

Aitken Creek Parklands Master Plan

Hume City Council
January 2024

Hume City Council recognises the rich Aboriginal heritage within the municipality and acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung, which includes the existing family members of the Gunung-Willam-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 Elders past, present and future.



This report has been prepared by Mosaic Insights Pty Ltd for Hume City Council under the contract titled 'Aitken Creek Parklands Master Plan'.

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Version: Final
Date issued: 21/01/ 2025
Issued to: Shalome Pinto, Hume City Council
Citation: Mosaic Insights, 2025, Aitken Creek Parklands Master Plan, report prepared by Mosaic Insights Pty Ltd for Hume City Council.



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1 Introduction

Aitken Creek Parklands is one of Hume's valued waterway corridors providing an important green artery through Craigieburn and connecting with Merri Creek.

Aitken Creek Parklands are located on the traditional lands of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people.

1.1 Project scope

The Aitken Creek Parklands Master Plan has been prepared to provide strategic direction for future development and improvement works along the Aitken Creek corridor that support community recreation, balanced with enhancing and protecting ecological and Aboriginal cultural heritage values.

1.2 Project objectives

The objectives of the Master Plan include to:

- Protect and enhance the ecological and cultural heritage values of the creek and improve community awareness and appreciation of those values
- Identify and address the needs and priorities of stakeholders and the community
- Maximise recreational opportunities providing a clear and holistic strategic direction for the upgrade and renewal of recreational infrastructure
- Reduce potential for antisocial behaviour using Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles
- Provide innovative accessibility improvements using relevant Australian Standards and Universal Design Principles
- Improve safety and functionality across the existing path network including at existing creek and road crossings
- Improve connection to areas and facilities including schools and activity centres, as well as to the adjoining local open space network and habitat corridors
- Consider the location and suitability of amenities, such as play spaces, picnic facilities, signage, seating, drinking fountains and shelters to allow locals to connect and socialise
- Improve climate resilience, tree canopy cover and urban biodiversity
- Provide a clear and transparent program of works and priorities for Council to seek internal and external funding to deliver the Master Plan vision.

1.3 Study area

The Aitken Creek corridor from Aitken Boulevard to the confluence with Merri Creek is the central open space spine of a well-established area of Craigieburn. The study area is part of the traditional Country of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as represented by the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation (WWCHAC). This Master Plan focusses on the eastern reach of the Aitken Creek that is most accessible to the public, and further upstream the creek plays an important conservation role.

The study area covers approximately 90 hectares and is located 24 kilometres northwest of the Melbourne CBD. The linear reserve traverses the Craigieburn Golf Course and links numerous smaller parks and reserves to Craigieburn Gardens. Access to the creek and reserve is restricted by rear fences in the residential areas with narrow and often steep cut throughs from the adjoining road network.

The study area is south of Craigieburn Road and interfaces with local and arterial roads, the Hume Highway and Craigieburn Railway Line.



Figure 1. Map of study area

1.4 Process for preparing the Master Plan

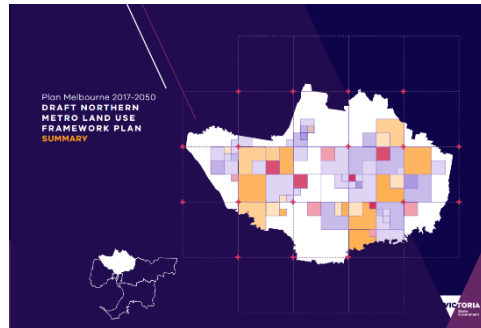
The Master Plan is based on a strategic review of current initiatives as well as existing conditions of Aitken Creek to harness opportunities and address constraints. Engagement has provided clear understanding of the needs and priorities of the community and key stakeholders and informed development of the Master Plan.



Figure 2. Process for preparing the Master Plan

2 Strategic context

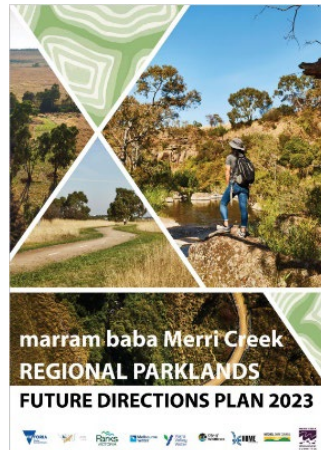
The following key state and local government policies and strategies have informed the development of the Master Plan.



Plan Melbourne 2017-2050 Draft Northern Metro Land Use Framework Plan Summary

The Draft Northern Metro Land Use Framework Plan is a 30-year strategy for action across seven local government areas – Banyule, Darebin, Hume, Moreland, Nillumbik, Whittlesea and part of Mitchell.

The Aitken Creek Parklands Master Plan supports the Framework’s objectives to foster connected, sustainable, environmentally resilient, and healthy communities.



marram baba Merri Creek Regional Parklands Future Directions Plan

The marram baba Merri Creek Regional Parklands Future Directions Plan 2023 sets out a vision, principles and strategic directions for progressive parklands establishment, protection and management to be achieved by 2050.

The Plan has been developed with the guidance of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people and reflects their ‘continued custodianship and culture, the volcanic landscape and diverse plants and animals within it, the flow of Merri Creek and confluences with Kalkallo Creek, Aitken Creek, Malcolm Creek and Curly Sedge Creek. The Plan seeks future opportunities to connect to Aitken Creek and values the escarpment shrubland at the confluence.

The Future Directions Plan is endorsed by the Parklands Partnership Group that includes Hume City Council, Whittlesea City Council, Shire of Mitchell, DEECA, Parks Victoria, Melbourne Water, Yarra Valley Water, Merri Creek Management Committee and Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation.



Melbourne Water Healthy Waterways Strategy 2018-2028

The Healthy Waterways ‘sets a long-term vision for managing the health of rivers, wetlands and estuaries in the Port Phillip and Westernport region, in order to protect and improve their value to the community’.

The Strategy is intended for State Government, Melbourne Water, Parks Victoria, local government, the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) Victoria, the Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority, other regional agencies and authorities and management partners, developers, Traditional Owners, and landholders or community groups involved in waterway management or activities that may affect waterway condition.

The Strategy’s co-designed catchment program for the Yarra Catchment identified nine key values as a representative measure of waterway values, which includes amenity, community connection, recreation, birds, fish, frogs, macroinvertebrates, platypus and vegetation. These waterway values have been explored through the Master Plan.

Upper Merri Creek IWM Plan

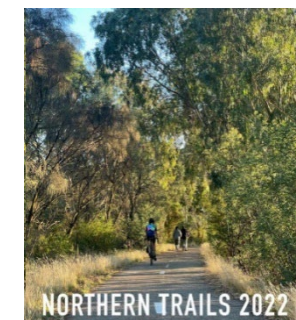


Upper Merri Creek IWM Plan

Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, Hume City Council, City of Whittlesea, Mitchell Shire Council, Yarra Valley Water, Melbourne Water and the Victorian Planning Authority worked together to develop an integrated water management plan for the Upper Merri Creek sub-catchment.

The IWM plan is piloting a new partnership approach to managing water at the catchment level. This approach supports all agencies to work together to address challenges and create positive outcomes for the local community and the environment in the Upper Merri Creek sub-catchment.

The plan outlines agreed outcomes and recommendations including increased alternative water use, supporting Traditional Owner values, mitigating flood impacts and increasing community knowledge.



Northern Trails Strategy (2022)

Aitken Creek is referenced in Northern Trails 2022, a regional strategy developed as a collaboration between Moreland, Darebin, Banyule, Hume, Whittlesea and Nillumbik Councils in Melbourne’s north. The strategy has been prepared to establish a framework for the planning and development of regional trails in Northern Melbourne for the next 10 years and beyond.

The strategy identifies existing and potential regional trails including Aitken Boulevard Shared Trail and Aitken Creek Trail.



Hume Draft Open Space Strategy

The final Open Space Strategy was released for public consultation in May-June 2024 and was received very positively by the community. The Strategy sets out a 20 year plan for open space with the following vision for:

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

The Aitken Creek Parklands Master Plan applies the Open Space Strategy guiding principles:

Protect: Protect and enhance conservation, heritage and Woi-wurrung cultural values. Protect open space from encroaching development, works, interfaces and the impacts of climate change

Optimise: Open spaces designed and maintained to provide a mix of visitor experiences in each neighbourhood

Grow: New open spaces needed in areas of high visitor and/or ecological needs, especially along waterways. This ‘grow’ principle applies to the headlands and confluence of Aitken Creek outside of the Master Plan area.

The Strategy recognises Aitken Creek Parklands as a valued regional open space asset stretching through Craigieburn from Merri Creek and linking to Highlands Lake and beyond. Strategy also recognises to “Improve connectivity and view lines from street to creek to enhance the visitor experience at Craigieburn Gardens.”

The Strategy commits to upgrading ‘nature-based’ walking and cycling experiences by creating more shared trails along:

- *Aitken Creek Parklands* – Continue investment in this regional park to provide high quality scenic and walking experiences, along with shade, seating and trails
- *Malcolm Creek Parklands* – Continue investment to provide high quality scenic and walking experiences, along with shade, seating and trails. Investigate the feasibility of linking to gravel path riding through Mt Ridley Nature Conservation Reserve.
- It is the long-term goal for habitat and trail connections to be created from Aitken Creek and Malcolm Creek to the marram baba Merri Creek Parklands.

Other Hume City Council Strategy and policy documents

Aitken Creek is identified across Council document as an important recreation and open space area for people and the environment.

- The **Land and Biodiversity Plan 2023-2030** identifies the importance of creek corridors for supporting landscape connectivity and providing habitat for a diversity of wildlife species.
- Council’s **Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025** identifies maintaining wetlands, creeks and rivers as essential to support green, interconnected and social environments.
- The **Leisure Strategy 2013-2018** notes that ‘our creek corridors with narrow, often deep valleys and major state and regional parks and path systems provide important opportunities for the community to access and experience the natural environment’.
- The **Hume Bicycle Network Plan 2015** included Aitken Creek Trail in its target project list.

3 Existing conditions

Understanding existing conditions of the study area ensures that any potential issues or challenges are identified, and opportunities harnessed. The study area includes Aitken Creek waterway and surrounding parkland, which includes open spaces, concreted shared use pathways and bridges, and sub-surface services. Portions of Aitken Creek have been modified, with channelisation, land and road bridges, and parts of the parkland/golf course constructed over the waterway. Whilst part of the creek traverses an industrial area, from the railway line to the Craigieburn Golf Course it is bounded by significant residential areas, typically 1980s-1990s curvilinear development with numerous cul-de-sacs. Study area investigations including feature surveys, Cultural Heritage Management Plans, land ownership analysis and ecological assessments have previously been undertaken and are detailed in the sections below.

3.1 Land ownership and management

Table 1 includes a list of the properties in the study area and the landowner of each property. The majority of the study area is owned by Hume City Council with just two properties owned by Melbourne Water.

Table 1. Study area property details

Property address	Landowner	Approximate area (ha)	
400 Hume Highway	Hume City Council	Whole property not included in the study area	
34 Potter Street	Hume City Council	0.51	
23 Potter Street	Melbourne Water	1.21	
25 Potter Street	Melbourne Water	0.66	
19-25 Bridgewater Road (survey completed from railway line to Hothlyn Drive in 2021)	Hume City Council	8.35	
Rear 31 Kirkbride Way	Hume City Council	0.26	
34A Bainbridge Close	Hume City Council	0.02	
59-151 Craigieburn Road (Craigieburn Gardens and Craigieburn Sports Stadium precinct.)	Hume City Council	Craigieburn Gardens: 11ha Sports Stadium precinct: 64 ha	
27 Belsay Place	Hume City Council	0.14	
15-17 Bridgewater Road	Hume City Council	0.41	
26A Bridgewater Road	Hume City Council	2.73	
9-11 Chinnock Court	Hume City Council	0.21	
27A Chinnock Court	Hume City Council	0.65	
54 Axminster Drive	Hume City Council	0.09	
40A Axminster Drive	Hume City Council	0.04	
20-24 Moonah Place	Hume City Council	2.97	
79-87 Balyang Way	Hume City Council	2.44	
6-8 Leveque Loop	Hume City Council	2.04	
361 Craigieburn Road	Hume City Council	66.4	
235-359 Craigieburn Road (Craigieburn Golf Course)	Hume City Council	Whole property not included in the study area	

The study area includes land zoned Comprehensive Development Zone (Schedule 1) (CDZ), Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ) associated with Craigieburn Public Golf Course, Urban Floodway Zone (UFZ), General Residential Zone 1 (GRZ1), Public Use Zone 6 - Local Government (PUZ6), Public Conservation and Resource Zone (PCRZ).

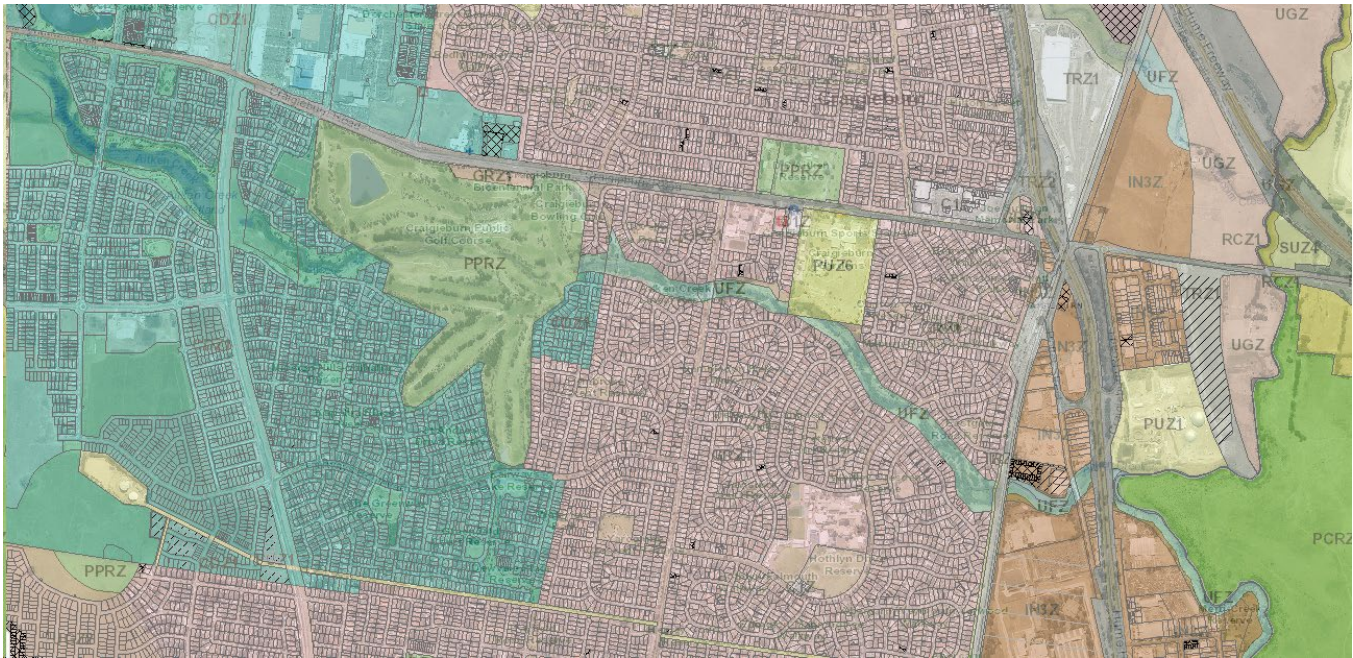


Figure 3. Planning scheme zones and ownership

Considerations for the Master Plan:

- Explore opportunities for the Council to collaborate with Melbourne Water in enhancing the management boundaries along the creek.

3.2 Cultural heritage

The Traditional Owners of the land where the study area is located are the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people represented by the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation (WWCHAC) as the Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP).

Aitken Creek and Craigieburn have a rich indigenous life, not to mention a significant history in the initial European contact. The Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung relied on the waterways for fishing, transport and food and Aitken Creek’s connection to the marram baba Merri Creek Regional Parklands is a key element of the cultural landscape.

The lands and water of Aitken Creek connect directly to the marram baba Merri Creek Regional Parklands. The name marram baba means ‘body of mother’ in the Woi-wurrung language and the diverse landscape features of Merri Creek, Aitken Creek and Malcom Creek and Kalkallo Creek including floodplains, billabongs, basalt plains, stony rises, gorges, historic trees, grasslands and grassy eucalypt woodlands represent ancestral and present-day Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country Values.

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 and the entire Aitken Creek corridor is an area of Aboriginal cultural heritage sensitivity with a range of registered Aboriginal site and places within, or in proximity to, the study area.

Ongoing Council partnership with WWCHAC is a key part of managing Aitken Creek and future implementation of Master Plan actions will be guided by ongoing consultation with them.

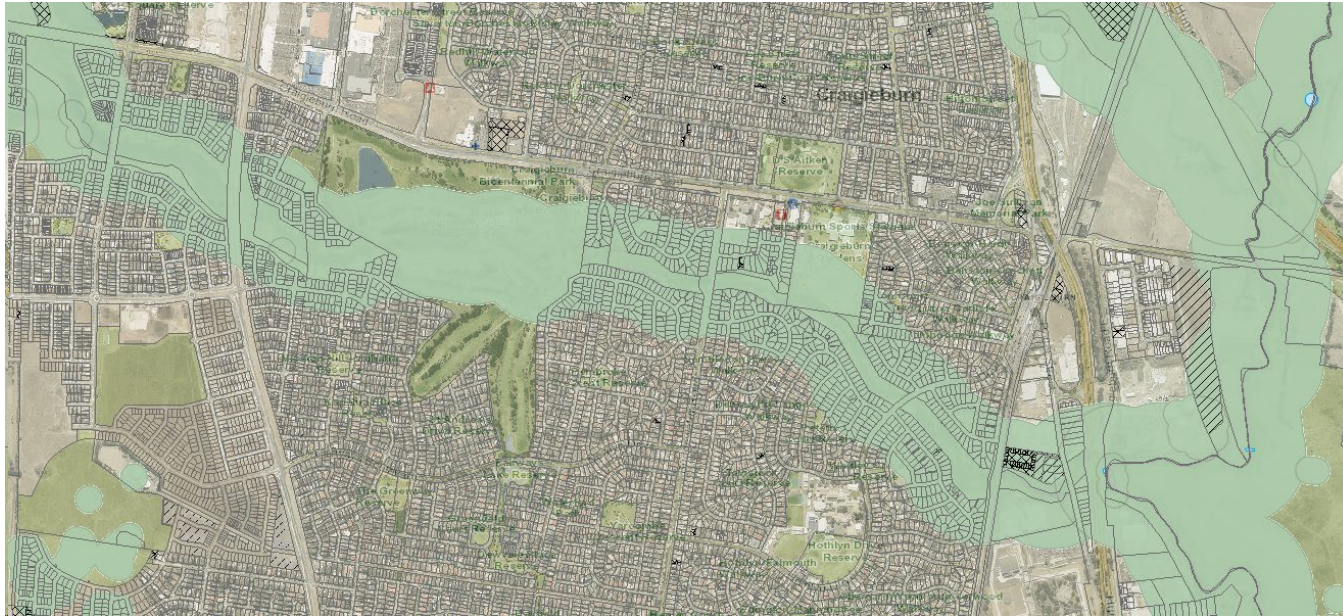


Figure 4. Areas of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Sensitivity

Considerations for the Master Plan:

- The Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung relied on the waterways for food, transport and cultural activities and the entire Aitken Creek Parklands Master Plan area is culturally significant. WWCHAC must be consulted on any works which require ground disturbance through the corridor.
- Council support WWCHAC to develop a cultural values plan for Aitken Creek and investigate interpretation and naming opportunities to increase public awareness of these values and places where appropriate.
- Council will liaise closely with WWCHAC to identify, protect and avoid/minimise impact on culturally significant areas along Aitken Creek during future low bridge and path replacement works.
- Council support direct management of culturally sensitive stony rises by WWCHAC in partnership with the Wurundjeri Narrap Ranger Team.
- The final design approach to low bridge, path replacement and any other ground disturbing works will be guided by further cultural heritage assessment and cultural heritage management plans developed in close consultation with WWCHAC as required under the Aboriginal Heritage Act and Regulations.

3.3 Geology and geomorphology

The area is characterised by Newer Volcanic Group – basalt flows (Neo) and Craigieburn Gardens is identified as Melbourne Formation. The creek corridor is incised and has been modified in some sections by filling while natural rock escarpments remain visible in other areas and stony rises areas that are culturally significant for the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people

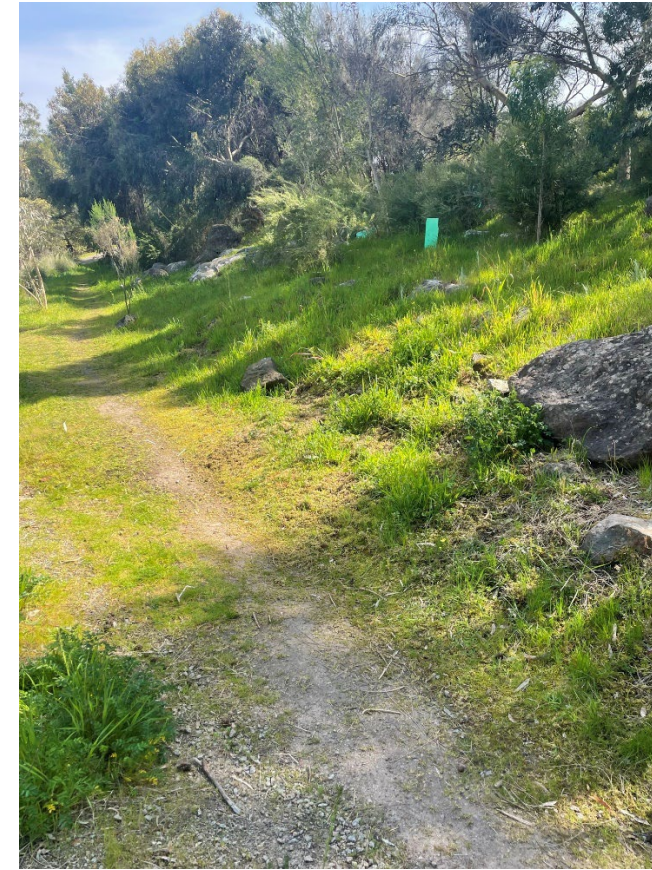


Photo 1. Trail leading to Craigieburn Gardens with rocky outcrops

Considerations for the Master Plan:

- Management of stony rises and rock escarpments in partnership with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung
- Opportunities to upgrade culverts/bridge and reduce piped sections along the creek to improve flows and habitat connection, in partnership with Melbourne Water.

3.4 Drainage and water quality

Aitken Creek is a small tributary of Merri Creek, flowing south-east from Mickleham through rural land and newly developing residential land before joining Merri Creek just west of the Hume Highway (MCMC management plan 2005).

The Aitken Creek corridor is covered by the Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (LSIO) and a small portion of the eastern part of the study area is covered by the Floodway Overlay. The Aitken Creek corridor has areas of both natural and constructed watercourse.



Photo 2. The Aitken Creek watercourse



Figure 5. Planning scheme floodway and land subject to inundation overlays

Considerations for the Master Plan

- Low bridges/ford crossings subject to flooding
- Identifying Growling Grass Frog (GGF) values places an increased emphasis on water quality and habitat outcomes
- Older drainage system does not meet best practice for pre-treatment of stormwater prior to discharge to the creek
- Large scale application of fertiliser, herbicide and pesticides at the golf course may risk water quality in the creek

3.5 Underground services

There are existing underground sewerage and water assets through the study area. There are no telecommunications or electricity networks present in the open space.

Considerations for the Master Plan:

- Works near road reserve and rail line must consider proximity to major underground services

3.6 Flora and fauna

A Flora and Fauna Assessment undertaken for the Aitken Creek Trail project in February 2021 indicated that the study area is home to remnant species of flora and fauna.

The Aitken Creek has been extensively modified during historical development however remnant Pre-1750 vegetation communities of the Victorian Volcanic Plain remain and have been supplemented by more recent revegetation. Indigenous Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVC) include:

- 175 Grassy Woodland (Critically Endangered) and 55-61 Red Gum Woodland
- 125 Plains Grassland and 68 Creek line Tussock Grassland
- 649 Stony Knoll and 895 Escarpment Shrublands
- Seasonal herbaceous wetland and Aquatic Herbfields

These remnants provide habitat for a range of rare and threatened species including Amethyst Hairstreak Butterfly (Amberfield Nature Reserve) and Growling Grass Frog (confluence with Merri Creek). Bird species including Purple Crowned Lorikeets, Spiny Checked Honeyeaters, Eastern Rosella, White necked Heron and White-browed Scrubwren also rely on indigenous vegetation along the corridor. Key environmental objectives for Aitken Creek include:

- Protect and consolidate remnant indigenous vegetation patches with planted indigenous buffer zones and linking revegetation.
- Extend indigenous overstorey tree planting and reduce mown grass in support of improved urban habitat values and to mitigate urban heat impacts.
- Advocate for Melbourne Water to continue woody and invasive weed control works along the creek bed and banks.
- Develop interpretive signage to increase community awareness of environmental values and threats along the corridor.
- Protect and enhance habitats for known threatened flora and fauna species, ensuring their conservation and long-term survival.

Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVC) are 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.

The numbers associated with the Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVCs) are unique identification codes assigned to each specific vegetation type in Victoria, Australia. These codes are used as a standardised reference in environmental planning, conservation, and ecological studies.

For example: 175 Grassy Woodland: The number 175 is the code for the "Grassy Woodland" EVC.

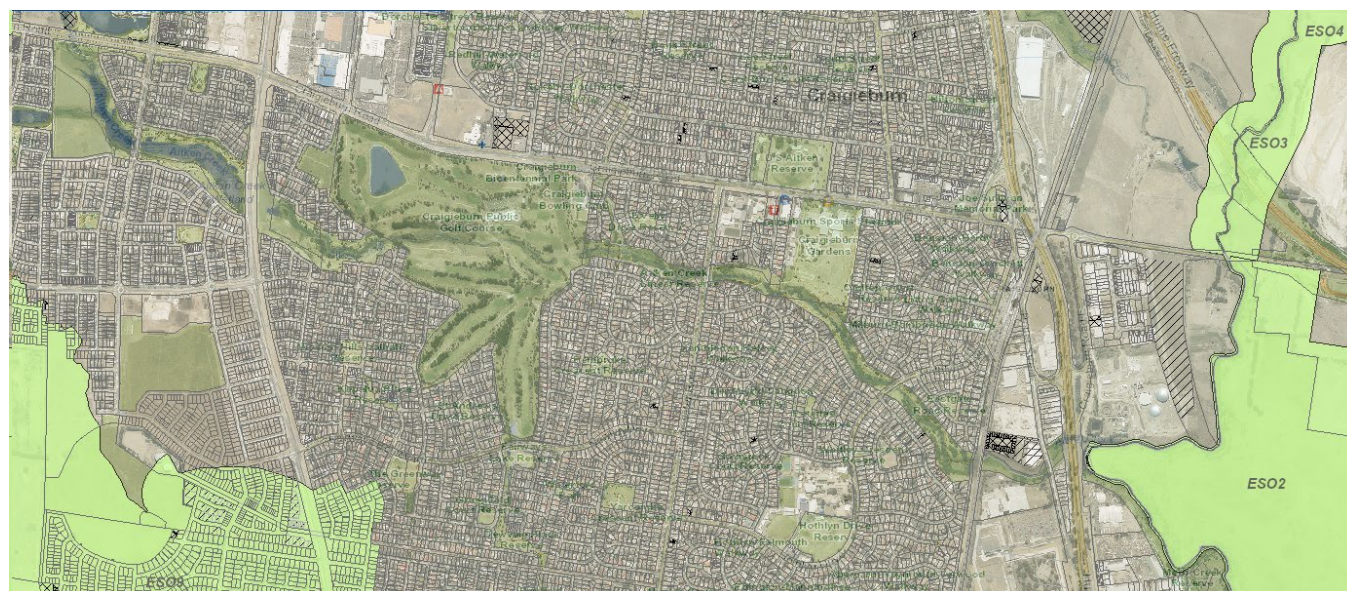


Figure 6. Planning scheme environmental overlays

Considerations for the Master Plan

- Growling Grass Frog recorded in this section of Aitken Creek and in Merri Creek. Piped sections of Aitken Creek reduce habitat connectivity
- Mature pine trees are non-indigenous/environmental weeds. Native birds, particularly birds of prey, nest in mature pine trees. Also, yellow tailed black cockatoos utilise mature pine trees. Existing pine trees provide a substantial contribution to landscape character and canopy cover on and around the golf course

3.7 Access

The majority of the path and bridge crossings were developed as part of residential development in the 1990s and the narrow open space corridor features a number of low bridges and ford crossings with steeply graded paths that do not meet contemporary path design widths, flood safety and accessible grade standards. There is currently no accessible path link from the south side of the creek to Craigieburn Gardens and the new sports stadium and shopping centre. A program of staged replacement of low bridges and upgrade of narrow and steep paths will be required to meet contemporary standards.

Current Council plans to extend the shared path from Hothlyn Drive to the Craigieburn Railway Station will increase use of the shared path but there is no designated shared trail crossing point on Aitken Boulevard, and the Hume Highway and Craigieburn Railway Line restrict community access through to Merri Creek and Craigieburn Grasslands. Extending the linear trail and other amenity improvements will also provide opportunities for new seating areas and visitor nodes to increase community connection and use of the open space corridor.

Strategic priorities are supported by,

- Aitken Creek is referenced in Northern Trails 2022 (a strategy developed in partnership by six councils in Melbourne's north); as well as Hume City Council's Walking and Cycling Strategy and Bicycle Network Plan.

- An initial project to extend the shared path from Hothlyn Drive to the Craigieburn Railway Station is currently in the detailed investigation stage and funded by the Walking and Cycling Strategy Implementation budget.
- Opportunity to connect the Aitken Creek Trail with the Aitken Boulevard Trail and the Amaroo Pipe Track identified in the Northern Trails Strategy.



Photo 4. Shared path and access point near Bridgewater Road



Photo 5. Flooding of low bridges is a regular occurrence after rainfall

- Facilities: BMX track and Craigieburn Sports Stadium adjoining the study area in Craigieburn Gardens,
- Dog off leash areas: one facility located at Aitken Creek between Hothlyn Drive and the railway at the eastern end of the study area, there is also a fenced dog park located in Craigieburn Gardens adjoining the study area.



Photo 5. Recreational infrastructure in study area

Considerations for the Master Plan

- Gaps in the existing shared path network
- Safety issues on the existing shared path - path less than 2m wide, path in poor condition, path grade exceeds gradient/curvature standards, other risks - proximity of vegetation/fencing/other obstructions
- Currently no area is secure from illegal vehicle access due to lack of secure fencing and gates
- Safety for people walking and biking at major road crossings. Accessibility issues due to steep grades and when bridges are flooded
- Safety issues on the path through the golf course in several locations

3.8 Recreation facilities

Existing recreational facilities in the study area include:

- Playgrounds (Craigieburn Gardens adjoining the study area): Leveque Loop at the western end of the study area
- Picnic facilities and furniture: some park benches next to paths, picnic tables, bins, signage
- Public toilets: toilet facilities provided in Craigieburn Gardens adjoining the study area



Photo 6. Recreational infrastructure in study area

Considerations for the Master Plan

- Wayfinding and other signage is inconsistent and/or missing along the open space corridor
- Existing play facilities are nearing the end of the useable life cycle (20 years) - Leveque Loop is 12 years old

- Lack of facilities along the creek including drinking fountains, seating, and picnic facilities
- Identify areas to support community gathering or event (via shelter, seating, toilets, water access, and power).
- Replace Exercise equipment at Craigieburn Gardens within 5 years

3.9 Craigieburn Sporting Club

The Craigieburn-Willmott Golf Course was established in 1974 and hosts more than 200 members. The popular local club includes a café/bistro and 18-hole 72 par golf course which provides high quality public access facilities for all ages and abilities and is connected to the Aitken Creek corridor via the existing shared path. Key objectives include:

- Improve public awareness of the golf course playing area and etiquette when using the existing shared path and define areas of restricted public access as required for safety.
- Improve public access to the Craigieburn Sporting Club and areas of open space along the creek which are not part of the golf course playing area.
- Retain the existing pine trees, which are an important part of the course and landscape character, while undertaking new indigenous tree planting to improve habitat values and canopy cover along the creek.
- In partnership with Melbourne Water investigate opportunities to harvest stormwater to improve water quality in the creek, enhance habitat values and reduce reliance on recycled water.



Photo 7. Third hole at Craigieburn Golf Course Image craigieburnsc.com.au/golf-club/

3.10 Amenity

Craigieburn has significant urban heat challenges, with high levels of vulnerability (Hume Urban Heat Vulnerability Analysis, 2018), and extremely low levels of urban forest canopy (around 2%). The Aitken Creek corridor has approximately 20% tree canopy and represents a significant proportion of the area's forestry.

Figure 8 represents Amenity Need Score of the Aitken Creek Parklands area, which is calculated considering health and socio-economic factors (heat vulnerability score, social disadvantage score, mental health score, physical health score) and equitable distribution factors (access to open space, 2021 population density and growth in population density from 2027 to 2032)¹.

The study area has an amenity needs score of 4, indicating a moderate to high amenity need for interventions that improve community access to high quality open space for health and wellbeing purposes.

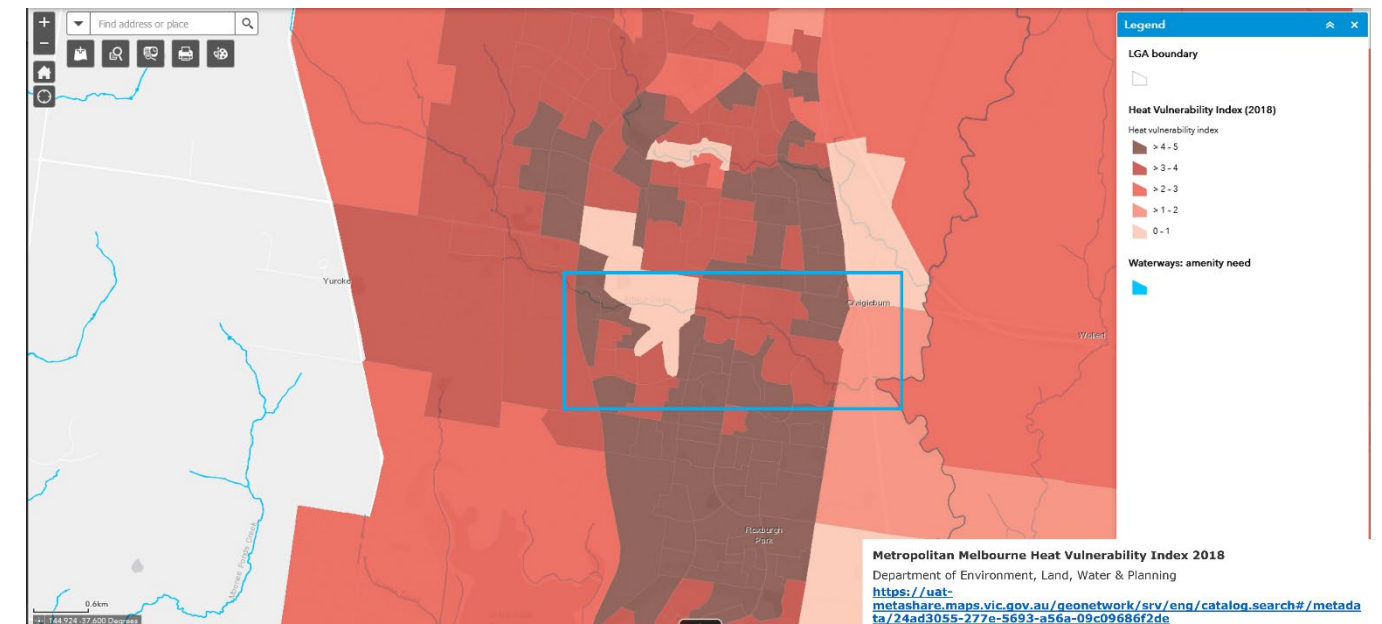


Figure 7. Heat Vulnerability Index

¹ Overall amenity need is the sum of all framework scores, categorised into quintiles and then aligned to the urban growth boundary.
Aitken Creek Parklands Master Plan

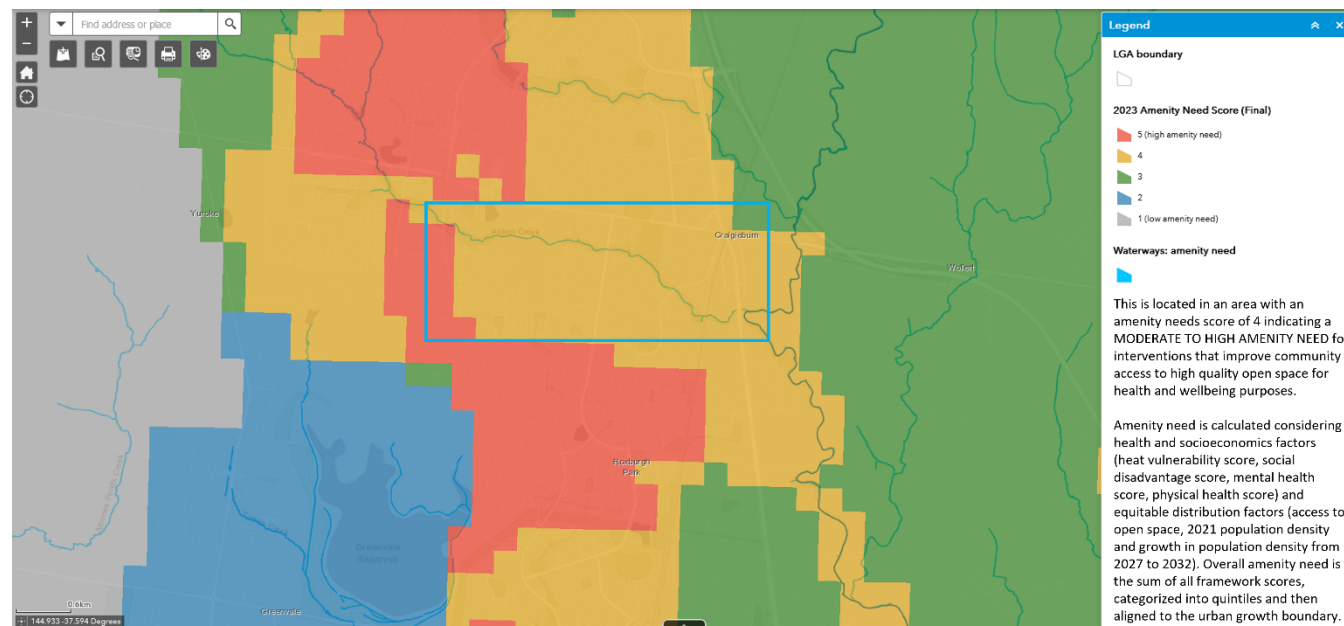


Figure 8. 2023 Amenity Need Score

Considerations for the Master Plan:

- Lack of tree planting along the creek and existing shared path within the golf course
- Large lot sizes and proximity to public transport and services will potentially see increasing development density adjoining the creek

4 Community Engagement

4.1 Community engagement

The first phase of engagement for the Master Plan invited the community to become part of the journey by informing the priorities and considerations for the Master Plan. The purpose of community engagement with the broader community was to discover how people use the area and how they would like to use it into the future. The following community engagement activities were undertaken in November 2023:

- A community pop-up event at Craigieburn Central
- A guided walk at Aitken Creek
- A community survey hosted on Hume City Council Have Your Say site, including an interactive map (further information is provided in Appendix B: Stage 2 Community Engagement Response)

The second phase included engagement with organisations such as Melbourne Water and the Craigieburn Sporting Club (December 2023) and meeting with Traditional Owners Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung (April 2024).

4.2 Melbourne Water, Craigieburn Sporting Club meeting

An onsite meeting was held with representatives from Craigieburn Sporting Club, Craigieburn Willmott Golf Club, Hume City Council and Mosaic Insights. The purpose of this meeting was to identify opportunities for improved environmental, habitat and amenity outcomes along Aitken Creek. Meeting discussion focused on:

- Suggested that Melbourne Water should remove sediment from the creek bridge culverts at the 18th hole of the golf course to reduce flood events
- Investigate drainage improvements in areas around the golf course
- Investigate opportunities for sustainable irrigation water alternatives given expected loss of recycled water following Craigieburn Road upgrade
- Support upgrade to the steep unsealed north south path across Aitken Creek to provide improved safety for golfers and maintenance vehicles and to improve public off road accessible shared path links from Aitken Creek through to the Club and Craigieburn Road
- Concern that the process that led to establishment of the existing Aitken Creek path did not involve consultation with the Sports Club and they are happy to be involved in the Aitken Creek Parklands Master Plan process
- Support additional planting and signage to improve definition of golf course playing areas and public access areas along the path



Photo 3. Walking tour and a visit by the Mayor of Hume to the pop-up event

4.3 Meeting with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation

The Traditional Owners of the land where the study area is located are the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people represented by the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation as the Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP). An onsite meeting was held with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, Heritage Insights, Hume City Council and Mosaic Insights. Ongoing partnership with the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation (WWCHAC) is a key part of managing Aitken Creek, and future implementation of masterplan actions will be guided by ongoing consultation with them. From this meeting it was established:

- The Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung relied on the waterways for food, transport and cultural activities and the entire Aitken Creek Parklands Master Plan area is culturally significant and WWCHAC must be consulted on any works which require ground disturbance through the corridor.
- Support WWCHAC to develop cultural values plan for Aitken Creek and investigate interpretation and naming opportunities to increase public awareness of these values and places where appropriate.
- Liaise closely with WWCHAC to identify, protect and avoid/minimise impact on culturally significant areas along Aitken Creek during future low bridge and path replacement works.
- Support direct management of culturally sensitive stony rises by WWCHAC in partnership with the Wurundjeri Narrap Ranger Team.

Note the design approach to low bridge, path replacement and any other ground disturbing works will be guided by further cultural heritage assessment and cultural heritage management plans developed in close consultation with WWCHAC as required under the Aboriginal Heritage Act and Regulations.

Categories	Summary of feedback reflected in Master Plan
Pathways and connectivity	Path extensions and more connections, shared use path, connectivity around major roads and barriers, new bridge crossings, improving paths, widening paths to accommodate people on foot and on bikes, enhanced accessibility
Flora and fauna	Signage with flora and fauna information, pest and weed removal, native grassland area, habitat areas, water quality improvements, deterring rubbish dumping in creek
Amenity	Regular maintenance and mowing, grassed lawn areas with flowers, provision of bins , rubbish removal, maps and distance markers, signage and more information throughout (flora and fauna), more tree canopy, improved drainage, graffiti-resistant paint finishes on bridges to facilitate easier cleaning, restricting unwanted uses (motor bikes etc)
Safety	Flooding impacting access and use of spaces, improved lighting (solar), cyclist and pedestrian safety improvements (gradient, obstructions, crossings), line-of-sight improvements from overgrown vegetation, lawn and vegetation maintenance for fire and snake hazard, passive surveillance opportunities and activation
Recreation	Park benches and tables, sheltered barbeque areas with seats tables bins toilets, outdoor fitness equipment, zipline, bocce club, soccer nets, AFL posts, cricket nets, mini golf, fishing, playground, dog bag dispensers, drinking fountains, dog off leash area, signage indicating dog on and off leash areas, new golf club facilities
Wetlands	Wetland areas with viewing platforms and signage, address drainage issues

Further details on community engagement are provided in *Appendix A: Community engagement findings*

5 Master Plan



VISION

Aitken Creek Parklands will support diverse community recreation experiences, balanced with protecting and enhancing important ecological and Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung cultural values.



CULTURAL HERITAGE

Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation (WWCHAC) are the traditional owners and Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) for the northern suburbs of Melbourne including Aitken Creek and Merri Creek. Aitken Creek and Craigieburn have a rich indigenous life, not to mention a significant history in the initial European contact. The Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung relied on the waterways for fishing, transport and food and Aitken Creeks connection to the marram baba Merri Creek Regional Parklands is a key element of the cultural landscape.

The name marram baba means 'body of mother' in the Woi-wurrung language and the diverse landscape features of Merri Creek, Aitken Creek, Malcom Creek and Kalkallo Creek including floodplains, billabongs, basalt plains, stony rises, gorges, historic trees, grasslands and grassy eucalypt woodlands represent ancestral and present-day Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country Values.

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 and the entire Aitken Creek corridor is an area of Aboriginal cultural heritage sensitivity with a range of registered Aboriginal site and places within, or in proximity to, the Master Plan study area.

Ongoing partnership with the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation (WWCHAC) is a key part of managing Aitken Creek and future implementation of masterplan actions will be guided by ongoing consultation with them.

- WWCHAC must be consulted on any works which require ground disturbance through the corridor.
- Support WWCHAC to develop a cultural values plan for Aitken Creek and investigate interpretation and naming opportunities to increase public awareness of these values and places where appropriate.
- Consult with Wurundjeri to protect sites of cultural significance and culturally sensitive areas along Aitken Creek.

RECREATION

Aitken Creek corridor provides the largest area of passive open space in Craigieburn and important links through the older areas which are not as well serviced with parks and facilities. Craigieburn Gardens, including the new sports stadium provide a range of facilities including BMX track, fenced dog off lead park, picnic, play and fitness equipment.

The existing concrete path, links to adjoining courts and older bridge and culvert crossings along Aitken Creek are steep and subject to flooding in many areas with rear facing private property to a narrow open space corridor.

Key objectives include:

- Connect the existing path network to the existing shared path network west across Aitken Boulevard to Highlands Lake and Craigieburn Central Shopping Centre.
- Extend the existing path network east to Craigieburn Railway Station and along the railway line.
- Undertake staged replacement of low lying bridges and older sections of path, focusing on higher use areas identified during community consultation.
- Improve directional signage and links to existing facilities in Craigieburn Gardens including distance markers on the path and QR codes.
- Identify additional areas to support community gatherings and events at Craigieburn Gardens.
- Provide additional informal seating, viewing and nature based play areas, fitness stations and drinking fountains along the shared path.

CRAIGIEBURN SPORTING CLUB

The popular local facility includes Craigieburn Sports Club with café/bistro and 18 hole 72 par golf course which provides high quality public access facilities for all ages and abilities and connected to the Aitken Creek corridor via the existing shared path.

Key objectives include:

- Provide additional public seating and viewing areas along the existing path while improving public awareness of the golf course playing area, safety and etiquette when using these areas.
- Retain the existing pine trees, which are an important part of the course and landscape character, while undertaking new indigenous tree planting to improve habitat values and canopy cover along the creek and define public access and golf course playing areas.
- In partnership with Melbourne water investigate opportunities to harvest stormwater to improve water quality in the creek, enhance habitat values and reduce reliance on recycled water.
- Upgrade public access path links through the golf course to Craigieburn Road.

ENVIRONMENT

The Aitken Creek has been extensively modified during historical development however remnant Pre 1750 vegetation communities of the Victorian Volcanic Plain remain and have been supplemented by more recent revegetation. Indigenous vegetation communities include:

- 175 Grassy Woodland (Critically Endangered) and 55-61 Red Gum Woodland
- 125 Plains Grassland and 68 Creekline Tussock Grassland
- 649 Stony Knoll and 895 Escarpment Shrublands
- Seasonal herbaceous wetland and Aquatic Herbfields

These remnants provide habitat for a range of rare and threatened species including Amythyst Hairstreak Butterfly (Amberfield Nature Reserve) and Growling Grass Frog (confluence with Merri Creek). Other bird species including Purple Crowned Lorikeets, Spiny Checked Honeyeaters, Eastern Rosella, White necked Heron and White-browed Scrubwren also rely on indigenous vegetation along the corridor. Key environmental objectives for Aitken Creek include:

- Protect and consolidate remnant indigenous vegetation patches with planted indigenous buffer zones and linking revegetation using locally sourced seed.
- Extend indigenous overstorey tree planting and reduce mown grass in support of improved urban habitat values and to mitigate urban heat impacts.
- Advocate for Melbourne Water to continue woody and invasive weed control works along the creek bed and banks.
- Improve habitat links between Amberfield Grasslands and Aitken creek through the golf course.
- Develop interpretive signage to increase community awareness of environmental values and threats along the corridor.
- Protect and enhance habitats for known threatened flora and fauna species, ensuring their conservation and long-term survival.

LAND MANAGEMENT

The Aitken Creek corridor, including Craigieburn Golf Course and Craigieburn Gardens are owned and managed by Hume City Council. Melbourne Water are the responsible drainage authority and directly manage the bed and banks of Aitken Creek including the Aitken Boulevard retarding basin and sections of creek reserve at Potter Street. VicTrack manage the railway reserve and Parks Victoria manages most of the marram baba (Merri Creek Parklands) east of the Hume Highway.

IMPLEMENTATION

The draft Master Plan recommendations outline actions to be prioritised over the next 10-15 years along the Aitken Creek corridor. Staging and timing for delivery of these works is subject to funding. The actions arising from the Aitken Creek Parklands Master Plan will be considered as part of future budget processes and grant applications.

DRAWING KEY

- Concrete shared path >2.5m wide
- Concrete shared path <2.5m wide (to be replaced)
- Proposed 3.0m wide shared path
- Informal path
- Existing bridge
- New replacement bridge
- New fencing
- New picnic area with tables
- New directional signage
- Public toilets
- Parking
- Existing Indigenous vegetation
- Potential wetland
- Proposed indigenous tree planting





HERITAGE

- H1** Consult with Wurundjeri to protect sites of cultural significance and culturally sensitive areas along Aitken Creek. (H)
- H2** Coordinate required cultural heritage management plans (CHMPs) for any ground disturbing works recommended in the Master Plan. (H)

ENVIRONMENT (H = High Priority, M = Medium Priority, L = Low Priority)

- E1** Collaborate with Melbourne Water to improve the interface to the Aitken Boulevard retarding basin outfall safety and amenity. (H)
- E2** Plant Indigenous trees along Aitken Creek in partnership with Melbourne Water. (L)
- E3** Investigate revegetation opportunities to expand habitat for the Amethyst Hairstreak Butterfly (listed as Endangered) into the golf course and improve habitat links from the existing grasslands to the creek. (M)
- E4** Investigate a nutrient sponge and additional indigenous tree planting between the 9th fairway and creek in conjunction with staged pine tree removal to maintain canopy cover and landscape character during transition. (M)
- E5** Continue weed control in support of overall corridor environmental values. (H)
- E6** Install new out of bounds markers and signage to the south side of the path and establish additional indigenous shade trees adjoining the 17th fairway. (H)

RECREATION

- R1** Establish a direct pedestrian/cyclist crossing at Aitken Boulevard with central refuge to link existing shared paths on the south side of the creek. (Note: Crossing will be completed with the Aitken Boulevard duplication) (H)
- R2** Extend shared path link to Aitken Boulevard on north bank and through to Craigieburn Shopping Centre. (H)
- R3** Install directional signage (with map) at Aitken Boulevard add distance markers to the existing shared. (H)
- R4** Upgrade Leveque Loop play space to include new equipment, picnic area with shelter and drinking fountain within the same playspace area (M)
- R5** Realign the shared path to the creek side of the playspace at Leveque Loop (M)
- R6** Replace narrow section of shared path west of the golf course at Albatross Close. (M)
- R7** Establish new seating area overlooking the creek on the north side of the path adjoining the 17th fairway. (H)
- R8** Install signage at the Jirrahlinga Terrace and Albatross Close access entry points to indicate the public access times in golf course area to ensure safety and protection. (M)
- R9** Install information signages near bridges and other common dumping areas highlighting the environmental impact of dumping waste and provide information on proper disposal methods. (M)

PLANNING

- P1** Encourage rear fronting properties to face onto the creek and reserve to improve passive surveillance and safety in the creek corridor in accordance with the Housing Strategy. (H)

DRAWING KEY

	Concrete shared path >2.5m wide		New fencing
	Concrete shared path <2.5m wide (to be replaced)		New picnic area with tables
Note: Pavement markings at all shared paths to clearly show the separation of lanes (for pedestrians and cyclists) as per Austroads guidelines.			New directional signage
	Proposed 3.0m wide shared path		Public toilets
	Informal path		Parking
	Existing bridge		Existing Indigenous vegetation
	New replacement bridge		Potential wetland
			Proposed indigenous tree planting

DETAIL PLAN 01- Aitken Boulevard to Craigieburn Golf Course

AITKEN CREEK PARKLANDS MASTERPLAN





PLANNING

- P1** Encourage rear fronting properties to face onto the creek and reserve to improve passive surveillance and safety in the creek corridor in accordance with the Housing Strategy. (H)

HERITAGE

- H1** Consult with Wurundjeri to protect sites of cultural significance and culturally sensitive areas along Aitken Creek. (H)
- H2** Coordinate required cultural heritage management plans (CHMPs) for any ground disturbing works recommended in the Master Plan. (H)

ENVIRONMENT (H = High Priority, M = Medium Priority, L = Low Priority)

- E3** Investigate revegetation opportunities to expand habitat for the Amethyst Hairstreak Butterfly (listed as Endangered) into the golf course and improve habitat links from the existing grasslands to the creek. (M)
- E7** Liaise with Melbourne Water to coordinate weed control along the creek and investigate opportunity to extend the pond in front of the first green to reduce the pipe length and improve habitat values. (L)
- E8** Investigate opportunity to harvest stormwater from Craigieburn Road/Craigieburn Central SC to a new storage dam reducing reliance on Class A recycled water for irrigation. (L)
- E9** Liaise with Melbourne Water to review bank stability and drain outfall water quality improvement opportunities when upgrading the Farnborough Ave bridge while retaining path links Chinnoek Ct and Clovelly Dr. (L)
- E10** Provide additional planting between water quality wetland and Clovelly Drive. (M)

RECREATION

- R9** Install information signages near bridges and other common dumping areas highlighting the environmental impact of dumping waste and provide information on proper disposal methods. (M)
- R10** Establish new ball protection fencing to the path at the rear of the 17th green. (H)
- R11** Regrade and resurface the existing cart path over Aitken Creek beside the 18th hole to improve safety for golfers and provide all ability public access to and from the Craigieburn Sporting Club and shared path on Craigieburn Road for pedestrians and cyclists. (M)
- R12** Improve path protection behind the 10th and 1st greens, replace existing old chainmesh fencing and realign and extend the shared path on Axminster Drive to improve access and safety for pedestrians and cyclists. Widen the access from Axminster Drive to enhance access and amenity, as this is a key entry point to the Aitken Creek parklands and the golf course area. (H)
- R13** Replace the existing low bridge crossing at the end of Farnborough Avenue. (H)
- R14** Establish a new path between Farnborough Ave bridge and Perron Ct on the north bank to enable bypass of the low bridge crossing upstream of Bridgewater Road when flooded. (M)
- R15** Establish new picnic tables/seating area on the creek north bank west of Bridgewater Road. (M)
- R16** Widen path and improve wayfinding signage at Bridgewater Road crossing. (M)
- R17** Install additional signage at the Axminster Drive, Chinnoek Court and Craigieburn Road access entry points to indicate the public access times in golf course area to ensure safety and protection. (M)
- R18** Install lectern style interpretive signs along trails and creek areas regarding the local grasslands, their benefits and conservation efforts. (H)

DRAWING KEY

	Concrete shared path		New fencing
	>2.5m wide		New picnic area with tables
	Concrete shared path <2.5m wide (to be replaced)		New directional signage
Note: Pavement markings at all shared paths to clearly show the separation of lanes (for pedestrians and cyclists) as per Austroads guidelines.			Public toilets
	Proposed 3.0m wide shared path		Parking
	Informal path		Existing Indigenous vegetation
	Existing bridge		Potential wetland
	New replacement bridge		Proposed indigenous tree planting





HERITAGE

- H1** Consult with Wurundjeri to protect sites of cultural significance and culturally sensitive areas along Aitken Creek. (H)
- H2** Coordinate required cultural heritage management plans (CHMPs) for any ground disturbing works recommended in the Master Plan. (H)

ENVIRONMENT

- E11** Review vegetation management along path east of Bridgewater Road to maintain sightlines for safety. Retain suitable habitat logs from thinning of senescent Wattles. (H)
- E12** Undertake additional indigenous revegetation at the southern end of Craigieburn Gardens to expand buffers to the culturally sensitive stony rise. (M)
- E13** Undertake additional indigenous shade tree planting to the southern bank along the path. (M)
- E14** Undertake additional indigenous shade tree planting to the north bank along the path. (M)

RECREATION (H = High Priority, M = Medium Priority, L = Low Priority)

- R09** Install information signages near bridges and other common dumping areas highlighting the environmental impact of dumping waste and provide information on proper disposal methods. (M)
- R18** Install lectern style interpretive signs along trails and creek areas regarding the local grasslands, their benefits, and conservation efforts. (H)
- R19** Establish informal walking track on south bank between Bridgewater Road and Falmer Place to extend the walking loop and provide an alternative access if low bridges west of Craigieburn Gardens are flooded. (H)
- R20** Upgrade shared path and signage to alert users heading west to potential flooding – allowing access out at Hothlyn Drive and flood bypass access via Langdon Crescent until low bridge is replaced. (H)
- R21** Install wayfinding signage to Craigieburn Gardens and existing toilet facilities on Aitken Creek path. Use distance markers and QR codes to improve links to information about the creek. (H)
- R22** Investigate options to improve all ability access to Craigieburn Gardens in consultation with Wurundjeri to determine the preferred approach while minimising impacts on cultural values. (M)
- R23** Upgrade narrow shared path between Penryn Place and Beckington Place to 3.0m wide. (L)
- R24** Install access gate to picnic facilities and BMX track. (H)
- R25** Investigate a new picnic area at the southern end of Craigieburn Gardens overlooking the creek. (Note: Assess landfill considerations for any new infrastructure) (L)
- R26** Upgrade and replace exercise equipment at Craigieburn Gardens and investigate opportunities for additional fitness stations and informal nature based play and seating areas along the shared path. (M)
- R27** Identify additional areas to support community gatherings and events (via new picnic shelter, seating, toilets, water access, and power) at Craigieburn Gardens. (M)
- R28** Replace the existing low bridge crossing at the end of Beckington Place. (M)
- R29** Installation of additional water refill stations and dog waste bag dispensers at Craigieburn Gardens. (M)

PLANNING

- P1** Encourage rear fronting properties to face onto the creek and reserve to improve passive surveillance and safety in the creek corridor in accordance with the Housing Strategy. (H)

DRAWING KEY

	Concrete shared path >2.5m wide		New fencing
	Concrete shared path <2.5m wide (to be replaced)		New picnic area with tables
	Proposed 3.0m wide shared path		New directional signage
	Informal path		Public toilets
	Existing bridge		Parking
	New replacement bridge		Existing Indigenous vegetation
			Potential wetland
			Proposed indigenous tree planting



CRAIGIEBURN RAILWAY STATION

HERITAGE

- H1** Consult with Wurundjeri to protect sites of cultural significance and culturally sensitive areas along Aitken Creek. (H)
- H2** Coordinate required cultural heritage management plans (CHMPs) for any ground disturbing works recommended in the Master Plan. (H)

ENVIRONMENT (H = High Priority, M = Medium Priority, L = Low Priority)

- E14** Undertake additional indigenous shade tree planting to the north bank along the path. (M)
- E15** Protect large remnant River Red Gums and undertake weed control in the eastern section of the creek. (H)
- E16** Undertake additional indigenous shade tree planting to the south bank west of the railway line. (L)
- E5** Continue weed control in support of overall corridor environmental values. (H)

RECREATION

- R09** Install information signages near bridges and other common dumping areas highlighting the environmental impact of dumping waste and provide information on proper disposal methods. (M)
- R18** Install lectern style interpretive signs along trails and creek areas regarding the local grasslands, their benefits, and conservation efforts. (H)
- R30** Extend the Aitken Creek shared path to the railway line and along the Stockton Street road reserve to Craigieburn Station. (H)
- R31** Maintain flood warning signage at existing low ford crossings. Retain for maintenance access only. (H)
- R32** Review dog off lead and install water refill stations and dog waste dispensers on south bank of Aitken Creek between railway and proposed new bridge following shared path replacement. (M)
- R33** Investigate a new pedestrian-cycle bridge providing north south access across the creek and linking a future pipe track shared path to the railway station. (M)
- R34** Extend a new 3.0m wide concrete shared path to the railway link and link to the existing track to Abercarn Avenue. (M)
- R35** Establish a new seating/picnic area overlooking the creek on the south bank (L).
- R36** Investigate new shared path access under the railway line on the south bank and extend access through to Potter Street enabling longer term connection of the Aitken Creek shared path to Merri Creek. (L)
- R37** Path access under or over the Hume Hwy to Merri Creek is currently not feasible due to the steep road embankment. If road culverts need replacing in the future consider opportunities for access via a new pedestrian/cyclist culvert to improve long term opportunities to connect Aitken Creek Parklands to marram baba. (L)

PLANNING

- P1** Encourage rear fronting properties to face onto the creek and reserve to improve passive surveillance and safety in the creek corridor in accordance with the Housing Strategy. (H)
- P2** Monitor bank stability and revegetation in accordance with development permit for industrial properties east of the railway line on the north bank. (H)

DRAWING KEY

	Concrete shared path		New fencing
	>2.5m wide		New picnic area with tables
	Concrete shared path		New directional signage
	<2.5m wide (to be replaced)		Public toilets
Note: Pavement markings at all shared paths to clearly show the separation of lanes (for pedestrians and cyclists) as per Austroads guidelines.			Parking
	Proposed 3.0m wide shared path		Existing Indigenous vegetation
	Informal path		Potential wetland
	Existing bridge		Proposed indigenous tree planting
	New replacement bridge		

DETAIL PLAN 04 - Hothlyn Drive To Railway Line

AITKEN CREEK PARKLANDS MASTERPLAN



JANUARY 2025

6 Implementation

A Master Plan provides a vision for an area identifying what is important and what it should look like and how it should function into the future. It establishes a strong and consistent direction by providing a framework for ongoing protection and improvement. It considers the interrelationship between:

- Current character and functionality of the landscape
- Public expectations and needs delivered by date
- Emerging issues and trends
- The realities of the economic, social, environmental and legislative context of the time.

The result is a plan that balances need across a range of often conflicting interests. The Master Plan does not necessarily suggest that all elements of the plan should proceed immediately, or that ratepayers and user groups should be responsible for all capital costs, in respect of those items that are progressed.

It is important to note that the intent of a Master Plan is to provide a framework for future management, use and development of the creek and open space over an extended period of time so that ad-hoc projects are avoided, and community use and long-term sustainability are maximised. To ensure this intent is achieved the masterplan will be regularly monitored to ensure the outcomes continue to meet community needs in the best possible way.

The Master Plan provides recommendation in the following key areas:

- New Capital Projects: new facilities, open space and waterway improvements
- Existing Asset Renewal: upgrade and replacement of existing facilities
- Strategy and Planning: to maximise integration with other plans and projects

The priorities are broadly identified as follows and all works are subject to funding:

- High (H) - 1 to 5 years
- Medium (M) - 6 to 10 years
- Low (L) - 11 to 15 years
- Ongoing (O) - Part of current programs

6.1 Implementation Schedule

Prepared by Mosaic Insights for Hume City Council April 2024. Note preliminary cost estimates are for planning purposes only and subject to CHMP, design and relevant authority approval.

Item	Recommendation	Cost	Responsibility	Priority
HERITAGE				
H1	Consult with Wurundjeri to protect sites of cultural significance and culturally sensitive areas along Aitken Creek.	\$100,000	HCC	High
H2	Coordinate required cultural heritage management plans (CHMPs) for any ground disturbing works recommended in the Master Plan.	\$150,000	HCC	High
		\$250,000		
ENVIRONMENT				
E1	Collaborate with Melbourne Water to improve the interface to the Aitken Boulevard retarding basin outfall safety and amenity.	\$20,000	HCC Melb Water	High
E2	Plant Indigenous trees along Aitken Creek in partnership with Melbourne Water.	\$10,000	HCC Melb Water	Low
E3	Investigate revegetation opportunities to expand habitat for the Amethyst Hairstreak Butterfly (listed as Endangered) into the golf course and improve habitat links from the existing grasslands to the creek.	\$30,000	HCC	Medium
E4	Investigate a nutrient sponge and additional indigenous tree planting between the 9th fairway and creek in conjunction with staged pine tree removal to maintain canopy cover and landscape character during transition.	\$120,000	HCC	Medium
E5	Continue weed control in support of overall corridor environmental values	\$20,000	HCC	High
E6	Install new out of bounds markers and signage to the south side of the path and establish additional indigenous shade trees adjoining the 17th fairway.	\$7,000	HCC	High
E7	Liaise with Melbourne Water to coordinate weed control along the creek and investigate opportunity to extend the pond in front of the first green to reduce the pipe length and improve habitat values.	\$250,000	Melb Water	Low
E8	Investigate opportunity to harvest stormwater from Craigieburn Road/Craigieburn Central Shopping Centre to a new storage dam, reducing reliance on Class A recycled water for irrigation.	\$525,000	HCC	Low
E9	Liaise with Melbourne Water to review bank stability and drain outfall water quality improvement opportunities when upgrading the Farnborough Ave bridge while retaining path links Chinook Ct and Clovelly Dr.	\$500,000	Melb Water	Low
E10	Provide additional planting between water quality wetland and Clovelly Drive. (M)	\$20,000	HCC	Medium
E11	Review vegetation management along the existing path east of Bridgewater Road to maintain sightlines for safety. Retain suitable habitat logs from thinning of senescent Wattles.	\$5,000	HCC	High
E12	Undertake additional indigenous revegetation at the southern end of Craigieburn Gardens to expand buffers to the culturally sensitive stony rise.	\$20,000	HCC	Medium
E13	Undertake additional indigenous shade tree planting to the southern bank along the path.	\$20,000	HCC	Medium
E14	Undertake additional indigenous shade tree planting to the north bank along the path.	\$20,000	HCC	Medium
E15	Protect large remnant River Red Gums and undertake weed control in the eastern section of the creek.	\$10,000	HCC	High
E16	Undertake additional indigenous shade tree planting to the south bank west of the railway line.	\$20,000	HCC	Low
		\$1,567,000		

Item	Recommendation	Cost	Responsibility	Priority
RECREATION				
R1	Establish a direct pedestrian/cyclist crossing at Aitken Boulevard with a central refuge to link existing shared paths on the south side of the creek. (Note: Crossing will be completed with the Aitken Boulevard duplication)	\$72,000	HCC	High
R2	Extend shared path link to Aitken Boulevard on north bank and through to Craigieburn Shopping Centre.	\$143,500	HCC	High
R3	Install directional/wayfinding signage (with map) at Aitken Boulevard and add distance markers to the existing shared.	\$5,000	HCC	High
R4	Upgrade Leveque Loop play space to include new equipment, picnic area with shelter and drinking fountain within the same playspace area.	\$450,000	HCC	Medium
R5	Realign the shared path to the creek side of the playspace at Leveque Loop.	\$35,000	HCC	Medium
R6	Replace narrow section of shared path west of the golf course at Albatross Close.	\$32,500	HCC	Medium
R7	Establish new seating area overlooking the creek on the north side of the path adjoining the 17th fairway.	\$30,000	HCC	High
R8	Install signage at the Jirrahlinga Terrace and Albatross Close access entry points to indicate the public access times in golf course area to ensure safety and protection.	\$3,000	HCC	Medium
R9	Install information signages near bridges and other common dumping areas highlighting the environmental impact of dumping waste and provide information on proper disposal methods.	\$10,000	HCC	Medium
R10	Establish new ball protection fencing to the path at the rear of the 17th green.	\$20,000	HCC	High
R11	Regrade and resurface the existing cart path over Aitken Creek beside the 18th hole to improve safety for golfers and provide all ability public access to and from the Craigieburn Sporting Club and shared path on Craigieburn Road for pedestrians and cyclists.	\$250,000	HCC	Medium
R12	Improve path protection behind the 10th and 1st greens, replace existing old chainmesh fencing and realign and extend the shared path on Axminster Drive to improve access and safety for pedestrians and cyclists. Widen the access from Axminster Drive to enhance access and amenity, as this is a key entry point to the Aitken Creek parklands and the golf course area.	\$135,000	HCC	High
R13	Replace the existing low bridge crossing at the end of Farnborough Avenue.	\$400,000	HCC	High
R14	Establish a new path between Farnborough Ave bridge and Perron Ct on the north bank to enable bypass of the low bridge crossing upstream of Bridgewater Road when flooded.	\$32,000	HCC	Medium
R15	Establish new picnic tables/seating area on the creek north bank west of Bridgewater Road.	\$15,000	HCC	Medium
R16	Widen path and improve wayfinding signage at Bridgewater Road crossing.	\$40,000	HCC	Medium
R17	Install additional signage at the Axminster Drive, Chinnock Court and Craigieburn Road access entry points to indicate the public access times in golf course area to ensure safety and protection.	\$6,000	HCC	Medium
R18	Install lectern style interpretive signs along trails and creek areas regarding the local grasslands, their benefits, and conservation efforts.	\$20,000	HCC	High
R19	Establish informal walking track on south bank between Bridgewater Road and Falmer Place to extend the walking loop and provide an alternative access if low bridges west of Craigieburn Gardens are flooded.	\$27,100	HCC	High
R20	Upgrade shared path and signage to alert users heading west to potential flooding - allowing access out at Hothlyn Drive and flood bypass access via Langdon Crescent until low bridge is replaced.	\$71,600	HCC	High
R21	Install wayfinding signage to Craigieburn Gardens and existing toilet facilities on Aitken Creek path. Use distance markers and QR codes to improve links to information about the creek.	\$25,000	HCC	High
R22	Investigate options to improve all ability access to Craigieburn Gardens in	\$400,000	HCC	Medium

	consultation with Wurundjeri to determine the preferred approach while minimising impacts on cultural values.			
R23	Upgrade narrow shared path between Penryn Place and Beckington Place to 3.0m wide.	\$85,000	HCC	Low
R24	Install access gate to picnic facilities and BMX track.	\$1,500	HCC	High
R25	New picnic area at the southern end of Craigieburn Gardens overlooking the creek. (Note: Assess landfill considerations for any new infrastructure)	\$70,000	HCC	Low
R26	Upgrade and replace exercise equipment at Craigieburn Gardens and investigate opportunities for additional fitness stations and informal nature-based play and seating areas along the shared path.	\$100,000	HCC	Medium
R27	Identify additional areas to support community gatherings and events (via new picnic shelter, seating, toilets, water access, and power) at Craigieburn Gardens.	\$500,000	HCC	Medium
R28	Replace the existing low bridge crossing at the end of Beckington Place.	\$400,000	HCC	Medium
R29	Installation of additional water refill stations and dog waste bag dispensers at Craigieburn Gardens.	\$10,000	HCC	Medium
R30	Extend the Aitken Creek shared path to the railway line and along the Stockton Street Road reserve to Craigieburn Station.	\$335,000	HCC	High
R31	Maintain flood warning signage at existing low ford crossings. Retain for maintenance access only.	\$3,200	HCC	High
R32	Review dog off lead on south bank of Aitken Creek between railway and proposed new bridge following shared path replacement.	\$1,600	HCC	High
R33	Investigate a new pedestrian-cycle bridge providing north south access across the creek and linking a future pipe track shared path to the railway station.	\$1,000,000	HCC	Medium
R34	Extend a new 3.0m wide concrete shared path to the railway link and link to the existing track to Abercarn Avenue.	\$277,500	HCC	Medium
R35	Establish a new seating/picnic area overlooking the creek on the south bank.	\$15,000	HCC	Low
R36	Investigate new shared path access under the railway line on the south bank and extend access through to Potter Street enabling longer term connection of the Aitken Creek shared path to Merri Creek.	\$30,000	HCC	Low
R37	Path access under or over the Hume Hwy to Merri Creek is currently not feasible due to the steep road embankment. If road culverts need replacing in the future, consider opportunities for access via a new pedestrian/cyclist culvert to improve long term opportunities to connect Aitken Creek Parklands to marram baba. (L)	N/C	DTP	Low
		\$5,041,500		
PLANNING				
P1	Encourage rear fronting properties to face onto the creek and reserve to improve passive surveillance and safety in the creek corridor in accordance with the Housing Strategy.	N/C	HCC Planning	High
P2	Monitor bank stability and revegetation in accordance with development permit for industrial properties east of the railway line on the north bank.	N/C	HCC Planning	High

Subtotal \$6,858,500
Contingency (10%) \$685,850
Total Aitken Creek Parklands Master Plan
\$7,544,350

Appendix A: Stage 1 Community engagement findings

This section covers the community engagement findings from the stage 1 community engagement that informed the development of the draft Master Plan.

Community feedback

Approximately 30 people were engaged at the pop-up and 12 people participated in the guided walk. In total 56 comments were recorded and feedback from across the two activities included:

- More seats along the path and lighting for safety
- Safe crossing option for Aitken Boulevard
- Increased wayfinding within Aitken Creek
- Keeping Aitken Creek tidier such as trash cleanup, formal plantings, increased maintenance
- Widening the paths along the creek to facilitate multiple users
- Inundation near Clovelly Drive and how to manage it
- Dogs - providing more poop bags and concerns over the off-lead areas
- Maintaining the Memorial for Friends Group near the bottom of Craigieburn Gardens

The community survey received 28 responses from community members with 22 complete and 6 partial completions, including 3 which answered none of the questions. When asked what people love about Aitken Creek, a large proportion of the respondents noted the connection to nature (13 or 65%). The opportunity to see wildlife and the fact that Aitken Creek provides habitat for wildlife was also noted by many of the respondents (eight or 40%).

Respondents were asked to note whether they have seen any native animal and/or plants that can be found in or around the Aitken Creek area. Of the 11 respondents (39.3%) that had seen native species in Aitken Creek, respondents listed kangaroos, a variety of different bird species, gum trees, snakes, bugs, rakali, possums, flying foxes, eels and a variety of fish species.

The majority of respondents noted it would take them 10 minutes or less to walk to Aitken Creek (59.3%). The most common response for people’s use of Aitken Creek was for exercise such as running or walking (18 or 64.3%) (Figure). Other popular uses of Aitken Creek for respondents included dog walking (11 or 39.3%), experiencing or immersing in nature (10 or 35.7%), visiting nearby parks (9 or 32.1%), and using bridges to cross creeks (9 or 32.1%). Five respondents selected ‘other’ and listed bike riding and rollerblading with children, active transport (cycling) and recreation, walking cats, helping to destress, and fishing.

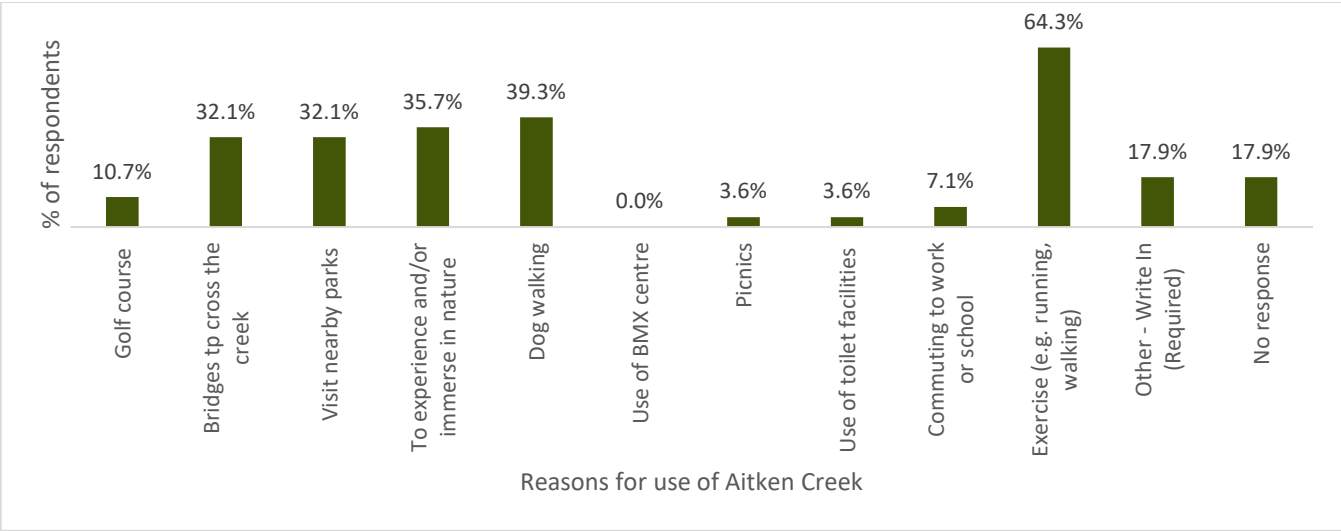


Figure 9. Uses of Aitken Creek

When asked about any improvements that could be made to Aitken Creek to help people use the space more often, a quarter of respondents (7 or 25%) noted that nothing currently prevents them from using Aitken Creek. Of respondents that noted suggestions, most believed the type and quality of paths (e.g. surface, slope, width) could be improved (11 or 39.3%), followed by improving connection with other areas (9 or 32.1%), and improving safety (8 or 28.6%). Other suggestions/considerations for improvements noted by 18 respondents included:

- Improved maintenance, particularly regarding management of rubbish
- Improving fishing areas
- Improvements to path surfaces
- Safety improvements such as road crossing and lighting
- Connectivity with other areas
- Signs providing history and facts about the environment
- BBQ and picnic areas
- Nature play park and provision of activities for children such as story time
- Improvements to toilet facilities
- Herbal plant and flower planting.

As part of the online engagement, feedback could also be provided via an interactive map. Participants could "drop a pin" to indicate the location of their suggestions or concerns or "like" other participants' pin comments. The interactive map had a total of 220 pin comments from 28 participants (with one individual contributing 131 pins) across 33 themes. Feedback focused on enhancing connectivity and accessibility, improving environmental management and safety, and expanding amenities and recreational facilities along the Aitken Creek Parklands Corridor.

Appendix B: Stage 2 Community engagement response

This section covers the summary of community response to the displayed draft Master Plan.

In November 2023 community and stakeholders were engaged to help develop a draft Master Plan for the Aitken Creek corridor in Craigieburn.

Feedback received from the community, key stakeholders and Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Traditional Owners helped shape the draft Master Plan, which will guide improvements that support walking and cycling, exercise, connection to nature and safety, as well as enhance and protect ecological and Aboriginal Cultural Heritage values.

The four main opportunities in the draft Master Plan were:

- Better waterway management and flooding
- Improve the path network including
- Managing safe community access to the golf course
- Protect where Aitken Creek meets Merri Creek

Community consultation was undertaken to find out what community loved about the draft Master Plan and what they felt had been missed.

Summary of engagement activities

A Facebook post on 27 June 2024 attracted 15 likes, 7 comments and 3 shares. None of the comments were on-topic and will not be included in this report.

Two pop-up in-person engagements were held at Craigieburn Central. One was on Wednesday 3 July between 11:00am and 1:00pm and the other was on Saturday 13 July between 10:00am and 1:00pm.

A Participate consultation page was available 19 June to 19 July 2024. The community could give feedback by filling out the Visioner tool on the consultation platform. Feedback could also be given by emailing a dedicated account or phoning a council officer.

All information was managed in accordance with the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic).

A total of 47 comments were made by the 32 respondents. Thirteen were about what people loved about the draft Master Plan, 33 were about what people felt was missing. Thirty-one respondents used the online platform, and one respondent gave feedback via email.

The 13 comments about **what people loved about the draft Master Plan were,**

- Pathway amenities such as seatings, dog bag dispensers, water refill stations, bicycle stations
- Biodiversity protection measures and actions
- Pathways through the golf course and connecting to railway station was found useful
- Upgradation of playground facilities
- Direct pedestrian crossing at Aitken Boulevard
- Proposed new bridges
- New plantings and canopy

Overall, people were positive about the planned improvements and acknowledgement of issues they have experienced and the improved walkability and connection to the surrounding areas.

The table below provides a summary of the key issues identified from the 33 comments on what people felt was missing in the draft Master Plan.

Table 2. Summary of Issues identified from 33 comments on what people felt was missing in the draft Master Plan

Community feedback and suggestions	Master Plan reference and explanation	Response
1. Dog off leash area Community concerns about dog poo littering along the paths and restricting off-leash policies. There were suggestions to install rubbish bins, dog waste bag dispensers and water refill stations. People expressed their safety concerns over managing the dog-off lead areas behind Jirrahlinga Terrace. There is a strong suggestion push to managing the dog off lead area between Hothlyn Drive and Railway line.	There is an existing fenced dog off lead park in Craigieburn Gardens. The area between Hothlyn drive and Railway line is dog off lead however the extension of the new shared trail to the railway station via the north bank will mean that this side of the creek will need to become dog on lead as there is not sufficient room for dogs to run free without impacting shared path users on the narrow bank. The Action R32 Detail Plan 04 indicates that the existing dog off lead area on south bank between Hothlyn Drive and Railway line will remain dog off lead. There is no plan for a dog off lead area in the golf course.	No change to plan There is not sufficient space along the creek to expand dog off lead areas without impacting shared path users. Provision of additional dog off lead areas in the golf course is not supported due to potential impact on the course and safety concerns associated with dogs running free in this area. Added action R29 and 32 for installation of additional water refill stations and dog waste bag dispensers at Craigieburn Gardens and between Hothlyn Drive to Railway line to support existing dog off lead use in these areas.
2. Lighting and safety Community raised safety concerns due to the lack of lighting on the pathways from Bridgewater Road to the dog park and railway station. There were also suggestions for additional lighting at the BMX track in Craigieburn Gardens. Some respondents who identified as women indicated that they feel unsafe walking through the pathways along the creek without lighting and suggested provision of lighting on both banks to enhance safety and accessibility during all seasons and times day.	The masterplan actions have prioritised vegetation management along the existing paths to maintain sightlines for safety and also encouraging rear fronting properties to face onto the creek and reserve to improve passive surveillance and safety in the creek corridor in accordance with the Housing Strategy. There is currently no provision for increased lighting along the Aitken Creek path in the Master Plan due to the high cost and potential impacts on wildlife in the creek.	No change to plan Longer term provision of lighting along the Aitken Creek path will increase use and improve safety with areas closer to the railway station to be considered in the future with key considerations to connections in the area. Increased lighting at Craigieburn Gardens BMX track is not supported to avoid increased public risk and potential vandalism associated with after hours and evening use at this location.

3. Signage The community suggested clear demarcation and signage on shared pathways for pedestrian and cyclist harmony and additional barriers to deter trail bike use. Concerns were raised about people dumping large hard waste into the creek and some suggested placing signs near bridges to educate on proper disposal options and to prevent bicycle abandonment and hard waste dumping into the creek. Other suggestions were to include additional signage at the golf course areas clearly displaying the golf playing times and non-golf playing times. Some respondents also mentioned the safety issues for the public during golf playing times.	One of the key environmental objectives of the Aitken Creek Parklands Master Plan is to develop interpretive signage to increase community awareness of environmental values and threats along the corridor. Directional or wayfinding signages are proposed at Aitken Boulevard, Bridgewater Road, Craigieburn Garden areas. Action R21 proposes to use distance markers and QR codes to improve links to information about the creek. Action R31 is to maintain flood warning signage at existing low ford crossings.	As part of proposed shared path upgrades use pavement markings at all shared paths to clearly show the separation of lanes (for cyclist and pedestrians), with symbols as per Austroads Guidelines. Add information signage near bridges and other common dumping areas. The signs should highlight the negative environmental impact of dumping waste and provide information on proper disposal methods. (Action R09) Install additional signage to indicate the public access times for the golf course area to ensure safety and protection. Install signage at the following access entry point. (Action R08 and R17) Axminster Drive access entry point Chinnock court Albatross Close Craigieburn Road Jirrahlinga Terrace
4. Access from Axminster Drive People suggested that action R10 should be made a high priority due to the broken chain-mesh fence in several areas, the hazardous uneven footpath, and the need to widen the access gate from Axminster Drive to the golf course for better accessibility.	Reference: Detail Plan 02 - Action R12. Action R12 for recreation is a medium-priority action aimed at improving path protection behind the 10th and 1st greens, replacing the old chain mesh fencing, and realigning and extending the shared path on Axminster Drive to enhance access and pedestrian safety.	Revise R12 as a high-priority action. Widen the access from Axminster Drive to enhance access and amenity, as this is a key entry point to the Aitken Creek parklands and the golf course.
5. Weed control and education It was suggested that weed control efforts be extended to most areas around the creek. Additionally, the council should provide education on endemic grasslands to help community members better	It is one of the key environmental objectives for the Aitken Creek is to support Melbourne Water to continue woody and invasive weed control works along the creek bed and banks. It is	No change to plan Weed control along the creek is a priority for both Melbourne Water and Hume City Council Install additional informational interpretive signs along trails and creek areas regarding the

understand and appreciate their local environment. Coordination and consistency of maintenance of planted areas, bridges, waterway and rubbish collection.	already mentioned in the Master Plan actions E5, E7 and E14. Action R21 proposes to add QR codes to improve links and information about the Creek.	local grasslands, their benefits, and conservation efforts. (Action 18)
6. Access from Farnborough Avenue connecting Chinnock Court, Clovelly Drive and Craigieburn Road It was suggested that the high priority action R11, to replace the existing low bridge crossing at the end of Farnborough Avenue, should align at an angle and connect directly to Chinnock Court. Other suggestions included creating a trail or pathway from Farnborough Avenue, connecting Chinnock Court to Craigieburn Road through the golf course, between the Craigieburn Bowling Club and the second hole. Proposed (E9) wetlands should be moved eastward and closer to the creek, where the actual creek tributary runs.	Replacement of the bridge is a high priority and proposed works include a link to Chinnock Court. Final location of the bridge and wetlands is subject to detailed design.	No change to plan Replacement of the bridge is a high priority and will consider options to establish a water quality treatment wetland New path access west from Chinnock Court through the golf course behind the Bowls Club is not supported due to potential risk of balls hit from the second tee.
7. Connecting links to other destinations There were suggestions to extend the bicycle and walking path connecting Aitken Creek to the Sikh temple on Hume Highway, as hundreds of people visit there every weekend. Other suggestions were to extend the shared path that currently ends at Desna Place, Roxburgh Park, so it continues to Craigieburn Station along the train line.	Extension of the shared path along the railway line to Desna place is a medium priority action. The Sri Guru Singh Sabha Temple at 344 Hume Hwy is located on the eastern side at Rushwood Drive. The Master Plan recommends future extension of the Aitken Creek shared path under the railway line and through to Potter Street. Completion of this link will enable off road connection to the temple however the cost and complexity of achieving this link under the railway line will mean it remains longer term priority after connection to the station is achieved.	No change to plan

8. Access to Aitken Creek via Hothlyn Drive from North side People suggested that there needs to be accessible pathways to Creek from the Hothlyn Drive near to the Kirkbridge Way as it currently accessed through stairs.	The current access from Hothlyn Drive to Aitken Creek on the western side is via stairs. There is an existing ramp to the creek on the eastern side.	No change to plan It is not possible to achieve ramp access on the western side of Hothlyn Drive without impacting flood levels on the creek and at the bridge underpass. Improving signage to the existing ramp on the eastern side is already a recommendation.
9. Landscape People suggested adding several landscape amenities throughout Aitken Creek parklands, including: - Landscaping and artwork installation under Hothlyn Bridge. - Benches and sheltered seating areas along the creek path for families. - Extending the children's play area with additional play equipment around Craigieburn Gardens and Bridgewater Road.	These suggestions are already incorporated through actions R35, R24, R25, R15 and R7 by providing additional seating areas and picnic areas along the south and north bank of the Aitken Creek.	No change to plan
10. Protecting the biodiversity value of Golf course area People have raised that the higher biodiversity value of the Golf course area and a decrease in human activity in the evening during the dark periods, with mature trees and minimal dog and cats sharing the area would gain positive results for the biodiversity and wildlife habitats. Suggestions included, Areas not to be used by public. For example, greens and fairways Clearly defined social areas away from golf playing areas	Action E3 is it to investigate opportunities to expand habitat for Amethyst Hairstreak butterfly into the gold course and improve habitat links from the existing grasslands to the creek. Action E4 also investigates a nutrient sponge and additional indigenous tree plantings in the golf course area. Additional changes for the golf course area in the Master Plan are already recommended in Issue no.3 to install signages to indicate the public access times for the golf course area to ensure safety and protection.	No change plan

Other Comments		
11. An additional bridge is required and can have a path leading to the southeastern corner of Craigieburn Gardens	Replacing existing low bridges and improving critical path links is the current priority and there is not sufficient funding to consider new bridges aside from the priority link at the railway line to improve access to Craigieburn station	No change to plan
12. Convert current BMX track into a pump track	The BMX track is well used and there is no evidence that changing to a pump track will increase use at this point.	No change to plan
13. There are feral cats in the area that need to be managed to avoid killing the wildlife.	Feral and domestic cats remain a high threat to urban wildlife. . Feral cats are a problem for many LGAs and it starts with responsible pet ownership. This needs to be investigated on a broader scale.	No change to plan
14. Walkthrough at Hexham Ct Craigieburn, shared path over creek to join up with original north side path	R35 proposed a path link on the south side of the creek which will connect to Hexham Ct and a future bridge over the creek closer to the railway line.	No change to plan
15. Please also develop Malcolm Creek Linear Park. You have only developed Creekwood Drive side not the Malcolm Creek Parade side. Thanks. Area on other side of Craigieburn Road had not been included. (Area between Creek bridge Street, Echelon Street, Peninsula Crescent and Cascade Terrace.	These areas are not part of the Master Plan study area and are further considered in Hume City Council's Open Space Strategy	No change to plan