BENNETTSWOOD RESERVE DRAFT MASTER PLAN

DRAFT VERSION REVISION M MAY 2026
PREPARED FOR CITY OF WHITEHORSE

Acknowledgement of Country

Whitehorse City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Owners of the land. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. Wurundjeri connection to this land dates back more than 40,000 years, and evidence of this connection still exists today.

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All drone photography captured in elevation within Wurundjeri Walk, which abides by open space restrictions.

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Executive summary

On behalf of Whitehorse City Council (WCC), AECOM Australia Pty Ltd (AECOM) has developed a draft Master Plan for Bennettswood Reserve.

The draft Master Plan identifies the vision, key design principles, and objectives for the precinct. The plan has been developed through extensive consultation and collaboration with a range of stakeholders including community groups, sport clubs, and government agencies.

Project context

The draft Master Plan offers an overview of the key features of Bennettswood Reserve. Detailed background information on the site's geographical, planning, heritage, and environmental context can be found within the Appendices, along with the Engagement Report.

Bennettswood Reserve is situated on the traditional land of the Wurrundjeri Woi-wurrung people of the Kulin Nation. Located in Burwood, to the east of Melbourne's Central Business District (CBD), within Whitehorse. The reserve features a large open grass area, the southern part of the site is primarily used for sport, while the northern section provides an off-leash dog walking area. Gardiners Creek and its trail run along the western edge of the reserve, offering a natural creek corridor amidst the urban landscape.

The draft Master Plan has taken into account one key interfacing project: the Suburban Rail Loop (SRL) Burwood station. This future station is expected to impact the local population and demographics, with an increase in housing density anticipated to make the community more dependent on public open spaces.

As participation in sport continues to grow within the City of Whitehorse, there is an increasing demand for modern, accessible, and well-equipped facilities to support both recreational and competitive activities. Many existing sports venues and amenities are reaching capacity, or no longer meet the needs of a diverse and expanding community. Upgraded facilities are essential to accommodate a wider range of sports, ensure accessibility for all user groups, and support the growing interest in women's and junior sports.

Bennettswood Reserve draft Master Plan

The Master Plan's key design principles include:

- Amenity
- Access and movement
- Environment
- People and culture

Key objectives and opportunities of the Master Plan have been identified through the guidance of these principles and have been informed by inputs from multiple professional disciplines, from WCC, key stakeholders, and the community.

The Master Plan provides conceptual illustrations of a number of the identified opportunities. These opportunities present possible ways in which the Master Plan's key design principles and objectives may be delivered, subject to future funding, design development and approval.

Master Plan implementation

The Bennettswood Reserve draft Master Plan opportunities have been categorised into low, medium, and high priority. The viability of each opportunity is dependent upon adequate future funding. For some opportunities, funding may require future detailed design development and detailed costings.



Bennettswood Reserve aerial image towards Burwood Highway

1.0
Introduction

1.1 Master Plan project overview

1.2 Current interfacing projects

1.3 Sport in Whitehorse

1.4 Bennettswood Reserve features

Path from Gardiners Creek (KooyongKoot) along north west edge of North Field

1.1 Master Plan project overview

Whitehorse City Council (WCC) has developed a draft Master Plan for Bennettswood Reserve which has been informed by comprehensive background research, analysis, and feedback gathered from community and stakeholder engagement (refer to Appendices for supporting documents). These inputs have shaped the Master Plan's vision, key principles, and objectives. The plan identifies specific opportunities for enhancements and new infrastructure, with the goal of providing a diverse range of recreational experiences for both the local and broader community.

Further community and stakeholder engagement and subsequent feedback will help to refine the final version of the Master Plan.

Purpose of the Master Plan

The draft Master Plan serves as a strategic framework for the long-term development and improvement of Bennettswood Reserve. It aims to guide decision making processes and to support the strategic planning and operations of the site. The plan recognises that the needs and expectations of visitors will evolve over time, and provides a flexible approach to implementation that adapts to these changes.

Some initiatives and projects proposed in the draft Master Plan may require further investigation and feasibility studies, depending on their scope, potential impact, and cost estimates.



Bennettswood Reserve Master Plan sketch

1.2 Current interfacing projects

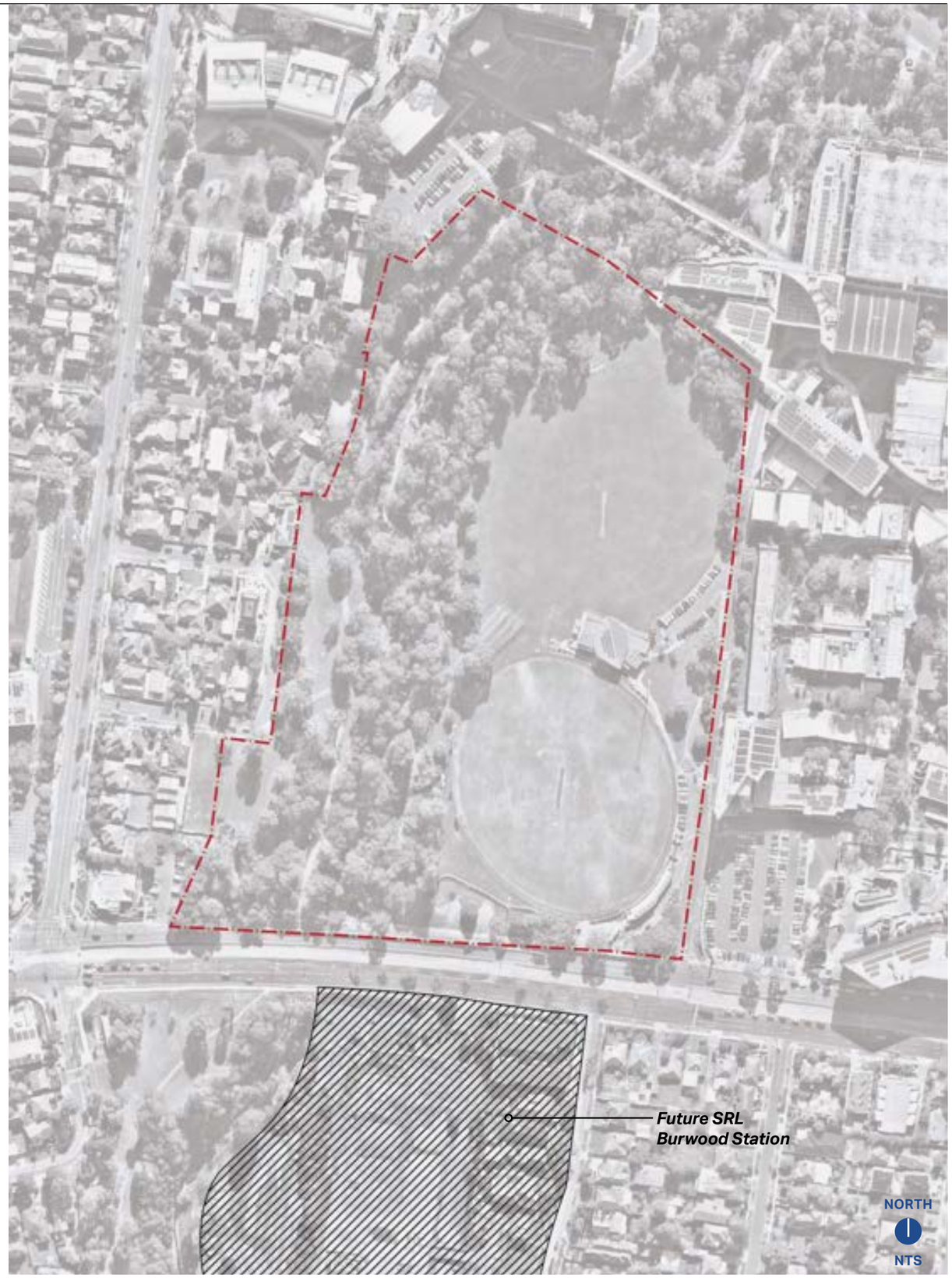
The Master Plan aims to align with ongoing and projects in and around Bennettswood Reserve. This includes the concurrent Suburban Rail Loop (SRL) Burwood Station project.

SRL Burwood Station

The SRL station in Burwood will provide a direct train link to Deakin University and connect Burwood locals to key destinations across Melbourne. This station is a critical part of the region's transformation over the next 20 to 30 years, supporting anticipated population growth and the development of Burwood into a vibrant urban hub. With new housing and infill development, the area will experience increased residential diversity and density, resulting in a community that will rely more on open spaces for respite, recreation, and environmental benefits.

As part of the project, SRL will contribute to the enhancement of parks, public spaces, and walking and cycling paths, including the Gardiners Creek Trail. The vision for the precinct has a focus on promoting active transport, making Bennettswood Reserve a vital transition point between the station and local destinations such as Deakin University, schools, and residential development.

Construction is already underway, with tunnelling set to begin in 2026, and trains expected to commence passenger services in 2035.



Key	
	Bennettswood Reserve Master Plan boundary
	Interfacing project

Interfacing projects

1.3 Sport in Whitehorse

Facilities

Sporting facilities in Whitehorse are facing increasing pressure as usage demand continues to grow. The city offers a well-distributed network of sports fields, reserves, and pavilions that support a range of activities, from team sports such as football, soccer and cricket to informal activities such as running or ball kicking practice. However, the heavy usage of these facilities is exceeding their capacity, creating challenges in maintaining safe and high-quality surfaces for play.

Many fields are showing signs of wear and tear, impacting both their condition and player safety. Additionally, some existing facilities do not fully support inclusivity and universality, with limited gender-neutral spaces, insufficient access for people with disabilities, and a lack of diverse options to meet the needs of emerging groups, such as women's and youth sports. This underscores the need for strategic planning and investment to upgrade and expand facilities to ensure they can accommodate the growing demand and provide safe, accessible spaces for all.

Participation

Sport participation in Whitehorse has been steadily increasing, particularly among youth and women, reflecting broader trends of greater inclusivity and community engagement in physical activity. The 2023/2024 summer season demonstrated the challenges posed by this growing demand, as six senior teams were forced to seek alternative locations in neighbouring municipalities due to the unavailability of grounds on Saturday afternoons. This not only disrupted team cohesion and local engagement but also added logistical burdens for clubs and athletes.

Additionally, the demand for grounds on Friday evenings is nearing full capacity, making scheduling and access increasingly difficult for all teams. The need for floodlit sports fields during the winter months is also high, with community usage estimated to exceed 112.2% of the turf industry's recommended levels for natural grass surfaces.

Team and player numbers have continued to rise in 2024 across all sports, particularly football (soccer), further highlighting the strain on existing facilities. As more people get involved in sports, it is crucial that the city's infrastructure evolves to support this growing participation and ensure access for everyone.



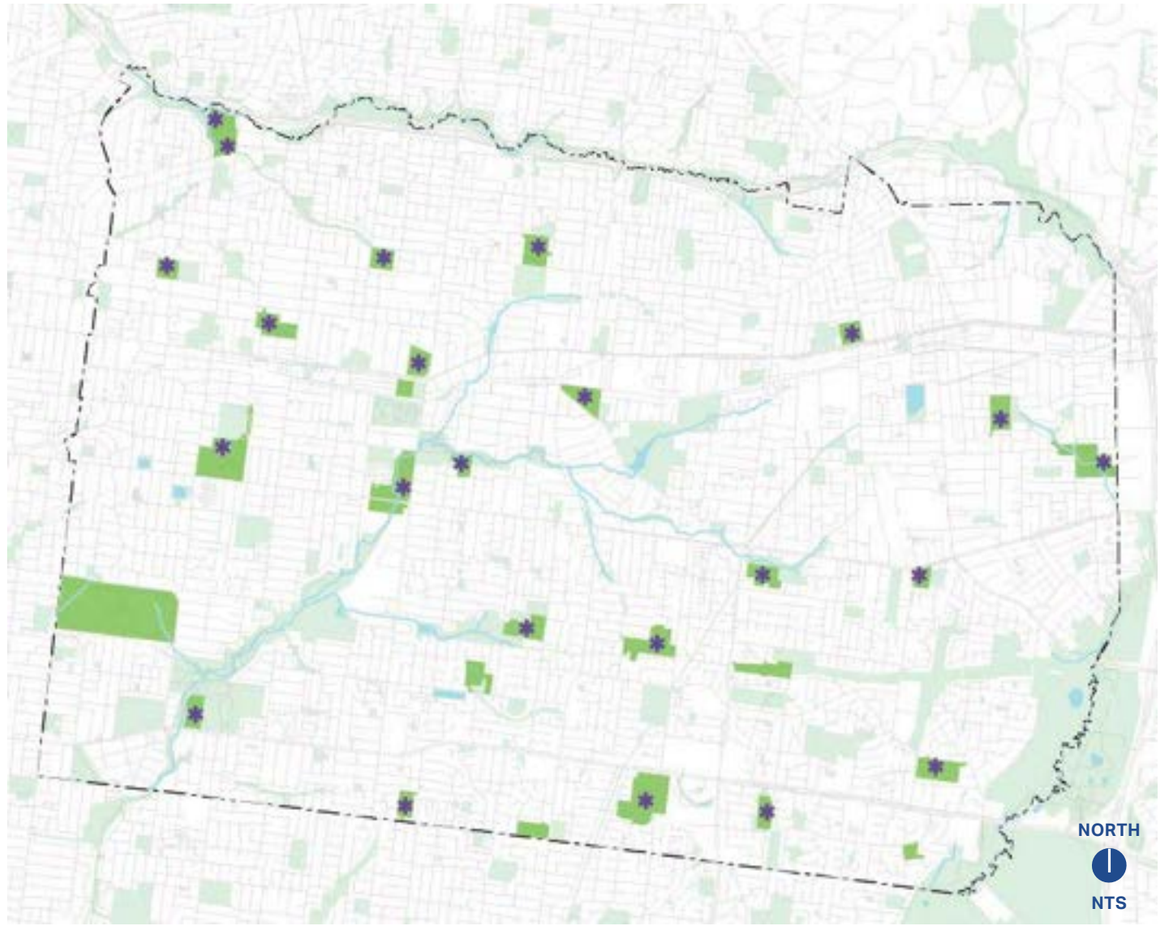
Wattle Park Amateurs Football game at Bennettswood Reserve
Source: Wattle Park Amateurs Football Club, 2024



Deakin Cricket Club at Bennettswood Reserve
Source: Deakin Cricket Club, 2024



2024 Whitehorse sport player numbers



Whitehorse City Council Sport Fields, Reserves, and Pavilions

Key	
	Whitehorse municipality boundary
	Sports field or reserve
✱	Pavilion
	Open space
	Watercourse or water body

1.4 Bennettswood Reserve features

Bennettswood Reserve is classified as a Municipal Open Space in the draft Whitehorse Open Space Strategy (2024). The precinct offers a range of recreational facilities and green spaces, making it an important resource for the local community.

Gardiners Creek (KooyongKoot) flows along the western boundary of the Reserve, with gravel paths on both sides forming part of the Gardiners Creek Trail which has been identified as a Strategic Cycling Corridor (SCC) and as a main trial within the City of Whitehorse's Easy Ride Routes. These trails provide pedestrian and cyclist connectivity to the north and south. The creek corridor encompass these trails and is highly valued by the local community for its aesthetic appeal and ecological significance.

The natural bushland along the Gardiners Creek (KooyongKoot) transitions into a large open space to the east. To the north, a grass field is primarily used for off-leash dog walking, while the southern oval is equipped with facilities for cricket and Australian Rules football (AFL). The Reserve has hosted community sports since at least 1945.

The precinct is home to a mix of indigenous and native vegetation, with large canopy trees lining the creek. However, there is limited understorey planting throughout the site, and sparse canopy cover in the eastern open space, reducing available habitat for native fauna.

Key features of Bennettswood Reserve

1	Gardiners Creek (KooyongKoot)
2	Gardiners Creek Trail
3	North Field
4	Pedestrian bridge
5	Cricket nets
6	Bennettswood Reserve pavilion
7	North car park
8	Open space along creek corridor
9	South Oval
10	South car park



Key

Bennettswood Reserve Master Plan boundary	Existing turf sports oval	Cricket nets
Existing tree canopy	Existing gravel pedestrian and shared path	Pavilion building
Existing grass	Existing concrete path	Car park

0 20 40 60 80 100m

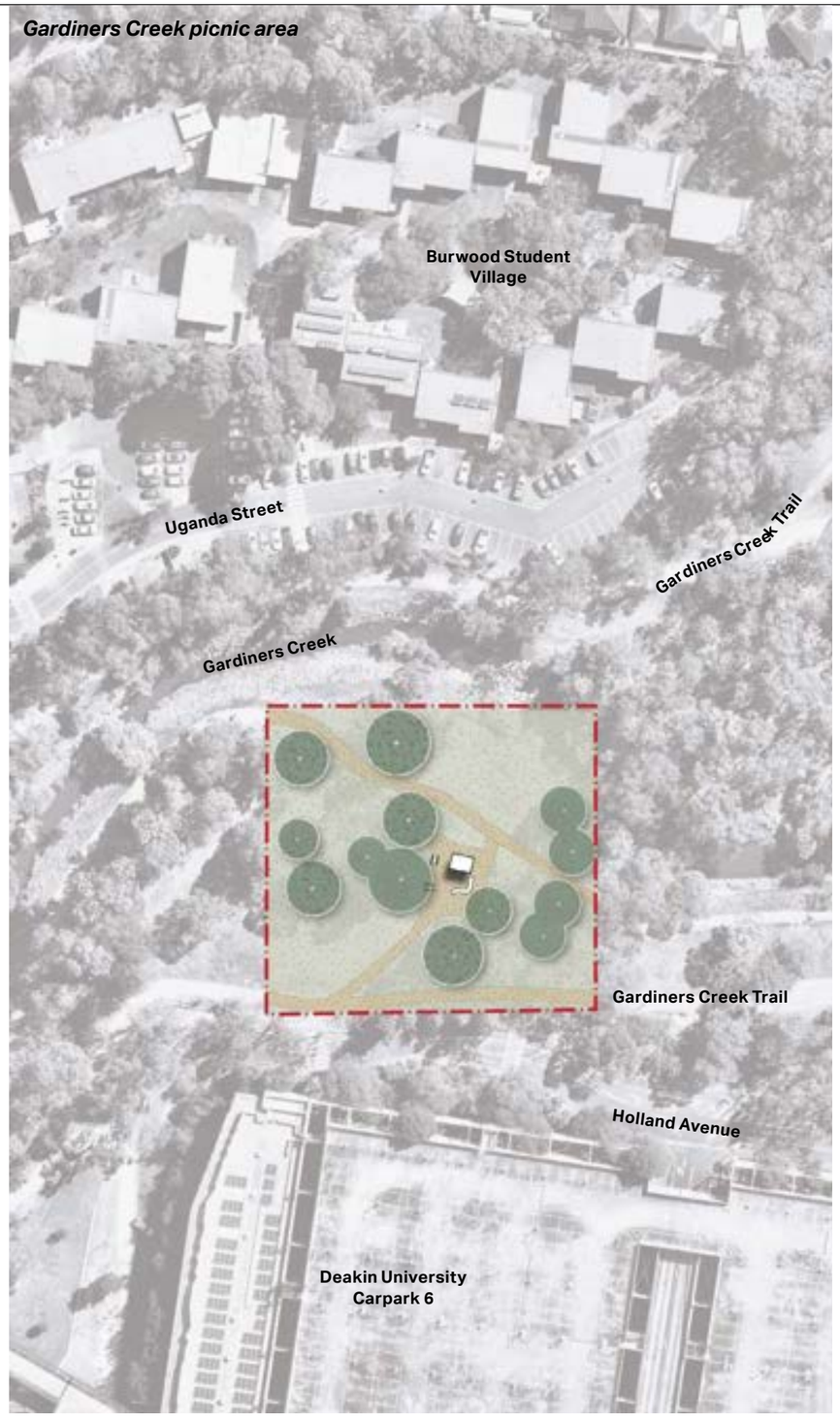
NORTH

1.5 Bennettswood Reserve features

North of Deakin University's Carpark 6 on Holland Avenue is the Gardiners Creek picnic area. The area is nestled between the paths of Gardiners Creek Trail, with Gardiners Creek running north of the space. Picnic settings, a shelter, BBQ, and drinking fountain are located at the top of the embankment on a gravel surface. The picnic area is the gathering and start / finish point for Gardiners Creek Park Run.

Further north of Bennettswood Reserve is the Gardiners Creek Reserve Playground. This site is bordered by residential properties to the north and west, with a pedestrian path leading to Stott Street and Cadorna Street. Gardiners Creek and its associated trails run to the east and south of the site. The fenced play area includes a variety of play equipment, east of the playground is a picnic setting, bicycle hoops, and a drinking fountain. The site is an off-lead dog area, featuring a large open grass space to the south of the playground. New trees have been planted along the paths to increase canopy cover.

Gardiners Creek picnic area



Gardiners Creek Reserve playground



Key

Bennettswood Reserve Master Plan boundary	Existing playground mulch	Existing shelter and BBQ
Tree canopy	Existing gravel pedestrian and shared path	Existing picnic seating
Existing grass	Existing play equipment	

0 10 20 30 40 50m

NORTH

2.0

Master Plan vision, principles and objectives

2.1 Master Plan vision

2.2 Master Plan principles

2.2.1 Amenity

2.2.2 Access and movement

2.2.3 Environment

2.2.4 People and culture

Gardiners Creek (KooyongKoot)

2.1 Master Plan vision

The vision statement of the Bennettswood Reserve Master Plan aims to:

'Create a vibrant, sustainable community space that is well connected, offering diverse recreational amenities within an ecologically rich and inviting environment.'

Alongside outlining the overarching vision, the Master Plan for Bennettswood Reserve will:

- Respect the cultural connection of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people to Country by ensuring their cultural narratives are acknowledged and integrated into the identity of the Reserve.
- Create well-designed spaces that cater to a wide range of recreational, social, and cultural needs, fostering a sense of belonging and connection for all visitors.
- Implement sustainable practices to enhance ecological resilience, support biodiversity, and restore indigenous flora and fauna, safeguarding the long-term health of the Reserve's natural environment.
- Foster partnerships with organisations, sports communities, and local groups to ensure the Reserve meets the needs of all users while cultivating a shared sense of responsibility for its future.

"To create a vibrant, sustainable community space that is well connected, offering diverse recreational amenities within an ecologically rich and inviting environment."

Bennettswood Reserve South Oval

2.2 Master Plan principles

The four key design principles that underpin the Bennettswood Reserve draft Master Plan will guide the future management and decision making for the site. These principles demand that any future changes to the park are to bring positive benefits and are consistent with the motivation and intent of the Master Plan.

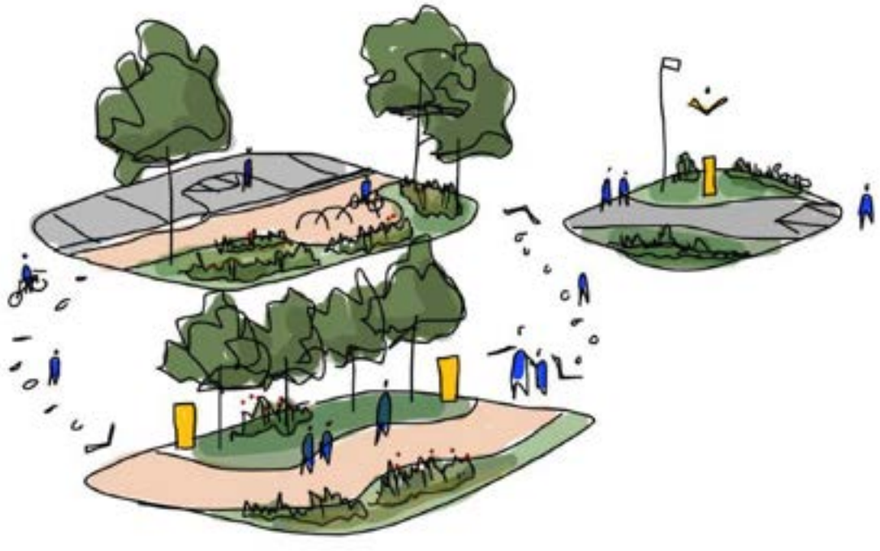
These principles include:

- Amenity
- Movement and access
- Environment
- People and culture



Amenity

Promote community health and well-being by providing a range of recreational opportunities for all ages and abilities, while meeting the needs of a growing, high-density population.



Movement and access

Provide a safe and accessible Reserve for all, enhancing connectivity within the site and facilitating efficient movement to key amenities and surrounding destinations.



Environment

Protect and enhance the Gardiners Creek (KooyongKoot) corridor, while improving landscape amenity throughout the Reserve, to create a resilient environment that supports biodiversity and promotes sustainability.



People and culture

Provide meaningful experiences that respond to the evolving needs of the community, while honouring and acknowledging the cultural heritage of the site.

2.2.1 Amenity

Master Plan principle:

Promote community health and well-being by providing a range of recreational opportunities for all ages and abilities, while meeting the needs of a growing, high-density population.

Key objectives to enhance amenity:

- Formalise the North Field to support a range of sports and recreational activities, providing necessary amenities for players and spectators.
- Develop a flexible multi-purpose court area that can accommodate various activities, providing a versatile space for users with a broad spectrum of abilities and interests.
- Integrate seating, shaded areas, and gathering spots to encourage relaxation, social interaction, and enjoyment of the natural surroundings.



South oval AFL goal posts and cricket nets

2.2.2 Movement and access

Master Plan principle:

Provide a safe and accessible Reserve for all, enhancing connectivity within the site and facilitating efficient movement to key amenities and surrounding destinations.

Key objectives to enhance movement and access:

- Establish clear, well-marked pathways and intuitive wayfinding systems to enhance navigation and ensure easy access throughout the Reserve.
- Improve connectivity between the creek corridor and open spaces, fostering seamless movement across the Reserve while enhancing the user experience.
- Ensure all paths and connections prioritise safety and universal access, providing a secure and welcoming environment for all visitors.
- Improve the layout and provision of parking spaces to ensure they are conveniently located and well integrated into the surrounding landscape.



Path between open space and creek corridor

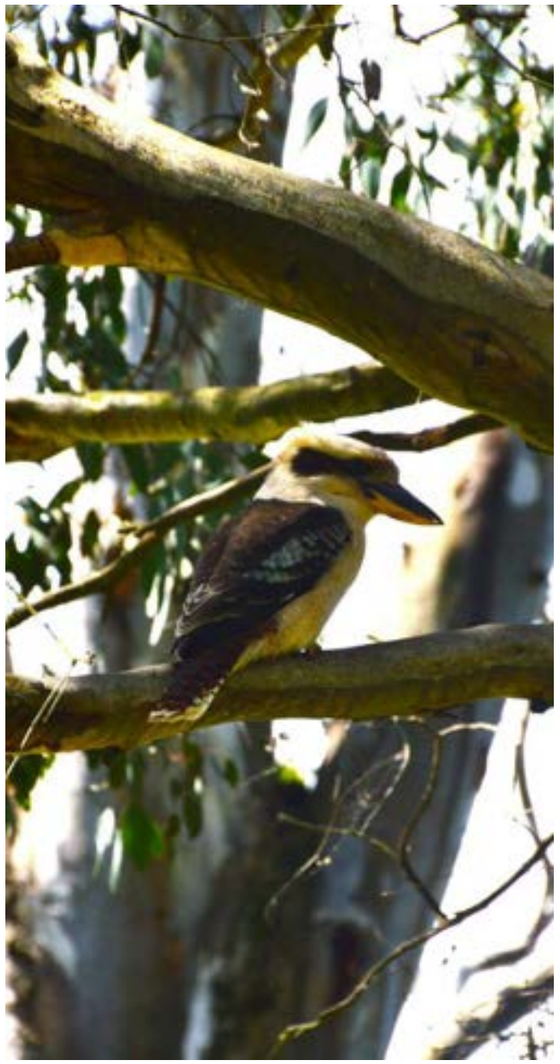
2.2.3 Environment

Master Plan principle:

Protect and enhance the Gardiners Creek (KooyongKoot) corridor, while improving landscape amenity throughout the Reserve, to create a resilient environment that supports biodiversity and promotes sustainability.

Key objectives to enhance environment:

- Protect and improve the existing tree canopy cover from approximately 38% to 50%, recognising its vital role in providing shade and contributing to urban cooling.
- Foster a resilient and ecologically balanced landscape by incorporating a diverse range of vegetation that supports and attracts local wildlife.
- Develop green corridors to facilitate wildlife movement, enhancing connectivity and contributing to the overall ecological health of the area.
- Implement sustainable landscape practices, including water-sensitive urban design techniques, to improve both the visual appeal and environmental quality of the precinct.



Kookaburra along Gardiners Creek (KooyongKoot)

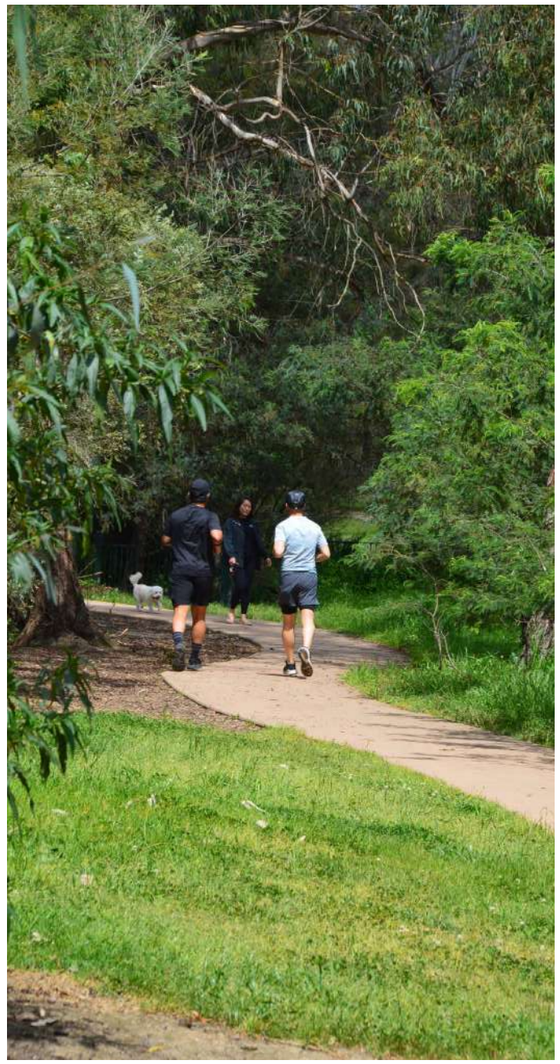
2.2.4 People and culture

Master Plan principle:

Provide meaningful experiences that meet the evolving needs of the community, while honouring and acknowledging the cultural heritage of the site.

Key objectives to enhance people and culture:

- Foster engagement and collaboration with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung to deepen understanding of cultural connections to the site.
- Provide spaces and infrastructure that facilitate a wide range of community activities and gatherings, promoting social interaction and a strong sense of belonging.
- Actively involve the community in vegetation management and environmental activities, fostering a shared sense of responsibility and care for the Reserve's natural and cultural resources.
- Create opportunities for the community to learn about the site's key values, particularly cultural heritage and environmental.



Runners and dog walker along Gardiners Creek trail

3.0

Bennettswood Reserve draft Master Plan

3.1 Bennettswood Reserve draft Master Plan

3.2 Master Plan Opportunities

3.3 Detail Area - Bennettswood Reserve Activity Space

Gardiners Creek trail

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3.1 Bennettswood Reserve draft Master Plan

Legend

- Bennettswood Reserve Master Plan boundary
- New canopy trees
- Gravel path
- Concrete path
- Asphalt / car park
- Turf oval playing surface
- New understorey planting
- New feature planting
- Proposed new satellite pavilion
- Proposed multi-purpose courts with canopy
- Proposed activity space with table tennis and picnic tables
- Proposed community gathering area
- Proposed golf practice nets
- Proposed park node and social space
- Proposed cricket nets with space for futsal
- Potential pedestrian and cyclist crossing (by SRL)
- Interpretive signage location
- Wayfinding signage location





Native dense planting - Jells Park
Source: Feral Walker Blogspot, 2016



Native understorey vegetation - Blackburn Lake
Source: Feral Walker Blogspot, 2020



Retractable nets to support football and cricket training and warm-up
Source: Global Turf, 2020



Golf practice nets
Source: David Golf, 2024



Water sensitive urban design planting - South Kensington Station
Source: Rail Network Alliance, 2023



Park node with picnic bench providing a social space
Source: TripAdvisor, 2017



Path and planting along sports field boundary - Subiaco East Oval
Source: UDLA, 2024



Gravel shared use path
Source: Pinterest, 2025

3.2 Bennettswood Reserve draft Master Plan - additional sites





Legend

- Bennettswood Reserve Master Plan boundary
- New canopy trees
- Gravel path
- New understorey planting
- New feature planting
- Proposed picnic space



1
Small seating node - Horscroft Place Pocket Park
Source: City of Kingston, 2022



2
Gravel path - Gardiners Creek Trail
Source: AECOM, 2025



3
Native understorey planting - Davy Lane Reserve
Source: AECOM, 2025



4
Playground seating - Garrong Park
Source: Merri-bek City Council



5
Informal log seating - Ontario natural playground
Source: Earthscape, 2015



6
Solar lighting - Strathdon House and Orchard Precinct
Source: AECOM, 2023



7
Leg stretch equipment
Source: NGF Play, 2025



8
Informal boulder seating - Curtin University Yarning Circle
Source: UDLA, 2020

3.3 Master Plan opportunities

The principles and objectives have guided the development of the Bennettswood Reserve Master Plan and its specific opportunities. Opportunities are captured under one of the four principles and can be identified on the Master Plan by coloured key tag coding.

Amenity	
A.1	Regrade and improve the drainage of North Field to provide a high-quality playing surface suitable for a range of sports and passive recreation. Provide new floodlights to North Field, cricket nets and activity nodes to maximise usage throughout playing seasons. *To be delivered with E4.*
A.2	Extend the pavilion to include two additional change rooms and spectator spaces, supporting the needs of the North Field.
A.3	Install a fence along the southern boundary of the existing car park to create a barrier between the parking area and Holland Avenue, enhancing safety and privacy.
A.4	Reorient the cricket nets to a north–south alignment and upgrade it to a six-lane configuration compliant with Cricket Australia standards. Incorporate retractable netting so the area can function as a flexible football and futsal training and warm-up space, while still accommodating seasonal cricket use.
A.5	Develop two new multi-purpose courts with a canopy to provide a sheltered space for a variety of recreational activities.
A.6	Designate an activity space incorporating interactive elements such as table tennis tables, picnic settings and seating to encourage informal recreation and social connection.
A.7	Install golf practice nets to create a safe, contained area for skill development without risk to others.
A.8	Reprogram South Oval sports lights for on-demand use to activate the open space when not occupied by active recreation and encourage broader community use. Upgrade existing floodlight when deemed necessary for renewal.
A.9	Create a new community gathering space with picnic tables and an open grass area to support social connection and provide opportunities for active play when the ovals are in use for organised sport.

Movement and access	
M.1	Designate a gravel shared use path along the east side of Gardiners Creek to clearly identify the Gardiners Creek trail while providing improved active transport access to Reserve amenities and Deakin University. Shared use path to be illuminated from Burwood Highway to Glengarry Avenue car park utilising wildlife sensitive luminaries.
M.2	Create a new accessible gravel pathway connecting Gardiners Creek Trail to the sports amenities, improving overall site connectivity.
M.3	Create a continuous gravel path from Burwood Highway to the Bennettswood Reserve pavilion to provide clear and accessible access to amenities.
M.4	Provide a new entrance point at Fletchers Parade North.
M.5	Consolidate the Holland Avenue car park and provide a single access point to improve safety, circulation, and legibility. *To be delivered with E7.*



Environment

E.1	Investigate the establishment of a conservation zone within the precinct to protect and restore local ecosystems and provide wildlife habitat.
E.2	Enhance biodiversity by increasing understorey planting with native species to provide habitat and improve ecosystem health.
E.3	Integrate landscaping to soften and blend infrastructure with the surrounding environment, improving aesthetics and creating more inviting spaces.
E.4	Incorporate Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) principles alongside the formalisation of the North Field to create a sustainable, multi-functional space that manages stormwater and reduces environmental impact. *To be delivered with A1.*
E.5	Expand the tree canopy by planting native tree species in open spaces to enhance biodiversity, provide shade, and improve the local environment.
E.6	Incorporate a raised open grass area to provide space for tree planting above the capping layer, enhancing green cover and supporting biodiversity.
E.7	Implement WSUD principles in the car park area by incorporating permeable surfaces and bioswales to manage stormwater runoff while enhancing the overall sustainability of the precinct. *To be delivered with M5.*
E.8	Continue monitoring the feasibility and assessing potential WSUD infrastructure solutions.

People and culture

P.1	Create a park node with landscape furniture to support and encourage passive recreation and to foster social connections.
P.2	Improve wayfinding through intuitive, consistent signage to enhance navigation and accessibility, ensuring users can easily identify key destinations and pathways across the site. Suggested locations include park entry from Burwood Highway, Fletcher Parade and the proposed new Activity Space.
P.3	Incorporate Traditional Owner artwork such as interpretive sculpture, particularly along Gardiners Creek (KooyongKoot), to highlight and share its significance, enriching the site's connection to its history. *To be delivered with P4.*
P.4	Install interpretative signage throughout the Reserve to provide interactive opportunities to learn about the site's heritage, ecology, and cultural significance. Suggested locations include northern and southern park entries from Gardiner's Creek Trail. *To be delivered with P3.*
P.5	Install clear signage to restrict dogs from entering the South Oval and North Field during sports activities, ensuring safety and minimising disruptions during organised events.
P.6	Ensure the ongoing maintenance and management of park assets in collaboration with relevant stakeholders and community groups.
P.7	Explore partnerships with educational institutions, government authorities, and peak sport organisations. Monitor Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Deakin University.
P.8	Incorporate public artwork into the space by collaborating with Deakin to find opportunities to display them.



Amenity

A.10	Introduce formal and informal seating options, including a stage, benches, logs and boulders, to accommodate large group gatherings.
A.11	Install solar lighting to enhance safety and enable the use of the picnic area for activities like Park Run during early morning hours in winter.
A.12	Provide infrastructure to support active recreation, including stretching stations and drinking fountains.
A.13	Develop new social and exercise facilities that cater for a wide range of ages, with a focus on the anticipated increase in adult users.

Movement and access

M.6	Construct a new gravel path connection east of the Gardiners Creek Reserve playground to link with the main Gardiners Creek Trail.
M.7	Upgrade the laneway connection from Cadorna Street to the playground entry to a concrete path. Concrete path to prevent erosion, and transit to gravel path within the Reserve.

Environment

E.2	Enhance biodiversity by increasing understorey planting with native species to provide habitat and improve ecosystem health.





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3.4 Detail Area - Bennettswood Reserve Activity Space

Bennettswood Reserve Activity Space

The Bennettswood Reserve Activity Space has been designed to support the Master Plan's vision of revitalising the northern field by introducing a diverse mix of active and passive recreation opportunities. The design strengthens the park's role as a community destination, offering facilities that encourage year-round participation, social connection, and well-being.

At the heart of the proposal are two full-sized multi-purpose courts positioned beneath a shared canopy. This configuration consolidates court use while providing weather protection and extended playability throughout the seasons.

The layout has been carefully considered to avoid impacting the significant existing trees to the east, maintaining the ecological integrity and established character of the site. A new row of trees along the eastern edge of the courts reinforces this green backdrop, creating a visually cohesive buffer that integrates the new infrastructure with the surrounding landscape.

A pedestrian path running along the eastern side of the courts ensures convenient and legible access, complemented by benches that offer comfortable resting points for players and spectators alike.

South of the courts, a new activity zone forms a lively central hub, featuring picnic areas, and a table tennis facility to cater to a wide range of users and age groups. This area is designed to draw people into the park and foster informal recreation and social interaction.

Layered tree planting and landscaped garden beds create a seamless spatial transition between the activity space and the broader park, enhancing visual cohesion while providing shade and visual amenity.

Legend

- Bennettswood Reserve Master Plan boundary
- New canopy trees
- Gravel path
- Concrete path
- Turf oval playing surface
- New understorey planting
- New feature planting
- Proposed multi-purpose courts with canopy
- Proposed activity space with table tennis and picnic tables

0 5 10 15 20 25m

NORTH





1

Multipurpose covered outdoor court - Deakin University
Source: Deakin Active, 2024



2

Reserve interface with courts - Jells Park, Waverley Netball Centre
Source: Northvale Netball Club, 2024



3

Native trees lining perimeter of courts, Garvey Park
Source: Dream Courts, 2025



4

Seating along court perimeter - Monash University, Clayton Campus
Source: TCL, 2015



5

Outdoor activity space with integrated seating - UTS Alumni Green
Source: Aspect Studio, 2016



6

Courtyard picnic benches - Macquarie University
Source: Brett Boardman, 2021

3.5 Pavilion

The two future change rooms of the Bennettswood Reserve pavilion is a key opportunity to enhance facilities supporting organised sport on the North Field, with a focus on increasing participation in women's and youth competitions. The proposed two change rooms would be equipped with showers and toilets, dedicated store rooms, and the flexibility to expand interior floor space the to cater for different sporting codes.

Due to the site's geotechnical challenges as a former landfill, the construction of permanent infrastructure will require careful investigation and engineering solutions to manage potential ground movement and settlement risks. As an interim measure, the provision of portable or modular change room units is being considered. This approach would allow for flexible placement and reduce construction impacts, while still delivering essential amenities in the short term.

As a part of the proposed two change rooms, new exterior treatments proposes additional paved surfaces to provide connection and circulation around the pavilion. A viewing terrace and pair of elongated bench seats will enable spectator observation during sporting events.
An entry plaza, featuring a waiting area, seating and feature planting, will provide a sense of arrival when approaching the pavilion from the revised car park.

Modular facilities would support ongoing growth in participation and activation of the North Field until a long-term, permanent pavilion two future change rooms can be delivered.

Legend

- New canopy trees
- Decking
- Store and changeroom
- Amenities room
- Water tank
- Fence
- Gravel path
- Concrete path
- Asphalt / car park
- New feature planting



3.6 Pavilion Palette



Concrete blockwork exterior walls
Source: Open House



Steel columns
Source: AECOM



Corrugated iron roofing
Source: Sydney Roof



Bennettswood Pavilion trellis wall
Source: AECOM



Bennettswood Pavilion, exterior
Source: Kneeler Design Architects



Changeroom, Spencer Pavilion
Source: Fleetwood



Changeroom shower partitions
Source: Group GSA



Bennettswood Pavilion roller door
Source: AECOM

3.7 Material Palette

The material palette for Bennettswood Reserve has been carefully selected to reflect a natural theme that complements the surrounding Gardiners Creek environment. The design prioritises a harmonious connection with the landscape, using materials that support both ecological sensitivity and user experience. Gravel paths feature throughout much of the reserve to maintain a soft, organic feel and minimise visual impact, while concrete surfaces are strategically applied to enhance accessibility to key amenities such as the pavilion, toilets, and sports facilities. At the pavilion canteen, a timber deck provides a warm and inviting interface, reinforcing the natural character of the reserve and offering a comfortable, functional space for community gathering and informal social interaction.



Gravel path
Source: AECOM



Concrete pavement
Source: Colorado Hardscapes



Lightly exposed aggregate concrete
Source: AECOM



Timber decking
Source:Site Office



Concrete terrace seating
Source: Concretum



Asphalt DDA Parking Space
Source: Area safe

3.8 Furniture Palette



Table setting
Source: Draffin



Bench seat with back and arm rests
Source: Draffin



Bench seat with arm rests
Source: Draffin



Accessible barbecue
Source: AECOM



Curved stainless steel bike hoop
Source: Draffin



Solar powered path lighting, ngarrak nakorang wilam park
Source: AECOM



Accessible drinking fountain
Source: Botton + Gardiner



Bin enclosure
Source: Draffin Street Furniture

3.9 Planting Palette

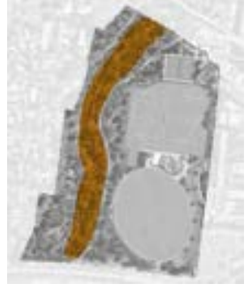
Riparian restoration

The riparian restoration mix focuses on stabilising the creek bank, improving water quality, and restoring the natural ecology of the Gardiners Creek corridor. Composed of moisture-loving indigenous species, this palette helps filter runoff, reduce erosion, and provide crucial habitat for native fauna.

The planting mix aims to recreate a layered riparian vegetation structure with canopy trees, dense understorey, and ground-level sedges and rushes that thrive in periodically inundated soils.

Scientific name	Common name
Trees	
Eucalyptus camaldulensis	River Red Gum
Melaleuca ericifolia	Swamp Paperbark
Acacia melanoxylon	Blackwood
Shrubs	
Leptospermum lanigerum	Woolly Tea-tree
Goodenia ovata	Hop Goodenia
Coprosma quadrifida	Prickly Currant-bush
Groundcovers and grasses	
Carex appressa	Tall Sedge
Juncus procerus	Tall Rush
Lomandra filiformis	Wattle Mat-rush
Poa labillardierei	Common Tussock Grass

Key Plan



















Gardiner Creek open space revegetation

This mix is designed to enhance biodiversity, visual appeal, and ecological function in the open spaces flanking the creek. Species are selected for their resilience, habitat value, and compatibility with existing conditions, including variable soil moisture and partial sun exposure.

The planting will reinforce the natural character of the reserve while improving connectivity for local wildlife, supporting pollinators, and minimising ongoing maintenance through the use of hardy native groundcovers and grasses.

Scientific name	Common name
Trees	
Eucalyptus polyanthemos	Red Box
Allocasuarina littoralis	Black She-oak
Shrubs	
Bursaria spinosa	Sweet Bursaria
Dodonaea viscosa	Sticky Hop Bush
Olearia lirata	Snowy Daisy-bush
Groundcovers and grasses	
Chrysocephalum apiculatum	Common Everlasting
Dianella revoluta	Spreading Flax Lily
Themeda triandra	Kangaroo Grass
Viola hederacea	Native Violet

Key Plan



















Oval perimeter feature planting

The oval perimeter planting provides structured, aesthetically engaging vegetation around the recreational oval, offering shade, wind protection, and seasonal interest. This mix uses taller feature trees paired with native shrubs and grasses to define space and soften the built environment.

The mix also functions as a transitional zone between active open space and passive areas, enhancing amenity while supporting local biodiversity and providing informal shelter and seating opportunities.

Scientific name	Common name
Trees	
Eucalyptus viminalis	Manna Gum
Corymbia maculata	Spotted Gum
Shrubs	
Callistemon sieberi	River Bottlebush
Hakea decurrens	Bushy Needlewood
Grevillea rosmarinifolia	Rosemary Grevillea
Groundcovers and grasses	
Lomandra longifolia	Spiny-headed Mat-rush
Myoporum parvifolium	Creeping Boobialla
Pelargonium australe	Austral Stork's-bill



Key Plan



Bennettswood Reserve Activity Space feature planting

Designed for capped soil conditions where soil depth is limited, this planting mix incorporates tough, low-maintenance native species that tolerate dry, shallow substrates. It provides visual interest and softens hardscape edges around play areas and picnic spots, using compact forms, flowering groundcovers, and textural grasses.

The palette supports ecological goals while ensuring safety, durability, and ease of maintenance in high-use areas.

Scientific name	Common name
Trees	
Acacia implexa	Lightwood
Allocasuarina verticillata	Drooping She-oak
Eucalyptus leucoxylon	Dwarf Yellow Gum
Shrubs	
Westringia fruticosa	Native Rosemary
Correa glabra	Rock Correa
Grevillea lanigera	Woolly Grevillea
Groundcovers and grasses	
Dianella caerulea	Blue Flax Lily
Lomandra confertifolia	Compact Mat-rush
Carpobrotus rossii	Native Pigface
Eremophila glabra	Emu Bush



Key Plan



4.0

Implementation strategy

4.1 Implementation strategy

4.2 Staging plan

Bridge across Gardiners Creek (KooyongKoot)

4.1 Implementation strategy

The Bennettswood Reserve Master Plan's opportunities have been categorised into low, medium and high priority.

The viability and time frame of each opportunity is dependent upon adequate future funding. This funding may be subject to further design development and detailed costings of elements.

Amenity

High Priority	
A.1	Regrade and improve the drainage of North Field to provide a high-quality playing surface suitable for a range of sports and passive recreation. Provide new floodlights to North Field, cricket nets and activity nodes to maximise usage throughout playing seasons. *To be delivered with E4.*
A.5	Develop two new multi-purpose courts with a canopy to provide a sheltered space for a variety of recreational activities.
A.8	Reprogram South Oval sports lights for on-demand use to activate the open space when not occupied by active recreation and encourage broader community use. Upgrade existing floodlight when deemed necessary for renewal.
A.11	Install solar lighting to enhance safety and enable the use of the picnic area for activities like Park Run during early morning hours in winter.

Medium Priority	
A.4	Reorient the cricket nets to a north–south alignment and upgrade it to a six-lane configuration compliant with Cricket Australia standards. Incorporate retractable netting so the area can function as a flexible football and futsal training and warm-up space, while still accommodating seasonal cricket use.
A.6	Designate an activity space incorporating interactive elements such as table tennis tables, picnic settings and seating to encourage informal recreation and social connection.
A.7	Install golf practice nets to create a safe, contained area for skill development without risk to others.
A.9	Create a new community gathering space with picnic tables and an open grass area to support social connection and provide opportunities for active play when the ovals are in use for organised sport.
A.10	Introduce formal and informal seating options, including a stage, benches, logs and boulders, to accommodate large group gatherings.
A.12	Provide infrastructure to support active recreation, including stretching stations and drinking fountains.
A.13	Develop new social and exercise facilities that cater for a wide range of ages, with a focus on the anticipated increase in adult users.

Low Priority	
A.2	Extend the pavilion to include two additional change rooms and spectator spaces, supporting the needs of the North Field.
A.3	Install a fence along the southern boundary of the existing car park to create a barrier between the parking area and Holland Avenue, enhancing safety and privacy.

Movement and access

High Priority	
M.2	Create a new accessible pathway connecting Gardiners Creek Trail to the sports amenities, improving overall site connectivity.
M.4	Provide a new entrance point at Fletchers Parade North.
M.5	Consolidate the Holland Avenue car park and provide a single access point to improve safety, circulation, and legibility. *To be delivered with E7.*

Medium Priority	
M.1	Designate a gravel shared use path along the east side of Gardiners Creek to clearly identify the Gardiners Creek trail while providing improved active transport access to Reserve amenities and Deakin University. Shared use path to be illuminated from Burwood Highway to Glengarry Avenue car park utilising wildlife sensitive luminaries.
M.6	Construct a new gravel path connection east of the Gardiners Creek Reserve playground to link with the main Gardiners Creek Trail.
M.7	Upgrade the laneway connection from Cadorna Street to the playground entry to a concrete path. Concrete path to prevent erosion, and transit to gravel path within the Reserve.

Low Priority	
M.3	Create a continuous gravel path from Burwood Highway to the Bennettswood Reserve pavilion to provide clear and accessible access to amenities.

Environment

High Priority	
E.2	Enhance biodiversity by increasing understorey planting with native species to provide habitat and improve ecosystem health.
E.3	Integrate landscaping to soften and blend infrastructure with the surrounding environment, improving aesthetics and creating more inviting spaces.
E.4	Incorporate WSUD principles alongside the formalisation of the North Field to create a sustainable, multi-functional space that manages stormwater and reduces environmental impact. *To be delivered with A1.*
E.7	Implement WSUD principles in the car park area by incorporating permeable surfaces and bioswales to manage stormwater runoff while enhancing the overall sustainability of the precinct. *To be delivered with M5.*
E.8	Continue monitoring the feasibility and assessing potential WSUD infrastructure solutions.

Medium Priority	
E.5	Expand the tree canopy by planting native tree species in open spaces to enhance biodiversity, provide shade, and improve the local environment.
E.6	Incorporate a raised open grass area to provide space for tree planting above the capping layer, enhancing green cover and supporting biodiversity.

Low Priority	
E.1	Investigate the establishment of a conservation zone within the precinct to protect and restore local ecosystems and provide wildlife habitat.

People and culture

High Priority	
P.2	Improve wayfinding through intuitive, consistent signage to enhance navigation and accessibility, ensuring users can easily identify key destinations and pathways across the site. Suggested locations include park entry from Burwood Highway, Fletcher Parade and the proposed new Activity Space.

Medium Priority	
P.1	Create a park node with landscape furniture to support and encourage passive recreation and to foster social connections.
P.5	Install clear signage to restrict dogs from entering the South Oval and North Field during sports activities, ensuring safety and minimising disruptions during organised events.

Low Priority	
P.3	Incorporate Traditional Owner artwork such as interpretive sculpture, particularly along Gardiners Creek (KooyongKoot), to highlight and share its significance, enriching the site's connection to its history. *To be delivered with P4.*
P.4	Install interpretative signage throughout the Reserve to provide interactive opportunities to learn about the site's heritage, ecology, and cultural significance. Suggested locations include northern and southern park entries from Gardiner's Creek Trail. *To be delivered with P3.*

Ongoing Priority	
P.6	Ensure the ongoing maintenance and management of park assets in collaboration with relevant stakeholders and community groups.
P.7	Explore partnerships with educational institutions, government authorities, and peak sport organisations. Monitor Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Deakin University.

4.2 Staging plan

Gardiners Creek picnic area



Gardiners Creek Reserve playground



Bennettswood Reserve



Legend

	Low priority
	Medium priority
	High priority

5.0

Appendices

The following documents have informed the Master Plan. These include:

1. **Bennettswood Reserve Background Report**
2. **Bennettswood Reserve Engagement Report**

Western edge of open space towards Gardiners Creek (KooyongKoot)

BENNETTSWOOD RESERVE BACKGROUND STUDY REPORT

REVISION C DECEMBER 2024

PREPARED FOR CITY OF WHITEHORSE

WHITEHORSE CITY COUNCIL

AECOM

Acknowledgement of Country

Whitehorse City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Owners of the land. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. Wurundjeri connection to this land dates back more than 40,000 years, and evidence of this connection still exists today.

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20-09-2024
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All drone photography captured in elevation within Bennettswood Reserve, which abides by open space restrictions.

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Quality Information

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Background Study Report	A	Whitehorse City Council	AECOM Australia	20 September 2024	RR
Background Study Report	B	Whitehorse City Council	AECOM Australia	11 October 2024	RR
Background Study Report	C	Whitehorse City Council	AECOM Australia	1 November 2024	RR
Background Study Report	D	Whitehorse City Council	AECOM Australia	6 December 2024	RR

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2.0

Area Context

1.1 Geographic Context

1.2 Local Context

1.3 Demographics

Bennettswood Reserve Aerial Image Looking North West

2.1 Geographic Context

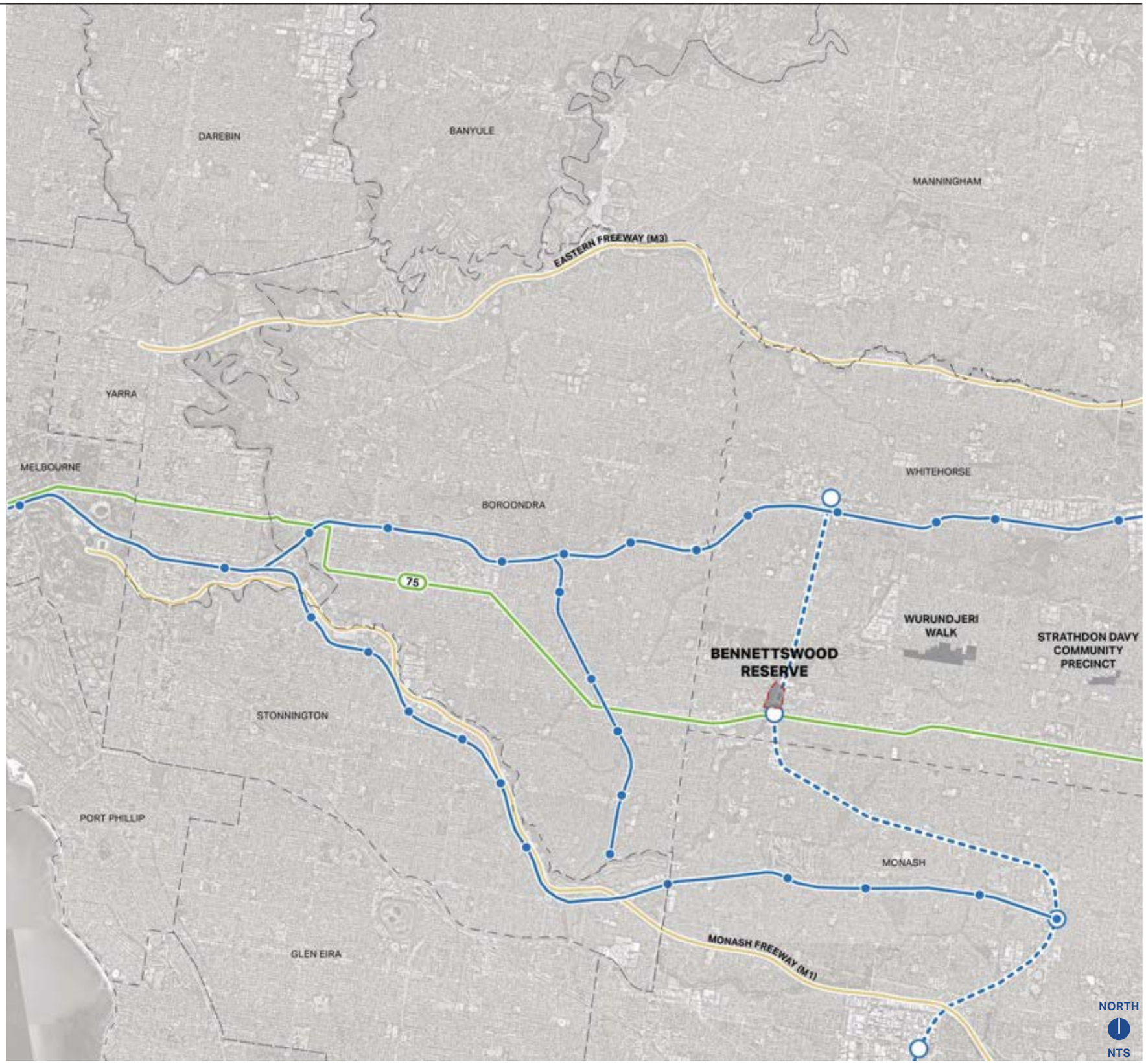
Bennettswood Reserve is located in Burwood, within the City of Whitehorse, approximately 12km east of Melbourne's Central Business District (CBD). The Reserve is bounded to the south by Burwood Highway. The surrounding public transport infrastructure that connects the site to the CBD includes:

- Tram Route 75 along Burwood Highway
- Lilydale and Belgrave rail lines to the north
- Alamein line to the west
- Glen Waverley line to the south

Additionally, the planned Suburban Rail Loop (SRL) will run underneath Bennettswood Reserve, with the future Burwood Station anticipated to be situated south of the site across Burwood Highway.

The Reserve is also connected to the Eastern Freeway (M3) to the north via Elgar Road and Station Street, linking Burwood with Melbourne's eastern suburbs and the CBD. To the south via Warrigal Road, the Monash Freeway (M1) provides a major route towards the south-eastern suburbs and beyond.

Bennettswood Reserve is in the package with three other sites that the City of Whitehorse is currently producing a Master Plan for in the 2024-25 financial year. It is located to the west of the Local Government Area (LGA), the other two sites referred to as Wurundjeri Walk and Strathdon Davy Community Precinct are located further east.



Key

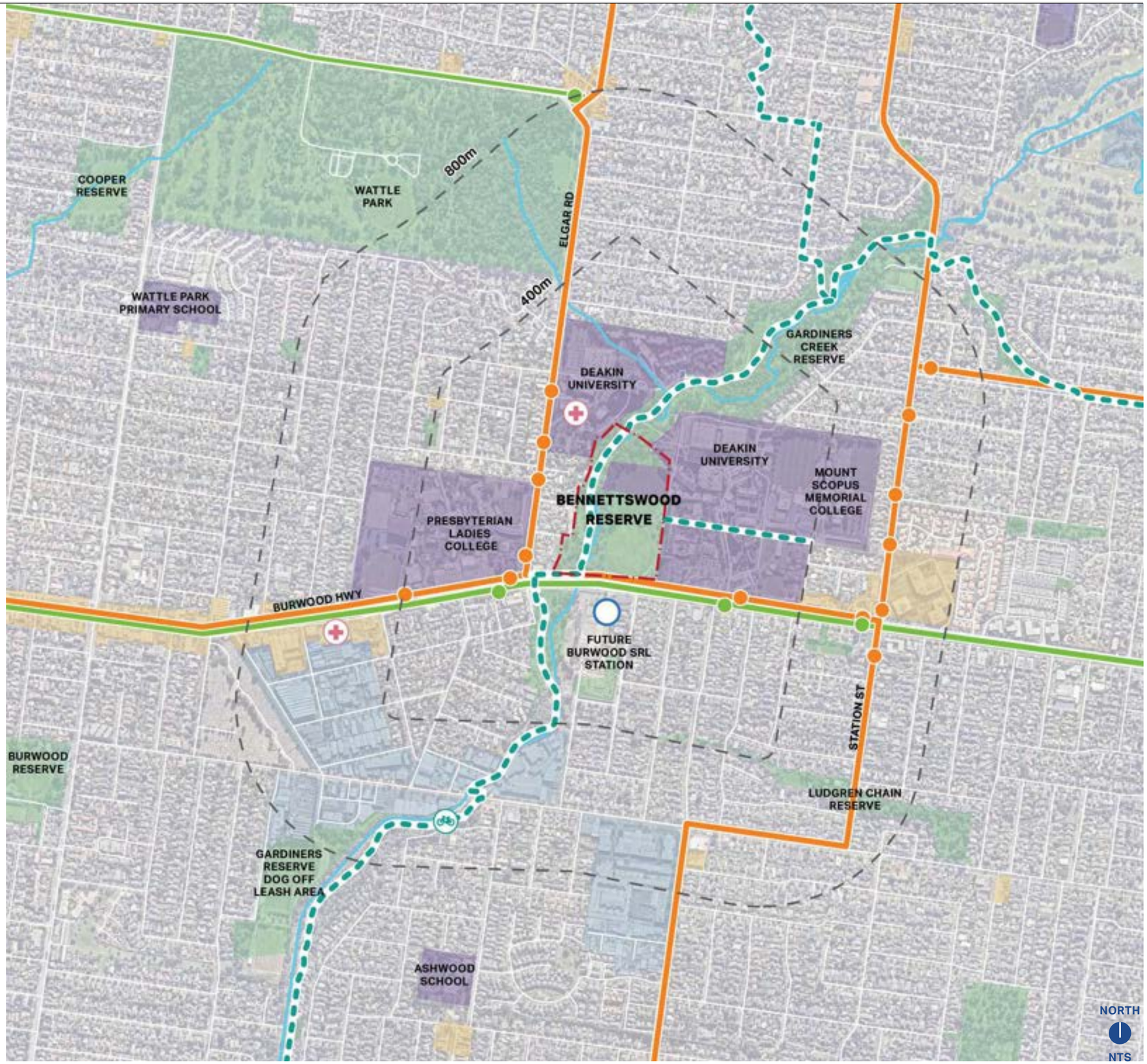
- Project boundary
- Reserves Undergoing Master Pan Process
- LGA boundary
- Freeway
- Tram line
- Train line and stations
- Future SRL line and stations

2.2 Local Context

Bennettswood Reserve, identified as Municipal Open Space in the Whitehorse Open Space Strategy 2007 and Draft White Horse Open Space Strategy 2024, is situated adjacent to Deakin University's Burwood Campus and associated student accommodation. The Morgan's Walk Bridge north of the Reserve connects the east and west campuses. Other nearby educational institutions include Mount Scopus Memorial College, Presbyterian Ladies College, Ashwood School, and Wattle Park Primary School.

Gardiners Creek (KooyongKoot) runs through the site along the western boundary. The Strategic Cycling Corridor (SCC) follows Gardiners Creek and extends through the Reserve, providing a key cycling route north to Blackburn Lakes and south to the Main Yarra Trail. Nearby parks and open spaces include Wattle Park, Gardiners Creek Reserve, the Gardiners Creek Reserve dog off-leash area, and Ludgren Chain Reserve. Bennettswood Reserve is the largest open space along Gardiners Creek in the municipality.

Public transport is well-serviced in the area: the 767 Box Hill bus service stops on the southern side of Bennettswood Reserve along Burwood Highway, and along Elgar Road to the west. Other bus services along Elgar Road include the 767 to Southland, 903 to Mordialloc, and 201 between Deakin University and Box Hill Station. Further east on Station Street, the 732 provides a connection to Upper Ferntree Gully. Tram Route 75 runs along the Burwood Highway, with the closest stops at Elgar Road/Burwood Highway and Deakin University/Burwood Highway.

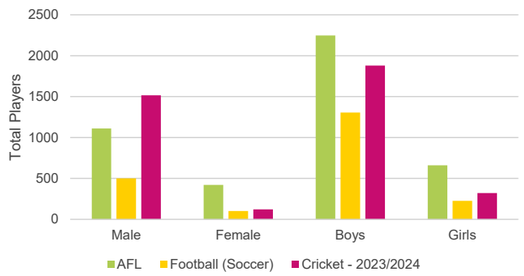


Key

- Project Boundary
- Public Open Space
- Water Bodies and Course
- Education
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Hospital and Healthcare
- Future SRL Station
- Strategic Cycling Corridor (SCC)
- Bus Stop
- Tram Stop

2.3 Sport Participation

Participation in sports in Whitehorse has seen a remarkable surge over the past decade, reflecting a broader trend of increased engagement in athletic activities. While traditionally dominated by male participation, there has been a notable rise in female sports and youth involvement. This growth indicates a positive shift towards inclusivity, as more girls and young athletes are embracing sports, contributing to a diverse sporting landscape.



Gender distribution of participation in Whitehorse sport

Despite this progress, the existing sports reserves and facilities in Whitehorse are struggling to keep up with the heightened demand. With usage at capacity, many of the grounds are experiencing overuse, leading to a deterioration in the quality of surfaces and limiting the availability for both training and competition. This situation is significantly impacting local sports clubs, which find it increasingly challenging to provide adequate programs and facilities for their athletes.

The 2023/2024 summer season highlighted these challenges, as six senior teams were forced to seek alternative locations in neighbouring municipalities due to the unavailability of grounds on Saturday afternoons. This not only disrupts team cohesion and local engagement but also places additional logistical burdens on clubs and athletes. Similarly, the demand for grounds on Friday evenings is also approaching full capacity, further complicating scheduling and access for all teams. Demand for floodlit sports fields in winter is high also, with community usage estimated at up to 112.2% of turf industry recommended levels for natural grass surfaces. Team and player numbers increased in 2024 across all sports, particularly football (soccer).

To ensure the continued growth and development of sports in Whitehorse, especially in promoting female and youth participation, there is a need for enhanced investment in sports facilities and infrastructure. Addressing these capacity issues will not only support current athletes but will also lay the foundation for future generations to engage in sports, fostering a healthier, more active community.

Total players 2024



AFL
4,436



Football (Soccer)
2,130



Cricket
3,834





2.4 Demographics

Demographic overview

Bennettswood Reserve is located within the City of Whitehorse LGA. The LGA encompasses an area of 65km2 in Melbourne's middle-eastern suburbs. The Reserve is approximately 14km from Melbourne's CBD. Suburbs within the City of Whitehorse are Mount Albert, Mount Albert North, Box Hill, Box Hill North, Box Hill South, Blackburn, Blackburn North, Blackburn South, Nunawading, Mitcham, Vermont, Vermont South, Forest Hill, Burwood and Burwood East.

Population

The City of Whitehorse had an estimated resident population of 178,639 in 2023. The average household size is 2.53 with 62% of the population living in separate house dwellings and 27.7% living in medium density dwellings. The largest growth in dwellings types has been high density with a growth of 3,966. An additional 2,320 residents are forecast to be living in Burwood by 2036, an 18% increase. Forecast change is largely along Burwood Highway where high density development is anticipated to continue.

178,639
Resident population

The population of Whitehorse comprised of 51.6% females and 48.4% males in the 2021 Census. 521 individuals identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

51.6% female

48.4% male

Age

In 2021, the City of Whitehorse had a lower proportion of children (under 18) and a higher proportion of persons aged 60 years or older than Greater Melbourne. The median age was 39 years old.

Overall, 29.3% of the population were aged between 0 and 24, 46.9% were aged between 25 and 59, and 23.8% were aged 60 years and over.

Emerging Age Groups

The largest changes in age structure in the LGA between 2016 and 2011 were in the age groups:

35 to 39 (+1,752)
50 to 54 (+1,308)
0 to 4 (-1,035)
70 to 74 (+1,004)

Cultural diversity

41.5% of the population were born overseas and 13% (21,962) had a birthplace of China. 40.5% of people use a non-english language at home. The top language used at home was Mandarin (16.2%), followed by Cantonese, Greek, Vietnamese, Hindi, Sinhalese and Italian. In comparison to Greater Melbourne, the City of Whitehorse population speaking Mandarin at home was greater by 11.9%.

The largest changes in reported ancestries of the population in the LGA between 2011 and 2016 were:

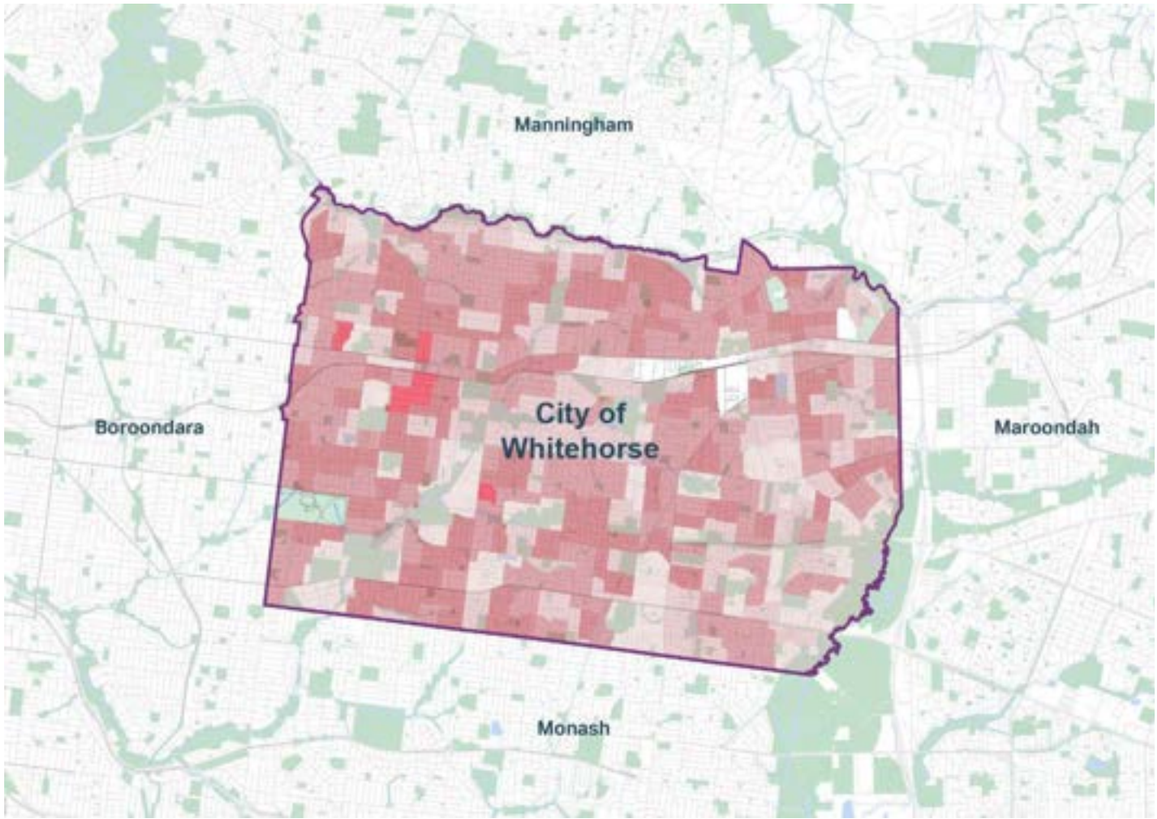
- Chinese (+11,987)
- Australian (-3,685)
- Indian (+1,949)
- Irish (+1,047)

Health and well-being

In 2021, 9,374 (5.5%) people in the City of Whitehorse reported needing help in their daily lives due to disability. 29.7% of the population has a long-term health condition.

9,374 or 5.5%
People in Whitehorse needing daily help

**All data obtained from Profile. ID and Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census Data.*



Burwood overview

As of 2021, Burwood has a population of 12,543 residents, reflecting an increase of 2,461 people (about 24%) since 2007. The area has a higher proportion of individuals aged 18 to 34, likely due to the presence of Deakin University, and a lower proportion of families with school-age children. The percentage of residents over 70 is consistent with the municipal average.

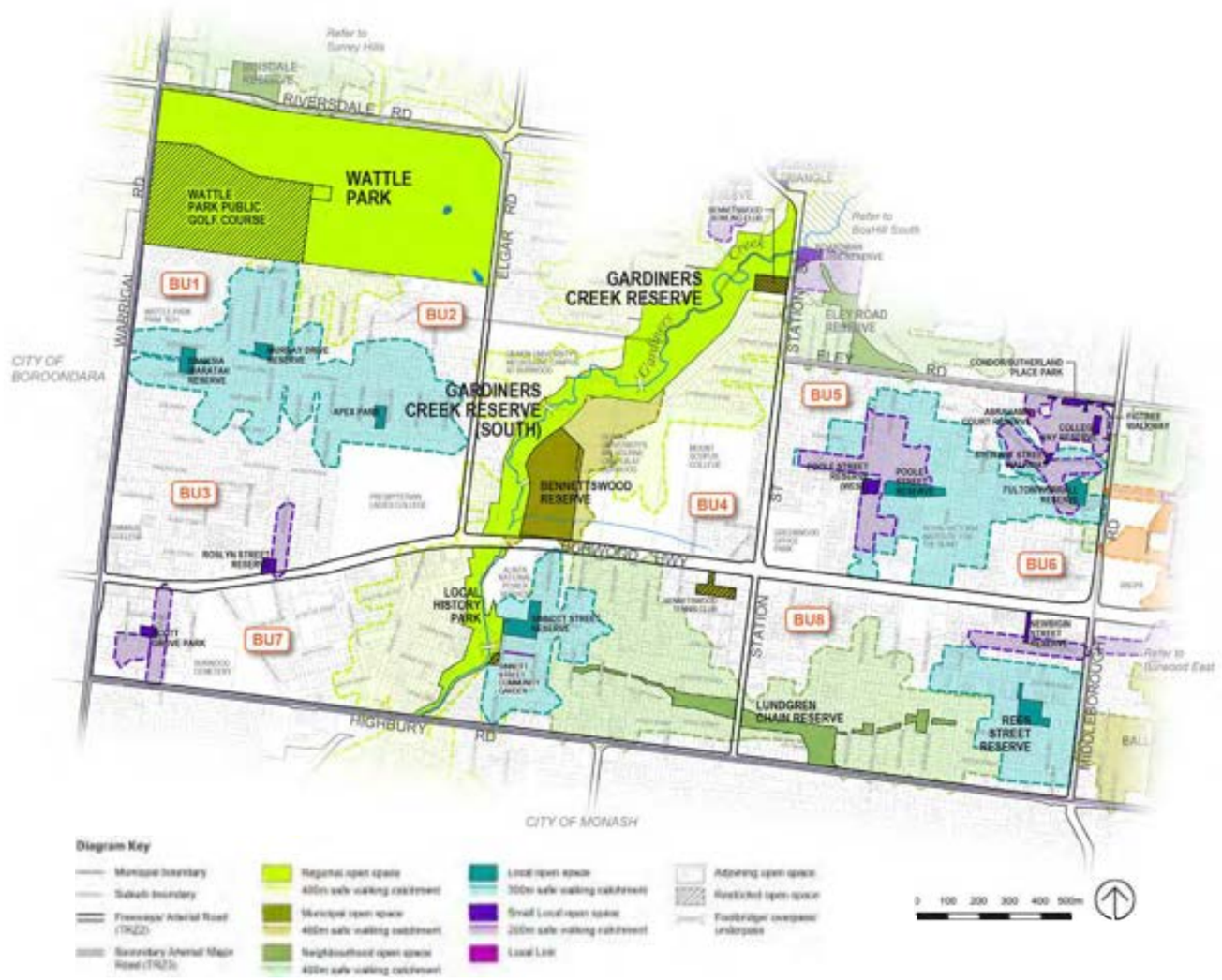
Housing trends show a shift towards medium and high-density living: in 2006, 72% of residents lived in separate houses, while by 2021, this figure dropped to 52%, with 34% in medium-density and 15% in high-density housing. The population is expected to grow by 18% to approximately 14,863 by 2036, driven by an aging population and fewer children under 11.

14,863

Burwood 2036 Population

This growth will heighten the demand for open spaces, particularly as urban densities increase and private outdoor areas decrease. Current facilities primarily cater to young children, indicating a need for more diverse amenities suitable for adults and varying open space types and sizes to accommodate the changing demographic.

The anticipated development of the Suburban Rail Loop (SRL) and a new train station near Burwood Highway may further influence population dynamics and urban density. As accessibility improves, more residents may be attracted to the area, amplifying existing trends and creating additional pressure on local infrastructure and services. This shift necessitates proactive urban planning to ensure that the evolving community's needs are met, including sustainable transport options, enhanced recreational facilities, and inclusive public spaces that cater to a wider age range and lifestyle preferences. Addressing these challenges will be crucial to maintaining Burwood's appeal as a vibrant and liveable suburb.



Whitehorse Open Space Strategy Burwood Gap Analysis

3.0

Planning Context

2.1 Strategic Planning Policy and Strategic Context

2.2 Planning Control Zones

2.3 Planning Overlays

Bennettswood Reserve Looking South-East Towards Deakin University and Pavilion

3.1 Strategic Planning Policy and Strategic Context

The Bennettswood Master Plan will be developed to align with the local policies of the Melbourne Planning Scheme, and high level strategic planning documents. Key information from these documents will be considered in the development of the Master Plan to ensure alignment with Council strategies and policies.

Whitehorse Arts and Culture Strategy

- Whitehorse has a rich history of arts and culture ,stemming from the Australian Impressionist arts movement and its multi-cultural community.
- Focus on creating an environment where arts and culture can be supported, flourish and continue to evolve.
- The provision of infrastructure, services, and programs is important to support and enable participation in arts and culture. 19% of residents have participated in programs and classes at Council's neighbourhood or community centres.
- Community festivals and events have the highest attendance/participation rates in Whitehorse.
- Whitehorse has a shortfall for spaces that facilitate programs, classes, and meetings.
- Accessibility issues such as paths and lack of drop off facilities prevented people with disabilities or over 60s age groups participating in programs.
- Aim to continue to build links that support indigenous and multicultural heritage, and further development of interpretation and signage around the municipality.
- Resident feedback supports the continuing commission and installation of public and community artworks to improve and provide interest in public and open spaces.

Whitehorse Planning Scheme - Public Open Space Contribution

- Identifies the need for new developments to contribute to the provision of public open space.
- Public open space contributions from developers are a potential resource for the acquisition of land for public open space and the improvement of existing facilities.
- The western part of the municipality has more areas where some residents have to walk further to access local open space.
- Burwood has been identified as an area where developers are required to provide additional open space to meet population needs. Contributions are to be imposed at the subdivision stage, where land can be transferred to or vested in Council.

Whitehorse Climate Response Plan 2023-2030

- Impacts from climate change are being felt across the Whitehorse community and are forecast to increase. Key impacts include:
  - Increased storm water runoff and flash flooding,
  - Increased damage to buildings and infrastructure, leading to higher maintenance costs,
  - More heat-related deaths, particularly among the elderly and other vulnerable members of the community,
  - Loss of biodiversity due to decreased habitat quality and availability, and
  - Interruptions to supply chains and food production.
- Council declared a climate emergency on 12 September 2022, highlighting the urgent need for adaptation, mitigation, and systemic actions. These include:
  - Encourage supply chain to reduce emissions, giving preference to procurement of carbon neutral products and services.
  - Ensure infrastructure is resilient to climate change impacts and will be able to service its community during extreme weather and other emergency events.
  - Reduce energy use, and aim for zero carbon electricity.
  - Walk, cycle, ride share or take public transport instead of driving.

Whitehorse Disability Action Plan 2022-2025

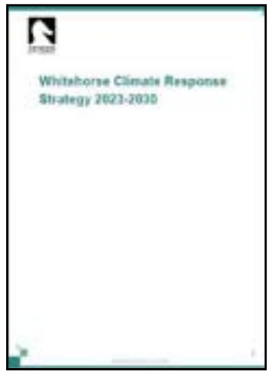
- People with disability continue to face multiple barriers to being included in all aspects of community life.
- A priority area for the Plan is to improve access to the built environment including footpaths, buildings, open spaces and play spaces. Actions under this priority include:
  - Increase the number of accessible car parks available in the municipality.
  - Increase accessibility of paths within parks and open spaces.
  - Increase the range of accessible equipment available in parks and play spaces.
  - Advocate for increased availability of Changing Places facilities and accessible toilets in the municipality.
- The Plan focuses on fostering the inclusion and participation of people with disability in the community by removing barriers experienced by people with disability.
- Follow Universal Design Principles to provide equitable use, flexibility in use, simple and intuitive, perceptible information, tolerance for error, low physical effort, size and space appropriate or use, and cultural appropriateness.

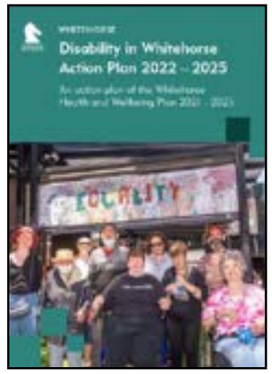
Whitehorse Open Space Strategy 2024

- The Strategy provides an overall framework for the future provision, planning, design and management of the public open space network for the next 15 years.
- Identifies where there is adequate provision of open space to meet existing residents needs and where there is not. Highlighting where population will drive demand for new open space or upgrades of existing Reserves.
- Bennettswood Reserve is listed as a Municipal Open Space. The role of this space is to provide facilities that the Whitehorse community will travel to including organised sport and recreation activities.
- The strategy provides direction to improve the quality and diversity of facilities in open spaces that are within a safe and easy walk of everyone. It strives to protect and strengthen biodiversity values and to assist to mitigate urban heat island effect.
- With forecast change the existing gaps in open space in Burwood will be exacerbated.
- Open spaces provide the opportunity to introduce diversity in character and facilities to meet the needs of forecast population living and working in higher density environments with less private open space.
- Sinnott Street Reserve has been acquired as part of the SRL Project, Council will continue to advocate for a new local open space to be provided as a replacement.











Whitehorse Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025

- Identifies the work council will do to improve the health and well-being of people in Whitehorse. This is shaped by social justice, inclusivity, and sustainability.
- Top 5 priorities for action by 2025:
  - Mental wellbeing
  - Physical activity
  - Social and neighbourhood connection
  - Social inclusion
  - Climate change mitigation
- Strategies to promote health and well-being include:
  - Creating built environments and programs that enable the community to be active.
  - Ensure public spaces, recreation and play spaces are safe and accessible to all.
  - Promote participation in structured and unstructured physical activity.
  - Encourage physical activity and social interactions in the community including walking a dog, cycling, running and walking.
  - Ensure the urban realm and open spaces are conducive to the needs of the local community and businesses.
  - Support and promote intergenerational, intercultural and interfaith activities.
  - Embed the stories of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung, new migrants, asylum seekers and international students within the narrative of Whitehorse.
  - Facilitate opportunities for people to socialise/ meet with others in their neighbourhood.
  - Open up and diversify use of Council spaces and facilities for multi-use.

Whitehorse Sporting Facilities Guide

- Sporting trends have reshaped the landscape.
- There are limited opportunities to develop new facilities across Whitehorse, requiring a collaborative approach with the sporting fraternity to manage growth and participation.
- Opportunities include:
  - Upgrade sports fields to optimise their use
  - Increase floodlit training venues
  - Retrofit pavilions
  - Consider temporary facilities as required
  - Support shared use of facilities
  - Review programming opportunities including night competition, and
  - Identify opportunities to gain access to school facilities.

Whitehorse Gender Equality Action Plan 2022-2026

- Whitehorse is actively promoting gender equality in the broader Whitehorse community. Whitehorse values all genders and takes steps to reduce all forms of gender discrimination.

Whitehorse Cycling Strategy 2016

- Cycling for transport, sport or recreation plays an important role in supporting a healthy, vibrant, inclusive and diverse community.
- Whitehorse is committed to providing a safe and enjoyable environment for all.
- The Strategy aims to increase participation in cycling across the municipality.
  - Creating a connected network of attractive, safe and inviting low stress streets and paths.
  - Accessible to all.
  - Respects the needs of all users.
- An existing off-road cycle route runs along Gardiners Creek.
- Bennettswood Reserve is identified as a low stress island, however, it is poorly connected and surrounded by high stress barriers of Burwood Highway and Elgar Road.
  - A guiding principle of the Strategy is to link low stress islands with appropriate measures such as signalised crossing facilities.
  - Provide Easy Ride routes with appropriate treatments and wayfinding signage.

Whitehorse Integrated Transport Strategy 2011

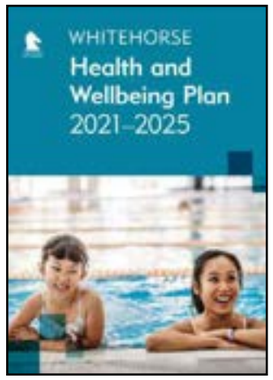
- Whitehorse is committed to ensuring that its community, and those who travel through the municipality, have access to transport options that are sustainable, convenient, accessible, safe and enhance the liveability of the city.
- Key strategy goals for Whitehorse are to:
  - Improve the links between transport modes for the efficient and convenient movement of people and goods
  - Increase the use of sustainable transport modes that promote healthy lifestyles, such as walking and cycling.
  - Increase the safety of residents and commuters who travel within and through the municipality.
  - Promote economic development and social connectedness within the community.

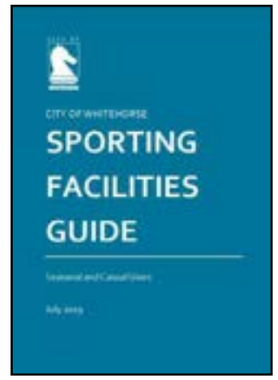
Whitehorse Integrated Water Management (IWM) Strategy 2022-2042

- Whitehorse is a resilient and thriving city, where water is valued as a precious resource and managed to support a healthy environment and prosperous communities.
- Acknowledgement that keeping some water in the landscape better supports green space, decreasing pollution resources.
  - Need to make the most of water sources like rainwater, stormwater and wastewater.
  - Need to reduce the negative impacts of stormwater and wastewater discharges on receiving waterways and bays.
- KooyongKoot (Gardiners Creek) is the largest catchment in Whitehorse. Seventy percent of the catchment is impervious generating significant stormwater flow.
- IWM opportunities include:
  - Water Sensitive Urban Design
  - Large-scale stormwater harvesting systems for parks, sports fields and Reserves
  - Targeted large-scale assets to improve waterway health and amenity
  - Gross Pollutant Traps (GTPs) to reduce discharge of litter to waterways
  - Point-source pollution investigation

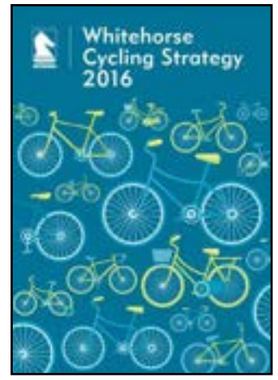
Whitehorse Biodiversity Strategy

- Undertaking strategic vegetation management works that conserve and enhance biodiversity assets and urban habitat across community open space will provide the greatest single benefit to biodiversity within Whitehorse.
- Water management has been identified as of prime importance to biodiversity management. Riparian corridors provide opportunities for linkages across the municipality.
- Focus for management will be primarily on vegetation due to limited options available for fauna management in an urban context.













  - Underlying principle to not only improve vegetation, but to assist in habitat management an provision for fauna species.
- Missing habitat components within much of suburbia include: large old trees, hollow bearing trees, forests and woodland with a grassy understorey and clumps of shrubs, coarse woody debris, riparian corridors shading streams and aquatic habitats, wetlands, and large patches and connecting corridors.

Whitehorse Urban Forest Municipal Wide Tree Study

- There is an urgency to put appropriate controls into place to protect natural features to avoid further loss of the City's environmental assets.
- Whitehorse is renowned for its lush gardens, bushy character and tree-dominated vistas.
- Trees are an integral aspect of character within Whitehorse and are highly valued.

Whitehorse Urban Forest Strategy Action Plan 2021-2031

- Trees and vegetation make the municipality a vibrant place to live, work and visit.
- The urban forest is an essential element across private and public land.
- The strategy aims to protect, enhance and connect Whitehorse's natural assets, including trees, shrubs, wildflowers, grasses, soil and water.
- Council has targets to:
  - Increase canopy cover to 27% by 2031, and 30% by 2050.
  - Improve connectivity for both biodiversity and active modes of transport along Gardiners Creek.
  - Plant a range of indigenous species including trees, shrubs, grasses and groundcovers to improve habitat and connectivity within public open space.
- Opportunity to provide a connection between Bennettswood Reserve and the wider Gardiners Creek Trail.

Whitehorse 2040 Community Vision

- Whitehorse is a resilient community where everyone belongs.
- The city is made up of active citizens who value their natural environment, history and diversity, embrace sustainability and innovation, are dynamic, and learn, grow and thrive.
- A key priority of the community is for focus on understanding and celebrating First Nations Peoples, and removing barriers for access.
- Facilitate opportunities for the community to interact and immerse with natural and built environments.

Whitehorse Play Space Strategy 2011

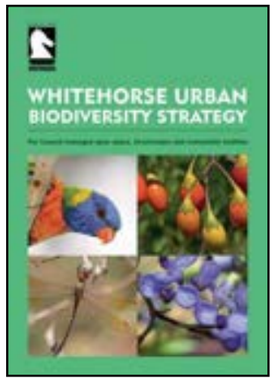
- Play is vital for a child's social, emotional and physical development. These spaces provide not only play opportunities but are important social meeting places which contribute more broadly to community wellbeing.
- The Strategy considers the international trend away from a dependence on modular play equipment towards spaces which incorporate play in a more natural environment.
- The Whitehorse community highly value its environment and where there are significant areas of bushland and linear parks that enhance play opportunities.
- The Strategy identifies opportunities to improve the Whitehorse play space network:
  - A need for play spaces and associated facilities to be designed and maintained to encourage use by children of all abilities.
  - Co-location of junior and senior play spaces to facilitate improved supervision.
  - Opportunities for children to experience stimulating, fun and, where appropriate, risk-taking challenges.
  - Opportunities to encourage interaction with the natural environment.

Whitehorse Recreation Strategy 2015-2024

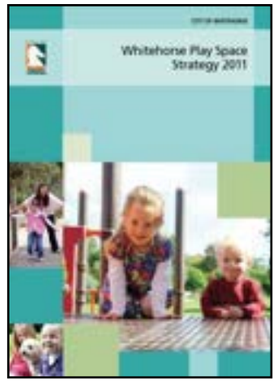
- Council is committed to the long-term planning for recreation and sport. This will ensure that facilities and services are provided in consideration of current needs, as well as emerging trends.
- Four themes emerged: active communities, effective information and communication, flexible community facilities, and deliverable partnerships.
- Council assets include more than 335 parks and Reserves, over 50 sports fields, over 150 community centres and buildings, 1300km of footpaths and trails, 170 play spaces and over 50 schools.
- Footpaths, roads and sport facilities play an important role in encouraging people to be active.
- There is also a requirement to support physical activities that do not require membership of a sporting club or have the constraints associated with playing team sport.
  - Support unstructured physical activities that assist residents to lead a healthy lifestyle through physical activity.
- Eight key principles to guide planning of recreation services and facilities:
  - Different needs
  - A range of opportunities
  - Addressing recreation and sport priorities
  - Integration and design of urban infrastructure
  - Universal design
  - Partnerships
  - Facilities
  - The natural environment

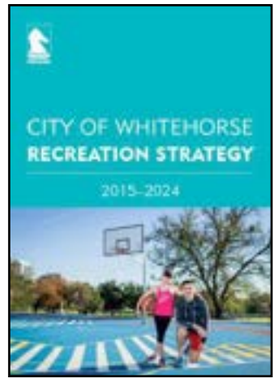
Wildlife habitat connectivity across the City of Whitehorse

- Lists species recorded in Whitehorse in taxonomic groups: amphibians, arachnids, birds, fungi, insects, mammals, other invertebrates, plants, and reptiles.
- Bennettswood Reserve had a low total species richness of 1-50 species (calculated across a 500m x 500m cell).
- Restoring the riparian habitat along Gardiners Creek is identified as a connectivity improvement to enhance habitat, particularly for the Spotted Pardalote (*Pardalotus punctatus*) and brown goshawk (*Accipiter fasciatus*).
  - Assist small birds living in Whitehorse that use native tree canopies for foraging.
  - Increase the density of trees on open green spaces.
  - Reduce night time lights, as the creek is a buffer for the Little Forest Bat (*Vespadelus vulturnus*).
  - Road crossing is suggested for the Common Blue-Tongued Lizard (*Tiliqua scincoides*) across Burwood Highway below Bennettswood Reserve.
  - Add ponds to support the Eastern Long-necked Turtle (*Chelodina longicollis*).
  - Plant *Acacia* sp. to support the Common Imperial Blue (*Jalmenus evagoras*).











3.2 Planning Control Zones

Bennettswood Reserve is located within two zones under the Melbourne Planning Scheme. The Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ) and Public Use Zone (PUZ2). The PPRZ is designated for public parks and recreational areas. It aims to recognise, protect, and conserve areas intended for public open space and recreation. The PPRZ also allows for certain commercial uses where appropriate. The PUZ2 zone applies to land used for education faculties and services, it applies to the portion of the Reserve that is managed by Deakin University.

Surrounding zones

The land surrounding Bennettswood Reserve contains a diverse range of zones, such as:

- Public Use Zone (PUZ1 & 2): Areas designated for public infrastructure and services.
- General Residential Zone 1 (GRZ1): Areas planned for residential development with a focus on maintaining local character.
- Neighbourhood Residential Zone 3 (NZR3): Zones designated to protect and enhance the character of low-density residential areas.
- Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ).
- Transport Zone 1 (TRZ1) : Zones allocated to transport infrastructure and related uses.
- Transport Zone 2 (TRZ2): Areas designated for transport operations and infrastructure.

These zoning classifications reflect the varies land uses and planning objectives in the vicinity of Bennettswood Reserve, balancing public open space, residential development, and transport infrastructure.



Key

	Project Boundary
	Title and Ownership Boundaries
	Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ)
	General Residential Zone (GRZ1)
	Residential Growth Zone (RGZ2)
	Public Use Zone (PUZ1 & 2)
	Transport Zone 1 - State Transport Infrastructure (TRZ1)
	Transport Zone 2 - Principal Road Network (TRZ2)

3.3 Planning Overlays

Bennettswood Reserve is subject to the following overlays under the Melbourne Planning Scheme:

- Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (LSIO): this identifies areas prone to flooding. It's purpose is to manage and improve water quality and health while ensuring that land use and development do not significantly increase flood levels or exacerbate flooding issues.
- Special Controls Overlay (SCO): imposes specific controls on the land to address unique circumstances or issues not covered by other planning provisions. The overlay covers the alignment of the future SRL corridor that will run underneath the site.
- Design and Development Overlay (DDO3) : provides guidelines for the design and development of land to ensure that new developments are compatible with the surrounding area.

Surrounding overlays

Additional overlays which interface with Bennettswood Reserve include:

- Heritage Overlay (HO249): assigned to a portion of the Deakin University north campus. It aims to protect and conserve buildings or areas with historical value by regulating development.
- Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO): aims to protect and enhance landscapes, including important visual and environmental features. It regulates development to ensure that is does not detract from the visual amenity or ecological value of the landscape.

These overlays collectively aim to manage environmental impacts, guide development, and protect cultural heritage and significant landscapes in and around Bennettswood Reserve.

Key

	Project boundary
	Heritage Overlay - HO
	Overlay - DDO
	Land Subject to Inundation Overlay - LSIO
	Significant Landscape Overlay - SLO
	Development Contributions Plan Overlay - DCPO
	Specific Controls Overlay - SCO



4.0

Heritage

3.1 Story Telling and Timeline

3.2 Protecting Indigenous Cultural Heritage

3.3 Non-Indigenous Heritage

Jolimont, the residence of Charles La Trobe.
Source: State Library of Victoria Acc[illegible] H98.[illegible]

4.1 Story Telling and Timeline

Bennettswood Reserve and the adjacent Gardiners Creek (KooyongKoot) are integral parts of a significant cultural landscape, located on Wurundjeri Country. The Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people's relationship with the land extends back thousands of years. The landscape and waterways are central to indigenous land management and cultural practices.

Following European settlement, in the late 1830s farms were established along Koonung Creek and Gardiners Creek. Following the discovery of gold in Warrandyte, land division and ownership grew in the Nunawading area. Many groups and individuals have played roles in the stewardship and development of Bennettswood Reserve. Recognising these contributions provides a fuller contextual understanding of the place.

The following timeline highlights a number of events that have influenced and shaped the region, activities of significance for First Nations People and milestones related to the Bennettswood Reserve.

65,000 BCE The earliest proposed human habitation of continental Australia.

For time immemorial the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people have cared for this Country. Gardiners Creek (KooyongKoot) was a significant waterway for First Nations people of the Kulin Nation. The area is integrated into their cultural landscape, with significant spiritual and practical connections to the waterways and surrounding environment.

1835 The first European settlers arrive in the Melbourne region.

1845 George and William Bennett purchased a farm immediately east of Gardiners Creek, known as 'Bennetts' farm'.

1851 Gold discovery in Victoria led to rapid growth in Melbourne spurring development of many manufacturing industries and establishment of more farms to grow produce to feed the population.

1860s The area that is now Burwood began to be settled as part of the broader expansion of Melbourne's eastern suburbs under the name of Ballyshanassy. It was initially known for its agricultural land and open spaces.

1870s The Burwood area began to see more residential development. By this time, it was becoming increasingly recognised as a desirable location for suburban living.

1882 Camberwell to Lilydale railway line extension stimulated a wave of subdivision which characterised much of the municipality.

1883 Burwood was officially named, and the local area was formally recognised as a distinct suburb. The establishment of local infrastructure and services followed, supporting the growth of residential and commercial activities.

1925 The local community begins advocating for the establishment of a public Reserve in Burwood to provide recreational space and preserve green areas amidst growing urban development.

1960s The Reserve served as a disposal site for municipal waste, which had implications for the site's ecological and environmental conditions.

1983 The closure of the landfill in 1983 marked the beginning of efforts to rehabilitate and restore the Reserve to its current state as a public park and recreational space.

1990s Continued urban expansion in Burwood leads to further enhancements of the Reserve to provide a public open space, including landscaping and the creation of walking paths.

The City of Whitehorse was proclaimed following the amalgamation of the former cities of Box Hill and Nunawading.

1994 Bennettswood Reserve sees significant upgrades, including the development of new recreational facilities and improvements in accessibility.

2000s Bennettswood Reserve sees significant upgrades, including the development of new recreational facilities and improvements in accessibility.

2018 The pavilion at Bennettswood Reserve was renovated in 2018. The renovation aimed to modernise the facility, improve amenities, and enhance its functionality for community use, including sports and recreational activities.

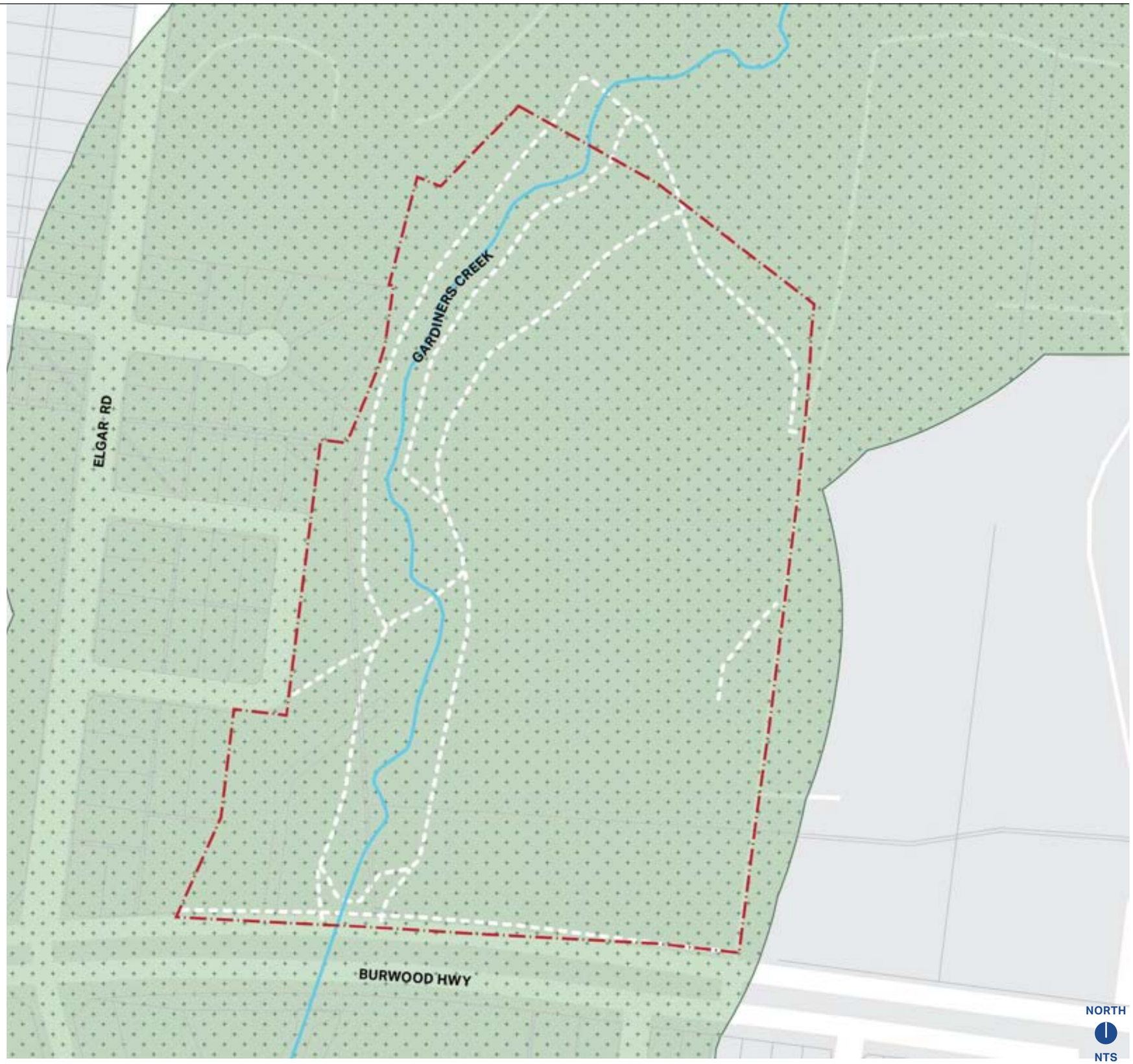
2024 Master Plan for Bennettswood Reserve under development to guide future improvements to enhance green spaces, provide additional recreational facilities, and improve accessibility and environmental sustainability. Community and stakeholder consultation carried out to ensure the plan reflects the needs and preferences of users.

4.2 Protecting Indigenous Cultural Heritage

Bennettswood Reserve holds cultural significance as part of the traditional lands of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people, who have maintained a connection to this area for thousands of years. The Reserve's natural features, including Gardiners Creek (KooyongKoot), are deeply embedded in the cultural practices and stories of the Wurundjeri people.

The riverbanks and surrounding landscapes are part of a broader cultural heritage sensitivity overlay, recognising their role in traditional practices and stories. These areas are often associated with important Indigenous practices such as fishing, ceremonial activities, and travel routes. The Cultural Heritage Sensitivity Overlay ensures that any development or activity within these sensitive zones respects and preserves the heritage values, integrating traditional knowledge into land management practices. This overlay aims to protect these culturally significant landscapes from adverse impacts while fostering greater awareness and respect for the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung's enduring connection to their ancestral lands.

Protecting this heritage involves recognising and respecting the spiritual and historical importance of these lands. Efforts to incorporate Indigenous perspectives into the Reserve's management and planning ensure that the cultural values and traditional knowledge of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung are honoured and preserved.



Key

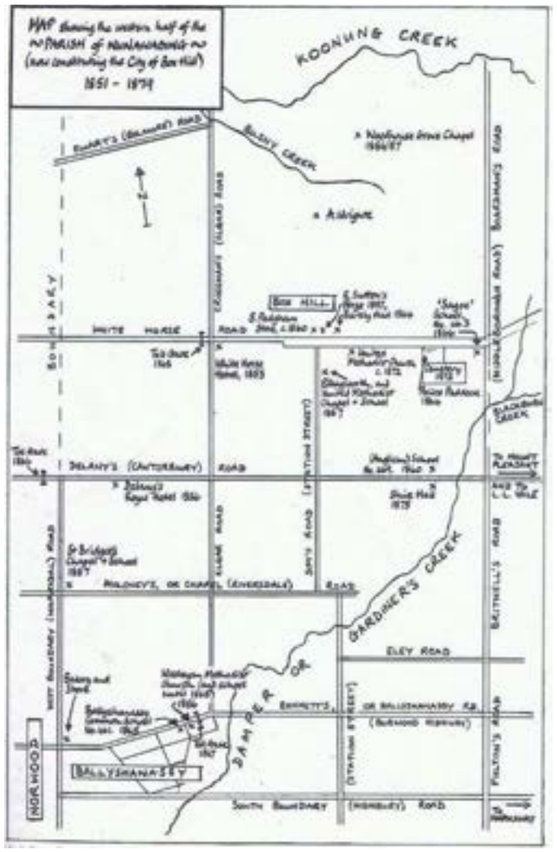
	Project Boundary
	Areas of Cultural Heritage Sensitivity (200m offset from waterway)

4.3 Non-Indigenous Heritage

Bennettswood Reserve has a notable heritage, reflecting its development from a rural area into a significant community hub. The reserve was purchased as a farm by the Bennett family in 1845. The area experienced urban growth in the early 20th century, changing land use from farm land to residential. The site was used as a municipal waste landfill site until 1983 when it was remediated to provide green space and recreational facilities for the growing suburb of Burwood. As part of this development, the Reserve was equipped with various amenities, including sports fields, which became central to community life. From the 1990s the site was used for organised sport.

Throughout the mid-20th century, the Reserve's facilities were expanded to meet the needs of an increasingly active community. One key addition was the establishment of cricket facilities, which became home to the Deakin Cricket Club in 1997 and has been used by football groups. The club's use of the Reserve highlights the site's role in fostering local sports and social activities. The Reserves sports fields have provided a venue for matches and training, contributing to the Reserve's status as a focal point for community recreation and engagement.

In recent decades, Bennettswood Reserve has continued to evolve, with significant updates such as the pavilion renovation in 2018. This renovation improved facilities to better support the needs of local sports teams, including the cricket club, and enhanced overall user experience. The Reserve also saw the addition of the Strategic Cycling Corridor, further modernising its infrastructure and ensuring it remains a central and versatile public space that serves the recreational needs of the Burwood community.



1870-1881 Ballyshanassy Township Map



1945 Aerial of Bennettswood Reserve



2000 View east along Burwood Highway



2019 Bennettswood Pavilion in Background of WPAFC match



2024 Aerial View of Bennettswood Reserve open space

5.0

Site Analysis

4.1 Existing Conditions

4.2 Topography and Geology

4.3 Ecology

4.4 Access and Circulation

4.5 Edge Conditions

4.6 Existing Landscape Features

4.7 Materiality

North of Bennettswood Reserve Looking Towards Deakin University

5.1 Existing Conditions

Bennettswood Reserve is a well-established open space located in Burwood, providing a range of recreational facilities and green spaces for the local community. The Reserve encompasses various amenities including the South Oval, pavilion, walking paths along Gardiner's Creek, a bridge across the creek. The main sports facilities include a cricket pitch and nets, fenced southern oval with lights and Australian Rules Football goal posts, which cater to local club and community sports. The pavilion, renovated in 2018, serves as a central hub for these activities, offering modern facilities and improved amenities for users.

The Reserve features extensive open areas to the west and naturalistic creek environment to the east, providing ample space for casual recreation and relaxation. The walking paths and cycling routes along the Creek offer connectivity and promote active lifestyles. The park's layout is designed to accommodate both organised sports and informal recreational activities. The northern open space is predominantly used for off-leash dog walking. The surface undulates and is not suitable for sport, with holes causing safety concerns. A portion of the Reserve between the South Oval and Burwood Highway is currently being used as a lay-down site for SRL.



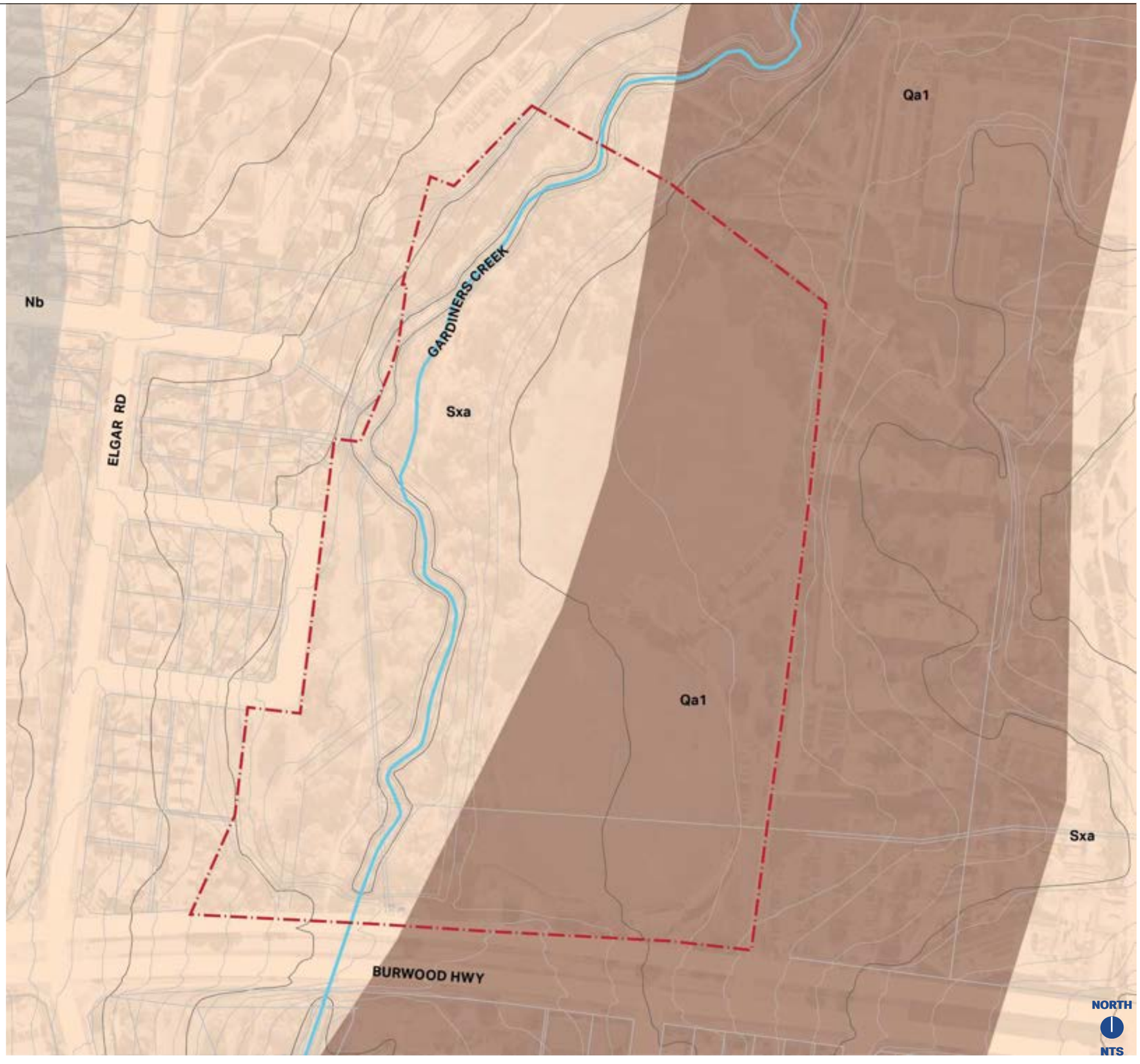
Key

	Project boundary
	Tree Canopy
	Dense Tree Canopy
	Paths
	Concrete
	Pedestrian bridge
	Light
	Fence
	Carpark
	Ownership - Crown Land
	Ownership - Deakin University
	Ownership- Whitehorse City Council
	Ownership - Freehold

5.2 Topography and Geology

Bennettswood Reserve features a gently undulating topography typical of the Burwood area. The site is relatively flat to the east where the sports fields are located with a subtle fall towards the Creek. The proximity to Gardiners Creek introduces slight variations in elevation, with the Creek area exhibiting a minor slope towards the watercourse.

The geological composition of Bennettswood Reserve includes a mix of soil types and underlying rock formations. Along the creek areas and floodplains, including parts of Bennettswood Reserve near Gardiners Creek, the geology is dominated by alluvial sediments. These are deposits of soil and organic material carried by water flow, create fertile, well-drained soils that are conducive to vegetation growth. The alluvial deposits contribute to the area's characteristic gently sloping terrain. The Quaternary alluvium, which includes more recent sedimentary deposits, is present along the creek's floodplain. These sediments consist of silt, sand, and gravel deposited during recent geological periods. The alluvium plays a role in the hydrology of the area, influencing local drainage patterns. East of the Reserve, geology is influenced by volcanic basalt, which is a common feature in the broader Melbourne area. Basalt formations contribute to the stable ground conditions and support a range of vegetation. The basaltic soils are generally fertile, which supports the lush green landscapes and diverse plant life.



Key

	Project boundary
	Contour Major
	Contour
	Nb (basalt)
	Sxa (alluvial sediments)
	Qa1 (quaternary alluvium)

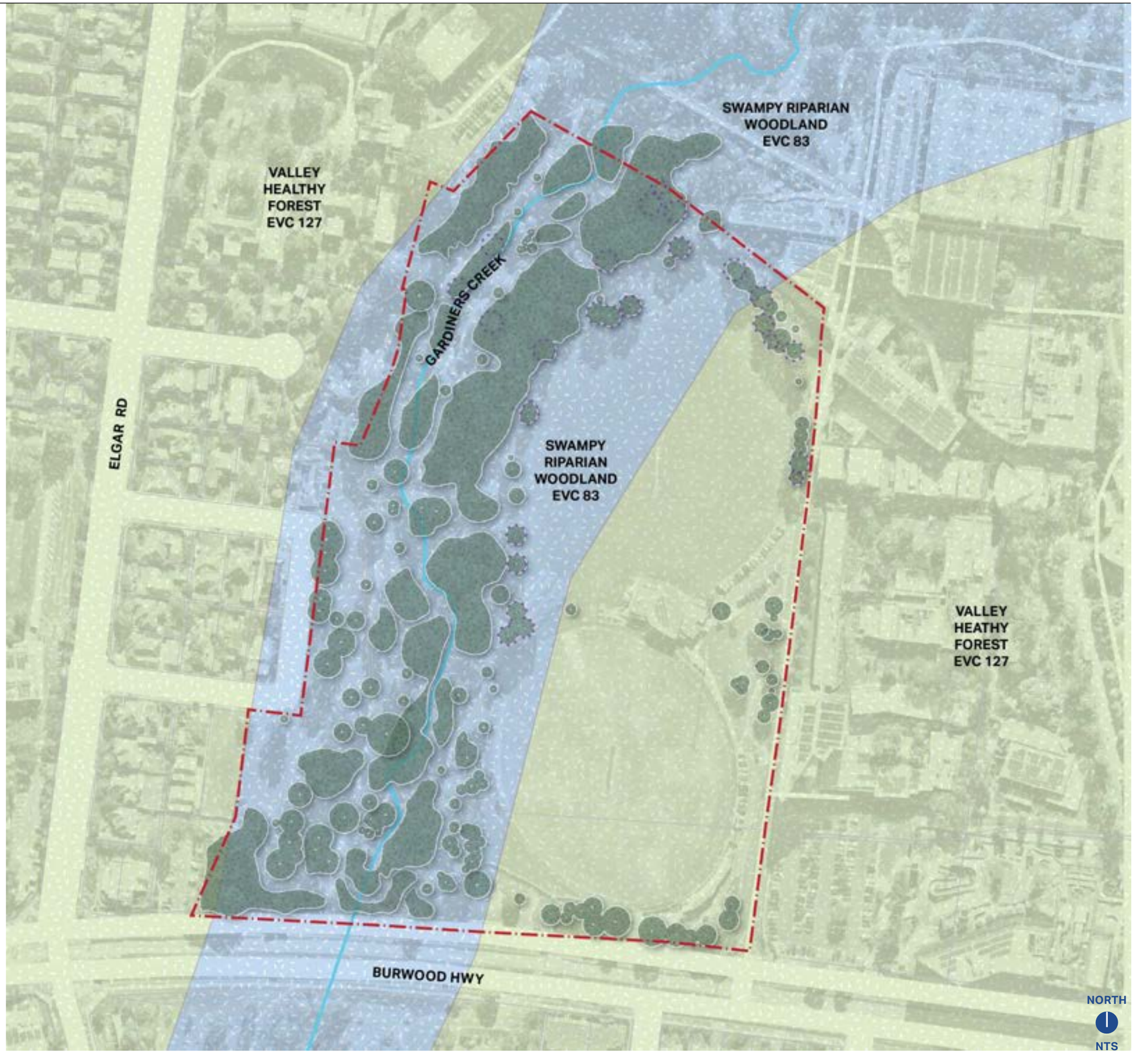
5.3 Ecology

Bennettswood Reserve features a range of vegetation that supports its varied recreational and natural areas. The central open spaces are turf, designed to accommodate active recreational uses. Surrounding these areas are a mix of native and non-native species. Indigenous plants, such as eucalypts and wattles, are prominent, reflecting the region's natural flora and providing habitat for local wildlife.

Bennettswood Reserve encompasses two Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVCs):

- EVC 83 – 'Plains Grassy Woodland': reflects the historic grassy woodlands of the region with a mix of native grasses and scattered trees,
- EVC 127 – 'Riparian Forest': characterises the riparian zones along Gardiners Creek, with diverse tree and shrub species adapted to wet conditions.

The mid and understorey vegetation is relatively sparse in most areas, allowing clear views through the greenery. However, near Gardiners Creek, there is a greater density of mid and understorey vegetation, reflecting the richer riparian environment. All existing and new plantings are composed of locally indigenous species, reinforcing the ecological integrity of the site. To support habitat creation, felled branches and trunks are left on-site, providing crucial resources for local wildlife, while organic mulch is spread throughout planting islands to promote soil health and plant growth. Steep slopes along the Creek corridor have heavy weed coverage. There are 19 trees of high and very high retention value that are predominantly Lemon Scented Gum, Yellow Box, River She - Oak, Spotted Gum and Manna Gum species.



Key

	Project boundary
	Vehicle access
	Valley Healthy Forest
	Tree Canopy
	Dense Tree Canopy
	High Value Trees

5.4 Access and Circulation

Bennettswood Reserve can be accessed by pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles. Vehicle access is along Holland Avenue, with two carparks located along the east boundary of the Reserve. A concrete path provides access to the sports fields and pavilion. A network of footpaths and trails connect to the Reserve, providing pedestrian and cyclist access from each direction. Access from the north, west, and south connect to the Gardiners Creek paths. These paths are generally informal, aligning with the Reserve's park-like character, and are well-maintained to support safe and enjoyable walking experiences. The east and west of the site are not well connected, with a grass embankment between the creek and ovals and no direct path.

There is a pedestrian bridge across Gardiners Creek, providing a safe crossing that links trails on both sides of the waterway.



Key

	Project boundary
	Vehicle access
	Pedestrian access
	Pedestrian bridge
	Gravel path
	Informal path
	Concrete path
	Bitumen path
	Car park

5.5 Edge Conditions

The edge conditions of Bennettswood Reserve along Gardiners Creek exhibit distinct characteristics between closed and open areas.

In certain sections, particularly where residential properties bound the Reserve, the edges are more closed and enclosed. The denser plantings along these closed edges help to shield the creek, providing a natural buffer and contributing to the ecological richness of the riparian zone.
In contrast, other sections of the Reserve feature open edges with more exposed views. These areas are characterised by mown grass and more open landscapes, where the vegetation is less dense. The open edges allow for unobstructed views of the Reserve, enhancing passive surveillance. . The contrast between these edge conditions helps to balance the Reserve's ecological functions with its recreational uses, promoting both habitat conservation and community engagement.



Key

- Project boundary
- Open - Car park
- Open - Road interface
- Open - Highway interface
- Open - University building
- Open - Open space
- Closed - Residential interface

5.6 Existing Landscape Features

The landscape across the Reserve changes from a naturalistic creek line to open grass space with facilities for organised sport.



Key

- Project boundary
- 1 View point



1 View south of pavilion to oval



2 Looking east of south oval to Deakin University



3 Looking east across north oval to Deakin University



4 Pedestrian bridge across Gardiners Creek



5 Path north of the Reserve towards Morgans Walk



6 Deakin University building north of the Reserve



7 Morgans Walk Bridge between Deakin campuses



8 Western border of north oval



9 View to pedestrian bridge over creek from south oval



10 Gardiners Creek path east of waterway



11 Gardiners Creek trail and embankment to oval



12 Western edge of open space looking towards Creek

5.7 Materiality

The Reserve features a mix of materials that are recessive and respond to the natural environment. The elements create a familiar identity across the site with materials around the pavilion and sports oval reflecting the local site conditions and character.



Timber bollards



Concrete bench seat



Concrete steps with steel handrail



Lighting



Low timber fence



Compacted Gravel footpath and Black chain mesh fence to sports oval



Timber bench



Stainless steel bicycle hoop



Gravel paths



Timber decking at Pavilion



Bluestone paving

5.8 Site User Profile

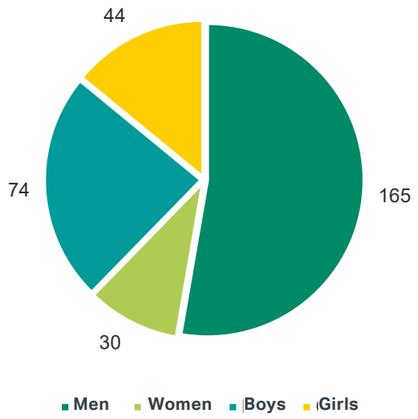
In 2024, the Reserve was used by four different clubs for organised sport throughout the year. These include:

- Wattle Park Amateur Football Club
- Surrey Park Football Club*
- Deakin Cricket Club
- Mont Albert Cricket Club*

* Denotes club that uses the Reserve as a secondary venue for junior teams.

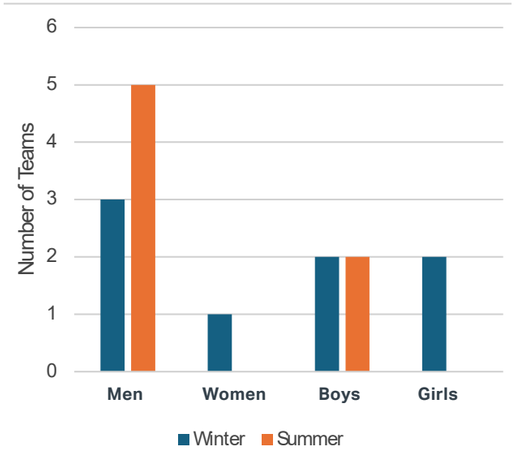
These clubs all use the South Oval for a mix of training sessions and competition matches. Football activities are predominantly scheduled over winter months, while cricket takes centre stage over summer.

Across all participating clubs, there are approximately 313 players actively using the Reserve for organised sport. Approximately 25% of these players are female or girls, reflecting the growing participation of women in sports and the commitment of local clubs to promote inclusivity and build their female participation.



Gender proportion of players at Bennettswood Reserve

There are a total of 15 teams that use the Reserve, which underscores the role that the South Oval plays in providing a crucial venue for both competitive and recreational sports in Whitehorse.



Gender proportion of sport teams at Bennettswood Reserve



Deakin Cricket Club



Wattle Park Amateur Football Club Mens



Wattle Park Amateur Football Club Womens

6.0

Consultation

5.1 Community Consultation

5.2 Stakeholder Consultation

South Oval Looking West Towards Deakin University

6.1 Community Consultation Background Information

The 1st round of engagement occurred between the 12th of April and 26th of May. A community pop-up session was held at the Bennettswood Reserve Pavilion on the 4th of May, alongside the pop-up, was a survey online via YourSay for the Bennettswood Reserve Master Plan. There were two user group submissions from Deakin Cricket Club and KooyongKoot Alliance.



Description



Description

6.2 Respondent Profile

Respondent key findings

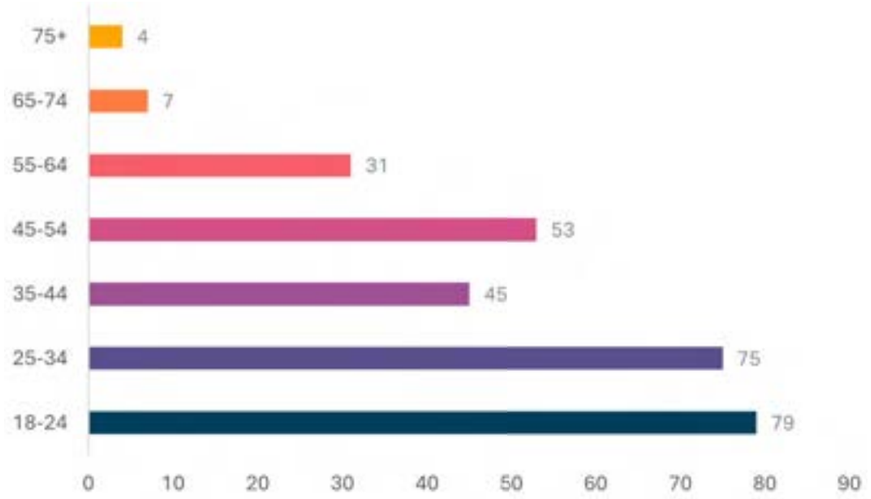
- Younger respondents between 18-34 made up the majority of responses (154 respondents). Only a small proportion of responses were from those between 65-75+. (11 responses)
- The ratio of gender had a majority of respondents (58%) being males, with the minority of responses from 37% females and 1% non-binary.
- 87 suburbs were reported in the catchment of respondents. Majority of respondents lived in Burwood (71 respondents) , followed by Burwood East (22 respondents) and Box Hill (17 respondents).
- 45 respondents were from a non-english speaking background. The highest number of respondents speaking languages other than English at home were Mandarin (13 respondents) or Hindi (13 respondents).
- The Reserve users represent a diverse range of backgrounds, 198 being in born in Australia, 29 in India, 15 in China, 11 in United Kingdom and10 in Sri Lanka.
- Of the 307 respondents, 7 described themselves as a person with a disability of impairment and 4 as being an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person

Catchments of travel key findings

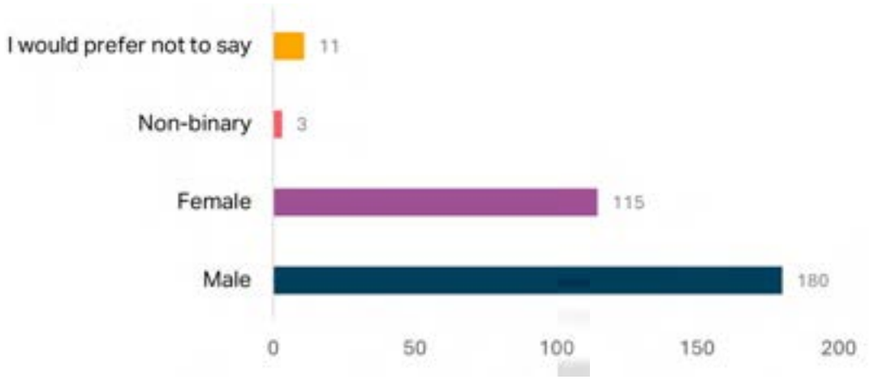
- Driving and walking to the Reserve were the top catchments of travel, 120 people drove, 118 people walked.
- 21% of respondents who drive to the park travelled more than 15km. 46% drove between 5-15km and 33% less than 5km
- Of those who walked to the Reserve, 33% walked 5 to 10 minutes (or up to 800m), 43% walked up to 5 minutes (or up to 400m) and 24% more than 10 minutes (or more than 1.2km)
- 22 respondents caught public transport to the Reserve with 50% travelling 5-15km
- Jog/running and cycling both had 16 respondents specifying that catchment of travel to the Reserve.

40% of respondents walked to the Reserve, 41% drove

Age



Gender



6.3 Current Use

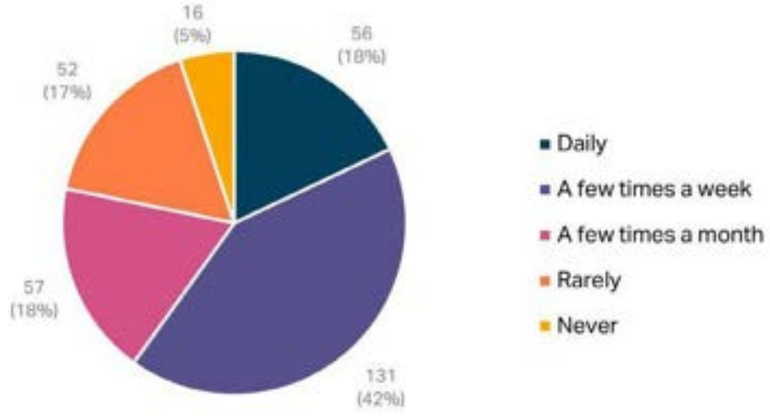
Current use key findings

- A large proportion of respondents (42%) specified that they use the Reserve a few times a week and 18% using the Reserve daily.
- Walking (164 responses) had the highest number of responses for the current park uses followed by enjoying nature and green spaces (130 responses) and sport (126 responses). Other top responses included jogging and running, meeting with friends and families and dog walking.
- 136 respondents reported spending an hour or two at the Reserve during a typical visit and 58 respondents specified to stay more than two hours. 101 respondents stayed at the Reserve for less than 30 minutes.
- Weekdays were a more popular time of use for the Reserve compared to weekends. Both weekday daytime (134 respondents) and weekend daytime (108 respondents) (between 9am and 5pm) were peak times of use.

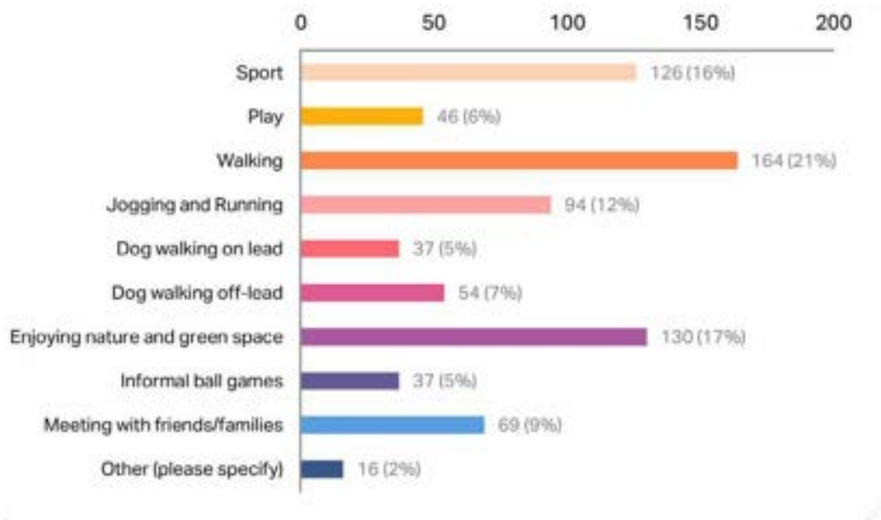
Top three current Reserve uses include walking, enjoying nature and green spaces and sport

A large proportion of users visited the Reserve multiple times per week

How often do you visit Bennettswood Reserve?



How do you use Bennettswood



6.4 Future Use

Other comments

- Dog off-leash area: A few respondents requested for the off-leash space to be kept with enhancement of safety through separation of pedestrians and cyclist nearby alongside dog related amenity (dog bags). (12 respondents)
- Sporting grounds and facilities: Calls for the northern oval to be upgraded in relation to levelling, ability to support multiple sports and winter suitability (33 respondents). Other suggestions included improvement of the cricket pitch, ability to use grass fields for multiple sports (cricket, rugby league/union and soccer), inclusion of running or athletics track, multi-purpose courts,upgrades to lighting, addition of squash centre. An overall desire expressed for ovals and courts to support multiple sporting functions, year round (61 respondents).
- Play and fitness space: A few respondents requested opportunities for children's play areas and public fitness equipment. (11 respondents)
- Increased biodiversity, planting and wildlife consideration: Requests to increase and celebrate overall vegetation and biodiversity whilst reducing loss of existing vegetation and considering wildlife habitat. (11 respondents)
- Access, amenity and equity: Calls for improved and increased access to toilets and change rooms, as well as more bins and BBQ areas in high use spaces. (14 respondents)

Q: What improvements would encourage you to visit Bennettswood Reserve more often? (other)

"Development of the North Oval into a proper oval. The South Oval has many teams training and playing on it, leading to congestion and overlap. The North Oval is currently unfit for any use - it is unfenced, uneven, not well maintained."

"Installing an outdoor gym will assist students and those residents with low incomes to do weight bearing exercise. A levelled walking bath will assist with reducing ankle injuries - yet raised above the flood areas near the pine trees. Expanding the sports facility building to include access for music ensembles. Improved lighting would assist in using the facilities at night time."

"Equipments/activities for active recreation such as parkfit equipments, anything that's low maintenance and don't break easily."

"Playground for children. The next closest playground is a long walk through gardeners creek, often too far for little ones. A small fenced playground in the corner of the unfenced Reserve would be great. It would be great to keep the rest of the oval off lead. There are few places where you can have children on play equipment and dogs running off leash at the same time."

Park safety key findings

- 79% of respondents said they felt safe in the Reserve, 20% of respondents felt somewhat safe and 1% did not feel safe.
- Majority of responses to improve safety within the Reserve were to provide more lighting (38 respondents). Other suggestions for improving safety were to increase surveillance (10 respondents) and the request to separate dogs off-lead from cyclists and pedestrians

Q: Do you have any suggestions to improve the sense of safety in the Reserve?

"There needs to be lighting along the track side of the unfenced oval. It feels unsafe early in the morning and late at night when it is dark. Small garden lights charged by solar dotted along the track would be very comforting and help me walk before work in winter."

"More lighting along paths."

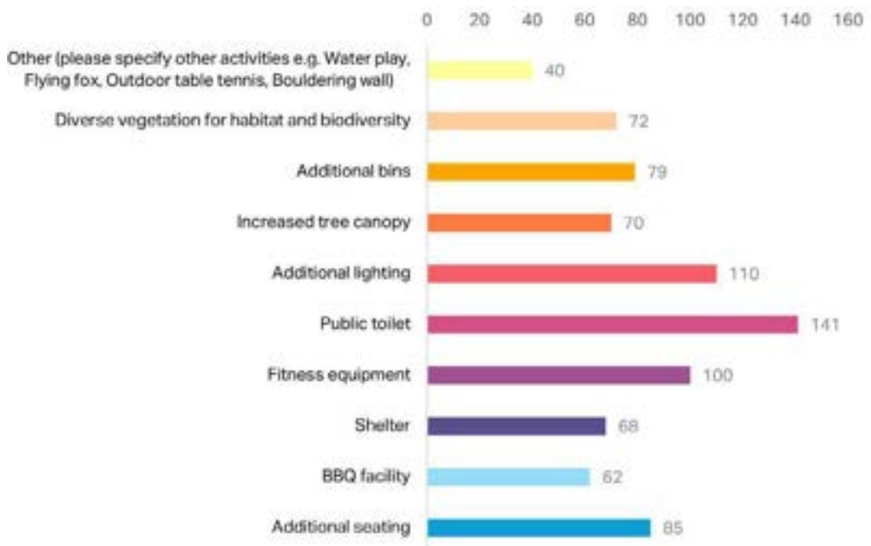
"More lighting, more signage."

"I feel safe during daytime, but at night it is pretty dark. So additional lighting would be beneficial."

"Dogs off-leash are the major safety risk. Off-lead areas should be fenced. Unfenced areas should be on-lead. Dogs are often off-lead and not under effective control by owners."

"Off-lead dogs are a persistent threat to cyclists and walkers."

What improvements would encourage you to visit Bennettswood Reserve more



6.5 Stakeholder Consultation

Engagement sessions were held with key stakeholders in August and September 2024. The following groups were invited to participate:

- Peak Sporting Bodies
  - AFL Victoria
  - Football Victoria
  - Cricket Victoria
  - Box Hill Reporter District Cricket Association
- Local Sports Clubs
  - Surrey Park Football Club
  - Box Hill Cricket Club
  - Wattle Park Amateur Football Club
  - Deakin Cricket Club
- Land Managers
  - Deakin University
  - DEECA
- Community Groups
  - Friends of Gardiners Creek
  - KooyongKoot Alliance
  - Gardiners Creek Park Run
  - Presbyterian Ladies' College
- Traditional Owners

A summary of findings is provided in the following table.

Issues	Opportunities	Future Aspirations

• Current access to male and female change rooms.
• Maintenance of surrounds is infrequent and in poor condition.
  - Ground is unsafe on south oval with potholes. North oval is not safe and no lighting.
  - Gradual loss of public open space from over access to areas it is important to keep some areas with reduced use.
  - Current park run loops around creek and is unable to use the Reserve as it is unsafe for the course (vision impaired users, parents with prams and small children).
• Safety issues with dog and runner collisions.
  - Dog use causing the need to clean up before use on sporting fields.
  - Game scheduling and oval availability is limited with the use of one oval.
• Deakin is the no.1 sports science school in the world, but the sports facilities don't match this.
  - Cricket nets aren't accessible or at a high standard for use.
• How to get enough funding to deliver.
• South area lacking trees, there is a need to establish connected biodiversity areas to encourage a diverse range of species.
• Implications of foot traffic from the future Suburban Rail Loop travelling north on the environment.
• Conflict between pedestrians and cyclists, with requirement of concrete paths. Paths mean greater carbon, loss of narrow riparian areas, bigger impact on biodiversity.
• Need to minimise storm water run off.
• Context changing - SRL.
	• Ability to invest in sport between Deakin and Presbyterian Ladies' College.
	  - Great universities build lifelong memories and stories, can be pursued through physical activity.
	  - Forming partnerships with sporting clubs and others to collectively use land.
	• Increased facilities for females equating to higher participation.
	• Players from Deakin would benefit from new nets.
	• Provision of sports and activities other than cricket and football in the Reserve, informal activities such as open kicking, frisbee, futsal and rollerblading.
	  - Public basketball and netball facilities.
	  - Space for free play use and no formal programming.
	  - Levelling out of surface would allow for a wider breadth of users.
	• Economic benefits and ability to have licensed operators to support clubs on weekends.
	  - Possible functional canteen.
	  - Investment in high quality toilets and facilities able to be used in events.
	  - Space for launch events.
	• Potential to imbed imagery from Traditional Owners into multipurpose court.
	  - First Nations links to nature.
	• After hours use and incorporation of lighting that turns off at set times (9pm, reduce light spill into neighbouring properties).
	  - Lighting BBQ shelter to facilitate activities for events/ socialising.
	• Finding the balance between providing sporting facilities and ecosystem.
	  - Infill planting.
	  - Path/Wayfinding with information about planting and animals.
	• Incorporate insights into multicultural perspectives to ensure communities feel respected.
	• Need for fenced dog off-leash area to present disruptions to biodiversity and cyclists.
		• Accessibility is important for everyone, in terms of gutters, gates and paths alongside the level of opportunities for free play.
		• Sport fields being able to cater for multiple sports and surfaces being able to withstand the use.
		• Concern for lighting impacts on fauna, no lighting to be along the creek.
		• There is a need for sport amenities as the community is largely derived from sport, but also a need for passive recreation.
		• Need to manage with other users of the park including dogs off-leash, need room for all users.
		• Less paths and lighting to provide greener reprieve with the outcome of a light touch approach and allow for forest bathing.
		• Can be a fully inclusive site.
		  - Within the suite of all the Reserves, there are 6-7 that will be high quality public realm - exceed minimum standards, particularly around accessibility (disabled, prams, elderly).
		• Safety, universality, accessibility, inclusiveness, wider arm rests, also facilitate elderly use. Consideration of feeding parents, mobile charging station, swing chair.
		• Self-determination needs to push the boundaries.
		• Consideration of rationale ie. building sports facilities, but not providing accessible paths through natural environment.
		• Biodiversity - understorey, Woody Meadows - lower maintenance once established - passively irrigated, robust plants, coppice every 3 years.
		• Connectivity to Gardiners Ck; provide interest when looking between different sections of the reserve.
		• Where are people arriving from; biodiversity corridors, is there a logical link to surrounding sites - greenway to Wattle Park/shops?

7.0

Issues and Opportunities

6.1 Issues

6.2 Opportunities

Along Gardiners Creek

7.1 Issues

Amenity

1. The North Oval's surface is in poor condition, making it unsuitable for sports activities.
2. Limited lighting hampers use of the North Oval and creek corridor during evening hours.
3. The pavilion is inadequately sized to serve the needs of both sports ovals, lacking sufficient facilities to support female participation.
4. Poor passive surveillance throughout the Reserve compromises safety, potentially deterring users during dusk and after sunset.

Access and Movement

1. The paths fail to meet DDA standards, making them difficult for individuals with mobility or visual impairments, as well as parents with prams.
2. Inadequate car parking at Bennettswood Reserve can hinder access for visitors.

Environment

1. Limited connectivity to Gardiners Creek impacts the Reserve's integration with the surrounding natural area.
2. A lack of trees and understorey vegetation reduces the site's biodiversity and ecological benefits.
3. The site's history as a landfill raises potential contamination and environmental challenges.
4. Increased foot traffic from future developments like the SRL may pose additional environmental challenges.

People and Culture

1. There is a lack of representation of First Nations perspectives and cultural elements.
2. Conflicts arise among pedestrians, cyclists, organised sports, and dogs.
3. Dog owners are not cleaning up after their pets, leaving this responsibility to sports organisers.



7.2 Opportunities

Amenity

1. Formalise the northern oval to provide a safe playing surface for a diversity of organised sports and passive recreation.
2. Expand the pavilion's capacity to serve the North Oval and provide facilities to support women and youth sport.
3. Install appropriate lighting to the North Oval and activity spaces to improve usability during evening hours while minimising environmental impact.
4. Enhance visibility and surveillance throughout the park.
5. Develop inviting public spaces that support various passive and active recreational activities.

Access and Movement

1. Ensure pathways and amenities are accessible to all users, including those with disabilities and families with prams.
2. Increase parking capacity to accommodate growing visitor numbers and enhance overall access to the Reserve.
3. Design intuitive pathways with clear signage to improve wayfinding.
4. Provide educational materials about the site's history and local flora and fauna.
5. Separate pedestrians and cyclists to enhance safety and promote active transport.

Environment

1. Enhance connections to Gardiners Creek through improved pathways and ecological restoration, fostering seamless integration with the surrounding environment.
2. Conduct environmental assessments to identify and address potential contamination issues, ensuring the Reserve supports biodiversity and ecological health.
3. Implement sustainable design practices, including infill planting and minimising hard surfaces, to create biodiversity corridors that enhance natural habitats.
4. Designate specific areas to have reduced access and focus on environmental restoration.
5. Reimagine the Gardiners Creek interface with the Reserve's open space.

People and Culture

1. Further celebrate First Nations' cultural values through consultation on design opportunities.
2. Explore partnerships with local businesses and educational institutions to secure investment and identify grant opportunities.





Bennettswood Reserve Master Plan

Stakeholder Engagement Report

December 2024



Aerial image of Bennettswood Reserve looking east

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1 Project overview

Whitehorse City Council commissioned the Bennettswood Reserve Master Plan in 2024 as part of a broader strategic commitment during the 2023/24 Financial year to enhance its open space management by preparing 10 open space Master Plans.

AECOM was appointed in June 2024 to undertake the Master Plan study.

The Master Plan will set the vision and direction for the reserve to meet the needs of Whitehorse's changing and growing community. As Burwood develops to accommodate around 44,500 residents and 24,000 jobs, Bennettswood Reserve will provide essential active and passive open space benefits to this high-density area.

Bennettswood Reserve is a municipal open space that is managed by the City of Whitehorse, with a portion of land owned by Deakin University and a section designated as Crown Land. The reserve spans approximately 4.8 hectares. It is bounded by Gardiners creek to the west and Deakin University to the east. The Master Plan will cover the reserve and adjacent section of Gardiners Creek.

The reserve has been a community sports hub since 1945, featuring two ovals: the North Oval used for informal recreation and a dog off-lease area, and the South Oval equipped for cricket and football. The pavilion was redeveloped in 2018 and serves local cricket and football clubs but would require expansion if the North Oval is formalised for future use.

As a former landfill site listed on the Victoria Landfill Register, development must be cognizant of contamination and environmental challenges. The proposed Suburban Rail Loop, Burwood Station will be located opposite the reserve, with a shared use overpass spanning across Burwood Highway between the station and reserve to connect to Gardiners Creek Trail and Deakin University.

This Stakeholder Engagement Report will collate all data collected during the study from meetings, interviews, and workshops conducted with reserve user groups, residents, the broader Whitehorse community, and council staff. The stakeholder engagement will be undertaken during two different phases of the project:

1st Round Engagement	Information gathering, assessment of the existing conditions, understanding of project requirements.
2nd Round Engagement	Key stakeholder requirements and input.

This report collates information from the 1st Round Engagement that occurred between April and May, and the 2nd Round Engagement that occurred between August and October 2024. The information collected from community and stakeholders during this phase of the project will help inform the development of the draft Master Plan for Bennettswood Reserve.

1.1 Round 1 Engagement: Community




Photos from the Community Pop-up Session at Bennettswood Reserve Pavilion

Community engagement participation

- Online community survey via Council's 'Have Your Say' page (245 responses) (14 April 2024 – 2 June 2024)
- Community Pop-up Session 1 (Bennettswood Reserve Pavilion) (04 May 2024)

User Group Submissions

- Deakin Cricket Club
- KooyongKoot Alliance

1.2 Round 2 Engagement: Key stakeholders

Stakeholder engagement participants

Peaks Sports Body

- Football Victoria
- Cricket Victoria
- Australian Football League Victoria
- Box Hill Reporter District Cricket Association

Traditional Owner Group

- Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation

Existing Sports Clubs

- Surrey Park Football Club
- Wattle Park Amateur Football Club

Existing Community Groups

- Friends of Gardiners Creek
- KooyongKoot Alliance
- Gardiners Creek Park Run

Landowners and Authorities

- Deakin University
- Whitehorse City Council Major Infrastructure Projects
- Whitehorse City Council Disability and Reconciliation
- Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA)
- Melbourne Water

2 Summary of key findings

2.1 Community engagement

- There is a high frequency of use of Bennettswood Reserve with weekend daytime (9am-5pm), and weekday daytime (9am-5pm) reported as the peak periods for visitors.
- Most visitors either drive to the reserve, (41%) or walk (41%).
- A large proportion of visitors (21%) use Bennettswood Reserve for walking, while (17%) of users enjoy the nature and green space and (16%) use the reserve for sport. Out of those who use the reserve for dog-walking (7%) of users walk dogs off-lead and (5%) of users walk dogs on-lead.
- Most visitors typically stay in Bennettswood Reserve for 'an hour or two' during a typical visit (46%), followed by 'less than 30 minutes' (34%).
- A significant majority of visitors (79%) expressed feeling safe, and (20%) feeling somewhat safe in the reserve.
- The top five most liked features of the reserve in order of preference are:
    - The walking path
    - The south oval
    - The pavilion
    - North oval (unfenced)
    - Quality and amenity of the landscape
- The top five improvements cited by visitors that would encourage them to use the reserve more frequently in order of preference are:
    - Public toilet
    - Additional sports facilities
    - Additional lighting
    - Fitness equipment
    - Pathways

2.2 User group submissions

- The Bennetswood Reserve Pavilion and southern oval are used by the Deakin Cricket Club.
- Require additional change rooms in the pavilion and the north oval to be re-surfaced to facilitate female and children's cricket.

2.3 Stakeholder engagement

- Participation in sport is high with a need for improved facilities, as existing are at capacity and need significant upgrades. Focus on supporting female players, including better changerooms and lighting.
- Key issues identified:
    - Limited biodiversity
    - Conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and dogs off-leash
    - Accessibility and connectivity across the site
    - Safety
- There is a need to preserve and enhance natural spaces and habitat, balancing sport facilities with ecological preservation.

- The Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation (WWWCHAC) emphasise the importance of integrating cultural heritage into local reserves by enhancing signage for cultural education fostering connections to Country and local Indigenous language.
- Deakin University highlights the mismatch between its status as a leading sports science institution and the quality of its sports facilities, emphasising the need for safer surfaces, better lighting, and more inclusive access for a diverse student population.
- Future developments should focus on creating vibrant, multi-use spaces that support both active and passive recreation.
- Key opportunities identified:
    - Opportunity to formalise the northern oval to provide a high-quality facility in collaboration with peak sport bodies and Deakin University.
    - Improve connectivity between open spaces while considering the impact of upcoming infrastructure changes from the Suburban Rail Loop.
    - Opportunity for educational initiatives to promote awareness of local flora and fauna.

3 Community engagement

The 1st round of engagement focused on community and comprised of two processes:

1. Online community survey.
2. Community pop-up session on site.

Table 1 shows the timeline and components of the community engagement.

Table 1 Schedule of Community Engagement

Date	Engagement Type
14 April 2024 – 2 June 2024	Online community survey (245 responses)
4 May 2024	Community pop-up session at Bennettswood Reserve

The survey was available on the City of Whitehorse's 'Your Say' website, and community awareness of the survey and the pop-up session was achieved through a combination of the following:

- Letterbox drops to residents.
- Signage installed at the reserve.
- Social media posts during the survey period.

As shown in Table 2 social media posts reach almost 3000 people, with approximately 9% of people (268) clicking onto the link to the Your Say page.

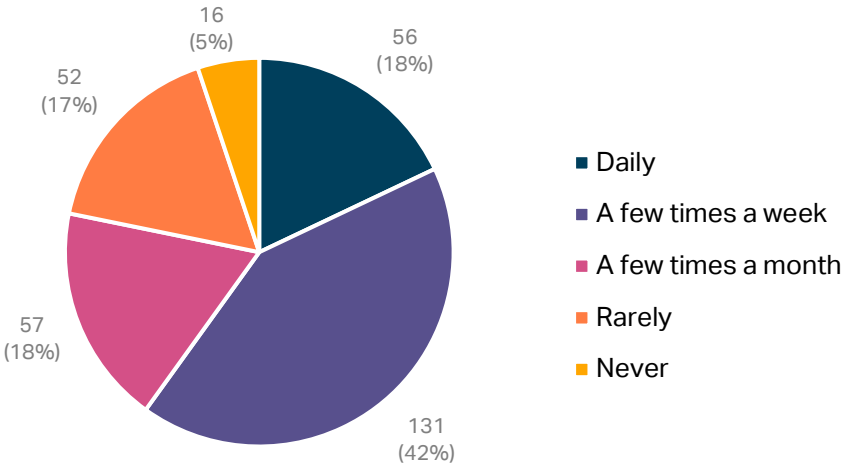
Table 2 Social media advertising results

Results	Reach	Impressions
268 link clicks	2,993	9,805

3.1 Online community survey results

Q1. How often do you visit Bennettswood Reserve?

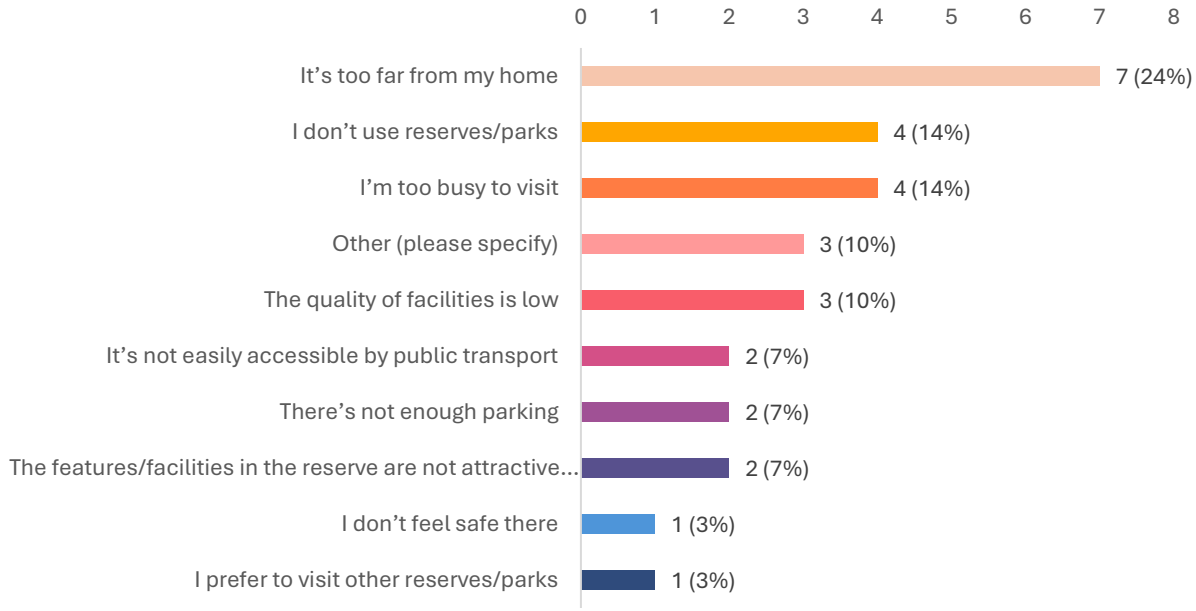
Many of the respondents visit Bennettswood Reserve a few times a week (42%), followed equally by daily visitors (18%) and those who visit a few times a month (18%).



Q2. Are there reasons you don't use the reserve?

(Multiple responses allowed)

Of those who visit Bennettswood Reserve, the most common reason that people don't use the reserve is that it's too far from home (7 respondents), that they are too busy (4 respondents), or that they don't use reserves (4 respondents).



Three participants selected other reasons for not using the reserve that included:

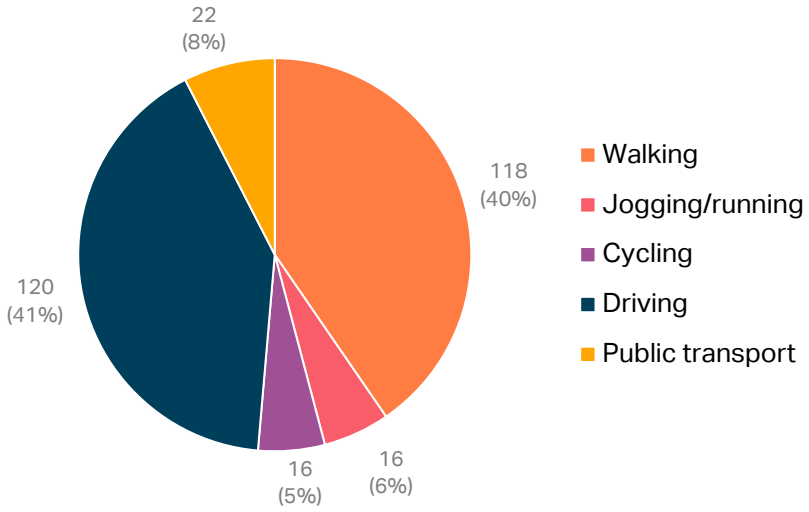
1. It was not accessible.
2. It's just a couple of ovals and not very interesting.
3. Have never heard of it.

Q3. Do you have any further comments on why you don't use the reserve?

1. The space needs to be activated for physical activity.
2. It's for sports and off leash dog walking and I don't do either.
3. I didn't have interest in being there.

Q4. What is the main method of travel you use to get to Bennettswood Reserve?

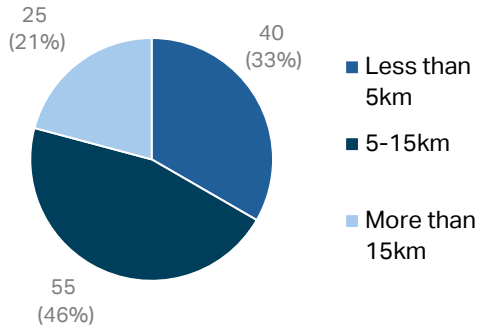
Most respondents drive (41%) or walk to the reserve (40%).



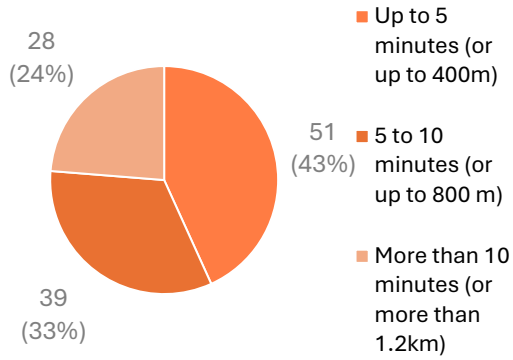
Catchments of Travel

The below graphs show the travel catchment of visitors to Bennettswood Reserve by mode of travel.

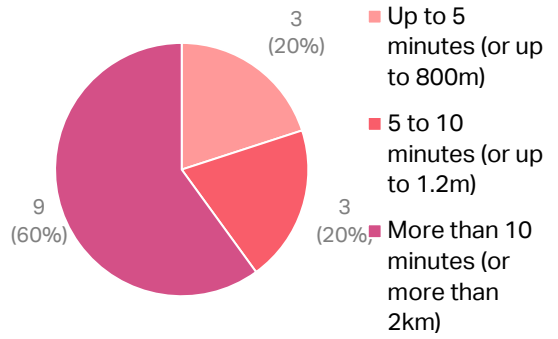
Drive (120 responses)



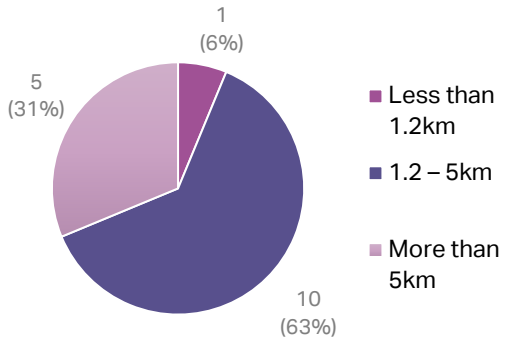
Walk (118 responses)



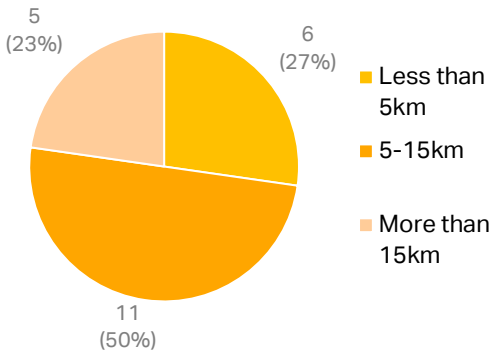
Jog/Run (16 responses)



Cycle (16 responses)

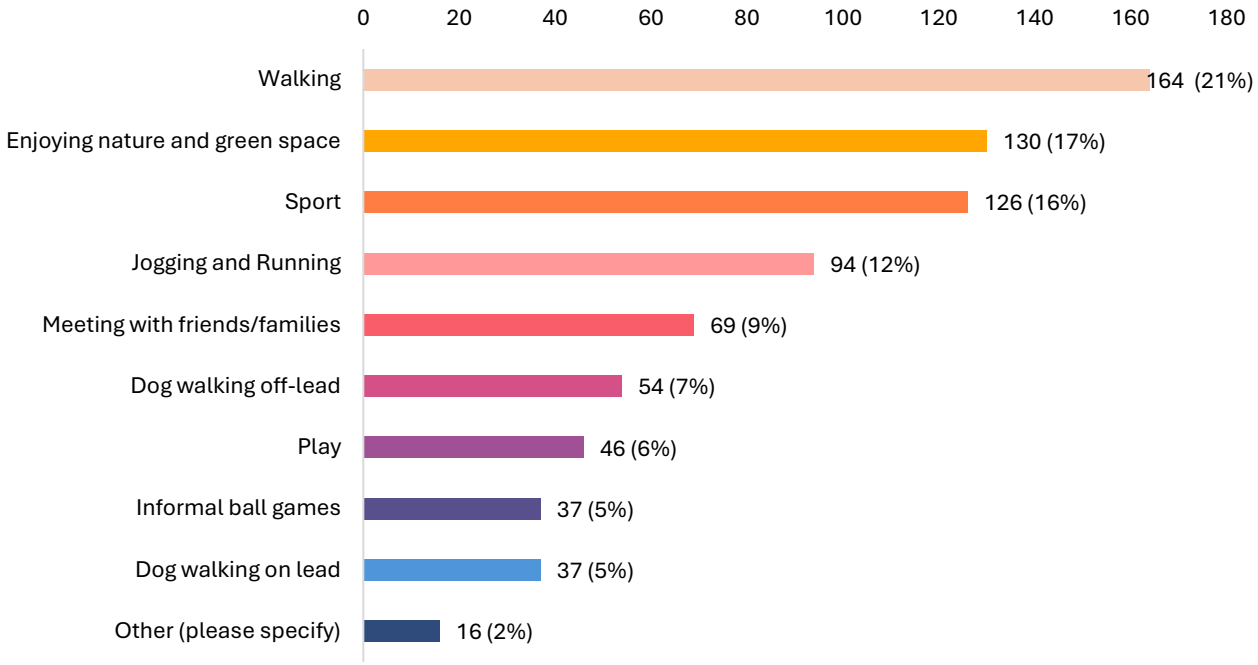


Public Transport (22 responses)



Q5. (a) How do you use Bennettswood Reserve?

A large portion of park visitors (21%) use Bennettswood Reserve for walking. (17%) of users come to enjoy nature and green space, followed closely by those who use the reserve for sport (16%). Out of those who use the reserve for dog-walking, 54 respondents (7%) of users walk dogs off-lead and 37 respondents (5%) of users walk dogs on-lead.

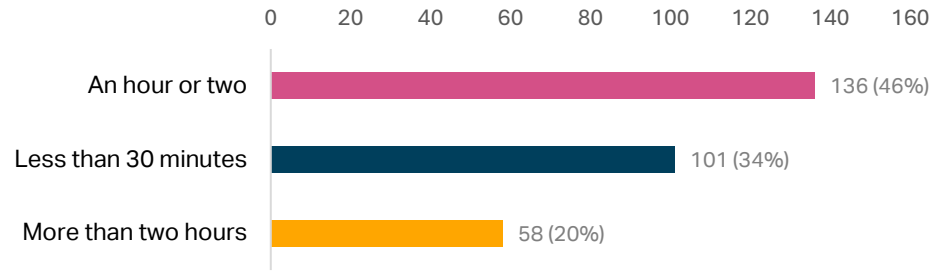


'Other' Responses

No. responses	Comments
3	Meetings at the pavilion
3	Using the space during lunch breaks
4	Cycling
3	Pass through the reserve
2	Soccer
1	University building Evacuation Assembly Area

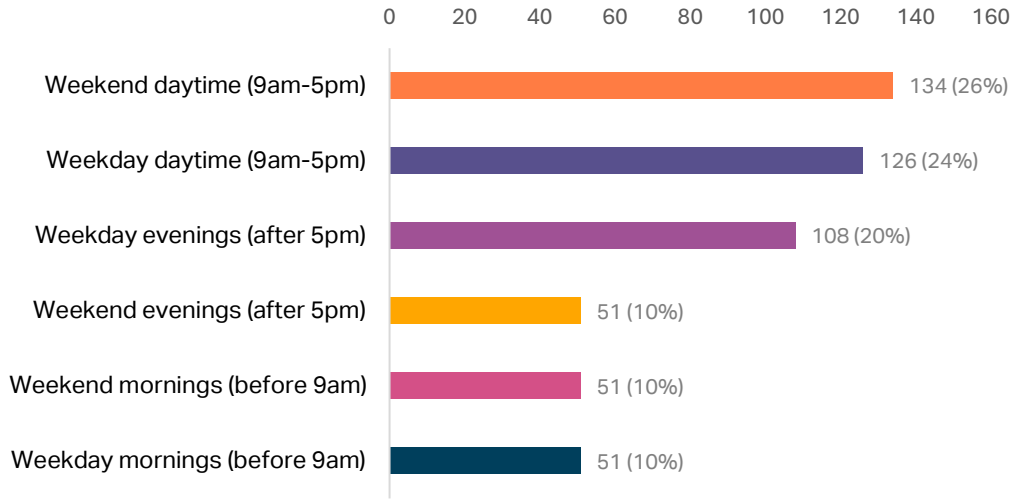
Q6. How long do you typically stay?

Most of the respondents (46%) stay in Bennettswood Reserve for 'an hour or two' during a typical visit, followed by 'less than 30 minutes' (34%).



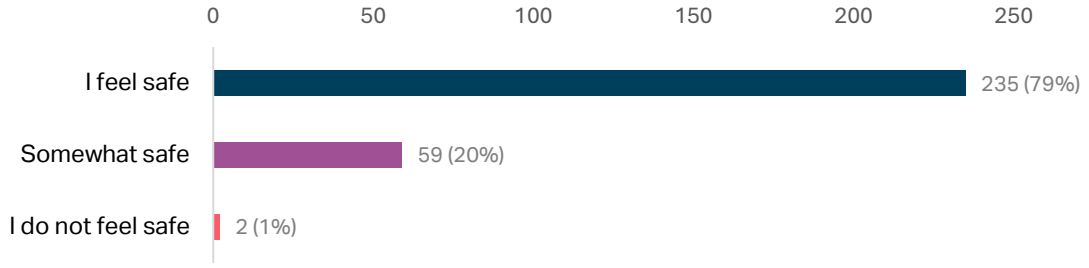
Q7. When do you typically use the reserve?

Weekend daytime (9am-5pm) and weekday daytime (9am-5pm) are the peak periods, closely followed by weekday evenings after 5pm for visitors accessing Bennettswood Reserve.



Q8. (a) Do you feel safe in the reserve?

Most of the respondents (79%) expressed feeling safe in the reserve, and 59 individuals (20%) stated feeling 'somewhat safe,' with a minority (1%) reported feeling unsafe. 40



Q8. (b) Do you have any suggestions to improve the sense of safety in the reserve?

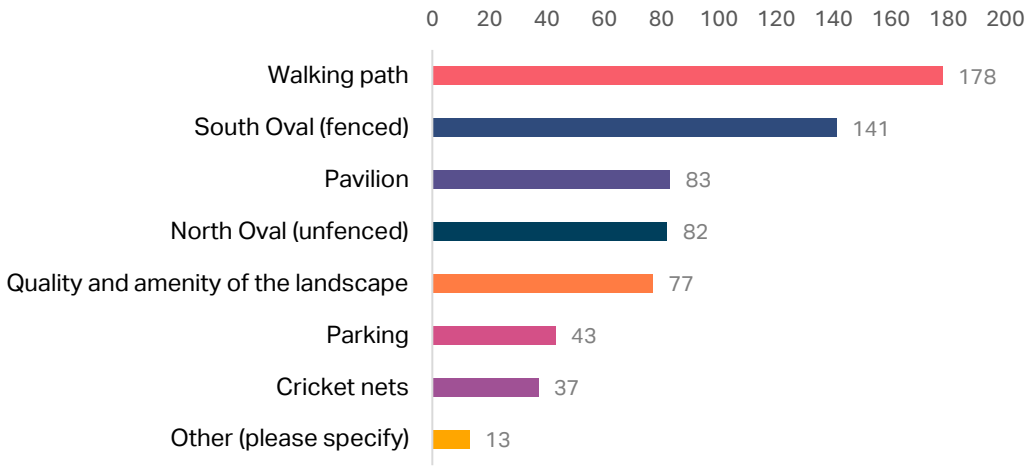
An example of passive surveillance and additional lighting was provided to prompt responses.

No. responses	Comments
38	More lighting
10	Surveillance
1	Separation of cyclists and walkers
2	Separation of off-lead dogs to cyclists and walkers
1	More signage
3	Dog off-lead only in a fenced off area
3	Improve oval surfaces to remove trip hazards
2	Clearer paths
1	Relocate homeless person
3	Development of northern oval to a sport facility
1	Clear shrubs

Q9. Which of the current facilities/features in the reserve do you like the most?

(multiple responses accepted)

The most liked feature of the reserve is the walking path (178 responses), followed by the South Oval (141 responses), and the Pavilion (83 responses).

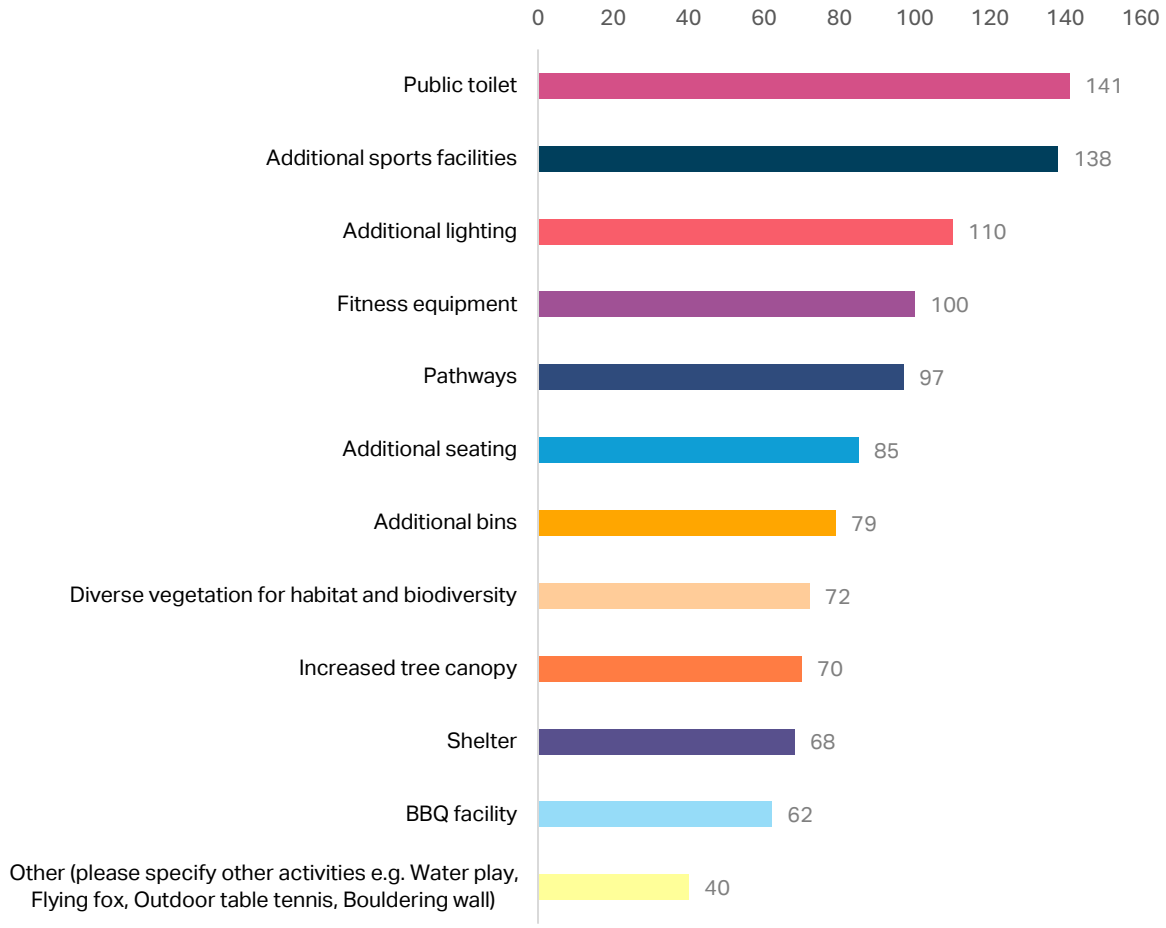


Other comments on features liked in the reserve included:

- Ecological aspects; trees, vegetation, and bird life (4 responses)
- Active sport use (2 responses)
- Amenities; public toilets, drinking tap (2 responses)
- Clean and not hilly (1 response)
- Location (2 responses)
- Dog off-lead walking (1 response)
- Nothing (1 response)

Q10. What improvements would encourage you to visit Bennettswood Reserve more often?

The top five improvements that would encourage more frequent visits to Bennettswood Reserve include a public toilet (141 responses), additional sports facilities (138 responses), additional lighting (110 responses), fitness equipment (100 responses), pathways (97 responses).



'Other' Responses

No. responses	Comments
11	Playground amenities (water play, flying fox)
2	Walking loop
1	Table tennis
15	North oval improvements (soccer field)

No. responses	Comments
3	Multipurpose courts (basketball, netball)
1	Running track
1	Bouldering wall
2	Additional parking
1	Shared use path along Holland Ave
2	Nature reserve
1	Separated dog areas
1	Squash court
1	Natural turf surface not artificial
1	Golf chipping and putting area
2	Outdoor gym
1	Community use space
1	Informal fun activities for students between classes
1	Indoor pool
2	Improved drainage

Q11. Do you have any other comments?

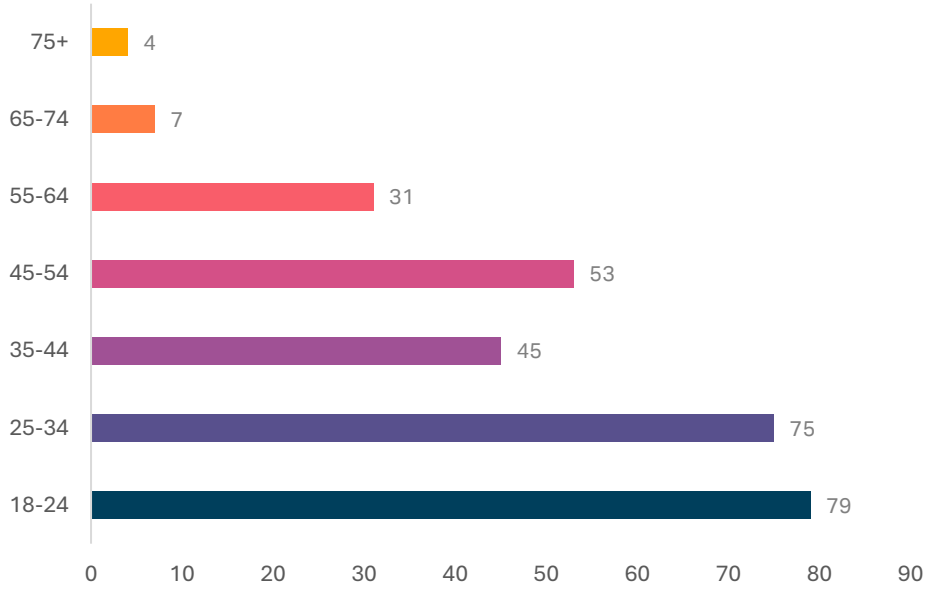
Number of comments	General comment description
12	**Dog off-leash area**
3	• Keeping an off-leash space
6	• Fence dog off-leash area for safety and separation (cyclist, pedestrian separation from dogs)
3	• Dog amenity (dog bags)
61	**Sporting Grounds and Facilities - Support:**
1	• Improved cricket pitch
33	• Northern oval upgrades i.e. leveling, ability to support multiple sports, be more play friendly and winter suitable
5	• Grass field upgraded to able to be use for multiple sports – cricket, rugby league/union and soccer
2	• Oval redeveloped with a surface suitable for all year round use to support activities and functions of soccer, hockey
9	• Introduction of running/ athletics track
3	• Multipurpose basketball/other courts
3	• Upgraded ovals with lighting
1	• Facilities and grounds to support local schools use, especially in winter
2	• Multi-sports area including bouldering wall
1	• South Oval developed for football and cricket
1	• Addition of a Squash centre
1	• Sport facilities to increase physical activity
2	**Sporting Grounds and Facilities - Objection:**
2	• Refrain from additional lighting to minimise disruption of nocturnal animals
11	**Play and fitness space – Support:**
1	• Scattered children's play opportunities
1	• Inclusive play area
1	• Children's play to encourage curiosity
1	• Public fitness equipment

Number of comments	General comment description
4	• Increased community activity / facilities
1	• Community music capabilities inside shelters or pavilions to cater for multicultural communities
2	• Playground
3	**Shelter – Support:**
2	• Shade and shelter additions
1	• Shelters integrating Solar PV
8	**Retain in current natural state / leave as is**
7	• Leave as is
1	• Retain open space
3	**Current state – Objection:**
2	• Upkeep, maintenance and rubbish removal improvement
1	• Space is not currently inviting
3	**Path enhancement – Support:**
2	• Additional paths and connections upgrades (to and from carpark, Deakin University, Gardiners Creek Trail)
1	• Maintain mountain bike trails
1	• Pathed path near creek
14	**Access, Amenity and Equity:**
4	• Toilet access
1	• Toilet access already suitable
5	• Changerooms and public toilets increased
2	• Bin additions
1	• BBQ additions closer to high use area
1	• Equity of access to grounds and facilities for all
3	**Car parking and Café – Suggestion:**
1	• Carparking improved
2	• Introduction of cafe
2	**Enhancement and improvement of Signage and Wayfinding**
11	**Increased biodiversity, planting, wildlife consideration:**
1	• Limit building development, celebrate nature
1	• Tawny frogmouth habitat consideration
9	• Increased vegetation and minimised loss of existing vegetation, increased biodiversity
1	**Traditional Owner recognition and acknowledgement**
1	**Concern for decisions already being made by council regardless of community consultation**

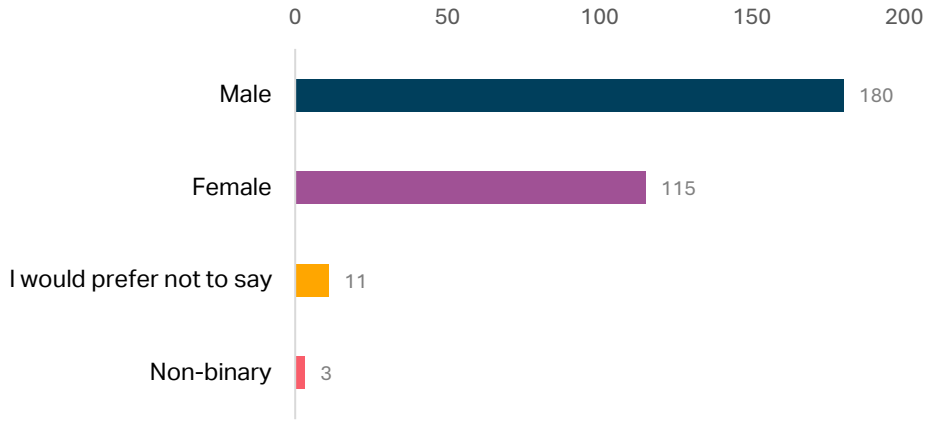
Respondent Profile

58% of respondents were Male; 37% Female; 1% Non-Binary. A majority of respondents were aged 18-24 (27%), followed closely by (25-34) (26%).

Age

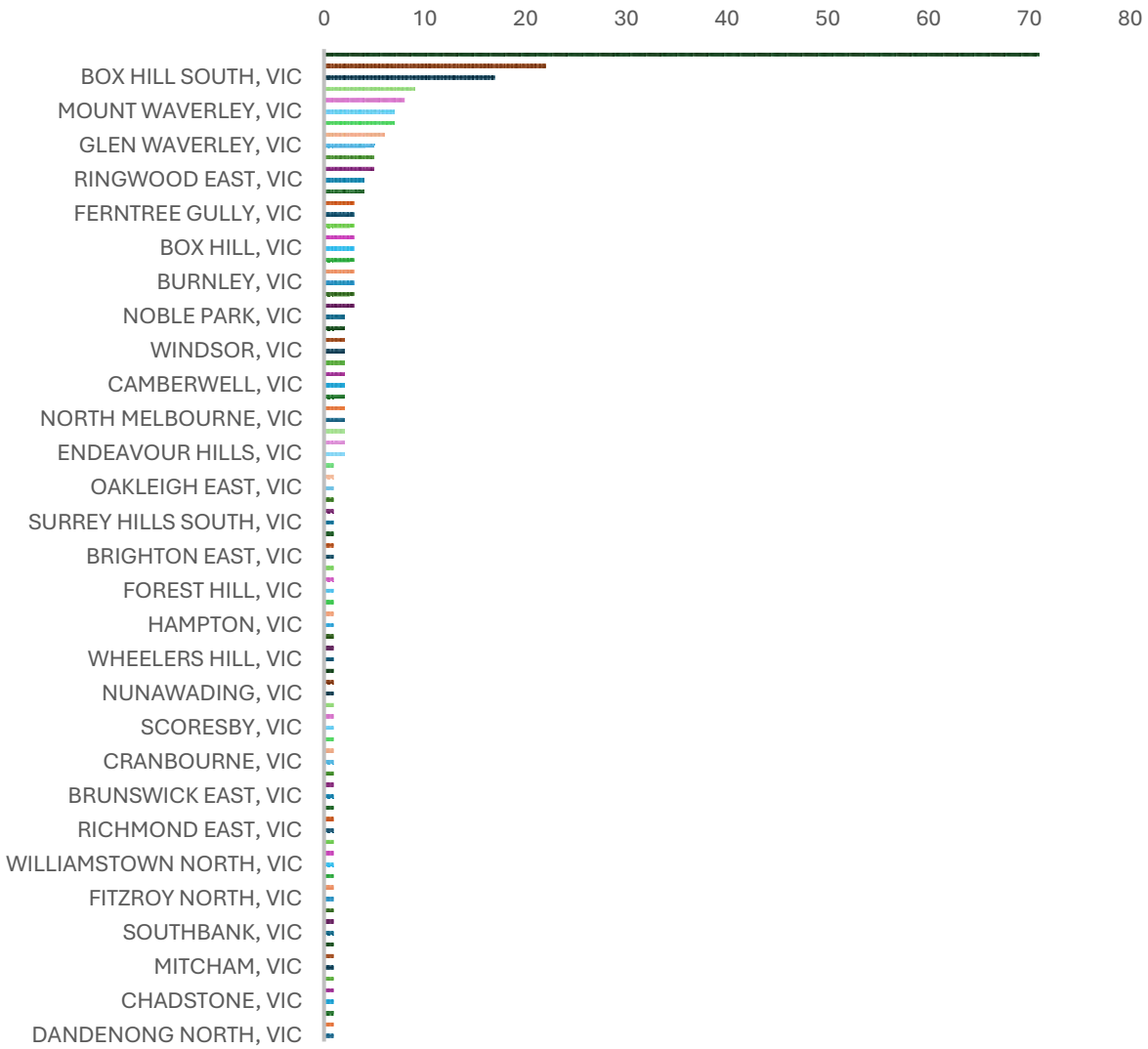


Gender

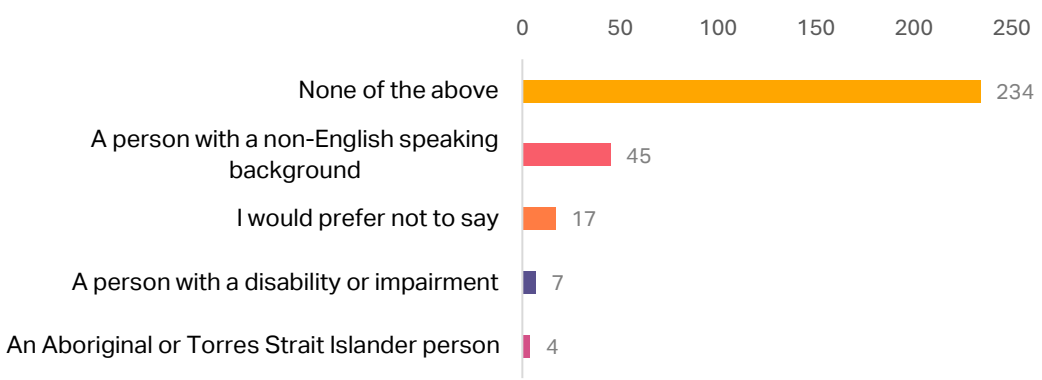


Place of Residence

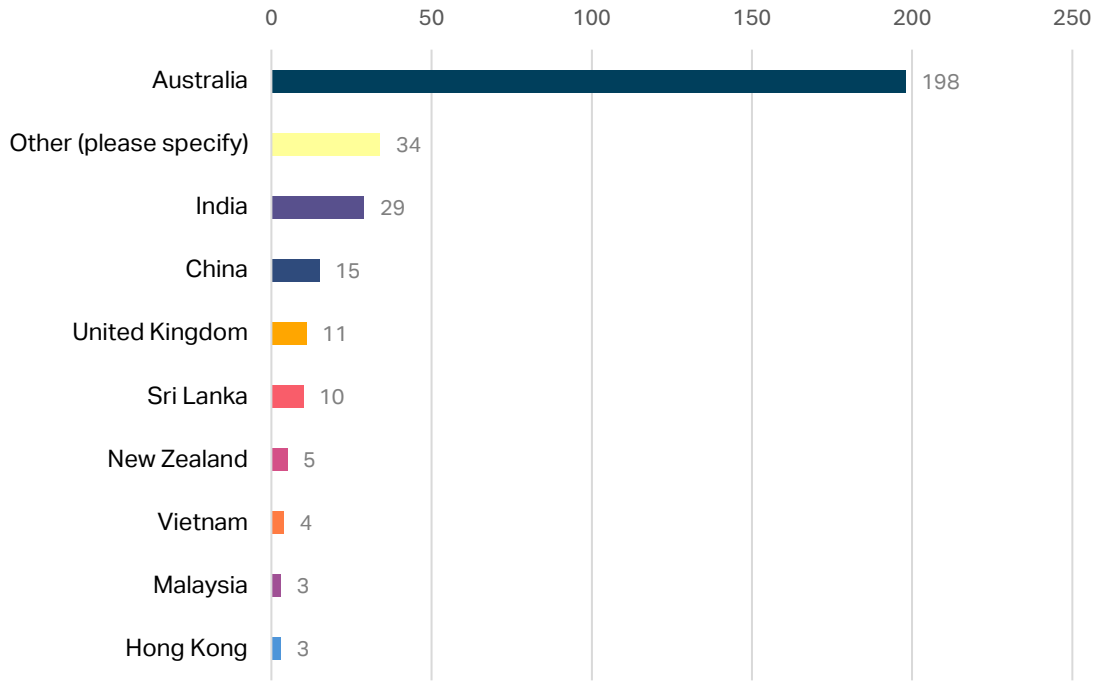
The reserve accommodates a wide catchment with 87 suburbs reported. A majority of respondents live in Burwood (71), followed by Burwood East (22), Box Hill (17), Surrey Hills (9), Vermont South (8), Ashwood (7), Mount Waverly (7), Glen Iris (6). All other suburbs reported had a total of 5 or less respondents.



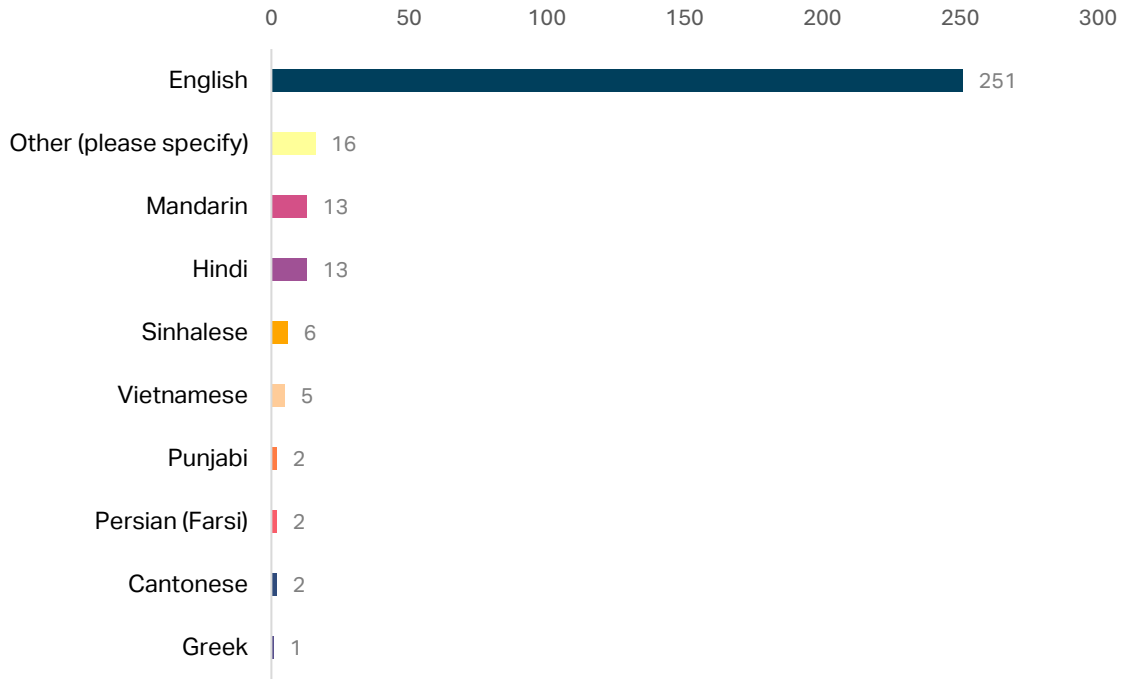
What describes you?



Where were you born?



What is the main language you speak at home?



3.2 Community pop-up sessions

To supplement the online community survey, a Community Pop-Up session was held in Bennettswood Reserve Pavilion. The aim of the session was to provide information on the Master Plan process, discuss opportunities to improve the reserve, and to encourage residents to complete the Online Community Survey via Your Say.

3.3 User group submissions

In addition to completing the online community survey, residents/ groups could also make a written submission to Council. Two user groups submitted to Council.

Stakeholder Group	Notes
Deakin Cricket Club	Background Club was formed in 1975 and has been based at Bennettswood Reserve since 1997. Membership has increased with the upgraded facilities, seeing the introduction of a women's team in 2024. Facility Use The club plays and trains at Bennettswood Reserve. Issues/Opportunities from Club • A second oval would reduce away games, improve player retention, and help to accommodate women's and children's cricket. • Safety risk from current overgrown grass • Cricket nets and run-up surface are inadequate for expected population surge. Modern, safe cricket nets required to protect players and public. • Require more room and changing facilities for female players.
KooyongKoot Alliance	Background A group of over twenty Friends Groups working in the Gardiners Creek catchment. Issues/Opportunities from Group • Align with shared vision and regional collaboration structure for Gardiners Creek corridor/catchment. • Concern over tree and vegetation retention with oval and path development. • Reserve as part of a natural habitat and native corridor for wildlife and birds. • Understanding management between ownership and future plans.

4 Stakeholder engagement

The 2nd round of engagement comprised of a series of meetings with key stakeholders. A set presentation was established for the site to cover:

- Project background
- Engagement process
- Master plan scope
- Stakeholder feedback: an open discussion to understand relationship with the site, issues and opportunities, and future aspirations
- Next steps

Table 3 shows the type of engagement and participants.

Table 3 Schedule of Stakeholder Engagement

Engagement Type	Participants
Peak Sport Bodies	• Football Victoria • Cricket Victoria • Australian Football League • Box Hill Reporter District Cricket Association (league)
Traditional Owner Engagement and Co-design	• Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation
Sports Clubs	• Deakin Cricket Club (Main tenant)* • Box Hill Cricket Club (Use on weekends only)* • Surrey Park Junior Football Club (Co-main tenant) • Wattle Park Amateur Football Club (Co-main tenant)
General Stakeholder	• Presbyterian Ladies College* • Gardiners Creek Parkrun • KooyongKoot Alliance • Friends of Gardiners Creek
Landowner / Authority	• Deakin University • Whitehorse City Council Major Transport Projects • Whitehorse City Council Disability and Reconciliation • Department of Energy, Environment, and Climate Action (DEECA) • Melbourne Water

*Invitations to participate in an engagement session was extended to all groups listed in Table 3. Asterix indicates that engagement has not occurred with the stakeholder group.

4.1 Peak sport bodies

The purpose of the sessions with peak sport bodies was to understand the requirements for each sport, future aspirations, and identify any competing interests. The sessions covered three sites that WCC are preparing master plans for: Bennettswood Reserve, Strathdon Davy Community Precinct, and Wurundjeri Walk.

A total of four sessions were held, one for each stakeholder group. Findings from these sessions are provided in Table 4.

Table 4 Peak Sport Body Feedback

Stakeholder Group	Notes
Football Victoria 22nd August 2024 Attendees: Leandro Mercaldi	Sport Overview • Over previous 10 years participation in football has doubled. • Growth experienced across all age groups with pressure on clubs to expand. • Currently undertaking an audit of grounds to generate data for Football Australia (Ballyshannassy, RHS Sparks, Mahoneys and Wembley Park). Issues • Concerns for female participation: quality of changerooms, inadequate lighting and parking especially for night training. • Poor drainage impacts play. • Cricket pitch to be provided outside of football pitches. Opportunities • Encourage synthetic or hybrid surface to prevent weather impacting play and increase lifespan of pitches. • Inclusion of smaller and potential indoor pitches to provide for different age and ability groups. • Provision of multipurpose courts that can be used for futsal/other sports. • Grants for sport facilities available through Football Victoria. Future Aspirations • Safeguarding and child safety need to be a priority. • Provision of 2 changerooms per field, minimum age group requiring a changeroom is U14s. • Football Victoria encourages Councils to have at least two synthetic/hybrid pitches within their municipality to accommodate participation rates. • Master Plans need to help contribute to retention within sport. Strategic Objectives • Goal to reach equity in female participation. • Achieve 50:50 gender participation by 2027. • Each LGA to have 2 synthetic or hybrid pitches.
Cricket Victoria 30th August 2024 Attendees: Clinton Kennon (*Customer experience*), Sharon Lynas (*Cricket*	Sport Overview • Some suburbs in Whitehorse have participation over state average of 4.9%; Box Hill – 6.9%, Nunawading 5.8%. • Municipality participation is projected to grow to 5.7% over the next 5-7 years. • Fair Access Roadmap will have an impact of facilities and requirements.

Stakeholder Group	Notes
Manager for NO's Metro), Callum Dean	<u>Issues</u> • Whitehorse facilities are at capacity across all age groups. • Not enough sporting facilities currently available (toilets, changerooms), particularly for grounds where 3rds, 4ths and juniors play. • Local clubs are forced to play far from their club bases (Laburnum, Vermont and Vermont South). • Deakin to introduce first women's team, which will have to compete with men's team for facilities. • Pitch direction is important as sun impacts play. • Playgrounds and active spaces need the correct buffer zones/nets for protection. <u>Opportunities</u> • Partnership with council to support funding facilities, looking to fund projects that align with objectives. Cricket Victoria offers infrastructure grants for minor – pitches and nets and major – ground and pavilion upgrades. • Work with dog owners to understand when use of areas is prioritised for sport and when appropriate for dog walking. Mont Albert Cricket Club as a precedent where club has built a positive relationship with the community. <u>Future Aspirations</u> • Open to smaller sizes, junior participation is needed. <u>Strategic Objectives</u> • Grow women's game and juniors 5-12 age groups. • Design factors to allow participation across junior and female, facilities fall short at secondary grounds – change rooms, parking, and lighting.
AFL Victoria 11th September 2024 Attendees: Shane Joules, Beau Tran	<u>Sport Overview</u> • Bennettswood Reserve is used by Wattle Park Amateur Football Club who have grown by 30% since COVID. • Aspirational approach to have 1 million members by 2033. • Breaking New Ground initiative available to partner with AFL to support the provision of football amenities. • Looking at targeting schools to provide afterhours use to take pressure of ovals over weekends. • High demand in area for AFL. Bennettswood Reserve is used by Wattle Park FC, with approximately 157 registered players. • Introduction of girls has strengthened numbers at Vermont, Mitcham and East Burwood clubs. <u>Issues</u> • Whitehorse clubs are held back due to capacity of sites. • Pavilion location would ideally be central to two ovals and provide undercover viewing. Emergency service access to all facilities is vital. <u>Opportunities</u> • Upgraded northern oval would help accommodate club growth.

Stakeholder Group	Notes
	• Engagement with Deakin University to ensure facilities are fit for purpose and welcoming for all wanting to participate and can be utilised for teaching. • Storage facilities for Auskick's unfixed equipment. • For Bennettswood, the formalisation of the second oval is crucial to support numbers of participation in the area and provide an open space area for people that live on campus. • Access points, paths, ability to circulate to each oval would support grassroots developments. Shelters, benches and gathering points to share experience. <u>Future Aspirations</u> • Programs targeting younger audiences such as Auskick and juniors (5-17 years). • Facilities that attract and retain users to hit the AFL 2033 target. • For a multipurpose flexible perspective, changeroom and storeroom spaces are crucial. • Gain AFL access to ovals for 15-20 hours per week to achieve the base target to supply their plan's participation. <u>Strategic Objectives</u> • AFL facilities are fit for purpose and welcoming for anyone to participate. Sites need to feel safe, be well lit, and accessible.
Box Hill Reporter District Cricket Association (BHRDCA) 12th September 2024 Attendees: Steve Flemming (*Admin Manager*), Peter Rosenthal (*President*), Lachlan Harty (*District Manager BHRDCA*)	<u>Sport Overview</u> • BHRDCA has 28 participating clubs, 16 are based in Whitehorse. • All clubs have similar guiding principles in growing their game and making their club viable. • Clubs are spread across all age groups; female participation has plateaued with introductions predominately at young ages. • Increase expected in under 7s and 9s, that use non-competitive fields (up to 4 teams playing on one oval at a time). • Critical need to have overflow grounds in the municipality. <u>Issues</u> • Grounds at capacity on Friday night and Saturday afternoon. • Mirrabooka main oval does not comply with size requirements for senior participation. • Grounds need to provide for women's participation, new policies prioritising clubs with participation across all groups. • Landlocked sites, need to provide infrastructure for increased residential growth. • Dog users will continue to use ovals even if separate facilities are provided. • Cricket nets are not up to standard. • Lack of lighting limit's ability to introduce T20 as a midweek twilight tournament. <u>Opportunities</u> • Fair Access Policy will bring pavilion upgrades for all use groups to address participation hindrance. • Electronic scoreboards - future proof for amenities without impacting any other infrastructure.

Stakeholder Group	Notes
	• Provide spaces to accommodate growth outside just infrastructure. Future Aspirations • Sports facilities to all have flexibility for use by other codes and school groups.

4.2 Traditional Owner and codesign opportunities

The purpose of engagement with Traditional Owners was to identify themes and design opportunities that can be integrated into the Master Plans for deeper cultural engagement and relevance.

One session was held with feedback provided in Table 5.

Table 5 Traditional Owner and Codesign Opportunities Feedback

Stakeholder Group	Notes
Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation (WWWCHAC) 17th October 2024 Attendees: Aunty Gail, Aunty Julianne, Anthony Huber Maureen D'Arcy (*WCC Disability and Reconciliation*)	All Reserves • Opportunity to engage with a local Wurundjeri artist to provide sculptural elements. Example: Lewis Wandin. Bennettswood Reserve • Incorporate signage to identify site specific cultural heritage. • Understand if there are specific cultural connections to KooyongKoot through the Whitehorse municipality.

4.3 Existing sports clubs

The purpose of engagement with sports clubs was to understand how existing sports groups and clubs are using the sites, key challenges that they face, and opportunities or future aspirations that they have for the site.

One session was held with participation from two sports clubs, feedback is provided in Table 6.

Table 6 Sports Club Feedback

Stakeholder Group	Notes
Surrey Park Football Club 21st August 2024 Luke Henderson (*Secretary and coach of under 12s*)	Membership • 300 juniors, 200 seniors in the football club. • Women's teams are growing. Facility Use • Secondary training ground and games venue. • Use facilities heavily during pre-season, use Surrey Park during season. Issues

Stakeholder Group	Notes
	• Poor changeroom facilities for females limit use of site for female programs that the club is looking to grow. • Maintenance of surrounds is infrequent. • Areas of unsafe surface on south oval with potholes limit use of space. • Dog use causing the need to clean up before club can use sporting fields. • Game scheduling and oval availability is limited with the use of one oval. Need Bennettswood Reserve to help with scheduling. <u>Opportunities</u> • Ability to invest in sport between Deakin and Presbyterian Ladies' College to provide a high-quality open space. • Basketball and netball upgrades that are public would be welcomed as there are limited facilities in the area. • People watching or performing are there for 2-hour blocks, possible functional canteen. • Oval or surrounding space would be used by locals if facilities were able to support passive recreation activities. <u>Future Aspirations</u> • Increased facilities for females equating to higher participation, as women's AFL appears to be an emerging sport. <u>Other Comments</u> • Carparking currently works but with formalisation of second oval it may need to be increased. • Excellent greenspace with natural connection to Gardiners Creek. • Club invested in indigenous jumpers in 2023 to understand connection to First Nations culture, with graphics to represent Gardiner's Creek as its central point surrounded by schools that service the club. • Netball club utilise facilities at Surrey Park, have not been approached to partner. • Wattle Park Basketball Club (55 teams) have no home base.
Box Hill Cricket Club 21st August 2024 James Box	<u>Facility Use</u> • Club have used facilities previously but not recently (past 5-10 years) • Located at Springvale Park, potential to relocate to grounds in future with anticipated development of home ground. <u>Issues</u> • Accessibility and standard of cricket nets is not at a high standard for use. • Surrounding area is not in good condition and unmaintained, north oval is a paddock. • When south oval is in use, the park is unavailable for use with the north oval being occupied by dogs. <u>Opportunities</u> • Players from Deakin would benefit from new cricket nets. • Provide spaces for training, running, kicking a football.

4.4 Existing community groups

The purpose of this engagement was to understand how community groups are using the sites, key challenges that they face, and opportunities or future aspirations that they have for the site.

One session was held with participation from three community groups, feedback is provided in Table 7.

Table 7 Existing Community Group Feedback

Stakeholder Group	Notes
Friends of Gardiners Creek 26th August 2024 Graham Scott	Issues • Area south of the oval is lacking trees, there is a need to establish connected biodiversity areas to encourage a diverse range of species. • Site is currently dominated by Common Myna birds. • Additional lighting is a key concern for fauna. • Implications of foot traffic from the future Suburban Rail Loop travelling north on the environment. Opportunities • Improve habitat for migratory birds that are currently using the site and encourage a wider diversity of local species. • Provide sport amenities and passive recreation opportunities to support the creation of a community. • More infill planting to improve bushy character. Future Aspirations • Concern for lighting impacts on fauna, no lighting to be along the creek. • There is a need for sport amenities as the community is largely derived from sport, but also a need for passive recreation. • Group currently infilling and making space more a more natural bush environment. Other Comments
KooyongKoot Alliance 26th August 2024 Graham Ross	Membership • Comprised of 22 friends' groups that work on strategic plan for the whole of the creek Issues • Conflict between pedestrians and cyclists. Cyclists require concrete paths, having a bigger impact on biodiversity - greater carbon impact, loss of narrow riparian areas. • Need to minimise storm water runoff into the creek by 30% to reach its natural flow. • Gradual loss of public open space from over access to areas. • Artificial turf would have a big impact on environment and biodiversity. • Dogs don't mix with biodiversity or cyclists. Opportunities • Look at Gardiners Creek as a whole biodiversity corridor (from Yarra River up to Blackburn Lake). • Finding the balance between providing sporting facilities and ecosystem. • Maintain some areas with reduced use/slightly harder to get to (less paths and lighting) to provide greener reprieve with the outcome of a light touch approach and allow for forest bathing.

Stakeholder Group	Notes
	• Space for launch events. • Need for fenced dog off-leash area to present disruptions to biodiversity and cyclists. • Education/wayfinding with information about planting and animals (native Rakali, Blue-tongued Lizard). • Infill planting with more canopy, understorey, and grasses. • Provide First Nations links to nature. • Move off-leash dogs to one part of the reserve and the rest is on-leash. <u>Future Aspirations</u> • Zero increase of flow into the creek, with all water reused and stormwater management techniques implemented. <u>Other Comments</u> • Currently revegetating the site next to Kilsyth Avenue by filling in between trees around a small wetland. • Have 17,000 plants over next 2 years with a grant from state government and support from local community groups.
Gardiners Creek Park Run 26th August 2024 Carissa (Event Director)	<u>Membership</u> • Up to 500 people at weekly park run event (greater use in summer). <u>Facility Use</u> • Using once per week for roughly an hour, take up whole path during that hour. • Park Run course loops around the creek, with start and end point in open space near the BBQ and multi-storey car park. <u>Issues</u> • Running course is unable to use the reserve as the surface is unsafe. • Suitable surfaces for all are not currently present (vision impaired users, parents with prams and small children). • Safety issues with dog and runner collisions. <u>Opportunities</u> • Provide lighting to BBQ shelter to facilitate activities for events/socialising, currently use torches. • Manage programming with other users of the park including dogs off-leash, need room for all users.

4.5 Landowners and Authorities

The purpose of engagement with landowners and authorities was to understand how the sites are being used, key challenges that they face, and opportunities or future aspirations that they have for the site.

Stakeholder Group	Notes
Deakin University 23rd August 2024 Andrew Crowley (*Senior Manager of Sport and Recreation*), Yvonne Yip *(Director of Planning and Property*),	<u>Facility Use</u> • Student use of site is currently low. • Thousands of students live on campus with potential to use facilities. <u>Issues</u> • Deakin is the no.1 sports science school in the world, but the sports facilities don't match this. • Safety of surface and lighting.

Stakeholder Group	Notes
Sung Wei Tan (*PM in Design & Construction*)	• Perceived safety, 50-60% of university community is female under 22 years. • How to get enough funding to deliver. • Students would use the space if it was flat, would enhance student experience. <u>Opportunities</u> • Potential to imbed imagery from TO into multipurpose court as it won't be used for elite sport. • Improve accessibility for everyone, in terms of gutters, gates and paths alongside the level of opportunities for free play with no formal programming. • Levelling out of surface would allow for a wider breadth of users. • Provision of sports and activities other than cricket and football in the reserve, possibility to design for informal activities such as open kicking, frisbee, futsal and rollerblading. • Forming partnerships with sporting clubs and others to collectively use land. • After hours use and incorporation of lighting that turns off at set times (e.g. 9pm to reduce light spill into neighbouring properties). • Become a key transition link to future SRL station/precinct. <u>Future Aspirations</u> • Create a central vibrant and active space that leads into the field for use by the university. • Sport fields being able to cater for multiple sports and surfaces being able to withstand the use – non-traditional sports like ultimate frisbee and touch. Teams can use the space to prepare for Uni Nationals. • Provide facilities to support education programs and provide a connection between education, research, community, and wellbeing. • Great universities build lifelong memories and stories this can be pursued through sport and physical activity. • Protection of environmental systems, and balance with open space. <u>Strategic Objectives</u> • University Charter focuses on community engagement and education – partnerships with Netball Victoria and Geelong Football Club. • Upgrades to Reserve can help university to meet several strategic directions. • Opportunities for future partnerships if facilities are available programs can establish at Deakin. • Increase connections to the community through exercise sport programs and opportunities for student placements. <u>Other Comments</u> • Majority of users don't require elite level facilities, although there are programs with elite athletes needing facilities. • The Waurn Ponds Deakin sporting facilities are an elite sport precinct that is accessible, an aspirational model. • Deakin have undertaken provisional heritage testing, a CHMP or cultural heritage permit are not required for the site.

Stakeholder Group	Notes
WCC Major Transport Projects 13th September 2024 Attendees: Leigh Morris, Leah McGuiness	Issues • Significant future influx in use from the population SRL will bring to the area, need for active and passive recreation facilities. • Impact of infrastructure and lighting on wildlife vs safety. Creek paths in Monash/Boorondara to the south are lit. • SRL pedestrian bridge will encroach into south of Bennettswood Reserve. Need to consider pedestrian safety from sport activities. • Need to resolve cycling access and route through the reserve: on the east or west of the creek. • SRL scope will provide a small amount of local open space around the station. Opportunities • Naturalisation of the creek through SRL Precinct Structure planning works. • Provide legible and safe active transport routes. • Incorporate water harvesting from the wider precinct, to create a water sensitive site using recycled water (harvesting from SRL to irrigate ovals). Other Comments • Limited opportunities to create new recreational spaces within the two Whitehorse SRL precincts (Box Hill and Burwood). An option to advocate to offset to other facilities.
DEECA 6th September 2024 Fran Horsley (*Open Space Planner*)	Issues • Safety, universality, accessibility, inclusiveness. • Poor connectivity between Gardiners Creek and open space, lack of views between and inviting aspects. • Lack of passive surveillance. • Context will significantly change with future SRL station. • Understand objective: boldly recreate the site and maximise use or improve qualities that are there. • Need to rationalise scope and trade-offs e.g. providing sports facilities vs. accessible paths through natural environment. • Inability to host events due to lack of infrastructure. Opportunities • Increase infrastructure for communities other than sports groups. • Create a fully inclusive site, use wider arm rests to facilitate use by elderly and mothers. Consideration of feeding parents, mobile charging station, swinging chair. • Create biodiversity corridors / a logical link to surrounding sites such as Wattle Park and local shops. • Improve biodiversity through lower maintenance practices such as Woody Meadows planting - passively irrigated, robust plants, coppice every 3 years. • Incorporate insights into multicultural perspectives to ensure local communities feel respected. • Provide economic benefits and ability to have licensed operators to support clubs on weekends.

Stakeholder Group	Notes
	• Invest in high quality toilets and facilities able to be used for events. • Provide spaces that support education and facilitate outdoor classes and recreation. • Focus on climate change mitigation, particularly integrated water management. <u>Other Comments</u> • Ensure input has been sought from all user groups: disability, multicultural, age, gender. • Consider XYX Lab principles around safety and user perceptions, and Open Space for Everyone Strategy.
WCC Disability and Reconciliation 30th August 2024 Attendees: Maureen D'Arcy	<u>Issues</u> • Need to protect Gardiners Creek corridor due to existing relationship with Wurundjeri. • Need for pathways to be accessible, flat/hard surfaces to achieve DDA compliance along Gardiners Creek (2.5m to facilitate circulation). <u>Opportunities</u> • Gardiners Creek to provide a pathway to the Yarra. • Passive amenities to be provided at a distance from shared use path. • Connection between elements is important. • Consider how grounds can be used by people with a disability, e.g. blind cricket.
Melbourne Water 18th October 2024 Attendees: Rebecca Penrose (Waterways and Land Officer, Lower Birrarung Team), Dan Green (Senior Asset Planner)	<u>Opportunities</u> • Consider Healthy Water Ways Strategy, opportunities to secure funding through Melbourne Water initiatives. • Water harvesting opportunities, including infiltration and irrigation to stop flow into waterways and key risks of flooding/climate change. • Collaborate with Melbourne Water to integrate strategies into oval development and sitewide initiatives. • Pathway planning, consider peoples connection to waterways and placement of paths. Set back of DDA paths/hard surfaces from waterway.