



**COUNCIL MEETING OF
THE HUME CITY COUNCIL**

MONDAY, 13 NOVEMBER 2023

7.00PM

HUME GLOBAL LEARNING CENTRE CRAIGIEBURN

OUR VISION:

Hume City Council will be recognised as a leader in achieving social, environmental and economic outcomes with a common goal of connecting our proud community and celebrating the diversity of Hume.

An audio recording of this meeting of the Hume City Council will be recorded and published in accordance with Council's Audio Recordings of Council Meetings Policy. The live stream of this meeting will not be recorded or published.

HUME CITY COUNCIL

**Notice of a
COUNCIL MEETING OF THE HUME CITY COUNCIL**
to be held on Monday, 13 November 2023
at 7.00pm
at the Hume Global Learning Centre Craigieburn

Attendees:	a: Council	Cr Naim Kurt	Mayor
		Cr Karen Sherry	Deputy Mayor
		Cr Jarrod Bell	
		Cr Trevor Dance	
		Cr Joseph Haweil	
		Cr Chris Hollow	
		Cr Jodi Jackson	
		Cr Jack Medcraft	
		Cr Sam Misho	
		Cr Carly Moore	
		Cr Jim Overend	
	b: Officers	Ms Sheena Frost	Chief Executive Officer
		Ms Rachel Dapiran	Director City Planning and Places
		Mr Hector Gaston	Director City Services & Living
		Mr Adam McSwain	Director Infrastructure and Assets
		Mr Carl Muller	Director Customer & Strategy
		Ms Fiona Shanks	Chief People Officer
		Mr Fadi Srour	Chief Financial Officer

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 forebears have been custodians for many thousands of years. The Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung, which includes the Gunung-Willam-Balluk clan, are the Traditional Custodians of this land. Hume City Council would also like to pay its respects to their Elders, past and present, and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples 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 Ahmed Kucukali, from the Muslim 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 & CONDOLENCES**6. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 23 October 2023 including Confidential Minutes, and Minutes of the Statutory Meeting held on 1 November 2023.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 23 October 2023, including Confidential Minutes, and the Minutes of the Statutory Meeting held on 1 November 2023, 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.

<u>Item No</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Page</u>
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9. NOTICES OF MOTION

9.1	NOM23/028 - Councillor Trevor Dance	301
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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:

13.1 Contract - Receipt and Processing of Recyclables

Item 13.1 is confidential in accordance with Section 3(1)(g(ii)) of the Local Government Act 2020 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 contains financial and contractual matters.

13.2 CEO Employment Matters Advisory Committee

Item 13.2 is confidential in accordance with Section 3(1)(f) of the Local Government Act 2020 because it is personal information, being information which if released would result in the unreasonable disclosure of information about any person or their personal affairs.

13.3 Chief Executive Officer - Contract of Employment

Item 13.3 is confidential in accordance with Section 3(1)(f) of the Local Government Act 2020 because it is personal information, being information which if released would result in the unreasonable disclosure of information about any person or their personal affairs.

14. CLOSURE OF MEETING

**SHEENA FROST
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

9/11/2023

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REPORT NO:	8.1
REPORT TITLE:	Making of Order under Section 26 of the Domestic Animal Act 1994
SOURCE:	Samuel Ferrier, Manager City Safety
DIVISION:	City Services & Living
FILE NO:	TBC
POLICY:	-
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE:	3.2: Deliver responsible and transparent governance, services and sustainable assets that respond to community needs
ATTACHMENT:	1. <i>Draft Order of Hume City Council made under Section 26 of the Domestic Animals Act 1994</i>

1. SUMMARY OF REPORT:

- 1.1 At an Ordinary Meeting of Council on 9 June 2020, a motion was carried to make an order under Section 26 of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*.
- 1.2 Due to an apparent administrative error, this order was not subsequently published (in full) in the government gazette or circulated in a newspaper available in the local area, as prescribed under legislation.
- 1.3 This administrative error rendered this order made by Council invalid. This issue was formally communicated in a report presented to an Ordinary Meeting of Council on 11 September 2023.
- 1.4 In light of the above, a new motion of Council is now sought to support the remaking of the 2020 order.

2. RECOMMENDATION:

That Council:

- 2.1 make an order under Section 26 of the Domestic Animals Act 1994 (as attached)**
- 2.2 publish the order in the Victorian Government Gazette**
- 2.3 publish the order in a newspaper circulating in the Hume City municipal district.**

3. LEGISLATIVE POWERS:

- 3.1 Under section 26 of the Domestic Animals Act 1994, Council may by resolution make an order to:
 - 3.1.1 Prohibit dogs in public places in the municipality
 - 3.1.2 Impose conditions for means of restraint of dogs and times at which the presence of dogs is or is not permitted and other conditions imposed in the order.
- 3.2 An order made by Council under this section must subsequently be published in the government gazette and in a newspaper circulating in the municipal district of the Council making the order.
- 3.3 If a dog is found in contravention of the order, the owner may be guilty of an offence.

REPORT NO: 8.1 (cont.)

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

- 4.1 Authorised officers may issue infringements to any person found in breach of an order made by council under section 26 of the Domestic Animals Act 1994. The penalty for the offence is one penalty unit.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS:

- 5.1 In determining restrictions and conditions to be imposed under the order, consideration was given to Council’s environmental sustainability responsibilities by incorporating requirements preventing dogs from harming the environment, including designating dogs prohibited areas to protect significant natural values.

6. CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION CONSIDERATIONS:

- 6.1 There are no climate changes adaptation considerations associated with this report.

7. CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS APPLICATION:

- 7.1 This report and its recommendations align with the intention of and do not limit any of the protected rights under the Victoria Charter of Human Rights.

8. COMMUNITY CONSULTATION:

- 8.1 In 2018, Council undertook extensive community consultation as part of the Dogs in Public Places Review. This included pop-up engagement activities at local festivals, surveys with pet owners, online and social media engagement, and targeted surveys with those in close proximity to public places and spaces.
- 8.2 The Dog in Public Places Review Final Report was endorsed by Council at a meeting on 9 July 2021. This report identified dogs in public place planning principles, proposed locations of off-leash areas, dog prohibited areas, and requirements around the management of dogs in public places.
- 8.3 To enable the requirements and conditions identified through the Dogs in Public Places Review Final report to be enforceable, a section 26 order including these requirements was subsequently presented and passed by Council on 9 June 2020. This order was recently found to have been invalid due to an apparent administrative error – further detailed below.
- 8.4 The draft order (attached) reflects the order that was presented to Council on 9 June 2020 and that was informed by the Dogs in Public Places Review.

9. DISCUSSION:

- 9.1 As detailed in a report to Council on 11 September 2023, a review of Council’s order made under section 26 of the Act found it was not published (in full) in the Government Gazette, nor was it circulated in a newspaper at the time of its making as prescribed by legislation. As a result, this Order was found to be invalid. A refund scheme was subsequently endorsed by Council for recipients of infringements/court penalties made under section 26 of the Act.
- 9.2 In the absence of a valid order, Council is currently unable to enforce any conditions or restrictions relating to the presence of cats and dogs in public places. This report therefore recommends the urgent remaking of the Order that was presented to Council in 2020.
- 9.3 It should be noted that the draft order does not seek to impose any restrictions and/or conditions beyond what was included in the order that was presented to Council in 2020. Any future proposed changes to off-leash areas, dog prohibited areas and/or other restrictions would need to be the subject of further community engagement and consultation.

10. CONCLUSION:

REPORT NO: 8.1 (cont.)

- 10.1 The draft order (attached) reflects the order that was presented to Council on 9 June 2020 and that was informed by the Dogs in Public Places Review. A new motion of Council is now sought to make this Order.

REPORT NO: 8.1 (cont.)

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DRAFT ORDER IN COUNCIL

On , Hume City Council (Council) made an Order under Section 26(2) of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*.

This Order is effective from (date).

1. Revocation of previous Orders

All previous Orders made by Council under Section 26(2) of the *Domestic Animals Act* are revoked.

2. Dogs must be on leash

The person in apparent control of a dog must keep the dog attached to a leash held by means of a chain, cord or lead, in any public place within the Council’s municipal boundaries, unless the dog is in a designated off-leash area or Council has granted permission for an off-leash activity to take place, such as for dog obedience club activities, dog show or the like.

2.1. Dog owners must adhere to the following:

- 2.1.1. Dog off-leash areas adjacent to schools will revert to dog on leash areas during the hours of 8.00 am to 5.00 pm Monday to Friday on school days.
- 2.1.2. Dogs must not be tied up within 10 metres of a school or preschool entry.
- 2.1.3. Dogs must not be tied up near a pathway such that they can encroach onto the pathway.
- 2.1.4. Dog owners to carry a receptacle for the effective removal of any excrement left by their dog and pickup and appropriately dispose of any excrement left by their dog.
- 2.1.5. Authorised officers must be trained and competent to use procedures that support the Order in Council.

3. Dogs in Off-leash Areas

3.1. Subject to Clauses 3.2 and 3.3 of this Order, a dog may be exercised off a leash in a designated off-leash area provided the person in apparent control of the dog:

- 3.1.1. carries a leash, one for each dog, sufficient to bring the dog under effective control
- 3.1.2. complies with any site-specific rules or regulations, including but not limited to time restrictions and regulations associated with fenced off-leash areas
- 3.1.3. remains in effective voice control or hand control and within consistent sight of the dog at all times
- 3.1.4. does not allow the dog to worry, cause a nuisance or threaten any person or animal.

3.2. If a dog is off-leash in a designated off-leash area, the dog must be brought under effective control by means of a leash if the dog is within 10 metres of:

- 3.2.1. a car park or roadway
- 3.2.2. outdoor exercise equipment
- 3.2.3. formal picnic facilities, including BBQ facilities or a permanent picnic shelter, even if these facilities are in a designated dog off-leash area
- 3.2.4. formal sporting competition or training events

- 3.2.5. a shared footpath or trail, nor impede other people using trails
- 3.2.6. a school or preschool boundary
- 3.2.7. wetlands or a water body
- 3.2.8. a market or community event e.g. festival, fun run
- 3.2.9. if a dog is in a designated off-leash area, the dog must be brought under effective control by means of a leash within 50 metres of a playspace, playground, BMX/skate facility or similar.

3.3. The following areas are designated dog off-leash areas:

Reserve Name	DOL Location Descriptor	Suburb	On Active Reserve	Time Restrictions apply *	Melways ref
Anderson Reserve	2-14 Glen Allan Street	Broadmeadows	Yes	No	6 H11
Broadmeadows Valley Park including Broadmeadows Dog Park (adjacent to John Ilhan Memorial Reserve)	Barry Road (west & south of sporting precinct & along ridge & east of north-south path)	Broadmeadows	No	No	6 F3
Broadmeadows Valley Park - Ripplebrook Reserve	Ripplebrook Drive between Johnstone St & Dimboola Rd	Broadmeadows	No	No	6 E7
Seabrook Reserve	20 Goulburn Street	Broadmeadows	Yes	No	7 A8
Will Will Rook Pioneer Cemetery	220 Camp Road	Broadmeadows	No	No	7 B9
Bulla Recreation Reserve	17-45 Green Street	Bulla	Yes	No	177 B6
Bolinda Road Reserve	via Horne Street	Campbellfield	No	No	7 J8
Seth Raistrick Reserve	1678-1700 Sydney Road	Campbellfield	Yes	No	7 F6
Progress Reserve	27-59 Almurta Avenue	Coolaroo	Yes	Yes	7 A2
Aitken Creek Reserve	between Hothlyn Drive & Railway line	Craigieburn	No	No	387 B11
Craigieburn Dog Park - Craigieburn Gardens	127-147 Craigieburn Road, rear of Craigieburn Leisure Centre	Craigieburn	No	No	387 A10
D.S. Aitken Reserve	136-170 Craigieburn Road	Craigieburn	Yes	No	387 A9
Hothlyn Drive Reserve	110-118 Hothlyn Drive	Craigieburn	Yes	Yes	387 A12
Hume Tennis and Community Centre	corner Marathon Boulevard & Newbury Boulevard (open space north of centre)	Craigieburn	No	Yes	386 D5
Mt Ridley Conservation Reserve	Mt Ridley Road	Craigieburn	No	No	387 A1
Newbury Park	corner Newbury Boulevard & Grand Boulevard (west of hockey field)	Craigieburn	No	No	386 E2
Vic Foster Reserve	16-32 Pines Way	Craigieburn	Yes	No	387 A7
Gibb Reserve	185 Blair Street	Dallas	Yes	Yes	7 A4
Laura Douglas Reserve	57-75 King Street	Dallas	Yes	No	7 B4
Carrick Drive Reserve	300 Carrick Drive	Gladstone Park	No	No	6 B8

Reserve Name	DOL Location Descriptor	Suburb	On Active Reserve	Time Restrictions apply *	Melways ref
John Coutts Reserve	46-48 Katrina Drive	Gladstone Park	No	No	6 C11
Ginifer Reserve	206-224 Carrick Drive	Gladstone Park	Yes	No	6 C10
Bradford Avenue Reserve	26-40 Bradford Avenue	Greenvale	Yes	Yes	179 A8
Drummond Street Reserve	11-25 Drummond Street	Greenvale	Yes	Yes	179 A12
Greenvale Recreation Reserve	Section Road	Greenvale	Yes	No	178 G7
Jacana Reserve	59-79 Johnstone Street	Jacana	Yes	Yes	6 D8
Jacana Valley	157-159 Johnstone Street	Jacana	No	No	6 E9
Broadmeadows Valley Park - Northern Reach	Between Somerton Road & Barry Road	Meadow Heights	No	No	179 H10
Lakeside Drive Reserve	27-51 Lakeside Drive	Roxburgh Park	Yes	No	180 A6
Emu Bottom Wetlands (excluding Horseshoe Bend)	300 Racecourse Road	Sunbury	No	No	362 F7
Eric Boardman Reserve	224-256 Mitchells Lane	Sunbury	Yes	No	381 G5
Heysen Drive Reserve	between Heysen Drive & Reservoir Road	Sunbury	No	No	381 J2
Langama Park	89-107 Mitchells Lane	Sunbury	Yes	No	381 K6
Spavin Drive Lake	Aldridge Drive	Sunbury	No	No	362 B11
Stewarts Lane Nature Reserve	between Coates Court & Streeton Court & south Stewarts Lane	Sunbury	No	No	361 K12
Sunbury Park including Sunbury Dog Park	60 Harker Street	Sunbury	No	No	382 E6
Sunbury Recreation Reserve – Clarke Oval	Riddell Road	Sunbury	Yes	No	382 C2
The Nook	Vaughan Street	Sunbury	No	No	382 G4
Leo Dineen Reserve	52-60 Spring Street	Tullamarine	Yes	No	15 H2
Trade Park	241 Melrose Drive	Tullamarine	No	No	5 H12
Tullamarine Reserve	300 Melrose Drive	Tullamarine	Yes	No	5 H11
Westmeadows Reserve	136 Ardlie Street	Westmeadows	Yes	Yes	5 K6
Willowbrook Reserve	317 Mickleham Road	Westmeadows	Yes	No	5 K6

* Time restrictions – Dogs must be on leash between 8am – 5pm Monday to Friday on school days

Maps and restrictions for designated dog off-leash areas can be viewed on Hume City Council's website www.hume.vic.gov.au

4. Dog Prohibited Areas

4.1. Dogs are not allowed:

4.1.1. in 'dogs prohibited' areas

4.1.2. on sportsfields unless the sportsfield is a designated dog off-leash area

4.1.3. to enter any water body

4.1.4. within the boundary of a playspace, BMX/skate facility, or similar facility

4.1.5. to rush at, attack, bite, worry or chase wildlife.

4.2. Dogs are prohibited from entering the following areas:

Dogs Prohibited Areas	Street Address	Suburb	Melways ref
Maygar Grasslands	11 Academy Drive	Broadmeadows	7 C6
Amberfield Grasslands	361 Craigieburn Road	Craigieburn	386 F9
Kalkallo Commons	100-130 Hunter Street & 56 Mitchell Street	Kalkallo	367 F2
Somerton Red Gum Reserve	193B Hume Highway	Somerton	180 D5
Albert Road Nature Reserve	110 Albert Road	Sunbury	362 C7
Evans Street Grassland	128 Evans Street	Sunbury	382 D5
Fullwood Drive Ceremonial Ring	76 Fullwood Drive	Sunbury	381 H1
Sunbury Cemetery	88 Shields Street	Sunbury	382 E7
Tandara Reserve	155 Phillip Drive	Sunbury	381 G1
The Parkway Reserve (Western section)	475 Racecourse Road	Sunbury	362 E5
Martin Dillon Reserve	Wildwood Road (near 400)	Wildwood	384 A12

4.3. Dog Prohibited areas reverting to dog on leash areas include:

Site	Street Address	Suburb	Melways ref
Grey Box Woodland	1-7 Columbia Court	Broadmeadows	7 D6
Konagaderra Bridge Reserve	Near 225 Konagaderra Road	Oaklands Junction	365 B8

5. Non-application to specified dogs or greyhounds

Clause 3 of this Order does not apply to any dog which has been declared a Dangerous Dog, menacing dog or restricted breed dog under the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*, or to a greyhound which must be restrained in accordance with the restraint requirements under section 27 of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*.

6. Definitions

For the purposes of this Order:

‘Leash’ means a dog leash sufficient to control and restrain the dog that is no more than 2 metres in length.

‘Council’ means Hume City Council.

‘Public Place’ Places where the public are permitted access whether on public or private land. Includes areas such as parks, gardens, reserves, footpaths, roads, public halls, markets, sports facilities as defined in the *Summary Offences Act (1966)*.

REPORT NO:	8.2
REPORT TITLE:	Emu Bottom Wetlands Draft Master Plan Report
SOURCE:	Greg McLaren, Manager City Design Yvonne Schell, Senior Project Facilitator
DIVISION:	City Planning & Places
FILE NO:	HCC21/151.005
POLICY:	-
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE:	1.2: Provide opportunities, and support business growth and visitor economy to create accessible local jobs for our diverse community
ATTACHMENT:	1. <i>Emu Bottom Wetland Reserve - Draft Master Plan September 2023</i>

SUMMARY OF REPORT

- 1.1 The Emu Bottom Wetlands Master Plan (the Master Plan) is a project stemming from the Jacksons Creek biik wurrdha Regional Parklands Plan adopted by Council in 2022.
- 1.2 The intent of the Master Plan (attached) is to guide the future development and use of the Emu Bottom Wetland Reserve for the long term, in line with the themes and objectives of the Jacksons Creek biik wurrdha Regional Parklands Plan.
- 1.3 Community Engagement.
- 1.4 Council undertook community engagement to inform the Master Plan in April/May 2023.
- 1.5 Findings from the engagement activities indicate support for the opportunities plan, except for a number of dog-owners not supporting the reduction of the dog off-leash area from 25 ha to 2.5 ha.
- 1.6 The Master Plan has considered all feedback received and strives to find a balance between the cultural and environmental sensitivities of the site, with the recreational uses, including dog exercise. The proposed dog off leash area has been shown in the draft Master Plan at approximately 6-7ha, subject to detailed planning and investigations. Given the controversial nature of this issue, this will need close management.

RECOMMENDATION

That the draft Emu Bottom Wetlands Master Plan be approved for exhibition, and subject to feedback Council receives a further report to consider endorsement of the final Plan.

LEGISLATIVE POWERS:

- 3.1 The development of the Plan considers Council’s obligations in relation to the overarching principles of Section 9.2 of The Local Government Act 2020 (Vic) specifically:
 - 3.1.1 Priority to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations.
 - 3.1.2 The economic, social, and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks, is to be promoted.
 - 3.1.3 The municipal community is to be engaged in strategic planning and strategic decision making.
 - 3.1.4 Collaboration with Government and statutory bodies is to be sought.
 - 3.1.5 Regional, state, and national plans and policies are to be considered in strategic planning and decision making.

REPORT NO: 8.2 (cont.)

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Budgets will be sought in future Capital Works bids in accordance with the proposed actions from the Master Plan. These will be planned and costed in accordance with the Project Management Framework.
- 4.2 Indicative costs at current rates are included in the implementation table at the back of the Draft Master Plan (Appendix 1).
- 4.3 The total indicative cost for High-Medium priority projects at current rates is in the range of \$1,890,000 to \$2,450,000. The indicative cost of a pedestrian bridge across Jacksons Creek is not included in this calculation, as it will be subject to the subdivisional development on the eastern side of the creek.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 The Plan has environmental objectives to:
 - 5.1.1 Strengthen and protect the ecological and habitat values in the reserve.
 - 5.1.2 Strengthen connections with existing and future residential areas.
 - 5.1.3 Create walking loops for recreation and appreciation of nature.
 - 5.1.4 Reduce the dog off leash area and better manage dogs around sensitive habitat areas.
 - 5.1.5 Protect and strengthen Growling Grass Frog conservation areas on site in accordance with *Melbourne Strategic Assessment, Growling Grass Frog Maser Plan for Melbourne’s Growth Corridors 2017*
 - 5.1.6 Adhere to the vision, principles and actions set out in the *Jacksons Creek biik wurrdha Regional Parklands Plan* (DELWP 2022), which include the protection of culture, heritage, identity, and biodiversity.

CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 In accordance with the Climate Resilience principles set out in the *Jacksons Creek biik wurrdha Regional Parklands Plan* (DELWP 2022), this plan and its future implementation supports:
 - 6.1.1 Good siting, design, creation, and maintenance of landscapes and built infrastructure to enable resilience to climate change and extreme weather events.
 - 6.1.2 Flora and fauna resilience through adapted flora species selection and siting
 - 6.1.3 Mitigation of bushfire risks through interface treatments
 - 6.1.4 Stormwater management to reduce negative impacts on waterways.
 - 6.1.5 Greater tree canopy cover where ecologically appropriate to shade paths and picnic areas

CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS APPLICATION

- 7.1 The Plan supports the self-determination priorities of the Traditional Owners of the land, as represented by the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation. The Plan supports the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people to care for their Country and the goal of future management of the parklands by the WWCHAC.
- 7.2 Access to a diverse range of open spaces makes a significant contribution to community health and wellbeing outcomes and creates environments that support social connections.

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

REPORT NO: 8.2 (cont.)

- 8.1 Community engagement on the Opportunities Plan was undertaken in April-May 2023, and fifty-three written submissions were made by 52 people or groups. Thirty-five submitters requested that the dog off-leash not be reduced, while nine were in favour of the change.
- 8.2 Five submitters supported the carpark being extended, one felt it was still going to be too small and three suggested other locations.
- 8.3 Concern for fauna was expressed by nine submitters who outlined the detrimental impact of off-leash dogs. Five submitters were in favor of increasing the vegetation and one saw this as an effective way of restricting access to areas of sensitivity.
- 8.4 One person was concerned that increased vegetation would hinder the Reserve's usefulness as a firebreak.
- 8.5 Following analysis of the submissions and on-site feedback, as well as internal feedback from other Council departments, the attached Master Plan has been drafted to address issues raised by the community, while balancing the protection of flora and fauna, the waterways, and cultural heritage.
- 8.6 It is proposed to take the draft Master Plan to the community in November-December 2023, prior to its adoption by Council.

DISCUSSION

- 9.1 The 32ha Emu Bottom Wetlands reserve consists of open parkland, the billabong (an ephemeral water body reflecting the original meander of the creek) and planted vegetation, with Jacksons Creek running along the eastern boundary and the Sherwood Grange development under way to the south. The primary function of the site is as a conservation area for flora, fauna, and Aboriginal Cultural Heritage.
- 9.2 Key issues in the Master Plan:
- 9.2.1 Dog off leash area; this proved to be the most controversial aspect of the consultation. The current dog off leash area is approximately 25ha, and includes the majority of the park, including the narrow sections of the reserve to the rear of properties on Homestead way, past the culturally sensitive Holly Green Mound, and close to the Creek.



SUNBURY

EMU BOTTOM WETLANDS



Legend
— off leash area



Figure 1: Existing Dog Off Leash Area

REPORT NO: 8.2 (cont.)

- 9.2.2** Restricting the access of off leash dogs to a smaller area in the wetlands to better manage dogs around sensitive habitat areas is a key recommendation. Dog owners have been allowing their off-leash dogs to access areas where dogs are prohibited, such as the creek, the billabong, and the land within the hairpin bend of the creek. It was noted that the banks are eroding at dog entrance points.
- 9.2.3** The proposed reduction of the dog off leash area attracted the highest number of responses from the community, with a large percentage expressing their desire to retain the existing area, or to fence the creek to prevent the dogs’ access.
- 9.2.4** A few people expressed their desire to exclude dogs from the reserve altogether.
- 9.2.5** To better manage this sensitivity, the Draft Master Plan proposes some protective fencing for sensitive revegetation works and applies a proposed approximately 6ha dog off-leash indicative area that will evolve over time as the regional trail is developed.
- 9.2.6** The future Jacksons Creek biik wurrdha Regional Parklands Trail will continue into the narrower part of Emu Bottom Wetlands reserve behind the Homestead Way properties, to connect with the future pedestrian bridge across the Creek (exact position subject to further investigations). This part of the reserve will be too narrow to support dogs off leash and the shared Trail. Having dogs on leash in this space will provide a safer experience for pedestrians and cyclists.



Figure 2: Proposed Dog Off Leash Area (approximate)

REPORT NO: 8.2 (cont.)

9.2.7 Platypus Viewing Areas

- The existing platypus viewing areas need repair or replacement, as well as management of the vegetation. The Draft Master Plan proposes upgrade of viewing areas and the removal of one of the viewing areas due to limited visibility, creek erosion and safety concerns.

9.2.8 Connection to Sherwood Grange Development

- Council staff continue to work with the Developer to the south to ensure their works include path connections to the southern border of Emu Bottom Wetlands, and a circuit around the wetland within the Sherwood Grange estate.

9.2.9 Bridge over billabong

- A bridge over the billabong is not proposed to be included, for the following reasons:
 - The bridge over the billabong that was identified in the 1997 plan is disconnected from the path network. Council does not support the construction of a bridge without supporting access networks.
 - The billabong is of considerable cultural significance to the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people, and the proposed bridge is adjacent to a registered Place where artefacts have been found. WWCHAC does not support the construction of the bridge and will seek to have the billabong included in the Cultural Heritage Overlay
 - The area where the bridge was shown is eroding due to people and dogs walking down the embankment when the water levels are low. This is not a safe practice, as it is steep and often slippery. Additional planting is proposed along the banks to prevent access in the future.

9.2.10 Play space and toilets

- Due to the cultural and environmental sensitivities of the site, it is not proposed to include any major infrastructure such as a play space or toilets. If provided, these are to be located in the adjacent residential development.

9.2.11 Proposed Works

- The Draft Master Plan proposes works over several years, including the extension of the car park (already included in Council’s Capital Works program with \$16,500 allocated to design and a further \$160,618 for construction in FY 24/25, subject to a Cultural Heritage Management Plan scheduled in the current 23/24 year), the development of the shared trail in accordance with the Jacksons Creek biik wurrdha Plan, secondary paths, revegetation to protect the waterway from further erosion and prevent access, a new shelter with picnic settings, seats, tree planting along paths for the shade and comfort of users, protection of sensitive areas, and reduction of the dog off leash area.
- Some of the works will be long-term, such as the pedestrian bridge across Jacksons Creek at the northern end of the site, which will be constructed in conjunction with the developer once the development on the east of the creek goes ahead.

REPORT NO: 8.2 (cont.)

- A signage suite will be developed, to include wayfinding, informative, and interpretive signage. With permission from WWCHAC, interpretive signage relating to the flora and fauna will be provided in dual languages.
- Maintenance of the site will be business as usual, with Council's Parks and Open Space Department engaging contractors to undertake required works. In accordance with the Jacksons Creek biik wurrdha Regional Parklands Plan, Council will seek to assist WWCHAC to progress managing further parts of the Parklands through the engagement of the Narrap team, as their capacity increases.

CONCLUSION

- 10.1** The Emu Bottom Wetlands Master Plan guides the future development and use of the Emu Bottom Wetlands Reserve for the long term.
- 10.2** Council support for further engagement will ensure the community is provided with the opportunity to comment on the draft Plan and for feedback to be considered in the final Plan, to be presented to Council for endorsement at the earliest opportunity.

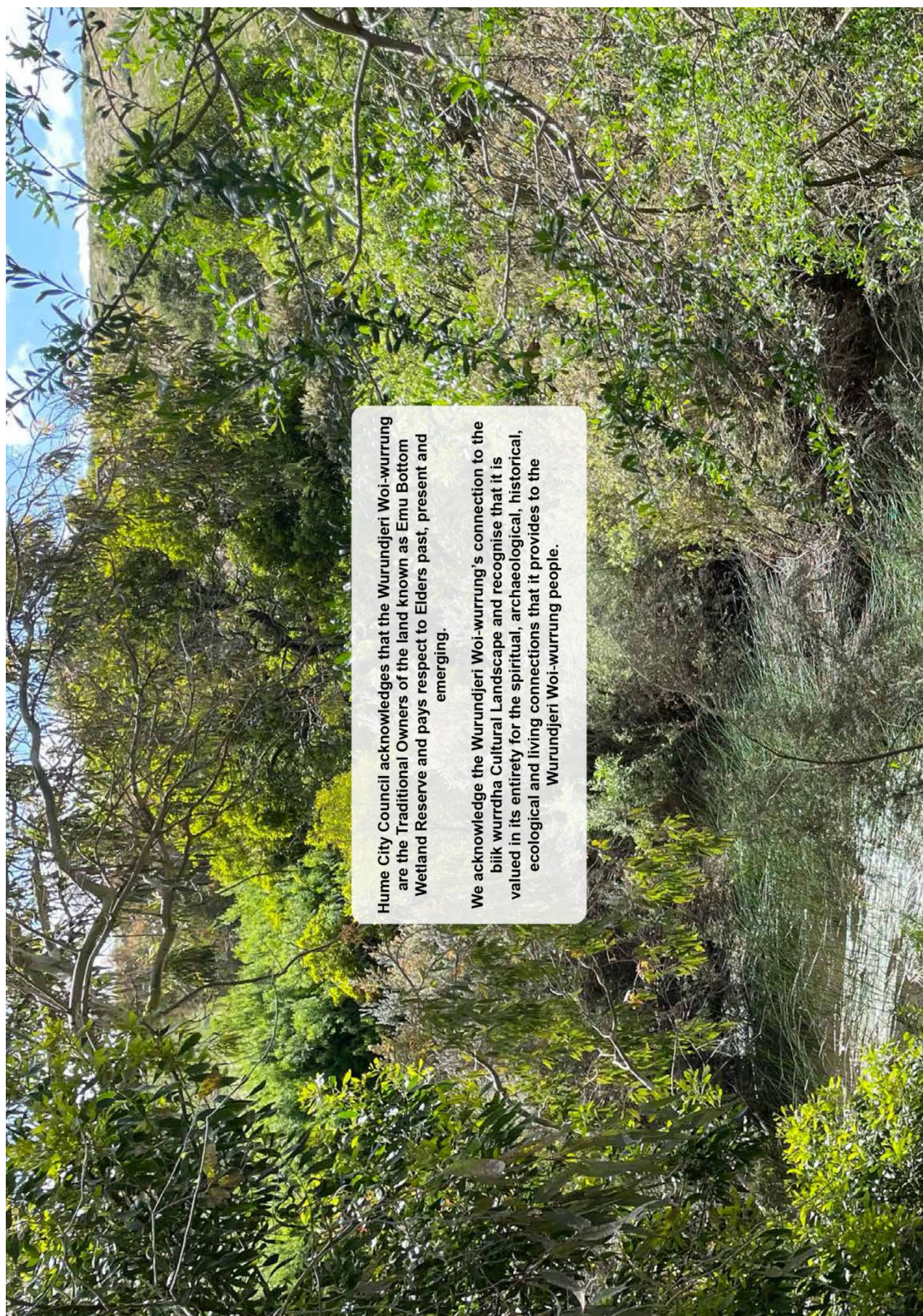


Emu Bottom Wetland Reserve
DRAFT Master Plan

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1. Introduction

Nestled in the Jackson's Creek valley of Sunbury, approximately 45km north-west of the Melbourne CBD is the Emu Bottom Wetland Reserve. The Reserve is located on Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country represented by the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation. It consists of approximately 32-hectares of open parkland and is bordered by Jacksons Creek to the east, low density housing to the north, and new developments currently under construction to the south. Future housing is also being constructed on the eastern side of the creek as part of the Lancefield Road Precinct Structure Plan.

The Emu Bottom Wetland Reserve is framed by a steep grassy ridge line to the east, falling towards the revegetated riparian zone of Jacksons Creek. The riparian zone is planted with large shrubs and trees with a small number of remnant trees. To the south of the Reserve there is an ephemeral billabong which, during flood events is periodically fed by the Jacksons Creek. The billabong, which is the original meander of the Jacksons Creek, has a revegetated riparian zone consisting of shrubs and a grassy understorey. The balance of the reserve consists of mown exotic grasses, and revegetation areas.

The Reserve currently features a small gravel carpark, gravel trails, scattered bench seats and three creekside nodes, known as platypus viewing areas. The site is well loved by local residents and dog walkers, who come to exercise and relax in the unique landscape.

Project Aim

The aim of this project is to produce a Master Plan to guide the future development and use of the Emu Bottom Wetland Reserve for the long term.

Project Objectives

The Master Plan is based on a strategic review of current initiatives as well as existing conditions, facilities and uses of the Emu Bottom Wetland Reserve. The Master Plan aims to respect the cultural heritage and the unique environmental values of the landscape whilst creating a strong foundation for future environmental initiatives and provision of new facilities.

Key considerations include:

- Exploration of opportunities to strengthen and protect the ecological and habitat values in the reserve
- Exploration of opportunities to strengthen connections with existing and future residential areas
- An inventory of initiatives that have been undertaken since the Emu Bottom Wetland Reserve Master Plan (Hume City Council, 1997)
- Creation of walking loops for recreation and appreciation of nature
- Retention a dog off leash area in the reserve and better manage dogs around sensitive habitat areas
- Provision of an expanded carparking area
- Improvement and update of existing seating
- Protect and strengthen Growing Grass Frog conservation areas on site in accordance with Melbourne Strategic Assessment, *Growing Grass Frog Master Plan for Melbourne's Growth Corridors 2017*
- The vision, principles and actions set out in the *Jacksons Creek blik wurrdha Regional Parklands Plan* (DELWP 2022)



2. Historic Context

The Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people are the Traditional Owners and custodians of the Emu Bottom Wetlands Reserve. The Reserve is part of the biik wurndha Cultural Landscape determined by the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung to be significant and home to a number of valued sites and cultural connections. The landscape has been shaped by Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung who, for thousands of years sustainably occupied and managed the land and it's resources to ensure seasonal harvest and regeneration of plants and animals that were required for diet, clothing, tools, dwellings and other resources¹.

A number of historic buildings are still located along the Jacksons Creek corridor. The Emu Bottom Homestead built in 1936 by George Evans is one of the oldest homesteads in Victoria². The land to the south of the reserve

forms part of the Rupertswood Estate which is home to Salesian College and also has a association with the history of cricket as the birthplace of The Ashes. Since it's was establishment in 1927, Salesian College has run an agricultural program within the parklands.

Over the last 30 years, large areas of revegetation has been carried out by Hume City Council and the Friends of Emu Bottom Wetland Reserve. The following photos highlight the changes in conservation values in the reserve.



Jacksons Creek 1990s



Platypus viewing area 2001



View of the billabong mid 1990s



Embankment revegetation 2001



Platypus viewing area 2001



Bank revegetation 2001



View to the south 2008

1. Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, Jacksons Creek Regional Parklands Woiwurrung Cultural Values Study, 2021
2. Victorian Heritage Register Number H0274, 2023

3. Strategic Context

The following are key strategic documents which have informed the preparation of the Master Plan:

Jacksons Creek Regional Parklands Woioiurung Cultural Values Study (Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation 2021)

The Cultural Values Study was prepared for the Jacksons Creek biik wurrdha Regional Parklands Plan. The study found that the Parklands, including the Emu Bottom Wetland Reserve, is a cultural landscape that holds spiritual, archaeological, historical, and ecological significance to the Wurundjeri Woiwurrung people. In relation to the Emu Bottom Wetland Reserve, the study refers to the following:

- Prioritising the protection of the biik wurrdha cultural landscape, and welcoming opportunities for visitors to learn about Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung culture, history and landscape
- The discovery of a stone axe within the Reserve
- The Reserve is a part of the Sunbury Rings Cultural Landscape with strong evidence of Aboriginal settlement and land-use
- The Sunbury Rings Cultural Landscape is significant for its landscape character and requires preservation from encroachment of development

Jacksons Creek biik wurrdha Regional Parklands Plan (Jacksons Creek biik wurrdha Parklands Partnership Group, 2022)

The Jacksons Creek biik wurrdha Regional Parklands Plan sets out a vision, principles and actions for the Parklands establishment and management. The following are recommendations relevant to the study area:

- The biik wurrdha cultural landscape is valued in its entirety for the spiritual, archeological, ecological and living connections it provides to the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung community
- Protect existing biodiversity values including Growing Grass Frog habitat, a nationally vulnerable species north of the reserve
- Provide a walking and cycling network including a bridge across Jacksons Creek biik wurrdha to the north of the reserve
- Create walking loops for recreation and appreciation of nature
- Provide seating every 400m along the primary trail network
- Retain dog off leash area in the reserve and better manage dogs around sensitive habitat areas

Growing Grass Frog Master Plan for Melbourne’s Growth Corridors (DELWP, 2017)

The Growing Grass Frog Master Plan for Melbourne’s Growth Corridors designates Growing Grass Frog conservation areas and provides guidance on implementing protection measures and investing in habitat creation and enhancement within these areas. The purpose of this plan is to:

- Identify areas of significance along Jacksons Creek and including areas to the east and south of Emu Bottom Wetland Reserve
- Outline proposed protection, management and creation of Growing Grass Frog habitat, a nationally vulnerable species, within conservation areas

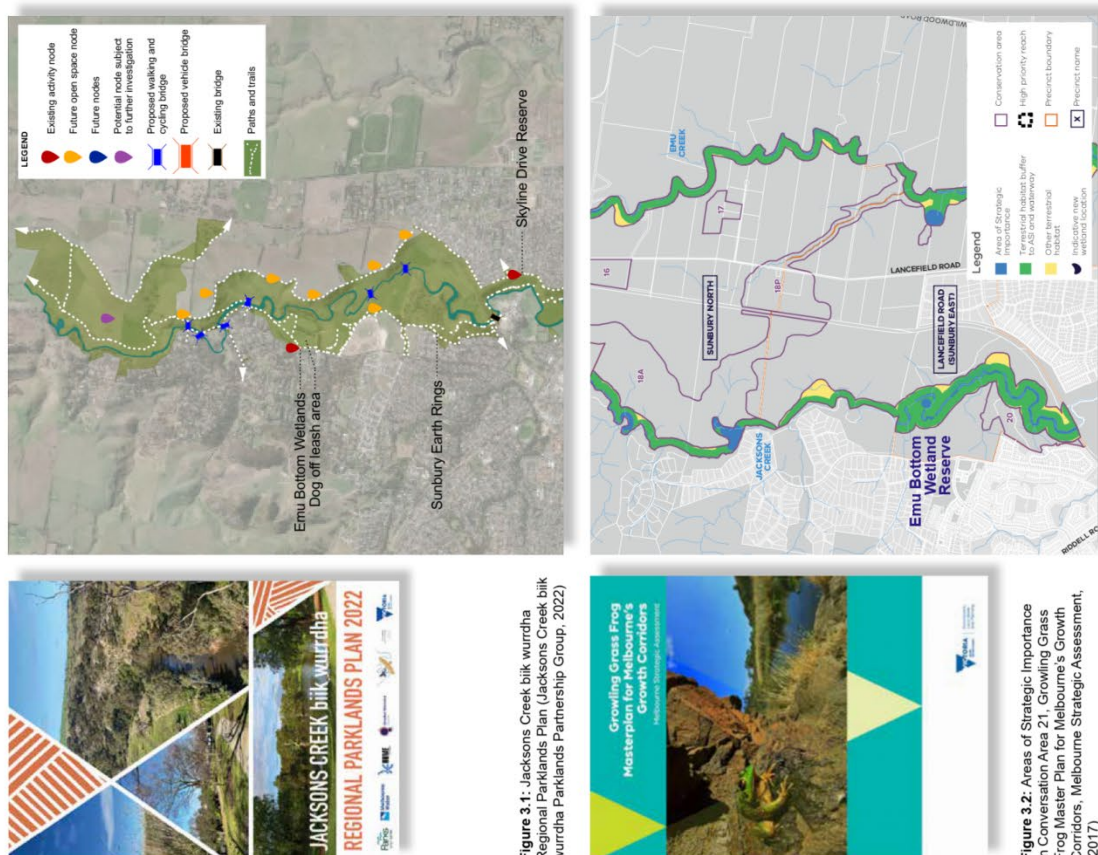


Figure 3.1: Jacksons Creek biik wurrdha Regional Parklands Plan (Jacksons Creek biik wurrdha Parklands Partnership Group, 2022)

Figure 3.2: Areas of Strategic Importance in Conservation Area 21, Growing Grass Frog Master Plan for Melbourne’s Growth Corridors, Melbourne Strategic Assessment, (2017)

Lancefield Road Precinct Structure Plan (VPA 2018, amended 2022)

The Lancefield Road Precinct Structure Plan guides future development to the north of Sunbury including the areas to the east and south of the Emu Bottom Wetland Reserve. Key considerations include:

- The Lancefield Road Precinct Structure Plan proposes future shared path alignments and connections across the creek.
- Protection of habitat within conservation areas including Growing Grass Frog habitat

During the preparation of this report, the **Sunbury North Precinct Structure Plan** was still in development. Once completed, it may also be used to inform future development of the Emu Bottom wetland.

Emu Bottom Wetland Reserve Master Plan (MSLAUD, 1997)

The previous Master Plan outlined a vision for the reserve which included:

- Areas for revegetation and conservation
 - Open areas of mown grass to retain views and the existing rural landscape character.
 - Informal path networks which over time have been formalised as a result of increased use.
- Master Plan also identified the opportunity to expand the reserve further to the south with a buffer zone created between conservation areas and future residential development.

The Master Plan also identified the opportunity to expand the reserve further to the south with a buffer zone created between conservation areas and future residential development.

Hume City Council Open Space Strategy 2010-2015 (HCC, 2010)

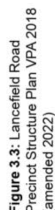
The Hume City Council Open Space Strategy 2010-2015 provides a framework for the future planning and provision of open space across the municipality. The following are recommendations included for Emu Bottom Wetland Reserve:

- Identifies the Emu Bottom Wetland Reserve as a 'natural area'
- States that 'natural areas' provide primarily for the conservation and restoration of flora and fauna and sometimes also for the protection of cultural and/or heritage values.
- Protect landscape values and provide informal passive recreation where they do not compromise the primary conservation objectives

Hume City Council: Fauna Survey Program 2015-2016 (Biosis, 2016)

Hume City Council engaged Biosis Pty Ltd to conduct a fauna survey across a number of Council-managed reserves including the Emu Bottom Wetland Reserve. Site investigations revealed the following information:

- Detected koala, platypus, Yellow-bellied Shearwater, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Little Lorikeet and Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater at the Emu Bottom Wetland Reserve
- Recommends the installation of nest boxes at the Emu Bottom Wetland Reserve to target smaller species such as microbats, gliding possums and Brush-tailed Wattlecoques



4. Existing Conditions

The following photographs provide an overview of current site conditions.



Existing car park on Racecourse Road



Existing trail and shelter



View across the billabong with revegetation around the margins



View from the north-west showing established revegetation



Existing platypus viewing area



Pedestrian path along Racecourse Road connecting to Shenwood Grange

5. Consultation

The first phase of community engagement for the Emu Bottom Wetland Master Plan was completed in May 2023 and included the following activities:

- A project page was published on Participate Hume and open for feedback from 28 April to 28 May 2023.
- The page attracted 990 visits with 124 visitors accessing information on the page.
- A project flyer was mailed to approximately 250 households near the reserve.
- Project signs were posted at the two main entries to the reserve
- An on-site engagement session was held on 6 May
- Emails were sent to people who had registered for updates via the Jacksons Creek biik wurrudha Regional parklands engagement.

The plans below were prepared to assist community engage for the first phase of consultation.

Traditional Owner Engagement

As Jacksons Creek biik wurrdha Parkland Partners, the Traditional Owners represented by the Wurundjeri Woiwurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation have provided guidance on embedding cultural value principles into parkland planning and management.

Advice from the Cultural Heritage Unit on 18 May 2023 advised the following in regard to the Emu Bottom Master Plan:

- The Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation appreciate the protection of the cultural and ecological values present within the Reserve. Given the cultural significance of the area, it is preferable that any proposed works are undertaken sensitively to ensure minimal ground disturbance.
- Interpretive signage, potentially referencing the original meander of the Jackaons Creek and Woi-wurrung culture, would be a welcome addition to the Reserve.

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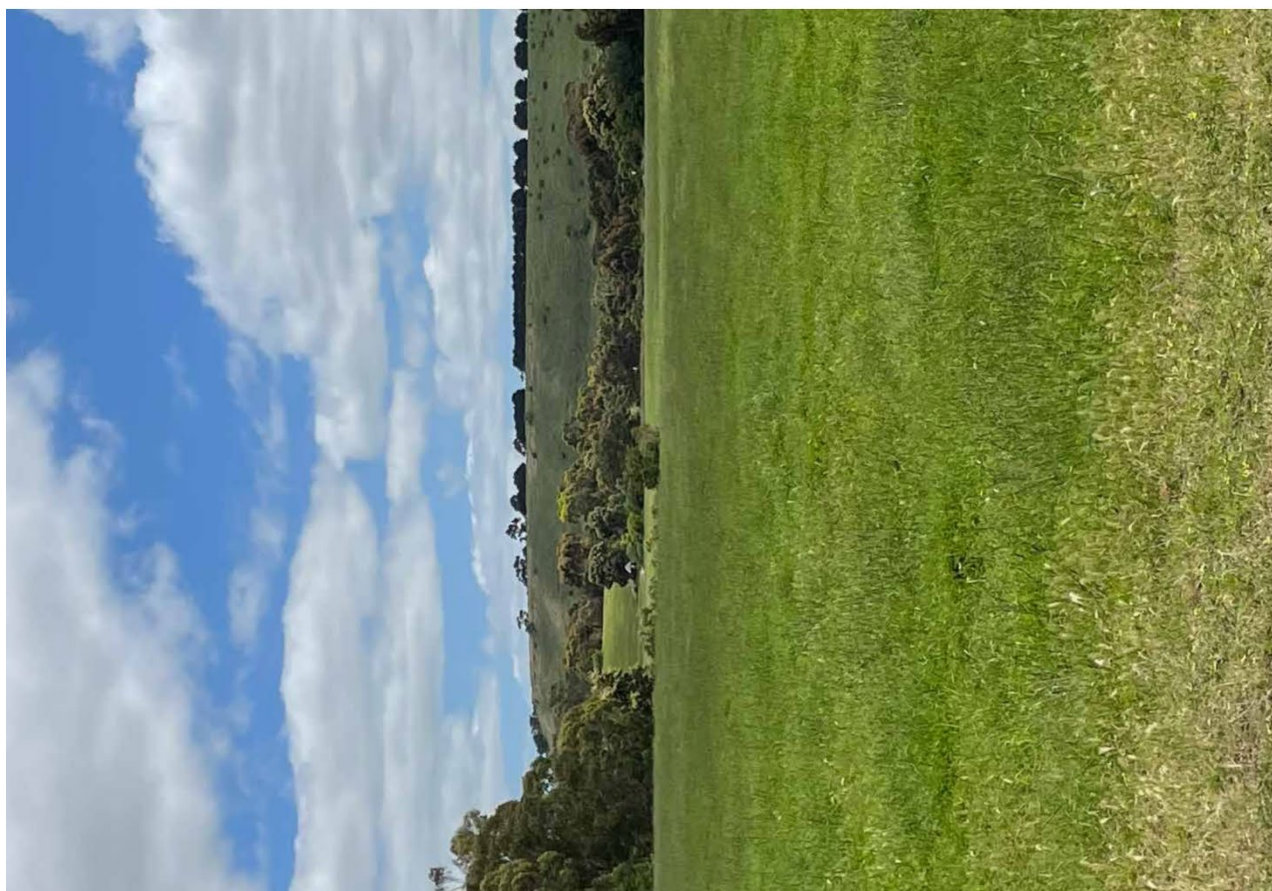
Emu Bottom Wetland Reserve
DRAFT Master Plan

Community Feedback

The following table outlines feedback received from community consultation and its implications for the Master Plan.

Community engagement feedback	Implications for the Master Plan
53 submissions were received noting the proposed reduction in dog off leash area to 2.5 hectares is too small. Feedback was also provided on areas which would be suitable for dog off leash activities.	The proposed dog off leash area has been further reviewed and is likely to be increased from the initial size of 2.5 hectares to 7 hectares in the Master Plan.
Expanding the existing car park was supported including provision of disabled parking bays and revegetation around the car park to screen views of the cars.	Car park design options being investigated by Council
The current dog off leash area is over 100m from the car park. The community noted improved connections to the car park would be an improvement especially for visitors with limited mobility.	The dog off leash area will be linked to the car park. A new shelter with picnic seats beneath is proposed near the entrance to dog off leash area.
The community does not want the dog off leash area fenced but supports fencing to protect vegetation works and the creek environs.	Fencing of the dog off leash areas is not proposed. Fencing to protect vegetation and the creek environs to be installed if required.
Community support for upgraded infrastructure such as shelters, picnic facilities, seats and signage. Mixed support was noted for public toilets and drinking fountains.	Additional park infrastructure is proposed. Playgrounds, public toilets and drinking fountains are not proposed.
Community support to upgrade existing platypus viewing areas.	Existing viewing areas are proposed to be upgraded. This may include existing sites being removed and new sites being added in areas of low cultural and environmental sensitivity.
Community support for additional scattered tree plantings to provide shade and shelter in open grass areas.	Additional scattered tree plantings are proposed.
Community support to protect and enhance ecological values within the reserve.	Proposed areas for additional revegetation are included in the Master Plan
Community support for additional paths to help define dog off leash areas as well as providing improved access.	Paths proposed to be constructed around the edge of dog off leash areas along with scattered tree plantings to provide shade and shelter.
Concern raised regarding the fire impacts of additional revegetation.	Mown grass buffers to surrounding properties are to be maintained. Fire management practices to be undertaken across the reserve.
Installation of a bridge across the billabong was included in the 1997 Master Plan but has not proceeded.	The proposed bridge has been excluded from the Master Plan due to cultural sensitivities, environmental sensitivities and construction costs. Future pedestrian bridge connections will be constructed as development occurs east of the creek.

7



Emu Bottom Wetland Reserve
DRAFT Master Plan

6. Draft Master Plan

The Master Plan aims to enhance and protect the significant cultural and ecological values of the Emu Bottom Wetland Reserve. The Master Plan will also provide linkages to connect the Reserve to the broader parklands, as demonstrated in the adjacent plan.

- 1 Extend the existing car park including new and upgraded paths around the car park to provide all abilities access
- 2 Replace existing shelter with a larger shelter and picnic settings beneath
- 3 Construct new shelter with picnic settings beneath and an accessible connection to the car park
- 4 Upgrade existing platypus viewing platforms (subject to detailed archaeological and flora/fauna investigations). Relocate existing platforms which are currently in areas of cultural and environmental sensitivity
- 5 Construct new walking trails throughout the reserve with seats approximately every 400m
- 6 Provide trees along trails and key activity areas to provide shade and shelter
- 7 Provide additional revegetation across the site to further enhance ecological values and protect cultural values
- 8 Upgrade existing walking trails
- 9 Upgrade existing path to provide a connection to Sherwood Grange and the broader parklands
- 10 Maintain fire management practices across the reserve including retaining mown grass buffers to surrounding properties
- 11 Construct a new pedestrian bridge crossing over Jacksons Creek (final location to be confirmed following detailed site studies and development of the land east of the creek)
- 12 Develop a suite of interpretive signage in key locations, signage to be dual language with both English/Woi-wurrung text

LEGEND

- Proposed new trails
- Existing trails to be upgraded
- Proposed areas of revegetation
- Potential location for new tree planting
- Proposed shelter
- Existing platypus viewing areas



8

Dog Off Leash Area

The adjacent plan shows the approximate extent of the proposed six hectare dog off leash area which will be demarcated with signage and planting to the perimeter as well as paths in some areas.

The dog off leash area is not proposed to be fenced, however it is recommended that protective fencing will be installed to revegetated areas to protect planting works where required.

The size of the off-leash dog area will evolve over time, adapting to the implementation of different paths, infrastructure, and planting outlined in the Master Plan. Additionally the extent of the area may be subject to change based on site conditions and any cultural or ecological sensitivities that arise during the implementation process.



Signage at entry to dog off leash area



8. Implementation

The following table outlines the priorities along with their estimated implementation costs. Proposed implementation priorities are intended as a reference and are subject to budget considerations.

Item	Action	Priority High = 1-5 years Medium = 5-10 years Low = 10 years+	Indicative cost
1	Extend the existing car park including new and upgraded paths around the car park	High	\$300,000 - \$400,000
2	Replace existing shelter with a larger shelter and picnic settings beneath	Medium	\$100,000 - \$150,000
3	Construct new shelter with picnic settings beneath and an accessible connection to the car park	Medium	\$100,000 - \$150,000
4	Upgrade existing platypus viewing platforms (subject to detailed archaeological and flora/fauna investigations). Relocate existing platforms that existing in area of cultural and environmental sensitivity.	Medium	\$300,000 - \$400,000
5	Construct new walking trails throughout the reserve with picnic benches approximately every 500m	High	\$750,000 - \$850,000
6	Provide trees along trails and key activity areas to provide shade and shelter	High	\$50,000 - \$100,000
7	Provide additional revegetation across the site to further enhance ecological values	Ongoing	\$40,000 - \$50,000
8	Upgrade existing walking trails	High	\$150,000 - \$200,000
9	Upgrade existing path to provide a connection to Sherwood Grange and the broader parklands	High	\$100,000 - \$150,000
10	Maintain fire management practices across the reserve including retaining mown grass buffers to surrounding properties	Ongoing	-
11	Construct a new bridge crossing over Jacksons Creek (final location to be confirmed following detailed site studies)	Medium	Scope and location to be further investigated
12	Investigate opportunities for interpretive signage in key locations, signage to be dual language with both English/Woi wurrung text	Medium	\$40,000-\$50,000

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REPORT NO:	8.3
REPORT TITLE:	Marram Baba Merri Creek Regional Parklands Future Directions Plan
SOURCE:	Sheridan Blunt, Open Space Strategy Project Leader Monique Perry, Coordinator Open Space And Recreation Planning Greg McLaren, Manager City Design
DIVISION:	City Planning & Places
FILE NO:	HCC22/751
POLICY:	-
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE:	2.1: Facilitate appropriate urban development and enhance natural environment, heritage, landscapes and rural places
ATTACHMENT:	1. <i>Future Directions Plan Marram Baba Merri Creek</i>

SUMMARY OF REPORT

- 1.1 A Future Directions Plan (the Plan) for marram baba Merri Creek Regional Parklands has been prepared to provide the strategic directions for progressive parklands establishment, protection, and management to be achieved by 2050.
- 1.2 The Plan has been written in partnership with the Traditional Owners, the Wurundjeri Woio-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation (WWCHAC).
- 1.3 The Plan has been developed by the Parklands Partnership Group led by the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) and including WWCHAC, Hume City Council, Whittlesea City Council, Mitchell Shire Council, Parks Victoria, Melbourne Water, Yarra Valley Water and Merri Creek Management Committee. All partners are concurrently seeking organisational support this November.
- 1.4 Community engagement helped shape the draft Plan's preparation in July and August 2022 and positive community feedback was provided on the draft Plan when it was released for public consultation in April-May 2023.
- 1.5 Each partner organisation is now seeking endorsement for the high-level Plan to enable it to be endorsed by Parklands Partnership Group in November 2023.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 2.1 **Endorses the Marram Baba Merri Creek Regional Parklands – Future Directions Plan.**
- 2.2 **Advise the Parklands Partnership Group of endorsement of the Plan, and request ongoing implementation commitment from the Suburban Parks Program.**
- 2.3 **Embed actions of the Plan in the upcoming review of the Open Space Strategy, Transport Strategy, Land & Biodiversity Plan and planning scheme overlays.**

LEGISLATIVE POWERS

REPORT NO: 8.3 (cont.)

- 3.1** The development of the Plan considers Council’s obligations in relation to the overarching principles of Section 9.2 of The Local Government Act 2020 (Vic) specifically:
- 3.1.1** Priority to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations.
 - 3.1.2** The economic, social, and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks, is to be promoted.
 - 3.1.3** The municipal community is to be engaged in strategic planning and strategic decision making.
 - 3.1.4** Collaboration with other Councils and Governments and statutory bodies is to be sought.
 - 3.1.5** Regional, state, and national plans and policies are to be taken into account in strategic planning and decision making.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1** Drafting and consultation for the Plan has been funded by the Victorian Government’s Suburban Parks Program and guided by the Parklands Partnership Group.
- 4.2** Council will continue its role in managing existing local parks and the new local parks as set out in the Lockerbie and Craigieburn North PSPs and future PSPs.
- 4.3** The Plan sets out the parkland boundary and includes land that is currently in private ownership. The Plan doesn’t extend to the detail of who will be future land manager of new land transfers. This will be subject to future discussions by the Partnership Group and guided by the parkland management zones which identify most of the parklands as conservation zone, which will not be managed by Council.
- 4.4** For implementation, it is anticipated Council will be involved in designing and constructing some of the parkland’s trail network, along with other public land managers. Should Council determine the need to construct any of these trails prior to external funding being available, allocation of funds will need to be considered in the Capital Works Program.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1** The Plan has environmental objectives to:
 - 5.1.1** Protect and enhance the biodiversity and environmental values of the parklands. This includes Growling Grass Frog habitat.
 - 5.1.2** Protect waterways and minimise impacts of urban stormwater runoff.

CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1** The draft Plan has a theme for climate resilience. The Plan sets guiding principles to support climate resilience, integrated water management, urban cooling, flood management, fire management and minimising greenhouse gas emissions.

CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS APPLICATION

REPORT NO: 8.3 (cont.)

- 7.1** The Plan supports the self-determination priorities of the Traditional Owners of the land, as represented by the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation. The Plan supports the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people to care for their Country and the goal of future management of the parklands by the WWCHAC.
- 7.2** Access to a diverse range of open spaces makes a significant contribution to community health and wellbeing outcomes and creates environments that support social connections.

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

- 8.1** Community engagement helped shape the draft Plan’s preparation in July and August 2022 and positive community feedback was provided on the draft Plan when it was released for public consultation in April-May 2023. A summary of this feedback is in Section 3.1 of the Plan. This has been coordinated by DEECA with help from partners.
- 8.2** Overall, the community feedback has been very positive with most respondents either ‘satisfied’ or ‘very satisfied’ with the various content of the plan and very few respondents identifying that they were not satisfied with key aspects.
- 8.3** Some landowners have raised concerns about the inclusion of their land in the parklands and the lack of clarity about this process. These matters have all related to land subject to Federal biodiversity conservation provisions and the landowners have been referred to DEECA’s Melbourne Strategic Assessment team for further advice.
- 8.4** In response to community feedback, the draft Plan has been amended to improve clarity. Additional words were added to emphasise the need for more consistent planning scheme controls, with the Plan to be considered as a reference document.

DISCUSSION

9.1 Co-Managed Parklands

- 9.1.1** The marram baba Merri Creek Regional Parklands is a co-managed parklands project of the Suburban Parks Program coordinated by DEECA. The Parklands Partnership Group includes DEECA, WWCHAC, Hume City Council, Whittlesea City Council, Mitchell Shire Council, Parks Victoria, Melbourne Water, Yarra Valley Water and Merri Creek Management Committee. The Parklands Area
- 9.1.2** The parklands will encompass an area of 2,778ha across the municipalities of Hume, Whittlesea and Mitchell and will include over 34km of Merri Creek, 4km of Kalkallo Creek and the confluences of Merri Creek with Malcolm Creek and Aitken Creek.
- 9.1.3** The Partners already manage 43% (1,169ha) of the parklands, with Hume City Council managing 4% (101ha). Most of the land still to be transferred to the parklands is set aside as Conservation Area and Growling Grass Frog area under the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for Melbourne’s Growth Areas facilitated by DEECA’s Melbourne Strategic Assessment (MSA) team.

9.2 Traditional Owners

- 9.2.1** The marram baba cultural landscape is considered to be of significance to the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people and all planning for the parklands has been based on their self-determined priorities.
- 9.2.2** The Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung have set out their cultural values in a Position Statement. These values influenced the draft Plan and were supported by the community during public consultation.
- 9.2.3** The Plan sets out a long-term commitment of returning land to WWCHAC. This will be undertaken via measures ranging from legislative changes for Crown land,

REPORT NO: 8.3 (cont.)

WWCHAC as a partner on land management committees, and appointing the WWCHAC Narrap Unit as a land management contractor.

- 9.2.4** This return of Country has already commenced with the Narrap Unit active in the parklands, and WWCHAC being set up as Committee of Management for a newly acquired 112 ha parcel including Curly Sedge Creek in Wollert.

9.3 Implementation

- 9.3.1** The Suburban Parks Program (SPP) has been funded as part of a 2018 election commitment. DEECA has advised that it is seeking funding to extend its secretariat role beyond June 2024, and that it already has funding for progressive transfer and management of MSA Conservation Areas.
- 9.3.2** All Parkland Partners will continue to manage their existing land, and Melbourne Water are funded to manage Growling Grass Frog conservation areas.
- 9.3.3** Section 5 of the Plan advises that funding models are needed to ensure meaningful partnerships with Traditional Owners. Given WWCHAC have no base funding, this is essential to implement their self-determined priorities.

9.4 Officer Assessment

- 9.4.1** The commitment from the State Government to support co-managed regional parklands has been welcomed. The creation of the Plan is the first step, and officers recommend that a request be made for the Suburban Parks Program to continue its funding commitment for implementation. This includes commitment to WWCHAC to help deliver the cultural values priorities of the Plan.
- 9.4.2** Officers note there is an opportunity for Council to advise the Parklands Partnership Group of its intention to extend NorthPark Nature Reserve to the Aitken Creek confluence by progressively negotiating the transfer of the rear of the remaining four parcels. It is recommended this be recognised in the upcoming Open Space Strategy as this is a continuation of a process that Council has already been progressing through the planning and subdivision process and aligns to existing Council’s strategic commitments in the Open Space Strategy 2010, the Open Space Strategy Discussion Paper 2023, and the Environmental Significance Overlay.
- 9.4.3** Officers welcome the references to investigate widening the narrow areas of parklands referred to as pinch points as identified in the Plan. A shared path along the Merri Creek is important, and it is recommended the upcoming review of Hume’s Open Space Strategy and Transport Strategy also highlight this to provide a stronger strategic basis for this in future parkland widening discussions such as in pending Precinct Structure Plans.
- 9.4.4** The Plan recommends that planning controls relevant to marram baba Merri Creek be reviewed to consider a more consistent approach and to reflect WWCHAC request for cultural landscape protection. It also proposes the Plan be considered as a planning scheme background document.
- 9.4.5** The upcoming review of the Open Space Strategy can reference the need for planning controls to protect creek corridors for waterway, biodiversity and cultural values. Officers note that Council’s Strategic Planning Team is currently reviewing waterway controls and considering marram baba Merri Creek recommendations.

9.5 Next Steps

REPORT NO: 8.3 (cont.)

- 9.5.1** All nine Parkland Partners are concurrently seeking formal organisational approval in November 2023. In the event one partner requires a variation, all Partners will need to be consulted and endorsement deferred to 2024. To avoid this delay, each organisation has worked closely in developing the Plan and commitments have been worded generally to support the challenge of seeking timely multiple partner endorsement. This shared endorsement approach was applied when seeking to release the Jacksons Creek biik wurrdha Regional Parklands Plan for consultation at the 9 May 2022 Council Meeting.
- 9.5.2** Following endorsement from Council and all other partners, the Parklands Partnership Group is scheduled to provide its collective endorsement of the Plan in November 2023.
- 9.5.3** Once endorsed, the Plan is scheduled to be released by early December 2023. DEECA is working with Council and other parkland partners on shared social media and website updates. DEECA is still to confirm if it will host a launch event involving all parkland partners. Further information will follow.
- 9.5.4** After the Plan is released, it is expected the Partnership Group (including Council) will continue working together to progress the Plan’s implementation.

CONCLUSION

- 10.1** The marram baba Merri Creek Regional Parklands Plan sets out the vision and directions for what will become one of greater Melbourne’s largest parklands. It will require collaboration by all parkland partners to coordinate the Plan’s ongoing implementation and future governance.

REPORT NO: 8.3 (cont.)

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marram baba Merri Creek REGIONAL PARKLANDS

FUTURE DIRECTIONS PLAN 2023



Acknowledgement of Country

The Parklands Partners acknowledge that the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung are the Traditional Owners of the land known as marram baba Merri Creek Regional Parklands and pay respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

We acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people and their deep spiritual connection to the marram baba Cultural Landscape and recognise that it is valued in its entirety for the spiritual, archaeological, historical, ecological and living connections that it provides to Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people.



marram baba short-finned eel artwork by Ash Firebrace Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung artist

Executive summary

marram baba Merri Creek Regional Parklands

The Parklands are part of the traditional Country of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people and encompass an area of 2,778 ha, including over 34 km of Merri Creek, 8 km of Curly Sedge Creek, 4 km of Kalkallo Creek, and the confluences of Merri Creek with Kalkallo Creek, Aitken Creek, Malcolm Creek and Curly Sedge Creek. The basalt plains of the Parklands support diverse habitats for protected plant and animal species, and are home to some of the largest remaining native grasslands in the area – galgi ngarrk grasslands and the bababi marning grasslands.

In an area of rapid urban development, the Parklands provide opportunities for existing and new communities to develop strong links with the natural environment. There are several existing parks and reserves within the Parklands enjoyed by visitors, including galada tamboore, Whittlesea Public Gardens, Northpark Nature Reserve, Bells Avenue Wetlands, Donnybrook Cemetery and John Laffan Reserve.

Traditional Owners

The lands and water of the area known as marram baba are significant for the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people for its songlines, creation stories and as a place for continued cultural practice. The name ‘marram baba’ means ‘body of mother’ in the Woi-wurrung language.

The flow of Merri Creek connects culturally significant places, with water having a deep spiritual meaning for the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people. Stone artefacts have been found along Merri Creek, and the Parklands provide protection of areas of cultural significance. The Parklands provide for opportunities to heal Country and for Aboriginal people today to continue traditional practices and connection with ancestors.

Future Directions Plan – Vision

The marram baba Merri Creek Regional Parklands Future Directions Plan (the Plan) sets out a vision, principles and strategic directions for progressive Parklands establishment, protection and management to be achieved by 2050.

The vision for the Parklands is:

marram baba Merri Creek Regional Parklands is the preeminent natural corridor running through Melbourne’s north on Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country, connecting and nurturing culture, nature, water, and people.

The Plan recognises that the lands and water of the Parklands are part of the traditional Country of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people and supports self-determination, and the goals of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people for the future management of the land known as marram baba.



The Plan supports regional biodiversity and waterway health outcomes by linking, protecting, maintaining, and enhancing the natural environmental values of the Parklands. The Plan aims to improve the connection between the community and the Parklands through improved access to and within the Parklands including access points, trails, and waterway crossings. Opportunities are identified for increasing climate change resilience in the community, the natural environment, and built and green infrastructure. A connected Parklands with areas for nature-based recreation, gathering and socialising will contribute to improved community health and wellbeing, and strengthen the social connections that support resilient communities. A collaborative governance approach to the establishment, protection and management of the Parklands is supported.

The Plan is centred around six interrelated themes – *culture and identity, biodiversity, water, climate resilience, access and movement, and experience*.

Culture and Identity

The marram baba Cultural Landscape is valued in its entirety for the spiritual, archaeological, historical, ecological and living connections that it provides to the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung community. Embedding this identity in the Parklands establishment and management is essential to build a sense of place that reflects Traditional Owner values and enhances community connections, participation and social inclusion.

The identity of the marram baba Merri Creek Regional Parklands is tied to the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung's continued custodianship and culture, the volcanic landscape and diverse plants and animals that live within it, the flow of Merri Creek and confluences with Kalkallo Creek, Aitken Creek, Malcolm Creek and Curly Sedge Creek.

The rapid urban and industrial development, and diverse communities that are moving into the surrounding residential areas, will also influence the identity of the Parklands. This will be most significant with the emergence of Cloverton Metropolitan Activity Centre creating a new 'city' for which the Parklands will wind through the middle, viewed by tens of thousands of people every day.

Biodiversity

A key driver of biodiversity in the Parklands is the unique combination of rainfall, geology and geomorphology (the shape of the landscape) of the Merri Creek catchment. The volcanic plain supports a significant diversity of native plants and animals, with over 15% of Victoria's native plant species occurring in an area of less than 0.02% of Victoria's total area. Many of these plants and animals are endangered or threatened. The Parklands will support the significant conservation values that are protected under the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for Melbourne's Growth Areas. However, these values are under threat from pest plants and animals, encroaching development and climate change. The Parklands provide protection against these threats and provide opportunities for people to connect with nature and contribute to improving the health of the natural environment through education programs and community stewardship.

The Plan is a tool to advocate for greater protection of the Parklands and the significant native biodiversity within it. This includes:

- Opportunities to call for greater areas of open space to allow for habitat corridors and wildlife movement.
- Access for people to commute and enjoy without impacting the biodiversity values.
- The provision of tree canopy cover to reduce heat impacts in areas of the Parklands that do not impact on the habitat of species that require access to light such as the Growling Grass Frog and native grasses.

Water and landscapes

The landscapes and ecosystems of the Parklands are shaped by the basalts of the Victorian Volcanic Plain and the water that flows over and through the Parklands. Merri Creek forms a central spine through a broad, flat valley punctuated by the volcanic cone of Bald Hill and the tributaries that join Merri Creek. The galada tamboore gorge is one of the most distinctive geological features of the Merri Creek catchment.

Merri Creek, Kalkallo Creek and Curly Sedge Creek support significant indigenous plants and provide important habitat for native animals. These natural resources are threatened by changes in land use, climate change, and increasing urban and industrial development that is reducing stormwater quality and changing flow patterns in the creeks and across the landscape.

Providing access for people to view the natural waterways and wetlands of the Parklands creates opportunities for respite from the intense urban environment and opportunities for relaxation that can lead to improved mental health outcomes. Water is at the heart of health of Country and plays an important role in a healthy Parklands ecosystem.

Climate resilience

Climate change threatens the Parklands with hotter and drier summers, more frequent heatwaves, bushfires and grassfires, and more intense storms and changes to hydrological systems. These impacts, when combined with other changes such as urban expansion, will place increased pressure on the Parklands.

The Parklands will be managed to support climate resilience including planting climate appropriate species, access to waterways for animals, cultural fire management, bushfire preventions and safety, water sensitive urban design and shade around picnic areas. The vegetation canopy coverage for the parklands was 23% in 2021. Due to the ecological priorities of the Parklands to protect grassland and Growling Grass Frog habitat it is not intended for the canopy to increase.

The establishment of connected parklands with areas for people to gather, recreate and socialise will also enhance community health and wellbeing and build social connections to support community resilience.

Access and movement

Access to open space and recreational opportunities for people of all abilities and backgrounds is an important and necessary step to ensuring the whole community can benefit from and safely experience the Parklands.

The Plan promotes greater north-south and east-west connections for walking and cycling and connections to public transport, while avoiding impacts on the high conservation values within the Parklands. As the preeminent natural corridor running through Melbourne’s north, the Parklands play a strategic regional role in providing active transport opportunities for people living and working in the North Growth Corridor.

The Plan advocates for increased Parkland area so that improved trails can be provided, and the Parklands connected to other regional open space and trail networks, without impacting on conservation values. The Plan promotes better connection to waterways, places to enjoy nature, respite from heat and areas for communities to gather.

Experience

Visitor experience of the Parklands is shaped around enjoying and immersing oneself in the natural environment, gaining an appreciation of the Aboriginal cultural heritage within the landscape,

moving through the landscape, and being able to take in the landscape from scenic viewpoints. There is opportunity to create and enhance visitor areas and points of interest that showcase the changing landscape and influence how people will feel moving through corridors with riparian shrubland to wider open plains grasslands and grassy woodlands. This changing landscape provides opportunities for people to engage in recreational activities such as walking, cycling and nature play as well as participate in education programs, volunteer opportunities and citizen science.

Existing visitor areas will continue to be supported and enhanced with an emphasis on walking, picnicking and connecting people to nature. This includes galada tamboore in Campbellfield, North Park Nature Reserve in Somerton, Bell Street Wetland, Quill Reserve and Donnybrook Cemetery in Kalkallo.

Whittlesea Public Gardens in Lalor will be the key visitor area available for more active recreational activities, as well as being a gateway for walking, cycling and enjoying the creeks in the parklands.

Cloverton will also provide new visitor experiences that are co-located west of the Parklands including playgrounds, sports facilities, toilets and picnic areas. From this location, visitors will enjoy an open space link encouraging walking up to Bald Hill for wider Parkland views.

Management of the Parklands

The Plan has been developed by the Parklands Partnership Group that includes the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation (WWCHAC), Parks Victoria, the Merri Creek Management Committee, Hume City Council, City of Whittlesea, Mitchell Shire Council, Melbourne Water, Yarra Valley Water, and the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA).

The Plan supports self-determination priorities of the Traditional Owners as represented by the WWCHAC and future management of the Parklands by the WWCHAC.

The Parklands Partners will work together to collaboratively develop, protect, enhance and manage the Parklands in line with the vision, guiding principles, strategic directions, actions and management zones set out in the Plan.

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The *marram baba Merri Creek Regional Parklands Future Directions Plan* has been drafted by Mosaic Insights and REALMstudios on behalf of the marram baba Merri Creek Regional Parklands Partnership Group.

Version - 18/09/23

marram baba Merri Creek Regional Parklands Future Directions Plan

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OFFICIAL

1 Introduction

The marram baba Merri Creek Regional Parklands (the Parklands) are located on Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country in the middle reaches of Merri Creek in Melbourne’s outer northern growth area. Since 2013 the Parklands have been managed under the guidance of the *Merri Creek Marran¹ Baba Parklands Strategic Management Plan May 2013* developed by Parks Victoria, which encompassed approximately 650 ha.

In 2018, the Victorian Government committed to expanding the area of the Parklands to 2,778 ha to create a continuous chain of parks and open spaces stretching from Campbellfield to Beveridge (Figure 2). This expanded commitment was made in response to the expansion of the urban growth boundary and the need to protect the values of Merri Creek, its tributaries and parklands as residential, commercial and industrial development rapidly occurs in areas adjacent to the Parklands. The expanded boundary generally aligns with the Conservation Areas set out in the *Biodiversity Conservation Strategy (BCS) for Melbourne’s Growth Corridors and Precinct Structure Plans (PSPs)*.

The *marram baba Merri Creek Regional Parklands Future Directions Plan* (the Plan) sets out a vision, principles and directions for progressive establishment and co-management of the expanded Parklands by Traditional Owners and land managers. The Plan supports self-determination and the goals of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people for future management of the Parklands. The Plan will protect Aboriginal cultural heritage values and areas of biodiversity values on both sides of Merri Creek. It will create new and improved access points and links for visitors, connecting a network of existing and future parks and reserves.

Urban parklands provide a range of important benefits to the environment and the community. The Parklands are no exception and provide important habitat for native animals and plants, access to natural spaces and experiences for the community, and opportunities to mitigate the impacts of climate change through sustainable water management and urban cooling.

The Plan considers the current and future values of the Parklands, and the drivers of change affecting the values and their management into the future. Developed with input from the Traditional Owners, land managers and the community, the Plan provides the basis for establishment and management of the Parklands to 2050.



Figure 1: Looking south across the Parklands from galada tamboore towards the Melbourne CBD

¹ Note: at the time of preparing the 2013 plan, the Parklands were referred to as marran baba. Recent naming analysis by the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation confirmed that the name ‘marram baba’ is to be applied instead, meaning ‘body of mother’.

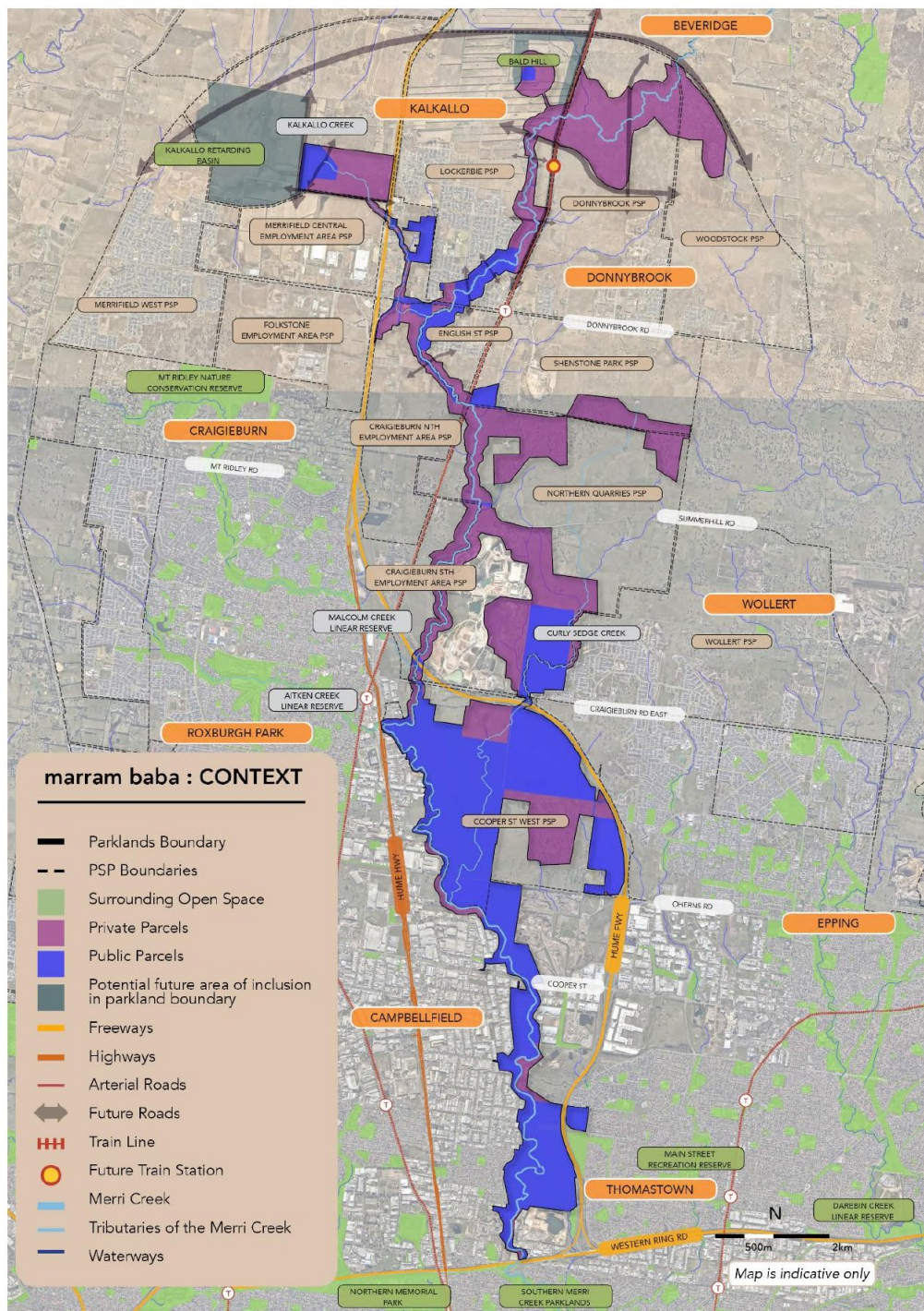


Figure 2: Context of the marram baba Merri Creek Regional Parklands

1.1 The role of the Plan

The Plan provides a framework to protect and enhance the Aboriginal cultural heritage, and the environmental and social values in the Parklands. The Plan provides guidance for co-management of the Parklands to support more detailed planning to deliver on-ground actions that will be progressively undertaken as land becomes available, visitor demand increases, and funding is allocated.

1.2 How the Plan has been developed

The Plan has been developed through a collaborative partnership between the Traditional Owners and land managers responsible for the management of public land within the Parklands. Together, these groups are referred to as the Parklands Partners. An overview of the process for developing the Plan is provided in Appendix 1.

The Parklands Partnership Group that developed the Plan will be responsible for its implementation. The Parklands Partnership Group has representatives from nine organisations:

- Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation (WWCHAC)
- Parks Victoria
- Merri Creek Management Committee
- Hume City Council
- City of Whittlesea
- Mitchell Shire Council
- Melbourne Water
- Yarra Valley Water
- Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA).

1.3 The objectives of the Plan

The objectives of the Plan were agreed by the Parklands Partnership Group in four categories:

Cultural heritage

- Protect and enhance the traditional and contemporary Aboriginal cultural heritage values of the Parklands
- Protect significant heritage features, such as drystone walls, that reflect changing community uses
- Provide opportunities for cultural learning.

Environmental

- Protect and enhance the biodiversity and natural values of the Parklands
- Protect terrestrial, riparian and instream habitats and overall waterway health
- Increase climate change resilience in the natural environment, the community and parklands infrastructure.

Social

- Support and foster community connections to and an appreciation for the landscape
- Support nature-based recreation, and environmental and cultural heritage learning and appreciation
- Provide better access to and within parts of the Parklands for local and regional visitors
- Provide opportunities for social connection and physical activity where appropriate.

Governance and management

- Support Traditional Owner-led management of Country and self-determination priorities
- Set out strategic directions to guide collaborative decision-making and management by the Parklands Partners
- Identify parkland management zones that guide decision making on future parkland uses, development and land management
- Identify key actions for establishing and managing the Parklands.

1.4 Relationship of the Plan to the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy and Precinct Structure Plans

The Biodiversity Conservation Strategy (BCS) for Melbourne’s Growth Corridors identifies Conservation Areas and outcomes required under the Commonwealth’s *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act 1999*. The BCS is being implemented as part of the Melbourne Strategic Assessment (MSA) program and is the basis for protecting (and securing) much of the northern reach of the Parklands.

The BCS identifies eight Conservation Areas along Merri Creek to mitigate the environmental impacts associated with Melbourne’s urban growth. These areas contain some of the most important habitat for endangered species and ecosystems within the growth corridors. The Conservation Areas protect and enhance habitat for matters of national environmental significance including the preservation of Growling Grass Frog populations and the protection of remaining remnants of Natural Temperate Grassland. The Conservation Areas are integrated into precinct structure planning, removing the need for additional assessment and identification of areas for the protection of National and State significant ecological values.

The marram baba Merri Creek Regional Parklands Future Directions Plan is a high-level strategic plan. Precinct Structure Plans (PSPs) remain the key plans that guide future use, subdivision and urban development of most of the land around the Parklands. This includes stormwater and drainage assets, bridges, trails and interfaces between the Parklands and urban development. Detailed planning and design of land that will be transferred from private ownership to the Parklands will be based on site specific analysis, and will be documented in approved development plans. In areas outside PSPs, land is subject to development approval and this planning permit process will determine inclusion of land in the Parklands.

2 Context

2.1 Understanding the marram baba Merri Creek Regional Parklands

The Parklands are located on the traditional lands of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people, where there are many places of cultural significance. The Parklands generally follow the course of Merri Creek, incorporating the lower sections and confluences of Kalkallo Creek, Malcolm Creek, Aitken Creek and Curly Sedge Creek.

This landscape is significant for the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as it is an area of movement, songlines, destinations and landmarks. The volcanic plain grasslands, Merri Creek and other creek confluences play a significant role as the source of creation stories and a place for important resources and cultural practices. Stone artefacts and other archaeological remains are found within the area known as marram baba. Water has a deep meaning for the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people, allowing for personal connection with ancestors and the past and the continuance of traditional practice today. The flow of Merri Creek connects these culturally significant places, and its health is essential for the health of Country. The Parklands provide greater protection of Country and opportunities for Aboriginal people today to keep community, health, traditional and contemporary practices strong through access to water and the surrounding landscape.

The volcanic landscape of the Parklands supports valuable grassland and grassy woodland communities. It also provides habitat for important and vulnerable native animals including Striped Legless Lizard, Growling Grass Frog, Golden Sun Moth and the critically endangered Swift Parrot and Regent Honeyeater.

Clearing of vegetation from the land around the Parklands for agricultural development, and now urban development, has modified and continues to threaten the ecosystem values by removing indigenous plant species, fragmenting habitat, reducing water quality, changing the patterns of flow of water to the creek, and damaging the health of Country.

The Parklands are located in the North Growth Corridor, which will develop from a currently semi-rural area to accommodate significant numbers of residents and workers. Infrastructure Australia forecast that the corridor is expected to have around 137,000 residents by 2031, an increase of approximately 70% from 2020². The Parklands will be an important regional open space for the rapidly growing number of residents in northern Melbourne, and as a regional parkland will attract visitors from a wider catchment.

The Parklands boundary currently incorporates existing parks and reserves and private land. Collectively, the existing parks and reserves provide a range of functions, including nature conservation, scientific research and protection of areas of Aboriginal cultural significance. These open spaces form important habitat links, and provide areas for visitors with infrastructure to support visitation such as signage, seating, parking, and walking and cycling trails.

² <https://www.infrastructureaustralia.gov.au/map/melbourne-outer-northern-suburbs-cbd-capacity-upgrade>

Established parks and reserves within the Parklands

galada tamboore, Campbellfield

Formed by the erosion of the volcanic plain by Merri Creek over a million years ago, the landscape of galada tamboore encompasses basalt escarpments with Merri Creek flowing through its centre. The name galada tamboore means ‘creek waterhole’ in Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung language and is culturally significant for the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people.

Located just north of the Metropolitan Ring Road in Campbellfield, this 130 ha reserve is a site of biodiversity significance that contains important riparian scrub, significant grasslands and wildlife. It also provides an important function as a natural flood retarding basin.

The community can experience parts of the reserve via the Merri Creek Trail with opportunities for exercise, play, relaxation, views and nature appreciation. Access to galada tamboore from Campbellfield is through the Horne Street Picnic Area, Somerset Drive, Hattie Court Playground, Barry Road and Merri Concourse. Another way to enter is via the Whittlesea Public Gardens in Lalor.

The Merri Creek Management Committee, Friends of Merri Creek and the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Narrap Unit work in partnership with the land managers and have been central in the care and protection of biodiversity within galada tamboore. The land is managed by Melbourne Water, Parks Victoria and Hume City Council.



Whittlesea Public Gardens, Lalor

Located in Lalor on Barry Road, the Whittlesea Public Gardens provide over 14 ha of open space for active and passive recreation.

Recent redevelopment of the gardens includes a new playground, nature play areas and a dedicated learn-to-ride area for cyclists. Future upgrades will mean visitors can also enjoy a new skate park, basketball courts, rock climbing wall and outdoor fitness equipment.

Whittlesea Public Gardens provide a major gateway into marram baba for people living in Whittlesea and is a launching place for cycling on the Galada Tamboore shared path east of the Hume Freeway. Walking and cycling trails in the gardens connect to the grasslands of galada tamboore, the galada tamboore reserve and the Merri Creek Trail by crossing the iconic ‘Ned Kelly Bridge’ over the Hume Freeway.

The land is managed by City of Whittlesea.



bababi marning Grasslands, Campbellfield

Located south of Cooper Street, bababi marning (previously known as the Cooper Street Grasslands) is a nature conservation reserve that protects nationally and state significant native plains grassland. The name bababi marning means ‘mother’s hand’ in Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung language and is culturally significant for the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people.

The 50 ha reserve protects critically endangered grasslands and areas of high-value escarpment shrubland and Woolly Tea-tree riparian scrub, providing habitat for the nationally significant Golden Sun Moth and Striped Legless Lizard. bababi marning is also home to several important animal species including the Mistletoe Bird, Stubble Quail, Latham’s Snipe, Tawny Frogmouth, Short-beaked Echidna, Swamp Wallaby, Eastern Grey Kangaroo, Blue-Tongue Lizard and Spotted Marsh Frog.

The Merri Creek Management Committee and Friends of Merri Creek have been central in the care and protection of biodiversity within bababi marning. The reserve is managed by Parks Victoria.

bababi marning has restricted access to protect its high conservation values, but visitors are welcome to enjoy the adjacent Metrolink Circuit Reserve (lower image) managed by Hume City Council.

**galgi ngarrk Grasslands, Epping and Wollert**

Located primarily on the east of Merri Creek, galgi ngarrk (previously known as Craigieburn Grasslands), is the largest reserve within the Parklands and encompasses approximately 400 ha of nationally and state significant native grasslands. The name galgi ngarrk means ‘back bone’ in Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung language and is culturally significant to the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people.

The reserve includes remnant stony knoll grasslands and provides habitat for protected plants, animals and migratory birds, including nationally and state significant endangered species such as the Matted Flax Lily, Curly Sedge, Striped Legless Lizard, Plains Wanderer, Golden Sun Moth and Growling Grass Frog.

The Merri Creek Management Committee and Friends of Merri Creek have been central in the care and protection of biodiversity within galgi ngarrk. The reserve has restricted public access.

The land is managed by Parks Victoria.



Northpark Nature Reserve, Somerton

The Northpark Nature Reserve is located on Northpark Drive and provides an open space link and walking trail with views of Merri Creek and low escarpments. Wildlife connections under the Cooper Street bridge directly link this reserve to the bababi marning grasslands.

Most of the reserve encompasses sloping grassed areas, rocky escarpments and minor riverine landforms associated with Merri Creek. The trail provides enjoyable respite in a light industrial area with seating and views along the creek.

The 14 ha site has conservation value with Golden Sun Moth and Growling Grass Frog having been recorded in the reserve. A population of Cunningham Skink is also present at this site. The land is managed by Hume City Council.

**John Laffan Reserve (Donnybrook Reserve), Kalkallo**

The 7.6 ha John Laffan Reserve is used by community groups for its sports ovals and pavilion.

The reserve is the site of the confluence of Merri Creek and Kalkallo Creek and connects public land extending south along the west side of Merri Creek. The conservation area in the reserve includes rocky escarpments and outcrops, grasslands, and remnant riparian vegetation including large, old trees with hollows that provide habitat for native animals. It is an area of cultural significance for the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people.

The reserve will be an important link for new communities located in the Donnybrook and the English Street PSP areas. A pedestrian bridge link from the English Street PSP on the east side of Merri Creek will connect to the south-eastern corner of the reserve. The size of and facilities at the reserve are likely to change in the long term, due to the future duplication of Donnybrook Road, and the development of new, larger sporting facilities nearby.

The Merri Creek Management Committee have been central in the protection and restoration of biodiversity in the southern part of the reserve. The land is managed by Hume City Council.



Bells Avenue Wetlands, Kalkallo

The 3 ha Bells Avenue Wetlands reserve is located off Moxham Drive in Kalkallo, just west of Merri Creek. It was created as part of the adjacent housing development.

The wetlands help to remove pollutants from stormwater from local streets and provide habitat for birds and aquatic life. Visitors can relax walking around the wetlands and enjoy the children’s play space at the adjacent Quill Reserve.

The wetlands are set within the Growling Grass Frog conservation area. The land is managed by Hume City Council.



Donnybrook Cemetery and Kalkallo Commons Grassland Reserve

Donnybrook (also known as Kalkallo) Cemetery is located on Malcolm Street at Kalkallo. Established in the late 1890s, it provides an opportunity to explore remnants of local colonial history.

Surrounding Donnybrook Cemetery on the northern, eastern, and southern sides are remnant volcanic plain grasslands known as the Kalkallo Commons Grasslands. The sites provide a critical conservation area for the Gilgai Plains Grasslands, which is nationally and regionally significant. The northern part of the Grasslands can be viewed from Donnybrook Cemetery. Public access is limited to protect the important area for habitat and conservation.

South of the cemetery are the stony knoll grasslands, which show the rocky outcrops created by the volcanic activity that has shaped the Parkland landscape.

Donnybrook Cemetery is managed by the Department of Health through the Remembrance Parks Central Victoria Trust. The Kalkallo Commons Grasslands are managed by Hume City Council.



Porto Kallo Park, Donnybrook

Porto Kallo Park is located on Nature Promenade in Donnybrook and is adjacent to the Porto Kallo wetlands (a stormwater treatment wetland). The Park features a large playground that connects to a long stretch of the marram baba parklands. The Park provides a space for family recreation and a link to the Merri Creek corridor with views of Bald Hill in the distance. The land is managed by Whittlesea City Council.



Land managers

A total of 43% of the Parklands area is currently managed by land managers represented on the Parklands Partnership Group (Table 1). While this land is public, some areas have restricted public access to protect environmental values and critical public assets, and to ensure the safety of the public. The remaining 57% of the area within the Parklands boundary is currently privately-owned land that will be progressively incorporated into the Parklands by 2050.

Table 1: marram baba Merri Creek Regional Parklands area managed by partners in 2022

Land manager	Area (ha)	Proportion of total parkland area
DEECA	43	2%
Parks Victoria	458	17%
City of Whittlesea	98	4%
Hume City Council	101	4%
Melbourne Water Corporation	185	7%
Yarra Valley Water Corporation	172	6%
Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation	112	4%
Total partner-managed area	1,169	43%

2.2 Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung values

The lands and water of the marram baba Merri Creek Regional Parklands are part of the traditional Country of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people, a custodianship that endures today. The name marram baba means ‘body of mother’ in the Woi-wurrung language.

The relationship between the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people and the marram baba landscape is one based on social, ceremonial, religious, ecological, archaeological and historical attachment evidenced in the study area by the ethnohistorical record and contemporary connections to place.

When I am along the Merri Creek I can feel my Mother, Grandmother and Ancestors. It helps me heal in regards to colonisation and the wellbeing of our people.

- Aunty Di Kerr, Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Elder.

marram baba features remnant native grasslands which tell the stories of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung ways of dwelling and land cultivation. Archaeological investigations evidence that galada tamboore (creek waterhole) has significance as a long-term camping location for families, with views of the Merri Creek. Within this landscape, various flora thrived, including kangaroo grass, river red gums, tuberous plants like murnong (yam daisy), and an array of herbs. These grasslands provided a supportive environment for these plant species, creating a vibrant ecosystem with cultural and ecological importance. The Merri Creek, or the merri merri (very rocky) creek, which runs through marram baba, attracted an abundance of animals that were cared for as totems by the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people. In turn, these animals could care for the Wurundjeri, providing them with food, clothing, and spiritual connection to Ancestors.

Like a mother nurtures her children, so we must nurture and look after the rivers creeks and environment; so our children’s children can enjoy the wild life, flora and fauna. We can achieve this by ensuring the revegetation and restoration of creeks and rivers like the Merri Creek waterway, which encourages an abundance of bird life to the area.

- Aunty Doreen Garvey-Wandin, Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Elder

Waterways hold immense cultural, spiritual, social and economic significance to the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people. They are not just physical features of the landscape but represent a living connection to their Ancestors, the land and their way of life. The preservation and protection of these waterways are crucial for the continuation of their cultural heritage and their connection to Country.

Fire was very important to Wurundjeri; firstly, fire provided my people with warmth and was used for cooking; secondly, it was used to eradicate the old and dying vegetation and promote new growth; thirdly, it was used in almost every ceremony practiced by the Wurundjeri.

- Uncle Ronald Terrick, Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Elder.

The growing engagement with cultural fire practices can be seen as an important step toward reconciliation insofar as it recognises the expertise and wisdom of First Nations Peoples in caring for their Country.

The Plan offers an opportunity to better reflect Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung cultural values and land management priorities in future planning. The WWCHAC, which is the Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) for Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country and represents the interests of Traditional Owners, prepared a Position Statement of Cultural values for the marram baba Merri Creek Regional Parklands study area. The Statement outlines seven recommendations to guide the Plan:

1. Strengthen the Management and Protection of Tangible Cultural Heritage

An Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Place (ACHP) is a location with historical or significant contemporary associations for Aboriginal people, but which lacks physical or archaeological materials. It is therefore a location where Aboriginal associations have been documented. marram baba holds an extensive presence of ACHPs that are documented on the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register (VAHR).

A complete assessment of the extent, nature and significance of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Material (ACHM) has not been documented. It is essential that this be assessed to: register previously unidentified ACHM on the VAHR; avoid future impact from parkland infrastructure; and reflect accurate cultural heritage sensitivity mapping. To achieve this objective, WWCHAC seeks support from the Victorian Government, local government and other authorities. In the meantime, it is asked that all partners apply the precautionary principle to avoid any harm.

2. Protect Aesthetic and Natural Attributes

marram baba is significant to Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people, including the diverse landscape features of Merri Creek and Kalkallo Creek, floodplains, billabongs, basalt plains, stony rises, gorges, grasslands, and grassy eucalypt woodlands. Along with preserved ecological biodiversity, this landscape represents ancestral and present-day Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country. The Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung community find spiritual meaning within Country that embodies the living spaces of their Ancestors and which provides a conceptual link to the traditional Country of their people. The Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Elders and representatives would like the public to enjoy marram baba and that visitors are guided to respect the area. All partners must work together to ensure that walking and driving tracks, lookouts and other visitor attractions support, and do not damage, the significant aesthetic and natural attributes of their ancestral place and that necessary protection is put in place.

3. Support the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung community in holistic caring for Country

For the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Community, both cultural significance and connection to Country in accordance with their traditions is sustained through the continuance of traditional on-Country practices and by ensuring the generational conferral of this knowledge. The Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people are the custodians of the marram baba Cultural Landscape and hold the responsibility of caring for this place to ensure seasonal maintenance of the right ecology, habitats for totemic and Creation Ancestors and restoration of the landscape traditionally managed by Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people. Activities such as fire practices, visits and ceremonies should be facilitated as requested by WWCHAC.

4. Conserve and Enhance the Cultural Landscape through Planning Controls

The marram baba Cultural Landscape is valued in its entirety for the spiritual, tangible heritage, archaeological, historical, ecological and living connections it provides the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people and other community members. It is important that development occurring alongside marram baba is not undertaken in a way that compromises the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Landscape. Parklands Partners must facilitate WWCHAC to review the impacts and cumulative impacts of development on a case-by-case basis and ensure WWCHAC has oversight of protective management plans for all aspects of the Parklands. This includes opportunity for WWCHAC to review and develop additional planning controls to protect the marram baba Cultural Landscape.

5. Support and Celebrate Cultural Practice

Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people have been the Traditional Owners and custodians of the land known as marram baba for at least 65,000+ years. For the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Community, significance is sustained through the continuance of traditional practices and ensuring the generational conferral of knowledge. Practicing culture in many ways, including Caring for Country, undertaking archaeological assessments, walking Country, knowledge sharing and celebrations that include private ceremonies and on-Country cultural activities, enables Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people to honour this aspect of their lives. These cultural practices are critical to belonging and connection, as well as fulfilling traditional rights and responsibilities. Partners must respect, support and celebrate cultural practice.

6. Involvement in Decision Making

Recognition and protection of the marram baba Cultural Landscape must be integrated into relevant policies and regulations to ensure adequate protection and cultural respect for the marram baba area. To ensure this is done to the satisfaction of WWCHAC, Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung representatives must be included in all decision making in relation to marram baba from now.

7. Direct Interpretation

It is recommended the use of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung artwork and cultural design elements be reflected in any future buildings, works and infrastructure design in the Parkland. WWCHAC should direct and be involved with these usages.

2.3 History and heritage

There are many culturally significant places throughout the area known as marram baba for the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people. Before European colonisation, the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people lived along Merri Creek, Edgars Creek, Darebin Creek, the Plenty River, and the Maribyrnong River and across the vast and productive grasslands and grassy eucalypt woodlands between these waterways. The creeks, rivers, wetlands and grasslands provided a variety of fish, birdlife, animal and plant foods and the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people moved across the area caring for their known sources of food, fresh water, shelter, and resources. Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung values are vastly different from those of the Europeans when it comes to their connection to land. The Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung lived within defined boundaries and ensured the land could be replenished by moving when needed.

In 1835 John Batman, of English descent, led an exploration party to acquire cheap grazing land in the Port Phillip region. In June of the same year, John Batman met up with senior Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung men and according to his understanding ‘negotiated’ what he regarded as a formal treaty for approximately 243,000 ha. This was not the understanding of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people who had a very different notion of land ownership and would not conceive of Country being sold. John Batman, along with numerous other settlers, began the pastoral expansion of sheep into the grasslands of northern and western Victoria. Two of Batman’s outstations are located within the parklands on the west bank of the Merri Creek. These will be protected and featured as part of Melbourne’s foundation era heritage.

The Merri and Darebin Creek area was a key region of Port Phillip in the very early years of European exploration, pastoral occupation, and farming. It was regarded as the premier farming land with the best watered land adjacent to the Merri Creek and the Darebin Creek in Wollert. The Merri Creek catchment became one of the major agricultural regions in Port Phillip in the middle to late 19th century.

Turnover of pastoral licences in the Settled District was considerable in the 1830s and 1840s, often as a result of sheep diseases, and bankruptcies by small farmers particularly during the 1840s depression. From 1840 the government continued selling lands further up the Merri Creek, in the parishes of Kalkallo and Merriang, along the Darebin Creek at Epping, and along the Plenty River.

Throughout the 1840s the major crop on the small farms, mostly between the Merri Creek and Plenty River, was wheat. In 1845 the Merri Creek had 2,067 acres (836 ha) under wheat, nearly twice as much as the next largest districts.

Fragments of history and archaeology reveal that there were at least two now forgotten mills on the Merri Creek. On the banks of the Merri Creek at Campbellfield archaeological evidence has been found of the Barber & Sons Flour Mill. The Kalkallo Steam Flour Mill was built by 1857 and had ceased production around 1872.

The intensity of dry stone walls in the Epping and Wollert area is the direct consequence of the intensive farming carried out by the small farmers who were able to settle after 1853. The vestiges of many dry stone walls from this early pastoral period – including boundary walls, animal enclosures and early ‘cultivation paddocks’ associated with stony rises across the landscape – still remain in the area.

In more recent years, the area has seen increased industrial and urban development in the form of manufacturing precincts as well as new suburbs to accommodate for the rapidly growing population. The Plan acknowledges the importance of incorporating the history of the Parklands and the opportunity this presents for learning and healing, particularly for those communities located adjacent to the Parklands.

Establishing the Parklands

The concept of formalising a new park along Merri Creek north of Mahoneys Road in Thomastown was first proposed in the 1929 Melbourne Metropolitan Town Planning Commission Report. It was recommended that a continuous parkland progressing north from the confluence of Merri Creek with the Yarra River be implemented, terminating in a large reservation of approximately 344 ha north of Mahoneys Road. This is the area now known as galada tamboore.

Through the 1990s, the importance of the remnant grasslands along Merri Creek became known, and the Government took action to acquire these significant parcels of land – the galgi ngarrk grasslands and bababi marning grasslands. The Hume Freeway re-alignment in 2001 created further opportunities to preserve areas of remnant vegetation. In combination with galada tamboore, this meant that large but discontinuous areas of public land existed along the Merri Creek corridor from the Metropolitan Ring Road to Craigieburn Road East.

The Friends of Merri Creek and Merri Creek Management Committee have long been advocates for the land surrounding Merri Creek. From 1989 the groups have worked closely with the Victorian National Parks Association, Parks Victoria and local environment groups to advocate for larger parkland areas along Merri Creek, produced plans to protect habitat corridors and conservation areas, and advocated for greater protections against rapidly increasing development. The groups continue to advocate for expanded parkland areas, and play an active and passionate role in the restoration, rehabilitation, protection and management of Merri Creek and its environmental values.

Since 2013, the Parklands have been managed under the guidance of the *Merri Creek Marram Baba Strategic Management Plan May 2013* which encompassed approximately 650 ha south of Craigieburn Road. The Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for Melbourne’s Growth Corridors was released in June 2013 and identified the area that now makes up the marram baba Merri Creek Regional Parklands as a major biodiversity area in the North Growth Corridor. The area identified in the BCS extended the biodiversity corridor north of Craigieburn Road, which was the northern extent of the 2013 Plan.

In 2018, the Victorian Government committed to expanding the Merri Creek Parklands to create a new 2,778 ha parkland stretching from Campbellfield to Beveridge in Melbourne’s north. This Plan recognises the expanded commitment and is an important step in implementation of the BCS for the North Growth Corridor.

2.4 Strategic planning context

The future planning, management, and use of the Parklands is informed by state and local government policies and strategies. The policy context for the Parklands is provided in Appendix 2.

Planning scheme zones and overlays

The Parklands lie within the municipalities of Hume City Council, City of Whittlesea and Mitchell Shire Council. The council planning scheme zones and overlays are shown below (Figure 3 and Figure 4).

Much of the private land within the Parklands boundary is zoned Rural Conservation Zone, which aims to protect areas of conservation and biodiversity value. The zoning was enacted as part of the Melbourne Strategic Assessment (MSA) commitment to protect designated Conservation Areas. Other land adjacent to or within the Parklands boundary is Urban Growth Zone, Industrial Zone and Comprehensive Development Zone. The planning for some of these areas, that were established before growth area planning, rely on development plans rather than PSPs. Urban development in these areas will have implications for the Parklands in terms of land inclusion, visual amenity, environmental protection as well as providing opportunities for trail connection and improved surveillance.

Other planning scheme zones within the parkland boundary include:

- Urban Floodway Zone along parts of Merri Creek and its tributaries
- Public Conservation and Resource Zone designed to protect and conserve the natural environment, provide facilities that assist in public education and interpretation of the natural environment and provide for appropriate resource-based uses
- Public Park and Recreation Zone designed to recognise areas for public recreation and open space, protect and conserve areas of significance and provide for commercial uses
- Areas of Public Use Zone (Service and Utility), Urban Growth Zone, Special Use Zone, Township Zone, Comprehensive Development Zone, Industrial Zone, Transport Zone, Commercial Zone, Farming Zone, General Residential Zone, and Green Wedge Zone. This zoning represents a legacy of past land uses and is not necessarily the intended future zoning of the Parklands.

The Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO) applies to a large portion of the Parklands and is designed to ensure that development is compatible with identified environmental values. In some instances the ESO that applied to Merri Creek was removed because of the planning scheme amendment that implemented the relevant PSP, leading to the uneven coverage of the ESO along the creek. The Land Subject to Inundation Overlay and Rural Floodway Overlay relate to Merri Creek and its tributaries. There are also several Heritage Overlay sites throughout the Parklands that apply to areas of post-1850 heritage.

There is an opportunity to apply a more consistent approach to the planning controls that will:

- conserve and enhance the cultural landscape as recommended by the Wurundjeri Woiwurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation
- apply a simpler consistent set of zones and overlays to support the waterways and parklands holistically. This will enable clearer decision-making for development plans and development applications within and adjoining the parklands.

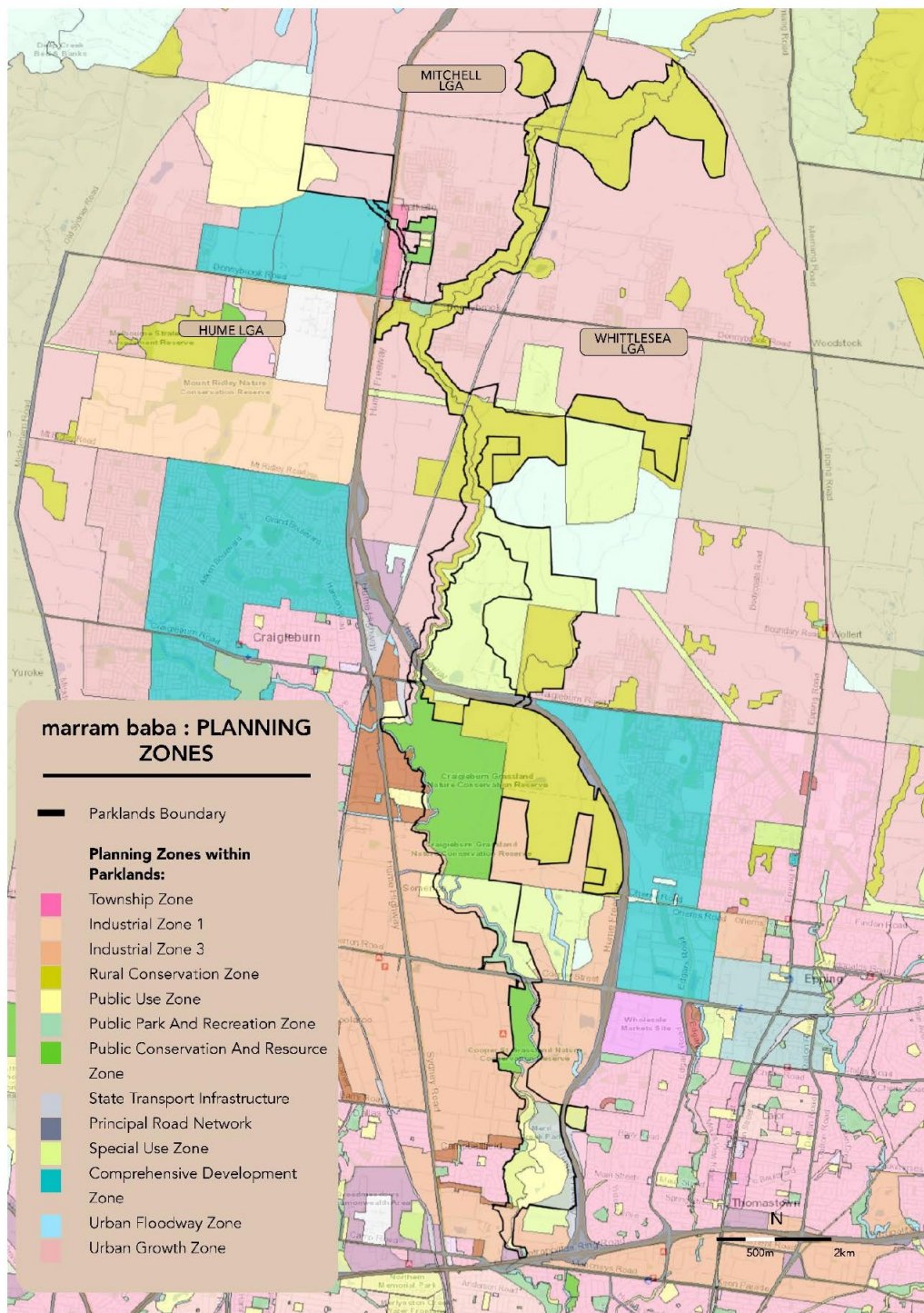


Figure 3: Planning scheme zones

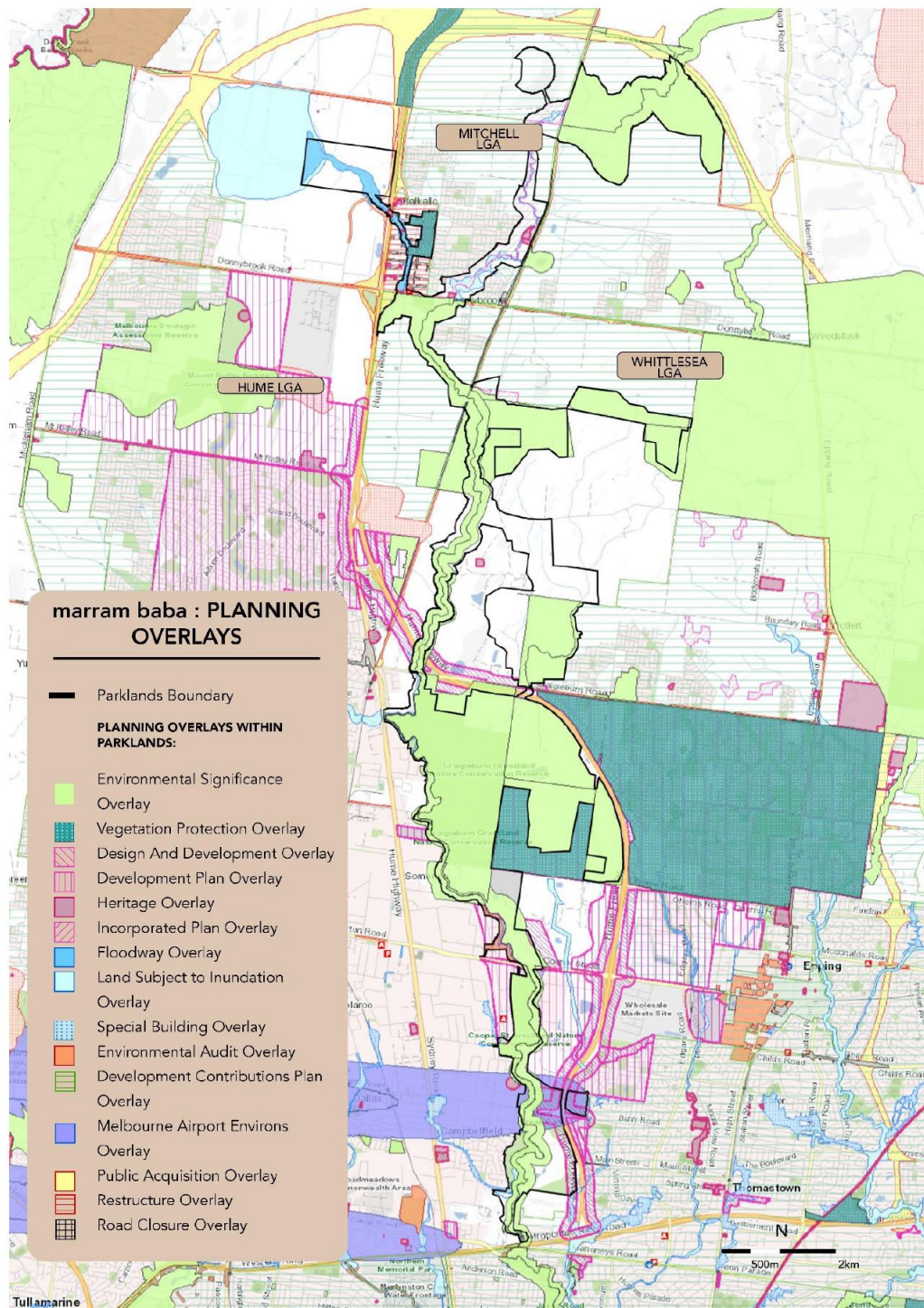


Figure 4: Planning scheme overlays

Precinct Structure Plans

A large part of the Parklands is in the North Growth Corridor which will see increased population growth and urbanisation. The North Growth Corridor Plan, released in 2012, provides a broad land use framework to guide the future planning and development of new precincts to accommodate growth. Before development can occur, detailed planning for each precinct must be undertaken in the form of a PSP, which are prepared and incorporated into Planning Schemes as a subsequent step. Many of the PSPs that are relevant to the Parklands have already been finalised.

Completed PSPs were reviewed in developing the Future Directions Plan. The planning for some PSPs is yet to commence. The relevant PSPs are shown in Figure 25 and include:

- Merrifield Central Employment Area Precinct Structure Plan 2008
- Lockerbie Precinct Structure Plan 2012
- English Street Precinct Structure Plan 2015
- Craigieburn North Employment Area Precinct Structure Plan 2016
- Donnybrook - Woodstock Precinct Structure Plan 2017
- Shenstone Park Precinct Structure Plan 2021
- Wollert Precinct Structure Plan 2017
- Northern Quarries Precinct Structure Plan (pending)
- Merrifield North Employment Area Precinct Structure Plan (pending)
- Craigieburn South Employment Area Precinct Structure Plan (pending)
- Cooper Street West Precinct Structure Plan (pending).

The Plan is consistent with the approved PSPs and recognises that new communities will benefit from an integrated open space network that provides a distinctive character and amenity. PSPs are the key plans guiding future use, subdivision and development. This includes any subsequent Development Plans that have been approved generally in accordance with the PSP.

The PSPs provide the strategic and statutory basis for land inclusion and will facilitate:

- Protection of BCS Conservation Areas including habitat for Growling Grass Frog and Nature Conservation Areas (nationally endangered woodland and grassland ecosystems that are home to many threatened species)
- The protection and recognition of areas of cultural significance
- Development that sensitively responds to, improves community access to, and protects Merri Creek and tributaries within the Parklands
- Enhanced public and active transport connections for existing and future communities into and through the Parklands, including shared trails
- Development of a network of open space along the creek corridors as well as east-west parts of the network, and a variety of recreational open spaces that adjoin or sit close to the Parklands
- Establishing residential, commercial, and industrial interfaces that will influence the character and visual amenity of the Parklands
- Identified view lines and high points that respond to the existing landscape
- Delivery of essential infrastructure including road networks, creek crossings, services, and stormwater treatment, retardation and drainage

Future pending PSPs will consider the vision and strategic directions of this Plan to support the ongoing creation of the Parklands. This includes seeking opportunities to widen the parklands in

narrow sections to support wildlife corridors and shared use walking and cycling path access.

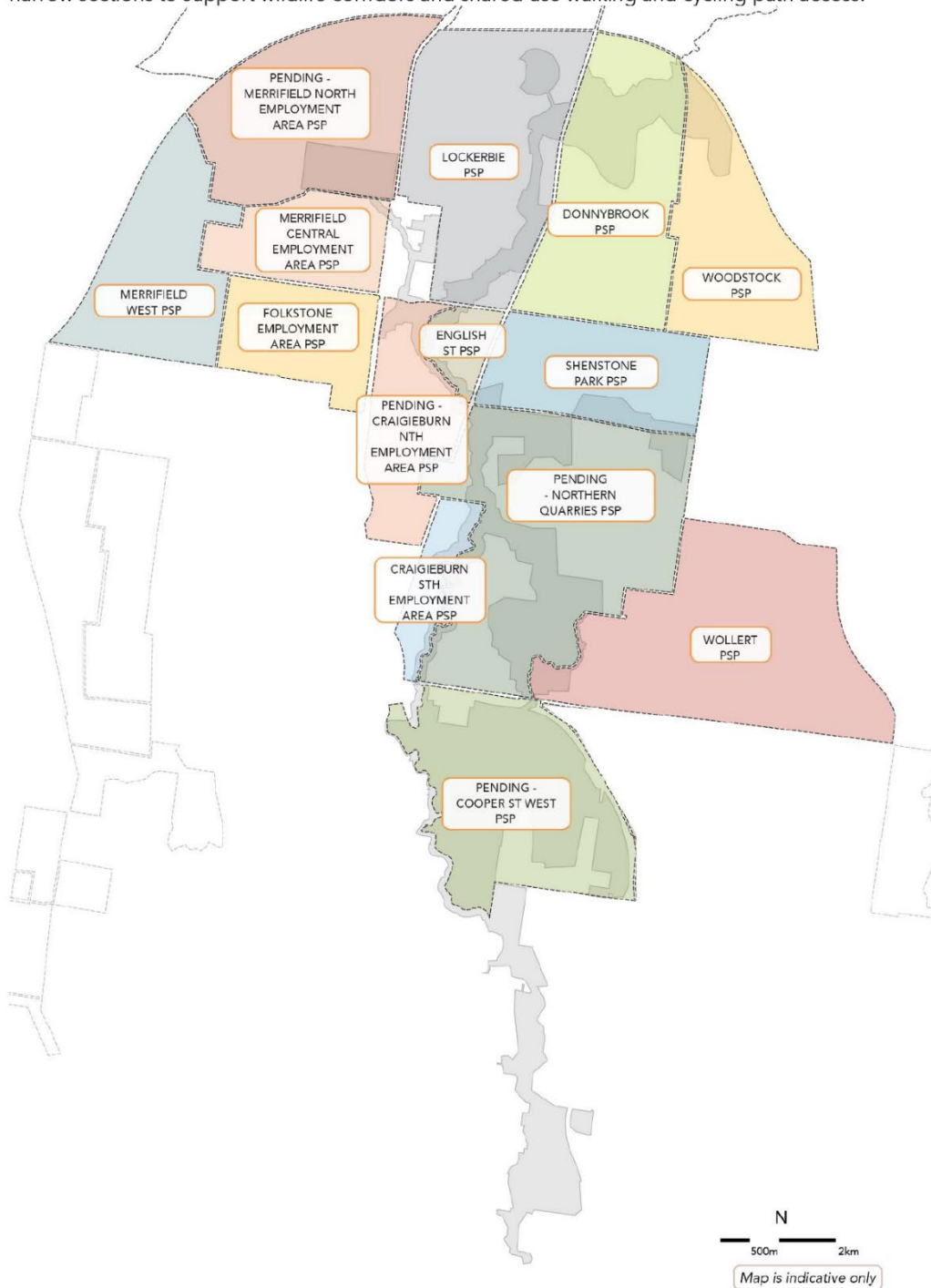


Figure 5: PSP locations (only applies to Parklands that lie north of Craigieburn Road East).

2.5 Drivers for change

The Plan responds to key trends and drivers for change that influence the current and future planning and management of the Parklands.

Traditional Owner self-determination

Aboriginal self-determination places Aboriginal people at the centre of decision-making around the issues that affect their lives. This is a central policy principle of the Victorian Government. The Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018-2023 states that the Victorian Government must ‘transform its systems and structures to support self-determination and improve outcomes for Aboriginal peoples. This applies across multiple objectives including 18.1- Increase the recognition and enjoyment of Aboriginal land, water and cultural heritage rights’

Protecting environmental values

The endorsed BCS for Melbourne’s Growth Corridors identified Conservation Areas and outcomes required under the Commonwealth’s *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act 1999*.

Some of Melbourne’s most threatened animal and plant species live in the open spaces, waterways, and wetlands of the Parklands. Within the Parklands communities of Matted Flax-lily (*Dianella amoena*) and River Swamp Wallaby-grass (*Amphibromus fluitans*) survive, which are listed under the EPBC Act. Curly Sedge (*Carex tasmanica*) is also present within the Parklands and is listed as endangered under Victoria’s *Flora and Fauna Guarantee (FFG) Act 1988*. There are several important and threatened fauna species in the Parklands, ranging from common species to critically endangered species. Significant populations of the vulnerable Growling Grass Frog, Golden Sun Moth and Striped Legless Lizard are present in the Parklands.

The Parklands are a critical area of protected habitat for native plants and animals in the rapidly urbanising North Growth Corridor. The management of the Parklands must protect the natural environment from the competing demands of a growing urban population.

Community health and wellbeing

Access to nature has significant benefits in improving mental³ and physical wellbeing⁴. There has been substantial research into the health and wellbeing benefits of open space, as well as the intergenerational impacts of lack of access to open space for low-income households and communities. Approximately 260,000 people are forecast to live in the area covered by the North Growth Corridor Plan, so the Parklands will play an increasingly important role in providing access to nature for existing and new communities.

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of public open space in supporting people coping with personal and community stress. Additionally, the pandemic, and the restrictions on movement that were put in place as part of the public health response, highlighted the inequity of community access to green space⁵. Research published during the Melbourne COVID-19 lockdown illustrated the wide disparity in access to green space close to people’s homes. Hume City Council⁶, City of Whittlesea⁷ and Mitchell Shire Council⁸ recognise the important role a healthy natural environment plays in supporting community health and wellbeing in their strategic plans.

³ Francis, J., Wood, L. J., Knuiman, M., & Giles-Corti, B. (2012). Quality or quantity? Exploring the relationship between Public Open Space attributes and mental health in Perth, Western Australia. *Social science & medicine*, 74(10), 1570-1577.

⁴ Koohsari, M. J., Mavoa, S., Villanueva, K., Sugiyama, T., Badland, H., Kaczynski, A. T., ... & Giles-Corti, B. (2015). Public open space, physical activity, urban design and public health: Concepts, methods and research agenda. *Health & place*, 33, 75-82.

⁵ Zandieh, R., Nieuwenhuijsen, M., & Zandieh, M. (2020). Adaptability of Public Spaces and Mental Health Inequalities during the COVID-19 Pandemic. *The Journal of Urban Design and Mental Health*, 6(5).

⁶ Stronger Hume COVID-19 Adaptation and Resilience Plan 2022

⁷ Municipal Pandemic Readiness and Recovery Plan

⁸ Covid-19 Community Recovery Plan 2021

The establishment of the Parklands will create a connected chain of parks and increase and enhance access for the community to green space. It will provide enhanced opportunities for the community to connect with nature and engage in recreation supporting improved physical and mental health and wellbeing.

Climate change

As the climate changes, Greater Melbourne will experience rising average temperatures, more frequent and longer heatwaves, and an increased frequency and severity of grassfires and bushfires. It is expected that droughts and extreme storms will become more frequent and severe, resulting in increased pressure on green spaces and more flooding. The impact of heatwaves is exacerbated by urban development which causes the ‘urban heat island effect’ (UHI)⁹, where temperatures are higher in urban areas than surrounding rural areas.

The Victorian Government’s Regional Climate Change Adaptation Strategy¹⁰ highlights the increasing importance of open spaces, like the Parklands, in enhancing climate resilience in the community. Green spaces and water bodies can reduce the impact of rising temperatures and heatwaves by preserving permeable, vegetated areas that allow evapotranspiration to occur and provide respite by increasing shaded areas. Currently, tree canopy cover in the Parklands is 23% of the total Parkland area. In addition to improving landscape and community resilience to climate change, the Parklands will assist in cooling the surrounding urban areas, which are particularly vulnerable to urban heat. The Parklands also play a role in mitigating flooding, which will reduce the impacts of extreme rain events on the community and infrastructure.

⁹ Melbourne Water. (2021, November 17). Urban cooling. Retrieved from Melbourne Water: melbournewater.com.au/water-data-and-education/environmental-issues/enhancing-liveability-our-commitment/urban-cooling.

¹⁰ Regional Adaptation Stakeholder Committee. (2021). Greater Melbourne Regional Climate Change Adaptation Strategy. Greater Melbourne: Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning.

3 Parklands planning process

Understanding what makes the Parklands unique and what is important to the community and visitors has been essential for preparing the Plan.

The Plan has been drafted to support the cultural value recommendations set out by the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation (WWCHAC), and following this, stakeholder and community priorities and values.

3.1 Community consultation

Community engagement was undertaken throughout July and August 2022 to understand local knowledge and priorities for the parklands. This stage of engagement helped shape the vision, guiding principles and strategic directions for the parklands. A second round of engagement was held in April and May 2023 to seek feedback on the Draft Plan. Participants were encouraged to provide feedback via an online survey, a map survey, written submissions or at an online community consultation session.

The results of the online survey revealed the following

- 93% were ‘very supportive’ or ‘supportive’ of the vision for the parklands
- 84% felt that the Plan represents ‘very well’ or ‘well’ the importance of Aboriginal culture and commitment to work together with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people
- 88% felt that the Plan represents ‘very well’ or ‘well’ the prioritisation of protecting plants and animals
- 88% supported longer walking and cycling trails, 84% supported connecting trails to other networks, 67% support shorter walking loops. Of the Punjabi and Arabic survey responses, 37% support longer walking and cycling trails, 33% support shorter walking loops, and 30% support connecting the trail to other networks

Overall, the feedback from the different methods of engagement showed high levels of support for the Plan and the vision for the Parklands.

Participants felt that the Plan positively reflects the importance of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung cultural values and protection of biodiversity. Responses supported Traditional Owner language and artwork in the Parklands, as well as resourcing to facilitate Traditional Owner management and cultural land management practices.

A recurring issue identified by participants was the need to widen narrow areas or ‘pinch points’ to ensure there is enough land to support habitat connections and trail connections. There were several requests to create stronger links to Aitken Creek, Malcolm Creek, Bald Hill and the potential wallan wallan Regional Parklands.

There were some differing opinions around access to the Parklands. Some participants were supportive of more trail connections and facilities, while others wanted nature prioritised and to avoid a trail on both sides of the parklands. While some participants noted that conservation areas should be dog-free. There were concerns raised about cycle paths and conflicts with pedestrians and wildlife. Suggestions around this included separation of cycling and pedestrians in some areas, slow traffic areas, adequate widths for shared use paths, and trails outside of high priority conservation areas.

Some recurring feedback was provided around broader walking and cycling, connections to the potential wallan wallan Regional Parklands and along creek tributaries. The connection to the existing Merri Creek Trail was identified as a priority.

There was support amongst participants for community engagement in the Parklands such as through volunteering, community events, tours and activities. Supporting the parkland experience with interpretation signage including ecological, cultural and heritage stories was considered important by participants. Including links to digital content was also suggested such as QR codes for further information, audio walks, maps of park features, soundscapes and local stories.

Provision of facilities to accommodate the diversity of people within the community was important to participants. This included access for wheelchairs and opportunities for people with disabilities to visit the Parklands and participate in caring for the environment.

Some participants noted that visitor facilities located close to the edge of the Parklands would help to maintain sweeping views. Supporting these facilities with appropriate car parking was also raised.

A number of landowners raised concerns about the inclusion of their land in the Parklands and advised they did not know it needed to be protected and managed for conservation in perpetuity in accordance with the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for Melbourne’s Growth Corridors (2013).

Monitoring and research activities in the Parklands was identified as important to ongoing management activities. There was support for immediate and long-term conservation-oriented land management including private land before it is included in the Parklands.

A number of participants noted the 2050 timeframe to complete parkland land inclusion and requested that this be accelerated due to the detrimental biodiversity impacts the delay creates.

A selection of quotes include:

“This local community is diverse and is open to learning about indigenous ways of life. I would love to see more First Nations culture around the creek - art, stories, ways to respect the nature around us.”

“The Parklands are an opportunity to involve the local community and to support their learning about the indigenous history and culture of the area as well as the landscape and the biodiversity it supports.”

“Conservation of the existing indigenous biodiversity should be your number one priority. Once it’s gone it’s gone forever”

“Urban growth is creating concrete jungles. Need accessible parkland side by side with natural landscapes”

“Connection to parkland via public transport and lots of parking areas at [the] entrance.”

“People (and animals) need connectivity and to experience and appreciate the endangered grasslands.”

“Use of volcanic rocks as an architectural theme throughout at least the northern half of the Parklands”.

“The park is way too narrow, especially highlighted in some sections”

“Thank you for incorporating Bald Hill in the park! Is this connection wide enough as a biolink?”

“Providing information in signage and online about where paths lead so visitors know they can get out or plan their journey”

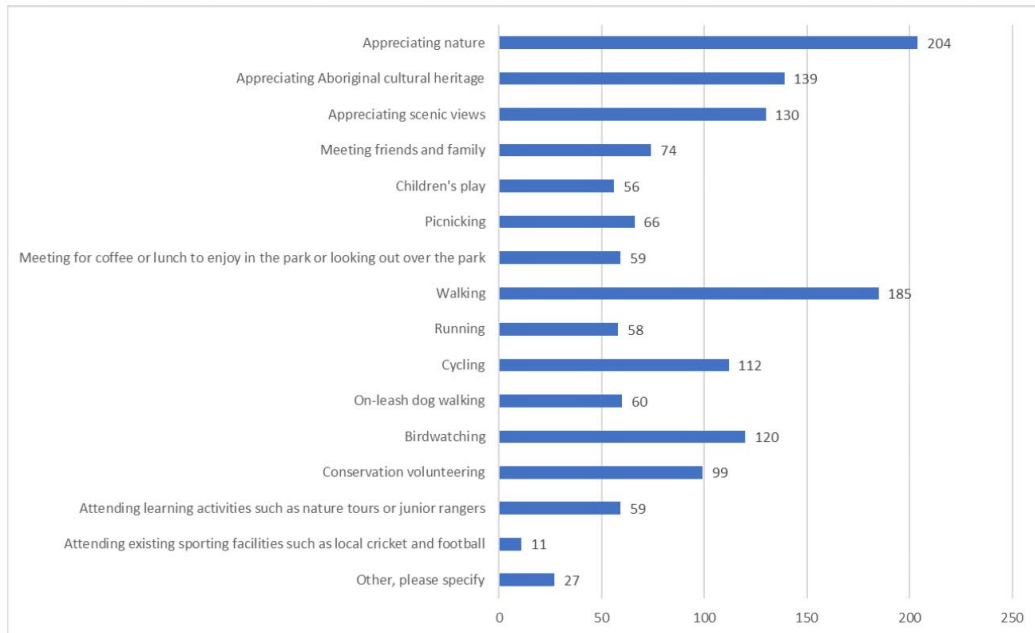


Figure 6: Activities that respondents would enjoy doing in marram baba Merri Creek Regional Parklands



Figure 7: Survey participants at marram baba Merri Creek Regional Parklands

3.2 Strategic opportunities

Understanding what makes the Parklands unique has been essential for preparing the Plan. The key considerations identified below bring together research, analysis and engagement outcomes to help shape the vision, guiding principles and strategic future directions for the Parklands.

1. The Volcanic Plain – A special parklands landscape

The Parklands lie in the landscape of the Victorian Volcanic Plain on Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country. This landscape was formed by lava flows; consisting of grasslands, open grassy woodlands, extinct volcanic cones, stony rises, escarpments, mineral springs and wetlands.

The Plan

- showcases the unique landscape setting and the processes that have formed it
- provides connection to Country and promotes caring for Country principles guided by Woi-wurrung cultural values

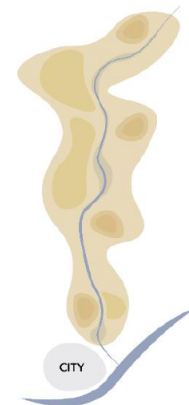


2. Merri Creek – A connection from the ranges to the city

Merri Creek rises in the forested foothills of the Great Dividing Range north of Wallan at Heathcote Junction. It flows for 70 km across and within basalt plains. It passes through rural farmland, then the fast-developing residential suburbs on the edge of the outer northern suburbs of Melbourne, and the active quarries, industrial warehouses and arterial roads in Melbourne’s north. Merri Creek eventually makes its way through the inner suburbs and meets the birrarung Yarra River at Dights Falls, an important historical confluence for the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people.

The Plan

- sets a vision for the parklands as the ‘preeminent nature corridor running through Melbourne’s north’
- contributes to a continuous, connected wildlife corridor and parkland experience from inner Melbourne to the Great Dividing Range by connecting it from the Merri Creek parklands in the south to the potential wallan wallan Regional Parklands in the north
- leverages the southern section of the Merri Creek corridor as a well-known and popular active transport route for commuter and recreational users and linear parklands

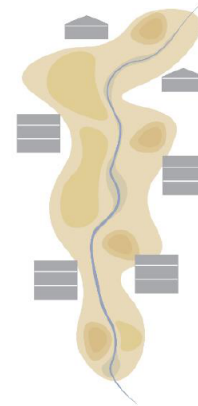


3. The Parklands - From rural to urbanised corridor

Showcasing an ancient landscape with ongoing Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung connections, the Parklands sit amongst a corridor that is rapidly changing from open farmland with fragments of remnant native vegetation to dense residential and industrial developments. Rapid urbanisation is in the growth areas that surround the Parklands including the creation of new Cloverton city, putting pressure on the Parklands as a refuge for the threatened volcanic plain grasslands, woodlands and fauna species like Growling Grass Frog and Golden Sun Moth.

The Plan

- focuses on the Parklands as one connected landscape buffered from adjacent development impacts
- protects, enhances and sustains the Parklands habitat values



4. Connection to nature

As urban growth continues, the Parklands provide an opportunity to connect the new and existing urban areas to nature, and connect existing and planned open spaces within these areas. Ecological links can also be fostered through these connections.

The Plan

- supports community connections to the Parklands and enhances community appreciation of Merri Creek, its viewlines, soundscapes, seasons and landscape qualities
- defines the Parklands as regional ecological link along the Merri Creek and supports broader ecological links along its tributaries of Kalkallo, Curly Sedge, Aitken and Malcolm Creeks



5. Opportunity for activation – key visitor areas

The ecological and cultural significance of the landscapes in the Parklands mean there are areas where it is not appropriate to encourage high levels of visitation by people. However, to prevent degradation and ensure ongoing management, strategies must find a manageable balance between no-go zones, access points, viewing points and landscapes that visitors can travel through. The Plan identifies several potential key visitor areas that are places of natural importance, landscape significance and potential recreation activity. They will form a string of connecting points along the Parklands for visitors to enjoy.

The Plan

- prioritises flourishing nature and connecting people to different landscape experiences, viewpoints, rest points and walking loops
- takes advantage of existing and co-located visitor facilities to provide gateways and activation of the Parklands
- showcases the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung cultural landscape and places that have stories to tell. It celebrates inclusivity for community groups and people from different backgrounds and abilities.



6. Connecting the Parklands – North / South and East / West

As the urban areas around the Parklands grow, there is need and opportunity to provide better connection points and wayfinding between east and west and from north to south to support 20-minute neighbourhoods and regional access. The Plan envisions a connected Parklands that allows for travel along the existing Merri Creek Trail and galada tamboore pathway, and new trails extending through the Parklands to Kalkallo and Beveridge in the north.

The Plan

- supports an expanded Merri Creek Trail as a key shared use path in Greater Melbourne that will connect into the wider regional trail network. Biodiversity and cultural values are prioritised over the trail and in pinch points that reduce trail location opportunities more investment in adjacent land and alternative design solutions is required
- supports new trails and connection points with links into the communities to the east and west, providing commuter connections and enabling recreational walkers and cyclists to enjoy the Parklands trails.



4 The Parklands Plan

This section sets out the vision, guiding principles and strategic directions for progressive parklands establishment, protection and management to be achieved by 2050.

Vision

marram baba Merri Creek Regional Parklands is the preeminent natural corridor running through Melbourne’s north on Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country, connecting and nurturing culture, nature, water, and people.

The vision for marram baba Merri Creek Regional Parklands was developed by the Parklands Partnership Group and will guide parklands establishment, protection and management.

Guiding principles

Five principles were established to support the Parklands vision and guide the development of the Plan. The five interconnected principles underpin the Plan and will assist Parkland Partners in the future delivery and management of the Parklands.

Cultural values

The Plan recognises that the lands, water, sky, plants, animals and more that make up the marram baba Merri Creek Regional Parklands are part of the traditional Country of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people, a custodianship that endures today. The Plan supports self-determination priorities of the Traditional Owners of the land around Merri Creek, as represented by the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation (WWCHAC). The Plan supports the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people to care for their Country and the goal of future management of the Parklands by the WWCHAC.

The Parklands will protect significant cultural values, educate the community and visitors about the Aboriginal history of the area, and promote Aboriginal cultural heritage and the importance and continued custodianship of Country.

Natural values

Natural values include habitat for native plants and animals, creeks and wetlands, and geological features such as volcanic cones, gorges and stony rises. The Plan supports these natural values and biodiversity and waterway health outcomes by linking, protecting, maintaining and enhancing the natural environmental values of the Parklands. The Parklands will create new opportunities for environmental management of these natural values, such as establishing protected Growling Grass Frog habitat and habitat for other matters of national environmental significance including the Golden Sun Moth and Striped Legless Lizard.

The Parklands will foster healthy ecosystems and provide opportunities for people to connect with nature, contributing to improved community education and nature stewardship, social connections and health and wellbeing outcomes.

Access, recreation and enjoyment

The Parklands provide open space in the North Growth Corridor and the opportunity for people to connect with and appreciate the natural environment.

The Plan supports access into and through the Parklands by providing enhanced visitor areas, trails and creek crossings, with opportunities to immerse in nature and learn about the natural environment and cultural values. The Plan sets out strategic directions to promote safe and inclusive visitor experiences.

Resilience

The Plan sets out strategic directions to increase resilience to climate change within the community, the natural environment and parkland infrastructure. The Plan recognises the substantial ecosystem services (i.e. benefits provided to humans by natural environments) provided by the Parklands. Ecosystem services include flood mitigation, stormwater and air purification, urban cooling, noise reduction, carbon sequestration and wildlife habitat. These ecosystem services are increasingly important as the population around the Parklands grows.

The Plan will help reduce threats to the Parklands from climate hazards by promoting the planting of climate-appropriate plant species, good design and maintenance of landscapes and visitor infrastructure, and integrated water management. The Parklands will provide an important refuge for animals, particularly as urban growth continues in the areas surrounding the Parklands.

The establishment of connected parklands with areas for people to gather, recreate and socialise in nature will enhance community health and wellbeing and build social connections to support community resilience. Wherever possible these areas should be shaded by the canopy of appropriate species of tree.

Governance and management

The Plan supports a collaborative governance approach to planning, establishment and management of the Parklands.

The Plan guides the collective and individual roles of current and future ongoing land managers. This includes the principle that land managers are considered transitional until such time that the WWCHAC has been provided the capacity and resources to take on management of the Parklands.

The Plan also provides strategic directions to increase community involvement in ongoing parkland establishment, protection and management.

Themes

The strategic directions for the Parklands have been developed under six themes:

- Culture and identity
- Biodiversity
- Water and landscape
- Climate resilience
- Access and movement
- Experience

The themes and guiding principles that underpin the Plan are illustrated below (Figure 8). The themes connect to and will support the guiding principles across natural and cultural values; resilience; access, recreation and enjoyment; and governance and management.

The following section outlines the existing context and planning for the Parklands across the six themes. The strategic directions and actions within each theme will guide implementation of the Plan to establish the Parklands.

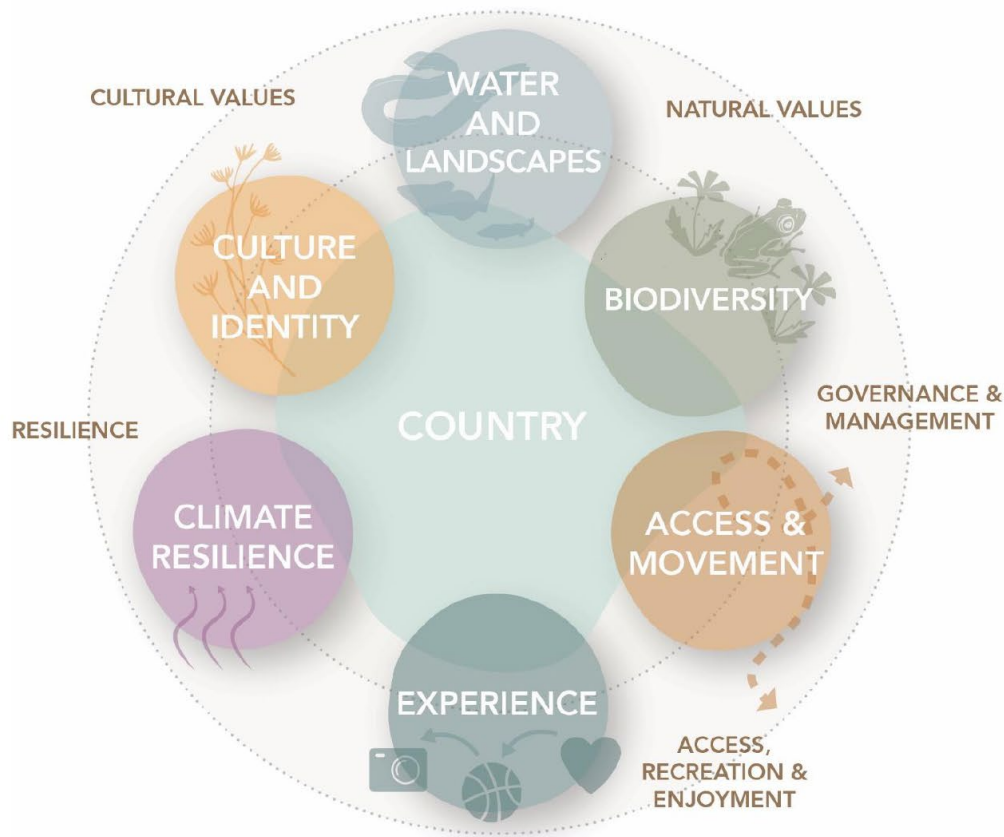


Figure 8: The interrelated principles and themes for the Future Directions Plan. The guiding principles are linked to strategic directions for each theme in the following section.

4.1 Culture and identity

‘marram baba’ is significant to Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people, including the diverse landscape features of Merri Creek and Kalkallo Creek, floodplains, billabongs, basalt plains, stony rises, gorges, and grasslands and grassy eucalypt woodlands. Along with preserved ecological biodiversity, this landscape represents ancestral and present-day Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country. The Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Community find spiritual meaning within Country that embodies the living spaces of their ancestors and which provides a conceptual link to the traditional Country of their people.

Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation 2022

The identity of the marram baba Merri Creek Regional Parklands is tied to the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung’s continued custodianship and culture, the landscapes of the Parklands and the biodiversity it supports. Embedding this cultural identity in the Parklands establishment, protection and management is essential to build a sense of place that reflects Traditional Ownership and enhances social connection, participation and social inclusion.

The landscape identity of the Parklands is characterised by the relatively flat volcanic plain formed by lava flows from the now extinct volcanoes at Bald Hill, Mount Fraser and Hayes Hill. The lava flows created volcanic landscape features such as stony rises, old lava flows and extinct volcanic cones.

The distinctive visual landscape is linked by the course of Merri Creek. The confluence of Merri Creek and its tributaries are an important aspect of the visual landscape in the Parklands. The formation of the modern Merri Creek and its tributaries was created by erosion of the basalt plans, which has created the distinctive bluffs, escarpments, cliffs and short sections of gorge that characterise the waterways in the Parklands.

The landscape supports grassland, riparian shrubland and grassy eucalypt woodland, and is home to a range of endangered and vulnerable native animals including the Striped Legless Lizard, Growling Grass Frog, Golden Sun Moth and the critically endangered Swift Parrot and Regent Honeyeater.

The scale of the landscape features and vegetation communities of the Parklands differs markedly to the urbanised lower reaches of Merri Creek, south of the Metropolitan Ring Road, and to the wetlands and steeper headwaters of the upper reaches of Merri Creek around Wallan and beyond to the southern slopes of the Great Dividing Range.

The agricultural identity of land surrounding the Parklands is being replaced with a suburban identity. This will comprise new areas of housing, new commercial districts including the large Cloverton Metropolitan Activity Centre, continued quarrying, and an expansion of industrial precincts and freight and logistics hubs. The importance of the northern metropolitan region in providing these essential functions reinforces the importance and identity of the Parklands in providing a place of nature and calm.

The Parklands will retain its natural and cultural identity amidst the transformation of the industry structure, employment, population, and demographic profile of surrounding areas. These changes will impact how the growing and culturally diverse population perceives and experiences the Parklands, and will influence the sense of place or place identity of emerging communities.

Parkland establishment, protection and management will aim to celebrate the Parklands’ identity and invite the community to connect with and care for the environment. The Plan will support and encourage community members to engage with one another in enjoying, protecting, enhancing, and valuing the Parklands.

Strategic directions - culture and identity

The future implementation of the Plan is guided by the following strategic directions:

Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Landscape

- The marram baba cultural landscape is valued in its entirety for the spiritual, tangible heritage, archaeological, historical, ecological and living connections it provides the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung community. It is important that development in areas adjacent to the Parklands is not undertaken in a way that compromises the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung cultural landscape
- Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung cultural values are embedded in Parklands establishment, protection and management. The WWCHAC will become equal partners to prepare for the long-term goal of returning Country to the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung community
- The Parklands sustain the continuance of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung traditional practices and the generational conferral of knowledge through activities including Caring for Country, undertaking archaeological assessments, walking Country, knowledge sharing and celebrations that include private ceremonies and on-Country cultural activities. These cultural practices enhance feelings of belonging and connection, as well as providing opportunities to fulfill traditional rights and responsibilities
- Cultural fire management recognises that fire allows for healing and caring for Country. Burning is the cultural responsibility of Traditional Owners and applies the approach of right fire, right time, and right way for the right cultural reasons. There are substantial positive impacts to Traditional Owner wellbeing and confidence through providing access and authority to practice on Country
- Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung will identify special places of significance for protection within a whole landscape of significance. Areas can be set aside as Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country Cultural Reserves. Lookouts, trails, and other visitor infrastructure is to support, and not damage, the significant aesthetic and natural attributes of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung ancestral place and necessary protection is to be put in place
- Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung language is supported for naming of the marram baba Parklands and feature areas. This acknowledges custodianship and enhances community knowledge of the cultural importance of the Parklands
- The Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung marram baba artwork and cultural design elements are reflected in any future buildings, works and infrastructure design in the Parklands. Extended roll out of the marram baba signage strategy developed in consultation with WWCHAC will enhance public knowledge of the cultural importance and sensitivity of the marram baba cultural landscape.

Biophysical identity

- Establishment, protection and good management of the Parklands celebrates the diverse landscapes, geology and natural features within the Parklands, including Merri Creek and its tributaries, wetlands, volcanic cones, stony rises, grasslands and grassy eucalypt woodlands
- Provide opportunities for people to connect with the biophysical identity of the Parklands through sensory and immersive experiences, from the open and expansive grasslands to the sheltered and quiet gorge at galada tamboore, and by showcasing the scenic views and inviting visual connection to the volcanic, creek and city landscape.

Urban identity and heritage

- Heritage sites and historic values within the Parklands associated with the farming and industrial heritage of the area are acknowledged and protected through design, maintenance and interpretation of features including dry stone walls, the remains of John Batman’s outstation, and other historic values identified during parkland planning
- Planned expansion of industrial precincts and freight and logistics activity (Plan Melbourne Northern Metro Region) will need to maximise enhancement of the Parklands interface and

enable effective, safe connections by implementing high quality design. Workers from the employment areas will benefit from well-designed connections to nature

- The Parklands will weave through Cloverton - a new Metropolitan Activity Centre - that will celebrate the Parklands role as a distinctive area of conservation in a major new commercial district.

Community connection

- The Parklands provide opportunities for the diverse communities living and working in surrounding areas to connect to and increase their knowledge and stewardship of the Parklands through interpretation, education, and immersion opportunities (e.g. tours, events, volunteering, recreation and environmental groups).

Lead actions

The following actions have been developed in consultation with the Parklands Partnership Group and reflect the priorities of the land managers.

Actions - Culture and identity
1. Protect the marram baba cultural landscape as a priority. Develop protection criteria and plans with WWCHAC oversight. These will be self-determined by Traditional Owners.
2. Celebrate and share Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung culture through naming, signage and interpretation, artwork, demonstrations of traditional cultural ecological management of the land, and talks and walks on Country.
3. Develop a cohesive branding strategy for the Parklands that incorporates the marram baba artwork of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people and supports a sense of place, biophysical identity, cultural and environmental values, wayfinding, and increased community awareness and stewardship of the Parklands.

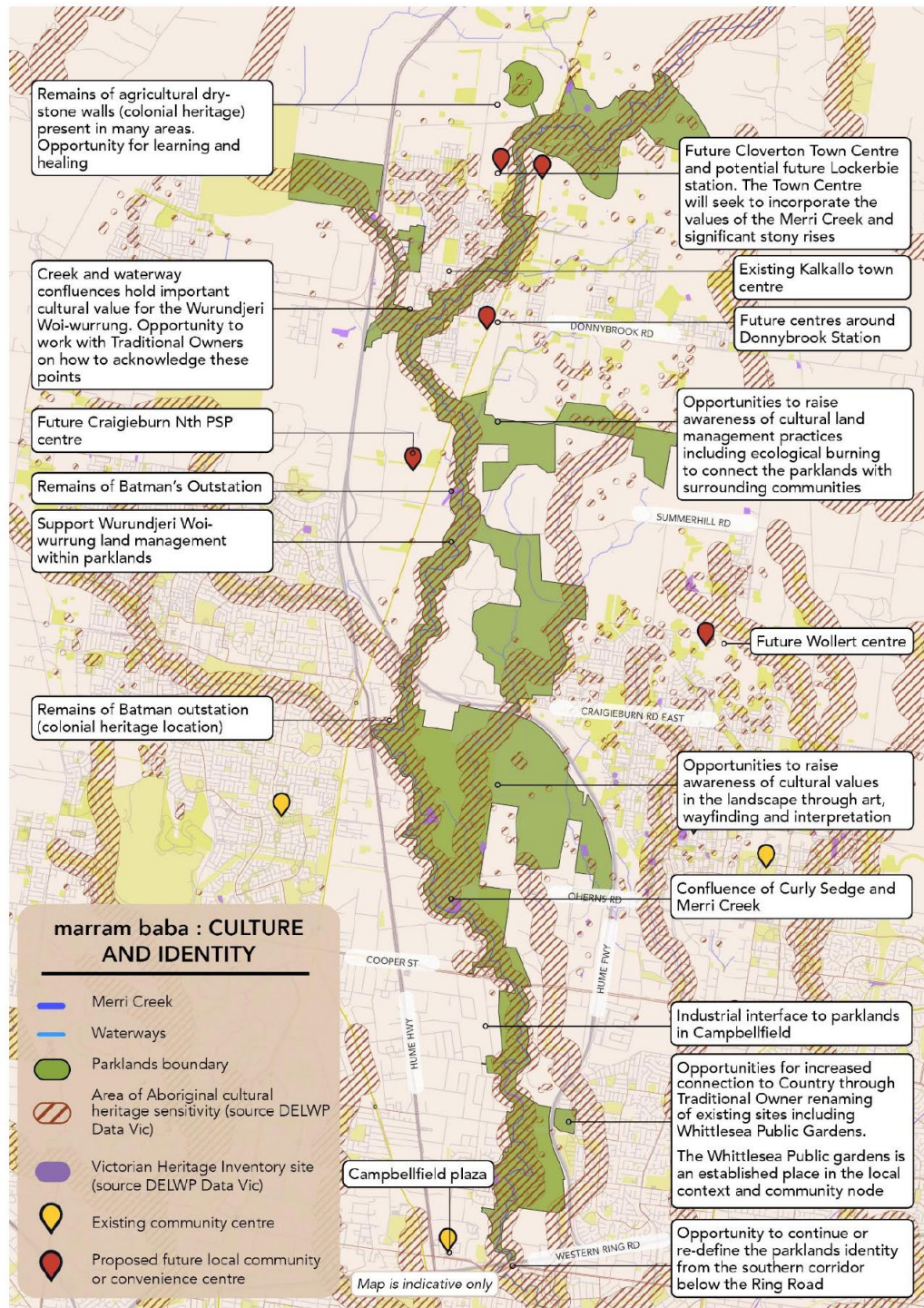


Figure 9: Key features that define the cultural identity of the Parklands and management objectives

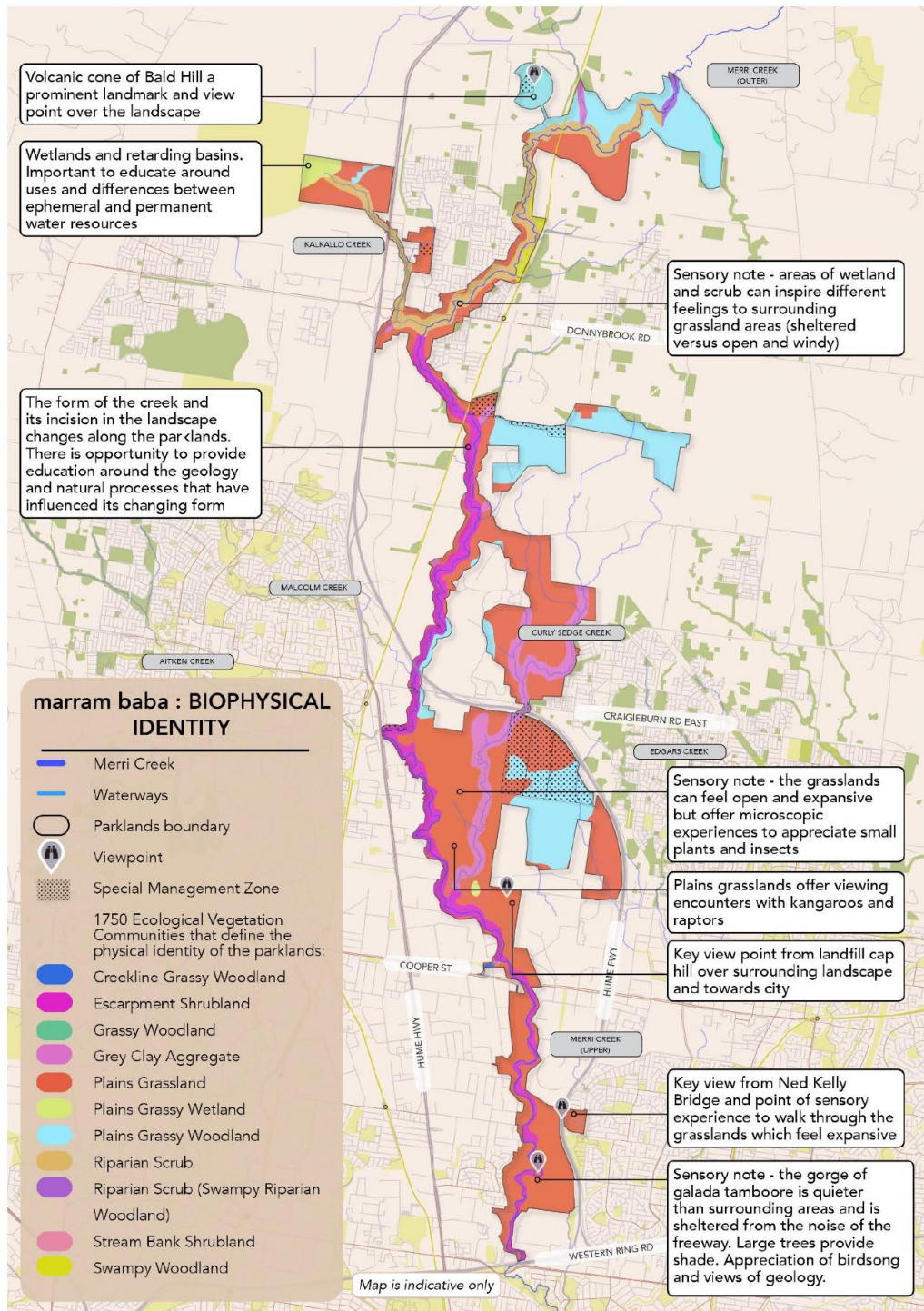


Figure 10: Key features that define the biophysical identity of the Parklands and management objectives

4.2 Biodiversity

The volcanic plain and valleys carved by waterways through the Parklands provide a range of habitats for indigenous plants and animals. The clay soils derived from the basalt flows are a key element in supporting and regulating biodiversity as they enable a high diversity of plants to survive, from wetland species to wildflowers and ancient Red Gums more than 400 years old. The Parklands contain substantial areas of important biodiversity conservation value that are poorly represented in Victoria today, including at least 454 species of indigenous plants. This is an outstandingly diverse area with over 15% of Victoria’s native plant species occurring in less than 0.02% of Victoria’s total area.

The Victorian Biodiversity Atlas lists an array of threatened animals native to the grasslands, grassy woodlands, and wetlands, with habitat areas provided by stony rises and eruption points within the landscape (Appendix 4). Grassland-dependent species such as Striped Legless Lizard, Grassland Earless Dragon and Golden Sun Moth, woodland-dependent birds, such as the critically endangered Swift Parrot and Regent Honeyeater, and wetland-dependent species such as Growling Grass Frog, Brown and Southern Toadlets, and Australian Little Bittern have all been recorded in the area, making the Parklands vital to the conservation of these animals.

The Parklands are home to significant populations of Growling Grass Frog which is protected under the provisions of the BCS. Nature Conservation Reserves and Conservation Areas exist in the Parklands to provide critical habitat for many EPBC and FFG listed species, such as Golden Sun Moth and Striped Legless Lizard as well as many others listed in Appendix 4.

The Grassy Eucalypt Woodland of the Victorian Volcanic Plain and the Natural Temperate Grassland of the Victorian Volcanic Plain are both critically endangered ecological communities under the EPBC Act 1999. The Parklands support some of the last remnants of these vegetation types and their conservation is a priority for parkland planning.

The life cycle needs of the threatened animals in the Parklands require sufficient habitat and connectivity both within the Parklands and with surrounding regional habitat corridors. For example, a wildlife bridge or underpass across major barriers such as the Hume Freeway, the rail line and (the future) Outer Metropolitan Ring transport corridor will help to connect populations across and beyond the Parklands.

The Plan identifies habitat pinch points (narrow areas) throughout the Parklands that are likely to restrict animal movement and plant dispersal. The Plan commits to investigating opportunities to widen the Parklands at these pinch points before this constraint is embedded into new development areas. The pinch points acknowledge that a walking and cycling path is to be supported in a way so that plant and animal movement is supported, with little to no impact on conservation areas.

The important natural environment values in the Parklands are threatened by weeds and pest animals, climate change and urban development. Effective management of the Parklands will maximise the ecological outcomes. Accessible open spaces provide important opportunities for people to connect with nature, contributing to improved community connection and enhanced health and wellbeing outcomes. Open spaces with ecological values offer the opportunity for environmental stewardship, volunteering, research and citizen science and education.

Strategic directions - biodiversity

The future implementation of the Plan is guided by the following strategic directions:

Protect

- Protect indigenous plants and animals in the Parklands
- Protect the Grassy Eucalypt Woodland and Natural Temperate Grasslands of the Victorian Volcanic Plain as some of the last remnants of their type in Victoria

- Protect national and state FFG and EPBC listed plant and animal species (Appendix 4) in line with relevant legislation including the requirements of the BCS. This includes investigating and applying measures to ensure protection on private land.

Restore

- Maintain, restore and enhance high-value environmental values including Grassy Eucalypt Woodland and Natural Temperate Grasslands of the Victorian Volcanic Plain and habitat for FFG and EPBC listed species in Appendix 4
- Undertake revegetation in accordance with Ecological Vegetation Class (EVC) requirements. Re-establish plant diversity by carefully managing remnant vegetation and re-planting significant and important structural species
- Ensure revegetation areas create areas of thermal variation (cool shaded and warm open) to support diverse animal habitat requirements, such as the Growling Grass Frog and reptiles.

Connect

- Focus on the establishment, protection and management of the Parklands as one connected regional landscape and an important riparian and wildlife corridor. This applies in established areas such as the west bank of the Merri Creek opposite galgi ngarrk that have not been included in the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for Melbourne’s Growth Corridors
- Advocate for future connection of the Parklands to areas beyond the Parklands boundary to provide further biodiversity and habitat connections, including to reaches of Merri Creek upstream and downstream of the Parklands, Hernes Swamp and the potential wallan wallan Regional Parklands to the north, the Grassy Eucalypt Protected Area to the east, and along tributaries including Malcolm Creek to connect to Mount Ridley Nature Reserve to the west
- The habitat link to the Grassy Eucalypt Woodlands is very important and requires additional corridor access along Summerhill Road in pending Northern Quarries PSP, along with focus on land acquisition in the Grassy Eucalypt Investigations Area that links to Quarry Hills Parklands
- Wildlife movement is an important function of the Parklands. Design and works for roads and subdivisions to ensure viable fauna movement and avoid pinch points. This includes consideration of additional land acquisition, wider bridge spans, and animal access infrastructure.

Engage and educate

- The Parklands provide opportunities for the community and visitors to connect with and value the natural environment through education and interpretation, volunteering, research partnerships and citizen science, to foster stewardship of the Parklands
- Interpretive information applying the ‘think, feel, do’ framework¹¹ helps lead to positive ecological and cultural outcomes. Opportunities to interweave artwork, soundscapes and poetry can help people feel a deeper connection, combined with suggestions for people to get involved such as birdwatching or seasonal events.

Manage

- To care for Country, it is important to consider biodiversity management holistically with water, air, and soil management to help protect and enhance the widest range of ecosystem functions. Undertaking an environmental management plan aligned to Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung values will be an important future step to implement this

¹¹ Think Feel Do is an outcome-based engagement framework focused on the three outcomes of effective communication: what we want the audience to think, what we want them to feel, and, as a result, what we want them to do.

- Cultural fire is living knowledge. Aboriginal fire knowledge is shared for continual learning and adaptive management. Continue to investigate the impact of cultural fire in restoring ecological function. Traditional Owners will work together on each other’s Country to heal Country and guide practice development. Knowledge and practice are shared
- A coordinated landscape-scale approach is adopted for environmental management and the ongoing challenge of weeds and pest animals. Management of grasslands includes ecological burns to be undertaken to deliver enhancement and restoration of ecological values in the parklands
- Undertake ongoing management of protected Ecological Vegetation Classes
- Any visitor access to areas of conservation value is designed and managed to prevent disruption to critical habitat. This includes the restriction of activities such as dog walking
- Urban and industrial development at the edge of the Parklands is designed to reduce threats to natural and cultural values. Pursue opportunities to address existing poorly designed interfaces to ensure any environmental risks associated with that adjoining land use are considered and managed to minimise the impacts on biodiversity and waters values.

Lead actions

The following actions have been developed in consultation with the Parklands Partnership Group and reflect the priorities of the land managers.

Actions – Biodiversity
1. Protect, maintain and enhance biodiversity values in line with regularly reviewed conservation management plans and strategies. Undertake weed and pest species management via current and continuing implementation with focused ecological restoration works throughout the Parklands.
2. Implement habitat obligations to protect nationally significant plants and animals in line with Federal and State commitments, including the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for Melbourne’s Growth Corridors. Supplement this with Growling Grass Frog enhancement works for the southern area of the Parklands.
3. Investigate, and where feasible, include additional land in a future expansion of the parkland boundary to reduce the impact and encroachment on conservation values from walking and cycling activity.
4. Develop environmental educational material and signage for the Parklands, including at important features such as Growling Grass Frog wetlands, grasslands and riparian woodland. Signage should help visitors connect and care for the landscape, and help identify the native plants and animals of the Parklands.

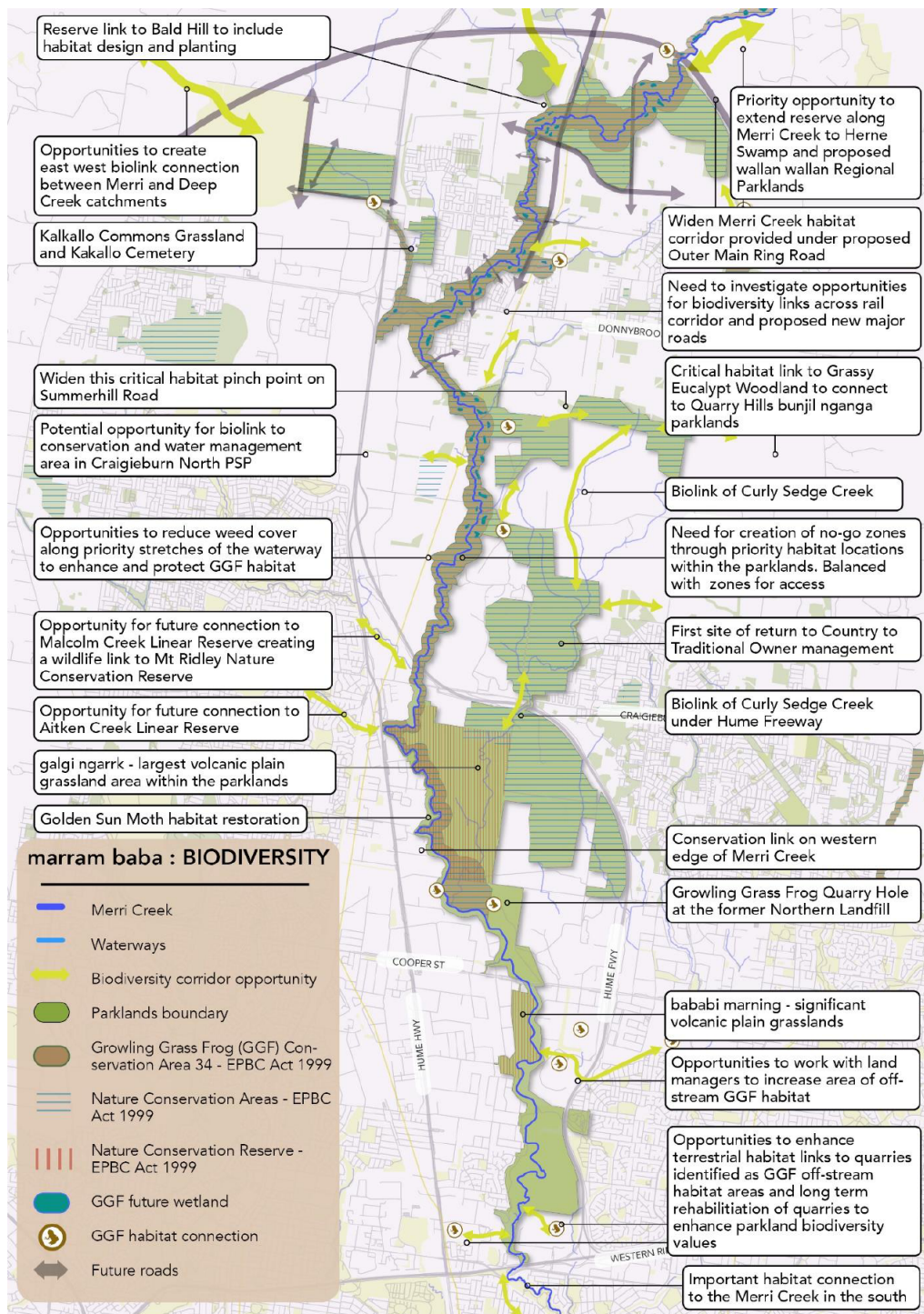


Figure 11: Parkland biodiversity values and management objectives

4.3 Water and landscape

The landscapes and ecosystems of the Parklands are shaped by the basalts of the Victorian Volcanic Plain and the water that flows over and through the Parklands. Merri Creek forms a central spine through a broad, flat valley punctuated by the volcanic cone of Bald Hill and the tributaries that join Merri Creek: Kalkallo Creek, Malcolm Creek and Aitken Creek from the west and Curly Sedge Creek from the east.

The landscape was formed by lava flows from the now extinct volcanoes at Bald Hill, Mount Fraser and Hayes Hill, which flowed south towards the confluence with the Yarra River. The modern day Merri Creek and its tributaries were formed as water cut into the basalt, eventually forming a relatively narrow ‘inner’ valley and an adjacent plain that is typically well-defined by escarpments, cliffs and some short gorge sections.

The geomorphology of Merri Creek and its tributaries has been extensively disturbed since colonisation. Some sites of significance and relatively undisturbed sections of waterway remain. Creating the Parklands and conservation areas is an important means to help protect these known, and yet to be known, sites of geomorphological significance.

The Parklands incorporates two geological and geomorphic sites of State Significance¹²:

- The galada tamboore gorge is one of the most distinctive landscape features of the Merri Creek catchment. Also known as the Barry Road Gorge, the site showcases a distinctive 15m high cliff and is an example of unconformity between the overlying basalt and the underlying Silurian bedrock. It also sustains a specialised vertical salt marsh plant community that thrives on saline seepage from the unconformity.
- Merri Creek Escarpment in Somerton showcases a 40m-long cliff between 2-4m high exposing the channel of an ancestral Merri Creek filled by a lava flow upon which a new stream has developed. Including this land in public ownership within the Parklands will protect the site and provide a potential education site.

Stony rises and gilgai (shallow depressions in clay soils that create ephemeral water bodies) are featured in the Parklands. This includes the regionally significant gilgai landscape in galgi ngarrk, Craigieburn, and the stony rise formation at Kalkallo Common Grasslands.

The landscape surrounding the Parklands continues to host quarry works for basalt, scoria, clay, sand and gravel to support building needs across Victoria and beyond. Groundwater management is important to protect Merri Creek and tributaries, and in the long term, remediation of these quarries will provide opportunities to remediate the landscape and expand the Parkland boundary. Remediation plans can include the retention of some quarry holes that support water and species conservation including Growling Grass Frogs.

Merri Creek and its tributaries support significant water-dependent plants and provide important habitat for native animals in the creeks and riparian zones and ephemeral wetlands across the Parklands. Groundwater is critical for some species that are part of groundwater dependent ecosystems in the Parklands. Parts of Merri Creek are sustained by groundwater inflow, especially during drought years, and the Red Gum woodlands, although located some distance away from the waterways, are likely accessing shallow groundwater.

The Parklands incorporates Donnybrook Mineral Springs, a regionally significant geological site with natural groundwater discharge and the closest known mineral springs to Melbourne.

¹² Victorian Resources Online - vro.agriculture.vic.gov.au/dpi/vro/vrosite.nsf/pages/vrohome

Waterway values are threatened by changes in the land use of the Merri Creek catchment, including areas outside the Parklands, with increasing urban and industrial development reducing stormwater quality and changing flow patterns in the creeks and across the natural landscape.

The health of water within the Parklands and the way it is managed plays a key role in the themes that underpin the Plan. At the heart, healthy water means healthy Country and healthy people. Merri Creek and its tributaries are identified as important cultural and landscape features with opportunities for connection to Country, respite from urban areas and heat, as well as providing for relaxing visitor experience that can lead to improved mental health and wellbeing. Effective integrated water management can support and enhance many of these values and functions in the Parklands.

Strategic directions - water and landscape

The future implementation of the Plan is guided by the following strategic directions:

Connect people to water

- Cultural water management processes can restore Country and deliver water justice for Traditional Owner groups. Cultural access to water is supported and aligns with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Nation Statement in *Water is Life*
- Opportunities are provided for visitors to enjoy and engage with water in a safe, respectful and sustainable way
- Parklands management will support management of flows in waterways in the Parklands to mitigate and help respond to floods. Plan for visitor and neighbourhood safety and impacts on natural and built infrastructure in times of flood.

Water and landscape management

- Manage the Parklands to protect and enhance the health of ecosystems in Merri Creek, Curly Sedge Creek, Kalkallo Creek, Malcolm Creek and Aitken Creek, including their floodplains and wetlands
- To care for Country, it is important to consider surface and groundwater management holistically with flora, fauna, air, and soil management to help protect and enhance the widest range of ecosystem functions. Undertaking an environmental management plan aligned to Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung values will be an important future step to implement this
- Manage the Parklands to protect important and distinctive geological and landscape features. Expand and review surveys of geological sites to ensure conservation and significance of sites
- Parkland planning supports groundwater dependent ecosystems with greater consideration of the impact of surface-groundwater interactions. Ensure adjacent quarries are not detrimentally affecting groundwater requirements needed to sustain a healthy park landscape
- Manage urban stormwater runoff to protect and enhance waterway health and improve Parkland amenity by integrating stormwater treatment systems into the landscape, avoiding significant conservation areas and maximising their habitat and amenity value to the community
- Harvest stormwater in the Parklands to irrigate open spaces (in the limited places where there is no conflict with conservation objectives) to reduce runoff to waterways and provide water for cooling and irrigation of open spaces (where feasible and appropriate)
- Planning controls should be reviewed, updated and enforced to protect waterway and geological values in line with Traditional Owner values.

Lead actions

The following actions have been developed in consultation with the Parklands Partnership Group and reflect the priorities of the land managers.

Actions - Water and landscape
1. Undertake works and education to reduce stormwater impacts on the Parklands. Consider upgrades to wetlands and infrastructure, and investigate solutions to reduce toxic runoff from industrial areas.
2. Investigate stormwater harvesting initiatives as a sustainable source of water for irrigation and cooling in the Parklands in areas where it does not conflict with conservation values.
3. Investigate opportunities to link the Parklands with future Kalkallo Retarding Basin development, including community and biodiversity connections in line with drainage requirements currently under investigation

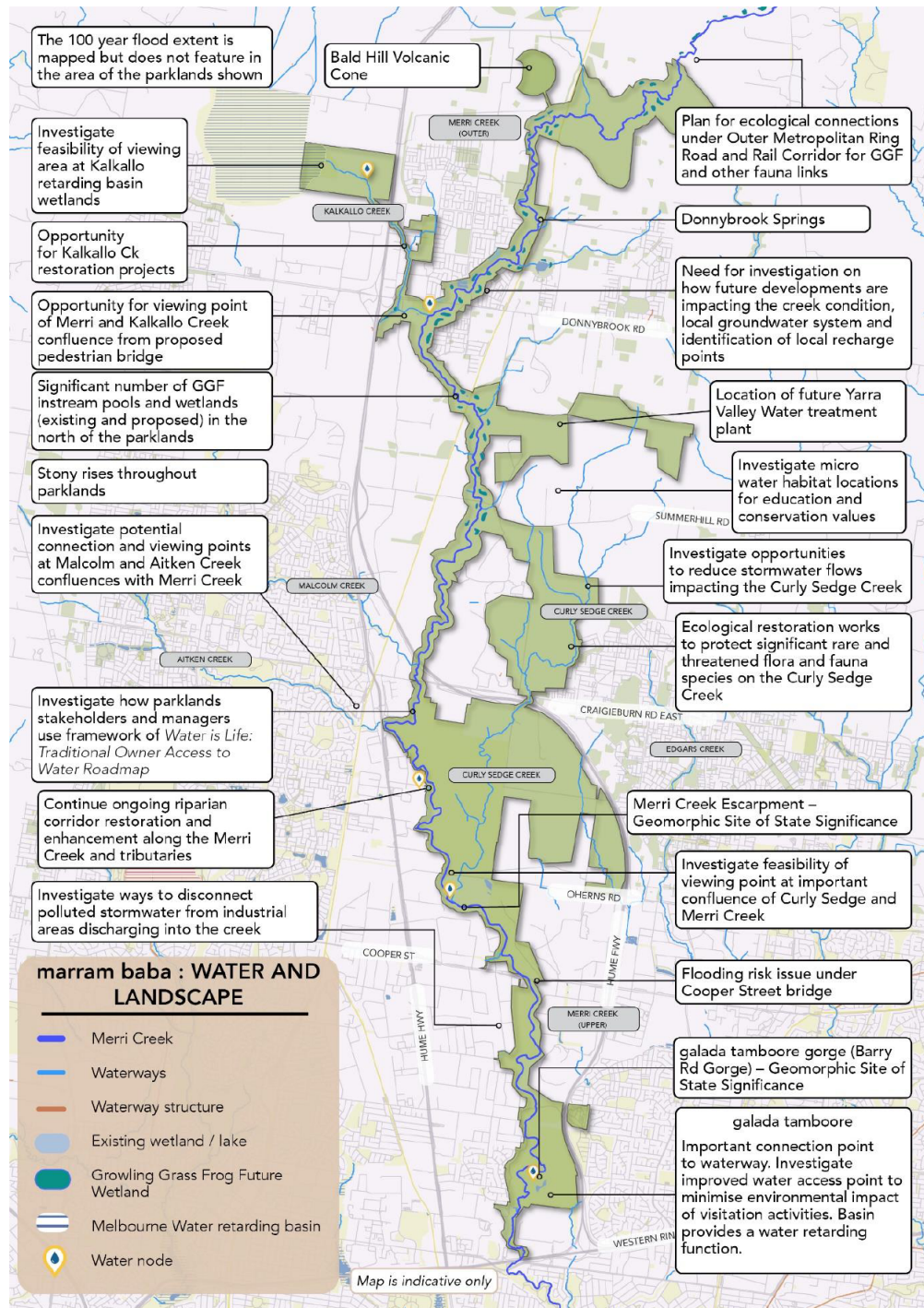


Figure 12: Parkland water values and management objectives

4.4 Climate resilience

Urban parks and green spaces provide significant ecosystem services that increase climate resilience, including mitigation of flooding in downstream communities, cooling to reduce the impact of the urban heat island on communities, and carbon sequestration. These climate-related ecosystem services are increasingly important as the population around the Parklands grows.

Climate change threatens the Parklands with hotter and drier summers, extended droughts, more frequent heatwaves and bushfires, and more intense storms and flood events. These changes threaten the environmental values and community use of the Parklands. Climate change impacts, combined with other changes such as population growth and urban development, place increased pressure on the Parklands’ values and visitor experience.

The Parklands will provide an important refuge for people and animals during hot periods, particularly as urban growth continues in the areas surrounding the Parklands. At all times, and particularly in times of extreme heat, the Parklands will be managed to protect people and protected species and values from fire danger.

The total vegetation canopy coverage in the parklands was 23% in 2021¹³. It is noted that some of this coverage is likely to be invasive gorse that is intended to be removed through ongoing ecological restoration works. Due to the ecological priorities of the Parklands to protect grassland and Growling Grass Frog habitat, it is not intended that the canopy coverage will increase.

Climate change threatens human health, and this threat will be exacerbated as the population in the surrounding areas exposes more people to areas of high urban heat. The establishment of connected parklands with well-designed areas for people to gather, recreate and socialise will enhance community health and wellbeing and provide opportunities to build social connections which strengthen community resilience.

Strategic directions - climate resilience

The future implementation of the Plan is guided by the following strategic directions:

Urban heat

- Shade tree planting will be limited to areas where it does not impact on the specific habitat requirements of grasslands and Growling Grass Frog
- Maintain climate refuge opportunities for animals, especially access to water
- Promote planting of climate-appropriate, locally-indigenous species
- Provide shade where possible and drinking water at key visitor areas to reduce the impact of heat on visitors
- Alternative water sources (such as harvested stormwater and recycled water) to be used in appropriate areas (i.e. outside conservation areas) for irrigating open space to maximise cooling and increase the resilience of open spaces during droughts.

Fire regime

- Cultural fire management recognises that fire allows for healing and caring for Country. Fire management is to be viewed as more than asset protection, and future parkland planning will apply a more holistic reflection of cultural fire management
- Cultural fire is applied to achieve culturally meaningful objectives while also reducing the risk of bushfire. Land managers to recognise the authority of Traditional Owners to lead the development and application of cultural fire practice on Country
- Ecological burns are applied to support and develop biodiversity values in the parklands

¹³ Data from Vicmap Vegetation - Tree Density data from 2021

- The Parklands incorporate bushfire and grassfire management measures through design of interface landscaping, species planting, setbacks, mown fire breaks, water supply and emergency access planning
- Urban development interface buffers avoid encroaching into environmentally important areas and provide for emergency and management vehicle access.

Flooding regime

- Water sensitive urban design is implemented to mitigate floods and retain water in the landscape. Natural wetlands are protected and enhanced to acknowledge their integral role in waterway management
- Visitor infrastructure, such as trails and recreation facilities, is designed and sited to be above major flood levels or alternatively be designed to work with and acknowledge flooding
- Stormwater and flood management is implemented to reduce negative impacts from pollutants and excess urban runoff on waterways and parklands, whilst minimising the use of area within the Parklands for new stormwater infrastructure.

Parkland infrastructure

- Good siting, design, implementation and maintenance of landscape and built infrastructure enable resilience to climate change and extreme weather events
- Parkland infrastructure uses sustainable materials and renewable energy sources to minimise greenhouse gas emissions throughout their life cycle.

Lead actions

The following actions have been developed in consultation with the Parklands Partnership Group and reflect the priorities of the land managers.

Actions - Climate resilience	
1.	Provide trees at visitor areas and along trails where appropriate to provide shade and increased thermal comfort for visitors. Tree species will be indigenous and climate appropriate, appropriate to the conservation areas and enhance conservation values.
2.	Design and construct visitor facilities to minimise their life cycle greenhouse gas emissions, and to enhance resilience to floods, heatwaves, bushfires, grassfires and storms.
3.	Cultural fire management to be applied to support healing and caring for Country, including supporting ecological outcomes and managing bushfire and grassfire risks

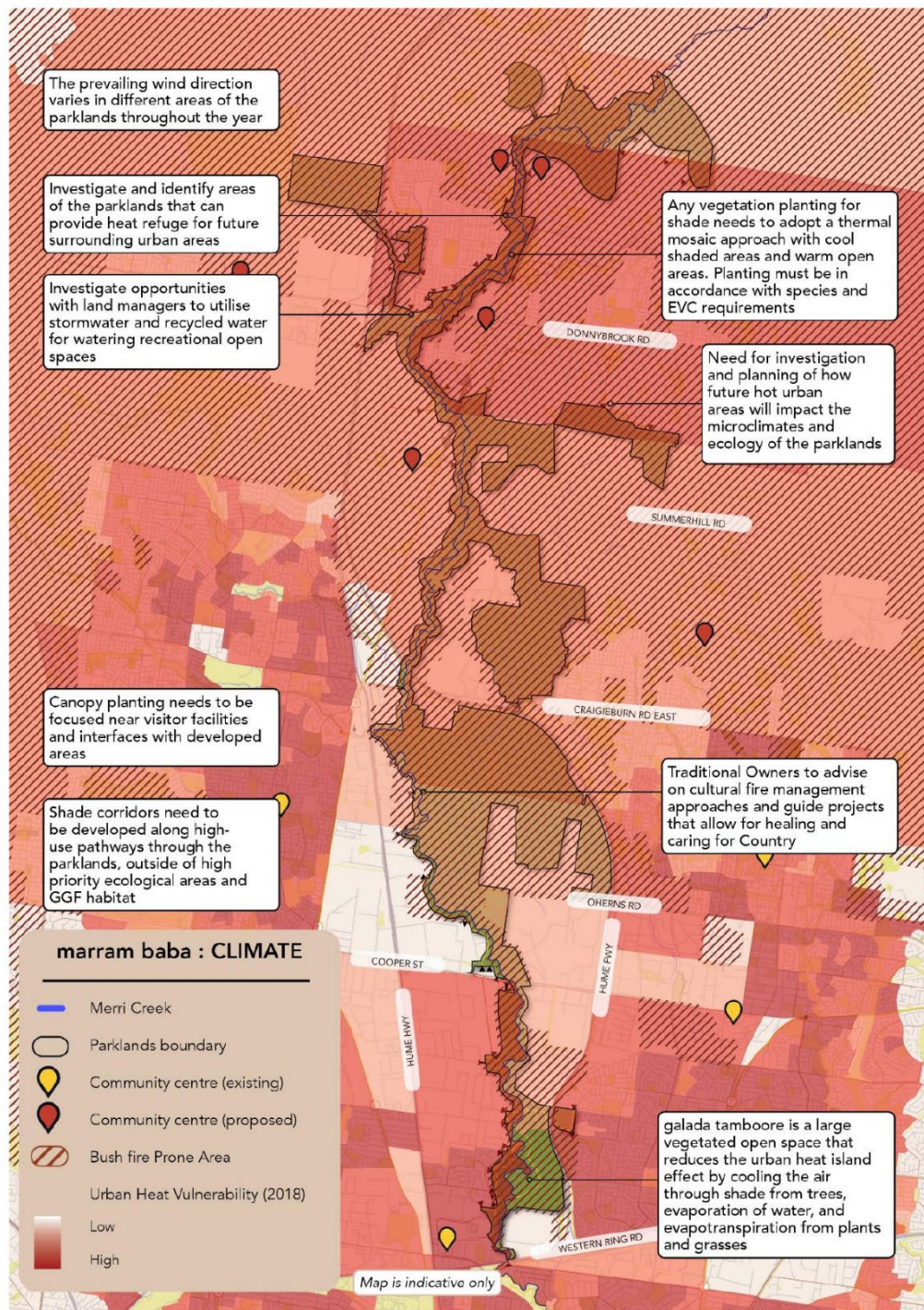


Figure 13: Parkland resilience management objectives

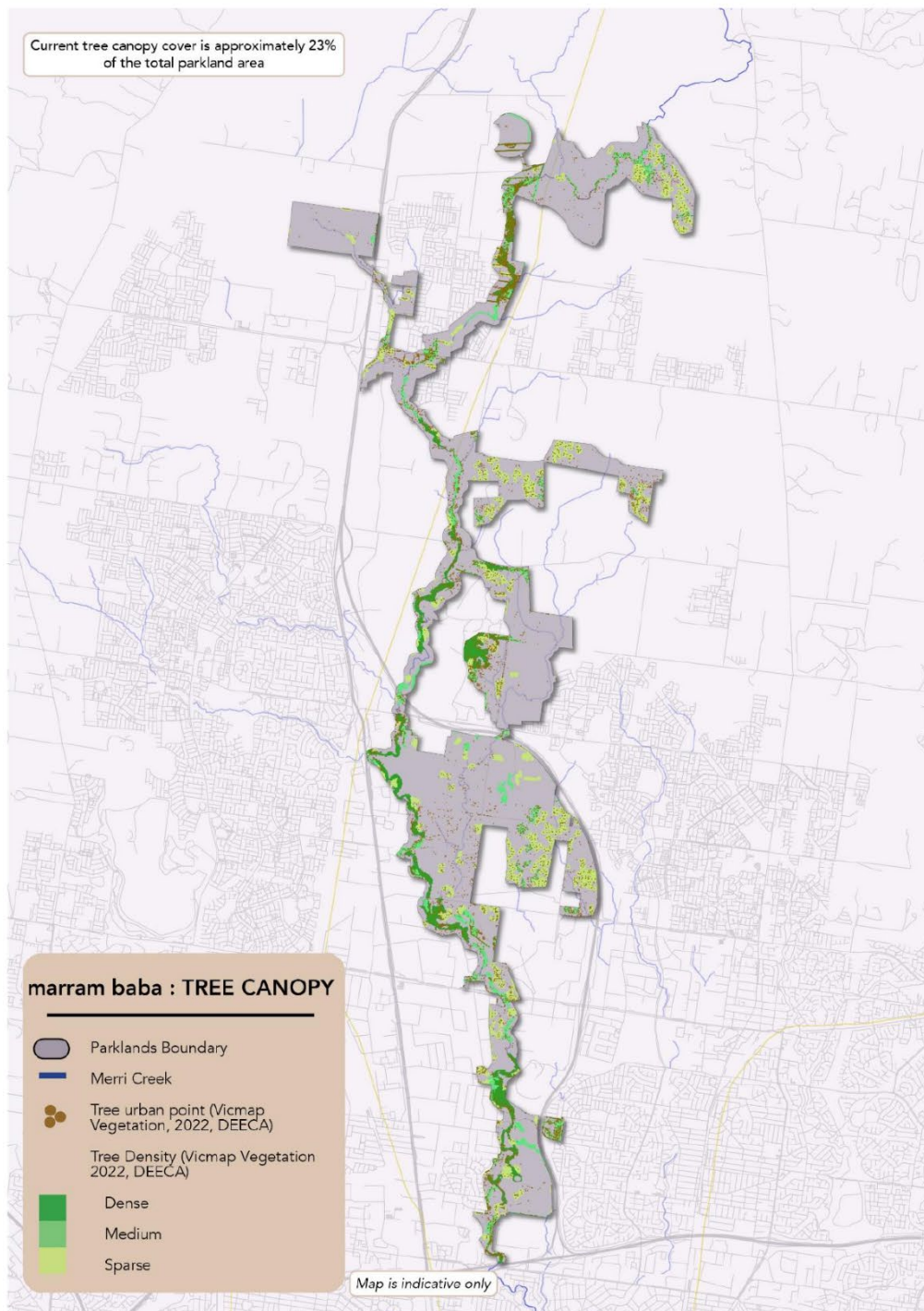


Figure 14: Tree canopy cover

4.5 Access and movement

Access to open space and nature-based recreational experiences for people of all abilities and backgrounds is an important and necessary step to ensuring the whole community can benefit from the Parklands. The benefits of access to open space are multi-dimensional, providing opportunities for interaction with nature, respite from heat, quiet calming places to reflect, places to exercise, explore and play, and places for communities to gather.

Access and movement within the Parklands will be shaped around the requirement to protect and enhance biodiversity and cultural heritage values of the Parklands. Visitors may enjoy different areas and features of the Parklands, while other areas will have restricted public access to protect the environmental values and critical public assets, and to ensure the safety of the public.

Enhanced north-south and east-west connections, connections to the waterways, creation of areas for nature-based recreation, and improved connections to established recreation areas will support greater access and movement.

As a major natural corridor running through Melbourne’s north, the Parklands play a strategic regional role in providing walking and cycling opportunities for the North Growth Corridor. The Parklands facilitate the northern regional shared trail network providing opportunities for the extension of the existing Merri Creek Trail and connections to the galada tamboore Regional Pathway that follows the Hume Freeway. Direction and advocacy is required to develop a continuous trail along the creek from north to south that does not impinge on environmental values. Regional commuter trails will be separated from quieter walking loops and access paths.

The Plan acknowledges the Parklands area is narrow in several areas, which will limit opportunities for a walking and cycling path in those locations. The Plan identifies pinch points and prioritises further investigations into widening the Parklands to ensure this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to plan for a connected trail network is maximised. Expansion of the open space corridor provided by the Parklands will benefit the tens of thousands of new residents and workers while protecting and enhancing biodiversity.

There are also opportunities to build connections to numerous regional open spaces and local reserves located within 15 km of the Parklands. These include links to the potential wallan wallan Regional Parklands and Bald Hill via a Cloverton Linear Reserve to the north; the Mount Ridley Nature Conservation Reserve via the Malcolm Creek Linear Reserve and Aitken Creek Linear Reserve in the west; and in the east the Quarry Hills Regional Park via the future MSA Grassy Woodland Reserve.

The need for east-west connections is an important consideration to ensure access to and through the Parklands. There is currently fragmented and disjointed parts of the Parklands, which result in visitors being able to experience only a small portion of the Parklands during a single visit. To link people to their desired destinations, it is important to provide connections to public transport hubs such as train stations and bus routes. Connections must also be planned for safe and easy access to existing centres in the south such as Craigieburn, Campbellfield and to the future centres of Wollert, Cloverton and Merrifield in the north.

The timing and sequencing of land being included in the Parklands is a critical barrier to providing access and continuous open space within the Parklands. Interim access opportunities that benefit park visitors will be investigated to ensure connectivity between open spaces and community places. Private landowners will continue to be consulted on the Parklands planning and opportunities to support the Parklands whilst land remains in private ownership.

A trail hierarchy should be developed that includes commuter routes (direct fast connections, likely located in conjunction with major roads and other non-sensitive easements), management tracks, recreational trails that provide a nature-based experience, and short loop walking paths that will support increased physical activity by residents. Places of meandering, safe, slow riding to be separated from busier commuter riding paths.

Strategic directions - access and movement

The future implementation of the Plan is guided by the following strategic directions:

Equitable Access

- The Parklands promote equity through all-abilities access. This will be achieved through the implementation of universal design and safety principles in future visitor infrastructure development, planning and design
- Visitor areas provide walking and cycling connections, all abilities paths and signage to public transport
- Surrounding communities are connected to the Parklands via safe walking and cycling access
- Visitor areas and trails incorporate elements for visitor comfort such as shade to ensure respite from heat, and seating at regular intervals that support people of all abilities.

Connectivity

- Improve east-west walking and cycling connections into and across the Parklands to better connect communities to the Parklands and other communities. All future bridges are to be designed to minimise the impact on biodiversity, cultural, waterway, and amenity values of Parklands. This includes investment in wider and higher bridges where they support better parkland outcomes
- The Parklands connect to trail corridors along the tributaries of Merri Creek in the Parklands including Kalkallo Creek, Malcolm Creek, Aitken Creek and Curly Sedge Creek
- Commuter pathways are connected with major roads, other non-sensitive easements such as pipetracks and powerlines, and established routes, such as the galada tamboore Regional Pathway to create regional cycling links that avoid impacting the environmental values of the Parklands
- Park information and wayfinding signage promotes awareness and enables access to the Parklands from surrounding activity centres and public transport hubs
- Interim access (alternative route) opportunities will be investigated for communities to access areas of open space or trails while the Parklands are being established
- The high demand for trails and changing recreational needs in new development areas will require land area set aside in pending PSPs and masterplans to support trail creation outside Conservation Areas in pinch points (narrow areas). A longer-term opportunity is for remediated quarries adjacent to the Parklands to dedicate areas for trails and recreation opportunities
- Explore innovative solutions for active transport in sensitive areas where additional land is not available.

Safety

- The Parklands provide safe spaces so visitors feel comfortable. Safety is a priority throughout the Parklands and design solutions will be applied including universal design principles, trail surfaces, signage, vehicle restrictions and passive surveillance. Lighting will not be installed where conservation is a priority as it is not the intention of the Parklands to support after-dark visits
- Location and design of creek crossings and other access infrastructure is not to increase flooding and risk to people and property.

Lead actions

The following actions have been developed in consultation with the Parklands Partnership Group and reflect the priorities of the land managers.

Actions - Access and movement

1. Progressively implement a connected path network that supports recreation and commuter needs, visitor enjoyment and safety while protecting natural and cultural values. This includes a new loop trail in galada tamboore and a new trail in the southern-most part of the Parklands that will connect to the lower Merri Creek Trail.
2. Progress opportunities to widen the Parklands at identified pinch points to provide safe, comfortable walking and cycling access while protecting natural and cultural values. High priority pinch points should be identified through analysis of topography, and environmental and cultural heritage values. Additional area for connected trails will be sought in future PSPs, development plans, planning scheme amendments, and any adjacent quarry remediation planning.
3. Implement east-west connections for walking and cycling across the Parklands to connect communities. This includes improved shared use paths, pedestrian bridges, and maximising walking and cycling access under the future Outer Metropolitan Ring Road and Rail Corridor.

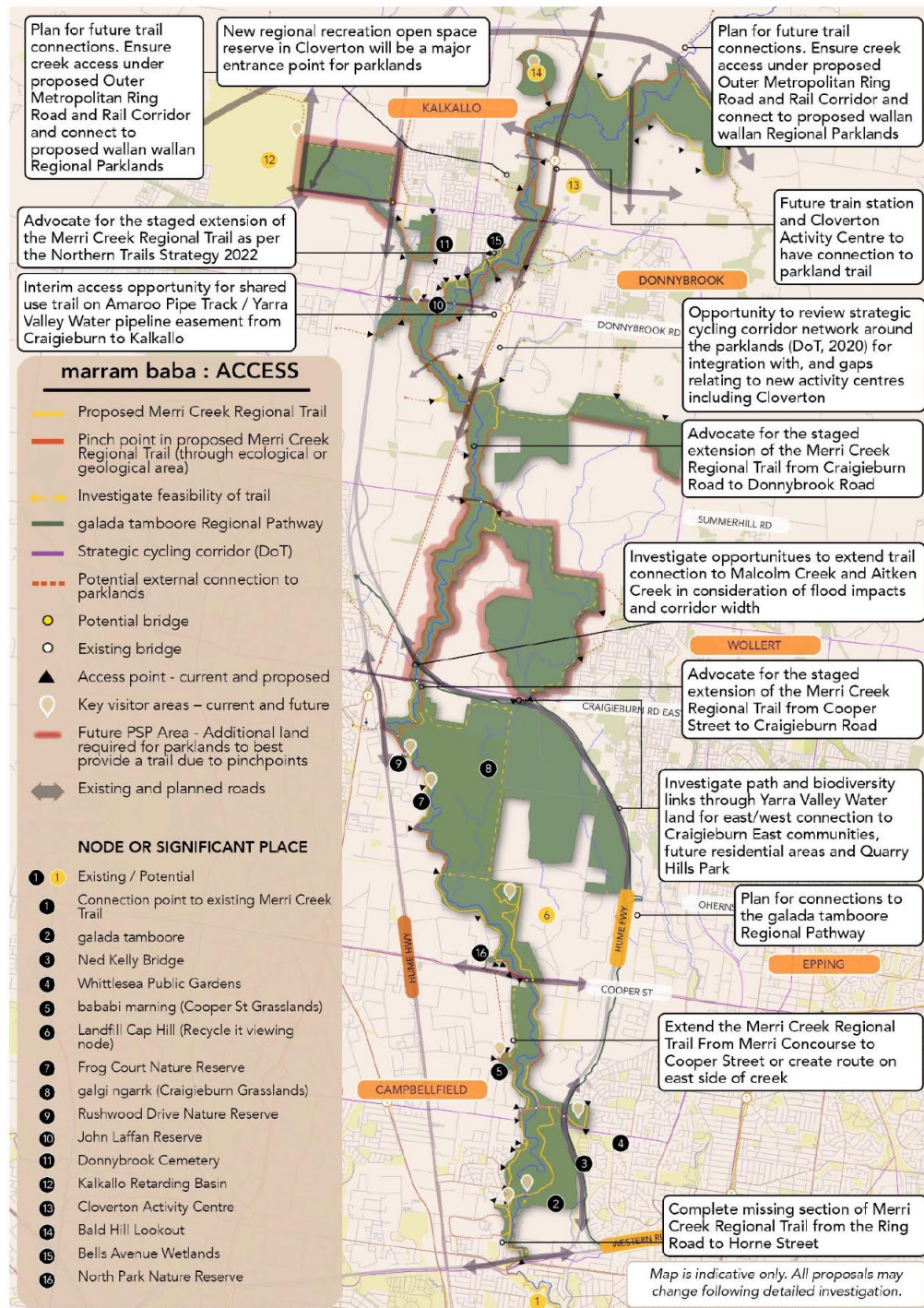


Figure 15: Existing and potential access and movement (whole corridor)

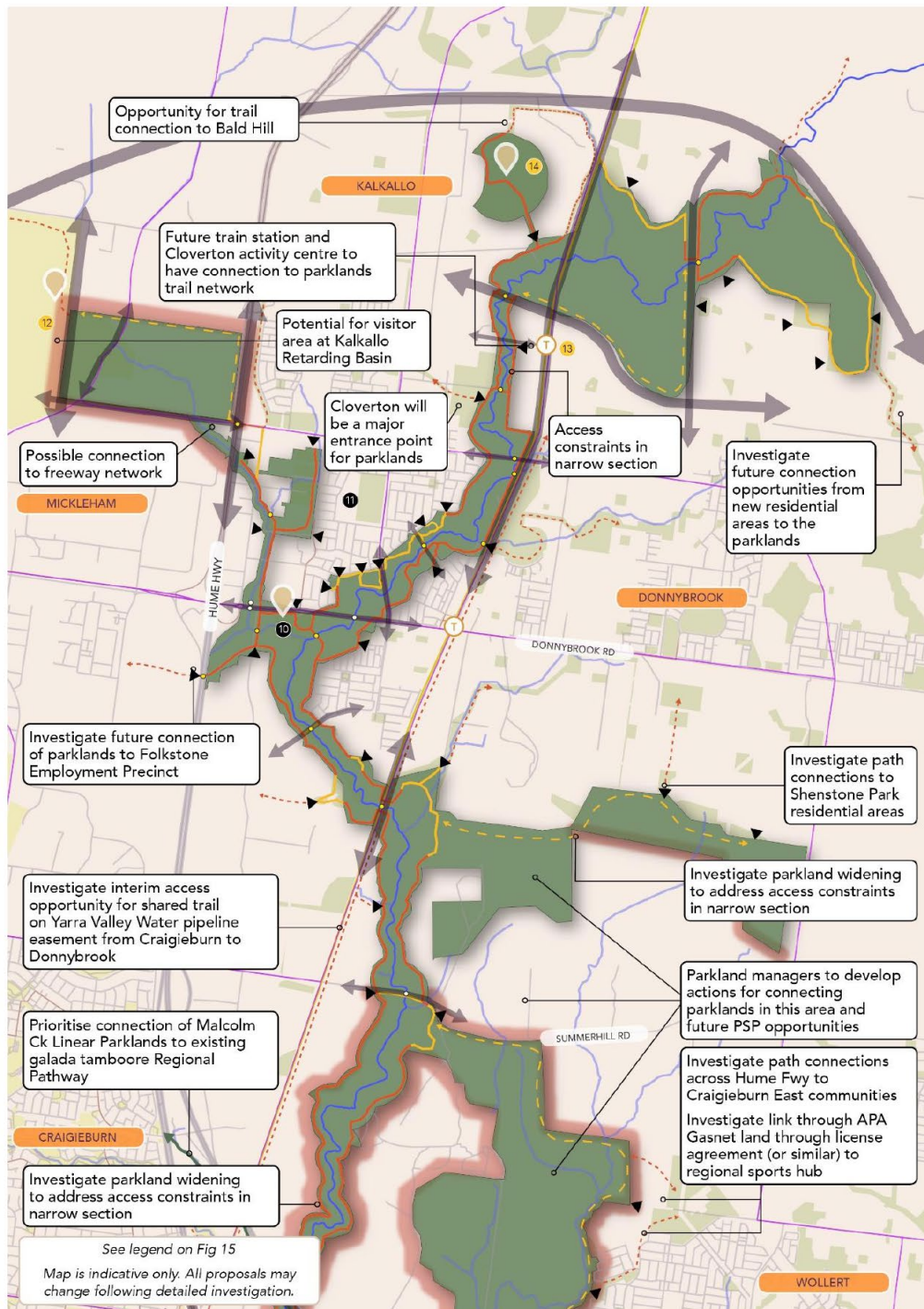


Figure 16: Existing and potential access and movement (northern portion)

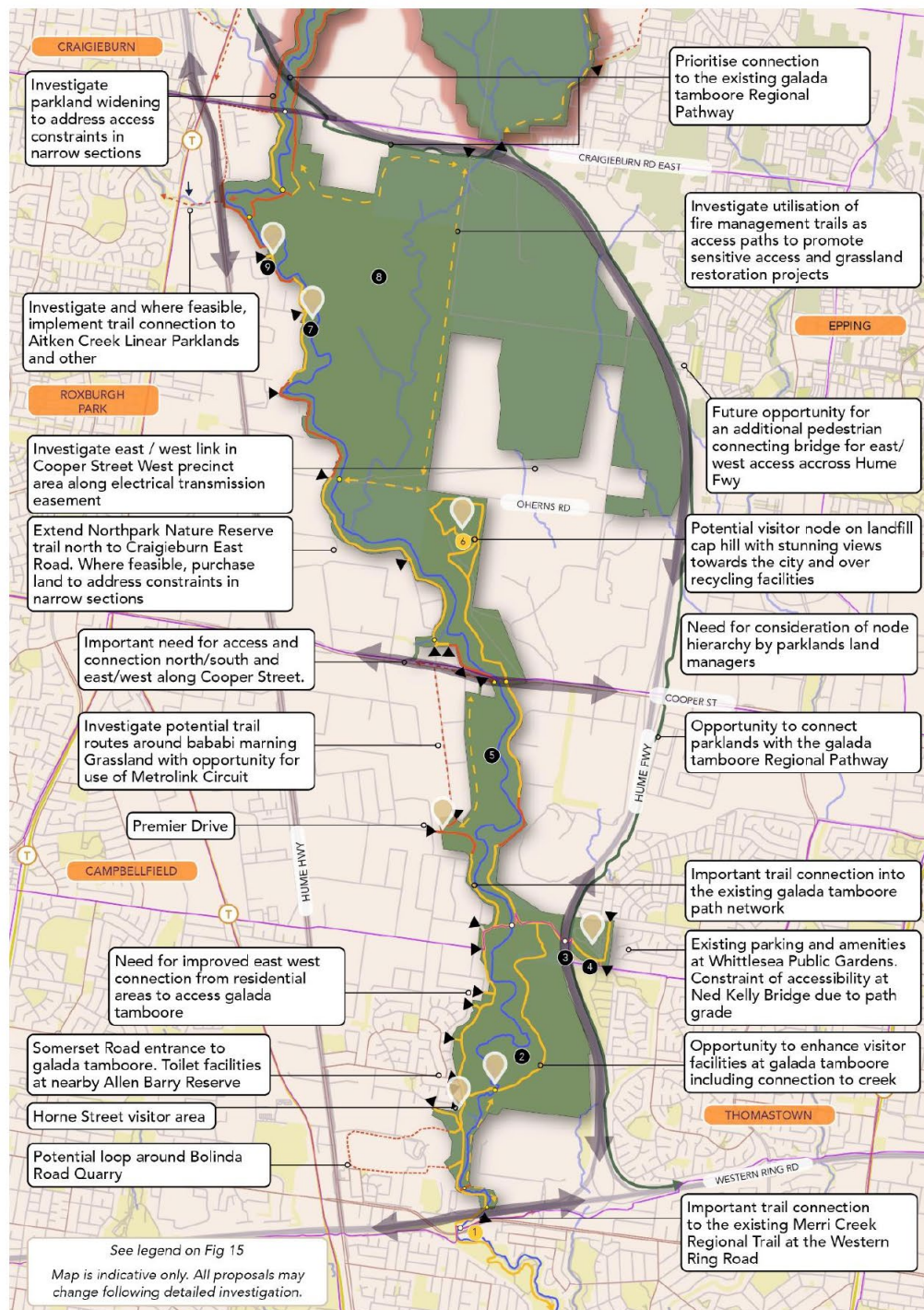


Figure 17: Existing and potential access and movement (southern portion)

4.6 Experience

The experience of the Parklands is shaped around enjoying and immersing oneself in the environment, gaining an appreciation of the natural and cultural heritage within the landscape, moving through the landscape, and being able to take in the landscape from scenic viewpoints and undertaking nature-based activities.

The sense of place characteristics that inform different people’s experience of the Parklands will be strongly influenced by the variation in the water, geology and vegetation communities of the natural landscape. The volcanic plain grasslands, which are open and often windy, feel different to the more sheltered woodland areas and areas of riparian scrub adjacent to Merri Creek. Different ecological areas of the Parklands will also change in different ways across the seasons such as areas where seasonal burning takes place.

The Plan acknowledges the diverse and growing communities that surround the Parklands and that there is opportunity to further understand community recreational needs for visitor areas. It is understood that different people’s experience of the Parklands is determined by a range of factors, such as cultural background, life stage, abilities and interests. Provision of knowledge and information is critical to an enjoyable experience for visitors to the Parklands.

Existing visitor areas for the marram baba Merri Creek Regional Parklands emphasise a connection to nature and culture with visitor facilities that emphasis walking, picnicking and other low impact recreational activities. These existing visitor areas include:

- galada tamboore in Campbellfield including the Horne Street Picnic Area and Hatty Court Playground
- Metrolink Circuit Reserve in Campbellfield
- North Park Reserve in Somerton
- John Laffan Reserve in Donnybrook
- Bell Street Wetlands, Quill Reserve and Klandy Drive Reserve in Kalkallo
- Donnybrook Cemetery and Kalkallo Commons Grassland in Kalkallo.

Whittlesea Public Gardens in Lalor is the key visitor parkland area that is available for more active recreational activities including playground, nature play areas, a cyclist learn-to-ride area, and outdoor equipment. This is an important entrance area for Whittlesea residents to enter galada tamboore and increasingly connected areas in the lower reaches of the Parklands.

The Parkland Partners will continue to maintain and enhance the above parks and with the expanded Parklands area will continue to investigate new visitor areas, entrance carparking and viewing sites that allow for appreciation of the landscape and natural and cultural values.

As a place of natural landscape values, situated amongst expanding residential development and industrial land uses, the Parklands provide places of calm, fresh air, views and low impact nature-based recreation. The Plan acknowledges that the Parklands will not be able to accommodate all the recreational needs of the growing communities in its surrounds. The significant conservation values of the Parklands means that certain recreation activities, such as off-leash dog exercise, must be located in and limited to suitable areas, and instead preferentially provided in nearby parks and recreation reserves outside the Parklands. There is the opportunity to work with the ongoing planning for PSPs to strategically co-locate recreation activities that require major visitor infrastructure such as toilets, parking, BBQs, dog off-leash exercise, and active recreation facilities near, but outside, the Parklands.

The Parklands will be influenced by the future development of the Cloverton Metropolitan Activity Centre (MAC) in the north of the Parklands. This Cloverton MAC will create a new ‘city’ with up to 20,000 residents and many thousands more workers expected to directly view and enjoy the Parklands. This includes a proposed new pedestrian bridge over the Merri Creek providing a busy

thoroughfare connecting the east and west of the activity centre, and viewing opportunity for people walking from the proposed new train station. The new city of Cloverton will include high rise offices and housing with the Merri Creek parklands running through its centre. People living, working and even those looking down from high buildings will be able to appreciate the natural and cultural values of the Parklands.

Just west of the Parklands boundary, the Cloverton activity centre will provide visitor facilities including playgrounds, picnic areas, toilets, and sporting facilities. This will be the most significant place for the community to experience the connection to the northern part of the parklands, enjoying barbeque and picnic facilities amongst river red gums. From this co-located key activity area, an open space link and wayfinding signage can help visitors walk and cycle up to Bald Hill providing a rewarding view over the Parklands.

Like many growth areas, the community surrounding the area of the proposed Cloverton MAC is culturally diverse, and consists of 46% of residents born overseas, including 26% from India providing an opportunity for different cultural groups to engage, connect and influence the future design of parklands¹⁴.

Significant urban infrastructure is planned for the area around the Parklands including the Outer Metropolitan Ring Road and Rail Corridor. This development reinforces the importance of protecting sites of high biodiversity that may have restricted visitor access, protecting soundscapes and views, as well as limiting inappropriate infrastructure and utility access into and through the parklands (with the exception of Special Use Zones). There are also opportunities to leverage the surrounding development for the Parklands, for example as trail connections.

Strategic directions - experience

The future implementation of the Plan is guided by the following strategic directions:

Landscape experiences

- Highlight seasonal changes within the Parklands through opportunities such as educational events, citizen science projects, interpretation and art. Information and programs undertaken in partnership with Traditional Owners and management groups can increase visitor awareness of topics such as cultural burning and species protection
- Provide opportunities for people to connect with different landscape experiences such as grasslands, open woodlands, and waterways; including scenic viewpoints and other rest points to invite visual, aural and other sensory connection to the landscape
- Increase viewing opportunities to showcase the natural beauty of the Parklands. This includes viewing points that may be located outside of the Parklands
- Support and enhance natural soundscapes in the Parklands, including the quiet gorge at galada tamboore, flowing creeks, and open grassland areas.

Parkland facilities

- Develop and expand visitor facilities (where appropriate) at major visitor areas within the Parklands and investigate the use of visitor facilities co-located at nearby local parks or public areas. This includes carparking at entrance points and public toilets
- Provide loop walks, and short nature-based walks designed for 30-60 minutes, for physical activity recreation opportunities that include all-ability opportunities
- Design park facilities to be environmentally sustainable and co-located with heat-refuge areas.

Wayfinding and park information

¹⁴ Hume City Council, Precinct 13: Lockerbie Community Profile, 2023

- Support inclusivity by providing Parkland information in languages that are commonly spoken in the community. This includes signage and online information
- Provide wayfinding signage and connections across and within the Parklands to link communities from both sides of the Parklands.

Education and interpretation

- Information about the cultural landscape and heritage of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people to be shared under the direction of the Traditional Owners. This includes cultural tourism and education opportunities
- Community art projects to support connection to the landscape, ecology, geology, waterways, and cultural and social values of the Parklands
- Celebrate different landscapes and natural features such as the grasslands, open woodlands and waterways, through wayfinding and interpretive educational resources
- Support education programs (storytelling, community tours, citizen science) and interpretation materials (signage, audio and digital guides).

Lead actions

The following actions have been developed in consultation with the Parklands Partnership Group and reflect the priorities of the land managers.

Actions - Experience
<p>1. Develop and expand visitor facilities (where appropriate) at key visitor areas within the Parklands including co-located local parks or other public areas. Investigate, plan and develop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential visitor area with views over Inverlochy Swamp at Kalkallo Retarding Basin • Visitor facilities adjacent to the Parklands at Cloverton Recreation Reserve to provide active recreation, wetlands and trails. A potential pedestrian bridge will cross the Merri Creek with viewing opportunities and a proposed open space link will encourage walking up to Bald Hill for wider Parkland views • Opportunities to co-locate visitor facilities just outside of the Parklands within pending PSPs including Northern Quarries, Craigieburn South Employment Area, Cooper Street West and Merrifield North Employment Area.
<p>2. Develop viewing areas to support visitor enjoyment, safety, and the protection of natural and cultural values. Opportunities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential viewing point at the City of Whittlesea Northern Landfill cap on Companion Street, which provides exceptional views south towards the Melbourne CBD. Also include interpretation of the history of the cap, the adjacent recycling facilities, Growling Grass Frog habitat and Traditional Owner stories of the landscape • Viewing point at Bald Hill in the north which provides sweeping 360-degree views and opportunity for interpretation about the volcanic history of the land and the cultural landscape • Investigate potential viewing points showcasing escarpments, rapids and confluences along waterways and wetlands including the Kalkallo Retarding Basin.

<p>3. Land managers, Traditional Owners and community partners deliver and support experiences and educational opportunities that celebrate the unique and precious natural and cultural features of the Parklands. These may focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seasonal changes in the waterways • Seasonal flora and fauna features • Importance of grasslands, grassy woodlands and geological features • Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung cultural stories and education.
<p>4. Support volunteer groups, community programs, citizen science and research partners to promote shared ecological, cultural and community Parkland values, and provide programs to support physical activity and social connections.</p>
<p>5. Continue to implement interpretive signage that shares cultural and ecological information. Support with wayfinding signage. Use marram baba Merri Creek branding for both interpretive and wayfinding signage.</p>

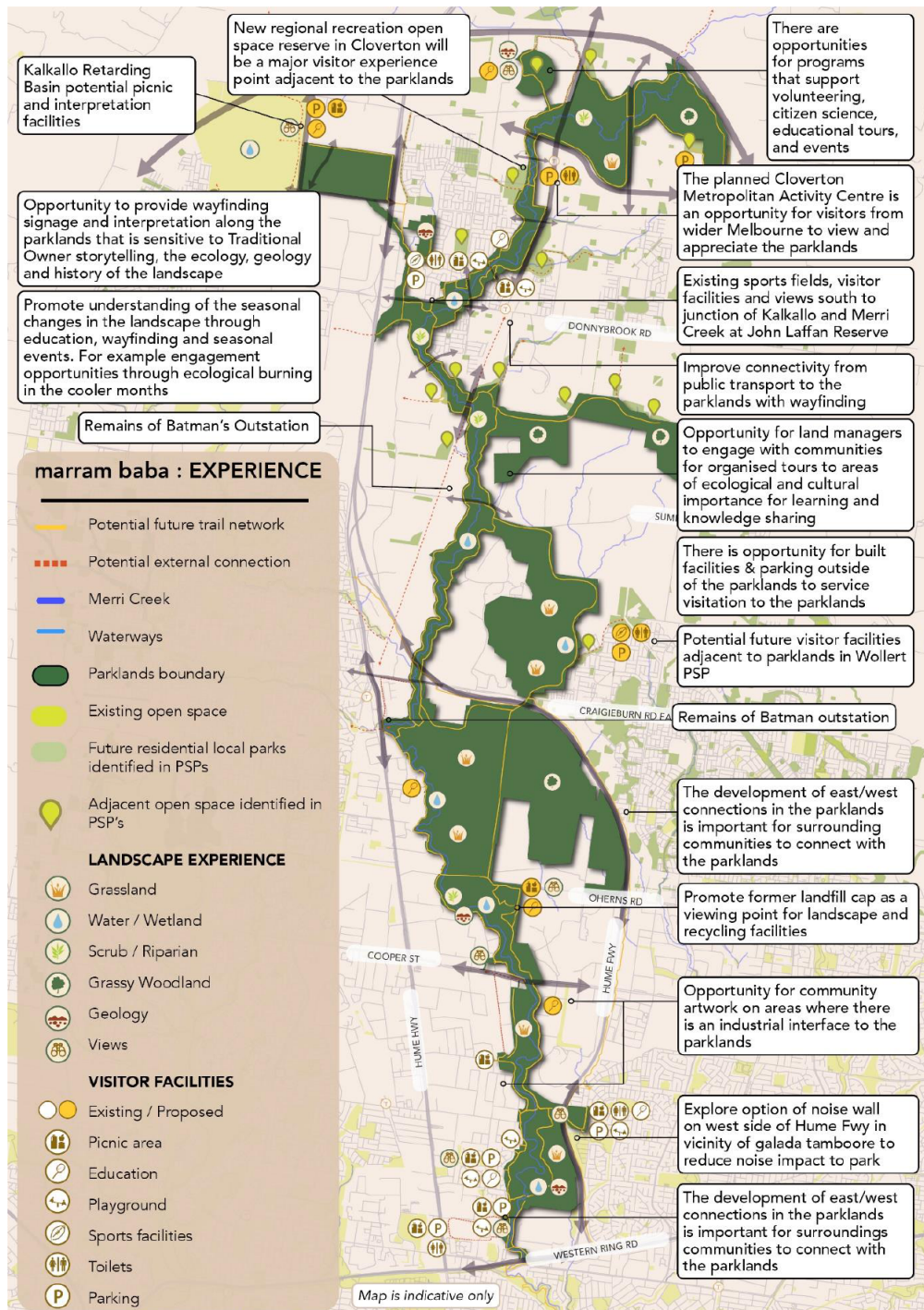


Figure 18: Existing and future experiences and activities

5 Management of the Parklands

5.1 Management and partnerships

The Plan supports a collaborative approach to planning, development and management of the Parklands. The resourcing for and implementation of actions in the Plan require collaboration between Parkland Partners, other management agencies, adjoining landowners, the community, and user groups to achieve the best outcomes for the Parklands.

5.2 Strategic directions

The future implementation of the Plan is guided by the following strategic directions:

Traditional Owners

- It is the expectation of the Traditional Owners, that Wurundjeri Country will be returned to the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people.
- The Parklands Partnership Group supports Traditional Owner self-determination and the goals of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people for future management of the Parklands. It is considered that any land managers (that are not the WWCHAC) are managing the land as a transitional measure until the WWCHAC is provided with the capacity and resources to take on the land manager role.
- Returning land to WWCHAC will be undertaken via a suite of measures ranging from longer term legislative changes regarding land tenure and management to more immediate options including appointment of WWCHAC as a Committee of Management, WWCHAC as a partner on relevant land management decision committees, WWCHAC Narrap Unit appointed as land management contractor.
- Funding models are needed to ensure meaningful partnerships with Traditional Owners to achieve Caring for Country, as identified in Open Space for Everyone.

Parklands Partnership Group

- The Parklands Partnership Group includes Parks Victoria, Hume City Council, City of Whittlesea, Mitchell Shire Council, Melbourne Water, Yarra Valley Water, WWCHAC, Merri Creek Management Committee and DEECA.
- The Parkland Partnership will review the Plan every four years.
- These land managers will manage and make decisions about land they manage in accordance with legislative requirement and the shared vision, guiding principles, strategic directions and actions set out in the Plan.
- Parklands Partners will maintain strong relationships by continuing to meet as a Parklands Partnership Group to deliver the Plan, work through shared issues, deliver joint projects, support and monitor the Parklands establishment, provide consistent input and guidance for adjacent development, and support consistent parklands communication and connections.

Land inclusion

- DEECA will continue to progress and coordinate land inclusion for the Parklands. 57% of the Parklands is managed by Parklands Partners in 2022. The remaining land inclusion will be undertaken progressively with new properties acquired as soon as feasible. The final properties will be protected or transferred into the Parklands by 2050.
- Parklands Partners will support private land managers to undertake education and promote Parklands protection and enhancement before private land comes into the Parklands.
- Parkland Partners will use research data and monitoring to inform management planning and responses.

Planning Controls

- WWCHAC request conservation and enhancement of cultural landscape through planning controls.
- Updated and consistent planning controls applied to the Parklands and adjoining properties will help conserve and enhance the marram baba cultural landscape. The marram baba Future Directions Plan can serve as a supporting background document for any revised planning controls, and any permits issued generally in accordance with PSPs.
- PSPs are the key plan in growth areas guiding future use, subdivision and urban development of the land around the Parklands.
- Pending PSPs will consider the vision and strategic directions of this Plan to support the ongoing creation of the Parklands. This includes seeking opportunities to widen pinch points to support wildlife corridors and shared trail access.
- The Parklands extent may vary in response to future detailed site-specific analysis as part of the planning assessment process. Any Parklands boundary will only be supported if the alternative boundary ensures biodiversity, cultural and visitor access values remain protected and enhanced in accordance with the Plan.

Community

- Parklands Partners will support the local community in volunteering activities to increase community involvement in ongoing Parklands protection and management.
- Parklands Partners will continue to work with research partners and volunteer groups including ‘Friends of’ groups and look for opportunities to further support these groups and other community activities including clean-up events, weeding and planting days, and citizen science activities such as Waterwatch, Frogwatch and bird surveys.

5.3 Management zones

The management zones set out the primary land management purpose and reinforce the identity of different areas within the Parklands boundary. The management zones assist in determining the future land manager for each parcel of land, and are a decision support tool that the Parklands Partners will use to align planning and management activities with the governance and management guiding principles in this Plan.

The management zones will support a consistent approach for all land managers, supporting them to:

- Recognise existing legislative obligations¹⁵
- Identify priorities for Parkland establishment and land management
- Identify appropriate future land managers for different areas within the Parklands (noting these are transitional until the WWCHAC can assume responsibility for management of the Parklands)
- Land reservation purpose and supporting regulations.

Table 2 sets out the four management zones, the (in principle) land managers and the proposed management measures for each zone, and examples of areas in the Parklands that are classified into each management zone. The location of the management zones across the Parklands are mapped in Figure 19: Future management zones

¹⁵ Legislative requirements and obligations of agencies and land managers override the Future Directions Plan. Overarching support for initiatives in this Plan is provided on the understanding that further detailed designs will need to be submitted for approval.

5.4 Actions

The following actions have been developed in consultation with the Parklands Partnership Group and reflect the priorities of the land managers.

Actions - Management of the Parklands	
1.	Establish the marram baba Merri Creek Regional Parklands Partnership Group as an ongoing collaboration to be reviewed every four years or as required.
2.	Progressively secure the transfer of private land within the Parklands boundary to Parklands Partners including land within the Biodiversity Conservation Area.
3.	Investigate, and where feasible update planning controls to help conserve and enhance the marram baba cultural landscape.
4.	Investigate options and, where possible, transition to land management by the WWCHAC to deliver cultural and natural resource management outcomes. Collaboratively develop a sustainable funding model that will facilitate the transition of management to WWCHAC.

Table 2: Management zones

Zone	Description	Management measures	Examples with this zone	Transitional management
Conservation	<p>Areas of significant environmental and cultural value where the emphasis is on protection, maintenance and enhancement of values and where human access is predominately restricted.</p> <p>Human interaction might include promoting the enjoyment of these areas to appreciate, learn from, and experience nature and culture.</p>	<p>Pest plant and animal management, minimising human activity, litter removal, managing interface areas, enhancing, restoring and managing habitat, ecological and cultural burning, education, monitoring and compliance.</p>	<p>Areas include galgi ngarrk and bababi marning grasslands, much of galada tamboore, Council conservation reserves, Conservation Areas, EPBC offset sites, that are or will eventually be included in the Parklands</p>	<p>Conservation Zones will be considered for management by the WWCHAC, Parks Victoria, and Melbourne Water (where it has a Growing Grass Frog conservation area reservation). Committees of Management will also be considered for management of these areas, including Merri Creek Management Committee.</p>
Conservation and recreation	<p>Areas where the management emphasis is on protection of environmental and cultural values while allowing for passive recreation in a natural setting.</p> <p>Recreational activities are provided without significant impact on natural values, and might include walking and cycling, picnicking, scenic viewing, and nature-based children's play.</p>	<p>Pest plant and animal management, visitor infrastructure management, litter removal, interface area management, enhancing, restoring and managing habitat and revegetation of selected areas.</p>	<p>Areas include North Park Reserve, the former Northern Landfill site, and future visitor areas.</p>	<p>Conservation and Recreation Zones will be considered for management by Parks Victoria, Melbourne Water and local Councils – Hume City Council, City of Whittlesea and Mitchell Shire Council. Committees of Management will also be considered for management of these areas.</p>
Community recreation	<p>Provision of a wide range of structured recreation and sport opportunities and events that cater to community and group activities.</p>	<p>Revegetation activities and native planting, litter removal, and visitor infrastructure maintenance.</p>	<p>Areas include Whittlesea Public Gardens.</p>	<p>Community Recreation Zones will be considered for management by local Councils – Hume City Council, City of Whittlesea and Mitchell Shire Council.</p>
Special use	<p>Areas of restricted access that support the activities of the land manager while maintaining the cultural and biodiversity values of the Parklands.</p>	<p>As determined by the nature of the land value.</p>	<p>Areas include Yarra Valley Water sites and Donnybrook Cemetery.</p>	<p>As determined by the nature of the land value or asset, for example Yarra Valley Water requires restricted access to protect important public infrastructure, assets and to ensure separations distances.</p>

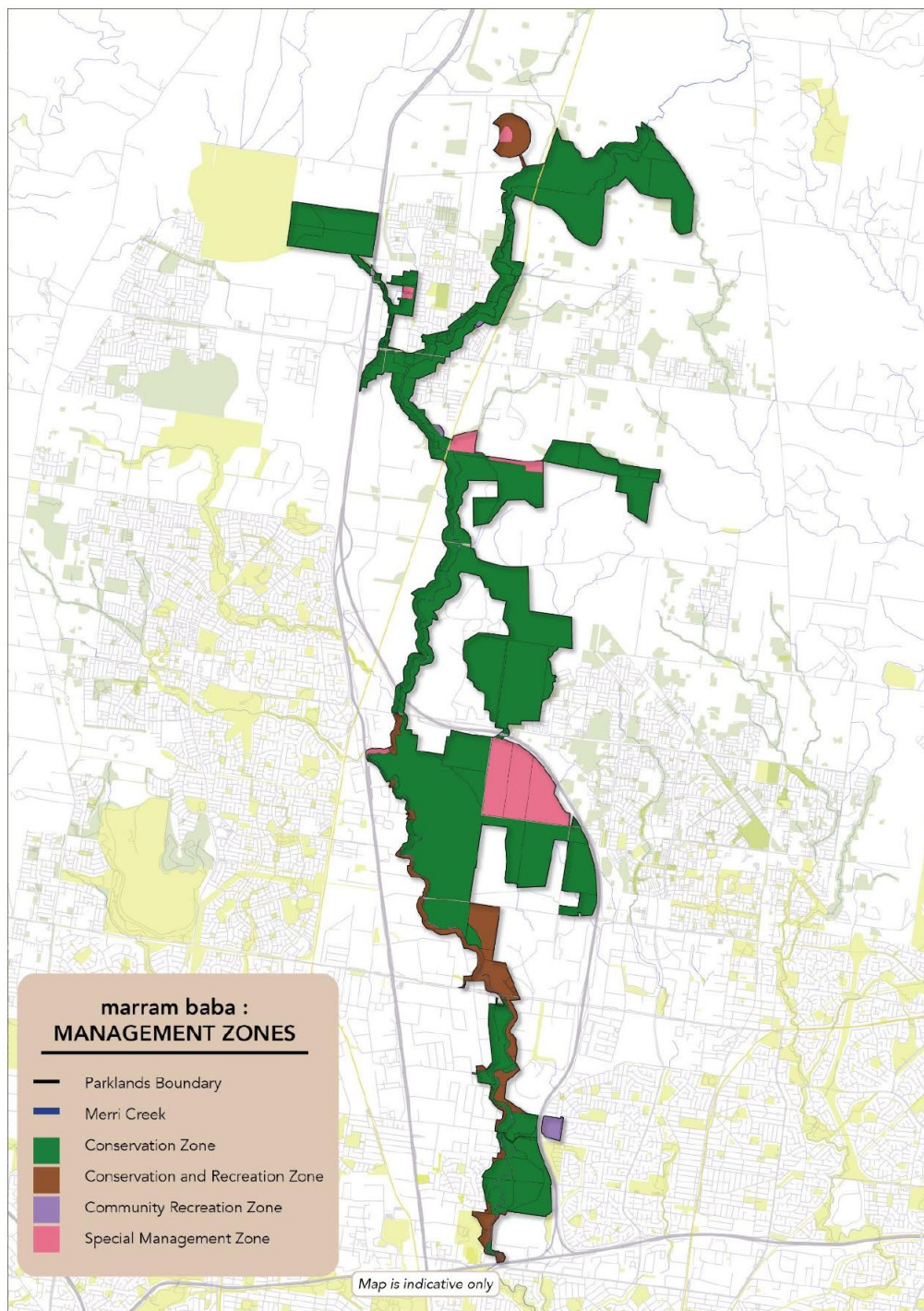


Figure 19: Future management zones

Appendix 1 Future Directions Plan method

The Future Directions Plan has been developed by the Mosaic Insights and REALMstudios team on behalf of the Parklands Partnership Group, whose members are:

- Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation
- Parks Victoria
- Melbourne Water
- Hume City Council
- City of Whittlesea
- Mitchell Shire Council
- Yarra Valley Water
- Merri Creek Management Committee
- Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action.

The Plan was developed with significant input from the Parklands Partners at each phase. Workshops and meetings with stakeholders, community groups, developers, landholders and other interested parties provided valuable insights into the priorities, challenges and opportunities for the Plan.

The community were consulted through face-to-face meetings and online surveys. The community consultation findings are summarised in the marram baba Merri Creek Regional Parklands: Engagement Summary Report.

Endorsement of the Future Directions Plan will be followed by further detailed design and approvals for parkland infrastructure. Partners will be responsible for assessing against their legislative requirement and obligations. An overview of the phases is provided below.

Phase	Overview
Phase 1. Project planning	The first phase of the project focussed on identifying key stakeholders and confirming a roadmap for delivering the Plan.
Phase 2. Background review and opportunities analysis	In this phase, previous work on the Parklands (including the 2013 Strategic Management Plan) was reviewed. Information was gathered from Project Partners and a range of other sources and used to create maps that captured the current ecological, cultural and social conditions of the Parklands and its surrounds.
Phase 3. Community engagement	In this phase, the community was consulted on the vision and direction for the Parklands through a mixture of online surveys, an information session and face-to-face intercept surveys. The primary purpose of this round of engagement was to generate interest and collect ideas from the community that could be included in the Plan.
Phase 4. Draft Future Directions Plan	Following feedback from the community and stakeholders, the draft Plan was developed. The Parklands Partnership Group were closely involved in confirming the vision, principles, themes and directions for the Parklands to inform the draft Plan.
Phase 5. Consultation	The draft Plan was released and stakeholder and community feedback gathered in April - May 2023. The Parklands Partners were closely involved in reviewing and providing feedback on the draft Plan.
Phase 6. Final Future Directions Plan	Edited the Plan to account for stakeholder and community feedback. All Parklands Partners endorse their role in the Plan, and the Parkland Partnership Group endorsed the Final Plan.

Appendix 2 Policy context

The future planning, management, and use of the Parklands is informed by state and local government policies and strategies. The following key strategies strongly influence the Plan. Appendix 3 includes a complete list of strategies, plans, and policy documents reviewed in preparing the Plan.

Plan Melbourne 2017-2050

Plan Melbourne is the State Government plan to guide and manage growth in the city. Plan Melbourne sets the overall direction for open space management at a metropolitan scale through:

- **Principles:**
 - Principle 1 – A distinctive Melbourne
 - Principle 4 – Environmental resilience and sustainability
 - Principle 5 – Living locally – 20-minute neighbourhoods
 - Principle 7 – Strong and Healthy communities
- **Policies:**
 - Policy 4.4.2 – Respect and protect Melbourne’s Aboriginal cultural heritage
 - Policy 5.4.1 – Develop a network of accessible, high-quality, local open spaces
 - Policy 6.2.1 – Mitigate exposure to natural hazards and adapt to the impacts of climate change
 - Policy 6.4.2 – Strengthen the integrated metropolitan open space network
 - Policy 6.5.1 – Create a network of green spaces that support biodiversity conservation and opportunities to connect with nature
 - Policy 6.5.2 – Protect and enhance the health of urban waterways
- **Actions:**
 - Action 93 – Open Space for Everyone.

Open Space for Everyone 2021

Open Space for Everyone (2021) is the Victorian Government open space strategy for metropolitan Melbourne. The strategy provides the strategic framework for planning, acquisition, design, management, use and maintenance of the Melbourne metropolitan open space network. The strategy aims to give everyone equal access to Melbourne’s renowned parks and open spaces that are central to our health and wellbeing. The strategic framework is presented below (Figure 21).

Several actions are already in progress to fulfill the vision set out in Open Space for Everyone, including a direction specific to the Parklands: *develop a plan and fund park infrastructure to create better facilities, linkages, and access to the marram baba Merri Creek Regional Parklands, which connect stretches of mostly existing public land.*



Figure 18: Open Space for Everyone strategic framework

Protecting Victoria's Environment - Biodiversity 2037

Protecting Victoria's Environment - Biodiversity 2037 is underpinned by two goals to support Victoria's biodiversity: Victorians value nature, and Victoria's natural environment is healthy. State-wide biodiversity commitments include targets for pest and weed control, as well as revegetation and establishment of new permanently protected areas.

An invaluable contribution to the protection of biodiversity is the connection of people to nature. It is crucial to the goal of five million Victorians taking action to protect the environment. The Plan supports the goals and commitments of Biodiversity 2037.

Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for Melbourne's Growth Corridors 2013

The Biodiversity Conservation Strategy governs the protection of biodiversity in the growth corridors. It includes conservation measures to be taken for matters of national environmental significance to meet commitments to the Commonwealth government, as well as measures for matters of state importance to meet state requirements. The purpose of the strategy is to inform the preparation of the Growth Corridor Plans, outline the means of achieving conservation outcomes for matters of national environmental significance, and identify land within the growth corridors that needs to be protected and how impacts will be mitigated.

The Parklands has been identified as a major wildlife corridor providing important habitat as well as connectivity through the growth corridor. A conservation outcome that is specific to the Parklands is the protection and enhancement of important populations of Growling Grass Frogs and the protection and enhancement of habitat for other matters of environmental significance, including native grasslands, grassy woodlands, wetlands, and threatened species.

Healthy Waterways Strategy 2018-28

The Healthy Waterways Strategy covers the Port Phillip and Westernport region and considers conditions over the next 50 years. Integrated catchment management initiatives and catchment planning processes are the key components of the Healthy Waterways Strategy. The strategy provides strategic directions for managing a diverse range of waterways, including Merri Creek.

The vision specific to the Yarra catchment, of which Merri Creek is a part, is that '*Our Yarra catchment waterways are increasingly protected, respected and collaboratively cared for by Traditional Owners, government and community as living and highly valued entities. They are a linked network of thriving corridor and instream spaces which nurture biodiversity, deepen the relationship between people and nature, build resilience as our population grows and the climate changes, and contribute to wellbeing and liveability. Their ecological health and value to the community continuously improves through rehabilitated waterways and balanced uses*'.

The strategy sets out management goals for the catchment, which have directly informed the Plan:

- *Environmental values and significant ecological processes of all the Yarra Catchment waterways are protected and improved.*
- *Riparian and instream habitats provide landscape connectivity, allowing the movement of native species and promoting resilient native flora and fauna populations.*
- *Cultural and heritage values are recognised, protected, maintained and enhanced.*
- *Communities and individuals connect with and appreciate the values of waterways.*
- *An engaged and knowledgeable community acts to protect and promote waterway values.*
- *The waterways support natural system maintenance and tourism in a balanced manner.*
- *The waterways are managed in a transparent and collaborative governance framework.*
- *The cultural, historical, amenity values and landscape settings of all modified waterways are protected and improved.*

The strategy also sets out targets and performance objectives for the sub-catchments, which includes Merri Creek Upper and Merri Creek Lower.

Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018-2023

The Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework is the overarching framework for working with Aboriginal Victorians, organisations and the wider community to drive action and improve outcomes and sets out whole of government self-determination enablers and principles. The vision is that *‘All Aboriginal Victorian people, families and communities are healthy, safe, resilient, thriving and living culturally rich lives’*. Goals of the framework that are particularly relevant to the Plan include:

- *Acknowledge, respect and celebrate the diversity and strength of Aboriginal culture.*
- *Promote greater understanding of and respect for Aboriginal culture and communities among non-Aboriginal Victorians.*
- *Support Traditional Owner-led management and control of land, water and other natural resources.*

Victoria’s Climate Change Strategy 2021

The five-point plan in Victoria’s Climate Change Strategy includes investing in Victoria’s natural environment to protect plants and animals, as well as creating a climate resilient Victoria through protecting landscapes, communities and ecosystems to withstand and recover from extreme weather events. Climate resilience of the community and natural environment is integrated in the Plan.

Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2019-2023

The Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan is centred on the vision of all Victorians enjoying the highest attainable standards of health, wellbeing, and participation at every age.

The plan includes several priorities and actions that are relevant to the Parklands including:

- *Resilient and safe communities that are adapting to the public health impacts of climate change.*
- *Increase the proportion of transport trips that use active modes of transport.*
- *Increase easy access to parks, open spaces and public spaces with opportunities for physical activity where appropriate.*
- *A reduction in the prevalence of mental illness, and increased resilience among Victorian individuals, families and communities.*

Appendix 3 Strategic document review

Existing strategies, plans and policy commitments of Federal, State and Local Government and Parkland Partners were reviewed to inform parkland planning. Documents were provided by Parks Victoria, Hume City Council, City of Whittlesea, Mitchell Shire Council, Melbourne Water, Yarra Valley Water, Merri Creek Management Committee and DEECA.

The background review was critical in understanding the opportunities and constraints for parkland planning, and directly informed the Plan. A list of the documents included in the review is provided below.

Organisation	Documents
Parks Victoria	Merri Creek Marram Baba Parklands Strategic Management Plan 2013
	Disability Action Plan 2017-2020 (2017)
	Galada Tamboore Master Plan (2009)
	Nature Conservation Strategy for parks and reserves managed by Parks Victoria 2021- 2031 (2021)
	Land Management Strategy (Draft – 2021)
	Managing Country Together Framework (2019)
	Healthy Parks Healthy People Framework (2020)
	Volunteering in Parks -Vision for future (2017-2021)
	Historic Places Strategic Framework and Action Plan (2019-2022)
	Cultural Diversity Action Plan 2018-2021
Hume City Council	Open Space Strategy 2010- 2015 (2010)
	Land and Biodiversity Plan 2015-2019 (2015)
	Leisure Strategy 2013-2018 (2013)
	Walking and Cycling Strategy 2010-2015 (2010)
	Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025 (2021)
	Live Green Plan 2021-2026 (2021)
	Pathways to Sustainability Frameworks 2015-2019 (2015)
	Stronger Hume Covid-19 Adaptation and Resilience Plan (2022)
	Northern Trails 2022 (also City of Whittlesea)
City of Whittlesea	Active Whittlesea Strategy 2019-2028 (2019)
	Biodiversity Strategy 2019-2029 (2019)
	Community Plan 2021-2025 (2021)
	Whittlesea Municipal Emergency Management Plan (2021)
	Health and Wellbeing Partnership Plan 2017- 2021 (2017)

Organisation	Documents
	Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2012-2022 (2012)
	Extreme Heat Sub- Plan 2021 - 2022 (2021)
	Greening Whittlesea City Forest Strategy 2020-2040 (2020)
	Walking and Cycling Plan 2022-2027 (2022)
	River Red Gum Protection Policy (2014)
	Whittlesea Township Plan (2021)
	A Place For All 2040 (2018)
	Whittlesea Bicycle Plan 2016 - 2020 (2016)
Mitchell Shire Council	Asset Management Strategy (2015)
	Economic Development Strategy 2016-2021 (2016)
	Environmentally Sustainable Design for Council Buildings Policy (2021)
	Open Space Strategy 2013-2023 (2013)
	Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021 - 2025 (2021)
	Heritage Policy (2009)
	Community Plan (2020)
	Environment Strategy 2020 - 2024 (2020)
	Heat Plan (2015)
	Play Space Strategy (2015)
	Municipal Emergency Management Plan 2021 - 2024 (2021)
	Environment Policy (2020)
	Flood Emergency Plan - A Sub-Plan of the Municipal Emergency Management Plan (2018)
	Parks and Open Space Asset Management Plan (2019)
	Sustainable Resource Management Strategy (2011)
	Urban Tree Management Polciy (2021)
Melbourne Water	Healthy Waterways Strategy (2018)
	Co-Designed Catchment Program for the Yarra Catchment - Working together for healthy waterways (2018)
	Galada Tamboore Site of Biological Significance, Campbellfield: Biodiversity Conservation and Site Management Plan (2018), by Ecology Australia
Yarra Valley Water	Yarra Valley Water 2030 Strategy
Merri Creek Management Committee	Merri Creek and Environs Strategy 2009- 2014 (2009) and Urban Growth Addendum (2013)

Organisation	Documents
	Masterplan for Southern Populations of Growling Grass Frog in Merri Creek (2022)
	Flora and fauna report 2018-2019
	Rosengren N (1993a) The Merri Creek: Sites of Geological and Geomorphological Significance, prepared for Merri Creek Management Committee
DEECA	Pupangarli Marnmarnepu ‘Owning Our Future’ – Aboriginal Self-Determination Reform Strategy 2020-2025
	Plan Melbourne 2017 - 2050 (2017)
	Draft Northern Metro Land Use Framework Plan (2022)
	Open Space for Everyone: Open Space Strategy for Metropolitan Melbourne (2021)
	Protecting Victoria’s Environment - Biodiversity 2037 (2017)
	Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for Melbourne’s Growth Corridors (2013)
	Growling Grass Frog Masterplan for Melbourne’s Growth Corridors (2017)
	Greater Melbourne Regional Climate Adaptation Strategy (2021)
	Water is Life: Traditional Owner Access to Water Roadmap (2022)
Victorian Planning Authority	North Growth Corridor Plan
	Precinct Structure Plans: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Merrifield Central Employment Area Precinct Structure Plan 2008 • Lockerbie Precinct Structure Plan 2012 • English Street Precinct Structure Plan 2015 • Craigieburn Nth Employment Area Precinct Structure Plan 2016 • Donnybrook - Woodstock Precinct Structure Plan 2017 • Shenstone Park Precinct Structure Plan 2021 • Wollert Precinct Structure Plan 2017
Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation (WWCHAC)	WWCHAC Interim Statement of Cultural Values for marram baba Merri Creek Regional Parklands November 2022
	WWCHAC Response to Melbourne’s Future Planning Framework and Green Wedge Agricultural Land February 2022
The Victorian Traditional Owner Cultural Fire Knowledge Group	The Victorian Traditional Owner Cultural Fire Strategy Federation of Vic Traditional Owners Corporations, DELWP, Parks Victoria, CFA

Appendix 4 Victorian Biodiversity Atlas extraction

Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act (FFG) listed faunal species in the project area. EPBC Act 1999 status is also noted.

Scientific name	Common name	FFG status	EPBC Status	Taxonomic group
<i>Emydura macquarii</i>	Murray River Turtle	Critically Endangered		Reptile
<i>Ornithorhynchus anatinus</i>	Platypus	Vulnerable		Mammal
<i>Dasyurus maculatus maculatus</i>	Spot-tailed Quoll	Endangered	E	Mammal
<i>Dasyurus viverrinus</i>	Eastern Quoll	Endangered (Extinct in Victoria)	E	Mammal
<i>Pteropus poliocephalus</i>	Grey-headed Flying-fox	Vulnerable	V	Mammal
<i>Miniopterus orianae oceanensis</i>	Eastern Bent-winged Bat	Critically Endangered	E	Mammal
<i>Turnix pyrrhorothonax</i>	Red-chested Button-quail	Endangered		Bird
<i>Pedionomus torquatus</i>	Plains-wanderer	Critically Endangered	CE	Bird
<i>Lewinia pectoralis</i>	Lewin's Rail	Vulnerable		Bird
<i>Burhinus grallarius</i>	Bush Stone-curlew	Critically Endangered		Bird
<i>Antigone rubicunda</i>	Brolga	Endangered		Bird
<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	Little Egret	Endangered		Bird
<i>Ardea alba modesta</i>	Eastern Great Egret	Vulnerable		Bird
<i>Ixobrychus dubius</i>	Australian Little Bittern	Endangered		Bird
<i>Spatula rhynchotis</i>	Australasian Shoveler	Vulnerable		Bird
<i>Stictonetta naevosa</i>	Freckled Duck	Endangered		Bird
<i>Aythya australis</i>	Hardhead	Vulnerable		Bird
<i>Oxyura australis</i>	Blue-billed Duck	Vulnerable		Bird
<i>Biziura lobata</i>	Musk Duck	Vulnerable		Bird
<i>Accipiter novaehollandiae</i>	Grey Goshawk	Endangered		Bird
<i>Hieraaetus morphnoides</i>	Little Eagle	Vulnerable		Bird
<i>Falco subniger</i>	Black Falcon	Critically Endangered		Bird
<i>Ninox connivens</i>	Barking Owl	Critically Endangered		Bird
<i>Polytelis swainsonii</i>	Superb Parrot	Endangered	V	Bird
<i>Lathamus discolor</i>	Swift Parrot	Critically Endangered	CE	Bird
<i>Hirundapus caudacutus</i>	White-throated Needletail	Vulnerable	V	Bird
<i>Pomatostomus temporalis</i>	Grey-crowned Babbler	Vulnerable		Bird
<i>Anthochaera phrygia</i>	Regent Honeyeater	Critically Endangered	CE	Bird
<i>Stagonopleura guttata</i>	Diamond Firetail	Vulnerable		Bird
<i>Delma impar</i>	Striped Legless Lizard	Endangered	V	Reptile
<i>Pogona barbata</i>	Bearded Dragon	Vulnerable		Reptile
<i>Tympanocryptis pinguicolla</i>	Grassland Earless Dragon	Critically Endangered	E	Reptile
<i>Pseudemoia pagenstecheri</i>	Tussock Skink	Endangered		Reptile
<i>Pseudophryne bibronii</i>	Brown Toadlet	Endangered		Amphibian
<i>Pseudophryne semimarmorata</i>	Southern Toadlet	Endangered		Amphibian
<i>Litoria raniformis</i>	Growling Grass Frog	Vulnerable	V	Amphibian
<i>Synemon plana</i>	Golden Sun Moth	Vulnerable	V	Insect

Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act (FFG) listed flora species in the project area.

Scientific name	Common name	FFG status
<i>Comesperma polygaloides</i>	Small Milkwort	Critically Endangered
<i>Eucalyptus kitsoniana</i>	Bog Gum	Critically Endangered
<i>Amphibromus pithogastrus</i>	Plump Swamp Wallaby-grass	Critically Endangered
<i>Dianella longifolia</i> var. <i>grandis</i> s.l.	Glaucous Flax-lily	Critically Endangered
<i>Coronidium gunnianum</i>	Pale Swamp Everlasting	Critically Endangered
<i>Microseris scapigera</i> s.s.	Plains Yam-daisy	Critically Endangered
<i>Eucalyptus X studleyensis</i>	Studley Park Gum	Critically Endangered
<i>Geranium</i> sp. 1	Large-flower Crane's-bill	Critically Endangered
<i>Eucalyptus leucoxylon</i> subsp. <i>megalocarpa</i>	Large-fruit Yellow-gum	Critically Endangered
<i>Callitriche umbonata</i>	Winged Water-starwort	Endangered
<i>Carex tasmanica</i>	Curly Sedge	Endangered
<i>Goodia medicaginea</i>	Western Golden-tip	Endangered
<i>Nicotiana suaveolens</i>	Austral Tobacco	Endangered
<i>Cullen parvum</i>	Small Scurf-pea	Endangered
<i>Cullen tenax</i>	Tough Scurf-pea	Endangered
<i>Tripogonella loliiformis</i>	Rye Beetle-grass	Endangered
<i>Lachnagrostis semibarbata</i> var. <i>semibarbata</i>	Purple Blown-grass	Endangered
<i>Ranunculus diminutus</i>	Brackish Plains Buttercup	Endangered
<i>Eucalyptus sideroxylon</i> subsp. <i>sideroxylon</i>	Mugga	Endangered
<i>Podolepis linearifolia</i>	Basalt Podolepis	Endangered
<i>Geranium solanderi</i> var. <i>solanderi</i> s.s.	Austral Crane's-bill	Endangered
<i>Geranium</i> sp. 3	Pale-flower Crane's-bill	Endangered
<i>Melaleuca armillaris</i> subsp. <i>armillaris</i>	Giant Honey-myrtle	Endangered
<i>Melaleuca halmaturorum</i>	Salt Paperbark	Endangered
<i>Acacia howittii</i>	Sticky Wattle	Vulnerable
<i>Corymbia maculata</i>	Spotted Gum	Vulnerable
<i>Rhagodia parabolica</i>	Fragrant Saltbush	Vulnerable
<i>Dianella amoena</i>	Matted Flax-lily	Critically Endangered
<i>Lachnagrostis adamsonii</i>	Adamson's Blown-grass	Endangered
<i>Lepidium hyssopifolium</i> s.s.	Basalt Peppercress	Endangered
<i>Eucalyptus crenulata</i>	Buxton Gum	Endangered
<i>Xerochrysum palustre</i>	Swamp Everlasting	Critically Endangered

Appendix 5 Glossary of key terms

Term	Definition
Aboriginal Cultural heritage	Aboriginal Cultural Heritage refers to the knowledge and lore, practices and people, objects and places that are valued, culturally meaningful and connected to identity and Country.
Activation (of parklands)	Activation of parklands refers to new investment in park infrastructure or activities to encourage people to visit an area of parklands that has either been inaccessible or undesirable.
Biodiversity	Biodiversity encompasses all components of the living world: the number and variety of plants, animals and other living things, including fungi and microorganisms, across our land, rivers, coast and ocean. It includes the diversity of their genetic information, the habitats and ecosystems within which they live, and their connections with other life forms and the natural world.
Biophysical (identity of the Parklands)	Biophysical refers to the life-environment interactions between living things (bio), such as plants and animals, and non-living things (physical), such as rocks, soil, and water. The biophysical identity of a place is the unique life-environment interactions and processes of an ecosystem that are unique to any given place.
Community resilience	Community resilience is the sustained ability of a community to use available resources to respond to, withstand, and recover from adverse situations.
Confluence	The point where a tributary joins a larger river, called the main stem, or where two streams meet to become the source of a river of a new name.
Conservation Areas (CAs)	Conservation Areas (written with capital letters) refers to dedicated areas of high biodiversity value set out in Victoria's <i>Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for Melbourne's Growth Corridors</i> (2013) (BCS) within the Melbourne Strategic Assessment Program area. Conservation Areas in the BCS are protected from urban development through the conditions in the Strategy, and zoning and overlay controls that apply under relevant planning schemes.
'conservation areas'	'conservation areas' written without capital letters refers collectively to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conservation Areas (CAs) in the BCS (e.g. "Growling Grass Frog Conservation Area 34" (CA34), managed by Melbourne Water, and the "Native Grassland Nature Conservation Area 32" (CA32), managed by the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation) - Crown land reserved for the purposes of Nature Conservation Reserve (NCR) under the Crown Lands Act 1978 (e.g. galgi ngark and bababi marning Nature Conservation Reserves managed by Parks Victoria) - Areas dedicated to conservation managed by local government (e.g. Kalkallo Common Grasslands managed by Hume City Council) - Land subject to an Environmental Significant Overlay in relevant planning schemes (e.g. galada tamboore reserve managed by Melbourne Water) - Dedicated 'offset sites' reserved under the federal <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i>, which are areas reserved to compensate for unavoidable impacts on nationally significant matters on the environment (e.g. Patullos Lane Reserve managed by Hume City Council).

Term	Definition
Cultural Fire	Fire deliberately put in to the landscape authorized and led by Traditional Owners of that Country, for a variety of purposes, including but not limited to: ceremony, protection of cultural and natural assets, fuel reduction, regeneration and management of food, fibre and medicines, flora regeneration, fauna habitat protection and healing Country’s spirit. ¹⁶
Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVC)	The standard unit for classifying vegetation types in Victoria. EVCs are described through a combination of floristics, lifeforms and ecological characteristics, and through an inferred fidelity to particular environmental attributes. Each EVC includes a collection of floristic communities (that is, lower level in the classification) that occur across a biogeographic range, and although differing in species, have similar habitat and ecological processes operating.
Ecosystem services	Ecosystem services are the benefits provided to humans through the transformations of resources (or environmental assets, including land, water, vegetation and atmosphere) into a flow of essential goods and services e.g. clean air, water, and food.
EPBC offset site	Dedicated ‘offset sites’ reserved under the federal <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> , which are areas reserved to compensate for unavoidable impacts on nationally significant matters on the environment In these Parklands, two ‘offset sites’ include Patullos Lane Reserve managed by Hume City Council, and Northern Landfill GGF Quarry Hole managed by Whittlesea City Council.
Ephemeral wetlands	Wetlands that only hold water during wetter periods of the year, and periodically dry up in summer or in periods of drought.
Floodplain	Low-lying land adjacent to a waterway that is inundated when flows in the waterway are larger than the capacity of the waterway. Floodplains often have ecosystems dependent on inundation during flood events.
Flow regime	The range of flows experienced by a waterway throughout the seasons and years which may include base flows, low flows, high flows, overbank flow and cease to flow (drying) events.
Geomorphology	The science of the physical features on the Earth’s surface and the processes that form them. Landforms include valleys, plains, gorges, escarpments, gilgai and stony rises.
Gilgai	Shallow depressions that form in expansive clay soils and create ephemeral water bodies during wet periods. Gilgais are important habitats for plants and animals and can play a role in water storage and distribution.
Habitat	The natural home or environment of an animal, plant, or other organism.
Hydrological system	The short- and long-term circulation, movement and storage of surface and groundwater through various processes including evaporation, transpiration, precipitation, and runoff.
Integrated Water Management	Integrated Water Management (IWM) is a collaborative approach to the way we plan for and manage all elements of the water cycle. IWM considers how the delivery of water, wastewater and stormwater services can contribute to water security, public and environmental health and urban amenity.

¹⁶ [The Victorian Traditional Owner Cultural Fire Strategy \(ffm.vic.gov.au\)](https://ffm.vic.gov.au)

Term	Definition
Nature Conservation Reserve (NCR)	Nature Conservation Reserves refer to Crown land set aside to conserve rare or threatened species and/or plant communities that have conservation significance or provide valuable habitat. In the Parklands, galgi ngarrk (formerly known as the Craigieburn Grasslands) and bababi marning (formerly known as Cooper St Grasslands) are set aside as Nature Conservation Reserves.
Permit	The Traditional Owners and land managers responsible for the management of public land within the Parklands. At the time of writing nine organisations (including the Traditional Owners) were Parkland Partners.
Precinct Structure Plan (PSP)	<p>A Precinct Structure Plan (PSP) is a land use and infrastructure plan guiding the form of subdivision and new development of an area of land.</p> <p>PSPs sit within the Victorian planning hierarchy which comprises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Planning Policy Framework (PPF) set out in all planning schemes - Plan Melbourne guiding the strategic vision for greater Melbourne - Growth Corridor Plans for metropolitan Melbourne – or where finalised Land Use Framework Plans - PSPs facilitating planning for new neighbourhoods, guiding the form of subdivision and development of land over the long term. They are incorporated into relevant local planning schemes and implemented primarily through planning permit applications. - Planning permit applications (for subdivisions or use and development) approve proposed developments (eg Development Plans) that are consistent with the relevant planning scheme and generally in accordance with the PSP.
Riparian	Land and vegetation that adjoins a waterway.
Stony rises	Small, isolated rocky outcrops that rise abruptly from the landscape at the edges of ancient lava flows that are subsequently weathered by wind and water flows.
Tributary	A tributary is a waterway that flows into a larger waterway or other body of water.
Urban cooling	The reduction of temperatures in urban areas. Examples of ways that urban cooling can be achieved include increasing vegetation to help reduce the urban heat island by providing shade, modifying thermal properties of the urban fabric, and increasing cooling through evapotranspiration.
Urban heat island	Temperatures in many urban areas are warmer than their rural surroundings. This phenomenon is known as the ‘Urban Heat Island’ which refers to temperature differences attributable to urbanisation.
Wildlife corridor	A wildlife corridor is a link of wildlife habitat, generally native vegetation, which joins two or more larger areas of similar wildlife habitat. Corridors are critical for the maintenance of ecological processes including allowing for the movement of animals and the continuation of viable populations.

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REPORT NO:	8.4
REPORT TITLE:	Land and Biodiversity Plan 2023-2030 - Final adoption
SOURCE:	Liz Turner, Coordinator Sustainability Engagement Daniela Pascuzzo, Coordinator Land & Biodiversity
DIVISION:	City Services & Living
FILE NO:	HCC15/430
POLICY:	-
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE:	2.1: Facilitate appropriate urban development and enhance natural environment, heritage, landscapes and rural places
ATTACHMENTS:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. <i>Land and Biodiversity Plan designed</i>2. <i>Action Plan designed Land and Biodiversity Plan 2024-2025</i>3. <i>Revised Land and Biodiversity Plan with track changes</i>4. <i>Revised Action Plan 2024-25 Land and Biodiversity Plan with tracked changes</i>

1. SUMMARY OF REPORT:

The *Land and Biodiversity Plan 2023-2030* sets Council's direction for the sustainable management of natural assets and for the recognition of cultural values and heritage in Hume City. The development of the Plan follows a review of the *Land and Biodiversity Plan 2015-2019*. The *Land and Biodiversity Plan 2023-2030* provides Council with a strategic framework to progress key biodiversity and conservation objectives as well as health and wellbeing measures outlined in *The Council Plan Pathways to Sustainability Framework, Open Space Strategy, Health and Wellbeing Plan, Live Green Plan, Climate Action Plan and Rural Strategy*. It will also continue to affect positive change for the natural and cultural landscape and continue to support community action for conservation.

2. RECOMMENDATION:

That Council adopts the *Land and Biodiversity Plan 2023 – 2030* and accompanying *Action Plan 2024-2025*.

3. LEGISLATIVE POWERS:

- 3.1 The Plan provides Council's strategic direction for the management of weeds and pest animals on Council-managed land, which is a statutory requirement of all landowners under the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*. The Plan also provides direction for the application and enforcement of penalties under Hume's Local Law for weed control on private land.
- 3.2 Council is also required to protect sites and relics of indigenous cultural heritage significance from harm in accordance with the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*. The Plan seeks to ensure that Council effectively protects sites and relics on Council-managed land.
- 3.3 The Plan builds on existing work under Council's *Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025*, required under the *Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 (Vic)* to create health promoting environments.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

REPORT NO: 8.4 (cont.)

- 4.1 The *Land and Biodiversity Action Plan 2024-2025* is funded via existing budget. No additional resourcing is requested to implement these actions.
- 4.2 Annual *Land and Biodiversity Action Plans* will be developed for Council endorsement for future financial years throughout the life of the Plan until 2030.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS:

Once the final *Land and Biodiversity Plan 2023 – 2030* is approved by Council, it will provide a strategic basis for sustainable land management and enhancement of biodiversity in Hume’s conservation areas and on privately owned land in rural areas.

6. CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION CONSIDERATIONS:

The Plan recognises climate change as a fundamental threat to the long-term protection of land and biodiversity. As such, it identifies actions to address climate change through enhancing vegetation connectivity in rural areas and in public open space. The Plan has been developed with reference to Hume’s *Climate Action Plan*. The Plan includes actions to assist in curbing urban heat, which will intensify under climate change and place additional heat stress on residents, gardens and public green spaces. Similarly to the *Open Space Strategy*, the *Land and Biodiversity Plan* takes into account Hume’s Urban Forest Principles.

7. CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS APPLICATION:

1. The *Land and Biodiversity Plan 2023-2030* outlines how Council can protect the human rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within the municipality with regards to land, water and cultural rights. Theme 4, ‘A Landscape Rich in Cultural Values and Heritage,’ describes the ways in which Council will promote and respect the right of self-determination for Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Traditional Owners. S19(2) of the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)* states: Aboriginal persons hold distinct cultural rights and must not be denied the right, with other members of their community...(d) to maintain their distinctive spiritual, material and economic relationship with the land and waters and other resources with which they have a connection under traditional laws and customs.
2. Objective 18.1 of the *Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018- 2023* aims to increase the recognition and enjoyment of Aboriginal land, water and cultural heritage rights.

The Plan does not negatively impact on the rights of Hume residents.

8. COMMUNITY CONSULTATION:

Community consultation took place in accordance with Council’s Community Engagement Framework. Consultation involved the Agriculture Land Use Rebate (ALUR) review with 13 community members over a 12 month period, extensive review of Council’s Urban Biodiversity program, ongoing consultation with internal staff responsible for implementing actions, two online community workshops open to the whole community, three sessions with Hume’s Sustainability Taskforce, as well as consultation with Melbourne Water, Parks Victoria, and Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Traditional Owners.

In addition to the above-mentioned extensive consultation during the development of the Plan, further consultation took place between 1 September – 15 October 2023 when the plan and action plan were available for comment on Participate Hume. No feedback was received by community members during the period of public exhibition. Additional consultation meetings were held with internal staff responsible for implementing actions under the plan. Members of Hume’s Sustainability Taskforce were invited to provide comments. A follow up consultation meeting took place with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Traditional Owners, with consideration given to the most up to date strategic objectives presented in Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation’s *Cultural Values Strategic Principles prepared for Hume’s Open Space Strategy 2023*.

REPORT NO: 8.4 (cont.)

9. DISCUSSION:

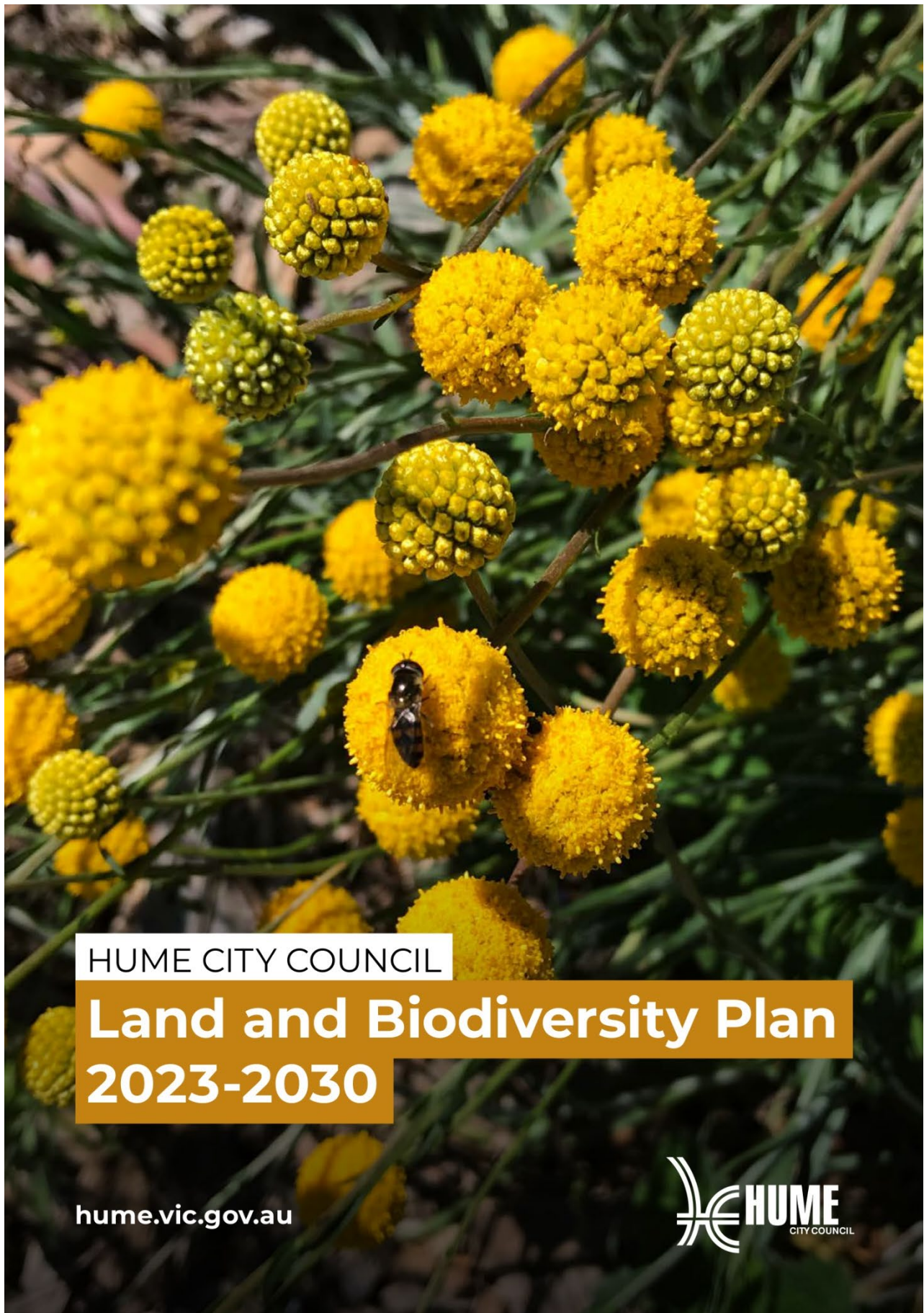
- 9.1 The Plan identifies:
 - 9.1.1 The particular land and biodiversity values/assets in Hume City that necessitate protection and enhancement,
 - 9.1.2 The planning and policy context for the management of land and biodiversity values in Hume, including Council’s roles and responsibilities,
 - 9.1.3 Impacts of climate change on land and biodiversity in Hume, and
 - 9.1.4 Overarching goals and clear objectives.
- 9.2 The Plan provides a framework for the continuation of work carried out under the *Land and Biodiversity Plan 2015-2019*. Under the previous plan, Council:
 - 9.2.1 created Urban Forest Principles that influence Council’s *Open Space Strategy* and *Climate Action Plan*,
 - 9.2.2 provided a framework for assessing the impact of development on cultural heritage,
 - 9.2.3 provided direction for re-naming certain locations with Woi-wurrung names,
 - 9.2.4 conducted a fauna monitoring program on private land,
 - 9.2.5 carried out the Northwest Ecological Connectivity Investigation,
 - 9.2.6 carried out significant remediation works to address soil erosion within nature reserves,
 - 9.2.7 rolled out natural heritage interpretation media, including approximately 40 interpretive signs within parklands, nature reserves and wetlands, website information and the development of nature trail guides,
 - 9.2.8 provided grants, rebates and incentives for landowners in rural areas to manage their land sustainably and
 - 9.2.9 delivered an annual community engagement program of workshops and events to support rural landholders to manage their land sustainably.
- 9.3 The *Action Plan 2024-2025* identifies targets to direct implementation of this plan over the eighteen-month period between 1 January 2024 – 30 June 2025. This *Action Plan* includes actions currently being implemented within budget. Subsequent action plans will include actions that are costed and presented to Council for approval, as per Council’s budget process.
- 9.4 Changes to the *Land and Biodiversity Plan 2023-2030* following public exhibition include:
 - 9.4.1 A revised acknowledgement of Country, informed by Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Traditional Owners,
 - 9.4.2 Revised language regarding cultural values throughout the document, in particular Theme 4: A Landscape Rich in Cultural Values and Heritage, was informed by Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, *Cultural Values Strategic Principles prepared for Hume’s Open Space Strategy, 2023*. This revised language aligns with language in the Draft *Open Space Strategy*, soon to be presented to Council,

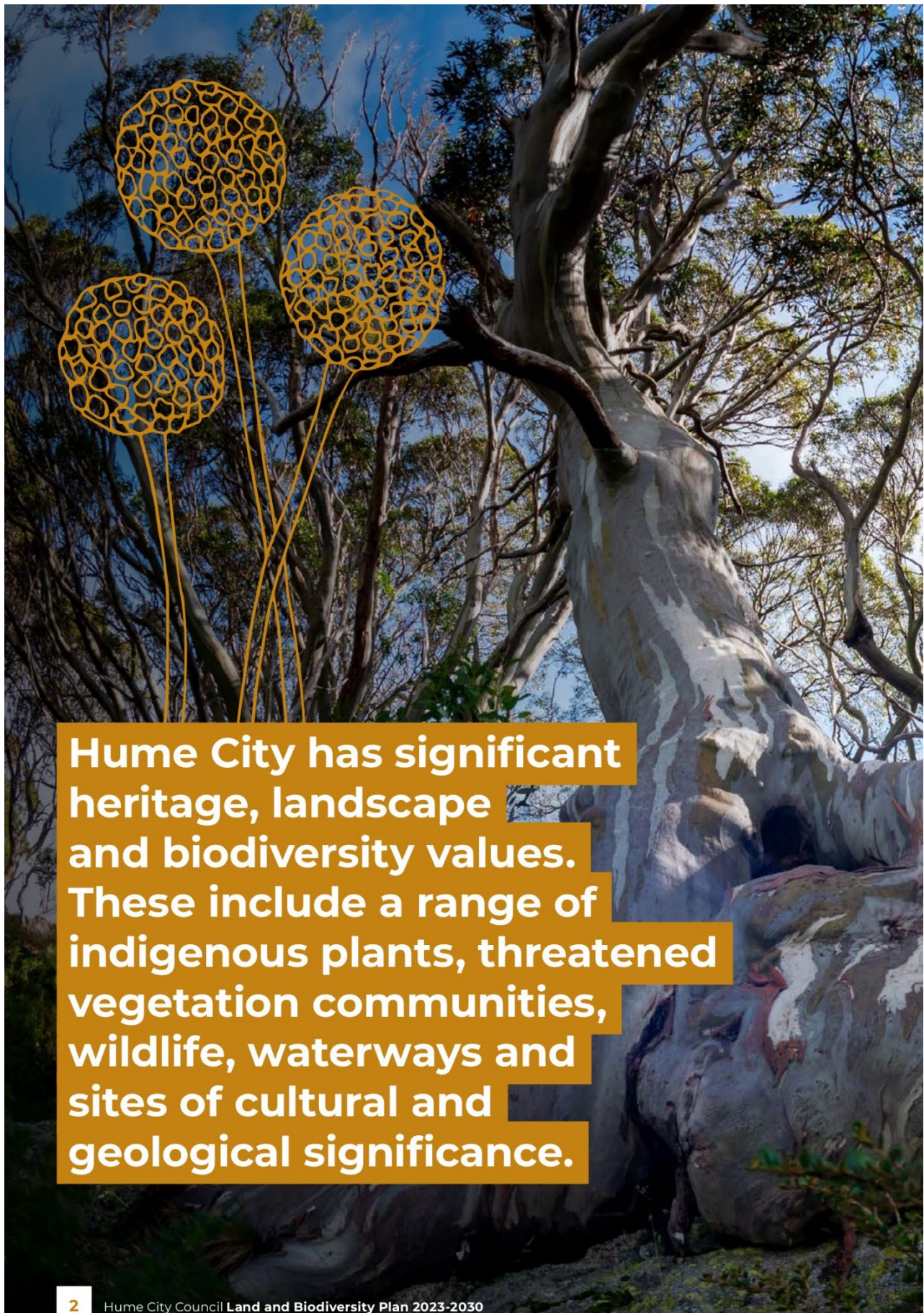
REPORT NO: 8.4 (cont.)

- 9.4.3 Removal of 2021 census data on current cultural demographics (due to forthcoming changes in cultural demographics over the life of the plan). Language recognising and celebrating Hume’s cultural diversity was retained and
- 9.4.4 Inclusion of language recognising the importance of reducing fire risks.
- 9.5 Changes to the accompanying *Action Plan 2024-25* following public exhibition and community consultation include:
 - (a) Modified timeline for the first period of actions, which will now be January 2024 – June 2025. (The previous draft stated the first action plan would span July 2023-June 2024). A large proportion of actions listed in the Action Plan are currently being implemented. The revised time period enables new actions to be implemented in a realistic timeframe,
 - (b) Minor changes to the roles and responsibilities of departments leading and supporting some actions, and
 - (c) Changed language from “conservation reserve,” to the more contemporary term “nature reserve.”
 - (d) Additional actions include:
 - (i) Advocating to the State Government for control of noxious weeds on State Government land,
 - (ii) Collaborating with State government, neighbouring Councils and partner organisations for effective management of kangaroo mobs,
 - (iii) Exploring and supporting the viability of a farmers’ market in Hume and
 - (iv) Investigating assistance to develop traditional ownership of water resources by Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, as outlined in the Upper Merri Creek Integrated Water Management Plan, of which Hume is a partner.

10. CONCLUSION:

The *Land and Biodiversity Plan 2023-2030* and *Action Plan 2025-25* provides clear direction for sustainable land management of areas with significant biodiversity values in the municipality. The Plan recognises the significance of indigenous plants, threatened vegetation communities, unique landscapes, wildlife, waterways and sites of cultural and geological significance that all contribute strongly to Hume City’s identity and sense of place. The Plan also reflects Council’s strong commitment to protecting Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung cultural values and cultural rights.







Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners, the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people

Hume City is located on the traditional lands of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people of the Kulin Nation.

Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung have a deep and enduring relationship with, connection and responsibility to land, water and sky. Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung have been managing land and water for more than 60,000 years. Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people continue to safely steward the diverse landscapes of Hume through Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung land management practices. The Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people have a deep understanding and knowledge of Country and this connection should be respected and valued.

Hume City remains rich in Aboriginal cultural heritage. The municipality has more than 700 registered Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Places including burial sites, artefact scatters, earth features, low density artefact distributions, object collections, quarries, scarred trees and stone features. Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people have a cultural obligation in preserving not just their cultural objects, but the natural landscapes of cultural importance. Significant cultural, community and environmental value require protection. This is essential to the identity and wellbeing of the Wurundjeri people.

Hume has a large and growing population of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, who come from varied backgrounds, locations and life experiences, and have their own connection to country, culture and community.



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Introduction



Hume City is a culturally diverse municipality. Hume City has significant heritage, landscape and biodiversity values. These include a range of indigenous plants, threatened vegetation communities, wildlife, waterways and sites of cultural and geological significance.

Many of these values, such as the ancient River Red Gums, deep creek valleys and Aboriginal artefact scatters, define the character of our landscape and contribute strongly to Hume City's identity and sense of place.

The *Land and Biodiversity Plan 2023-2030* outlines Hume Council's strategic direction for the protection and management of these important values. The Land and Biodiversity Plan identifies:

- The particular land and biodiversity values/assets that necessitate protection and/or enhancement in Hume City,
- The planning and policy context for the management of land and biodiversity values in Hume, including Council's roles and responsibilities,
- Impacts of climate change on the health of Hume's nature reserves, on landscape connectivity, urban biodiversity, cultural heritage assets and Hume's rural landscape and
- An overarching goal, clear objectives, actions, and targets to direct the implementation of this plan over a seven-year timeframe.

The *Land and Biodiversity Plan 2023-2030* follows the *Land and Biodiversity Plan 2015-2019*. Under the previous plan, Council committed to 21 actions across three goals.

Thirteen actions were completed entirely with seven actions ongoing and carried over to the new Plan. Three actions are considered redundant, superseded by related actions.



Actions achieved, Land and Biodiversity Plan 2015-2019

 <p>GOAL: The city’s natural heritage, environment and rural spaces are protected, enhanced, maintained and valued</p>	<p>ACTIONS: 15</p> <p>COMPLETE, REDUNDANT OR INCOMPLETE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 complete • 1 redundant, superseded by related actions • 4 carried forward and implemented to specific projects
 <p>GOAL: Cultural heritage sites and identified, protected and effectively managed</p>	<p>ACTIONS: 4</p> <p>COMPLETE, REDUNDANT OR INCOMPLETE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 complete • 2 ongoing and carried forward to new Plan
 <p>GOAL: Suburbs are leafier, with increased canopy cover</p>	<p>ACTIONS: 2</p> <p>COMPLETE, REDUNDANT OR INCOMPLETE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 considered redundant, superseded by related actions

Council’s roles in relation to land and biodiversity

The Council Plan establishes several strategic objectives to guide progress for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity. One key strategic objective is to:

“Facilitate appropriate urban development and enhance natural environment, heritage, landscapes and rural places.”

This strategic objective defines the scope of the Land and Biodiversity Plan. As such, it has been adopted as the overarching goal of the Land and Biodiversity Plan from which several themes, objectives and actions have originated.






Council’s four overarching functions as a local government are to provide community services, act as a Statutory Authority, facilitate service delivery with other organisations, and advocate on behalf of the Hume community. The table below explains how Council performs these functions in relation to land and biodiversity.

Council’s Role	Relevance to land and biodiversity
Statutory Authority	Council has a legal obligation to manage land, including protecting threatened plants and plant communities, protecting cultural heritage, and controlling declared weeds and pests. Council also has an important role to play in reviewing and implementing the Hume Planning Scheme and ensuring that development complies with planning requirements around protection of the environment and cultural heritage.
Service Provider	Council provides a range of services to the community that aim to protect and manage land and biodiversity whilst supporting community wellbeing. This includes offering financial incentives for sustainable land management, delivering workshops, field days and other events as engagement and capacity-building programs for residents and local community organisations, developing information resources and providing advice and guidance. Council also manages some privately owned or state-owned land for conservation purposes by agreement with the landowner.
Facilitator	Council has a role to play in supporting and partnering with other land managers in Hume, in neighbouring municipalities, and sometimes across the State to better manage land and biodiversity. Council also facilitates collaboration between a range of community and government stakeholders to mobilise and direct resources to where they are most needed.
Advocate	Council advocates to all levels of government for the best outcomes for the Hume community and the local environment. This includes important advocacy around issues such as weeds and pests, native vegetation protection and government investment into land and biodiversity initiatives.



Themes

The objectives and actions of the Land and Biodiversity Plan relate to five key themes, described in the table below.

 THEME 1: A healthy and thriving network of nature reserves	This theme relates to Council's role as a land manager, specifically the management of conservation areas and flora and fauna. It focusses on how Council can enhance the current system of management to achieve a healthy and thriving network of nature reserves.
 THEME 2: A well-connected landscape for wildlife	This theme explores the important function that adjoining vegetation plays within the landscape to facilitate movement of flora and fauna across and between urban, rural, and natural environments in Hume and beyond Hume's borders.
 THEME 3: Urban biodiversity and health and wellbeing	This theme explores the important role that urban areas play in supporting biodiversity, including parks, streetscapes and residential gardens. This theme recognises the important link between nature connection and community health and wellbeing.
 THEME 4: A landscape rich in cultural values and heritage	This theme supports the cultural values of the Traditional Owners of Hume City, the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people. It supports significant cultural landscapes, heritage and connections and the return of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the ongoing custodians of their Country. It also supports non-Aboriginal heritage requiring protections.
 THEME 5: A healthy and productive rural landscape	This theme explores the vast rural landscape of Hume City, and Council's role in supporting rural landowners to manage their land sustainably as custodians of one of Melbourne's green wedges.

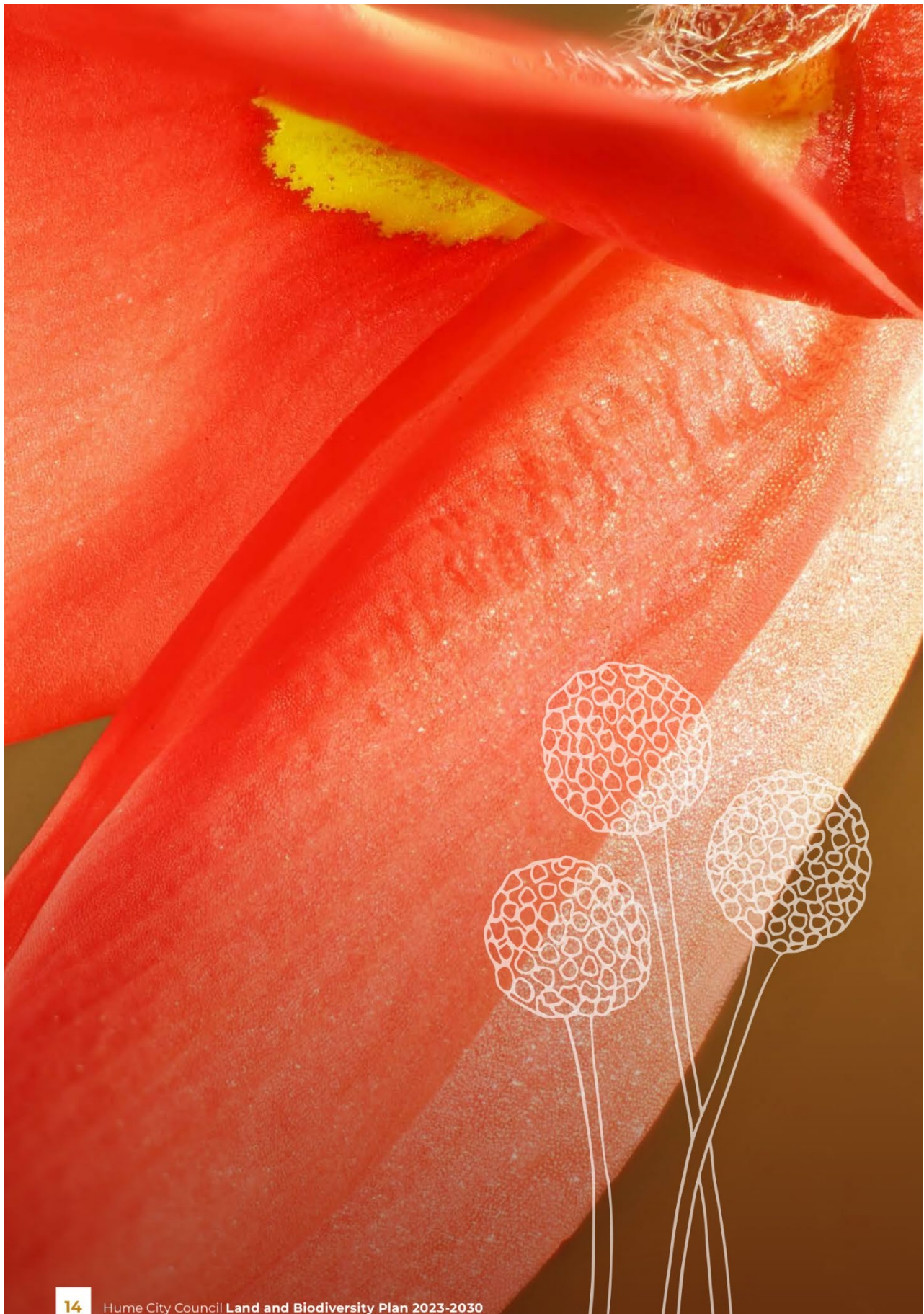
Planning and policy context

The Land and Biodiversity Plan sits within a broader framework of Council strategies and plans (Figure 1). The Land and Biodiversity Plan is identified as a strategy or action plan within Figure 1. It seeks to meet the land and biodiversity-related priorities of the *Council Plan*, and the overarching *Community Vision*, alongside a range of other Council strategies and action plans.

Key actions identified within the Land and Biodiversity Plan will be incorporated into the Council Plan and linked to team and individual staff performance objectives to drive their implementation.

Figure 1: Council's planning framework.





Council Plan and Pathways to Sustainability Framework

The Land and Biodiversity Plan is underpinned by important principles of social justice and sustainability. It seeks to progress Council's *Pathways to Sustainability Framework*, which is contained within the *Council Plan 2021-2025*. Three Pathways from the Pathways to Sustainability Framework are particularly relevant to the Land and Biodiversity Plan; 'provide strong environmental stewardship' (Pathway 3), 'support self-determination and partnerships with Traditional Owners and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' (Pathway 7) and 'recognise the rights of nature' (Pathway 8).

Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025

Hume's *Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025* provides directions for promoting equity of health outcomes. One of these key directions is 'green, interconnected and social environments.' Priority 4 of Hume's *Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025* is 'a green environment, climate action and community resilience.' The link between natural spaces and health and wellbeing is an important principal underpinning the Land and Biodiversity Plan.

Open Space Strategy

The *Hume Open Space Strategy* guides Council's work in planning for and managing a high-quality open space network that supports the health and wellbeing of the community and the natural environment in a changing climate. The Land and Biodiversity Plan complements this strategy and progresses the natural environment priorities for open space in Hume.

Climate Action Plan 2023 – 2028

Hume's *Climate Action Plan 2023 – 2028* recognises the need to build climate resilience across Hume's nature reserves, as well as increase tree canopy cover throughout Hume City's open space network to reduce heat in urban areas.

Reconciliation Action Plan

Hume's Reconciliation Action Plan acknowledges the journey towards reconciliation, demonstrates recognition and respect for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and provides practical actions to assist with health, education and employment opportunities.

Rural Strategy

Hume's Rural Strategy 2022 outlines Council's role in protecting the curfew free operation of Melbourne Airport, protecting the rural qualities and opportunities in Hume by maintaining the diverse lot sizes and urban growth boundary, and maintaining important natural and cultural values. The Rural Strategy provides details of the steps Council is taking to support rural landowners and land managers as the caretakers of the rural areas in Hume. The Rural Strategy recognises environmental and landscape values in the planning scheme.

External drivers and state and regional strategies influencing this Plan

Protecting Victoria’s Environment – Biodiversity 2037

This state government strategy aims to improve the health of Victoria’s biodiversity. It also seeks to increase people’s connection to nature by supporting environmental volunteering. The sections of the Land and Biodiversity Plan that contribute to the priorities in *Biodiversity 2037* include Theme 1: *A Healthy and Thriving Network of Nature Reserves*, Theme 2: *A Well Connected Landscape for Wildlife* and Theme 3: *Urban biodiversity and health and wellbeing*.

The Biodiversity Conservation Strategy (BCS) for Melbourne’s Growth Corridors identifies Conservation Areas and outcomes required under the Commonwealth’s Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act 1999. The BCS is being implemented as part of the Melbourne Strategic Assessment (MSA) program and is the basis for protecting and securing conservation land along Merri Creek, Jacksons Creek, and Emu Creek.

Climate change, Victoria’s Climate Change Strategy and Building Victoria’s Climate Resilience

Climate modelling shows that the climate of Victoria, and therefore of Hume, is becoming hotter and dryer, with an increase in extreme weather events, bushfires, floods and heatwaves are becoming more frequent and intense (*Hume Health & Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025*). This presents an immediate and ongoing threat to the health of people, animals and ecosystems.

The Northern Alliance for Greenhouse Action (NAGA, 2021) reports that under the current high emissions scenario, predicted climate change impacts for Melbourne include:

- 2.4 degrees Celsius temperature increase by 2050,
- Double the number of very hot days,
- Longer fire seasons with up to 60% more very high fire danger days
- Melbourne’s climate will be more like Wangaratta’s

During heat waves, green spaces in our urban areas are particularly important to help provide heat havens for local wildlife and for people. Green spaces in urban areas help to reduce heat from roads and buildings on hot days. Native trees and ground cover near waterways also help provide a buffer to reduce the impacts of flooding.

One of the aims of Victoria’s Climate Change Strategy is to recognise and safeguard the role of our natural environment in reducing emissions. Climate change is a major threat to biodiversity and land values. Ongoing drought conditions, storm damage and floods present challenges to retaining the values of nature reserves. Additional resources will be required to protect biodiversity in the future.

Hume is a participant in the Victorian Climate Councils Alliance.

Healthy Waterways Strategy (HWWS) for Port Phillip & Westernport region

The Healthy Waterways Strategy sets priorities and targets for waterways across the Yarra and Maribyrnong catchments, including in Hume City. This includes targets for revegetation and control of weeds to achieve an improvement in the health and biodiversity of creeks and rivers. The targets both complement and contribute to the priorities for conservation in Hume’s Land and Biodiversity Plan, particularly in theme 2, *A Well Connected Landscape for Wildlife*.

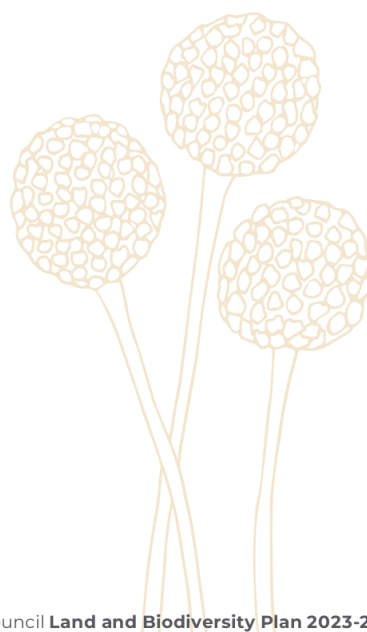
Victorian Traditional Owner Cultural Landscapes Strategy, Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006, Heritage Act 2017 and Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018 - 2023

The Victorian Traditional Owner Cultural Landscape Strategy represents a shared vision of Traditional Owner communities across Victoria to heal Country and culture. It sets a number of priorities that enable organisations like Council to support this vision with local Traditional Owner communities. dThe Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 and Heritage Act 2017 outline Council’s obligations to protect cultural heritage in capital works developments, and to ensure that developers have effective Cultural Heritage Management Plans when required. The Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018-2023 emphasises the importance of culturally safe services for Aboriginal people and describes Aboriginal self-determination as a human right, encompassing a spectrum of rights that are necessary for Aboriginal Victorians to achieve economic, social and cultural equity, based on their own cultural values and way of life.

This includes rights to not be discriminated against, enjoy language, culture and heritage, land and natural resources, have access to the basic necessities of life and be economically self-sufficient, make decisions that impact their lives from a position of wellbeing and empowerment and for ‘grassroots community’ to have ownership and responsibility for their own affairs and their own communities, including through designing and delivering policy and services on their own terms, setting their own funding priorities and holding their service providers accountable. These priorities are explored in theme 4 of the Land and Biodiversity Plan, *A Landscape Rich in Cultural Heritage*.

Living Melbourne, Greening the West and Greening the North initiatives

Living Melbourne, Greening the West and Greening the North initiatives are collaborative projects to extend and link urban forestry and nature conservation initiatives to foster improved community health and wellbeing and reduce climate change impacts. The Land and Biodiversity Plan will address several priorities identified through these initiatives in Theme 1 of the Plan, *A Healthy and Thriving Network of Nature Reserves*.







Hume City Council manages conservation areas totalling approximately 841 hectares across the municipality. Some of these areas are owned by Council and some are managed via formal agreements. The actions in this Plan will guide Council to build on our knowledge of ecological features across our nature reserves.

The actions in this plan will also guide the strategic assessment of Hume City’s conservation management practices. This approach is particularly important as changing climatic conditions will alter ecosystems already under threat and increase the spread of invasive species. Evidence-based, informed decisions can then be made to effectively inform land management approaches that are adaptable to changes in local ecosystems.

Climate change places pressure on plants, animals, and landscapes, making it one of the leading threats to biodiversity in Hume and more broadly across the world. Hotter, drier conditions and more extreme weather events place direct and ongoing pressures on nature reserves and can exacerbate other threats such as weeds and landscape fragmentation.

Further investigation needs to occur into how Council can manage nature reserves to build climate resilience. By understanding which species will respond better than others under changing climatic conditions, Council can increase diversity across Hume’s conservation areas to create resilient strongholds for plant and animal species.

Monitoring and evaluation of our land management practices will assist us to continually improve our methods for protecting local vegetation and wildlife, whilst providing opportunities for the community to connect with nature.



Environmental values across the nature reserves

Native vegetation

Hume supports some of the most endangered vegetation types or ecosystems in Australia, including grassy woodlands and grasslands. Compared to their original distribution, these remaining areas are small and fragmented. Of the 457 native flora species that have been recorded throughout Hume’s nature reserves, 31 are listed as threatened or endangered under State and/or Federal legislation. In addition, 218 flora species have been identified as ‘unique’, as they have been recorded in five or less nature reserves and are underrepresented in Hume.

Hume’s rural roadsides span 300 kilometres and feature some dedicated roadside nature reserves. Rural roadside reserves contain significant remnant native vegetation, provide habitat for native wildlife and create linkages between vegetation patches. Rural roadside reserves are actively managed by Council to control noxious weeds.

Council manages nature reserves using a variety of land management techniques, including revegetation, weed control and ecological burning. Hume’s ecological burns are influenced by the traditional land management practices of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung. Ecological burns stimulate natural regeneration of indigenous plants and reduce biomass, thereby reducing the risk of wildfire.

Adaptive management in Hume’s nature reserves involves a ‘learning by doing’ approach, incorporating the latest scientific information. This approach is important as changing climatic conditions are altering ecosystems already under threat.

Wildlife

Eastern Grey Kangaroos, echidnas and native birds are commonly sighted across Hume. The elusive Platypus is less commonly sighted along Jacksons, Deep and Merri creeks. The threatened Growling Grass Frog inhabit the Merri and Yuroke creeks. The vulnerable day-flying Golden Sun Moth has been recorded across the municipality, with the largest known population in greater Melbourne occurring at Broadmeadows Valley Park.

As climate change progresses, it’s also important to understand and monitor how animals are being impacted by changes to their habitat and food chain, so that Council can make informed decisions about strengthening the resilience of vulnerable ecosystems.

The extent of land protected in nature reserves and linkages between reserves will become increasingly important for wildlife. As the pressures of climate change increase – small isolated conservation areas will be at greater risk of losing their biodiversity values.

Natural Landscape

Hume City’s natural landscape is characterised by expansive plains, volcanic hills and deeply cut river valleys. The prominent landscape summit at Mt Holden provides scenic views over Sunbury and greater Melbourne, to Port Phillip Bay and the You Yangs. Hume’s landscape includes impressive remnant trees that are hundreds of years old. Old, gnarled River Red Gums are common along creeks and reserves throughout Mickleham and Greenvale, providing vital habitat for many wildlife species.

The volcanic cones across the municipality hint at the basalt geology of much of Hume that has nurtured the municipality’s significant grasslands and distinctive biodiversity. These volcanic cones, including Reds Rock Hill, Deverall Hill, Fitzgerald Hill, O’Brien Hill, Burke’s Hill, Crowe Hill, Fairbanks Hill and Gellibrand Hill are part of the world’s third largest basalt plain that stretches west to the South Australian border. These cones continue to provide important viewlines that punctuate the landscape.

Hume’s waterways include the Jacksons, Deep and Emu creeks in the west, the Merri and Moonee Ponds creeks in the east and the Maribyrnong River in the South. Each are connected to a network of smaller streams. Waterways support abundant native vegetation that plays an essential role in supporting wildlife habitat and movement across corridors. Hume’s waterways vary in their degree of health, which has implications for healthy wildlife. Natural waterways are essential for the spiritual, cultural, mental and physical wellbeing of people, and have been central to the wellbeing of local Aboriginal people for thousands of years.

Collaborating for better outcomes

Biodiversity values transcend political borders. Hume is involved with important cross-organisational partnerships with other Councils and state government agencies, including the Merri Creek Management Committee, the Chain of Ponds Collaboration for the Moonee Ponds Creek, the Jacksons Creek biik wurrdha Regional Parklands Partnership Group, and marram baba Merri Creek Regional Parklands Partnership Group. Opportunities exist to build on existing relationships with these agencies to enhance biodiversity and encourage community connection to nature.

Council recognises the importance of adopting traditional land management practices across Hume’s nature reserves and is committed to working alongside the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation to learn culture and traditional management techniques.

By striving to improve our knowledge of Hume’s native vegetation, wildlife and natural landscapes and through effective evaluation of land management practices, we will create an even more healthy and thriving network of nature reserves.

The recent partnership with WWCHAC to develop the Jacksons Creek biik wurrdha Regional Parklands Plan has provided a model for supporting the cultural knowledge and self-determined priorities of the Traditional Owners in the ongoing planning and management of their traditional lands.



Objectives

 OBJECTIVE 1.1:	Improving our understanding of Hume’s biodiversity
 OBJECTIVE 1.2:	Strategic management of Hume’s reserves
 OBJECTIVE 1.3:	Collaborating with other organisations to foster well informed land management practices







THEME 2:
**A well connected
landscape for wildlife**



Landscape connectivity is the degree to which native wildlife can move across the landscape between patches of native vegetation and waterways on both public and private land. Connectivity in the natural world can be likened to a human transport network. Wildlife need to move between available areas of habitat to continue to support strong populations into the future. Without a suitable degree of connectivity, populations will go into decline and some local extinctions may occur.

Climate impacts such as hotter, drier conditions and more extreme weather events will make landscape connectivity even more important for survival of native wildlife species. Extreme weather events impact wildlife as they need to move away from impacted areas in search of food, water and suitable habitat. Increased movement of species is already experienced in times of drought, or in response to fire and floods.

Climate change will also impact landscape connectivity across Hume, particularly how species interact with each other and their environment. It is likely that valleys and escarpments (such as cliffs and slopes) will be less vulnerable to climate change, as they are naturally buffered from extreme variation in climatic condition. Therefore, these areas may become important habitat sanctuaries as climate change progresses.

Protecting existing connectivity

To ensure landscape connectivity does not decline any further, it is critical to protect existing habitat patches and corridors, including waterways. This involves sustainable land management approaches that address threats to structural connectivity such as overgrazing, competition from weeds, soil erosion and the removal of native vegetation. Council is pursuing avenues to provide legal protections for habitat including an Environmental Significance Overlay in the Hume Planning Scheme, correct zoning of open space areas for public recreation and conservation and Trust for Nature Covenants. This involves an expansion of environmental and landscape overlay provisions and improvements to local policy in the Hume Planning Scheme.

Planning for future urban development provides opportunities for innovative approaches when addressing impacts from physical barriers, such as roads. For instance, installing functional wildlife crossings across major roads, can provide aerial cables for arboreal animals (possums) and enable ground-dwelling species to successfully move across the landscape.

Enhancing existing connectivity

Enhancing existing connectivity involves creating new vegetation patches / corridors, extending existing patches / corridors, encouraging natural regeneration of native vegetation and planting scattered or clusters of trees and shrubs across the landscape and waterways. Non-living habitat components such as tree hollows, fallen logs and rocks will also enhance connectivity. The installation of fabricated hollows using tree limbs pruned during tree maintenance, can increase the number of nesting sites for a range of species in open space areas and rural properties.



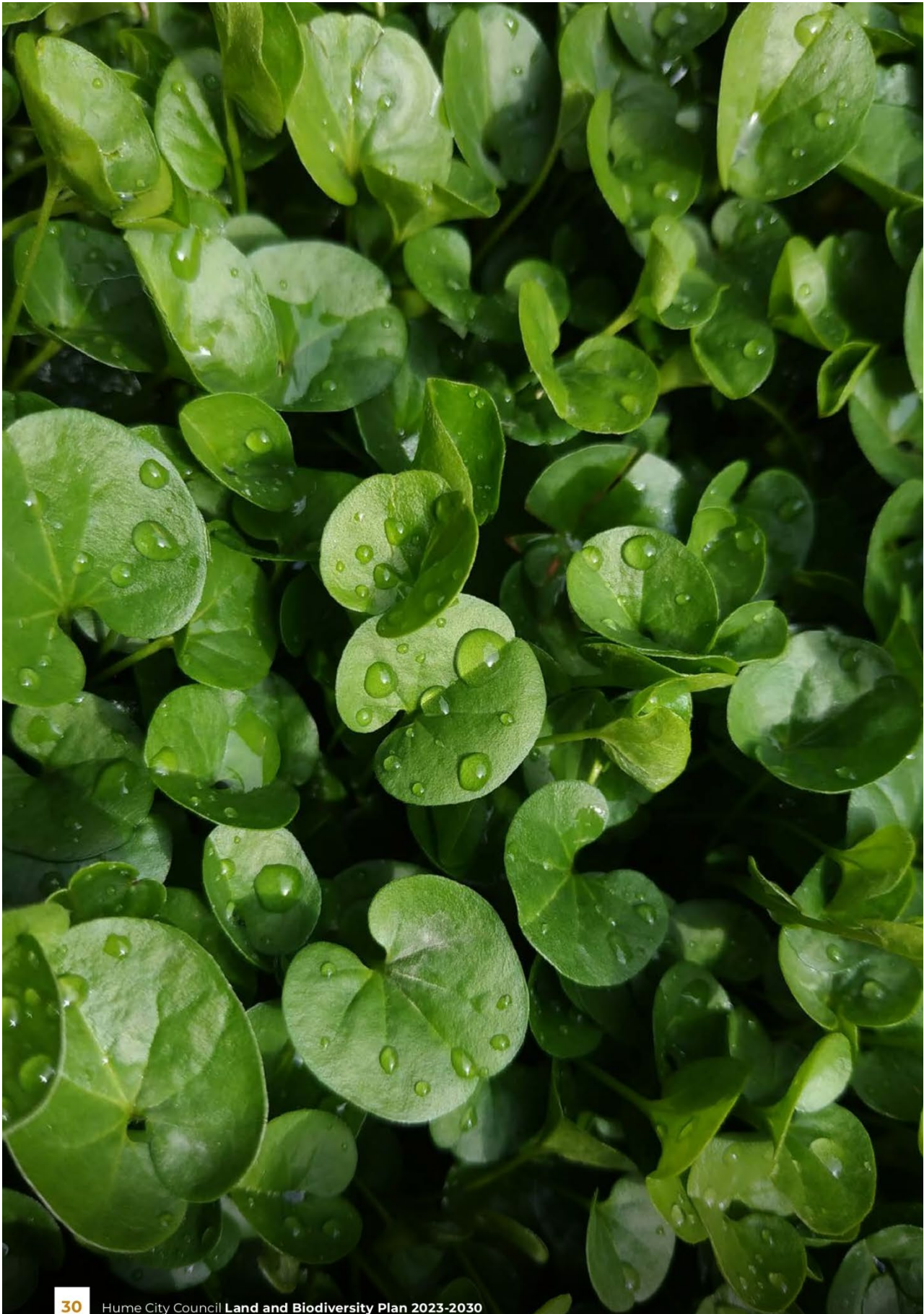
Collaboration

Places managed by Parks Victoria and Melbourne Water, such as Woodlands Historic Park in Greenvale and the Tarnuk Reserve in Westmeadows, are fundamental to the network of habitat patches and corridors found on public land within Hume. Opportunities exist to collaborate with road and rail authorities to enhance connectivity along linear corridors. Stakeholder networks such as the Moonee Ponds Creek Chain of Ponds collaboration and Merri Creek Management Committee offer opportunities to work at the waterway catchment scale to enhance connectivity. Other significant stakeholders in Hume include the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Corporation, which owns and manages sites of natural and cultural significance in Hume such as the Sunbury Rings, and volunteer groups that have worked tirelessly over decades to restore the natural environment through revegetation and weed control projects.

Monitoring and improvement

Council uses computer modelling to monitor changes in landscape connectivity over time. This helps us understand when species may be impacted and what action can be taken to reduce this impact.





Values that landscape connectivity aims to protect in Hume

Ecosystems and wildlife

Patches of native grasslands and woodlands are concentrated in Hume’s rural areas, within parklands and nature reserves and along creek valleys and waterways. They are vital to ensuring landscape connectivity, as they provide habitat for a diversity of wildlife species.

Wildlife Species

Approximately 270 mammal, bird, reptile, amphibian, and fish vertebrate species have been recorded in Hume. Some of these species are in low numbers or are in decline, highlighting the critical importance of improving connectivity in the landscape.

Cultural values

The Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people have been custodians of the Hume area for tens of thousands of years and value the landscape in its entirety for the spiritual, archaeological, historical, ecological and living connections that it provides. This is set out for example in the Jacksons Creek biik wurrdha Regional Parklands Cultural Values Study 2021.





Many of the natural areas that remain in Hume today are as culturally significant as they are ecologically significant. Protecting structural connectivity in the landscape assists in preserving cultural heritage.

Other structural connectivity elements

Many forms of vegetation exist across the landscape that contribute to connectivity in Hume. This includes non-native vegetation such as pine trees; trees and other vegetation in urban streetscapes and green spaces; native and non-native gardens on residential, industrial, or commercial properties; and any vegetation within rural areas. These structural connectivity elements enable some wildlife species to persist and even thrive in urban areas and provide resources for other species that may need to use urban sites to move between habitat patches.



Objectives

 OBJECTIVE 2.1:	Protecting vegetation that supports landscape connectivity
 OBJECTIVE 2.2:	Enhance connectivity in the landscape
 OBJECTIVE 2.3:	Collaborating with other stakeholders to enhance connectivity
 OBJECTIVE 2.4:	Undertake monitoring and improvement







The value of biodiversity in the urban environment

Neighbourhoods that are abundant in nature support an abundance of wildlife. People can readily connect and interact with biodiversity in a positive way. Nature connection plays an important role in maintaining and improving the mental health and wellbeing of people.

Hume’s location on the urban fringe means it is not uncommon to see native animals in our everyday life. In Hume, urban gardens, streetscapes, parks and waterways are homes for more than 170 species of bird, 21 types of reptiles (snakes, lizards, turtles), 13 frog species and nearly 30 different native mammals (including 12 microbats). Within Hume’s urban areas, several threatened species exist including Golden Sun Moth, Growling Grass Frog, Swift Parrot, Matted Flax-lily and a protected population of critically endangered Eastern Barred Bandicoots at Woodlands Historic Park. Over 200 flora species found in less than a handful of Hume’s nature reserves and are at risk of regional extinction.

Habitat plants in urban areas include groundcovers, wildflowers, grasses, shrubs, bushes and large trees. Mature hollow-bearing trees are vitally important to over 40 species of hollow-dependent fauna as nesting sites to rear their young.

Pollinators including birds, bees, butterflies, moths, flies, beetles, wasps, bats are under threat from habitat loss as well as the overuse of chemicals, disease, and climate change.

Residential, industrial and commercial environments serve as important habitat for many species of wildlife that have adapted to the built environment. Human-made structures provide nesting sites. Urban backyards, streetscapes and parks contribute to habitat connectivity.

Urban biodiversity programs

Council’s urban biodiversity programs include Gardens for Wildlife, Community Greening and Citizen Science. Gardens for Wildlife supports community volunteers to provide advice to residents about wildlife friendly gardens. Citizen Science activities include bird count events and iNaturalist workshops such as the City Nature Challenge.

Community health and wellbeing

Healthy communities rely on healthy ecosystems. Without clean air, fresh water, clean food and food security, human health is put at risk. Large industrial estates produce a significant amount of air and stormwater pollution, which affects waterways, animals, and plant life. Pollution of air and water from industrial fires affects children, older residents, people with heart disease and lung conditions and people with disabilities in a disproportionate way. It is crucially important to prevent industrial pollution from occurring.

Being in the presence of nature can relieve stress and improve physical and mental health. For children, playing within nature supports creativity, problem-solving, and emotional and intellectual development. People thrive in physical environments that support social interactions in nature.




Food growing

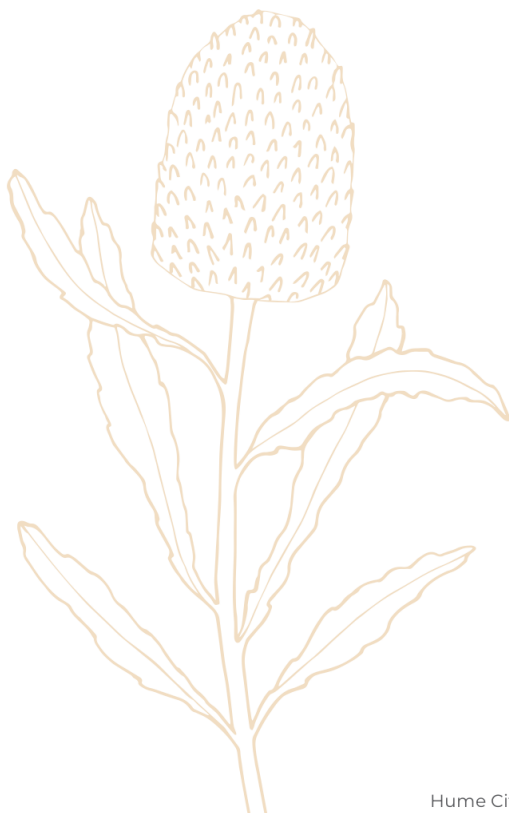
Growing our own food has benefits including food sovereignty (access to and control over healthy food produced sustainably and in a culturally appropriate way). In recent years food growing in urban areas, including Hume City, has increased in popularity, with more gardening happening in schools, community spaces and private gardens. This helps forge stronger social connections between people from different age groups and cultures. Food growing is extremely important for urban biodiversity, as birds and insects perform the vital function of pollinating plants. This is crucial to the health of the whole ecosystem.

Living with Wildlife

Council will redevelop the Living with Wildlife policy and will introduce elements of ‘the rights of nature’ addressed in the Council Plan’s Pathways to Sustainability. Council will also update behaviour change messaging around commonly reported issues such as bird feeding, responsible recreational fishing, litter impacts on wildlife, and swooping magpies.

Objectives

 OBJECTIVE 3.1:	Enhance biodiversity connectivity within the urban environment
 OBJECTIVE 3.2:	Provide opportunities for the community to connect with nature through citizen science, engagement programs, and restoration projects
 OBJECTIVE 3.3:	Support residents and the community to live safely and harmoniously with wildlife







The Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people have an unbroken relationship with Country, caring for this land, its waterways, its plants and animals. The traditional lands of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung, extend from the north of Melbourne to Lerderderg State Park in the west to Baw Baw National Park in the east.

Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people nurture the environment to sustain their community as living culture. Traditional methods of managing Country sustain the land. Their living legacy of tens of thousands of years of occupation and land management is evident in archaeological sites scattered across the landscape and in oral histories passed down through generations. As inheritors of this vast cultural history, Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people today continue the tradition of caring for Country and protecting cultural heritage.

Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung objectives, as outlined in the Cultural Values Strategic Principles prepared for Hume's Open Space Strategy include:

Cultural objective: redress the interruption of culture, enable meaningful continuity of culture through cultural practice, recognise and enable Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people to share and educate others about culture.

Environmental objective: redress the degradation of lands and waters, ensure the protection, care of and connection to Country, ensure and enable meaningful participation in and control of the planning and management of Country (lands and waters), recognise Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung knowledge and enable Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people to share and educate others about that knowledge.

Social objective: redress social inequity and ongoing oppression, enable and support Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people to live and work on Country, recognise social and community values, enable and support Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people to share and educate others about Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung society and history.

Economic objective: redress historic and ongoing dispossession and repair economic damage to Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung society, ensure that a greater share of the resources taken from Country goes to Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people, enable and support economic self-determination.

Hume's landscape has changed significantly compared to the time when it was exclusively managed by the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people. Early colonial people pioneered a way of life that profoundly changed the land. Vegetation was removed for farming, roads and urban settlements. This caused environmental degradation at a rapid rate. This legacy continues to affect biodiversity, human and ecological health today.

Hume Council will partner with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Traditional Owners to work towards their cultural objective as outlined in the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Statement of Country prepared for Hume City Council to guide their Open Space Strategy and other related land, biodiversity, waterway strategies and plans, to redress the interruption of culture, enable meaningful continuity of culture through cultural practice, and recognise and enable Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people to share and educate others about culture.

Cultural Heritage Values

Aboriginal cultural heritage

From volcanic hilltops to waterway valleys, Aboriginal heritage is abundant across the Hume landscape. Archaeological remnants include stone tool artefact scatters, middens, camp sites and scar trees. These sites hold living stories. Their significance is supported by historical records and oral histories in telling a narrative of how Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people utilised and managed the land and its resources in a sophisticated way. These sites hold historical, spiritual, educational, and scientific value for the community and a deeper significance for Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people.

The biik wurrdha valley along Jacksons Creek in Sunbury is of particular significance, being one of the few places in Victoria with preserved earth rings. While the exact story of the site is unclear, the Sunbury Rings are believed to be an important gateway for other tribes interacting with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung. Sections of freehold title of the Sunbury Rings Cultural Landscape are owned outright by Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation. The return of Wurundjeri Country will continue, as set out in the Jacksons Creek biik wurrdha Regional Parklands Plan.. Each year through cultural heritage investigations, more Aboriginal heritage places and artefacts are rediscovered. Sharing of this cultural heritage needs to be done according to Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung protocols.

As the effects of climate change include more severe storms, floods and fires, there is a risk that elements of significant sites may be destroyed and/or displaced.

Non-Aboriginal heritage

The former Bulla Shire Office and the site of the Sunbury Music Festival 1972-75 are sites of non-Aboriginal heritage significance. Remnants of homesteads and dry-stone walls and are a reminder of Hume’s colonial history. They are part of the story of change in Hume City. Council takes various roles in managing non-Aboriginal heritage features including protection through policy including in the Hume Planning Scheme, and encouraging adaptive reuse where possible. A priority remains protecting heritage features as former agricultural land is developed around Sunbury and in the northern growth corridors.





Protecting and valuing cultural values

Council has both a legal and moral obligation to protect cultural heritage on the land it owns and manages, and to ensure as a statutory authority that cultural heritage is considered in development. Council has a responsibility to support self-determination for the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung. Three key pieces of legislation that guide Council’s role are the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006, Heritage Act 2017 (dealing with non-Aboriginal heritage matters), and the Planning and Environment Act 1987 that informs the Hume Planning Scheme. The Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation (WWCHAC) is the Registered Aboriginal Party for all land within Hume City and is responsible for enforcing the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006.

Council also has a broader goal to support Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents and communities in Hume and work towards reconciliation, which is addressed through the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). An important component of reconciliation is truth-telling. Truth-telling enables Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents and communities to educate non-Aboriginal community members about the impacts of ongoing colonisation, the stolen generations and genocide. The Hume Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Recognition Policy recognises the impacts of dispossession and intergenerational trauma and highlights the need for self-determination for Aboriginal people. The Stolen Generations Marker at Malcolm Creek Wetlands, Craigieburn pays tribute to the Stolen Generations – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who were forcibly removed from their families and communities - denied their identity, family, traditional culture and country through the race-based policies of State and Federal Governments between 1910-1970s.

Hume partners with a number of local Aboriginal networks and community organisations including the Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group, Sunbury Aboriginal Corporation and Wandarra community organisation to redress social inequity and ongoing oppression and redress historic and ongoing dispossession. Council does this by making community spaces available, providing enhanced maternal child health services run by Aboriginal staff, supporting the Elders and Boorais group and supporting local Aboriginal artists.

The Victorian Traditional Owner Cultural Landscapes Strategy identifies five strategic directions over the next 10 years to progress the healing of Country and people. The priorities most relevant to the Land and Biodiversity Plan are:

- To enable Traditional Owner cultural landscape planning
- To embed Traditional Owner knowledge and practice into policy, planning and management of Country
- To enable the application of Traditional Owner cultural objectives, knowledge and practice in the management of public land.

Objective 18.1 of the Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018- 2023 aims to increase the recognition and enjoyment of Aboriginal land, water and cultural heritage rights. The Victorian Traditional Owner Culture Fire Strategy recognises that fire allows for healing and caring for Country. Burning is cultural responsibility of Traditional Owners and applies the approach of right fire, right time, and right way for the right cultural reasons. There are substantial positive impacts to Traditional Owner wellbeing and confidence through providing access and authority to practice on Country. Cultural burning practices meet cultural and ecological objectives while also reducing the risk of damaging bushfire. Land managers to recognise the authority of Traditional Owners to lead the development and application of fire practice on Country. Fire management is to be viewed as more than asset protection, and future parkland planning will apply more holistic reflection of fire management.

To respond to the priorities of Hume's Reconciliation Action Plan, Traditional Owner Cultural Landscapes Strategy, Victorian Traditional Owner Culture Fire Strategy, The Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018- 2023 and legislation, Council will focus on three priority areas under this theme:

- **Governance** – Ensuring Council's internal processes are adequate to meet statutory and moral obligations.
- **Partnership** – Partnering with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation to conserve and manage land.
- **Community engagement** – Raising awareness about the importance of cultural heritage and involving the community in managing and celebrating it.

Governance

As a statutory authority Council must ensure that any development proposal, whether on Council or private land, considers the protection of heritage values. For development proposals that require a planning permit, Council must ensure that the requirements of the Heritage Act 2017 and Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 have been adequately addressed. Proponents of development must understand how their development may impact on heritage values and demonstrate that they have put measures in place to minimise or negate those impacts to have their permit approved. Council must follow a similar process for development projects it undertakes on public land, ensuring that project plans mandate the need for heritage due diligence.

Council has Cultural Heritage Guidelines for project managers to assist in effectively considering the requirements of the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 and Heritage Act 2017 in their projects on Council land. These guidelines prescribe when an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) is required for a project, or if a Cultural Heritage Permit is needed to undertake an activity near an existing Aboriginal Heritage Place. Both approvals are granted by the WWCHAC and place strict requirements on the developer to ensure harm to cultural heritage is minimised or negated. Ensuring Council staff are aware of and can effectively apply the guidelines will be fundamental to achieving compliance with regulations at all times.

Heritage advisors

In instances where a Due Diligence Assessment, Cultural Heritage Management Plan or Cultural Heritage Permit are required, the advice and assistance of an internal Heritage Advisor would provide readily accessible information on cultural heritage matters across multiple sections in Council. While the Cultural Heritage Guidelines are a valuable tool for project managers, they will not remove the need for expert cultural heritage advice from a registered Heritage Advisor in many instances.





Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Partnership:

A key aspiration of the WWCHAC is to provide a holistic approach to working on Country. To this end the WWCHAC has established the Narrap Team, a team of rangers working on Country to manage ecosystems. The Narrap Team operate under the philosophy of relearning and applying traditional land management practices in conjunction with contemporary techniques.

Council's Reconciliation Action Plan and Pathways to Sustainability Framework recognise the importance of self-determination, self-advocacy and the aspirations of Aboriginal people. This includes being empowered to make decisions about cultural heritage values on Country. To meet these important needs, Council is initiating a land management partnership with the WWCHAC. This partnership agreement will evolve over time to ensure the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people have a voice in how Council-owned and managed sites of Aboriginal cultural heritage significance are managed.

Council also works with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung to incorporate the principles of cultural flows in the management of waterways in Hume. Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung representatives were involved in the development of the regional Upper Merri Creek Integrated Water Management project.

It is a priority for Council that the voices of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Traditional Owners are heard, to have relationships based on respect and shared understanding. Council recognises that Cultural strength is an enabling factor for the Aboriginal community.






WWCHAC have been central partners in the planning of marram baba Merri Creek Regional Parklands and the biik wurrdha Jacksons Creek Regional Parklands and cultural values and priorities are now embedded in the strategic directions for these parklands.

Community engagement:

The sharing of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung cultural knowledge must occur with permission of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Traditional Owners. One of five themes in Council's Live Green Plan for sustainability engagement with the community includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ecological practices. Council organises and supports community education workshops with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Traditional Owners and educators.

Council's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Recognition Policy (September 2020) states that in regards to the naming of places with Woi-wurrung place names, Council will actively engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities including Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, the RAPWG and broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members in the naming of places.

Objectives

 OBJECTIVE 4.1:	Ensure legislative compliance and increase Council's capacity to protect cultural heritage values through land development projects
 OBJECTIVE 4.2:	Increase active management of cultural values on Council land under guidance by Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung
 OBJECTIVE 4.3:	Establish and implement a long-term, living land management partnership agreement with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation
 OBJECTIVE 4.4:	Support Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people to build their capacity to care for Country in Hume
 OBJECTIVE 4.5:	Partner with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung to engage the Hume community in understanding the Aboriginal cultural heritage significance of sites across Hume City



THEME 5:
**A healthy and productive
rural landscape**



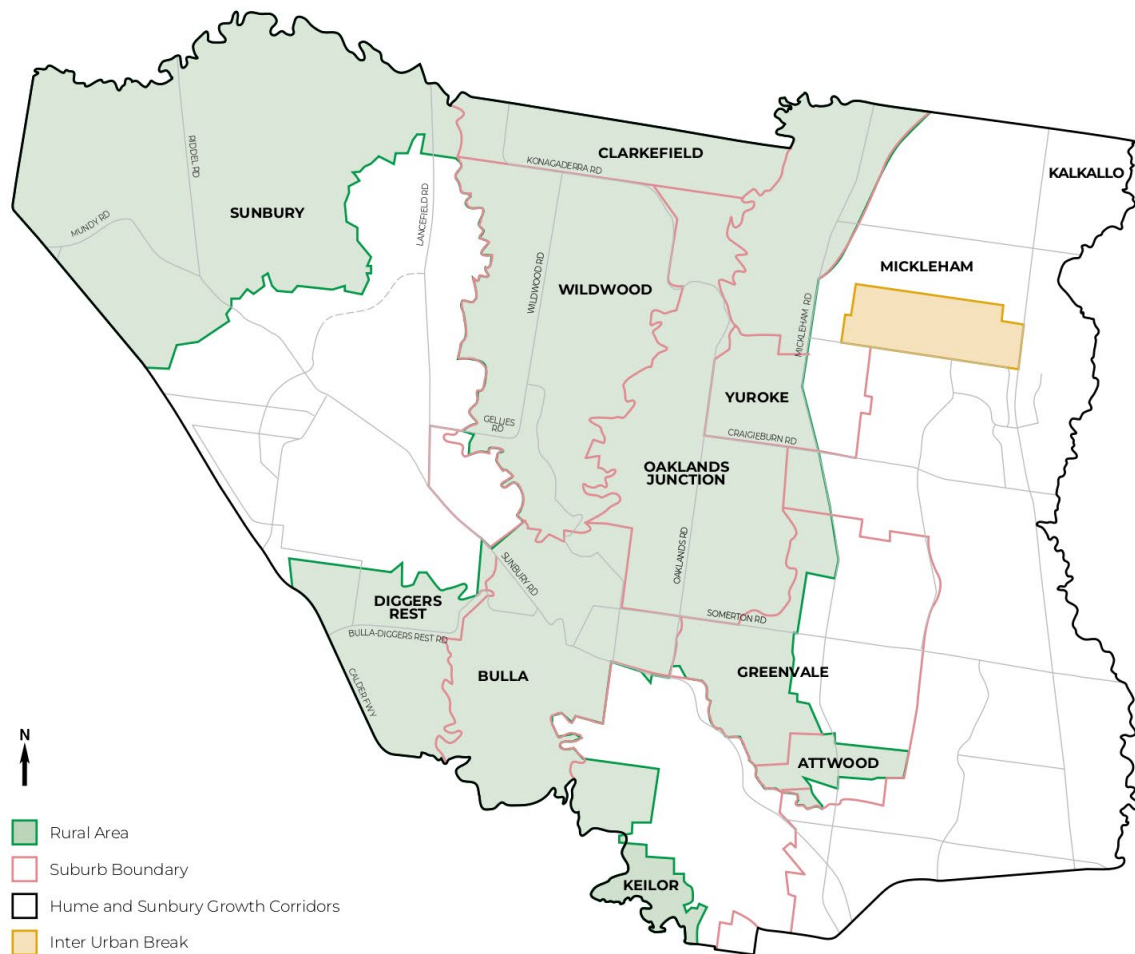
About half of Hume City’s total land area – more than 250 of 504 square kilometres - is designated as green wedge zone, outside Melbourne’s urban growth boundary and protected from development by State government policy. This land is characterised by grasslands and grassy woodlands of the Victorian volcanic plains and intersected by several steep creek valleys and narrow floodplains.

Landholders in the rural areas face challenges including pressures from surrounding development, climate change, weed infestation, land banking, illegal rubbish dumping, absentee landholders and an aging farming community. Hume’s Rural Engagement Program supports landholders with incentives and education to manage natural, agricultural and landscape values.

Hume’s green wedge includes the significant state infrastructure of Melbourne Airport. Development regulations protect the ongoing curfew-free operations of the airport. The rural community play an important role as stewards of the land, protecting, conserving and restoring Hume’s green wedge.



Figure 3: Map of the rural area of Hume City, showing suburb boundaries and the adjoining urban growth corridors.



Agriculture/horticulture production

Agricultural and horticulture pursuits in Hume include grazing for beef and sheep, horse agistment/ownership, grape and olive production, cropping, orchards, regenerative farming and lifestyle farming. Farming in Hume supports livelihoods, retains natural processes such as water and oxygen circulation and is a cultural way of life.

Biodiversity

Hume’s rural areas are rich in biodiversity. In fact the rural areas support most of the native vegetation and wildlife habitat that occurs in the municipality. Despite land clearing and other farming practices, biodiversity provides economic benefits to the community through natural pest management and revitalisation of soils. Hume’s biodiversity is integral to the municipality’s character, and there are opportunities to support landscape-based tourism and hospitality activities that support a regenerative approach to landscape renewal as part of a sustainable local economy.

Rural Strategy and Rural Engagement Program

The priorities set by the Land and Biodiversity Plan for a healthy and productive rural landscape align with Council’s Rural Strategy. The Rural Strategy explores the broader challenges facing the rural community and identifies opportunities for protection and enhancement of the rural landscape.

Vision for Hume’s Rural Areas

Council’s primary role in supporting a healthy and productive rural landscape is to support people living and working on the land by providing services that invest in social and economic wellbeing. People who are well-supported are more likely to succeed in their endeavours to manage the land sustainably.

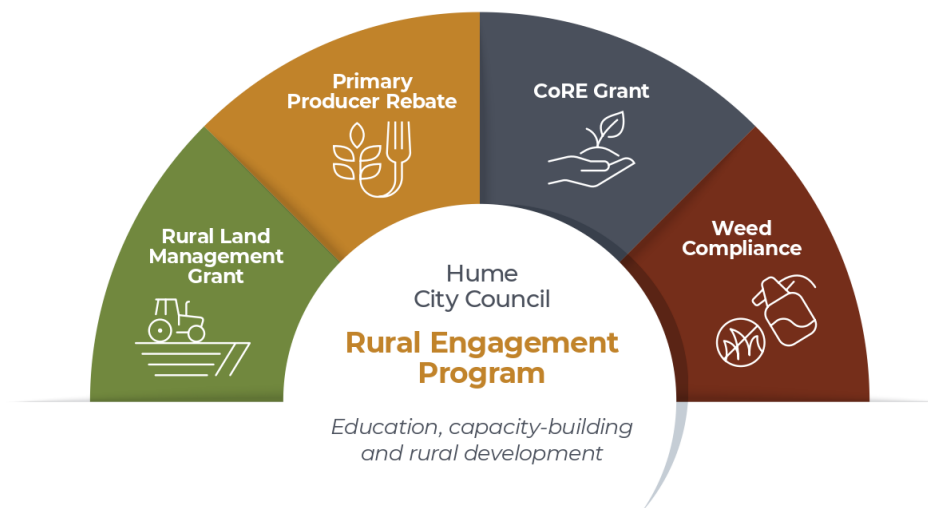
Control of weeds is particularly important in Hume. Weed infestations are already a significant land management issue and are expected to increase as a result of climate change. Many weeds respond well to flood and fire, both of which are expected to intensify as climate change progresses (Steffen et al., 2009, p. 133) and some weeds are well adapted to hotter and drier conditions. The Weed Compliance and Education Program aims to work with rural landholders on making a reasonable effort to control noxious weeds on their land.







Council's Rural Engagement Program (Figure 4), includes the following initiatives that support the rural community to manage the land sustainably for production and biodiversity:

- Primary Producer Rate Rebate (PPRR) – a 30% rate rebate for agricultural businesses in the green wedge who typically have higher cost and time inputs associated with managing their land. Council staff visit properties annually where the landholder is a recipient of a Primary Producer Rate Rebate.
- Rural Land Management Grant (RLMG) – a \$300 grant, plus an additional \$20 per hectare of land owned, targeted at the non-farming community or those undertaking hobby farming to support land managers to manage land in an environmentally sustainable way.
- Conserving our Rural Environment (CoRE) Grant – a grant of up to \$10,000 per eligible property to undertake environmental works to protect and enhance biodiversity. This program was established in 2012 and supports landowners to protect and manage the vast nature reserves on rural land in Hume City.
- Weed Compliance and Education Program – Under the Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994 (CaLP Act) all landholders are responsible for controlling and reducing noxious weeds throughout their property. Council's local law gives authorised officers the ability to provide directions to landholders to control significant weed infestations. Landholders may receive infringements if they do not comply.
- Education, capacity-building and rural development – Council offers workshops, field days and information resources to assist landowners to build their capacity to manage weeds, pest animals, revegetation, conservation, soil health and agriculture. This program will continue, with new topics including agribusiness and climate change adaptation. Landowners can also apply for an Agriculture Scholarship up to \$1500 for on-farm advice to build their skills for specific productive and sustainable land uses.

Figure 4: Diagrammatic overview of Council's Rural Engagement Program, including the Rural Land Management Grant, Primary Producer Rate Rebate, Conserving our Rural Environment (CoRE) Grant and Weed Compliance Program. Underpinning these programs is a focus on supporting education, capacity-building and development of landowners.



Objectives

 OBJECTIVE 5.1:	Reduce the spread and extent of noxious priority weeds within the rural area of Hume
 OBJECTIVE 5.2:	Support primary producers to practice sustainable agricultural production in Hume
 OBJECTIVE 5.3:	Increase the capability of rural landowners to manage their land sustainably and enhance resilience to climate change
 OBJECTIVE 5.4:	Support collaboration between rural residents engaged in sustainable land management
 OBJECTIVE 5.5:	Increase native vegetation and wildlife habitat in the Hume’s rural areas





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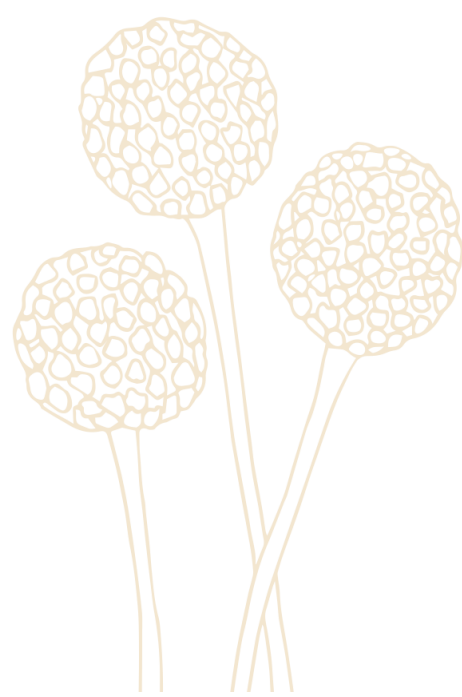
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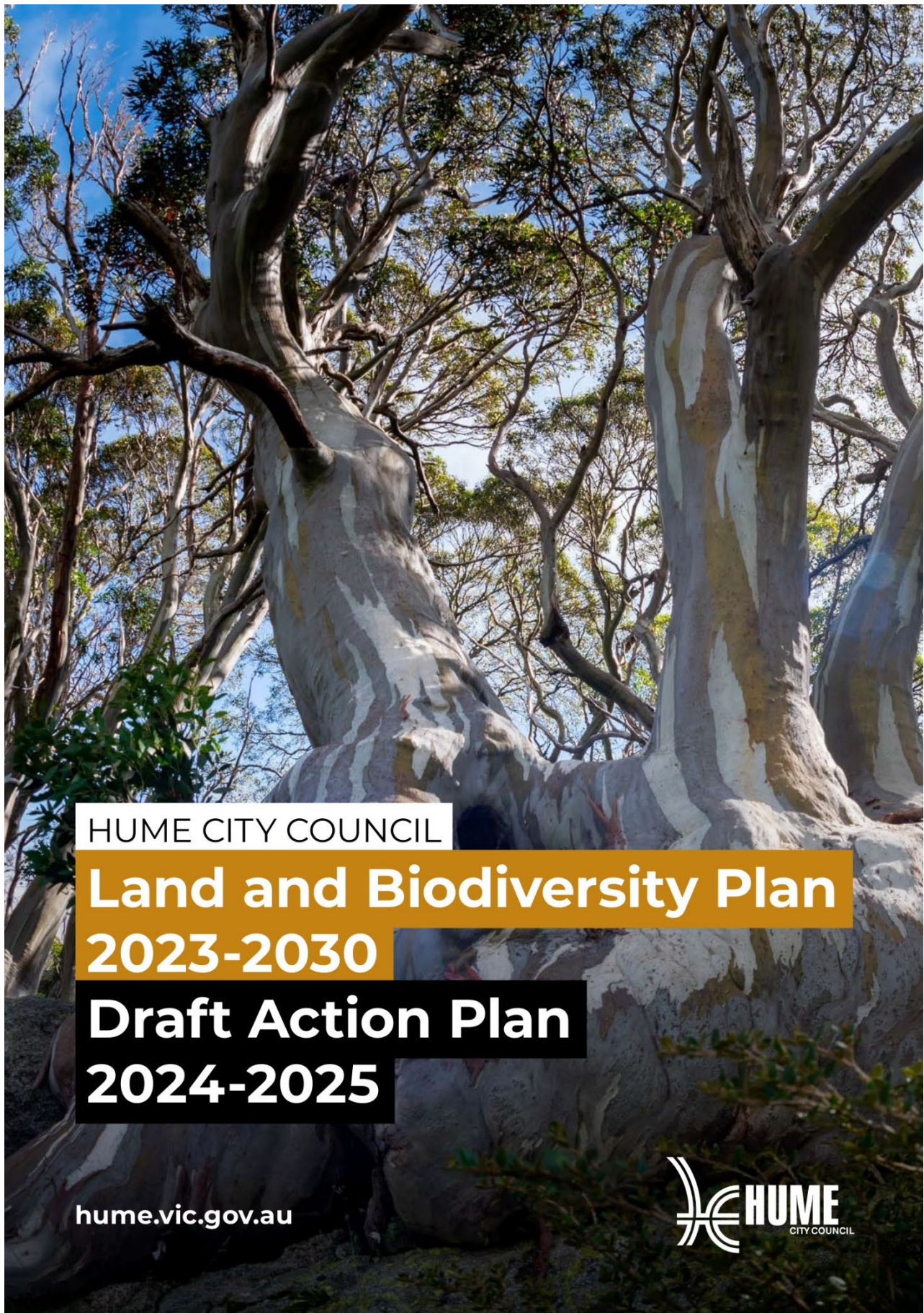
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This 2024-25 action plan guides Council in the first eighteen months of implementation of the Land and Biodiversity Plan 2023-2030. It covers the period from January 2024 – June 2025.

For each theme it identifies objectives, actions, the role that Council departments will play in implementing the actions, external partners/stakeholders, and timeframes for completion. While actions in 2024-25 Action Plan are all costed according to existing allocated resources, future Action Plans will be costed as part of Council's budget process. Where an internal department is listed as Support, this team can assist by consulting the Lead team and will be kept informed about progress of the action.

2 Hume City Council Land and Biodiversity Plan 2023-2030 | Draft Action Plan 2024-2025

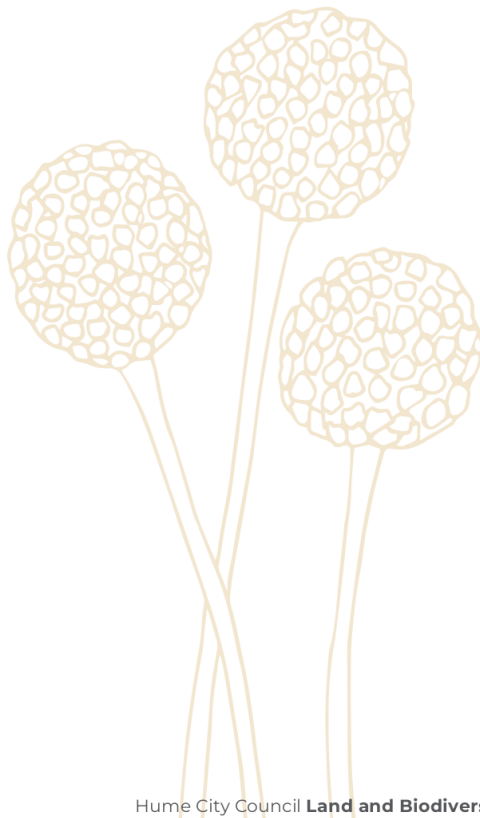


THEME 1: A healthy and thriving conservation estate

Action ID	Action	Responsibility	Complete Action by
OBJECTIVE 1.1: Improve our understanding of Hume’s biodiversity			
1.1.1	Collate floristics data across the conservation estate through the Nature Reserves Monitoring Program and incorporate the data into Council’s GIS database.	Lead: City Parks & Open Space Support: IT Partners: DEECA	Ongoing
1.1.2	Map all known threatened flora species and incorporate the data onto Hume’s GIS or other software system, to highlight their location and significance to Council departments.	Lead: City Parks & Open Space Support: IT Partners: DEECA	Ongoing
1.1.3	Develop a native fauna monitoring framework to outline the species that should be actively conserved.	Lead: City Parks & Open Space Support: Community Health & Wellbeing Partners: DEECA, MW, PV, Tertiary Institutions	30 June 2025
1.1.4	Develop internal organisational processes to assist with directing maintenance and enhancement projects for Matters of State and National Environmental Significance across Hume’s open space network.	Lead: City Parks & Open Space Support: City Design, Planning & Development Partners: DEECA, Tertiary Institutions	30 June 2025
1.1.5	Investigate resourcing for internal environmental planning referral process to be streamlined and rolled out across the organisation.	Lead: Planning & Development Support: City Parks & Open Space Partners: DEECA, MW, YVW	30 June 2025

Action ID	Action	Responsibility	Complete Action by
OBJECTIVE 1.2: Strategic management of Hume’s nature reserves			
1.2.1	Develop an environmental management strategy for Hume’s conservation estate.	Lead: City Parks & Open Space Support: City Design, Community Health & Wellbeing Partners: DEECA, FRV, MW, MCMC, PV, TFN, WWCHAC, YVW	30 June 2025
1.2.2	Investigate and seek resourcing for the development of a strategic plan for building climate resilience in Hume’s conservation areas.	Lead: City Parks & Open Space Support: Climate Action Integration, City Strategy Partners: DEECA	Ongoing
1.2.3	Develop five Conservation Management Plans as part of the Council Plan.	Lead: City Parks & Open Space Support: Community Health & Wellbeing Partners: DEECA, FRV, MW, MCMC, PV, TFN, WWCHAC, YVW	30 December 2024
1.2.4	Review and redevelop two expired Conservation Management Plans.	Lead: City Parks & Open Space Support: Community Health & Wellbeing Partners: DEECA, FRV, MW, MCMC, PV, TFN, WWCHAC, YVW	30 June 2025
1.2.5	Develop Annual Plans for all reserves not under the CMP framework and incorporate service level guidelines into the plans.	Lead: City Parks & Open Space Support: Community Health & Wellbeing Partners: DEECA, FRV, MW, MCMC, PV, TFN, WWCHAC, YVW	Ongoing
1.2.6	Identify threatened and unique flora species and incorporate them into restoration programs in Conservation Management Plans/Annual Plans where reasonably practicable, to increase their representation across Hume’s conservation estate.	Lead: City Parks & Open Space Support: Community Health & Wellbeing Partners: MCMC, WWCHAC	Ongoing
1.2.7	Identify strategic ecological restoration projects in Conservation Management Plans to increase habitat extent and connectivity.	Lead: City Parks & Open Space Support: City Strategy, City Safety Partners: CoPCG, DEECA, FRV, MW, MCMC, PV, TFN, WWCHAC, YVW	Ongoing
1.2.8	Implement restoration projects outlined in Conservation Management Plans.	Lead: City Parks & Open Space Support: Community Health & Wellbeing Partners: MCMC, WWCHAC	Ongoing

Action ID	Action	Responsibility	Complete Action by
1.2.9	Deliver four ‘Cues to care’ interpretive signage capital projects to meet the community’s expectations on nature reserve appearance.	Lead: City Parks & Open Space Support: Community Health & Wellbeing, Strategic Communications, City Design	30 June 2025
1.2.10	Review and redevelop Council’s pest animal management plan, incorporating the impacts of pest animals on habitat connectivity.	Lead: City Parks & Open Space Support: Community Health & Wellbeing Partners: DEECA, Pest Animal Action Groups, WWCHAC	30 June 2025
OBJECTIVE 1.3: Collaborate with other organisations to foster well informed land management practices			
1.3.1	Participate in, and provide \$15,000 + CPI annually towards the Chain of Ponds Collaboration Group.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Support: City Parks & Open Space Partners: CoPCG, CVA, CoM, FoMPC, FoUMPC, GtW, KA, LCS, MW, MV, MBUG, MB, PV, RMIT, SU, UniMelb, VPA, YVW	Ongoing
1.3.2	Work with partners including Chain of Ponds Collaboration and Merri Creek Management Committee to organise community clean ups at strategically identified litter hotspots along waterways.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Support: Waste & Sustainability Partners: MCMC, CoPCG	Ongoing





THEME 2:

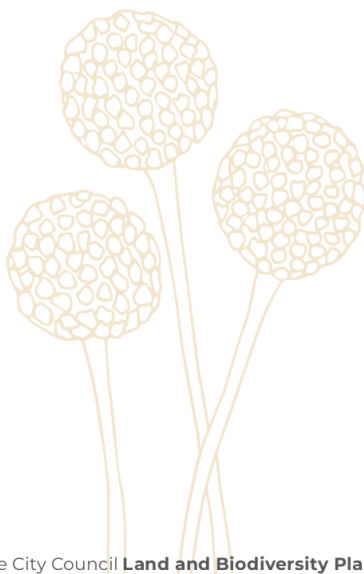
A well connected landscape for wildlife

Action ID	Action	Responsibility	Complete Action by
OBJECTIVE 2.1: Protect vegetation that supports landscape connectivity			
2.1.1	Promote conservation covenants to rural landowners on Council's incentive programs, prioritising properties with significant landscape connectivity.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Partners: TFN	Ongoing
2.1.2	Continue to manage all conservation areas on Council-managed land that contribute to ecological connectivity within the open space network.	Lead: City Parks & Open Space Support: City Design, City Safety, Planning & Development Partners: CoPCG, DEECA, FRV, MW, MCMC, PV, TFN, WWCHAC, YVW	Ongoing
2.1.3	Begin managing new reserves designated as part of sub-divisions or vested from developers.	Lead: City Parks & Open Space Support: Planning and Development and Subdivisions, City Design, City Safety Partners: CoPCG, DEECA, FRV, MW, MCMC, PV, TFN, WWCHAC, YVW	Ongoing
2.1.4	Through the Rural Engagement Program, encourage improved grazing management practices on rural properties.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Partners: DEECA	Ongoing
2.1.5	Facilitate wildlife crossing design training for Council engineers to explore opportunities and incorporate learnings into infrastructure projects.	Lead: Assets Support: City Parks & Open Space, City Strategy, Planning & Development Community Health & Wellbeing	30 June 2025
OBJECTIVE 2.2: Enhance connectivity in the landscape			
2.2.1	Incorporate landscape connectivity into the Open Space Strategy to ensure important conservation and biodiversity areas are protected and enhanced where possible.	Lead: City Design Support: City Parks & Open Space, Planning & Development, City Strategy	Ongoing

2.2.2	Review Environmental Significance Overlays in the Hume Planning Scheme with consideration for holistic and effective protection of native vegetation, significant landscapes, biodiversity connectivity, cultural heritage and significant waterways.	Lead: City Strategy Support: Planning & Development, City Parks & Open Spaces, Community Health & Wellbeing Partners: WWCHAC, DEECA, CoP	Ongoing
2.2.3	Incorporate landscape connectivity principles into the design phase when new areas of open space are being vested to Council through urban growth and subdivisions.	Lead: Planning & Development Support: City Parks & Open Spaces Partners: DEECA, Developers	Ongoing
2.2.4	Identify reserves that are deficient in hollow-bearing trees and develop a fabricating nest box program for a range of species.	Lead: City Parks & Open Spaces Support: City Design, Community Health & Wellbeing Partners: DEECA	Ongoing
2.2.5	Seek opportunities to utilise the Corridors of Green grant program to support connectivity enhancement projects on Council-managed land.	Lead: City Parks & Open Spaces Support: Grants & Projects, Community Health & Wellbeing Partners: CoPCG, MW, MCMC, WWCHAC	Ongoing
OBJECTIVE 2.3: Collaborate with other stakeholders to enhance connectivity			
2.3.1	Establish an annual forum for public land managers such as Melbourne Water and Parks Victoria in Hume to discuss the recommendations of the Landscape Connectivity Plan and identify opportunities for connectivity enhancement and other biodiversity conservation works.	Lead: City Parks & Open Spaces Support: Community Health & Wellbeing Partners: CoPCG, local and state government agencies, MCMC, WWCHAC	Ongoing
2.3.2	Support the implementation of the Merri Creek Management Committee's Growling Grass Frog Masterplan.	Lead: City Parks & Open Spaces Support: Waste & Sustainability, Planning & Development, City Design, Community Health & Wellbeing, Project Management Office Partners: local government agencies, MW, MCMC, PV, WWCHAC	Ongoing
OBJECTIVE 2.4: Undertake monitoring and improvement			
2.4	Establish a methodology for mapping weed infestations on private land.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Support: City Parks & Open Spaces Partners: Banksia Gardens Community Services	30 December 2024

**THEME: 3****Urban biodiversity and health and wellbeing**

Action ID	Actions	Responsibility	Complete Action by
OBJECTIVE 3.1: Enhance biodiversity connectivity within the urban environment			
3.1.1	Implement the Gardens for Wildlife program. Minimum 10 Garden Guides recruited and trained. Minimum 20 garden visits conducted per year.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing	Ongoing
3.1.2	Implement the Community Greening Program, ensuring that site selection is made to enhance biodiversity outcomes and to meet the needs of the community. Minimum five plantings per year. Minimum 50 participants per planting Minimum 500 plants per planting.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Support: City Parks & Open Spaces Partners: Community groups including Friends groups, faith groups and businesses	Ongoing
3.1.3	Implement the Seedlings for Schools program. Seedlings provided to at least 10 schools for on-ground projects. Minimum 3,000 seedlings donated to schools per year Minimum 65% plant survival rate.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Partners: Hume schools	Ongoing



OBJECTIVE 3.2: Provide opportunities for the community to connect with nature through citizen science, engagement programs and restoration projects			
3.2.1	Implement a Schools for Nature program of incursions to improve student's environmental literacy. Minimum seven biodiversity incursions / excursions delivered each year. Investigate one excursion per year involving students planting in Hume's open space network.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Support: City Parks & Open Spaces Partners: Hume schools	Ongoing
3.2.2	Implement Citizen Science projects and campaigns to raise awareness of Hume's natural assets. Minimum three community events per year.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Support: City Parks & Open Space Partners: Melbourne metro Councils participating in the City Nature Challenge	Ongoing
3.2.3	Identify opportunities to expand environmental and waste education activations at current and future Hume community centres.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Support: Waste & Sustainability	Ongoing
OBJECTIVE 3.3: Support residents and the community to live safely and harmoniously with wildlife			
3.3.1	Update the Living with Wildlife Policy, aligning it with Council's Domestic Animal Management Plan and have it endorsed by Council.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Support: City Parks & Open Space	30 June 2025
3.3.2	Initiate a Nature is Your Neighbour campaign with developers.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Support: City Parks & Open Space	30 December 2024
3.3.3	Collaborate with neighbouring Councils, developers, State Government and Wildlife Victoria to address the safety of kangaroo mobs.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Support: City Parks & Open Space, Planning & Development	Ongoing
3.3.4	Initiate a Responsible Fishing in Urban Waterways campaign, that includes consideration of introduced and native fish species.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Support: City Parks & Open Space Partners: Victorian Fishing Association	30 December 2024
3.3.5	Review existing signage and communications to reduce bird feeding in the community. Design and begin implementation of a new campaign including information in different languages.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Support: City Parks & Open Space	30 June 2025

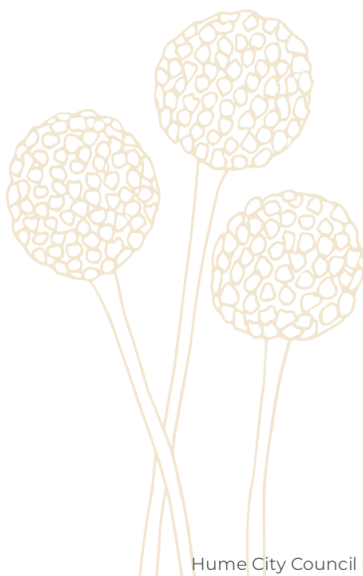


THEME 4:

A landscape rich in cultural values and heritage

Action ID	Actions	Responsibility	Complete Action by
OBJECTIVE 4.1: Ensure legislative compliance and increase Council’s capacity to protect cultural heritage values through land development projects			
4.1.1	Training, capacity building and integration of Cultural Heritage Management Plan guidelines into Project Management Office framework.	Lead: Project Management Office Support: Community Health & Wellbeing, People & Culture	Ongoing
4.1.2	On-country tours of significant locations for Hume Project Management Office staff. Minimum one event per year.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Support: Project Management Office, People & Culture Partners: WWCHAC	Ongoing
4.1.3	Work with local Traditional Owners to actively protect significant Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung cultural values in the municipality.	Lead: City Design Support: City Strategy, Project Management Office, Community Health & Wellbeing, City Parks & Open Spaces Partners: WWCHAC	Ongoing
OBJECTIVE 4.2: Increase active management of cultural values on Council-managed land under guidance by Traditional Owners			
4.2.1	Work with local Traditional Owners to manage sites of significance in accordance with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung requirements and the community.	Lead: City Parks & Open Space Partners: WWCHAC	Ongoing
4.2.2	Investigate adequate resourcing to formalise Traditional Owner authority in water entitlement and management to help develop traditional ownership of water resources and planning.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Support: Climate Action Integration, City Parks & Open Space, Planning & Development Partners: WWCHAC, partners in the Upper Merri Creek Integrated Water Management Plan.	30 June 2025

OBJECTIVE 4.3: Establish and implement a long term, living land management partnership agreement with wurundjeri woi-wurrung cultural heritage aboriginal corporation			
4.3.1	Enter into a Wurundjeri-Hume Land Management Partnership Agreement, to develop mutually agreed principles for protecting and managing Aboriginal cultural heritage values during ongoing, routine maintenance activities.	Lead: City Parks & Open Space Support: Community Health & Wellbeing Partners: WWCHAC	1 March 2024
OBJECTIVE 4.4 Support wurundjeri woi-wurrung people to build their capacity to care for country in Hume			
4.4.1	Provide opportunities for Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people to practice cultural traditions as living culture.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Support: City Parks & Open Space Partners: WWCHAC	Ongoing
4.4.2	Investigate options for the return of country to Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Traditional Owners via benchmarking exercise with other Councils and State Government.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Support: City Design, Property and Leasing, Planning & Development Partners: Developers, WWCHAC	30 December 2024
OBJECTIVE 4.5 Partner with wurundjeri woi-wurrung people to engage the Hume community in understanding the aboriginal cultural heritage significance of sites across Hume city			
4.5.1	Work with Traditional Owners to build greater community awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Partners: WWCHAC	Ongoing
4.5.2	Engage educators from Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation to educate children and young people in Hume's schools and preschools.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Support: Children, Youth and Family Services Partners: Koori Engagement Support Officers (Victorian State Government), WWCHAC	Ongoing

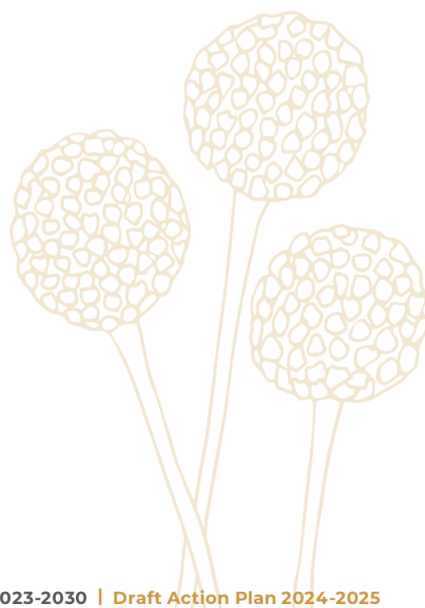


**THEME 5:****A healthy and productive rural landscape**

Action ID	Actions	Responsibility	Complete Action by
OBJECTIVE 5.1: Reduce the spread and extent of noxious weeds within the rural areas of Hume			
5.1.1	Develop and pilot a weed compliance and education program to enforce the local law requiring control of weeds.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Support: City Laws	30 June 2025
5.1.2	Develop a noxious weed monitoring program incorporating private land and roadsides.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Support: City Laws, City Parks & Open Space Partners: Banksia Gardens Community Services	30 June 2025
5.1.3	Align the delivery of the rural roadside weed management program on public land with the weed compliance and education program on adjoining private land.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Support: City Parks & Open Spaces	30 June 2025
5.1.4	Develop a Rural Landholder Kit, outlining landholder responsibilities for weed control and promoting the values of Hume’s rural areas.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Support: Finance Partners: Real estate agents	30 December 2024
5.1.5	Continue to offer and increase participation in Rural Land Management Grant to eligible rural landholders.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing	Ongoing
5.1.6	Advocate to the State Government to better manage weeds from their land.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Support: City Strategy	Ongoing
OBJECTIVE 5.2: Support primary producers to practice sustainable agricultural production in Hume			
5.2.1	Maintain Primary Producer Rate Rebates to minimum 75 rebates per round.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing	Ongoing
5.2.2	Promotion of Primary Producer Rate Rebate to agriculture enterprises in Hume who are currently not engaged in the program.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Support: Economic Development Partners: Local businesses	Ongoing
5.2.3	Bi-annual review of operations of the incentives (grants and rebates) programs.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing	Ongoing

5.2.4	Deliver community workshops and advice to Hume’s primary producers and other rural landholders, focusing on sustainable agriculture and supporting a farmers’ market in Hume. Minimum three events per year.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Partners: City of Whittlesea, Macedon Ranges Council, Mitchell Shire Council	Ongoing
5.2.5	Investigate grants from external sources to support primary producers in Hume.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Support: Grants and Projects	Ongoing
5.2.6	Create a service directory for primary producers and distribute to rural residents.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Support: Economic Development	30 December 2024
OBJECTIVE 5.3: Increase the capability of rural landowners to manage their land sustainably and enhance resilience to climate change			
5.3.1	Raise awareness amongst rural landowners about the values, benefits and management of habitat connectivity for wildlife and farm productivity through avenues such as: • RE-Source Newsletter (four hard copy and four eNews per year) • Connectivity fact sheet in the Land & Biodiversity Guidelines • Connectivity field day • Information at events	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Support: Strategic Communications & Events	Ongoing
5.3.2	Investigate a rural area plant donation program to support increased revegetation on rural land and help increase habitat connectivity for wildlife.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing	30 December 2024
5.3.3	Promote the development of community led sustainable land management initiatives such as a rabbit action group and Landcare.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Partners: Landcare	Ongoing
5.3.4	Promote Melbourne Water’s Stream Frontage Management Program to rural landowners in Hume.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Partners: Melbourne Water	Ongoing
5.3.5	Seek opportunities to link corporate and community volunteers with rural landowners to support large scale rural land revegetation projects.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Support: Economic Development Partners: Local businesses	Ongoing
5.3.6	Investigate and raise awareness of Native Vegetation Net Gain Offsets.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Support: Economic Development Partners: TFN	Ongoing
5.3.7	Investigate and promote alternate uses for land that doesn’t have the capacity to carry agriculture (eg, carbon farming).	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Support: Climate Action Integration	Ongoing

OBJECTIVE 5.4: Support collaboration between rural residents engaged in sustainable land management			
5.4.1	Develop and implement an annual Community Engagement Plan for workshops, education and events. Minimum 10 events per year, with at least one cross-Council collaboration.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Support: Strategic Communications & Events Partners: City of Whittlesea, Mitchell Shire Council, Macedon Ranges Council	Ongoing
5.4.2	Inform landowners via RE-source newsletter, property visits and education workshops about Melbourne Airport’s lack of curfew and the implications for landowners in the Green Wedge regarding a lack of subdivision opportunities and the benefits of diverse and sustainable land uses.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Support: Environmental Planners, Strategic Planning Partners: Melbourne Airport	Ongoing
OBJECTIVE 5.5: Increase native vegetation and wildlife habitat in Hume’s rural areas			
5.5.1	Support rural landowners through the CoRE Grant or other means to invest in large revegetation projects on their land.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing	Ongoing
5.5.2	Explore opportunities to support the provision of fabricated nest boxes to rural landowners.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Support: City Parks & Open Spaces	Ongoing
5.5.3	Develop a program to subsidise the cost of one Trust for Nature conservation covenant per year for rural landowners in areas important to connectivity and biodiversity conservation for permanent protection of assets.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Support: Environmental Planning	30 December 2024



Acronyms and Abbreviations

CoPCG	Chain of Ponds Collaboration Group
CVA	Conservation Volunteers Australia
DEDJTR	Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources
DEECA	Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action
FoMPC	Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek
FoUMPC	Friends of Upper Moonee Ponds Creek
FRV	Fire Rescue Victoria
GR&P	Governance, Risk and Property
GtW	Greening the West/City West Water
I&A	Infrastructure and Assets
IT	Information Technology
KA	Kensington Association
L&C Plan	Landscape and Connectivity Plan
LCS	Living Colour Studio
MBUG	Moonee Bicycle Users Group
MCMC	Merri Creek Management Committee
MV	City of Moonee Valley
MB	Moonee Bicycle Users Group
MW	Melbourne Water
PPRR	Primary Producer Rate Rebate
PPWCMA	Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority
PV	Parks Victoria
RMIT	Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology
SU	Swinburne University
TFN	Trust for Nature
UniMelb	University of Melbourne PhD candidate
Urban Forest	Urban Forest Team, City Parks and Open Spaces Department
VPA	Victorian Planning Authority
WW	Western Water
WWCHAC	Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation
YVW	Yarra Valley Water

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HUME LAND AND BIODIVERSITY PLAN 2023-2030

Style Definition: TOC 2

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DRAFT

Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners, the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people

Hume City is located on the traditional lands of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people of the Kulin Nation, who have lived in the area for approximately 40,000 years. The Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung are composed of several clans that are the Traditional Owners of separate pieces of land or estates. The Gunung-William Balluk clan are the Traditional Owners of much of the Hume City municipality. The Gunung-William Balluk clan did not survive colonisation.

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Although significant cultural knowledge was lost following European invasion and settlement, Hume City remains rich in Aboriginal cultural heritage. The municipality has more than 700 registered Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Places including burial sites, artefact scatters, earth features, low density artefact distributions, object collections, quarries, scarred trees and stone features.

Hume has a large and growing population of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, who come from varied backgrounds, locations and life experiences, and have their own connection to country, culture and community. In 2021, approximately 1,870 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were living in Hume, which was an increase of approximately 40% from 2011. Hume City has the 5th largest Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in metropolitan Melbourne.

Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people have a deep and enduring relationship with, connection and responsibility to land, water and sky. Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people have been managing land and water for more than 60,000 years. Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people continue to safely steward the diverse landscapes of Hume through Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung land management practices. The Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people have a deep understanding and knowledge of Country and this connection should be respected and valued.

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Hume City remains rich in Aboriginal cultural heritage. The municipality has more than 700 registered Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Places including burial sites, artefact scatters, earth features, low density artefact distributions, object collections, quarries, scarred trees and stone features. Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people have a cultural obligation in preserving not just their cultural objects, but the natural landscapes of cultural importance. Significant cultural, community and environmental value require protection. This is essential to the identity and wellbeing of the Wurundjeri people.

Hume has a large and growing population of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, who come from varied backgrounds, locations and life experiences, and have their own connection to country, culture and community.

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Introduction

Hume City is a culturally diverse municipality. According to the 2021 census, Hume residents come from 170 countries of birth. Common overseas countries of birth of Hume City residents include India, Iraq, Turkey and Lebanon. Almost half of Hume’s residents (49%) speak a language other than English. Hume City has significant heritage, landscape and biodiversity values. These include a range of indigenous plants, threatened vegetation communities, wildlife, waterways and sites of cultural and geological significance. Many of these values, such as the ancient River Red Gums, deep creek valleys and Aboriginal artefact scatters, define the character of our landscape and contribute strongly to Hume City’s identity and sense of place.

The *Land and Biodiversity Plan 2023-2030* outlines Hume Council’s strategic direction for the protection and management of these important values. The Land and Biodiversity Plan identifies:

- The particular land and biodiversity values/assets that necessitate protection and/or enhancement in Hume City,
- The planning and policy context for the management of land and biodiversity values in Hume, including Council’s roles and responsibilities,
- Impacts of climate change on the health of Hume’s conservation nature reserves, on landscape connectivity, urban biodiversity, cultural heritage assets and Hume’s rural landscape and
- An overarching goal, clear objectives, actions, and targets to direct the implementation of this plan over a seven-year timeframe.

The *Land and Biodiversity Plan 2023-2030* follows the *Land and Biodiversity Plan 2015-2019*. Under the previous plan, Council committed to 21 actions across three goals. Thirteen actions were completed entirely with seven actions ongoing and carried over to the new Plan. Three actions are considered redundant, superseded by related actions.

Actions achieved, Land and Biodiversity Plan 2015-2019

Goals	Number of actions	Complete, redundant or incomplete
The city’s natural heritage, environment and rural spaces are protected, enhanced, maintained and valued	15	10 complete 1 redundant, superseded by related actions 4 carried forward and implemented to specific projects
Cultural heritage sites and identified, protected and effectively managed	4	2 complete 2 ongoing and carried forward to new Plan
Suburbs are leafier, with increased canopy cover	2	2 considered redundant, superseded by related actions

Council’s roles in relation to land and biodiversity

The Council Plan establishes several strategic objectives to guide progress for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity. One key strategic objective is to:

“Facilitate appropriate urban development and enhance natural environment, heritage, landscapes and rural places.”

This strategic objective defines the scope of the Land and Biodiversity Plan. As such, it has been adopted as the overarching goal of the Land and Biodiversity Plan from which several themes, objectives and actions have originated.

Council’s four overarching functions as a local government are to provide community services, act as a Statutory Authority, facilitate service delivery with other organisations, and advocate on behalf of the Hume community. The table below explains how Council performs these functions in relation to land and biodiversity.

Council’s Role	Relevance to land and biodiversity
Statutory Authority	Council has a legal obligation to manage land, including protecting threatened plants and plant communities, protecting cultural heritage, and controlling declared weeds and pests. Council also has an important role to play in reviewing and implementing the Hume Planning Scheme and ensuring that development complies with planning requirements around protection of the environment and cultural heritage.
Service Provider	Council provides a range of services to the community that aim to protect and manage land and biodiversity whilst supporting community wellbeing. This includes offering financial incentives for sustainable land management, delivering workshops, field days and other events as engagement and capacity-building programs for residents and local community organisations, developing information resources and providing advice and guidance. Council also manages some privately owned or state-owned land for conservation purposes by agreement with the landowner.
Facilitator	Council has a role to play in supporting and partnering with other land managers in Hume, in neighbouring municipalities, and sometimes across the State to better manage land and biodiversity. Council also facilitates collaboration between a range of community and government stakeholders to mobilise and direct resources to where they are most needed.
Advocate	Council advocates to all levels of government for the best outcomes for the Hume community and the local environment. This includes important advocacy around issues such as weeds and pests, native vegetation protection and government investment into land and biodiversity initiatives.

Themes

The objectives and actions of the Land and Biodiversity Plan relate to five key themes, described in the table below.

Theme	Description
1 A healthy and thriving network of conservation nature reserves	This theme relates to Council’s role as a land manager, specifically the management of conservation areas and flora and fauna. It focusses on how Council can enhance the current system of management to achieve a healthy and thriving network of conservation-nature reserves.
2 A well-connected landscape for wildlife	This theme explores the important function that adjoining vegetation plays within the landscape to facilitate movement of flora and fauna across and between urban, rural, and natural environments in Hume and beyond Hume’s borders.
3 Urban biodiversity and health and wellbeing	This theme explores the important role that urban areas play in supporting biodiversity, including parks, streetscapes and residential gardens. This theme recognises the important link between nature connection and community health and wellbeing.
4 A landscape rich in cultural values and heritage	This theme recognises the rich cultural heritage of the Traditional Owners of Hume City, the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people, and explores how this heritage should be protected, managed, and celebrated. It also addresses non-Aboriginal heritage requiring protection. This theme supports the cultural values of the Traditional Owners of Hume City, the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people. It supports significant cultural landscapes, heritage and connections and the return of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the ongoing custodians of their Country. It also supports non-Aboriginal heritage requiring protections.
5 A healthy and productive rural landscape	This theme explores the vast rural landscape of Hume City, and Council’s role in supporting rural landowners to manage their land sustainably as custodians of one of Melbourne’s green wedges.

Planning and policy context

The Land and Biodiversity Plan sits within a broader framework of Council strategies and plans (Figure 1). The Land and Biodiversity Plan is identified as a strategy or action plan within Figure 1. It seeks to meet the land and biodiversity-related priorities of the *Council Plan*, and the overarching *Community Vision*, alongside a range of other Council strategies and action plans. Key actions identified within the Land and Biodiversity Plan will be incorporated into the Council Plan and linked to team and individual staff performance objectives to drive their implementation.



Figure 1: Council's planning framework.

Council Plan and Pathways to Sustainability Framework

The Land and Biodiversity Plan is underpinned by important principles of social justice and sustainability. It seeks to progress Council's *Pathways to Sustainability Framework*, which is contained within the *Council Plan 2021-2025*. Three Pathways from the *Pathways to Sustainability Framework* are particularly relevant to the Land and Biodiversity Plan; 'provide strong environmental stewardship' (Pathway 3), 'support self-determination and partnerships with Traditional Owners and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' (Pathway 7) and 'recognise the rights of nature' (Pathway 8).

Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025

Hume's *Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025* provides directions for promoting equity of health outcomes. One of these key directions is 'green, interconnected and social

environments.' Priority 4 of Hume's *Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025* is 'a green environment, climate action and community resilience.' The link between natural spaces and health and wellbeing is an important principal underpinning the Land and Biodiversity Plan.

Open Space Strategy

The *Hume Open Space Strategy-2023* guides Council's work in planning for and managing a high-quality open space network that supports the health and wellbeing of the community and the natural environment in a changing climate. The Land and Biodiversity Plan complements this strategy and progresses the natural environment priorities for open space in Hume.

Climate Action Plan 2023 – 2028

Hume's *Climate Action Plan 2023 – 2028* recognises the need to build climate resilience across Hume's **conservation-nature** reserves, as well as increase tree canopy cover throughout Hume City's open space network to reduce heat in urban areas.

Reconciliation Action Plan

Hume's Reconciliation Action Plan acknowledges the journey towards reconciliation, demonstrates recognition and respect for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and provides practical actions to assist with health, education and employment opportunities.

Rural Strategy

Hume's Rural Strategy 2022 outlines Council's role in protecting the curfew free operation of Melbourne Airport, protecting the rural qualities and opportunities in Hume by maintaining the diverse lot sizes and urban growth boundary, and maintaining important natural and cultural values. The Rural Strategy provides details of the steps Council is taking to support rural landowners and land managers as the caretakers of the rural areas in Hume. The Rural Strategy recognises environmental and landscape values in the planning scheme.

External drivers and state and regional strategies influencing this Plan

Protecting Victoria's Environment - Biodiversity 2037

This state government strategy aims to improve the health of Victoria's biodiversity. It also seeks to increase people's connection to nature by supporting environmental volunteering. The sections of the Land and Biodiversity Plan that contribute to the priorities in *Biodiversity 2037* include Theme 1: *A Healthy and Thriving Network of Conservation-Nature Reserves*, Theme 2: *A Well Connected Landscape for Wildlife* and Theme 3: *Urban biodiversity and health and wellbeing*. As outlined in the Victorian State Government's *marram baba Merri Creek Future Direction Plan*, the *Biodiversity Conservation Strategy (BCS)* for Melbourne's Growth Corridors identifies Conservation Areas and outcomes required under the Commonwealth's *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act 1999*. The BCS is being implemented as part of the Melbourne Strategic Assessment (MSA) program and is the basis for protecting and securing conservation land along Merri Creek, Jacksons Creek, and Emu Creek.

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Climate change, Victoria's Climate Change Strategy and Building Victoria's Climate Resilience

Climate modelling shows that the climate of Victoria, and therefore of Hume, is becoming hotter and dryer, with an increase in extreme weather events, bushfires, floods and heatwaves are becoming more frequent and intense (*Hume Health & Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025*). This presents an immediate and ongoing threat to the health of people, animals and ecosystems.

The Northern Alliance for Greenhouse Action (NAGA, 2021) reports that under the current high emissions scenario, predicted climate change impacts for Melbourne include:

- 2.4 degrees Celsius temperature increase by 2050,
- Double the number of very hot days,
- Longer fire seasons with up to 60% more very high fire danger days
- Melbourne's climate will be more like Wangaratta's

During heat waves, green spaces in our urban areas are particularly important to help provide heat havens for local wildlife and for people. Green spaces in urban areas help to reduce heat from roads and buildings on hot days. Native trees and ground cover near waterways also help provide a buffer to reduce the impacts of flooding.

One of the aims of Victoria's Climate Change Strategy is to recognise and safeguard the role of our natural environment in reducing emissions. Climate change is a major threat to biodiversity and land values. Ongoing drought conditions, storm damage and floods present challenges to retaining the values of conservation reserves. Additional resources will be required to protect biodiversity in the future.

Hume is a participant in the Victorian Climate Councils Alliance.

Healthy Waterways Strategy (HWS) for Port Phillip & Westernport region

The Healthy Waterways Strategy sets priorities and targets for waterways across the Yarra and Maribyrnong catchments, including in Hume City. This includes targets for revegetation and control of weeds to achieve an improvement in the health and biodiversity of creeks and rivers. The targets both complement and contribute to the priorities for conservation in Hume's Land and Biodiversity Plan, particularly in theme 2, *A Well Connected Landscape for Wildlife*.

Victorian Traditional Owner Cultural Landscapes Strategy, Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 and Heritage Act 2017, and Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018 - 2023

The Victorian Traditional Owner Cultural Landscapes strategy represents a shared vision of Traditional Owner communities across Victoria to heal Country and culture. It sets a number of priorities that enable organisations like Council to support this vision with local Traditional Owner communities. These priorities are explored in theme 4 of the Land and Biodiversity Plan, A Landscape Rich in Cultural Heritage. The Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Act outlines Council's obligations to protect cultural heritage in capital works developments, and to ensure that developers have effective Cultural Heritage Management Plans when required. The Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018-2023 emphasises the importance of culturally safe services for Aboriginal people and describes Aboriginal self-determination as a human right, encompassing a spectrum of rights that are necessary for Aboriginal Victorians to achieve economic, social and cultural equity, based on their own cultural values and way of life. This includes rights to not be discriminated against,

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enjoy language, culture and heritage, land and natural resources, have access to the basic necessities of life and be economically self-sufficient, make decisions that impact their lives from a position of wellbeing and empowerment and for 'grassroots community' to have ownership and responsibility for their own affairs and their own communities, including through designing and delivering policy and services on their own terms, setting their own funding priorities and holding their service providers accountable. These priorities are explored in theme 4 of the Land and Biodiversity Plan, *A Landscape Rich in Cultural Values and Heritage*.

Living Melbourne, Greening the West and Greening the North initiatives

Living Melbourne, Greening the West and Greening the North initiatives are collaborative projects to extend and link urban forestry and nature conservation initiatives to foster improved community health and wellbeing and reduce climate change impacts. The Land and Biodiversity Plan will address several priorities identified through these initiatives in theme 1 of the Plan, *A Healthy and Thriving Network of Conservation-Nature Reserves*.

Theme 1: A healthy and thriving network of ~~conservation-nature~~ reserves

Hume City Council manages conservation areas totalling approximately 841 hectares across the municipality. Some of these areas are owned by Council and some are managed via formal agreements. The actions in this Plan will guide Council to build on our knowledge of ecological features across our ~~conservation-nature~~ reserves. The actions in this plan will also guide the strategic assessment of Hume City's conservation management practices. This approach is particularly important as changing climatic conditions will alter ecosystems already under threat and increase the spread of invasive species. Evidence-based, informed decisions can then be made to effectively inform land management approaches that are adaptable to changes in local ecosystems.

Climate change places pressure on plants, animals, and landscapes, making it one of the leading threats to biodiversity in Hume and more broadly across the world. Hotter, drier conditions and more extreme weather events place direct and ongoing pressures on ~~nature conservation~~ reserves and can exacerbate other threats such as weeds and landscape fragmentation. Further investigation needs to occur into how Council can manage ~~conservation-nature~~ reserves to build climate resilience. By understanding which species will respond better than others under changing climatic conditions, Council can increase diversity across Hume's conservation areas to create resilient strongholds for plant and animal species.

Monitoring and evaluation of our land management practices will assist us to continually improve our methods for protecting local vegetation and wildlife, whilst providing opportunities for the community to connect with nature.

Environmental values across the ~~nature~~~~conservation~~-reserves

Native vegetation

Hume supports some of the most endangered vegetation types or ecosystems in Australia, including grassy woodlands and grasslands. Compared to their original distribution, these remaining areas are small and fragmented. Of the 457 native flora species that have been recorded throughout Hume's ~~conservation-nature~~ reserves, 31 are listed as threatened or endangered under State and/or Federal legislation. In addition, 218 flora species have been identified as 'unique', as they have been recorded in five or less ~~conservation-nature~~ reserves and are underrepresented in Hume.

Hume's rural roadsides span 300 kilometres and feature some dedicated roadside ~~conservation-nature~~ reserves. Rural roadside reserves contain significant remnant native vegetation, provide habitat for native wildlife and create linkages between vegetation patches. Rural roadside reserves are actively managed by Council to control noxious weeds.

Council manages ~~conservation-nature~~ reserves using a variety of land management techniques, including revegetation, weed control and ecological burning. Approaches to fire prevention differ depending on the area. By balancing the needs of biodiversity with the need to reduce fire risks, Hume's ecological burns aim to get the best outcomes for the environment and for the community. Hume's ecological burns are influenced by the traditional land management practices of by the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people. Ecological

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burns stimulate natural regeneration of indigenous plants and reduce biomass, thereby reducing the risk of wildfire.

Adaptive management in Hume's ~~conservations-nature~~ reserves involves a 'learning by doing' approach, incorporating the latest scientific information. This approach is important as changing climatic conditions are altering ecosystems already under threat.

Wildlife

Eastern Grey Kangaroos, echidnas and native birds are commonly sighted across Hume. The elusive Platypus is less commonly sighted along Jacksons, Deep and Merri creeks. The threatened Growling Grass Frog inhabit the Merri and Yuroke creeks. The vulnerable day-flying Golden Sun Moth has been recorded across the municipality, with the largest known population in greater Melbourne occurring at Broadmeadows Valley Park.

As climate change progresses, it's also important to understand and monitor how animals are being impacted by changes to their habitat and food chain, so that Council can make informed decisions about strengthening the resilience of vulnerable ecosystems.

The extent of land protected in ~~conservation-nature~~ reserves and linkages between reserves will become increasingly important for wildlife. As the pressures of climate change increase – small isolated conservation areas will be at greater risk of losing their biodiversity values.

Natural Landscape

Hume City's natural landscape is characterised by expansive plains, volcanic hills and deeply cut river valleys. The prominent landscape summit at Mt Holden provides scenic views over Sunbury and greater Melbourne, to Port Phillip Bay and the You Yangs. Hume's landscape includes impressive remnant trees that are hundreds of years old. Old, gnarled River Red Gums are common along creeks and reserves throughout Mickleham and Greenvale, providing vital habitat for many wildlife species.

The volcanic cones across the municipality hint at the basalt geology of much of Hume that has nurtured the municipality's significant grasslands and distinctive biodiversity. These volcanic cones, including Reds Rock Hill, Deverall Hill, Fitzgerald Hill, O'Brien Hill, Burke's Hill, Crowe Hill, Fairbanks Hill and Gellibrand Hill are part of the world's third largest basalt plain that stretches west to the South Australian border. These cones continue to provide important viewlines that punctuate the landscape.

Hume's waterways include the Jacksons, Deep and Emu creeks in the west, ~~and~~ Merri and Moonee Ponds creeks in the east ~~and the Maribyrnong River in the South~~. Each are connected to a network of smaller streams. Waterways support abundant native vegetation that plays an essential role in supporting wildlife habitat and movement across corridors. Hume's waterways vary in their degree of health, which has implications for healthy wildlife. Natural waterways are essential for the spiritual, cultural, mental and physical wellbeing of people, and have been central to the wellbeing of local Aboriginal people for thousands of years.

Collaborating for better outcomes

Biodiversity values transcend political borders. Hume is involved with important cross-organisational partnerships with other Councils and state government agencies, including the Merri Creek Management Committee, ~~and~~ the Chain of Ponds Collaboration for the Moonee Ponds Creek, the Jacksons Creek biik wurrdha Regional Parklands Partnership Group, and marram baba Merri Creek Regional Parklands Partnership Group. Opportunities exist to build on existing relationships with these agencies to enhance biodiversity and encourage community connection to nature.

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Council recognises the importance of adopting traditional land management practices across Hume’s ~~conservation-nature~~ reserves and is committed to working alongside the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation to learn culture and traditional management techniques.

By striving to improve our knowledge of Hume’s native vegetation, wildlife and natural landscapes and through effective evaluation of land management practices, we will create an even more healthy and thriving network of ~~conservation-nature~~ reserves.

The recent partnership with WWCHAC to develop the Jacksons Creek biik wurrdha Regional Parklands Plan has provided a model for supporting the cultural knowledge and self-determined priorities of the Traditional Owners in the ongoing planning and management of their traditional lands.

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Objectives

Objective 1.1: Improving our understanding of Hume’s biodiversity

Objective 1.2: Strategic management of Hume’s ~~conservation-nature~~ reserves

Objective 1.3: Collaborating with other organisations to foster well informed land management practices

Theme 2: A well connected landscape for wildlife

Landscape connectivity is the degree to which native wildlife can move across the landscape between patches of native vegetation and waterways on both public and private land.

Connectivity in the natural world can be likened to a human transport network. Wildlife need to move between available areas of habitat to continue to support strong populations into the future. Without a suitable degree of connectivity, populations will go into decline and some local extinctions may occur.

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Climate impacts such as hotter, drier conditions and more extreme weather events will make landscape connectivity even more important for survival of native wildlife species. Extreme weather events impact wildlife as they need to move away from impacted areas in search of food, water and suitable habitat. Increased movement of species is already experienced in times of drought, or in response to fire and floods.

Climate change will also impact landscape connectivity across Hume, particularly how species interact with each other and their environment. It is likely that valleys and escarpments (such as cliffs and slopes) will be less vulnerable to climate change, as they are naturally buffered from extreme variation in climatic condition. Therefore, these areas may become important habitat sanctuaries as climate change progresses.

Protecting existing connectivity

To ensure landscape connectivity does not decline any further, it is critical to protect existing habitat patches and corridors including waterways. This involves sustainable land management approaches that address threats to structural connectivity such as overgrazing, competition from weeds, soil erosion and the removal of native vegetation.

Council is pursuing avenues to provide legal protections for habitat including an Environmental Significance Overlay in the Hume Planning Scheme, correct zoning of open space areas for public recreation and conservation and Trust for Nature Covenants. This involves an expansion of environmental and landscape overlay provisions and improvements to local policy in the Hume Planning Scheme.

Planning for future urban development provides opportunities for innovative approaches when addressing impacts from physical barriers, such as roads. For instance, installing functional wildlife crossings across major roads, can provide aerial cables for arboreal animals (possums) and enable ground-dwelling species to successfully move across the landscape.

Enhancing existing connectivity

Enhancing existing connectivity involves creating new vegetation patches / corridors, extending existing patches / corridors, encouraging natural regeneration of native vegetation and planting scattered or clusters of trees and shrubs across the landscape and waterways. Non-living habitat components such as tree hollows, fallen logs and rocks will also enhance connectivity. The installation of fabricated hollows using tree limbs pruned during tree maintenance, can increase the number of nesting sites for a range of species in open space areas and rural properties.

Collaboration

Places managed by Parks Victoria and Melbourne Water, such as Woodlands Historic Park in Greenvale and the Tamuk Reserve in Westmeadows, are fundamental to the network of habitat patches and corridors found on public land within Hume. Opportunities exist to collaborate with road and rail authorities to enhance connectivity along linear corridors. Stakeholder networks such as the Moonee Ponds Creek Chain of Ponds collaboration and Merri Creek Management Committee offer opportunities to work at the waterway catchment scale to enhance connectivity. Other significant stakeholders in Hume include the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Corporation, which owns and manages sites of natural and cultural significance in Hume such as the Sunbury Rings, and volunteer groups that have worked tirelessly over decades to restore the natural environment through revegetation and weed control projects.

Monitoring and improvement

Council uses computer modelling to monitor changes in landscape connectivity over time. This helps us understand when species may be impacted and what action can be taken to reduce this impact.

Values that landscape connectivity aims to protect in Hume**Ecosystems and wildlife**

Patches of native grasslands and woodlands are concentrated in Hume’s rural areas, within parklands and [conservation-nature](#) reserves and along creek valleys [and waterways](#). They are vital to ensuring landscape connectivity, as they provide habitat for a diversity of wildlife species.

Wildlife Species

Approximately 270 mammal, bird, reptile, amphibian, and fish vertebrate species have been recorded in Hume. Some of these species are in low numbers or are in decline, highlighting the critical importance of improving connectivity in the landscape.

Cultural values

~~The Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people have been custodians of the Hume area for tens of thousands of years and value the landscape in its entirety for the spiritual, archaeological, historical, ecological and living connections that it provides. This is set out for example in the Jacksons Creek biik wurrdha Regional Parklands Cultural Values Study 2021.~~

~~Many of the natural areas that remain in Hume today are as culturally significant as they are ecologically significant. Protecting structural connectivity in the landscape assists in preserving cultural heritage.~~

~~The Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people have occupied the Hume area for tens of thousands of years, managing the landscape to preserve and regenerate the resources they needed for their survival and connection to country. Many of the natural areas that remain in Hume today are as culturally significant as they are ecologically significant. Protecting structural connectivity in the landscape assists in preserving cultural heritage.~~

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Other structural connectivity elements

Many forms of vegetation exist across the landscape that contribute to connectivity in Hume. This includes non-native vegetation such as pine trees; trees and other vegetation in urban streetscapes and green spaces; native and non-native gardens on residential, industrial, or commercial properties; and any vegetation within rural areas. These structural connectivity elements enable some wildlife species to persist and even thrive in urban areas and provide resources for other species that may need to use urban sites to move between habitat patches.

Objectives

Objective 2.1: Protecting vegetation that supports landscape connectivity

Objective 2.2: Enhance connectivity in the landscape

Objective 2.3: Collaborating with other stakeholders to enhance connectivity

Objective 2.4: Undertake monitoring and improvement

Theme 3: Urban biodiversity and health and wellbeing

The value of biodiversity in the urban environment

Neighbourhoods that are abundant in nature support an abundance of wildlife. People can readily connect and interact with biodiversity in a positive way. Nature connection plays an important role in maintaining and improving the mental health and wellbeing of people.

Hume's location on the urban fringe means it is not uncommon to see native animals in our everyday life. In Hume, urban gardens, streetscapes, parks and waterways are homes for more than 170 species of bird, 21 types of reptiles (snakes, lizards, turtles), 13 frog species and nearly 30 different native mammals (including 12 microbats). Within Hume's urban areas, several threatened species exist including Golden Sun Moth, Growling Grass Frog, Swift Parrot, Matted Flax-lily and a protected population of critically endangered Eastern Barred Bandicoots at Woodlands Historic Park. Over 200 flora species found in less than a handful of Hume's nature ~~natureconservation~~ reserves and are at risk of regional extinction.

Habitat plants in urban areas include groundcovers, wildflowers, grasses, shrubs, bushes and large trees. Mature hollow-bearing trees are vitally important to over 40 species of hollow-dependent fauna as nesting sites to rear their young.

Pollinators including birds, bees, butterflies, moths, flies, beetles, wasps, bats are under threat from habitat loss as well as the overuse of chemicals, disease, and climate change.

Residential, industrial and commercial environments serve as important habitat for many species of wildlife that have adapted to the built environment. Human-made structures provide nesting sites. Urban backyards, streetscapes and parks contribute to habitat connectivity.

Urban biodiversity programs

Council's urban biodiversity programs include Gardens for Wildlife, Community Greening and Citizen Science. Gardens for Wildlife supports community volunteers to provide advice to residents about wildlife friendly gardens. Citizen Science activities include bird count events and iNaturalist workshops such as the City Nature Challenge.

Community health and wellbeing

Healthy communities rely on healthy ecosystems. Without clean air, fresh water, clean food and food security, human health is put at risk. Large industrial estates produce a significant amount of air and stormwater pollution, which affects waterways, animals, and plant life. Pollution of air and water from industrial fires affects children, older residents, people with heart disease and lung conditions and people with disabilities in a disproportionate way. It is crucially important to prevent industrial pollution from occurring.

Being in the presence of nature can relieve stress and improve physical and mental health. For children, playing within nature supports creativity, problem-solving, and emotional and intellectual development. People thrive in physical environments that support social interactions in nature.

Food growing

Growing our own food has benefits including food sovereignty (access to and control over healthy food produced sustainably and in a culturally appropriate way). In recent years food growing in urban areas, including Hume City, has increased in popularity, with more gardening happening in schools, community spaces and private gardens. This helps forge stronger social connections between people from different age groups and cultures. Food

growing is extremely important for urban biodiversity, as birds and insects perform the vital function of pollinating plants. This is crucial to the health of the whole ecosystem.

Living with Wildlife

Council will redevelop the Living with Wildlife policy and will introduce elements of 'the rights of nature' addressed in the Council Plan's Pathways to Sustainability. Council will also update behaviour change messaging around commonly reported issues such as bird feeding, responsible recreational fishing, litter impacts on wildlife, and swooping magpies.

Objectives

3.1 Objective: Enhance biodiversity connectivity within the urban environment.

3.2 Objective: Provide opportunities for the community to connect with nature through citizen science, engagement programs, and restoration projects.

3.3 Objective: Support residents and the community to live safely and harmoniously with wildlife.

Theme 4: A landscape rich in cultural heritage

Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people have an unbroken relationship with Country, caring for this land, its waterways, its plants and animals. Humans have had a long association with the Hume landscape. The territory of the Traditional Owners, custodians and land managers, the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung, extends from the north of Melbourne to Lerderderg State Park in the west, to Baw Baw National Park in the east.

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The Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people nurture the environment to sustain their community as living culture. Traditional methods of managing Country sustain the land. Their living legacy of tens of thousands of years of occupation and land management is evident in archaeological sites scattered across the landscape and in oral histories passed down through generations. As inheritors of this vast cultural history, Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people today continue the tradition of caring for Country and protecting cultural heritage.

Hume has the fifth largest Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population within all the local government areas of metropolitan Melbourne and twelfth in Victoria. At the 2021 census, Hume's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population was around 1807, or 0.8% of the population, however Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status is known to be under reported.

Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung objectives, as outlined in the Cultural Values Strategic Principles prepared for Hume's Open Space Strategy include:

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Cultural objective: redress the interruption of culture, enable meaningful continuity of culture through cultural practice, recognise and enable Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people to share and educate others about culture.

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Environmental objective: redress the degradation of lands and waters, ensure the protection, care of and connection to Country, ensure and enable meaningful participation in and control of the planning and management of Country (lands and waters), recognise Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung knowledge and enable Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people to share and educate others about that knowledge.

Social objective: redress social inequity and ongoing oppression, enable and support Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people to live and work on Country, recognise social and community values, enable and support Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people to share and educate others about Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung society and history.

Economic objective: redress historic and ongoing dispossession and repair economic damage to Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung society, ensure that a greater share of the resources taken from Country goes to Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people, enable and support economic self-determination.

Hume's landscape has changed significantly compared to the time when it was exclusively managed by the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people. Early colonial people pioneered a way of life that profoundly changed the land. Vegetation was removed for farming, roads and urban settlements. This caused environmental degradation at a rapid rate. This legacy continues to affect biodiversity, human and ecological health today.

Hume Council will partner with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Traditional Owners to work towards their cultural objective as outlined in the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Statement of Country prepared for Hume City Council to guide their Open Space Strategy and other related land, biodiversity, waterway strategies and plans, to redress the interruption of culture, enable meaningful continuity of culture through cultural practice, and recognise and enable Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people to share and educate others about culture.

Cultural ~~Heritage~~ Heritage Values

Aboriginal cultural heritage:

From volcanic hilltops to waterway valleys, Aboriginal heritage is abundant across the Hume landscape. Archaeological remnants include stone tool artefact scatters, middens, camp sites and scar trees. These sites hold living stories. Their significance is supported by historical records and oral histories in telling a narrative of how Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people utilised and managed the land and its resources in a sophisticated way. These sites hold historical, spiritual, educational, and scientific value for the community and a deeper significance for Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people.

The biik wurrdha valley along Jacksons Creek in Sunbury is of particular significance, being one of the few places in Victoria with preserved earth rings. While the exact story of the site is unclear, the Sunbury Rings are believed to be an important gateway for other tribes interacting with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people. Sections of ~~freehold title of~~ the Sunbury Rings Cultural Landscape are owned outright by Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation. The return of Wurundjeri Country will continue, as set out in the Jacksons Creek biik wurrdha Regional Parklands Plan. Each year through cultural heritage investigations, more Aboriginal heritage places and artefacts are rediscovered. Sharing of this cultural heritage needs to be done according to Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung protocols.

As the effects of climate change include more severe storms, floods and fires, there is a risk that elements of significant sites may be destroyed and/or displaced.

Non-Aboriginal heritage:

The former Bulla Shire Office and the site of the Sunbury Music Festival 1972-75 are sites of non-Aboriginal heritage significance. Remnants of homesteads and dry-stone walls and are a reminder of Hume's colonial history. They are part of the story of change in Hume City. Council takes various roles in managing non-Aboriginal heritage features including protection through policy including in the Hume Planning Scheme, and encouraging adaptive reuse where possible. A priority remains protecting heritage features as former agricultural land is developed around Sunbury and in the northern growth corridors.

Protecting and valuing cultural heritage values

Council has both a legal and moral obligation to protect cultural heritage on the land it owns and manages, and to ensure as a statutory authority that cultural heritage is considered in development. Council has a responsibility to support self-determination for the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people. Three key pieces of legislation that guide Council's role are the Victorian *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*, *Heritage Act 2017* (dealing with non-Aboriginal heritage matters), and the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* that informs the Hume Planning Scheme. The Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation (WWCHAC) is the Registered Aboriginal Party for all land within Hume City and is responsible for enforcing the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*.

Council also has a broader goal to support Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents and communities in Hume and work towards reconciliation, which is addressed through the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). An important component of reconciliation is truth-telling. Truth-telling enables Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents and communities to educate non-Aboriginal community members about the impacts of ongoing colonisation, the stolen generations and genocide. The Hume Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Recognition Policy recognises the impacts of dispossession and intergenerational trauma and highlights the need for self-determination for Aboriginal people. The Stolen Generations Marker at Malcolm Creek Wetlands, Craigieburn pays tribute to the Stolen Generations – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who were forcibly removed from their families and communities - denied their identity, family, traditional culture and country through the race-based policies of State and Federal Governments between 1910-1970s.

Hume partners with a number of local Aboriginal networks and community organisations including the Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group, Sunbury Aboriginal Corporation and Wandarra community organisation to redress social inequity and ongoing oppression and redress historic and ongoing dispossession. Council does this by making community spaces available, providing enhanced maternal child health services run by Aboriginal staff, supporting the Elders and Boorais group and supporting local Aboriginal artists.

The Victorian Traditional Owner Cultural Landscapes Strategy identifies five strategic directions over the next 10 years to progress the healing of Country and people. The priorities most relevant to the Land and Biodiversity Plan are:

- To enable Traditional Owner cultural landscape planning
- To embed Traditional Owner knowledge and practice into policy, planning and management of Country
- To enable the application of Traditional Owner cultural objectives, knowledge and practice in the management of public land.
- Objective 18.1 of the Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018- 2023 aims to increase the recognition and enjoyment of Aboriginal land, water and cultural heritage rights. The Victorian Traditional Owner Culture Fire Strategy recognises that fire allows for healing and caring for Country. Burning is cultural responsibility of Traditional Owners and applies the approach of right fire, right time, and right way for the right cultural reasons. There are substantial positive impacts to Traditional Owner wellbeing and confidence through providing access and authority to practice on Country. Cultural burning practices meet cultural and ecological objectives while also reducing the risk of damaging bushfire. Land

managers to recognise the authority of Traditional Owners to lead the development and application of fire practice on Country. Fire management is to be viewed as more than asset protection, and future parkland planning will apply more holistic reflection of fire management.

To respond to the priorities of Hume’s Reconciliation Action Plan, Traditional Owner Cultural Landscapes Strategy, Victorian Traditional Owner Culture Fire Strategy, The Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018- 2023 and legislation, Council will focus on three priority areas under this theme:

- Governance - Ensuring Council’s internal processes are adequate to meet statutory and moral obligations.
- Partnership - Partnering with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation to conserve and manage land.
- Community engagement - Raising awareness about the importance of cultural heritage and involving the community in managing and celebrating it.

Governance:

As a statutory authority Council must ensure that any development proposal, whether on Council or private land, considers the protection of heritage values. For development proposals that require a planning permit, Council must ensure that the requirements of the *Heritage Act 2017* and *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* have been adequately addressed. Proponents of development must understand how their development may impact on heritage values and demonstrate that they have put measures in place to minimise or negate those impacts to have their permit approved. Council must follow a similar process for development projects it undertakes on public land, ensuring that project plans mandate the need for heritage due diligence.

Council has Cultural Heritage Guidelines for project managers to assist in effectively considering the requirements of the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* and *Heritage Act 2017* in their projects on Council land. These guidelines prescribe when an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) is required for a project, or if a Cultural Heritage Permit is needed to undertake an activity near an existing Aboriginal Heritage Place. Both approvals are granted by the WWCHAC and place strict requirements on the developer to ensure harm to cultural heritage is minimised or negated. Ensuring Council staff are aware of and can effectively apply the guidelines will be fundamental to achieving compliance with regulations at all times.

Heritage advisors

In instances where a Due Diligence Assessment, Cultural Heritage Management Plan or Cultural Heritage Permit are required, the advice and assistance of an internal Heritage Advisor would provide readily accessible information on cultural heritage matters across multiple sections in Council. While the Cultural Heritage Guidelines are a valuable tool for project managers, they will not remove the need for expert cultural heritage advice from a registered Heritage Advisor in many instances.

Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Partnership:

A key aspiration of the WWCHAC is to provide a holistic approach to working on Country. To this end the WWCHAC has established the Narrap Team, a team of rangers working on Country to manage ecosystems. The Narrap Team operate under the philosophy of relearning and applying traditional land management practices in conjunction with contemporary techniques.

Council's Reconciliation Action Plan and Pathways to Sustainability Framework recognise the importance of self-determination, self-advocacy and the aspirations of Aboriginal people. This includes being empowered to make decisions about cultural heritage values on Country. To meet these important needs, Council is initiating a land management partnership with the WWCHAC. This partnership agreement will evolve over time to ensure the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people have a voice in how Council-owned and managed sites of Aboriginal cultural heritage significance are managed.

Council also works with [the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Traditional Owners](#) to incorporate the principles of cultural flows in the management of waterways in Hume. Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung representatives were involved in the development of [Hume's Integrated Water Management Plan as well as](#) the regional Upper Merri Creek Integrated Water Management project.

It is a priority for Council that the voices of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Traditional Owners are heard, to have relationships based on respect and shared understanding. Council recognises that Cultural strength is an enabling factor for the Aboriginal community.

[WWCHAC have been central partners in the planning of marram baba Merri Creek Regional Parklands and the biik wurrdha Jacksons Creek Regional Parklands and cultural values and priorities are now embedded in the strategic directions for these parklands.](#)

Community engagement:

The sharing of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung cultural knowledge must occur with permission of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Traditional Owners. One of five themes in Council's *Live Green Plan* for sustainability engagement with the community includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ecological practices. Council organises and supports community education workshops with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Traditional Owners and educators.

Council's *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Recognition Policy (September 2020)* states that in regards to the naming of places with Woi-wurrung place names, Council will actively engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities including Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, the RAPWG and broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members in the naming of places.

Objectives

Objective 4.1: Ensure legislative compliance and increase Council's capacity to protect cultural [heritage](#) values through land development projects.

Objective 4.2: Increase active management of cultural [heritage](#) values on Council land under guidance by [Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Traditional Owners](#).

Objective 4.3: Establish and implement a long-term, living land management partnership agreement with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation.

Objective 4.4: Support Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people to build their capacity to care for Country in Hume.

Objective 4.5: Partner with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung to engage the Hume community in understanding the Aboriginal cultural heritage significance of sites across Hume City.

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Theme 5: A healthy and productive rural landscape

About half of Hume City’s total land area – more than 250 of 504 square kilometres - is designated as green wedge zone, outside Melbourne’s urban growth boundary and protected from development by State government policy. This land is characterised by grasslands and grassy woodlands of the Victorian volcanic plains and intersected by several steep creek valleys and narrow floodplains. Landholders in the rural areas face challenges including pressures from surrounding development, climate change, weed infestation, land banking, illegal rubbish dumping, absentee landholders and an aging farming community. Hume’s Rural Engagement Program supports landholders with incentives and education to manage natural, agricultural and landscape values.

Hume’s green wedge includes the significant state infrastructure of Melbourne Airport. Development regulations protect the ongoing curfew-free operations of the airport. The rural community play an important role as stewards of the land, protecting, conserving and restoring Hume’s green wedge.

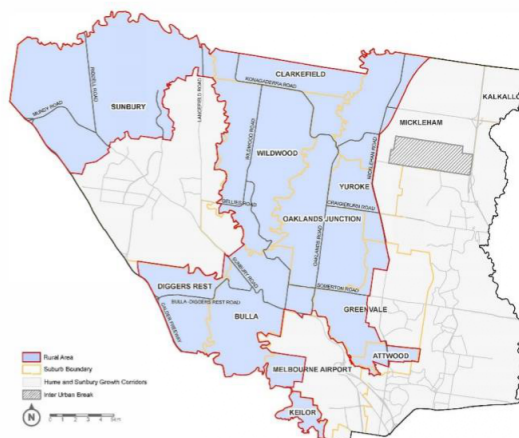


Figure 3: Map of the rural area of Hume City, showing suburb boundaries and the adjoining urban growth corridors.

Agriculture/horticulture production

Agricultural and horticulture pursuits in Hume include grazing for beef and sheep, horse agistment/ownership, grape and olive production, cropping, orchards, regenerative farming and lifestyle farming. Farming in Hume supports livelihoods, retains natural processes such as water and oxygen circulation and is a cultural way of life.

Biodiversity

Hume's rural areas are rich in biodiversity. In fact the rural areas support most of the native vegetation and wildlife habitat that occurs in the municipality. Despite land clearing and other farming practices, biodiversity provides economic benefits to the community through natural pest management and revitalisation of soils. Hume's biodiversity is integral to the municipality's character, and there are opportunities to support landscape-based tourism and hospitality activities that support a regenerative approach to landscape renewal as part of a sustainable local economy.

Rural Strategy and Rural Engagement Program

The priorities set by the Land and Biodiversity Plan for a healthy and productive rural landscape align with Council's Rural Strategy. The Rural Strategy explores the broader challenges facing the rural community and identifies opportunities for protection and enhancement of the rural landscape.

Vision for Hume's Rural Areas

Council's primary role in supporting a healthy and productive rural landscape is to support people living and working on the land by providing services that invest in social and economic wellbeing. People who are well-supported are more likely to succeed in their endeavours to manage the land sustainably.

Control of weeds is particularly important in Hume. Weed infestations are already a significant land management issue and are expected to increase as a result of climate change. Many weeds respond well to flood and fire, both of which are expected to intensify as climate change progresses (Steffen et al., 2009, p. 133) and some weeds are well adapted to hotter and drier conditions. The Weed Compliance and Education Program aims to work with rural landholders on making a reasonable effort to control noxious weeds on their land.

Council's Rural Engagement Program (Figure 4), includes the following initiatives that support the rural community to manage the land sustainably for production and biodiversity:

- **Primary Producer Rate Rebate (PPRR)** – a 30% rate rebate for agricultural businesses in the green wedge who typically have higher cost and time inputs associated with managing their land. Council staff visit properties annually where the landholder is a recipient of a Primary Producer Rate Rebate.

Rural Land Management Grant (RLMG) – a \$300 grant, plus an additional \$20 per hectare of land owned, targeted at the non-farming community or those undertaking hobby farming to support land managers to manage land in an environmentally sustainable way.

- **Conserving our Rural Environment (CoRE) Grant** – a grant of up to \$10,000 per eligible property to undertake environmental works to protect and enhance biodiversity. This program was established in 2012 and supports landowners to protect and manage the vast [nature conservation](#) reserves on rural land in Hume City.

- **Weed Compliance and Education Program** – Under the Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994 (CaLP Act) all landholders are responsible for controlling and reducing noxious weeds throughout their property. Council’s local law gives authorised officers the ability to provide directions to landholders to control significant weed infestations. Landholders may receive infringements if they do not comply.
- **Education, capacity-building and rural development** – Council offers workshops, field days and information resources to assist landowners to build their capacity to manage weeds, pest animals, revegetation, conservation, soil health and agriculture. This program will continue, with new topics including agribusiness and climate change adaptation. Landowners can also apply for an Agriculture Scholarship up to \$1500 for on-farm advice to build their skills for specific productive and sustainable land uses.

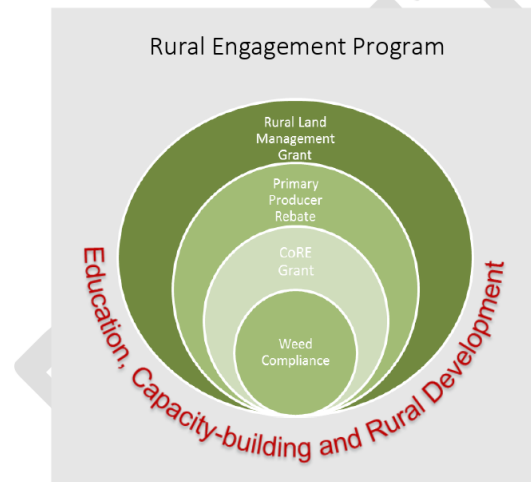


Figure 4: Diagrammatic overview of Council’s Rural Engagement Program, including the Rural Land Management Grant, Primary Producer Rate Rebate, Conserving our Rural Environment (CoRE) Grant and Weed Compliance Program. Underpinning these programs is a focus on supporting education, capacity-building and development of landowners.

Objectives

Objective 5.1: Reduce the spread and extent of noxious priority weeds within the rural area of Hume

Objective 5.2: Support primary producers to practice sustainable agricultural production in Hume.

Objective 5.3: Increase the capability of rural landowners to manage their land sustainably and enhance resilience to climate change.

Objective 5.4: Support collaboration between rural residents engaged in sustainable land management.

Objective 5.5: Increase native vegetation and wildlife habitat in Hume’s rural areas.

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DRAFT ACTION PLAN 20243-254
DRAFT LAND AND BIODIVERSITY PLAN 2023-30

This 20243-254 action plan guides Council in the first eighteen months of implementation of the Land and Biodiversity Plan 2023-2030. It covers the period from January 2024 – June 2025. For each theme it identifies objectives, actions, the role that Council departments will play in implementing the actions, external partners/stakeholders, and timeframes for completion. While actions in this 20243-254 Action Plan are all costed according to existing allocated resources, future Action Plans will contain actions that will be costed as part of Council's budget process. Where an internal department is listed as Support, this team can assist by consulting the Lead team and will be kept informed about progress of the action.

THEME 1: A HEALTHY AND THRIVING CONSERVATION ESTATE

ID	Action	Responsibility	Complete By
OBJECTIVE 1.1: IMPROVE OUR UNDERSTANDING OF HUME'S BIODIVERSITY			
1.1.1	Collate floristics data across the conservation estate through the <u>Conservation-Nature</u> Reserves Monitoring Program and incorporate the data into Council's GIS database.	Lead: City Parks & Open Space Support: IT Partners: DEECA	Ongoing
1.1.2	Map all known threatened flora species and incorporate the data onto Hume's GIS or other software system, to highlight their location and significance to Council departments.	Lead: City Parks & Open Space Support: IT Partners: DEECA	<u>Ongoing 30 June 2024</u>
1.1.3	Develop a native fauna monitoring framework to outline the species that should be actively conserved.	Lead: City Parks & Open Space Support: Community Health & Wellbeing Partners: DEECA, MW, PV, Tertiary Institutions	<u>30 June 20254</u>

ID	Action	Responsibility	Complete By
1.1.4	Develop <u>internal organisational</u> processes to assist with directing maintenance and enhancement projects for Matters of State and National Environmental Significance across Hume's open space network.	Lead: <u>City Parks & Open Space</u> Support: City Design, <u>City Parks & Open Space</u> Partners: DEECA, Tertiary Institutions	30 June 202 <u>5</u> ⁴
1.1.5	Investigate resourcing for internal environmental planning referral process to be streamlined and rolled out across the organisation.	Lead: <u>Statutory Planning & Development</u> Support: City Parks & Open Space Partners: DEECA, MW, YVW	30 June 202 <u>5</u> ⁴
OBJECTIVE 1.2: STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT OF HUME'S CONSERVATION NATURE RESERVES			
1.2.1	Develop an environmental management strategy for Hume's conservation estate.	Lead: City Parks & Open Space Support: City Design, Community Health & Wellbeing Partners: DEECA, FRV, MW, MCMC, PV, TFN, WWCHAC, YVW	30 June 202 <u>5</u> ⁴
1.2.2	Investigate and seek resourcing for the development of a strategic plan for building climate resilience in Hume's conservation areas.	Lead: City Parks & Open Space Support: Climate Action Integration, City Strategy Partners: DEECA	<u>O</u> ngoing
1.2.3	Develop <u>five</u> ^{ine} Conservation Management Plans as part of the Council Plan.	Lead: City Parks & Open Space Support: Community Health & Wellbeing Partners: DEECA, FRV, MW, MCMC, PV, TFN, WWCHAC, YVW	30 June <u>D</u> ecember 2024
1.2.4	Review and redevelop <u>two</u> ^{three} expired Conservation Management Plans.	Lead: City Parks & Open Space Support: Community Health & Wellbeing	30 June 202 <u>5</u> ⁴

ID	Action	Responsibility	Complete By
		Partners: DEECA, FRV, MW, MCMC, PV, TFN, WWCHAC, YVW	
1.2.5	Develop Annual Plans for all reserves not under the CMP framework and incorporate service level guidelines into the plans.	Lead: City Parks & Open Space Support: Community Health & Wellbeing Partners: DEECA, FRV, MW, MCMC, PV, TFN, WWCHAC, YVW	<u>Ongoing</u> <u>30 June 2024</u>
1.2.6	Identify threatened and unique flora species and incorporate them into restoration programs in Conservation Management Plans/Annual Plans where reasonably practicable, to increase their representation across Hume's conservation estate.	Lead: City Parks & Open Space Support: Community Health & Wellbeing Partners: MCMC, WWCHAC	Ongoing
1.2.7	Identify strategic ecological restoration projects in Conservation Management Plans to increase habitat extent and connectivity.	Lead: City Parks & Open Space Support: City Design, City Safety Partners: CoPCG, DEECA, FRV, MW, MCMC, PV, TFN, WWCHAC, YVW	Ongoing
1.2.8	Implement restoration projects outlined in Conservation Management Plans.	Lead: City Parks & Open Space Support: Community Health & Wellbeing Partners: MCMC, WWCHAC	Ongoing
1.2.9	Deliver four 'Cues to care' capital projects to meet the community's expectations on conservation reserve appearance.	Lead: <u>City Parks & Open Space</u> <u>Community Health & Wellbeing</u> Support: <u>Community Health & Wellbeing</u> , <u>City Parks & Open Space</u> , Strategic Communications, City Design	30 June 202 5 ⁴
1.2.10	Review and redevelop Council's pest animal management plan, incorporating the impacts of pest animals on habitat connectivity.	Lead: City Parks & Open Space Support: Community Health & Wellbeing	30 June 202 5 ⁴

ID	Action	Responsibility	Complete By
		Partners: DEECA, Pest Animal Action Groups, WWCHAC	
OBJECTIVE 1.3: COLLABORATE WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS TO FOSTER WELL INFORMED LAND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES			
1.3.1	Participate in, and provide \$15,000 + CPI annually towards the Chain of Ponds Collaboration Group	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Support: City Parks & Open Space Partners: CoPCG, CVA, CoM, FoMPC, FoUMPC, GW, KA, LCS, MW, MV, MBUG, MB, PV, RMIT, SU, UniMelb, VPA, YVW	Ongoing
1.3.2	Support Work with partners including Chain of Ponds Litter Lead and Merri Creek Management Committee to organise community clean ups at strategically identified litter hotspots along waterways.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Support: Waste & Sustainability Partners: CoPCG, MCMC, FoUMPC	30 June 2024 Ongoing

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THEME 2: A WELL CONNECTED LANDSCAPE FOR WILDLIFE

ID	Action	Responsibility	Complete By:
OBJECTIVE 2.1: PROTECT VEGETATION THAT SUPPORTS LANDSCAPE CONNECTIVITY			
2.1.1	Promote conservation covenants to rural landowners on Council's incentive programs, prioritising properties with significant landscape connectivity.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Partners: TFN	Ongoing
2.1.2	Continue to manage all conservation areas on Council-managed land that contribute to ecological connectivity within the open space network.	Lead: City Parks & Open Space Support: City Design, City Safety, P&D, Community Health & Wellbeing Partners: CoPOG, DEECA, FRV, MW, MCMC, PV, TFN, WWCHAC, YVW	Ongoing
2.1.3	Begin managing new reserves designated as part of sub-divisions or vested from developers	Lead: City Parks & Open Space Support: City Design, City Safety, P&D, Community Health & Wellbeing Partners: CoPOG, DEECA, FRV, MW, MCMC, PV, TFN, WWCHAC, YVW	Ongoing
2.1.4	Through the Rural Engagement Program, encourage improved grazing management practices <u>to protect biodiversity connectivity</u> on rural properties.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Partners: DEECA	Ongoing
2.1.5	Facilitate wildlife crossing design training for Council engineers to explore opportunities and incorporate learnings into their infrastructure projects.	Lead: <u>Infrastructure Delivery Assets</u> Support: City Parks & Open Space, <u>City Strategy, Planning & Development</u> , Community Health & Wellbeing	30 June 202 5 ⁴

ID	Action	Responsibility	Complete By:
OBJECTIVE 2.2: ENHANCE CONNECTIVITY IN THE LANDSCAPE			
2.2.1	Incorporate landscape connectivity into the Open Space Strategy to ensure important conservation and biodiversity areas are protected and enhanced where possible.	Lead: City Design Support: City Parks & Open Space, City Strategy, <u>Planning & Development</u> .	Ongoing
2.2.2	Review Environmental Significance Overlays in the Hume Planning Scheme with consideration for <u>wholistic</u> and effective protection of native vegetation, significant landscapes, biodiversity connectivity, cultural heritage and significant waterways.	Lead: City Strategy Support: <u>Statutory Planning & Development</u> , City Parks & Open Spaces, Community Health & Wellbeing Partners: WWCHAC, DEECA, CoP	Ongoing
2.2.3	Incorporate landscape connectivity principles into the design phase when new areas of open space are being vested to Council through urban growth and subdivisions.	Lead: <u>Landscape Planning & Development</u> Support: City Parks & Open Spaces Partners: DEECA, Developers	Ongoing
2.2.4	Identify reserves that are deficient in hollow-bearing trees and develop a fabricating nest box program for a range of species.	Lead: City Parks & Open Spaces Support: City Design, Community Health & Wellbeing Partners: DEECA	<u>30 June 2024</u> <u>Ongoing</u>
2.2.5	Seek opportunities to utilise the Corridors of Green grant program to support connectivity enhancement projects on Council-managed land.	Lead: City Parks & Open Spaces Support: Grants & Projects, Community Health & Wellbeing Partners: CoPCG, MW, MCMC, WWCHAC	Ongoing

ID	Action	Responsibility	Complete By:
OBJECTIVE 2.3: COLLABORATE WITH OTHER STAKEHOLDERS TO ENHANCE CONNECTIVITY			
2.3.1	Establish an annual forum for public land managers such as Melbourne Water and Parks Victoria in Hume to discuss the recommendations of the Landscapes Connectivity & C Plan and identify opportunities for connectivity enhancement and other biodiversity conservation works.	Lead: City Parks & Open Spaces Support: Community Health & Wellbeing Partners: CoPCG, local and state government agencies, MCMC, other stakeholders , WWCHAC	Ongoing
2.3.2	Support the implementation of the Merri Creek Management Committee's Growing Grass Frog Masterplan.	Lead: City Parks & Open Spaces Support: Waste & Sustainability, Planning & Development , City Design, Community Health & Wellbeing, Project Management Office Partners: local government agencies, MW, MCMC, PV, WWCHAC	Ongoing
OBJECTIVE 2.4: UNDERTAKE MONITORING AND IMPROVEMENT			
2.4	Establish a methodology for mapping weed infestations on private land	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Support: City Parks & Open Spaces Partners: Banksia Gardens Community Services,	30 June 2024

THEME: 3 URBAN BIODIVERSITY AND HEALTH AND WELLBEING

ID	Action	Responsibility	Complete By:
OBJECTIVE 3.1: ENHANCE BIODIVERSITY CONNECTIVITY WITHIN THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT			
3.1.1	Implement the Gardens for Wildlife program. Minimum 10 Garden Guides recruited and trained, 20 garden visits conducted per year	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing	Ongoing
3.1.2	Implement the Community Greening Program, ensuring that site selection is made to enhance biodiversity outcomes and to meet the needs of the community. Minimum five plantings per year, 50 participants per planting, 500 plants per planting.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Support: City Parks & Open Spaces Partners: Community groups, including Friends groups, faith groups and businesses.	Ongoing
3.1.3	Implement the Seedlings for Schools program. Seedlings provided to at least 10 schools for on-ground projects. Minimum 3,000 seedlings donated to schools per year Minimum 65% plant survival rate.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Partners: Hume schools	Ongoing
OBJECTIVE 3.2: PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE COMMUNITY TO CONNECT WITH NATURE THROUGH CITIZEN SCIENCE, ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS AND RESTORATION PROJECTS			
3.2.1	Implement a Schools for Nature program of incursions to improve student's environmental literacy. Minimum seven biodiversity incursions / excursions delivered each year. Investigate one excursion per year involving students planting in Hume's open space network.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Support: City Parks & Open Spaces Partners: Hume schools	Ongoing
3.2.2	Implement Citizen Science projects and campaigns to raise awareness of Hume's natural assets. Minimum three community events per year.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Support: City Parks & Open Space Partners: Melbourne metro Councils participating in the City Nature Challenge	Ongoing
3.2.3	Identify opportunities to expand environmental education and waste <u>education</u> activations at current and future Hume community centres.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Support: City Design, Community Services, <u>Executive Officer Waste & Sustainability</u>	Ongoing

ID	Action	Responsibility	Complete By:
OBJECTIVE 3.3: SUPPORT RESIDENTS AND THE COMMUNITY TO LIVE SAFELY AND HARMONIOUSLY WITH WILDLIFE			
3.3.1	Update the Living with Wildlife Policy and have it endorsed by Council.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Support: City Parks & Open Space	30 June 2024
3.3.2	Initiate a Nature is Your Neighbour campaign with developers.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Support: City Parks & Open Space	30 June 2024
3.3.3	Initiate a Responsible Fishing in Urban Waterways campaign, <u>that includes consideration of introduced and native fish species.</u>	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Partners: Victorian Fishing Association	30 June 2024
3.3.4	Review existing signage and communications to reduce bird feeding in the community. Design and begin implementation of a new campaign including information in different languages.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Support: City Parks & Open Space	30 June 2024

THEME 4: A LANDSCAPE RICH IN CULTURAL VALUES AND HERITAGE

ID	Action	Responsibility	Complete By:
OBJECTIVE 4.1: ENSURE LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE AND INCREASE COUNCIL'S CAPACITY TO PROTECT CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUES THROUGH LAND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS			
4.1.1	Training, capacity building and integration of Cultural Heritage Management Plan guidelines into Project Management Office framework.	Lead: Project Management Office Support: People and Culture, Community Health & Wellbeing	Ongoing
4.1.2	On-country tours of significant locations for Hume capital works staff. Minimum one event per year.	Lead: <u>Community Health & Wellbeing</u> Support: <u>People & Culture</u> Support: Capital Works, <u>Community Health & Wellbeing</u> Partners: WWCHAC	Ongoing
4.1.3	Work with local Traditional Owners and the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council to actively protect significant Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung cultural heritage in the municipality, including the Sunbury Earth Rings.	Lead: City Design Support: <u>City Strategy, Project Management Office, Community Health & Wellbeing, Capital Works, Community Strengthening</u> Partners: <u>City Parks & Open Spaces</u> Partners: WWCHAC	Ongoing
OBJECTIVE 4.2: INCREASE ACTIVE MANAGEMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUES ON COUNCIL LAND UNDER GUIDANCE BY <u>TRADITIONAL OWNERS</u>			
4.2.1	Work with local Traditional Owners to manage sites of significance in accordance with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung requirements <u>and the community.</u>	Lead: City Parks & Open Space Partners: <u>WWCHAC</u>	Ongoing
<u>4.2.2</u>	<u>Investigate adequate resourcing to formalise Traditional Owner authority in water entitlement and management to help develop traditional ownership of water resources and planning.</u>	Lead: <u>Community Health & Wellbeing</u> Support: <u>Climate Action Integration, City Parks & Open Space,</u> Partners: <u>WWCHAC, partners Upper Merri Creek Integrated Water Management Plan.</u>	<u>30 June 2025</u>

ID	Action	Responsibility	Complete By:
OBJECTIVE 4.3: ESTABLISH AND IMPLEMENT A LONG TERM, LIVING LAND MANAGEMENT PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT WITH WURUNDJERI WOI-WURRUNG CULTURAL HERITAGE ABORIGINAL CORPORATION			
4.3.1	Enter into a Wurundjeri-Hume Land Management Agreement, to develop a mutually agreed <u>framework principles</u> for protecting and managing Aboriginal cultural heritage during ongoing, routine maintenance activities.	Lead: City Parks & Open Space Support: <u>Community Health & Wellbeing</u> Partners: WWCHAC	1 March 2024 Sept 2023
OBJECTIVE 4.4 SUPPORT WURUNDJERI WOI-WURRUNG PEOPLE TO BUILD THEIR CAPACITY TO CARE FOR COUNTRY IN HUME			
4.4.1	Provide opportunities for Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung to practice cultural traditions as a living culture.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Support: City Parks & Open Space Partners: WWCHAC	Ongoing
4.4.2	<u>Benchmarking exercise with other Councils to investigate options for Hume to support the further granting of freehold title the return of country to Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Traditional Owners, via benchmarking exercise with other Councils and State government, for example with developers through the process of housing development applications.</u>	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Support: <u>Environmental Planning, City Design, Property and Leasing, Statutory Planning & Development, Subdivisional Development</u> Partners: Developers, WWCHAC	30 June December 2024
OBJECTIVE 4.5 PARTNER WITH WURUNDJERI WOI-WURRUNG PEOPLE TO ENGAGE THE HUME COMMUNITY IN UNDERSTANDING THE ABORIGINAL CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE OF SITES ACROSS HUME CITY			
4.5.1	Work with Traditional Owners to build greater community awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Partners: WWCHAC	Ongoing
4.5.2	Engage educators from Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation to educate children and young people in Hume's schools and preschools.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Support: Children, Youth and Family Services Partners: Koori Engagement Support Officers (Victorian State Government), WWCHAC	30 June 2024

THEME 5: A HEALTHY AND PRODUCTIVE RURAL LANDSCAPE

Action ID	Actions	Responsibility	Complete Action By:
OBJECTIVE 5.1: REDUCE THE SPREAD AND EXTENT OF NOXIOUS WEEDS WITHIN THE RURAL AREAS OF HUME			
5.1.1	Develop and pilot a weed compliance and education program to enforce the local law requiring control of weeds.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Support: City Laws	30 June 2024
5.1.2	Scope a noxious weed monitoring program incorporating private land and roadsides.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Support: City Laws, City Parks & Open Space Partners: Banksia Gardens Community Services	30 June 2024
<u>5.1.3</u>	<u>Align the delivery of the rural roadside weed management program on public land with the weed compliance and education program on adjoining private land.</u>	<u>Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing</u> <u>Support: City Parks & Open Spaces</u>	<u>30 June 2025</u>
5.1.4 3	Develop a Rural Landholder Kit, outlining landholder responsibilities for weed control and promoting the values of Hume's rural areas.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Support: Rates Partners: Real estate agents	30 June 2024
5.1.5 4	Continue to offer and increase participation in Rural Land Management Grant to eligible rural landholders.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing	Ongoing
<u>5.1.6</u>	<u>Advocate to the State Government to better manage weeds from their land</u>	<u>Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing</u>	<u>Ongoing</u>
OBJECTIVE 5.2: SUPPORT PRIMARY PRODUCERS TO PRACTICE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION IN HUME.			
5.2.1	Maintain Primary Producer Rate Rebates to minimum 75 rebates per round.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing	Ongoing

5.2.2	Promotion of Primary Producer Rate Rebate to agriculture enterprises in Hume who are currently not engaged in the program.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Support: Economic Development Partners: Local businesses	Ongoing
5.2.3	Bi-annual review of operations of the incentives (grants and rebates) programs.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing	30 June 2024
5.2.4	Deliver agriculture-themed community workshops and advice to Hume's primary producers and other rural landholders, with a focus on regenerative and sustainable agriculture and supporting a farmers' market in Hume.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Partners: City of Whittlesea, Macedon Ranges Council, Mitchell Shire Council	Ongoing
5.2.5	Minimum three events per year. Investigate grants from external sources to support primary producers in Hume.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Support: Grants and Projects	Ongoing
5.2.6	Create a service directory for primary producers and distribute to rural residents.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Support: Economic Development	30 June 2024
OBJECTIVE 5.3: INCREASE THE CAPABILITY OF RURAL LANDOWNERS TO MANAGE THEIR LAND SUSTAINABLY AND ENHANCE RESILIENCE TO CLIMATE CHANGE			
5.3.1	Raise awareness amongst rural landowners about the values, benefits and management of habitat connectivity for wildlife and farm productivity through avenues such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RE-Source Newsletter (four hard copy and four eNews per year) • Connectivity fact sheet in the Land & Biodiversity Guidelines • Connectivity field day • Information at events 	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Support: Strategic Communications & Events	Ongoing
5.3.2	Investigate a rural area plant donation program to support increased revegetation on rural land and help increase habitat connectivity for wildlife.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing	30 June 2024
5.3.3	Promote the development of community led sustainable land management initiatives such as a rabbit action group and Landcare.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Partners: Landcare	Ongoing

5.3.4	Promote Melbourne Water's Stream Frontage Management Program to rural landowners in Hume.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Partners: Melbourne Water	Ongoing
5.3.5	Seek opportunities to link corporate and community volunteers with rural landowners to support large scale rural land revegetation projects.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Support: Economic Development Partners: Local businesses	Ongoing
5.3.6	Investigate and raise awareness of Native Vegetation Net Gain Offsets	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Support: Economic Development Partners: TFN	Ongoing
5.3.7	Investigate and promote alternate uses for land that doesn't have the capacity to carry agriculture (eg. carbon farming)	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Support: Climate Action Integration	Ongoing
OBJECTIVE 5.4: SUPPORT COLLABORATION BETWEEN RURAL RESIDENTS ENGAGED IN SUSTAINABLE LAND MANAGEMENT			
5.4.1	Develop and implement an annual Community Engagement Plan for workshops, education and events. Minimum 10 events per year, with at least one cross-Council collaboration.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Support: Strategic Communications & Events Partners: City of Whittlesea, Mitchell Shire Council, Macedon Ranges Council	Ongoing
5.4.2	Inform landowners via RE-source newsletter, property visits and education workshops about Melbourne Airport's lack of curfew and the implications for landowners in the Green Wedge regarding a lack of subdivision opportunities and the benefits of diverse and sustainable land uses.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Support: Environmental Planners, Strategic Planning Partners: Melbourne Airport	Ongoing
OBJECTIVE 5.5: INCREASE NATIVE VEGETATION AND WILDLIFE HABITAT IN HUME'S RURAL AREAS			
5.5.1	Support rural landowners through the CoRE Grant or other means to invest in large revegetation projects on their land.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing	Ongoing
5.5.2	Explore opportunities to support the provision of fabricated nest boxes to rural landowners.	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Support: City Parks & Open Spaces	Ongoing
5.5.3	Develop a program to subsidise the cost of one Trust for Nature conservation covenant per year for rural landowners in areas important to	Lead: Community Health & Wellbeing Support: Environmental Planning	30 June 2024

	connectivity and biodiversity conservation for permanent protection of assets.	
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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CoPCG	Chain of Ponds Collaboration Group
CVA	Conservation Volunteers Australia
DEDJTR	Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources
DEECA	Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action
FoMPC	Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek
FoUMPC	Friends of Upper Moonee Ponds Creek
FRV	Fire Rescue Victoria
GR&P	Governance, Risk and Property
GtW	Greening the West/City West Water
I&A	Infrastructure and Assets
IT	Information Technology
KA	Kensington Association
L&C Plan	Landscape and Connectivity Plan
LCS	Living Colour Studio
MBUG	Moonee Bicycle Users Group
MCMC	Merri Creek Management Committee

MV	City of Moonee Valley
MB	Moonee Bicycle Users Group
MW	Melbourne Water
P&D	Planning and Development
PPRR	Primary Producer Rate Rebate
PPWCMA	Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority
PV	Parks Victoria
RMIT	Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology
SU	Swinburne University
TFN	Trust for Nature
UniMelb	University of Melbourne PhD candidate
Urban Forest	Urban Forest Team, City Parks and Open Spaces Department
VPA	Victorian Planning Authority
WW	Western Water
WWCHAC	Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation
YVW	Yarra Valley Water

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REPORT NO:	8.5
REPORT TITLE:	2024 Hume Arts Grants Program
SOURCE:	Feyza Yazar, Arts Activation Officer David Henry, Team Leader Arts and Cultural Development
DIVISION:	City Services & Living
FILE NO:	HCC22/809
POLICY:	Creative Community Strategy
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE:	1.4: Strengthen community connections through local events, festivals and the arts
ATTACHMENTS:	1. <i>Hume Art Grants 2024 - Application Guidelines</i> 2. <i>Hume Arts Grants 2024 - Terms of Reference</i>

1. SUMMARY OF REPORT:

- 1.1 This report outlines the Guidelines and Terms of Reference for the 2024 Hume’s Arts Grants Program.
- 1.2 Now in its third year and supporting the outcomes of the Creative Community Strategy (2020 – 2025), this program aims to support creative practitioners, organisations, and industries to improve practice capability and economic participation.
- 1.3 Recommendations for the 2024 Arts Grants Program have been informed by feedback received and a review of the 2023 Program.

2. RECOMMENDATION:

That Council:

- 2.1 **Endorses the Hume Arts Grants Program 2024 including the Arts Grants Guidelines (Attachment 1) and Arts Grants Assessment Panel Terms of Reference (Attachment 2).**
- 2.2 **Notes that in 2023/24:**
 - a) **\$72,850 has been allocated for the delivery of the Hume Arts Grants Program.**
 - b) **the maximum amount in the Creative Project Grant category has increased to \$20,000, better supporting applications from arts organisations, artist collectives, and professional artists.**
- 2.3 **Nominates Councillor Overend, Councillor Bell, and Councillor Sherry to take part in the Councillor Review Panel, to be held in April 2024.**
- 2.2 **Notes that applications for the 2024 Arts Grants Program will be open for applications from Monday 5 February 2024 until Monday 11 March 2024.**
- 2.3 **Notes that a report recommending the distribution of Hume Arts Grants Program funds to successful applicants will be presented to Council in May 2024.**

3. LEGISLATIVE POWERS:

- 3.1 The provision of an Arts Grants Program is aligned to the Service Performance principles (Part 5, Division 1, Section 106) of the Local Government Act, 2020 specifically that:
 - 3.1.1 Services are equitable and responsive to the diverse needs of the community.
 - 3.1.2 Services are accessible and provide good value for money.

REPORT NO: 8.5 (cont.)

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

- 4.1 In 2023/24, Council has allocated \$72,850 for the delivery of the Hume Arts Grants Program.
- 4.2 This budget is forecast to be distributed across two categories as follows:

Category	Forecast Allocation
Creative Project Grants	\$40,000
Creative Activity Grants	\$32,850
Total	\$72,850

5. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS:

- 5.1 The Hume Arts Grants Program gives special priority to projects that support environmental sustainability and sustainable arts practices.

6. CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION CONSIDERATIONS:

- 6.1 In support of environmental sustainability, works and projects that engage with sustainability (including climate change) will be treated as a priority.

7. CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS APPLICATION:

- 7.1 Under the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic) Council has a responsibility to ensure all people, including those who may face barriers to participation, are treated fairly and equitably and are supported to seek funds through the program.
- 7.2 These Rights have been considered and applied in the development, implementation, and assessment of the program. The Program does not limit any Human Rights, and actively considers the barriers some Hume community members may face in participating in community life, artistic endeavors, and creative practice. The program actively seeks to provide opportunities and reduce barriers through targeted grant criteria and identification of priority cohorts / project types in support of Section 18 (taking part in public life) and Section 19 (cultural rights) of the Act.
- 7.3 Priority groups who may face barriers to participation in arts and cultural practice are highlighted in Council's Creative Community Strategy (2020-2025) within strategic priority 3.3. They include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, young people, people of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, LGBTIQ+ people and people living with disabilities.

8. COMMUNITY CONSULTATION:

- 8.1 The Arts Grants program was initiated through engagement undertaken in the development of the Creative Community Strategy 2020-2025.
- 8.2 A review of the 2023 program, including feedback from applicants, level of applications received per category and informal conversations with artists indicated:
- Applicants were overall satisfied with the program, and pleased that Council continues to support artists' practice and professional development in Hume.
 - The guidelines were considered to be clear and consistent, and the process easy.
 - The level of applications was lower in the Creative Project Grant category than anticipated. Minor program changes are being recommended for 2024 as a result; refer to Discussion below for further information on recommended program changes for 2024.

9. DISCUSSION:

REPORT NO: 8.5 (cont.)

Background

- 9.1 Guided by the Creative Community Strategy 2020-2025, the Hume Arts Grants Program is committed to the principles that:
- (a) Creativity is a central element to learning, creating pathways to training, employment and thriving cultural industries.
 - (b) All people should be enabled to participate fully in their society.

2023 Arts Grant Program Review

- 9.2 In 2023 the Hume Arts Grants Program had \$50,000 allocated across two categories – Creative Project Grant and Creative Activity Grant.
- 9.3 At the conclusion of the grant application period, 17 applications were received and 16 were recommended for funding (\$47,150 allocated).
- 9.4 In 2023, only one application was received for the Creative Project Grant category.
- 9.5 The review of the 2023 program found that increasing the maximum allocation per applicant in the Creative Project Grant category from \$10,000 to \$20,000 would encourage more applications from arts organisations, artist collectives, and professional artists.
- 9.6 If the recommendations of this report are accepted, the 2024 Program will continue to comprise of two categories, however the category maximum for Creative Project Grants will increase:

Category	Purpose	Category maximum	Est. no. groups supported	Total Allocation
Creative Project Grants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity building. Long term impacts. Delivery of public outcomes of significance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to \$20,000 Requires matched funds valued at 25% of total project cost (cash or in-kind) 	1-2	\$40,000
Creative Activity Grants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emerging artists and creative organisations. Trial new projects / ideas or works. Professional development for individuals or groups (attend conferences / training / join industry organisations). Arts equipment purchases / supporting ongoing practice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to \$3,000 	13 -15	\$32,850
TOTAL			18-20	\$72,850

Guidelines / Eligibility

- 9.7 The eligibility requirements for the Arts Grants 2024 program require that applicants:
- (a) Demonstrate a strong commitment to chosen arts or heritage practice (individual) and/or have a strong record of achievement in the arts sector (organisation).
 - (b) Are Hume residents (individual), or are Hume based or deliver programs that engage and benefit Hume residents (group / organisation).
 - (c) Have no outstanding grant acquittals or debts owing to Council.

REPORT NO: 8.5 (cont.)

- (d) Provide evidence of legal structure (groups). Groups that do not have a legal structure (e.g., As an Incorporated Entity) must apply through an auspice arrangement.

- 9.8 Full eligibility and program guidelines are available in the Hume Arts Grants Guidelines 2024 (Attachment 1).
- 9.9 It is noted that applications to the Arts Grants Program does not impact the ability of arts, culture, or creative groups to also submit applications for Council’s Community Grants Program.

Assessment Process

- 9.10 The Assessment Process is detailed in the Arts Grants Assessment Panel Terms of Reference (Attachment 2).
- 9.11 In line with Council’s Community Grants Policy, the Hume Arts Grants Program assessment process will be managed online via the SmartyGrants portal. Officers will be available to support applicants in any language (through an interpreter) if they have difficulties submitting an online application.
- 9.12 A pre-eligibility check will be conducted on all applications prior to progressing to assessment stage.
- 9.13 Eligible applicants will be assessed by the Arts Grants Assessment Panel according to the assessment matrix published in the Arts Grants Program Guidelines 2024.
- 9.14 Applicants to be recommended for funding will be presented to the Councillor Review Panel in April 2024, which will provide oversight over the process.
- 9.15 A summary of applications recommended for funding will be provided to Council for approval in May 2024.

Notification of Grants and Conditions

- 9.16 Following Council consideration of recommendations for the 2024 Arts Grants Program, Officers will notify successful applicants of the outcome of their application by email. Successful applicants’ obligations will be detailed in a funding agreement with Council.
- 9.17 Unsuccessful or ineligible applicants will be provided with the opportunity to discuss their applications with Council officers. They will also be offered support to develop their proposal for future funding rounds. Officers will also work with applicants where required, to either refer them to other funding opportunities or encourage them explore potential partnerships to support a successful application.
- 9.18 All grant recipients will be required to comply with the conditions of their Funding Agreement. The funds must only be used for the purpose described and are to be acquitted at the completion of the agreement period.

Program Evaluation

- 9.19 A review of the 2024 Hume Arts Grants Program (including application categories and allocation of funds) will be conducted to inform the delivery of the 2025 program.

10. CONCLUSION:

- 10.1 The Hume Arts Grants Program will assist local artists and creative practitioners to improve their practice capability and economic viability. This will actively support Hume to be a creative community, where artistic expression provides opportunities, builds wellbeing, connection and belonging.



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16	CONTACT DETAILS

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF TRADITIONAL OWNERS

Hume City Council recognises the rich Aboriginal heritage within the municipality and acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung, which includes the Gunung-William-Balluk clan, 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 the existing family members of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and to Elders past, present and future.

GETTING STARTED

HUME CITY COUNCIL ARTS GRANTS PROGRAM 2024

Thanks for
your interest
in the Hume
Arts Grants
Program.

If you are ready to apply for a grant, go straight to: hume.vic.gov.au/artsgrants. Otherwise, please read these guidelines to help you prepare your application.

QUESTIONS AND SUPPORT

Questions about your application or technical difficulties with your online application? Please contact our Arts Team for assistance.

Telephone:
9205 2200

Email: artsandculture@hume.vic.gov.au

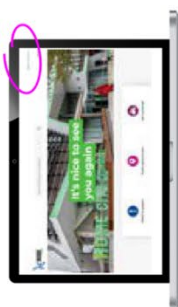
PRINT TOO SMALL?

An accessible word version of this kit is available online.

NEED TRANSLATION SERVICES?

Translation services are available via Humelink at www.hume.vic.gov.au.
Just set your language in the top right corner (see picture below).

You can also select a translated summary of this document from the Arts Grant page on Hume's website.



ABOUT THE ARTS GRANTS PROGRAM

The Hume Arts Grants program supports the vision of the *Hume Creative Community Strategy 2020-2025* that creative expression connects the people and communities of Hume, creating opportunity, building wellbeing, connection and belonging.

The Hume Arts Grants program will assist local artists and creative practitioners to sustainably improve their practice capability and economic viability, helping to create more visible and accessible arts and cultural practice in Hume.

This program is intended for applicants who have demonstrated a strong commitment to their chosen arts or cultural practice.

This may include literature, music, theatre, musical theatre, opera, dance, heritage, circus, comedy, puppetry, arts festivals, visual arts and crafts, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts, community arts, and experimental arts.

The program will prioritise projects that:

- Engage and develop practice capability for Hume artists and communities.
- Support the development of creative economic participation.
- Support environmental sustainability in Hume.

- Initiatives that address a range of social justice barriers and engage members of the community who are more likely to face barriers to participation including:
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples,
 - young people,
 - people of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds,
 - LGBTQIA+ people,
 - people living with disabilities

GRANTS AVAILABLE

CATEGORY	MAXIMUM AMOUNT	WHO SHOULD APPLY?	PAGE NO.
Reactive Activity Grants	Up to \$3,000	Small projects run by individuals or organisations that support emerging artistic practice, develop and trial new ideas, or support the generation of new work. Individuals attending development opportunities or purchasing equipment.	p. 14
Reactive Project Grants	Up to \$20,000	Individuals or organisations with a strong record of achievement in the arts sector. Projects with matched funding that demonstrate significant benefit to the arts sector and/or community.	p. 15

DATES & ELIGIBILITY



APPLICATIONS OPEN
**9AM MONDAY
5 FEBRUARY 2024**

APPLICATIONS CLOSE
**5PM MONDAY
11 MARCH 2024**

Please note that you will not be able to submit an application after this date, and incomplete submissions are not accepted.

Before you apply, check that you meet the below criteria.

INDIVIDUALS

Applicants must:

- Have a strong commitment to their chosen arts or heritage practice demonstrated through evidence of performance, public presentation, or creative work. This may include literature, music, theatre, musical theatre, opera, dance, heritage, circus, comedy, puppetry, arts festivals, visual arts and crafts, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts, community arts, and experimental arts.
- Be a resident of Hume City.
- Have no outstanding grant acquittals or outstanding debts owing to Hume City Council.
- Have satisfactorily acquitted any previous funding received from Hume City Council (if applicable).

ORGANISATIONS

Applicants must:

- Have a strong record of achievement in the arts sector. This includes literature, music, theatre, musical theatre, opera, dance, heritage, circus, comedy, puppetry, arts festivals, visual arts and crafts, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts, community arts, and experimental arts.
- Be based in Hume City and/or run the proposed activity or project from a location within Hume City, and/or show that it will substantially benefit residents of Hume City.
- Have no outstanding debts with Hume City Council.
- Have satisfactorily acquitted any previous funding received by Hume City Council (if applicable).

Note: Successfully receiving an Arts Grant does not exclude you from applying for the Hume Community Grants program.

HOW DO I APPLY?

To apply for an Arts Grant you will need to complete an application form and provide supporting documentation online. Refer to p10.

WHAT WILL I NEED TO RESPOND TO IN MY APPLICATION?

You will need to submit your application online using **SmartyGrants**. The application form consists of the following questions.

- What is the proposed activity and creative conceptual rationale?
- How does the proposed activity benefit the Hume creative practitioners involved and/or the Hume community?
- How do you plan to deliver the proposed activity? For activities working with specific communities, how will you ensure best practice and appropriate cultural protocols?
- List all the creative personnel and organisations involved in your activity, and their role(s).
- Creative's/Organisation's biography (you must provide at least one creative's biography, and a maximum of five).
- Budget - your budget will need to show the income and expenditure of your project, demonstrate that the project can be achieved within the timeframe and will be well managed. If you are paying for wages and fees, you will need to demonstrate appropriate sector award rates.



WHAT IS NOT FUNDED	NOTES
Alcohol licenses, tobacco and gambling related activities.	Council does not provide grants related to these activities because they do not support broader community wellbeing outcomes (refer to Council's Gambling Harm Minimisation Policy and Health and Wellbeing Plan).
Projects that are for general fundraising and fundraising events.	Your group can fundraise but Council cannot financially support fundraising activities.
Fixed/permanent equipment, building maintenance or capital improvements (such as heating or cooling systems, shade sails, solar panels, portable buildings etc.).	Arts Grants focus on arts sector activities and projects, rather than any infrastructure for community groups/organisations.
Activities that have already started and/or need retrospective funding.	If you have already completed a project or staged an event you will not be eligible for a grant for that project or activity.
Fees associated with tertiary education qualifications.	There are other avenues of funding to support these outcomes.
Projects that mostly address shortfalls in funding from other local, state and/or federal governments.	Arts Grants support unique projects, activities and events. We encourage groups to seek funding from other sources to help create the best projects and activities. However, we will not fund projects that have run out of money part-way through, been defunded by other organisations or use Council funds to 'top up' existing projects.
Activities, projects, programs and events that are owned, managed or already funded by Hume City Council.	Hume City Council's own activities, projects, programs and events are already funded through the annual budget process, therefore will not be funded through the Arts Grants.
Projects that do not meet the aims of the Arts Grants Program or Council priorities.	The purpose and priorities for the Arts Grants are identified on p. 5. Please read this and consider whether or not your project meets these aims and priorities.
Personal expenses (i.e. petrol, utility bills, phone bills that are not in the group's name or are not incurred by the group).	Arts Grants support the running of arts activities. They are not designed to fund personal expenses, even if those personal expenses relate to project activities.
Applications without adequate Public Liability Insurance. (If you do not have Public Liability Insurance please contact Council for a list of providers.)	Most applications will require Public Liability Insurance for \$20million. Council does make exceptions from requiring public liability insurance for applicants who satisfy ALL of the following criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You are applying as an individual. You are running the project alone (ie. not paying anyone to work for you, and there are no other people involved in your project either paid or unpaid). You are using the grant for the sole purpose of purchasing materials, equipment or training from existing providers. If you intend to apply without securing Public Liability Insurance it is strongly recommended that you discuss this with the Arts Team prior to applying.
Applications that do not meet eligibility requirements.	Each grant has unique eligibility requirements, which are listed in this document under each grant type. If you do not meet the eligibility requirements listed for the grant type you seek, your application cannot be considered.
Costs that are not directly related to this project or covered by ongoing funding from another source.	Arts Grants are specifically designed to support the arts in Hume. With limited funds available, our grants are not available to fund costs outside the scope of the proposed project such as unrelated salaries, administration fees, and office rental.

HOW WE ASSESS GRANTS

We assess eligible applications using the criteria listed below and funding is awarded based on merit.

% OF SCORE	CRITERIA (WHAT YOU NEED TO TELL US)	MEASURE (HOW WE ASSESS IT)
20%	Who is delivering the activity / project? 1. What is your creative record (individual / group) what do you do? 2. Are you based within Hume City? 3. Will this activity / project benefit residents of Hume City?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent does the project benefit the arts practice, the Hume arts community and residents? How many local people are likely to benefit from the project? Will the project promote opportunities for people to participate in the arts?
40%	Why is the proposed activity / project needed? What do you hope to achieve? 1. Why is the project / activity important? 2. Does the project have a high level of artistic / creative merit? 3. What are the expected outcomes of the project? 4. How will you know if these outcomes have been achieved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the proposed creative activity represent a high level of artistic or creative capability or originality? Are the outcomes of the project clearly identified and do they contribute to one of the areas of focus of the grants program? How will the applicant evaluate the outcomes of the project (Creative Project Grants)?
40%	What do you need to do to deliver the project? 1. What are the planned activities? 2. What is your budget? 3. How will you manage the project and the budget?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the project well planned and achievable within the timeframe? Is the budget clear and realistic? Is the project financially viable and does it demonstrate sound management?



HUME CITY COUNCIL ARTS GRANTS PROGRAM 2024



WHAT DOCUMENTATION DO I NEED?

To have the best chance possible, please ensure you supply the following supporting documentation with your grant application.

For groups/organisations, you will need to provide evidence of your legal status (ie. certificate of incorporation or business registration). If your group/organisation is not incorporated, you can apply for a grant through an auspice organisation. If you do this, you need to supply a letter confirming the auspice agreement. Attach this to the application.

ABN details or completed ATO Statement by Supplier form for your group/organisation.

A Public Liability Insurance 'certificate of currency' for \$20million to cover your group/organisation's activities for the duration of the grant period. Unless you are applying as an individual and you meet exemption criteria on p. 8.

Quotes to support your budget (ie. for equipment hire or purchase, venue hire, advertising and promotion, flyers, posters etc.).

Incorporated groups and organisations must provide a copy of their profit and loss statement. Australian public companies with an ABN should provide their most recently audited financial statements.

Bank details for your group/organisation (so that you can receive payment).

For Creative Project Grants, a referee report or letters of support. Note that Council may contact referees, so ensure their contact details are correct.

Artistic support material: links to website or a link to 3 minutes of video material and a maximum of three A4 pages can be uploaded as a PDF or Word document.

Individuals will need to provide proof of residency (ie. drivers licence or utility bill with a residential address in Hume City).

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Hume City Council

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IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER ABOUT THE GRANTS PROCESS

▶ The decision to award grants is made by Hume City Council. Council's decision will be final. There is no review or appeal process.

▶ Hume City Council's Arts Grants Program is a competitive process and funds are awarded based on merit.

▶ Canvassing of Councilors is prohibited. This means that you cannot contact a Councilor and ask them to help you get your grant approved.

▶ Councilors of Hume City Council are not permitted to apply, either as individuals or as part of a group/organisation. Hume City Council employees may apply so long as they can demonstrate their application does not represent a conflict of interest.

▶ We encourage you to review Victorian Government COVID-19 advice relating to masks, ventilation and vaccination prior to submitting.

▶ Councilors and Council staff cannot act as referees, as this could be an actual or perceived conflict of interest.

▶ Council provides funding for the term specified in the Funding Agreement. You or your group is responsible for the future sustainability of your program or activity beyond the funding period.

▶ Council reserves the right to withdraw support if you do not comply with Council policy or any written agreement entered into.



11

COMPLETING MY ONLINE APPLICATION

When you are ready to submit your grant application, you will use an online program called SmartGrants. SmartGrants lets you complete sections of your application in stages, save your progress and return to it later (you do not need to do it all at once). Your application will be stored online, so there is no need to save it to your computer.

- IMPORTANT NOTES ON USING THE SMARTGRANTS ONLINE FORM**
- SmartGrants is user friendly, but please keep the following in mind.
- It is helpful to read the SmartGrants Help Guide for Applicants before you start the application form.
 - Allow plenty of time to complete your online application, as submissions after the deadline are not accepted.
 - As part of completing the form, you need to upload supporting documents. Files must be no greater than 25MB but are best kept under 5MB each.
 - To avoid losing your work, remember to regularly save your progress in SmartGrants every 10–15 minutes, as the form logs you out after 30 minutes of inactivity.
- ASSESSMENT PROCESS**
- The assessment process involves a series of steps, which is why it takes a little time before you find out the outcome of your application.



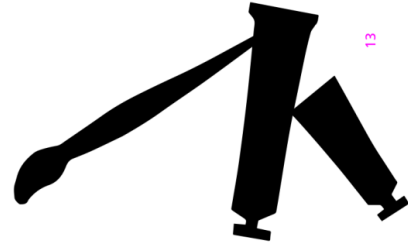
IF YOUR APPLICATION IS SUCCESSFUL

- You will be informed of the outcome of your grant request in writing.
- If your proposal is successful, you will receive a Letter of Offer with a Funding Agreement document.
- If you are successful, you must enter into a Funding Agreement with Council before any money can be paid (via EFT).
- Note that if you are applying in partnership with an auspice organisation, funding will be paid to that organisation, who will then distribute to your group/organisation as agreed in your auspice agreement.

- WHAT IS EXPECTED OF ME (OR MY GROUP) IF SUCCESSFUL?**
- If you receive a grant from Council, you will be expected to:
- Attend a series of up-to-six professional development workshops with other practice leaders in Hume City. Sessions may be a combination of online or in-person.
 - Spend the money for the purpose outlined in your application and Funding Agreement. If your plans change (timing/budget/project), you need to submit a variation request to Council and have it approved, before you make any changes to your project.
 - Submit an Acquittal/Accountability Report that shows how the grant money was used, as set out in the Funding Agreement document. If your Accountability Report does not match your Funding Agreement and you have not received an approved variation request, Council may ask for all grant monies to be returned.
 - Return any unspent funds to Council, unless written consent has otherwise been granted by Council.
 - Acknowledge Council's support in any advertisements, flyers or other activities used to promote the project.

Acquittals are due by
Friday 30 May 2024,
unless otherwise
approved by Council.

As part of the Arts Grant accountability process, Council reserves the right to audit any and all grant recipients for compliance with the grant conditions and expenditure of grant monies received.



GRANT CATEGORIES

CREATIVE ACTIVITY GRANTS

Grant Amount: Up To \$3,000

Apply for this grant if you are an individual or organisation with a small to medium scale project, you are wanting to attend professional development opportunities or purchase equipment to support your craft.

This category is ideal for projects that support emerging artistic practice, develop and trial new ideas and support the generation of new work. Funding also supports the costs to attend recognised opportunities and purchase of equipment to further develop your creative practice.

Opportunities and work must be of benefit to the Hume community.

Applicants must:

- Have a strong commitment to their chosen arts or heritage practice demonstrated through evidence of performance, public presentation, or documentation of a body of creative work.
- This includes literature, music, theatre, musical theatre, opera, dance, circus, heritage, comedy, puppetry, arts festivals, visual arts and crafts, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts, community arts, and experimental arts.
- Organisations must have a recognised legal structure (ie. company or incorporated association) or be auspiced (see p.6).
- Organisations/groups must be Hume-based and/or run the proposed activity or project from a location within Hume and/or show that it will substantially benefit residents of Hume City.
- Be a resident of Hume City.
- Have no outstanding debts owing to Hume City Council.
- Have satisfactorily acquitted any previous funding received by Hume City Council (if applicable).

14

CREATIVE PROJECT GRANTS

Grant Amount: Up To \$20,000

Apply for this grant if you have a larger scale project that can demonstrate significant benefit to the arts sector and/or community. This category requires matched funding and public outcomes of significance.

Matched funds are valued at 25% of total project cost, both cash or in-kind contributions are acceptable.

Example: A \$20,000 grant application must demonstrate \$5000 cash or in-kind contribution to support the delivery of the project.

Applicants must:

- Have a strong record of achievement in the arts sector. This includes literature, music, theatre, musical theatre, opera, dance, circus, heritage, comedy, puppetry, arts festivals, visual arts and crafts, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts, community arts, and experimental arts.
- Be based in Hume City and/or, run the proposed activity or project from a location within Hume City, and/or show that it will substantially benefit residents of Hume City.
- Have no outstanding debts with Hume City Council.
- Have satisfactorily acquitted any previous funding received from Hume City Council (if applicable).

Individuals applying for the Creative Project Grant must apply through an auspice arrangement.

15

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Hume Arts Grants Assessment Panels TERMS OF REFERENCE

Governance Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council delegates responsibility for assessing applications submitted under the Arts Grants Program to the Arts Grants Assessment Panel. • This document outlines the operation and scope of the Officer Assessment Panel – Hume Arts Grants and Councillor Review Panel. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Assessment Panel comprises of Council Officers. ○ The Review panel comprises nominated Councillors. • This document outlines the operation and scope of each panel.
Goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To assess and award funds to applicants based on merit, and without prejudice, ensuring Hume City Council's grants distribution is equitable, efficient and transparent.
Membership Terms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All panels are 12 months in duration • Members of the Councillor Review Panel are nominated by Council at an Ordinary Meeting when the Guidelines are adopted. • All panels members must complete Fraud, Corruption and Conflict of Interest training prior to commencing the assessment process • Members must adhere to the Conflict of Interest Policy, maintaining confidentiality and declaring any potential conflicts during the assessment process • All listed members of assessment panels are required to score applications – Non scoring secretariat roles sit outside membership of the panel.
Reference Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council's Grant Giving Policy. • Conflict of Interest Policy. • Arts Grants Application Guidelines. • SmartyGrants User Guide.
Secretariat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Health and Wellbeing – Community Grants Officer will provide administrative support (unless otherwise specified).

Name	Officer Assessment Panel – Hume Arts Grants
1. Scope	Assessment of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative Activity Grant • Creative Project Grant
2. Membership and chairperson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinator Arts and Culture (Chair). • Two officers from the Arts and Culture team • Two officers from other teams / departments team with knowledge of Hume’s arts and cultural communities and/or community need. • At least the Chair and three Officers must be present at a meeting to constitute a quorum
3. Role of Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Panel members (except Chair) will be assigned applications to assess within Smartygrants and score independently. • Panel members will meet to discuss and agree on final scores. • The panel will recommend successful candidates to Council.
4. Conflict of Interest / Alternative Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the event of a conflict of interest; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict will be recorded as per Staff Conflict of Interest Policy. • The Officer will be removed from the panel and replaced with a member who does not have a conflict. • If the Panel is unable to source a non-conflicted Officer, the Panel will continue the assessment process as long as a quorum can be reached. • If the Chair has a conflict, the Coordinator Arts, Culture and Events will replace the Coordinator Arts and Culture as Chair.
5. Meeting frequency, location and duration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial assessment by panel members will be undertaken independently via SmartyGrants. • Panel meets at least once (this may be separated into sessions depending on number of applications received). • Each session should be 2 hours maximum – multiple sessions to be scheduled as needed. • Meetings may be held in-person or remotely.
6. Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The panel is accountable for providing recommendations to Council regarding the distribution of funds.
7. Assessment processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An average of scores will be compiled and provided to the entire panel. • If assessors’ scores differ by more than 30 points, assessors may choose to discuss the application and confirm a final score. If agreement cannot be reached, the Chair will assess the application and the average of all scores will provide the final score. • Panel members will meet to review scores and discuss before deciding the applications to be recommended for funding. • A majority of panellists must agree to finalise funding allocation. • Should the total of eligible grants requested exceed the total available funds, only the highest-ranking applications will be recommended for funding.

8. Reporting requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At the conclusion of assessment, officers will present a summary of the process to the Councillor Review Panel to provide oversight and transparency over the process.
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Name	Councillor Review Panel – Hume Arts Grant Program
1. Scope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Program Consider recommendations from Officer Assessment Panel – Hume Arts Grants.
2. Membership and chairperson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manager City Life (Chair) Three nominated Councillors (preferably each representing one of the Hume City Wards of Aitken, Jackson’s Creek and Meadow Valley). Coordinator Arts and Culture or Officer Panel Chair (advisory capacity only). At least two Councillors and the Chair must be present to constitute a quorum.
3. Role of members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review probity of process across the program Consider Officer Assessment Panels – Hume Arts Grant recommendations
4. Conflict of interest / alternative members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the event of a conflict of interest: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Mayor would replace a Councillor on the panel. If the Mayor also has a conflict or is unavailable the Panel will meet as long as a quorum can be reached. The Coordinator Arts, Culture and Events replace the Manager City Life.
5. Member frequency, location and duration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Panel meets once per year. Meetings may be held in-person or virtually. Email comments / confirmation of review may be used in lieu of a meeting.
6. Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accountable to review recommendations and the probity of process across the program. Funding recommendations will be considered and endorsed at an Ordinary Meeting of Council.
7. Review considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review probity of Assessment process. Review equitability of distribution.
8. Reporting requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On the basis of the Panel’s completed review, the Coordinator Arts and Culture (or Officer Panel Chair) will prepare a Council Report including a summary of recommended applications, those not recommended, and a request to distribute funds. This Report will be considered at an Ordinary Meeting of Council.

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REPORT NO:	8.6
REPORT TITLE:	Event Grants 2023/2024 - Round 2 Recommendations
SOURCE:	Hazel Finnie, Coordinator Arts, Culture and Events Narda Shanley, Community Development Officer
DIVISION:	City Services & Living
FILE NO:	HCC23/389
POLICY:	Grant-Giving Policy POL/303 Sponsorship Policy POL/174
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE:	1.4: Strengthen community connections through local events, festivals and the arts
ATTACHMENT:	1. <i>Hume Event Grants Round 2 Recommendations</i>

1. SUMMARY OF REPORT:

This report recommends the allocation of funds within Round Two of the 2023/2024 Event Grant Program (Attachment 1).

The recommended applications embody Council's commitment to strengthening community connections through local events, festivals, and the arts.

2. RECOMMENDATION:

That Council

- 2.1 Endorse the distribution of \$84,750 of cash funds and up to \$21,700 of in-kind support to 11 applicants for the Round Two applicants of the 2023/2024 Event Grant Program (Table 1, Attachment 1).**
- 2.2 Endorse a further nine applicants for in-kind support up to the value of \$11,000 (Table 2, Attachment 1).**
- 2.3 Note that disbursement of funds identified in 2.1 and the in-kind support outlined in 2.2 is subject to satisfactory acquittals and resolution of any outstanding eligibility requirements.**

3. LEGISLATIVE POWERS:

The provision of grants is within Council's power under the Local Government Act, 2020, aiming to provide the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations, whilst providing services in an equitable, responsive manner.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

- 4.1 The Event Grant Program is funded within Council's annual operating budget. \$170,000 is allocated to this program in 2023/24.
- 4.2 Of the accepted offers from Round One, \$84,750 remained available for allocation in Round 2. This report recommends providing cash funding to 11 groups, totalling \$84,750.
- 4.3 In kind support offers will be funded from the existing operational budget.
- 4.4 At the conclusion of Round 2, all funds for the 2023/24 Event Grant Program will have been allocated.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS:

- 5.1 The Event Grant Program prioritises applications that demonstrate sustainability considerations in their event planning. Assessments included environmental and financial sustainability as a key criterion, with a weighting of 15% of applicant's total score.

REPORT NO: 8.6 (cont.)

6. CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION CONSIDERATIONS:

- 6.1 There are no direct implications for climate change adaptation as a result of this report.

7. CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS APPLICATION:

- 7.1 Under the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic) Council has a responsibility to ensure all people, including those who may face barriers to participation, are treated fairly and equitably and are supported to seek funds through the program.
- 7.2 These Rights have been applied in the development, implementation, and assessment of the program. The Program does not limit any Human Rights, and supports community members in relation to Section 18 (taking part in public life) of the Act.
- 7.3 The Hume Event Grant program is aimed at events that align with the Hume Social Justice Charter. Events that do not align with the Charter are not eligible for funding.
- 7.4 Events that are inclusive of all residents within Hume City are prioritised and those that attract disadvantaged groups are also further prioritised.

8. COMMUNITY CONSULTATION:

- 8.1 In relation to the Event Grant Program, consultation for the draft *Vibrant and Inclusive – Events and Festivals Strategy 2023-2026* (26 September 2023 to 6 November 2023), indicated that event organisers value Council’s support and experience in event planning. Feedback further noted that the provision of grants is one of the most important ways that Council can support their event.
- 8.2 Promotion of the grant opportunity and call for applicants was communicated via:
- 8.2.1 Email contact with previous applicants in the event grants program; to relevant applicants in the community grants program; to applicants for event permits for the period January 2022-June 2023.
- 8.2.2 The Hume City Council website targeted social media posts and promotions on screens in Libraries and Community Centres.
- 8.2.3 One online information session and three in-person information sessions were held in Broadmeadows, Sunbury and Craigieburn. In all, 46 people registered to attend, and 19 participated. Registered participants who did not attend were emailed and provided direct contact information with an Officer for support.
- 8.2.4 All communications included a point of contact where application support could be provided.

9. DISCUSSION:

9.1 Background

- 9.1.1 The Event Grant Program supports the delivery of Hume City Council’s vision for a sustainable and thriving community with great health, education, employment, infrastructure, and a strong sense of belonging. As part of this vision, Council aims to strengthen community connections through local events, festivals, and the arts.
- 9.1.2 The Program provides direct support (financial and / or in-kind) to event organisers, helping them to develop and deliver vibrant, inclusive, and engaging events in Hume City.
- 9.1.3 The Program has one category with four levels of funding available. Maximum funding amounts are based on the expected number of attendees (see table below).
- 9.1.4 The application and assessment processes were undertaken in accordance with Council’s Grant Giving Policy (POL/303).

REPORT NO: 8.6 (cont.)

9.2 Application Process

- 9.2.1 Round Two of the Event Grant Program was open for applications from 17 July 2023 to 16 August 2023.
- 9.2.2 The application and assessment processes were managed online via SmartyGrants. Officers offered all applicants support in using the online system. Twenty calls were received from potential applicants during the period.
- 9.2.3 At the conclusion of the round, 29 applications were received. This figure is higher than recent rounds; by comparison, 11 applications were received in Round One, in contrast, 22 were received across both rounds in 2022.
- 9.2.4 Of the 29 applications, 17 were received from first-time applicants to the Events Program.
- 9.2.5 A range of organisation types submitted applications, this included:
- 18 applications from community associations,
 - five from registered charities, and
 - five from businesses.
 - one application was received from an interstate community group.
- This indicates the program is supporting Council’s aim of strengthening community connections and a strong sense of belonging.

9.3 Assessment Process

- 9.3.1 Applications were checked for eligibility including a review of submitted documentation (i.e., bank statements, certificate of incorporation, auspice arrangements, ABN check etc.), record of debts to Council, and confirmation of the location of the event.
- 9.3.2 As per the Assessment Panel Terms of Reference, the assessment process for the Events Grant Program was undertaken via an Officer Assessment Panel (OAP). The Panel comprised four Council Officers from various Council departments, each with a mix of relevant subject knowledge.
- 9.3.3 In line with Council’s Grant Giving Policy, the application and assessment process and Officer recommendations was referred to the Councillor Review Panel (Councillors Hollow, Overend, and Bell).
- (a) The Councillor Review Panel were asked to identify potential conflicts of interest with any applicant group that was listed.
 - (b) Cr Bell identified a potential Conflict of Interest, and did not participate in the review process.
 - (c) The Councillor Review Panel considered the process and decision making evidenced and agreed that the recommendations could proceed to a full meeting of Council without amendment.

9.4 Recommended Event Grant Recipients

- 9.4.1 The increase in applications for Round has meant that many events were unable to be recommended for funding at their maximum requested level. Where possible, in-kind support has been offered.
- 9.4.2 Of the 29 applications:
- (a) Six applications were deemed ineligible; one because the applicant applied twice in this round, four because they were already supported in

REPORT NO: 8.6 (cont.)

Round One, and one due to a change in event date (to prior to 1 January 2024) which caused them to become ineligible.

- (b) Three were not recommended for funding.
- (c) Eleven applications were recommended for cash funding. Of these:
 - (i) eight were recommended for part-funding rather than at their full request.
 - (ii) six were recommended to receive a mix of cash funding and in-kind support.
- (d) Nine applications are recommended for in kind support.

9.4.3 Of the 20 applications recommended for cash funding and in-kind support, the table below shows the diversity of event and experiences that will be offered across the city:

Expected Attendance	Recommended Applications	Cash amount recommended	In-kind support (maximum equivalent value)
Less than 2,000 people (funding \$0 - \$2,000)	4 (+4 in kind only)	\$6,670	\$6,000
2,000+ people (funding up to \$8,000)	1	\$5,000	\$1,200
3,000+ people (funding up to \$15,000)	3 (+3 in kind only)	\$24,550	\$5,000
5,000+ people (funding up to \$25,000)	3 (+2 in kind only)	\$48,500	\$20,500
Totals	20 (11 cash or mix of cash and in-kind and 9 in kind only)	\$84,750	\$32,700

9.5 Notification of Grants and Conditions

- 9.5.1 Pending the adoption of report recommendations all applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application by letter.
- 9.5.2 Unsuccessful / ineligible applicants will be provided with the opportunity to discuss their applications with Council Officers. They will also be offered support to develop their proposal for future funding rounds.
- 9.5.3 Officers will provide advice to unsuccessful applicants to build capacity for future applications and discuss other avenues for support for their upcoming events.

9.6 Program Evaluation and Review

- 9.6.1 The *Vibrant and Inclusive – Events and Festivals Strategy 2023-2026* includes a commitment to review the Events Grant Program considering the Strategy’s aims.
- 9.6.2 Officers commenced this review in September 2023, examining the accessibility of the program, level of funding / options for multi-year funding, the level of the program’s annual budget allocation and other factors.
- 9.6.3 A report is scheduled be presented to Council in late 2023 providing the outcomes of the review, and recommendations for the 2024 Event Grant Program.

10. CONCLUSION:

- 10.1 The successful Event Grant Program Round Two recipients represent and celebrate the breadth and diversity of Hume’s communities. In so doing, they advance Hume City

REPORT NO: 8.6 (cont.)

Council’s vision for a sustainable and thriving community with great health, education, employment, infrastructure, and a strong sense of belonging.

REPORT NO: 8.6 (cont.)

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Hume Event Grants 2023-24: Round 2 Recommendations
Table One: Recommended for funding

Organisation	Event Name	Amount Recommended	In-kind (value)
Annual Islamic Eid Show	The Eid Show	\$11,000	\$7,750
Austar Creations Pty Ltd	Kalkallo Vaisakhi Mela	\$4,550	\$2,000
Australian Chaldean Family Welfare Association Inc	Chaldean / Babylonian New Year Celebration	\$2,000	N/A
Banksia Gardens Community Services	Banksia Gardens Estate Summer Cinema	\$1,200	N/A
Ente Keralam Cultural Forum Inc	Ente Keralam Kalasandhya 2024 (Annual stage show)	\$5,000	\$1,200
Greenvale United Soccer Club	Timor Cup 2023	\$18,750	\$6,250
Hume Sri Lankan Seniors' Association Inc.	Sinhala/Tamil New Year Celebration	\$1,500	N/A
Hume Tennis and Community Centre	Victorian Wheelchair Tennis Open and Melbourne Wheelchair Tennis Open	\$10,000	N/A
North Victorian Buddhist Association Inc.	Vesak Festival 2024	\$10,000	N/A
Northern Melbourne Marathi Mandal	NMMM Snehsammelan 2024	\$0	\$1,000
Sunbury Community Festival Inc	SunFest (Sunbury Community Festival)	\$18,750	\$3,500
Westmeadows Indigenous and Community Garden	Westmeadows Indigenous and Community Garden Open Days 2024	\$2,000	N/A
Totals		\$84,750	\$21,700

Table 2 – Recommended for kind support.

Organisation Name	Event	In kind value
All Saints	Roxy Street Festival	\$1,000
Assyrian Culture Centre of Australia	Splashing Water Feast	\$1,000
Australian Multicultural Community Center Limited (sic - registered name of group)	Building Bridges with Fun	\$1,000
Craigieburn Art Group Inc.	CAG 33rd Annual Art Show.	\$2,000
Feskove Australia	Fiji Australia Day Vuvale Partnership Celebrations	\$2,000
Hume Whittlesea Local Learning & Employment Network (HWLLEN)	VET Discovery	\$2,000
Jannat Events	Hume Basant Colour Fest	\$1,000
Prader Willi Syndrome Assoc. of Victoria	Prader Wears Orange Festival	\$1,000
Total		\$11,000

Table 3 Unsuccessful applicants

Blind Sports and Recreation Victoria (BSRV)	Learn to surf and picnic lunch for young people with vision loss	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not recommended for funding – stronger alignment to Community Grants Program.
Marnong Estate	Marnong Estate Harvest Festival	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not recommended for funding. • Did not include co-contribution.
Tullamarine Cricket Club	TCC Charity Fun Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not recommended for funding – stronger alignment to Community Grants Program.

Table 4 – ineligible applicants

Organisation	Event Name	Comments
Australian Peace Organisation	Pakistani Community Celebration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported in Round 1
Australian Women's Association	Hume Colour Fest - Holi 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported in Round 1
Australian Nepalese Multicultural Centre Inc (ANMC)	Nepali New Year Celebration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported in Round 1
Hume Tennis and Community Centre	Easter Fun Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Withdrawn (applied twice in round / elected to keep the other application as their primary application).
URBNSURF Melbourne	Rip Curl Prop URBNSURF World Surf League QS3000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported in Round 1
SalamFest	SalamFest - Building Bridges by Breaking Bread Together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Withdrawn (event scheduled prior to 1 Jan 2024).

REPORT NO:	8.7
REPORT TITLE:	Hume Central Vision - Towards the next steps Update
SOURCE:	Ruth Robles McColl, Manager Strategic Projects & Places
DIVISION:	City Planning & Places
FILE NO:	HCC23/374
POLICY:	-
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE:	1.2: Provide opportunities, and support business growth and visitor economy to create accessible local jobs for our diverse community
ATTACHMENT:	1. <i>Summary of communications and engagement Hume Central 2023-24</i>

SUMMARY OF REPORT:

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of the progress and future plans for the Hume Central precinct. The Hume Central Vision, adopted in 2014, aims to transform the Hume Central precinct into a vibrant and active town centre, fostering economic growth and community pride.
- 1.2 The importance of Hume Central as creating a sense of place in Broadmeadows requires a program of works to be planned and considered. As Council has not considered the work program involved in delivering the Vision for Hume Central in either of the past two terms it is recommended by officers these combined initiatives be endorsed to support Council's advocacy efforts for the site.
- 1.3 The report updates Council on the key moves for implementation to support this, Vision. These include the creation of a town square, refurbishment of the Broadmeadows Hume Global Learning Centre, a mixed-use commercial development, expansion of community services, and the development of the Broadmeadows Car Park
- 1.4 The report also emphasises a collaborative approach required to deliver Vision and seeks support for an advocacy plan to be developed and launched for the project.
- 1.5 This report is in the context of Broadmeadows being named as an Activity Centre of focus in the recently released Victorian Government's Housing statement.

2. RECOMMENDATION:

That Council:

- 2.1 **Endorse further work on the key moves, as outlined in sections 9.8 and 9.9 of this report, for implementation of the Hume Central Vision incorporating:**
 - 2.1.1 **A Town Square to create a vibrant events and festival site and community gathering place.**
 - 2.1.2 **Refurbishment of the existing Broadmeadows Hume Global Learning Centre ground floor area into the new Council Chamber and community spaces.**
 - 2.1.3 **A mixed-use commercial development that includes quality hotel accommodation, a restaurant and office spaces to be developed on Lot-E.**
 - 2.1.4 **Activating Lot C via built form to offer additional services and spaces for the community and the Broadmeadows Hume Global Learning Centre.**
 - 2.1.5 **The staged development of a new Broadmeadows Car Park, including safe, pedestrian-friendly connections across Dimboola Road to support the precinct.**

REPORT NO: 8.7 (cont.)

- 2.2 Note that funding is provisionally allocated in the long-term capital works program to support achieving the key moves for implementation of the Hume Central Vision.
- 2.3 Note that further work will be undertaken on the need, design and possible operating model for the provision of community and commercial spaces for Lot E and Lot C, and that a proposal to construct built form on Lot C will only be submitted to Council for decision after confirmation of whether a Property Development Agreement (PDA) for Lot E is secured.
- 2.4 Note that Council will confirm progress of the individual projects described above in line with Council’s annual budget processes, update reports to Council and the issuing of any planning permits as required by the Local Government Act 2020.
- 2.5 Endorse a proposed Hume Central Advocacy Plan that supports Council’s efforts to secure funding from Federal and State Government or private funding sources to support implementation of the vision.

3. LEGISLATIVE POWERS:

- 3.1 Local Government Act 2020 Part 3 Division 1 - Community accountability
- 3.2 Local Government Act 2020 Part 4 Division 1 - Strategic Planning
- 3.3 Local Government Act 2020 Part 5 Division 4 - Powers in relation to land

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

- 4.1 Since 2014, Council has had a long-standing commitment to the vision for Hume Central and has over recent years allocated funds in its long-term budget towards realising the vision.
- 4.2 Currently the long-term capital plan has allocated over \$60M across the program to Hume Central. The allocation is spread over four key programs of work as detailed below:

Program	Current Allocation <i>(subject to annual budget approval process)</i>
Hume Central public realm works (includes Lot E)	\$1.6m
Broadmeadows GLC Redevelopment	\$24.7m
Broadmeadows Town Centre Car Park	\$30.8m
Broadmeadows Town Square	\$10.3m

- 4.3 This report does not bind Council to any financial commitments outside of the annual budget process.
- 4.4 2023/24 funding will deliver a new Council Chamber and improved community spaces in the Broadmeadows GLC. 2023/24 funding will also fund works to inform scope as well as design and development for the Town Square, Lot C and the car park.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS:

REPORT NO: 8.7 (cont.)

- 5.1 Council adopted *Sustainable and Cutting Edge* as a guiding principle for Hume Central projects. This principle ensures built form outcomes will result in positive environmental sustainability outcomes for Hume.

6. CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION CONSIDERATIONS:

- 6.1 Hume Central is listed in Council’s adopted Climate Action Plan 2023-2028 and provides opportunities to create carbon neutral new facilities and promote sustainable transport options within the precinct.

7. CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS APPLICATION:

- 7.1 The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 sets out the basic rights and responsibilities of all people in Victoria. The Charter places obligations on public authorities by requiring them to act compatibly with human rights and give proper consideration to human rights when making decisions.

7.1.1 The recommended action in this Report does not limit human rights.

8. COMMUNITY CONSULTATION:

- 8.1 Council completed the first stage of communications for the Hume Central Project in early 2023. The first stage of strategic communications was to ‘INFORM’ key stakeholders and community about the project and next steps.
- 8.2 The engagement activities were effective in reaching more than 270 people with an overall positive sentiment noted, including excitement about the ideas being explored by Council towards the next steps of realising the vision for Hume Central.
- 8.3 Community consultation on specific projects will continue to occur in accordance with commitments within Council’s adopted Community Engagement Policy. This will include seeking Council endorsement to provide genuine and meaningful opportunities for the community to be involved and contribute to the development of projects.
- 8.4 A comprehensive communications and engagement strategy is in place and, in accordance with the *collaborative* guiding principle, the project team has continued to engage with and inform key stakeholders as we work together toward a shared vision.
- 8.5 This is in addition to the engagement that was undertaken in relation adopted strategies such as the Hume Libraries and Learning Service Plan, Council’s Creative places, and spaces: An Arts Infrastructure Plan and the Community Infrastructure Plan.
- 8.6 Given the various projects being considered for Hume Central, we intend to start a regular newsletter (electronic and printed) to complement broader communications. Other activities include updates via social media, local pop-up events and activations to promote projects and gather community feedback.
- 8.7 A summary of the engagement plan is attached.

9. DISCUSSION:

- 9.1 Adopted by Council in 2014, the Hume Central Vision aims to transform the land around the Broadmeadows Town Hall, Global Learning Centre, and Council Offices into a vibrant and active town centre for people to visit, work, learn and connect.
- 9.2 The Hume Central precinct is an area that offers opportunities to revitalise and catalyse further investment in central Broadmeadows through higher density development and increased activity. Each site has been named as a ‘Lot’ for ease of reference (refer to Figure 1):

REPORT NO: 8.7 (cont.)

- 9.2.1 Lot A – located on the corner of Dimboola Road and Pascoe Vale Road.
 - 9.2.2 Lot C – located immediately south of Council's office.
 - 9.2.3 Lot D – fronting Tanderrum Way and adjacent to Lot C.
 - 9.2.4 Lot E – located on the corner of Tanderrum Way and Pearcedale Parade.
 - 9.2.5 Lot G – located behind Town Hall Broadmeadows
 - 9.2.6 Area F – is privately owned, tenanted by Centrelink (Services Australia) and does not form part of this project.
- 9.3 The Hume Central Project focuses on taking a great central location and transforming it into a vibrant and attractive destination for people.

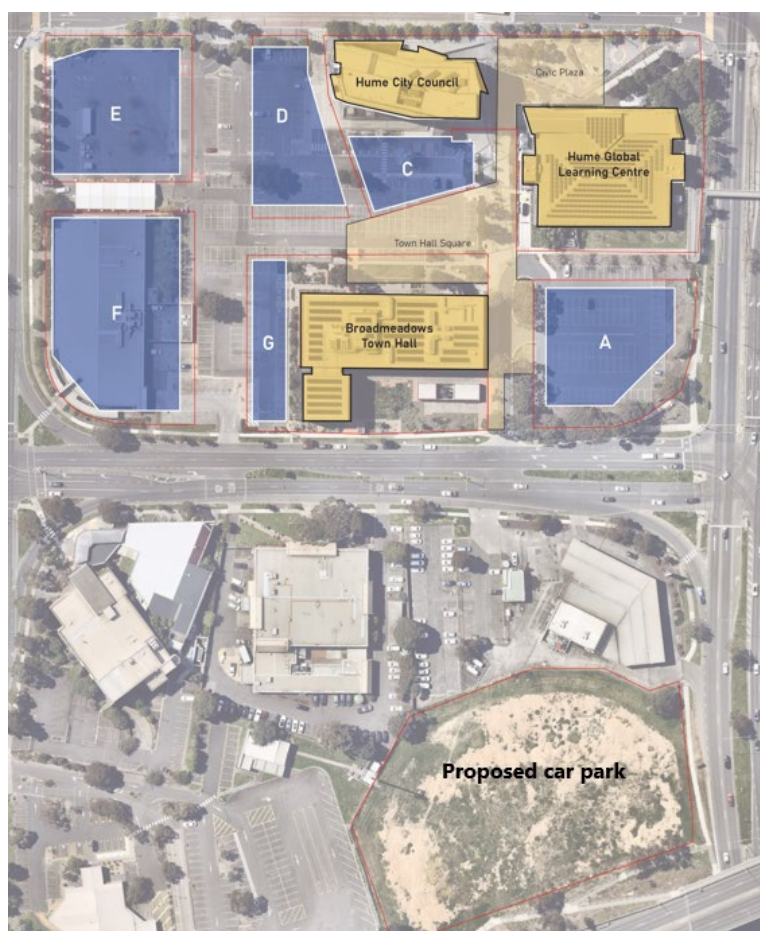


Figure 1 Hume Central sites

- 9.4 Council have been working on this project since 2014, and much has been achieved so far, including:
- 9.4.1 The \$25 million redevelopment of the Town Hall.
 - 9.4.2 Development of Civic Way and upgrade of Civic Plaza outside the Global Learning Centre and Council offices.
 - 9.4.3 Upgrades and improvements to underground services like telecommunications, sewage, and water to lay the foundations for future projects.
 - 9.4.4 Acquired land on the corner of Pascoe Vale Road and Camp Road to gradually move the car parking from the town centre to a new facility, freeing up land in Hume Central for broader uses.

REPORT NO: 8.7 (cont.)

- 9.4.5 Securing Orange Door services within the Global Learning Centre.
- 9.4.6 Activating the precinct with community events like the Hume Winter Lights Festival.
- 9.5 In April 2023, Council adopted project principles to guide and inform development of projects within the Hume Central precinct. These principles aim to create sustainable, inclusive, and collaborative development for Hume Central that benefits the whole community, promotes economic growth, and offers adaptable and connected spaces for a diverse range of uses.
- 9.6 Hume Central involves a range of different projects. For the precinct to be successful it needs a package of projects (or key moves) that work together to achieve the overall goal of creating an active, vibrant and successful town centre for Broadmeadows.
- 9.7 A range of project ideas have continued to be explored to implement the Vision for the Hume Central precinct. These projects, listed below, align closely with Council’s adopted principles for the site (see 9.5) and the community benefit that could be achieved for Hume:
- 9.7.1 A new Town Square to create a vibrant events and festival site and community gathering place.
- 9.7.2 The refurbishment of the existing Broadmeadows Hume Global Learning Centre ground floor area into the new Council Chamber and community spaces.
- 9.7.3 A mixed-use commercial development that includes quality hotel accommodation, a restaurant and office spaces to be developed on Lot E.
- 9.7.4 Activating Lot C via built form to offer additional services and spaces for the community and the Broadmeadows Hume Global Learning Centre. This aligns with the 2014 Vision for active frontages to the Town Square.
- 9.7.5 The staged development of the Broadmeadows Car Park, including pedestrian connections across Dimboola Road to support the precinct.
- 9.8 The projects are at various stages of development. Further work is required, and the project team will go through the usual rigorous project management delivery stages, including community consultation and Council decision making processes required to fulfil obligations under the Local Government Act 2020. The table below outlines the proposed further work for these projects in the coming months:

Project	Further work	Timeline
Town Square	Functional brief Procurement process for lead design services Concept plan options	2024
HGLC ground floor	Assessment of construction tender	December 2023
Lot E development	Assessment of RFP responses Progress Lot E subdivision process	Late 2023 - Early 2024
Lot C activation	Functional brief – confirmation of scope (inc need and operating assessment) Appointment of architectural services Concept design options	Mid-Late 2024 (Subject to outcomes of functional brief decision of Council)

REPORT NO: 8.7 (cont.)

Project	Further work	Timeline
Broadmeadows car park	Progress detailed design Planning permit process Operating model business case	2023 - 2024
Hume Central Advocacy, communications, and stakeholder engagement	Launch Hume Central newsletter Launch Advocacy plan Hume Central activation and events	2023-2024

- 9.9 Funding for the work on at 9.8 is in accordance with Councils adopted 2023/2024 budget. Further work on these projects does not commit Council to additional funding at this time, it simply mandates a clear vision that allows future funding decisions to be made over successive terms of Council.

10. COLLABORATION

- 10.1 A transformational project like implementation of the Hume Central Vision requires a collaborative approach. In accordance with the *collaborative* guiding principle, officers are working on an advocacy plan to help with this.
- 10.2 The Hume Central advocacy plan will lift the profile of the Hume Central Vision at a time when state and federal governments have grant programs and relevant policy considerations live.
- 10.3 For example, in its recently released Housing Statement the Victorian government has announced Broadmeadows will be one of the ten designated activity centres subject to planning controls designed to support an increase in the quality and quantity of housing in Broadmeadows.
- 10.4 A further increase in Broadmeadows population strengthens the need for the key moves to be explored in Hume Central that will support the current and growing population, including the new need for a town square and additional community spaces and services.
- 10.5 Given the timing and expected speed of the changes, it is considered important Council endorses further work on the key moves to deliver its Vision for Hume Central to inform work undertaken on Broadmeadows under the Housing Statement.

11. CONCLUSION:

- 11.1 The Hume Central Vision represents a significant effort by Council to revitalise and develop the Hume Central precinct into a dynamic and attractive destination for residents and visitors. Since its adoption in 2014, substantial progress has been made, including the redevelopment of the Town Hall, infrastructure upgrades, and the acquisition of land to facilitate future development.
- 11.2 The report outlines several key moves to progress implementation of the Vision, including the creation of a town square, refurbishment of the Global Learning Centre, mixed-use commercial development, expanded community spaces and services, and the development of a car park to service the precinct. These projects are at various stages of development and further work is needed to bring them to fruition.
- 11.3 The recommendations in this report do not commit the Council to additional funding at this time. Instead, they establish a clear vision that will guide future funding decisions over successive Council terms. Additionally, a collaborative approach and advocacy plan are being pursued to secure support and funding from state and federal governments and private sources.

Hume Central Exploring the next steps towards the vision

Summary of overarching communications and engagement schedule

(2023-2024)

Milestone	Approx Dates	Examples of Activity	Inform/ update	Engage	Activate
Key Moves for Hume Central Update on Lot E – Subdivision	Late October 2023	Stakeholder email Web update News item	x		
Chambers/ Community Space in GLC – tender awarded/ construction to start soon	Mid November 2023	Hume Central Newsletter Web update Hume e-newsletter What's on Libraries & Learning Social media Flier (for Library)	x		
Hume Central Advocacy Document	Late 2023	Hume Central Newsletter Hume e-newsletter News item/ media Web/ social media	x		
Update on car park project – planning permit application	November/ December 2023	Hume Central Newsletter Direct contact with stakeholders Web update Participate Hume Engagement activities	x	x	
Activation event Christmas in Hume Central and project update	Mid December 2023	Event/ event promotion Displays/ collateral Hume Central Newsletter Hume e-newsletter Web update/ events on web News item/ media Social media Pop-up at event for information	x		x
Update on Town Square and Community Spaces within Hume Central – design tender awarded	Early 2024	Hume Central Newsletter Web update News item	x		
Completion of Chambers/ Community Space	Early 2024	Hume Central Newsletter Contact community groups Hume e-newsletter News item/ media Web/ social media	x		

Milestone	Approx Dates	Examples of Activity	Inform/ update	Engage	Activate
Activation event Community event and official opening of Chambers and Community Spaces in the GLC	April 2024	Event/ event promotion Displays/ collateral Hume Central Newsletter Hume e-newsletter What's on Libraries & Learning Web update/ events on web News item/ media Social media Pop-up at event for information	x		x
Progress plans/ designs for Town Square and Community Spaces	Mid 2024	Hume Central Newsletter Direct contact with stakeholders Web update Participate Hume Engagement activities	x	x	
Update on Lot E Hotel Project – announce outcomes of the market process and vision for the site	Mid 2024	Hume Central Newsletter Web update Hume e-newsletter News item/ media Social media	x		

Note: This table provides indicative information only. Progress of projects are dependent on Council decisions and funding allocation. More detailed communications and engagement plans will be developed for each key milestone in response to how the various Hume Central projects progress.

REPORT NO:	8.8
REPORT TITLE:	Naming Proposal – Rhyolite Drive Reserve (Community Consultation Results)
SOURCE:	Peter Faull, Coordinator Governance Veronica Rowley, Governance Officer
DIVISION:	Finance & Governance
FILE NO:	HCC22/457
POLICY:	Place Names Policy
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE:	3.2: Deliver responsible and transparent governance, services and sustainable assets that respond to community needs
ATTACHMENT:	1. <i>Council Report 8.5 Naming Proposal: Aitken Hill Recreation Reserve (Community Consultation Results and alternative Suggestion for Name)</i>

1. SUMMARY OF REPORT:

- 1.1 At its meeting held on 24 July 2023, Council approved commencement of community consultation for a proposal to name a reserve located at 18 Rhyolite Drive Craigieburn the ‘Rhyolite Drive Reserve’.
- 1.2 This report provides Council with a summary of the results of the community consultation process and recommends that Council endorses the proposed name of ‘Rhyolite Drive Reserve’.

2. RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council:

- 2.1 **Notes the results of the community consultation on a proposal to name the reserve located at 18 Rhyolite Drive Craigieburn the ‘Rhyolite Drive Reserve’.**
- 2.2 **Endorses the proposed name of ‘Rhyolite Drive Reserve’.**
- 2.3 **If endorsed, submits the name of ‘Rhyolite Drive Reserve’ to the Registrar of Geographic Names for their consideration and approval.**
- 2.4 **Notes that the community will be advised of Council’s decision which will consist of sending correspondence to the same affected property owners and residents who originally received a consultation pack on this proposal and by placing information of Council’s website.**

3. LEGISLATIVE POWERS:

- 3.1 *Geographic Place Names Act 1998* (the Act)
- 3.2 *Naming Rules for places in Victoria – Statutory requirements for naming roads, features and localities 2022* (the Naming Rules)

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

- 4.1 If approved, the expenditure associated with this naming proposal will include administration costs and costs for signage and an unveiling event.
- 4.2 Both the costs for administration and signage, if required, will be funded from Council’s operational budget.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS:

There are no environmental sustainability implications in respect to this report.

REPORT NO: 8.8 (cont.)

6. CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION CONSIDERATIONS:

There are no climate change adaptation implications in respect of this report.

7. CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS APPLICATION:

The rights protected in the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 were considered and it was determined that no rights are engaged in this naming proposal.

8. COMMUNITY CONSULTATION:

8.1 When consulting with the community, Council officers coordinating this naming proposal followed the applicable procedures as outlined in the Naming Rules.

8.2 The consultation period for this naming proposal commenced Monday 14 August and concluded on Tuesday 12 September 2023. The activities undertaken during the consultation period were as follows:

8.2.1 consultation packs, containing a cover letter with background information, a survey and a reply-paid envelope were sent to 124 directly affected property owners and residents in the vicinity of the proposed Rhyolite Drive Reserve, being ‘immediate community’ members as defined by the Naming Rule:

8.2.2 the naming proposal was promoted on the *Participate* page of Council’s website, inviting ‘extended community’ members, as defined by the Naming Ruling to also provide their feedback on either naming proposal.

8.2.3 consultation packs were sent to the 4 residents that provided submissions for the community consultation on the previously proposed name of Aitken Hill Recreation Reserve. The packs contained a cover letter with details of the community consultation and background information, a survey, and a reply-paid envelope.

8.3 Six submissions were received for the Rhyolite Drive Reserve naming proposal, with four submissions in support of it and two objecting. As per the Naming Rule, it is assumed that all non-returned survey recipients had no objections to the naming proposal. The two submissions objecting to this naming proposal included the comments which are provided below:

	Reason
Disagree	I feel that the Hume Council should give an indigenous name to the reserve. Most of the street names and parks in Craigieburn have Anglo names, which does not do justice to the indigenous people and culture of the land. So, it is about time Hume Council showed support for the cultural heritage of the indigenous people of Victoria by giving the reserve an indigenous name.
Disagree	Name difficult to pronounce! Should stay with Aitken Hill Reserve. It is not confusing with Mt Aitken.

8.4 Objections submitted to Council must be addressed when they suggest that a naming proposal does not comply with the Naming Rules.

8.5 The objections received for this naming proposal have been assessed as follows:

Feedback	Reason
I feel that the Hume Council should give an indigenous name to the reserve. Most of the street names and parks in Craigieburn have Anglo names, which does not do justice to the indigenous people and culture of the land. So, it is about time Hume Council showed support for the cultural heritage of	The use of Traditional Owner language in the naming of roads, features and localities is encouraged, however each application must be considered on its own merit. Given the length of time that has passed since the original naming proposal was first submitted, it is recommended that council finalises this matter by endorsing the

REPORT NO: 8.8 (cont.)

Feedback	Reason
the indigenous people of Victoria by giving the reserve an indigenous name.	proposed name of Rhyolite Drive Reserve for submitting to the Registrar of Geographic Names for their consideration.
Name difficult to pronounce! Should stay with Aitken Hill Reserve. It is not confusing with Mt Aitken.	Principle K) Council acknowledges that the name Rhyolite Drive Reserve may initially appear difficult to pronounce, over time the name will become more familiar and easier to say.

8.6 Based on the assessment of the objections received, the naming proposal is not proposed to be amended following the community consultation period prior to it being presented to Council in this report for consideration.

9. DISCUSSION:

9.1 Report 8.5 (Attachment 1), which was considered by Council at its meeting held on 24 July 2023, included an analysis of the proposal to name a reserve located at 18 Rhyolite Drive Craigieburn, the ‘Rhyolite Drive Reserve’ against the General Principles contained in the Naming Rules. This same assessment is included in this report in the table below.

TABLE 1: Analysis of proposal against Principles – Proposed naming of a reserve located at 18 Rhyolite Drive Craigieburn – ‘Rhyolite Drive Reserve.’	
Principle (A) Ensuring public safety	The proposed naming of the unnamed reserve may enhance public safety by providing a more easily identified location for emergency services and visitors to the reserve
Principle (B) Recognising the public interest	The proposed name of Rhyolite Drive Reserve is viewed as having a long-term benefit for the community because it will bring certainty to the reserve name for both current and future residents. The proposed name and location does not affect any locality boundaries, and it is not envisaged that naming the park will adversely affect the local community.
Principle (C) Linking the name to the place	The proposed name of Rhyolite Drive Reserve is relevant to the local area in that this is the name of the street that the reserve’s entrance is located on, which will assist with identification of the reserve. A variation of this name (Rhyolite Recreation Reserve) was also suggested during community consultation on a name which was originally proposed for this reserve, but which is no longer being considered.
Principle (D) Ensuring names are not duplicated	A search in VICNAMES revealed no duplication of the name ‘Rhyolite Drive Reserve’ within a 15 km radius of the location.
Principle (E) Recognition and use of Traditional Owner languages	The proposed name of Rhyolite Drive Reserve does not use Traditional Owner Language.
Principle (F) Names must not discriminate or be offensive	The proposed name of Rhyolite Drive Reserve is not considered to be discriminatory or offensive in any way.

REPORT NO: 8.8 (cont.)

TABLE 1: Analysis of proposal against Principles – Proposed naming of a reserve located at 18 Rhyolite Drive Craigieburn – ‘Rhyolite Drive Reserve.’	
Principle (G) Gender equality	This Naming Principle is not applicable to the proposed name of Rhyolite Drive Reserve.
Principle (H) Dual names	This Naming Principle is not applicable to the proposed name of Rhyolite Drive Reserve.
Principle (I) Using commemorative names	This Naming Principle is not applicable to the proposed name of Rhyolite Drive Reserve.
Principle (J) Using commercial and business names	This Naming Principle is not applicable to the proposed name of Rhyolite Drive Reserve.
Principle (K) Language	This Naming Principle is not applicable to the proposed name of Rhyolite Drive Reserve.
Principle (L) Directional names to be avoided	This Naming Principle is not applicable to the proposed name of Rhyolite Drive Reserve.
Principle (M) Assigning extent to a road, feature or locality	This Naming Principle is not applicable to the proposed name of Rhyolite Drive Reserve.

9.2 Based on the assessment conducted against the general principles contained within the Naming Rules and the results of the community consultation process, it is recommended that Council endorses the proposed name of ‘Rhyolite Drive Reserve’ for the reserve located at 18 Rhyolite Drive Craigieburn and that it approves submitting this name to the Registrar for their consideration and approval.

9.3 The Naming Rules require that both the immediate and extended communities are advised of Council’s decision. This will be done by sending correspondence to the same affected property owners and residents who originally received a consultation pack on this proposal, and by placing information on Council’s website.

10. CONCLUSION:

A community consultation process on the ‘Rhyolite Drive Reserve’ naming proposal is now complete. It is recommended that Council endorses this name and submits it to the Registrar for consideration and approval.

REPORTS – OFFICERS’ REPORTS**24 JULY 2023****COUNCIL MEETING**

REPORT NO:	8.5
REPORT TITLE:	Naming Proposal: Aitken Hill Recreation Reserve (Community Consultation Results and Alternative Suggestion for Name)
SOURCE:	Chris Bradbury, Acting Manager Governance Peter Faull, Coordinator Governance Veronica Rowley, Governance Officer
DIVISION:	Finance & Governance
FILE NO:	HCC22/457
POLICY:	Place Names Policy
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE:	3.2: Deliver responsible and transparent governance, services and sustainable assets that respond to community needs
ATTACHMENT:	1. <i>Council Report 12.3 Naming Proposal - Aitken Hill Recreation Reserve and Kalkallo Recreation Reserve</i>

1. SUMMARY OF REPORT:

- 1.1 At its meeting held on 11 July 2022, Council approved commencement of community consultation for a proposal to name a reserve located at 18 Rhyolite Drive Craigieburn the Aitken Hill Recreation Reserve.
- 1.2 Community consultation for this naming proposal is now complete. Based on the feedback received during the consultation period, which is outlined in this report, it is recommended that Council:
 - 1.2.1 considers the alternative name of Rhyolite Drive Reserve for the reserve located at 18 Rhyolite Drive Craigieburn;
 - 1.2.2 approves the commencement of community consultation to seek the community's view on this alternative name.

2. RECOMMENDATION:**THAT Council:**

- 2.1 **Notes the results of community consultation on a proposal to name the reserve located at 18 Rhyolite Drive Craigieburn the Aitken Hill Recreation Reserve.**
- 2.2 **Approves the commencement of community consultation for the alternative name of Rhyolite Drive Reserve for the reserve located at 18 Rhyolite Drive Craigieburn.**

3. LEGISLATIVE POWERS:

- 3.1 Geographic Place Names Act 1998 (the Act);
- 3.2 *Naming rules for places in Victoria – Statutory requirements for Naming Roads, Features and Localities 2022* (the Naming Rules) which are given effect under the Act.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Expenditure associated with this naming proposal will include administration costs, costs for signage and the cost of an unveiling event (if held), if the proposal is approved. These costs will be funded from Council's operational budget.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS:

There are no environmental sustainability implications in respect to this report.

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24 JULY 2023

COUNCIL MEETING

REPORT NO: 8.5 (cont.)

6. CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION CONSIDERATIONS:

There are no climate change adaptation implications in respect to this report.

7. CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS APPLICATION:

The rights protected in the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* were considered and it was determined that no rights are engaged in this naming proposal.

8. COMMUNITY CONSULTATION:

8.1 When consulting with the community, Council officers coordinating this naming proposal followed the applicable procedures as outlined in the Naming Rules.

8.2 The community consultation period for the Aitken Hill Recreation Reserve naming proposal commenced on 15 August and concluded on 15 September 2022. The activities undertaken during the consultation period were as follows:

8.2.1 consultation packs, containing a cover letter with background information, a survey and a reply-paid envelope were sent to 124 directly affected property owners and residents in the vicinity of the proposed Aitken Hill Recreation Reserve, being ‘immediate community’ members as defined by the Naming Rules;

8.2.2 the naming proposal was promoted on the Participate page of Council’s website, inviting ‘extended community’ members, as defined by the Naming Rules to also provide their feedback on either naming proposal.

8.3 Four submissions were received for the Aitken Hill Recreation Reserve naming proposal, with two submissions in support of it and two objecting to it. The two submissions objecting to this naming proposal included the comments which are provided below:

	Reason
Disagree	A nearby reserve, which is nearing completion, literally just across the street Fairways Boulevard to this subject reserve, will likely have a similar name Mt Aitken Reserve (Principle D). The summit is already known by both names Mt Aitken and Aitken Hill. The word "recreation" in the proposed name may be insufficient to distinguish between the two reserves - one is for sporting and social recreation and the other is really just for social recreation. If these two reserves are really one and the same, which could well be the impression people get by similar names, then Fairways Boulevard should have major rework on it to remove the road and prioritise people travelling from one part of the reserve to the other. An alternative name "Waterview Recreation Reserve" named after a local street, may not be appropriate as that is the exact same name as a sporting field reserve 15km away in Mernda (Principle D states 5km for metropolitan urban areas and 15km for regional urban areas). I recommend the name "Rhyolite Recreation Reserve", which helps to locate the entrance on the local street. The word "rhyolite" also makes reference to the volcanic geology of the area, indirectly referencing the name Aitken Hill or Mt Aitken. The easy abbreviation "RRR" could help to promote it.
Disagree	Must be Waterview Boulevard Recreation Reserve as Aitken Hill there is never has a sign as difficult to find name.

8.4 Objections submitted to Council must be addressed when they suggest that a naming proposal does not comply with the Naming Rules.

8.5 The objections received for the Aitken Hill Recreation Reserve naming proposal are considered to establish that this name could potentially cause confusion in the community because of other existing or potential future references to Mt Aitken or Aitken Hill in feature names. In particular, the objections engage Naming Principle A (Ensuring Public Safety) and potentially Naming Principle D (Ensuring Names Are Not Duplicated). Naming Principle K (Language) may also be engaged because it states that geographic

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REPORT NO: 8.5 (cont.)

names should preferably not exceed three words. It is for these reasons that an alternative name of Rhyolite Drive Reserve is suggested for this reserve.

- 8.6 The Naming Rules require Council to reconsult with the community if it is considering an alternative name for a naming proposal. If approved by Council, community consultation on the alternative name of Rhyolite Drive Reserve would occur in the same manner as the original consultation, which would consist of:

8.6.1 consulting with the immediate community within the vicinity of the reserve located at 18 Rhyolite Drive Craigieburn by writing directly to the property owners;

8.6.2 consulting with the extended community by placing public notices in local newspapers where available and promoting the consultation via a Participate Hume page on Council’s website.

9. DISCUSSION:

- 9.1 The name Aitken Hill Recreation Reserve was originally proposed for the reserve located at 18 Rhyolite Drive Craigieburn because a community centre with the corresponding area name is co-located in proximity to the reserve. The report presented to Council on this matter is provided as Attachment 1 of this report.

- 9.2 Following community consultation and for the reasons outlined in this report, the alternative name of Rhyolite Drive Reserve is now proposed for this location. This name is proposed because of the ease of identification of the reserve for visitors or newcomers to the area, and for the name’s relevance to the local area.

- 9.3 An analysis of the proposed name of Rhyolite Drive Reserve was undertaken by Council Officers against key principles of the Naming Rules, as detailed in Table 1 below:

TABLE 1: Analysis of proposal against Principles – Proposed naming of a reserve located at 18 Rhyolite Drive Craigieburn – ‘Rhyolite Drive Reserve.’	
Principle (A) Ensuring public safety	The proposed naming of the unnamed reserve may enhance public safety by providing a more easily identified location for emergency services and visitors to the reserve
Principle (B) Recognising the public interest	The proposed name of Rhyolite Drive Reserve is viewed as having a long-term benefit for the community because it will bring certainty to the reserve name for both current and future residents. The proposed name and location does not affect any locality boundaries, and it is not envisaged that naming the park will adversely affect the local community.
Principle (C) Linking the name to the place	The proposed name of Rhyolite Drive Reserve is relevant to the local area in that this is the name of the street that the reserve’s entrance is located on, which will assist with identification of the reserve. A variation of this name (Rhyolite Recreation Reserve) was also suggested during community consultation on a name which was originally proposed for this reserve, but which is no longer being considered.
Principle (D) Ensuring names are not duplicated	A search in VICNAMES revealed no duplication of the name ‘Rhyolite Drive Reserve’ within a 15 km radius of the location.
Principle (E) Recognition and use of Traditional Owner languages	The proposed name of Rhyolite Drive Reserve does not use Traditional Owner Language.

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Principle (F) Names must not discriminate or be offensive	The proposed name of Rhyolite Drive Reserve is not considered to be discriminatory or offensive in any way.
Principle (G) Gender equality	This Naming Principle is not applicable to the proposed name of Rhyolite Drive Reserve.
Principle (H) Dual names	This Naming Principle is not applicable to the proposed name of Rhyolite Drive Reserve.
Principle (I) Using commemorative names	This Naming Principle is not applicable to the proposed name of Rhyolite Drive Reserve.
Principle (J) Using commercial and business names	This Naming Principle is not applicable to the proposed name of Rhyolite Drive Reserve.
Principle (K) Language	This Naming Principle is not applicable to the proposed name of Rhyolite Drive Reserve.
Principle (L) Directional names to be avoided	This Naming Principle is not applicable to the proposed name of Rhyolite Drive Reserve.
Principle (M) Assigning extent to a road, feature or locality	This Naming Principle is not applicable to the proposed name of Rhyolite Drive Reserve.

- 9.4 As the alternative proposed name Rhyolite Drive Reserve appears to conform to the Naming Principles contained in the Naming Rules and Council's Place Names Policy, and the name is not a duplicate of an already named feature or reserve, it is viewed as appropriate for Council to approve progression of this alternative naming proposal to the public consultation stage.
- 9.5 Should Council endorse the recommendation to proceed with this naming proposal to the public consultation stage, a report on the feedback received during public consultation will be presented to Council after that process has concluded.
- 9.6 The reason for the delay in presenting this report to Council following the conclusion of community consultation in September 2022 is because of the time required to research a suitable alternative name for proposing to Council, and because of work that was also concurrently occurring to investigate and report on other naming proposals. If the recommendations made to Council in this report are adopted, it is anticipated that this naming proposal will be concluded in 2023.

10. CONCLUSION:

It is recommended that Council approves the commencement of community consultation to seek the community's view on the alternative name of Rhyolite Drive Reserve for the reserve located at 18 Rhyolite Drive Craigieburn, for the reasons outlined in this report.

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COUNCIL MEETING

Attachment 1 - Council Report 12.3 Naming Proposal - Aitken Hill Recreation Reserve and Kalkallo Recreation Reserve

REPORTS – GOVERNANCE AND ENGAGEMENT

11 JULY 2022

ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING

REPORT NO:	12.3
REPORT TITLE:	Naming Proposals - Aitken Hill Recreation Reserve and Kalkallo Recreation Reserve
SOURCE:	Megan Kruger, Manager Governance Peter Faull, Coordinator Governance
DIVISION:	Finance & Governance
FILE NO:	HCC22/457
POLICY:	Place Names Policy
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE:	3.2: Deliver responsible and transparent governance, services and sustainable assets that respond to community needs
ATTACHMENTS:	1. <i>Naming Proposal - Aitken Hill Recreation Reserve (Aerial View)</i> 2. <i>Naming Proposal - Kalkallo Recreation Reserve (Aerial View)</i>

1. SUMMARY OF REPORT:

- 1.1 Council's Sport and Recreation team have proposed names for two officially unnamed reserves that are co-located in proximity to the Aitken Hill Community Centre and the Kalkallo Community Centre respectively. The two proposed reserve names are the Aitken Hill Recreation Reserve and the Kalkallo Recreation Reserve.
- 1.2 This report recommends that Council approves the commencement of community consultation for each of the proposed reserve names.

2. RECOMMENDATION:

- 2.1 **THAT Council approves the commencement of community consultation to ask for the community's feedback on the following two naming proposals:**
 - (a) Aitken Hill Recreation Reserve (18 Rhyolite Drive, Craigieburn);
 - (b) Kalkallo Recreation Reserve (45 Toyon Road, Kalkallo).

3. LEGISLATIVE POWERS:

- 3.1 *Geographic Place Names Act 1998* (the Act)
- 3.2 *Naming Rules for Places in Victoria – Statutory Requirements for Naming Roads, Features and Localities 2016* (the Naming Rules)

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

- 4.1 The initial costs associated with consideration of these naming proposals would be the cost of community consultation which would include a mailout to immediately effected residents, and advertisements in local papers. Future costs, should these naming proposals ultimately be approved, would be the cost of signage at each reserve.
- 4.2 All costs associated with these naming proposals would be funded through Council's operational budget.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS:

There are no environmental sustainability implications in respect to this report.

6. CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION CONSIDERATIONS:

There are no climate change adaptation implications in respect to this report.

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Attachment 1 - Council Report 12.3 Naming Proposal - Aitken Hill Recreation Reserve and Kalkallo Recreation Reserve

REPORTS – GOVERNANCE AND ENGAGEMENT

11 JULY 2022

ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING

REPORT NO: 12.3 (cont.)

7. CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS APPLICATION:

The rights protected in *The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* were considered and it was determined that no rights are engaged in this naming proposal.

8. COMMUNITY CONSULTATION:

- 8.1 In accordance with the *Naming Rules for Places in Victoria – Statutory Requirements for Naming Roads, Features and Localities – 2022* (the Naming Rules), and Hume City Council’s Place Names Policy, Council is required to consult with the community when considering applications under the *Geographic Place Names Act 1998*. The method and extent of consultation is dependent on the significance of the feature to be named.
- 8.2 It is recommended that Council consults with both directly and indirectly affected residents of the community by placing public notices in local papers and on Councils website, and by writing to the properties that border each reserve.
- 8.3 The period of public consultation would be for a minimum of 30 days.
- 8.4 Internal consultation was undertaken to seek advice from relevant Council officers. No feedback was received that would prevent the commencement of community consultation on the proposed names of Aitken Hill Recreation Reserve and Kalkallo Recreation Reserve, should community consultation be approved by Council.

9. DISCUSSION:

- 9.1 Officers in Council’s Sport and Recreation team have proposed names for two reserves, being the Aitken Hill Recreation Reserve and the Kalkallo Recreation Reserve, because community centres with the corresponding area names are co-located in proximity to each reserve.
- 9.2 The Aitken Hill Community Centre, which is located in Craigieburn, offers modern state-of-the-art facilities which include preschool rooms, maternal and child health consulting rooms, consulting rooms for visiting services, a training room, multipurpose community meeting rooms, a semi commercial kitchen, a staffed reception area, welcoming gathering space for informal meetings within the centre, a covered courtyard, immunisation sessions and free wi-fi.
- 9.3 The Kalkallo Community Centre, which is located in Kalkallo, provides a permanent space to house a broad range of services for the Kalkallo community which includes function spaces to hire casually or regularly, flexible multipurpose community meeting and function rooms, a commercial kitchen, consulting rooms, preschool rooms, maternal and child health consulting rooms, first aid training, karate classes, playgroup, yoga and prayer services.
- 9.4 Aerial views of the reserves at which these two community centres are located are provided respectively as Attachments 1 and 2 of this report.
- 9.5 The initial assessment of these two naming proposals against key General Principles contained within the Naming Rules is as follows:

Assessment Against General Principles Contained Within Naming Rules Aitken Hill Recreation Reserve and Kalkallo Recreation Reserve Naming Proposals	
Principle (A)	Comment
Ensuring public safety	<p>Aitken Hill Recreation Reserve</p> <p>The proposed name does not pose any risk to public safety, and it is not anticipated that the proposed name would cause any disruption or confusion in the local community.</p> <p>Kalkallo Recreation Reserve</p> <p>The proposed name does not pose any risk to public safety, and it is not anticipated that the proposed name</p>

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	would cause any disruption or confusion in the community.
Principle (B) Recognising the public interest	<p>Comment</p> <p>Aitken Hill Recreation Reserve</p> <p>The proposed name is viewed as having a long-term benefit for the community because it will bring certainty to the reserve name for both current and future residents, and because the proposed name corresponds with the name of the Aitken Hill Community Centre that is co-located in proximity to it. The name is not proposed because of any short-term benefits that may result from it.</p> <p>Kalkallo Recreation Reserve</p> <p>The proposed name is viewed as having a long-term benefit for the community because it will bring certainty to the reserve name for both current and future residents, and because the proposed name corresponds with the name of the Kalkallo Community Centre that is co-located in proximity to it. The name is not proposed because of any short-term benefits that may result from it.</p>
Principle (C) Linking the name to place	<p>Comment</p> <p>Aitken Hill Recreation Reserve</p> <p>The proposed name corresponds to the name of a community centre that is co-located in proximity to the reserve, being the Aitken Hill Community Centre. This is viewed as establishing a link to place.</p> <p>Kalkallo Recreation Reserve</p> <p>The proposed name corresponds to the name of a community centre that is co-located in proximity to the reserve, being the Kalkallo Community Centre. This is viewed as establishing a link to place.</p>
Principle (D) Ensuring names are not duplicated	<p>Comment</p> <p>Aitken Hill Recreation Reserve</p> <p>There are no duplications of this proposed name within the Hume municipality. There is a park named the Kathleen Aitken Park located in the suburb of Sunbury that is approximately 27 kilometres away from this location, which shares one word with the proposed reserve name, but this is not considered to be a duplication.</p> <p>Kalkallo Recreation Reserve</p> <p>There are no duplications of this proposed name within the Hume municipality.</p>
Principle (E) Names must not be discriminatory	<p>Comment</p> <p>Aitken Hill Recreation Reserve</p> <p>The proposed name is not considered to be discriminatory in any way.</p> <p>Kalkallo Recreation Reserve</p> <p>The proposed name is not considered to be discriminatory in any way.</p>

- 9.6 As the proposed names of Aitken Hill Recreation Reserve and Kalkallo Recreation Reserve have been assessed as conforming with the General Principles contained within the Naming Rules, it is viewed as appropriate for Council to approve the commencement

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of community consultation to ask for the community’s feedback on the two proposed names.

- 9.7 Should Council endorse the recommendation to commence community consultation, a report on the feedback received during the consultation periods will be presented to Council after community consultation has concluded.

10. CONCLUSION

It is recommended that Council approves the commencement of community consultation to ask for the community’s feedback on the proposed names of Aitken Hill Recreation Reserve and Kalkallo Recreation Reserve.

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Attachment 1 - Council Report 8.5 Naming Proposal: Aitken Hill Recreation Reserve (Community Consultation Results and alternative Suggestion for Name)

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Attachment 1 - Council Report 12.3 Naming Proposal - Aitken Hill Recreation Reserve and Kalkallo Recreation Reserve

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Attachment 1 - Naming Proposal - Aitken Hill Recreation Reserve (Aerial View)

AITKEN HILL RECREATION RESERVE NAMING PROPOSAL



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Attachment 1 - Naming Proposal - Aitken Hill Recreation Reserve (Aerial View)

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Attachment 1 - Council Report 12.3 Naming Proposal - Aitken Hill Recreation Reserve and Kalkallo Recreation Reserve

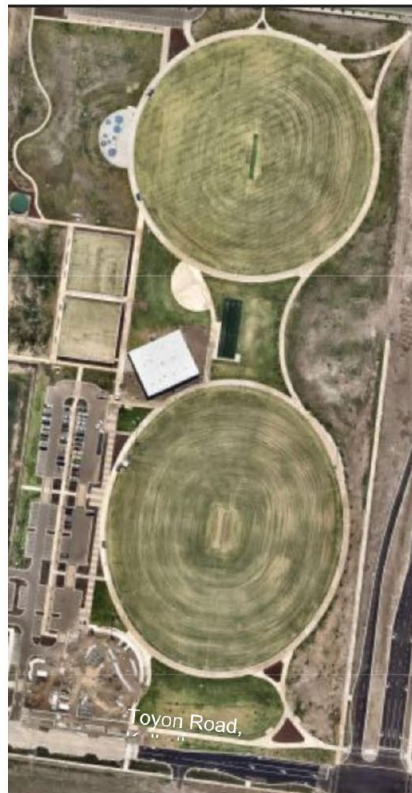
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Attachment 2 - Naming Proposal - Kalkallo Recreation Reserve (Aerial View)

KALKALLO RECREATION RESERVE NAMING PROPOSAL



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Attachment 2 - Naming Proposal - Kalkallo Recreation Reserve (Aerial View)

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REPORT NO:	9.1
REPORT TITLE:	NOM23/028 - Councillor Trevor Dance
SOURCE:	Jane Mikaele, Governance Officer
DIVISION:	Finance & Governance
FILE NO:	HCC23/688

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. RECOMMENDATION:

That all future council briefing meetings are fully recorded and kept on council record to ensure accurate records moving forward. The meeting recordings are to be made available for councillor access.

2. OFFICER COMMENTS

The purpose of Council briefings is to present opportunities for Councillors to ask questions of officers that support Councillor decision making in the Council Chamber.

Additionally, they provide opportunities for Councillors to get together and discuss items as a group or where an invitation is extended to external presenters to attend and brief Councillors on issues and projects. These external presenters may not wish/provide approval to be recorded.

Councillors may also choose not to attend future briefings should a recording be made available to them as they could watch the briefing without taking part in the important discussions/hear from these presenters.

REPORT NO: 9.1 (cont.)

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REPORT NO:	9.2
REPORT TITLE:	NOM23/029 - Councillor Trevor Dance
SOURCE:	Jane Mikaele, Governance Officer
DIVISION:	Finance & Governance
FILE NO:	HCC23/688

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. RECOMMENDATION:

That Council provide in all full financial information line by line to all councillors for all future budgets. This information will be for every single itemised line entry for all matters and presented on an excel spread sheet (Not any other file) listing exactly what each line is for and the dollar amount for each.

2. OFFICER COMMENTS

- 2.1 The practice of Council in recent years has been to provide an overall summary by division, a summary by manager and a detailed breakdown of every revenue and expenditure item by natural account. The next level down would generate in excess of 10,000 lines of information. The natural account description currently provided describes what each line is for and is the level of information Councillors have indicated they are comfortable with at the last Councillor planning weekend in November 2022.
- 2.2 Officers do not support information being provided in Excel. Providing information in Excel allows for information to be manipulated and its integrity lost. Officers propose that if the NoM is supported all information will be provided in PDF format.

REPORT NO: 9.2 (cont.)

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