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# AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING

To be held on Monday 23 August 2021 at 6.00pm.

**This Council Meeting will be held virtually.**

**This meeting will be closed to the public pursuant to Section 395 of the Local Government Act 2020.**

**This meeting will be livestreamed and may be accessed from Councils website [www.darebin.vic.gov.au](http://www.darebin.vic.gov.au).**

Persons wishing to submit a 'Public Question' may do so online by 12.00 noon on the day of the meeting via the Question and Submissions form.



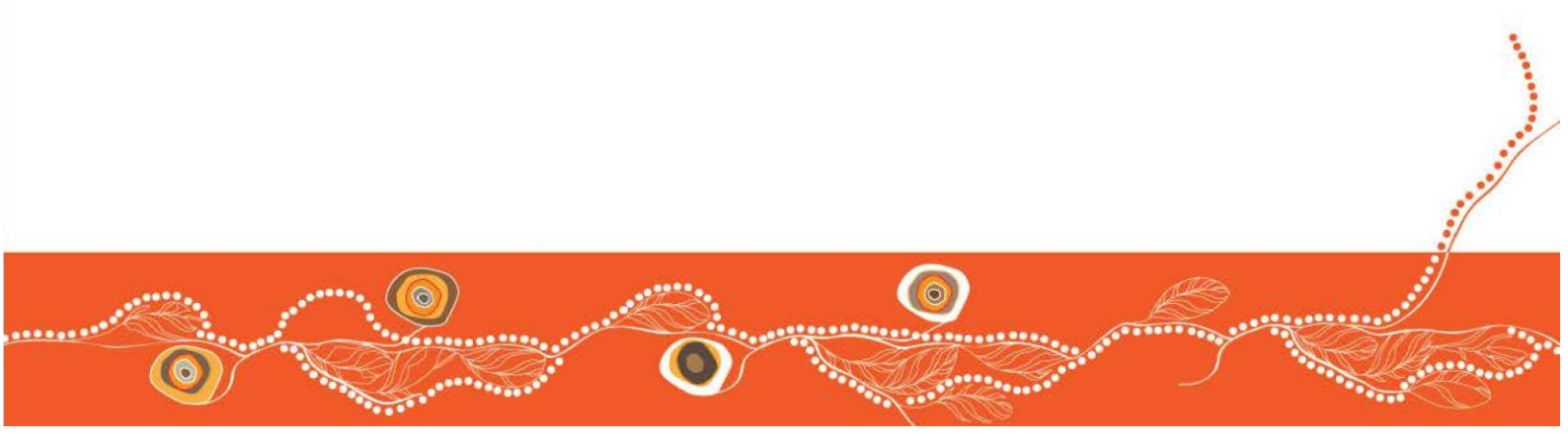
## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL OWNERS AND ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER COMMUNITIES IN DAREBIN**

Darebin City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung people as the Traditional Owners and custodians of the land we now call Darebin and pays respect to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

Council pays respect to all other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Darebin.

Council recognises, and pays tribute to, the diverse culture, resilience and heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

We acknowledge the leadership of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and the right to self-determination in the spirit of mutual understanding and respect.



### English

These are the Minutes for the Council Meeting. For assistance with any of the items in the minutes, please telephone 8470 8888.

### Arabic

هذه هي محاضر اجتماع المجلس. للحصول على المساعدة في أي من البنود في المحاضر، يرجى الاتصال بالهاتف 8470 8888.

### Chinese

这些是市议会会议纪要。如需协助了解任何纪要项目，请致电8470 8888。

### Greek

Αυτά είναι τα Πρακτικά της συνεδρίασης του Δημοτικού Συμβουλίου. Για βοήθεια με οποιαδήποτε θέματα στα πρακτικά, παρακαλείσθε να καλέσετε το 8470 8888.

### Hindi

ये काउंसिल की बैठक का सारांश है। सारांश के किसी भी आइटम में सहायता के लिए, कृपया 8470 8888 पर टेलीफोन करें।

### Italian

Questo è il verbale della riunione del Comune. Per assistenza con qualsiasi punto del verbale, si prega di chiamare il numero 8470 8888.

### Macedonian

Ова е Записникот од состанокот на Општинскиот одбор. За помош во врска со која и да било точка од записникот, ве молиме телефонирајте на 8470 8888.

### Nepali

यी परिषद्को बैठकका माइन्युटहरू हुन्। माइन्युटका कुनै पनि वस्तुसम्बन्धी सहायताका लागि कृपया 8470 8888 मा कल गर्नुहोस्।

### Punjabi

ਇਹ ਵੈੱਸਲ ਦੀ ਮੀਟਿੰਗ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਸੰਖੇਪ ਸਾਰਾਂਸ਼ ਹੈ। ਸੰਖੇਪ ਸਾਰਾਂਸ਼ ਵਿਚਲੀਆਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਆਈਟਮਾਂ ਸੰਬੰਧੀ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਵਾਸਤੇ, ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ 8470 8888 ਨੂੰ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।

### Somali

Kuwaani waa qodobadii lagaga wada hadlay Fadhiga Golaha. Caawimada mid kasta oo ka mid ah qodobada laga wada hadlay, fadlan la xiriiir 8470 8888.

### Spanish

Estas son las Actas de la Reunión del Concejo. Para recibir ayuda acerca de algún tema de las actas, llame al teléfono 8470 8888.

### Urdu

یہ کاؤنسل کی میٹنگ کا ایجنڈا ہے۔ ایجنڈے کے کسی بھی حصے کے بارے میں مدد کے لیے براہ مہربانی 8470 8888 پر فون کریں۔

### Vietnamese

Đây là những Biên bản Họp Hội đồng Thành phố. Muốn có người trợ giúp mình về bất kỳ mục nào trong biên bản họp, xin quý vị gọi điện thoại số 8470 8888.

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# Agenda

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## **1. OPENING OF MEETING AND MEMBERSHIP**

Cr. Lina Messina (Mayor) (Chairperson)

Cr. Gaetano Greco (Deputy Mayor)

Cr. Emily Dimitriadis

Cr. Tom Hannan

Cr. Tim Laurence

Cr. Trent McCarthy

Cr. Susanne Newton

Cr. Susan Rennie

Cr. Julie Williams

## **2. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL OWNERS**

## **3. APOLOGIES**

## **4. DISCLOSURES OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

## **5. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETINGS**

<b>Recommendation</b>
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**That** the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on 26 July 2021 be confirmed as a correct record of business transacted.

## 6. QUESTION AND SUBMISSION TIME

Members of the public can lodge questions for Council to answer at an Ordinary Council meeting.

Due to the current COVID-19 health crisis and associated requirements, residents and interested persons are strongly encouraged to view this Council meeting online.

The meeting will not be open to the public and accordingly public questions to be answered at the meeting will only be received up until 12.00 noon on the day of the meeting.

### QUESTIONS

Members of the public can ask up to three (3) questions at an Ordinary Council meeting.

Any question not answered at the meeting will be taken on notice and a written response will be provided to the person asking the question.

In accordance with the Council Governance Rules 2020, the Chairperson may disallow a question if it:

- a) relates to a matter outside the duties, functions or powers of Council;
- b) is defamatory, indecent, abusive, offensive, irrelevant, trivial or objectionable in language or substance;
- c) may lead to a breach of Council's statutory obligations;
- d) relates to a Notice of Motion, Petition or item of urgent business;
- e) deals with a subject matter already answered;
- f) is aimed at embarrassing a Councillor or an Officer; or
- g) deals with a matter that should be, or has been, considered as a confidential matter or relates to any matter in respect of which Council may close the Meeting to the public under section 66 of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

No questions directed at an individual Councillor or Officer will be allowed

### SUBMISSIONS OR COMMENTS

Due to the meeting not being open to members of the public no submissions or comments will be able to be made on reports listed on the agenda.

**HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR QUESTION**

Members of the public who wish to ask a question at an Ordinary Council Meeting may register their question before 12.00 noon on the day of the meeting in one of the following ways:

- (a) online at [darebin.vic.gov.au/questionsandsubmissions](http://darebin.vic.gov.au/questionsandsubmissions); or
- (b) by mail to PO Box 91, Preston 3072.

Council meetings can be viewed at the Watch Council and Planning Committee meetings web page.

Agenda's will be available for viewing on Council's website at the 'Meeting Agendas and Minutes' page by 5pm, up to 6 days prior to the date of the meeting.

**7. PETITIONS**

## 8. CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS

### 8.1 EARLY YEARS INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

**Author:** Planning and Project Officer

**Reviewed By:** General Manager Community

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#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The draft Early Years Infrastructure Plan 2021-2041 (the Plan) outlines a plan to ensure that Council provides a suite of early years facilities that will meet the needs of the Darebin community over the next twenty years.

The Plan focuses on facilities used for maternal and child health services, kindergarten programs, long day childcare, occasional care, playgroups and toy libraries.

The Plan addresses the need to expand early years infrastructure to meet the additional demand created by population growth and the implementation of funded three-year-old kindergarten, and ensure council-owned facilities are well maintained, functional and high quality.

It is recommended that Council endorse the plan for community engagement.

<b>Recommendation</b>
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**That Council:**

- (1) Endorses the draft Early Years Infrastructure Plan 2021-2041 to proceed to community consultation.
  - (2) Receives a further report on community feedback received and a final proposed Early Years Infrastructure Plan 2021-2041 for adoption.
- 

#### BACKGROUND / KEY INFORMATION

The review of Darebin's Early Years Infrastructure Plan commenced in 2018, stimulated by the 2017-21 Council Plan Big Action to "*Create a new park, playground, oval and children's hub on the site of the old Ruthven primary school in Reservoir*". Planning in response to this action initiated a review of supply and projected demand for early years infrastructure over the next 15-20 years.

The 2019 announcement by the Victorian Government to introduce funded three-year-old kindergarten, commencing in 2022 in metropolitan areas, led the Families, Youth and Children Department to commission a full early year's infrastructure review.

The draft Plan (Attachment A) is informed by the infrastructure review, as well as by Darebin's Kindergarten Infrastructure and Services Plan (KISP), which was negotiated with the Victorian Department of Education and Training (DET). The KISP outlines agreed estimates of the supply and demand for kindergarten in each of the eight localities



comprising Darebin during the roll-out period of funded three-year-old kindergarten to 2029, highlighting which areas will need additional capacity to meet demand.

Council received a report on progress on planning for three-year-old kindergarten, the KISP, and the development of the Early Years Infrastructure Plan at its meeting on 22 March 2021.

### **Previous Council Resolution**

At its meeting held on 22 March 2021 Council resolved:

*'That Council:*

- 1. Notes this report.*
- 2. Notes the Kindergarten Infrastructure and Services Plan.*
- 3. Notes that a further report on the draft Early Years Infrastructure Plan will be provided to Council in June 2021.*
- 4. That the above further report should consider additional options on how Council can significantly increase its strategic investment (beyond what is currently suggested in the above Council report) to further increase the proportion of kindergarten places provided by community-based services to ensure equitable and affordable access to more services for the whole community.'*

## **COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT**

### **Consultation**

Engagement with community-based kindergartens and childcare facilities has been ongoing from June 2020 through both individual meetings with services and network events. Service level meetings have been held with 19 of the 25 community-managed kindergarten and childcare services in Darebin and all community-managed services have been provided with regular updates through network meetings and emails.

The following Council staff have been consulted through the Early Years Infrastructure Plan Project Control Group: Manager – Assets & Capital Delivery, Acting Manager – City Futures, Manager – Creative Culture & Events, Coordinator – Strategic Planning, Acting Manager – Property & Business Improvement, Manager – Parks & Open Space. Coordinators and Team Leaders across the relevant teams in the Families, Youth and Children Department have also been consulted.

A detailed plan to consult with stakeholders, families and the broader community has been developed to commence following endorsement of the draft Plan for consultation. The consultation will be guided by the Community Engagement Policy as well as by the latest demographic insights from ID and participation data provided by the Department of Education and Training and Department Health and Human Services.

Public consultation on the Plan will seek to achieve broad engagement with stakeholders and community members, with a range of targeted strategies employed to ensure we reach diverse cohorts in the Darebin community including culturally and linguistically diverse and vulnerable groups. Actions will include, but not limited to:

- Online submissions via Your Say webpage.
- Engagement with staff and committees in the early years sector through established networks and communication channels.

- Targeted engagement to other key stakeholders such as State Government Departments, community service organisations and peak bodies.
- Engagement with current service users through the services they currently access.
- Engagement with broader community through diverse methods including place-based community pop-up events, postcard (hardcopy) and an online survey, promoting the consultation on Council website and social media channels.
- Targeted engagement activities with First Nations peoples, multicultural communities, faith leaders, place based disadvantaged communities, LGBTQIA+, children and young people.

## **Communications**

A communications plan has been developed to communicate the community consultation on the draft Plan. This will include tailored targeting of messages, activities and products to reach families, and the broader community, from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALD) and other groups that have lower rates of participation in early years services and who may be less likely to participate in consultation activities.

## **ANALYSIS**

### **Alignment to Council Plan / Council policy**

Strategic Direction 2 - Prosperous, Liveable and Flourishing

- Big Action 2: Plan infrastructure for decades to come by ... building new kindergarten facilities...
- Big Action 10: Expand our delivery of quality universal services across the lifespan by providing more three-year-old kindergarten places...

### **Environmental Sustainability Considerations**

Environmental sustainability is proposed as one of the principles in the Plan to guide Council's approach to early years infrastructure planning and provision. The Plan proposes that Council should aim to ensure that current and future facilities are sustainable, have low emissions and are resilient to changing climatic conditions.

#### **Climate Emergency**

Climate emergency considerations will be part of the development of the Early Years Infrastructure Delivery Plan to ensure that any facility upgrades, expansions or new developments deliver reduced emissions where possible and that facilities are resilient to changing climatic conditions.

### **Equity, Inclusion and Wellbeing Considerations**

Equity, inclusion and wellbeing are foundational considerations within the Plan. Ensuring that all children and families have access to the services they need during a child's early years is fundamental to the promotion of wellbeing and equity within our community, due to the lifelong impacts that early childhood experiences have on development, health, educational achievement and life chances.

Providing equitable access to high quality services in high quality facilities is one of the most important things that Council can do to create the conditions in which all children have a decent chance of a good start in life. In addition, ensuring that families have equitable access to, and choice of, the full range of early years services and service models (for example community managed, not for profit, for profit, sessional kindergarten, integrated long day care and kindergarten) is also a key factor in ensuring that all children and families can receive the care, education and health services they require irrespective of their background or where they live.

A key objective of the Plan is to ensure that children and families in all areas in Darebin have equal access by identifying the areas where investment is needed most to address service gaps, to improve the quality of facilities, and/or ensure that access to affordable services is more equitably spread across Darebin.

Ensuring that services and facilities are culturally safe and appropriate for families from CALD backgrounds and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families will be critical considerations during the implementation of the Plan; as will addressing barriers to participation for other cohorts of children and families where participation rates are low or at risk including, but not limited to, children with disabilities and families experiencing disadvantage.

The Plan proposes the following principles to guide planning and decision-making on early years infrastructure in a way that reflects Council's commitment to equity and inclusion:

- **Equity.** Ensuring equitable access to affordable and high-quality services across Darebin is a key objective of the Plan.
- **Access.** All early year's facilities should be accessible and inclusive for all children and families, including those with disability, underpinned by the application of universal design principles.
- **Diversity and Inclusion.** Facilities and services should be welcoming, culturally safe and inclusive for all children and families across all dimensions of diversity.
- **Integration.** The integration of early years services is recognised to be particularly important for families who experience disadvantage or other barriers to accessing services.
- The principles of **quality** and **choice** are also included in part because of the evidence of the importance of those principles for children experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage.

The Equity & Wellbeing Department will be an integral partner in supporting the development of appropriate strategies to achieve equity in early years' service provision and participation over the life of this Plan.

### **Cultural Considerations**

Access to arts and creative culture is included as a principle within the Plan, noting that creative and cultural experiences in early childhood play an important role in learning and the development of identity. The Plan proposes that opportunities to facilitate creative and cultural expression should be considered in the planning and design of new facilities or upgrades to existing facilities.

## Economic Development Considerations

Economic development is included as a principle within the Plan, noting that the significant investments in early years infrastructure recommended in the Plan have the potential to deliver substantial economic benefits to the Darebin community, during both the construction phase of infrastructure and on an ongoing basis through the delivery of more jobs in early years' service delivery. The Plan proposes that procurement of the proposed works should be guided by Council's Social and Sustainable Procurement Policy to deliver social, economic and environmental value to the community.

## Financial and Resource Implications

The Plan proposes a substantial program of work, which will require significant resourcing over the next twenty years across a range of budget areas including:

- Operational funds to deliver the planning and engagement work necessary to deliver the actions.
- Capital funds for building projects (upgrades, extensions and new facilities).
- Capital funds to acquire new properties where required.
- Ongoing maintenance and renewal funds over the lifecycle of the buildings.

At this stage, the actions proposed in the Plan have not been costed and the resources required across Council have not been identified. More detailed investigations and scoping are required before the cost to deliver the actions contained within the Plan can be estimated.

Based on previous high-level cost estimates for kindergarten infrastructure, \$18.45 million has been allocated in the endorsed 10-year Capital Works Plan to support the roll-out of funded three-year-old kindergarten. Further allocations will be required in subsequent years to meet the early year's infrastructure needs created by population growth.

Securing funding from external sources will be necessary to enable Council to deliver the actions outlined in the Plan. The State Government has committed \$1.68 billion of infrastructure funding state-wide over the next decade to support the three-year-old kindergarten reforms, which can be accessed for projects in local areas where the KISP shows additional kindergarten infrastructure is needed. Council has commenced discussions with DET on the development of a Building Blocks Partnership Agreement, which will outline in principle agreement for co-investment in a pipeline of projects to provide greater investment certainty. Other potential sources of funding are explored in the discussion section below.

## Legal and Risk Implications

Some of the key risks associated with early years facilities that the Plan seeks to mitigate are:

- Social impacts and reputational risk to Council if families are not able to access a service in their local area due to capacity shortfalls.
- Inequalities in access and participation in early years services with impacts on child development if investments are not appropriately targeted to address equity issues.
- Risk that existing facilities will cease to provide high-quality and fully functional environments if not maintained and renewed.
- Failure to deliver required infrastructure in a timely fashion to meet demand if planning and project management are not adequately resourced.

Robust mitigating actions will be required for the duration for this highly complex, multifaceted, legacy making project. These include, but are not limited to:

- Effective collaboration across several key departments within council including establishing an internal Early Years Infrastructure Plan Implementation Working Group.
- Strong partnerships with external stakeholders for example community based early years' service providers, other levels of government, developers, community organisations and the for-profit sector.
- Ongoing communication and engagement with children, families and the broader community; targeted to ensure that the full range of diverse cohorts in the Darebin community are well informed and have a voice in the planning and delivery of the Plan.
- Targeted investment to address current inequities in access to early years services across the municipality.
- Maximising external funding opportunities including state government infrastructure grants and developer contributions.
- Evidenced based decision making over the life of the plan guided by the latest demographic insights from ID and participation data provided by DET and Department Health and Human Services.
- Continued investment in Council's facilities maintenance and renewal program.
- Strong asset management and financial planning, project planning and management capabilities and resourcing.

### **Operational Impacts**

Delivery of the Early Years Infrastructure Plan is a major project at scale and will require significant involvement from operational teams over the life of the Plan and beyond. The Early Years Infrastructure Plan Project Control Group includes representation from Assets & Capital Delivery, Parks & Open Space, and Property & Business Improvement.

### **DISCUSSION**

The Plan aims to provide Council with a strategic framework for the future provision of early years facilities across the municipality, which will ensure that early years services are able to respond to the diverse and changing needs of our community and enable all children and families to thrive.

As a result of significant population growth, and the roll-out of a second year of funded kindergarten, demand for early years services will grow significantly over the next twenty years. The Plan analyses the supply and demand for early years services over this period, trends in early years facilities design, the geographic distribution of Council's facilities, and the condition and functionality of Council's facilities.

The Plan lays out an approach for Council to play its role in meeting these growing needs through key actions to:

- Optimise the use of existing Council facilities.
- Expand the capacity of existing Council facilities where feasible, desirable and cost-effective.
- Building new facilities in areas of high need, with a focus on delivering integrated service hubs.

- Investing in, and supporting, community managed services to ensure equitable and affordable access to community-based services for the whole community.
- Working with early years service providers to optimise the level, accessibility and equity of service delivery utilising spare capacity where needed, adopting agile operational models, utilising innovative, flexible and best practice approaches including outreach and pop-up models that meet the needs of a changing and diverse community.

Addressing unmet need in disadvantaged communities and inequities in access to services are central considerations for Council's future investment in early years services. These equity considerations will drive decisions about which locations are prioritised for investment.

The Plan also emphasises the importance of addressing condition and functionality issues across Council's suite of facilities to create the best possible environments for children, families, staff and the broader community.

Some of the key drivers for change at a service level are summarised below:

Maternal & Child Health (MCH)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demand for MCH sessions will increase by an estimated 100 sessions per week by 2041 to 254 sessions per week.</li> <li>• If the current 14 locations were all used to their full capacity an additional 5 MCH rooms would be required by 2041.</li> <li>• Additional capacity is expected to be required in Preston East, Preston West and Reservoir West.</li> <li>• 7 of the current MCH locations are single-room centres, which do not meet the preferred model of having at least 2 rooms at each centre.</li> <li>• The MCH facilities are reasonably functional but some functionality issues should be further investigated, particularly access to suitable spaces for group programs.</li> </ul>
Kindergarten	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demand for funded kindergarten places will increase from an estimated 1,628 in 2021 to 4,196 in 2029.</li> <li>• Additional kindergarten capacity will be required in Northcote, Preston West, Reservoir East, Reservoir West, Thornbury and possibly Preston East (depending on future developments – current population estimates do not include the Preston Market development).</li> <li>• To provide equitable access to sessional kindergarten services, Council investment to expand community-based provision will be required across all these local areas.</li> <li>• Existing Council facilities are reasonably functional, but some functionality issues should be investigated further.</li> </ul>
Long Day Care (LDC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demand for long day care will increase by 1,173 places by 2041. Additional demand is expected to be highest in Preston East, Preston West and Reservoir East.</li> <li>• Currently both community-based provision and overall provision varies across local areas and Reservoir East is significantly under-served.</li> </ul>
Occasional Care (OCC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Darebin has far lower provision of OCC than the Melbourne average, with only 3 OCC services operating. 188 OCC places would be needed immediately to match the Melbourne average.</li> <li>• The recent closure of three OCC programs highlights a need to further examine both the demand for OCC in Darebin and the financial viability of service models.</li> </ul>

Playgroups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are 41 known playgroup locations across Darebin, of which 16 are Council facilities. A number of these locations are small and have functionality issues.</li> <li>• Access to suitable venues for Supported Playgroups is problematic in Kingsbury, Reservoir and Preston East.</li> </ul>
Toy Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council's Toy Library service is currently undergoing a service review. Recommendations related to infrastructure needs are expected from that review.</li> </ul>

The Plan includes a list of '18 Big Actions' which aim to deliver the early years infrastructure needed by the Darebin community over the next 20 years. Following endorsement of the Plan, a detailed delivery plan will be developed, outlining the timelines and cost estimates for the planning, scoping, design and implementation of agreed priorities.

### **Early Years Infrastructure Actions**

1. Monitor indicators of supply and demand across all early year's services on an ongoing basis and review and adjust infrastructure planning as new information becomes available.
2. Work with providers across all early year's services to optimise the level of service delivered from existing infrastructure by utilising spare capacity where needed, adopting new schedules and operational models, utilising innovative, flexible and best practice approaches including outreach and pop-up models.
3. Address functionality issues, where feasible and cost effective, at Council-owned early years facilities to optimise service delivery and utilisation across all sites.
4. Provide additional service capacity in localities where additional capacity is needed through, where feasible and cost effective, expansion of existing facilities.
5. Consolidate MCH locations to provide a full suite of two room facilities integrated with other family/children's services either at existing MCH locations or alternative sites.
6. Review Council's existing property portfolio to identify opportunities to re-purpose properties for early years' service delivery, where feasible and cost effective, in localities where additional capacity is needed.
7. Progress planning for the development of intergenerational hubs in the following localities:
  - 7.1. Reservoir West (Merrilands)
  - 7.2. Preston West
  - 7.3. Preston East
8. Advocate and plan for the inclusion of a new community centre within or close to the Preston Market Precinct inclusive of two MCH rooms, two kindergarten rooms and multi-use spaces including playgroup spaces. Assess need and opportunity to include LDC, OCC and other services within the centre.
9. Progress planning for the development of new hubs in localities where unmet demand for early years services will not be met by expansion upgrades or other actions. These hubs should include a mix of services as required on a case-by-case basis.
10. Develop a property acquisition strategy to identify and acquire sites for new facilities where required to meet future needs.
11. Develop a 10-year program of capital works projects that identifies the planned Council investments in facility upgrades, expansions or new facility developments in order to deliver the actions and priorities outlined in this plan: to increase capacity where required and improve functionality and condition of facilities.

12. Explore the feasibility of mixed-use development (e.g. kindergarten/childcare, social housing and private housing/commercial) on council-owned or private land, through public private partnerships.
13. Develop an advocacy strategy to encourage investment in early years facilities from a range of sources including government and private developers.
14. Provide support to community-managed kindergarten and childcare providers, including those in non-Council facilities, to pursue infrastructure projects that will increase kindergarten and/or LDC places in areas where additional capacity is needed.
15. Work with services to support them to open their facilities up to other uses by the community at times when they are not being utilised for service delivery.
16. Review the current use and demand for OCC in Darebin, the financial viability of OCC service models and cost to increase supply. Identify options to increase supply if indicated by this review.
17. Review the current use and demand for playgroup spaces, and the functionality and suitability of current locations. Explore the feasibility of addressing functionality issues at existing sites and identify options to increase the supply of suitable venues if required.
18. Address infrastructure needs identified by the Toy Library review (review expected to be complete in September 2021).

### **Support for the Community-Managed Kindergarten and Childcare sector**

Council has consistently adopted a strong position of support for the community-managed kindergarten and childcare sector. This is reflected in the draft Plan which outlines commitments to support the community-managed sector to maintain its important role as a provider of kindergarten and childcare services in Darebin. The resolution adopted by Council on 22 March 2021 asked for the consideration of *“additional options on how Council can significantly increase its strategic investment to further increase the proportion of kindergarten places provided by community-based services to ensure equitable and affordable access to more services for the whole community”*.

Council's current commitment to invest in the expansion of three-year-old kindergarten places is \$18.45M over the years 2021-22 to 2029-30 in the endorsed 10-Year Capital Works Plan 2020-2030. A plan for further investment in the following ten years has also been identified in the draft 20-Year Capital Works Plan (not endorsed) including a further \$3.25M for three-year-old-kindergarten in 2030-31, followed by a investment of \$18M from 2030 through to 2038 for three intergenerational hubs which would include kindergarten rooms as well as other early years and broader community services. This represents a total planned investment of approximately \$40M identified for early years infrastructure over the next 20 years.

As part of the development of the Early Years Infrastructure Delivery Plan, estimates of the cost of delivering key infrastructure projects over the life of the Plan will be developed to provide Council with robust estimates of what can be delivered within the funding allocations budget that have been identified and how much additional investment from other sources or additional Council investment may be required to deliver all identified priorities.

It is important to note that Council's investment will be just one of a number of funding sources that we will be seeking to utilise to expand and improve early years infrastructure, including community-based kindergarten, over this period.



Other funding sources that we will be seeking to leverage include:

- State Government grants – the State Government has allocated \$1.68 billion Infrastructure funding state-wide over the next decade to support the three-year-old kindergarten reforms. We have commenced negotiations with the State Government to develop a Building Blocks Partnership Agreement, which will outline in principal commitment from both the State Government and Council to a pipeline of projects that will create additional kindergarten places in areas of need.
- State Government direct investments – in addition to grants, the State Government has a program of direct investment in Kindergartens on School Sites. These facilities are fully funded and delivered by the State Government. Local Government can contribute additional funding to enable the inclusion of complementary services where feasible. Council is working with the State Government to identify and progress potential sites.
- Investment from services - some community-managed kindergarten and childcare services have the ability, and are willing to, invest their own funds in infrastructure projects, as a co-contribution to Council and/or state government funding.
- Developer funding - as outlined in the Plan the opportunity to leverage developer contributions to early years infrastructure is an important funding source for Council to pursue. This may occur through the Municipal Development Contribution Plan (DCP) when it is reviewed in future years or through large redevelopment projects within strategic sites. The Preston Market is one such site where the development is expected to generate additional need for kindergarten services attributable to the development. La Trobe University is another site that Council will be closely monitoring. Council should be looking to leverage all such opportunities to attract additional investment into early years facilities.
- Public private partnerships - the Plan includes an action to explore feasibility of mixed-use development (e.g. kindergarten/childcare, social housing and private housing/commercial) on council-owned or private land, through public private partnerships.

In summary, these diverse funding sources provide a range of opportunities that Council can pursue to significantly increase investment in early years infrastructure beyond the \$40M that Council has identified in its 20 year capital works planning.

Through Council's investment and other funding sources, there are a range of ways in which the number of community-managed kindergarten places can be increased:

- Expansion of existing Council kindergarten facilities. In 2021-22 we will commence a rolling program of planning, design and construction projects to increase, where feasible, the capacity of existing kindergarten and childcare services operating from Council buildings.
- Explore potential to re-purpose unused or under-utilised Council buildings and sites for delivery of additional early years services.
- Build new facilities. The Plan proposes progressing planning for the development of intergenerational hubs in Reservoir West, Preston West and Preston East. Funding for these hubs is currently planned for the 2030s. To meet kindergarten demand Council may need to consider bringing the development of these hubs forward. Other new builds will also be explored. A Property Acquisition Strategy to identify and acquire sites for new facilities will be required as part of the implementation of the Plan.

- Advocacy and support to facilitate projects that deliver additional community-managed kindergarten places for the Darebin community. Council will take a proactive approach for example to working with partners, including the Victorian School Building Authority (VSBA), developers and community-managed early years providers that are not Council-tenants, to facilitate new builds or expansion upgrades in non-Council facilities.

This work will be supplemented by work with providers across all early years services to optimise the level of service delivered from existing infrastructure. Specific additional supports will also be provided to the community-managed kindergarten and childcare services to support their sustainability and growth including the provision of the Kindergarten and Childcare Registration System to reduce the administrative burden of managing enrolments and registrations, supporting networks and professional development, and targeted promotion and engagement to support enrolments and participation.

## **OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

### **Option 1 (recommended)**

- Endorse the draft Early Years Infrastructure Plan 2021-2041 to proceed to community consultation, and
- Receive a further report by December 2021 on community feedback received and a final proposed Early Years Infrastructure Plan 2021-2041 for adoption.

### **Option 2 (not recommended)**

- Do not endorse the draft Early Years Infrastructure Plan 2021-2041 to proceed to community consultation.

## **IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY**

### **Details**

- Public consultation on the draft Early Years Infrastructure Plan – September-October 2021.
- Officer consideration of feedback and any changes as a result – November 2021
- Presentation of the Early Years Infrastructure Plan to Council for adoption – December 2021.
- Communication of adopted Early Years Infrastructure Plan – December 2021-January 2022.
- Development of the Early Years Infrastructure Delivery Plan – July-December 2021.

The Delivery Plan will prioritise the actions contained within the Plan and outline timelines, budget requirements and responsibilities for the implementation of agreed priorities.

## **RELATED DOCUMENTS**

- Darebin Kindergarten Infrastructure and Services Plan

**Attachments**

- Appendix A - Darebin Early Years Infrastructure Plan 2021-2041 draft for public consultation.pdf (**Appendix A**) [↓](#)

**DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST**

Section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020* requires members of Council staff and persons engaged under contract to provide advice to Council to disclose any conflicts of interest in a matter to which the advice relates.

The Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.



**Darebin City Council**  
**Early Years Infrastructure Plan 2021-2041**

**Draft**  
**August 2021**

**Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities in Darebin**

Darebin City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung people as the Traditional Owners and custodians of the land we now call Darebin and pays respect to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

Council pays respect to all other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Darebin.

Council recognises, and pays tribute to, the diverse culture, resilience and heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

We acknowledge the leadership of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and the right to self-determination in the spirit of mutual understanding and respect.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The early years are a crucial period in children's development, with impacts that can last a lifetime. High quality, inclusive and accessible services for children and families from birth to the time they enter school play an essential role in providing children with a good start in life.

High quality services require high quality facilities. Councils have an important role in planning for, providing and maintaining high quality early years infrastructure to ensure that families have access to the services they need. This Early Years Infrastructure Plan (the Plan) seeks to provide a strategic framework to ensure that Darebin City Council provides its community with a suite of early years facilities that provide safe and high-quality environments for children, families and staff, meet the increasing demands for service created by population growth and the roll-out of funded three-year-old kindergarten, and promote equity and inclusion.

Council's approach to early years infrastructure planning and investment is guided by principles of equity, access and inclusion, choice, service integration, a whole of community approach, environmental sustainability and community engagement. The Plan also recognises the important role that access to natural environments, arts and creative culture play in the development of children's wellbeing and identity.

As a result of significant population growth and the roll-out of a second year of funded kindergarten demand for early years services in Darebin will grow significantly over the next twenty years:

- By 2041 an additional 100 Maternal & Child Health sessions per week will be required.
- The estimated total demand for funded kindergarten places is expected to grow from 1,628 places in 2021 to 4,196 in 2029 and 4,756 in 2041.
- An additional 1,173 long day care places will be required by 2041 to maintain the current provision rate of 1 place to every 3.9 children aged 0-6.

These needs will be met by actions and investment from a range of actors in the early years sector including Council, state government, community-managed and not-for profit organisations and private for-profit organisations.

The Plan lays out an approach for Council to play its role in meeting these growing needs through key actions to:

- Ensure equitable distribution of council facilities within the City of Darebin and direct future capital investment to where the community needs it most
- Optimise the use of existing Council facilities
- Expand the capacity of existing Council facilities where feasible, desirable and cost-effective
- Build new facilities in areas of high need, with a focus on delivering integrated service hubs
- Drive innovative, integrated and flexible service models and delivery that meet changing and diverse community needs and enable all children and families to thrive.

The Plan also emphasises the importance of addressing condition and functionality issues across Council's suite of facilities to create the best possible environments for children, families and staff.

Delivery of the Plan will require significant investment by Council over the next twenty years, as well as investments from the Victorian Government and other stakeholders. The Victorian Government's Building Blocks Infrastructure Strategy provides an exciting opportunity to access state government funding as co-contributions to projects that will deliver new and improved infrastructure for Darebin residents. Council will be working in close partnership with the Department of Education and Training, partners across the early years sector and other stakeholders to deliver the Plan.

The Plan is a living document and will be regularly reviewed and updated to ensure that it remains relevant and provides a useful and contemporary roadmap for Council's investment in early years infrastructure over the next twenty years.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The early years of life are crucial to children's health, development and learning, and provide the foundations for lifelong wellbeing. High quality, inclusive and accessible early years services play an essential role in supporting the care, education, health and wellbeing of children and their families.

Darebin City Council (Council) plays many roles in the system of services that support children in the early years, including planning and coordination, service provision, facilities planning, advocacy, and strengthening community capacity. One of Council's key roles is to plan for, provide and maintain a range of early years infrastructure from which critical services are delivered.

In the context of a growing population, significant service reforms and changing community expectations, the Early Years Infrastructure Plan (the Plan) aims to provide Council with a strategic framework for the future provision of early years facilities across the municipality, which will ensure that early years services are able to respond to the diverse and changing needs of our community and enable all children and families to thrive.

The Plan focuses on facilities used for maternal and child health services, kindergarten programs, long day childcare, occasional care, playgroups and toy libraries. It is concerned primarily with council-owned facilities, from which services are delivered either by Council or community groups. Services operating from other facilities have been considered for contextual purposes, particularly in the supply and demand assessment.

The key objectives of the Plan are to:

- Analyse the planning context in which early years facilities operate and identify the implications of this context for the future provision of facilities.
- Assess the suitability of the facilities for their current and future use in light of relevant legislation and policy, community expectations and anticipated future need.
- Identify the anticipated need for refurbishment and replacement of Council owned early years facilities and construction of new facilities over the next 20 years.
- Identify opportunities for service integration and flexibility in the utilisation of early years facilities.
- Propose a sustainable strategy to address the anticipated needs of early years services operating from Council owned buildings so that Council can effectively manage the upgrading, refurbishment and replacement of these buildings over the next 20 years.

The Plan aims to inform the provision of a suite of Council owned early years facilities that:

- Can satisfy existing and future demand
- Comply with relevant legislation and building codes
- Are fit for purpose and highly functional
- Are accessible, conveniently located and equitably distributed across the municipality
- Are optimally used
- Promote service integration
- Are sustainable in terms of maintenance
- Provide safe environments for staff, children and families.

The Plan has been informed by a comprehensive assessment report by ASR Research and the *Kindergarten Infrastructure and Services Plan for Darebin*, jointly developed with the Department of Education and Training.<sup>1</sup>

## 2. OVERVIEW OF SERVICES AND KEY TERMS

The Plan is focused on the facilities from which the following early years services are currently provided:

### Maternal and Child Health

The Maternal and Child Health (MCH) service is a free, universal service delivered by Council that supports children's health and development from birth until school age (generally from 0-4 years). The service supports children, parents, carers and families with an emphasis on health promotion, prevention, parenting, developmental assessment, early detection and referral and social support. Key elements of the service include key ages and stages consultations to assess children's physical, emotional and cognitive development assessed, new parent groups, parent education sessions and other parenting supports.

### Kindergarten

Kindergarten programs offer developmental and education experiences for children in the two years prior to school entry. The programs are delivered at licensed education and care centres and are run by qualified teachers and support staff. In Victoria, **four-year-old kindergarten** programs are currently funded for 15 hours per child per week. **Funded three-year-old kindergarten** is currently being rolled out in Victoria and will be introduced in Darebin from 2022. Kindergarten programs are delivered at both standalone kindergartens and at long day care centres. At **standalone kindergartens** children attend for set kindergarten sessions on certain days and times of the week. The length of these sessions varies by service and can include part days or full days. At long day care centres, **integrated kindergarten** programs are integrated into longer days of education and care.

### Long Day Care

Long Day Care (LDC) services provide centre-based care for children aged 0-6 years whose families are working or studying, or just need some regular time off. Centres are licensed and generally operate for at least eight hours a day on normal working days. Most centres offer integrated kindergarten programs.

### Occasional Care

Occasional childcare programs (OCC) provide centre-based care and education for children 0-6 years on a casual basis for short periods of time. Typically, OCC programs offer three to five-hour blocks of care and children can attend for up to 15 hours per week.

### Playgroups

In playgroups groups of preschool aged children and their caregivers come together to learn and develop through informal play activities and social interaction. Playgroups support children's development and provide social support and connection for parents. There are two main types of playgroups: **community playgroups**, which are usually funded, led and organised by the parents who attend, and **supported playgroups** which receive external funding, are led by a paid facilitator and are usually targeted to families who meet specific eligibility criteria. Council is funded by the state government to deliver supported playgroups in Darebin.

### Toy Libraries

Toy Libraries provide families access to a range of toys, games, puzzles and activities to borrow or hire for a minimal fee. The service also provides a space for services to connect with local families through information sessions and individual consultations.

Some of the other key terms used in the Plan are:

- **Local areas** or **localities** refer to the geographic areas that Darebin has been divided into for population profiling and forecasting purposes. To align with the Department of Education and Training's planning for kindergarten infrastructure, the Plan has used the ABS Statistical Area 2 (SA2) boundaries to define local areas. These boundaries divide Darebin into eight local areas: Alphington-Fairfield, Kingsbury (which includes the parts of Bundoora and Macleod that lie within the City of Darebin), Northcote, Preston East, Preston West, Reservoir East, Reservoir West, and Thornbury. The local areas boundaries are shown on the map at Appendix 3.
- **Licensed number of places** refers to the number of places that a kindergarten or childcare service is licensed to provide by the relevant licencing authority. This is the maximum number of children the service is legally allowed accommodate at any one time.
- **Licensed capacity** or **licensed enrolment capacity** refers to the maximum number of children that a kindergarten or childcare room could accommodate in a week if the service provided the maximum number of places it is licensed to provide each day. For example, a kindergarten program licensed for 30 places at any one time has a licensed capacity of 60 children in a week as it could accommodate two groups of 30 children over the week.
- An **MCH session** refers to half a day of service. Therefore, a single MCH consulting room operating for five days a week during normal working hours can be used for 10 sessions.
- **Spare capacity** refers to the gap between the actual usage level and the maximum potential usage level of a facility. For example, an MCH consulting room can typically be used for five days or 10 sessions per week. If it is used for six sessions, the room has spare capacity of four sessions per week.
- **Types of management in kindergarten and childcare.** The kindergarten and childcare sector in Darebin includes a range of organisation that have different management and governance structures. **Community-managed kindergarten or childcare services** are not-for-profit services that are managed either by a committee of volunteer parents or by an Early Years Management service. Most but not all community-managed services in Darebin operate out of facilities owned and maintained by Council. **Other not-for-profit organisations** that provide services include universities (La Trobe University Community Children's Centre), independent schools (East Preston Islamic College) and the national not-for-profit organisation Goodstart. **Commercial services** are private businesses providing childcare and kindergarten services on a for-profit basis.

### 3. CONTEXT: DEMOGRAPHICS, POLICY AND REGULATION

#### 3.1 Young children in Darebin

In 2020 there were an estimated 14,813 children aged 0-6 living in Darebin, out of a total estimated resident population of 166,430.

The Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) measures children's developmental health and wellbeing when they start school. The 2018 AEDC results show that most children in Darebin are doing well developmentally. A higher proportion of children in Darebin are developmentally on track across each of the five measured domains (physical, social, emotional, language and communication) than the Victorian and Australian averages and fewer are developmentally vulnerable. The AEDC 2018 results vary across local communities in Darebin as shown in Table 1.<sup>2</sup>

**Table 1: 2018 AEDC results and 2016 SEIFA scores**

Area	2018 AEDC			2016 SEIFA score (Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage)
	Number of children included in census	Vulnerable on one or more domains %	Vulnerable on two or more domains %	
Alphington	63	15.3	6.8	1095
Fairfield	70	8.8	2.9	1068
Kingsbury	48	31.8	15.9	938
Northcote	281	13.2	4.9	1064
Preston	398	20.7	10.2	997
Reservoir	586	18.1	10	952
Thornbury	194	14.2	4.9	1038
DAREBIN	1,640	17.4	8.3	1004
VICTORIA	76,245	19.9	10.1	1010
AUSTRALIA	308,953	21.7	11	1002

Children are vulnerable to the impacts of poverty, inequality and disadvantage during their early years. As table 1 shows, there is a correlation between the AEDC results and the Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) scores, which measure relative socioeconomic advantage and disadvantage. The areas with the lowest SEIFA scores (Kingsbury, Preston, Reservoir) also had the most children identified as being developmentally vulnerable. At a more granular level the small areas of Cheddar, Oakhill and Merrilands (all in Reservoir) and Kingsbury were all ranked in the bottom fifth of areas on the SEIFA Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage in 2016.<sup>3</sup>

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds can have lower levels of participation in early childhood services due to barriers to access and engagement. Barriers that have been identified for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children include out of pocket costs, limited awareness of services, administrative complexity, lack of transport or locally available services, a perception that the child is too young to participate, a lack of confidence in the value of early education services or fear of racism and judgment.<sup>4</sup> For children from culturally diverse backgrounds barriers can include racism,

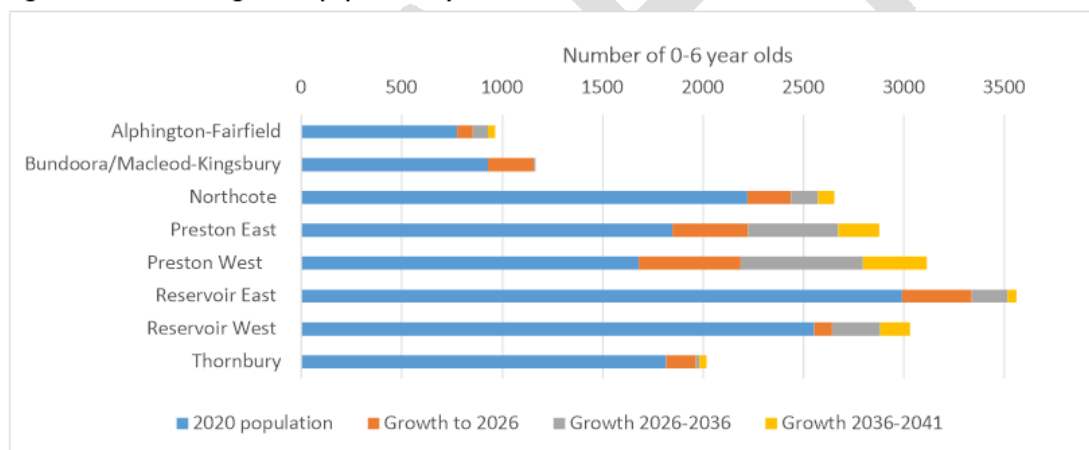
limited awareness of services and their benefits, communication and language barriers, distrust of services, fear of being judged, and structural barriers.<sup>5</sup>

### 3.2 Population growth

The City of Darebin is expected to see significant population growth over the next 20 years. From the baseline of 2016 through to 2041, the population of the City of Darebin is forecast to increase by 75,102 persons from 155,016 to 230,118 (48.45% growth), at an average annual change of 1.59%. In 2020 there were an estimated 14,813 children aged 0-6 living in Darebin. By 2041 there are expected to be 19,388 children of this age, an increase of 4,575.<sup>6</sup>

As figure 1 shows, the distribution of the growth in the 0-6 population will vary widely across the different local areas. For example, Preston West is expected to have 1436 more 0-6 year-old children in 2041 than it does now, whilst Alphington-Fairfield will have only 191 more. Collectively, Preston East and West are expected to account for over half of the growth in Darebin’s 0-6 year-old population in this period. Whilst growth will not be as great in Reservoir East and West, these areas have the largest 0-6 populations currently, and will continue to be home to nearly a third of Darebin’s 0-6 year-olds in 2041.

**Figure 1: Forecast change in 0-6 population by area**



Much of the projected growth, particularly in Preston, is expected to occur through the development of high-density housing. Some of the larger developments may provide opportunities for social infrastructure to be included as part of the development.

Forecast population growth in Darebin is informed by development assumptions across the municipality, including expected dwelling yields at identified major development sites such as the Polaris Development (Kingsbury), Oakover Village (Preston West) and others in Northcote, East Preston and Alphington-Fairfield. An additional strategic development site not included within current projections is the Preston Market site. The Preston Market has been designated as a strategic development site by the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA) and is part of the VPA’s Fast Track Program. The draft precinct structure plan released for public consultation in May 2021 outlines that the Preston Market Precinct is anticipated to accommodate between 4,500 to 6,000 new residents by 2041, which is expected to generate sufficient demand for 2-3 MCH rooms and a 66-place kindergarten.<sup>7</sup> Another major development that is not included in current projections is La Trobe University’s

University City of the Future vision for the Bundoora campus, which envisages additional housing for 12,000 students, staff and private residents as part of the La Trobe National Employment and Innovation Cluster.<sup>8</sup> Developments such as these would significantly impact demand for services if they go ahead and would require appropriate infrastructure responses.

Developments on Darebin's borders may also impact demand for kindergarten in Darebin. One of the major developments that we are aware of is the Alphington Paper Mill site in the City of Yarra. The approved development plan for this site endorsed by the City of Yarra in 2016 included an estimated 2500 dwellings in the form of town houses and apartments.

The context of the COVID-19 pandemic is a new factor that may have an impact on demographic trends within Darebin. Whilst there is a lot of uncertainty about how the pandemic may affect population growth in the coming years, some insights have been provided by .id who suggest that COVID-19 may impact the following factors that contribute to population growth:

- Overseas migration – potential negative impact on growth
- Internal migration – potential negative impact on growth
- Natural increase (births and deaths) – some potential negative impact on growth
- Economic resilience – some potential negative impact on growth
- Resident vulnerability – some potential negative impact on growth
- Local amenity including housing affordability – potential mixed impact on growth<sup>9</sup>

In addition to impacts on population growth, the COVID-19 pandemic may have other long-term impacts on the Darebin community which could have flow-on impacts to demand for early years services. The uncertainty created by the pandemic underscores the importance of flexible approach to early years infrastructure planning that involves constantly monitoring key indicators of future need and demand and responding accordingly.

### 3.3 Key policy drivers

#### **Funded three-year-old kindergarten**

In an Australian first, the Victorian Government has committed to implement funded three-year-old kindergarten for all children.<sup>10</sup> Darebin will join the statewide roll-out schedule in 2022. In 2022 three-year-old children in Darebin will have access to five hours of funded kindergarten per week. From 2023 services will be able to set the number of hours they offer from a minimum of five hours per week up the full 15 hours. By 2029 at full roll-out all three-year-old children should have access to 15 hours per week of funded kindergarten.

The Three-Year-Old Kindergarten reform will require a large expansion of kindergarten programs and services, supported by investment across the kindergarten and childcare sector. The Victorian Government is partnering with Local Governments to plan for this expansion. All Victorian Local Governments have been invited to agree an individual Kindergarten Infrastructure and Services Plan (KISP) with the Department of Education and Training (DET). The KISPs represent an agreed view of existing kindergarten capacity in a local government area and estimates of future supply and demand of three and four-year-old kindergarten places driven by the reform and population growth. Agreed KISPs are published on the DET website as a resource for the whole Victorian early childhood sector. Darebin agreed its KISP with DET in February 2021.<sup>11</sup>

The state government has allocated \$1.68 billion in infrastructure funding over the roll-out period to support the infrastructure expansion required for the reform. The KISPs will guide where DET will invest this money –

projects will only be eligible for funding in locations where the relevant KISP shows that new infrastructure is needed in order to meet demand for kindergarten places over the roll-out period.

### Early Years Compact

In Victoria, the state government and local governments have agreed to work together to improve outcomes for young children and their families through the Early Years Compact.<sup>12</sup> This ten-year agreement (2017-2027) sets out five outcomes for young children and their families which provide a guiding framework for early years policy and strategy:

1. All young children are engaged, confident and creative learners.
2. All children are safe, cared for and experience optimal health and development.
3. Families feel well supported by high quality, inclusive services for children and families in the early years.
4. Vulnerability, location and disadvantage do not determine outcomes for young children.
5. Families are connected to culture, actively participate in community life and can access help when and where they need it.

### Family Violence Reforms

Wide-ranging reforms are being implemented in Victoria as part of a 10-year plan to implement the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Family Violence.<sup>13</sup> Reforms that are relevant to services that work with children and families include the Child Information Sharing Scheme, the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme, and the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM). Services prescribed under these information sharing schemes include Maternal and Child Health Services, kindergartens, long day care centres and DHHS funded Supported Playgroups, and there is an expectation that all Council services will use the MARAM if they come into contact with individuals and families experiencing family violence. A key direction of many of these reforms is towards increased collaboration and integration between services to promote the wellbeing and safety of children and to improve responses to family violence.

### 3.4 Regulation of early childhood education and care services

Most services for children are regulated to ensure children are protected from harm and that their opportunities for learning and development are maximised. Long day care and kindergarten services are regulated by the Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority under National Quality Framework which provides a national approach to regulation, assessment and quality improvement of these services.<sup>14</sup> Occasional Care services operate under the Victorian Children's Services Act and Children's Services Regulations.<sup>15</sup>

There are many aspects of the regulatory frameworks that are relevant to the provision of infrastructure for early years services. Amongst the most significant considerations for infrastructure planning are factors that relate to the physical environment and those that cover educator to child ratios:

- The maximum number of places that a kindergarten, long day care or occasional care centre can be licensed for is determined by the eligible floor area of its children's playroom (3.25m<sup>2</sup> per place) and outdoor play area (7m<sup>2</sup> per place).
- Educator to child ratio requirements for kindergarten and childcare services are an essential consideration when thinking about the optimal size of rooms due to the impact on staffing and financial viability. The ratios in Victoria are:
  - Birth to 36 months: one educator for every four children
  - 36 months up to and including preschool age: one educator for every 11 children
  - Over preschool age: one educator for every 15 children.

## 4. PRINCIPLES

Darebin City Council's approach to early years infrastructure planning and provision will be guided by the Darebin 2041 Community Vision:

*Darebin is an equitable, vibrant and connected community.  
Darebin respects and supports First Nations People, values country, our diverse communities and places.  
Darebin commits to mitigating the climate emergency, creating prosperity for current and future generations.*

The following planning principles will guide our decision-making:

- **Equity.** Ensuring equitable access to affordable and high-quality services across Darebin is a key objective of the Plan. Guided by *Towards Equality – Darebin City Council's Equity, Inclusion and Human Rights Framework 2019-2029*, we aspire to create a community where everyone can thrive and belong. The provision of early years infrastructure should contribute to reducing the impact of poverty and disadvantage on our community by ensuring that all children and families have access to the services they need to thrive.<sup>16</sup>
- **Access.** All early years facilities should be accessible and inclusive for all children and families, including those with disability, underpinned by the application of universal design principles.<sup>17</sup> Children and families should be able to access the services they need in facilities that are conveniently located and accessible by public transport
- **Diversity and inclusion:** Facilities and services should be welcoming, culturally safe and inclusive for all children and families across all dimensions of diversity including, but not limited to, cultural background/identity, language, socioeconomic status, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion and family structure.
- **Choice.** Council values a mixed market in the childcare and kindergarten sector, so that families are able to choose services that suit their circumstances, preferences and needs from diverse options across community-managed services, other not for profits and commercial services, and from a range of service delivery models including both sessional and integrated kindergarten programs.
- **Quality.** High quality standards in early years services are fundamental to delivering the best possible long-term impacts on children's development, wellbeing and learning. High quality physical environments are critical to enabling high quality service provision, keeping children, families and staff safe, and providing the best possible experiences for children and families in all services. Council is committed to ensuring that all our early years facilities are fit-for-purpose and well-maintained.
- **Integration.** The integration of early years services provides significant benefits to children and families and is recognised to be particularly important for families who experience disadvantage or other barriers to accessing services.<sup>18</sup> We aim to enable children and families to access a range of services at the same location, including universal and targeted services, and to enable collaborative and integrated service planning and programming. Integration requires more than just the co-location of services; it is supported by high quality shared spaces and amenities, organisational commitment from all relevant parties, governance mechanisms, facilitation and resourcing of shared functions.
- **Whole of community approach.** Council's early years facilities are assets that the whole community should benefit from. They should not only be sites for service delivery but should be active community spaces that bring the community together across generations. By opening these assets to a broader range of uses their



benefits to the community can be realised over extended hours, throughout the week and at weekends and at all times of the year.

- **Community engagement.** The planning and design of early years facilities must be informed and guided by strong community engagement, to ensure that the views of the community are central to decision-making and co-design about the facilities that they will use.<sup>19</sup> Place-based planning models that bring together local stakeholders and community to develop locally tailored solutions are particularly important in areas of vulnerability.<sup>20</sup> Crucially, engagement must include the voices and views of children and young people in line with Council's commitment as a signatory to the Victorian Child Friendly Cities and Communities Charter.<sup>21</sup>
- **Environmental sustainability.** Council is committed to a safe climate future for all. We aim to ensure that current and future facilities are sustainable, have low emissions and are resilient to changing climatic conditions.<sup>22</sup>
- **Access to natural environments.** Council recognises the important role that access to natural environments plays in the healthy development of children and is committed to increasing opportunities for children to engage with nature.<sup>23</sup> Bush kindergarten programs are an important contributor to this goal. The incorporation of natural features in outdoor play spaces in early years facilities creates a stimulating environment for play, as well supporting children to become environmentally responsible and show respect for the environment.<sup>24</sup>
- **Arts and creative culture.** Access to arts and cultural experiences in early childhood settings plays an important role in supporting children's development and wellbeing and creates important connections between children and the wider community in which they live. Early years facilities that enable and support creative and cultural expression including through artist and community-led collaborations have the potential to deliver wide-ranging benefits to children, families and the wider community.<sup>25</sup>
- **Economic development.** The significant investments in early years infrastructure recommended by the Plan have the potential to deliver substantial economic benefits to the Darebin community, during both the construction phase of infrastructure projects and on an ongoing basis through the delivery of more jobs in early years' service delivery. In line with Council's Social and Sustainable Procurement Policy, planning and procurement for these investments should aim to ensure social, economic and environmental value and benefit for our community.<sup>26</sup>

## 5. SUMMARY ASSESSMENT BY SERVICE

### 5.1 Maternal and Child Health (MCH)

#### Overview of facilities

Darebin has 21 MCH consulting rooms across 14 locations (see list at Appendix 1). Seven of the locations have two consulting rooms and seven are single room facilities. Eight of the MCH facilities are co-located with kindergarten or childcare services, four are co-located with other community facilities, one is co-located with Council's immunisation service and one centre is stand-alone. 12 of the facilities are in Council-owned buildings. For operational reasons, two of the locations are not currently being utilised.

On a geographical basis, the distribution of the MCH centres across the municipality is satisfactory (see map at Appendix 2). There are centres in each local area. There are some centres in relatively close proximity, but they are separated by major barriers such as major roads or train lines. All centres are accessible by at least one mode of public transport.

#### Condition and functionality

The design of MCH centres is not subject to special regulation or standards. Suggestions relating to the design and configuration of centres are outlined in the Design Guide for Victorian Children's Services<sup>27</sup> and the Maternal and Child Health Service Program Standards<sup>28</sup>.

Council's preferred facility model for MCH centres is for centres to have at least two consulting rooms operating in an integrated setting with other children's services, health or community service programs. In terms of design, a modern MCH centre comprises at least two good sized consulting rooms, parent education/meeting room, suitably sized dedicated or shared waiting room, kitchen, staff amenities area, family amenities area with baby changing facilities, storage room, pram parking and nearby carparking area. In many local government areas MCH consulting and waiting rooms are increasingly being used by other family and children's service professionals and for small group activities when not required for MCH sessions.

Darebin MCH centres are generally in fair condition and most centres function reasonably well from a physical perspective. There are some functionality concerns. The most pressing issues are a lack of suitable space for the delivery of new parent groups at several locations. These groups are a core part of the MCH service and having to deliver them at a different location to individual consultations can be a barrier to parents' participation and engagement.

#### Supply and demand

Including the two centres that are not currently operational, Darebin's 14 MCH centres have the spatial capacity to provide 210 sessions per week. They currently provide 154 sessions, around 73% of their potential capacity. Eleven centres have spare capacity to provide more sessions if required.

There were an estimated 10,988 children aged 0-4 years resident in Darebin in 2020. Current provision of 154 sessions per week equates to one session per 71 children, which compares to a ratio of one session per 60 children commonly applied by metropolitan councils when planning the provision of MCH services. Alphington-Fairfield has the highest actual provision rate at 1:47 children, Reservoir West the lowest at 1:94 children.

**Table 2: MCH supply and demand to 2041**

Local Area	0-4 population 2020	Current provision (sessions)	Current ratio: children per session	Potential capacity existing facilities (sessions)	Projected 0-4 population 2041	Sessions required to achieve 1:60 children ratio 2041	Additional sessions required 2041
Alphington-Fairfield	562	12	47	20	698	12	-8 (surplus capacity)
Kingsbury	679	8	85	10	827	14	4
Northcote	1653	22	75	30	1955	33	3
Preston East	1376	24	57	40	3126	52	12
Preston West	1276	20	64	20	2303	38	18
Reservoir East	2197	28	78	40	2625	44	4
Reservoir West	1881	20	94	30	2232	37	7
Thornbury	1364	20	68	20	1483	25	5
<b>Darebin</b>	<b>10988</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>15249</b>	254	44

The 0-4 year-old population of Darebin is expected to grow to 15,249 by 2041. This will see demand for the MCH service increase by an estimated 100 sessions to 254 sessions per week by 2041. If the current centres are used to their full capacity of 210 sessions, they could cater for most of the additional demand but an additional five rooms would be needed to meet demand by 2041. The number of sessions offered will need to increase in all local areas except Alphington-Fairfield. Additional room capacity is likely to be required in Preston East and Preston West. The potential development of the Preston Market would further add to the need for additional rooms in Preston.

Maximising the number of sessions provided at existing facilities might require some families to have to travel more than they currently do to access a service. The distance families need to travel to attend sessions needs to be considered in decision-making about adjusting catchment areas for centres, to enable families to access the service as close to home as possible.

## 5.2 Kindergarten and Long Day Care

### Overview of current provision

As of June 2021 there are 15 stand-alone kindergartens and 45 long day care services licensed to operate in Darebin. These services are listed in full at Appendix 3 and their distribution across Darebin is provided at Appendix 4.

14 of the stand-alone kindergartens are operated by not for profit community-managed organisations and one by an independent school. 11 of the stand-alone kindergartens operate in Council facilities. In total the stand-alone kindergartens are licensed for 643 places, and the services in Council facilities account for 449 of these places (69.8%).

11 of the long day care centres are community-managed services, eight are other not-for-profit services and 27 are commercial for-profit providers. Eight community-managed services operate from Council facilities. The services in Council facilities provide 520 licensed places out of a total of 3,806 licensed places across all LDC centres in Darebin (13.7% of places).

In 2019 55 services in total offered a funded four-year-old kindergarten program; this included 15 stand-alone kindergartens and 40 long day care services. 29 services offered an unfunded three-year-old kindergarten program in 2019.

**Functionality and condition**

Kindergarten and LDC programs operate in a highly regulated environment. The venues they operate from must be licensed with the State and Federal Government as education and care centres and venues must comply with the facility requirements specified in the National Education and Care Act and Regulations (2011 and 2012 respectively) and other relevant legislation.

The Council owned facilities are in reasonable to good condition and all comply with the requirements of the National Care and Education Act and Regulations and the building/access codes that were in place when they were constructed or redeveloped. Some centres may not comply with current access codes and would have to be made compliant, probably at significant cost, if their facilities were substantially redeveloped. A full audit of compliance issues that could be triggered across all sites has not been completed as they would be dependent on the nature and extent of any redevelopment.

The Council facilities are reasonably functional. Functionality issues have been identified in some of the facilities including: lack of staff rooms, meeting rooms or planning rooms; undersized offices; limited storage; connectivity and visibility issues.

**Sector design trends**

The following trends are occurring in the design of new stand-alone kindergarten facilities: a minimum of two playrooms, often three, sometimes four; the rooms are mainly 33 places to enable optimal capacity in line with the required ratio of 1 educator to every 11 children; two storey facilities are being developed on confined or constrained sites; full Disability Discrimination Act compliance; centres are being built in a manner that allows them to be converted to another use when no longer required for kindergarten.

Councils are making the following improvements/changes to the design of existing kindergarten facilities: single room facilities are expanding to 33 places and double room facilities to 66 places or 55 places if the second room is solely for three-year old kindergarten and/or occasional care; larger staff areas are being provided including bigger offices, staff planning and meeting rooms, particularly as staff numbers increase with the expansion of services; visibility is being improved to allow children to be seen at all times; playgrounds are being redeveloped to offer a mix of fabricated and natural play elements; second storeys are being constructed if an additional playroom is required and the site cannot accommodate a ground floor extension; disability access and toilets are being provided.

The trends in long day care centre design are similar to those occurring in stand-alone kindergartens: program rooms are being extended or reduced in size to match the child to staff ratios (rooms of 12 places for 0-3 year-olds and of 22 or 33 places for 4-5 year-olds); larger staff areas are being provided; visibility is being improved to allow concurrent inside and outdoor play and improve internal and external surveillance. The predominant facility model for new long day childcare centres is 100+ place facilities. Small existing centres, where feasible, are being redeveloped as 90+ place centres.

### Supply and demand - kindergarten

In 2019, the 53 kindergarten programs operating in Darebin were licensed for 1514 places. 49% of these places were provided by sessional kindergarten programs and 51% by integrated programs in long day care. The estimated maximum capacity or full licensed capacity of these programs was 2654 children for 15 hours each per week. Many programs have not operated at their full licensed capacity historically and in 2019 offered places for a total of 2012 four-year-old children (their offered capacity). There are many reasons for centres not operating at full licensed capacity including operational and financial decisions, workforce availability, and real or perceived lack of demand for a higher level of service offering.

1575 children attended a funded four-year-old kindergarten program in 2019. Therefore, the programs had spare licensed capacity for 1079 children and unutilised offered places for 437 children. Enrolment numbers were close to evenly split between sessional and integrated kindergarten programs.

The four-year-old kindergarten participation rate for Darebin was 85.9% in 2019, up slightly from 83.4% in 2018. In 2018 the participation rate for local areas varied from a low of 68% in Bundoora-Macleod-Kingsbury to 99% in Northcote.<sup>29</sup> 29 services offered unfunded three-year-old kindergarten programs in 2019. As an unfunded program data on participation in these programs is not available.

The introduction of funding for three-year-old kindergarten from 2022 onwards will significantly increase demand for kindergarten places over the coming decades. The additional demand for kindergarten places that funded three-year-old kindergarten creates will be determined by a number of variables including the size of the three-year-old population, the participation rate for three-year-olds in kindergarten and the number of hours that services offer in three-year-old programs (from 2023-2028 services have flexibility to choose how many hours of funded three-year-old kindergarten they offer, between 5 and 15 hours per child). The estimated demand for funded kindergarten places to 2029 is based on assumptions about these variables agreed with the Department of Education and Training.

As shown in table 3, demand for funded kindergarten could increase by 157% over the next eight years to 2029 as operational funding for three-year-old kindergarten is rolled out at the same time as the three- and four-year-old population is expected to grow in most areas of Darebin.

**Table 3: Total estimated demand for funded kindergarten places (three and four-year-old children) 2021-29**

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
<b>Darebin</b>	1,628	2,141	2,499	2,778	3,018	3,406	3,642	3,888	4,196

Joint planning completed with the Department of Education and Training, summarised in table 4, indicates that an additional 907 places will be required by 2029 to meet this demand.<sup>30</sup> Three local areas (Alphington-Fairfield, Bundoora/Macleod-Kingsbury and Preston East) will have sufficient supply to meet demand through to 2029.\* The other local areas will need additional capacity. Reservoir East will require the most additional capacity. The figures are inclusive of assumptions that current services will increase the number of kindergarten places they provide within existing infrastructure through operational changes. In total with operational changes it is estimated that current services could provide places for 3,365 children for 15 hours per week. The figures in table 4 are the unmet demand after operational changes have been factored in.

\* The figures for Bundoora/Macleod-Kingsbury differ to those published in the Kindergarten Infrastructure and Services Plan (KISP) due to subsequent identification of a new service under construction in Kingsbury.

**Table 4: Projected unmet demand to 2021-29, 3 and 4yo kindergarten, number of places (children)**

Local area	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Alphington-Fairfield	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kingsbury	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Northcote	0	0	0	0	0	3	42	78	123
Preston East	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Preston West	0	0	0	0	0	44	84	124	167
Reservoir East	0	0	0	1	24	191	240	284	343
Reservoir West	0	0	0	0	0	6	40	73	117
Thornbury	0	0	0	0	32	66	97	123	157
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>503</b>	<b>682</b>	<b>907</b>

Council's population forecasts project that the three- and four-year-old populations will continue to increase beyond 2029 and there will be an additional 561 children by 2041. As shown in Table 5, in Preston West, Preston East and Reservoir West this increase will be substantial and will significantly add to demand. These figures do not include the potential Preston Market or La Trobe University developments.

**Table 5: Increase in 3 and 4 year old population 2029-41**

Local area	Increase between 2029 and 2041
Alphington-Fairfield	24
Kingsbury	4
Northcote	46
Preston East	135
Preston West	204
Reservoir East	41
Reservoir West	93
Thornbury	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>561</b>

The analysis indicates that significant additional capacity will be required for three and four-year-old kindergarten in five of Darebin's eight local areas over the roll-out period for three-year-old kindergarten to 2029, and that additional capacity will also be required in at least three local areas in the following years to 2041.

#### Supply and demand – Long Day Care

The 45 long day care centres in Darebin are licensed for 3,806 places. This is 1 place for every 4.0 children aged 0-6 years. This is higher (better) than the Melbourne Metropolitan Area provision rate of 1: 5.3. Provision rates vary across the local areas in Darebin. Alphington-Fairfield has the highest rate 1: 2.3 and Reservoir East the lowest 1: 18.2. Reservoir East is the only area where provision is below the Melbourne average.

The distribution of Council-owned facilities is uneven. There are two Council-owned facilities in each of Northcote and Thornbury, but only one in each of Preston East, Reservoir East and Reservoir West, and none in Preston West or Kingsbury.

The services operating in Council facilities are running at very close to capacity and have waiting lists. It is understood that the private centres 'on average' are operating at about 85% capacity. The unused capacity in Centres varies across the week, with some days harder to fill than others, e.g. Fridays.

The target age cohort for long day childcare (0-6 year-olds) is forecast to increase by 4,575 in Darebin from 2020 to 2041. Applying the current provision rate in Darebin of 1 place to 4.0 children, the increase in population could generate demand for an additional 1,143 places. Demand will increase in all local areas, most significantly in Preston East and Preston West which currently have a good supply of childcare places and Reservoir East which has a poor supply. Based on recent trends, the private sector can be expected to increase supply in many locations. Council's focus will need to be on addressing areas where the market has not provided adequate capacity (as seems to be the case in Reservoir East) and ensuring access to affordable childcare for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.

**Table 6 – current provision and future growth in demand for long day care places**

Area	2020			2041		
	0-6 year-olds	Approved places	0-6 year-olds per place	Forecast 0-6 year-olds	Increase in 0-6 year-olds 2020-41	Increase in demand – places at one place per 4 children
Alphington-Fairfield	775	333	2.3	966	191	49
Kingsbury	930	382	2.4	1165	235	60
Northcote	2221	532	4.2	2654	433	111
Preston East	1848	661	2.8	2878	1030	264
Preston West	1679	526	3.2	3115	1436	368
Reservoir East	2992	164	18.2	3561	569	146
Reservoir West	2552	642	4.0	3031	479	123
Thornbury	1816	445	4.1	2018	202	52
<b>Darebin</b>	<b>14813</b>	<b>3684</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>19388</b>	<b>4575</b>	<b>1143</b>

Note: The above figures are based on current population projections. Additional developments not factored into current projections, such as at Preston Market and La Trobe University, will generate additional demand if they proceed.

#### **Equity and choice in a mixed market**

The principles of equity and choice outlined in section four of this plan have a particular bearing in relation to the provision of kindergarten and long day care services in Darebin. In kindergarten and long day care, Council is committed to supporting a mixed market that ensures families have a choice of sessional or integrated kindergarten programs, and to maintaining a strong community-managed kindergarten and long day care sector.

#### *Supporting community-managed services*

Kindergarten and long day care services are provided by organisations that operate under a range of management types including community-managed not for profits, other not for profits and commercial for profit organisations. Council provides supports to all of these providers through a range of support services including the professional development programs and networks that we run. In our role as an infrastructure provider we are committed to providing facilities for community-managed services. We support the community-managed sector in this way for several reasons: to enable not for profit kindergarten and long day care to be financially viable; to provide families with a choice of services including community-managed services; because we believe that community-based organisations deliver positive community development benefits and social capital. Council also notes that that community-managed services have better quality ratings than private for-

profit services – the State of Early Learning 2019 report shows that a higher proportion of community-managed services received Exceeding NQS ratings than private for profit services.<sup>31</sup>

Currently, the distribution of standalone kindergarten and community-managed long day care places is uneven across Darebin. In relation to the size of the three- and four-year old population, Kingsbury, Preston East and Preston West have fewer places in both standalone kindergarten and community-managed long day care than the Darebin average, whilst Northcote and Thornbury are above average for both these service types. Reservoir East has a high provision of standalone kindergarten places, but low provision of community-managed long day care, whilst Reservoir West is the opposite.

This is an important equity and affordability issue because of the difference in fees that families can be required to pay between sessional kindergarten programs and integrated programs in long day care due to the different state and federal government funding structures of these two service types. Affordability can be a significant deterrent or barrier to kindergarten participation particularly where there is limited access to sessional kindergarten services with lower fees in a local area. The finances of kindergarten mean that sessional kindergartens are almost exclusively run by community-managed not for profit organisations, and in Darebin the majority of these operate out of Council facilities.

Through its infrastructure investments and advocacy strategy, Council will seek to ensure equitable access to sessional kindergarten across Darebin by expanding sessional places in areas where there is currently lower provision, lower participation rates and in areas of high population growth. Council will also seek to ensure equitable distribution of council facilities within the City of Darebin and direct future capital investment accordingly.

### 5.3 Occasional care (OCC)

Three occasional childcare (OCC) programs operate in Darebin. The programs are licensed for a total of 67 places. Two operate from Council facilities. One is located at a recreation centre, one at a neighbourhood house and one at La Trobe University. Three other programs recently closed, at Jika Jika Community Centre, The Bridge Preston and Reservoir Leisure Centre – representing a loss of 75 OCC places. Appendix 5 provides details of the current and recently closed OCC programs.

OCC services are licensed by the Victorian Government as children's services. New Children's Services Regulations came into effect in May 2020. The new regulatory requirements applied immediately to all new providers and new services. For former licensed children's services, the changes will be phased in over two years. The main operational changes will commence on 1 January 2022. These include a new requirement that occasional care services must provide seven square metres of outdoor space per child.

The actual provision ratio for occasional childcare places across Melbourne is 1 place: 58 children aged 0-6 years. Darebin has 67 places at a provision ratio of 1 place: 221 children. To meet the 1:58 ratio, 188 places are needed immediately and a further 79 will be required by 2041. On a local area basis, there are currently no occasional care programs in Fairfield-Alphington, Preston East, Preston West, Reservoir East or Reservoir West. Considering recent closures of programs, the financial viability of OCC programs needs to be examined alongside any planning for infrastructure.



#### 5.4 Playgroups

Facilities used for playgroups are not required to be licensed. They can be held in community centres, halls, parks, cafes or even private homes. There are currently 41 known playgroup locations across Darebin, of which 16 are Council facilities (see Appendix 6 for a list of known locations). There are playgroup locations in all localities in Darebin, but Northcote and Preston East have fewer identified locations than would be expected for their population size. As neither playgroups nor the facilities in which they operate need to be licensed, other locations may be in current use for playgroups and some of the identified locations may no longer be hosting groups. Outdoor only playgroups also operate in various locations along the Merri Creek, Darebin Creek and Bundoora Park, these have not been included.

A suitable playgroup venue should provide an accessible, safe and stimulating environment for children, carers and facilitators, preferably with both indoor and outdoor play areas that are large enough to allow children of different ages (including babies) to play safely, access to storage, toilet facilities and ideally a kitchen. A full functionality audit of current venues has been conducted, but it is known that some playgroups are currently running in small venues with functionality issues such as lack of privacy, no pram parking, noise issues, accessibility and security issues.

Council is funded by the State Government to deliver 10 supported playgroups across Darebin, with a focus on delivering these in areas of disadvantage as indicated by current AEDC and SEIFA data. Venues for supported playgroups need to provide a welcoming, inclusive and safe environment for vulnerable and disadvantaged families. The preferred model for delivery of supported playgroups is to run them at venues where MCH and other services operate to facilitate access for eligible families. Kingsbury, Reservoir and Preston East have been identified as areas of significant demand and low suitable venue availability for supported playgroups.

Population growth, particularly in Preston East and Preston West, will add to the demand for playgroup venues. The roll-out of three-year-old kindergarten may also reduce the availability of rooms in kindergartens and childcare centres for use by playgroups

#### 5.5 Toy Library

Darebin City Council operates a Toy Library that provides families with children aged 0 – 6 years access to high quality, age-appropriate toys and play equipment. The Toy Library currently operates from the Northcote Family Centre at 185-187 High St, Northcote for one session a week from 10am-12. The Toy Library previously also operated from a second location at Reservoir Community & Learning Centre. The service ceased to operate from this location in 2020 as the site was not deemed suitable to provide the service under COVID-safe requirements. As of March 2021 Council's Toy Library had 381 borrowers. Membership has remained steady over the past five years. A community-run Toy Library also operates from the Alphington Community Centre.

There are no regulations or official guidelines relating to the physical space requirements of a Toy Library. Toy Library Australia outlined the ideal elements for Toy Libraries of various membership sizes. For a large toy library of 200+ members the recommendation is for 300m<sup>2</sup> of dedicated space including a main toy library room (minimum 200m<sup>2</sup>), an adjoining storage area, and a smaller side room for informal meetings. Toy Library Australia also recommends that the library be located close to or on the same site as other early years services, community groups or services such as MCH, library, kindergarten, childcare or playgroups, close to public transport, and close to a playground and open play space.<sup>32</sup>

Council's Toy Library service is currently being reviewed to ensure that it continues to be contemporary, accessible, affordable and responsive to Darebin's diverse community, particularly those most vulnerable and/or experiencing disadvantage. Any recommendations from the Toy Library review relating to infrastructure needs for the service should be integrated into this plan, when available.

DRAFT

## 6. LOCALITY SUMMARIES

### 6.1 Alphington-Fairfield

#### Population

- The smallest of the localities in Darebin by population, with an estimated resident population of 10,145 in 2020. This includes an estimated 775 children aged 0-6.
- Limited population growth expected to 2041: 191 more 0-6 year-olds by 2041 compared to 2020. The growth that is projected is almost all in Fairfield.
- The development of the Alphington Paper Mill site in the City of Yarra (an estimated 2500 dwellings) may create additional demand on some services in Darebin.
- Alphington and Fairfield are two least disadvantaged suburbs in Darebin on the SEIFA index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage.

#### Service provision

- Two MCH rooms at the Fairfield Community Centre with capacity to satisfy projected needs to 2041.
- Five kindergarten locations provide sufficient kindergarten capacity to meet projected demand to 2029 and likely to 2041 based on current population projections. Low access to sessional kindergarten with just one stand-alone kindergarten.
- Four long day care centres provide 2.3 LDC places per 0-6 year-old – the highest provision rate in Darebin. Low access to community-managed LDC.
- No Occasional Child Care program in the locality.
- Three known playgroup locations.
- Community-run Toy Library located at Alphington Community Centre.

### 6.2 Kingsbury

#### Population

- The Kingsbury locality (which incorporates the City of Darebin parts of the suburbs of Bundoora and Macleod) is the second smallest locality in Darebin by population with an estimated resident population of 13,490 in 2020. This includes an estimated 930 children aged 0-6.
- Relatively low population growth forecast: 235 more 0-6 year-olds in 2041 compared to 2020. Potential major development at La Trobe University of housing for an additional 12,000 people would significantly increase this if it proceeds.
- The suburb of Kingsbury is the second most disadvantaged suburb in Darebin on the SEIFA Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage. Bundoora-Macleod is relatively advantaged. The locality recorded the poorest AEDC results in Darebin.

#### Service provision

- One MCH room. An additional four sessions per week beyond this centres full capacity may be required by 2026.
- Four current kindergarten programs plus a new service expected to open in 2022. Capacity expected to be sufficient to meet demand to 2029. Low access to sessional kindergarten with just one stand-alone kindergarten.
- High rate of long day care provision with three current services and new private centre expected to open in 2022. However, La Trobe University facility services a wider catchment than just the local area. No community-managed childcare.

- Occasional Child Care is provided at La Trobe University – mainly used by staff and students.
- Three known playgroup locations.

### 6.3 Northcote

#### Population

- Estimated resident population of 28,172 in 2020, of whom an estimated 2221 were children aged 0-6.
- 0-6 year-old population expected to grow by 433 from 2020 to 2041.
- Lower levels of disadvantage than the Darebin average and lower levels of developmental vulnerability in the AEDC.

#### Service provision

- Two MCH locations providing sufficient capacity to meet demand until at least 2026, with a small shortfall in capacity after that.
- Eight kindergarten locations including two stand-alone kindergartens and four community-managed services. Unmet kindergarten capacity expected from 2027 onwards. Unmet demand of 123 children by 2029, and another 46 children by 2041.
- Six long day care centres including two community-managed services. Current provision of LDC a little below Darebin average but above Melbourne average. Population growth will create demand for approximately 100 more places by 2041.
- One Occasional Child Care service providing 21 places.
- Three playgroup locations identified.
- Current location of Darebin Toy Library.

### 6.4 Preston East

#### Population

- Estimated resident population of 20,430 in 2020, of whom an estimated 1848 were children aged 0-6.
- Significant population growth projected. 1030 more 0-6 year-olds from 2020 to 2041, with much of the growth expected from 2036 onwards. Preston Market precinct development would add a further 4500 – 6000 to overall population growth. Note also that some of the major areas of population growth are in the central area of Preston. Services in this central area may see an increase in demand from population growth in both Preston East and Preston West.
- Locality ranks below the Darebin average on the SEIFA Index of Relative Socio-economic disadvantage and includes some of the most disadvantaged small areas in Darebin.

#### Service provision

- Three MCH locations with sufficient capacity to meet demand until the mid-2030s on current population projections. 12 additional MCH sessions required by 2041 – at least one new MCH room required.
- Nine kindergarten locations, plus an additional centre opening soon. On current population projections surplus kindergarten capacity is expected to 2029 and current capacity should meet most demand to 2041. Low access to sessional kindergarten: one small community-managed stand-alone kindergarten plus one larger kindergarten at East Preston Islamic College which draws families from a wider regional catchment.
- High level of long day care LDC provision with eight centres plus an additional centre opening soon. Only one community-managed service. Population growth will create demand for an additional 264 LDC places by 2041.
- No Occasional Child Care following recent closure of OCC at The Bridge Preston.

- Four playgroup locations identified.

### 6.5 Preston West

#### Population

- Estimated resident population of 20,430 in 2020, of whom an estimated 1848 were children aged 0-6.
- Area of most significant projected population growth. 1436 more 0-6 year-olds to 2041. Note also that some of the major areas of population growth are in the central are of Preston. Services in this central area may see an increase in demand from population growth in both Preston East and Preston West. The Preston Market development can be included in this category.
- Level of disadvantage slightly below (less disadvantaged) the Darebin average.

#### Service provision

- One MCH location. Current MCH capacity fully utilised and will be insufficient to meet future demand. 18 additional MCH sessions will be required by 2041 – requiring two additional MCH rooms.
- Seven kindergarten locations including one stand-alone kindergarten. Additional kindergarten supply expected to be needed to cater for unmet demand: 44 children by 2026, 167 by 2029 and a further 204 by 2041.
- Six long day care centres. LDC provision is above the Darebin average, but population growth will create demand for an additional 368 LDC places by 2041. One community-managed LDC service. Currently no LDC in Council facilities in area.
- No Occasional Child Care programs.
- Seven playgroup locations.

### 6.6 Reservoir East

#### Population

- Estimated resident population of 29,540 in 2020, of whom an estimated 2992 were children aged 0-6.
- 0-6 year-old population expected to grow by 569 from 2020 to 2041.
- The most disadvantaged locality in Darebin. Two sub-areas: Reservoir East Cheddar and Reservoir East Oakhill both in the lowest quintile on SEIFA Index of Relative Disadvantage.

#### Service provision

- Two MCH locations have capacity to supply 40 sessions per week – currently provide 28 sessions. Projected demand to 2041 is 44 sessions per week, requiring four additional sessions per week.
- Six kindergarten locations, including four stand-alone kindergartens. Significant unmet demand for kindergarten projected to 2029: 191 children by 2026, 343 by 2029.
- Three long day care providers. Level of LDC provision is far below all other areas in Darebin (1 place per 18.3 children aged 0-6). Population growth will create further demand.
- No Occasional Child Care program since closure of program at Reservoir Leisure Centre.
- 7 playgroup locations.

### 6.7 Reservoir West

#### Population

- Estimated resident population of 25,846 in 2020, of whom an estimated 2552 were children aged 0-6.
- 0-6 year-old population expected to grow by 479 from 2020 to 2041.

- Merrilands sub-area in the lowest quintile on SEIFA Index of Relative Disadvantage. Edwardes Lake sub-area also more disadvantaged than the Darebin average.

**Service provision**

- Two MCH locations have capacity to supply 30 sessions in total. Kenilworth Road location not currently in use. Projected demand to 2041 is 37 sessions. Additional room may be required to meet demand. No provision in Merrilands sub-area.
- Nine kindergarten locations including two stand-alone kindergartens. Unmet demand for kindergarten projected from 2027 onwards – 40 children in 2027, 117 by 2029. A further 93 three and four-year-olds expected in area by 2041.
- Seven long day care locations including two community-managed services. LDC provision rate similar to Darebin average. 123 additional places required to maintain provision rate at Darebin average to 2041.
- No Occasional Child Care program.
- Eight playgroup locations.

## 6.8 Thornbury

**Population**

- Estimated resident population of 20,779 in 2020, of whom an estimated 1816 were children aged 0-6.
- 0-6 year-old population expected to grow by 202 from 2020 to 2041.
- Relatively advantaged – higher than the Darebin average on SEIFA Index of Relative Disadvantage.

**Service provision**

- Two single-room MCH locations, supplying their maximum capacity of 20 sessions at present. Capacity for five additional sessions will be required by 2041.
- 10 kindergarten locations including two stand-alone kindergartens. Unmet demand for kindergarten projected by 2025 – 32 children in 2025, rising to 157 children by 2029.
- Eight long day care centres including three community-managed services. Similar provision rate to the Darebin average. Limited growth in demand from population growth (52 places to 2041).
- One Occasional Child Care providing 20 places.
- Six playgroup locations.

## 7. Action Plan

### 7.1 18 Big Actions

Table 7 outlines 18 recommended actions to deliver the Early Years infrastructure needed by the Darebin community over the next 20 years.

**Table 7: Early Years Infrastructure Actions**

1.	Monitor indicators of supply and demand across all early years services on an ongoing basis and review and adjust infrastructure planning as new information becomes available.
2.	Work with providers across all early years services to optimise the level of service delivered from existing infrastructure by utilizing spare capacity where needed, adopting new schedules and operational models, utilizing innovative, flexible and best practice approaches including outreach and pop-up models.
3.	Address functionality issues, where feasible and cost effective, at council-owned early years facilities to optimise service delivery and utilisation across all sites.
4.	Provide additional service capacity in localities where additional capacity is needed through, where feasible and cost effective, expansion of existing facilities.
5.	Consolidate MCH locations to provide a full suite of two room facilities integrated with other family/children's services either at existing MCH locations or alternative sites.
6.	Review Council's existing property portfolio to identify opportunities to re-purpose properties for early years service delivery, where feasible and cost effective, in localities where additional capacity is needed.
7.	Progress planning for the development of intergenerational hubs in the following localities: 7.1. Reservoir West (Merrilands) 7.2. Preston West 7.3. Preston East  Intergenerational hubs to include at least two MCH rooms, two kindergarten rooms and multi-use spaces including playgroup spaces. Assess need and opportunity to include LDC, OCC and other services on a case-by-case basis.
8.	Advocate and plan for the inclusion of a new community centre within or close to the Preston Market Precinct inclusive of two MCH rooms, two kindergarten rooms and multi-use spaces including playgroup spaces. Assess need and opportunity to include LDC, OCC and other services within the centre.
9.	Progress planning for the development of new hubs in localities where unmet demand for early years services will not be met by expansion upgrades or other actions. These hubs should include a mix of services as required on a case-by-case basis.
10.	Develop a property acquisition strategy to identify and acquire sites for new facilities where required to meet future needs.
11.	Develop a 10-year program of capital works projects that identifies the planned Council investments in facility upgrades, expansions or new facility developments in order to deliver the actions and priorities outlined in this plan: to increase capacity where required and improve functionality and condition of facilities.
12.	Explore the feasibility of mixed-use development (e.g. kindergarten/childcare, social housing and private housing/commercial) on council-owned or private land, through public private partnerships.
13.	Develop an advocacy strategy to encourage investment in early years facilities from a range of sources including government and private developers.
14.	Provide support to community-managed kindergarten and childcare providers, including those in non-Council facilities, to pursue infrastructure projects that will increase kindergarten and/or LDC places in areas where additional capacity is needed.

15. Work with services to support them to open their facilities up to other uses by the community at times when they are not being utilised for service delivery.
16. Review the current use and demand for OCC in Darebin, the financial viability of OCC service models and cost to increase supply. Identify options to increase supply if indicated by this review.
17. Review the current use and demand for playgroup spaces, and the functionality and suitability of current locations. Explore the feasibility of addressing functionality issues at existing sites and identify options to increase the supply of suitable venues if required.
18. Address infrastructure needs identified by the Toy Library review (review expected to be complete in September 2021).

## 7.2 Funding

The implementation of the actions contained in the Plan will require the allocation of significant resources for planning, designing, constructing, commissioning, overseeing and maintaining the facilities. Capital funds will be required to convert, extend or refurbish existing facilities or develop new facilities. Ongoing resources will be needed to maintain and renew the buildings over their lifecycles and, in many cases operational funds will be required to support expanded service delivery or the operations of facilities.

Operational resources will also be required to support change management, community engagement and stakeholder management throughout the implementation of this plan. Many of Council's existing early years facilities will be impacted in some way and resources will also be required to ensure continuity of service delivery through the provision of alternative accommodation for displaced programs during works at existing facilities.

Council has allocated \$18.45m in the 10-year Capital Works Plan to meet the demand created by the roll-out of funded three-year-old kindergarten. Additional funding will be required over the next ten years to deliver the actions relating to MCH, LDC, OCC, playgroups and the Toy Library. Further funding will be required in the following ten years to meet ongoing increases in demand for services created by population growth.

Accessing funding from other sources will be crucial to enable Council to deliver all that it aspires to achieve with this plan. State Government funding as co-contributions to projects will be critical. The State Government has committed \$1.68 billion of infrastructure funding state-wide over the next decade to support the three-year-old kindergarten reforms through its Building Blocks Infrastructure strategy.<sup>33</sup> This funding is accessible to local government and not for profit organisations in the form of grants for projects where the local Kindergarten Infrastructure and Services Plan has identified the need for additional infrastructure to meet unmet kindergarten demand. Funding is available for a range of projects including Integrated Children's Centres, New Early Learning Facilities, Modular Kindergarten Facilities, Expansion Upgrades, Facility Upgrades and Kindergartens on School Sites. Council has the opportunity to develop a Building Blocks Partnership Agreement with the State Government, which will outline in principle agreement for co-investment in a pipeline of projects to provide greater investment certainty.

Developer contributions are another potential source of funding. It will be important to ensure Early Years infrastructure needs are considered when the Municipal Development Contribution Plan (DCP) is reviewed in future years. Also, where large redevelopment projects create additional demand for early years services within a strategic site, developers may be required to provide infrastructure (e.g. delivery of new kindergarten on site or cash contribution) to service the need generated by their project.



### 7.3 Implementation

A detailed Delivery Plan will prioritise the actions contained within this Plan and outline timelines and responsibilities for the implementation of agreed priorities.

### 7.4 Monitoring and review

The Early Years Infrastructure Plan will be treated as a 'living document'. It will be formally reviewed on a yearly basis in time for the formulation of Council's annual budget and amended after the adoption of the budget. A major review will be conducted every three to five years or as required.

### 7.5 Related Council plans, strategies and policies

There are many Council plans, strategies and policies that have informed the development of this plan and which will inform the delivery of the actions. These include the following key documents:

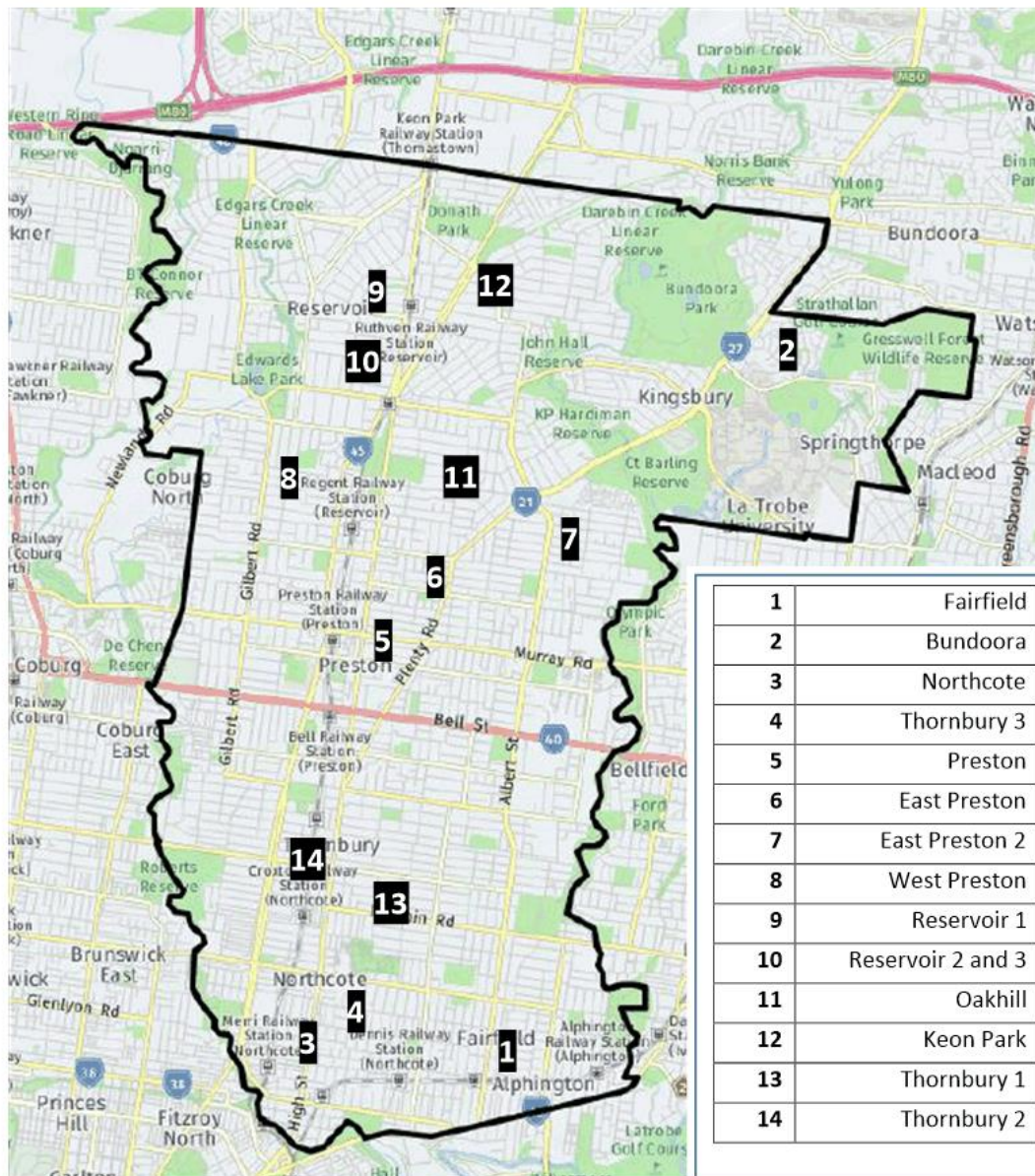
- Council Plan 2021-25 incorporating the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan
- Community Vision (Darebin 2041)
- Towards Equality –Equity, Inclusion and Human Rights Framework 2019-2029
- Disability Access and Inclusion in Darebin
- Community Engagement Policy
- Child and Youth Engagement Protocol (in development)
- Families, Youth and Children Strategy (to be developed in 2021)
- Age Friendly Darebin
- Creative and Cultural Infrastructure Framework
- Council Asset Strategy/Property Strategy
- Breathing Space – The Darebin Open Space Strategy
- Darebin Environmentally Sustainable Design Building Policy

## APPENDICES

## Appendix 1: Maternal and Child Health Centres (June 2021)

Centre	Address	Local area	Setting and co-located services	Consulting rooms
Fairfield	84 Arthur St, Fairfield	Alphington-Fairfield	Residential setting Co-located with library and community room at Fairfield Community Centre.	2
Bundoora	35 Copernicus Cres, Bundoora	Kingsbury	Residential/commercial setting Co-located with community meeting and activity spaces including playgroup room at Darebin North East Community Hub.	1
Northcote	4 Oldis Ave, Northcote	Northcote	Residential setting Co-located with LDC and kindergarten at Annie Dennis Children's Centre.	2
Thornbury 3	55 Clifton St, Northcote	Northcote	Residential setting Co-located with LDC and kindergarten at Clifton Street Children's Centre.	1
Preston	270 Gower St, Preston	Preston East	Residential/civic precinct Co-located with Darebin Immunisation Service.	2
East Preston	2 Sylvester Grove, Preston	Preston East	Residential setting No co-located services.	1
East Preston 2 (not currently utilised)	7 Newton St, Preston	Preston East	Residential setting Co-located with community spaces at East Preston Community Centre (building not owned by Council).	1
West Preston	524 Gilbert Rd, Preston	Preston West	Residential/commercial setting Co-located with JS Grey Kindergarten.	2
Reservoir 1 (not currently utilised)	6-8 Kenilworth St, Reservoir	Reservoir West	Residential setting Co-located with LDC and kindergarten at Darebin Community Childcare and Kindergarten - Reservoir.	1
Reservoir 2 and 3	23 Edwardes St, Preston	Reservoir West	Civic/commercial setting Co-located with library, Decibels Youth Music Centre and community rooms at Reservoir Community and Learning Centre.	2
Oakhill	91 North Rd, Reservoir	Reservoir East	Residential setting Co-located with LDC and kindergarten at Oakhill Family Centre.	2
Keon Park	1-7 Dole Ave, Reservoir	Reservoir East	Residential setting Co-located with kindergarten and community spaces at Keon Park Children's Hub.	2
Thornbury 1	8A Newcastle St, Thornbury	Thornbury	Residential/commercial setting; Co-located with Thornbury Kindergarten.	1
Thornbury 2	2B Watt St, Thornbury	Thornbury	Residential/commercial setting; co-located with LDC and kindergarten at Yappera Children's Service (building not owned by Council).	1

Appendix 2: Maternal and Child Health Locations (June 2021)



## Appendix 3: List of Kindergarten and Long Day Care services in Darebin (June 2021)

(\* = services in Council-owned facilities)

Service Name	Local area (SA2)	Service Type	Management	Licensed places
Alfred Nuttall Memorial Kindergarten*	Alphington-Fairfield	Stand-alone Kindergarten	Community-managed not-for-profit	29
Journey Early Learning Centre – Alphington	Alphington-Fairfield	Long Day Care	Private for profit	45
Perry Street Child Care Centre and Elizabeth Gorman Memorial Kindergarten*	Alphington-Fairfield	Long Day Care	Community-managed not-for-profit	50
Smart Start Early Learning and Development Centre	Alphington-Fairfield	Long Day Care	Private for profit	120
The Hive Fairfield Early Learning Centre	Alphington-Fairfield	Long Day Care	Private for profit	118
Goodstart Early Learning Bundoora - Karl Court	Kingsbury	Long Day Care	Other not-for-profit	75
La Trobe University Community Children's Centre	Kingsbury	Long Day Care	Other not-for-profit	187
Maryborough Avenue Kindergarten*	Kingsbury	Stand-alone Kindergarten	Community-managed not-for-profit	28
Paisley Park Early Learning Centre Bundoora	Kingsbury	Long Day Care	Private for profit	120
Annie Dennis Children's Centre*	Northcote	Long Day Care	Community-managed not-for-profit	98
Batman Park Kindergarten*	Northcote	Stand-alone Kindergarten	Community-managed not-for-profit	59
Clifton Street Children's Centre*	Northcote	Long Day Care	Community-managed not-for-profit	81
Nicki's Clever Cookies	Northcote	Long Day Care	Private for profit	36
Only About Children Northcote	Northcote	Long Day Care	Private for profit	93
TimeOut Educare	Northcote	Long Day Care	Private for profit	94
TimeOut Educare – Westgarth	Northcote	Long Day Care	Private for profit	130
Westgarth Kindergarten	Northcote	Stand-alone Kindergarten	Community-managed not-for-profit	58
Darebin Childcare and Kindergarten Inc – Preston*	Preston East	Long Day Care	Community-managed not-for-profit	61
East Preston Islamic College Early Learning Centre	Preston East	Stand-alone Kindergarten	Independent School	88
Goodstart Dalgety Street Preston (new service expected to open soon)	Preston East	Long Day Care	Other not-for-profit	122
Gower Street Kindergarten*	Preston East	Stand-alone Kindergarten	Community-managed not-for-profit	29
Happy Hubbub	Preston East	Long Day Care	Private for profit	17
Inspire Early Learning Journey Preston	Preston East	Long Day Care	Other not-for-profit	130
Kool Kidz Preston	Preston East	Long Day Care	Private for profit	130

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Melbourne Juniors	Preston East	-	Long Day Care	Private for profit	105
Nino Early Learning Adventures - Preston	Preston East	-	Long Day Care	Private for profit	122
Northland Kinder Haven	Preston East	-	Long Day Care	Private for profit	100
Victoria Street Early Learning & Kinder	Preston East	-	Long Day Care	Private for profit	60
Wood Street Childcare Centre	Preston East	-	Long Day Care	Private for profit	58
Bell Street Early Learning & Kinder	Preston West	-	Long Day Care	Private for profit	61
Guardian Childcare & Education Preston	Preston West	-	Long Day Care	Private for profit	110
Guardian Childcare & Education Preston West	Preston West	-	Long Day Care	Private for profit	141
J S Grey Reserve Kindergarten*	Preston West	-	Stand-alone Kindergarten	Community-managed not-for-profit	54
Nara Community Early Learning Centre	Preston West	-	Long Day Care	Community-managed not-for-profit	68
Wonder World Play Centre	Preston West	-	Long Day Care	Private for profit	24
Blake Street Kindergarten*	Reservoir East	-	Stand-alone Kindergarten	Community-managed not-for-profit	27
Dewdrops Early Learning	Reservoir East	-	Long Day Care	Private for profit	45
Goodstart Early Learning Reservoir	Reservoir East	-	Long Day Care	Other not-for-profit	60
Keon Park Children's Hub*	Reservoir East	-	Stand-alone Kindergarten	Community-managed not-for-profit	68
Keon Park Kindergarten	Reservoir East	-	Stand-alone Kindergarten	Community-managed not-for-profit	33
Oakhill Family Centre – Kindergarten*	Reservoir East	-	Stand-alone Kindergarten	Community-managed not-for-profit	59
Oakhill Family Centre - Long Day Care*	Reservoir East	-	Long Day Care	Community-managed not-for-profit	58
AMIGA Montessori Reservoir	Reservoir West	-	Long Day Care	Private for profit	105
Darebin Childcare and Kindergarten Inc – Reservoir*	Reservoir West	-	Long Day Care	Community-managed not-for-profit	86
Edwardes Street Child Minding	Reservoir West	-	Long Day Care	Private for profit	50
Gellibrand Crescent Kindergarten*	Reservoir West	-	Stand-alone Kindergarten	Community-managed not-for-profit	30
Goodstart Early Learning Preston	Reservoir West	-	Long Day Care	Other not-for-profit	99
Great Beginnings Reservoir	Reservoir West	-	Long Day Care	Private for profit	120
Kookaburra Kindergarten	Reservoir West	-	Stand-alone Kindergarten	Community-managed not-for-profit	30
Merrilands Children's Centre & Kindergarten	Reservoir West	-	Long Day Care	Community-managed not-for-profit	66

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Starfish Early Learning Centre (Reservoir)	Reservoir - West	Long Day Care	Private for profit	116
Clyde Street Kindergarten*	Thornbury	Stand-alone Kindergarten	Community-managed not-for-profit	29
Goodstart Early Learning Thornbury	Thornbury	Long Day Care	Other not-for-profit	44
Guardian Childcare & Education Thornbury	Thornbury	Long Day Care	Private for profit	80
Merri Community Child Care Centre*	Thornbury	Long Day Care	Community-managed not-for-profit	49
Raleigh St Community Children's Centre*	Thornbury	Long Day Care	Community-managed not-for-profit	37
Sunrise Preschool and Long Daycare Thornbury	Thornbury	Long Day Care	Other not-for-profit	30
Thornbury Kindergarten*	Thornbury	Stand-alone Kindergarten	Community-managed not-for-profit	66
Thornbury Learning Centre	Thornbury	Long Day Care	Private for profit	70
Thornbury World of Learning	Thornbury	Long Day Care	Private for profit	75
Yappera Childrens Centre	Thornbury	Long Day Care	Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisation	60

Appendix 4: Kindergarten and Long Day Care Locations (June 2021)



KGN LDC NEW  
▲ ■ ●

Note: new = new LDC service expected to open in 2021 (Goodstart Preston Dalgety Street)

## Appendix 5: Current and former occasional childcare locations (June 2021)

Centre Details	Local Area	Approved places	Building Owner	Provider
<b>Current</b>				
La Trobe University Community Children's Centre	Kingsbury	26	University	La Trobe University
Northcote Aquatic & Recreation Centre	Northcote	21	Council	YMCA
The Bridge Thornbury	Thornbury	20	Council	The Bridge Darebin
<b>Recently closed</b>				
Jika Jika Community Centre	Northcote	14	Council	Neighbourhood House
Reservoir Leisure Centre	Reservoir East	21	Council	Reservoir leisure Centre
The Bridge Preston	Preston East	40	Council	The Bridge

## Appendix 6 – Known playgroup locations (June 2021)

Area	Venues	Council facilities	Other locations
Alphington-Fairfield	3	Alphington Community Centre, Fairfield Community Centre	Darebin Parklands
Kingsbury	3	Darebin North East Community Hub, Maryborough Avenue Kindergarten	Kingsbury Primary School
Northcote	3	Jika Jika Community Centre, Old Gardens Community Room	Play Nook Play Centre
Preston East	4	East Preston Community Centre, Ruthven Community Room (Ruthven Reserve Pavilion), East Preston Senior Citizens Hall	Northern Community Church of Christ
Preston West	7	JS Grey Kindergarten	Newlands Primary School, West Preston Baptist Church, Melbourne Polytechnic, Bell Primary School, Preston Mosque, Bell Street Early Learning & Kinder
Reservoir East	7	Keon Park Children's Hub, Reservoir Leisure Centre, Blake St Kindergarten	Reservoir Views Primary School, Reservoir Baptist Church, Reservoir Neighbourhood House, St Stephen's Primary School
Reservoir West	8	Reservoir Senior Citizens Centre	St Josephs the Worker Primary School, Reservoir Primary School, St Gabriel's Primary School, Reservoir West Primary School, St Mark's Church, St Andrew's Church, Girl Guides Hall Reservoir
Thornbury	6	Thornbury Early Years Centre, Clyde Street Community Hall/SPAN Community House	St Mary's Primary School, Penders Grove Primary School, Our Lady of Lebanon, Croxton Uniting Church



## NOTES

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- <sup>2</sup> Australian Early Development Census, <https://www.aedc.gov.au/data/data-explorer>.
- <sup>3</sup> .id, City of Darebin Community Profile, <https://profile.id.com.au/darebin/seifa-disadvantage-small-area>.
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- <sup>5</sup> Parliament of Victoria: Legislative Assembly Legal and Social Issues Committee 2020, Inquiry into early childhood engagement of culturally and linguistically diverse communities, <https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/lsc-la/inquiry/971>.
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- <sup>15</sup> Department of Education and Training, How we regulate early childhood services, <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation/Pages/which.aspx>.
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- <sup>19</sup> Darebin City Council 2021, Community Engagement Policy.
- <sup>20</sup> Department of Education and Training 2019, Place-Based Education Plans, <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/educationstate/placebasedstatefactsheet.pdf>.
- <sup>21</sup> Victorian Local Governance Association, Child Friendly Cities and Communities, <https://www.vlga.org.au/advocacy/child-friendly-cities-and-communities-cfcc>.
- <sup>22</sup> Darebin City Council 2018, Darebin Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) Building Policy.
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## 8.2 NAMING OF THE BEAVERS ROAD BRIDGE

**Author:** Senior Property Officer

**Reviewed By:** General Manager, Governance and Engagement

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides information on the outcome of the statutory process for the proposed naming of the Beavers Road Bridge (the Bridge), end of Beavers Road, Northcote connecting over the Merri Creek to Kingfisher Gardens, Brunswick East and recommends that Council endorse the name Warrk-warrk Bridge.

<b>Recommendation</b>
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**That Council:**

Having completed the statutory process in accordance with the requirements of the *Geographic Place Name Act 1998* and the Names rules for places in Victoria – Statutory requirements for naming roads, features and localities 2016; and; given notice of the voting poll by way of an online survey and on Council's webpage:

- (1) Endorses the preferred name from the voting poll results, for the Bridge to be name Warrk-warrk Bridge;
- (2) Delegates the Manager, Property and Business Improvement to lodge the application to the Geographic Names Victoria for the naming of the Bridge end of Beavers Road, Northcote connecting over the Merri Creek to Kingfisher Gardens, Brunswick East to Warrk-warrk Bridge; and
- (3) Writes to the Wurundjeri Council to advise of this decision and thank them for their support to date.

### BACKGROUND / KEY INFORMATION

This report provides history and background relating to proposed naming of the Bridge located at the end of Beavers Road, Northcote connecting over the Merri Creek to Kingfisher Gardens, Brunswick East to Warrk-warrk Bridge, as well as the outcome of the statutory process and recommendation following the results of the voting poll (online survey) and community consultation.

In the spirit of reconciliation with the Darebin Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, Darebin City Council (Council) through the *Breathing Space; The Darebin Open Space Strategy* made a commitment, that when naming 50% of new public open spaces a name would be chosen in collaboration with the Wurundjeri Council of a significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, figures, symbols or items. The Wurundjeri are the Traditional Owners of the land on which Darebin stands today. Whilst this decision relates to the naming of a building property on land owned by Council, the same principles have been applied to align with the intent of Council's *Breathing Space* position.

The construction of the bridge reached practical completion and was opened to the public on 16 September 2020. The Bridge is located at the end of Beavers Road, Northcote, crosses over the Merri Creek and connects to Kingfisher Gardens located within Moreland City Council. The Bridge is shown on the attached plan in **Appendix A**.

A request was received in July 2020 to name the Bridge in collaboration with the Wurundjeri Council. Contact was made with Moreland City Council (Moreland) as the bridge is also located within the Moreland municipality. Council was informed that the bridge within the Moreland municipality was on Melbourne Water land and given this, they are only able to assist with consultation on the Moreland municipal side.

In August 2020 Council Officers, after approval from Council's Aboriginal Partnerships Officer, submitted a naming request form to the Wurundjeri Council seeking viable names for the Bridge. In September 2020, the Wurundjeri Council provided four naming options in Woi Wurrung language. The following names were received;

- Berrbang – *means Connection in Woi Wurrung language;*
- Bindjirru Parren – *means Two Way in Woi Wurrung language;*
- Warrk-warrk - *means Nimble in Woi Wurrung language;*
- Ganbu Murrup – *means One Spirit in Woi Wurrung language;*

In September 2020 Council Officers, in consultation with Council's Aboriginal Partnerships Officer, invited Darebin Aboriginal Advisory Committee (DAAC) member to select their top two preference. The following names were chosen by DAAC to be selected by the Community through the consultation period;

- Bindjirru Parren Bridge (pronounced bit-ja-ru paren); and
- Warrk-warrk Bridge (pronounced wark-wark).

In accordance with the requirements of the *Geographic Place Name Act 1998* (Act), the *Names rules for places in Victoria – Statutory requirements for naming roads, features and localities 2016* (Rules), and Council's Road and Place Naming Policy 2014 (Policy), Council is required to undergo a statutory consultation process before a public road, feature or locality can be named or renamed.

At its ordinary meeting on 28 June 2021, Council authorised the commencement of the statutory process for the proposed naming of the Bridge. The statutory process commenced on 29 June 2021, ending on 2 August 2021. A total of 770 voting submissions via the online survey were received. Bindjirru Parren Bridge received 282 votes and Warrk-warrk Bridge received 286 votes. Following completion of the community consultation, Warrk-warrk Bridge received the most number of votes, being the preferred name.

This report recommends that Council accepts the recommendation and endorses the naming of the Bridge to Warrk-warrk Bridge.

### **Previous Council Resolution**

At its meeting held on 28 June 2021, Council resolved:

*'That Council'*

- (1) *Formally thank the Wurundjeri Council and in particular the Wurundjeri Elders who provided Council with the proposed naming options;*

- (2) *Endorse, for inclusion in the voting poll, the following names for the Bridge at end of Beavers Road, Northcote connecting over the Merri Creek to Kingfisher Gardens, Brunswick East:*
  - a. *Bindjirru Parren Bridge; and*
  - b. *Warrk-warrk Bridge.*
- (3) *Commence the statutory process in accordance with the requirements of the Geographic Place Name Act 1998 and the Names rules for places in Victoria – Statutory requirements for naming roads, features and localities 2016;*
- (4) *Gives notice of the voting poll by way of an online survey and on Council's webpage. Posters will be placed at each end of the Bridge and circulated to local networks to promote; and*
- (5) *Receives a further report with the results of the voting poll and recommendation for Council to endorse the name for the Bridge at end of Beavers Road, Northcote connecting over the Merri Creek to Kingfisher Gardens, Brunswick East.*

## COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

### Consultation

#### Legislation

The *Geographic Place Names Act 1998* (Act) which commenced in 1999, gave the responsibility for investigation and determination of geographic names and the notification of new or altered geographic names for inclusion in the Geographic Names Register to local governing and administering bodies. Geographic names include suburbs, streets, reserves schools, parks and other geographic features, including pedestrian bridges.

When considering the naming/renaming of a road, feature or locality, the Darebin City Council (Council), as a naming authority, is required to comply with the *Naming rules for places in Victoria – Statutory requirements for naming roads, features and localities 2016* (Rules), as well as its Road and Place Naming Policy October 2014 (Policy).

#### Statutory Process

The statutory process (community consultation) occurred from 29 June 2021 to 2 August 2021. It provided the community with an opportunity to submit an online survey submission on their preferred name for the naming of the Bridge. People could vote on one of the two names; they could object to the proposal or provide comment on it without expressing support or opposition. Submissions had to explain why a proposal is opposed/supported and include the signatories printed name and address.

In accordance with *Section 55* of the *Local Government Act 2021* and Council's *Community Engagement Policy 2021*, Council has committed to reaching all sections of the diverse community and provide an opportunity to give feedback and be involved when forming decisions in a way that is accessible, appropriate and welcoming. Council, at a minimum, will engage with our diverse community and engage with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The Geographic Names Victoria (GNV) advised that the naming of a geographic feature is slightly different than naming something where an address is affected (road or locality). The minimum requirement (currently) is to advertise in a local paper. They advised that they accepted Council proposed consultation as shown below.

The Community Consultation was conducted with the Darebin and Moreland Community. The process involved:

- An online survey (**Appendix B**) which was available to all members of the Darebin and Moreland Community. The online survey was translated into the top 5 languages spoken at home within that area and available if required;
- Posters were placed at either end of the Bridge. It was also sent to surrounding businesses by email to display and promote the naming of the Bridge;
- Emails were sent to local networks (Schools, Neighbourhood Houses, Libraries, Local Aboriginal Networks, and other external organisations) encouraging their votes, to share the email to their networks and to print the poster and display to further promote the naming of the Bridge; and
- Information was uploaded to Darebin and Moreland Council's "Yoursay" pages and both Council's facebook pages promoting the naming of the Bridge and how to vote.

### 1. Online survey Results

The statutory process closed on 2 August 2021 with a total of 770 submissions via the online survey (**Appendix D**).

- 282 votes supported the naming of the Bridge to be named Bindjirru Parren Bridge (*Two Way in Woi Wurrung language*).
- 286 votes supported the naming of the Bridge to be named Warrk-warrk Bridge (*Nimble in Woi Wurrung language*).
- 11 voting submissions were not considered valid as they did not provide an adequate address or contact as specified as required by the Geographic Names Victoria.
- 127 voting submissions preferred not to provide their personal information and did not continue with a vote.
- 10 voting submissions were unable to provide personal information as they did not have an email address or postal address.
- 46 voting submissions were partial responses to the online survey. They were respondents that said they were happy to provide their information however did not proceed to vote.
- 8 voting submissions provided objections of comments (**Appendix E**) and some were as follows:
  - One voting submission advised it was too hard to decide between the two options but took the opportunity to show appreciation to the use of Woi Wurrung language.
  - Three voting submissions suggested other names to be used instead. Two were opposed to the remaining of Beavers Road Bridge. These submitters will be contacted by Council thanking them for their submission and advising them that the bridge is not actually names Beavers Road Bridge, rather just a name used to pinpoint that the bridge is located there. One submitter suggested another Woi Wurrung language name and that submitter will be contacted thanking them for their submission and advising them of our process in working with Wurundjeri Council on the current suggestions and that that we could perhaps consider the name for another feature within Council.

- **Objections:**

Two voting submissions objected/were not in favour of the name change.

One voting submission recommended that one of the names not be used as the slang version of the name could be translated to a vulgar word.

One voting submission suggested one of the naming options was too long and for the bridge to be named Merri Bridge. The submitters will be contacted by Council informing them that Council is compliant with the Naming Rules, providing them some clarity around the name choice and that over time the name will become easier to pronounce. They will also be told where they can further appeal if they wish to.

There is a requirement in the Naming Rules that if an objection is received during the consultation period that the Registrar will only consider the application following a 30-day period where the submitters get an additional chance to appeal. Council Officers have consulted with the GNV in the past where we have been advised that the naming authority (being Council) will need to review the objections and use its discretion when deciding which are valid objections, i.e. the proposed name is non-compliant to the naming rules or the process being followed is incorrect. If the 'objections' received do not fit into these categories, then there would be no requirement for Council to offer the opportunity to appeal to the Registrar of Geographic Names.

The GNV have advised in the past that advised that the following would not be considered a valid objection;

- Suggesting an alternative name;
- Use of vulgar language; and
- Not liking a name.

The GNV advised that the following could likely be a valid objection;

- Name is confusing.

Copies of the voting submissions and objections have been separately circulated confidentially to Councillors. Councillors are expected to read the objections and take them into consideration when making any resolution. The naming proposal is considered to conform to the principles and statutory requirements of the naming rules.

## **2. Lodging Naming Proposal & Registration**

Should Council resolve to endorse the recommendation made by the Community, the naming proposal will be lodged with the Geographic Names Victoria (GNV).

The Registrar of Geographic Names (Registrar) will undertake all necessary reviews to ensure compliance with the Act and the Rules. Given Council has received valid objections during the statutory process, the proposal may not be considered by the Registrar for 30 days after Council's resolution and notification to submitters. This 30-day period provides those submissions which raised objection to the proposal with the opportunity to lodge an appeal to the GNV. If there are no appeals received, the Registrar will proceed with considering the proposal. If there is an appeal it will only be reviewed by the Registrar if the objector can demonstrate that either:

- That Council in its capacity as naming authority, did not consider the objections during its deliberations; and
- The proposal does not reasonably conform to the principles and statutory requirements of the naming rules.

If the proposal is accepted, a gazettal notice will be published in the Victoria Government Gazette. The notice will act as the official notification that the name will be registered in VICNAMES.

The Registrar will inform Council, in its capacity as the local naming authority, that the official name has been registered in VICNAMES. All signage must then be erected within 30 days of being notified from the GNV. It is only after Council has been notified by the GNV that it can officially commence using the registered name.

### **3. Implementation of Name Change**

Following acceptance of the name change from the GNV, Officers will work with relevant departments for appropriate signage to be displayed.

#### **Communications**

Consultation will be completed by communication with:

- Council Departments;
- Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation;
- Darebin Local Community and Businesses;
- Local networks; and
- Geographic Names Victoria.

#### **ANALYSIS**

##### **Alignment to Council Plan / Council policy**

Strategic Direction 1 - Vibrant, Respectful and Connected

##### **Environmental Sustainability Considerations**

There are no factors in this report which impact upon environmental sustainability considerations.

##### **Climate Emergency**

There are no factors in this report which impact upon climate emergency.

##### **Equity, Inclusion and Wellbeing Considerations**

Officers have addressed factors of Equity, Inclusion and Wellbeing, through the development of the Community Consultation plan which was taken into consideration when commencing community consultation.

##### **Cultural Considerations**

Officers have consulted with the Wurundjeri Council, following approval from Council's Aboriginal Partnerships Officer, who have proposed the names that are being considered in the Community Consultation.

### **Economic Development Considerations**

There are no factors in this report which impact upon economic development considerations.

### **Financial and Resource Implications**

Funds will be sourced within existing budgets to undertake the design and construction of signage.

### **Legal and Risk Implications**

Any legal or risks and governance implications associated with the proposed naming of the Bridge will be documented in the options provided to Council.

## **DISCUSSION**

Council is being asked to consider the results of the community consultation and endorse the proposed naming of the Beavers Road Bridge (the Bridge), end of Beavers Road, Northcote connecting over the Merri Creek to Kingfisher Gardens, Brunswick East. The results of the statutory process provide Council with the opportunity to obtain further insight into the overall consensus of surrounding property owners and the community.

## **OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

### **Option 1 – Abandon the Proposal or Do Nothing (Not recommended)**

Council could resolve to abandon the proposal, take no action or may make no resolution on the matter. If Council, choose to abandon the project then the Bridge will remain unnamed. Council may, at some time in the future, resolve to recommence the statutory process.

### **Option 2 – Endorse the Naming of the Bridge (Recommended)**

It is recommended that Council resolve to endorse the proposed naming of the Bridge (located at the end of Beavers Road, Northcote connecting over the Merri Creek to Kingfisher Gardens, Brunswick East) to Warrk-warrk Bridge and lodge the proposal with the GNV. This would be consistent with the outcomes of the community consultation process and Council's commitment to reconciliation.

## **IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY**

### **Details**

If Council accepts the Officer recommendation an application to the Geographic Names Victoria will be made for the Registrars consideration.



## RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Council's Road and Place Naming Policy 2014
- *Geographic Place Names Act* 1998
- *Local Government Act* 2021
- *Naming Rules for Places in Victoria – Statutory requirements for naming roads, features and localities* 2016
- *Darebin's Community Engagement Policy* 2021
- Breathing Space; The Darebin Open Space Strategy

## Attachments

- Map of the Bridge (**Appendix A**) [↓](#)
- Online Survey for the naming of the Beavers Road Bridge (**Appendix B**) [↓](#)
- Voting submissions for the naming of the Beavers Road Bridge (**Appendix C**)  
Confidential - enclosed under separate cover
- Objections/Comments to the naming of the Beavers Road Bridge (**Appendix D**)  
Confidential - enclosed under separate cover
- Report for Naming the Beavers Road Bridge as of 3 August 2021 - deidentified (**Appendix E**) [↓](#)

## DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

Section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020* requires members of Council staff and persons engaged under contract to provide advice to Council to disclose any conflicts of interest in a matter to which the advice relates.

The Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.



6/2/2021

Naming the Beavers Road Bridge voting form



## Naming the Beavers Road Bridge voting form

After consultation with the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation and the Darebin Aboriginal Advisory Committee (DAAC), Darebin City Council has narrowed down the list of potential names for the new bridge to two.

They are:

- Bindjirru Parren Bridge (which means Two Way in Woi Wurrung Language).
- Warrk-warrk Bridge (which means Nimble in Woi Wurrung Language).

Statutory Process:

Council is required to undergo a statutory process before a public place can be named in accordance with the Naming rules for places in Victoria, Statutory requirements for naming roads, features and localities – 2016.

Please cast your votes by 2 August 2021. Only one vote per household.

All votes will be counted and the name with the majority of votes will become the official name of the bridge, subject to Council approval.

<p><b>Arabic</b> لمعرفة المزيد حول هذه الفرصة لتقديم الآراء والمقترحات للمجلس والتحدث مع أحد الموظفين بلغة، يرجى الاتصال على الرقم 8470 8470</p>	<p><b>Punjabi</b> ਕੋਲਲ ਨੂੰ ਸੁਣਾਅ ਦੇ ਇਸ ਮੌਕੇ ਬਾਰੇ ਹੋਰ ਜਾਣਨ ਲਈ ਅਤੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਕਿਸੇ ਨਾਲ ਗੱਲ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ, ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ 8470 8470 ਉੱਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ</p>
<p><b>Greek</b> Για να μάθετε περισσότερα σχετικά με αυτή την ευκαιρία από το Δήμο για να σχολιάσετε και να μιλήσετε σε κάποιον στη γλώσσα σας, καλέστε το 8470 8470</p>	<p><b>Chinese</b> 了解有关这次向市议会提供反馈意见机会的更多信息及使用您的母语向市议会工作人员咨询，请致电8470 8470</p>
<p><b>Hindi</b> इस काउंसिल कीइदक अवसर के बारे में और जानने के लिए और अपनी भाषा में किसी के साथ बात करने के लिए, कृपया 8470 8470 पर कॉल करें</p>	<p><b>Somali</b> Si aad u heshid wax badan oo ku saabsan fursada natijjo celinta Golaha oo aad kula hadashid qof luuqadaada, fadlan wac 84708470</p>
<p><b>Italian</b> Per saperne di più su questa opportunità di feedback del Comune e parlare con qualcuno nella vostra lingua, chiamate il numero 8470 8470</p>	<p><b>Spanish</b> Para obtener más información acerca de esta oportunidad de comentarios para el Concejo Municipal y para hablar con alguien en su idioma, llame al 8470 8470</p>
<p><b>Macedonian</b> За да дознаете повеќе за оваа можност да ја запознаете Општината со вашето мислење и за да зборувате со некој на вашиот јазик, ве молиме телефонирајте на 8470 8470</p>	<p><b>Urdu</b> اس کاؤنسل کے بارے میں مزید جاننے، اپنی رائے کہنے کا موقع حاصل کرنے اور اپنی زبان میں کسی سے بات کرنے کے لیے براہ مہربانی 8470 8470 پر کال کریں</p>
<p><b>Nepali</b> परिपदलाई पृष्ठपोषण दिने यो अवसरको बारेमा थप जान्न र तपाईंको भाषामा कसैसँग कुरा गर्नको लागि कृपया 8470 8470 मा फोन गर्नुहोस्</p>	<p><b>Vietnamese</b> Muốn tìm hiểu thêm về cơ hội đóng góp ý kiến này của Hội đồng Thành phố và nói chuyện với nhân viên bằng ngôn ngữ của quý vị, vui lòng gọi số 8470 8470</p>

### Privacy Statement

The collection and handling of personal information is in accordance with Council's Privacy Policy which is displayed on [Council's website](#) and available for inspection at, or collection from, Council's Customer Service Centres.

6/2/2021

Naming the Beavers Road Bridge voting form

The personal information that we collect from you in this survey will be treated confidentially in accordance with the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014. It will only be used for the primary purpose of this engagement and for no other purpose without your consent. The information is being collected for data integrity purposes to minimise the risk of multiple submissions. Your personal information will not be linked with any of your responses provided in this engagement. When making any comments, please do not include any personal information if you would not like it to be accessible for public viewing, and please do not identify specific people by name for the sake of their privacy.

1. Darebin Council has introduced a new approach for all engagements with the community and is collecting some personal information from all participants, such as name and email address or postal address, and postcode. \*

- Yes - I am happy to proceed and provide my personal information
- No - I prefer not to provide my personal information
- No - I am unable to provide this information as I do not have an email address or postal address and postcode

Please provide the following information: \*

Details

Full name *	<input type="text"/>
Address *	<input type="text"/>
Postcode *	<input type="text"/>
Email *	<input type="text"/>

Would you like to receive the Your Darebin e-newsletter? \*

- Yes  No

Please select your preferred name.

- Bindjirru Parren (means Two Way in Woi Wurrung Language).
- Warrk-warrk (means Nimble in Woi Wurrung Language).

6/2/2021

Naming the Beavers Road Bridge voting form

Please comment if you object to the names (you must explain why you do not support the names.)

**About you**

Please answer the following questions to help us understand more about you:

What is your relationship with Darebin? Tick all that apply. \*

- Live     Work     Study     Visit

What is your age group? \*

- |  |                                   |   |
|--|-----------------------------------|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Under 15 years old<br>(please let your parent or guardian know you are completing this survey) | <input type="radio"/> 30-39 years | <input type="radio"/> 70-79 years         |
| <input type="radio"/> 15-19 years  | <input type="radio"/> 40-49 years | <input type="radio"/> 80 and over         |
| <input type="radio"/> 20-24 years  | <input type="radio"/> 50-59 years | <input type="radio"/> I prefer not to say |
| <input type="radio"/> 25-29 years  | <input type="radio"/> 60-69 years |   |

What is your gender? \*

- Female     Male     I prefer not to say

I identify as

Do you identify as having a disability? \*

- Yes     No     I prefer not to say

Do you speak a language other than English at home? \*

- Yes     No     I prefer not to say

6/2/2021

Naming the Beavers Road Bridge voting form

What language(s) other than English do you speak at home?

Are you Aboriginal or a Torres Strait Islander?

- Yes     No     I prefer not to say

Submit

0%

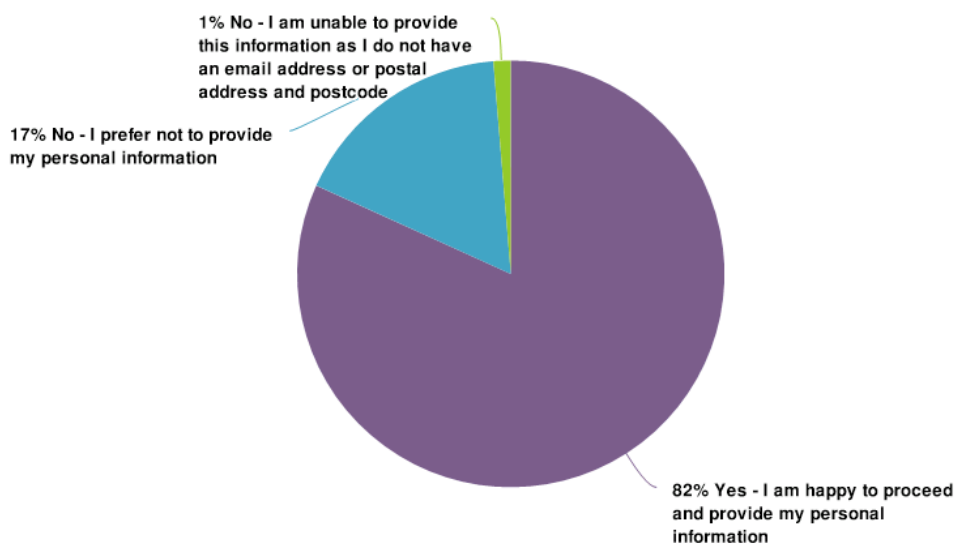
# Report for Naming the Beavers Road Bridge voting form

## Response Counts



Totals: 759

1. Darebin Council has introduced a new approach for all engagements with the community and is collecting some personal information from all participants, such as name and email address or postal address, and postcode.

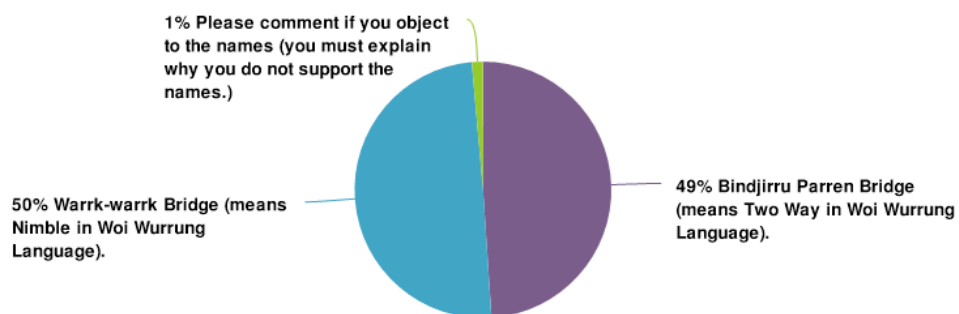


Value	Percent	Responses
Yes - I am happy to proceed and provide my personal information	81.8%	615
No - I prefer not to provide my personal information	16.9%	127
No - I am unable to provide this information as I do not have an email address or postal address and postcode	1.3%	10

Totals: 752



2. Please select your preferred name.



Value	Percent	Responses
Bindjirru Parren Bridge (means Two Way in Woi Wurrung Language).	49.0%	282
Warrk-warrk Bridge (means Nimble in Woi Wurrung Language).	49.7%	286
Please comment if you object to the names (you must explain why you do not support the names.)	1.4%	8
<b>Totals:</b>		<b>576</b>

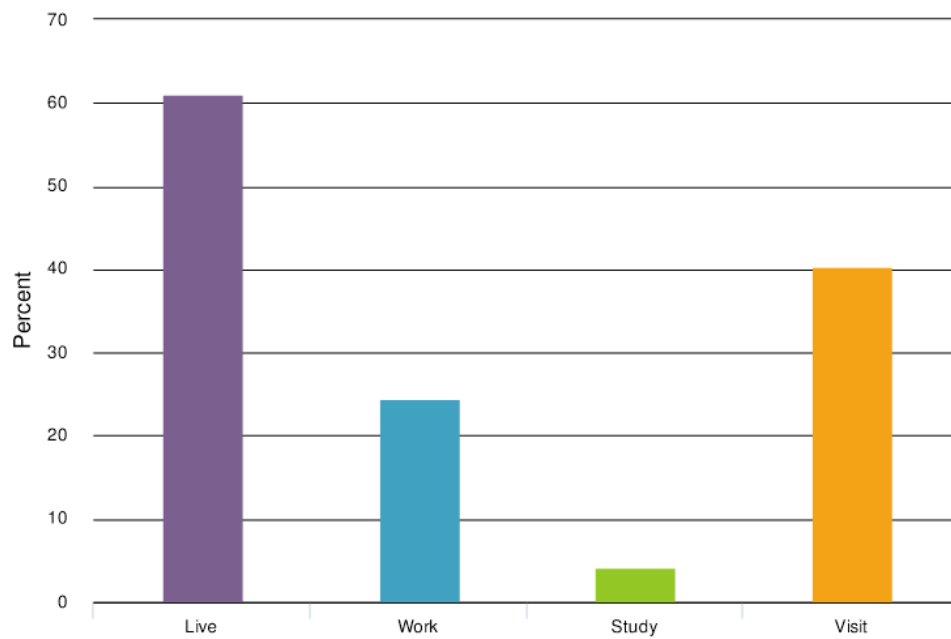
Please comment if you object to the names (you must explain why you do not support the names.)

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This information can be found on the Confidential attachment

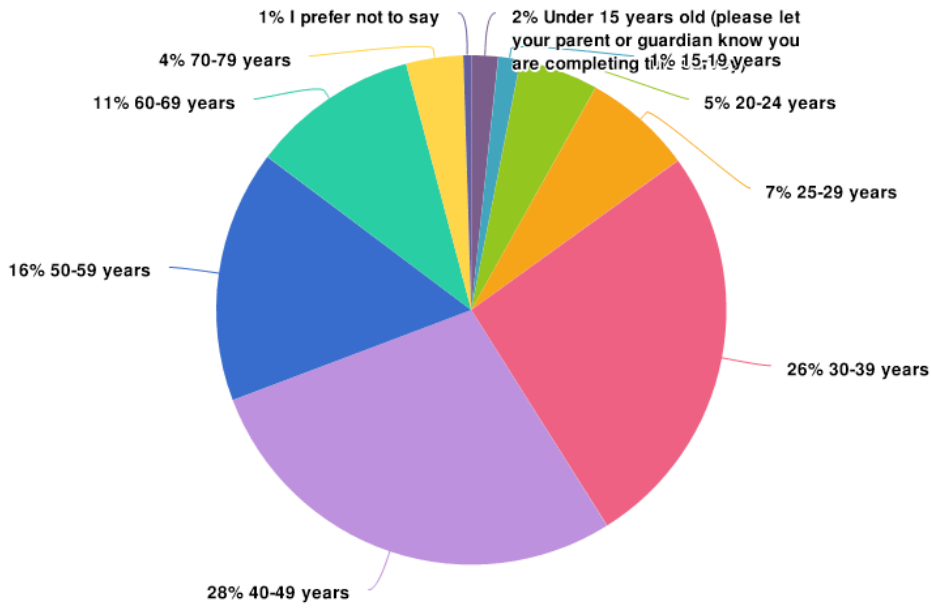
---

3. What is your relationship with Darebin? Tick all that apply.



Value	Percent	Responses
Live	61.1%	352
Work	24.5%	141
Study	4.2%	24
Visit	40.3%	232

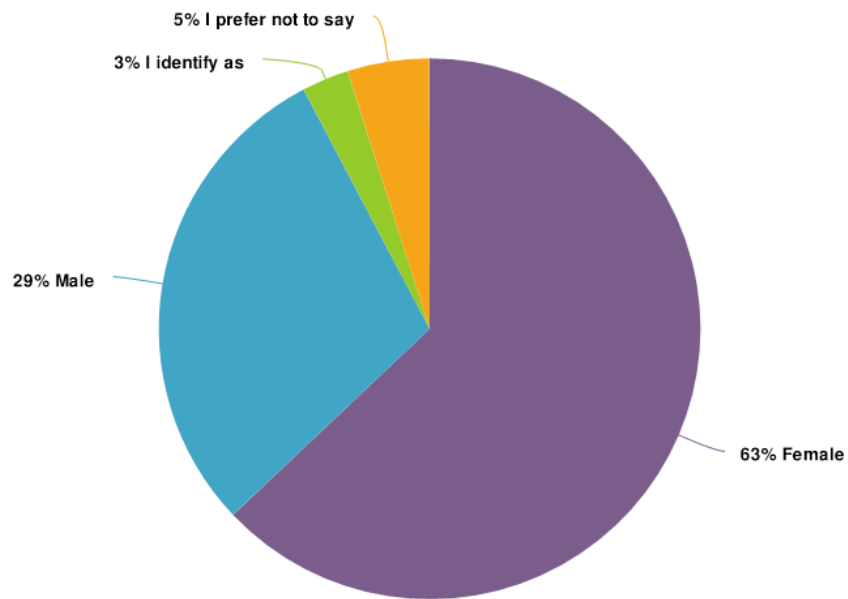
4. What is your age group?



Value	Percent	Responses
Under 15 years old (please let your parent or guardian know you are completing this survey)	1.7%	10
15-19 years	1.4%	8
20-24 years	5.0%	29
25-29 years	6.9%	40
30-39 years	26.0%	150
40-49 years	28.1%	162
50-59 years	16.0%	92
60-69 years	10.6%	61
70-79 years	3.6%	21
I prefer not to say	0.5%	3

Totals: 576

5. What is your gender?



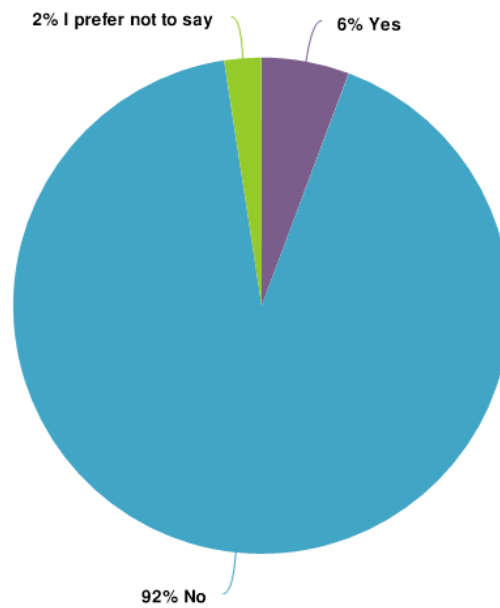
Value	Percent	Responses
Female	63.0%	362
Male	29.4%	169
I identify as	2.8%	16
I prefer not to say	4.9%	28

Totals: 575

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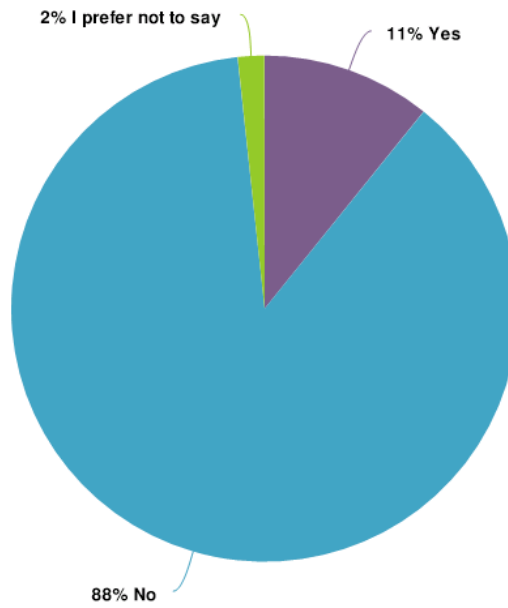
I identify as	Count
Non-Binary	2
Other	2
Genderfluid	1
Genderqueer	1
Helicopter	1
Human	1
Just SOUL	1
Male	1
Non binary	1
Non-binary	1
Nonbinary	1
genderqueer	1
non binary	1
she / they	1
Totals	16

6. Do you identify as having a disability?



Value	Percent	Responses
Yes	5.7%	33
No	91.8%	527
I prefer not to say	2.4%	14
		<b>Totals: 574</b>

7. Do you speak a language other than English at home?



Value	Percent	Responses
Yes	10.8%	62
No	87.5%	503
I prefer not to say	1.7%	10
		Totals: 575



8. What language(s) other than English do you speak at home?



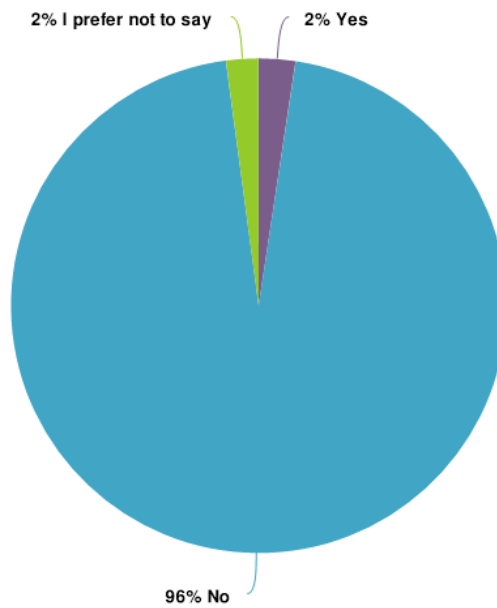
ResponseID	Response
12	Italian
24	Greek
29	urdu
35	Korean; Mandarin
57	Tagalog
70	Indonesian
71	Arabic
72	Spanish
83	Dutch
97	Italian
118	Greek
125	Maltese
134	German
143	Farsi

ResponseID	Response
162	Dutch and French
171	Italian
173	German
183	Dutch
187	Chinese Mandarin
198	Italian
231	French
248	Italian, Cantonese
308	french
321	Italian
328	Dutch
332	Vietnamese
385	Japanese
388	Japanese
417	Chinese
419	German
454	Italian
457	Italian
481	Lithuanian
493	Cantonese
498	German, French
548	French
550	Spanish /Italian
553	Portuguese

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ResponseID	Response
559	Croatian, Macedonian
566	russian
590	German, Spanish
597	Russian, French
617	Mandarin
619	Armenian
651	Swedish
680	Portugese
687	Greek
688	Italian
711	Norwegian
753	Punjabi, Hindi
754	German
756	Swedish
760	French
762	Vietnamese
764	Vietnamese
767	greek
768	italian

9. Are you Aboriginal or a Torres Strait Islander?



Value	Percent	Responses
Yes	2.4%	14
No	95.5%	549
I prefer not to say	2.1%	12
		Totals: 575

**8.3 SOCIAL & SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT POLICY 2021-2025****Author:** Coordinator Procurement & Contracting**Reviewed By:** General Manager, Governance and Engagement

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The current Social & Sustainable Procurement Policy under the *Local Government Act 1989* (LGA 1989) was adopted by Council on 16 December 2019.

Effective from 1 July 2021, the new *Local Government Act 2020*, Procurement s108 & s109 will replace all procurement matters previously covered under s186 of the LG Act (1989). The current *Local Government Act 1989*, which remains in effect until 30 June 2021, requires Council to review its Procurement Policy each financial year.

The new *Local Government Act 2020* requires Council to prepare and adopt a Procurement Policy in respect of the purchase of goods and services by 31 December 2021.

This report informs Council of the updated/revised Social & Sustainable Procurement Policy 2021-2025 to address the requirement of the 1989 Act and align with the 2020 Act.

<b>Recommendation</b>
-----------------------

**That** Council;

1. Adopts the updated Social and Sustainable Procurement Policy 2021-2025 attached as **Appendix A** as its procurement policy in accordance with section 108 & S109 of the *Local Government Act 2020*
- 

**BACKGROUND / KEY INFORMATION**

The updated Social and Sustainable Procurement Policy seeks to realise the achievements and further opportunities for Councils procurement activities to create an impact above and beyond the products or services purchased by Council. The updated policy maintains the value and benefits that are currently in operation and in accordance with the resolution from the Council meeting held on 16 December 2019.

The policy continues and improves the positive screening approach as opposed to limiting or preventing opportunities to participate (via bids or tenders). Structuring the framework and evaluation criteria to support the engagement of suppliers, vendors and partners that demonstrate corporate responsibility through delivery of social and environmental outcomes will continue to be a key goal.

The mandatory selection criteria and overall weighting of 20% for social and sustainable procurement will increase to 25% with social at 5%, local business at 5%, sustainability at 5% and the remaining 10% aligned to either category according to the procurement type or activity.

The remaining 75% is a combination of quality, quantity, risk, timelines and optimum value for money. The assessment criteria fall into one of 3 categories:

1. Capacity which measures resources, labour, expertise, plant & equipment,
2. Capability which measures competency, skills, experience, systems and methodology, and
3. Price.

Separate to the above weighting percentage, this draft policy will continue the aspirational 10% youth dividend as part of mandatory tender requirements.

The policy is further structured to Local Government procurement practices that are compliant and strictly regulated, with all activities occurring in the context of competition and administrative law requirements.

Council's Social and Sustainable Procurement Policy Principles continue to drive:

- Understanding our procurement spend – recognising that value for money is more than price paid.
- Providing more opportunities for the local business community, in particular our social enterprises, to increase their capacity and capability to become suppliers to Council.
- Increasing opportunities for local businesses and social enterprises to create capacity for local job seekers, especially those who are marginalised, disadvantaged and under-represented in the work force.
- Working to reduce our negative impact on the environment, support our climate emergency goals and move towards our aim of carbon neutral through purchasing behaviours.
- Leading in procurement governance practices of integrity, probity and accountability while building organisational capability and expertise.
- Achieving equity, inclusion and diversity outcomes.

A legal review was also undertaken of the Policy with no matters of concerns identified.

### **Previous Council Resolution**

At its meeting held on 16 December 2019, Council resolved:

*'That Council adopts the draft Social and Sustainable Procurement Policy attached as **Appendix A** as its procurement policy in accordance with Section 186A of the Local Government Act 1989'*

## COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

### Consultation

In developing the policy, the consultation included:

- Council department managers.
- Northern Councils Alliance – Corporate Services Directors Group. Other regional Councils, Local Government Victoria and MAV have requested that the Northern Region standardised policy be shared, with the view that the other regions will adopt a similar policy and approach.
- Maddocks Lawyers – legal advice on compliance with the new *Act* commissioned by Northern Councils Alliance Group.
- Procurement & Contracting Teams.
- MAV.
- Local Government Victoria.
- Sustainability Victoria.

## ANALYSIS

### Alignment to Council Plan / Council policy

Strategic Direction 4 - Responsible, Transparent and Responsive

The Social and Sustainable Procurement Policy is central to the following 2021-25 Council Plan Strategic Actions:

Strategic Action 2-55: Establish a regional alliance of government, business and community organisations, to drive economic outcomes, including local, social, sustainable procurement.

Strategic Action 2-56: Continue to implement our Social and Sustainable Procurement Policy to increase the engagement of Aboriginal-led businesses and focus on job creation for culturally and linguistically diverse peoples, and young people.

Strategic Action 2-57: Promote to Darebin businesses the benefits of voluntary adoption of our Social and Sustainable Procurement Policy.

### Environmental Sustainability Considerations

A more specific evaluation and assessment approach to Council's procurement framework will enable broader environmental sustainability outcomes to be achieved through Council's engagement with its suppliers, vendors and partners.

### Climate Emergency

Darebin recognises that we are in a state of climate emergency that requires urgent action. Reducing our environmental impact is a must and this can be achieved through our purchasing activity. Darebin was the first government body in the world to declare a Climate Emergency and the Social and Sustainable Procurement Policy seeks to embed action in response to that commitment both in procurement practice and evaluation.

### **Equity, Inclusion and Wellbeing Considerations**

The implementation of a procurement framework that includes a more specific evaluation and assessment approach to the engagement of suppliers, vendors and partners will take into account equity, inclusion and wellbeing outcomes in the best interests of our community.

### **Cultural Considerations**

The implementation of a procurement framework that includes a more specific evaluation and assessment approach to the engagement of suppliers, vendors and partners will take into account cultural outcomes and opportunities in the best interests of our community.

Through the Council Plan Action Plan, Council is seeking to continue implementation of the Social and Sustainable Procurement Policy to increase the engagement of Aboriginal-led businesses and focus on job creation for culturally and linguistically diverse peoples, and young people.

### **Economic Development Considerations**

The Social and Sustainable Procurement Policy will ensure that the quality and the value for money of the goods and services procured are not compromised and translate into a broader understanding of economic impact and economic value add.

Engagement of suppliers, vendors and partners that demonstrate corporate responsibility through social and environmental outcomes will continue to facilitate positive local economic outcomes. This will be strengthened through engagement with local businesses on how they can work with Council to achieve better community outcomes, in addition to potentially leveraging extended local networks.

Through the Council Plan Action Plan, Council is seeking to establish a regional alliance of government, business and community organisations, to drive economic outcomes, including local, social, sustainable procurement. A key goal is that alliance partners will sign on to Council's Social and Sustainable Procurement policy.

Through the Council Plan Action Plan, Council is seeking to promote to Darebin businesses the benefits of voluntary adoption of our Social and Sustainable Procurement Policy.

### **Financial and Resource Implications**

It is important that the implementation of a new social and sustainable procurement framework does not significantly increase Council's costs for goods, services and works or compromise value for money. However, it is recognised that procurement decisions can based on more than price alone can have significant indirect impact on the local economy, the environment and our community. This is an ongoing action as part of procurement best practice activities.



## Legal and Risk Implications

There are competition law, administrative law and procurement issues associated with seeking to specifically exclude entities from participating in public purchasing processes. Doing so could leave Council open to legal challenge and potential prosecution for contravention of the *Competition and Consumer Act 2010 (Cth) (CCA)*.

The Social and Sustainable Procurement Policy includes assessment criteria that supports the engagement of suppliers, vendors and partners that demonstrate corporate responsibility through delivery of social and environmental outcomes. This strengthens the alignment Council's procurement practices to ensure that Council funds drive the outcomes of the Council Plan and Community Vision.

## Operational Impacts

The current procurement policy under *LGA (1989)* can continue to apply, however the new Policy must be adopted by Council no later than 31 December 2021.

## DISCUSSION

The updated Policy continues the strong commitment to achieving social and sustainable outcomes. Whilst the policy incorporates the provisions of the *Local Government Act 2020* relating to procurement, all objectives and aims remain consistent with the Council's commitment and new Council Plan direction. Only a few changes are proposed as outlined in the following table.

LG Act 2020	Current policy	Proposed policy	Reason
s108 (3)(a) Public Tendering Threshold	Contract values exceeding: \$150,000 for Goods and Services or \$200,000 for Works would go to tender.	All contract values exceeding \$300,000 would go to tender.	Increase determined by cumulative CPI and cost increases since 2008
S108 (3)(c) & s109(1) Collaboration with other Councils	No requirement	Council will collaborate for contracts values exceeding \$1m or contracts of less financial value that offer high value in strategic outcomes.	Policy definition. The CEO must ensure any reports entering into a procurement agreement considers opportunities for collaboration
S108(5)	Procurement Policy is reviewed once each year	Procurement Policy is reviewed at least once during each 4-year term of the Council	Change to review period
S109(1)	Nil. Currently implied and managed through accountabilities rather than explicitly stated.	Council must comply with its Procurement Policy before entering into a contract	New
	20% of the evaluation weightings are applied to Social & Sustainable objectives	25% of the evaluation weighting are applied to Social & Sustainable objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased weighting applied according to the procurement type or activity.</li> <li>Quarterly reporting provided to Council on progress and achievements</li> </ul>

The proposed Social & Sustainable Procurement Policy is structured in parts containing:

- a) Compliance aspects addressing the new LG Act provisions.
- b) Current Social & Sustainable Procurement priorities, principles, objectives.
- c) Quotation and Tendering processes.

## **IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY**

### **Training**

Training across Council will be required to successfully refresh and inform staff of the policy, procedures, evaluation methodologies and reporting. It is an organisation-wide policy and will be adequately supported in the training rollout.

Local businesses will be supported to promote social and sustainable objectives through the chamber of commerce and targeted information forums.

Further support and leadership will be provided to support the exploration of collaborative procurement opportunities.

### **Communication**

Council will continue to proactively engage with its contractors and vendors to identify ways to improve the contractor experience and success. Training and support, including examples and frequently asked questions will also need to be available to local and other potential vendors. All relevant material and information will be available through Council's website.

Council is conscious that some smaller, local service providers will continue to seek support particularly those overwhelmed by process. Council has over time improved its engagement by lessening systems and processes so that smaller businesses are able to easily and quickly respond to opportunities with Council.

### **Timeline**

Social and sustainable procurement practices are already underway with over 160 tender/quotations conducted which have highlighted our social and sustainable objectives.

The training program will continue with a priority focus on our social objectives. The implementation of the new policy will continue to build on the 2019 Social and Sustainable Policy achievements.

**RELATED DOCUMENTS**

- Social and Sustainable Procurement Policy 2019
- Local Government Act 2020
- Preface to the New Best Practice Procurement Guidelines June/July 2020
- Victorian Local Government Best Practice Guidelines 2013
- Beyond Value for Money: Social Procurement for Victorian Local Government
- Victoria's social procurement framework

**Attachments**

- Social and Sustainable Procurement Policy 2021 - 2025 (**Appendix A**) [↓](#)

**DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST**

Section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020* requires members of Council staff and persons engaged under contract to provide advice to Council to disclose any conflicts of interest in a matter to which the advice relates.

The Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.



**DRAFT**  
**DAREBIN CITY COUNCIL'S**  
**SOCIAL AND SUSTAINABLE**  
**PROCUREMENT POLICY**

**1 JULY 2021 – 30 JUNE 2025**

*ACHIEVING SOCIAL AND SUSTAINABLE OUTCOMES THROUGH OUR  
PROCUREMENT ACTIVITY.*

**ADOPTED BY COUNCIL: AUGUST 2021**

## Procurement Policy

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DRAFT

## Definitions and Abbreviations

Term	Definition
Act	<a href="#">Local Government Act 2020</a> .
Collaborative Procurement Arrangement	A contract established by the Council, government or a nominated agent, such as Procurement Australasia, Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV), Northern Region Group of Councils or local government entity, for the benefit of numerous state, federal and/or local government entities that achieves best value by leveraging combined economies of scale.
Commercial in Confidence	Information that, if released, may prejudice the business dealings or commercial interests of Council or another party, e.g. prices, discounts, rebates, profits, methodologies and process information, etc.
Contract Management	The process that ensures all parties to a contract fully meet their respective obligations as efficiently and effectively as possible, in order to deliver the contract objectives and provide Value for Money.
Council	Darebin City Council
Councillors	Council's elected representatives (the Mayor and Councillors) or Administrator(s) appointed to act in this capacity.
Council Staff	Includes all Council officers, temporary employees, contractors, volunteers and consultants while engaged by Council.
IBAC	The Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission
Indigenous Business	An Indigenous Business is one that is at least 50% owned by an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islands person(s) (consistent with Supply Nation's definition).
Local Business	A commercial business with an operational premises that is physically located within the municipal borders of the 7 Northern Regional Councils.
Northern Councils Alliance (NCA)	The 7 Councils comprising the NCA, being the Cities of Darebin, Darebin, Hume, Moreland and Whittlesea and Mitchell and Nillumbik Shire Councils.
Probity	Within government, the term "probity" is often used in a general sense to mean "good process". A procurement process that conforms to the expected standards of probity is one in which clear procedures that are consistent with the Council's policies and legislation, are established, understood and followed from the outset. These procedures need to consider the legitimate interests of suppliers and ensure that all potential suppliers are treated equitably.
Procurement	Procurement is the whole process of acquisition of external goods, services and works. This process spans the whole life cycle from initial concept through to the end of the useful life of an asset (including disposal) or the end of a service contract.
Schedule of Rates Contract	A standing offer arrangement based on a Schedule of Rates contract that sets out rates for goods and services which are available for the term of the agreement but without a commitment to purchase a specified value or quantity of goods or services.

Term	Definition
Sustainability	Activities that meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.
Tender Process	The process of inviting parties from either a select list or via public advertisement to submit an offer by tender followed by evaluation of submissions and selection of a successful bidder or tenderer in accordance with pre-determined evaluation criteria.
Total Contract Sum	<p>The potential total value of the contract including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• costs for the full term of the contract, including any options for either party to extend the contract;</li> <li>• applicable goods and services tax (GST);</li> <li>• anticipated contingency allowances or variations;</li> <li>• all other known, anticipated and reasonably foreseeable costs.</li> </ul>
Value for Money	<p>Value for Money in procurement is about selecting the supply of goods, services and works taking into account both cost and non-cost factors including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-cost factors such as contribution to the advancement of Council's priorities, fitness for purpose, quality, service and support; and</li> <li>• Cost-related factors including whole-of-life costs and transaction costs associated with acquiring, using, holding, maintaining and disposing of the goods, services or works.</li> </ul>



## I. Procurement Policy

### A. Overview

This Procurement Policy is made under Section 108 of the [Local Government Act 2020 \(the Act\)](#). The Act requires each council to:

- Prepare and adopt a procurement policy which specifies the principles, processes and procedures applying in respect of the purchase of goods and services and carrying out of works by the Council; and
- Review its Procurement Policy at least once during each 4-year term of the Council.
- This Policy has been developed collaboratively by the Northern Councils Alliance with a view to facilitating smooth collaborative procurement processes, consistent with *the Act*. This Policy also incorporates content that is specific to the Council and may differ from that of the other NCA councils and is intended to apply only to procurement involving the Council.

### B. Applicability

This Policy applies to all contracting and procurement activities at the Council and is applicable to Councillors and Council Staff.

It is recognised this will enhance achievement of the Council's objectives such as sustainable and socially responsible procurement, supporting local economies and obtaining Value for Money, leading to a better result in the provision of goods, services and works for the benefit of the community.

This Policy provides direction on the conduct of procurement activities throughout the sourcing, management and disposal phases. It also covers the general procurement framework but does not extend to the related accounts payable processes.

The Council must comply with this Procurement Policy before entering into a contract for the purchase of goods or services or the carrying out of works.

### C. Objectives

This Policy is consistent with the requirements of S108(2) of *the Act* and will:

- Seek to promote open and fair competition and provide Value for Money;
- Provide clear guidelines to the Council to allow consistency and control over procurement activities;
- Demonstrate accountability to ratepayers and residents;
- Provide guidance on ethical behaviour in public sector procurement;
- Demonstrate the application of best practice in procurement activities;
- Demonstrate the consideration of sustainability in procurement with respect to social, economic and environmental factors;
- Increase the probability of obtaining the best outcome for the municipal community when procuring goods and services; and
- Seek to undertake collaborative procurement in accordance with section 2.3.4 of this Policy;

These objectives will be achieved by requiring, that the Council's contracting, purchasing and contract management activities:

- Support the Council's corporate strategies, aims and objectives;
- Span the whole life cycle of an acquisition and take sustainability considerations into account;
- Achieve demonstrable Value for Money;
- Are conducted in, and demonstrate an impartial, fair and ethical manner;
- Seek continual improvement through innovative and technological initiatives; and
- Generate and support Local Business through inclusion wherever practicable.

## 1 Procedures

### 1.1 Treatment of GST

All monetary values stated in this policy include GST unless specifically stated otherwise.

## 2 Effective Legislative and Policy Compliance and Control

### 2.1 Ethics and Probity

#### 2.1.1 Requirement

The Council's procurement activities shall be performed in an open, transparent and ethical manner with demonstrated integrity, fairness and accountability that meets relevant legal requirements.

All tender processes shall be conducted in accordance with the requirements of this Procurement Policy and any associated procedures, relevant legislation, relevant Australian Standards, Commercial Law and *the Act*.

#### 2.1.2 Conduct of Councillors and Council Staff

Councillors and Council Staff shall at all times conduct themselves in ways that are in accordance with the Councillor Code of Conduct or the Staff Code of Conduct respectively, and will perform their duties ethically and with integrity and must:

- Treat potential and existing suppliers with equality and fairness;
- Not use their position to seek or receive personal gain in procurement matters;
- Maintain confidentiality of Commercial in Confidence information;
- Present the highest standards of professionalism and probity;
- Afford suppliers and tenderers with the same information and an equal opportunity to tender or quote for goods, services and works contracts;
- Be able to account for all decisions and demonstrate and provide evidence of the processes followed;
- Not perform any work under any Council contracts they are supervising i.e. Council Staff cannot also work for the relevant supplier;
- Query incidents, decisions or directions that appear to contradict or deviate from Council's standards of ethics or probity or established policies and procedures; and
- Ensure that this Procurement Policy and Council's Procurement Guidelines are adhered to in relation to any expenditure of Council funds.

#### 2.1.3 Conflict of Interest

Councillors and Council Staff shall at all times avoid situations which may give rise to an actual or perceived conflict of interest. A conflict of interest may be a 'general' or a 'material' conflict of interest.

A member of Council Staff has a general conflict of interest in a matter if an impartial, fair-minded person would consider that the person's private interests could result in that person acting in a manner that is contrary to their public duty.

A member of Council Staff has a material conflict of interest in a matter if an affected person would gain a benefit or suffer a loss depending on the outcome of the matter. The benefit or loss may be direct or indirect and pecuniary or non-pecuniary. Affected persons include, among others, the member of Council Staff and their family members.

Council Staff involved in the procurement process, in particular preparing tender documentation, writing tender specifications, opening tenders, participating in tender evaluation panels, preparing a recommendation report; and Councillors and Council Staff awarding tenders must:

- **Avoid** conflicts of interest, whether material or general or actual, potential or perceived;
- **Declare** that they do not have a conflict of interest in respect of the procurement. All Council Staff participating in tender evaluation panels must complete a Conflict of Interest declaration. Council Staff must declare any actual or perceived conflicts in line with Council's internal processes for reporting conflicts of interest; and
- **Observe** prevailing Council and Government guidelines on how to prevent or deal with conflict of interest situations; and not take advantage of any tender related information whether or not for personal gain.

#### 2.1.4 Fair and Honest Dealing

All prospective contractors and suppliers must be treated impartially and afforded an equal opportunity to tender or submit a quotation.

Any suspected improper conduct, including suspected fraud, corruption, substantial mismanagement of public resources, risk to public health and safety, risk to the environment, or detrimental action should be managed in accordance with Council's internal policies and processes.

#### 2.1.5 Probity, Accountability and Transparency

Accountability in procurement means being able to justify and provide evidence of the process followed. An independent third party must be able to see clearly that a process has been followed and that the process was fair and reasonable.

Council Staff must be able to account for all procurement decisions and ensure all procurement activities leave an audit trail for monitoring and reporting purposes.

#### 2.1.6 Gifts and Benefits

No Councillor or member of Council Staff shall seek or accept any immediate or future reward or benefit in return for the performance of any duty or work for Council or where it could be reasonably perceived as influencing them or their position or undermining their integrity or the integrity of the process in some way.

Any gift or benefit offered to a Councillor or Council Staff will be managed in accordance with Council's internal policies and processes.

Councillors and Council Staff, particularly contract supervisors:

- must not knowingly visit a current supplier's premises without invitation when acting in their official capacity; and
- must not knowingly engage a Council supplier for private benefit, unless that engagement is on proper commercial terms.

#### 2.1.7 Disclosure of Information

Commercial in Confidence information received by the Council must not be disclosed and is to be stored in a secure location.

Councillors and Council Staff must take all reasonable measures to maintain confidentiality of:

- Information disclosed by organisations in tenders, quotation or during tender negotiations; and
- Commercial in Confidence information.

Councillors and Council Staff are to avoid references to current or proposed contracts in discussion with acquaintances or outside interests.

Discussion with potential suppliers during tender evaluations should not go beyond the extent necessary to resolve doubt on what is being offered by that supplier.

At no stage should any discussion be entered into which could improperly influence the procurement process or negotiation of a contract prior to the contract approval process being finalised, other than authorised pre-contract negotiations.

#### 2.1.8 Complaints & Reporting suspicious activities

##### **Complaints Handling**

Members of the public and suppliers, are encouraged to report known or suspected incidences of improper conduct to the CEO. Councillors and Council Staff will report and manage complaints in accordance with Council's internal policies and processes.

##### **Reporting Suspicious Activities**

All Councillors, Council Staff and Council suppliers are required at all times to act honestly and with integrity and to safeguard the public resources for which they are responsible. Council is committed to protecting all revenue, expenditure and assets from any attempt to gain illegal benefits (financial or otherwise).

Council will take all reasonable steps to protect those who assist Council by providing information about suspected fraud. This will include confidentiality of identity and protection from harassment, to the extent possible.

Suspected improper conduct, offers of bribes, commissions and any other irregular approaches from suppliers, prospective suppliers or other individuals will be investigated and reported in accordance with Council's internal policies and processes.

The CEO must notify IBAC of any matter they suspect on reasonable grounds to involve corrupt conduct occurring or having occurred in accordance with mandatory reporting requirements under the *Independent Broad-based Anti-Corruption Commission Act 2011*.

## 2.2 Governance

### 2.2.1 Structure

Council has delegated a range of powers, duties and functions to the CEO in relation to procurement. The delegation aims to ensure that the Council's procurement structure operates according to processes that:

- Are flexible enough to procure in a timely manner the diverse range of goods, works and services required by Council;
- Guarantee that prospective contractors and suppliers are afforded an equal opportunity to tender or submit a quotation; and
- Encourage competition and collaboration,

even where the CEO runs a procurement process under delegation.

### 2.2.2 Methods

The Council's standard methods for procuring goods, services and works shall be by any of the following:

- Purchase order following a quotation process from suppliers for goods or services that represent best Value for Money under the quotation thresholds adopted by the Council. An approved purchase order must be created prior to committing expenditure on behalf of Council for the provision of services, goods or works in accordance with the Council's procurement thresholds and guidelines;
- Under contract following a quotation or tender process;
- Using Collaborative Procurement Arrangements;
- Multi-stage tenders commencing with an EOI followed by a tender process;
- Under a sole-sourcing arrangement in line with the conditions contained in section 2.3.2.3;
- Purchasing Cards; and
- Petty Cash,

unless other arrangements are authorised by Council or under appropriate delegated authority on an 'as needs' basis as required by abnormal circumstances such as emergencies.

### 2.2.3 Responsible Financial Management

The principle of responsible financial management shall be applied to all procurement activities. Accordingly, to give effect to this principle, the availability of existing funds within an approved budget or source of funds shall be established prior to the commencement of any procurement action for the supply of goods, services or works.

Council funds must be used efficiently and effectively to procure goods, services and works and every attempt must be made to contain the costs of the procurement process without compromising any of the procurement principles set out in this Policy.

## 2.3 Procurement Thresholds and Competition

Wherever it would likely achieve best value, procurements will be arranged under a relevant contractual arrangement established in accordance with section 108 of [the Act](#) and this Procurement Policy.

In every procurement activity all practicable efforts will be made to consider the sustainable procurement considerations as listed in Section 3.2.

Council will invite offers from the supply market for goods, services and works in accordance with the thresholds listed in [Appendix IA](#).

### 2.3.1 Procurement Principles

Council will apply the following fundamental best practice principles to procurement, irrespective of the value and complexity of that procurement:

- Value for Money;
- Sustainability (social, economic and environmental);
- Open and fair competition;
- Accountability;
- Risk management; and
- Probity and transparency.

### 2.3.2 Procurement Methodology

Section 108 of the Act details that each Council will set the public tender threshold above which tenders or expressions of interest for contracts must be publicly invited.

A public tender process must be used for all procurements valued at \$300,000 and above (incl. GST) for goods, services or works.

For procurements under \$300,000 (incl. GST), the procurement methodology and thresholds detailed in [Appendix I](#) will apply.

#### 2.3.2.1 Exemptions from tendering

The following circumstances are exempt from the general publicly advertised tender, quotation and expression of interest requirements.

Exemption Name	Explanation, limitations, responsibilities and approvals
1. A contract made because of genuine emergency or hardship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where the Council has resolved that the contract must be entered into because of an emergency (e.g. to provide immediate response to a natural disaster, declared emergency).</li> </ul>
2. A contract made with, or a purchase from a contract made by, another government entity, government-owned entity or other approved third party.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This general exemption allows engagements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>With another government entity or government owned entity. For example, Federal, State or Local Government or an entity owned by the Federal, State or Local Government; and/or</li> <li>In reliance on contracts and arrangements established by another government entity, local authority or local government group purchasing scheme, Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) or National Procurement network members (e.g. Local Buy), Procurement Australia (PA).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
3. Extension of contracts while Council is at market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allows Council to extend an existing contract where the procurement process to replace the contract has commenced, and where the tender process or negotiations will take or are taking longer than expected.</li> <li>This exemption may be used when the establishment of an interim short-term arrangement with an alternative supplier is considered not to be in the public interest, as it may be cost prohibitive and/or present a risk in the delivery of critical public services to the municipality.</li> </ul>
4. Professional services unsuitable for tendering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legal Services – Issues based advice which is unable to be quantified. All other legal advice. Planned services will be subject to quotation or tender process in accordance with this policy.</li> <li>Insurance.</li> </ul>
5. Novated Contracts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where the initial contract was entered into in compliance with the Act and due diligence has been undertaken in respect to the new party.</li> </ul>

Exemption Name	Explanation, limitations, responsibilities and approvals
6. Information technology resellers and software developers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allows Council to renew software licenses and maintenance and support, or upgrade existing systems, where there is only one supplier of the software, who holds the intellectual property rights to the software.</li> </ul>
7. Regional Waste and Resource Recovery Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Situations where a Regional Waste and Resource Recovery Group constituted the Environment Protection Act 1970 had already conducted a public tender for and on behalf of its member councils.</li> </ul>
8. Statutory Compulsory Monopoly Insurance Schemes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Motor vehicle compulsory third party</li> <li>WorkCover</li> </ul>
9. Operating Leases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where a lessor leases an asset (generally a vehicle or plant and equipment) to the Council and assumes the residual value risk of the vehicle.</li> </ul>
10. Other specific Council exemptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Defined in Appendix 5.</li> <li>Specific Council exemptions will be reviewed and updated in Appendix 5 from time to time, as per the Policy Review Process (section 5.1.2).</li> </ul>

#### 2.3.2.2 Contract Variations

All contract variations must be assessed to determine whether they are properly characterised as variations, or whether they are in effect a new contract. This will depend on factors like:

- The monetary value of the proposed variation, i.e. the value of the variation in the context of the thresholds fixed by the Procurement Policy; and
- The subject matter of the proposed variation, and whether it is consistent with the scope of the original contract.

#### 2.3.2.3 Sole or select sourcing

Supply of goods, services or works can be sought from one supplier (sole sourcing) or a restricted group of suppliers (select sourcing) where it is consistent with this Procurement Policy and:

- It is in the public interest;
- There is one or a limited number of available tenderers in the market or suppliers able to submit quotations;
- The marketplace is restricted by statement of license or third-party ownership of an asset (excluding public utility plant); or
- Council is party to a joint arrangement where Council jointly owns the Intellectual Property with a third party provider.

#### **Sole Sourcing:**

If there is a current procurement or disposal process in place, that process must be terminated prior to sole sourcing being implemented.

Sole sourcing is subject to existing delegations.

#### **Select Sourcing:**

Select sourcing is subject to existing delegations.

### 2.3.3 Public Tender Requirements

All public tenders invited by the Council will be published via Council's eTendering Portal and may be advertised in the media.

Information regarding Current Tenders and Awarded Tenders will be published on Council's website.

#### 2.3.3.1 Tender Evaluation

A tender evaluation panel will be established to evaluate each tender submission against the tender's selection criteria. Tender evaluation panels can include external personnel in order to ensure the best outcome for a procurement activity and must comprise of at least 3 persons as well as a chairperson.

A detailed Tender Evaluation Plan shall be developed, approved and strictly adhered to by that panel. Amongst other things, this involves the establishment of more detailed evaluation criteria (i.e. than those published with the tender) and the application of a pre-approved and robust weighted scoring system.

The Tender Evaluation Plan should be completed and signed off prior to the tender or quotation being issued.

#### 2.3.3.2 Evaluation Criteria

The Council may include the following evaluation criteria categories to determine whether a proposed contract provides Value for Money:

- Mandatory Compliance criteria (e.g. ABN registration, OH&S, Fair Work Act);
- Tendered price;
- Capacity of the Tenderer to provide the goods and/or services and/or works;
- Capability of the Tenderer to provide the Goods and/or Services and/or Works; and
- Demonstration of sustainability.

#### 2.3.3.3 Probity Advisor

A formal probity plan should be developed, and a probity advisor appointed in the following circumstances:

- Where the proposed Total Contract Sum exceeds \$1 million over the life of the contract or greater value set by Council from time to time; or
- Where a proposed contract is considered by Council or the CEO to be particularly complex, of a high risk or controversial nature, and requiring a high level of public confidence.

A probity advisor may be appointed to any tender evaluation panel and may be appointed to oversee the evaluation process.

#### 2.3.3.4 Shortlisting and Negotiations

Council may conduct a shortlisting process during EOI, tender and quotation processes. Shortlisting can be based on any criterion or criteria but only in pursuit of the most advantageous outcome for the Council.

Shortlisted tenderers may be invited by the Council to submit a best and final offer in relation to all or certain aspects of their respective tenders. Once a preferred tenderer/s is/are selected, negotiations can be conducted in order to obtain the optimal solution and commercial arrangements, within the original scope and intent of the tender. Probity requirements apply to all negotiations.



#### 2.3.4 Collaborative Procurement

In accordance with section 108(c) of *the Act*, the Council will first give consideration to collaboration with other Councils and public bodies or utilise Collaborative Procurement Arrangements, when procuring goods, services and works in order to take advantage of economies of scale.

Council Staff must consider any opportunities for Collaborative Procurement in relation to a procurement process undertaken by Council. Any Council report that recommends commencing a procurement process must set out information relating to opportunities for Collaborative Procurement, if available, including:

- The nature of those opportunities, if any, and the councils or public bodies with which they are available; and
- Why Council did, or did not, pursue the identified opportunities for collaboration in relation to that procurement process.

When collaborating with the NCA, the Council will do so in accordance with the following:

- The NCA will develop a consolidated contract register to identify joint procurement projects on an annual basis.
- Council contracts with a minimum value of \$1 million per annum (per Council), for the ongoing supply of goods or provision of services or works, other than projects that are unique to an individual Council (e.g. unique construction or works projects), will be included in the consolidated contract register for collaboration consideration;
- Other contracts which, due to the subject matter, nature or scope, are likely to deliver operational efficiencies if procured in collaboration with the NCA, must be included in the consolidated contract register for consideration as a possible joint procurement opportunity;
- Where Collaborative Procurement is to be pursued:
  - A pre-market approval submission will be submitted to each Council and the NCA prior to commitment to collaboration, seeking delegation of contract approval to CEOs;
  - The NCA will establish a Heads of Agreement that gives authority for a lead council to act as each Council's agent in the Collaborative Procurement;
  - Each of the Councils who participate will be able to enter into a contract with the preferred supplier identified through the Collaborative Procurement process, or may choose as a group to enter into a contract using "jump in/opt-in" contract provisions during the contract term, or with the Council which conducted the public tender; and
  - Each participating council must be involved in:
    - The initial decision to undertake the Collaborative Procurement;
    - Preparation of, and agreement to, the specifications;
    - Ensuring probity for the Collaborative Procurement; and
    - The acceptance of tender(s) and awarding of contract(s).

Furthermore, Council may collaborate with other Councils or other bodies such as MAV Procurement or Procurement Australasia to procure goods, services or works, or utilise existing Collaborative Procurement Arrangements for the procurement of goods, services or works established through a public tender process where it provides an advantageous, Value for Money outcome for the Council.

Any Federal or State Government grant funded projects may be excluded from collaborative procurement.

## 2.4 Delegation of Authority

### 2.4.1 Requirement

Delegations define the limitations within which Council Staff are permitted to commit Council to the procurement of goods, services or works and the associated costs. The Instrument of Delegation allows specified Council Staff to undertake certain purchases, quotation, tender and contractual processes without prior referral to the Council. This enables the Council to conduct procurement activities in an efficient and timely manner whilst maintaining transparency and integrity.

Council has delegated responsibilities relating to the expenditure of funds for the purchase of goods, services and works, the acceptance of quotations and tenders and for contract management activities to the CEO. The CEO has further delegated some of those responsibilities to other members of Council Staff, subject to specified conditions and limitations.

## 2.5 Internal Controls

The CEO will install and maintain a framework of internal controls over procurement processes that will ensure:

- More than one person is involved in and responsible for the authorisation and management of a transaction from end to end;
- Transparency in the procurement process;
- A clearly documented audit trail exists for procurement activities;
- Appropriate authorisations are obtained and documented;
- Systems are in place for appropriate monitoring and performance measurement; and
- A process is in place for escalation, where appropriate, of procurement matters (including procedural non-compliance) to the Executive Leadership Team, the Audit and Risk Committee and Council.

## 2.6 Risk Management

### 2.6.1 General

Risk assessments are a vital part of the procurement planning process, particularly for significant contracts. Risks will be identified for each part of the sourcing, transition, delivery and finalisation stages of procurement. Appropriate risk avoidance and mitigation strategies will be employed whenever practicable and appropriate.

## 2.7 Endorsement

Council Staff must not publicly endorse any products or services without the permission of the relevant Director or the CEO.

## 2.8 Dispute Resolution

Where relevant, all Council contracts shall incorporate dispute management and alternative dispute resolution provisions to minimise the chance of disputes escalating to legal action.

## 2.9 Contract Management

In order to continually improve its procurement and contract management processes and outcomes, Council will evaluate and seek to improve on all aspects of procurement and contract management, in accordance with its documented procurement processes and Contract Management Guidelines.

Good contract management ensures goods, services and works are delivered to the required standards of quality and quantity as intended by the contract through:

- Establishing a system monitoring and achieving the responsibilities and obligations of all parties under the contract;
- Providing a means for the early recognition of issues and performance problems and the identification of solutions;
- Adhering to the Council's risk management framework and relevant Occupational Health and Safety and sustainability requirements.

Council contracts are to include contract management requirements commensurate with the complexity of the procurement. Furthermore, contracts are to be proactively managed by the member of Council Staff responsible for the delivery of the contracted goods, services or works to ensure the Council and therefore the community, receives Value for Money.

Council awards some contracts that are strategically critical and of relatively high value. Council will provide additional senior oversight to the management of such significant contracts.

### 3 Demonstrate Sustained Value

#### 3.1 Achieving Value for Money

##### 3.1.1 Requirement

The Council's procurement activities will be carried out on the basis of obtaining Value for Money. This means minimising the total cost of ownership over the lifetime of the requirement consistent with acceptable quality, reliability and delivery considerations. Lowest price is not the sole determinant of Value for Money.

##### 3.1.2 Approach

This will be facilitated by:

- Achieving continuous improvement in procurement activity in accordance with the direction set out in the Council's Strategic Procurement Plan;
- Developing, implementing and managing processes that support the co-ordination and streamlining of activities throughout the procurement lifecycle;
- Effective use of competition;
- Using existing Council contractual arrangement or Collaborative Procurement Arrangements where appropriate;
- Identifying and rectifying inefficiencies in procurement processes;
- Developing cost efficient tender processes;
- Council Staff responsible for providing procurement services or assistance within the Council providing competent advice in terms of available products and agreements; and
- Working with suppliers to create relationships that are professional, productive, and are appropriate to the value and importance of the goods, services and works being acquired.

#### 3.2 Sustainable Procurement

##### 3.2.1 Sustainable procurement definition

Sustainable procurement involves decision making that has the most positive environmental, social and economic impacts possible across the entire lifecycle of goods, services and works. The United Nations Environment Programme defines sustainable procurement as a "process whereby organisations meet their needs for goods, services, works and utilities in a way that achieves Value for Money on a whole of life basis in terms of generating benefits not only the organisation, but also to society and the economy whilst minimising damage to the environment."

3.2.2 Applying sustainable procurement in Council

Sustainability will be embedded in the Council’s work. All Council Staff will have a clear and shared understanding about what it means and how they can apply it to their daily tasks. The Council commits to applying the principles of sustainability to all of its decision-making and activities.

Council demonstrates sustainable procurement by:

- Being accountable for its impacts on society, the economy and the environment including the impacts of the organisation’s supply chain;
- Examining anticipated organisational, project and/or community needs;
- Continually improving sustainability specifications, practices and outcomes; and
- Planning and undertaking sustainability evaluations as part of contracting activities.

3.2.3 Principles and objectives

In its [Sustainable Procurement Policy as detailed in Appendix 2](#), Council commits to:

- Applying specific principles of sustainability to its decision-making and activities; and
- Focusing on specific Economic, Environmental and Social objectives.

The following Economic, Environmental and Social objectives have been determined in line with these principles.

Area	Principles	Objectives
Economic	<p>Council is committed to procurement that supports Local Business and economic diversity in the NCA. Where practicable and applicable Council will give preference to goods manufactured or produced in Australia and will actively seek quotations and tenders from Local Businesses in the Northern Region.</p> <p>Council’s Sustainable Procurement Policy (as detailed in Appendix 2) will be underpinned by the following principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring accountability and transparency;</li> <li>• Ensuring Value for Money outcomes;</li> <li>• Ensuring open and effective competition, and development of competitive Local Business and industry;</li> <li>• Fostering innovation and emerging sectors; and</li> <li>• Considering life cycle costs</li> </ul>	<p>Council’s economic sustainability approach aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieve Value for Money on a whole of life (including disposal) basis, rather than just initial cost;</li> <li>• Consider broader life cycle impacts of products procured;</li> <li>• Ensure probity and accountability in the procurement process;</li> <li>• Commit to sourcing locally as detailed in Appendix 2;</li> <li>• Build relationships with Local Business and encourage procurement from them to help build their capacity; and</li> <li>• Increase local employment.</li> </ul> <p><i>Appendix 2 details the policy by which Council will achieve the above objectives.</i></p>

Area	Principles	Objectives
<p>Environmental</p>	<p>Where applicable Council will purchase goods, services and works that reduce air, water and soil pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, waste production, natural resource depletion and biodiversity depletion whenever they present an acceptable Value for Money outcome, and in some cases where they might not. Council's sustainable procurement strategies (as detailed in Appendix 2) will be underpinned by the following principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Considering a product's or asset's lifecycle;</li> <li>• Promoting circular economy participation;</li> <li>• Managing demand to reduce procurement requirements;</li> <li>• Encouraging innovation through specifications; and</li> <li>• Engaging suppliers who are also committed to reducing their environmental impact.</li> </ul>	<p>Council's environmental sustainability and approach aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve energy efficiency;</li> <li>• Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and contribution towards Council's carbon footprint;</li> <li>• Minimise waste production;</li> <li>• Improve water efficiency;</li> <li>• Reduce air, water and soil pollution;</li> <li>• Reduce biodiversity impacts; and</li> <li>• Increase the use of recycled materials to:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Reduce demand for raw materials and non-renewable resources; and</li> <li>○ Close the loop on kerbside recycling.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><i>Appendix 2 details the policy by which Council will achieve the above objectives.</i></p>
<p>Social</p>	<p>Council is committed to building stronger communities and meeting social objectives which benefit the municipality and commits to integration of measures in its procurement processes and documentation which promote improved social outcomes. Council's sustainable procurement (as detailed in Appendix 2) will be underpinned by the following principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A thorough understanding of the socio-economic issues affecting the community;</li> <li>• Creation of training and employment opportunities for unemployed or disadvantaged residents and ratepayers in Council's municipality, and marginalised job seekers in Council's municipality, to address local socio-economic issues;</li> <li>• Promotion of equity, diversity and equal opportunity; and</li> <li>• Respect for human rights, the rule of law and international norms of behaviour.</li> </ul>	<p>Council's social sustainability approach aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure vendors do not exploit workers and provide fair wages, including inclusive business practices;</li> <li>• Maintain a social procurement program to increase social procurement spend across the NCA;</li> <li>• Ensure sourced products are accessible by all segments of the community;</li> <li>• Increase employment opportunities for indigenous people, people with a disability, disadvantaged people and long term unemployed;</li> <li>• Improve gender equity; and</li> <li>• Prevent, detect and remove modern slavery from Council's supply chain.</li> </ul> <p><i>Appendix 2 details the strategies by which Council will achieve the above objectives.</i></p>

## 4 Build and Maintain Supply Relationships

### 4.1 Managing Suppliers

Council recognises the importance of effective and open working relationships with its suppliers and is committed to managing existing suppliers via performance measurements to ensure the benefits negotiated through contracts are delivered.

### 4.2 Supply Market Development

A wide range of suppliers are encouraged to compete for Council work. The focus for new work need not always be with the larger more familiar businesses. Other types of organisations offering business diversity include:

- Green suppliers;
- Local, small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and Social enterprises;
- Ethnic and minority businesses (e.g. Indigenous Business); and
- Volunteer and community organisations.

## 5 Policy Key Linkages and Governance

### 5.1.1 Standards and Linkages

The Council's procurement activities shall be carried out to the professional standards in accordance with best practice and in compliance with the *Act* and applicable policies and procedures including Codes of Conduct for Councillors, Council Staff and suppliers.

Compliance will be monitored by the Council's Procurement Team and minor issues identified will be addressed by Council Staff in leadership positions. Where required, serious compliance issues will be reported by the CEO to the Audit and Risk Committee and Council.

All Council policies comply with the *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities*.

This Policy has clear linkages to a range of codes, charters, legislation and Council documents, including:

- [Local Government Act 2020](#)
- Procurement procedures and guidelines
- Purchasing and accounts payable manuals
- Codes of Conduct and associated policies
- Contract management guidelines

This policy will help guide Council's work delivered through Council's key plans, strategies and policies listed in Appendix 4.

Other relevant legislative requirements include compliance with the [Competition and Consumer Act 2010](#), [Goods Act 1958](#), [Fair Work Act 2009](#), [Working with Children Act 2005](#), [Working with Children Regulations 2016](#) and the [Environment Protection Act 1970](#) and [Environment Protection Act 2017](#) and other relevant Australian Standards.

### 5.1.2 Policy Review Process

In accordance with *the Act*, Council will review its Procurement Policy at least once during each 4-year term of the Council.

Members of the NCA will endeavour to work together to keep this Policy under review and to prepare any amendments to Sections 1-5.

Any amendment to the Sections within Appendices 1, 2, 3 4 and 5, which is specific to the individual Council can be made at any time during the 4-year term of the Council and is only required to be reviewed and adopted by the individual Council.

#### 5.1.3 Policy Enquiries and Contact Details

For further information on this policy, please contact Council's Procurement Function on:

Email: [ProcurementandContracts@darebin.vic.gov.au](mailto:ProcurementandContracts@darebin.vic.gov.au)

Phone: (03) 8470 8888

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## APPENDICES

All policy requirements contained within these Appendices Sections are only applicable to Darebin City Council.

### Appendix I - Darebin City Council Procurement Methodology Thresholds

#### Requirement for quotes and tenders

The following procurement thresholds apply to procurements undertaken by Council:

Procurement Threshold Incl of GST	Procurement Methodology
<\$10,000	<\$1,000 Verbal quote to justify the one-off purchase. >\$1,000 Obtain at least one written quotation for one-off purchase.
\$10,001 - \$50,000	Minimum of three written quotes are to be invited from suppliers who are considered able to meet the requirements. Used for One-off or Cumulative spend. When seeking and or evaluating quotes, defined weightings will be applied to local and social suppliers. A minimum of one local and social business supplier must be invited, depending on availability of local suppliers.
\$50,001 - \$300,000	Undertake a formal Request for Quote. The process is supported and coordinated through the Procurement Unit by following the process within Council's eTendering Portal. Publish formal Request for Quote using Council and other commercial business eTendering Portals. More than three written quotes are to be invited/received from suppliers for evaluation. Mandatory inclusion of S&S objectives. Used for One-off or Cumulative spend. Defined weightings will be applied to local and social business suppliers with a minimum of one local supplier must be invited, depending on availability of local suppliers.
>\$300,000	A public tender process is required for goods, services or works. Used for One-off or on-going cumulative spend where the life of the contract is expected to exceed \$300,000.

Procurement Threshold Incl of GST	Procurement Methodology
	or Consideration joint regional collaborative procurement taking advantage of economies of scale and efficiencies.

Obtaining sufficient quotations can sometimes be difficult, e.g. if there are few suppliers for the goods, services or works being sought or where the work is highly specialised. In such a case contact Procurement Unit to discuss options or alternative processes.

#### Cumulative Spend

From time to time Council will find it necessary to enter into multiple contracts with a single supplier over a longer period. The cumulative value of those individual contracts (ie. the aggregate value of the multiple contracts) may exceed the procurement thresholds stated above. In each case where multiple contracts are likely to be necessary Council will give careful consideration to:

- their likely cumulative value and, if it exceeds the thresholds stated above, consider adopting the applicable procurement process; and
- other potential suppliers of the relevant goods, services or construction works before entering into a subsequent contract with the same supplier.

This is guided by the Victorian General Auditor's Office (VAGO) and Local Government Victoria (LGV) - see the Victorian Local Government Best Practice Procurement Guidelines, published in 2013

#### Purchasing Methods

The City's standard methods for purchasing goods, services and works shall be via:

- Purchase order following a quotation process
- Under contract following a tender or quotation process or
- Consider beneficial advantages to sources supplier via an collaborative purchasing arrangements with other councils or aggregated schemes such as provided by Procurement Australia, Municipal Association of Victoria, State Purchase contracts, Whole of Victorian Government contracts and the construction suppliers register.

Note: Use of collaborative or aggregated schemes are to be accessed in accordance with procurement governance protocols, evaluation methods and Sub-Delegation authorisations.

#### Other Procurement methods include:

- Purchasing card – purchasing cards are available for select staff in accordance with Corporate Purchasing card policy
- Petty cash - a petty cash system operates to reimburse legitimate, urgent and operational business expenses incurred by city staff in the course of discharging their roles (in accordance with Petty cash policy). The maximum claim for petty cash is \$100 and must be authorised by the requesting officer's supervisor.

#### Measures which intentionally avoid public tendering

Procurement transactions will not be split to circumvent these thresholds. Measures which intentionally seek to avoid the requirement to give public notice, for example, contract splitting, placing multiple orders, seeking multiple quotations with a single supplier or engaging in effect a single supplier under different guises, are considered to breach the requirement to call public tenders where threshold values would otherwise be reached. Council must act with good faith in this regard.

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## Appendix 2 Darebin City Council – Sustainable Procurement Policy

### Sustainable Procurement Commitment

#### INTRODUCTION

#### OUR VISION

Darebin City Council's (Darebin) Social and Sustainable Procurement Policy (Policy) puts social and sustainable outcomes at the heart of our procurement activity.

By leveraging Darebin's significant buying power, our Policy will enable us to increase the social benefit and economic prosperity of our community as a direct result of our purchasing of goods, services and construction work.

We want to ensure that value for money is not just about cost, but also translates into social, economic and environmental value and benefit for our community.

#### Glossary

<p><b>Social Procurement</b></p>	<p>Social procurement is when we use our buying power to generate social value and benefit that goes above and beyond the value of the goods, services, or construction works that are being purchased. Social procurement ensures that purchasing decisions include equity, inclusion and diversity outcomes that will collectively achieve a more holistic community result – a quadruple bottom line approach (one which delivers social, economic, environmental and governance outcomes).</p> <p>This approach aims to deliver maximum value for our community - helping to address inequality while we go about our day to day business.</p> <p>There are two primary forms of social procurement:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Direct - engaging a social benefit provider to deliver goods or a service.</li> <li>2) Indirect - including social benefit(s) as an outcome of a procurement contract.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Sustainable Procurement</b></p>	<p>Separate from social procurement, sustainable procurement includes specific factors that can be considered that will deliver environmental benefits. This can include using re-usable or recycled materials, choosing low energy or low water consumption options, or designing and constructing energy efficient buildings. This ensures that our community achieves value for money for the life of the project (long term) by generating benefits not only for the organisation, but also for our community and our economy, while minimising its impact on the environment.</p> <p>Sustainable procurement involves decision-making that has the most positive environmental, social and economic impacts possible across the entire life cycle of goods and services.</p>

<b>Social Enterprise</b>	<p>Social enterprises are businesses that trade to intentionally tackle social problems, improve communities, provide people access to new opportunities, employment and training or support the sustainability and health of our environment and biodiversity.</p> <p>Income generating social enterprises often play a key role in supporting marginalised and disadvantaged job seekers and provide real pathways to development and employment.</p>
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#### **Why are we doing this?**

At Darebin, our mission is to preserve and improve the physical, social, environmental, cultural and economic health and wellbeing of our neighbourhoods, while ensuring quality of life for current and future generations.

Our Policy provides a key pathway to achieving this mission. Using our collective buying power, Darebin can enter into procurement contracts that will contribute to creating a fair, inclusive community that is both environmentally and socially sustainable.

As a socially responsible organisation and employer, this approach brings us into line with local, national and international practices and references the Victorian State Government's Social Procurement Framework.

#### **Continuous improvement**

Council will implement management reporting systems to monitor performance against targets and compliance with procurement policy and guidelines.

Procurement procedures, innovative practices, guidelines and costs will be benchmarked externally. Internal service standards will be agreed within Council and set performance criteria against these targets will be measured, reported and reviewed regularly to support continuous improvement.

#### **Social and Sustainable Procurement**

Council will consider Social and Sustainable procurement options in all purchasing decisions. To achieve this, customised evaluation criteria will be developed and tailored, depending on the nature of the contract.

To support Council to achieve its objectives, the following principles apply:

- Understand our procurement spend – recognising that value for money is more than price paid
- Provide more opportunities for the local business community, in particular our social enterprises, to increase their capacity and capability to become suppliers to Council
- Increase opportunities for local businesses and social enterprises to create capacity for local job seekers, especially those who are marginalised, disadvantaged and under-represented in the work force
- Work to reduce our negative impact on the environment, support our climate emergency goals and move towards our aim of being carbon neutral by 2020 by adopting thoughtful purchasing behaviours
- Focus on the quadruple bottom line in procurement which incorporates social, economic, environmental and governance considerations that can be measured, evaluated and reported on
- Lead in procurement governance practices of integrity, probity and accountability while building organisational capability and expertise
- Achieve equity, inclusion and diversity outcomes

**WHAT IS SOCIAL AND SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT**

**1. Social Procurement – promoting equity and diversity**

Council has a long-standing commitment to serving and responding to the diverse needs of its community. This is stated in the Council Plan 2017-2021 which places a strong emphasis on equity, diversity and inclusion considerations across all aspects of Council business.

Council strongly believes that all people, in their diversity, should have fair and equitable access to opportunities, infrastructure, services and information. Darebin is committed to creating a community where everyone can thrive and belong. We will work to eradicate discrimination and reduce the impact of poverty and disadvantage where we can throughout all aspects of our business and decision making.

Council recognises that not all in our community experience equal access to resources and opportunities, including participation in employment and economic activity, which are widely recognised as key factors keeping people healthy and well. We know that communities who experience high rates of unemployment generally experience poorer health outcomes.

This Policy seeks to further Council’s commitment to addressing disadvantage and improving health equity by ensuring that our procurement leverages social value and positive social outcomes.

Our purchasing and procurement decision making will, where relevant, take into account policies and practices that suppliers adopt as a way of further strengthening the health and wellbeing of our community. Through processes such as contract management and setting and monitoring of targets, Council seeks to encourage suppliers to consider delivering on socially inclusive outcomes. To achieve this outcome, customised evaluation criteria will be tailored to each sourcing event depending on the nature of the contract.

**Table 1: Darebin City Council’s Social Procurement Objectives with example Key Performance Indicator (KPI’s)**

Council has adopted mandatory weightings when undertaking formal procurement quotations and tendering activities. A total weighting of 25% is allocated to create an impact above and beyond the products and services purchased by Council.

Detailed in the below tables is a combined weighting of 15% for social, local and sustainable outcomes, with a further 10% weighting to be allocated according to the procurement type or activity, in total 25% of a possible 100% is applied to social and sustainable outcomes.

Objectives	Outcomes	Example KPI’s (these are examples only of what may potentially be negotiated and will depend on the nature and value of the contract)
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<p>Opportunities for Aboriginal people</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purchasing goods or services from Aboriginal businesses</li> <li>• Employment of Aboriginal people by suppliers to Darebin Council</li> </ul>	<p>The awarding of a contract to Aboriginal businesses either directly or through subcontracting.</p> <p>Supplier will attend Aboriginal employment expo or similar.</p> <p>Supplier will engage in cultural awareness training.</p> <p>Supplier will develop a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).</p>
<p>Opportunities for people with a disability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purchasing goods or services from social enterprises and disability enterprises</li> <li>• Employment of people with disability by suppliers to Darebin Council</li> </ul>	<p>Supplier will become member of a disability employment network.</p> <p>Number of new employment opportunities created for local people with disabilities.</p>
<p>Opportunities for disadvantaged people</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purchasing goods or services from Victorian social enterprises</li> <li>• Job readiness and employment for including but not limited to:                         <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- long-term unemployed people</li> <li>- single parents</li> <li>- migrants and refugees</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Awarding of a contract to a social enterprise either directly or through subcontracting.</p> <p>Number of new employees from identified disadvantaged and marginalised groups.</p>
<p>Opportunities for local young people: 10% dividend</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying and engaging suppliers who can offer opportunities to young people (aged 15 – 25) in Darebin, including:                         <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Job readiness and capacity building such as work experience, work placement or industry tours</li> <li>- Apprenticeships, traineeships, internships or cadetships</li> <li>- Those suppliers who commit to employment</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Number of employees who are apprentices and/or trainees.</p> <p>Number of work placement students engaged by supplier during contracts.</p> <p>Engagement with local school programs such as work experience or industry tours.</p>

	through Victorian government programs such as the Major Project Skills Guarantee or the Local Jobs First – Victorian Industry Participation Program	
Improve gender equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purchasing goods or services from businesses which promote the full and equal participation of women</li> <li>• Employment of women who experience barriers to employment by suppliers</li> </ul>	<p>Attendance of supplier at family-based training and/or education sessions; i.e. family violence, mental health, men’s health.</p> <p>Supplier commits to develop internal policies based on gender equity and/or health and wellbeing.</p>

Council will consider social procurement criteria in all purchases and allocate a social procurement weighting at a **minimum of 5% (or more)** in all public tender evaluation criteria. This weighting will be allocated having regard to the nature of the purchase and used in addition to provisions for environmentally sustainable criteria as outlined below.

The criteria will reflect the objectives and outcomes outlined above and will be tailored to reflect the nature of the purchase and associated opportunities to achieve social benefit.

Where possible, Council will consider purchasing from organisations with a demonstrated commitment to human rights and improving local communities, particularly where this is evidenced by social enterprise, fair trade certification, positive and inclusive employment practices, direct community involvement or other demonstrable positive impacts on society.

When assessing potential supplier relationships, Council will consider:

- Activity that promotes inclusion through social capacity building.
- Exploring joint ventures with Council and social benefit suppliers.
- The ethical procurement of goods and services.
- Engaging local businesses that generate local employment for disadvantaged residents.
- Improving equity of access to opportunities.
- Supporting social and service innovation.
- Using procurement to reinvigorate disadvantaged or marginalised communities.
- Helping to build the capacity and capability of social enterprises.



## 2. Environmentally Sustainable Procurement

Council recognises that we are in a state of climate emergency that requires urgent action. Reducing our environmental impact is a must and this can be achieved through our purchasing activity. Council was the first government body in the world to declare a Climate Emergency and this Policy seeks to embed action in response to that declaration.

Council will, wherever possible, seek to select energy and water efficient services and practices, choose reusable, refillable and recycled options, avoid the use of single use, minimise the purchase of items manufactured from virgin materials, minimise the use of disposable items and select items which generate less waste.

Our decision-making process will, where relevant, take into account efforts of suppliers to achieve higher standards of environmentally sustainable practices in their own businesses as a way of further strengthening the health and wellbeing of our community. Through processes such as contract management and the setting and monitoring of targets, Council will endeavour to encourage suppliers to consider delivering on sustainable policies and practices.

Wherever possible, when assessing potential supplier relationships, Council will consider:

- Reducing consumption through demand management and eliminating unnecessary purchasing.
- Alternatives such as reuse, recycle or refurbish.
- Environmental management practices of suppliers/manufacturers.
- The whole life cycle of products in terms of the impact on the environment including product manufacture, packaging, use and disposal at end of product life.
- Eliminating the use of single use plastics.
- Reducing waste to landfill.
- Improving and protecting waterways.
- Reducing water consumption and using best-fit water sources.

Council will consider environmental criteria in all purchases and allocate an environmental procurement weighting at **a minimum 5% (or more)** in all public tender evaluation criteria. This weighting will be allocated having regard to the nature of the purchase and used in addition to provisions for social procurement criteria as outlined above.

## 3. Local sourcing opportunities

Council is a major purchaser of goods and services within the municipality and recognises that its procurement policies and practices have the potential to influence the local economy. Council is committed to procurement that supports local businesses plus economic diversity and viability. This also supports socially inclusive activities as it works to stimulate the local economy and contribute to local job creation and reduces the reliance on goods and services that impact the environment through travel and transport.

Wherever possible, when assessing potential supplier relationships, Council will consider:

- The use of local suppliers to encourage economic development.
- Generating local employment.
- Considering the life cycle impacts of products purchased on the local economy.

In support of local suppliers, Council will allocate a local content weighting at **a minimum of 5% (or more)** in all public tender evaluation criteria. This weighting will be allocated having regard to the nature of the purchase.

**Darebin City Council’s Sustainable Procurement Objectives with example Key Performance Indicator (KPI’s)**

Objectives	Outcomes	Example KPI’s (these are examples only of what may potentially be negotiated and will depend on the nature and value of the contract)
Address the climate emergency by reducing CO2 emissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced reliance on fossil fuels</li> <li>• Less energy consumed by Darebin</li> <li>• Less energy consumed by our suppliers</li> </ul>	<p>Suppliers commit to using materials that have lower levels of CO2 emissions such as recycled concrete.</p> <p>Suppliers commit to reduction of energy by engaging with Council services such as solar saver.</p> <p>Suppliers demonstrate their commitment by either investing in alternative energy, offsetting carbon emissions and renewable energy power purchases schemes.</p>
Address the climate emergency by minimising waste production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced use of non-renewable resources</li> <li>• Reduced demand for raw materials and natural resources</li> <li>• Reduction in waste and by-products</li> <li>• Help to promote a market for recycled materials</li> </ul>	<p>Suppliers commit to recycling programs such as recycling and composting food waste.</p> <p>Supplier commits to utilising recycled content in building and construction materials such as concrete and asphalt.</p> <p>Supplier commits to using sustainably sourced FSC certified timber products in building.</p> <p>Catering suppliers commit to zero single use plastic items.</p> <p>Supplier considers all options in relation to product stewardship.</p>
Address the climate emergency by reducing water consumption and activities that impact biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less water used and less impact on water quality</li> <li>• Activities don’t threaten natural habitats</li> </ul>	<p>Suppliers engaged in major capital works projects and minor maintenance contracts adhere to Darebin Council’s Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) policy with reference to water management.</p> <p>Supplier commits to reduction of water use in production techniques or use of rainwater tanks on site.</p>

*Note: Council officers will consider Social and Sustainable procurement options in all purchasing decisions. This will be applied on a case by case basis depending on the nature of the purchase.*

## DEFINITIONS

### Social procurement

Social procurement is when organisations use their buying power to generate social value above and beyond the value of the goods, services, or construction works being procured (Victorian Government 2018).

Social procurement ensures that procurement decisions incorporate consideration of social value to build real quadruple bottom line value propositions into procurement processes. Quadruple bottom line incorporates social, environmental, economic/ financial and governance considerations.

It is a powerful tool that can improve value for money and community benefit by integrating and furthering social and economic objectives. Social procurement strategies demonstrate how improving 'quality of life' outcomes can be embedded in the business of all public-sector entities.

In recognition of the purchasing power which local governments have, there are many opportunities for Darebin to leverage social benefit through the goods, services, or construction being procured.

This delivers maximum value for the community - helping to address structural and systemic inequality, while conducting our core business.

Types of organisations offering diversity include (but are not limited to) businesses that are:

- Gender diverse
- Aboriginal owned and/or operated or employing Aboriginal people
- Culturally and linguistically diverse
- Employing people with disabilities or owned and/or operated by those with disabilities.

### Sustainable procurement

Sustainable procurement involves decision-making that has the most positive environmental, social and economic impacts possible across the entire life cycle of goods and services. It looks beyond up-front costs to make purchasing decisions that consider associated environmental and social risks and benefits, and broader social and environmental implications.

"Sustainable Procurement is a process whereby organisations meet their needs for goods, services, works and utilities in a way that achieves value for money on a whole of life basis in terms of generating benefits not only to the organisation, but also to society and the economy, whilst minimising damage to the environment." (United Nations Environment Programme n.d.)<sup>7</sup> To view the full definition <http://www.unep.fr/scp/procurement/whatisspp/>

### Social enterprise

"Social enterprises are businesses that trade to intentionally tackle social problems, improve communities, provide people access to employment and training or help the environment. They derive most of their income from trade (not donations or grants) and use the majority of their profits (at least 50%) to contribute to their social or environmental mission." Source: Social Traders (<https://www.socialtraders.com.au>) and the Victorian Social Procurement Framework.

Income generating social enterprises often play a key role in supporting disadvantaged job seekers with pathways to employment into mainstream businesses.

**Environmental/sustainability considerations**

Specific factors that will be considered in purchasing decisions can include using re-usable or recycled materials, choosing low energy or low water consumption options, or designing and constructing energy efficient buildings. Other factors such as reducing carbon emissions or total product life cycle including products that generate less waste or waste output that can be re-purposed or recycled will also be considered.

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### **Appendix 3 Performance KPIs**

**This section lists performance indicators that have clear linkages to this Procurement Policy.**

Note: Procurement performance indicators will form part of the quarterly financial reporting program periodically provided to Council.

#### **Procurement Performance Indicators**

Darebin City Council will seek to improve its procurement performance by capturing and analysing data on key performance indicators including but not limited to:

- Social Procurement Objectives;
- Sustainable Procurement Objectives;
- Annual spend on sustainable goods and services.
- The number of Local Businesses engaged and proportion of local spend New Collaborative Procurement contracts;
- New preferred supplier (panel) contracts;
- Value of savings and benefits achieved;
- Level of compliance with the Procurement Policy; and
- Extent of contracts delivered on time and on budget.

## Appendix 4 Council Plans, Strategies and Policies

This section lists the Council plans, policies, strategies and other legislations that have clear linkages to this Procurement Policy.

Council will adhere to all these provisions in all procurement matters consistent with the Victorian Local Government Best Practice Guidelines 2013 or replaced by newer Guidelines or regulations made by the Minister for Local Government.

Council's Procurement Guidelines detail the implementation of these legislative provisions and details the processes and procedures to be followed for the procurement of goods, services and construction works

Key legislative requirements for this Policy include:

- Part 5, Division 2, Section 108 of the Act;
- The relevant provisions of the Competition and Consumer Act 2010.

Key policies and other documents relating to this policy:

- Darebin City Council Employee Code of Conduct
- Councillor Code of Conduct
- Gifts and Hospitality Policy
- Climate Emergency Plan 2017 - 2022
- Single Use Plastic Free Events Policy
- Fraud Prevention and Control Policy
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy and Action Plan 2017 – 2027
- Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) Building Policy
- Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2021
- Access and Inclusion Plan 2015-2019
- Beyond Value for Money: Social Procurement for Victorian Local Government
- Victoria's social procurement framework
- Any other policies that interact with Council's procurement activities.

**REFERENCES**

\*Victorian State government developed a *Social Procurement Framework* which enables buyers and suppliers to use the Government's buying power to deliver social, economic and environmental outcomes that benefit the Victorian community.

<https://buyingfor.vic.gov.au/social-procurement-framework>

\**GROW 21* is a whole of community approach taken in the Geelong region of Victoria to tackle entrenched regional social and economic disadvantage. It led to a compact that drew in State and local government, local industry and enterprise and community groups.

<https://grow.g21.com.au/>

\**Social Traders* is "Australia's leading organisation" connecting social enterprises with social procurement opportunities and supporting social enterprise to successfully deliver on the contracts they win.

<https://www.socialtraders.com.au/>

This policy document also references:

Beyond Value for Money Social Procurement for Victorian Local Government

[https://www.localgovernment.vic.gov.au/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0020/48512/Beyond-Value-for-Money-Social-Procurement-for-Victorian-Local-Government-2nd-edition-update-4-April-2019.pdf](https://www.localgovernment.vic.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0020/48512/Beyond-Value-for-Money-Social-Procurement-for-Victorian-Local-Government-2nd-edition-update-4-April-2019.pdf)

Queensland Government procurement policy <https://www.forgov.qld.gov.au/procurement-policy> Australian Government Sustainable Procurement Guide

<http://www.environment.gov.au/protection/waste-resource-recovery/publications/sustainable-procurement-guide>

Victorian Aboriginal Economic Strategy

<https://www.vic.gov.au/aboriginalvictoria/policy/victorian-aboriginal-economic-development.html>

And acknowledges the work of the MAV, ArcBlue and the GROW 21

Project

## Appendix 5 Council Specific Exemptions

**This section will include any additional exemptions not included in Section 2.3 from tendering applicable to Darebin City Council that are identified from time to time.**

Council has a process in place to exempt a procurement from the procurement policy requirements under specific circumstances.

Exemptions from the procurement policy requirements will be issued by exception on approval by the relevant General Manager. The financial approval will be governed in accordance with the limits determined and allocated to the General Manager in the *Instrument of Financial Delegation by the Chief Executive Officer for Goods, Services or Works* under the following circumstances:

- An item or service procured which is issued under copyright laws.
- Infrastructure works which can only be procured from the Utility owner will not require a public tender process. This relates to new or maintenance of assets owned by Electricity, Gas or Water Utilities.
- A service or upgrade to an asset owned by a utility provider responsible for the provision of or maintenance of that asset.
- Software specific to one provider only.
- Maintenance and support of proprietary assets, structures or services.
- Engagement of consultants where there is continuity of history and expertise. This exemption will require consideration of services and intellectual ownership and progression of services which can demonstrate efficiencies. A business case will be required to explain the requirement.
- Software licensing or maintenance costs specific to one provider only
- Payments to other Municipalities
- Payments made by the administrator of a Special Rates Scheme (i.e. Business Associations)
- Arts Programming, as determined by the relevant General Manager.

Any exemption in excess of the relevant General Manager will be referred to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Where the value exceeds the financial threshold for the CEO, it must be referred to Council for approval.



**8.4 OPEN SPACE LEVY - FURTHER STRATEGIC WORK****Author:** Principal Strategic Planner**Reviewed By:** General Manager City Sustainability and Strategy

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Council has a strong commitment to the provision of high-quality, accessible open space and the protection and enhancement of biodiversity. To support this commitment, one of Council's actions in the *Council Plan 2021-2025* is to introduce a new open space levy. This levy is payable by developers at the point of subdividing land for development and is used by Council to fund the acquisition and improvement of open space.

Significant progress has already been made towards this action in the endorsement of *Breathing Space: The Darebin Open Space Strategy* (City of Darebin 2019, referred to as "Breathing Space"), the *Open Space Contributions Review Report* (SGS Economics and Planning 2019) and the public exhibition of Amendment C186, which proposes to change the Darebin Planning Scheme to implement and align with these adopted strategic documents.

Amendment C186 proposes to increase the open space levy rate for all subdivisions of three or more lots within the municipality to 10 percent. The amendment was publicly exhibited in December 2019 and Council resolved to refer submissions to a Planning Panel. Before the C186 panel hearing, a Panel Report for a similar amendment in Monash directed that an Implementation Plan and Strategic Land Acquisition Plan be undertaken to support the amendment. Council recognised this as an opportunity to strengthen its own Amendment C186, which was based on the same methodology as Monash, so in June 2020, Council resolved to request a hearing adjournment to carry out further work.

This further work has now been substantially progressed, and two draft reports – 'Implementing Breathing Space' (**Appendix A**) and 'Enhancing Open Space'<sup>1</sup> (**Appendix B**) have been developed to provide additional evidence for Amendment C186 and address the findings of the Monash Panel Report.

The first draft report *Implementing Breathing Space* prioritises actions identified in Breathing Space, and sets out the estimated costs, responsibilities and timeframes associated with each action, including the projected cost of delivering new open space. Its purpose is to establish the need for open space (both delivering new and upgrading existing open space) across Darebin in order to achieve Breathing Space objectives and provide an estimate of costs required to meet this need.

These estimates do not "lock Council in" to future decisions regarding open space upgrades or enhancements, and in fact they cannot, as the amount of levy funds that will be authorised by the State Government is yet to be known. These future decisions will be taken by Council through its annual budget decisions. These reports will be a useful guide as one consideration in Council's future decisions to prioritise open space purchases and upgrades.

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<sup>1</sup> Following feedback from Traditional Owners and Aboriginal staff, the previously referred to 'Land Acquisition Plan' has been renamed to 'Enhancing Open Space' be more culturally sensitive.

Independent consultant Mesh Planning has considered the indicative costings and prepared a further document, the 'Open Space Contribution Report' (Mesh Planning, 2021) (**Appendix C**). This report recommends that the open space levy rate is increased to 10 per cent to ensure that contributions adequately support the investment required to deliver Breathing Space. This rate aligns with previous work undertaken by SGS Consultants however it uses a different methodology based on the costings to reach this determination.

Altogether, *Breathing Space*, *Implementing Breathing Space*, *Enhancing Open Space* and the two contribution reports provide a comprehensive strategic basis to increase Darebin's open space levy through Amendment C186.

This report summarises the two new draft reports and recommends that Council endorse them as further work for Amendment C186 (with updated amendment documents in **Appendix D**). Following Council's decision, a further Directions Hearing will be held by the Panel. Following this, *Implementing Breathing Space*, *Enhancing Open Space* and the *Open Space Contribution Report* will be publicly exhibited alongside Amendment C186.

### Recommendation

**That** Council:

- (1) Endorse *Implementing Breathing Space* (**Appendix A**), *Enhancing Open Space* (**Appendix B**) and *Open Space Contribution Report* (**Appendix C**) as part of further work to support Amendment C186dare.
- (2) Endorse proposed changes to Amendment C186dare documentation to reflect the new supporting documents (**Appendix D**).
- (3) Note that further public consultation will take place on Amendment C186dare and the supporting reports as directed by the Independent Planning Panel.
- (4) Authorise the Manager City Futures to make minor alterations and corrections, where necessary, to the Amendment C186dare and reports prior to exhibition.

## BACKGROUND / KEY INFORMATION

### Amendment C186: Open Space Levy

Amendment C186, proposing an increase in the open space levy to 10 per cent, was publicly exhibited from 14 November 2019 to 16 December 2019. Fifty-six submissions were received. At its 24 February 2020 meeting, Council considered all submissions received to the amendment and referred all submissions to an independent planning panel for consideration.

Prior to the panel hearing taking place, a report for a similar planning scheme amendment being undertaken by Monash City Council (referred to as the "Monash Panel Report") was released. This report has significant implications for Amendment C186 because Monash proposed the same methodology to arrive at its proposed open space levy rate. The Monash Panel Report recommended that Council, among other things, should undertake additional work to develop an open space strategy implementation plan, and use this plan as a basis for calculation of the open space levy rate in place of the 30 square metre per person provisioning standard.

On 9 June 2020 Council resolved to request an adjournment to the Panel Hearing for Amendment C186 to enable officers to carry out further work (as recommended by the Monash Panel and which also applies to Darebin). This report outlines the outcome of this further work for Council to endorse and next steps with the amendment.

### **What the Amendment does**

Amendment C186 implements the recommendations of *Breathing Space: The Darebin Open Space Strategy* and the *Open Space Contributions Review Report* by increasing the open space levy in the Darebin Planning Scheme to ten per cent for all non-exempt subdivisions.

The Amendment applies to all commercial, residential, and industrial land in the municipality. The provisions are triggered if the land is being subdivided for development into three or more lots, at the point a subdivision permit is issued. The levy does not apply to subdivisions of two lots, except when they are still large enough to be further subdivided.

Clause 53.01 of the Darebin Planning Scheme currently provides for open space contributions to be collected at the time of subdivision. Council currently collects an open space contribution rate of between two and five per cent based on a sliding scale determined by how many additional lots are created at subdivision.

Amendment C186 proposes to amend the schedule to clause 53.01 to require all subdivisions of three or more lots within the municipality to pay a 10 per cent open space levy rate. Subdivisions of two lots that are assessed as not being able to be further subdivided continue to be exempt from the open space levy.

Amendment C186 will also make updates to the Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) at Clause 21.02 Environment. Clause 21.02-5 Open Space will be updated to align with the strategies and objectives of *Breathing Space: The Darebin Open Space Strategy* and to reference the new strategy.

### **Planning Scheme Amendment Process**

At its 23 September 2019 meeting, Council resolved to formally request that the Minister for Planning authorise, prepare and exhibit Amendment C186 to the Darebin Planning Scheme. Authorisation to prepare and exhibit the amendment was received from the Minister for Planning on 21 October 2019.

Amendment C186 was publicly exhibited from 14 November 2019 to 16 December 2019 where 56 submissions were received. One additional late submission has been received by officers prior to this briefing. This additional submission has been referred to Planning Panel.

At its 24 February 2020 meeting, Council considered all submissions received to the planning scheme amendment and referred all submissions to an independent planning panel hearing.

On 9 June 2020 Council resolved to request an adjournment to the Panel Hearing for Amendment C186 to enable officers to carry out further work.

On Dec 11 2020, a PPV Directions Hearing was held where Council updated the Panel and submitters on the timeframes for C186 and sought an adjournment to the Planning Panel Hearing (to allow further work to be completed). PPV directed that Council confirm by 11 June 2021 when the further strategic work will be considered by Council for adoption, with a view to a further hearing in late-July.

Council wrote to Panel on 11 June 2021 advising that Council would consider the *Implementing Breathing Space* and *Enhancing Open Space* as further strategic work in support of Amendment C186 at its meeting on 23 August 2021. This timing sets the date this work must be completed by. PPV has set a new Directions Hearing for 30 August.

### **Previous Council Resolution**

At its meeting held on 9 June 2020, Council resolved:

*'That Council*

- (1) Request Planning Panels Victoria to adjourn the Planning Panel Hearing for Amendment C186 – Open Space Levy to allow further work to be completed to strengthen the strategic justification for the amendment, as recommended by the Monash C148 Planning Panel.*
- (2) Authorise officers to carry out further work to Amendment C186, as recommended by the Monash C148 Planning Panel.*
- (3) Formally consider the Property Council of Australia's late submission to Amendment C186 to the Darebin Planning Scheme and refer the late submission to the Planning Panel.*
- (4) Endorses the officer's response to the Property Council of Australia's late submission outlined in this report to form the basis of Council's submission to the independent Planning Panel.*
- (5) Receives a further detailed briefing on what additional cost and resources will be needed to develop a comprehensive implementation plan given the now narrower statutory time frame in having Amendment 186 adopted by the Planning Minister.*
- (6) Officers consult and work with the Darebin Nature Trust Advisory Committee and the proposed Working Groups to help develop the implementation plan.'*

## **COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT**

### **Consultation**

#### **Advisory Groups**

The Darebin Nature Trust (DNT) and the Darebin Aboriginal Advisory Committee (DAAC) have been consulted with on the development of the plans. Officers attended DNT and DAAC meetings in September 2020 to introduce the project.

A workshop was held with DNT on 10 March 2021 and feedback was given on the prioritisation of actions for the implementation plan and criteria for the enhancement plan. A workshop with DNT to review the Draft implementation plan and enhancement plan was held in May 2021 and feedback has been incorporated into the reports. Other advisory groups were invited to comment on the draft plans during May.

Due to the small number of current DAAC members, further feedback from DAAC was sought via email.

### **Traditional Owners**

Four meetings have been held with Traditional Owners from the Wurundjeri Land Council and officers have committed to further conversations about the broader implementation of Breathing Space.

### **Internal Consultation**

The two reports – *Implementing Breathing Space* and *Enhancing Open Space* have been developed in partnership between strategic planning and parks and open space teams.

A Project Control Group (PCG) and Project working Group (PWG) has been established to guide the development of the plans. The following teams form part of the PWG: Strategic Planning, Parks and Open Space, City Design, Leisure Services, and Property Services. Several internal workshops have been held with input from Council staff representing: Climate Emergency, Capital Delivery, Sustainable Transport, Equity and diversity, Community Development and Wellbeing, Aged and Disability, Youth Services, Creative Culture and Events, Economic Development and Leisure Services.

### **Communications**

Public communications regarding these plans has not been undertaken as part of the development of these plans, due to the technical nature of the work. Public communication and consultation will take place later in 2021, details of this are included in the “Implementation” section below.

## **ANALYSIS**

### **Alignment to Council Plan / Council policy**

Strategic Direction 4 - Responsible, Transparent and Responsive

Council Plan Strategic Objective 4.5 We will improve the sustainability, accessibility, and design of development on private land in our city.

### **Environmental Sustainability Considerations**

Breathing Space reflects leading practice and actions regarding climate risk and how Council can influence and offset the effects, specifically in relation to open space.

The *Implementing Breathing Space* and *Enhancing Open Space* will provide supporting evidence for Amendment C186 to increase the open space levy to 10 per cent. This will provide a funding mechanism to contribute to improving existing and creating new open space. The open space levy will help to mitigate the effects of climate change as the city grows.

### **Equity, Inclusion and Wellbeing Considerations**

An Equity Impact assessment (EIA) has been undertaken for the development of the *Implementing Breathing Space* and *Enhancing Open Space* with a focus on ensuring that a broad range of stakeholders were included in the workshops for prioritisation of *Breathing Space* actions and criteria for land purchases. Issues around equity including gender, age, disability and social disadvantage have been integrated into the criteria for land purchases.

## **Cultural Considerations**

Breathing Space recognises that open space is important for social and cultural connections including gathering spaces for celebrations, festivals, and activities.

## **Economic Development Considerations**

The outcomes facilitated by Breathing Space are complementary to enhancing economic activity in Darebin. Having great open spaces, which offer a diversity of uses, retains locals and attracts people from neighbouring suburbs to spend more time in our city.

Generally, economic advice is that development levies don't increase the cost of housing, but rather they are factored into development costs and reduce the land price that developers are prepared to pay. There may be some transition period effects.

## **Financial and Resource Implications**

The cost of developing the *Implementing Breathing Space* and the *Enhancing Open Space* reports has been provided for within the current budget. If Council is successful at implementing a higher levy, it will significantly increase funds available for improvements and/or new open spaces.

## **Legal and Risk Implications**

The Panel process allows the merits of the methodology underpinning the levy to be debated. The development of the implementation and enhancement plans and associated costings was recommended by the Monash Planning Panel and is intended to address concerns with the methodology underpinning the Amendment C186 as originally exhibited. There remains a risk that the amount of the levy may be criticised at panel. To mitigate this risk, Council has worked with Mesh Planning and other experts to provide independent expert evidence.

## **Operational Impacts**

If Amendment C186 is approved, there will be a significant increase in the funds available for purchasing new open space and upgrading existing open space. Funds collected through the levy cannot be spent on maintenance, and for Council will need to make provision for maintenance and renewal of any new or improved open spaces in its future operational budgets. Additional operational costs will be considered by Council in future budget cycles.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Role of Implementing Breathing Space & Enhancing Open Space**

*Implementing Breathing Space* prioritises the actions identified in Breathing Space, and identifies the indicative costs, responsibilities and timeframes associated with each action. The role of this document is to provide enough detail about open space need to establish indicative costings on upgrading open space to a higher standard and purchasing new open space. This is needed to demonstrate how much funding is required to implement the actions of Breathing Space, and to support increase of the open space levy through the planning scheme amendment process.

*Enhancing Open Space* sets out a decision-making framework for the delivery of new open space or increased access to open space in gap areas and can be used to guide future Council decisions on purchasing open space. Land value data has been used to develop indicative cost estimates, which is needed to justify setting of the Open Space Levy at the level needed to achieve what Council is aiming for in practice.

However, Council's decisions to go ahead with Open Space improvements take place via the annual Council planning and budget cycle and forward planning for the 10 year capital works plan. Endorsing the reports for the purposes of supporting the planning scheme amendment does not 'lock in' specific projects.

### **Implementing Breathing Space**

This report provides further detail on implementing the actions in Breathing Space by:

- Further identifying the gaps in quantity and quality of open space and providing indicative costings to upgrade and improve parks.
- Prioritising upgrades and purchases to those in most need first.
- Providing indicative costing of all actions in breathing space.
- Further mapping areas of under-provision of open space and identifying opportunities of how new open space could be provided (*Enhancing Open Space*).

*Implementing Breathing Space* also shows an indicative overall cost per precinct and which components can be funded by the Open Space Levy (in line with Planning Scheme rules), including estimated costing of actions for the:

- Delivery of new open space (*Enhancing Open Space*).
- Upgrading existing open space to a higher standard.
- Other physical, education, research and planning, etc.

These costings provide an indication of the scale of investment required to ensure that as the population grows, the Darebin community has access to quality open space over the *Breathing Space* horizon. Note that if population growth were to occur more slowly than forecast, improvements would also be expected to occur more slowly. In *Implementing Breathing Space*, the total estimated cost is around \$200M.

### **Enhancing Open Space**

*Enhancing Open Space* provides a blueprint for increasing the amount of open space and particularly by filling gap areas with new open spaces. The report builds on *Implementing Breathing Space* by identifying areas where delivery of new open spaces may be required, articulates strategies for how land could be acquired, and provides a guide for decision making about future open space provision and indicative costings needed to acquire land.

The working documents that informed costings for the purchase of land are confidential. These consist of spatial and property analysis, and a land acquisition framework, including indicative costings for land acquisition in priority areas. This information is commercially sensitive and must remain confidential to prevent land speculation. These documents are a costing exercise and will guide, rather than direct future Council decisions to expand its open space network. These decisions will primarily be guided by the framework set out in *Enhancing Open Space* which is a public document.

### Recommended open space levy rate

Mesh Planning has used the draft *Implementing Breathing Space* to arrive at an appropriate open space levy rate to ensure that contributions adequately support the investment required to deliver *Breathing Space*. This approach is documented in **Appendix C**. It has found that a 10 per cent rate will meet a large proportion of the *Implementing Breathing Space* costs eligible to be funded through open space contributions and strikes a reasonable balance between development feasibility and the reality of the escalating cost of providing open space in an already built-out urban environment.

To arrive at this recommendation, Mesh considered a range of factors. Extrapolating from actual open space contribution data for Darebin from 2019-20, it found that a 10 per cent levy operating to the 2028 Breathing Space horizon could be expected to collect \$112M. This figure generally aligns with costings and provides a strategic basis for a 10 per cent flat rate. Refer to **Appendix C** for further details.

### Response to key recommendations of the Monash Panel Report

As noted above, the Monash Panel Report has raised a number of key issues for consideration in this work, including that justification for a levy rate should be provided by a costed implementation plan and de-coupled from a provisioning benchmark (i.e. 30 sqm open space per capita). These concerns are addressed through this work in that:

- *Enhancing Open Space* nominates priority areas for new open space delivery, noting that opportunities to address OS gaps may arise within adjoining precincts.
- *Implementing Breathing Space* estimates precinct level costs of OS upgrades, based on assessments of individual parks against characteristics of 'type' identified in Breathing Space; and
- *Implementing Breathing Space* actions and costings have been used to calculate levy (based on costs eligible for open space contributions), rather than the 30sqm provision rate.

## OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

### Option 1: Endorse *Implementing Breathing Space*, *Enhancing Open Space* and the *Open Space Contribution Report* – recommended

This option would result in *Implementing Breathing Space*, *Enhancing Open Space* and the *Open Space Contribution Report* being endorsed as further work in support of Amendment C186.

This endorsement would enable the planning scheme amendment process to continue. Officers would then advise the Panel of Council's decision and anticipate that the Panel would direct further exhibition of the two documents.

*Implementing Breathing Space* and *Enhancing Open Space* provide high level costings of *Breathing Space* actions, in support of Amendment C186. The delivery of open space upgrades in the future would be further informed by work being undertaken by the Parks and Open Space team.



**Option 2: Endorse *Implementing Breathing Space* and *Enhancing Open Space* with changes – not recommended**

Council could choose to endorse these documents subject to changes. This is possible but not recommended given the detailed inputs and planning that has gone into development of the draft documents, and that any changes should be well considered. Council can choose to amend these documents following exhibition and informed by public submissions.

**Option 3: Do not endorse *Implementing Breathing Space* or *Enhancing Open Space* – not recommended**

Council could choose not to endorse the documents. Council would need to advise the Panel of this decision. The Panel may then require a full hearing in relation to Amendment C186. This would present risks to Council, as the Monash Panel Report has indicated that there is further work required to support the proposed methodology (which is the same as Council's). There is a risk that Amendment C186 would not be supported by the Panel or the Minister for Planning without these further supporting documents.

**IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY****Timeline**

- **30 August 2021:** Further Directions Hearing for Amendment C186. The Panel is likely to direct Council to undertake further exhibition of Amendment C186.
- **October/November 2021:** Further exhibition of Amendment C186.
- **March 2022:** Panel Hearing.
- **April 2022:** Panel Report received.
- **June 2022:** Council to consider panel findings and adopt amendment.

**Communication**

Further consultation will be undertaken on *Implementing Breathing Space* and *Enhancing Open Space* later in the year. The consultation will be undertaken in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Policy, and generally in accordance with the table below.

<b>Engagement Level and Method</b>	Consultative engagement including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Uploading documents to YourSay Page and seeking submissions</li> <li>- Notify previous submitters and community members and identified stakeholders</li> <li>- Social media posts</li> <li>- Drop in information sessions (likely online)</li> <li>- All statutory notice requirements under the Planning Act</li> </ul>
<b>Key Messages</b>	<p>As the municipality grows, it is essential that Council plans for the open space needs of the future population. Failure to do so, will result in unacceptable outcomes and a gradual decline in liveability.</p> <p>Council has a new, visionary Open Space Strategy that focuses on bringing more and better open space to Darebin's diverse community.</p> <p><i>Breathing Space: The Darebin Open Space Strategy (City of Darebin 2019)</i> and the <i>Open Space Contributions Review (SGS Economics and Planning 2019)</i> formed the basis of the planning scheme amendment to increase the open space levy and this work is now further supported by the inclusion of the priorities contained in the implementation plans '<i>Implementing Breathing Space</i>' and '<i>Enhancing Open Space</i>' developed to provide further supporting evidence for the planning scheme amendment to increase the open space levy.</p> <p>An increase to the levy is essential to collect adequate funds or land contributions from development allowing for improvements to open space to meet the demands of the growing population.</p>

## RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Breathing Space: The Darebin Open Space Strategy
- Planning Practice Note 70 Open Space Strategies
- Monash C148 Interim Panel Report

## Attachments

- Implementing Breathing Space (**Appendix A**) [↓](#)
- Enhancing Open Space (**Appendix B**) [↓](#)
- Open Space Contribution Report (**Appendix C**) [↓](#)
- Amendment C186 Amendment Documents (**Appendix D**) [↓](#)

## DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

Section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020* requires members of Council staff and persons engaged under contract to provide advice to Council to disclose any conflicts of interest in a matter to which the advice relates.

The Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.



hansen

# IMPLEMENTING BREATHING SPACE DELIVERING DAREBIN'S OPEN SPACE STRATEGY

Prepared By HANSEN PARTNERSHIP | 2021



Urban Planning | Urban Design | Landscape Architecture



IMPLEMENTING BREATHING SPACE

**Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners**

Darebin City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people as the Traditional Owners and custodians of the land and waters we now call Darebin and pays respect to their elders, past, present and emerging. Council affirms that Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people have lived on this land for millennia, practising their ceremonies of celebration, initiation and renewal.

Council respects and recognises all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and their values, living culture and practices, including their continuing spiritual connection to the land and waters and their right to self-determination.

**Ngarrgma Wurrundjeri Woi-wurrung guljin gurringanyinu bik wenerop Darebin dharri Ngarri yana ngarnga bik, baan ba ngarrgu. Gahgook-al nanggit bambuth, yalingbu ba gama-dji.**





## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In September 2019, Darebin City Council adopted *Breathing Space*, an ambitious strategy to improve the municipality's open space. Access to open space is critical to the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities, and the importance of open space has been highlighted through the COVID-10 pandemic.

As an inner urban municipality with strong levels of growth, the provision of appropriate open space for the municipality is a key challenge, particularly for a Council that has recognised the climate emergency.

This document establishes a framework for implementing *Breathing Space*. It prioritises the actions identified in *Breathing Space*, and identifies the indicative costs, responsibilities and timeframes associated with each action.

Section Two of the document includes definitions of open space used within this document and provides a comparison between all open space in the municipality and that identified as being available to the community in *Breathing Space*. This broadening of scope for open space access is an important consideration in assessing the priorities for the delivery of new open space.

The existing and future gaps in open space provision in Darebin provide a critical baseline from which *Implementing Breathing Space* addresses Actions set out in *Breathing Space*.

Section Three of the document provides a basis for how the differing 'gaps' in open space in Darebin can be understood holistically to guide future investment in open space assets. It sets out a Framework for addressing per capita provision gaps and access gaps and outlines a methodology for prioritising areas for new open space and for upgrades to existing open space.

Priority Investigation Areas are identified, where proactive program of open space delivery will be undertaken. The Framework also guides consideration of opportunities to add to the open space network in other areas, to meet the objectives of *Breathing Space*.

Upgrades to existing parks are prioritised at the Precinct level, and indicative costings are provided for delivery of the identified improvements. Preston West, Preston Central, Preston Industrial and Reservoir South are identified as priority upgrade Precincts as a result of their shortfalls in open space provision and anticipated high rates of future growth.

To provide a structure to support implementation, and to present costs in an organised manner, this document separates Breathing Space Actions into three key groups:

- Group One: Actions associated with the delivery of a network of open space
- Group Two: Other Actions with funding implications
- Group Three: Actions for which no additional funding requirements are identified.

Costs associated with the first two groups are as follows:

- **TOTAL GROUP ONE COSTS = \$158,315,093.00**  
Group One costs attributable to the Open Space Levy (cash contributions) = \$148,146,693
- **TOTAL GROUP TWO COSTS = \$41,310,000.00**  
Group Two costs attributable to the Open Space Levy (cash contributions) = \$20,600,000.00

The costs associated with the delivery of new open space in Darebin are derived from the companion document to this implementation plan, *Enhancing Open Space* which assesses opportunities for the delivery of new open space and provides costings and prioritisation of these.

The scale of the costs identified in this document is a testament to the challenges faced by many Councils. Through careful analysis of real life, on-the-ground, opportunities to deliver a range of types of open space, a rigorous assessment of the potential of existing areas of open space to work harder, and a clear system of prioritisation, *Implementing Breathing Space* is intended to help address this challenge.



## IMPLEMENTING BREATHING SPACE

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 OPEN SPACE IN DAREBIN: BREATHING SPACE

In September 2019 Darebin City Council adopted *Breathing Space*, an ambitious strategy to improve the municipality’s open space. *Breathing Space* took a broader view of what constitutes ‘open space’ than traditionally adopted. This wider view recognised the growing body of evidence and research highlighting the important contribution that streets and incidental nature within an urban context can make to delivery of a wide range of Council objectives.

The vision of *Breathing Space* is for more and better open space to meet the community’s needs, with an emphasis on open space which delivers closer alignment with local culture and supports improved biodiversity and health outcomes

As an inner urban municipality with strong levels of growth, the provision of appropriate open space for the municipality is a key challenge, particularly for a Council in the context of responding to the climate emergency.. Darebin is, however blessed with a number of significant open space assets, not least of which are the two main waterways (the Merri and Darebin Creeks) which form the eastern and western boundaries of the municipality. The broader spatial context can be seen in Figure 3 overleaf.

### 1.2 WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT?

*Implementing Breathing Space* complements the *Breathing Space* strategy by providing detail on each of the implementation tasks required to achieve the open space objectives, including responsibilities, cost estimates and priorities.

It responds to Planning Practice Note 70: Open Space Strategies (PPN 70) which recommends that Open Space Strategies have an implementation plan.

As recommended by *Breathing Space*, Council is also pursuing an amendment to the Darebin Planning Scheme to increase the amount that developers in Darebin must contribute to fund the municipality’s network of public open space, above the current level required at Clause 53.01.

Recent feedback provided to other Councils through the independent Planning Panel process has suggested that an increase in the rate of contributions should be based on a ‘high level’ understanding of the costs involved in delivering public open space in the local context. *Implementing Breathing Space* assists in identifying these costs.

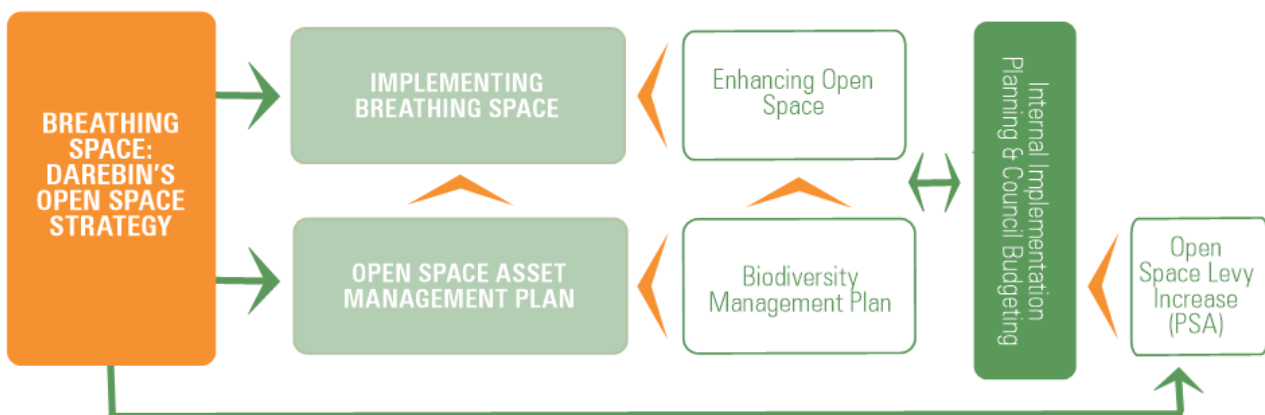


Figure 1: Breathing Space Implementation Components



IMPLEMENTING BREATHING SPACE

**1.3 SCOPE OF IMPLEMENTING BREATHING SPACE**

*Implementing Breathing Space* is not comprehensive. It has been prepared at a 'point in time' and is intended to provide a framework within which further internal processes and work can be undertaken to deliver individual actions identified by *Breathing Space*. In particular, at the time of writing Council is preparing to undertake further work on a *Levels of Service framework and Asset Management Plan*, which will guide continued investment in Council owned open space assets.

The preparation of this document has involved a number of key stakeholders, both internal and external, in determining priorities.

In particular feedback on priorities for implementation has been sought from the Darebin Nature Trust (one of Council's independent advisory groups) and Darebin's Traditional Owners, the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people, both directly in engagement through the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, and guidance provide by the Darebin Aboriginal Advisory Committee.

**1.4 PROCESS**

The preparation of this document has involved a number of key stakeholders, both internal and external, in determining priorities.

In particular feedback on priorities for implementation has been sought from the Darebin Nature Trust (one of Council's independent advisory groups) and Darebin's Traditional Owners, the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people, both directly in engagement through the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, and guidance provide by the Darebin Aboriginal Advisory Committee.

This document was prepared as a collaborative effort between the consultant and Council's designated internal Project Working Group.

The project was overseen by a Project Control Group which included key staff from the Parks and open Space, Property and Business improvement and Strategic Planning teams.

The key steps in the process of the Plans preparation are outlined in Figure 2.

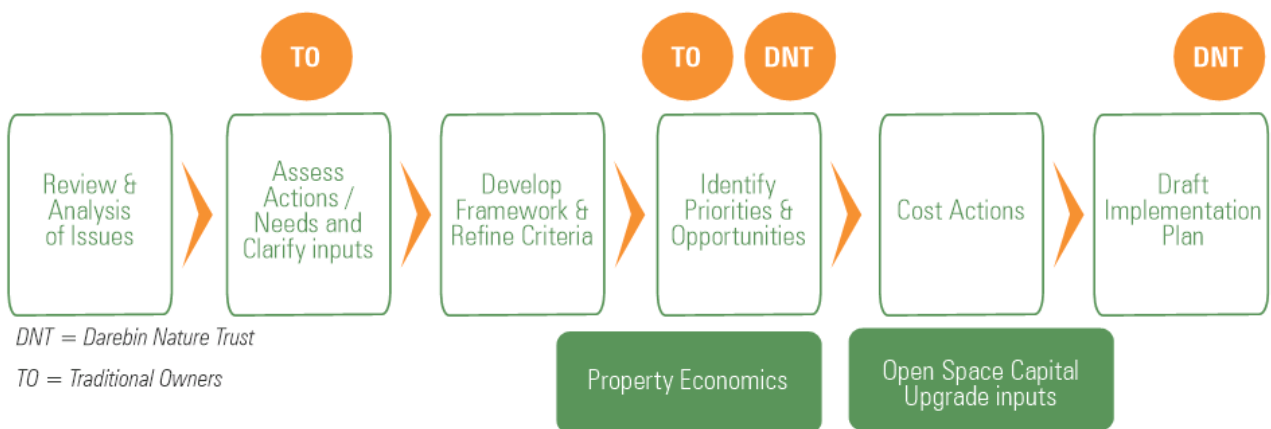


Figure 2: Project process





## 2.0 BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

### 2.1 WHAT IS OPEN SPACE?

While *Breathing Space* contains a number of descriptions of open space as it relates to particular uses, for the purposes of *Implementing Breathing Space* it is considered that the majority of open spaces within Darebin will not be 'single purpose' spaces but will serve multiple purposes (such as a linear open space which provides for active recreation such as jogging or bike riding, and a biodiversity purpose, or a large park which contains active and passive recreation opportunities as well as social and civic functions and a contribution to local biodiversity).

However, an understanding of the role of the varying spaces within the open space network, and more importantly, as part of the formal network of Public Open Space in Darebin is important in the context of funding avenues. Aligning definitions with other strategic plans and strategies also helps support effective implementation. As such, the following descriptions are adopted for this Plan:

- **Open space / the open space network** - As per *Breathing Space* - "open space includes not only parks and reserves, but also streetscapes, nature strips, productive food gardens, urban nodes, quasi-public space, parklets, transport corridors and overlapping uses of space with schools, public asset providers and other institutions"
- **Public Open Space** – As per Subdivision Act (1988) Section 18A  
*Public open space means land set aside in a plan or land in a plan zoned or reserved under a planning scheme –*
  - a) For public recreation or public resort, or
  - b) As parklands
  - c) For similar purposes

It is important to recognise these two district definitions as *Breathing Space's* definitions of open space is much broader than that with the potential to be funded through the legal mechanism of the *Subdivision Act* (currently implemented through Clause 53.01 of the Darebin Planning Scheme).

### 2.2 DAREBIN'S CONTEXT

Darebin's context is a municipality which ranges from a more intensively developed inner city area, to more traditional suburban landscapes extending up to Melbourne's northern growth areas. The creek corridors are defining features of the municipality and form the majority of the eastern, western and north boundaries of the municipality. These creek corridors provide many important open space opportunities but can also serve as barriers to open space in adjoining municipalities.

In addition to the creek corridors the strong north / south characteristics of Darebin are also reflected in the major road corridors of St Georges Road / Spring Street, High Street and Plenty Road. High Street and Plenty Road in particular are major development corridors. Bell Street is the major defining east / west corridor. Darebin has a legacy of a number of large industrial estates which are generally located adjoining the creek corridors to both the north-west and south-east. The area around Latrobe University Campus, extending south to include Northland and Summerhill Shopping Centres, is a designated National Employment & Innovation Cluster under Plan Melbourne.

In addition to the open space along Darebin's creek corridors, which also include Edgars and Central Creeks, larger scale open space assets are mostly located in the north-east, around the La Trobe University Campus, including Bundoora Park and key environmental assets. Other notable spaces include golf courses, Edwardes Lake, the sports complexes at JC Donath Reserve, and around the Darebin International Sports Centre and All Nations Park.

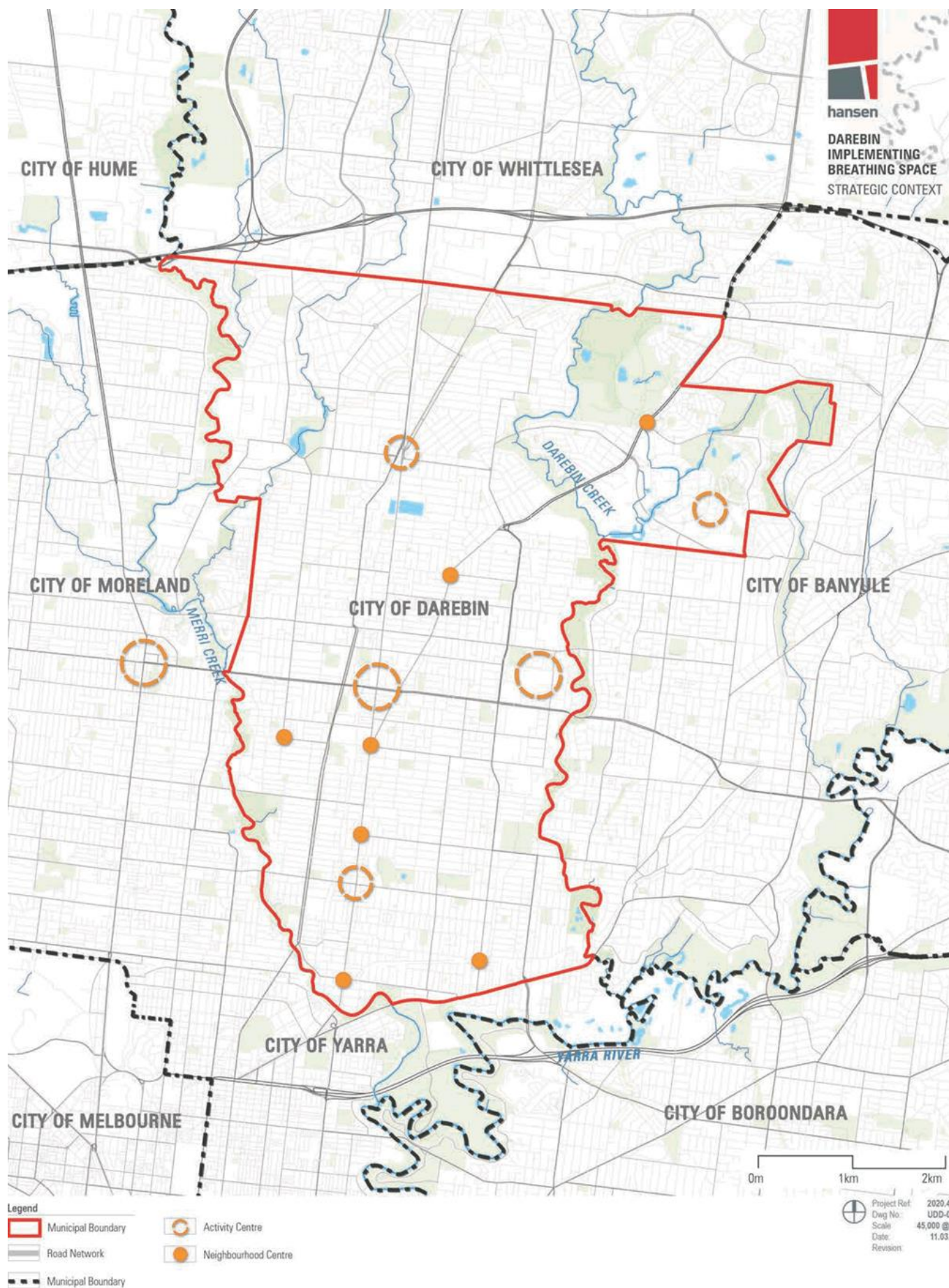


Figure 3: City of Darebin context



## 2.3 BREATHING SPACE STRUCTURE & KEY OBJECTIVES

The vision for Open Space in Darebin articulated by *Breathing Space* is as follows:

*We see a future city that has more and better open space. Where we share multifaceted, contemplative, biodiverse, inspiring and active spaces that promote health, wellbeing, and social and cultural connections.*

*Our streets, reserves, nature strips and medians are lush and rewilded with bushland trees, flowers and plants.*

*Breathing Space: The Darebin Open Space Strategy seeks to achieve a place where we work together to protect local species and extend their habitat, celebrate our unique natural character and where everyone in the community feels a deep sense of ownership and responsibility towards our beautiful natural world.*

*The strategy will achieve its vision of more and better open space through increasing the quantity of open space by working towards all residents having access to open space within 500m walking distance of their homes and improving the quality of open space to meet the three key directions of the strategy:*

*Key Direction 1: Meeting community open space needs*

*Key Direction 2: Rewilding Darebin: improving biodiversity*

*Key Direction 3: Creating a Green Streets Network*

Both the 'quality' and 'quantity' of open space in Darebin are key challenges identified by *Breathing Space* and the strategy seeks to address them both.

The three Key Directions outlined in the Vision which form the structure of the document are supported by 15 Objectives.

*Key Direction 1: Meeting community open space needs*

- *Objective 1: Make the distribution of open space equitable*
- *Objective 2: Recognise local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities, particularly Traditional Owners*
- *Objective 3: Designing for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities*
- *Objective 4: Reflect diverse needs*
- *Objective 5: Provide facilities that make open spaces more appealing and useable by more people*
- *Objective 6: Balance the needs of different users*
- *Objective 7: Make all open spaces multi-use*
- *Objective 8: Make open spaces places for expression and art*

*Key Direction 2: Rewilding Darebin: improving biodiversity*

- *Objective 9: Increase appreciation for biodiversity*
- *Objective 10: Protect local species*
- *Objective 11: Engage the community as partners in biodiversity protection*
- *Objective 12: Make indigenous bushland character the default choice*

*Key Direction 3: Creating a Green Streets Network*

- *Objective 13: Develop a network of green streets in Darebin*
- *Objective 14: Enable walking and cycling*
- *Objective 15: Build best practice across Council, the community and public asset owners*



## IMPLEMENTING BREATHING SPACE

## 2.4 IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

### QUALITY, QUANTITY AND PROXIMITY

One of the major issues in implementing *Breathing Space*, or any open-space strategy, is the need to consider open space not only in terms of the *quantity* of open space available to the community but also to consider issues of both *access* and *quality* of available open space. One of the strengths of the *Breathing Space* strategy is that it acknowledges that more effective utilisation of existing open space, as well as the provision of new open space, is critical to meeting community needs. *Breathing Space* reflects an acknowledgement that, particularly in inner-city areas with more density and high land values, the large-scale delivery of new open spaces is constrained.

It is important to acknowledge that open-space strategies are prepared in a range of ways and there is no consistent or standardised way of measuring either quality, quantity or proximity. *Breathing Space* adopts a 30m<sup>2</sup> rate per person for 'quantity' and a 500m distance from open space for 'proximity'. These definitions are adopted in the absence of any state mandated standards. *Breathing Space* also identifies what may be expected in terms of 'quality' based on the intensity of usage and other *Breathing Space* objectives by allocating 'Types' with associated facilities, to existing parks (noting these are being confirmed as part of the review of Councils *Open Space Asset Management Plan* (Action 5.10)).

While traditionally open space plans and funding have focused on the delivery of new open spaces (the *quantity*) and to lesser degree on *proximity*, the *quality* of existing open spaces needs to be considered meaningfully as part of any implementation plan.

Within Darebin, land is heavily utilised and there is little 'spare' land which can be converted to new areas of open space. The vast majority of land is also in private ownership which creates issues both in the cost of acquiring new land, and in the timely acquisition of land, given the reliance on land being offered up for sale. The emphasis in *Breathing Space* on upgrading existing areas of open space, alongside the provision of new areas when and where these can be delivered responds to the realities of many local governments in delivering open space for their communities.

### COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS AND THE IMPACT OF COVID 19

Also influencing any implementation of Darebin's open-space strategy are considerations of changing expectations from the community in terms of what open spaces will deliver, and an increasing awareness of the importance of open space. More specifically, there is an increasing importance placed on high-quality locally accessible

open space highlighted by lockdowns in 2020 which in Darebin saw increased pressure on linear open spaces in particular, noting over 200% increases in usage in some places. For many, patterns of usage established at the time are continuing and these increases in usage, as well as community expectations have significant implications for Council's delivery and funding of open spaces. There is a current disconnect between the importance placed by the community on open space and the mechanisms available for Council to deliver open space

As noted, *Breathing Space* identified that open space is more than just formal parks. The way people experience open space varies - it encompasses linear pathways with vegetation and canopy trees such as the St George's Road corridor, more 'natural' and biodiverse spaces such as Merri Creek and also more formal sporting and recreation facilities. Open space also needs to be considered in terms of what it provides and the scale at which it provides it. Considerations of the range of scales of open space available were also highlighted during the pandemic, with the use of the Northcote Golf Course for a range of uses by the local community an often cited example.

### FUNDING CONSTRAINTS

Importantly for implementation of any open space strategy the definition of what can be funded through the main mechanism used by Council to deliver open space (the Open Space Levy linked to subdivision) does not necessarily reflect contemporary understanding of 'open space'. *Implementing Breathing Space* therefore needs to be clear on what aspects are available to be funded through the open space levy according to the relevant definitions and what will be funded through other sources. *Implementing Breathing Space* documents indicative costs to deliver appropriate open space within the municipality. Due to funding constraints, it is not anticipated that all of these will be able to be met, and a process of prioritisation will therefore need to occur.

The critical issue which must be acknowledged is that meeting identified benchmarks in terms of 'quality', 'proximity' and 'quantity' (not to mention community expectations) will result in funding needs which far exceed anything that can be reasonably delivered by Council, even with a significant increase in the open space levy as proposed by *Breathing Space*. This is even more notable in the current rate capped context in which Councils are seeking to rectify existing shortfalls and meet future needs in relation to open space.

Darebin, like many inner-city municipalities, has an existing shortfall in open-space. The municipality is also anticipated to accommodate significant future growth which will increase pressure on these open space assets. While Darebin is lucky to have a number of high quality open spaces, it lacks significant large-scale open space



assets and there are parts of the municipality which have very little open space. Consistent with other inner city municipalities, addressing shortfalls by increasing the quantity of open-space provision is significantly constrained by the cost of land which makes purchase of land (particularly large-scale parcels) a difficult proposition. This requires more 'innovative' approach to the delivery of open space which is not always compatible with the available funding sources, and associated mechanisms. *Enhancing Open Space* addresses these challenges by identifying a wide range of opportunities for the delivery of open space.

**INTEGRATION OF BIODIVERSITY VALUES**

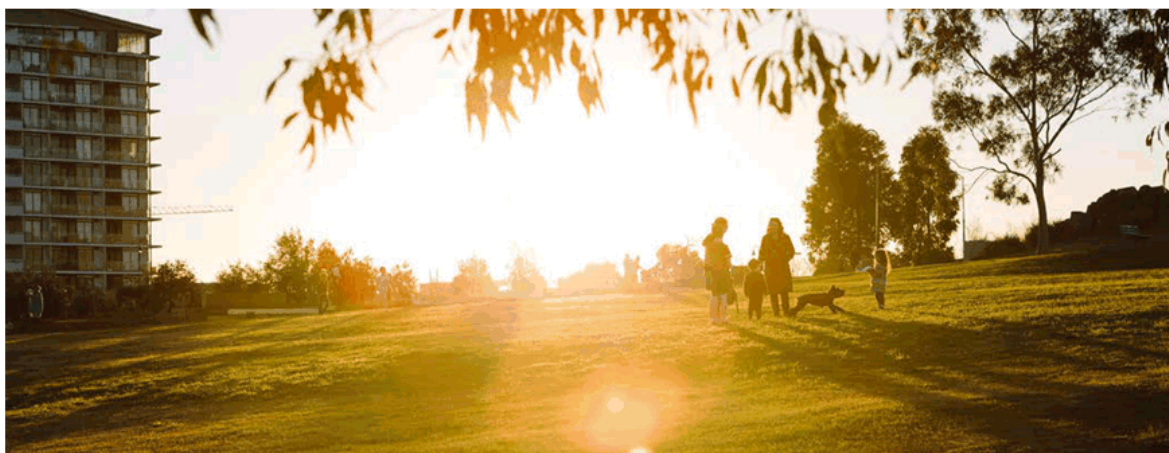
*Breathing Space* also places a strong emphasis on the role of open spaces, not just as formal public open space networks (designed as social infrastructure) but also the contribution open spaces make in terms of ecosystem services and protection and enhancement of biodiversity. Darebin's declaration of a climate and biodiversity emergency means this aspect of open space planning is of critical importance in terms of integration of biodiversity related matters with the open-space network. There are however, current gaps in understanding of the context which must be addressed in order to appropriately implement *Breathing Space* aspirations. Some of these are addressed through *Implementing Breathing Space* - of particular note is the need to prepare a Biodiversity Management Plan which can highlight opportunities for the delivery of habitat linkages and wildlife corridors beyond those provided by the creek corridors. Until this work is undertaken it is difficult to fully integrate the objectives of *Breathing Space* with any expansion of the broader public open space network. However, significant work is underway and addressed through *Implementing Breathing Space* to ensure considerations of biodiversity are central to the delivery of all open spaces.

**INTEGRATION OF CULTURAL VALUES**

Recognising the importance of landscapes within Darebin, and in particular waterway corridors, to the cultural values of Darebin's Traditional Owners, the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people and culture, as well as the broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, is also critical. While the preparation of *Implementing Breathing Space* has been informed by conversations with the Darebin Aboriginal Advisory Committee and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, this is just the beginning of the process of more fully integrating the cultural values which are embedded in Darebin's open spaces. The important opportunity that open space can provide in increasing the visibility of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and history, in increasing the broader community's understanding and appreciation of cultural values, has been highlighted during engagement sessions.

**OVERLAPS AND INTEGRATION**

Planning for open space is also made more complex by the diversity of interests, pressures and other influences which inform them. Open spaces are multifunctional and are often subject to contradictory ambitions. Equally open space planning has the opportunity to deliver on objectives related to a range of other matters including active transport, health and well-being, equity, inclusion and responses to climate change. Open space planning intersects with, and is critical to, the delivery of objectives well beyond those articulated in *Breathing Space*. As such, *Implementing Breathing Space* represents a 'whole of Council' approach and will require the involvement of the majority of Council departments.





## IMPLEMENTING BREATHING SPACE

### 3.0 GAPS IN THE PROVISION OF PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

*Implementing Breathing Space* recognises that the core vision of *Breathing Space* vision is to provide 'more and better open space'. Actions 1.1 and 5.1 are broad actions that play a key role in achieving this vision.

'Key Direction 1: Meeting community open space needs', and its associated Objectives, Strategies and Actions relate to the provision of open space, and in particular, its equitable spatial distribution across the municipality.

*Strategy 1.1 Work towards all Darebin residents having quality public open space within 500m of their homes.*

*Strategy 1.2 Over time, plan and deliver new open space where there are identified gaps in the open space network and where there is the greatest need.*

**Action 1.1 Acquire additional open space. This may be through purchase, joint use agreements and/or partnerships with public and private entities.**

To implement Action 1.1, having regard to Strategies 1.1 and 1.2, requires a number of things be first understood. These are:

- Where the gaps in the existing open space network are, including a confirmation of existing available open space
- Where there is the greatest need for new open space
- What the various opportunities available are to 'acquire' additional open space
- What the funding mechanisms, potential barriers and practical steps to deliver this open space are.

These are addressed in this Section of the *Implementing Breathing Space* and the complementary document, *Enhancing Open Space*.

Importantly, under the same Key Direction, *Breathing Space* also identifies a need to 'upgrade' open spaces over time to improve their appeal and usability. This is expressed through

*Strategy 5.1 Over time, plan and deliver open space improvements where there are gaps in the current level of service/amenity provision.*

**Action 5.1 Over time, upgrade open spaces in need of safety, quality and amenity improvements.**

*Breathing Space* explicitly acknowledges that both quality and quantity of open space in Darebin are key challenges the strategy seeks to address. Direction 1 acknowledges that areas with high levels of growth will require high performing open spaces that support intensive use by the local community.

As such, gaps need to be identified in two ways -

- Gaps in the QUANTITY of open space, having particular regard for areas without current access to LOCAL parks.
- Gaps in the QUALITY of open space, where the current level of service does not correspond with *Breathing Space's* identified 'Type'. This is discussed further at Section 3.4.



### 3.1 EXISTING OPEN SPACE IN DAREBIN

*Breathing Space* identifies a range of existing open spaces in Darebin (Page 27). Importantly, *Breathing Space* makes a distinction between spaces which are owned / managed by Council and met certain parameters and those which did not. In *Breathing Space*, a broad definition of 'open space' was adopted generally, but in assessing the gaps in the existing network of Public Open Space available to Darebin's resident, a narrower definition was used. As stated in *Breathing Space* (Page 29), accessible open space was considered as follows:

*This includes access to Council managed and/or publicly accessible open spaces within Darebin. Golf courses, schools and conservation reserves with limited public access are excluded from the analysis. Open spaces in neighbouring municipalities are also excluded (standard planning practice is to exclude any land over which Council does not have direct ownership and control and is therefore unable to guarantee its future use and availability).*

Figure 4 identifies open spaces across Darebin and their role as identified in *Breathing Space*.

As part of this project areas defined as Public Open Space were reviewed. Figure 5 identifies an updated appreciation of existing open space assets in and adjoining Darebin, as well as the relevant 'categorisation' of those assets.

In response to the parameters established in *Breathing Space*, areas of open space which were not owned / managed by Council and which are not 'publicly accessible' are identified separately. As noted, *Breathing Space* does not identify all of these open spaces as contributing to the network of Public Open Space available to Darebin's residents.

However, as can be seen by comparison between the two plans, there are a large number of other open space assets which *may* be available to residents, albeit in a less secure or formalised manner.

### 3.2 OPEN SPACE TYPOLOGIES

*Breathing Space* also defined parks in Darebin according to their hierarchy (size) and role. These include:

- **local** parks - small parks drawing visitors within walking distance from the location or suburb. Lower level of use / service.
- **district** parks - draw visitors from surrounding suburbs as well as people who live within walking distance. Moderate level of use / service.
- **regional** parks - draw visitors from across the municipality and beyond. High level of use / service.

In addition to hierarchical classifications of open space, *Breathing Space* classifies District and Local parks into 'type' A, B and C to reflect varying levels of population density within their geographic catchments. Together, hierarchy and type are used in *Breathing Space* to guide the provision of assets required to meet the needs of the community.

As part of developing the *Open Space Asset Management Plan*, an assessment of existing assets was undertaken alongside a review of the type allocation in *Breathing Space*.

This comprehensive assessment also considered a further level of 'park category' recognising the primary purpose/ activity of each site. For example, a 'community' park is a very different proposition from a 'linear' reserve which functions primarily as an active transport corridor, and would therefore be anticipated to have different needs. Identification of primary purpose, in addition to catchment, enables a holistic approach to planning Levels of Service and the appropriate type, number and quality of asset provision for each space.



IMPLEMENTING BREATHING SPACE

The 'primary purpose' used in the background assessment for the *Open Space Asset Management Plan*, and referenced within *Implementing Breathing Space* are as follows

**Civic**

- Open space used for community and civic gatherings, or that surrounds civic buildings.

**Community**

- Open space that is used for casual recreation, providing spaces and features to encourage play, social interaction and relaxation.

**Conservation**

- Areas that have unique or important native plants and/or animals where species conservation priorities override other visitor activities.

**Residential Pocket Park**

- Provides general beautification through the provision of grass, shrubs and trees, with low levels of development or use (except for people walking through). Usually these parks cannot be used for recreation because of their size, location and/or topography and their main value is visual appearance.

**Linear**

- Often long and mostly narrow parks that link green spaces, provide opportunities for walking and cycling, or that follow natural features such as creeks and rivers. Paths and trails are key features and reason to visit.

**Active**

- Usually large sites where organised/competition sport is played. Playing ovals, tennis and other small ball courts, playgrounds, car parking, sports pavilions and toilets are typical features found in Sports Parks.

**Special Purpose**

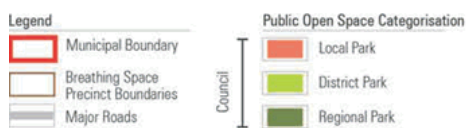
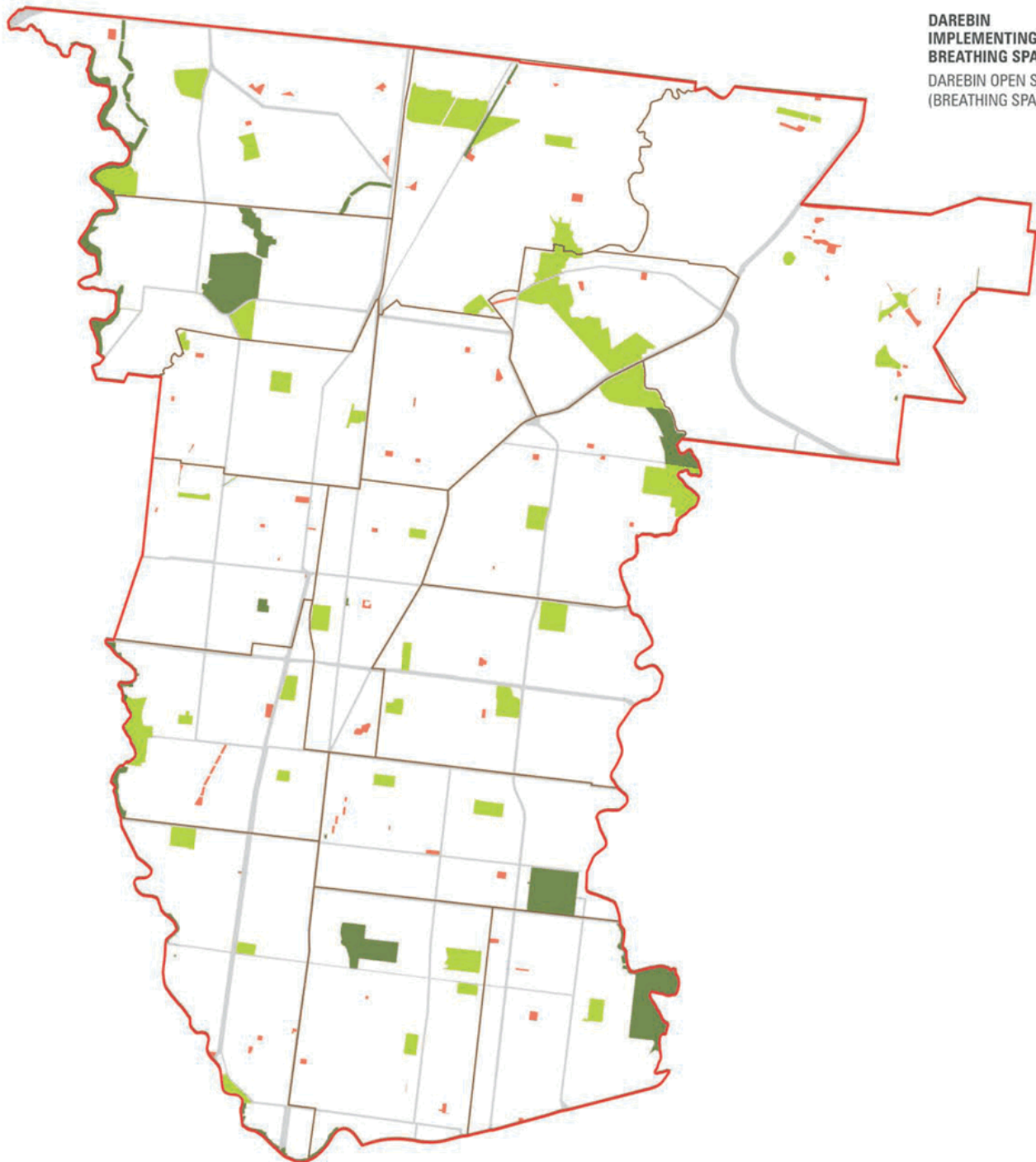
- These are sites which have a specific purpose, and often with a unique level of service, and includes sites such as golf courses, forestry plantations, botanic gardens etc







**DAREBIN  
IMPLEMENTING  
BREATHING SPACE**  
DAREBIN OPEN SPACE  
(BREATHING SPACE)



Project Ref: 2020.4  
Dwg No.: UDD-01  
Scale: 10,000 @/J  
Date: 18.03.  
Revision:

Figure 4: Network of Public Open Space identified in Breathing Space

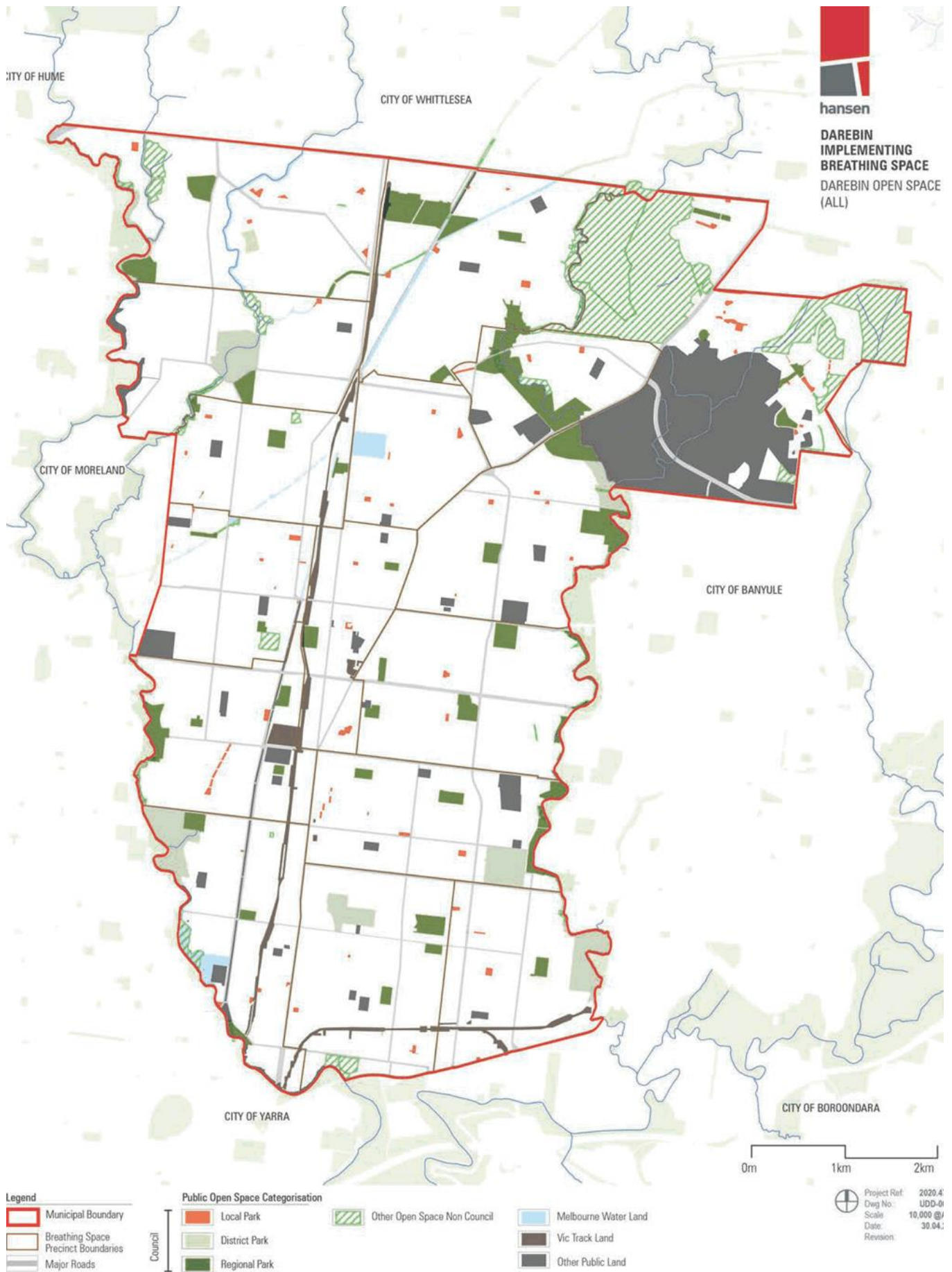


Figure 5: Existing Public Open Space network



### 3.3 WHERE ARE THE GAPS?

*Breathing Space* identifies ‘gaps’ or shortfalls in the network of Public Open Space in Darebin in three different ways. For the purposes of assessment and comparison, *Breathing Space* breaks the municipality down into a series of ‘precincts’ which relate to proposed development contributions areas. Using these precincts, the gaps in provision are quantified as follows:

- Precincts where there is an EXISTING shortfall on a PER CAPITA basis identified in *Breathing Space*.
- Precincts where there is a FUTURE shortfall on a PER CAPITA basis identified in *Breathing Space* / Precincts where there is a high rate of growth anticipated which will increase pressure on existing open spaces.
- Precincts where existing lots do not have ACCESS to Public Open Space within 500m.

*Breathing Space* identifies land which does not have access to ‘acceptable’ open space within 500m on a map at Page 28 (replicated at Figure 6). It is important to note that not all open spaces shown on this plan were considered as being accessible to residents.

As can be seen on this map there are a number of areas (those in pink) where properties do not have access to Council managed publicly accessible open space within 500m walking distance. The lots shown in pink include lots in all zones (including industrial and commercial zones).

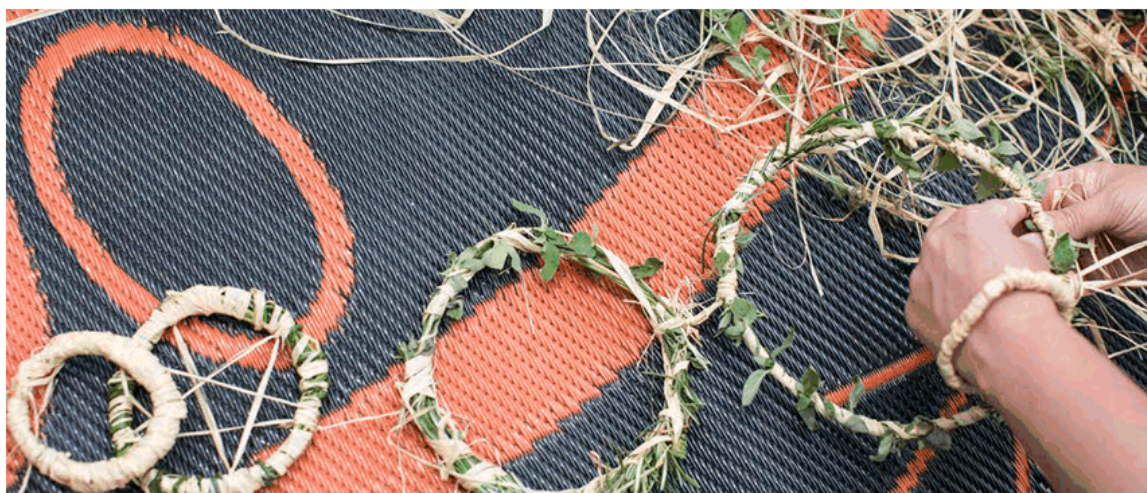
A corresponding table (Table 2, Page 29) is included in *Breathing Space* which identifies the percentage of ‘households’ which do not have access to open space per precinct. This is based on the number of lots highlighted in pink per precinct but is understood to have excluded lots in the industrial zones.

The *Breathing Space* ‘per capita’ shortfall in the provision of open space for each precinct represents the difference between the amount of ‘acceptable’ open space (Figure 4) available to each person and the identified benchmark of 30sqm per person.

The indicator of 30sqm per person is adopted based on a ‘commonly accepted’ benchmark, with existing population figures for each precinct were based on the 2018 figures adopted by the City of Darebin.

Building on the existing per capita shortfall, *Breathing Space* then provides an estimate for how the existing gap will grow under adopted growth scenarios. For most of the municipality growth projections mean that existing shortfalls are likely to be exacerbated.

*Note: These forecasts were last updated in May 2017 by .id, the population experts, on behalf of the Darebin Council. Forecasts are available for each year from 2016 to 2041. They do not consider potential impacts to assumptions stemming from COVID-19. It is acknowledged that this external shock has implications which may affect future growth in Darebin, although there remains considerable uncertainty about the nature and degree of these effects. We regularly monitor the performance of our forecasts. These forecasts were last reviewed in March 2021.*





IMPLEMENTING BREATHING SPACE

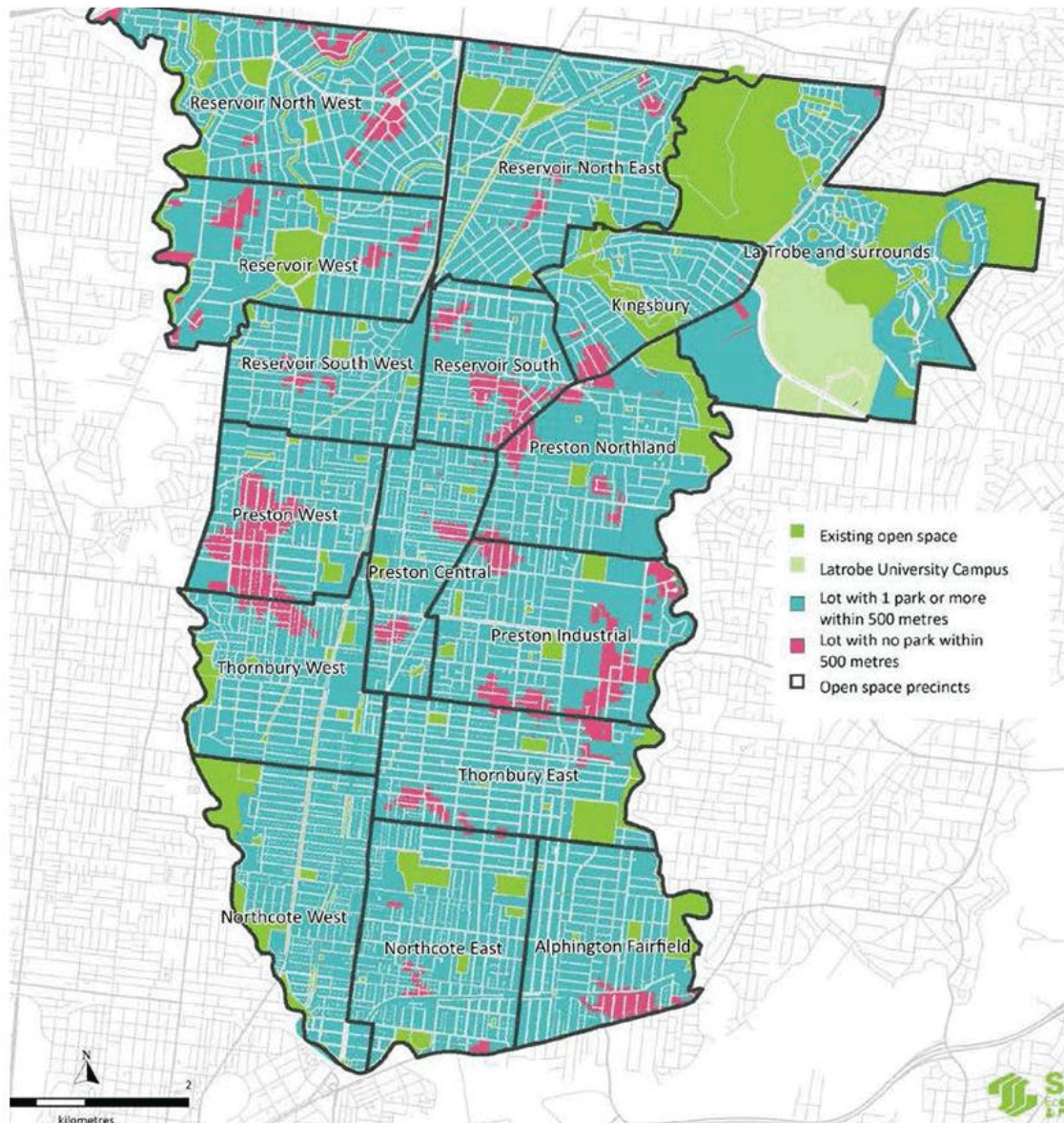


Figure 6: Breathing Space 'proximity' gap identification



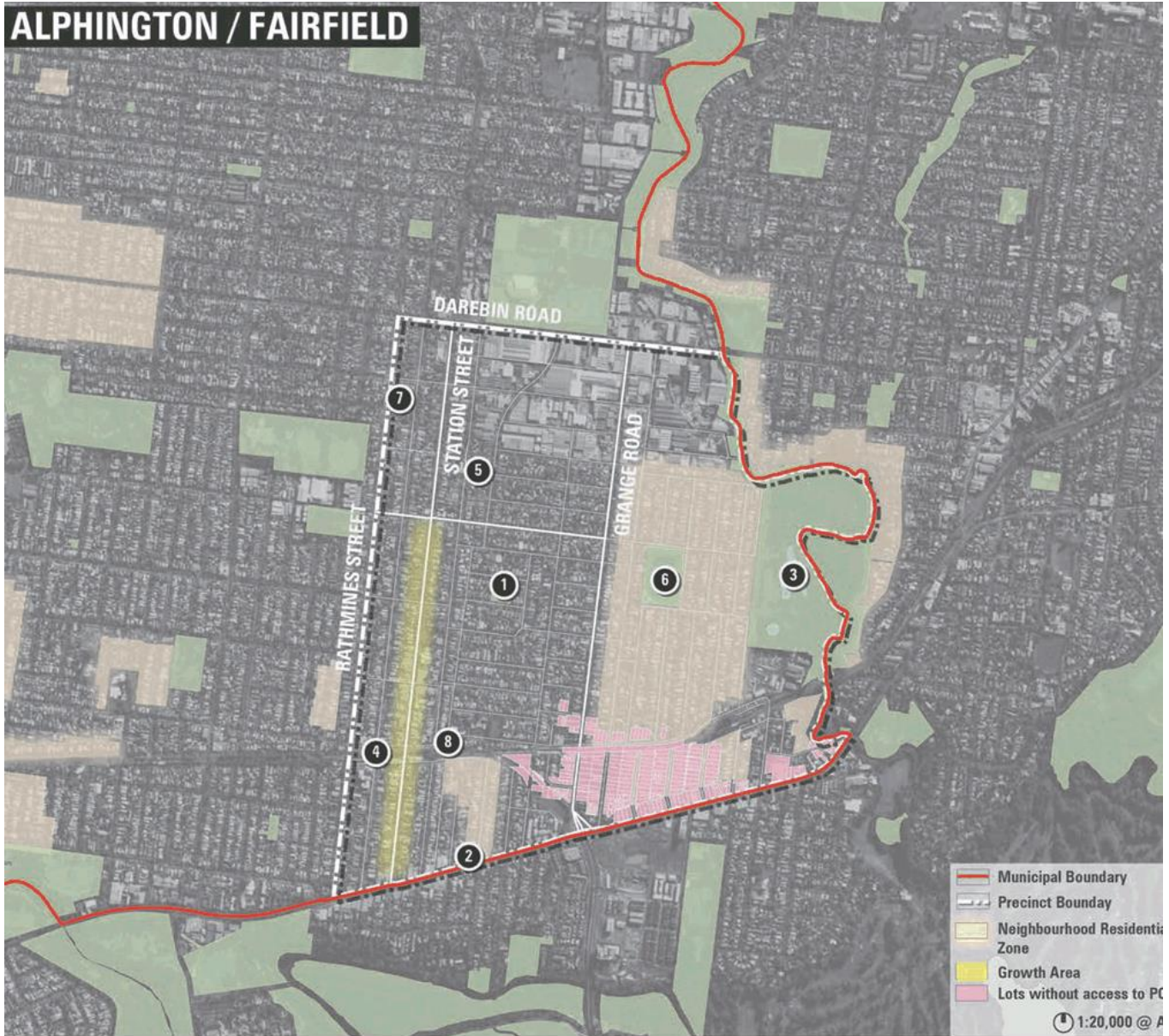
### 3.4 PRECINCT SUMMARIES

The following pages bring together the separate assessments undertaken as part of *Breathing Space*, providing a summary of the precincts in terms of their existing open spaces, the future Type assigned to each park in *Breathing Space*, for upgrades (see Section 3.5) the scale and type of any shortfall in the provision of open space. The Precinct Summaries also allow for an understanding of where (spatially) growth is directed through current planning policy.

#### WHAT DO THESE PRECINCT SUMMARIES SHOW?

- The various level of growth and shortfalls are identified for each Precinct, including a colour coded identification of those with the greatest shortfalls. Dark orange represents a high shortfall or level of growth
- The spatial extent of existing lots without access to open space as identified in *Breathing Space*, with industrial zoned lots removed, but commercial lots retained given their potential for residential growth. Where there are more lots without access beyond the defined precinct boundaries these are also shown to provide context
- The spatial definition of where higher levels of growth in the precinct is anticipated (such as activity centres, strategic development sites or housing growth corridors, as well as lower levels of growth (ie through the application of the Neighbourhood Residential Zone)
- Existing open spaces in and around each precinct are identified. Those which are not included in *Breathing Space* assessment are identified with an asterisk.
- For each area of open space its role in the hierarchy (Regional / District / Local) is identified, as well as the proposed *Breathing Space* Type. And finally the primary purpose of open space used internally by Council is included (see Section 3.2 for discussion of definitions)

Figures 7 - 22: Precinct Summaries (following pages)



**PRECINCT GROWTH SUMMARY**

Alphington Fairfield has a low growth rate compared to many areas within the municipality, therefore intensification of use of the public open space is expected to be less than in other precincts. The Darebin Creek corridor, including Darebin Parklands forms the eastern border of this precinct and comprises a significant part of the public open space in this precinct.

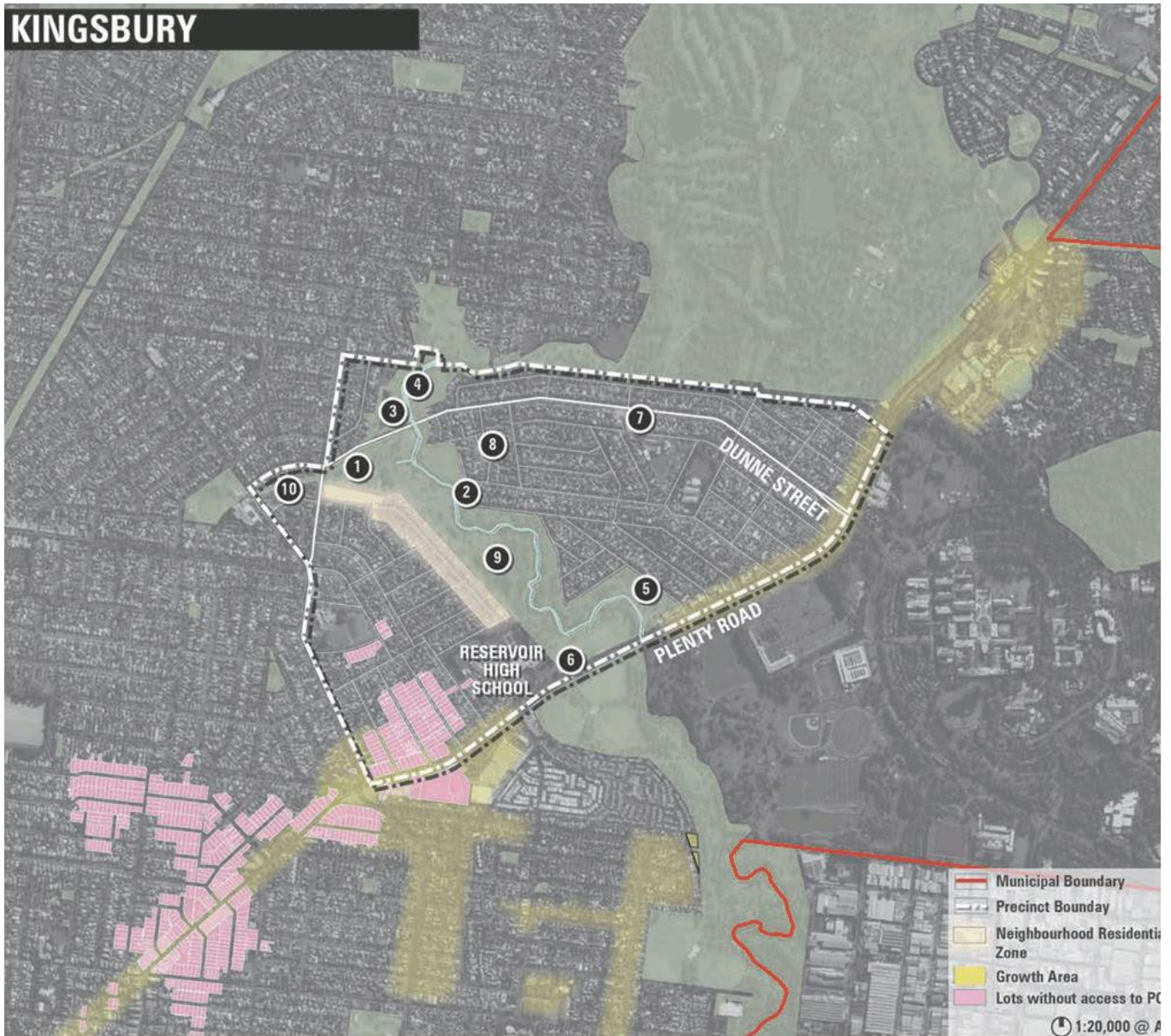


**EXISTING OPEN SPACE**

Location	Area (ha)	Future Type:	Primary Purpose:
1. Breavington Reserve	0.57	B	Community
2. Broomfield Reserve	0.14	C	Community
3. Darebin Creek Corridor including Darebin Parklands*	21.03	Regional	Linear
4. Fairfield Station Reserve	0.27	C	Non-council
5. McGregor Street Reserve	0.18	B	Community
6. Pitcher Park	2.78	C	Active
7. Susan Walsh Reserve	0.3	B	Community
8. Wingrove Reserve	0.14	C	Non-council

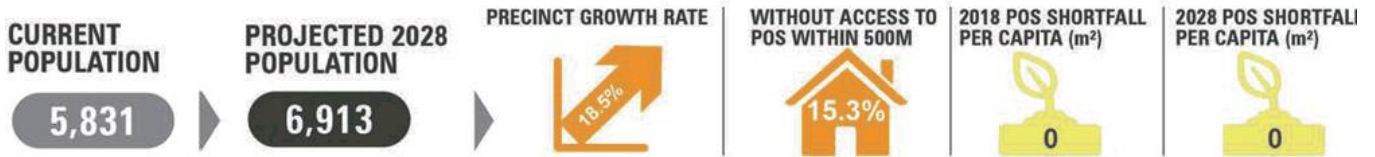
LOCAL    DISTRICT    REGIONAL

# KINGSBURY



**PRECINCT GROWTH SUMMARY**

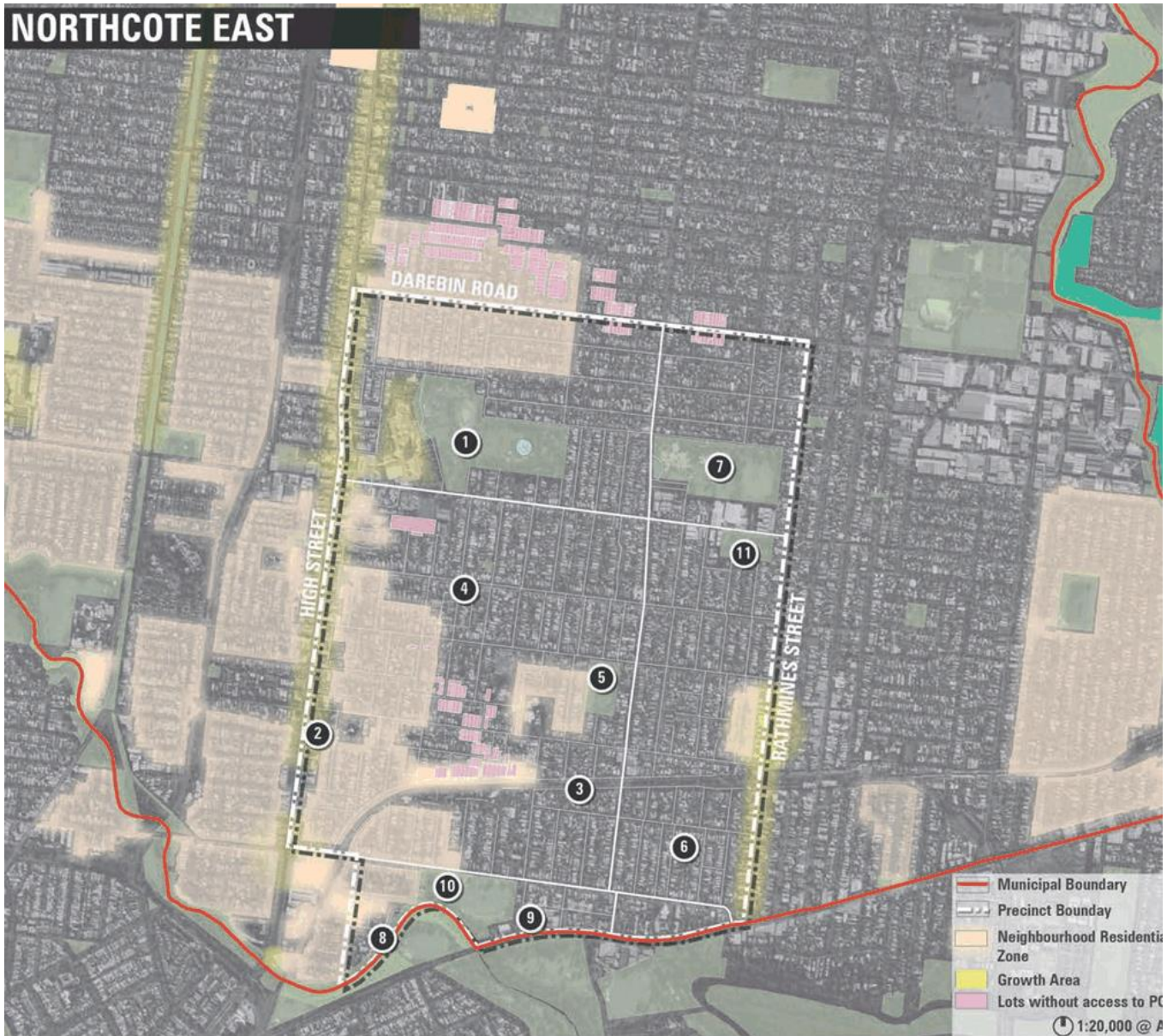
Kingsbury is expected to be a high growth precinct in the future. The public open space within the precinct is anticipated to be maintained or upgraded where required. The Darebin Creek corridor runs centrally through the precinct with a landscaped buffer on either side. Future development is expected to be of more medium to high density dwellings consisting of more apartments and townhouses



**EXISTING OPEN SPACE**

Location	Future Type:	Primary Purpose:
1. Arch Gibson Reserve (5.56ha)	C	Active
2. C.W. Kirkwood Reserve (2.51ha)	C	Active
3. Clements Reserve (2.84ha)	C	Community
4. John Hall Reserve (3.07ha)	C	Active
5. Judith Scott Memorial Park (5.28ha)	C	Active
6. K.P. Hardiman Reserve (14.83ha)	C	Active
7. Link Reserve (0.34ha)	A	Community
8. Parkhaven Estate Reserve (0.3ha)	A	Community
9. Scott Reserve (2.4ha)	C	Linear
10. T.W. Andrews – Link Arch Gibson Reserve (0.47ha)	A	Linear

# NORTHCOTE EAST



**PRECINCT GROWTH SUMMARY**

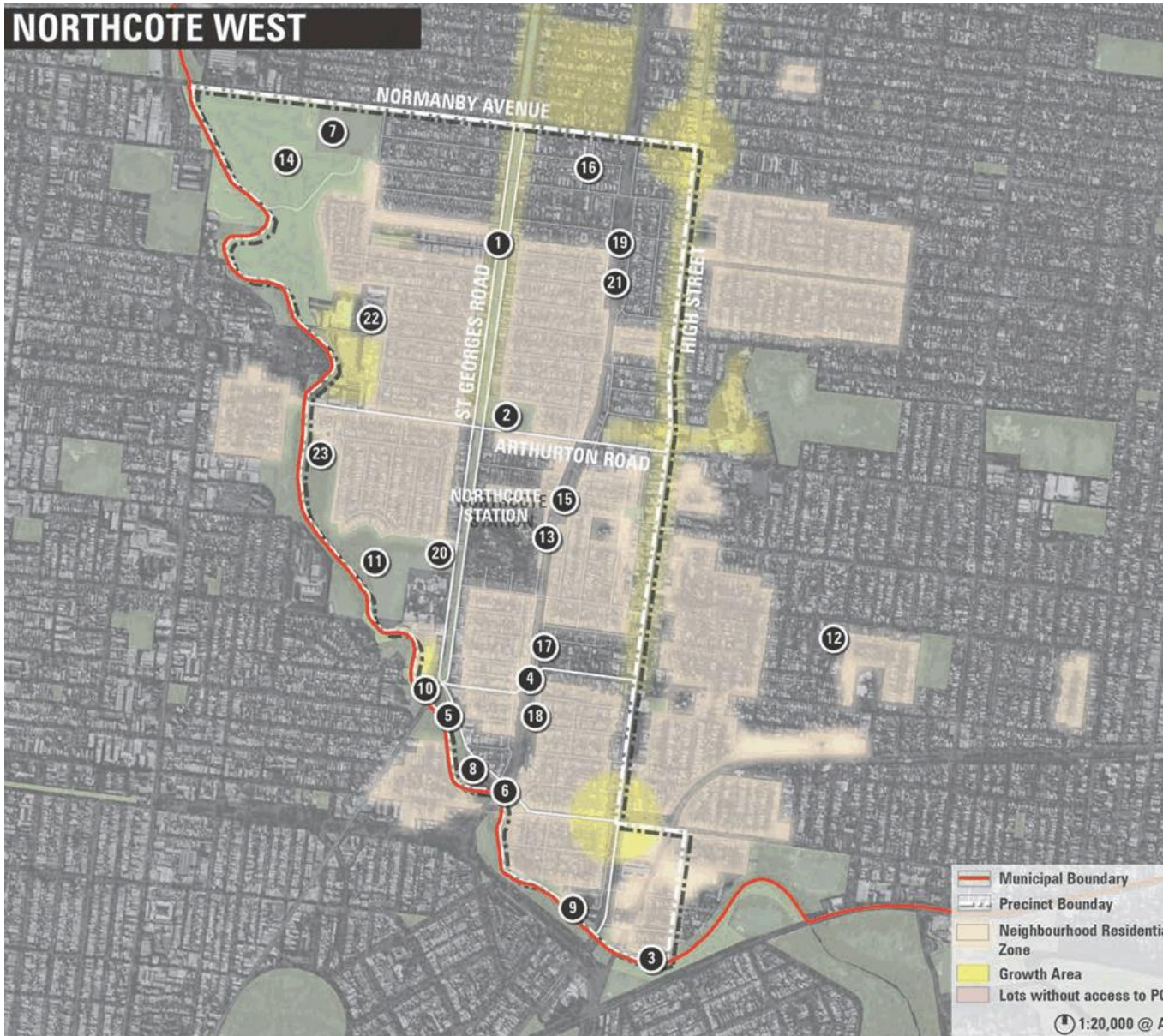
Northcote East has a low growth rate compared to many areas within the municipality, therefore intensification of use of the public open space is expected to be less than in other precincts. The recent growth in residential apartments along High Street has increased pressure on open space. The Merri Creek corridors forms part of the southern border of this precinct. Improvements will be made to amenity, access and planting along the creek corridor and pedestrian links to improve their function in terms of biodiversity, connectivity and public open space.



**EXISTING OPEN SPACE**

Location	Future Type:	Primary Purpose:
1. All Nations Park (12.19ha)*	Regional	Community
2. Baden Morgan Reserve (0.26ha)	B	Community
3. Dennis St Pedestrian Link (0.02ha)	C	Linear
4. Derby Reserve (0.07ha)	B	Community
5. Johnson Park (2.1ha)	A	Community
6. McAdam Reserve (0.34ha)	C	Community
7. McDonnell Reserve (6.13ha)	A	Active
8. Merri Creek Corridor (1.78ha)*	Regional	Linear
9. Northcote Park (Bill Lawry Oval) (3.1ha)	A	Active
10. Oldis Gardens (2.63ha)	A	Community
11. Rubie Thomson Reserve (1.75ha)	A	Community





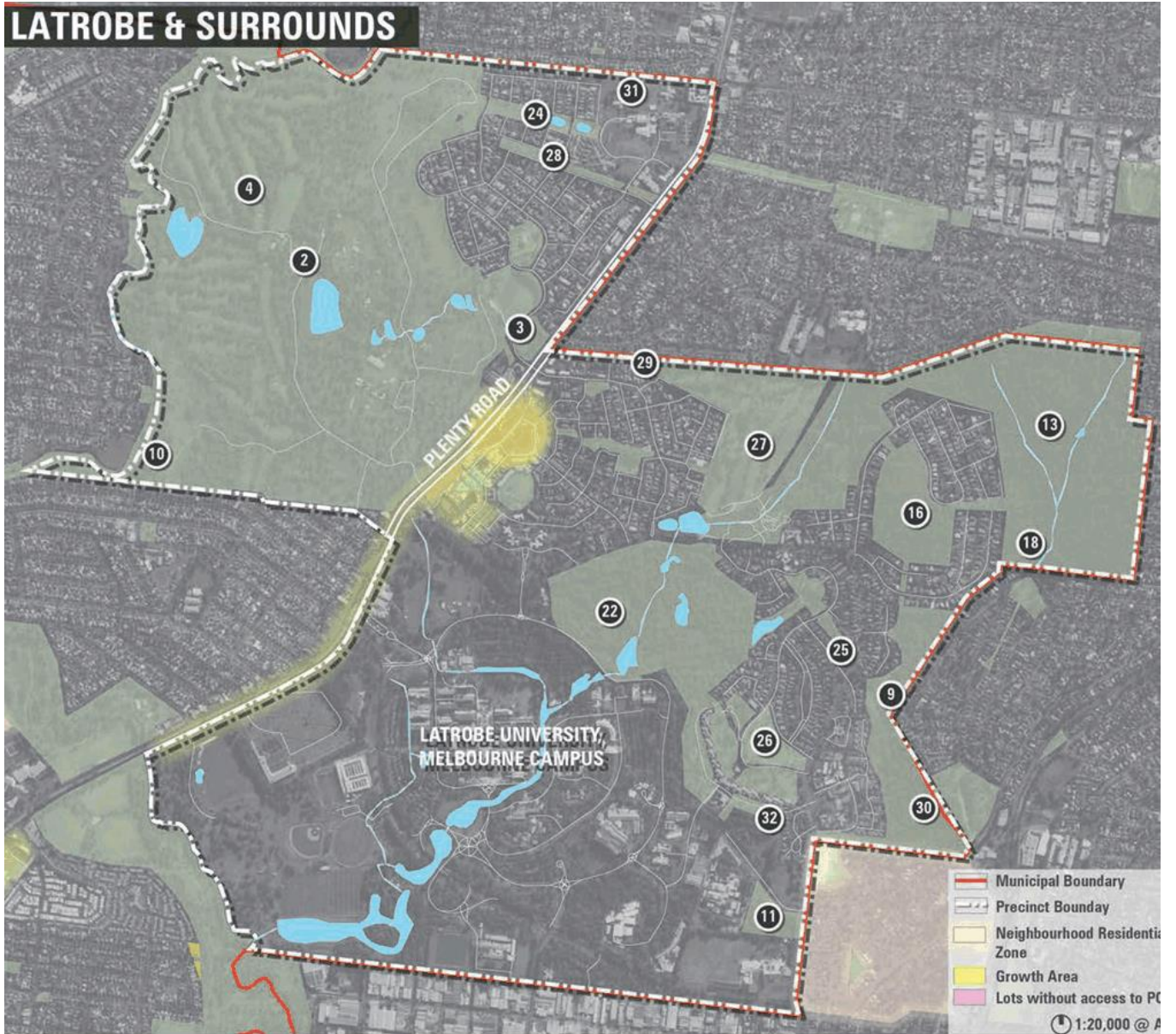
**PRECINCT GROWTH SUMMARY**

Northcote West is expected to be a future growth precinct with development predicted to be in the medium to higher density housing. Bounded by the Merri Creek Corridor on the west and High Street to the east, the precinct seeks east west connection improvements while reinforcing the conditions of existing public open spaces.

<b>CURRENT POPULATION</b> <b>13,942</b>	<b>PROJECTED 2028 POPULATION</b> <b>16,998</b>	<b>PRECINCT GROWTH RATE</b> <b>21.9%</b>	<b>WITHOUT ACCESS TO POS WITHIN 500M</b> <b>0%</b>	<b>2018 POS SHORTFALL PER CAPITA (m<sup>2</sup>)</b> <b>10.9</b>	<b>2028 POS SHORTFALL PER CAPITA (m<sup>2</sup>)</b> <b>14.8</b>
<b>EXISTING OPEN SPACE</b>	<b>Future Type:</b>	<b>Primary Purpose:</b>		<b>Future Type:</b>	<b>Primary Purpose:</b>
1. Allan Bird Reserve (0.06ha)	A	Conservation	13. Northcote Community Gardens Reserve (0.48ha)	B	Linear
2. Batman Park (1.64ha)	A	Community	14. Northcote Public Golf Course (24.34ha)#	Golf Course	Golf Course
3. Bridge Park (0.21ha)	C	Non-Council	15. Northcote Station Railway Easement (0.36ha)*	B	Non-Council
4. Caddayes Corner (0.2ha)	B	Non-Council	16. Pearl Reserve (0.15ha)	A	Community
5. Green Memorial Reserve (0.97ha)	B	Linear	17. Peters Reserve (0.17ha)	B	Community
6. Grovesland Reserve (2.47ha)	A	Linear	18. South Park Reserve (0.61ha)	B	Non-Council
7. Mayer Park (3.98ha)	A	Active	19. Spencer Reserve (0.83ha)	A	Non-Council
8. Merri Common (0.68ha)	B	Linear	20. St. Georges Road Reserve (3.0ha)*	Regional	Linear
9. Merri Creek Corridor (2.22ha)*	Regional	Linear	21. Stott Reserve (0.71ha)	A	Non-Council
10. Merri Creek Reserve (0.29ha)*	Regional	Linear	22. Woolhouse Reserve (0.72ha)	B	Non-Council
11. Merri Park (12.24ha)	A	Active	23. Zoe Reserve (0.02ha)	B	Conservation
12. Northcote Civic Square (0.13ha)	R	Civic			

LOCAL DISTRICT REGIONAL # Future Use of Northcote Golf Course to be determined

# LATROBE & SURROUNDS



### PRECINCT GROWTH SUMMARY

Most of precinct is covered by La Trobe University and associated facilities, and significant conservation reserves. In the small areas that accommodate housing, density is low to medium, with few dwellings exceeding 30 dwellings per hectare. Future dwellings anticipated to be predominantly high density housing – student housing and apartments to cater to students and staff at Latrobe University and Latrobe Employment centre.

### CURRENT POPULATION

8,933

### PROJECTED 2028 POPULATION

11,807

### PRECINCT GROWTH RATE



### WITHOUT ACCESS TO POS WITHIN 500M



### 2018 POS SHORTFALL PER CAPITA (m<sup>2</sup>)



### 2028 POS SHORTFALL PER CAPITA (m<sup>2</sup>)



### EXISTING OPEN SPACE

1. Barlow Rise Reserve (0.53ha)
2. Bundoora Park (113.11ha)*
3. Bundoora Park Oval (3.2ha)
4. Bundoora Park Public Golf Course (64.89ha)*
5. Cascade Link (0.04ha)
6. Cascade Park (2.36ha)
7. Cascade Park Link (0.07ha)
8. Cascade Walk (0.04ha)
9. Cherry Street Reserve (6.51ha)
10. Darebin Creek Corridor (3.27ha)*
11. Forensic Drive Reserve (2.36)
12. Gonella Reserve (0.17ha)
13. Gresswell Forest Wildlife Reserve (63.8ha)*
14. Gresswell Grange Lakes (1.15ha)
15. Gresswell Grange Reserve (0.76ha)

Future Type:	Primary Purpose:
B	Community
Regional	Community
C	Active
C	Golf Course
B	Linear
C	Community
C	Community
C	Linear
C	Conservation
Regional	Linear
C	Conservation
B	Landscape
Conservation	Non-Council
C	Non-Council
B	Community

16. Gresswell Hill Nature Conservation Reserve (8.81ha)*
17. Gresswell-Cherry Reserve Habitat Link (0.24ha)*
18. Habitat Link (0.26ha)
19. Lancaster Gate Oval (1.02ha)
20. Lancaster Gate Reserve (0.14ha)
21. Larundel Grasslands Reserve (0.34ha)*
22. La Trobe Wildlife Sanctuary (26.92ha)*
23. Lelean Reserve (0.07ha)
24. Mount Cooper Reserve (2.18ha)
25. Red Gum Reserve (0.77ha)
26. Springthorpe Village Common (2.86ha)
27. Strathallan Golf Course (16.83ha)*
28. Sugargum Drive Reserve (0.73ha)
29. Summerhill Rise Reserve (0.55ha)
30. The Village Square (0.11ha)
31. Warramunga Reserve (0.23ha)
32. Woodford Reserve (0.08ha)

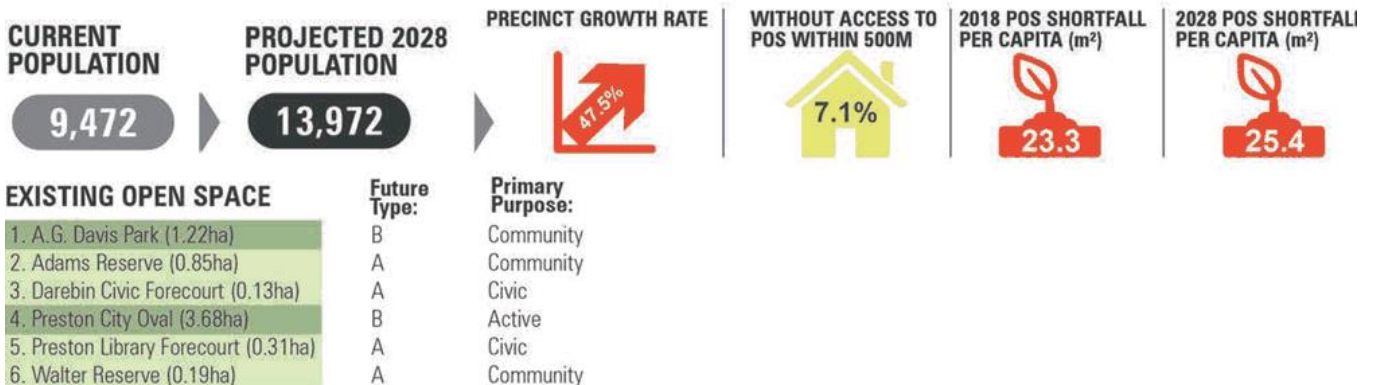
Future Type:	Primary Purpose:
Conservation	Non-Council
Conservation	Linear
C	Linear
C	Active
B	Conservation
Conservation	Conservation
Conservation	Non-Council
B	Conservation
C	Linear
C	Linear
C	Community
Golf Course	Non-Council
C	Community
C	Linear
C	Conservation
C	Conservation

# PRESTON CENTRAL

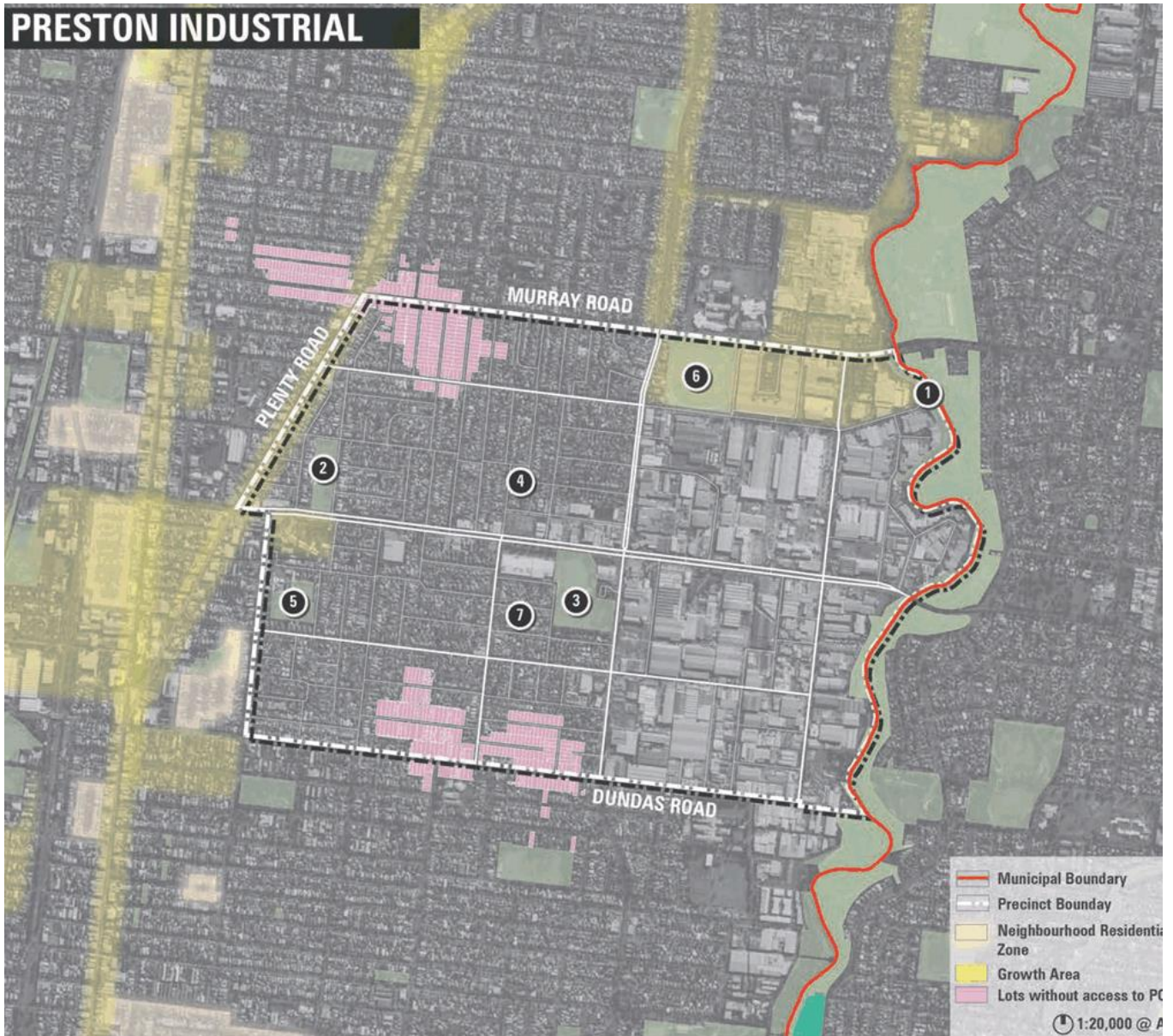


**PRECINCT GROWTH SUMMARY**

Preston Central Precinct is anticipated to have the highest precinct growth rate within Darebin. This will see a significant increase in population resulting in higher density housing (apartments). According to the Darebin Open Space Strategy, an approximate of over 2,000 dwelling are expected to be built by 2028. Growth is expected to occur around major transport corridors and the Preston Market.



# PRESTON INDUSTRIAL



**PRECINCT GROWTH SUMMARY**

Preston Industrial is anticipated to have a high growth rate of 34.2%. This will see a significant increase in medium-higher density dwellings being built in the precinct. As a result, the use of public open space will intensify. There is currently a portion of residential lots to the north and south border west of the precinct that is lacking access to high quality open space.



**EXISTING OPEN SPACE**

Location	Area (ha)	Region	Primary Purpose
1. Darebin Creek Corridor	2.77ha*	Regional	Linear
2. G.H. Mott Reserve	1.85ha	C	Active
3. H.L.T. Oulton Reserve	5.03ha	C	Active
4. Lahinch Reserve	0.41ha	A	Community
5. T.A. Cochrane Reserve	1.85ha	C	Community
6. T.W. Blake Park	6.1ha	C	Active
7. Walsh Reserve	0.25ha	A	Community

LOCAL DISTRICT REGIONAL

# PRESTON NORTHLAND



**PRECINCT GROWTH SUMMARY**

Significant growth in the number of medium to higher density dwellings is anticipated for Northland, with over 1,000 additional apartment dwellings expected by 2028. This higher density development will in part be accommodated by the Northland Urban Renewal Precinct development.



**EXISTING OPEN SPACE**

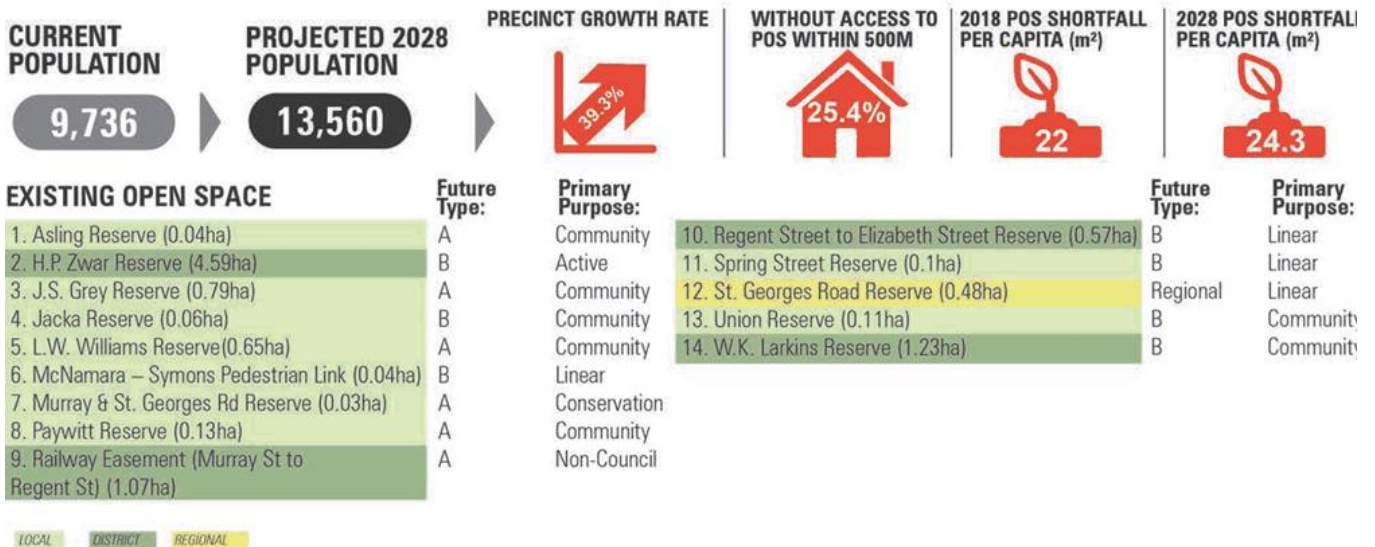
Location	Future Type:	Primary Purpose:
1. C.H. Sullivan Memorial Park (14.21ha)	B	Active
2. C.T. Barling Reserve (13.02ha)	B	Active
3. Darebin Creek Corridor (11.59ha)*	Regional	Linear
4. Greenbelt Reserve (0.15ha)	A	Community
5. Highview Reserve (0.05ha)	B	Community
6. McComas Reserve (0.28ha)	A	Community
7. Nisbett Reserve (0.23ha)	A	Community
8. Progress Park (0.14ha)	A	Conservation
9. W.R. Ruthven V.C. Reserve (3.62ha)	B	Active

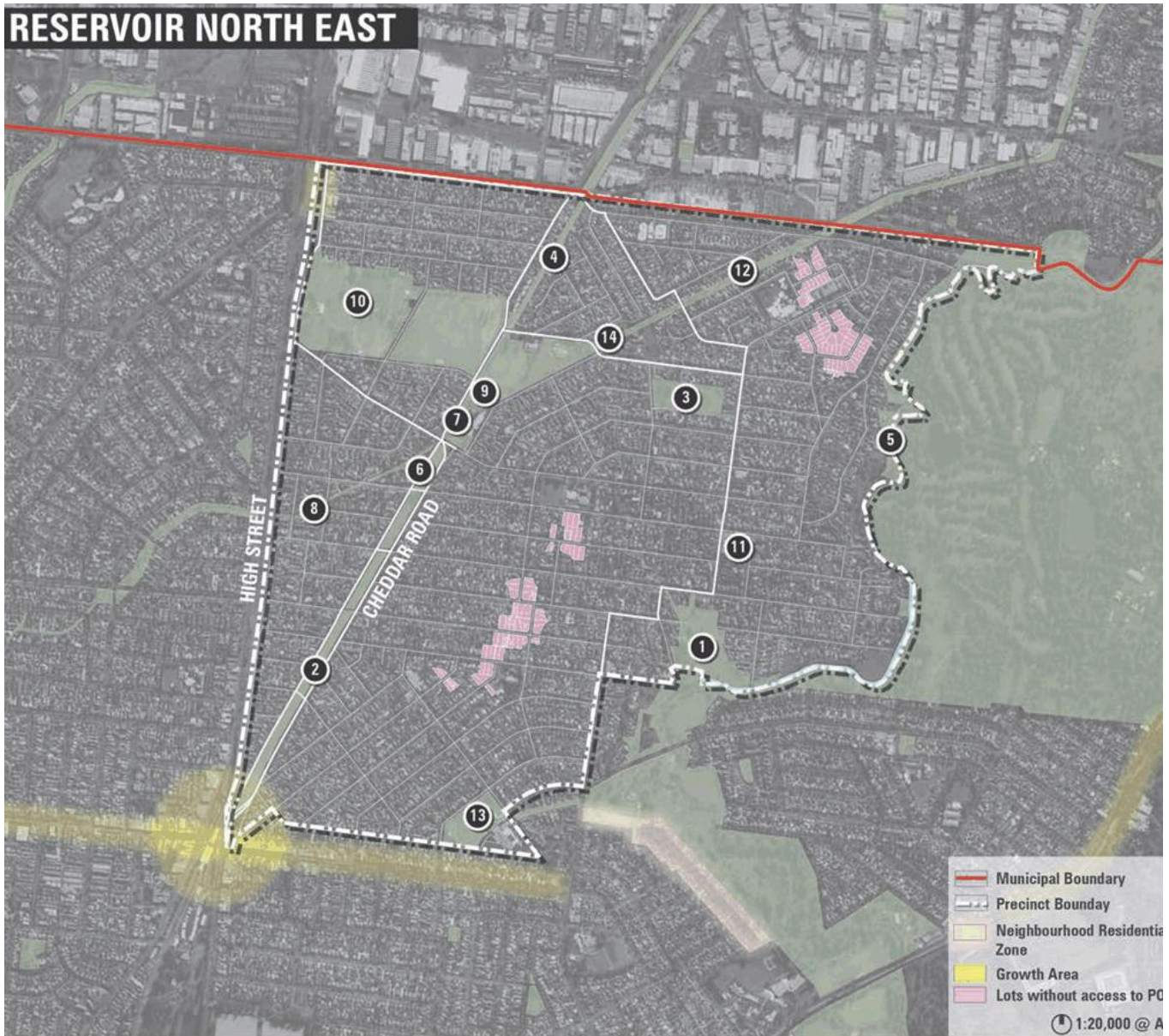
LOCAL DISTRICT REGIONAL



**PRECINCT GROWTH SUMMARY**

Preston West is a growth area with medium to higher density housing (townhouses and apartments) appearing along the growth corridors of St Georges Road, and Preston Station. The intensification of future housing growth has put pressure on the increased need of public open spaces to cater for the fast population growth.





**PRECINCT GROWTH SUMMARY**

In comparison to other precincts within Darebin, Reservoir North East is predicted to have a lower growth rate. Housing around the precincts consist largely of villias. Future development will consist of mid-rise medium density housing. Surrounding public open space is recommended to be upgraded to improve their functions for connectivity and bio-diversity to surrounding public spaces and services.

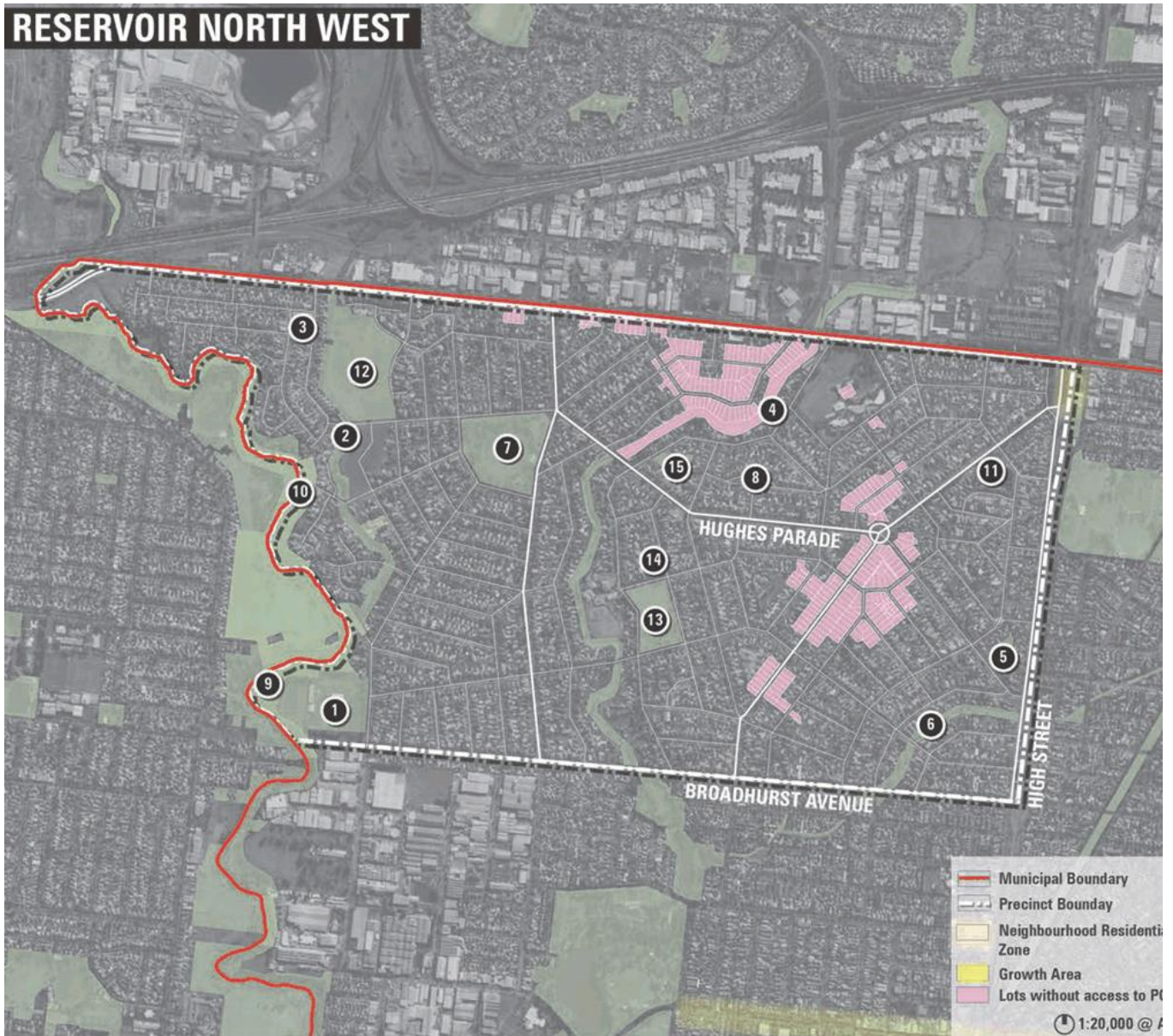
CURRENT POPULATION	PROJECTED 2028 POPULATION	PRECINCT GROWTH RATE	WITHOUT ACCESS TO POS WITHIN 500M	2018 POS SHORTFALL PER CAPITA (m <sup>2</sup> )	2028 POS SHORTFALL PER CAPITA (m <sup>2</sup> )
15,172	17,140	13%	2.1%	5.8	8.6

EXISTING OPEN SPACE	Future Type:	Primary Purpose:	EXISTING OPEN SPACE	Future Type:	Primary Purpose:
1. Beenak/McMahon Reserve (5.34ha)	A	Linear	11. Leslie Reserve (0.7ha)	A	Community
2. Cheddar Road Reserve (4.83ha)*	A	Non-Council	12. San Leandro Reserve (0.09ha)	B	Community
3. D.R. Atkinson Reserve (2.4ha)	B	Active	13. T.W. Andrews Reserve (2.72ha)	A	Active
4. Daleglen Street Reserve (0.07ha)	B	Conservation	14. Tunaley Pde – Cheddar Rd Reserve (5.25ha)*	A	Non-Council
5. Darebin Creek Corridor/Bundoora Park interface (14.26ha)*	Regional	Linear			
6. Frank A.A. Dunstan Reserve (0.29ha)	A	Community			
7. Frank A.A. Dunstan Reserve – Link I.W. Dole Reserve (0.15ha)	C	Community			
8. Fyfe Reserve (0.36ha)	A	Community			
9. I.W. Dole Reserve (4.57ha)	B	Active			
10. J.C. Donath Reserve (20.04ha)	A	Active			

LOCAL
DISTRICT
REGIONAL

# RESERVOIR NORTH WEST



**PRECINCT GROWTH SUMMARY**

The character of Reservoir North West presents itself as a low density detached housing precincts with minimal future growth. Siting along the border of Merri Creek Corridor, future growth within the precinct is expected to be minimal. The current non-regional public open spaces are encouraged to be upgraded to improve their connections to the eastern and northern areas of the precinct.

CURRENT POPULATION	PROJECTED 2028 POPULATION	PRECINCT GROWTH RATE	WITHOUT ACCESS TO POS WITHIN 500M	2018 POS SHORTFALL PER CAPITA (m <sup>2</sup> )	2028 POS SHORTFALL PER CAPITA (m <sup>2</sup> )
10,565	11,322	7.2%	5.6%	11.4	12.7

EXISTING OPEN SPACE	Future Type:	Primary Purpose:	EXISTING OPEN SPACE	Future Type:	Primary Purpose:
1. B.T. Connor Reserve (7.54ha)	B	Active	13. Former Ruthven Primary School (3.05ha)	B	Community
2. Central Creek Corridor (3.72ha)*	Regional	Conservation	14. Tracey Reserve (0.19ha)	C	Community
3. Doug Hannan Reserve (0.67ha)	C	Community	15. Wilson Boulevard Reserve (0.67ha)	C	Community
4. Edgars Creek Corridor (7.45ha)*	Regional	Linear			
5. Gellibrand Crescent Reserve (0.42ha)	B	Conservation			
6. High St to Broadhurst Ave Reserve (1.88ha)	B	Linear			
7. L.E. Cotchin Reserve (6.48ha)	B	Active			
8. Ludeman Reserve (0.22ha)	C	Community			
9. Merri Creek (2.38ha)*	Regional	Linear			
10. Merri Creek Corridor (7.84ha)*	Regional	Linear			
11. Merrilands Community Centre (0.38ha)	B	Community			
12. Ngarri-diarrang Grassland (9.77ha)*	Conservation	Linear			

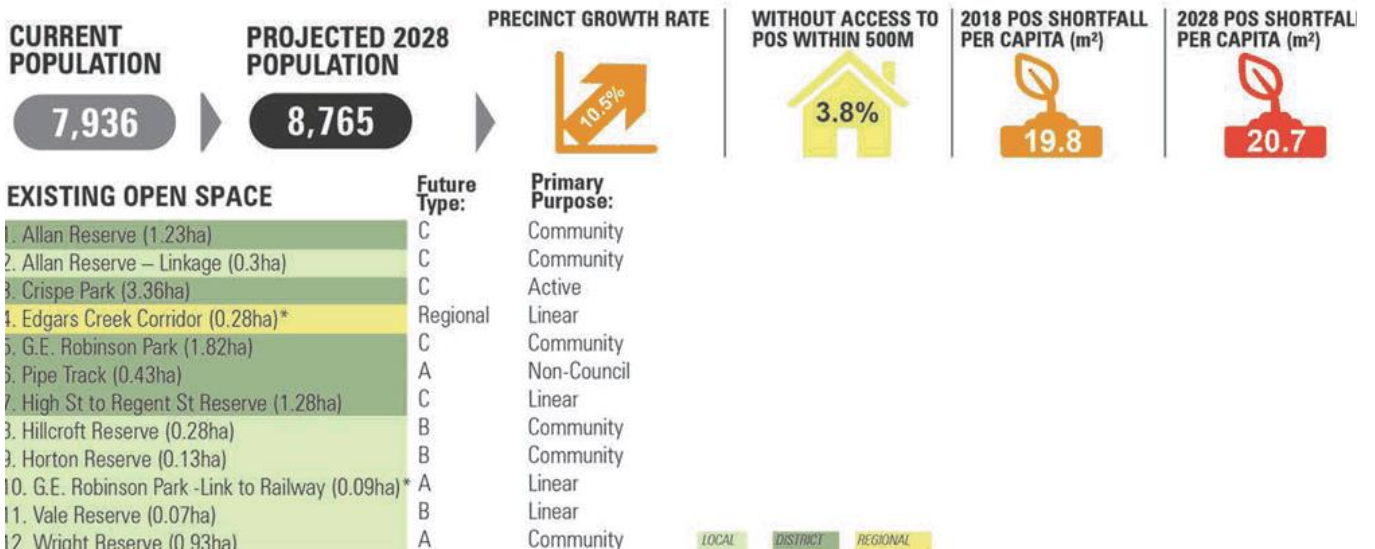
LOCAL    DISTRICT    REGIONAL





**PRECINCT GROWTH SUMMARY**

Within the Reservoir South West Precinct Crispe Park acts as a major public open space catering to a large portion of the east and north-east sides of the precinct. Future growth within the precinct is predicted to be relatively low with a steady increase of low to medium density housing. Public open space within the precinct is therefore encouraged to be maintained and upgraded to cater to the surrounding community.



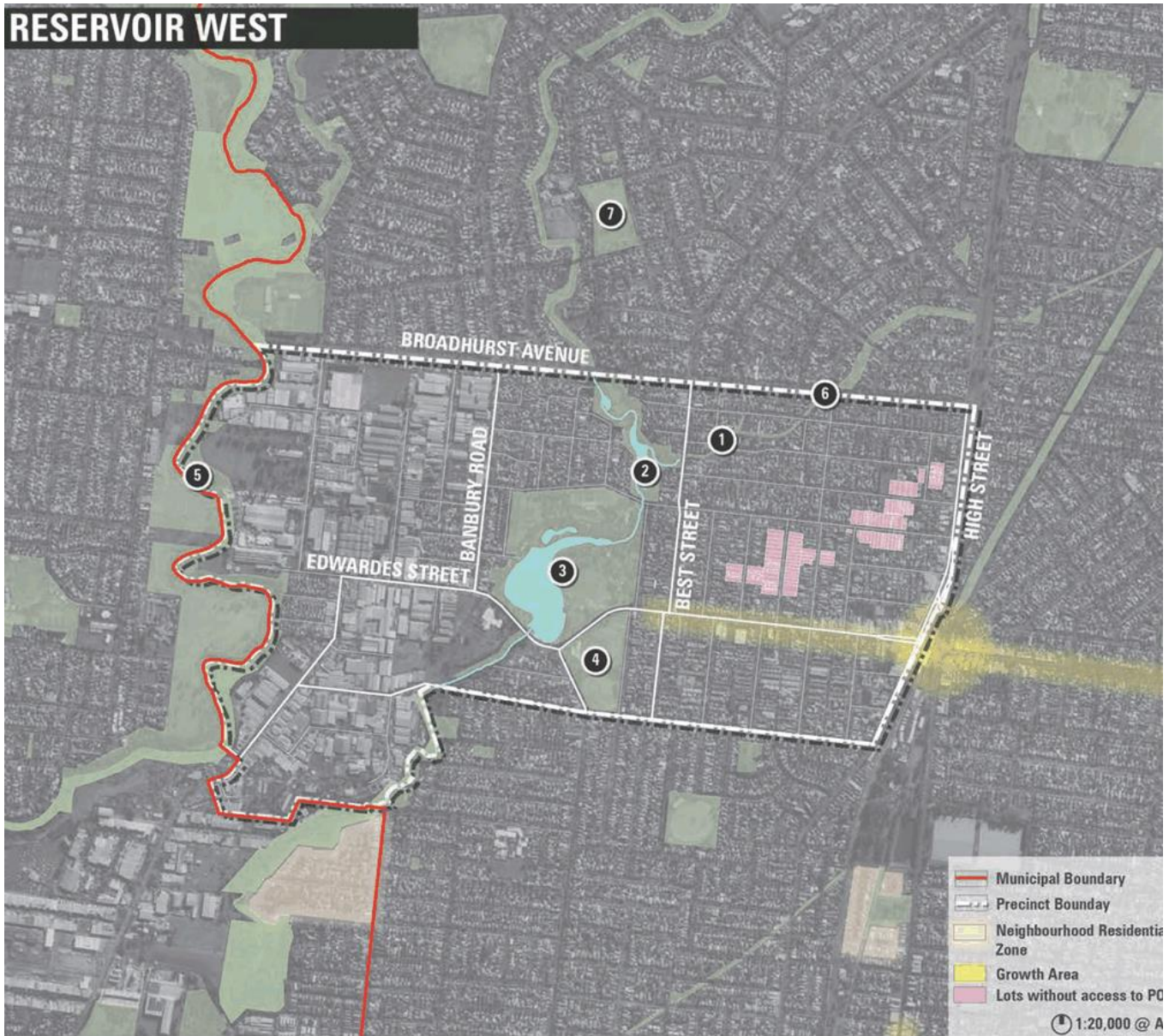
# RESERVOIR SOUTH



**PRECINCT GROWTH SUMMARY**

Growth in Reservoir South is expected to increase exponentially over the next 7 years. The intensification will see more medium to high density dwellings to cater for the additional population growth that will occur within the precinct. Existing public opens spaces will be required to be upgraded with potential for new public spaces to be developed.





**PRECINCT GROWTH SUMMARY**

The Reservoir West Precinct is serviced largely by the Edgars Creek Corridor and Edwardes Lake Park public open spaces. The precinct is expected to cater to some growth in the future with future developments predominantly consisting of medium to higher density housing. The predicted future growth will see existing public open spaces needed to be improved through better connections and diversity across uses.



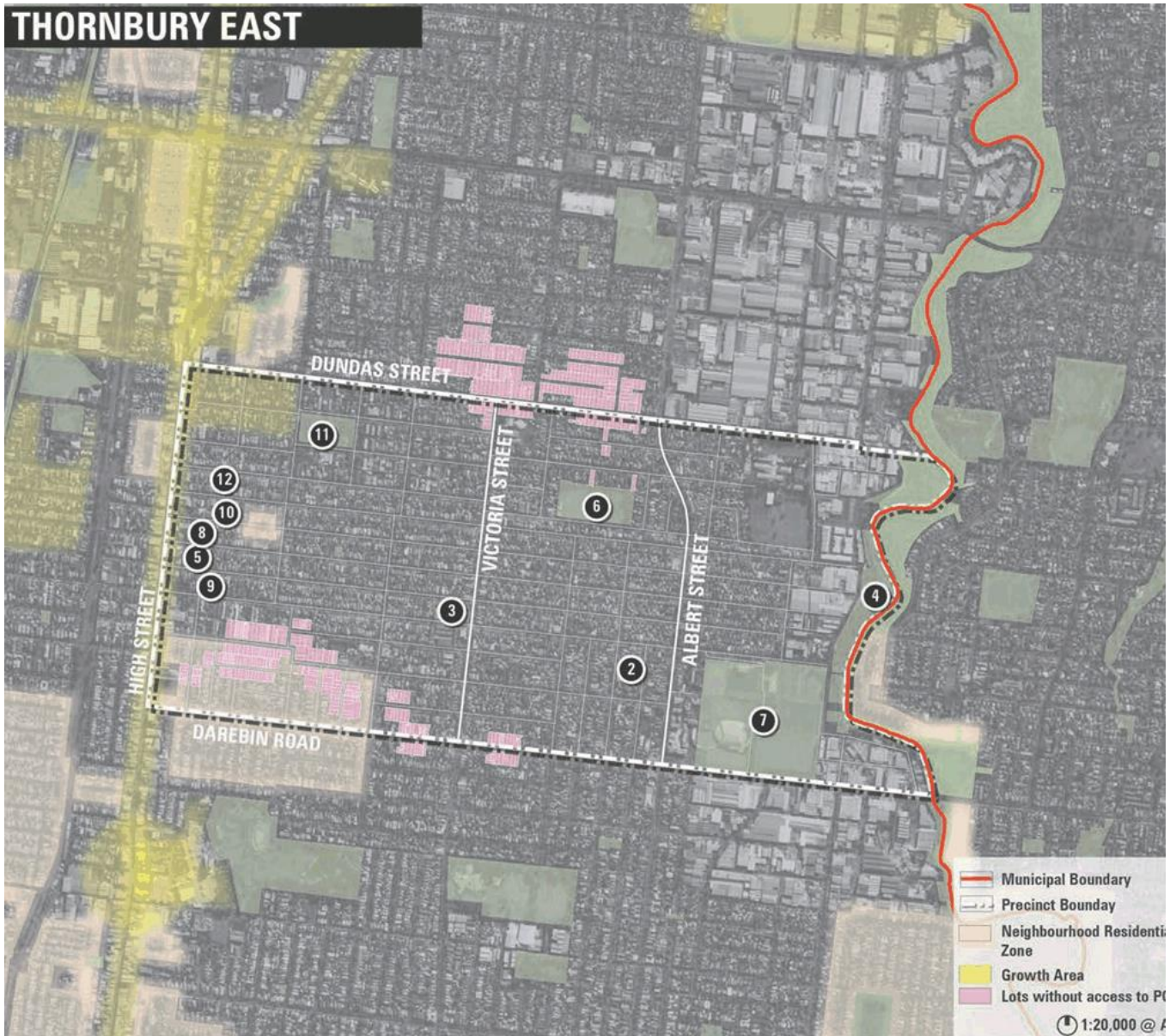
**EXISTING OPEN SPACE**

- 1. Broadhurst Ave to McFadzean Ave Reserve (0.62ha)
- 2. Edgars Creek Corridor (9.48ha)\*
- 3. Edwardes Lake Park (22.13ha)\*
- 4. J.E. Moore Park (5.19ha)
- 5. Merri Creek Corridor (8.31ha)\*
- 6. Whitby Reserve (0.26ha)
- 7. Former Ruthven Primary School Reserve (3.05ha)

Future Type:	Primary Purpose:
A	Linear
Regional	Linear
Regional	Community
C	Active
Regional	Linear
B	Community
B	Community

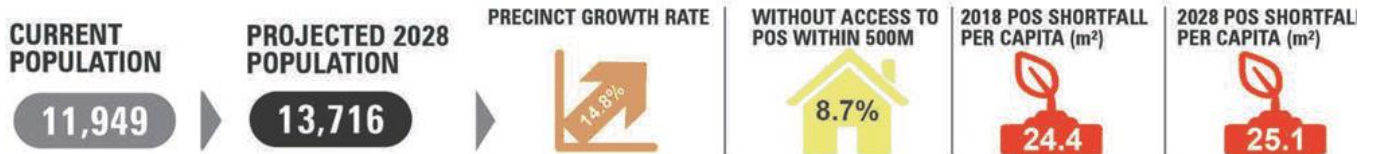
LOCAL DISTRICT REGIONAL

# THORNBURY EAST



**PRECINCT GROWTH SUMMARY**

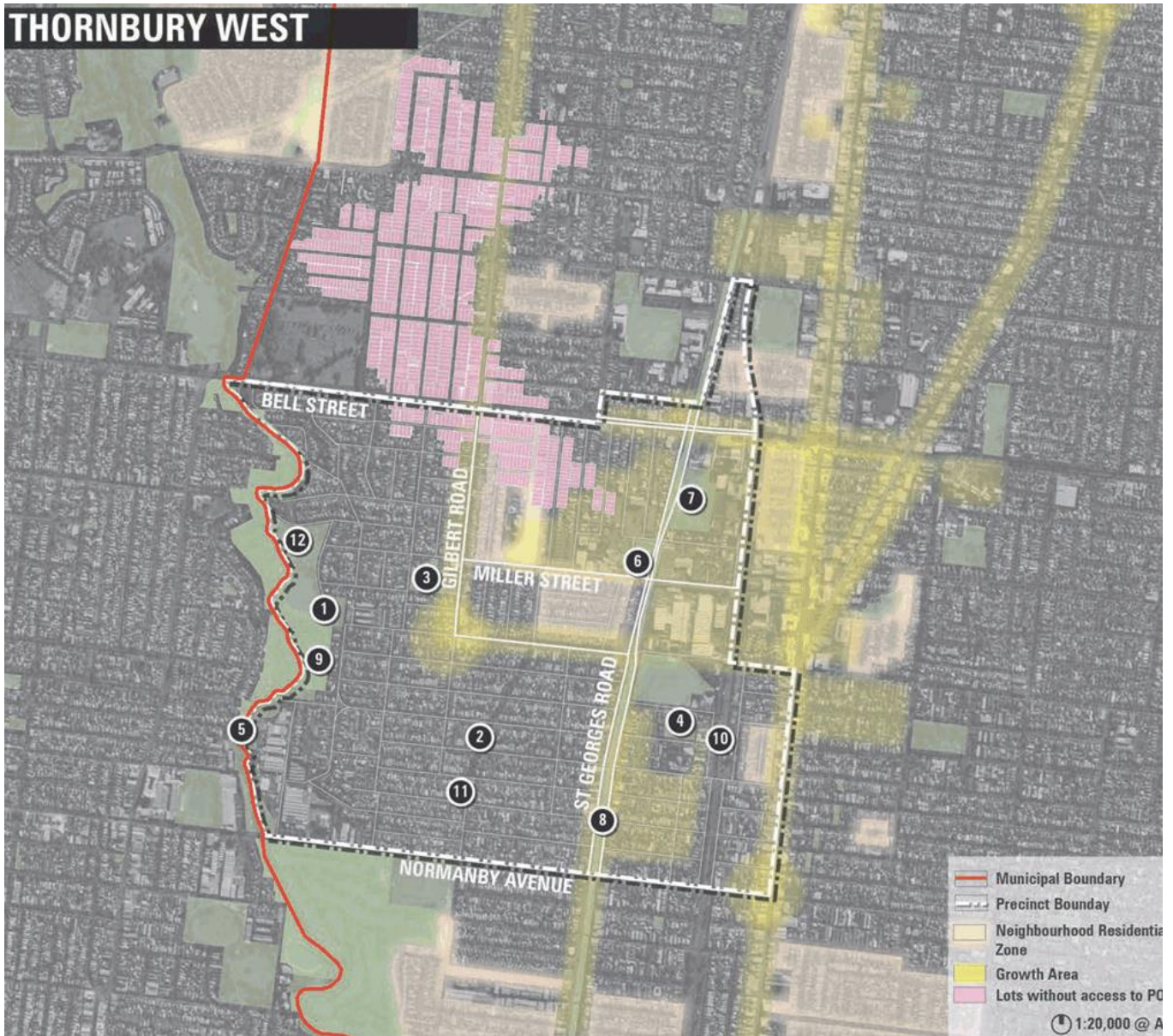
Thornbury East Precinct is a growing precinct with predicted medium to higher density housing in the future. The precinct is located to the east of the High Street Activity Centre with its eastern boundary bounded by the Darebin Creek Corridor. Residential lots which lack access to public open space is located largely to the south west of the precinct. Future public open spaces within the precinct should take into consideration access and connectivity to the surrounding community.



**EXISTING OPEN SPACE**

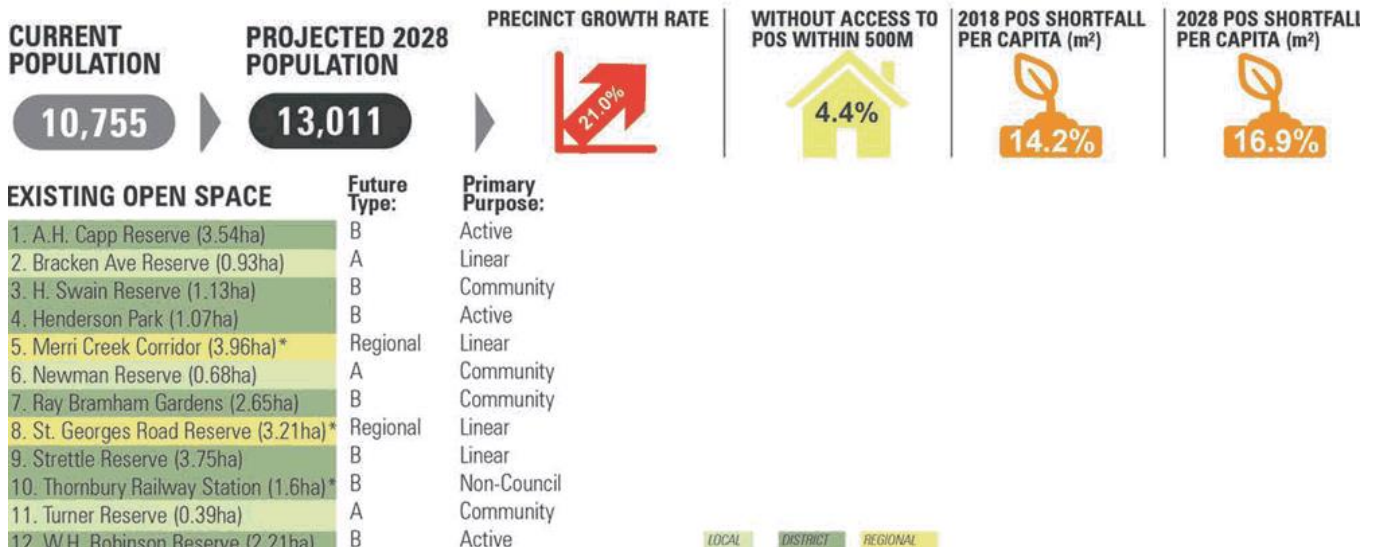
EXISTING OPEN SPACE	Future Type:	Primary Purpose:
1. Allan Sheppard Reserve (0.05ha)	A	Community
2. Andrew Boyd Reserve (0.49ha)	A	Community
3. Clyde Jones Reserve (0.43ha)	A	Community
4. Darebin Creek Corridor (12.18ha)*	Regional	Linear
5. Harry Reserve (0.14ha)	A	Linear
6. Hayes Park (3.27ha)	B	Active
7. John Cain Reserve – DISC (17.34ha)*	Regional	Active
8. Jones Reserve (0.14ha)	A	Linear
9. McDonald Reserve (0.07ha)	A	Community
10. Olver Reserve (0.14ha)	A	Linear
11. Penders Park (1.91ha)	B	Community
12. Roberts Reserve (0.08ha)	A	Linear

LOCAL    DISTRICT    REGIONAL



**PRECINCT GROWTH SUMMARY**

Preston West is a growth area with medium to higher density housing (townhouses and apartments) appearing along the growth corridors of St Georges Road, and Preston Station. The intensification of future housing growth has put pressure on the increased need of public open spaces to cater for the fast population growth.





IMPLEMENTING BREATHING SPACE

3.5 IMPLICATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The gaps in the delivery of existing and future public open space in Darebin provide a critical baseline from which *Implementing Breathing Space* can address Action 1.1 of *Breathing Space* in the context of Strategies 1.1 and 1.2. This Section of the document provides a basis for understanding how the various differing ‘gaps’ in open space in Darebin can be understood holistically to guide future investment in open space assets. It outlines a process by which Priority Investigation Areas are identified, for which a ‘proactive’ program of open space delivery will be a focus, as well as recognising and addressing the other ways open space may need to be considered. This Section also includes Precinct level costs and prioritisation for required park upgrades.

3.5.1 FRAMEWORK FOR ADDRESSING THE GAPS

*Breathing Space* acknowledges the issues with land acquisition and flags that much of the future delivery of Public Open Space in Darebin will be a result of reprogramming and upgrading of existing areas of Public Open Space, rather than the delivery of new open space.

In general the approach could be characterised as “Access gaps = new land needed, Per capita gaps = upgrades needed”. However, the details of this are more nuanced, particularly in areas where the future per capita gap is as a result of precinct scale development where there is the potential for additional land to be dedicated to open space, and where there are other priorities for land acquisition identified in *Breathing Space* (specifically biodiversity).

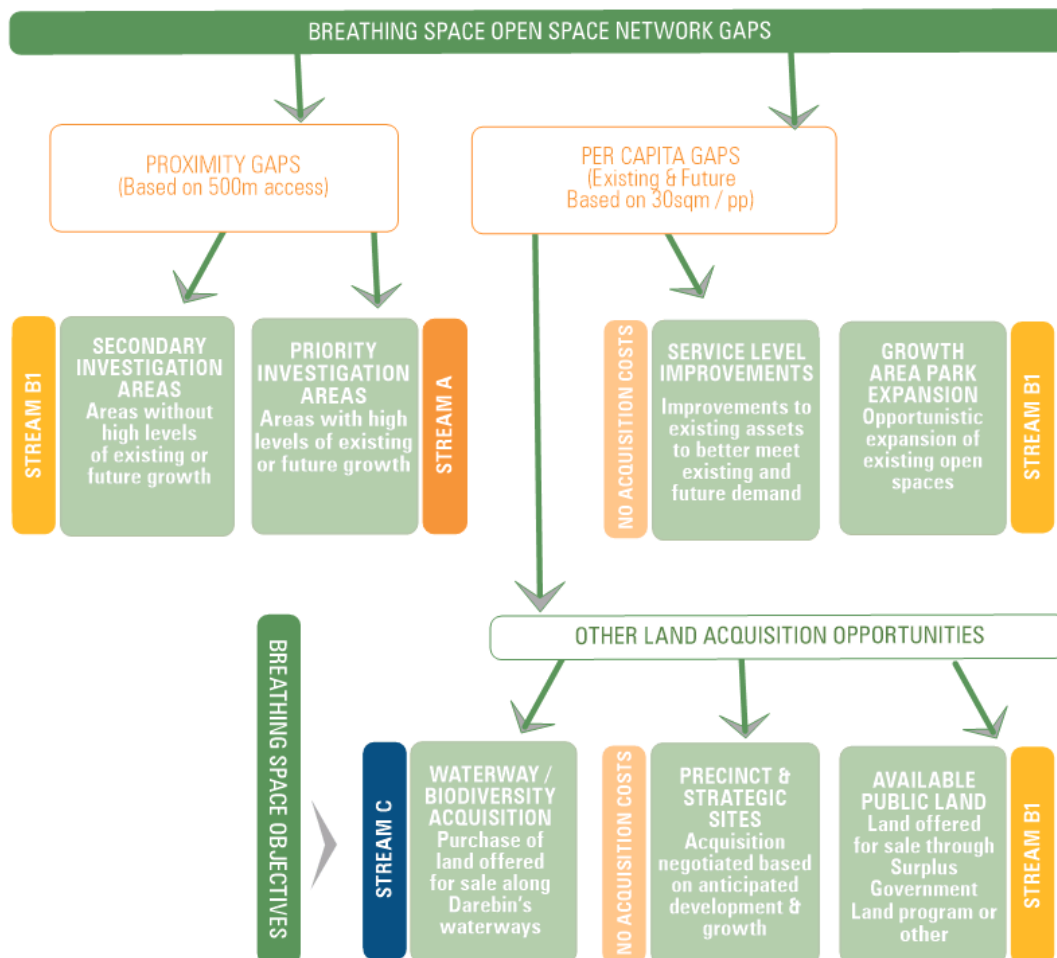


Figure 23: Framework for addressing open space network gaps



*Breathing Space* identifies that for existing and future 'per capita' shortfalls 'upgrades' to existing parks will be one of the key mechanisms for addressing future population needs. So the focus for increasing existing 'quantities' of open space is on areas with existing gaps in access, with priority on those with other shortfalls.

The necessary upgrades to existing parks are being addressed by the *Open Space Asset Management Plan*.

*Breathing Space* did not identify specific locations for the delivery of any new open space to meet per capita gaps (noting the above commentary around service standards). The process for assessing potential land purchases should have consideration for identified growth areas within Darebin. Large precincts and development sites are considered as one of the 'opportunities' in Priority Investigating Areas.

The opportunities and broad framework for addressing gaps in open space in Darebin is summarised in Figure 23.

### 3.5.2 HOW TO IDENTIFY AREAS FOR THE DELIVERY OF NEW OPEN SPACE (QUANTITY)

The question of how to identify precincts in which the delivery of new areas of open space should be prioritised (on the basis of *Breathing Space* recommendations) is not a straightforward proposition. First and foremost, there is the issue of integrating and balancing the distinct ways of measuring 'shortfalls' identified in *Breathing Space*, all of which need to be balanced. Table 1 brings these together.

Added to this are a number of other factors which all also need to be considered when interrogating the shortfalls and prioritising land for acquisition, including:

Proximity (lots without access in 500sqm):

- The mapping included in *Breathing Space* has some minor errors in the identification of land which is Council Public Open Space vs other open space (i.e. excluded Darebin Creek parklands), which will need to be considered in the identification of priorities. This has now been thoroughly reviewed.
- The mapping included in *Breathing Space* did not consider other open space in proximity to these lots, even where these form part of a nominated open space network (i.e. of an adjoining Council). Recent findings by independent Planning Panels has suggested that consideration of this access in areas where purchase of additional land may be constrained may be warranted. This consideration has informed *Implementing Breathing Space*.

- There is an inconsistency between the lots mapped without access and the numbers identified in Table 2 of *Breathing Space*, as the mapping included commercial and industrial lot as well as residential.
- No analysis of spatial implications of the growth that will occur in different precincts had been undertaken to date (i.e a cluster of dwellings without access may be identified in a precinct with high growth, but the dwellings without access may be in a low growth pocket, while the dwellings in high growth areas of the precinct may have good access). These matters form the basis for analysis as part of *Implementing Breathing Space*.
- The division of the municipality into Precincts, while useful in some ways, is not that useful in considering opportunities for purchase as there is often an overlap in precinct boundaries of areas lacking current access.

Quantity (precincts with per capita shortfalls):

- Shortfalls are based on growth projections which may be subject to change, particularly in the short term given the recent impacts of COVID-19. However, it is understood that the broad parameters of growth are likely to remain intact and the locations where this growth will be directed are reasonably well known and established through the Darebin Planning Scheme.
- The shortfall on a per capita basis is only calculated in *Breathing Space* for a ten year period (i.e. to 2028), only seven years away (at the time of writing). While this may have merit as a strategic approach given the difficulties of predicting growth patterns over the longer term, it nonetheless means that the figures may not reflect the longer term needs of Darebin's Public Open Space network.









IMPLEMENTING BREATHING SPACE

	2018 PER CAPITA SHORTFALL	2028 PER CAPITA SHORTFALL	2018 HOUSEHOLDS WITHOUT ACCESS	GROWTH RATE	CONNECTED PRECINCTS
<b>HIGH PRIORITY</b> RESERVOIR SOUTH	28.1 sqm	28.6 sqm	17.1% / 530 (Near Reservoir AC, Tylers Street & Summerhill)	31.7%	Preston Northland / Kingsbury
<b>HIGH PRIORITY</b> PRESTON WEST	22 sqm	24.3 sqm	25.4% / 1160 (Large number in continuous area)	39.3%	Thornbury West
<b>HIGH PRIORITY</b> PRESTON CENTRAL	23.3 sqm	25.4 sqm	7.1% / 268 (Some near Junction, large resi area around Murray / Plenty)	47.5%	Preston Industrial
<b>HIGH PRIORITY</b> PRESTON INDUSTRIAL	9.1 sqm	14.4 sqm	10.5% / 426 (Four large pockets, two are industrial)	34.2%*	Thornbury East / Preston Central
RESERVOIR NORTH WEST	11.4 sqm	12.7 sqm	5.6% / 294 (Two discrete pockets lack access)	7.2%	n/a
LA TROBE & SURROUNDS	11.1 sqm	15.7 sqm	8.4% / n/a (Noting that there are no clear clusters)	32.2%	n/a
RESERVOIR SOUTH WEST	19.8 sqm	20.7 sqm	3.8% / 141 (One small pocket)	10.5%	n/a
THORNBURY WEST	14.2 sqm	16.9 sqm	4.4% / 231 (Area south of Bell St, either side of Gilbert)	21%	Preston West
THORNBURY EAST	24.4 sqm	25.1 sqm	8.7% / 311 (Residential area north of Darebin / High St)	14.8%	Preston Industrial
NORTHCOTE WEST	10.9 sqm	14.8 sqm	0.0% / 0 (No existing access issues)	21.9%	n/a



IMPLEMENTING BREATHING SPACE



	2018 PER CAPITA SHORTFALL	2026 PER CAPITA SHORTFALL	2018 HOUSEHOLDS WITHOUT ACCESS	GROWTH RATE	CONNECTED PRECINCTS
 <b>NORTHCOTE EAST</b>	12.3 sqm	13.5 sqm	2.5% / 102 (Some small isolated pockets)	7.5%	Thornbury East
 <b>ALPHINGTON FAIRFIELD</b>	1.8 sqm	5.5 sqm	9.5% / 298 (Area to south east corner, some commercial)	15.1%	n/s
 <b>RESERVOIR NORTH EAST</b>	5.8 sqm	8.6 sqm	5.6% / 171 (Two small residential pockets)	13%	n/a
 <b>PRESTON NORTHLAND</b>	0 sqm	6.1 sqm	6.9% / 390 (Two overlapping clusters and small area near Northland)	29.8%*	Preston Industrial / Reservoir South / Kingsbury
 <b>RESERVOIR WEST</b>	0 sqm	0 sqm	8.7% / 180 (Discrete residential pocket plus industrial)	16.7%	n/a
 <b>KINGSBURY</b>	0 sqm	0 sqm	15.3% / 174 (Summerhill cluster)	18.5%	Preston Northland

# Households Without Access figures: % is number of households, figure is number of lots (includes residential and commercial lots but not industrial lots), brackets identify location of lots.

Table 1: Breathing Space gap analysis summary



IMPLEMENTING BREATHING SPACE

**3.5.3 PRIORITY INVESTIGATION AREAS**

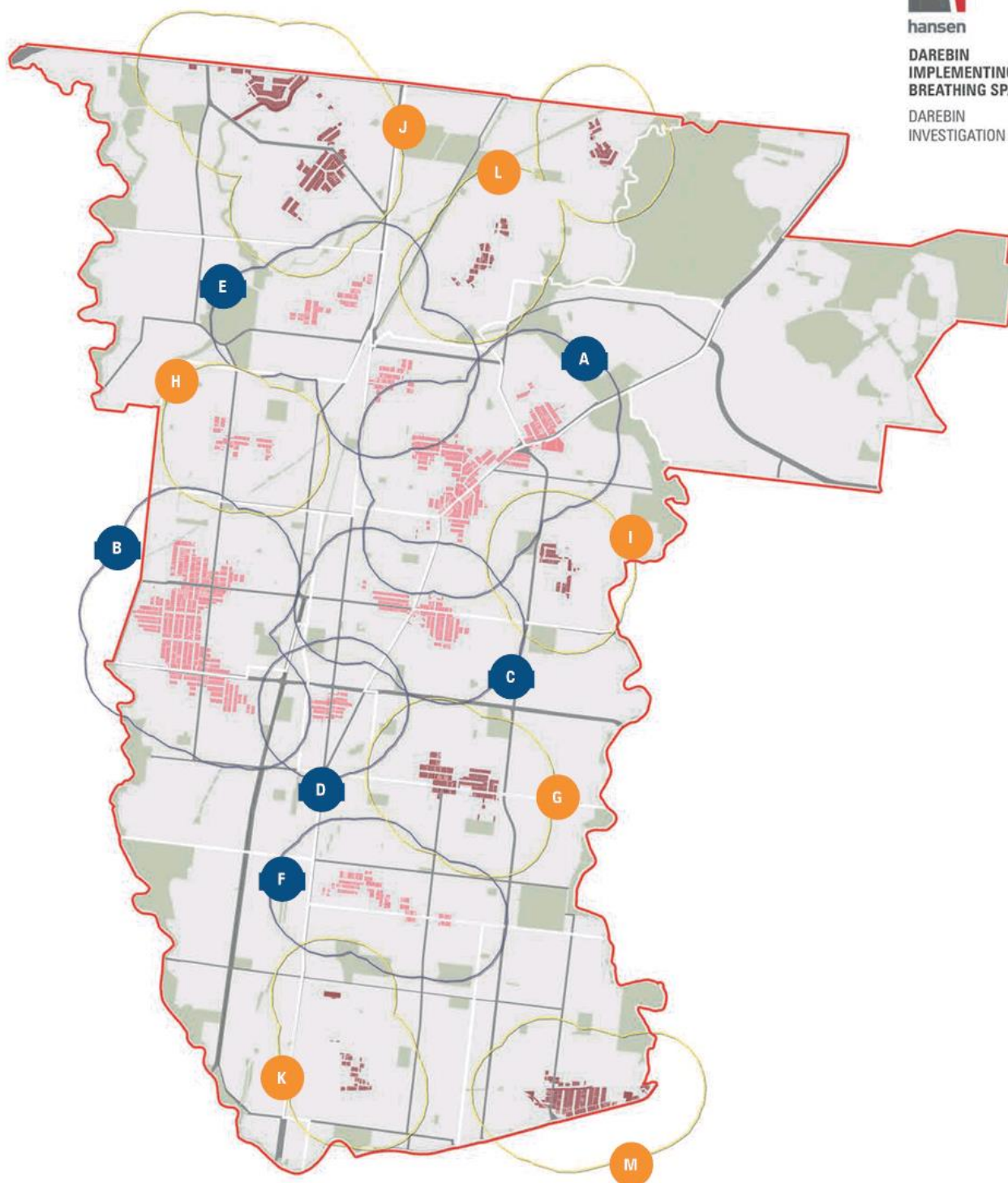
The associated document *Enhancing Open Space* (referred to in *Breathing Space* as the Strategic Land Acquisition Plan) considers areas where delivery of new spaces may be required in terms of 'Investigation Areas' to address the alignment / crossover of areas with existing proximity gaps when a 'precinct' approach is retained.

These Investigation Areas were identified using the spatial plans provided in *Breathing Space* and then were subject to refinement considering the following:

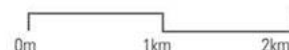
- A process of identifying which of the areas where there was a current 'proximity' gap was also identified as having an existing or future per capita gap. These were categorised as being high, medium or low gaps based on the per hectare shortfall identified in *Breathing Space*.
- Consideration of the zoning of properties identified as having a lack of provision and the removal of properties in industrial zones. Commercial zoned land was retained given the potential for residential populations under the zoning. Clear anomalies were also removed (such as part of the Coburg Cemetery).
- Consideration of the *scale* of existing 'proximity' gaps (i.e how many properties were in a cluster which was lacking access).
- Consideration of existing areas of Public Open Space which may not have been considered in *Breathing Space* calculations, but which could reasonably be assumed to form part of a secure network of public open space.

Using this quantification of gaps, seven Priority Investigations Areas were identified, with the remaining areas identified as Secondary Investigation Areas. While the delivery of new open space in these areas is still important, responding to the 'proximity gaps' in these areas is of lesser importance than providing more open space in areas which will see much higher growth. It is noted that Investigation Area G (North of Dundas) was originally identified as a Priority Investigation Area, but the quality of the existing open space assets in proximity to the relevant lots (albeit slightly beyond the nominated 500m distance) meant this area was re-categorised as a Secondary Investigation Area.





- Legend**
- Municipal Boundary
  - Major Roads
  - Breathing Space Precinct Boundaries
  - Priority Investigation Areas
  - Secondary Investigation Areas
  - 500m Priority Investigation Area Buffer
  - 500m Secondary Investigation Area Buffer
  - Existing Public Open Space



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 Dwg No.: UDD-001  
 Scale: 10,000 @A3  
 Date: 11.03.21  
 Revision: A

Figure 24: Open Space investigation areas



## IMPLEMENTING BREATHING SPACE

Both Priority and Secondary Investigation Areas are shown on Figure 24.

On the basis of the above the following areas are identified as needing to be investigated for potential acquisition of land. 'Priority Acquisition Areas' are as follows:

- Investigation Area A - Tylers Street / Summerhill area (overlap of Reservoir South, Kingsbury, Preston Northland Precincts)
- Investigation Area B - Preston West / Thornbury West south of Bell (Preston West & Thornbury West precincts)
- Investigation Area C - Murray and Plenty Road intersection area (Preston industrial, Preston Northland and Preston Central)
- Investigation Area D - The Junction (Preston Central)
- Investigation Area E - Reservoir Activity Centre / western residential clusters (Reservoir South, Reservoir South-west)
- Investigation Area F – Residential cluster north of Darebin Road close to High Street (Thornbury East)

These areas are where there is an aggregation of various pressures for the delivery of additional Public Open Space. Figures 25 - 30 on the following pages provide mapping of these areas, allowing for an understanding of the current conditions and opportunities within them to deliver additional Public Open Space.

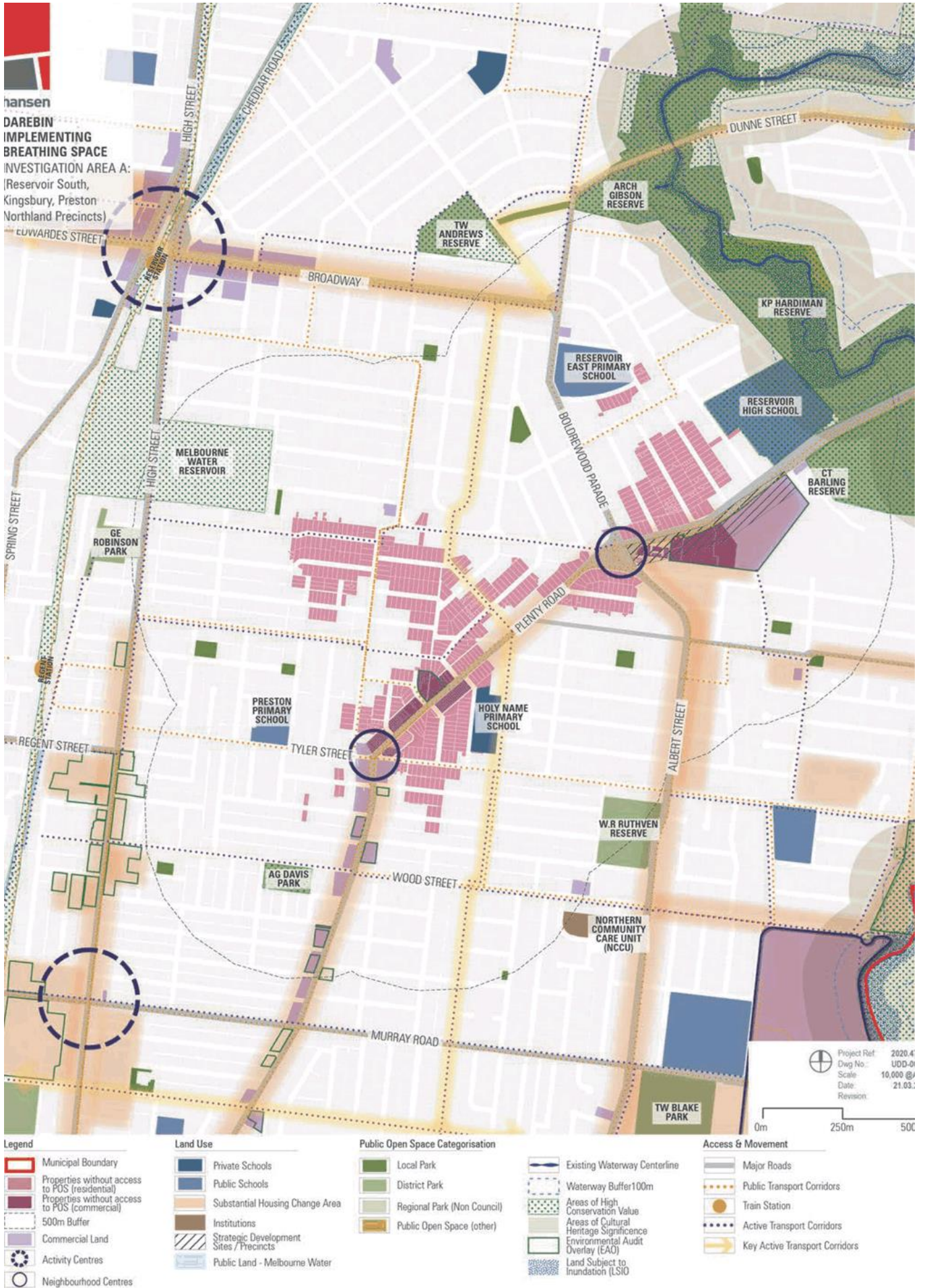
It is noted that the 500m radius is shown on plans from the edge of the last lot identified as not have access to POS. *Breathing Space* used a more sophisticated measurement, calculating the length of blocks in assessing access but for the purpose of this exercise an indicative understanding of the area which is within 500m of the edge of these areas is sufficient for purpose. The intention of this exercise, in practical terms, is not to provide access to open space within 500m for every property, but to ensure a reasonable equity of access for residents across the municipality.

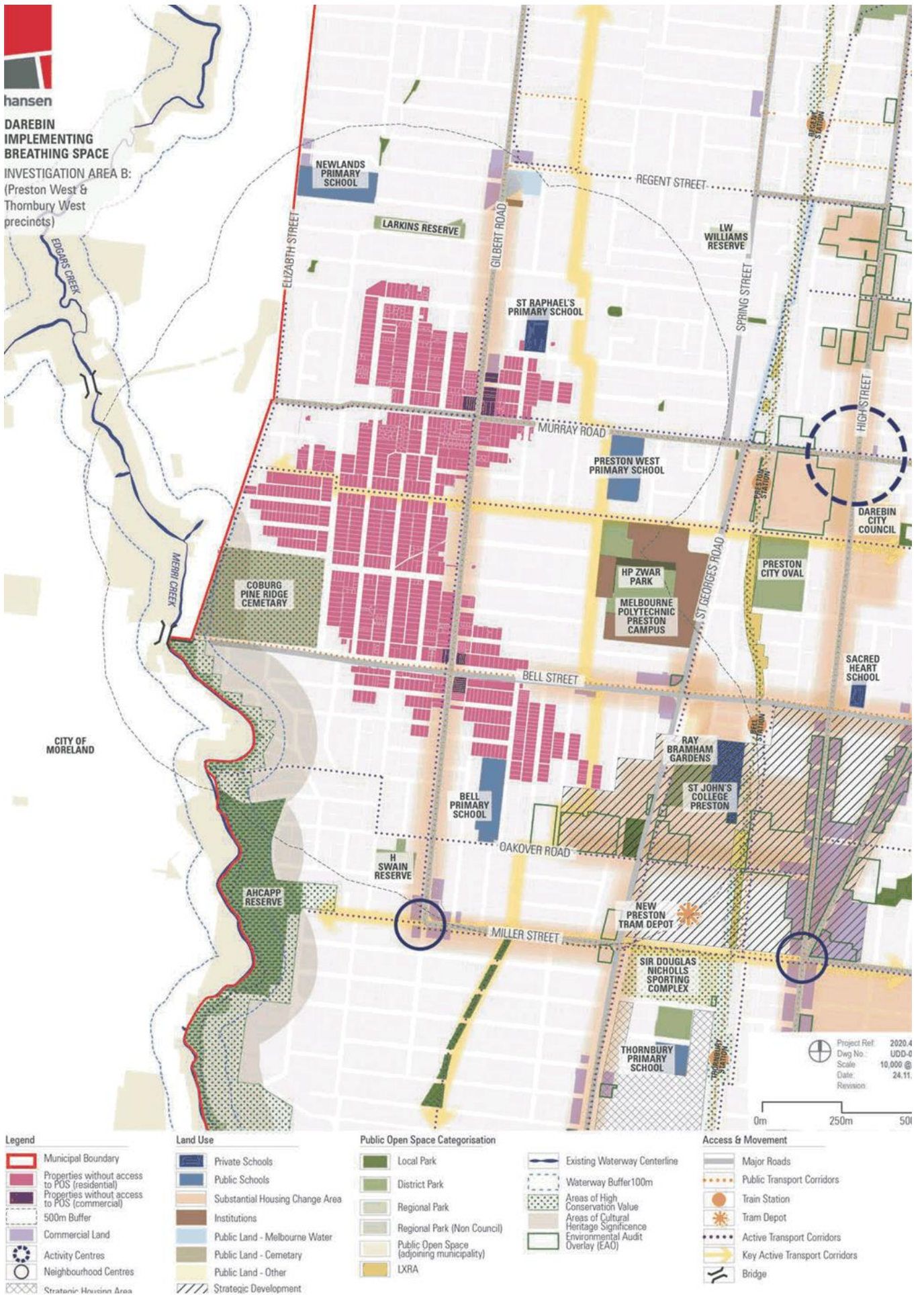
In addition to the Priority Investigation Areas there are current 'Proximity' gaps in the following precincts, but which are subject to either lesser growth pressures or have lesser per capita shortfalls, these are characterised as 'Secondary Acquisition Areas':

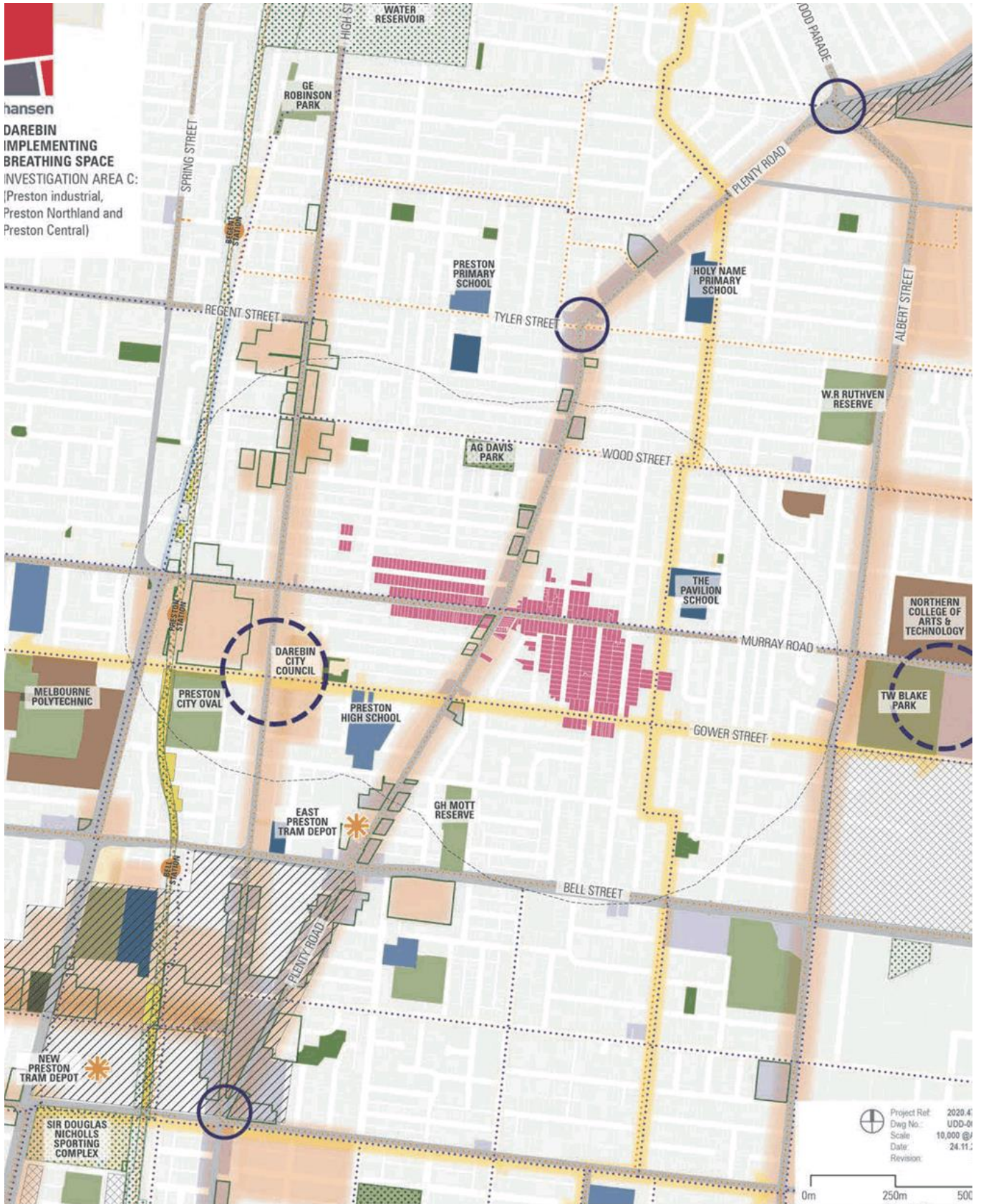
- Investigation Area G- North of Dundas (Preston Industrial)
- Investigation Area H – Small residential pocket (Reservoir West)
- Investigation Area I – Small residential pocket west of Northland around Wood Street (Preston Northland)
- Investigation Area J – Two residential pockets (Reservoir North-West)
- Investigation Area K – Small residential pocket north of train line (Northcote East)
- Investigation Area L – Latrobe area where there is little issue with current access but growth anticipated (Latrobe and Surrounds)
- Investigation Area M – Alphington area where there is a small area of commercial and 'neighbourhood' residential, adjacent to Alphington Mills site

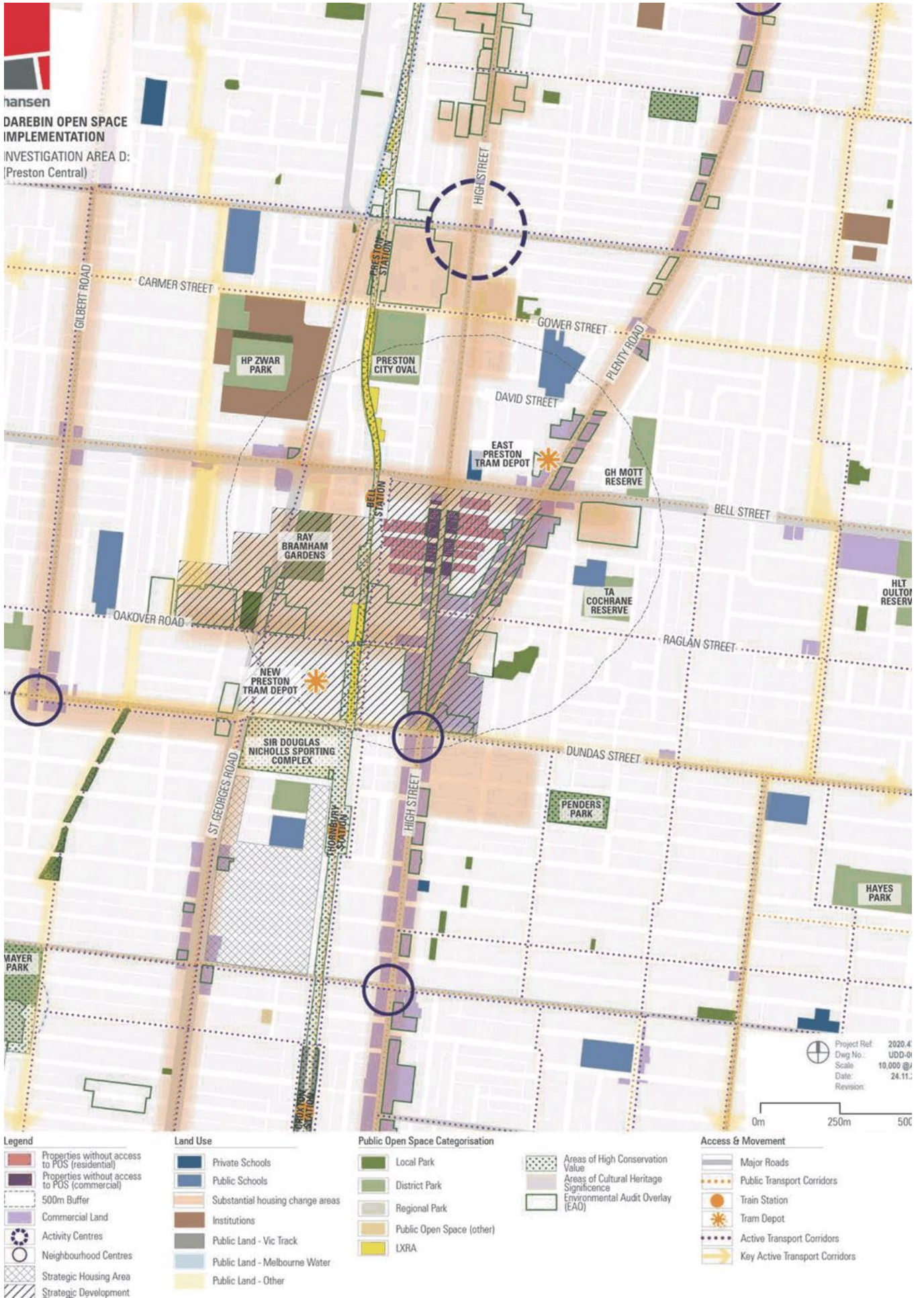
*Enhancing Open Space* uses the analysis provided on the following pages supported by further investigations and engagement to identify a range of potential opportunities to deliver open space in these precincts. It also articulates the linkages between the areas of higher growth and these investigation areas. For each of the Priority Investigation Areas, the opportunities are then assessed according to the delivery of an optimal network of new open space in that area, considering diversity, scale, access and ease of implementation. Given the identification of specific sites as 'opportunities' this document is confidential to avoid prejudicing potential future purchase of land by Council.

Figures 25 - 30: Priority Investigation Areas - existing conditions (following pages)







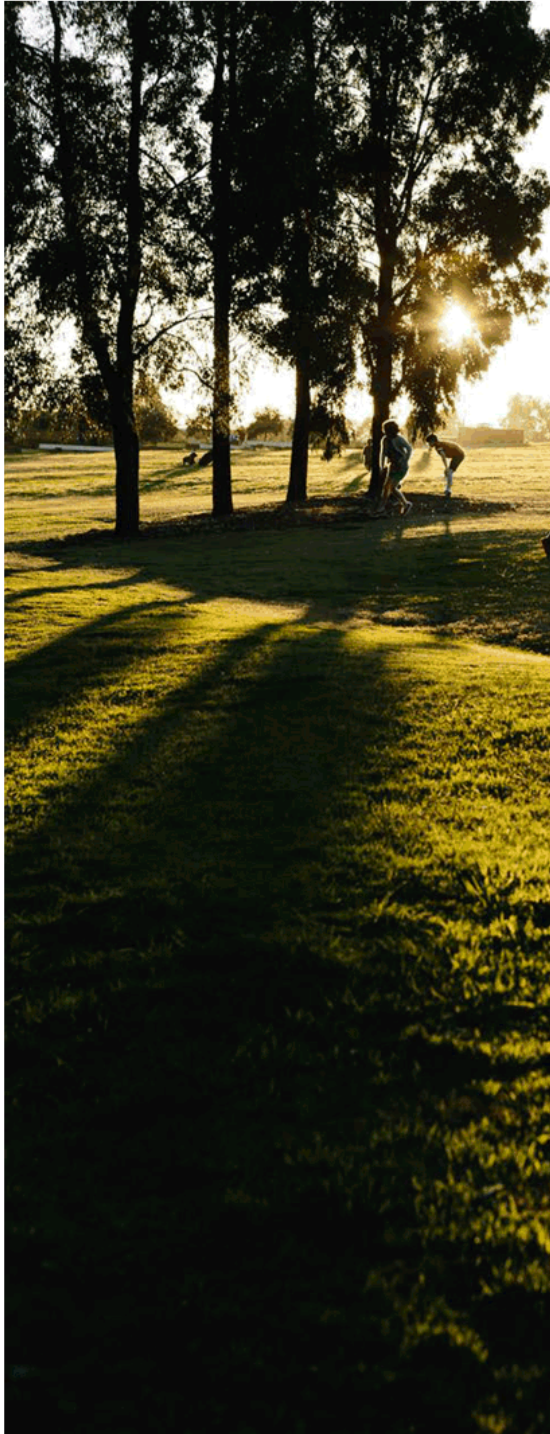








IMPLEMENTING BREATHING SPACE



3.5.3.1 PRECINCT GROWTH RATES AND OPEN SPACE IMPLICATIONS

In establishing the Priority Investigation Areas, it is useful to provide a clear line of sight between these areas and those where population growth will occur, establishing the nexus required in applying the Open Space Levy. The links between growth rates, existing open space provision and identified Priority Investigation Areas is articulated in this section.

*Precincts with an identified HIGH rate of growth*

Northcote West

While this area has a high growth rate it is not a priority due to existing access to open space and relatively low rates of per capita shortfall. Growth in the precinct is also likely to be confined to key areas given zoning. Opportunities to integrate new public open space as part of any larger developments along the High Street corridor are noted and land contributions may be appropriate on some sites and improved public access to the Northcote Golf Course is another opportunity. Council has recently committed to engage in community consultation on the future use of the Northcote Golf course.

Latrobe and surrounds

This precinct has a high growth rate but also, taking into account the whole picture of open space provision, a generous amount of open space (which includes more than public open space). Most of the growth will be associated with the Latrobe University campus and residents will therefore have access to the significant open space assets associated with the university. It is therefore not a priority for the provision of new areas of open space.

Preston Central

This area is a high priority for new open space (Priority Investigation Area D) as it has a high growth rate combined with little existing provision. While some new open space will be provided as part of the LXRA project, there is still a significant need for open space in this area. This area also includes the Preston Market which is proposed for high density residential development. Public open space will be provided on the Preston Market as part of the open space contribution.

Preston Industrial

This area is a high priority for new open space, which should be focussed in the northwest quadrant where there are lots without exiting access and growth occurring close to the Plenty Road spine (PIA A). If the Northland Urban



## IMPLEMENTING BREATHING SPACE

Renewal Precinct develops in the future, land contributions should be sought, with reactive acquisition of land along the Darebin Creek corridor to improve regional linkages another consideration.

#### Preston Northland

New open space is required in this precinct due to the combination of a high growth rate and number of lots without access in growth areas which will exacerbate existing inequities in distribution across the precinct. New open space should be provided to the north-western part of the precinct, with a focus on areas along Plenty Road. New open space in the form of land contributions should be sought as part of the redevelopment of both the Northland and Summerhill Shopping Centres (part of PIA A).

#### Preston West

This precinct is the highest priority for the delivery of new open space with high levels of growth projected, exacerbating existing gaps in provision, with the precinct having both very low levels of access and per capita provision. Given much of the growth will be distributed throughout the precinct in the form of medium density and along the Gilbert Road corridor, the open space distribution also needs to be improved. This precinct forms part of PIA B. Areas of growth to the east should have access to new open space provided as land contributions through the Preston Market redevelopment.

#### Reservoir South

This is another of the highest priority precincts for the delivery of new open space. It has significant existing shortfall and high rates of growth will exacerbate this. The distribution of open space across this precinct also results in areas with no access. Growth is likely to be directed to areas along the Plenty Road corridor and associated Activity Centres, as well as the Reservoir Activity Centre – the need for open space in these areas is addressed by PIA A and E.

#### Thornbury West

This precinct is a priority for new open space (as part of PIA B with the Preston West precinct to the north) as a result of growth along the Miller / Gilbert tram route, as well as significant development in the north-east as an industrial and public housing estate are redeveloped. The focus for the delivery of new open space should be to the north of the precinct, in particular focussed around areas where current distribution is poor. New open space to the west of the precinct is likely to be delivered as part of LXRA works and the redevelopment of public housing estates, with additional open space in PIA D also accessible.

### *Precincts with an identified MEDIUM rate of growth*

#### Alphington/Fairfield

Not a priority as the area has no or low shortfalls and other open space is accessible just beyond precinct boundaries.

#### Kingsbury

New open space is a priority in the southern corner where 'proximity' gaps overlap with growth areas and about other areas with high need – this is addressed through PIA A. Not a priority in other parts of the precinct due to no identified shortfalls.

#### Reservoir Northeast

Not a high priority for new open space given range of open space assets and low per capita shortfalls and lots without access. Where open space can be delivered it should be focussed to the southeast where growth as anticipated in conjunction with the Reservoir Activity Centre – PIA E.

#### Reservoir South West

While this precinct is anticipated to experience a medium level of growth it is not a priority for the delivery of new open space, rather open space should be provided in the adjoining precincts where there is greater need. Low number of lots do not currently have access, and while the per capita shortfall is predicted to increase, residents in this precinct are likely to also have access to proposed new areas of open space in adjoining precincts as it abuts PIAs A, B and E.

#### Reservoir West

This area itself is not a high priority given the low per capita need as a result of Edwardes lake, but it is noted that the western portion of the precinct (which forms part of the Reservoir Activity Centre) is likely to see some growth which will intersect with existing areas without current access – this area forms part of PIA E.

#### Thornbury East

While this area has a medium level of growth this growth will exacerbate existing shortfalls and so is likely to require additional open space. Growth in the precinct will be focused on the High Street corridor and given the existing distribution new open space should be focused in the south western area where there are gaps in distribution which can be aligned with the delivery of open space accessible to new residents (PIA F). Growth areas in the north-west about PIA D



### *Precincts with an identified LOW rate of growth*

#### Northcote East

Low growth rates and low number of lots without access, as well as relatively low per capita shortfall mean this area is not a priority for new open space. If 'reactive' opportunities for new open space became available they should be pursued if located close to identified growth corridors, or lots without current access.

#### Reservoir North West

Low growth rate combined with low proximity gaps and relatively low per capita gaps means this area is not a priority. District level open space is also available in adjoining precincts and across bridges in Moreland.





## IMPLEMENTING BREATHING SPACE

### 3.5.4 HOW TO UPGRADE EXISTING OPEN SPACE (QUALITY)

As identified in *Breathing Space*, the capacity to fully deliver the preferred 'per capita' provision of open space is limited by difficulties in the acquisition of large quantities of land in an inner urban context. While consideration of other non-Council owned open space goes some way to addressing this shortfall, increasing the service levels and quality of existing Public Open Space is also critical. This goes to the issue of Quality as distinct from Quantity, discussed at Section 2.4.

This Section of *Implementing Breathing Space* outlines how costs have been calculated to upgrade existing areas of Public Open Space, in line with *Breathing Space* directions.

#### Asset upgrades based on *Breathing Space* categories

*Breathing Space* sets out a classification system to inform planning for the future open space network, reflective of the anticipated growth and need across the various precincts. Each park is categorised based on the extent of its geographical catchment ('hierarchy') and population density within its catchment ('type') - see Pages 72-107 of *Breathing Space*. A matrix is provided that guides the provision of assets and services to meet the requirements of each category.

The approach outlined in *Breathing Space* has been refined and advanced through the development of a *draft Levels of Service framework*. This process assessed all existing parks in Darebin, establishing their primary purpose (e.g. conservation) and current level of service and identifying where assets needed to be 'upgraded' to align with the categories established in *Breathing Space*. This process also reviewed and added rigour to the specific assets associated with each category of park. The outputs of this assessment have informed the precinct level asset upgrade cost estimates in this *Implementing Breathing Space* document.

#### Capital works projects

In addition to the asset upgrades identified within the scope of the *Open Space Asset Management Plan* review, relevant capital works projects delivering improved sporting infrastructure and accessible toilets were also identified. Where these could be specified in particular locations, the associated cost estimates are included in Precinct level upgrade costings.

#### Masterplan implementation

A number of park masterplans have been adopted by Council in recent years and are in various stages of implementation. Yet to be delivered components of these masterplans are costed and included in the precinct level upgrade estimates, only where they are not identified as replicating improvements captured elsewhere in this document.

#### Vegetation improvements

Further assessment was undertaken to establish the vegetation improvements required in response the *Breathing Space* rewilding objectives, and the estimated costs associated across all identified parks in the municipality.

Indicative costs for the above categories of asset and vegetation improvements are presented in Table 2. Mostly, the costs are aggregated to the Precinct level, however there are renewal/upgrade programs where further planning is required to finalise priority locations and these are presented as a general improvement costs.

#### 3.5.4.1 PRECINCT SPECIFIC UPGRADE COSTS AND PRIORITISATION

The costs associated with upgrades required to service Darebin's existing and growing population are presented at the Precinct level in Table 2.

This table identifies:

- Each *Breathing Space* Precinct.
- The total costs associated with upgrading parks within each Precinct.
- The Level of priority that upgrades should be given.

## IMPLEMENTING BREATHING SPACE



### Prioritisation

Given *Breathing Space* only considered growth to 2028, it is reasonable to assume that all identified upgrades will be required within that same timeframe. However, in recognition of the difficulties of delivering such a comprehensive program of upgrades in that timeframe, a 'prioritisation' of these upgrades is useful. This is also consistent with the wording of the relevant Action, which states "over time". The speed with which Council is able to deliver these upgrades is dependant on funding availability.

As such, required upgrades have been prioritised in a similar fashion as the process for delivering new areas of open space. Areas which have the highest levels of growth and the highest current shortfall in existing open space are to be delivered in advance of those areas likely to experience less intense pressure on their existing areas of open space. The results of this are included in Table 2 through identification of different priority levels. Levels One to Four represent high priority upgrades. Parks within these identified 'priority' precincts which should be the focus of upgrades are those identified as performing a Regional or District role, as well as Active and Community open spaces. This prioritisation is based on delivering Key Direction 1 of *Breathing Space*.

Breathing Space Precinct Upgrade Costs and Priority	
ALPHINGTON / FARIFIELD	
<b>TOTAL COST OF UPGRADE</b>	<b>\$512,114</b>
<b>PRIORITY = Level Five</b>	
PRESTON WEST	
<b>TOTAL COST OF UPGRADE</b>	<b>\$900,874</b>
<b>PRIORITY = Level One</b> (highest levels of shortfall and high levels of growth)	
KINGSBURY	
<b>TOTAL COST OF UPGRADE</b>	<b>\$4,714,535</b>
<b>PRIORITY = Level Four</b> (high levels of growth)	
LATROBE & SURROUNDS	
<b>TOTAL COST OF UPGRADE</b>	<b>\$10,237,914</b>
<b>PRIORITY = Level Two</b> (high levels of shortfall and high levels of growth)	
NORTHCOTE EAST	
<b>TOTAL COST OF UPGRADE</b>	<b>\$2,473,477</b>
<b>PRIORITY = Level Five</b>	
NORTHCOTE WEST	
<b>TOTAL COST OF UPGRADE</b>	<b>\$3,021,955</b>
<b>PRIORITY = Level Three</b> (medium levels of shortfall and medium levels of growth)	
PRESTON CENTRAL	
<b>TOTAL COST OF UPGRADE</b>	<b>\$1,054,364</b>
<b>PRIORITY = Level One</b> (highest levels of shortfall and high levels of growth)	
PRESTON INDUSTRIAL	
<b>TOTAL COST OF UPGRADE</b>	<b>\$6,306,552</b>
<b>PRIORITY = Level One</b> (highest levels of shortfall and high levels of growth)	



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PRESTON NORTHLAND	
<b>TOTAL COST OF UPGRADE</b>	<b>\$2,905,180</b>
<b>PRIORITY = Level Three</b> (medium levels of shortfall and medium levels of growth)	
RESERVOIR NORTH EAST	
<b>TOTAL COST OF UPGRADE</b>	<b>\$8,737,516</b>
<b>PRIORITY = Level Five</b>	
RESERVOIR NORTH WEST	
<b>TOTAL COST OF UPGRADE</b>	<b>\$5,078,368</b>
<b>PRIORITY = Level Five</b>	
RESERVOIR SOUTH	
<b>TOTAL COST OF UPGRADE</b>	<b>\$82,505</b>
<b>PRIORITY = Level One</b> (highest levels of shortfall and high levels of growth)	
RESERVOIR SOUTH WEST	
<b>TOTAL COST OF UPGRADE</b>	<b>\$1,665,686</b>
<b>PRIORITY - Level Four</b> (high levels of growth)	
RESERVOIR WEST	
<b>TOTAL COST OF UPGRADE</b>	<b>\$2,605,464</b>
<b>PRIORITY - Level Four</b> (high levels of growth)	
THORNBURY EAST	
<b>TOTAL COST OF UPGRADE</b>	<b>\$1,599,585</b>
<b>PRIORITY - Level Two</b> (high levels of shortfall and high levels of growth)	
THORNBURY WEST	
<b>TOTAL COST OF UPGRADE</b>	<b>\$1,083,904</b>
<b>PRIORITY - Level Three</b> (medium levels of shortfall and medium levels of growth)	

*General improvements and renewals*

In addition to costs which can be allocated to specific parks, and therefore to the relevant precincts, there are additional general improvements works which will be needed to ensure the on-going delivery of quality Public Open Space in Darebin.

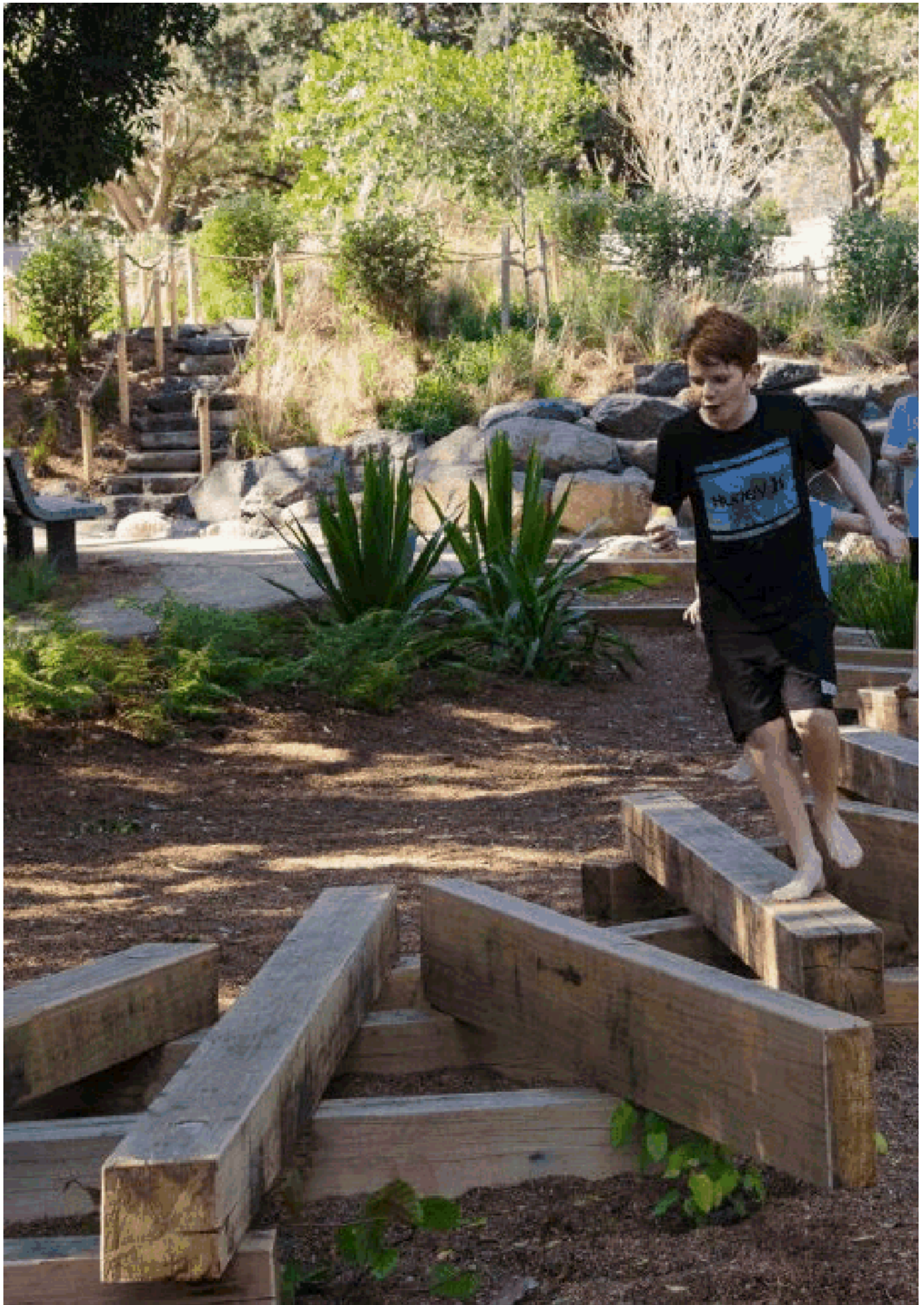
These costs include:

- Delivery of public toilets
- Delivery of relevant upgrades and renewal of sporting facilities, such as fencing and Synthetic Cricket Wicket Installation.
- Irrigation Upgrades and Renewals, and other drainage related works such as Sportground sub-surface drainage.

- Park Assets and Playspace Renewal
- Renewal of other assets such as drinking fountains
- A conservative contingency for site remediation associated with upgrades.

These costs have been consolidated for the purpose of this document and have a total value of \$12,777,000 for the period of 2022-2028. This is aligned with the timeframes of *Breathing Space* and is therefore identified in Table 5 as a Short - Medium term Action.







## IMPLEMENTING BREATHING SPACE

## 4.0 PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION

This Section of *Implementing Breathing Space* addresses some of the practical considerations which underpin the *Breathing Space* Action Plan found at Section 5.0.

As identified, *Breathing Space* contains a total of 147 Actions across 15 objectives under three key directions. There are a number of Actions which are similar or complementary under different Objectives. In order to appropriately implement the 147 Actions of *Breathing Space* and avoid duplication, a number of steps were taken.

- Firstly, the Actions were assessed and then categorised as discussed at Section 4.1. This categorisation had a particular focus on the costs and funding mechanisms of the Actions.
- Secondly, a costing exercise was undertaken for those Actions which were assessed as having funding implications.
- Thirdly, Actions were prioritised and allocated to specific timeframes. This step was not applied to Actions considered to have already been 'implemented' in the process of adopting *Breathing Space*, or whose introduction is on-going through internal implementation (for example changes to practice or policy).

Group One Actions were prioritised according to need, and the decision-making frameworks embedded in the *Enhancing Open Space*. Group Two Actions were prioritised through engagement with relevant Stakeholder groups, including internal Council teams to ensure alignment with broader Council objectives. For all Actions, responsibilities and timeframes were then documented, along with relevant partnerships and other considerations.

And lastly, the costs associated with the delivery of *Breathing Space* were estimated, to allow an understanding of the 'high level' costs of delivering *Breathing Space*. The caveats on these costs are discussed in more detail in Section 4.2 of this report.

### 4.1 CATEGORISATION OF ACTIONS

All Actions of *Breathing Space* were tabulated and then assigned to a Group.

#### 4.1.1 GROUP ONE: PUBLIC OPEN SPACE (PARKS) NETWORK

The bulk of the capital investment required to deliver a network of open space is tied up in 'Group One' Actions, which includes:

- New Open Space delivery – including land purchase (where relevant) and development
- Existing Open Space upgrades – to achieve identified quality (Type) to respond to growth

#### 4.1.2 GROUP TWO: OTHER ACTIONS WITH COST IMPLICATIONS

This group captures a broad range of Actions with cost implications, including::

- Education & Training, such as Citizen Science programs etc
- Research & Review, where *Breathing Space* recommended further research be undertaken to support future change
- Physical works which deliver improvements of a specific nature and which sit outside the scope of the Group one upgrades
- Planning which includes the preparation of further plans or guidelines

#### 4.1.3 GROUP THREE: ADDITIONAL FUNDING NOT REQUIRED

- Actions which are already funded, such as Action 5.10.
- Existing Policy Implementation, which includes Actions which support other adopted Council strategies.
- Internal policy directions (i.e. changes to place names)
- Internal design practice.



## 4.2 COSTING METHODOLOGIES

The full implementation of *Breathing Space* has very significant cost implications for Council. As such, it is important that there is clear identification of mechanisms for funding relevant Actions and a practical lens placed on how to best deliver the outcomes of *Breathing Space* 'on the ground'.

There are a series of differing costs which are outlined in this Section of the report. These all have differing implications and potentially differing funding sources (most notably the funding stream available to Council through the Open Space Levy). The parameters and caveats associated with the costs documented in the Action Plan are as follows:

### 4.2.1 GROUP ONE: PUBLIC OPEN SPACE (PARKS) NETWORK COSTS

These costs are broken down into two key areas, with each of these broken down further to allow a more in-depth understanding of cost components.

Firstly there are three Streams related to the delivery of new areas of public open space in Darebin. These are:

- Delivery of new public open space in Priority Investigation Areas (Stream A).
- Facilitation of access to other open space in Priority Investigation Areas, such as through shared use agreements or access improvements (Stream A).
- Delivery of new public open space in other areas, which will generally be either reactive in nature (Stream B).
- Delivery of open space along waterways or in areas of high biodiversity, which may not consistently, or to the same degree, accommodate use by the community (Stream C).





## IMPLEMENTING BREATHING SPACE

Secondly, there are the associated costs of upgrading existing parks to meet a higher service standard. These include:

- Relevant upgrades to all existing Council Public Open Space guided by Precinct priority levels.
- Other improvements to open space associated with municipal-wide upgrade and renewal programs

It is very important to note that the costs identified in relation to Group One only relate to the purchase of land, delivery of new or upgrades to existing open space. There are also significant additional costs to Council in maintenance which is associated with open space but which is not addressed by *Implementing Breathing Space*. Despite this, it is important to recognise that the true 'overall' cost to Council is higher than articulated through this document.

#### 4.2.1.1 DELIVERY OF NEW PUBLIC OPEN SPACE IN PRIORITY INVESTIGATION AREAS

These costs reflect those associated with the 'proactive' delivery of new open space in areas where there are current gaps in residents' access to open space, coupled with high level of growth and existing and future deficiencies in per capita provision.

The costs allocated to this group is based on a series of considered opportunities for the delivery of new open space outlined in the document *Enhancing Open Space*.

The opportunities which have informed these high level costings do not represent a comprehensive list, and further investigations or discussions with local communities or landowners may result in some opportunities not being pursued. However, given the reasonably limited scope of potential open spaces and their modest size, compared the quantum of shortfall in the provision of open space in these Priority Investigation Areas (PIAs) the costing of a range of different opportunities for each PIA is important. As with other aspects of the Public Open Space network, the proposed new open space is required to service both existing populations and future populations to 2028, meaning their delivery needs to sit in the first phase of funding for *Breathing Space*.

Costing for new areas of open space in the PIAs is high level only and employs a range of assumptions. The costs were calculated using a standardised delivery cost and a corresponding land value calculation based on current valuations for the area, where applicable.

Cost associated with land purchase are as documented in *Enhancing Open Space*. For residential land the highest estimate of land value has been used. For land in commercial zones either a low, mid or high level value from within the identified range has been adopted depending on the location of the commercial land. For land in a Mixed Use Zone, the identified commercial rate has been applied.

In identifying the delivery costs, projects were generally costed as:

- Linkage / pathway improvements which were calculated at a per linear metre rate of \$120.
- Development of a 'community' types park on a residential block, where costs comprised a per sqm rate of \$386, plus an additional allocation of \$70,000 for design and other fees. The per sqm rate included consideration of demolition of existing dwellings, lighting, playground, garden beds and trees, drinking fountain, bins, picnic table, bench seat, minor earthworks and site prep and reseeding grass and concrete pavement (based on a 1000sqm site).
- Development of 'grey to green' type 'pocket park'. For these areas a fee of \$1660 per sqm has been applied, along with an engineering and design fee of \$60,000. The per sqm estimate includes trees and shrubs, some structural soil, custom seating, all surfaces, lighting relocation and upgrades and pedestrian crossings.

Costs for managing contamination can be very high so the presence of potential contamination is an important issue. For all sites where potential contamination has been identified an additional \$50,000 has been included for investigations but further fees for addressing any contamination found have not been included.

#### 4.2.1.2 DELIVERY OF NEW PUBLIC OPEN SPACE OUTSIDE PRIORITY INVESTIGATION AREAS

These costs reflect those associated with maximising opportunities which arise to deliver new open space in areas where there is a medium or high level of existing or future shortfall or where a relatively smaller number of residents lack access within the specified distance.

The cost allocated to this is a nominal 'budget' for 'reactive' purchases of land in accordance with an adopted decision-making framework for the purchase of land which has regard to the objectives of *Breathing Space*. The costs associated with them are estimates based on land values and assumptions about the number of purchases per annum that could be achieved, having regard to *Breathing Space* timeframes.



#### 4.2.1.3 DELIVERY OF NEW OPEN SPACE ALONG WATERWAYS OR FOR BIODIVERSITY

These costs reflect the costs associated with maximising the use of opportunities which arise to deliver new open space in areas along waterways. While these purchases may not always provide Public Open Space they are nonetheless an important part of *Breathing Space's* implementation.

As above, the cost allocated to this is a nominal 'budget' for reactive' purchases of land in accordance with an adopted decision-making framework for the purchase of land which has regard to the objectives of *Breathing Space*. The costs associated with them are estimates based on land values and assumptions about the number of purchases per annum that could be achieved, having regard to *Breathing Space* timeframes.

#### 4.2.1.3 DELIVERY OF UPGRADES TO EXISTING OPEN SPACE

The costs for relevant upgrades to existing open space have been drawn from the findings of the asset management review, and costing estimates for adopted masterplans, relevant capital works projects and vegetation improvements.

Costs for the relevant open space upgrades are outlined in more detail in Section 3.5.4.1.

The upgrade costs are presented in the Action Plan at Section 5 according to timings guided by Precinct priority (refer Section 3.5.4):

- Short term - upgrading Priority Level One to Three Precincts
- Short to Medium term - upgrading Priority Level Four and Five Precincts

#### 4.2.2 Group Two: Other Actions with cost implications

The costs for the Actions identified in Group Two have been estimated by Council on the basis of precedents and existing budgets. They fall into two different categories:

- One-off project costs - These are the most straightforward costs associated *Breathing Space*, being single projects or Actions with single nominated budgets that should be allocated to relevant funding cycles.
- Recurring costs - There are a number of Actions which are not just 'one-off costs' which will be allocated to a single years budget, but represent a recurring annual cost above usual budgeting practice.

### 4.3 FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

There are a number of potential funding sources which can be used to deliver the Actions identified in *Breathing Space*. These include but are not limited to:

- Government grants
- Council funds from a range of sources including:
  - Capital works, and asset management program budgets
  - Other internal sources such as community grants/ sport programs targeting users
  - Land sales
- Philanthropic trusts / foundation grants / bequests etc.
- Reinvestment of funds generated from use of council facilities
- Public Open Space Contributions from developers triggered by subdivision (levy)
- Development contributions
- Public open space provided by other Government bodies or agencies, on their landholdings

The largest funding requirements associated with *Breathing Space* are associated with the acquisition and delivery of new Public Open Space. While joint access arrangements, developments and partnerships with schools or other public agencies may provide some opportunities, the Public Open Space Contribution (the Open Space Levy / OSL) is by far the most important funding stream for Council.

There is some 'grey area' in terms of what can and should be funded through the Open Space Levy under the Subdivision Act. This remains however, one of the key funding sources available to Council in delivering public open space, and there are more than sufficient projects and areas to which any generated funds could be directed without regard for additional 'semi public' areas.

Critically, it is noted that even with the increase in the Levy as proposed by a current Planning Scheme Amendment (yet to be approved), there will remain a very significant gap in the funds generated through the Levy and the costs to Council of delivering an appropriate network of open space.



## IMPLEMENTING BREATHING SPACE

While *Breathing Space* used a precinct based approach to identify shortfalls in the provision of public open space, funds generated through the Open Space Levy are not proposed to be allocated on a precinct basis as the principle of municipal wide distribution has been well established and remains appropriate. However, allocation of funds will be guided by the priorities identified in this document, which has had regard to areas anticipated to experience higher levels of growth.

For the purposes of *Implementing Breathing Space*, the allocation of funds generated through the Open Space Levy to the costs identified in this plan are that they must be directed to area set aside for the *primary* purpose of public recreation or parklands (or similar). This has been taken as meaning:

- Cost must be associated with land that is on public ownership and is zoned or otherwise clearly identified for use as open space. For the most part while this means Council ownership, it may also include land which is in other public ownership but which is leased and / or managed by Council for the purposes of open space.
- The open space in question must be publicly accessible. This is implications for some of the *Breathing Space* objectives around land for biodiversity purposes etc. Land for which the primary purpose is, for example, the protection of endangered flora may not be suitable for public access and therefore should be funded through other sources. It is also noted that some of these areas may also be acquired in areas to which public access is not currently available, and so would not be suitable to be funded through the OSL.

## 4.4 PARTNERSHIPS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

While Council will retain ownership of the delivery of *Breathing Space*, the successful implementation will require strategic partnerships to be developed in order to maximise the opportunities to most fully deliver on relevant objectives. Put simply, Council cannot deliver *Breathing Space* on its own.

This Section of the report outlines some of the key partnerships which have the potential to assist in implementation, and which are referenced in the relevant Action Plan tables which follow. This list is by no means comprehensive but represents the key partnership that have been identified through this project - future partnerships may, and hopefully will, emerge over the coming years.

### Internal responsibilities

Unlike many other Open Space Strategies, *Breathing Space* is a whole-of-council Strategy crossing areas relating to transport, equity and diversity, design, community engagement and property. As such, the spirit of collaboration which has informed the preparation of this document must continue in order to deliver successful implementation. The Action Plan tables document the relevant internal departments who will lead or partner in the delivery of the identified Actions.

### Darebin Nature Trust.

This group of qualified and passionate individuals provides Council with the opportunity to test ideas and be guided by the professional expertise of residents across a range of relevant disciplines. This group will be instrumental in *Breathing Space's* implementation, particularly those Actions which fall under Objectives 2: Rewilding Darebin

### Darebin Aboriginal Advisory Committee and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation

The ongoing engagement and active participation in the delivery of many of the Actions of the Darebin Aboriginal Advisory Committee and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation is also critical. The embedding of this partnership in the planning and care for Darebin's open spaces is explicit in *Breathing Space*, and represents a true opportunity for collaboration, and for learning.



### **Partnerships with other public land owners**

There are a number of public landholders within Darebin with whom on-going discussions are identified in the delivery of new open space. Of particular note is Melbourne Water, who hold a number of undeveloped land assets. Melbourne Water's recognition of the benefits of appropriate multi-purpose spaces, and precedents for their delivery such as the Greening the Pipeline project offers a real opportunity to expand the amount of accessible open space for Darebin's residents. The other public landowners of note within Darebin are VicTrack, and the Department of Education - VicTrack for their landholdings, many of which are currently used for open space, and schools, which offer the greatest potential for shared use arrangements in areas where shortfalls are identified.

### **Community**

Also critical partners in the delivery of *Breathing Space* are the members of Darebin's community, those who will use and enjoy the open spaces and who will contribute along the way - from inputting to vision setting processes, to getting their hands dirty on community planting days, the involvement and endorsement of the community is fundamental.

## **4.5 COMPLEMENTARY STRATEGIES**

An important acknowledgement in the implementation of *Breathing Space* is that the strategy itself does not stand alone. It is supported by, and supports, a number of other Council strategies and policies.

Of particular relevance to *Breathing Space's* implementation are the following strategies which are referenced in various Actions. Many of these have their own implementation plans.

- *Playspace Strategy*
- *Leisure Strategy*
- *Greenstreets Strategy*
- *Public Toilet Strategy*
- *Natural Heritage Strategy*

Where referenced strategies have expired, reference should be taken as to any replacement or 'follow-on' strategy (ie the leisure Strategy references should consider the The Outdoor Sports Infrastructure Framework, adopted in 2020.)

Of particular note also is Council's *Climate Emergency Plan* which as a close relationship to *Breathing Space*, and contains many complementary objectives and actions. Other more recent work by Council also has relevance to the implementation of *Breathing Space* including the Streets for People project which established a framework of key streets where a shift in the balance between movement hierarchies is to be facilitated. Streets for People corridors are identified on the relevant precinct mapping.







## 5.0 BREATHING SPACE ACTION PLAN

This chapter contains the refined list of Actions needed to deliver *Breathing Space*, including their relevant categorisation, costs, partnerships and funding opportunities, and timeframes.

### 5.1 ACTION PLAN FORMAT




The Tables included in this section of *Implementing Breathing Space* are broken down into the Groups and categories described in Section 4.1 for ease of understanding.

#### 5.1.1 Definitions

The following definitions inform the Action Plan tables which are contained within this section of the report.

##### Timeframes




Actions which require the identification of a timeframe (i.e those which have not already been implemented or represent practice or process changes) have been assigned one of three timeframes.

-  • Short term (to 2025) - the 'priority Actions. Many of these are 'foundation' Actions on which later Actions or new practices rely.
-  • Medium Term (2025 - 2035) - this is where many of the Actions of *Breathing Space* will be delivered 'on the ground' following planning and funding.
-  • Long Term (beyond 2035) - longer term Actions or lesser priorities

Most Actions will be identified in the Short or Medium categories given *Breathing Space* is based on requirements to 2028. (7 years from the date of this document). Long Term items are not generally identified but a Short - Long Term designation is used to acknowledge Actions which may commence in the Short Term but which will be implemented over a longer timeframe.

##### Costings

The methodologies for costing various Actions of *Breathing Space* are outlined at Section 4.2. In the Action Plan these are categorised as follows:

-  • Low cost - a one-off or recurring costs which will equate to less than \$150,000 over the relevant time period.
-  • Medium cost - a one-off or recurring costs which will equate to less than \$1,000,000 over the relevant time period.
-  • High cost - a one-off or recurring costs which will equate to more than \$1,000,000 over the relevant time period.

Costs are identified as 'One-off' or 'Recurring', identified respectively by an O or R in the Table. Recurring costs should be taken as a per annum amount. No cost is allocated to Group Three Actions.

The Tables also identify the most likely funding sources for the Actions but it should be noted that funding avenues are continually evolving and a continual process of reviewing available funding avenues is presumed.

##### Key partnerships and responsibilities

Understanding who is taking responsibility for the delivery of the various Actions is a critical component of any implementation plan. As such, each Action (including Group Three Actions), has the relevant internal department who will drive delivery of the Action identified, as well as other departments where an important input has been established.

Importantly, many of the Actions also have other partnerships which are important to their implementation and these are also identified where relevant. Some of these key partners include:

- Melbourne Water
- Private landowners
- Schools / Department of Education
- VicTrack / VicRoads
- Darebin Nature Trust
- Aboriginal Advisory Committee



## IMPLEMENTING BREATHING SPACE

## 5.2 GROUPS ONE: OPEN SPACE NETWORK COSTS

Group One Actions will require significant funding allocation. They represent the Actions and associated funding requirements to deliver new, and to upgrade existing, open space to reflect the ambitions of *Breathing Space*.

The 'overarching' Actions contained in *Breathing Space* have been broken down into a series of 'sub-actions' to guide the detailed steps to be undertaken.

Given the importance of the funding source/s for these Actions, and in particular the relationship to the Open Space Levy which represents a major funding source, they have been structured with reference to their relevant funding mechanism. They have been subject to the consultation process outlined in Section 1.4 which has informed their prioritisation and the associated timeframes, where relevant.

### 5.2.1 Group One Implementation Priorities

Given the extent of the existing shortfall in access to open space in Darebin, and the fact that the identified shortfalls only reflect population growth to 2028, all Actions within Table 4 are priorities for implementation. However, in recognition that there will need to be some prioritisation of these Actions, the following should be priorities:

- Deliver new Public Open Space (as defined by the Subdivision Act) in Priority Investigation Areas
- Deliver new publicly accessible open space in Priority Investigation Areas
- Require the delivery of new Public Open Space in the form of land contribution in the following locations:
  - Preston Market precinct
  - Northland precinct (subject to rezoning proceeding)
  - Summerhill Shopping Centre precinct
- Pursue the purchase of additional land along designated waterways or areas of high biodiversity value in accordance with the relevant decision making framework
- Undertake relevant upgrades to existing Public Open Space in Precincts identified in Table 2, according to Priority Levels

### 5.2.2 Group One Costs

Total Group One costs are summarised as follows:

- Delivery of new open space: \$69,584,700.00 + \$6,268,400.00 + \$12,000,000.00 + \$3,900,000.00
- Upgrades and improvements to existing open space: \$52,979,993.00 + \$12,777,000.00
- Recurring associated costs (2022-2028): \$805,000.00

**TOTAL GROUP ONE COSTS = \$158,315,093.00**

Group One costs attributable to the Open Space Levy (cash contributions) = \$148,146,693

IMPLEMENTING BREATHING SPACE



1.1	<b>Acquire additional open space. This may be through purchase, joint use agreements and/or partnerships with public and private entities.</b> <i>This Action requires an increase in the quantity of publicly accessible Open Space available to Darebin’s existing and future residents.</i>				
Sub-action	Timing	Indicative Cost / Type of cost		Funding Mechanisms	Partnerships
Deliver new Public Open Space (as defined by the <i>Subdivision Act</i> ) in Priority Investigation Areas.	Short	\$69,584,700	0	OSL (cash contribution), State funding, Council funding,	Melbourne Water
Deliver new publicly accessible open space in Priority Investigation Areas.	Short	\$6,268,400	0	Council funding, Grants, Partnership agreements	Department of Education, Melbourne Water
Require the delivery of new Public Open Space in the form of land contribution in the following locations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preston Market precinct</li> <li>• Northland precinct (subject to rezoning proceeding)</li> <li>• Summerhill Shopping Centre precinct</li> </ul>	Short - Medium	-	0	OSI (land contribution)	Developers / Landowners, Public Landowners, VPA
Deliver additional new publicly accessible open space in accordance with relevant decision-making frameworks, by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pursuing the expansion of existing parks in areas high level of growth</li> <li>• Acquiring new Public Open Space when public land offered for sale</li> <li>• Delivering new Public Open Space (as defined by the <i>Subdivision Act</i>) in Secondary Investigation Areas.</li> </ul>	Short - Medium	\$12,000,000	0	OSL (cash contribution), Council funding,	Public Landowners
Pursue the purchase of additional land along designated waterways or areas of high biodiversity value in accordance with the relevant decision-making framework	Short - Medium	\$3,900,000	0	Grants, Council funding,	Developers / Landowners, Public Land Owners, Melbourne Water
Hire an Open Space delivery officer to coordinate the purchase, negotiation and delivery of new open space.	Short	\$115,000	R	OSL (cash contribution)	



IMPLEMENTING BREATHING SPACE

5.1	<b>Over time, upgrade open spaces in need of safety, quality and amenity improvements.</b>				
	<i>This Action requires an increase in the quality of Public Open Space available to Darebin’s existing and future residents. It is underpinned by the draft levels of Service framework and Open Space Asset Management Plan.</i>				
Sub-Action	Timing	Cost		Funding Mechanisms	Responsibility
Undertake relevant upgrades to existing Public Open Space in areas identified in Table 2 as Level One priorities	Short	\$8,344,295	0	OSL (cash contribution), Grants, Council funding,	Parks and Open Space
Undertake relevant upgrades to existing Public Open Space in areas identified in Table 2 as Level Two priorities	Short	\$11,837,499	0	OSL (cash contribution), Grants, Council funding,	Parks and Open Space
Undertake relevant upgrades to existing Public Open Space in areas identified in Table 2 as Level Three priorities	Short	\$7,011,039	0	OSL (cash contribution), Grants, Council funding,	Parks and Open Space
Undertake relevant upgrades to existing Public Open Space in areas identified in Table 2 as Level Four priorities	Short - Medium	\$8,985,685	0	OSL (cash contribution), Grants, Council funding,	Parks and Open Space
Undertake relevant upgrades to existing Public Open Space in areas identified in Table 2 as Level Five priorities	Short - Medium	\$16,801,475	0	OSL (cash contribution), Grants, Council funding,	Parks and Open Space
Undertake other general improvement and renewal works to the broader network of Public Open Space (i.e. fencing, public toilets, land improvement)	Short - Medium (costs calculated to 2028)	\$12,777,000	0	OSL (cash contribution), Grants, Council funding,	Parks and Open Space

Table 4: Group One: Open Space Network Actions



### 5.3 GROUP TWO: OTHER BREATHING SPACE ACTIONS REQUIRING FUNDING

These Actions are those to which new and additional funds will need to be allocated. They have been subject to the consultation process outlined at Section 1.4 which has informed their prioritisation and the associated timeframes where relevant.

#### 5.3.1 Group Two Implementation Priorities

The timing and priorities identified in Table 5 reflect both the relationship between the various types of Actions identified in *Breathing Space* (for example, there are Actions which are 'planning' such as "develop Nature Play Guidelines", which would logically occur prior to the development of additional nature play areas) and the priorities of the various stakeholder groups consulted.

On that basis, the following implementation priorities from this group of Actions have been identified:

- Hire a Biodiversity Officer (ongoing - Council has a biodiversity officer and this position should continue to be funded)
- Prepare of a new Urban Forest Strategy
- Further developing existing and new Aboriginal tourism experiences including the Spiritual and Healing Trail, Merri Creek, the Koori Mural, the site where the Batman "Treaty" was first "signed", and contemporary experiences, in consultation with Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung elders and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders particularly DAAC.
- Prepare a Biodiversity Management Plan
- Increase the annual Council budget for revegetation (ongoing - Council has increased annual spend but should continue)

#### 5.3.2 Group Two Costs

Total Group Two costs are summarised as follows:

- Actions associated with biodiversity and land management improvements: \$17,770,000.00
- Improving the use of open space: \$22,865,000.00
- Other costs: \$675,000.00

**TOTAL GROUP TWO COSTS = \$41,310,000.00**

Group Two costs attributable to the Open Space Levy (cash contributions) = \$20,600,000.00



IMPLEMENTING BREATHING SPACE

Action		Type	Indicative cost / type of cost	Responsibility / Partners	Timing / Priority
Deliver an expanded program of education and training focussed on Darebin’s biodiversity including:		Education & Training	\$400,000	0	Parks and Open Space Climate Emergency Youth Services Darebin Nature Trust
9.2	Deliver education and training initiatives to Council and community focussed on increasing understanding of biodiversity values.				
9.5	Develop community science projects to engage and educate the community and to foster custodianship.				
11.4	Commit resources to support the founding, development, programming and longevity of community stewards to identify local projects, ‘get their hands dirty’ and make a positive change locally.				
11.7	Engage the community in citizen science activities such as monitoring local species.				
10.11	Hire a biodiversity officer.	Education & Training	\$100,000 (2022-2028 = \$700,000)	R	Short
Undertake research to improve use of open space by diverse groups		Research & Reviews	\$195,000	0	Parks and Open Space City Design Equity and diversity Age and Disability Youth Services
3.1	Undertake research to identify and understand the cultural and linguistic groups surrounding areas of open space being considered for improvements, and ensure engagement activities to plan these improvements reach these groups.				
6.1	Identify opportunities that enable diversification of public space types to meet the needs of a diverse community within a growing urban setting.				
3.3	Work with the University of Melbourne’s Designing for Difference program to deliver a pilot project which addresses the intersections of cultural and ethnic difference in public space and the development of design and policy toolkits to optimise diverse public space use.				
4.3	A safety and gender based audit should be conducted where possible engaging a user based community group to assist in the design and planning of equitable open spaces.				

IMPLEMENTING BREATHING SPACE



Action		Type	Indicative cost / type of cost	Responsibility / Partners	Timing / Priority
Preparation of a new Urban Forest Strategy		Planning	\$100,000	0	Parks and Open Space Climate Emergency Darebin Nature Trust Darebin Aboriginal Advisory Group
5.21	Review the tree canopy cover target to establish a long term target (beyond 2028) and milestones that maximise tree canopy cover and support maximising vegetation cover, taking into consideration: —The need to create habitat and to layer understorey plantings with trees in an integrated way —What is achievable from the point of view of available land, including considering functional uses that necessarily restrict cover (e.g. sports fields) —Leading examples from other parts of Melbourne and the world				
13.4	In consultation with council advisory committees, create a list of preferred trees and plants to be used in the Green Streets Network which prioritise shade provision, and include indigenous and drought tolerant tree and plant species.				
13.2	Ensure a minimum of 25 per cent of land is planned to be covered by multilayered vegetation and tree canopy				
Review of dog parks including signage and facilities		Research & Review	\$100,000 (OSL)	0	Parks and Open Space
6.4	Review the provision of dog on and off lead areas in parks across the municipality to determine suitability of existing network in consultation with community and in line with the dog off lead principles.				
6.5	Undertake a review of signs in all dog off lead areas to ensure it is correct and clear.				
Development / review, publication and distribution of a preferred species palette		Planning	\$20,000	0	Parks and Open Space City Design Darebin Nature Trust
6.15	Create a species palette of hardy plants including perennial productive food plants.				
	<i>Note: should be integrated with other relevant palettes such as indigenous species, climate resilient species, street tree species as referenced in Breathing Space and published.</i>				
2.4	Further developing existing and new Aboriginal tourism experiences including the Spiritual and Healing Trail, Merri Creek, the Koori Mural, the site where the Batman “Treaty” was first “signed”, and contemporary experiences, in consultation with Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung elders and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders particularly DAAC.	Physical Works	\$150,000	0	Parks and Open Space Equity and diversity Darebin Aboriginal Advisory Group
4.4	Develop an intergenerational playspace with equipment, activities and amenities specifically targeted at all ages in an area of high population density.	Physical Works	\$500,000 (OSL)	0	Parks and Open Space Youth Services



IMPLEMENTING BREATHING SPACE

Action		Type	Indicative cost / type of cost		Responsibility / Partners	Timing / Priority
Prepare a Biodiversity Management Plan		Planning	\$250,000	0	Parks and Open Space Climate Emergency Darebin Nature Trust	Short
9.6	Conduct a biodiversity survey and develop a Biodiversity Management Plan (refer break out box on page 60) which identifies a street tree and open space plant palette.					
10.2	As part of the implementation of the Biodiversity Management Plan, develop an action plan which covers all relevant activities of Council to ensure integrated planning, and identifies priorities for protection of biodiversity sites					
10.12	Select key species to preserve and protect following a review of the existing flora and fauna audit as a key action of the Biodiversity Management Plan (see page 60).					
10.3	Undertake a Vegetation Assessment to understand the quantity, quality, extent, location and habitat value of existing vegetation in open spaces.					
7.7	Identify priorities for 'wild spaces' that conserve natural character and habitat.					
10.4	Develop revegetation priorities for strengthening existing habitats and filling gaps in habitat corridors as a priority action.					
10.10	Investigate other resourcing arrangements (capital and recurrent) in relation to indigenous vegetation cover.					
4.5	Incorporate a purpose built space or area for youth in all upgrades to district and regional parks. This space will be gender inclusive and include a youth focused consultation process to understand what infrastructure the user groups need. <i>Note: cost covers all District &amp; Regional parks</i>	Physical Works	\$20,000,000 (OSL)	0	Parks and Open Space Youth Services	Short - Long
5.2	Install water fountains at key nodes such as trail junctions and key destinations along all major cycling trails and walking paths throughout the municipality including as a priority the Darebin Creek Trail, Merri Creek Trail and St Georges Road Shared Path / Northern Pipe Trail.	Physical Works	\$150,000	0	Parks and Open Space City Design	Medium
5.8	Identify locations and install free public Wi Fi hot spots. Seating, shade, sealed paths and wayfinding signage should accompany the hot spot. Priority should be given to regional parks.	Physical Works	\$1,200,000	0	Parks and Open Space	Medium



IMPLEMENTING BREATHING SPACE



Action		Type	Indicative cost / type of cost		Responsibility / Partners	Timing / Priority
Increased per annum spend on signage (wayfinding, information, Aboriginal culture)		Physical Works	\$50,000 (2022-2028 = \$350,000)	R	Parks and Open Space Equity and diversity Transport Darebin Aboriginal Advisory Group	Short - Medium
6.12	Implement wayfinding signage and user etiquette messaging along shared paths over time.  <i>Note: also reflects various other directions regarding signage found in Breathing Space Actions</i>					
9.4	Increase the provision of purpose built nature play and bush kinder areas throughout the municipality.	Physical Works	\$200,000	O	Parks and Open Space	Short - Medium
Increase the annual Council budget for revegetation		Physical Works	\$200,000 (2022-2028 = \$1,400,000)	R	Parks and Open Space Climate Emergency Darebin Nature Trust	Short
10.18	Increase investment for remnant site management, revegetation programs and weed control guided by the following order of site priority as per the Natural Heritage Strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remnant vegetation sites of national and state significance.</li> <li>Remnant vegetation sites of regional and local significance.</li> <li>Revegetated sites.</li> <li>Degraded sites, noting that additional resources for ongoing maintenance would also be required.</li> </ul>					
	<i>Note: also reflects various other directions regarding vegetation management found in Breathing Space Actions</i>					
13.9	Improve water quality in creeks and water bodies through increased use of WSUD on streets	Physical Works	\$200,000 (2022-2028 = \$1,400,000)	R	Parks and Open Space Climate Emergency Engineering services	Short - Long
10.26	Continue to implement and maintain WSUD throughout the municipality including wetlands, swales and detention systems as a response to declining rainfall.	Physical Works	\$13,000,000	O	Parks and Open Space Climate Emergency Engineering services	Short - Long
9.6	Develop nature play guidelines	Planning	\$20,000	O	City Design Darebin Nature Trust	Short



IMPLEMENTING BREATHING SPACE

Action		Type	Indicative cost / type of cost		Responsibility / Partners	Timing / Priority
10.9	Develop and implement a land management plan over time.	Planning	\$500,000	0	Parks and Open Space Darebin Aboriginal Advisory Group	Medium - Long
Continue program of subsidies for schools and local communities for small scale local open space enhancement		Physical Works	\$25,000 (2022-2028 = \$175,000)	R	Parks and Open Space Climate Emergency Darebin Nature Trust	Short - Long
11.1	Create a program where Council subsidises planting of indigenous gardens and trees on school grounds and private land.					
11.5	Work with communities who want to increase the open space on their streets. This could include removal of on street parking of a lane of travel and upgrading nature strips.					
8.4	Develop the following precinct plans (refer <i>Breathing Space</i> Table 5 p. 55): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A premier arts precinct at Darebin Arts Centre including Ray Bramham Gardens.</li> <li>• A premier arts precincts at Northcote Town Hall and Bundoora Homestead.</li> <li>• A landscape upgrade plan for Northcote Town Hall including Civic Square. –</li> <li>• A landscape plan for premier events spaces at Edwardes Lake Park, All Nations Park, Ray Bramham Gardens and TW Blake Reserve.</li> </ul>	Planning	\$500,000	0	Strategic Planning City Design Parks and Open Space Creative Culture Team	Medium

Table 5: Group Two: Other Breathing Space Actions



#### 5.4 GROUP THREE: ACTIONS NOT REQUIRING ADDITIONAL FUNDING

While Groups One and Two outline Actions which will significant funding implications, Group Three Actions are not considered to require any new funding sources. Many Actions outlined in this Section of *Implementing Breathing Space* have already been implemented in the years since the adoption of *Breathing Space*, including:

- Actions which are have already been delivered or are being delivered currently
- Actions which represent changes in policy and direction related to internal Council decision-making
- Actions which provide guidance for the design process Council undertaken in developing and managing open space. This includes a number of more 'generic' actions which would be delivered as part of standard practice, and so did not require identification as a Group two cost.

For these Actions, responsibilities and partnerships are identified but are considered to have been 'implemented' as practice upon adoption of *Breathing Space*. Where additional changes to internal processes are required by Actions in this Table they would be addressed by internal implementation planning, separate from this Plan.

CURRENT AND DELIVERED ACTIONS		
Action		STATUS
1.2	Implement a higher open space contribution rate as a schedule to Clause 53.01 in the Darebin Planning Scheme, across all land uses.	Current
7.3	Identify parcels of land owned by schools, government bodies and private land owners and develop partnerships with their owners to increase access to open space.	Current
10.23	Create a Strategic Land Acquisition Plan that contains a decision making framework to guide selection of open space for biodiversity referencing section 6.4 of this strategy.	Current
5.10	Review Council's Open Space Asset Management Plan to include a clear table of responsibilities, action plan and service level agreements regarding maintenance.	Current
5.19	Continue to implement the Darebin Public Toilet Strategy (noting some aspects are also addressed though identified open space upgrades).	Ongoing
6.18	Continue to implement actions from the Darebin GreenStreets Streetscape Strategy and Urban Food Production Strategy.	Ongoing
11.2	Continue to provide community planting days	Ongoing
14.1	Increase the use of sustainable and active transport through the design and implementation of the Green Streets Network (GreenStreets Streetscape Strategy)	Ongoing
14.2	Enhance bicycle links through the creation of on and off road trails, additional bike racks and improved bicycling connections at intersections. (Bicycle Strategy)	Ongoing

Table 6: Current and delivered Actions



IMPLEMENTING BREATHING SPACE

INTERNAL POLICY DIRECTIONS & PRACTICE			
Action		Responsibility	Partners
2.1	Naming at least 50% of new public open spaces for significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, figures, symbols or items, with particular attention to Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people as the Traditional Owners	Property Services	Darebin's Traditional Owners, Darebin Aboriginal Advisory Group
2.2	Engaging with Registered Aboriginal Parties when creating strategies and master plans on culturally significant land	City Design Parks & Open Space	Darebin's Traditional Owners, Darebin Aboriginal Advisory Group
3.2	Name at least 25% of new public open spaces for significant members, figures, symbols, items or terms of CALD communities.	Property Services	CALD community
3.4	Create and implement strategies around best practice engagement with CALD communities.	Equity & Diversity	CALD community
3.5	Include a reflection of the cultural make up of an area in all master planning and open space design.	City Design Parks & Open Space	CALD community
3.6	Ensure that wayfinding signage is clear and usable to individuals of CALD backgrounds. This can mean translation information, infographics or easily understood icons.	City Design Parks & Open Space Equity & Diversity	CALD community
3.7	Include a variety of seating and gathering area types, layouts and configurations in designs and upgrades to open spaces to allow for CALD communities to choose the areas that most appeal to them. These areas should be identified through inclusive engagement.	City Design Parks & Open Space	CALD community
3.8	Identify universal activities like play and exercise, and design for diversity in these spaces to appeal to a wide user base.	City Design Parks & Open Space	
3.9	Ensure that community engagement is done in Darebin's top languages inclusive of print materials and translation services for all District and Regional major park upgrades.	Parks & Open Space	
3.10	Celebrate diversity in open space by programming open spaces to reflect the community's unique make up. This can include art, music, food, storytelling or celebrating culturally significant dates.	Parks & Open Space Equity & Diversity Creative Culture Team	CALD community, Darebin Aboriginal Advisory Group
4.1	When planning and designing new and upgraded open space, include safe and equitable access for all residents, particularly those with a disability, older people, children and young people and gender diverse residents.	Parks & Open Space Equity & Diversity Youth Services	
4.2	When planning and designing new and upgraded open space, utilise Principles of Universal Design, the World Health Organisation's Age Friendly Cities Framework and all relevant Australian Standards regarding accessibility.	Parks & Open Space	
4.6	Update the Civic Recognition Policy to ensure the contributions of diverse individuals in the municipality are reflected in the names of Council assets, open spaces and memorials.	Equity & Diversity	

## IMPLEMENTING BREATHING SPACE



4.7	Achieve gender parity in the naming of open spaces as quickly as possible over the course of this strategy (and beyond) through naming at least 80% of new public open spaces (and renaming existing spaces where appropriate) for significant women	Property Services	
4.8	Reflect the community profile and diversity notably of the contribution of the elderly, children, the LGBTIQ community and people with a disability in the naming of open spaces.	Property Services	LGBTIQ community, Disability advocacy groups
4.9	Reflect the community profile and diversity on all community reference groups or advisory committees.	All	
5.18	Improve relationships and co-working with non-council landowners and bordering local government areas to identify opportunities for joint projects	All	Moreland, Wittlesea, Banuyle and Yarra Councils, non-council landowners
6.3	Explore the opportunity to provide designated times of day for dogs to be off lead, to ensure Darebin's space is accessible to multiple users.	Parks & Open Space	
6.6	Ensure that all dog off lead areas are clearly identified in Council's website.	Parks & Open Space	
6.16	Consult with the Aboriginal community regarding opportunities and concepts for growing indigenous foods.	Parks & Open Space	Darebin's Traditional Owners, Darebin Aboriginal Advisory Group
6.17	Identify opportunities to collaborate with community groups on urban food production projects, including mentoring programs.	Climate Emergency	
7.2	Test goods and services associated with open space through a social procurement rating with preference given to local providers and social enterprises.	Parks & Open Space	
7.6	Make sporting grounds available for public use when games or training sessions are not in session.	Parks & Open Space	Sporting Groups
8.5	Create a booking policy inclusive of a fees and charges schedule for all arts facilities, sites and places.	Parks & Open Space	
9.3	Join the Gardens for Wildlife program.	Parks & Open Space	
12.3	Cease mowing of areas known to comprise remnant indigenous vegetation to allow regeneration while reducing Council's reliance on fossil fuel.	Parks & Open Space	
13.3	Seek opportunities to put power lines underground as part of public or private development works.	All	Power companies
15.4	Develop and maintain working relationships with entities like VicTrack, Vic Roads, Melbourne Water, schools and private land owners and advocate for the strategy's vision, objectives and goals on their land.	All	VicTrack, Vic Roads, Melbourne Water, schools and private land owners

Table 7 - Internal Policy Directions and Practice



## IMPLEMENTING BREATHING SPACE

CHANGES TO DESIGN PRACTICE			
Action		Responsibility	Partners
2.3	Designing public open spaces and streetscapes to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage	Parks & Open Space City Design	Darebin's Traditional Owners, Darebin Aboriginal Advisory Group
5.3	Include a water fountain with dog bowl (where appropriate) in the design for public spaces particularly around sports pavilions, playspaces and BBQ areas.	Parks & Open Space	
5.6	Include provision of rubbish and recycle bin suites in the design for parks and open space.	Parks & Open Space	
5.11	Design paths to safely accommodate a range of users in terms of surface materials, width and location. Paths should be fit for purpose.	Parks & Open Space Sustainable Transport City Works	
5.14	Incorporate Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles such as encouraging increased activation, passive surveillance and the thoughtful provision of lighting to increase perceptions of safety.	Parks & Open Space City Design	
6.7	Consider separating uses which can conflict with cycling as part of the design process.	Parks & Open Space Sustainable Transport	
6.8	Consider adding cycling links through key open spaces, where it can improve the network of off road cycling paths.	Parks & Open Space Sustainable Transport	
6.14	Design new and upgraded paths as low stress environments for all path users, and where high volume travel is expected, consider separation of pedestrians and cyclists.	Parks & Open Space Sustainable Transport	
7.4	Minimise the fencing of public open spaces.	Parks & Open Space	
7.5	Use planting and other well placed barriers as boundaries to playspaces. Sections of fencing for playspaces may be considered along busy roads.	Parks & Open Space	
7.8	Incorporate bushland or 'wild' spaces in designs for park upgrades.	Parks & Open Space	
7.10	Select a variety of tree species to provide for multiple uses including shade, habitat and urban cooling.	Parks & Open Space	
8.2	Use public art as a placemaking tool to create iconic places within Darebin.	Parks & Open Space City Design	
8.3	Use art as a consultation tool when designing for open spaces.	Parks & Open Space City Design	
9.1	In open space designs, include areas of indigenous plantings to increase contact with nature.	Parks & Open Space	Darebin's Traditional Owners, Darebin Aboriginal Advisory Group
10.5	Use local provenance indigenous species in all revegetation sites, and increase biodiverse plantings.	Parks & Open Space	
10.6	Include nesting boxes, logs, rocks and water sources in parks and open spaces to increase habitat value.	Parks & Open Space	Darebin Nature Trust, Melbourne Water, Latrobe University

IMPLEMENTING BREATHING SPACE



Action		Responsibility	Partners
10.7	When designing open spaces consider the impact of infrastructure such as lighting and paths to indigenous flora and fauna.	Parks & Open Space	Darebin Nature Trust
10.8	Prioritise conservation and enhancement of sites with remnant biodiversity values.	Parks & Open Space	
10.13	Habitat for bees and insects should be reflected in designs for open spaces and considered in land management practices including stepping stones and hotels.	Parks & Open Space	Darebin Nature Trust
10.15	When planting indigenous vegetation, use plants of local provenance wherever possible.	Parks & Open Space	
10.17	Minimise requirements for ongoing maintenance including weed management through good design, reduction in edges and effective use of surface material	Parks & Open Space	
10.20	Use smaller areas of open space as building blocks towards connectivity, especially where there is re introduction of indigenous vegetation.	Parks & Open Space	
11.3	Engage with community and advisory groups in the planning and design of biodiverse open space.	Parks & Open Space	Darebin Nature Trust
11.6	Use all forms of art as a way to activate open spaces, create a sense of connection to place and as an education tool.	Parks & Open Space Creative Culture and Events	
12.1	Consider indigenous vegetation ahead of native or exotic vegetation to improve complexity and recover biodiversity, including in water sensitive urban design treatments.	Parks & Open Space	
12.2	Increase the use of indigenous vegetation when planning new open spaces.	Parks & Open Space	
13.5	Increase the biodiversity value of streets through the use of multi layered, local provenance indigenous species in the green streets network	Parks & Open Space Sustainable Transport	VicRoads
13.6	Plant the largest tree possible.	Parks & Open Space City Design	
13.7	Prioritise infill planting on the Principle Pedestrian Network.	Parks & Open Space Sustainable Transport	
13.10	Employ passive irrigation measures to water 50 per cent of street trees planted.	Parks & Open Space	
13.11	When designing the Green Streets Network, focus on sustainable technology, skills and actions.	Parks & Open Space	
13.12	Increase urban food production through fruiting trees in streetscapes and open space upgrades.	Parks & Open Space	Local community garden groups
14.3	Ensure clear delineation of spaces for pedestrians, cyclists and drivers including clear line marking.	Parks & Open Space Sustainable Transport	VicRoads

Table 8: Changes to design practice



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# ENHANCING OPEN SPACE DELIVERING NEW OPEN SPACE IN DAREBIN

Prepared By HANSEN PARTNERSHIP | 2021

Urban Planning | Urban Design | Landscape Architecture





ENHANCING OPEN SPACE

**Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners**

Darebin City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people as the Traditional Owners and custodians of the land and waters we now call Darebin and pays respect to their elders, past, present and emerging. Council affirms that Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people have lived on this land for millennia, practising their ceremonies of celebration, initiation and renewal.

Council respects and recognises all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and their values, living culture and practices, including their continuing spiritual connection to the land and waters and their right to self-determination.

**Ngarrgma Wurrundjeri Woi-wurrung guljin gurringanyinu bik wenerop Darebin dharri Ngarrri yana ngarnga bik, baan ba ngarrgu. Gahgook-al nanggit bambuth, yalingbu ba gama-dji.**



2 Hansen Partnership Pty Ltd



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APPENDIX ONE: CRITERIA DEFINITIONS

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This document has been prepared in response to Action 1.3 of Breathing Space, which is to prepare a Strategic Land Acquisition Plan. This plan will assist in identifying ways to fill gaps in the current and future provision of open space. Importantly, this document is now deliberately referred to as a document focused on 'enhancement'. There are two key reasons for this:

- While *Enhancing Open Space* may require the purchase of land in some areas, the notion of land acquisition is not aligned with Council's explicit acknowledgment that the land called Darebin was never ceded by its Traditional Owners, the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people, and Council's commitment to acknowledging this history. Advice was received from the Darebin Aboriginal Advisory Committee and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation that a change to the name was necessary and Council is fully supportive of this.
- Further to this, *Enhancing Open Space* more accurately reflects the intention of this Plan which is to identify how the delivery of new open space can be approached in a strategic manner. In many cases this may not be strictly through 'acquisition'. Enhancement is "an increase or improvement in quality, value, or extent."

The document will serve two key purposes:

- To assist in the practical delivery of public open space on the ground where *Breathing Space* has identified a gap in the current provision
- To provide a basis for the development of an understanding of the costs associated with land acquisition and the delivery of new open space to inform any changes to the required contribution sought from developers

This document should be read as an addendum / supplement to *Implementing Breathing Space* and not as a 'standalone' document. The process of preparing *Enhancing Open Space* included identifying and assessing opportunity sites for delivering additional open space. The outputs of this process inform the cost estimates in *Implementing Breathing Space*, while the details form part of an internal working document which is a confidential appendix to this document.

### 1.1 BREATHING SPACE LAND ACQUISITION REQUIREMENTS

As noted in the *Implementing Breathing Space* there is a need to deliver a significant quantum of new open space to meet the needs of Darebin's existing and future residents. The needs of future residents will primarily be addressed through upgrades to existing open space, but also through the delivery of new areas of open space in those parts of the municipality which have current access issues (see Section 3 of *Implementing Breathing Space*)

The delivery of new open space identified in *Breathing Space* had a number of clear parameters associated with it:

- While Actions 1.1 and 5.1 sought to upgrade and deliver more open space "over time" the significant gaps identified in that document only reflected existing gaps or gaps to 2028, indicating that if growth continues the gaps will also continue to increase. It is therefore appropriate that meeting the gaps in *Breathing Space* is considered a 'short term' or 'priority' action, with an acknowledgement that the program of upgrades and delivery will inevitably take longer than that but that any further delay will be compounded by growth beyond 2028.
- In light of the recent interim findings of the independent Panel assessing Monash City Council's Am148, *Breathing Space* only considered open space which was in Council ownership in assessing 'gaps' in provision. This process was considered by the Panel to be 'flawed' as it failed to consider the 'real life' access to open space enjoyed by residents. As such, this document considers the following:
  - Access to open space in adjoining municipalities, provided this forms part of a formalised network of open space, and is accessible (for example, by a bridge where land adjoins Merri or Darebin Creeks,
  - The potential use of land such as schools where there is suitable open space (ie not just hardstand courts) available for public use through a shared use agreement.
  - The potential for existing Council land currently 'privatised' to be reframed as publicly accessible open space



## 2.0 HOW IS NEW OPEN SPACE DELIVERED?

*Breathing Space* clearly identifies there are significant shortfalls in both the existing and future provision of public open space within Darebin. This Section of the report provides a framework for how these gaps will be met, and the role different types of delivery or acquisition might play in meeting these gaps.

As outlined in the *Implementing Breathing Space* (Section 3) there are two distinct aspects of shortfalls in Darebin's network of Public Open Space:

- **Proximity Gaps**, which represent where existing residents do not have access to public open space within 500m.
- **Per Capita Gaps**, which are based on an allocation of 30sqm per person for both existing and future populations.

### 2.1 HOW WILL IDENTIFIED GAPS BE MET?

There are significant challenges in delivering Public Open Space in an inner urban context, and in specifically achieving 30sqm per person of space which *Breathing Space* identifies as good practice. For example, the Reservoir South Precinct is identified as having an provision of 1.3sqm per person in 2028. To meet the proposed benchmark of 30sqm this would require the delivery of an additional 28.7sqm per person. For the projected population in 2028 (9,140) this would mean more than 261ha of new Public Open Space would need to be delivered within that precinct alone. This would not be achievable. Nonetheless, the aspirations of achieving a higher amount of open space per capita, and a more equitable delivery, must remain the driver, even if a specific quantum is not achieved.

*Breathing Space* addresses this challenge, in part, by focussing on making existing Public Open Space work harder and identifying upgrades to existing parkland.

The process of identifying the Priority Investigation Areas does however, consider the 'Per Capita' gaps identified through *Breathing Space* and ensures that areas with both 'Proximity' gaps and high 'Per Capita' gaps are prioritised over areas with lesser 'Per Capita' shortfalls.

The framework for meeting gaps shown in Figures 1 and 2, identifies the range of ways these shortfalls will be met. The implication of these different streams for implementation and funding are discussed in the following Sections, and the prioritisation of these is also addressed in Section 3.

#### Stream A - Location Based Strategic Land Acquisition.

This is a program of pro-active identification of opportunities to increase the quantity of public open space available to residents within the Priority Investigation Areas. This Stream is the priority for the delivery of new open space in Darebin.

#### Stream B – Opportunity Based Land Purchase

Stream B recognises that there will be ongoing opportunities for the purchase of land by Council which may form part of the open space network. These are identified as:

- B1 purchase of land to facilitate the expansion of existing parks
- B2 purchase of parcels of land offered to Council through the Public Land Sale program
- B3 purchase of land in Secondary Investigation Areas

#### Stream C – Waterway Corridor Acquisition

The acquisition of land along a creek corridor has been separated from other Streams in recognition of the differences in both objectives and potential funding sources which may affect this Stream. It is noted that following the preparation of Darebin's *Biodiversity Management Plan* and its associated identification of areas of high biodiversity value and habitat linkages, this Stream may also be to support the purchase of land to meet these other objectives.

#### Other

In addition to the three Streams, all of which have potential funding implications for Council in terms of purchase and / or delivery, there are also a number of other ways that gaps in Darebin's open space network may be met.

- Proposed increases in service standards addressed in *Implementing Breathing Space* focus on 'quality' with an aim to increasing the useability of existing open spaces. While these upgrades have significant funding implications, the mechanics of their delivery are addressed through the *Open Space Asset Management Plan* which has been prepared (Action 5.10 of *Breathing Space*).
- There may also be additional opportunities which arise, other than those identified through this work, for Council to seek a land contribution rather than an monetary contribution to deliver public open space. This is likely to occur only in specific strategic location and as part of precinct scale development. An example of this might be the redevelopment of the Preston Market site.



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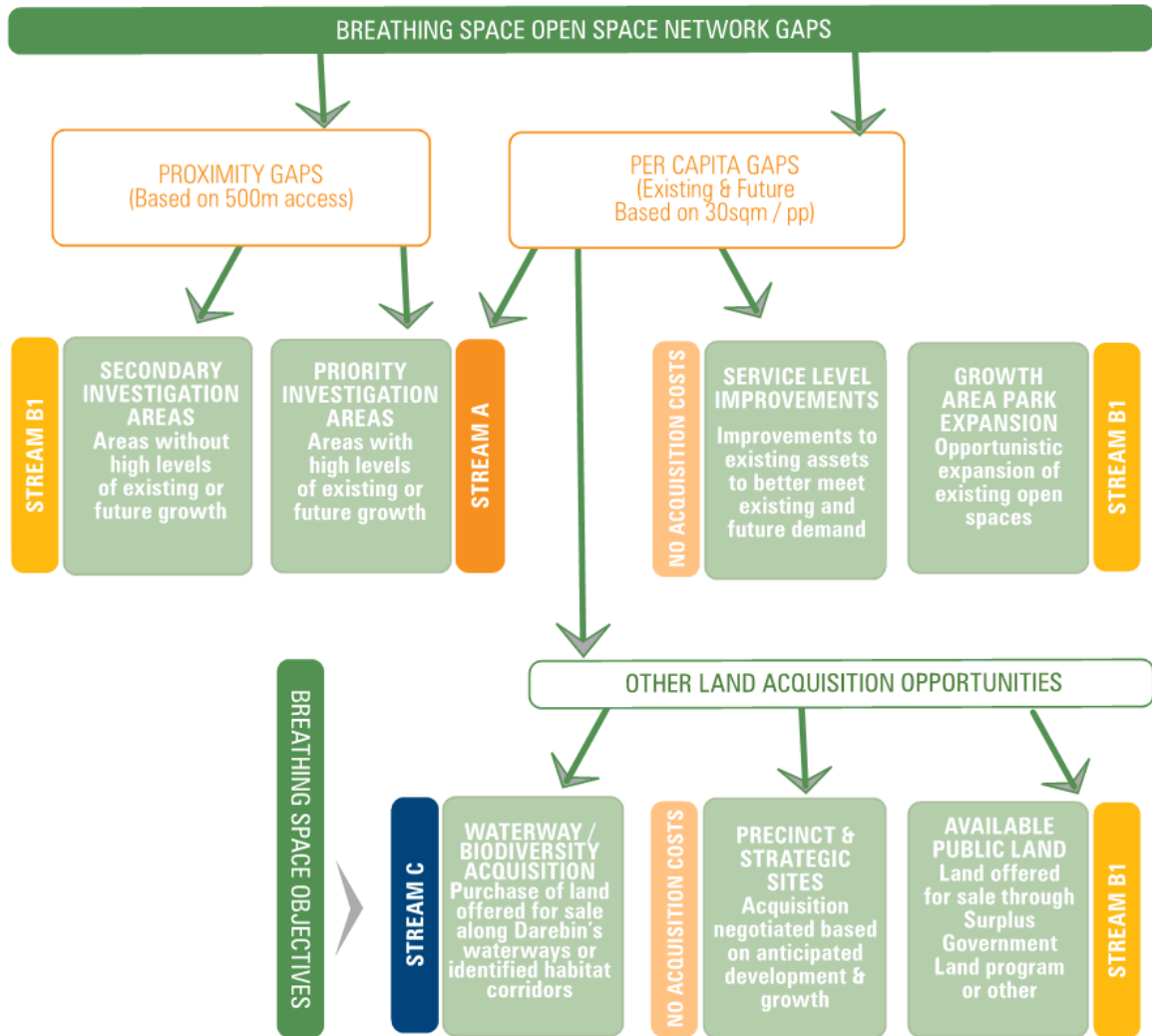


Figure 1: Framework for addressing open space network gaps

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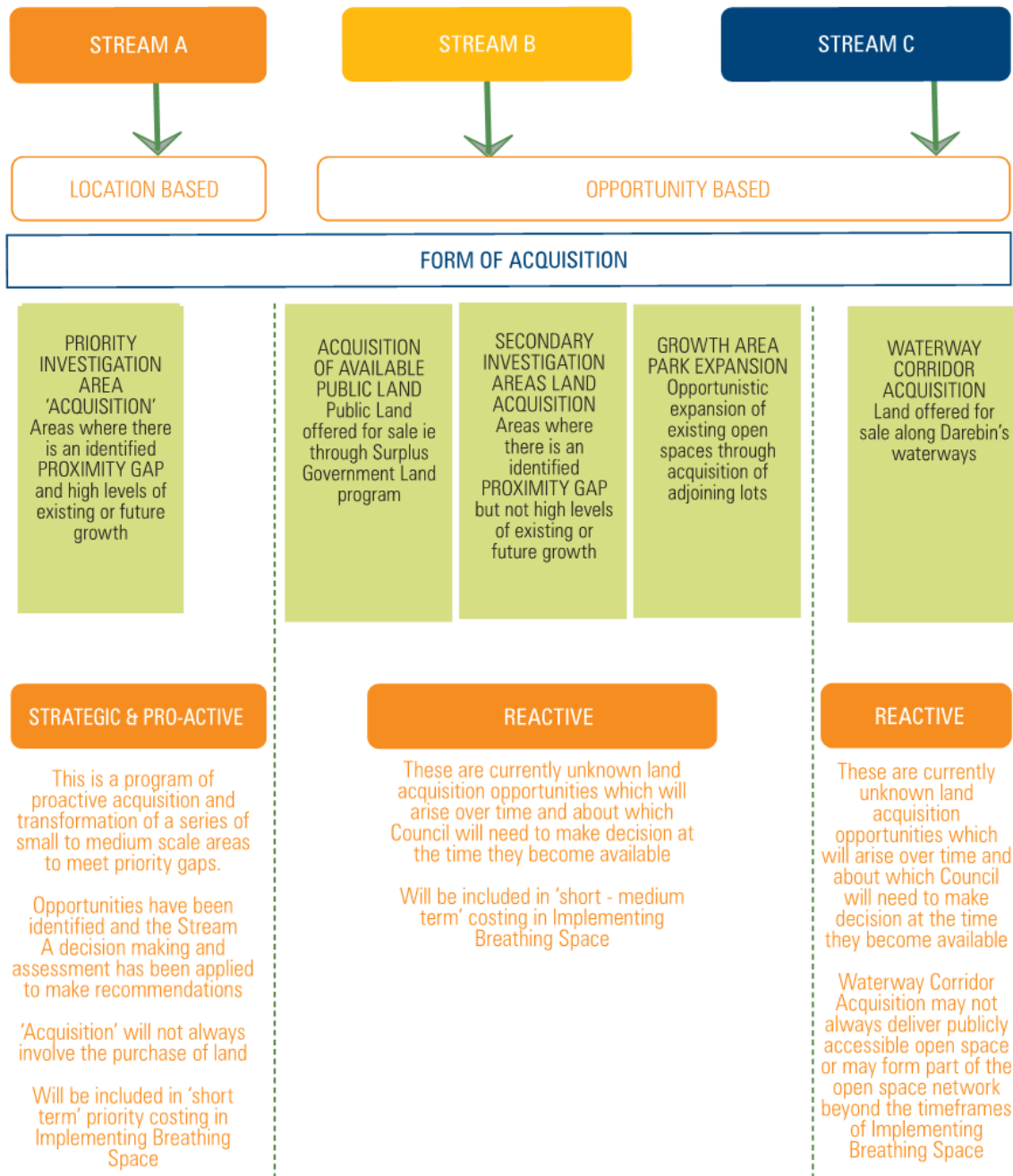


Figure 2: Land purchase framework



## 3.0 DECISION MAKING PROCESS

This section of the report outlines the process by which Council will make decisions on where and how it will deliver new publicly accessible open space. This provides strategic rigour and transparency as to how options for augmenting the open space network are progressed.

This section of the report therefore outlines the process by which Council will make decisions on where and how they will deliver new open space.

It should be noted that this chapter deals only with the decision making with regard to Stream A, Stream B and Stream C. Further commentary on the role of park upgrades and Precinct & Strategic Site Development in meeting open space requirements can be found in the *Implementing Breathing Space*. Specific opportunities where land contributions may be sought are also highlighted in the relevant chapter addressing opportunities in the Priority Investigation Areas.

### 3.1 DECISION MAKING PROCESS FOR NEW OPEN SPACE DELIVERY

Decision making around public open space is a complex matter, with many competing interests and influencing factors. The factors requiring consideration also vary significantly depending on the objectives for the particular site under consideration and its context.

The steps to be taken in assessing potential sites for the delivery of new publicly accessible open space are outlined below, followed by an explanation of the proposed assessment process for each of the three streams.

#### STEP ONE Identification of relevant Stream

The first step is to identify the relevant Stream under which an assessment will be made. If the land is within a Priority Investigation Area (as identified in *Implementing Breathing Space*) it should be assessed under Stream A where a 'pro-active approach will be taken to delivery of new open space. Stream A considers more broadly the opportunities to deliver new publicly accessible open space, while Stream B and C will almost exclusively be used to assess the potential purchase of parcels of land.

#### STEP TWO Threshold Questions

In order to ensure that decision-making on open space acquisition / delivery aligns with the objectives of *Breathing Space*, a series of 'threshold' questions have been identified which are intended to rule out unsuitable sites prior to a full assessment. For Stream A, these Threshold Questions are integrated into the assessment process detailed in Section 3.4.

#### STEP THREE Assess against relevant Criteria

A series of Assessment Criteria have been developed by refining the Land Acquisition Criteria outlined in *Breathing Space* (see Section 3.2). These are supported by the Threshold Questions.

The Assessment Criteria have then been split into two categories:

- 'Fixed' criteria which specifically implement the objectives of *Breathing Space* (*Breathing Space* Criteria)
- 'Flexible' criteria which reflect the range of other considerations Council may consider in assessing land acquisition (Implementation Criteria)

Each *Breathing Space* Criteria is provided with a simple weighting reflecting its importance. A weighting of 3 reflects matters of the greatest importance, and 1, those with lesser importance. *Note: these criteria have been framed as questions to ensure consistency with Breathing Space.*

To ensure an alignment with *Breathing Space* Objectives a score of below four or six (depending on the Stream) is identified as a trigger for review, indicating that the acquisition of the parcel may not align with *Breathing Space*.

Importantly, the separation of parcels along Waterways into Stream C offers particular opportunity to address *Breathing Space* biodiversity objectives, to which different criteria may be applied.

The Implementation criteria are a series of YES / NO questions which are used to demonstrate how aligned the acquisition of the parcel may be with other Council objectives and imperatives beyond the strategic objectives of *Breathing Space*. These are the practical considerations which will inform Council decision-making. Less 'YES' responses to these questions may indicate misalignment with Council policy and process and could trigger a reconsideration of the potential purchase.



**STEP FOUR Test and Confirm**

Once an understanding of the potential purchase has indicated that there may be merit in proceeding, further review of the costs implications against the Threshold Questions should be considered, and the purchase should be reviewed through the relevant Property Assessment Committee processes.

**3.2 DECISION MAKING CRITERIA AND BREATHING SPACE**

The Criteria outlined below were identified in *Breathing Space* to guide the assessment of land for Council acquisition (Page 37).

- Does it fill a gap in the open space network?
- Is it in an area of high population density?
- Is it in an area of projected growth?
- Does it contain remnant vegetation or biodiversity values?
- Is it/can it be habitat for a protected species of flora or fauna?
- Does it make a connection in habitat, active transport etc?
- Does it make an existing open space or habitat corridor larger?
- Does it make access to an existing open space or transport corridor easier?
- Is it within 100m of a creek system?
- Is it in or near an area of natural or environmental significance?
- Is it nominated in a council strategic document or effected by a council resolution?
- Would it make a connection in the Principal Pedestrian Network?
- Does it provide green public open space in commercial or retail areas?
- Does it service a population likely to be experiencing disadvantage, social isolation or poor health, such as older people, social housing tenants or newly arrived migrants?
- Is it good value?



Figure 3: Steps in the decision-making process





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The process of developing *Implementing Breathing Space* included a review and potential refinement of the original criteria. One of the first steps in this review process was establishing the definitions that would inform assessment against the relevant Criteria, for example, is an 'active transport connection' the combination of the Darebin Principle Pedestrian and Cycling routes as outlined in the relevant strategies? The agreed definitions that underpin these Criteria are included at Appendix 1. Appendix 2 contains mapping which informs assessment in terms of socio economic, density, age and urban heat considerations.

Other refinements to the original *Breathing Space* criteria included distinguishing between Criteria which were purely strategic in their focus (such as those identified in the original document) from additional new decision making Criteria which reflected the practicalities of implementation which Council should consider in the decision making process.

It was also necessary to adjust the criteria to reflect the different Streams within the framework. For example asking if an opportunity fills a gap in the network in a Priority Investigation Area (Stream A) is unnecessary.

**3.2.1 WEIGHTING OF CRITERIA**

Once the Criteria had been refined a weighting was assigned to each Criteria to allow the matters of key importance to be appropriately measured in any assessment. This process involved consultation not only with internal Council staff but also Councillors, the Darebin Nature Trust and the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation. The feedback from those sessions was generally aligned and supported increased weighting on matters relating to:

- Areas of socio-economic disadvantage
- Areas with significant biodiversity assets
- Areas with high levels of urban heat
- Areas of cultural value

A process of 'testing' the criteria against real life examples was also undertaken and led to refinement of the Criteria.



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### 3.3 FUNDING IMPLICATIONS

As has been discussed in *Implementing Breathing Space*, there will be a significant shortfall in funding for the delivery of open space, even with an increase to the Open Space Levy. Notwithstanding this, specific funding considerations related to each Stream are outlined below.

#### Stream A

Given the significant per capita shortage, an incremental and ‘patchwork’ approach to the delivery of Local open spaces should be pursued. This means that the majority of suitable opportunities within the Priority Investigation Areas should be pursued (or comparable projects identified). Using the Assessment framework, opportunities were assessed in relation to their alignment with *Breathing Space* criteria. Following this, opportunities which would require Council investment, through purchase or delivery were assessed further and priorities identified. The costs associated with these priorities then informed the relevant costs identified in *Implementing Breathing Space*.

#### Stream B

Given this Stream is framed around opportunities which cannot be predicted at this time, the allocation of a certain sum of money, which could form part of a reserve for reactive acquisitions should be considered. Importantly, consideration should be given to this being a ‘roll over’ funding stream, to reflect the realities of land purchase, whereby the availability of suitable lots may vary from year to year. Purchasing lots to use up available funds may not result in optimal use of Council funds. The development of the Criteria allows for an assurance that land purchases will be consistent with the delivery of an improved network of Public Open Space aligned with *Breathing Space*. This suggests the allocated funding could also be supported though the Open Space Levy.

#### Stream C

As with Stream B, the specific opportunities are currently unknown. However, the two Streams differ in that the funds for Stream C are less likely to be drawn fully from any development contribution even if this was sufficient to cover costs. This is because the acquisition of land along waterways will, in some cases be driven by *Breathing Space* objectives related to biodiversity protection, rather than the delivery of new Public Open Space. However, this land has significant potential to form part of a future regional parkland along creek corridors and so therefore a portion of funds could legitimately be attributed to the development of land for the purposes of Public Open Space if the intention is for the longer term delivery of corridors of Public Open Space. Council must however, be prepared to provide public access to these areas and to provide appropriate infrastructure to facilitate this if they are to seek to fund purchases through the Open Space Levy.





## ENHANCING OPEN SPACE

### 3.4 THE 'STREAM A' PROCESS: STRATEGIC OPEN SPACE DELIVERY

The process outlined in this Section has been used to inform decision-making in regard to opportunities for the delivery of new open space in Priority Investigation Areas. It should also be used if relevant new opportunities are identified in those areas. The details of the opportunities and their assessment are part of an internal working document.

STEP 3

#### CONSIDER ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Each of the identified opportunities should be assessed again against the CRITERIA listed on Page 13.

In the context of Stream A and the identified need to provide a quantum of additional open space well beyond that that would be delivered by all opportunities combined, the Criteria should be used to prioritise opportunities rather than to exclude them from consideration.

STEP 4

#### RANK OPPORTUNITIES

Based on the finding of Step 3, the identified opportunities should be ranked in order of priority for delivery having regard to their ability to deliver *Breathing Space* Objectives, and their relevant ease of implementation.

Eliminate any opportunities which are likely to be very difficult to deliver (implementation objectives). This process should have regard to the number of opportunities identified for each Investigation Area.

STEP 5

#### COST AND CONFIRM OPPORTUNITIES

Based on relevant precedents, identify an indicative high level cost for each opportunity to inform decision-making.

Test the opportunities against the identified THRESHOLD QUESTIONS to ensure they are strategically justified and to eliminate any impractical opportunities

Once these steps have been undertaken, Council can begin a process of internal works to establish appropriate processes. These will differ for the various opportunities, and key steps have been identified for each Priority Investigation Area in the relevant Section of this report.

If any purchase of land is required to delivery an opportunity then the purchase should be referred to the Property Assessment Committee for consideration.

#### STREAM A THRESHOLD QUESTIONS

Will the cost of this open space have a detrimental impact on Council's ability to deliver more open space in this area or in other high priority areas?

Does Council have the resources available to purchase property or to deliver the proposed open space?

Does Council have the resources available to manage any open space delivered on the land?

Are there limitations as a result of context or condition which create barriers to use or maintenance of the proposed open space?

Is the cost to purchase land or acquire the land reasonable?

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**STREAM A CRITERIA**

STREAM A: BREATHING SPACE CRITERIA		WEIGHTING for YES response
1	Will the open space be delivered in or close to an area with a high concentration of social disadvantage?	3
2	Will the open space be delivered in or close to an area with high concentrations of young or old residents?	2
3	Is it in or near an area of natural or environmental significance, have the potential to protect remnant vegetation or biodiversity values, contribute to the protection of protected species or to make or strengthen a connection in habitat?	3
4	Does it have potential to protect areas of cultural value, in particular areas of cultural significance for Traditional Owners or to communicate cultural values to the broader community and visitors?	3
5	Is it an area identified as having a high level of Urban Heat vulnerability?	2
6	Does it support the use, amenity or development of Darebin's active transport linkages?	1
7	Does it have the potential to improve movement within residential areas, particularly to improve access to existing open spaces or transport corridors?	1
8	Does it have the potential to contribute to activity center activation or revitalisation	3
<b>BENCHMARK: Should score a minimum of 4</b>		
STREAM A: IMPLEMENTATION CRITERIA		YES/ NO
1	Is the cost in delivering open space and / or ongoing maintenance on this land achievable within current budgets or funding streams?	
2	Does the acquisition of this land increase the certainty of use of existing land used for the purposes of public open space?	
3	Does the acquisition of this land deliver other Council objectives (beyond <i>Breathing Space</i> )?	
4	Has it been confirmed that the use of this land for open space does not conflict with other competing objectives?	
5	Does the acquisition of land improve or assist in delivery of internal council process or responsibilities?	
6	Has the area been identified previously for the delivery of open space by adopted Council documents or resolutions?	
7	Has there been a previous commitment to the community related to the use of the land for the purpose of open space?	
<b>BENCHMARK : a higher number of YES responses indicates a higher level of implementation alignment and corresponding priority</b>		





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**THE 'STREAM A' PROCESS: EXAMPLE ASSESSMENT**

These opportunities have been identified to deliver new open space in Priority Investigation Area B - Preston West / Thornbury West:

- Improvements (and shared use agreement if required) to deliver more usable parkland
- Partial street closure

Assessment against the Stream A: *Breathing Space* Criteria reveals:

			OP5	OP10
1	Will the open space be delivered in or close to an area with a high concentration of social disadvantage?	3		
2	Will the open space be delivered in or close to an area with high concentrations of young or old residents?	2	2	2
3	Is it in or near an area of natural or environmental significance, have the potential to protect remnant vegetation or biodiversity values, contribute to the protection of protected species or to make or strengthen a connection in habitat?	3	3	
4	Does it have potential to protect areas of cultural value, in particular areas of cultural significance for Traditional Owners or to communicate cultural values to the broader community and visitors?	3	3	
5	Is it an area identified as having a high level of Urban Heat vulnerability?	2		
6	Does it support the use, amenity or development of Darebin's active transport linkages?	1		1
7	Does it have the potential to improve movement within residential areas, particularly to improve access to existing open spaces or transport corridors?	1	1	1
8	Does it have the potential to contribute to activity center activation or revitalisation	3		
TOTAL			9	4

		OP5	OP10
1	Is the cost in delivering open space and / or ongoing maintenance on this land achievable within current budgets or funding streams?	YES	YES
2	Does the acquisition of this land increase the certainty of use of existing land used for the purposes of public open space?	YES	
3	Does the acquisition of this land deliver other Council objectives (beyond <i>Breathing Space</i> )?	YES	YES
4	Has it been confirmed that the use of this land for open space does not conflict with other competing objectives?	YES	YES
5	Does the acquisition of land improve or assist in delivery of internal Council process or responsibilities?	YES	
6	Has the area been identified previously for the delivery of open space by adopted Council documents or resolutions?		YES
7	Has there been a previous commitment to the community related to the use of the land for the purpose of open space?		YES
TOTAL		5	5

Given the both resulted in 5 YES responses to the Implementation Criteria but OP5 delivered a higher number of *Breathing Space* Objectives, OP5 should be priorities for delivery, provided that a satisfactory response to the identified Threshold Questions could be delivered.



### 3.5 THE 'STREAM B' PROCESS: OPPORTUNITY BASED LAND PURCHASE

The process outlined in this section should be used to inform Council decision making when parcels of land become available for purchase from either public or private sellers. Following the steps outlined in this section will assist in ascertaining if the purchase of land in question is aligned with the objectives of *Breathing Space* and should assist in directing Council funds to most effectively deliver open space within the municipality. The 'opportunity based' purchase of additional land should not be prioritised over the delivery of Stream A opportunities, unless it is clear through the proposed assessment process that there are significant benefits in any acquisition.

**STEP 1** ESTABLISH PARAMETERS OF ACQUISITION

- Ascertain a 'provisional' cost to Council for the land purchase
- Identify the potential additional costs that would be incurred by Council including:
  - Any remediation works required to the site
  - The likely service standard / open space definition for the parcel and the likely cost of transforming the land to meet relevant standards
  - The likely costs of associated maintenance and renewal, having regard to likely service standard

**STEP 2** ASSESS THE PURCHASE OPPORTUNITY AGAINST THRESHOLD QUESTIONS

Assess the site against the following 'Threshold Questions'

- Will the cost of acquisition have a significantly detrimental impact on Council's ability to deliver open space in areas of higher priority?

*If YES then consider abandoning purchase*

- Is there another, comparable, opportunity to deliver new open space which would be more cost effective to Council?

*If YES then consider abandoning purchase*

- Does Council have the resources available to perform the acquisition?

*If NO then consider abandoning purchase*

- Is there money in the reserve to purchase the site?

*If YES then pursue purchase*

- Does Council have the resources available to manage any open space delivered on the land?

*If NO then consider abandoning purchase*

- Does the property's context or condition create barriers to use or maintenance of the lot?

*If YES then consider abandoning purchase*

If a site fails to respond appropriately to the Threshold Questions, purchase of the parcel should be approached with a high level of caution as it may compromise the broader implementation of *Breathing Space* and the delivery of an improved public open space network.



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STEP 3

**ASSESS THE OPPORTUNITY AGAINST THE CRITERIA**

Assess the opportunity for new Public Open Space against *Breathing Space* Criteria. *Breathing Space* Criteria are weighted according to their relative importance on a scale of 1-3, this weighting should be considered 'fixed'. For each 'yes' answer the nominated figure for that criteria should be added together to provide a score as per Stream A. Assess the opportunity against Implementation Criteria (which represent other matters Council needs to consider when making decisions on land acquisition). These are also framed as 'questions', a higher number of 'yes' responses indicates a higher level of 'ease' in implementation.

*Note: If the land parcel is adjoining a waterway it should be assessed under Stream C.*

STEP 3

**ASSESS THE RELATIVE MERIT OF THE ACQUISITION**

Establish the level of strategic alignment with *Breathing Space* outcomes through meeting a benchmark score against *Breathing Space* Criteria. The benchmark score is framed around a high, medium or low level of strategic alignment. High = 9 or more, Medium = 6-9, Low = below 6

The Implementation Criteria are not specifically weighted allow a holistic understanding of the other matters which may influence decision making. These matters will not be definitive (as per the Threshold Questions) but the higher the number of 'yes' responses indicates that the development of new open space on the lot has a higher level of support and allows a broader understanding of the benefits of acquiring the parcel

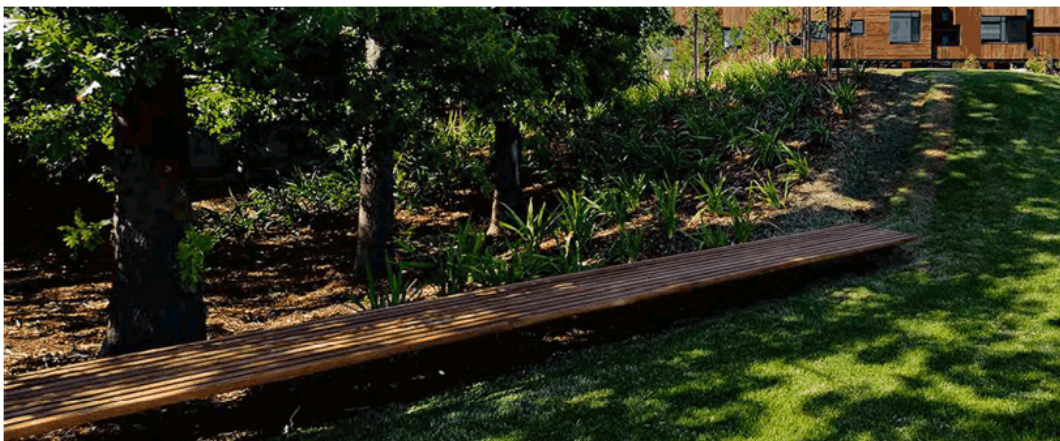
STEP 4

**CONFIRM RECOMMENDATIONS**

Confirm the Threshold Questions have been appropriately responded to, and there are no extenuating circumstances. If the Threshold Questions are acceptable but the parcel scored Low in terms of alignment with *Breathing Space* objectives, purchase of the land should not be pursued. It is considered that in order to align with *Breathing Space* as the adopted strategy for open space, parcels which score below a certain benchmark should not be pursued.

If there are over 50% (five) positive responses to the Implementation Criteria purchase should be pursued. If there are less than 50% positive responses, then further investigations should be undertaken to determine the suitability of the site for purchase but it should be approached with caution

If the assessment identifies that there is merit in pursuing the purchase of the parcel, the likely costs established in Step 1 should be revisited and refined prior to any recommendation.



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**STREAM B CRITERIA**

<b>STREAM B: BREATHING SPACE CRITERIA</b>		<b>WEIGHTING for YES response</b>
1	Is it in a Precinct identified as having a high existing or future shortfall open space?	3
2	Is it in an identified Priority Investigation Area?	3
3	Will the open space be delivered in or close to an area with a high concentration of social disadvantage?	3
4	Will the open space be delivered in or close to an area with high concentrations of young or old residents?	2
5	Is it in or near an area of natural or environmental significance, have the potential to protect remnant vegetation or biodiversity values, contribute to the protection of protected species or to make or strengthen a connection in habitat?	3
6	Does it have potential to protect areas of cultural value, in particular areas of cultural significance for Traditional Owners or to communicate cultural values to the broader community and visitors?	3
7	Is it an area identified as having a high level of Urban Heat vulnerability?	2
8	Does it support the use, amenity or development of Darebin’s active transport linkages?	1
9	Does it have the potential to improve movement within residential areas, particularly to improve access to existing open spaces or transport corridors?	1
10	Does it have the potential to contribute to activity center activation or revitalization	1
<b>BENCHMARK: High = 9 or more, Medium = 6-9, Low = below 6</b>		
<b>STREAM B: IMPLEMENTATION CRITERIA</b>		<b>YES/ NO</b>
1	Is cost to purchase land or acquire the land reasonable?	
2	Is the cost in delivering open space and / or ongoing maintenance on this land achievable within current budgets or funding streams?	
3	Does the acquisition of this land increase the certainty of use of existing land used for the purposes of public open space?	
4	Does the acquisition of this land deliver other Council objectives (beyond <i>Breathing Space</i> )?	
5	Does the acquisition of land improve or assist in delivery of internal council process or responsibilities?	
6	Has the area been identified previously for acquisition by adopted Council documents or resolutions?	
7	Has there been a previous commitment to the community related to the use of the land for the purpose of open space?	
8	Would use of the land for purposes other than open space be inconsistent with Council objectives?	
9	Would use of the land for purposes other than open space compromise environmental values?	
10	Is the acquisition of adjoining parcels of land or the implementation of a shared use agreement likely, if land remains in private ownership	
<b>BENCHMARK : a higher number of YES responses indicates a higher level of implementation alignment and corresponding priority</b>		





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**THE 'STREAM B' PROCESS: EXAMPLE ASSESSMENT**

A privately owned parcel of land adjoining an existing park is put up for sale. An assessment against the Threshold Questions indicated that, provided the purchase can be facilitated within the stated price range the opportunity may be appropriate. As such, an assessment against the Criteria is undertaken. Given the findings of the assessment pursuit of this purchase would not optimise use of funds to deliver *Breathing Space* objectives and so would not be recommended.

Assessment against the Stream B: <i>Breathing Space</i> Criteria reveals:			
1	Is it in a Precinct identified as having a high existing or future shortfall open space?	3	
2	Is it in an identified Priority Investigation Area?	3	
3	Will the open space be delivered in or close to an area with a high concentration of social disadvantage?	3	
4	Will the open space be delivered in or close to an area with high concentrations of young or old residents?	2	2 (old)
5	Is it in or near an area of natural or environmental significance, have the potential to protect remnant vegetation or biodiversity values, contribute to the protection of protected species or to make or strengthen a connection in habitat?	3	
6	Does it have potential to protect areas of cultural value, in particular areas of cultural significance for Traditional Owners or to communicate cultural values to the broader community and visitors?	3	
7	Is it an area identified as having a high level of Urban Heat vulnerability?	2	
8	Does it support the use, amenity or development of Darebin's active transport linkages?	1	
9	Does it have the potential to improve movement within residential areas, particularly to improve access to existing open spaces or transport corridors?	1	1
10	Does it have the potential to contribute to activity center activation or revitalization	1	
TOTAL			3

Assessment against the Stream B: Implementation Criteria reveals:		
1	Is the cost in delivering open space and / or ongoing maintenance on this land achievable within current budgets or funding streams?	YES
2	Does the acquisition of this land increase the certainty of use of existing land used for the purposes of public open space?	NO
3	Does the acquisition of this land deliver other Council objectives (beyond <i>Breathing Space</i> )?	NO
4	Has it been confirmed that the use of this land for open space does not conflict with other competing objectives?	YES
5	Does the acquisition of land improve or assist in delivery of internal Council process or responsibilities?	NO
6	Has the area been identified previously for the delivery of open space by adopted Council documents or resolutions?	NO
7	Has there been a previous commitment to the community related to the use of the land for the purpose of open space?	NO
TOTAL		2



### 3.6 THE 'STREAM C' PROCESS: OPPORTUNITY BASED LAND PURCHASE

The process outlined in this section should be used to inform Council decision making when parcels of land become available for purchase from either public or private sellers. This Stream applies specifically to parcels of land which adjoin waterways in Darebin or which have been identified as delivering specific biodiversity outcomes, for example, to deliver habitat linkages identified in the upcoming *Biodiversity Management Plan*. Waterway corridor have been specifically identified as they serve a number of functions, and these may change over time. For example, a lot which Council elects to purchase because it can contribute to the protection of biodiversity may not be publicly accessible due to the ownership of adjoining lots. However, in the long term, as objectives to transition waterway corridors to key regional open space linkages, the use of the land for Public Open Space may become more realistic.

Given there may be some lots which are not suitable in the short to medium term as Public Open Space, the funding streams for these purchases may differ from the other two Streams.

Following the preparation of the Biodiversity management Plan, this Stream should be reviewed to ensure it is effective in supporting decision making..

The steps in this process are similar the same as those for Stream B. However, there are different Threshold Questions and different Criteria which are outlined in this section of the report.

#### STREAM C THRESHOLD QUESTIONS

Will the cost of acquisition have a significantly detrimental impact on Council's ability to deliver open space in areas of higher priority?

*If YES then consider abandoning purchase*

Does Council have the resources available to perform the acquisition?

*If NO then consider abandoning purchase*

Does Council have the resources available to manage any open space delivered on the land?

*If NO then consider abandoning purchase*

Does the property's context or condition create barriers to use or maintenance of the lot?

*If YES then consider abandoning purchase*

Is there an available or identified source of funding independent of funding for Public Open Space provision?

*If NO then consider abandoning purchase*

If no funding is available, would capital expenditure be justifiable for the proposed property?

*If NO then consider abandoning purchase*



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**STREAM C CRITERIA**

<b>STREAM C: BREATHING SPACE CRITERIA</b>		<b>WEIGHTING for YES response</b>
1	Is it in a Precinct identified as having a high existing or future shortfall open space?	3
2	Is it in an identified Priority Investigation Area?	3
3	Will the open space be delivered in or close to an area with a high concentration of social disadvantage?	3
4	Will the open space be delivered in or close to an area with high concentrations of young or old residents?	1
5	Does it have potential to protect areas of cultural value, in particular areas of cultural significance for Traditional Owners or to communicate cultural values to the broader community and visitors?	3
6	Is it in or near an area of natural or environmental significance?	2
7	Does the site contain any rare or threatened species or have the potential to contribute to the protection of protected species?	3
8	Does the site contain any existing remnant vegetation? Does it have the potential to protect remnant vegetation or biodiversity values?	3
9	Does the site currently have high biodiversity value?	3
10	Does the site have potential to develop high biodiversity value and is located next to an existing area of biodiversity value?	2
11	Does the site offer potential to make or strengthen a connection in habitat / wildlife corridor?	2
12	Is it an area identified as having a high level of Urban Heat vulnerability?	2
13	Does it support the use, amenity or development of Darebin's active transport linkages?	1
14	Does it have the potential to improve movement within residential areas, particularly to improve access to existing open spaces or transport corridors?	1
15	Does it have the potential to contribute to activity center activation or revitalization	1
<b>BENCHMARK: High = 20 or more, Medium = 12 - 20 Low = below 12</b>		
<b>STREAM B: IMPLEMENTATION CRITERIA</b>		<b>YES/ NO</b>
1	Is cost to purchase land or acquire the land reasonable?	
2	Is the cost in delivering open space and / or ongoing maintenance on this land achievable within current budgets or funding streams?	
3	Does the acquisition of this land increase the certainty of use of existing land used for the purposes of public open space?	
4	Does the acquisition of this land deliver other Council objectives (beyond <i>Breathing Space</i> )?	
5	Does the acquisition of land improve or assist in delivery of internal council process or responsibilities?	
6	Has the area been identified previously for acquisition by adopted Council documents or resolutions?	
7	Has there been a previous commitment to the community related to the use of the land for the purpose of open space?	
8	Would use of the land for purposes other than open space be inconsistent with Council objectives?	
9	Would use of the land for purposes other than open space compromise environmental values?	
10	Is the acquisition of adjoining parcels of land or the implementation of a shared use agreement likely, if land remains in private ownership	
<b>BENCHMARK : a higher number of YES responses indicates a higher level of implementation alignment and corresponding priority</b>		



## 4.0 THE ECONOMICS OF LAND PURCHASE

An assessment of the likely future cost of acquiring sites within the six identified Priority Investigation Areas for the purpose of creating new open space was undertaken as part of this Plan. The focus of this analysis was on recent sales of 'potential development sites' with minimal value in capital improvements and thereby representing underlying land values within each area. The key findings from this analysis are that:

- Commercial development sites in secondary retail precincts are notably higher than both residential and industrial zoned sites.
- Residential land values range from \$1,250 to \$2,800 per square metre with sites in the southern portion of Darebin notably higher valued than those in the north.
- Commercial development site values are in the range \$3,000 - \$5,500 per square metre of land.
- Indicative land values for industrial sites are \$1,300-\$2,600 per square metre of land.
- Growth in residential property prices is difficult to predict over the next decade given uncertainty around population growth as a result of reduced migration, stabilisation of interest rates and weak wage growth which may limit demand in the years ahead.

### 4.1 FACTORS INFLUENCING LAND PURCHASE COSTS

The market value of both residential and commercial properties varies depending upon a number of factors including the following.

a) Location

Residential values vary across suburbs reflecting the socio-economic status households seeking to live in these locations, and their financial capacity to purchase properties. Within Darebin, suburbs offering convenient access to the Melbourne CBD for professional workers (Alphington, Fairfield, Northcote and Thornbury) have significantly higher median house prices than Darebin's northern suburbs (Bundoora, Kingsbury, Reservoir). See Figure 3.

The socio-economic status of households may also impact upon the value of commercial properties within a location where higher household expenditure creates increased business opportunities. However, this is often limited to select number of prime retail strips that offer a strong mix of cafes, restaurants and speciality retailers. Secondary retail strips have significantly lower property values that reflect demand from a mix of less profitable businesses.

b) Land Area / Development Potential

Larger sites are naturally more highly valued than an equivalent smaller site. The per square metre value of sites is typically inversely related to total land area where there is limited opportunity for sites to be more intensively developed. Where there is the opportunity for townhouse or apartment, land values will reflect the number of dwellings that may be developed upon a site.

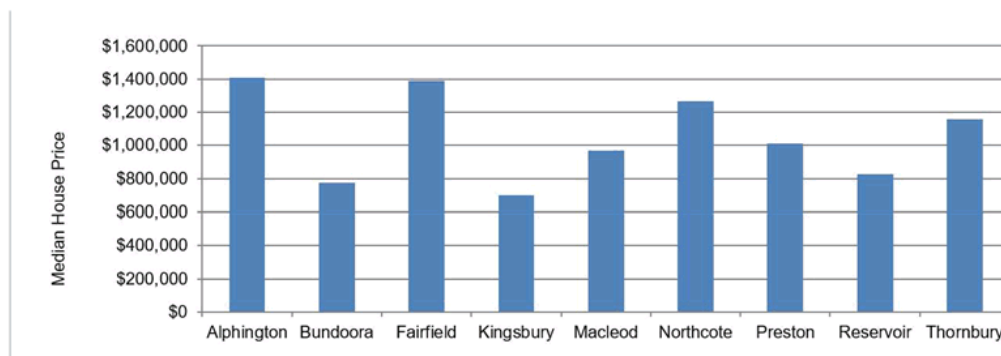


Figure 3: City of Darebin Median House Prices 2019 Source: Valuer General Victoria



c) Capital Improvements

Capital improvements will influence property values for both residential and commercial sites. The exception to this will be where the highest and best use for a site is for redevelopment. For the purpose of acquiring sites for open space, acquiring sites with minimal capital improvements will be the most cost effective strategy in most circumstances.

d) Development Potential

Planning controls that encourage higher residential development will typically support higher property values. As a result, sites within activity centres or strategic development sites will often have higher land values than adjacent residential areas.

e) Property Market Conditions

Property market conditions fluctuate in response to a range of economic and demographic factors. Melbourne's residential property market has reflected strong population growth and falling interest rates over the past decade. More recently, slowing migration and economic growth prior to Covid19 resulted in Melbourne's median established house price peaking in late 2017. The pandemic has however highlighted the state's reliance upon migration, particularly from overseas students, to support economic growth.

There is considerable uncertainty around the future direction of the Victorian economy given its high reliance upon both interstate and international migration. Combined with the Reserve Bank's official cash interest rate now at 0.1% and wage growth at historically low levels, it is reasonable to expect both the residential and commercial property markets to experience slower rates of price growth compared to the past decade.

## 4.2 METHODOLOGY FOR DETERMINING INDICATIVE PROPERTY VALUES

Three methods are primarily used to assess the market value of a particular property being:

- Method 1: Sales of Comparable Properties
- Method 2: Site Value plus Depreciated Replacement Cost of Improvements
- Method 3: Capitalisation of Net Income

An indicative value for residential development sites may be obtained through analysing comparable property sales on a per square metre of land basis. As the value of capital improvements upon development sites is often minimal, Methods A and B will deliver similar results. The capitalisation approach is typically not utilised for valuing residential properties given the availability of comparable sales evidence and the majority of detached dwellings being owner-occupied rather than leased and therefore not income generating.

Commercial properties are less generic than residential properties and generally purchased by investors as an income generating asset. Property sales may be analysed based upon the rental yield that they generate, which reflects the security of income streams offered by tenants as well as potential development opportunities. Indicative yields for comparable properties provides the basis for the income capitalisation approach. Shortcomings of the capitalisation approach are the need to assess the security of future rental income based upon details of tenants and lease conditions, as well as the sensitivity of property valuations to assumed yields.

Commercial and industrial properties may also be valued on a per square metre of building area given that building area is typically the main source of income. However, this approach is complicated by varying proportions of retail, office and residential floor areas within a building, with different market values attached to each.

Given the limitations of the capitalisation and building area valuation approaches, combined with the opportunity for commercial sites within the investigation areas to be redeveloped for apartments, the analysis of properties as potential development sites is appropriate. This entails analysing sale results for comparable properties on a per square metre of land basis.

An analysis of recent sales of residential, commercial and industrial properties was conducted to provide indicative land value rates within Investigation Areas. This has informed indicative cost estimates for new open space, reflected in *Implementing Breathing Space*.



## 5.0 PRIORITY INVESTIGATION AREA OPPORTUNITIES

As outlined in *Implementing Breathing Space*, a number of Priority Investigation Areas have been identified which represent the areas where existing 'access' gaps correspond with existing and future 'per capita' gaps. In these areas a strategic program of pro-active delivery of new publicly accessible open space is warranted.

The process of preparing *Enhancing Open Space* included identifying and assessing opportunity sites for delivering additional open space in Priority Investigation Areas. For each Priority Investigation Area:

- A range of potential opportunities were identified and then refined following internal testing with Council. These represent a wide range of opportunities which will have different issues and funding implications.
- The identified opportunities were categorised into the 'type' of opportunity they represented. Further information about these 'types' and the implications for implementation is included below for the sake of clarity.
- Each opportunity was then assessed using the Stream A process outlined on Pages 10-13.

The outputs of this process inform the cost estimates in *Implementing Breathing Space*, and details form part of a confidential appendix to this document. For the purposes of inputs into *Implementing Breathing Space*, the following is included in the analysis.

- The type of open space the opportunity represents having regard for Council open space definitions (i.e. Active, Linear, Pocket Park, Community).
- Any pertinent comments related to rationale or delivery.
- Whether or not the opportunity is likely to be appropriately funded through the Open Space Levy. This identification has then informed the allocation of funding for the delivery of open space in these Priority Investigation Areas in the relevant costing in the *Implementing Breathing Space*.

A number of points are noted in relation to the opportunities identified:

- It is important to appreciate that the identification of these opportunities and their high level costs is just the first step in a long process. Council should undertake further assessment of the suitability of these sites, liaise with relevant land owners or managers and consult with local communities.

- The opportunities to deliver new publicly accessible open space in these areas takes a number of forms. Importantly, not all of these will be able to be funded through the Open Space Levy as they may not be specifically zoned or reserved for public recreation or similar, nor will any maintenance costs associated with these areas be able to be funded through that source.

The opportunities can generally be characterised as follows:

- Recognition of existing assets or spaces which could provide local access to open space through shared use agreements or redevelopment of other publicly held land.
- A 'grey to green' program similar to that implemented by the City of Melbourne where some local streets have restricted or altered access arrangements and are converted to pocket parks. Where these opportunities have been identified there is generally:
  - Alternate access routes available to properties that would be affected by any road closure.
  - Limited crossovers requiring shared access arrangements.
  - A minimum size of over 600sqm.
- Opportunities for streetscape transformation, essentially 're-imagining' streets as parks, building on the concept of 'Living Streets' where environmental and social considerations are considered alongside access.
- Recognition of known future opportunities through redevelopment of key sites or within growth nodes.
- The strategic purchase of privately held land where this can meet an identified need. Specific sites are identified only where there are characteristics of these areas / sites which make the lots more suitable than others, otherwise a general area is identified which reflects access considerations.
- Opportunities to negotiate with non-public institutional land holders to deliver open space through a shared use agreement. In some cases this may involve Council funding the transition of this land to park.
- Improvements to linkages and wayfinding to improve amenity, legibility and safety of access to existing areas of open space.



## ENHANCING OPEN SPACE

The range of opportunities identified reflects the specific characteristics of the areas based on the analysis plans included in the *Implementing Breathing Space*. The number of available opportunities also varies between precincts. It is also important to acknowledge that there may be additional opportunities within these area which have not been addressed by this document.

In identifying priorities from the longer list of potential opportunities the following matters have been considered:

- The relationship / proximity to other identified opportunities.
- The delivery of a diversity of open space typologies in the Priority Investigation Areas.
- The equitable distribution of these spaces.
- The ability for any newly created open space, particularly those which involve purchase of land, to be available to be widest range of residents.
- The likely ease of implementation and degree of certainty.
- An assessment against the Stream A criteria which was undertaken and is included as an appendix.





**APPENDIX ONE: CRITERIA DEFINITIONS**







## ENHANCING OPEN SPACE

Definitions and sources used in *Implementing Breathing space* and *Enhancing Open Space* are as follows:

### Overarching

Open space / the open space network As per *Breathing Space*. "Open space includes not only parks and reserves, but also streetscapes, nature strips, productive food gardens, urban nodes, quasi-public space, parklets, transport corridors and overlapping uses of space with schools, public asset providers and other institutions"

Public open space As per Subdivision Act (1988) "Public open space means land set aside in a plan or land in a plan zoned or reserved under a planning scheme –

- a) For public recreation or public resort, or
- b) As parklands
- c) For similar purposes"

### Public Open Space (parks heirecrhcy )

Local parks Open spaces set aside for the purposes of recreation that meet the everyday needs of residents, usually located within 500 metres walking distance of their homes. Draws visitors from/has significance within walking distance from the location suburb, or suburbs directly adjacent. These are split into 'types' which reflect their anticipated usage and corresponding service level over the course of *Breathing Space* implementation.

District parks Open spaces set aside for the purposes of recreation that provide a broader range of sport and recreation opportunities for residents at the suburb scale. Draws visitors from/has significance to surrounding suburbs as well as people who live within walking distance. These are split into 'types' which reflect their anticipated usage and corresponding service level over the course of *Breathing Space* implementation.

Large regional parklands and sporting reserves (Council) Open spaces set aside for the purposes of recreation that are enjoyed by all residents of Darebin, as well as visitors to the municipality. Draws visitors from/has significance across the municipality and beyond. These are split into 'types' which reflect their anticipated usage and corresponding service level over the course of *Breathing Space* implementation.

Large regional parklands and sporting reserves (Other) Open spaces set aside for the purposes of recreation that are enjoyed by all residents of Darebin, as well as visitors to the municipality. Draws visitors from/has significance across the municipality and beyond. These spaces are

not owned or managed by Council. These areas are given lesser weight in any consideration of their contribution to the accessibility of public open space in *Breathing Space* given their management and continued use as open space in perpetuity is beyond Council's control.

Regional & Metropolitan open space corridors. These areas comprise a patchwork of different 'open spaces', some of which form part of Council's network of Public Open Space, some of which are open spaces not managed by Council and others are not accessible to the public. While the corridors themselves are an important asset and stitching them together is a key objective for a number of organisations, for the purposes of *Implementing Breathing Space*, open space along these corridors is considered primarily as individual parcels and associated, localised definition.

### Public Open Space (parks)

Civic: Open space used for community and civic gatherings, or that surrounds civic buildings.

Community: Open space that is used for casual recreation, providing spaces and features to encourage play, social interaction and relaxation.

Conservation: Areas that have unique or important native plants and/or animals where species conservation priorities override other visitor activities.

Residential Pocket Park: Provides general beautification through the provision of grass, shrubs and trees, with low levels of development or use (except for pedestrians passing through). Usually these parks cannot be used for recreation because of their size, location and/or topography and their main value is visual appearance.

Linear: Often long and mostly narrow parks that link green spaces, provide opportunities for walking and cycling, or that follow natural features such as creeks and rivers. Paths and trails are key features and reason to visit.

Active: Usually large sites where organised/competition sport is played. Playing ovals, tennis and other small ball courts, playgrounds, car parking, sports pavilions and toilets are typical features found in Sports Parks.

Special Purpose: These are sites which have a specific purpose, and often with a unique level of service, and includes sites such as golf courses, forestry plantations, botanic gardens etc



### Open Space (other)

**Streetscapes / Nature Strips:** Streets where there are opportunities to increase the contribution to the areas biodiversity values and to reinforce the benefits of green infrastructure within Darebin, but which do not serve a 'formal' open space role.

**Urban Nodes:** Key areas of the public realm, generally within streetscapes which function as a gathering point or landmark spaces

**Parklets:** Small urban parks with no formal recreational or leisure purposes

**Schools:** Institutions where there may be open space including playgrounds which is accessible to the public outside of school hours

**Community gardens / Productive food gardens:** Areas of land set aside for productive use. In most cases this land will be public land which may or may not be managed by Council, but in some cases it will be private land set aside for this purposes

**Areas of high conservation value:** Areas where high biodiversity or other natural values have been identified. These are not necessarily defined nature reserves, and can overlap with other parks and open spaces.

**Areas of cultural value (indigenous) –** As per the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage mapping accessed via AAV.

### Ownership

**Quasi-public space:** Land which is in private ownership but serves a purposes as public open space. This land is not considered part of the open space network given the uncertainty of its tenure.

**Land managed by public asset providers:** land currently used for the purposes of open space or with the potential to used for public space in the future but which is managed by a public entity other than Council

**Land managed by institutions:** land currently used for the purposes of open space or with the potential to used for public space in the future but which is managed by a private institution.





## ENHANCING OPEN SPACE

### Other Definitions

**Adjoining open space network:** Land in adjoining municipalities which is managed as part of a municipal open space network.

**Commercial or retail areas:** Areas zoned for business purposes by the Darebin Planning Scheme

**Major retail precincts:** Activity centres as defined by the Darebin Planning Scheme

**Principal Pedestrian Network:** As defined by Darebin's Walking Strategy (primary and secondary routes)

**Habitat corridor:** Connections across the landscape that link up areas of habitat. They support natural processes that occur in a healthy environment, including the movement of species to find resources, such as food and water

**Areas of high population density:** Areas where there is currently a population density of above 60 dwellings per hectare (*Breathing Space* pg 23)

**Areas of projected growth:** defined as those shown on the Strategic Housing Framework contained at Clause 21.03-1 of the Darebin Planning Scheme as Substantial Housing Change areas or as Activity Centres (where a level of residential growth is also supported)

**Areas containing remnant vegetation or biodiversity values or habitat for a protected species of flora or fauna are identified as:**

- areas where pre 1750 vegetation is identified in relevant State Government databases
- areas identified as having conservation significance in the *Darebin Natural Heritage Strategy* (pg 10)
- areas covered by a Vegetation Protection Overlay, Environmental Significance Overlay (related to nature) or Significant Landscape Overlay in the Darebin Planning Scheme

Transport corridors are considered at three levels:

- Active transport corridors which includes the primary and secondary parts of the Principal Pedestrian Network identified in the Darebin Walking Strategy (pg 8), the Darebin Bicycle Network identified in the Darebin Cycling Strategy (pg 39) and public transport corridors identified by the Principal Public Transport Network
- Key 'Streets for People' corridors (as identified in the Streets for People Feasibility Report pg 6)
- Existing 'Green Movement Corridors' which are linear

open spaces whose primary function is to facilitate active transport or recreation such as jogging walking or bike riding (identified and defined within this document but not identified through other strategic documents)

**Habitat corridors are:** linear corridors where there is remnant vegetation. They are not currently defined in other Council documents. Gaps are where there is a clear 'gap' between two areas of habitat which could be linked through the acquisition of land or repurposing of land

Populations likely to be experiencing disadvantage, social isolation or poor health, such as older people, social housing tenants or newly arrived migrants will be identified using the SEIFA index.

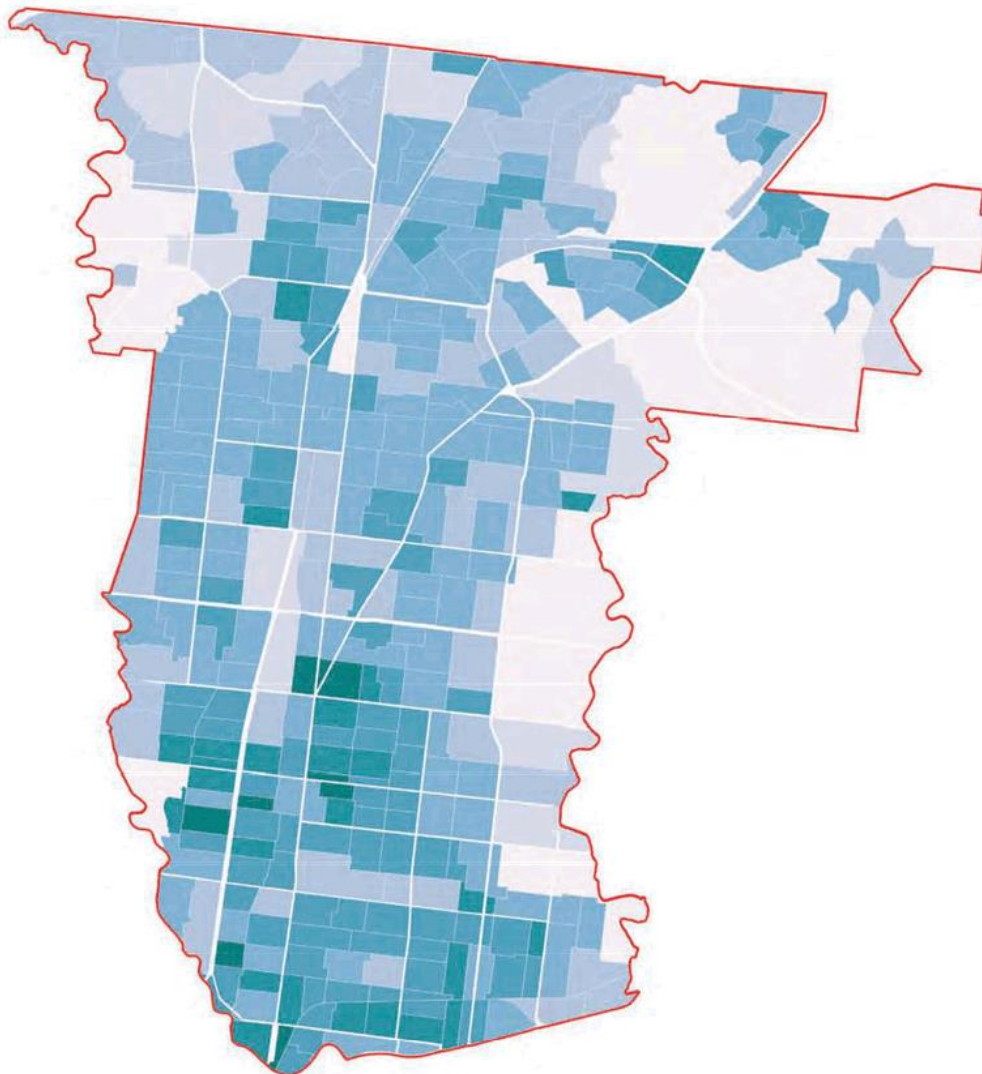


**APPENDIX TWO: CRITERIA MAPPING**





ENHANCING OPEN SPACE



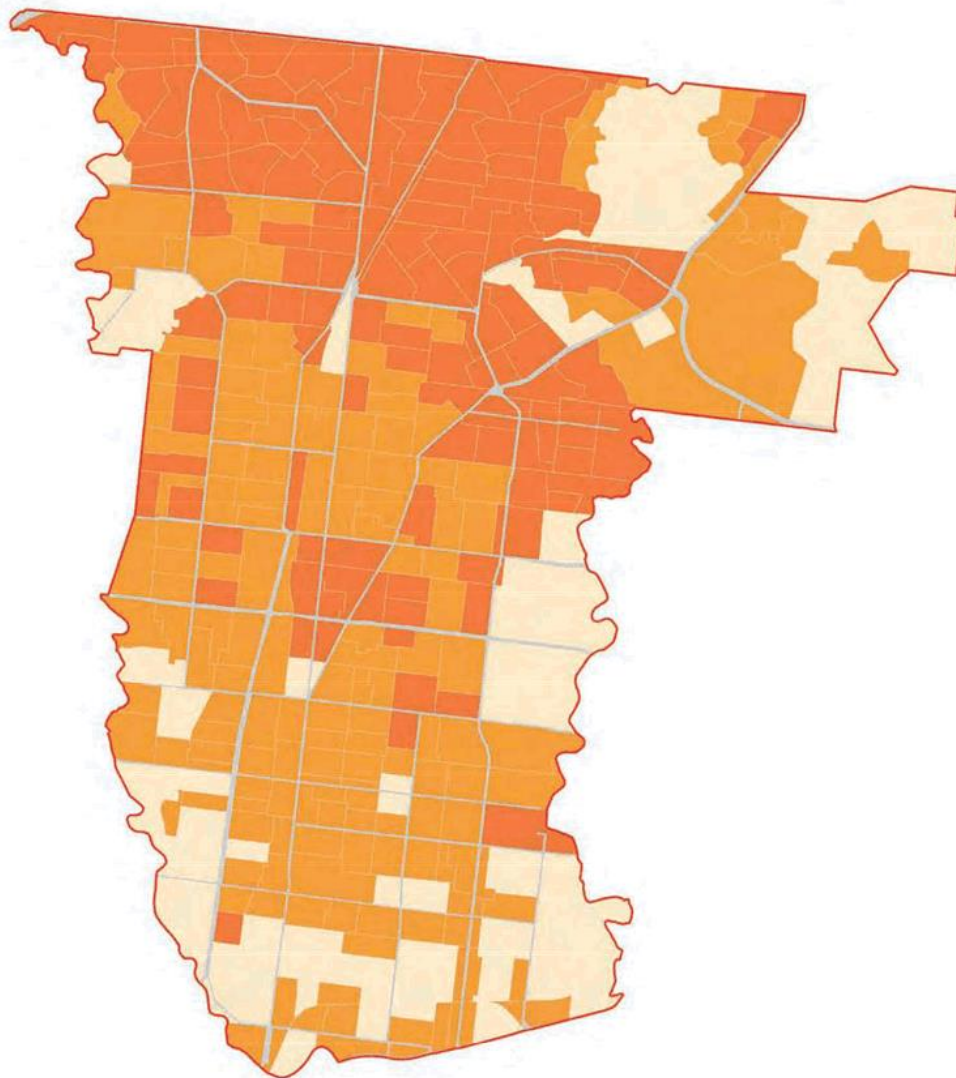
Legend

- Municipal Boundary
- Major Roads
- SA2 Areas

Population Density

- |           |           |           |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 0-1000    | 3000-4000 | 6000-8000 |
| 1000-2000 | 4000-5000 | 8000+     |
| 2000-3000 | 5000-6000 |           |




Data: 2018



Legend

-  Municipal Boundary
-  Major Roads
-  SA2 Areas

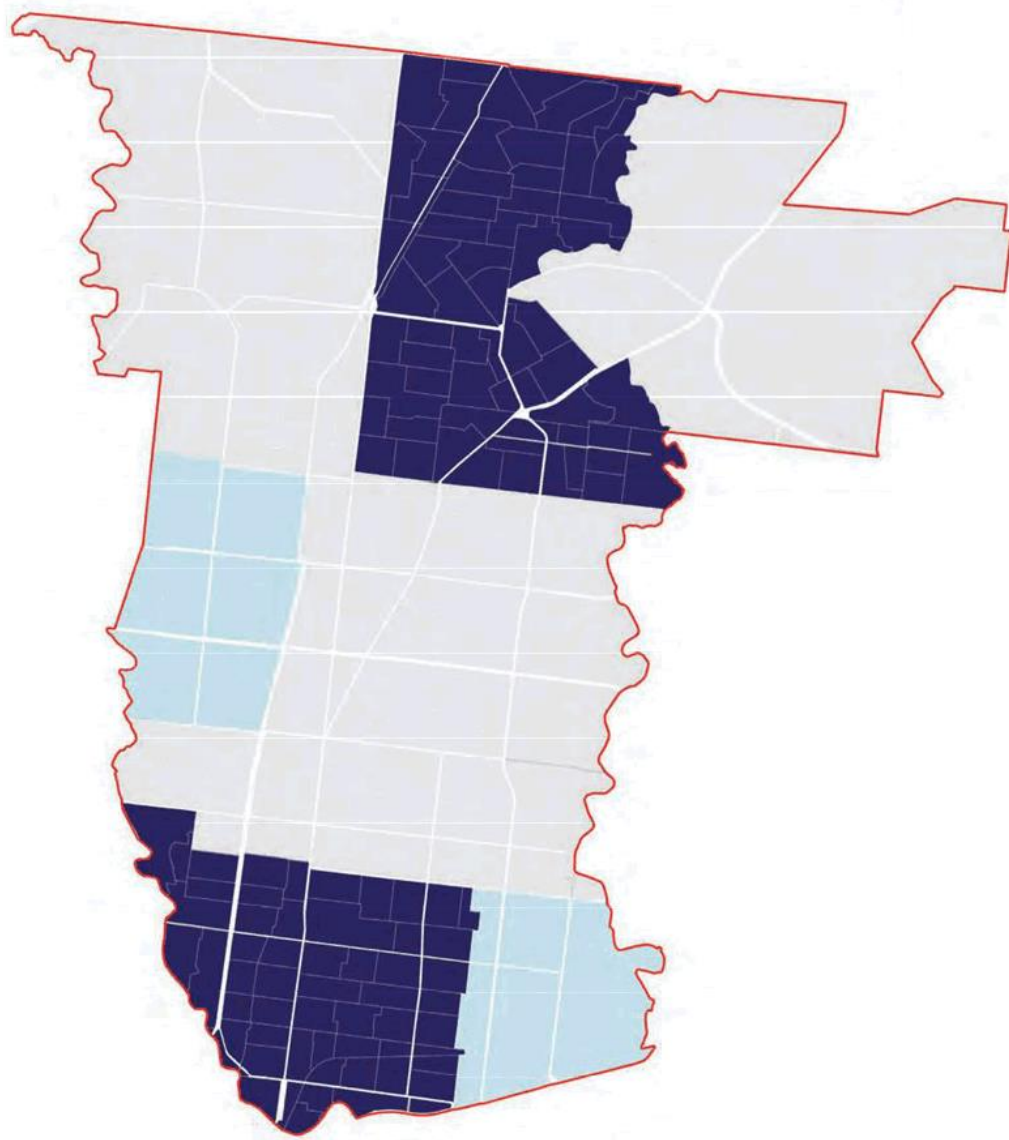
SEIFA Categorisation

-  Areas with a low level of relative urban heat vulnerability
-  Areas with a medium level of relative urban heat vulnerability
-  Areas with a high level of relative urban heat vulnerability

Data: 2018



ENHANCING OPEN SPACE



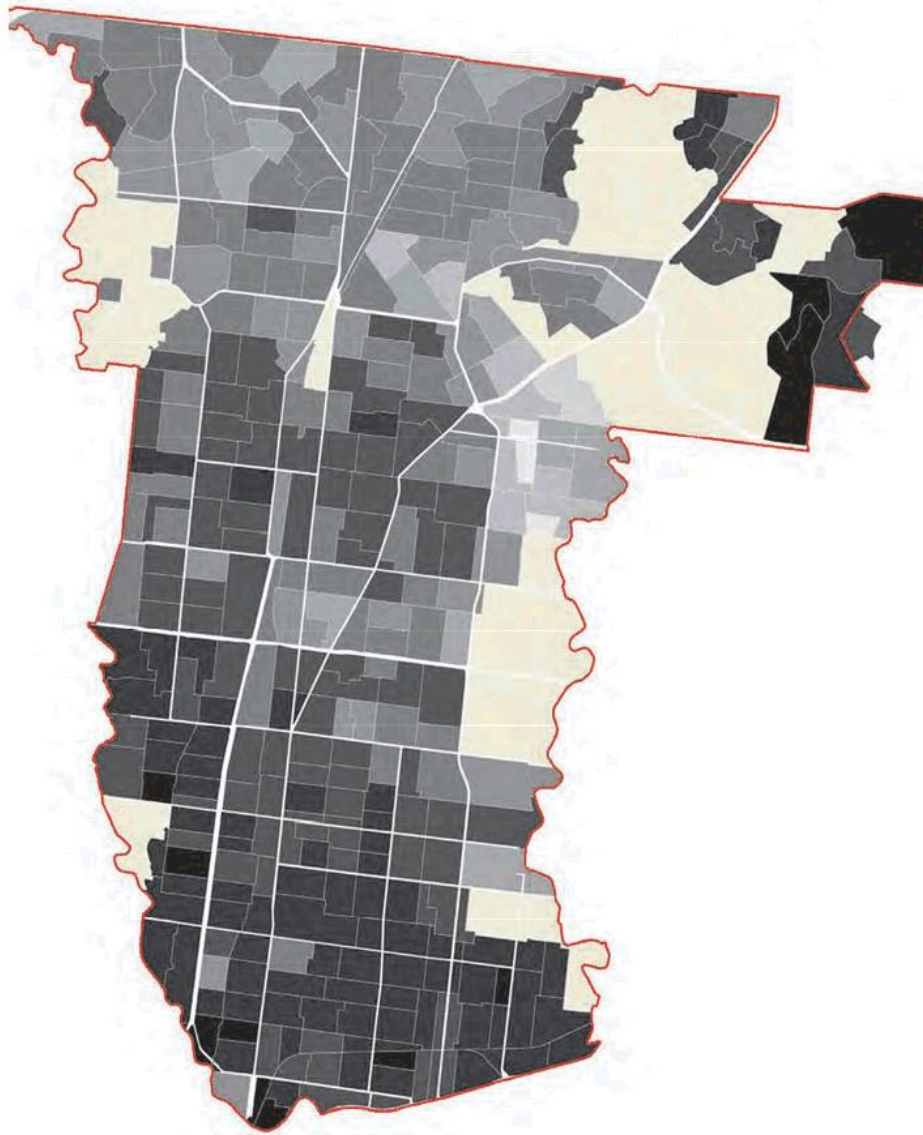
Legend

- Municipal Boundary
- Major Roads
- SA2 Areas

Age Distribution

- Younger Population higher than Darebin average
- Older Population higher than Darebin average

Data: 2018



Relative SEIFA Categorisation



Data: 2018



# Open Space Contribution Report

City of Darebin

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August 2021



# Open Space Contribution Report

City of Darebin

August 2021

Client	City of Darebin
Project	Open Space Contribution Report
Version	1.1
Prepared By	Michael Turnbull
Reviewed By	Leah Wittingslow
Date	August 2021

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Mesh acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we work, and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

|

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Mesh Planning was commissioned by the City of Darebin to review a range of key documents in relation to open space planning within the City including '*Breathing Space: Darebin Open Space Strategy*' (*Breathing Space*). More specifically, the review was commissioned within the context of a current Planning Scheme Amendment process that seeks to introduce a specified, increased open space contribution within clause 53.01 of the Darebin Planning Scheme.

The key task that Mesh was commissioned to respond to is to *prepare a report that contains:*

- a) *A recommendation on an appropriate open space levy rate for the entire municipality based on the Implementation Plan and Land Acquisition Plan costings.*
- b) *Depending on the findings and the recommended open space levy rate in part a) a sub report that makes additional recommendations on how this can be implemented into Amendment C186 (Open Space Levy).*

This report responds to the project brief as requested and commences by setting out some background in relation to the relationship between redevelopment and open space needs before explaining the analysis and associated recommendations.

## 2. BACKGROUND

The City of Darebin is an inner northern municipality in Melbourne with an existing population of 166,430 persons in 2020. The City is well located relative to the CBD and other places of interest and has a dense public and private transport network particularly in the southern parts of the City.

The City has been subject of intense pressure for redevelopment in the recent past and this pressure is likely to continue into the future such that the population is projected to increase to 195,736 persons by 2028<sup>1</sup>. The City of Darebin policy and strategy framework acknowledges the attractiveness of the City and generally supports continued redevelopment of the City (with appropriate guidance regarding the preferred location and types of development).

Whilst the policy and strategy framework generally supports continued redevelopment of the City, it is acknowledged that a key livability indicator is the character, quality and accessibility of the City's open space network but that the existing open space network is under significant pressure to accommodate the needs of a rapidly growing population.

The City of Darebin was estimated to have an open space provision ratio of approximately 19.6m<sup>2</sup> per person in 2018 which will fall to 16.2 m<sup>2</sup> per capita by 2028 if no additional open space is provided<sup>3</sup>. Figure 1 shows the location of existing open space in the City that is included in the calculation of the current per capita provision rate.

The City has recognized the challenges associated with meeting the needs of a growing population, particularly in a 'redevelopment' context where the density of development is steadily increasing and where the likelihood of land being contributed for open space purposes is increasingly unlikely. Without intervention, the impacts on the existing open space network are likely to be significant including a decline in the character, composition and accessibility of open space.

With these undesirable consequences in mind, the City engaged SGS to prepare *Breathing Space* which seeks to guide open space outcomes from 2018 to 2028. A key action of *Breathing Space* is to increase the open space levy under Clause 53.01 of the planning scheme to raise the quantity and quality of open space in Darebin for the benefit of current and future populations. Clause 53.01 currently identifies a varying 2-5% open space contribution based on the number of lots being subdivided.

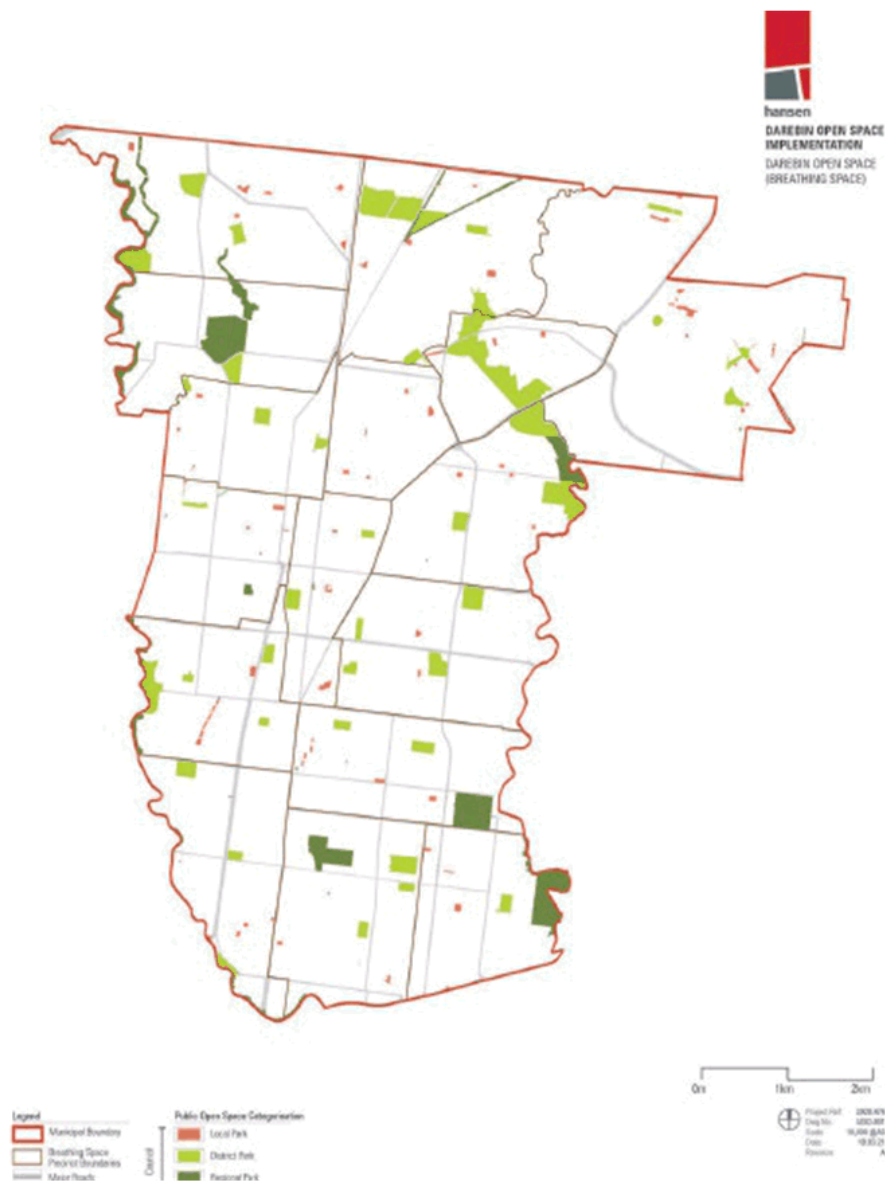
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<sup>1</sup> SGS, *Breathing Space*

<sup>2</sup> Only open spaces that are publicly accessible and have a primary purpose for recreation are included in this calculation

<sup>3</sup> SGS, *Breathing Space*, Table 4: Access to open space per capita (2018 and projected)

Figure 1 Existing Open Space Provision



**3. LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT**

It is important to have regard to the tests that are contained within the relevant legislation when proposing to introduce a specified municipal open space contribution. As set out following, the mechanism that is available to specify an open space contribution that is in excess of 5% is via clause 53.01 of the Planning Scheme.

**3.1 Subdivision Act 1988**

The head of power to require a public open space contribution is derived from the Subdivision Act 1988 (the Act).

### 3.2 Common Provisions and Definitions

There are a number of definitions and common provisions that apply to open space contributions regardless of whether the contributions have been collected via Section 18 of the Subdivision Act or Clause 53.01 of the Planning Scheme, which are outlined below.

#### *Public Open Space Definition*

Land for public open space is defined in the *Subdivision Act 1988* as: -

**Public open space** means land set aside in a plan or land in a plan zoned or reserved under a planning scheme—

- a) for public recreation or public resort; or
- b) as parklands; or
- c) for similar purposes;

An open space contribution required from development proponents can be provided as either the provision of land and/or a cash in lieu payment via the following legal mechanisms under Sections 18-20 of the Subdivision Act, Clause 53.01 of the Victorian Planning Provisions, a Development Contribution Plan Overlay, an Infrastructure Contribution Plan Overlay and negotiated legal agreements.

### 3.3 Sections 18-20 of the Subdivision Act 1988

Section 18 of the Subdivision Act applies if a requirement for public open space is not specified in the planning scheme (e.g. no percentage is specified in the schedule to Clause 53.01) and the land is not subject to an Infrastructure Contributions Plan (ICP).

Section 18 states that council acting as the responsible authority or a referral authority under the Planning and Environment Act 1987 may require an applicant who proposes to create any additional parcels of land by plan of subdivision to: -

- d) set aside on the plan, for public open space, in a location satisfactory to the Council, a percentage of all of the land in the subdivision intended to be used for residential, industrial or commercial purposes, being a percentage set by the Council not exceeding 5 per cent; or
- e) pay or agree to pay to the Council a percentage of the site value of all of the land in the subdivision intended to be used for residential, industrial or commercial purposes, being a percentage set by the Council not exceeding 5 per cent; or
- f) do a combination of (a) and (b) so that the total of the percentages required under (a) and (b) does not exceed 5 per cent of the site value of all the land in the subdivision.

The council may only make a public open space requirement if it considers that because of the subdivision, there will be a need for additional open space. When determining the need for open space council must have regard to the following matters as set out in Section 18(1A) of the Subdivision Act: -

- a) the existing and proposed use or development of the land;
- b) any likelihood that existing open space will be more intensively used after than before the subdivision;
- c) any existing or likely population density in the area of the subdivision and the effect of the subdivision on this;
- d) whether there are existing places of public resort or recreation in the neighbourhood of the subdivision, and the adequacy of these;
- e) how much of the land in the subdivision is likely to be used for places of resort and recreation for lot owners;
- f) any policies of the Council concerning the provision of places of public resort and recreation.

Section 18(3) states that

*Land intended to be used for residential, industrial or commercial purposes includes land set aside on the plan of subdivision for roads or other reserves incidental or ancillary to the use of the land for residential, industrial or commercial purposes.(emphasis added)*

### 3.4 Clause 53.01

The schedule to Clause 53.01 enables specification of an open space percentage requirement that can apply to the municipality or specific precincts. To include a schedule to Clause 53.01 Council must complete the necessary strategic work to justify the percentage/s set, which can exceed the 5% cap set in Section 18 of the Subdivision Act and a Planning Scheme Amendment is required to introduce the schedule.

If a percentage is nominated in Clause 53.01 then this overrides Section 18 of the Subdivision Act (where the provision of land for public open space is limited to 5% of site area/value).

The Schedule to Clause 53.01 enables council to obtain a contribution for public open space during the development process. A council can require an open space contribution at two stages in the development process: -

- Firstly, the subdivision of land (unless already levied);
- Secondly, the subdivision of a building (unless exempt).

Section 18A of the Subdivision Act sets out how the requirements for public open space under Clause 53.01 are to be satisfied. Put simply, a requirement under Clause 53.01 can be satisfied through the transfer of land and/or the payment of cash in lieu.

### 3.5 Use of Open Space Contributions

Council must use land and funds received as part of any open space requirement to purchase or improve land for open space purposes. Public open space may, however, be used for public purposes in accordance with the planning scheme and so some scope for varying public uses is possible.

Section 20(1) of the Subdivision Act clearly sets out that council must set aside for public open space any land vested in council for that purpose. Section 20(2) states that council must use any cash in lieu payments for open space it receives to: -

- buy land for public recreation or public resort, as parklands or for similar purposes; and/or
- improve land already set aside, zoned or reserved for use for public recreation or public resort, as parklands or similar.

All open space contributions collected are to be kept in a reserve account.

Notwithstanding the above, the Subdivision Act does not mandate use of the funds for the purpose they were collected (i.e. funds collected do not need to be spent on projects that will benefit the area that paid the contribution). As noted above, the only requirement is that the cash in lieu contributions must be used for "public recreation or public resort, as parklands or similar" within the municipality.

Individual council policies and strategies can be used to define public open space in a local context which can include: -

- > land for parks and plazas/ town squares, that can be used for a wide variety of active and passive purposes;
- > capital works – upgrade, renewal or construction of new facilities on open space land, this can include amenities such as toilets, barbeque and picnic areas, playing surfaces, pathways, playgrounds and landscaping.

Open space contributions are not to be used for recurrent costs such as administration or maintenance of land or an asset.

### 3.6 Valuation of Public Open Space

The payment of any cash in lieu under both provisions (unless expressly stated otherwise in Clause 53.01) is calculated as a percentage of site value as set out in Section 19 of the Subdivision Act. Site value has the same meaning as set out in the Valuation of Land Act 1960 as set out below:

*site value of land, means the sum which the land, if it were held for an estate in fee simple unencumbered by any lease, mortgage or other charge, might in ordinary circumstances be expected to realise at the time of the valuation if offered for sale on such reasonable terms and conditions as a genuine seller might be expected to require, and assuming that the improvements (if any) had not been made;*

Section 19 of the Subdivision Act sets out how the valuation of land for public open space required under Section 18 and Section 18A (i.e. Clause 53.01) is to be valued. In summary, the council may obtain a valuation of the land required for public open space: -

- > the valuation must be completed by a qualified valuer if the value is not agreed;
- > the land is to be valued not more than 12 months before the date of compliance with the public open space requirement;
- > council must provide the applicant with a copy of the valuation;
- > Part III of the Valuation of Land Act 1960 (except Division 2) applies to the valuation as if the valuation had been made under Part 8 of the Local Government Act 1989 .

Therefore, the amount of cash in lieu contribution for a particular subdivision must be determined on a case by case basis unless specified in the schedule to Clause 53.01.

It is common for a Council rates department to determine the site value for cash in lieu payments.

### 3.7 Requirement to satisfy an open space contribution

An open space contribution required under either Section 18 of the Subdivision Act or Clause 53.01 of the Planning Scheme can be satisfied through either: -

- > Provision of land being a percentage of the land intended to be used for residential, industrial or commercial purposes; or
- > A percentage of the site value of such land, or
- > A combination of both.

Any requirement for open space must be made by council as the responsible authority as a condition included in a planning permit for subdivision.

Council is effectively protected against challenge to the contributions specified in the Schedule to Clause 53.01 so long as it is unambiguous and applied appropriately. Common areas of appeal relate to its application and in particular: -

- > Application of the requirement;
- > Method of payment; and
- > Valuation of the site if a cash in lieu payment is required.

### 3.8 Exemptions

There are several general exemptions: -

- > If the subdivision comprises one of the following classes: -
  - > Class 1 – the subdivision is of a building used for residential purposes provided each lot contains part of the building and the building was constructed or used for residential purposes prior to 30 October 1989.



- > Class 2 – the subdivision of a commercial or industrial building provided each lot contains part of the building.
- > Excision of land to be transferred to a public agency; and
- > Subdivision of land (whether residential, industrial or commercial) into two lots where council considers it unlikely that each lot will be further subdivided.

### 3.9 Observations

The relevant parts of the Subdivision Act have been in place since 1988 and remain in place for all types of subdivisions to enable (with justification) Council's to seek an open space contribution not exceeding 5% (in accordance with the requirements of Sections 18-20 of the Subdivision Act).

In lieu of any broadscale review of the Subdivision Act, and/or explicit guidance regarding appropriate public open space contributions that exceed 5%, most planning authorities have sought to either introduce variable open space contributions into clause 53.01 or other forms of justification, such as preparation of Precinct Structure Plans, have been used in support of higher levels of contribution for open space purposes.

In growth areas, a general consistency has emerged over the last 15 years of open space contributions of approximately 10% for passive and active open space purposes. This open space planning benchmark has been recognized in and is recommended in the Precinct Structure Plan Guidelines<sup>4</sup>. The 10% open space contribution that is recommended in growth areas explicitly seeks to meet the land area requirements for passive and active purposes whereas the embellishment of the active open space (for construction of playing fields and associated infrastructure) is typically included in Development Contributions Plans (DCPs) or Infrastructure Contributions Plans (ICPs). Accordingly, there are two levels of open space contributions that apply in growth areas, one for the land component and another for the embellishment of some parts of the land.

As development densities have been increasing in growth areas and in other infill locations, general concern has been expressed by most planning authorities that existing open spaces are under significant pressure and that a 5% open space contribution is insufficient to meet the needs of the growing population. The City of Melbourne for example have introduced an 8% contribution for Fishermans Bend and the City of Greater Geelong have a specified contribution of 10% for the growth areas and some parts of the existing urban areas (where a contribution of 10 or more lots is proposed).

The varying approaches that are being adopted (that are somewhat similar to the divergence in approach regarding preparation of Development Contributions Plans) are indicative of the needs that are being generated but they are also indicative of the need for broader direction and reform. In the absence of such direction or reform, the justification work that has been completed by Council can be used to respond to the interim Panel report that was delivered in relation to the City of Monash proposed open space contribution as discussed following.

## 4. PLANNING SCHEME AMENDMENTS

Amendment C186 to the Darebin Planning Scheme proposes to introduce a municipal wide open space contribution of 10% for all non-exempt subdivisions (with potential to seek a higher contribution for key redevelopment sites). The hearing for the Amendment was however deferred to enable all parties to consider the implications of the interim Panel Report that was released in relation to the City of Monash Amendment C148.

The relevance of Amendment C148 is that the Amendment proposed to introduce a 10% open space contribution based on a Monash Open Space Strategy prepared by the same consultants who prepared *Breathing Space*.

The Monash interim Panel Report was critical of adoption of the 30m<sup>2</sup> per capita benchmark and its use in support of an increased open space levy. The Panel ultimately concluded it is a flawed metric for the calculation of an appropriate open space levy rate.

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<sup>4</sup> Victorian Planning Authority, Precinct Structure Plan Guidelines

The interim Panel Report recommended review of the amendment documents along with preparation of additional justification. The additional work that was recommended in the interim Panel report includes:

- > *The development of an Implementation Plan which nominates precincts in which land acquisition will be sought and projects and works in open spaces with cost estimates;*
- > *The use of the Implementation Plan as the basis for calculation of the open space levy rate in place of the 30 square metre macro-provisioning standard; and*
- > *Development of a detailed justification for the application of the same open space levy rate to residential and non-residential subdivisions.*

The interim Panel Report also discusses the issue of inclusionary provisions (the same open space levy rate being applied to all subdivisions) and the associated treatment of the municipality as a single planning unit in light of localised open space shortfalls. The Panel accepted that Councils may be considered a single planning unit as this is how Clause 53.01 currently operates. There is no direction within Clause 53.01 on where funds collected should be spent nor is there any such limitation in the Subdivision Act. The Panel also concluded an inclusionary provision approach for residential subdivision is reasonable.

Mesh shares and supports the view of the interim Panel Report with respect to the 30m<sup>2</sup> benchmark being a flawed metric for the purpose of calculating an open space levy rate, treatment of a Council as a single planning unit being appropriate and an inclusionary provisions approach residential subdivision being reasonable.

#### **5. CITY OF DAREBIN RESPONSE TO MONASH INTERIM PANEL REPORT**

In response to the interim Panel Report recommendations, the City of Darebin commissioned preparation of two important documents called '*Implementing Breathing Space*' and '*Enhancing Open Space*<sup>5</sup>' by Hansen Partnership. *Implementing Breathing Space* and *Enhancing Open Space* respond to the first recommendation from the interim Panel Report by setting out an implementation plan that identifies open space projects and cost estimates across numerous precincts.

In this regard, *Implementing Breathing Space* and *Enhancing Open Space* are very important documents that provide strategic justification for the proposed open space levy rate, offering transparency in relation to expenditure of the income. These documents, and their relationship to the proposed open space levy rate, are discussed in greater detail in the sections that follow.

#### **6. OPEN SPACE LEVY RATE PROPOSITIONS**

A number of open space levy rate propositions were established and tested by Mesh in order to respond to the key task of recommending an "*an appropriate open space levy rate for the entire municipality based on the Implementation Plan and Land Acquisition Plan costings*". These propositions include:

- > Open space levy contributions can only be used to fund the open space needs of new growth;
- > Quantifying the open space demand generated by new growth in both land and dollar terms;
- > Considering the revenue potential of the proposed 10% open space levy rate; and
- > Considering the findings of *Implementing Breathing Space* and *Enhancing Open Space*;

The propositions were tested to inform Mesh's recommendation of an appropriate open space levy rate for the entire municipality.

##### **6.1 New Growth**

The first proposition explored was that open space levy contributions can only be used to fund the open space needs of new growth. This proposition is based on the fundamental principle of need, as noted in Section 18 of the *Subdivision Act 1988*.

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<sup>5</sup> Note *Enhancing Open Space* is a confidential background report that accompanies *Implementing Breathing Space*

Section 18, subsection 1A, states that Council may only make a public open space requirement if it considers that, as a result of the subdivision, there will be a need for more open space having regard to a range of factors including the proposed use of the land, likelihood existing open space will be more intensively used, population density of the area and whether the subdivision creates any open space among other factors.

Section 18 only applies where an open space levy rate is not specified in Clause 53.01 of the Planning Scheme. Where an open space levy rate is specified in Clause 53.01 of the Planning Scheme, Section 18A of the Subdivision Act applies. Section 18A primarily concerns the administration of open space levy payments as distinct from the range of considerations under Section 18 that inform whether or not Council can seek an open space requirement.

Rather than considering the impact of a subdivision, Section 18A assumes a strategic assessment of open space need has already been undertaken in order to identify a Clause 53.01 open space levy rate. Noting the existence of this strategic assessment, Mesh is of the view there is no requirement under Section 18A that open space levies collected can only fund new the open space needs of new development.

In contemplating the proposition that open space contributions only fund new growth, Mesh considered the Development Contributions Plan (DCP) principles of 'need and nexus'. The principle that requires DCPs to demonstrate new development subject to a levy is likely to use the infrastructure to be provided. The principle was raised by a submitter to Monash Amendment C148 who questioned the transparency on where open space levy funds would be spent, arguing that an identification of acquisitions and improvements is needed to justify a higher open space levy rate. The response of Panel was to require preparation of an implementation plan that nominates precincts in which land acquisition will be sought in addition to open space projects and works with cost estimates.

Mesh is of the opinion that whilst some overall regard to need and nexus are useful considerations, a more complete shift towards detailed adoption of DCP principles in an open space levy context should be treated with caution given their potential impact on limitations to where funds can be spent etc however and their use in calculating an open space levy rate be avoided.

In considering Section 18 and 18A of the *Subdivision Act 1988* along with the limited application of the DCP principles of need and nexus, Mesh is of the view that open space levies collected under Clause 53.01 can be spent anywhere within the municipality.

The following section includes a piece of analysis that seeks to quantify the open space demand generated by new growth.

## 6.2 Open Space Shortfall Attributed to Growth

While the Monash interim Panel Report was critical of applying a 30m<sup>2</sup> per capita open space benchmark as the basis for a specified open space contribution, the benchmark was used in *Implementing Breathing Space* where it is used as a means of identifying precincts within Darebin which have a 'per capita shortfall' of open space. That is, precincts which have the greatest disparity between the 'goal' of 30sqm and their actual per capita provision.

Putting aside the issues associated with use of the benchmark as justification for introduction of an increased open space contribution for a moment, Mesh undertook a piece of analysis to understand what 30m<sup>2</sup> per capita translates to as a land area and what proportion of Darebin's shortfall of 30sqm per capita at 2028 can be attributed to new growth. The results are set out in Table 1 where the area of land in hectares<sup>6</sup> required to achieve 30sqm of open space per capita that can be attributed to growth is 103.4ha.

<sup>6</sup> We acknowledge that Breathing Space identifies a combination of open space land and improvement works as contributing to the 30m<sup>2</sup> target. However, there is no reference to an 'equivalence' between land and works. As such, for the purpose of this analysis, we have used land costs as the basis for examining the relationship between contributions and the 30m<sup>2</sup> target. It may well be that improvement works to existing open spaces to meet the aspirational target will cost less than purchase of new land, however, this analysis has not been undertaken by SGS or Hansen Partnership.

Table 1 Open Space Shortfall Analysis – 30sqm Per Capita Benchmark

2018 Open Space Shortfall	2028 Open Space Shortfall	Shortfall Attributed to Growth
167.17ha	270.57ha	103.4ha

Running the same analysis against a 19.6sqm<sup>7</sup> open space per capita benchmark yields the results set out below in Table 2. The intent of this analysis is to understand the open space land area required to result in no net loss of open space per capita to 2028 i.e. to maintain the status quo. Under this scenario the shortfall that can be attributed to growth is 67.01ha.

Table 2 Open Space Shortfall Analysis – 19.6sqm Per Capita Benchmark

2018 Open Space Shortfall	2028 Open Space Shortfall	Shortfall Attributed to Growth
0ha	67.01ha	67.01ha

Based on assumed land value of \$1,400/m<sup>2</sup> - \$2,000/m<sup>2</sup><sup>8</sup> the cost of each shortfall is:

- > \$1.55B - \$2.06B to fund 103.4ha of land to maintain 30sqm per capita; and
- > \$938M - \$1.3B to fund 67.01ha of land to maintain 19.6sqm per capita.

This simple piece of analysis demonstrates an important finding, that application of an aspirational benchmark of 30m<sup>2</sup> or 19.6m<sup>2</sup> per capita is not achievable in a redevelopment context where there are relatively high land values and competition for land for other purposes.

Further, there is no workable or equitable relationship between an open space contribution that is based on a percentage of site value and maintenance of an existing open space provision benchmark (of 19.6m<sup>2</sup> per capita).

**6.3 Revenue Potential**

Noting the considerable area of land required to maintain the current (2018) open space provision or to achieve an aspirational benchmark, Mesh sought to calculate the revenue potential of a proposed increased open space levy rate.

The testing process considered a number of options but commenced with gaining an understanding of the revenue potential associated with open space contributions within the City of Darebin in previous years. Data regarding open space contributions from the 2019-2020 period was gathered and carried forward to the years 2022 to 2028<sup>9</sup>. The 2019 – 2020 period was selected as being the most representative in terms of the type of redevelopment that is likely to occur in the period between 2022 and 2028.

The data revealed that for the 2019-20 period Council collected \$12.26M in open space contributions at a variable rate of 2-5% of site value (under Clause 53.01<sup>10</sup>). The total site value of leviable development involving a subdivision in this period was \$372M (at an average of \$186M per year).

Assuming for the purposes of analysis that the 2019-2020 average annual site value of \$186M is generally consistent for the 2022-2028 period<sup>11</sup>, the total site value for this period would be \$1.12B. Table 3 provides an analysis of the theoretical open space levy potential at various percentages for the 2022-2028 period.

<sup>7</sup> The 2018 open space per capita in Darebin identified in Breathing Space  
<sup>8</sup> SGS, *Darebin housing demand and supply analysis (2020)*, Table 10 Cost Inputs and Assumptions  
<sup>9</sup> Breathing Space is the adopted City of Darebin open space strategy for the years 2018-2028, the period of time within which the proposed open space levy is relevant  
<sup>10</sup> Clause 53.01 of the Darebin Planning Scheme identifies a varying 2-5% open space contribution based on the number of lots being subdivided  
<sup>11</sup> While we appreciate that land values are likely to escalate in this timeframe, for ease of comparison, we have not escalated these values for the analysis.

Table 3 Open Space Levy Collection at Various Open Space Levy Rates

Open Space Levy Rate	Total 2022-2028 Revenue	Annual Levy Revenue
5%	\$56M	\$9.33M
6%	\$67.2M	\$11.2M
7%	\$78.4M	\$13.07M
8%	\$89.6M	\$14.93M
9%	\$100.8M	\$16.8M
10%	\$112M	\$18.67M
15%	\$168M	\$28M
18.2% <sup>12</sup>	\$203.84M	\$33.97M

The analysis suggests the City of Darebin can expect to collect in the order of \$9.33M - \$18.67M a year via a 5-10% open space levy rate. From 2022 until the time horizon of Breathing Space in 2028 the total levy collection is in the order of \$112M if a 10% contribution were to apply.

In addition to demonstrating the potential revenue associated with various open space levy rates, this analysis demonstrates an important finding, that there is no workable or equitable relationship between an open space contribution that is based on a percentage of site value and the open space per capita benchmark discussed in the previous section. The revenue potential at various open space levy rates pales in comparison to the cost funding 67.01ha or 103.4ha of open space land to achieve an open space per capita benchmark.

The revenue potential is however relevant to determining a direct relationship between the proposed acquisitions and other improvements to the open space network and what funds are required to implement such improvements as is set out following.

#### 6.4 Implementing Breathing Space Findings

*Implementing Breathing Space* and *Enhancing Open Space* are very important documents that respond to the direction of the Monash interim Panel Report. Mesh considers these documents offer an appropriate strategic basis on which to recommend an open space levy rate as they provide a clear link between the collection of an increased levy and where and how the levy will be spent.

The combined documents provide context to the potential \$18.67M annual revenue potential of a 10% open space levy, which provides Council and the community with an understanding of 'how far' a 10% open space contribution goes towards achieving the vision of *Breathing Space*.

In response to the interim Panel Report direction to identify precincts for levy expenditure, *Implementing Breathing Space* identifies precincts within Darebin which have a 'per capita shortfall' of open space. That is, precincts which have the greatest disparity between the goal of 30sqm and their actual per capita provision. The next layer of analysis in *Implementing Breathing Space* is an identification of areas that have an open space 'proximity' issue.

The 'Priority Investigation Areas' are identified as those which have 'per capita' and 'proximity' issues which will be exacerbated by high rates of growth. Thus, the rate of growth is the determining factor of a Priority Investigation Area.

*Implementing Breathing Space* identifies and provides costs for a number of new open space projects within Priority Investigation Areas, as well upgrades to existing open spaces across the whole municipality not specific to a precinct. This addresses the Monash interim panel direction to nominate precincts, open space projects and cost estimates.

The projects identified in *Implementing Breathing Space* have a total implementation cost of **\$199M**. The proportion of these costs that could be funded by an open space levy of 15% is approximately \$168M.

<sup>12</sup> Contribution percentage included for reference purposes as stated in SGS, Open Space Contribution Review, Table 1: Open Space Contribution Rate Calculation

*Breathing Space* clearly identifies the location and type of open space projects that will deliver the *Breathing Space* vision.

The \$168M figure is important to consider in the context of the forecast \$1.12B site value for the 2022-2028 period. To fund \$168M of open space levy applicable projects in *Implementing Breathing Space* an open space levy rate of 15% is required. Whereas an open space levy rate of 10% will fund approximately \$112M of these projects.

It is also relevant to consider the time horizon of the recommended open space levy rate. The Mesh recommendation is relevant to 2028, the time horizon of *Breathing Space* being 2018-2028. As the current year is 2021 and the recommended open space levy rate is likely to be implemented from 2022 onwards, the analysis of revenue potential earlier in this report deals with the 2022-2028 period.

Should the 10% open space levy rate have been implemented in 2018 from the outset of *Breathing Space* and assuming an \$186M average annual site value as was the case in 2019-2020, a 10% open space levy rate would collect a total of \$186M for the period from 2018-2028. While this scenario is based on a number of assumptions, it provides an indication of revenue potential (\$186M) that aligns with the cost estimate of open space projects (\$168M).

The findings of both *Implementing Breathing Space* and *Enhancing Open Space* are considered an appropriate strategic basis on which to recommend an open space levy rate as they provide a transparent link between the collection of an open space levy and where it will be spent. Notwithstanding this general view there is some concern that 6 years may be an insufficient implementation period. It is typically the case that 10 years would be applied as a planning horizon for contributions to be gathered and projects undertaken. In this context, a 10 year period is typically more appropriate to not only enable funds to be gathered and spent but also to allow for changes in rates of development.

## 7. OPEN SPACE PLANNING PRINCIPLES

The findings that are set out in the previous section are very important as the relationship between the proposed works (land acquisition and improvement to open space) and the revenue potential offers the strategic basis for the recommended open space contribution of 10%.

The proposed open space contribution is supported by the following principles or characteristics associated with the proposed increased open space contribution:

- > Any reference to an aspirational open space benchmark of 30m<sup>2</sup> per capita is more appropriately referenced as a general desire to increase open space provision in any amount that is possible;
- > Notwithstanding the desire to increase the provision of open space, it is probable that the open space provision ratio (per m<sup>2</sup> per person) will decrease over time as redevelopment occurs;
- > Smaller to medium sized redevelopment sites that are redeveloped for medium to high density development are unlikely to be able to set aside land for public open space purposes and cash contributions are more likely;
- > Larger redevelopment sites that are redeveloped for medium to high density development are more likely to have some potential to set aside land for open space purposes, however, some proposals may opt for cash contributions or a combination of land and cash;
- > Smaller, medium and larger development sites that are redeveloped for medium to high density development will generate combined need for open space;
- > Any land that is acquired for open space purposes is likely to be difficult and expensive to secure;
- > Due to the unavailability of well-located land that can be purchased for open space purposes, and the high cost of such land, it will be appropriate to consider a combination of strategic purchases, opportunity-based purchases including possible conversion of existing land uses (that may involve additional remediation costs) along with progressive embellishment and improvement of existing open space;

- > It will be increasingly important to identify shared use opportunities within and beyond the boundaries of the City;
- > Associated initiatives to 'green' the City will be increasingly important to complement the open space network;
- > Given that the policy and strategy framework generally supports redevelopment within the City it is entirely appropriate that the new development (that is recognised as being of a significantly higher density than the existing older parts of the City) be liable for an increased open space contribution but that the contribution level be managed such that it is not a disincentive to development; and
- > That the implementation plan based on Implementing Breathing Space and Enhancing Open Space is used to guide the expenditure of open space contributions but that the City has some flexibility and discretion to adjust priorities as opportunities become available.

#### 8. PREFERRED APPROACH

In combination, *Breathing Space*, *Implementing Breathing Space* and *Enhancing Open Space* provide a comprehensive assessment of open space needs and a clear open space improvement implementation plan for the City of Darebin. It is clear that the projected population and the density of development will generate increased open space needs.

*Enhancing Open Space* contains a proposed framework for meeting open space 'gaps' within the City comprising:

- > Location based Strategic Land Acquisition
- > Opportunity based Land Purchases
- > Waterway Corridor Acquisition
- > Increases in service standards/quality of existing open space; and
- > Other open space land contributions that are offered as part of the redevelopment process (primarily on larger sites).

This framework, which includes reference to priority development precincts and a decision-making process, is supported as it will establish a strategic approach to progressive improvement of the Darebin Open Space network.

The projects that have been identified in *Implementing Breathing Space* total implementation costs of \$199M with a total cost that could be attributed to open space levy revenue of \$168M. The preferred form of the open space contribution is a municipal wide open space contribution of 10% of site area for all non-exempt subdivisions to be specified in clause 53.01 of the Darebin Planning Scheme.

10% is the preferred open space contribution (based on site value) with a revenue potential of approximately \$112M<sup>13</sup> between 2022-2028 (or approximately \$18.67M per annum) to enable delivery of a significant proportion of the open space projects that are identified in *Enhancing Open Space which have a combined value of approximately \$199M*. The revenue generated by introduction of a 10% contribution will not meet all of these costs however it is anticipated that there will be a need for some flexibility in the expenditure of funds as opportunities become available and as priorities change over time. In this regard it is very important that the expenditure of the funds is able to occur anywhere within the municipality.

An increased open space contribution (in excess of 10%) for larger strategic redevelopment sites is not supported as a 'requirement', however the ability for Council to negotiate with a development proponent to deliver more than 10% open space in lieu of other contributions and/or with Council compensation for an additional open space contribution is supported.

<sup>13</sup> This is an estimate only, the exact amount collected will be subject to development rates and land value escalations.





*Planning and Environment Act 1987*

## DAREBIN PLANNING SCHEME

## AMENDMENT C186dare

## INSTRUCTION SHEET

The planning authority for this amendment is the Darebin City Council

The Darebin Planning Scheme is amended as follows:

**Planning Scheme Ordinance**

The Planning Scheme Ordinance is amended as follows:

1. In **Local Planning Policy Framework** – replace Clause 21.02-2 with a new Clause 21.02-2 in the form of the attached document.
2. In **Local Planning Policy Framework** – replace Clause 21.02-5 with a new Clause 21.02-5 in the form of the attached document.
3. In **Particular Provisions** – Clause 53.01, replace the Schedule with a new Schedule in the form of the attached document.
4. In **Operational Provisions** – Clause 72.08, replace the Schedule with a new Schedule in the form of the attached document.

End of document

*Planning and Environment Act 1987*

## DAREBIN PLANNING SCHEME

### AMENDMENT C186dare

#### EXPLANATORY REPORT

##### Who is the planning authority?

This amendment has been prepared by the Darebin City Council, who is the planning authority for this amendment.

The Amendment has been made at the request of Darebin City Council.

##### Land affected by the Amendment

The Amendment applies to all land in the municipality.

##### What the amendment does

The amendment proposes to increase the public open space contribution rate for all subdivisions, by amending the schedule to Clause 53.01 (Public Open Space Contribution and Subdivision) and amending the Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS).

The amendment:

- Amends the schedule to Clause 53.01 Public Open Space and Subdivision of the Darebin Planning Scheme to require a 10% open space levy for all land in the municipality.
- Amends Clause 21.02 of the Local Planning Policy Framework to:
  - o Update local policy to implement relevant strategies of *Breathing Space: The Darebin Open Space Strategy (City of Darebin, 2019)*
  - o Update reference documents to include *Breathing Space: The Darebin Open Space Strategy (City of Darebin, 2019)*, *and Open Space Contributions Review Report (SGS Economics and Planning, 2019)*, [Implementing Breathing Space \(Hansen Partnership, 2021\)](#), [Enhancing Open Space \(Hansen Partnership, 2021\)](#) and [Open Space Contribution Report \(Mesh Planning, 2021\)](#)
- Amends the schedule to Clause 72.08 Background documents to include *Breathing Space: The Darebin Open Space Strategy (City of Darebin, 2019)*, *and Open Space Contributions Review Report (SGS Economics and Planning, 2019)*, [Implementing Breathing Space \(Hansen Partnership, 2021\)](#) and [Enhancing Open Space \(Hansen Partnership, 2021\)](#) and [Open Space Contribution Report \(Mesh Planning, 2021\)](#)

##### Strategic assessment of the Amendment

##### Why is the Amendment required?

Access to open space is essential to people's health and wellbeing. Darebin's population is expected to reach approximately 196,000 people by 2028. This will create greater pressure on existing public open spaces.

There are areas within Darebin that do not currently have access to open space within 500 metres and current access to open space per capita in Darebin is 19.6 square metres (as at 2018). Without creation of new open spaces, there will be a reduction in the open space per capita rates and an increase in the number and proportion of residents who do not have access to open space within 500 metres. Furthermore, residents living in higher density developments are anticipated to rely more heavily on open spaces for their needs.

30 square metres of open space per capita is recommended to deliver a reasonable standard of open space provision. In the absence of a state-wide standard the determination of a benchmark of 30 square metres per person is based on an assessment of open space provision standards internationally, nationally and other examples from within Victoria. Open space strategies for the City of Kingston, City of Wyndham, City of Frankston and City of Monash for example have open space provisions between 24 and 30.3 square metres (as demonstrated on p. 5 of the *Open Space Contributions Review Report*, SGS Economics and Planning, 2019).

It is not just access and proximity to open space that is important, but also the quality and useability of that open space. In a developed municipality, it is difficult to acquire enough land to ensure all occupants have access to an optimal per capita rate of public open space. It is therefore important to improve the quality of open spaces to deliver a greater level of open space services to the local community.

The current open space levy rates in the Darebin Planning scheme will not be sufficient to provide for the open space needs of the future population. The funds made available from the increased open space levy will be used to invest directly back into open spaces to improve the quality of existing spaces and to acquire more open space to grow the network.

*Breathing Space: The Darebin Open Space Strategy* (City of Darebin, 2019) was adopted by Council in September 2019. The strategy guides future open space planning in the municipality. A key action of the strategy is to undertake a planning scheme amendment to increase the open space contribution rate in the Darebin Planning Scheme.

*The Open Space Contributions Review Report* (SGS Economics and Planning, 2019) provides an independent analysis of public open space contribution requirements for Council based on expected growth rates and demand for future open spaces.

The report finds that there is need for an 18.2% open space contributions rate across land uses in Darebin to reach optimum quality of open space (30 square metres per capita). However, the report recommends an increase in the levy to a 10% open space contributions rate in Darebin across all land uses, to help ensure that the future community will have access to a reasonable standard of public open space provision. A 10% open space contributions rate equates to approximately 16 square metres (or equivalent) of open space provision per capita.

The calculation of open space contribution requirements [in this report](#) is founded on three key principles:

1. The City of Darebin is considered a single planning unit for open space planning purposes. Clause 53.01 allows for open space contributions collected to be spent anywhere within the municipality.
2. All residents (existing and future) of the City of Darebin are entitled to enjoy access to a reasonable standard of open space and planning for future open space acquisitions and upgrades should seek the most equitable distribution of open space services across the city.
3. An inclusionary provisions approach means that all development should equip itself with sufficient open space to meet its needs as indicated by planning standards, and this can be through land or cash in kind contributions.

[The above two documents formed the original background for Amendment C186dare. Since exhibition in 2019, further work has been undertaken to develop \*Implementing Breathing Space and Enhancing Open Space\* to provide a framework for the implementation of the strategy. \*Implementing Breathing Space\* prioritises actions identified in \*Breathing Space\*, and sets out the estimated costs, responsibilities and timeframes associated with each action, including the projected cost of delivering new open space. The purpose of the document is to establish the need for open space \(both delivering new and upgrading existing open space\) across Darebin in order to achieve \*Breathing Space\* objectives and provide an estimate of costs required to meet this need. \*Enhancing Open Space\* is a complementary document that sets out a strategic approach to delivery of new open space, including decision making criteria, and informs the cost estimates for new open space in \*Implementing Breathing Space\*.](#)

[Based on the findings of \*Implementing Breathing Space and Enhancing Open Space\*, the \*Open Space Contribution Report\* \(Mesh Planning 2021\) was prepared. Similar to the \*Open Space Contributions Review Report\* by SGS, this report recommends a 10% open space contribution rate. The calculation](#)

[of open space contributions in this report is based on the estimated costs associated with the implementation of \*Breathing Space\*, rather than a 30 square metre per capita provisioning standard.](#)

[All of these documents together, including the three open space reports and two contribution methodologies, provide a comprehensive strategic basis for this amendment's proposed increase of the public open space contribution levy.](#)

#### **How does the Amendment implement the objectives of planning in Victoria?**

The amendment implements the objectives of planning in Victoria contained in section 4(1) in the following ways:

- To provide for the fair, orderly, economic and sustainable use and development of land;
- To provide for the protection of natural and man-made resources and the maintenance of ecological processes and genetic diversity;
- To secure a pleasant, efficient and safe working, living and recreational environment for all Victorians and visitors to Victoria.
- To protect public utilities and other assets and enable the orderly provision and co-ordination of public utilities and other facilities for the benefit of the community.
- To balance the present and future interests of all Victorians.

The amendment helps to implement these objectives by:

- Providing a fair and equitable method of collecting contributions for open space.
- Providing public open space to meet the needs of the present and future population.
- Providing for the protection of natural and man-made resources and, protection and orderly provision and co-ordination public facilities by increasing the funding method to support improvements to public open spaces.

#### **How does the Amendment address any environmental, social and economic effects?**

##### Environmental Effects

The amendment will provide immense environmental improvements as it implements *Breathing Space: The Darebin Open Space Strategy (City of Darebin, 2019)* which reflects leading practice and actions regarding the climate emergency.

*Breathing Space: The Darebin Open Space Strategy (City of Darebin, 2019)* has three key directions:

- Meeting community open space needs
- Rewilding Darebin: Improving Biodiversity
- Creating a Green Streets Network

The amendment proposes an increase to the funding mechanism to contribute to improving existing and acquiring new open spaces which will be conserved to support a cooler City, increased biodiversity and nature habitat corridors.

##### Social Effects

The amendment will provide a strong benefit for the community as there is a clear link between health and wellbeing and access to quality open space. The open space contributions will contribute to funding improvements for open spaces that cater for all of Darebin's residents regardless of culture, gender, sexual orientation, age, socioeconomic condition and disability.

##### Economic Effects

The amendment will result in more financial resources to fund new open spaces and improve existing open space. The amendment will provide an equitable collection of contributions from subdivisions

across the municipality. The flat rate levy will provide greater certainty to developers and a more equitable means of distributing costs.

**Does the Amendment address relevant bushfire risk?**

The changes proposed in the amendment will not result in any increase to the risk to life as a priority, property, community infrastructure and the natural environment from bushfire.

**Does the Amendment comply with the requirements of any Minister's Direction applicable to the amendment?**

The amendment is consistent with the Ministerial Direction on the Form and Content of Planning Schemes (section 7(5) of the Act).

In accordance with Section 12 (2) (a) of the Planning and Environment Act, The Minister's Directions relevant to the amendment are:

Ministerial Direction No. 9 – Metropolitan Planning Strategy

The amendment is consistent with and implements the following aspects of Ministerial Direction No. 9 Metropolitan Planning Strategy, *Plan Melbourne 2017-2050*:

- Direction 5.1 – Create a city of 20-minute neighbourhoods. A 20 minute neighbourhood must offer high-quality public realm and open space.
- Direction 5.4 – Deliver local parks and green neighbourhoods in collaboration with communities.
  - o 5.4.1 – Develop a network of accessible, high-quality, local open spaces.
- Direction 6.4 – make Melbourne cooler and greener.
  - o 6.4.1 – support a cooler Melbourne by greening urban areas, buildings, transport corridors and open spaces to create an urban forest.
  - o 6.4.2 – Strengthen the integrated metropolitan open space network.
- Direction 6.5 – protect and restore natural habitats
  - o 6.5.1 – Create a network of green spaces that support biodiversity conservation and opportunities to connect with nature.

Ministerial Direction No. 11 – Strategic Assessment of Amendments

The requirements of Ministerial Direction No 11 are addressed through this Explanatory Report and accompanying strategic justification in support of this amendment.

Ministerial No. 15 – The planning scheme amendment process

The requirements of Ministerial Direction No 15 are addressed through complying with the specified planning scheme amendment process and associated timeframes.

**How does the Amendment support or implement the State Planning Policy Framework and any adopted State policy?**

The amendment supports the following provisions of the Planning Policy Framework:

- Clause 11- *Settlement* 'Planning is to anticipate and respond to the needs of existing and future communities through provision of zoned and serviced land for housing, employment, recreation and open space, commercial and community facilities and infrastructure'.

The amendment supports this clause by requiring all new subdivisions to contribute to the future open space needs of the municipality.

- Clause 12 – *Environmental and Landscape Values*. The objective at clause 12.05-2S *Landscapes* is 'to protect and enhance significant landscapes and open spaces that contribute to character, identity and sustainable environments'.

The amendment supports this clause by improving valued open spaces in the municipality.

- Clause 15- *Built Environment and Heritage*. The objective at clause 15.01-3S *subdivision design* is 'to ensure the designs of subdivision achieves attractive, safe accessible, diverse and sustainable neighbourhoods'.

The amendment supports this clause by providing the funding to create a network of open spaces and by protecting and enhancing native habitat.

- Clause 19- *Infrastructure*. The objective at clause 19.02-6S *Open space* is 'to establish, manage and improve a diverse and integrated network of public open space that meets the needs of the community'. The objective at clause 19.02-6R *Open space – Metropolitan Melbourne* is to strengthen the integrated metropolitan open space network'.

The amendment supports this clause by providing the funding to improve and acquire new open spaces that meet the needs of the community.

**How does the Amendment support or implement the Local Planning Policy Framework, and specifically the Municipal Strategic Statement?**

The amendment supports and amends the following clauses of the Local Planning Policy:

Clause 21.02-2 Natural Environment – the amendment is consistent with objectives to protect, maintain and enhance Darebin's natural environment.

Clause 21.02-5 Open Space – amends this clause by updating the key issues, strategies and further strategic work in-line with the recommendations of *Breathing Space: The Darebin Open Space Strategy (City of Darebin, 2019)*.

**How does the amendment support or implement the Municipal Planning Strategy?**

The Darebin Planning Scheme is scheduled for translation into the new planning scheme format in 2020. As part of this translation, the above clauses in the Municipal Strategic Statement will be redrafted. It is considered that the proposed changes to the current format will not hinder the translation process and will be able to be translated into the new format, with the rest of the local content as scheduled.

**Does the Amendment make proper use of the Victoria Planning Provisions?**

The amendment introduces and amended schedule to clause 53.01. This schedule is specifically provided in the Victorian Planning Provisions to allow councils to specify open space contribution rates appropriate for their local circumstances.

**How does the Amendment address the views of any relevant agency?**

The exhibition of the amendment will provide a formal opportunity for all relevant agencies to comment on the amendment. The amendment does not create any new referral agencies or referral requirements.

**Does the Amendment address relevant requirements of the Transport Integration Act 2010?**

The requirements of the Transport Integration Act 2010 are not considered to be relevant to this amendment.

**Resource and administrative costs**

- **What impact will the new planning provisions have on the resource and administrative costs of the responsible authority?**

The amendment may have an impact on the legal and administrative costs of the responsible authority. Increasing the open space levy rate across the municipality for all subdivisions may result in Council receiving additional legal appeals for those 2 lot subdivisions where council considers it likely that the land can be further subdivided and therefore applying the open space levy.

#### **Where you may inspect this Amendment**

The amendment is available for public inspection, free of charge, during office hours at the following places:

- City of Darebin (Planning Counter), Level 1, 274 Gower Street, Preston
- Northcote Customer Service Centre, 32-38 Separation Street, Northcote
- Reservoir Community and Learning Centre, 23 Edwardes Street, Reservoir
- Preston Library, 266 Gower Street, Preston
- Fairfield Library, 121 Station Street, Fairfield

The amendment can be viewed online at [www.darebin.vic.gov/C186dare](http://www.darebin.vic.gov/C186dare)

The amendment can also be inspected free of charge at the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning website at [www.planning.vic.gov.au/public-inspection](http://www.planning.vic.gov.au/public-inspection).

#### **Submissions**

Any person who may be affected by the amendment may make a submission to the planning authority. Submissions about the amendment must be received by ~~16 December 2019~~ [XX XXXXX 2021](#).

A submission must be sent to:

Coordinator Strategic Planning  
Darebin City Council  
PO Box 91  
Preston Victoria 3072

or via email to: [planningservices@darebin.vic.gov.au](mailto:planningservices@darebin.vic.gov.au)

or online [www.darebin.vic.gov.au/c186dare](http://www.darebin.vic.gov.au/c186dare)

#### **Panel hearing dates**

In accordance with clause 4(2) of Ministerial Direction No.15 the following panel hearing dates have been set for this amendment:

- directions hearing: To commence in the week of ~~Monday, 30 March 2020~~ [XXX XXXXX](#)
- panel hearing: To commence in the weeks of ~~Monday 27 April 2020 and Monday 4 May 2020~~ [XXX XXXX](#)

## DAREBIN PLANNING SCHEME

**21.02 ENVIRONMENT**

This Clause provides local content to support Clause 11.03 (Open Space), Clause 12 (Environmental and Landscape Values), Clause 13 (Environmental Risks), Clause 14 (Natural Resource Management) and Clause 15 (Built Environment and Heritage) of the State Planning Policy Framework.

**21.02-1 Strategic Environment Framework**

'The environment' encompasses all the circumstances, objects or conditions that surround us as we live, work and recreate – from the climate, soil, water and other living things to open spaces, buildings, and urban streetscapes. In land use planning, 'natural' and 'built' environments are generally distinguished separately as they are in the objectives. However, they are interconnected in how they interface and collectively contribute to the experience of life in Darebin. Council supports an approach to natural and built environments that:

- Protects and enhances natural environmental assets, in particular creek and habitat corridors, and manages visual and physical impacts from land use and development in a way that does not preclude accessibility and, where appropriate, the physical and visual integration between urban and natural environments.
- Promotes urban environments and open spaces designed for liveability and environmental sustainability, and making a positive contribution to the health and wellbeing of Darebin residents, workers and visitors.
- Recognises and protects areas and sites of natural, cultural and built heritage value.

Objectives and strategies for these are set out in the clauses below.

**21.02-2 Natural Environment****Overview**

Areas of natural environmental significance in Darebin include native grasslands at Central Creek Reservoir and Cherry Street Macleod; two major creek systems (Merri and Darebin); significant remnant vegetation (River Red Gums at Mount Cooper and Bundoora Park); and native habitat forest (Gresswell Forest and Hill, and La Trobe Wildlife Sanctuary) which also support significant native animal species.

The Merri and Darebin Creeks, Gresswell Habitat Link and Hurstbridge Rail Reserve provide a cohesive network of natural spaces and corridors. Appropriate landscape and water management on land adjoining this network can contribute to the protection of these habitats. Additionally, areas around Darebin and Merri Creeks that are popular for recreation, cycling and walking require planning to ensure they are safe spaces to access.

Refer to the Strategic Framework Plan at Clause 21.01-6 showing areas of natural environment significance.



**DAREBIN PLANNING SCHEME****Key Issues**

- Protection of remnant natural areas in Darebin from the impacts of development.
- Pressure for redevelopment of residential creek-side lots.
- Impact of industrial development on creek-side environs with regard to location of storage areas, car parking and design of the built form.
- Maintaining long term protection of remnant native vegetation in estates such as Springthorpe in Macleod and Mt. Cooper and Lancaster Gate in Bundoora.
- Impacts of land use activities on local and regional waterways through substances released into the stormwater system, run-off from roads, and litter.
- Maintaining a cohesive network of linked natural spaces and corridors to provide havens and corridors for wildlife and enhance water quality in the creeks.
- Balancing the need for preserving a natural landscape feel with the need for passive surveillance at interfaces between natural and built environments.

**Objective 1 – Protect and Enhance**

To protect, maintain and enhance Darebin's natural environment including the major creek systems.

**Strategies**

- Ensure that remnant vegetation is identified and conserved.
- Ensure that places and areas of natural heritage significance are conserved and enhanced.
- Encourage the use of indigenous vegetation and planting on private and public land to increase biodiversity.
- Manage landscapes in ways that contribute to the creation of a more ecologically sustainable natural environment.
- Ensure development of urban areas maintains or improves river and wetland health, waterway protection and flood plain health through appropriate stormwater and overland flow management and integrated water management planning of precincts.
- Provide for a consistent and coordinated planning approach to protect, maintain and enhance the natural, landscape, cultural and built character of the Darebin and Merri Creek environs.

**Objective 2 – Interfaces**

To achieve a balance between the protection of the natural environment and the safety and surveillance objectives of recreational users of public open space.

**Strategies**

- Ensure that land use and development is compatible and appropriately integrated with areas of natural heritage and environmental significance.

### DAREBIN PLANNING SCHEME

- Ensure that development adjacent to the Darebin and Merri Creeks retains and enhances each creek's unique contribution to the community and wider ecology.
- Balance the need to ensure the aesthetic impact of development adjacent to creeks is sensitive to existing creek environs, view lines and landscape works with the need to provide passive surveillance over creek-side environs, particularly around access points to public land and along pedestrian and cycling pathways.
- Consider fencing strategies for development adjacent to parks and reserves, which ensures fencing not only defines the transition from public to private realm but promotes good surveillance.
- Ensure development of private land adjoining the perimeter of Bundoora Park is designed and orientated to provide frontage to the park and avoid high fencing and expanses of wall at the park interface. Development should provide visual and physical connections to the park (via active frontages with appropriate land uses at ground level, pedestrian paths and links, and windows, terraces/balconies orientated to overlook the park) wherever possible.

#### Implementation

The strategies in relation to natural environment will be implemented through the planning scheme as follows:

#### Policy Guidelines

Apply Clause 22.03 Darebin Creek – Adjacent Land Design and Development in considering applications for development or subdivision of land adjacent to Darebin Creek.

#### Application of Zones and Overlays

- Apply the Public Conservation and Resource Zone over the Gresswell Habitat Link, Gresswell Forest Nature Conservation Reserve and Central Creek Grasslands.
- Apply Vegetation Protection Overlays to provide for the long term preservation of significant vegetation on the Mount Cooper, Springthorpe and Lancaster Gate Estates and the former Kingsbury Centre.
- Apply Environmental Significance Overlays to protect remnant vegetation sites and other areas of identified environmental significance.
- Apply Design and Development Overlays over private and public land adjacent to the Darebin and Merri Creeks to manage the impact of development on and provide appropriate interfaces with creek-side areas.
- Apply the Urban Floodway Zone and Land Subject to Inundation Overlay provisions as appropriate around waterways to minimise flood-related soil erosion, sedimentation and silting and to protect water quality.

#### Further Strategic Work

- Review the application of the Urban Floodway Zone along parts of the Merri, Darebin and Edgars Creeks.

### DAREBIN PLANNING SCHEME

- Review the Environmental Significance Overlays along Darebin Creek and Merri Creek to ensure that the boundary of each overlay covers areas where development is likely to have an impact on the creek environs.
- Review the Darebin Creek Design and Development Guidelines (2000) to inform preparation of a Design and Development Overlay for land adjacent to Darebin Creek.
- Review the Development Guidelines for Merri Creek (Merri Creek Management Committee, 2004) to inform preparation of a Design and Development Overlay for land adjacent to Merri Creek.
- Include an integrated water management plan and ecological improvement initiatives for Darebin Creek in the formulation of the Northland Structure Plan.

#### Reference Documents

Bundoora Park Master Plan 2012

Central Creek Grassland 5 Year Management Plan 2011-2016

Darebin Creek, Design and Development Guidelines, City of Darebin, 2000

Darebin Litter Plan 2011-2013

[Breathing Space: The Darebin Open Space Strategy \(Darebin City Council, 2019\), 2007-2017 \(2008\)](#)

Development Contributions Plan Development Guidelines for Merri Creek, Merri Creek Management Committee, 2004

Lower Darebin Creek Concept Plan, Parks Victoria/Melbourne Water, 1996

Merri Creek and Environs Strategy 2009-2014, Merri Creek Management Committee, 2009

Springthorpe Conservation Plan, February 2001

Springthorpe Tree Conservation Plans

Watershed: Towards a Water Sensitive Darebin, Darebin City Council Whole of Water Cycle Management Strategy 2015-2025

Watershed: Towards a Water Sensitive Darebin, Implementation Plan 2015-2025

#### 21.02-3 Built Environment

##### Overview

The design and quality of the built environment, including buildings, public spaces, infrastructure and streetscapes plays an important role in enhancing civic pride, liveability and social connectedness, and provides opportunities for creating a more sustainable city.

Good urban design acknowledges the collective impact of development both within and beyond the boundaries of individual sites and enables positive outcomes for the public realm that enhance people's wellbeing and experience of the built environment.

## DAREBIN PLANNING SCHEME

Darebin City Council is committed to environmental sustainability and actively encourages sustainably-designed buildings that reduce energy consumption and water use, encourage recycling and sustainable transport and that use recycled and sustainable materials.

### Key Issues

- Achieving high-quality design in development across a variety of urban environments, including activity centres and industrial/employment precincts.
- Impacts of large-scale development on streetscape amenity and pedestrian experience, and increased reliance on the public realm in providing visual appeal and amenity.
- How design might improve the interface and interaction of new developments with the public realm (including parks and open spaces).
- Incorporating Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) principles in the design and development of built environments and strengthening requirements at planning permit stage.
- Striking a balance between the understandable need for businesses to advertise and community expectations for an environment devoid of unattractive visual clutter.

### Objective 1 – Urban Design Excellence

To ensure development in Darebin exhibits good urban design and provides distinctive, attractive and engaging places in which to reside, visit or work.

### Strategies

- Encourage high quality design and buildings that respond to characteristics of the locality.
- Develop and implement detailed design guidelines for areas where substantial housing change and growth is encouraged.
- Ensure that important public views and vistas, where identified in a strategy or guideline adopted by Council, are recognised, protected and enhanced.
- Apply urban design principles when developing structure plans, land use strategies, and urban design guidelines.
- Promote land use and development in activity centres, strategic corridors and strategic development precincts in accordance with adopted Structure Plans, precinct plans or strategies.
- Ensure development in activity centres, strategic corridors and strategic development precincts:
  - is responsive to its environment with a high quality appearance
  - promotes an urban scale and character that is appropriate to the role and function of the activity centre or strategic corridor precinct
  - encourages consolidation of commercial areas along strategic corridors to create strong, vibrant hubs to serve the local community
  - manages negative off-site impacts and interface issues with surrounding sensitive land uses
  - promotes visual and physical improvements to the public realm
  - encourages a safe and accessible environment for pedestrians, cyclists, public transport users and motorists.

**DAREBIN PLANNING SCHEME**

- Ensure that development in industrial and commercial areas:
  - achieves a high standard of building design and provides for suitable landscaping and treatments to improve the visual character, function and layout of such areas
  - minimises the impact of traffic, noise and emissions from industrial land uses on the amenity of surrounding residential areas
  - reduces and minimises conflict between industrial and non-industrial land uses.
- Encourage streetscape upgrades and street tree planting, particularly in areas where Substantial Housing Change is envisaged.
- Collect development contributions from private development for streetscape upgrades.
- Undertake streetscape upgrades to Edwardes Street, Broadway and other streets in Reservoir Activity Centre.

**Objective 2 – Safe Urban Environments**

To promote safety through well-designed and well-maintained urban environments.

**Strategies**

- Encourage designs that incorporate elements that promote safety, such as clear sightlines, safe movement, passive surveillance, good connections, good access, mixed use and activities that promote public use.
- Ensure that public spaces, access routes and areas in the vicinity are attractive, safe, uncluttered and work effectively for all.
- Ensure new retail and/or mixed use development incorporates verandahs over footpaths where appropriate.
- Ensure that buildings at ground level provide active frontages and a high level of pedestrian amenity.
- Encourage day and evening activity in activity centres, other precincts and key development.
- Consider the above strategies in assessments and when developing strategies and urban design guidelines.

**Objective 3 – Environmentally Sustainable Design**

To promote and facilitate development that incorporates best practice environmentally sustainable design and promotes sustainable living and business practices.

**Strategies**

- Encourage the adaptive reuse of buildings to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill.
- Encourage the design of new and retrofitted buildings and public spaces to incorporate high standards of energy efficient design, water sensitive urban design, sustainable transportation, waste reduction and protection of biodiversity.
- Promote the integration of land use and sustainable transport (walking, cycling and public transport) in accordance with the strategies in Clause 21.05-1.
- Encourage best practice industrial and commercial development to minimise amenity impacts and achieve long term environmental sustainability.

**DAREBIN PLANNING SCHEME**

- Require the preparation of Sustainable Design Assessments and Sustainability Management Plans for residential and non-residential development as part of the planning permit approval process.

**Objective 4 - Signage**

To ensure signage is integrated into development and streetscapes.

**Strategies**

- Minimise visual clutter and prevent the proliferation of signs, particularly along major gateways, road reservations, commercial/retail areas and industrial estates.
- Ensure that outdoor signage presents a coordinated and high quality image.
- Ensure outdoor signage is located on the land to which it relates.
- Encourage simple, clear, consistent and non-repetitive advertising that is displayed in appropriate locations and planned as an overall signage package for a site.
- Ensure outdoor advertising is appropriate with regard to the architectural design of buildings on which signs are displayed.
- Incorporate outdoor advertising into the design of new buildings and major renovations and ensure signage is planned for at the beginning rather than at the end of development.

**Implementation**

The strategies in relation to built environment will be implemented through the planning scheme as follows:

**Policy Guidelines**

- Apply Clause 22.01 Junction Framework Plan in considering applications for use and development in the Junction Strategic Development Precinct.
- Apply Clause 22.04 Industrial and Commercial Activity in considering applications for use and development in the Industrial 1, Industrial 3 and Commercial 2 Zones.
- Apply Clause 22.05 High Street Corridor Land Use and Urban Design in considering applications for use and development in the High Street corridor.
- Apply Clause 22.06 in considering applications for Residential or Mixed Use Development in a Residential Growth Zone, Mixed Use Zone, Commercial Zone, Priority Development Zone and, where considered relevant, General Residential Zone.
- Apply Clause 22.08 Northcote Activity Centre in considering applications for use and development in the Northcote Activity Centre.
- Apply Clause 22.09 Preston Central (Incremental Change) in considering applications development in residential precincts of the Preston Activity Centre.
- Apply Clause 22.12 Environmentally Sustainable Development in considering applications for residential and non-residential development.

**Application of Zones and Overlays**

- Apply the Activity Centre Zone to activity centres, incorporating urban design frameworks and guidelines.

**DAREBIN PLANNING SCHEME**

- Apply the Design and Development Overlay to ensure that key public views and vistas are protected and enhanced.
- Apply the Design and Development Overlay to sites and precincts to achieve specific desired built form outcomes, design principles and treatment of interfaces (as required by structure plans, strategies, or site studies).
- Apply Design and Development Overlays along strategic corridors to achieve high quality development in accordance with relevant urban design frameworks.
- Apply the Development Plan Overlay to strategic redevelopment sites and precincts.

**Further Strategic Work**

- Develop an Environmentally Sustainable Development Strategy that will:
  - establish a framework to coordinate the various environmental policies of Council and provide strategic directions for energy efficiency, waste management and integrated water management
  - set design guidelines for achieving sustainable development that minimises energy and water consumption and encourages reuse of water and waste; and
  - provide the basis for other planning measures such as overlays for achieving sustainable development at both site and precinct scale.
- Prepare and implement Urban Design Frameworks and guidelines for development in:
  - Northland Activity Centre
  - Reservoir Activity Centre
  - Fairfield Village and Miller-on-Gilbert Neighbourhood Centres
  - Heidelberg Road Corridor
  - The Junction – South Preston and Oakover Village Strategic Redevelopment Precincts.
- Review the Preston Structure Plan 2006 (as amended) and Northcote Structure Plan (2007) to ensure the strategic directions in these plans address contemporary issues and reflect the broader strategic vision for municipal growth and change.
- Review the High Street Urban Design Framework (2005) and implement Design and Development Overlay controls for intermodal areas of High Street.
- Review the Bell Street Corridor Strategy (2006) and implement Design and Development Overlay controls to encourage high quality development along the Bell Street Corridor.
- Identify important public views and vistas in the municipality.
- Explore opportunities to incorporate public art elements in high profile developments.
- Identify and support the delivery of streetscape upgrades in Substantial Housing Change areas.

**Reference Documents**

Bell Street Corridor Strategy, Hansen Partnership, 2006

Climate Change and Peak Oil Adaptation Plan, 2009

Community Climate Change Action Plan 2009-2020

Community Health and Wellbeing Plan 2009-2013

### DAREBIN PLANNING SCHEME

Darebin Community Safety Strategy 2012-2016

Darebin Housing Strategy 2013 (revised 2015)

Darebin Waste and Litter Strategy 2015-2025

Green Streets Strategy 2013

High Street Urban Design Framework and High Street Study Precinct Guidelines, 2005

Northcote Activity Centre Structure Plan, 2007, and Medium and Low Change Residential Areas Precinct Guidelines, 2008

Northland Residential Neighbourhood Precinct Structure Plan, 2014

Plenty Road Integrated Land Use and Transport Study, 2013

Preston Central Structure Plan 2006 (as amended) and Urban Design Framework and Guidelines, 2006

Reservoir Structure Plan, 2012

Residential Built Form Guidelines, 2014

Safer Design Guidelines for Victoria, 2005

Urban Design Charter for Victoria, 2010

Urban Design Framework 2015 St Georges Road and Plenty Road Corridors

Watershed: Towards a Water Sensitive Darebin, Darebin City Council Whole of Water Cycle Management Strategy 2015-2025

Watershed: Towards a Water Sensitive Darebin, Implementation Plan 2015-2025

#### 21.02-4 Heritage

##### Overview

Darebin municipality's rich and diverse natural heritage and history of human settlement, from pre-contact inhabitation, through European colonisation to the modern era, has created a heritage fabric characterised by many layers and types of significance.

The extensive stock of older buildings can provide opportunities for redevelopment that demonstrate principles of cultural and ecological sustainability, possibly through adaptive reuse, urban design and architectural excellence. Some heritage places have the potential to increase and enhance local and regional tourism opportunities.

##### Key Issues

- Providing a balance between conservation needs and capacity for new infill development within heritage precincts to deliver a good design outcome.
- Balancing diversity of experience and conservation of biodiversity values around natural heritage assets.

##### Objective 1 – Heritage Places and Areas



**DAREBIN PLANNING SCHEME**

To ensure that places and areas of cultural and natural heritage significance are conserved and enhanced.

**Strategies**

- Encourage the retention of any significant original fabric in development proposals.
- Discourage demolition or relocation of locally significant heritage buildings.
- Encourage appropriate use of heritage places in keeping with heritage significance.
- Identify and protect sites of identified Aboriginal cultural heritage significance.
- Identify and protect sites of natural heritage significance.

**Objective 2 – Development and Heritage**

To promote sympathetic infill and redevelopment of heritage places and areas.

**Strategies**

- Ensure development within heritage areas is sympathetic with the heritage character of the area.
- Ensure that redevelopment of heritage buildings and areas is visually compatible with existing forms.
- Promote innovative responses that makes a positive contribution to the heritage places and areas.
- Facilitate designs that are sensitive to heritage and urban character.
- Require conservation management plans for key sites prior to approval and commencement of works.

**Implementation**

The strategies in relation to heritage will be implemented through the planning scheme as follows:

**Application of Zones and Overlays**

- Apply the Heritage Overlay to places of local, regional, State or national heritage significance.
- Apply the Environmental Significance Overlay to places of natural heritage significance and culturally significant landscapes, trees and/or vegetation.

**Further Strategic Work**

- Review the Darebin Heritage Strategy, which should include the development of design guidelines on demolition and redevelopment of heritage places, and provide the strategic basis for development of a local policy to guide decision making.
- Prepare a Natural Heritage Study to identify sites of natural heritage significance and form strategies for ongoing conservation and management.

**Reference Documents:**

City of Darebin Heritage Study: Volume 3, Key Findings & Recommendations, 2008

## DAREBIN PLANNING SCHEME

City of Darebin Heritage Study: Volume 4a, Preston Central Heritage Assessment, Key Findings and Recommendations, 2008

City of Darebin Heritage Study, Volume 4b, Preston Central Heritage Place Citations, 2008

Darebin Heritage Review Volumes 1, 2, & 3, 2002

Darebin Housing Strategy 2013 (revised 2015) City of Darebin Citations for Individually Significant Buildings, 1996

## 21.02-5 Open Space

**Overview**

Access to and enjoyment of open space is a key contributor to quality of life and local amenity. Council aims to improve the quantity and quality of open space and encourage the use and development of waterways and linkages. Priorities for managing open space are guided by the Breathing Space: The Darebin Open Space Strategy (Darebin City Council, 2019) 2007-2017, which identifies and categorises/classifies open spaces according to their size and role by state down to local role, and the range of functions each space should fulfil.

**Key Issues**

- Darebin is a developed municipality with limited opportunities for creating additional open space. Existing open space is highly valued by the community.
- There are areas in Darebin which currently have limited access to open space.
- Provision of sufficient open space as the City grows, particularly in higher density living precincts where there is higher reliance on ~~for~~ communal facilities for outdoor activities and recreation.
- Provision of open spaces that cater to different user groups and are inclusive of all members of the community.

**Objective**

- To provide a safe, accessible and high quality open space network that is equitably distributed across the municipality.

**Strategies**

- Increase the quality and quantity of open space to address gaps in Darebin's open space network.
- Ensure that strategic redevelopment sites that seek high residential densities provide an appropriate level of open space to cater for the intended population.
- Encourage opportunities for public and communal open spaces adjacent to the creek environs.
- Protect and enhance existing open spaces where possible.

### DAREBIN PLANNING SCHEME

- Encourage linear open space linkages along waterways including pedestrian and bicycle access.
- Include provision for acquisition and improvement of open space in Development Contributions Plans.
- Consider opportunities for 'greening' in areas of higher density development, including alternative to traditional ground level landscaping e.g. green roofs and walls.
- Ensure open spaces contribute to increasing biodiversity, including through strategic land acquisition.
- Design public open spaces that are welcoming, safe, multipurpose and easy to access for all members of the community.
- Encourage the design of public open space to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage.
- Encourage opportunities for urban food production in open spaces.

#### Implementation

The strategies will be implemented through the planning scheme as follows:

- Application of Zones and Overlays
- Apply the Public Park and Recreation Zone to all municipal reserves.
- Apply the Public Conservation and Resource Zone to undeveloped municipal reserves which contain significant levels of indigenous vegetation or high biodiversity values.
- Apply the Heritage Overlay to open space of recognised cultural and social heritage value.

#### Policy Guidelines

- When deciding on an application to develop or subdivide land, consider whether to seek a land contribution for public open space as part of the redevelopment of strategic sites, where the Responsible Authority has identified a need for additional open space in the locality through Breathing Space: the Darebin Open Space Strategy (SGS Economics and Planning, 2019) , Implementing Breathing Space (Hansen Partnership, 2021), and Enhancing Breathing Space (Hansen Partnership, 2021) or any adopted structure plan, master plan , urban design framework.

#### Further Strategic Work

- ~~— Create a strategic land acquisition plan to guide decisions on the selection of open space.~~
- Review and rezone public open space in accordance with relevant strategies.
- Review the Environmental Significance Overlays along Darebin Creek and Merri Creek to ensure that the boundary of each overlay covers areas where development is likely to have an impact on the creek environs.
- Undertake an assessment of the heritage significance of the City's older reserves as a basis for conservation planning and management, including Oldis Gardens, Johnson Park, LW Williams Reserve, JS Grey Reserve, Adam Reserve, Batman Park, Penders Park and AG Davis Reserve.

## DAREBIN PLANNING SCHEME

## Reference Documents

Bundoora Park Precinct Master Plan, 2012

[Breathing Space: The Darebin Open Space Strategy, 2007-2017](#) (Darebin City Council, 2008/2019)

[Open Space Contributions Review](#) (SGS Economics and Planning, 2019)

[Implementing Breathing Space and Enhancing Open Space](#) (Hansen Partnership, 2021)

[Open Space Contribution Report](#) (Mesh Planning, 2021)

Development Contributions Plan

Leisure Strategy 2010-2020

Playspace Strategy 2010-2020

DAREBIN PLANNING SCHEME

## DAREBIN PLANNING SCHEME

SCHEDULE TO CLAUSE 53.01 PUBLIC OPEN SPACE CONTRIBUTION AND  
SUBDIVISION

## 1.0 Subdivision and public open space contribution

Type or location of subdivision	Amount of contribution for public open space
The subdivision of land that creates:	
All land in the municipality	10%
1 additional lot	None specified
2 additional lots	2%
3 additional lots	3%
4 additional lots	4%
5 or more additional lots	5%

## DAREBIN PLANNING SCHEME

## SCHEDULE TO CLAUSE 72.08 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

## 1.0 Background Documents

Name of background document	Amendment number – clause reference
<a href="#">Breathing Space: The Darebin Open Space Strategy (Darebin City Council, 2019)</a>	<a href="#">C186</a>
<a href="#">Open Space Contributions Review (SGS Economics and Planning, 2019)</a>	<a href="#">C186</a>
<a href="#">Implementing Breathing Space (Hansen Partnership, 2021)</a>	<a href="#">C186</a>
<a href="#">Enhancing Open Space (Hansen Partnership, 2021)</a>	<a href="#">C186</a>
<a href="#">Open Space Contribution Report (Mesh Planning, 2021)</a>	<a href="#">C186</a>

**8.5 VICTORIAN ENERGY COLLABORATION (VECO) UPDATE****Author:** Energy Project Officer**Reviewed By:** General Manager City Sustainability and Strategy

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In September 2020, Darebin Council as the lead Council on behalf of the 47 members of the Buyers Group released an open Request for Tender for the provision of a new electricity supply contract from 100% renewable energy supplies from licenced electricity retailers.

The procurement process was completed in April 2021 with 46 out of 47 Councils taking up the retail electricity offer from Red Energy. Supply agreements commenced on 1 July 2021.

The project is now called the Victorian Energy Collaboration (VECO), previously known as the LG PPA Project, and has become the largest ever emissions reduction project undertaken by local government in Australia, aggregating over 45% of all Victorian Council electricity to switch to 100% renewable energy.

All of Darebin's electricity supplies will be sourced under this contract with large buildings and streetlighting commencing 1 July 2021 and small buildings commencing 1 January 2022 until 31 December 2030.

Darebin is now looking to offer the same VECO agreement to other Victorian Councils who are yet to secure a long-term electricity contract for 100% renewable energy and is considering options for businesses.

<b>Recommendation</b>
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**That Council:**

1. Notes the update on the Victorian Energy Collaboration project and the significance of this landmark achievement and Darebin's role as lead organisation.

**BACKGROUND / KEY INFORMATION**

Prior to the creation of the Victorian Energy Collaboration (VECO) most Victorian Councils procured their electricity through a conventional 2-3 year fixed-price contract with an energy retailer. Usually these contracts were exposed to significant price volatility of the energy market. Any purchases of renewable energy (e.g. GreenPower) were often on a short term or ad-hoc basis, more expensive and rarely taken up.

In response, Darebin in conjunction with the Victorian Greenhouse Alliances looked to provide an alternative model that provided a longer-term agreement that incorporated 100% renewable electricity at a better price than 'business as usual'.



In September 2020, Darebin City Council, as the lead Council on behalf of the 47 members of the Buyers Group, released an open Request for Tender for the provision of a new electricity supply contract from 100% renewable energy supplies from licenced electricity retailers. The procurement process was completed in April 2021, with 46/47 Councils taking up the retail electricity offer from Red Energy and supply agreements commenced on July 1, 2021.

Some of the key features of the offer include:

- Final pricing was modelled by the project's energy advisors and found to be a price that is better than business as usual (which was the project's key financial criteria);
- A contract for a period of 9.5 years, commencing July 1, 2021 and concluding 31 December 2030; linking the electricity supply to two considerable wind farms (one that has just become fully operational, another that is under construction and will be ready to commence supply by mid-2022). This means the project will be supporting additional renewable energy supply in the grid; and
- Considerable socio-economic and community value add for the regions where the wind farms are located, as well as Victoria more broadly.

The project is now called the Victorian Energy Collaboration (VECO, previously the LG PPA Project) and has become the largest ever emissions reduction project undertaken by local government in Australia, aggregating over 45% of all Victorian council electricity to switch to 100% renewable energy.

A project launch event was coordinated in late May 2021 with the VECO member Councils, Victorian Greenhouse Alliances as well as Red Energy representatives.

All of Darebin's electricity supplies will be sourced under this contract with large buildings and streetlighting commencing 1 July 2021 and small buildings commencing 1 January 2022 until 31 December 2030.

### **Previous Council Resolution**

This report implements Clause 4 of Council's resolution at its meeting held on 02 September 2019:

*That Council:*

- (1) Approves Council's participation including role as the lead organisation, in all future stages of the Local Government Power Purchase Project.*
- (2) Approves the commitment of all of Council's Large Market and Unmetered Streetlighting accounts to the Local Government Power Purchase Project.*
- (3) Delegates the authority of the Chief Executive to finalise and execute the retail supply agreement contract(s) on behalf of Darebin Council, subject to the final offer(s) being within the agreed financial limits of: that the net present cost of the PPA offer to be no more than the cost of business as usual based on the mid-renewables scenario.*
- (4) Receives a subsequent report at the conclusion of the tendering process that provides an update on the outcomes of the project.*

At its meeting held on 02 September 2019, Council also resolved:

*That Council:*

- (1) *Approves the expansion of Council's commitment to the Local Government Power Purchase Project, to include all of Council's Small Market account types.*
- (2) *Delegates the authority of the Chief Executive Officer to finalise and execute the retail supply agreement contract(s) on behalf of Darebin Council, subject to the final offer(s) being within the agreed financial limits of: that the net present cost of the PPA offer to be no more than the cost of business as usual based on the midrenewables scenario.*

## COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

### Consultation

The engagement and consultation of stakeholders and partners was key to driving an outcome that met the needs of such a wide group. Collaboration is at the heart of the project, with considerable input from a variety of internal and external stakeholders including:

- Internal Project Control Group (internal) - Consisting of General Manager City Sustainability & Strategy, Manager for Finance, Manager Climate Emergency and Sustainable Transport, Manager Creative Culture and Events, Coordinator Climate Emergency and Environment Strategy.
- Project Steering Committee (external) - consisting of senior representatives of the Buyers Group. Their role was to oversee and guide the project throughout the process.
- Buyer Group (external) - consisting of primary and secondary contacts from each of the Councils.
- Communications Advisory Group (external) - consisting of experienced media and communications representatives of the Buyers Group. Their role was to assist with developing the project's key communications documents and activities.

### Communications

Darebin City Council together with the project's Communications Advisory Group developed a comprehensive communications plan including:

- Project branding to coincide with the new project name.
- A dedicated website.
- Project videos, photographs and social media provisions.
- Project launch event; and
- Future promotional and communications activities.

At the launch in late May 2021, Darebin organised for ABC news to run an exclusive online article about the project which received over 20,000 views in the first two days of its publication. Since then over 200 news outlets nationwide have featured the project. Examples include:

- [The ABC's first online article at 6.16am](#)
- [Geelong Indy](#)
- [Renew Economy](#)
- [The Courier, Ballarat](#)
- Australian Associated Press, which was syndicated across 113 different news organisations including [The West Australian](#), [the Launceston Examiner](#) and a number of rural and regional papers. This was predominantly online but also printed in some regional newspapers.
- Regional TV bulletins such as Win TV Albury.
- A number of regional commercial radio stations, including Triple M radio in Wodonga and Geelong K Rock radio, who both interviewed the Mayor.

By 0930 am on May 21, VECO had been mentioned 441 times in stories across online, TV and radio.

Communication and promotional opportunities will continue to be rolled out over the course of the next 12- 18 months.

At an appropriate time, officers will organise a site tour with participating councils. This was previously planned to coincide with the contract start date on 1 July 2021 but was cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions.

## ANALYSIS

### Alignment to Council Plan / Council policy

Strategic Direction 3 - Climate, Green and Sustainable

VECO strongly aligns Council's ambition to continue to lead with our response to the climate emergency through collaborating with other Councils to deliver unprecedented emissions reductions.

### Environmental Sustainability Considerations

By switching to 100% renewable energy the project will be collectively procuring 240GWh of electricity from two wind farms located in Victoria:

**Dundonnell Wind Farm-** located 23 kilometres north-east of Mortlake in Western Victoria. This wind farm consists of 80 turbines with a total project capacity of 336MW. Construction commenced in 2019 and successfully began generating energy into the grid in early 2021.

**Murra Warra Wind Farm-** located 25 kilometres north of Horsham. This wind farm will consist of 38 turbines with a total project capacity of 209MW. Construction commenced in September 2020 and will begin supplying energy to the project from mid-2022.

### **Climate Emergency**

VECO is the largest emissions reduction project ever undertaken by the local government sector in Australia, representing 46 Councils or nearly 60% of all Victoria local governments.

By switching to 100% renewable energy the project will be collectively procuring 240GWh of electricity, saving 260,000 tonnes of carbon emissions from entering the atmosphere – the same as taking 90,000 cars off the road or powering 48,000 households.

The renewable energy will be used to power council-owned infrastructure, like our town halls, sports grounds, community venues, leisure centres and streetlights.

### **Equity, Inclusion and Wellbeing Considerations**

With many Councils allowing community groups using their facilities to access the VECO offer for their electricity supplies, this has overcome a significant barrier to many community groups accessing renewable electricity at a competitive rate.

### **Cultural Considerations**

With many Councils allowing community groups using their facilities to access the VECO offer for their electricity supplies, this has overcome a significant barrier to many cultural based community groups accessing renewable electricity at a competitive rate.

### **Economic Development Considerations**

Being associated with two significant wind farms, this infrastructure investment creates jobs, and supports local communities through areas such as increased retail, and accommodation expenditure. In addition, the broader Victorian community will see ongoing benefits including: Dundonnell Wind farm completed the bulk of construction in 2019. However, the farm will create 10-15 direct ongoing jobs, whilst providing an annual community benefit fund to the value of \$50,000.

Whilst Murra Warra II Farm is currently being constructed, it is anticipated to generate 114 direct FTE positions created during constructions and approximate 7 direct ongoing jobs. An independent study by Essential Economics estimated that Murra Warra I Wind Farm would generate an overall economic stimulus of up to \$68M, Murra Warra II is expected to generate similar stimulus.

Landowners will receive approximately \$190,000 p.a. in revenue whilst a community fund will be created providing approximately \$1.1 million over the next 25 years back to the local community.

Looking forward to 2021-22, Council officers will investigate options for local businesses to purchase renewable energy, to save on energy bills and reduce emissions.

### **Financial and Resource Implications**

The project's energy advisors undertook price modelling during the tender process and compared them against each other and against the Business-As-Usual scenario. The price model results demonstrated that the Red Energy offer was cheaper than the Business-As-Usual scenario over the life of the contract.

The deal secured by VECO will save on Darebin's energy bills by approximately 30% compared to electricity costs in 2020-21.

## Legal and Risk Implications

The project involved a large procurement activity and establishment of a rigorous contract. Legal and risk management were critical to the project's success.

## Operational Impacts

The new electricity contract under VECO provides a single electricity retailer (Red Energy) for the next 9.5 years. This creates more consistency for ongoing management of the contract and significantly reduced staff time managing re-contracting arrangements that typically occurred every 2-3 years previously.

## DISCUSSION

Now that VECO has been delivered, and in line with the project's key governance document - the Implementation Deed, Darebin will begin the transition of lead organisation responsibilities to Glen Eira City Council.

Darebin will continue to coordinate the project's media, communications and marketing responsibilities until June 2022, before handing over this aspect of the lead organisation role to Glen Eira.

## OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

Nil.

## IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

- Over the course of the next six months, Darebin will continue to roll out several communications and marketing opportunities consistent with the project's communications plan.
- At the same time, Darebin will transition the responsibilities of contract management and other group-level management roles to Glen Eira.
- Council officers will also review VECO and consider how the lessons can inform other collaboration activities for Councils and other organisations undertaking group procurement for energy contracts or other services.

## Timeline

Activity	Timelines
Hand over lead organisation role to Glen Eira	By 30 Sept 2021
Roll out of VECO communications plan	Aug 2021 – 30 June 2022
Hand over communications role to Glen Eira	30 June 2022

**RELATED DOCUMENTS**

- VECO project website: <https://veco.org.au/>
- Introducing VECO film: <https://youtu.be/SMAQa3lDvNs>

**Attachments**

Nil

**DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST**

Section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020* requires members of Council staff and persons engaged under contract to provide advice to Council to disclose any conflicts of interest in a matter to which the advice relates.

The Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.

**8.6 PROPERTY MATTERS REPORT****Author:** Senior Property Services Officer**Reviewed By:** General Manager, Governance and Engagement

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report relates to two current property matters that require Council's consideration including;

- (1) The outcome of preliminary investigations into the proposed discontinuance of the right of way/road adjoining 4 and 6 Tynan Street and 415 to 427 Gilbert Road, Preston and to seek approval to commence the statutory procedures under section 206 and clause 3 of Schedule 10 to the *Local Government Act 1989* to discontinue the road.
- (2) The outcome of preliminary investigations into the proposed declaration of the 3.05m wide road and 0.30m to 0.68m wide road (which was formerly a reserve) adjoining 4 to 9 Kenwood Court, 19 to 47 Showers Street, 15 to 19 Railway Place West and 32 Oakover Road, Preston and to seek approval to commence the statutory procedures pursuant to the provisions of section 204(1) of the *Local Government Act 1989* to declare the road a public highway.

<b>Recommendation</b>
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**Recommendation 1:****Road adjoining 4 and 6 Tynan Street and 415 and 427 Gilbert Road, Preston**

1. **That** Council:
  - (a) Commences the statutory procedures under section 206 and clause 3 of Schedule 10 to the Local Government Act 1989 to discontinue the Road adjoining 4 and 6 Tynan Street and 415 to 427 Gilbert Road, Preston, shown hatched in the statutory plan in **Appendix A**; and section 114 of the Local Government Act 2020 to sell the land from the Road
  - (b) Gives public notice under section 223 of the Local Government Act 1989 and section 114 of the Local Government Act 2020 in the appropriate newspapers and on Council's website of the intention to discontinue the road and sell the land to the adjoining property owners (or be specific) by private treaty and transfer to itself any land from the Road not sold in accordance with Council policy.

**Recommendation 2:**

**Road adjoining 4 to 9 Kenwood Court, 19 to 47 Showers Street, 15 to 19 Railway Place West and 32 Oakover Road, Preston**

**2. That Council:**

- (a) Acting under section 204(1) of the Local Government Act 1989 (“the Act”), resolves that the statutory procedures be commenced to declare the land from the 3.05m wide road and 0.30 to 0.68m wide road (which was formerly a reserve) adjoining 4 to 9 Kenwood Court, 19 to 47 Showers Street, 15 to 19 Railway Place West and 32 Oakover Road, Preston, shown hatched in the statutory plan in Appendix A, to be a public highway for the purposes of section 204(1) of the Act.
- (b) Gives public notice under section 223 of the Act of the proposal to declare the land shown hatched on Appendix A to be a public highway.

**BACKGROUND / KEY INFORMATION**

Council is required to consider a range of property matters for decision. These include matters such as property acquisitions and disposals, statutory naming processes, Right of Way disposals and proposed Road declarations.

In this case the matters specifically relate to the commencement of statutory procedures into the proposed sale of three separate parcels of land from previously discontinued rights of way/roads.

In accordance with best practice and good governance principles reporting of property matters has been consolidated into one single standing report.

**COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT****ANALYSIS****Alignment to Council Plan / Council policy**

Strategic Direction 4 - Responsible, Transparent and Responsive

**Environmental Sustainability Considerations**

There are no factors in this report which impact upon environmental sustainability considerations.

**Climate Emergency**

There are no factors in this report which impact upon climate emergency.

**Equity, Inclusion and Wellbeing Considerations**

There are no factors in this report that impact upon equity, inclusion and wellbeing considerations.



**Cultural Considerations**

There are no factors in this report that impact upon cultural considerations.

**Economic Development Considerations**

There are no factors in this report which impact upon economic development considerations.

**Financial and Resource Implications**

This work will be undertaken within current budget parameters.

**Legal and Risk Implications**

Any legal or risks and governance implications associated with the items will be documented in the options provided to Council.

**DISCUSSION**

Council's property portfolio must meet current service needs while providing the flexibility to meet future requirements. Roads, reserves, revenue strips and other pieces of land of unusual shape and limited usefulness that are less than 200m<sup>2</sup> in area (collectively referred to as minor Council property assets) were originally set aside in early plans of subdivision for a particular purpose, such as access or drainage. In many cases these parcels of land are still required for and need to remain open and available to the public. In situations where a minor Council property asset is no longer reasonably required for that purpose or any other strategic purposes it may be considered surplus and suitable for sale.

**OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

As outlined in **Appendix A**.

**IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY**

As outlined in **Appendix A**

**Timeline**

It is expected that all relevant actions will be affected within three months of this report.

**RELATED DOCUMENTS**

- Local Government Act 1989
- Local Government Act 2020
- Road Management Act 2004
- Sale of Minor Council Property Assets Policy

**Attachments**

- Summary of Information (**Appendix A**) [↓](#)

**DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST**

Section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020* requires members of Council staff and persons engaged under contract to provide advice to Council to disclose any conflicts of interest in a matter to which the advice relates.

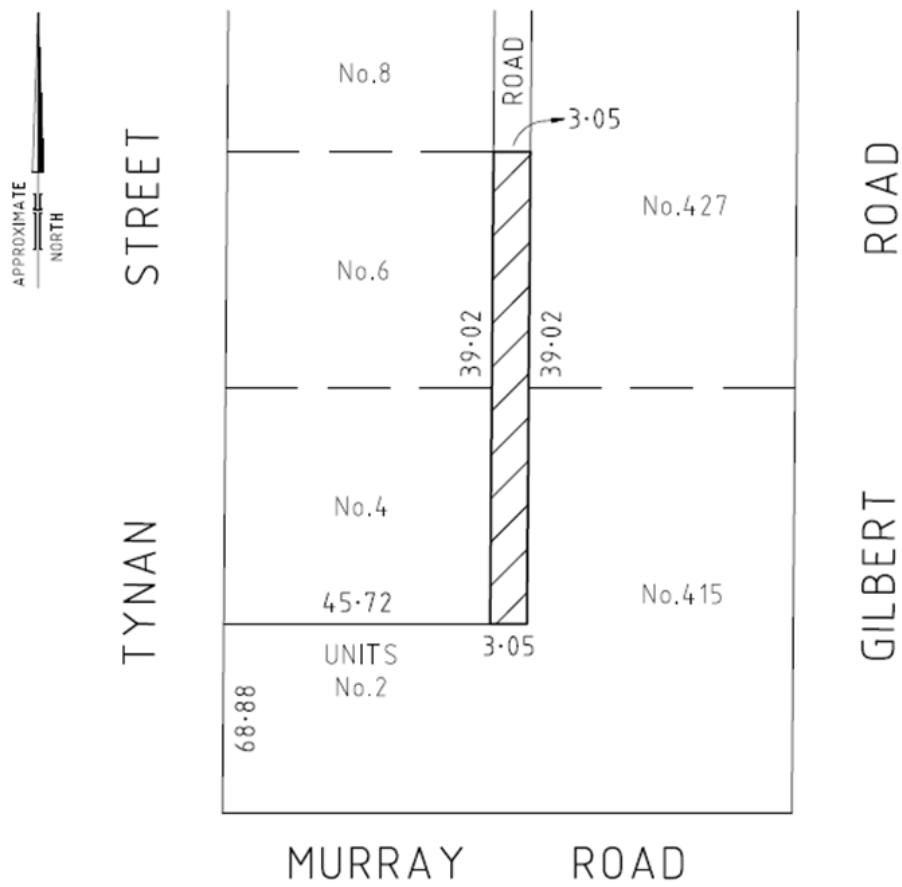
The Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.

**SUMMARY INFORMATION ON PROPERTY MATTERS****ITEM 1****Right of way/road adjoining 4 and 6 Tynan Street and 415 to 427 Gilbert Road, Preston**

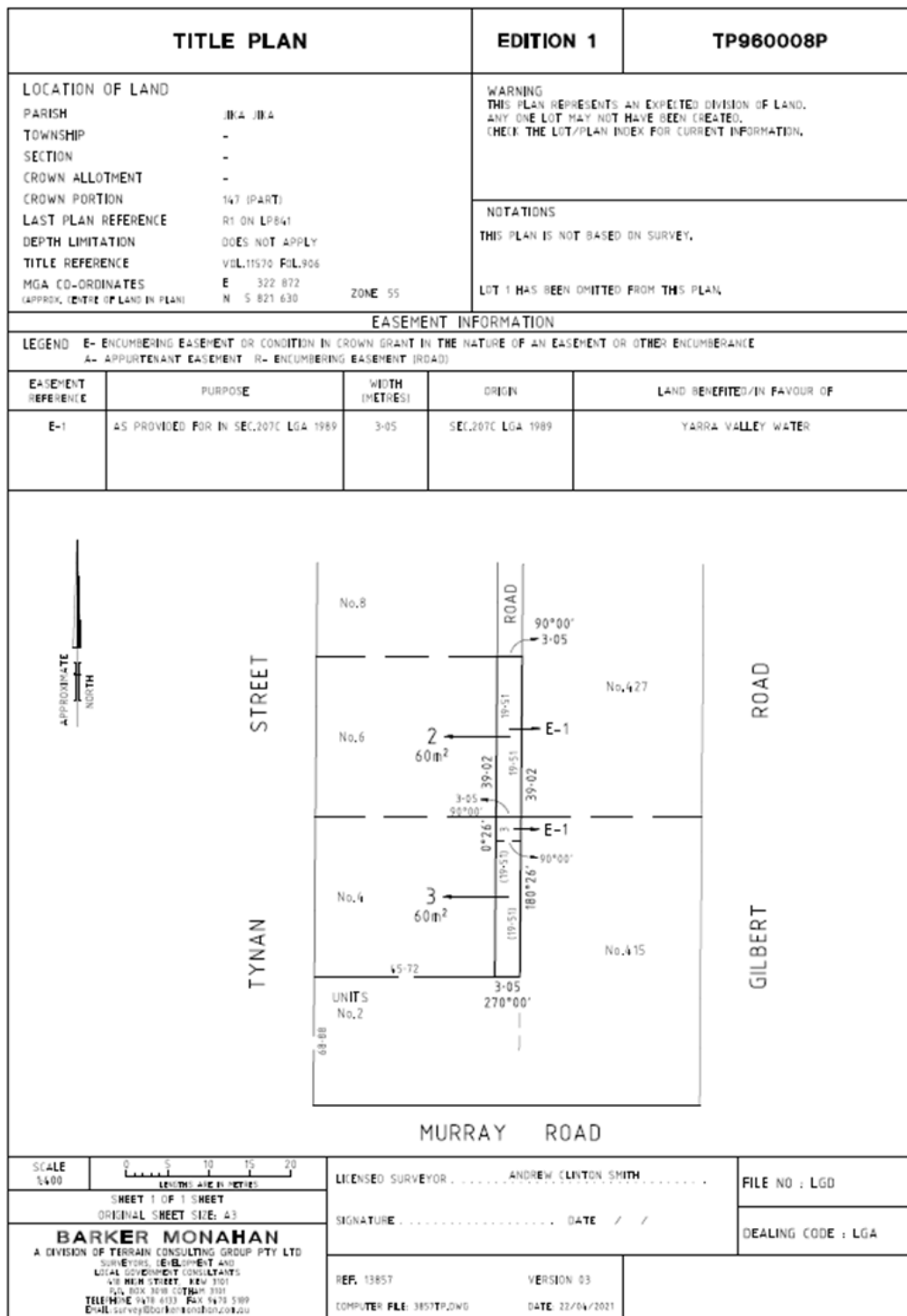
To contextualise this property matter:

- Statutory Plan is shown in **Figure 1**.
- Title Plan is shown in **Figure 2**.
- Aerial View is shown in **Figure 3**.

**Figure 1 – Statutory Plan right of way/road adjoining 4 and 6 Tynan Street and 415 to 427 Gilbert Road, Preston**



**Figure 2 – Title Plan right of way/road adjoining 4 and 6 Tynan Street and 415 to 427 Gilbert Road, Preston**



**Figure 3 – Aerial View right of way/road adjoining 4 and 6 Tynan Street and 415 to 427 Gilbert Road, Preston**



### Background information

In October 2020, Council received an inquiry from the new owners of 6 Tynan Street, Preston, requesting the discontinuance and sale of the 3.05 metre wide Road adjoining their property.

The investigations identified that although the Road remains a road on title, it is not listed on Council's Register of Public Roads. The section of road to the south, adjoining 2 Tynan Street was discontinued by Council many years ago and the land is in the ownership of 4/2 Tynan Street, Preston.

The Road appears to have been enclosed within the adjoining properties at 4 and 6 Tynan Street, Preston, for many years as shown on the aerial view in **Figure 3**.

Once initial investigations confirmed the feasibility of the proposed discontinuance, Macquarie Lawyers were commissioned to undertake further consultation with a view to Council commencing the statutory procedures to facilitate the possible discontinuance and sale of the 3.05m-wide section of Road.

All immediate adjoining property owners have been informed of the proposal and no objections or issues have been raised. The dimensions and proposed allocation of the land are shown in the statutory plan provided in **Figure 1** and the Title Plan TP960008P in **Figure 2**.

The owners of 6 Tynan Street, Preston, have confirmed an interest in acquiring the land shown as Lot 2 in the Title Plan TP960008P in **Figure 2** at current market value, as well as agreeing to meet all the reasonable costs associated with Council discontinuing and selling the Road, in accordance with policy.

## COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

All immediate adjoining property owners were consulted regarding the proposal and no objections were received. The dimensions and proposed allocation of the land are shown in the Title Plan TP960008P provided in **Figure 2**.

The owners of 6 Tynan Street, Preston, have confirmed an interest in acquiring the land shown as Lot 2 in the Title Plan TP960008P in **Figure 2**, at current market value as well as agreeing to meet all of the reasonable costs associated with Council discontinuing and selling the Road, in accordance with policy. The owners of 4 Tynan Street, Preston, have not expressed any objection to the discontinuance nor shown any interest in acquiring the land shown as Lot 3 in the Title Plan TP960008P in **Figure 2**. Council will take title to this land in accordance with policy.

Internal departments and the Service Authorities were consulted regarding the proposal and no objections were received.

Yarra Valley Water has a sewer within part of the land and will require an easement to be saved over part of the land if the Road is discontinued.

Whilst Council currently does not have any assets located within the Road it will require an easement for drainage to be created over any land sold to cater for the installation of a drain in the future.

### Consultation with the Community

The statutory procedures require Council to give public notice of its intentions to discontinue the right of way/road adjoining 4 and 6 Tynan Street and 415 to 427 Gilbert Road, Preston and invite submissions from affected parties.

Submitters may request to be heard by Council prior to a decision being made to proceed or otherwise with the proposal. In addition, all abutting property owners would be advised of the proposal in writing and informed of their right to make a submission. Following which, a report will be presented to Council for a decision on each of the matters.

## OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

### Option 1 – Abandon the Proposal or Do Nothing

Council could resolve to abandon the proposal, take no action or may make no resolution on the matter. This option would mean that the Road would continue to vest in Council and with the adjoining property owners continuing to occupy the Road. Council may be perceived as knowingly encouraging and enabling property owners to continue to occupy other roads or rights of way within Darebin to the detriment of the community (whether financially or as a benefiting right). Additionally, Council may lose future rights to the Road if adjoining property owners are able to accrue possessory rights.

Council may, at some time in the future, resolve to commence the discontinuance process.

**Option 2 – complete the Statutory Procedures (Recommended)**

Council could resolve to commence the statutory procedures to potentially discontinue the Road. This would extend the consultation to the wider community and enable all affected property owners a formal opportunity to make a submission.

This option would assist Council in obtaining further insight into the overall consensus of surrounding property owners and the community in relation to the Road. It would also enable Council to make an informed assessment on the future of the Road, to potentially open part or all of the Road, discontinue part or all of the Road and sell the land from the Road (if discontinued) to the adjoining property owners and take title to the land if not sold.

Further benefits of commencing the statutory procedures depend on Council's decision on the future of the Road. These may include the asset being opened to the public and used for its prescribed purpose, potential revenue from the sale of part or all of the Road (if discontinued), and/or the ongoing protection of a public asset (if the Road is discontinued and Council takes title to the land if not sold).

**IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY****Details**

- Commence statutory process by giving public notice of Council's intentions to discontinue and sell the road and written notification to adjoining property owners and occupiers.
- Report back to Council on outcome of statutory process and seek a resolution on the future of the Road.



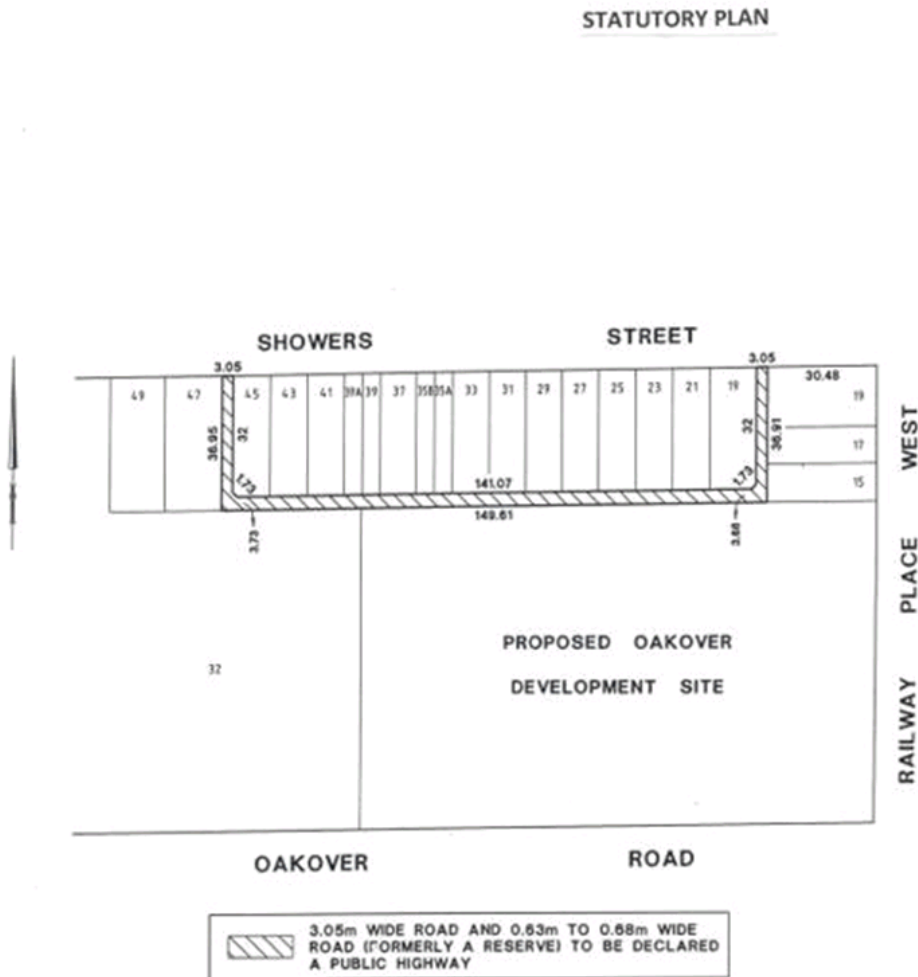
**Item 2**

**Road adjoining 4 to 9 Kenwood Court, 19 to 47 Showers Street, 15 to 19 Railway Place West and 32 Oakover Road, Preston**

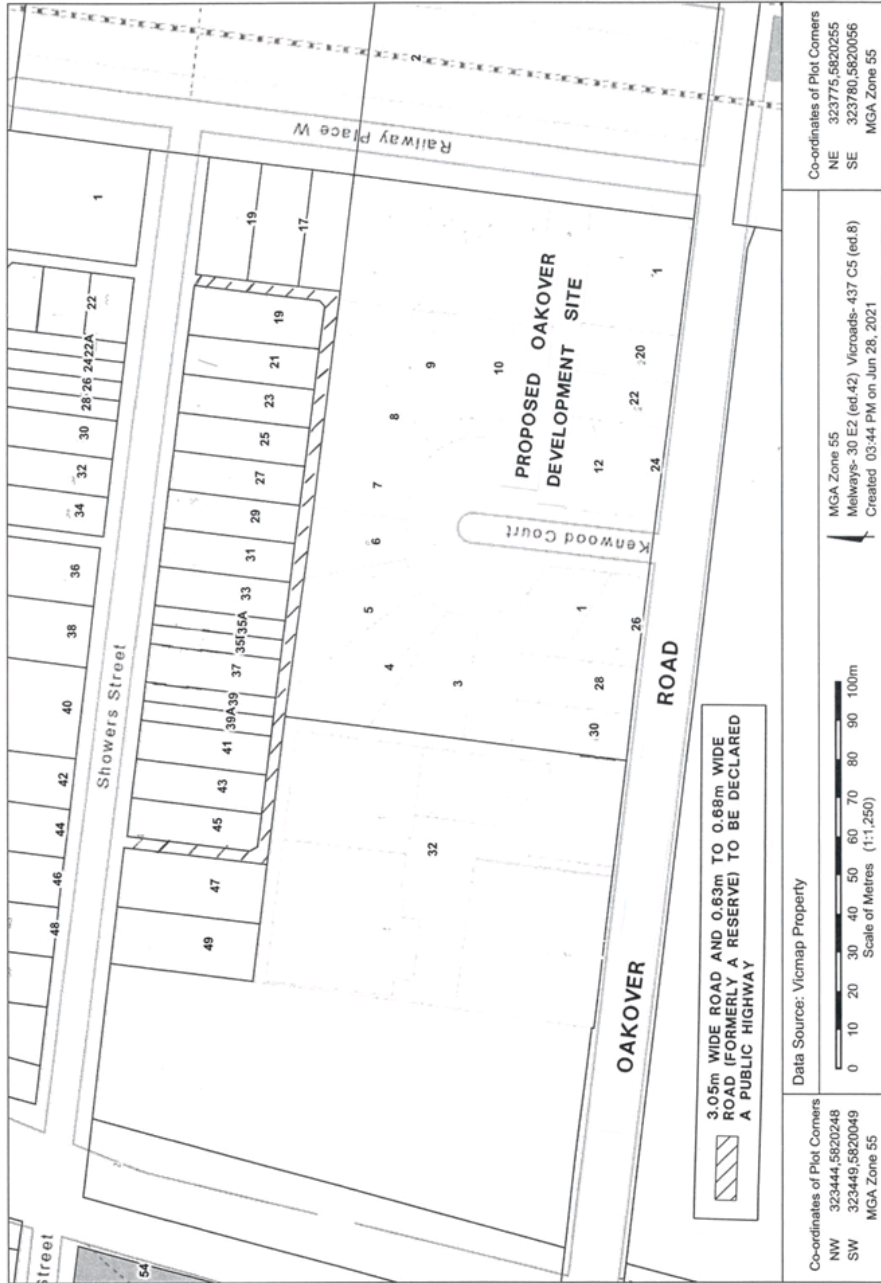
To contextualise this property matter:

- Statutory, Site & Development Plan and Precinct Connectivity Plan is shown in **Figure 1**
- Plan of subdivision & title is shown in **Figure 2**.
- Aerial View is shown in **Figure 3**.

**Figure 1 – Statutory, Site & Development Plan and Precinct Connectivity Plan Road adjoining 4 to 9 Kenwood Court, 19 to 47 Showers Street, 15 to 19 Railway Place West and 32 Oakover Road, Preston**



SITE PLAN

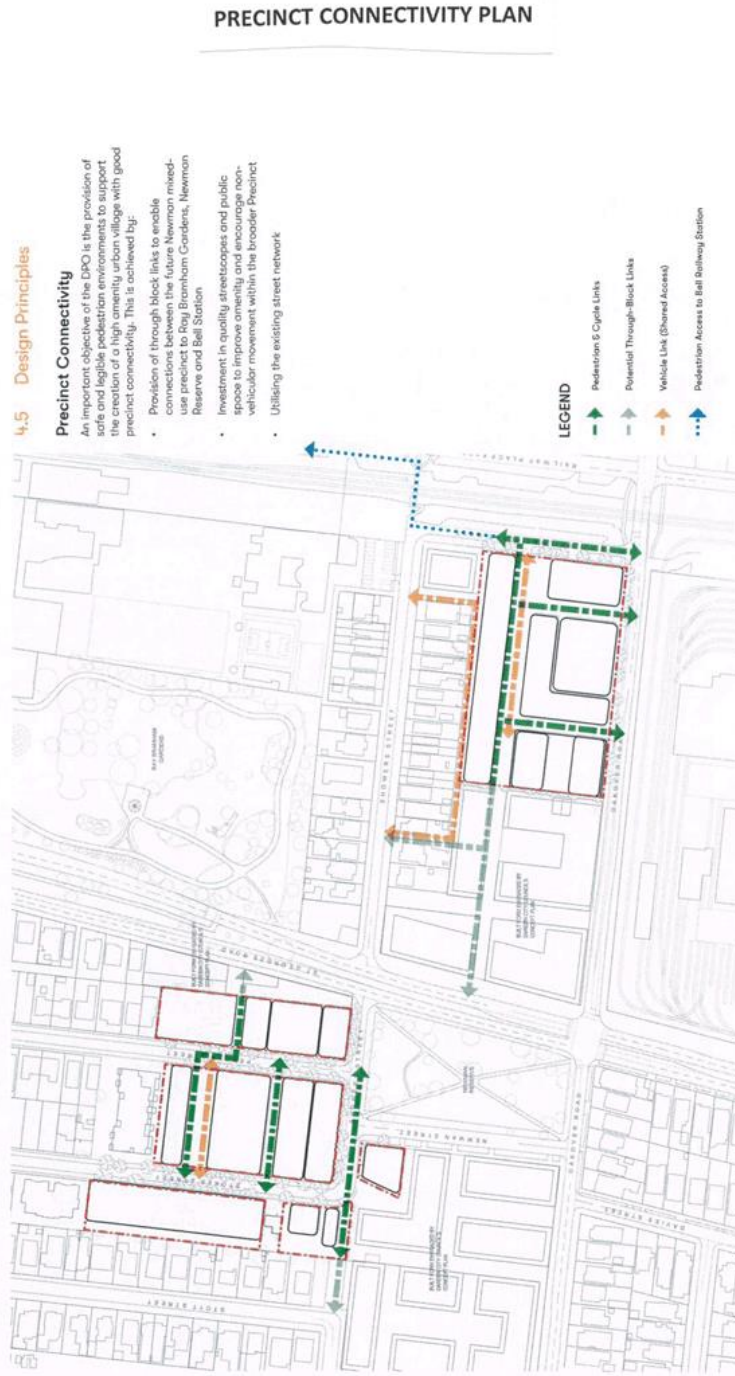


DEVELOPMENT SITE PLAN



Figure 1.1: Indicative Development Plan (Context Plan)

4.0 Development Plan (Cont'd)



4.5 Design Principles

**Precinct Connectivity**

An important objective of the DPO is the provision of safe and legible pedestrian environments to support the creation of a high amenity, urban village with good precinct connectivity. This is achieved by:

- Provision of through block links to enable connections between the future Newman mixed-use precinct to Roy Bramham Gardens, Newman Reserve and Bell Station
- Investment in quality streetscapes and public spaces to encourage pedestrian and bicycle movement within the broader Precinct
- Utilising the existing street network

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Figure 4.2

**Figure 2 – Plan of Subdivision and Title Road adjoining 4 to 9 Kenwood Court, 19 to 47 Showers Street, 15 to 19 Railway Place West and 32 Oakover Road, Preston**

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<b>PLAN OF SUBDIVISION</b> UNDER SECTION 24A OF THE SUBDIVISION ACT 1988				<b>EDITION 1</b>	<b>PS 831977P</b>				
<b>LOCATION OF LAND</b> PARISH: JIKA JIKA TOWNSHIP: --- SECTION: --- CROWN ALLOTMENT: --- CROWN PORTION: 139 PART TITLE REFERENCE: VOL 11830 FOL 587 (PART) LAST PLAN REFERENCE: RESERVE 2 ON LP 1988 POSTAL ADDRESS: LANEWAY OFF SHOWERS ROAD (at time of subdivision) PRESTON 3072 MGA 94 CO-ORDINATES: E 323630 ZONE: 55 (approx. centre of land in plan) N 5820180				Council Name: Darebin City Council Council Reference Number: SUB/181/2019 Planning Permit Reference: D/475/2019 SPEAR Reference Number: S146041C <b>Certification</b> This plan is certified under section 6 of the Subdivision Act 1988 <b>Statement of Compliance</b> This is a statement of compliance issued under section 21 of the Subdivision Act 1988 Public Open Space A requirement for public open space under section 18 of the Subdivision Act 1988 has not been made Digitally signed by: Laura Palermo for Darebin City Council on 02/04/2020					
<b>EASEMENT INFORMATION</b>				<b>NOTATIONS</b>					
<b>LEGEND:</b> E - ENCUMBERING EASEMENT, CONDITION IN CROWN GRANT IN THE NATURE OF AN EASEMENT OR OTHER ENCUMBRANCE      A - APPURTENANT EASEMENT				SURVEY THIS PLAN#1 IS NOT BASED ON SURVEY THIS SURVEY HAS BEEN CONNECTED TO PERMANENT MARKS NO(S) - N/A IN PROCLAIMED SURVEY AREA NO. - N/A DEPTH LIMITATION DOES NOT APPLY PURPOSE OF THIS PLAN: TO REMOVE THE RESERVE STATUS FROM RESERVE No2 ON LP 1988 (BEING PART OF CERTIFICATE OF TITLE VOL 11830 FOL 587) & TO VEST THE LAND AS A ROAD TO DAREBIN DAREBIN CITY COUNCIL. GROUNDS FOR REMOVAL & VESTING: PLANNING PERMIT No - SEE PANEL ABOVE					
SUBJECT LAND	PURPOSE	WIDTH (METRES)	ORIGIN			LAND BENEFITED IN FAVOUR OF			
				<b>VESTING OF ROADS AND/OR RESERVES</b> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="width: 50%;">IDENTIFIER</th> <th style="width: 50%;">COUNCIL/BODY/PERSON</th> </tr> <tr> <td>ROAD R1</td> <td>DAREBIN CITY COUNCIL</td> </tr> </table>		IDENTIFIER	COUNCIL/BODY/PERSON	ROAD R1	DAREBIN CITY COUNCIL
IDENTIFIER	COUNCIL/BODY/PERSON								
ROAD R1	DAREBIN CITY COUNCIL								
Level 3, 1 Southbank Boulevard Southbank, Victoria 3006 03) 7019 8400 www.veris.com.au DEVELOP WITH CONFIDENCE™ Formerly <b>Bosco Jonson</b>				LICENSED SURVEYOR <b>ANDREI FIJAN</b> SCALE 1:600 DATE 15/07/19      REFERENCE 300632 VERSION A      DRAWING 300632-BA Digitally signed by: ANDREI FIJAN, Licensed Surveyor, 31/03/2020, SPEAR Ref: S146041C PLAN REGISTERED TIME: 2 : 15 PM      DATE: 18 / 05 / 2021 R McBain      Assistant Registrar of Titles					

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REGISTER SEARCH STATEMENT (Title Search) Transfer of Land Act 1958

VOLUME 12304 FOLIO 350

Security no : 124090744725H  
Produced 24/06/2021 12:39 PM

LAND DESCRIPTION

Road R1 on Plan of Subdivision 831977P.  
PARENT TITLE Volume 11830 Folio 887  
Created by instrument PS831977P 18/05/2021

REGISTERED PROPRIETOR

Estate Fee Simple  
Sole Proprietor  
DAREBIN CITY COUNCIL of 274 GOWER STREET PRESTON VIC 3072  
PS831977P 18/05/2021

ENCUMBRANCES, CAVEATS AND NOTICES

Any encumbrances created by Section 98 Transfer of Land Act 1958 or Section 24 Subdivision Act 1988 and any other encumbrances shown or entered on the plan set out under DIAGRAM LOCATION below.

DIAGRAM LOCATION

SEE PS831977P FOR FURTHER DETAILS AND BOUNDARIES

ACTIVITY IN THE LAST 125 DAYS

NUMBER	PLAN OF SUBDIVISION	STATUS	DATE
PS831977P (B)	PLAN OF SUBDIVISION	Registered	18/05/2021

-----END OF REGISTER SEARCH STATEMENT-----

Additional information: (not part of the Register Search Statement)

ADMINISTRATIVE NOTICES

NIL

eCT Control 09859E DAREBIN CITY COUNCIL  
Effective from 18/05/2021

DOCUMENT END

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**Figure 3 - Aerial view road adjoining 4 to 9 Kenwood Court, 19 to 47 Showers Street, 15 to 19 Railway Place West and 32 Oakover Road, Preston**



### Background information

Council has been working closely with the State Government's Department of Health and Human Services and its partners, the MAB Corporation and HousingFirst, to provide a mix of social and private housing, community space and commercial space as part of the Public Housing Renewal Program at a number of sites within Melbourne. One of the sites is in Preston, to be known as the Village Bell development, which will deliver two new residential villages at two locations in the area, known as the Stokes/Penola and Oakover Sites.

This report relates to the development proposed for the Oakover Site, comprising the properties at 1 to 12 Kenwood Court, 18 to 30 Oakover Road 1 to 13 Railway Place West, Preston, shown in the Development Site Plan in **Figure 1**.

The right of way located at the rear of 19 – 45 Showers Street, Preston, as show in the aerial view in **Figure 3**, is a Council constructed and maintained road which is also in the register of public roads. Directly adjoining this road, to the south, and at the rear of 4 – 9 Kenwood Court was a reserve, this reserve legally prevented any access and egress to the road by the properties at Kenwood Court. As part of the proposed development the reserve was removed through a Plan of Subdivision, became known as Road R1 and was vested with Council, shown in **Figure 2**.

The Transport and Traffic Management Report for the development states that vehicular access to on-site car parking within the Oakover Site is proposed to occur via Oakover Road, Railway Place West and the roads to the north of the site, as shown on the Precinct Connectivity Plan in **Figure 1**.

It is proposed that Council declare both of the roads (one of which was formerly a reserve) shown hatched in the statutory plan in **Figure 1** to be a Public Highway for the purposes of the Act in order to facilitate permanent formal access to the Oakover Site.

## **COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT**

### **Consultation with adjoining property owners**

Although the adjoining owners have not been consulted directly about the proposed declaration, the proposed development of the two sites has been the subject of a wide - ranging community consultation process, via newsletters and community meetings.

### **Consultation with the community**

The statutory procedures require Council to give public notice of its intention to declare the roads as a public highway and invite submissions from affected parties.

Submitters may request to be heard by Council prior to a decision being made to proceed or otherwise with the proposal. In addition, all abutting property owners would be advised of the proposal in writing and informed of their right to make a submission. Following which, a report will be presented to Council for a decision whether to declare the roads a public highway or not to declare the roads a public highway.

### **Action undertaken by MAB Corporation Pty Ltd**

The MAB Corporation Pty Ltd had also recently prepared a Plan of Subdivision pursuant to section 24A of the *Subdivision Act 1988* to provide for the removal of reserve status from the 0.30m to 0.68m reserve (revenge strip) and vesting the land as a road in Council. The Plan of Subdivision has been registered at Land Use Victoria, the implications of which mean that the former reserve has now become a road vested in Council.

Notwithstanding the above, it is considered that declaring the land from the 3.05m wide road and 0.30m to 0.68m wide road (which was formerly a reserve) adjoining 4 to 9 Kenwood Court, 19 to 47 Showers Street, 15 to 19 Railway Place West and 32 Oakover Road, Preston, a public highway under section 204(1) of the Act will serve to remove any possible ambiguity relating to the use of the land as a road and also enhance the status and physical use of the land as a public highway to facilitate access to the proposed Village Bell development.

## **OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

### **Option 1 – Abandon the Proposal or Do Nothing**

Council could resolve to abandon the proposal, take no action or may make no resolution on the matter. This option would mean that the roads, although open and used for access would not enjoy the status of being a public highway and its on-going use for vehicular access to the proposed Village Bell development in Oakover Road, Preston, may be open to question.

Council may, at some time in the future, resolve to commence the declaration process.



**Option 2 – Commence the Statutory Procedures (Recommended)**

Council could resolve to commence the statutory procedures to potentially declare the land from the roads to be a public highway. This would extend the consultation to the wider community and enable all affected property owners a formal opportunity to make a submission.

This option would assist Council in obtaining further insight into the overall consensus of surrounding property owners and the community in relation to the future of the land, including further enhancing the status of the land as a road for public use in order to facilitate vehicular access to the Village Bell development in Oakover Road, Preston.

**IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY****Details**

- Commence statutory process by giving public notice of Council's intentions.
- Report back to Council on outcome of statutory process and seek a resolution on the future of the land.

**Communication**

- Council Departments
- Macquarie Local Government Lawyers
- Owners of the adjoining properties
- Department of Health and Human Services, MAB Corporation and HousingFirst

**Timeline**

It is expected that a further report in relation to the matter will be provided to Council within three months of this report.

**8.7 GOVERNANCE REPORT - AUGUST 2021****Author:** Senior Council Business Officer**Reviewed By:** General Manager, Governance and Engagement

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The matters covered under the Governance Report for the month of July 2021 are:

- Summary of Advisory Committees, Councillor Briefing and other informal meetings of Councillors;
- Reports by Mayor and Councillors;
- Responses to the questions taken on notice during Public Question Time at the Council Meeting held on 26 July 2021;
- Councillor Expenses Report for the quarter from 1 April 2021 to 30 June 2021;
- Audit and Risk Committee Matters.

**Officer Recommendation**

**That Council:**

- (1) Notes the Governance Report – August 2021.
- (2) Notes the summary of Advisory Committees, Councillor Briefings and other Informal Meetings of Councillors at **Appendix A** to this report, for incorporation in the minutes of this meeting.
- (3) Notes that reports by Mayors and Councillors submitted prior to the meeting and circulated to Councillors, will be incorporated in the minutes of this meeting.
- (4) Notes the responses to the questions taken on notice during Public Question Time at the Council meeting held on 26 July 2021, at **Appendix B** to this report.
- (5) Notes the Councillor Expenses Report for the quarter from 1 April 2021 to 30 June 2021, at **Appendix C** to this Report.
- (6) Notes the Summary Minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee Meeting held on 29 June 2021 at **Appendix D** to this report.
- (7) Endorses the revised Audit and Risk Committee Charter at **Appendix E** to this Report.
- (8) Endorses the Audit and Risk Committee Annual Committee Performance Report 2020-21 at **Appendix F** to this Report.
- (9) Endorses a fee of \$1,883.75 per meeting for the Chairperson and \$1,634.25 per meeting for external Members of the Audit and Risk Committee for Financial year 2021-22 and
- (10) Endorses the appointment of independent members Dr. Marco Bini and Lisa Tripodi as follows:
  - Dr Marco Bini – At the expiration of Marco Bini’s current term on 31 December 2021 Council appoint Marco Bini as an external member of the Audit and Risk Committee for three years to 31 December 2024.

- Lisa Tripodi - That Lisa Tripodi, Chair elected by the Committee to March 2022, be appointed Chairperson by Council for a three year term until 23 August 2024, to support the transition to the revised Committee Charter.

**BACKGROUND / KEY INFORMATION**

In accordance with Council's Governance Rules 2020, the agenda for each Ordinary Meeting is required to list certain governance / administrative matters in addition to other specified items. These include the Reports of Standing Committees (for example the Hearing of Submissions Committee), Summary of Meetings (for example Briefings, Advisory Committee), Responses to Public Questions taken on notice and reports by Mayor and Councillors

Instead of having multiple reports for these governance / administrative matters on each agenda, it is considered appropriate to consolidate these matters in one single standing report to provide a single reporting mechanism for a range of statutory compliance, transparency and governance matters.

This is in accordance with best practice, good governance principles, transparent and accountable reporting of governance activities and to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Act, Council's Governance Rules and related regulations. This report additionally incorporates matters including but not limited to reporting of advisory committees, items relating to the delegation of Council powers, policy and strategy reporting, and the reporting on Councillors expenses.

**ANALYSIS****Environmental Sustainability Considerations**

Nil

**Climate Emergency**

Nil

**Equity, Inclusion and Wellbeing Considerations**

Nil

**Cultural Considerations**

Nil

**Economic Development Considerations**

Nil

**Financial and Resource Implications**

Nil

## Legal and Risk Implications

This report fulfils legislative governance obligations, to provide transparent and accountable reporting of governance activity.

## DISCUSSION

The matters covered under Governance Report for the month of July 2021 are:

### **Summary of Advisory Committees, Councillor Briefing and other informal meetings of Councillors**

In accordance with Council's Governance Rules 2020 for any meeting of an Advisory Committee established by Council attended by at least one Councillor or a scheduled or planned meeting to discuss the business of Council or to brief Councillors, and which is attended by at least half of the Councillors and one member of Council staff and which is not a Council meeting, Delegated Committee meeting or Community Asset Committee meeting the Chief Executive Officer must ensure that a summary of the meeting is:-

- a) Tabled at the next convenient Council meeting; and
- b) Recorded in the minutes of that Council meeting.

The summary of the meeting should include a) the time, date and location of the meeting, b) the Councillors in attendance, c) the topics discussed, d) the positions of Council officers in attendance, e) the organisation that any attendees external to council are representing and f) any conflicts of interest declared, including the reason.

A Summary of the following Advisory Committees, Councillor Briefings or other Informal Meetings of Councillors are attached at **Appendix A** to this Report:

- Active and Health Ageing Advisory Committee – 10 June 2021.
- Audit and Risk Committee – 29 June 2021.
- Councillor Briefing Session – 2 August 2021.
- Councillor Briefing Session – 9 August 2021.
- Councillor Briefing Session – 16 August 2021.

### **Reports by Mayor and Councillors**

The Mayor and Councillors submit their monthly report by 4.00pm on the day of each Ordinary Council Meeting, detailing their attendance at various functions and activities since the last Council Meeting. Reports submitted by Mayor and Councillors will be recorded in the minutes of this meeting.

**Responses to Public Questions taken On Notice – Council meeting 26 July 2021**

Pursuant to the Councils Governance Rules the response to a question from the public taken on notice must be recorded in the minutes of the next Ordinary Council meeting.

Questions taken on notice at the Ordinary Council meeting held on 26 July 2021 and subsequently responded to are provided in **Appendix B** to this report.

**Councillor Expenses (1 April 2021 – 30 June 2021)**

Councillor Expenses Report for the period from 1 April 2021 to 30 June 2021, are included at **Appendix C** to this report. The Councillor Expenses report will also be made available on Council's website.

**Audit and Risk Committee Matters****Audit and Risk Committee Meeting Summary Minutes**

The summary minutes for the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on 29 June 2021 are provided at **Appendix D** to this report for transparency to both Council and the Darebin community.

**Audit and Risk Committee Revised Charter**

The Audit and Risk Committee Charter is reviewed annually and was presented to the Committee for discussion and formal review at 29 June 2021 Committee meeting.

The revised Charter was approved by the Committee and is attached at **Appendix E** to this Report for Council endorsement.

**Audit and Risk Committee Annual Committee Performance Report 2020-21**

The Audit and Risk Committee has prepared an Annual Committee Performance Report that includes an annual assessment of Committee performance against the Audit and Risk Committee Charter in accordance with section 54(4a) of the Act.

The draft report was approved by the Committee at its June meeting and presented by the Chair at the Councillor Briefing held on 16 August 2021.

It is attached at **Appendix F** to this Report for Council endorsement.

**Audit and Risk Committee Fees FY 2021-22**

In accordance with section 53 of the Local Government Act 2020, Council will pay a fee to all external members of the Audit and Risk Committee with the amount determined by Council, taking into account an assessment of the market and the recommendations of the CEO.

To inform the remuneration to external members from 1 July 2021, the Audit and Compliance Officer undertook an exercise to benchmark the fee paid to the external members against several peer Councils.

The proposed increase in fees for 2021-22 is 1.5% in line with the rate cap. The recommended fees per meeting are:

- Chairperson \$1,883.75 (increased from \$1,855.90)
- Member fee \$1,634.25 (increased from \$1,610.10)

As per section 6 of the Audit and Risk Committee Charter, external member fees are paid each quarter (e.g. per meeting) but in accordance with section 53(6) of the Act, the fee that is paid is based on a per annum fee.

### **Audit and Risk Committee - Confirmation of Membership**

The Audit and Risk Committee plays an important role in assisting Council with its oversight of external financial and performance reporting, risk and financial management, corporate governance and internal control systems.

Under the Audit and Risk Committee Charter 2020, the Committee consists of five members, made up of two Councillors and three external members. Under the revised Audit and Risk Committee Charter July 2021 (the Charter), external members are appointed for a three-year term, with an option for a further three-year term by mutual consent. Council may adjust the initial period of appointment to allow for mid-term appointments and to avoid situations where all external member terms expire within close proximity of each other.

Council appoints external members with an appropriate balance and demonstrated experience in the fields of finance, risk, audit, governance and/or legal practices. Members of the Audit and Risk Committee require a high level of expertise and commitment to fulfil their role.

The mix of skills and experience of the current and prospective external member was taken into consideration as part of the selection of the preferred candidate for the Committee.

#### **Dr. Marco Bini**

The term of one of the independent committee members, Dr Marco Bini expires on 31 December 2021. Marco Bini served the full term (two years) on the Audit and Risk Committee under the previous Charter and officers are seeking to re-appoint Marco Bini as an independent member of the Audit and Risk Committee.

It is recommended that Council offer Dr. Bini a new term of appointment as an external member of the Audit and Risk Committee for a term of three years to 31 December 2024.

#### **Lisa Tripodi**

Lisa Tripodi is an independent committee member, who was re-appointed to a two year term on 7 December 2020 for a two year period (with the option of a two year extension) under the previous Charter. At its meeting on 22 March 2021, the Committee appointed Lisa Tripodi as Chairperson of the Audit and Risk Committee for a term of one year under the previous Committee Charter.

Under the new Charter, Council will recruit and appoint an independent Chairperson for a three year term. The appointment of the current Chair ends on 22 March 2022. With consideration of continuity for the Committee and Council's commitment to continuous improvement, it is recommended that Lisa Tripodi be appointed Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee in accordance with the Charter presented to Council in this report, for a period of three years until 23 August 2024. Upon completion of this term, the option of a second term would remain available.

Should Council approve the appointment as recommended, the General Manager Governance and Engagement will confirm the appointment in writing and the Audit and Risk Committee will be informed at their meeting of 6 September 2021.

## RELATED DOCUMENTS

Nil

### Attachments

- Councillor Briefing and other informal meetings of Councillors - 23 August 2021 (**Appendix A**) [↓](#)
- Responses to Public Questions taken on notice - 26 July 2021 (**Appendix B**) [↓](#)
- Quarterly Councillor Expenses Report - 1 April 2021 to 30 June 2021 (**Appendix C**) [↓](#)
- Summary Minutes Audit and Risk Committee - 29 June 2021 (**Appendix D**) [↓](#)
- Revised Charter Audit and Risk Committee (**Appendix E**) [↓](#)
- Annual Committee Performance Report 2020-21 (**Appendix F**) [↓](#)

## DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

Section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020* requires members of Council staff and persons engaged under contract to provide advice to Council to disclose any conflicts of interest in a matter to which the advice relates.

The Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.



## SUMMARY OF ADVISORY COMMITTEES, COUNCILLOR BRIEFINGS AND OTHER INFORMAL MEETINGS OF COUNCILLORS

<b>MEETING DETAILS:</b>	<b>Title:</b>	Active and Health Ageing Advisory Committee.
	<b>Date:</b>	10 June 2021
	<b>Location:</b>	Zoom – online meeting
<b>PRESENT:</b>	<b>Councillors:</b>	Cr. Gaetano Greco (Chair), Cr. Susan Rennie, Cr. Julie Williams
	<b>Council Staff:</b>	Janet Hanh, Fionnuala Spillane, Kerry McGrath, Shadi Hanna
	<b>Other:</b>	Anne Learmonth, Audrey Grace, Fred Psaropoulos, Geoff Richards, Nick Nickolaou, Robin Vote, Win Stenton
<b>APOLOGIES:</b>		Nil

The Meeting commenced at 5.00 pm

MATTERS CONSIDERED		DISCLOSURES AND COMMENTS
1	Advisory Groups Terms of Reference	No disclosures were made.
2	Government's Response to Royal Commission	No disclosures were made
3	Update on Age Friendly Activities	No disclosures were made.

The Meeting concluded at 6.30pm

<b>RECORD COMPLETED BY:</b>	<b>Officer Name:</b>	Shadi Hanna
	<b>Officer Title:</b>	Manager Aged and Disability





## SUMMARY OF ADVISORY COMMITTEES, COUNCILLOR BRIEFINGS AND OTHER INFORMAL MEETINGS OF COUNCILLORS

<b>MEETING DETAILS:</b>	<b>Title:</b>	Darebin Audit and Risk Committee
	<b>Date:</b>	29 June 2021
	<b>Location:</b>	Council Chambers, Darebin Civic Centre
<b>PRESENT:</b>	<b>ARC Committee Members:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lisa Tripodi (Independent External Member) (Chairperson)</li> <li>• Craig Geddes (Independent External Member)</li> <li>• Dr. Marco Bini (Independent External Member)</li> <li>• Cr. Lisa Messina (Mayor and Committee Member)</li> <li>• Cr. Tom Hannan (Committee Member)</li> </ul>
	<b>Council Staff:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sue Wilkinson (Chief Executive Officer)</li> <li>• Jodie Watson (General Manager Governance &amp; Engagement)</li> <li>• Kerry McGrath (General Manager Aged &amp; Disability)</li> <li>• Vanessa Petrie (Acting General Manager, City Sustainability &amp; Strategy)</li> <li>• Steve Tierney (Acting General Manager, Operations &amp; Capital)</li> <li>• Anthea Kypreos (Acting Manager Property &amp; Business Improvement)</li> <li>• Gideon VanDerWesthuizen (Coordinator Risk &amp; Improvement)</li> <li>• Rebecca Ristevski (Audit &amp; Compliance Officer)</li> </ul>
	<b>Other:</b>	<p><b>Internal Auditor</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mark Holloway (Partner, Audit &amp; Assurance, HLB Mann Judd)</li> <li>• Kapil Kukreja (Director – Risk, Assurance &amp; Advisory HLB Mann Judd)</li> </ul> <p><b>External Auditor</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sanchu Chummar (Acting Sector Director, Local Government, VAGO)</li> </ul> <p><b>Invited Guests</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Claudio Cavallo (Manager, Information Services)</li> <li>• Damian Hogan (Manager, Finance)</li> <li>• Karen Leeder (Manager, City Development)</li> <li>• Michael Almonte (Municipal Building Surveyor, City Development)</li> <li>• Fabio Piccinin (Deputy Municipal Building Surveyor, City</li> </ul>

<b>APOLOGIES:</b>	Development) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enna Giampiccolo (Manager, Communications &amp; Engagement)</li> <li>• Andy Viswanath (Cyber Security Specialist, HLB Mann Judd) <i>via telephone conference</i></li> <li>• Cr Tom Hannan – partial apology, left at 1:55pm</li> <li>• Kevin Chan (Acting Senior Manager, Data Analytics, VAGO)</li> <li>• Rachel Ollivier (General Manager, City Sustainability &amp; Strategy)</li> <li>• Sam Hewett (General Manager, Operations &amp; Capital</li> </ul>
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In-camera discussion was held from 1:00PM – 1:26PM

The Meeting commenced at 1:26PM.

MATTERS CONSIDERED		DISCLOSURES AND COMMENTS
1	Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country	
2	Membership	
3	Apologies	
4	Disclosures of Conflicts of Interest	
5	Approval of previous minutes	
6	<b>Standing Reports</b>	
6.1	Actions arising from previous meeting	
6.2	Information Services Report	
7	<b>Financial Reports</b>	
7.1	VAGO Interim Management Letter for the year ended 30 June 2021	
7.2	Quarterly Finance Management Report	
8	<b>Risk Management</b>	
8.1	Quarterly Risk Management Report	
8.2	Quarterly Safety Report	
8.3	Complaints Handling Framework & Performance	
9	<b>Internal Audit</b>	
9.1	Draft Strategic Annual Internal Audit	

MATTERS CONSIDERED		DISCLOSURES AND COMMENTS
	Plan 2021-22	
9.2	Outstanding Audit Actions Status Report	
9.3	Internal Audit Status Report and Audits Completed	
9.4	Recent Report and Publications	
10	Quarterly CEO Report	Verbal report delivered
11	Governance	
11.1	Committee Management Report	
12	Other Business	
12.1	VAGO Sexual Harassment Survey Outcomes and Actions	
13	Next Meeting	Monday 6 September 2021
14	Close of Meeting	

The Meeting concluded at 4:04pm

<b>RECORD COMPLETED BY:</b>	<b>Officer Name:</b>	Rebecca Ristevski
	<b>Officer Title:</b>	Audit and Compliance Officer

This form is to be completed by the nominated Council Officer and returned to the Council Business Team within 3 working days for inclusion the agenda of the next Council meeting and in the register available for public inspection.



## SUMMARY OF ADVISORY COMMITTEES, COUNCILLOR BRIEFINGS AND OTHER INFORMAL MEETINGS OF COUNCILLORS

<b>MEETING DETAILS:</b>	<b>Title:</b>	Councillor Briefing
	<b>Date:</b>	Monday 2 August 2021
	<b>Location:</b>	Microsoft Teams
<b>PRESENT:</b>	<b>Councillors:</b>	Cr. Messina, Cr. Greco, Cr. Dimitriadis, Cr. Hannan, Cr. McCarthy, Cr. Newton, Cr. Rennie, Cr. Williams
	<b>Council Staff:</b>	Sue Wilkinson Jodie Watson Sam Hewett Rachel Ollivier Kerry McGrath Stevie Meyer Sophie Jordan Steve Tierney Karen Leeder Hamish Jacobsen Joylon Boyle Munir Vahanvati
	<b>Other:</b>	N/A
<b>APOLOGIES:</b>		Cr. Laurence

The briefings commenced at 3.48 pm

MATTERS CONSIDERED		DISCLOSURES AND COMMENTS
1	Open Space Levy Update on Further Strategic Work	No disclosures of conflict were made
2	State Government Future Homes Project	No disclosures of conflict were made
3	Statutory Planning Service Improvement Update	No disclosures of conflict were made

MATTERS CONSIDERED		DISCLOSURES AND COMMENTS
4.	State Government Planning Reform Advocacy	No disclosures of conflict were made
5.	General Business	No disclosures of conflict were made

The briefing concluded at 6.40 pm

<b>RECORD COMPLETED BY:</b>	<b>Officer Name:</b> Jodie Watson
	<b>Officer Title:</b> General Manager Governance & Engagement

This form is to be completed by the nominated Council Officer and returned to the Council Business Team within 3 working days for inclusion the agenda of the next Council meeting and in the register available for public inspection.



## SUMMARY OF ADVISORY COMMITTEES, COUNCILLOR BRIEFINGS AND OTHER INFORMAL MEETINGS OF COUNCILLORS

<b>MEETING DETAILS:</b>	<b>Title:</b>	Councillor Briefing
	<b>Date:</b>	Monday 9 August 2021
	<b>Location:</b>	Microsoft Teams
<b>PRESENT:</b>	<b>Councillors:</b>	Cr. Messina, Cr. Greco, Cr. Dimitriadis, Cr. Hannan, Cr. McCarthy, Cr. Newton, Cr. Rennie, Cr. Williams
	<b>Council Staff:</b>	Sue Wilkinson Jodie Watson Sam Hewett Rachel Ollivier Kerry McGrath Shadi Hanna (Item 1) Katherine Kiley (Item 1) Damian Hogan (Item 2) Sophie Jordan (Item 2) Felicity Leahy (Item 3) Enna Giampiccolo (Item 3) Sarah Noel (Item 4) Justin Hanrahan (Item 4)
	<b>Other:</b>	
<b>APOLOGIES:</b>		Cr Laurence

The briefings commenced at 4.00 pm

MATTERS CONSIDERED		DISCLOSURES AND COMMENTS
1	Darebin Access and Inclusion Plan	No disclosures of conflict were made
2	Social and Affordable Housing Rate Exemption	No disclosures of conflict were made
3	Northcote Aquatic and Recreation Centre (NARC) Update	No disclosures of conflict were made

MATTERS CONSIDERED		DISCLOSURES AND COMMENTS
4.	General Business	No disclosures of conflict were made
	Introduction to new Managers: Sarah Noel, Manager People and Culture Justin Hanrahan, Manager Economic Recovery and Resilience	N/A

The briefing concluded at 6.00 pm

<b>RECORD COMPLETED BY:</b>	<b>Officer Name:</b>	Jodie Watson
	<b>Officer Title:</b>	General Manager Governance & Engagement

This form is to be completed by the nominated Council Officer and returned to the Council Business Team within 3 working days for inclusion the agenda of the next Council meeting and in the register available for public inspection.



## SUMMARY OF ADVISORY COMMITTEES, COUNCILLOR BRIEFINGS AND OTHER INFORMAL MEETINGS OF COUNCILLORS

<b>MEETING DETAILS:</b>	<b>Title:</b>	Councillor Briefing
	<b>Date:</b>	Monday 16 August 2021
	<b>Location:</b>	Microsoft Teams
<b>PRESENT:</b>	<b>Councillors:</b>	Cr. Messina, Cr. Greco, Cr. Hannan, Cr. Laurence, Cr. McCarthy, Cr. Newton, Cr. Rennie, Cr. Williams Cr. Dimitriadis joined the briefing at approximately 3.29pm
	<b>Council Staff:</b>	Sue Wilkinson Jodie Watson Sam Hewett Rachel Ollivier Kerry McGrath Amol Khapre Arthur Pitsas Anthea Kypreos Greg Phippen
	<b>Other:</b>	Lisa Tripodi, Independent Chair, Audit and Risk Committee
<b>APOLOGIES:</b>		

The briefings commenced at 3.17 pm

MATTERS CONSIDERED		DISCLOSURES AND COMMENTS
1	Audit and Risk Committee Performance Report 2020/21 and Strategic Annual Internal Audit Plan 2021/22	No disclosures of conflict were made
2	NARC Update	No disclosures of conflict were made
3	Unused and under-utilised properties	No disclosures of conflict were made
4.	General Business	No disclosures of conflict were made

The briefing concluded at 5.58 pm

<b>RECORD COMPLETED BY:</b>	<b>Officer Name:</b>	Jodie Watson
	<b>Officer Title:</b>	General Manager Governance & Engagement



Question and Submission Time

Council Meeting – 26 July 2021

**Question and Submission Time –  
Questions taken on notice**

Pursuant to the Councils *Governance Local Law 2020* the response to a question from the public taken on notice must be recorded in the minutes of the next Ordinary Council meeting.

At the Council meeting held on 26 July 2021, the following questions were taken on notice by the Chairperson, Mayor Messina

**1. Name: Ben Burton**

Question 1: How can we find out about getting a permanent space possibly under the new raised train station? Can we learn the steps or process for requesting this?

Question 2: Can Darebin please connect us to the builder or owner of Newman Street because we would like to confirm the very last day before real construction begins - so we can have a send off/fundraiser and use the site as long as possible.

**Response from Stephen Mahon, Coordinator Council Business**

Thank you for your questions, I understand an officer has spoken to you today. We understand you would like to see a skate park built under the new rail viaduct because the space you are currently using is being developed.

**Question 1.**

This is a state government project, so we'll help put you in touch with the best contact person. Council hasn't specifically been advocating for a skate park, but is advocating more generally for active recreation activities, which could include skating.

**Question 2:**

Response at Council Meeting - Whilst we will not be in a position to pass on the owners contact details due to privacy, Officers will be happy to contact the owners and seek their consent to connect you and your group with them.

Postscript – Officers have attempted to contact the owner of the subject land with no success. Contact has been made with Mr Burton to advise of the options available to him to contact the property owner.

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Question and Submission Time

Council Meeting – 26 July 2021

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**2. Name: Matthew Burke**

At the May Council Meeting, Mayor Messina made clear that an update on the Cramer St traffic calming would be presented at the July Council Meeting.

I cannot see it in the Agenda. Am I missing something?

Residents are anxious for traffic calming to commence. When can residents expect to be updated on Cramer St traffic calming?

**Response from Chairperson, Mayor Messina at 26 July 2021 Council Meeting**

- Tonight, at Item 8.2 Council will make a decision on its forward schedule for detailed investigations and community engagement about transport and local area place-making.
- An officer will contact you tomorrow to let you know the timing of engagement planned for Cramer Street.

**The Coordinator Transport Engineering contacted Mr Burton on 28 July 2021 to discuss this matter further.**

**The following question was submitted after 12 noon on the day of the last Council Meeting. The response was provided by Coordinator Major Projects on 6 August 2021.**

**3. Name: Thomas Madden**

**Question 1.** Has any consideration been given to traffic from the Early Learning Centre and school located on Blanch Street? Drop off and pick up times are particularly busy at peak hours (which will clash with commuters coming and going to the station carpark at those times).

**Response:** Traffic generators that use Blanch Street is a characteristic for the area. These existing generators include Early Learning Centre, St John's College and Darebin Arts Complex to name a few.

**Question 2.** Has any consideration been given to the additional volume of traffic to Blanch Street that will come from the new apartment complex being built behind Bellview Apartments? And the likelihood of more apartment complexes being built on or around Blanch St?

**Response:** Any design outcome for the Level Crossing Removal Project team (Project team) would require supporting analysis to confirm the road networks are suitable for the project. Any future development in the area would also have to provide a traffic impact assessment for the expected change in vehicle / people movements and provide solutions if required.

A6063152

**Question and Submission Time****Council Meeting – 26 July 2021**

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**Question 3.** Has there been any comparison between the volume of traffic to Blanch Street versus the volume of traffic to the 3 streets in the initial plan? It seems very unusual that the volume of traffic planned for \*3\* streets is expected to be accommodated by 1 already very busy street.

**Response:** Any analysis would be prepared by the Level Crossing Removal Project team and provided to Council for review. As the Project team ruled out access to the Bell Station car park early in the design development stages there has not been a comparison prepared.

A6063152

Councillor Expenses 1 April 2021 - 30 June 2021 (If applicable GST is excluded)										
	Cr Dimitriadis	Cr Greco	Cr Hannan	Cr Laurence	Cr McCarthy	Cr Messina	Cr Newton	Cr Rennie	Cr Williams	Total
										\$
Councillor Allowances	10,594	10,594	10,594	10,594	10,594	33,839	10,594	10,594	10,594	118,591
Mobile (Usage & Data Plan)	95	95	95	95	95	96	95	95	95	856
Internet	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	369
Travel (Cabcharge/misc travel expenses)				69		309				378
Family care										
Conferences/training (Inc. all related costs/travel/meals/accom)	1,501	2,434	12		12	2,610	2,526	1,823		10,918
Functions/events										
<b>Total net expenses</b>	<b>12,231</b>	<b>13,164</b>	<b>10,742</b>	<b>10,799</b>	<b>10,742</b>	<b>36,895</b>	<b>13,256</b>	<b>12,553</b>	<b>10,730</b>	<b>131,112</b>

Telephone and internet charges are recorded in the month they are incurred. All other expenses are reported on a cash basis.

Reimbursements to Council include payments from Councillors owed for a range of previous months which were paid for within this quarter

Further explanation of the expense categories is available in the City of Darebin Councillor Support and Expenses Policy June 2021.



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## **SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE MEETING**

Held on Tuesday 29 June 2021 at Darebin Civic Centre,  
350 High Street Preston



**TUESDAY 29 JUNE 2021 - 1.00PM - DAREBIN CIVIC CENTRE  
350 HIGH STREET PRESTON****Attendees****Members**

- Lisa Tripodi (Independent External Member) (Chairperson)
- Craig Geddes (Independent External Member) - *via telephone conference*
- Dr. Marco Bini (Independent External Member)
- Cr. Lisa Messina (Mayor and Committee Member)
- Cr. Tom Hannan (Committee Member)

**Internal Auditor**

- Mark Holloway – Partner, Audit & Assurance, HLB Mann Judd
- Kapil Kukreja – Director – Risk, Assurance & Advisory HLB Mann Judd

**External Auditor**

- Sanchu Chummar – Acting Sector Director, Local Government, VAGO

**Council Officers**

- Sue Wilkinson – Chief Executive Officer
- Jodie Watson – General Manager Governance & Engagement
- Kerry McGrath – General Manager Aged & Disability
- Vanessa Petrie – Acting General Manager, City Sustainability & Strategy
- Steve Tierney – Acting General Manager, Operations & Capital
- Anthea Kypreos - Acting Manager Property & Business Improvement
- Gideon VanDerWesthuizen – Coordinator Risk & Improvement

**Invited Guests**

- Claudio Cavallo – Manager, Information Services (Item 6.2)
- Damian Hogan – Manager, Finance (Item 7)
- Karen Leeder – Manager, City Development (Item 8.1)
- Michael Almonte – Municipal Building Surveyor, City Development (Item 8.1)
- Fabio Piccinin – Deputy Municipal Building Surveyor, City Development (Item 8.1)
- Enna Giampiccolo – Manager, Communications & Engagement (Item 8.3)
- Andy Viswanath, Cyber Security Specialist (Item 9.3) *via telephone conference*

**Minutes**

- Rebecca Ristevski – Audit & Compliance Officer

**DISCLAIMER:**

The information contained in this report is designated confidential by the Chief Executive Officer for the purposes of Section 3(1) of the Local Government Act 2020, being information that could prejudice Council's position in commercial negotiations if prematurely released. This ground applies because of the sensitive and varied nature of the information received and considered by the Audit & Risk Committee from time-to-time which can pertain to external stakeholders also.





**AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY MINUTES**

29 JUNE 2021

**IN CAMERA DISCUSSION (IF REQUIRED)**

In camera discussion was held from 1:00PM – 1:26PM.

**1. WELCOME & ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

Meeting commenced at 1:26PM.

The CEO gave an Acknowledgement of Country and the Chair welcomed the Committee members and all attendees present at the meeting.

**2. MEMBERSHIP**

- The Chair requested that the following titles to be amended:
  - Craig Geddes – remove the word Councillor
  - Kapil Kukreja – Director - Risk, Assurance & Advisory HLB Mann Judd

**3. APOLOGIES**

- Cr Tom Hannan – partial apology, left at 1:55pm
- Kevin Chan – Acting Senior Manager, Data Analytics, VAGO
- Rachel Ollivier - General Manager, City Sustainability & Strategy
- Sam Hewett – General Manager, Operations & Capital
- Natasha Ralston – Manager, People & Culture

**4. DISCLOSURES OF CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS**

None declared.

**5. CONFIRMATION OF THE PREVIOUS MINUTES**

The Committee approved the minutes as a true and correct record of the previous meeting held on 22 March 2021.

**6. STANDING REPORTS****6.1 ACTIONS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

The Committee noted the status of the action items from the previous meeting.

**KEY FINDINGS**

- Management have progressed all business actions arising from previous meetings.

**AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY MINUTES**

29 JUNE 2021

**6.2 INFORMATION SERVICES REPORT**

The Committee noted the Information Services Report.

**KEY FINDINGS**

- Management have progressed priority IT projects that address key risks, with appropriate resourcing.

**7. FINANCIAL REPORTS****7.1 VAGO INTERIM MANAGEMENT LETTER FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2021**

The Committee noted the Darebin City Council – Interim Management Letter for the year ended 30 June 2021.

**KEY FINDINGS**

- There were two low risk audit findings and six prior year findings closed. There are also two remaining open issues from prior years that will be closed with the implementation of the new Integrated Finance System.

**7.2 QUARTERLY FINANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT**

The Committee noted the Financial Report for the nine months ended 31 March 2021, Annual Financial Reporting and Key Financial Reporting Developments for the year ended 30 June and the Procurement Non-Conformance Reporting.

**KEY FINDINGS**

- Council is monitoring and managing its financial position and key controls and addressing procurement capability and compliance.

**8. RISK MANAGEMENT****8.1 QUARTERLY RISK MANAGEMENT & IMPROVEMENT REPORT**

The Committee noted the Quarterly Risk Management & Improvement Report and endorsed the Risk Management Policy and Framework and the Fraud and Corruption Control Policy and Plan.

**KEY FINDINGS**

- Actions that have been taken to manage Council's risks were deemed as adequate and strengthened by the review of the Risk Management Policy, Risk Management Framework, Fraud Policy and Fraud and Corruption Control Plan.
- Council's Business Continuity Plan is overdue for review however there is a plan in place to update this.
- Council's process to manage insurable risks were deemed adequate.

**8.2 QUARTERLY SAFETY REPORT**

**AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY MINUTES**

29 JUNE 2021

The Committee noted the Quarterly Safety Report.

**KEY FINDINGS**

- Management has adequate measures in place to support health, safety and wellbeing.

**8.3 COMPLAINTS HANDLING FRAMEWORK & PERFORMANCE**

The Committee noted the Complaints Handling Framework & Performance report.

**KEY FINDINGS**

- Management have established the Complaint Handling Framework in accordance with requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020* and the Public Interest Disclosure Framework in accordance with the requirement of the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012*.

**9. INTERNAL AUDIT****9.1 DRAFT STRATEGIC ANNUAL INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2021-22**

The Committee endorsed the Draft Strategic Annual Internal Audit Plan 2021-22, with agreed changes and endorsed the Assurance Map.

**KEY FINDINGS**

Management have established a Strategic Annual Internal Audit Plan for 2021/22 with the Internal Auditor to address areas with opportunity for improvement, which has been endorsed by the Committee.

**9.2 OUTSTANDING AUDIT ACTIONS STATUS REPORT**

The Committee noted the Outstanding Audit Actions Status report.

**KEY FINDINGS**

Management have progressed the completion of outstanding audit actions, with some delays experienced in achieving completion as expected.

**9.3 INTERNAL AUDIT STATUS REPORT AND AUDITS COMPLETED**

The Committee noted the Internal Audit Status Report and Audits Completed and endorsed the Internal Audit Status Report, the Cyber Security (Penetration Testing) Report and the draft internal audit plan for the Review of Compliance with VicRoads Information Protection Agreement.

**KEY FINDINGS**

The 2020/21 Internal Audit Program has been adjusted to reflect changes to align with organisational priorities and is on track for completion as planned.

**9.4 RECENT REPORT AND PUBLICATIONS**

The Committee noted the Recent Report and Publications report and management comments.

**KEY FINDINGS**

**AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY MINUTES**

29 JUNE 2021

Management have reviewed recent reports and publications related to issues of management controls, integrity and continuous improvement that impact the local government sector and initiated actions to mitigate Council's risk in response.

**10. QUARTERLY CEO REPORT (VERBAL)**

Sue Wilkinson (Chief Executive Officer) provide a verbal quarterly CEO update including a recap on 29 June 2021 Council meeting and 2021-22 Budget update.

The Committee noted the verbal update provided by the Chief Executive Officer.

**11. GOVERNANCE****11.1 COMMITTEE MANAGEMENT REPORT**

The Committee noted the Committee Management Report and endorsed the revised Committee Charter, the proposed Committee Annual Work Plan 2022 with agreed changes and the Committee Meeting Schedule 2022.

**KEY FINDINGS**

Management have fulfilled their legislative obligations and support of the Committee by completing a review of the Committee Charter, an annual assessment of the performance of the Committee and planning the Committee activities for the year ahead.

**12. OTHER BUSINESS****12.1 VAGO SEXUAL HARASSMENT SURVEY OUTCOMES AND ACTIONS**

The Committee noted the VAGO Sexual Harassment Survey Outcomes and the recommendations for application across Darebin City Council and the actions being taken in response to these. The Committee requested further reporting as a standing item until all recommendations have been addressed, including inputs from the Gender Equality Survey.

**KEY FINDINGS**

Management have established a plan and commenced implementation of actions in response to the recommendations of the VAGO Sexual Harassment in Local Government Report.

**13. NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Audit Committee will be held at 9.00am on 6 September 2021 in person at the Darebin Civic Centre, 350 High Street Preston.

**14. CLOSE OF MEETING**

As there was no further business, the Chair closed the meeting at 4:04PM

AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY MINUTES

29 JUNE 2021

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*Lisa Tripodi*

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Signed: Lisa Tripodi (Chair)

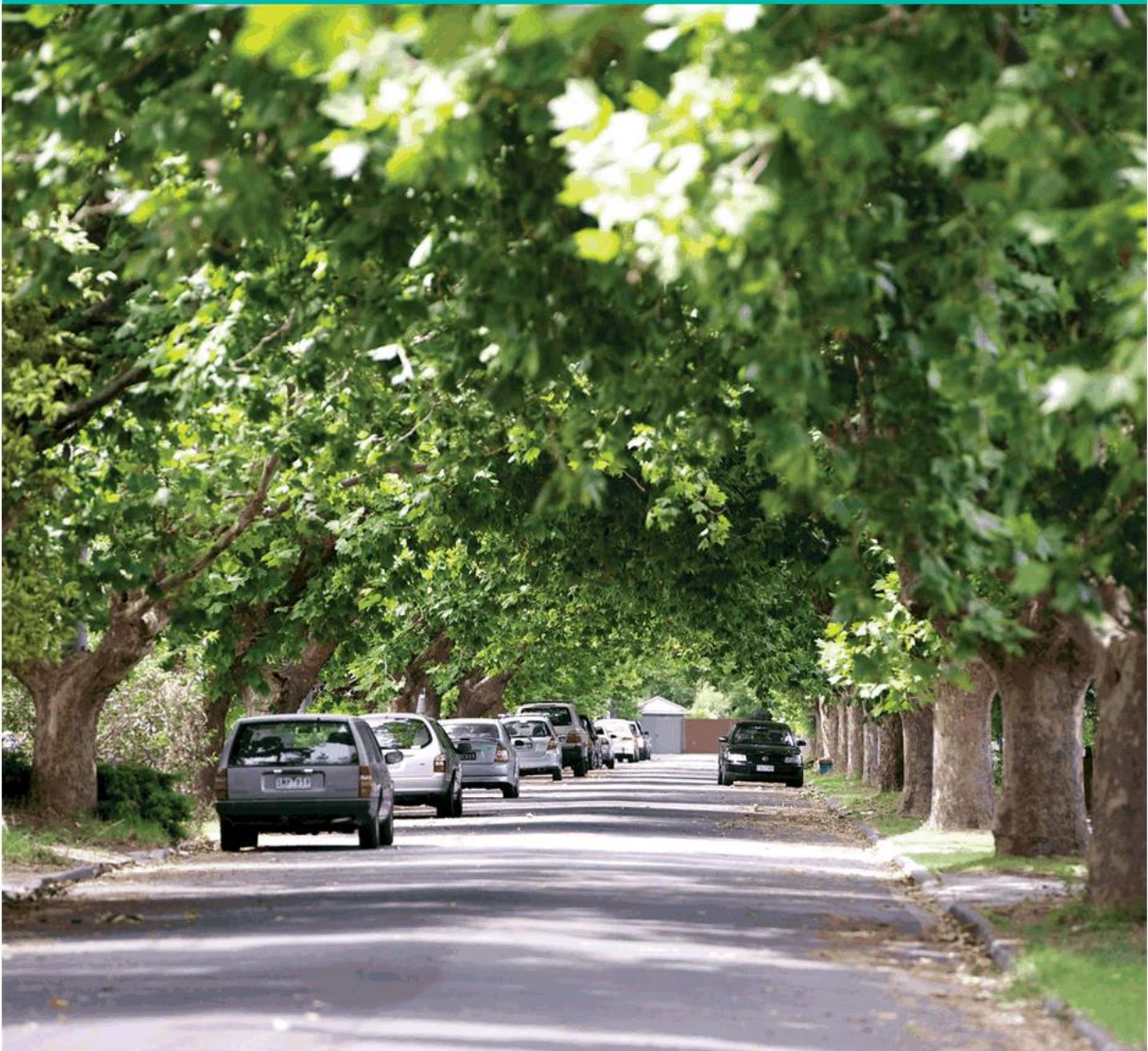
2 August 2021



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# AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE CHARTER

## June 2021



## City of Darebin Council - Audit and Risk Committee Charter – June 2021

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## City of Darebin Council - Audit and Risk Committee Charter – June 2021

**1 PURPOSE**

The Audit and Risk Committee (the Committee) is a committee established in accordance with section 53 and 54 of the Local Government Act 2020 (the Act) to assist Darebin City Council (Council) in fulfilling its responsibilities relating to external financial and performance reporting, risk and financial management, corporate governance, internal control systems and providing advice to drive continuous improvement.

In accordance with section 53 (2) of the Act, the Committee does not have any delegated powers, including executive powers, management functions or delegated responsibility.

In accordance with section 54 (2) of the Act, the Committee is established to assist Council in discharging its responsibilities to:

- monitor the compliance of Council Policies and Procedures with:
  - the Act and the regulations and any Ministerial directions,
  - the overarching governance principles;
- monitor Council's financial and performance reporting;
- monitor and provide advice on risk management and fraud prevention systems and controls; and
- oversee internal and external audit functions.

In line with Council's commitment to environmental sustainability and social justice, the Audit and Risk Committee in discharging the above responsibilities - particularly as they relate to policy compliance and auditing of Council functions and processes, will give due regard to the advancement of Council's environmental and social objectives.

**2 AUTHORITY**

The Committee is not a delegated Committee but is responsible to Council. The Council authorises the Committee, within its responsibilities to:

- obtain any information it requires from any official or external party (subject to any legal obligation to protect information);
- discuss any matters with the Victorian Auditor General's Office (VAGO), or other external parties (subject to confidentiality considerations);
- request the attendance of any official, including Councillors and Council Officers, at Committee meetings; and
- seek resolution on any disagreements between management and the external auditors on financial reporting and
- support resolution of differences of opinion between management and the internal auditors on internal audit recommendations.

**3 RESPONSIBILITIES**

In accordance with section 54 (2) of the Act, the Committee has the following responsibilities:

**Financial Management (Section 54(2b))**

(1) Monitor Financial and performance reporting, Specific matters the Committee may address include:

- (a) Review significant financial and reporting issues, including complex or unusual transactions and recent accounting, professional and regulatory pronouncements and legislative changes, and understand their effect on the financial report;



## City of Darebin Council - Audit and Risk Committee Charter – June 2021

- (b) Review the results of the annual external audit in conjunction with management and the external auditors, including any difficulties encountered;
- (c) Review the annual financial report, performance report and governance and management checklist, and consider whether the reports are complete, consistent with information known to Audit and Risk Committee members and reflect appropriate accounting principles, and make a formal recommendation to Council;
- (d) Review with management and the external auditors all matters required to be communicated to the Committee under the Australian Auditing Standards;
- (e) Review the process for the consolidation of financial information of council related entities into the financial reports of the council; and
- (f) Assess information from internal and external auditors that affects the quality of financial reports. For example, actual and potential material audit adjustments, financial report disclosures, non-compliance with legislation and regulations, internal control issues.
- (g) Review any changes to Council's accounting policies and procedures and the methods of applying them, with the input of management, external and internal auditors, ensuring that they are in accordance with the stated Financial Reporting Framework and accounting standards;

**Internal Control Environment**

(2) Monitor Internal controls. Specific matters the Committee may address include:

- (a) Review whether management's approach to maintaining an effective internal control framework is sound and effective;
- (b) Consider the scope of the internal auditors review of internal controls over financial reporting, and obtain reports from the internal and external auditors on significant findings and recommendations, together with management's responses

**Risk Management (Section 54(2c))**

(3) Monitor and provide advice on Risk management systems and controls. Specific matters the Committee may address include:

- (a) Review the risk management framework annually;
- (b) Monitor the systems and process that are in place to manage strategic and operational risks;
- (c) Monitor the process of review of Council's risk profile;
- (d) Consider the adequacy of actions taken to ensure that material risks have been dealt with in a timely manner to minimise exposures;
- (e) Provide advice on strategic reviews of insurance program through a report on the annual renewal of the insurance program.
- (f) Monitor the effectiveness of business continuity planning and processes, including whether business continuity and disaster recovery plans have been regularly updated and tested.
- (g) Monitor and provide advice on fraud prevention systems and controls (section 54(2c)). Specific matters the Committee may address include:
- (h) Receive summary reports from management on all suspected and actual frauds, thefts and material breaches of legislation, ensuring reporting to the Council and/or relevant authorities and monitor the effectiveness of the management responses; and
- (i) Monitor the Council's fraud prevention and detection framework, including fraud risks and any action taken with respect to actual and suspected instances of fraud.
- (j) Receive updates on the review of Policies (Operational and Council)
- (k) Receive summary reports from the Information Service Department on Penetration Testing (internal and external)

## City of Darebin Council - Audit and Risk Committee Charter – June 2021

**Internal Audit (Section 54(2d))**

- (4) Oversee the Internal audit function (section 54 (2d)). Specific matters the Committee may address include:
- (a) Monitor the implementation, review and endorse the three-year rolling and annual strategic internal audit plans, and any major changes to the plans, and ensure that the plans are aligned with Council's risk profile;
  - (b) Review and approve the memorandum of planning (MAP) for each internal audit to ensure that the audit objectives and scope are fit for purpose;
  - (c) Receive internal audit reports and provide advice to Council on significant issues raised and associated actions, including the identification of good practice;
  - (d) Monitor the implementation of agreed management actions;
  - (e) Monitor processes and practices to ensure that the appropriateness and independence of the internal audit function is maintained;
  - (f) Monitor the performance of the internal audit provider, taking into consideration the Institute of Internal Auditors' International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing;
  - (g) Ensure that opportunities are provided for the internal auditor to meet in-camera with the Committee, as required; and
  - (h) Ensure that opportunities are provided to explore other internal audits in line with Council's environmental, social and sustainability objectives.
  - (i) Oversee periodic testing of whether audit actions reported as completed by Management have been effectively implemented.

**External Audit (Section 54(2a))**

- (5) Oversee External audit. Specific matters the Committee may address include:
- (a) Annually review the external auditor's proposed audit scope and approach, including any reliance on internal auditor activity;
  - (b) Ensure that significant findings and recommendations made by the external auditor, and management's responses to them are appropriate and are acted on in a timely manner;
  - (c) Provide advice on the resolution of any disagreements between management and the external auditors on financial reporting;
  - (d) Ensure that opportunities are provided for the external auditor to meet in-camera with the Committee, as required; and
  - (e) Maintain awareness of Local Government performance audits undertaken by Victorian Auditor-General and consider the findings and recommendations of performance audits relevant to Council for action/implementation, where appropriate.
  - (f) Monitor work by the Council to mitigate and plan for climate change risks.

**Compliance Management (Section 54(2a))**

- (6) Monitor the compliance of Council Policies and Procedures in accordance with the overarching governance and principles, the Act and the regulations and any ministerial directions
- (a) Review the effectiveness of the systems and processes that monitor compliance with legislation and regulations;
  - (b) Monitor the implementation of actions associated with identified instances of non-compliance;
  - (c) Receive reports on the findings of any examinations by regulatory agencies and monitor management's response to these findings;
  - (d) Receive regular updates from management about compliance matters;

## City of Darebin Council - Audit and Risk Committee Charter – June 2021

- (e) Review Council's compliance with procedures associated with complaints including confidential and anonymous employee complaints under the Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012 and section 1317aa of the Corporations Act 2001 (commonwealth), dealing with accounting, internal accounting controls or auditing matters or other matters likely to affect the council or its compliance; and
- (f) Comply with legislative and regulatory requirements imposed on the Committee members, including not misusing their position (s123 of the Act) to gain an advantage for themselves/another or to cause detriment to the council and disclosing conflicts of interest (s125 of the Act);
- (g) Assess the status Council's policy framework to ensure the embedding of the governance principals;
- (h) Review the Governance and Management Checklist;
- (i) Review report on Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality; Interstate and Overseas Travel;
- (j) Review Councillor expenses;
- (k) Review CEO credit card transactions (if applicable, may not have a credit card) or expenses report.

#### 4 MEMBERSHIP

##### Composition of membership

- (1) The Committee comprises **five** members appointed by Council, made up of two Councillors and three external members.

In accordance with section 53 of the Act, the Committee must:

- Include members who are Councillors of the Council (3a);
  - Consist of a majority of members who are not Councillors of the Council and who collectively have:
    - expertise in financial management and risk (3b i),
    - expertise in public sector management (3b ii); Not be a member Council staff (3c).
- (2) In accordance with Council's commitment to cultural diversity and gender equality, composition of the Committee will aim for gender balance and culturally diverse representation, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation, through Committee membership.
- (3) Council will appoint two external members and the independent Chairperson through a merit-based recruitment process that also seeks value of connection to the Darebin community and achieves diversity of membership as outlined at (4).
- (4) The external members appointed by Council are to be natural persons with an appropriate level of skill and experience relating to local government, finance, audit, risk or management experience.
- (5) The external members are to be appointed for a three-year term, with an option for a further three-year term by mutual consent.
- (6) Council may adjust the initial period of appointment to allow for mid-term appointments and to avoid situations where all external member terms expire within close proximity of each other. This initial period of appointment must be more than one year, and no more than three years.
- (7) Where vacancies exist, Council shall determine a mechanism for filling those vacancies.
- (8) The Chairperson of the Committee must be an independent member (section 53(b)). In accordance with Section 53 of the Act, they:

City of Darebin Council - Audit and Risk Committee Charter – June 2021

- must not be a Councillor or
  - must not be a member of Council staff.
- (9) Management will recruit and recommend the Chairperson to Council for appointment.
- (10) The Chairperson is to be appointed for a three-year term.
- (11) If the Chairperson is unable to attend a meeting, the members in attendance at the meeting will appoint a Chairperson for that meeting from among the attending members.

**Quorum for Meetings**

- (12) A quorum of at least a majority of current Committee members, with a minimum of two external members and one Councillor will be necessary to transact the business of the Committee. The quorum must be in attendance at all times of the meeting.
- (13) The Chief Executive Officer (CEO), General Manager Governance & Engagement, Manager Governance and Corporate Strategy and Manager Finance will be invited to all meetings as advisors or observers, but they will not form part of the Committee. All General Managers will be invited and attend for at least the review of the 'Outstanding Audit Actions Report' and any 'Audit Scope or Internal Audit Reports' presented to the Committee for consideration in their respective portfolios.
- (14) Other management representatives or Council Officers may be invited to attend meetings as advisors or observers, but they will not form part of the Committee. They will attend if they are required to prepare a report for the Committee in their area of responsibility.
- (15) The Committee reserves the right to meet at any time without non-members or with invited non-members.
- (16) A representative(s) of VAGO will be invited to attend meetings of the Committee, as an observer. Such representative will be required to act in accordance with the governance principles in addition to the obligations of confidentiality (section 125) and conflict of interest (part 6, division 2) as outlined within this Charter and the Act.
- (17) A representative(s) of the appointed internal audit contractor will be invited to attend meetings of the Committee, as an observer. Such a representative will be required to act in accordance with the governance principles in addition to the obligations of confidentiality (section 125) and conflict of interest (part 6, division 2) as outlined within the Act.
- (18) Membership of the Committee will be reviewed periodically (but at least every three years) by Council, with the aim of ensuring an appropriate balance between continuity of membership, the contribution of fresh perspectives and a suitable mix of qualifications, knowledge, skills and experience. Councillor members will be appointed for a one-year term of office.

The initial appointment of external Committee members shall be for a three-year period. An external member may serve no more than two full terms in any one position before the position must be publicly advertised. This does not preclude existing members from being re-appointed through a competitive process.

**5 MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES**

- (1) Whilst the Local Government Act 2020 does not require members of Audit & Risk Committee to lodge Personal Interest Returns, Council through this Charter requires Committee members to lodge an initial and then biannual Personal Interest Returns in the interests of demonstrating independence and transparency. These returns will be required to be consistent with the provisions of the Act, with the exception being that Committee members information and

## City of Darebin Council - Audit and Risk Committee Charter – June 2021

disclosures will not be included in the summary of personal interests' information that is published on the Council's website pursuant to Section 135 of the Act.

- (2) Committee members may be requested to perform other activities related to this Charter.

## 6 FEES

- (1) In accordance with section 53 of the Local Government Act 2020, Council will pay a fee to all external members with the amount determined by Council, taking into account an assessment of the market and the recommendation to the CEO.
- (2) Fees will consist of a Member fee (paid to all external members) and a Chairperson fee (paid to the Chair).
- (3) The Member fee payment:
- (a) will be made each quarter following receipt of a Tax Invoice from the external member (including the purchase order provided by Council) after each scheduled quarterly meeting; and
  - (b) will not be paid to an external member that was absent from the meeting without leave from the Committee.
- (4) The Chairperson fee payment:
- (a) will be made each quarter following receipt of a Tax Invoice from the external member (including the purchase order provided by Council) after each scheduled quarterly meeting; and
  - (b) will not be paid to an external member acting or temporary holding the role of Chair.
- (5) Council does not have to pay a Member fee or Chairperson fee to a Committee member who does not want to receive a fee.
- (6) In accordance with section 53(6) of the Act, Council will pay a fee to an external member and the fee will be based on a per annum fee, determined by the CEO, which will be indexed in alignment with the rate cap % each 1 July.
- (7) Payment of the fee will be made each quarter to the external member following receipt of a Tax Invoice (including the purchase order provided by Council) after each meeting.
- (8) No less than once every Council term, the fee paid to the external members will be benchmarked, against no less than five other peer Councils, to provide the Council with the information required to fully review the fees.

## 7 MEETINGS

- (1) The Committee will meet at least four times a year, one or more special meeting may be held to review Council's annual financial statements and performance statements, or to meet other responsibilities of the Committee.
- (2) All Committee members are expected to attend each meeting, in person or through teleconference or video conference. Failure to attend a meeting will result in non-payment of the Member fee for the associated quarter.
- (3) The Chair is required to call a meeting if asked to do so by the Council or decide if a meeting is required should it be requested by another member, internal audit or VAGO.

## City of Darebin Council - Audit and Risk Committee Charter – June 2021

- (4) The CEO or their delegate will facilitate the meetings of the Committee and invite whoever is necessary for the orderly and effective conduct of committee business to attend meetings to provide pertinent information, as necessary.

**8 ADMINISTRATION**

In accordance with section 54 (6a) of the Act, the CEO will appoint a Council officer to provide secretariat support to the Committee. The secretariat will:

- (1) Ensure the agenda prior to each meeting is approved by the CEO of Council;
- (2) Prepare meeting agendas and supporting paper, which will be circulated at least one week before the meeting to the Committee members; and
- (3) Prepare meeting minutes and ensure they are well maintained. Minutes will include relevant elements of the Committee's discussion. Minutes must be reviewed by the Coordinator Risk, Manager Governance and Corporate Strategy and General Manager Governance & Engagement. Minutes must be circulated within two weeks of the meeting to each member and committee observers, as appropriate.

**9 PLANNING**

The Committee will develop a forward meeting schedule that includes the dates and location for each meeting for the forthcoming year.

In accordance with section 54(3) of the Act, the Committee will develop an annual work program that includes the timing of reporting for all of the responsibilities outlined in this Charter.

**10 SUPPORT**

To facilitate the operation of the Committee, the CEO or their delegate has responsibility to provide:

- (a) any necessary training for members in relation to their responsibilities under the Local Government Act 2020;
- (b) any information required by the Committee to enact its responsibilities under this Charter;
- (c) officer advice in respect of matters before the Committee;
- (d) formal meetings with Council staff, the internal auditors or the external auditors as requested by the Committee, in accordance with the execution of its responsibilities under this Charter; and
- (e) secretariat and logistical support to the Committee.

**11 REPORTING**

- (1) Officers will prepare biannual reports on Audit and Risk Committee that describes activities, findings, and recommendations in accordance with section 54(5a) of the Act for reporting to Council.
- (2) Committee members will attend Councillor briefings as required, to report on financial and other relevant matters.
- (3) Officers will prepare a report for inclusion in the City of Darebin Council Annual Report describing the Committee's composition, responsibilities and how they were discharged, and any other information required by regulation, including approval of non-audit services.

## City of Darebin Council - Audit and Risk Committee Charter – June 2021

- (4) The Committee will prepare an Annual Committee Performance Report that includes an annual assessment of Committee performance against the Audit and Risk Committee Charter in accordance with Section 54(4a) of the Act. This report will be provided to the CEO for presentation to Council annually in accordance with Section 54(4b) of the Act;
- (5) Internal audit reports and external audit reports shall not be made public.
- (6) In accordance with section 54(6b) of the Act, the CEO is required to table reports upon request by the Chair of the Committee.

**12 INDUCTION**

All new members will receive an induction by the Manager Governance and Corporate Strategy and the Coordinator Risk to assist them to meet their Committee responsibilities.

**13 EVALUATING PERFORMANCE**

In accordance with section 54 (4a) of the Act, the Committee must complete an annual self-assessment to evaluate the Committee's performance, as well as the performance of the internal auditors, and to confirm that the Committee has met its responsibilities under the charter. The assessment will be provided to the CEO for tabling at Council.

**14 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

- (1) Committee recommendations must be transparent and accountable, they must protect the public interest, maintain the integrity of the Committee and Council and enable the public to be confident that the Committee is performing its duties properly.
- (2) If a conflict of interest exists, it must be declared and managed. The Committee members are required to provide written declarations, through the Chair, to the Council declaring any material personal interests they may have in relation to their responsibilities.
- (3) Division 2 of Part 6 of the Act applies to a member of the Committee who is not a Councillor, as if the member were a member of a delegated Committee. An external member has a conflict of interest if they have:
  - a general conflict of interest within the meaning of section 127 of the Act; or
  - a material conflict of interest within the meaning of section 128 of the Act.

Members of the Committee will provide declarations in accordance with statutory requirements.

- (4) External members should consider past employment, consultancy arrangements and related party issues in making these declarations. The Council, in consultation with the Chair, should be satisfied that there are sufficient processes in place to manage any real or perceived conflict.
- (5) At the beginning of each Committee meeting, members are required to declare any material personal interests that may apply to specific matters on the meeting agenda. Where required by the Chair, the member will be excused from the meeting or from the Committee's decision of the relevant agenda item(s). The Chair is also responsible for deciding if they should excuse themselves from the meeting or from the Committee's decision of the relevant agenda item(s). Details of material personal interests declared by the Chair and other members, and actions taken, will be appropriately recorded in the minutes.

## City of Darebin Council - Audit and Risk Committee Charter – June 2021

**15 MISUSE OF POSITION**

Section 123 of the Local Government Act 2020 applies to a member of the Committee who is not a Councillor, as if the member were a member of a delegated Committee. The requirements include:

- (1) The external member must not intentionally misuse their position –
  - o to gain or attempt to gain, directly or indirectly, an advantage for themselves or for any other person; or
  - o to cause, or attempt to cause, detriment to the Council or another person.
- (2) For the purposes of this section, circumstances involving the misuse of a position by a person who is, or has been, a Councillor or member of a delegated committee include –
  - o making improper use of information acquired as a result of the position the person held or holds; or
  - o disclosing information that is confidential information; or
  - o directing or improperly influencing, or seeking to direct or improperly influence, a member of Council staff; or
  - o exercising or performing, or purporting to exercise or perform, a power, duty or function that the person is not authorised to exercise or perform; or
  - o using public funds or resources in a manner that is improper or unauthorised; or
  - o participating in a decision on a matter in which the person has a conflict of interest.

**16 CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION**

Section 125 of the Act applies to a member of the Committee who is not a Councillor, as if the member were a member of a delegated Committee. The requirements include:

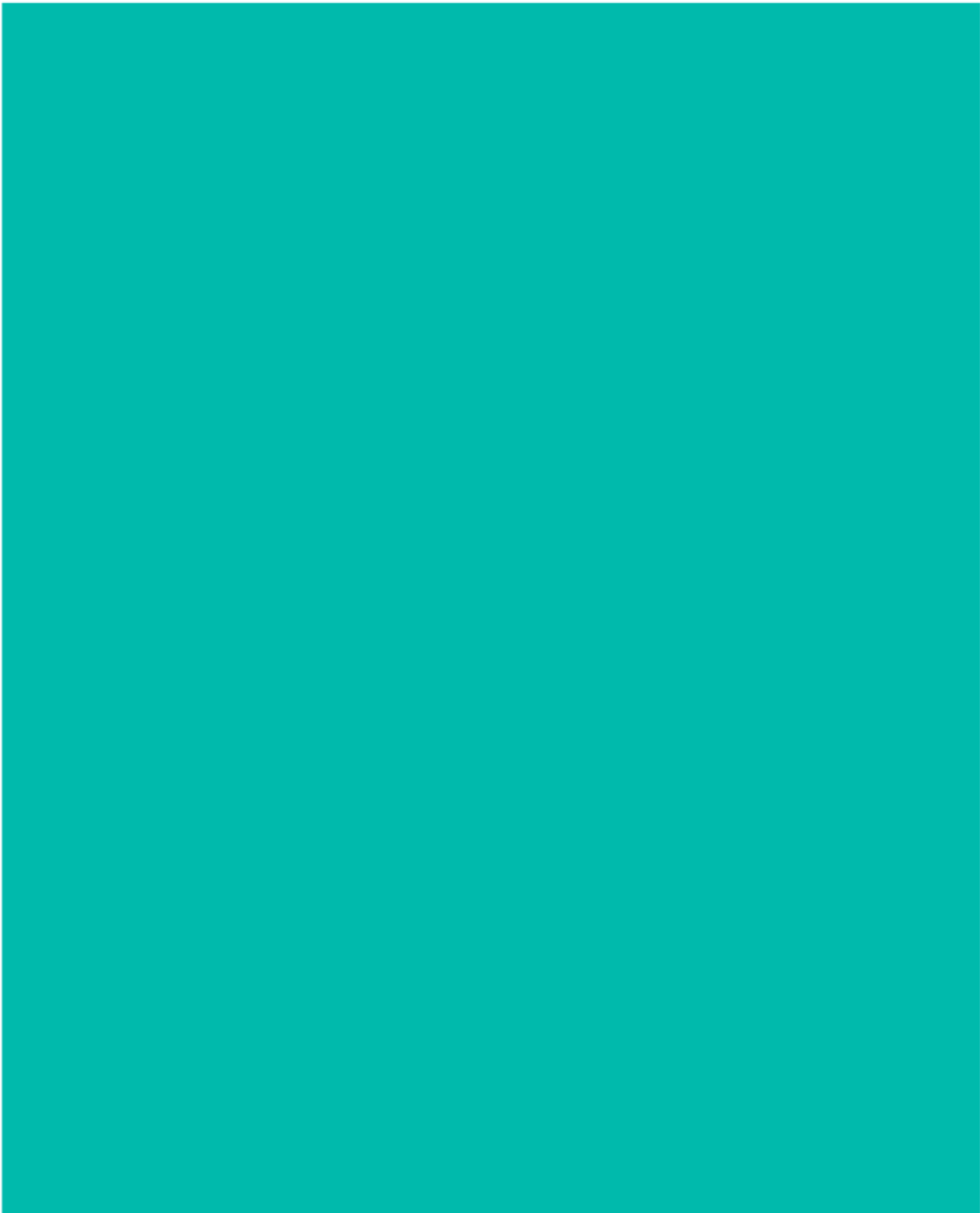
- (1) Unless subsection (2) or (3) applies, a person who is, or has been, an external member must not intentionally or recklessly disclose information that the person knows, or should reasonably know, is confidential information.
- (2) Subsection (1) does not apply if the information that is disclosed is information that the Council has determined should be publicly available.
- (3) A person who is, or has been, an external member may disclose information that the person knows, or should reasonably know, is confidential information in the following circumstances:
  - o for the purposes of any legal proceedings arising out of this Act;
  - o to a court or tribunal in the course of legal proceedings;
  - o pursuant to an order of a court or tribunal;
  - o in the course of an internal arbitration and for the purposes of the internal arbitration process;
  - o in the course of a Councillor Conduct Panel hearing and for the purposes of the hearing;
  - o to a Municipal Monitor to the extent reasonably required by the Municipal Monitor;
  - o to the Chief Municipal Inspector to the extent reasonably required by the Chief Municipal Inspector;
  - o to a Commission of Inquiry to the extent reasonably required by the Commission of Inquiry;
  - o to the extent reasonably required by a law enforcement agency.




City of Darebin Council - Audit and Risk Committee Charter – June 2021

**17 REVIEW OF THE COMMITTEE CHARTER**

The Committee will review and assess the adequacy of this Charter annually, taking into account any relevant legislative requirements. The Audit and Risk Committee Charter, including amendments to the Charter, will be approved by Council.



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# City of Darebin Audit and Risk Committee

Annual Performance Report 2020-21



### **Message from the Audit and Risk Committee Chair**

I was first appointed Chair of the Committee in March 2019 and would like to thank Councillors, fellow independent members and Council staff for their contribution and support during the year on behalf of the City of Darebin Audit and Risk Committee.

I would like to acknowledge the cooperation and support that the Committee and I have received from Sue Wilkinson, Chief Executive Officer, the Victorian Auditor General's Office (VAGO) and HLB Mann Judd and the management team at Council throughout the year. Their support has been central to developing the organisational culture that is necessary to foster accountability, integrity and compliance.

I am pleased to report the independent view of the Committee that the governance culture of the City of Darebin is supporting the development of a robust risk, control and compliance framework which continues to strengthen and adapt to changes in the Council's operations.

**Lisa Tripodi**  
Audit and Risk Committee Chair  
City of Darebin

## 1. Introduction

The City of Darebin Audit and Risk Committee (the Committee) has continued to undertake its role in providing independent advice to the Council and management of the City of Darebin (Council) throughout the period 1 June 2020 to 30 June 2021 as covered by this report.

The Committee's role is to report to the Council and provide appropriate advice and recommendations on matters relevant to its charter in order to facilitate decision making by the Council in relation to the discharge of its responsibilities.

The objective of the Committee is to oversee:

- the integrity of external financial reporting, including accounting policies
- the scope of work, objectivity, performance and independence of the external and internal auditors
- the establishment, effectiveness and maintenance of controls and systems to safeguard the Council's financial and physical resources
- the systems or procedures that are designed to ensure that Council comply with relevant statutory and regulatory requirements
- the process for recognising risks arising from the Council's operations and strategies, and consider the adequacy of measures taken to manage those risks, including compliance
- the processes and systems which protect the Council against fraud and irregularities including the Protected Disclosures Act procedures.

To achieve its objective, some of the key activities undertaken by the Committee during this period were to:

- review the draft Financial Statements and recommend their adoption to Council
- review the Annual Performance Statement and recommend its adoption to Council
- approve the scope of the Internal Audit Program 2020/21 to ensure that planned Internal Audit activity is aligned to key business risks
- review the plans, results and effectiveness of the Internal Audit Program
- monitor compliance obligations and challenge the existence and effectiveness of accounting and financial systems and other systems of internal control and business risk management.

Overall, through its work, the Committee's aim is to add to the credibility of Council by promoting ethical standards. Under the guidance of the Committee Chair, Ms Lisa Tripodi, the focus on strategic risk issues was continued while ensuring that all key operational risks were still considered.

## 2. Audit and Risk Committee membership

The Audit and Risk Committee comprises **five** members appointed by Council, made up of three independent members and two Councillors:

### 2.1 Council representatives

Cr Kim Le Cerf                      October 2016 - October 2020

Cr Susan Rennie	October 2016 - October 2020
Cr Lina Messina	December 2020 – ongoing
Cr Tom Hannan	December 2020 – ongoing

**2.2 Independent members**

Ms Lisa Tripodi	June 2020 – December 2022
Mr Craig Geddes	March 2020 – March 2022
Dr. Marco Bini	November 2017 – December 2021

In 2020, Independent members were appointed for a two-year term, with the option of a further two-year term. The Chair was elected from among the independent members.

In June 2021, the Committee Charter was revised so that Independent members are appointed for a three-year term, with an option for a further three-year term by mutual consent. Under the new terms of the Charter, the Chairperson is to be appointed for a three-year term and Management will recruit and recommend the Chairperson to Council for appointment.

The Committee Charter is tabled for endorsement by Council at its meeting in August 2021.



**Above: Current ARC Members (L-R)**

Lisa Tripodi (Chair & Independent Member), Dr. Marco Bini (Independent Member), Craig Geddes (Independent Member), Cr. Lina Messina (Mayor and Councillor) and Cr. Tom Hannan (Councillor)

**3. Meetings and attendance**

A total of five meetings were held during the period under review. A summary of meeting dates and attendance is shown in the table below.

Representatives of the Victorian Auditor General's Office (VAGO, External Auditors) as well as representatives from HLB Mann Judd, the internal audit service provider for the period, attended each quarterly meeting and the Special Committee meeting.

Senior management representatives also attend each Committee meeting. These include the Chief Executive Officer, the General Manager Governance and Engagement, the Manager Property and Business Improvement, the Manager Finance and Coordinator Risk. In addition, there was attendance by other Managers and Coordinators when there were Department-related items on the Agenda.

**Table 1 – Membership, meeting dates and attendance**

Member	Role	15/06/2020 Quarterly	31/08/2020 Financial	14/12/2020 Quarterly	22/03/2021 Quarterly	29/06/2021 Quarterly
Lisa Tripodi	Independent Member	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Craig Geddes	Independent Member	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dr. Marco Bini	Independent Member	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cr. Kim Le Cerf	Committee Member	✓	✓			
Cr. Susan Rennie	Mayor & Committee Member	✓	✓			
Cr. Tom Hannan	Committee Member			✓	✓	✓
Cr. Lina Messina	Mayor & Committee Member			✓	✓	✓
Sanchu Chummar	A/Sector Director, VAGO	x	✓	✓	✓	✓
Kevin Chan	Snr Manager Financial Audit, VAGO	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mark Holloway	Partner, Audit & Assurance, HLB Mann Judd	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Kapil Kurkreja	Snr Manager, Risk, Assurance & Advisory, HLB Mann Judd	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sue Wilkinson	Chief Executive Officer	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ingrid Bishop	General Manager, Governance & Engagement	✓				
Jodie Watson	General Manager, Governance & Engagement			✓	✓	✓
Lenny Jenner	Acting General Manager, Governance & Engagement		✓			

✓ = In attendance

X = Apology

■ = not required / not a Member at that time

## 4. Internal audit

### 4.1 Internal audit contract

During the period under review, HLB Mann Judd entered Year 2 of their 3-year contract. As this contract expires in May 2022, with the option to extend for two further 1-year extensions, it was not necessary to commence any procurement activities.

An annual review of contract performance has not been undertaken by the Coordinator, Risk during the period under review.

Representatives from HLB Mann Judd attended each Committee meeting and presented the results of the audits they had undertaken.

**4.2 Internal audit reports program 2020-21**

The 2020-21 Internal Audit plan was presented to the Committee in June 2020. Further to some additional commentary being added the plan was approved at that meeting.

HLB Mann Judd continued the practice of presenting the Terms of Reference for each internal audit to the Committee for discussion before their execution in order to ensure that the focus remained aligned to the risk profile of the organisation and the requirements of the Committee.

Final internal audit reports were reviewed and discussed by the Committee at each of the scheduled meetings. The status of Internal and External Audit recommendations was reported to the Committee on a quarterly basis and details of any outstanding recommendations provide.

**4.3 Internal audit reports reviewed**

A total of eleven internal audit reports were presented to the Audit and Risk Committee during the period under review.

These are listed below with the overall rating, the number of findings by risk level and the number of recommendations for each report.

**Table 2 – 2020-21 Internal audits with overall audit and findings ratings**

Audit name	Meeting (Dates)	High Risk Findings (total #)	Medium Risk Findings (total #)	Low Risk Findings (total #)	Improvement Opportunities (total #)
Victorian Protective Data Security Standards	June 2020	6	6	-	
Cyber Security (Penetration Testing)	June 2020	1	4	2	
Review of Compliance with Child Safe Standards	August 2020	-	-	-	7
Fraud and Corruption Control (High level Review)	August 2020	1	7	-	
VicRoads Confidentiality Agreement	August 2020	-	-	-	6
Councillor Expenses	December 2020	-	4	1	
IT General Controls	December 2020	-	7	1	
Initiation and Prioritisation of Capital Works	March 2021	1	2	1	
Procurement above \$150,000 (including tendering and	March 2021	-	4	2	



Audit name	Meeting (Dates)	High Risk Findings (total #)	Medium Risk Findings (total #)	Low Risk Findings (total #)	Improvement Opportunities (total #)
management of contracts/agreements)					
Cyber Security (Penetration Testing)	June 2021	3	8	5	
Assurance Map	June 2021	-	-	-	-

#### 4.4 Oversight of internal audit performance

The Committee monitored the performance of the Internal Auditor through ongoing review of Internal Audit reports, the quarterly Internal Audit Status reports and periodic contract management meetings.

Improvement initiatives included:

- Introduction of the quarterly Local Government Sector Report
- Scheduling of the internal audits as per Audit and Risk Committee timelines
- Enhancements to the quarterly Internal Audit Status Report

#### 4.5 Implementation of audit recommendations

The Committee continued to encourage management to implement Internal and External Audit recommendations in a timely manner to ensure that better practices and controls in all council's services are achieved. The organisation was able to address audit recommendations in a timely manner and consistently fulfilled its committed actions.

### 5. External Audit

The Victorian Auditor General's Office (VAGO) continued to take the responsibility for external audits of the City.

Sanchu Chummar, Acting Sector Director, Local Government, has been the VAGO officer responsible for the external audit of the Council for the financial year 2020/21, supported by VAGO colleagues as required.

VAGO's approach focuses on key financial reporting risks. This involves gaining an understanding of significant financial reporting processes and a combination of internal control testing and substantive audit procedures to assess the residual risk of material error.

### 6. Oversight of Annual Financial reports

During the year, a special meeting to consider the accounts of the City of Darebin for the year ended 30 June 2020 was held on 31 August 2020. After presentations from the Chief Finance Officer, the Committee undertook a thorough review of the Financial Statements and after some edits were identified to be made, the Audit and Risk Committee recommended to Council that they approve the 'in principle' Annual Financial Statements, Performance Statement and Standard Statements. This work was undertaken by the Committee in a timely manner so that final clearance of all financial statements was received within the deadline imposed under the Local Government Act.

The Committee provided assurance to Council on the Annual financial statements at the Council meeting on 7 September 2020.

Quarterly financial performance reporting was presented to the Committee at each meeting throughout the year for the proceeding month. At the June 2020 Committee meeting, the Committee received a 'Financial Presentation of Council's Model Financial Accounts' from the Chief Financial Officer.

## **7. Duties and responsibilities**

### **7.1 General assessment**

The Audit and Risk Committee works to its Charter (Audit and Risk Committee Charter). An annual work plan is developed from the Charter and is the basis by which the Committee tracks its responsibilities and monitors its performance throughout each year.

### **7.2 Monitoring of legal claims**

As part of managing the Council's risk exposure, the Committee received quarterly reports, which identify litigated claims or other matters settled or pending and any monetary movement associated with those claims.

### **7.3 Other activities**

In addition to the activities directly identified in the Committee Charter, the Committee undertook a number of activities and considered several other initiatives and reports throughout the year. These included:

- Implementation of Local Government Act 2020 (June 2020)
- Asset Protection Bonds (June 2020)
- Annual Financial Statements & Performance Statement (August 2020)
- Strategic Internal Audit Plan updated 2020 – 2023 (August 2020)
- Social and Sustainable Procurement Policy (August 2020)
- IT Project Program (December 2020)
- Risk-Based approach to Tree Management (March 2021)
- Cladding Report (March 2021)
- VAGO Sexual Harassment Survey Outcomes and Actions (June 2021)

## **8. Audit and Risk Committee Effectiveness Survey**

The Audit and Risk Committee undertakes an annual self-assessment survey to evaluate the Committee's performance, as well as the performance of the internal and external auditors, to identify possible areas of improvement and to confirm that the Committee has met its responsibilities under the Charter.

The results of the self-assessment survey were circulated to Committee members at the March 2021 meeting.

The questionnaire attached at **Appendix A** includes a total of 5 respondents and the summary represents a snapshot of their opinions for the March Audit and Risk Committee meeting.

The questionnaire assessed 5 areas where respondents were requested to evaluate performance based on a Likert 5-point scale (agreement and satisfaction). The scores from this assessment were converted to averages to assess overall performance. The averages were also compared to the scores from the previous survey.

The areas that were tested include, Committee meeting its responsibilities, conduct of meetings, Internal Audit, External Audit and Management.

Overall, all areas scores had an average of 4.4 and scores were distributed between;

- "neither agree/disagree" and "strongly agree"
- "neither satisfied/not dissatisfied" and "very satisfied"

The survey indicates that the respondents rated the discharge of their duties as member of the Committee, as *medium to high performance*. In comparison to the previous year, the scores were on par. Comments provide an insight in specific areas identified for improvements.

The survey noted other areas of improvement, and as such Risk and Business Improvement will continue to consider improving financial reporting to ARC in conjunction with the Finance Department to ensure adequate time for scrutiny and simplified reporting, where possible.

Council have begun addressing the management of and reporting on audit recommendations by incorporating the line of sight within the Audit & Compliance Officer role. Climate risk is noted in the Audit Charter and responsible reporting is explored as a direct consequence.

## **9. Overall assessment of City of Darebin's risk, control and compliance framework**

The Committee's overall assessment is that the Council has continued its pathway to enhance its management of strategic and operational risk, financial and other internal controls and compliance. The organisation has continued to demonstrate a high level of commitment to being open to audit findings, genuine in addressing any issues or improvement opportunities, and consistent in the fulfilment of its commitments.

It is the independent view of the Committee that the governance culture of City of Darebin is supporting the development of a robust risk, control and compliance framework which continues to strengthen and adapt to changes in the Council's operations.

*Lisa Tripodi*

**Lisa Tripodi**  
Audit and Risk Committee Chair  
City of Darebin

06 August 2021



**Appendix A**

**Audit and Risk Committee Self-Assessment Questionnaire Results (March 2021)**

**Total: 5 respondents**

**Areas of Responsibility**

The committee has met its responsibilities in the area of:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Average 2021	Average 2020
monitoring of financial and performance reporting	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 20.0%	2 40.0%	1 40.0%	4.2	4.2
monitoring of internal controls	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 20.0%	3 60.0%	1 20.0%	4.0	4.2
monitoring and providing advice on risk management and fraud prevention	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 20.0%	3 60.0%	1 20.0%	4.0	4.0
overseeing internal audit	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 20.0%	3 60.0%	1 20.0%	4.0	4.2
overseeing external audit	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 20.0%	3 60.0%	1 20.0%	4.0	4.2
business continuity	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	2 40.0%	2 40.0%	1 20.0%	3.8	4.0
monitoring the compliance of Council Policies and Procedures*	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 20.0%	3 60.0%	1 20.0%	4.0	4.2

\*2020 did not investigate compliance with the same topic

**Comments:**

Monitoring achievement of Council's objectives is not the major role of the Committee, albeit achievement against the Council Plan is provided to the Committee

Council is updating policy and procedures therefore the Committee will need to review the monitoring of the updated policy and procedures

I am new to the committee and don't have strong impressions yet on how it is going.

**The committee is committed to monitoring Council's achievement of key deliverables.**

Value	Percent
Neither agree nor disagree	40.0
Agree	20.0%
Strongly Agree	40.0%

Statistics	2021	2020
Total Responses	5	5
Average	4.0	4.2

**Conduct of Meetings**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Average 2021	Average 2020
Meetings have been conducted in accordance with the agenda	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	2 40.0%	3 60.0%	4.6	4.4
Meeting agendas and papers are well-structured and contain sufficient detail to inform decision-making	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	3 60.0%	2 40.0%	4.4	4.0
Meetings have been conducted to allow for full participation by all members	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	2 40.0%	3 60.0%	4.6	4.2
Meetings have been conducted to allow for open, frank and robust discussion of all matters raised	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	2 40.0%	3 60.0%	4.6	4.0

**Comments:**

Additional meeting needed for Financial Statements due to increased volume of Committee papers and oversight responsibilities.

**Internal Audit**

	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither satisfied not dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Average 2021	Average 2020
The performance of the internal auditor	0 0.0 %	0 0.0 %	1 20.0 %	1 20.0 %	3 60.0%	4.4	4.0
The committee's working relationship with the internal auditor	0 0.0 %	0 0.0 %	1 20.0 %	0 0.0%	4 80.0%	4.6	4.4
Opportunities provided to meet with the internal auditor 'in camera' to discuss critical issues	0 0.0 %	0 0.0 %	1 20.0 %	0 0.0%	4 80.0%	4.6	4.0

**No Comments Provided**

**External Audit**

	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither satisfied not dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Average 2021	Average 2020
The performance of the external auditor	0 0.0 %	0 0.0%	1 20.0 %	1 20.0 %	3 60.0%	4.4	4.2
The committee's working relationship with the external auditor	0 0.0 %	0 0.0%	1 20.0 %	1 20.0 %	3 60.0%	4.4	4.4

Opportunities provided to meet with the external auditor 'in camera' to discuss critical issues	0 0.0 %	0 0.0%	1 20.0 %	1 20.0 %	3 60.0%	4.4	4.0
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No Comments Provided

**Management**

	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither satisfied not dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Average 2021	Average 2020
The committee's working relationship with management	0 0.0 %	0 0.0%	0 0.0 %	1 20.0 %	4 80.0%	4.8	4.2
The committee's access to management and relevant officers	0 0.0 %	0 0.0%	0 0.0 %	1 20.0 %	4 80.0%	4.8	4.4
The quality and transparency of information provided by management	0 0.0 %	0 0.0%	1 20.0 %	2 40.0 %	2 40.0%	4.2	4.0

**Comments:**

There has been a turnover of Governance staff this year, but all Darebin staff have been extremely attentive to any requirements.

Council understands there are still challenges in completing the implementation of audit recommendations in a timely manner.

I would like to see simple reports of financial position made firstly to the committee and then to the full council.

**Are there any other matters you would like to raise?**

Love the introduction of electronic work papers. An extra meeting for the financial statements may be required as there seems to be an increased requirement in the financial statements to review and having additional papers makes the meeting very large and increases the risk of missing something important.

Committee has a good working relationship with management, internal auditors and external auditors.

Council has done well during Covid in trying to update policy and procedures. The new Governance structure and team has started well but will take a bit of time to settle down into normal operations. Service/assistance provided to myself as an independent AC member has been excellent.

I would like to see climate related risks highlighted in reporting.





## 9. NOTICES OF MOTION

### 9.1 NUCLEAR WEAPONS BAN

**Councillor:** Gaetano GRECO

**NoM No.:** 20/21

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Take notice that at the Council Meeting to be held on 23 August 2021, it is my intention to move:

**That Council:**

- (1) *Notes that August the 9th marked the 76th anniversaries of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.*
- (2) *Notes that at its National General Assembly in June 2021, the Australian Local Government Association delegates unanimously passed a motion calling on Australia to sign and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.*
- (3) *Notes the recent call by the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (Nobel Peace Prize winners in 2017) for cities and towns to takes steps to help reduce exposure to the development, testing, production, maintenance or trade of nuclear weapons related technology, parts, products or services.*
- (4) *Receives a Council report in October that;*
  - i. *Examines how Council can possibly embed exclusions of nuclear weapons in Council investment policies in alignment with the Climate Emergency Plan (Key Direction 6 – Fossil Fuel Divestment).*
  - ii. *Reviews whether Council is currently transacting with companies associated with the production of nuclear weapons and if so provide options on how to possibly divest from these companies.*
  - iii. *Considers how Council can advocate to ensure Council's preferred super fund excludes nuclear weapons from its investment portfolio.*
  - iv. *Receive advice on further advocacy and communications opportunities to encourage other councils, organisations and communities to take action to prohibit nuclear weapons.*

*Rationale*

*According to ICAN the Australian public supports action on nuclear disarmament and abhor nuclear weapons: Up to 70% of people support Australia signing and ratifying the UN ban treaty.*

*Darebin were successful in leading the way in presenting a motion that was passed unanimously by Council's across the country at the June ALGA conference. To follow on with this work it is now incumbent on councils to critically examine their own policies and practices to ensure steps are taken for eliminating nuclear weapons investments from council finances.*

**Notice Received:** 9 August 2021  
**Notice Given to Councillors** 16 August 2021  
**Date of Meeting:** 23 August 2021

**Attachments**

Nil

## 10. URGENT BUSINESS

## 11. CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS CONSIDERED CONFIDENTIAL

In accordance with Section 66(2) of the *Local Government Act 2020*, Council may resolve to close the meeting to members of the public to consider items, deemed to be confidential by the Chief Executive Officer in accordance with Section 3(1) of the Act for the reasons indicated:

### 11.1 CT202065 Contract Award for Construction of Northcote Aquatic and Recreation Centre

This item is designated confidential because it contains private commercial information, being information provided by a business, commercial or financial undertaking that if released, would unreasonably expose the business, commercial or financial undertaking to disadvantage, pursuant to Section 3(1) (g(ii)) of the Act.

### 11.2 Optimising Utilisaton of Council Buildings

This item is designated confidential because it contains Council business information, being information that would prejudice the Council's position in commercial negotiations if prematurely released, pursuant to Section 3(1) (a) of the Act.

### 11.3 Darebin Submission to DELWP's Yarra Catchment Integrated Water Management Forum

This item is designated confidential because it contains Council business information, being information that would prejudice the Council's position in commercial negotiations if prematurely released, pursuant to Section 3(1) (a) of the Act.

### 11.4 Contractual Matter

This item is designated confidential because it contains personal information, being information which if released would result in the unreasonable disclosure of information about any person or their personal affairs, pursuant to Section 3(1) (f) of the Act.

## CLOSE OF MEETING

<b>Recommendation</b>
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**That** in accordance with section 66(2) of the *Local Government Act 2020*, Council resolves to close the meeting to members of the public to consider the items designated confidential by the Chief Executive Officer on the basis that the matters are confidential in accordance with Section 3(1) of the Act.

**RE-OPENING OF MEETING**

**Recommendation**

That the meeting be re-opened to the members of the public.


**12. CLOSE OF MEETING**

**CITY OF  
DAREBIN**

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If you are deaf, or have a hearing or speech impairment, contact us through the National Relay Service.

 **Speak your language**  
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