

HUME CITY COUNCIL

Agenda Council Meeting

Monday, 10 August 2026 at 7:00pm

**Council Chamber - Hume Global Learning Centre
Broadmeadows**

HUME COMMUNITY VISION 2045:

***A thriving community with a strong sense of
belonging.***

An audio and video recording of this meeting of the Hume City Council will be published to Council's website within two (2) working days.

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HUME CITY COUNCIL

Notice of a

COUNCIL MEETING OF THE HUME CITY COUNCIL

to be held on Monday, 10 August 2026

at 7:00pm

at the Council Chamber - Hume Global Learning Centre Broadmeadows

Attendees:	a: Council	Cr. Carly Moore	Mayor
		Cr. Ally Watson	Deputy Mayor
		Cr. Jarrod Bell	
		Cr. Daniel English	
		Cr. Steve Gagen	
		Cr. John Haddad	
		Cr. Kate Hamley	
		Cr. Naim Kurt	
		Cr. Sam Misho	
		Cr. Jim Overend	
		Cr. Karen Sherry	
	b: Officers	Ms Sheena Frost	Chief Executive Officer
		Ms. Kristen Cherry	Director City Services & Living
		Ms Rachel Dapiran	Director Planning, Places & Delivery
		Ms Ann-Michel Greenwood	Director People, Customer & Communication
		Mr Matthew Irving	Director Assets, Operations & Sustainability
		Mr Fadi Srour	Director Organisational Performance

ORDER OF BUSINESS

1. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL OWNERS

Hume City Council would like to acknowledge that we are meeting on Country for which the members and Elders of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people and their ancestors have been Owners for many thousands of years. The Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung, which includes existing family members of the Gunung-Willam-Balluk clan, are the Traditional Owners of this land. Hume City Council would like to pay respect to the existing family members of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung. Hume City Council would like to pay its respects to their Elders, past and present, and Elders from other communities who may be here today.

2. PRAYER

Hume City's religious diversity strengthens and enriches community life and supports the well-being of the citizens of Hume City. Hume City Council acknowledges the importance of spiritual life and the leadership offered by the Hume Interfaith Network (HIN). In recognition of the religious diversity of residents in Hume City Council has invited the HIN to take responsibility for the opening prayer at Council meetings. This evening's prayer will be led by Enele Tailiki, from the Hume Samoan Assembly of God community, on behalf of the HIN.

3. APOLOGIES**4. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST**

Councillors' attention is drawn to the provisions of the *Local Government Act 2020* and Council's Governance Rules in relation to the disclosure of conflicts of interests. Councillors are required to disclose any conflict of interest immediately before consideration or discussion of the relevant item. Councillors are then required to leave the Chamber during discussion and not vote on the relevant item.

5. CONGRATULATIONS AND CONDOLENCES**6. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 27 July 2026.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 27 July 2026 be confirmed.

7. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**8. OFFICER'S REPORTS**

The Mayor will ask the Councillors and gallery at the commencement of this section, which reports they wish to speak to. These reports will then be discussed in the order they appear on the notice paper.

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9. NOTICES OF MOTION

9.1	NOM26/22 - Cr Karen Sherry - Data Centres	179
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10. ITEMS TO BE TABLED

11. URGENT BUSINESS**12. DELEGATES REPORTS****13. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS**

The Meeting may be closed to members of the public to consider confidential items.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council close the meeting to the public pursuant to section 66(2) of the *Local Government Act 2020* to consider the following items:

8.3 Selection - 2026 Community Award Winners**Confidential Attachment:**

Attachment 1. Selection Panel Recommendation - 2026 Community Awards

The attachments in item 8.3 is confidential in accordance with Section 3(1)(f) of the Local Government Act 2020 because it is Personal information.

The specified grounds apply because informaton relates to individuals. This information will be made public at the awards ceremony scheduled for 20 August 2026.

8.6 Contract 30 25 3665 - Mailing Services (MAV-MS8014-25)**Confidential Attachment:**

Attachment 1. Confidential Attachment 1 - 30 25 3665 - Tender Evaluation Report

Attachment 2. Confidential Attachment 2 - MAV-MS8014-25 Tender Recommendation Report

Attachment 3. Confidential Attachment 3 - 30 25 3665 – Digital Mail Assessment

Attachment 4. Confidential Attachment 4 - 30 25 3665 - Awarded Schedule of Rates

Attachment 5. Confidential Attachment 5 - 30 25 3665 - Directors and Officeholders

Attachment 6. Confidential Attachment 6 - 30 25 3665 - Contract Departures

The attachments in item 8.6 is confidential in accordance with Section 3(1)(a)(g(ii))(a)(a)(a) of the Local Government Act 2020 because it is Council business information.

The specified grounds apply because it would unreasonably expose a business, commercial or financial undertaking that if released.

13.1 Melbourne Greyhound Racing Association (MGRA) S.173 Agreement 4-80 Northcorp Boulevard, Broadmeadows

Item 13.1 is confidential in accordance with Section 3(1)(c) and (g(ii)) of the Local Government Act 2020 because it is land use planning information, being information that if prematurely released is likely to encourage speculation in land values, and because it is 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.

The specified grounds apply because the report relates to a commercial agreement with financial implications.

13.2 65 Kirkham Drive, Greenvale - Sale of Council Land

Item 13.2 is confidential in accordance with Section 3(1)(c) of the Local Government Act 2020 because it is land use planning information, being information that if prematurely released is likely to encourage speculation in land values.

The specified grounds apply because the report refers to a land transaction

14. CLOSURE OF MEETING

**SHEENA FROST
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

6/08/2026

REPORT NO:	8.1
REPORT TITLE:	Merlynston Creek Parklands Masterplan
SOURCE:	Sheridan Blunt, Open Space Strategy Project Leader
DIVISION:	Planning, Places & Delivery
FILE NO:	HCC25/744
POLICY:	-
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE:	SO1.3 Safe and well-maintained places
ATTACHMENTS:	1. <i>Merlynston Creek Parklands Masterplan</i> 2. <i>Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Merlynston Creek Cultural Values Assessment 2026</i>

DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No Council officers involved in the preparation of this Report have a general or material interest in relation to the matters for consideration.

1. SUMMARY OF REPORT:

- 1.1 The Merlynston Creek Parklands Masterplan provides for a continuous nature corridor through Broadmeadows, Dallas and Coolaroo linking multiple parks including Laura Douglas Reserve, Hepburn Street Reserve, Seabrook Reserve, Will Will Rook Pioneer Cemetery and Jack Roper Reserve.
- 1.2 The Masterplan seeks to progressively deliver the parkland vision including the creation of a continuous trail connection, upgrades to Laura Douglas Reserve, and waterway improvement initiatives.
- 1.3 Community and stakeholder feedback was sought in March/April and minor changes to the Masterplan have been made to reflect input received.
- 1.4 The Merlynston Creek Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Values Assessment (CVA) was received in May 2026 providing Elder recommendations for the ongoing care of Country. The CVA will inform multiple projects, teams and stakeholders in future.
- 1.5 Melbourne Water has partnered on the Masterplan to progress their plans to enable safe access and enjoyment by the public to the Dallas Army Camp Retarding Basin.
- 1.6 Implementation of the Masterplan will commence with the upgrade of Laura Douglas Reserve playspace, confirmation on the removal of dogs from Will Will Rook Pioneer Cemetery, and commencement of landowner negotiations in priority gap areas. The Masterplan will be used for annual capital works budget bids, and grant funding sought to fund large initiatives including removing concrete to naturalise Merlynston Creek.

2. RECOMMENDATION:

That Council

- 2.1 **Approve Merlynston Creek Parklands Masterplan (Attachment 1)**
- 2.2 **Note the Masterplan will provide the strategic basis to guide capital works delivery, future capital works bids, grant applications, partnerships and developer negotiations to progressively deliver the range of large and small open space improvement actions**

REPORT NO: 8.1 (cont.)

- 2.3 **Note the Masterplan has been developed in partnership with Melbourne Water. Endorsement of the Masterplan will enable progress on their investment plans to open up safe access and enjoyment by the public to the Dallas Army Camp Retarding Basin**
- 2.4 **Note and support the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Merlynston Creek Cultural Values Assessment and its support the ongoing Care for Country (Attachment 2)**

3. LEGISLATIVE POWERS & POLICY CONTEXT:

- 3.1 The Merlynston Creek Parklands Masterplan is informed by:
 - 3.1.1 Council Plan SO1.1 Liveable places that are inclusive and accessible.
Strategy 1.1.2 Provide a network of equitable community infrastructure and diverse open spaces.
 - 3.1.2 Open Space Strategy 2025 which includes the following positions in Precinct 8 Summary:
 - (a) ‘Upgrade nature-based experiences by continuing to create shared use trails and pedestrian bridges along Merlynston Creek’
 - (b) ‘Laura Douglas Reserve. Upgrade to improve entrances, paths, shelters, King St shop connections, and play opportunities as a feature of the wider Merlynston Creek Parklands’
 - (c) ‘Seabrook Reserve Improve passive surveillance of Seabrook Reserve playspace and Merlynston Creek.’
 - (d) ‘Where feasible, increase land along Merlynston Creek to help resolve shortage of open space in the Riggall Street, Dallas area. Combine this with species protection and negotiating continuous trail access along the creek corridor.’
 - (e) ‘Merlynston Creek Investigate and negotiate creek interface land upstream of Barry Road as an open space corridor.
 - (f) ‘Fill missing links in waterways program by investigating, advocating and where feasible acquiring gaps along waterways with an emphasis on marram baba Merri Creek Parklands, Jacksons Creek biik wurdha Parklands, and Merlynston Creek’ (Key Policy Direction p12).
 - 3.1.3 Urban Forest Principles (endorsed 23 March 2020) ‘Hume’s healthy and resilient urban forest improves the urban environment and responds to a changing climate’.

4. OVERARCHING GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES:

This Report supports Council giving effect to the Overarching Governance Principles including

- b) priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations;
- c) the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks, is to be promoted;
- d) the municipal community is to be engaged in strategic planning and strategic decision making;
- f) collaboration with other Councils and Governments and statutory bodies is to be sought;
- g) the ongoing financial viability of the Council is to be ensured;

REPORT NO: 8.1 (cont.)

5. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

5.1 CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES ACT 2006

5.1.1 The human right most relevant to this Report is the ‘Right to take part in public life’.

This right is not being limited by the recommended action in this Report.

5.2 GENDER EQUALITY ACT 2020

5.2.1 The Gender Impact Assessment for the project found the Masterplan sets directions that support safety, access and accessibility that will benefit women, LGBTIQ+ communities, older people, children, culturally diverse communities and Aboriginal communities.

6. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

6.1 The Masterplan provides strategic direction for the delivery of existing funded capital works programs including playspace renewal and upgrades, footpath renewal and expansion, ecological works, sports renewal, traffic and stormwater improvements. The Masterplan identifies future initiatives that may be assessed and prioritised in accordance with Council's Project Management Framework.

6.2 The Masterplan also supports Council's advocacy activities and pursuit of grants, partnerships and opportunities arising through adjacent developer negotiations.

6.3 The Masterplan identifies opportunities to use contribution funds, including stormwater quality offset funding and open space contribution funding where applicable.

6.4 The Masterplan identifies a range of strategic parkland improvements, with lead initiatives outlined in Section 9 (Attachment 1). Inclusion of such projects in the Masterplan does not constitute a commitment to fund or deliver them. Rather, the Masterplan provides a strategic framework to inform future budget deliberations and support grant, partnership and advocacy opportunities.

6.5 Delivery of new projects will depend on feasibility assessments, available funding and Council priorities, and will be considered through Council's annual budget and long-term financial planning processes. Projects that are wholly dependent on external grant funding are excluded.

7. OPPORTUNITIES & RISKS:

7.1 The Masterplan provides a key opportunity to safeguard public land for the community now and into the future. The strategic nature of the Masterplan also minimises the risk of any inappropriate use or development of the land.

7.2 The Masterplan addresses Council's strategic risk for Assets and Infrastructure by addressing financial, compliance, safety and sustainability risks associated with shared use paths, difficult road crossings, creek crossings, ageing play spaces, and reducing low visibility corners of the walking and cycling paths

7.3 The Masterplan addresses Council's strategic risk for Environment / Natural Values / Landscape. It sets priorities that will improve the creek water quality, and reduce ecological, cultural and climate change risks through better design and planting.

7.4 The Masterplan references Council's potential future new bridge crossing concept from Maygar Boulevard and emphasises that its design will mitigate ecological, cultural, waterway and amenity impacts on the parkland. This was the biggest risk emerging from stakeholder feedback.

7.5 The Masterplan captures the opportunities for:

REPORT NO: 8.1 (cont.)

- 7.5.1 Strengthening grant applications for showcase items such as naturalising concrete areas of the creek, creating a new space for community events, installing a new all-abilities footbridge, and realigning sportsfields at Laura Douglas Reserve.
- 7.5.2 Upcoming Melbourne Water funding to open up the Dallas Army Camp Retarding Basin with safe trail access, along with habitat improvements and additional canopy planting. As the Basin has long been fenced, the Masterplan will help remove one of the last barriers to delivering continuous Creekside public access.
- 7.5.3 Delivering on the Merlynston Creek Integrated Water Management Opportunities Plan 2021 and guiding stormwater offset funding priorities.
- 7.5.4 Progressing partnership opportunities with Department of Transport to install pedestrian lights on Camp Road and improving Shared Use Trail connections to Upfield Railway Station.
- 7.5.5 Addressing trail pinchpoints in developer negotiations and open space contribution funding investment. This includes progressing investigations in partnership with DFFH to reconfigure and purchase parts of housing rear yards to improve viewlines and safety to park visitors.
- 7.5.6 Integrating the design of the potential proposed new bridge crossing from Maygar Boulevard to better protect parkland values.
- 7.5.7 Continuing education to private landowners to undertake greater care for Merlynston Creek in properties north of Barry Road. This includes exploring opportunities to transfer creek land to public land ownership and management.
- 7.5.8 Planning permit negotiations for adjacent land to consider parkland priorities of any proposed development on adjacent land.

8. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

- 8.1 Two rounds of community engagement were undertaken to develop the Masterplan. Consultation in July-August 2025 helped understand community preferences, and consultation in March-April 2026 enabled feedback on the Draft Masterplan.
- 8.2 The engagement included in-park information sessions, trader discussions, online engagement via Participate Hume and social media posts in English, Turkish, Arabic.
- 8.3 The input is summarised in Section 5 of the Masterplan and includes support for more continuous trail along the waterway, walking loops, trees, shade, creek improvements, along with greater wildlife corridor provisions and implementation of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung cultural values. The community seeks better event facilities in Laura Douglas Reserve, safer crossing at Camp Road and reduced litter and dumping in the park. Stakeholders seek low impact design on the proposed new road crossing.
- 8.4 In response to feedback, changes were made to the Masterplan including minor text and map clarifications, Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung cultural values recommendations, additional principles on litter and dumping prevention, rocky riverine habitat for wildlife, greater recognition of The Knoll on Stamford St, and investigation of improved planning controls for the parklands.

9. DISCUSSION:

- 9.1 The vision is ‘Merlynston Creek Parklands will be a valued, continuous nature corridor through Broadmeadows, Dallas and Coolaroo, strengthening habitat connectivity and providing welcoming public places that reflect the diverse needs, interests and cultures of local communities and Traditional Owners.

REPORT NO: 8.1 (cont.)

- 9.2 In a leading partnership initiative with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung, the Elders have provided Hume City Council (and also Merri-bek and Melbourne Water) with the Merlynston Creek Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Values Assessment in May 2026. This sets Elder priorities for the cultural landscape, including recommendations for revitalising Country, protecting ecology, waterscapes, cultural heritage and Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung cultural connections, truth-telling and engagement. These recommendations have been incorporated into the Masterplan and will assist Council in its ongoing work with Wurundjeri in planning for the creek.
- 9.3 The Masterplan has been developed in partnership with Melbourne Water to inform their plans to enable safe access and enjoyment by the public to the Dallas Army Camp Retarding Basin. Melbourne Water have also provided support for plans relating to the land they manage at Jack Roper Reserve and 30m either side of the creek itself.
- 9.4 The Masterplan prioritises improving access, viewlines and reducing trail pinchpoints. With Melbourne Water opening up the Dallas Army Camp Basin, the biggest access gap remaining is the privately owned land immediately north. All other smaller trail gaps and pinchpoints are identified so Council has a position in any site discussions or permit applications that may arise.
- 9.5 The Plan responds strongly to community requests for more trees, walking loops, upgrading Laura Douglas Reserve and improving the health and quality of the creek. It also responds to community requests for more opportunities for outdoor gatherings and events, and to improve the dangerous crossing point at Camp Road.
- 9.6 The Plan advocates for a long-term future connection to the source of the creek which runs along the rail reserve. Future plans for the extension of the railway from Upfield Station to Roxburgh Station must be an elevated rail line that is designed with minimal impact on the creek source and its cultural and ecological values.
- 9.7 Implementation will commence with the upgrade of the Laura Douglas playspace. The draft version of the Masterplan assisted in the recent successful \$250,000 Pick My Park grant application. Additional implementation underway includes landowner negotiations in priority gap areas, confirmation of the removal of dog off-leash area from the Will Will Rook Cemetery via the Draft Dogs in Open Space Plan, refining the details for the proposed new Merlynston Creek Maygar Boulevard bridge, and design investigations underway to convert the Will Will Rook bluestone toilet to a shelter.

10. CONCLUSION

- 10.1 Merlynston Creek Parklands Masterplan provides an exciting vision for the community of Broadmeadows, Dallas and Coolaroo with strategic directions and actions set out for the protection and enhancement of multiple parks connected as part of the Merlynston Creek Parklands.



Acknowledgement of Country

Hume City Council recognises the rich Aboriginal heritage within the municipality and acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung as the Traditional Custodians of this land.

Council embraces Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander living cultures as a vital part of Australia's identity and recognises, celebrates and pays respect to Elders past and present.

Project: Merlynston Creek Parklands Masterplan
Document Title: Merlynston Creek Parklands Masterplan
Client: Hume City Council
Lead Consultant: REALMstudios
Date: 28/07/2026
Revision: G

Document Issues:	Revision:	Date:
Issues for:		
Client Review	A	03/10/2025
Client Review	B	12/11/2025
Client Review	C	26/11/2025
Client Review	D	15/12/2025
Client Review	E	02/02/2026
Client Review	F	23/06/2026
Final Masterplan	G	28/07/2026

Prepared by: **REALM**studios

In collaboration with: **STREAM**
OLOGY

For: **HUME**

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Part 1

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Community, Access & Amenities	Detail Plan 3 - Hepburn Street Reserve & The Sanctuary
Heat Vulnerability	Detail Plan 4 - Dallas Army Camp Basin
Waterway Context	Detail Plan 5 - Seabrook Reserve & Will Will Rook Pioneer Cemetery
The Concrete Channel	Detail Plan 6 - Jack Roper Reserve
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Figure 1: Merlynston Creek Parklands Masterplan Process.

1.0

Overview

Project introduction

Merlynston Creek is located on the traditional lands of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people.

From its headwaters it flows southwards for approximately 11 kilometres before entering Merri Creek. Starting in Campbellfield, Merlynston Creek flows through Coolaroo, Dallas and Broadmeadows for about 7 kilometres. It then passes out of the City of Hume under the Western Ring Road, continuing through the City of Merri-bek to join Merri Creek.

Within Hume, Merlynston Creek forms part of an important green spine that is the main source of public open space for many residents. The creek travels through many existing parks, including Laura Douglas Reserve, Hepburn Street Reserve (also known as Dallas Tennis Hall), Seabrook Reserve, Will Will Rook Pioneer Cemetery, and Jack Roper Reserve.

However, the Merlynston Creek Parklands lack continuous connected trails and much of the habitat has been removed over time. Water quality in the creek is poor.

Project scope

The Masterplan aims to set the long-term strategic direction for the Merlynston Creek Parklands, embedding cultural, ecological, waterway, heritage, community recreation, and access and connection values.

The Masterplan provides direction for short, medium and long term future capital works bids to support playspace renewal and upgrades, footpath renewal and expansion, ecological and landscape works, sports renewal, traffic and stormwater improvements.

Some initiatives cannot be funded by Council alone, and the Masterplan provides advocacy and strategic direction that will be drawn on to apply for grants, partnerships and any adjacent developer negotiations.

Policy context

The Masterplan aligns with:

- Council Plan 2025 - 2029
- Open Space Strategy 2025
- Community Infrastructure Plan
- Active Living Plan 2026

Study Area

Study Area

The project study area is located 25 kilometres north of the Melbourne CBD and extends from Maffra Street in the north to the Western Ring Road in the south. It covers approximately 82 hectares and passes through the suburbs of Coolaroo, Dallas and Broadmeadows.

The map on this page gives a high-level snapshot of the area under investigation.

Why this project?

The vision, key policy directions, and infrastructure levels of service informing both the Merlynston Creek Parklands Masterplan and more detailed reserve planning are set out in Hume City Council's Open Space Strategy 2025.

The municipal-wide vision for open space is:

"Hume's high-quality open space network supports the health and wellbeing of our diverse community and celebrates the waterways, natural values and Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung cultural values of our landscape."

Merlynston Creek stretches over three of the 13 precincts set out in the Open Space Strategy. Most of the study area falls within Precinct 8: Broadmeadows. A small area of Merlynston Creek is in the southeast corner of Precinct 9: Roxburgh Park, and the source is located in Precinct 10: Somerton.

The Open Space Strategy identifies the need for greater investment in Broadmeadows to improve the diversity and number of open space reserves, and the quality of experiences and assets. Broadmeadows has the least open space per person in the City of Hume, and about one-fifth of urban homes are not within a 400m walk of open space.

In an otherwise very urbanised area, Merlynston Creek Parklands is a habitat corridor rich in nature — improvements within the Parklands will help to address these challenges and ensure open space outcomes are maximised to support the housing expansion forecast for Broadmeadows over the next 20 years. The project will contribute to all three key policy directions — Protect; Optimise; Grow — in the Open Space Strategy



Figure 2: Merlynston Creek Parklands Masterplan Study Area.

2.0

Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country

Merlynston Creek is located on the lands of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people

“Merlynston Creek and the cultural landscape it is embedded in is an important part of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country. Waterways and waterscapes hold immense cultural, spiritual, and social significance to Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People. The protection, preservation and revitalisation of waterways and waterscapes is a crucial part of caring for Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country.

The health of Merlynston Creek is intertwined with that of all beings within this cultural landscape, all which have an important role. For Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People, Merlynston Creek flows as a living connection to Ancestors and Country, and the ways they lived in and cared for this landscape, much which can be learnt from. Revitalising Country to reflect the landscape of Merlynston Creek prior to colonisation as much as possible is important to Elders. Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural knowledge and history of Ancestors should be celebrated and shared with the wider community, where appropriate. Such education is important for non-Wurundjeri people living on Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country, allowing for truth-telling and fostering greater respect for Country.

Caring for Country is an immense task that is everyone’s responsibility. Within this shared responsibility, it is important that Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People have a real and meaningful voice in decision making around their Country. This includes Merlynston Creek and connected Cultural Landscapes, which remains of immense value to Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People today.”¹²

“Elders place significant value on the scarce patches of remnant vegetation along Merlynston Creek, including areas at Jack Roper Reserve, Will-Will Rook Cemetery, and around The Knoll. Elders have highlighted the importance of preserving and protecting remnant vegetation in caring for Country. These areas also offer a connection to the pre-colonial landscape, an inheritance from Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Ancestors that cared for Country at this time. Elders have emphasised the need for preventative measures to be put in place to reduce detrimental impacts on remnant vegetation; as well as proactive measures, such as seed collection, to increase native populations.”¹³

The Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation (WWCHAC) are the Registered Aboriginal Party appointed to represent Traditional Owner matters.

The WWCHAC has undertaken a Cultural Values Assessment to consider the wider cultural landscape significance. This considers cultural beliefs, customs, spiritual attachments, the archaeological and historical records, ongoing association and more.

The outcomes and recommendations of the Cultural Values Study have informed the outcomes of this Merlynston Creek Parklands Masterplan. Additionally, Cultural Heritage Management Plans (CHMP) will be undertaken prior to any construction work.

“Waterways are the lifeline of all Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People’s flora and fauna species.

– Perry Wandin, Wurundjeri Elder

“It’s Mother Earth, so the waterways are her veins. If you are looking after Country, you are looking after your mother. If you are blocking the waterways, you are blocking her veins. It’s a spiritual connection.

– Aunty Di Kerr, Wurundjeri Elder

“The Cultural Landscape of Merlynston Creek plays an important role in providing habitat to a wealth of native fauna species of significance to Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People.

– Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation





3.0

One Parkland: Many Places

Merlynston Creek Parklands is a place of diversity. It can be understood and experienced in many different ways.

Critically, it is a cultural place, Country with deep significance to the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People.

It is also a place of ecology, of waterways, of heritage, of community recreation, and of connection. These qualities and characters are expressed in different ways along the length of the parklands.

The images on these two pages show just some of the many different places and conditions within Merlynston Creek Parklands. Both individually and together, they provide a snapshot of the character of the parklands.

A Cultural Place

Merlynston Creek is on the traditional lands of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and their cultural values and heritage are seen in the land, water, sky, plants, animals and more.

“The Wurundjeri People have an unbroken relationship with Country, caring for this land, its waterways, its plants, and animals. A core purpose of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Corporation is the protection, preservation and revitalisation of Wurundjeri culture and cultural practices.”¹²

An Ecological Place

Merlynston Creek Parklands is home to many plants and animals, including:

- Kangaroos - these in the rail reserve north of Barry Road
- Stands of native trees - these in Laura Douglas Reserve
- Golden Sun Moth - suitable habitat west of The Knoll
- Endangered Crane’s Bill - sighted west of The Knoll

A Waterway Place

Merlynston Creek itself takes many forms as it travels through the Parklands, including:

- Concreted and fenced - beside the Coolaroo Hotel
- Concrete and disconnected from surrounding parkland - near Hepburn Reserve
- Free-flowing, with waterway planting along the banks - through Will Rook Cemetery
- Opening into large detention basins for flood management - like the basin at Jack Roper Reserve

A Heritage Place

Merlynston Creek Parklands contains glimpses of post-settlement heritage, including:

- Will Will Rook Pioneer Cemetery - with central avenue tree planting and remaining gravesites
- Broadstore Railway Crossing - remembered with a viewing area with informational signage
- Maygar Army Camp - remembered in the name of Camp Road, south of Will Will Rook Pioneer Cemetery - image shows the barracks to the east of the site during World War 1

A Community Recreation Place

One of the striking features of Merlynston Creek Parklands is the three Regional / District parks, including:

- Laura Douglas Reserve - A ‘district’ reserve currently offering soccer facilities and small playground
- Seabrook Reserve - A ‘district’ reserve with recently upgraded picnic and play facilities, State Rugby League facilities, Seabrook Community Centre and more
- Jack Roper Reserve - A ‘regional’ reserve much loved as one of Hume’s feature play and picnic areas, along with walking loops and sporting areas

A Connected Place

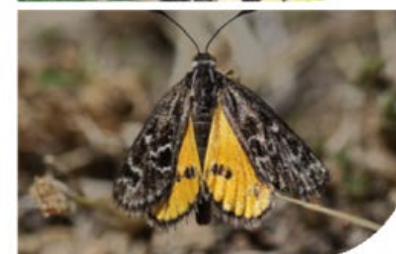
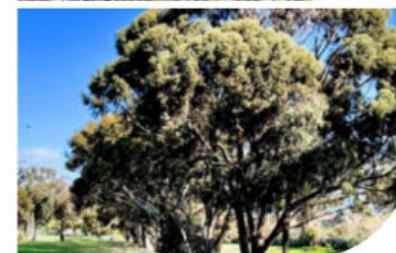
Although Merlynston Creek Parklands extends in one long corridor, there are a number of challenges to overcome to maximise access and connectivity, including:

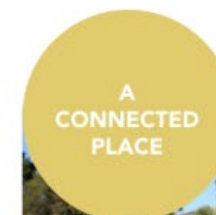
- Walls and barriers that block views and restrict access - Hepburn Reserve
- Steep creek banks that make it challenging to cross from one side to the other, and pinch points that block long views into the park from streets - this pinch point is south of Hepburn Reserve
- A large central gap in the parkland including the fenced Dallas Army Camp Basin and private land north of this that prevent continuous walking and cycling
- However, generous shaded paths exist and they allow visitors to access the park

A CULTURAL PLACE



AN ECOLOGICAL PLACE







Analysis Map 1

LAND USE

The Merlynston Creek Parklands are bordered by a mix of residential, industrial and commercial zones.

North of Barry Road the creek passes mainly through industrial land. From Barry Road to the northern extent of the Dallas Retarding Basin, the parklands are surrounded by established residential development. The Basin itself is largely surrounded by industrial land. Further south, industrial land uses continue along the eastern edge of the creek and parklands, whilst residential development occurs to the west.

Several schools are located close to the study area, as well as a number of local commercial precincts. The majority of the study area is zoned as Public Park and Recreation (PPRZ), Public Use – Service and Utility (PUZ1) or Public Use – Cemetery/Crematorium (PUZ5).

Growth and housing

Hume’s population is expected to grow by more than 130,000 people in the next 20 years.³

Large parts of the established suburbs of Dallas and Coolaroo are affected by the Melbourne Airport Environments Overlay (MAEO), a State planning control designed to limit the impacts of aircraft noise on land use and development in areas close to Melbourne Airport. The MAEO currently limits the potential for new housing in the study area. Potential updates to the MAEO may unlock more sites for housing development and associated park and open space improvements.

Ownership and management

Melbourne Water and Hume City Council work together to manage different parts of Merlynston Creek Parklands. Melbourne Water directly manages the following areas:

- Dallas Retarding Basin;
- Jack Roper Reserve lake area;
- The creek itself and land extending 30m on either side of it.

Supporting a growing community

There are several schools and retail shopping precincts close to the parklands. These are shown on Figure 4: Community, Access & Amenities.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR MASTERPLAN

- Consider future opportunities to bring all land within the Merlynston Creek Parkland corridor into public ownership for parkland purposes.
- Maximise interface with Merlynston Creek Parklands for any new development along the parkland corridor.
- Consider impact of proposed future amendment to the Melbourne Airport Environs Overlay (MAEO).
- Maximise co-benefits for any work proposed in land managed by or with Melbourne Water.

Legend

- Merlynston Creek Park Boundary
- Strategic Cycling Corridor
- Watercourse
- Buildings
- Elevation Contours - 10m Intervals
- Land Ownership
 - Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH)
 - Private Property
 - Melbourne Water
- Plan Overlays
 - MAEO - Melbourne Airport Environs Overlay
 - SBO - Special Building Overlay, Flood Mgmt.
 - ESO - Environmental Significance Overlay
 - HO - Heritage Overlay
 - LSIO - Land Subject to Inundation Overlay
- Planning Zones
 - Commercial Zone
 - Commonwealth Land
 - General Residential Zone
 - Housing Choice and Transport Zone
 - Industrial Zone
 - Mixed Use Zone
 - Public Park and Recreation Zone
 - Public Use Zone
 - Special Use Zone
 - Transport Zone



Figure 3: Existing Land Uses Map

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Analysis Map 2

COMMUNITY, ACCESS & AMENITY

Cultural diversity

The City of Hume’s residents hail from over 170 different countries and speak more than 155 languages. Within the study area, close to half of residents living within a 15-minute walk of Laura Douglas Reserve were born overseas, with nearly 40% speaking Turkish and Arabic at home.⁴ The Broadmeadows Turkish Islamic and Cultural Centre and the Greek Community of Broadmeadows & Districts centres, which are both adjacent to the parklands, reflect and serve this diverse community. Community data shows that the local residents are younger than the national average (32yo/38yo) and nearly double the national average for being born overseas (48/27%).

Community facilities

The community adjacent to the Merlynston Creek Parklands is served by a range of schools, places of worship, and community centres. Within the parklands, community groups use the Dallas Tennis Hall for activities ranging from community choirs to community kitchens. The retail shops at the top of Laura Douglas Reserve are well used, and there is an opportunity to take greater advantage of the proximity to the parklands. Connection between the parklands and the Central Grove shops could also be enhanced. Apart from Seabrook and Jack Roper Reserves, there is a general lack of outdoor furniture – seats, drink fountains, bins, picnic settings – to support visitors using the parklands.

Recreation

Merlynston Creek Parklands contains three major recreational nodes including: Laura Douglas Reserve at the top, and Seabrook Reserve in the middle both with a District classification and with primary function of sport, and Jack Roper at the bottom with a Regional classification and a primary function of social recreation

Movement and Access

Arrival and legibility

Large parts of the parklands are hidden from public view behind tracts of housing or industrial development. In many locations park entry points are not obvious or intuitive.

Connectivity

There is a lack of north-south connectivity through the parklands. Pedestrian paths and Shared Use Paths are mainly located from Seabrook Reserve south, with few formal paths in northern parts of the parklands. There are few opportunities to cross Merlynston Creek or to connect from west to east. Improvements must consider the diversity of needs for different people who walk and cycle, and make provision for commuter, novice, and recreational cyclists.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR MASTERPLAN

-  Improve walking and cycling access to, through, and within the Merlynston Creek Parklands.
-  Reflect and celebrate the cultural diversity and community activities of the community.
-  Improve vehicle access around the parklands without compromising parkland values.

Vehicle conflict

The parklands interface several busy roads including Barry Road and Camp Road. These are challenging and dangerous for people who walk and cycle to cross, further impacting arrival and connectivity. During peak school drop-off and pick-up times, traffic on Dallas Drive is heavily congested. School-time traffic through Seabrook Reserve also congested, with cars using the carpark as a through-street for pick-up and drop-off.

Public transport

It is difficult for visitors who rely on public transport to visit the parklands. Whilst there are bus stops near Laura Douglas and Jack Roper Reserves, there is no bus stop directly serving Seabrook Reserve. Walkability to the nearest bus stops must be maximised within the parklands. For visitors arriving by train, there is a lack of wayfinding or obvious walking path from Upfield Station.

Future road crossing

This project will introduce a new section of Council road from Maygar Boulevard to Dallas Drive. The proposed road is seen as an important renewal project for the eastern part on Broadmeadows. In the context of the Merlynston Creek Parklands, the proposed road needs to be designed to support walking, cycling, habitat, canopy, waterway, amenity and maintenance outcomes.

Legend

- | | |
|--|--|
|  Merlynston Creek Park Boundary |  Community Facilities |
|  Watercourse |  Education |
|  Elevation Contours - 10m Intervals |  Religious |
|  Potential Road Crossing |  Retail Shopfront |
|  Strategic Cycling Corridor | |
|  Bus Stop | |
|  Train Station | |
|  PTV Bus Route | |
|  Train Line | |
|  Dog Off Leash Area | |
|  Open Space | |
|  Sports Field | |

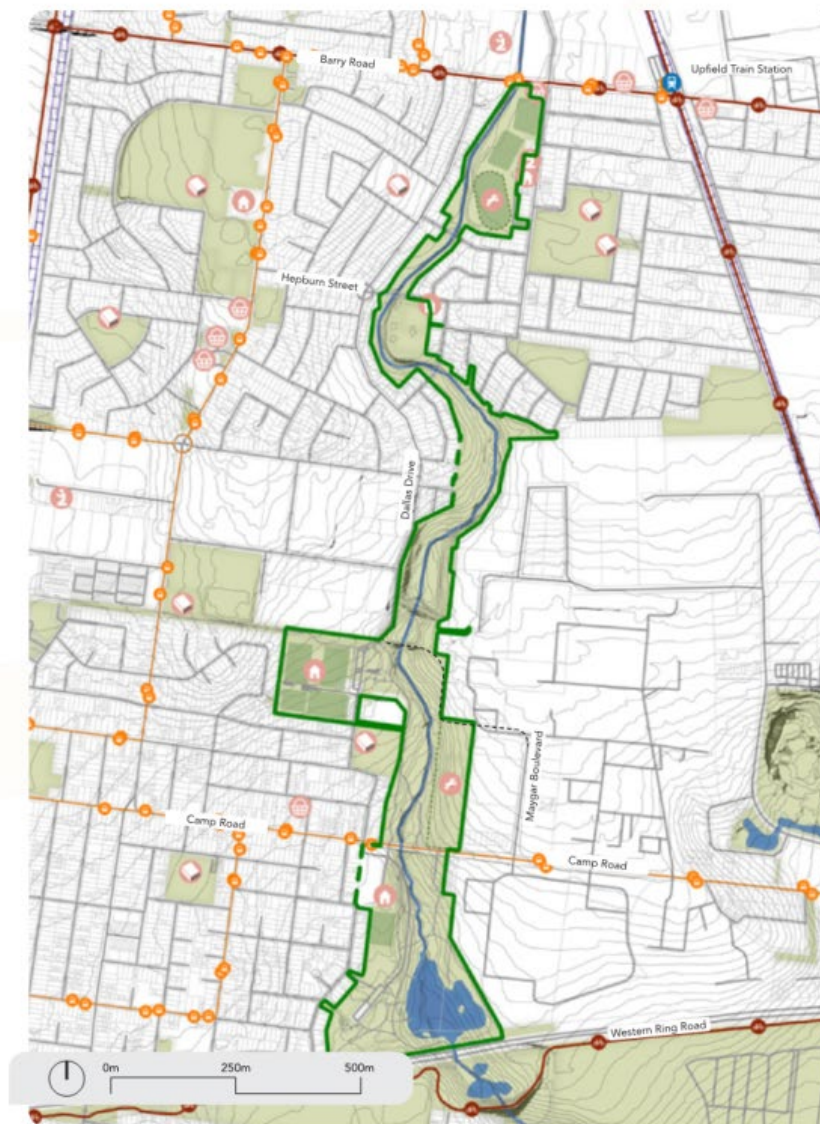


Figure 4: Community Access & Amenity Map.

Analysis Map 3

HEAT VULNERABILITY

Heat Vulnerability Index

Coolaroo, Dallas, and Broadmeadows experience some of the highest rates of heat vulnerability in Greater Melbourne, meaning there are more people vulnerable to heat and more areas with less vegetation and more buildings.⁴ Merlynston Creek Parklands sits within and connects all three suburbs.

There is a strong relationship between tree canopy cover and reducing heat in urban areas. The tree canopy cover across Hume City is just over 5%, far less than the State Government target of 30%.

There is growing evidence that an effective method of delivering human thermal comfort is via introducing shade and moist soil environments (i.e. irrigated vegetation). This suggests the urban heat island effect could be mitigated through the establishment of healthy tree canopy supported by water sensitive urban design (WSUD) approaches.

The combination of WSUD ensures tree canopies are large, healthy and actively release water vapour via transpiration. The CRC for Water Sensitive Cities (CRCWSC) has demonstrated that urban heat impacts are mitigated by means of passive watering practices and green infrastructure solutions (such as irrigated trees) and these practices can lower the Urban Thermal Climate Index by up to 10 °C.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR MASTERPLAN



Maximise healthy tree canopy to help reduce urban heat island effects and increase community resilience.



Maximise soil moisture to support healthy tree growth by implementing water sensitive urban design (WSUD) approaches, including naturalisation to remove concrete, and capturing rainwater and stormwater for irrigation.

Legend

- Merlynston Creek Park Boundary
- Watercourse
- Elevation Contours - 10m Intervals
- Heat Vulnerability Index**
- 0 - 1 Least Vulnerable
- 1 - 2
- 2 - 3
- 3 - 4
- 4 - 5 Most Vulnerable



Figure 5: Heat Vulnerability across suburbs surrounding Merlynston Creek Parklands.

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Analysis Map 4

WATERWAY CONTEXT

Condition

Merlynston Creek is highly modified, with long sections of the creek piped underground or straightened and lined with a concrete channel. The creek catchment for the extent upstream of Jack Roper Reserve is approximately 847 hectares with most of the ground surface covered with hard surfaces (e.g. concrete and asphalt) that prevent water being able to soak into the ground.

During dry weather there are very low flows in the creek. Two retarding basins manage storm flows and provide flood protection for downstream communities.

The basin at Dallas, located on the site of the former World War 1 Army Camp, is ephemeral, whilst the one at Jack Roper Reserve contains permanent standing water. Several other permanent pools exist along the waterway.

Water Quality

Pollution generated from upstream industries has long impacted water quality in Merlynston Creek and Jack Roper Reserve. Untreated runoff, spills, dumping and factory fires have all contributed to poor water quality in the waterway, and potentially further downstream in Merri Creek.

Pollutants remain accumulated in sediment beds in Jack Roper Reserve, limiting the extent to which the public can use the lake for recreational activities.

EPA monitoring shows that upstream pollution loads have decreased in recent years. The ongoing implementation of appropriate industrial pollution management solutions is critical to improving water quality and enabling naturalisation of some channelised portions of Merlynston Creek.⁶

The community continues to express concern about pollution in the northern parts of the creek and the presence of litter in the waterway and the parklands more generally.

Wurundjeri Elders are also concerned about the water quality of the Merlynston Creek, connecting the concrete channels akin to suffocating Country and any removal of concrete along this creek will give macro-invertebrates and other species to be reintroduced, leading to a stronger, healthier waterway and overall system.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR MASTERPLAN



Plan for waterway improvements that deliver multiple community and environmental benefits.



Increase or improve the visibility of Merlynston Creek, both the water flowing in the creek, and the creek as a connected, vegetated landscape corridor.

Flooding

The existing flood risk is largely contained upstream of Barry Road by the existing stormwater assets.

Within the Masterplan study area, the key reach for flood risk is around the bluestone toilet block at Camp Road. The Municipal Flood Emergency Plan (MFEP) for Merlynston Creek indicates that stormwater from the residential neighbourhoods to the west generate flash flood events that drain to the parklands via Stanhope Street.

Flash flood waters arrive at the culverts at Camp Road and then back up towards the toilet block. There are opportunities to enhance flood resilience at this location. This could be through infrastructure upgrades or creating a 'stilling basin' immediately upstream of the culverts.

The MFEP also indicates that, at Jack Roper Reserve, the flash flood extent looks to be exceeding the stormwater infrastructure and sheeting across the car park. If this is considered problematic, there are different opportunities for improvement.

Legend

- Merlynston Creek Park Boundary
- Watercourse
- Elevation Contours - 10m Intervals
- Sewer Pipe
- Stormwater Pipe
- Watercourse Condition**
- Natural Stream
- Channelised - Overgrown
- Channelised
- Piped
- Open Water Body
- Culverts & Hydraulic Structures
- Gross Pollutant Trap
- SBO - Special Building Overlay, Flood Mgmt.

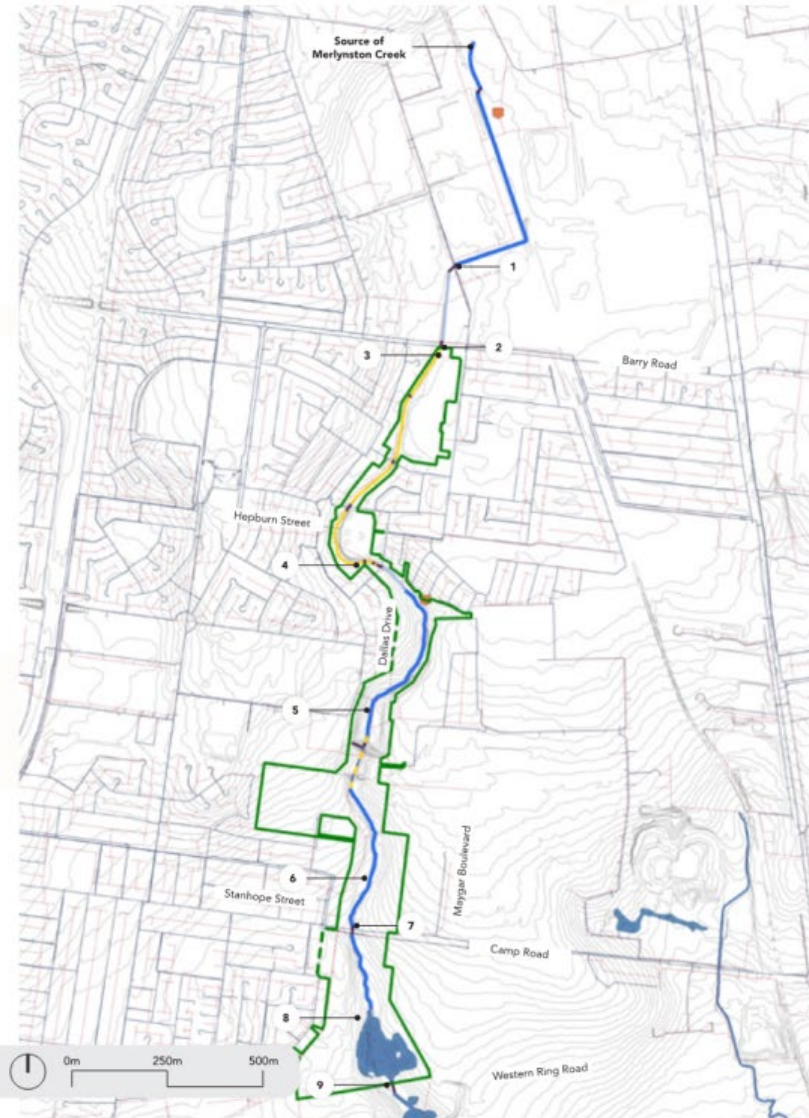


Figure 6: Waterway Context Map.

Visibility

There are two main ways creeks are visible and recognised as waterways:

- The water flowing through the creek can be seen; and
- The riparian corridor - the water, creek banks, low plants and trees that grow along the banks - is present and can be seen.

Large parts of Merlynston Creek are not visible to the community. There are several reasons for this:

- It is not possible to access some parts of the creek as they are fenced or not publicly owned;
- The lack of paths and facilities means people do not travel to or through the parklands, and as a result do not see the creek regularly;
- Where the creek is channelised, the lack of vegetation and trees creates a perception of a piece of drainage infrastructure that people should stay away from, rather than a living waterway;
- The lack of footbridges crossing the creek means people do not have opportunities to look straight down onto flowing water, or directly up and down the creek.

Terrain

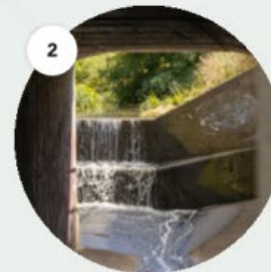
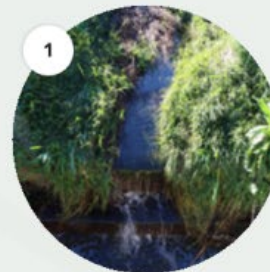
Whilst the terrain through the parklands varies, there are some similar types of land forms:

- Steep banks - where Merlynston Creek is channelised, the banks tend to be relatively steep.
- Flat plateaus - above the banks the land generally flattens out. Where these flat areas are located in 'corners' of the parkland e.g. north and south of Berger Street, there is an opportunity for the creek corridor to be widened to incorporate water quality treatment features such as bioretention, rocky riffles, and more planting.
- High points - several locations along the corridor offer elevated views of the parklands and creek. The land on the west side of the creek opposite The Knoll, offers sweeping views across an important stretch of waterway and critical habitat. Similarly, the top of the Melbourne Water spillway offers expansive views north into the retarding basin, and south across Seabrook Reserve and the parklands.

Upper Area

The Upper study area runs along and through several industrial lots and at the back of residential lots. The creek channel base material throughout this area is concrete, with pockets of vegetation growing through the cracks in the concrete.

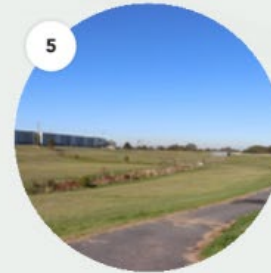
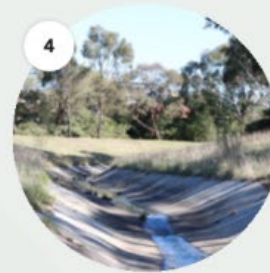
Merlynston Creek through this area is highly modified, with long, linear runs, sharp changes of direction, and minimal bends and meanders.



Central Area

The Central study area has the greatest variation in surrounding context condition, with the creek corridor running alongside parklands, residential and industrial land uses. The creek passes through a grassed basin operated and owned by Melbourne Water, where floodwaters up to 8m deep are held back to allow downstream floodwater to move away.

The creek base channel material varies, with concrete towards the north and towards the south of the central area, the creek widens out, with a sediment base.

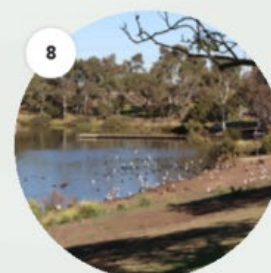
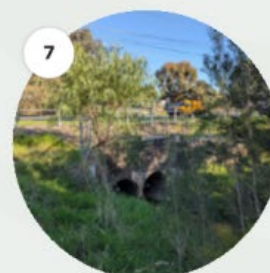


Lower Area

The Lower study area generally travels through parklands adjacent to residential development and industrial lots.

Merlynston Creek flows into an expansive lake at Jack Roper Reserve, before continuing under the M80 Ring Road and further towards Fawkner.

The creek base channel material is primarily a sediment base, with rough objects such as boulders to slow the speed of water.



Concept

THE CONCRETE CHANNEL

Potential

The concrete channel base and walls are the most obvious physical and visual component of much of Merlynston Creek in its current form. The present day creek and associated concrete has been designed as a stormwater drain. What to do with the concrete - if anything - is a fundamental consideration affecting the ongoing contribution of the creek to the parklands.

Retention vs removal

A spectrum of options is available, including perforating, building over, cutting into, or removing some or all of the concrete.

The adjacent section diagrams illustrate a range of possible interventions to the creek channel. A preliminary rating has been made against 6 criteria that relate to perceived social, economic, and environmental performance, where 1 = low performance and 5 = high performance.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR MASTERPLAN



Exploring the full range of possible naturalisation options, from 'light touch' to full removal of concrete and reprofiling the ground to create a more naturalistic floodplain, means that solutions can be tailored to suit the conditions, budget and desired outcomes along the length of Merlynston Creek.

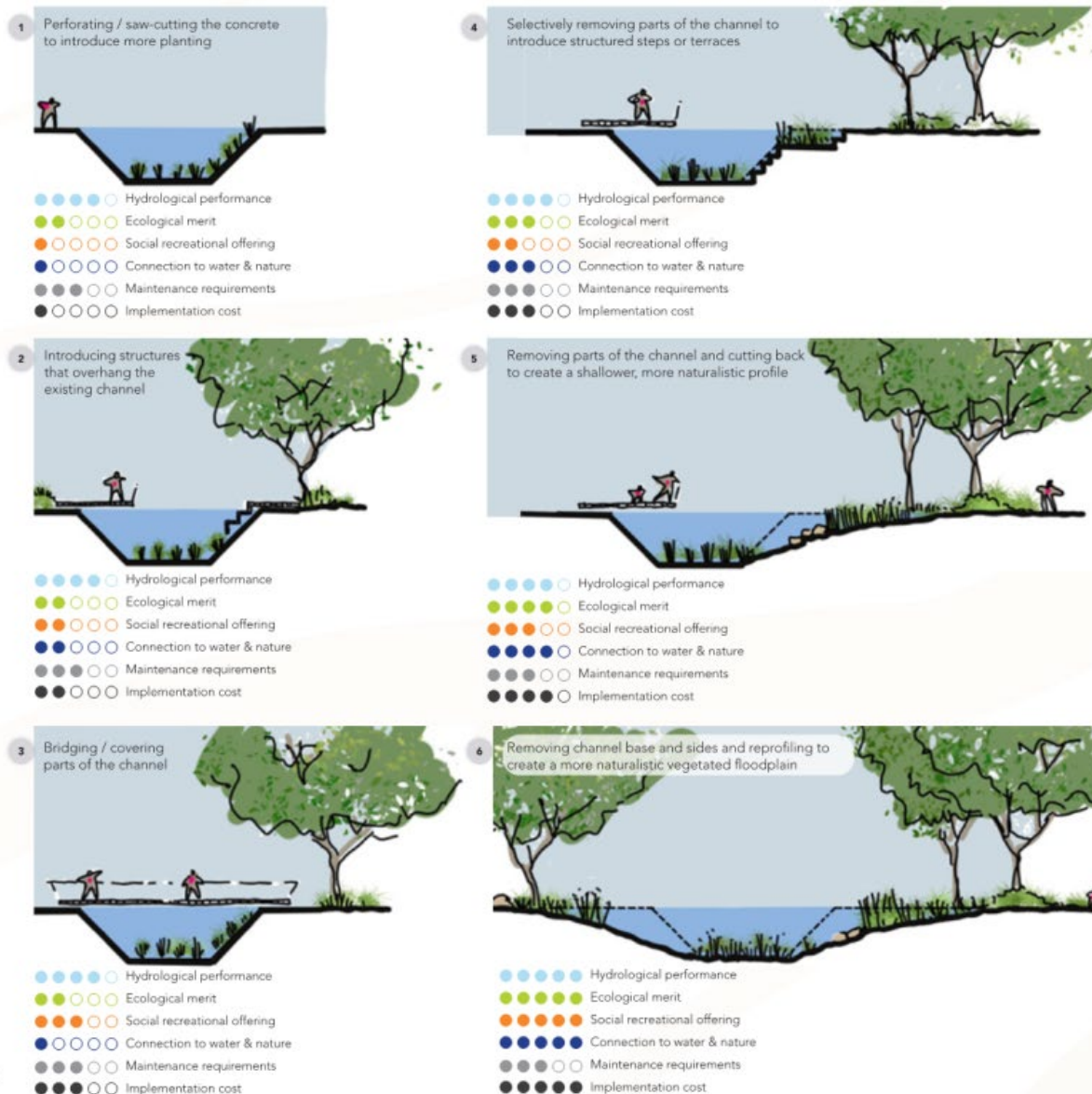


Figure 7: Section diagrams illustrating possible interventions to the concrete channel.

Analysis Map 5

ECOLOGICAL CONTEXT - FAUNA

Species

Animal species observed within the study area include 41 bird, 3 amphibian, and 2 mammal species. Fifty threatened fauna species have been recorded or have modelled habitat within 5 kilometres of the Merlynston Creek Parklands.

According to the most recent on site survey³, the following threatened fauna species have been observed:

- **Hardhead (duck)**
Aythya australis
- **Tussock skink**
Pseudemoia pagenstecheri

The following threatened fauna species have a high or moderate likelihood of presence:

- **Golden Sun Moth (GSM)**
Synemon plana
- **Grey-headed flying fox**
Pteropus poliocephalus
- **Eastern great egret**
Ardea alba modesta
- **Little eagle**
Hieraaetus morphnoides
- **Blue-billed duck**
Oxyura australis
- **Australasian shoveler (duck)**
Spatula rhynchotis
- **Murray River Turtle**
Emydura macquarii

Fauna habitats

Merlynston Creek currently provides limited habitat for threatened species: there are steep banks and extensive concrete, and a resulting lack of shallow edges, emergent vegetation and basking spots. The frequently mown lawns provide little shelter and limited habitat complexity.

Less frequently mown areas may provide habitat for smaller mammals and reptiles, as well as the Golden Sun Moth. Existing identified habitat with the potential to support the threatened Golden Sun Moth is shown on Figure 8.

A range of animals have been observed in the grassland areas in the central study area. This includes the Eastern Grey Kangaroo *Macropus giganteus*.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR MASTERPLAN



Manage waterway renewal and access for visitors in ways that supports conservation of Golden Sun Moth habitat.



Naturalising Merlynston Creek creates an opportunity for additional, connected habitat for multiple species.

Legend

- Merlynston Creek Park Boundary
- Watercourse
- Elevation Contours - 10m Intervals
- Golden Sun Moth Suitable Habitat
- Existing Native Tree
- Golden Sun Moth Suitable Habitat
- Pre-1750 Ecological Vegetation Class
 - Plains Grassy Woodland (EVC 55, 61)
 - Creekline Grassy Woodland (EVC 68)
 - Plains Grassland (EVC 132, 61)
 - Grassy Woodland (EVC 175)

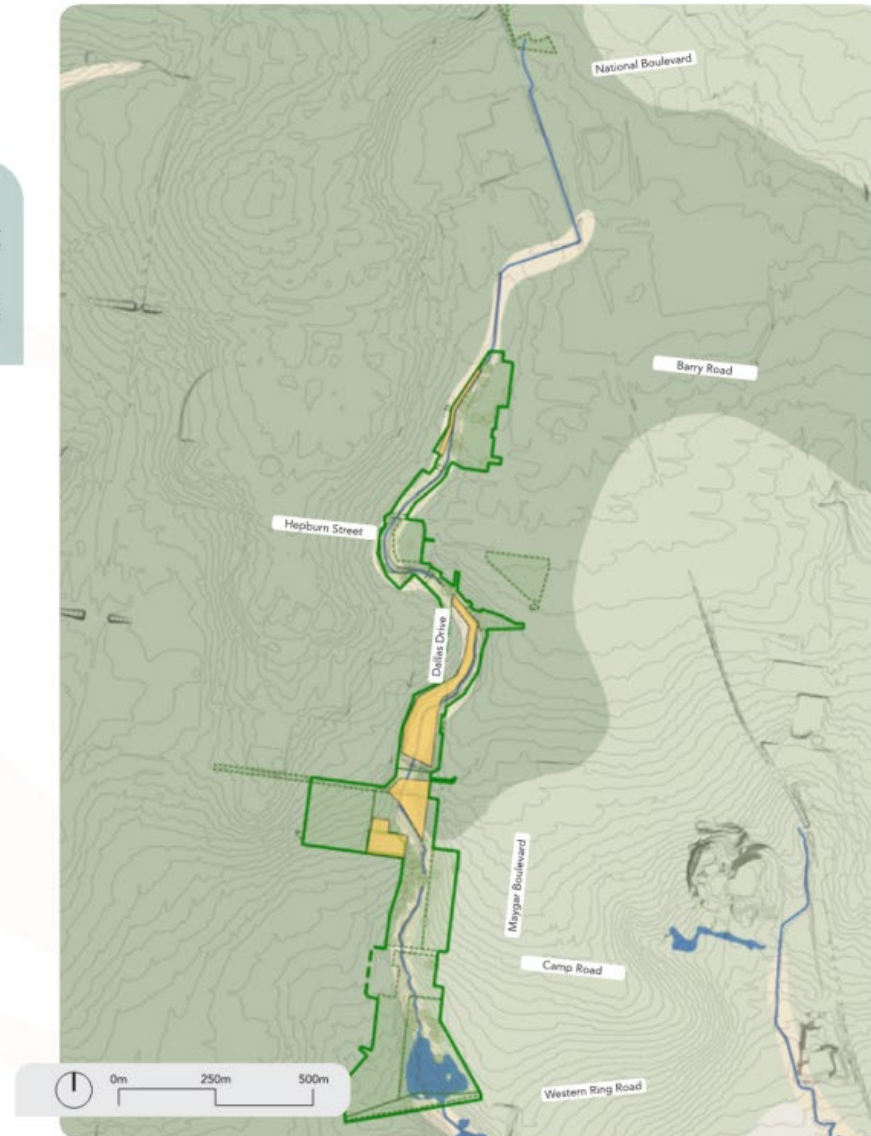


Figure 8: Map of Habitat with Potential to Support Golden Sun Moth, and Confirmed Fauna Sightings within Study Area.

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Analysis Map 6
ECOLOGICAL CONTEXT - FLORA

Plant communities

Most indigenous vegetation within the study area has been removed as a result of channelisation and urbanisation.

*"Merlynston Creek and the connected Cultural Landscape provides habitat to a number of threatened species. These species hold great value to Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People and play a significant role in this landscape."*¹²

Prior to colonial settlement and clearing, the land through which Merlynston Creek flows may have supported several vegetation communities (EVCs). Remnants of these are still found on site today, although they are not well represented. Two additional vegetation communities are also present.

All the EVCs present in the study area are widely scattered and are endangered. They occur in discrete patches surrounded by weedy vegetation or lawn. The location and extent of these are shown on Figure 9.

No EPBC Act-listed communities are present, and two FFG Act-listed communities are present although highly modified.⁹

Plant species

Eight threatened plant species have been observed within the study area.

Large-flower crane's bill

This plant is both endemic, critically endangered, and not previously recorded within the study area. The Masterplan includes actions to support conservation of this rare species.

The location and extent of threatened plant species present throughout the study area are shown on Figure 9.

No Environmental Significance, Significant Landscape, or Vegetation Protection overlays apply to the study area. The land is also not subject to a native vegetation precinct plan and is not within a Melbourne Strategic Assessment Area.

Threatened flora

Other threatened native flora which has been previously recorded throughout the Merlynston Creek Parklands include species such as Matted flax-lily (*Dianella amoena*), Austral Crane's bill (*Geranium solanderi* var. *solanderi* s.s.), Pale Swamp Everlasting (*Coronidium gunnianum*), the Fragrant Saltbush (*Rhagodia parabolica*), and the Giant Honey-myrtle (*Melaleuca armillaris* subsp. *armillaris*).¹²

CONSIDERATIONS FOR MASTERPLAN

- Manage waterway renewal and access for visitors in ways that supports conservation of Large-flower crane's bill.
- Build on existing recorded EVC patches and pre-1750 to create a richer and more resilient connected creek and parklands corridor.
- Expand tree canopy cover to contribute to urban cooling and improve year-round usability of the parklands for visitors.

Legend

- Merlynston Creek Park Boundary
- Watercourse
- Elevation Contours - 10m Intervals
- Recorded Ecological Vegetation Class**
 - Plains Grassy Woodland
 - Stream Bank Shrubland
 - Tall Marsh
 - Creekline Grassy Woodland
 - Plains Grassland
- Pre-1750 Ecological Vegetation Class**
 - Plains Grassy Woodland (EVC 55_61)
 - Creekline Grassy Woodland (EVC 68)
 - Plains Grassland (EVC 132_61)
 - Grassy Woodland (EVC 175)
- Existing trees - Native to Victoria**
 - Eucalypt spp.
 - Grey Box
 - Large-fruit yellow gum
 - Mugga
 - Red box
 - River red-gum
 - Yellow box

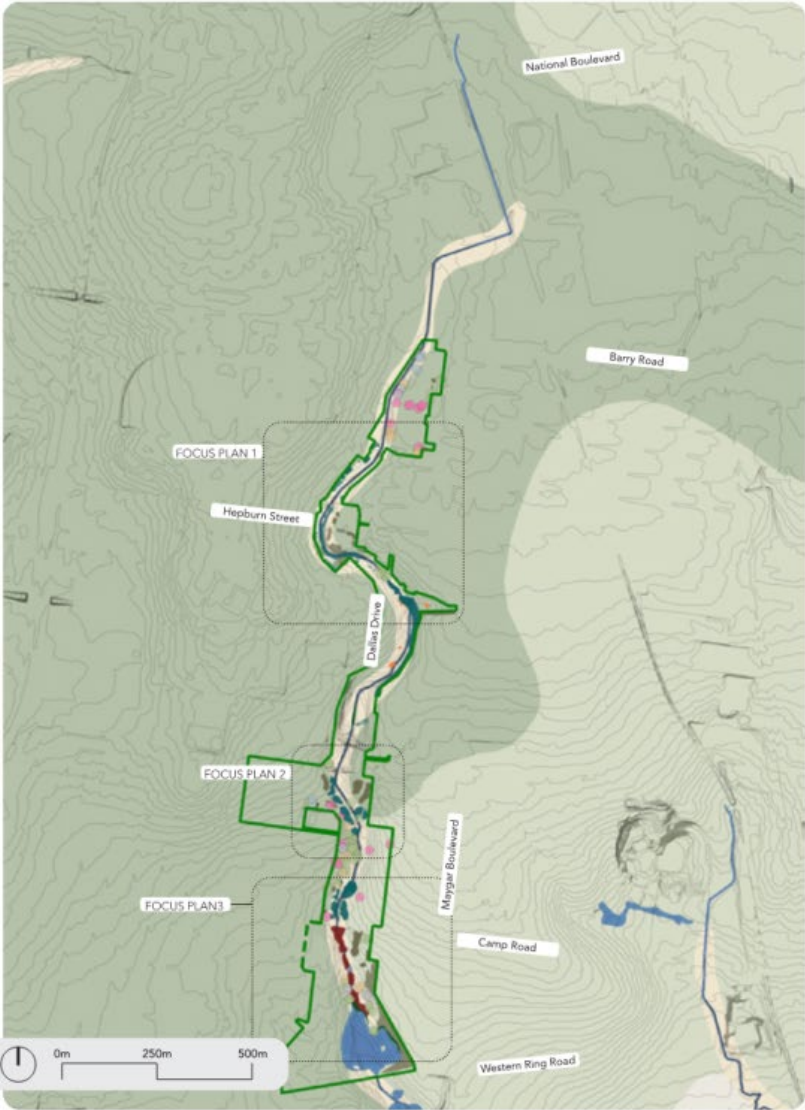


Figure 9: Map of Vegetation Communities and Threatened Species Occurring within Study Area.

FOCUS PLANS



- Focus Plan 1**
- Plains Grassy Woodland (EVC 55_61)
 - Creekline Grassy Woodland (EVC 68)
 - Plains Grassland (EVC 132_61)



- Focus Plan 2**
- Plains Grassy Woodland (EVC 55_61)
 - Creekline Grassy Woodland (EVC 68)



- Focus Plan 3**
- Plains Grassy Woodland (EVC 55_61)
 - Stream Bank Shrubland (EVC 851_61)
 - Tall Marsh (EVC 821)
 - Creekline Grassy Woodland (EVC 68)

FFG Listed Communities

The Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 Threatened List contains Victoria's native flora, fauna and ecological communities recognised as being at risk of extinction.

Two communities listed on the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act (FFG) are present within the study area (Ecology Australia 2025), however they are highly modified:

- 1. Western (Basalt) Plains Grassland Community**
The Plains Grassland vegetation community was identified within the site study area, however it is highly fragmented, with very small remnants scattered throughout the site.
- 2. Western Basalt Plains (River Red Gum) Grassy Woodland Community**
The Plains Grassy Woodland vegetation community was identified within the site study area, and tended to be in poor condition. This is due to high modification or clearing of the land, weed invasion or installation of inappropriate planting. This vegetation community generally features River Red Gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) trees with a ground cover dominated by native grass species.

Golden Sun Moth Habitat

Less frequently mown areas provide habitat for fauna including reptiles and insects including the Golden Sun Moth.

Golden Sun Moths (GSM) are unable to disperse themselves further than a few hundred metres and rely on grasslands with low biomass. This means that they cannot move and migrate into new areas, so adequate habitat creation is important in protecting the Golden Sun Moth.

Ideal habitat for the Golden Sun Moth consists of open native grassland with little canopy or shade as these can impact the temperature and moisture content of the soil, affecting moth larvae.

Species that should be used to create ideal habitat are grasses such as Spear Grass (*Austrostipa* spp.) and Wallaby Grass (*Rytodisperma* spp.).



Golden Sun Moth
Synemon plana

5.0

Community Engagement

Two rounds of Community engagement were conducted from 24 July to 19 August 2025 and 27 February to 2 April 2026. These consultation sessions were used to understand preferences for future parkland outcomes along Merlynston Creek.



290

A total of **290** responses were received representing valuable snapshots of ideas from the community and stakeholders across the key engagement topics.



17,750+

Across both Facebook and Instagram, via both organic and paid promotion the posts reached **17,751** people.



33

On Participate Hume's interactive online map, there were a total of **33** community pins with feedback.



5

sessions

Throughout the consultation period, **5** in person consultation sessions were set up at various points along the creek.



12

posters

12 posters in English, and translated into Turkish and Arabic, placed along the parklands

Preliminary Engagement consultation involved:

- **Online engagement** hosted on Participate Hume: two interactive maps and a survey.
- **On-site meetings:** five pop-up engagements at various locations and times along the creek. These were held at Laura Douglas Reserve, Will Will Rook Pioneer Cemetery, and Jack Roper Reserve.
- **Walk on Country** with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation and commencement of a detailed Cultural Values Study to inform the Masterplan
- **Information session** hosted by Merri Creek Management Committee.
- **Meetings** with key stakeholders: Hume Sustainability Taskforce, Melbourne Water, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, Department of Transport and Planning, Broadmeadows Turkish Islamic and Cultural Centre, Friends of Will Will Rook Pioneer Cemetery, Greek Orthodox Community of Broadmeadows, Dallas City Football Club, Coolaroo Hotel.
- **Individual letters** were sent to 16 landowners located adjacent to the parklands and most directly impacted.
- **Social media promotion** in English and translated into Turkish and Arabic.
- **12 signs** placed along the parklands and posters in English, Turkish and Arabic placed in community centres and playgrounds.
- **In person surveys** were undertaken with King Street traders, and with park visitors at Laura Douglas Reserve, Will Will Rook Pioneer Cemetery and Jack Roper Reserve
- **Community travel analysis** (Neighbourlytics) to help understand existing park users and patterns

Key Engagement Topics

Community engagement was structured to address:

- Merlynston Creek Parklands holistically
- Laura Douglas Reserve in detail

Feedback was sought on key topics, including:

- Naturalising the Creek
- Private Land Uses
- Hepburn Reserve and Dallas Tennis Hall
- Dallas Retarding Basin (Melbourne Water)
- Seabrook Reserve Community Centre
- Will Will Rook Pioneer Cemetery
- Upfield Station Connection
- Camp Road Crossing
- Future Road Crossing at Dallas
- Laura Douglas Reserve upgrade

" The local cemetery should be enhanced with grassland wildflowers and biodiversity (similar to projects underway in Melbourne General Cemetery) these areas could bring value and respect to the heritage values of the landscape and the name 'Broad Meadows' which was given for these beautiful grasslands.

- Local resident

" Improve the natural values and visual appeal of the area which would encourage residents to treat the creek better, potentially reducing pollution and dumping.

- Local resident

" I often walk alongside the creek and I as well as many others would benefit from a formal walking/cycling path.

- Local resident

" (A path network) Would be a fantastic addition to the creek's rehabilitation, whilst assisting more people and Hume residents to use the path along the river as a green corridor, a great alternative to roads. Especially for Bike riders, joggers, people pushing prams or walking dogs!

- Local resident

Summary of findings

CREATING A CULTURAL PLACE...

- Support for stronger **integration of Aboriginal culture and naming** into the parklands, and ongoing consultation with Traditional Owners.
- Support for **information and signage**, including way-finding, heritage interpretation, and opportunities for volunteering and community activities.

CREATING A ECOLOGICAL PLACE...

- Strong support for future opportunities for **private land to be made public** to create a continuous parkland corridor and improved access.
- External stakeholders highlighted the need for **stronger ecological protections**, integration with broader habitat corridors, and careful siting of new infrastructure to avoid impacts on remnant vegetation and threatened species.

CREATING A WATERWAY PLACE...

- Most respondents were supportive of **naturalising the creek**, with 81% 'strongly supportive' or 'supportive'.
- External stakeholders highlighted the need for **stronger ecological protections**, integration with broader habitat corridors, and careful siting of new infrastructure to avoid impacts on remnant vegetation and threatened species.

CREATING A COMMUNITY RECREATION PLACE...

- Community members expressed a strong desire for **improved safety, lighting, and amenities** (toilets, seating, picnic and BBQ areas, shade).
- High priority given to **upgraded play spaces, and more sitting and picnic areas**, particularly at Laura Douglas Reserve.
- Concerns raised about potential **impacts of the proposed future road crossing** near Seabrook Reserve
- Concerns raised about **rubbish dumping, vandalism, and antisocial behaviour**, with requests for CCTV and better maintenance.

CREATING A HERITAGE PLACE...

- Support for **moving the off-leash dog park** away from Will Will Rook Pioneer Cemetery.
- Desire to **redesign and re-purpose the bluestone toilet building** at Will Will Rook Pioneer Cemetery for heritage and community use.

CREATING A CONNECTED PLACE...

- A large majority (87%) supported a **continuous walking and cycling trail** along the creek, with shorter loops for local use.
- Calls for **improved crossing at Camp Road**, with suggestions for traffic lights, pedestrian overpasses or bridges.

In-person community stakeholder sessions



Promotional posters in different languages.



Community engagement session at Will Will Rook Pioneer Cemetery.



Community engagement session #1 at Laura Douglas Reserve.



Community engagement session #2 at Laura Douglas Reserve.



Reference images used to support community conversations. Some children drew hearts to show their support for playspace improvements.



Informal community activities occurring within the parklands and shared during community engagement sessions.

6.0

Vision, Values and Strategies

Process

A logical process has been used to make sure the Masterplan is aligned with Council and community aspirations:



Where are we heading?

The Vision is an aspirational statement. It describes the shared ambitions that Council and the community have for Merlynston Creek Parklands. Throughout the rest of the process, decisions can be tested to make sure they align with the vision.

What is important to protect and enhance?

The Parkland Values are the aspects of Merlynston Creek Parklands with the highest worth and importance to Council and the community. The Masterplan must make sure Parkland Values are protected and enhanced.

How can this be achieved?

The Strategies are specific (often measurable) targets and goals to protect and enhance the Values of Merlynston Creek Parklands.

Locations and timing for integrating and implementing different strategies are included in the Masterplan.

What, where, and when?

The Merlynston Creek Parklands Masterplan is a long-term planning document. It has been developed through technical assessments and community and stakeholder engagement, and will guide future investment. The Masterplan includes maps showing features, spaces and links to be delivered, linked to a schedule showing priorities and indicative budgets.

Design Principles for all Merlynston Creek Parkland Planning

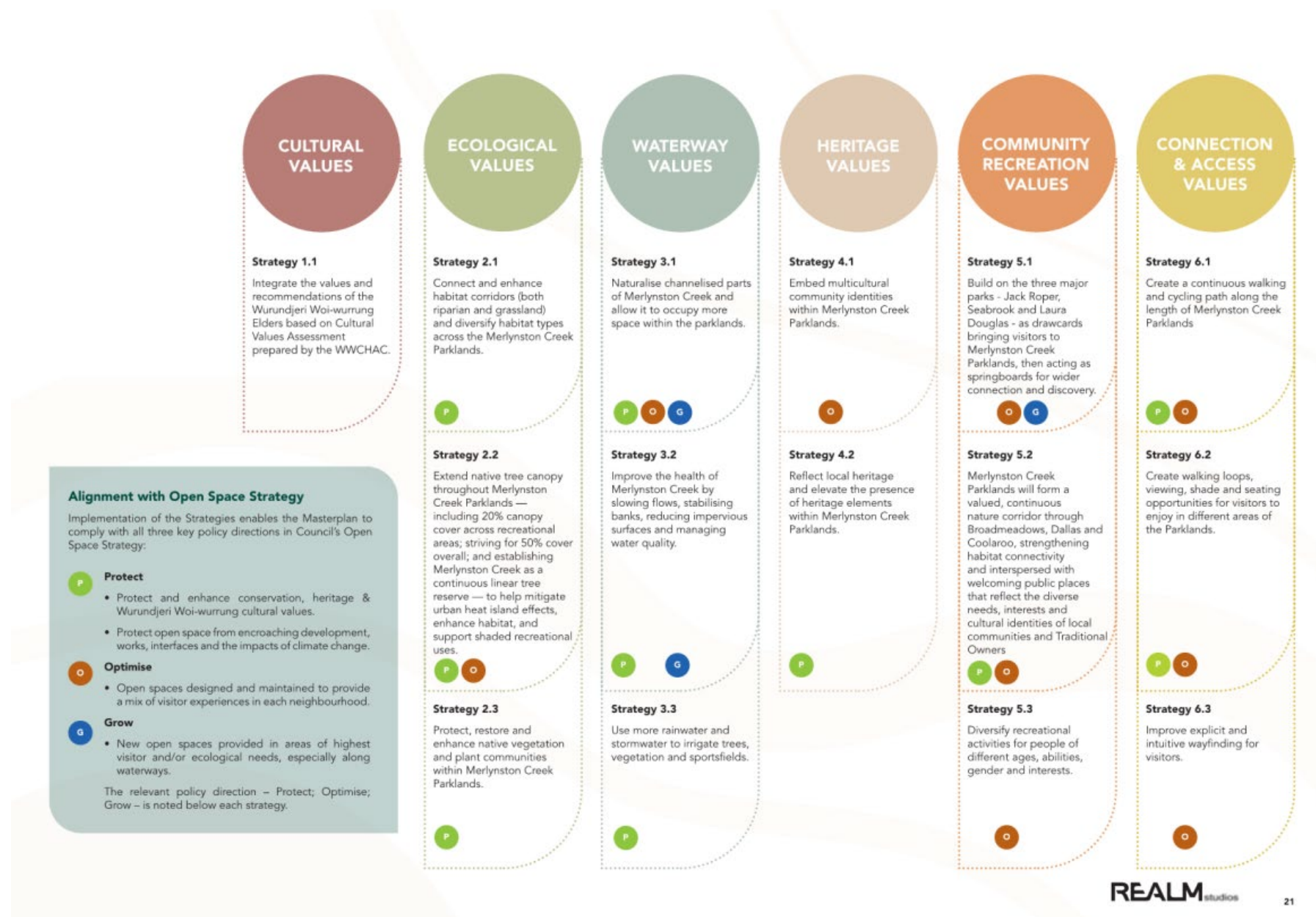
What informs design decisions?

A series of Design Principles guides how the Parkland Values are translated into Key Strategies and the Masterplan, forming a bridge between the aspects of the parklands with the highest worth, and how they will be protected and enhanced.

1. Opportunities to deliver the self-determined priorities of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung will be maximised, employing strategies from Cultural Values Assessment prepared by the WWCHAC (Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation)
2. The local community priorities will be supported in the parkland through community hubs and activities.
3. Opportunities to enhance habitat connections will be maximised. Ecological values will be protected and enhanced.
4. Improving summer shade options for park visitors will be maximised. Creating warm wind-sheltered nooks for visitors will be sought.
5. Sport, events and recreation is focused in the Regional / District Park nodes, with the connecting areas focused on walking, cycling, and nature.
6. Decisions will support the long term commitment to create public access along the length of the parklands from its source.
7. No additional carparking within the open space, instead improved signage and paths will be supported for people to park nearby, or come by public transport, walking or cycling.
8. Increases in park visitation will be supported with design and maintenance that helps reduce litter and rubbish dumping
9. Minimise and redirect stormwater flows from adjacent properties to reduce impact on Merlynston Creek.

Vision Statement

"Merlynston Creek Parklands will be a valued, continuous nature corridor through Broadmeadows, Dallas and Coolaroo, strengthening habitat connectivity and providing welcoming public places that reflect the diverse needs, interests and cultures of local communities and Traditional Owners."



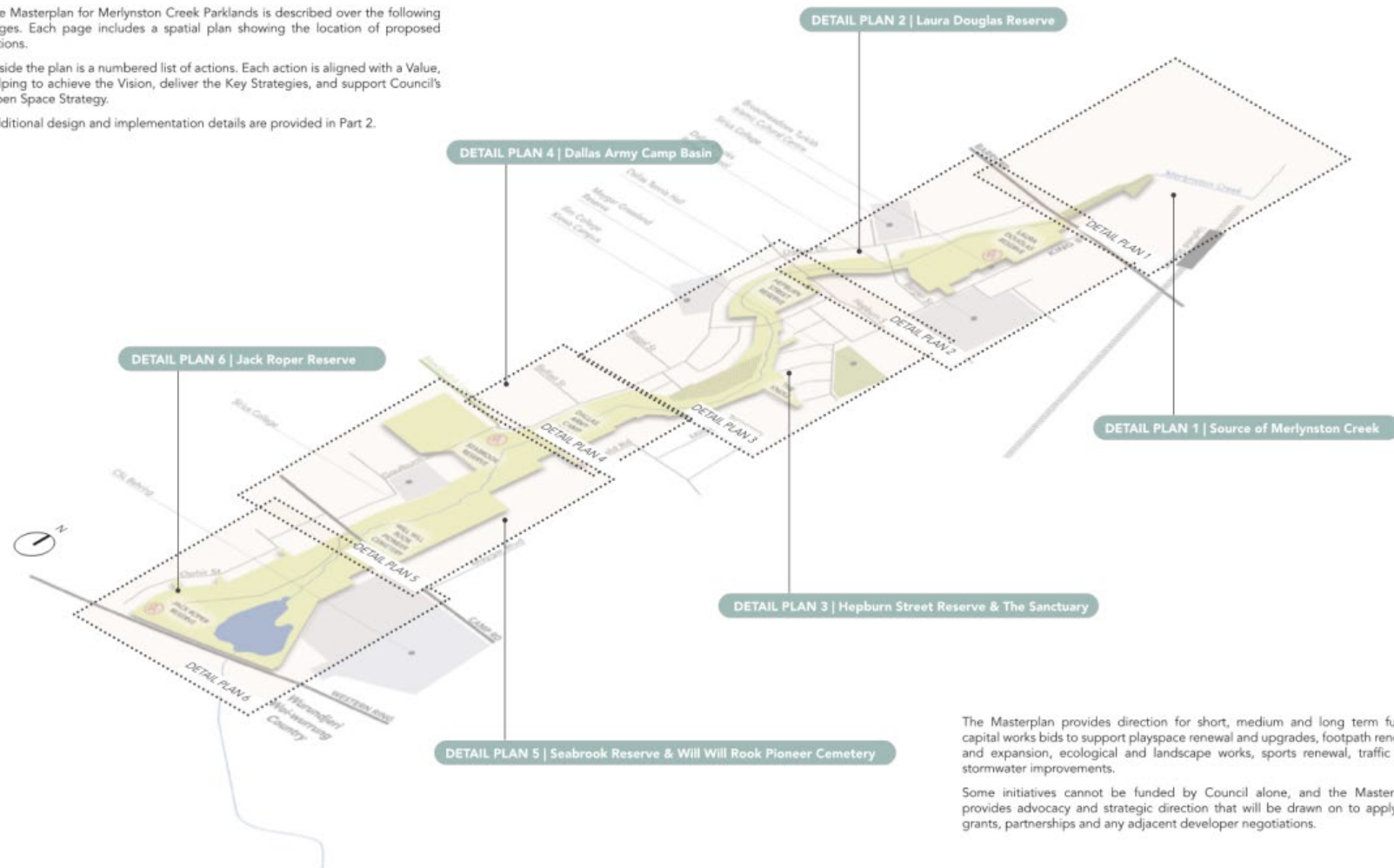


HOW TO READ THE MASTERPLAN

The Masterplan for Merlynston Creek Parklands is described over the following pages. Each page includes a spatial plan showing the location of proposed actions.

Beside the plan is a numbered list of actions. Each action is aligned with a Value, helping to achieve the Vision, deliver the Key Strategies, and support Council's Open Space Strategy.

Additional design and implementation details are provided in Part 2.



The Masterplan provides direction for short, medium and long term future capital works bids to support playspace renewal and upgrades, footpath renewal and expansion, ecological and landscape works, sports renewal, traffic and stormwater improvements.

Some initiatives cannot be funded by Council alone, and the Masterplan provides advocacy and strategic direction that will be drawn on to apply for grants, partnerships and any adjacent developer negotiations.

WURUNDJERI WOI-WURRUNG CULTURAL VALUES ASSESSMENT

Vision

“Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People have a deep and abiding connection to their Country. Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country is inscribed with cultural heritage places that are a record of Country and the activities of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Ancestors.”

Overview

The Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Values Assessment was commissioned by Council to understand the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung cultural values of Merlynston Creek and the surrounding parklands as well as assist in the development of this Masterplan.

Within this Cultural Values Assessment document, there are eight recommendations and thirty-five specific actions along with three overarching themes.

Themes

The three themes outlined within the assessment document align with the Cultural Values Assessment within the Wurundjeri’s Whole of Country Plan Principles. These provide a holistic approach to the care and connection to country.



CULTURAL VALUES ASSESSMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

The eight key recommendations of the Cultural Values Assessment have been included to implement cultural values and embed Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung perspectives throughout Merlynston Creek.

RECOMMENDATION 1

Revitalise Country to reflect the landscape prior to colonisation as much as possible and where appropriate

Actions:

Ecological rehabilitation is a priority including protecting remnant vegetation, habitat restoration, revegetation, removal of invasive species, waste and pollutants. Protect and repopulate fauna species native to Merlynston Creek, including aquatic fauna and protection of spiritual animals, and provide signage to share information about native fauna.

RECOMMENDATION 2

Enhanced protection of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country from encroaching development

Actions:

Consider the broader interconnected landscape to improve waterway health, including minimising stormwater flows from surrounding development feeding into Merlynston Creek. Work with Wurundjeri Corporation to ensure future development applies low impact design including the proposed rail extension and the proposed new bridge crossing apply low impact design.

Refer to Appendix 2 - Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Values Assessment Actions page for more information

RECOMMENDATION 3

Protect and enhance Merlynston Creek and connected waterscapes

Actions:

Renaturalising Merlynston Creek is a priority for Elders along with rehabilitation of the creekline and associated wetlands. This can support environmental flows, cultural flows and natural cycles of flooding, infiltration and evaporation.

RECOMMENDATION 4

Enhanced protection of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung cultural heritage

Actions:

Protect cultural values holistically, this may include artefacts, cultural features, flora, fauna, water bodies, landforms, stories, associations, practices, beliefs, traditions and Cultural Landscapes. Consider story rises and other features mapped in the Wurundjeri Strategic Aboriginal Heritage Assessment (SAHA) as an area of cultural sensitivity and design to avoid harm to these features.

RECOMMENDATION 5

Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People and Culture is visible on Country

Actions:

Acknowledge Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People as the Traditional Owners along the parkland, facilitate renaming using Woi-wurrung language, and use Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung art and design where possible in future building, works and infrastructure design along Merlynston Creek. Co-develop interpretive signage which can include Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung cultural knowledge and history, and information on Ancestors and resource use, as deemed appropriate by Elders.

RECOMMENDATION 6

Support Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People in continuing to connect with their Cultural Landscape

Actions:

Continue engagement with the Elders on cultural values work and ensure Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people have ongoing access to Country along Merlynston Creek and its resources to engage in cultural practices, as guided by the Wurundjeri Corporation

RECOMMENDATION 7

Support Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People in Truth-telling and healing processes

Actions:

Implement interpretive signage to support truth telling.

RECOMMENDATION 8

Genuine and meaningful engagement with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People

Actions:

Engage with Wurundjeri Corporation to ensure Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People have a real voice in informed decision-making regarding their Country. Consider the Wurundjeri Corporation's Whole of Country Plan. Provide project updates to the Wurundjeri Corporation and increase compliance in relation to caring for Country, where possible.

Detail Plan 1

THE SOURCE OF MERLYNSTON CREEK

Vision

The source of Merlynston Creek is a hidden oasis, where wallabies graze amongst wattles and eucalypts. Improvements along the creek will support a healthy waterway and habitat. Enhanced access will enable better connections between the railway, the source of the creek, and Merlynston Creek Parklands.

Wurundjeri advise that Merlynston Creek was once fed by headwaters originating much further north where Roxburgh Park is today. Development in the region has seen modifications to Merlynston Creek. This has resulted in changes to its source, which today begins in Coolaroo (indicated on the plan adjacent).¹²



Landscape at the Merlynston Creek headwaters: the source of the creek.



The Merlynston Creek corridor next to the Coolaroo Hotel.



Precinct Plan



ACTION ITEMS

Plan No.	Action	Key Strategy	Responsibility	Priority
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WURUNDJERI WOI-WURRUNG CULTURAL VALUES

1-C1	C1 Implement recommendations from the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Values Assessment to support Caring for Country, self-determination and the celebration and education of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung culture.	1.1	HCC / WWCHAC	O
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ECOLOGICAL VALUES

1-E1	E1 Protect and enhance conservation values along the Merlynston Creek within the rail reserve northwards to at least the National Boulevard Nature Reserve.	2.3	HCC	O
1-E2	E2 Future plans for the extension of the rail line from Upfield to Roxburgh Park are supported only if it is an elevated rail that is designed with minimal impact on the creek and its Ecological and Woi-wurrung Cultural Values. This includes level crossing removal at Barry Road to improve community connectivity and safety.	2.1	HCC / MW	S
1-E3	E3 Advocate for ecological and waterway outcomes to Merlynston Creek on private land from Barry Road to Maffra Street, including retention of standing dead tree snags to provide ongoing habitat.	2.1; 2.3	HCC	L

WATERWAY VALUES

1-W1	W1 Recognise and celebrate the source of Merlynston Creek.	3.1; 3.2	HCC, WWCHAC	L
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HERITAGE VALUES

1-H1	H1 Reflect the former Ford factory history in the emerging open space along Merlynston Creek, the former rail line, and in the proposed new Upfield Station Reserve.	4.2	HCC, WWCHAC	L
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Plan No.	Action	Key Strategy	Responsibility	Priority
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COMMUNITY RECREATION VALUES

1-R1	R1 Viewing Areas: Provide nature viewing opportunities along the creek.	5.1, 5.2	HCC	S
1-R2	R2 Planning Permits: Maximise parkland interface improvements in any development applications on adjacent land. Seek Environmental Significance or Significant Landscape Overlay planning controls for better protection.	5.1	HCC	S-L

ACCESS AND CONNECTION VALUES

1-A1	A1 Investigate opportunities to create a loop 'shared (use)' path connecting the northern end of Merlynston Creek Parklands to Upfield Station.	6.1; 6.3	HCC	L
1-A2	A2 Develop a long-term strategy to support habitat and access improvements to Merlynston Creek between Maffra Street and the railway line.	6.1; 6.3	HCC, DTP	L
1-A3	A3 Create a cycling path on both sides of Barry Road to improve active transport safety between the Upfield Rail Station and Laura Douglas Reserve within the Merlynston Creek Parklands.	6.2	HCC, DTP	L

Detail Plan 2

LAURA DOUGLAS RESERVE

Vision

"A place of belonging, that celebrates community, welcomes joy and play, offers cool shade and creekside exploration, and is easy to visit, time and time again."

Although it starts north of Barry Road, this is the first part of Merlynston Creek that flows through a residential neighbourhood. Improvements to Laura Douglas Reserve would provide many opportunities for the park to become part of life on a daily or weekly basis, as well as for special events and occasions. Classified as a 'District' park, Laura Douglas Reserve has the potential to bring visitors from further away to enjoy Merlynston Creek Parklands.

Enhancements to Merlynston Creek, including more planting and potential naturalisation, could provide more habitat, more shade, and a focus for walking and cycling. Extending the creekside planting and meandering forms into the park reinforces the sense that all the reserve is part of, and connected to the creek.

Places for recreation, play, sport, events, and gatherings - both large and small, formal and informal - are nestled within the parkland landscape. A network of looped paths and trails allow people to move through at the pace that suits them, from quickly and directly, to slowly and curiously.



ACTION ITEMS

Plan No.	Action	Key Strategy	Responsibility	Priority
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ECOLOGICAL VALUES

2-E1	E1	Install riparian vegetation and trees along both banks of Merlynston Creek. Retain 3m wide turfed zone behind property fencelines for maintenance access and clear viewlines. Install rock habitat and sun access for wildlife.	2.3	HCC	S
2-E2	E2	Undertake native tree planting for habitat and shade, and to draw more creekside character into the park.	2.2	HCC	S
2-E3	E3	Implement educational initiatives to discourage bird feeding.	2.3	HCC	S

HERITAGE VALUES

2-H1	H1	Reuse of bluestone boulders in reserve upgrade.	4.2	HCC	S
2-H2	H2	Provide flexible, shaded and welcoming ‘Cultural Carpet’ that reflects local cultural diversity and enables multi-purpose use for events; markets, large family and community gatherings and celebrations, and overflow parking.	4.1; 5.3	HCC	M
2-H3	H3	Investigate design opportunities to enhance interface between parklands and Turkish Islamic Cultural Centre.	4.1	HCC	M

ACCESS AND CONNECTION VALUES

2-A1	A1	Signage: Improve information and wayfinding signage at key park entrances to increase awareness of Merlynston Creek and its visitor features.	6.1	HCC	S
2-A2	A2	Shared Use Path: Implement an inclusive, Shared Use Path along the length of Merlynston Creek Parklands, on at least one side of the creek, for people who walk and cycle. Investigate lighting on higher use paths for early morning and early evening use. Lighting design is to minimise wildlife impacts.	6.2	HCC	M
2-A3	A3	Secondary Trail: Implement secondary trails along the length of Merlynston Creek Parklands, on the side opposite the shared use trail.	6.1	HCC	M
2-A4	A4	Access: Remove chainlink fence at top of bank.	6.3	HCC	S
2-A5	A5	Walking Loops: Implement loops around the open lawn area for people who walk and cycle, with easy connection to the Shared Use Path, the play space, sports fields and other parkland features. Provide shade trees and seating.	6.1	HCC	M
2-A6	A6	New Footbridge: Install new footbridge for a walking and cycling connection to Dallas Drive, for people who walk and cycle. As part of the design, investigate a viewing area so visitors can see up and down the creek, as well as across the parklands to key wayfinding landmarks such as buildings and the play space.	6.1, 6.2	HCC	S
2-A7	A7	Creekside Place: Provide creekside meeting space under shade trees with views into waterway and parkland, and connection to the Shared Use Path and other trails, paths and loops.	5.3, 6.2	HCC	S
2-A8	A8	Discovery Loops: Implement ‘discovery loops’ - informal paths to enable slower walking and discovery. Provide shade and seating.	6.1, 6.2	HCC	M
2-A8	A9	Carparking: Move carparking away from the rear of the pavilion to support walking loops and shared space. Loading access will be retained. Visitors will park in new multiple use carparking area that will also be closer to the shops, play and events area. There will be no change to carpark numbers.	5.1	HCC	L

Plan No.	Action	Key Strategy	Responsibility	Priority
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WURUNDJERI WOI-WURRUNG CULTURAL VALUES

2-C1	C1	Implement recommendations from the Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung Cultural Values Assessment to support Caring for Country, self-determination and the celebration and education of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung culture.	1.1	HCC / WWCHAC	O
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WATERWAY VALUES

2-W1	W1	Investigate and where feasible implement ‘light touch’ naturalisation opportunities to improve riparian zone whilst protecting existing trees. Refer Typical Section 1 (see page 40).	3.2	HCC / MW	M
2-W2	W2	Underground the water storage tank as part of playing field and clubhouse redevelopment.	3.3	HCC	L
2-W3	W3	Investigate, and where feasible, seek partnership funding to implement naturalisation of Merlynston Creek including widening waterway footprint and integrating with sediment pond and bioretention to deliver water quality improvements. Refer Typical Section 2 (see page 41).	3.1; 3.2	HCC / MW	M
2-W4	W4	Investigate, and where feasible implement ways for rainwater and stormwater to be stored and used to water parkland trees and plants.	3.1	HCC	M

COMMUNITY RECREATION VALUES

2-R1	R1	King Street Shops: Enhance the interface between the parklands and the King Street shops - e.g. shade, paving, outdoor seating - so customers can enjoy the parkland setting.	5.2	HCC	M
2-R2	R2	Events: Provide large welcoming shelter and combine with ‘cultural carpet’ plaza that can be used for events, markets and gatherings. Seek funding to construct including supporting power, water, public toilet, event vehicle access and signage.	5.1	HCC	M
2-R3	R3	Carparking: Investigate, and where feasible implement multiple use opportunities for carpark e.g. painting and hoop at one end to allow use as a basketball half court; or patterns and colours that reflect local groups.	5.2	HCC	M
2-R4	R4	Daily Enjoyment: Provide a range of furniture including picnic settings, seating, rubbish and ash disposal bins.	5.3	HCC	S
2-R5	R5	Play: Establish a district level play space that can be viewed and enjoyed from the streets and shops and future event area.	5.2; 5.3	HCC	S
2-R6	R6	Sport: Investigate, and if feasible, incorporate a smaller third field (96mx50m) to the south and realign two full sized fields (78x105m). The realignment will retain the central tree avenue including walking loops and viewlines to new footbridge.	5.2; 5.3	HCC	M / L
2-R7	R7	Play: Retain small simple playspace for young children to meet high demand when older siblings are playing soccer. This space will be included in the design considerations for the nearby larger district playspace.	5.2	HCC	S
2-R8	R8	Pavilion: Replace clubhouse when fields are realigned including forecourt. Ensure new clubhouse location does not result in loss of walking loops, trees and other parkland values.	5.2; 5.3	HCC	L
2-R9	R9	Park Connections: Investigate future long-term opportunities to bring land into public ownership to improve parkland connections, viewlines and visibility from King Street and Berger Street.	5.1; 5.3	HCC	L
2-R10	R10	Planning Permits: Maximise parkland interface improvements in any development applications on adjacent land. Seek Environmental Significance or Significant Landscape Overlay planning controls for better protection.	5.2; 5.3	HCC	O

LAURA DOUGLAS RESERVE SCENARIOS

SCENARIO
1

SPORTS DAY



All three pitches can be used for games or training without affecting the Shared Use path or movement through the park for people who walk or cycle. A redeveloped clubhouse is located on the centreline of the field for optimal viewing. At the northern end of the clubhouse, a shaded plaza is a welcoming arrival point for members, visitors, or those coming for events. A small play space caters for families with younger children who need to be close to the sporting activities during training, so cannot move away to use the larger play facilities.

SCENARIO
2

MARKET DAY



Flexible spaces allow for small scale markets, larger monthly or seasonal markets, and different events, and access from King Street to bump in temporary stages, food trucks, coffee carts, and market stalls. Ticketed events with temporary fencing could be accommodated whilst still allowing multiple ways for visitors to move through the park and use the play space and other facilities.





Detail Plan 3

HEPBURN STREET RESERVE and THE SANCTUARY

Vision

“Away from the bustle of Laura Douglas is a place of calm and connection. Hepburn Street Reserve invites visitors to slow down, meander, and explore with the senses. The Sanctuary provides refuge for important plant and animal species, with views over rolling terrain and connection to earth and sky.”

Hepburn Street Reserve and Sanctuary is a Neighbourhood scale reserve and home to the Dallas Tennis Hall offering opportunities for nature, walking, kick-about and picnic connections.

This area has gaps in continuous trail connection that are a priority to address.



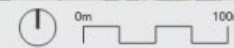
Paths that allow you to move like the river: quick and direct, or slow and meandering.



Large sunny spaces open to the sky; smaller shady spaces to explore and connect.



Precinct Plan



ACTION ITEMS

Plan No.	Action	Key Strategy	Responsibility	Priority
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WURUNDJERI WOI-WURRUNG CULTURAL VALUES

3-C1	C1	Implement recommendations from the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Values Assessment to support Caring for Country, self-determination and the celebration and education of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung culture.	1.1	HCC / WWCHAC	O
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ECOLOGICAL VALUES

3-E1	E1	Install riparian vegetation and trees along both banks of Merlynston Creek. Install rock habitat and sun access for wildlife. Retain 3m wide turfed zone behind property fences for maintenance access and clear viewlines.	2.3; 6.2	HCC	S
3-E2	E2	Undertake native tree planting for habitat and shade. Curving sweeps of trees and planting meander across the flatter land, increasing the sense of being part of a riparian plain connected to the creek.	2.2	HCC	M
3-E3	E3	Implement edge treatment and planting, and maintenance regimes that direct cyclists and walkers away from sensitive ecological areas.	2.3	HCC	S
3-E4	E4	Any installation and timing of lighting to assist park visitors is to be designed to minimise wildlife impacts.	2.3	HCC	S

HERITAGE VALUES

3-H1	H1	Retain existing bluestone retaining wall and integrate into park entry.	4.2	HCC	O
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ACCESS AND CONNECTION VALUES

3-A1	A1	Hepburn Bluestone Path: Improve walking and cycling entry from Hepburn Street by adapting the bluestone walk for all abilities access.	6.1	HCC	M
3-A2	A2	Signage: Improve information and wayfinding signage at key park entrances to increase awareness of Merlynston Creek and its visitor features.	6.3	HCC	S
3-A3	A3	Shared Use Path: Implement an inclusive, Shared Use Path along the length of Merlynston Creek Parklands, on at least one side of the creek, for people who walk and cycle. Investigate lighting on higher use paths for early morning and early evening use. Lighting design is to minimise wildlife impacts.	6.1; 6.2	HCC	S
3-A4	A4	Secondary Trails: Implement secondary trails along the length of Merlynston Creek Parklands, on the side opposite the shared use trail. All trails located to direct walkers and cyclists away from ecological and culturally sensitive areas.	6.1; 6.2	HCC	M
3-A5	A5	Walking Trail: Where feasible, implement a secondary path that enables a walking loop around the open lawn area with easy connection to the shared use path, the Terang Street entry, and the hall. Provide shade trees and seating.	6.1; 5.3	HCC	M
3-A6	A6	Terang Street Walkway: Improve path connection into parklands from Terang Street to make it feel safer to walk through.	6.1	HCC	M
3-A7	A7	Benalla + Hepburn entrance: Investigate, and where feasible, seek additional parkland area near the Benalla Street and Hepburn Street entrance to improve path connections, viewlines and visibility.	6.1; 6.2; 6.3	HCC	L
3-A8	A8	Footbridge: Investigate, and if feasible, construct a creek crossing to improve east-west connectivity.	6.2; 6.3	HCC	L
3-A9	A9	Maygar Grasslands: Improve wayfinding and information signage to support links to nearby Maygar Grasslands.	6.1	HCC	M

Plan No.	Action	Key Strategy	Responsibility	Priority
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WATERWAY VALUES

3-W1	W1	Investigate, and where feasible, implement 'light touch' naturalisation of Merlynston Creek including introduction of riparian vegetation, and saw-cutting concrete to allow low density sedge planting.	3.2	HCC / MW	M
3-W2	W2	Investigate, and where feasible, seek partnership funding to implement naturalisation of Merlynston Creek including concrete removal, meandering low flow channel, benched floodplain, and riparian vegetation.	3.1; 3.2	HCC / MW	L
3-W3	W3	Increase planting to screen fencing on top of the culvert wing walls. Extend the planting area outside the fence to ease ongoing maintenance.	3.3	HCC / MW	L
3-W4	W4	Investigate, and if feasible, implement sediment basin and bioretention basin to improve water quality in Merlynston Creek.	3.1	HCC / MW	M

COMMUNITY RECREATION VALUES

3-R1	R1	Carpark: Investigate, and where feasible implement 'light touch' upgrades to enable multiple use opportunities for carpark e.g. painting and hoop at one end to allow use as a basketball half court; or patterns and colours that reflect local groups using the community building.	5.2; 5.3	HCC	M
3-R2	R2	Building Upgrade: Investigate, and where feasible implement building upgrades that better connect the hall with the parkland e.g. windows, verandah, or forecourt.	5.2; 5.3	HCC	L
3-R3	R3	Community Gardens: Investigate, and if self-managed by an active community group, implement a small community garden subject to site having limited impact on public use of reserve and self-organisation by the community.	5.2	HCC	M
3-R4	R4	Picnics: Install seating, sun loungers and picnic settings to support smaller gatherings and quiet relaxation.	5.2; 5.3	HCC	S
3-R5	R5	Signage: Enhance signage to viewing and picnic area at The Knoll by Stamford Court.	6.3	HCC	O
3-R6	R6	Discovery Loops: Implement 'discovery loops' - informal paths to enable slower movement, discovery and walking. Create sensory garden with informal paths weaving between drifts of planting. Extend creekside tree and groundcover planting to connect and increase the sense of being part of the creek corridor. Integrate existing olive grove into planting clusters. Integrate pockets of planting chosen for their textural and sensory qualities.	5.2	HCC	L
3-R7	R7	Maintenance Partnerships: Continue to maintain DFFH land at 12-16 Benalla Street that is zoned PPRZ for parkland purposes.	5.3; 6.1	HCC	L
3-R8	R8	Rezone: Rezone existing Council parkland at 6-20 Military Road, 16 Stamford Street and 20 Cornell Close from General Residential to PPRZ. Improve parkland interface in any adjacent development.	5.3	HCC / DFFH	O
3-R9	R9	Viewing Area: Investigate viewing area looking over creek and Golden Sun Moth / Large-flower crane's bill habitat.	5.2	HCC	S
3-R10	R10	Critical Parkland Gap: Seek to acquire grassy plains parcel at 13 Merlynston Close, Broadmeadows, to fill the most critical parkland and trail gap in the Merlynston Creek Parklands. Rezone from General Residential to PPRZ. Improve parkland interface in any adjacent development.	5.2; 5.3	HCC	L
3-R11	R11	Planning Permits: Seek Environmental Significance or Significant Landscape Overlay planning controls for better protection.	5.1; 5.3	HCC	S

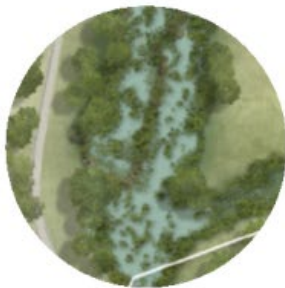
Detail Plan 4

DALLAS ARMY CAMP BASIN

Vision

"A flourishing Merlynston Creek becomes an artery of life, connecting the waterway through the parklands to the vibrant community activity at Seabrook Reserve."

Constructed in the 1960s to mitigate flooding in surrounding suburbs, the Dallas Army Camp Basin is managed by Melbourne Water and underwent a major upgrade in 2015. Due to ongoing flood risk, further works are required to open up and allow integration of safe walking and cycling access, such as egress paths and warning signage.



Detail plan showing the central Army Camp Basin area with sediment pond, ephemeral wetlands and native tree planting.



Precinct Plan



ACTION ITEMS

Plan No.	Action	Key Strategy	Responsibility	Priority
WURUNDJERI WOI-WURRUNG CULTURAL VALUES				
4-C1	C1 Implement recommendations from the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Values Assessment to support Caring for Country, self-determination and the celebration and education of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung culture.	1.1	HCC / WWCHAC	O

ECOLOGICAL VALUES

4-E1	E1 Establish passively watered street tree planting along Dallas Drive to shade path.	2.2	HCC	M
4-E2	E2 Undertake native tree planting for habitat and shade.	2.1	HCC	O
4-E3	E3 Plant scattered River Red Gum and Swamp Gum trees and reduce mowing to form a modified floodplain woodland (EVC56) in areas below the Q10 flood extent.	2.2	MW	M
4-E4	E4 Revegetate steep slopes to increase habitat and screen the adjoining factories.	2.1; 2.2	MW	M

WATERWAY VALUES

4-W1	W1 Continue monitoring and investigation of catchment-wide water quality management. Implement sediment pond and bioretention basin.	3.2	MW	S
4-W2	W2 Within Melbourne Water-owned land, implement ephemeral wetlands fed by stormwater outlets along western side of Merlynston Creek.	3.2	MW	M
4-W3	W3 Investigate, and where feasible, daylight piped section of Merlynston Creek to elevate its presence within the parklands and facilitate improved riparian connectivity.	3.2	HCC / MW	M

HERITAGE VALUES

4-H1	H1 Reflect former Army Camp history as part of enabling access into the Dallas Retarding Basin.	4.2	HCC / MW	L
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COMMUNITY RECREATION VALUES

4-R1	R1 Viewing Area: Work with Melbourne Water to investigate opportunities for enhancements along top of spillway to provide viewing platform with seating, signage, and integrated balustrade.	5.3	HCC, MW	M
4-R2	R2 Planning Permits: Maximise parkland interface improvements in any development applications on adjacent land.	5.1	HCC	

Plan No.	Action	Key Strategy	Responsibility	Priority
ACCESS AND CONNECTION VALUES				
4-A1	A1 Shared Use Path: Implement an inclusive Shared Path along the length of the Dallas Army Camp Basin. This will be set back from Dallas Drive to provide a shady relaxed walking experience.	6.1; 6.2	HCC, MW	S
4-A2	A2 Dhemre Place: Provide connection into parklands from southern end of Dhemre Place.	6.1	HCC	M
4-A3	A3 Entrance Gateway: Create formal parkland entry points along Dallas Drive, with views over the Basin. Provide seating.	6.1	HCC / MW	M
4-A4	A4 Signage: Improve information and wayfinding signage at key park entrances to increase awareness of Merlynston Creek and its visitor features. Include emergency warning markers in flood hazard areas.	6.3	HCC / MW	S
4-A5	A5 Access: Remove chainlink fencing along Dallas Drive (once other access restrictions, signage and warning markers are installed).	6.2	HCC / MW	S
4-A6	A6 Restricted Area: Some areas of the basin will remain unavailable for public access due to flooding safety risks. This is indicatively marked on the map by the white line. No stepping stones along stretch of creek to limit access to eastern bank.	6.2	HCC / MW	O
4-A7	A7 Safety: Provide additional egress to allow evacuation during a flood event.	6.1; 6.2	HCC / MW	S
4-A8	A8 Proposed Potential Road: Connect Shared Use Path running along proposed future road into the parkland trail network.	6.1	HCC	M

Detail Plan 5

SEABROOK RESERVE and WILL WILL ROOK PIONEER CEMETERY

Vision

“Life is celebrated in Merlynston Creek Parklands. There is laughter and adventure at Seabrook Reserve; further along, dogs also run and play, and children make their way to and from school. Past lives are commemorated with planting that makes the cemetery more visible.”

Seabrook Reserve features State Rugby League facilities and community centre.

Along the creek, Seabrook Reserve is home to recently upgraded high quality play and picnic facilities along the banks of the creek. This important feature is not well known and used by the local and district community.

Will Will Rook Pioneer Cemetery is on Crown land and provides an important historical point of interest for the creek.

Difficulties crossing or entering the reserve from Camp Road are a priority to address.



Detail plan showing altered mowing regime to allow the old pattern of Will Will Rook Pioneer Cemetery to be revealed, and path connection along the east side of the creek.



ACTION ITEMS

Plan No.	Action	Key Strategy	Responsibility	Priority
WURUNDJERI WOI-WURRUNG CULTURAL VALUES				
5-C1	C1 Implement recommendations from the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Values Assessment to support Caring for Country, self-determination and the celebration and education of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung culture.	1.1	HCC / WWCHAC	O

ECOLOGICAL VALUES

5-E1	E1 Infill gaps in riparian vegetation along banks of the Merlynston Creek while ensuring sun access and rocky habitat for fauna. Ensure protection of associated grassland communities.	2.3	HCC	M
5-E2	E2 Undertake native tree planting for habitat and shade.	2.1	HCC	S
5-E3	E3 As wetlands, ponds and creek improvements are created, implement educational initiatives to discourage bird feeding.	2.2	HCC	M
5-E4	E4 Trial mowing regime to only mow along the historic grid layout and monitor any species improvements. Implement supplementary planting with the support of the Friends of Will Will Rook Pioneer Cemetery.	2.3	HCC	M
5-E5	E5 Investigate, and if feasible, relocate dog off-leash area to an alternate area to support ecological improvements in Will Will Rook Pioneer Cemetery.	2.3	HCC	M

WATERWAY VALUES

5-W1	W1 Implement sediment basin and wetland using stormwater diverted from industrial catchment to the east.	3.2	HCC / MW	M
5-W2	W2 Reduce stormwater being pumped directly into Merlynston Creek to protect the riparian corridor and reduce potential bank instability.	3.2	HCC / MW	M

HERITAGE VALUES

5-H1	H1 Investigate, and if feasible, undertake adaptive reuse of bluestone toilet block to convert to an outdoor shelter area with information panels celebrating local history.	4.2	HCC	M
5-H2	H2 Better recognise the historic significance and graves of Will Will Rook Pioneer Cemetery with planting and mowing regimes to showcase its layout, along with improved trails, seating and sweeps of low planting to create a sense of enclosures. Seek funding to undertake ground penetrating radar sensing to confirm location of unknown graves.	4.2	HCC	S

Plan No.	Action	Key Strategy	Responsibility	Priority
COMMUNITY RECREATION VALUES				
5-R1	R1 Creekside Walkings: Design and management of the creekside reserve area, Seabrook Reserve and Will Will Rook Pioneer Cemetery to encourage safe, relaxing and enjoyable walking routes to schools, sporting reserves and playgrounds visitor features.	5.1	HCC	O
5-R2	R2 Playground Visibility: Maximise design and viewlines around the new housing development to help improve sense of connection and community at Seabrook playground.	5.1	HCC	S
5-R3	R3 Outdoor Gathering: Investigate, and where feasible integrate improvements for small outdoor events e.g. bump-in area and strategic hardstand sites into any future redesign of playground and picnic area at Seabrook Reserve.	5.2	HCC	L
5-R4	R4 Seabrook Community Centre: Maintain State Rugby League reserves and facilities while investigating design improvements to improve seating and sense of place for community use near the Seabrook Community Centre.	5.2	HCC	S
5-R5	R5 Planning Permits: Maximise parkland interface improvements in any development applications on adjacent land. Seek Environmental Significance or Significant Landscape Overlay planning controls for better protection.	5.2; 5.3	HCC	O

ACCESS AND CONNECTION VALUES

5-A1	A1 Seabrook Reserve Carpark: Investigate and where feasible, implement redesign Seabrook Reserve carpark, access, and building arrival to prioritise people who walk and cycle, a slow speed environment, and wayfinding. Include land currently used for informal path in assessment.	6.1	HCC	M
5-A2	A2 Stanhope Connection: Investigate future long term opportunities to create connection into parklands along Stanhope Street to improve the connection to the Central Grove Shopping Centre. If proceeding investigate forecourt as potential entry incorporating the adaptive reuse of the bluestone toilet block.	6.2; 6.3	HCC	L
5-A3	A3 Walking Loops: Subject to heritage, cultural and ecological sensitivities, investigate new walking and cycling path along eastern side of Merlynston Creek that will connect to Shared Use Path. Implement where feasible.	6.1; 6.3	HCC / DEECA	M
5-A4	A4 Broadfield Road: Create new walking and cycling entrance into the parklands with signage and trail connections from the east at Broadfield Road	6.1	HCC	M
5-A5	A5 Proposed Potential New Road: Potential proposed future road to be set back further from Merlynston Creek if needed to protect Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung cultural values, ecological values, heritage values, walking and cycling access and community recreation values including minimising visual and noise impacts.	6.1; 6.2	HCC	S
5-A6	A6 Walking Loops: Explore feasibility for path connection under new potential proposed future road	6.1; 6.2	HCC	S

Detail Plan 6

JACK ROPER RESERVE

Vision

“Jack Roper Reserve will continue as a popular recreational drawcard, attracting and connecting visitors to the rest of the parklands and to a flourishing Merlynston Creek.”

Jack Roper Reserve provides a ‘regional’ level of play and picnic facilities and is a well known and well used park for people of many surrounding suburbs. It also provides some sporting facilities. Recent trail upgrades create new connections with further work needed to enhance safe road crossings and vehicle entrance legibility. The recent completion of the stormwater harvesting scheme is improving the water quality of the Melbourne Water basin, and providing a reliable source of water to keep the park green at all times.



Detail plan showing wetlands to the lake, to improve water quality, and associated path connections.



ACTION ITEMS

Plan No.	Action	Key Strategy	Responsibility	Priority
WURUNDJERI WOI-WURRUNG CULTURAL VALUES				
6-C1	C1 Implement recommendations from the Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung Cultural Values Assessment to support Caring for Country, self-determination and the celebration and education of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung culture.	1.1	HCC / WWCHAC	O
ECOLOGICAL VALUES				
6-E1	E1 Undertake planting of riparian vegetation and trees along both banks of Merlynston Creek and infill any gaps. Install rock habitat and sun access for wildlife.	2.1	HCC	M
6-E2	E2 Undertake native tree planting for habitat and shade.	2.2	HCC	M
6-E3	E3 Implement educational initiatives to discourage bird feeding.	2.3	HCC	S
WATERWAY VALUES				
6-W1	W1 Align additional water quality treatment measures such as sediment ponds with community recreation opportunities to maximise co-benefits. Ensure flood detention capacity of Jack Roper Reserve is maintained, to protect downstream suburbs and communities. Seek additional monitoring and investigation of catchment-wide water quality management.	3.2	HCC / MW	L
6-W2	W2 Investigate, and if feasible implement recirculating wetlands to improve creek water quality and habitat.	3.2	HCC / MW	L
6-W3	W3 Investigate and seek community input on potential removal of, or redesign of island as part of lake water quality improvement. If feasible, implement as a long-term initiative.	3.2	HCC / MW	L
HERITAGE VALUES				
6-H1	H1 Investigate and where feasible reflect contributions of the Greek community as part of long term use and development of Jack Roper Reserve and neighbouring PPRZ-zoned land.	4.2	HCC	L
6-H2	H2 Reflect the story and history of Merlynston Creek basins.	4.2	HCC	S/M

Plan No.	Action	Key Strategy	Responsibility	Priority
COMMUNITY RECREATION VALUES				
6-R1	R1 Shared Entrance: Improve shared entrance into Jack Roper and 227 Camp Road for clearer walking, cycling and vehicular movement. Ensure 227 Camp Road retains its PPRZ zone and parkland interface improvements are maximised.	5.1	HCC	L
6-R2	R2 Interface with 227 Camp Road: Implement design solutions that help improve the interface of adjacent community building to sports field including walking loops, clearer vehicle movements, fencing to help protect the building from potential ball damage.	5.2	HCC	M
6-R3	R3 Viewing Point: Investigate, and if feasible, establish shelter or seating at existing viewing point.	5.1	HCC	L
6-R4	R4 Regional Playspace: Retain and invest in Jack Roper Playground to maintain its status as one of Hume's feature regional play experiences and outdoor gathering experiences.	5.2	HCC	O
6-R5	R5 Sound Barrier: Advocate with the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) for a potential sound barrier along the Western Ring Road.	5.1	HCC / DTP	L
6-R6	R6 Planning Permit: Maximise parkland interface improvements in any development applications on adjacent land. Seek Environmental Significance or Significant Landscape Overlay planning controls for better protection.	5.1	HCC	O
ACCESS AND CONNECTION VALUES				
6-A1	A1 Camp Road Crossing: Improve trail connections to help pedestrian and cycle connections between Jack Roper Reserve and Will Will Rook Pioneer Cemetery. Partner with DTP to install pedestrian crossing lights, to help people cross Camp Road.	6.1; 6.3	HCC	M
6-A2	A2 Signage: Install directional and wayfinding signage at key park entrances. Show clearly how the Shared Use Path connects into the rest of the park.	6.3	HCC	M
6-A3	A3 Footbridge: Consider relocation of bridge crossing point further north to facilitate water quality improvements. If it is not feasible to reuse the existing bridge, consider replacing with one that is wide enough to include Shared Use Path.	6.1; 3.2	HCC	L
6-A4	A4 Tree Trail: Provide informal trail through established trees.	6.1	HCC	M
6-A5	A5 Wetlands Loop: If wetlands are created, provide path on top of main bund to facilitate walking loop and maintenance.	6.1	HCC	L
6-A6	A6 Underpass: Improve path amenity and habitat link for wildlife under the Western Ring Road. Improve wayfinding and invite visitors to enjoy extended Merlynston Creek parklands in the City of Merri-bek.	6.1; 6.3	HCC	M

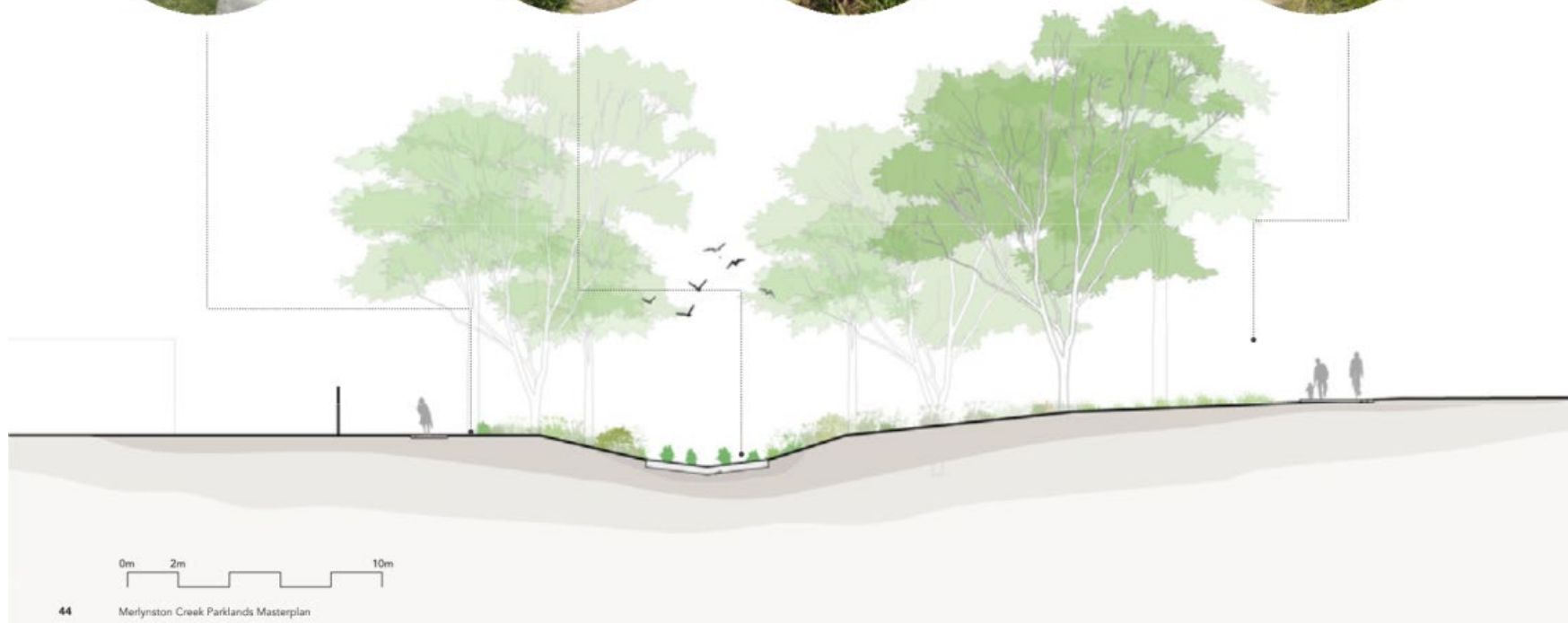




Section 1 | 1:200 at A3

CREEKLINE LAURA DOUGLAS RESERVE

This section illustrates options for improvements along the creek where the concrete drain is very close to residential neighbours on one side, and large existing trees on the other. To protect these trees, so they can continue to provide shade and habitat, the existing creek bank is retained and planted. Space for maintenance vehicles is provided behind property fences, with mown grass on both sides of the informal trail. There may be opportunities to introduce pockets of planting amongst the concrete in the drain.



Section 2 | 1:300 at A3

CREEKLINE LAURA DOUGLAS RESERVE

In the south west corner of Laura Douglas Reserve, a large parcel of available land presents the opportunity to widen out the creek (subject to flow requirements). This would include a series of pools and riffles, with informal rock crossing points.



Section 3 | 1:200 at A3

LAURA DOUGLAS RESERVE FIELD

The southern portion of Laura Douglas Reserve is currently underutilised and lacking clear connection to Merlynston Creek. A new loop path around the open lawn area will provide people who walk and cycle with an easy connection to the Shared Use Path, the play space, sports fields and other parkland features.



Section 4

Will Will Rook Pioneer Cemetery

The Will Will Rook Pioneer Cemetery is a historic and important landmark within the Merlynston Creek parklands. Its unique grid like ground plain presents an opportunity to employ a selective mowing regime to only mow along the historic grid layout. Native supplementary planting such as grasses and flowering shrubs will highlight gravesites, markers and other features. This will allow for Will Will Rook to become more visible as an historic place of rest.







EXISTING MATERIALS & FINISHES

Vision

Existing materials, finishes, textures, surfaces and colours provide a starting point to build upon, and a way of incorporating the best the parkland currently offers.

Pavements and Surfaces

1. Artwork on court surface at Seabrook Reserve: opportunity to continue the involvement of local artists in creating locally responsive artworks on pavements and other surfaces throughout the parklands.
2. Carpark surfaces are hot and not used at all times: opportunity to consider temporary treatments (e.g. painting) to allow for other recreational uses such as half courts.
3. Concrete pavements: opportunity to upgrade with new or temporary (painted) surfaces to tie in with parklands.
4. Breaking up the pavement surface into smaller squares reduces the overall scale, bringing it down to a more personal scale: opportunity to continue to use pavement treatments to provide spaces that feel comfortable for large and small group, and individuals.

Furniture

- 5 & 6. Existing furniture is robust and durable.
7. New picnic settings and BBQs at Seabrook Reserve are also durable: opportunity to build on this new evolution of furniture, with clean lines, simple shapes and forms, and a greater range of accessible options, allowing people of different ages and abilities to enjoy the facilities.
8. Existing fences and balustrades range from chainlink to custom design at key locations like the old rail spur near Seabrook reserve.

Structures

9. Basalt retaining wall at Hepburn Street is beautifully constructed and its generosity suits the scale of the parklands: opportunity to use basalt as a key landscape element through the parklands.
10. Existing (unused) toilet block at Will Will Rook is solidly built: opportunity to consider adaptive reuse of existing building and materials.
11. The new shelter structure at Seabrook provides shade and is a strong landmark.
12. Existing footbridges vary in style and not all allow for Shared Use: opportunity to upgrade over time (from repainting to replacement) in line with other improvements.

Signage & Wayfinding

13-15. Existing signage varies in style: opportunity to rationalise over time, with consistent graphics and languages.

16. New information signage near Seabrook is more contemporary in design.

Play & Discovery

17. Play equipment at Laura Douglas is small and dated, although well used by families attending soccer training.

19 & 20. District level play spaces at Seabrook and Jack Roper are extremely popular, and offer different activities, providing play opportunities for children of different ages and abilities: opportunity for new play at Laura Douglas to complement.

21. Existing fields are well used.

Waterway

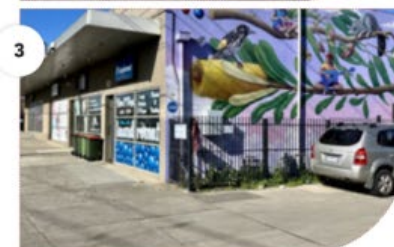
21 and 22. Existing concrete is generally in good condition: opportunity to salvage and reuse or keep in place and plant in the joins (subject to flow requirements).

23. Basalt boulders in the creek near Will Will Rook (and elsewhere): opportunity to use a consistent, local material throughout, where required as part of naturalisation.

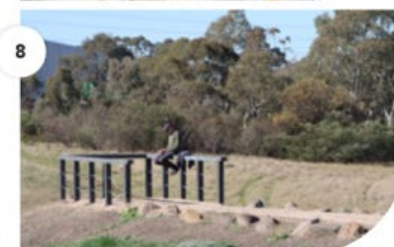
24. Investigate rock-filled gabions at Army Camp basin: opportunity to consider the use of gabions elsewhere.

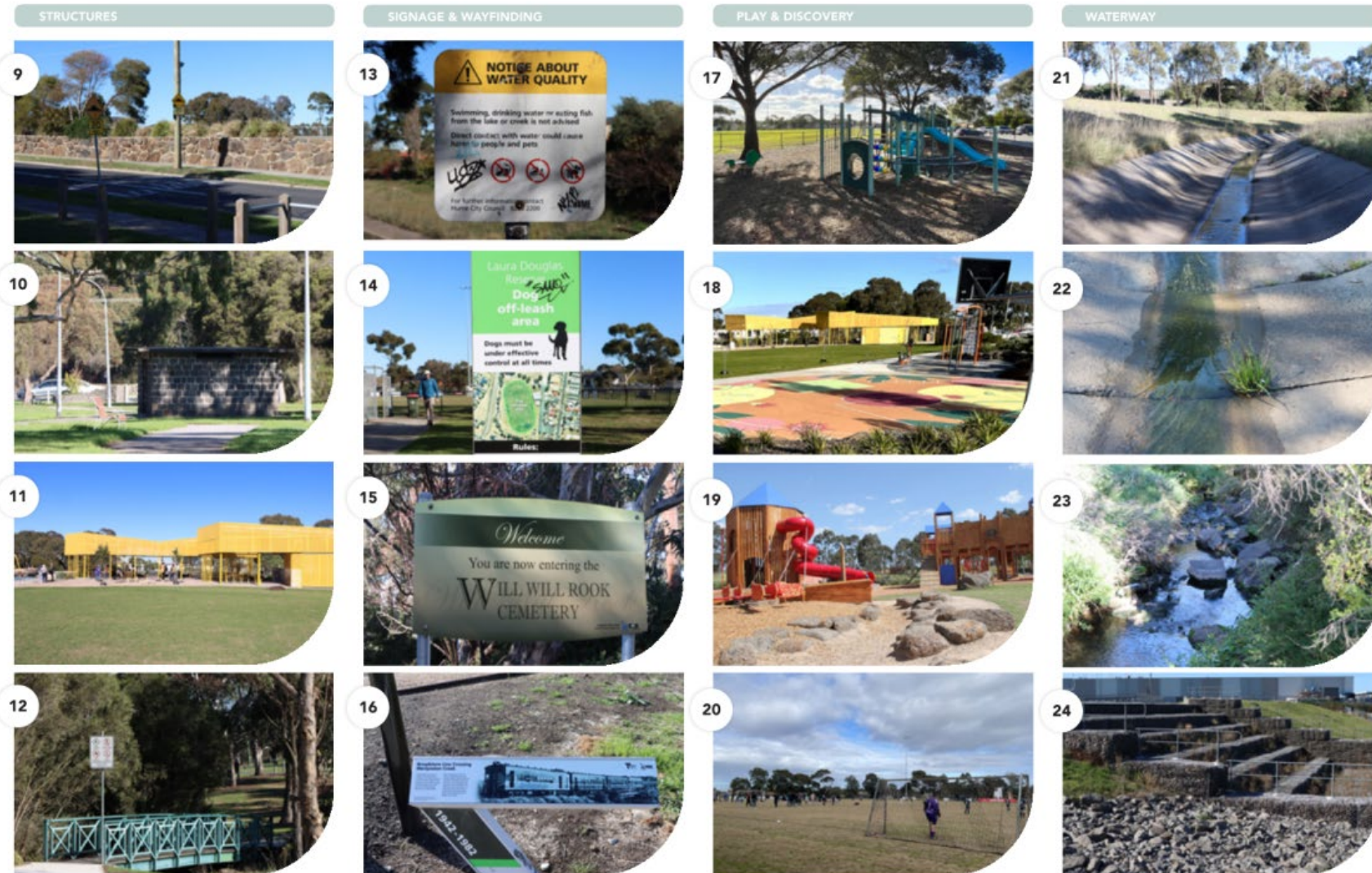
The following pages show how this approach could be varied to suit the different needs of two parts of Merlynston Creek Parklands: Laura Douglas Reserve, and Hepburn Street Reserve.

PAVEMENTS



FURNITURE





PROPOSED MATERIALS & FINISHES

Vision

“Across the full extent of Merlynston Creek Parklands, materials and finishes, colours and patterns draw from the rich cultural diversity of the community, and the natural qualities of the creek. This approach allows different parts of the park to have their own identity whilst still feeling connected to the rest of the corridor.

The diversity of play and recreation experiences is supported by inclusive furniture and play spaces, allowing people of different ages and abilities to visit and enjoy the parklands.

Pavements and Surfaces

1 & 2. Tones and patterns reflect traditions of rug-making and textiles in cultural background of many locals and visitors. Colours and patterns to reflect cultural diversity - temporary or painted options could be reapplied for different festivals, events or cultural celebrations.

3. Painted carpark surfaces allow for other recreational uses.

4. Stone reflects local geology and is a hard wearing surface.

Furniture

5. Robust furniture is resilient and provides creekside durability. Custom-designed furniture can be considered for District level parks, to support their role as important recreation destinations.

6. Loungers for relaxing - can be installed in smaller groupings under shade trees and along the creek.

7. Furniture should enable large family gatherings to occur in comfort, and support the needs of people of different ages and abilities.

8. Multifunctional furniture allows for different uses, including sitting, lounging, and dining, and for visitors to use the park in small or larger groups.

Structures

9. A bridge across the creek can become a landmark.

10 & 11. Robust and colourful structures to reflect a sense of play, joy, and celebration.

12. Integrated multifunctional furniture / structures allow for a variety of uses from dining and sitting, to play, performances and events

Signage & Wayfinding

13. Parks totem sign in accordance with the Hume Signage Style Guide.

14. Nature reserve interpretive signage in accordance with the Hume Signage Style Guide.

15 & 16. Custom interpretive signage with a mixture of languages, words and diagrams, or used to celebrate important plants and animals.

Play & Discovery

17 & 18. Challenging adventure structures in materials that reflect the creek and its importance.

19. Diverse skills and activities support the needs of children of different ages and abilities.

20. Different colours, textures, scents and sounds support the physical, social and mental wellbeing of children of different ages, needs and abilities.

Waterway

21 and 22. Opportunities for boulder crossing points for exploration, where the creek widens.

23. Reuse of concrete removed and salvaged from the drain.

24. Using materials and plants to make places for play and sitting that are away from the creek but feel like part of the waterway.

The following pages show how this approach could be varied to suit the different needs of two parts of Merlynston Creek Parklands: Laura Douglas Reserve, and Hepburn Street Reserve.

PAVEMENTS

1



2



3



4



FURNITURE

5



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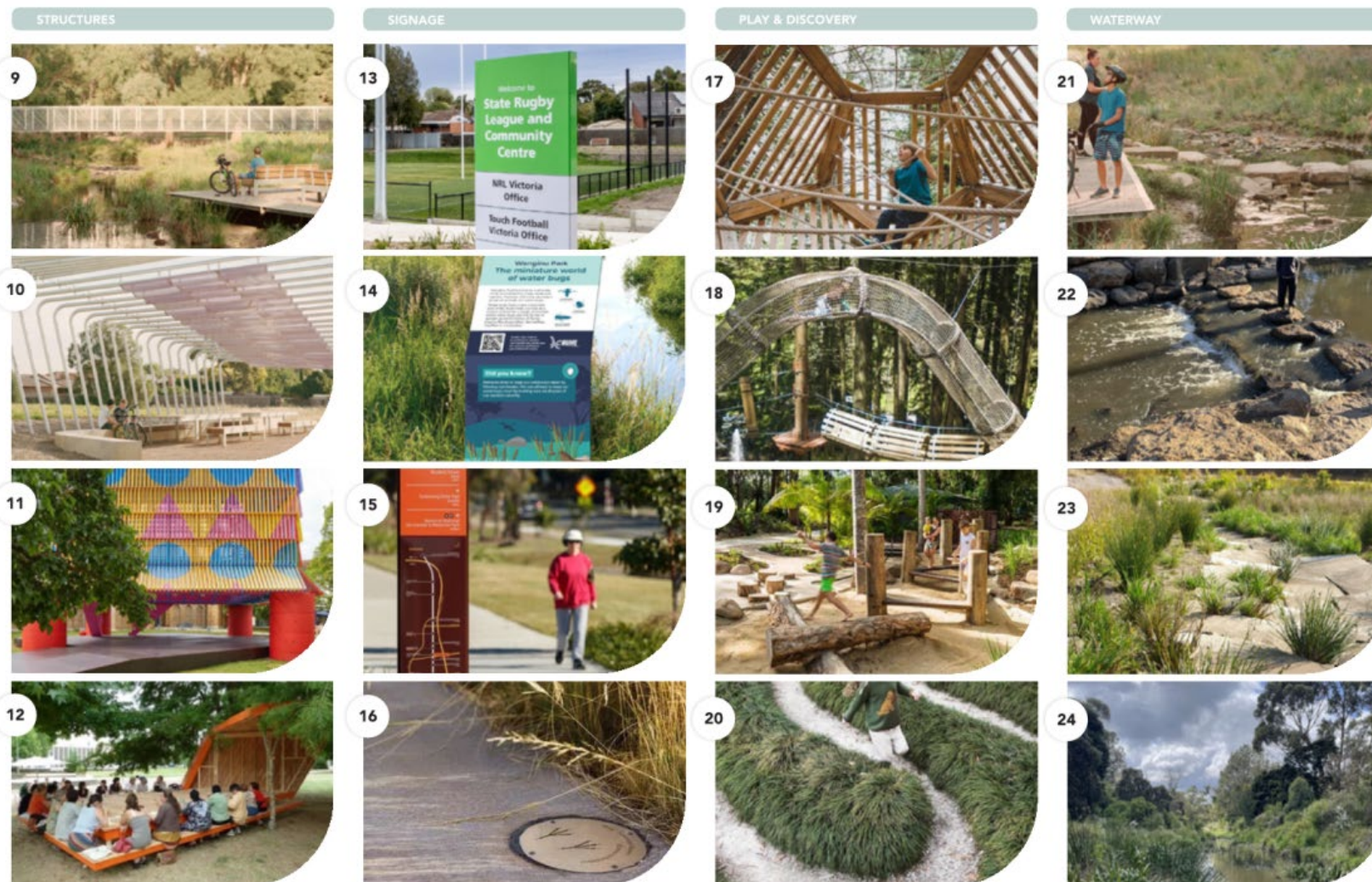


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8





PROPOSED: LAURA DOUGLAS RESERVE

Vision

“Materials and finishes, colours and patterns draw from the rich cultural diversity of the community, and the natural qualities of the creek. Different types of furniture and fixtures cater to visitors of different ages and abilities, as well as large and small gatherings - appropriate for this District park.”

Pavements and Surfaces

1. Tones and patterns reflect traditions of rug-making and textiles in cultural background of many locals and visitors.
2. Colours and patterns to reflect cultural diversity - temporary or painted options could be reapplied for different festivals, events or cultural celebrations.
3. Stone reflects local geology and is a hard wearing surface.
4. Informal paths allow exploration and rainwater to soak into the soil and irrigate plants along the creek.

Furniture

5. Robust custom furniture is resilient and provides creekside durability. Custom-designed furniture can be considered for District level parks to support their role as important recreation destinations, while accommodating the needs of people of different ages and abilities.
6. Loungers for relaxing - can be installed in smaller groupings under shade trees and along the creek.
7. Integrated multifunctional furniture / structures allow for a variety of uses from dining and sitting, to play, performances and events.
8. Opportunities for flexible sitting, dining, gathering, that can be shared.

Structures

9. A bridge across the creek can become a landmark.
- 10 & 11. Robust and colourful structures to reflect a sense of play, joy, and celebration.
12. One key part of the structure can be the hero, telling the story of the community.

Signage & Wayfinding

13. Parks totem signage in accordance with the Hume Signage Style Guide.

14. Interpretive signage in accordance with the Hume Signage Style Guide, to inform the community of its surroundings, along with any rules and regulations that may apply.

15 & 16. Custom interpretive signage with a mixture of languages, words and diagrams, or used to celebrate important plants and animals.

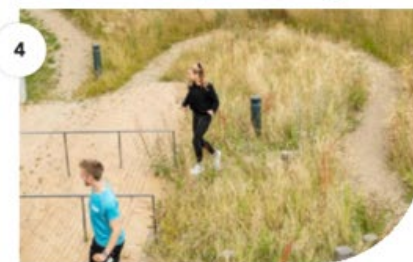
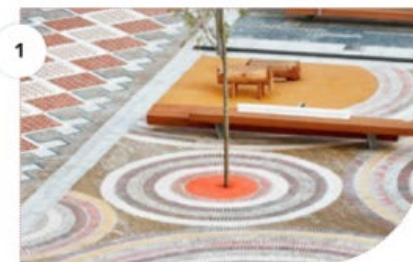
Play & Discovery

- 17 & 18. Challenging adventure structures in materials that reflect the creek and its importance.
19. Diverse skills and activities support the needs of children of different ages and abilities.
20. Play is integrated with existing trees and new planting, and there are places for parents and carers close by.

Waterway

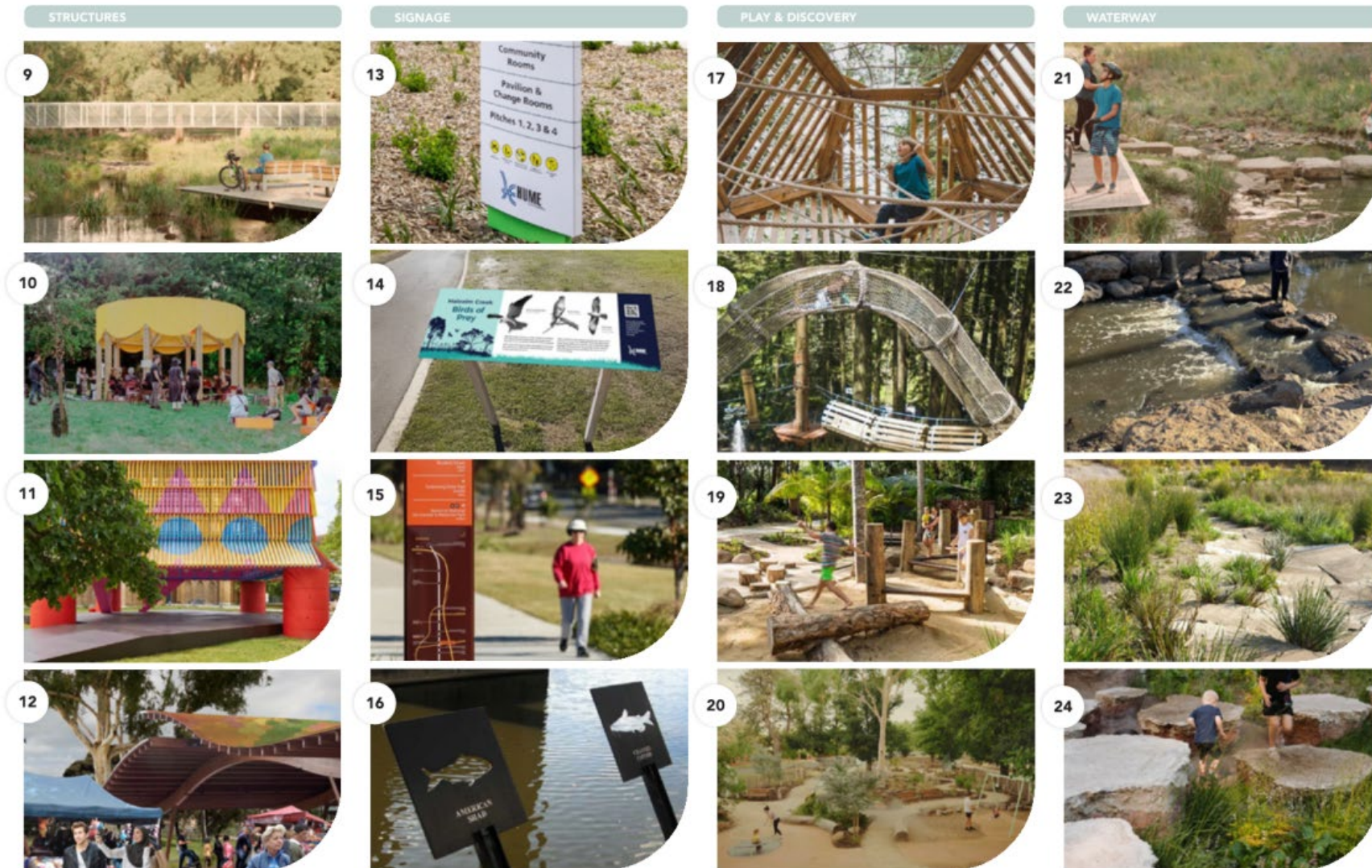
- 21 and 22. Opportunities for boulder crossing points for exploration, where the creek widens.
23. Reuse of concrete removed and salvaged from the drain.
24. Using materials and plants to make places for play and sitting that are away from the creek but feel like part of the waterway.

PAVEMENTS



FURNITURE





PROPOSED: HEPBURN STREET RESERVE

Vision

“Nature is the focus, with simple pavements and furniture enabling people to enjoy the creek, the sensory planting, open lawn and sky, and community gathering.”

Pavements and Surfaces

1. Colours and patterns to reflect cultural diversity - temporary or painted options could be reapplied for different festivals, events or cultural celebrations.

2. Sawcutting into edges of existing pavements to allow planting and encourage rainwater to soak into the soil and irrigate plants.

3. Painted surface to carpark to allow for other uses.

Furniture

4 & 5. Different types of ‘off-the-shelf’ furniture, including loungers for relaxing, allow for people of different ages and abilities to enjoy the park in comfort, by themselves or with others.

6. Groups of individual seats close to the Tennis Hall so visitors using the hall can enjoy the park.

Structures

7. Informal canopy outside the Tennis Hall to provide an outdoor sitting space.

8. Robust structures to reflect a sense of play, joy, and celebration, while providing a space for relaxation and gathering.

Signage & Wayfinding

10. Parks totem signage in accordance with the Hume Signage Style Guide.

11. Interpretive signage in accordance with the Hume Signage Style Guide, to inform the community of its surroundings, along with any rules and regulations that may apply.

12. Custom interpretive signage with a mixture of languages, words and diagrams, or used to celebrate important plants and animals.

Play & Discovery

13 & 14. Different colours, textures, scents and sounds.

15. Raised planters could be used for community gardens. Sensory plants such as culinary herbs could be grown and link the community and sensory gardens.

Waterway

16 & 17. Opportunities for boulder crossing points for exploration, where the creek widens.

18. Using materials and plants to make places for play and sitting that are away from the creek but feel like part of the waterway.

PAVEMENTS

1



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3



FURNITURE

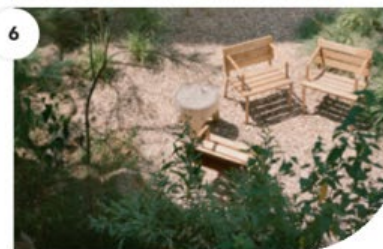
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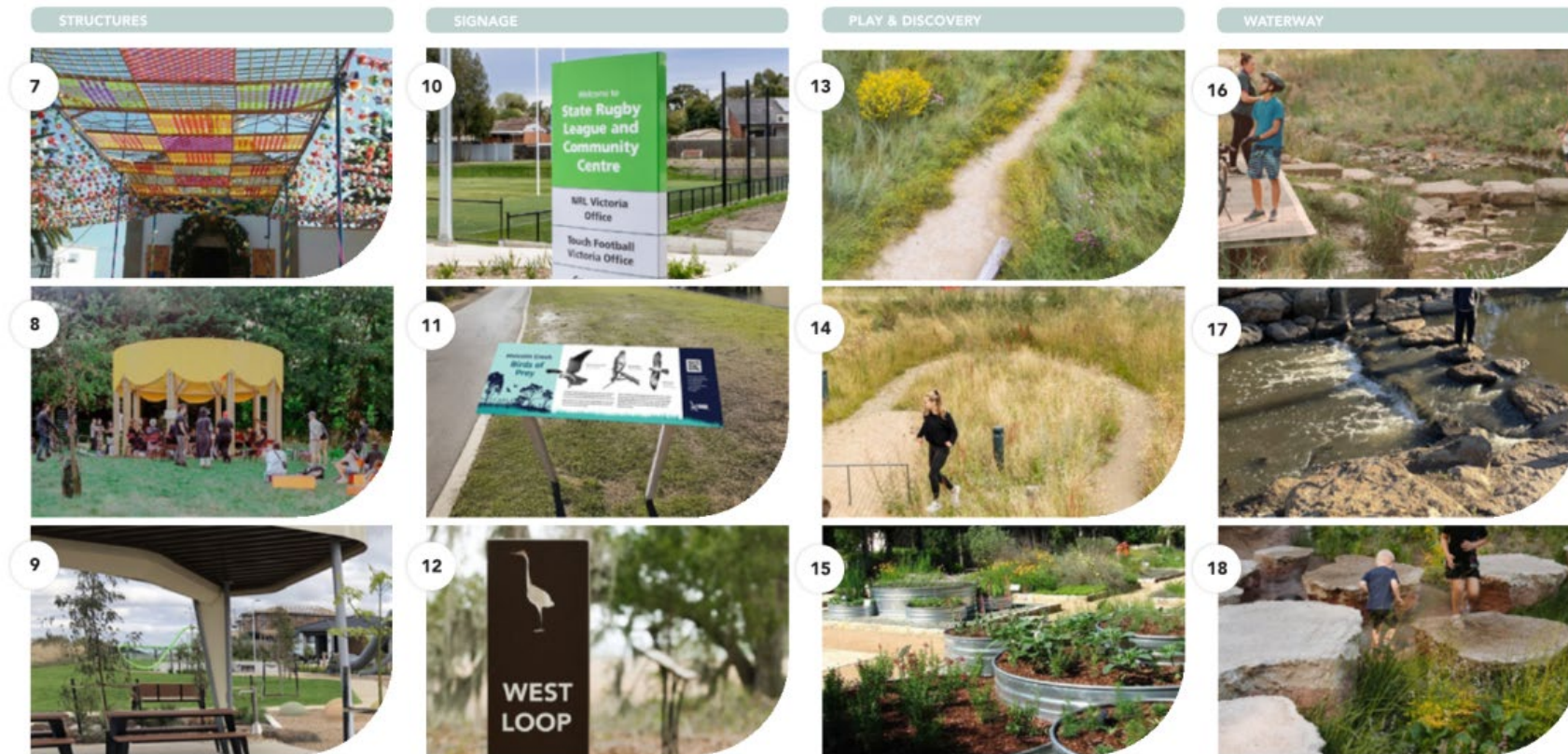


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6





BIORETENTION & WETLANDS

Role in Merlynston Creek Parklands

These plants may be used within naturalised areas of Merlynston Creek, or within water quality treatment elements such as bioretention basins, ephemeral or permanent wetlands, or lake edges.

Note: this is not an exhaustive list of possible species, but a high-level guideline to indicate the types of plant forms and habits.

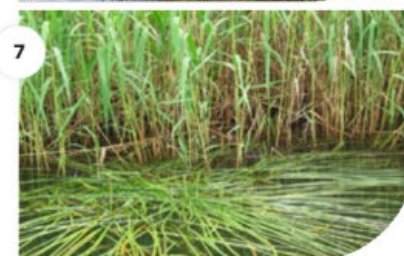
Indicative Species

1. *Baumea articulata* Jointed Twig-rush
2. *Bolboschoenus cadlwellii* Salt Club-sedge
3. *Persicaria decipiens* Slender Knotweed
4. *Schoenoplectus tabernaemontani* River Club Rush
5. *Eleocharis spicelata* Tall Spike-rush
6. *Schoenoplectus tabernaemontani* River Club Rush.
7. *Triglochin procera* Water Ribbons.
8. *Carex appressa* Tall Sedge
9. *Ficinia nodosa* Knobby Club Rush
10. *Juncus kraussii* Sea Rush
11. *Ranunculus inundatus* River Buttercup

AQUATIC



DEEP MARSH



EPHEMERAL WETLANDS



SOCIAL SPACES

Role in Merlynston Creek Parklands

These tree and understorey plants may be used within the social and recreation areas of the park, to provide different qualities of shade, texture, foliage, and flowers in addition to creek side vegetation.

There is a focus on native species and the planting palette includes species that encourages birds and insect pollinators.

Note: this is not an exhaustive list of possible species, but a high-level guideline to indicate the types of plant forms and habits.

Indicative Species

1. *Acacia pendula* Weeping Myall
2. *Agonis flexuosa* Willow Myrtle
3. *Angophora hispida* Dwarf Apple Myrtle
4. *Callistemon viminalis* Weeping Bottlebrush
5. *Corymbia citriodora* 'Dwarf Pink' Dwarf Lemon-scented Gum
6. *Corymbia maculata* Spotted Gum
7. *Hakea laurina* Pincushion Hakea
8. *Lomandra longifolia* Mat Rush
9. *Enchylaena tomentosa* Ruby Salt Bush
10. *Westringia 'Low Horizon'* Coastal Rosemary

NATIVE TREES



NATIVE TREES



GROUND LAYER



EVC REVEGETATION

Creekline Grassy Woodland EVC 68

Description

Prior to settlement, waterways in this landscape are presumed to have been intermittent linear wetlands or linked chain of ponds. The surrounding woodland was made up mainly of grasses and sedges, with occasional scattered shrubs. Tree canopy cover, dominated by Eucalypts, made up 15% of the landscape.

Role in Merlynston Creek Parklands

Fragments of this EVC are common throughout the study area, although some areas are higher quality. Species from this EVC should be planted to bolster species diversity in existing patches and to provide a continuous connected waterway.

Note: this is not an exhaustive list of possible species, but a high-level guideline to indicate the major components of the plant community.

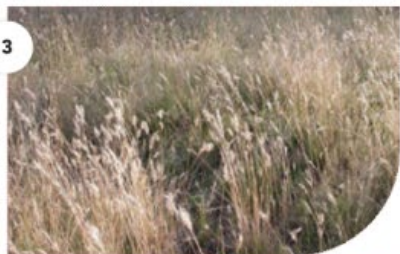
Indicative Species

- 1. *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* River Red-gum
- 2. *Acacia melanoxylon* Blackwood
- 3. *Austrodanthonia caespitosa* Common Wallaby Grass
- 4. *Austrostipa bigeniculata* Knead Spear-grass
- 5. *Enchylaena tomentosa* var. *tomentosa* Ruby Saltbush
- 6. *Microlaena stipoides* var. *stipoides* Weeping Grass.
- 7. *Dianella revoluta* Flax Lily
- 8. *Poa labillardieri* Common Tussock-grass

TREES & SHRUBS



UNDERSTOREY



EPHEMERAL WETLANDS



EVC REVEGETATION

Plains Grassy Woodland EVC 55_61

Description

This plant community is an open eucalypt woodland with trees growing to 15m tall, sparse shrubs, and a species-rich grassy and herbaceous ground layer.

Role in Merlynston Creek Parklands

Fragments of this EVC are scattered throughout the study area, although most patches appear to contain supplementary plantings of native species. Species from this EVC should be planted to bolster species diversity in existing patches and to extend grassy woodland out beyond the riparian zone of the creek.

This EVC currently occurs in locations identified as potential Golden Sun Moth habitat. Additional plantings may boost habitat for this species.

Note: this is not an exhaustive list of possible species, but a high-level guideline to indicate the major components of the plant community.

Indicative Species

1. *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* River Red-gum
2. *Acacia pycnantha* Golden Wattle
3. *Pimelia humilis* Common Rice-flower
4. *Austrodanthonia setacea* Bristly Wallaby Grass
5. *Austrostipa bigeniculata* Kneed Spear-grass
6. *Dichondra repens* Kidney-weed
7. *Gonocarpus tetragynus* Common Raspwort
8. *Dianella revoluta* Flax Lily
9. *Microlaena stipoides* var. *stipoides* Weeping Grass
10. *Themeda triandra* Kangaroo Grass

TREES



UNDERSTOREY



UNDERSTOREY



9.0

Implementation

Implementation Schedule

All implementation actions and opportunities are set out in Section 7 Detailed Plans.

This is a strategic list of parkland improvement opportunities that will be implemented, wherever feasible. Experience has shown that works along waterways are subject to multiple challenges including topographical, geological, ecological, cultural and land contamination, waterway health. Initial planning for all activities will enable costs and timelines to be better resolved prior to seeking final approval for their implementation.

Council will fund works on their land via their new capital works budget bids, in addition to ongoing budgets for maintenance of landscapes, playspace renewals, footpath, strategic planning and advocacy. Larger projects will be dependent on external funding from grants, partnerships, developer negotiations, open space contributions, and stormwater offset contributions.

The scheduling prioritisation of actions is provided in the Detailed Plans and is based on the following timelines:

- » Short Term (S) 1—5 years
- » Medium Term (M) 6—10 years
- » Long Term (L) 11—20 years
- » Ongoing (O)

Lead Initiatives

The lead initiatives to implement across the whole Parklands are:

- **Upgrade of Laura Douglas Reserve** including new district playspace, event area, walking loops and footbridge and integrated with creek naturalisation opportunities. This will also be supported by the sportsfield and pavilion upgrades. Given the scale of community and environment benefit of these initiatives, grants will be sought for this to be delivered as a showcase upgrade. Council will undertake playspace, signage, furniture and pavement works within its annual Capital Works budget program.
- **Upgrade of Dallas Army Camp Basin** at Dallas Retarding Basin will be funded by Melbourne Water.
- **Habitat enhancements** will be incorporated into Council parkland planting and maintenance programs and subject to annual budget processes.
- Implementation of **Shared Use Trail** along the length of the parklands. This will be progressively undertaken in stages with an initial focus on Berger to Benalla St and subject to Council's annual budget processes and grant opportunities. The installation of pedestrian lights at Camp Road will be subject to Council's annual budget processes.
- **Acquisition of land** to create a continuous parkland and fill critical gaps will be negotiated and subject to Council's annual capital works prioritising processes and draw primarily upon its open space contributions and grant/partner opportunities. The priority gap to fill is in the central parklands.

Funding and delivery of the potential proposed new Maygar Boulevard bridge crossing, and future pavilion and building upgrades sit outside of the Merlynston Creek Parklands program.

All other actions listed in the Masterplan set out Council priorities to guide future capital works budgets as they arise. The actions also give clear direction to guide unplanned requests, for example, if an adjacent landowner wants to develop in will need to draw on the guidance of this Masterplan in its considerations.

Parkland Strategies	HCC Cost (if all projects feasible) Grants, Partnerships, Negotiations	Actions
WURUNDJERI WOI-WURRUNG CULTURAL VALUES		
Reflect Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people and culture in the parklands through design, signage, artwork, naming and Care for Country as guided by the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Merlynston Creek Cultural Values Assessment (CVA) May 2025	Approx. \$500,000 over 15-20 years.	1-C1, 2-C1, 3-C1, 4-C1, 5-C1, 6-C1 Other CVA initiatives embedded in actions below
ECOLOGICAL VALUES		
Incrementally expand ecological habitat enhancement works along Merlynston Creek.	Between \$1m and \$1.6m over 15-20 years.	1: E1, E2, E3 2: E1, E2, E3 3: E1, E2, E3, E4 4: E1, E2, E3, E4 5: E1, E2, E3, E4, E4 6: E1, E2, E3
WATERWAY VALUES		
Deliver additional waterway enhancements including creek naturalisation, stormwater harvesting, planning controls, and interpretive signage.	Between \$5m and \$6.5m over 15-20 years. Seek additional \$12-22m grant and partnerships for naturalisation works.	1: W1 2: W1, W2, W3, W4 3: W1, W2, W3, W4 4: W1, W2, W3 5: W1, W2 6: W1, W2, W3
HERITAGE VALUES		
Strengthen heritage and multicultural features in landscape and signage to reflect the local history and community.	Between \$0.5m and \$0.8m over 15-20 years. Seek additional \$300-500,000 grant for LiDAR assessment.	2: H1, H2, H3 3: H1 4: H1 5: H1, H2 6: H1, H2
ACCESS AND CONNECTION VALUES		
Deliver a continuous all-abilities walking and cycling trail along the creek including footbridges, safer road crossings, connections to public transport, gateways and wayfinding signage. Provide smaller walking loops with shade and seating.	Between \$5m and \$7.5m over 15-20 years. Plus \$3m-\$6m for priority land purchase. Seek additional \$2m-\$3.8m grant and partnerships for additional connections.	2: A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, A6, A7, A8 3: A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, A6, A7, A8, A9 4: A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, A6, A7, A8 5: A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, A6 6: A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, A6
COMMUNITY RECREATION VALUES		
Link the three major parks with a continuous nature corridor with welcoming viewing, walking, seating and meeting areas. Deliver district level upgrade to Laura Douglas Reserve including event space, playspace and new junior sportsfield.	Between \$7.5m and \$10.5m over 15-20 years. Seek additional \$7-\$12m grant and partnerships for Laura Douglas event space and sportsfield reconfiguration.	2: R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7, R8, R9, R10 3: R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7, R8, R9, R10 4: R1, R2 5: R1, R2, R3, R4, R5 6: R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6

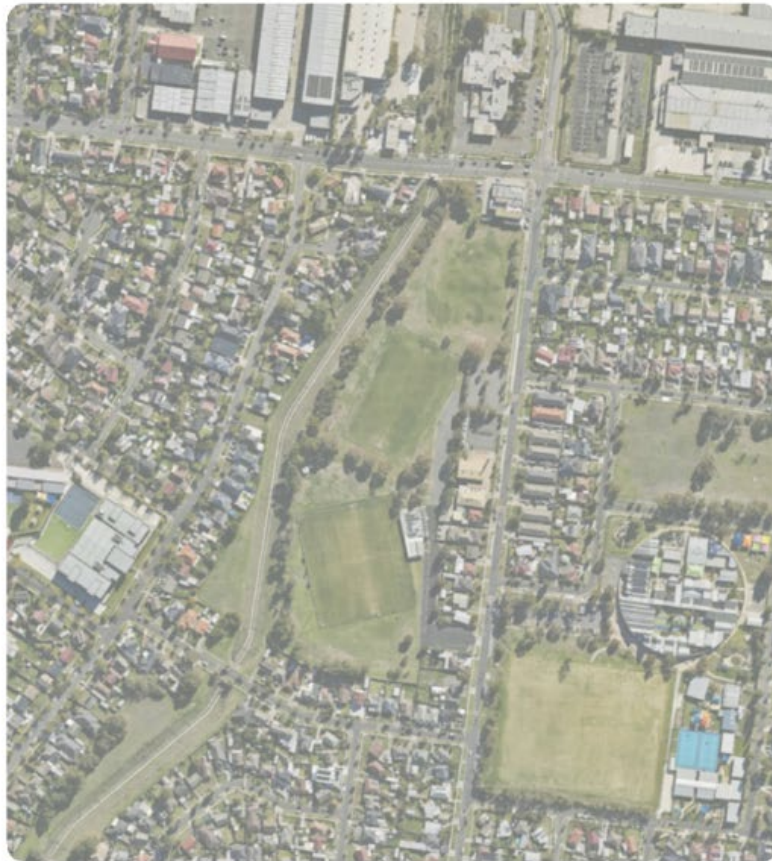






10.0

Appendix 1 - Laura Douglas Reserve Comparison



Laura Douglas Reserve - Current Condition



Laura Douglas Reserve - Proposed Condition

11.0

Appendix 2 - Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Values Assessment Actions

The Merlynston Creek Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Values Assessment (CVA) May 2026 set out the values and recommendation of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Elders. These have been embedded into the Merlynston Creek Parklands Masterplan. Below is a list of all the CVA actions and readers are guided to the CVA Overview Document which sets these actions within the broader cultural context of the creek.

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Revitalise Country to reflect the landscape prior to colonisation as much as possible and where appropriate

Action No.	Action Description
1.1	Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung input and decision-making regarding the land and water of Merlynston Creek must be sought and prioritised. The Wurundjeri Corporation's Narrap Unit (Water Program and Narrap Rangers) should be offered first preference in codesigning and leading water, natural resource management activities and remediation works; and given the opportunity for ongoing involvement in decision making around the future management of Merlynston Creek.
1.2	Ecological rehabilitation: A priority for Elders is the rehabilitation of the ecological values along Merlynston Creek and surrounding landscapes to a level of a typically healthy waterway.
1.3	Removal of invasive species along Merlynston Creek, using the least harmful methods available.
1.4	Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung input and decision-making regarding the land and water of Merlynston Creek must be sought and prioritised. The Wurundjeri Corporation's Narrap Unit (Water Program and Narrap Rangers) should be offered first preference in codesigning and leading water, natural resource management activities and remediation works; and given the opportunity for ongoing involvement in decision making around the future management of Merlynston Creek.
1.5	Protect areas of remnant vegetation along Merlynston Creek. This includes appropriate protection of remnant vegetation, including areas at Will Will Rook Cemetery. Seed collection could be used to increase native populations.
1.6	Planting of appropriate native species along creekline, which belong to the area. Wurundjeri Corporation's Narrap Unit should be provided the opportunity to collaborate in the identification of appropriate plants.
1.7	Protect fauna species native to habitats along Merlynston Creek. This should include protection of endangered fauna and repopulation of native fauna species, including aquatic fauna. This should also include the protection of spiritual animals associated with Merlynston Creek. Protection of habitats and wildlife corridors should be supplemented with modern habitat creation and installation.
1.8	Work with Wurundjeri Corporation to develop interpretive signage with information regarding native fauna species of relevance. This could include injured wildlife hotline numbers for members of the public to contact.
1.9	Further investigations that assist in understanding how the landscape has changed to allow Elders to provide a more comprehensive account of cultural values for Merlynston Creek relating to the rehabilitation of Country and enhanced biodiversity. This could include the inspection of core samples from identified locations along Merlynston Creek. Engagement with the Narrap Unit at Wurundjeri Corporation is essential to this action.

RECOMMENDATION 2:

Enhanced protection of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country from encroaching development

Action No.	Action Description
2.1	Project partners should prioritise low impact infrastructure and consider impacts of all development associated with Merlynston Creek on the health of the waterway and preservation of native flora; fauna and their habitats. This includes works associated with the Merlynston Creek Parklands. The natural and aesthetic attributes of Merlynston Creek and the surrounding landscape should be maintained where possible. This involves: a) Ensuring the proposed potential road in Dallas is designed with minimal impact on the health of Merlynston Creek, including the waterway, native flora, fauna and habitats. b) Ensuring the potential future train line extension from Upfield to Roxburgh Park is designed with minimal impact on the health of Merlynston Creek and the connected Cultural Landscape. This includes protecting existing and creating habitat corridors to support connectivity for wildlife, including the protection of old gum trees in this area as much as possible. Engagement with Wurundjeri Corporation is essential to this action. This should include involvement in decision making regarding such future developments from the early planning stage and throughout the development project.
2.2	Project partners should work with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People to improve the health of waterways by considering the broader interconnected landscape. This includes working with Wurundjeri Corporation to ensure future developments prioritise healthy waterways.
2.3	Hume City Council, Merri-bek City Council and Melbourne Water must work to minimise the current stormwater flows that Merlynston Creek receive as surface run-off. This is vital in moving towards a system that allows water to support the land, sky and beings (both above and below ground), as the water makes its way more naturally down Merlynston Creek.
2.4	Plans for increased population growth, including around Broadmeadows, must aim to reduce stormwater that flows from roofs, footpaths and roads which ultimately feed into Merlynston Creek. Engagement with the Water Program at Wurundjeri Corporation is essential to this action.

RECOMMENDATION 3:

Protect and enhance Merlynston Creek and connected waterscapes

Action No.	Action Description
3.1	Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung input and decision-making regarding the land and water of Merlynston Creek must be sought and prioritised. The Wurundjeri Corporation Narrap Unit (Water Program and Narrap Rangers) should be offered first preference in codesigning and leading water, natural resource management activities and remediation works; and given the opportunity for ongoing involvement in decision making around the future management of this waterway.
3.2	Re-naturalisation of Merlynston Creek is a priority for Elders. This includes the removal of concrete channelling in all instances where environmentally safe to do so. This also includes the improvement of water quality; the removal of weeds and invasive species; preservation of any native plants; and the re-introduction of native plants that will help make Country and Water healthy.
3.3	Rehabilitation of Merlynston creekline and, where possible, associated waterways and wetlands to support the retardation and treatment of surface water flows. This involves improving the ecological health, environmental flows, Cultural flows, and the persistence of natural cycles of flooding, infiltration, and evaporation for Merlynston Creek and associated waterways and wetlands.
3.4	Project partners must ensure water testing is conducted to establish base levels of water quality, and efforts must be made to improve these levels on an ongoing basis. Wurundjeri Corporation's Water Program should be given first right of refusal to conduct this water testing, or to direct specifications of testing by a third party.

RECOMMENDATION 4:

Enhanced protection of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung cultural heritage

Action No.	Action Description
4.1	Project partners must engage with the Wurundjeri Corporation Cultural Heritage Unit regarding the protection of tangible cultural heritage in accordance with the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 (Victoria) and its regulations. Project partners are encouraged to consider voluntary Cultural Heritage Management Plans (CHMPs) and permits where mandatory CHMPs and permits may not be triggered in accordance with the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 (Victoria) Sections 45 and 46.
4.2	Protect Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung cultural values holistically. Cultural values are to be considered in relation to their tangible (physical) and intangible (non-physical) attributes. For example, this may include artefacts, cultural features, flora, fauna, waterways and waterbodies, landforms, stories, associations, practices, beliefs, traditions, and Cultural Landscapes.
4.3	Areas of important cultural heritage landscapes identified from the Wurundjeri Strategic Aboriginal Heritage Assessment (SAHA) and depicted through the First Peoples – State Relations’ mapping platform for strategic planning, are to be treated as areas of cultural heritage sensitivity.
4.4	Project partners should encourage developers operating within their jurisdictions to design their activities to avoid harm to important cultural heritage landscapes identified from the Wurundjeri Strategic Aboriginal Heritage Assessment (SAHA) depicted through the First Peoples – State Relations’ mapping platform for strategic planning. Where areas of important cultural heritage landscapes identified from SAHA are present and CHMPs or CHPs are not mandatory, voluntary CHMPs (for high-impact activities) or CHPs (for low-impact activities) should be sought. Project partners should lead by example in development activities they are managing.
4.5	Further investigations would allow Elders to provide a more comprehensive account of cultural values for Merlynston Creek relating to the enhanced protection of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage. This involves: a) Archaeological surveys along the creek corridor b) A survey of the Merlynston Creek CVA project area for ground truthing with Cultural Heritage Officers to inspect potential stony rises. Engagement with the Cultural Heritage Unit at Wurundjeri Corporation is essential to this action.

RECOMMENDATION 5:

Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People and Culture is visible on Country

Action No.	Action Description
5.1	Co-develop interpretive signage with Wurundjeri Corporation at significant places along the creek sharing Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung cultural knowledge and history related to Merlynston Creek. Interpretive signage could include Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung cultural knowledge and history, and information on Ancestors and resource use, as advised and deemed appropriate by Elders. Places identified by Elders include: a) The original confluence of Merlynston Creek with Merri Creek b) Waterhole in Northern Memorial Park
5.2	Acknowledgement of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People as the Traditional Owners of Country must be clear along the parkland.
5.3	The project team is encouraged to engage with Wurundjeri Corporation’s Education Unit to facilitate the re-naming of Merlynston Creek using Woi-wurrung language
5.4	Use Woi-wurrung language where possible with consultation with the Wurundjeri Corporation’s Education Unit. Woi-wurrung language should be used on signage (with English translation where necessary) and for naming natural features, surrounding areas, flora and fauna, and significant sites along Merlynston Creek.
5.5	Use Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung art and design where possible. It is recommended that Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung artwork and cultural design elements are reflected in any future buildings, works and infrastructure design along Merlynston Creek. This includes Hume City Council’s development of Merlynston Creek Parkland. Wurundjeri Corporation should direct these usages. Where possible incorporate Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung artwork and cultural design elements into the design phase of the project, co-developed with Wurundjeri Corporation and engaging with Elders and Wurundjeri Corporation approved artists.

RECOMMENDATION 5 (cont.):

Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People and Culture is visible on Country

5.5	Promote and Respect Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People’s right to practise Culture on Country. The project team is encouraged to engage with Wurundjeri Corporation and to facilitate opportunities for cultural practice, particularly throughout the Merlynston Creek Parklands project, and beyond. This includes Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremonies. It is very important to Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People that visitors are welcomed onto their Country in this way. It is a cultural tradition that has been practised on Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country for tens of thousands of years and beyond.
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RECOMMENDATION 6:

Support Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People in continuing to connect with their Cultural Landscape

Action No.	Action Description
6.1	Continue engagement with Wurundjeri Corporation Research Unit to undertake further cultural values work on Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country. Elders have recommended that Hume City Council, Merri-bek City Council, and Melbourne Water strive to engage in cultural values works for any projects that they are leading on Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country at the project inception stage.
6.2	Ensure Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People have ongoing access to Country along Merlynston Creek and its resources to engage in cultural practices, as guided by the Wurundjeri Corporation.

RECOMMENDATION 7:

Support Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People in Truth-telling and healing processes

Action No.	Action Description
7.1	Co-develop interpretive signage with Wurundjeri Corporation at appropriate places along Merlynston Creek to enable Truth-telling. This includes signage at an appropriate and respectful location at Fawcner Memorial Park to provide a Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung perspective on Batman’s so called ‘Treaty’.

RECOMMENDATION 8:

Genuine and meaningful engagement with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People

Action No.	Action Description
8.1	Engagement with Wurundjeri Corporation to facilitate and support equal partnerships and ensure Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People have a real voice in informed decision-making regarding their Country. Hume City Council, Merri-bek City Council and Melbourne Water should lead by example by creating strong and meaningful partnerships and working relationships with Wurundjeri Corporation.
8.2	Project partners should consider Wurundjeri Corporation’s Whole of Country Plan in future planning and decision making on Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country.
8.3	Provide project updates to Wurundjeri Corporation. Project partners must provide updates regarding this project; and the outcomes and evaluation of recommendations provided in this report to Wurundjeri Corporation Elders and community members. Updates should be delivered through engagement with the Policy and Partnerships Unit at Wurundjeri Corporation.
8.4	Hume City Council, Merri-bek City Council and Melbourne Water should increase compliance of stakeholders operating within their jurisdiction in policies and guidelines related to caring for Country, where possible.

12.0

References

Footnotes

1. Notes in italics are direct quotes from the *Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Statement for Draft Hume Open Space Strategy 23 August 2023*, as included in the Hume City Council Open Space Strategy 2025.
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3. Hume City Council Housing Diversity Strategy June 2020 (updated August 2023).
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6. Hume City Council website, Climate and Environment, Tree Canopy Cover.
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8. Merlynston Creek Integrated Water Management Opportunities Plan. 2022. TBLD/Alluvium Consulting.
9. CHMP 18445: Brief Summary of Activity Area, Proposed Activity and Desktop Assessment. Christine Williamson Heritage Consultants.
10. Army Camp Retarding Basing Activation Concept Report. 2023. Alluvium Consulting
11. Army Camp Retarding Basin Geotechnical and Contaminated Land Assessment. 2023. Tonkin and Taylor.
12. Merlynston Creek Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Values Assessment Overview document, 2026

Referenced Hume City Council Policies

- Hume City Council Plan 2025-2029
- Hume City Council Open Space Strategy 2025. [Link](#).
- Hume City Council Community Infrastructure Plan
- Hume City Council Heat Health Plan 2020.
- Hume City Council Hume Bicycle Network Plan 2015. [Link](#).
- Hume City Council Species List 2025. [Link](#).
- Municipal Flood Emergency Plan for Merlynston Creek.
- Hume City Council Active Living Plan 2026
- Merlynston Creek - Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Values Assessment Overview document 2026





Summary Document

Merlynston Creek

Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Values Assessment

A report by the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural
Heritage Aboriginal Corporation for Hume City
Council, Merri-bek City Council and Melbourne Water

15 March 2026

Warning: this report may contain images of deceased persons

The content derived from the documentary record and reproduced within this report reflects the views of the respective commentators and may not at times accord with the views of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People. This content may also include gender-specific information.

This document presents a summary of the results of the Merlynston Creek Cultural Values Assessment, prepared by the Research Unit of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation (hereon referred to as the Wurundjeri Corporation) for Hume City Council, Merri-bek City Council and Melbourne Water.

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Authorship

This report has been produced by Wurundjeri Corporation Research Unit staff Aurelia Bulpit and Susannah Beardsell in consultation with and informed by the knowledge of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Elders Aunty Alice Kolasa, Aunty Diane Kerr, Perry Wandin, and Aunty Jacqui Wandin. This report has been reviewed and endorsed by these Elders.



Cover page image taken by Aurelia Bulpit, showing Merlynston Creek at Northern Memorial Park.

Acknowledgements

Ngoon godjin (thank you) to each Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Elder who shared their time and knowledge to develop this document: Aunty Diane (Di) Kerr, Aunty Alice Kolasa, Perry Wandin and Aunty Jacqui Wandin.

The Wurundjeri Corporation would also like to thank the following individuals and organisations for their contribution and support for this work:

External Stakeholders: Sheriden Blunt; Hume City Council; Alex English, Merri-bek City Council; and Dan Green, Melbourne Water.

Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation Staff: Michael Brown and Anna Tuechler from the Water Program, Narrap Unit; and Andrew Tanner, John Coomans, Macey Hodgson, Dayne O'Meara and Natalie Bell from the Research Unit.

Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People retain their custodianship over their Cultural Landscape. Indigenous Sovereignty has never been ceded.



Research Unit:
Yiagilang Ngarrngatj
Seeking Knowledge

**Research Unit: *Yiagilang Ngarrngatj* Seeking Knowledge
Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal**

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Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Community Statement

The Wurundjeri People have been Caring for Country since the beginning of time. Our message is that Wurundjeri People have a deep understanding and knowledge of Country and that Wurundjeri’s connection should be respected and valued.

The Wurundjeri People have an unbroken relationship with Country, caring for this land, its waterways, its plants, and animals. A core purpose of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Corporation is the protection, preservation and revitalisation of Wurundjeri culture and cultural practices.

There is a deep cultural obligation and birthright to look after Country and keep it healthy. Country to us includes the land, water, plants, animals, and spirits of the traditional lands. Country is known through the Songlines of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Ancestors who lived and cared for Country here for thousands of years.

Today our Country is shared with Victorians from many different backgrounds. In addition, people from across Australia and internationally visit our Country. We believe that Wurundjeri People must take a leading role in working with all communities on matters of Country.

As Traditional Owners we seek to build solid, working relationships and partnerships across our Traditional Country to protect, manage, and restore the land and water today and for the future generations. We have the right and the obligation to speak for Country.

Executive summary

The Merlynston Creek Cultural Values Assessment has been commissioned by the Hume City Council, Merri-bek City Council and Melbourne Water. The assessment has been sought to understand the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung cultural values of Merlynston Creek, primarily so that they can be recognised in the Merlynston Creek Parklands Masterplan being produced by Hume City Council for the northern portion of the creek in this jurisdiction.

This assessment documents the cultural values associated with Merlynston Creek and the surrounding Cultural Landscape as expressed by Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Elders, who are the Traditional Owners and custodians of this Country. Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung

People have a deep and abiding connection to their Country

Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country is inscribed with cultural heritage places that are a record of Country and the activities of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Ancestors. Cultural sites and places constitute a direct link between contemporary Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People and their Ancestors who created and cared for those places since time immemorial.

Eight recommendations and thirty-five specific actions for managing cultural values and otherwise embedding Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung perspectives have been identified through this Cultural Values Assessment:

- **Recommendation 1:** Revitalise Country to reflect the landscape prior to colonisation as much as possible and where appropriate
- **Recommendation 2:** Enhanced protection of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country from encroaching development
- **Recommendation 3:** Protect and enhance Merlynston Creek and connected waterscapes
- **Recommendation 4:** Enhanced protection of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung cultural heritage
- **Recommendation 5:** Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People and Culture is visible on Country
- **Recommendation 6:** Support Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People in continuing to connect with their Cultural Landscape
- **Recommendation 7:** Support Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People in Truth-telling and healing processes
- **Recommendation 8:** Genuine and meaningful engagement with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People

Glossary of Key Terms

Country	Country is a term used by First Nations Australians to describe their traditional lands and waters. Country is both a common noun and a proper noun. People talk of Country in the same manner that they may refer to an individual. There are varying customs of visiting Country, caring for Country, speaking to Country, singing to Country and smoking Country.
Cultural Landscape	Traditional Owner Cultural Landscapes are both material and symbolic, and include Traditional Owner societies' unique worldview, ontology, history, institutions, practices, and the networks of relationships between human and non-human animals, plants, Ancestors, song lines, physical structures, trade routes and other significant cultural connections to Country. Traditional Owner Cultural Landscapes reflect the management and modification of Country over many thousands of generations to provide maximum benefit to all the inhabitants of Country, both human and non-human. Cultural Landscapes are the 'planning units' of choice for Traditional Owners. ¹
Cultural significance	A concept used in Australian heritage practice and legislation to encompass all the cultural values and meanings that might be recognised in a place. Cultural significance is the sum of the qualities or values that a place has, including the five values - aesthetic, historic, scientific, social, and spiritual - that are listed in Article 1.2 of the Burra Charter.
Intangible heritage	Intangible heritage refers to the cultural practices, expressions, knowledge, skills, and traditions that are passed down from generation to generation within communities. Unlike tangible heritage, intangible heritage encompasses aspects of Culture that are not physical in nature.
Narrap Unit	The Wurundjeri Corporation's Narrap Unit undertakes a range of Natural Resource Management activities on Country at the request of clients, including the maintenance of firebreaks in accordance with local council by-laws. One of the prime responsibilities of the Narrap Unit is managing properties owned by the Wurundjeri Corporation. Each property has its own significant cultural, community and environmental value.

¹ "Victorian Traditional Owner Cultural Landscapes Strategy," Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations, 2021, <https://fvtoc.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Cultural-Landscapes-Strategy.pdf>.

ngurungaeta	Woi-wurrung term for the traditional headman or leader of a local descent group.
Tangible heritage	Tangible heritage refers to the physical and visible manifestations of cultural heritage, including artefacts, structures, sites, and objects that possess historical, artistic, or cultural significance. Differing from intangible heritage, tangible heritage comprises elements that can be touched, seen, and interacted with.
Traditional	This term is used as many Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People use it: to describe cultural beliefs and practices that have their origins in, and may continue from, the period prior to colonial invasion of Woi-wurrung Country.

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The project area

Merlynston Creek is a tributary of the Merri Creek, which today travels eleven kilometres from its source in Coolaroo to its confluence with the Merri Creek in Coburg North. The northern portions of the creek - from its headwaters to the M80 Western Ring Road - is within the Hume City Council local government area. The southern portions of the creek – from M80 Western Ring Road to its confluence with the Merri Creek - are within the jurisdiction of Merri-bek City Council.

Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung cultural values relating to Merlynston creek extend beyond the current creek corridor. In a Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung perspective of Country, Merlynston Creek cannot be considered in isolation from the broader Cultural Landscape within which it is a part, encompassing earth – both above and below ground; water – both above and below ground; sky; and all beings.



Figure 1 - Map of the study area. Source: Google Earth (labels & waterways indicated by author).



Methodology

Documenting the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung cultural values for Merlynston Creek and establishing its cultural significance provides the basis for asserting the Wurundjeri Corporation’s aspirations for protection and management of the study area. This report also provides the basis for interpretation or other opportunities to reflect on Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People’s history and association with the study area.

Within Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country, heritage places often contain cultural features of artefacts, scarred trees, earth mounds, quarries, Ancestral Remains, stone arrangements; and, less often, rock art and shell middens. Heritage places are also those related to cultural practices, beliefs, or traditions. These features are defined as intangible, and include ceremonies, dances, songs, creation stories, spiritual associations, technical skills, traditional craft skills, ecological knowledge, language, traditional laws, and responsibilities.

The Australian Association of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) describes intangible cultural heritage as cultural practices created by communities or groups of people over time and are practices recognised by those communities or groups as part of their heritage; inclusive of cultural responsibilities, rituals and ceremonies, oral traditions, performance, language, knowledge, and skills.² The *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* (AHA 2006) is also reflective of this definition.³

Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People aspire to preserve not just their archaeological footprint but also places and landscapes of cultural significance. A Cultural Values Assessment documents values of a site, place, or landscape in detail, together with Traditional Owner informed recommendations. Cultural values work is conducted through knowledge recording sessions with Elders and community members.

This work is used to communicate the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung community’s powerful stories in a culturally appropriate way, to support the Corporation’s goal of protecting, preserving, promoting, and revitalising Wurundjeri Culture and ways of knowing, being, and doing.

This Cultural Values Assessment for Merlynston Creek has been developed in line with frameworks within the Whole of Country Plan 2025-2035.

There is no prescribed format for undertaking or presenting a Cultural Values Assessment, and such investigations do not constitute statutory documents pursuant to the AHA 2006.

The benchmark for considering cultural significance is contained within section 4 of the AHA 2006; the ICOMOS Australia Practice Note for Intangible Cultural Heritage and Place; and ICOMOS Australia Practice Note for Understanding and Assessing Cultural Significance.⁴ Section 4 of the AHA 2006

² Australia ICOMOS, *Practice Note: Intangible Cultural Heritage and Place* (ICOMOS), 2017, p. 2.

³ *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* (Victoria)

⁴ “Practice Note: Intangible Cultural Heritage and Place”; “Practice Note: Understanding and assessing cultural significance,” ICOMOS, November 2013. https://australia.icomos.org/wp-content/uploads/Practice-Note_Understanding-and-assessing-cultural-significance.pdf.

defines Aboriginal cultural heritage significance as including (a) archaeological, anthropological, contemporary, historical, scientific, social, or spiritual significance; and (b) significance in accordance with Aboriginal tradition.

To identify place based cultural values, a Cultural Values Assessment is a holistic means to determine a connection between people and place.

This assessment has synthesised ethnohistorical research with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung knowledge recording, involving on Country days. This assessment considers the significance of the identified cultural values and

develops recommendations to protect or manage those values.

It is important to highlight that the ethnographic record relied on in this report is greatly limited in its ability to speak to the associations of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Ancestors with the Country of the study area prior to colonisation. Records from the early colonial period were captured at a time when the way of life of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Ancestors had already been significantly impacted by colonisation. Moreover, accounts by surveyors, pastoralists and explorers must be read critically on account of the many biases inherent within them.

Figure 2 - Examples of Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage





People and place

Merlynston Creek is located on the Country of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People. Their Ancestors have cared for and lived on this country since time immemorial. Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People had and continue to have a complex system of land ownership enshrined in law and custom. Despite the effects of colonisation, Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People maintain their responsibility to manage and care for their Country. This responsibility was never relinquished, and Indigenous Sovereignty has never been ceded.

"Ancestors would have camped there. They always camped on the riverbanks - everything was there for them. There was plenty to eat. They set eel traps and they fished. They took their canoes across the river. There were reeds on the swamp areas for the women to weave and make baskets. There would have been trees and they would have built mia mia made from the resources in the bush. Could you imagine this place in their time? There would have been more cover, more scrub, more trees. Ancestors would have had this in a much better condition."

Aunty Alice Kolasa, Elder

Colonial invasion

In 1835, 47 years after the First Fleet arrived in Botany Bay, the colonial invasion of Victoria began in earnest. Pastoral expansion into Woi-wurrung Country was rapid and had disastrous consequences for Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Ancestors, immediately restricting People's access to their Country and resources. In being dispossessed of their land, Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Ancestors' identity, culture and knowledge was also torn from the Country in which it was deeply embedded.

In May 1835, John Batman arrived in Port Phillip Bay with members of the Port Phillip Association, of which he was a co-founder. Looking to acquire pastoral land for the Association, they led an expedition across the Port Phillip region, describing the area around Merlynston Creek as thinly timbered and thickly covered with excellent grass.⁵ Batman declared the Country around Fawkner Memorial Park to be "as rich as I ever saw".⁶

It was during this journey that Batman entered into a transfer of deed of title, which later became referred to as the Batman treaty, the first formal act of Indigenous land dispossession in Victoria.⁷ Despite Batman's "deed of title" being declared void, the actions of the Port Phillip Association set in motion the colonisation of the Port Phillip region, with devastating effects for Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People.

Given the pastoral appeal of its rich landscapes, it is no wonder that the region through which most of Merlynston Creek travels was one of the first parts of the Port Phillip district to be settled. The area around the creek's headwaters followed later. John Batman and other key players in these early acts of dispossession are today buried at Fawkner Memorial Park, through which Merlynston Creek runs.

Despite the devastating impacts of colonial settlement and encroaching pastoralism in this region, what limited records there are reveal glimpses of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Ancestors continuing to gather, camp, hunt and carry out cultural practices on their Country within the region of Merlynston Creek in the early colonial period.

This included the connected waterway of the Merri Creek, which continued to be the site of large gatherings made up of people across multiple Kulin language groups. In February 1844, Assistant Protector William Thomas recorded 675 people camped along the Merri Creek to attend judicial proceedings, including 86 Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Ancestors.⁸

Assistant Protector William Thomas' "Strangways Farm" was located close to the confluence of Merlynston Creek and the Merri Creek, and was another regular site where Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Ancestors gathered during this period, likely as a pit-stop on

⁵ John Batman in John Daniels, "Batman's Route Revisited, his exact steps to a new treaty site," *Victorian Historical Journal* 85, no. 1 (June 2014): 156.

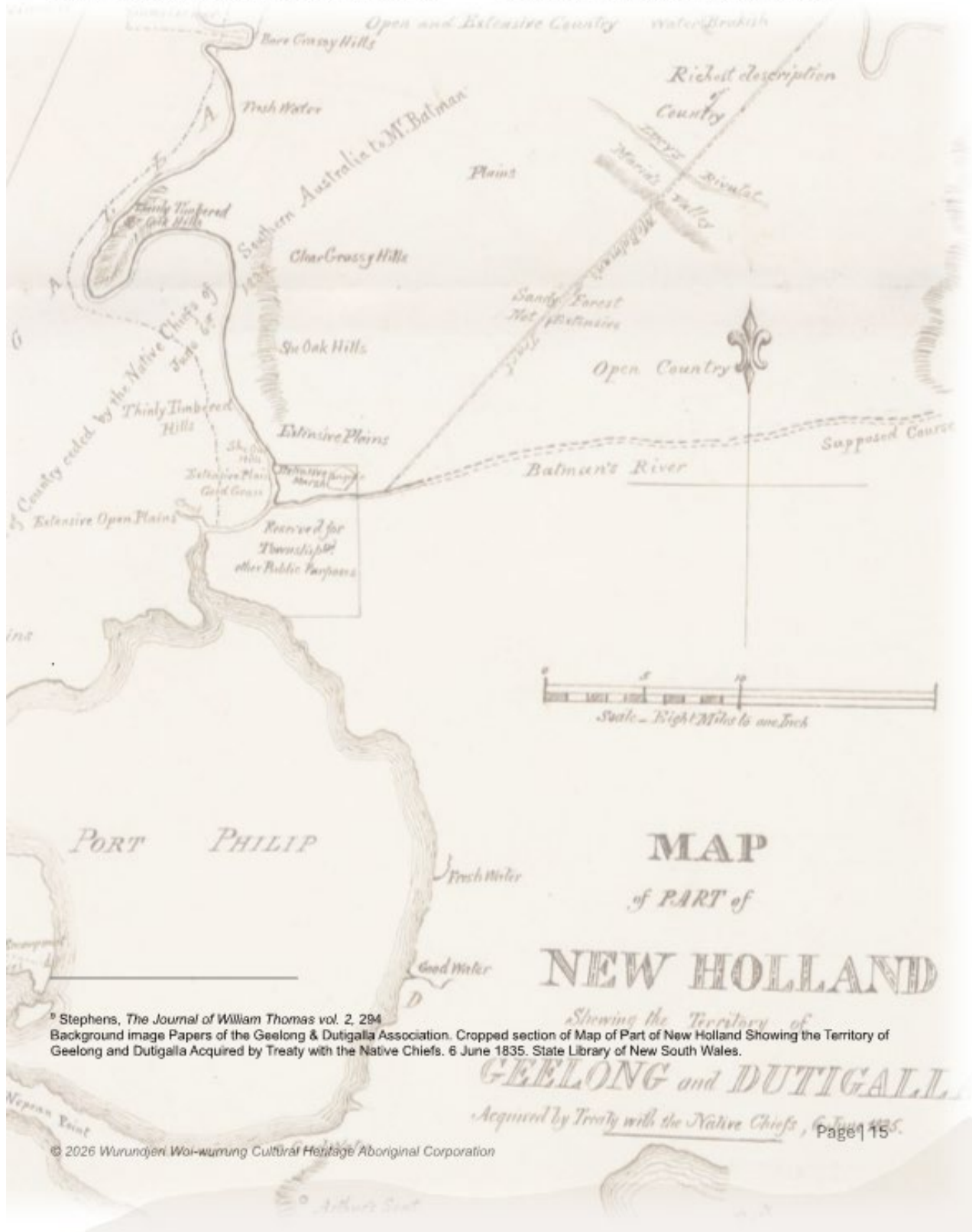
⁶ Batman in Daniels, "Batman's Route Revisited," 156.

⁷ Daniels, "Batman's Route Revisited," 152-153.

⁸ Thomas in Stephens, *The Journal of William Thomas* vol. 2, 13 - 14

hunting trips, given the proximity to the Merri Creek and its confluence with both Merlynston Creek and Edgar Creek tributaries.⁹ Whilst the

homestead was demolished in the 1980s, the remains of its bluestone foundation remain in what is the Coburg Bush Reserve today.



Significance of Merlynston Creek to Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People

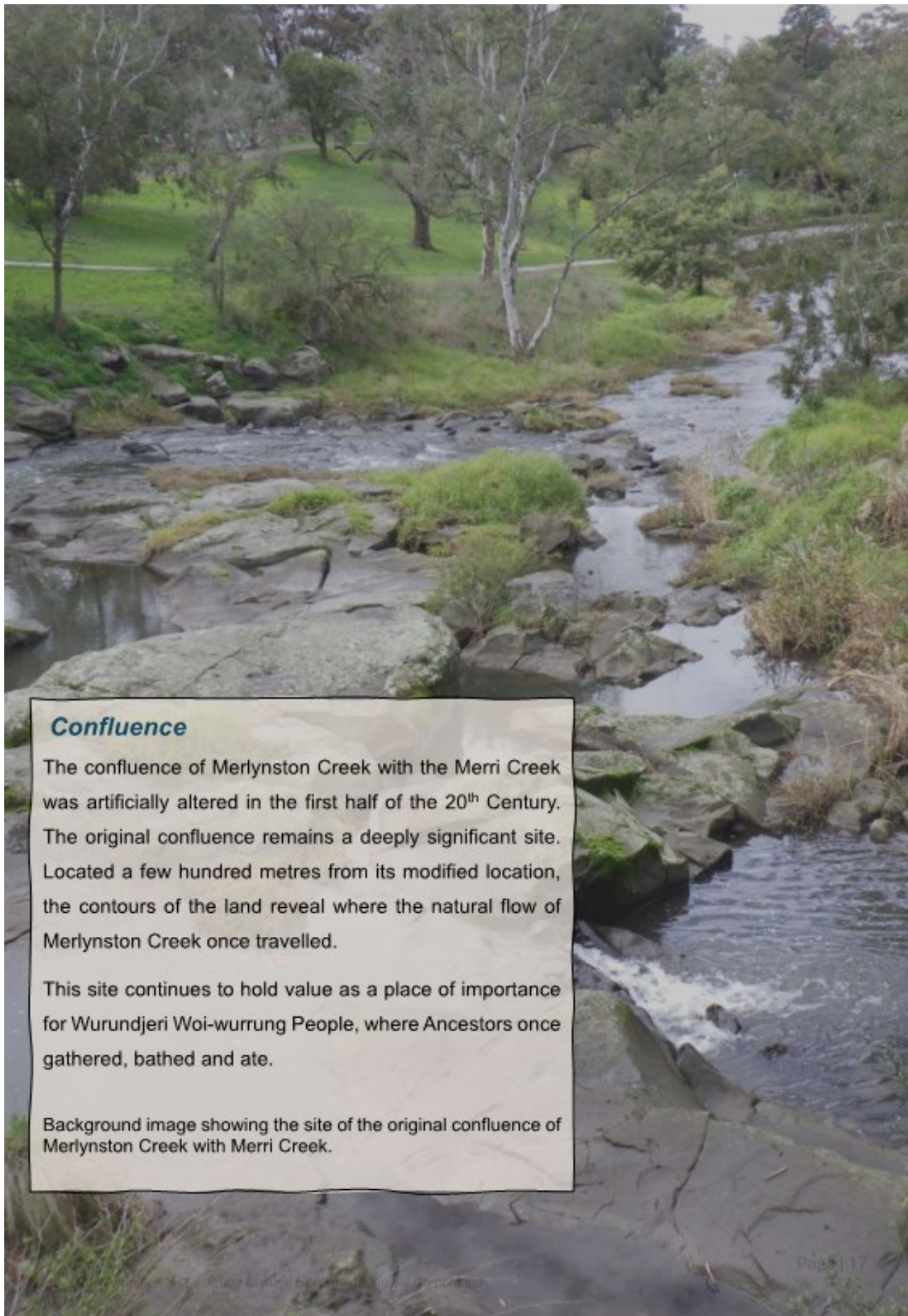
Merlynston Creek and the Cultural Landscape it is embedded in is an important part of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country. Waterways and waterscapes hold immense cultural, spiritual and social significance to Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People. The protection and preservation of waterways and waterscapes is a crucial part of caring for Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country.

The cultural significance of waterways and waterscapes, including wetlands, floodplains and billabongs, is expansive. Amongst the surrounding volcanic plains, waterways like Merlynston Creek would have provided vital resources. Resource use is one interconnected element through which waterways form part of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Landscape. For Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Ancestors, waterways existed as meeting and camping places, marked boundaries between clan areas, and were understood as the dwelling place of creation Ancestors and spiritual beings.

Today, waterways remain central elements of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Landscape, and healthy waterways is a key priority for Elders involved in this project. This significance is reflected in the Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018, which categorises all land within 200 metres of a named waterway as an Area of Cultural Heritage Sensitivity.

The health of Merlynston Creek is intertwined with that of all beings within this Cultural Landscape, all which have an important role. For Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People, Merlynston Creek flows as a living connection to Ancestors and Country, and the ways they lived in and cared for this landscape, much which can be learnt from.

All of Merlynston Creek and the connected Cultural Landscape is important for Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People. Some of the locations of significance along Merlynston Creek include the following:

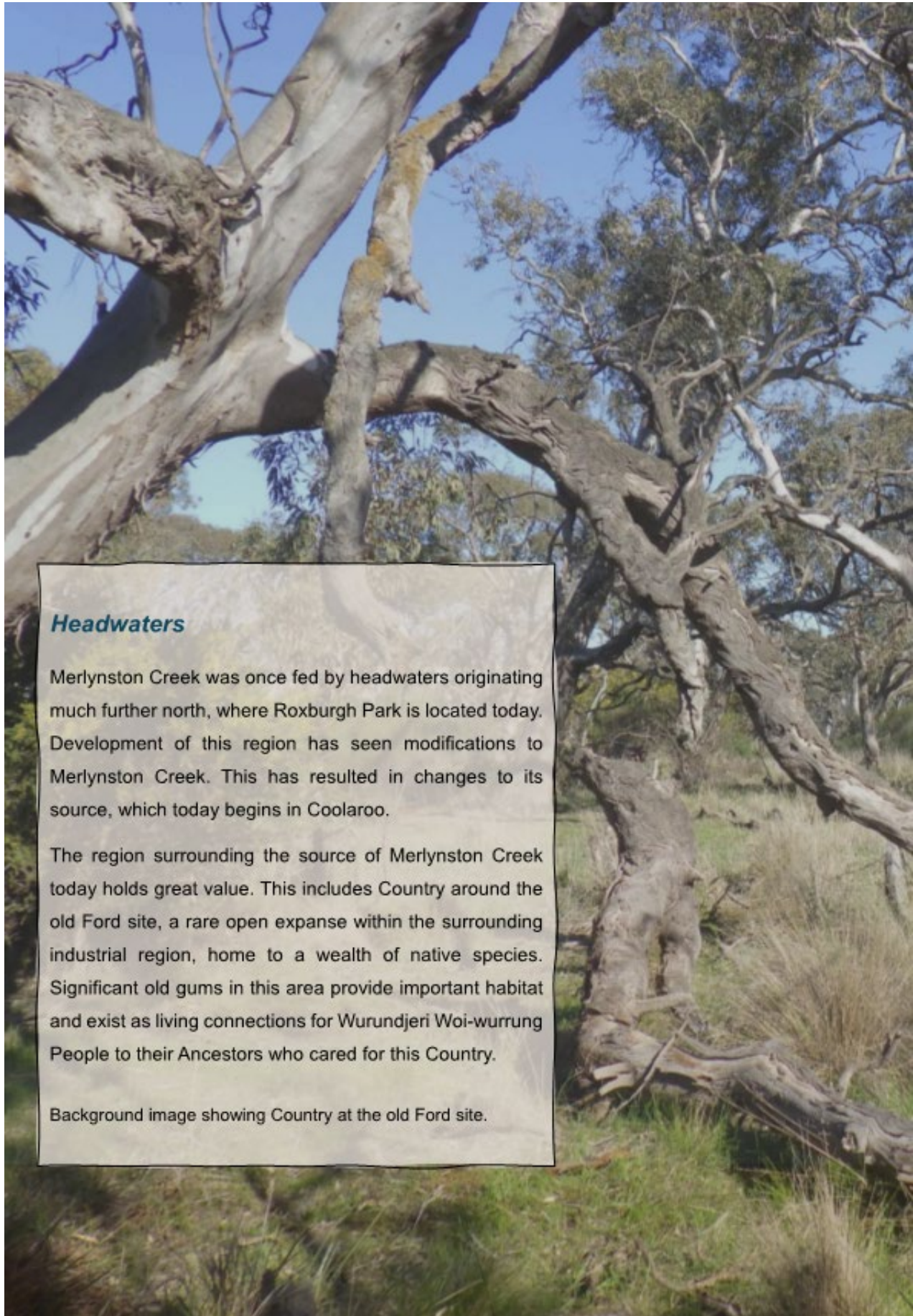


Confluence

The confluence of Merlynston Creek with the Merri Creek was artificially altered in the first half of the 20th Century. The original confluence remains a deeply significant site. Located a few hundred metres from its modified location, the contours of the land reveal where the natural flow of Merlynston Creek once travelled.

This site continues to hold value as a place of importance for Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People, where Ancestors once gathered, bathed and ate.

Background image showing the site of the original confluence of Merlynston Creek with Merri Creek.

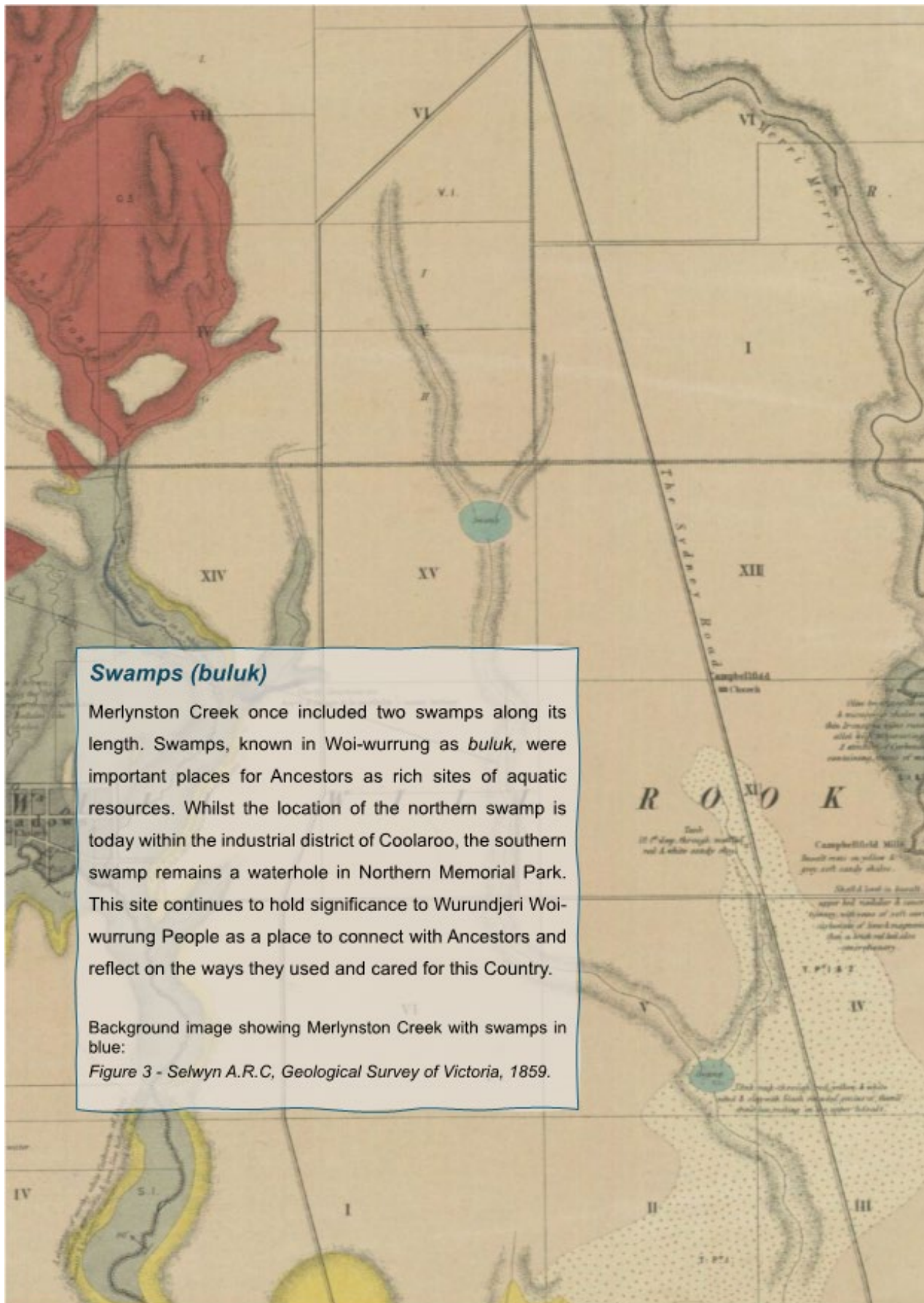


Headwaters

Merlynston Creek was once fed by headwaters originating much further north, where Roxburgh Park is located today. Development of this region has seen modifications to Merlynston Creek. This has resulted in changes to its source, which today begins in Coolaroo.

The region surrounding the source of Merlynston Creek today holds great value. This includes Country around the old Ford site, a rare open expanse within the surrounding industrial region, home to a wealth of native species. Significant old gums in this area provide important habitat and exist as living connections for Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People to their Ancestors who cared for this Country.

Background image showing Country at the old Ford site.



Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung cultural significance: Summary of cultural values & recommendations

Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung cultural values relating to Merlynston Creek, and the broader Cultural Landscape within which it is embedded, can be considered within three themes:

- Caring for Country;
- Celebrating and educating about Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Ancestors, Culture, and history; and
- Self-determination, partnership and advocacy.

Cultural Values identified in the Merlynston Creek Cultural Values Assessment align with Wurundjeri Corporation’s Whole of Country Plan Principles. Identified and developed by Elders, these principles provide a consistent and holistic approach to Wurundjeri Corporation’s cultural objectives and articulates protocols to care for Country. They highlight the aspirations to deepen the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung community’s spiritual connection with Country and uphold the responsibility to maintain it for future generations. This includes the protection and rehabilitation of Country, Culture and People.



Eight specific recommendations and thirty-five related actions have been identified by

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Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Elders as necessary in upholding these cultural values and otherwise embedding Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung perspectives. The implementation of these recommendations is a crucial part of cultural values projects.

recommendations are followed through. If this report goes on to the shelf and no-one does anything, it's a waste of time and money. We need to hear back from the project partners about these issues."
Aunty Alice Kolasa, Elder

"We need to take it seriously; it is important that these goals or

Theme 1: Caring for Country

- **Value 1: Rehabilitation of Country and enhanced biodiversity**
- **Value 2: Healthy waterways**
- **Value 3: Enhanced protection of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country from encroaching development**
- **Value 4: Enhanced protection of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage**

Caring for Country is a fundamental focus of many of the cultural values held by Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Elders working on this project in relation to Merlynston Creek. Central to the notion of caring for Country is a holistic understanding of Country. Elders have emphasised the connected roles of land, water, sky and all beings, and the importance of this bigger connected picture when caring for Country.

"If you're waterways aren't healthy, Country is not healthy, and we're not healthy. It all intertwines."

Aunty Di Kerr, Wurundjeri Elder

Caring for Country is closely connected to the cultural values emerging under Theme 3: Self-determination, partnership & advocacy. Elders have emphasised the importance of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung self-determination when it comes to caring for Country, including the prioritisation of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung input and decision making.

Equally, Elders have stressed that the imperative of caring for Country is everyone's responsibility, a huge and critical task that everyone must prioritise together.

This theme encompasses the following values:

Value 1 - Rehabilitation of Country and enhanced biodiversity

Elders have emphasised the importance of revitalising Country to reflect the landscape prior to colonisation as much as possible and where appropriate, noting the need to adapt to a changing climate. Merlynston Creek has been highly modified since colonisation. Its natural course has been altered; it has been artificially reinforced; and it has been transformed into a stormwater and waste drain in various places.

Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Ancestors have lived in and cared for this Country for thousands of years. These modifications categorically oppose a Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung approach to caring for Country. Understanding what Merlynston Creek and the surrounding landscape looked like prior to colonisation, and how Ancestors might have cared for, lived on and used the resources of Country, is important when caring for it.

This value is embodied in the following Whole of Country Plan 2025 - 2035 goals:

"Investment in Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People to enhance outcomes across Country: Sustainable investment in Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People to enhance the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Corporation's capacity and capability and ensure best outcomes across Country"

- Whole of Country Plan 2025-2035 Goal

"Enhanced biodiversity across Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country: Biodiversity is enhanced across all Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country. The natural landscape is recognised as a broader living entity."

- Whole of Country Plan 2025-2035 Goal

Revegetation with appropriate native species & removal of invasive species

Critical to this rehabilitation of Country along Merlynston Creek is the need to bring back plants which once thrived in this landscape. As Elders have explained, it is important to reflect the landscape prior to colonisation as much as possible, when revegetating:

"You need to bring back plants that were here before colonisation, that's the only way you're going to have a healthy waterway."

Aunty Di Kerr, Wurundjeri Elder

Elders also note the need to adapt to a changing climate and acknowledge there may be changes in which species are best suited for this environment today. Native plants which support the health of the waterway should be prioritised, whilst the removal of invasive species is an equally important part of rehabilitation. Wurundjeri Corporation Elders advocate for consultation with Wurundjeri Corporation's Narrap Unit, and other appropriate specialists to advise on the revegetation of this landscape.

Remnant vegetation

Elders place significant value on the scarce patches of remnant vegetation along Merlynston Creek, including areas at Jack Roper Reserve, Will-Will Rook Cemetery, and around The Knoll. Elders have highlighted the importance of preserving and protecting remnant vegetation in caring for Country. These areas also offer a connection to the pre-

colonial landscape, an inheritance from Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Ancestors that cared for Country at this time. Elders have emphasised the need for preventative measures to be put in place to reduce detrimental impacts on remnant vegetation; as well as proactive measures, such as seed collection, to increase native populations.

Figure 4 - Old gum and native flora at old Ford site, Coolaroo



Threatened flora

Merlynston Creek and the connected Cultural Landscape provides habitat to a number of threatened species. These species hold great value to Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People and play a significant role in this landscape. Within a holistic understanding of Country, Elders have stressed the interdependence of all beings, and need for all native species to be protected when caring for Country.

Threatened native plants recorded along Merlynston Creek in the past decade include the Matted flax-lily (*Dianella amoena*), Austral Crane's bill (*Geranium solanderi* var. *solaneri* s.s), Pale Swamp Everlasting (*Coronidium gunnianum*), the Fragrant Saltbush (*Rhagodia parabolica*), and the Giant Honey-myrtle (*Melaleuca armillaris* subsp. *armillaris*).

“It’s important to protect the natural vegetation. We are trying to hang on to what we have been left with. Our job is following the legacy of our Ancestors. We are following in their footsteps, in the 21st century.”

Aunty Alice Kolasa, Elder

Native Fauna

The Cultural Landscape of Merlynston Creek also plays an important role in providing habitat to a wealth of native fauna species of significance to Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People.

Elders working on this project have highlighted the importance of protecting and encouraging these species, which continue to be impacted by encroaching development and changing urban landscapes. This includes all beings living on the land – both above and below ground; in the water – both above and below ground; and sky of Merlynston Creek’s Cultural Landscape.

“Waterways are the lifeline of all Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People’s flora and fauna species.”

Perry Wandin, Wurundjeri Elder

Figure 5 - Perry Wandin, Wurundjeri Elder, indicates kangaroo and wallaby tracks at the old Ford site.



Elders have stressed the importance of understanding what lived in this Country prior to colonisation.

“Okay, you gotta think, go back 200 years - what would have been here? And then we look at the records... it's not here anymore. Where has it gone? It's an uphill battle in getting things back to the way it was, but all we can do is bit by bit.”

Perry Wandin, Wurundjeri Elder

Aquatic fauna recorded along the creek in recent decades includes the Southern Shortfin Eel (*Anguilla Australia*); Common Yabby (*Cherax destructor destructor*); Common Freshwater Shrimp (*Paratya australiensis*); Eastern Snake-necked Turtle (*Chelodina longicollis*); and the critically endangered Murray River Turtle (*Emydura macquarii*). In the past, Merlynston Creek has been home to Platypus (*Ornithorhynchus anatinus*) and Spotted Galaxia (*Galaxias truttaceus*) too.

The sections of the creek running through Fawcner Memorial Park and Jack Roper Reserve are particularly rich with birdlife, including birds holding great significance as Ancestral beings. This includes *Bunjil*, the Ancestral being that created the universe, taking the form of a wedge tail eagle. *Bunjil's* wife, *Gunawarra*, is also found along Merlynston Creek in the form of the Black swan.¹⁰

Other species highlighted as significant for Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Elders include a number of rare and threatened species associated with the waterway. In recent years,

this has included the Black Falcon (*Falco subniger*), which is critically endangered in Victoria; as well as the Grey-headed Flying fox (*Pteropus poliocephalus*); the Hardhead Duck (*Aythya australis*); the Great Egret (*Ardea alba*); and the Golden Sun Moth (*Synemon plana*), all which are vulnerable in Victoria.

In the past, the creek has been home to the endangered Southern Toadlet (*Pseudophryne semimarmorata*); the critically endangered Regent Honeyeater; and the Eastern Quoll (*Dasyurus viverrinus*), which was considered extinct on the mainland since 1963, although has been reintroduced to parts of Victoria in recent decades.

A key part of the ongoing protection of these species is habitat conservation, the preservation of wildlife corridors, and, where necessary, modern habitat creation and installation.

More broadly, Elders urge for wildlife conservation efforts which promote the natural state of Merlynston Creek and encourage local species to thrive, including aquatic animals. This should involve minimising the impacts of future development by considering ways in which designs can promote healthy Country and habitat.

Concern around the impact of possible future development on native species and their habitats includes possible future development around the source of Merlynston Creek, at the old Ford site, and the impacts this will have on the kangaroos and wallabies residing there.

¹⁰ Howitt, *The Native Tribes*, 128; Howitt & Fison, *Field notebook Transcription* – page 53, XM 759.

*Recommendations***1. Revitalise Country to reflect the landscape prior to colonisation as much as possible and where appropriate**

1.1 Action	Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung input and decision-making regarding the land and water of Merlynston Creek must be sought and prioritised. The Wurundjeri Corporation’s Narrap Unit (Water Program and Narrap Rangers) should be offered first preference in codesigning and leading water, natural resource management activities and remediation works; and given the opportunity for ongoing involvement in decision making around the future management of Merlynston Creek.
1.2 Action	Ecological rehabilitation: A priority for Elders is the rehabilitation of the ecological values along Merlynston Creek and surrounding landscapes to a level of a typically healthy waterway. This includes: • Revegetation to restore the ecological fabric of this Cultural Landscape • Removal of waste, rubbish and pollutants in waterscapes, waterway, and creek corridor • Habitat restoration (see action item 1.7) • Reintroduction and protection of fauna and flora species (see action item 1.7)
1.3 Action	Removal of invasive species along Merlynston Creek, using the least harmful methods available.
1.4 Action	Protect threatened flora species and ecological communities along Merlynston Creek.
1.5 Action	Protect areas of remnant vegetation along Merlynston Creek. This includes appropriate protection of remnant vegetation, including areas at Will Will Rook Cemetery. Seed collection could be used to increase native populations.
1.6 Action	Planting of appropriate native species along creekline, which belong to the area. Wurundjeri Corporation’s Narrap Unit should be provided the opportunity to collaborate in the identification of appropriate plants.
1.7 Action	Protect fauna species native to habitats along Merlynston Creek. This should include protection of endangered fauna and repopulation of native fauna species, including aquatic fauna. This should also include the protection of spiritual animals associated with Merlynston Creek. Protection of habitats and wildlife corridors should be supplemented with modern habitat creation and installation.

1.8 Action	Work with Wurundjeri Corporation to develop interpretive signage with information regarding native fauna species of relevance. This could include injured wildlife hotline numbers for members of the public to contact.
1.9 Action	Further investigations that assist in understanding how the landscape has changed to allow Elders to provide a more comprehensive account of cultural values for Merlynston Creek relating to the rehabilitation of Country and enhanced biodiversity. This could include the inspection of core samples from identified locations along Merlynston Creek. Engagement with the Narrap Unit at Wurundjeri Corporation is essential to this action.

Value 2 - Enhanced protection of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country from encroaching development

Development of this region in the 20th century has had devastating impacts on the health of Merlynston Creek, which has been subjected to severe modification to accommodate increasing populations and urbanisation. This

included the gradual diversion of parts of Merlynston Creek to underground drainage from the early 1950s, previously operating as an open drain that regularly flooded the homes and streets of the Merlynston municipality.¹¹

Figure 6 - Image and title from 26 February 1946 article, the Herald, titled 'Flood Maroons Merlynston Families when Creek Overflows'¹²



WATERY WASTE TODAY surrounds Sussex Street in Merlynston, where many families are marooned

FLOOD MAROONS MERLYNSTON FAMILIES **WHEN CREEK OVERFLOWS**

Elders working on this project are concerned about the ongoing impact of encroaching development on Merlynston Creek and the significant Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung cultural values associated with it. This is part of a broader priority to better protect Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country from increasing development.

"I think Wurundjeri Corporation is in a good place, but we're not happy with development. It destroys what was naturally there before. We always try to save what we can. We've lost a lot. A lot of our Country has been taken from us and destroyed."

Aunty Alice Kolasa, Elder

¹¹ "Merri Creek Pollution," *The Sun News-Pictorial*, March 23, 1946, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article279198524>; "Merlynston Drain Plan," *The Sun News-Pictorial*, Oct 30, 1951, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article279731054>;

¹² Flood Maroons Merlynston Families when Creek Overflows," *The Herald*, February 26, 1946, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-page26695511>.

This value is broadly embodied in the following Whole of Country Plan 2025 - 2035 goal:

“Enhanced protection of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country from encroaching development: Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country is better protected from development through increased understanding of the value of preserving Country, as well as enhanced legislation.”

- Whole of Country Plan 2025-2035 Goal

Impact of development on Country

Elders have conveyed concerns regarding the plans for the potential development of a road between Dallas Water Basin and Will Will Rook Cemetery, crossing Merlynston Creek. These concerns include the impacts of increased traffic (including trucks) into the area and associated increased environmental footprint. Elders have stressed the need to prioritise low impact infrastructure and consider the impacts of all development on the preservation of native flora, fauna, and habitats.

These values remain pertinent to the proposed possible extension of the railway from Upfield Station to Roxburgh Park Station. Elders have emphasised the value of Country around the old Ford site as important habitat for native fauna within the surrounding industrial region.

Significant old gums in this area not only provide habitat to a range of animals but also a connection for Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung community to their Ancestors who would have utilised these trees. Elders see this site has having great potential for a revegetation project

and open parkland, and future development should be designed with this in mind.

Again, drawing on the values of Theme 3, Elders emphasised the need for Wurundjeri Corporation to be a part of such future developments in the early planning stage, to ensure cultural values are minimally impacted.

Elders have emphasised the need for a holistic approach to Country when considering impacts of development on Merlynston Creek, with cultural values extending beyond the creek corridor. Healthy waterways depend on and support healthy land, sky, and the health of surrounding waterways, groundwater, wetlands, and floodplains.

This involves looking not only at proposed developments along the creek itself, but the impact of development in the surrounding region. This includes development of the nearby Broadmeadows activity centre. Elders are concerned about the impacts of this development on Merlynston Creek, including the effect of stormwater flows.

Recommendations

2. Enhanced protection of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country from encroaching development.	
2.1 Action	Project partners should prioritise low impact infrastructure and consider impacts of all development associated with Merlynston Creek on the health of the waterway and preservation of native flora; fauna and their habitats. This includes works associated with the Merlynston Creek Parklands. The natural and aesthetic attributes of Merlynston Creek and the surrounding landscape should be maintained where possible. This involves: a) Ensuring the proposed potential road in Dallas is designed with minimal impact on the health of Merlynston Creek, including the waterway, native flora, fauna and habitats. b) Ensuring the potential future train line extension from Upfield to Roxburgh Park is designed with minimal impact on the health of Merlynston Creek and the connected Cultural Landscape. This includes protecting existing and creating habitat corridors to support connectivity for wildlife, including the protection of old gum trees in this area as much as possible. Engagement with Wurundjeri Corporation is essential to this action. This should include involvement in decision making regarding such future developments from the early planning stage and throughout the development project.
2.2 Action	Project partners should work with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People to improve the health of waterways by considering the broader interconnected landscape. This includes working with Wurundjeri Corporation to ensure future developments prioritise healthy waterways.
2.3 Action	Hume City Council, Merri-bek City Council and Melbourne Water must work to minimise the current stormwater flows that Merlynston Creek receive as surface run-off. This is vital in moving towards a system that allows water to support the land, sky and beings (both above and below ground), as the water makes its way more naturally down Merlynston Creek.
2.4 Action	Plans for increased population growth, including around Broadmeadows, must aim to reduce stormwater that flows from roofs, footpaths and roads which ultimately feed into Merlynston Creek. Engagement with the Water Program at Wurundjeri Corporation is essential to this action.

Value 3 - Healthy waterways

Waterways and waterscapes are central elements of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Landscape, and their health is a key priority for Elders involved in this project. Not only are they important as significant physical

features within the landscape which support and in turn are supported by all beings on Country; they also exist for Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People today as spiritual connections to their Ancestors, Country, and culture.

This value is embodied in the following Whole of Country Plan 2025 - 2035 goal:

“Improved waterway health across Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country. Water is understood as a complex living entity”

- Whole of Country Plan 2025-2035 Goal

Re-naturalisation

Today large portions of Merlynston Creek are buried underground or travel as open concrete channels. Elders have emphasised the re-naturalisation of Merlynston Creek as a crucial step in improving the health of this waterway. This involves the removal of all concrete channelling, where doing so is environmentally safe and will not cause further harm. Within a holistic understanding of Country, Elders have highlighted the importance of a natural relationship of waterways with the earth. As explained by Elders:

“I don't like concrete channels. They're suffocating the earth. It's the species underneath that suffer. We can't see what is going on underground, but they are in trouble. Everything under the ground is living and was put there for a reason through the Creation of the earth.”

Aunty Alice Kolasa, Elder

“It's Mother Earth, so the waterways are her veins. If you are looking after Country, you are looking after your mother. If you are blocking the waterways, you are blocking her veins. It's a spiritual connection.”

Aunty Di Kerr, Wurundjeri Elder

Concrete channels which were constructed in response to flooding have manipulated the natural flow of Merlynston Creek, with ongoing effects felt broadly across Country. Flooding has always been a natural and necessary phenomenon within Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country, which Ancestors would have anticipated and worked with.

"They didn't have the pipes underground when Ancestors were there - it was a natural landscape. Floods would have happened, and maybe they had to change location. As soon as you start playing around with things, it becomes a nightmare. With the alteration of colonisation, water can't find its way anymore. That's probably why you do find damp areas, because that was once a billabong, that was once a wetland, that was once a swamp. I do believe that."

Aunty Alice Kolasa, Elder

"As soon as the landscape was altered, problems happened. Due to colonisation. Due to idiots behind the desk."

Perry Wandin, Wurundjeri Elder

Another important part of Merlynston Creek's re-naturalisation is the planting of appropriate native species, in line with the values set out in relation to rehabilitation of Country and enhancement of biodiversity.

Re-naturalisation of the creek line will also improve the health of the banks along Merlynston Creek, which Elders raised concerns about. Erosion cause by water velocity and straightening of the water course can be improved by re-naturalisation of the creek line; whilst revegetating will support bank stabilisation. Re-naturalisation of the creek line would also work to enhance the natural and aesthetic attributes of this area, encouraging community members to enjoy Country, enhancing well-being.

"If the water was running and there were no concrete slabs there, people would be sitting on that grass under the trees and probably having a bit of a picnic, listening to the bird life and taking the time to appreciate Country. But there's nothing to draw them there- it's not a good look."

Aunty Alice Kolasa, Elder

Figure 7 - Concrete channelled section of Merlynston Creek south of Hepburn Street, Dallas



Water quality

Elders are concerned about the water quality of Merlynston Creek, improvement to which is reliant on the re-naturalisation of the waterway. Water quality has been greatly impacted by the suffocation of Country, and removal of the concrete will support the macroinvertebrates and other species to be reintroduced to support a healthier, natural system.

Elders found the current confluence of Merlynston Creek with the Merri Creek to be particularly unhealthy. Elders were also concerned how the health of Merlynston Creek will impact the culturally significant Merri Creek.

"The flow of the Merlynston Creek is a big concern, considering the unhealthy way it is sitting now. It's also worrying for the Merri which it feeds into, which is a major creek which comes off our main artery, Birrarung. If nothing changes, these

waterways are looking like they don't have a good future. It's not only what's in the water – healthy waterways is healthy people, and healthy flora and fauna. It affects us all. It once would have been a place of abundance where people could have gathered."

Aunty Jacqui Wandin, Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Elder

"Tributaries are there to enhance the strength of main waterways. It supports Country by bringing away what could overload it and takes it to the main waterway. All waterways are important to us, not just the main ones."

Aunty Di Kerr, Wurundjeri Elder

Elders have identified that further research regarding the water quality of Merlynston Creek is required in order to advise on the recommendations to manage this value. Elders have recommended that Wurundjeri Corporation's Water Program is facilitated to do this work. Wurundjeri Corporation's Water

Program should be offered first right of refusal and provided with the opportunity to collaborate on all work regarding water quality, pending capacity, capability and priorities. This is connected to the broader recommendation set out in relation to Theme 3: Self-determination, partnership & advocacy.

Figure 8 - Merlynston Creek at the new confluence with Merri Creek



*Recommendations***3. Protect and enhance Merlynston Creek and connected waterscapes.**

3.1 Action	Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung input and decision-making regarding the land and water of Merlynston Creek must be sought and prioritised. The Wurundjeri Corporation Narrap Unit (Water Program and Narrap Rangers) should be offered first preference in codesigning and leading water, natural resource management activities and remediation works; and given the opportunity for ongoing involvement in decision making around the future management of this waterway.
3.2 Action	Re-naturalisation of Merlynston Creek is a priority for Elders. This includes the removal of concrete channelling in all instances where environmentally safe to do so. This also includes the improvement of water quality; the removal of weeds and invasive species; preservation of any native plants; and the re-introduction of native plants that will help make Country and Water healthy.
3.3 Action	Rehabilitation of Merlynston creekline and, where possible, associated waterways and wetlands to support the retardation and treatment of surface water flows . This involves improving the ecological health, environmental flows, Cultural flows, and the persistence of natural cycles of flooding, infiltration, and evaporation for Merlynston Creek and associated waterways and wetlands.
3.4 Action	Project partners must ensure water testing is conducted to establish base levels of water quality, and efforts must be made to improve these levels on an ongoing basis. Wurundjeri Corporation's Water Program should be given first right of refusal to conduct this water testing, or to direct specifications of testing by a third party.

Value 4 – Enhanced protection of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage

Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage associated with Merlynston Creek must be protected. Cultural heritage tells of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Ancestors and their ways of life, and continues the ongoing visibility of Wurundjeri People on Country.

Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage must be considered holistically, in respect of physical and non-physical attributes. Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People place great value not only on their archaeological footprint but also on places and landscapes of cultural significance.

This value is embodied in the following Whole of Country Plan 2025 - 2035 goal:

“Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung cultural heritage is better protected through increased understanding, legislative changes, and the development and implementation of stronger strategies and goals.”

- Whole of Country Plan 2025-2035 Goal

Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register

The Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register (VAHR) holds all registrations of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Places (ACHPs) and objects within Victoria.

Registered Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Places along Merlynston Creek not only provide evidence of occupation by Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People in the form of cultural heritage material but also remain as tangible expressions of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People’s historical and ongoing connection to this landscape.

The places recorded on the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Register are limited by the boundaries of archaeological investigations for heritage assessments and Cultural Heritage Management Plans (CHMPs), and only small sections of Merlynston Creek have been subject to archaeological surveys. Given the significance of waterways for Wurundjeri Woi-

wurrung Ancestors as places to source resources, meet, and camp, they are associated with high concentrations of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage. Accordingly, the places recorded on the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Register along Merlynston Creek only offer a glimpse into a rich, Cultural Landscape, and there are likely to be significant numbers of unrecorded artefacts and other tangible Aboriginal Cultural Heritage. Modification of Merlynston Creek and the surrounding landscape would also have seen many artefacts removed from their original locations, disturbing the integrity and context of many places of Wurundjeri cultural significance.

Elders have emphasised the importance of facilitating the Wurundjeri Corporation Heritage Unit to carry out the necessary surveys and investigations in respect of Merlynston Creek.

Intangible Cultural Heritage

Heritage places are also those related to cultural practices, beliefs, or traditions. These features are defined as intangible, and include ceremonies, dances, songs, Creation Stories, spiritual associations, technical skills, traditional craft skills, ecological knowledge, language, traditional laws, and responsibilities.

As outlined in the methodology section, the Australian Association of the International

Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) describes intangible cultural heritage as cultural practices created by communities or groups of people over time and are practices recognised by those communities or groups as part of their heritage; inclusive of cultural responsibilities, rituals and ceremonies, oral traditions, performance, language, knowledge, and skills.¹³ The *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* (Victoria) is also reflective of this definition.¹⁴

Recommendations

4. Enhanced protection of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage	
4.1 Action	Project partners must engage with the Wurundjeri Corporation Cultural Heritage Unit regarding the protection of tangible cultural heritage in accordance with the <i>Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006</i> (Victoria) and its regulations. Project partners are encouraged to consider voluntary Cultural Heritage Management Plans (CHMPs) and permits where mandatory CHMPs and permits may not be triggered in accordance with the <i>Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006</i> (Victoria) Sections 45 and 46.
4.2 Action	Protect Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung cultural values holistically. Cultural values are to be considered in relation to their tangible (physical) and intangible (non-physical) attributes. For example, this may include artefacts, cultural features, flora, fauna, waterways and waterbodies, landforms, stories, associations, practices, beliefs, traditions, and Cultural Landscapes.
4.3 Action	Areas of important cultural heritage landscapes identified from the Wurundjeri Strategic Aboriginal Heritage Assessment (SAHA) and depicted through the First Peoples – State Relations' mapping platform for strategic planning, are to be treated as areas of cultural heritage sensitivity.
4.4 Action	Project partners should encourage developers operating within their jurisdictions to design their activities to avoid harm to important cultural heritage landscapes identified from the Wurundjeri Strategic Aboriginal Heritage Assessment (SAHA) depicted through the First Peoples – State Relations' mapping platform for

¹³ Australia ICOMOS, *Practice Note: Intangible Cultural Heritage and Place* (ICOMOS, 2017), p. 2.

¹⁴ *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* (Victoria)

	strategic planning. Where areas of important cultural heritage landscapes identified from SAHA are present and CHMPs or CHPs are not mandatory, voluntary CHMPs (for high-impact activities) or CHPs (for low-impact activities) should be sought. Project partners should lead by example in development activities they are managing.
4.5 Action	Further investigations would allow Elders to provide a more comprehensive account of cultural values for Merlynston Creek relating to the enhanced protection of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage. This involves: ○ Archaeological surveys along the creek corridor ○ A survey of the Merlynston Creek CVA project area for ground truthing with Cultural Heritage Officers to inspect potential stony rises. Engagement with the Cultural Heritage Unit at Wurundjeri Corporation is essential to this action.

Theme 2: Celebrating and educating about Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Ancestors, Culture, & History

- ***Value 5: Celebration of Ancestors & Cultural Knowledge***
- ***Value 6: Education of the wider community***
- ***Value 7: Knowledge sharing & enhanced cultural practice***
- ***Value 8: Truth -telling***

The celebration of culture, Ancestors and history is a crucial part of cultural renewal and the transmission of knowledge to younger generations. Beyond the importance of this work for the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung community, Elders have highlighted the importance of educating the wider non-

Indigenous community about Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung culture and history.

Alongside celebration, Truth-telling is an important and necessary process in both educating the public and healing within the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung community. This theme encompasses the following values:

Values 5 & 6 – Celebration of Ancestor & Cultural Knowledge; and Education of the wider community

Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People and culture should be visible on Country and celebrated. Sharing Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung knowledge, culture and history in relation to Merlynston Creek and Country, where appropriate, is important in enhancing the non-Wurundjeri

people’s understanding of living on and visiting this Country. As explained in the goals of the Whole of Country Plan, this in turn should foster greater respect and connection of the wider community with Country.

These values are embodied in the following Whole of Country Plan 2025 - 2035 Goals:

“Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People and culture are visible on Country.”
- Whole of Country Plan 2025-2035 Goal

“Non-Wurundjeri people living on, working on and visiting Country continue to enhance their understanding of Country, resulting in a deeper respect and connection with Country.”
- Whole of Country Plan 2025-2035 Goal

Interpretive signage has been identified as a way to share this knowledge with the broader community. An important aspect of this knowledge sharing is the celebration of Ancestors and their relationship with Merlynston Creek. For example, Elders have emphasised that whilst the confluence of Merlynston Creek cannot be returned to its original site, the story of this place and Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Ancestors' connection with it can be shared.

“The public needs to be educated about our Ancestors, history and culture, whether that is done verbally or with interpretive signage. A lot of this has been left out of the education systems over the years. People don't know enough. Putting interpretive signage out there educates the public, the visitor and everyone. They need to know the history of who we are and be proud to be on our Country. We then hope people can become more aware of the land they live and work on and learn respect.”

Aunty Alice Kolasa, Elder

Figure 9 - Perry Wandin, Wurundjeri Elder, with significant old gum tree. Source: Sheridan Blunt (Hume City Council).



Elders have also highlighted the significant value of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung knowledge around traditional uses of flora and fauna native to Merlynston Creek, which offers insight into improving its health. This is important cultural knowledge which should continue to be held and celebrated.

Woi-wurrung language

Woi-wurrung is the language of the Wurundjeri People and remains an important part of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung cultural identity. As set out in the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Whole of Country Plan:

Since the colonial invasion of the unceded territories of the Woi-wurrung speaking clans, language use has declined to the point of near extinction due to government control and policy. Many Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Elders and members have been working tirelessly to revive the Woi-wurrung language, with much success, although further research continues.¹⁵

Elders have stressed the need for Woi-wurrung language to be used wherever possible. Most importantly, this should involve the renaming of Merlynston Creek.

It is unclear when the creek became known as Merlynston, although it was likely named sometime after the 1920s and the establishment of Merlynston municipality area; known as Coburg North today. This area was named after the daughter of Captain Donald

Bain, who was instrumental in the residential development of Merlynston.¹⁶

Re-naming the creek is important in identifying and celebrating Merlynston Creek as an important place on Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country for the broader community, but it would also offer an important act of healing for Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People, reconnecting people today to Country, culture and language.

“Language was stolen. Renaming places on Country needs to happen. At the moment, the name Merlynston doesn’t connect me to my Country, Culture and Ancestors. Language helps you spiritually connect with Country, and that’s what it’s all about when we go out there. We go out there because we are the descendants of our Ancestors.”

Aunty Alice Kolasa, Elder

¹⁵ Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, *Whole of Country Plan 2025 – 2035*, 17.

¹⁶ Broome, Coburg, *Between Two Creeks* (Coburg Historical Society, 2001), 209; “Merlynston”, November 11, 1921; “Merlynston,” *The Brunswick and Coburg Leader*, August 18, 1922, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-page29814111>.

*Recommendations***5. Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People and Culture is visible on Country**

5.1 Action	Co-develop interpretive signage with Wurundjeri Corporation at significant places along the creek sharing Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung cultural knowledge and history related to Merlynston Creek. Interpretive signage could include Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung cultural knowledge and history, and information on Ancestors and resource use, as advised and deemed appropriate by Elders. Places identified by Elders include the original confluence of Merlynston Creek with Merri Creek; and the waterhole in Northern Memorial Park
5.2 Action	Acknowledgement of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People as the Traditional Owners of Country must be clear along the parkland.
5.3 Action	The project team is encouraged to engage with Wurundjeri Corporation's Education Unit to facilitate the re-naming of Merlynston Creek using Woi-wurrung language
5.4 Action	Use Woi-wurrung language where possible in consultation with the Wurundjeri Corporation's Education Unit. Woi-wurrung language should be used on signage (with English translation where necessary) and for naming natural features, surrounding areas, flora and fauna, and significant sites along Merlynston Creek.
5.5 Action	Use Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung art and design where possible. It is recommended that Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung artwork and cultural design elements are reflected in any future buildings, works and infrastructure design along Merlynston Creek. This includes Hume City Council's development of Merlynston Creek Parkland. Wurundjeri Corporation should direct these usages. Where possible incorporate Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung artwork and cultural design elements into the design phase of the project, co-developed with Wurundjeri Corporation and engaging with Elders and Wurundjeri Corporation approved artists.
5.6 Action	Promote and Respect Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People's right to practise Culture on Country. The project team is encouraged to engage with Wurundjeri Corporation and to facilitate opportunities for cultural practice, particularly throughout the Merlynston Creek Parklands project, and beyond. This includes Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremonies. It is very important to Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People that visitors are welcomed onto their Country in this way. It is a cultural tradition that has been practised on Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country for tens of thousands of years and beyond.

Value 7 – Knowledge sharing & enhancement of cultural practice

Sharing knowledge and enhancing Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung cultural practice are important values for Elders involved in this project.

In maintaining cultural practices, it is important for Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People to be able to access Country and use necessary resources along Merlynston Creek for cultural purposes.

These values are embodied in the following Whole of Country Plan 2025 - 2035 goals:

“Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People have the right to access Country and resources.”

- Whole of Country Plan 2025-2035 Goal

“Knowledge sharing and enhancing cultural practice within Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People.”

- Whole of Country Plan 2025-2035 Goal

Elders have explained how the process of knowledge recording in projects like these works to reconnect people with Culture and Country.

“It also connects our songlines. It got interrupted with colonisation and our family being on Coranderrk. This work today is actually reconnecting the songlines and reconnecting us back to them, and that’s important.”

Aunty Di Kerr, Wurundjeri Elder

“As a descendant, I’m very proud to get the opportunity to go out on Country and see the condition it’s in, give input, talk to the stakeholder and walk on Country together. It creates reconciliation and you learn from each other.”

Aunty Alice Kolasa, Elder

A key part of this knowledge sharing is the consideration of future generations of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People, and the transmission of cultural knowledge.

“It’s a historical process. The role of Elders is to educate younger ones about our knowledge, teach them about Country and teach them about our waterways. That needs to continue. What we are doing now will benefit the younger ones. I don’t want in 50 years’ time my great grandchildren or great-great grandchildren to be having to go back to the archives. It’s going to be the same about Mother Earth and the same about our waterways. It’s already there. That continuance is important to us as a living culture.”

Aunty Di Kerr, Wurundjeri Elder

Figure 10 - Perry Wandin, Wurundjeri Elder, and Wurundjeri Corporation staff at Merlynston Creek in Fawkner Memorial Park



Recommendations

6. Support Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People in continuing to connect with their Cultural Landscape.

6.1 Action	Continue engagement with Wurundjeri Corporation Research Unit to undertake further cultural values work on Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country. Elders have recommended that Hume City Council, Merri-bek City Council, and Melbourne Water strive to engage in cultural values works for any projects that they are leading on Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country at the project inception stage.
6.2 Action	Ensure Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People have ongoing access to Country along Merlynston Creek and its resources to engage in cultural practices, as guided by the Wurundjeri Corporation.

Value 8 – Truth-telling

Elders working on this project have highlighted the importance of Truth-telling for Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People in respect of Merlynston Creek and identified it as a necessary process to be facilitated through the Cultural Values Assessment project.

Fawkner Memorial Park contains the remains of John Batman and other significant colonial figures involved in the dispossession of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and other First Nations peoples across Australia. Elders have highlighted the importance of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung truths being shared in relation to these people, their actions, and the devastating impacts on Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Ancestors & Country.

"If the colonisers had worked better with our people, we would have respected their names. It would have been a better place. But they never learnt to work with our people. Instead, they killed and took our land. These are our stories - the way they have left the condition of Country. Our Ancestors, they're not here to speak for Country now. Other Elders and I are. We should put the truth up about John Batman as to what happened when he landed on our shores."

Aunty Alice Kolasa, Elder

Elders have highlighted a particular need for Truth-telling in relation to the memorial to John Batman, and the plaque detailing a 'Treaty' he made with First Nations people. Elders have highlighted the importance of respectfully including a Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung perspective on this encounter, given the current plaque does not tell the full story.

"Do you put signage up and say the true fact about John Batman was that he purchased the land over a few pieces of jewellery, rugs, maybe shoes, clothing? We were screwed from day one when colonisation happened."

Perry Wandin, Wurundjeri Elder

"The first part would have been that my Ancestors accepted the arrival of John Batman, because the day before he'd sent his brother to deliver them potatoes. My Ancestors did not understand John Batman's intentions - Batman misled them. It should really say John Batman is the man who tried to do a treaty with Wurundjeri people... but that is not what it says. That's what it needs to say."

Aunty Jacqui Wandin, Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Elder

Figure 11 Perry Wandin, Wurundjeri Elder, at John Batman's memorial in Fawkner Memorial Park



Recommendations

7. Support Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People in Truth-telling and healing processes

7.1 Action	Co-develop interpretive signage with Wurundjeri Corporation at appropriate places along Merlynston Creek to enable Truth-telling. This includes signage at an appropriate and respectful location at Fawkner Memorial Park to provide a Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung perspective on Batman's so called 'Treaty'.
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Theme 3: Self-determination, partnership & advocacy

- ***Value 9: Self-determination and empowerment***
- ***Value 10: Collaboration and advocacy: building and maintaining cross-organisation partnerships***

Values 9 & 10 – Self-determination and empowerment; & Collaboration and advocacy: building and maintaining cross-organisational partnerships

Self-determination for Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People is at the forefront of all work of the Wurundjeri Corporation. It must always be prioritised when considering altering aspects of Country. Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People must have a real voice in informed decision-making, led by Elders and supported by all generations on issues that impact Country.

Investment must be made in Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People to enhance outcomes across

Country. Elders have advocated for strong and meaningful partnerships with Hume City Council, Merri-Bek City Council and Melbourne Water which support the self-determination of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People.

Within such partnerships, project partners should make efforts to increase compliance of stakeholders operating within their jurisdiction in policies and guidelines related to caring for Country.

These values are embodied in the following Whole of Country Plan 2025 - 2035 goals:

"Investment in Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People to enhance outcomes across Country."

- Whole of Country Plan 2025-2035 Goal

"Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People are supported to achieve their goals and aspirations."

- Whole of Country Plan 2025-2035 Goal

"Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People have a real voice in the decisions that impact Country."

- Whole of Country Plan 2025-2035 Goal

Throughout this project, Elders have continually emphasised that self-determination of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People should be supported by project partners by continuing to invest in specialised units within the Wurundjeri Corporation and ensuring their early and ongoing involvement in decision making.

This includes engagement with the Narrap Unit regarding natural resource management and remediation works (see action 1.1); as well as engagement with Narrap Unit's Water Program regarding re-naturalisation and rehabilitation of Merlynston Creek, and reduction of stormwater in future development plans within the region (see actions 3.1 – 3.3 & 4.2).

More broadly, Elders encourage project partners to support and invest in capability building of the Water Unit, in order to be meaningfully involved in the improvement of the health of waterways across Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country. This also includes engagement with the Cultural Heritage Unit regarding the enhanced protection of Cultural Heritage (see actions 4.1 & 4.5).

Ongoing engagement with the Research Unit has also been highlighted by Elders as paramount, with follow-up processes identified as a crucial part of cultural values projects, encouraging accountability and implementation of the recommendations.

The Wurundjeri Corporation's Research Unit should continue to be engaged in cultural values works for any projects that Hume City Council, Merri-bek City Council, and Melbourne Water are leading on Wurundjeri

Woi-wurrung Country (see action 6.1). Altering Country in one aspect causes ramifications in a myriad of ways. As project partners initiate further development within their respective jurisdictions, impacts on Country need to be considered by Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Elders and any future works to be undertaken should be done in consultation with Wurundjeri Corporation.

“There needs to be ongoing Elder Consultation. When these people are thinking about doing infrastructure, they need to knock on the door of the Traditional Owner. Our Ancestors have cared for this country for thousands of years before colonisation. They were surviving and they didn't destroy anything. Colonisation took all that away.”

Aunty Alice Kolasa, Elder

Elders working on this project have emphasised the positive role Cultural Values Projects like this play in cultural renewal and knowledge transmission processes for Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People. Elders encourage project partners to invest in Cultural Values Projects over areas identified by Wurundjeri Corporation of interest, rather than in response to development.

Collaboration between local government organisations and Wurundjeri Corporation is valued highly.

*Recommendations***8. Genuine and meaningful engagement with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People:**

8.1 Action	Engagement with Wurundjeri Corporation to facilitate and support equal partnerships and ensure Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People have a real voice in informed decision-making regarding their Country. Hume City Council, Merri-bek City Council and Melbourne Water should lead by example by creating strong and meaningful partnerships and working relationships with Wurundjeri Corporation.
8.2 Action	Project partners should consider Wurundjeri Corporation’s Whole of Country Plan in future planning and decision making on Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country.
8.3 Action	Provide project updates to Wurundjeri Corporation. Project partners must provide updates regarding this project; and the outcomes and evaluation of recommendations provided in this report to Wurundjeri Corporation Elders and community members. Updates should be delivered through engagement with the Policy and Partnerships Unit at Wurundjeri Corporation.
8.4 Action	Hume City Council, Merri-bek City Council and Melbourne Water should increase compliance of stakeholders operating within their jurisdiction in policies and guidelines related to caring for Country, where possible.



Concluding Statement

Merlynston Creek and the cultural landscape it is embedded in is an important part of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country. Waterways and waterscapes hold immense cultural, spiritual, and social significance to Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People. The protection, preservation and revitalisation of waterways and waterscapes is a crucial part of caring for Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country.

The health of Merlynston Creek is intertwined with that of all beings within this cultural landscape, all which have an important role. For Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People, Merlynston Creek flows as a living connection to Ancestors and Country, and the ways they lived in and cared for this landscape, much which can be learnt from. Revitalising Country to reflect the landscape of Merlynston Creek prior to colonisation as much as possible is important to Elders. Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural knowledge and history of Ancestors should be celebrated and shared with the wider community, where appropriate. Such education is important for non-Wurundjeri people living on Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country, allowing for truth-telling and fostering greater respect for Country.

Caring for Country is an immense task that is everyone's responsibility. Within this shared responsibility, it is important that Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People have a real and meaningful voice in decision making around their Country. This includes Merlynston Creek and connected Cultural Landscapes, which remains of immense value to Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People today.

Ngoon Godgin. Thank you.

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REPORT NO:	8.2
REPORT TITLE:	Hume Enforcement and Compliance Policy Review
SOURCE:	Samuel Ferrier, Manager City Safety
DIVISION:	Assets, Operations & Sustainability
FILE NO:	-
POLICY:	-
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE:	SO4.1 A high performing organisation that prioritises continuous improvement, safety and accountability.
ATTACHMENT:	1. <i>Attachment 1 - Hume Enforcement and Compliance Policy 2026</i>

DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No Council officers involved in the preparation of this Report have a general or material interest in relation to the matters for consideration.

1. SUMMARY OF REPORT:

- 1.1. The Hume Enforcement and Compliance Policy outlines Council's approach to exercising its regulatory responsibilities, including how it administers, monitors, and enforces legislation, regulations and other statutory obligations for which it is responsible.
- 1.2. The current Policy was adopted by Council on 9 October 2023. A review of this Policy has since been undertaken to ensure it remains current, reflects legislative and operational requirements, and continues to support a consistent, transparent and risk-based approach to compliance and enforcement activities.
- 1.3. The review identified several amendments to improve clarity, strengthen governance arrangements and to better align the Policy to contemporary regulatory practice. This report presents the revised Policy for Council consideration and adoption.

2. RECOMMENDATION:

That Council:

- 2.1 **Notes amendments made to the Hume Enforcement and Compliance Policy, including the amendments summarised in section 9 of this report.**
- 2.2 **Adopt the revised Hume Enforcement and Compliance Policy as provided in Attachment 1.**

3. LEGISLATIVE POWERS & POLICY CONTEXT:

- 3.1 Council is responsible for administering and enforcing a range of Acts, laws and regulations that help protect public health and safety, community amenity, the environment and the wellbeing of residents.

REPORT NO: 8.2 (cont.)

- 3.2 The Hume Enforcement and Compliance Policy provides an overarching framework for the exercise of these functions. It establishes a consistent, transparent and fair approach to compliance and enforcement activities, ensuring regulatory decisions are proportionate to the level of risk or harm and support positive community outcomes.
- 3.3 The Policy is informed by legislative requirements and regulatory best-practice principles, including education and voluntary compliance wherever possible, while recognising that stronger enforcement action may be required where significant risks, deliberate non-compliance or repeated breaches occur.
- 3.4 The Policy also supports Council's broader governance framework by providing clear guidance for officers and helping ensure regulatory powers are exercised consistently, responsibly and in the public interest.

4. OVERARCHING GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES:

This report supports Council in giving effect to the following Overarching Governance Principles:

- a) Council decisions are to be made and actions taken in accordance with the relevant law.
- i) The transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured.

5. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006

- 5.1 The proposed Hume Compliance and Enforcement Policy has been assessed against the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006.
- 5.2 The Policy seeks to support the fair, transparent and accountable exercise of Council's regulatory powers, and does not create any new enforcement powers or obligations.
- 5.3 It is considered that the Policy is compatible with the Charter and appropriately balances individual rights with Council's statutory responsibility to protect public health, safety, amenity and the environment.

Gender Equality Act 2020

- 5.4 In accordance with the Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic), the updated Policy has been assessed for gender impacts. No material gender impacts have been identified.
- 5.5 The Policy does not introduce regulatory approaches, decision-making frameworks or service arrangements that differentially affect people based on gender or other personal characteristics. Rather, it promotes fair, consistent and evidence-based enforcement practices that are applied irrespective of personal attributes and in accordance with legislative requirements.

6. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 6.1 The proposed Hume Compliance and Enforcement Policy provides an overarching framework to guide the delivery of Council's existing compliance and enforcement functions.
- 6.2 Implementation of the Policy will be undertaken within existing operational resources and does not create any new regulatory functions, services or statutory obligations. Accordingly, adoption of the Policy is not expected to result in any additional financial or resource implications for Council.

REPORT NO: 8.2 (cont.)

7. OPPORTUNITIES AND RISKS:

Opportunities:

- 7.1 The proposed Hume Compliance and Enforcement Policy provides an opportunity to further strengthen Council’s regulatory framework and practice by:
- 7.1.1 Promoting a consistent, transparent and risk-based approach to compliance and enforcement decision-making across Council.
 - 7.1.2 Supporting fair, proportionate and evidence-based regulatory outcomes through the application of contemporary compliance and enforcement principles.
 - 7.1.3 Strengthening governance, oversight and organisational accountability through enhanced monitoring, assurance and reporting arrangements.
 - 7.1.4 Supporting a more intelligence-led approach to regulation through the use of data, information and risk insights to inform regulatory priorities and decision-making.
 - 7.1.5 Enhancing community confidence in Council's regulatory functions through a clear, contemporary and publicly available policy framework.

Risks:

- 7.2 Failure to adopt the revised Hume Compliance and Enforcement Policy may result in:
- 7.2.1 Reduced alignment between Council's regulatory framework and contemporary compliance and enforcement practices.
 - 7.2.2 Missed opportunities to strengthen governance, assurance and organisational oversight of compliance and enforcement activities.
 - 7.2.3 Reduced capacity to utilise intelligence, data and emerging technologies to support effective regulatory decision-making.
 - 7.2.4 Inconsistencies in the application and interpretation of regulatory principles across Council's diverse compliance and enforcement functions.
 - 7.2.5 Reduced visibility of regulatory performance, trends and opportunities for continuous improvement.

8. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

- 8.1 In accordance with Council's Community Engagement Policy, community consultation on the updated Hume Enforcement and Compliance Policy is not proposed as the amendments retain the strategic intent of the existing Policy, and are primarily intended to align the Policy with current legislative obligations, contemporary enforcement practice and Council's operational requirements, leaving limited scope for community influence.
- 8.2 The amendments have been informed through consultation with relevant internal stakeholders responsible for the delivery of Council's compliance and regulatory functions, to ensure the Policy remains practical, effective and reflective of current service delivery.

REPORT NO: 8.2 (cont.)

- 8.3 The updated Policy recognises the critical importance of reports from community members in informing Council's compliance activities, enforcement responses and regulatory priorities. Community engagement will continue to play an important role in the implementation of the Policy through the reporting of issues and concerns, which assist Council in identifying emerging risks, prioritising resources and responding to matters impacting community safety, amenity and wellbeing.

9. DISCUSSION:

Background and Overview

- 9.1 Council exercises a broad range of compliance and enforcement responsibilities under various Acts, regulations and local laws. These functions are critical to protecting public health and safety, maintaining community amenity, safeguarding the environment and supporting the wellbeing of the community.
- 9.2 Effective compliance and enforcement activities require decisions to be made in a manner that is consistent, transparent, proportionate and accountable. To support this, many local governments and regulatory authorities adopt compliance and enforcement policies that establish the principles and expectations that guide the exercise of regulatory powers and the management of non-compliance.
- 9.3 The Hume Compliance and Enforcement Policy provides Council's overarching framework for compliance and enforcement activities. It outlines the principles that guide regulatory decision-making and supports a balanced, risk-based approach that incorporates education, engagement, prevention, deterrence and enforcement as appropriate to the circumstances.
- 9.4 The Policy does not create new regulatory powers, duties or obligations, nor does it prescribe how every individual compliance matter must be addressed. Rather, it supports the lawful, fair and consistent exercise of Council's existing regulatory functions while allowing authorised officers to apply professional judgement, legislative requirements and service-specific procedures when responding to particular circumstances.

Policy Review and Amendments

- 9.5 The current Hume Compliance and Enforcement Policy was adopted by Council on 9 October 2023.
- 9.6 A review of the Policy has been undertaken to ensure it remains contemporary, fit-for-purpose and aligned with current legislative, operational and governance requirements. The review also sought to ensure the Policy reflects contemporary regulatory best practice and supports Council's ongoing commitment to effective, accountable and community-focused regulation.
- 9.7 The review confirmed that the existing Policy remains fundamentally sound and continues to provide an appropriate framework for Council's compliance and enforcement functions. However, several opportunities were identified to strengthen the clarity, application and governance arrangements of the Policy, while improving alignment with contemporary regulatory practices and organisational priorities.
- 9.8 Key amendments incorporated within the revised Policy include:
- 9.8.1 Minor administrative, formatting, wording and grammatical amendments throughout the document to improve readability, clarity and consistency.

REPORT NO: 8.2 (cont.)

- 9.8.2 Removal of references to the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986 and associated regulations from the scope of the Policy, recognising that responsibility for compliance and enforcement activities under this legislation has transitioned to the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA).
- 9.8.3 Inclusion of a new ‘Intelligence-Led’ regulation guiding principle, recognising the importance of using data, intelligence, risk assessments, trends, community information and evidence-based insights to better identify emerging issues, target resources, inform decision-making and improve regulatory outcomes.
- 9.8.4 Expansion of the Policy's provisions relating to monitoring, surveillance and information-gathering activities to acknowledge the increasing role of contemporary technologies and digital tools in supporting compliance and enforcement functions. This amendment reflects the rapid evolution of technology and its capacity to improve efficiency, accuracy, evidence collection, risk identification and service delivery outcomes, while maintaining appropriate legislative, privacy and governance safeguards.
- 9.8.5 Strengthening monitoring, assurance and oversight arrangements to support greater organisational accountability, transparency and continuous improvement. This includes establishing a foundation for enhanced performance monitoring, reporting and governance processes that will assist Council in evaluating regulatory outcomes, identifying emerging trends and risks, and promoting consistent application of the Policy across all compliance and enforcement functions.
- 9.9 Officers are of the view that the proposed amendments build upon the strengths of the existing framework by improving clarity, strengthening governance and oversight arrangements, and enhancing Council's ability to deliver a consistent, accountable and intelligence-led approach to compliance and enforcement across the organisation.

Enactment, Monitoring and Assurance

- 9.10 Subject to Council's adoption, the revised Policy will take effect immediately and replace the existing Hume Compliance and Enforcement Policy adopted on 9 October 2023.
- 9.11 The Policy will be published on Council's website and communicated to relevant Council officers responsible for undertaking compliance and enforcement functions.
- 9.12 Responsibility for implementation, administration and ongoing review of the Policy will rest with the Manager City Safety, with support from relevant service areas that undertake compliance and enforcement activities.
- 9.13 In line with the enhanced monitoring, assurance and oversight arrangements incorporated within the revised Policy, further work will be undertaken to develop a Compliance and Enforcement Assurance Framework. The framework will establish the scope, methodology, performance measures, reporting requirements and governance arrangements necessary to support effective oversight, accountability and continuous improvement across Council's regulatory functions.
- 9.14 To support this work, it is proposed that an internal cross-organisational Compliance and Enforcement Working Group be established. The Working Group will guide the development of the Assurance Framework and associated reporting arrangements, promote a coordinated and consistent organisational approach to regulation, and oversee initiatives that support implementation and embedment of the Policy.

REPORT NO: 8.2 (cont.)

- 9.15 The Working Group will also provide a forum for collaboration, intelligence-sharing and continuous improvement, including the identification of emerging risks and opportunities, review of regulatory trends and performance outcomes, and consideration of initiatives that strengthen Council's compliance and enforcement capability, governance arrangements and regulatory maturity.

10. CONCLUSION

- 10.1 A review of the Hume Compliance and Enforcement Policy has been undertaken to ensure it remains contemporary, effective and aligned with current legislative, operational and governance requirements.
- 10.2 The review confirmed that the existing Policy remains fundamentally sound, while identifying targeted opportunities to strengthen governance, oversight and contemporary regulatory practices. The resulting revised Policy builds upon the strengths of the existing framework and is presented to Council for consideration and adoption.

Council Approved Policy

HUME CITY COUNCIL

Hume City Enforcement And Compliance Policy

Policy reference No:	POL/307
File No:	HCC15/190
Strategic objective:	4.3 A responsive and engaged organisation that works with our community
Adopted by Council:	9 October 2023
Re-Adopted:	TBC
Date for review:	TBC Responsible
officer:	Manager City Safety
Department:	City Safety

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Policy Reference No:	POL/307	Responsible Officer:	Manager City Safety
Date of Re/Adoption:	9 October 2023	Department:	City Safety
Review Date:	October 2025		

1. Introduction

1.1. Overview and purpose

Council plays an important role in promoting and facilitating compliance with the wide range of legislation, local laws, regulations, permits, licences and other regulatory requirements it administers. These regulatory frameworks support the health, safety, wellbeing, environment, amenity and quality of life of the Hume community.

The Hume City Enforcement and Compliance Policy establishes Council's approach to the delivery of compliance and enforcement functions. It provides a framework to guide decision-making by authorised officers and promotes a consistent, transparent, risk-based and proportionate approach to the exercise of regulatory powers and discretion.

The Policy outlines how Council:

- promotes and supports voluntary compliance with regulatory requirements;
- monitors and detects non-compliance through risk-based and intelligence-led activities;
- uses a range of compliance and enforcement tools to achieve regulatory outcomes;
- considers factors such as culpability, harm, risk, community impact and the public interest when determining an appropriate regulatory response;
- communicates and engages with affected persons, businesses and the broader community regarding compliance obligations and enforcement decisions; and,
- ensures compliance and enforcement activities are evidence-based, accountable, proportionate and responsive to community expectations and emerging risks.

This policy has been developed for Hume City community members, Council authorised officers, other Council staff and Councillors. In addition to providing transparency about Council's enforcement and compliance-related approach and decision-making, the policy seeks to ensure that these activities are delivered a way that is consistent, practical, proportional, credible and fair.

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1.2. Scope

This policy is relevant to a broad range of enforcement and compliance activities performed by Council's authorised officers and its authorised contractors for and on behalf of Council within the municipality.

This includes, but is not limited to, the following legislation administered by Council:

- Building Act 1993
- Country Fire Authority Act 1958
- Country Fire Authority Regulations 2014
- Domestic Animals Act 1994
- Domestic Animals Regulations 2015
- Environment Protection Act 1970
- Fire Rescue Victoria Act 1958
- Food Act 1984
- Impounding of Livestock Act 1994
- Infringements Act 2006
- Infringements Regulations 2016
- Local Government Act 1989
- Local Government Act 2020
- Planning and Environment Act 1987
- Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008
- Public Health & Wellbeing Regulations 2009
- Tobacco Act 1987
- Road Safety Act 1986
- Road Safety Road Rules 2017
- Road Management Act 2004
- Summary Offences Act 1966
- All Local Laws of Hume City Council

This policy does not seek to limit the discretion and exercise of official functions of Council's authorised officers. It is also recognised that in some cases, legislation may prescribe specific actions authorised officers are expected to take when responding to non-compliance. Authorised officers are expected to assess the full circumstances and facts of each case, to make decisions based on merits, and in line with any legislative requirements.

2. Guiding principles

Council will undertake its compliance and enforcement work in line with the guiding principles outlined below. These principles seek to ensure Council's compliance and enforcement actions and decisions are lawful, evidence-based, proportionate and accountable.

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2.1. Outcomes-focused

The various Acts, regulations and laws administered by Council seek to protect and deliver broad health, safety and amenity outcomes for Hume City residents, businesses, and visitors.

Council authorised officers have at their disposal a range of tools to ensure accountability and compliance with these Acts, regulations, and laws, described later in this policy. When selecting and using these tools, authorised officers are expected to remain focused on addressing the reported or observed problem, and delivering a desirable outcome.

Council will review and refine its enforcement and compliance focus and approaches on an ongoing basis, based on assessment of risks, evidence, and impacts.

2.2. Risk-based

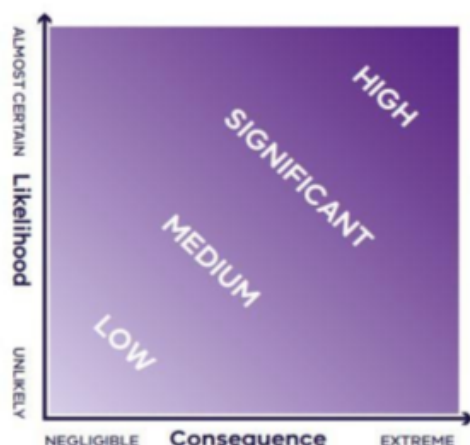
When determining its response to non-compliance, Council will consider:

- The level of risk the non-compliance poses to community health, safety and amenity
- Whether Council is best placed to address the risk or non-compliance; and
- The most effective use of regulatory resources available to Council.

This approach recognises it is not practical or appropriate for Council to take compliance or enforcement action in response to every alleged or suspected breach. Instead, Council's efforts will be directed toward those areas where is the greatest risk to health, safety, and amenity.

Figure 1 below illustrates how Council will assess risk based on both the likelihood of harm, and the consequence.

Figure1 Risk assessment framework



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2.3. Intelligence-led

Council will use information, data and intelligence to inform the planning, prioritisation and delivery of its compliance and enforcement activities. This may include analysis of service requests, complaints, inspection and audit outcomes, operational intelligence, community information, and information shared by partner agencies.

Where lawful, appropriate and consistent with Council's obligations relating to privacy, information management and ethical decision-making, Council may use technology-enabled tools, data analytics and other emerging technologies to assist in identifying trends, risks, patterns and areas of potential non-compliance.

An intelligence-led approach supports Council to identify emerging issues, target resources to areas of greatest risk, harm or community impact, and evaluate the effectiveness of its compliance and enforcement activities in achieving intended outcomes.

2.4. Proportionate and graduated

Council seeks to maximise compliance with the laws for which it is responsible, while reducing harm and delivering positive outcomes for the community.

Council's compliance and enforcement activities will be proportionate to the risk, harm or impact arising from non-compliance. In determining its response, Council will consider the circumstances, behaviours and attitudes of those who are required to comply. The most significant harms, and instances of deliberate or repeated non-compliance, will warrant Council's strongest enforcement responses.

Council will seek to understand whether a person is willing and intending to comply with their legal obligations but requires further information, guidance or support to do so, or whether they are recklessly or deliberately failing to meet those obligations.

Council's compliance and enforcement activities will be informed by its previous interactions and actions. This includes consideration of prior communications, education, warnings, enforcement actions and the compliance history of a person or entity, as well as the nature and history of the issue or matter being addressed.

Figure 2 illustrates Council's graduated and proportionate approach to promoting compliance and determining when and how enforcement action may be taken.

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Figure 2 Factors which influence our regulatory response



2.5. Collaborative

Council is committed to collaborating across internal enforcement departments, with the community, stakeholders and other regulatory agencies to deliver effective, efficient and holistic responses to non-compliance in the Hume City community.

In instances where Council receives a report of non-compliance that falls outside its legislative powers or jurisdiction, attempts will be made to determine the agency best positioned to respond. Where appropriate, Council may refer the reported non-compliance directly to this agency, or to assist the individual who has made the report to direct their enquiry to the correct agency.

Council will use a number of avenues to inform, engage, consult and collaborate with community members and stakeholders. These will include through:

- Providing community members and stakeholders with opportunities to comment on Council's enforcement and compliance activities and approach
- Providing opportunities for community members and stakeholders to meet with Council authorised officers
- Convening or participating in meetings on critical community issues or concerns, or in multi-agency responses/operations
- Providing convenient ways for community members to report non-compliance

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2.6. Transparent

Council is committed to exercising its compliance and enforcement powers in a manner that is transparent, accountable and capable of public scrutiny.

Council will seek to provide clear information about its regulatory approach and the factors that inform its decisions. Compliance and enforcement decisions and actions will be appropriately documented, supported by relevant evidence, and capable of being explained and reviewed.

Council will seek to communicate openly and, where appropriate, keep affected parties informed of compliance and enforcement actions and outcomes, while recognising that privacy, confidentiality, evidentiary and legal obligations may limit the information that can be disclosed in particular circumstances.

2.7. Safety and wellbeing

Council is committed to protecting the safety and wellbeing of its authorised officers. Council will actively support the physical and mental wellbeing of these staff, and will promote a healthy workplace by maintaining safe systems of work.

Investigations and enforcement activities carried out by Council authorised officers can involve considerable risks. Authorised officers are often required to work in a variety of environments, including investigating and enforcing the laws:

- In isolated locations and in areas with difficult terrain;
- Outside of ordinary work hours;
- In situations involving uncontrolled animals;
- In areas with possible health hazards; and
- In situations where they are exposed to aggressive and threatening members of the public who may inflict harm.

Council will provide its staff with appropriate training, equipment, policies and processes to ensure compliance and enforcement activities are undertaken in the safest possible manner. Council will proactively address and pursue instances where authorised officers have been verbally threatened, abused or physically assaulted in the course of their duties.

3. Council's approach to compliance and enforcement

Council will make use of a range of approaches to encourage and ensure compliance with laws for which it is responsible.

Council's resources will be appropriately allocated to support and deliver a mix of:

- Preventative work, such as raising awareness of regulatory requirements and

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how to comply to support compliance with the law

- Monitoring and assessing compliance with regulatory requirements, approvals and directions such as through regular and routine inspections, audits and targeted patrols
- Responding to harmful events as they arise. These activities are outlined in further detail below.

3.1. Supporting compliance with the law

Council acknowledges that most people and entities want to be compliant with the law. Council will deliver a range of activities to support voluntary compliance including:

- providing clear information and education to community members and entities about their laws in place and their requirements;
- providing practical, constructive and specific advice to individuals and/or entities to assist them in achieving compliance with the law; and
- ensuring compliance processes/requirements are as easy as possible for people and entities to achieve (e.g. permits, applications, licenses)

3.2. Monitoring compliance

In addition to responding to and investigating reports of non-compliance or unlawful activity made by members of the public or other agencies, Council uses ongoing monitoring activities to identify non-compliance, and to maintain a credible threat of detection for individuals or agencies subject to laws.

These activities include:

- Surveillance, such as the use of CCTV in identified hot-spots
- Audit and compliance programs, including inspections of businesses and other entities to ensure compliance with standards, permit/licence terms and conditions and codes of practice
- Proactive inspections and patrols

In some instances, legislation requires Council to deliver monitoring activities on a prescribed frequency or basis. Outside of these activities, Council will use a range of information to inform and direct its monitoring activities including community information, service request data and trends, and intelligence and data shared with Council from other agencies.

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Council will utilise monitoring activities and approaches that are lawful, risk-based, proportionate, and no more intrusive than reasonably necessary, having regard to the nature, significance, and likelihood of the risk or harm being addressed.

As technologies evolve, Council may consider the use of additional tools and capabilities to support its compliance and enforcement functions. These may include remote sensing and imaging technologies, geographic information systems, environmental monitoring systems, artificial intelligence, automated analytics, and other data-driven tools.

Any adoption or use of such technologies will be subject to appropriate governance, risk assessment, privacy, information management, and oversight arrangements, and will only occur where lawful, necessary, proportionate, and consistent with a legitimate regulatory purpose.

3.3. Assessing and investigating non-compliance

Council will assess alleged or suspected contraventions of the law, including those reported by the community, other enforcement agencies, and those identified through Council’s own activities. These reports will be assessed by Council to determine the level of risk, and the priority given to the matter.

Anonymous reports of non-compliance or unlawful activity will be recorded and assessed by Council based on the information available. In these instances, it may be more difficult for Council to fully evaluate these reports without the ability to seek further information from the reporting party. This may result in limited response options and/or compliance or enforcement actions taken by Council.

Before commencing a formal investigation, Council may make further preliminary enquiries including (but not limited to) reviewing other intelligence, desktop assessments, field inspections and making enquiries with others to ensure the contravention is allocated to the agency or area best positioned to address the non-compliance.

During an investigation, authorised officers may collect evidence from a range of sources including:

- site inspections (including inspections conducted under a monitoring warrant, or search warrant);
- conducting interviews;
- seeking expert assessments;
- requesting information (including under statutory notices); and,
- Collecting passive and active surveillance data.

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The time taken to investigate will vary depending on the complexity of the issue, including the evidence required. In all cases, Council will maintain records of its assessments, investigations and enforcement actions (if any) so that the information collected can be used to inform future decisions.

3.4. Enforcement tools

Following an investigation, where a breach of the law is identified, an authorised officer will assess whether enforcement action is warranted and, if so, determine the most appropriate and proportionate response. Enforcement action may include remedial measures to address non-compliance and mitigate harm, as well as sanctions where required. A range of tools or enforcement actions are available to authorised officers, including but not limited to:

- Verbal advice and guidance
- Advisory, educational or warning letters
- Voluntary rectification measures or cooperative compliance plans
- Formal notices, directions or orders
- Infringement notices and official warnings
- The imposition, amendment or enforcement of conditions on approvals, permits, licences or other authorisations
- Referrals to other regulators, government agencies or professional bodies
- The suspension, variation, revocation or cancellation of approvals, permits, licences or other authorisations
- Court imposed injunctions or enforceable undertakings or other court orders
- Commencement of legal proceedings, including prosecution.

3.5. Enforcement approach assessment

Before determining an appropriate enforcement tool, authorised officers assess each individual matter using the enforcement matrix tool below.

This matrix synthesises the principles of risk-based assessment, and proportional and graduated responses introduced earlier in this policy, and factors for decision making outlined above.

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Figure 3: Enforcement Response Matrix

Likelihood or consequence of non-compliance	Insignificant No impact to community or environment	Minor May have a minor impact on the wider community or environment. Harm abated and some remedial works required.	Moderate Has a moderate impact on community or environment. Non-compliance for a short duration (days). Harm abated and remedied.	Major Has a major impact on community or environment.
- Repeated non-compliance. - Past enforcement activity or breaches of related law and no remedial works undertaken	Elevated	Elevated	Significant	Significant
- Requirements are apparent (e.g. signage in place) - Previous enforcement activity or breaches of related law	General	Elevated	Elevated	Significant
- Non-compliance of medium duration (weeks). - Harm abated and some remedial works undertaken.	Low	General	Elevated	Significant
- No history of non-compliance - Non-compliance of short duration (days). - Harm abated and remedied.	Low	Low	General	Elevated

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The table below expands further on the above matrix and details enforcement options that may be appropriate given the level of risk, the seriousness of the confirmed breach and the need for deterrence.

Table 1: Enforcement action options

Enforcement response level	Possible enforcement options
Low	No Action / Record Only may be a suitable course of action after preliminary assessment or investigation of the matter where the following circumstances apply: • There is insufficient evidence to substantiate breaches of legislation have occurred or are occurring • The report is from an anonymous source and details provided are insufficient to locate the alleged offending or warrant investigation • The concerns raised are frivolous, vexatious or trivial in nature • The alleged offence is outside Council's area of authority or jurisdiction (referral to other agencies may be appropriate) • Taking action may prejudice other major investigations • A matter falls into the category of civil dispute that is more appropriately dealt with through dispute resolution or other civil remedies (e.g. fence boundary disputes) • A matter has already been rectified or resolved through voluntary compliance Informal Action may be a more suitable course of action when the above circumstances do not apply and the risk level is deemed to be low. Informal action may include the following: • Providing information or advice about requirements and how to be compliant, which may be verbal and/or in writing; • Negotiating with the person to obtain voluntary undertakings or an agreement to adequately address the issues of concern • Issuing a letter for work to be done, an activity to cease, or to obtain required permits instead of more formal action or notices • Issuing a verbal or written warning Informal Low level actions may also be more appropriate than more formal actions where there is a low prospect of prosecution success if the matter were proceeded with.

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General	General Action may include the following: • Issuing a notice to comply or other legal direction to remedy a breach of legislation • Issuing an official warning and possible penalty infringement notice that carries a low level monetary fine • Seizure or impound of items or animals on public land or on private land at the request of the land owner/occupier • Issuing a notice of intention to serve an order or notice under relevant legislation, and then serving an order or notice if appropriate
Elevated	Elevated action may include: • Issuing a penalty infringement notice and/or multiple notices where appropriate that carries a high level monetary fine • Council carrying out the works specified in a notice to comply or other legal direction after a person's failure to comply with the direction (at the cost of the person served with the direction) • Executing warrants or other court issued orders to search for and/or seize things, animals, or prevent access to a premises • Commence formal administrative proceedings (e.g. dangerous or menacing dog declarations) • Formal undertakings / agreements with Council
Significant	Significant action may include: • Seeking an injunction through the courts to prevent future or continuing unlawful activity • Executing court orders to conduct works or remove a person from a premises • Commence prosecution or other legal proceedings for an offence against the relevant Act or Regulation. • Monitoring orders of the court to ensure ongoing compliance

4. Communicating Council's enforcement and compliance activities

Council recognises that timely and effective communication regarding reported offences, compliance matters, and regulatory outcomes is essential to maintaining public trust, supporting voluntary compliance, and demonstrating accountability in the exercise of its regulatory functions.

4.1. Communicating with those who have made a report of non-compliance

Where possible, Council will seek to close the information loop with people or agencies who have made allegations of non-compliance or unlawful activity.

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There are a range of factors that limit the amount of information Council can share about its compliance and enforcement activities with those who have made a report, other interested parties and the community more broadly including:

- Fairness to those being investigated for alleged noncompliance
- In the case of proceedings, respecting the court or tribunal's processes to ensure a fair hearing of the issues in contention
- Legislative restrictions (certain material cannot be disclosed)
- The need to safeguard confidential or sensitive information (such as commercial-in-confidence)
- The potential to jeopardise current or future investigations and court proceedings through the untimely release of information
- How release of information may impinge upon the privacy or safety of others involved (such as complainants, witnesses and suspects).

In most cases, those who have made a report of non-compliance can expect as a minimum:

- An acknowledgement of their report
- An update when their report is 'in progress' – e.g. when the matter has been assigned to an authorised officer for investigation
- An update when an compliance or enforcement action has been determined/taken by Council.

4.2. Public reporting

Council recognises the importance of communicating and sharing information with the community about its enforcement and compliance activities in order to:

- Promote confidence and trust in the community that the Acts, regulations and laws for which Council is responsible are being actively and consistently enforced
- Deter others who may otherwise seek to break laws by demonstrating that there are repercussions for doing so
- Promote compliance by informing the community about standards required by law, and the consequences of failing to meet those standards.

When making decisions about whether to share information about Council's compliance and enforcement activities with the public, officers consider and determine:

- The intent, purpose and benefit of sharing this information; and

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- Legislative, legal process or information privacy considerations

Council may make use of a range of channels to promote its compliance and enforcement activities, including:

- Council's webpage
- Publications
- Social media
- Targeted promotions to hot spot areas/regulated businesses
- Media

5. Role of Councillors in enforcement and compliance

Councillors establish the strategic direction, policy settings and resource framework that guide Council's compliance and enforcement functions. While operational decisions relating to compliance and enforcement are undertaken by authorised Council officers, Councillors play an important role in ensuring that Council's regulatory framework remains effective, responsive and aligned with community expectations.

Councillors may also advocate for legislative, policy and regulatory reforms that support improved community outcomes and the effective administration of laws by local government.

In relation to compliance and enforcement functions, Councillors:

- Adopt Council plans, strategies, policies, budgets and local laws that shape Council's regulatory framework;
- Support the allocation of appropriate resources to enable Council to fulfill its regulatory responsibilities and priorities;
- Consider community expectations, emerging issues and local impacts when establishing Council priorities;
- Receive information, assurance and reporting regarding the performance and effectiveness of Council's compliance and enforcement framework; and,
- Consider strategic opportunities to strengthen Council's regulatory framework and advocacy positions.

5.1. Reporting Non-Compliance or Unlawful Activities to Councillors

Community members may choose to report concerns about potential non-compliance or unlawful activities directly to Councillors.

Where a concern is raised with a Councillor, the Councillor may assist by providing

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information about relevant Council requirements and advising how the matter can be reported to Council for assessment.

All reports of non-compliance or unlawful activities are assessed through Council's established processes. Matters raised through a Councillor will be referred to an authorised officer for consideration and will be assessed in the same manner as any other report. A report will not receive higher priority because it has been raised through a Councillor.

5.2. Councillor involvement in enforcement decisions and outcomes

Enforcement and compliance decisions are made by appropriately authorised Council officers who have been delegated the authority to administer and enforce relevant legislation.

Authorised officers are responsible for assessing reports, determining appropriate actions and making decisions about investigations, remedies and enforcement outcomes. Depending on the circumstances, this may include deciding that no further action is required.

To ensure decisions are fair, consistent and impartial, Councillors do not direct, influence or intervene in enforcement decisions made by authorised officers.

If a community member is dissatisfied with an enforcement response or outcome, they are encouraged to contact Council directly so the matter can be reviewed and responded to through the appropriate channels:

- Email: contactus@hume.vic.gov.au
- Phone: 9205 2200
- Post: Hume City Council, PO Box 119, DALLAS, VIC, 3047

While Councillors may assist residents to connect with the appropriate Council services, communication regarding enforcement matters will generally occur directly between Council officers and the individual who has raised the concern.

6. Appeals and review

6.1. Appeals and review

Where a person does not agree with a decision or an enforcement action taken by Council or its authorised officers, there may be a range of options available for review or appeal in accordance with legislative provisions and/or Council policies and procedures.

These may include:

- Appealing a permit refusal to Council

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- Requesting an internal review of an **infringement**
- Electing for an **infringement** to go to the Magistrates Court to be **determined**
- Appealing through VCAT
- Appealing through the Magistrates' Court
- Making complaint about Council's handling of a matter, or the conduct of an authorised officer to Council or the Victorian Ombudsman

The **appropriate** avenue for having a matter **reviewed** or **appealed** is, in most cases, determined by legislation. Council will provide accurate information about a persons right to seek a review and appeals of an enforcement action taken by Council, and the appropriate process given the circumstances.

7. Performance, Assurance & Oversight

Council recognises the importance of robust performance, assurance and oversight mechanisms to ensure its **regulatory activities** are **undertaken effectively**, consistently and in accordance with legislative and community expectations.

7.1. External Oversight

Council's compliance and enforcement activities may be subject to review, oversight and scrutiny by a range of external bodies, including, but not limited to:

- Media
- Courts and tribunals
- The Victorian Ombudsman
- Integrity agencies
- State regulators
- External auditors
- Other statutory review or oversight bodies.

Council will cooperate with lawful audits, investigations, reviews, appeals and information requests, and will take reasonable steps to address findings, recommendations and identified improvement opportunities where appropriate.

7.2. Internal Controls

In addition to fully cooperating with requests for information and enquiries relating to Council's compliance and enforcement activities, Council will establish, maintain and periodically review an assurance and monitoring framework to support the lawful, consistent, effective and accountable delivery of its compliance and enforcement functions.

The assurance and monitoring framework will be endorsed by Council and will be designed to promote transparency, continuous improvement and public confidence in Council's compliance and enforcement activities.

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The framework will provide for periodic review, oversight and reporting on:

- compliance with relevant legislation, delegations, policies and procedures;
- the quality, consistency and proportionality of compliance and enforcement decisions;
- record keeping, evidence management and decision-making practices;
- service performance, including timeliness and responsiveness;
- emerging risks, trends and systemic issues; and
- the effective and efficient use of compliance and enforcement resources.

Information arising from assurance and monitoring activities will be reported periodically to the Executive Leadership Team and Councillors through established reporting processes.

The outcomes of assurance, monitoring and oversight activities will also be used to improve operational practice, inform training and guidance, support resource planning, and contribute to the ongoing review and continuous improvement of this Policy.

Council will establish and maintain an internal Compliance and Enforcement Working Group to support the implementation and ongoing operation of the assurance and monitoring framework.

The Working Group will facilitate coordination, oversight and continuous improvement by reviewing assurance and performance information, monitoring outcomes and actions arising from the framework, and supporting the identification and implementation of improvements to regulatory processes, practices, systems and service delivery.

7.3. Review of this policy

It is intended that this policy will be reviewed every two years by Council.

Date Adopted	09/10/2023
Date Re-Adopted	TBC
Review Date	TBC

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REPORT NO:	8.3
REPORT TITLE:	Selection - 2026 Community Award Winners
SOURCE:	Holly De Kretser, Manager Governance & Property
DIVISION:	Organisational Performance
FILE NO:	-
POLICY:	-
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE:	SO3.3 An inclusive and socially connected community that celebrates diversity and culture
ATTACHMENT:	1. <i>Selection Panel Recommendation - 2026 Community Awards - Confidential</i>

DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No Council officers involved in the preparation of this Report have a general or material interest in relation to the matters for consideration.

1. SUMMARY OF REPORT:

To present the recommended finalist and 2026 Hume Community Award winners for Council’s endorsement.

2. RECOMMENDATION:

That Council approve the Community Award winners and finalists as presented in Confidential Attachment 1.

3. LEGISLATIVE POWERS & POLICY CONTEXT:

There is no policy which is applicable to the Community Awards. Award terms and conditions are published on Council’s website and were considered by the selection panel during assessment.

4. OVERARCHING GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES:

This report supports Council in giving effect to the following Overarching Governance Principles:

- i) The transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured.

5. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

5.1 CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES ACT 2006

The above rights are not being limited by the recommended action in this report.

5.2 GENDER EQUALITY ACT 2020

This report does not relate to the development or review of a policy, program or service, therefore a Gender Impact Assessment is not required.

REPORT NO: 8.3 (cont.)

6. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 6.1 The 2026 Community Award program is delivered within operational budgets. Award recipients will receive an award to the value of \$250 each.

7. OPPORTUNITIES & RISKS:

- 7.1 The annual Community Awards provide an opportunity for community to recognise the contributions and achievements of Hume residents.
- 7.2 Council is further reviewing the complete profile of award programs delivered ahead of the 2027/28 financial year. This work will inform future community award programs and mitigate risk of duplication and inefficiency across the suite of award programs.

8. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

- 8.1 Nominations for the 2026 Community Awards were sought from the community between 1 and 30 June 2026, with promotion via Council’s website and social media channels including electronic direct mailing (EDMs) and notification to local community groups and schools.

9. DISCUSSION:

- 9.1 The Hume Community Awards have run annually since 2023.
- 9.2 This year, there were 90 nominations received across seven categories including Academic Excellence, Advocacy & Social Justice, Arts & Creative Expression, Community Service excellence, Outstanding Community Leadership, Outstanding Cultural Leadership and Sport & Recreation Achievement.
 - 9.2.1 One nominee was put forward in the category of Arts & Creative Expression however were ineligible as a prior winner.
- 9.3 A selection panel comprising the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and two community members who were 2025 Community Award recipients assessed the applications received and have provided recommendations as per Confidential Attachment 1.
- 9.4 All panel members declared no conflicts of interest in the applications reviewed and recommended to Council.
- 9.5 All nominees have been invited to attend the 2026 Hume Community Award ceremony in late August at which point finalists and winners will be announced.

10. CONCLUSION

The 2026 Hume Community Award winners will be announced and made public on Council’s website in late August 2026 following the award ceremony.

REPORT NO:	8.4
REPORT TITLE:	Response to NOM25/07 - Cr Ally Watson - Communications Campaign Trial for Kalkallo and Mickleham Community Centres
SOURCE:	Sena Kocoglu, Coordinator Digital, Brand and Publishing
DIVISION:	People, Customer & Communication
FILE NO:	HCC25/688
POLICY:	-
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE:	SO4.3 A responsive and engaged organisation that works with our community.
ATTACHMENTS:	Nil

DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No Council officers involved in the preparation of this Report have a general or material interest in relation to the matters for consideration.

1. SUMMARY OF REPORT:

- 1.1 This report responds to Notice of Motion 25/07, which requested a communications trial to improve community awareness and engagement with the Kalkallo and Mickleham community centres.
- 1.2 The four-month trial was delivered from July to October 2025 through existing Council channels, including targeted advertising, translated materials, increased centre-specific content, and a centralised web hub.
- 1.3 The trial improved awareness, visibility and online engagement, including approximately 170,000 organic social media views, 71,000 paid impressions and 1,989 visits to the web hub. However, this did not translate into increased participation or utilisation of the centres.
- 1.4 Further evidence from NOM 25/45, the 2025 Centres and Venues Needs Survey, Voice of Customer data and Councillor workshop feedback, and input from City Lifestyle and Customer Experience has informed this updated assessment. Data indicates that under-utilisation is not primarily caused by lack of awareness. Key factors include programming, timing, access, community demand and activation levels.
- 1.5 It is therefore recommended that communications activity be aligned with a broader activation approach, including the proposed Community Facilities Feasibility Study and Activation Pilot under NOM 25/45, and complementary community capacity building work such as the “Start Strong” initiative.

2. RECOMMENDATION:

That Council:

- 2.1 Notes the outcomes of the NOM 25/07 communications trial, including increased awareness and engagement, and limited translation into participation or utilisation.**
- 2.2 Notes that the evidence indicates under-utilisation of community centres is not primarily a communications issue, but is influenced by programming, timing, access, activation, community demand and growth area maturity.**

REPORT NO: 8.4 (cont.)

- 2.3 Council will receive a report on the outcomes of the Community Facilities Feasibility Study for unstaffed minor facilities, being undertaken from August–September 2026. Subject to Council consideration of those outcomes, an Activation Pilot is proposed for November – January 2026 (dates to be confirmed).
- 2.4 Refers budget of \$6000 to the 2027/28 budget process for a Kalkallo and Mickleham Activation Pilot investing \$1,000 per month for three months at two facilities, to test the impact of dedicated strategic programming on overall participation and facility utilisation.
- 2.5 Notes that expanding standalone communications or social media channels is not expected to materially improve utilisation outcomes unless supported by relevant programming, activation and community-led opportunities.

3. LEGISLATIVE POWERS & POLICY CONTEXT:

- 3.1 This matter is presented in accordance with the Local Government Act 2020. The approach aligns with Council’s strategic objective to provide responsive services and effective communications to diverse and rapidly growing communities.

4. OVERARCHING GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES:

- 4.1 This Report supports Council is giving effect to the following Overarching Governance Principles:
 - a. Council decisions are to be made and actions taken in accordance with the relevant law.
 - b. Priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations.
 - c. The economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks, is to be promoted.
 - d. Innovation and continuous improvement is to be pursued.
 - e. The ongoing financial viability of the Council is to be ensured.
 - f. The transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured.

5. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

- 5.1 CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES ACT 2006
The human rights relevant to this Report are:
 - 1. 1 Participation in public life.

The above rights are not being limited by the recommended action in this Report.
- 5.2 GENDER EQUALITY ACT 2020

This Report does not relate to a development or review of a policy, program or service; therefore, a Gender Impact Assessment was not required.

6. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 6.1 The NOM 25/07 communications trial was delivered within existing operational budgets. Campaign costs totalled \$2,862, with approximately 124 staff hours contributed across seven staff members as part of normal operations.
- 6.2 Future activation work is proposed to align with NOM25/45. Council will receive a report on the outcomes of the Community Facilities Feasibility Study for unstaffed minor facilities, scheduled for August-September 2026. Subject to Council's

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consideration of those outcomes, an Activation Pilot is proposed for November 2026 to January 2027 (dates to be confirmed) at the two most underutilised unstaffed facilities, with a further report to be presented to Council at the conclusion of the pilot.

- 6.3 An activation Pilot in Kalkallo and Mickleham Activation is proposed, which would see \$1,000 per month for three months at two facilities, to test the impact of strategic programming on overall participation and facility utilisation. Total budget of \$6000 would be referred to the 2027/28 budget for consideration.
- 6.4 No additional funding is requested for communications channels as outlined in report recommendations. The recommended approach reduces financial and resourcing risk by avoiding the creation of additional standalone communications channels without evidence that they would improve utilisation.

7. OPPORTUNITIES & RISKS:

7.1 OPPORTUNITIES

- 7.1.1 The key opportunity is to shift from an awareness-led response to a coordinated activation model that integrates communications, programming, community capacity building and facility use.
- 7.1.2 Aligning NOM 25/07 with NOM 25/45 provides a more coherent pathway to test what improves participation, including modest programming investment, activity-based communications, community-led use and third-party delivery models.
- 7.1.3 The “Start Strong” initiative provides a practical foundation for supporting local groups to form, seek funding and activate local facilities.

7.2 RISKS

- 7.2.1 Further investment in communications channels alone is unlikely to improve utilisation if there are not relevant programs, activities or community-led opportunities to promote.
- 7.2.2 Activation efforts may have limited impact without some level of programming investment, and delivery will require coordination across multiple service areas.
- 7.2.3 In growth areas such as Kalkallo and Mickleham, utilisation may also be influenced by population maturity and the timing of infrastructure delivery, reinforcing the need for a staged and evidence-based approach.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

- 8.1 The recommended approach is expected to have a neutral to positive environmental impact by prioritising digital communications and reducing reliance on printed materials.
- 8.2 Improving access to local programs, facilities and support networks also contributes to community resilience by strengthening local connection and participation.

9. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- 9.1 Community engagement for this trial was undertaken in line with *the Local Government Act 2020* and Council’s *Community Engagement Policy*.
- 9.2 The trial aimed to make it easier for residents to understand what is available at the Kalkallo and Mickleham North and South community centres, how to access the centres and how to participate in programs and activities.

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- 9.3 Engagement was delivered through existing Council channels, including corporate social media, targeted advertising, translated materials, school-based outreach and a centralised web hub.
- 9.4 The campaign achieved strong online reach and engagement, including approximately 170,000 organic social media views, 71,000 paid impressions and 1,989 visits to the web hub.
- 9.5 While these results show improved awareness and discoverability, they did not result in increased participation or attendance. Broader engagement findings from the 2025 Centres and Venues Needs Survey support this conclusion, indicating that program relevance, timing and competing priorities are more significant barriers than awareness alone.
- 9.6 These findings have informed the recommended shift toward a coordinated activation approach that links communications to specific programs, activities and community-led opportunities.

10. DISCUSSION:

- 10.1 NOM 25/07 requested a communications trial to improve awareness and engagement with the Kalkallo and Mickleham community centres.
- 10.2 The trial achieved its communications objective by increasing visibility, improving access to information and generating strong online engagement. However, this did not translate into increased participation or utilisation.
- 10.3 This is the central finding of the trial: awareness is important, but it is not the primary driver of centre use.
- 10.4 Broader evidence, including the 2025 Centres and Venues Needs Survey, Voice of Customer data, Councillor workshop feedback and work associated with NOM 25/45, confirms that utilisation is influenced by programming, timing, access, activation levels, community demand and growth area maturity.
- 10.5 Expanding standalone communications or social media channels is therefore unlikely to materially improve utilisation unless there are relevant programs, activities or community-led opportunities to promote.
- 10.6 The recommended response is to align communications with a broader activation approach informed by the outcomes of the Community Facilities Feasibility Study and Activation Pilot under NOM 25/45.
- 10.7 The pilot will focus on the municipality's most underutilised unstaffed facilities. Any future consideration of additional facilities, including those in Kalkallo and Mickleham, would be informed by the findings and learnings of that work.
- 10.8 Any future consideration of activation initiatives for Kalkallo and Mickleham community centres should be informed by the outcomes and learnings of the Community Facilities Activation Pilot being undertaken as part of NOM 25/45 for the municipality's most underutilised unstaffed facilities. These findings will help inform future approaches to improving participation and utilisation across the broader community facility network.
- 10.9 This approach aligns with the "Start Strong" pilot program being delivered in growth area community facilities to support community connection and establish community groups, access services and funding opportunities.
- 10.10 Outcomes would be monitored and reported back to Council to inform future decisions.

REPORT NO: 8.4 (cont.)

11. CONCLUSION

- 11.1 The NOM 25/07 communications trial successfully improved awareness, visibility and online engagement for the Kalkallo and Mickleham community centres.
- 11.2 However, it did not result in increased participation or utilisation, confirming that lower utilisation is not primarily a communications issue.
- 11.3 Further evidence is proposed to be gathered through the Community Facilities Activation Pilot being undertaken as part of NOM 25/45 for the municipality's most underutilised unstaffed facilities. The outcomes and learnings from that work will help inform future approaches to improving participation and utilisation across the broader community facility network, including Kalkallo and Mickleham.

REPORT NO:	8.5
REPORT TITLE:	Response to NOM25/09 – Cr Carly Moore - Craigieburn Scouts Relocation - Preferred Site Recommendation
SOURCE:	Luke Maguire, Coordinator Sport and Recreation
DIVISION:	City Services & Living
FILE NO:	-
POLICY:	-
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE:	SO3.2 A healthy community with access to opportunities
ATTACHMENT:	1. <i>Attachment 1 - Highlander Drive, Identified Site Location</i>

DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No Council officers involved in the preparation of this Report have a general or material interest in relation to the matters for consideration.

1. SUMMARY OF REPORT:

- 1.1 This report responds to NOM25/09 - Cr Carly Moore - Potential sites for a new scout facility in Craigieburn):

That Council directs officers to work with Scouts Victoria and Craigieburn Scouts to explore potential sites for a new scout facility.

- 1.2 Following investigation into this Notice of Motion, Officers have identified the vacant land adjacent to the Highlander Drive Community Centre, located at 141 Highlander Drive, Craigieburn, as the preferred location for the relocation of the 1st Craigieburn Scout Group.
- 1.3 Officers now seek authorisation from Council to commence negotiations with Scouts Victoria regarding this site.

2. RECOMMENDATION:

That Council:

- 2.1 **Endorse the vacant land adjacent to the Highlander Drive Community Centre, 141 Highlander Drive, Craigieburn (Attachment 1), as the preferred site for the relocation of the 1st Craigieburn Scout Group facility.**
- 2.2 **Authorise Officers to commence negotiations with Scouts Victoria and the 1st Craigieburn Scout Group, with a view to entering a land lease agreement for the use and occupation of the site at 141 Highlander Drive, Craigieburn.**
- 2.3 **Note that should these negotiations be successful, Officers will;**
- 2.3.1 **Provide a future report relating to the future use of the existing Scout Hall site at 22 Hilton Street, Craigieburn.**
- 2.3.2 **Any lease agreement will be subject to all statutory and Council approval requirements.**

REPORT NO: 8.5 (cont.)

3. LEGISLATIVE POWERS & POLICY CONTEXT:

- 3.1 Council has the power to manage and lease Council-owned land in accordance with the Local Government Act 2020 (Vic). Any future lease arrangement will be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the Act and Council's property management processes.

4. OVERARCHING GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES:

- 4.1 This report supports Council in giving effect to the following Overarching Governance Principles:
- a) Council decisions are to be made and actions taken in accordance with the relevant law.
 - b) Priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations.

5. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

- 5.1 Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006

5.1.1 The human rights relevant to this report are:

- Protection and recognition of families and children.
- Freedom of association.
- Participation in community life.

- 5.2 The above rights are not being limited by the recommended action in this report.

5.3 GENDER EQUALITY ACT 2020

This report does not relate to the development or review of a policy, program or service, therefore a Gender Impact Assessment is not required.

6. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 6.1 There are no immediate financial implications for Council associated with the recommendations of this report.
- 6.2 Scouts Victoria will be responsible for the design, funding and construction of any future Scout facility on the Highlander Drive site.
- 6.2.1 Scouts Victoria has indicated an intention to pursue external funding opportunities to support delivery of the project.
- 6.2.2 Officers propose including a sunset clause within future lease negotiations to ensure delivery of the facility within an agreed timeframe.
- 6.3 Pending negotiations, future costs to Council may include legal, valuation, survey and lease establishment expenses associated with finalising a land lease agreement.
- 6.4 Any staff resources required to negotiate and administer a future lease arrangement can be accommodated within existing operational resources.
- 6.5 Any costs relating to the future use of the existing Scout Hall site at 22 Hilton Street, Craigieburn will be identified at the time that the future report, identified in Recommendation 2.3.1, is presented to Council.

7. OPPORTUNITIES & RISKS:

REPORT NO: 8.5 (cont.)

- 7.1 Officers have considered the opportunities and risks associated with the proposed relocation of the Craigieburn Scout Facility, noting the following opportunities:
- 7.1.1 The proposed site supports the delivery of a fit-for-purpose facility for Scouts Victoria and the 1st Craigieburn Scout Group.
 - 7.1.2 The site would facilitate shared use by community groups and Council programs, improving utilisation of community infrastructure and increasing access to meeting and activity spaces
 - 7.1.3 The site improves visibility, accessibility and participation opportunities for young people, whilst also enhancing activation of the Highlander Drive Community Centre precinct through co-location of complementary community uses.
- 7.2 The following risks relating to the proposal have been identified, however sufficient mitigations are in place that minimise these risks:
- 7.2.1 The allocation of the site may reduce Council's future flexibility to utilise the land for community infrastructure expansion or other community purposes. However, it is noted that the site has been assessed as surplus to current service delivery requirements, with no funded plans identified for future expansion of the Highlander Drive Community Centre. Furthermore, lease negotiations will ensure Council retains appropriate protections and controls over the land, including permitted use provisions and conditions relating to future community outcomes. Encouragingly, the proposed use is consistent with the broader community purpose of the precinct and supports activation of an existing community hub.
 - 7.2.2 Future lease negotiations may identify matters requiring further consideration prior to final agreement. This risk is mitigated as Officers will undertake detailed lease negotiations with Scouts Victoria and return to Council with proposed lease terms for consideration prior to execution. This will include procuring specialist legal and property advice to ensure Council's interests are protected. Furthermore, any lease agreement will include appropriate governance, maintenance, insurance, construction and performance obligations.
 - 7.2.3 There may be unexpected traffic and parking impacts identified through internal consultation. This risk is mitigated as traffic and parking requirements will be assessed during the detailed design and planning approval stages. Any identified impacts can be addressed through site planning, operational management measures and, if required, future minor infrastructure improvements. Internal feedback indicated that any traffic and parking concerns are manageable and do not preclude the site's suitability for the proposed use.
 - 7.2.4 This project is reliant on Scouts Victoria funding the building development. There is a risk that they may be unsuccessful in obtaining external grant funding or may experience funding delays, resulting in the proposed Scout Hall not being delivered within the anticipated timeframe. This could lead to the preferred site remaining undeveloped for an extended period and delay the community benefits associated with the relocation. This risk will be mitigated as any future land lease agreement will include a sunset clause requiring commencement and/or completion of construction within an agreed timeframe. Furthermore, lease negotiations will ensure Council retains the ability to review alternative uses for the land should the project not proceed within the agreed period.
- 7.3 Climate Change

REPORT NO: 8.5 (cont.)

- 7.3.1 The proposal concerns the allocation of an existing parcel of community land and does not involve Council-funded construction works at this stage.
- 7.3.2 Any future building design and development undertaken by Scouts Victoria will be subject to statutory planning, building regulations and contemporary design requirements, including consideration of climate resilience, energy efficiency and environmental sustainability measures where applicable.
- 7.3.3 The proposal is not considered to introduce any significant climate-related risks to Council at the current decision-making stage.

8. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

- 8.1 Consultation undertaken to date has been consistent with the intent of Council's Community Engagement Principles and has focused on key stakeholders directly affected by the proposal.
- 8.2 Consultation has included:
 - 8.2.1 Engagement with Scouts Victoria and the 1st Craigieburn Scout Group to understand facility requirements and relocation objectives.
 - 8.2.2 Internal referral and assessment involving relevant Council service areas to identify site suitability, servicing requirements and operational considerations. This included preliminary planning assessment regarding the suitability of the Highlander Drive site.
 - (a) This process identified broad support for the Highlander Drive Community Centre location, subject to further consideration of traffic and parking matters. Planning advice confirmed the site's suitability for the proposed use.
 - 8.2.3 Should Council endorse the recommendation, further engagement will occur with Scouts Victoria and the 1st Craigieburn Scout Group during lease negotiations and project development phases.

9. DISCUSSION:

- 9.1 Notice of Motion 25/09 directed Officers to consult with Scouts Victoria and the 1st Craigieburn Scout Group to investigate alternative locations within Craigieburn for a new Scout facility as the existing Scout Hall, located at 22 Hilton Street, Craigieburn is considered no longer fit-for-purpose due to limitations associated with site access, visibility and functionality.
- 9.2 Scouts Victoria expressed interest in relocating to a more suitable site and constructing a new facility through a land lease arrangement with Council.
- 9.3 Officers investigated four potential sites and undertook an assessment against criteria including accessibility, site size, visibility, servicing requirements, co-location opportunities and strategic alignment.
- 9.4 The four sites assessed were:
 - 9.4.1 Craigieburn Bicentennial Park. This site was not recommended as it is constrained by significant drainage and infrastructure costs.
 - 9.4.2 Craigieburn Sports Stadium Precinct. This site is strategically located but lacking a clearly defined development site and requiring further investigation.
 - 9.4.3 Highlander Drive Community Centre. This is the preferred site, with sufficient vacant land adjacent to an established community facility with strong accessibility and limited constraints.

REPORT NO: 8.5 (cont.)

- 9.4.4 Banbury Crescent. This site was not recommended as it is constrained by drainage easements, residential interfaces and reduced visibility.
- 9.5 Following assessment, the Highlander Drive Community Centre site emerged as the preferred option due to:
 - 9.5.1 Suitably sized vacant land.
 - 9.5.2 Opportunity for co-location with existing community infrastructure.
 - 9.5.3 Strong community accessibility and visibility.
 - 9.5.4 Limited enabling works relative to alternative sites.
 - 9.5.5 Alignment with Council's objective of maximising community benefit from public assets.
- 9.6 Officers acknowledge that allocating the land for a dedicated Scout facility may limit future expansion opportunities at the Highlander Drive site. However, the land is currently undeveloped, no funded expansion plans exist, and the proposed use is consistent with the broader community purpose of the precinct.
- 9.7 A future report will be presented to Council outlining the outcomes of lease negotiations, including potential future opportunities for the existing site at Hilton Street (in accordance with Council's Strategic Property Framework).

10. CONCLUSION

- 10.1 Following a detailed assessment of potential relocation sites for the 1st Craigieburn Scout Group, the vacant land adjacent to the Highlander Drive Community Centre has been identified as the recommended location. The site provides appropriate land area, accessibility, visibility and co-location opportunities while requiring relatively limited enabling works.
- 10.2 Endorsement of the recommendations contained in this report will enable Officers to commence formal lease negotiations with Scouts Victoria and progress planning for a new Scout facility that supports youth participation and delivers long-term community benefit for the Craigieburn and Hume community.

Attachment 1: Supported Site Location

Address: 141 Highlander Drive (Part) Adjacent to Highlander Community Centre

Area: 1492m²

Zoning: Urban Growth Zone (UGZ)



REPORT NO:	8.6
REPORT TITLE:	Contract 30 25 3665 - Mailing Services (MAV-MS8014-25)
SOURCE:	Shane Bartholomew, Technology and Digital Solutions Lead
DIVISION:	Organisational Performance
FILE NO:	30/25/3665
POLICY:	POL189
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE:	SO4.3 A responsive and engaged organisation that works with our community.
ATTACHMENTS:	1. <i>Confidential Attachment 1 - 30 25 3665 - Tender Evaluation Report - Confidential</i> 2. <i>Confidential Attachment 2 - MAV-MS8014-25 Tender Recommendation Report - Confidential</i> 3. <i>Confidential Attachment 3 - 30 25 3665 – Digital Mail Assessment - Confidential</i> 4. <i>Confidential Attachment 4 - 30 25 3665 - Awarded Schedule of Rates - Confidential</i> 5. <i>Confidential Attachment 5 - 30 25 3665 - Directors and Officeholders - Confidential</i> 6. <i>Confidential Attachment 6 - 30 25 3665 - Contract Departures - Confidential</i>

DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No Council officers involved in the preparation of this report have a general or material interest in relation to the matters for consideration.

1. SUMMARY OF REPORT:

- 1.1 Tenders have been called by the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) for Contract No. MAV-MS8014-25 Mailing Services.
- 1.2 This report recommends that the tender submissions from Bing Technologies Pty Ltd T/A Bing, Cannon Business Services ANZ T/A Cannon Business Services Australia Pty Ltd, Lane Bros. Printers Pty Ltd T/A Lane Communications, Australian Postal Corporation and The Trustee for Ambient Distribution Trust T/A Mr Moto for Contract No. MAV-MS8014-25 Mailing Services. be accepted by Council.
- 1.3 Pursuant to the Instrument of Delegation to the Chief Executive Officer, the value of this contract exceeds their financial limit, and a Council motion is now required to accept the recommendation to award the contract.

2. RECOMMENDATION:

That Council

- 2.1 **Resolves to access and utilise the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) contract number MAV-MS8014-25 for Mailing Services.**
- 2.2 **Accepts the Tender Evaluation Report and Recommendations made by the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) to utilise the awarded suppliers for the following categories:**

REPORT NO: 8.6 (cont.)

Category 1 – Direct Mail Services

- a) Bing Technologies Pty Ltd T/A Bing
- b) Cannon Business Services ANZ T/A Cannon Business Services Australia Pty Ltd
- c) Lane Bros. Printers Pty Ltd T/A Lane Communications

Category 2 – Unaddressed Mail/Mail Delivery

- a) Australian Postal Corporation
- b) Cannon Business Services ANZ T/A Cannon Business Services Australia Pty Ltd
- c) The Trustee for Ambient Distribution Trust T/A Mr Moto

- 2.3 Accepts the attached tendered schedule of rates (incl. GST).
- 2.4 Authorises CPI adjustments to occur in accordance with the conditions of contract.
- 2.5 Accepts the contract for a term of 3-years commencing 1 August 2025 with extension options of 2 x 3-year terms.
- 2.6 Delegates to the Director Organisational Performance the authority to finalise and execute the contract documentation.
- 2.7 Delegates to the Director Organisational Performance the powers to review and exercise the extension options. The use of this authority is to be reported to Council within 3 months.

3. LEGISLATIVE POWERS & POLICY CONTEXT:

- 3.1 Local Government Act 2020 S108(1) requires that a Council must prepare and adopt a Procurement Policy which specifies the principles, processes and procedures applying in respect of the purchase of goods and services by the Council, including for the carrying out of works.
- 3.2 Local Government Act 2020 S109(1) requires that a Council must comply with its Procurement Policy before entering a contract for the purchase of goods or services or the carrying out of works.
- 3.3 The Council adopted a Procurement Policy (ref. POL189) on 15 November 2021 which is effective from 1 December 2021. Under this Policy, procurement of goods, services or works valued at \$300,000 or greater shall be undertaken by a tender process.

4. OVERARCHING GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES:

This report supports Council in giving effect to the following Overarching Governance Principles:

- e) Innovation and continuous improvement is to be pursued.

5. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

5.1 CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES ACT 2006

The *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* sets out the basic rights and responsibilities of all people in Victoria. It places obligations on public authorities by requiring them to act compatibly with human rights and to give proper consideration to human rights when making decisions.

REPORT NO: 8.6 (cont.)

The obligation to give proper consideration to, and act compatibly with, human rights does not apply where:

- a) under another law you could not reasonably have acted differently or made a different decision. For example, where you are giving effect to another statutory provision that is incompatible with a human right;
- b) the act or decision is of a private nature; or
- c) the act or decision would impede or prevent a religious body from acting in conformity with religious doctrines, beliefs or principles.

The above rights are not being limited by the recommended action in this report.

5.2 GENDER EQUALITY ACT 2020

Under the *Gender Equality Act 2020* a Gender Impact Assessment is required to be completed in relation to the development or review of a policy, program or service, where it has a direct and significant impact on the public.

This section needs to be completed where the report relates to a policy, program or service (including infrastructure projects) of Council. Please see the Gender Impact Assessment Guidelines and Templates on Hume Quarters for more information.

This report does not relate to the development or review of a policy, program or service; therefore a Gender Impact Assessment is not required.

6. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 6.1 This is a schedule of rates contract; therefore, Officers undertook a cost modelling exercise to understand the total costs over contract term, including extension options.
- 6.2 Services will be used throughout the life of the contract, as required, to meet Council's obligations.
- 6.3 Through opting in to access this contract, Council will be able to source services at competitive rates from pre-qualified and experienced suppliers.
- 6.4 These services are provided both on a routine and an as required basis. It is anticipated Council will exceed \$1,000,000 of expenditure over the life of the contract.
- 6.5 The budget for these purchases will be funded through operational budgets.

7. COLLABORATIVE PROCUREMENT

- 7.1 In Accordance with section 108(3c) of the Act, Council will consider collaboration with other councils and public bodies or utilise Collaborative Procurement Arrangements, when procuring goods, services and works in order to take advantage of economies of scale.
- 7.2 The evaluation panel considered any opportunities for collaborative procurement in relation to this procurement process undertaken by Council, including the nature of those opportunities. The public bodies with which they are available includes;
 - Municipal Association of Victoria – Mailing Services
 - Procurement Australia – Printing Services
 - State Purchase Contract – Mail and Delivery Services
- 7.3 Council is pursuing the Municipal Association of Victoria contract as it includes both Direct Mail Services and Unaddressed Mail/Mail Delivery.

REPORT NO: 8.6 (cont.)

8. OPPORTUNITIES & RISKS:

8.1 Opportunities

Bing Technologies provide a virtual faxing service which supports the efficient delivery of Maternal and Child Health and Public Health services by enabling referrals to be sent directly to Northern Health while staff are working in the community. This reduces administrative delays, improves service responsiveness and supports timely access to health services for residents. The solution also promotes flexible and mobile service delivery by removing reliance on office-based equipment.

The contract has been established through a Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) procurement process that incorporated strong social and sustainable procurement outcomes. This provides Council with an opportunity to support suppliers that demonstrate environmental sustainability, ethical supply chain practices, local economic participation and positive social outcomes, including support for First Nations communities. Ongoing reporting requirements will also assist Council in monitoring supplier performance against sustainability and social responsibility objectives.

8.2 Risks

If the virtual faxing service is not maintained, Council's health professionals may experience delays in sending referrals, as Northern Health does not currently accept referrals via email. This could reduce operational efficiency, increase administrative burden and impact the timeliness of services provided to clients.

As with any outsourced technology service, there is a risk of service disruption or supplier performance issues affecting business continuity. These risks are mitigated through the established contractual arrangements and performance management provisions available under the MAV panel agreement.

There is also a risk that sustainability, social procurement or ethical supply chain commitments may not be achieved if supplier performance is not effectively monitored. The inclusion of reporting and compliance requirements within the contract provides Council with mechanisms to oversee delivery against these commitments and address any issues that arise.

9. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

Community consultation or engagement is not required in relation to this Report.

10. DISCUSSION:

10.1 Technical Specification

- **Category One – Direct Mail Services**

Provision of a seamless direct mail solution for processing, printing and distribution of physical and electronic correspondence to targeted audiences. The solution must provide end users (Customers) the ability to print and post documents from individual computers, as well as delivering documents via SMS, email, or other digital channels.

- **Category Two – Unaddressed Mail/Mail Delivery Services**

Provision of reliable and timely delivery services throughout all regions of Victoria, ensuring competitive rates for local government Customers.

REPORT NO: 8.6 (cont.)

10.2 Background

- 10.2.1 The aim of this tender process was to engage Suppliers to (where possible):
- a) Establish an agreement that will deliver value for money through a combined spend arrangement for Councils located in Victoria
 - b) Ensure access to reliable, inclusive communication solutions, that support community engagement and public transparency principles in alignment with the *Local Government Act 2020* (Vic) and any relevant regulations
 - c) Provide access to competitive pricing established through market benchmarking, ensuring value for money based on the requirements of the participant Councils
 - d) Provide a streamlined, end-to end approach for the management of Mailing Services
- 10.2.2 Hume City Council issues approximately 75,000 direct mail notifications each year, including rates notices, fire prevention notices and other important correspondence. Historically, the printing, collating and preparation of around 500 letters could require more than a full day of manual effort by one or more staff members.
- 10.2.3 The adoption of direct mail services has significantly streamlined this process, reducing preparation time from more than a day to just a matter of minutes. This has improved operational efficiency, reduced administrative overheads and enabled staff to focus on higher-value activities that support service delivery to the community.

10.3 Tender Details

MAV Procurement on behalf of Councils in Victoria, issued a Request for Tender (RFT) for Mailing Services on 7 April 2025. Tenders closed at 5 pm AEST on 1 May 2025. At the closing time, eight (8) on time tenders were received.

The tender was advertised via Tenderlink as of 7 April 2025 and was open for a period of 24 days up until the closing date 1 May 2025, 5 pm AEST.

The RFT sought the provision of a Standing Offer for the required services for a period of three (3) years commencing 1 August 2025, with an option to extend the Standing Offer for two (2) additional periods of three (3) years.

10.4 Tender Evaluation Panel

The tender evaluation panel (TEP) consisted of a combination of 5 MAV and Victorian Council representatives and are contained within the confidential report.

All tender evaluation panel members completed the required conflict of interest declarations, with no conflicts declared and committing to maintaining the confidentiality of tender information.

10.5 Selection Criteria

The evaluation involved scoring of conforming tenders according to the following pre-determined criteria:

10.5.1 Compliance Selection Criteria:

Compliance criteria included:

- Conditions for Participation Evaluation
 - The Conditions for Participation are minimum standards that Tenderers must meet in order to participate in this procurement process
- Compliance Evaluation
 - Non-Compliance Statement – Conditions of Tender

REPORT NO: 8.6 (cont.)

- Non-Compliance Statement – RFT Specifications
- Non-Compliance Statement – Standing Offer Deed

10.5.2 Qualitative Selection Criteria:

Selection criteria	Weighting
Ability to meet the specifications	22%
Capability and capacity	22%
Customer Service and Performance Management	20%
Organisational expertise (case studies and referees)	16%
Social & sustainable procurement	20%

10.6 Tender Evaluation Process

Only compliant tenders received full scoring, while those identified as non-compliant were excluded from further evaluation. Any instances of non-compliance are explained in the confidential attachment.

10.7 Recommendation

- 10.7.1 The final weighted score for each conforming tenderer is included in the confidential attachment.

Tenderer	Conforming
Tenderer A Bing Technologies (recommended)	Yes
Tenderer B Cannon (recommended)	Yes
Tenderer C Mr Moto (recommended)	Yes
Tenderer D Lane Bros (recommended)	Yes
Tenderer E Australia Post (recommended)	Yes
Tenderer F	Yes
Tenderer G	Yes
Tenderer H	No

- 10.7.2 Following a comprehensive commercial compliance assessment, qualitative evaluation, and pricing review, five (5) tenderers exceeded the threshold and were recommended as preferred panel Suppliers, subject to the negotiation of terms.
- 10.7.3 As part of MAV’s due diligence, creditor checks were completed for all recommended Suppliers. For new suppliers to the panel, reference checks were also conducted and system demonstrations undertaken to confirm the suitability of proposed solutions.
- 10.7.4 Refer to the confidential attachment for further details of the evaluation of all tenders.
- 10.7.5 Council is able to engage directly with their choice of the recommended
- 10.7.6 Suppliers on the panel or can raise a Request for Quotation (RFQ) based on their particular requirements.
- 10.7.7 Council does not guarantee any works to the recommended suppliers through this contract.

REPORT NO: 8.6 (cont.)

11. CONCLUSION

- 11.1 The process described in this report is in accordance with the Council's Procurement Policy, the relevant provision of the Local Government Act 2020 – section 108 (Procurement Policy) and section 109 (Procurement).
- 11.2 the MAV process complied with relevant procurement requirements, provides value for money and enables Council to access suitably qualified suppliers under a compliant collaborative procurement arrangement.
- 11.3 Recommend the access and utilisation of the 5 organisations as preferred supplier under the MAV Mailing Services panel.

REPORT NO:	9.1
REPORT TITLE:	NOM26/22 - Cr Karen Sherry - Data Centres
SOURCE:	Ruth Robles McColl, Manager Strategic Projects & Places
DIVISION:	Planning, Places & Delivery
FILE NO:	HCC26/688
POLICY:	-
ATTACHMENTS:	Nil

I hereby request that pursuant to Council's Governance Rules and Code of Conduct for Councillors that the following motion be included in the Agenda of the next Council Meeting.

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Data centres are an emerging and increasingly significant form of infrastructure across metropolitan Melbourne, regional Victoria and in other Australian states. In Hume we have several with another proposed in Campbellfield on the former Ford factory site. Community interest in their potential impacts, including energy use, water consumption, traffic, employment outcomes and planning controls, has grown as more facilities have been proposed and developed.

As the tier of government responsible for long-term land-use planning, climate resilience, and community wellbeing, we are deeply concerned that current regulatory settings are not keeping pace with the scale and intensity of this emerging industry and development typology.

Victoria's planning framework contains no clear definitions, mandatory sustainability standards specific to data centres, and without them, the data centre industry's growth risks undoing progress already made in reducing the built environment's carbon footprint. Many applications are fast-tracked through the Development Facilitation Program (DFP). Local government and communities are left unable to weigh the merits of siting or design of these facilities - yet they carry long-term social, infrastructure and environmental consequences of decisions not made locally.

Federally, the Senate's Environment and Communications References Committee was tasked on 13 May 2026 to investigate artificial intelligence and data centres in Australia. The inquiry responds to growing public concern over the rapid expansion of energy-intensive AI infrastructure and the perceived lack of federal oversight. It is scheduled to report by 16 November 2026, with submissions from individuals and organisations accepted until 26 June 2026.

The NSW state government is currently undertaking a similar parliamentary inquiry. We think it is time to halt the establishment and expansion of data centres in Hume and in neighbouring municipalities and to await broad community consultation through the state parliamentary process and regulatory adjustment.

2. RECOMMENDATION:

That Council:

2.1 Writes to the Premier of Victoria, the Minister for Planning, the Minister for Artificial Intelligence and Digital Economy, and the Minister for Jobs, Industry and Advanced Manufacturing, requesting that the Victorian Government:

2.1.1 Introduce a moratorium on approvals for new data centres and expansions of existing data centres until a Victorian Parliamentary Joint

REPORT NO: 9.1 (cont.)

Select Committee Inquiry into Data Centres has been completed. The Inquiry should include comprehensive public hearings and invite evidence from scientific experts, community organisations, Traditional Owners, local residents, local governments, industry representatives and relevant government agencies to consider the cumulative environmental, social and economic impacts of data centres and recommend an appropriate regulatory framework and other initiatives identified through the inquiry process.

- 2.1.2 Actively participate in the Australian Government's development of national standards, regulatory frameworks and policy settings relating to artificial intelligence and associated digital infrastructure, ensuring alignment between national and Victorian regulatory responses.
- 2.1.3 Establish a joint State and Local Government Taskforce to develop planning, environmental and infrastructure policy responses for the siting and operation of data centres, including the preparation of planning scheme amendments for public consultation and implementation through regulation and/or legislation following completion of the proposed Parliamentary Inquiry.
- 2.1.4 Ensure the work of the Taskforce includes consideration of:
 - (a) Cumulative and place-based strategic assessments; electricity network capacity and energy demand; water supply, water security and catchment health; biodiversity and ecosystem impacts; land use planning and agricultural land protection; clustering and precinct-based development; community amenity and social impacts; economic benefits, including local jobs and skills development; and any additional matters identified through research, consultation and stakeholder engagement.
- 2.1.5 Immediately release the Victorian Government's Sustainable Data Centre Action Plan and all supporting research informing its development.
- 2.2 Notes the significant and growing community interest in the development and expansion of data centres, including concerns raised by residents, community organisations and environmental groups regarding their cumulative impacts.
- 2.3 Notes community interest in a public information session to provide independent information on data centre development, planning processes, environmental impacts, energy demand, water use and economic outcomes.
- 2.4 Resolves to provide appropriate in-kind support for a public information session on data centres, subject to Council's usual policies and procedures.

3. OFFICER COMMENTS

Officers note the increasing community interest in data centres and the request from the Broadmeadows Progress Association for Council assistance in facilitating a community led forum. While data centre proposals are generally considered through established statutory planning processes, the proposed forum would provide an opportunity to support community awareness and discussion on the issue. If adopted, officers would work with the Broadmeadows Progress Association to determine appropriate in kind support for the delivery of the forum.

REPORT NO:	9.2
REPORT TITLE:	NOM26/25 - Cr Karen Sherry - Animal Welfare Grants Program
SOURCE:	Samuel Ferrier, Manager City Safety Joel Kimber, Head of Government Relations & Advocacy
DIVISION:	Assets, Operations & Sustainability
FILE NO:	HCC26/688
POLICY:	-
ATTACHMENTS:	Nil

I hereby request that pursuant to Council's Governance Rules and Code of Conduct for Councillors that the following motion be included in the Agenda of the next Council Meeting.

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Hume continues to experience significant demand associated with the management of stray, semi-owned and surrendered cats, with substantial numbers entering the municipal animal management and shelter system each year. These challenges are also experienced by animal shelters, rescue organisations, foster carers and veterinary providers, which collectively face increasing pressure associated with cat overpopulation.

The Victorian Government has made positive investments in this area through the Animal Welfare Grants Program, including support for low-cost desexing initiatives, place-based programs and innovative pilot projects. While these initiatives have delivered worthwhile outcomes, many funding opportunities remain short-term (annual) and limited in scale relative to the ongoing challenge.

Accessible low-cost and no-cost desexing programs are widely recognised as one of the most effective and humane measures available to prevent unwanted litters and reduce cat overpopulation before animals enter the shelter system. Increased investment in preventative initiatives, coupled with greater funding certainty and pathways to scale successful pilot programs, would support more sustainable and measurable improvements in animal welfare outcomes across Victoria.

2. RECOMMENDATION:

That Council:

2.1 Write to the Victorian Minister for Agriculture, the Hon. Michaela Settle MP, requesting increased investment in, and a review of, the Victorian Government Animal Welfare Grants Program to:

- 2.1.1 Establish a dedicated, ongoing and adequately funded grants program to support cat population management initiatives across Victoria;**
- 2.1.2 Provide multi-year funding certainty for local governments, animal welfare organisations and veterinary service providers delivering low-cost and no-cost cat desexing programs;**
- 2.1.3 Ensure funding levels appropriately reflect the scale and ongoing impacts of stray, semi-owned and surrendered cat populations on Victoria's animal welfare system;**

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- 2.1.4 Expand investment in innovative, evidence-based and place-based initiatives that improve access to desexing services and reduce cat overpopulation; and
- 2.1.5 Establish mechanisms to evaluate, scale and expand successful pilot programs and demonstrated best-practice approaches across Victoria.

3. OFFICER COMMENTS

- 3.1 The intent of the Notice of Motion is supported. Accessible cat desexing programs support Council's broader objectives of promoting responsible pet ownership, improving animal welfare outcomes, and reducing demand on municipal animal management services and the wider animal welfare sector.
- 3.2 Increased, ongoing and multi-year State Government grant funding is important to enable local governments, animal welfare organisations and veterinary service providers to plan, deliver and expand accessible low-cost and no-cost cat desexing programs with greater certainty, reach and long-term impact.
- 3.3 Should the Notice of Motion be adopted, officers will prepare and send correspondence to the Victorian Minister for Agriculture, the Hon. Michaela Settle MP, advocating for the measures outlined in the resolution.