emissions vehicles. With zero or low tailpipe emissions, EVs also contribute towards improved air quality. The availability of charging infrastructure is key to accelerate EV uptake.

Load management is a key element that supports a cost effective and stable EV charging system and can be facilitated in various forms; from simple timers to a more sophisticated smart and dynamic controlled system. Incorporating a load management system within a development reduces the maximum electricity demand to a building and provides better grid stability.

To align with 'Zero Carbon Metrics for Development Guidelines' the applicant must demonstrate EV infrastructure is specified and designed in accordance with Zero Carbon Moreland EV Guidelines METRIC 1: Medium Density Development (townhouses, dual-occupancies and stand alone dwellings) which can be found in the following link:
https://morelandzerocarbon.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/MZCDG_EV_INFRASTRUCTURE.pdf

Part 3: Building Accessibility

Part 3 of the scorecard relates to the level of building accessibility so that residents of all mobilities can enter a dwelling and move around within it. This requirement also relates to the cost-effective adaptation of housing so that dwellings can be responsive to the changing needs of residents.

This section of the scorecard will be evaluated by the assessing Planning Officer.

1. 70% of dwellings (rounded to the nearest whole dwelling) to meet the following 'silver level' livable housing design guidelines, demonstrated on the plans:

Access to the dwelling

- A continuous accessible path of travel from the street to the dwelling entrance.
- A continuous accessible path of travel from car parking areas to the main entrance or another dwelling entry.
- The path of travel must be minimum 1000mm wide and at a maximum gradient of 1:14 and with a crossfall no greater than 1:40.

Entrance

At least one level (step free) entrance into the dwelling that provides:

- Direct access from the accessible path of travel described above.
- A level landing area of 1200mm x 1200mm, exclusive of the swing of the door.
- A minimum doorway width of 850mm.
- The height difference between abutting surfaces must be no greater than 5mm.

Corridors & doorways

- The width of internal corridors must be a minimum of 1000mm.
- The width of doorways must be a minimum width of 850mm.

Bathroom, toilet and shower

A toilet on ground floor that provides:

- A clear width of 900mm and a space of 1200mm (length) forward of the pan (exclusive of the swing of the door) if toilet is located in a separate room.
- Reinforced walls to allow for future installation of grab rails.

Access to a shower on the ground floor that provides:

- A step free shower area of at least 900mm x 900mm in width and length.
- A clear space in front of the shower that is 1200mm x 1200mm in width and length.
- Reinforced walls to allow for future installation of grab rails.
- A notation on plans that the bathroom & toilet walls will be reinforced in accordance with the measures outlined in the Silver Standard of the Livable Housing Design Guidelines.

Note: If the toilet and shower area are located in the same room the above dimensions and features should be maintained for both the shower and the toilet.

2. For unit developments of five or more dwellings, at least one dwelling for every five dwellings must have a room on the ground floor that could be used as a bedroom that:

- **Is at least 10m² clearance exclusive of wardrobes; skirtings and wall lining;**
- **Provides for a minimum path of travel of at least 1000mm on at least one side of the bed.**

The above requirements have been taken from the 'Livable Housing Design Guidelines'.

For further information on the Guidelines, please see:
<http://www.livablehousingaustralia.org.au/>

For applicants to complete this requirement of the scorecard, plans should be clearly dimensioned to demonstrate compliance with each element.

Part 4: Community Benefit

Part 4 of the scorecard relates to the provision of community benefit in exchange for the incentives provided by Council.

It should be noted that these contributions are in addition to any existing open space or development contribution levies.

This section of the scorecard will be evaluated by the assessing Planning Officer.

The applicant may choose either option 1 or option 2, or provide both.

1. Provide on-site tree planting beyond the requirements of the Residential Zone Schedule and a net increase of at least one additional street tree within the road reserve within the vicinity of the site, where possible.

This requirement will provide a range of environmental benefits to the immediate area.

The requirement for an additional street tree will form a condition of permit and will require Council to plant the tree at the permit holder's cost.

2. Contribution of 0.1% of the sale price of each dwelling to Homes for Homes, or other equivalent not-for-profit company that funds affordable housing projects.

Homes for Homes is a charity established by the Big Issue that is playing a part in addressing the huge challenge of the lack of affordable housing in Australia.

Developers commit to contribute 0.1% of a property's sale price, as a tax-deductible donation. This is committed to via a caveat over the property title. The funds raised are used to build social and affordable housing through grants to housing providers.

A condition of permit would be included requiring that the signed Homes for Homes Donation Deed is submitted to Council as evidence of the donation.

Glossary

Affordable housing

Housing, including social housing, that is appropriate for the housing needs of very low, low, and moderate-income households.

Articulation

Changes in the depth of a building face or façade such as attached columns, recessed windows, horizontal banding or decorative embellishment.

Canopy tree

A tree of sufficient breadth and density to provide shading and cooling benefits.

Community infrastructure

The public spaces or places that deliver services or provide opportunities for activities to the local community.

Façade

The principal front of a building, that faces a street or an open space.

High-density development

Housing that contains more than two dwellings on a lot where each dwelling does not have its own entrance at ground level. Apartments are the most common high-density housing typology.

Indoor Environmental Quality (IEQ)

The quality of the interior of a dwelling based on the following factors: ventilation, thermal comfort, product choice, internal noise levels, external views and daylight.

Materials schedule

A detailed visual catalogue of the materials intended to be used in a building.

Medium-density development

Housing that contains two or more dwellings on a lot where each dwelling has its own entrance at ground level. Common types are units, townhouses and terraces which can be in detached, semi-detached and attached typologies. They may be single storey, two storey or three storey.

NatHERS

A national star rating system (out of ten) that rates the energy efficiency of a home, based on its design and construction materials.

Planning and Related Matters Council Meeting (PARM)

A meeting held at Council where Councillors decide on permit applications. Any interested parties may attend these meetings. Applicants and objectors can provide a brief verbal statement at these meetings.

Planning Information and Discussion Meetings (PIDs)

A meeting held after the public notification of a planning permit application. Council invites the applicant and objectors to discuss any issues they may have with a planning permit application.

Public-private interfaces

Spaces, edges or boundaries that mark the transition between publicly owned land to privately owned land.

Public realm

The publicly-owned space between built structures, to which people have access. It includes roads and footpaths, laneways, public squares, parks and gardens, ovals and other open space.

Section 173 Agreement

A legal contract between Council and a landowner to set out conditions or restrictions on the use or development of the land.



Moreland City Council

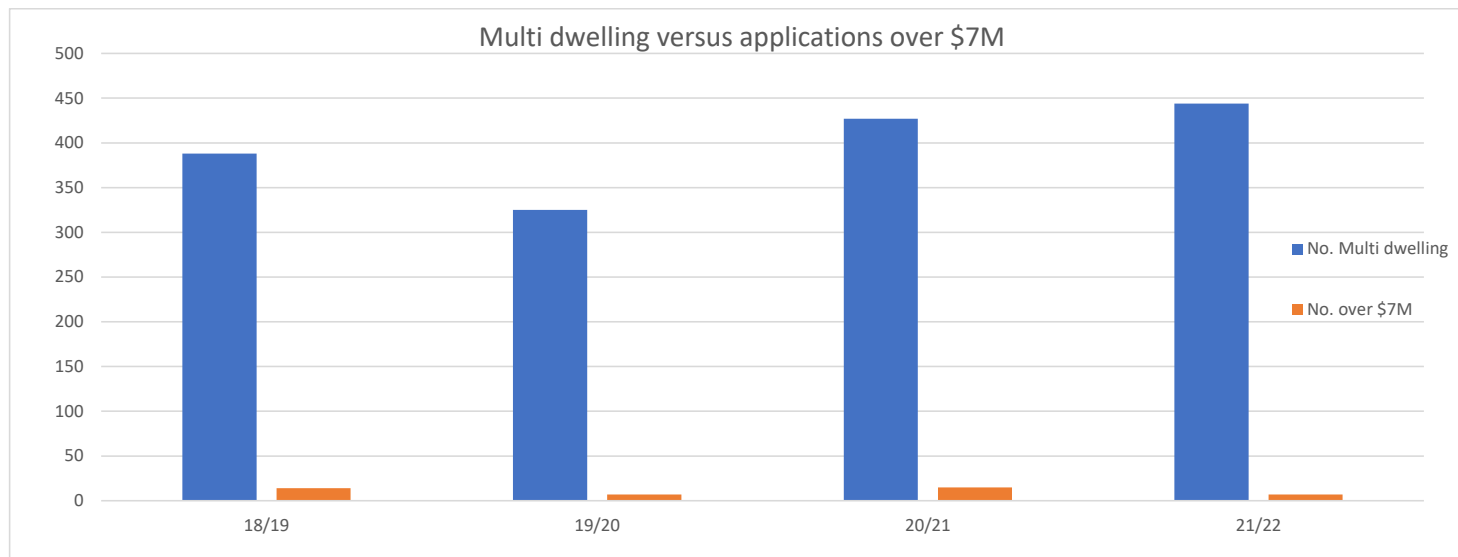
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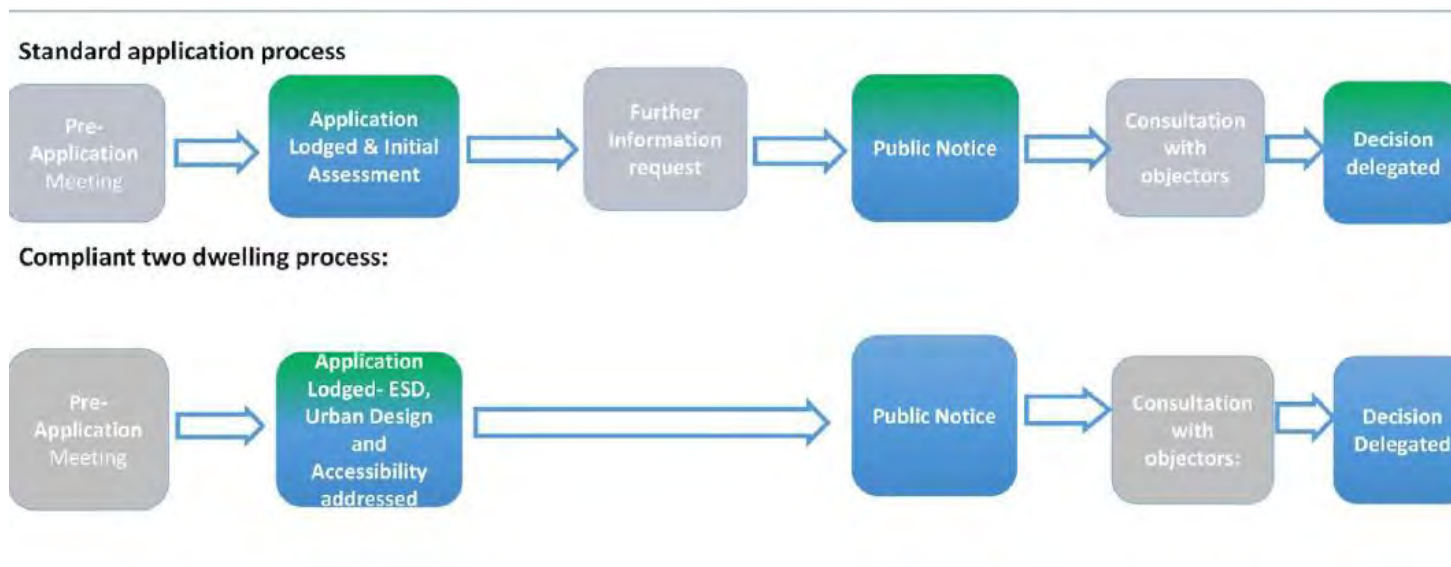
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Moreland Design Excellence Scorecard



Type of planning applications

Standard planning permit application process vs better quality compliant two dwellings on a lot model

7.3 NORTHERN REGIONAL TRAILS STRATEGY 2022 - MERRI-BEK ADOPTION

Director City Infrastructure Anita Curnow

Transport

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Endorses the Northern Regional Trails Strategy 2022 as at Attachment 1.
2. Supports efforts by the Northern Councils Alliance to pursue initiatives in the strategy with the State Government.

REPORT

Executive Summary

This report provides an update on the development of the Northern Regional Trails Strategy (the Strategy) 2022 (refer to Attachment 1) and seeks endorsement of the draft strategy.

The draft strategy has been reviewed by relevant officers of all member councils of the Northern Councils Alliance.

When endorsed, the Strategy will be a key advocacy document to attract funding to deliver the Northern Region Trail Network over the next decade and beyond. The State Government has provided approximately \$11 million toward the current Strategy and is likely to continue to provide grants due the success to date.

The refresh is built upon the previous work completed in 2016, and makes several main changes, including updates to works completed, a focus on delivering regionally significant trails, additional actions to upgrade existing trails, and updates to the cost-benefit analysis.

The strategy identifies strategic cycling routes of regional significance in Merri-bek including:

- Merri Creek Trail
- Edgars Creek Trail
- Upfield Rail Trail (Shared Path)
- Craigieburn Line (Shared Path)
- Moonee Ponds Creek Trail

The Coburg North Linear Reserve Trail needed to be removed from the previous version as it is not of regional significance.

The major benefit for Merri-bek was the addition of upgrades required to existing trails. The two high priority projects for Council are the Harding Street Bridge replacement, and flooding at the Lower Merri Creek at Sumner Park. Both projects are expected to have high costs and are likely to require external funding. The addition of these projects to the Strategy creates another viable opportunity for external funding support.

A cost-benefit analysis was completed by an external consultant, and considered a range of additional factors like need, buildability, and community support. A Top 10 for the region, and for each Council, was created. It is important to note that this was a high-level estimate, and each project would require further investigation, and public consultation, to determine their feasibility and alignment.

The community consultation was led by Banyule City Council on behalf of all six council areas and was undertaken between 8 August and 28 September 2022.

The Shaping Banyule website was the primary point of contact with the community. Merri-bek promoted the engagement through the Conversations Merri-bek website and Council's social media channels.

There were 11 responses to the Merri-bek Top 10 which highlighted Sumner Park flooding, and Harding Street bridge replacement as the highest priority. This feedback aligns with previous community consultation.

Previous Council Decisions

Endorsement of the Northern Regional Trails Strategy – 13 April 2016

Council resolves to:

1. *Endorse the Northern Regional Trails Strategy.*
2. *Write to Nillumbik Shire Council thanking them for project managing The Strategy.*
3. *Join with the seven participating Councils in bringing the Northern Region Trails Strategy to the attention of the State Government, and to allocated funding to both new trails and upgrades to existing infrastructure.*

1. Policy Context

Council Plan 2021-2025

The Council plan sets out Council's and community's vision for the future. Key objectives and strategies related to this report include:

2. To contribute to the health, safety, and security of everyone living in our diverse community and to increase safe, accessible, physically active, and enjoyable ways to get around Merri-bek, especially via walking, and cycling.
 - 2.1. Build safe, accessible, and high-quality bike and pedestrian infrastructure to create links between areas of high pedestrian and cycling demand, especially the Coburg to Glenroy bike path
 - 2.2. Scope and implement suburb based active transport (bike and pedestrian) improvements (prioritising Fawkner, Gowanbrae, Hadfield, Oak Park, Pascoe Vale and Glenroy)

Moreland Integrated Transport Strategy (2019)

The Moreland Integrated Transport Strategy 2019 is Council's current transport strategy, and it encourages greater take up of sustainable transport alternatives. Key action items are:

- Action 7: Work in partnership with adjoining municipalities to integrate cycling routes and wayfinding signage (including design standards for wayfinding signage) across borders.
- Action 10: Develop and maintain a ten-year capital works program of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, that includes communicating the success of programs

Moreland Open Space Strategy 2012-2022

The Moreland Open Space Strategy sets a framework for future provision, planning, design, and management of publicly owned open space that is set aside for leisure, recreation, and nature conservation purposes. It aims to encourage further investigations into potential cycle routes such as the Upfield Rail Trail through the centre of the municipality and gaps in access on the Merri and Moonee Ponds Creeks.

2. Background

In 2016 the original Northern Regional Trails Strategy was developed by the Councils in the Northern Councils Alliance including Merri-bek City Council, Banyule City Council, Darebin City Council, Hume City Council, Nillumbik Shire Council, Whittlesea City Council, with additional input from Yarra City Council, to establish a framework for the planning and development of trails of regional significance.

The first Strategy was adopted in 2016 by all Councils. The strategy successfully advocated approximately \$11 million of State Government funding for the region to construct trails it highlighted. Unfortunately, Merri-bek did not receive any of this funding. However, Merri-bek did receive an allocation of \$4 million being delivered by the Department of Transport for Upfield Shared Path improvements and extension as a part of other advocacy work (most of which were actions in the 2016 Strategy). These projects are currently planned to be delivered in 2023.

3. Issues

Northern Regional Trails Strategy Update

Due to the success of the Strategy, and some changes required, the Northern Councils Alliance agreed to refresh the strategy. The Strategy now:

- Provides updates to the work that was completed in the 2016 strategy;
- Focuses on delivering regionally significant trails that connect multiple municipalities (removing smaller local trails);
- Adds actions to upgrade sections of completed trails that were previously highlighted as just existing; and
- Prioritises projects based on the latest data and cost benefit analysis.

The projects that attracted State funding are either completed or on track to be completed. The draft 2022 Strategy provides a list of the 2016 Strategy funded action items and their status. This includes direct funding of \$11 million toward projects within Strategy 2016, and other funding by alternative methods such as the Safer Cyclist and Pedestrian Fund, and Level Crossing Removal projects. Due to the success of the Strategy, officers from the State Government have indicated that future funding is likely.

The draft refresh advocates for trail improvements with region-wide priorities. This required the removal of trails that did not have regional significance. For Merri-bek, this meant the removal of the Coburg North Linear Parkland Trail. While this does not diminish the trail's significance for Merri-bek it needed to be excluded from the refresh as it does not hold regional significance.

The 2016 version of the Strategy focused on growing the network of trails, however it did not address issues with the existing network. For example, the Merri-bek section of the Merri Creek Trail was stated to be existing (not requiring funding), however did not highlight any shortcomings that needed to be addressed.

As historically raised, there are many issues with the existing Merri Creek Trail that Council is actively progressing to find solutions. These include the replacement of the Harding Street bridge, which is too narrow and cannot be ridden across, and the flooding that occurs at the lower Merri Creek path near Sumner Park. Both projects are currently in the design phase to find appropriate solutions for the community. Additionally, both projects are costly and likely to require external contribution to complete. It is important that the Strategy highlights these projects to be of regional significance and in need of funding.

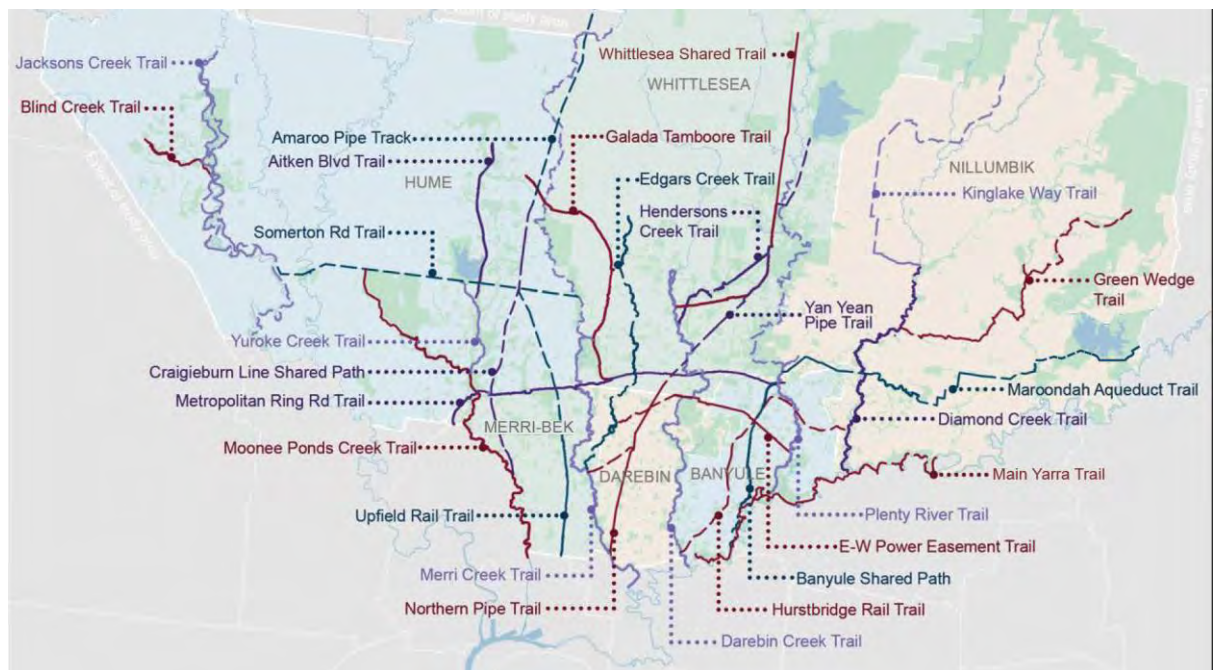


Image 1: The Northern Melbourne Regional Trail Network Map

A high-level cost-benefit analysis was completed by an independent consultant for all action items within the draft Northern Regional Trails Strategy 2022. It should be noted that the consultant needed to assume a solution and alignment for each action item. Each project will need to have detailed design, consultation with the community, and approval from the relevant authorities to determine the best solution, and true cost estimate.

Each of the action items were weighted by costs, and a range of other factors:

- Contribution to an integrated and connected network
- Encouraging use by spatial location
- Potential economic benefits
- Contribution to community health and wellbeing
- Contribution to uniqueness and the quality of the natural environment
- Encouraging diversity of use through facility quality and maximising usability
- Strategic alignment
- Ease of implementation

Action Priority List - Top 10 Projects

All actions within the Strategy were ranked in priority based on the consultant's high-level cost estimated and factoring the previously mentioned other factors. From this an overall Top 10 for the region, and for each Council was developed.

It should be noted that this does not align with Merri-bek's priorities, as the consultant focused on the network rather than more local desires. Projects such as the Harding Street bridge replacement is high priority for both Council and the local community however, it ranks ninth in the consultant's Merri-bek Top 10 list.

Overall Top 10 for the Northern Region

No.	Trail action item	Description
1	Maroondah Aqueduct_01	Construct new section of trail connecting the Plenty River Trail near Lear Court, east along the aqueduct across Diamond Creek Road to the Diamond Creek Trail at Allendale Road.
2	MerriCreekTrail_08	Complete missing section of trail from the Metropolitan Ring Road to existing section of trail south of Horne Street
3	Maroondah Aqueduct_02	Construct new section of trail from Main Road Diamond Creek, along Eltham-Yarra Glen Road, Creek Road, Eltham Road and Carters Lane while ensuring minimal impact to the Warrandyte - Kinglake Nature Conservation Reserve
4	EdgarsCreekTrail_01	Construct new section of trail from the Merri Creek Trail to Ronald Street on the west bank
5	MerriCreekTrail_02	Partner with Parks Victoria and DELWP to extend the Merri Creek Trail from Merri Concourse (north) to Cooper Street
6	UpfieldRail_02	Advocate to Department of Transport to construct a new section of trail from the Metropolitan Ring Road to Somerton Road
7	WhittleseaShared_01	Construct a new trail along the train line from Mernda Station to Laurel Street, Whittlesea. Ensure there is provision for horse riders on parts of the trail
8	MerriCreekTrail_03	Advocate for and investigate the staged extension of the Merri Creek Trail from Cooper Street Somerton/Epping north to OHerns Road as a part of the Upper Merri Creek Regional Parkland Plan.
9	MerriCreekTrail_04	Advocate for and investigate the staged extension of the Merri Creek Trail from OHerns Road to Craigieburn Road as a part of the Upper Merri Creek Regional Parkland Plan.
10	KinglakeWay_01	Establish a new trail from Hurstbridge to Arthurs Creek.

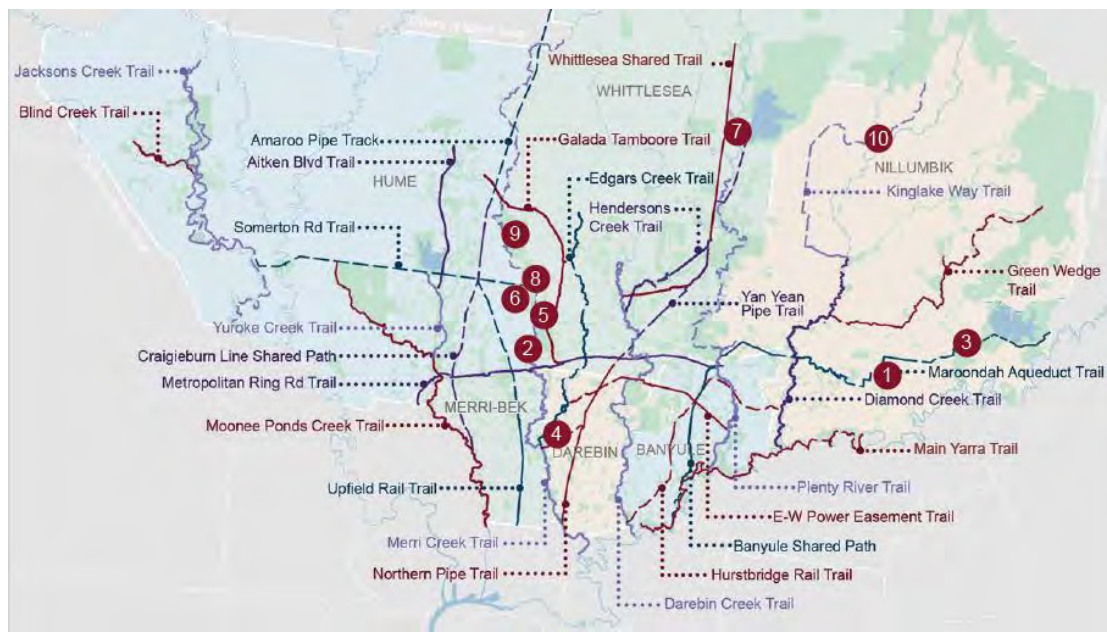


Image 2: Map of Top 10 Actions for the Region

Top 10 for Merri-bek

No.	Trail action item	Description
1	EdgarsCreekTrail_01	Construct new section of trail from the Merri Creek Trail to Ronald Street on the west bank
2	CraigieburnSharedPath_01	Construct new section of trail from the Moonee Ponds Creek Trail to Gaffney Street
3	CraigieburnSharedPath_04	Construct a new section of trail, on the western side of the train line, from Cartwright Street to Glenroy Road including fencing and lighting
4	CraigieburnSharedPath_06	Construct a new section of trail, on the eastern side of the train line, from Glenroy Station to Jacana Station including fencing and lighting
5	EdgarsCreekTrail_02	Construct new section of trail from Ronald Street to Carrington Road. Consider keeping the trail away from the creek and along development frontages
6	CraigieburnSharedPath_03	Construct a new section of trail, on the western side of the train line, from Bothwell Street to Devon Road including retaining, fencing, and lighting
7	MerriCreekTrail_20	Provide wayfinding signage along the length of the trail
8	MerriCreekTrail_12	Relocate and widen trail from Merri Creek Primary School to Sumner Park outside of flood zone
9	MerriCreekTrail_15	Replace the Harding Street Bridge to cater for shared use
10	MerriCreekTrail_18	Construct a new section of trail from Vervale Avenue to the bridge crossing to the north to provide an alternative route with a gentler grade

Human Rights Consideration

The implications of this report have been considered in accordance with the requirements of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities. The proposal supports Sections 12 and 18 of the Human Rights Charter which relate to freedom of movement and taking part in public life respectively.

4. Community consultation and engagement

The community consultation was led by Banyule City Council for all six council areas and was undertaken between 8 August and 28 September 2022.

The Shaping Banyule website was the primary point of contact with the community. Some basic demographic information was collected, such as postcode, age group, gender, ability, and language spoken.

Merri-bek promoted the engagement through the Conversations Merri-bek website and linked to the Shaping Banyule website.

There were 11 responses to the Merri-bek Top 10 which highlighted that MerriCreekTrail_12 (Relocate and widen trail from Merri Creek Primary School to Sumner Park outside of flood zone), and MerriCreekTrail_15 (Replace the Harding Street Bridge to cater for shared use) were the highest priority. This aligns with the feedback Council has historically received regarding these two issues. As both projects will be very expensive to deliver compared to other, the consultant was not able to shift them in the priority list based on the cost benefit analysis of the network. Despite this, Council is still pursuing both projects as a priority.

Affected persons rights and interests

Before making a decision that affects a person's rights, Council must identify whose rights may be directly affected and provide an opportunity for that person (or persons) to convey those views regarding the effect on their rights and consider those views.

To date, Council has undertaken consultation online via the Conversations Merri-bek website. As this is a high-level broad advocacy document, people will have greater opportunity to engage with each project during the design, development, and consultation phase.

Communications

As outlined in Section 4 – Community Consultation and engagement, the bulk of this work was undertaken by Banyule City Council, with supplementary engagement on locally specific projects addressed through Conversations Merri-bek. Once endorsed, the Strategy continues to be an advocacy document on behalf of the member councils.

5. Officer Declaration of Conflict of Interest

One Council officer involved in the preparation of this report has a minor conflict of interest in this matter due to living near one of the trails. The conflict of interest is deemed negligible, as the trails chosen to have been decided based on regional significance, the report and analysis undertaken by an independent consultant, and reviewed by all Councils. Additionally, any works funded by the Strategy would need to have undertaken full design process and community consultation to be shovel ready.

6. Financial and Resources Implications

Projects will need to be shovel ready to be eligible for funding by the State Government. As such, all design, and consultation will need to be funded by Council. All of the projects that planned for external funding grants are costed within the existing 10-Year Active Transport Program.

No additional resources are required at this time. It should be noted that due to the scale of some of these projects, additional resources maybe required at the time.

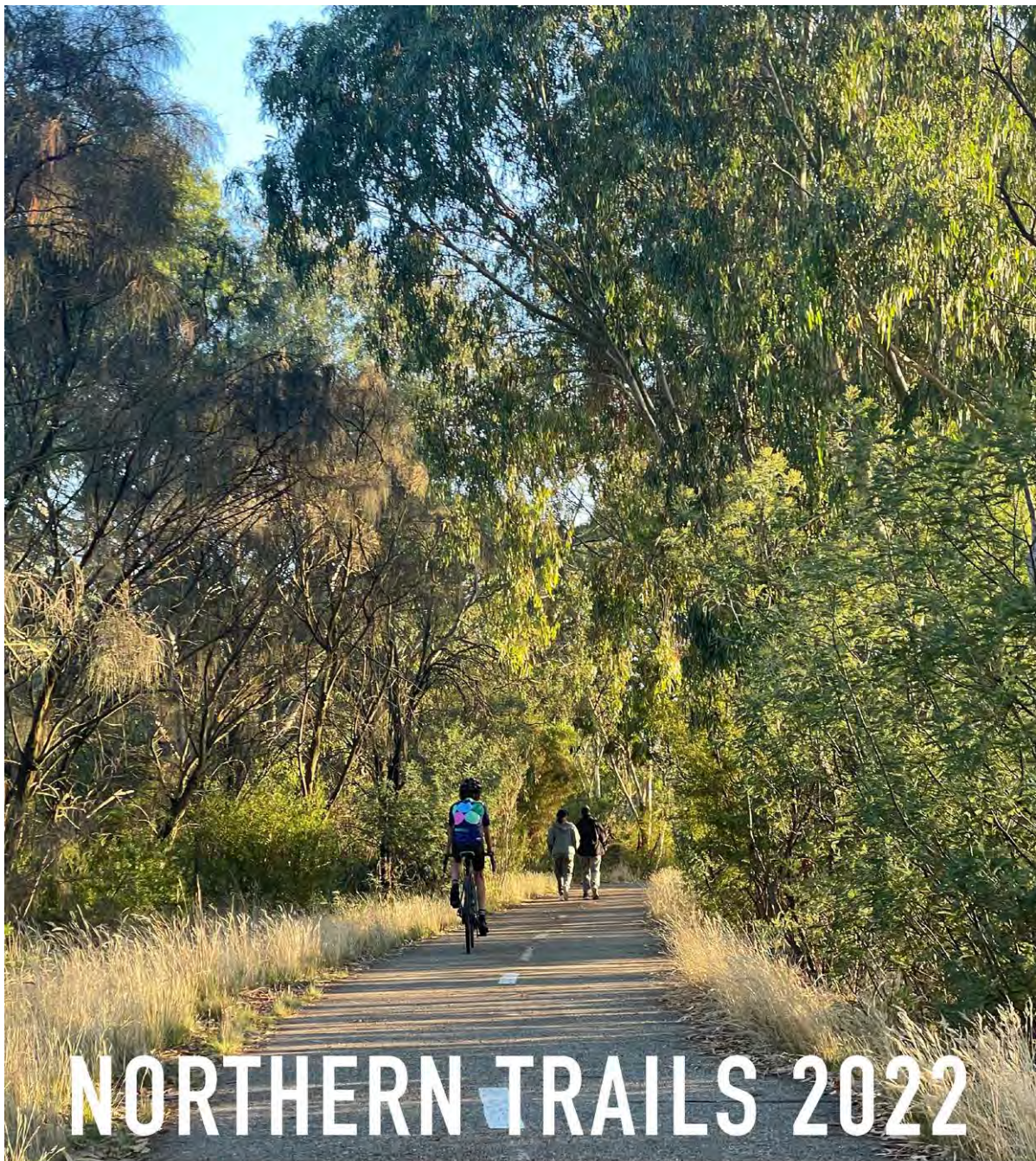
7. Implementation

Merri-bek will join along with the other Councils will continue to advocate for funding for projects within the Strategy.

Council officers will continue to develop projects based on priorities based on existing programs such as the 10 Year Active Transport Program to make them eligible for funding via the Strategy.

Attachment/s

- 1 [↓](#) Draft Northern Regional Trails Strategy 2022 D23/28864



NORTHERN TRAILS 2022

Northern Regional Trails Strategy Review and Update

October 2022



1.1 ABOUT THE PROJECT

In 2016 the original *Northern Regional Trails Strategy* was developed by the Councils in the Northern Region (Banyule City Council, Darebin City Council, Hume City Council, Merri-bek (formerly Moreland) City Council, Nillumbik Shire Council, City of Whittlesea, plus Yarra City Council), to establish a framework for the planning and development of trails to support the increasingly dense urban footprint and population, while providing accessible recreation and active travel opportunities and economic benefits to the communities in Melbourne's north.

The 2016 strategy has successfully leveraged approximately \$11 million of State Government Funding to deliver the key priorities identified in the strategy as well as focusing individual Council's budget allocations into the planning and delivery of priority trail projects. However, since the adoption of the strategy, significant State Government infrastructure projects have changed and will continue to change the physical landscape of the northern region necessitating the review and update of the strategy to reflect the impact these have had and the changing priorities.

This study reviews the 2016 strategy and provides an updated framework for the next ten years and beyond in order to deliver a comprehensive trail network taking into consideration projects already completed, changed Council priorities and the changed landscape as a result of significant state infrastructure projects.

This project provides an in-depth strategic analysis of the network that has been created and seeks to determine the key trails of regional importance, who and why people use these regional trails and how to encourage greater use of the regional trail network. The study will also provide the strategic direction required to allow local government and other land management authorities to work together towards an interconnected and well-used trail network that prioritises accessibility and promotes healthy and active communities.

This is a high-level strategy covering a large study area and many recommended actions dealing with complex sites. Many of the trail action items will require further investigations prior to being realised, including to ensure that any proposed construction works are in alignment with all relevant authority and land manager acts, strategies, plans and policies.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Northern Trails 2022 is a regional trails strategy that has been prepared to establish a framework for the planning and development of regional trails in Northern Melbourne for the next 10 years and beyond. This document is an updated version of a strategy completed in 2016. The original strategy successfully leveraged approximately \$11 million of State Government funding to deliver key priority projects. The delivery of projects and recent significant State Government infrastructure projects have necessitated the review and update of the strategy to reflect the changing circumstances and priorities.

The study area

The study area includes six local government areas (Banyule City Council, Darebin City Council, Hume City Council, Merri-bek City Council, Nillumbik Shire Council and the City of Whittlesea) on the traditional lands of the Wurundjeri – Woi wurrung people of the Kulin Nation.

The study area covers approximately 159,100 hectares and includes a mix of urban, suburban and rural areas. The current population of the area is a little over one million, stretching from the inner-city suburbs of Brunswick, Northcote, Alphington and Ivanhoe, to the outer areas of Craigieburn and Sunbury, and to the Kinglake National Park and rural and interface communities of Whittlesea and St Andrews.

Regional trails

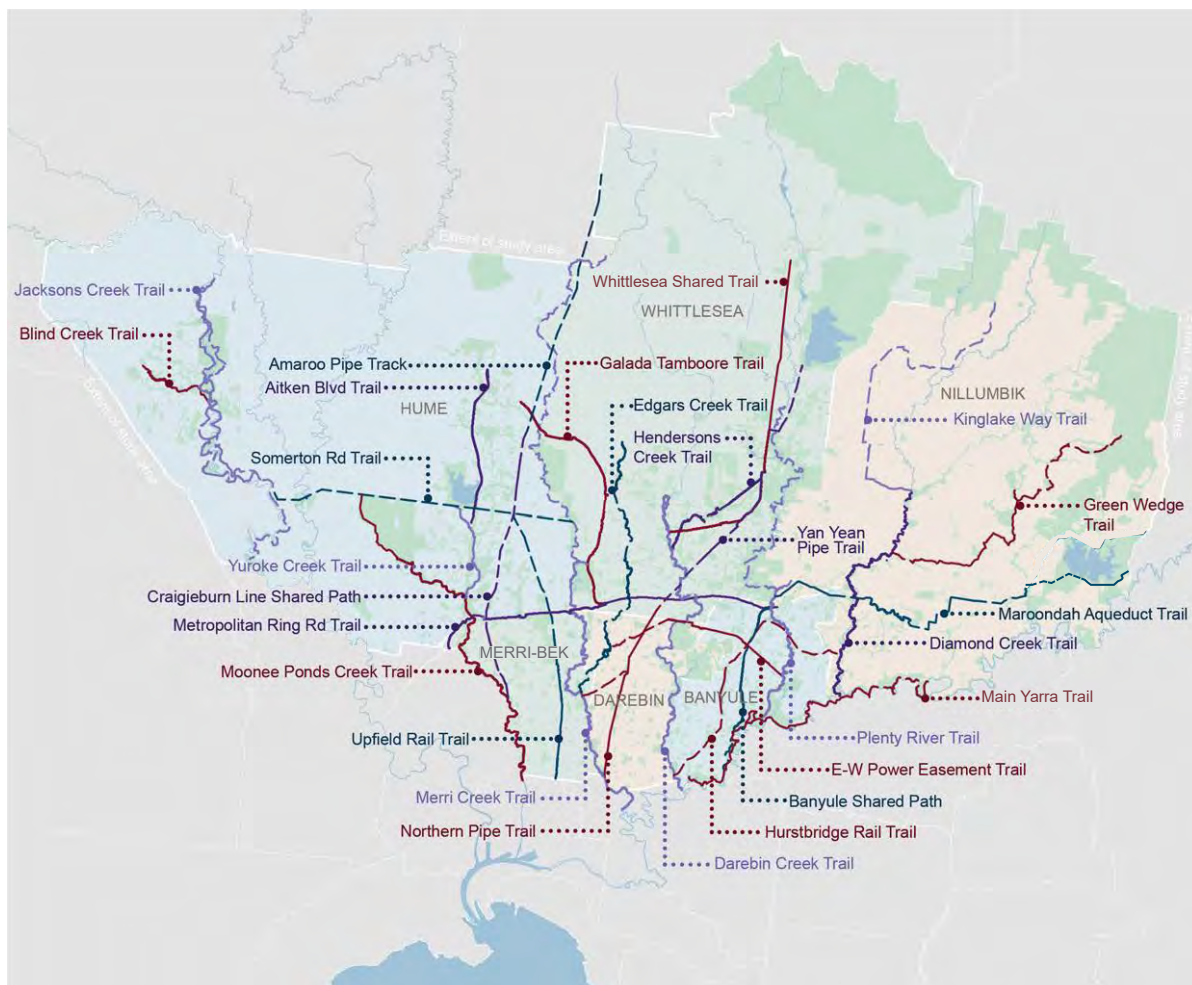
For the purposes of this study, trails have been defined as having the following characteristics:

- multiple potential user groups
- an off-road location
- a relatively long and continuous length.

This study focusses upon 'regional trails', which are defined as being higher order trails that have a regional scale, purpose and/or impact.

Twenty seven existing and potential regional trails have been identified within the study area. They are listed below in alphabetical order, and are located on the accompanying map.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| • Aitken Boulevard Shared Trail | • Kinglake Way Trail |
| • Amaroo Pipe Track | • Maroondah Aqueduct Trail |
| • Banyule Shared Trail | • Merri Creek Trail |
| • Blind Creek Trail | • Metropolitan Ring Road Trail |
| • Craigieburn Line Shared Trail | • Moonee Ponds Creek Trail |
| • Darebin Creek Trail | • Northern Pipe/ St Georges Rd/ Cheddar Rd Trail |
| • Diamond Creek Trail | • Plenty River Trail |
| • East-West Power Easement Trail | • Somerton Road Trail |
| • Edgars Creek Trail | • Upfield Rail Trail |
| • Galada Tamboore Trail | • Whittlesea Shared Path |
| • Green Wedge Trail | • Yan Yean Pipe Track |
| • Hendersons Creek Trail | • Main Yarra Trail |
| • Hurstbridge Rail Trail | • Yuroke Creek Trail |
| • Jacksons Creek Trail | |



The Northern Melbourne regional trail network

As a part of this project, each of the identified regional trails have been assessed (including a trail auditor riding all of the existing trails) and individually mapped. Investigations into the trails and the auditing process identified recommended trail improvement projects for each trail.

The benefits of regional trails

Regional trails provide a range of benefits to the community that can be broadly grouped into four categories.

- ***Social***

Trails provide cost-free locations where planned and unplanned social interaction occurs. People use trails to exercise together and also have chance interactions with people with shared interests (e.g., dog walkers). The state government strategy *Plan Melbourne 2017-2050* identifies a goal of creating '20 minute neighbourhoods' (where most everyday needs are within a 20 minute walk, ride or public transport trip from a person's home) as a way to improve the quality of life for residents of the city.

Central to this plan is the infrastructure, including trails, that allow people to safely and conveniently move around their 20 minute neighbourhood.

- *Health*

The most common physical activities that people undertake (walking, jogging and cycling) are activities that are highly suited to trails. Trails provide safe, convenient, attractive and cost-free ways for people to exercise, either as a recreational activity, or integrated with their day-to-day life (e.g.. riding to the shops).

- *Environmental*

A high quality regional trail network encourages people to choose to walk or cycle to destinations, rather than using motorised transport modes. This results in reduced vehicle numbers on roads, and the resulting reductions in air pollutants, noise pollution and congestion issues. Trails can also provide access to natural environments which can assist in fostering an appreciation of the environment and help to develop awareness of environmental issues.

- *Economic*

A Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) has been undertaken as a part of this study in order to quantify the economic benefits of regional trail investment. The CBA highlights that the Northern Regional Trails upgrade is expected to generate a net present value of around \$114 million and a benefit cost ratio of 1.6. This indicates that benefits directly attributable to the project will be around 1.6 times that of the investment.

Findings

This strategy makes recommendations regarding a range of factors, grouped into four categories.

- *Trail infrastructure*

Standards and guidelines are provided relating to physical trail infrastructure, including the trails themselves (incorporating width, surface material, and intersection design), signs, facilities (such as drinking fountains and toilets), and trail-side vegetation.

- *Trail management*

Regional trails often cross municipal boundaries, regularly traverse land managed by multiple different organisations and are funded from a range of sources. This document identifies the current management bodies and challenges, and identifies opportunities for improving management processes across organisations for the betterment of the regional trail network.

- *Trail marketing*

While individual regional trails are quite well-known by residents of Northern Melbourne, few know about the extent of the regional trail network. The trail network also provides potential opportunities for greater use by visitors to the region (and the associated potential economic benefits that this can bring). The existing marketing activities and target audiences are examined here, and recommendations made about the most effective ways to communicate to different groups about the trail network.

- *Trail improvement projects*

Trail improvement projects have been identified for all of the 27 regional trails within the study area, ranging from major trail construction works to small-scale improvements to intersections or signage (the list of trail improvement projects are itemised into a schedule which can be found in Appendix B and/or cross referenced to the trail maps in chapter 6).

- *Prioritising trail improvement projects*

Following the identification of trail improvement projects, each action item was assessed using a multi-criteria analysis in order to identify priority projects that provide the most benefit to the region and most closely align with the objectives of this study. The top ten priority projects were determined to be:

No.	Trail action item	Project description	LGA
1	MaroondahAqueduct_01	Construct new section of trail connecting the Plenty River Trail near Lear Court, east along the aqueduct across Diamond Creek Road to the Diamond Creek Trail at Allendale Road.	Nillumbik
2	MerriCreekTrail_08	Complete missing section of trail from the Metropolitan Ring Road to existing section of trail south of Horne Street.	Hume
3	MaroondahAqueduct_02	Construct new section of trail from Main Road Diamond Creek, along Eltham-Yarra Glen Road, Creek Road, Eltham Road and Carters Lane while ensuring minimal impact to the Warrandyte - Kinglake Nature Conservation Reserve.	Nillumbik
4	EdgarsCreekTrail_01	Construct new section of trail from the Merri Creek Trail to Ronald Street on the west bank.	Merri-bek
5	MerriCreekTrail_02	Partner with Parks Victoria and DELWP to extend the Merri Creek Trail from Merri Concourse (north) to Cooper Street.	Hume
6	UpfieldRail_02	Advocate to Department of Transport to construct a new section of trail from the Metropolitan Ring Road to Somerton Road.	Hume
7	WhittleseaShared_01	Construct a new trail along the train line from Mernda Station to Laurel Street, Whittlesea. Ensure there is provision for horse riders on parts of the trail.	Whittlesea
8	MerriCreekTrail_03	Advocate for and investigate the staged extension of the Merri Creek Trail from Cooper Street Somerton/Epping north to OHerns Road as a part of the Upper Merri Creek Regional Parkland Plan.	Hume & Whittlesea
9	MerriCreekTrail_04	Advocate for and investigate the staged extension of the Merri Creek Trail from OHerns Road to Craigieburn Road as a part of the Upper Merri Creek Regional Parkland Plan.	Hume & Whittlesea
10	KinglakeWay_01	Establish a new trail from Hurstbridge to Arthurs Creek.	Nillumbik

Schedule of top ten unfunded trail action items

In order to undertake the multi-criteria analysis, a series of qualitative and quantitative criteria were developed and assigned a weighting in collaboration with the Project Steering Group. The criteria and the relative weighting used are as follows:

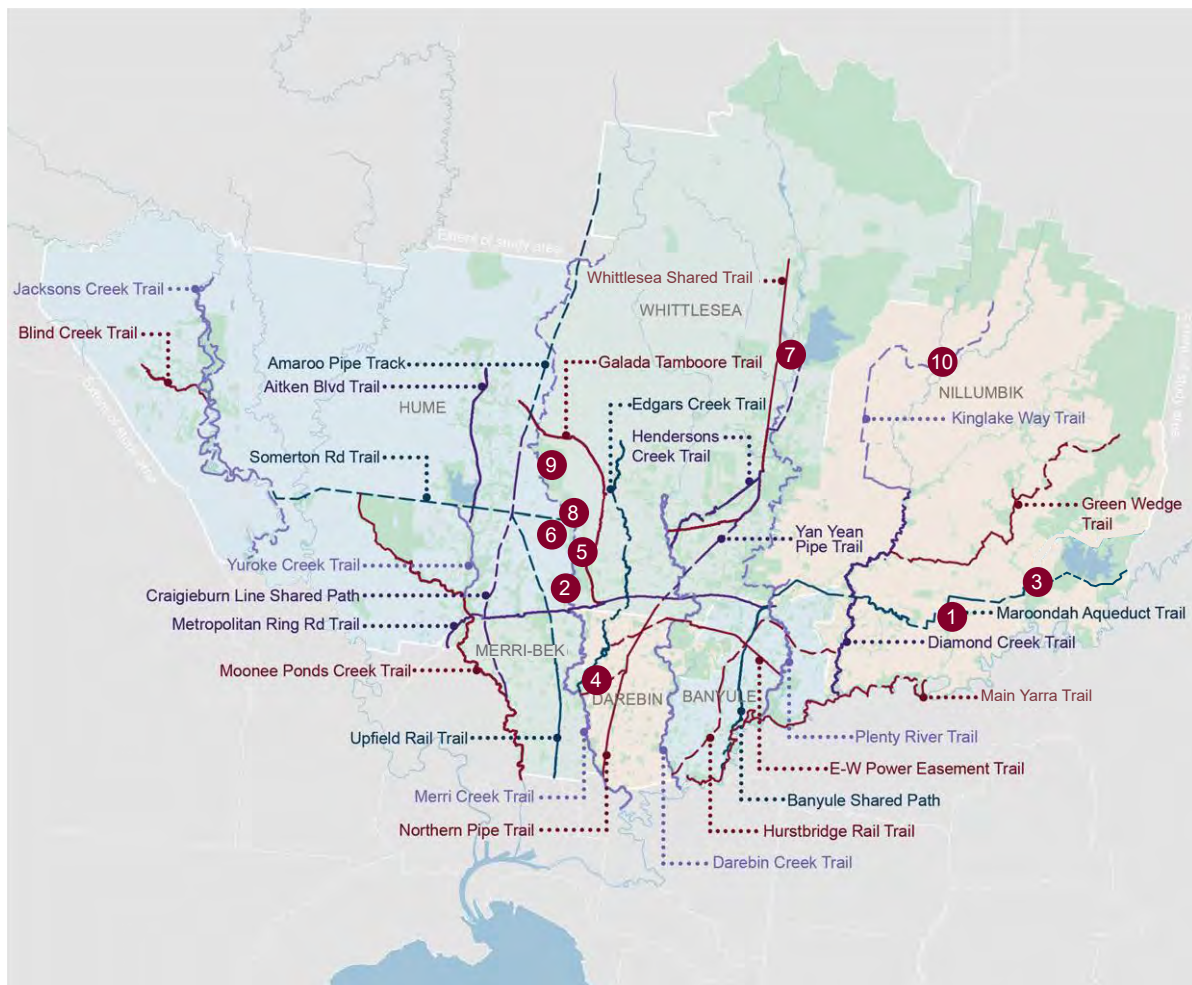
1. Contribution to an integrated and connected network (26%)
2. Encouraging use by spatial location (18%)
3. Potential economic benefits (5%)
4. Contribution to community health and well-being (5%)
5. Contribution to uniqueness and the quality of the natural environment (18%)
6. Encouraging diversity of use through facility quality and maximising usability (5%)
7. Strategic alignment (18%)
8. Ease of implementation (5%)

This criteria, assessment process and the priority action items outline the priorities for the Northern Region and the whole regional trail network, as opposed to individual Councils.

Refer to chapter 10 for more detail on the assessment method and implementation.

Northern Trails 2022

v



Top ten trail action items

- **Trail improvement filters**

Due to the wide variety in project types, and to allow project types to be easily sorted, a series of 'filters' were also developed. Using these filters, a project based on specific requirements regarding the filter categories can be identified.

The top ten projects identified during the multi-criteria analysis process outline the priority projects for the Northern Region however there may be instances where a grant or funding opportunity arises that is suited to an improvement project that is not highly ranked. In these instances, projects can be sorted using the filters to identify suitable projects for implementation or funding applications.

It is important to note that this strategy is high level and as such many of the trail action items require further investigation in order to determine their feasibility and alignment, and to ensure they are in alignment with all relevant authority and land manager acts, strategies, plans and policies. Many of the action items are significant in complexity, i.e. involve multiple land owners or managers or include kilometres of new trail construction, and therefore may present barriers for implementation and take longer than the life of this study to be realised.

1. THE PROJECT	1	7. TRAIL INFRASTRUCTURE	68
1.1 About The Project	2	7.1 Trail Surfaces	69
1.2 Study Area	3	7.2 Trail Signage	73
1.3 Project Objectives	4	7.3 Trail Facilities	75
1.4 Project Approach	4	7.4 Trail-Side Vegetation	77
1.5 Acknowledgments	5	7.5 Intersection Treatments	77
		7.6 Trail Infrastructure Standards And Guidelines	78
2. VISION	6	8. TRAIL MANAGEMENT	80
2.1 Project Vision	7	8.1 Existing Management Structure	81
2.2 Guiding Principles	7	8.2 Management Roles	84
3. REGIONAL TRAILS	8	8.3 Trail Management Opportunities	85
3.1 What Are Trails?	9	9. TRAIL MARKETING	86
3.2 What Are Regional Trails?	9	9.1 Introduction	87
4. STRATEGIC CONTEXT	12	9.2 Current Marketing Activities	87
4.1 Existing Strategic And Policies	13	9.3 Marketing Types	89
4.2 Strategic Context Overview	13	9.4 Tourism Potential	90
4.3 Northern Regional Trails Strategy 2016	13	9.5 Goals And Potential Target Markets	90
5. TRAIL USERS	17	10. IMPLEMENTATION	92
5.1 Demographics	18	10.1 Introduction	93
5.2 Existing Trail Users	22	10.2 Region-wide action items	93
5.3 Potential Trail Users	26	10.3 Trail-specific action items	94
5.4 Equestrian Use	28	10.4 Cost benefit analysis	103
		10.5 Funding the trails	105
6. THE TRAIL NETWORK	30	APPENDICES	113
6.1 Aitken Boulevard Shared Trail	33		
6.2 Amaroo Pipe Track	34		
6.3 Banyule Shared Trail	35		
6.4 Blind Creek Trail	36		
6.5 Craigieburn Line Shared Path	37		
6.6 Darebin Creek Trail	38		
6.7 Diamond Creek Trail	39		
6.8 East West Power Easement Trail	40		
6.9 Edgars Creek Trail	41		
6.10 Galada Tamboore Trail	42		
6.11 Green Wedge Trail	43		
6.12 Hendersons Creek Trail	45		
6.13 Hurstbridge Rail Trail	46		
6.14 Jacksons Creek Trail	47		
6.15 Kinglake Way Trail	49		
6.16 Maroondah Aqueduct Trail	50		
6.17 Merri Creek Trail	52		
6.18 Metropolitan Ring Road Trail	54		
6.19 Moonee Ponds Creek Trail	56		
6.20 Northern Pipe/ St Georges Rd/ Cheddar Rd Trail	58		
6.21 Plenty River Trail	59		
6.22 Somerton Road Trail	61		
6.23 Upfield Rail Trail	63		
6.24 Whittlesea Shared Trail	64		
6.25 Yan Yean Pipe Track	65		
6.26 Main Yarra Trail	66		
6.27 Yuroke Creek Trail	67		

CONTENTS



Merri Creek Trail



1.1 ABOUT THE PROJECT

In 2016 the original *Northern Regional Trails Strategy* was developed by the Councils in the Northern Region (Banyule City Council, Darebin City Council, Hume City Council, Moreland City Council, Nillumbik Shire Council, City of Whittlesea, plus Yarra City Council), to establish a framework for the planning and development of trails to support the increasingly dense urban footprint and population, while providing accessible recreation and active travel opportunities and economic benefits to the communities in Melbourne's north.

The 2016 strategy has successfully leveraged approximately \$11 million of State Government Funding to deliver the key priorities identified in the strategy as well as focusing individual Council's budget allocations into the planning and delivery of priority trail projects. However, since the adoption of the strategy, significant State Government infrastructure projects have changed and will continue to change the physical landscape of the northern region necessitating the review and update of the strategy to reflect the impact these have had and the changing priorities.

This study reviews the 2016 strategy and provides an updated framework for the next ten years and beyond in order to deliver a comprehensive trail network taking into consideration projects already completed, changed Council priorities and the changed landscape as a result of significant state infrastructure projects.

This project provides an in-depth strategic analysis of the network that has been created and seeks to determine the key trails of regional importance, who and why people use these regional trails and how to encourage greater use of the regional trail network. The study will also provide the strategic direction required to allow local government and other land management authorities to work together towards an interconnected and well-used trail network that prioritises accessibility and promotes healthy and active communities.

1.2 STUDY AREA

Melbourne's Northern Metropolitan Region stretches from the inner-city suburbs of Brunswick, Northcote, Alphington and Ivanhoe, to the outer areas of Craigieburn and Sunbury, and to the Kinglake National Park and rural and interface communities of Whittlesea and St Andrews. It is a diverse and vibrant region, featuring Melbourne's Tullamarine Airport, arts and cultural precincts, the National Employment and Innovation Cluster in La Trobe and new growth communities on the northern fringe of the city.

The total area of the Northern Region is approximately 159,100 hectares and includes a mix of urban, suburban and rural areas. Much of the study area lies within the Yarra River catchment, including Diamond Creek, Plenty River, Darebin Creek, Merri Creek and the Moonee Ponds Creek. Areas in the north-west of the study area are within the Maribyrnong River catchment.

The Wurundjeri – Woi wurrung people of the Kulin Nation are the traditional custodians of the land in the Northern region of Metropolitan Melbourne.

The region's population is estimated at approximately 938,000 people and includes a diverse range of communities in terms of age groups, cultural backgrounds and socio-economics. The geography and topography are varied as is the nature of township and urban development.

The six Local Government Authorities in the Northern Region of Metropolitan Melbourne and included in this project are: Banyule City Council, Darebin City Council, Hume City Council, Merri-bek City Council, Nillumbik Shire Council, and the City of Whittlesea.

To the north of the study area lie municipalities that are predominantly rural in nature (the Shires of Macedon Ranges, Mitchell and Murrundindi) and currently have no regional trails that link to the regional trail network within the study area. This is likely to change in the future as the southern parts of the Shire of Mitchell, for instance, become more urban. Future strategies should consider extending the study area to accommodate this. The areas to the west and east of the study area are covered by separate regional trail strategies.



Figure 1.1: Project study area

1.3 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The 2016 Northern Regional Trails Strategy was developed by the Councils listed above (plus Yarra City Council) in recognition of the need to plan and deliver appropriate infrastructure to support urban development and population growth while providing accessible recreation facilities, active transport opportunities and economic benefits in Northern Metropolitan Melbourne. The strategy was endorsed by all participating councils (with the exception of Yarra City Council) and whilst considered successful, the development of State Government Infrastructure has impacted the landscape of the region necessitating a review and update of the trails strategy.

The key objectives for this new and revised strategy include:

- Consideration of the recommendations of the existing strategies prepared by each of the participating Councils in the Region, the *Victorian Cycling Strategy 2018-28*, *Victoria's Trails Strategy 2014-24*, *Northern Regional Trails Strategy 2016* and other relevant state and local strategic plans including State Government's Strategic Cycling Corridors.
- Identification of gaps and opportunities in the provision of an integrated and linked network of trails.
- Development of a strategic framework for establishing, upgrading and maintaining trails across the network.
- Recognition of the changing physical landscape of the Northern Region and the impact and opportunities significant infrastructure projects may have.
- Definition and quantification (where possible) of the economic, social, health and commuter benefits of developing the regional trail network.
- Consideration of the recent impact of COVID-19 on travel patterns and active transport demand.
- Positioning the strategy as a key advocacy document to attract funding to deliver the Northern Region Trail Network.

1.4 PROJECT APPROACH

There have been a number of key steps undertaken in the completion of this project, as briefly outlined below.

- **Trail desktop assessment**
Identifying the locations of key existing and proposed trails from maps and relevant Council strategies.
- **Trail audit**
Riding each of the existing trails on a bicycle, providing an accurate map of the existing trails and an understanding of the network, including trail surfaces, navigational signs and trail character.
- **Initial community engagement**
Including an on-line questionnaire prior to the preparation of the strategy, promoted by the Councils as well as through a wide range of organisations with a potential interest in regional trails. The questionnaire was open for five weeks over July and August 2021 and received 923 responses.
- **Strategic context review**
Strategic documents relevant to regional trail provision at a local, regional and state level were reviewed. The information from these, particularly the recommendations from local government strategies, provided a starting point for trail improvement measures assessed in the Action Plan.
- **Action plan**
Potential trail improvements were identified through various phases of the project and were assessed against a set of criteria allowing them to be prioritised.
- **Community review of draft**
An additional engagement process ran between 26th July and 26th September 2022 allowing people to provide feedback on a draft version of this document. There were 371 individual contributors to this engagement process, with a strong alignment evident between the region wide strategy priorities with those of the community.



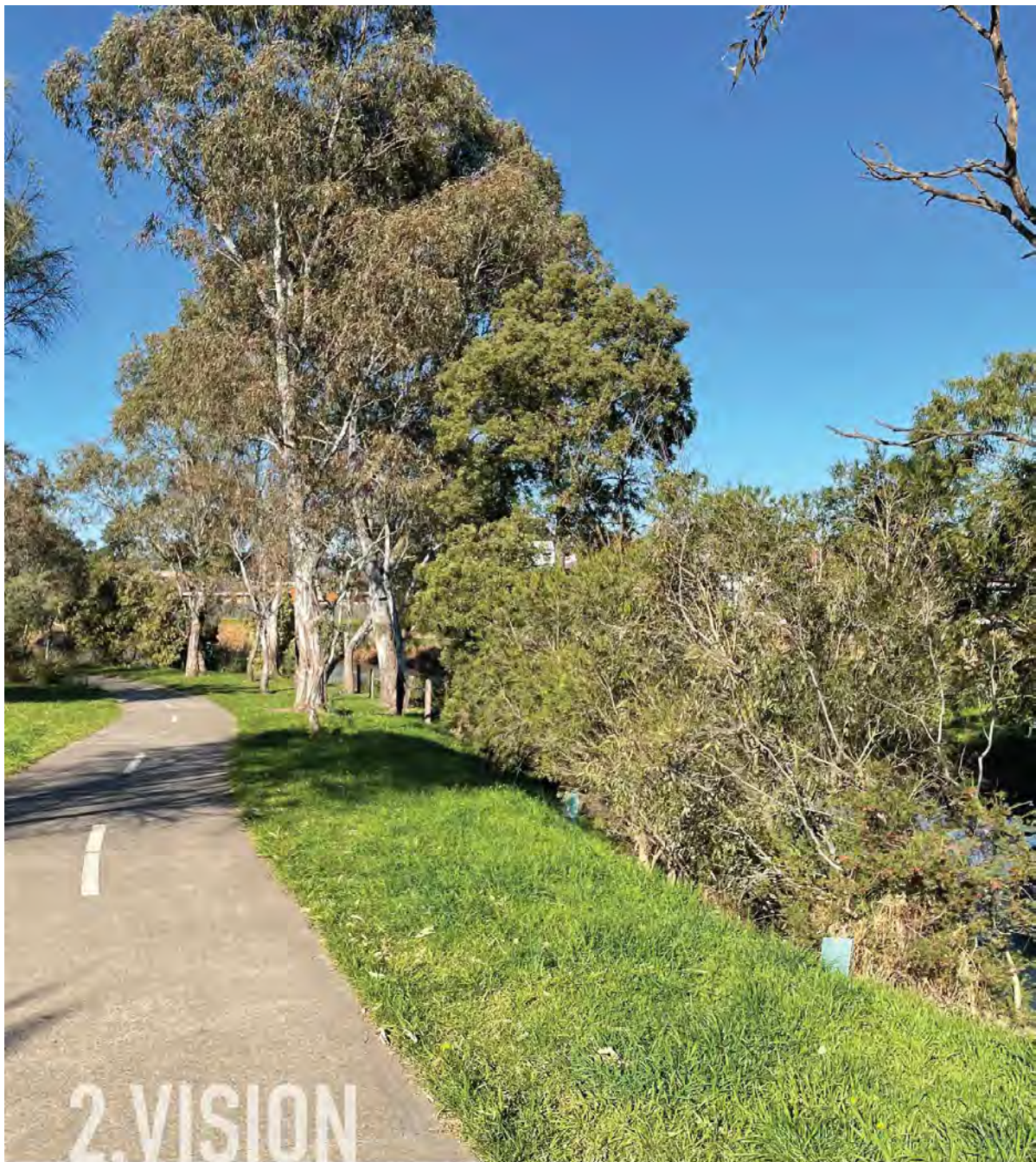
1.5 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This project was undertaken by a consultant team lead by *Fitzgerald Frisby Landscape Architecture*, with specialist inputs from *Quentin Frayne*, who undertook the trail auditing and *SGS Economics & Planning* who prepared the Cost Benefit Analysis.

This study was undertaken with extensive and invaluable input from the Project Working Group, led by Banyule City Council, and with representatives from (in alphabetical order):

- Banyule City Council
- Darebin City Council
- Hume City Council
- Merri-bek City Council
- Nillumbik Shire Council
- City of Whittlesea

This project also benefited greatly from the input of a very broad range of people and organisations including government departments, authorities, advocacy groups, clubs and the hundreds of individuals who responded to the questionnaire undertaken as a part of this project.



Edgars Creek Trail

2.1 PROJECT VISION

The Northern Trails: Connecting People, Places and Spaces

The Northern Trails Strategy will document a realistic planning framework and implementable action plan to establish a high quality network of integrated and connected shared trails sensitively linking communities, destinations and a diverse range of urban and natural environments.

The regional trail network will provide desirable, safe and accessible transport and recreation opportunities for residents and collectively reinforce the region as a world class trails destination for visitors.

2.2 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Complementing the project vision, this Strategy is guided by the following principles:

1. Connected:

The trail network must create useful and convenient routes that link communities, destinations and environments.

2. Integrated:

Individual regional trails must link with other trails to create a continuous network, and also link to other networks and transport modes where possible.

3. Multi-use:

The trail network must be designed to cater for the widest possible range of user modes and types, including commuting and recreational use, and including consideration of equestrian where appropriate.

4. Universal access:

The trail network must be designed to ensure that it is accessible and usable by as many people as possible, including the young, old, people with limited mobility and people from diverse cultural and social backgrounds.

5. User safety:

The trail network must be safe to use, including compliance with standards and the appropriate application of guidelines relating to trail design, construction and management.

6. User experience:

The trail network must provide appropriate facilities and settings, and be managed in a way that facilitates usage, including the provision of navigational signs, shade, trail-side vegetation, drinking fountains and toilets where possible.

7. Longevity/robustness:

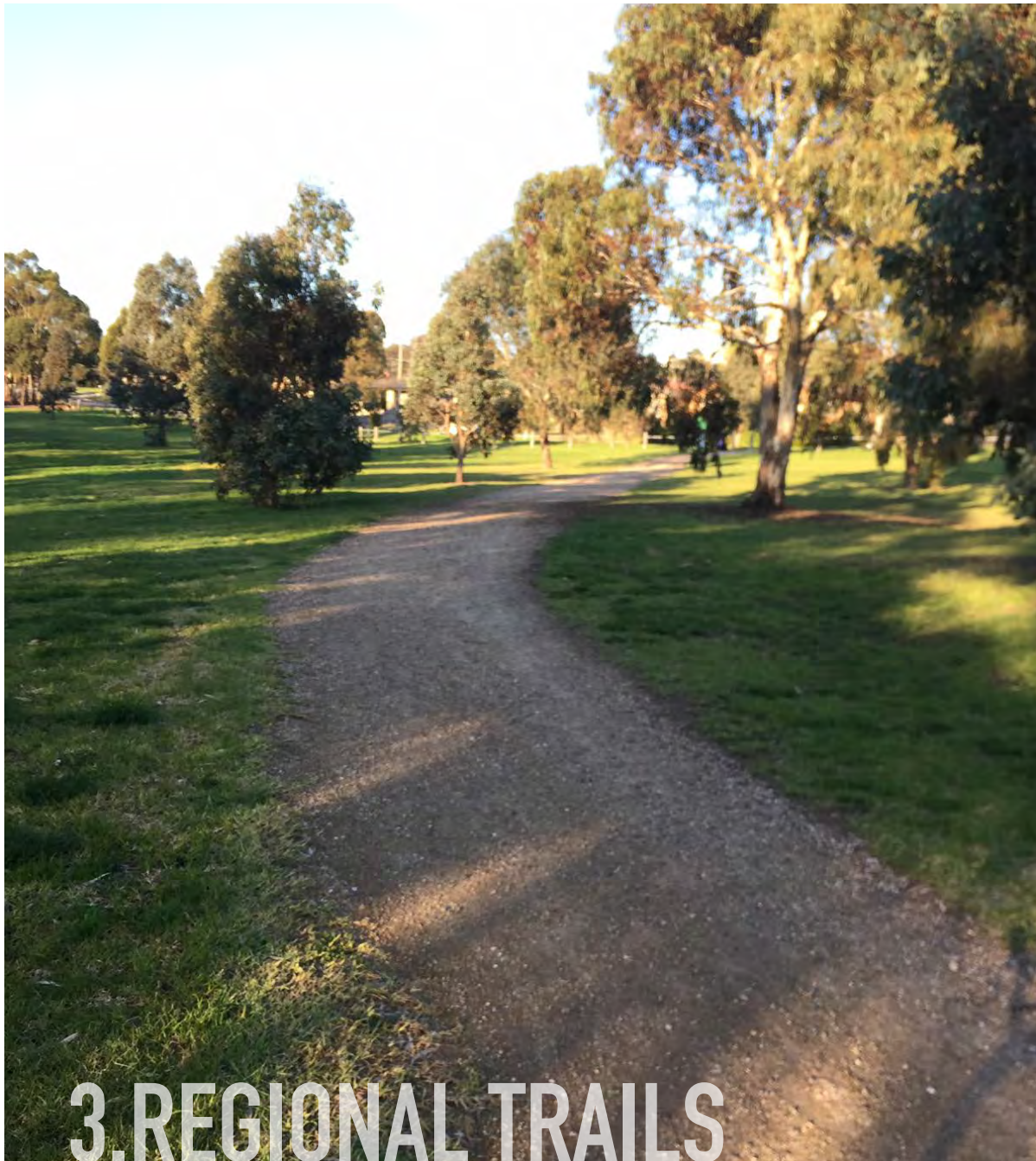
The trail network must be constructed and managed in a sustainable way to ensure that it continues to provide appropriate standards of safety, usability and presentation into the future.

8. Environment:

The trail network must be designed and constructed to minimise negative environmental impacts from both construction and ongoing use.

9. Cultural Heritage:

The trail network must be designed and constructed to ensure cultural heritage values are retained and protected.



Yuroke Creek Trail

3.1 WHAT ARE TRAILS?

The *Victorian Trails Strategy 2014-2024* defines a trail as:

'an established path, route or track which often traverses natural areas and is used by people for non-motorised recreation, such as walking, running, cycling, mountain biking and horse riding.'

Key characteristics of a trail include:

- multiple potential user groups, but with a recreational and restorative focus
- an off-road location
- a relatively long and continuous length.

These definitions, with a focus on off-road routes and connections to nature, fit comfortably with many trails within the study area. However, trails in urban areas may also be used to provide links to schools and shopping centres, rather than connections to nature. Similarly, the establishment of long and continuous trails in densely-developed urban areas very often requires the incorporation of routes of a more urban nature, including road-side shared paths and on-road bicycle lanes. To accommodate the full range of conditions found across the study area, the term 'trails' in this document incorporates these kinds of urban trail characteristics.

The *Victorian Trails Strategy* definition notes horse riders as a trail user group. While equestrian use of urban trails is not as common as other use modes, consideration of equestrian trail use is included within this study.

3.2 WHAT ARE REGIONAL TRAILS?

'Regional trails' fit the definition of trails developed above, and also have a regional scale, purpose and/or impact. Other key defining characteristics of regional trails are:

- **Connecting regionally important locations:** the provision of routes accessing and linking key civic/commercial destinations, activities and natural/cultural features of regional importance.
- **Integrated:** Regional trails in a metropolitan context do not exist in isolation, and must be integrated with a network of other regional and local trails.
- **Recreation:** the provision of recreation opportunities that are both accessible and attractive to a group of users of a regional scale and/or distribution.
- **Economic benefit:** the potential to deliver economic benefits of regional importance (including promoting economic development and/or tourism)
- **Ease of access:** the ability to be readily accessed by the community living and working within the region, as well as by visitors. Trails that require special skills or equipment to access (e.g. trails only accessible by mountain bikes) are not defined as regional trails for the purposes of this study.

Therefore, the kinds of facilities not defined as regional trails for the purposes of this study include local footpaths (i.e. roadside pedestrian-only paths that serve a very local function), on-road cycling opportunities, and informal mountain biking routes.

3.3 THE BENEFITS OF REGIONAL TRAILS

Regional trails provide a range of benefits to the community that can be grouped into four categories:

- Social
- Health (including active transport)
- Environmental, and
- Economic.

There are strong inter-relationships between these categories, as can be seen in the discussion of these benefits below.

3.3.1 Social

Regional trails create spaces for people to exercise with others, facilitating community connection and health benefits. Approximately half of the respondents to a questionnaire undertaken as a part of this study indicated that they regularly use the regional trail network with friends and family.

These project-specific findings about the prevalence of people exercising in groups are backed up by broader analysis. The Victorian Government health promotion foundation, VicHealth, undertakes regular analyses of public health in the state. The *VicHealth Indicators Survey 2015* found that;

just under a third (31.8%) of all Victorians (45.1% of those who participated in non-organised activities) reported that they participated in non-organised activities with someone else.

Unplanned social interactions also occur, particularly where there is a shared interest (such as dog walkers, families, or neighbours). These chance encounters provide opportunities for social interaction for people who may otherwise be socially isolated. Importantly, these opportunities for social interaction are available to all members of the community, regardless of social or economic standing.

The state government strategy *Plan Melbourne 2017-2050* identifies a goal of creating '20 minute neighbourhoods' (where most everyday needs are within a 20 minute walk, ride or public transport trip from a person's home) as a way to improve the quality of life for residents of the city. Trails can play an important role in realising this goal, by providing infrastructure to facilitate active transport modes.

3.3.2 Health

The *VicHealth Indicators Survey 2015* identifies 'physical activity and sedentary behaviour' as one of five key public health indicators. The top non-organised physical activities that Victorians participate in are all activities highly suited to regional trails: walking (51.2%), jogging/running (14%), and cycling (11.8%).

The *VicHealth Indicators Survey 2011* identified three key reasons for lack of physical activity and sedentary behaviour within the population:

- an increased reliance on cars for transportation
- leisure activities have become more sedentary in nature
- many workplaces require people to sit for long periods
(*VicHealth Indicators Survey 2011, Selected Findings, page 55*)

A high-quality trail network in an urban environment has the potential to strongly influence the choices people make regarding two out of three of these reasons for inactivity.

- Trails can make active transport options more attractive, by providing locations for safe, convenient and desirable alternatives to vehicles for personal transport.
- Trails can stimulate participation in active recreation activities, by providing allocation for a range of cost-free, convenient and attractive leisure opportunities.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the health and well-being benefits derived from visiting green and blue spaces (i.e.. open space and spaces in proximity to water bodies), enabling not only exercise but also opportunities for respite and connection. In *Time for 'Green' during COVID-19? Inequities in Green and Blue Space Access, Visitation and Felt Benefits* (Burt & Feng, 2021) Australian residents surveyed reported greater levels of green and/or blue space visitation and felt benefits during the pandemic. However, these benefits were not equally distributed. People with greater socio-economic disadvantage reported lower levels of visitation and felt benefits. This highlights the value of strengthening our trail network as a strategy to equalise access to green/blue spaces and their associated health and wellness benefits.

Trails also often provide shady routes, often in vegetated areas and along waterways, that provide valuable refuges from the 'urban heat island' (i.e.. higher temperatures in urban areas caused by high densities of hard-paved surfaces).

3.3.3 Environmental

A high quality regional trail network encourages people to choose to walk or cycle to destinations, rather than using motorised transport modes. This results in reduced vehicle numbers on roads, and the resulting reductions in air pollutants, noise pollution and congestion issues.

Trails can also provide access to natural environments which can assist in fostering an appreciation of the environment and help to develop awareness of environmental issues. The 2017 State Government strategy *Protecting Victoria's Environment – Biodiversity 2037* identifies increasing opportunities for all Victorians to have daily connections with nature as a priority action.

Trails are regularly located in sensitive environments (e.g. along waterways). Care needs to be taken in developing trails in sensitive locations to limit negative environmental and cultural heritage impacts. It should also be noted that creating trail access into such spaces can drive positive environmental outcomes by making problems (such as weed infestations) more visible. Trails can also make these areas easier to access for weed control and native vegetation management activities.

3.3.4 Economic

Some aspects of economic and tourism benefits of regional trails are closely linked, especially if a relatively broad definition of tourism is applied. Most of the visitors to the regional trails in Northern Melbourne live in Melbourne themselves. These local tourists have the same potential to provide economic advantage as those travelling greater distances before arrival.

There are also strong relationships between economic benefits of trails and the two previous categories (social and health benefits). The cost to the community of ill health is very large, and a portion of this can be attributed to physical inactivity. Mental illness also has an associated economic cost, which includes the costs from loss of productivity and absence from the workforce. Regular participation in physical activity has been shown to improve mental and physical health, and regional trails are a direct way to invest in improving that participation.

In addition to providing a healthy transport alternative, regional trails can also prove to be time-efficient, reducing costs such as lost productivity associated with transport congestion. Commuting time is also associated with negative health effects. The *VicHealth Indicators Survey 2015* noted that 'perceived stress during or immediately after commuting increases with commute time, lack of predictability or control associated with commuting, and crowding during the commute journey'. It also noted that commuting is also linked with negative health outcomes not directly related to the commute itself, such as time spent commuting resulting in less time available for health-promoting behaviours such as physical activity and relaxation.



Edgars Creek Trail

4.1 EXISTING STRATEGIC AND POLICIES

Given the large geographical size of the study area and the multitude of benefits associated with regional trails, there are a large number of existing strategies and policies that are relevant to this study. Relevant documents have been reviewed as a part of this study and are summarised in Appendix A.

The documents reviewed can be broadly grouped into the following categories.

- Municipal cycling and walking strategies
- Municipal open space strategies
- Municipal integrated transport strategies
- Municipal road management plan/ safe travel strategies
- Miscellaneous municipal strategies (including feasibility studies and Master Plans for trails).
- Northern Melbourne regional strategies (including the *Northern Horizons – 50 Year Infrastructure Strategy for Melbourne’s North 2016*, *Northern Metro Region Five Year Plan for Jobs, Services and Infrastructure 2018–2022*, and the *Northern Regional Trails Strategy* completed in 2016, which is a significant precursor to this study).
- Higher-level strategic documents (typically state government strategies relating to particular issues, including open space provision, waterways, cycling, trails, infrastructure plans and tourism).

4.2 STRATEGIC CONTEXT OVERVIEW

The review of existing strategies and policies highlights the strong alignment between the objectives of this study and broader strategic directions at all levels of government. These strategic directions include:

- Identification of cycling and walking infrastructure as an important part of an integrated transport network for Melbourne in state government plans and strategies (including *Open Space for Everyone 2021*, *Plan Melbourne 2017-2050*, the *Victorian Cycling Action Plan 2013-2023* and the *Victorian Cycling Strategy 2018-28*).
- Strong support for trail infrastructure development in local government strategies across the study area, including relating to transport, recreation, and health and wellbeing.
- The identification of regional trails as key recreational facilities for the region in the *Northern Horizons – 50 Year Infrastructure Strategy for Melbourne’s North 2016* and the *Northern Regional Trails Strategy 2016*.

4.3 NORTHERN REGIONAL TRAILS STRATEGY 2016

Completed in 2016, the *Northern Regional Trails Strategy* was undertaken to facilitate the implementation of an effective and integrated trail network to support an expanding, increasingly dense urban footprint and population, provide accessible recreation opportunities and promote and support a diverse range of employment and economic opportunities for the residents of Melbourne’s north and beyond.

The aim of the 2016 strategy was to develop a trail network that is a highly connected, functional off-road network with regional-scale economic, social and environmental value. To date, the strategy has been effective in leveraging approximately \$11 million of State Government funding to deliver key priorities identified in the strategy as well as focusing individual Councils’ budget allocations into the planning and delivery of priority trail projects.

The following table outlines the recommendations and key priorities identified in the 2016 strategy and their current status.

Trail	Project description	Status
Banyule Shared Trail	Two sections of new trail construction (2km) adjacent to the Greensborough Highway: 1. Wattle Drive north to Watsonia Station 2. Watsonia Station north to Grimshaw Street	High level concept design completed. Funded
East-West Power Easement Trail	Two sections of new trail construction (1.7km): 1. From Plenty Road to Watsonia Road / Railway Station / Greensborough Highway precinct 2. From the Greensborough Highway to the Plenty River Trail	Concept design partially completed. Partially funded
Main Yarra Trail	Bridge crossing over the Yarra River to Banksia Park at Vine Street, Heidelberg	Feasibility study is required. Funded
Main Yarra Trail	Realignment of the Main Yarra Trail through the Banyule Flats	On hold, pending further investigations and consultation. Not funded
Banyule Shared Trail	New trail construction (2.1km) from Banksia Street south to the Yarra Trail just north of McArthur Road	Concept design
Darebin Creek Trail	Bridge Crossing over the Darebin Creek at Tee Street providing a link between the existing Darebin Creek Trail and Beenak/ McMahon Reserve Path	Constructed
La Trobe University Shared Path	New trail construction (1.97km) from the La Trobe University at Plenty Road/ Main Drive to the existing Shared Path at Kingsbury Drive	Construction commenced
Plenty Road Shared Path	New trail construction (1.61km) along Plenty Road from Drive Road north to Arthur Street	No design undertaken to date
Aitken Boulevard Trail	Three sections of new trail construction (2.97km): 1. Along Kirkham Drive from the Yuroke Creek north to Kirkham Drive Reserve 2. Along Aitken Boulevard from Somerton Road to James Mirams Drive 3. From Fairways Boulevard north to Aitken Creek	1. Concept design 2. Constructed 3. Constructed
Aitken Creek Trail	New trail construction (0.58km) from Hothlyn Drive east to join the proposed Merri Creek Shared Trail.	Concept design developed for Stage 1
Blind Creek Trail	New trail construction (0.6km) from the rail line in Sunbury, east to the Jacksons Creek	Partial detailed design
Greenvale Reservoir Park Trail	New trail construction (1.2km) from Mickleham Road/ Garibaldi Road, east along Venezia Promenade to the Greenvale Reservoir Park	No design undertaken to date
Meadowlink Shared Pathway	Two sections of new trail construction (2.55km): 1. Through Rotary Park/ Johnstone Street Reserve to Johnstone Street 2. From Dimboola Road, along Tanderrum Way, Pascoe Vale Road then east to Merlynston Creek	1. Detailed design 2. Constructed
Yuroke Creek Trail	New trail construction (0.55km) along the Melbourne Water Pipe Track from Greenvale Reservoir Park south to the existing Yuroke Creek Trail	No design undertaken to date
Merri Creek Trail	Major trail extension (24.51km) from the north side of Barry Road to the far northern border of Hume.	Concept Design between Barry Road and Cooper Street
Upfield Rail Trail	New trail construction (1.4km) from Box Forest Road north to Metropolitan Ring Road	Funded - Construction commencing

Trail	Project description	Status
Upfield Rail Trail	Six sections of new trail construction (1.16km): 1. Missing section at Jewell Station 2. From Reynard Street to Munro Street 3. Missing section south of Gaffney Street 4. Missing section at Batman Station 5. Missing section at Ararat Avenue 6. Missing section at Merlynston Station	1. Constructed 2. Under construction 3. Constructed 4. Concept Design 5. No design 6. Some sections planned via car park upgrade.
Edgars Creek Trail	Three sections of new trail construction (2.19km): 1. From the Merri Creek Trail to Ronald Street 2. From Ronald Street to Photography Drive 3. From Photography Drive to Carrington Road	1. Partially constructed 2. No design undertaken to date 3. No design undertaken to date
Diamond Creek Trail	New trail construction (7.34km) along the Diamond Creek from Luscombe Drive to Ferguson's Paddock	Partially constructed
Aqueduct Trail	Three sections of new trail construction (20.63km): 1. From the Plenty River Trail, over the Metropolitan Ring Road to the existing Banyule Diamond Creek trail 2. From Main Road Diamond Creek, along Eltham-Yarra Glen Road, Creek road and Eltham road to the commencement of the existing trail 3. From Warrandyte Kinglake Road, north along Westering, Ridge and Muir Roads to Skyline Road	Concept design, partial detailed design
Green Wedge Trail	Four sections of new trail construction (8.22km): 1. From the proposed Diamond Creek Trail (Wattle Glen Station) to existing trail on Watery Gully Road 2. Missing section at Alma Road and Eltham-Yarra Glen Road 3. Missing section at Motschalls Road 4. Missing section from Spanish Gully Road to Kinglake	No design undertaken to date
Edgars Creek Trail	Four sections of new trail construction (7.98km): 1. North of Metropolitan Ring Road, from Spring Street to Main Street 2. Between Cooper Street and Tramoo Street 3. From Willandra Drive to Rockfield Street 4. From Gammage Boulevard to Craigieburn Road	1. Constructed 2. No design 3. Constructed 4. Partially constructed
Merri Creek Trail	New trail construction (0.34km) from the Merri Creek Trail to the Whittlesea Public Gardens.	Constructed
Whittlesea Rail Trail (also known as the Whittlesea Shared Trail)	New Trail construction (16.8km) along the train line from McDonalds Road, South Morang to Laurel Street, Whittlesea	No design undertaken to date
Yan Yean Pipe Track	Three sections of new trail construction (6.88km): 1. From the Western Ring Road north to Childs Road 2. From Moorhead Drive to Williamson Road 3. From Vincent Drive to Gordons Road	Partially constructed
Plenty Road Shared Path	New Trail Construction (0.43km) from Centenary Drive, Mill Park to the proposed Yan Yean Pipe Track at Hickey Court	No design undertaken to date
Darebin Creek Trail	Upgrade existing trail from M80 to Childs Road and Childs Road to Findon Road from granitic sand to concrete	Partially constructed
Merri Creek Trail	Upgrade existing trail in the City of Whittlesea from granitic sand to concrete	
Hendersons Road Drain Trail	Upgrade existing trail in the City of Whittlesea from granitic sand to concrete	Partially constructed

South Morang Pipe Trail	Upgrade existing trail in the City of Whittlesea from granitic sand to concrete	Detailed design
Craigieburn Line Shared Path	Construct 8 new sections of trail (15.65km): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. From Moonee Ponds Creek Trail to Gaffney Street 2. From Gaffney Street to Bothwell Street, on the western side 3. From Bothwell Street to Devon Road, on the western side 4. From Devon Road to Cartwright Street, on the western side 5. From Cartwright Street to Glenroy Road, on the western side 6. From Glenroy Road to Glenroy Station 7. From Glenroy Station to Jacana Station, on the eastern side 8. From Jacana Station to Craigieburn Station 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strategic Plan 2. Funded for construction 3. Design underway 4. Completed 5. Design underway 6. Construction underway 7. Strategic Plan 8. No design undertaken to date

Since the adoption of the *Northern Regional Trails Strategy (2016)*, significant State Government infrastructure projects have changed and will continue to change the physical landscape of the northern region necessitating the review and update of the 2016 strategy to reflect the impact these have had and the changing priorities. This updated strategy considers the recommendations and priorities outlined in the table above and establish an updated framework for the future development, prioritisation and maintenance for off road trails in the Northern Region of Metropolitan Melbourne.



Merri Creek Trail

5.1 DEMOGRAPHICS

The study area for this project is very diverse ranging from established inner-suburban areas to rural townships. The population of Northern Melbourne is similarly diverse. Figures 5.1 to 5.5 illustrate the key population characteristics of the study area, including land area, population numbers, population change and population density. These figures demonstrate that:

- The municipalities that make up the Northern Melbourne study area range in population size (from approximately 65,000 to 241,000 residents).
- The density of the population is heavily weighted to the south of the study area
- The area to the north of the region has the highest population, but low population densities. The growth areas have the fastest growing populations with their population densities projected to increase.
- The far eastern side of the study area has the lowest population and lowest density and due to the green wedge and larger rural lots.

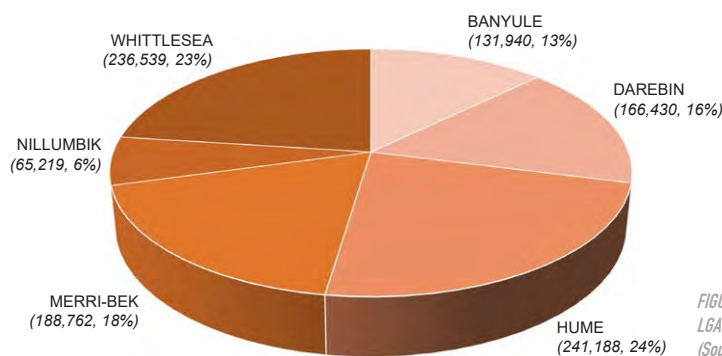


FIGURE 5.1:
LGA ABS Estimated Resident Population 2020
(Source: www.profile.id.com.au)

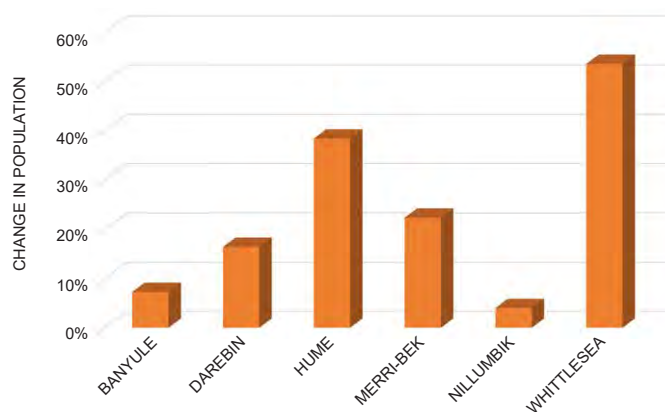


FIGURE 5.2:
Change in Estimated Resident Population from
2011 to 2020 by Local Government Area
(Source: www.profile.id.com.au)

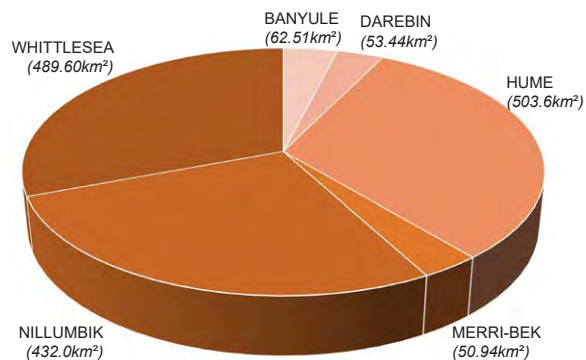


FIGURE 5.3:
LGA Land Area
(Source: www.profile.id.com.au)

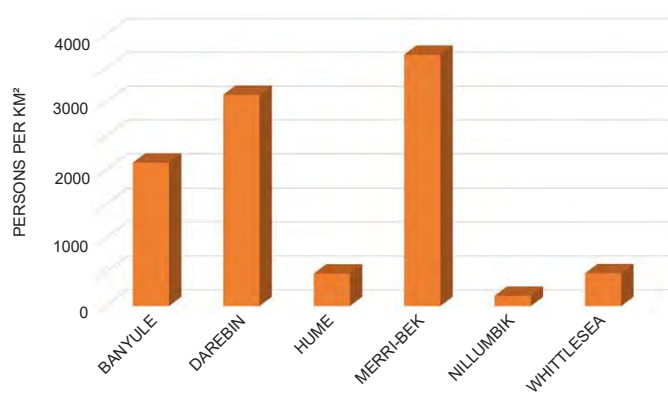


FIGURE 5.4:
Population Density by Local Government Area 2020
(Source: www.profile.id.com.au)

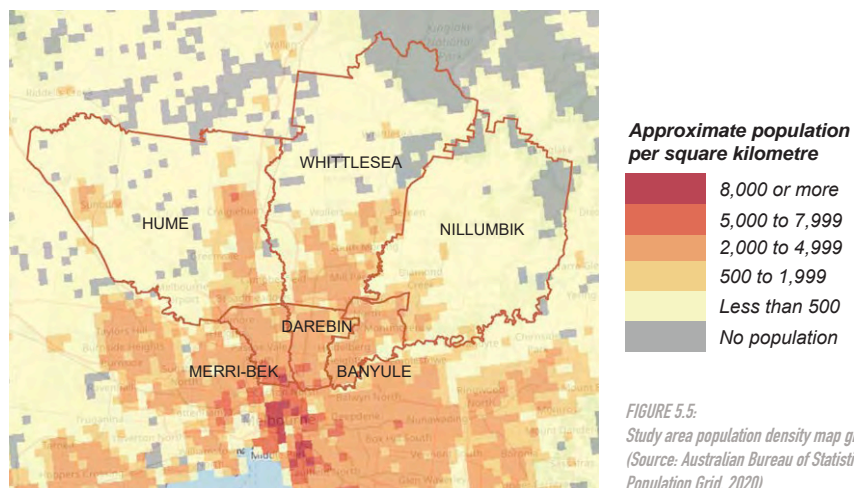


FIGURE 5.5:
Study area population density map grid (2020)
(Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Population Grid, 2020)

It can also be seen that all of the Councils within the study area are recording population growth and that this is projected to continue over the coming decades, particularly within the growth areas.

Figure 5.6 shows the age distribution for each of the Councils within the study area and a comparison to the Greater Melbourne average. The study area as a whole has high numbers of residents in the 35-49 year age bracket.

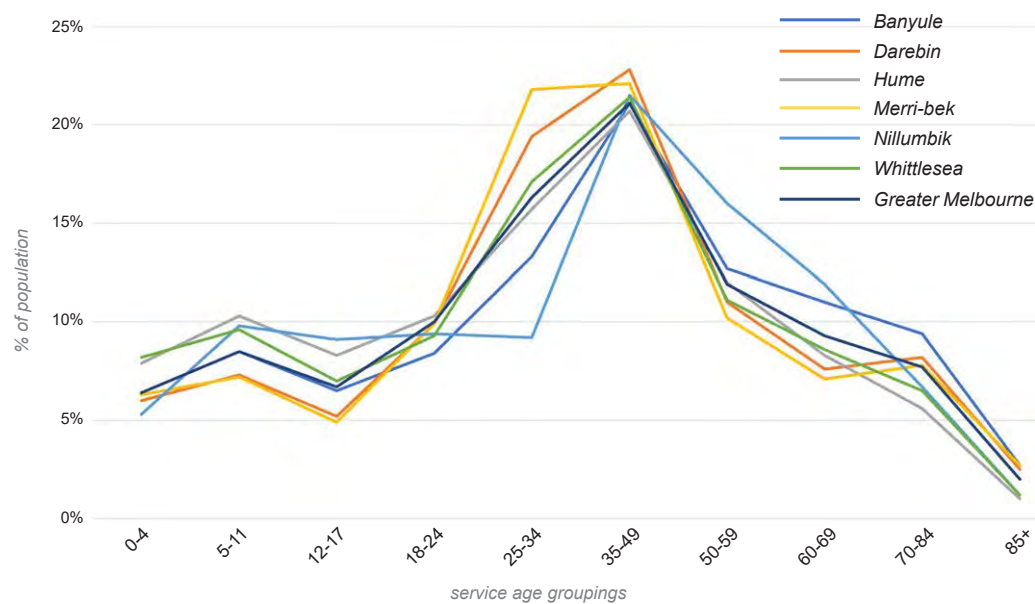


FIGURE 5.6:
Service age group distribution by Council within study area, compared to the Greater Melbourne population (2016)
(Source: www.profile.id.com.au)

Figure 5.7 shows the relative socio-economic disadvantage by suburb measured against the Australian Bureau of Statistics Socio-economic indexes for areas (SEIFA) measures. This dataset broadly defines socio-economic advantage and disadvantage through an assessment of people's access to material and social resources, and their ability to participate in society.

Within our study area the majority of the key population centres within the study area are ranked as having low levels of disadvantage. The areas of disadvantage identified are predominantly in the centre of the study area.

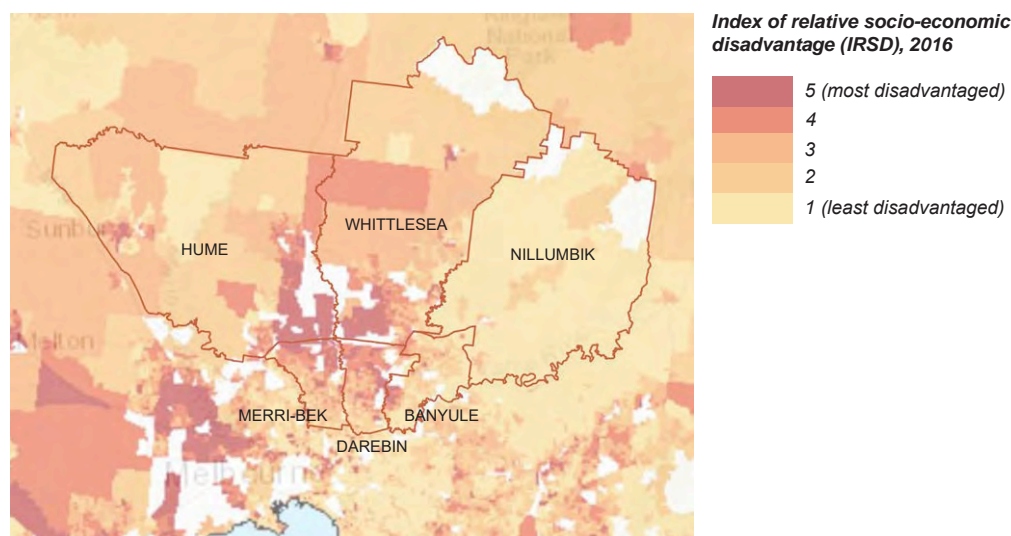


FIGURE 5.7:
Relative socio-economic disadvantage by suburb (2016)
(Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Socio-economic indexes for areas, SEIFA, 2016)

The implications of this demographic data on regional trail provision in the study area include:

- Population growth in the study area is inconsistent, with growth areas experiencing major growth in past decade, a trend that is likely to continue. There is potential to take advantage of new trail projects being delivered as a part of growth corridor planning and broad-scale land development activities.
- Increasing populations across the study area create a strong argument for investment in community infrastructure, including regional trails.
- The high densities of population in the southern part of the study area create demand for regional trails, but also make the construction of new regional trails very difficult (due to the constraints that come with density).
- There are currently no regional trails within the far-eastern and northern portions of the study area due to the low population densities. These areas are unlikely to become a priority for regional trail construction, with the exception of tourism-focused, nature based trails.
- Consideration should be given to prioritising regional trail improvement in areas identified as being socio-economically disadvantaged. Regional trails provide a free and accessible recreation resource, and also contribute to the feasibility and attractiveness of low-cost transport options.

5.2 EXISTING TRAIL USERS

There is no comprehensive information available about regional trail network use and users in the Northern Melbourne study area. In this section, information has been compiled from a number of sources in order to build a picture of regional trail use:

- The *Super Tuesday Commuter Bike Count* (undertaken annually by the bicycle advocacy organisation *Bicycle Network*).
- The *Super Sunday Recreational Count* (also undertaken annually by *Bicycle Network*).
- Individual count data provided by some Councils.
- The on-line questionnaire undertaken as a part of this project. Please note that this open questionnaire went out to Bicycle Network members, which may weight results towards this interest group.

The purpose of understanding existing trail use is to determine:

- Who is using the regional trail network, and why? This provides a framework for trail planning, management and focuses potential improvements to meet their needs of these users.
- Who isn't using the regional trail network, and why? This provides a framework for improvements that appeal to a broader demographic and increase usage.

Regional trail network use and users were established through three key questions:

- Quantity/location - how many people are using the regional trails, and which trails are they using?
- Mode - how are people using the trails?
- Function - why are people using the trails?

5.2.1 Quantity/location

How many people use the regional trails of Northern Melbourne, and which trails are they using?

An indication hierarchy of use is provided via the questionnaire undertaken as a part of this study in which we asked people to identify which of the regional trails in the study area they had used, and how often (see figure 5.8).

The Merri Creek Trail recorded the highest level of use with over 13% of respondents indicating that they use the Merri Creek Trail 'daily or several times a week'. This trail is located within the most densely populated areas of the northern region. Its north-south alignment and position within a creek corridor supports both commuter and recreational use. Bicycle Network Victoria's Super Tuesday count data from 2019 recorded over 300 trips per hour on the Merri Creek Trail. The impact on commuter traffic from the COVID-19 lock downs is demonstrated in the 2020 count data which recorded only 125 trips per hour.

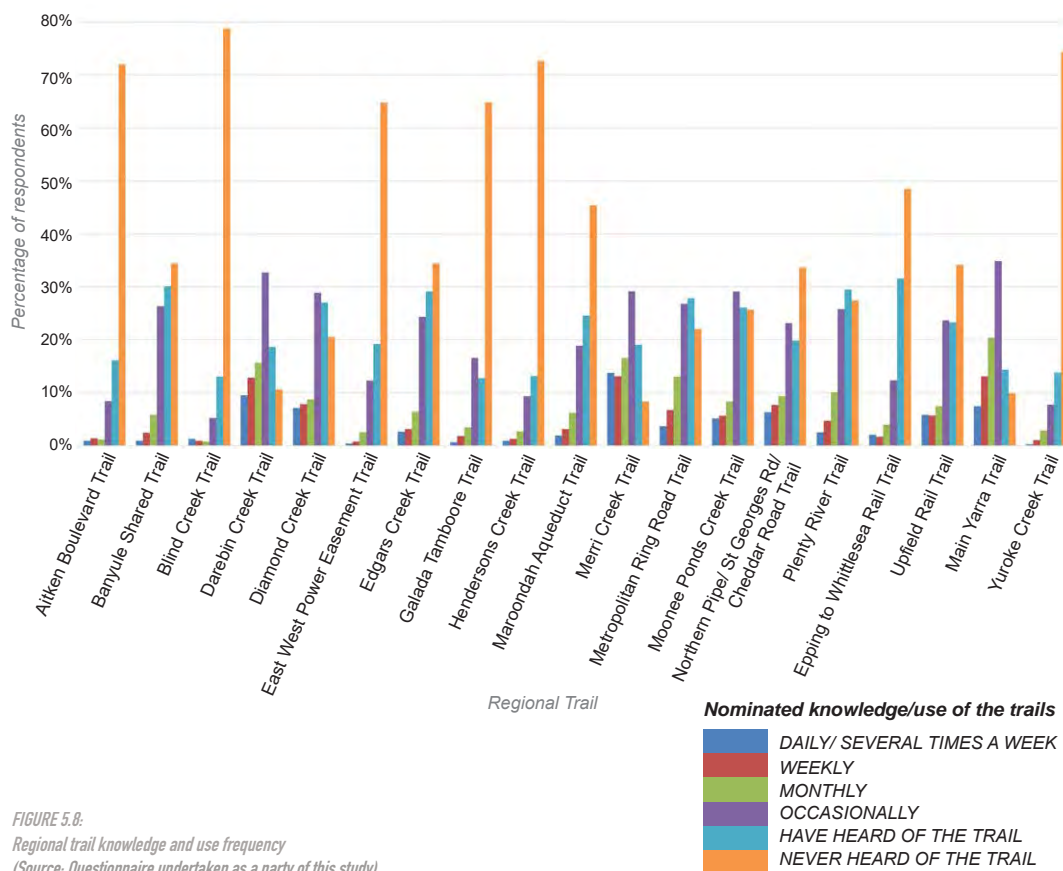
The Darebin Creek Trail, another north-south trail with both commuter and recreational appeal, recorded the second highest level of usage with almost 10% of respondents indicating they use the trail 'daily or several times a week'. Bicycle Network Victoria's Super Tuesday count data from 2020 saw an increase of usage of up to 60% for the section of trail located within Whittlesea. Due to its relative distance from the CBD this section is more commonly used for its recreational benefits. It could be inferred that this spike in usage during the COVID-19 lock downs demonstrates an increase in residents turning to trails for exercise, socialising and relaxation.

Lack of name recognition of the Northern Trails network is demonstrated by over one third of respondents reporting that they have 'never heard of' 11 of the 19 listed trails. This indicates a need to broaden public awareness of the Northern Trails network to increase user diversity and frequency of use.

An indication of trail use frequency is provided by the on-line questionnaire. Figure 5.9 illustrates how often respondents indicated they use the regional trails. Close to three quarters of the respondents indicated they used the regional trails at least weekly ('several times a week', 36%, 'weekly' 21% and 'daily', 17%).

Northern Trails 2022

23



5.2.2 Mode and function

Why are people using the regional trails of Northern Melbourne?

The questionnaire undertaken as a part of this project asked people to identify how they most often used regional trails in the study area (see figure 5.10). Bike riding was the most common response, being selected by over 52% of respondents, followed by walking (23%) and walking with a dog (almost 10%). It is recognised that there is often significant cross-over in reasons for trails use. Being able to use trails for multiple purposes is one of their key benefits.

Regarding the dominant recreation and exercise categories, supporting this are the findings of the *VicHealth Indicators Survey 2015* that notes at a state-wide level, walking (51%), jogging/running (14%) and cycling (12%) are the highest participation non-organised physical activities.

Northern Trails 2022

24

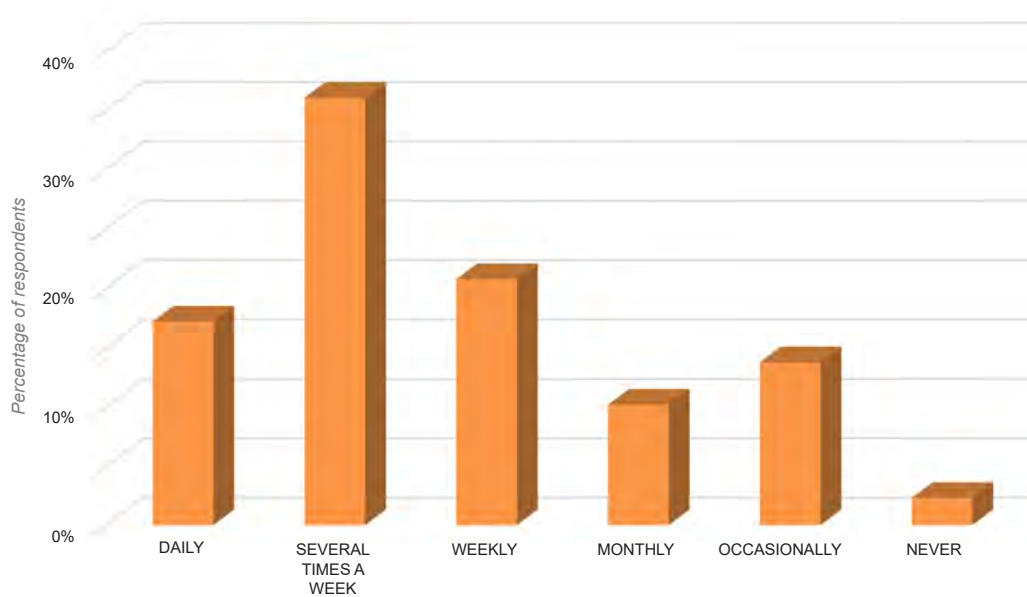


FIGURE 5.9:
Regional trail use frequency: 'How often do you currently use the regional trails in Northern Melbourne?'
(Source: Questionnaire undertaken as a party of this study)

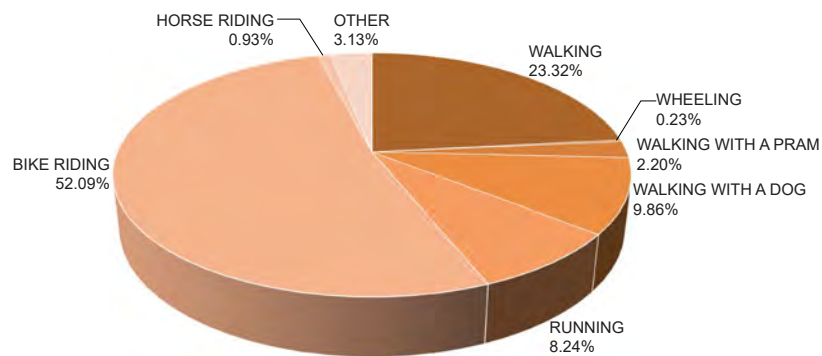


FIGURE 5.10:
Primary use mode of the regional trails: 'How do you most often use the regional trails in Northern Melbourne?'
Source: Questionnaire undertaken as a party of this study)

Cycling for transport is an important function of many regional trails in Northern Melbourne. The questionnaire was undertaken during the COVID-19 pandemic. The increase in people working from home and the reduced movement experienced under lock down conditions may mean that this use is not accurately represented in the findings (figure 5.11). At a population level the *Victorian Cycling Strategy 2018-28* reports that cycling makes up just 2% of daily trips to work in Melbourne (compared to 4% walking, 18% public transport, and 74% private vehicle).

Trails are traditionally perceived as rural or natural in setting. This perception is reflected in the alignment of many existing urban trails, which are more likely to connect to parkland and natural reserves than to centres of activity and employment. This may also impact the prevalence of cycling for transport as a reason for using regional trails. As active transport routes, regional trails have room for improvement.

The questionnaire identified that many respondents used trails with family and/or friends (refer to figure 5.12) indicating that the trails play an important role in facilitating social engagement and interaction. Anecdotal evidence suggests that COVID-19 restrictions amplified the importance of trails as a public and locally accessible facility where the community can gather and interact with family and friends.

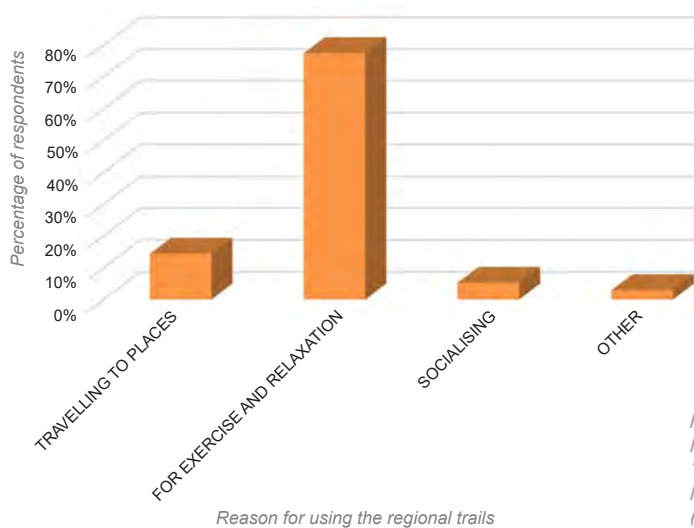


FIGURE 5.11:
Reason for trail use:
‘Why do you most often use regional trails in Northern Melbourne?’
(Source: Questionnaire undertaken as a party of this study)

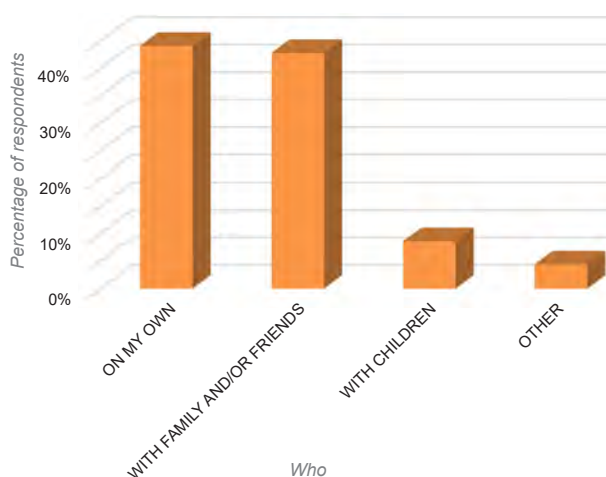


FIGURE 5.12:
Who do you use the regional trails with?
‘Who do you most often use the regional trails in Northern Melbourne with?’
(Source: Questionnaire undertaken as a party of this study)

5.3 POTENTIAL TRAIL USERS

One of the key measures of success for a regional trail network is the number of users. A growing regional trail network should prioritise attracting additional users.

External factors that are likely to effect regional trail usage include:

- Population growth within the region (as identified within the demographics section earlier in this chapter), and in Melbourne as a whole.
- Usage trends relating to exercise and active transport.
- Increase in the use of electric bikes which allow broader access to trails, where route length or gradient may be prohibitive for standard cycling.
- The growth of dockless share bike schemes.

Trail improvements impact usage. A key focus of this project is to identify and examine which improvements are most valued among current and potential users. Within our on-line questionnaire the most valued preference to 'increase your usage of the trails' was 'improved connectivity between the trails,' with 77% of respondents citing it as a preference (see figure 5.13).

The popular support for improved connectivity between trails reflects the broad user benefits this would have. For recreational users, connecting trails create the potential for circuits and loops, which provide a more interesting and varied user experience, and allows users to set goals and challenges relating to circuits of a particular length. For people using regional trails for transport, inter-connecting trails open up a larger range of destinations which increases the likelihood of frequent use.

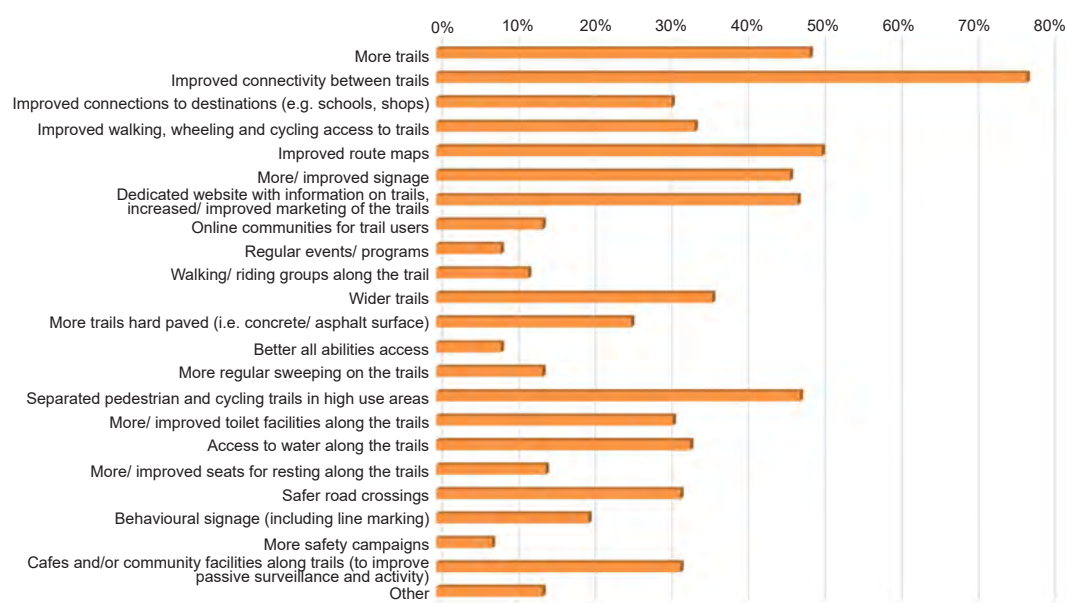


FIGURE 5.13:

Trail improvement preferences:

'Which of the following could increase your usage of the trails? (Tick all that apply)'

(Source: Questionnaire undertaken as a part of this study)

'Separated pedestrian and cycling trails in high use areas' also had popular support. This reflects the concern for conflicts that arise on shared-use trails. A key issue here is the difference in speed between cyclists and pedestrians using the trails. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 7: Trail Infrastructure.

The responses regarding trail improvements provide useful insights into user perceptions of the existing trail network. The respondents to the questionnaire are, in general, people who already use the regional trails. How can new users be attracted to use regional trails?

The *Victorian Cycling Strategy 2018-28* identifies four groups of people relating to their propensity to cycle:

- 'Strong and fearless' cyclists will cycle regardless of road conditions and are ready to mix with traffic.
- 'Enthusied and confident' cyclists are already riding, but they could ride more and their riding experience could be better
- 'Interested but concerned' cyclists are the largest group, and they vary in age and cycling ability. They are curious about cycling and like to ride but are afraid to do so and put off by the need to ride close to motor vehicles and pedestrians, especially on higher-speed, higher-volume roads or where conflicts are more likely.
- 'No way, no how' people will not cycle because they can't, because the terrain is unsuitable or because they have no interest whatsoever in it.

The 'interested but concerned' category are estimated to make up 60% of the population (compared to only 1% who are 'strong and fearless', and 7% 'enthused and confident'). The off-road condition of regional trails make them an attractive option for this safety conscious group. To increase regional trail usage within the 'interested but concerned' category, a focus should be placed on improvements that make trails more convenient, safe, and easy to navigate.

Tourism-related use has strong potential to introduce new users to regional trails. While not all regional trails are scenic or adjacent to tourist-attracting destinations, an interconnecting network means that visitors can utilise the network to access the more scenic trails and destinations.

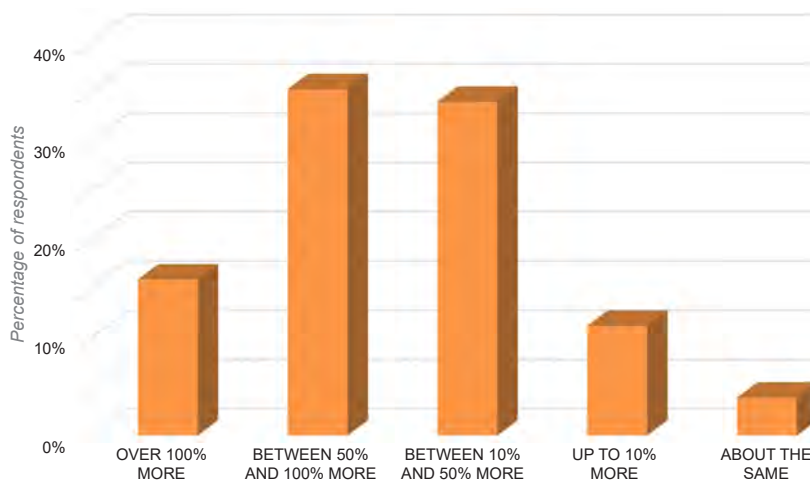


FIGURE 5.14:

Regional trail use frequency if improvements undertaken:

'If the improvements that you identified (listed above) were implemented, how much more often do you think you would use the trails?'

(Source: Questionnaire undertaken as a party of this study)

5.4 EQUESTRIAN USE

For the purposes of this study, regional trails have been defined as trails providing opportunities for multiple user types. However, there are challenges in accommodating all potential trail users, and these challenges are perhaps most pronounced with equestrian use.

Whilst horse riding on the northern regional trails is relatively limited at present, the feasibility of equestrian use of the entire trail network should be considered. Should trail users be able to ride horses from the rural fringes to the city centre on off-road trails? This level of equestrian use of regional trails in Northern Melbourne is hindered by a number of factors including:

- **Suitability of surfaces:** many urban shared trails are hard paved (for all-weather access, accessibility for people of all abilities, and the minimisation of ongoing maintenance requirements) which makes many trails unsuitable for equestrian use.
- **Width of trail corridors:** many trails within the network are highly constrained due to adjacent waterways, rail lines or sensitive environments and cannot accommodate the additional width required for a second parallel path for equestrian use.
- **External stakeholders:** many trail corridors are owned or managed by external stakeholders who may not be supportive of equestrian use on their land due to increased risk to trail users (which as land owners, they share some responsibility for), and the potential for environmental damage.
- **Low demand:** the numbers of regular horse riders are very low compared to pedestrian and cycling numbers. The 2017 Equestrian Victoria *State Facility Plan* estimates that there are 53,246 participants in equestrian sport in Victoria. This equates to less than 1% of the total population. Of these participants, many are involved in the competitive aspects of horse riding, including dressage, show jumping and eventing. These activities are undertaken at purpose-built facilities, not on trails.
- **Conflict of use:** Shared-use trails can create issues for horse riders, including the potential for horses to be troubled by other trail users and dogs. This makes shared trail use less desirable than riding on private land (such as at the many commercial equestrian facilities within the region) or on quieter bushland trails.

For these reasons, equestrian use of trails needs to be targeted rather than broadly applied. There are three types of equestrian use of trails that seem most likely to be attractive to riders and compatible with broader regional trail planning objectives.

- **Off-road horse riding opportunities,** particularly in rural areas. As the population of Melbourne has grown, once-rural areas have become more developed and quiet roads have been progressively upgraded to accommodate increased populations. The quiet country roads that used to be ideal for horse-riding (either on unmade roads, or on the grassy verges of made roads) are becoming busier and less suited to equestrian use. Regional trails that are more rural in nature have the potential to provide the kind of riding opportunities being lost through road upgrades.
- **Trail connections to equestrian facilities.** As noted previously, many horse riders prefer experiences other than riding on shared use trails. However, there is the potential for them to access these experiences via a shared trail network. The potential benefits to riders is that they can ride between equestrian facilities and places of agistment, rather than needing to transport riders and horses by vehicle.
- **Tourism use.** Trails with a tourism focus can benefit from accommodating equestrian use. The presence of horses on a trail can add to the rural experience being sought by other users. There is also the potential for economic benefit through commercial operators providing tourism experiences based around horse riding on the trails.

If equestrian use is to be accommodated on the regional trails, which trails should be targeted? One method for targeting regional trails for equestrian use is to identify existing trails that are aligned closely to the areas of existing equestrian activity. The 2017 Equestrian Victoria *State Facility Plan* identifies five key venues for equestrian events within the study area (out of 55 venues identified state-wide). These, along with other equestrian facilities identified as a part of this project, are mapped in figure 5.15 with the regional trail network. It can be seen that there are many equestrian facilities that are located in close proximity to regional trails, providing the potential for a relationship between them.

Trails where equestrian use and tourism activities could be mutually beneficial are those concentrated in the northern and more rural parts of the study area. Consideration should be given to the following trails in terms of accommodating equestrian use:

- the proposed extension of the Moonee Ponds Creek Trail within Hume on Parks Victoria land
- the Main Yarra Trail within Banyule
- the proposed extension of the Maroondah Aqueduct Trail
- the Green Wedge Trail
- the Diamond Creek Trail
- the Kinglake Way Trail

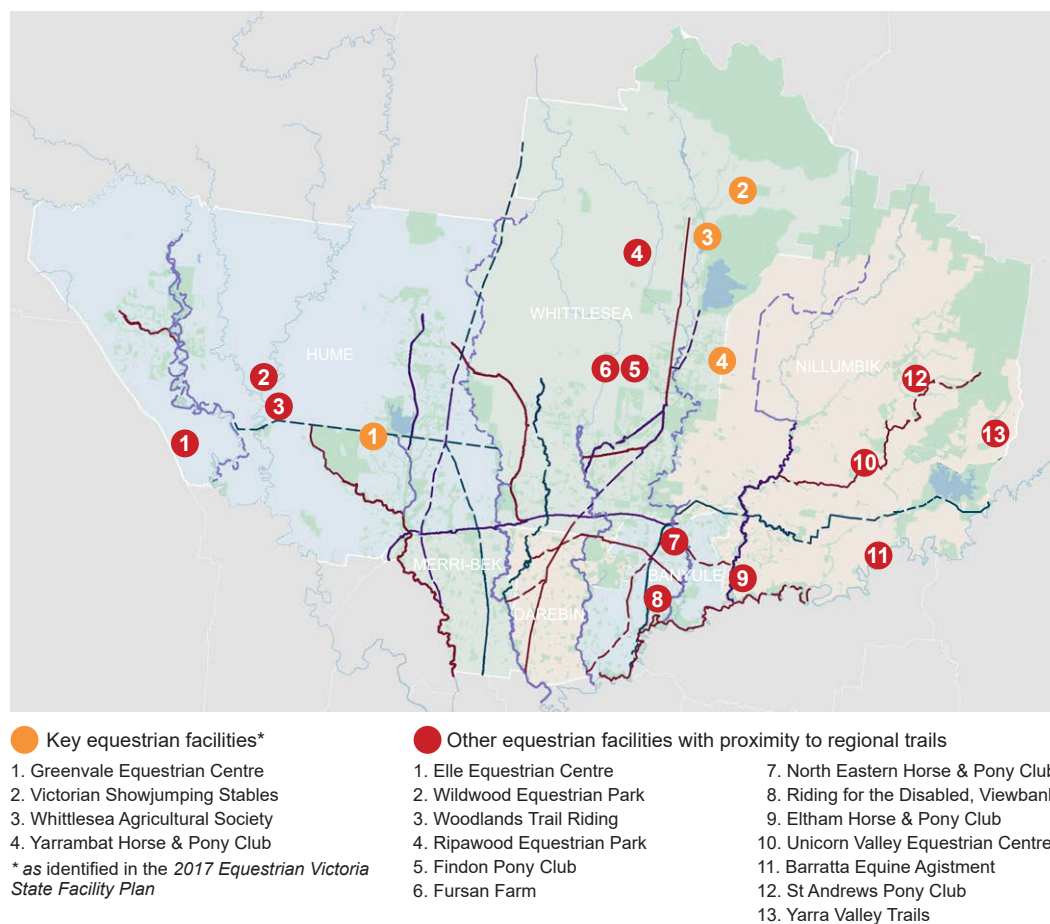


FIGURE 5.15:
Location of key equestrian facilities in relation to the regional trail network
(Source: key equestrian facilities are as identified in the 2017 Equestrian Victoria State Facility Plan)



Edgars Creek Trail

A number of steps were undertaken to determine which of the many paths that exist in the study area should be incorporated in this study as regional trails:

- **Northern Trails Strategy (2016) review** - a review of the 2016 study identified the major trails within the study area.
- **Desktop review** - a review of available local government, regional level and State Government strategic documents
- **Trail audit** - the major trails identified were audited, including riding all of the identified trails with a GPS device to map the trail extent and characteristics.
- **Action Plan** - potential trail improvements for each of the major trails were identified through various phases of the project. Because of the strategic nature and proposed lifespan of this study, trails were assessed not just on their existing condition, but also taking into account the proposed and potential future development of the trails.

Of the trails identified as a part of the desktop review, 27 were assessed to be, or have the potential to be, regional trails. These trails are shown in figure 6.1, and individually mapped in this chapter, along with descriptions of the trails and the recommended trail improvement projects for each.

Of the 27 regional trails, eight were either non-existent or have a substantial potential for expansion. They are:

- **Jacksons Creek Trail** - The Jacksons Creek Trail is proposed to run along the length of the Jacksons Creek in Sunbury to eventually connect with the Organ Pipes National Park (outside the study area).
- **Somerton Road Trail** - this proposed trail is expected to be implemented with the Somerton Road Duplication Project and will connect the Jacksons Creek Trail in the west to the Merri Creek Trail in the east.
- **Merri Creek Trail** - Whilst a substantial length of this trail exists, mostly within Darebin, plans to extend the trail north along the creek corridor will more than double it's length.
- **Plenty River Trail** - The proposed extension of the Plenty River Trail will provide a connection from the southern end of the region to Mernda. It will also provide connections in to Nillumbik from Greensborough in the south and Mernda in the north
- **Maroondah Aqueduct Trail** - Whilst sections of this trail exists, the proposed extension east would provide a route to the Sugarloaf Reservoir.
- **Kinglake Way Trail** - This proposed trail of approximately 20km in length provides a connection from the existing Diamond Creek Trail to Kinglake National Park.
- **Craigieburn Line Shared Path** - With construction having already commenced, the completed Craigieburn Line Shared Path will run from the Moonee Ponds Creek Trail in the south to Craigieburn Station in the north, providing over 15km of new trail along the rail corridor.
- **Amaroo Pipe Track** - The Amaroo Pipe Track, once realised, will provide a direct trail from Craigieburn Station in the south through to the proposed train station in Beveridge

Any summary of regional trails will always be a snapshot in time and a work in progress. Priorities will change over time, new opportunities will arise, and the planning and management of regional trails will need to respond to these changes.



FIGURE 6.1:
The Northern Melbourne regional trail network

6.1 AITKEN BOULEVARD SHARED TRAIL

Trail information

Length: 9.6km
SCC: Yes

Location:

The Aitken Boulevard Trail follows Aitken Boulevard from the Yuroke Creek Trail through Roxburgh Park and Craigieburn, to Mt Ridley Road

Local Government Area:
Hume

Additional Stakeholders:
-

Auditor comments:

"Basically a wide footpath with access issues at the south end and major gaps in the northern sections"



Priority Actions

- 1 Provide wayfinding signage along the length of the trail
- 2 Construct new section of trail on the eastern side of Aitken Boulevard from the Aitken Creek to Craigieburn Road
- 3 Construct new section of trail from Brookfield Boulevard to Highlands Shopping Centre
- 4 Construct new section of trail from the Yuroke Creek Trail to Somerton Road following duplication of Somerton Road and a safe crossing point being constructed

6.2 AMAROO PIPE TRACK

Trail information

Length: 14.5km
SCC: Yes

Location:

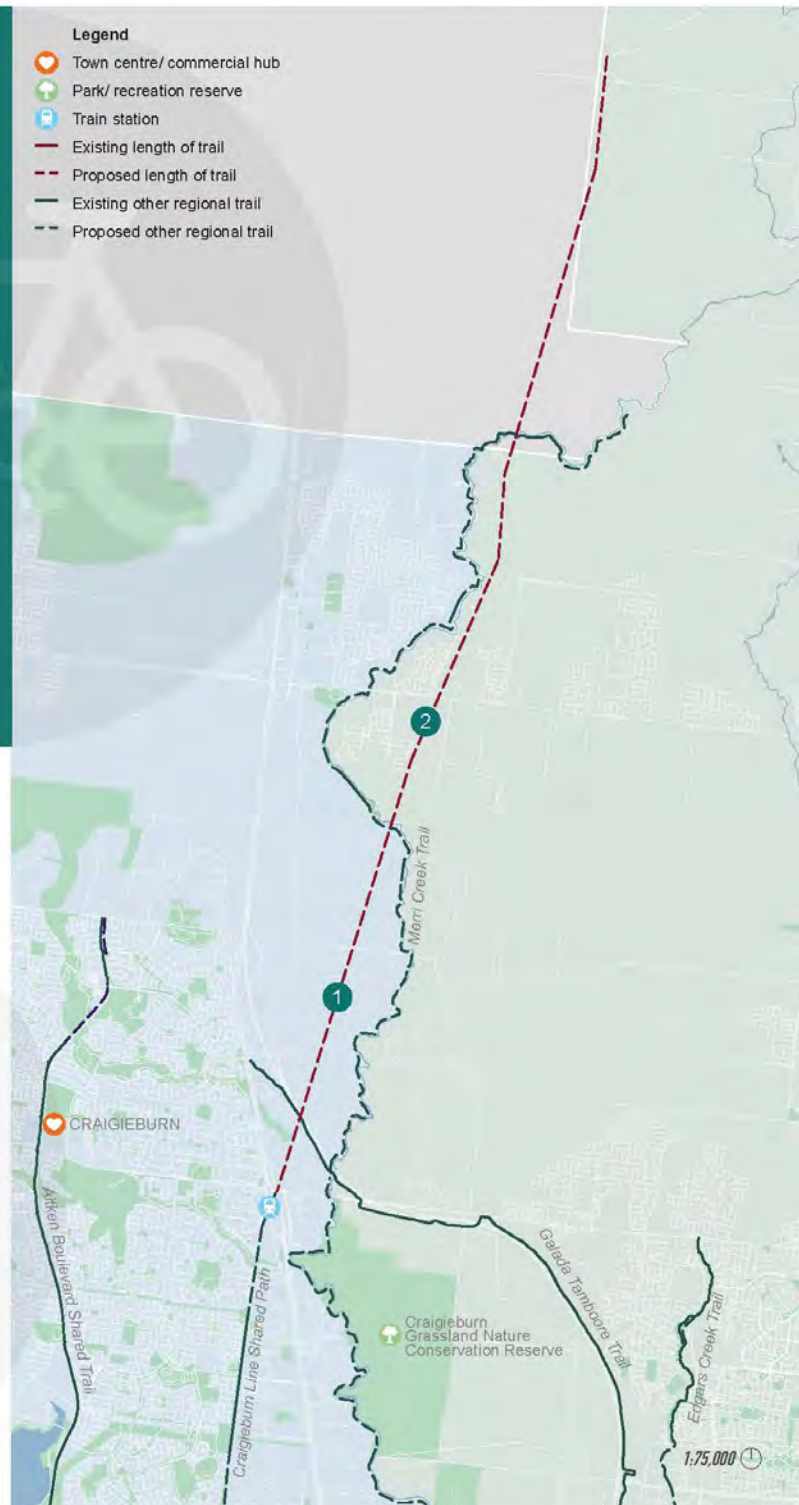
The Amaroo Pipe Track is a direct trail from Craigieburn Station in the south through to the City of Whittlesea and beyond the study area to Mitchell Shire

Local Government Area:
Hume & Whittlesea

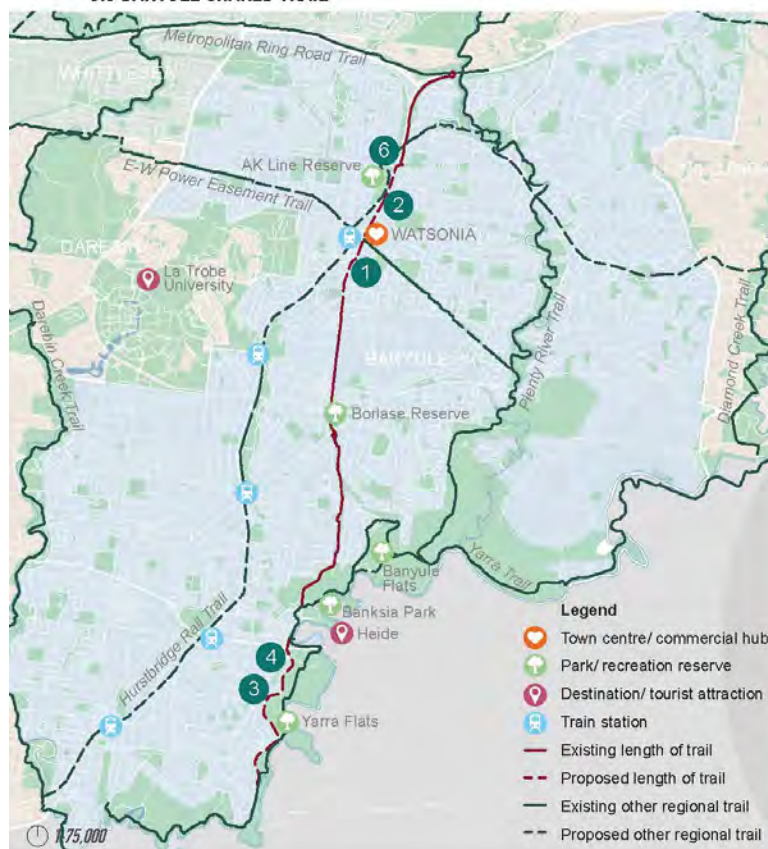
Additional Stakeholders:
Mitchell Shire and Yarra Valley Water

Priority Actions

- 1 Advocate for a new trail along the sewer easement from Craigieburn Station north toward Beveridge (within Hume)
- 2 Advocate for a new trail along the sewer easement north to Beveridge (within Whittlesea)



6.3 BANYULE SHARED TRAIL



Trail information

Length: 10.6km
SCC: Yes

Location:

The Banyule Shared Path runs in a north-south direction through Watsonia and Rosanna from the Metropolitan Ring Road Trail to the Yarra Trail

Local Government Area:

Banyule

Additional Stakeholders:

Melbourne Water, Parks Victoria, VicRoads

Auditor comments:

"A potentially effective commuter trail if some major improvements are made to address the gaps in continuity"

Priority Actions

- 1 Construct new section of trail from Wattle Drive north to Watsonia Station
- 2 Construct new section of trail from Watsonia Station north to Grimshaw Street
- 3 Construct new section of the trail from Banksia Street south to the Yarra Trail just north of McArthur Road
- 4 Realign trail at playground on River Gum Walk to reduce incline
- 5 Provide wayfinding signage along the length of the trail
- 6 Provide a grade separated north-south walking and cycling link across Grimshaw Street at the Greensborough Bypass

6.4 BLIND CREEK TRAIL

Trail information

Length: 7km
 SCC: No

Location:

The Blind Creek Trail follows the creek through parkland across Sunbury and will connect with the future Jacksons Creek biik wurrdha Regional Parklands in the east (in accordance with the Jacksons Creek biik wurrdha Regional Parklands Plan)

Local Government Area:
 Hume

Additional Stakeholders:

Major Road Projects Victoria, Melbourne Water, private landowners, Salesian College Sunbury, VicRoads

Auditor comments:

"Pleasant trail of good quality marred by lack of signage and general waymarking."



Priority Actions

- 1 Advocate and plan for a new section of trail from the rail line in Sunbury east to Jacksons Creek and The Nook/Bicentennial Park
- 2 Provide wayfinding signage along the length of the trail
- 3 Investigate the feasibility of realigning the underpass at Riddell Road to cater to all users (cyclists) and improve access and safety
- 4 Investigate a pedestrian priority crossing with wayfinding signage at Phillip Drive
- 5 Investigate a pedestrian priority crossing at Elizabeth Drive
- 6 Investigate a pedestrian priority crossing with wayfinding signage at Racecourse Road
- 7 In partnership with Salesian College construct trail on southwest side of the Dam to connect with Ardcloney Drive.

6.5 CRAIGIEBURN LINE SHARED PATH

Trail information

Length: 15.65km
SCC: Yes

Location:

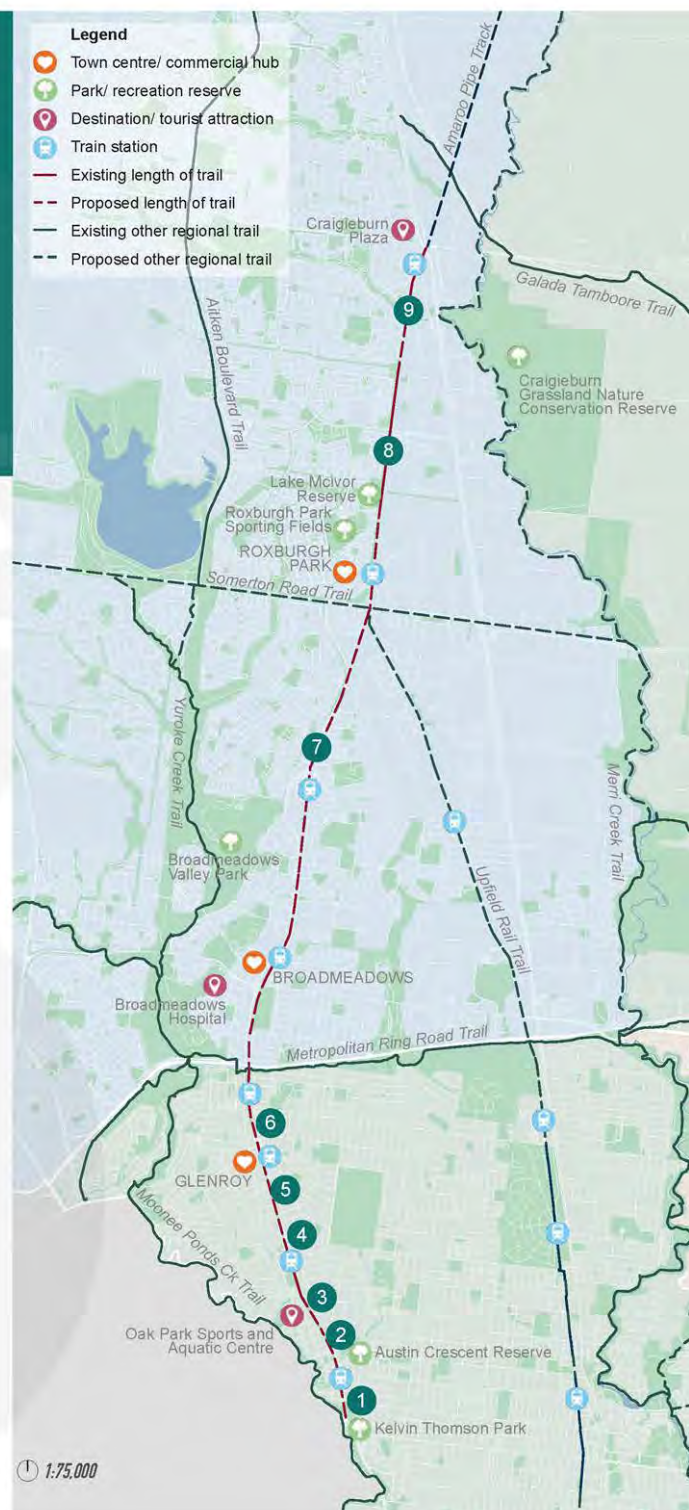
The Craigieburn Line Shared Path runs along the rail corridor from the Moonee Ponds Creek in the South through to Craigieburn Station

Local Government Area:
Hume & Merri-bek

Additional Stakeholders:
VicTrack

Priority Actions

- 1 Construct new section of trail from the Moonee Ponds Creek Trail to Gaffney Street
- 2 Construct a new section of trail, on the western side of the train line, from Gaffney Street to Bothwell Street including fencing and lighting
- 3 Construct a new section of trail, on the western side of the train line, from Bothwell Street to Devon Road including retaining, fencing and lighting
- 4 Construct a new section of trail, on the western side of the train line, from Cartwright Street to Glenroy Road including fencing and lighting
- 5 Construct a new section of trail from Glenroy Road to Glenroy Station
- 6 Construct a new section of trail, on the eastern side of the train line, from Glenroy Station to Jacana Station including fencing and lighting
- 7 Advocate for a feasibility study for a new continuous shared path from Jacana Station to McConnell Crescent (north of Roxburgh Park Station)
- 8 Widen the existing section of trail from McConnell Crescent to Zambezi Court Reserve
- 9 Advocate for a feasibility study for a new continuous shared path from Zambezi Court Reserve to Craigieburn Station



6.6 DAREBIN CREEK TRAIL

Trail information

Length:
30km (extends beyond study area) **SCC:**
No

Location:
This trail runs along the Darebin Creek Trail from Ivanhoe in the south to Epping in the north.

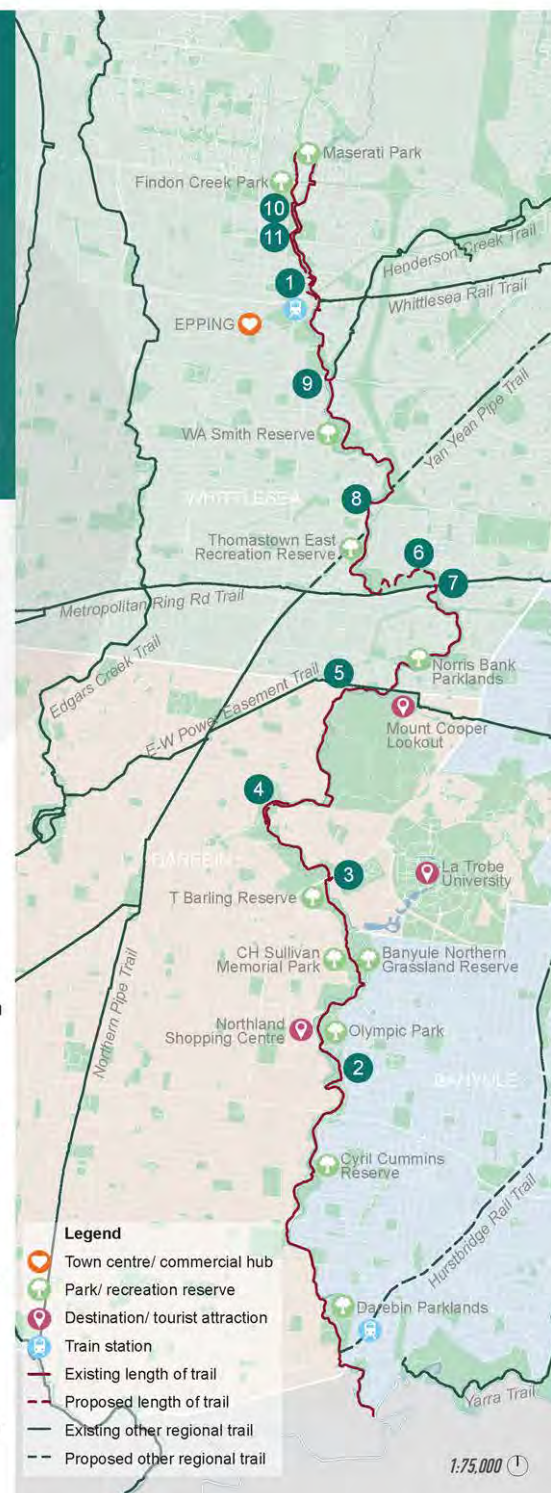
Local Government Area:
Banyule, Darebin, Whittlesea

Additional Stakeholders:
La Trobe University, Major Road Projects Victoria, Melbourne Water, VicRoads

Auditor comments:
"A generally first class trail that utilises the creek's green margins to excellent effect, with only a few minor sections that require upgrading/attention"

Priority Actions

- 1 Construct new section of trail on the western side of the creek from the train underpass east of Epping Station to Greenbrook Drive
- 2 Upgrade section of trail between Gona Street and Southern Road
- 3 Investigate the feasibility of an underpass or bridge crossing Plenty Road intersection to avoid section of trail on Plenty Road footpath
- 4 Construct a new section of trail on the eastern side of the Darebin Creek from Dunne Street to Chenies Street including an underpass at Dunne Street and Chenies Street
- 5 Investigate the feasibility of an underpass or signalised pedestrian crossing at Settlement Road to improve trail continuity
- 6 Construct a new section of trail that follows the creek from the Metropolitan Ring Road through the Darebin Creek Linear Reserve to connect to the new section of trail
- 7 Elevate the section of the Darebin Creek Trail where it passes beneath the Western Ring Road to avoid flooding
- 8 Investigate the feasibility of an underpass and bridge crossing at McKimmies Road to avoid section of trail on McKimmies Road bridge
- 9 Investigate the feasibility of an underpass and bridge crossing at Childs Road to avoid section of trail on Childs Road bridge
- 10 Investigate the feasibility of an underpass and bridge crossing at Findon Road to avoid section of trail on Findon Road
- 11 Provide a pedestrian priority crossing at McDonalds Road roundabout



6.7 DIAMOND CREEK TRAIL

Trail information

Length: 20.2km
SCC: Yes

Location:

Following the creek corridor, the trail begins at the Yarra Trail in Lower Eltham and continues north to Hurstbridge

Local Government Area:

Nilumbik

Additional Stakeholders:

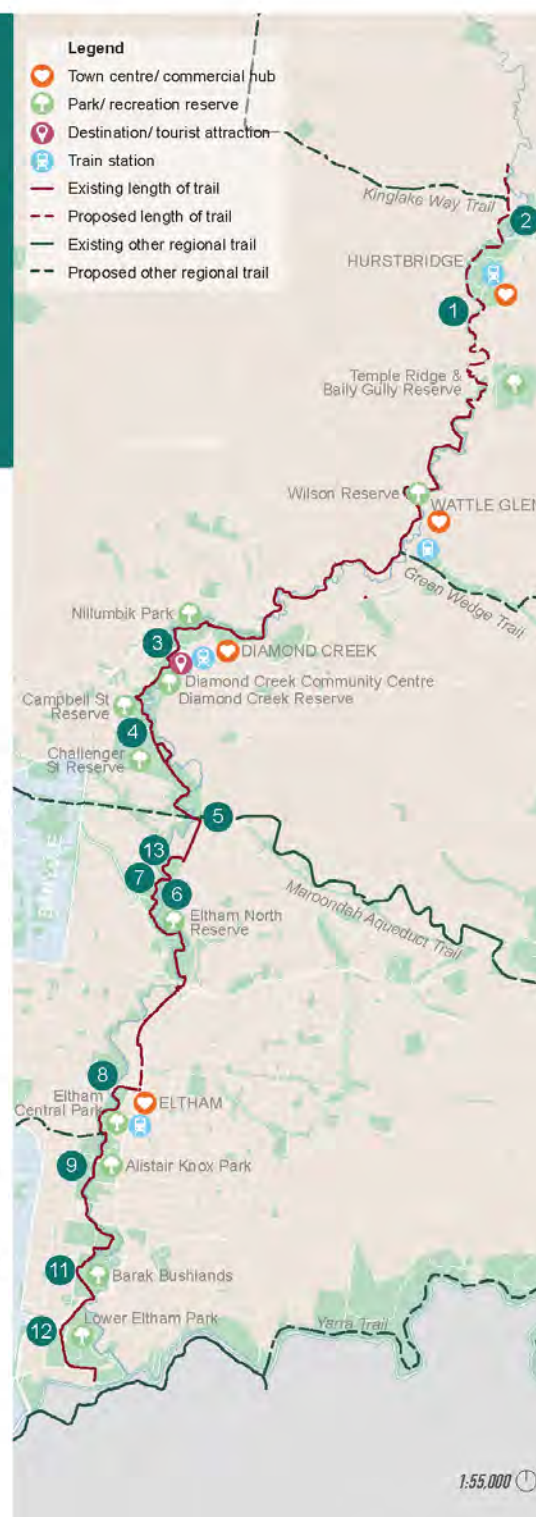
Melbourne Water, VicRoads

Auditor comments:

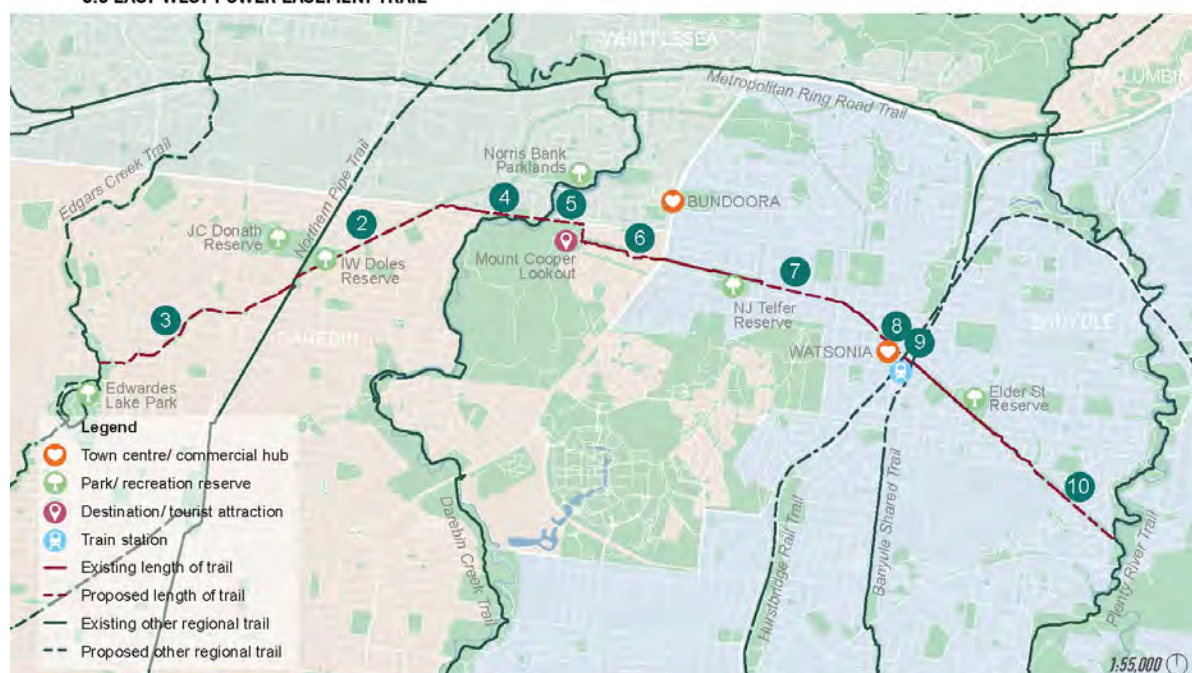
"A reasonably complete trail through some quite scenic areas, with a superb new extension to Wattle Glen but marred badly by a gaping hole in Eltham."

Priority Actions

- 1 Construct new section of trail from Wilson Road to Graysharps Road, Hurstbridge.
- 2 Construct new section of trail from Graysharps Road to Fergusons Paddock
- 3 Construct an underpass at Main Hurstbridge Road, Diamond Creek to avoid busy traffic crossing
- 4 Widen trail surface from Allendale Road north to Main Hurstbridge Road
- 5 Install a signalised/ pedestrian priority crossing at Allendale Road
- 6 Maintain/ upgrade sections of bitumen trail surface through Eltham North Reserve, Research Gully, Eltham North Playground, and Edendale Community Farm
- 7 Realign the section of trail at the Wattletree Road and Gastons Road underpass to create a gentler grade and wider trail surface
- 8 Construct new section of trail with wayfinding signage along Main Road and Diamond Street, Eltham to fill the gap in the trail and direct users to the continuation of the trail
- 9 Upgrade surface of existing trail between Susan Street Oval and Ely St, with wayfinding or linemarking to create a consistent and legible trail
- 10 Provide wayfinding signage along the length of the trail
- 11 Maintain/ upgrade sections of bitumen trail surface through Eltham Bushland Reserve alongside Main Road
- 12 Realign/ enhance the section of trail through the Eltham Lower Park.
- 13 Realign the sharp bend in the trail between Laurel Hill Drive and Allendale Road



6.8 EAST WEST POWER EASEMENT TRAIL

**Trail information**

Length: 11.6km
SCC: No

Location:

This trail runs from the Edgars Creek Trail in the west to the Plenty River Trail in the east, following an existing power easement through Reservoir, Bundoora and Watsonia.

Local Government Area:

Banyule, Darebin, Whittlesea

Additional Stakeholders:

AusNet, Melbourne Water, Private landowners, VicRoads

Auditor comments:

"A somewhat odd amalgamation of sections, ranging in quality from poor to excellent, and several glaring gaps that seem to make an effective and enjoyable trail an impossibility."

Priority Actions

- 1 Provide wayfinding signage along the length of the trail
- 2 Construct a section of trail from the Northern Pipe/ St Georges Rd/ Cheddar Road Trail north west along the vacant pipe reserve
- 3 Construct a section of trail from the Northern Pipe/ St Georges Rd/ Cheddar Road Trail south east along the vacant pipe reserve to Edgardes Lake Park
- 4 Construct a section of trail along Holt Parade to connect to the Darebin Creek Trail (at Valley Road)
- 5 Investigate the feasibility of a new section of trail, including a new bridge crossing, from the Darebin Creek Trail, at Holt Parade, around Mount Cooper to connect to the existing section of trail at Snake Gully Drive
- 6 Construct a section of trail from Reedy Rise to Plenty Road including a new pedestrian priority crossing at Plenty Road
- 7 Investigate options for providing a new section of trail from Dilkara Avenue to Gleeson Drive
- 8 Construct a section of trail from the existing trail on Morwell Avenue to Watsonia Station
- 9 Upgrade existing footbridge over the rail line at Watsonia Station including an underpass/ overpass at Greensborough Road to avoid footpath and multiple road crossings
- 10 Construct a new section of trail along Wendover Place and Yallambie Road, along the easement to the Plenty River Trail

6.9 EDGARS CREEK TRAIL

Trail information

Length: 20.9km
 SCC: No

Location:

Beginning in Coburg at the Merri Creek Trail, this trail follows the creek north through Thomastown and Epping.

Local Government Area:

Darebin, Merri-bek, Whittlesea

Additional Stakeholders:

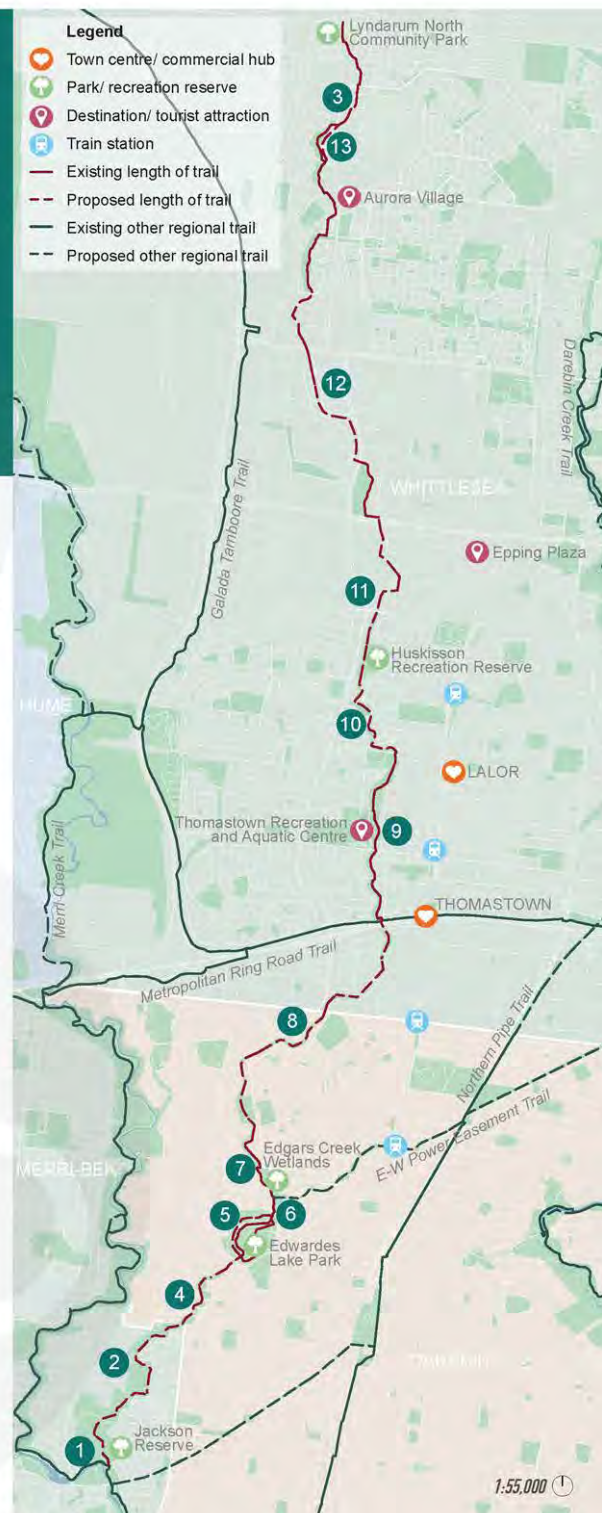
Melbourne Water, VicRoads

Auditor comments:

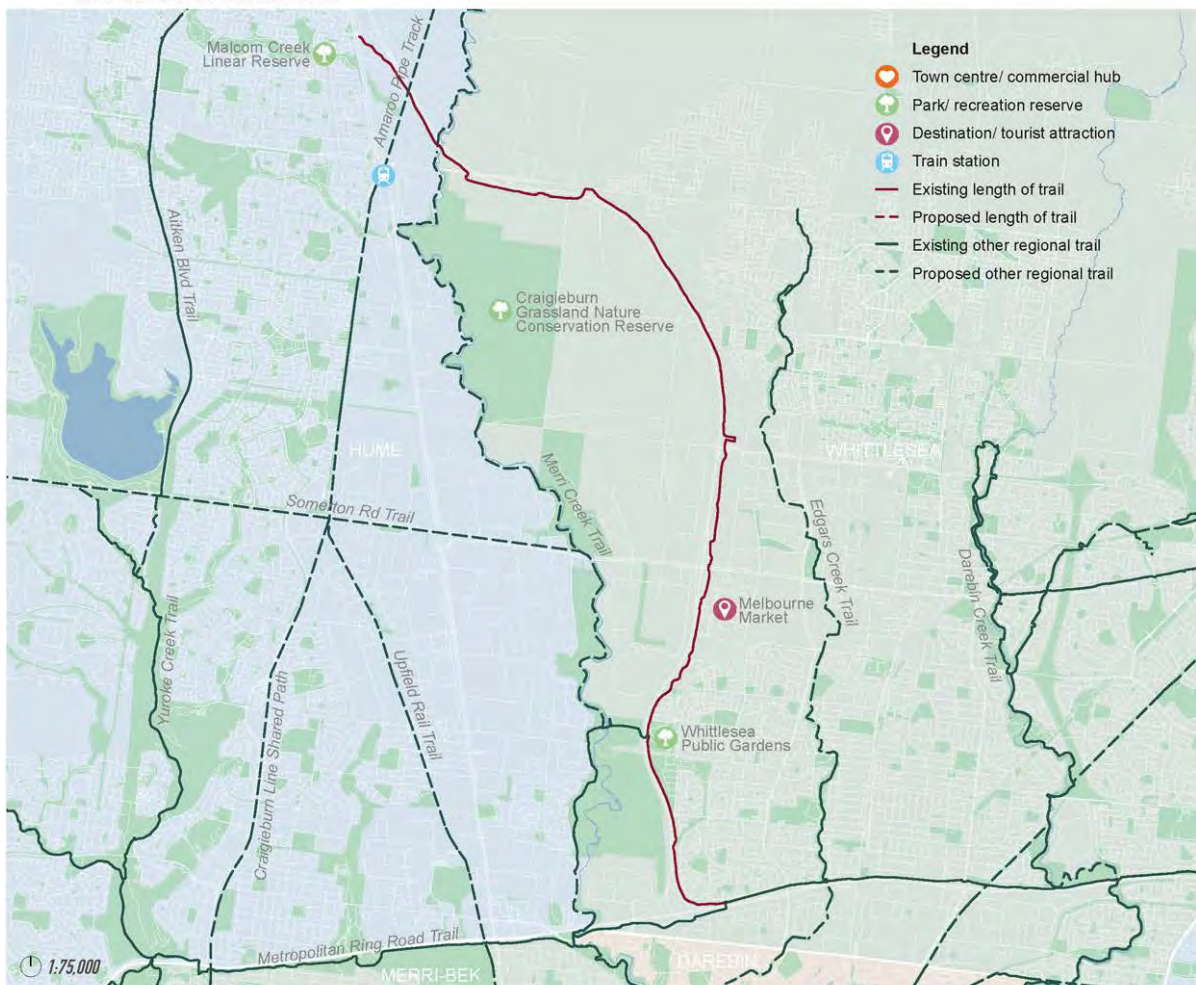
"A potentially useful and rewarding trail along Edgars Creek that is at this time, a long way short of that."

Priority Actions

- 1 Construct new section of trail from the Merri Creek Trail to Ronald Street on the west bank
- 2 Construct new section of trail from Ronald Street to Carrington Road. Consider keeping the trail away from the creek and along development frontages
- 3 Construct new section of trail from Strahalbyn Chase to Contempo Boulevard
- 4 Investigate a new section of trail along the creek from Carrington Road to Edwardes Lake. Explore the feasibility of a trail between Kia Ora Road and Henty Street on the east bank.
- 5 Construct a separate cycling only trail through Edwardes Lake Park
- 6 Construct a dedicated shared trail from the public toilets in Edwardes Lake Park, around the car park and over Leamington Street
- 7 Investigate the feasibility of an underpass and bridge crossing at Broadhurst Avenue
- 8 Construct a section of trail along the creek from Glasgow Avenue to the Metropolitan Ring Road
- 9 Upgrade surface of trail between Main Street and Melaleuca Drive
- 10 Construct section of trail between German Lane and Kingsway Drive, Lalor
- 11 Construct section of trail along the street from Deveny Road to Cooper Street, Epping
- 12 Construct a section of trail along the creek from Jersey Drive to Rockfield Street
- 13 Construct section of trail along the creek from Sheba Way to Snowy Place
- 14 Provide wayfinding signage along the length of the trail



6.10 GALADA TAMBOORE TRAIL

**Trail information**

Length: 15.5km
 SCC: No

Location:
 Running along the Hume Freeway/ Craigieburn Bypass, this trail begins at the Metropolitan Ring Road Trail in the south and continues north to Craigieburn.

Local Government Area:
 Hume, Whittlesea

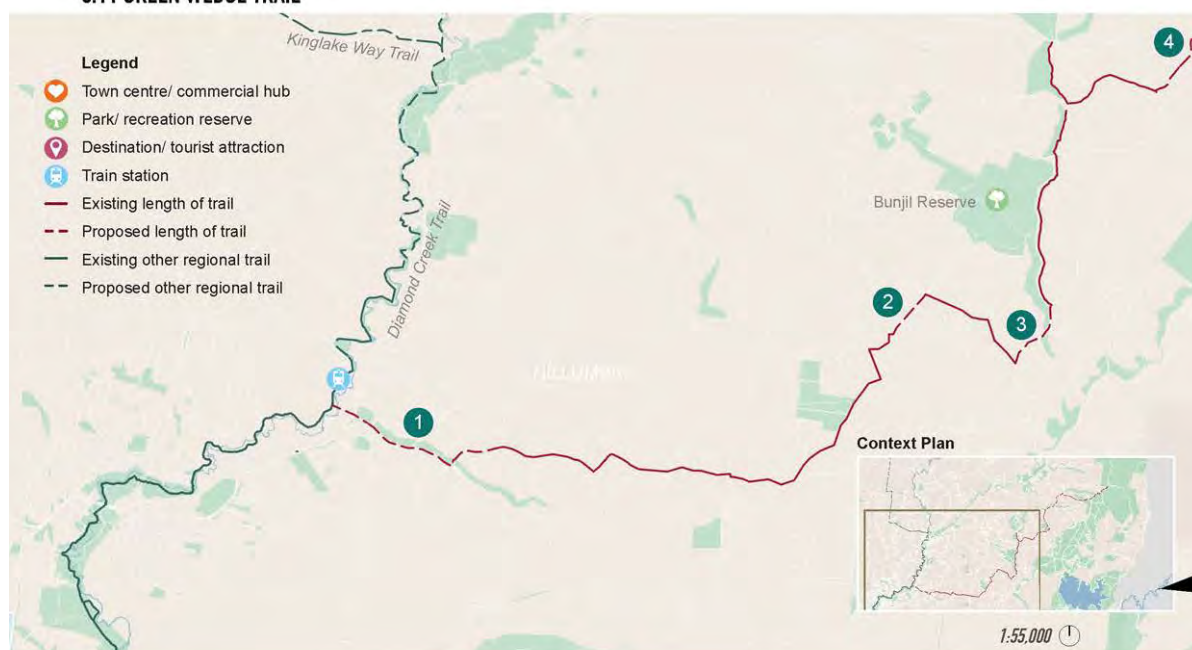
Additional Stakeholders:
 Merri Creek Management Committee, VicRoads

Auditor comments:
 "An effective path that offers reasonable off-road bicycle exercise options or, for the hearty long-range cycle commuter, a direct route from Melbourne's northern urban reaches to the city-access trails."

Priority Actions

- 1 Provide wayfinding signage along the length of the trail
- 2 Reinstate centre linemarking along the trail

6.11 GREEN WEDGE TRAIL

**Trail information**

Length: 21.5km

SCC: No

Location:

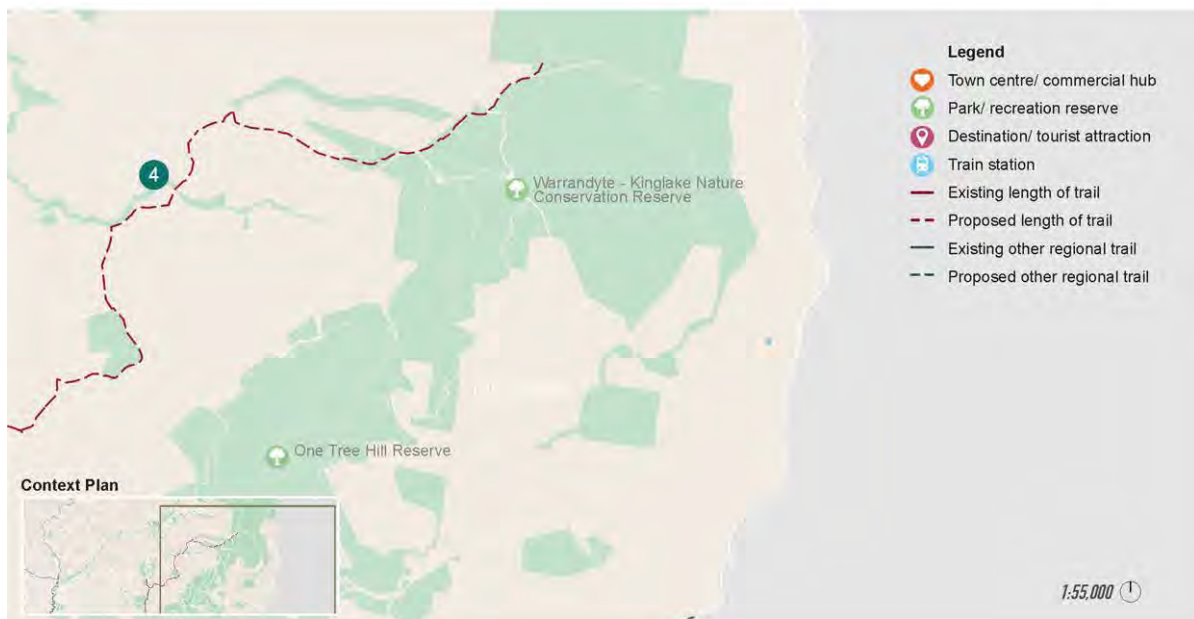
Located entirely within Nillumbik, this trail begins at the Diamond Creek Trail in Wattle Glen to Kinglake National Park

Local Government Area:

Nillumbik

Additional Stakeholders:

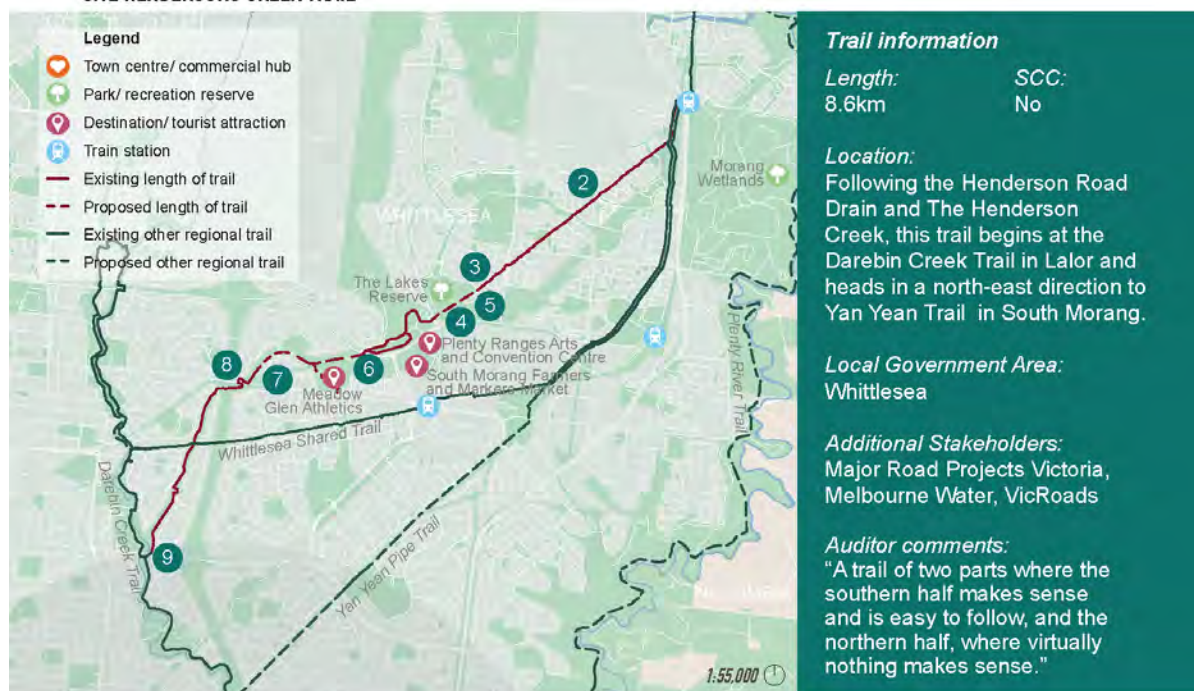
Parks Victoria



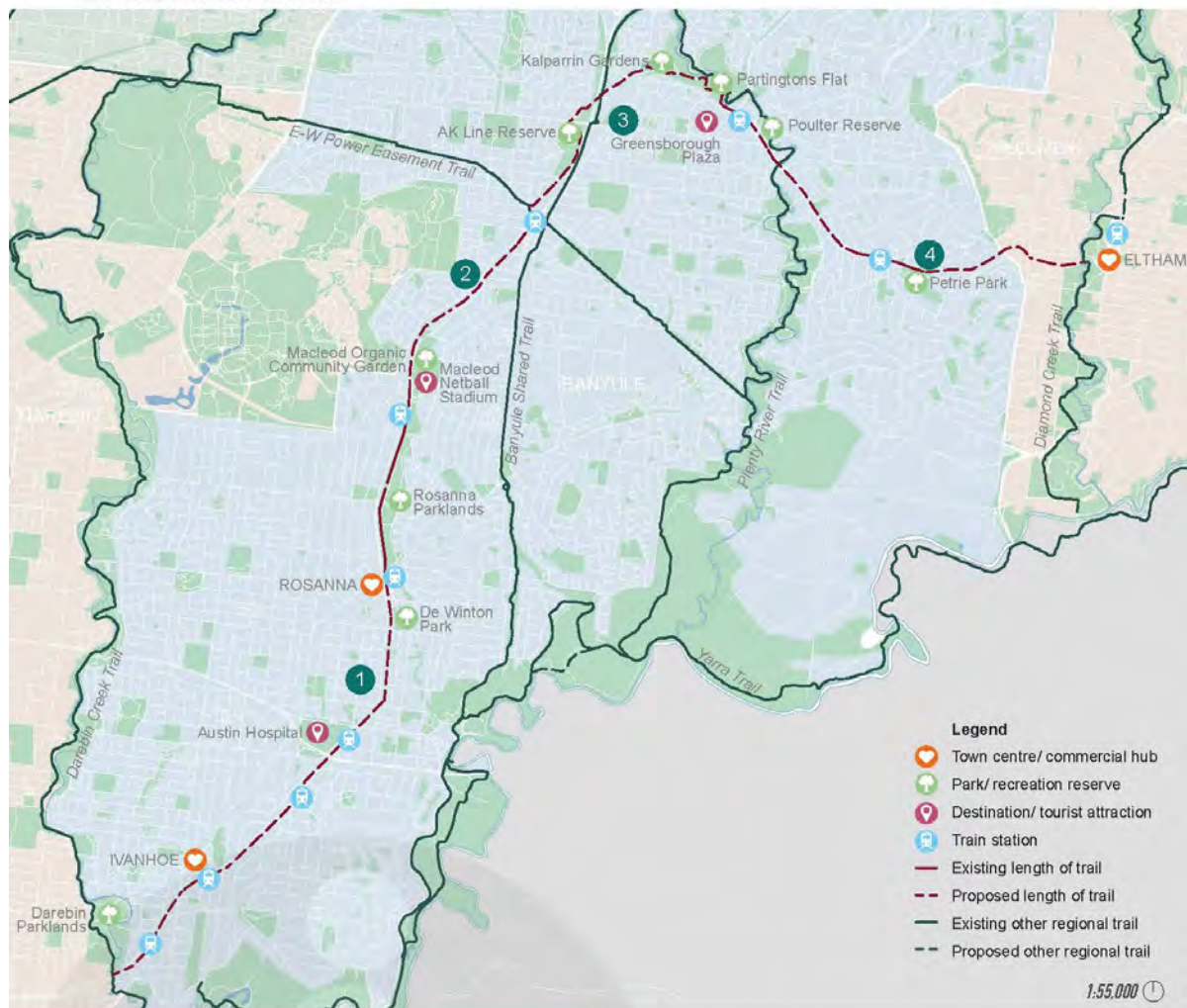
Priority Actions

- 1 Construct a new section of trail east from the Diamond Creek Trail at Wattle Glen Station along Watery Gully Creek to existing trail on Watery Gully Road
- 2 Construct a new section of trail from Couties Road to Alma Road
- 3 Construct a new section of trail along Long Gully Road from Alma Road to Turnung Road
- 4 Construct an extension of the trail from the intersection of Clintons Road and Spanish Gully Road to the Marshalls Road car park within the Kinglake National Park
- 5 Upgrade existing sections of the trail surface to match width and material treatment of new sections
- 6 Provide wayfinding signage along the length of the trail

6.12 HENDERSONS CREEK TRAIL



6.13 HURSTBRIDGE RAIL TRAIL

**Trail information**

Length: 16.1km
SCC: Yes

Location:

This trail begins at the Darebin Creek Trail in Ivanhoe follows the Hurstbridge rail line to the Diamond Creek Trail in Eltham.

Local Government Area:
Banyule and Nillumbik

Additional Stakeholders:
Metro Trains, VicTrack

Auditor comments:

Priority Actions

- 1 Construct a new section of trail along the Hurstbridge rail line from the Darebin Creek Trail north to Macleod Station
- 2 Construct a new section of trail along the Hurstbridge rail line from Macleod Station to Elder Street
- 3 Construct a new section of trail along the Hurstbridge rail line from Elder Street to the Plenty River Trail
- 4 Construct a new section of trail along the Hurstbridge rail line from the Plenty River Trail to the Diamond Creek Trail

6.14 JACKSONS CREEK TRAIL

Trail information

Length: 50.3km (potential to extend beyond study area)

SCC: No

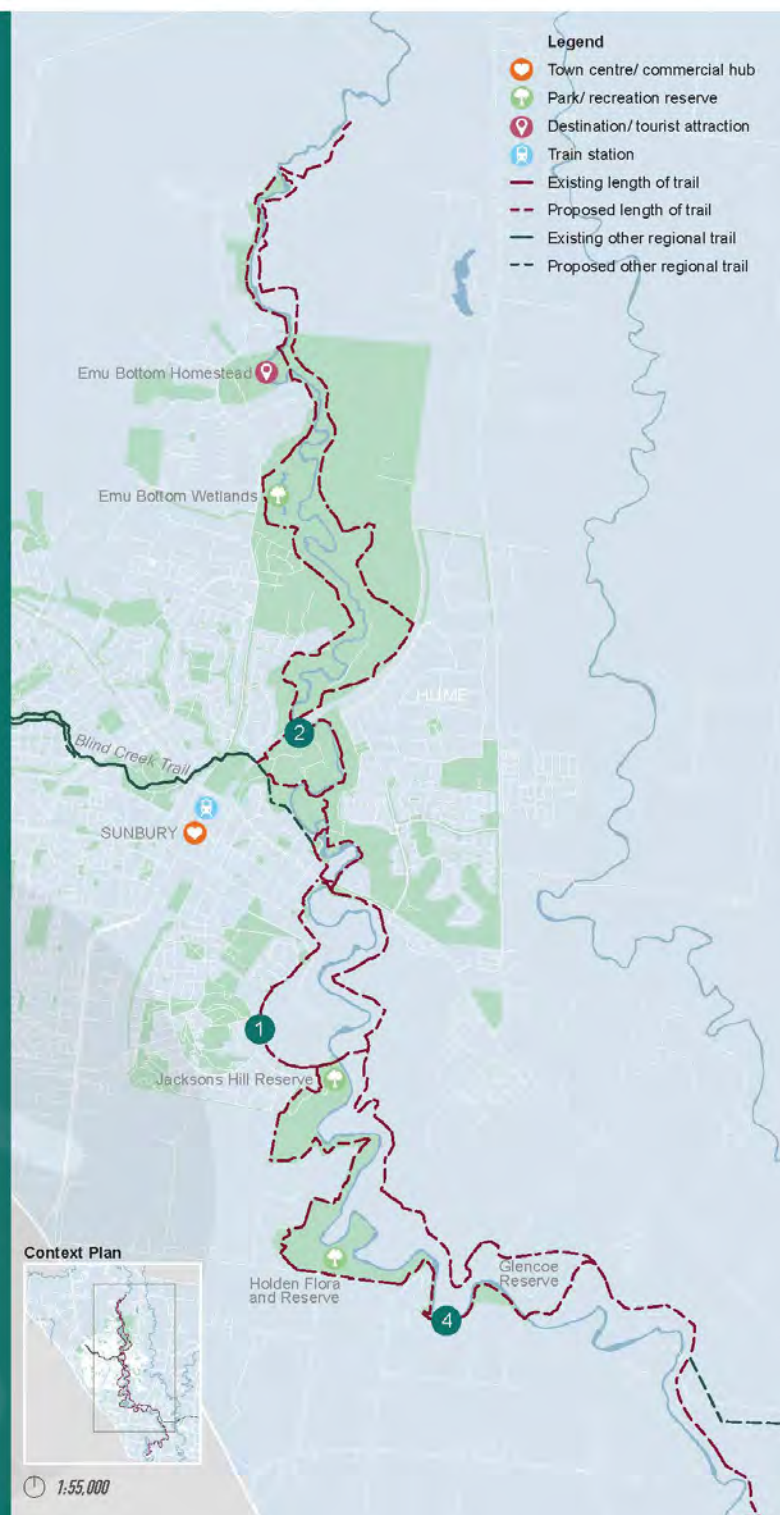
Location:

This proposed trail runs through the Jacksons Creek corridor in Sunbury and continues south to the border of Hume and the Organ Pipes National Park

Local Government Area:
Hume

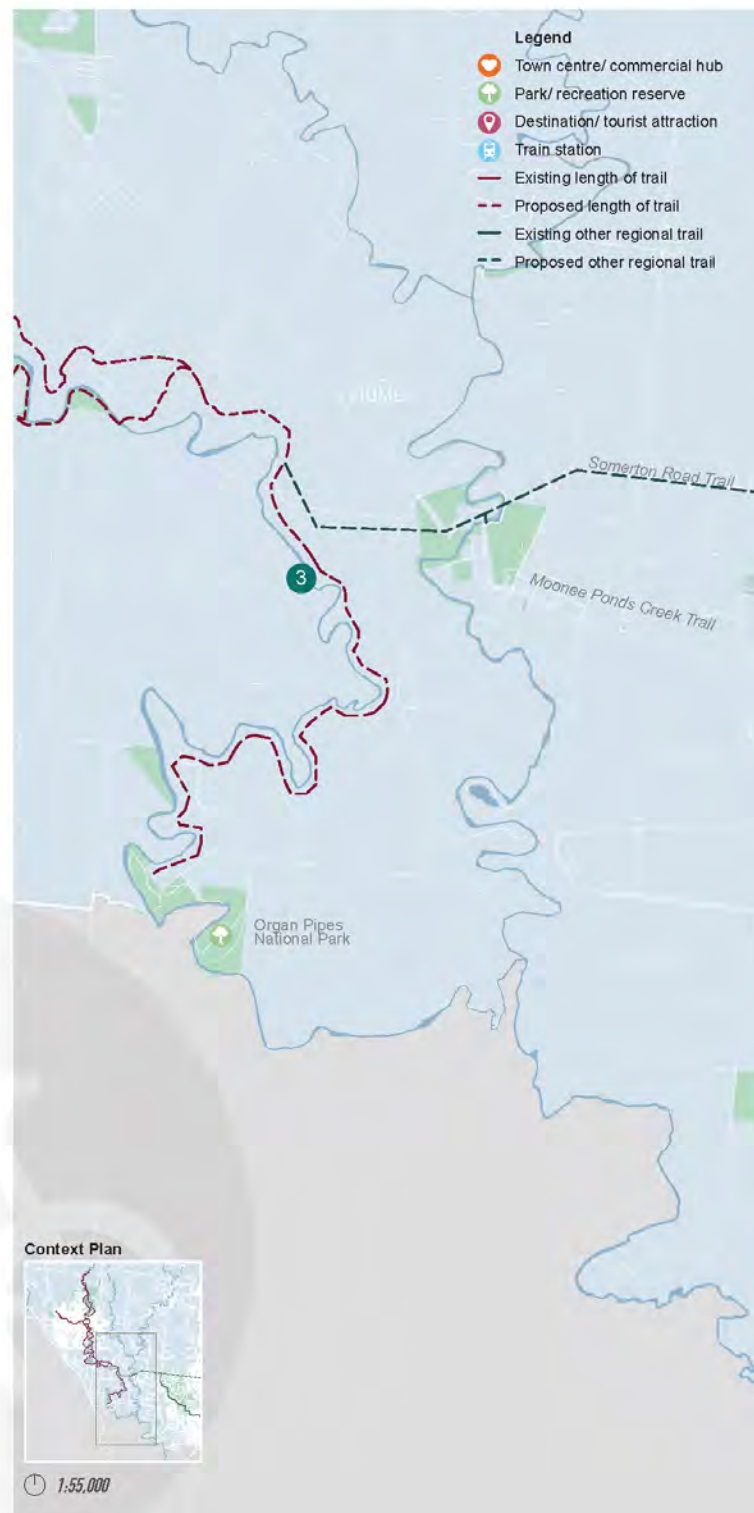
Additional Stakeholders:

DELWP, Greater Western Water, Melbourne Water, Parks Victoria, Wurundjeri Land Council

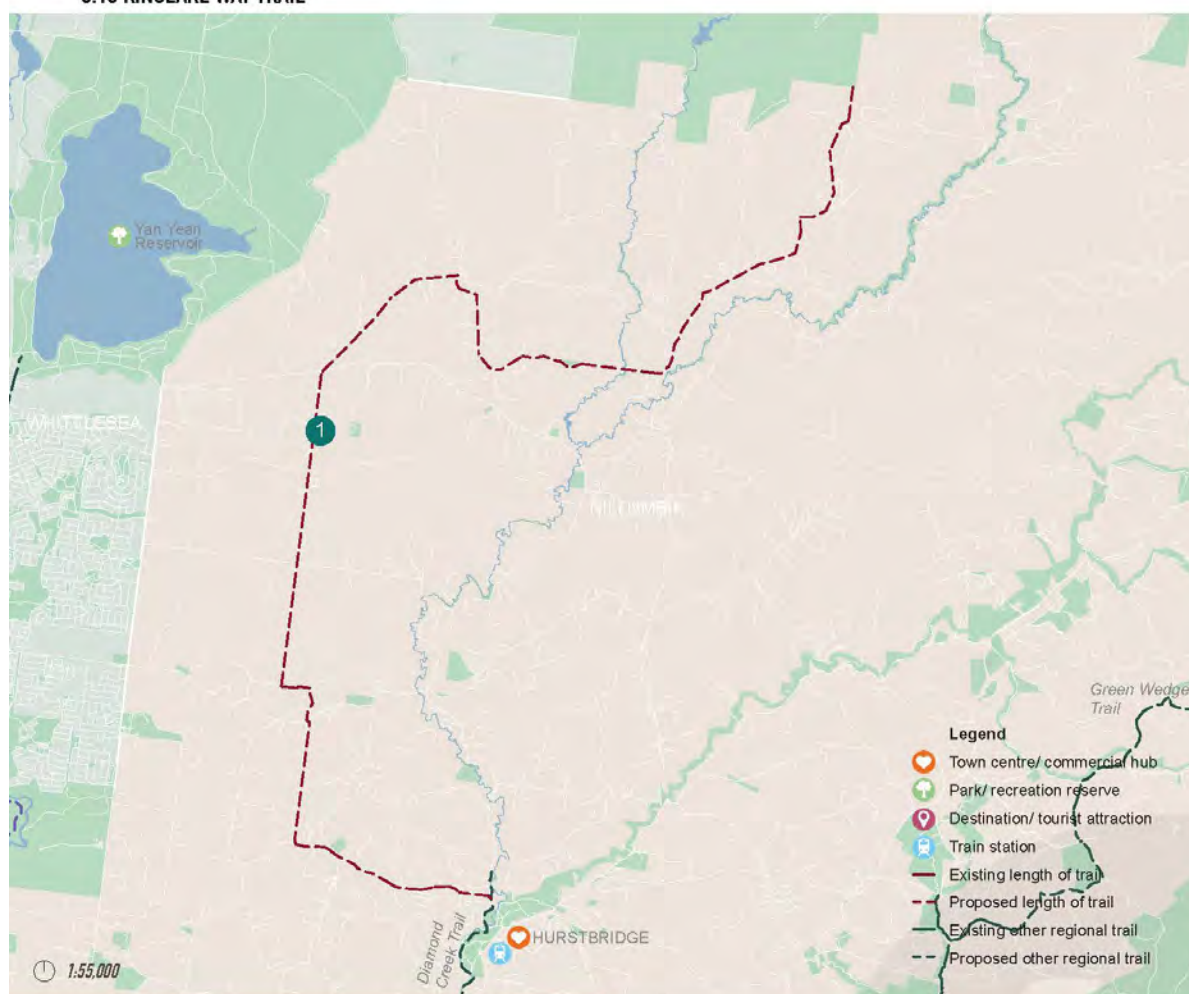


Priority Actions

- 1 Construct new section of trail from Harker Street to Hammersmith Court
- 2 Plan and investigate the staged construction of trails on both sides of the Jacksons Creek with project partners and other landholders in line with the priorities of the Jacksons Creek biik wurrdha Regional Parklands Plan
- 3 Investigate opportunities to construct a new section of trail from Bulla-Diggers Rest Road to Organ Pipes National Park in partnership with Parks Victoria and Brimbank City Council
- 4 Construct a new section of trail from Duncans Lane to Glencoe Reserve along the south side of the creek



6.15 KINGLAKE WAY TRAIL

**Trail information**

Length: 20.8km
SCC: No

Location:

Located entirely with Nillumbik, this trail begins at the Diamond Creek Trail in Hurstbridge and heads north to Arthurs Creek

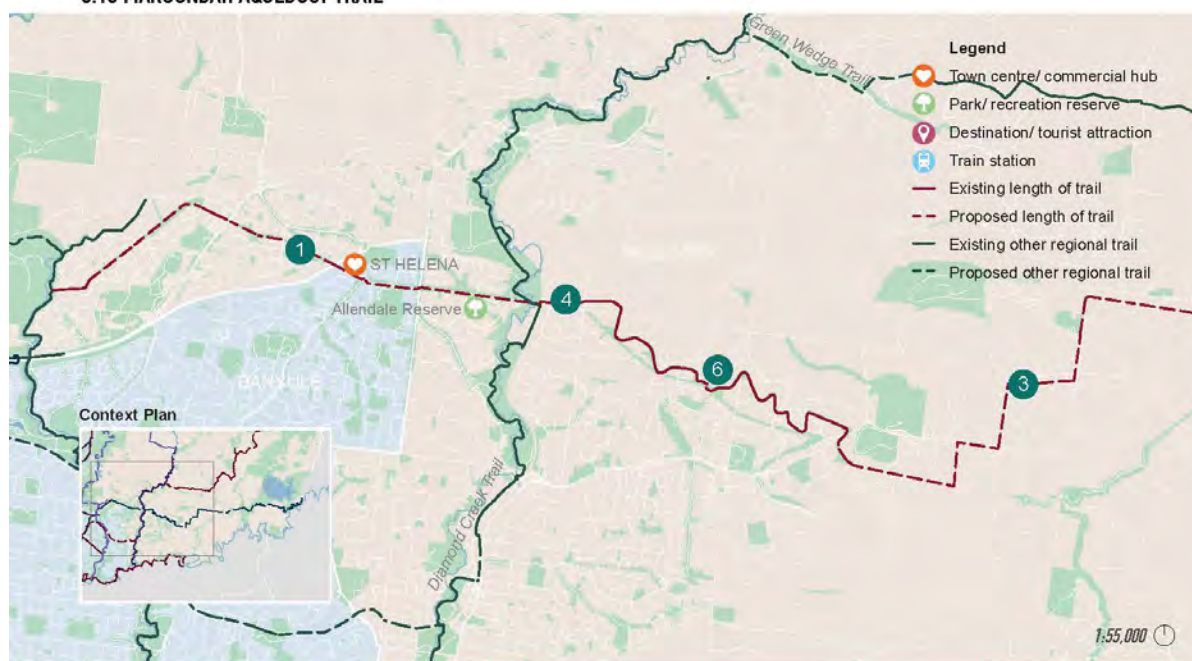
Local Government Area:
 Nillumbik

Additional Stakeholders:
 ParksVic

Priority Actions

- 1 Establish a new trail from Hurstbridge to Arthurs Creek

6.16 MAROONDAH AQUEDUCT TRAIL

**Trail information**

Length: 24.1km
SCC: No

Location:

This trail runs in an east west direction from the Diamond Creek Trail in Greensborough in the west to the Sugarloaf Reservoir in the east.

Local Government Area:

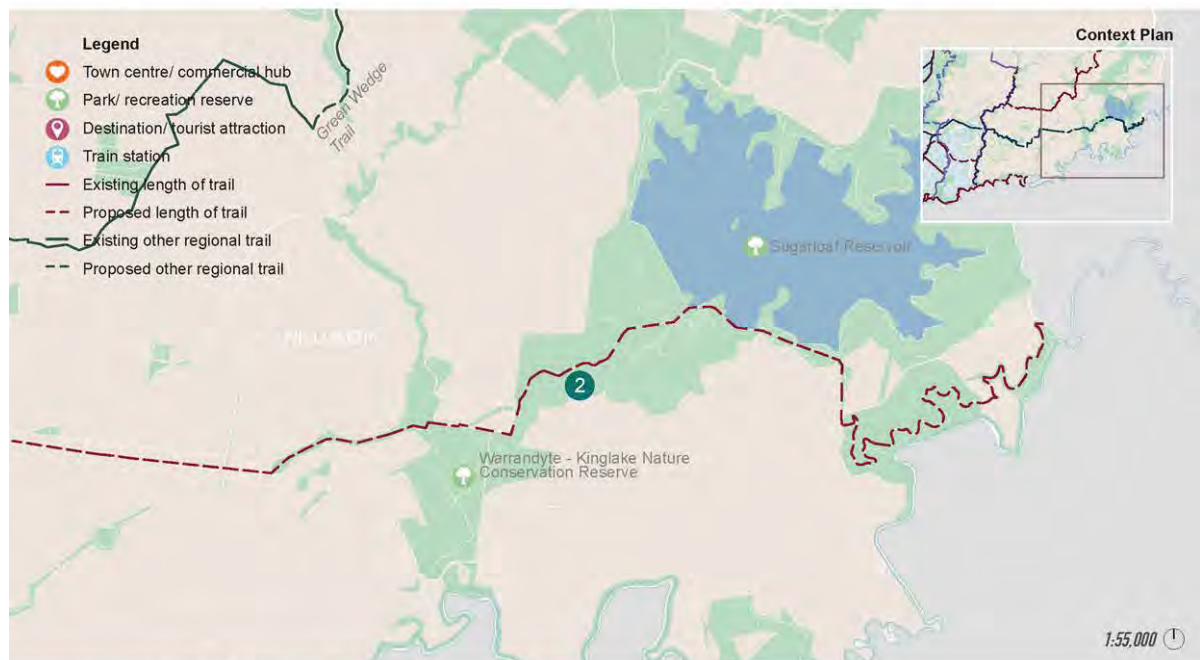
Banyule, Nillumbik

Additional Stakeholders:

Melbourne Water, Parks Victoria, VicRoads

Auditor comments:

"A very pleasant trail that has mostly a neutral gradient, marred only by very steep access at the west end and a busy main road at the east end."



Priority Actions

- 1 Construct new section of trail connecting the Plenty River Trail near Lear Court, east along the aqueduct across Diamond Creek Road to the Diamond Creek Trail at Allendale Road.
- 2 Construct new section of trail from Main Road Diamond Creek, along Eltham-Yarra Glen Road, Creek Road, Eltham Road, and Carters Lane while ensuring minimal impact to the Warrandyte - Kinglake Nature Conservation Reserve
- 3 Construct new section of trail from Warrandyte Kinglake Road, north along Westering, Ridge and Muir Roads to Skyline Road
- 4 Extend the trail west from Godber Road to connect to the Diamond Creek Trail
- 5 Provide wayfinding signage along the length of the trail
- 6 Realign section of trail either side of Afton Street to reduce grade

6.17 MERRI CREEK TRAIL

Trail information

Length: 35.1km (extends beyond study area)
SCC: No

Location:

The Merri Creek Trail follows the creek corridor from Northcote in the south through Coburg, Thomastown, Craigieburn and onto Donnybrook in the north (in accordance with the future *Merri Creek Regional Parklands Plan*).

Local Government Area:

Darebin, Hume, Merri-bek, Whittlesea

Additional Stakeholders:

City of Yarra, Mitchell Shire, Developers, Melbourne Water, Parks Victoria, VicRoads, DELWP, MCMC

Auditor comments:

"An excellent off-road trail that serves both local and commuter cycle traffic and walkers, with fundamental continuity issues."

Notes:

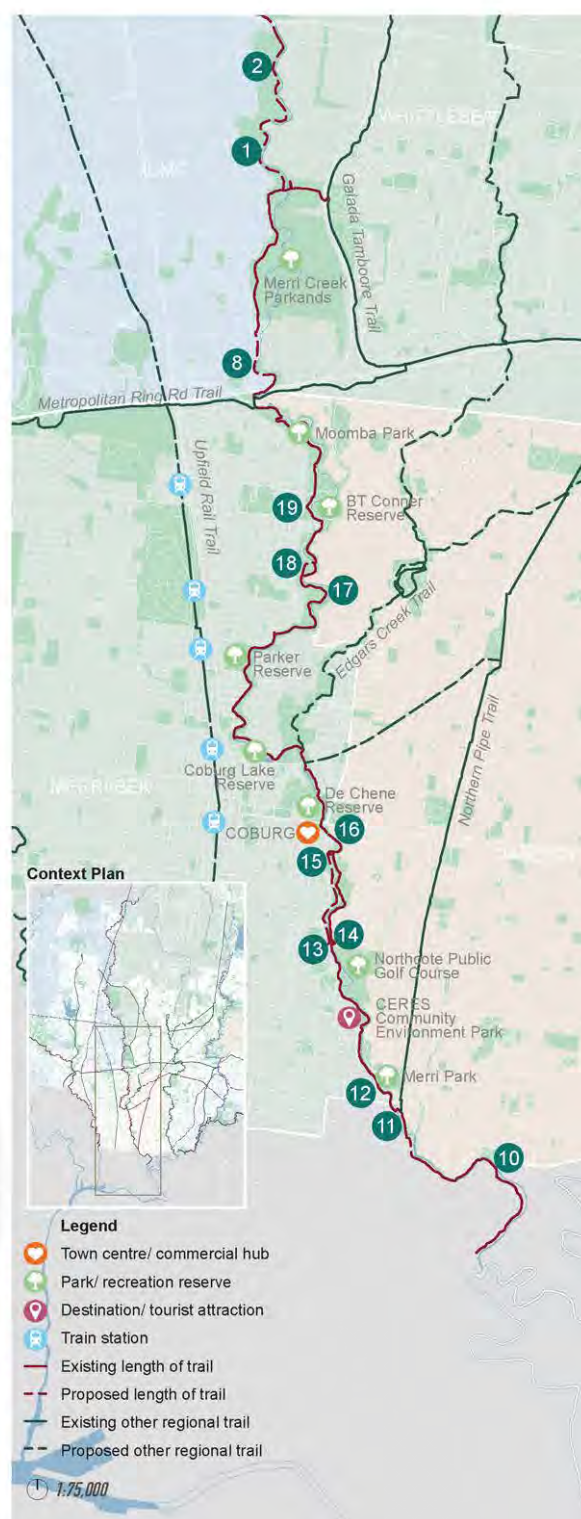
Whilst sitting outside the study area in the City of Yarra, it should be noted that an additional section of trail is required at Rushall Station to improve the continuity in this area.

Context Plan

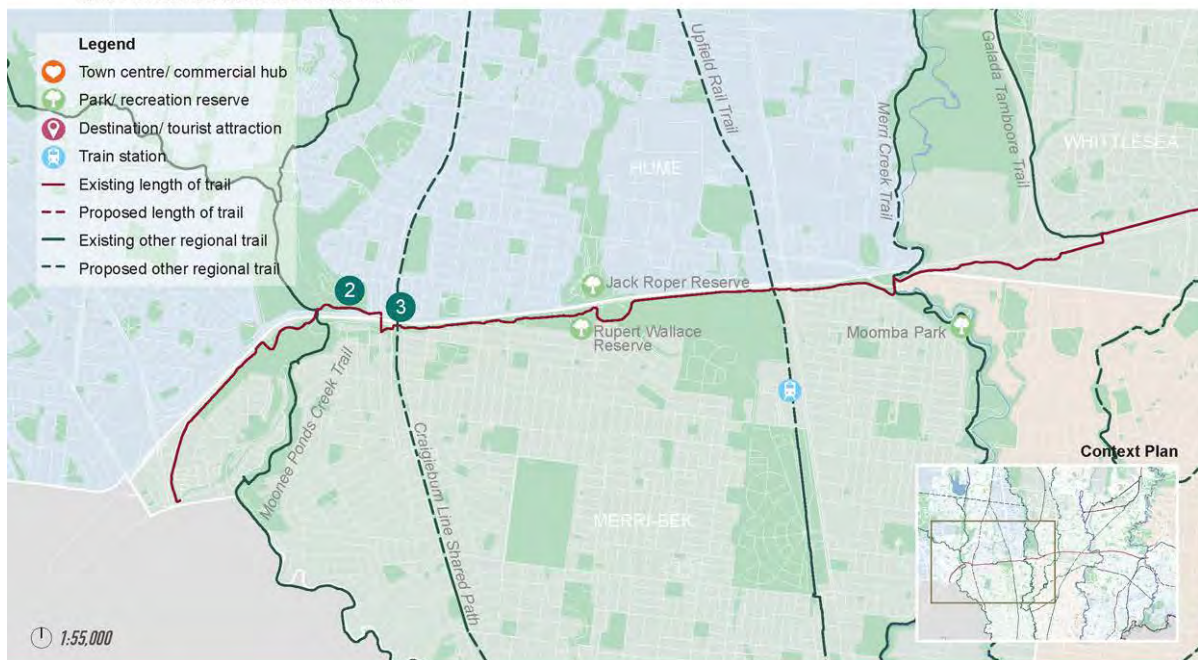


Priority Actions

- 1 Extend the Merri Creek Trail from the south end of Merri Concourse to Premier Drive
- 2 Partner with Parks Victoria and DELWP to extend the Merri Creek Trail from Merri Concourse (north) to Cooper Street
- 3 Advocate for and investigate the staged extension of the Merri Creek Trail from Coopers Street Somerton/Epping north to OHerns Road as part of the Upper Merri Creek Regional Parkland Plan
- 4 Advocate for and investigate the staged extension of the Merri Creek Trail from OHerns Road to Craigieburn Road as part of the Upper Merri Creek Regional Parkland Plan
- 5 Advocate for and investigate the extension of the Merri Creek Trail from Craigieburn Road to Summerhill Road as part of the Upper Merri Creek Regional Parkland Plan
- 6 Extend the Merri Creek Trail from Summerhill Road to Donnybrook Road
- 7 Extend the Merri Creek Trail from Donnybrook Road to the Northern End of Moxham Drive
- 8 Complete missing section of trail from the Metropolitan Ring Rd to existing section of trail south of Horne Street
- 9 Provide and upgrade line-marking to ensure continuous white lines indicating trail flow/ direction in high traffic areas
- 10 Realign section of trail south of Heidelberg Road to reduce steep grade
- 11 Provide a bridge crossing over the creek near the St Georges Road Bridge
- 12 Relocate and widen trail from Merri Creek Primary School to Sumner Park outside of the flood zone
- 13 Realign and widen trail north and south of Moreland Road
- 14 Modify existing bridge alongside Moreland Road vehicular bridge to better serve pedestrians and cyclists
- 15 Replace the Harding Street Bridge to cater for shared use
- 16 Widen and reduce the steepness of the boardwalk section of trail from Edna Grove to Bell Street and create a new connection at Bell Street
- 17 Widen and realign path outside of flood zone between Basil Nursing Home and Parker Reserve
- 18 Construct a new section of trail from Vervale Avenue to the bridge crossing to the north to provide an alternative route with a gentler grade
- 19 Provide wayfinding signage for Fawcner section of the Merri Creek (as per Moreland's Merri Creek Action Plan)
- 20 Provide wayfinding signage along the length of the trail



6.18 METROPOLITAN RING ROAD TRAIL

**Trail information**

Length: 11.3km (extends beyond study area)
SCC: No

Location:

Following the Metropolitan Ring Road, this trail connects a number of regional trails as it runs east-west from Greensborough to Gowanbrae within the Northern Region. Beyond the study area, the trail extends further west to Altona North.

Local Government Area:

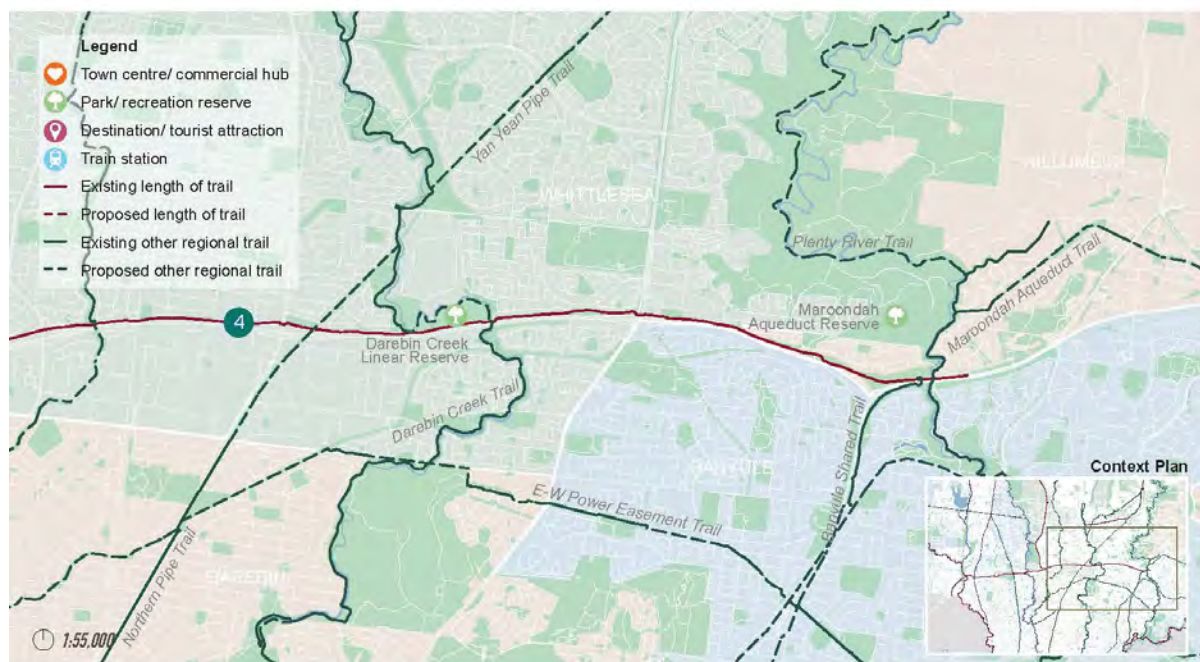
Banyule, Hume, Merri-bek, Nillumbik, Whittlesea

Additional Stakeholders:

Major Road Projects Victoria, Melbourne Water, Metro Trains, VicRoads, VicTrack

Auditor comments:

"A highly effective transportation/ commuting route with excellent capacity for direct passage east-west, where few or no alternatives are available"



Priority Actions

- 1 Provide wayfinding signage along the length of the trail
- 2 Investigate the feasibility of realigning the section of trail east of the section of trail east of the Moonee Ponds Creek towards Jacana to reduce the incline
- 3 Advocate for an upgrade to the existing overpass at Jacana Station with wayfinding signage to improve connectivity and continuity
- 4 Upgrade section of trail between High Street and Dalton Road

6.19 MOONEE PONDS CREEK TRAIL

Trail information

Length: 29.8km (extends beyond study area)
SCC: Yes

Location:

The Moonee Ponds Creek Trail follows the creek corridor from Woodlands Historic Park in Greenvale, in the north, to Brunswick West in the south. The trail extends beyond the study area in the south to Docklands.

Local Government Area:

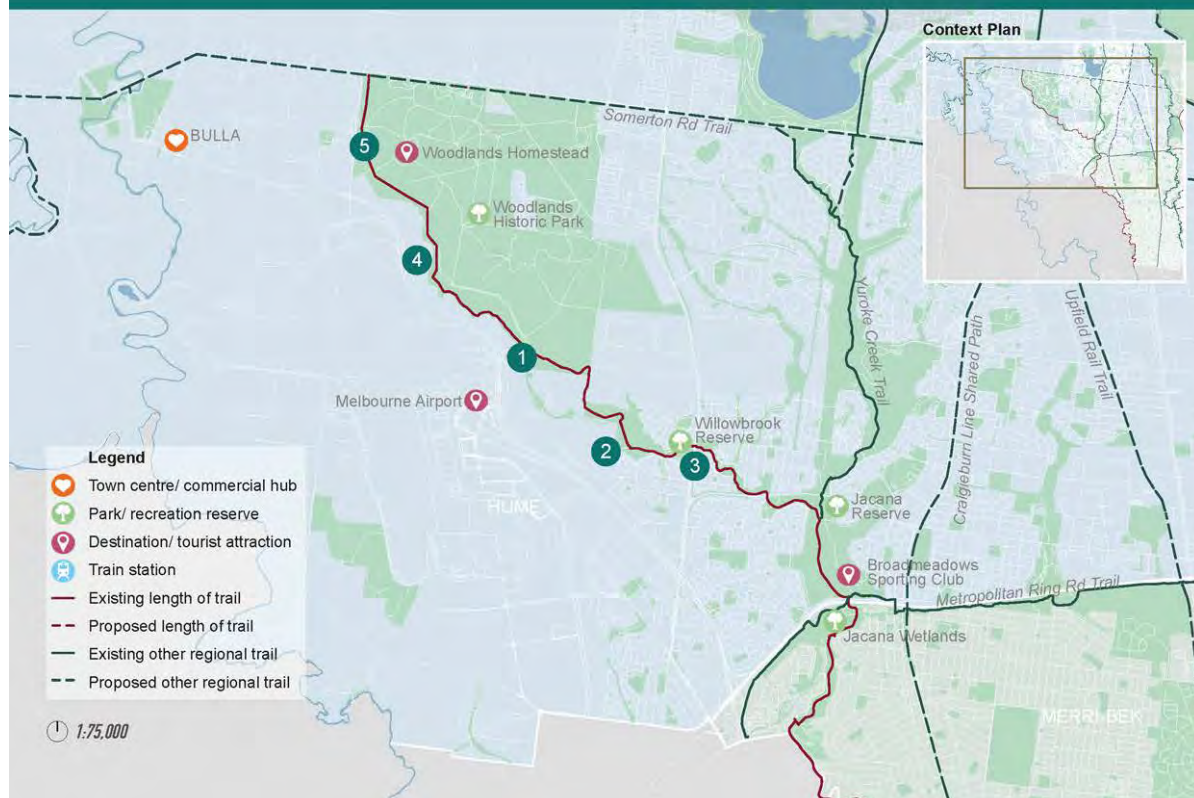
Hume, Merri-bek

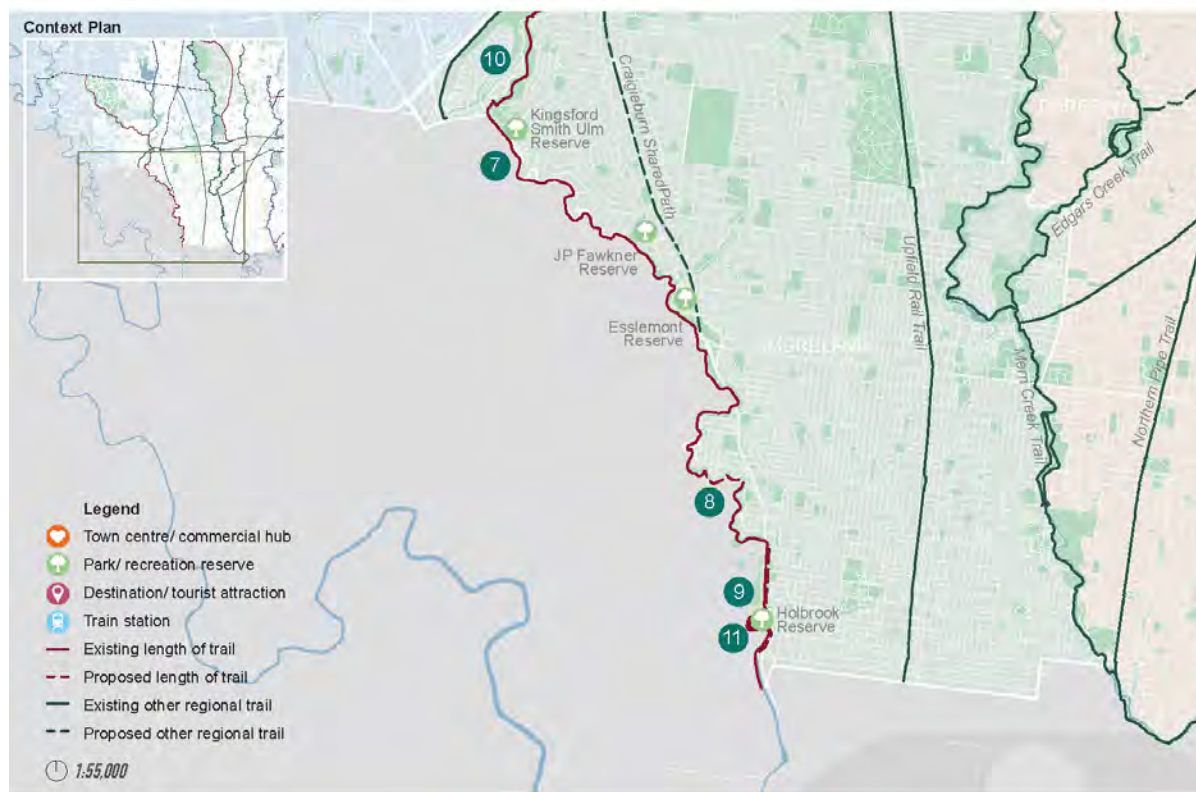
Additional Stakeholders:

Crown Land, Melbourne Airport, Melbourne Water, Parks Victoria, Private landowners, The City of Moonee Valley, VicRoads

Auditor comments:

"A super-highway from the NE fringes of the CBD offering excellent commuter and intra urban off-road cycling options and potentially a wonderful mode of accessing Woodlands Historic Park."





Priority Actions

- 1 Create a trail head at northern end of the trail at Marker Road ensuring alignment is outside federal airport boundary to avoid land access issues
- 2 Upgrade surface and width of trail from Marker Road to and around Willowbrook Reserve to regional trail standard
- 3 Upgrade surface and width of trail from Willowbrook Reserve to Westmeadows Reserve to regional trail standard
- 4 Construct a new section of trail from Marker Road to Living Legends/ Woodlands Historic Park
- 5 Upgrade existing trail from Living Legends/ Woodlands Historic connecting to Somerton Road Woodlands entrance
- 6 Provide wayfinding signage along the length of the trail include at crossing points, connections to other trails and where appropriate to direct users to optimal trail route where alternatives occur
- 7 Upgrade surface of trail from the rail line south to the Essendon Baseball Club
- 8 Construct section of new trail between Primrose Street and Vanberg Road (within Moonee Valley)
- 9 Upgrade trail surface from Boeing Reserve, Strathmore, to Brunswick Road to improve safety and cross grade
- 10 Resurface trail connection from Gladstone Park down the hill to main trail
- 11 Construct a new section of trail from Union Street to the Hope Street pedestrian bridge. Consider a new bridge using former off ramp to Denzil Don Reserve to Victoria St as an alternative if required

6.20 NORTHERN PIPE/ ST GEORGES RD/ CHEDDAR RD TRAIL**Trail information**

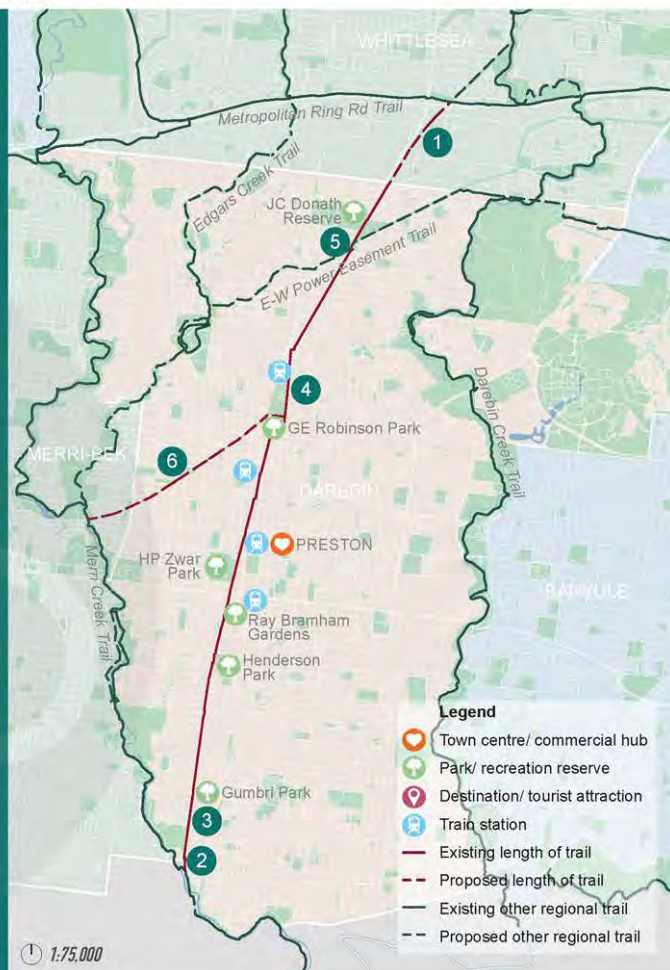
Length: 14.1km
SCC: Partial (south of Reservoir Station)

Location:
 This trail runs relatively north-south through Darebin from Northcote to Thomastown. An additional section of trail is proposed along a series of linear reserves in Preston to connect the trail to Coburg and the Merri Creek and Edgars Creek Trails.

Local Government Area:
 Darebin, Merri-bek and Whittlesea

Additional Stakeholders:
 Melbourne Water, Metro Trains, VicRoads, VicTrack

Auditor comments:
 "A highly effective commuting corridor with inherent issues where cyclists interact with traffic, and access impediments mar an otherwise excellent urban thoroughfare."

**Priority Actions**

- 1 Extend the Northern Pipe/ St Georges Rd/ Cheddar Road Trail north to the Metropolitan Ring Road
- 2 Improve access at the St Georges Rd/Merri Parade/ Charles St intersection to connect the Merri Creek Trail to the Northern Pipe Trail and create a direct access point to and from the trail with pedestrian and cyclist priority
- 3 Widen and resurface the section of trail between Clarke Street and Arthurton Road to align with newly constructed sections of trail
- 4 Advocate for trail alignment alongside the train line from Garden Street to Cheddar Road to replace section of trail on the footpath
- 5 Widen trail surface in the Cheddar Road central median from High Street to Hickford Street
- 6 Investigate a new section of trail from High Street (near the Melbourne Water Reservoirs) along the vacant pipe reserve to the Merri Creek Trail at Murray Road. Existing road crossings to be considered

6.21 PLENTY RIVER TRAIL

Trail information

Length: 43.5km
SCC: No

Location:

Following the creek corridor, the Plenty River Trails begins at the Yarra Trail in Viewbank and continues north to Greensborough. The trail is then proposed to extend further to the Township of Whittlesea.

Note: Indicative trail alignment only. Refer to Parks Victoria's Plenty Gorge River Trail design

Local Government Area:

Banyule, Nillumbik, Whittlesea

Additional Stakeholders:

Melbourne Water, Parks Victoria, VicRoads

Auditor comments:

"A mostly very scenic trail through urban bushland with quite good flow and continuity, marred mainly by far too much variability in surface quality and width; lacks consistency"

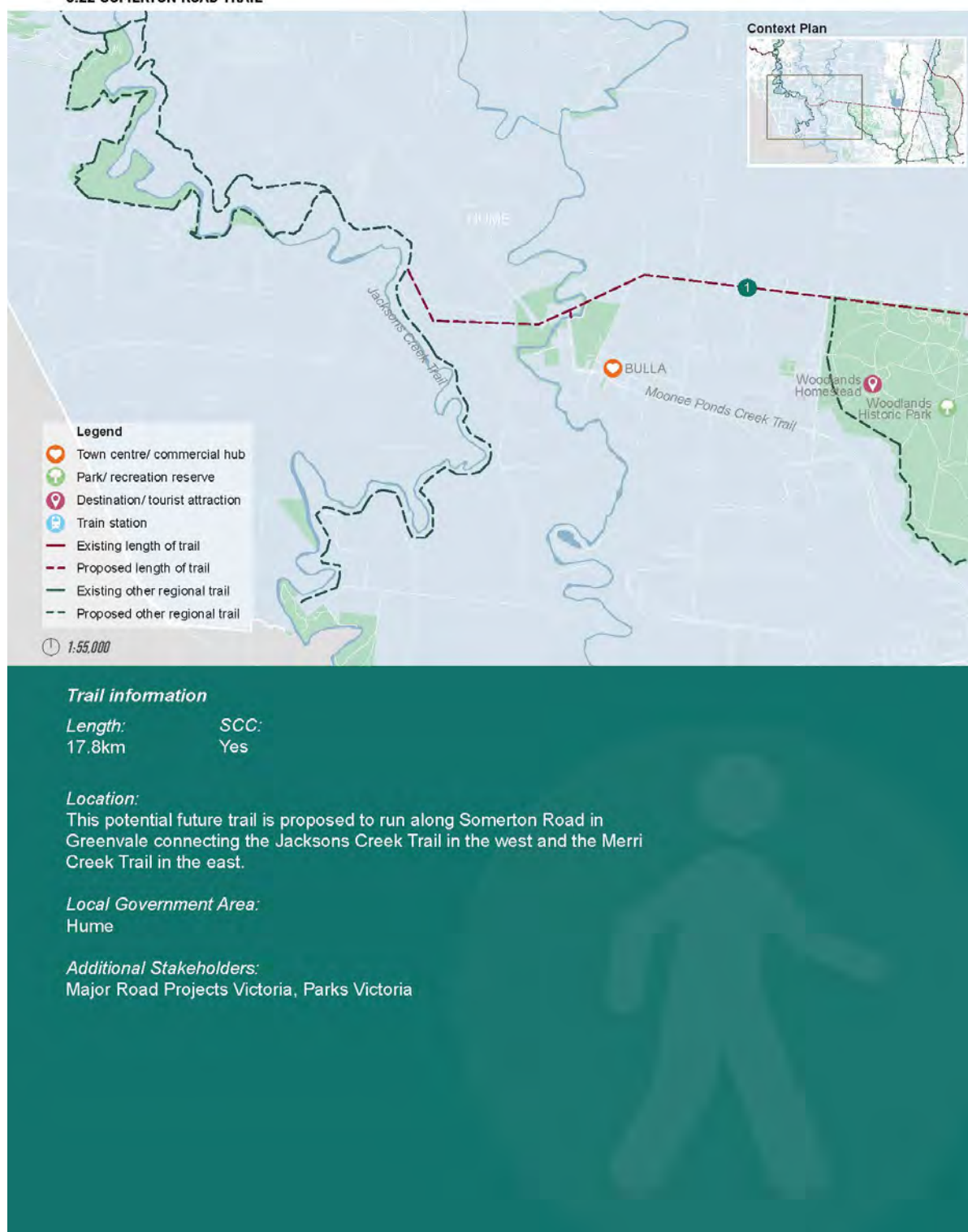


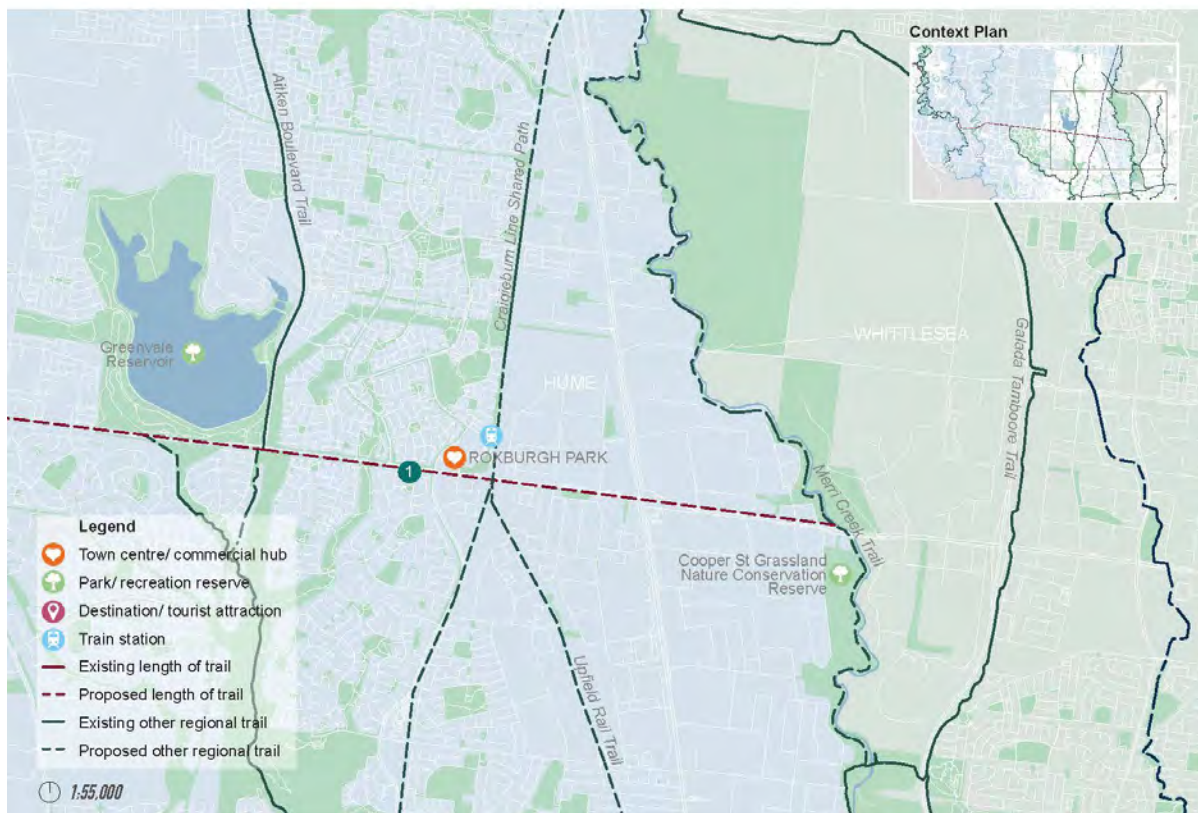
Priority Actions

- 1 Extend trail east to McLaughlans Lane
- 2 Upgrade and widen section of trail from Punkerri Circuit to Booyan Crescent
- 3 Realign section of trail to reduce grade and provide an underpass at Booyan Crescent
- 4 Widen section of trail under the Greensborough Bypass
- 5 Upgrade and widen section of trail at Main Street
- 6 Improve wayfinding signage at Poulter Reserve to direct users to the wider trail network west of the reserve
- 7 Construct a new section of trail at Bicton Street
- 8 Upgrade and widen section of trail with wayfinding signage at Montmorency Park
- 9 Upgrade surface and realign trail to reduce grade south of Old Lower Plenty Road and through Banyule Flats
- 10 Improve wayfinding signage along the length of the trail
- 11 Upgrade pedestrian bridges on the Plenty River Trail where required and improve sight lines where appropriate
- 12 Investigate the feasibility of realigning the Plenty River Trail to the eastern bank of the Plenty River between George Court and Para Road in order to avoid the steep grade on the west bank
- 13 Construct a new section of trail along the creek through The Plenty Gorge Parklands to Bridge Inn Road. Support the proposal for a bridge connection from South Morang to Hawkestone picnic area to Yarrambat Park
- 14 Extend the trail from Bridge Inn Road north to Hazel Glen Drive



6.22 SOMERTON ROAD TRAIL





Priority Actions

- 1 Advocate for the construction of a new trail along Somerton Road from Jacksons Creek to the Merri Creek Trail



6.23 UPFIELD RAIL TRAIL

Trail information

Length: 11.6 (extends beyond study area)
SCC: Yes

Location:

This trail follows the Upfield rail line from Brunswick to Fawcner with a proposed extension to Roxburgh Park.

Local Government Area:
 Merri-bek and Hume

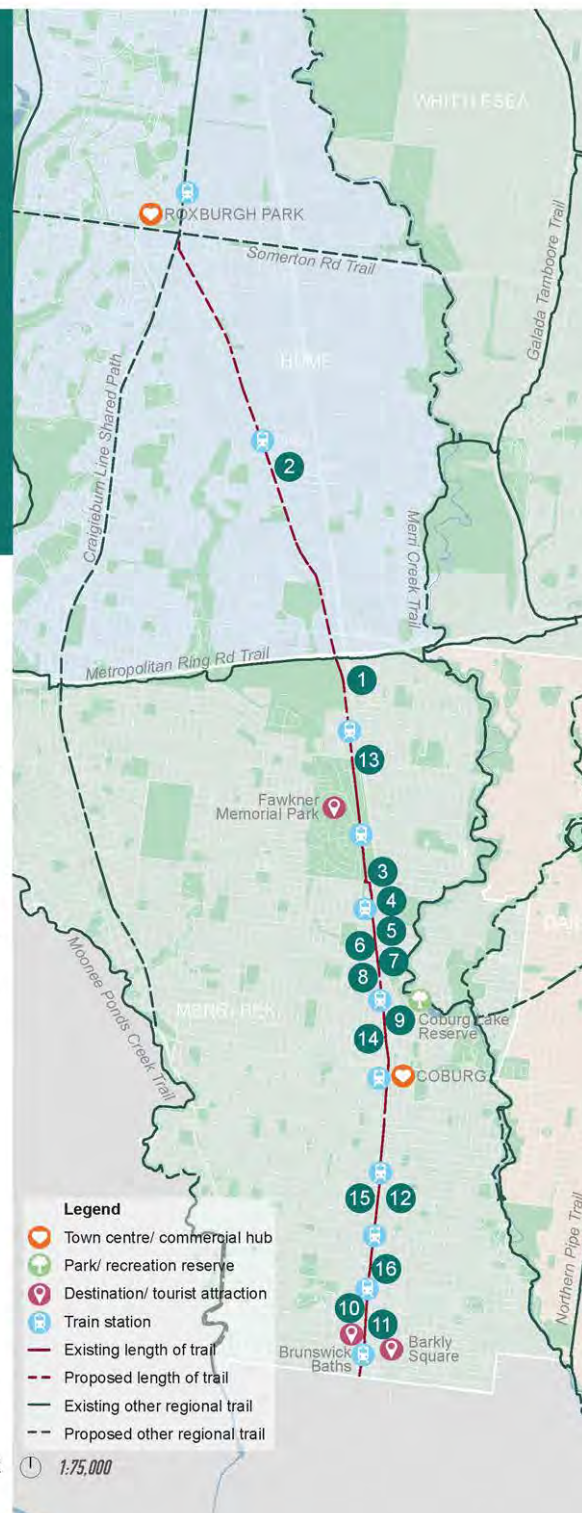
Additional Stakeholders:
 Department of Transport, Metro Trains, VicRoads, VicTrack

Auditor comments:

"A potential cycling 'super highway' with enormous scope as the major north-south corridor through the densely populated suburbs from the inner north."

Priority Actions

- 1 Construct new section of trail from Box Forest Road north to Metropolitan Ring Road
- 2 Advocate to Dept. of Transport to construct a new section of trail from the Metropolitan Ring Road to Somerton Road
- 3 Create a signalised pedestrian crossing over Boundary Rd
- 4 Construct an off-road shared path along Bain Avenue
- 5 Widen section of trail between Plaisted St and Shorts Rd
- 6 Construct an off-road shared path along Ararat Avenue
- 7 Provide a signalised/ pedestrian priority crossing over Bakers Rd
- 8 Construct an off-road shared path along Renown St
- 9 Construct an off-road shared path along Batman Avenue
- 10 Upgrade and widen trail from Victoria St to Jewell Station
- 11 Provide a signalised/ pedestrian priority crossing over Albert St
- 12 Consider long term feasibility of separated cycle path between Park St and Tinning St
- 13 Create a signalised pedestrian crossing over Box Forest Rd
- 14 Create a signalised pedestrian crossing over O'Hea St
- 15 Create a signalised pedestrian crossing over Albion St
- 16 Create a signalised pedestrian crossing over Victoria St



6.24 WHITTLESEA SHARED TRAIL

Trail information

Length: 13.5km
 SCC: Yes

Location:

This trail follows the rail line from Epping Station in the south west to Mernda station. The trail is then proposed to continue along the rail easement to Whittlesea.

Local Government Area:

Whittlesea

Additional Stakeholders:

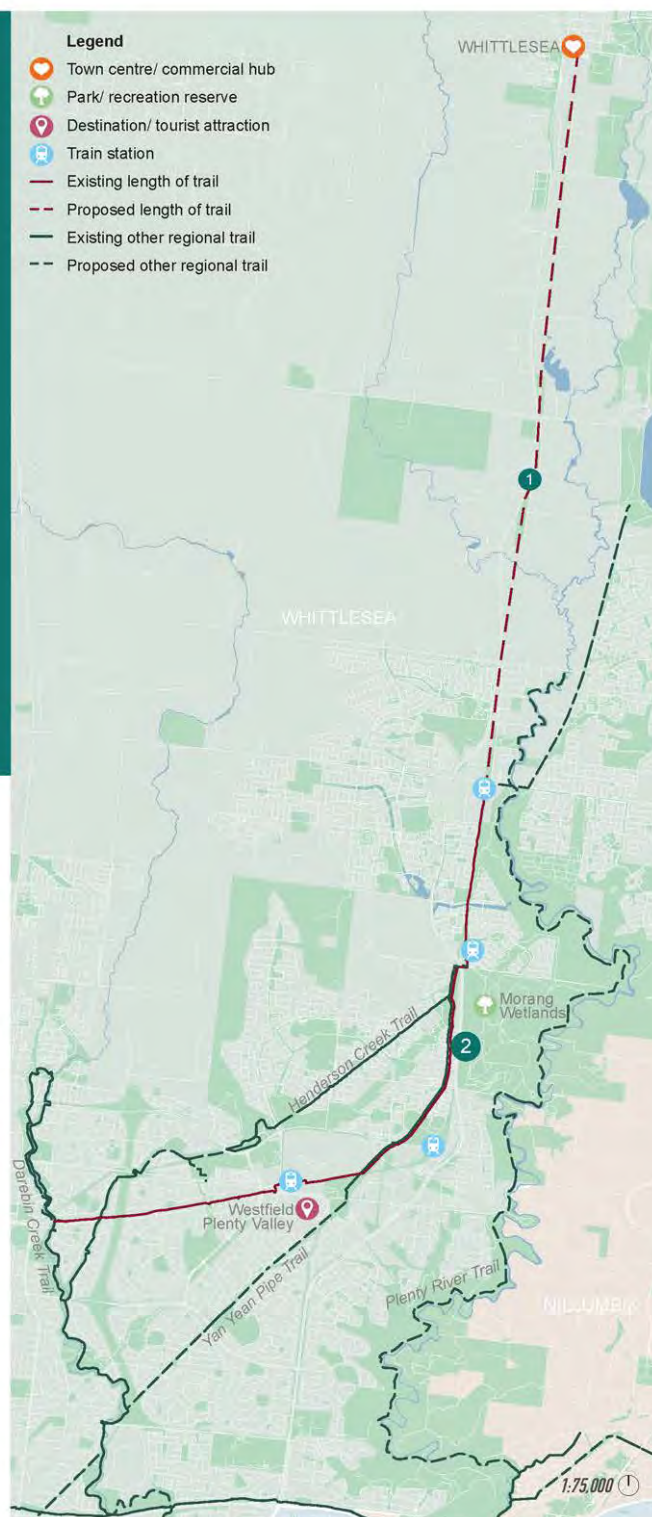
Metro Trains, VicRoads, VicTrack

Auditor comments:

"A fundamentally excellent trail that would only benefit further with a bit more thought regarding flow and continuity at a couple of points."

Priority Actions

- 1 Construct a new trail along the train line from Mernda Station to Laurel Street, Whittlesea. Ensure there is provision for horse riders on parts of the trail
- 2 Provide a pedestrian priority crossing on the Pipe Track at the Lakes Boulevard
- 3 Provide wayfinding signage along the length of the trail



6.25 YAN YEAN PIPE TRACK

Trail information

Length: 13.5km
SCC: No

Location:

The Yan Yean Trail begins at the Metropolitan Ring Road Trail in the south and continues in a north-east direction where it meets the Whittlesea Rail Trail. The Trail then continues from Mernda Station to the Yan Yean Reservoir.

Local Government Area: Whittlesea

Additional Stakeholders:

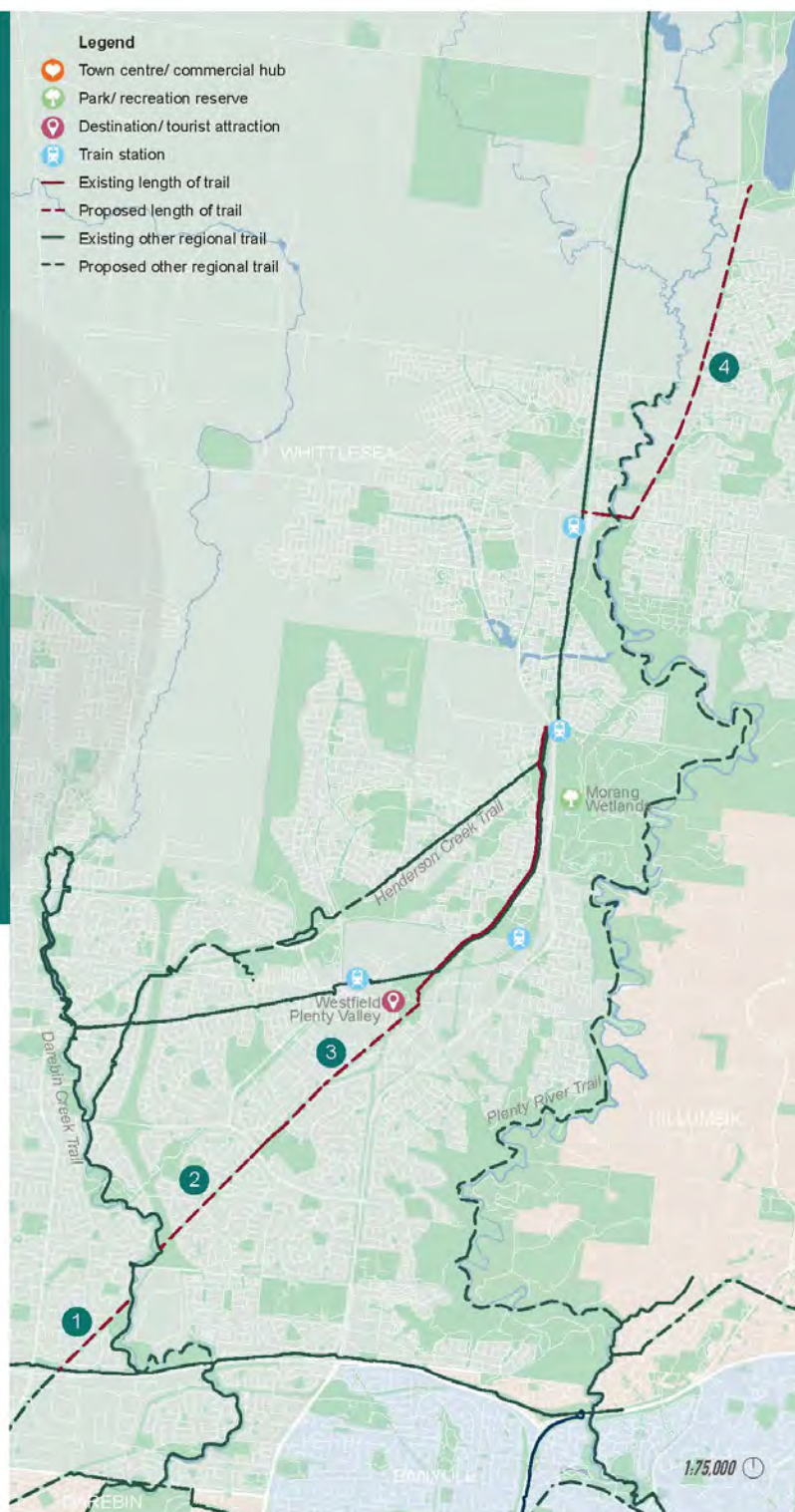
-

Auditor comments:

-

Priority Actions

- 1 Construct a new section of trail from The Metropolitan Ring Road Trail and the Northern Pipe/ Cheddar Road Trail to the Darebin Creek Trail
- 2 Construct a new section of trail from the Darebin Creek Trail to Childs Road
- 3 Construct a new section of trail from Childs Road to McDonalds Road and the Plenty Valley Activity Centre
- 4 Construct a new section of trail from Bridge Inn Road to the Yan Yean Reservoir and creating a connection to the Plenty River Trail



6.26 MAIN YARRA TRAIL

**Trail information**

Length: 26.5km (extends beyond study area)
SCC: Partial

Location:

Following the Yarra River, the Yarra Trail within the northern region begins in Alphington in the west and is proposed to continue to Warrandyte in the east.

Local Government Area:

Banyule, Nillumbik

Additional Stakeholders:

City of Boroondara, City of Manningham, Melbourne Water, Parks Victoria

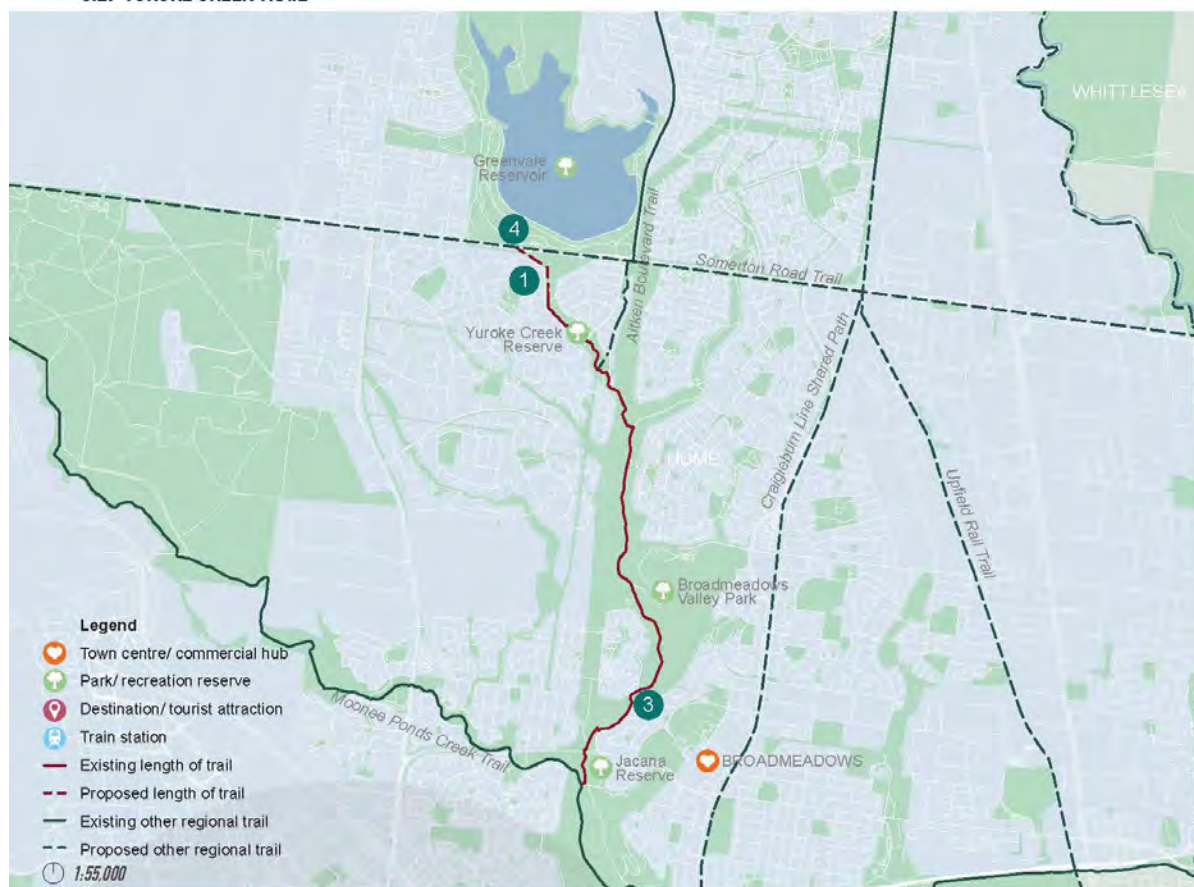
Auditor comments:

"A long, flowing trail through some beautiful riverland countryside, with a combination of surfaces and levels of quality (concrete, gravel, bitumen) that would benefit greatly from an extension to Warrandyte and beyond."

Priority Actions

- Construct a bridge crossing over the Yarra River to Banksia Park at the eastern end of Yarra Street, Heidelberg
- Undertake improvements to the Main Yarra Trail at Banyule Flats
- Realign the section of trail at the Banksia Street underpass to create a gentler grade and wider trail surface
- Upgrade surface and width of existing trail from Banksia Street to Yarra Street
- Upgrade surface and width of existing trail from junction with Plenty River Trail to Fitzsimons Lane Reserve
- Provide wayfinding signage along the length of the trail
- Construct shared use trail from the Mullum Mullum Creek Trail to the Warrandyte State Park
- Construct a bridge crossing over the Yarra River to Birrarung Park
- Construct a bridge crossing over the Yarra River to Bulleen Park

6.27 YUROKE CREEK TRAIL

**Trail information**

Length: 6.5km
SCC: Partial

Location:

The Yuroke Creek Trail runs along the creek corridor from Broadmeadows to Greenvale through the Broadmeadows Valley Park

Local Government Area:

Hume

Additional Stakeholders:

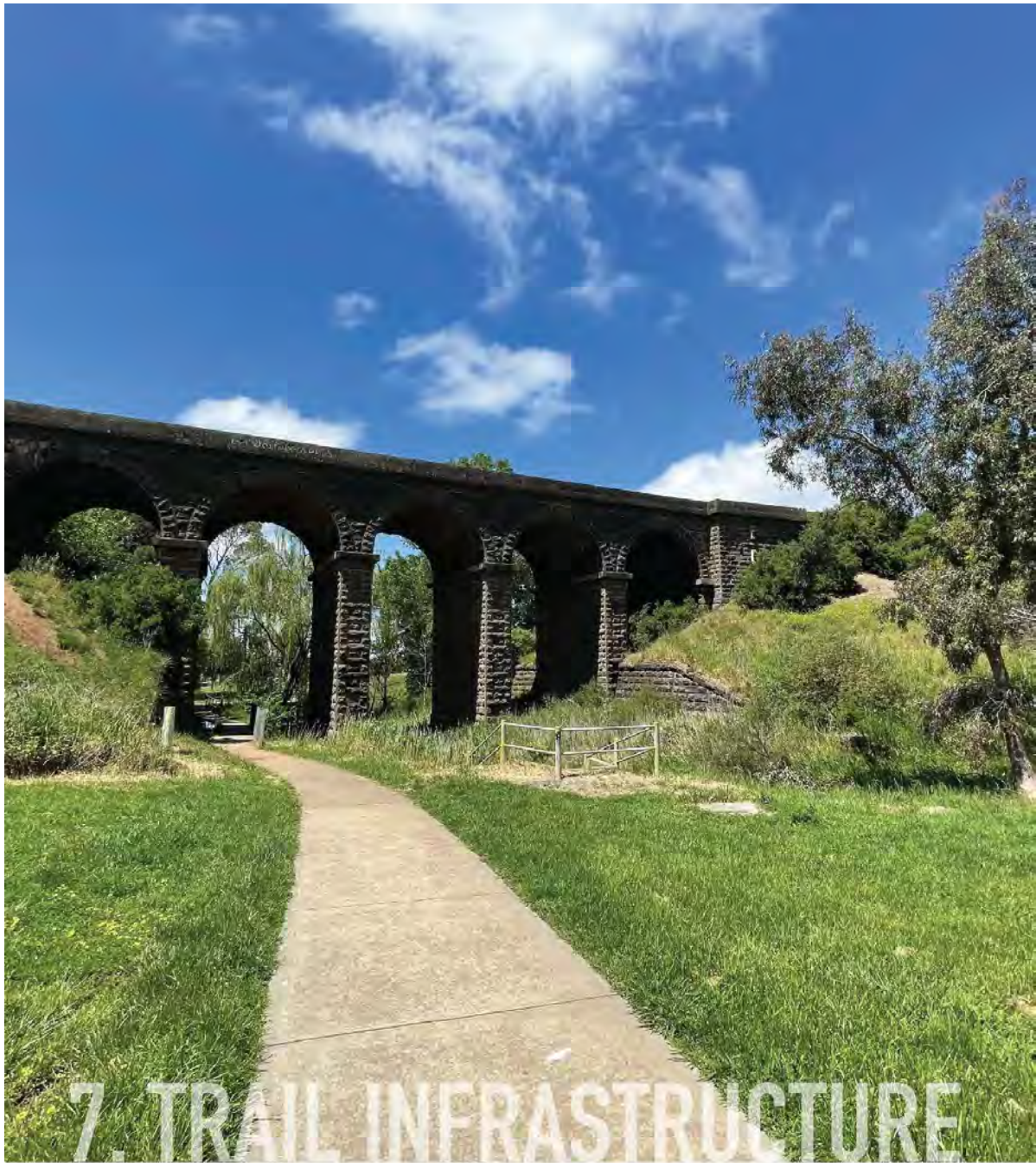
Major Road Projects Victoria, Melbourne Water, Parks Victoria, VicRoads

Auditor comments:

"A pleasant and meandering trail of adequate width quality, with good access at the southern end from Moonee Ponds Creek Trail, that could be improved with signage and a safe northern access point."

Priority Actions

- 1 Partner with Melbourne Water and MRPV to plan and construct new section of trail along the Melbourne Water Pipe Track from Greenvale Reservoir Park south to the existing section of the Yuroke Creek Trail, including a safe crossing option for Somerton Road
- 2 Provide wayfinding signage along the length of the trail
- 3 Investigate the provision of a pedestrian priority crossing at Dimboola Road, remove bicycle chicanes from either side and improve the path intersection treatment
- 4 Provide a pedestrian priority crossing at Somerton Road to connect trail to Greenvale Reservoir
- 5 Undertake a staged upgrade of the trail to a regional standard width with linemarking



7. TRAIL INFRASTRUCTURE

Blind Creek Trail

There are a wide variety of elements that make up a regional trail network. Firstly there is the trail surface itself, which can vary in width and construction material. Trails often also have a range of supporting infrastructure, including signs (both directional signs to tell people where the trails lead, as well as hazard and use-related signs), lights, seats, shelter, and drinking fountains. There are also functional benefits provided by non-built elements, such as trees providing shade and planted areas acting as buffers between different uses (e.g. creating a soft barrier between a trail and a play space). All of these elements play a role in the way a trail is used and influence the trail-use experience. The type and quality of facilities also have broader impacts upon the way trails present themselves and are perceived, impacting upon the character of a place and sense of community.

The different trail infrastructure components are addressed separately in this section. The key recommendations are then summarised at the end in two diagrams covering trail infrastructure standards and guidelines. The recommendations within this chapter generally outline the ideal outcomes. There are various factors involved in trail and infrastructure implementation that will require case by case consideration and the potential need for compromise.

7.1. TRAIL SURFACES

7.1.1 Materials

Regional trails within Northern Melbourne are made up of three main construction materials. The relative benefits and issues with each are summarised below.

Material	Positive attributes	Negative attributes
Concrete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Durable - very little maintenance required once installed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inflexible - if tree roots or subsurface conditions cause movement, this will result in cracking and abrupt level changes creating significant hazards. Regular jointing required, which can create a bumpy ride for cyclists if tooled joints are used (alternative joints are now commonly used). Runners often avoid using concrete surfaces because the inflexible surface can be harsh on joints. More expensive than the other two options identified here.
Bitumen/asphalt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More flexible than concrete, meaning that they do not need regular joints, and any lifting of pavement tends to occur gradually, initially creating rises and falls within a surface rather than abrupt cracks and edges. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Because of the flexibility of the material, it needs to be edged to prevent edges deteriorating. Timber edging is commonly used but deteriorates over time. Problematic when installed on highly reactive subgrades such as clay. Shrink-swell behaviour of reactive subgrades can cause cracking to pavement.
Gravel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a more natural trail character than hard paved options. Preferred surface for equestrian use. The least expensive of the three options identified here. Reduced speed of cyclists minimising trail conflict between cyclists and other users. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Variable quality, dependent upon the material used, the quality of the installation and drainage conditions. Susceptible to water damage (erosion from water flowing, and softening from pooling water). Edge maintenance can be an issue if a hard edge is not provided. Gravel surfaces are not particularly well-suited to narrow-tyred 'road' cycles. Not suitable for users with mobility aids or physical ailments due to uneven surface. More regular and intensive maintenance required.



FIGURE 7.1:
Regional trail construction material examples.
Top: Concrete trail construction (Merri Creek Trail)
Middle: Asphalt surface (Diamond Creek Trail)
Bottom: Gravel (Edgars Creek Trail)

The three options noted (examples pictured in figure 7.1) are ordered from most to least expensive. However it should be noted that the difference in upfront costs are relatively minor compared to the ongoing maintenance costs, i.e. decisions to use gravel surfaces based primarily upon installation costs should be very mindful of the ongoing maintenance costs. Other specialist surfaces (such as boardwalks) are used sparingly to address specific circumstances due to the high costs of construction, long-term maintenance costs and safety concerns.

There is a mix of trail surface materials used for the regional trail network within the study area, but there are some patterns that able to be observed:

- Concrete appears to be the dominant surface material across the network, particularly within the more urban and populated areas.
- Gravel surfaces appear to be preferred for trails within a rural environment or a more natural setting (i.e. sections of the Edgars Creek Trail).

Where compacted gravel surfaces are the preferred trail material, the following guidelines should be considered:

- gravel surfacing should not be used if the trail has a focus upon commuter use
- gravel surfacing should not be used if there is potential for flooding
- gravel surfacing should be used where a trail targets equestrian use
- gravel surfacing should be considered if the trail is in a rural setting.

7.1.2 Conditions

In the community questionnaire undertaken as a part of the project, only 5% of respondents identified trail condition as a reason preventing them from using the trail network. However a significant number of respondents identified the following as changes to the network that would increase their usage of the trails:

- Wider trails - 36% of respondents
- More trails hard paved (i.e. concrete or asphalt surface) - 25.43%
- Better all abilities access - 8.43%
- More regular sweeping of the trail - 13.86%

This indicates that while trail condition does not stop people from using the trails, usage rates would likely increase if the condition of the trail network was improved.

7.1.3 Trail width & trail separation

Regional trails within the study area vary in width, with the majority being between 1.5m and 2.5m wide. In general the narrower paths are older or exist within constrained corridors (i.e. creek or rail corridors), while recently-installed paths are 2.5m wide or more.

One standard available regarding trail width is that provided by Austroads (the peak organisation of Australasian road transport and traffic agencies). Austroad publish the *Guide to Road Design Part 6A: Paths for Walking and Cycling (Second edition, June 2017)*, which lists suggested shared path widths for 'regional' and 'recreational' shared paths. For regional shared paths the suggested desirable minimum width is 3.0m, with an acceptable range from 2.5 to 4.0m. For recreational shared paths the suggested desirable minimum width is 3.5m, with an acceptable range from 3.0 to 4.0m. Building upon the Austroad guide is the *Traffic Engineering Manual Vol 3 Part 218 VicRoads Design Guidance for strategically important cycling corridors, 2016*. As the name suggests, this document focuses upon Strategic Cycling Corridors (SCCs) that are intended to improve cycling to and around major activity centres in metropolitan Melbourne, and to provide routes catering for high volumes of cyclists.

It is noted that the 2016 version of this strategy identified an aspiration for paths to be at the upper end of these width ranges (i.e. minimum 3m wide, and 4m wide where possible). Wide paths do provide benefits to users on busy trails, helping to minimise conflict between trail users, and is a worthy aspiration where space allows and usage expectations are high. However, space is very regularly an issue when retrofitting trails to developed urban areas and wider trails significantly exacerbate the issue.

The latest Austroads document also provides guidance relating to designing path widths based upon known peak hour cyclist and pedestrian volumes. Where known usage volumes are available (i.e. from Council installed counters or Bicycle Network Victoria's Super Saturday and Super Tuesday count data), the following recommendations for regional trails from Austroads should be applied:

Recommended trail type	Pedestrian volumes	Cyclist volumes
Minimum 2.5m wide shared path	0-50 per hour	0-550 per hour
Minimum 3.0m wide shared path	50-100 per hour	550-1000 per hour
Separated dedicated paths for pedestrians and cyclists (note: if separated paths are not feasible, a wider shared path of 3.5-4.5m should be considered instead)	Over 100 per hour	Over 1000 per hour

The Austroads *Guide to Road Design Part 6A: Paths for Walking and Cycling* (Second edition, June 2017) notes that;

a separated path is a path divided into separate sections, one of which is designed for the exclusive use of cyclists and the other for the exclusive use of pedestrians. A separated path may be appropriate where there are safety or conflict issues such as where there are a high number of pedestrians and/or cyclists, or the desired level of service on a shared path is not being met.

While this kind of separated path is not a regular feature of the regional trail network in Northern Melbourne, the recently installed section of the Upfield Rail Trail between Moreland and Coburg Station is a good example to follow if being considered in other areas within the region (refer figure 7.2).

The idea of separated paths also has higher-level support. *Victoria's 30-year Infrastructure Strategy* (2016), prepared by Infrastructure Victoria, makes recommendations relating to walking and cycling infrastructure to 'increase walking and cycling for transport' and 'encourage people living along congested corridors and in higher density areas to shift to active travel to reduce the demand on other transport modes'. It specifically notes trail separation as a key part of this, under both recommendations 4.1 and 10.3:

improving standards for existing walking and cycling networks, in particular the separation of walking and cycling paths and also from other road users.



FIGURE 7.2:
An example of a separated regional trail recently installed along the Upfield Rail Trail, Coburg

The idea of separated paths is also popular among trail users. In the questionnaire undertaken as a part of this project, respondents were asked which potential trail improvements, from a list of 23, would increase their usage of the trails (with multiple selections allowed). The item 'separated pedestrian and cycling trails in high use areas' was selected by just under half (47.43%) of the respondents, the fourth most popular response. By comparison, the item 'wider trails' was selected by 36% of the respondents. The popularity of the idea of separated paths arises from the conflicts between users, including pedestrians feeling unsafe sharing trails due to fast-moving bicycles and many cyclists feeling unsafe sharing trails with dogs that are off-lead and not under effective control.

Factors working against heavily-used regional trails in Northern Melbourne being separated include:

- **Space** - Many existing trails are located within relatively tight corridors, often also constrained by existing vegetation or infrastructure. Finding the space to build separated paths will not be possible in many locations. This is particularly true when talking about longer lengths of trail, rather than just individual sections. Separation of trails may not be particularly effective if separation is achieved for only short sections due to 'bottle-necks', therefore requiring regular merging.
- **Character** - Separated paths are the freeways of trail infrastructure, and inevitably have a larger footprint and more visual impact than shared paths.
- **Construction cost** - Providing separate trails for cycling and pedestrian use doubles the cost of providing the facility.

7.2 TRAIL SIGNAGE

Signs play a significant role in the experience of trails, whether they be behavioural, wayfinding or interpretive signs.

- Behavioural signs along trails are used to direct user behaviour in order to reduce user conflicts and to ensure comfort for users. Key examples include:
 - notification that paths are shared, which may include directions regarding shared trail etiquette (such as warning other users prior to passing, keeping left, and keeping dogs on leads).
 - directions for cyclists to slow down due to trail conditions ahead.
 - notification of potential hazards, including flood information, dog off-lead areas and playgrounds.
- Wayfinding (or directional) signs assist users in finding their way around the trail network and to reach destinations. This includes destinations along the trail, surrounding destinations, and connections to other paths and trails.
- Interpretive signs typically provide information and stories about the nature, culture and/or history of a place. This type of sign is not integral to the functioning of a trail network, and so is not a focus of this project. This kind of sign can provide interest and improve the user experience of a trail.

7.2.1 Sign types and styles

As is inevitable for a trail network developed by different parties over a long period of time, there is a wide variety of existing sign types and styles existing on the regional trails of Northern Melbourne.

It is recommended that a standard suite of directional signs be developed for regional trails in Northern Melbourne, and that these be used on all new regional trail construction projects and gradually replace signs on existing trails. The benefits of a standard suite are:

- Consistent quality. A standard suite of signs sets a minimum quality, both aesthetically and in the way information is being communicated.
- Ease of maintenance. A standard suite of signs streamlines repair and maintenance of signs.
- Marketing. A standard signage suite contributes to visual branding of the trails.

It is recommended that the standard suite of signs link with proposals for standard regional trail signs elsewhere across Melbourne and Victoria. The recommended sign type is based upon the outcomes of a workshop titled *Bicycle Wayfinding: The case for a metropolitan approach* held by Knox City Council in 2012, and the report *Finding Melbourne: Standardising Melbourne/Victorian Bicycle Wayfinding Systems* (2012) by Chris Hui and Winchelle Chuson. The aim of this workshop and resultant report is to have a standard suite of wayfinding signage across the shared trails within the Melbourne Metropolitan areas and across the state.

Key features of this signage suite include:

- **Legibility** - The signs are simple and legible.
- **Robustness** - The signs are robust, do not attract vandalism or graffiti, and are easily cleaned or replaced in the event of damage.
- **Simple and affordable** - Having many simple signs is more beneficial to users than fewer ornate ones.
- **Information hierarchy** - A hierarchy of information is established, with priority given to destinations, but also including distances and the route name, where applicable.

Figure 7.3 shows an example of the proposed signage suite recommended in *Finding Melbourne: Standardising Melbourne/Victorian Bicycle Wayfinding Systems* (2012). This suite is also a recommendation of the *Western Regional Trails Strategic Plan* (2017) and *Eastern Metropolitan Trails Strategy* (2018). Implementation of this suite across the study area will allow for a consistent approach to wayfinding across the eastern, western and northern regions of Metropolitan Melbourne.

Some customisation of this standard sign type may be appropriate to allow the branding of key regional trails with a strong tourism focus, but the key features of the standard sign suite should be retained.

As an alternative, a distinctive signage suite may be developed on a trail-by-trail basis. Whilst this would mean that each trail within the Northern Trails network would be different (and therefore potentially negate the benefits of a standardised signage suite as discussed above), it would allow for individual branding of each of the trails and a consistent suite along the length of the trail. Implementation of this type of suite may involve coordination and involvement from neighbouring Councils outside the northern region. The signage suite recently implemented along the Merri Creek Trail, as shown in figure 7.4, is a good example of a distinctive suite implemented along the length of the trail across multiple municipalities. The recently installed signage on the Darebin Creek Trail is another example of a successful cross-municipality signage suite.

7.2.2 Emergency markers

Emergency markers are signs that allow locations to be pinpointed for emergency services. They are of greatest use in locations, such as many of the trails, where other navigational aides such as street intersections and house numbers are not available. Emergency markers in Victoria are managed by the Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority (ESTA). They produce the *Emergency Marker Signage Guidelines* document that identifies the sign types required and location guidelines.

Emergency markers are recommended along regional trails every 500 to 1000 metres, as well as at trail heads, junctions, significant features, activity nodes, and where the level of risk is increased.



FIGURE 7.3:
An example of the proposed standard sign type for regional trails in Eastern Melbourne.



FIGURE 7.4:
An example of the existing signage suite along the Merri Creek Trail by Aspect Studios.
Source: www.aspect-studios.com/project/merri-creek-trail

7.3 TRAIL FACILITIES

Trail facilities such as seating, drinking fountains, toilets and lighting can play an important part in the regional trail usage experience. Where trails intersect with parks, activity centres and civic facilities, these functions can be provided separate from the trail. Toilets, shelters and barbecues, for instance, are better addressed as a part of a municipal open space strategy, keeping trail users in mind.

Commercial precincts and town centres can provide good opportunities for rest stops, food and drink, and toilet facilities. Indeed these locations, along with transport hubs such as train stations, are in many cases the destinations of trails users. In such cases, the 'trail head' infrastructure is being provided by these facilities.

Where facilities are provided on trails, they need to be designed to avoid interfering with the safe use of the trail by all users. For instance, seats should not be placed too close to the trail surface.

The following are types of trail infrastructure, with recommendations regarding their use associated with regional trails in Northern Melbourne. Recommendations regarding their provision are summarised in figure 7.5.

- **Seats** - Seats should be provided in locations where people may want to sit. This may apply to locations with attractive views or outlooks. It may also apply to locations where people may want to rest or wait for others, such as at destinations, trail heads, or in the vicinity of other facilities such as toilets. In general, seats with backs and arm rests provide more comfortable seating for people wishing to sit for a period of time, while benches are more suitable for short term seating.
- **Lights** - The majority of regional trail usage occurs during daylight hours. Lighting is therefore generally not considered as a standard requirement for regional trails, except in situations such as tunnels or underpasses where low levels of light are experienced during daylight hours. There are a number of potential disadvantages of providing lighting to trails, including disturbance of wildlife, the potential attraction of undesirable and antisocial night time activity, and the cost of operation. The kind of users who most benefit from lighting are people using sections of regional trails in a relatively local way over the winter months, such as recreational walkers, dog walkers, and commuters. Where there is evidence of strong potential benefits for these groups without the potential disadvantages noted above, lighting should be considered.
- **Drinking fountains** - Drinking fountains provide opportunities for trail users to rehydrate while using the trail. They are particularly popular with people undertaking exercise on trails during warmer weather. Walkers and joggers are more likely to use them than cyclists, who have more opportunity to carry their own water bottles. Drinking fountains are most efficiently provided associated with parks, where water connections are likely to already exist. Dog drinking bowls can also be associated with drinking fountains.
- **Rubbish bins** - Rubbish bins should be provided only at key activity nodes, destinations and in key dog off-lead/dog walking areas. In many cases these nodes and destinations will already have bins (e.g.. parks, railway stations, civic buildings). Bins should only be considered where there is easy access for rubbish trucks and the capacity to service them. Parks Victoria has a carry-in carry-out rubbish policy throughout its estate.
- **Bicycle parking** - Regional trails attract a lot of cycling users, so there is a strong demand for bicycle parking at key destinations and stopping points along the way. In most cases simple 'hoop' style parking is appropriate, but for destinations such as railway stations where people are likely to be regular users requiring secure longer-term parking, cage style parking should also be considered. E-bike charging stations should be considered at transport node connections or on higher use commuter trails.
- **Bicycle pump and repair stations** - Further to bicycle parking, maintenance stations allow cycling users to perform on-the-go repairs to allow safe and convenient travel along the trails. These should be considered for key activity nodes such as trail heads and transport hubs.

- **Shelter** - The length of the trail network means that the provision of shelter needs to be focussed upon points where it is most needed. These points logically include trail heads, key destinations and stopping points. Where shelters are provided, other facilities are also likely to be appropriate, including seating, drinking fountains and bins. Shelter types can vary depending upon the preferences of the relevant Council, but should provide both sun and rain protection. Shelters directed primarily at trail users do not need to be large (compared to those targeted at picnics and others gathering in larger numbers).
- **Other 'end of trip' facilities** - end of trip facilities such as showers and change rooms may be desirable for some regional trail users, especially commuters and tourists. Due to the construction cost and maintenance requirements associated with end-of-trip facilities, having them fulfil the needs of multiple user groups may assist in making them viable. Examples of where a shared approach may work include at beaches (where showers are commonly provided) and at civic buildings (where staff may also use these facilities).

Infrastructure element	Infrastructure provision			
	Regular (<500m spacing)	Occasional (500-1000m spacing)	At key activity nodes	Where required for safety reasons
Behavioural signs		○	○	
Bicycle parking		○	●	
Bicycle pump & repair stations			○	
Directional signs	●			
Drinking fountains		○	●	
Emergency markers (in accordance with ESTA requirements)		●		
End of trip facilities (e.g. showers)			○	
Interpretive signs		○	○	
Lights		○	○	●
Outdoor fitness equipment			○	
Public toilets			●	
Rubbish bins			●	
Seats		●	●	
Shelter			●	
Vegetation (including shade trees)	●			

- *mandatory*
- *recommended*
- *to be considered*

FIGURE 7.5:
Regional trail infrastructure provision recommendations

7.4 TRAIL-SIDE VEGETATION

Trail-side vegetation can provide a range of benefits, including:

- **Function** - including the provision of shade from trees, and the use of vegetation in creating a barrier/buffer between different uses. Shade is particularly important along active transport routes for the comfort of users.
- **Character** - vegetation can contribute strongly to the appeal of trail settings, by creating visual interest, contributing to a sense of respite from the urban environment, and by screening undesirable views.
- **Environmental** - linear trail corridors are in many cases ideal habitat corridors, and the management of trail-side vegetation can play an important role in their effectiveness.

For these reasons, vegetation should be incorporated into regional trails where possible. The incorporation of vegetation needs to be mindful of potential issues, including:

- **Existing vegetation impacts** - installing new trails may result in the need to remove existing vegetation, or create conditions that are detrimental to the health of existing vegetation.
- **View lines** - thick vegetation should be offset from trails to allow trail users to see other trail users and to minimise the presence of hiding places.
- **Collision risk** - there should be a buffer between the trail and tree trunks to prevent injury from people colliding with them.
- **Trip risk** - vegetation should be designed and managed in a way that minimises the risk of plants growing onto the trail surface to avoid potential trip hazards.
- **Maintenance burden** - the length of trails means that any maintenance-intensive activities required along trail edges can involve significant resources and cost.

The approach to trail-side vegetation needs to strike a balance on a case-by-case basis regarding the benefits and potential issues noted above. In some cases this may require compromises to the trail infrastructure.

7.5 INTERSECTION TREATMENTS

Especially in built-up urban environments, trail intersections with roads and other paths and trails can be numerous. There are a wide variety of intersection treatments to select from based upon the intersection type. The options range from line marking for trail intersections with paths, through to signalised intersections for busy roads. The options are detailed in the Austroads *Guide to Road Design Part 6A: Paths for Walking and Cycling*, and the recommendations of this document should be applied for all trail intersection treatments.

7.6 TRAIL INFRASTRUCTURE STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

Standards and guidelines are provided here to guide the development of new regional trails, and regeneration/replacement works on existing regional trails within Northern Melbourne. The standards (items that must be addressed) are shown in figure 7.6, while the guidelines (items that should be considered) in figure 7.7. These standards and guidelines are intended to supplement the Austroads *Guide to Road Design Part 6A: Paths for Walking and Cycling*, which provides the over-arching standards for path and trail construction. Trail infrastructure standards and guidelines should be assessed to align with the existing guidelines and policies of relevant stakeholders.

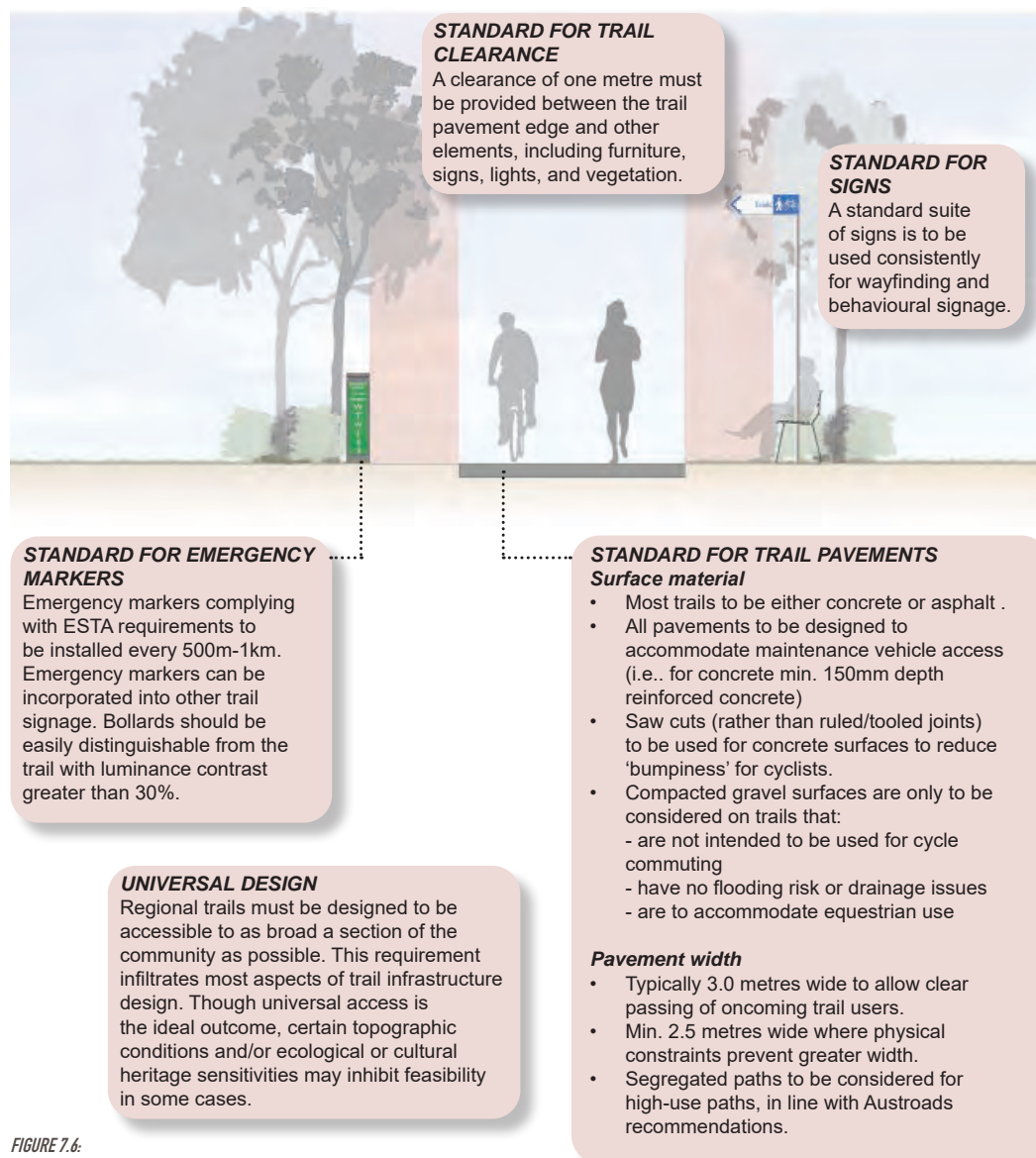


FIGURE 7.6:
Regional trail infrastructure standards for Northern Melbourne.

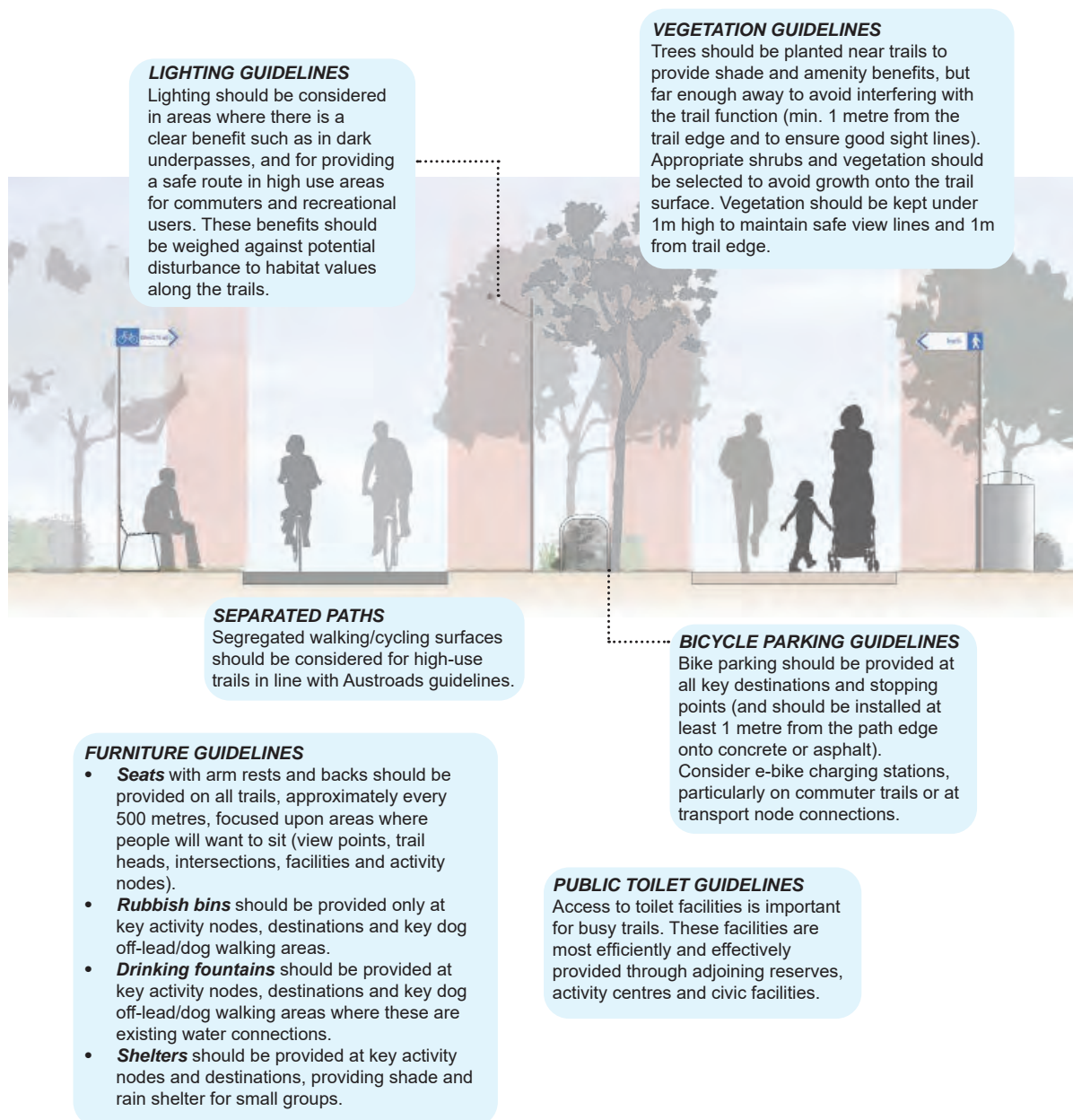


FIGURE 7.7:
Regional trail infrastructure guidelines for Northern Melbourne



8. TRAIL MANAGEMENT

Yarra River Trail

8.1 EXISTING MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

The management of the regional trail network comprises a wide variety of activities, relationships and agreements that support trail planning, construction, funding, maintenance and promotion. The management structures of trails are often complex and responsibilities for trails are spread across many different organisations.

The three key types of organisations who have responsibilities and involvement in the management of regional trails are Local Government Authorities, State Government Departments, and Service Authorities/Statutory Corporations. The involvement of these groups is summarised below.

8.1.1 Local Government Authorities

Local Government Authorities (LGAs, also referred to in this document as Councils) provide a wide range of services and facilities for their local community in accordance with the Local Government Act. This includes the planning, delivery, maintenance and promotion of regional trails within the local government area. The LGAs administer the State's responsibilities for the local government sector through collaboration and seeking input from State Government Departments and/or Service Authorities/Statutory Corporations. Though LGAs have little influence upon State legislation they are required to operate in accordance with it.

LGAs have been the key group involved in the development of this strategy. Each of the six LGAs within the study area are represented on the Project Working Group and have been heavily involved in shaping this report.

8.1.2 State Government Departments

Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP)

DELWP has a broad range of responsibilities relating to the management of Victorian land and natural resources, protection of the environment, responding to fire, flood and biosecurity emergencies, and primary industries. The relationship of these responsibilities and regional trail provision relates most strongly to the waterways along which many of the regional trails are located. DELWP oversees the water corporations constituted under the *Water Act 1989* that manage Victoria's state-owned water resources. This includes Melbourne Water Corporation whose responsibilities include the management of rivers, creeks and major drainage systems.

Department of Transport (DoT)

The Department of Transport is responsible for the planning, building and operation of integrated, sustainable and safe transport systems with Victoria. The DoT is currently investing in new cycling and pedestrian connections across metropolitan and regional Victoria to help relieve congestion and to provide an alternative to public transport. In the 2019/20 budget, the Victorian Government committed \$15.3M towards Active Transport Victoria (see below) however, following recent lock downs relating to COVID-19, this investment has been more than doubled to improve existing and deliver new cycling routes and shared user paths in Metropolitan Melbourne.

Active Transport Victoria (ATV)

ATV is a unit within the Department of Transport and was formed in 2016 as a focal point for State Government pedestrian and cycling-related strategies and projects. ATV was responsible for the preparation of the *Victorian Cycling Strategy 2018-28*, which has the subtitle '*increasing cycling for transport*'.

Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR)

The DJPR is responsible for the economic recovery and growth of Victoria by creating more jobs for more people, building thriving places and regions, and supporting inclusive communities. In more recent times, the department has been focussed on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and how it will help communities and businesses adapt, build resilience and recover from a strategic point of view. One of the key initiatives implemented by the DJPR is the Growing Suburbs Fund.

The *Growing Suburbs Fund* is a \$375M investment over 7 years to assist local government in the task of delivering new local infrastructure. It is expected that a number of trail related projects will be delivered over the coming years due to this funding opportunity.

The DJPR also provides a series of programs and grants to support Victoria's sporting sector and visitor economy including Visit Victoria and Sport and Recreation Victoria

Visit Victoria is a statutory authority reporting to Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events who sits within DJPR. Visit Victoria works to develop and realise the local and global market potential for Victoria's tourism industry. It's strategy work relating to regional trails has included the preparation of a number of documents referred to in this report, being:

- Victoria's Trails Strategy (2014)
- Victoria's 2020 Tourism Strategy (2013)
- Victorian Visitor Economy Strategy (2016)

Sport and Recreation Victoria (SRV)

The role of the SRV is to support Victoria's sport and recreation sector and inspire Victorians to get active. SRV work collaboratively with local government to improve the health and well-being of all Victorians, build strong and more connected communities, deliver economic growth and jobs, and enhance liveability. These goals are closely aligned with this strategy. The work of SRV has a focus upon research, planning and design facilitation relating to sport and recreation facilities, rather than directly constructing or managing facilities.

Victorian Planning Authority (VPA)

The VPA is responsible for providing strategic planning and coordinated infrastructure for the future growth and transformation of Victoria's cities and regions.

Given that the study area includes designated growth corridors, the VPA will have had significant involvement in the planning or provision of regional trails in the study area through Precinct Structure Plans and may continue to do so. This document can be used a guide when working with the VPA to deliver trails within growth corridors.

8.1.3 Service Authorities/Statutory Corporations

VicRoads

VicRoads is the Victorian road and traffic authority. It is a statutory corporation which is responsible for a range of road and transport-related research, strategy, policy and licensing, as well the construction, management and maintenance of assets. While the majority of the activities undertaken by the authority relate to roads for motorised vehicles, VicRoads also has responsibilities relating to pedestrians and cyclists.

VicRoads constructs and maintain on-road cycling facilities as a part of their road construction and maintenance responsibilities. They also construct and manage off-road trails located within road reserves, such as within freeway corridors. Regional trails also frequently intersect with roads, and so the management of these roads (through VicRoads or local government Road Management Plans) can be critical to trail function.

As a part of their activities relating to pedestrian and cycling transport, VicRoads is the body responsible for planning for appropriate infrastructure using a number of planning tools. These include the Principal Bicycle Network (PBN), Strategic Cycling Corridors (SCC), Bicycle Priority Routes (BPR) and the Metropolitan Trail Network (MTN).

The Principal Bicycle Network (PBN) was originally established in 1994 as a bicycle infrastructure planning tool. In 2009 and 2010 VicRoads lead a major review of the PBN, working closely with LGAs and other organisations. The PBN includes both on and off road routes for cyclists, and as a planning tool, also includes both existing and proposed routes.

The 2009-2010 review of the PBN also established Bicycle Priority Routes (BPRs), which create a higher order subset of the PBN. BPRs are identified as 'providing priority access for cyclists into key destinations', and so are intended to act as discrete links rather than as an integrated network. To meet the criteria to be defined as a BPR the route needs to have:

- a high potential for separation from motorised modes of transport making routes more attractive to less experienced bike riders
- a sufficiently direct route
- a focus on varying catchments relative to the size of the activity areas.

(source: *Principal Bicycle Network Fact Sheet, VicRoads, August 2012*)

With a focus on separation from motorised traffic, it is not surprising that there is a degree of overlap between BPRs and regional trails.

Strategic Cycling Corridors (SCCs) are also a higher-order subset of the PBN, developed to improve cycling to and around major activity centres in metropolitan Melbourne. These are intended to provide routes catering for high volumes of cyclists.

The Metropolitan Trail Network (MTN) focuses on recreational bicycle and walking routes in metropolitan Melbourne. The MTN was originally developed by Parks Victoria in their *Strategy for Melbourne's Open Space Network: Linking People and Spaces* report 2002, but planning responsibility for the MTN now lies with VicRoads. The MTN is made up primarily of off-road shared trails, often running beside rivers and creeks, but there are some short on-road sections that link off-road sections of trail.

Melbourne Water

Melbourne Water is a statutory corporation operating in accordance with the *Water Act 1989 (Vic)* to manage Victoria's water resources (including Melbourne's water supply and sewerage systems, waterways, drainage, stormwater and recycled water). The relationship that Melbourne Water has with regional trails relates to the ownership and/or management of large areas of land relating to their operations, which also form ideal locations for shared paths.

While Melbourne Water may own the land, their core business and legislative charter does not extend to path construction and maintenance. Instead, Melbourne Water enters into user agreements with LGAs to construct and maintain assets on their land. Typically, Melbourne Water and the local Council have joint maintenance responsibilities, with open space features (bench seats, playgrounds, barbecues, garden beds, etc.) that have a community function being maintained by Council, and elements that are part of the functioning Melbourne Water asset (waterbodies, hydraulic structures, aquatic and edge planting) are Melbourne Water's to maintain. User agreements also address issues such as risk and liability.

Melbourne Water seeks to facilitate the best use of Melbourne Water land and is generally supportive of the development of trails on Melbourne Water-owned land. They have also undertaken work relating to the construction and management of trail assets, such as their *Shared Pathways Guidelines* (Melbourne Water, 2009).

Parks Victoria

Parks Victoria is a statutory authority that operates under the Parks Victoria Act 2018, and is responsible for providing services to the state and its agencies for the management of parks, reserves and other land under the control of the state, including waterways land (within the meaning of the Water Industry Act 1994), for the purposes of conservation, recreation, leisure, tourism or water transport. It is as the manager of land through which trails pass that Parks Victoria is most engaged with regional trails. The minister responsible for administering the Parks Victoria Act is the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change.

VicTrack

VicTrack is a state-owned business created to deliver transport infrastructure for Victoria, operating under the *Transport Integration Act 2010*. VicTrack is the custodial owner of Victoria's railway land and infrastructure.

Railway land is often seen as a desirable location for shared trails, due to the general directness of the route, the relatively flat grades, the opportunities for mixing transport modes. While 'rail trails' often refer to trails built on disused rail lines, there are also regional trails associated with operational rail lines, located within the land buffer either side of the tracks.

VicTrack has a number of personnel dedicated to Third Party Access and Licensing issues within their Property Group, who facilitate usage such as shared trails on VicTrack land. This facilitation usually requires VicTrack to negotiate with the core users of their infrastructure (e.g.. the rail operators).

In addition to these key organisations, management committees and local community groups such as Friends groups often assist with ongoing trial works and maintenance requirements.

8.2 MANAGEMENT ROLES

Of the organisations identified in Section 8.1, only the LGAs and Parks Victoria have roles and responsibilities that span trail planning, construction, management and maintenance.

Land ownership along regional trails is often fragmented. In many cases local government has maintenance responsibility for a trail, but does not own the land upon which it is built. There are many examples of regional trails being built on land owned by authorities such as Melbourne Water and VicTrack (who each own extensive tracts of land but have no trail construction charter). These partnerships, though sometimes complex, are central to the provision of many trails that would otherwise not exist.

The management bodies and scenarios presented here reflect the current situation. Many existing trails were built under different organisational configurations and changes in these structures will inevitably continue into the future.

With increased public demand, and pressure from lobby groups regarding trail provision, the authorities and organisations involved have begun to change. Traditionally, authorities such as Melbourne Water, VicTrack and their predecessors have been conservative organisations that have fulfilled their obligations relating to drainage, railway provision and the like, but have, in general, not supported the use of their land for other purposes. The straightforward approach of restricting public access was preferred over the layered complexities and risk factors associated with allowing it. However this attitude has changed considerably in recent years. Both authorities now have staff responsible for facilitating the use of their land for trails and other purposes and are being more proactive in working through the issues and required agreements associated with this. This has required (and will continue to require) negotiation and compromise, but significant progress is being made to the benefit of trail provision.

There have also been recent changes in the way the state government deals with trail planning and provision. This change reflects a broad shift in thinking regarding trails. Where once they were seen as being primarily for recreation purposes and connecting people to nature, they are now increasingly being seen as also providing an important contribution to an integrated transport network, as well as community health and well-being benefits.

8.3 TRAIL MANAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

In reviewing the existing trail management structures, the following key issues have been identified:

- local government has the broadest responsibility for regional trails, but necessarily also has a local focus centred around their rate payers.
- there is a general lack of knowledge about the overall trail network, with information held at a local level being variable in detail and quality.
- there is a general lack of knowledge about trail users, and no existing government body with an interest or responsibility in collecting evidence and data to inform strategic decisions. Where members of the community have feedback on trails, it is directed at LGAs and is therefore usually restricted to local issues.
- regional trails are regularly delivered as a secondary benefit to large infrastructure projects (e.g. freeway construction, level crossing removals and rail duplication). Large scale trail network improvement projects are therefore being implemented in locations convenient to the primary project, but not necessarily the best location for a trail.

Most of the issues identified above stem from the discrepancy between a management structure that is focussed upon the local, and a trail network that is regional. To address this issue, there is an opportunity for input from a group with a regional focus. This regional study is an example of the broader overview able to be taken from this management viewpoint.

The kind of outcomes that could result from a regional group that are difficult to achieve at an LGA level include:

- Lobbying for increased recognition and funding of the regional trail network (potentially including a metropolitan trail strategy to coordinate the regional strategies and the creation of regular state funding grants for trail projects).
- Collation of detailed mapping and data on the regional trail network via Geographic Information Systems (GIS), and shared data arrangements between Councils and other authorities (such as Melbourne Water and Vicroads).
- The negotiation of formal boundary agreements in relation to the management of boundary interfaces.
- Collection of data relating to trail use to help inform regional trail planning and management decisions.
- The development of the trail network in a way that is strategic and regionally-focussed.
- The development of regional marketing and communications approaches for trails, potentially including regional maps of the network.
- The establishment of events at a regional scale that take advantage of the broad trail network.
- The sharing of information and experience between LGAs, for the betterment of the regional trail network.
- The development of consistent infrastructure, including a standard directional signage suite.

To achieve these benefits, it is recommended that the existing Northern Melbourne regional trails working group be retained. The Northern Melbourne LGAs already have a history of working together on various issues including the previous trail strategy and successful funding applications. Working together collectively is seen as a way to respond to challenges posed to individual LGAs, by pooling resources and advocacy/promotion efforts between LGAs for a regional benefit.



Yuroke Creek Trail

9.1 INTRODUCTION

Drawing the trail network to the attention of people has the potential to play an important role in increasing use of the trails. Many regional trails are located in places where many members of the community may not see them on a day to day basis (e.g.. alongside waterways).

In general, the marketing of the trails has two potential audiences: residents and visitors. However, the large size of the study area means that residents within the study area are also potential visitors within the region. As the motivations and needs of people who use trails as residents or as visitors can be quite different, it is valuable when considering trail marketing to clarify what is meant when referring to 'a resident' and 'a visitor'.

- **Residents** - refer to those who live within the study area using the trails in a way tied to their day to day life (primarily transport/commuting and recreation/exercise).
- **Visitors/tourists** - refer to people who have travelled from where they reside (which could be within the study area) for the purpose of travel including holiday, visiting friends and relatives, and business. Trail usage tends to be motivated by leisure, health and fitness. Within this grouping there are two key subgroups: overnight visitors and day trippers.

For an urban trail network the majority of users would normally be residents and the planning of the network is largely based around their transport and recreation needs. However, trails often provide leisure opportunities in scenic environments that can make them attractive destinations for visitors. The study area also includes a range of visitor destinations where access via trails could be a part of the visitor experience.

This section explores existing and potential marketing of the regional trails within the study area to both resident and visitor audiences.

9.2 CURRENT MARKETING ACTIVITIES

All of the municipalities across the study area provide communications and resources to encourage trail usage and provide information about trail facilities and etiquette of usage. The following table lists examples found on local government web pages within the study area (arranged alphabetically by local government area):

Local government authority	Trail marketing product	Description
Banyule City Council	'Banyule Travelsmart Map' (January 2019)	Downloadable map with some trail information, but also strongly focussed upon public transport.
Darebin City Council	'Darebin Travelsmart Map' (June 2018)	Downloadable map with some trail information, but also strongly focussed upon public transport.
	'Darebin Loves Bikes' community mailing list	Able to be subscribed to via the Darebin Council web page, informing subscribers of 'the City of Darebin's bike events, workshops and fun activities'.
Hume City Council	'Travel Smart Maps'	Covering walking, cycling, public transport routes, places of interest and information on clubs and user groups for Craigieburn/Broadmeadows/Greeenvale, and Sunbury/Bulla. Downloadable PDFs from the council web page.

Merri-bek City Council	Cycle Moreland 'pocket map' (December 2013)	Downloadable map focussed upon cycling routes.
Nillumbik City Council	'Exploring Nillumbik Map' (June 2012)	Downloadable map including places of interest and walking/cycling trails/routes.
Whittlesea City Council	'Explore Whittlesea' web page (www.explorewhittlesea.com.au)	Includes an online interactive map identifying key attractions, but the map does not locate trails. The site highlights two trails (The Metropolitan Ring Road Trail and Darebin Creek Trail) under a 'Sports & Recreation' heading.
Multiple	'The Merri Creek Trail Shared Pathway' map	Prepared collaboratively by multiple organisations, including Darebin, Merri-bek & Yarra City Councils. Accessed via the Merri-bek City Council web page.
Multiple	'Darebin Creek Trail Map' (www.northerntrails.melbourne/DarebinCreek/map.html)	Interactive web-based map. (prepared collaboratively by multiple organisations, Banyule, Darebin, Whittlesea City Councils). Accessible via the Darebin Council web page.

The last two examples in the table above have a more regional approach, covering an area across multiple local government area boundaries. The remainder have a local focus.

At a broader scale, trail marketing does occur at a state level, but is concentrated on key branded nature-based walks (e.g.. Great South West Walk) and North-East Victoria as a cycle tourism destination (incorporating the Murray to Mountains Rail Trail). Tourism promotions relating to Melbourne have typically had a strong focus upon central Melbourne.

9.3 MARKETING TYPES

The following table summarises the kinds of existing and potential marketing types most applicable to regional trails in Northern Melbourne.

Communication method	Pros	Cons
Hard copy maps/brochures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maps allow route planning and encourage exploration Meets the needs of a wide variety of users, including those who are not digitally-savvy. Ideal marketing 'give aways' at events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hard copies not always easy for users to access. Distribution of hard copies to appropriate locations creates ongoing logistical issues. Hard copy maps can become out of date very quickly, requiring regular reprints and re-distribution.
Downloadable maps/brochures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maps allow route planning and encourage exploration Accessible to most people any time Can be readily accessed and printed by users who prefer hard copy maps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can become out of date very quickly if not updated.
Interactive online maps/brochures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maps allow route planning and encourage exploration Accessible to most people any time Potential for information to be updated in real time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An expectation by users that maps are always up to date, which is beyond the current capability of most Councils. This typically means a reliance upon third parties to provide mapping, which can limit the opportunity for controlling what is shown and how it is presented.
Social media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local government authorities have social media teams who are skilled at communicating via this media. Opportunities to answer queries and interact in person. Potential for information to be updated in real time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The broad scope of Council activities means that trail-related information will always be a very small proportion of communications. A need to monitor activity and manage negative aspects of open public participation.
Email mailing lists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides an opportunity to communicate directly with interested people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communications targeted to already engaged parties, rather than reaching new users.
Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a focal point for communications Can encourage people to overcome participation hurdles in order to participate, which can lead to ongoing use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Usually require a lot of organisation and resources to be well attended and effective.
On-trail signs/advertising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A very targeted method of communication, talking directly to trail users. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communications targeted to already engaged parties, rather than reaching new users.
Commercial advertising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential to reach large new audiences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires a well thought-out strategy to ensure it is targeted and effective. Cost

9.4 TOURISM POTENTIAL

Trails that appeal to visitors can be broadly categorised into three types:

- **Scenic trails** – these are a destination in themselves and are enjoyed for their scenic features for example the Plenty River Trail.
- **Touring trails** – these provide connectivity to a range of facilities and services near the trails. The trail's major function is as a transport route, even though it may also have some scenic value, i.e. the Merri Creek Trail.
- **Experience trails** – these are themed to provide an experience along the trail, usually taking advantage of distinctive local features and themes. This kind of trail may also focus on linking the user to a range of complementary experiences located close to the trail e.g.. a local produce trail.

The definitions above are perhaps most closely associated with rural trails and trails through natural areas. The study area certainly has attractive rural and natural areas that have potential in relation to trails. The study area also has some very urban landscapes that may be equally valuable from a tourism perspective. The recent tourism focus on things like street art in central Melbourne laneways provides an example.

The challenge in developing a trail for tourism is differentiating it from the many kilometres of other trails that exist around the state that are also competing for users. Some potential points of differentiation include:

- **Proximity** - While trails in regional Victoria are very popular (i.e. Murray to Mountains or the Lilydale-Warburton Rail Trail), most users need to travel to access them. This often includes the need to transport bicycles, which can be logistically difficult. Trails with a similar rural character can be accessed by bicycle or public transport in Northern Melbourne by many Melbourne residents.
- **Urban character** - The urban areas of Northern Melbourne include a high density of cultural and commercial activities, including things like art galleries, cafes and breweries that are highly compatible with an urban trail experience.

9.5 GOALS AND POTENTIAL TARGET MARKETS

9.5.1 Marketing goals

Marketing Goals for Regional Trails include:

- To increase the number of residents who use the trails to improve their health and well-being, with a particular focus on resident groups who undertake the least physical activity, or for whom trail usage would address a particular social disadvantage.
- To increase trail usage by residents to commute to work, school and other leisure facilities.
- To increase visitor usage of the trails
- To increase length of stay and expenditure in the region by visitors and local residents associated with trail experiences.
- To create new and improved trail experiences that are enjoyed by residents and visitors.

9.5.2 Potential Target Markets

Residents

The target markets for trail development, communication and promotions continue to be all current resident markets, with a particular emphasis on those who will gain most from the mobility, health and social and benefits offered by trails.

Visitors

In terms of visitor origin, target markets for the trails should include those who are:

- Living in other parts of the project region,
- Living in greater Melbourne, and
- Visiting Friends and Relatives of those living in these areas.

These markets most closely align with current marketing activities, and are the most cost-effective use of promotional resources. The Visiting Friends and Relatives market can be reached through targeting Melbourne residents and encouraging them to take their visitors to the region's trails. This creates a visitor market benefit from resident-focussed marketing activities.

9.6 MARKETING OPPORTUNITIES

The marketing objectives for regional trails in Northern Melbourne are:

- To increase motivation to visit the trails
- To raise the profile of the trails
- To provide appropriate information about trail usage and associated services/ destinations so people can use the trails easily, safely and enjoyably.

Actions include:

Develop the regional trails product offering and branding

- Develop a series of themed trail-based itineraries across the region that are tailored to a variety of different trail users and their interests, e.g. trail experiences for families that can be undertaken over a weekend featuring low-risk, low impact activities, and the time it takes to do them; identify complementary leisure activities, hospitality and facilities, such as bike hire, etc.
- Encourage tourism operators in the relevant parts of the region to develop trail-themed packages which provide services that meet the needs of trail users, e.g. substantial nutritious food, bike storage, nearby accommodation, etc.

Provide additional information about trails

- Devise a suite of messages about each trail that is regularly refreshed, which is consistently communicated by all stakeholders, including regional tourism organisations.
- Increase the level of information about regional trails on visitor-focused websites, such as Visit Victoria's consumer website (visitvictoria.com.au), and websites appealing to trail users (e.g.. trail cycling, walking or running sites).
- Investigate the potential to develop a regional trails app or website which would be kept up-to-date with the latest trails information. The app or website could be maintained by an external contractor.
- Develop a social media strategy to build awareness about the region's trails.
- Develop an Events Calendar for the trails which can be promoted by all relevant stakeholders.

Trail management & funding

- Develop a formal collaborative structure between the region's councils to guide the development and promotion of regional trails. The collaboration should be adequately funded to outsource key marketing activities, with participating councils guiding the decision making.
- Secure additional funds to undertake more promotion of regional trails to visitor and resident markets, and to support a collaborative structure involving the region's councils for trail marketing and development purposes.



Darebin Creek Trail

10.1 INTRODUCTION

Two kinds of action items associated with improving the regional trail network in Northern Melbourne have been identified:

- **Region-wide items** - these items are recommendations regarding the broader management and operation of the trail network. These are summarised below.
- **Trail-specific items** - these trail improvement projects have been assessed against criteria to determine their relative prioritisation.

10.2 REGION-WIDE ACTION ITEMS

The key region-wide action items are summarised below (based upon recommendations made throughout this document).

Category	Recommended actions
Trail infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement a standard suite of directional signs for regional trails in Northern Melbourne. • Implement the Trail infrastructure standards and guidelines as identified in this document (refer to Chapter 7).
Trail management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the Northern Regional Trails working group continue to meet regularly, in order to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lobby for trail funding. - Undertake strategic planning of the regional trail network, informed by data collected and shared about the network and users. - Promote the regional trail network.
Trail marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the regional trails product offering and branding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop a series of themed trail-based itineraries across the region that are tailored to a variety of different trail users and their interests - Encourage tourism operators in the relevant parts of the region to develop trail-themed packages which provide services that meet the needs of trail users • Provide additional information about trails <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Devise a suite of messages about each trail that is regularly refreshed, which is consistently communicated by all stakeholders, including regional tourism organisations. - Increase the level of information about regional trails on visitor-focused websites and websites appealing to trail users. - Investigate the potential to develop a regional trails app or website which would be kept up-to-date with the latest trails information. - Develop a social media strategy to build awareness about the region's trails. - Develop an Events Calendar for the trails which can be promoted by all relevant stakeholders. • Trail management & funding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop a formal collaborative structure between the region's councils to guide the development and promotion of regional trails. - Secure additional funds to undertake more promotion of regional trails to visitor and resident markets, and to support a collaborative structure involving the region's councils for trail marketing and development purposes.

10.3 TRAIL-SPECIFIC ACTION ITEMS

A number of trail-specific action items were identified through various phases of the project such as the desktop assessment, strategic document review, trail audit, and the community and stakeholder engagement. These action items, which range from signage projects which can potentially be undertaken by a single Council, to extensive lengths of new trail requiring coordination between Councils and other land owners/ managers, aim to provide a comprehensive and connected trail network.

This list of trail improvement projects are itemised into a schedule which can be found in Appendix B and/or cross referenced to the trail maps in chapter 6.

Following the identification of the trail improvement projects, each action item was assessed using a multi-criteria analysis in order to identify priority projects that provide the most benefit to the region and most closely align with the objectives of this study. In order to undertake this process, a series of criteria was developed.

10.3.1 The Criteria

Following analysis of the multi-criteria analysis used in the 2016 Northern Trails Strategy, a new set of criteria is proposed based on the strategy's vision and the criteria from the previous strategy. This qualitative and quantitative criteria has been developed in collaboration with the Project Steering Group to assess potential trail improvement projects against the key objectives of the study.

It should be noted that the assessment method used has provided a useful prioritisation tool but it is not scientific. While the method used does rank projects in order, the accuracy of the method means that it is best used to provide only broad groupings regarding relative priorities.

The eight criteria and the relative weighting used are as follows:

1. **Contribution to an integrated and connected network** (26%)
Including linking to other regional and local trails, not having 'missing links', and linking to key destinations such as regional parks and conservation areas, tourism destinations, regional leisure centres, tertiary institutions, activity centres and business parks, and recreational water bodies.
Rationale: Trail improvement works that create an integrated and connected, network will be more useful and convenient for users, increasing the use of the trail.
2. **Encouraging use by spatial location** (18%)
Including the proximity of trails to population centres and transport hubs.
Rationale: Trail improvement works located close to dense population centres are more likely to attract higher numbers of users.
3. **Potential economic benefits** (5%)
Including commercial opportunities for local communities as well as cost savings associated with reduced ongoing operational costs such as maintenance.
Rationale: Trail improvement works that provide economic benefits potentially contribute to capital being available for additional trail improvement works. Works that can demonstrate a strong economic 'business case' also have a better chance of being implemented.
4. **Contribution to community health and well-being** (5%)
Including trails maximising opportunities for the use of the trails for active transport, recreation and social interaction. This includes improvements that positively contribute to a trails recreation values and actions that actively encourage new users to the trails.
Rationale: Trail improvement works that help to encourage health and well-being provide positive contributions the 'social' aspect of a triple bottom line assessment.

5. Contribution to uniqueness and the quality of the natural environment (18%)

Including trails that provide access to natural environments, features and other 'selling points' that make them more attractive to users, including tourists. Provision of trails should also minimise negative impacts on the natural environment.

Rationale: Trail improvement works that help to increase the attractiveness or positive uniqueness of a trail will make people more likely to use the trail, and also opens up potential economic benefits. This criteria will often relate to the enhancement of environmental values, providing positive contributions the 'environmental' aspect of a triple bottom line assessment.

6. Encouraging diversity of use through facility quality and maximising usability (5%)

Including improving accessibility, safety, legibility, facility diversity and the broader user experience of trails.

Rationale: Maximising the safety of trails is a non-negotiable principle of trail provision. People are also more likely to use trails if they appeal to a diverse range of users, are accessible, safe, legible and provide a positive user experience.

7. Strategic alignment (18%)

Level of support from and alignment with adopted strategies and plans and external stakeholder plans.

Rationale: Trail improvement works that fit with broader strategies, policies and plans help to ensure that works to improve the network are all 'pulling in the same direction'.

8. Ease of implementation (5%)

Including projects that are considered to be 'easy wins', are supported by all stakeholders, are easy to construct, are 'shovel ready' or are considered 'feasible', or are relatively low cost.

Rationale: Trails improvements works that are easy to implement are more likely to be implemented in a timely and efficient manner.

10.3.2 Priority trail improvement projects

The following schedules itemise the priority trail improvement projects identified by the multi-criteria analysis where each project was assessed against the criteria discussed above. These projects can be cross-referenced to the trail maps in chapter 6, using the trail name and identification number. It is important to note that the trail improvement projects that have been identified outline the priorities for the Northern Region and the whole regional trail network, as opposed to individual Councils.

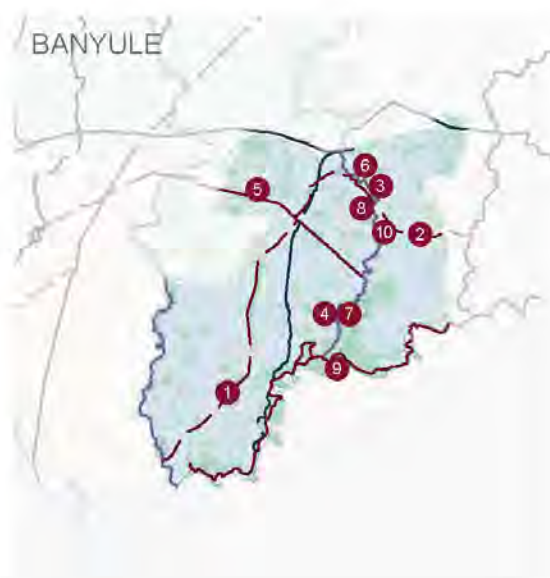
Of the 190 trail improvement projects identified, 25 have already been funded or will be funded through interrelated projects and developments. These projects have been committed to and as such have not been included in the lists below.

The overall top ten priority trail improvement projects for the Northern Region are:

No.	Trail action item	Project description
1	Maroondah Aqueduct_01	Construct new section of trail connecting the Plenty River Trail near Lear Court, east along the aqueduct across Diamond Creek Road to the Diamond Creek Trail at Allendale Road.
2	MerriCreekTrail_08	Complete missing section of trail from the Metropolitan Ring Road to existing section of trail south of Horne Street
3	Maroondah Aqueduct_02	Construct new section of trail from Main Road Diamond Creek, along Eltham-Yarra Glen Road, Creek Road, Eltham Road and Carters Lane while ensuring minimal impact to the Warrandyte - Kinglake Nature Conservation Reserve
4	EdgarsCreekTrail_01	Construct new section of trail from the Merri Creek Trail to Ronald Street on the west bank
5	MerriCreekTrail_02	Partner with Parks Victoria and DELWP to extend the Merri Creek Trail from Merri Concourse (north) to Cooper Street
6	UpfieldRail_02	Advocate to Department of Transport to construct a new section of trail from the Metropolitan Ring Road to Somerton Road
7	WhittleseaShared_01	Construct a new trail along the train line from Mernda Station to Laurel Street, Whittlesea. Ensure there is provision for horse riders on parts of the trail
8	MerriCreekTrail_03	Advocate for and investigate the staged extension of the Merri Creek Trail from Cooper Street Somerton/Epping north to OHerns Road as a part of the Upper Merri Creek Regional Parkland Plan.
9	MerriCreekTrail_04	Advocate for and investigate the staged extension of the Merri Creek Trail from OHerns Road to Craigieburn Road as a part of the Upper Merri Creek Regional Parkland Plan.
10	KinglakeWay_01	Establish a new trail from Hurstbridge to Arthurs Creek.

The top ten priority trail improvement projects within the municipality of Banyule are:

No.	Trail action item	Project description
1	Hurstbridge RailTrail_01	Construct a new section of trail along the Hurstbridge rail line from the Darebin Creek Trail north to Macleod Station
2	Hurstbridge RailTrail_04	Construct a new section of trail along the Hurstbridge rail line from the Plenty River Trail to the Diamond Creek Trail
3	PlentyRiver_07	Construct a new section of trail at Bilton Street
4	PlentyRiver_11	Upgrade pedestrian bridges on the Plenty River Trail where required and improve sight lines where appropriate
5	EastWestPower_07	Investigate options for providing a new section of trail from Dilkara Avenue to Gleeson Drive
6	PlentyRiver_06	Improve wayfinding signage at Poulter Reserve to direct users to the wider trail network west of the reserve
7	PlentyRiver_10	Improve wayfinding signage along the length of the trail
8	PlentyRiver_12	Investigate the feasibility of realigning the Plenty River Trail to the eastern bank of the Plenty River between George Court and Para Road in order to avoid the steep grade on the west bank
9	YarraTrail_08	Construct a bridge crossing over the Yarra River to Birrarung Park
10	PlentyRiver_08	Upgrade and widen section of trail with wayfinding signage at Montmorency Park



The top ten priority trail improvement projects within the municipality of Darebin are:

No.	Trail action item	Project description
1	EdgarsCreekTrail_04	Investigate a new section of trail along the creek from Carrington Road to Edwardes Lake. Explore the feasibility of a trail between Kia Ora Road and Henty Street on the east bank.
2	EdgarsCreekTrail_08	Construct a section of trail along the creek from Glasgow Avenue to the Metropolitan Ring Road
3	NorthernPipeTrail_02	Improve access at the St Georges Rd/Merri Parade/ Charles St intersection to connect the Merri Creek Trail to the Northern Pipe Trail and create a direct access point to and from the trail with pedestrian and cyclist priority
4	EastWestPower_05	Investigate the feasibility of a new section of trail, including a new bridge crossing, from the Darebin Creek Trail, at Holt Parade, around Mount Cooper to connect to the existing section of trail at Snake Gully Drive
5	NorthernPipeTrail_06	Investigate a new section of trail from High Street (near the Melbourne Water Reservoirs) along the vacant pipe reserve to the Merri Creek Trail at Murray Road. Existing road crossings to be considered.
6	MerriCreekTrail_20	Provide wayfinding signage along the length of the trail
7	EastWestPower_02	Construct a section of trail from the Northern Pipe/ St Georges Rd/ Cheddar Road Trail north east along the vacant pipe reserve
8	EastWestPower_03	Construct a section of trail from the Northern Pipe/ St Georges Rd/ Cheddar Road Trail south east along the vacant pipe reserve to Edwardes Lake Park
9	DarebinCreek_03	Investigate the feasibility of an underpass or bridge crossing Plenty Road intersection to avoid section of trail on Plenty Road footpath
10	MerriCreekTrail_15	Replace the Harding Street Bridge to cater for shared use



The top ten priority trail improvement projects within the municipality of Hume are:

No.	Trail action item	Project description
1	MerriCreekTrail_08	Complete missing section of trail from the Metropolitan Ring Road to existing section of trail south of Horne Street
2	MerriCreekTrail_02	Partner with Parks Victoria and DELWP to extend the Merri Creek Trail from Merri Concourse (north) to Cooper Street
3	UpfieldRail_02	Advocate to Department of Transport to construct a new section of trail from the Metropolitan Ring Road to Somerton Road
4	MerriCreekTrail_03	Advocate for and investigate the staged extension of the Merri Creek Trail from Coopers Street Somerton/Epping north to and along Oherns Road both east and west as part of the Upper Merri Creek Regional Parkland Plan
5	MerriCreekTrail_04	Advocate for and investigate the staged extension of the Merri Creek Trail from Oherns Road to Craigieburn Road as part of the Upper Merri Creek Regional Parkland Plan
6	JacksonsCreek_02	Plan and investigate the staged construction of trails on both sides of the Jacksons Creek with project partners and other landholders in line with the priorities of the Jacksons Creek biik wurrdha Regional Parklands Plan
7	YurokeCreek_01	Partner with Melbourne Water and MRPV to plan and construct new section of trail along the Melbourne Water Pipe Track from Greenvale Reservoir Park south to the existing section of the Yuroke Creek Trail, including a safe crossing option for Somerton Road
8	MerriCreekTrail_05	Advocate for and investigate the extension of the Merri Creek Trail from Craigieburn Road to Summerhill Road as part of the Upper Merri Creek Regional Parkland Plan
9	AmarooPipeTrack_01	Investigate options for a new trail along the sewer easement from Craigieburn Station heading north (Hume)
10	Craigieburn SharedPath_07	Advocate for a feasibility study for a new continuous shared path from Jacana Station to McConnell Crescent (north of Roxburgh Park Station)
	Craigieburn SharedPath_09	Further investigate opportunities for a new continuous shared path from Zambezi Court Reserve to Craigieburn Station

HUME



The top ten priority trail improvement projects within the municipality of Merri-bek are:

No.	Trail action item	Project description
1	EdgarsCreekTrail_01	Construct new section of trail from the Merri Creek Trail to Ronald Street on the west bank
2	Craigieburn SharedPath_01	Construct new section of trail from the Moonee Ponds Creek Trail to Gaffney Street
3	Craigieburn SharedPath_04	Construct a new section of trail, on the western side of the train line, from Cartwright Street to Glenroy Road including fencing and lighting
4	Craigieburn SharedPath_06	Construct a new section of trail, on the eastern side of the train line, from Glenroy Station to Jacana Station including fencing and lighting
5	EdgarsCreekTrail_02	Construct new section of trail from Ronald Street to Carrington Road. Consider keeping the trail away from the creek and along development frontages
6	Craigieburn SharedPath_03	Construct a new section of trail, on the western side of the train line, from Bothwell Street to Devon Road including retaining, fencing and lighting
7	MerriCreekTrail_20	Provide wayfinding signage along the length of the trail
8	MerriCreekTrail_12	Relocate and widen trail from Merri Creek Primary School to Sumner Park outside of the flood zone
9	MerriCreekTrail_15	Replace the Harding Street Bridge to cater for shared use
10	MerriCreekTrail_18	Construct a new section of trail from Vervale Avenue to the bridge crossing to the north to provide an alternative route with a gentler grade.



The top ten priority trail improvement projects within the municipality of Nillumbik are:

No.	Trail action item	Project description
1	Maroondah Aqueduct_01	Construct new section of trail connecting the Plenty River Trail near Lear Court, east along the aqueduct across Diamond Creek Road to the Diamond Creek Trail at Allendale Road.
2	Maroondah Aqueduct_02	Construct new section of trail from Main Road Diamond Creek, along Eltham-Yarra Glen Road, Creek Road, Eltham Road, Carters Lane and along Fryers Gully Drain while ensuring minimal impact to the Warrandyte - Kinglake Nature Conservation Reserve
3	KinglakeWay_01	Establish a new trail from Hurstbridge to Arthurs Creek
4	GreenWedge_01	Construct a new section of trail east from the Diamond Creek Trail at Wattle Glen Station along Watery Gully Creek to existing trail on Watery Gully Road
5	Maroondah Aqueduct_03	Construct new section of trail from Warrandyte Kinglake Road, north along Westering, Ridge and Muir Roads to Skyline Road
6	GreenWedge_04	Construct an extension of the trail from the intersection of Clintons Road and Spanish Gully Road to the Marshalls Road car park within the Kinglake National Park
7	Maroondah Aqueduct_04	Extend the trail west from Godber Road to connect to the Diamond Creek Trail
8	Hurstbridge RailTrail_04	Construct a new section of trail along the Hurstbridge rail line from the Plenty River Trail to the Diamond Creek Trail
9	YarraTrail_07	Construct shared use trail from the Mullum Mullum Creek Trail to the Warrandyte State Park.
10	DiamondCreek_02	Construct new section of trail from Graysharps Road to Fergusons Paddock



The top ten priority trail improvement projects within the municipality of Whittlesea are:

No.	Trail action item	Project description
1	WhittleseaShared_01	Construct a new trail along the train line from Mernda Station to Laurel Street, Whittlesea. Ensure there is provision for horse riders on parts of the trail
2	MerriCreekTrail_03	Advocate for and investigate the staged extension of the Merri Creek Trail from Coopers Street Somerton/Epping north to and along Oherns Road both east and west as part of the Upper Merri Creek Regional Parkland Plan
3	MerriCreekTrail_04	Advocate for and investigate the staged extension of the Merri Creek Trail from Oherns Road to Craigieburn Road as part of the Upper Merri Creek Regional Parkland Plan
4	MerriCreekTrail_05	Advocate for and investigate the extension of the Merri Creek Trail from Craigieburn Road to Summerhill Road as part of the Upper Merri Creek Regional Parkland Plan
5	YanYeanPipeTrack_04	Construct a new section of trail from Bridge Inn Road to the Yan Yean Reservoir and creating a connection to the Plenty River Trail
6	MerriCreekTrail_06	Extend the Merri Creek Trail from Summerhill Road to Donnybrook Road
7	YanYeanPipeTrack_03	Construct a new section of trail from Childs Road to McDonalds Road and the Plenty Valley Activity Centre
8	DarebinCreek_01	Construct a new section of trail on the western side of creek from the train underpass east of Epping Station to Greenbrook Drive
9	EastWestPower_04	Construct a section of trail along Holt Parade to connect to the Darebin Creek Trail (at Valley Road)
10	YanYeanPipeTrack_01	Construct a new section of trail from The Metropolitan Ring Road Trail and the Northern Pipe/Cheddar Road Trail to the Darebin Creek Trail

WHITTLESEA



10.3.3 Project filters

Due to the wide variety in project types, and to allow project types to be easily sorted for comparison, a series of 'filters' were also developed in collaboration with the Project Working Group. These filters, which can be found in Appendix B include:

- **Location** - relevant Council/s involved in the project.
- **Significant prerequisites and considerations** - including any additional information that may be relevant to the delivery of the action item such as development or major infrastructure that could be leveraged off, significant constraints such as topographical, ecological or cultural considerations, or other strategic work that may be underway.
- **Stakeholders** - identifies other relevant stakeholders and land owners (e.g. Melbourne Water, VicRoads and VicTrack).
- **Project cost** - broken down into broad groupings:
 - Small (S) - \$0-50,000
 - Medium (M) - \$50,000-250,000
 - Large (L) - \$250,000-1M
 - Extra Large (XL) - \$1M+

The intention behind these filters is to provide relevant information regarding each of the potential trail improvement projects, but also to enable the sorting of the projects by these categories. Using these filters Councils are able to identify a project based on specific requirements regarding the filter categories.

The top ten projects identified during the multi-criteria analysis process outline the priority projects for the Northern Region however there may be instances where a grant or funding opportunity arises that is suited to a trail improvement project that is not highly ranked according to the multi-criteria analysis. In these instances, projects can be sorted using the filters to identify suitable projects for implementation or funding applications. For example, a grant may become available for a project that is low cost and located in a growth area. Whilst none of the top ten priority projects fit the specifications for this grant, *WhittleseaRail_03 (Provide wayfinding signage along the length of the trail)* satisfies all the requirements.

10.4 COST BENEFIT ANALYSIS

A cost benefit analysis (CBA) was undertaken by SGS Economics and Planning in order to assess the merit of the proposed trail improvements and to inform due diligence and investment decision making processes by the Northern Regional Councils. SGS modelled the social, economic and environmental costs and benefits of delivering the trail improvements. It shows the project is expected to generate a net present value of around \$114 million and a benefit cost ratio of 1.6. This indicates that benefits directly attributable to the project will be around 1.6 times that of the investment over the appraisal period.

The CBA considers the project case; 10-year staged expansion of the Northern Regional Trails Network, against a counterfactual base case, whereby no additional capital works are undertaken. Only the incremental change between the project case and base case scenario was modelled as a benefit/cost. That is, the change that is directly generated by project case. The assessment has modelled a 30-year benefit period, and standard economic outputs were calculated using a seven per cent discount rate.

Three benefits have been monetised within the CBA. These are:

- Health benefits of increased walking and cycling
- Transport network benefits due to a shift in mode share from private vehicle to active transport modes
- Leisure and recreation benefits associated with increased use of the trail network.

Realisation of these benefits is underpinned by an increase in trail demand associated with the project; in particular, an increase in the distance and time that people walk and/or cycle. Demand forecasts undertaken as part of the analysis indicate that use of the Northern Regional Trail Network will increase by around 33 per cent once the entire planned network is delivered. Around two thirds of this uplift would be associated with existing users using the trail more frequently, and one third of the uplift is associated with new users.

Benefit component	Undiscounted values (\$m)	Present value (7%) discount rate (\$m)	% Of total benefits (present value) (\$m)
Present value of health benefit	\$541.7	\$180.2	62%
Present value of transport network benefits	\$34.9	\$11.6	4%
Present value of leisure and recreation benefits	\$296.5	\$98.6	34%
Total	\$873.2	\$290.5	100%

FIGURE 10.1:
Present benefit values

Under a seven per cent discount rate, the project results in a net present value (NPV) of around \$114 million and a benefit cost ratio (BCR) of 1.6. This means that for each \$1 invested, a welfare gain of \$1.6 is realised.

Costs exceed benefits until FY2037, at which point costs increase marginally as per OPEX assumptions, while benefits increase rapidly as users enjoy and gain value from an improved and expanded network., (refer to Figure 10.2).

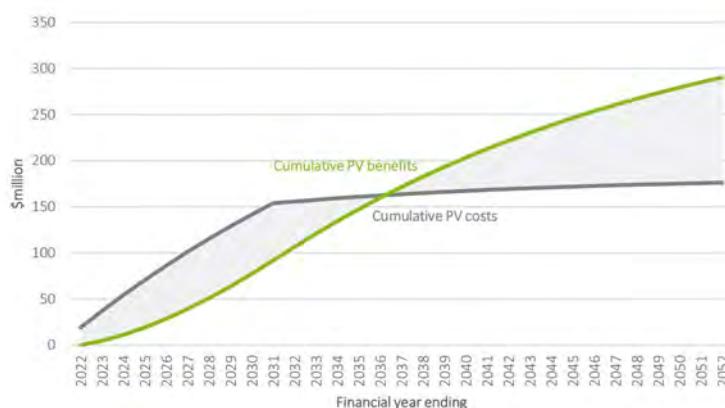


FIGURE 10.2:
Cumulative Net Present Value.
Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2021

The analysis undertaken by SGS indicates that the Northern Regional Trails network project is economically warranted with consideration of monetised benefits. The case is strengthened when non-monetised benefits are considered. In particular, the upgrade and expansion of the Northern Regional Trails network has potential to lead to increased economic value added derived from additional tourism expenditure, stimulate local businesses, and enhance community cohesion and education opportunities.

For the full Cost Benefit Analysis Report, refer to Appendix C.

10.5 FUNDING THE TRAILS

The 2016 Northern Regional Trails Strategy successfully leveraged approximately \$11 million of State Government funding in the last 3 years to deliver key priorities identified in the strategy. Budget allocations for Councils were also given a framework for the planning and delivery of priority trail projects within individual municipalities.

Since the endorsement of the previous plan, the physical landscape of the region has undergone significant change through the delivery of new and future major infrastructure projects. A global pandemic has also impacted the community's reliance on public recreation facilities and the frequency of which the trails are used. During lock downs in 2020 and 2021, regional trails across metropolitan Melbourne reported significant increases in use. As a result, the State Government (who has been the main funding body for the Northern Trails in recent years) has introduced some initiatives that will assist in funding and delivering the open space and trails across the metropolitan regions including the Northern Trails network:

The Growing Suburbs Fund:

The Growing Suburbs fund is a \$375M investment by the State Government over 7 years to assist local government in the task of delivering new local infrastructure including trails. It's anticipated that this funding scheme will drive trail development of the coming years.

Suburban Parks Program:

The Victorian Government is investing \$154 million to deliver 6,500 hectares of new and upgraded parks and trail as part of the Suburban Parks Program. This initiative has already assisted in securing funding via DELWP and will continue to assist in the funding and delivery of the following trails:

- Jacksons Creek Trail as part of the Jacksons Creek Parkland Plan
- Plenty River Trail, the program has committed to delivery the missing link between University Hill in Bundoora and Doreen to the north.
- Merri Creek Trail as part of the Upper Merri Creek Parkland Plan.
- Diamond Creek Trail

In addition to these initiatives, Victoria is undergoing significant changes due to major transport infrastructure changes such as:

- The level crossing removal project, such as those currently underway along the Upfield rail line;
- Major road widening and duplication projects including the potential future Somerton Road duplication;
- Rail line duplication such as the Hurstbridge rail line duplication; and
- New road construction, such as the North East Link.

The development of these large State Government funded projects provide the opportunity for trails to 'piggy-back' on new transport infrastructure by taking advantage of left-over land or ensuring the provision and financing of regional trails, in accordance with this study, are delivered alongside these projects. The large scale and budget of these projects also presents the opportunity to deliver larger, more strategic aspects of the trail network that cannot feasibly be delivered by regular grant cycles and capital works programs.

Growth areas and Precinct Structure Plans (PSPs):

A Precinct Structure Plan is a Master Plan for new communities within growth areas which guide development, land use and infrastructure of the area over time. Shared trails and regional trails are included within the PSPs which allow Councils to lobby developers for the development of trails within their land. This study along with the PSPs provide the Northern Regional Trails working group with information to ensure the trails are strategically aligned, funded and delivered in accordance with the region's plans.



B TRAIL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

Northern Trails 2022

114

C COST BENEFIT ANALYSIS

Northern Trails 2022

129

7.4 TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR COCOA JACKSON LANE, Warburton Street and Horne Street, BRUNSWICK - RESPONSE TO NOTICE OF MOTION

Director City Infrastructure Anita Curnow

Transport

Council Meeting at its meeting on 07 December 2022 resolved that the matter be deferred to the meeting to be held on 08 February 2022.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Notes that Cocoa Jackson Lane and the surrounding local streets currently operate in a generally safe manner for all road users and that traffic management interventions are therefore not currently warranted.
2. Addresses the concerns that some drivers are contravening the road rules by turning right into and out of Cocoa Jackson Lane from Horne Street, by writing to nearby properties advising of the road rules and asking the community to adhere to them.
3. Authorises officers to reiterate the turn ban by increasing the size of the existing roadside no right turn signs on Horne Street.

REPORT

Executive Summary

On 13 April 2022, Council resolved to call for a report to be presented to the December 2022 Council Meeting investigating traffic management options in consultation with Warburton Street, Horne Street and Cocoa Jackson Lane residents including the option of bollards to prevent heavy vehicles accessing residential streets.

Council officers have since undertaken a thorough investigation of the laneway and the surrounding local streets. This investigation has included site visits, traffic volume surveys (vehicle, and people walking and bike riding), a review of crash history, vehicle queueing surveys, a review of historic community concerns and consultation on the option to install bollards with local residents.

This report details the concerns identified by nearby residents, and consideration of solutions to address these concerns.

The engagement identified that:

1. Some drivers are contravening the road rules by turning right into and out of Cocoa Jackson Lane, Brunswick where it intersects with Horne Street
2. The loading activities associated with Reece, a plumbing company which has been operating out of the building at 123 Lygon Street for around 40 years, are creating noise and safety issues within Cocoa Jackson Lane.

It is likely that drivers who have been contravening the road rules at the intersection of Horne Street and Cocoa Jackson Lane, are local to the area as they are aware of the local traffic conditions and more willing to take the risk.

Infringements for what is known as “moving violations” such as speeding or ignoring turn ban signs are the responsibility of the Victoria Police to enforce. Council cannot enforce these violations. Rather, Council officers can refer the matter to the police for enforcement if deemed necessary, and/or investigate options to amend the road design to alleviate the problem behaviour.

On 7 November 2022, a letter was circulated to the nearby properties seeking feedback on the option to install bollards within Cocoa Jackson Lane, where it intersects Horne Street to prevent vehicle access. This option would directly address the concerns that drivers are contravening the road rules at this location. Responses were received from 33 residents via phone and email. Of those, 25 people were unsupportive, two were indifferent and six were supportive of the option to install bollards. Based on the feedback received, Council officers do not recommend pursuing this option any further at this time.

Officers investigated opportunities to lengthen the existing traffic island in Horne Street to further discourage these illegal right turn manoeuvres but due to an existing driveway, there is little scope for improvement. Council officers will circulate a letter to the owner and occupiers of properties within the nearby vicinity to help reinforce the road rules and address the driver behaviour issues. Council officers can also increase the size of the existing roadside no right turn signs on Horne Street to reiterate the turn ban.

A new mixed-use development is currently being constructed on the corner of Lygon Street and Cocoa Jackson Lane at 119a-121 Lygon Street (referred to as “new development” in this report). It is very likely that the construction activities related to this new development are exacerbating any existing issues along the laneway, especially given the concerns raised by residents about the Reece loading operations overlap with the construction period. Once occupied, the estimated traffic generated from this development may have a noticeable impact on the operation of Cocoa Jackson Lane as the daily traffic volumes are expected to increase by approximately 160 per cent, but still expected to be within acceptable levels for the capacity of the laneway and surrounding streets.

At this stage, following a thorough investigation, Council officers recommend that the operation of Cocoa Jackson Lane be monitored and that the issues be responded to on an as need basis. Any significant changes to the traffic management in Cocoa Jackson Lane should be considered following the completion and occupation of the new development to garner a complete picture of the future operation of the nearby local streets.

Previous Council Decisions

Traffic and Parking Management - Brunswick - 13 April 2022

That Council:

...

2. *Calls for a report to be presented to the December Council Meeting investigating traffic management options in consultation with Warburton and Horne Streets and Cocoa Jackson Lane residents including the option of bollards to prevent heavy vehicles accessing residential streets.*

...

1. Policy Context

Moreland Integrated Transport Strategy

The review of the laneway aligns with Council’s adopted Moreland Integrated Transport Strategy 2019 as follows:

- Strategy 3: Protect our local streets from the impacts of increasing vehicle traffic.
- Strategy 6: Create a safer space for all users, day and night.
- Strategy 18: Support safe and efficient local freight, servicing and loading, being conscious of impact on liveability

2. Background

Local Street Network

Local Streets

As outlined in the Integrated Transport Strategy, the main function of local streets is to provide access to and from adjacent properties. They should prioritise walking and bike riding amenity and safety and support local bus movements, where they are present.

Cocoa Jackson Lane, Warburton Street and Horne Street in Brunswick form part of an area wide 40 km/h speed limit that is bounded by Glenlyon Road in the north, Lygon Street in the east, Brunswick Road in the south and Sydney Road in the west.

Figure 1 shows the location of Cocoa Jackson Lane, Horne Street, Warburton Street in the context with the wider local street network.

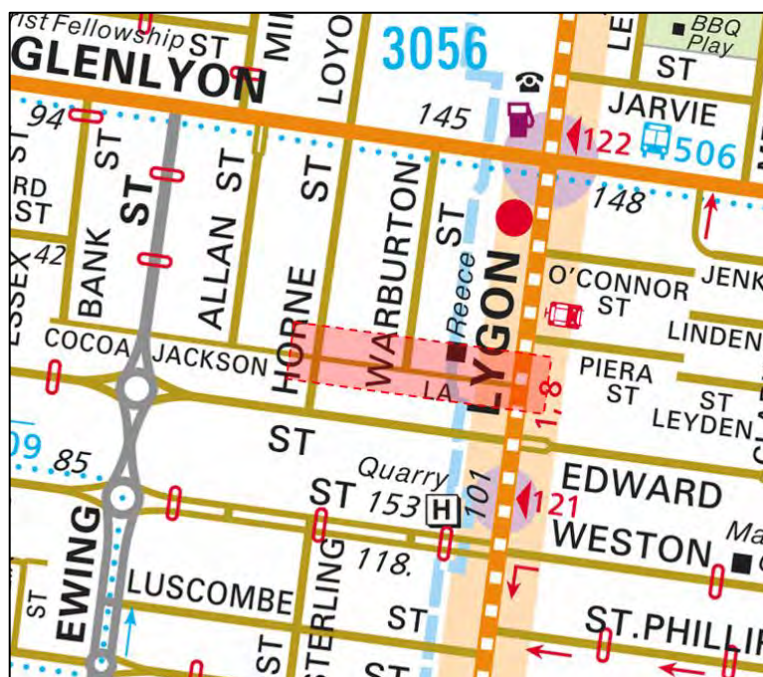


Figure 1 Map highlighting Cocoa Jackson Lane within the local street network

Descriptions of the local street network and traffic, walking and bike riding survey results can be found in **Attachment 1**.

Crash History

A review of the crash history database along Cocoa Jackson Lane between and including the intersections of Lygon Street and Horne Street found that in the most recent five-year period, there have not been any recorded crashes.

This is important to note as Council prioritises its annual Capital Works Program based on traffic speed, volumes, and casualty crash data. Sites with higher speed, volume, and road casualty data (including serious injury or fatality) are given a higher priority in funding.

Laneway key land uses

Reece

Reece has occupied the building at 123 Lygon Street for around 40 years. Pedestrian access for customers is provided directly from Lygon Street. The store has no on-site car parking and operates the loading and unloading of pipes and other materials directly from Cocoa Jackson Lane.

The vehicles that frequent the site include general customers picking up goods, Reece branded utility vehicles used for deliveries to construction sites and inbound trucks delivering goods to the store.

The store is open from 7 am-5 pm Monday to Friday and 8 am-12 pm Saturday. The store is closed on Sunday.

A council officer met with representatives from Reece on 28 September 2022 to observe the peak morning period and discuss the operation of the business.

Reece are looking into opportunities to cater for on-site loading and unloading in the next 18-24 months. This demonstrates that Reece are considering alternatives to loading and unloading from Cocoa Jackson Lane. They anticipate that once the new development is completed, they will likely have ongoing issues with their existing operation.

Council officers commissioned queuing surveys of Cocoa Jackson Lane adjacent to the Reece loading area. There were 52 vehicles recorded as queued in this area throughout the day (which accounts for half of the daily laneway traffic). Of the queued vehicles, 10 were classed as heavy vehicles. On average, it took seven minutes for the queue to clear.

As the daily traffic volumes recorded in Cocoa Jackson Lane near Lygon Street and Warburton Street were in the order of 100 vehicles per day, it is expected that Cocoa Jackson Lane is not used as a through route for drivers and the eastern end is predominately used by vehicles associated with Reece.

The survey results generally indicate that traffic is not excessive in Cocoa Jackson Lane

New Development at 119a-121 Lygon Street

The construction of a new seven-storey mixed-use development including 48 car parking spaces within the land at 119a-121 Lygon Street (new development) was approved at VCAT in 2018.

As taken from the expert evidence of the applicant's Traffic Engineer, the proposal is estimated to generate 164 vehicle trip ends per day. This will have the result of increasing the traffic in the lane to approximately 25-27 vehicle movements in the peak hour. It is critical to note that whilst this increase in traffic can be readily accommodated within Cocoa Jackson Lane, it will result in an overall increase in daily laneway traffic in the order of 160 per cent. Therefore, the laneway could operate in a very different way post construction.

The vehicle access to the basement car park of the new development will be located adjacent to Lygon Street. To promote left-in and right-out movement between the car park and Cocoa Jackson Lane, the vehicle access will be angled towards Lygon Street. This will aid in reducing any potential conflict with vehicles loading and unloading within the laneway. It is also understood that between Lygon Street and the western edge of the vehicle access to the new development, Cocoa Jackson Lane will be locally widened to 6.2 m to better cater for two-way simultaneous vehicle access.

It is understood that the construction related activity is likely exacerbating the issues within Cocoa Jackson Lane. Council officers understand that:

- Construction of the building facade required vehicles to occupy the laneway which may have created flow-on impacts to Cocoa Jackson Lane and the Reece loading activities
- Large trucks that are delivering construction materials often use Cocoa Jackson Lane; increasing the heavy vehicle volumes
- Construction related traffic has generally occupied all the on-street car parking along the store frontage on Lygon Street, resulting in more customers accessing Reece via Cocoa Jackson Lane.

- As shown in the Figure 2, due to the black coloured temporary construction hoarding fencing for the new development, the usable width of the laneway has been reduced by 200mm and passing a propped vehicle in this section of the laneway has become more difficult.



Figure 2 View of Cocoa Jackson Lane looking east towards the Reece loading area and the new development

The development is forecast to finish at the end of 2022 but the completion date is likely to extend into 2023.

3. Issues

Concerns raised

There are two key concerns raised by residents which can be summarised as:

1. Some drivers are contravening the road rules by turning right into and out of Cocoa Jackson Lane, where it intersects with Horne Street
2. The loading activities associated with Reece, which has been operating out of the building at 123 Lygon Street for 40 years, are creating noise and safety issues within Cocoa Jackson Lane.

These two key concerns have been expanded below.

Horne Street intersection with Cocoa Jackson Lane

Over the years, concerns have been raised about the Horne Street intersection with Cocoa Jackson Lane as some drivers are disobeying the road rules and turning right into and out of Cocoa Jackson Lane from Horne Street and as a result, some vehicles are impacting the fence of 27 Horne Street.

As shown in Figure 3, there have been two bollards installed to guide drivers away from the fence.



Figure 3 Image of bollards at the corner of 27 Horne Street and Cocoa Jackson Lane

It is understood the installation of these bollards has gone some way to appease the concerns from local residents that drivers are hitting the fence.

Warburton Street intersection with Cocoa Jackson Lane

Within the past 12 months, one resident has shared their concerns that trucks turning into Cocoa Jackson Lane from Warburton Street are damaging the street trees, dislodging bluestone blocks and damaging property including walls and fences.

Operation of Cocoa Jackson Lane

The same resident has shared their concerns that Reece generates a significant number of utility vehicles and truck movements, and that the use of Cocoa Jackson Lane for loading and unloading of goods is unsafe and potentially illegal.

The resident expressed concern that vehicles propped waiting to access the Reece loading area do so alongside their dwelling, causing noise issues due to the idling vehicle sounds and klaxon for reverse movements. There are also concerns that their children may be hit by passing traffic when they enter the laneway from their garage.

Legal road uses

For supplementary reading, the road rules that are relevant here to address the concerns shared by the community are discussed in **Attachment 2**.

Opportunities

Council officers have considered a number of opportunities to address the concerns raised. The opportunities that Council officers have included as a recommendation are discussed below. The opportunities that Council officers do not consider viable at this time have been included in **Attachment 3**.

Horne Street and Cocoa Jackson Lane

There are concerns that drivers are disobeying the road rules and turning right into and out of Cocoa Jackson Lane where it intersects with Horne Street, impacting the fence of 27 Horne Street.

Install Bollards within Cocoa Jackson Lane at Horne Street

Council officers have investigated opportunities to install bollards within Cocoa Jackson Lane, where it intersects Horne Street to prevent vehicle access. People walking and riding would still be able to access the laneway via Horne Street.

On 7 November 2022, a letter was circulated to the properties bound between Glenlyon Road, Lygon Street, Edward Street and Horne Street seeking feedback on the option to install bollards at this location.

Responses were received from 33 residents via phone and email. Of those, 25 people were unsupportive, two were indifferent and six were supportive of the option to install bollards. The key themes in the feedback were that installing the bollards would:

- Increase traffic and parking pressure on Warburton Street
- Create an inconvenience for those accessing Barkly Square and Sydney Road
- Do little to address the concerns that large trucks accessing Reece use Cocoa Jackson Lane
- Limit access to garages
- Make the intersection safer for people walking and riding, especially children

Based on the feedback received, Council officers do not recommend pursuing this option any further at this time.

Notify residents via circular letter

Given the daily vehicle volumes on Cocoa Jackson Lane are in the order of 100 vehicles per day only, it is likely that most drivers use the lane to access properties fronting Cocoa Jackson Lane or to properties where the vehicle access is from one of the two north-south laneways. It is likely that the drivers who choose to contravene the road rules by turning right out of and into Cocoa Jackson Lane at Horne Street are those who are living locally and familiar with the conditions.

To address this behaviour, Council officers will circulate a letter to properties in the vicinity to reinforce the road rules.

Infringements for moving violations such as speeding or ignoring turn ban signs are the responsibility of the Victoria Police to enforce. Council is not able to issue infringements for these violations.

Improve linemarking and signage

As shown in Figure 4 below, the existing line marking related to the Horne Street traffic island is clearly visible and does not required reinstating.



Figure 4 View of Horne Street traffic island looking north toward Cocoa Jackson Lane

There is existing no right turn signs in both the traffic island and within the left-hand side grass verge (roadside) for both approaches. To reinforce the road rules, Council officers will increase the size of the existing roadside no right turn signs on Horne Street.

Summary

The two main concerns in the laneway are that drivers are contravening the road rules on Horne Street by turning right into and out of Cocoa Jackson Lane and that large trucks and utility vehicles frequent Reece which creates noise and safety concerns for residents. To address the first concern and reinforce the road rules, there is an opportunity to inform the drivers of the nearby properties via a circular letter and increase the size of the existing roadside no right turn signs on Horne Street.

Following feedback from nearby residents on the opportunity to install bollards within Cocoa Jackson Lane, where it intersects Horne Street, Council officers do not recommend pursuing this option at this time.

Council officers are committed to managing the loading and unloading of goods at Reece in order to promote the safety of all road users in the laneway. The future operation of the Cocoa Jackson Lane will be influenced by the new development and any proposed traffic management changes should be carefully considered. For that reason, at this time, Council officers are proposing to investigate the operation of the laneway in 6-12 months to compare and contrast it to the existing conditions. At that time, Council officers can reinvestigate the need for traffic management treatments.

Community Impact

Council officers have concluded that Cocoa Jackson Lane, Horne Street and Warburton Streets are currently operating in a safe manner for all road users and are not proposing any traffic management treatments at this time.

Council officers acknowledge that this conclusion may not align with what one or two community members were hoping for.

As outlined in the opportunities discussion, implementing a traffic management treatment at this time would significantly impact the community and is not recommended until the new development has been completed and is occupied.

Legal and risk considerations

Council officers have demonstrated that legally we cannot prohibit access for heavy vehicles within the local street network.

Human Rights Consideration

The implications of this report have been assessed in accordance with the requirements of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities and the reports' recommendations have not been found to impinge on these rights and responsibilities.

4. Community consultation and engagement

Affected persons rights and interests

All owners and occupiers of properties bounded by Lygon Street, Glenlyon Street, Horne Street and Cocoa Jackson Lane may be impacted by any future changes to Cocoa Jackson Lane and the surrounding streets.

Communications

On 7 November 2022, a letter was circulated to the nearby properties bound between Glenlyon Road, Lygon Street, Edward Street and Horne Street seeking feedback on the option to install bollards within Cocoa Jackson Lane, where it intersects Horne Street to prevent vehicle access.

Responses were received from 33 residents via phone and email. Of those, 25 people were unsupportive, two were indifferent and six were supportive of the option to install bollards. Based on the feedback received, Council officers do not recommend pursuing this option any further at this time.

To address concerns that drivers are turning right into and out of Cocoa Jackson Lane where it intersects Horne Street, a circular letter will be sent to owners and occupiers of properties in the local vicinity to reinforce the road rules.

It is important for the community to understand that Council is committed to maintaining a safer environment for all road users along Cocoa Jackson Lane. Council officers acknowledge that the noise and traffic generated from Reece can impact residential amenity. It is also important to communicate that Reece have been operating for 40 years from this site and any possible solution will need to balance the needs of the community.

Should an opportunity to address key issues be identified following a future review, a thorough consultation process can be undertaken with the owner and occupiers nearby properties. Councillors can be advised of this process, if necessary.

5. Officer Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Council officers involved in the preparation of this report have no conflict of interest in this matter.




6. Financial and Resources Implications

Council officers will continue to monitor the operation of the laneway and can undertake a second engineering review following the completion of the new development.

7. Implementation

The proposed circular letter will be sent to residents within 2 weeks of the Council meeting. Council officers are committed to ensuring that Cocoa Jackson Lane and the surrounding local streets operate in a safe manner and recommend that issues be monitored and responded to on an as need basis.

Attachment/s

1 	Local street descriptions and survey summary	D22/474561
2 	Relevant Road Rules and Regulations	D22/473530
3 	Discussion of unviable traffic management options with swept path assessments	D22/474412

Local road descriptions and survey summary results

Cocoa Jackson Lane

Cocoa Jackson Lane is a blue stone laneway that provides an east-west connection between Lygon Street in the east and Ewing Street in the west. Between Lygon Street and Horne Street, Cocoa Jackson Lane varies in width from 4.6m at the Lygon Street end and 4.9m throughout the remainder of the laneway. Blue stone laneways in the municipality are typically 3m wide, making Cocoa Jackson Lane wider than most.

The width of the laneway generally allows two vehicles to simultaneously pass one another at slow speeds. When loading or unloading, drivers can prop their vehicles left of the central line of blue stone kerbs to provide sufficient space for a second vehicle to pass. As shown in the Figure 1, due to the black coloured temporary construction hoarding fencing for the New Development, the usable width of the laneway has been reduced by 200mm and passing a propped vehicle in this section of the laneway has become more difficult.



Figure 1 View of Cocoa Jackson Lane looking east towards the Reece loading area and the New Development



Figure 2 View of Cocoa Jackson Lane looking west toward Warburton Street

Reece receives inward goods via Cocoa Jackson Lane. When a truck is propped to unload in this eastern section of Cocoa Jackson Lane, a second vehicle is generally unable to pass.

Cocoa Jackson Lane provides front door and therefore direct pedestrian access to five properties (61, 63, 65, 73 and 75 Cocoa Jackson Lane) between Warburton Street and Horne Street and two properties (46 and 48 Cocoa Jackson Lane) between Warburton Street and Lygon Street. There are approximately 20 properties that have rear vehicle access directly onto Cocoa Jackson Lane. However, this number may vary as some garages are unused and other properties may gain access via one of the two north-south laneways accessed from Cocoa Jackson Lane, Warburton Street and Horne Street.

Based on turning movement count surveys that were undertaken on Thursday 25 August between 6.30am and 6.30pm, Cocoa Jackson Lane caters for approximately 100 vehicles per day. Within the busiest section near Lygon Street, up to 200 pedestrians use Cocoa Jackson Lane per day. At the intersection with Horne Street, there were 120 pedestrians recorded to use Cocoa Jackson Lane throughout the day. Based on the surveys and site observations, it is likely that a large portion of the increased pedestrian volumes at the Lygon Street end can be attributed to people walking around the construction site of the new development. The recorded daily bicycle volumes were in the order of 10 bike riders a day.

It should be noted that these volumes are very low for people walking, riding and in a private vehicle.

Warburton Street

Warburton Street is a north-south oriented Local Street that provides pedestrian frontage to approximately 30 residential dwellings. Crossovers (driveways) are limited on Warburton Street and vehicle access to properties is generally provided via the rear laneways. Footpaths are provided on both sides of the road.

The available carriageway width in Warburton Street is approximately 9.6m with time restricted car parking on both sides of the road and two-way vehicle movements. There is an existing traffic calming treatment near 19 Warburton Street that acts as a single lane pinch point to reduce vehicle speeds. As shown in Figure 3, at the southern end of Warburton Street at the intersection of Cocoa Jackson Lane, there is a similar but wider treatment where kerb outstands have been provided to reduce the usable carriageway width.



Figure 3 View of Warburton Street looking south towards Cocoa Jackson Lane

There is a raised threshold treatment across Warburton Street at the intersection with Glenlyon Road which aids pedestrians by providing a continuous path level across the road whilst slowing vehicle speeds.

Surveys

Council officers commissioned surveys of vehicle, pedestrian and cyclist volumes along Cocoa Jackson Lane on Thursday 25 August between 6.30am and 6.30pm to better understand the existing use of the laneway. Three cameras were installed at the intersections with Lygon Street, Warburton Street and Horne Street to capture the movements. No personal information on road users was noted.

The overall peak periods along Cocoa Jackson Lane was found to be 8.15-9.15am and 5-6pm which corresponds generally to the morning and evening commuting periods.

The volume of light vehicles (cars), heavy vehicles (trucks), pedestrians and cyclists is shown graphically below across the morning, evening and daily survey periods.

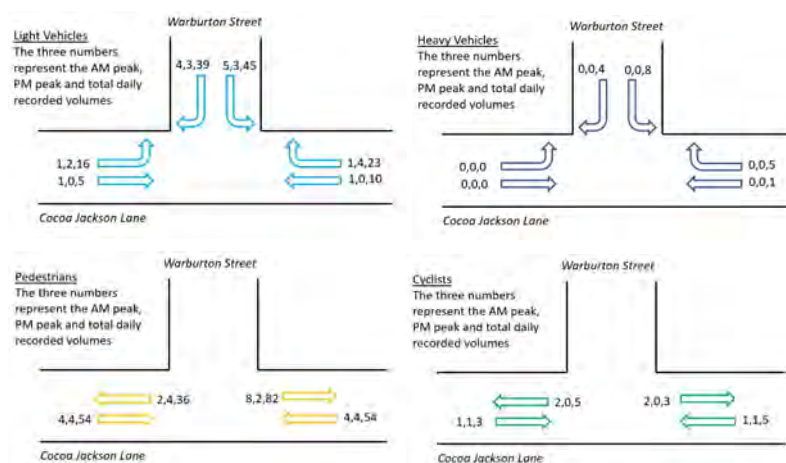


Figure 4 Turning movement count surveys at Warburton Street and Cocoa Jackson Lane

Across the day, there were 140 vehicles recorded to turn into and out of Warburton Street from Cocoa Jackson Lane. Of these, 17 were heavy vehicles.

The survey results generally indicate that traffic is not excessive in Warburton Street, given that volumes of up to 3,000 vehicles per day are considered typical on local streets in Merri-bek.

Horne Street

Horne Street is a north-south oriented Local Street that provides pedestrian frontage to approximately 30 residential dwellings. Crossovers are limited on Horne Street and vehicle access to properties is generally provided via the rear laneways. Footpaths are provided on both sides of the road.

The available carriageway width in Horne Street is approx. 9.5m to cater for time restricted car parking on both sides of the road and two-way vehicle movements.

There is an existing central traffic island on Horne Street at the intersection with Cocoa Jackson Lane. The traffic island restricts through traffic along Cocoa Jackson Lane from crossing at Horne Street. The design of the traffic island and the associated signs also prohibit drivers from turning right into and out of Cocoa Jackson Lane where it intersects with Horne Street. Two views of the existing traffic island is shown below.



Figure 5 View of Horne Street traffic island looking north toward Cocoa Jackson Lane



Figure 6 View of Horne Street traffic island taken from Cocoa Jackson Lane east approach looking west

There is also a raised threshold treatment across Horne Street at the intersection with Glenlyon Road which aids pedestrians by providing a continuous path level across the road whilst slowing vehicle speeds.

Surveys

The volumes of light vehicles (cars), heavy vehicles (trucks), pedestrians and cyclists is shown graphically below across the morning, evening and daily survey periods.

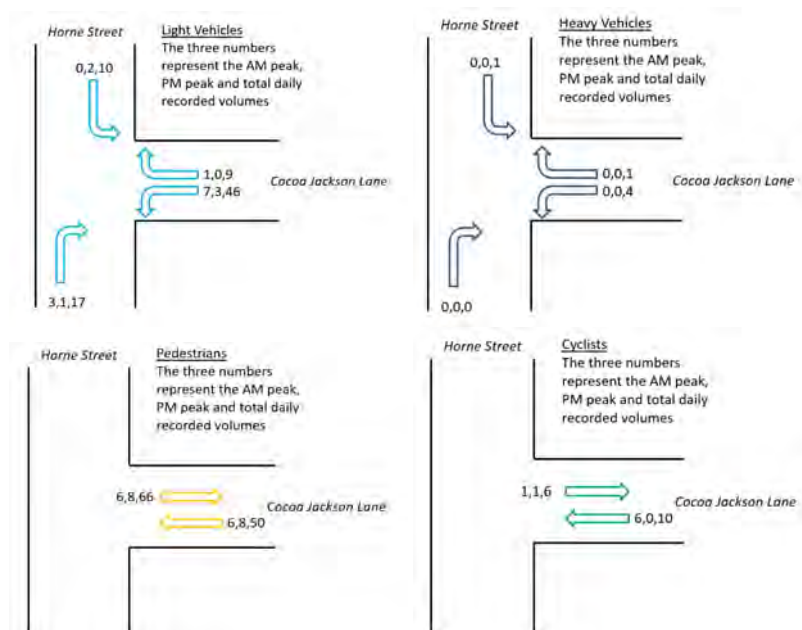


Figure 7 Turning movement count surveys at Horne Street and Cocoa Jackson Lane

As mentioned above, the existing island at Horne Street and Cocoa Jackson Lane legally prohibits right turn movements into and out of Cocoa Jackson Lane where it intersects with Horne Street. Across the survey day, there were 17 vehicles recorded to turn right into and 9 vehicles recorded turning right out of Cocoa Jackson Lane which contravenes the road rules. As the vehicle volumes on Cocoa Jackson Lane itself are low (in the order of 100 per day), it is likely that the drivers are familiar with the area and live in the properties fronting Cocoa Jackson Lane or the southern ends of Warburton Street and Horne Street and gain access from the rear laneways accessed via Cocoa Jackson Lane.

There were also six vehicles recorded to turn right out of the Cocoa Jackson Lane west approach (west of Horne St), but no vehicles were recorded turn right into this section of Cocoa Jackson Lane from the north.

Vehicle volumes measured just north and south of Cocoa Jackson Lane on Horne Street were recorded as 276 and 331 vehicles, respectively. Less than 10% of traffic turning into and out of Cocoa Jackson Lane was recorded as heavy vehicles.

The survey results generally indicate that traffic is not excessive in Horne Street, given that volumes of up to 3,000 vehicles per day are considered typical on local roads in Merri-bek.

Lygon Street

Lygon Street is a Major Council Road that provides a connection from Coburg in the north and Melbourne CBD in the south. Near Cocoa Jackson Lane, Lygon Street is within a Commercial 1 Zone. Lygon Street caters for the tram routes 1 and 6 and also the route 955 night bus.

Along the frontage of the new development, there is a temporary work zone parking restriction to allow construction related vehicles to park.

Surveys

Lygon vehicles per Street near Cocoa Jackson Lane has daily traffic volumes in the order of 15,000 day.

The volumes of light vehicles (cars), heavy vehicles (trucks), pedestrians and cyclists is shown graphically below across the morning, evening and daily survey periods.

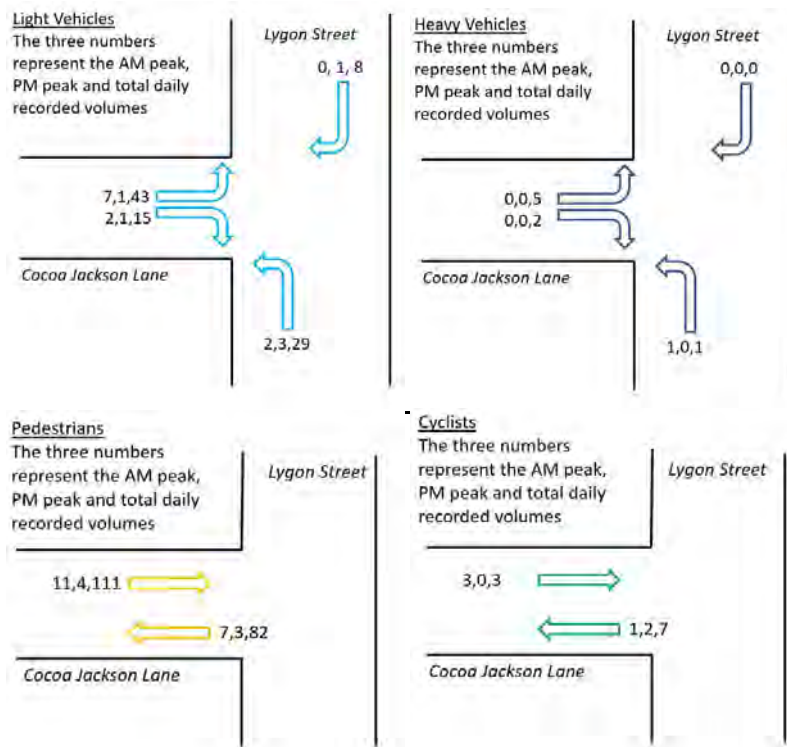


Figure 8 Turning movement count surveys at Lygon Street and Cocoa Jackson Lane

From the surveys, the majority of traffic is moving from Cocoa Jackson Lane to Lygon Street.

Applicable Road Rules and Regulations

Road Management Act 2004

Section 9 of the Road Management Act 2004 outlines the rights of owners and occupiers of adjoining land being that:

- (1) An owner or occupier of any land which adjoins a road is entitled as of right to access the road from that land.*
- (2) Rights of access conferred by this section or at common law are subject to any restrictions, limitations or conditions which may be specified by or under this Act or any other Act or law.*

Based on the above, Reece plumbing, the New Development and any other property with a frontage to Cocoa Jackson Lane planning would entitle, as-of-right, an owner or occupier of the land adjoining the laneway to access the laneway from that land and as such Council is currently unable to prohibit vehicle access along any of the local streets.

Road definition taken from Road rules

Clause 12 of the Australian Road Rules outlines that (1) a road is –

- (a) an area that is open to or used by the public and is developed for, or has as one of its main uses, the driving or riding of motor vehicles;*

By definition, Cocoa Jackson Lane, Warburton Street and Horne Streets together with trafficable laneway intersecting, Christopher Lane (behind Reece Plumbing) and the unnamed road, are treated as local roads for the purposes of the Road Rules.

No Parking signs

There are existing no parking restrictions on the northern side of Cocoa Jackson Lane between Christopher Lane and Warburton Lane.

Road Rule 168 relates to No Parking Signs as:

- (1) The driver of a vehicle must not stop on a length of road or in an area to which a no parking sign applies, unless the driver—*
- (a) is dropping off, or picking up, passengers or goods; and*
 - (b) does not leave the vehicle unattended; and*
 - (c) completes the dropping off, or picking up, of the passengers or goods, and drives on, as soon as possible and, in any case, within the required time after stopping.*
- (2) For this rule, a driver leaves a vehicle unattended if the driver leaves the vehicle so the driver is over 3 metres from the closest point of the vehicle.*
- (3) In this rule—required time means—*
- (a) if information on or with the sign indicates a time—the indicated time; or*
 - (b) if there is no indicated time—2 minutes;*

Parallel Parking on a Road

Road rule 208 Parallel parking on a road (except in a median strip parking area) states that:

- (1) A driver who parks on a road (except in a median strip parking area) must position the driver's vehicle in accordance with subrules (2) to (8).*

Sub-rule (7)

If the road does not have a continuous dividing line or a dividing strip, the driver must position the vehicle so there is at least 3 metres of the

road alongside the vehicle that is clear for other vehicles to pass, unless otherwise indicated by information on or with a parking control sign.

Subrule (8)

The driver must position the vehicle so the vehicle does not unreasonably obstruct the path of other vehicles or pedestrians.

In the section adjacent to Reece, the laneway has an existing width of 4.4m. Note that whilst the property boundary to boundary width of Cocoa Jackson Lane at this location is 4.6m, the construction hoarding fence is currently reducing the usable width by 200mm. Given the nominal width of a delivery truck (2.5m), it is unlikely that the remaining 1.9m would provide adequate clearance for an average car to pass, which would be contrary to Rule 208 (above).

A B99 vehicle (which represents 99.8% of Australian passenger vehicles including utility vehicles) is 1.94m wide. If the vehicle were propped close to the Reece wall, a second vehicle could pass but it is currently difficult to do so. Council officers have witnessed this movement.

Once the new development is complete and the hoarding fence is removed, the widened 4.6m wide laneway will allow a vehicle to pass another propped passenger vehicle.

Discussion of unviable opportunities

Banning heavy vehicles

Swept path assessment

Based on Table 4.2 of the Austroads Design Vehicle and Turning Path Templates Guide, the appropriate design and checking vehicle for an intersection between two local roads such as Warburton Street and Cocoa Jackson Lane is an 8.8m long service vehicle and a 12.5m long truck, respectively. This allows for the turning movements of waste collection and emergency vehicles within the local street network.

Based on the above, Council officers have prepared swept path assessments (**Appendix 1**) to demonstrate that:

- An 8.8m long truck can turn left into and right out of Cocoa Jackson Lane where it intersects with Warburton Street. To undertake this manoeuvre, the vehicle body is required to partially overhang the kerb outstand which is unlikely to result in any damage as the body of the vehicle will be elevated higher than the kerb height.
- To turn left into and right out of Cocoa Jackson Lane, where it intersects with Warburton Street, a 12.5m long would likely require multiple corrective manoeuvres to complete the turn without impacting the street trees or building facade.

Based on site observations, a medium truck (approx. 8.8m long) can comfortably turn left into Cocoa Jackson Lane from Warburton Street outlining that the required movements can be achieved.

Regulations

Heavy vehicles causing damage to Council assets is a concern. Whilst service vehicles such as waste collection vehicles, emergency vehicles and standard delivery vans can be accommodated relatively well within a residential street network, larger trucks can experience great difficulty in accessing the street network and can damage signs, tree branches, kerbs, nature strips and drainage pit lids.

While it is possible to install a "No Trucks" sign with a load limit, the Road Rules - Victoria provide various exemptions for these vehicles to access a site, including an exemption for the purposes of loading or unloading of goods or equipment. This exemption provides flexibility and would cover situations such as deliveries to construction sites including new homes, renovations to existing homes and deliveries of purchases that may be delivered in a large vehicle such as a large furniture van.

An example of this type of sign is the east-facing "Large Vehicles Advised Not To Enter" sign currently installed at the intersection of Warburton Street and Cocoa Jackson Lane due to the existing traffic island on Horne Street.

Council is unable to ban trucks smaller than B-Doubles entering and using Cocoa Jackson Lane as it is a public road. Whilst signs could be placed advising trucks not to enter, the signs would have no statutory enforcement value.

Horne Street and Cocoa Jackson Lane

There are concerns that drivers are disobeying the road rules and turning right into and out of Cocoa Jackson Lane where it intersects with Horne Street, impacting the fence of 27 Horne Street. Council officers have discussed various opportunities below.

Extend existing Horne Street traffic island

The existing traffic island prohibits right turn movements into and out Cocoa Jackson Lane where it intersects with Horne Street. There is currently adequate signage to warn drivers of these restrictions and it is likely that those motorists undertaking the prohibited movements are familiar with the area. From both approaches, the visibility of oncoming vehicles is reasonably good.

As outlined earlier in the report, throughout the day, there were 17 vehicles recorded to turn right into and 9 vehicles recorded to turn right out of Cocoa Jackson Lane where it intersects with Horne Street.

Council officers have considered extending the existing island to further reinforce the ban on right turns at this intersection.

There are limitations on how far the island could be extended to the south as there is an existing vehicle crossover to 32 Horne Street. The island could be extended to the north but it would result in the loss of some on street car parking.

It is likely that if the island were to be extended, drivers who currently choose to contravene the road rules would continue to do so. The concern is that drivers would then be using driving on the wrong side of the road for a longer length, further placing them at risk of colliding with an oncoming vehicle.

At this stage, Council officers do not consider extending the traffic island to be the appropriate response.

Narrow Cocoa Jackson vehicle access at Horne Street

Council officers investigated an option of amending the access to Cocoa Jackson Lane adjacent to 27 Horne Street by extending the barrier kerb half a metre to the south to narrow the vehicle access and deter drivers from turning right out of Cocoa Jackson Lane onto Horne Street. To reinforce this, a bollard would also be placed behind the extended kerb. This is highlighted in the image below.



Figure 1 Potential kerb extension with bollard adjacent to 27 Horne Street

As shown in **Appendix 2**, it was found that if the extended kerb were constructed, a 6.4m long service vehicle would be unable to turn left into Cocoa Jackson Lane without mounting the existing central island. The extended kerb would also have little impact on deterring drivers from contravening the road rules as a B99 design vehicle could still comfortably undertake the right turn out of Cocoa Jackson Lane.

As providing the extended kerb would limit access for service vehicles including waste collection vehicles and emergency access vehicles whilst still allowing the prohibited right turn to occur, Council officers will not consider constructing the extended kerb at this time.

It should be noted that there are two existing bollards installed at this corner to deter motorists from hitting and damaging the fence of 27 Horne Street.

Warburton Street and Cocoa Jackson Lane

In the past 12 months, there have been concerns raised by a resident within one of the recently constructed townhouses on the corner of Warburton Street and Cocoa Jackson Lane. The concern is that the loading and unloading of vehicles related to the Reece is creating noise and safety issues for laneway users. Various opportunities below have been discussed and are outlined below.

Extend no parking signs

There are existing "No Parking" restriction signs on the northern side of Cocoa Jackson Lane between Warburton Street and Christopher Lane. Council officers have the authority to extend the "No Parking" restrictions along the frontage of the Reece building between Christopher Lane and Lygon Street to reinforce the Road Rules.

This would limit the amount of time that Reece plumbing can undertake their loading and unloading activities to two minutes. As drivers of loading vehicles have no other option than to prop within the laneway and given that loading operations takes an average of seven minutes, extending the "No Parking" signs would likely result in Reece receiving excessive fines and therefore impacting their business. As the current situation is likely exacerbated by the construction of the new development, Council officers can reconsider this option once the new development is occupied. At this stage, it does not seem justifiable to implement these measures to appease one residents' concerns.

Warburton Street kerb outstands

There may be opportunities to reduce the length of the kerb outstands in order to better cater for the truck movements and reduce the likelihood that bluestone blocks (within the kerb outstands) are dislodged in the future. This can be monitored on an as need basis as the kerb blocks were in good condition when inspected.

Given the above, there is limited scope to restrict the size of vehicles accessing a road from a regulatory point of view and banning trucks along Cocoa Jackson Lane, Warburton Street or Horne Street would do little to deter drivers from using the streets.

Opportunity for one way laneway from Warburton Street to Lygon Street

Council officers considered opportunities to limit Cocoa Jackson Lane to one way access. This would limit the conflicts in the laneway and ensure that loading vehicles are queued in the same direction.

As the new development has an angled driveway to Cocoa Jackson Lane requiring left in and right out movements, a one-way restriction for either direction in Cocoa Jackson Lane would not be feasible. The vehicle access to the new development is near the eastern end of Cocoa Jackson Lane adjacent to Lygon Street, therefore creating a one-way laneway would also likely increase the traffic volumes within the laneway as drivers would need to circulate via Horne Street or Warburton Street to access the new development.

Request that Reece undertake all loading via Warburton Street

To address the concerns that some vehicles reverse onto Lygon Street when the loading area is occupied, Council officers are considering opportunities to request that Reece encourage their drivers to enter Cocoa Jackson Lane via Warburton Street and leave via Lygon Street. At present, loading vehicles arrive evenly from both approaches.

Encouraging a one-way loading arrangement will increase the traffic volumes locally along Warburton Street.

Council officers did discuss opportunities to stage deliveries at Reece but they outlined that deliveries are difficult to schedule accurately as drivers go to multiple stores throughout the day and are affected by traffic and other variables.

Mandate on site loading

Reece plumbing could have historically undertaken loading within the building given the high vertical clearance to the building and the internal gantry built into the ceiling.

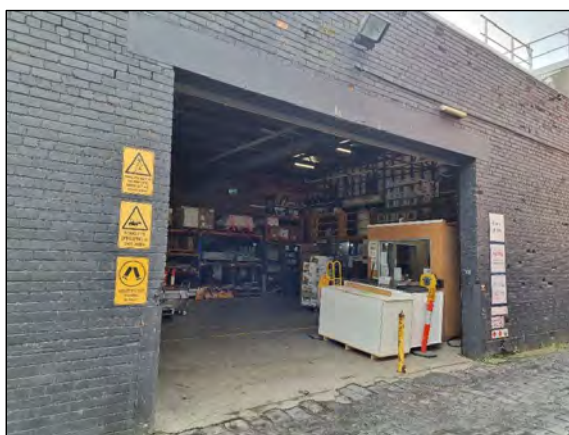


Figure 2 View of Reece plumbing loading area

Council is unable to mandate that Reece undertake their loading within the site boundary unless this was specified in the Planning Permit issued for store. However, at this time, Council officers cannot locate the historic planning permit as it dates back four decades.

Regardless, heavy vehicles would not be able to turn into and out of the internal loading area to deliver goods and therefore must continue to prop within the laneway. Utility vehicles would also have to regularly conduct reversing manoeuvres onto the laneway after loading which would create a hazard given the poor visibility of oncoming vehicles and pedestrians within the laneway.

At this stage, Council officers do not consider this to be a viable option.

Opportunity to provide bollards near Christopher Lane

A suggestion was made to install bollards near Christopher Lane to essentially truncate (close) Cocoa Jackson Lane. Council officers have considered this possibility but have some serious concerns with this configuration.

Reece rely on deliveries of pipe and other material which are delivered using 8.8m long trucks. If Cocoa Jackson Lane were to be truncated near Christopher Lane, these trucks would need to reverse onto Lygon Street which would create significant hazards to other road users on both Cocoa Jackson Lane and Lygon Street.

It would also be near impossible for utility vehicles to turn around within the laneway, requiring drivers to also reverse onto Lygon Street. Utility vehicles may be able to reverse into the Reece plumbing loading area to then drive forwards out, but further analysis is required to better understand the site constraints.

It is likely that the new development will create more traffic than what Cocoa Jackson Lane is currently catering for so additional reverse manoeuvres across the new vehicle accessway would be potentially very dangerous.

Whilst it is appreciated that installing bollards near Christopher Lane may benefit some properties in the laneway by reducing the number of trucks that pass, it cannot be justified at this time as it will create significant safety issues at the Lygon Street end of Cocoa Jackson Lane.

Opportunity to provide traffic calming to limit access to trucks

It was also suggested that we consider introducing traffic calming treatments to limit access for larger trucks.

As mentioned earlier, Council have an obligation to facilitate vehicle access on local streets which includes waste collection vehicles, emergency vehicles and delivery vehicles. We are unable to restrict access to larger vehicles.

If larger vehicles were banned from accessing Cocoa Jackson Lane, delivery vehicles for Reece would likely park on Lygon Street and walk large pipes along Cocoa Jackson Lane to their loading area. This would create a hazard for other road users on Lygon Street which is a very busy commercial area and will not be considered at this time.

Provide flush laneway surface

It was also recommended that Council consider reinstating the laneway with flush saw cut blue stone or other smooth materials to improve access for mobility impaired users or bicycle riders. Bluestone laneways provide a critical part of the transport network in Melbourne. Whilst they are not the most accessible for the mobility impaired or bicycle riders, they do act as a form of traffic calming. If the laneway were to be reconstructed using a flush material, it is likely that the vehicle speeds would increase significantly.

**Appendix 1 Swept path assessments at Warburton Street and Cocoa
Jackson Lane**

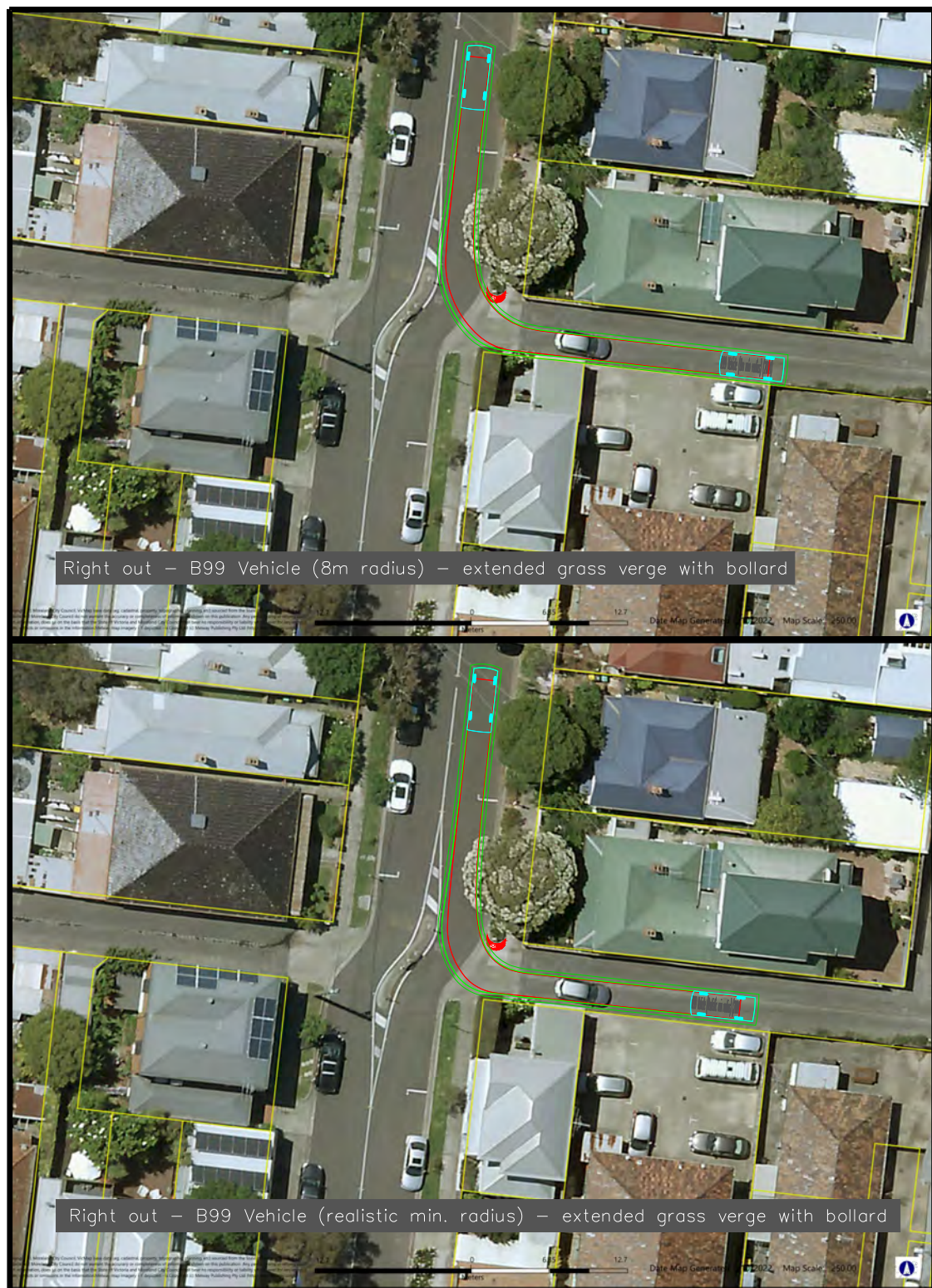




**Appendix 2 Swept path assessments at Horne Street and Cocoa Jackson
Lane**







7.5 SUBURB BOUNDARY REALIGNMENT - 119A AND 121 LYGON STREET BRUNSWICK EAST

Director Business Transformation Sue Vujcevic

Finance and Procurement

Officer Recommendation

That Council approves the suburb boundary realignment to the western boundary of 121 Lygon Street, in order to ensure that the development at 119A and 121 Lygon Street, is located wholly within the suburb of Brunswick East, as outlined in this report.

REPORT

Executive Summary

The need for a minor realignment of a suburb boundary has emerged as a consequence of the residential apartment development currently under construction on land parcels known as 119A Lygon Street, Brunswick East and 121 Lygon Street which lies partly within the suburb boundary of Brunswick and partly within Brunswick East. The current and proposed suburb boundary realignment is indicated in the maps in Background and Issues sections of this report.

As the land parcels are located within two suburbs, Council is unable to issue street numbering for the proposed subdivision of this new development. Without the provision of street numbers from Council, the development is unable to arrange services to be connected and therefore complete the subdivision process for the release of new titles to purchasers.

This recommendation is independent of any current or future planning processes or decisions regarding this development.

It seeks to resolve the suburb boundaries which cannot dissect the new apartment development. The proposed new suburb boundary re-alignment is considered to be most effectively resolved by including the entire building in the suburb of Brunswick East.

Previous Council Decisions

Planning permit application MPS/2017/1021 for a 6 storey residential apartment building was refused under delegated authority of Council in May 2018. A planning permit for a modified development was subsequently issued at the direction of the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

A planning permit SP/2020/204 was issued under delegated authority of Council for the subdivision of the residential apartment building currently under construction of the land at 119A and 121 Lygon Street in December 2022.

1. Policy Context

The Naming rules for places in Victoria 2022, Statutory requirements for naming roads, features and localities – 2022 uphold the guidelines in the *Geographic Place Names Act 1998*. The naming rules are based on national standards and policies.

Council as a naming authority, in line with *The Naming rules for Places in Victoria 2022 section 1.5.2*, has the following responsibility in this matter;

“Naming authorities are responsible for submitting naming proposals that comply with these naming rules to the Registrar.”

To adhere to the relevant guidelines below, the suburb should be amended prior to new addresses been resolved.

Below is the relevant legislation.

NOTE: Gazetted Localities are the officially recognised boundaries of suburbs (in cities and larger towns) and localities (outside cities and larger towns).

AS NZS 4819-2011 Rural and Urban Addressing.

Section 3.3.2 Selections of locality boundaries

d) A locality boundary, where possible, should not bisect properties in common ownership or land parcels. Some exceptions may apply to large areas, e.g. forest, lakes or national parks.

Section 3.4.2 Review of localities

Boundaries of localities in areas that are subject to development should be reviewed and amended where appropriate.

Official Naming Rules for Places in Victoria

Section 5.2.1

4. The locality boundary for corner blocks should be the same as those for neighbouring properties accessed from the same road. There are four options for the location of boundaries, as shown in diagrams a, b, c and d below

Diagram d. shows one option on how to apply a locality boundary where multiple shop fronts or residences on one property have access to both Black Street and White Street.

5. If a property is situated on a corner and the block is subdivided with one or more of the new properties accessed from a road generally being addressed to a different locality, the locality boundary should be changed to incorporate the new subdivided properties

2. Background

Historically the suburb boundary between Brunswick and Brunswick East has dissected the property at 121 Lygon Street and ran along the western boundary of 119A Lygon Street as shown on the "Current Boundary" map below.

Current boundary:



A planning permit has been issued for an apartment development on the combined land of 119A-121 Lygon Street, Brunswick East. The construction of this development is well progressed. Council has also issued a planning permit for the subdivision of the land into 49 separate land parcels. The subdivision process is progressing however can only be finalised with the release of addressing and in turn Certificates of Title by Land Victoria.

Property settlements require official addressing to be provided to allow for completion of service authority connections (electricity, gas, water, drainage and telecommunication) to these new addresses.

The finalisation of the subdivision process involves the release of new street numbering by Council.

As part of the normal subdivision of land process, the property owner wrote to Council on 6 September 2022 requesting that Council provide new property addresses pursuant to its powers and responsibilities under the *Geographic Place Names Act 1998*.

Currently Council is unable to issue the new addresses/street numbering as the development is bisected by the boundary between Brunswick and Brunswick East. This is delaying the development with the connection of utility services, as well as the subdivision process which if unresolved will delay the lodgement to Land Victoria for the release of Certificates of Title and in turn the settlements for new residents.

The Addressing Standards and official Naming Rules for Places in Victoria both require that the building not be bisected within two suburbs and therefore the suburb boundary should be resolved. The Australian Standard, AS NZS 4819-2011 Rural and Urban Addressing require that the suburb boundary should be adjusted prior to new addresses being released. Once Council resolve to realign the suburb boundary it is submitted the Geographic Names Victoria Registrar for finalisation whereby the Land Victoria maps are amended.

As a majority of the parcel sits within Brunswick East and due to the current configuration of the boundary, the appropriate resolution is to realign the suburb boundary so that the entire development is encompassed into Brunswick East as per below. This is in line with the Official Naming Rules for Places in Victoria.

Proposed Boundary:



There is only one property that is impacted by this change being the development site itself at 119A & 121 Lygon Street. The landowner has written to Council confirming support of this proposal.

The proposed suburb boundary realignment:

- Conforms to the statutory requirements in Section 5.2 of the Official Naming rules for Places in Victoria.
- As the names of the locality themselves are not changing, all naming rules are being adhered to.
- The name is not an estate or linked to a subdivision name. The size is appropriate.
- The locality boundaries sit wholly within Merri-bek municipality therefore Council does not need to consult with neighbouring municipalities.
- As the amendment is a small realignment, no impact has been made to United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names resolutions, Sustainable Development Goals, or Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework goals.

As Council is the naming authority for locality (suburb) boundaries, Council officers have assessed that this proposal meets all relevant statutory requirements. Once Council resolves to realign the boundary it is submitted the Geographic Names Victoria Registrar for finalisation whereby the Land Victoria maps are amended.

3. Issues

Currently Council is unable to issue the new addresses/street numbering as the development is bisected by the boundary between Brunswick and Brunswick East. This is delaying the development with the connection of utility services, as well as the subdivision process which if unresolved will delay the lodgement to Land Victoria for the release of Certificates of Title and in turn the settlements for new residents.

In order to issue the new numbering for the development, Council is required to realign the suburb boundary so that the entire development is encompassed into Brunswick East.

Community impact

No other members of the community are affected by the suburb boundary adjustment.

Council officers have also confirmed that the current development was marketed as apartments in Brunswick East and therefore all purchasers are of an understanding that the property will be located in Brunswick East.

Legal and risk considerations

There is a risk of cost escalation and other impacts to both the developer and new residents should the suburb addressing delay the subdivision process and settlements of the apartments.

Human Rights Consideration

The implications of this report have been assessed in accordance with the requirements of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities.

4. Community consultation and engagement

Council's Community Engagement Policy 2020 states that for matters related to Council's internal organisational operations Council will not engage the community. Therefore, as this proposed boundary realignment has a negligible impact on the community, nor can the realignment be influenced significantly by the community; and as the views of the affected land owner are known, with a letter of support having been received, Council has not carried out additional community engagement.

Affected persons rights and interests

Before making a decision that affects a person's rights, Council must identify whose rights may be directly affected and provide an opportunity for that person (or persons) to convey those views regarding the effect on their rights and consider those views.

This decision on proposed change of suburb boundary affects part of the land at 121 Lygon Street and has implications for the street numbering of the entire apartment development on the land comprising 119A and 121 Lygon Street. The owner of these land parcels have provided a letter of support to change the suburb as recommended in this report.

As no other persons are affected by the change in suburb boundary, and a letter of support has been provided by the owners, no further community consultation or engagement has been undertaken.

5. Officer Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Council officers involved in the preparation of this report have no conflict of interest in this matter.

6. Financial and Resources Implications

There are no financial implications of this report. The issuing of street numbers reflecting the suburb boundary change can be completed with the current resources in the Finance and Procurement Branch.

7. Implementation

Should Council support the recommendation of this report, Council officers will issue the new street numbering. This will enable the development to connect utility services, as well as progress the subdivision and enable the lodgement to Land Victoria for the release of Certificates of Title and in turn the settlements for new residents.

Council officers will submit the resolution to Geographic Names Victoria Registrar for finalisation whereby the Land Victoria maps are amended.

Attachment/s

There are no attachments for this report.

7.6 COUNCIL ACTION PLAN 2022-23 - SECOND QUARTER PERFORMANCE REPORT

Director Business Transformation Sue Vujcevic

Governance and Strategy

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Notes the Council Action Plan 2022-2023 – Second Quarter Performance Report (provided as Attachment 1).
2. Endorses that action 145: 'Commence construction of Wheatsheaf Road streetscape improvement' be withdrawn for delivery in 2022-23 and referred for delivery to the 2023-24 Council Action Plan.

REPORT

Executive Summary

This Second Quarter Performance Report (shown at Attachment 1) gives an overview of Council's performance through the delivery of the Council Plan 2021-2025, specifically the delivery of the Council Action Plan 2022-23 through to 31 December 2022.

The status of the 97 actions is as follows:

- 6 per cent (6) closed (completed, achieved)
- 89 per cent (86) in progress (on track)
- 1 per cent (1) behind target (off track)
- 1 per cent (1) critical (significantly delayed)
- 1 per cent (1) actions not started (action not started)
- 2 per cent (2) withdrawal or proposed withdrawal

There is the proposed withdrawal of action 145: '*Commence construction of Wheatsheaf Road streetscape improvement*' for delivery in 2022-23 and its referral for delivery to the 2023-24 Council Action Plan due to significant project complexities which are outlined in the report.

This report also includes updates on those actions that were not achieved or '*Off-Track*' from the 2021-22 action plan. As resolved by Council on 10 August 2022, Council will continue to report on these actions until their completion (as outlined in the Issues section of this report).

Previous Council Decisions

Council Action Plan 2022-23 – First Quarter Performance Report – 9 November 2022

That Council:

1. *Notes the Council Action Plan 2022-2023 – First Quarter Performance Report (provided as Attachment 1).*
2. *Endorsed a new delivery timeframe for action 66 'Scope a coordinated approach and policy on digital inclusion in Merri-bek' from delivery in quarter one of 2022-23 to quarter three (March 2023).*
3. *Notes the delay in delivering action 7 'Develop the Open Space Strategy' and endorses that this Action be extended into the 2023-24 Council Action Plan.*

4. *Endorsed that action 146: 'Commence construction of the Stewart Street streetscape improvement' be withdrawn for delivery in 2022-23 and referred for delivery to the 2023-24 Council Action Plan.*

Council Action Plan 2021-22 – Fourth Quarter Performance Report – 10 August 2022

That Council:

1. *Notes the Council Action Plan 2021-2022 – Fourth Quarter Performance Report for the period ending 30 June 2022 (provided as Attachment 1).*
2. *Endorsed that action 56 'Support the implementation of the Men at Work Pilot Program through facilitating local partnerships and promotion' as identified for delivery in the Council Action Plan 2021-2022 be withdrawn and discontinued for delivery from the Council Action Plan entirely.*
3. *Endorsed that 'Off Track' actions from the Council Action Plan 2021-2022 will continue to be reported to Council through the quarterly reporting cycle of the Council Action Plan 2022-2023, until completion.*

Council Action Plan 2021-22 – Third Quarter Performance Report – 11 May 2022

That Council:

1. *Notes the Council Action Plan 2021-2022 – Third Quarter Performance Report for the period ending 31 March 2022 (provided as Attachment 1).*
2. *Endorsed that action 43 'Support sports clubs to deliver free activities through application to Council's community grants program' is withdrawn for 2021/22 delivery (placed on hold) and will be added to the Council Action Plan 2022/23 as an action for year 2 of the Council Plan delivery.*
3. *Endorsed that action 66 'Scope a coordinated approach and policy on digital inclusion in Merri-bek' is withdrawn for 2021/22 delivery (placed on hold) and will be added to the Council Action Plan 2022/23 as an action for year 2 of the Council Plan delivery and to be completed in the first quarter of 2022/23.*
4. *Endorsed that action 70 'Take forward place based and integrated approaches to meeting community needs by developing precinct plans' is withdrawn for delivery in 2021/22 and discontinued for delivery from the Council Action Plan entirely.*
5. *Endorsed that action 102 'Develop community programs framework to support wellbeing and learning outcomes' is withdrawn for 2021/22 delivery (placed on hold) and will be added to the Council Action Plan 2022/23 as an action for year 2 of the Council Plan delivery.*

Council Action Plan 2021-22 - Second Quarter Performance Report – 9 March 2022

That Council:

1. *Notes the Council Action Plan 2021-2022 – Second Quarter Performance Report for the period ending 31 December 2021 (provided as Attachment 1).*
2. *Endorsed that action 75 'Council to adopt principles for design and location of public toilets and then identify and prioritise locations for new and upgraded public toilets as part of planning for community infrastructure, activity centres and open space, leading to an investment plan that feeds into the capital works program' is withdrawn for 2021/22 delivery and placed on hold as an action for year 3 of the Council Plan.*

Adoption of the Merri-bek Community Vision 2021-2031, Merri-bek Council Plan 2021-2025 and Merri-bek Council Action Plan 2021-2022 – 20 October 2021

That Council:

1. *Adopts Merri-bek Council Plan 2021–2025 (provided as Attachment 2) in accordance with legislative requirements of the Local Government Act 2020 and the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008, noting that it incorporates the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025.*

2. *Adopts Merri-bek Council Action Plan 2021-2022 (provided as Attachment 4) as the first year of actions to deliver against the Merri-bek Council Plan 2021-2025.*

1. Policy Context

In accordance with sections 88 and 90 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, Council adopted its Community Vision 2021-2031 and Council Plan 2021-2025 in October 2021.

The Council Action Plan 2022-23 supports implementation of the Council Plan 2021-2025 for the second financial year of the 4-year period and includes the specific actions to be undertaken that are resourced through the 2022-23 annual budget (included in the 2022-2026 Budget).

This report supports Council's continuing commitment to sustainable, equitable and transparent management of funds on behalf of ratepayers, key stakeholders and the broader community.

2. Background

The purpose of the second quarter performance report is to provide a status update on delivery against the Council Action Plan 2022-2023 as of 31 December 2022.

This report also includes updates on those actions that were not achieved or 'Off-Track' in the 2021-22 action plan and as resolved by Council in August 2022 to continue reporting on these actions separately, yet concurrently until their completion are outlined in the table below through Council's quarterly reporting process.







3. Issues

Council Action Plan Second Quarter Performance

Council has 97 actions in the Council Action Plan 2022-23. The action status of the delivery is presented below in the following categories, and the percentages complete.

Detailed results for the second quarter performance are shown in **Attachment 1**.

The status of the 97 actions in the plan is as follows:

Number	Percentage	Status	Definition	Traffic Light
6	6%	Achieved	Completed, achieved	
86	89%	In progress	On track	
1	1%	Off track	Behind target	
1	1%	Critical	Action is significantly delayed	
1	1%	Action not started	Action not started	
2	2%	Withdrawal or proposed withdrawal	On hold or removed	

Completed actions (Achieved)

6 actions or 6 per cent have been achieved with their objective complete as shown in the table below.

Action #	Action Description and Q2 Update	% Complete	Directorate
29	Investigate the extensions of tram routes 19 and 58	Achieved	City Infrastructure

Action #	Action Description and Q2 Update	% Complete	Directorate
	Council officers have investigated options for tram extensions for routes 19 and 58 and briefed Councillors in September 2022. This will help inform a future advocacy position of Council. This action was achieved in the first quarter of this year.		
72	Investigate financial incentives to encourage maintenance of heritage buildings An investigation of financial incentives to encourage maintenance of heritage buildings was completed and reported to Council at its meeting 7 December 2022 - Report reference 7.2 Heritage Action Plan - Status Report.	Achieved	Place and Environment
81	Review Merri-bek Planning Scheme and prepare a plan for implementing review recommendations A review of the planning scheme was completed and reported to the 12 October 2022 Council meeting - Report reference 7.3 Planning Scheme Review Report.	Achieved	Place and Environment
95	Develop industry sector profiles and promote the value of these sectors to the broader community Officers have completed the development and release of the Industry Papers series celebrating Merri-bek's most important economic sectors. In the previous financial year, four industry papers (covering Health, Retail, Creative and cultural, and Manufacturing) were developed and launched. During the first half of this current financial year, two further papers related to (i) Professional, Scientific and Technical and the (ii) Education and Training sectors have been completed and promoted through various channels including social media and Council's website - on the 'Which sectors to invest in?' page.	Achieved	Place and Environment
132	Finalise contract terms for the transfer of land for the purposes of a new health and community services precinct within Coburg Following detailed negotiations around community benefit and delivery requirements, the contract of sale to transact land at Bell Street, Coburg for the purposes of creating a health and community services precinct, was signed in December 2022.	Achieved	Place and Environment
160	Finalise and begin implementing the change of the municipal name We are continuing to roll-out the implementation including branding guidelines, signage replacements across the municipality and uniform updates. A once off Renaming Community Support Grant was also established by Council in December 2022. This will commence in late February/early March 2023.	Achieved	Community

On track (In Progress)

86 actions or 89 per cent of actions are in progress and on track to complete their objective in the Council Action Plan 2022/23 as shown in **(Attachment 1)**.

Off track (Behind Target)

1 or 1 per cent of actions are considered as off track.

Action #	Action Description and Q1 Update	% Complete	Directorate
7	Develop the Open Space Strategy - The Strategy will assist with identifying priorities for new and expanded open space and for decision-making about the use of open space to support passive and active recreation, water management, nature and the urban forest. A project manager has been appointed to lead the development of the strategy; however, they won't commence working full time on the project until early 2023. Detailed project planning, including the development of a community engagement plan is under way.	15%	City Infrastructure

Critical (Action is significantly delayed)

1 or 1 per cent of actions are considered as off track.

Action #	Action Description and Q1 Update	% Complete	Directorate
26	Design, approval and construction of new shared paths along the Craigieburn Rail Corridor Significant works have been done in quarter two for the section between Gaffney Street and Bothwell Street (stage 3) to progress MTM/VicTrack approvals to access the corridor for surveys in order to then complete designs and undertake flood modelling. It was hoped to have this section constructed by 30 June 2023, but flood modelling has highlighted some issues that require further investigation and a possible redesign so this important work will continue in the next quarter with the reviewed aim to have a design approved by MTM/VicTrack by 30 June 2023 to be shovel ready for any future grant opportunities.	40%	City Infrastructure

Action not started

1 or 1 per cent of action are not yet started. Reporting in this way allows us to be as transparent as possible with the Councillors and the Community on the status of the plan. Some actions are not planned for delivery until the second half of the financial year. Further information is provided in the table below.

Action #	Action Description and Q1 Update	% Complete	Directorate
144	Commence Detailed Design for West Street streetscape renewal After the detailed design is completed in Quarter 3 (refer to Action 90 from Council Action Plan 2021/22) a tender for the construction of West Street will commence. Completion of this Action: Quarter 4 (June 2023).	Action not started	Place and Environment

Proposed Withdrawn Action

Council endorsement is sought for action 145: '*Commence construction of Wheatsheaf Road streetscape improvement*' to be withdrawn for delivery in 2022-23 and referred for delivery to the 2023-24 Council Action Plan.

Officer reasoning:

Due to complexities of having to site proposed new trees in the road reserve for the Wheatsheaf Road Streetscape Improvement Project, permission will need to be sought for the design from the State Government who owns and manages Wheatsheaf Road.

This is likely to take longer than was originally intended for the project, and construction is now expected to begin next financial year. Therefore, it is proposed that this action item is withdrawn for this financial year.

Completion of this Action: Next Financial Year 2023/2024.

Additional financial information: The Branch responsible for the delivery of this action will follow the appropriate Council process to carry forward the budget attached to this action and seek to realign it with the Capital Works budget.

Previously Endorsed Withdrawn Action

Council endorsed the withdrawal of action 146 “*Commence construction of the Stewart Street streetscape improvement*” in quarter one.

Council Action Plan 2021/22 remaining actions progress report**Not - Achieved (Off-Track)**

There were sixteen (16) actions that were not achieved and deemed 'Off Track' as at the end of the Council Action Plan 2021-2022 reporting period.

At its meeting held 10 August 2022, Council resolved to continue to report on these actions (until their completion) through the quarterly reporting cycle of the Council Action Plan 2022-2023.

These actions (as highlighted in the table below) will be separately reported and presented concurrently with the quarterly updates for the Council Action Plan 2022-2023. The intention was to have these actions 'Achieved' by the end of quarter two 2022-2023, where possible.

Three (3) actions were achieved in the first quarter of this year, and a further nine (9) actions have been completed this quarter, leaving four (4) actions to complete by the end of this financial year. These actions will continue to be delivered under existing resources.

Action #	Action Description and Q4 Update	% Complete	Directorate
9	Design of the Dunstan Reserve Storm Water Harvesting System The Detailed Design for Dunstan Reserve Stormwater Harvesting has been completed. Pending budget approval as part of the annual budgeting process, next steps will be to tender and construct the system.	Action Achieved	Place and Environment
10	Develop catchment scale place-based plans for delivery of IWM outcomes The place-based final report has been received, reviewed and approved by the IWM Working Group including, Melbourne Water, Yarra Valley Water, DELWP and internal Merri-bek stakeholders. This will inform future years planning and budgeting.	Action Achieved	Place and Environment

Action #	Action Description and Q4 Update	% Complete	Directorate
15	<p>Finalise Kerbside Waste Service and Charge Policy and plan the communications and education to support roll-out of the reformed service</p> <p>Revisions to the Kerbside Waste Service and Charge Policy were endorsed by Council at the 7 December 2022 Council Meeting. Reporting on implementation of the communications and education plan for the reformed service will continue against the broader 2022-23 action to implement the reformed kerbside waste service (CAP no.120).</p>	Action Achieved	Place and Environment
23	<p>Implement and finalise Covid-19 Safe Movement Pedestrian and Bicycle Transport Program</p> <p>All actions are completed. It is noted that some items such as the reduced speed limit of 40km/h on all local roads has not been formally approved by the State Government, but works are underway to seek approval which was the Council commitment for the COVID-19 safe movement of pedestrians and bike riders.</p>	Achieved in Q1	City Infrastructure
33	<p>Negotiate the Building Block Partnership MOU, project schedule and funding package with State Government</p> <p>The agreement was entered into on 22/7/22 and announced by the Minister for Early Childhood and Pre-prep at an event at Turner St Kindergarten Pascoe Vale on 23/8/22.</p>	Achieved in Q1	Community
41	<p>Investigate need and location options for a new synthetic hockey pitch and sports pavilion</p> <p>A council report was presented in September 2022, which outlined the feasibility of a number of sites and recommendations for a second Hockey pitch in Merri-bek, including anticipated costs. This action is complete, however Council resolved to investigate the appropriateness of recommended sites and report back at a future Council meeting, which will occur in 2023.</p>	Achieved in Q1	Community
47	<p>Develop the implementation plan for the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan and identify partner organisations</p> <p>The implementation plan has been completed and will be updated and adjusted as required. The key actions and updates on the implementation will be reported to the Human Rights and Inclusion Advisory Committee and Disability Reference Group.</p>	Action Achieved	Community
57	<p>Include a gender affirming statement of 'what is gender' within the current gender equality commitment to be included in gender impact analysis</p> <p>The Gender Affirming Statement is being implemented through the development of Council's inclusive Language Guide, resources and training for the workplace. Further, the Commitment's Action Plan 2022-2024 has a focus on equitable access of people of all genders to services, programs and in our workplace.</p>	Action Achieved	Community

Action #	Action Description and Q4 Update	% Complete	Directorate
59	<p>Scope the delivery of healthy eating initiatives and links to food security in the Food Systems Strategy</p> <p>The scoping of healthy eating initiatives across Merri-bek, other Local Governments and State programs has now been completed. The recommendations will inform Council's key partner, Merri Health, to finalise their Integrated Health Promotion Plan. A key project of the scoping activity included partnering with sporting clubs regarding healthy eating and the 'traffic light' system in partnership with the Healthy Eating Advisory Service. Other highlights include the Food Leadership Action Group focusing on further partnerships to develop Food insecurity approaches to incorporate healthy eating initiatives.</p>	Action Achieved	Community
62	<p>Scope a coordinated approach to supporting volunteering in the community</p> <p>Scoping a coordinated approach in supporting volunteering in the community has been completed with comparison of National Standards of Volunteering and recommendations are being considered by all relevant internal stakeholders. A revised work experience policy will be expanded to include volunteers, which has been a direct output of the scoping activities.</p>	Action Achieved	Community
64	<p>Develop and implement Council rough sleeping protocol</p> <p>The protocol (now referred to as a guideline) is finalised. Staff will be further supported to respond to anti-social behaviour and identify strategies for supporting rough sleepers, which will be supported by a social worker role within our libraries area.</p>	Action Achieved	Community
73	<p>Review operational plans addressing removal of graffiti, unsightly properties, dumped rubbish, public litter bins, drinking fountains, public toilets, car park opening hours and public lighting</p> <p>Resources have been diverted to other priorities in the first half of 2022/23, the proactive aspects of these operational reviews will commence properly in quarter three.</p>	60%	City Infrastructure
79	<p>Explore opportunities to include affordable housing as part of the urban revitalisation programs in central Coburg</p> <p>In September 2022, Council endorsed a resolution to advocate to the State Government for a redesignation of Coburg as a Metropolitan Activity Centre and for a partnership approach to the revitalisation of the centre. Affordable housing would be considered as a key part of this revitalisation.</p>	50%	Place and Environment
90	<p>Completion of Concept Design for West Street Shopping Strip Streetscape Renewal Program</p> <p>This quarter we commenced community and stakeholder engagement planning in preparation for public consultation activities to be undertaken in February 2023.</p>	70%	Place and Environment

Action #	Action Description and Q4 Update	% Complete	Directorate
91	Completion of Detailed Design for W heatsheaf Road Streetscape Improvement Activities undertaken this period include progressing the detailed design and negotiating with key stakeholders, including Service Authorities regarding impacts to underground assets and the Department of Transport. The project is currently on track to go to tender in early - mid 2023, pending Department of Transport approvals and Council endorsement.	75%	Place and Environment
110	Develop and implement a Digital Engagement Framework that provides community members with high quality online information and participation opportunities The Digital Framework is being rolled out across the organisation to ensure our online engagement efforts are clear and inclusive. The rollout will be ongoing.	Action Achieved	Community

Community impact

Community impact is addressed throughout the Council Plan 2021-2025 but primarily under strategic objective 5: To build community trust through encouraging participation, evidence-based decision making, stewardship of resources and being accessible and responsive.

Climate emergency and environmental sustainability implications

Climate emergency and environmental sustainability implications are addressed throughout the Council Plan 2021-2025 but primarily under strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3:

1. To strive for maximum protection of people, plants and animals through leading an urgent response to the climate emergency and a regeneration of our natural environment
2. To contribute to the health, safety, and security of everyone living in our diverse community and to increase safe, accessible, physically active and enjoyable ways to get around Merri-bek, especially via walking, cycling and public transport.
3. To support Merri-bek to become a more inclusive, connected, healthy and caring community through providing equitable access to community facilities and services and facilitating local partnerships and programs.

Economic sustainability implications

Economic sustainability implications are addressed throughout the Council Plan 2021-2025 but primarily under strategic objective 4: To create welcoming, unique spaces and places across Merri-bek that attract and connect everyone, improving access to community facilities and affordable housing and encouraging vibrant artistic, social and economic activity.

Legal and risk considerations

The Merri-bek Community Vision 2021-2031 and Merri-bek Council Plan 2021-2025 and processes associated with the development of these documents have been undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020* and the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*.

Human Rights Consideration

The implications of this report have been assessed in accordance with the requirements of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities.

4. Community consultation and engagement

Community consultation and engagement was not required for this report as it reflects the performance against the Council Action Plan 2021 – 2025 (Council Action Plan).

Advice was sought from officers across Council to provide the performance updates.

Affected persons rights and interests

Before making a decision that affects a person's rights, Council must identify whose rights may be directly affected and provide an opportunity for that person (or persons) to convey those views regarding the effect on their rights and consider those views. There are no individual rights or interests affected.

5. Officer Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Council officers involved in the preparation of this report have no conflict of interest in this matter.

6. Financial and Resources Implications

All actions documented in the Council Action Plan 2022-23 are resourced through the 2022-23 annual budget (included in the 2022-2026 Budget).

It is proposed to withdraw Action145: '*Commence construction of Wheatsheaf Road streetscape improvement*' for delivery in 2022-23 and refer it for delivery to the 2023-24 Council Action Plan. The Branch responsible for the delivery of this action will follow the appropriate Council process to seek to carry forward the budget attached to this action and to realign it with the Capital Works budget.

7. Implementation

The Council Action Plan second quarter performance results will be made available on Council's website.

Attachment/s

- 1 [📄](#) Council Action Plan Q2 Report 2022-23 D23/13224



Merri-bek City Council

Council Action Plan 2022-2023

2nd Quarter Performance Report



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Merri-bek City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people as the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waterways in the area now known as Merri-bek. We pay respect to their Elders past, present, and emerging, as well as to all First Nations communities, who significantly contribute to the life of the area.

Executive Summary

This report supports Council's continuing commitment to sustainable, equitable and transparent management of funds on behalf of Merri-bek ratepayers, key stakeholders, and the broader community.

In accordance with sections 88 and 90 of the Local Government Act 2020, Council adopted a new Community Vision 2021-2031 and Council Plan 2021-2025 on 20th October 2021. These were developed as major outputs of a four-stage engagement program which included a deliberative panel process.

The Council Action Plan 2022-21 was adopted which supports implementation of the Council Plan 2021-2025 for the second financial year of the 4-year period. It includes the specific actions to be taken during the second financial year in the implementation of the Council Plan 2021-2025.

This Second Quarter Performance Report gives an update on delivery of the Council Action Plan 2022-2023.

In summary, the status of the 97 actions in the plan is as follows:

Number	Percentage	Status	Definition	Traffic Light
6	6%	Achieved	Completed, achieved	✓
86	89%	In Progress	On track	●
1	1%	Off Track	Behind Target	●
1	1%	Critical	Action is significantly delayed	●
1	1%	Action Not Started	Action Not Started	●
2	2%	Withdrawal or proposed withdrawal	On hold or removed	●

The rest of this report below provides a detailed progress update for each action below including:





- A description of the action
- The percentage complete against what was planned for this financial year
- The status in the form of a traffic light (see table above); and
- Relevant officer commentary.

Theme 1: An environmentally proactive Merri-bek

1: To strive for maximum protection of people's health, plants and animals through leading an urgent response to the climate emergency and a regeneration of our natural environment

Action Name	Directorate	Progress	Status	Comments
Implement Zero Carbon Merri-bek Climate Emergency Action Plan	Place and Environment	50%	●	<p>During quarter two, Council collaborated on delivery of a Northern Melbourne Electric Vehicle Bulk Buy launch event with 200 attendees and over 600 expressions of interest. Officers hosted a stall at the Fawkner Festa, Mike Hill Fellow undertook planning and promotion for a 'Bring Your Bills' event at Glenroy Hub in quarter three.</p> <p>Stakeholder workshops and electrification guide for Unlocking Sustainable Strata pilot (a collaboration with Yarra Council and contractor Hip V. Hype) were delivered, with planning underway for an event to share the outcomes in early 2023. Some 30 local households installed solar PV (totalling 175kW) through the Solar Savers offer for the general community.</p> <p>To support Council's expanding Electric Vehicle (EV) fleet, procurement of three additional EV chargers at Coburg Civic Centre and four at the Operations Centre in Hadfield was completed, with installation planned for early 2023. Advocacy outcomes included development of the Northern Council Alliance EV Charging Strategy in December 2022 which will inform council's approach to public charging.</p>
Deliver Integrated Behaviour Change Program including the Ride and Stride program participating primary schools	Place and Environment	50%	●	<p>In quarter two, Ride and Stride schools Brunswick North West Primary School and St Oliver Plunkett Primary School held successful Open Streets trials over several days. Students from Moreland Primary School and Coburg High School took part in a Transition Ride Day to help the younger students prepare for riding to high school next year. Officers presented on the Ride & Stride at two webinars (VicHealth and Stantec)</p>




Action Name	Directorate	Progress	Status	Comments
				and the initiative won the Institute of Transport Engineers Sustainable Transport Award. Evaluation of the 2022 Ride & Stride informed design of a scaled-up delivery model for 2023.
Improving safety and thermal comfort of low-income residents at home through solar and energy efficiency subsidies	Place and Environment	50%	●	During quarter two, a solar information session was held at Coburg Library, with promotion targeting diverse audiences. 22 low-income households have had Council subsidised solar installed (totalling 104kW capacity) in the financial year to date. 19 low-income households have had Council subsidised thermal upgrades (insulation and/or draughtproofing) in the financial year to date. Recruitment of eligible households has occurred through Community Connectors and letters from the Mayor.
Urban forest strategy - implementation of annual tree planting program including identifying ways to support the community to preserve and plant new trees on private land.	City Infrastructure	95%	●	<p>In the 2022 planting season, we have scheduled the planting 3,515 trees. So far, we have planted 3,487 trees, with the remaining 28 trees on track to be planted before January.</p> <p>On October 17, we launched the Urban Forest Strategy project page on the Conversations Merri-bek platform. The page provides access to a live version of the Council's tree inventory, including trees on the Significant Tree Register, and a "find a tree" tool for residents to choose the right tree for their situation. Before launching the page, it was presented to both Councillors and community stakeholder groups and was well received by both. Since going live, the page has also received positive feedback from the community. In addition, we have updated our website to make it easier for residents to find information about our tree-planting activities and how to request tree planting in their area.</p> <p>We have also continued to engage with various community stakeholders to support their urban forest and greening initiatives. For example, we collaborate with Woman's Health in the North to support a commemorative tree-planting event.</p>
Identify ways to support the community to preserve and plant new trees (may include giving trees away)	City Infrastructure	75%	●	On October 17, we launched the Urban Forest Strategy project page on the Conversations Merri-bek platform. The page provides access to a live version of the Council's tree inventory, including trees on the Significant

Action Name	Directorate	Progress	Status	Comments
				<p>Tree Register, and a "find a tree" tool for residents to choose the right tree for their situation.</p> <p>Before launching the page, it was presented to both Councillors and community stakeholder groups and was well received by both. Since going live, the page has also received positive feedback from the community. In addition, we have updated our website to make it easier for residents to find information about our tree-planting activities and how to request tree planting in their area.</p> <p>We have also continued to engage with various community stakeholders to support their urban forest and greening initiatives. For example, we collaborate with Woman's Health in the North to support a commemorative tree-planting event.</p>
Develop the Open Space Strategy - The Strategy will assist with identifying priorities for new and expanded open space and for decision-making about the use of open space to support passive and active recreation, water management, nature and the urban forest.	City Infrastructure	15%		A project manager has been appointed to lead the development of the strategy; however, they won't commence working full time on the project until early 2023. Detailed project planning, including the development of a community engagement plan is under way.
Implement the Nature Plan	City Infrastructure	50%		Council continues to deliver on its ongoing program of natural resource management projects. Several community planting days were held in the last quarter and further days will be held once the warmer summer weather has finished. The new wetlands at Gavin Park have been completed, providing further opportunity for education and engagement. Officers are also dedicating time to the development of an enhanced nature strip program due to high community interest in plantings within nature strips.
Implement Yarra and Maribyrnong Catchment Scale Integrated Water Management plans and achieve 2030 targets	Place and Environment	50%		This project continues to progress with the external parties. The actions that relate to Merri-bek and our catchment are largely aligned with our IWM Strategy 2040 and associated Action Plan and are on track.
Construction of Moomba Park Wetland, Fawkner	Place and Environment	25%		In quarter two, the consent letter from DELWP letter was received and construction on site commenced in early December. Residents have been

Action Name	Directorate	Progress	Status	Comments
				informed of the works, timeframes and expectations. A Pre-commencement meeting was held with Melbourne Water and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation on-site.
Undertake Detailed design of Stormwater Harvesting at AG Gillon and Gilpin Park (Brunswick Central Parklands)	Place and Environment	40%	●	Tender is completed and a contractor has been engaged for the design. Geotechnical testing and land survey has commenced. Internal stakeholder engagement has commenced, to gather feedback on high level concept. Feedback will be further refined and ready for community consultation.
Continue implementing Zero Waste (and plastic wise) Community and Council (Festivals, events, facilities) initiatives	Place and Environment	50%	●	In quarter two, three waste education were held (zero waste, recycling right and reusable nappies). The kerbside bins of some 3504 households were inspected and tagged to encourage correct recycling and reduce contamination. The nappy & period product subsidy was promoted. Postcards alerting businesses to prepare for the upcoming state ban on problematic single use plastic items were distributed. Trial of crockery, cutlery and glassware at the townhalls also began.
Implement the reformed kerbside waste service	City Infrastructure	50%	●	Work on public information regarding bin delivery has occurred and procurement to provide the necessary services is well progressed.
Collaborate with the Food Leadership Action Group to support community led actions that are identified through the Collective Impact Shared Measurement Framework for a Northern Food Hub	Community	50%	●	During this quarter the two food security project groups collected data using the indicators derived from the Collective Impact Measurement Framework and will report on the results in early 2023.

Theme 2: Moving and living safely in Merri-bek

2: To contribute to the health, safety, and security of everyone living in our diverse community and to increase safe, accessible, physically active and enjoyable ways to get around Merri-bek, especially via walking, cycling and public transport



Action Name	Directorate	Progress	Status	Comments
Review and update the Integrated Transport Strategy in consultation with the community	City Infrastructure	10%		<p>Significant planning on the refresh of the transport strategy refresh occurred during this quarter, including the appointment of a social policy research piece of work to inform the issues and opportunities papers for the strategy. In addition, workshops were held with the Sustainable Transport Advisory Committee, and the other advisory committees and reference groups in quarter two as key stakeholders to further inform the issues and opportunities for the strategy.</p> <p>Work is underway on detailing the engagement approach with the broader community which is expected to occur in June/July 2023. This approach is expected to be completed in quarter three.</p>
Design, approval and construction of new shared paths along the Craigieburn Rail Corridor	City Infrastructure	40%		<p>Significant works have been done in quarter two for the section between Gaffney Street and Bothwell Street (stage 3) to progress MTM/VicTrack approvals to access the corridor for surveys in order to then complete designs and undertake flood modelling. It was hoped to have this section constructed by 30 June 2023, but flood modelling has highlighted some issues that require further investigation and a possible redesign so this important work will continue in the next quarter with the reviewed aim to have a design approved by MTM/VicTrack by 30 June 2023 to be shovel ready for any future grant opportunities.</p>
Advocate for: a) duplication of the Upfield line north of Gowrie Station; b) the creation of an East/West bus link and improved bus services in the North, including advocating for bus services to be scheduled to	Chief Executive Office	45%		<p>Advocacy for the duplication and upgrade of the Upfield line north of Gowrie Station during the quarter included continued development of a regional approach, including extension and electrification to Wallan, with neighboring councils (Hume and Mitchell). Key public discussions about the duplication and upgrade of the Upfield line occurred at several transport forums involving State election candidates in the lead up to the</p>

Action Name	Directorate	Progress	Status	Comments
operate at night and on weekends c) improved personal safety				<p>State election, confirmation of our continued advocacy for the Upfield line upgrade and duplication.</p> <p>Following the release of the Northern Councils Alliance (NCA) Northern Region Transport Strategy and Bus Networking materials in late September 2022, Council advocated to the Minister for Public Transport via a letter, in alignment with the NCA materials, for implementation of the Fawkner Tram Link (increasing the frequency and operational hours of bus route 531), a review of timetables for bus services operating on Bell Street and to upgrade all bus services in Merri-bek to provide full weekend and full evening services.</p> <p>Updates for the advocacy for improved personal safety at Jacana railway station, have included the State Government investing \$1.04 million to improve access and safety at Jacana station including CCTV and passenger information displays.</p>
Investigate the extensions of tram routes 19 and 58	City Infrastructure	100%	✓	Council officers have investigated options for tram extensions for routes 19 and 58 and briefed Councillors in September 2022. This will help inform a future advocacy position of Council. This action was achieved in the first quarter of this year.
Undertake community engagement and seek adoption of a revised parking management policy with a precinct by precinct approach	City Infrastructure	10%	●	This item is related to the refresh of the transport strategy. Works have commenced on the planning for this review of the parking management policy. It is likely to become part of the action planning that emerges from the transport strategy rather than tracking with the strategy's preparation. However, this will be confirmed through the engagement process for the strategy which will commence in June/July 2023.
Investigate and implement measures to encourage reduced speed and improve pedestrian safety measures (special attention to accessibility) taking a precinct approach	City Infrastructure	50%	●	Applications to reduce the speed limit to 40km/h for all local roads currently with a speed limit of 50km/h have been submitted to the Department of Transport (DoT). DoT has already approved 7 of the 11 precincts and Council is expecting approval for the remaining four in the next quarter. Officers are currently working through the implementation including the communications program to begin to roll this out in quarter four.

Action Name	Directorate	Progress	Status	Comments
				<p>Engagement occurred in Fawkner seeking feedback from the community regarding opportunities for improvements for pedestrians, bicycles and public transport. This engagement will inform a report to Council in quarter three for capital works and advocacy work in Fawkner.</p> <p>Council has been successful in receiving black spot grant funding to implement road safety projects at Lygon Street and Barkly Street, Brunswick East and Pearson and Albert Street, Brunswick West. These projects will address crash history and improve safety for pedestrians.</p>

Theme 3: A healthy and caring Merri-bek

3: To support Merri-bek to become a more inclusive, connected, healthy and caring community through providing equitable access to community facilities and services, facilitating local partnerships and programs, mitigating the effects of climate change and supporting the community to adapt and build climate resilience

Action Name	Directorate	Progress	Status	Comments
Plan and deliver Year 2 Early Years Infrastructure Projects as listed in the 5-year Capital Works Program	Community	40%		Significant progress has been made on priority projects including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Doris Blackburn Kindergarten - an additional 33 place kindergarten room will be installed in early 2023 - Pascoe Vale Community Centre - works to create a 33-place kindergarten and an additional MCH consulting room to be completed in early 2023 - Turner Street Kindergarten - planning approval received, and designs finalised for improvements and minor expansion of kindergarten room to provide 6 additional kindergarten places; construction to occur in early 2023, subject to availability of suitable contractors - Oak Park Kindergarten - consultation on a concept plan to develop an additional 33 place kindergarten room to occur in early to mid-2023 - Derby St Children's Centre - demolition of existing kindergarten room to provide two kindergarten rooms with increased capacity of 27 places; architects have been engaged and construction to commence later in 2023.
Implement actions of the Children, Young People and Families Plan	Community	50%		While the COVID-19 has continued to impact service delivery at times and some projects and programs were delayed or modified, there has been good progress in implementing key actions from the Plan, with almost 50 Year one actions now completed. Engagement and consultation processes have been strengthened to involve children and young people in decision making on matters that impact them. A number of local primary schools have partnered with Council in developing the model for

Action Name	Directorate	Progress	Status	Comments
				the establishment of the first Merri-bek Childrens Reference Group which is scheduled to commence in early 2023.
Finalise contract terms for the transfer of land for the purposes of a new health and community services precinct within Coburg	Place and Environment	100%	✓	Following detailed negotiations around community benefit and delivery requirements, the contract of sale to transact land at Bell Street, Coburg for the purposes of creating a health and community services precinct, was signed in December 2022.
Finalise and begin implementation of the Climate Risk Strategy	Place and Environment	60%	●	The Climate Risk Strategy was adopted by Council in November 2022. The Action Plan is being developed with a view to be presented to the June Council meeting for adoption. The Adaptation Game - A Merri-bek Climate Drill was held at Glenroy Community Hub with members of the community.
Assess climate risk for priority Council infrastructure	Place and Environment	10%	●	Various staff positions contributing to this work have recently been filled. The work is now progressing.
Progress the Fawkner Leisure Centre Upgrade	City Infrastructure	70%	●	Council resolved to award design and construct contract at 19 December 2022 Council meeting. Site possession to be taken by contractor in the next quarter.
Implement the Fleming Park masterplan priorities	City Infrastructure	95%	●	Project construction is almost complete with tidy up of site being completed. Demolition of Clarrie Wholers Centre will be done in the next quarter to turn the space into green open space.
Implement the Hosken Reserve masterplan	City Infrastructure	35%	●	The series of investments to be made in implementing the master plan for Hosken Reserve have been reconsidered as a package of works and as a result, new time baselines have been set for the works. Commencement of tender process for the football pavilion will commence in early 2023.
Support sports clubs to deliver free activities through application to Council's community grants program	Community	50%	●	Council's community grants program opens in January 2023. Sports clubs will be encouraged to consider running free 'come and try' days to increase participation.
Continue to network with service providers and partnerships with service providers, agencies and organisation to continue to inform Council's approach to resilience	Community	50%	●	Bimonthly meetings of the Fawkner Service Provider Network, Glenroy and Fawkner Service Provider Network, Hume Merri-bek Volunteer Network, Hume Merri-bek Family Violence Network, Service Newsletter and weekly service provider updates have occurred over the past 3 months. In addition, the Community Liaison Officers as a part of the Local Partnership Project have been attending community group gatherings to

Action Name	Directorate	Progress	Status	Comments
				share information health messages and good practice in relation to COVID 19.
Investigate Social Workers in Libraries Trial	Community	70%	●	Through partnership with Yarra and Melbourne Libraries and RMIT University, a Master of Social Work student undertook placement at Coburg, Glenroy and Brunswick libraries. The student placement experience confirmed the need for the support of a library social worker to develop support frameworks and processes for library staff, advise on library policy and undertake direct practice with community members in need. A recruitment process for a library social worker (for a one year trial) is currently underway.
Implement the Social Cohesion Plan	Community	50%	●	<p>This quarter we worked with Merri-Health and other community partners to finalise the Shared Indicators for Social Inclusion Measurement Project. This will help us to collect consistent and stronger data about our collective impact, help to identify gaps and better meet the needs of our communities.</p> <p>The Merri-bek Interfaith Network was further consolidated, culminating in the Merri-bek City Council and the Interfaith Network deciding to host the 2023 Victorian Interfaith work Festival on the 19th of November at the Coburg Town Hall. Other activities during this period include delivering and evaluating Social Cohesion Plan-funded partnership projects - The Democracy Lab and The Seeds of Change.</p>
Conduct navigation pilot project to support older people to access services	Community	30%	●	In this quarter the commencement of one Age Well Planner commenced, the second position was readvertised and recruitment to this position was finalised by the end of December. The Age Well Pilot Program will commence accepting referral in January, including involvement in the community festivals planned for early 2023.
Continue to implement and improve new outdoor help and transport services for older people	Community	45%	●	During this quarter we have been able to offer an additional 30 people access to the program with 80 people currently registered for the Outdoor Help Project. Promotion of the program is being offered via our Customer Services Centres and via distribution to our Seniors Clubs and current client group. The inclement weather has resulted in delays for some of our

Action Name	Directorate	Progress	Status	Comments
				clients to get their jobs completed as the community demand for gardeners is very high.
Implement actions to support genuine inclusion of LGBTIQ+ community in Council programs, systems, activities in consultation with reference group	Community	55%	●	<p>This quarter we have continued with activities that support LGBTIQ+ inclusion including hosting a successful event for Trans awareness week and sharing intersex resources via the library service. In September Council endorsed the development of an LGBTIQ+ action plan and statement of support for trans and gender diverse sports people.</p> <p>The first stage of engagement with the LGBTIQ+ reference group on the draft LGBTIQ+ action plan was successfully completed during this time. We are on track to undertake further engagement across the wider Merri-bek community, within the next quarter. Going forward, Council will be present at Midsumma for Carnival and the Pride march.</p>
Support the development of the business case, stakeholder engagement and advocacy campaign for the Ballerit Mooroop Community Hub	Community	60%	●	Landscaping works at Ballerit Mooroop Community Hub have been delayed due to the weather but will resume as soon as possible. Signage for the site is being developed with the Traditional Owners and awaiting sign off. The First Nations Advisory Committee are planning to work with other key stakeholders on coordinating advocacy efforts to secure the land for development.
Implement the First People's Employment Plan	Business Transformation	40%	●	The First Peoples Employment Plan has been endorsed. The Plan includes recruitment for a First Peoples Employment Officer role to support delivery of the planned outcomes.
Continue to work with partners to increase community awareness of First Nations communities, reconciliation and Treaty	Community	45%	●	The public screening of the Lake of Scars at the Glenroy Hub was an important forum for community education and truth telling. Bimonthly cultural consultation with Traditional Owners continues and provides and forum to build relationships in addition to seeking input.
Continue to advocate for gambling harm prevention	Community	50%	●	Council and partner Gambler's Help City and Inner North participated in Gambling Harm Awareness week in the third week of October with activities to engage young people in education and sport settings about gambling harm prevention.
Continue education around tobacco related harm and enforcement of tobacco regulation	Place and Environment	50%	●	Education visits to tobacco related premises continued throughout the second quarter with a further 42 inspections conducted across tobacco retailers, eating establishments and licensed venues. This brings the total

Action Name	Directorate	Progress	Status	Comments
				number of compliance and educative inspections regarding tobacco restrictions in these settings to over 150 for the first half of the reporting year. The number of inspections completed to date is above requirements of the Department of Health Tobacco Service Agreement for 2022/23.
Implement the Libraries After Dark program to reduce gambling harm or similar community impacts	Community	50%	●	The weekly Libraries After Dark program is being delivered until 10pm Thursday nights at the Glenroy Library. Events which have been particularly popular are yoga, makerspace activities and film screenings. Libraries after Dark provides an opportunity for people to experience social connection in the evening without visiting a gaming venue.
Implement the Gender Equity Action Plan	Business Transformation	40%	●	Activities undertaken have included: reviewing reporting requirements for the gender equality action plan; delivery of cultural safety program training; improving our data collection systems to enable safe and accurate recording of employee identity information; and updating and rolling out our appropriate workplace behaviour policy to explicitly cover sexual harassment.
Continue facilitation role to improve service coordination for people who are homeless	Community	60%	●	Council endorsed the Affordable Housing Action Plan in December. This also included approving the continuation of developing the Merri-bek "Functional" Zero approach as outlined in Theme 4 of this plan. Council will continue to investigate securing resourcing and partners for the potential to commence this program in 2023/24.
Scope a coordinated approach and policy on digital inclusion in Merri-bek	Community	25%	●	Working group, timeline and project plan established and planning underway. Initial research undertaken. On track to deliver plan in the next quarter.

Theme 4: Vibrant spaces and places in Merri-bek

4: To create welcoming, unique spaces and places across Merri-bek that attract and connect everyone, improving access to community facilities and affordable housing and encouraging vibrant artistic, social and economic activity










Action Name	Directorate	Progress	Status	Comments
Complete an integrated Property Framework to guide strategic decision making around property acquisition, sale and redevelopment, including renewing Moreland's Leasing and Licensing Policy (including Open Space)	Place and Environment	45%		Consultants have been appointed to guide the preparation of the Strategic Property Framework, and internal engagement around key property issues has begun.
Commence preparation of a new Development Contributions Plan	Place and Environment	15%		Internal governance for the preparation of a new development contributions plan has been established. A project team is due to be confirmed in February 2023. The list of projects to be included in the new plan are being collated by the relevant departments across council.
Implement the Community Infrastructure Plan	Community	50%		The Community Infrastructure Plan was endorsed by Council in 2022 and implementation of the plan continues, which is guided by an internally facing action plan. Progress this quarter on implementing the plan includes awarding of tenders for Stage 1 of the Fawkner Leisure Centre Redevelopment and the Saxon Street Community Hub in Brunswick. Work continues on numerous plan priorities through delivery of Council's annual Capital Works Program; notably a range of upgrades, expansions and improvements to early years facilities throughout Merri-bek as part of the Victorian Government supported 'Building Blocks' Partnership.
Pursue 2 opportunities for fenced dog-off-leash areas in northern Merri-bek ahead of finalising the Merri-bek Open Space Strategy	City Infrastructure	50%		Public consultation on the preferred location of two new dog parks in Fawkner and Glenroy have taken place. Officers are reviewing the feedback received and will be progressing design options for the two preferred locations.
Implement targeted dog on-leash signage that promotes off-leash areas	City Infrastructure	25%		Officers continue to add signage at key locations to demarcate dog on-leash and off-leash areas. Meeting held this quarter with Communications Team to discuss implementation of signage at on-leash parks to promote off-leash parks. Open Space Community Engagement Planner has been

15 | Merri-bek Council Action Plan 2022 – 2023 Q2 Report

Action Name	Directorate	Progress	Status	Comments
				involved in discussions to ensure that signage needs are consolidated, and multiple signs avoided. Once messaging is approved, implementation should commence in the third quarter.
Continue Renuwall Graffiti Intervention Program	Community	50%	●	Officer started in this role in October. Sites across Merri-bek are being assessed for feasibility and an artist callout undertaken. Partnership with Pascoe Vale South Primary School and Transurban in place to deliver a mural at the school.
Continue the Cladding Rectification Project seeking resolution of moderate and low risk buildings with suspected combustible cladding	Place and Environment	50%	●	This work is ongoing and generally on track. Liaison continues with Cladding Safety Victoria the VBA and DELWP in respect to cases in Merri-bek including those for which the Minister for Planning appointed the VBA as Municipal Building Surveyor (MBS). Cases in which Council's MBS has responsibility have all been issued with a notice or order for resolution or have otherwise been resolved. Owners corporations have clear timelines within which to resolve cladding matters and many are being funded by CSV, with none beyond the deadlines set by Council's (MBS). Work with owners corporations continue as BAU and notices and orders are removed as cladding issues are rectified. A small number of cases achieved compliance this quarter.
Continue swimming pool certification and compliance functions	Place and Environment	50%	●	Approximately 20 land owners (out of a total of approximately 1500) have failed to register their swimming pools and spas with Council, despite being issued with infringements. Given the seriousness of potential drownings associated with inadequate pool or spa safety barriers, Council will shortly commence proceedings to bring these non-registered pools and spas into compliance. Approximately 27 properties that have a pool or spa have not lodged their pool compliance certificate with Council by the required 1 June 2022. Council has issued all these properties with infringements notices and are following up to ensure compliance. Council's Swimming Pool Safety Barrier Inspector is also assisting the community with swimming pool barrier certification, with many pool owners seeking to achieve compliance through this new Council service.
Investigate financial incentives to encourage maintenance of heritage buildings	Place and Environment	100%	✓	An investigation of financial incentives to encourage maintenance of heritage buildings was completed and reported to Council at its meeting 7




Action Name	Directorate	Progress	Status	Comments
				December 2022 - Report reference 7.2 Heritage Action Plan - Status Report.
In consultation with the Coburg Historical Society, commence development plans for the construction of a new storage annex, refurbishment of the bluestone cottage and creation of a heritage garden	City Infrastructure	30%	●	Currently seeking appointment of architects to provide Council with design options for consideration. Consultants have now been engaged with a target to report back to Council at April 2023 Council Meeting.
Review service levels for responding to public realm amenity customer requests	City Infrastructure	55%	●	Further work on this initiative will occur in the third quarter of the year along with the operational planning.
Collaborate with neighbouring Councils to advocate for the removal of graffiti on State owned assets	City Infrastructure	10%	●	Collaboration has commenced, other Councils have shown interest in joining together to achieve better outcomes.
Identify opportunities to encourage greater community participation in litter collection days, tree planting, weeding, graffiti removal and clarify the community's role in nature strip management, keeping footpaths clear	City Infrastructure	25%	●	A Community Engagement Partner has been appointed to develop a project plan to trial a new model of engagement as to how we manage our parks. Two sites have been selected and further background work is being completed to provide baseline data for the two locations.
Continue to support Moreland Affordable Housing Ltd	Place and Environment	50%	●	In this quarter support for Moreland Affordable Housing Ltd (MAH) included monthly meetings between Council staff and the Executive Officer of MAH on operational matters relating to current and future development projects. MAH's Deputy Chair participated in the Safe and Affordable Homes forum at Glenroy Hub on 7 October. We offered informational, stakeholder management and research support to MAH's strategic partner for the 2-12 Wilkinson St Brunswick development.
Implement the affordable housing action plan	Place and Environment	50%	●	<p>The Affordable Housing Reference Group met in November and offered feedback to a research project on Living and Ageing Well in Merri-bek and Renter Information Nights were run by the Renters and Housing Union (RAHU).</p> <p>Specialist advice was provided on planning applications for three major proposals involving social and affordable housing and final Council approval was achieved for amendment C201 - Sheppard and Norris Street Coburg North, which includes requirements for affordable housing</p>

Action Name	Directorate	Progress	Status	Comments
				in future residential developments. This quarter also saw the release of an Expression of Interest to 24 housing and community organisations for the use of a Council owned dwelling as affordable housing. Final internal and external consultation was undertaken on the Affordable Housing Action Plan for the period 2022- 2026, which included a Safe and Affordable Homes forum at Glenroy Community Hub. The 38 invited attendees included community housing and service providers, developers, state government, people with lived experience of social housing and homelessness and membership of council's advisory and reference groups. The new Affordable Housing Action Plan was adopted by Council on 7 December.
Advocate for zero carbon in the planning scheme through the Council Alliance for Sustainable Built Environments (CASBE)	Place and Environment	65%	●	Following lodgement of the amendment request with the Minister for Planning, the Minister's office advised that the amendment would be further considered following the November 2022 State election.
Review Merri-bek Planning Scheme and prepare a plan for implementing review recommendations	Place and Environment	100%	✓	A review of the planning scheme was completed and reported to the 12 October 2022 Council meeting - Report reference 7.3 Planning Scheme Review Report.
Review Neighbourhood Character provisions	Place and Environment	40%	●	A summary report of the engagement feedback has been made public on the Conversations Merri-bek website. A review of the feedback and additional background work and research, including development of draft planning controls is currently underway.
Formalise flood modelling within the Planning Scheme	Place and Environment	25%	●	Melbourne Water have finalised a draft of their stormwater catchment modelling. This is currently being checked against Councils drainage and stormwater modelling. Council officers are currently preparing for community consultation, planned for mid-2023.
Continue the proactive planning enforcement program by Auditing approximately 80+ development projects for compliance with planning permits	Place and Environment	50%	●	The program is on track with 47 proactive audits of developments that have commenced construction currently taking place.
Carry out engagement program to seek community feedback on the future of central Coburg	Place and Environment	30%	●	Due diligence on the context and constraints for central Coburg, and the exploration of partnerships for delivery, are the current focus of work in this area, to inform community engagement later in 2023.

Action Name	Directorate	Progress	Status	Comments
Develop and adopt a set of social, economic, cultural and environmental objectives to drive future revitalisation of the Coburg Activity Centre, incorporating community aspirations	Place and Environment	35%		Due diligence on the context and constraints for central Coburg, and the exploration of partnerships for delivery, are the current focus of work in this area, to inform community engagement later in 2023.
Carry out safety and accessibility audits for Louisa Street and design tactical responses to improve the street for pedestrians	Place and Environment	30%		This quarter we are progressing design for the tactical response to improve the accessibility of Louisa St by creating a separated footpath.
Complete design and commence construction of the Saxon Street facility and open space	City Infrastructure	95%		Concept and schematic design is complete and a design and construct contract award was approved at the 19 December 2022 Council meeting.
Continue the Jobs Advocates (until 2023)	Community	30%		Jobs Advocates continue to support residents looking for work, reskilling or other social supports. Jobs Advocates have been working in community venues, shopping centres and at community events and Council festivals. Since October the Jobs Advocates have supported 1130 people in our community with assistance or referrals to services.
Progress central Coburg Revitalisation projects	Place and Environment	30%		Due diligence on the context and constraints for central Coburg, and the exploration of partnerships for delivery, are the current focus of work in this area, to inform community engagement later in 2023.
Commence Design for 260 Sydney Road (Park Close to Home)	Place and Environment	40%		Following completion of community engagement Stage 1, a design consultant team has been engaged to develop a concept design for the site based on community feedback.
Commence Detailed Design for West Street streetscape renewal	Place and Environment	0%		After the detailed design is completed in Quarter 3 (refer to Action 90 from Council Action Plan 2021/22) a tender for the construction of West Street will commence. Completion of this Action: Quarter 4 (June 2023).
Commence construction of Wheatsheaf Road streetscape improvement	Place and Environment	0%		Due to complexities about having to site proposed new trees in the road reserve for the Wheatsheaf Road Streetscape Improvement Project, permission will need to be sought for the design from the State Government who owns and manages the road. This is likely to take longer than was originally intended for the project, and construction is now expected to begin next year. Therefore, we propose that this action item is withdrawn for this year.
Commence construction of the Stewart Street streetscape improvement	Place and Environment	0%		Approved for withdrawal in quarter one.

Action Name	Directorate	Progress	Status	Comments
Commence preparation of a Planning Scheme Amendment for an Activity Centre Zone for the Brunswick Activity Centre	Place and Environment	55%	●	A report to consider a draft Activity Centre Zone schedule and Brunswick Activity Centre Structure Plan for community consultation is being prepared for Council to consider in 2023.
Continue to integrate and implement business development programs into the Shopping Strip Renewal Program (SSRP)	Place and Environment	50%	●	<p>Support was provided to over 10 businesses in this quarter (as part of the Shopping Strip Renewal Project) with shop front improvement work to complement the wider program of urban streetscape improvements. Officers also commenced preparations for the next project that is scheduled to commence consultation in early 2023.</p> <p>Related to this program of work, officers continued to maintain the 'more space' installations across Merri-bek, showcasing the work and wares of local micro-businesses. Officers also launched the Vacant Shop Grant program in October 2022 and commenced receiving and assessing applications.</p>
Develop industry sector profiles and promote the value of these sectors to the broader community	Place and Environment	100%	✓	Officers have completed the development and release of the Industry Papers series celebrating Merri-bek's most important economic sectors. In the previous financial year, four industry papers (covering Health, Retail, Creative and cultural, and Manufacturing) were developed and launched. During the first half of this current financial year, two further papers related to (i) Professional, Scientific and Technical and the (ii) Education and Training sectors have been completed and promoted through various channels including social media and Council's website - on the 'Which sectors to invest in?' page.
Scale up and implement adaptive training and support programs for micro and small businesses	Place and Environment	50%	●	<p>This quarter saw the continued development and delivery of various programs to support micro and small businesses including holding the monthly Merri-bek Business Women's Network Coffee Conversations, supporting the ongoing operation of Women's Co-Working Wednesday in collaboration with East Brunswick Village, and running a follow up event for businesses who had participated in the Plus One Entrepreneur program.</p> <p>Officers have also researched, diarised and commenced planning for a</p>



Action Name	Directorate	Progress	Status	Comments
				program at least 12 training and business networking events which will take place during the first half of 2023.
Continue to develop and support the Love Merri-bek Buy Local campaign	Place and Environment	50%	●	The Love Moreland website was transitioned to Love Merri-bek, with improvements delivered to make the website more useable including making the map easier to search. Work has advanced significantly to develop three new experience trails (breweries and distilleries, historic buildings and live music) for publishing in print and online. The brewery trail will be released in January 2023, and a live music and record shop trail will be released shortly after.
In collaboration with local traders, residents, agencies and creatives, develop and implement an activation program for Brunswick	Place and Environment	50%	●	Activation of the future Park Close to Home site at 260 Sydney Road has continued, with further night-time projection shows, and a Christmas Carols event hosted by the adjacent Church community. A closing party with activities including live music, a roller disco and art market, was held to mark the major milestone of the closing of Siteworks at 33 Saxon Street, bringing together tenants and users old and new to celebrate the achievements of the project, and look forward to the upcoming redevelopment.
In collaboration with local traders, residents, agencies and creatives, develop and implement an activation program for Glenroy	Place and Environment	40%	●	A family friendly event, with live music, games and activities was held In Belair Avenue Park in December, bringing many families and community members into the space and fostering connections within the community.
In collaboration with local traders, residents, agencies and creatives, develop and implement an activation program for Coburg	Place and Environment	40%	●	Shade structures and picnic tables were installed at Coburg Courtyard to improve usability of the space. Use of the space by Victoria University has continued this quarter.
Develop community programs framework to support wellbeing and learning outcomes	Community	15%	●	Strategic planning and training undertaken with library programming team. A timeframe and project plan for community programs framework is in place.
Continue to deliver festivals program and undertake a festivals review	Community	50%	●	Coburg Night Market and Carols by the Lake were both successfully run in December with high community participation and positive feedback. The Brunswick Music Festival, including the Sydney Road Street Party and Glenroy Festival are scheduled for 2023.
Develop and commence implementation of a new integrated arts and culture strategy	Community	30%	●	A timeline, project plan and community engagement plan for the Arts and Culture Strategy has been created. A consultant has been engaged to assist community engagement which will take place in February 2023.

Action Name	Directorate	Progress	Status	Comments
Continue to build on the Brunswick Design District Strategic Plan that prioritises infrastructure projects, programs and activation activities and the recovery of the creative sector in Brunswick	Place and Environment	50%		Council officers have continued to participate on the Brunswick Design District Steering Committee and also provide practical and participatory support to the launch of RMIT's PlaceLab Brunswick. In addition, the Steering Committee toured a Climate Action Centre in the heart of the Design District to learn more about the Centre and its activities, and potential collaborations. The Engagement and Communications working group also met to commence planning for actions in 2023.
Implement key visitor attraction activities	Place and Environment	50%		<p>Council officers worked on the first of three self-guided experience trails that will showcase exciting and appealing visitor attractions within Merri-bek, namely a breweries and distilleries trail to showcase the different beverage makers of Merri-bek. Work also commenced on a second trail to show case the live music and record scene; evolving from the initial concept to showcase creative aspects of Merri-bek so as to better fulfil the 'visitor attraction' purpose of the trail maps.</p> <p>In line with the objectives and actions outlined in the Merri-bek Visitor Attraction Plan 2022-24, officers also supported the identification of potential Renuwall sites (to install street art murals to deter and replace graffiti) and set up and launched the Merri-bek Vacant Shop Grants Program in October 2022.</p>
Local History Maintenance & Conservation: To commence planning for the collection, conservation and presentation of Merri-bek's local history	Community	70%		Heritage and Local History action plan developed and noted by Council in December. Ongoing work and resourced projects identified and allocated to Council officers, with other projects referred to the 2023/24 budget process for consideration.

Theme 5: An empowered and collaborative Merri-bek

5: Build community trust through encouraging participation, evidence-based decision making, stewardship of resources and being accessible and responsive

Action Name	Directorate	Progress	Status	Comments
Finalise and begin implementing the change of the municipal name	Community	100%	✓	We are continuing to roll-out the implementation including branding guidelines, signage replacements across the municipality and uniform updates. A once off Renaming Community Support Grant was also established by Council in December 2022. This will commence in late February/early March 2023.
Develop and implement training and resources for Council officers to support best practice engagement with Children and Young People	Community	95%	●	The first of several training sessions was successfully held with Council officers in November 2022. More sessions with officers will be rolled out in 2023.
Continue to support the CALD Merri-bek Connectors community engagement program to improve access to information and services	Community	50%	●	The CALD Connector Program continues to be successfully delivered, including engagement and capacity building with members and successful delivery of communications on a number of key Council projects and initiatives.
Deliver the Accessible and Inclusive Communications Policy Implementation plan (2021-2024)	Community	50%	●	The Accessible and Inclusive Communications Policy is still in implementation, with focus being on delivering the Accessible Comms Toolkit for staff, review of the Language Aid Program and regular support to staff in transforming their communications collateral into Plain/Easy English.
Continue to deliver the Community Engagement Policy Implementation Plan 2020-2024	Community	70%	●	Delivery of the Community Engagement Policy Implementation Plan 2020-2024 is continuing across the organisation. A year-2 progress report was presented to Council at its December 2022 meeting. A revised version of the Policy with minor amendments was also presented to Council at the same meeting.
Community at the HEART <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop efficiencies and understand pain points by conducting customer journey and service process mapping, learning from and listening to customer feedback and 	Community	50%	●	Customer Journey Mapping is continuing with positive changes being implemented to improve the Customer Experience. Our Customer Service Knowledge Base continues to be overhauled to capture current information across all services in order to serve our customers better. Options to increase proactive communications with customers is being

Action Name	Directorate	Progress	Status	Comments
<p>complaints</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve customer communication channels Implement the continuous improvement program including initiatives under Community at the Heart 				<p>explored with a view to commence a trial Quarterly Customer Experience Performance Sessions, exploring reporting performance and customer feedback which is providing visibility of improvement opportunities for teams.</p> <p>Customer Experience Training to be delivered or all staff working at the Glenroy HUB is in the final stages of review, which will then be used more broadly across Council.</p> <p>A Capability Framework is being built for each element of Helpful; Engaged; Accountable; Respectful & Timely with a view to provide a toolkit for use across Council.</p> <p>Options to enhance our website are currently being explored in order to deliver an improved customer experience.</p>
Build capability and develop staff to improve customer experience	Community	50%		<p>Customer service is continuing to improve the overall customer experience through a focus on building capability and staff development. This will be accomplished through a significant upgrade of the training program, focusing on developing team members post their initial training and as they gain mastery of the role, enhancements to the Quality programs and additional coaching from their leaders.</p> <p>Closer focus on Service Level Agreements has been occurring resulting in the ability for front line managers to be across timeframes for the resolution of customer requests. The program remains on track, with several elements of the program implemented, however, there is further work to be undertaken.</p>
Deliver advocacy campaigns that support council priorities	Chief Executive Office	55%		Coordinated advocacy continued with Merri-bek actively participating in the Northern Councils Alliance, particularly via the NCA Advocacy Priorities launch in October, and M9. Council also joined with the Northern Alliance for Greenhouse Action in the Planning for A Safe Climate campaign, strongly aligned with council priorities, and continued advocating as one of 24 Victorian councils in conjunction with CASBE for

Action Name	Directorate	Progress	Status	Comments
				<p>planning reform for sustainable design outcomes.</p> <p>A public facing campaign was run in October around Safe Access Over Bell Street Bridge for Everyone, in collaboration with Darebin Council, Coburg High School and the SABBE group. A video and social media campaign, initiating key discussions at transport forums in the lead up to the state election and publishing a parties scorecard led to community engagement in the campaign.</p>
Implement a meeting room booking system that enhances current system and encourages ease of new bookings	Community	25%	●	Glenroy Community Hub chosen as trial site for online booking system. Actions undertaken have included endorsement of the Project Brief for procurement of software to manage room bookings, establishing a project plan, timeline and working group; research and needs analysis was undertaken and an RFQ was sent out to suppliers.
Feasibility analysis to determine land and construction costs, funding sources and prioritisation of expenditure to inform developer contributions	City Infrastructure	10%	●	Internal governance for the preparation of a new development contributions plan has been established. A project team is due to be confirmed in February 2023. The list of projects to be included in the new plan are being collated by the relevant departments across council. Once this list has been finalised the feasibility analysis can be undertaken.

7.7 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT REPORT FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022

Director Business Transformation Sue Vujcevic

Finance Management

Officer Recommendation

That Council notes the Financial Management Report for the period ended 31 December 2022, at Attachment 1 to this report.

REPORT

Executive Summary

This report presents the Financial Management Report for the financial year to date period ending 31 December 2022.

The December Income Statement shows the Council surplus is \$2.2 million better than the year-to-date revised forecast as a result of higher overall revenue and lower overall expenditure. These differences are considered largely timing in nature.

Council has spent \$38.5 million on capital expenditure, which is tracking below the year-to-date (YTD) forecast of \$48.3 million, with \$58.3 million budget remaining.

Previous Council Decisions

2022-23 First Quarter Financial Report – 7 December 2022

That Council:

1. *Notes the 2022/23 First Quarter Financial Report for the period ending 30 September 2022, including operating performance and capital performance;*
2. *Notes the status of the capital works program for 2022/23;*
3. *Notes the increase to the full-year forecast for operating income of \$4.9 million and increase to expenditure of \$4.7 million arising from the 2022/23 First Quarter Financial Review;*
4. *Notes the unrestricted surplus of \$4.0 million to be transferred to the Significant Projects Reserve, leaving an unrestricted forecasted surplus of \$0.2 million;*
5. *Endorses the full-year capital expenditure forecast of \$101.1 million, arising from the 2022/23 First Quarter Financial Review;*
6. *Carries forward the following capital project funding to the 2023/24 Capital Works Program.*
 - *Merri Trail – Sumner Park to Capital City Trail Flood Mitigation – Bridge across Merri Creek into Darebin - \$190,000*
 - *Merri Creek Trail Access and Safety Upgrades - \$170,000*
 - *Park Reserve Public Toilet Upgrade - \$156,266*
 - *Road Safety at the Intersection of Albion Street and Nicholson Street - \$60,000*
 - *Holbrook Reserve Female Friendly Change Rooms - \$50,000*
 - *Craigieburn Shared Path – Stage 2 (Design) - \$50,000*
 - *Fawkner Transport Study - \$50,000; and*
 - *Street Landscape Improvements - \$17,228.*

1. Policy Context

This report supports Council's continuing commitment to open and accountable management of the financial resources of Merri-bek on behalf of its ratepayers.

2. Background

The Financial Management Report at **Attachment 1** provides Council's financial statements for the year to date (YTD) period ending 31 December 2022. The actual results are compared to the revised forecast which includes changes made in the First Quarter Financial Review which was endorsed by Council at the December meeting.

3. Issues

Council ended December 2022 with a surplus operating result of \$25.2 million which is \$2.2 million (10%) better than the YTD revised forecast of \$22.9 million. These differences are considered largely timely in nature.

Significant variance explanations are provided below to clarify where the current YTD variances are expected to be a timing or permanent difference by 30 June 2023. A timing variance is a current difference between actual result and budget which is expected to be resolved before the end of the financial year. A permanent variance is a current difference between actual result and budget which will continue to the end of the financial year.

The main items contributing to the overall variance are:

Revenue

- **User Fees** ended \$0.9 million (30%) favourable due to health registrations being invoiced for the 2023 calendar year. 50% will be allocated to FY24 (timing).
- **Grants Operating** ended \$0.8 million (10%) favourable primarily due to the early receipt of funding for the Commonwealth Home Support Program and funding from the Department of Human Services (timing).
- **Other Revenue** ended \$0.7 million (23%) favourable due to the receipt of an insurance excess payment (\$0.2 million) and higher than anticipated interest rates on investments (\$0.5 million) (permanent).

These favourable variances are partially offset by grants Capital which ended \$0.8 million (23%) unfavourable due to the timing of grant funding.

Expenditure

- **Depreciation** ended \$1.8 million (13%) unfavourable due to the of the asset revaluations at 30 June 2022 (permanent).

Key Definitions

Comprehensive operating surplus – the comprehensive operating surplus reflects the anticipated annual performance of the organisation's day to day operations based on recurrent income and expenditures.

Underlying operating result – the underlying operating result is an important measure of financial sustainability as it excludes income which is to be used for capital from being allocated to cover operating expenses.

Environmental Upgrade Agreements

No new Environmental Upgrade Agreements were approved in the quarter from 1 July 2022 to 30 September 2022. There are currently six agreements in operation, with a total value of \$484,854 Environmental Upgrade Agreement payments that have not yet fallen due.

Capital Projects – Capital Expenditure

The Capital Expenditure program year to date has an actual spend of \$38.5 million which is tracking below the YTD forecast of \$48.3 million (20%). The revised forecast includes the adopted budget plus the \$25.1 million of carried forward projects from 2021-22.

Cash

At the end of December, Council had cash and short-term investments of \$116.5 million. This is \$2.5 million higher than the cash position at the beginning of the financial year. Cash fluctuates frequently over the year due to a number of factors including the timing of payments and receipts.

Solvency Assessment

Council's liquidity ratio (current assets divided by current liabilities) is 1.8 as at 31 December 2022. The Victorian Auditor-General's Office recommends that this ratio be 1.5 or higher. The current ratio is similar to this time last year.

COVID-19 Financial Impacts

The annual budget was adopted at the June 2022 Council meeting.

Community Impact

There are no community impacts identified in this report.

Climate Emergency and Environmental Sustainability Implications

There are no climate emergency and environmental sustainability implications identified in this report.

Economic Sustainability Implications

There are no economic sustainability implications identified in this report.

Legal and Risk Considerations

There are no legal and risk considerations identified in this report.

Human Rights Consideration

The implications of this report have been assessed in accordance with the requirements of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities.

4. Community Consultation and Engagement

This report has been prepared based on information provided by managers and reviewed by directors.

5. Officer Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Council officers involved in the preparation of this report have no conflict of interest in this matter.

6. Financial and Resources Implications

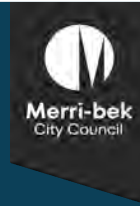
The overall corporate objective is to deliver the 2022/23 budget with the best possible outcome for Council and the community and in line with the adopted budget targets.

7. Implementation

The financial position of Council will continue to be monitored and managed.

Attachment/s

- 1 [!\[\]\(0cbc7cdca7d071aa179d7aa169df42b4_img.jpg\)](#) Council Financial Management Report - December 2022 D23/27615



Executive Financial Management Report

Six Months Ended December 2022

Executive Summary

For the six months ended 31 December 2022, Council had an operating surplus of \$25.2 million which is \$2.2 million (10%) higher than the year to date (YTD) revised forecast of \$22.9 million. This comprises total revenue of \$123.5 million which is \$1.4 million (1%) higher than the YTD revised forecast of \$122.1 million and total expenditure of \$98.3 million which is \$0.9 million (1%) favourable compared to the YTD revised forecast budget of \$99.1 million.

The main reasons for the favourable variance to YTD budget are:

Revenue

User fees ended \$0.9 million (30%) favourable due to Health Registrations being invoiced for the 2023 calendar year. 50% will be allocated to FY24.

Grants Operating ended \$0.8 million (10%) favourable due to the early receipt of the Commonwealth Home Support Program funding (\$0.6 million) and the Department of Human Services funding (\$0.2 million).

Other Revenue ended \$0.7 million (23%) favourable due to the receipt of an insurance excess payment (\$0.2 million) and higher than anticipated interest rates on investments (\$0.5 million). The investment interest budget was based on 0.3% on \$100.0 million and the actual is 1% - 4% on \$88.0 million.

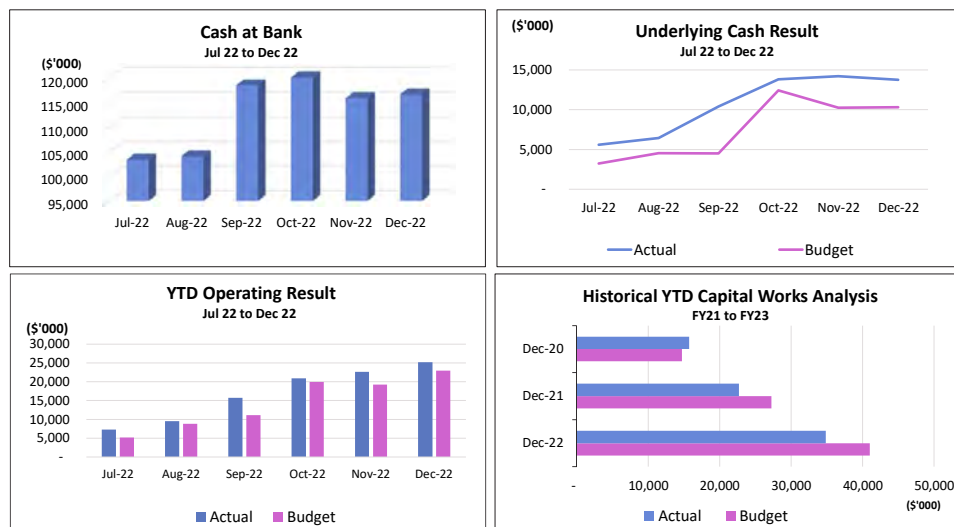
These favourable variances were partially offset by Grants Capital which ended \$0.8 million (23%) unfavourable due to the timing of grant funding.

Expenditure

Depreciation ended \$1.8 million (13%) unfavourable due to revaluations at 30 June 2022 not being factored into the depreciation budget for 2022/23.

Council has spent \$38.5 million on capital expenditure to 31 December 2022 which is \$9.7 million (20%) lower than the YTD revised forecast, with \$62.6 million (62%) of the full year revised budget remaining. The underspend comprises a number of minor variances, the most material being Fleming Park Masterplan Implementation \$2.3 million underspent and Park Close to Home Frith Street \$1.4 million underspent.

Cash assets are \$116.5 million at 31 December 2022. This is a increase of \$2.5 million on 30 June 2022 cash levels. Cash fluctuates frequently over the year due to a number of factors including the timing of payments and receipts. The increased cash position is primarily a result of the timing of rate payments as the second instalments were due at the end of November.



Merri-bek City Council
Consolidated Income Statement
Six Months Ended December 2022

YTD Variance (\$)	YTD Variance (%)
when >\$100k	when > 10%
when <\$100k & > -10%	when < 10% & > -10%
when < -100%	when < -10%

Full Year Original Budget (\$'000)	Revenue & Expenditure	NOTES	YTD Actual (\$'000)	YTD Revised Forecast (\$'000)	YTD Variance (\$'000)	YTD Variance (%)	Full Year Revised Forecast (\$'000)
	Revenue						
177,529	Rates and Charges		89,681	89,690	(8)	0%	178,210
16,772	Statutory Fees and Fines		9,468	9,500	(32)	0%	17,389
6,873	User Fees	1	3,891	2,991	900	30%	6,838
11,700	Contributions		5,571	5,447	124	2%	11,707
20,872	Grants Operating	2	8,928	8,151	777	10%	21,147
6,821	Grants Capital		2,768	3,607	(839)	-23%	8,572
4,117	Other Revenue	3	3,136	2,457	679	28%	5,470
85	Asset Sales		14	246	(232)	100%	365
244,769	Total income		123,458	122,088	1,369	1%	249,699
	Expenditure						
101,828	Employee Benefits		48,443	49,026	583	1%	102,230
67,733	Contracts, Materials & Services		31,408	33,803	2,395	7%	72,029
28,393	Depreciation	4	15,983	14,196	(1,787)	(13%)	28,393
236	Amortisation Expense		118	118	0	0%	236
2,931	Bad & Doubtful Debts		1,451	1,421	(30)	(2%)	2,888
2,119	Net gain/loss on disposal of assets		245	0	(245)	0%	2,119
670	Finance Costs		328	343	15	4%	722
713	Other Expenses		310	240	(70)	(29%)	740
204,623	Total expenses		98,288	99,149	861	1%	209,357
40,146	Surplus		25,170	22,940	2,230	10%	40,341

Revenue

- 1) **User Fees** ended \$0.9 million (30%) favourable primarily due to Health Registrations being invoiced for the 2023 calendar year in November. 50% will be allocated to FY24;
- 2) **Grants Operating** ended \$0.8 million (10%) favourable due to the early receipt of the Commonwealth Home Support Program funding (\$0.6 million) and the Department of Human Services funding (\$0.2 million);
- 3) **Other Revenue** ended \$0.7 million (28%) favourable primarily due to higher than anticipated interest rates on investments. The budget was based on 0.3% on \$100 million and the actual is 1% - 3% on \$83 million;

Expenditure

- 4) **Depreciation** ended \$1.8 million (13%) unfavourable due to revaluations at 30 June 2022 not being factored into the depreciation budget for 2022/23.

Merri-bek City Council
Underlying Result Analysis
Six Months Ended December 2022

Adopted Budget (\$'000)		YTD Actuals (\$'000)	YTD Revised Forecast (\$'000)	YTD Variance (\$'000)	YTD Variance (%)	Full Year Revised Forecast (\$'000)
38,028	Surplus for the Year	25,170	22,940	2,230	10%	40,341
38,028	Surplus/Deficit	25,170	22,940	2,230	10%	40,341
	<i>Non Operating Income and Expenditure</i>					
2,119	Net loss on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant & equipment	231	(246)	477	100%	2,119
(55)	Contributions Capital (cash & non monetary)	(1,544)	(28)	(1,516)	5431%	(62)
(6,821)	Grants - Capital	(2,768)	(3,607)	839	-23%	(8,572)
(10,000)	PRRLF Reserve	(3,248)	(4,687)	1,439	-31%	(10,000)
(1,645)	DCP Reserve	(780)	(732)	(47)	6%	(1,645)
(16,402)	Total Capital Income	(8,108)	(9,300)	1,192	-13%	(18,160)
21,626	Underlying Result	17,062	13,640	3,422	25%	22,181
	<i>Less</i>					
2,092	Loan Principal Repayments	661	661	(0)	0%	2,092
6,710	Additional Rates Funded CAPEX	1,950	1,950	0	0%	3,901
0	Operating Grants brought forward from FY24	0	0	0	0%	0
12,905	Transfers to Reserves - Operating	0	0	0	0%	17,891
(533)	Transfers from Reserves - Operating	0	0	0	0%	(2,671)
0	Carry Forwards processed into FY24	723	723	0	0%	723
21,174	Total Transfers & Other	3,335	3,335	(0)	0%	21,935
452	Unrestricted surplus / (deficit)	13,727	10,305	3,422	33%	246

Merri-bek City Council
Balance Sheet
As at 31 December 2022

	NOTES	December 2022 (\$'000)	December Revised Forecast 2021-22 (\$'000)	Variance to Forecast (\$'000)	Prior Year June 2022 (\$'000)	Movement Since 30 June 2022 (\$'000)
ASSETS						
Current assets						
Cash Assets		112,530	111,230	1,300	17,052	95,479
Receivables		130,831	130,533	298	38,909	91,925
Other Financial Assets		4,000	4,000	0	97,000	(93,000)
Inventories		294	297	(3)	294	(0)
Non Current Assets Classified As Held For Sale		2,119	2,119	0	2,119	0
Other Assets		2,129	2,328	(199)	2,416	(287)
Total current assets		251,904	250,507	1,396	157,790	94,117
Non current assets						
Unlisted Shares		2	2	0	2	(0)
Property, Plant & Equipment		2,670,780	2,671,587	(807)	2,646,815	23,965
Right of use assets		945	945	0	945	(0)
Investments		28,870	28,870	-	28,870	(0)
Total non-current assets		2,700,597	2,701,404	(807)	2,676,631	23,964
Total Assets		2,952,501	2,951,911	589	2,834,421	118,081
LIABILITIES						
Current liabilities						
Payables						
Payables		22,935	24,697	1,762	12,337	10,599
Revenue Received in Advance		90,126	90,126	(0.45)	3,272	86,854
Provisions		20,803	21,557	754	21,072	(269)
Interest Bearing Loans and Borrowings		1,326	1,326	-	1,326	0
Trust Funds & Deposits		1,173	1,173	(0.19)	5,465	(4,292)
Total current liabilities		136,364	138,879	2,515	43,472	92,893
Non current liabilities						
Provisions		2,253	2,059	(194)	2,253	0
Interest Bearing Loans and Borrowings		23,176	22,495	(681)	23,157	19
Total non current liabilities		25,429	24,554	(875)	25,410	19
Total Liabilities		161,793	163,433	1,640	68,882	92,912
Net Assets		2,790,708	2,788,478	2,230	2,765,538	25,170
EQUITY						
Reserves						
Asset Revaluation Reserves		1,969,930	1,814,354	155,576	1,969,487	443
General Reserves		89,012	85,601	3,411	85,120	3,892
Total Reserves		2,058,942	1,899,955	158,987	2,054,607	4,335
Surplus						
Accumulated Surplus		731,767	888,524	(156,757)	710,932	20,834
Total Accumulated Surplus		731,767	888,524	(156,757)	710,932	20,834
Total Equity		2,790,708	2,788,478	2,230	2,765,539	25,170

Merri-bek City Council
Cashflow Statement
Six Months Ended December 2022

	NOTES	YTD December 2022 (\$'000)	YTD December Revised Forecast 2021-22 (\$'000)	Variance to Forecast (\$'000)
Cash flows from operating activities				
Receipts				
Rates and charges	1	93,542	88,810	4,732
User fees		7,601	3,968	3,632
Statutory fees and fines		4,880	9,078	(4,199)
Grants - operating		9,821	8,848	973
Grants - capital		3,045	3,906	(861)
Contributions - Cash (operating & capital)		5,539	4,364	1,175
Interest		1,082	1,271	(189)
Other receipts (includes rents & reimbursements)		3,050	1,680	1,370
Tax / Trust funds		3,225	4,979	(1,754)
		131,784	126,904	4,880
Payments				
Employee costs		(50,637)	(48,021)	(2,615)
Materials and consumables		(33,406)	(35,641)	2,235
Other payments		(548)	(270)	(278)
		(84,590)	(83,932)	(659)
Net cash provided by (used in) operating activities		47,194	42,973	4,221
Cash flows from investing activities				
Proceeds from sale of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment		(136)	(360)	223
Payments for property, infrastructure, plant and equipment		(43,588)	(40,378)	(3,210)
Deposits movement (includes trust monies and deposits held)		(1)	(63)	62
Net cash provided by (used in) investing activities		(43,725)	(40,801)	(2,924)
Cash flows from financing activities				
Finance costs		(328)	(331)	3
Proceeds from borrowings		0	0	0
Repayment of borrowings		(661)	(661)	0
Net cash provided by (used in) financing activities		(990)	(992)	3
Net increase / (decrease) in cash & cash equivalents		2,479	1,179	1,300
Cash Position **				
Non-restricted Cash at 1 July 2022		17,051	17,051	0
Other Financial Assets at 1 July 2022		97,000	97,000	0
Cash & cash equivalents at beginning of financial year		114,051	114,051	0
Non-restricted Cash at close of period		112,530	111,230	1,300
Other Financial Assets at close of period	2	4,000	4,000	0
Cash & cash equivalents at end of reporting period		116,530	115,230	1,300
Net increase / (decrease) year to date		2,479	1,179	1,300

NOTES:

1. Rates cash collection ended \$4.7 million favourable to budget. The internal debt collection plan has commenced to address outstanding amounts.

2. The restricted cash is made up of term deposits with a maturity date over 3 months.

Merri-bek City Council
Top Ten Capital Projects by Annual Budget Value
Six Months Ended December 2022

YTD Variance (\$)	YTD Variance (%)
when > 50	when > 0.15
when < 50	when < 0.15
when > 25	when > 0.1
when < 25	when < 0.1

Revised Forecast (\$'000)	Capital Project	NOTES	YTD Actuals (\$'000)	YTD Revised Forecast (\$'000)	YTD Variance (\$'000)	YTD Percentage Variance (\$'000)	Commitments (\$'000)
101,132	Grand Total (All Projects)		38,541	48,275	9,734	20%	38,204
6,118	52190023 - Park Close to Home Frith Street		808	2,200	1,392	63%	4,588
5,960	5269459 - Fleming Park Masterplan Implementation		3,017	5,301	2,284	43%	1,487
5,900	53590321 - Kerbside Waste Reform		964	803	(161)	-20%	5,363
5,000	52690254 - Saxon St Community Hub : Brunswick		558	414	(144)	-35%	633
3,530	44490166 - Hosken Reserve - Football Pitch		14	0	(14)	0%	0
2,006	5567929 - Resurfacing Program - Various		1,176	806	(370)	-46%	868
2,000	5568556 - Footpath & Bikepath Renewals : Various		666	830	164	20%	1,307
1,738	52690127 - Fawkner Leisure Centre Redevelopment		814	784	(29)	-4%	1,214
1,517	52690238 - Oak Park Kindergarten		3	79	76	96%	178
1,424	52690216 - Doris Blackburn Kindergarten : Shore Reserve		11	69	58	84%	18

Merri-bek City Council
Top Ten Capital Projects by YTD Overspend
(Excluding property purchases and fully funded capital projects)
Six Months Ended December 2022

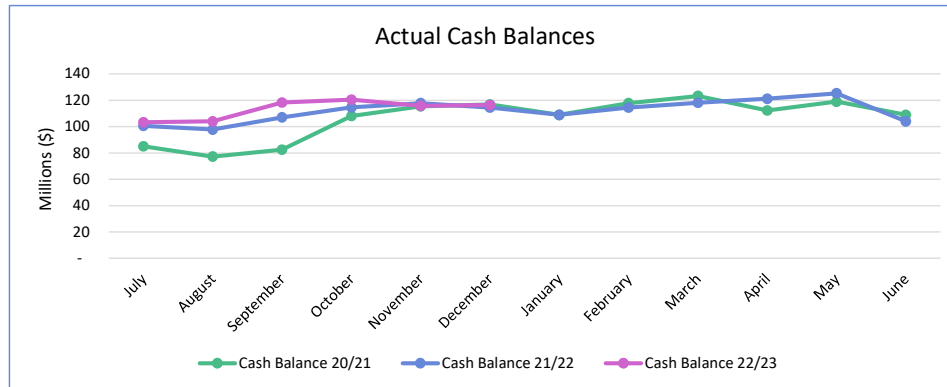
Revised Forecast (\$'000)	Capital Project	NOTES	YTD Actuals (\$'000)	YTD Revised Forecast (\$'000)	YTD Variance (\$'000)	YTD Percentage Variance (\$'000)	Commitments (\$'000)
101,132	Grand Total (All Projects)		38,541	48,275	9,734	20%	38,204
2,006	5567929 - Resurfacing Program - Various		1,176	806	(370)	-46%	868
173	52690099 - Park St Child Care Centre : 785 Park St, Brunswick		429	172	(257)	-150%	105
1,035	3459274 - Equipment Refresh & Services : Various		678	430	(248)	-58%	22
0	64590350 - CERES - Fire Claim Settlement		200	0	(200)	-100%	0
5,900	53590321 - Kerbside Waste Reform		964	803	(161)	-20%	5,363
515	52390299 - Trevannion St - Corrigan - Hiltion, Glenroy		319	170	(149)	-87%	127
5,000	52690254 - Saxon St Community Hub : Brunswick		558	414	(144)	-35%	633
0	52490139 - Threshold Pedestrian Treatments - LRCI		81	0	(81)	-100%	56
340	52190140 - Park Asset Renewal - Gilpin Park		416	340	(76)	-22%	2
200	5248878 - Traffic Management Devices : Various Locations		205	135	(70)	-52%	369

Merri-bek City Council
Top Ten Capital Projects by YTD Underspend
Six Months Ended December 2022

Revised Forecast (\$'000)	Capital Project	NOTES	YTD Actuals (\$'000)	YTD Revised Forecast (\$'000)	YTD Variance (\$'000)	YTD Percentage Variance (\$'000)	Commitments (\$'000)
101,132	Grand Total (All Projects)		38,541	48,275	9,734	20%	38,204
5,960	5269459 - Fleming Park Masterplan Implementation		3,017	5,301	2,284	43%	1,487
6,118	52190023 - Park Close to Home Frith Street		808	2,200	1,392	63%	4,588
537	44490300 - Charles Mutton Res-Tennis Crt Resurface & Lighting		49	537	488	91%	436
1,130	52690169 - Sumner Park : 3 Alister Street, North Fitzroy		0	450	450	100%	960
1,350	5537134 - Replace Council Fleet : Walter St depot		84	430	346	80%	487
1,071	52690010 - Glenroy Community Hub		437	771	334	43%	1,523
496	52390297 - Flinders St- O'Hea St to Murray St, Coburg		181	496	315	63%	245
500	34690334 - Core System Upgrade - Various		16	300	284	95%	0
295	52690260 - Wallace Reserve - North		12	295	283	96%	200
461	44490170 - Tennis Courts - West Brunswick		200	461	261	57%	275

Merri-bek City Council - Cash & Investments

Six Months Ended December 2022



Bank	Type of account	Interest Rate	S & P short term rating	Amount (\$'000)
Westpac	Transaction	0.50%	A-1+	\$ 7,710
Westpac	Investment	3.30%	A-1+	\$ 20,812
				\$ 28,522

	Maturity date	Interest Rate	S & P short term rating	Amount (\$'000)	Ratio
CBA - 3	07-Mar-23	3.67%	A-1+	\$ 6,000	11.36%
CBA - 3	24-Feb-23	3.33%	A-1+	\$ 4,000	
Bendigo Bank - 4	18-Apr-23	3.80%	A-2	\$ 4,000	18.18%
Bendigo Bank - 3	07-Mar-23	3.55%	A-2	\$ 7,000	
Bendigo Bank - 3	06-Mar-23	3.55%	A-2	\$ 5,000	
IMB - 3	29-Mar-23	3.70%	A-2	\$ 5,000	13.64%
IMB - 3	23-Jan-23	3.35%	A-2	\$ 4,000	
IMB - 3	09-Jan-23	3.40%	A-2	\$ 3,000	
ME Bank - 3	27-Jan-23	3.45%	A-2	\$ 4,000	15.91%
ME Bank - 4	01-Feb-23	3.65%	A-2	\$ 10,000	
NAB - 4	21-Feb-23	3.64%	A-1+	\$ 7,000	7.95%
Suncorp - 4	11-Jan-23	3.30%	A-1	\$ 11,000	21.59%
Suncorp - 6	10-Jan-23	3.36%	A-1	\$ 8,000	
Westpac - 4	03-Apr-23	3.73%	A-1+	\$ 6,000	11.36%
Westpac - 3	10-Feb-23	3.45%	A-1+	\$ 4,000	
Total				\$ 88,000	100%
Green				\$ 71,000	81%

Minor Cash Accounts (e.g., NAB holding account & Petty Cash)

\$ 8

Cash at Bank & Investment Total

\$ 116,530

*Credit rating; **D15/200676** - S & P Ratings tab

Procurement Delegations Report
Contracts Executed in December

Contract Description	Contract Number	Start date	Delegation Exercised	TOTAL Contract Value (Ex GST)
No delegations for December				

7.8 CONTRACT VARIATION: RFT-2021-217 – WALLACE RESERVE NORTH AND SOUTH REFURBISHMENTS

Director City Infrastructure Anita Curnow

Capital Works Planning and Delivery

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Approves the contract value variation of Contract RFT- 2021- 217 – Wallace Reserve North and South Refurbishments (originally executed under the Chief Executive Officer's delegation) from \$691,000.00 to \$877,591.06 (an increase of \$186,591.06 or 27 per cent) as follows:
 - a) Contract sum for building works of \$816,753.39 (up from \$610,000)
 - b) Further 5 per cent contingency of \$40,837.67 (original 10 per cent contingency of \$61,000 now included in item a)
 - c) Provisional sum of \$20,000 (unchanged)
2. Notes that additional project budget of \$190,144.60 is to be supported by reallocating savings in public toilet and road reconstruction projects and these budget adjustments will be presented to Council as part of the Q2 financial reports.
3. Notes that, related to the cost increases the project has also suffered delays in delivery schedule and, subject to the contract variation approval is now scheduled for completion by the end of April 2023.
4. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to do all things necessary to execute the contract variation and related documentation.

REPORT

Executive Summary

The two Wallace Reserve pavilions (north and south) were originally scheduled for refurbishment in 2021/22, with the planning and design work done during the initial strict COVID-19 restrictions in 2019/20. Several aspects of the design were undertaken without the usual site visits and as a result there are some latent conditions that were not accounted for when the project was tendered in late 2021.

In March 2022 the Chief Executive Officer awarded under delegation Contract RFT-2021-217 to United Project Solutions for these pavilion refurbishments. This followed a quotation process whereby Council invited quotations from suppliers on a tendered Procurement Australia (PA) panel. The contract was originally due to end in September 2022 and was expected to cost \$610,000 (ex GST). The total approved contract expenditure was \$691,000 including 10 per cent contingency and a \$20,000 Provisional Sum.

This project has experienced delays due to encountering latent conditions and design challenges. This has resulted an overall increase in cost and delivery timeframe.

The contractor has made claims for increased costs totalling \$206,753.39. Accepting these claims and adding a further 5 per cent of contingency would bring the total contract cost to \$877,591.06, a 27 per cent increase, above the Chief Executive Officer delegation for variations over \$700,000 of 20 per cent, and so requires approval of Council.

The report recommends that the contract RFT-2021-217 with United Project Solutions be increased in value to \$877,591.06 including 5 per cent contingency and notes that adequate budget coverage exists within the Capital Works Program for this increase.

Previous Council Decisions

Nil.

1. Policy Context

The report is in line with the Council-approved S5 Instrument of Delegation to Chief Executive Officer, dated October 2021.

This Instrument of Delegation provides that:

1. The delegate (i.e. the Chief Executive Officer) must not determine the issue, take action, or do the act or thing which involves:
 - 1.1 entering into a contract exceeding the value of \$700,000 (excluding GST) except if it is a contract for the supply of Insurance;
 - 1.2 varying a contract, either in one instance or in aggregate, that was awarded:
 - a) where the variation exceeds a total contract sum of 20 per cent above \$700,000 (excluding GST) delegation limit

Under item 1.1, Contract RFT-2021-217 was executed by the Chief Executive Officer. This report relates to varying that contract, and the size of the variation exceeds the Chief Executive Officer's delegation under 1.2 a), requiring Council approval.

2. Background

Wallace Reserve is located at 123 Justin Avenue, Glenroy. The facility is a large sporting reserve with four formal sports fields and two sports pavilions catering for soccer during the winter season, and cricket throughout the summer season. During the winter season, the Glenroy Lions Soccer Club are allocated the north and south soccer pitches.

In 2022 they had 10 junior teams (nine male and one female), and three senior teams (two male and one female). Moreland Eagles Soccer Club are allocated the east and west soccer pitches during winter. They had seven junior teams (six male and one female), and three senior teams (one male and two female).

During the summer season Wallace Reserve is an overflow facility for Merri-bek cricket clubs in the north, such as Glenroy Cricket Club and Pascoe Vale United Cricket Club. The refurbishment to create female friendly change rooms for both sports pavilions will have a significant impact on existing female players and will provide an exciting opportunity for clubs to continue to grow their female programs.

In 2019/20 some \$63,000 was allocated to undertake the design of the refurbishment projects. This work was undertaken without site visits given the COVID-19 restrictions at the time, leading to assumptions being made about conditions at the site and therefore the costs of the works that were estimated and included in the 5 year Capital Works Plan, initially flagged for construction in 2021/22.

Quotations were obtained for the works via a tendered Procurement Australia panel in late 2021 and Contract RFT-2021-217 awarded to United Project Solutions under the Chief Executive Officer's delegation in March 2022 with total authorised expenditure under the Contract being \$691,000 (excluding GST). The tender assessment Memo is included at **Confidential Attachment 1**.

3. Issues

Since the commencement of works, the project has experienced latent conditions and compliance issues both unforeseen and underestimated. This has led to claims from the Contractor for additional costs totalling \$206,753.39.

The key issues contributing to the cost claims are:

- Issues with the cricket pavilion internal ceiling structure between the amenities and the change rooms. Major issues with the ceiling supports required engineering investigation and amendment of the design.
- The existing concrete flooring in the wet areas of the cricket pavilion amenities rooms is not fit to take the future floor loads given stumps were found to be hollow. Once exposed further engineering design and geotechnical investigations were required to revise the footing design to support the refurbishment.
- The soccer pavilion refurbishments have been to upgrade the umpires change and amenities rooms. In order to limit cost increases, the scope of this project has been amended. The project will still provide improved the required gender inclusive change and amenities facility, and long-term benefits to the community.

Council has considered each claim thoroughly and re-engaged with the architect on matters raised by the Contractor. Some \$144,527.39 of the claims have been validated and a further \$62,226.00 of claims is under consideration and likely to be accepted.

In addition to the additional costs, the time taken for the additional investigations and redesign has also added to delivery timeframe. Further to time extensions previously granted, a time extension to the current contract is proposed to 28 April 2023.

Human Rights Consideration

The implications of this report have been assessed in accordance with the requirements of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities. There were no Human rights impacts identified.

4. Officer Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Council officers involved in the preparation of this report have no conflict of interest in this matter.

6. Financial and Resources Implications

Contract costs

Accepting the Contractor's claims for this project with allowance for a further contingency of 5 per cent will increase the contract sum to \$816,753.39 and the total value of the contract to \$877,591.06 excluding GST.

A summary of the current and proposed contract costs are as follows:

Items	Value
ORIGINAL CONTRACT PROVISION	
Building works contract sum	\$610,000.00
Construction contingency (10%)	\$61,000.00
Provisional sum Authority upgrade	\$20,000.00
Total recommended contract cost RFT-2021-217	\$691,000.00
PROPOSED CONTRACT PROVISION	
Building works contract sum – PROPOSED – made up of:	\$816,753.39
Building works contract sum – ORIGINAL	\$610,000.00
Variations agreed to date (within 10% contingency) – includes \$40,000 for costs due to Covid-19 period and \$21,000 of latent conditions	\$61,000.00

Items	Value
Further variations due to latent conditions agreed to date	\$83,527.39
Estimated future variations under consideration	\$62,226.00
Further construction contingency (5%)	\$40,837.67
Provisional sum Authority upgrade	\$20,000.00
Proposed contract cost RFT-2021-217	\$877,591.06
Additional costs to be provided for	\$186,591.06

Budget position

The project was budgeted as two separate projects, for the north and south pavilions. Budget amounts have been combined given the contract has bundled both projects. The table below outlines the current budget position, including prior year expenditure, current year budget; and identifies the shortfall. This table includes the contract-related costs for RFT-2021-217 as well as the additional project costs such as its design.

Wallace Reserve pavilion projects – north (52690260) / south (52690261)	Costs relating to contract RFT-2021-217 (including contingency / provisional sum)	Other project costs (e.g. design consultants)	TOTAL
2021/22 and earlier actuals	\$ 209,108.95	\$ 72,530.05	\$ 281,639.00
2022/23 budget (carry forward from 2021/22)	\$ 481,891.05	\$ 18,719.95	\$ 500,611.00
Subtotal – current budget and prior actuals	\$ 691,000.00	\$ 91,250.00	\$ 782,250.00
2022/23 shortfall – additional budget required	\$ 186,591.06	\$ 26,750.00	\$ 213,341.06
TOTAL	\$ 877,591.06	\$ 118,000.00	\$ 995,591.06

In total, Savings totalling \$213,341.06 are to come from the following projects and added to Wallace Reserve pavilion project south (52690261):

- HE Payne Reserve public toilet (52690329): \$25,000
- Kirkdale Street Park public toilet (52690328): \$50,000
- Hillview Avenue road reconstruction (52390219): \$115,144.60
- O’Hea Street road reconstruction and (52390239): \$23,196.46

These budget adjustments will be made as part of the Q2 capital adjustment process.

7. Implementation

Upon Council’s approval of the contract variation, it will be executed by the Chief Executive Officer and works on the project will continue towards the end of April 2023 completion date.

Attachment/s

- 1 Wallace Reserve Tender Assessment Memo

D22/64464

Pursuant to section 3(1)(g(ii)) of the Local Government Act 2020 this attachment has been designated as confidential because it relates to private commercial information, being information provided by a business, commercial or financial undertaking that if released, would unreasonably expose the business, commercial or financial undertaking to disadvantage.

7.9 CONTRACT AWARD RFT-2022-333 CONCRETE AND DRAINAGE WORKS

Director City Infrastructure Anita Curnow

City Services

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Awards Contract RFT-2022-333 - Provision of Concrete and Drainage works for the period of 3 years, with two further 1-year options, to the following suppliers:
 - a) AJ Civil Estimation & Construction Pty LtdABN: 47 722 115 506
 - b) S&J Investments (Australia) Pty Ltd trading as ASJ Concrete & ConstructionsABN: 92 105 107 355
 - c) Samson Excavations and ConcretingABN: 66 809 858 712
 - d) GP Bluestone Pty Ltd.....ABN: 21 664 700 435
 - e) Grounds Paving Pty LtdABN: 25 105 850 235
 - f) JNR Civil Pty Ltd.....ABN: 18 608 122 747
 - g) Kaizen Civil Pty LtdABN: 18 619 423 068
 - h) Midcity Constructions Group Pty LtdABN: 54 282 901 947
 - i) New Horizon Construction Pty LtdABN: 29 360 54 3618
 - j) Novacon Group Pty Ltd.....ABN: 23 621 403 076
 - k) Melbourne Civil Works Pty LtdABN: 28 347 242 302
 - l) S & A Piccirillo Paving Pty Ltd.....ABN: 97 087 980 489
 - m) Tompsett Asphalt Pty LtdABN: 12 625 912 772
2. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to do all things necessary to execute the contracts and approve contract extensions or other related variations.

REPORT

Executive Summary

Council is seeking to establish a concrete and drainage works panel to provide a range of civil works across Merri-Bek for the period 2023-2028.

Council recently sought suitably qualified and experienced contractors to submit a tender for Contract RFT-2022-333 for inclusion on Council's Concrete and Drainage Works Panel. The panel will enable contractors to access works across the municipality for 2023-2028 (with a one plus one-year extension). These services are required to assist the City Works Unit in the delivery of road and footpath maintenance and capital projects. The panel members may also be called upon to deliver other relevant Council works.

The Tender was advertised in August 2022, seeking a panel of suitably experienced and qualified contractors to provide materials and services under the Contract RFT-2022-333 - Provision of Concrete and Drainage works.

A total of 15 submissions were received and 13 companies are recommended to provide concrete, and drainage works services. We have selected a greater number of contractors for this panel to tackle the wide variety of concrete and drainage works and maximise opportunities and availability of contractors to carryout specialised works.

The scope of services includes, but is not limited to:

- Footpaths
- Kerb and channel
- Vehicle crossings
- Rights of way
- Pram crossings
- Minor drainage works.

The purpose of this report is to seek approval to enter into contract with various suppliers for the provision of concrete and drainage works. The tender complies with section 109(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Previous Council Decisions

Nil

1. Policy Context

This report is in keeping with Council's commitment to accountability and sound financial management. It also addresses the requirement under Section 109(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020* which requires Council to conduct a public tender for goods, services and works where once-off or ongoing cumulative spend over the life of the contract is expected to exceed \$300,000 (incl GST) as well as the policy commitments contained in the Procurement Policy.

2. Background

Merri-Bek City Council's City Works Unit maintains and upgrades the road, footpath and associated infrastructure across the municipality. Works range from minor concrete and asphalt footpath and road repairs, drainage works, Right of Way repairs and other similar infrastructure works.

To provide a reliable, efficient, and quality service, a panel of supply contractors is required. This tender was publicly advertised, and tenders invited, via Council's 'e-tender' system, for suitably qualified contractors to deliver the required services.

Procurement Process

In accordance with Council's Procurement Policy, an open tender for Contract RFT-2022-333 was advertised in *The Age* newspaper on 27 August 2022 and closed at 3pm on 19 September 2022.

Council officers also emailed all providers that have existing relationships with Merri-bek City Council to advise them of this tender opportunity via the Procurement Portal.

A total of 15 tenders were received from the following companies:

- a) AJ Civil Estimation & Construction Pty LtdABN: 47 722 115 506
- b) S&J Investments (Australia) Pty Ltd trading as
ASJ Concrete & Constructions.....ABN: 92 105 107 355
- c) Civilink Group Pty LtdABN: 50 119 219 840
- d) Samson Excavations and ConcretingABN: 66 809 858 712
- e) GP Bluestone Pty Ltd.....ABN: 21 664 700 435
- f) Grounds Paving Pty LtdABN: 25 105 850 235
- g) Jeni Construction Pty LtdABN: 29 624 326 852
- h) JNR Civil Pty LtdABN: 18 608 122 747
- i) Kaizen Civil Pty LtdABN: 18 619 423 068
- j) Midcity Constructions Group Pty LtdABN: 54 282 901 947

- k) New Horizon Construction Pty LtdABN: 29 360 543 618
- l) Novacon Group Pty Ltd.....ABN: 23 621 403 076
- m) Melbourne Civil Works Pty LtdABN: 28 347 242 302
- n) S & A Piccirillo Paving Pty Ltd.....ABN: 97 087 980 489
- o) Tompsett Asphalt Pty LtdABN: 12 625 912 772

Tenderers were asked 12 questions covering the consideration of capacity, capability, and social / environmental / local aspects.

In assessing the tender, consideration was given to the following aspects of the tender responses:

- Experience - qualifications, skills and experience
- Capability and resources – background and proof of other similar work
- Resources – number of employees and resources and their availability
- Credibility:
 - Financial interests/viability
 - Quality Assurance Systems
 - Referees
 - Occupation Health and Safety
 - Equal Employment Opportunity
 - Environmental Management
 - Risk Management
 - Insurance level
- Compliance to conditions of contract
- Conflict of interest.

The evaluation criteria and weighting are provided in the following table:

Criteria	Weighting
Capability, Experience & Past Performance and Capacity	15%
OHS	8%
Traffic Management and works program	12%
Quality System	6%
Customer Service	6%
Social Sustainability	4%
Environmental Sustainability	4%
Economic Sustainability	5%
Price	40%

The membership of the tender evaluation panel was as follows:

Title	Project Manager/ Generalist or Nominated Speciality	Full Voting / Advisory Member
Acting Unit Manager City Works	Project Manager (Chair)	Full
Unit Manager Engineering Services	Generalist	Full
Senior Construction Engineer, Engineering Services	Generalist	Full
Contracts and Procurement Officer	Procurement	Advisory

3. Issues

The tenders were evaluated in accordance with Council's Procurement Policy. Tenders were assessed by an assessment panel against set criteria. A summary report of the assessments is provided in the **Confidential Attachment 1**.

Social / Environmental / Local Implications

The tenders were evaluated against the relevant social policies of Council. The areas covered as part of the evaluation were Environmental Management and Equal Opportunity policies and performance and consideration were given to the location of the business.

Human Rights Consideration

The implications of this report have been assessed in accordance with the requirements of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities.

4. Community consultation and engagement

Engineering Services, procurement and independent probity advisor were consulted during the tender evaluation.

5. Officer Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Council officers involved in the preparation of this report have no conflict of interest in this matter.

6. Financial and Resources Implications

The total value of the contract over its 5-year life, will exceed Chief Executive Officer delegation and therefore requires Council endorsement. All expenditure against this contract is covered from existing Base and Capital budget allocations. The Panel covers the following types of activities:

- Concrete footpath maintenance
- Kerb and channel maintenance
- Drainage maintenance (including pits and drains repairs)
- Stormwater drainage repairs
- Retaining walls
- Concrete grinding
- Footpath and bike path renewals
- Minor improvement works – transport
- Minor improvement works – engineering services

The anticipated expenditure for this contract over the 5-year contract term is \$19,000,000.00 excluding GST.

7. Implementation

It is proposed that the Chief Executive be authorised to do all things necessary to execute the contracts and any other required documentation, including authorising contract extension options in the future up to two by one-year extensions.

The contracts will commence as soon as possible following Council approval to award and it anticipated to occur by end of February 2023.

Attachment/s

- 1 Confidential Attachment 1 - Tender Assessment Matrix Panel Contract RFT-2022-333 D23/40267

Pursuant to section 3(1)(g(ii)) of the Local Government Act 2020 this attachment has been designated as confidential because it relates to private commercial information, being information provided by a business, commercial or financial undertaking that if released, would unreasonably expose the business, commercial or financial undertaking to disadvantage.

7.10 GOVERNANCE RULES REVIEW PROCESS

Director Business Transformation Sue Vujcevic

Governance and Strategy

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Notes the recent reviews of the Governance Rules and options for additional reviews.
2. Determines that option ____ is its preferred course of action.

REPORT

Executive Summary

This report has been prepared in response to the Notice of Motion submitted by Cr Pavlidis and adopted at Council's meeting of 7 December 2022, which requested that a report be prepared that outlines the process and resourcing that is required to undertake a full review of Council's Governance Rules.

In accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act) Council may amend its Governance Rules subject to ensuring that a process of community engagement is followed in amending its Governance Rules.

The full review of the Governance Rules (referred to as option 1 in this report) would require significant officer time and additional resources, with benchmarking supported by analysis of many varied technical governance provisions, utilised across multiple councils.

It is conservatively estimated that a review process of this scale could take approximately six to seven months and would require additional external resources to support this work, as this project would place additional demands on Council's currently fully committed inhouse resources.

A second option as proposed in this report is to condense the timeline and scope of the review from a full review, to a review of only specific provisions of the Governance Rules, as nominated by Councillors and officers following internal consultation.

The third option proposed for Council to consider, is to not undertake a review of the Governance Rules, at this time recognising that a full review was completed in December 2021, with further updates made in August 2022.

Previous Council Decisions

Notice of Motion – Review of Governance Rules – 7 December 2022

That Council:

1. *Receives a report at the February 2023 Council meeting, outlining the processes and resourcing required to undertake a full review of Council's Governance Rules.*
2. *The scope of the review of the Governance Rules is to include:*
 - a) *undertaking a review against best practice in meeting procedure and a comparative benchmark with other metropolitan councils; and*
 - b) *outlining options for improving the Governance Rules which includes (but is not limited to):*
 - i) *enhancing community questions and submissions*
 - ii) *refining motions and debate*
 - iii) *clarifying conflicts of interest*
 - iv) *refining records of meetings held under auspices of Council being more inclusive; and*
 - v) *removing ambiguity in the interpretation and practical application of the Governance Rules.*

Adoption of Council's Governance Rules - 10 August 2022

That Council:

- 1) *Adopts the revised Governance Rules, which provide for attendance and participation in Council meetings and delegated committees by electronic means of communication, provided as Attachment 1.*
- 2) *Thanks all submitters who provided feedback, and writes to submitters who may have provided feedback outside of the proposed amendments, explaining the purpose and rationale for the limitation of proposed amendment changes, and providing a copy of the outcome of Council's decision (including a copy of responses as provided in Attachment 2).*

Governance Rules - Regulatory Legislation Amendment (Reform) Act 2022 – 13 July 2022

That Council:

1. *Endorses the amended Governance Rules provided as Attachment 1 to this report, for community consultation for a period of 10 days from 14 July 2022 and inviting feedback from the community to be received by 5pm, 24 July 2022.*
2. *Receives a report at the August 2022 Council meeting to consider the amended Governance Rules.*

Adoption of Council's Governance Rules - 8 December 2021

That Council:

1. *Adopts the revised Governance Rules, provided as Attachment 1.*
2. *Writes to the individual submitter, thanking them for their contribution and providing a copy of the outcome of Council's decision (including a copy of responses as provided in Attachment 2).*

Implementation of *Local Government Act 2020* - Governance Rules, Public Transparency Policy and Council Expenses Policy - for Adoption - 12 August 2020

That Council:

1. *Adopts the Governance Rules at Attachment 1 to this report with the following amendment:*
 - *Modify sub-rule 3.3.4 (3) to read: An Agenda for an Ordinary Meeting held in accordance with the schedule of Council meetings prepared in accordance with sub-rule (1) will be made available on Council's website at least 6 days prior to the meeting.*
2. *Determines the commencement date for the Governance Rules to be 1 September 2020.*

1. Policy Context

Section 60 of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act) provides that a Council must develop, adopt and keep in force Governance Rules. In doing so, a Council may amend its Governance Rules subject to ensuring that a process of community engagement is followed in amending its Governance Rules.

2. Background

The purpose of this report is to outline the process and resourcing that is anticipated to be required to conduct a full review of Councils Governance Rules as proposed in the following resolution of Council dated 7 December 2022:

"That Council:

1. *Receives a report at the February 2023 Council meeting, outlining the processes and resourcing required to undertake a full review of Council's Governance Rules.*
2. *The scope of the review of the Governance Rules is to include:*
 - a) *undertaking a review against best practice in meeting procedure and a comparative benchmark with other metropolitan councils; and*
 - b) *outlining options for improving the Governance Rules which includes (but is not limited to):*
 - i) *enhancing community questions and submissions*
 - ii) *refining motions and debate*
 - iii) *clarifying conflicts of interest*
 - iv) *refining records of meetings held under auspices of Council being more inclusive; and*
 - v) *removing ambiguity in the interpretation and practical application of the Governance Rules."*

Further to this it is important to note that the background information provided by Cr Pavlidis in the Notice of Motion, stated that:

"A review of Council's Governance Rules is sought to set out options to improve the Governance Rules in alignment with best practice in meeting procedure and benchmarking against other metropolitan councils. At times there is ambiguity and difference in the interpretation of the Rules. It would be beneficial if all Councillors and the Community had the same understanding on the application of the Governance Rules, and therefore the review should include but not be limited to:

- *Enshrining a copy of all questions submitted prior to 12 noon on the day of the meeting will be circulated to councillors no later than 4pm on the day of the meeting.*

- *A written response being provided to all questions and a copy of the written response appearing in the Minutes of the next Council meeting.*
- *Establishing a seconder to a motion/amendment can reserve the right to speak.*
- *Clearly identifying when requesting a leave of absence, whether a Councillor does or does not have a general conflict of interest.*
- *Expanding upon the requirement of all internal Advisory Committees and Working Group Minutes/Notes to be presented to the Council for noting.”*

3. Issues

The most recent review of the Governance Rules was conducted in August 2022, in response to the requirements of the *Regulatory Legislation Amendment (Reform) Act 2022*, which resulted in changes to the *Local Government Act 2020* that provided for attendance and participation in Council meetings by electronic means of communication. However, this review was strictly limited to making amendments to the Governance Rules to meet the requirements of the legislated changes.

Further to this, Council had also undertaken a review of its Governance Rules in December 2021. In this review, much of the content of the current Governance Rules was retained, particularly as they were originally developed in line with the Model Governance Rules issued by Local Government Victoria in 2020.

This review resulted following changes being made to the Governance Rules:

- correcting anomalies and improving readability e.g. Rules and Sub-Rules are cross-referenced accurately and editorial amendments with the removal of preambles, overview notes and lengthy references to Act provisions
- defining the nature of Council Meetings
- provision of a new section titled Acknowledgments and Other Matters at Council Meetings to allow timely acknowledgement of community interest e.g. events
- revising and realigning Chapters for the purposes of alignment and consolidation
- amending availability of Council Agendas
- amending provisions relating Community statements
- enabling the mover of an amendment to have a ‘right of reply’
- amending provisions relating to Questions of Council
- increasing provisions regarding the safe use and storage of Council’s Seal
- amending provisions relating to Motions Moved in Block.

As the Governance Rules have already been reviewed twice during this Council term, this report outlines three options for Council to consider in relation to the proposal to review its Governance Rules. Each of the options is addressed below:

Option 1

The full review of the Governance Rules is a project that would require significant officer time, with benchmarking and analysis of a large number of technical governance provisions contained in the Governance Rules of multiple councils.

It is conservatively estimated that a review process of this scale, would take approximately six to seven months and require the support of external resources. The following timeline is an indicative guide of the process and time that would be required to undertake a comprehensive review of the Governance Rules:

Stage 1 - Early 2023

Detailed project planning and background research to be undertaken (incl. comprehensive benchmarking and technical analyses to identify best practices).

Stage 2 – May 2023

Councillor Briefing to discuss any opportunities for amendments as identified by Councillors, and those identified by Council officers as a result of the benchmarking process.

Stage 3 - June 2023

Councillor Briefing to discuss the draft amendments as proposed by officers.

Stage 4 - July 2023

Council considers the approval of the draft Governance Rules (as amended) for community consultation.

Stage 5 - July 2023

Community engagement process to be commenced, inviting community feedback on the proposed amendments to the governance rules.

Stage 6 - August 2023

Community feedback to be analysed and final proposed changes to the governance rules to be developed and incorporated in the draft document.

Stage 7 - September 2023

Council considers the draft Governance Rules for adoption.

This timeline is indicative only and would be subject to change if unforeseen complexities or contentious issues were to arise, such as matters requiring legal clarification or human rights advice etc.

As the Governance Unit already has a full work program for the year, it would be necessary to seek additional resources to assist with a review process of this scale. At the time of writing this report, officers have not been able to secure formal quotes from external agencies to assist with the review, however it is estimated that an external resource would be required for approximately 4-5 weeks to assist with the review. It is anticipated that the cost for the type of assistance, could be up to \$20,000.

Furthermore, it should be noted that it is often challenging to remove all “ambiguity” from every part of the entire Governance Rules. Standing orders for meeting procedure will usually inevitably involve a degree of interpretation for some provisions, especially if an unusual situation arises that had not been predicted, however Council should always seek to improve and continue to deliver best practice with minimal ambiguity.

As part of the review process, Council officers would aim to make recommendations that reduce or mitigate as much ambiguity as possible.

Option 2

Should Council prefer to condense the timeline and cost for the review of the Governance Rules, another option is to consider the reduction of the scope of the review from a full review, to a review of only the specific sections of the Governance Rules nominated by Councillors and officers, as requiring further clarity or benchmarking for best practice.

Option 3

Council may also prefer not to undertake a review of the Governance Rules at this time. If this is Councils preferred option, it is anticipated that the next review of the Governance Rules would be undertaken following the commencement of the next Council term or as otherwise required to meet any future legislative changes.

Legal and risk considerations

Council's current Governance Rules satisfy the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020*. It is essential that during any review process, careful consideration is given to ensuring that any proposed amendments to the Governance Rules comply with all relevant legislative requirements.

Human Rights Consideration

When reviewing the Governance Rules, consideration must be given to upholding people's human rights as required by the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities (Victoria). In particular, the right to freedom of expression (section 15) providing that people are free to say what they think and want to say.

4. Community consultation and engagement

It is proposed that as part of the Governance Rules review process, consultation will be undertaken with Councillors at two Councillor Briefing sessions.

The draft revised Governance Rules would subsequently be made available on the Conversations Merri-bek website, inviting written submissions from the community.

The feedback received from the community would then be considered when preparing the final draft Governance Rules for presentation to Council, for final adoption.

Affected persons rights and interests

Prior to making a decision that affects a person's rights, Council must identify whose rights may be directly affected and provide an opportunity for that person (or persons) to convey their views regarding the effect on their rights, and for those expressed views to then be considered. A review of the Governance Rules would require that Council invites affected persons to contribute to the review of the Governance Rules, in line with Council's Community Engagement and Public Participation Policy.

5. Officer Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Council officers involved in the preparation of this report have no conflict of interest in this matter.

6. Financial and Resources Implications

The costs associated with conducting a full review of the Governance Rules can be partially met using inhouse resources, however, assistance from external resources will also be required. The estimated cost of the external resources required, is expected to be in the vicinity of \$20,000.

The costs associated with undertaking a condensed review of the Governance Rules can be met within existing budget allocations.

7. Implementation

Should Council determine in favour of Option 1, to undertake a full review of the Governance Rules in accordance with the timeline as outlined in this report, officers will procure external resources and the initial research, benchmarking will commence in February 2023.

Should Council determine in favour of Option 2, to undertake a condensed review of the Governance Rules, officers will commence internal consultation process with Councillors, to ascertain any opportunities for amendments to the Governance Rules that may be identified by Councillors.

Should Council determine in favour of Option 3, to not undertake a review of the Governance Rules at this time, it is anticipated that the next review of the Governance Rules would be undertaken following the commencement of the next Council term or as otherwise required by future legislative changes impacting the current Governance Rules.

Attachment/s

There are no attachments for this report.

7.11 GOVERNANCE REPORT - FEBRUARY 2023 - CYCLICAL REPORT

Director Business Transformation Sue Vujcevic

Governance and Strategy

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Notes the summary of minutes from the Human Rights and Inclusion Advisory Committee meeting held 27 October 2022 and the Sustainable Transport Advisory Committee meeting held on 6 December 2022, at Attachment 1 to this report.
2. Notes the summary of minutes from the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held 20 December 2022, at Attachment 2 to this report.
3. Notes the Records of Meetings, at Attachment 3 to this report.
4. Notes responses to questions taken on notice during Public Question Time at the September and December 2022 Council meetings, at Attachment 4 to this report.
5. Appoints Councillor _____ as a representative to the Audit and Risk Committee for the 2022/2023 Mayoral year.
6. In accordance with the recommendation of the Independent Member Review Panel, reappoints Lisa Tripodi as an independent member of the Audit and Risk Committee for the period 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2025.
7. Approves the attendance of the Mayor Councillor Panopoulos and Councillor Riley at the Islamic Museum of Australia - Gala Dinner on Saturday on 18 February 2023, at the cost of \$170 per ticket.

REPORT

Executive Summary

The Governance report is prepared as a monthly standing report to Council, which provides a single reporting platform for a range of statutory compliance, transparency, and governance related matters.

This Governance report includes:

- A summary of minutes from the Human Rights and Inclusion Advisory Committee held 27 October 2022.
- A summary of minutes from the Sustainable Transport Advisory Committee meeting held on 6 December 2022.
- A summary of minutes from the Audit and Risk Committee held 20 December 2022.
- Records of Meetings, with a recommendation that Council notes the records.
- Responses to Public Question Time items taken on notice at the 14 September and 7 December 2022 Council meetings, with a recommendation that Council notes the responses.
- The appointment of a Councillor representative to the Audit and Risk Committee.
- The reappointment of Lisa Tripodi as an independent member of the Audit and Risk Committee for the period 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2025.

- A request seeking approval for the Mayor Cr Panopoulos and Cr Riley to attend the Islamic Museum of Australia - Gala Dinner on Saturday on 18 February 2023.

Previous Council Decisions

Nil

1. Policy Context

Reports from Advisory Committees to Council provided in accordance with the Terms of Reference.

The *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act) and the Governance Rules set out the requirements for keeping and reporting records of meetings held under the auspices of Council.

Council's Governance Rules contains provisions which enable the Chairperson to take a question On Notice, with a considered written response being provided to the questioner, in circumstances including where the question requires information that is either not available or accessible at the time of that meeting, or where the time allowed for Public Question Time has elapsed.

2. Background

The Governance Report is prepared as a monthly report to Council to provide a single reporting platform for a range of statutory compliance, transparency, and governance related matters.

In accordance with best practice principles and good governance practice, and to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Act, this report incorporates matters including reporting of Advisory Committees, records of meetings held under the auspice of Council, items relating to the delegation of Council powers and duties, and policy and strategy reporting.

3. Issues

Human Rights and Inclusion Advisory Committee minutes

A summary of the minutes of the Human Rights and Inclusion Advisory Committee meeting held 27 October 2022 is provided at **Attachment 1** for Council's information. The minutes do not contain any recommendations from the Committee to Council.

Sustainable Transport Advisory Committee

A summary of minutes from the Sustainable Transport Advisory Committee meeting held on 6 December 2022 is provided at **Attachment 1** for Council's information. The minutes do not contain any recommendations from the Committee to Council.

Audit and Risk Committee minutes

A summary of the minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held 20 December 2022 is provided at **Attachment 2** for Council's information.

Records of Meetings held under the auspice of Council

Records of matters discussed at meetings organised or hosted by Merri-bek that involve Councillors and Council officers are kept in accordance with the Governance Rules.

Meeting Records must include meeting attendees, including organisations represented by external presenters; the title of matters discussed; and any conflicts of interests disclosed and whether the declarant of a conflict of interests recused themselves from the meeting.

Some examples of meetings organised or hosted by Council that include Councillors are Councillor Briefings, meetings with residents, developers, Government departments or statutory authorities and consultations.

Records of Meetings are presented at **Attachment 3** as follows:

- Councillor Briefing – 30 November 2022
- Councillor Briefing – 5 December 2022
- Councillor Training – 5 December 2022
- Planning Briefing – 12 December 2022
- Audit and Risk Committee – 20 December 2022
- Planning Briefing – 23 January 2023.

On Notice responses – 14 September and 7 December 2022 Council meetings

At Council Meetings, questions and/or statements are taken On Notice during Public Question Time, where persons submitting questions are not in attendance or where the maximum allowable time for public questions has elapsed.

Questions taken On Notice are provided with a written response following the meeting for which they are submitted and reported to Council at the next practicable meeting. The questions are recorded in the meeting minutes. Statements taken On Notice are provided to Councillors for information, with an abbreviated/summarised version recorded in the meeting's minutes.

The on notice responses at **Attachment 4** to this report relates to questions from September and December 2022 Council meetings regarding:

- North Coburg Rebels Baseball Club
- Cat Containment Strategy
- Community Engagement Policy Update
- Kent Road Bike Lanes
- Domestic Animal Management Act fines.

Appointment of Councillor representative to the Audit and Risk Committee

The Audit and Risk Committee is a requirement of the *Local Government Act 2020* and governed by the Audit and Risk Committee Charter, adopted in July 2021. It comprises 3 Councillor members and 4 independent, external members.

At its meeting of 7 December 2022, Council appointed Councillors Panopoulos, Riley and Pavlidis as its members of the Audit and Risk Committee for the 2022/2023 Mayoral year. However, since that time Cr Pavlidis has tendered her resignation as a member of the committee. The appointment of another Councillor member is required to fill the current vacancy, to ensure the continued operation of the Committee.

Reappointment of Independent Member, Lisa Tripodi to the Audit and Risk Committee

At its meeting held 10 July 2019, Council appointed Independent Member Lisa Tripodi to the former Audit and Risk Management Committee for a period of 3 years (under the old Charter and *Local Government Act 1989*). Ten months later at its meeting of 13 May 2020, Council appointed Lisa Tripodi for a period of 2 years and 7 months (until 30 December 2022), constituted under the new *Local Government Act 2020* and the newly adopted Audit and Risk Committee Charter. Effectively, Lisa Tripodi has now completed 1 term under the new Charter.

Therefore, in line with section 7 of the Audit and Risk Committee Charter - Evaluating Performance, the Chair, in conjunction with the Director Business Transformation has undertaken an independent review of Lisa Tripodi's performance, in the form of the skills assessment (aligned to the position description for independent members). As a result of the completed assessment, it is recommended that Lisa Tripodi be reappointed to the Audit and Risk Committee for a second term of a further 3 years (1 January 2023 to 31 December 2025).

Attendance at the Islamic Museum of Australia - Gala Dinner

The Islamic Museum – Gala Dinner is being held on Saturday 18 February 2023 at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre. The theme for the 2023 dinner is 'Connecting with Community Through Sport', which will highlight the contributions of Australian Muslim sportspeople, and the way sport can be a vehicle to deliver cross-cultural education and social cohesion. The cost to attend the Gala Dinner is \$170 per person. An invitation to attend the dinner has been extended to Councillors, with Councillors Panopoulos and Cr Riley registering their interest in attending. This report seeks approval of Council for attendance at the Gala Dinner.

Human Rights Consideration

The implications of this report have been assessed in accordance with the requirements of the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*.

4. Community consultation and engagement

Advisory committees provide a valuable communication and consultation link between the organisation, Councillors, Council and the community.

Public Question Time provides an opportunity for the community to engage with and direct their questions and statements directly to the Council.

5. Officer Declaration for a Conflict of Interests

Council officers involved in the preparation of this report have no conflicts of interest in the matters contained therewith.

6. Financial and Resources Implications

The cost of the attendance of Councillors at the Islamic Museum – Gala Dinner will be met from the Mayor and Councillor budget.

7. Implementation

Governance activity, including reports of Committees to Council, Records of Meetings and Community Question Time items will continue to be reported to Council monthly.

Subject to Council's decision the next steps include:

- Inducting the newly appointed Councillor member to the Audit and Risk Committee.
- Writing to Lisa Tripodi confirming her reappointment as an Independent Member to the Audit and Risk Management Committee.
- Confirming the attendance of the Mayor Cr Panopoulos and Cr Riley at the Islamic Museum of Australia - Gala Dinner on Saturday 18 February 2023.

Attachment/s

1	Reports from Advisory Committees to Council - February 2023	D23/7628
2	Audit and Risk Committee Summary Minutes - 20 December 2022	D23/28656
3	Records of Meetings - Governance Report - February 2023	D23/29069
4	Responses to questions taken On Notice - February 2023	D23/37966

HUMAN RIGHTS AND INCLUSION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

A report of the Human Rights and Inclusion Advisory Committee (HRIAC) meeting held on Thursday 27 October 2022 is provided for Council's information.

Councillors appointed to the HRIAC: Cr Sue Bolton; Cr Angelica Panopoulos (apology).

Key Items Discussed

- Resolutions from Council Meeting held 14 September 2022:
 1. That Council adopts the revised Human Rights Policy 2016-2026.
 2. That Council accepts the recommendation of the Human Rights and Inclusion Advisory Committee meeting of 18 August 2022 regarding organisational membership, reduction in current members and proposal to consult with the First Nations Advisory Committee regarding their preference for input and collaboration with HRIAC.
- Reports and any recommendations from associated Reference Groups
- HRIAC acknowledges Intersex Awareness Day and Ace week
- Options for collaboration with First Nations Advisory Committee
- Draft Human Rights implementation plan
- HRIAC and associated reference groups – Combined gathering in February

Disclosures of Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest was disclosed at the meeting.

Committee Recommendation

There were no recommendations from the Committee to Council.

Attachment/s

There are no attachments for this report.

SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

A report of the Sustainable Transport Advisory Committee meeting held on 6 December 2022 is provided for Council's information.

The Councillor appointed to the Sustainable Transport Advisory Committee for 2022 was Cr Conlan.

Key Items Discussed

Issues and ideas workshop Transport Strategy refresh – under the sub groups of:

- Safety
- Infrastructure
- Public Transport
- Equitable access
- Communicating transport benefits
- Coordination and taking vision to action

Disclosures of Conflict of Interest

One member disclosed that they worked for a company bidding for the community engagement tender for the transport strategy refresh. No mention of the community engagement tender or process was part of the briefing so the member stayed in the meeting.

Committee Recommendation

There were no recommendations from the committee to Council.

Attachment/s

There are no attachments for this report.



Committee:	Audit and Risk Committee (Established in accordance with the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i>)
Meeting Date:	Tuesday 20 December 2022
Representatives:	Councillor members – Mayor Angelica Panopoulos and Cr Mark Riley Independent members - John Watson (Chair), Marilyn Kearney, Lisa Tripodi and Jeff Rigby

The Audit and Risk Committee is chaired by Independent Chair, John Watson. The following business was conducted:

- No conflicts of interest were declared.
- The CEO advised the Committee that there were no known legislative breaches or instances of fraud.
- The internal auditor reported that there had been no obstructions to the work of internal audit.
- The minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee Meeting held on 6 September 2022 were **CONFIRMED**.

FINANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT

That the Audit and Risk Committee:

- **DISCUSSED** and **NOTED** the First Quarter Financial Review at *Attachment 2* to this report.
- **NOTED** the progress against the 3-year Financial Management Improvement Plan.
- **NOTED** a draft 3-year Financial Management Improvement Plan is currently being prepared and will be presented to the committee in March 2023.
- **NOTED** the monitoring and update on Council's controls for unusual transactions above acceptable risk.
- **NOTED** the management disclosures in the financial reports.
- **NOTED** Council's handling of accounting, internal accounting controls or auditing matters or other matters likely to affect the Council or its compliance with relevant legislation and regulations.
- **NOTED** the Financial Management Report for October at *Attachment 1* to this report.

Finding

Council is monitoring and managing its financial position and key controls.

BUSINESS ACTIONS PROGRESS REPORT

That the Audit and Risk Committee:

- **NOTED** the progress and status of Business Actions arising from previous committee meetings and the Internal Auditor's recent reports and publications report (Curious Eyes).

Finding

Management is progressing responses to Business Actions noting there are two actions off track for delivery.

AUDIT ACTIONS PROGRESS REPORT

The Audit and Risk Committee:

- **DISCUSSED** and **NOTED** progress toward completion of outstanding audit action items.
-

**Finding**

Management continues to progress on the completion of actions arising from internal and external audits, noting there are delays on **10** off track audit actions.

COMMITTEE WORK PLAN REPORT

That the Audit and Risk Committee:

- **NOTED** the schedule to review the City Infrastructure policies overdue for review.
- **NOTED** the report on Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality.
- **NOTED** the findings of the Child Safe Standard mini audit.
- **NOTED** and agreed to changes to the Audit and Risk Committee meetings dates for 2023.
- **NOTED** the 2022-23 Audit and Risk Committee workplan is correct ensuring that the 'Recommendations and Findings' report has been presented in September 2022 and will be presented in March 2023.

Findings

1. Management has a plan in place to review overdue policies managed by the City Infrastructure Directorate.
2. Declarations of gifts, benefits and hospitality have been recorded in accordance with policy.
3. The Child Safe Standard mini audit concluded that the processes around the management of commercially sensitive and confidential Child Safe files are adequate.
4. The meeting dates for the 2023 Audit and Risk committee meetings have been confirmed.
5. An Audit and Risk Committee report which should have been reported twice in the 2021- 22 Financial Year (September 2021 and March 2022), titled 'Recommendations and Findings' was only presented in September 2021. In 2022 – 2023, it has been presented in September 2022 and will be presented in March 2023.

COUNCIL PLAN 2021-2025 - FIRST YEAR IMPLEMENTATION

That the Audit and Risk Committee:

- **NOTED** the implementation of a cloud-based technology system (Pulse) enabling better monitoring and reporting against the Council Plan 2021 – 2025.
- **NOTED** the strategic indicators update achieved against the Council Action Plan 2021-2022(provided as Attachment 1).
- **NOTED** the outcomes achieved against the Council Action Plan 2021-2022 (period ending 30June 2022 (provided as Attachment 2) and the progress towards completion of delayed actions and the status of these actions.

Finding

That Council has appropriate systems and procedures in place measuring the performance of individual programs and activities as identified in the Council Plan 2021 – 2025 through the implementation of the annual action plans and supported by a cloud-based technology system (Pulse).



MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE OF THE USE OF DATA, INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE

That the Audit and Risk Committee:

- **NOTED** the report on Data Governance.

Finding

There are adequate protocols and standards applied to the management and governance of the use of data, information, and knowledge.

CLIMATE RISK AND RESILIENCE

The Audit and Risk Committee:

- **NOTED** ongoing activities to manage and plan for climate change risks.

Findings

1. Council endorsed the Climate Risk Strategy at the 9 November 2022 Council meeting (item 7.1, Minutes of Council Meeting, 9 November 2022). The strategy benefitted from stakeholder feedback that highlighted the most important climate impacts to the community.
2. Note the Climate Resilience Integration Lead role commenced on 24 October 2022.
3. The 2022/23 budget includes dedicated funding for resourcing and consultancy support to conduct risk vulnerability assessments of infrastructure and community services as foundational actions.

MEMORANDUMS OF AUDIT PLANNING AND AUDITS COMPLETED

That the Audit and Risk Committee:

- **DISCUSSED** and **ENDORSED** the following four Memorandums of Audit Planning (MAP) for the forthcoming audits:
 - Payroll Management
 - Procurement (above threshold/tendering)
 - Follow up
 - Public Health and Wellbeing Act Compliance
- **DISCUSSED** and **NOTED** the findings, recommendations, and management comments for the following audits:
 - Cyber Security
 - Child Safe Standards
 - Safety Process
- **NOTED** the progress against the 2022/2023 Internal Audit Plan.

Findings

1. The Cyber Security – Essential 8 audit report has ten findings. Appropriate management comments (including actions) have been provided by management.
2. The Child Safe Standards audit report has 8 findings, and appropriate management comments (including actions) have been provided by management.
3. The Safety Process audit report has 8 findings, and appropriate management comments (including actions)



have been provided by management.

4. Sufficient progress has been made against the Internal Audit Plan.

RECENT REPORTS AND PUBLICATIONS

That the Audit and Risk Committee:

- **NOTED** recent reports and publications and management comments.

Finding

Management has reviewed recent reports and publications related to issues of management controls, integrity and continuous improvement that impact the local government sector and initiated actions to mitigate Council's risk in response.

VAGO REPORT

That the Audit and Risk Committee:

- **NOTED** the VAGO Status Report as per *Attachment 1* to the report.

Finding

Council has been selected to participate in a VAGO audit concerning illegally disposed asbestos-contaminated (hazardous) waste.

RISK MANAGEMENT REPORT

That the Audit and Risk Committee:

- **DISCUSSED and NOTED** the recent IT activities and the IT Roadmap 2022-25.
- **NOTED** the Annual Risk Report.
- **NOTED** Council's management of complaints and public interest disclosures.
- **NOTED** the absence of controls which has led to four incidents.
- **NOTED** that Council's Business Continuity Plan Performance, Preparedness and Training is meeting organisational needs.
- **NOTED** the open Public Liability claims.

Findings

1. The Annual Risk Report demonstrates that Council's operational and strategic risks continue to be effectively identified and managed across the organisation.
2. The IT Roadmap 2022-25 has been prepared and Council data was not compromised when a targeted phishing attack occurred in November.
3. Council continues to manage complaints and there are no public interest disclosures.
4. Adequate remedial action has been taken to address the breakdown in controls reported to the committee.



- 5. A business continuity exercise was completed on 30 November 2022.
- 6. There are open Public Liability claims that may exceed Council's excess.

Next Meeting: 14 March 2023 at 6pm

Record of Meeting

Meeting: Councillor Briefing

Date: 30 November 2022

Meeting time: 6 pm



This Record is kept in accordance with the Governance Rules adopted by Council most recently on 8 August 2022.

Rule 9.1 provides that a record of the matters discussed at meetings organised or hosted by Council that involve Councillors and Council staff will be kept. The record will include the attendees at the meeting, including the organisations represented by external presenters, the title of matters discussed and any conflicts of interest were disclosed and the person with the conflict of interest left the meeting.

Attendees	
Councillors	<div>Cr Angelica Panopoulos, Mayor</div> <div>Cr James Conlan</div> <div>Cr Mark Riley</div> <div>Cr Oscar Yildiz</div> <div>Cr Helen Davidson, Deputy Mayor</div> <div>Cr Helen Pavlidis</div> <div>Cr Lambros Tapinos</div> <div>Cr Monica Harte</div>
Apologies	<div>Cr Adam Pulford</div> <div>Cr Sue Bolton</div> <div>Cr Annalivia Carli Hannan</div>
Council Staff (name and position)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cathy Henderson, Chief Executive Officer • Eamonn Fennessy, Director Community • Joseph Tabacco, Director Place and Environment • Sue Vujcevic, Director Business Transformation • Sandra Troise, Acting Director City Infrastructure • Sunny Haynes, Manager Property Place and Design • Jessamy Nicholas, Manager Community Engagement • Bernadette Hetherington, Manager Community Wellbeing • Alisha Abate, Community Wellbeing Lead • Lisa Dempster, Manager Cultural Development • Kim Giaquinta, Unit Manager Strategic Planning • Greg Rodwell, Manager Open Space and Environment • Richard Tolliday, Unit Manager Open Space Design and Development • Lee Dowler, Unit Manager Transport • Olivia Wright, Manager Transport • Kris Kasmawan, Transports Projects Engineer • Yvonne Callanan, Manager Governance and Strategy
External participants	Nil

Items discussed		Conflict disclosed by, general or material and the nature	Left meeting
1	Community Engagement Policy	Nil	-

This form is kept in accordance with the Information Privacy Principles and Merri-bek City Council's Privacy Policy and practices as stated on Merri-bek's [website](#).

Items discussed		Conflict disclosed by, general or material and the nature	Left meeting
2	Merri-bek Functional Zero (approach to homelessness)	Nil	-
3	Brunswick LXP update	Nil	-
4	Citizenship ceremonies	Nil	-
5	Local history plan	Nil	-
6	Open Space Strategy Update	Nil	-
7	De Carle Street bike lanes update	Nil	-
8	Special Charge Scheme – Sydney Road Brunswick Shopping precinct	Nil	-
9	Councillor Gifts and Benefits	Nil	-
10	Resolutions status report	Nil	-

Name and title of Council officer completing record: Sue Vujcevic, Director Business Transformation

This form is kept in accordance with the Information Privacy Principles and Merri-bek City Council's Privacy Policy and practices as stated on Merri-bek's [website](#).

Record of Meeting

Meeting: Councillor Briefing

Date: 5 December 2022

Meeting time: 6 pm



This Record is kept in accordance with the Governance Rules adopted by Council most recently on 8 August 2022.

Rule 9.1 provides that a record of the matters discussed at meetings organised or hosted by Council that involve Councillors and Council staff will be kept. The record will include the attendees at the meeting, including the organisations represented by external presenters, the title of matters discussed and any conflicts of interest were disclosed and the person with the conflict of interest left the meeting.

Attendees		
Councillors	Cr Angelica Panopoulos, Mayor Cr James Conlan Cr Mark Riley Cr Oscar Yildiz	Cr Helen Davidson, Deputy Mayor Cr Helen Pavlidis Cr Lambros Tapinos
Apologies	Cr Adam Pulford Cr Annalivia Carli Hannan	Cr Sue Bolton Cr Monica Harte
Council Staff (name and position)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cathy Henderson, Chief Executive Officer Eamonn Fennessy, Director Community Joseph Tabacco, Director Place and Environment Sue Vujcevic, Director Business Transformation Sandra Troise, Acting Director City Infrastructure 	
External participants	Nil	

Items discussed (list topics discuss, excluding welcome & next meeting)	Conflict disclosed by, general or material and the nature	Left meeting
1 Council meeting agenda	Nil	Nil

Name and title of Council officer completing record: Sue Vujcevic, Director Business Transformation

This form is kept in accordance with the Information Privacy Principles and Merri-bek City Council's Privacy Policy and practices as stated on Merri-bek's [website](#).

Record of Meeting

Meeting: Councillor Training

Date: 5 December 2022

Meeting time: 7 pm



This Record is kept in accordance with the Governance Rules adopted by Council most recently on 8 August 2022.

Rule 9.1 provides that a record of the matters discussed at meetings organised or hosted by Council that involve Councillors and Council staff will be kept. The record will include the attendees at the meeting, including the organisations represented by external presenters, the title of matters discussed and any conflicts of interest were disclosed and the person with the conflict of interest left the meeting.

Attendees	
Councillors	<div>Cr Angelica Panopoulos, Mayor</div> <div>Cr Helen Davidson, Deputy Mayor</div> <div>Cr Helen Pavlidis</div> <div>Cr Lambros Tapinos</div> <div>Cr James Conlan</div> <div>Cr Monica Harte</div> <div>Cr Mark Riley</div> <div>Cr Annalivia Carli Hannan</div> <div>Cr Oscar Yildiz</div>
Apologies	<div>Cr Adam Pulford</div> <div>Cr Sue Bolton</div>
Council Staff (name and position)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cathy Henderson, Chief Executive Officer Eamonn Fennessy, Director Community Joseph Tabacco, Director Place and Environment Sue Vujcevic, Director Business Transformation Sandra Troise, Acting Director City Infrastructure
External participants (include organisation represented)	Nerida – Diversity Australia

Items discussed (list topics discuss, excluding welcome & next meeting)	Conflict disclosed by, general or material and the nature	Left meeting
1 Councillor Training	-	-

Name and title of Council officer completing record: Sue Vujcevic, Director Business Transformation

This form is kept in accordance with the Information Privacy Principles and Merri-bek City Council's Privacy Policy and practices as stated on Merri-bek's [website](#).

Record of Meeting

Meeting: Planning Briefing

Date: 12/12/2022

Meeting time: 7:00pm



This Record is kept in accordance with the Governance Rules adopted by Council most recently on 8 August 2022.

Rule 9.1 provides that a record of the matters discussed at meetings organised or hosted by Council that involve Councillors and Council staff will be kept. The record will include the attendees at the meeting, including the organisations represented by external presenters, the title of matters discussed and any conflicts of interest were disclosed and the person with the conflict of interest left the meeting.

Attendees	
Councillors	Cr Angelica Panopoulos, Mayor Cr Adam Pulford Cr Helen Pavlidis Cr Lambros Tapinos Cr Monica Harte Cr Sue Bolton
	Cr Helen Davidson, Deputy Mayor Cr Mark Riley
Apologies	Cr James Conlan Cr Annalivia Carli Hannan
Council Staff (name and position)	Joseph Tabacco – Director Place and Environment Phillip Priest – Group Manager City Development Mark Hughes – Unit Manager Urban Planning
External participants (include organisation represented)	N/A

Items discussed (list topics discuss, excluding welcome & next meeting)	Conflict disclosed by, general or material and the nature	Left meeting
1 1- 3 Moreland Road, Essendon - MV/269/2022 - Lionsville		

This form is kept in accordance with the Information Privacy Principles and Merri-bek City Council's Privacy Policy and practices as stated on Merri-bek's [website](#).

Items discussed <i>(list topics discuss, excluding welcome & next meeting)</i>		Conflict disclosed by, general or material and the nature	Left meeting
2	Update on 251-265 Lygon Street, Brunswick East		
3	81A Bell Street, Coburg – Potential VCAT Consent		

Name and title of Council officer completing record: Phillip Priest – Group Manager City Development

This form is kept in accordance with the Information Privacy Principles and Merri-bek City Council's Privacy Policy and practices as stated on Merri-bek's [website](#).

Record of Meeting

Meeting: Audit and Risk Committee Meeting

Date: 20/12/2022

Meeting time: 6:00 PM



This Record is kept in accordance with the Governance Rules adopted by Council most recently on 8 August 2022.

Rule 9.1 provides that a record of the matters discussed at meetings organised or hosted by Council that involve Councillors and Council staff will be kept. The record will include the attendees at the meeting, including the organisations represented by external presenters, the title of matters discussed and any conflicts of interest were disclosed and the person with the conflict of interest left the meeting.

Attendees	
Councillors	Cr Angelica Panopoulos, Mayor Cr Mark Riley
Apologies	Blessing Mendoza, RSD Audit (external Auditors for VAGO) Lynda Cooper, Crowe Phil Delahunty, RSD Audit (external Auditors for VAGO)
Council Staff (name and position)	Cathy Henderson, Chief Executive Officer Sue Vujcevic, Director Business Transformation Anita Curnow, Director City Infrastructure - online Eamonn Fennessy, Director Community Joseph Tabacco, Director Place and Environment Simon Rennie, Chief Financial Officer Yvonne Callanan, Manager Governance and Strategy Robert Raiskums, Manager Information Technology Brian Harris, Manager People and Safety Sophie Barison, Unit Manager Integrity Risk and Resilience
External participants	John Watson (Chair), Independent Member Jeff Rigby, Independent Member Lisa Tripodi, Independent Member – online Marilyn Kearney, Independent Member – online Martin Thompson, Crowe

Items discussed (list topics discuss, excluding welcome & next meeting)	Conflict disclosed by, general or material and the nature	Left meeting
1 Finance Management Report	-	
2 Audit Actions Progress Report	-	

This form is kept in accordance with the Information Privacy Principles and Merri-bek City Council's Privacy Policy and practices as stated on Merri-bek's [website](#).

Items discussed <i>(list topics discuss, excluding welcome & next meeting)</i>		Conflict disclosed by, general or material and the nature	Left meeting
3	Committee Work Plan Report	-	
4	Memorandums of Audit Planning and Audits Completed	-	
5	Risk Management Report	-	

Name and title of Council officer completing record: Archita Pant Sercombe - Acting Audit and Claims Administrator

This form is kept in accordance with the Information Privacy Principles and Merri-bek City Council's Privacy Policy and practices as stated on Merri-bek's [website](#).

Record of Meeting

Meeting: Planning Briefing

Date: 23/1/2023

Meeting time: 6:00pm



This Record is kept in accordance with the Governance Rules adopted by Council most recently on 8 August 2022.

Rule 9.1 provides that a record of the matters discussed at meetings organised or hosted by Council that involve Councillors and Council staff will be kept. The record will include the attendees at the meeting, including the organisations represented by external presenters, the title of matters discussed and any conflicts of interest were disclosed and the person with the conflict of interest left the meeting.

Attendees			
Councillors	Cr Angelica Panopoulos, Mayor	Cr Helen Davidson, Deputy Mayor	
	Cr Adam Pulford	Cr James Conlan	
	Cr Lambros Tapinos	Cr Mark Riley	
	Cr Monica Harte	Cr Oscar Yildiz	
		Cr Sue Bolton	
Apologies		Cr Annalivia Carli Hannan & Cr Helen Pavlidis (leaves of absence)	
Council Staff (name and position)		Joseph Tabacco – Director Place and Environment Lachlan McGowan – Acting Group Manager City Development Mark Hughes – Unit Manager Urban Planning Esha Rahman – Planning Coordinator	
External participants (include organisation represented)		N/A	
Items discussed (list topics discuss, excluding welcome & next meeting)		Conflict disclosed by, general or material and the nature	Left meeting
1	1- 9 Moreland Road, Essendon - MV/269/2022 – Lionsville Site		
2	Building Enforcement - Implications of Supreme Court Appeal - Shout Rock Cafes Pty Ltd v City of Port Phillip & Anor [2022] VSC 615 (Judgment)		
3	53-57 Albert Street, Brunswick East - VCAT Decision		

Name and title of Council officer completing record: Lachlan McGowan – Acting Group Manager City Development

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XRef. D22/580755
Doc. No. D22/417900
Enq: Bernadette Hetherington
Tel: [REDACTED]

Ms Natalie Abboud
[REDACTED]

Dear Ms Abboud

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME ON NOTICE RESPONSE FROM SEPTEMBER 2022 COUNCIL MEETING

I write to you in response to your questions submitted to the 14 September Council meeting, as follows:

- **How do external consultants get their information for studies such as this, and how was the North Coburg Rebels Baseball Club use of and access to the whole site all year round completely overlooked?**

The consultants developed this report based on current allocations, use of reserves, liaison with clubs and relevant Council strategies.

Parker Reserve consists of the following facilities:

- Pavilion (main)
- Change room (x 1)
- Baseball diamond
- East ground
- West ground

North Coburg Rebels currently have an annual allocation to the pavilion and baseball diamond. A seasonal allocation is provided for the East ground in Summer and the West ground is not allocated to the baseball club.

- **Will Councillors amend the motion to acknowledge the fact that North Coburg Rebels Baseball Club exists and has year-round access to the whole of Parker Reserve?**

Council resolved to note that at the September meeting 'that the North Coburg Rebels Baseball Club has a year-round allocation at Parker Reserve'.

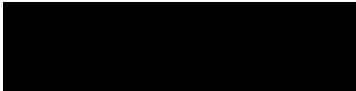
Point of clarification: Parker Reserve has multiple components and the baseball club has access to the following areas all year around:

- Pavilion (main)
- Baseball diamond

Thank you for your interest in community engagement and public participation and apologies this response has taken slightly longer than usual to come to you.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact myself or Bernadette Hetherington on [REDACTED] or bhetherington@merri-bek.vic.gov.au

Yours sincerely



Cr Angelica Panopoulos
MAYOR

12 / 01 / 2022

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Xref: PQT Dec 22
Doc. No. D22/560821
Enq: Olivia Wright
Tel: 9240 1111

Mr Ian Carmichael
[REDACTED]

Dear Mr Carmichael

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME ON NOTICE RESPONSE FROM DECEMBER 2022 COUNCIL MEETING

I write to you in response to your question submitted to the 7 December Council meeting, as follows:

Question

With a new bike lane design being installed on Kent Road this week, a Road Safety Audit which was completed back in August, found, for the second time, that the bike lanes installed 18 months ago put bike riders at risk of dooring. The four Greens Councillors, which included the Mayor, wanted to make those unsafe lanes permanent. Now with the new design the same Councillors wanted to make them permanent without being certain they will be safe for all users, including bikes, but mainly the thousands of elderly and vulnerable visiting Pascoe Vale health.

Is this a case of implicit bias and should the four Councillors declare a conflict of interest? And if so, should they be excluded from all future discussion and voting on Kent Road bike lanes?.

Response

Thank you for your interest in community engagement and public participation.

Road Safety Audits are a recognised process that identify road safety related risks and hazards. This risk that you are speaking about with car dooring was categorised with a "rare" likelihood, which is the least likely category in the matrix for a risk to occur. That said, car dooring is almost always a risk for bike riders, and so designers come up with designs to minimise this risk as much as possible, and also to minimise the impacts to the bike rider if they are in fact doored.

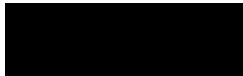
Car dooring can be a serious issue for bike riders. You may remember Alberto Paulon, aged 25, who was riding along Sydney Road in Brunswick with his fiancée in 2015, when a motorist opened their car door and knocked Mr Paulon into the path of a truck. Sadly Mr Paulon died as he had no protection. The Victoria Police Inspector that investigated the fatality said the man was not going too fast, and the truck that hit him was driving below 40 kilometres per hour.

In the rare instance that a bike rider experiences car dooring incident happens in these trial bike lanes on Kent Road, they would not be pushed into flowing car traffic as they would be protected by the kerb separators and the row of parked cars. So if car dooring did occur, the consequences would be significantly less, which is why this is a significantly safer treatment for bike riders.

I also note that the resolution by Council in August 2022 to modify the design on Kent Road and extend the trial was unanimous.

If you need further information, please feel free to contact Olivia Wright, Manager Transport on 9240 1111.

Yours sincerely

A black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Anita Curnow.

Anita Curnow

DIRECTOR CITY INFRASTRUCTURE

24 / 01 / 2023

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Xref: D22/559086
Doc. No. D22/560764
Enq: J.Nicholas
Tel: [REDACTED]

Mr Dino Albano
[REDACTED]

Dear Mr Albano

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME ON NOTICE RESPONSE FROM DECEMBER 2022 COUNCIL MEETING

I write to you in response to your questions submitted to the 7 December 2022 Council meeting, as follows:

- **Re Item 7.12 (Community Engagement Policy Update) and Item 7.24 (Governance Report)** I am still waiting for an answer to the question specifically of whether the Council forgot to implement the decision of 8 December 2021 to review the Community Engagement Policy with a 28-day public exhibition period of a revised policy in May-June 2022, or whether there was some other reason.
Why wasn't the Council resolution to publicly exhibit the policy in May to June 2022 implemented?

Thank you for your interest in community engagement and public participation.

A revised Community Engagement Policy was endorsed at Councils December 2022 meeting to be endorsed for a 15-day public exhibition period in February 2023. The revised Policy was delayed from May/June 2022 due to staff changes however, the current Policy has still been in effect throughout this time.

I trust this answers your questions, however if you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact myself or Jessamy Nicholas on [REDACTED] or jnicholas@merri-bek.vic.gov.au

Yours sincerely
[REDACTED]

Cr Angelica Panopoulos
MAYOR

22 / 12 / 2022

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Xref: PQT Dec 22
Doc. No. D22/555893
Enq: Sandra Troise
Tel: 9240 1111

Mr Simon Xue

Dear Mr Xue

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME ON NOTICE RESPONSE FROM DECEMBER 2022 COUNCIL MEETING

I write to you in response to your questions submitted to the 7 December Council meeting, as follows:

Question 1

Are cats forbidden to be outdoors beyond the premise of my home under all circumstances including under supervision and taken to a vet without a carrier or in a car?

Question 2

What local evidence do you have to justify a cat confinement in Merri-bek? Do you have the statistics for key drivers of the loss of wildlife in Merri-bek so far? What are they?

I am pleased to advise that there is no proposal for a cat curfew. Officers had been recommending confinement of cats, which would be a voluntary, education-based approach to reducing the number of cats roaming the streets. However, Council made a slightly different decision than the officer recommendation. I have detailed the background and what is planned below, responding in more detail to your questions.

In 2021 we sought feedback on the Domestic Animal Management Plan, our plan for managing cats and dogs in our community. We heard from the community that a potential solution to cat issues was a cat curfew. We heard from 1,986 people during the engagement in May and June and a large number of people were concerned about nuisance cats, overpopulation and attacks on wildlife and expressed their interest in a cat curfew. Council conducted research into these issues gathering data and information from other Councils, RSPCA, other animal organisations, and industry experts. We heard from the experts that the best way to address these issues is not through enforcement but by investing in cat desexing, encouraging cat ownership, and educating about responsible cat ownership.

We presented a report with a recommendation to the council meeting on 7 December 2022. The report detailed the findings from our engagement and the research on the best ways to address the issues, we recommended a strong education campaign on the benefits of keeping cats at home, cat desexing and increasing the value of cats.

At the council meeting on 7 December 2022 Council considered the report and heard from members of the public and decided on an alternate motion that focused on unowned and semi-owned cats as a more effective way to keeping cats and wildlife safe. Council has also requested a report to be presented to Council in 2023 that focuses on unowned and semi-owned cats and takes a multi-pronged approach to dealing with the issue of over-population of cats.

We will prepare a report to be presented to Council in 2023 on a range of proposals and recommendations for a targeted desexing program of unowned and semi-owned cats, information on other local councils that have implemented cat management strategies including cat curfews, and for an education program to support residents in keeping their cats at home. The report will also consider the number of cats brought into the Epping Animal Welfare Facility, impacts on wildlife and budget.

In the meantime, we will continue to encourage residents who feed cats but do not 'own' them, to take ownership of these cats and provide them with the best possible care by desexing, microchipping and registering them. Our [free cat desexing](https://merri-bek.vic.gov.au/desexing) program continues for Merri-bek residents who have a concession card. If you or someone you know is eligible you can apply on our website at <https://merri-bek.vic.gov.au/desexing>

If you need further information, please feel free to contact Sandra Troise, Manager Amenity and Compliance on 9240 1111.

Yours sincerely

Anita Curnow
DIRECTOR CITY INFRASTRUCTURE

17 / 01 / 2023

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Xref: PQT Dec 22
Doc. No. D22/560773
Enq: Sandra Troise
Tel: 9240 1111

Ms Kylie Simpson

Dear Ms Simpson

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME ON NOTICE RESPONSE FROM DECEMBER 2022 COUNCIL MEETING

I write to you in response to your question about the cat containment report, which was submitted to the 7 December Council meeting, as follows:

Question

Why are council using obscure language about their cat containment policy? Are you planning on making it mandatory in the future?

That's what it seems to me. I support a 8pm to 5am curfew with no fines associated with this. Anything beyond this has zero research to back it up and is punitive.

Answer to Question

Thank you for your interest in the public participation. In summary, Council has no plans at present to introduce a mandatory cat curfew. I cannot answer your question about a future decision to introduce a curfew, but Council certainly has not made a decision now to introduce one in the future.

Your suggestion of a 'curfew' with no fines attached essentially aligns with the recommendation officers had made to encourage containment, but not take a punitive approach. Below is some more background and information about the Council decision that was made on 7 December.

In 2021 we sought feedback on the Domestic Animal Management Plan, our plan for managing cats and dogs in our community. We heard from the community that a potential solution to cat issues was a cat curfew. We heard from 1,986 people during the engagement in May and June and a large number of people were concerned about nuisance cats, overpopulation and attacks on wildlife and expressed their interest in a cat curfew. Council conducted research into these issues gathering data and information from other Councils, RSPCA and other animal organisations, and industry experts.

We heard from the experts that the best way to address these issues is not through enforcement but by investing in cat desexing, encouraging cat ownership, and educating about responsible cat ownership.

We presented a report with a recommendation to the council meeting on 7 December 2022. The report detailed the findings from our engagement and the research on the best ways to address the issues, we recommended a strong education campaign on the benefits of keeping cats at home, cat desexing and increasing the value of cats. At the council meeting on 7 December 2022 Council considered the report and heard from members of the public and decided on an alternate motion that focused on unowned and semi-owned cats as a more effective way to keeping cats and wildlife safe. Council has also requested a report to be presented to Council in 2023 that focuses on unowned and semi-owned cats and takes a multi-pronged approach to dealing with the issue of over-population of cats.

We will prepare a report to be presented to Council in 2023 on a range of proposals and recommendations for a targeted desexing program of unowned and semi-owned cats, information on other local councils that have implemented cat management strategies including cat curfews, and for an education program to support residents in keeping their cats at home. The report will also consider the number of cats brought into the Epping Animal Welfare Facility, impacts on wildlife and budget.

In the meantime, we will continue to encourage residents who feed cats but do not 'own' them, to take ownership of these cats and provide them with the best possible care by desexing, microchipping and registering them. Our [free cat desexing](https://merri-bek.vic.gov.au/desexing) program continues for Merri-bek residents who have a concession card. If you or someone you know is eligible you can apply on our website at <https://merri-bek.vic.gov.au/desexing>.

If you need further information, please feel free to contact Sandra Troise, Manager Amenity and Compliance on 9240 1111.

Yours sincerely

Anita Curnow
DIRECTOR CITY INFRASTRUCTURE

16 / 01 / 2023

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Xref: PQT Dec 22
Doc. No. D2022/556376
Enq: Sandra Troise
Tel: 9240 1111

Ms Nicole McKenzie

Dear Ms McKenzie

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME ON NOTICE RESPONSE FROM DECEMBER 2022 COUNCIL MEETING

I write to you in response to your question about the cat containment report, which was submitted to the 7 December Council meeting, as follows:

Question

Why did Council not write to cat owners in Merri-bek Council, either by email or by post? Surely cat owners should have the voice of what is right for them. You have excluded cat owners by not inviting them to respond.

Thank you for your interest in the public participation and provide you with the answer to your question.

Answer to Question

In 2021 we sought feedback on the Domestic Animal Management Plan, our plan for managing cats and dogs in our community. We heard from the community that a potential solution to cat issues was a cat curfew. We conducted engagement in May and June of this year and heard from our community through a variety of avenues, an online survey, in person engagement, paper surveys and we reached a large number of people through our social media channels and posters around the municipality. We also had the survey open for nearly 6 weeks to allow the community time to have their say. We wanted to have all opinions represented during the engagement period and therefore did not send communications to specific groups to ensure we received a variety of feedback.

We heard from 1,986 people during the engagement and a large number of people were concerned about nuisance cats, overpopulation and attacks on wildlife and expressed their interest in a cat curfew. Council also conducted research into these issues gathering data and information from other Councils, RSPCA, other animal organisations, and industry experts. We heard from the experts that the best way to address these issues is not through enforcement but by investing in cat desexing, encouraging cat ownership, and educating about responsible cat ownership. Our report was able to differentiate between the views of cat owners and non-cat owners, which gave us confidence about the findings without needing to separately contact each cat owner.

We presented a report with a recommendation to the council meeting on 7 December 2022. The report detailed the findings from our engagement and the research on the best ways to address the issues, we recommended a strong education campaign on the benefits of keeping cats at home, cat desexing and increasing the value of cats. At the council meeting on 7 December 2022 Council considered the report and heard from members of the public and decided on an alternate motion that focused on unowned and semi-owned cats as a more effective way to keeping cats and wildlife safe. Council has also requested a report to be presented to Council in 2023 that focuses on unowned and semi-owned cats and takes a multi-pronged approach to dealing with the issue of over-population of cats.

We will prepare a report to be presented to Council in 2023 on a range of proposals and recommendations for a targeted desexing program of unowned and semi-owned cats, information on other local councils that have implemented cat management strategies including cat curfews, and for an education program to support residents in keeping their cats at home. The report will also consider the number of cats brought into the Epping Animal Welfare Facility, impacts on wildlife and budget.

In the meantime, we will continue to encourage residents who feed cats but do not 'own' them, to take ownership of these cats and provide them with the best possible care by desexing, microchipping and registering them. Our free cat desexing program continues for Merri-bek residents who have a concession card. If you or someone you know is eligible you can apply on our website at <https://merri-bek.vic.gov.au/desexing>.

If you need further information, please feel free to contact Sandra Troise, Manager Amenity and Compliance on 9240 1111.

Yours sincerely

Anita Curnow
DIRECTOR CITY INFRASTRUCTURE

16 / 01 / 2023

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Xref: PQT Dec 22
Doc. No. D22/560794
Enq: Sandra Troise
Tel: 9240 1111

Ms Lucy Foley

Dear Ms Foley

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME ON NOTICE RESPONSE FROM DECEMBER 2022 COUNCIL MEETING

I write to you in response to your question regarding the cat containment report, which was submitted to the 7 December Council meeting, as follows:

Question

RSPCA 2018 Report - Identifying Best Practice Domestic Cat Management in Australia recommends that 24 hour cat containment is needed to significantly reduce wildlife predation, breeding of unwanted cats and cat nuisance. The report also states that while education programs are needed to increase the acceptance and uptake of 24-hour cat containment, subsequent regulation re: compulsory cat containment should also be in place in areas of high conservation value. Given that Council has identified areas of the Merri-bek as being of high conservation (and cultural) value, with at least 21 vertebrate species facing extinction that live in the area and are at risk of predation from cats, including the growling grass frog, tussock skink, and swift parrot, why is Council proposing a voluntary cat containment policy that falls short on protection and conservation for wildlife in the municipality? The proposed policy is not guided by best-practice multi-strategy policy re: cat containment, which recommends community education with strengthened regulation re: containment. It is not aligned with current Federal or State laws and policies re: wildlife protection. Nor is it aligned with Council's own community engagement feedback from the community, where over 75% of respondents supported the establishment of a cat curfew.

Thank you for your interest in community engagement and public participation and provide you with the answer to your question.

Answer to Question

In 2021 we sought feedback on the Domestic Animal Management Plan, our plan for managing cats and dogs in our community. We heard from the community that a potential solution to cat issues was a cat curfew. We heard from 1,986 people during the engagement in May and June and a large number of people were concerned about nuisance cats, overpopulation and attacks on wildlife and expressed their interest in a cat curfew. Council conducted research into these issues gathering data

and information from other Councils, RSPCA other animal organisations, and industry experts. We heard from the experts that the best way to address these issues is not through enforcement but by investing in cat desexing, encouraging cat ownership, and educating about responsible cat ownership.

We presented a report with a recommendation to the council meeting on 7 December 2022. The report detailed the findings from our engagement and the research on the best ways to address the issues. We recommended a strong education campaign on the benefits of keeping cats at home, cat desexing and increasing the value of cats to encourage residents to keep cats safe and therefore wildlife safe. At the council meeting on 7 December 2022 Council considered the report and heard from members of the public and decided on an alternate motion that focused on unowned and semi-owned cats as a more effective way to keeping cats and wildlife safe. Council has also requested a report to be presented to Council in 2023 that focuses on unowned and semi-owned cats and takes a multi-pronged approach to dealing with the issue of over-population of cats.

We will prepare a report to be presented to Council in 2023 on a range of proposals and recommendations for a targeted desexing program of unowned and semi-owned cats, information on other local councils that have implemented cat management strategies including cat curfews, and for an education program to support residents in keeping their cats at home. The report will also consider the number of cats brought into the Epping Animal Welfare Facility, impacts on wildlife and budget.

If you need further information, please feel free to contact Sandra Troise, Manager Amenity and Compliance on 9240 1111.

Yours sincerely

Anita Curnow
DIRECTOR CITY INFRASTRUCTURE

16 / 01 / 2023

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merri-bek.vic.gov.au



Xref: PQT Dec 22
Doc. No. D22/560895
Enq: Sandra Troise
Tel: 9240 1111

Mr Andrew Mackinnon

Dear Mr Mackinnon

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME ON NOTICE RESPONSE FROM DECEMBER 2022 COUNCIL MEETING

I write to you in response to your question submitted to the 7 December Council meeting, as follows:

Question 1

I received a fine for not paying my \$34 annual cat registration fee on time. I have since paid the registration, but my infringement appeal has been denied. The question I would like to ask is, what is a fair and reasonable penalty for late payment of a \$34 registration fee? In thinking about this, it is worth noting that the same penalty applies for pensioners who might miss their \$15.20 cat registration fee. It is also worth noting that the only evidence Council has that I have a cat is that I have voluntarily paid my cat registration. How severely should someone who voluntarily complies be penalised? What is a reasonable penalty, that a reasonable person would feel is commensurate with the offence? I suggest that a fine of \$370.00 is a stick that is significantly excessive to the breach.

Question 2

The fine amount is prescribed in the Domestic Animal Management Act. So, while the fine is set, Council needs choose how and when it applies this penalty. Such a high penalty suggests more effort is required by the Council to achieve compliance before issuing fines. At a time when interest rates are soaring, and cost of living is so high, this type of lazy administration, and militant enforcement just shows the Council is disconnected from the community and is nothing short of a money grab. Some Councils have late fees, presenting a more reasonable penalty. An adjoining municipality rings everyone who hasn't paid their annual renewal to check they still have their pet and discuss payment arrangements.

How is Merri-bek supporting its pet owning community through its animal registration process?

I provide the following information in response to your questions.

Regarding your question about the penalty amounts for certain fines, as you indicated, Council does not set the infringement amount. The number of penalty units for an offence is determined by the Domestic Animals Act (1994) and the penalty unit value is set by the State Government and is reviewed annually. If you have concerns with the size of the penalty, I suggest you take this up with the State Government.

The Domestic Animal Act (1994) requires that animal registration is renewed by 10 April each year. Renewal notices were sent to all pet owners in March and reminder notices were sent in May to those that missed the renewal date. Further to the letters, we also educate and remind our community about the renewal period in various ways including using A-boards and an electronic messaging board placed at various locations across the municipality. We also post messages on social media platforms and information on our website. Those residents that still had not paid their registration were then issued an infringement from July, 3 months after the registration due date.

We support and educate our community on the importance of pet registration in a number of ways throughout the year. We run various social media campaigns at different times in the year on the importance of animal registration and we send out letters to animal owners who have an animal microchipped to an address in our municipality but not yet registered with Council to inform them of their responsibilities. We also receive notification from animal adoption agencies about animals recently adopted and we reach out to these owners and advise them of the registration process. Additionally, our Animal Management Officers attend community events and walk or cycle through our parks, creeks and reserves where they speak with residents about responsible pet ownership.

Merri-bek Council also call residents that haven't renewed their registration to check if they still live in the municipality and own the animal or whether their circumstances have changes. Calls are made based on information residents provide so we rely on residents to keep their information up to date and notify us of any changes. Residents can also opt to receive renewal notices via email if they prefer to receive notification via email.

If you need further information, please feel free to contact Sandra Troise, Manager Amenity and Compliance on 9240 1111.

Yours sincerely



Anita Curnow
DIRECTOR CITY INFRASTRUCTURE

16 / 01 / 2023

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Xref: PQT Dec 22
Doc. No. D22/560891
Enq: Olivia Wright
Tel: 9240 1111

Ms Kate Rose

Dear Ms Rose

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME ON NOTICE RESPONSE FROM DECEMBER 2022 COUNCIL MEETING

I write to you in response to your question submitted to the 7 December Council meeting, as follows:

Question 1

How can Council justify spending additional money on a new trial of separated bike lanes on the portion of Kent Road between Cornwall and Cumberland when it is no longer apart of the Glenroy to Coburg bike link?

Question 2

Will Council's public liability and professional indemnity insurance cover the trial of separated bicycle lanes on Kent Road and any damage to vehicles or otherwise?

Thank you for your interest in community engagement and public participation and provide you with the answers to your questions.

Answer to Question 1

The section of Kent Road between KW Joyce Reserve and Cumberland Road in Pascoe Vale is still a key section in the longer Glenroy to Coburg link. There have been no changes to this route alignment.

Answer to Question 2

Council's public liability insurance policy does provide cover against personal injury or property damage suffered by a member of the public as a direct result of any negligent acts or omissions of Council. However, it does not cover personal injury or property damage arising from the negligent acts of third parties (such as road users, whether motorists, pedestrians or cyclists).

As such, damage to vehicles - whether cars or bicycles - caused by the negligence of a third party would not be covered by Council's public liability policy.

If you need further information, please feel free to contact Olivia Wright, Manager Transport on 9240 1111.

Yours sincerely



Anita Curnow
DIRECTOR CITY INFRASTRUCTURE

24 / 01 / 2023

8. NOTICES OF MOTION

8.1 BOX FOREST ROAD IMPROVEMENTS - NORTHERN MEMORIAL PARK

Cr Lambros Tapinos

Motion

That Council:

1. Receives a report at the April 2023 Council meeting with the key findings of the Road Safety Audit and Traffic Impact Assessment and comments about traffic management treatments and alterations to Box Forest Road including the creation of a slip lane to enter the cemetery:
 - a) The report includes financial options and timelines for the construction of these road works in partnership with the cemetery.

1. Background

Cr Tapinos's background:

Fawkner Memorial Park spans over 113 hectares. As one of Australia's largest cemeteries, they offer many burial options, memorials, cremation and private mausoleums. The entrance to the cemetery on Box Forest Road is very busy and safety concerns have been raised by residents, requiring traffic management treatment. The cemetery has approached the council with designs to explore the potential to alter the road alignment at the entrance on Box Forest Road. In May 2022 reports with the findings of Road Safety Audit and Traffic Impact Assessment were submitted to Council.

2. Policy Context

Officer's comments:

Improvements to the entrance of the Fawkner Memorial Park on Box Forest Road is not in the Council Plan nor in any Council Action Plans.

Council officers have met with counterparts at the Great Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust (GMCT) on three occasions during the past 18 months on this issue and have not been convinced of the safety need for slip lane and revised intersection treatment. The slip lane will impact the kerb in the local area, widen the road, impact nearby driveways and impact on existing trees. Officers at GMCT were to come back to Council officers with evidence of the need for this treatment and are yet to do so.

3. Financial Implications

Officer's comments:

There are no financial implications from preparing this report. It is noted however, that there is no budget allowance for any alterations to Box Forest Road in this location to enhance the entrance to the Fawkner Memorial Park.

4. Resources Implications

Officer's comments:

If supported by Council, officers will prepare this report using existing resources. Time spent on preparing the report will be at the expense of addressing Customer Service Requests.

8.2 PUBLIC TOILETS IN RESERVES

Cr Sue Bolton

Motion

That Council:

- 1) When reviewing the principles for design and location of public toilets as part of the 2023-24 Council Action Plan, gives consideration to:
 - a) Parks and reserves which have barbeque areas and children's playgrounds but no public toilets.
 - b) Locating a public toilet in any sports pavilion upgrade in reserves without a public toilet.

1. Background

Cr Bolton's background:

Access to public toilets is a human right. From the late 1800s/early 1900s, women campaigned for the right to have public toilets in Melbourne's CBD so that they could visit the city. Merri-bek Council still has many parks and reserves which do not have public toilets despite having children's playgrounds and in some cases barbeque areas. It is time to review Council's Public Toilet Strategy which has not been reviewed since 2012.

2. Policy Context

Officer's comments:

The Council Plan 2021-25 includes strategy 4.5 as follows:

Promote the amenity and liveability of the public realm with services, facilities, community participation, strong local laws and compliance activities

In the delivery of actions against Strategy 4.5, an action was included in Council Action Plan 2021-22 that our public toilet strategy would be refreshed in that year. However, with resourcing constraints at the time and a full three years of forward public toilet projects in the Capital Works Plan, Council agreed to a deferral of this action to Council Action Plan 2023-24. As such, it is scheduled to be undertaken in 2023/24. The action is as follows:

Council to adopt principles for design and location of public toilets and then identify and prioritise locations for new and upgraded public toilets as part of planning for community infrastructure, activity centres and open space, leading to an investment plan that feeds into the capital works program

3. Financial Implications

Officer's comments:

Cr Bolton's motion would not add significantly to the cost of implementing the Council Plan Action in 2023/24 as outlined above.

4. Resources Implications

Officer's comments:

The resources to implement the Council Action Plan action identified above will also be able to accommodate consideration of the two specific issues in Cr Bolton's motion.