



Agenda

Council Meeting

6.30pm, Tuesday 18 July 2023

Richmond Town Hall

Council Meetings

Council Meetings are public forums where Councillors come together to meet as a Council and make decisions about important, strategic and other matters. The Mayor presides over all Council Meetings, and they are conducted in accordance with the City of Yarra Governance Rules.

Council meetings are decision-making forums and only Councillors have a formal role. However, Council is committed to transparent governance and to ensuring that any person whose rights will be directly affected by a decision of Council is entitled to communicate their views and have their interests considered before the decision is made.

Question Time

Yarra City Council welcomes questions from members of the community.

Registration

To ask a question, you will need to register and provide your question by 6.30pm on the day before the meeting. Late registrations cannot be accepted, and you will be unable to address the meeting without registration.

Asking your question

During Question Time, the Mayor will invite everyone who has registered to ask their question. When your turn comes, come forward to the microphone and:

- state your name;
- direct your question to the Mayor;
- don't raise operational matters that have not been previously raised with the organisation;
- don't ask questions about matter listed on tonight's agenda
- don't engage in debate;
- if speaking on behalf of a group, explain the nature of the group and how you are able to speak on their behalf.

You will be provided a maximum of three minutes to ask your question, but do not need to use all of this time.

Comments not allowed

When you are addressing the meeting, don't ask a question or make comments which:

- relate to a matter that is being considered by Council at this meeting;
- relate to something outside the powers of the Council;
- are defamatory, indecent, abusive, offensive, irrelevant, trivial or objectionable;
- deal with a subject matter already answered;
- are aimed at embarrassing a Councillor or a member of Council staff;
- include or relate to confidential information; or
- relate to something that is subject to legal proceedings.

Addressing the Council

An opportunity exists to make your views known about a matter that is listed on the agenda for this meeting by addressing the Council directly before a decision is made.

Registration

To ask address Council, you will need to register by 6.30pm on the day before the meeting. Late registrations cannot be accepted, and you will be unable to address the meeting without registration.

Addressing the Council

Before each item is considered by the Council, the Mayor will invite everyone who has registered in relation to that item to address the Council. When your turn comes, come forward to the microphone and:

- state your name;
- direct your statement to the Mayor;
- confine your submission to the subject being considered;
- avoid repeating previous submitters;
- don't ask questions or seek comments from Councillors or others; and
- if speaking on behalf of a group, explain the nature of the group and how you are able to speak on their behalf.

You will be provided a maximum of three minutes to speak, but do not need to use all of this time.

Comments not allowed

When you are addressing the meeting, don't make any comments which:

- relate to something other than the matter being considered by the Council;
- are defamatory, indecent, abusive, offensive, irrelevant, trivial or objectionable;
- are aimed at embarrassing a Councillor or a member of Council staff;
- include or relate to confidential information; or
- relate to something that is subject to legal proceedings.

Arrangements to ensure our meetings are accessible to the public

Council meetings are held on the first floor at Richmond Town Hall. Access to the building is available either by the stairs, or via a ramp and lift. Seating is provided to watch the meeting, and the room is wheelchair accessible. Accessible toilet facilities are available. Speakers at the meeting are invited to stand at a lectern to address the Council, and all participants are amplified via an audio system. Meetings are conducted in English.

If you are unable to participate in this environment, we can make arrangements to accommodate you if sufficient notice is given. Some examples of adjustments are:

- a translator in your language
- the presence of an Auslan interpreter
- loan of a portable hearing loop
- reconfiguring the room to facilitate access
- modification of meeting rules to allow you to participate more easily

Recording and Publication of Meetings

A recording is made of all public Council Meetings and then published on Council's website. By participating in proceedings (including during Question Time or in making a submission regarding an item before Council), you agree to this publication. You should be aware that any private information volunteered by you during your participation in a meeting is subject to recording and publication.

Order of business

1. **Acknowledgement of Country**
2. **Attendance, apologies and requests for leave of absence**
3. **Announcements**
4. **Declarations of conflict of interest**
5. **Confirmation of minutes**
6. **Question time**
7. **Council business reports**
8. **Notices of motion**
9. **Petitions and joint letters**
10. **Questions without notice**
11. **Delegates' reports**
12. **General business**
13. **Urgent business**
14. **Confidential business reports**

1. Acknowledgment of Country

“Yarra City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people as the Traditional Owners and true sovereigns of the land now known as Yarra.

We acknowledge their creator spirit Bunjil, their ancestors and their Elders.

We acknowledge the strength and resilience of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung, who have never ceded sovereignty and retain their strong connections to family, clan and country despite the impacts of European invasion.

We also acknowledge the significant contributions made by other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to life in Yarra.

We pay our respects to Elders from all nations here today—and to their Elders past, present and future.”

2. Attendance, apologies and requests for leave of absence

Attendance

Councillors

- Cr Claudia Nguyen Mayor
- Cr Edward Crossland Deputy Mayor
- Cr Michael Glynatsis Councillor
- Cr Stephen Jolly Councillor
- Cr Herschel Landes Councillor
- Cr Anab Mohamud Councillor
- Cr Bridgid O’Brien Councillor
- Cr Amanda Stone Councillor
- Cr Sophie Wade Councillor

Council staff

Chief Executive Officer

- Sue Wilkinson Chief Executive Officer

General Managers

- Brooke Colbert Governance, Communications and Customer Experience
- Sam Hewett Infrastructure and Environment
- Kerry McGrath Community Strengthening
- Mary Osman City Sustainability and Strategy
- Jenny Scicluna Corporate Services and Transformation

Governance

- Phil De Losa Manager Governance and Integrity
- Rhys Thomas Senior Governance Advisor
- Mel Nikou Governance Officer

3. Announcements

An opportunity is provided for the Mayor to make any necessary announcements.

4. Declarations of conflict of interest

Any Councillor who has a conflict of interest in a matter being considered at this meeting is required to disclose that interest either by explaining the nature of the conflict of interest to those present or advising that they have disclosed the nature of the interest in writing to the Chief Executive Officer before the meeting commenced.

5. Confirmation of minutes

RECOMMENDATION

That the minutes of the Council Meeting held on Tuesday 20 June 2023 be confirmed.

6. Question time

An opportunity is provided for questions from members of the public.

7. Council business reports

Item		Page	Rec. Page	Report Presenter
7.1	Draft Concept Plan for Charlotte Street Pocket Park	8	13	Susan Stanes - Senior Coordinator Design and Place Making
7.2	Golden Square Bicentennial Park Masterplan Adoption	22	26	Susan Stanes - Senior Coordinator Design and Place Making
7.3	Nature Strategy Update	70	76	Brett Grambau - Manager City Works
7.4	Electoral Structure Review	192	195	Phil De Losa - Manager Governance and Integrity
7.5	Fossil Fuel related advertising on Council property	222	226	Michael Oke - Sustainability Unit Manager
7.6	Governance Report - July 2023	227	231	Phil De Losa

8. Notices of motion

Nil

9. Petitions and joint letters

An opportunity exists for any Councillor to table a petition or joint letter for Council's consideration.

10. Questions without notice

An opportunity is provided for Councillors to ask questions of the Mayor or Chief Executive Officer.

11. Delegate's reports

An opportunity is provided for Councillors to table or present a Delegate's Report.

12. General business

An opportunity is provided for Councillors to raise items of General Business for Council's consideration.

13. Urgent business

An opportunity is provided for the Chief Executive Officer to introduce items of Urgent Business.

14. Confidential business reports

The following items were deemed by the Chief Executive Officer to be suitable for consideration in closed session in accordance with section 66(2)(a) of the Local Government Act 2020. In accordance with that Act, Council may resolve to consider these issues in open or closed session.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the meeting be closed to members of the public, in accordance with section 66(2)(a) of the Local Government Act 2020, to allow consideration of confidential information

Item

14.1 **Fitzroy Adventure Playground 2023-2026 Grant Recommendation**

This item is to be considered in closed session to allow consideration of private commercial information, being information provided by a business, commercial or financial undertaking that relates to trade secrets or if released, would unreasonably expose the business, commercial or financial undertaking to disadvantage.

These grounds are applicable because the report contains information that has been submitted on a commercial in confidence basis as part of a competitive grant application process.

7.1 Draft Concept Plan for Charlotte Street Pocket Park

Reference	D23/247548
Author	Christian Lundh - Landscape and Urban Designer
Authoriser	General Manager City Sustainability and Strategy

Purpose

1. To consider the approval of the draft Concept Plan for the proposed Charlotte Street Pocket Park to be taken to community consultation in August - September 2023.

Critical analysis

History and background

2. The Yarra Open Space Strategy 2020 has identified the need for more green open space in Richmond.
3. The Swan Street Streetscape Masterplan was endorsed by Council in early 2022. The Masterplan included a proposal to create a pocket park in Charlotte Street which received high levels of support from the community.
4. Feasibility work has progressed and a first stage of consultation during November 2022 sought to gauge the level of community support for the creation of a pocket park. Of those surveyed, 68% were in favour of the new park. The Consultation Findings Report is published on Council's website on Your Say Yarra.
5. Following this early consultation, a draft Concept Plan has been prepared (**Attachment One**) and additional feasibility work is currently underway. Council's 2023/2024 budget provides funding to progress to detailed design and documentation.

Discussion

Feasibility work

6. Given the scale and complexity of this project, extensive feasibility and site studies have been undertaken at an early stage to understand the site conditions and identify any risks. This has included:
 - (a) stormwater modelling and drainage catchment analysis;
 - (b) preliminary soil contamination testing;
 - (c) geotechnical investigation;
 - (d) Yarra's internal arborist advice;
 - (e) full feature and levels survey and service proofing;
 - (f) a Safer by Design Review of Charlotte Street and surrounds, including a night time audit;
 - (g) a traffic impact assessment (TIA) for the area, conducted over different days and times to provide comprehensive and independent analysis of the expected impacts of the proposed closure on the surrounding area; and
 - (h) discussions with service authorities to understand existing utilities and potential limitations to the space.
7. Further feasibility work and technical advice is underway to support and inform the design including:

- (a) a heritage assessment to identify any potential design requirements associated with the HO315 Heritage Overlay, which covers the northern half of Charlotte Street;
- (b) civil engineering feasibility studies, which covers extending the Church Street footpath across Charlotte Street and potential locations for new DDA parking;
- (c) assessment of storm water harvesting opportunities;
- (d) a public lighting assessment of Charlotte Street and the library car park; and
- (e) gender impact assessment.

Draft concept plan for Charlotte Street Pocket Park

- 8. The Draft Concept Plan at **Attachment One** has been prepared in response to the early community feedback and feasibility work.
- 9. The Draft Concept Plan proposes to create approximately 550sqm of new public open space including footpath connections to improve amenity and access to open space for the local community and users of the library. The main feature will be a gently sloping lawn with large native canopy trees for shade, framed by low stone edges and seating areas nestled in between trees and garden beds with low planting.



Draft concept plan, graphics by Fooks Landscape Architecture based on in-house Council design.



Images; draft conceptual view across the park towards Church Street (proposed and existing) by Fooks Landscape Architecture.

10. The draft Concept Plan responds to the five key themes identified from the Stage 1 community consultation (refer Table 1) and the concept is also guided by the following:
- (a) Existing site conditions (sun/shade, surface grade, drainage, service constraints etc);
 - (b) Functional requirements (flexible useability, pedestrian access, bike parking etc);
 - (c) Yarra’s strategies and policies;
 - (d) Design and Management Guidelines as set out in the *Open Space Strategy*; and
 - (e) Subtle design references to the local character and features within the wider area.
11. The Draft Concept Plan responds to the main themes of the consultation as per Table 1 below:

Stage 1 Community feedback	How the Draft Concept Plan responds to the community feedback
Green Space – A desire from the community for plants, shade, and nature	<p>A large central lawn is proposed with large canopy trees and surrounding garden beds to provide an opportunity to escape the urban environment into a green space.</p> <p>The use of predominantly native plants will be considered to increase biodiversity and fauna habitat and aligns with Council’s Nature Strategy (2020). A mix of evergreen and deciduous trees will be proposed, their locations aimed at providing shade in summer and solar access in winter.</p>
Library Integration - The opportunity to borrow a book and read it outside, or take a break in the Pocket Park after a visit to the library.	<p>The central lawn will accommodate uses such as reading in the sun/shade or story time under a tree.</p> <p>A key feature of the draft concept plan is the many and varied seating options provided, including areas close to the library entrance. These will allow the space to be used by a mix of individuals and groups, including library users.</p>
Traffic - Concerns about the impact of the proposed road closure on the traffic in neighbouring streets.	A traffic impact assessment has been carried out, which shows the impact will be manageable. Potential further traffic studies could be undertaken, to provide supplementary evidence-based data to inform any potential future traffic calming requirements.
Parking & Accessibility - Concerns that the proposal would lead to greater competition for the remaining on-street car parking bays, and noting that the library’s accessibility for people with a disability, for families with prams, or for people wishing to quickly return library books were important.	<p>Design investigations are underway confirming suitable new location for accessible parking in vicinity of the library entrance, to be designed as part of the project for an integrated outcome.</p> <p>Review of parking restrictions in surrounding streets can be undertaken once the park is completed to confirm suitable location/s for short term parking to facilitate quick visits to the library.</p>
Children & Community - Many parents of children welcomed the opportunity for a place to gather and have a snack, while some noted the need to design the space so that it discouraged children from running close to Church Street.	<p>The pocket park will provide locals with an opportunity to gather and socialise in their local neighbourhood, as well as becoming a space to meet (e.g. parent groups).</p> <p>The Draft Concept Plan proposes raised stone edges and garden beds along the interfaces to Church Street and St Crispin Street, creating a physical separation between the proposed pocket park and these streets.</p> <p>The small size of the pocket park does not allow space for a conventional playground. However, the proposed placement and design of seating provide elements of playfulness that allow children to explore and enjoy the space.</p>

12. The proposed pocket park aims to bring many benefits to the area including:
 - (a) A new open space for Central Richmond, a neighbourhood where there is an identified deficiency in open space;
 - (b) The opportunity for the library to spill out onto a green space that is open and accessible for the wider Yarra community;
 - (c) Increased green infrastructure that will help to achieve targets from the Climate Emergency Plan, Integrated Water Management Plan, Nature Strategy, Urban Forest Strategy and Yarra Open Space Strategy 2020;
 - (d) Removing asphalt surfaces and replacing with irrigated grass and permeable surfaces to help mitigate the urban heat island effect; and
 - (e) Infrastructure to improve water catchment and passive irrigation to assist in the management of predicted future extreme weather events.
13. The draft Concept Plan provides a high-level idea for the look and feel of the park as well as the general layout and allocation of space. It does not provide specific detail around items such as type of furniture, lighting, materiality, plant species, exact bin locations, drainage network, or civil engineering design. This level of detail will be worked through at the next detailed design phase once the concept design is finalised and approved.

Potential issues and considerations

14. The potential issues and impacts and how they are being managed as the project develops include the following:
 - (a) The closure of Charlotte Street to traffic, and the redistribution of traffic flow to the adjacent streets especially Elm Grove, Charles Street and Mary Street:
 - (i) A traffic impact assessment has been carried out, which shows the traffic redistribution will be manageable; and
 - (ii) Potential further traffic studies could be undertaken during the planned temporary road closure with a pop up park, during the summer of 2023/2024 to provide evidence-based data to inform any potential traffic calming requirements;
 - (b) Loss of up to five existing parking spaces in Charlotte Street including one accessible parking bay with the full road closure proposal:
 - (i) There may be potential to integrate additional parking bays along Church Street where the road is proposed to be closed;
 - (ii) Officers recognise the actions in the Access and Inclusion Strategy 2018 - 2024 and note the current accessible bay on Charlotte Street by the library entrance;
 - (iii) Investigations are underway to establish the most suitable location for replacement accessible parking that would comply with relevant Australian Standards and provide best access to the library; and
 - (iv) The proposed location for new accessible parking will be discussed with relevant internal stakeholders including Council's Disability Advisory Committee, parking and traffic and be presented to Council at the next stage of the project; and
 - (c) The approved RSL development includes a vehicle entry from Charlotte Street. A swept path analysis has been undertaken to ensure access to the potential future basement car park (if the development is constructed) can be accommodated with minimal reduction to the overall open space area.
15. The above issues raised are important and will continue to be considered as the project progresses. The majority of community feedback to date has been supportive, with many people understanding the need to provide more green space to support the rate of growth and development in the area.

Proposed Project timeframes

16. Following the planned consultation over August-September 2023, the consultation results will be reviewed, and the concept plan will be modified where feasible, to respond to the feedback received.
17. Once a final concept plan is finalised, it is anticipated to be brought to Council in the later part of the year for approval November/December 2023.
18. The road discontinuance process can then commence with this process generally taking between 6-8 months and includes statutory consultation.
19. Detailed design and documentation work will progress with the tender design and documentation to be completed by June 2024.
20. A trial pop-up park is proposed over the summer of 2023/2024. The pop-up is in the early planning stage. The road would be temporarily closed during this time and converted to an open space area with seating elements and planters with trees and greenery for the community to enjoy.

Community and stakeholder engagement

External consultation

21. The initial proposal for a pocket park in Charlotte Street as per the adopted Swan Street Streetscape Masterplan (2022) received high levels of support from the community.
22. The consultation for the Charlotte Street project held in November 2022 provided 256 responses to our survey for a new park as well as a petition opposing the proposal. The consultation results indicated that 68% of respondents were in favour of the new park.
23. It is proposed to present the draft concept plan to the wider community for review and comment between August – September 2023. This will include many similar activities as the previous round of consultation. People who responded to the previous consultation will also be invited to comment.

Policy analysis

Alignment to Community Vision and Council Plan

24. The Yarra Open Space Strategy 2020 has identified the need for more green open space in Richmond.
25. The Swan Street Streetscape Masterplan was endorsed by Council in early 2022. Within the Masterplan is a proposal for a section of Charlotte Street to be turned into a public park.
26. The proposal also aligns with the overarching Council Plan (2021-25) that supports the following strategies and initiatives:
 - (a) Build a more resilient, inclusive, safe and connected community, which promotes social, physical and mental wellbeing;
 - (b) Manage access, safety and amenity to enhance people's experience when visiting Yarra;
 - (c) Improve our streetscapes, accessibility, safety, and amenity, including embedding outdoor dining, increase greenery and active transport infrastructure, to attract more people to visit, spend time and shop across our precincts; and
 - (d) Reduce urban heat island effect through the planting of trees and vegetation and an increase of green open space.

Climate emergency and sustainability implications

27. Increased tree canopy cover and a reduction in asphalt would assist in the mitigation of the urban heat island effect resulting in cooler streets and a more pleasant local environment.

28. Flood mitigation and permeable surfaces would help reduce the effect of localised flooding to adjacent buildings and increase moisture in the ground.

Community and social implications

29. New and improved public spaces is important with a rapidly growing city, and this site, between the Richmond Library building and the RSL offers the opportunity to create a new pocket park for this precinct.

Economic development implications

30. A more attractive and welcoming urban environment would enhance people's experience when visiting Yarra and spending more time in the area, including nearby Swan Street.

Human rights and gender equality implications

31. The design considers CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design), universal design principles and gender equity principles to create a safe, welcoming and equitable space for all users.

Operational analysis

Financial and resource impacts

32. Detailed design and consultation is included in the 2023/24 budget.
33. Construction of the project will be subject to future budget considerations in later years (estimated to be \$1.8M).

Legal Implications

34. The legal process to discontinue the road is lengthy and complex and would run in parallel with the detailed design phase.

Conclusion

35. A new park at Charlotte Street will provide long term benefits to the local and wider area for generations to come and help address the existing shortfall in open space.
36. The majority of respondents from the previous consultation were supportive of the proposal to build a park. Further community consultation is planned in August – September 2023 to present the draft concept plan and seek feedback on the project.
37. Although the project has received high levels of support so far, there are a few issues around traffic impacts, minor loss of parking and accessibility parking provision, which are being managed as the project progresses.
38. A formal road discontinuance process is required as part of the intended delivery of the park, and this is anticipated to be progressed once the concept plan is finalised and approved by Council.

RECOMMENDATION

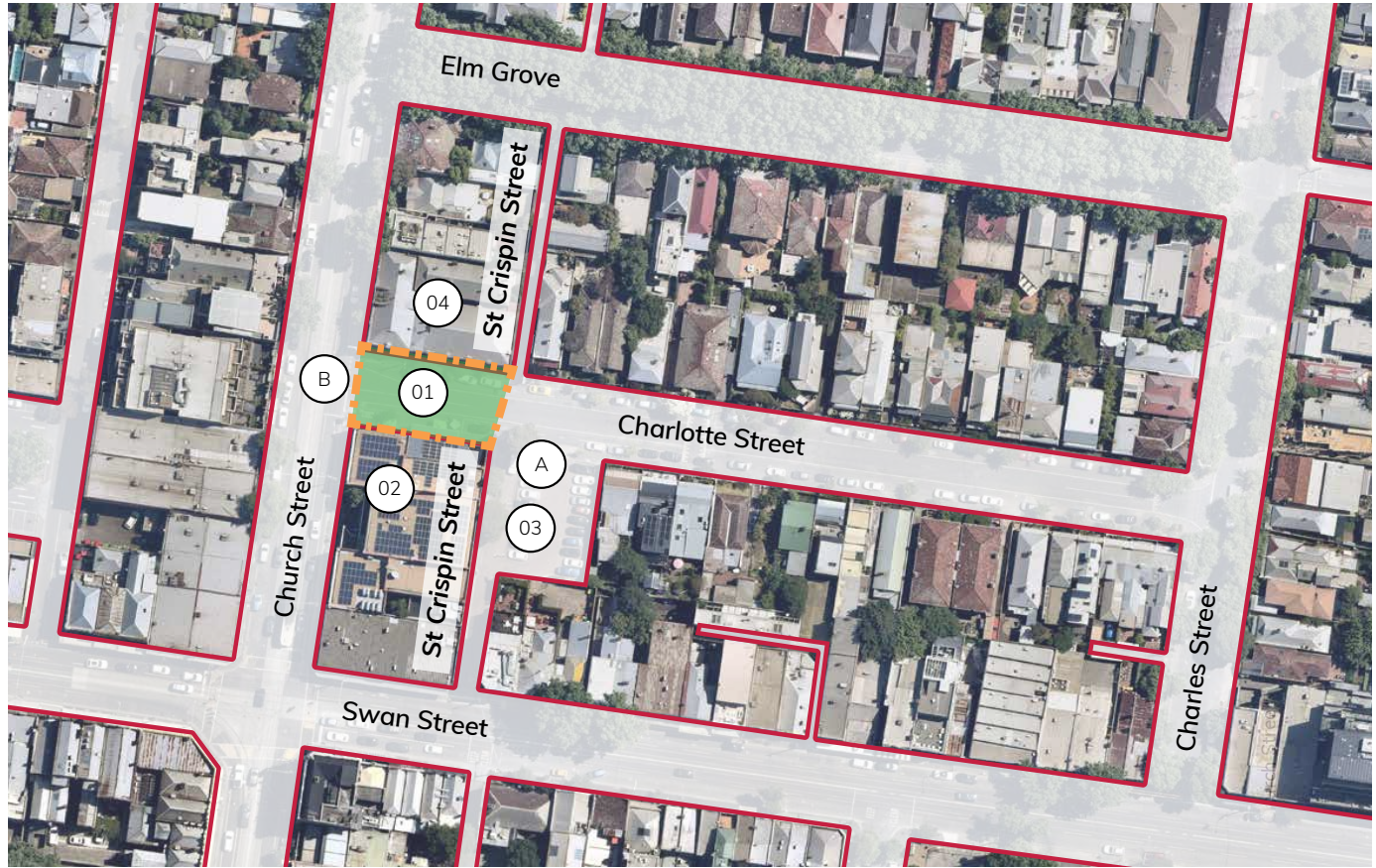
1. That Council:
- (a) approve the Draft Concept Plan for Charlotte Street Pocket Park to be taken to community consultation in August - September 2023; and
 - (b) note that the required formal road discontinuance process will commence once a final concept plan is approved.

Attachments

- [1](#) Attachment 1 - Draft Concept Plan for Charlotte Street Pocket Park



Overall location plan
(This plan will not be public)

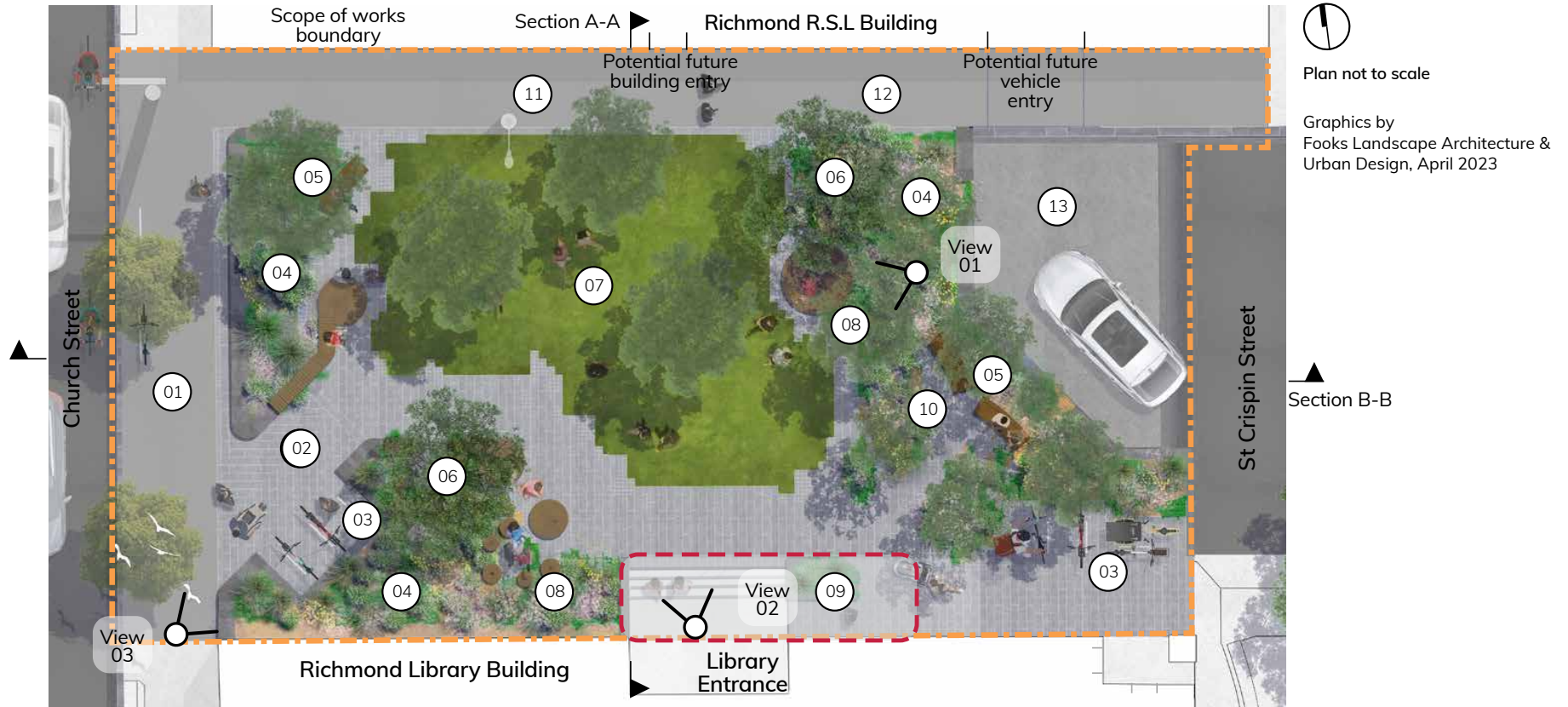


Plan not to scale

- 01 Proposed Charlotte Street pocket park
- 02 Richmond Library
- 03 Richmond Library car park
- 04 Richmond R.S.L.

- Below listed design investigations are currently underway (May 2023) for Council consideration at the next stage of the project in conjunction with the presentation of the final concept plan:
- A Potential locations for DDA parking to be within the Council car park
 - B Potential to integrate new parking bays along the Church Street park frontage

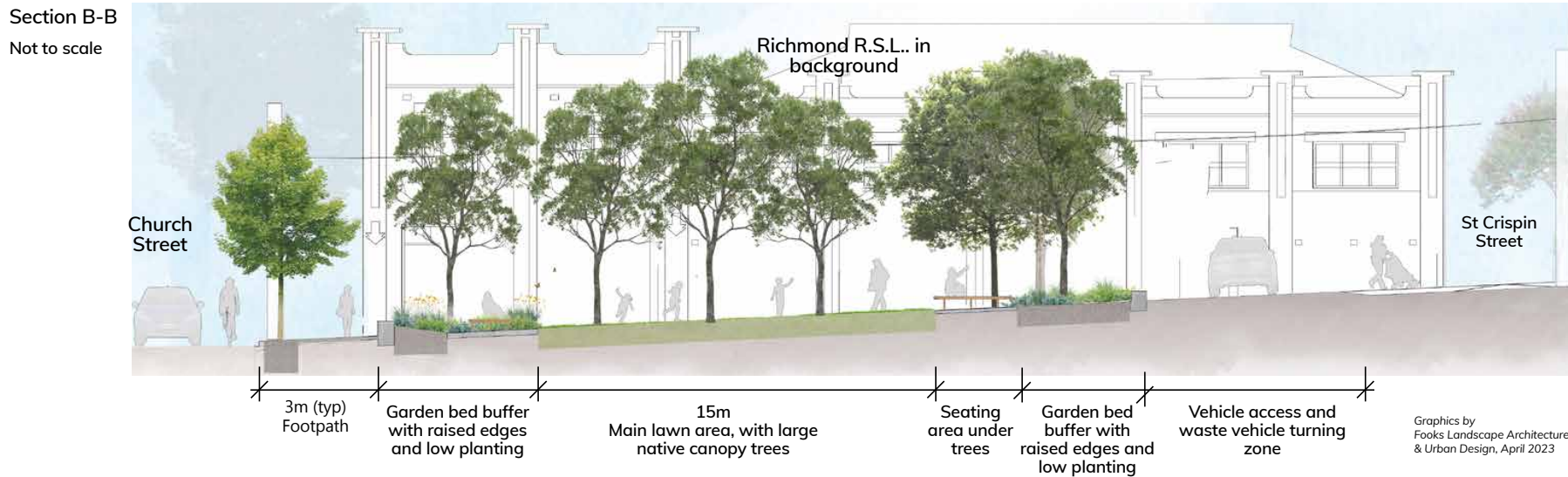
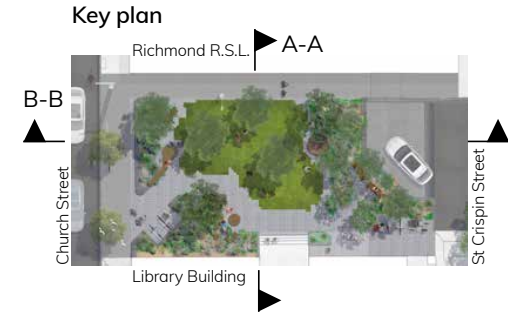
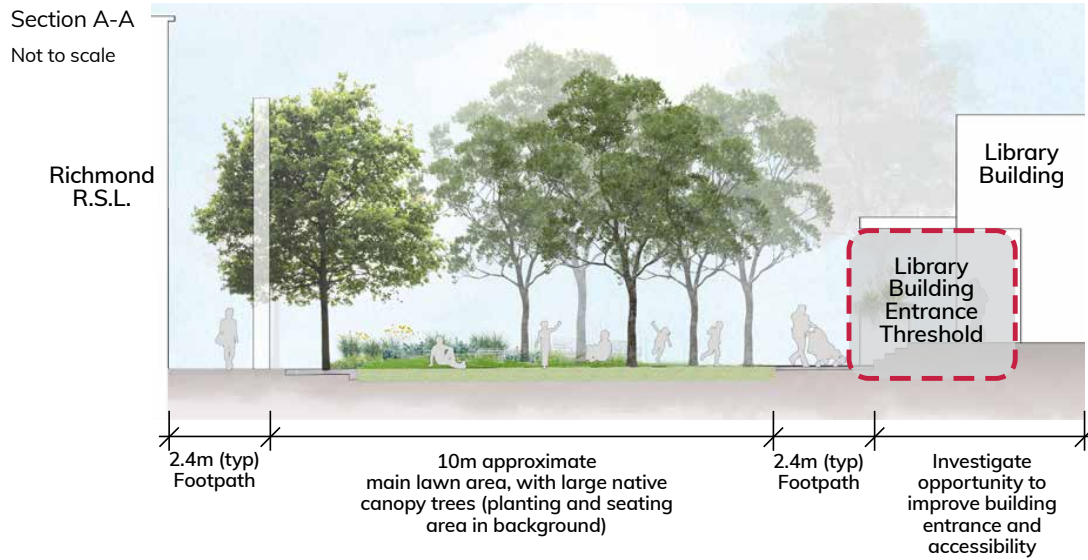
Draft concept plan



Plan not to scale
 Graphics by
 Fooks Landscape Architecture &
 Urban Design, April 2023

- 01 Footpath (asphalt) connection across Charlotte Street, typically 2.8m wide from back of kerb. Opportunity for tree and bike facilities
- 02 Entrance threshold and path into park and library, framed by stone edges, garden beds and seating elements
- 03 Bike parking facilities
- 04 Garden beds with low growing flowering plants to maintain sight-lines
- 05 Bench seats with back and arm rests
- 06 Existing Pin Oaks proposed to be retained and integrated into the park design
- 07 Main lawn area, with large native canopy trees. Approximately 15x10m
- 08 Groupings of informal seating elements, multi-functional for small groups / story time, stage, or just lounge under trees
- 09 Investigate opportunity to improve building entrance threshold and accessibility
- 10 Tree grove with seating below. Trees with clear trunks to ensure minimum obstruction of sight-lines
- 11 Lighting design will be undertaken in the next design stage. Potential to replace the existing pole light with bespoke park lighting
- 12 Asphalt foot path typically 2.4m wide
- 13 Vehicle access and waste vehicle turning zone

Draft concept sections



Graphics by
Fooks Landscape Architecture
& Urban Design, April 2023

View 01

Looking out over the pocket park from the northeast corner (towards Church Street)



Key plan



Existing site view



Graphics and site images by
Fooks Landscape Architecture
& Urban Design, April 2023

View 02

Looking out over the pocket park from the library building entrance



Key plan



Existing site view



Graphics by
Fooks Landscape Architecture
& Urban Design, April 2023

View 03 Looking into the pocket park from Church Street



Key plan



Existing site view



Graphics by
Fooks Landscape Architecture
& Urban Design, April 2023

7.2 Golden Square Bicentennial Park Masterplan Adoption

Executive Summary

Purpose

To consider the adoption of the *Golden Square Masterplan 2023* (Masterplan) and associated *Golden Square Masterplan Report* (Masterplan Report).

Key Issues

There are high levels of growth projected in the Cremorne, Richmond South and Burnley precincts of Yarra which will likely lead to increased use of this reserve.

The Masterplan and Masterplan Report have been developed as important planning tools for future design, development, and management of this open space over the next 10 years. They reflect the community vision for the park and will guide future design and capital work improvements.

Financial Implications

The masterplan recommends an overall \$1.1million worth of works to be implemented over the next 10 years subject to prioritisation and consideration of future budget allocations.

There is \$210,500 allocated in the 2023/24 Budget for design and construction works. This includes renewal works for irrigation, lawn rejuvenation, playground design, and planting design.

PROPOSAL

For Council to adopt the Masterplan and Masterplan Report.

7.2 Golden Square Bicentennial Park Masterplan Adoption

Reference	D23/233640
Author	Julia Mardjuki - Open Space Planner
Authoriser	General Manager City Sustainability and Strategy

Purpose

1. The *Golden Square Masterplan* (Masterplan) and *Golden Square Masterplan Report* (Masterplan Report) reflect the community vision for the park and provide an important planning tool for future design, development, and management of this open space. They will guide design and capital work improvements in the reserve over the next 10 years.
2. The Masterplan provides an overview of future directions and works for the reserve. See *Attachment 1 – Golden Square Masterplan*.
3. The Masterplan Report details the background work and analysis undertaken to determine the outcomes of the Masterplan. It also includes an implementation plan and budget implications. See *Attachment 2 – Golden Square Masterplan Report*.

Critical analysis

History and background

4. Golden Square Bicentennial Reserve occupies the grounds of the previous Burnley State School. The community were key in ensuring that the site was preserved as a public open space rather than subdivided and sold off for housing as initially proposed.
5. It was opened as a public park in the late 1970's and its name reflects the community values of the time.
6. The site is included in the Golden Square Precinct Heritage Overlay H0322.
7. The reserve is located in the heart of the Burnley residential precinct and is classified as a Small Neighbourhood open space in the *Yarra Open Space Strategy 2020* (YOSS). It has an informal character with open grass areas, scattered mature native and exotic trees, picnic facilities with a BBQ, a rotunda, and a playground that is nearing the end of its useful life expectancy.
8. There is no existing masterplan for Golden Square Bicentennial Reserve. Any works to date have been undertaken on an as needs basis relating to safety and maintenance.
9. The aim of the draft masterplan is to:
 - (a) capture a long-term shared vision for the reserve that addresses the needs of residents, key user groups, and visitors to the park; and
 - (b) provides a framework which guides the design and future delivery of park improvement projects through Council's capital works program.
10. The park is locally significant as the main open space within the Burnley A residential catchment as set out in the YOSS. Given forecast projections in the wider area, increased use of the reserve is anticipated.
11. Council appointed Jeavons Landscape Architects in September 2022 as the design consultant for the project.
12. Two rounds of extensive community engagement were undertaken to guide the development of the Masterplan.

13. The first round of consultation sought community feedback and their thoughts on any future changes and/or works in the park. A draft masterplan was then prepared using these findings.
14. This draft masterplan was presented to the community through a second round of consultation to seek feedback. This feedback was then incorporated where appropriate to amend and finalise the Masterplan for endorsement.
15. The draft masterplan was generally supported by the community. Refer to the *Golden Square Draft Masterplan Consultation Report* on YSY page <https://yoursayyarra.com.au/goldensquare>
16. Much of the consultation was undertaken online via the project's YSY page. There were also onsite meetings run as part of the engagement for each phase which were attended by ward Councillors.
17. During the consultation, officers received a range of suggestions for improvements as well as some infrastructure requests. Suggestions supported by the majority of respondents and deemed feasible have been incorporated. The list of recommendations are aligned to a number of Council's strategic frameworks, particularly in relation to the YOSS.

Discussion

18. Throughout the development of the Masterplan, the community has consistently expressed a strong sense of pride and ownership for the reserve. They defined it as a '*hidden urban gem*' and expressed a desire for its existing qualities to be maintained. The Masterplan vision; '*To retain a much-loved urban green retreat where the local community can gather, play, reflect and enjoy*' reflects this sentiment.
19. The Masterplan proposes modest recommendations to enhance the existing landscape character and maintain the quality and amenity of the reserve.
20. The key recommendations resulting from the consultation and incorporated into the Masterplan include:
 - (a) Design and construction of a new playground;
 - (b) An upgrade of the existing rotunda, picnic and BBQ facilities including furniture;
 - (c) Rejuvenation of the lawn and planting beds through irrigation and new plantings;
 - (d) New plantings around the perimeter of the reserve particularly of indigenous species that tie in with those of the nearby Yarra River environs as a replacement to the existing bollards as well as improving biodiversity;
 - (e) A lighting plan to improve and increase lighting provisions within the reserve;
 - (f) Creation of quiet spaces for reflection that allude to the idea of a 'yarning circle' and reference the indigenous history of the area, which is representative of Council's priorities and community values; and
 - (g) Improving overall tree canopy cover and protection of the much loved 'Fairy Tree'.

Options

21. The options for this project are:
 - (a) To adopt the *Golden Square Masterplan* and *Golden Square Masterplan Report* and use them as the guiding documents for future improvements and works in the reserve; or
 - (b) To modify the *Golden Square Masterplan* and *Golden Square Masterplan Report* and present them to Council at a later meeting for adoption.

Community and stakeholder engagement

22. There were two rounds of engagement (refer paras. 12-17) as part of the development of the Masterplan:

- (a) First round of consultation in August to September 2022; and
 - (b) The second round of consultation in March 2023.
23. The community were informed on 11 May 2023, that the draft Masterplan was now finalised based on their comments and thanked for their input.
24. Participants were sent a direct email with a link to all documents on the Golden Square Your Say Yarra page, including the updated Masterplan, the Masterplan Report and the Consultation Report, to show how comments were analysed and applied.
25. To date, only one comment has been received around the final masterplan which was supportive.

Policy analysis

Alignment to Community Vision and Council Plan

26. This project aligns with Strategic Objective four, Place and nature and specifically the following strategies:
- (a) *Create safe, accessible active spaces that provide diverse physical activity opportunities for the whole community;*
 - (b) *Plan and manage community infrastructure that responds to growth and changing needs;*
 - (c) *Protect and enhance the biodiversity values, connectivity and resilience of Yarra's natural environment;*
 - (d) *Protect, promote and maintain our unique heritage and ensure development is sustainable; and*
 - (e) *Encourage people to connect with Yarra's natural and cultural heritage and prioritise the voices of Traditional Owners.*

Climate emergency and sustainability implications

27. The masterplan seeks to improve the sustainability of the park and ensure it can cope with the impacts of climate change and seeks to improve the biodiversity and habitat values of the park through the proposed introduction of indigenous shrubs and ground cover planting.
28. Opportunities for greater water efficiency, water security and water sensitive urban design will be explored during the implementation of works.
29. Principles of sustainability and adaptation strategies will be considered as design drivers during the implementation of the recommendations in the masterplan.

Community and social implications

30. The project has engaged with the community and the implementation of the recommendations will enhance the park and provide for an improved space where the community can meet, socialise, and connect with each other.

Economic development implications

31. There are no economic development implications associated with this project.

Human rights and gender equality implications

32. The masterplan has been developed with the view to ensure public access to the park considers users of all abilities.
33. It supports equitable use of the park by people of all ages, cultural backgrounds and genders.

Operational analysis

Financial and resource impacts

34. The *Golden Square Masterplan Report (Attachment 2)* includes an estimated funding breakdown with a proposed investment of \$1,110,000 over the 10-year life span of the masterplan. This includes:
 - (a) \$240,000 in the short term over the next 1-3 years (NB – The budget allocation for 2023/24 is \$210,500);
 - (b) \$625,000 in the medium term over the next 4-6; and
 - (c) \$245,000 in the long term over the next 7-10 years.
35. Project budgets for future works will be submitted as part of Council's annual budget process.
36. Maintenance works will continue as per current arrangements, with allowances made to accommodate new infrastructure where required.
37. The \$210,500 allocated in the 2023/24 Budget is programmed for renewal works for irrigation, lawn rejuvenation, playground design and planting design.
38. A total of 70% of all design and construction costs for this park can be funded through the Open Space Reserve and the budget of \$210,500 for 2023/24 is proposed to be split funding, \$147,350 from the Open Space Reserve and the remaining \$63,150 from Council funds.

Legal Implications

39. There are no known legal implications associated with this project.

Conclusion

40. The Masterplan has been developed with the community for the sustainable growth and development of Golden Square Bicentennial Reserve over the next 10 years.
41. It provides a strategic framework for how works can be implemented and prioritised to meet future demands and needs.
42. A budget of \$210,500 has been allocated in the 2023/24 Budget. This includes renewal works in Golden Square for irrigation, lawn rejuvenation, playground design, and planting design.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That:
 - (a) Council adopts the *Golden Square Masterplan* and associated *Golden Square Masterplan Report*, to use as the guiding document for the strategic planning, development and management of the reserve over the next 10 years; and
 - (b) Council thanks the community for their involvement in the engagement process.

Attachments

- 1 [↓](#) Attachment 1 - Golden Square Masterplan
- 2 [↓](#) Attachment 2 - Golden Square Masterplan Report

Attachment 1 Attachment 1 - Golden Square Masterplan

Landscape Masterplan Vision

To retain a much-loved, urban green retreat where the local community can gather, play, reflect and enjoy.

The landscape masterplan has been developed to guide future improvements, ongoing maintenance and the sustainable development of Golden Square Park.

The park is bounded by heritage houses and its landscape character includes a large open lawn, naturalistic playground, traditional style rotunda, standard BBQ facilities, walking paths, some seating and the much-loved Fairy Tree. Scattered plantings of predominantly evergreen native trees and some exotic deciduous trees have been established over time. Timber bollards surround the park and understory garden beds are sparse.

The community were a driving force in ensuring Burnley Primary School demolished in the 1970s was converted to this park, rather than be sold off for housing development as initially proposed. Today the park remains a much-loved green retreat and its role as an urban refuge continues as development increases in the surrounding areas. We used community feedback to develop and refine the masterplan.

Recommendations - On going

Tree Planting

Continue to maintain and care for existing trees within the park, particularly the Fairy Tree. Consider removal of some existing trees identified as senescing or in poor condition to improve passive surveillance. Consider future planting of suitable species for a changing climate and biodiversity improvements, as well as deciduous trees to improve options for all year sun/shade.

Furniture

Replace ageing furniture with a consistent suite across the park. Seating to be a mix of benches, seats with back and arm rests. Informal log seats are provided to tie in with natural aesthetics of the dog off leash and Fairy Tree areas. Locate furniture to create informal social gathering spaces and quiet seating areas for reflection.

Water sensitive design and management

Seek opportunities for greater water efficiency, water security and improved soil moisture levels.

Recommendations - Short Term

- 01 Open Lawn area**
Improve the lawn area for recreational activities. Level the surface, top dress, provide new irrigation and remove redundant pits.
- 02 Existing signalised crossing**
Undertake a feasibility study to rationalise the crossing points between the park and train station. This study should provide a clear understanding of the primary access route to be encouraged and any infrastructure replacement options.
- 03 Reserve Entry**
New path and plaque relocated within feature entry garden beds.
- 04 Path connectors**
New paths to be constructed from existing pram crossing locations on surrounding streets to connect to the park's main path network.
- 05 Playspace**
Redesign play space to improve accessibility, play value, shade and offer a greater range of play opportunities for different ages and abilities. Include accessible play elements, routes and seating locations within the proposed play footprint. Ensure all elements meet current safety standards.

Recommendations - Mid Term

- 06 Picnic shelter and BBQ**
Improve the existing BBQ area with a new shelter, picnic setting, accessible BBQ unit and paved surface to improve access. The lawn area behind the proposed shelter provides a spill out space for larger gatherings.
- 07 Perimeter planting**
Replace existing perimeter timber bollards with groundcover and shrub planting over time. The new garden beds aim to improve biodiversity and create a physical barrier around the park, without compromising safety or visual permeability.
- 08 Lighting**
Prepare a lighting plan to improve safety and wayfinding provisions in the reserve. Implement as funding becomes available.

Recommendations - Long Term

- 09 Rotunda**
Replace the existing rotunda and ground surface with a suitable structure that provides plenty of seating and improved access.
- 11 Quiet space for reflection**
Create spaces that provide opportunity for quiet reflection. Include seating under existing shade trees and around sensory plants.



LEGEND

- Existing trees, predominantly native evergreen
- Existing Palm trees
- Existing Pine trees
- Existing feature evergreen trees
- Existing feature deciduous trees
- Existing tree to be removed in future to improve sightlines and protect infrastructure. Tree removal pending on on-going and future assessment of tree health.
- Proposed Trees - species to be confirmed
- Existing garden beds
- Proposed garden beds
- Garden bed mulch surface including mulch zone under existing Fairy Tree
- Lawn surface
- Proposed mounds formed using existing site excavated soil, locations to be confirmed on site
- Existing paths
- Proposed path and paved surfaces
- Proposed logs from tree removal work as informal seating edges and informal play elements
- Proposed picnic setting
- Proposed platform table
- Proposed seat with back and arm rest
- Proposed bench
- Proposed BBQ
- Proposed Bins
- Proposed drink fountain
- Existing light
- Relocated plaques
- Indicative dog off leash area
- Indicative future playground footprint

Golden Square Bicentennial Park Landscape Masterplan

Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Country
Parkville Street, Burnley VIC

CLIENT:



LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT:



Job No. 223676
Date: 17.04.23
Dwg No: MPO1 of 1
Scale: 1:250 @ A1



0 2.5 5.0 7.5 10.0 12.5m

Golden Square Bicentennial Park Landscape Masterplan Report

2023



Yarra City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people as the Traditional Owners and true sovereigns of the land now known as Yarra. We also acknowledge the significant contributions made by other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to life in Yarra. We pay our respects to Elders from all nations and to their Elders past, present and future.

Contents

1.0 Introduction	4
1.1 Background and masterplan process	4
2.0 Guiding principles	6
3.0 Site description	8
3.1 Site location and context	8
3.2 Site history	8
3.3 Existing conditions	12
3.4 Existing site conditions plan	14
3.5 Constraints and opportunities plan	16
4.0 Analysis and key recommendations	18
4.1 Uses and activities	18
4.2 Infrastructure and buildings	22
4.3 Landscape, drainage, planting and maintenance	25
4.4 Proposed masterplan	28
5.0 Implementation	30
5.1 Budget implementation	30
5.2 Estimated funding breakdown	32
5.3 Proposed masterplan works in stages	34
6.0 References	36
7.0 Appendix	37

Report and Plans prepared by Jeavons Landscape
Architects for City of Yarra 2023

This publication is available in
alternative accessible formats on
request.

Electronic copy

PDF versions of this report can be
downloaded from yarracity.vic.gov.au

National Relay service

TTY 133 677 then (03) 9205 5555
or relayservice.gov.au

Yarra Council language line

العربية 9280 1930

中文 9280 1937

Ελληνικά 9280 1934

Italiano 9280 1931

Español 9280 1935

Tiếng Việt 9280 1939

Other 9280 1940

REF 19652

1.0 Introduction

Purpose of the Masterplan: This Masterplan sets the strategic direction for Golden Square Bicentennial Park and guides its future development, improvement and maintenance for the next 10 years.

1.1 Background and masterplan process

The Masterplan has been a study to understand community values around Golden Square Bicentennial Park so Yarra Council can plan and undertake future works based on community priorities.

The development of the Masterplan was guided by extensive community engagement, details of which can be found in the Golden Square Bicentennial Reserve Consultation Reports, available on the project's Your Say Yarra page.

Since the inception of the park in the 1970s, the community has championed it as being an open space for all. Rather than have the land subdivided and sold off for housing, the community has played an important role in ensuring the park remains a much-loved green retreat. Today its role as an urban refuge continues, as development increases in the surrounding areas.

The Masterplan aims to preserve the qualities the community value most as well as include infrastructure provisions to support the growing community far into the future.



2.0 Guiding principles

Vision: To retain a much-loved urban green retreat where the local community can gather, play, reflect and enjoy.

General

Following the results of the engagement process, the following principles have been developed to guide the Masterplan and its key recommendations.

Landscape character

- Enhance the existing landscape character through increased planting and infrastructure improvements.
- Plan for increased usage given the expected growth in the area, whilst maintaining the amenity and quality of the park.
- Continue management of existing trees and plan for the future of mature trees in the park, particularly the Fairy Tree.

Uses and activities

- Allow for public use and enjoyment by encouraging a complementary mix of activities.
- Provide a diverse variety of recreation uses within the park, whilst maintaining the local feel.
- Consider synergies or conflicts between uses.
- Provide additional amenities and uses where these are complementary to the character and capacity of the reserve.



Access and safety

- Ensure public access to the park, considering users of all abilities.
- Support equitable use of the park by people of all ages, cultural backgrounds and genders.
- Implement Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles to ensure safe public space.

Environmental sustainability

- Improve the sustainability of the park and ensure it is able to cope with the impacts of climate change.
- Improve the biodiversity and habitat value of the park through the introduction of indigenous shrubs and ground cover planting.

Seek opportunities for greater water efficiency, water security, water sensitive urban design and improved soil moisture levels where possible.

3.0 Site description

3.1 Site location and context

Golden Square Bicentennial Park is located in the heart of the Burnley residential precinct, and classified as a 'Small Neighbourhood' open space. It covers an area of approximately 8,300 sq metre.

The park is bounded by Madden Grove and Burnley train station and railway line to the north, Stawell Street to the west, Parkville Street to the south and Gibdon Street to the east.

Surrounding the park are footpaths, carparking and heritage residential buildings. A café and some businesses are located along the west side of Stawell Street.

Vehicle and foot traffic during work hours can increase significantly around local roads compared to other times of the day. The path in the park is used as a connection to Burnley train station. A signal crossing light is provided along Madden Grove, connecting the park to train station.

The park is located near the Yarra River and the native tree planting forms an integral connection to the wider wildlife corridor along the Yarra.

This park is locally significant as it is the only open space within this residential catchment.

3.2 Site history

General

The site is Crown land permanently reserved as gardens and recreation reserve. The park is located with the Golden Square Precinct with limited reference being made of the parks significant values and elements. Refer to Appendix 1 for Historical Memorandum.

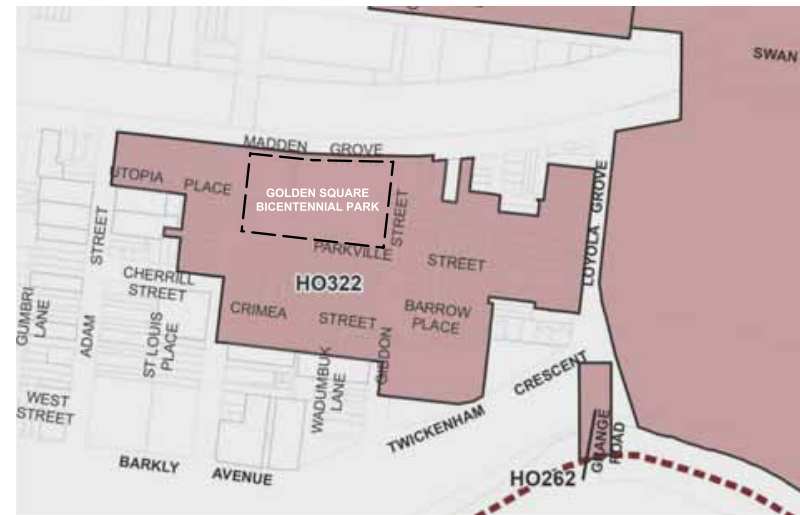
This park is located on the site of a former Burnley State School. The school block was located on the west side of the park. The eastern side of the park was reserved for the Catholic Church but it was never developed. The school was closed and demolished in 1970s and consolidated into the future park site. Golden Square Bicentennial Park was opened in 1988 and named to commemorate the arrival of the First Fleet, reflecting community values at the time.

Heritage and planning controls

No tree controls are applied under the heritage overlay. Built form is limited to the western side of the park where the existing rotunda and playground are located. The site is significant as a former school site with tree planting from the time. Through historical photos, it is established that the English Elm (Fairy Tree) has been on site since 1904.



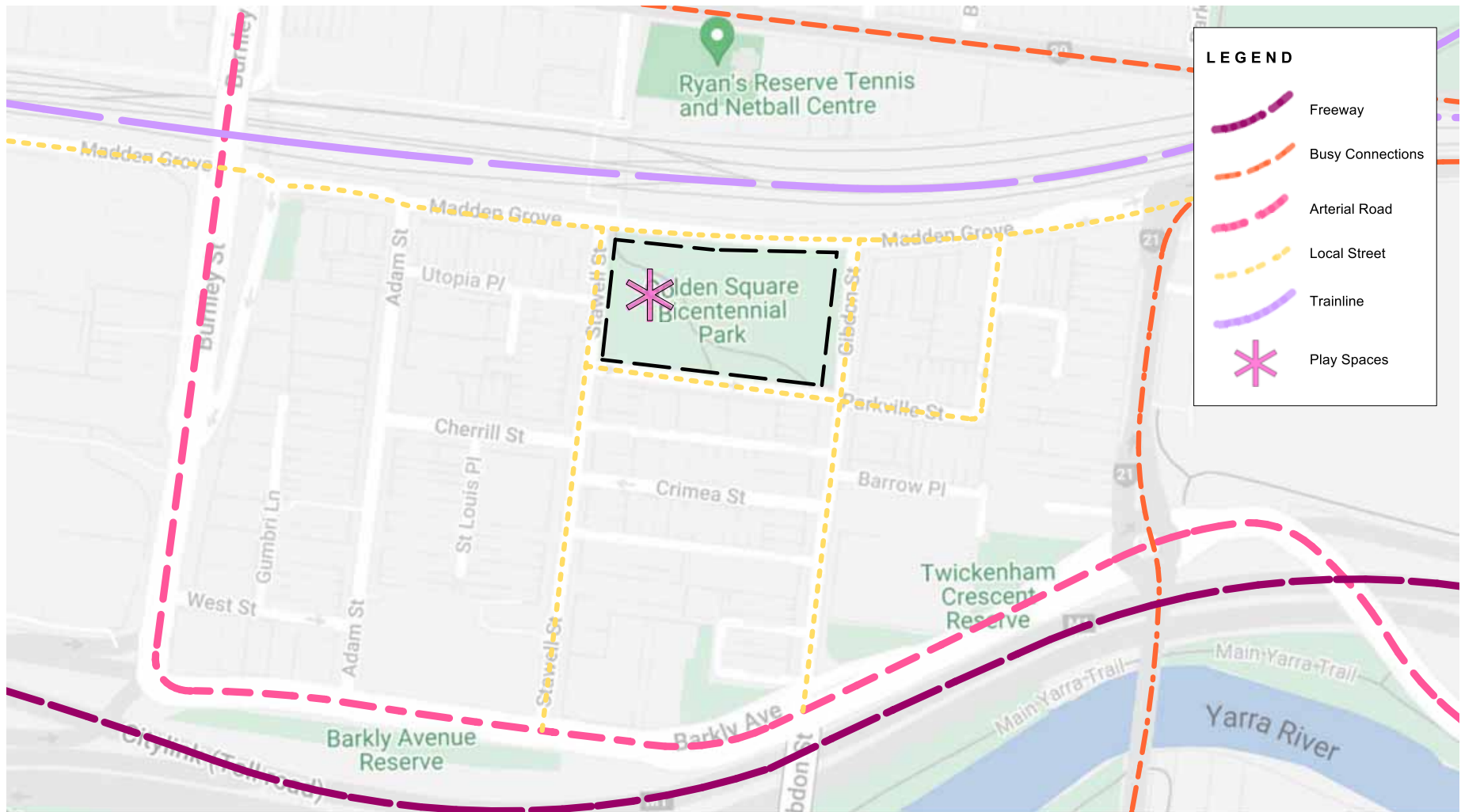
Source: Richmond and Burnley Historical Society



Heritage Overlay

Source: Department of Transport and Planning, Plan Schemes





Open space catchment analysis
Not to scale, refer to Appendix 1 for full scale plan



3.3 Existing conditions

General

Existing features of the park include a playground, rotunda, barbeque, plaques, picnic settings, scattered seating, and a main diagonal walking path connecting the south east to north west corners of the park. There are light poles along the path.

The site is predominantly flat apart from a mound in the playground area, and has a gentle gradient sloping down from North to South.

Dog off leash area

A large open lawn covers the eastern side of the park and is currently used as a dog off leash area. The dog off leash area is bounded by the main diagonal path and tree plantings around the perimeter.

Playground

The playground is located on the west side of the diagonal path and has a timber play structure backing onto a mound and a swing set. It was constructed in 2009. The mound is covered in lawn to the north and synthetic rubber to the south.



Landscape character

The landscape character of the park is predominantly native tree planting with scattered remnant palms, pine trees and a feature English Elm tree, fondly named by locals as the Fairy Tree. Understory and ground cover planting is currently limited.

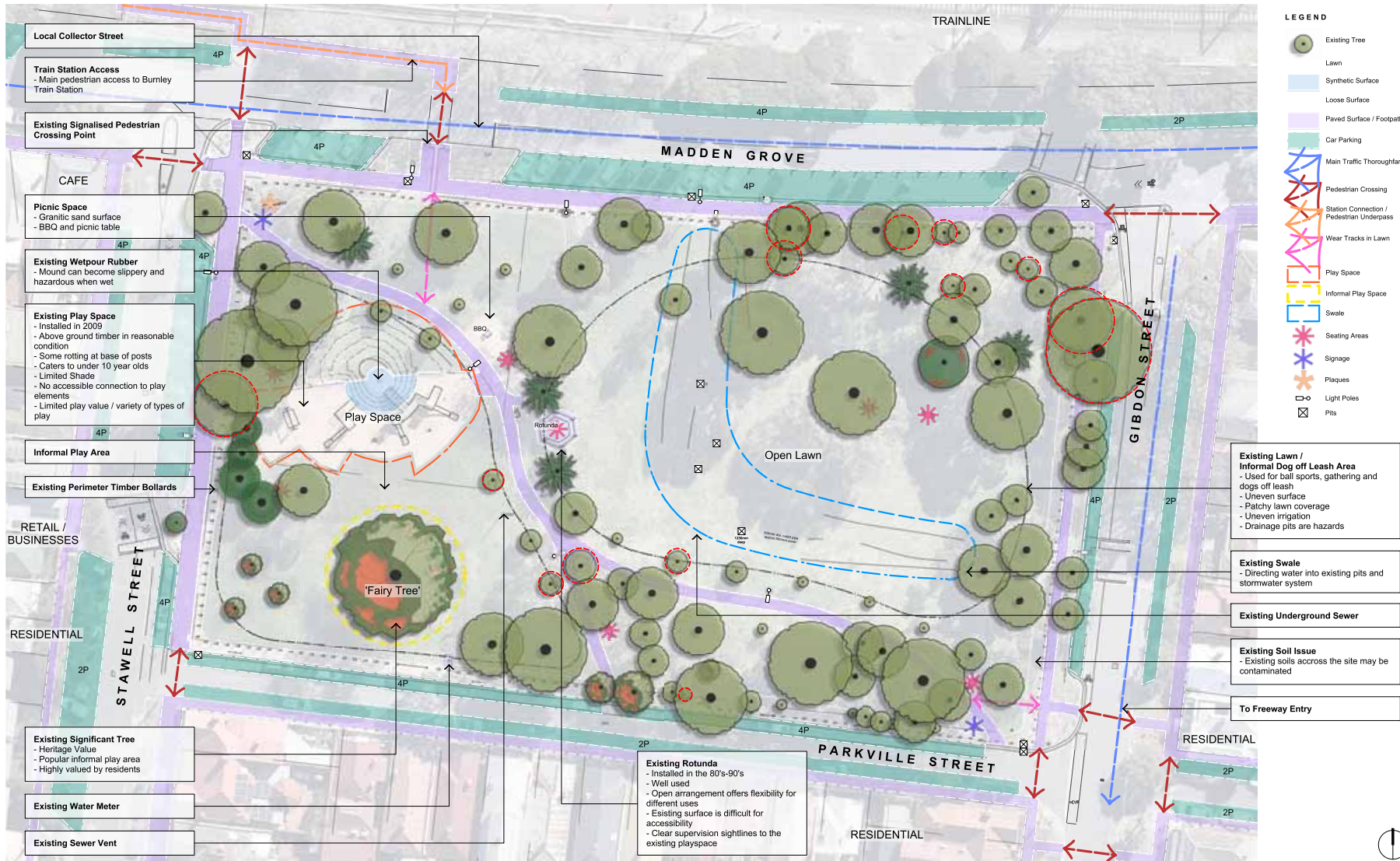
The local community appreciates the way the park functions as a 'hidden gem' within Burnley and would like to retain its current quality, and not have it overdeveloped.

Rotunda and facilities

A rotunda is located towards the centre of the park and is well used by the local community as a gathering point. A barbeque, picnic setting, drink fountain and bins are located close to the rotunda. Timber bollards currently line the perimeter of the park.



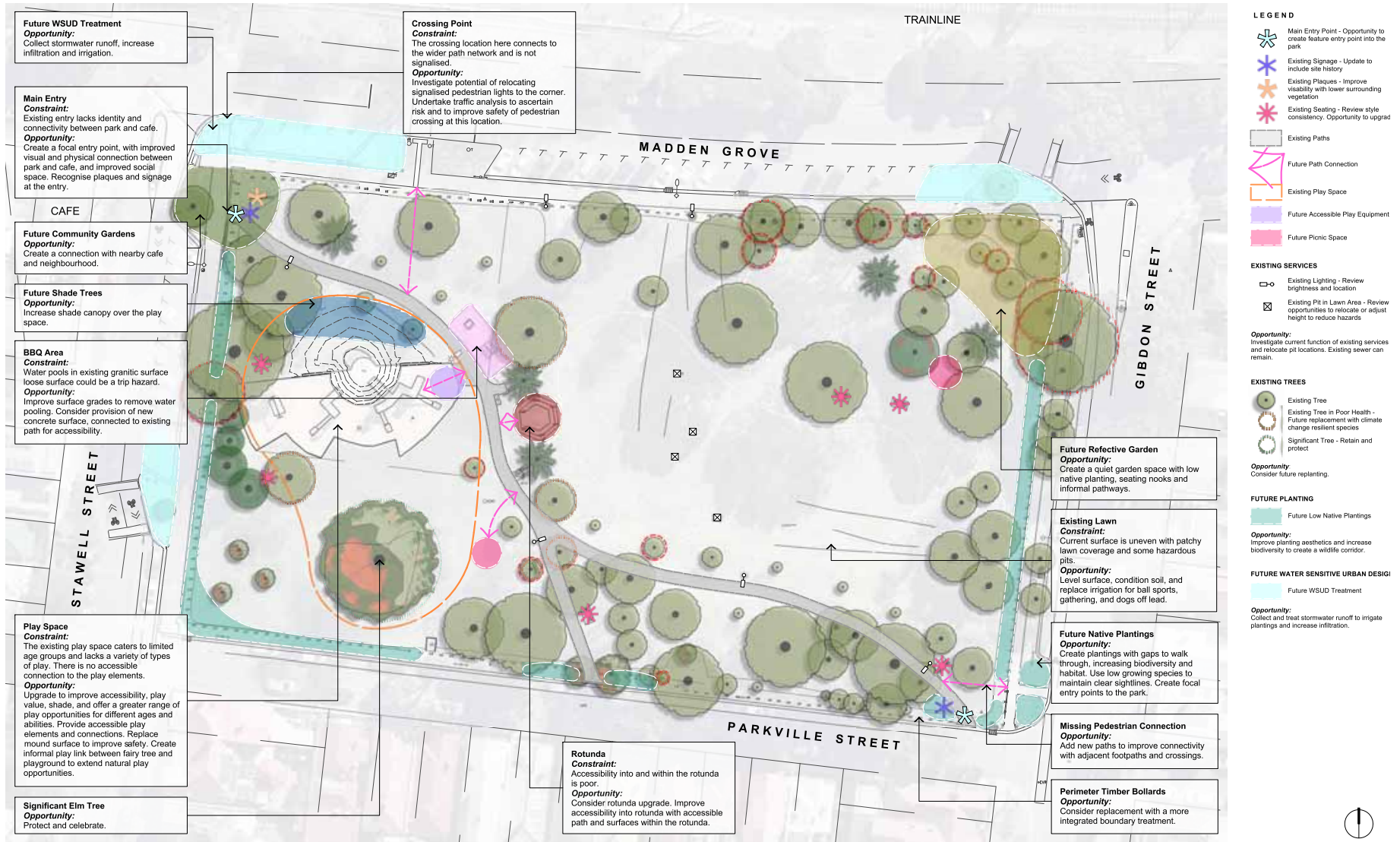
3.4 Existing site condition plans



Existing site condition plans

Not to scale, refer to Appendix 2 for full scale plan

3.5 Constraints and opportunities plan



Constraints and opportunities plan

Not to scale, refer to Appendix 3 for full scale plan

4.0 Analysis and key recommendations

4.1 Uses and activities

4.1.1 Play

Playgrounds are often the main focal points for families and users in parks and reserves for social activities, health and mental well-being. The existing playground is located on the western side of the park in amongst a copse of pine trees, north of the existing Fairy Tree and adjacent to the rotunda and picnic areas. There are good opportunities for natural informal play to extend under the existing trees.

The existing playground was constructed in 2009 and is close to reaching the end of its usable life. Accessibility and play opportunities are limited within the current layout and there are signs of rot at the base of the timber posts.



The play structure was designed with a mound approx. 2.0 – 2.5m high to the north side. The mound has a lawn surface to the north and synthetic rubber surface to the east. Although the mound is a nice feature introducing a high point to the overall park, the synthetic surface can be slippery, and the mound impedes views.

Given its current condition and restrictions, the playground will require replacement within the next 3 years. Some respondents from the survey requested the playground be catered for older aged children.



Recommendations:

- Prepare a design brief for replacement of the playground.
- Retain the playground in its current location but look at expanding the footprint on that side.
- Remove the existing mound to improve supervision sightlines and reduce risk of slip on the embankment surface.
- Design a new playground that considers users of all abilities and equipment for a wider age range.
- Provide accessible path connections from the main paths, to bring users into the playground, social spaces and onto equipment.
- Include pretend play/creative/sensory play elements as well as physical play activities.
- Use durable, natural materials for construction.
- Provide shade over the play area.

The following suggestions were raised during consultation but are not considered appropriate due to the limited size of the park, and proximity to residential buildings:

- Water play (splash pad type) -not recommended due to cost of infrastructure and maintenance. A small manual water pump or dry creek bed may be considered.
- Sand play (due to limited size of park and availability of maintenance capability)
- A hard court for ball games (due to the limited size of the park and proximity to surrounding residences).

4.1.2 Dogs off leash

The dog off leash lawn area covers a quarter of the park. When not in use by dogs, the open lawn area is used for ball games and picnics. There is a local understanding that this lawn area will continue to be used for dog off leash activities.



4.1.3 Rotunda and picnic areas

The existing rotunda is well loved by the residents as it provides a space for users to sit in a circle facing each other during social events. The rotunda is located centrally within the park, providing good supervision /sightlines within the park. This gathering space is supplemented by the BBQ and picnic setting, north of the rotunda.

The rotunda, BBQ and picnic setting have limited accessibility. The rotunda and BBQ area is located off the main path and currently has an unsealed surface with poor surface drainage. Access into the rotunda is limited by the existing bluestone surface.

Recommendations:

- Replace the rotunda with a new shelter that retains the social seating arrangement. This should incorporate spaces for wheelchair users to participate equally.
- Design the rotunda and BBQ area to be accessible for all users.
- Retain the BBQ area in its current location.
- Provide a new shelter over the picnic tables and BBQ.
- Consider the design of the former primary school building (that previously occupied this site) as a design reference, in terms of built-form or materiality, for the design of new buildings/shelters.



4.1.4 Seating areas

The park currently offers users a number of different seating options within the park. Formal seating is mainly focused within the playground, rotunda, BBQ and along the paths. Some seats are scattered to the east side of the park to the periphery of the dog off leash area.



Recommendations:

- Provide formal and informal seating areas for social interaction.
- Ensure the majority of seating areas are accessible to all users.
- Provide different seating design options to cater for users of different ages/abilities.
- Provide some seats along the perimeter of the park.
- Create smaller gathering areas away from the focal gathering points to allow users a quiet place for reflection and contemplation.



4.2 Infrastructure and buildings

4.2.1 General

All future upgrades to infrastructure and building work are to be designed with best practice, current standards and CPTED principles.

4.2.2 Rotunda

Recommendations:

- Replace the rotunda and retain in its current location.
- Ensure all new surfaces and connections are accessible to users of all abilities.
- Incorporate a design that reflects and sits well with the existing character of the park.

4.2.3 Additional shelters

Recommendations:

- Add an additional shelter over the picnic settings to allow users to extend their stay at the park.
- Design the new shelter to be wheelchair accessible, connected to main access route/s.
- Provide picnic settings of an accessible design for users, arranged with space to manoeuvre between furniture.
- Complement the new rotunda design.

4.2.4 Barbecue

Recommendations:

- Retain the BBQ in its current location.
- When the existing BBQ is due for renewal, replace with an accessible BBQ design.



4.2.5 Lighting

Consultation revealed a strong demand for better and increased lighting to accommodate movement through the park. The existing lights provide way-finding along the existing main path and path intersections.

Recommendations:

- Review the existing lighting layout to improve safety within the park.
- Implement as funding becomes available.
- Design all lighting to be simple and contemporary in nature, energy efficient, and in keeping with the Yarra Open Space Lighting Policy.
- The lights should also not detract from way-finding and disrupt local wildlife during night-time.

4.2.6 Pedestrian crossing lights

The pedestrian crossing lights provide a signalized crossing point across Madden Grove to the train station. The crossing lights that had been recently installed in 2019 are in close proximity to an unsignalized crossing point at the corner of Madden Grove and Stawell Street.

A number of respondents and site observations suggest that users tend to use the unsignalized crossing point due to desire lines and a lack of path connection.

Recommendations:

- Commission a feasibility study to rationalise the crossing points between the park and train station.
- This study should provide a clear rationale for the selection of one favoured crossing point and access route, and any infrastructure replacement options.



4.2.7 Signage

Signs are currently located at the two corner entrances to the park and in the centre near the Rotunda.

Recommendations:

- The purpose of park signage is to provide welcoming, wayfinding and information/regulations.
- Consistent with the Council-wide approach to park signage, signage should be kept to a minimum and information incorporated into single signs wherever possible to reduce visual clutter in the reserve.
- Re-organise signage as required to the entry point from Stawell and Madden Grove.
- Upgrade when required using Council standard designs.



4.2.8 Park furniture

There are picnic settings and seats located near the playground, as well as some seats along the path and some scattered under existing vegetation to the east. There are currently different styles of park furniture within the reserve.

There is also a demand for increased seating in the reserve to provide more places to rest, sit, socialise and contemplate.

Recommendations:

- Upgrade all ageing furniture with a consistent furniture suite.
- Retain the current location of picnic settings near the playground area to provide gathering and supervision spaces.
- Locate seats across the reserve to allow users to enjoy the different seasons.
- Locate some seats in a group to form smaller areas away from the rotunda and playground, for gathering in a quiet setting.
- Provide informal seating opportunities, such as with logs and rocks, where suitable.

4.2.9 Fencing

Timber bollards currently line the perimeter of the park forming a visual barrier between park and surrounding roads.

Recommendations:

- Remove the ageing timber bollards and replace with buffer planting to increase habitat value and complement the natural character of the park.



4.2.10 Other infrastructure: toilets

The provision of toilets was suggested by some during consultation. Due to the size and nature of the reserve as one that predominantly services the local community, toilets are not considered suitable for the site and will not be included.

4.3 Landscape, drainage, planting and maintenance

4.3.1 Drainage and soil investigation; lawn and irrigation

The current lawn surface is in poor condition; lawn cover is patchy and large pits are scattered through the lawn. Further investigations into the pits reveal that most are redundant.

The existing lawn area is currently used for dog leash exercise and informal recreational activities. Improvements to the surface of the existing lawn was listed as the highest priority during community engagement.

Recommendations:

- Investigate in detail the existing pits to confirm relevance and remove any surface pits if redundant.
- Undertake all soil excavation work in accordance with a Soil Management Plan.

Recommendations:

- Investigate the need for new pits, and if required, locate these on the perimeter of the lawn area if feasible.
- Resurface and regrade the existing lawn area to ensure good drainage and ease of maintenance.
- Install an updated irrigation system for the reserve.
- On going maintenance and management of the lawn surface.



4.3.2 Trees

The trees in the park consist of predominantly native trees plus some exotic species including:

- Canary island date palms,
- Arizona cypress and
- An English elm known by the community as the fairy tree.



These trees are predominantly established, with some newer tree planting along the path, south of the park.

Paperbark trees are the predominant street tree species with some damaging footpath infrastructure.

It is assumed that the trees in this park form a valuable part of the Yarra River habitat value due to its proximity to that corridor.



Recommendations:

- Continue to maintain and care for existing trees within the park, particularly the Fairy Tree.
- Consider removal of some existing trees identified as deteriorating with age or in poor condition to improve passive surveillance.
- Avoid tree species that could potentially damage path, road or building infrastructure.
- Consider future planting of suitable species for a changing climate and biodiversity improvements, as well as deciduous trees to improve options for all year sun/shade.

4.3.3 Mid and lower level shrubs

There is currently very little mid or low-level planting within the park.

Recommendations:

- Introduce a new layer of low shrubs and ground cover planting, less than a meter in height, along the perimeter of the park to establish a barrier and create new habitat areas.
- The new perimeter plants are to be maintained to less than 1 meter height to retain passive surveillance into the park.
- Feature species are to be located at the park entrances to identify these entry points and welcome users into the park.



4.4 Proposed masterplan

Landscape Masterplan Vision

To retain a much-loved, urban green retreat where the local community can gather, play, reflect and enjoy.

The landscape masterplan has been developed to guide future improvements, ongoing maintenance and the sustainable development of Golden Square Park.

The park is bounded by heritage houses and its landscape character includes a large open lawn, naturalistic playground, traditional style rotunda, standard BBQ facilities, walking paths, some seating and the much-loved Fairy Tree. Scattered plantings of predominantly evergreen native trees and some exotic deciduous trees have been established over time. Timber bollards surround the park and understory garden beds are sparse.

The community were a driving force in ensuring Burnley Primary School demolished in the 1970s was converted to this park, rather than be sold off for housing development as initially proposed. Today the park remains a much-loved green retreat and its role as an urban refuge continues as development increases in the surrounding areas. We used community feedback to develop and refine the masterplan.

Recommendations - On going

Tree Planting

Continue to maintain and care for existing trees within the park, particularly the Fairy Tree. Consider removal of some existing trees identified as senescing or in poor condition to improve passive surveillance. Consider future planting of suitable species for a changing climate and biodiversity improvements, as well as deciduous trees to improve options for all year sun/shade.

Furniture

Replace ageing furniture with a consistent suite across the park. Seating to be a mix of benches, seats with back and arm rests. Informal log seats are provided to the tea in with natural aesthetics of the dog off leash and Fairy Tree areas. Locate furniture to create informal social gathering spaces and quiet seating areas for reflection.

Water sensitive design and management

Seek opportunities for greater water efficiency, water security and improved soil moisture levels.

Recommendations - Short Term

- 01 Open Lawn area**
Improve the lawn area for recreational activities. Level the surface, top dress, provide new irrigation and remove redundant pits.
- 02 Existing signalised crossing**
Undertake a feasibility study to rationalise the crossing points between the park and train station. This study should provide a clear understanding of the primary access route to be encouraged and any infrastructure replacement options.
- 03 Reserve Entry**
New path and plaque relocated within feature entry garden beds.
- 04 Path connectors**
New paths to be constructed from existing pram crossing locations on surrounding streets to connect to the park's main path network.
- 05 Playspace**
Redesign play space to improve accessibility, play value, shade and offer a greater range of play opportunities for different ages and abilities. Include accessible play elements, routes and seating locations within the proposed play footprint. Ensure all elements meet current safety standards.

Recommendations - Mid Term

- 06 Picnic shelter and BBQ**
Improve the existing BBQ area with a new shelter, picnic setting, accessible BBQ unit and paved surface to improve access. The lawn area behind the proposed shelter provides a spill out space for larger gatherings.
- 07 Perimeter planting**
Replace existing perimeter timber bollards with groundcover and shrub planting over time. The new garden beds aim to improve biodiversity and create a physical barrier around the park, without compromising safety or visual permeability.
- 08 Lighting**
Prepare a lighting plan to improve safety and wayfinding provisions in the reserve. Implement as funding becomes available.

Recommendations - Long Term

- 10 Rotunda**
Replace the existing rotunda and ground surface with a suitable structure that provides plenty of seating and improved access.
- 11 Quiet space for reflection**
Create spaces that provide opportunity for quiet reflection. Include seating under existing shade trees and around sensory plants.

Proposed masterplan

Not to scale, refer to Appendix 4 for full scale plan



LEGEND

- Existing trees, predominantly native evergreen
- Existing Palm trees
- Existing Pine trees
- Existing feature evergreen trees
- Existing feature deciduous trees
- Existing tree to be removed in future to improve sightlines and protect infrastructure. Tree removal pending on on-going and future assessment of tree health.
- Proposed Trees - species to be confirmed
- Existing garden beds
- Proposed garden beds
- Garden bed mulch surface including mulch zone under existing Fairy Tree
- Lawn surface
- Proposed mounds formed using existing site excavated soil, locations to be confirmed on site
- Existing paths
- Proposed path and paved surfaces
- Proposed logs from tree removal work as informal seating edges and informal play elements
- Proposed picnic setting
- Proposed platform table
- Proposed seat with back and arm rest
- Proposed bench
- Proposed BBQ
- Proposed Bins
- Proposed drink fountain
- Existing light
- Relocated plaques
- Indicative dog off leash area
- Indicative future playground footprint



5.0 Implementation

5.1 Budget implementation

The actions recommended in the Masterplan will be funded through the open space capital works budget. Projects are subject to Yarra Council's annual budget process, in competition with other works across the City of Yarra.

The responsibility of implementing the Masterplan will sit with the Open Space Planning and Design Unit. Council officers will consult with the local community on the detailed design of new elements in the Reserve, such as the proposed playspace and rotunda in advance of these works occurring.

Recommendations and indicative timing and costs are listed below. Recommendations around maintaining existing assets are not listed in the table. Estimates are approximate only and will require detailed design and quantity surveying to determine exact costs.



5.2 Estimated funding breakdown

Note: these are estimates based on 2022 rates and must be reviewed and updated regularly depending upon the timing of the works.

Item	Proposed budget
Short Term Works	
Lawn rejuvenation works including pit investigation, grading, top dressing, earthworks and maintenance	\$70,000
Irrigation design and installation works, any other services upgrade required for irrigation	\$80,000
Madden Grove crossing location investigation	\$15,000
Playground upgrade design fees	\$60,000
Horticulture design including arborist report and planting plan	\$15,000
Subtotal Short Term Works	\$240,000

Item	Proposed budget
Mid Term Works	
Construction of new pathways	\$35,000
Playground construction works	\$450,000
Picnic area works to include shade structure and associated furniture	\$60,000
Lighting design and implementation	\$80,000
Subtotal Mid Term Works	\$625,000
Long Term Works	
Rotunda renewal including permits	\$140,000
Playground audit, maintenance, miscellaneous	\$15,000
Tree planting and garden beds including removal of timber bollards	\$40,000
Furniture upgrades and construction of quiet space for reflection	\$35,000
Maintenance	\$15,000
Subtotal Long Term Works	\$245,000
Total proposed investment over 10 years	\$1,110,000

5.3 Proposed masterplan works in stages

Landscape Masterplan Vision

To retain a much-loved, urban green retreat where the local community can gather, play, reflect and enjoy.

The landscape masterplan has been developed to guide future improvements, ongoing maintenance and the sustainable development of Golden Square Park.

The park is bounded by heritage houses and its landscape character includes a large open lawn, naturalistic playground, traditional style rotunda, standard BBQ facilities, walking paths, some seating and the much-loved Fairy Tree. Scattered plantings of predominantly evergreen native trees and some exotic deciduous trees have been established over time. Timber bollards surround the park and understory garden beds are sparse.

The community were a driving force in ensuring Burnley Primary School demolished in the 1970s was converted to this park, rather than be sold off for housing development as initially proposed. Today the park remains a much-loved green retreat and its role as an urban refuge continues as development increases in the surrounding areas. We used community feedback to develop and refine the masterplan.

Recommendations - On going

Tree Planting

Continue to maintain and care for existing trees within the park, particularly the Fairy Tree. Consider removal of some existing trees identified as senescing or in poor condition to improve passive surveillance. Consider future planting of suitable species for a changing climate and biodiversity improvements, as well as deciduous trees to improve options for all year sun/shade.

Furniture

Replace ageing furniture with a consistent suite across the park. Seating to be a mix of benches, seats with back and arm rests. Informal log seats are provided to the tea in with natural aesthetics of the dog off leash and Fairy Tree areas. Locate furniture to create informal social gathering spaces and quiet seating areas for reflection.

Water sensitive design and management

Seek opportunities for greater water efficiency, water security and improved soil moisture levels.

Recommendations - Short Term

- 01 Open Lawn area**
Improve the lawn area for recreational activities. Level the surface, top dress, provide new irrigation and remove redundant pits.
- 02 Existing signalled crossing**
Undertake a feasibility study to rationalise the crossing points between the park and train station. This study should provide a clear understanding of the primary access route to be encouraged and any infrastructure replacement options.
- 03 Reserve Entry**
New path and plaque relocated within feature entry garden beds.
- 04 Path connectors**
New paths to be constructed from existing pram crossing locations on surrounding streets to connect to the park's main path network.
- 05 Playspace**
Redesign play space to improve accessibility, play value, shade and offer a greater range of play opportunities for different ages and abilities. Include accessible play elements, routes and seating locations within the proposed play footprint. Ensure all elements meet current safety standards.

Recommendations - Mid Term

- 06 Picnic shelter and BBQ**
Improve the existing BBQ area with a new shelter, picnic setting, accessible BBQ unit and paved surface to improve access. The lawn area behind the proposed shelter provides a spill out space for larger gatherings.
- 07 Perimeter planting**
Replace existing perimeter timber bollards with groundcover and shrub planting over time. The new garden beds aim to improve biodiversity and create a physical barrier around the park, without compromising safety or visual permeability.
- 08 Lighting**
Prepare a lighting plan to improve safety and wayfinding provisions in the reserve. Implement as funding becomes available.

Recommendations - Long Term

- 10 Rotunda**
Replace the existing rotunda and ground surface with a suitable structure that provides plenty of seating and improved access.
- 11 Quiet space for reflection**
Create spaces that provide opportunity for quiet reflection. Include seating under existing shade trees and around sensory plants.

Proposed masterplan

Not to scale, refer to Appendix 4 for full scale plan



LEGEND

- Existing trees, predominantly native evergreen
- Existing Palm trees
- Existing Pine trees
- Existing feature evergreen trees
- Existing feature deciduous trees
- Existing tree to be removed in future to improve sightlines and protect infrastructure. Tree removal pending on on-going and future assessment of tree health.
- Proposed Trees - species to be confirmed
- Existing garden beds
- Proposed garden beds
- Garden bed mulch surface including mulch zone under existing Fairy Tree
- Lawn surface
- Proposed mounds formed using existing site excavated soil, locations to be confirmed on site
- Existing paths
- Proposed path and paved surfaces
- Proposed logs from tree removal work as informal seating edges and informal play elements
- Proposed picnic setting
- Proposed platform table
- Proposed seat with back and arm rest
- Proposed bench
- Proposed BBQ
- Proposed Bins
- Proposed drink fountain
- Existing light
- Relocated plaques
- Indicative dog off leash area
- Indicative future playground footprint



6.0 References

Council Strategies, Policies and Standards

- [Council Plan \(2021-2025\)](#)
- Nature Strategy (2020-2024)
- [Yarra Ngargna Plan 2020 – 2023](#)
- [Domestic Animal Management Plan 2021 - 2024](#)
- [Draft Transport Strategy 2022](#)
- [Integrated Water Management Plan](#)
- [Urban Forest Strategy \(2017\)](#)
- Yarra [Open Space Strategy \(2020\)](#)
- [Access and Inclusion Plan \(2018-2024\)](#)
- [Active Healthy & Ageing Strategy \(2018-2024\)](#)
- [Yarra Arts and Culture Strategy 2022- 2026 \(2016-2020\)](#)
- [Yarra LGBTQ+ Strategy 2021-2024](#)

7.0 Appendix

1. Open space catchment analysis
2. Existing site condition plans
3. Constraints and opportunities plan
4. Proposed masterplan
5. Analysis and verbatim results community engagement
6. Lovell Chan – Historical Memorandum
7. Existing Tree Health Report



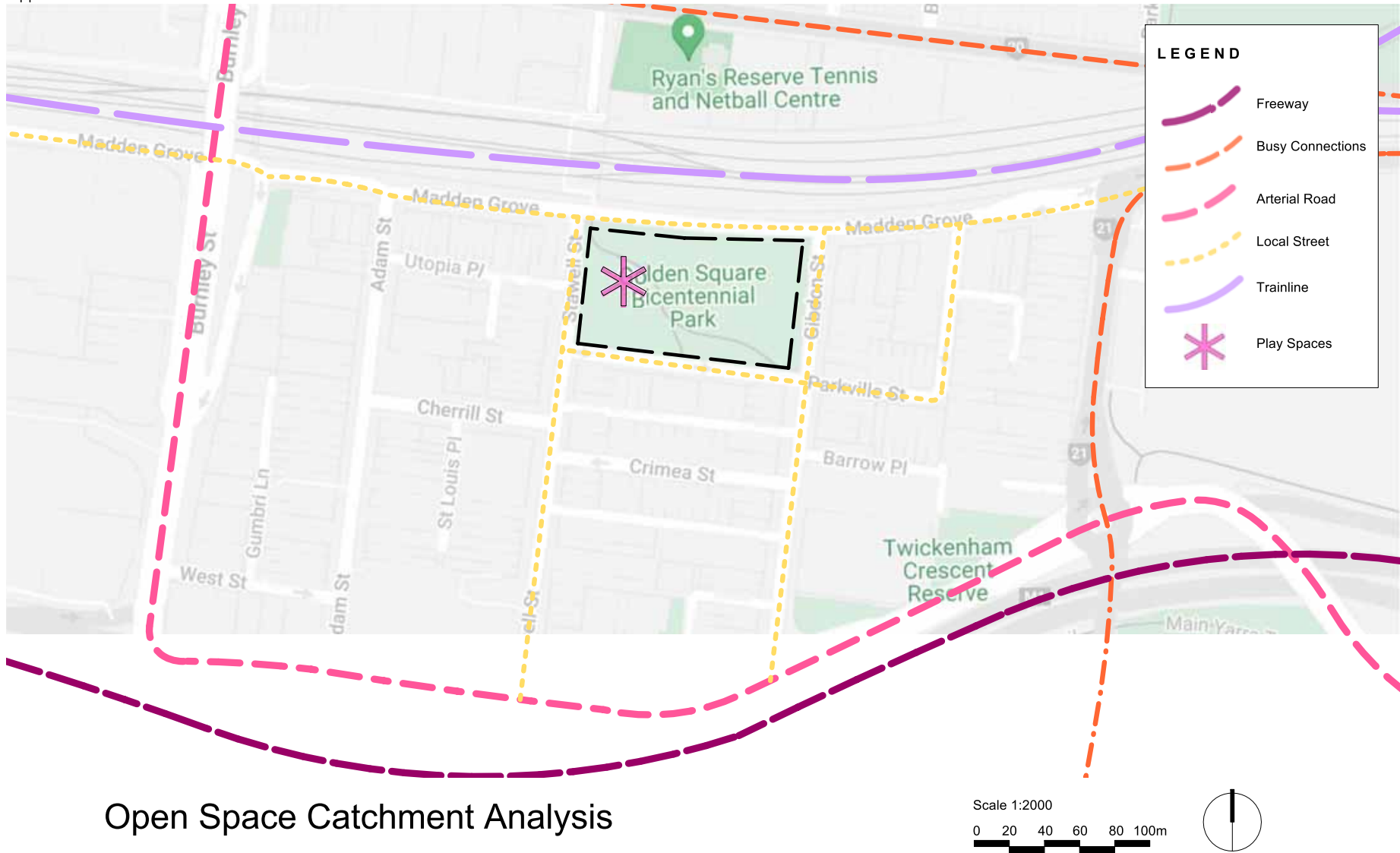


Yarra City Council

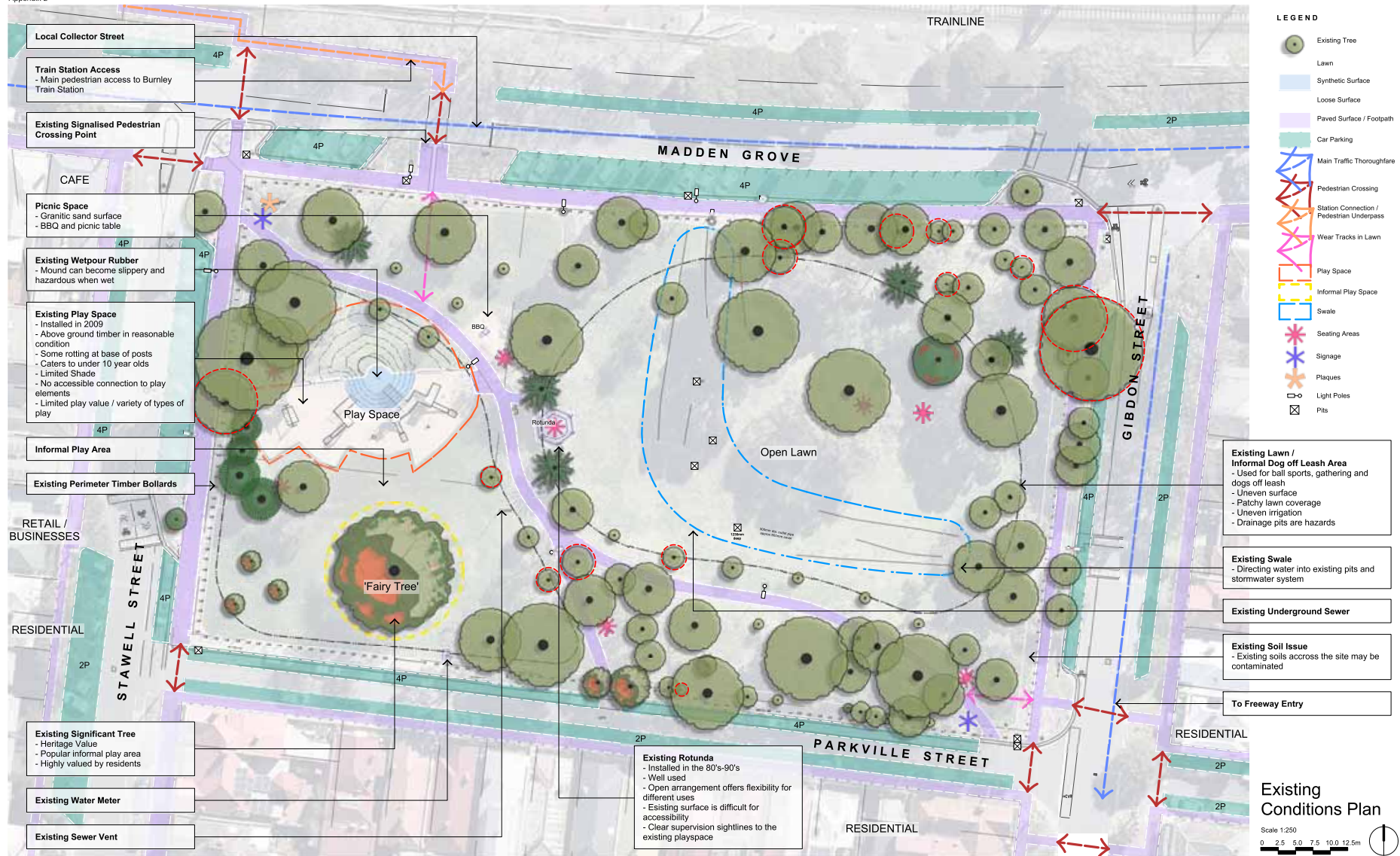
PO Box 168, Richmond, VIC 3121
9205 5555
info@yarracity.vic.gov.au
yarracity.vic.gov.au

Customer service centres

Richmond Town Hall
333 Bridge Road, Richmond
Collingwood Town Hall
140 Hoddle Street, Abbotsford
Connie Benn Centre
160 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy
Bargoonga Nganjin, North Fitzroy Library
182 St Georges Road, Fitzroy North



Open Space Catchment Analysis

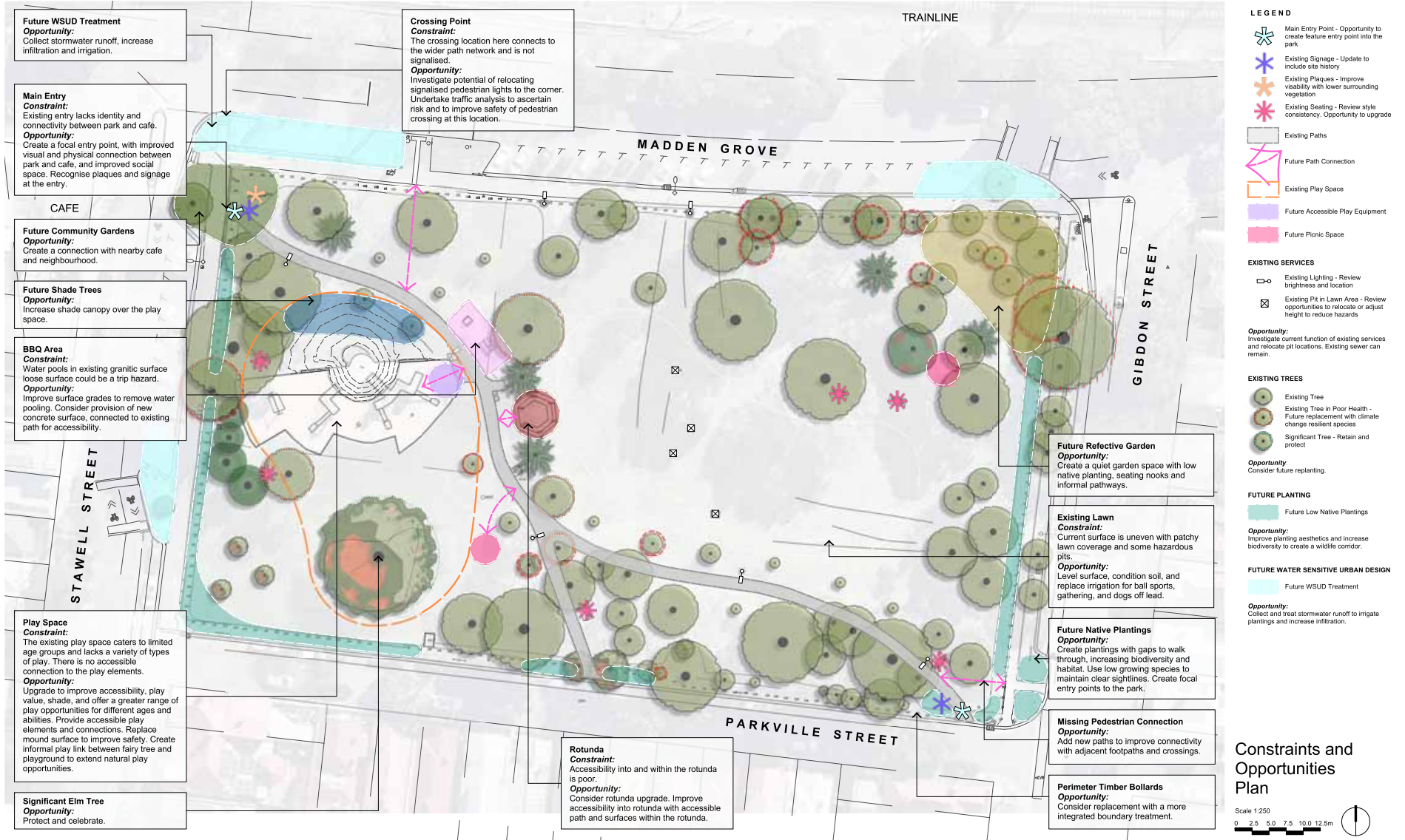


Golden Square Bicentennial Park Landscape Masterplan

Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Country
Parkville Street, Burnley VIC



Job No: 223676
Date: 17.04.23
Dwg No: CP05 of 1
Scale: 1:250 @ A1
0 2.5 5.0 7.5 10.0 12.5m



Golden Square Bicentennial Park Landscape Masterplan

Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Country
 Parkville Street, Burnley VIC

CLIENT:  LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT: 

Job No: 223676
 Date: 17.04.23
 Dwg No: CP08 of 1
 Scale: 1:250 @ A1
 0 2.5 5.0 7.5 10.0 12.5m

Landscape Masterplan Vision

To retain a much-loved, urban green retreat where the local community can gather, play, reflect and enjoy.

The landscape masterplan has been developed to guide future improvements, ongoing maintenance and the sustainable development of Golden Square Park.

The park is bounded by heritage houses and its landscape character includes a large open lawn, naturalistic playground, traditional style rotunda, standard BBQ facilities, walking paths, some seating and the much-loved Fairy Tree. Scattered plantings of predominantly evergreen native trees and some exotic deciduous trees have been established over time. Timber bollards surround the park and understory garden beds are sparse.

The community were a driving force in ensuring Burnley Primary School demolished in the 1970s was converted to this park, rather than be sold off for housing development as initially proposed. Today the park remains a much-loved green retreat and its role as an urban refuge continues as development increases in the surrounding areas. We used community feedback to develop and refine the masterplan.

Recommendations - On going

Tree Planting

Continue to maintain and care for existing trees within the park, particularly the Fairy Tree. Consider removal of some existing trees identified as senescing or in poor condition to improve passive surveillance. Consider future planting of suitable species for a changing climate and biodiversity improvements, as well as deciduous trees to improve options for all year sun/shade.

Furniture

Replace ageing furniture with a consistent suite across the park. Seating to be a mix of benches, seats with back and arm rests. Informal log seats are provided to tie in with natural aesthetics of the dog off leash and Fairy Tree areas. Locate furniture to create informal social gathering spaces and quiet seating areas for reflection.

Water sensitive design and management

Seek opportunities for greater water efficiency, water security and improved soil moisture levels.

Recommendations - Short Term

- 01 **Open Lawn area**
Improve the lawn area for recreational activities. Level the surface, top dress, provide new irrigation and remove redundant pits.
- 02 **Existing signalised crossing**
Undertake a feasibility study to rationalise the crossing points between the park and train station. This study should provide a clear understanding of the primary access route to be encouraged and any infrastructure replacement options.
- 03 **Reserve Entry**
New path and plaque relocated within feature entry garden beds.
- 04 **Path connectors**
New paths to be constructed from existing pram crossing locations on surrounding streets to connect to the park's main path network.
- 05 **Playspace**
Redesign play space to improve accessibility, play value, shade and offer a greater range of play opportunities for different ages and abilities. Include accessible play elements, routes and seating locations within the proposed play footprint. Ensure all elements meet current safety standards.

Recommendations - Mid Term

- 06 **Picnic shelter and BBQ**
Improve the existing BBQ area with a new shelter, picnic setting, accessible BBQ unit and paved surface to improve access. The lawn area behind the proposed shelter provides a spill out space for larger gatherings.
- 07 **Perimeter planting**
Replace existing perimeter timber bollards with groundcover and shrub planting over time. The new garden beds aim to improve biodiversity and create a physical barrier around the park, without compromising safety or visual permeability.
- 08 **Lighting**
Prepare a lighting plan to improve safety and wayfinding provisions in the reserve. Implement as funding becomes available.

Recommendations - Long Term

- 10 **Rotunda**
Replace the existing rotunda and ground surface with a suitable structure that provides plenty of seating and improved access.
- 11 **Quiet space for reflection**
Create spaces that provide opportunity for quiet reflection. Include seating under existing shade trees and around sensory plants.



LEGEND

- Existing trees, predominantly native evergreen
- Existing Palm trees
- Existing Pine trees
- Existing feature evergreen trees
- Existing feature deciduous trees
- Existing tree to be removed in future to improve sightlines and protect infrastructure. Tree removal pending on on-going and future assessment of tree health.
- Proposed Trees - species to be confirmed
- Existing garden beds
- Proposed garden beds
- Garden bed mulch surface including mulch zone under existing Fairy Tree
- Lawn surface
- Proposed mounds formed using existing site excavated soil, locations to be confirmed on site
- Existing paths
- Proposed path and paved surfaces
- Proposed logs from tree removal work as informal seating and informal play elements
- Proposed picnic setting
- Proposed platform table
- Proposed seat with back and arm rest
- Proposed bench
- Proposed BBQ
- Proposed Bins
- Proposed drink fountain
- Existing light
- Relocated plaques
- Indicative dog off leash area
- Indicative future playground footprint

Golden Square Bicentennial Park Landscape Masterplan

Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Country
Parkville Street, Burnley VIC



Job No: 223676
Date: 17.04.23
Dwg No: MP01 of 1
Scale: 1:250 @ A1



0 2.5 5.0 7.5 10.0 12.5m

**Golden Square Landscape Master Plan
Consultation Phase One, August 28 – September 26, 2022**

Summary of Engagement

- **Your Say Yarra Page** – live August 28 – September 26, 2022
<https://yoursayyarra.com.au/goldensquare>
- **Email campaign** – 1,378 recipients opened the email and 75 clicked through to the Your Say Yarra page
- **Your Say Yarra email** – 216 recipients opened the email and 4 clicked through to the Your Say Yarra page
- **Yarra Life e-newsletter** – 6,526 recipients opened the email and 35 clicked to the Your Say Yarra page
- **Facebook post** – reached 524 people and 2 clicked through to the Your Say Yarra page
- **Facebook pop-up event post** – reached 459 people and 3 clicked through
- **DL postcards delivered to 500 residents:**



Share your ideas for Golden Square Bicentennial Park

The master plan will set out a vision for the park and provide a framework to guide future design, development and management. It will also provide clear actions to guide the delivery of the master plan in the short, medium and long term.

As part of the master planning process, we'd like to hear from you. Scan the QR code for more information.



Consultation ends on **Monday 26 September** at 9am.



Have your say

Online
yoursayyarra.com.au/goldensquare

Email us
info@yarracity.vic.gov.au

Call us
9205 5555, or to speak to us in your own language call **9280 1940**.

In-person
At Golden Square Park on Saturday 10 September from 10am to midday.

National Relay Service
TTY 133 677 then 03 9205 5555

Languages

Arabic	9280 1930	中文	9280 1937	Italiano	9280 1931	Tiếng Việt	9280 1939
Ελληνικά	9280 1934	Español	9280 1935	Other	9280 1940		

REF 19,224

- **A1 corflute in park detailing consultation and pop-up events:**

YOUR SAY YARRA

Golden Square Master Plan

We are developing a master plan for Golden Square Bicentennial Park in Burnley.

The master plan will set out a vision for the park and provide a framework to guide future design, development and management. It will also provide clear actions to guide the delivery of the master plan in the short, medium and long term.

As part of the the master planning process, we'd like to hear from you.

Share your feedback

Find out more about this project and provide your feedback online, by scanning the QR code.

Have your say

Online
yoursayyarra.com.au/
goldensquare

Email
info@yarracity.vic.gov.au

Phone
9205 5555

In person
Pop by for a chat at Golden Square Park on **Saturday 10 September** from 10am to midday.

Share your feedback by **9am on Monday 26 September 2022.**

If you want to find out more in your own language, please call our interpreter service on **9280 1940.**

National Relay Service TTY 133 677 then (if) 9205 5055

Languages 中文 9280 1937 Italiano 9280 1931 Tiếng Việt 9280 1939 العربية 9280 1930 Ελληνικά 9280 1934 Español 9280 1935 Other 9280 1940

REF 19_315

- **Residents invited to speak to officers in person at Golden Square on Saturday 10 September from 10am until midday.**

Survey Results

1. How would you describe your use of Golden Square?

Answer Choice	Percent	Count
Passing through (on the way to public transport, work, or school)	40.22%	72
For quiet recreation (reading, eating lunch)	44.13%	79
For informal active recreation (kicking a ball, running, walking)	50.84%	91
For family activities (playground, BBQ, picnic)	59.22%	106
For respite or refuge (from crowds and noise)	25.70%	46

Other*	22.91%	41
--------	--------	----

*Other included:

Answer	Count
Dog Walking	38
Like our backyard	4
Walking/exercise	3
Visual aspect	1
Playground	1

2. What types of activities/experiences would you like to see more of or added in this park?

Answer Choice	Percent	Count
Improved lawn quality	56.10%	92
Shade	39.02%	64
Sun	7.32%	12
More open areas for informal ball play	12.20%	20
More recreational areas for families (playground, picnic, BBQ facilities)	46.34%	76
More habitat for wildlife	30.49%	50
Lighting for night-time use	45.73%	75
Other*	15.24%	25

*Other included:

Answer	Count
Fenced in dog area	3
Improved picnic facilities	3
More garden beds	3
Community garden	3
Playground Upgrade	2
No dog off leash	1
More bins	1
Playground shade	1
Playground fence	1
No toilets	1
Self-cleaning toilet	1
Dog water bowl, possum boxes	1
Yarning circle	1
Night lighting	1

3. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Skipped: 73

Answered: 113 (60.8%). Responses have been grouped below:

Answer	Percent	Count
Seating/furniture/BBQ's		23
Leave as is		20

Make playground relevant for all kids (including older kids)		19
Shade Trees		8
Provide toilet		7
Improve Madden Grove ped crossing		7
Rejuvenate large grass area		7
Provide half-court		6
Provide fenced in area for dogs		6
Fence playground		6
Improve rotunda		5
Do not provide toilet		5
Shade playground		5
Plant natives		5
Provide exercise equipment		5
More lighting		5
Establish garden beds		4
Provide bike jumps		3
Create community garden		2
Plant exotic trees		2
Provide more dog bags (biodegradable)		2
Name rotunda after Ron Pinnell		1
Establish 'yarning circle' to acknowledge traditional owners		1
Provide bat and bird boxes		1

4. What age groups in your household use the park? Tick all that apply.

Answer choices	Percent	Count
4 years and under	19.21	34
5 – 11 years	17.51	31
12 – 17 years	3.95	7
18 – 24 years	5.65	10
25 – 34 years	19.77	35
35 – 44 years	33.33	59
45 – 54 years	25.99	46
55 – 64 years	15.82	28
65 – 74 years	14.12	25
75 – 84 years	3.39	6
85 years	.56	1

4. What is your connection Golden Square. Tick all that apply.

Answer choices	Percent	Count
I live in the area	92.18%	165
I work in the area	7.26%	13
I visit the park with my family	41.90%	75

I visit the park with friends	32.96%	59
I visit the park on my own	25.7%	46
I own a local business	2.23	4

Summary of in-person catch up with staff at Golden Square on Saturday 10 September (10am until midday).

Fiona O’Byrne and Lisa Monaghan (Open Space Planning & Design) and Gabby Penfold (Communications) attended the in-person catch up on behalf of Council. In total approximately twenty people popped down to say hi and share their thoughts over the course of the morning. Ward Councillors Crossland and Landes also came past and stayed for an hour and a half. Everyone was very constructive and community minded. The main takeaways were:

Natural Environment

- People really value the park and the open space it offers.
- People especially value the existing large open lawn area for ball playing, dog walking etc. and wanted it retained and the grass quality improved if possible (during summer it’s a dust bowl).

Circulation & access

- Diagonal curved path from the NW to SE is well used and seems to be about the right width and right location.
- Formal entrances to the park seemed about right – despite no entrance directly in alignment with the pedestrian crossing. Ped crossing hardly used.
- Good parking near the park – people come from Toorak apparently for the playground.

\$ to be spent

- Lots of concerns raised about the need for the masterplan to be realistic as Council has ‘limited funding’.

Soft landscaping

- Lots more shrub and ground cover planting to improve reserve edge treatments, interest, and aesthetic qualities of the reserve.
- The large existing Elm tree in the park, which is of heritage significance, is highly valued. Children play in this tree – bounce and climb on the low hanging branch.

Infrastructure:

- The gazebo is much loved and well used, however it could do with a ‘zhuzh’ up. The existing gazebo has seating around the edges which people liked. They did not want picnic tables within the gazebo as they bring their own and this offers more flexibility in terms of use.
- Pavement in the gazebo is tired and mortar is coming loose – some people raised this as a trip hazard.
- Lots of requests for better and more considered picnic tables and seating within the park.
- People seemed to like the location of the playground but were a bit ambivalent about the playground itself. Scope for more exciting play opportunities (there was a specific request for a spinner), but the existing footprint was supported.
- A couple of comments raised about fencing the playground.
- Toilet in the reserve is not supported.
- Lighting was Ok but could be more.

- A balance of shade and sun.

Officer observations:

- Open lawn area very uneven and not suitable for ball games in the current state.
- Service pits lids and grates in lawn areas should be investigated for redundant status and safety.
- Condition of lawn is generally very poor.
- Health of quite a few of the Eucalypts along the main path looked in poor condition.
- Heritage elm needs better protection. Increase extents of mulching and maybe some kid friendly signage about not bouncing on the tree limb and to be kind to the tree. Nature based play should be considered in future play upgrades as well as accessibility not just for children but for carers with a disability.
- Main entry points from the NW and SE could be improved with alignment to pram ramps/footpath and more welcoming.
- Other infrastructure needs an assessment on the condition and suitability of existing location.
- Planting in general could be substantially improved to encourage greater diversity of wildlife.



LEVEL 5, 176 WELLINGTON PARADE
 EAST MELBOURNE 3002
 AUSTRALIA
 TEL +61 (0)3 9667 0800
 enquiry@lovellichen.com.au
 www.lovellichen.com.au

MEMORANDUM

TO	City of Yarra, Attn: Richa Swarup	FROM	Michael Cook
RE	Golden Square Bicentennial Park, significance of trees	DATE	22 June 2022

Introduction

This memorandum summarises a preliminary appraisal of Golden Square Bicentennial Park, a public open space on Stawell Street, Burnley managed by the City of Yarra. The park is located within the Golden Square Precinct (HO322) (Figure 1), noting limited reference is made to its significant values and elements in the precinct statement of significance (refer below).

Yarra manages the park in line with council’s policies and best practices, including the Yarra Heritage Strategy and Heritage Asset Management Plan. A recommendation of the Heritage Asset Management Plan was for further work to be undertaken to provide certainty as to the heritage values at Golden Square Bicentennial Park and establish appropriate management procedures. This preliminary advice has been commissioned on that basis, and in the context of recent and anticipated future tree management requirements and other works within the park.

As part of this review, a site visit was conducted at Golden Square Bicentennial Park on 12 June 2022; noting the balance of the precinct was not inspected. The comments and advice provided are based on this preliminary work, and not a detailed investigation into the history or fabric of the place. As part of this review, consultation was requested with Mr. Ian Wight (Yarra Heritage Advisory Committee), but no response has been received as of 21 June 2022.

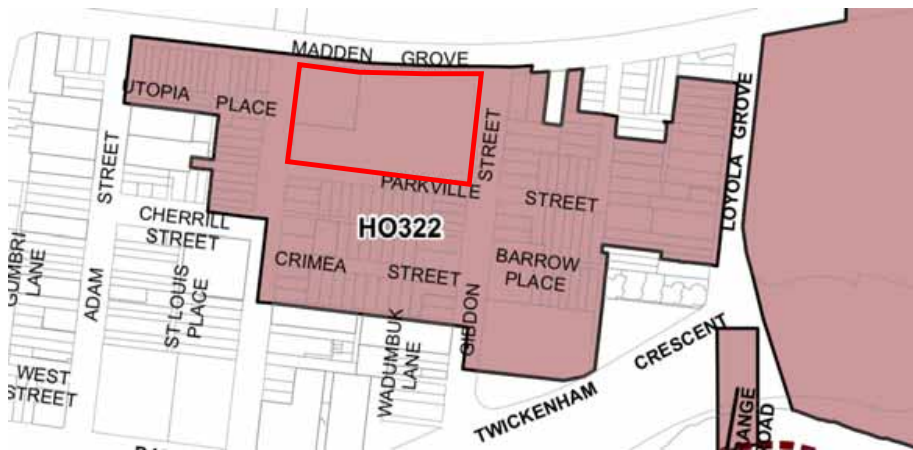


Figure 1 Detail, Yarra Planning Scheme Map 09 Heritage Overlay, with Golden Square Bicentennial Park indicated (red)
 Source: Planning Schemes online



Description and summary development history

Golden Square Bicentennial Park is a 0.8 hectare open space (Figure 2 - Figure 4) occupying a full block immediately south of the Hawthorn and Glen Waverley railway corridors, east of Burnley Station, and bounded by Stawell, Parkville and Gibdon streets and Madden Grove which runs parallel to the railway.

The western part of the block was developed as the Burnley State School no. 2853 in the late nineteenth century (Figure 5). The balance of the block to the east is understood to have been reserved initially for the Catholic Church, however it does not appear to have ever been developed as a church facility; instead, a small subdivision of residential lots was laid out and built to the east of the school before 1899 (Figure 6). Additional lots were developed to the south, adjoining Parkville Street.

In the c. 1970s the school was closed and demolished, and the block subsequently consolidated into the future park site, although the particular history of this land assembly has not been researched. Golden Square Bicentennial Park is believed to have opened in c. 1988 as part of the City of Richmond’s commemoration of the 1788 arrival of the First Fleet of convict ships at Sydney; this is consistent with aerial photography showing that park development occurred after 1984.

Today the park contains a variety of trees, open lawns, a timber playground and a small hexagonal shelter. Most of the trees on the site were planted after the mid-1980s.



Figure 2 View of Golden Square Bicentennial Park from corner of Stawell and Parkville Streets (south-west); the English Elm tree is seen at right (with autumn foliage)



Figure 3 Golden Square Bicentennial Park, view from Parkville and Gibdon streets (south-east)



Figure 4 Golden Square Bicentennial Park, view from far corner of Gibdon Street and Madden Grove (north-east)



Figure 5 R19E survey, dated 19.05.1877; the future Golden Square Bicentennial Park shown is outlined in red; the school occupied the lot within that area marked '1'
 Source: Central Plan Office, SERV

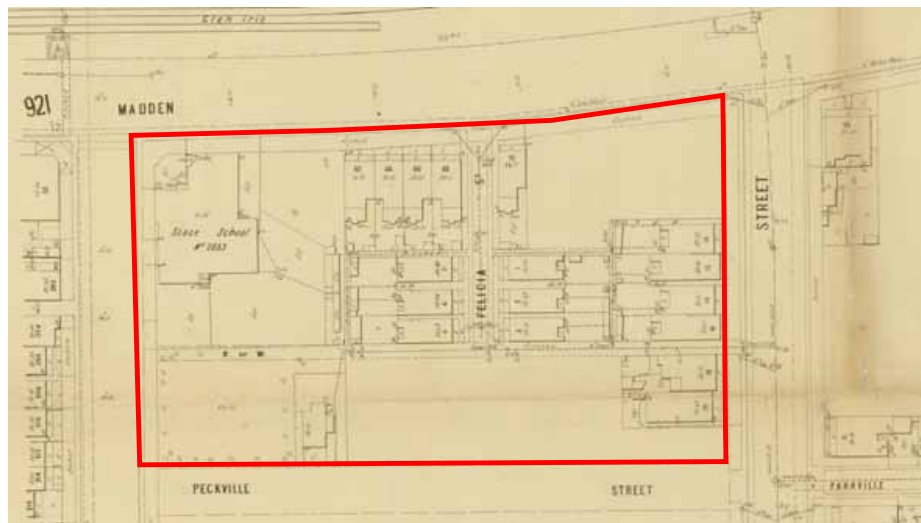


Figure 6 Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) plan no. 923 (1899) illustrating Burnley State School and the residential development to the east of this (red outline, north to top)
 Source: State Library of Victoria



Relevant heritage and planning controls

As noted above, Golden Square Bicentennial Park is located in the Golden Square Precinct (HO322), a local heritage precinct applied to portions of nine blocks of Burnley located south of the railway corridor and east of Burnley Street (Figure 1). No tree controls are applied under the heritage overlay. Within the park, built form is limited to the open-sided park shelter and the children’s playground.

The name Golden Square was reportedly attached to the broader precinct at an early date and did not relate to the specific site now occupied by the park. The precinct statement of significance (Graeme Butler 2007, updated 2013) identifies the following values (excerpted) related to the site:

What is significant?

...

Burnley State School SS2853 was a three storey Gothic Revival style school, built in the 1880s. It was demolished in 1979 and the site developed as a residential square or public park, with some significant residual trees from the school era.

...

Contributory elements also include:

- Evidence of a former historic school reserve and plantings;

...

Why is it significant?

The Golden Square Heritage Overlay Area is significant: ...

- For the Golden Square Bicentennial Park and its mature trees, as symbolic of the Burnley Primary School, and the adjacent church sites, as two significant elements on the area’s history; ...

Historical tree plantings

A review of historical aerial photography provides clear evidence for the provenance of most vegetation at Golden Square Bicentennial Park as stemming from the c. 1988 development of the parkland. This includes the park’s large assortment of native trees, as well as the handful of Canary Island Date Palms also present in the park, which were not present prior to the park development.

The only surviving tree originating in historical use of the site is the large English Elm (*Ulmus procera*) tree (Figure 7) in the park’s south-west, opposite 2 Parkville Street. This tree is clearly distinguished on aerial photography from 1931 and 1945 (Figure 8), situated to the rear of the state school, along with another large tree to its immediate north-east that is no longer extant. The English Elm was identified as Tree #18 in a recent ‘Tree Health Report for Golden Square Park’ (undated), with a DBH of 1100, good health and fair structure.

A 1984 aerial photograph captured prior to the park redevelopment shows just three specimens or groups of trees on the future park block, which by this time had been cleared of buildings and fenced for future development (Figure 9). The remaining extant Elm tree can be seen in this image, along with a medium-sized tree situated on the western boundary opposite 140 Stawell Street, with a more



extensive group of vegetation along part of the northern boundary, terminating west of the former cross-over to a short lane identified as Felicia Street on the 1899 MMBW plan. The western tree appears to have been initially retained in the redeveloped parkland but based on Nearmap imagery was removed in June-July 2010. The northern trees, grown on a set of former house-lots west of Felicia Street, did not have an association with the school and appear to have been removed after 1984 as they do not correspond with the locations of trees along Madden Grove today.

Historical newspaper coverage provides accounts of the Burnley State School's participation in the 1904 Arbor Day, with an event held on the school grounds. The principal of the Burnley School of Horticulture, C.B. Luffman, attended and gave a speech to the students, following which trees are said to have been planted in the school grounds.¹ Arbor Day plantings may also have occurred on the school grounds in 1905, and it is possible that the extant Elm tree dates to these 1904 and 1905 plantings. In several later years, Arbor Day appears to have been held jointly by area schools at larger parklands.



Figure 7 English Elm, Golden Square Bicentennial Park, in autumn leaf

¹ *Richmond Guardian*, 2 July 1904, p. 2



Figure 8 Detail, 1945 aerial image showing the former Burnley State School and the extant English Elm tree in the then-school ground (red arrow); as well as the completed residential development of other parts of the urban block
Source: Land Victoria Aerial Photography Collection

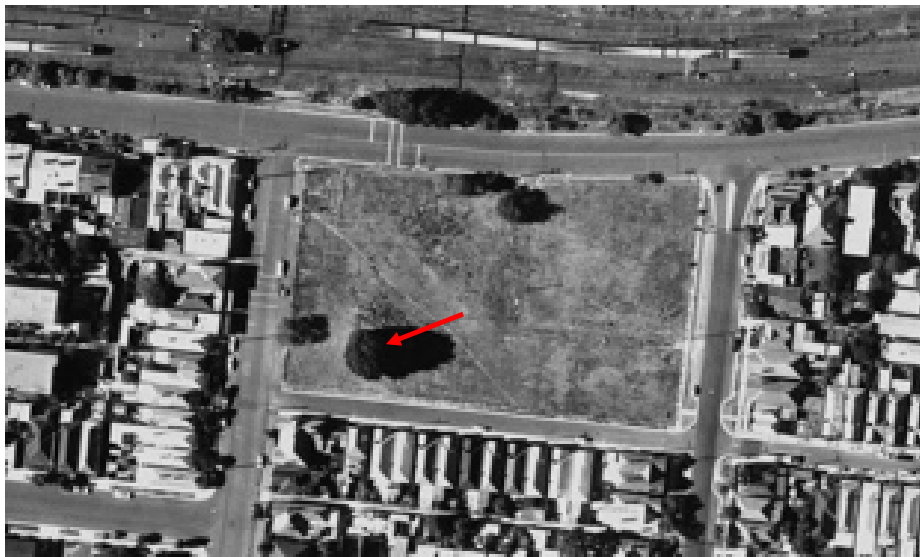


Figure 9 Detail, 1984 aerial photograph showing the cleared and consolidated block prior to its development as the Golden Square Bicentennial Park; of the trees seen in this image, only the English Elm (red arrow) has been retained to the present day
Source: Land Victoria Aerial Photography Collection



Preliminary heritage advice

As presently worded, the statement of significance implies that a greater number of trees and other elements provide evidence of the former state school reserve at the corner of Stawell Street and Madden Grove. In fact, only one tree has been retained from the very small number that ever existed on the school ground. The Golden Square Bicentennial Park is much larger than that original school site and presents no other evidence of the former location and boundaries of the school grounds.

Although the original form and character of the state school ground has been obscured by the acquisition of additional land and plantings of both native trees and exotic palms undertaken since the 1980s, the parkland retains value for its potential to denote and interpret the former site of the state school. However, the park's current elements and signage do not address this history.

As an anchor to the HO322 precinct, the park does represent a continuity of public use of this block, and of some form of accessible playing ground on this site since the late 1800s. The park's identification and inclusion in HO322 has few planning ramifications for Yarra's management of the modern parkland, other than in promoting retention; although there would be policy considerations under the overlay in respect to new built form in the event a more substantial building were proposed on the site in future.

The Elm tree is the sole surviving element of the state school's presence on the site, and may date to early Arbor Day plantings reportedly held at the school grounds in 1904 and 1905. The Elm is a prominent specimen which has had the opportunity for unrestricted growth in the former school ground area, developing a broad and sprawling canopy rarely seen in English Elms in Melbourne. The tree has evident arboricultural significance; a value deepened by the historical connection to the state school.

Although no tree controls are applied under the precinct HO, the current precinct statement of significance specifically identifies evidence on the state school reserve and plantings. In this context, the Elm tree should be treated as significant within HO322, and Yarra as the responsible manager of the park should take all appropriate measures to conserve the tree.

The Elm tree is significant and should be protected, however it is currently not addressed by permit controls under the planning scheme. While addressed by permit requirements as a significant tree (by size) under Yarra's local laws, the specific history of this tree and its intrinsic significance on the site would not necessarily be considered in an assessment of a permit to remove a significant tree by size.

The precinct HO designation could be updated in future via a Planning Scheme Amendment to apply tree controls to the English Elm in Golden Square Bicentennial Park. However, a faster process may be available by listing the Elm tree in Yarra's Significant Tree Register at that register's next update. As the register is constituted under local laws, this would only require the tree to be assessed by an arborist and its registration approved under the processes applied to previous amendments to the register, and would not require a planning scheme amendment. This would clearly flag the significance of the Elm tree, in future management and open space works undertaken by Yarra personnel and contractors.

The history of the Burnley State School and the development of Bicentennial Park should be interpreted on site. A contemporary interpretation approach to the site might also include a more critical reflection on the contested history of the First Fleet and of the commemoration activities that accompanied the bicentennial in 1988, or other reconciliation components.



Summary of recommended planning and management measures

- Recommend the former Burnley State School Elm tree for future assessment for inclusion in the Yarra Significant Tree Register;
- Add a note to available internal management systems such as TRIM or GIS, and any other relevant file, to denote the Elm Tree at Golden Square Bicentennial Park as a significant tree;
- In future, review the information presented about the park in the HO322 precinct statement of significance to more completely reflect the site's development history and current condition;
- Interpret the history of the Burnley State School (including the Elm tree) and the development of Bicentennial Park through signage and/or other elements on site.

Appendix 7

DBH (Diameter at Breast Height)

was measured at 1.4 m above ground level, or calculated from the total stem area if the

Maturity

summarises the age class of the tree.

J – Juvenile (Young tree with mostly dynamic mass)

S – Semi-mature (Actively growing tree that has not yet reached 70% of its mature)

M – Mature (Tree has reached around 70% of its full size and growth has slowed)

Health

summarises observations of tree health made in the field:

G – Good, no significant pest or disease problems, expected growth rates, dense canopy, and good leaf colour

F – Fair, minor pest or disease problems, average growth rates, canopy sparse in places, or some chlorosis

P – Poor, serious pest or disease problems, poor growth rates, sparse canopy, or major leaf discoloration.

Dead

Structure

summarises observations of tree structure made in the field:

G – Good, All forks are sound; no major decay in limbs or stem

F – Fair, Some structurally poor fork s are developing, or decay is developing in limbs or stem . Major structural

failure is unlikely

P - Poor, Serious structural defects are present, either structurally poor fork s, or decayed limbs or stem ;

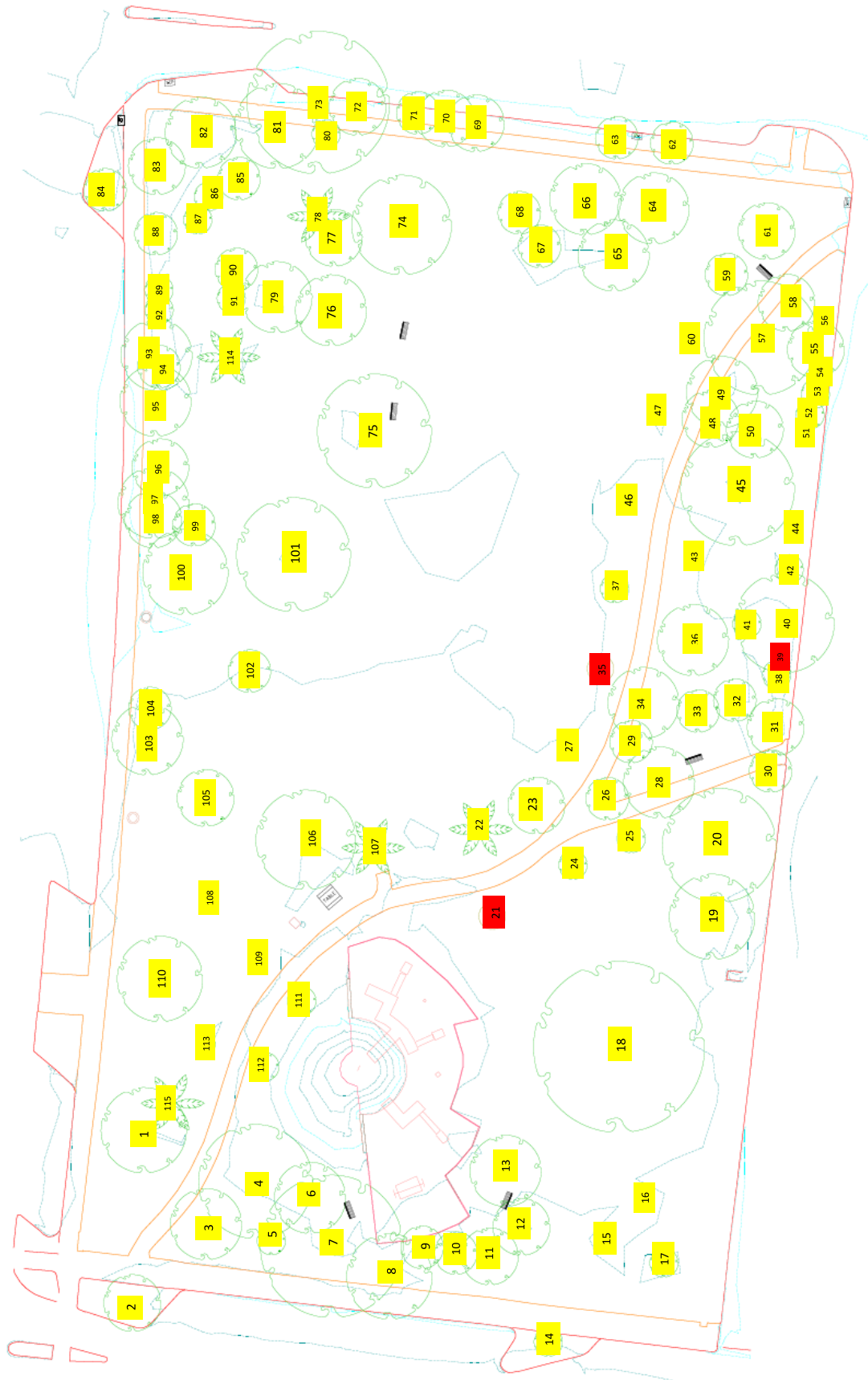
structural failure is likely.

* Multi stem

Tree No	Species	DBH (mm)	Tree Maturity	Tree Health	Tree Structure	Comments
1	Eucalyptus nicholii	560	M	G	F	Fruiting body in decay pocket, halfway up stem
2	Lophostemon confertus	430	M	G	F	Co-dom in main union
3	Eucalyptus mannifera	440*	M	F	F	
4	Corymbia maculata	680	M	G	G	
5	Grevillea robusta	100	S	G	G	
6	Corymbia maculata	390	M	G	G	
7	Eucalyptus scoparia	730	M	G	G	Fruiting body in decay pocket, lower stem
8	Casuarina cunninghamiana	530	M	G	F	Co-dom in main union
9	Hesperocyparis arizonica	200*	M	G	G	
10	Hesperocyparis arizonica	140*	M	G	G	
11	Hesperocyparis arizonica	240*	M	G	G	
12	Hesperocyparis arizonica	220*	M	G	G	
13	Eucalyptus camaldulensis	360*	M	F	G	
14	Brachychiton populneus x acerifolius 'Jerilderie Red'	<100	S	G	G	
15	Gladitsia triacanthos	<100	S	G	G	
16	Gladitsia triacanthos	<100	S	G	G	
17	Gladitsia triacanthos	<100	S	G	G	
18	Ulmus procera	1100	M	G	F	
19	Corymbia maculata	530	M	G	G	
20	Eucalyptus scoparia	680	M	G	G	
21	?					TREE REMOVED
22	Phoenix canariensis	900	M	G	G	
23	Eucalyptus camaldulensis	360	M	G	G	
24	Eucalyptus camaldulensis	100	M	G	G	
25	Eucalyptus leucoxylon	100	M	F	G	
26	Eucalyptus camaldulensis	107	M	F	G	
27	Eucalyptus leucoxylon	<100	M	G	G	
28	Corymbia citriodora	380	M	G	F	
29	Eucalyptus camaldulensis	107	M	G	F	
30	Fraxinus angustifolia subsp. Oxycarpa	240	M	P	F	
31	Fraxinus angustifolia subsp. Oxycarpa	340	M	F	G	
32	Corymbia citriodora	280	M	G	G	
33	Eucalyptus camaldulensis	320	M	G	G	
34	Corymbia citriodora	400	M	G	G	
35	Eucalyptus leucoxylon					TREE REMOVED
36	Corymbia maculata	370	M	G	G	
37	Eucalyptus leucoxylon	<100	M	G	G	
38	Eucalyptus blakelyi	105	M	F	G	
39	Eucalyptus leucoxylon					REMOVAL REQUIRED
40	Corymbia citriodora	570	M	G	F	
41	Prunus cerasifera	<100	M	F	P	
42	Eucalyptus leucoxylon	102	M	F	G	
43	Eucalyptus leucoxylon	<100	M	F	G	
44	Eucalyptus leucoxylon	<100	M	F	P	
45	Corymbia maculata	740	M	G	G	
46	Eucalyptus leucoxylon	<100	M	G	G	
47	Eucalyptus leucoxylon	<100	M	G	G	
48	Eucalyptus microcorys	340	M	G	G	
49	Corymbia maculata	380	M	G	G	
50	Eucalyptus saligna	350	M	G	G	
51	Cupaniopsis anacardioides	<100	S	G	G	
52	Acacia longifolia	<100	S	G	G	
53	Banksia integrifolia	105	M	G	G	
54	Corymbia citriodora	<100	S	F	G	
55	Grevillea robusta	420	M	G	G	
56	Acacia retinodes	<100	S	F	P	

Attachment 2 Attachment 2 - Golden Square Masterplan Report

57	Eucalyptus sideroxylon	660	M	G	F	
58	Eucalyptus camaldulensis	360	M	G	P	
59	Corymbia ficifolia	270	M	G	G	
60	Eucalyptus leucoxyton	<100	M	G	G	
61	Eucalyptus scoparia	350	M	G	G	
62	Syzygium australe	320*	M	G	G	
63	Banksia integrifolia	300	M	G	G	
64	Corymbia maculata	440	M	G	G	
65	Corymbia maculata	460	M	G	G	
66	Eucalyptus nicholii	470	M	G	G	
67	Grevillea robusta	260	M	G	G	
68	Eucalyptus camaldulensis	200	M	G	G	
69	Melaleuca armillaris	360	M	G	G	
70	Grevillea robusta	330	M	G	F	Pruned hard for powerlines
71	Corymbia ficifolia	220*	M	G	G	
72	Grevillea robusta	360	M	G	F	Pruned hard for powerlines
73	Melaleuca linariifolia	600*	M	G	F	Pruned hard for powerlines
74	Eucalyptus nicholii	720	M	G	G	
75	Eucalyptus camaldulensis	870*	M	F	G	
76	Ficus macrophylla	380*	M	G	G	
77	Corymbia citriodora	330	M	G	G	
78	Phoenix canariensis	920	M	G	G	
79	Eucalyptus nicholii	790	M	G	G	
80	Corymbia ficifolia	<100	M	F	G	
81	Melaleuca lanceolata	260*	M	F	F	
82	Eucalyptus nicholii	560	M	G	G	
83	Corymbia citriodora	390	M	G	G	
84	Lophostemon confertus	250	M	G	G	
85	Eucalyptus camaldulensis	290	M	F	G	
86	Eucalyptus camaldulensis	<100	M	F	F	
87	Eucalyptus camaldulensis	260	M	G	F	
88	Casuarina cunninghamiana	230	M	G	F	Pruned hard for powerlines
89	Casuarina cunninghamiana	160	M	F	F	
90	Corymbia citriodora	200	M	G	G	
91	Eucalyptus camaldulensis	170	M	F	G	
92	Corymbia ficifolia	140	M	P	F	
93	Corymbia citriodora	400	M	F	G	
94	Melaleuca styphelioides	280	M	P	F	
95	Corymbia citriodora	430	M	G	G	
96	Corymbia citriodora	320	M	G	G	
97	Corymbia citriodora	540	M	G	G	
98	Melaleuca styphelioides	300	M	F	G	
99	Corymbia maculata	210	M	F	G	
100	Corymbia maculata	490	M	G	G	
101	Eucalyptus cladocalyx	800	M	G	G	
102	Eucalyptus camaldulensis	260	M	G	G	
103	Corymbia calophylla	240	M	F	P	
104	Corymbia calophylla	440	M	G	G	
105	Angophora costata	360	M	G	G	
106	Eucalyptus camaldulensis	660	M	G	G	
107	Phoenix canariensis	560	M	G	G	
108	Eucalyptus leucoxyton	<100	M	G	G	
109	Eucalyptus leucoxyton	<100	M	G	G	
110	Eucalyptus nicholii	740	M	G	G	
111	Eucalyptus leucoxyton	<100	M	G	G	
112	Eucalyptus camaldulensis	<100	S	G	G	
113	Eucalyptus leucoxyton	<100	M	G	G	
114	Phoenix canariensis	550	M	G	G	
115	Phoenix canariensis	640	M	G	G	



7.3 Nature Strategy Update

Reference	D23/239173
Author	Craig Lupton - Senior Biodiversity Officer
Authoriser	General Manager Infrastructure and Environment

Purpose

1. To provide an update on the delivery of the Yarra Nature Strategy.

Critical analysis

History and background

2. In 2020, Council introduced its Nature Strategy, Protecting Yarra's Unique Biodiversity 2020-2024 to protect and enhance Yarra's landscape and waterways that shape the municipality, providing the structure for the plants, animals and other elements of nature that form our home.
3. Included within the strategy was a 4 year action plan for each year of the strategy. Details were provided on proposed timing, internal collaboration and external partnership opportunities and what level of impact action delivery will have on the business.
4. At the 14 February 2023 Ordinary Meeting, Council resolved:
 - *That Council recognise that we are in a biodiversity crisis and that Yarra's Nature Strategy provides a strong foundation for helping to address that.*
 - *That an update report on the implementation of the Yarra Nature Strategy be provided to the May Council meeting and that thereafter updates be provided via the Annual Plan reporting.*

Note: This paper is to highlight delivery of some of the key actions since the strategy's adoption and provide Council an overview of the remaining actions of the strategy and how we can continue to build and further deliver on objectives of the strategy.

Discussion

5. There were many highlights during the first few years of the action plan including but not limited to the below.

Council Action Plan Measures

6. **Goal 1:** Increase the diversity, connectivity, and resilience of Yarra's natural environment:
 - (a) Council joined the Victorian Branch of the Australian Association of Bush Regenerators (AABR). Yarra's Biodiversity Officer was appointed to the committee to represent both Council's interests and to improve officer and contractor skills and knowledge. This appointment seeks to achieve best practice in innovative biodiversity management as it relates to Yarra's bushland management program;
 - (b) Our grow areas of high quality and diverse habitat increased indigenous vegetation target was exceeded by 1,927m². The Ecological Vegetation Class (EVC) revegetation target of 10,000 local indigenous plants at 9 bushland sites in Yarra to improve resilience, connectivity, and ecological function was exceeded by 3429; and
 - (c) 160 advanced local indigenous trees of 6 different species were planted in open space park and reserves areas adjacent to waterways to provide Winter/Spring foraging opportunities for the Yarra Bend Grey-headed Flying-fox colony.

7. **Goal 2:** Encourage people to appreciate and actively enhance Yarra's natural landscape:
- (a) Yarra's Gardens for Wildlife affiliate application was accepted as an affiliate of Gardens for Wildlife Victoria.
8. **Goal 4:** Make innovation, communication, and collaboration the cornerstones of Yarra's nature-focussed programs:
- (a) Key biodiversity staff partnered with Dr Scarlett Howard from the Centre for Integrative Ecology (CIE) Deakin University to undertake fieldwork in Yarra parks and gardens to examine and measure native and non-native bee behaviour, morphology, pollination, distribution, diversity in urban areas, suburban areas, and state parks;
 - (b) The ongoing partnership with Deakin University to monitor Powerful Owls in Yarra to contribute to research associated with a PhD thesis on habitat requirements and home ranges of urban Powerful Owls, including the use of camera traps and cellular technology to live-monitor the breeding hollow of Yarra's Powerful Owl pair; and
 - (c) The platypus was recently listed as vulnerable in Victoria. Yarra is part of a working group including the Cities of Boroondara, Banyule and Whittlesea to develop a project to understand the status of platypus (and other species) within the lower sections of the Yarra, Merri, Darebin, and Plenty waterways. This work complements Melbourne Water's Platypus Citizen Science Project.

Other Yarra Nature Strategy Actions

9. **Goal 1:** Increase the diversity, connectivity, and resilience of Yarra's natural environment:
- (a) The completion of Habitat Tree Research Project that involved auditing 5000 trees across Yarra and mapping opportunities for improving habitat opportunities via a variety of artificial options, including the use of nest boxes and artificial hollows. The objective was to inform Council of the range and availability of habitat resources for fauna across evergreen and deciduous trees and identify the limitations of winter food resources for grey-headed flying-fox within the municipality;
 - (b) City of Yarra, in partnership with Felix Botanica (bushland contractors) has developed an iNaturalist project called Bioblitz of the City of Yarra. The project provides a social networking opportunity for members of the community to engage, learn and contribute to biodiversity outcomes within Yarra. The aim is to collect data on all fungi, flora, invertebrate and vertebrate species within Yarra which will assist management decisions to ensure the protection of species and enhancement of their habitat;
 - (c) Council has designed and installed 2 floating islands to reduce nutrients and algae blooms and create habitat in Alphington Wetlands. These wetlands will be monitored to assess the efficacy of algae reduction in addition to biodiversity responses;
 - (d) We proudly partnered with Collingwood Children's Farm, Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation to deliver the Narrap team Female Ranger Traineeship initiative on Country. The initiative supports the Narrap team in the development of a long-term employment pathway for Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung women participating in natural resource management (NRM) programs as well as First Nations agriculture projects in Yarra; and

- (e) Officers engaged an arboriculture specialist to add value to necessary tree risk works by shaping in a variety of hollows into a senescing tree. Research about the thermodynamic properties of these created natural hollows demonstrate better performance than constructed wildlife boxes in specific relation to reducing heat stress to wildlife residents. The senescing tree works not only retained the tree as a valuable habitat stag, but it is created new habitat opportunities for a variety of small avifauna species. The process involved hollowing out decay and structural faults behind poorly attached branches (likely to fail). Removing decay improved the trees' health and inserting artificial hollow of known sizes to target specific native species, has improved the habitat value. The plan to roll out this hollow enhancement project across Yarra's bushland areas, parks, and streetscapes (particularly along street-based corridors) to expediate the availability of habitat for hollow dependant fauna.
10. **Goal 1:** Increase the diversity, connectivity, and resilience of Yarra's natural environment:
- (a) Planning has commenced to deliver a cultural burn in the endangered Plains Grassy Woodland - Ecological Vegetation Class (EVC) in Burnley Park to heal Country, in conjunction with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Narrap team. A pre-burn habitat hectare assessment of the 0.7ha site has been undertaken. The Spring 2022 extreme wet weather events resulted in limited burning (ecological and fuel reduction) being undertaken, therefore burn programs have been postponed 12 months;
 - (b) Direct seeding using local provenance seed collected from local remnant bushland in Yarra has accounted for 3050m² of direct seeding in Kevin Bartlett Reserve, Halls Reserve and Burnley Park. A further 1000m² of follow up direct seeding has been completed at Rushall and Halls Reserve during 2022/23; and
 - (c) We have 108 advanced local indigenous advanced trees (target of 100) planted in parks and reserves along the Yarra River to provide winter foraging opportunities for the threatened grey-headed flying-fox.
11. **Goal 2:** Encourage people to appreciate and actively enhance Yarra's natural landscape.
12. Implement Yarra's pilot Gardens for Wildlife program to include 25 households in 2023.
13. The grey headed flying-fox won the community icon species vote narrowly from the Silvereye, then the blue-tongue lizard, southern brown tree frog and dainty swallowtail butterfly. Yarra has engaged 13 local community Garden for Wildlife volunteers who will be instrumental in designing and undertaking the household visits commencing July 2023.
14. Future program milestones are:
- (a) Design and printing of Gardens for Wildlife participating household letter box stickers is complete;
 - (b) First draft of Yarra's Gardens for Wildlife booklet is complete;
 - (c) Expressions of interest are open for households to participate in the Gardens for Wildlife program and close on 26 July 2023;
 - (d) 25 + household visits will be scheduled for July – September 2023; and
 - (e) Monitoring and evaluation of program in November 2023.



15. As part of the biodiversity team’s commitment to providing improved access to nature-focussed news, initiatives, and interactions, the following outlines delivery highlights:
- (a) National Tree Day at Hardy Gallagher Reserve on 31 July 2022. 150 community attended and 3360 local indigenous seedlings were planted;
 - (b) Frog Watch at View Street/Alphington Wetlands on 16 November 2022. 25 local community attended, with 3 frog species identified;
 - (c) ‘Nature in the Neighbourhood’ theme will become an umbrella campaign that all nature engagement/environment programs will be linked to. e.g., Gardens for Wildlife, climate emergency and nature engagement community-based events/interactions; and
 - (d) A project to improve provision of biodiversity information on Yarra’s website, including info documenting updates on the status of delivery of Yarra Nature Strategy priority actions is complete.
16. A calendar of nature engagement events has been scheduled for 2023. Over 180 community members have participated in the events listed below as of June 2023. Events include:
- (a) Sustainable Living Festival - Yarra library events collaboration x 3 nature engagement events;
 - (b) Gardens for Wildlife – Volunteer garden guides online information session;
 - (c) Gardens for Wildlife - volunteer garden guides in person information session;
 - (d) National Eucalypt Day – Video screening at Collingwood Library meeting room;
 - (e) Waterwatch training;
 - (f) Gardens for Wildlife - Volunteer garden guides induction workshop;
 - (g) City Nature Challenge – Yarra specific event to prepare and motivate participants for the ‘City Nature Challenge Greater Melbourne’. Included 3 separate events conducted by biodiversity officers:
 - (i) iNaturalist and plant ID event - Railway Neighbourhood house and Hardy Gallagher Reserve;
 - (ii) Collingwood Children’s Farm survey (April 2023) - Engaged people by walking around with families using iNaturalist and talking about the challenge;
 - (iii) Burnley Park blitz (April 2023) - Dr Scarlett Howard presented on native bees;
 - (h) Gardens for Wildlife - Volunteer garden guides assessment template workshop, Richmond Town Hall;
 - (i) World Environment Day - Friends of Labyrinth planting day;

- (j) Gardens for Wildlife - Volunteer garden guides vision workshop;
 - (k) National Tree Day – Kevin Bartlett Reserve;
 - (l) National Biodiversity Month - Grassland walk and talk with local Indigenous grass expert;
 - (m) Aussie backyard bird count - Event to promote backyard bird watching and will include a bird watching field trip;
 - (n) Frog Watch Week – Frog census events at Alphington Wetlands with biodiversity and Waterwatch officers; and
 - (o) Music from the Wetlands – Biodiversity officer guided tour of Alphington Wetlands.
17. The iNaturalist 'City Nature Challenge Greater Melbourne' was run over 4 days (April 2023). The Yarra community was encouraged to upload photos and recordings of plants, animals, and fungi to iNaturalist.
- (a) Yarra had 1,155 observations over the 4 days. 339 species recorded and 47 observers. One community member submitted 700 observations; and
 - (b) Yarra came sixth out of the 20 Councils that participated.
18. Officers have been contributing regular articles in the Yarra Environment News and social media.
19. **Goal 4:** Make innovation, communication, and collaboration the cornerstones of Yarra's nature-focussed programs:
- (a) During 2023, Melbourne Water and Yarra partnered to deliver two Yarra River riparian restoration projects that are funded through the MW Liveable Communities Liveable Waterways Grants Program:
 - (i) Yarra Estuary Habitat Improvement Works, Alphington Park Wetlands Riparian Zone Yarra River (\$30k); and
 - (ii) Loys Paddock Escarpment Project, Yarra River (Liveable Communities Liveable Waterways Program) (\$26k);
 - (b) Biodiversity officers represent Council at the Yarra Collaboration Committee (YCC) to provide input into the delivery of the Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo, Yarra River Strategic Plan (YSP) and its 10-year plan for the Yarra River corridor – 2022 to 2032;
 - (c) The YSP fulfills requirements in the Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murrong) Act 2017 and the Yarra River Action Plan to develop a 10-year strategy for the river that works towards the 50-year community vision for the Yarra, Birrarung. The plan has been prepared through a collaborative governance approach by the YCC so that the Yarra River, Birrarung, can be managed as one living and integrated entity. This group included representatives from Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation and state and local government organisations who care for Yarra River lands; and
 - (d) Partnered with Collingwood Children's Farm, Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation to deliver the Narrap Team Female Ranger Traineeship Initiative on Country. During the period August – November 2022, under the guidance of Collingwood Children's Farm (CCF) staff, 9 Narrap Rangers, including 6 female trainee rangers worked on Country at CCF to deliver 184 hours of healing country works.

Options

Community and stakeholder engagement

20. Officers are actively monitoring feedback from the community and are considering which items can be included into our future actions to accommodate this feedback. The Yarra community is very active in work associated with our Nature Strategy and have played a key part in its success so far.

Policy analysis

Alignment to Community Vision and Council Plan

21. Yarra is a vibrant, safe, and inclusive environment. We celebrate and embrace our diversity and connection to each other and the land. Our community is empowered to work together and support one another with respect and trust.

Climate emergency and sustainability implications

22. Planning and growth prioritises the needs of our community. Growth is managed in a way that has a positive impact on our open spaces and community services. Unique and special aspects of our culture and heritage are protected. The objectives of the Nature Strategy will be considered as part of the development of the updated Climate Emergency Plan.

Community and social implications

23. We respect and acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Yarra. Their voices are involved in council decision making. Their stories and values are visible in the community.

Economic Development Implications

24. A healthy natural environment complements Yarra's built environment and both support those who work, live, study, recreate and travel in and through Yarra. Outcomes of the actions of the Nature Strategy help to deliver economic benefits to all that enjoy Yarra's natural assets.

Human Rights and gender equality implications

25. Efforts have been made to ensure inclusive and accessible participation by Yarra's community in the delivery of actions outlined in the plan. A City which prioritises the health of its natural environment is considered congruent with the rights and privileges of all who live, work, study and recreate within the City.

Operational analysis

Financial and resource impacts

26. While the current plan expires in 2024 and to date has delivered outstanding results, with some outcomes exceeding the expectations set out in the strategy, Officers believe extending the actions beyond the conclusion of the strategy will continue to deliver significant outcomes across the City.
27. There is currently no funding within the 2023/24 annual budget for the preparation of a new Nature Strategy and officers believe that extending actions beyond the expiry of the Nature Strategy would be prudent. The existing strategy is a useful plan to help address the biodiversity crisis and the allocation of scarce resources are better directed towards improving outcomes for the natural environment rather than towards the development of a new strategy. Additional and new actions to enhance the health of the natural environment will be considered throughout 2023/24 and the objectives of the Nature Strategy will be considered through the development of a new Climate Emergency Plan.

Legal Implications

28. There are no legal implications.

Conclusion

29. The Nature Strategy has delivered significant benefits to all who live, work, study and recreate in Yarra and the ongoing delivery of actions within the strategy helps to mitigate the biodiversity crisis.

RECOMMENDATION

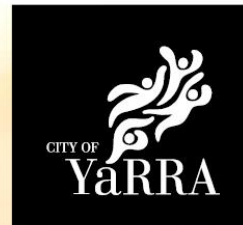
1. That Council:
 - (a) notes the progress made on actions in the first few years of the Nature Strategy and the significant outcomes it has achieved; and
 - (b) receives future progress reports through the Annual Plan reporting process.

Attachments

- 1 [↓](#) Attachment 1 - Yarra Nature Strategy - Protecting Yarra's Unique Biodiversity 2020-2024

NATURE STRATEGY

PROTECTING YARRA'S UNIQUE BIODIVERSITY 2020-2024



Contents

Acknowledgement of country	5
Vision and goals	7
Why have a Nature Strategy?	8
Nature in Yarra: What did the area look like in the past?	11
<i>Geology</i>	11
<i>Past vegetation cover and type</i>	12
<i>Seasons of Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Country</i>	14
Nature in Yarra: What does the area look like now?	17
<i>The Biodiversity Health Survey – an inventory of Yarra’s natural values</i>	17
<i>Key findings from the Biodiversity Health Survey</i>	19
<i>Current vegetation cover and type</i>	20
<i>Significant habitat trees</i>	27
<i>Critical habitat, ecosystems and habitat corridors</i>	29
<i>Current policy and strategy relating to nature</i>	33
<i>Opportunities and challenges for nature</i>	38
Nature in Yarra: The way forward	43
<i>Nature Action Plan 2020-2024</i>	45
Glossary	56
References and bibliography	60
Appendix 1 Summary of Council and state policies and strategies related to Nature	66
Appendix 2 Legislative context	78
<i>Environmental Protection and Biodiversity (EPBC) Act 1999</i>	78
<i>Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murrong) Act 2017</i>	78
<i>Flora and Fauna Guarantee (FFG) Act 1988</i>	78
<i>Catchment and Land Protection (CaLP) Act 1997</i>	79
<i>Wildlife Act 1975 and Wildlife Regulations 2013</i>	79
<i>Planning and Environment Act 1987</i>	79
<i>State Planning Policy Framework</i>	79
<i>Zoning and Overlays</i>	80
<i>City of Yarra Street Tree Policy</i>	82
Appendix 3 Nature Action Plan context	84
<i>Goal 1: Increase the diversity, connectivity and resilience of Yarra’s natural environment</i>	84
<i>Goal 2: Encourage people to appreciate and actively enhance Yarra’s natural landscape</i>	101
<i>Goal 3: Embed nature at the core of Yarra’s business practices</i>	108

Goal 4: Make innovation, communication and collaboration the cornerstones of Yarra's nature-focused programs 113

Figures

Figure 1 The ecosystem services that biodiversity can provide to the City of Yarra community.....	8
Figure 2 7 Seasons of Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Country.....	15
Figure 3 Fauna survey methods used during the Biodiversity Health Survey in 2016. Photographs by Practical Ecology	17
Figure 4 This large old River Red Gum provides excellent habitat value and is a prime example of a significant habitat tree. Photograph by Craig Lupton.....	18
Figure 5 Vegetation cover across the City of Yarra's municipal reserve system	20
Figure 6 Comparison of native vegetation cover between adjoining municipalities	21
Figure 7 Aquatic Herbland, Alphington Wetlands.	22
Figure 8 Floodplain Riparian Woodland at Rudder Grange, Alphington.	22
Figure 9 Escarpment Shrubland at the Circus Site, Burnley.	23
Figure 10 Plains Grassy Woodland at Coate Park, Alphington.	23
Figure 11 Tall Marsh at McConchie Reserve, Burnley.	24
Figure 12 Usage of street trees by various birds.	28
Figure 13 Ecosystem model for the City of Yarra.	29
Figure 14 Plans, policies and strategies relevant to the Yarra Nature Strategy – [Opportunity to improve via graphic design]	33
Figure 15 Average 'Site Condition' components and 'Landscape Context' scores across all habitat zones.....	85
Figure 16 Fauna taxon composition across all 2014-2016 BHS observations.	86
Figure 17 Large Manna Gum on private land in Princes Hill. Photograph by Yasmin Kelsall	91
Figure 18 Eucalypt with a native understorey planting provides a contrast to Plane Trees on a street in Fitzroy. Photograph by Yasmin Kelsall.....	91

Maps

Map 1 Distribution of the Victorian Volcanic Plains (VVP) and Gippsland Plains (GP) bioregions around Yarra.	11
Map 2 Pre-European native vegetation (Ecological Vegetation Classes) throughout Yarra.	13
Map 3 [Placeholder Map – Check with Open Space Planning to confirm use] Existing Open Space (from Draft Yarra Open Space Strategy 2019). Make an A3 pull out.	25
Map 4 Distribution of indigenous vegetation and significant habitat trees in Yarra.....	26
Map 5 Opportunities for strengthening and creating habitat links across the City of Yarra.....	31
Map 6 Location of the Environment Significance Overlay and Significant Landscape Overlay in Yarra	81

Map 7 Habitat trees observed and inferred via LIDAR mapping 90

Acknowledgement of country

Yarra is deeply proud of its connection to the Aboriginal community and acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people as the true sovereigns, caretakers and custodians of the land now known as Yarra. Prior to the colonisation of Melbourne, the area known as Yarra held significant and cultural importance to the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people, and this connection still exists today. The spiritual connection to places within Yarra's municipal boundaries, like the Yarra River, and the confluence of the Yarra River and Merri Creek, extends back thousands of years to the Dreamtime. Since the early 1900s, Victoria's Aboriginal community has flocked to Yarra, to find the sense of community that is the strength of Aboriginal people. The City of Yarra is committed to keeping this sense of connection alive, and over a number of years has forged an increasingly robust relationship with the local Aboriginal community.



Mural by Tom Civil and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Council artist, Dights Falls.



The Eastern Banjo Frog or Pobblebonk Frog can be easily identified by its 'bonk' call that sounds like a banjo string being plucked. Photograph from Getty Images.

06 Nature Strategy: Protecting Yarra's Unique Biodiversity 2020-24

Vision and goals

The land within the City of Yarra supports a natural environment that is diverse, connected and resilient. Its custodians, the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people, continue to care for Country as is their traditional lore. Yarra's residents and visitors appreciate and enhance the natural and cultural values of the land and water, contributing to benefits for all.

Goal 1

Increase the diversity, connectivity and resilience of Yarra's natural environment

Goal 2

Encourage people to further appreciate and actively enhance Yarra's natural landscape

Goal 3

Embed nature at the core of Yarra's business practices

Goal 4

Make innovation, communication and collaboration the cornerstones of Yarra's nature-focussed programs



Why have a Nature Strategy?

“One touch of nature makes the whole world kin” - William Shakespeare

Nature is valuable

Nature is life and includes everything from the land, soil, rocks, groundwater, waterways and every living thing, to the atmosphere and beyond. It provides our landscape and sets the scene of every day, providing everything we need to live and to be comfortable. It underpins the economy, climate, and the health and wellbeing of all humans. Nature includes all the variety of life (biodiversity) that makes up the non-human, non-built world.

Nature is important to every Australian no matter where we live. It is everywhere throughout our rural, urban and even industrial landscapes, not just in national parks or the bush.

Our feelings about nature are often formed through childhood experiences of being outdoors and enjoying the simplicity and beauty of the open space surroundings. Connection to and caring for nature and country are fundamental to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and existence. A lot of us identify with aspects of nature that are unique to Australia such as the Eucalypt trees dominating the Australian bush, the laugh of a kookaburra, picnics in parks, walks along babbling rivers, white sandy beaches, turquoise oceans and rugged outback landscapes.

There are many and diverse reasons why Australians care for nature, from the intrinsic belief that nature is beautiful and has a right to exist, through to recognition of the services nature provides. Known as ‘natural capital’ or ‘ecosystem services’, these services include food, drinking water, fibre, building and manufacturing materials, and other, less direct services like carbon storage, filtering air and water, pollination, protection from storms and floods, and places for rest and recreation.

If we want to understand how nature benefits us, we can consider the ecosystem services that are provided by nature (Figure 1).

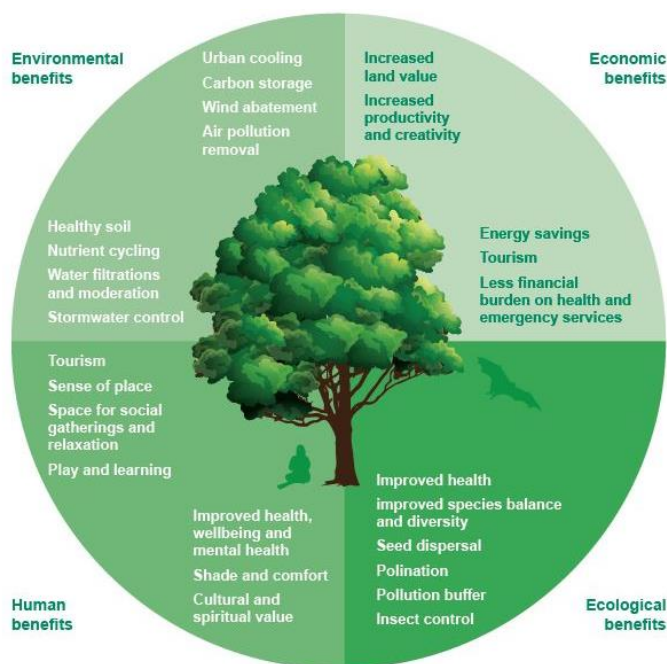


Figure 1 The ecosystem services that biodiversity can provide to the City of Yarra community.

Nature is our home

The landscape and waterways shape the municipality, providing the structure for the plants, animals and other elements of nature that form our home. Traditionally, this land is the home of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people of the Woi-Wurrung language group, of the Kulin nation.

Nature is essential to our health, wellbeing and quality of life

Whether you live in the city or rural Australia, nature provides the building blocks for our very survival, such as clean air, water and shelter. Beyond providing for our fundamental needs, nature also provides more subtle benefits to people and communities. Both traditional knowledge accumulated over thousands of years and contemporary research show that spending time in nature is good for our mind and body. Contact with nature has positive effects on our ability to concentrate, learn, solve problems and be creative. It boosts immune systems and helps us relax. Our health is improved by traditional and modern medicines that originate from nature. Nature also provides opportunities for social interaction, important for connection with other people and healthy communities.

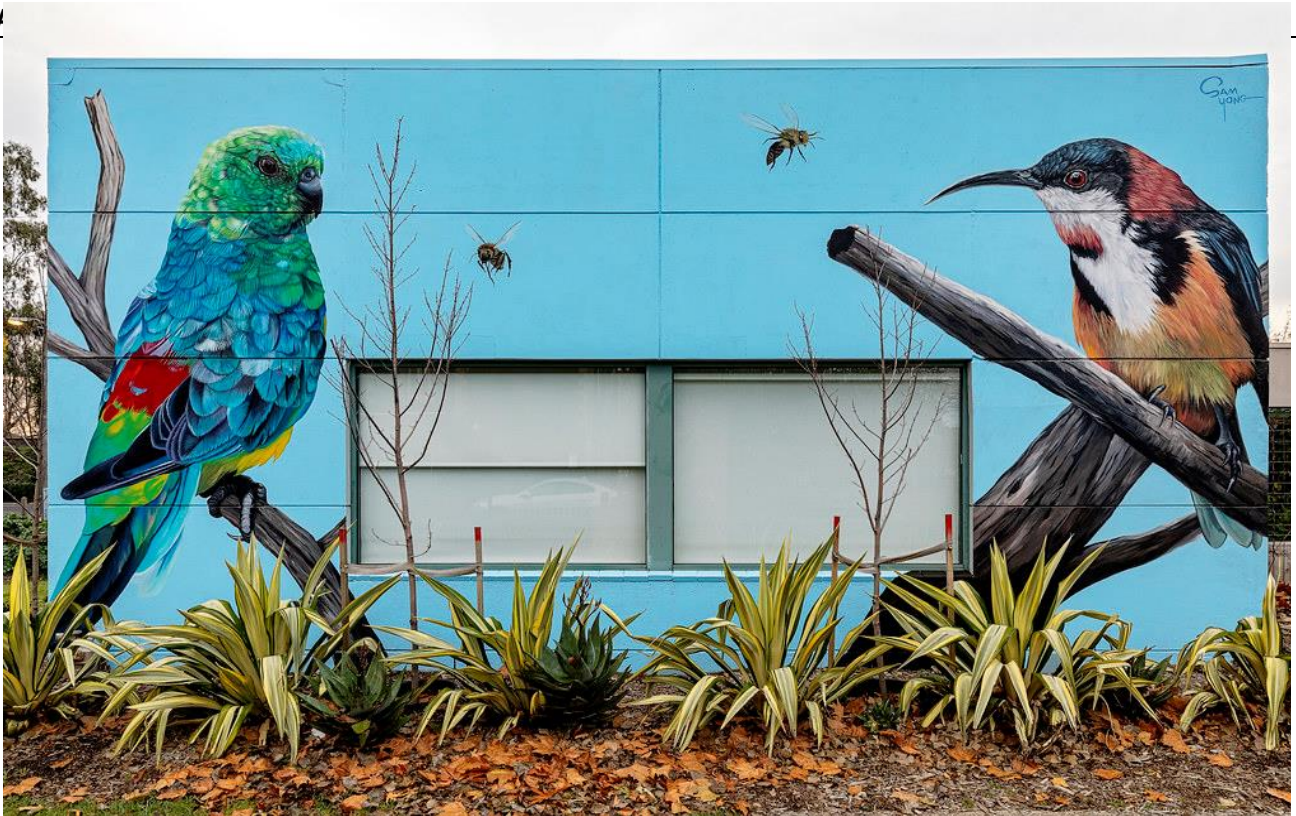
Nature has an iconic status in Australian life that is celebrated in many ways, in literature and paintings, popular music, films, foods and our favourite sports and pastimes. Our epic natural and cultural landscapes, unique wildlife and way of life feature strongly in our sense of identity and underpin our sense of place. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, in particular, have a special relationship with nature, based on a profound spiritual connection that guides cultural practices.

Nature and COVID-19

The Nature Strategy has been developed during a time of unprecedented uncertainty around the world – the Coronavirus pandemic. In the midst of this pandemic, many of us have turned to nature to reduce stress levels, improve mental health and stay physically active. A growing body of research, including research by International conservation scientists, points to a direct link between the destruction of nature and disease outbreaks, highlighting the role of protecting and restoring nature in preventing future pandemics.

During the Coronavirus pandemic, greater contact between humans and their environment has been one of the most important responses to the crisis, from a mental health perspective. As we respond to the pandemic, the attraction of nature (parks, reserves, gardens, green open spaces, waterways and the bush) for improving well-being cannot be underestimated. Science has long established that access to urban green areas such as parks and waterways has positive impacts on health, typically due to improved air quality, increased physical activity, social cohesion, and stress reduction. It has also been shown that interaction with nature helps us to better recover from stress.

The Coronavirus pandemic has given the world an opportunity to reassess its relationship with nature and get on track to a more sustainable future. Right now, probably more than any other time in human habitation of earth, the value of nature is being recognised.



Local artist Sam Yong is has created a stunning mural that reflects the Biodiversity Arts Project that Yarra Senior Citizens are undertaking in 2020. The vibrant artwork showcases some of Yarra's native flora and fauna. Photographer Unknown.

Nature in Yarra: What did the area look like in the past?

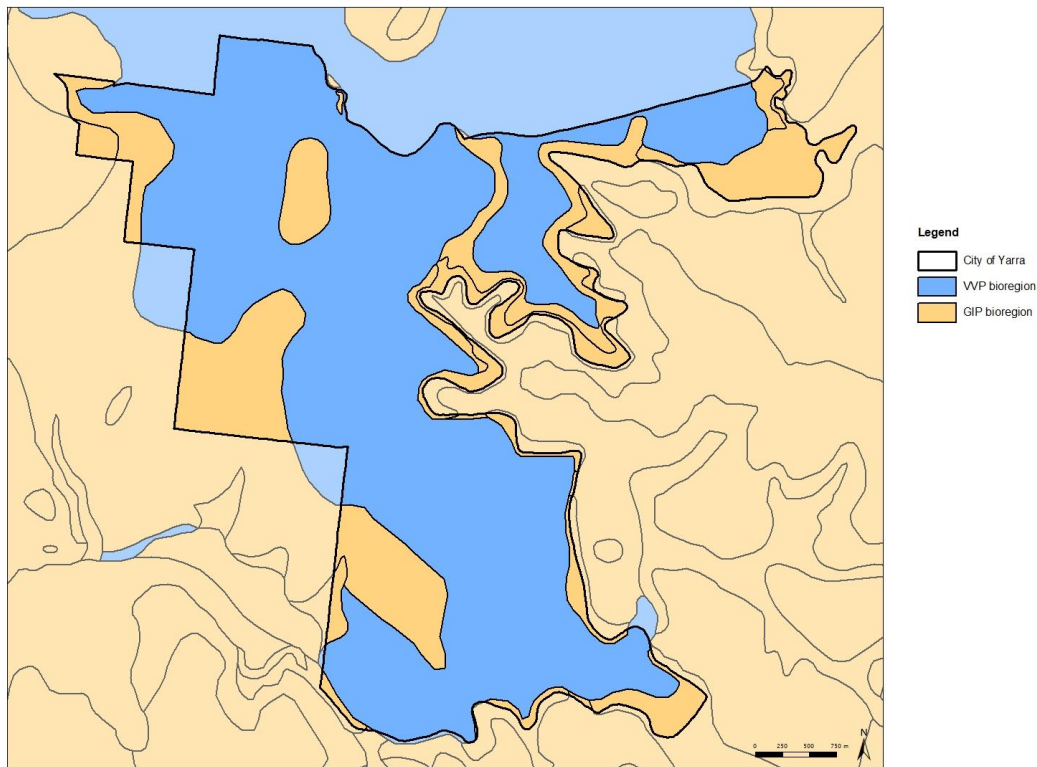
Geology

The landscape of Yarra has been shaped by its geology. It sits at the junction of two distinctly different geological regions that in this case also geographically align with two bioregions (**Map 1**). These bioregions are generally separated by the Yarra River:

- The Victorian Volcanic Plains (VVP) Bioregion, characterised by its basaltic rock and clay soils, formed by volcanic eruptions to the west of Melbourne covering the majority of the municipality; and
- The Gippsland Plains (GP) Bioregion: associated with sedimentary, layered geology of Silurian siltstones, Tertiary aged sandstones and Quaternary aged basalt. Each of these layers is much older than the western plains basalt and is derived from times when Victoria sat within a deep ocean basin.

The majority of Yarra's topography is gently undulating, which is characteristic of the Volcanic Plains. Subtle changes in topography are evident at Richmond Hill, where the elevation facilitates great views across the municipality, formerly attracting some of the district's first grand homes and churches. Conversely the lower areas, formerly known as the Fitzroy, Collingwood and Richmond 'Flats,' include the wet and swampy ground which was formerly part of the Yarra River floodplain.

The waterway corridors provide the most significant variation in topography across the City of Yarra, with areas of the Darebin Creek, Merri Creek and the Yarra River deeply incised at various locations. Of course, much of the natural topography has been modified with the urban development of the area.



Map 1 Distribution of the Victorian Volcanic Plains (VVP) and Gippsland Plains (GP) bioregions around Yarra.

Past vegetation cover and type

In the past, Yarra was mostly covered by Plains Grassy Woodland, which also dominated much of the surrounding landscape (**Map 2**). This vegetation community consisted of a low density of large trees, mostly River Red Gums *Eucalyptus camaldulensis*, with an understorey of some small shrubs, but covered mostly by grasses and herbaceous species.

Along the waterways, the Floodplain Riparian Woodland, Riparian Woodland, and Steam Bank Shrubland communities thrived. These areas were also likely dominated by River Red Gums, perhaps with some Swamp Gums *Eucalyptus ovata*, *Acacia* species, and a rich understorey of shrubs, sedges, rushes, herbs, and grasses. Much of the areas around the waterways would have been subject to seasonal variations in water level, and changed throughout the year.

The area around Yarra would have supported a vast array of wildlife including Quolls, Plains Wanderers, Bandicoots, Bettongs, and perhaps even Diprotodon, a large wombat-like marsupial the size of a hippopotamus, until their extinction about 60,000 years ago.

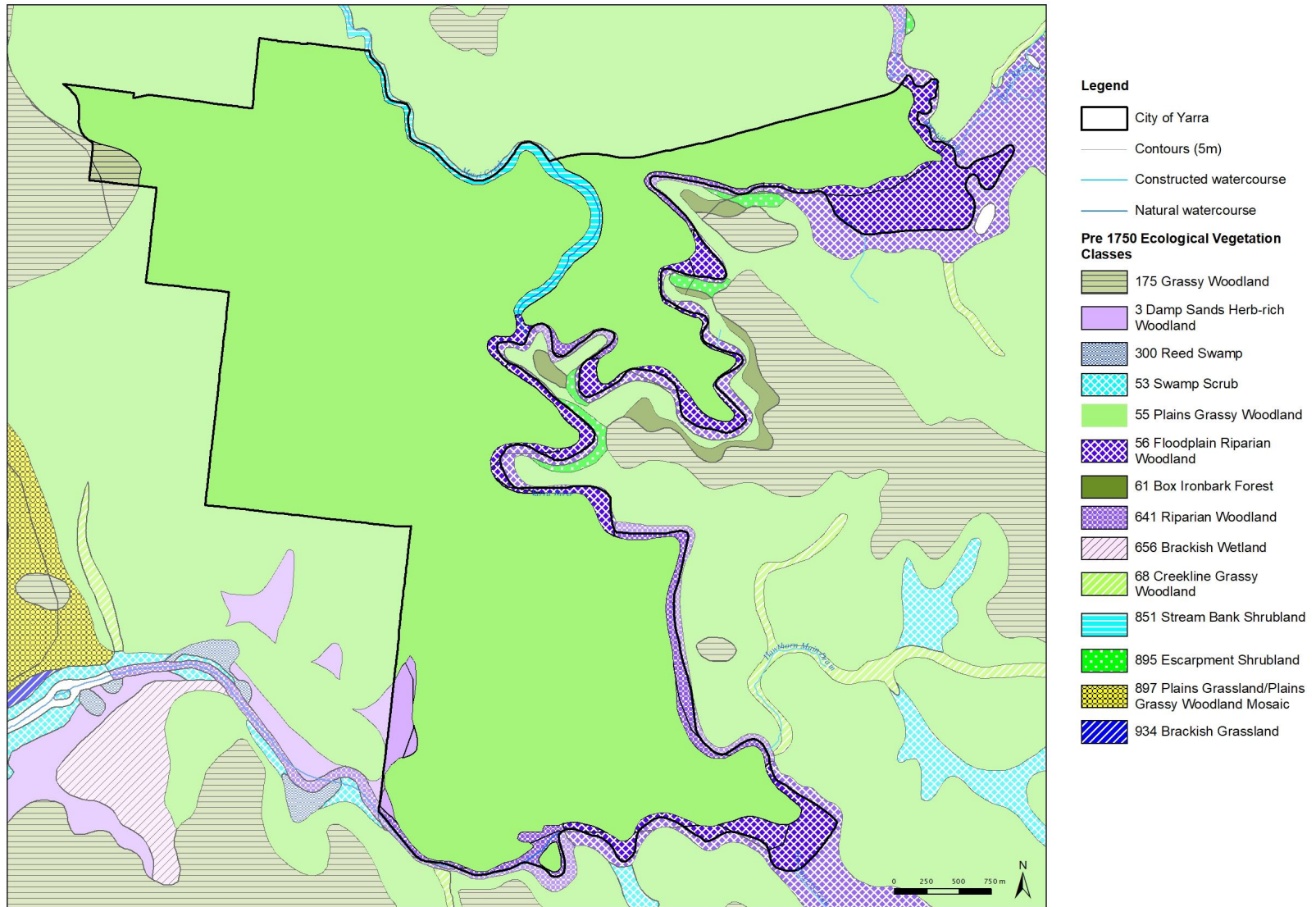
While much of this diversity is now lost, some still remains within pockets of Yarra, and this knowledge can provide inspiration for restoration practices into the future.

'Native' and 'indigenous' vegetation

The terms 'native vegetation' and 'indigenous vegetation' are often colloquially used interchangeably possibly due to the lack of distinction in planning law language. Typically "native vegetation" refers to Australian plant species though the language in the Victorian Planning Scheme often associates the term towards plant species only found in Victoria.

When ecologists implement vegetation assessments to address planning law criteria their methodologies need only align to those state wide based and interchangeable definitions. However, the prevailing definition of 'indigenous vegetation' for practitioners from the science community is that species are of local genetic provenance, and reside within the same bioregion.

Therefore, with the context of this Strategy, viewed through a scientific lens, 'indigenous vegetation' means plants that are local to the Yarra area, and "native vegetation" means plants from Australia.



Map 2 Pre-European native vegetation (Ecological Vegetation Classes) throughout Yarra.

Seasons of Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Country

Traditional owners have developed a deep understanding of natural systems and processes through more than 40,000 years of experience and connection to country, with an example being understanding of seasons.

Like many Traditional owner groups around Australia, the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people have a detailed, local understanding of the seasons and the environment. Each season is marked by the movement of the stars in the night sky and changes in the weather, coinciding with the life cycles of plants and animals. Seasons were also defined not only by temperature and the amount of rainfall, but also by more subtle distinctions related to patterns of rainfall and the types of events. Reading this seasonal rhythm helped maximise the availability of food and shelter. When food was plentiful there were opportunities to carry out ritual responsibilities and ceremonial gatherings.

In Melbourne and surrounds, there are seven annual seasons alongside two non-annual seasons: flood and fire seasons. Flood season is likely to occur on average about every 28 years, and fire season occurs on average about every seven years. (Aboriginal Victoria)

Lifestyle depended very much on the rhythm of the seasons. Traditional owners moved over their extensive territories in regular cycles, maximising the availability of food and shelter. When food was plentiful there were opportunities to carry out ritual responsibilities and opportunities for ceremonial gatherings.

They were always mindful of the seasons in selecting the localities in which to spend their time, taking into account not only the natural features of the ground, but the facilities for obtaining food.

Much was known about the stars and the seasons. People could read the sky. For example, they would know that when a particular constellation appeared it was time to hunt a particular animal, or dig up a particular plant. The flowering of particular plants was often used to mark seasonal events. Even today, fisherman use the flowering of the Coast Tea-tree in early November to mark the entry of Snapper into Port Phillip Bay.

7 Seasons of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Country

Museums Victoria have named the seasons after the Woi Wurrung language names for eels, wombats, and orchid, tadpoles and grass, but it is not known if these names were used by the Woi Wurrung. According to Museums Victoria;

"The Kulin have a detailed local understanding of the seasons and the environment. Each season is marked by the movement of the stars in the night sky and changes in the weather, coinciding with the life cycles of plants and animals."

Their calendar has seven seasons:

Guling Orchid Season, (August) and it is marked by orchids flowering, the silver wattle bursting into colour and male koalas bellowing at night.

Poorneet Tadpole Season, (September and October) is when temperatures rise, rain continues and the pied currawongs call loudly. The days and nights are of equal length.

Buath Gurru Grass Flowering Season, (November) is warm and it often rains. (A good thing to remember as we start planning picnics.)

Kangaroo-Apple Season, (December) is marked by its changeable, thundery weather, longer days and shorter nights.

Biderap Dry Season, (January and February) has high temperatures and low rainfall.

Luk (Eel) Season, (March) is when the hot winds stop and the temperatures cool, while the manna gums flower and the days and nights are again equal in length.

Waring Wombat Season, (April-July) has cool, rainy days and misty mornings, with our highest rainfall and lowest temperatures.

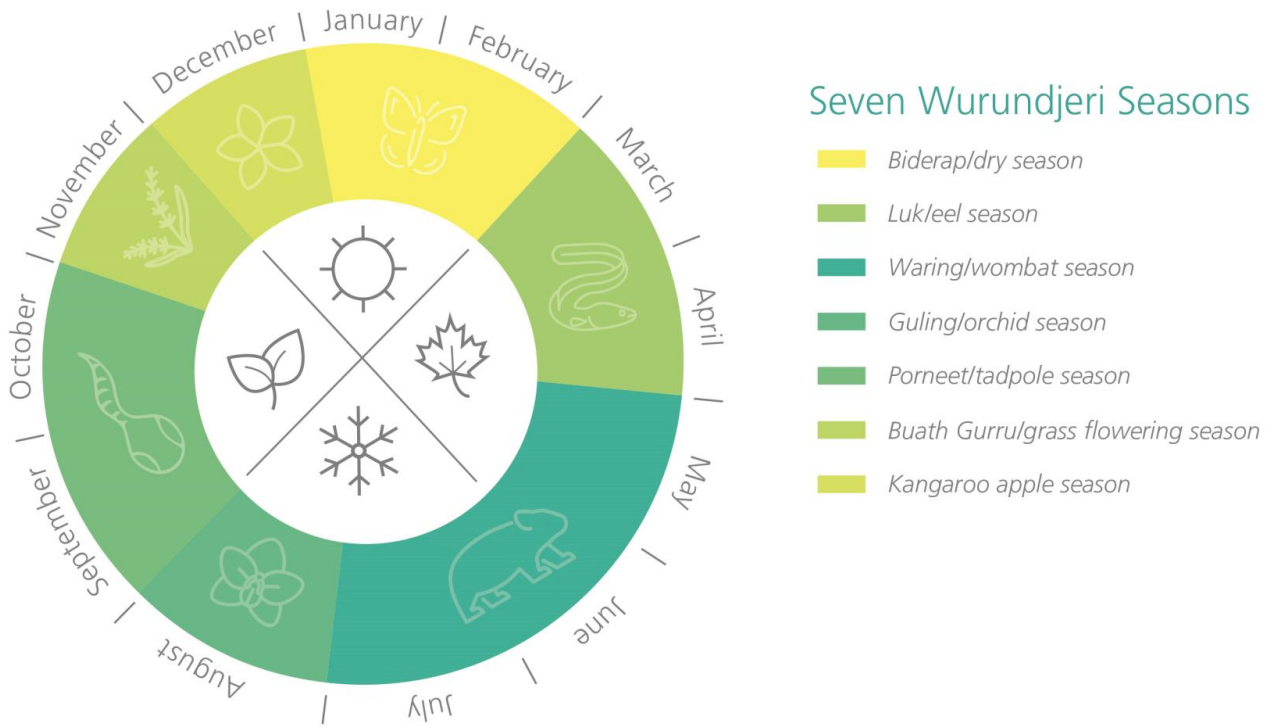


Figure 2 7 Seasons of Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Country.



Nature in Yarra: What does the area look like now?

The Biodiversity Health Survey – an inventory of Yarra's natural values

The Biodiversity Health Survey (BHS) was a two-year study that aimed to develop an inventory of the biodiversity values present across the open space areas within the City of Yarra.

The project involved a comprehensive survey of various open space areas across the municipality. This included 30 open space reserves such as Hall Reserve, Edinburgh Gardens and Alphington Park Wetland; 10 pocket parks including Flockhart Reserve, Holden Byrne Park and Dame Nellie Melba Park; and 12 streetscapes including Heidelberg Road, Hoddle Street and Pigdon Street. An important aspect of the study was the inclusion of areas not typically considered to be associated with the presence of native plants and animals.

The survey methods (**Figure 3**) used as part of the study aimed to capture the broad array of primarily native animals and also plants still existing within the City of Yarra. The survey included the use of:

- Database resources from CSIRO Entomology Dept., Birdlife & Victorian Biodiversity Atlas to name a few,
- Assessment methods ascribing ecological vegetation types and functional coverage,
- identification of land cover and vegetation types,
- assessment of fauna habitat values: leaf litter, significant habitat trees (**Figure 4**) and hollow abundance,
- documentation of plant species diversity, including indigenous plants and weeds,
- daytime (diurnal) and night-time (nocturnal) bird surveys,
- frog and reptile surveys,
- microbat surveys using specialised bat detector devices, and
- wildlife camera trap surveys.



Figure 3 Fauna survey methods used during the Biodiversity Health Survey in 2016. Photographs by Practical Ecology

What are significant habitat trees?

- Indigenous trees (originate from the local area) that also qualify as Large Old Trees under the *Habitat Hectare* method, large dead stags, or trees that support a number of hollows.
- Australian native or exotic trees that provide shelter (hollows or canopy to nest in) and/or important food resources (flowers, fruits, seeds, and insects) for fauna in the local environment.
- Larger trees which provide stepping stones for fauna movement, patches of trees connecting bushland canopy that links fauna to water, food and sheltering opportunities. The most valuable significant trees harbour multiple sized hollows, retain bark furrows and have extensive connected canopy cover which provides nesting real estate and predation security.



Figure 4 This large old River Red Gum provides excellent habitat value and is a prime example of a significant habitat tree. Photograph by Craig Lupton

Key findings from the Biodiversity Health Survey



Yarra has large areas of valuable bushland

- Significant areas of bushland were mapped at Burnley Park, and Hall, Kevin Bartlett & Rushall Recreation Reserves; providing great habitat for native plants and animals.



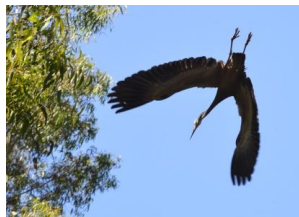
Yarra has a high diversity of plants and animals

- 430 plant species were recorded with 209 indigenous to Yarra.
- A diversity of animals recorded including a number of birds, mammals, reptiles, frogs and insects.
- Diversity of bat species was high, largely microbats (7 species), including Eastern False Pipistrelle (pictured) and Yellow-bellied Sheathtail Bat.
- National and state significant animals were recorded including Grey-headed Flying Fox and Nankeen Night-heron.



Yarra contains a number of important wetland habitats

- Alphington Park Wetland, and McConchie Reserve & its surrounds ('Burnley Harbour') provide habitat for a variety of wetland plant and animal species.
- Wetlands were a hotspot of bird and microbat activity.



Yarra is connected with wildlife corridors and urban stepping stones

- Wildlife corridors were identified along the Merri Creek, Yarra River, and the Park Street Linear reserves.
- Urban parks such as Edinburgh Gardens and Darling Gardens provide 'stepping stones' across the Yarra landscape between larger areas of fauna habitat.



Yarra has a variety of significant habitat trees

- Significant River Red Gums and Sugar Gums were mapped in Burnley Park and Kevin Bartlett Reserve.
- Other hollow-bearing native trees and larger canopy trees including non-native species like Oaks were mapped across the municipality.

Current vegetation cover and type

Across the City of Yarra open space and sporting reserves, exotic vegetation patches (mostly lawns) and planted tree canopy cover (combining non-local native and exotic scattered trees and tree patches) were the dominant land cover types. This was followed by indigenous vegetation patches and garden beds (Figure 5). There was also a reasonably high cover of scattered indigenous trees. This suggests there are considerable opportunities to increase plantings of midstorey shrubs, and groundstorey grasses and herbaceous species in Yarra's reserves.

In total, the City of Yarra includes 263.4 hectares (ha) of publically accessible open space, with an additional 85.3 ha of 'restricted access' open space, namely sporting ground/s or golf courses (Thompson Berril Landscape Design 2016), shown in Map 3 on Page 25.

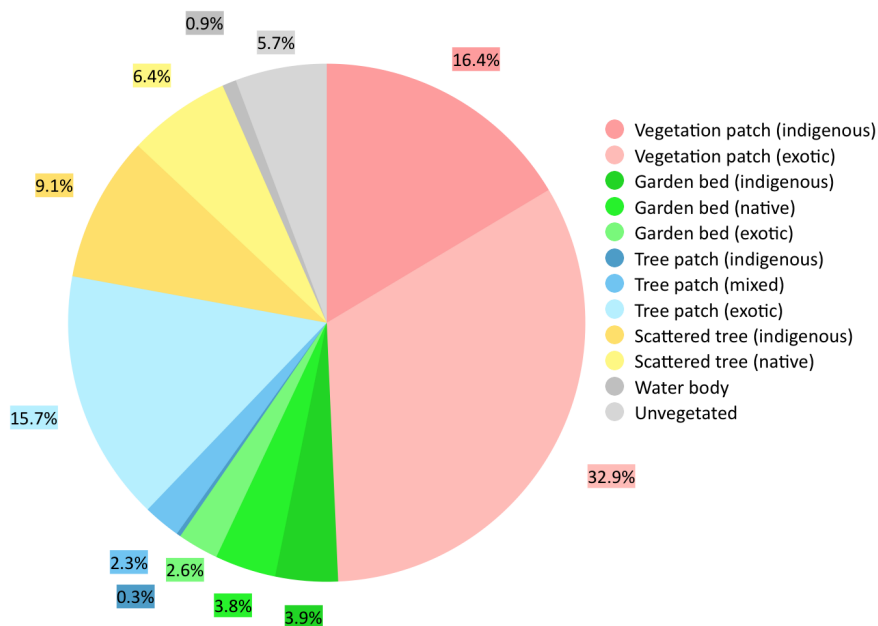


Figure 5 Vegetation cover across the City of Yarra's municipal reserve system

When compared with neighbouring municipalities (Figure 6), a relatively high proportion of the City of Yarra landscape is attributable to native vegetation cover. This is almost as high as the City of Banyule, with its much less urbanised landscape. Of Yarra's native vegetation cover, 6% occurs within public land, leaving approximately 5% cover within private land. While this provides a good base from which to work, this is well below recommended percentages for landscape vegetation cover and there are good opportunities for increasing the cover of native vegetation within council's open spaces. It is recommended that a benchmark of 20% native vegetation cover is the accepted amount to sustain woodland bird communities.

While most natural areas of open space - largely located within Yarra Bend Regional Park - are managed by Parks Victoria, the City of Yarra manages 94 open space reserves or parks, covering over 157 ha (see Map 3 on Page 25). The City of Yarra-managed open space reserves range from approximately 24 ha (Kevin Bartlett Reserve, Burnley) to fewer than 0.1 ha (Chestnut Street Reserve, Cremorne). The larger reserves are generally situated along waterways, while the smaller reserves mostly fall within the urban development matrix.

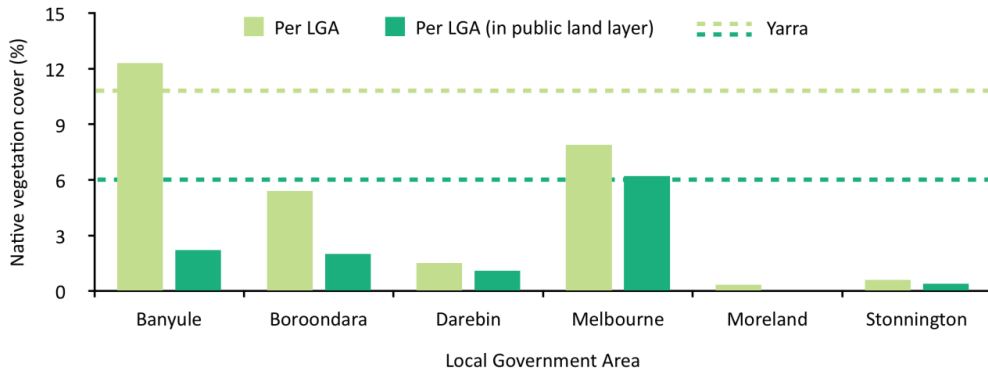


Figure 6 Comparison of native vegetation cover between adjoining municipalities

The City of Yarra is home to many sites of natural significance, which are primarily linked with the waterway corridors, especially the Yarra River. The vast majority of remnant native vegetation located on public land (Map 4 on Page 26).

During the BHS, areas of vegetation that met a set of criteria using the 'Habitat Hectare' methodology as per the *Native Vegetation Assessment Method* (DSE 2004) were mapped as 'Habitat Zones', and classified into individual 'vegetation communities'. In total, six different vegetation communities were recorded, which covered 27.25 ha across Yarra. For representative images see Figure 7 to Figure 11, and for the distribution of these communities see Map 4 on Page 26. The reserves with the greatest number of vegetation communities were Burnley Park (6), Hall Reserve (5), Alphington Park Wetland (5), Rushall Recreation Reserve (5), Park Street Linear Reserves (4), and Coulson Reserve/Knott Reserve (4).

Small areas of wetland vegetation comprising the Aquatic Herbland and Tall Marsh communities are restricted to locations within Alphington Wetland and McConchie Reserve.

Gould's wattle bats roost most commonly in tree hollows, particularly in River Red Gums. They are one of the first bats to emerge from their hollows after sunset. Photograph by Bill Jackson.





Figure 7 Aquatic Herbland, Alphington Wetlands.



Figure 8 Floodplain Riparian Woodland at Rudder Grange, Alphington.



Figure 9 Escarpment Shrubland between the Yarra River and Yarra Boulevard, Burnley.



Figure 10 Plains Grassy Woodland at Coate Park, Alphington.



Figure 11 Tall Marsh at McConchie Reserve, Burnley.



*White-striped freetail bat. Their call can be heard distinctly at night as a regular metallic 'Ting, ting, ting'.
Photograph by Bill Jackson.*

24 Nature Strategy: Protecting Yarra's Unique Biodiversity 2020-24



Map 3 Existing Yarra Open Space. [Placeholder Map – Update Map in line with Final YOSS, make A3 pull for printing]



Map 4 Distribution of indigenous vegetation and significant habitat trees in Yarra.

Significant habitat trees

Large significant habitat trees act as 'stepping stones' across the landscape for birds, bats and arboreal mammals. They are distributed broadly throughout the municipality (**Map 5 on Page 31**), either as single trees or positioned along streets. However, in some key areas significant habitat trees occur in relatively high densities (e.g. Edinburgh Gardens and Darling Gardens). A number of animal species such as Ringtail and Brushtail Possums, and the Powerful Owl can use tall trees for shelter and foraging.

During the Biodiversity Health Survey (BHS), significant indigenous habitat trees were recorded when they were encountered in each patch of native vegetation (habitat zone) and as incidental observations within reserves and streetscapes that were surveyed.

Generally, large indigenous hollow-bearing trees are scarce across the municipality. A high proportion of the assessed indigenous trees in the municipality are young and not large enough for the development of hollows. A large proportion of the older trees across the municipality are species that are less likely to form hollows. This includes both planted exotic and introduced native species. Exotic trees in reserves such as Edinburgh Gardens rarely provide a wide range of hollow sizes suitable for a diversity of native fauna. These tend to be utilised by introduced/non-indigenous and/or urban tolerant bird species (e.g. Rainbow Lorikeets, Galahs, and Corellas) and Brushtail Possums.

The majority of hollow-bearing trees recorded in the BHS were either very large old River Red Gums (which were sparse), or in exotic Elm or Oak trees. Regardless of the origin of the tree species, hollow-bearing trees should be protected wherever possible, as they are a key habitat resource which can take many human lifetimes and sometimes hundreds of years to replace naturally.

The Grey-headed flying-fox roosts at Yarra Bend Park in a colony of up to 30,000 individuals. It is the only fruit bat that lives in Yarra. Photograph from Getty Images



Bird usage and tree habitat values

During the BHS bird censuses conducted along the streetscapes, native street trees were assessed as providing greater habitat values for bird species than exotic trees, particularly for honeyeaters, lorikeets and insectivores (Figure 12). These trees may also provide occasional habitat for endangered bird species such as the Swift Parrot. Insectivorous birds were expected to use a greater number of exotic street trees.

Both native and exotic tree species provide flowering resources for honeyeaters and lorikeets, and the appropriate canopy structure and tree trunks for foraging insectivorous species. Native trees are expected to provide greater numbers and size ranges of hollows that can be potential nesting and/or breeding sites. Frugivorous bird species would be mainly limited to foraging in native fruit-bearing trees (or backyard fruit trees, which were not assessed as part of the BHS). The streetscape along Pigdon Street provides nesting habitat for Cockatoos in the Canary Island Date Palm trees. Other resources for Cockatoos occur along Stawell Street where Sheoak and Hakea species are present. All the mapped significant habitat trees and street trees provide 'stepping stones' across the landscape for bird movement.

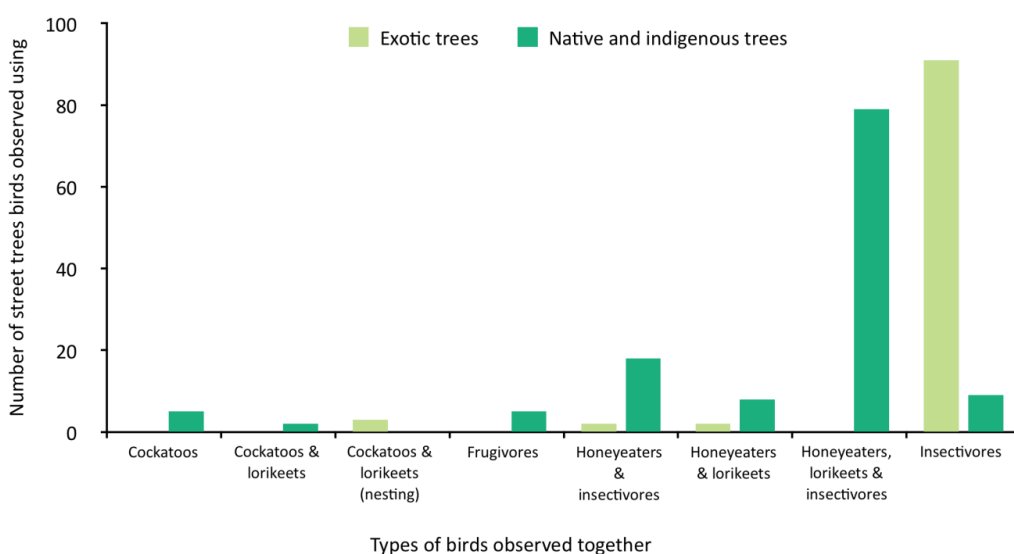


Figure 12 Usage of street trees by various birds.

The location and type (exotic, native or indigenous) of tree species will influence the range of bird species likely to inhabit the trees present. The exotic trees across the City of Yarra tend to generally be older, and whilst they do provide some refuge and nesting opportunities, it is only for a small suite of urban tolerant bird species.

Native and/or indigenous tree species provide a wider range of habitat values across the full spectrum of bird species recorded in the municipality. Although many of these tree species are yet to reach their maturity, there are clear indications their resilience to drought and adaptability present a longer term option to sustain ecological function through the Climate Emergency in addition to providing a broader spectrum of shelter and foraging activities for birds, than those provided by exotic tree species.

Critical habitat, ecosystems and habitat corridors

During the Biodiversity Health Survey a number of locations of Critical Habitat were identified within the municipality. These were primarily for wetland and waterway dependent species in and around the Yarra River and its wetlands. Further from the immediate waterway areas, critical habitat is provided in other locations for woodland species. This is sometimes on the basis that significant habitat trees or other key habitat features are present. Areas of Critical Habitat are shown in **Map 5**.

Synthesis of the results of the Biodiversity Health Survey assisted in creating an Ecosystem Model that can be used to plan and measure management actions (**Figure 13**). This model includes animals that can be considered as focal species, as their needs align with a series of important habitat features. Therefore, if this type of animal is healthy and reproducing, it can be derived that there are satisfactory levels of critical elements (food, water, and shelter) indicating the focal species' requirements are being fulfilled. It is recommended that this ecosystem model is promoted internally and to the community. Additionally, these animals are recommended for use when planning and designing habitat links or enhancing existing areas of critical habitat.

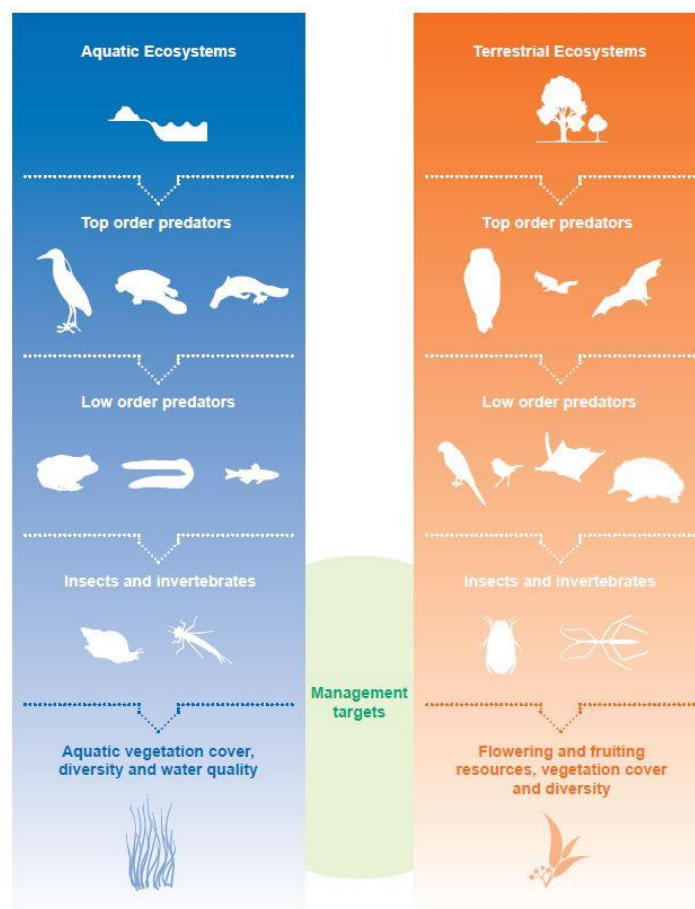
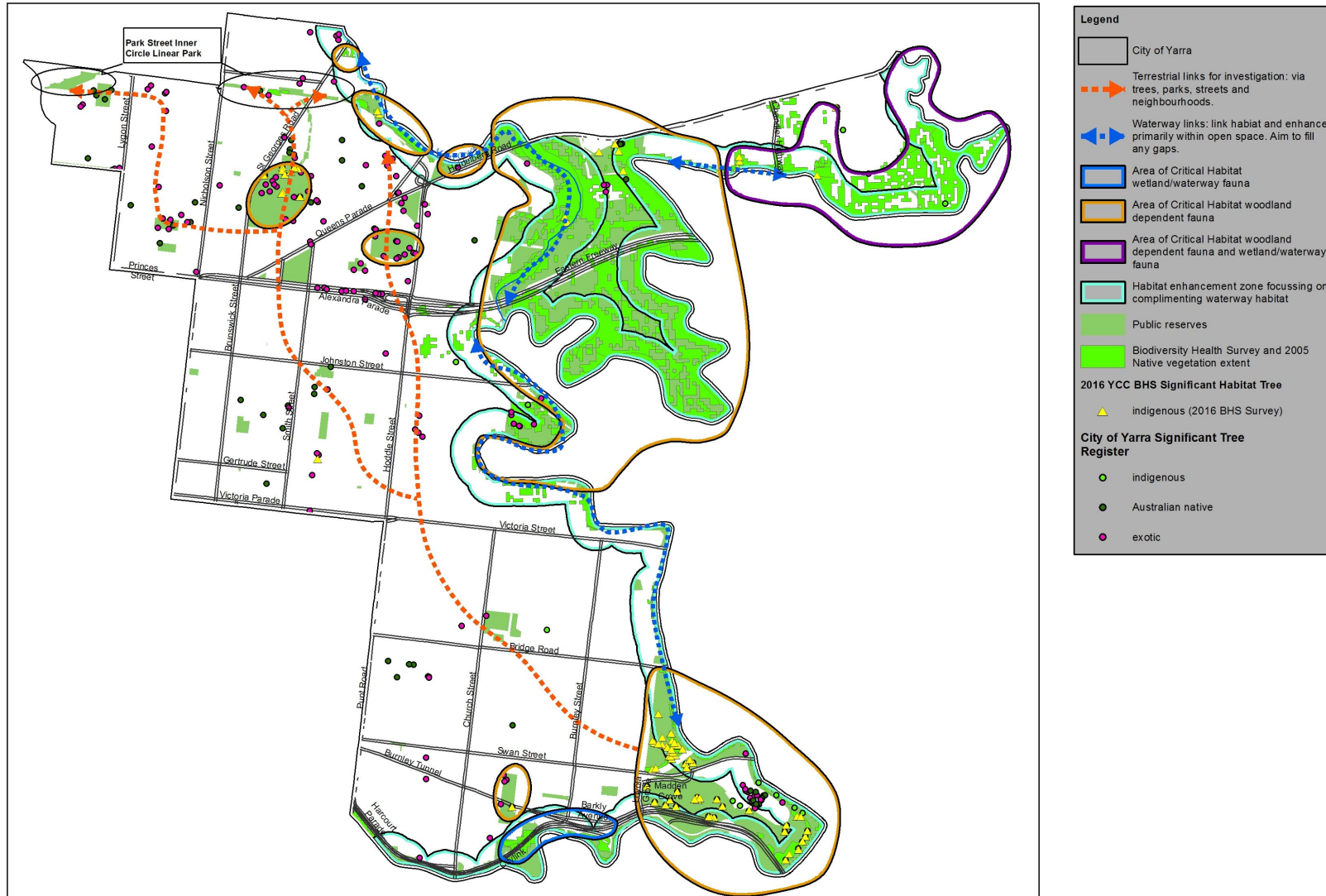


Figure 13 Ecosystem model for the City of Yarra.

Habitat corridors or links differ from critical habitat in that they provide fewer habitat resources for fauna to complete their life cycle. Corridors provide the basic habitat elements to enable animals to move safely across the landscape, sometimes between two or more areas of critical habitat. There are several important corridors for fauna movement within the City of Yarra, and further corridors that could be created. These are shown in **Map 5**.



Map 5 Opportunities for strengthening and creating habitat links across the City of Yarra

Could sugar-gliders fly across Yarra's skies?

The Yarra River corridor is known to support populations of Sugar Gliders (*Petaurus breviceps*); small gregarious creatures that creep out and soar between trees as the sun goes down.

While there are only a few official records of these animals locally, a recent study in the City of Boroondara found populations that live just to the east of Yarra. As they're now known to live so close, it's likely they're in the City of Yarra as well.

While we don't know exactly how many Sugar Gliders live locally, we can encourage more of them to move in! It might take a while to eventually see them soaring above Carlton, but not if we really try!

Would you like to see Sugar Gliders gliding in the Yarra skies? This is how can we make it happen:

- They live in small tree hollows that have developed in older trees, so if there aren't lots of old trees with hollows, we can help by putting up nest boxes or creating artificial hollows.
- More trees could be planted so that they too would eventually become large and old with their own hollows.
- Retain as many large old trees as possible. Undertake interventions to prolong tree life (cabling and other stability works).
- Implement a program of person-made chainsaw hollows in suitable large trees along the waterways and adjacent park areas.
- They love to eat nectar, insects and fruit. And they especially love feasting on the sap of Wattles, their favourite treat. So we'd need to plant plenty of the types of trees and food plants that they like. Again this would include indigenous trees like Yellow Box and Manna Gums as well as wattles, in clusters near the trees.
- They like to live in family groups called clans of around seven animals, so for them to live in one place together they would need enough room for everyone.
- They can glide, they need tall trees within a distance that they can safely reach (up to 90 metres apart, but preferably closer). And for them to feel safe, they need trees with good canopy cover.
- Start a community nest box program on Council and private land. Engage qualified arborists/tree climbers to install boxes and the community can use wireless nest box cameras to monitor how many Sugar Gliders use the boxes as homes.



Sugar Glider in a nest box. Photograph by Craig Lupton

Current policy and strategy relating to nature

The maintenance and enhancement of natural values are relevant to a cross organisation focus and has close relationships with a broad range of other council policies and strategies. The most closely related strategies and policies are shown in **Figure 14**. Further detail on each of these policies, strategies and how they relate to the Nature Strategy is provided in **Appendix 1**. Further information on the legislative context for the Nature Strategy is provided in **Appendix 2**.



Figure 14 Plans, policies and strategies relevant to the Yarra Nature Strategy

What does Yarra do to support nature?

There is a suite of direct and indirect actions/approaches that Council implements that have positive impacts on nature conservation and engagement, including:

Staff resources:

The City of Yarra currently allocates approximately 1.6 FTE to nature conservation outcomes, providing oversight and coordination of strategic biodiversity and operational bushland management outcomes.

Management and restoration of natural values:

- Bushland management work focuses on 31 Core Bushland sites with additional and substantial native plant restoration programs at Alexandra Parade (0.78Ha) , Burnley Golf Course (12Ha) and the Burnley Circus Site (1.5Ha) to name a few.
- The City of Yarra's reserves that are primarily native vegetation cover an extent of 33.6 hectares with another 4.4Ha indirectly managed through a Parks Victoria and Merri Creek Management Committee partnership.
- The 38Ha bushland management program is delivered by a team of professional bushland management contractors via a structured program of management.
- Each of the reserves with bushland values have been mapped, and bushland areas allocated into a series of management categories that align with an adapted version of the *Society for Ecological Restoration Australasia (SERA) National Standards for Ecological Restoration*.
 - The bushland management team are employed on a long-term contract. This requires that they meet set KPIs associated with monitoring data linked to the adapted SERA standards including: percentage cover for weeds and native vegetation; including grasses, herbs, shrubs and trees – that are monitored via regular transects
 - Bushland management work includes weed management, vegetation planting, mulching, slashing, rubbish removal and other miscellaneous tasks.
 - An annual audit that appraises the site condition of habitat zones with reference to the relevant vegetation community (EVC), management standard required and species diversity
- A monitoring program is completed by a separately contracted ecological consultant to measure progress towards long and short-term management goals, which mainly focus on seeking improvements in native vegetation cover and reduction in weed cover.
- A program of revegetation work is completed annually and this is largely targeted towards areas of existing vegetation, as well as extending patches of native vegetation, and filling gaps. An average of 15,000 – 20,000 indigenous ground cover, understory and trees are planted annually.
- The City of Yarra is a member body of the Merri Creek Management Committee (MCMC) and the Darebin Creek Management Committee (DCMC) and contributes financially towards supporting these two organisations in areas of Planning and Coordination, Ecological Restoration and National Tree Day, Community Education and Waterwatch events.
- City of Yarra also partners with Parks Victoria to deliver bushland restoration work in Yarra Bend Park to achieve biodiversity outcomes across boundaries. City of Yarra expands MCMC's capacity to improve the Merri Creek by facilitating a partnership with Parks Victoria and deliver the on ground bushland restoration funding component in Yarra Bend Park.
- An annual grant is received from Melbourne Water through the 'Corridors of Green' Grants program, to deliver the Yarra River Escarpment Remnant EVC Restoration Project. This is an ongoing project that aims to reinstate the Yarra River riparian corridor.
- Additional funding is offered by Melbourne Water through their 'Corridors of Green' Grants program for which council has been regularly successful applicant. The Yarra River Loy's Paddock Escarpment EVC Restoration Project is one such ongoing project that aims to reinstate the Yarra River riparian corridor.
- In its own projects in council managed land, the City of Yarra engages suitably qualified consultants to inspect trees/vegetation for wildlife prior to tree removal. If wildlife is identified, the consultant will minimise stress and ensure the safety of wildlife that are displaced during tree removal in line with the Governor in Council Order (2003), under the Wildlife Act 1975.

- The City of Yarra has implemented a range local and regional fox control programs to comply with the Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994 (CaLP) noting the Red Fox is declared as an “Established Pest Animal” in Victoria.
- Council provides advice on techniques to exclude exotic birds from resident’s gardens such as the Common or Indian Myna.
- In addition to activities associated with the direct removal of red foxes, reduction in habitat disturbance and fragmentation is likely to reduce predatory-prey interactions. The Bushland maintenance program will continue to improve the coverage of indigenous vegetation to support those species predisposed to fox predation.

Water management:

Council has installed and maintains over 100 Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) features in council managed land. More than half are rain gardens and collectively these assist in delivering:

- Reduced volume of stormwater entering the Yarra River and Merri Creek, leading to an improved aquatic environment.
- Reduced minerals and nutrients enter waterways that improves water quality in the Yarra River and Merri Creek, and Port Phillip Bay.
- Reduced velocity of stormwater flows assisting in the mitigation of flash flooding events.
- Improved biodiversity as a result of the green space provided by rain gardens, especially where local native plants are used.
- Decreased urban heat island effect as a result of increased green space.

An Integrated Water Management Plan has been drafted and following a period of community consultation, is due to be presented to Council for adoption in September 2020. This plan will deliver a range of actions to ensure that water is used wisely and sustainably to keep our environment and community healthy. The plan will complement the Yarra Nature Strategy.

Streetscape management:

Council manages over 2200 (approx. 34,000m²) traffic garden beds under contract which equates to more than 4 Ha of green space. Many traffic garden beds have native plants and managed for biodiversity outcomes with some specific planting of indigenous grasses, ground covers and shrubs which provides food for local birds and insects. Traffic gardens beds are also used as seed banks when planted with local provenance plant species.

Creating an Urban Forest:

The vision for the Urban Forest Strategy is for: a more liveable city supported by a healthy and growing urban forest.

Objectives of the Urban Forest Strategy (UFS) include:

- To enhance Yarra’s healthy and growing urban forest, improving liveability and mitigating the impacts of the urban heat island effect
- To manage current and future tree-stock through best practice urban tree management using evidence-based planning and decision making, together with cross-organisational implementation and innovation
- To engage and support community involvement in the development of a flourishing and unique urban forest

Implementation of the UFS intends to include the development of a 10-year Priority Plan. In this plan, planting locations will be decided based on primary drivers including significant areas of biodiversity and areas identified as important linkages for fauna, including tree canopy corridors and understory linkages to address the Climate Emergency.

Another action associated with the Urban Forest program will be to develop support materials to embed urban forest principals into capital works and open space programs to realise outcomes that benefit natural-values.

Council plants between 800-1000 trees per annum in streetscapes.

Urban Agriculture:

The City of Yarra Urban Agriculture Strategy 2018 – 2023 helps promote sustainable local food systems and build community resilience. Sustainable local food systems improve the management of the food cycle from production through processing, distribution, access, consumption and resource and waste recovery. Whether it be growing a few herbs on a balcony, a roof top farm, developing a market garden or

contributing to a thriving community growing space, urban agriculture is becoming increasingly popular. On a systems level, urban agriculture adds to the multifunctionality of the urban fabric, by facilitating a wide range of benefits to urban communities, including recreational social and cultural benefits as well as environmental (urban greening, climate regulation, biodiversity, nutrient recycling).

A key urban agriculture action is to develop educational material with partners to enhance community understanding of traditional foods and agricultural practices.

Urban Agriculture (UA) systems have the ability to increase the biodiversity of urban landscapes. UA systems offer an extensive, varied, and undervalued resource for enhancing urban biodiversity and improving connectivity across the larger landscape. Furthermore, biodiversity supported by UA can increase the quality and quantity of ecosystem services delivered across the urban sphere. (The future of urban agriculture and biodiversity-ecosystem services: Challenges and next steps: Brenda B. Lina, Stacy M. Philpott, Shalene J. Jha, 8/1/2015)

OS Design (YOSS - Open Space Design and Management Guidelines):

These guidelines aim to support the core guiding principles and directions for open space as set out in the Yarra Open Space Strategy (in prep.) Existing Council policies and best practice inform these guidelines. The guidelines are to be referred to in relation to the future design and management for all open space in the City of Yarra.

Guidelines related to nature/biodiversity are principally addressed in:

6.2 Climate change/urban greening

- 6.2.1 Protecting mature canopy trees
- 6.2.3 Vegetation selection

6.3 Biodiversity values and natural character in open space

- 6.3.1 Open space with nature conservation values
- 6.3.2 Biodiversity values in other areas of open space

Embedding Green Infrastructure Guidelines:

The Embedding Green Infrastructure Best Practice Toolkit has been developed by the City of Yarra with input from multiple councils to create a tool applicable for all Victorian Local Government.

This toolkit will help Council's assess their own practices against best practice green infrastructure guidance. It also provides a resource manual to help the implementation of green infrastructure become streamlined, cost effective, and business as usual.

Green infrastructure refers to trees, shrubs, grasses and Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) in urban environments. Green infrastructure addresses a direct and important link between greening and water management. Healthy trees and vegetation rely on the provision of soil moisture to thrive and flourish, while vegetated areas play a key role in absorbing, treating and controlling stormwater runoff in urban areas.

Green infrastructure improves the environmental and social quality of an area and contributes to improving the long-term liveability of our cities and communities. Our cities face a number of pressures including population growths, increased urban development, and the effects of climate change, such as rising temperatures and extreme weather. Creating green, cool, climate adapted spaces will be key to responding to these pressures and emphasises the importance of local governments embedding green infrastructure into the planning, design and function of our cities.

The Toolkit consists of:

- Best Practice Review
- Case Studies
- Self Assessment Tool
- Economic Framework
- Design Guidelines

'Embedding Green Infrastructure Best Practice Toolkit' is the result of the Victorian Climate Change Grant from the Department of the Environment, Water, and Planning (DELWP).

The City of Yarra is the lead Partner in this project, with other Project Partners being Cities of Melbourne, Brimbank and Moreland, the Green Infrastructure Research Group, and the Northern Alliance for Greenhouse Action.

Yarra Community Grants:

The City of Yarra annual grants provide financial and in-kind support for community initiatives and projects.

In 2020 this program will invest over \$900,000 in programs which support and enrich the Yarra community. The funded programs will address a wide variety of local needs and promote connectedness and well-being across Yarra. The Annual Grants are split into a number of different streams. Some of these streams also have sub-categories. These are:

Arts and Culture, Community Development, Community Housing Family, Youth and Children, Sports and Recreation, Sustainability and Youth-Led Grants

Sustainability Stream

The Sustainability Stream seeks to support initiatives that engage and empower the community to take environmental action at a local level. This is in line with Council's Yarra Environment Strategy and other sustainability commitments.

Council encourages grant applications that seek to address these climate, waste and resource use priorities. Council also has commitments and programs to enhance urban agriculture, sustainable transport and biodiversity and welcomes applications that respond to these areas.

There are two project categories: Partnering for Sustainability and General Sustainability Grant.

General Sustainability Grant

The General Sustainability Grant supports a diverse range of smaller projects to deliver sustainability outcomes. Projects may be broad and holistic or may focus on any particular aspect of environmental sustainability. Project management, promotional, on-ground and capacity building activities are all eligible. Infrastructure and equipment may be funded as long as they are part of a holistic project that benefits and engages the community.

Partnering for Sustainability

This category seeks to support community projects that are larger and more complex in nature, the priorities for this funding stream are:

- Partnerships
- Legacy
- Reach
- Innovation

Cats in the urban environment – a challenge for native wildlife management

Cats are a deeply entrenched part of many people's lives, often considered a core part of the family. However, the threat they pose to native animals is not trivial, and is vital to pragmatically address.

Cats hunt throughout the day; their exceptional night vision offers a distinct advantage for nocturnal predation to target native wildlife sleeping or active in a cat's perceived 'territory'. CSIRO have acknowledged the devastation both feral and domestic felines wreak on biodiversity and have investigated various mitigation measures designed to hinder cat hunting ability, including desexing to reduce wandering and nuisance behaviours.

While containment and revising regulations governing cat ownership aim to reduce cat densities, further consideration to prohibit cat ownership around conservation areas has been a long adopted strategy by some urban fringe councils. Yarra's Domestic Animal Management Plan and the Wildlife Management Plan make reference to

the cat predation problem and their review in the coming years will need to consider recent data about Victoria's species extinction rates.

While Council's direct management of cats is largely undertaken by Yarra's Compliance and Parking Services Team, this Strategy aims to further articulate the impact of cat predation through the development of a Literature Review, to support further collaboration across the several departments and surrounding councils and collaborating with the Communications and Engagement Unit to develop a communications plan to educate and promote responsible cat ownership and keeping cats inside at night.

Opportunities and challenges for nature

Essential to this strategy's development, has been the stakeholder engagement process that involved the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Council, community group members, experts in flora, fauna and land management policy, adjoining land managers, regional authorities and City of Yarra staff. This invaluable process identified the following opportunities and challenges which shaped the basis to draft a strategy:

Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung

- The Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Council are key partners in the management and appreciation of natural values in the City of Yarra, as many or all of the natural values are also cultural values. Engagement and involvement of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Council to ensure their values and stories are honoured and conserved is integral to this Nature Strategy. This Strategy includes actions that seek opportunities to work with the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Council in recognition of their heritage and custodianship of the land. This may be done in partnership with other areas of council, for example Urban Agriculture or Community Partnerships.

Biodiversity values

- The Yarra River and its parklands form a substantial and significant base of critical habitat along the eastern border of the municipality upon which to build further biodiversity values.
- The Merri and Darebin Creeks provide two important northern habitat links, which link to the Yarra. These waterways are well loved, accessible and comprise a myriad of natural values. These areas can be strengthened, connected and form the anchor points for terrestrial links.
- The Biodiversity Health Survey, completed in 2016 provides a solid resource to base future work on and the ecosystem model is useful from an ecological perspective. However, there is more information that is known by local experts (land managers, Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Council, community groups, indigenous nurseries and academics) that needs to be considered. Examples include: locations of high small bird diversity known only to long-term bird observers; locally rare plants that may become lost; and culturally significant areas for the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung.
- Recognising and surveying for other 'urban significant' species such as, frogs, echidnas or sugar gliders. Certain species guilds may have niche habitat requirements that are not identified as having high biodiversity values via scientific measures. Nevertheless, these species may be useful for engaging the community with nature-based programs, as they are 'likeable critters' and easier for the community to identify with than an obscure bird species. This can be in addition to more abundant species such as the common ringtail and brushtail possums, which are widely known to the public, though still face their own challenges in urban environments.

Council

- Within council, natural affinity exists between the conservation of and engagement with nature and the areas of Open Space, Environment and Sustainability, Urban Forestry, Heritage, Water Management, Planning and Urban Agriculture. There would be a benefit to seeing each of these teams better linked and interacting to achieve better outcomes for nature in the City of Yarra. The Nature Strategy will need to acknowledge and interact with the strategies and objectives of these other teams, seeking synergies and opportunities for positive outcomes.
- The impacts associated with new development and higher density urban areas has been emphasised as both an opportunity and a threat. There are biodiversity opportunities that have been identified via use of the planning scheme as well as supporting guidance for planners and applicants to see better outcomes in the

private realm. Additionally the possibility of introducing a development levy for nature has also been suggested more than once during stakeholder engagement.

Water management

- Water quality and water infrastructure, including stormwater management are integral to ensuring the health of natural systems in the City of Yarra. Waterways and wetlands are also indicated as being of cultural importance to the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Woi Wurrung. This needs to be reflected back through all areas of council and via partnerships with other relevant agencies, i.e. Melbourne Water, Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Woi Wurrung Council and water service providers.

Community

- The community (residents and visitors) of the CoY can take action and contribute, and will also benefit via higher quality natural values in all areas of the municipality. The City of Yarra has been relatively conservative in resourcing community engagement in nature compared to other Councils. Community groups are currently acting as a conduit for community engagement. This could be built on but should be complemented by investment in staff resources as well as augmenting relationships with existing community groups, recognising the work that they currently do and assisting them to build on that.
- The community has emphasised the importance of ongoing ecological knowledge, innovation and trials in implementing more sophisticated approaches to on-ground biodiversity management. This could involve:
 - annual review of elements of ecological function
 - planning for ecological outcomes based on natural systems, species outcomes and corridors rather than by park/reserve
 - consideration of senescent (aging) vegetation and on ground management techniques to replace vegetation, possibly through natural recruitment
 - provision for trials and innovation in on-ground management and reintroductions
 - continuity in management and preserving/documenting ecological knowledge
 - coordination of land management across all land managers i.e. Parks Victoria and Melbourne Water
- The Yarra Environment Strategy community engagement process has demonstrated that there is an appetite for integrating nature-focussed elements and habitat features into the private, streetscape and neighbourhood-scale realm. Community members believe this will result in benefits for health, wellbeing and amenity over and above the ecological benefits.
 - Priority 1. Everyday nature / greenscaping
 - Priority 2. Community engagement and capacity building, education and youth
 - Priority 3. Thriving neighbourhoods
 - Priority 4. Take urgent action towards climate neutrality and zero waste
 - Priority 5. Council leadership
 - Priority 6. Support business sustainability
- Urban Agriculture programs and activities which are already well established in the City of Yarra contributes to positive natural values outcomes and there are natural synergies which should be explored and strengthened through both this strategy and the Urban Agriculture strategy. Good working relationships will see improved outcomes in each complementary area.

Communication

- A dedicated communication program for nature-focussed news, initiatives and interactions is required. This would also serve to build trust with the community, that council are managing natural values in an informed and timely way. In particular the community were interested to see greater transparency around what is being done/where/why? One suggestion was for council to develop a semi-accessible online platform for the community to observe progress of land management and to contribute to it.

Adjacent councils

- Other councils have implemented initiatives and set standards that can be adopted by the City of Yarra. Many examples exist that could be easily adopted, thereby enabling council to benefit from the learning's of others. One example is City of Melbourne's native street garden planting palate and urban nature planting guide that is available on the City of Melbourne's website.
- There is goodwill and enthusiasm for cooperation between staff from adjoining municipalities to work across-borders on projects that will benefit all.

Relationships with other institutions

- The City of Yarra is very well placed to engage with academic institutions who are actively involved in urban ecology research. Melbourne University's Burnley Campus lies within the municipality and already completes projects within council reserves. Other institutions like RMIT also have an interest in urban ecology and could



assist with collaborative research and other initiatives as they have with other urban municipalities.

The Platypus currently inhabits the waters of the Yarra River and Merri Creek. Photograph from Getty Images



*The Powerful Owl uses the vegetation of the Yarra River, Merri and Darebin Creek corridors to forage and shelter.
Photograph Craig Lupton*

Extinction crisis – an opportunity for action

Biological diversity is messy. It walks, it crawls, it swims, it swoops, it buzzes. But extinction is silent, and it has no voice other than our own. Paul Hawken, journalist, philanthropist.

In May, 2019, the United Nations Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) panel released the most comprehensive report yet on the state of global ecosystems, highlighting that up to one million plant and animal species face extinction, many within decades, because of human activities.

Without drastic action to conserve habitats, the rate of species extinction — already tens to hundreds of times higher than the average across the past ten million years — will only increase, says the analysis.

The loss of species and habitats poses as much a danger to life on Earth as climate change does, stated a summary of the work, released on 6 May 2019.

Anne Larigauderie, IPBES executive secretary stated that “Biodiversity should be at the top of the global agenda alongside climate. We can no longer say that we did not know”.

Along with the Climate Emergency, this extinction crisis presents a real challenge for every person and particularly every organisation in a place of influence, such as the City of Yarra. It also provides a compelling reason to act.

Nature in Yarra: The way forward

This Nature Strategy is being developed at a time when the value of nature is being recognised; and as the effects of increasing urbanisation and climate change are hitting urban environments and an awareness of the plight of nature is becoming heightened.

This is the first Nature Strategy for the City of Yarra and while it includes a strong focus on the conservation of nature and on engaging the community with natural values, importantly, it also seeks to strengthen internal processes and resources to ensure that natural values are considered as core council business. This is being undertaken with the overall aim that the City of Yarra will lead via its nature conservation activities, like Yarra has for many years on other important issues like sustainability and climate action.

There is significant opportunity to improve habitat and reinstate local plant species in Yarra which can in turn support further wildlife. This is one opportunity to address the current Extinction Crisis, while creating a more adaptable urban environment in the face of the Climate Emergency. Where opportunities exist in lawn areas, and under tree canopies where appropriate, the reinstatement of indigenous midstorey and understorey vegetation should be considered as a part of future open space management objectives and outcomes.

Conservation of nature

In 1982 the *World Charter for Nature* was adopted by United Nations member nation-states. It proclaims five "principles of conservation by which all human conduct affecting nature is to be guided and judged."

1. Nature shall be respected and its essential processes shall not be impaired.
2. The genetic viability on the earth shall not be compromised; the population levels of all life forms, wild and domesticated, must be at least sufficient for their survival, and to this end necessary habitats shall be safeguarded.
3. All areas of the earth, both land and sea, shall be subject to these principles of conservation; special protection shall be given to unique areas, to representative samples of all the different types of ecosystems, and to the habitats of rare or endangered species.
4. Ecosystems and organisms, as well as the land, marine and atmospheric resources that are utilized by man, shall be managed to achieve and maintain optimum sustainable productivity, but not in such a way as to endanger the integrity of those other ecosystems or species with which they coexist.
5. Nature shall be secured against degradation caused by warfare or other hostile activities.^[1]

Yarra's role in valuing and conserving nature

In recognition of themes that are associated with the UN Charter for Nature and similar agreements, the City of Yarra's key roles in conserving and improving nature are:

- To ensure that the City of Yarra actively seeks the conservation of its natural values through its own management and leadership.
- To ensure Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung values and interests are included and integrated in nature conservation and engagement activities, seeking methods to involve Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung in decisions and custodial activities.
- To work with local, municipal and regional networks to promote natural values and to seek methods to progress positive outcomes for nature.
- To provide education, support and engagement opportunities to residents and visitors through a dedicated engagement and communications program.

Limitations of this strategy

This strategy is designed to be focused and realistic with clear aims and objectives. As the first Nature Strategy for the City of Yarra, there are many items that are new for council, requiring leadership and commitment of new resources.

This strategy also focuses on building networks and processes in recognition that the governing processes for natural values sit across many different council teams. Indeed, most council teams will be relevant to seeing the success of this strategy. Similarly, collaboration will also need to extend to all neighbouring municipalities and land managers.

This strategy is a stepping stone, it aims to build the foundations of processes and programs to see better outcomes for the natural values in the City of Yarra while maintaining some flexibility to be responsive to any future/new opportunities that may arise.

The timeframe of four years applied to the strategy is intentionally short in recognition that this policy area is rapidly evolving and that regular revision will ensure it stays relevant.

Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring will be integral to ensuring the success of the strategy. It will be required at various levels and for a variety of purposes. These include:

- Progress against management priorities and actions. This includes reporting annually across all relevant teams on key implementation actions, particularly those which have short or ongoing timeframes.
- Onsite results in bushland and weed management against current or revised standards.

To maintain the relevance of this strategy: priority actions, resources and training requirements will be determined annually, following a review of the following performance measures towards achieving its objectives:

- Reports on actions outlined in this Strategy will be provided to council annually.
- This strategy includes provisions for periodic review and adjustment.
- This will occur via annual internal and external progress reviews. These review processes will be informed by consultation with other stakeholders and the community.
- A detailed report and review will take place at the end of the four year period.



Nature Action Plan 2020-2024

This action plan provides a summary of the actions and targets that are proposed to meet each of the four goals. Details are provided on proposed timing, internal collaboration and external partnership opportunities and what level of impact action delivery will have on the business. For example, actions will be delivered through business as usual processes, capital works, new initiative bids/business case and/or external funding. All actions are subject to the Council annual budget cycle, and approval process and service delivery priorities. Unless otherwise stated, the Biodiversity and Urban Agriculture Team, City Works Branch, will be responsible for delivery of the Nature Action Plan 2020-24.

Further detail for each of these actions is provided in **Appendix 3 Nature Action Plan context**.

Goal 1: Increase the diversity, connectivity and resilience of Yarra’s natural environment

Management Principle	Actions	Target	Priority/Timeframe	Collaboration/Partnerships
1.1 Consolidate and grow areas of high quality, diverse habitat	Consolidate and increase the condition of all patches of current indigenous vegetation.	Indigenous vegetation understorey score in all current native vegetation patches increased by 20% by Year 3.	Medium Year 1 – 3	Contractors, community groups and Universities, Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Council Narrap Team
	Review all indigenous vegetation patches in the context of their role as habitat within a corridor and their contribution to ecological function. Adjust management approach accordingly, following collaboration with the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Woi Wurrung Council Narrap Team to consider adopting traditional practices in Yarra.	Management planning for bushland areas includes consideration of ecological function for key indicator species and consideration of threatening processes by end of Year 2. This is documented and monitored.	Medium Year 2	Ecological consultants, contractors, community groups and Universities, Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Council Narrap Team
	Prioritise some areas for enhancement and identify locations for linking, while engaging with the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Woi Wurrung Council to consider works in culturally important areas.	Increase indigenous vegetation understorey extent (at >25% cover) within Open Space by 0.5 ha annually.	High Year 1 - 4	Open Space Planning, Open Space Maintenance Community Groups, General Community, Parks Victoria, Local Government, Melbourne Water and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Council Narrap Team

Management Principle	Actions	Target	Priority/Timeframe	Collaboration/Partnerships
1.2 Increase flora and fauna diversity	<p>Establish monitoring locations targeting higher quality habitat and also low-quality areas for key indicator fauna groups.</p> <p>Fauna recommended to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pollinator insects, butterflies • Birds (diverse range of guilds) • Micro-bats <p>Collaborate with the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Woi Wurrung Council Narrap Team to consider alternative indicators of ecosystem health.</p>	<p>Net positive flora and fauna diversity by end Year 3 resulting in an appropriate increase in each of the faunal groups listed.</p>	<p>Medium Year 2 - 3</p>	<p>Community Groups, Universities, Ecological Consultants, Local Government, DELWP, Conservation Groups (FNVC), Bird Australia, Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Council Narrap Team</p>
	<p>Design and deliver a monitoring program that measures diversity in fauna focussing on key indicator fauna groups (above). Involve public/citizen science where possible.</p>	<p>Monitoring conducted at relevant intervals (as determined by method).</p> <p>Data is useful, interpreted and made publicly available in an engaging way.</p>	<p>Medium Year 2 - 4</p>	<p>Communications and engagement Unit, Yarra CityLab</p> <p>Community Groups, Universities, Ecological Consultants, Local Government, DELWP, Conservation Groups including Field Naturalists Club of Victoria (FNCV), BirdLife Australia, Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Council Narrap Team</p>
	<p>Where deemed appropriate, initiate re-introductions, particularly for flora in key locations.</p>	<p>Optional target: a 5% increase in indigenous flora diversity within bushland reserves.</p>	<p>Low Year 2 - 4</p>	<p>Victorian Indigenous Nursery Cooperative (VINC), Ecological contractors, Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Narrap Team</p>
	<p>Collaborate with the Communications and Engagement Unit to develop a communications plan to educate and promote responsible cat ownership and keeping cats inside at night.</p>	<p>To reach the owners of all registered cats in Yarra.</p>	<p>Medium Year 2 - 3</p>	<p>Communications and Engagement Unit and Compliance and Parking Services Team</p>

Management Principle	Actions	Target	Priority/Timeframe	Collaboration/Partnerships
	Develop a literature review related to the impact of cats in Yarra, to be used as a potential 'Justification Paper' for the development of further policies.	An easily interpreted and implemented set of recommendations is created.	Medium Year 2 - 3	Universities (literature review), Compliance and Parking Services Team
1.3 Protect and celebrate significant habitat trees and their values	Building on the trees documented via the Biodiversity Health Survey, document and map all large old trees and others that provide significant habitat. Include a description of their habitat values, including hollows.	Maintain the number of hollow bearing trees. Implement programs to see an increase of 5% annually including planting of indigenous trees, creating artificial hollows and retaining dead trees where it is safe to do so. All significant habitat trees added to the Significant Tree register.	High Year 1	GIS/Spatial Unit Ecological/Arboriculture Consultant, Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Council
	Engage with Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Council to ensure Large Old tree values that are culturally significant are adequately considered in the City of Yarra (and its land management partners) policy and practice. This action may align with the Heritage Strategy which aims to engage the community in identifying areas of Natural Heritage value.	All trees identified by Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Council protected via the appropriate mechanism (such as the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 or the Yarra Planning Scheme) if/where this is culturally appropriate and sensitive. Procedures and training in cultural heritage awareness and practice are up to date for all relevant staff.	High Year 1	Statutory and Strategic Planning, City Heritage, Community Partnerships Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Council
	Ensure local laws protocols are in place to protect all significant habitat trees.	No significant habitat trees removed on streets or open space that is managed by the City of Yarra.	Medium Year 2	Open Space Maintenance, Statutory, Planning, Compliance and Parks Services

Management Principle	Actions	Target	Priority/Timeframe	Collaboration/Partnerships
	Promote significant habitat trees, and their values in an online forum. Encourage public interaction.	The City of Yarra resident's survey indicates increased awareness of significant habitat trees and their values.	Medium Year 2	Communications and engagement Unit
1.4 Understand and conserve habitat refuge areas for plants and animals	Commission a project in recognition of Yarra's Climate Emergency Plan to advise on council's role in providing nature refuge areas (for species affected by climate change) and actions that it can implement.	Climate refuge study complete by end Year 2. Any resulting recommendations funded in Year 3.	Medium Year 1 -3	Sustainability Unit Ecological Consultant
1.5 Conserve locally rare or threatened flora and fauna	Establish a 'local legends' working and networking group. Key stakeholders include VINC, Parks Victoria, Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Council and staff from adjoining councils and land managers e.g. Merri Creek Management Committee (MCMC), Darebin Creek Management Committee (DCMC).	No new local extinctions in flora or fauna	High Year 1	VINC, Parks Victoria, Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Council, Local Government and staff and land managers
	Invest in a project that focuses on the long-term sustainability of locally rare flora and fauna. For example flora seed conservation, seed orchards and plantings with the option to encourage residents to grow a seed orchard for a rare plant at their home.		Low Year 1 - 4 (a four year project)	In House Horticulture Team VINC, Community Groups, Local Community
	Investigate and document locally rare plants and animals. Promote this information via online opportunities and seek engagement from the community.		Low Year 2 - 4	Communication and Engagement Unit Universities, Community Groups, Ecological Contractors

Management Principle	Actions	Target	Priority/Timeframe	Collaboration/Partnerships
1.6 Conserve state and federally significant flora and fauna	Collaborate with other land and water managers to enhance habitat and the conservation status of all confirmed State and nationally-threatened flora and fauna.	No local extinctions of state or nationally threatened fauna in the City of Yarra.	Medium Year 2	Land and Waterway Managers, Community Groups, Universities, local community, Conversation Groups
	Conduct targeted fauna surveys that build on the Biodiversity Health Survey work to confirm a baseline level for threatened fauna within the municipality. Collaborate with other land managers as required, e.g. Melbourne Water for aquatic animals. Parks Victoria and Birdlife Australia (Swift Parrot) as necessary.	Extent of state or nationally threatened fauna is known and documented.	Medium Year 2	Melbourne Water, Parks Victoria, DELWP, FNCV, Birdlife Australia, Universities
	Complete further research to confirm or otherwise, the occurrence of state or Nationally-threatened flora.	Extent of state or nationally threatened flora is known and documented.	Medium Year 2	Melbourne Water, Parks Victoria, DELWP, Universities
1.7 Increase habitat connectivity	Research and develop connectivity plans for keystone or character species for at least 3 habitat links with at least one being a new terrestrial link.	At least 3 connectivity projects delivered in 4 years, focussing on waterways (2) and terrestrial priorities (1). Utilise the priorities established in the City of Yarra Integrated Waterways Plan (see Action 1.9) to align with the objectives of the YRSP.	Medium Year 1 - 4	Strategic Planning, Open Space Planning Adjacent Land Managers, Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Council, Community Groups, Local Community, Land and Waterway Managers
	Host community consultation meetings during the planning of each connectivity project.	At least 3 connectivity projects delivered in 4 years, focussing on waterways (2) and terrestrial links (1).	Medium Year 2	Communications and Engagement Unit Adjacent Land Managers, Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Council, Community Groups, Local Community

Management Principle	Actions	Target	Priority/Timeframe	Collaboration/Partnerships
1.8 Increase integrity and innovation in biodiversity management.	<p>Establish a working group of bushland management experts to inform council on its on-ground management and associated programs. Also to collaborate on cross-tenure projects.</p> <p>Include experts such as Merri Creek Management Committee, Darebin Creek Management Committee, VINC, the Narrap team, Melbourne Water, Parks Victoria, land managers from adjoining councils and council contractors. This group may be best implemented as a larger inner-Melbourne working group allowing for information sharing and time efficiencies.</p>	Working group established by end Year 1 and meeting 6 monthly thereafter.	High Year 1	Merri Creek Management Committee, Darebin Creek Management Committee, VINC, the , Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Council Narrap team, Melbourne Water, Parks Victoria, land managers from adjoining councils and council contractors
1.9 City of Yarra Integrated Waterway Corridors Plan	Contribute to the preparation of a specific integrated waterway corridors plan for Yarra that brings together all the strategic directions and provides an overall single coordinating plan of action.	To acknowledge the YRSP objectives and the need to assess the opportunities locally and across boundaries with partners to deliver the YRSP commitments and to generate plausible strategic waterways restoration projects to access available funding.	High Year 1 - 2	Strategic Planning, and Open Space Planning

Goal 2: Encourage people to appreciate and actively enhance Yarra’s natural landscape

Management Principle	Actions	Target	Priority/Timeframe	Collaboration/Partnerships
2.1 Encourage and support ‘nature-focussed’ initiatives on private land and throughout streetscapes at the neighbourhood-scale	Establish a ‘nature in the neighbourhood’ reference group. Consider if/where it is possible to combine with Urban Agriculture and/or Environment Advisory Committee where relevant.	‘Nature in the neighbourhood’ Action Plan developed in consultation with reference group by the end of Year 1.	High Year 1	Sustainability Unit, Urban Agriculture, Waste Management, Communications and Engagement Unit, Community partnerships, YAC, RMIT, Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Council, Local Community, Community Groups, Local Government, Gardens for Wildlife Victoria
	Work with the reference group to plan initiatives that include a focus on increasing nature in the private and streetscape realm. This may include integration with Urban Agriculture and indigenous cultural initiatives.		High Year 1	
	Fund and implement the abovementioned action plan.	500 households in the City of Yarra participating in a nature in the neighbourhood initiative by end of Year 4. One streetscape initiative implemented by the end of Year 4 that aims to introduce nature-focussed elements into a neighbourhood, resulting in wellbeing and community benefits.	Medium Year 2 - 4	
2.2 Invest in nature engagement	Identify resource to deliver community engagement initiatives.	Engage resources to deliver community engagement initiatives.	High Year 1	Human Resources

Management Principle	Actions	Target	Priority/Timeframe	Collaboration/Partnerships
	Scope and deliver a number of nature engagement initiatives. Seek to collaborate with other councils that have run successful programs.	Nature engagement program involving at least two new initiatives in place by end Year 2, with one of the programs being Gardens for Wildlife. Engagement program including Actions 2.1, 2.3 implemented by end Year 2.	High Year 1 - 2	Communications and Engagement Unit, Urban Agriculture, Sustainability Unit. Gardens for Wildlife Victoria, Local Government, VINC, Local Community, Community Groups, Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Council, Parks Victoria
2.3 Establish a nature in Yarra communications program	Design and implement online communication program for nature-focussed news, initiatives and interactions. Seek to integrate with existing communication mechanisms used in environmental, sustainability and urban agriculture projects.	Engaging nature-based content on the City of Yarra website and other council communications channels throughout the year from when new program commences. Regular engagement via social media.	High Year 1	Communications and Engagement, Urban Agriculture, Sustainability Unit. Communications Consultant, Universities Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Council
	Trial an online program which allows the City of Yarra to share information about its on-ground management activities and allows the community to assist/contribute to it.		Low Year 2	Communications and Engagement Unit, Urban Agriculture, Sustainability Unit

Goal 3: Embed nature at the core of Yarra's business practices

Management Principle	Actions	Target	Priority/Timeframe	Collaboration/Partnerships
<p>3.1 Ensure nature is considered as core Council business.</p>	<p>Planning and reporting to consider and address natural values.</p>	<p>City of Yarra's processes explicitly recognise nature as a component of Environment in the quadruple bottom line approach.</p> <p>Nature is one of the 'implications' to be considered within Council Reports.</p> <p>Annual plan includes a dedicated budget line for biodiversity or nature-focussed programs and projects.</p> <p>Ensure Yarra Annual Grants has a separate for category for Nature/Biodiversity enhancement projects.</p>	<p>High Year 1</p>	<p>Governance, Community Grants</p>
<p>3.2 Encourage more natural spaces in the private realm via planning mechanisms.</p>	<p>Provide resourcing to support delivery of strategic biodiversity/natural values requests and projects.</p>	<p>Resourcing support provided</p>	<p>High Year 1</p>	<p>Human Resources, Statutory Planning</p>
	<p>Implement requirement for landscaping plans for permit applications for 2+ lot subdivisions and above.</p>	<p>Increased incidence of indigenous landscaping and habitat components in developments. Shown in Landscaping Plans and monitored by audit of 10%.</p>	<p>Low Year 2</p>	<p>Statutory Planning, Open Space Planning, Urban Design</p>
	<p>Develop pre-application information for planning permits that includes preferences around use of indigenous plants and habitat components.</p>		<p>Low Year 2</p>	<p>Statutory Planning, Open Space Planning, Urban Design</p>
<p>3.3 Consider options for new planning tools to see more nature-focussed outcomes.</p>	<p>Include nature based policy in the draft local planning policies for the Yarra Planning Scheme</p>	<p>Include policy that seeks to protect and enhance natural environments and seek to increase the quality and quantity of the city's biodiversity.</p>	<p>Low Year 3</p>	<p>Strategic Planning</p>

Management Principle	Actions	Target	Priority/Timeframe	Collaboration/Partnerships
3.4 The City of Yarra leads by example	In order to meet the multiple objectives associated with Environment, Sustainability, Nature and Water Infrastructure, seek expert advice on all in-house projects for their 'green infrastructure' credentials, including nature-focussed elements.	All council-led projects to include green infrastructure and demonstrably consider nature and habitat elements in their design and implementation.	High Year 2 - 3	Lead Sustainability Unit, supported by City Works Branch
	The City of Yarra recognises that green infrastructure includes nature-focussed elements and updates process and design practice accordingly.		Medium Year 2	Sustainability Unit

Goal 4: Make innovation, communication and collaboration the cornerstones of Yarra’s nature-focussed programs

Management Principle	Actions	Target	Priority/Timeframe	Collaboration/Partnership
4.1 Collaborate with others who share common goals.	Participate in networks with other municipalities, organisations and institutions who are working on similar issues around urban ecology.	Staff role descriptions and time allocations provided to relevant staff for participation in relevant networks.	High Year 1 - 4	Local and State Government, Community Groups, Universities, Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Council
	Support partnership projects that result in mutual benefits for nature.	Council management acknowledges optional funding for partnership projects as relevant.	Medium Year 1 - 4	Local and State Government, Community Groups, Universities, Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Council
4.2 Develop working partnerships with academic institutions	Actively collaborate with an educational institution on at least one new project each year.	At least one project per year is implemented in partnership with an educational institution.	Medium Year 1- 4	Universities and TAFEs
	Develop a list for a series of projects that include student monitoring of council reserves or encourage teaching and learning in these reserves. The results of this will be fed back to the City of Yarra.	A working partnership to encourage student field studies in council reserves is established by end Year 1 and active by Year 2. Results are useful for all parties involved.	High Year 1	Universities and TAFEs
4.3 Use Smart City technology to assist in conserving natural values	In conjunction with CityLab, scope one project to deliver annually with relevance to nature in the City of Yarra. Option to work collaboratively with other urban councils.	One project is scoped and delivered annually with the assistance of CityLab.	Low Year 2 - 4	CityLab, Sustainability, Communications and Engagement Unit

Glossary

Alien (species): Not native (also referred to as exotic).

Anthropogenic: Resulting from or produced by human beings.

Biodiversity: A word derived from biological diversity. The variety of all life forms: the different plants, animals and micro-organisms, their genes, and the communities and ecosystems of which they are part. Biodiversity is usually recognised at three levels: genetic diversity, species diversity and ecosystem diversity.

Bioregion: A landscape-scale approach to classifying the environment using a range of attributes such as climate, geomorphology, geology, soils and vegetation. There are 28 bioregions identified within Victoria.

Biosphere: The part of the Earth system comprising all ecosystems and living organisms in the atmosphere, on land (terrestrial biosphere) and in the oceans (marine biosphere). It includes derived dead organic matter, such as litter, soil organic matter and oceanic detritus.

Biota: All the plants, animals and micro-organisms of a particular region.

Canopy: Layer of vegetation elevated above the ground, usually of tree branches and epiphytes. In tropical forests, the canopy may be more than 100 feet above the ground.

Canopy tree: A mature tree (i.e. it is able to flower) that is greater than 3 metres in height and is normally found in the upper layer of the relevant vegetation type.

Climate: The average weather in a region over a long period of time. Average weather may include average temperature, precipitation, wind patterns, ultraviolet (UV) levels and other physical measurements.

Climate change: Any long-term significant change in the 'average weather' that a given region experiences. In recent usage, the term 'climate change' often refers to changes in modern climate due to global warming.

Community or Ecological community: A naturally co-occurring biological assemblage of species that occurs in a particular type of habitat.

Connectivity: The extent to which particular ecosystems are joined with others of similar kind; the ease with which organisms can move across the landscape. Also applies to the extent to which populations of a species are able to interact with each other through gene flow (interbreeding.)

Corridor (for wildlife): A strip of habitat of varying width that facilitates animal movement between otherwise isolated patches of habitat.

Diameter at Breast Height (DBH): The diameter of the main trunk of a tree measured over bark at 1.3 metres above ground level. The diameter is the circumference (in centimetres) of the tree divided by π (3.14).

Dispersal: The movement of organisms from one place to another. This differs from migration, which is a cyclical event due to seasonal changes in resources.

Disturbance (ecological): A temporary change in average environmental conditions that causes a pronounced change in an ecosystem. Outside disturbance forces often act quickly and with great effect, sometimes resulting in the removal of large amounts of biomass. Ecological disturbances include fires, flooding, windstorm, insect outbreaks, as well as anthropogenic disturbances such as forest clearing and the introduction of exotic species. Disturbances can have profound immediate effects on ecosystems and can, accordingly, greatly alter the natural community. Because of these and the impacts on populations, these effects can continue for an extended period of time.

Driver: A process that changes the trajectory of a species or ecosystem. Most ultimate drivers of biodiversity loss in Australia are human activities associated with consumption or development.

Ecological community: see Community.

Ecological processes: Actions or events that shape ecosystems. Understanding ecological processes – whether they are natural disturbances like fire, or ongoing processes like nutrient cycling or carbon sequestration – is the key to the development and implementation of sustainable ecological management.

Ecological Vegetation Class (EVC): An indigenous vegetation type classified on the basis of a combination of its floristics, lifeforms, and ecological characteristics. **Ecology:** The scientific study of the distribution and abundance of life on Earth, and the interactions between organisms and their environment.

Ecosystem: An ecosystem is a dynamic complex of plant, animal and micro-organism communities, and the non-living (abiotic) environment (water, soil, climate, etc.), interacting as a functional unit. Humans can be an integral part of ecosystems. **Ecosystem processes:** The physical, chemical and biological actions or events that link organisms and their environment. They include decomposition, production (of plant matter), nutrient cycling, and fluxes of nutrients and energy.

Ecosystem services: The benefits people obtain from ecosystems (e.g. food, renewable resources, water supply, recreational opportunities, oxygen, carbon sequestration, erosion control).

Endemic (noun: endemism): Occurring only in the stated area.

Environment: The place in which an organism lives, and the circumstances under which it lives. Environment includes measures like moisture and temperature, as much as it refers to the actual physical place where an organism is found.

Exotic (species): Introduced (see alien).

Extinction: The global disappearance of an entire species (as distinguished from extirpation).

Extinction debt: Describes the condition where a threatening process, e.g. fragmentation or climate change, leads to environmental conditions in which certain species will inevitably become extinct.

Extirpation: Local extinction.

Fire regime: The combination of fire frequency, intensity, interval and season. Different fire regimes can have different effects on ecosystems, e.g. frequent, low-intensity, cool-season fires can result in different combinations and abundances of plants and animals compared with infrequent, high-intensity, summer fires.

Flora and Fauna Assessment – is an assessment of the flora and fauna recorded during the field site surveys as well as background searches for any rare or threatened species.

Food chain: The feeding relationships between species within an ecosystem. Organisms in a food chain are grouped into trophic levels based on how many links they are removed from the primary producers (plants). The pathways of the food and/or energy within the whole system are called a food chain or a food web.

Fragmentation: Removal (usually by land clearing) of large parts of a natural area, resulting in the retention of only small fragments (or remnants).

Genera: See genus.

Genus (plural genera): A taxonomic category ranking below a family and above a species, and generally consisting of a group of species exhibiting similar characteristics. In taxonomic nomenclature the genus name is used – either alone or followed by a Latin adjective or epithet – to form the name of a species. The scientific name of a species is usually written 'genus name' then 'species name', e.g. the scientific name for humans is *Homo sapiens*; *Homo* is the name of the genus and *sapiens* is the specific epithet, i.e. it describes the species within that genus. There is only one living species of *Homo* (although some scientists have suggested that chimpanzees and bonobo should be included in *Homo*), while *Eucalyptus* includes several hundred species.

Global warming: The increase in the average temperature of the Earth's near-surface air and oceans since the mid-20th century, and its projected continuation. The Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change concluded: 'Warming of the climate system is unequivocal.' 'Most of the observed increase in globally averaged temperatures since the mid-20th century is very likely due to the observed increase in anthropogenic greenhouse gas concentrations' ('very likely' in IPCC terminology means 'the assessed likelihood, using expert judgment, is over 90%').

Guild: A functional group of species that exploit the same class of environmental resources in a similar way and between which competition can be expected.

Habitat: The locality or natural home in which a particular plant, animal or group of closely associated organisms lives.

Habitat hectare assessment: is an assessment of indigenous vegetation to determine its condition, extent (in hectares) and EVC. The assessment must be completed by an accredited native vegetation assessor following methodology described in *Native vegetation: sustaining a living landscape*.

Habitat hectares: A site-based measure of biodiversity value that is calculated by multiplying the extent of native vegetation by its condition score. Habitat hectares = extent × condition score.

Indigenous: Originating or occurring naturally in a particular locality; not introduced; native.

Large tree: A native canopy tree with a Diameter at Breast Height (DBH) greater than or equal to the large tree benchmark for the relevant bioregional EVC. A large tree can be either a large scattered tree or a large tree contained within a patch.

Litter: Leaf litter, or forest litter, is the detritus of fallen leaves and bark which accumulate in forests.

Monitoring: Sampling and analysis designed to ascertain the extent of change from an expected or defined norm, or from past conditions.

Monotremes: One of three groups of living mammals, monotremes lay eggs rather than giving birth to live young. While fossil evidence suggests that the group was once more common and widespread, only five species exist today: two species in Australia (platypus and short-beaked echidna) and three species of long-beaked echidnas in New Guinea.

Native vegetation: Native vegetation is defined in Clause 72 of the Victoria Planning Provisions and all local planning schemes as 'plants that are indigenous to Victoria, including trees, shrubs, herbs and grasses.

Natural selection: The process by which heritable traits that are favourable in a particular environment become more common in successive generations of a population of reproducing organisms, and unfavourable heritable traits become less common. Over time, this process can result in adaptations that specialise organisms for particular ecological niches and may eventually result in the emergence of new species (see fitness).

Naturalised: An alien (introduced) species that has become established in the wild.

Nocturnal: Active only at night.

Niche: The total range of conditions within which a species can survive, grow and produce viable offspring. The 'fundamental niche' defines the potential distribution of a species without any interactions with other organisms, while the 'realised niche' is the area actually occupied because of limitations due to other organisms such as competitors, predators, etc.

Nutrient: Any element or simple compound necessary for the health and survival of an organism. This includes air and water, as well as food.

Organism: An individual form of life, such as a plant, animal, bacterium, protist or fungus.

Patch: A patch of native vegetation is an area of vegetation where at least 25 per cent of the total perennial understorey plant cover is native, or any area with three or more native canopy trees where the drip line of each tree touches the drip line of at least one other tree, forming a continuous canopy, or any mapped wetland included in the Current wetlands map, available in DELWP systems and tools.

Phytophthora: A genus of water moulds, many species of which damage plants. Phytophthora infestans was the infective agent of the potato blight that caused the Great Irish Famine (1845–1849). Several species of Phytophthora have been introduced to Australia, the most damaging of which is *P. cinnamomi*, which causes root rot and which may cause the death of the plant due to water stress (the disease is sometimes referred to as dieback).

Placental (mammals): A derivation of 'placenta', an organ of the foetus of most mammals that attaches to the wall of the mother's uterus (womb), and provides for foetal nourishment and elimination of waste products. The other groups of mammals – monotremes (e.g. echidna, platypus) and marsupials – do not have a placenta.

Pollinator: Animal which carries pollen from one seed plant to another, unwittingly aiding the plant in its reproduction. Common pollinators include insects, especially bees, butterflies, and moths, birds, and bats.

Population (biological): The collection of individuals of a particular species in a stated area; they may or may not interact with other populations (see gene flow). Refugium (plural: refugia): An area that has escaped or will escape changes occurring elsewhere and so provides a suitable habitat for relict species. Resistance: The degree to which a system does not respond to a shock (as opposed to resilience, which describes the extent to which it changes).

Predator: Organism which hunts and eats other organisms. This includes both carnivores, which eat animals, and herbivores, which eat plants.

Prey: Organism hunted and eaten by a predator.

Restoration: renewing a degraded, damaged or destroyed ecosystem through active human intervention.

Riparian: Having to do with the edges of streams or rivers.

Salinity: A measure of the salt concentration of water. Higher salinity means more dissolved salts.

Scattered tree – A native canopy tree that does not form part of a patch. Scattered trees are considered lost if construction encroaches more than 10% in the Tree Protection Zone. In this instance, the tree must be offset.

Seed bank: The collective name for seeds, often dormant, that are stored within the soil of many terrestrial ecosystems. Spatial/Spatially (scale): Pertaining to area.

Species: A species is usually defined as a group of organisms capable of interbreeding and producing fertile offspring. While in many cases this definition is adequate, more precise or differing measures are often used, such as those based on similarity of morphology or DNA. Presence of locally adapted traits may further subdivide species into subspecies.

Stress (ecological): Factor(s) that reduce ability of an organism or ecosystem to thrive, e.g. drought, lack of nutrients, high temperature.

Substrate: "Supporting surface" on which an organism grows. The substrate may simply provide structural support, or may provide water and nutrients. A substrate may be inorganic, such as rock or soil, or it may be organic, such as wood.

Symbiotic: A situation where two organisms (symbionts) live together in a close, mutually beneficial relationship. Taxa: See taxon.

Taxon (plural: taxa): A taxonomic category or group, such as a phylum, order, family, genus, species or subspecies.

Temperate: Region in which the climate undergoes seasonal change in temperature and moisture. Temperate regions of the earth lie primarily between 30 and 60 degrees latitude in both hemispheres.

Temporal (scale): Pertaining to time.

Threatened (species): Likely to become extinct, threatened with extinction. A threatened ecological community is one that is likely to be destroyed. In the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, threatened is a collective term including, from most to least threatened with extinction: critically endangered, endangered and vulnerable. This terminology is widely used in Australia.

Threatening process: Actions, either human or otherwise induced, that threaten the survival, abundance or evolutionary development of a species, population or ecological community, e.g. land clearing, introduced predators, weeds, pollution, fishing by catch.

Traits: Characteristics or properties of an entity. In biology it refers to a distinct phenotypic character of an organism that may be inherited, environmentally determined or somewhere in between. Transformation: See resilience.

Tree Protection Zones: Diameter at Breast Height multiplied by 12 (measured in metres). The minimum that a TPZ can be is 2 metres and the maximum is 15 metres.

Vertebrate: An animal with a backbone (spinal column). A member of the subphylum Vertebrata of the phylum Chordata. Vertebrates comprise sharks and rays, bony fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals (including humans).

References and bibliography

- Allen, G. R., Midgley, S. H. & Allen, M. (2002) *Field Guide to the Freshwater Fishes of Australia*. Western Australian Museum, Perth.
- Beardsell, C. (1997) *Sites of Faunal and Habitat Significance in North East Melbourne*. Nillumbik Shire Council and The North East Regional Organisation of Councils (NEROC).
- Beardsell, C. (2003) *The Vegetation of Yarra Bend Park; A report on the vegetation communities and sub-communities of Yarra Bend Park, incorporating an annotated list of native vascular flora*. Parks Victoria.
- Beardsell, C. & Beardsell, D. (1999) *The Yarra. A natural Treasure*. Royal Society of Victoria.
- Biosis: Hill, A. J. K., S (2001) *Stage 2 of the Natural Heritage Study of the City of Yarra*, Victoria. Biosis.
- Brereton, R., Schulz, M., Mansergh, I., Sandiford, K. & Bennett, S. (2004) *Sites of zoological significance of south-east Melbourne and the Mornington Peninsula—a compendium of information collected between 1987 and 1991*.
- Bureau of Meteorology (2015) *Climate change in Australia. Information for Australia's Natural Resource Management Regions: Technical Report*. Bureau of Meteorology.
- Carroll, C. (2010) *Connectivity analysis toolkit manual (v 1.0)* Available online at: <http://www.connectivitytools.org> , 1.0.
- City of Yarra (2015) *Aboriginal Partnerships Plan 2015-2018*
- City of Yarra (2016) *Aboriginal Partnerships Plan 2015-2018 – Year 2 action plan 2016*
- City of Yarra (2018) *Aboriginal Partnerships Plan 2015-2018 – Year 4 action plan 2018*
- City of Yarra (2017) *Council Plan 2017-2021*
- City of Yarra (2019) *Draft Urban Agriculture Strategy 2018-2022*
- City of Yarra (2015) *Heritage Strategy 2015-2018*
- City of Yarra (2011) *Urban Design Strategy*
- City of Yarra (2017) *Urban Forest Strategy*
- City of Yarra (2018) *Waste Minimisation and Resource Recovery Strategy 2018-2022*
- City of Yarra (2013) *Yarra Environment Strategy 2013-2017*
- Chace, J. F. & Walsh, J. J. (2006) Urban effects on native avifauna: a review. *Landscape and urban planning*, 74, pp. 46-69.
- Churchill, S. (2008) *Australian Bats (Second Edition)*. Allen & Unwin.
- Cooke, R., Wallis, R., Hogan, F., White, J. & Webster, A. (2006) The diet of powerful owls (*Ninox strenua*) and prey availability in a continuum of habitats from disturbed urban fringe to protected forest environments in south eastern Australia. *Wildlife Research*, 33, pp. 199-206.
- CSIRO and Bureau of Meteorology (2016) *State of the Climate*. CSIRO, Canberra.
- Davies, P., Corkery, L., Nipperess, D., Barnett, G., Bishop, M., Hochuli, D., Hose, G., Joei, L.C., Lin, B., Keane, A., Osmond, P., Pelleri, N., Staas, L., Threlfall, C., Van den Berg, F. & Wilkinson, S. (2017) *Blueprint for Urban Ecology: Policy to Practice*. National Green Infrastructure Network Available at <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/grants/urban-ecology-renewal-investigation-project.htm>
- Davies, P., Corkery, L., Nipperess, D., Barnett, G., Bishop, M., Hochuli, D., Hose, G., Joei, L.C., Lin, B., Keane, A., Osmond, P., Pelleri, N., Staas, L., Threlfall, C., Van den Berg, F. & Wilkinson, S. (2017) *Urban Ecology Renewal Investigation Project. Desktop Review*. National Green Infrastructure Network
- Department of the Environment (2013) *Matters of National Environmental Significance - Significant Impact Guidelines 1.1*. Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra.

- DEPI (2014a) *Advisory list of rare or threatened plants in Victoria - 2014*. Department of Environment and Primary Industries, Government of Victoria.
- DNRE (2002) *Biosites: Sites of Biodiversity Significance in Port Phillip and Westernport region Victoria*. Department of Natural Resources and Environment, East Melbourne, Victoria.
- DSE (2004a) *Vegetation Quality Assessment Manual—Guidelines for Applying the Habitat Hectares Scoring Method*
- DSE (2004b) *Vegetation Quality Assessment Manual - Guidelines for applying the habitat hectares scoring method, Version 1.3*. Department of Sustainability and Environment, East Melbourne, Victoria.
- DSE (2009) *Advisory list of threatened invertebrate fauna in Victoria*. Department of Sustainability and Environment, East Melbourne, Victoria.
- DSE (2013) *Advisory list of threatened vertebrate fauna in Victoria*. Department of Sustainability and Environment, State Government of Victoria, East Melbourne.
- DEWHA (2010) *EPBC Act—Environment assessment process*. Department of Environment Water Heritage and the Arts.
- Deslauriers, M. R., Asgary, A., Nazarnia, N. & Jaeger, J. A. G. (2017) *Implementing the connectivity of natural areas in cities as an indicator in the City Biodiversity Index (CBI)*. Ecological Indicators.
- Didier, K. A., Glennon, M. J., Novaro, A., Sanderson, E. W., Strindberg, S., Walker, S. & DiMartino, S. (2008) The landscape species approach: Spatially-explicit conservation planning applied in the Adirondack (USA) and San Guillermo-Laguna Brava (Argentina) landscapes. In press.
- Dobbs, C., Kendal, D. & Nitschke, C. (2013) The effects of land tenure and land use on the urban forest structure and composition of Melbourne. *Urban Forestry & Urban Greening*, 12, pp. 417-425.
- Doerr, V. A. J., Doerr, E. D. & Davies, M. J. (2010) Does structural connectivity facilitate dispersal of native species in Australia's fragmented terrestrial landscapes? Systematic Review No. 44, *Collaboration for Environmental Evidence*. CSIRO, Canberra.
- Dunlop, M. et al. (2012) *The implications of climate change for biodiversity conservation and the National Reserve System: Final synthesis*. CSIRO Climate Adaptation Flagship, Canberra.
- Dunlop, M. et al. (2017) *Scoping the adaptation challenge: What do we need to know to prepare for transformational climate change? Building "climate future plots": designing trials to usefully inform management*. VicNature2050 Symposium.
- Ecology Australia (2009) *Urban Wildlife Management Plan - City of Yarra*. Ecology Australia, Fairfield, Vic.
- Fahrig, L. (1997) Relative effects of habitat loss and fragmentation on population extinction. *Journal of Wildlife Management*, 61, pp. 603-610.
- Forman, R. T. T. & Alexander, L. E. (1998) Roads and their Major Ecological Effects. *Annual Review of Ecology and Systematics*, 29, pp. 207-231.
- Gibbons, P. & Lindenmayer, D. (2002) *Tree Hollows and Wildlife Conservation in Australia*. CSIRO Publishing, Collingwood.
- Griffiths, S. R., Bender, R., Godinho, L. N., Lentini, P. E., Lumsden, L. F. & Robert, K. A. (2017) Bat boxes are not a silver bullet conservation tool. *Mammal Review*, 47, pp. 261-265.
- Hall, D.M., Camilo, G.R., Tonietto, R.K., Ollerton, J., Ahrné, K., Arduser, M., Ascher, J.S., Baldock, K.C.R., Fowler, R., Frankie, G., Goulson, D., Gunnarsson, B., Hanley, M.E., Jackson, J.I., Langellotto, G., Lowenstein, D., Minor, E.S., Philpott, S.M., Potts, S.G., Sirohi, M.H., Spevak, E.M., Stone, G.N. & Threlfall, C.G. (2017) The city as a refuge for insect pollinators. *Conservation Biology*, 31, 24-29.
- Hamer, A., Ainley, J. & Hipler, E. (2010) *Selection of Landscape Species for Biodiversity Conservation of Wetlands and Waterways*. Report to Melbourne Water by Australian Research Centre for Urban Ecology, Melbourne.
- Hamer, A. (2018) *Biodiversity Health Survey Discussion Paper*. Practical Ecology, Preston.
- Harris, V., Kendal, D., Hahs, A.K., Threlfall, C.G. (2018) Green space context and vegetation complexity shape people's preferences for urban public parks and residential gardens. *Landscape Research*. 43. 150-162.
- Higgins, P. J. (ed.) (1999) *Handbook of Australian, New Zealand and Antarctic Birds: Parrots to Dollarbird*. Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, Victoria.

- Hudson, L. N., Newbold, T., Contu, S., Hill S. L. L., Lysenko, I., De Palma A., Threlfall, C.G.,... Purvis, A. (2017). The database of the PREDICTS (Projecting Responses of Ecological Diversity In Changing Terrestrial Systems) project. *Ecology and Evolution*, 7: 145–188.
- Ikin, K., Knight, E., Lindenmayer, D. B., Fischer, J. & Manning, A. D. (2013) The influence of native versus exotic streetscape vegetation on the spatial distribution of birds in suburbs and reserves. *Diversity and Distributions*, 19, pp. 294-306.
- Ikin, K., Le Roux, D. S., Rayner, L., Villaseñor, N. R., Eyles, K., Gibbons, P., Manning, A. D. & Lindenmayer, D. B. (2015) Key lessons for achieving biodiversity-sensitive cities and towns. *Ecological Management & Restoration*, 16, pp. 206-214.
- Ives, C.D., Lentini, P.E., Threlfall, C.G., Ikin, K., Shanahan, D.F., Garrard, G.E., Bekessy, S.A., Fuller, R.A., Mumaw, L., Rayner, L., Rowe, R., Valentine, L.E., Kendal, D (2016) Cities are hotspots for threatened species. *Global Ecology and Biogeography*. (25) 117-126.
- Jordan, R. & Hoffman, A. (2017) *Creating resilient habitat for the future: Building Climate Future Plots* VicNature2050 Symposium.
- Kendal, D. & Baumann, J. (2016) *The City of Melbourne's Future Urban Forest: Identifying vulnerability to future temperatures*. The University of Melbourne, City of Melbourne.
- Kendal, D, Farrar, A., Plant, L., Threlfall, C.G, Bush, J., Baumann, J. (2017) Risks to Australia's urban forest from climate change and urban heat. Clean Air and Urban Landscapes Hub, National Environmental Science Programme.
- Kennet, R., Roe, J., Hodges, K. & Georges, A. (2009) *Chelodina longicollis (Shaw 1794) - Eastern Long-necked turtle, Common Long-Necked turtle, Common Snake-Necked Turtle*. Chelonian Research Foundation
- King, C. A. R. (1988) *Geology and Geological Features of the Yarra Bend/Studley Park Reserve* Geological Survey of Victoria. Unpublished Report 1988/44. .
- Kirk H, Threlfall C, Soanes K, Ramalho C, Parris K, Amati M, Bekessy SA, Mata L. (2018) Linking nature in the city: A framework for improving ecological connectivity across the City of Melbourne. Report prepared for the City of Melbourne Urban Sustainability Branch.
- Lorimer, D. G. S. (2006) Inventory and Assessment of Indigenous Flora and Fauna in Boroondara. Biosphere Pty Ltd, Boroondara.
- Marchant, S. & Higgins, P. J. (1990) *Handbook of Australian, New Zealand and Antarctic birds - Volume 1 Ratites to Ducks*. Oxford University Press, Melbourne.
- Makinson, J.C., Threlfall, C.G. & Latty, T. (2016) Bee-friendly community gardens: Impact of environmental variables on the richness and abundance of exotic and native bees. *Urban Ecosystems*, 1-14.
- Mata, L., Threlfall, C.G., Williams, N.S.G., Hahs, A., Malipatil, M., Stork, N. & Livesley, S.J. (in press) Conserving herbivorous and predatory insects in urban green spaces. *Scientific Reports*, accepted 13th Dec 2016
- McDonald, T., Jonson, J. & Dixon, K. W. (2016) National standards for the practice of ecological restoration in Australia. *Restoration Ecology*, 24, pp. S4-S32.
- McRae, B. H. & Shah, V. B. (2009) *Circuitscape User Guide*, 3.5 - updated November 6, 2009. The University of California, Santa Barbara, USA. Available at: http://www.circuitscape.org/Downloads/Circuitscape_User_Guide.pdf.
- Menkhorst, P. & Knight, F. (2001) *A Field Guide to the Mammals of Australia*. 1st edn. Oxford University Press, Melbourne.
- Moilanen, A., Franco, A. M. A., Early, R. I., Fox, R., Wintle, B. & Thomas, C. D. (2005) Prioritizing multiple-use landscapes for conservation: methods for large multi-species planning problems. *Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*, 272, pp. 1885–1891 Available online at: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1559892/pdf/rspb20053164.pdf>.
- Moilanen, A. & Kujala, H. (2008) *Zonation spatial conservation planning framework and software (v. 2.0): User manual*: Available online at: <http://www.helsinki.fi/bioscience/consplan/software/Zonation/index.html> .
- Moritz, C. & Agudo, R. (2013) The future of species under climate change: resilience or decline? *Science* 504, 504–508.
- O'Malley, A. (2016) *City of Yarra Biodiversity Health Survey 2014-16*, Practical Ecology, Preston.

- O'Malley, A. & Lechner, A. (2017) *Northwest Ecological Connectivity Investigation*. Practical Ecology, Preston, Vic.
- Parkes, D., Newell, G. & Cheal, D. (2003) Assessing the quality of native vegetation: The 'habitat hectares' approach. *Ecological Management & Restoration*, 4, pp. S29-S38.
- Parmesan, C. (2006) Ecological and evolutionary responses to recent climate change. *Annual Review of Ecology, Evolution, and Systematics* 37, 637–669.
- Parsons, H., French, K. & Major, R. E. (2008) The vegetation requirements of Superb Fairywrens (*Malurus cyaneus*) in non-urban edge and urbanised habitats. *Emu*, 108, pp. 283-291.
- Pittle, L. & Kern, L. (1998) Elms and Remnant Indigenous Vegetation in the City of Yarra. Practical Ecology.
- Pizzey, G. & Knight, F. (2007) *The Field Guide to the Birds of Australia. 8th edn*. Harper Collins Publishers, Sydney.
- Radford, J. Q., Bennett, A. F. & Cheers, G. J. (2005) Landscape-level thresholds of habitat cover for woodland-dependent birds. *Biological conservation*, 124, pp. 317-337.
- Roe, J. H. & Georges, A. (2008) Terrestrial activity, movements and spatial ecology of an Australian freshwater turtle, *Chelodina longicollis*, in a temporally dynamic wetland system. *Austral Ecology*, 33, pp. 1045-1056.
- Sanderson, E. W., Redford, K. H., Vedder, A., Coppolillo, P., B & Ward, S. E. (2002) A conceptual model for conservation planning based landscape species requirements. *Landscape and Urban Planning*, 58, pp. 4156.
- Scheffers, B. R. et al. (2016) The broad footprint of climate change from genes to biomes to people. *Science* 354, aaf7671.
- Shukuroglou, P. & McCarthy, M. A. (2006) Modelling the occurrence of rainbow lorikeets (*Trichoglossus haematodus*) in Melbourne. *Austral Ecology*, 31, pp. 240-253.
- Stagoll, K., Lindenmayer, D. B., Knight, E., Fischer, J. & Manning, A. D. (2012) Large trees are keystone structures in urban parks. *Conservation Letters*, 5, pp. 115-122.
- Swift Parrot Recovery Team (2001) *Swift Parrot Recovery Plan*. Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment, Hobart.
- Thompson Berril Landscape Design (2006) *Yarra Open Space Strategy*.
- Thompson Berril Landscape Design (2016) *Yarra Open Space Strategy – Technical Report*.
- Threlfall, C.G. and Kendal, D (2018) The distinct ecological and social roles that wild spaces play in urban ecosystems. *Urban Forestry and Urban Greening*. 29, 348-356
- Threlfall, C.G., Mata, L., Mackie, J.A., Hahs, A.K., Stork, N.E., Williams, N.S. & Livesley, S.J. (2017) Increasing biodiversity in urban green spaces through simple vegetation interventions. *Journal of Applied Ecology*, accepted 4th Jan 2017
- Threlfall, C.G., Ossola, A., Hahs, A.K., Williams, N.S.G., Wilson, L. & Livesley, S.J. (2016) Variation in vegetation structure and composition across urban green space types. *Frontiers in Ecology and Evolution*, (4), 66.
- Threlfall, C.G., Williams, N.S.G., Hahs, A.H. & Livesley, S.J. (2016) Approaches to urban vegetation management and the impacts on urban bird and bat assemblages. *Landscape and Urban Planning*, (153) 28-39.
- Todd, J. (2017) *Protecting Victoria's Environment - Biodiversity 2037: the emerging policy framework for climate change adaptation of biodiversity. Building "climate future plots": designing trials to usefully inform management*. VicNature2050 Symposium.
- Tollefson, J. (2019) Humans are driving one million species to extinction *Nature* 569, 171 (2019). Accessed via: <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-019-01448-4>
- Tremblay, M. A. & St Clair, C. C. (2011) Permeability of a heterogeneous urban landscape to the movements of forest songbirds. *Journal of Applied Ecology*, 48, pp. 679-688.
- Tyler, M. J. & Knight, F. (2009) *Field Guide to the Frogs of Australia*. CSIRO Publishing, Collingwood, Victoria.
- Urban Forest Consulting (2017) *City of Yarra Urban Forest Strategy*. City of Yarra, Richmond.
- Walsh, C. J., Waller, K. A., Gehling, J. & Nally, R. M. (2007) Riverine invertebrate assemblages are degraded more by catchment urbanisation than by riparian deforestation. *Freshwater Biology*, 52, pp. 574-587.

Walsh, C. J. & Webb, J. A. (2016) Interactive effects of urban stormwater drainage, land clearance, and flow regime on stream macroinvertebrate assemblages across a large metropolitan region. *Freshwater Science*, 35, pp. 324-339.

Van der Ree, R. (2017) *Sugar Gliders (Petaurus breviceps) at key biodiversity sites along the Yarra River Corridor, Boroondara City Council*. Boroondara City Council.

Victorian Stormwater Committee, (1999). *Urban Stormwater - Best Practice Environmental Management Guidelines*. CSIRO Publishing, Collingwood

Yugovic, J. (2001a) City of Yarra: Management Guidelines for Sites of Conservation Significance. BIOSIS Research.

Yugovic, J. (2001b) Weed Management and Vegetation Assessment: Lower Yarra River (Dights Falls to Church Street): Final Report. Biosis Research, Melbourne.



The Brown thornbill is a small woodland bird that uses the cover of thick understory vegetation to forage, shelter, and make nests. Photograph from Getty Images



Appendix 1 Summary of Council and state policies and strategies related to Nature

Related strategy/policy	Connection to Yarra Nature Strategy (YNS)	Direction for the Nature Strategy
Council plans, policies and strategies		
<p>Council Plan</p>	<p>Two key objectives are directly relevant to the Nature Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key objective 1. Community health, safety and wellbeing are a focus in everything we do • Key objective 3. Council leads on sustainability and protects and enhances its natural environment <p>And two are relevant to the goals of the Nature Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key objective 4. Development and growth are managed to maintain and enhance the character and heritage of the city • Key objective 7. Transparency, performance and community participation drive the way we operate <p>Council's Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan is now expressed through the Council Plan and there are themes for the Nature Strategy which result from requirements such as:</p> <p>Open space that meets community requirements; community resilience and connection; mental and physical health and wellbeing; opportunities for connection with their community.</p>	<p>The Council Plan provides high level guidance in the areas of protection and enhancement of natural environment; and community health and wellbeing.</p> <p>The Nature Strategy is an action from Key Objective 3 and will be a vehicle for the City of Yarra to 'protect and enhance its natural environment'.</p>

Related strategy/policy	Connection to Yarra Nature Strategy (YNS)	Direction for the Nature Strategy
Yarra Environment Strategy (YES)	<p>The Yarra Environment Strategy (draft) community engagement process has shown that natural values and greening the city were the highest priority</p> <p>The Yarra Environment Strategy 2013-17 provided direction and actions required to integrate sustainable practices into council's operations. Its themes included urban greening, climate adaptation, climate mitigation, and stormwater and water quality.</p> <p>In particular, Pathway 2 (Urban Ecology and Natural Environment) aimed to improve biodiversity and ecosystem health in parks, waterways and open spaces.</p>	<p>Pathway 2, Urban Ecology and Natural Environment from the former Yarra Environment Strategy is now addressed in detail via the Nature Strategy. The Nature Strategy has considered the community's input to the YES renewal process and taken them onboard, aiming to reflect their intent.</p> <p>The Nature Strategy will function under the umbrella of the Yarra Environment Strategy but will deliver on its own vision and goals independently, contributing to Yarra's wider Environment and Sustainability charter.</p>
Climate Emergency Action Plan (Draft under development)	<p>Yarra City Council recognises that the climate emergency presents an unprecedented challenge – both globally and locally. Our planet's climate is already too hot, with dangerous heatwaves, droughts, storms and flooding becoming more intense and destructive.</p> <p>Effectively responding to the climate emergency requires society-wide changes at emergency scale and speed to rapidly reduce carbon emissions, drawdown carbon, drastically change the way ecological resources are used and foster resilience to living in a climate-impacted world. It will require a collective effort across all levels of government, business and the local community.</p> <p>Yarra's first Climate Emergency Plan (currently in development) sets the strategic direction for the next four years to accelerate carbon emission reductions, plan and build a climate adapted city and support and engage our community.</p> <p>Creating a climate resilient city involves greater use of water sensitive design to retain moisture in our landscapes; investing in natural cooling solutions; protecting and enhancing our ecological assets; and adapting our land and vegetation management practices as the climate changes.</p>	<p>While the detail of the Climate Emergency Plan is yet to be confirmed, there are many actions outlined in the draft Nature Strategy that the City of Yarra could undertake in recognition of its stewardship of areas that can provide natural refuges for flora and fauna.</p>

Related strategy/policy	Connection to Yarra Nature Strategy (YNS)	Direction for the Nature Strategy
Yana Ngargna Plan	<p>Yana Ngargna Plan 2020-2023 is guided by five priority areas, which will determine council's ongoing work with the community. These priorities include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Community connection - Council will support Aboriginal community connection to Fitzroy and other historically significant places in Yarra, and continue to develop its own connection to the Aboriginal community. 2. Culture - Council will promote Aboriginal culture to ensure a greater understanding of and respect for Aboriginal people, culture, traditions and history in Yarra. 3. Employment - Council will increase employment opportunities for Aboriginal people at council and broker Aboriginal employment opportunities in the broader community. 4. Events - Council will promote Aboriginal calendar events and other significant Aboriginal community events. 5. Advocacy and Responsiveness - Council will promote relevant policy changes and emerging issues to the Aboriginal community and respond, with permission from the community, on behalf of the community 	<p>Priority 1 aims to see more community connection to Fitzroy and other historically significant places in Yarra, and continue to develop its own connection to the Aboriginal community. While most annual action plans do not make specific mention of the natural values of Yarra that are also culturally significant, particularly to the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people, this is an area that will be recognised via the Nature Strategy.</p> <p>It is recommended that recognition of community connection to the natural values in Yarra is included in future years of the Aboriginal Partnerships Plan.</p> <p>Other priorities in the APP have relevance. The Nature Strategy can seek to involve the Aboriginal community in any resulting actions, events, employment opportunities and also to seek partnership projects.</p>

Related strategy/policy	Connection to Yarra Nature Strategy (YNS)	Direction for the Nature Strategy
<p>Yarra Open Space Strategy</p>	<p>The Technical Report that will form the basis of the Open Space Strategy (in draft) provides in-depth analysis of background information to support the future direction for open space strategy.</p> <p>Analysis of current demographics and predicted changes indicates a strong need for more open space, especially in areas that have under-representation and will experience growth.</p> <p>Options for acquisition of new open space areas are a focus for implementation of the Open Space Strategy. This includes options for reviewing portions of currently inaccessible land such as the Burnley Golf Course.</p> <p>Many of the objectives from the Yarra Open Space Strategy, 2006 are likely to be reflected in the revised strategy. Objectives of particular relevance to the Nature Strategy are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to protect and improve the diversity of indigenous vegetation values in open space reserves adjoining the waterways. • Incorporate best practice principles in the ongoing management and design of open space including water use, energy use and waste management practices. • Increase the provision of indigenous vegetation in the linear open space reserves (additional to the waterway corridors) including the former Outer Circle Railway reserve and, where appropriate, along the railway corridors. Including: improving ecological values of other reserves; improving ecological values in the links between open space reserves • Manage open space that adjoins the waterway to protect and, where appropriate, improve native fauna habitat values • Protect and enhance both the environmental values and cultural heritage values in open space • Improve access to open space in the City to overcome some inherent inequity in open space distribution across Yarra. • Understand, protect and improve, where appropriate, both indigenous and nonindigenous cultural heritage values. 	<p>The Biodiversity Health Survey identified that there is opportunity within Yarra’s open space for increased areas for nature, including along waterways, within parkland of all types and throughout streetscapes.</p> <p>The former and new Open Space Strategy identify that the community of Yarra will require more open space in the coming decades. In the decade of the former OSS, a number of new open spaces have been created, but the new OSS identifies the need for many more, especially in areas that have gaps and will see increased population density.</p> <p>While the detail around how this will best occur is to be confirmed, new open space provides opportunities to incorporate more natural features and habitat value than has traditionally been seen in Yarra.</p> <p>There are also many opportunities to see improved outcomes in streetscapes and existing open spaces as opportunities for enhancement or renewal plantings arise.</p> <p>The OSS objectives have included many of the same objectives as the Nature Strategy including protecting, enhancing and linking environmental values in open space, including cultural heritage values. This objective also aligns with the Nature Strategy, particularly the conservation of indigenous cultural heritage values.</p>

Related strategy/policy	Connection to Yarra Nature Strategy (YNS)	Direction for the Nature Strategy
<p>Yarra Urban Forest Strategy, 2017</p>	<p>The vision for the Urban Forest Strategy is for: a more liveable city supported by a healthy and growing urban forest.</p> <p>Objectives of the Urban Forest Strategy (UFS) include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To enhance Yarra’s healthy and growing urban forest, improving liveability and mitigating the impacts of the urban heat island effect • To manage current and future tree-stock through best practice urban tree management using evidence-based planning and decision making, together with cross-organisational implementation and innovation • To engage and support community involvement in the development of a flourishing and unique urban forest <p>The UFS highlights opportunities to increase biodiversity through new management protocols for street and park vegetation that prioritises habitat value. Emphasis is given to a strategic approach to minimise the impact of tree and canopy loss at one point in time. It recommended that council’s street and park tree planting program carefully consider species selection and placement of trees in connecting streets to improve biodiversity and connectivity outcomes.</p> <p>Aligned with the UFS, the <i>Inner Melbourne Action Plan</i> (IMAP) is collaboration between the Cities of Melbourne, Yarra, Maribyrnong, Port Phillip and Stonnington. Yarra’s UFS directly aligns with Strategy 4.2 of the IMAP Action Plan (2006): <i>We will work together to integrate water sensitive landscapes, substantial tree canopies, biodiversity and habitat into the design of all parks and public space (i.e. streets) areas right across Inner Melbourne.</i></p>	<p>Implementation of the UFS intends to include the development of a 10-year Priority Plan. In this plan, planting locations will be decided based on primary drivers including areas of biodiversity need or significance and areas identified as important linkages for fauna, including corridors and understorey linkages.</p> <p>Another action associated with the Urban Forest program will be to develop support materials to embed urban forest principals into capital works and open space programs to realise outcomes that benefit natural-values.</p>

Related strategy/policy	Connection to Yarra Nature Strategy (YNS)	Direction for the Nature Strategy
<p>City of Yarra Urban Wildlife Management Plan 2009</p>	<p>This plan identifies areas of fauna habitat, addresses threats to fauna, identifies opportunities for habitat improvement and reviews control methods for pest animal species.</p> <p>The plan made several recommendations, many of which include measures to identify, protect, enhance and connect fauna habitat. In addition, an emphasis was placed on protecting waterway fauna habitat, and to improve water quality in whole catchment.</p> <p>Strategically, the plan recommended improving connectivity throughout the municipality, and retaining hollow bearing trees and stags, as well as terrestrial and in-stream habitat with large woody debris.</p>	<p>Some of the recommendations from the UWMP are taken on board in the Nature Strategy, particularly around connectivity and habitat for fauna adjoining waterways and inland.</p> <p>Other initiatives that can be pursued through activity associated with the Nature Strategy include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanently fence areas of fauna habitat such as wetlands and temporarily fence those areas of rehabilitation and revegetation; • Undertake control and monitor for pest animals in conjunction with other stakeholders; • Create dog-exclusion zones around fauna habitat, such as wetlands. All other areas of fauna habitat dogs 'on-leash' only; • Promote and encourage environmental awareness through education campaigns; and • Install fauna friendly lighting in and adjacent to all areas of fauna habitat.
<p>Yarra Waste Minimisation and Resource Recovery Strategy 2018-2022</p>	<p>The long-term ambition of the Waste Minimisation and Resource Recovery Strategy is to move the community towards zero waste to landfill.</p> <p>It will be delivered through a large suite of actions around five priority objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Valuing our resources 2. Delivering high quality, accessible services and programs 3. Encouraging community pride through clean public spaces 4. Ensuring Yarra has access to the programs, infrastructure and technology to meet its targets 5. Collaborate, partner and advocate for better outcomes 	<p>Objective 3 that focus on reducing litter in public spaces will have a direct impact on Yarra's habitat, especially via reductions in litter entering waterways.</p> <p>All other elements of the strategy will benefit the natural world in less direct ways and some, such as objective 5 offer opportunities for collaboration, possibly leading to dual messaging around issues of mutual interest. For example, banning plastic straws to assist the waterway and marine fauna.</p>

Related strategy/policy	Connection to Yarra Nature Strategy (YNS)	Direction for the Nature Strategy
Urban Design Strategy	<p>Future developments in Yarra reinforce a coherent, harmonious and appealing urban environment with an opportunity for continuity and change, focusing on achieving design excellence and a high-quality public domain.</p> <p>Key Objectives</p> <p>The key objectives of the Urban Design Strategy to achieve this vision are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enhanced quality of Yarra’s urban form and character 2. Effective management of growth and change 3. Design excellence in new developments 4. Quality public domain and public spaces in Yarra 5. Processes and practices that promote good design 	

Related strategy/policy	Connection to Yarra Nature Strategy (YNS)	Direction for the Nature Strategy
<p>Yarra Heritage Strategy</p>	<p>The Heritage Strategy (under review) has traditionally focussed largely on the built environment and the cultural environment (non-indigenous and indigenous).</p> <p>The 2015-18 Heritage Strategy focussed on four strategic directions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Knowing our heritage 2. Protecting and managing our heritage 3. Supporting our heritage, and 4. Promoting and celebrating our heritage. <p>The first strategy associated with Strategic Direction 2, states: <i>focus on conserving the identity and uniqueness of Yarra that includes ..., natural assets such as the Yarra River and the extensive parklands that border it.</i></p> <p>The draft Heritage Strategy will focus on similar themes but seeks to formally include and address 'natural heritage' in the revised strategy.</p> <p>Two key actions are planned:</p> <p>Strategy Action No. 8: Introduce a process/project for public to identify areas of natural heritage in the city for potential listing on appropriate lists.</p> <p>Measure: Places of natural heritage significance identified, mapped and listed on an appropriate register - to be determined.</p> <p>Strategy Action No. 30: Achieve recognition of heritage value within other strategies dealing with the natural environment.</p> <p>Measure: All related strategies recognise human attachment to the natural environment and cross-reference to the heritage strategy.</p> <p>Note: Recognise that this is the 'people' value of natural heritage – not 'nature for nature's sake' (as managed under other strategies).</p>	<p>Opportunity to define and develop Natural Heritage values will receive a stronger focus in the revised Heritage Strategy. Actions 8 and 30 set direction for the identification of natural heritage values, establishment of a register and potentially for their formal recognition via an appropriate planning mechanism.</p> <p>Action 30 asks for each relevant Strategy to reference the abovementioned process. This Nature Strategy does so here and also in reference to Management Action 1.3.</p>

Related strategy/policy	Connection to Yarra Nature Strategy (YNS)	Direction for the Nature Strategy
Water Management	<p>Yarra is also considering developing an Integrated Water Management Plan that will cover the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental benefits of water • Water use by council for buildings, open space and for marquis locations • Improving water quality for the Yarra • WSUD, Rain Gardens and Stormwater harvesting; • Other infrastructure i.e. Gross Pollutant Traps; • Technology to improve water quality • Education and awareness 	<p>The management of water is imperative to maintaining natural values, especially throughout the waterways.</p> <p>The Nature Strategy recognises this and supports the development of a Water Strategy that addresses the breadth of water-related issues and opportunities.</p> <p>It recommends that the water strategy consider natural values associated with the waterways and beyond as a priority.</p>
Yarra Planning Scheme (review in progress, almost complete)	MSS, policies, planning tools (Zones, overlays, local policy) and provisions. Provided in more detail in Appendix 2 Legislative context.	<p>The revision of the Planning Scheme has occurred recently. There has been limited update of the scheme in relation to nature-related themes.</p> <p>The creation of this Nature Strategy aims to raise the profile of natural values within council and in the future see this reflected through greater and stronger representation within formal planning structures.</p>
<p>State or regional plans, policies and strategies</p>		

Related strategy/policy	Connection to Yarra Nature Strategy (YNS)	Direction for the Nature Strategy
<p>State Biodiversity Plan</p>	<p>Protecting Victoria’s Environment - Biodiversity 2037 is Victoria’s plan to address the decline of biodiversity and achieve overall biodiversity improvement over 20 years. The Plan presents a long-term vision supported by two general principles. These being:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Victorians value nature; and • Victoria’s natural environment is healthy <p>In its implementation to date, the State Government has developed the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Framework to track the progress of achieving the plan’s goals and targets. • An Implementation Framework which identifies 20 Priority areas and 83 corresponding actions for the first 4 years of the Plan. The priorities and actions are varied and include some that will be of relevance to the City of Yarra. • State Biodiversity Grants that target a range of community-based and regional, strategic projects and programs. • Some new online tools for purposes such as identifying what the state government considers to be Strategic Management Prospects, i.e. locations supporting natural values that provide a good case for investment. 	<p>There is the potential for local government to contribute to delivery of the Plan and vice versa.</p> <p>Preliminary discussions have been held regarding options for this.</p> <p>The Nature Strategy has taken direction from the State Biodiversity Plan, considered stakeholder engagement with Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning staff and aims to align with the vision, principles and priorities of the Plan.</p>

Related strategy/policy	Connection to Yarra Nature Strategy (YNS)	Direction for the Nature Strategy
<p>Yarra Strategy (draft) and Yarra River Action Plan (2017)</p>	<p>In 2017, the <i>Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murrong) Act</i> (the Act) passed through the Victorian Parliament, enshrining in law the protection of the Yarra River. The Act identifies the Yarra River and its corridor as ‘one living, integrated natural entity for protection and improvement’ and recognises Traditional Owners’ custodianship and intrinsic connection to the river.</p> <p>The Yarra River Action Plan was launched in February 2017. Key actions of most relevance include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Melbourne Water is assigned as the lead agency and tasked with more responsibilities including recommending referral authority for amenity issues along the Yarra and delivering the Yarra Strategy • Greater Yarra Urban Parklands (one living and integrated natural entity) • Establishment of the Birrarung Council • the Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability to report on the condition of Yarra River land <p>In early 2018, the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung developed their vision for the Birrarung in a policy titled <i>Nhanbu narrun ba ngargunin twarn Birrarung</i> (Ancient Spirit and Lore of the Yarra). This policy defines the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung’s aspirations for planning, policy and decision-making to enhance the integrity of the Yarra Strategic Plan.</p>	<p>The Draft Yarra Strategy identifies a suite of actions for the Lower Yarra section that include focus on habitat links along the Yarra waterway and extending this focus into adjoining private land. Habitat corridors are also mooted for a terrestrial link that may be similar in its intent to corridors that are proposed within the Nature Strategy.</p> <p>Involvement of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Council in the development and governance of the Yarra Strategy aligns with the objectives of the City of Yarra and of the Nature Strategy.</p>
<p>Melbourne Water, Healthy Waterways Strategy (2018-2028)</p>	<p>Melbourne Water is responsible for the waterways within the municipality and has responsibilities associated with stormwater, water quality and drainage.</p> <p>Melbourne Water has priority work areas and operations that are directed by its Healthy Waterway Strategy and Capital Investment Plan and operations plans. It provides grants for waterway related activities and is an active partner in weed-related management for the City of Yarra.</p>	<p>A collaborative relationship is integral to management of adjoining areas of land along waterways for the benefit of the entire ecosystem and for residents.</p> <p>The City of Yarra has responsibility for some of the infrastructure and landscape within the urban environment which influences stormwater quality and quantity.</p> <p>Priority areas of focus in the Healthy Waterways Strategy and Capital Investment Plan would ideally align with City of Yarra’s natural values priorities. An example being Dights Falls where updates to the fish ladder are a current priority project.</p>

Related strategy/policy	Connection to Yarra Nature Strategy (YNS)	Direction for the Nature Strategy
Resilient Melbourne	<p>Melbourne is one of the first 32 cities to become a member of the 100 Resilient Cities network.</p> <p>Resilient Melbourne, a joint project of 32 metropolitan Melbourne councils, Melbourne’s academic, business and community sectors, and the Victorian Government sets out the first resilience strategy for Greater Melbourne. This strategy seeks to respond to future challenges associated with climate change and its impacts amongst other challenges.</p> <p>One of the first flagship actions, the delivery of a Metropolitan Melbourne Urban Forest Strategy, <i>Living Melbourne, Our Metropolitan Urban Forest</i> was delivered in March 2019, with the primary aim to “Extend and link existing urban greening, reforestation and nature initiatives across Melbourne, to improve wellbeing and reduce our exposure to hazards such as heatwaves and flooding”.</p>	<p><i>Living Melbourne, Our Metropolitan Urban Forest</i> strongly links together nature and urban forest outcomes.</p> <p>Its eight actions strongly align with the goals and many of the actions of the Nature Strategy.</p>
Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority, Regional Catchment Strategy	<p>The Regional Catchment Strategy sets targets for environmental assets that are identified as being of particular importance to the ecological health and resilience in the Port Phillip and Western Port region – native vegetation, native animals, waterways and wetlands, hinterland, coasts and the bays.</p> <p>For each of these ‘environmental assets’ it assigns objectives, priorities and management measures.</p> <p>Of most relevance to the City of Yarra are the objectives for native vegetation, native animals, waterways and wetlands.</p>	<p>The RCS sets targets for animal diversity and other measures such as key indicator species which may be of interest to the City of Yarra. It provides an umbrella strategy which may be useful to use as an opportunity to collaborate with other land managers on partnership projects.</p>

Appendix 2 Legislative context

Environmental Protection and Biodiversity (EPBC) Act 1999

The Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) applies to sites where proposed developments or projects may have a significant impact on matters of National Environmental Significance.

There are currently seven matters of National Environmental Significance, which include nationally listed threatened species; including the Matted Flax-lily, and listed fauna includes the Swift Parrot, Macquarie Perch, Grey-headed Flying-fox and Australian Grayling; ecological communities (*Grassy Eucalypt Woodland of the Victorian Volcanic Plains* being the most likely), and listed migratory species.

Under the EPBC Act, any action that may have a significant impact on matters of national environmental significance must involve a referral to the Australian Government to seek approval.

The removal or modification of habitat on private or public land for these species may trigger requirements under the EPBC Act. However, careful planning to avoid development or activities from occurring within areas of critical habitat for these species (including movement corridors), could remove the need to refer any council actions or future developments to the Minister.

Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murrong) Act 2017

In 2017, the *Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murrong) Act* (the Act) passed through the Victorian Parliament, enshrining in law the protection of the Yarra River. The Act identifies the Yarra River and its corridor as 'one living, integrated natural entity for protection and improvement' and recognises Traditional Owners' custodianship and intrinsic connection to the river.

The Act, provides for the preparation of an unprecedented, holistic Yarra River Strategic Plan (YRSP) to coordinate 15 public entities that operate along the river corridor, to guide future use and development and identify areas for protection within the Yarra corridor. Objectives for the first 10 years of the YRSP:

YRSP (in preparation), driven by a Yarra River 50 Year Community Vision, responds to the Act and will enable responsible agencies to protect the Birrarung, Yarra River

As one of the 15 managing authorities that has statutory obligations to deliver the objectives of the YRSP over the first 10 year period, the City of Yarra is committed to complying with the YRSP plan objectives and actions.

This YRSP will set out the first 10 years of action to contribute to the delivery of the Yarra River 50 Year Community Vision.

1. A healthy river and lands - YRSP will improve the water quality of the Birrarung and protect its land, floodplains and billabongs to achieve greater biodiversity.
2. Greater Yarra Urban Parkland - YRSP will seek to protect and improve the river's parklands in order to support the Yarra River 50 Year Community Vision.
3. A culturally diverse river corridor - YRSP will acknowledge, protect and commemorate the rich heritage of the Birrarung.
4. Protecting the natural beauty of the Birrarung - YRSP will seek to respect the significance of the Birrarung's landscapes. Where we build, we will protect and celebrate the river's natural beauty, landscapes and views.

Flora and Fauna Guarantee (FFG) Act 1988

The *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* (FFG Act) was legislated to ensure the continued survival of all Victorian species of flora and fauna. The FFG Act lists threatened taxa, communities of flora or fauna and potentially threatening processes. The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) is the referral authority for matters under the FFG Act. Public authorities have a responsibility to ensure that their operations have regard to the objectives of the Act. Species listed under the FFG Act that have been recorded in the City of Yarra and that have the potential to occur include a suite of waterbirds and wetland-dependent species and one bat species. Potential impacts to these species should be considered early in the planning phase of any development.

Catchment and Land Protection (CaLP) Act 1997

The CaLP Act provides clear provisions relating to spread of noxious weeds on private and public land. Under section 20 of the CaLP Act, all land owners, including public authorities, must, in relation to their land, take all reasonable steps to avoid causing or contributing to land degradation, eradicate regionally prohibited weeds, prevent the growth and spread of regionally controlled weeds on their land, and prevent the spread of, and as far as possible, eradicate established pest animals.

Wildlife Act 1975 and Wildlife Regulations 2013

There may be an avenue to achieve greater protection of significant habitat trees in the City of Yarra by invoking the *Wildlife Act 1975* (the Act), as there is the potential for fauna to be harmed when large trees are removed. The Act provides for the protection and conservation of native wildlife (fauna) within Victoria. Under the Act a person must not hunt, take or destroy endangered, notable or protected wildlife; this includes all native vertebrate animals. Applying the principles of the Act to protect fauna using large trees may overcome any existing limitations in tree protection under the current local laws of the City of Yarra or under other State regulations.

The Wildlife Regulations 2013 provide further detail relating to the Act, including that a person not to damage, disturb or destroy any wildlife habitat, although this does not apply if the person is authorised to do so under any other Act such as the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

Planning and Environment Act 1987

The Planning and Environment Act 1987 establishes the framework for planning the use, development and protection of land in Victoria in the present and long-term interests of all Victorians. This includes providing the structure for and administering the implementation of Planning Schemes in each municipality through the Victorian Planning Provisions (VPPs). Planning Schemes are legal instruments outlining provisions for land use, development and protection. They are constructed and sourced from the VPPs.

State Planning Policy Framework

Clause 12 Environmental and Landscape Values - recognises that planning:

- should help to protect the health of ecological systems and the biodiversity they support (including ecosystems, habitats, species and genetic diversity) and conserve areas with identified environmental and landscape values.
- must implement environmental principles for ecologically sustainable development that have been established by international and national agreements.
- should protect sites and features of nature conservation, biodiversity, geological or landscape value.

Clauses of particular relevance include:

- Clause 12.01-1 Protection of biodiversity
- Clause 12.01-2 Native vegetation management
- Clause 12.05 'Yarra River Protection' requires that that building height is below the natural tree canopy and all development is set back a minimum of 30 metres, or greater, from the banks of the river;
- Clause 14.02-1 'Catchment planning & management' stipulates the need to retain natural drainage corridors with vegetated buffer zones at least 30 metres wide along each side of a waterway to maintain the natural drainage function, stream habitat and wildlife corridors and landscape values, to minimise erosion of stream banks and verges and to reduce polluted surface runoff from adjacent land uses.
- Clause 52.17 Victoria's Native Vegetation Management, A Framework for Action

Under Clause 52.17 a permit is required to remove, destroy or lop native vegetation on land which together with all contiguous land in one ownership, has an area of at least 0.4 hectares (exemptions apply). Clause 52.17 requires a planning permit for the removal of native vegetation (exemptions apply). The purpose of the clause (amongst others) is to minimise impacts on Victoria's biodiversity from the removal of native vegetation and to manage native vegetation to minimise land and water degradation. Referral to DELWP

under Clause 66.02 may be required for an application to remove native vegetation; e.g. if clearing is greater than 0.5 ha or the application follows the high-risk pathway. Exemptions apply on land less than 0.4 hectares to remove native vegetation, and so significant habitat trees will not be protected under Clause 52.17.

Given that there are few sites in the City of Yarra that would support >0.4 ha of native vegetation, Clause 52.17 is unlikely to be invoked when assessing new developments within the municipality. However, under Clause 52.17, scattered indigenous trees also require protection and offsetting if proposed to be removed. The removal of significant trees is also regulated by council exercising its local law for significant tree protection. That is, any tree >40 cm diameter at breast height has to be inspected by a qualified arborist before removal. This provision is likely to protect large trees that are more likely to contain hollows and high canopy cover; that is, important fauna habitat.

- Clause 53.18 Stormwater management in urban development. Provides stormwater management requirements for new developments.
- Clause 58.03 Site layout for apartments. Includes a series of requirements for new apartment developments including considerations for layout of communal space. Objectives for landscaping include:
 - To encourage development that respects the landscape character of the area.
 - To encourage development that maintains and enhances habitat for plants and animals in locations of habitat importance.
 - To encourage appropriate landscaping.
 - To encourage the retention of mature vegetation on the site.
 - To promote climate responsive landscape design and water management in developments that support thermal comfort and reduces the urban heat island effect.

Zoning and Overlays

Several planning instruments and mechanisms exist to protect and enhance biodiversity within the City of Yarra.

Zoning: The most appropriate way to secure fauna habitat in the long term is through zoning and/or the use of overlays. All publicly managed open space in the municipality is zoned as Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ), except for Alphington Wetlands which is zoned as Public Conservation and Resource Zone (PCRZ). Land zoned as Public Park and Recreation Zone does not have a primary focus of conservation and consideration in the long-term could be given to rezoning areas of high biodiversity value to Public Conservation and Resource Zone (PCRZ) to give a higher level of security and protection to these sites. This measure would apply to areas identified as critical habitat and movement corridors in the City of Yarra (see **Map 5** on **Page 31**).

Overlays:

Significant Landscape Overlay and Environmental Significance Overlay

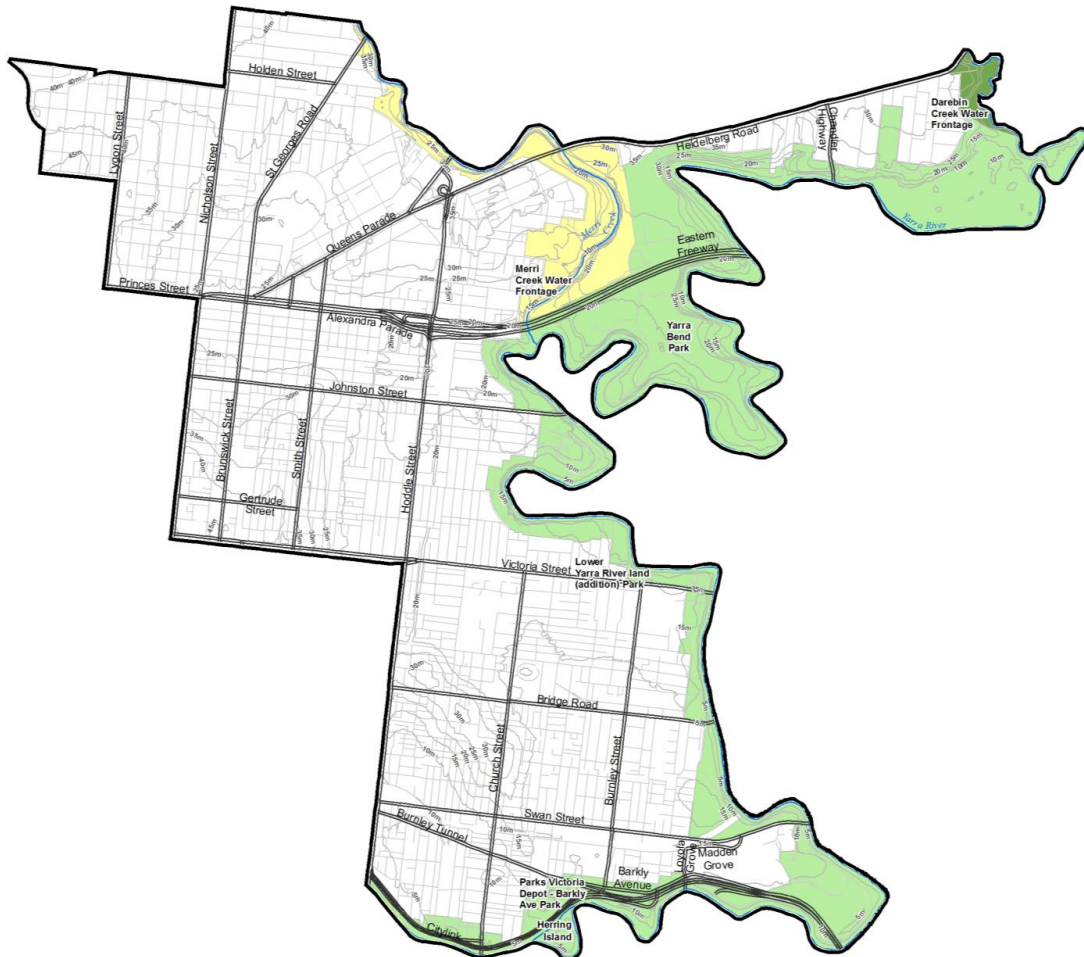
The Yarra River Corridor is covered by a Significant Landscape Overlay while Merri and Darebin Creeks are covered by an Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO2 and ESO3, respectively; **Map 6**).

These overlays consider a broad-scale vision for the landscape's vegetation and character, with aspirations for biodiversity protection. Environmental Significance Overlays are applied to areas on the basis of the location and type of remnant riparian and other indigenous vegetation, which in these tributaries to Yarra River may include biodiversity and habitat values. The application of the ESO's in this instance is strategically applied to capture an appropriate area where ecological values have been identified and require ongoing protection, such as critical habitat or movement corridors. In the Yarra Planning Scheme, under ESO2 and ESO3 it is policy that areas of remnant vegetation are not disturbed and disturbance to non-remnant vegetation minimised. The protection of ecological values along the Yarra River is provided by SLO1. Under the SLO1 a Landscape Plan is required that includes details around design features that are compatible with the landscape; vegetation to be planted and protected; weed and erosion management; stormwater management.

Additionally, an application to remove, destroy or lop vegetation must be accompanied by a written explanation justifying the removal of the vegetation supported by a suitably qualified arborist.

- A description and accurate site plan denoting the position, height, number, trunk circumference, branch spread, slope of land and species of any vegetation to be removed.
- Plan details of the location of proposed replanting.

For instance, consideration could be given to applying an ESO over the Park Street Linear Reserve, which encompasses both critical habitat and an ecological corridor.



Map 6 Location of the Environment Significance Overlay and Significant Landscape Overlay in Yarra

Design and Development Overlay (DDO-Schedule1) - applies to the Yarra River corridor, Merri and Darebin Creeks and some adjoining land. Links to the Yarra River Corridor Urban Design Guidelines Local Planning Policy.

This DDO will be updated when Amendment C66 is included in the Yarra Planning Scheme.

The new overlay recognises four sub-areas of the River Corridor and there are specific Design Objectives and buildings and works provisions for the whole corridor and for each sub-area. For some of the sub-areas the buildings and works provisions nominate heights and setbacks for new development.

Public Acquisition Overlay (PAO2) - the overlay indicates the intention of the State Government to acquire land to create a continuous linear park/trail system adjacent to waterways. Sections of this overlay are present along the Yarra River (south of Gipps Street) and the lower section of the Darebin Creek.

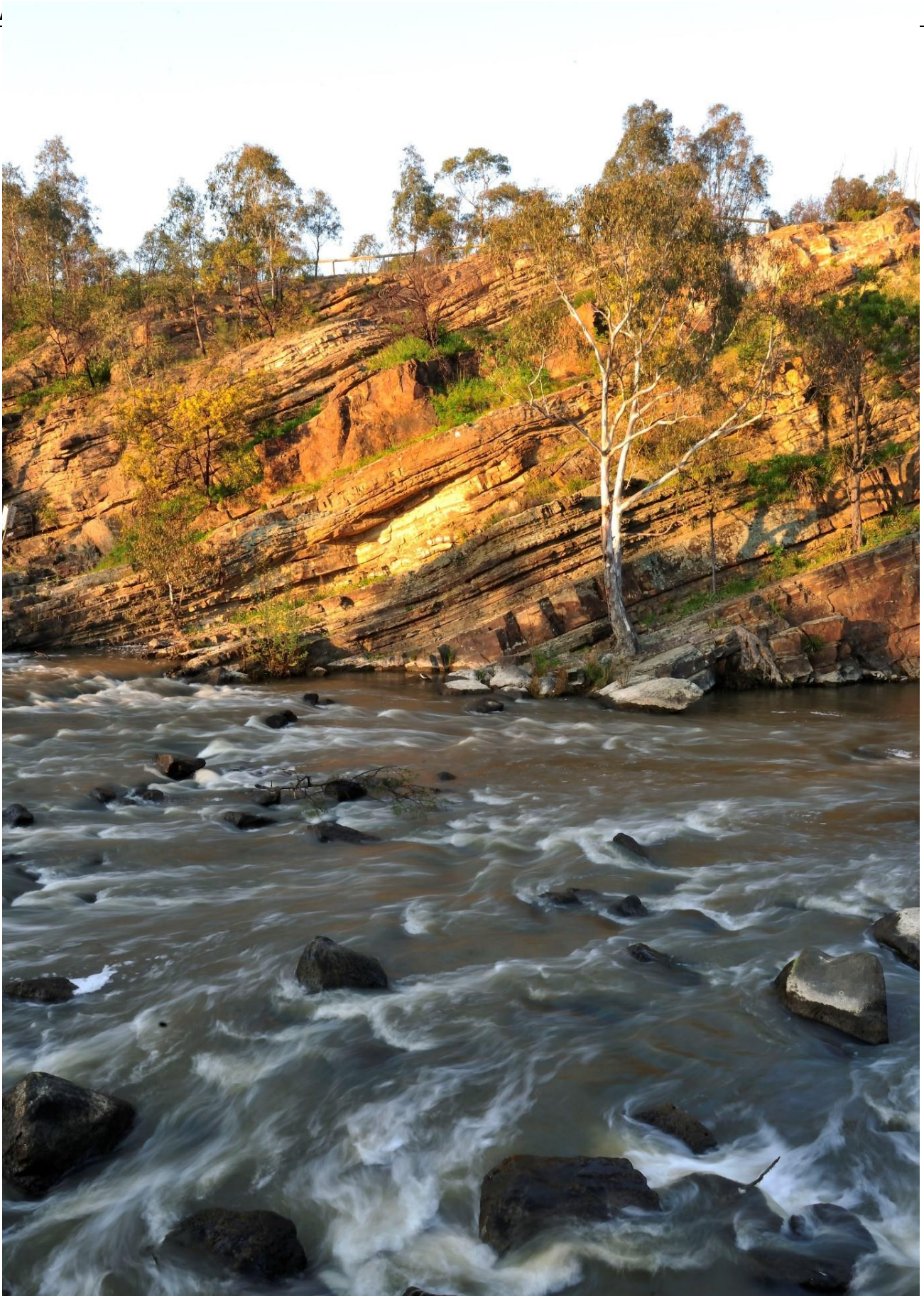
Environmentally Sustainable Development – Local Policy in Yarra Planning Scheme (22.17) Planning Permit Considerations. Under this local policy, Clause 22.17-2 includes objectives that support the protection of urban biodiversity:

- To protect and enhance biodiversity within the municipality.
- To provide environmentally sustainable landscapes and natural habitats, and minimise the urban heat island effect.
- To encourage the retention of significant trees.
- To encourage the planting of indigenous vegetation.
- To encourage the provision of space for productive gardens, particularly in larger residential developments.

Sustainable Management Plans are detailed sustainability assessments of a proposed building design required with planning permit applications. Within the City of Yarra, there are ten key sustainable building categories that must be addressed in applications for large buildings, comprising of 10 or more residential dwellings or more than 1000m² of non-residential Gross Floor Area (GFA). Two categories that apply to biodiversity include Urban Ecology (see objectives listed above), and stormwater management, which aims to reduce the impact of stormwater runoff by improving water quality, by implementing water sensitive urban design principles. Implementing Melbourne Water storm water management best practice around wetland sites may achieve this.

City of Yarra Street Tree Policy

Council supports an increase in the quality and quantity of trees in its streets and is committed to the prioritisation of street trees through integrated streetscape design. Council recognises the benefits of healthy and diverse street trees and promotes biodiversity values across the Municipality. Native and indigenous species are preferred as street trees to build on their ecological value and provide valuable habitat that accommodates a range of wildlife. The aim of the policy is to provide a policy framework to guide street tree planning, planting, maintenance removal and replacement in the City of Yarra that will increase the benefits provided by trees in the urban landscape. Specific objectives of the policy relating to biodiversity include a net increase in the number of street trees and overall street tree canopy, improvements in the quality of street trees, and to increase the diversity of street tree species



Appendix 3 Nature Action Plan context

Goal 1: Increase the diversity, connectivity and resilience of Yarra's natural environment

Management Principle 1.1. Consolidate and grow areas of high quality, diverse habitat

Actions:

- **Consolidate and increase the condition of all patches of current native vegetation.**
- **Review all native vegetation patches in the context of their role as habitat within a corridor and their contribution to ecological function. Adjust management approach accordingly.**
- **Prioritise some areas for enhancement and identify locations for linking.**

Targets:

- **Native vegetation understorey score in all mapped current native vegetation patches increased by 20% by Year 3.**
- **Management planning for bushland areas includes consideration of ecological function for key indicator species and consideration of threatening processes by end of Year 2. This is documented and monitored.**
- **Increase native vegetation understorey extent (at >25% cover) within Open Space by 0.5 ha annually**

Context:

The Biodiversity Health Survey assessed open space reserves to identify and map patches of native vegetation. A *Habitat Hectare* assessment was undertaken to determine the condition of areas of native vegetation, including areas of planted vegetation. This methodology is outlined in *Vegetation Quality Assessment Manual-Guidelines for Applying the Habitat Hectares Scoring Method* (DSE 2004). The *Habitat Hectare* method involves making visual and quantitative assessments on various characteristics of individual native vegetation patches, according to established criteria that are set against an optimum benchmark.

The mapped habitat zones and EVC distribution are shown previously in **Map 4** on **Page 26**. Patches of native vegetation are relatively fragmented. In particular, along the waterway corridor and linear trail that extends along Park Street there are ample opportunities to extend existing patches and to link between patches, providing a much more continuous habitat corridor.

Compared with pristine bushland, Yarra's native vegetation scored particularly poorly in the categories of large old trees (measured by the number of large trees per ha, large trees are defined as those above a certain predefined size for different vegetation types), weed cover, recruitment, and logs (**Figure 15**). Understorey, organic litter, and canopy cover scores are what would be expected levels of condition within urban bushland remnants.

The Landscape Context score was also determined as part of assessments and represents a combined assessment of the native vegetation patch size, the proximity to large core habitat patches (>50 ha in size), and the amount of native vegetation within the immediate surrounding landscape. As Yarra is an urbanised area, it inevitably scored relatively poorly due to the fragmented nature of the surrounding landscape (**Figure 15**).

The results from the *Habitat Hectare* assessment show that there is ample opportunity for improving the condition of the native vegetation within the reserve system, and provides a framework with which we can conceptualise management principles.

Increase understorey extent (at >25% cover) within Open Space by 0.5 ha annually at locations that are unsafe to maintain under existing regimes (sleep slope), strategically link habitat and widen existing waterway corridors, in line with design principals of the YOSS.

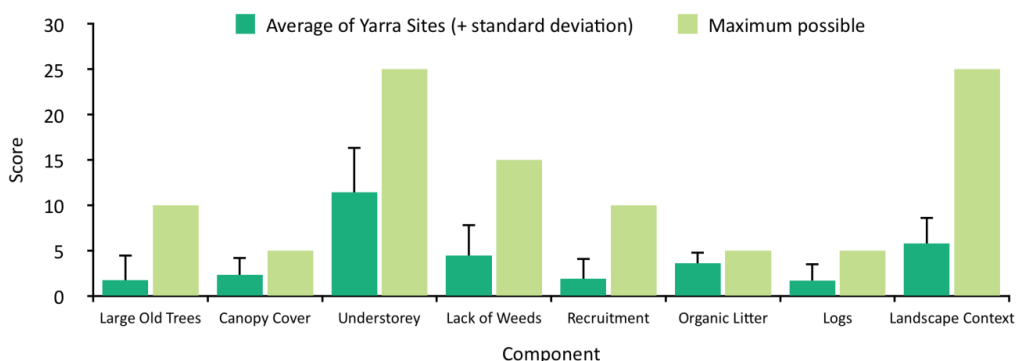


Figure 15 Average 'Site Condition' components and 'Landscape Context' scores across all habitat zones

Management Principle 1.2. Increase flora and fauna diversity

Actions:

- **Establish monitoring locations targeting higher quality habitat and also low-quality areas for key indicator fauna groups.**
Fauna recommended to include:
 - *Pollinator insects, butterflies*
 - *Birds (diverse range of guilds)*
 - *Bats*
- **Design and deliver a monitoring program that measures diversity in fauna focussing on key indicator fauna groups (above). Involve public/citizen science where possible.**
- **Where deemed appropriate, initiate re-introductions, particularly for flora in key locations.**
- **Collaborate with the Communications and Engagement Unit to develop a communications plan to educate and promote responsible cat ownership and keeping cats inside at night**
- **Develop a literature review related to the impact of cats in Yarra, to be used as a potential 'Justification Paper' for the development of further policies.**

Targets:

- **Net positive flora and fauna diversity by end Year 3 resulting in an appropriate increase in each of the faunal groups listed above.**
- **Monitoring conducted at relevant intervals (as determined by method).**
- **Data is useful, interpreted and made publicly available in an engaging way.**
- **Optional target: a 5% increase in indigenous flora diversity within bushland reserves.**
- **To reach the owners of all registered cats in Yarra.**
- **An easily interpreted and implemented set of recommendations is created.**

Context:

The Biodiversity Health Survey included a comprehensive fauna census in 2014-2016 which used a range of survey techniques to detect vertebrate fauna species.

953 new fauna observations were made over the course of the Biodiversity Health Survey. The majority of records were for bird and mammals species, with smaller numbers of records for reptiles, amphibians, invertebrates, and fish (Figure 16).

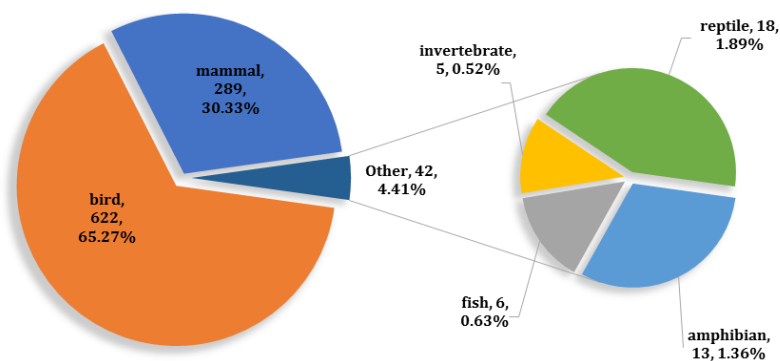


Figure 16 Fauna taxon composition across all 2014-2016 BHS observations.

Bird species abundance and diversity across Yarra varied across the surveyed reserves. The common native species included the Australian Magpie, Noisy Miner, Red Wattlebird, Rainbow Lorikeet, Silver Gull, Magpie-lark, and Galah. Common introduced bird species included Spotted Turtle-dove, Common Myna, Rock Dove, and Common Starling. The Common Myna and Rock Dove accounted for a large number of individual bird species observed, while the Rainbow Lorikeet was the most abundant native bird species by a considerable margin.

Fauna monitoring opportunities:

The BHS established a series of fauna census areas for a number of fauna groups. This allows future surveys to occur which can be compared with the current results for tracking the progress in biodiversity improvement programs and general biodiversity values across the municipality. A number of councils (e.g. City of Whitehorse) undertake regular annual bird surveys in nominated bushland reserves in an effort to monitor biodiversity health across the municipality.

Regular monitoring is important to provide a reliable picture of the fauna diversity within an area and can provide key insights into the health of ecological systems. Key insights can allow for adaptive management actions to be implemented, to reduce declines in fauna populations. However they can also be utilised to observe positive outcomes for fauna and ecosystems, through biodiversity improvement works. Bird and microbat surveys are probably the best indicators fauna groups for achieving these insights, as they utilise and respond to a wide range of habitat resources and attributes and play important roles in ecosystems function such as pollination, seed dispersal, and regulation of insect populations (lerps, scales, mosquitos etc.). Both species can also utilise both bushland habitat and scattered significant tree 'stepping stone' habitat.

Insects likely comprise a significant proportion of the fauna diversity with the City of Yarra. This fauna group can be used as indicators of general ecosystem health, particularly of soil and microhabitat health as they respond strongly to the diversity, structure, and health of the groundstorey vegetation.

Flora

The Biodiversity Health Survey contributed a significant amount of data to the knowledge base for the City of Yarra. Prior to this survey; 961 flora taxa had been recorded from 5374 records. During the survey, new flora species records were compiled during the completion of habitat zone flora lists for each of the 59 mapped habitat zones and in establishing 16 flora quadrats across several council reserves. Accordingly, the survey resulted in a total of 3174 new flora records.

As database searches revealed only 498 flora records existed for council reserves, this amounts to a substantial increase in flora records for the council reserve system. New records included 211 introduced flora species, 209 indigenous, and 20 naturalised native species. The proportions recorded in these surveys reflect the results and proportions of indigenous versus exotic and introduced flora species in the wider council area and surrounds. It should be noted that of the flora species observed, the diversity was relatively low, which reflects the surrounding urban environment, and the history of land modification.

On this basis, there is significant opportunity for improving plant diversity, particularly focussing on higher quality locations as a first priority. The locations of the ten quadrats that were established during the Biodiversity Health Survey would provide a good first batch of sites and quadrat monitoring would then assist in gauging the success of improving plant diversity.

Chocolate lilies observed during the Biodiversity Health Survey

Management Principle 1.3 Protect and celebrate significant habitat trees and their values

Action: *Building on the trees documented via the Biodiversity Health Survey, document and map all large old trees and others that provide significant habitat. Requires a description of their habitat values, including hollows.*

Targets:

- Maintain the number of hollow bearing trees. Implement programs to see an increase of 5% annually including planting of indigenous trees, creating artificial hollows and retaining dead trees where it is safe to do so.
- All significant habitat trees added to the Significant Tree register.



Action: *Engage with Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Council to ensure Large Old tree values that are culturally significant are adequately considered in the City of Yarra (and its land management partners) policy and practice.*

Note: *This action may align with the Heritage Strategy which aims to engage the community in identifying areas of Natural Heritage value.*

Targets:

- All trees identified by Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Council protected via a formal planning mechanism if/where this is culturally appropriate and sensitive.
- Procedures and training in cultural heritage awareness and practice are up to date for all relevant staff.

Action: Ensure local laws protocols are in place to protect all significant habitat trees.

Target: No significant habitat trees removed on streets or open space that is managed by the City of Yarra.

Action: Promote significant habitat trees, and their values in an online forum. Encourage public interaction.

Target: The City of Yarra resident's survey indicates increased awareness of significant habitat trees and their values.

Context:

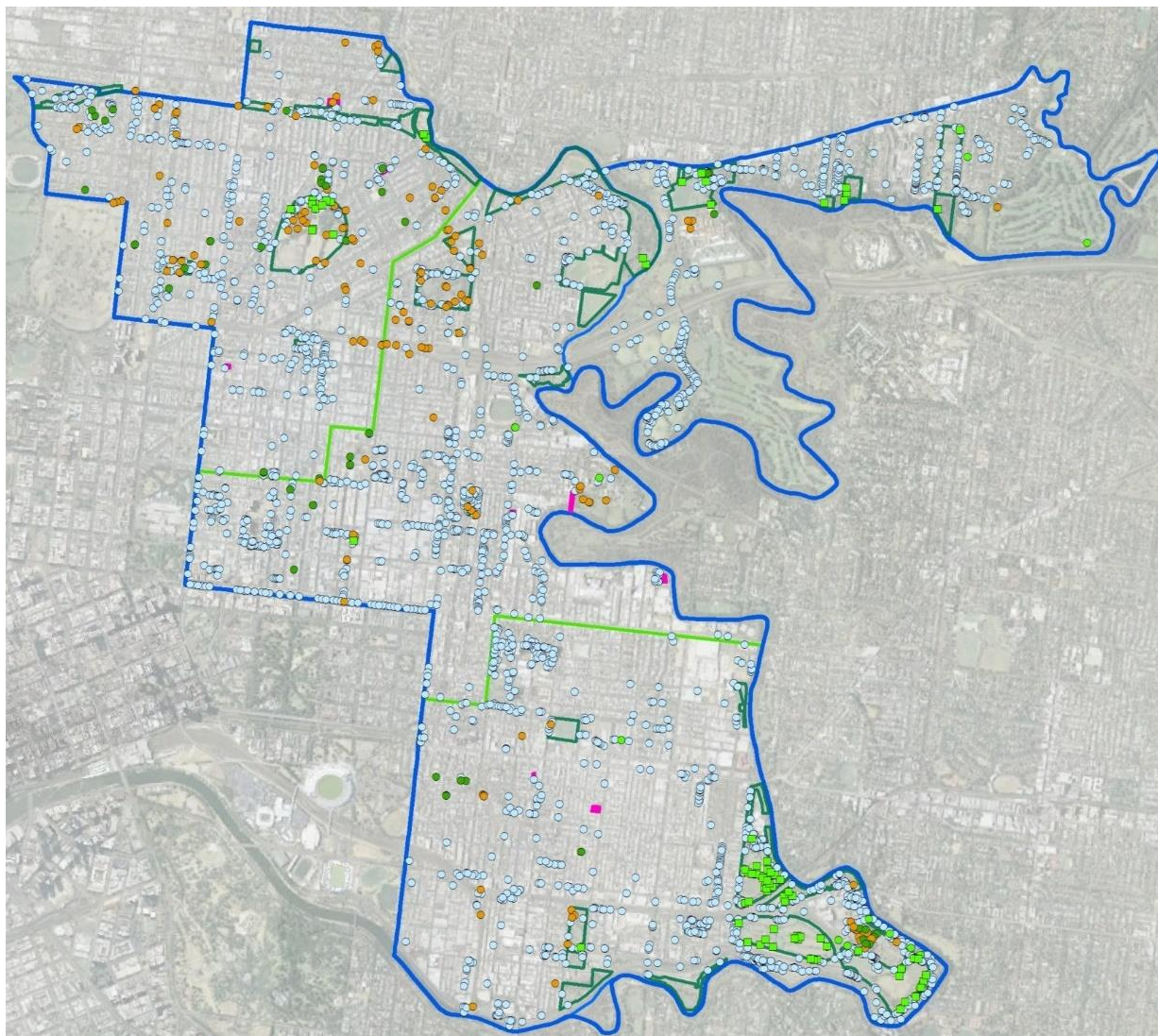
Large indigenous trees (**Figure 17** and **Figure 18**) are keystone structures for birds and arboreal mammals in urban parks (Stagoll et al. 2012), and contribute to overall biodiversity. Large old trees need to be managed for long-term sustainability and it is vital they be retained in new developments (Ikin et al. 2015). Increasing the cover of flowering eucalypt trees by at least 40% of the current extent in the municipality would significantly increase the probability of foraging occupancy by the Rainbow Lorikeet, although nesting occupancy would be reliant on the availability of tree hollows (Shukuroglou and McCarthy 2006).

An indication of where other significant trees may be present was investigated during the BHS using remote sensing LIDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) imaging, which uses light from a pulsed laser on an aircraft to measure the height of vegetation. Using this technique, point locations of trees estimated to be greater than 15m in height were identified to infer the potential location of additional significant trees across both public and private land in the City of Yarra.

Analysis of Lidar Images

Collectively, all trees are important within a landscape through their contribution to total canopy cover. Total landscape habitat cover has been shown to have a strong influence on bird abundance, diversity, and species composition. The relative cover of eucalypt and exotic trees also influences bird community structure, with eucalyptus forest birds more likely to persist where a eucalypt canopy is present, and a unique urban bird community where exotic trees dominate. Gaps in forest canopy and habitat connectivity can also have a strong influence of fauna persistence within an urban matrix ([Chace and Walsh 2006](#); [Fischer and Lindenmayer 2007](#); [Radford et al. 2005](#); [Tremblay and St Clair 2011](#)).

Some large trees across open space reserves and council land are captured within the City of Yarra Significant Tree Register, but not all. The Large Old Trees that were identified during the BHS would be added as a first step (shown as green squares in **Map 7**). Further investigation should include engagement with the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Council, as well as survey of the other trees recorded in open spaces (small blue circles in **Map 7**).



Map 7 Habitat trees observed and inferred via LIDAR mapping



Figure 17 Large Manna Gum on private land in Princes Hill. Photograph by Yasmin Kelsall

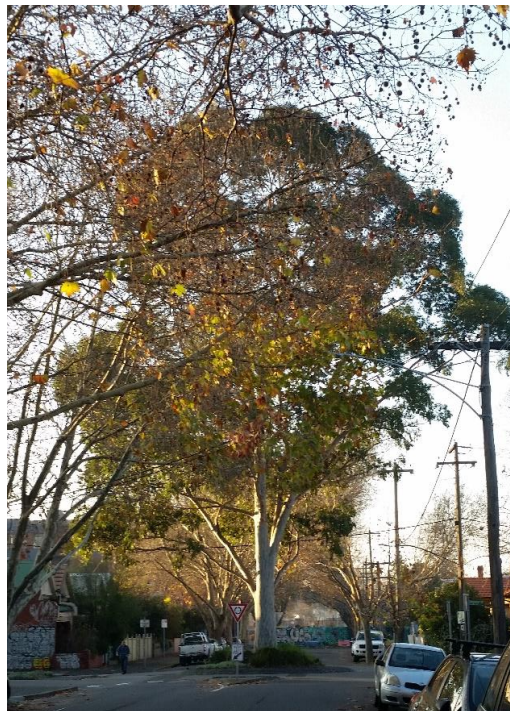


Figure 18 Eucalypt with a native understorey planting provides a contrast to Plane Trees on a street in Fitzroy. Photograph by Yasmin Kelsall

1.4 Understand and conserve habitat refuge areas for plants and animals

Action: Commission a project in recognition of Yarra's Climate Emergency Plan to advise on council's role in providing nature refuge areas (for species affected by climate change) and actions that it can implement.

Target: Climate refuge study complete by end Year 2. Any resulting recommendations funded in Year 3.

Context:

The City of Yarra has joined hundreds of organisations across the world in recognising the serious threat of climate change by declaring a climate emergency and accordingly, developing a Climate Emergency Plan.

The myriad effects of climate change are expressing themselves locally through altered weather, rainfall and effects on plants and animals. These effects have been recognised locally by naturalists and land managers, expressed in the form of new weed species emerging, altered flowering and fruiting cycles for well-known species such as Blackberry, new fauna movement patterns, some fauna species now residing permanently outside of their former range (Red-rumped Parrots, Cormorants, even Eastern Koels), loss of local flora, and increasingly stressed flora and fauna.

The VicNature2050 alliance brings together Victoria's universities in combination with government departments and non-government organisations, working to explore and address the impacts of climate change upon Victoria's nature. A document resulting from a symposium in 2017 (Jordan, R. & Hoffman, A. 2017), summarised the threat to Victorian nature:

"Climate change is currently one of the greatest emerging threats to our natural systems. Ongoing climate change in combination with other stressors that are degrading landscapes is expected to create stressful environments for biota across Australia. These stressful conditions threaten natural processes and are expected to drive major losses in biodiversity in the next few decades (Dunlop, M. et al. 2012; 2017). In Victoria, the past century has seen conditions become hotter and drier (CSIRO and Bureau of Meteorology, Australia: 2016), a trend that is projected to continue together with increases in the incidence of extreme weather events involving heat, drought, fire and flooding. Climate change in combination with landscape fragmentation and land use change is already impacting natural systems (Scheffers, B. R. et al. 2016). A range of ecological processes are being affected including species distributions contracting in some areas and expanding in others, and flowering and migration times shifting in response to recent climate change (Scheffers, B. R. et al. 2017; Parmesan, C. 2016; Moritz, C. & Agudo, R. 2013).

The need to promote adaptability within our natural systems is now recognised (Victoria's Climate Change Adaptation Plan 2017-2020; Protecting Victoria's Environment – Biodiversity 2036 (Todd, J. 2017))."

The City of Yarra has many landscape features that make it a natural 'hub for nature' and recommend its waterways and near-waterway environments as places that can provide features that may assist as refuges for plants and animals, especially in times of higher temperatures and lower rainfall. The municipality sits at the confluence of four waterways, and it includes the meeting of two geology types. Other natural features include its habitat trees, wetlands and relatively large areas of open space adjoining the waterways.

In support of the municipality's intention to take urgent action on the climate emergency, there are many actions (outlined in this Strategy) that the City of Yarra could undertake in recognition of its stewardship of areas that can provide natural refuges for flora and fauna.



Red-rumped Parrot, a species that has moved to the city in recent decades. Image from Getty Images.

1.5 Conserve locally rare or threatened flora and fauna

Actions:

- *Establish a 'local legends' working and networking group. Key stakeholders include Victorian Indigenous Nurseries Co-op, Parks Victoria, Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Council and staff from adjoining councils and land managers e.g. Merri Creek Management Committee, Darebin Creek Management Committee.*
- *Invest in a project that focuses on the long-term sustainability of locally rare flora and fauna. For example flora seed conservation, seed orchards and plantings with the option to encourage residents to grow a seed orchard for a rare plant at their home.*
- *Investigate and document locally rare plants and animals. Promote this information via online opportunities and seek engagement from the community.*

Target:

- **No new local extinctions in flora or fauna.**

Context:

While there is a duty of care and legislative requirement to conserve state or nationally threatened flora and fauna, it is important to also recognise and conserve plants and animals that are locally rare or threatened.

Some of those reasons outlined by Lorimer (2010) in his report on locally threatened plants in Manningham include:

- As the number of species in any domain of interest reduces, the ecological system loses complexity and the web of interactions weakens;

- The extinction of a species from a jurisdiction represents a contraction of that species' range and thereby contributes to the extinction process at the global scale;
- Some species possess important genetic variation between jurisdictions, and it is desirable to conserve the full range of genetic variability;
- There is a philosophical viewpoint that we, as individuals, communities, organisations or governments, have a duty of care to do what is within our own sphere of influence to look after the environment, and not rely on others (such as another state) to compensate for environmental deterioration in our own jurisdiction.

Lorimer states that *"Each of these principles applies to local government as much as to states or nations. Indeed, the first of the three concerns listed above becomes more serious as one focuses on smaller areas. The loss of even a small number of species from a municipality or district can have significant consequences and lead to a cascade of adverse flow-on effects. For example, the collapse of mistletoe numbers in Melbourne's eastern fringe over the past five years due to drought has led to a collapse in dependent species such as the Mistletoe bird and Imperial White Butterfly, and flow-on effects such as reduced pollination by butterflies and reduced pest control by Mistletoe birds. It is impossible to know to what extent the consequences have spread through the web of interactions that maintains the ecosystem in a productive and dynamically stable state.*

Some species play more important or fundamental ecological roles than others, but in general, the greater the diversity of species that can be retained at the local or municipal scale, the better.

Sadly, the importance of this is rarely recognised and it has been generally overlooked by governments at all levels.

In Victoria, state government policies, legislation and regulation related to protection of native flora and fauna recognise species that are threatened with extinction throughout the state but not at smaller scales".

In the City of Yarra there are a number of plants that were formerly common that are now noted to be 'disappearing'. These have been noted by the local indigenous plant nursery, Victorian Indigenous Nurseries Co-operative (VINC), who have developed specialised 'seed production areas' with the aim of propagating plants from some of the last locally available seed.



Running Postman, a plant that is now locally rare. Photograph by Craig McGrath

1.6 Management Principle: Conserve state and federally significant flora and fauna

Actions:

- Collaborate with other land and water managers on projects to actively enhance habitat and conservation values for all State and Nationally-threatened flora or fauna.
- Conduct targeted fauna surveys that build on the Biodiversity Health Survey work to confirm a baseline level for threatened fauna within the municipality. Collaborate with other land managers as required, e.g. Melbourne Water for aquatic animals. Parks Victoria and Birdlife Australia (Swift Parrot) as necessary.
- Complete further research to confirm or otherwise, the occurrence of state or Nationally-threatened flora.

Target:

- Extent of state or nationally threatened fauna is known and documented. By Year 2.
- Extent of state or nationally threatened flora is known and documented. By Year 2.
- No local extinctions of state or nationally threatened fauna in the City of Yarra.

Context:

The Biodiversity Health Survey, while ambitious, was not designed to confirm or provide a baseline status for species which are recognised as being rare or threatened at the state or national level.

A sound understanding of threatened species distributions, movements, and habitat use across the City of Yarra is crucial to managing threatening processes such as predation by foxes and cats, disturbance by domestic dogs, weed invasion, loss of hollow bearing trees, and other threatening processes as listed the Victorian *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* (FFG Act) and the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act 1999*.

The BHS involved extensive searches of relevant flora and fauna databases and a shortlist was created of significant flora and fauna that were determined to have a medium or high likelihood of persisting in the City of Yarra based on habitat availability, years since the last record, and total number of records within the surrounding landscape.

This shortlist includes 9 flora and 20 fauna species.

Flora:

- Austral Tobacco
- Fragrant Saltbush (likely only planted specimens)
- Rosemary Grevillea (likely only planted specimens)
- Matted Flax-lily
- Native Peppercross
- Leafy Twig-sedge
- Slender Bindweed
- Studley Park Gum
- Melbourne Yellow-Gum

The Matted Flax-lily is the only EPBC-listed species with potential to occur. The remaining species are state-significant and listed either under the FFG Act or the *Advisory List of Rare or Threatened Plants in Victoria* (DELWP 2014).

The Leafy Twig-sedge was recorded in McConchie Reserve during the BHS flora surveys, although this species was planted during habitat restoration at the site. Eucalypts that were unconfirmed as Melbourne Yellow Gum were observed in Coate Park in Alphington and Studley Park Gum is recorded locally.

There is also an unconfirmed sighting of Austral Tobacco from McConchie Reserve in 1987. Native Peppercross was recorded in Alphington Park Wetland in 2003. There is little potential for isolated remnant plants or populations of Fragrant Saltbush or Rosemary Grevillea and recent records are likely to be planted specimens.

Undetected remnant threatened flora populations are most likely to occur along the Yarra River and Merri Creek corridors, especially where remnants (EVCs) of indigenous vegetation occur around the escarpment (e.g. Escarpment Shrubland) or within off-stream wetlands (e.g. Aquatic Herbland).

Fauna:

Five nationally threatened species are likely to make use of habitat within the City of Yarra and immediately adjoining waterways and bushland. These species include the Critically Endangered Swift Parrot, the Endangered Macquarie Perch and Regent Honeyeater, and the Vulnerable Grey-headed Flying-fox and Australian Grayling.

A further fifteen state-threatened species are considered likely to make regular use of habitat within or immediately adjoining the City of Yarra. These include the Eastern Great Egret, Azure Kingfisher, Nankeen Night Heron, Pied Cormorant, Hardhead, Clamorous Reed Warbler, Rufous Fantail, Powerful Owl and Golden Perch. Other threatened or migratory species recorded within the City of Yarra may also make some sporadic use of habitat for migration, dispersal, and foraging.

Most of these species are restricted to aquatic environments or adjacent riparian habitats; and all are likely to depend on riparian and aquatic habitats along the Yarra River and the Merri, and Darebin Creek corridors for foraging, dispersal, and/or migration. Stands of Yellow Gum, Yellow Box, and Mugga Ironbark within the City of Yarra and adjoining areas (Yarra Bend Parklands) could provide occasional food resources for the Swift Parrot during its summer and winter migrations between its breeding habitat with Tasmania and summer foraging areas in south-eastern Australia.

The Grey-headed Flying-fox has a large established population within the City of Yarra and adjoining areas, and likely makes significant use of habitat resources across the Yarra reserve system, and urban environments including flowering eucalypts and fruit trees. The Nankeen Night Heron is resident at a number of locations along the Yarra River and observed on a number of occasions during the 2014-2016 censuses.

Further targeted surveys for significant fauna should focus on species likely to be resident or make significant use of the study area such as: the Nankeen Night Heron, Eastern Great Egret, and Azure Kingfisher. Many of the threatened fauna species within the City of Yarra are aquatic or aquatic-dependent fauna, meaning they could be targeted together as a group.

Future microbat monitoring would provide verification of Yellow-bellied Sheathtail Bat records made in this study and provide a better understanding of the species distribution and use of habitat across the City of Yarra.

Other species may require further research to determine their presence or otherwise within the municipality.

1.7 Increase habitat connectivity

Actions:

- **Research and develop connectivity plans for keystone or character species for at least 3 habitat links with at least one being a new terrestrial link.**
- **Involve community in the planning of each connectivity project.**

Target:

- **At least 3 connectivity projects delivered in 5 years, focussing on waterways (2) and terrestrial priorities (1)**

Context:

Maintaining and enhancing habitat connectivity is key to improving and safeguarding the flora and fauna within the City of Yarra and its environs. The majority of current habitat value is provided along the Merri Creek and Yarra River corridors, but other large reserves such as the Edinburgh Gardens play a key role as 'stepping stones' for birds, bats and other fauna across inner northern Melbourne. Large significant canopy trees also play an important role in the movement of fauna and providing food and shelter resources.

Habitat links

Habitat corridors or links differ from critical habitat in that they provide fewer habitat resources for fauna to complete their life cycle. Corridors provide the basic habitat elements to enable animals to move safely across the landscape, sometimes between two or more areas of critical habitat. There are several important corridors for fauna movement present within the municipality:

Waterway corridors:

- The Yarra River corridor, considered to be of National and International Treaty Significance (Brereton et al. 2004). Provides a link between significant areas of critical habitat including in the east, around Yarra Bend Park, Dights Falls and Burnley Park.

Key linkages for focus along the Yarra include between Alphington and Yarra Bend area, and from Dights Falls to Burnley.

- Merri Creek corridor - provides a link for the movement of terrestrial and aquatic fauna between habitat patches to the north, and south to the Yarra River corridor.

The Merri Creek Corridor provides a great opportunity as a high priority habitat corridor project.

- Darebin Creek corridor – provides another north-south habitat link to the Yarra River.

Terrestrial corridors:

- Park Street Linear Reserve - provides an east-west habitat corridor, comprised mainly of ground and shrub cover, and some habitat trees, potentially linking the Merri Creek corridor with Royal Park, Princes Park and Moonee Ponds Creek.

This corridor, already partly established requires further enhancement and strengthening, particularly in the west.

- Terrestrial link(s) from the Yarra to large habitat patches in the west such as Royal Park.

There is ample opportunity for the provision of fauna habitat corridors across the landscape away from the waterways. These corridors would focus on indigenous canopy species, supplemented by small plantings of mid and groundstorey. Opportunities such as replacement of street trees, new street tree plantings, new or refurbished parkland and private land should all be investigated.

A number of strategic opportunities based on preliminary analysis of the Yarra landscape are provided in **Map 5 on Page 31**. These would require a full scoping study to confirm one or two key corridors for implementation; and would involve collaboration and close alignment with Urban Forest and Open Space priorities.

Terrestrial corridors provide a great opportunity to also link with the community of Yarra and inspirational ideas and messaging will be important elements of successful implementation. On this basis the Sugar

Glider is promoted as the focal species for planning and implementing terrestrial corridors. Secondary species include birds, butterflies, microbats and pollinators.

Adjoining areas:

- The locations next to any area of fauna habitat, including locations of critical habitat or corridors are important to include in an overall plan for enhancing and linking for natural values in the City of Yarra.
- Locations to target for education and programs that encourage habitat creation for nature are shown in **Map 5** on **Page 31** as a 200 metre buffer along all waterways. Additional areas would include a similar buffer applied to any overland or terrestrial fauna links including the Park Street Linear Park.

Within the waterway buffer areas, species such as Pobblebonk Frogs and small woodland birds including Brown Thornbill could be used as focal species to include in community engagement programs.

Terrestrial areas that form a buffer to terrestrial corridors, could create habitat for the same species associated with the terrestrial corridors themselves, i.e. Sugar Gliders and birds, butterflies, microbats and pollinators.

Opportunities to Reconnect the Landscape

The reserve system within the City of Yarra provides an opportunity to sustain important flora and fauna populations and this could be greatly enhanced with some key additions via extra habitat introduced within the urban matrix either via parkland, streetscapes or on private land.

In all cases it is recommended that the vegetation used for revegetation aim to recreate the former vegetation type as closely as possible.

The City of Yarra could create some planting guides for common vegetation types that can be easily accessed and used by both the community, internal staff and contractors. The City of Melbourne's [Urban Nature Planting Guide](#) could form a useful base.

There are several areas that are strategically positioned within or close to potential corridors, that are presently unvegetated (no EVCs), have overstorey but no shrub layer, or offer little fauna habitat. Revegetation via plantings of canopy (trees, tall shrubs), mid-storey (medium and small shrubs, climbers) and groundstorey plants (grasses, wildflowers and herbs) would promote connectivity especially for birds, pollinators including butterflies; and would be valuable 'stepping stones' to assist these animals to move across the landscape. These locations include smaller parks and reserves that contain canopy cover but do not presently support much understorey cover.



Small parks like Cambridge Park in Fitzroy could benefit from plantings of a greater diversity of vegetation providing more structure beneath canopy trees. Photograph by Yasmin Kelsall

1.8 Increase integrity and innovation in biodiversity management.

Actions:

- *Establish a working group of bushland management experts to inform council on its on-ground management and associated programs. Also, to collaborate on cross-tenure projects.*
- *Include experts such as Merri Creek Management Committee, Darebin Creek Management Committee, VINC, the Narrap team, Melbourne Water, Parks Victoria, land managers from adjoining councils and City of Yarra contractors. This group may be best implemented as a larger inner-Melbourne working group allowing for information sharing and time efficiencies.*

Target:

- **Working group established by end Year 1 and meeting 6 monthly thereafter.**

Context:

The stakeholder engagement process for the development of this Strategy involved a workshop of technical experts, where the value of bringing this group of experienced bushland managers to discuss on-ground management issues, achievements and challenges was evident. Therefore, the creation of future opportunities for this group to meet is recommended, to promote discussion that will ideally result in better on-ground outcomes, shared project ideas and new learning's.

While there is no key action relating to the City of Yarra supporting or delivering any project ideas, trials or education materials that resulted from the discussions, should be encouraged, and it is anticipated that once the group is operational there will be more clarity around its purpose, areas of interest and likely outcomes.

1.9 City of Yarra Integrated Waterway Corridors

Actions:

- *Contribute to the preparation of a specific integrated waterway corridors plan for Yarra that brings together all the strategic directions and provides an overall single coordinating plan of action*

Target:

- **To acknowledge the Yarra River Strategic Plan (YRSP) objectives and the need to assess the opportunities locally and across boundaries with partners to deliver the YRSP commitments and to generate plausible strategic waterways restoration projects to access available funding.**

Context:

In 2017, the *Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murrong) Act (the Act)* passed through the Victorian Parliament, enshrining in law the protection of the Yarra River. The Act identifies the Yarra River and its corridor as 'one living, integrated natural entity for protection and improvement' and recognises Traditional Owners' custodianship and intrinsic connection to the river.

In early 2018, the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung developed their vision for the Birrarung in a policy titled *Nhanbu narrun ba ngargunin twarn Birrarung (Ancient Spirit and Lore of the Yarra)*. This policy defines the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung's aspirations for planning, policy and decision-making to enhance the integrity of the Yarra Strategic Plan.

The Draft Yarra Strategy identifies a suite of actions for the Lower Yarra section that include focus on habitat links along the Yarra waterway and extending this focus into adjoining private land. Habitat corridors are also mooted for a terrestrial link that may be similar in its intent to corridors that are proposed within the Nature Strategy

It is proposed that Council prepare a waterways corridor plan for the City of Yarra, which integrates all strategic directions of the Yarra River Strategic Plan (YRSP) and provide a single coordinating plan of action. This would achieve the following:

- reinforce and confirm the YRSP,

- identify opportunities locally and across municipal boundaries with partners,
- deliver on YRSP commitments, and
- generate robust strategic waterways restoration projects that will attract funding.



Goal 2: Encourage people to appreciate and actively enhance Yarra's natural landscape

2.1 Encourage and support 'nature-focussed' initiatives on private land and throughout streetscapes at the neighbourhood-scale

Actions:

- Establish a 'nature in the neighbourhood' reference group. Consider if/where it is possible to combine with Urban Agriculture and/or Environment Advisory Committee where relevant.
- Work with the reference group to plan initiatives that include a focus on increasing nature in the private and streetscape realm. This may include integration with Urban Agriculture and indigenous cultural initiatives.
- Fund and implement the abovementioned action plan.

Target:

- 'Nature in the neighbourhood' Action Plan developed in consultation with reference group by the end of Year 1.
- 500 households in Yarra participating in a 'nature in the neighbourhood' initiative by end of Year 3.
- One streetscape initiative implemented by the end of Year 3 that aims to introduce nature-focussed elements into a neighbourhood, resulting in wellbeing and community benefits.

Context:

The City of Yarra has a diverse community and an equally diverse urban matrix. All areas are seeing significant change and in general trajectories are for more population and higher density living. The Open Space Strategy has identified that based on these trajectories, there is a need for increased access to open space to address a variety of needs including contact with natural areas. As well as the creation of greener, more natural areas in the public realm, there are opportunities that council can support to increase nature and natural areas in the private realm, and within streetscapes and other community spaces that make up the various neighbourhoods within Yarra.

Dr Sarah Bekessy, a Professor of Design and Social Context at RMIT, encouraged Melbourne to think big during Sustainable Design Week 2019 and take on board ideas that could see the greater Melbourne region follow in the footsteps of London, in declaring itself a national park city. Dr Bekessy said *"It's about rewilding the very urban fabric, using streetscapes and roundabouts and green walls and green roofs and courtyards in the city, school yards ... [and] having core areas of green, where you can have connected pathways for native plants and animals to exist and to come back into the city"*.

Ideas that could see Dr Bekessy's vision achieved would include a suite of activities on private and public land with objectives including:

- increasing the canopy cover of Melbourne by 20 per cent over the next ten years,
- creating habitat in Melbourne's private and public spaces for 10 native species, and literally bring them back into the city.
- ensuring that every single resident of Melbourne has within 200 metres, a rich biodiversity experience.



Plant-covered walls and roofs can lower a building's internal temperature by ten degrees. Image: RMIT

Support and opportunities:

Community representatives have expressed a desire for more urban greening within the fabric of the community. This has included participants in the engagement process for the revised Yarra Environment Strategy identifying nature as the highest priority for focus. The priorities identified were:

- Priority 1. Everyday nature / greenscaping
- Priority 2. Community engagement and capacity building, education and youth
- Priority 3. Thriving neighbourhoods
- Priority 4. Take urgent action towards climate neutrality and zero waste
- Priority 5. Council leadership
- Priority 6. Support business sustainability

Involvement of the community in nature-focussed initiatives will assist the City of Yarra in meeting its wider environmental goals around climate action, sustainability, water management, urban agriculture, waste management and community engagement and wellbeing, as well as improving natural values.

Urban Agriculture and other Sustainability and Environmental initiatives have already achieved much via engaging the community resulting in visible benefits to the community themselves as well as for the environment and natural world. There are many initiatives that each of these areas are already undertaking that the inclusion of natural values and habitat elements would complement.

For example, Urban Agriculture - encouraging people to engage in their own food growing activities - encourages more urban greening and more conscious use of resources, nutrient and water management. All plants provide habitat for native animals and insects including birds, bats and butterflies. And there are some native and indigenous plants that are also food, fibre and medicine plants. Urban Agriculture systems can offer opportunities for enhancing urban nature and improving connectivity. Varied vegetative structure, increased plant diversity, and increased permeability of surfaces are key features of Urban Agriculture (UA) systems that contribute to natural systems, supporting ecosystem services such as pollination, pest control, and climate resilience.

Within the municipality there are already many examples of the community integrating food growing combined with habitat creation, with potential for plenty more, including:

- Community engagement work (events, social media, newsletters etc.)
- Behaviour change (influencing land management practices on private land)
- Educational programs (workshops etc.)
- Partnerships (i.e. the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Council, the Collingwood Children's Farm, Neighbourhood Houses etc.)
- Shared advocacy



Indigenous habitat provided by Flax-lillies, Tussock-grasses and Spiny-headed Flax-lily shares the space in a community food garden in Collingwood

2.2 Invest in nature engagement

Actions:

- **A nature engagement officer to be appointed**
- **Scope and deliver a number of nature engagement initiatives. Seek to collaborate with other councils that have run successful programs.**

Target:

- **A nature engagement officer to be appointed by the end Year 1**
- **Nature engagement program involving at least two new initiatives in place by end Year 2.**
- **Engagement program including Actions 2.1, 2.3 and 2.4 partially implemented by end Year 1.**

Context:

There is a demonstrated appetite for urban greening and nature engagement, which has been clearly expressed by the community.

Providing opportunities for the community to participate in nature-based activities will assist the City of Yarra to meet many of its own objectives relating to habitat creation, plant and animal monitoring, community connectedness, wellbeing and health.

Other municipalities and organisations have established programs for their residents that encourage them to become more involved in nature-based activity with some success, including:

- [Gardens for Wildlife Program](#) – now implemented by five other Victorian municipalities and with over 20 affiliate councils and organisations, this program, pioneered in Victoria by Knox City Council provides support, information and resources for local residents to introduce more habitat features into their own space.
- [Backyard Biodiversity Program](#) – run by the City of Boroondara, an annual learning and incentive program that targets key neighbourhoods that sit closer to priority areas for natural values.
- Incentives program for residents, schools and other organisations – this could include plant vouchers at a local indigenous nursery, such as the City of Boroondara's buy one get one free offer, garden planning assistance from a landscape architect, provision of other expert advice or inspiration, or volunteer labour.

Others encourage more activity and engagement via learning or creative means. These include:

- Education programs and opportunities - the Merri Creek Management Committee is currently engaged by the City of Yarra to deliver some education and engagement programs, particularly to local schools. Other programs that exist locally include a [Nature Stewards program](#), launched in 2018 which provides a structured training course for participants to develop their skills as naturalists, leading to application of these skills in the future.
- Environmental leadership programs - other municipalities run programs that combine environmental, sustainability and nature-focussed learning with a resulting project or program that is delivered by the participants. An example is the [Hume Enviro Champions](#) program.
- Competitions and awards – a dedicated award or suite of awards could be developed to raise awareness of nature and the activities that are being undertaken in the municipality. Competitions could also be run annually that are nature-focussed. For example, an art competition.
- Citizen Science - there are many opportunities for linking to existing citizen science programs or creating a new one. Some existing opportunities include:
 - [Aussie Backyard Bird Count](#) – an annual event run by Birdlife Australia that encourages participants to observe and record birds during the month of October.
 - [Wild Pollinator Count](#) – run twice a year (Autumn and Spring) by a small group of volunteers, it encourages the community to observe and record insects and their behaviour.

- The City of Melbourne has held its own citizen science projects including BioBlitz, Waterbug Blitz and Urban Forester Program. These initiatives can provide learning's and also opportunities to even team up or support these programs in the neighbouring municipality.



Backyard bird species include Eastern Spinebill (above) and Spotted Pardalote (below). Photographs from Getty Images.

2.3 Establish a nature in Yarra communications program

Action: Design and implement online communication program for nature-focussed news, initiatives and interactions. Seek to integrate with existing communication mechanisms such as environment, sustainability and urban agriculture.

Targets:

- Engaging nature-based content on the City of Yarra website and other council communications channels throughout the year from when new program commences.
- Regular engagement via social media.

Action: Trial an online program which allows the City of Yarra to share information about its on-ground management activities and allows the community to assist/contribute to it.

Target:

- Trial completed by end Year 2.

Context:

Our community's strong interest in nature and nature-focussed initiatives remains largely untapped. A communication and engagement program focussing on nature and nature-focussed initiative is envisaged to change this. The success of similar programs for sustainability and urban agriculture has been demonstrated; and a similar focus for nature will result in higher levels of awareness and involvement that have been achieved in these complementary areas.

To this end, it is envisaged that regular communication on nature-related news will become a regular feature of council communications, largely via existing channels such as Yarra Environment e-news and council's social media. Additionally, a dedicated webpage for Nature in Yarra will be developed.

The development of this web and social-media based communications program could take direction from similar initiatives by other municipalities and although modest targets are proposed should not preclude a higher level of activity. Other options include creating education or engagements either in hardcopy or online; partnership projects with creative artists; films; podcasts or apps.

Interactive online engagement option:

- Community feedback during the development of this strategy indicated an appetite to know more about what the City of Yarra is doing towards caring for nature and its rationale for doing so. An example of where this has worked is Melbourne Water, which have shared that they now enjoy improved interaction with the community. They have an interactive map on their website showing 'local projects' and also encourage more interaction via Facebook and social media.
- There are many options for enabling online community engagement, particularly using a map as the basis for this. A recent example was an online mapping tool used during the development of the Yarra Action Plan to gather community input on issues that mattered to people
- This style of online mapping engagement tool could be one method for sharing information with the community regarding works of any kind that the City of Yarra is undertaking, and to receive information back from the community. This could have wider applicability than only to share information on nature-related work or observations.



Online mapping tool used in the 'Reimagine the Yarra' engagement process. Source: <https://the-hive.com.au/features/participation-apps/social-map>.

Goal 3: Embed nature at the core of Yarra's business practices

3.1 Management Principle: Ensure nature is considered as core council business.

Action: Councillor planning and reporting to consider and address natural values.

Targets:

- City of Yarra's processes explicitly recognise nature as a component of Environment in the quadruple bottom line approach.
- Nature is one of the 'implications' to be considered within council reports.
- Annual plan includes a dedicated budget line for biodiversity or nature-focussed programs and projects.
- Ensure Yarra Annual Grants has a separate for category for Nature/Biodiversity enhancement projects.

Context:

It is important that Yarra Council processes reflect the objectives and direction of its plan. Conservation of natural values is explicitly identified in Key Objective 3 of the Council Plan and directly contributes to elements of Health and Wellbeing.

With the development of the Nature Strategy clearly providing clear direction in the form of Goals, Management Principles, Actions and Targets requiring increased resources, the need for more formal accountability and recognition is required via the Council Action Plan and for Councillor awareness and accountability.



[Placeholder Image] Example: Greening Howlett Street – a green infrastructure retrofit that will include a wildflower garden communal meeting space. AKAS Architects, c/o City of Melbourne, 2019. Seeing permission for use.

3.2 Management Principle: Encourage more natural spaces in the private realm via planning mechanisms.

Action:

- *Provide resourcing to support delivery of strategic biodiversity/natural values requests and projects.*
- *Implement requirement for landscaping plans for permit applications for 2+ lot subdivisions and above.*
- *Develop pre-application information for planning permits that includes preferences around use of indigenous plants and habitat components.*

Targets:

- **Natural Values Planner employed by end Year 1.**
- **Increased incidence of indigenous landscaping and habitat components in developments. Shown in Landscaping Plans and monitored by audit of 10%.**

Context:

The City of Yarra, like many other urban municipalities, is experiencing increased levels of growth and development, placing further demands on its staff, management and governance teams to ensure a diversity of issues and community expectations are met.

Planning expertise relevant to natural values is required in many areas of council. This includes expert response and oversight, sometimes requiring specialist subcontractor involvement. To date there has been limited in-house capacity to adequately meet requirements which include:

- Reviewing and responding to planning permit applications, particularly in locations affected by ESO and SLOs;
- Advising and reviewing landscape plans;
- Ensuring the City of Yarra meets its legislative and planning scheme requirements, particularly those associated with significant species and communities, but also associated with weed management and wildlife welfare issues amongst others;
- Participating in processes involving new large high-density developments or precincts;
- Advising on nature-related matters relevant to city works, infrastructure planning and implementation;
- Advising on and in some cases, directly contributing to strategic planning processes;
- Auditing compliance with planning permit conditions and internal capital project delivery that relate to natural values; and
- Grant application assistance.

Dedicated in-house capacity to deliver on these requirements is limited and in light of this, other areas of council have aimed to cover these areas, sometimes with limited information.

The City of Yarra would benefit from improved processes and resources in the form of decision-making guidelines and information as well as increased, dedicated expert staff to support planning decisions.

Examples of guidelines that have been developed by other municipalities include:

- [City of Manningham Landscape Plan Guidelines](#) (March 2010). This booklet provides advice for applicants who need to develop a landscape plan as a requirement of their planning permit. It includes a flow chart of the process, a tick-list to make sure their plan contains everything and also provides examples of suitable landscape plans for higher density scenarios including townhouses and units.

In-house support documents would include:

- Species and planting lists for the most common types of native vegetation (Ecological Vegetation Classes) that are normally encountered in the City of Yarra in its development areas. Such as Plains Grassy Woodland outside of the waterway corridors. This would include examples drawn by landscape architects and designers that demonstrate how these plants could be used in common urban landscape scenarios. For example:

single-fronted home front yard / courtyard; townhouse; apartment common area/green roof/wall/balcony; laneway; carpark; café or warehouse.

- Information on common weed species that shouldn't ever form part of a landscape plan.
- Information for staff that summarises council's requirements to ensure that any in-house projects or works follow processes that ensure all legislative requirements regarding natural values (threatened species, ecological communities, wildlife and cultural heritage values) are met.
- A summary lookup document that provides common responses to planning permit queries.



Habitat creation in urban areas including laneways and via a rooftop garden in a private residence. Photographs from © Coolth Inc. .



Habitat creation exhibit at the Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show, 2019. Photograph from Coolth Inc..

3.3 Management Principle: Consider options for new planning tools to see more nature-focussed outcomes.

Actions:

- *Scope and work up options for one or more overlays that seek to see ecological benefits in the future.*
- *Instigate a project to investigate and document Natural Heritage values within the municipality in line with Actions from the Heritage Strategy.*

One or more planning scheme tools are introduced to assist in:

- **Delivering more habitat value such as green roofs**
- **Protecting and encouraging habitat elements for a specific species or group of species;**
- **Recognition and conservation of areas of natural heritage.**

Context:

Overlays: The Yarra River Corridor is covered by a Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO1) while Merri and Darebin Creeks are covered by an Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO2 and ESO3, respectively).

The application of the ESOs in this instance is strategically applied to capture an appropriate area where ecological values have been identified and require ongoing protection, such as critical habitat or movement corridors.

Consideration should be given to applying an ESO over any other significant habitat or fauna movement corridors. The Park Street Linear Reserve is an example, which encompasses both critical habitat and an ecological corridor.

Possible overlay considerations include:

- A Design and Development Overlay that requires new developments to include green roofs and vertical gardens.
- An ESO that is developed to recognise habitat values for certain species including fauna movement corridors.
- An ESO that protects locations of locally significant species.
- A suitable planning tool, possibly a Heritage Overlay that protects areas of indigenous cultural heritage significance.

3.4 Management Principle: The City of Yarra leads by example in its own projects.

Actions:

- *In order to meet the multiple objectives associated with Environment, Sustainability, Nature and Water Infrastructure, support the creation of a senior expert role to advise on and approve all in-house projects for their 'green infrastructure' credentials, including nature-focussed elements.*
 - *City of Yarra recognises that green infrastructure includes nature-focussed elements and updates process and design practice accordingly.*
- **Target: All council-led projects to include green infrastructure and demonstrably consider nature and habitat elements in their design and implementation by end Year 2.**

Context:

The Sustainability and Environment team has developed an 'Embed Green' framework and process which is designed to enable any council to better include green infrastructure planning and implementation into all of their in-house projects. Broadly speaking green infrastructure would generally consider reducing impacts on natural values and also to innovation that would benefit nature. For example, water-sensitive urban design such as rain gardens or pollutant treatments have dual benefits for nature: they reduce the flow of nutrients and pollutants into waterways.

However, the 'embed green' framework should be updated to include specific consideration of habitat values and ensuring green infrastructure considers impacts to nature.

In recognition of the importance that the City of Yarra is placing on its sustainability initiatives, climate response, water management, and valuing nature, it is proposed that creating a role for overseeing and accrediting all in-house projects would be the most efficient way to ensure accountability around achieving nature-related objectives.

Note: In recognition of its direct relevance, the position is flagged in this Nature Strategy, but it is recognised that it will be requested via the Yarra Environment Strategy.

Goal 4: Make innovation, communication and collaboration the cornerstones of Yarra's nature-focused programs

4.1 Collaborate with others who share common goals.

Actions:

- *Participate in networks with other municipalities, organisations and institutions who are working on similar issues around urban ecology.*
- *Support partnership projects that result in mutual benefits for nature.*

Targets:

- **Staff role descriptions and time allocations provided to relevant staff for participation in relevant networks.**
- **Council management acknowledges optional funding for partnership projects as relevant.**

Context:

There are a range of networks and forums that would be beneficial for the City of Yarra to participate in, to see better nature-focussed outcomes within the municipality and beyond its boundaries. Examples of other inner-urban local government networks focussed on nature-based outcomes:

- The City of Yarra participates in multi-organisational networks on a range of issues including Urban Forestry (Inner Melbourne Action Plan); Climate Resilience (Resilient Melbourne and more); Yarra River Strategy and the Biodiversity Planners Network among others.
- Particularly amongst inner-urban and neighbouring municipalities there is an interest in sharing experiences, learning's and opportunities that are common to each relevant to nature conservation.

Network of land-management policy staff:

In recognition that the City of Yarra sits at a pivotal location in the landscape, as a hub for waterway values, large areas of parkland and important indigenous cultural heritage with many neighbouring land managers to liaise with, a regular forum for policy staff land managers relevant to the City of Yarra and its neighbours and partners is recommended.

This would include but not be limited to policy staff from all adjoining municipalities; Parks Victoria; Melbourne Water; Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Council; Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority and possibly others. Discussion could centre on sharing and alignment of relevant policy, strategy and programs. It could provide options for shared projects and grants, and the sharing of ideas and learning's.

4.2 Develop working partnerships with academic institutions

Actions:

- *Participate in networks with other municipalities, organisations and institutions who are working on similar issues around urban ecology.*
- *Support partnership projects that result in mutual benefits for nature.*
- *Actively collaborate with an academic institution on at least one new project each year.*
- *Develop a list of projects that include student monitoring of council reserves or encourage teaching and learning in these reserves. The results of which will be fed back to the City of Yarra.*

Targets:

- **At least one project per year is implemented in partnership with an academic institution.**
- **A working partnership to encourage student field studies in council reserves is established by end Year 1 and active by Year 2. Results are useful for all parties involved.**

Context:

The City of Yarra is very well placed to engage with academic institutions who are actively involved in urban ecology research. Melbourne University's Burnley Campus lies within the municipality and already completes projects within council reserves. Other institutions like RMIT also have an interest in urban ecology and could assist with collaborative research and other initiatives as they have with other urban municipalities.

- An early example may be to work with Melbourne University to adopt the streetscapes project, first piloted in the City of Melbourne.
- Other options include trials of green roofs and green walls; or sponsoring a design for a large urban development that includes habitat features.

4.3 Use the Smart City technology to assist in conserving natural values

Actions:

- *In conjunction with CityLab, scope one project to deliver annually with relevance to nature in the City of Yarra. Option to work collaboratively with other urban councils.*

Targets:

- **One project is scoped and delivered annually with the assistance of CityLab beginning Year 2.**

Context:

The City of Yarra is implementing a smart monitoring network to better monitor and manage its assets and services. This is in-line with international and national approaches to management of urban environments and services.

Current examples of its capacity include monitoring air quality and requirements around rubbish collection. There are other opportunities to ensure that the current plans for this technology best works to support the natural values within the landscape.

Examples include: smart lighting that is wildlife friendly, i.e. in parkland that is particularly good habitat for wildlife, or lights are fitted with motion sensors to reduce 'light pollution' that is known to affect the natural behaviour and navigation of some wildlife.

Other options to consider include:

- Aiming to reduce noise pollution adjoining natural areas and open space through increased use by council of electric vehicles and other electric powered machinery.
- Wildlife monitoring options using remote cameras that could stream and automatically process imagery.
- Use of drones or other technology for wildlife or plant monitoring and perhaps in the future for more intricate activities.
- Use of soil moisture detectors to monitor revegetation and identify if any irrigation is required. Particularly for any high priority plantings.
- Smart lighting that is wildlife friendly, i.e. in parkland that is particularly good habitat for wildlife, or lights are fitted with motion sensors to reduce 'light pollution' that is known to affect the natural behaviour and navigation of some wildlife.

7.4 Electoral Structure Review

Reference	D23/232097
Author	Rhys Thomas - Senior Governance Advisor
Authoriser	General Manager Governance, Communications and Customer Experience

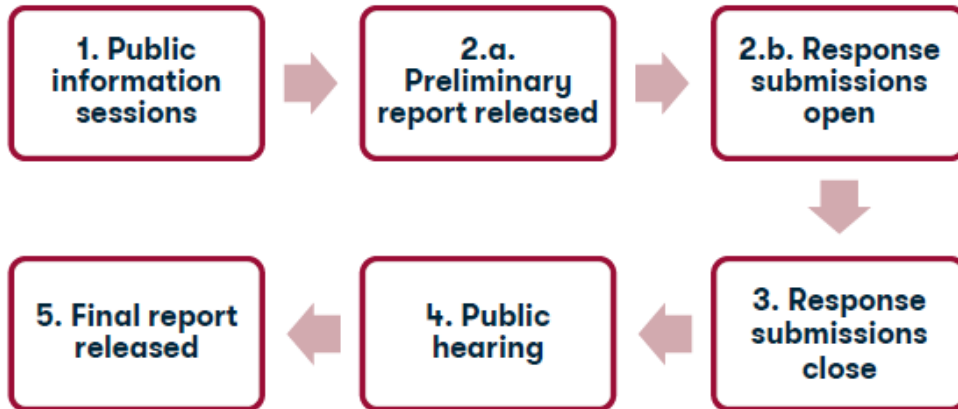
Purpose

1. To seek Council endorsement of a submission to the Electoral Representation Panel (ERAP) in relation to the Yarra City Council electoral structure review.

Critical analysis

History and background

2. The Yarra City Council electoral structure review commenced on 12 July 2023 with the release of a preliminary report setting out a proposed electoral structure for Yarra City Council to take effect at the 2024 Council election.
3. This preliminary report can be found at **Attachment One** to this report.
4. In the review of the City of Yarra, the ERAP will consider and ultimately make recommendations on:
 - (a) the appropriate number of Councillors and wards;
 - (b) the location of ward boundaries; and
 - (c) the names of proposed wards.
5. The ERAP is not empowered to consider any structure other than single member wards.
6. The key steps of the review are set out in the following diagram:



7. The timelines for the process are as follows:

Milestone	Date
VEC Information Sessions	10 and 11 July 2023
Release of preliminary report	12 July 2023
Response submission close	2 August 2023
Public hearing	9 August 2023
Submission of final report to Minister	6 September 2023

Discussion

Council's submission

8. In addition to the process that will be used to encourage the community to get directly involved in the process, Council itself has the opportunity to make a submission.
9. A draft submission has been prepared and includes:
 - (a) reiteration of Council's position that multi-member wards should be permitted;
 - (b) preferred number of Councillors;
 - (c) the principles that should be applied in determining ward boundaries; and
10. This draft submission can be found at **Attachment Two** to this report.

Ward names

11. The draft submission does not present any proposed ward names for the panel's consideration.
12. While the Panel's terms of reference require that advice be provided on "the names of the wards of the municipal district of the Council, having regard to local Traditional Owner groups' interests", the panel have advised that they are unable to undertake this consultation within the timeframes of the current review program.
13. To that end, Council has commenced its own engagement process with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, and has been working in recent months with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung elders to identify possible ward names that would be suitable for presentation to the panel.
14. As this process is not yet complete, it is hoped that it may be completed ahead of the panel's deadline, and enable a subsequent submission in relation to Council's preferred ward names. To that end, this report recommends that the Chief Executive Officer be authorised to finalise a further submission in relation to ward names, after consulting with Councillors.
15. Should the engagement process not be completed ahead of the deadline, it is proposed that Council make representations direct to the Minister for the Local Government ahead of the final decision being made.

Options

16. There are no options presented in this report, although it is open to Council to take the following approaches by alternative resolution:
 - (a) making a submission that differs from that tabled at this meeting; and
 - (b) determine not to make a submission to the ERAP.

Community and stakeholder engagement

17. No community or external stakeholder engagement has been undertaken in the development of this report, save the engagement with the Victorian Electoral Commission.
18. The ERAP itself is conducting a community consultation process, with Council encouraging members of the community to get involved.
19. Engagement with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Corporation regarding ward names is underway. At the time of writing this report, no names have been recommended.

Policy analysis

Alignment to Community Vision and Council Plan

20. In its Yarra 2036 Community Vision, Council articulated an objective for a community that is *"informed and empowered to contribute to the shared governance of Yarra, (where) decision-making is through access, inclusion, consultations and advocacy."*

21. City of Yarra Council Plan 2021-2025 includes Strategic Objective six: ‘Democracy and governance’, which states that good governance is at the heart of our processes and decision-making. The plan commits Council to *“practice good governance, transparency and accountable planning and decision-making.”*
22. Advocacy for an electoral structure that provides meaningful and community-centric representation by Councillors while complying with the provisions of the Local Government Act 2020 is central to the achievement of these objectives.

Climate emergency and sustainability implications

23. There are no climate emergency or sustainability implications considered in this report.

Community and social implications

24. It is Council’s position that the diversity of Yarra’s community is best represented by multi-member wards and proportional representation, rather than the ‘winner take all’ approach of single member wards and preferential voting. That said, this process does not enable Council to directly advocate for that outcome for the 2024 election.
25. By endorsing principles for determining ward boundaries (rather than commenting on ward boundaries themselves), Council has the opportunity to advocate for a structure that does not divide existing communities unnecessarily.

Economic development implications

26. There are no economic development implications considered in this report.

Human rights and gender equality implications

27. Whatever the outcome of the review, the Local Government Act itself ensures that the right to vote in Council elections by residents and ratepayers is unaffected by the ward boundaries chosen. Further, the requirement that each ward contain a similar number of electors seeks to achieve the ‘one vote, one value’ principle for each Council election.
28. There are no other human rights implications and no gender equality implications considered in this report.

Operational analysis

Financial and resource impacts

29. The Local Government Act 2020 requires that Council meet the costs of the Electoral Structure Review, including the cost of the panel itself and the VEC’s administrative support. The estimated costs of the review are:

Expense	Cost (excluding GST)
Mandatory advertising (state-wide newspaper)	\$ 1,942.34
Optional advertising (social media, SMS alerts)	\$ 2,281.35
Fixed-term staffing (VEC)	\$ 32,183.89
Electoral Representation Advisory Panel	\$ 7,272.63
Population and voter forecast research	\$ 9,846.94
TOTAL	\$ 53,527.15

30. The financial and resource implications of a change to the ward structure are yet to be fully understood. While there will be costs associated with updates to internal systems, reports, maps and databases, these costs are essentially the same, regardless of the electoral model finally determined.

31. The only material cost impact to Council would be if the number of Councillors were to change, with a nine Councillor model being cost neutral, a smaller number of Councillors resulting in a saving and a larger number resulting in a cost increase. These impacts are relatively minor, with the most recent calculation (for the purposes of the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework) showing the “costs associated with electoral representation” in 2021/2022 was \$47,596 per Councillor.

Legal Implications

32. The completion of this review is a requirement of section 15 the Local Government Act, which requires that the Governor in Council, on the recommendation of the Minister, make an Order in Council to specify:
- (a) the total number of Councillors to be elected for the Council;
 - (b) that each of those wards is to consist of a single Councillor;
 - (c) the boundaries of wards; and
 - (d) the name of those wards.
33. The Act further requires that the Minister must, before recommending the making of an Order in Council under section 15, establish an electoral representation advisory panel to conduct a review.
34. It is this review that is underway.

Conclusion

35. This paper provides a draft submission to the Electoral Representation Advisory Panel and seeks Council’s formal endorsement.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That:
- (a) Council endorse the submission to the Electoral Representation Advisory Panel at **Attachment Two**; and
 - (b) in the event the engagement with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation is concluded and a proposal for Woi wurrung ward names is agreed before 2 August 2023, Council authorise the Chief Executive Officer, after consulting Councillors, to make a further submission to the Electoral Representation Advisory Panel with suggested ward names.

Attachments

- [1](#) Attachment 1 - Electoral Representation Advisory Panel Preliminary Report
- [2](#) Attachment 2 - Draft submission to the Electoral Representation Advisory Panel

Local council electoral structure review

Preliminary Report

Yarra City Council

July 2023

ERAP | Electoral Representation
Advisory Panel

Acknowledgement of Country

The electoral representation advisory panel acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters for which it is holding this review and pays respects to ancestors and Elders past, present and emerging. The panel acknowledges their custodianship for many thousands of years and their continuing living culture.

Document history and version control

Version	Date approved	Submission approved by	Brief description
1	7 July 2023	Acting Electoral Commissioner	Final version for publication

Contents

Executive summary	4
Developing electoral structure models	4
Electoral structure models.....	4
Next steps.....	4
Background.....	5
About the 2023–24 electoral structure reviews.....	5
The electoral representation advisory panel.....	5
Public engagement	5
Developing recommendations.....	6
About Yarra City Council.....	10
Profile	10
Current number of councillors and electoral structure	12
Last electoral structure review.....	12
Preliminary findings and models	13
Number of councillors	13
Electoral structure	14
Models for public feedback	16
Ward names	16
Next steps.....	17
Response submissions	17
Public hearing	18
Final report.....	18
References	19
Appendix 1: Model map.....	20

Executive summary

An independent electoral structure review panel appointed by the Minister for Local Government is reviewing the electoral structure of Yarra City Council.

The purpose of the review is to advise the Minister on the appropriate number of councillors and electoral structure, including ward names, for the council.

Under Victoria's *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act), Yarra City Council must now have a single-councillor ward electoral structure.

The panel is looking at:

- the appropriate number of councillors and wards for the council
- the location of ward boundaries
- appropriate ward names.

This report outlines the preliminary models the panel is presenting for public consultation, for the proposed new electoral structure of Yarra City Council to meet the requirements of the Act.

More information about the background to the review is available on [page 5](#).

Developing electoral structure models

The panel considered a range of factors when deciding on the models in this report, including:

- research and analysis
- voter growth or decline over time.

More information on the way the panel decided on the models is available on [page 6](#).

Electoral structure models

After considering research and the requirements of the Act, the panel is presenting the following electoral structure model for public consultation:

- Model 1: a subdivided electoral structure with a total of 9 councillors – 9 wards with one councillor per ward.

Details of this model, including a map, are available in [Appendix 1](#).

Next steps

The panel is now seeking feedback on the preliminary electoral structure model. You can make a response submission to the preliminary models until 5 pm Wednesday 2 August. If any response submitters wish to speak at a public hearing, the panel will hold an online public hearing on Wednesday 9 August 2023. Following this, the panel will present its final recommendation to the Minister on Wednesday 6 September 2023.

More information about the review process is available on the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) website at vec.vic.gov.au

Background

About the 2023–24 electoral structure reviews

In October 2022, the Minister for Local Government formed 2 electoral representation advisory panels to review and provide advice on the electoral structures of 39 local councils, under section 16 of the Act. If the Minister accepts the electoral structure recommended by the panel, any changes will take effect at the October 2024 local council elections.

The Act introduced several changes to local government representation, including the types of electoral structures local councils may have. All metropolitan, interface and regional city councils (including Yarra City Council) must now have single-councillor ward electoral structures.

For Yarra City Council, the electoral representation advisory panel is examining:

- the number of councillors and wards
- where the ward boundaries should be
- the name of each ward.

The Act requires electoral structures to provide fair and equitable representation and facilitate good governance. Each ward must have an approximately equal number of voters per councillor (within +/-10% of the average). While conducting the review, the panel also notes the role of a councillor as specified under section 28 of the Act.

The electoral representation advisory panel

The panel conducting the electoral structure review of Yarra City Council has 3 members:

- The Honourable Frank Vincent AO KC (Chairperson)
- Ms Liz Williams PSM
- Acting Deputy Electoral Commissioner Ms Máiréad Doyle.

The purpose of the review is to advise the Minister on the appropriate number of councillors and electoral structure, including ward names, for the council. The panel is independent of councils and the Victorian State government.

Under the Act, the VEC is not responsible for reviewing council electoral structures but must provide administrative and technical support to the panel. The Electoral Commissioner (or their delegate) must be a member of each panel.

Public engagement

Public information program

On behalf of the panel, the VEC has conducted a public information and awareness program to inform the public about the Yarra City Council electoral structure review. This has included:

- printed public notices in state-wide newspapers

- public information sessions to outline the review process and respond to questions from the community
- media releases to announce the start of the review
- information on social media channels
- updated website content on vec.vic.gov.au, including:
 - current information on the review process
 - submission guide and fact sheets for each council under review with background information.

The VEC will continue to promote the review on behalf of the panel during the response submission stage via media releases, the VEC’s social media channels and the VEC website.

Public consultation

The panel now invites input to the electoral structure review of Yarra City Council via:

- response submissions to this preliminary report
- an online public hearing for anyone who makes a response submission to speak to the panel and expand on their submission.

Public submissions are an important part of the review process and are considered alongside other factors addressed during the review. These are outlined below.

Developing recommendations

The electoral structure models the panel is presenting in this preliminary report comply with the Act and were developed through careful consideration of:

- research and analysis conducted by the VEC support team, including geospatial and demographic data
- rates or patterns of population and voter change over time, and relevant forecasts of growth or decline based on forecast information provided by .id (informed decisions, a company specialising in demographics and forecasting).

Deciding on the number of councillors

The Act allows local councils to have between 5 and 12 councillors, but neither the Act nor the Local Government (Electoral) Regulations 2020 specify how the number of councillors is to be determined. Therefore, the models put forward by the panel in this report are guided by the Act’s intention for fairness and equity in voter representation.

In examining the appropriate number of councillors for Yarra City Council, the panel considered the following criteria:

- the population and number of voters in the council area, compared to other councils with a similar population size and number of voters in the same category (for example, other comparable metropolitan, interface or regional city councils)
- patterns of population change and voter growth or decline in the council area over time

- the current and past numbers of councillors
- the representation needs of the communities of interest in the council area.

The panel's final recommendation will also consider any matters raised in public response submissions not already listed above.

Local councils with a larger number of voters will often have more councillors. Large populations generally have greater diversity, both in the type and number of communities of interest and issues relating to representation. However, the ideal number of councillors can also be influenced by the circumstances of each council, such as the:

- nature and complexity of services the council provides
- geographic size and topography of the area
- forecast population and voter growth or decline
- social diversity.

Deciding the electoral structure

Under the Act, regional city, metropolitan and interface councils must now have single-councillor ward electoral structures.

When developing single-councillor ward models for Yarra City Council, the panel considered these criteria:

- whether the structure would comply with section 15(2) of the Act (see below), and for how long it would likely comply
- the appropriate number of councillors, as outlined above
- whether meaningful and effective ward boundaries could be established and whether these would be easily identifiable to local communities
- the representation of communities of interest
- the voter distribution and physical features of the area, and the impact these may have on the shape and size of wards
- past elections for the council, including:
 - numbers of candidates nominating
 - incidences of uncontested elections
 - rates of informal voting.

The panel's final recommendation will also consider any matters raised in public response submissions not already listed above.

Under section 15(2) of the Act, subdivided structures must aim for an approximately equal number of voters per councillor in each ward. This means the number of voters represented by each councillor in a ward should be within +/-10% of the average number of voters per councillor for all wards.

During this review, the panel aims to recommend a structure that will comply with section 15(2) at the time of the 2024 local council elections and, if possible, also comply based on voter numbers at the time the review is conducted. The panel uses forecasts of population and voter change to assess compliance at the 2024 elections with as much accuracy as possible. In some cases, population change and other factors impacting voter numbers mean it is not possible to create compliant subdivided structures based both on voter numbers that were current at the time of the review and forecast voter numbers. In these instances, the panel prioritises compliance at the 2024 local government elections to ensure each vote will have approximately equal value at the 2024 election.

One of the factors that may impact compliance with section 15(2) is the number of current and forecast voters with ratepayer-based voting entitlements, also known as council-enrolled electors. Voters' rolls include both state-enrolled electors (the majority of the roll) and a smaller number of council-enrolled electors. The Act introduced changes to ratepayer-based entitlement categories, which come into full effect at the 2024 local council elections. The panel will take this change to the makeup of voters' rolls, and therefore compliance with section 15(2) of the Act, into consideration during this review.

Deciding on ward names

The panel has taken the following approach to naming wards.

1. Retaining existing ward names if these are still relevant to the area covered by the ward.
2. When a new name is required, the panel bases this on features such as:
 - places (registered under the *Geographic Place Names Act 1998*) in the ward
 - compass directions
 - native flora or fauna.

Use of Aboriginal language

The panel recognises that there should first be meaningful consultation with local Aboriginal communities and groups before a ward is named using Aboriginal language. Meaningful consultation is a significant process that the panel is not able to undertake within the timeframes of the current review program.

The panel also recognises that many of the place names in current use across Victoria are based on Aboriginal language. As such, the panel may put forward new ward names using Aboriginal language if:

- it is the name of a place within a ward
- it is currently in common use

and

- the name is registered under the *Geographic Place Names Act 1998*.

Local council electoral structure review – Preliminary report – Yarra City Council

Unregistered names using Aboriginal language have not been put forward by the panel as new ward names. While the panel supports the adoption of names based on Aboriginal language, this requires appropriate consultation.

Accordingly, for the panel to consider an Aboriginal language ward name that is suggested in a public submission to the review, the name submitted needs to comply with the above guidelines.

About Yarra City Council

Profile

Yarra City Council covers an area of 20 km² and is in inner metropolitan Melbourne, approximately 5 km north-west of the city centre. It is bounded by Darebin, Merri-Bek and Banyule councils in the north, the City of Boroondara in the east, the City of Stonnington in the south, and the City of Melbourne in the west. The Traditional Custodians of the Yarra City Council area are the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung peoples.

Landscape

Yarra City Council includes the relatively affluent suburbs of Carlton North, Clifton Hill and Princes Hill in the north, and parts of Alphington and Fairfield in the east. The formerly industrial suburbs of Fitzroy, Collingwood, and Abbotsford make up the council's centre, while the council's southern suburbs include Burnley, Richmond, and Cremorne.

The Yarra River forms most of the council's eastern boundary, while the Merri Creek forms part of the northern boundary. Major parks within the council's boundaries include Edinburgh Gardens, Darling Gardens, Yarra Bend Park, and Burnley Park.

The council area is well connected to public transport, with connections to the major northern and eastern train lines as well as numerous tram and bus services. The Eastern Freeway ends at Clifton Hill and becomes Alexandra Parade, connecting traffic with the city's northern and western suburbs. The major arterial road of Hoddle Street runs north-south through the centre of the council, while the City Link toll road runs through Cremorne and Burnley near the council's southern boundary connecting the freeway system east and west of Melbourne.

Community

At the 2021 census, Yarra City Council's population was 90,114 (ABS 2022a), an increase from 86,657 in 2016, and 74,090 in 2011 (ABS 2011, 2016). From 2022, the council's population is projected to increase by 2.2% per year to be about 102,800 by 2028. The median age of the council's population is 34, less than the median of 37 found in Greater Melbourne (ABS 2022a, 2022b).

Of the population, 66.2% were born in Australia, and 74.8% speak only English at home, compared to 59.9% and 61.1% respectively for Greater Melbourne (ABS 2022a, ABS 2022b). Despite appearing less diverse than metropolitan Melbourne overall, some areas have significantly high proportions of the population born overseas and speaking a language other than English. The suburb of Richmond, for example, is home to a very large Vietnamese community (ABS 2022b, ABS 2022d). The number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander people at the 2021 census was 0.6%, slightly less than the 0.7% across Greater Melbourne (ABS 2022a, ABS 2022b).

Home ownership, at 44.1% of all households (inclusive of property owned outright and with a mortgage), is significantly lower than the Greater Melbourne rate of 66.8%. More than half (53.4%) of all households are renting, which is far greater than the Greater Melbourne average of

30.2% (ABS 2022a, ABS 2022b). The council has one of the highest proportions of people living in public housing at 10%, which is over 3 times the metropolitan average (Yarra City Council 2023), most of which is located in the suburbs of Richmond and Fitzroy.

The weekly median income is \$2,270, more than the Greater Melbourne median of \$1,901 (ABS 2022a, ABS 2022b). However, the council contains heavily gentrified areas, such as Carlton North and parts of Fitzroy where median house prices are well above the metropolitan average. The most common employment categories for residents of the council are professionals and managers. These factors underpin the higher than median incomes of the population.

Current number of councillors and electoral structure

Yarra City Council is currently divided into 3 wards with a total of 9 councillors:

- 3 wards with 3 councillors each (Nicholls Ward, Langridge Ward, Melba Ward).

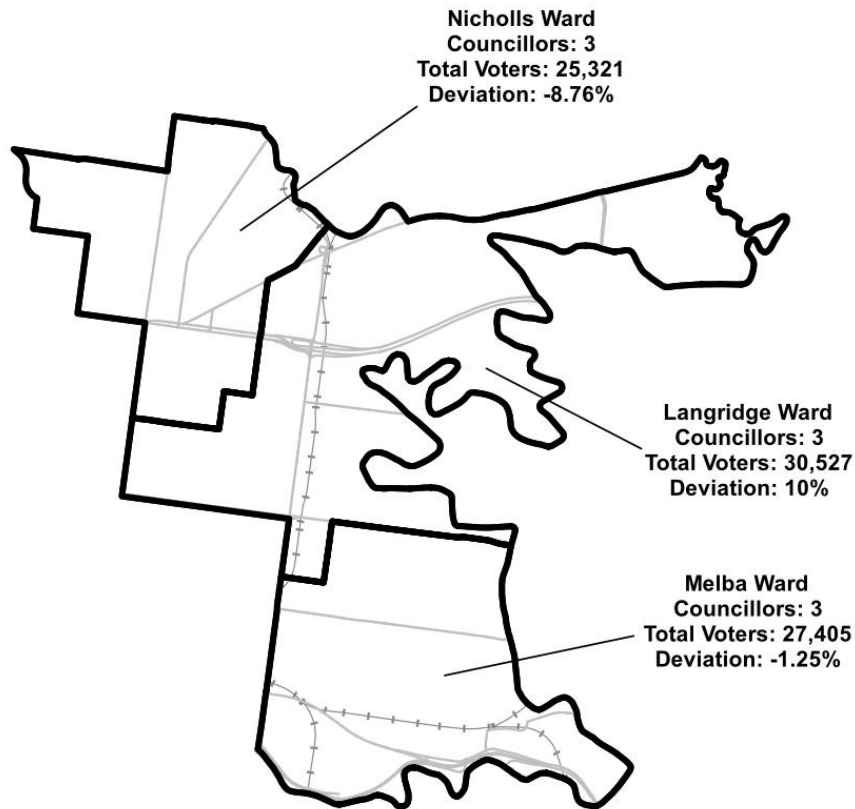


Figure 1: Diagram of current electoral structure of Yarra City Council.

There are approximately 83,253 voters in Yarra City Council, with an approximate ratio of 9,250 voters per councillor.

Visit the VEC website at vec.vic.gov.au for more information on Yarra City Council.

Last electoral structure review

The VEC conducted an electoral representation review of Yarra City Council in 2011. This review was carried out under the *Local Government Act 1989* (Vic), which was replaced by the *Local Government Act 2020* (Vic).

After conducting the review, the VEC recommended that Yarra City Council continue to consist of 9 councillors elected from 3 wards with 3 councillors in each.

Visit the VEC website at vec.vic.gov.au to access a copy of the 2011 representation review final report.

Preliminary findings and models

Number of councillors

After taking into consideration the requirements of the Act and the agreed criteria, the panel found 9 councillors to be an appropriate number for Yarra City Council.

The panel considered the characteristics of Yarra City Council in relation to similar councils, including its population, the number and distribution of voters, and the size and geography of the council.

Similar metropolitan councils to Yarra City Council						
Local council	Area (km ²)	Number of voters at 2020 election	Population (2021 Census)	Current total estimate of voters	Number of councillors	Number of voters per councillor
Moonee Valley City*	43	93,923	121,851	93,530	9	10,392
Manningham City	113	87,255	124,700	87,278	9	9,698
Stonnington City*	26	89,600	104,703	86,821	9	9,646
Maroondah City	61	85,275	115,043	85,033	9	9,448
Yarra City*	20	78,793	90,114	83,253	9	9,250
Bayside City	37	76,020	101,306	76,043	7	10,863
Hobsons Bay City	64	68,321	91,322	67,693	7	9,670
Maribyrnong City*	31	63,456	85,209	64,361	7	9,194

*This local council is undergoing an electoral structure review during 2023–24.

Maintaining 9 councillors

Yarra City Council currently has 83,253 voters represented by 9 councillors and covers an area of 20 km². Other metropolitan councils with a similar number of voters usually also have either 7 or 9 councillors. While Yarra City Council has the lowest number of voters of all 9-councillor metropolitan councils, forecasts indicate relatively high rates of growth and population change will continue throughout the council area.

Additionally, there are special circumstances that Yarra City Council faces, creating conditions that may increase councillor workloads and demand for council services. These include the largest public housing population in Victoria, significant and expanding commercial activities, a

high growth profile – which likely requires the council to manage local opposition and community expectations – and a section of the population considered to be highly mobile.

These special circumstances warrant Yarra City Council having 9 councillors and have not changed since the last council electoral structure review. For these reasons, the panel considers it appropriate for the total number of councillors to remain unchanged at 9.

Electoral structure

To identify the most appropriate electoral structure, various factors were considered. This included the requirements of the Act, the communities of interest in Yarra City Council, the appropriateness of ward boundaries and which models best offered fair and equitable representation and consequently facilitate good governance.

In developing the preliminary model presented in this report, the panel considered a range of models. The strongest model has been put forward for further public comment.

The panel proposes one model for the consideration of the Yarra City Council community:

- a subdivided electoral structure of 9 single-councillor wards (Model 1).

A diagram of the preliminary model is included in [Appendix 1](#).

A single-councillor ward structure with 9 councillors (Model 1)

Under this model, Yarra City Council would adopt a 9-ward structure. Each ward would be represented by one councillor, in line with the requirements of the Act.

Despite being presented with various models, the panel chose this sole model as it best represents the community, while also complying with the strictures of the Act. Creating legislatively compliant and sensibly bordered single-councillor ward structures is a considerable challenge for geospatial modellers. The unique shape of the council area, including a narrow passage of land extending east along the Yarra River around Alphington, was an important consideration in determining appropriate ward divisions. As such, these geographic features, as well as the pattern and distribution of the population throughout the council area, limit the ways the council can reasonably be divided. In acknowledging these challenges, the panel also noted that this model represents the culmination of various attempts and revisions at achieving compliance with the Act (particularly the +/-10% requirement) and was considered to be significantly stronger than other draft models.

The panel noted the distinct social and cultural identities throughout the council area, which tend to materialise in the form of strong connections to suburbs. From the diverse Richmond area in the south, the formerly industrial and gentrifying areas of Fitzroy, Collingwood and Abbotsford in the centre, and the quieter northern suburbs like Carlton North, Fitzroy North and Clifton Hill, each area of the council has a history and identity that makes it distinct. Each area also faces particular challenges and pressures related to population growth and housing development. As such, the key design principle for this model was an attempt to keep these distinct localities sensibly grouped together, while using recognisable features for boundaries.

This model also attempts to follow similar boundaries as the current electoral structure, achieving this aim in numerous places, such as along Victoria Street in Richmond.

Model 1 structures Yarra City Council in the following ways:

- Carlton North and Fitzroy North Wards capture the northern and quieter suburbs of Princes Hill, Carlton North and Fitzroy North, using well known features for boundaries such as Merri Creek, Nicholson Street, and the northern part of Brunswick Street.
- Abbotsford, Collingwood, and Fitzroy Wards capture the formerly industrial suburbs in the centre of the council. They provide representation for the significant cultural and commercial precincts found in and around Smith Street, Brunswick Street, Gertrude Street, and Johnson Street, as well as the public housing units located around Gertrude Street and Hoddle Street.
- The southern area of the council is divided into three wards: Cremorne Ward, Burnley Ward, and Richmond Ward. These wards provide representation for the large Richmond area, and the commercial and cultural precincts of Bridge Road, Swan Street, Victoria Street and Church Street, as well as the large number of public housing units found around Lennox Street.
- Yarra Bend Ward takes in the localities of Clifton Hill, Fairfield, Alphington, and a small part of Fitzroy North adjacent to the Yarra River and Merri Creek. Strong boundaries in the Eastern Freeway, Alexandra and Queens parades are used to separate it from neighbouring wards.

Every effort was made in this model to capture sensible communities of interest while considering the special circumstances facing the council, including areas of disadvantage and diversity. Bearing in mind the constraints of the Act, the panel is now interested in public feedback regarding this model and welcomes any suggestions for improvement.

Summary

In summary, introducing single-councillor wards represents a large electoral change for Yarra City Council. Achieving models that divide communities into appropriate wards while also accounting for population growth and ensuring they comply with the +/-10% requirement proved to be challenging. Division of the council into 9 wards was also difficult due to the geography of the council area and the distribution of its population. However, the presence of distinct suburb-based communities and strong features for possible ward boundaries allowed a reasonable single-councillor ward structure to be developed. For the most part each ward of the current structure was able to be divided evenly to form 9 wards. Of the various options considered during this process no other model was able to be developed which captured the council's communities using sound features for ward boundaries as well as Model 1.

Models for public feedback

The panel considers the model outlined below to be the single-councillor ward electoral structure with the best potential to offer fair and equitable representation for voters in Yarra City Council and consequently facilitate good governance. Please see [Appendix 1](#) for a detailed map of this model.

Model 1

Yarra City Council has 9 councillors and is divided into 9 wards with one councillor per ward.

Ward names: Abbotsford Ward, Burnley Ward, Carlton Ward, Cremorne Ward, Collingwood Ward, Fitzroy Ward, Fitzroy North Ward, Richmond Ward, Yarra Bend Ward.

Ward names

The panel has suggested ward names to identify the wards in the model and invites comments from the community on these names as part of submissions responding to the preliminary report. The basis of the ward name recommendations for the model are described below.

Model 1

All ward names are new and are based on natural features or localities found within each ward.



The panel will review ward name suggestions received during the response submission stage when forming the final advice to the Minister for Local Government on the electoral structure of the council. Suggested ward names should comply with the panel's approach to naming wards (see [Deciding on ward names](#) and [Use of Aboriginal language](#)). All ward name suggestions received during the response submission stage will be provided to the Minister for consideration at the conclusion of the electoral structure review.

Next steps

Response submissions

Any person or group, including the local council under review, can make a response submission to the electoral representation advisory panel. In your submission you should address the models proposed by the panel in this preliminary report.

You can make a submission:

	Online Visit vec.vic.gov.au to make a submission online. You will need to make an account to use the online Public Submission Tool and can save a draft submission to finish later.
	By email Yarra.ERAPSubmissions@vec.vic.gov.au
	By post Electoral Representation Advisory Panel c/o Victorian Electoral Commission Level 11, 530 Collins St Melbourne VIC 3000

The panel must receive all response submissions before 5 pm on Wednesday 2 August 2023. If you post your submission, make sure it has enough time to reach the panel before the deadline. Late submissions will not be accepted.

Required information

For your submission to be considered, you must include your:

- full name
- contact phone number or email address
- postal or residential address.

To protect the integrity and transparency of the review process, the panel will not consider submissions without this information. If you are submitting as a group or organisation, you must include the name of a nominated contact person who is authorised to submit on behalf of your group.

On behalf of the panel, the VEC will handle information provided by submitters in accordance with the privacy policy available at vec.vic.gov.au/privacy

Public access to submissions

To ensure transparency in the electoral structure review process, your submission will be published on the VEC website at vec.vic.gov.au. The VEC will remove your signature and contact details, including residential and postal addresses, from all public copies but must publish your full name (or group name) and locality (suburb or town).

Please note that any submission content that is potentially defamatory, offensive, obscene or that includes the personal information of people or organisations who are not a party to the submission may also be redacted before publication.

Public hearing

If you make a response submission, you can also ask to speak at an online public hearing to support your submission and expand on your views.

The online public hearing is scheduled for:

Time: 10 am

Date: Wednesday 9 August 2023

The panel encourages participation in the public hearing. If you wish to speak at the public hearing, you **must** indicate this in your response submission. The public hearing will not be held if there are no requests to speak.

Anyone can attend a public hearing, but you will only be able to speak if you asked to in your response submission. If you ask to speak, the VEC will contact you to arrange a time for you to speak at the hearing. You will have 10 minutes to address the public hearing panel, which will include at least 2 of the review panel members. The members of the public hearing panel may ask you questions.

Visit the VEC website at vec.vic.gov.au for more information on public hearings.

Final report

Following the public hearing, the review panel will consider all evidence gathered and prepare a final report for the Minister for Local Government containing a recommendation for the number of councillors and the electoral structure for the local council.

The final report is scheduled to be provided to the Minister on Wednesday 6 September 2023. The Minister will consider the final reports, including any determination to make the reports publicly available. Any change to the electoral structure of Yarra City Council following on from this review is expected to apply at the October 2024 local council elections. Under the Act, the final council electoral structure will be set by an Order in Council published in the Victoria Government Gazette.

References

.id (2023a) [City of Yarra, Industry sector of employment](#), .id website, accessed 8 June 2023.

ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics) (2022a) [2021 Census All Person Quickstats, Yarra](#) ABS website, accessed 7 June 2023.

— (2022b) [2021 Census All Person Quickstats, Greater Melbourne](#), ABS website, accessed 7 June 2023.

— (2022c) [2021 Census All Person Quickstats, Victoria](#), ABS website, accessed 22 June 2023.

— (2022d) [2021 Census All Person Quickstats, Richmond](#), ABS website, accessed 28 June 2023.

— (2016) [2016 Census All Person Quickstats, Yarra](#), ABS website, accessed 7 June 2023.

— (2011) [2011 Census All Person Quickstats, Yarra](#), ABS website, accessed 7 June 2023.

Yarra City Council (2023) [Council Plan 2021-2025](#), Yarra City Council website, accessed 28 June 2023.

Geographic Place Names Act 1998 (Vic)

Local Government Act 1989 (Vic)

Local Government Act 2020 (Vic)















Local Government (Electoral) Regulations 2020 (Vic)

Appendix 1: Model map

The following map is included in this report:

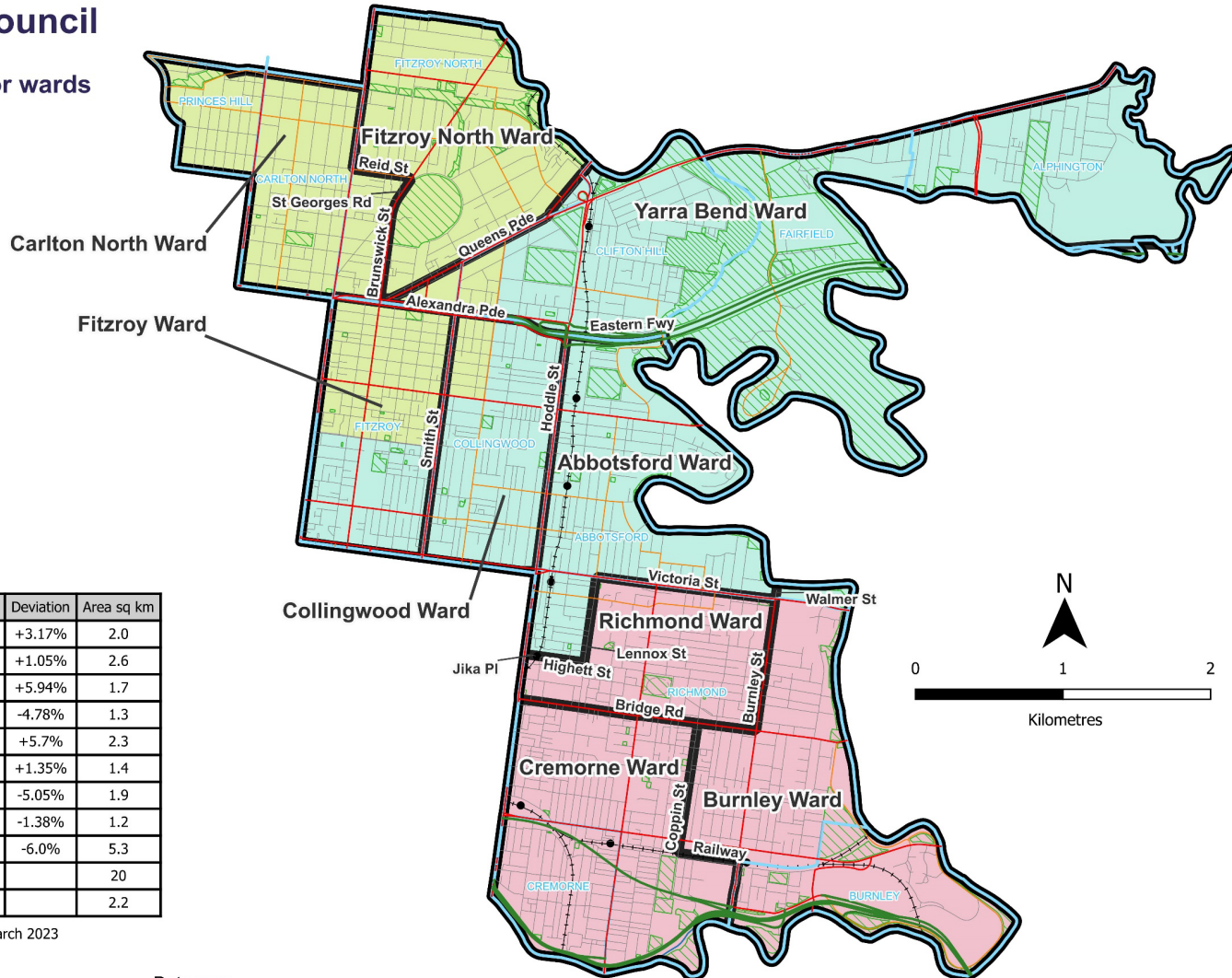
Map	Page
Model 1 – a single-councillor ward structure with 9 councillors – 9 wards with one councillor per ward.	21

Yarra City Council Model 1 9 single-councillor wards

- Legend**
-  Proposed boundaries
 - Existing ward(s)**
 -  Langridge
 -  Melba
 -  Nicholls
 - Map symbols**
 -  Freeways
 -  Main roads
 -  Collector roads
 -  Minor roads
 -  Railways
 -  Railway stations
 -  Rivers & creeks
 -  Lakes
 -  Parks & reserves
 -  Locality boundaries

Ward	Electors*	Deviation	Area sq km
Abbotsford	9,544	+3.17%	2.0
Burnley	9,347	+1.05%	2.6
Carlton North	9,800	+5.94%	1.7
Collingwood	8,808	-4.78%	1.3
Cremorne	9,778	+5.7%	2.3
Fitzroy	9,375	+1.35%	1.4
Fitzroy North	8,783	-5.05%	1.9
Richmond	9,123	-1.38%	1.2
Yarra Bend	8,695	-6.0%	5.3
Total	83,253		20
Average	9,250		2.2

*Elector numbers as at 30 March 2023



Map prepared by:



Data use:



Copyright © 2023 - State Government of Victoria, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning

Disclaimer: This content is provided for information purposes only. While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy and authenticity of the content, the Victorian government does not accept any liability to any person for the information provided.

Forecast information referred to in the text of this report is based on forecasts prepared by .id – informed decisions id.com.au. .id and its licensors are the sole and exclusive owners of all rights, title and interest subsisting in that part of the report content where .id are identified. Some of .id content is a derivative of ABS Data, which can be accessed from the website of the Australian Bureau of Statistics at abs.gov.au, and licensed on terms published on the ABS website.



Submission to the electoral representation advisory panel



The City of Yarra is pleased to make this submission to the electoral representation advisory panel in relation to the 2023 electoral structure review for Yarra City Council.

Electoral Representation Model

At the outset, Council takes this opportunity to reiterate our position that the community of Yarra is better served by the application of multi-member wards and proportional voting, rather than single member wards counted with the preferential voting system. We believe the electoral representation panel should have had the opportunity to consider that model.

In appointing the electoral representation review panels, the Minister for Local Government stated that they “will ensure that councils are effectively representing the communities they serve”, yet the panels have not been provided with the tools necessary for that task.

Notwithstanding the panel’s terms of reference tasking it to consider the most suitable composition of a Council (unsubdivided, single member wards, multi member wards), sections 16(7)(c) and 16(7)(ca) mean the panel is unable to consider all options without notices having first been published under section 13(5) and 13(5A) in respect of the City of Yarra.

As part of our advocacy effort on this issue, Council recently submitted a motion to the State Council of the Municipal Association of Victoria. The motion was supported by the Victoria-wide membership of the MAV and reads:

1. *That this State Council call on the Minister for Local Government to:*
 - (a) *recognise the expertise of its own appointed electoral representation advisory panels and their ability to recommend an appropriate constitution of a Council, guided by consultation with local communities; and*
 - (b) *publish a notice in the Government Gazette in accordance with section 13 of the Local Government Act 2020 enabling all Victorian Councils to be constituted in any one of the three permissible manners, which will have the effect of allowing the electoral representation advisory panels to consider all options.*

With that being said, we acknowledge that the Local Government Act 2020 and the panel’s terms of reference does not permit it to do anything other than recommend that Yarra be made up of single member wards.

We remain disappointed in this regard, but make this submission nonetheless.

Number of Councillors

With single member wards pre-determined, all that remains for the Panel is to make a recommendation regarding the appropriate number of Councillors to be elected, in a range from five to 12 Councillors.

We agree with the preliminary position of the Panel that nine Councillors is the preferred number.

In determining the appropriate number, it is important that consideration be given to the size, geography, population and the number and distribution of voters in the municipality. Aside from the obvious advantage of maintaining the status quo (Yarra has been served by nine Councillors since our first Council was elected), the following arguments support a nine Councillor structure:

Arguments against any change:

- The 2024 election will see a shift to single member wards, and a move away from the proportional voting system. It will be important to communicate this change to electors ahead of the election and once the new Council is elected. A status quo position in relation to the number of Councillors will assist in this communication effort, by limiting the change to the new electoral model only.

Arguments against a reduction:

- Despite its small geographic footprint, the City of Yarra is made up of distinct neighbourhoods, each with its own strong identity. The inner city location of these neighbourhoods means that travel times between relatively proximate locations can be considerable, especially during peak travel times.
- A reduction in the number of Councillors runs the risk of reducing the diversity of Yarra's Councillors, and compounding the impact of a move away from multi-member wards. Smaller wards, each with fewer electors, provides an opportunity for Councillors with specific appeal in a particular geographic area to be elected.
- Fewer Councillors means that the temporary absence of a Councillor (due to reasons such as illness, leave of absence, conflict of interest or suspension) has a greater impact on the orderly operation of Council meetings, and a possibly greater influence on the outcome of any matter to be considered in the Chamber.
- Fewer Councillors increases the likelihood of a Council meeting lapsing due to a failure to achieve a quorum. For example, a Council of nine can proceed with four Councillors absent, while a Council of seven would be unable to proceed in those circumstances.
- The two-thirds majority required for the adoption of a Councillor Code of conduct can be achieved exactly with nine Councillors (the only other permissible models where this is the case being six or 12 Councillors). The effective threshold for adopting a Councillor Code of Conduct under other models is significantly higher. For 10 Councillors it is 70%, for seven it is 71%, for 11 it is 73%, for eight it is 75% and for five it is 80%.

Arguments against an increase:

- The City of Yarra's small geographic footprint means that an increase in the number of Councillors (especially a significant one) would result in wards that could be very small indeed – in some cases perhaps a few hundred metres across.
- The larger a ward, the easier it is for a Councillor "to represent the interests of the municipal community" (as they are required to do under the Local Government Act 2020), rather than only the interests of a specific ward.
- An increase in the number of Councillors in Yarra would increase the cost to the community associated with Councillor allowances, professional development and associated support costs.
- A greater number of wards would result in the necessary ward boundary changes (to ensure the number of electors remains within 10% of the mean) would be more significant, as individual developments or populations shifts in a small area have a greater impact on the balance of electors across wards.

Arguments against an even number of Councillors (six, eight, 10 or 12):

- Any even number of Councillors has the potential to increase the likelihood of the Mayor having to exercise a casting vote – something which is best avoided. This is particularly the case in circumstances where the Mayor observes the long standing custom of voting to maintain the status quo – meaning that a matter could reach a stalemate position.
- Any even number of Councillors increases the possibility of a stalemate in an election for the office of Mayor – a tie which cannot be broken by a ballot, casting vote or any other method.

Principles for ward boundary determination

We do not seek in this submission to offer commentary about the specific ward boundaries recommended in the Panel's preliminary report, and we will leave it to others to make observations in that regard. Instead, we offer a series of principles the Panel should apply in considering community feedback on the preliminary proposal and forming a final recommendation.

In addition to the legislative requirement that ward boundaries must result in a structure where the number of voters per ward does not vary by more than 10 per cent from the average number of voters for all of the wards, we suggest that the following principles be observed in forming a final position:

- established and distinct communities should not be unnecessarily split between two or more wards, and that careful consideration be given to submissions made by the community in this respect;
- where ward boundaries are proximate to major roads and railway lines, the ward boundary should follow that geographic feature where possible;
- where ward boundaries are proximate to existing suburb boundaries, the ward boundary should follow the suburb boundary where possible; and
- wards should not be overly complicated in shape.

Ward names

The Panel's terms of reference require that advice be provided on "the names of the wards of the municipal district of the Council, having regard to local Traditional Owner groups' interests".

We agree with the Panel that there should be meaningful consultation with local Aboriginal communities and groups before a ward is named using Aboriginal language. We appreciate that meaningful consultation is a significant process and understand that the Panel is not able to undertake within the timeframes of the current review program.

By way of assistance to the Panel, Council has commenced its own engagement process with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation – the Registered Aboriginal Party for the land on which the City of Yarra stands today.

In recent months, Council officers have been working with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung elders to identify possible ward names in the Woi-wurrung language that would be suitable for presentation to the panel in this submission.

While this process is not yet complete, we are hopeful that it may be completed ahead of the panel's deadline, and enable a subsequent submission in relation to Council's preferred ward names. Should this not be possible (or in the event that the final recommendation on ward numbers or boundaries differs markedly from that in the preliminary report), Council intends to make representations direct to the Minister ahead of the final decision being made.

As a result of our commitment to this process, we offer no comment on the specific names suggested by the Panel in the Preliminary Report.

This submission was endorsed by Council on 18 July 2023.

7.5 Fossil Fuel related advertising on Council property

Reference	D23/255097
Author	Indy Lingam - Greenhouse Program Leader
Authoriser	General Manager City Sustainability and Strategy

Purpose

1. This report responds to a Council resolution on 19 April 2022 requesting advice on the implications of not permitting fossil fuel-related advertising on Council property and a process for phasing this in.

Critical analysis

History and background

2. On 19 April 2022 Council resolved that:
 - (a) *Yarra Council, not support the advertising of companies involved in the production or supply of fossil fuels on Council property, consistent with its Climate Emergency Plan; and;*
 - (b) *Council call for an Officer report on the implications of not permitting advertising for companies involved in the production or supply of fossil fuels on Council property, and a process for phasing this in.*

Discussion

3. There is clear evidence that burning fossil fuels are a direct contributor to the climate emergency. Yarra Council has an adopted position that fossil fuels need to be phased out as soon as possible.
4. United Nations research estimates 72% of the Australian public also believe climate change is an emergency.
5. In 2017 Yarra Council became just the second jurisdiction in the world to declare a climate emergency. In 2020 Council adopted its first Climate Emergency Plan. Yarra is now one of 115 local governments from metropolitan and regional Australia that have declared a Climate Emergency.
6. Council's adopted Climate Emergency Plan sets a clear vision and action plan for Council and the municipality. This includes objectives to:
 - (a) achieve zero-net emissions across the entire Yarra community by 2030;
 - (b) push for urgent change and changing the way we live and work; and
 - (c) to collaborate and advocate with others in the climate emergency movement to increase our impact.
7. There are many adopted actions in the Climate Emergency Plan relevant to this proposal. These include to:
 - (a) Continue to implement and update Yarra Council's divestment activities;
 - (b) Be powered by 100% renewable energy for the entire organisation's energy needs (transitioning to all zero emissions vehicles and off gas by 2030); and
 - (c) To advocate for strong action commensurate with the scale and urgency of the emergency.

8. Following significant consultation, Yarra also adopted our 'Yarra 2036 Community Vision' in 2021, which included Theme 4 - 'Sustainability'. – with one relevant priority being:
 - (a) Lead the way in climate change mitigation and resilience within Yarra and extend our impact through advocacy and innovative partnership.
9. In making this climate emergency declaration and setting strong policy positions to eliminate the use of fossil fuels, Council may use actions within its control to implement this for our own operations, as well as advocating to our community and other governments to do the same.
10. Restricting the promotion of certain products or services is not a new role for governments. Local governments, including Yarra, already restrict advertising on council property which promote goods or services that are inconsistent with priorities and values of Council and our communities. For example, our recreation site and venue hire agreement prohibits signage which advertises:
 - (a) alcohol;
 - (b) drugs;
 - (c) pharmaceuticals;
 - (d) tobacco-related products, and
 - (e) entities directly associated with gaming or gambling activities.
11. On 15 May 2023, Tasmania's Waratah Wynyard council became Australia's first Council to ban signs for fossil fuel sponsors at all its venues, including sports fields and open space.
12. Additionally, across Australia, multiple Councils have passed declarations to seek to implement a policy to restrict fossil fuel advertising on council properties, including Darebin, Merri-bek, and Sydney.
13. The Public Health and Safety (Fossil Fuel Advertising) Bill is being introduced in NSW which seeks to ban fossil fuel advertising and sponsorships across that state.
14. Restrictions on fossil fuel advertising are also already in place in France, the ACT, and at least seven local government areas in the UK and the Netherlands. Similar laws are being debated in the European Union, Germany, Sweden and Canada.
15. Provisions to restrict advertising relating to fossil fuels would not affect users with existing agreements rather these would be considered at the time that new agreements / renewals are undertaken.

What is a Fossil Fuel company for the purpose of these advertising restrictions?

16. It is important to define the scope of what would not be permitted advertising. The recommended definition is:

Council does not permit advertising on Council property which specifically promotes fossil fuels, or by companies which extract, produce and/or refine fossil fuels.
17. 'Fossil Fuels' for the purposes of this resolution would be defined as fuels including, but not limited to, thermal coal, gases such as natural gas and LPG, petrol and diesel which have been sourced from mining operations.

Current status of advertising on Council property, and implications to not permit fossil fuel advertising.

18. It is also important to define the scope of 'Council property.' The recommended definition is that Council Property refers to a physical property or open space where Council is the owner / manager / and/or custodian, and / or where users need to enter a formal agreement with Council for usage (i.e. a public space usage agreement for an event).
19. Council property, within the boundaries described above, could include:
 - (a) direct approaches to Council to advertise on our managed property;

- (b) short-term hire agreements for our premises, open spaces or roadways for one-off events (i.e. hall hire, festivals, etc and may wish to display their sponsors);
 - (c) longer-term agreements to use our property (i.e. buildings and open space, such as sports or cultural clubs which may display sponsors or alike);
 - (d) Council-managed 'community noticeboards' (i.e. real estate type boards across Yarra in some parks and reserves use to advertise community events and alike which may have sponsors/supporters associated); and
 - (e) other users who require a permit for use of open space reserves and this use may involve advertising.
20. Affected Council property does not include:
- (a) a road, footpath or nature strip which is not subject to a specific usage agreement of the kind noted above. For example, an A-frame board for a shop would be excluded; and
 - (b) land and assets not owned by Council and any advertising which may occur on these.
21. Council does not currently advertise companies (fossil fuel or otherwise), or fossil fuels, on any property which is directly managed by Council. Therefore, the implications of banning fossil fuel advertising would only be to organisations which use or lease Council property where there could potentially be some advertising.
22. Currently Council has a range of Agreements which can influence the type of advertising that can occur in the above scenarios. These include:
- (a) Tenant agreements (i.e. long term agreements e.g. sports clubs and associations):
 - (i) Individual agreements. Requirements vary;
 - (b) Recreation site and venue Hire Agreements (i.e. one-off use of Council property agreements). Standard Agreement terms and conditions states:
 - (i) "You must not display ... signage ... which advertise alcohol, drugs, pharmaceuticals, tobacco-related products, entities directly associated with gaming or gambling activities, or any sign which we deem to be offensive or objectionable. Signage advertising hotels will only be permitted if those hotels do not house gaming machines"; and
 - (c) Community Noticeboards (i.e. for advertising on Council managed Community noticeboards). Standard Agreement terms and conditions states:
 - (i) "Signs which display sponsorship or advertising relating to tobacco or gambling associated activities, events or organisations, will not be approved.
23. From the above stated definitions and agreements, there is only one property (Victoria Park) currently has advertising related to fossil fuels, and only in discrete circumstances.
24. Currently the use of Victoria Park for AFLW, VFL and VFLW matches occurs via a multi-year Agreement between Council and the Collingwood Football Club (who has oversight of Victoria Park when these home games are played). This current Agreement runs until the end of 2025 and no changes are recommended to that agreement.

Options

Option 1

25. Not permit advertising on Council property which specifically promotes fossil fuels, or by companies which extract, produce and/or refine fossil fuels.
26. Within this option, Council may choose to modify the definition for what types of work by companies are not permitted, what constitutes 'fossil fuels' and/or what constitutes 'council property'.

27. Following a resolution from Council, it is recommended that all agreements with third parties (i.e. tenants and event organisers) relating to this initiative would not come into place until such time as agreements and leases are renewed or negotiated. Council could determine to seek to implement these conditions prior to agreements being negotiated however this would result in significant time and cost to update all existing agreements. It is recommended incorporate these changes within the usual lease and agreement processes.

Option 2

28. Council can commence an advocacy campaign seeking support from other local governments, authorities, sports clubs to ban the advertising of fossil fuels.

Option 3

29. Maintain Councils position that fossil fuels need to be phased out as soon as possible, but not proceed with a ban on fossil fuel advertising on Council property.

Community and stakeholder engagement

30. Council officers have engaged with the Collingwood Football Club and the Australian Football League of the intention to restrict fossil fuel related advertising at Victoria Park at such time as the agreements/leases are renewed/re-negotiated.

Policy analysis

Alignment to Community Vision and Council Plan

31. Council has declared a climate emergency and has set strong policy positions to eliminate the use of fossil fuels. This includes for example the Yarra 2036 Community Vision Theme 4 - 'Sustainability', with one of the priorities being:
- (a) Lead the way in climate change mitigation and resilience within Yarra and extend our impact through advocacy and innovative partnership.

Climate emergency and sustainability implications

32. The adopted Climate Emergency Plan set a clear vision for Council and the municipality, including the objectives to:
- (a) Achieve zero-net emissions across the entire Yarra community by 2030, and accelerate the removal of excess carbon emissions;
 - (b) Enable our community to take effective climate action — pushing for urgent change and changing the way we live and work; and
 - (c) Collaborate and advocate with others in the climate emergency movement to increase our impact.

Community and social implications

33. This report highlights that Victoria Park is the only example where fossil fuel-related advertising occurs on Council property. Any changes reflected in future agreements would be subject to negotiation at the time of renewal – as such there would be no immediate impact for Victoria Park.

Economic development implications

34. N/A

Human rights and gender equality implications

35. There are no known human rights implications of this report.

Operational analysis

Financial and resource impacts

36. N/A

Legal Implications

37. Council is able update to relevant agreements as they are re-negotiated, and updating standard text in other relevant policies and agreements.

Conclusion

38. Council was the second jurisdiction in the world to declare a climate emergency. A resolution to restrict fossil fuel related advertising on Council property is consistent with this declaration, our Climate Emergency Plan, and other strategic directions such as our Community Vision.
39. Restricting the promotion of certain products or services is not a new role for governments. Local governments, including Yarra, already restrict advertising on council property which promote goods or services that are inconsistent with priorities and values of Council and our communities.
40. The recommended changes would be phased-in as agreements and leases are renewed or negotiated
41. This report highlights that Victoria Park is the only instance where fossil fuel-related advertising occurs on Council property. No change is proposed to the current agreement. Any changes reflected in future agreements would be subject to negotiation at the time of renewal – as such there would be no immediate impact.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Council:
 - (a) not permit advertising on Council property which specifically promotes fossil fuels, or by companies which extract, produce and/or refine fossil fuels;
 - (b) notes the definitions of 'fossil fuels' and 'Council property' as provided in the Council report which provide the scope of this resolution; and
 - (c) notes that that agreements with third parties relating to this initiative would not come into place until such time as agreements and leases are renewed or negotiated.

Attachments

There are no attachments for this report.

7.6 Governance Report - July 2023

Reference	D23/218738
Author	Rhys Thomas - Senior Governance Advisor
Authoriser	Manager Governance and Integrity

Purpose

1. The Governance Report is prepared as a periodic report to Council which provides a single reporting platform for a range of statutory compliance, transparency and governance related matters.

Critical analysis

History and background

2. To ensure compliance with the Act and in accordance with best practice and good governance principles, transparency and accountability, this standing report consolidates a range of governance and administrative matters.
3. Matters covered in this report are:
 - (a) the outcomes of the Australian Local Governance Association National General Assembly;
 - (b) the completion of Councillor induction training by Cr Glynatsis;
 - (c) the scheduling of an Extraordinary Council Meeting to present the Annual Report;
 - (d) motions for the MAV State Council; and
 - (e) a change to the terms of reference of the Arts Advisory Committee.

Discussion

Australian Local Governance Association National General Assembly – 13 to 16 June 2023

4. The Australian Local Governance Association held its annual National General Assembly on 13 to 16 June 2023. The National General Assembly is an opportunity for all Australian Councils to come together to meet collectively and provides an opportunity for the furtherance of Council's interests at the national level.
5. Yarra City Council submitted three motions to the National General Assembly for consideration. The outcome of the vote on these matters was:
 - (a) Moving towards a circular economy (carried as a joint motion combined with similar motions from Monash, Sunshine Coast, Mitchell, Merri-bek, Glen Eira, Shoalhaven, Woollahra, Break O'Day and Orange);
 - (b) Partnering for biodiversity protection (carried); and
 - (c) Partnering for climate action (carried as a joint motion combined with similar motions from Banyule, Greater Dandenong, Newcastle and Sydney).
6. The next National General Assembly will be held in June 2024.

Completion of Councillor induction training

7. The Local Government Act 2020 requires that all Councillors undertake Councillor induction training within six months after the day the Councillor takes the oath or affirmation of office.
8. The training is required to include the following matters:
 - (a) the role of a Councillor, a Mayor and a Deputy Mayor;
 - (b) the role of a Chief Executive Officer;

- (c) any practices, protocols or policies in relation to the interaction between members of Council staff and Councillors;
 - (d) the overarching governance principles and the supporting principles;
 - (e) the standards of conduct;
 - (f) misconduct, serious misconduct and gross misconduct;
 - (g) the internal arbitration process and the Councillor Conduct Panel process under Divisions 5 and 7 of Part 6 of the Act;
 - (h) engagement and reconciliation with the traditional owners of land in the municipal district of the Council;
 - (i) giving effect to gender equality, diversity and inclusiveness; and
 - (j) any other matters relating to governance and integrity which the Chief Executive Officer has determined should be addressed.
9. Upon completion of the training, each Councillor must make sign and date a written declaration before the Chief Executive Officer that states that the Councillor has completed the Councillor induction training.
10. All of Yarra's Councillors satisfied this obligation in May 2021, apart from Councillor Glynatsis who, by virtue of his election at countback in January 2023, has been required to undertake Councillor induction training in the period since his taking of the oath of office.
11. Councillor Glynatsis completed the Councillor induction training on 4 July 2023, and the necessary statement to that effect can be found at **Attachment One**.

Extraordinary Council Meeting

12. The Local Government Act 2020 requires that Council must prepare an annual report in respect of each financial year and that the Mayor report on the implementation of the Council Plan by presenting the annual report at a Council meeting open to the public.
13. The timelines associated with the finalisation of the annual report require that an additional Council meeting be scheduled ahead of the deadline at the end of October.
14. The City of Yarra Governance Rules provide that an Extraordinary Council meeting can be scheduled by Council resolution which must specify the date and time of the meeting and the business to be transacted.
15. In order to enable the Mayor to present the annual report to the community, it is recommended that an Extraordinary Council meeting be held for this purpose on 31 October 2023.

Motions for the MAV State Council

16. The Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) State Council will be held on 13 October 2023. It sees all Victorian Councils come together to determine the policy directions of the Municipal Association of Victoria. It provides an opportunity for the furtherance of Council's interests at the state level.
17. Council has the opportunity to submit motions for consideration by the MAV State Council. To be eligible for inclusion and presentation to the State Council, motions must:
- (a) be of strategic relevance to the MAV or of such significance to local government that they ought to be considered at the State Council meeting, and
 - (b) not be repetitive in form or substance of a motion or item considered at the most recently held meeting of the State Council.
18. Motions must be submitted to the MAV by 14 August 2023.
19. Officers have reviewed Council's Strategic Advocacy Plan and recommended the following motions for submissions to the MAV:

- (a) “Department of Transport to Enact Alternate Approval Pathway for Pedestrian Works” (**Attachment Two**)
- (b) “Proposed Planning Reform” (**Attachment Three**)

Arts Advisory Committee

- 20. This report seeks a variation to the Terms of Reference for the Arts Advisory Committee to expand the community membership (in addition to the two appointed Councillors) from six to eight members to enable two Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community members to be appointed.
- 21. The Arts Advisory Committee is the formal mechanism for Council to enable community participation in arts and cultural planning and development. It was established in 1997 as a community advisory committee to Council to provide advice on arts and cultural development in the City of Yarra. It comprises representatives from arts and community organisations, artists and representatives from cultural industries.
- 22. The Arts Advisory Committee assists with consultation of key stakeholders, receipt of specialist advice and facilitation of community participation in arts and cultural planning and development. A key role of the committee is to assess and make recommendations on a range of arts and culture grants including annual and multi-year funding.
- 23. The expansion of the committee to include two Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander members is consistent with Council’s Arts and Culture Strategy 2022-2026 to increase the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members on the committee. It also ensures there is more than one Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community representative.
- 24. The human rights implications of this proposal have been considered, and officers are satisfied that it constitutes a special measure as provided for under section 12 of the Equal Opportunity Act 2010.
- 25. The term of the committee is three years, with the current term ending in December 2023. Upon Council’s endorsement of this change, two casual vacancies will be created, which will be filled in accordance with Council’s Appointment of Members to Council Committees Procedure.
- 26. It is recommended that the Terms of Reference be updated to incorporate the markups shown at **Attachment Four**, to add two Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander members to the committee, as well as make an administrative change due to a change in position title for the responsible manager.

Options

- 27. There are no options presented in this report.

Community and stakeholder engagement

- 28. No community or stakeholder engagement has been undertaken in the development of this report, save the engagement with internal stakeholders necessary to compile the report content.

Policy analysis

Alignment to Community Vision and Council Plan

- 29. In its Yarra 2036 Community Vision, Council articulated an objective for a community that is *“informed and empowered to contribute to the shared governance of Yarra, (where) decision-making is through access, inclusion, consultations and advocacy.”*
- 30. City of Yarra Council Plan 2021-2025 includes Strategic Objective six: ‘Democracy and governance’, which states that good governance is at the heart of our processes and decision-making. The plan commits Council to *“practice good governance, transparency and accountable planning and decision-making.”*

31. The presentation of a Governance Report provides an opportunity to provide updates on key organisational matters both to the Council and the community.

[Climate emergency and sustainability implications](#)

32. There are no climate emergency or sustainability implications considered in this report.

[Community and social implications](#)

33. There are no community or social implications considered in this report.

[Economic development implications](#)

34. There are no economic development implications considered in this report.

[Human rights and gender equality implications](#)

35. There are no human rights or gender equality implications considered in this report.

Operational analysis

[Financial and resource impacts](#)

36. There are no financial and resource impacts considered in this report.

[Legal Implications](#)

37. There are no legal implications considered in this report.

Conclusion

38. This report presents an officer recommendation on:
- (a) the outcomes of the Australian Local Governance Association National General Assembly;
 - (b) the completion of Councillor induction training by Cr Glynatsis;
 - (c) the scheduling of an Extraordinary Council Meeting to present the Annual Report;
 - (d) motions for the MAV State Council; and
 - (e) a change to the terms of reference of the Arts Advisory Committee.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Council note this Governance Report on:
 - (a) the outcomes of the Australian Local Governance Association National General Assembly; and
 - (b) the completion of Councillor induction training by Cr Glynatsis.
2. That in accordance with Governance Rule Chapter Two, Rule 10.1, Council call an Extraordinary Council meeting at 6.30pm on Tuesday 31 October 2023 to enable the Mayor to report on the implementation of the Council Plan by presenting the City of Yarra Annual Report 2022/2023.
3. That Council endorse the following motions for submission to the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) State Council to be held in on 13 October 2023, as detailed at **Attachment Two and Attachment Three**:
 - (a) Department of Transport to Enact Alternate Approval Pathway for Pedestrian Works; and
 - (b) Proposed Planning Reform.
4. That Council adopt the changes to the Arts Advisory Committee Terms of Reference as shown in the marked up version found at **Attachment Four**.

Attachments

- 1 [↓](#) Attachment 1 - Councillor induction training declaration - Cr Glynatsis
- 2 [↓](#) Attachment 2 - MAV motion re alternate approval pathway for pedestrian works
- 3 [↓](#) Attachment 3 - MAV motion re Proposed Planning Reform
- 4 [↓](#) Attachment 4 - Arts Advisory Committee terms of reference markups



Completion of Councillor Induction Training


In accordance with section 32 of the Local Government Act 2020, the Chief Executive Officer has delivered Councillor induction training to Cr Glynatsis following his election by countback on 18 January 2023 and taking of the oath of office on 25 January 2023.

The training included all matters required under the Regulations.

Declaration before the Chief Executive Officer

I, Cr Michael Glynatsis, declare that I have completed the Councillor induction training delivered by the Chief Executive Officer.

Signed


Cr Michael Glynatsis
Councillor

Witnessed


Sue Wilkinson
Chief Executive Officer

Dated

4 July 2023

Title
Alternate approval pathway for pedestrian works
Motion
<p>1. That this State Council call on the State Government to give councils an alternative approval pathway for certain types of pedestrian works in line with recent changes to transport delegations in NSW, including for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) works to enable alfresco dining on a road (where there is no change to the number of continuous travel lanes); (b) continuous footpaths; (c) converting existing pedestrian ('zebra') crossings to raised pedestrian ('wombat') crossings; (d) mid-block treatments to manage vehicle speed including road humps, road cushions, chicanes and slow points; (e) pedestrian crossings; (f) pedestrian refuges; (g) 'No Stopping' controls at intersections; (h) kerb buildouts to reduce intersection crossing distance or manage vehicle speed (where there is no change to the number of continuous travel lanes); (i) kerb modifications for footpath improvements or tree planting (where there is no change to the number of continuous travel lanes); and (j) associated changes to kerbside parking necessary to implement the proposal and to offset any parking impacts.
Rationale for Motion
<p>Why is this a state issue and why should this be endorsed by the MAV? (Maximum 300 words)</p> <p>In February 2023, Transport for NSW issued a temporary delegation of its powers under the Roads Act 1993, and an authorisation under the Road Transport Act 2013, to give councils an alternative approval pathway for certain types of pedestrian works.</p> <p>Subject to conditions, councils are able to design and implement the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. works to enable alfresco dining on a road (where there is no change to the number of continuous travel lanes) 2. continuous footpaths 3. converting existing zebra crossings to raised wombat crossings 4. mid-block treatments to manage vehicle speed including road humps, road cushions, chicanes and slow points 5. pedestrian crossings 6. pedestrian refuges

7. 'No Stopping' controls at intersections
8. kerb buildouts to reduce intersection crossing distance or manage vehicle speed (where there is no change to the number of continuous travel lanes)
9. kerb modifications for footpath improvements or tree planting (where there is no change to the number of continuous travel lanes)
10. associated changes to kerbside parking necessary to implement the proposal and to offset any parking impacts.

In Victoria, the Department of Planning and Transport requires councils to obtain sign off on many pedestrian works, including those listed in this notice of motion. This causes significant delays in the implementation of much needed pedestrian infrastructure, including on projects that have already been through rigorous design and consultation at the council level, and that are funded by local residents and ratepayers through the council budget.

Projects in the City of Yarra, and other councils, have been delayed by months, and are often delayed by up to a year. The current approval process prevents councils from taking timely action to make their streets safer and more walkable.

Title
Proposed planning reforms
Motion
<p>1. That this State Council call on the State Government to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Ensure that any proposed changes to planning powers should be done in direct consultation with the local government sector. (b) Ensure planning powers for local planning decisions remain in the hands of local governments to guarantee the best planning decisions for their communities, present and future. (c) Provide a commitment that, if a reform package is pursued, it will not cost shift to the local government sector. (d) Ensure that any reforms protect the voice of community who deserve to have a say in what directly affects their homes and shapes their municipality.
Rationale for Motion
<p>Why is this a state issue and why should this be endorsed by the MAV? (Maximum 300 words)</p> <p>Yarra City Council is concerned over reports that a reform package to streamline and fast track developments may be reconsidered by the State Government to address the housing crisis.</p> <p>Council want to ensure that any considerations to reduce or diminish council planning powers is avoided and extensive consultation with the sector is conducted before reform decisions are made.</p> <p>Taking planning powers away from councils removes the voice of community who deserve to have a say in what directly affects their homes and shapes their municipality.</p> <p>According to data collected by the Department of Transport and Planning, local governments have approved more than 85% of planning applications in the current financial year with refusals only making up about 3% of total applications. Specifically, Yarra City Council refusals only make up 2% of all planning applications received.</p> <p>Council would like to reaffirm that local governments are best placed to make planning decisions for their communities due to their extensive and nuanced knowledge of local areas and will act in the best interests of current and future residents.</p> <p>Any proposed changes to planning powers should be done in direct consultation with the local government sector.</p>

Arts Advisory Committee

TERMS OF REFERENCE



Type	Advisory Committee
Purpose	To provide a formal mechanism for Council to consult with key stakeholders, seek specialist advice and enable community participation in arts and cultural planning and development.
Objectives	<p>The key role of the Committee is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide advice on the implementation of the Arts and Cultural Plan 2011–2015; • provide comment on relevant Council policies and strategies; • make recommendations to Council on the arts streams of the Community Grants Program; • facilitate formal and informal communication and consultation processes with local arts and cultural industries, practitioners, organisations and residents; and • provide advice to Council on issues related to visual arts in the City including to the City of Yarra Art and Heritage Collection and public art; and • provide advice to Council on issues related to creative infrastructure, specifically to the Room to Create Program. <p>To support the Committee in this role it shall establish the following working groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual Arts Panel • Room to Create Panel
Membership	<p>Eight <u>Ten</u> members, comprising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two Councillors • <u>Six</u> community members • <u>Two Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community members</u>
Chair	Meetings shall be chaired by an appointed Councillor on an alternating basis.
Selection Criteria	<p>Members may be appointed for a term of up to three years and are eligible for re-appointment.</p> <p>Members must demonstrate a strong link to the City of Yarra, such as be a resident, own a property or business, work, study in the City of Yarra.</p> <p>Membership consists of a reasonable representation from across art forms and interests relevant to the Yarra community. Where possible, membership will have a balance of continuing and new members.</p>
Meeting arrangements	Meetings four times per year (plus working group meetings as required).
Departures from the Council Committees Policy	<p>The following additional provisions apply to this Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each of the Committee’s working groups will comprise up to ten members and must include at least one appointed Councillor, at least one community member and additional co-opted members appointed by the <u>Manager Libraries, Arts and Events</u>Senior Coordinator of Arts, Culture and Venues.