



**PUBLIC
OPEN
SPACE
PLAN**
2016-2031



Banyule
CITY COUNCIL

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MAYOR'S MESSAGE



Banyule boasts some of the best public open space in metropolitan Melbourne with its fair share of sprawling parks and sports fields, river-lined reserves, shared trails, beautiful bushland and neighbourhood playgrounds.

We continually hear from residents how much they appreciate our open spaces and the pleasure they get from being able to play and exercise close to home. We also know how beneficial these outdoor sanctuaries are for community health and wellbeing, and how they preserve our precious flora and fauna.

To help ensure these treasured assets continue to be maintained in great shape and developed to meet the needs of our community we need a long-term strategic plan. The Public Open Space Plan has incorporated significant research and consultation, and captures the needs and aspirations of our community. It also considers the many challenges of our changing landscape, where population growth, climate change, and increasing urban density will have an impact on open space.

As our seasons change and our city keeps growing, this Public Open Space Plan will provide a framework to guide Council to make decisions that continue to sustain and enhance our valuable open spaces. The plan is built on six strategic pillars of Quality, Quantity, Access, Equitable Distribution, Diversity, and Sustainability which align with the framework used by an overarching strategy for the whole of metropolitan Melbourne being developed by the Melbourne Planning Authority.

The actions in this plan nurture what we have and lay the solid groundwork to ensure our open spaces will provide community benefits now and well into the future.

Mayor of Banyule

Cr Craig Langdon



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Banyule is fortunate in having some of the best public open space in metropolitan Melbourne and an extensive network of play spaces, contributing to a liveable community, with a local lifestyle, identity and environmental character appreciated by residents and Council. The challenge for Council is to maintain this level of provision in the context of rapidly increasing population density, increasing land values and tightening financial resources.

Having access to high quality public open space can be as important as provision itself. This is a fundamental pillar of the strategy, which considers access from a number of perspectives, including the distance residents need to travel, the barriers they may need to overcome to get to public open space and whether paths of travel to parks and playgrounds, as well as those within them, are “access friendly.”

The reviewing and updating of Council’s public open space strategy has been undertaken in context and the State Government’s strategy of continuing to encourage better quality and improved access to public open space in the long term.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE

The overall guiding principle of the strategy is “community health and wellbeing.” Research throughout the world recognises the significant health benefits regular exposure to natural phenomena such as trees, plants and grass brings to humans. Visiting public open space is often the only regular opportunity many city dwellers have to experience such natural phenomena. In addition public open space provides opportunities for passive and active recreation.

Banyule’s strategy also recognises the importance play, natural environment and landscapes has in the health and wellbeing of the community generally, as well as in the physical, social and psychological development.

VISION

A green City that provides high quality, sustainable, accessible and well maintained public open space within 5 minutes walk of residents.

OBJECTIVES (PILLARS)

The Guiding Principle and Vision are supported by six objectives. These objectives replicate the six pillars that form the basis for the draft Melbourne Metropolitan Public Open Space Strategy currently being finalised by the Metropolitan Planning Authority.

- Quantity (*Is there enough?*)
- Quality (*How good is it?*)
- Access & Connectivity (*Can I get there to use it?*)
- Equitable distribution (*It is available throughout Banyule?*)
- Diversity (*Will it provide different experiences?*)
- Sustainably (*Will it affect the environment & will it last?*)

POLICY CONTEXT

In preparing this strategy, due consideration was given to strategic directions championed by the Banyule City Plan, Council's existing Public Open Space Strategy, the Banyule Recreation Plan and Banyule's draft Playspace Strategy, as well as the State Government's "Plan Melbourne Refresh 2016" document and the Metropolitan Planning Authority's draft Public Open Space Strategy.

OPEN SPACE EXPERIENCES

The revised open space plan has broadly defined "public open space" to not only include "green" parks that provide passive and active environments and experiences, but also urban "hard spaces," which can play an important complementary role to the more traditional "green" public spaces. It also provides a hierarchy for public open spaces and playgrounds. The hierarchy covers those spaces that serve a "regional" function down to those that are termed "pocket" parks and/or playgrounds, which are very small in size and serve a small very localised part of the community.

The broad types of experiences, that public open space should offer users are considered, including formal sport, informal and passive recreation, as well as more nature based environmental recreational experiences.

PLAY EXPERIENCE

For children play is a fundamental experience that significantly contributes to a child's development in terms of experience, intelligence, competence, values and creativity. Fundamental to all of this is the idea that play is fun. It is also recognised that play is beneficial to people of all ages.

DELIVERING THE STRATEGY

The strategy sets out a series of "high level" strategic directions and actions, including a high level precinct analysis, around the six objectives. It is designed to provide broad strategic direction for Council in its approach to open space planning and development going forward. Whilst the intent of the accompanying technical report is to provide "in-house" support to key working documents such as Council's asset management plans and long term capital program. It includes an open space and playground assessment of each precinct, as well as recommendations about specific open space assets.

PREPARING THIS PLAN

In preparing the strategy, an extensive consultation process was conducted. This included a public online survey, as well as surveys conducted at both the Banyule and Malahang festivals, several public workshops including two youth specific workshops, and meetings with all of Council's population specific reference groups. A community reference group and an internal reference group were also established and utilised for their input during the project.

INTRODUCTION

Banyule City Council first adopted a Public Open Space Strategy in 1997. This document was used to help guide and direct Council's planning and development of public open space until a new public open space strategy was adopted in 2007.

However since 2007, given Melbourne's continued rapid population growth, the State Government has continued with and further strengthened its policies of increasing urban density in established suburban areas. In addition to this Banyule has a number of areas which are particularly targeted for high density development. These include the Greensborough Principal Activity Centre and the major activity centres of Heidelberg and Ivanhoe. In addition, the Latrobe National Employment Cluster, which includes parts of Banyule has also been earmarked for "special attention" when it comes to growth and development.

These proposed developments and the accompanying projected population growth will place additional pressures on Banyule's public open space and associated facilities including playspaces. It will particularly raise the importance of public open space to community health and wellbeing in the higher density residential areas that by their very nature will have significantly diminished amounts of private open space.

Given all of this, Council has therefore now decided it is time to undertake a complete major review and update of its current public open space strategy incorporating play spaces in order to meet these growing demands and pressures for the next 15 years.

This strategy provides a framework for the planning of public open space and play spaces.

RATIONALE

There is an abundance of research, both in Australia and internationally, which confirms the important role “green” public open space has in the physical and mental health and wellbeing of urban communities and individuals.

This underscores the importance of “getting it right” with the planning, provision and on-going management of public open space, particularly given the likely increases in population density projected for some parts of Banyule and neighbouring municipalities. Such increases, should they come to fruition, will place much greater demands on existing public open space and potentially create demand for more public open space.

Ensuring Banyule has good quality accessible public open space available, now and into the future, for all of its residents is supported by one of the City Plan’s fundamental principles; i.e. Community wellbeing. It is also supported by a number of elements within the City Plan’s key directions:

- Place – “Enhance Banyule’s public open spaces”
- Planet – “Protect and enhance our natural environment”
- People – “Promote and support health and wellbeing”

THE IMPORTANCE OF OPEN SPACE

The majority of health problems society will face, now and in the future, are likely to be stress related illnesses, mental health problems and cardiovascular health problems.¹

There is a growing body of research that indicates that to access green open spaces, be it for experiencing the natural environment, community based activities, or structured or unstructured physical activity, enhances physical and mental health, and helps reduce the risk of developing chronic diseases.

Physical Activity – Regular physical activity has been shown to increase health and reduce the risk of a wide range of diseases, including cardiovascular diseases, hypertension, diabetes and some types of cancers. Increasingly research shows that when people have access to quality parks, they exercise more.²

Beyond Physical Activity – Beyond the benefits of exercise, a growing body of research shows that close proximity to green spaces, and/or a view of the natural world is clearly associated with improved psychological health and reduced prevalence of depression and other mental health problems, particularly amongst children and people with low incomes.³

An extensive review of Australian and international literature on the links between mental health and well being and contact with nature and green spaces was undertaken by Deakin University as part of the Beyond Blue Initiative. The project found research evidence to demonstrate the following assertions with certainty:

- Natural environments, such as parks, foster recovery from mental fatigue and are restorative;
- When given a choice people prefer natural environments (particularly those with water features, large old trees, intact vegetation or minimal human influence) to urban ones, regardless of nationality or culture;
- The majority of places that people consider favourite or restorative are natural places, and being in these places is recuperative;
- People have a more positive outlook on life and higher life satisfaction

when in proximity to nature (particularly in urban areas);

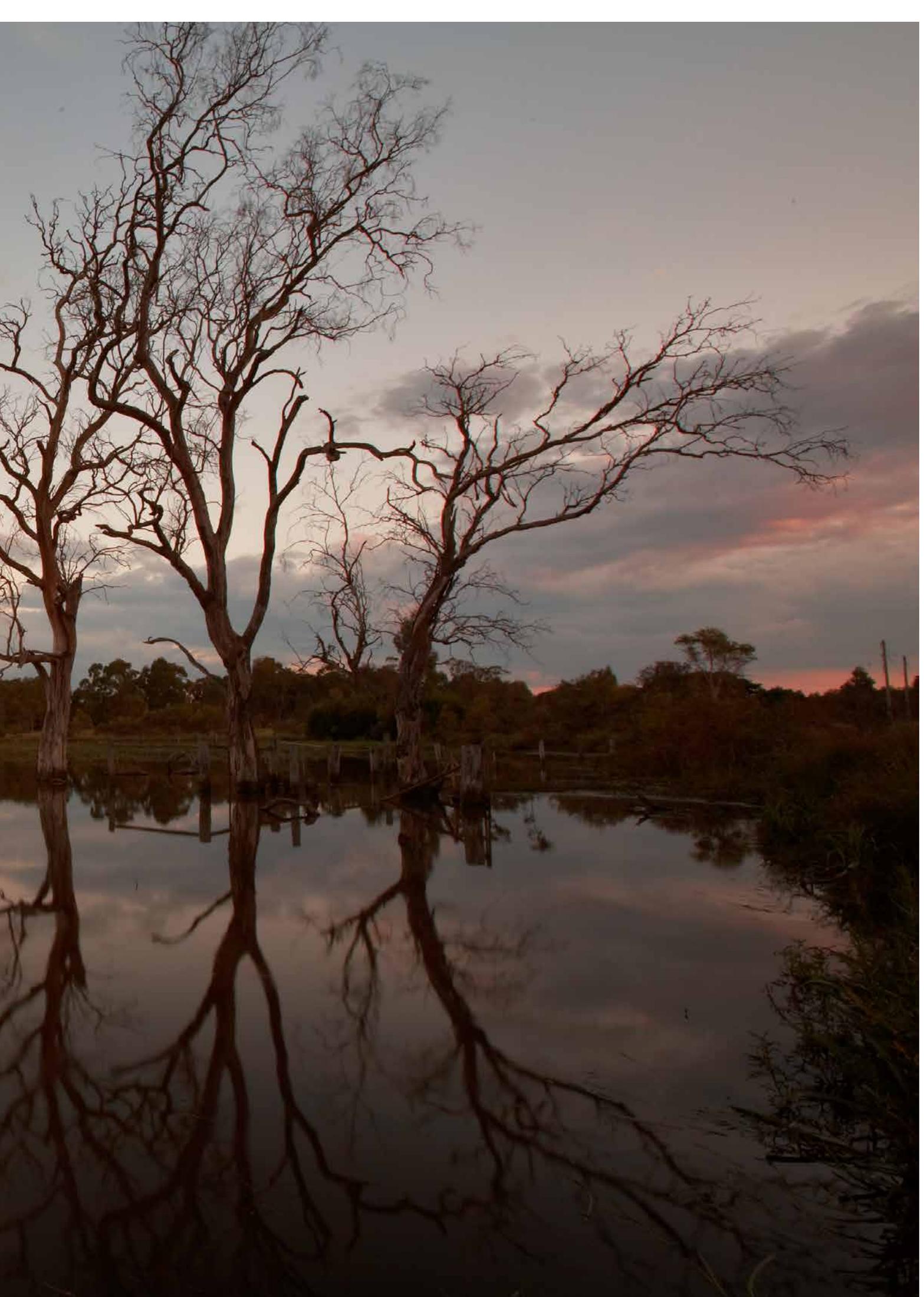
- The majority of problems society will face, now and into the future, are likely to be stress related illnesses, mental health problems and cardiovascular health problems.
- Exposure to natural environments, such as parks, enhances the ability to cope with and recover from stress, cope with subsequent stress, and recover from illness and injury;
- Observing nature can restore concentration and improve productivity;
- Having nature in close proximity (e.g. urban or national parks) or just knowing it exists, is important to people regardless of whether they are regular “users” of it.⁴

A Dutch study in 2009 investigated morbidity levels for 24 selected diseases and found that:

- Green spaces closer to home appeared to play a major role in morbidity prevention,
- 15 of the 24 diseases studied had lower rates for participants living within a 1km radius of green spaces
- The relationship was strongest for anxiety disorders and depression; and for people who were expected to spend more of their time closer to their homes, such as children and people with lower socio-economic status.

The serious health and wellbeing implications of reduced access to green, open spaces for people living in socio-economically disadvantaged areas is significant and warrants serious consideration in future urban renewal and development projects.⁵





IMPORTANCE OF PLAY

Play is important for the health and wellbeing of all people, regardless of age. For children play is a fundamental experience that significantly contributes to a child's development in terms of experience, intelligence, competence, values and creativity. Fundamental to all of this is the idea that play is fun.

Research tells us that a child's environment and experiences strongly influences their development.

- Play is one of the best ways for children to learn, whether it's a planned activity or 'free flow' play where there's no plan and children play at their own pace. A balance of organised and free flow play is best.
- Children get the most out of play if they have the chance to explore a range of activities that they are naturally drawn to.
- Play is important for children's developing self-esteem and social skills.
- Playing with others increases a child's social competence.
- Play helps children to develop an understanding of themselves and their own identity.⁶

Through play, children develop qualities necessary in adulthood, such as:

- Problem solving
- Socialising
- Independence
- Self-awareness
- Body development such as balance and motor skills
- Creativity
- Resilience
- Spatial knowledge
- Flexibility and adaptability
- Risk taking and judgement.

The importance of play as an essential part of a child's life is acknowledged in Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. It supports a child's right to rest and leisure, and to participate in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child.⁷

For young people play spaces provide an opportunity to gather and socialise as well as to be physically active.

PLAY DIVERSITY

Risk Taking and Play

Risk is defined as the chance of an adverse outcome. Challenge and risk taking are an important part of children's play and their physical, intellectual and emotional development.

Risk is important in children's development of a sense of self: of confidence and of independence. Children experience a deep sense of achievement and satisfaction from taking on a risk and mastering a situation. The skills developed from risk taking are critical in all spheres of children's development, and serve to protect them by teaching them how to deal with the challenges and hazards that inevitably occur in life. Children who learn to take risks, learn from mistakes, and learn to move on are likely to be more adaptable and resilient.

A number of factors have contributed to minimising risk-taking play opportunities in public environments. Key among these is the fear of litigation and the lack of understanding by adults, of the importance of exposing children to risk-taking activities.

Play England recommends play space providers apply (safety) standards within the context of their local play policy, and in consideration of the needs of local children. It discourages a total dependence on industry guidelines or standards when making decisions about inclusions and exclusions in adventure and challenging play spaces.

Play England recommends breaking down the task of managing risk into four steps, three of which are relevant to the management of public play spaces:

- **Develop a policy framework** – This will provide the context in which any risk evaluation is conducted. A play policy that supports risk-taking elements and outcomes in play spaces will result in different play environments to those that are underpinned by a more conservative approach to play space design.
- **Undertake a risk-benefit assessment** – This should bring together an analysis of both risks and benefits for a play space or feature, and should provide a reasonable and transparent means of describing decision-making and judgments. 'This process should not be about creating a risk-free society, but about ensuring that reasonable precautions are taken to avoid injury'
- **Perform technical assessments** – This is the ongoing and routine monitoring of play spaces for soundness, wear and tear, maintenance requirements, and cleanliness. Technical assessments should be informed by the play policy and the risk-benefit assessment.⁸

Research suggests that there is a fundamental misunderstanding of parents when they say they want 'a safe place' where their children can play. It has been shown that most parents are referring to 'social safety' rather than 'physical safety' in relation to the playground. That is, they want playgrounds to be places where children can see and be seen. Less than 5% of parents see playgrounds as unsafe. In fact most parents, as with most children, reported playgrounds as being boring and not exciting or adventurous enough.⁹

SOCIAL BENEFITS OF PUBLIC PLAYSPACES

With our increasingly urban society there is increasing evidence of social isolation. Public play spaces are one way of increasing opportunities for social engagement.

The type of park furniture provided, its accessibility and placement in relation to shade, wind and shelter will contribute to how inviting and socially welcoming a park or playspace is. A well thought out playspace design will encourage and provide opportunities for people to meet and get to know one another, not just on the playground equipment, but amongst the surroundings and along the paths to the playspace. The location of playspaces within public open space and their proximity to other like facilities, including local businesses and amenities is also likely to have a positive effect in community building.

Life Play – play across all age

Play is primarily thought of as a key element in the lives of children. "Play matters, no matter how old you are. The only thing that's changed is the stigma. We associate play with childhood, and therefore "playing" with childishness".¹⁰

This plan acknowledges that play is beneficial and should be encouraged across all ages. Playspace design, choice of equipment and promotion of play spaces can all assist in fostering play from a young child to an older adult. For example an extra wide slide that both an adult and child can use together, fitness stations for outdoor exercise and promotion of traditional play equipment to all – the experience of swinging can be just as enjoyable for an older adult as it can be for a toddler.

Benefits of Nature to Children

Nature is important to children's development in every major way – intellectually, emotionally, socially, spiritually and physically. Play in nature, particularly during the critical period of middle childhood, appears to be an essentially important time for developing the capacities for creativity, problem solving and emotional and intellectual development.

POLICY CONTEXT

OUR POLICIES

The Public Open Space Plan has strong connections to the overall Banyule City Plan 2013-2017 at a number of levels.

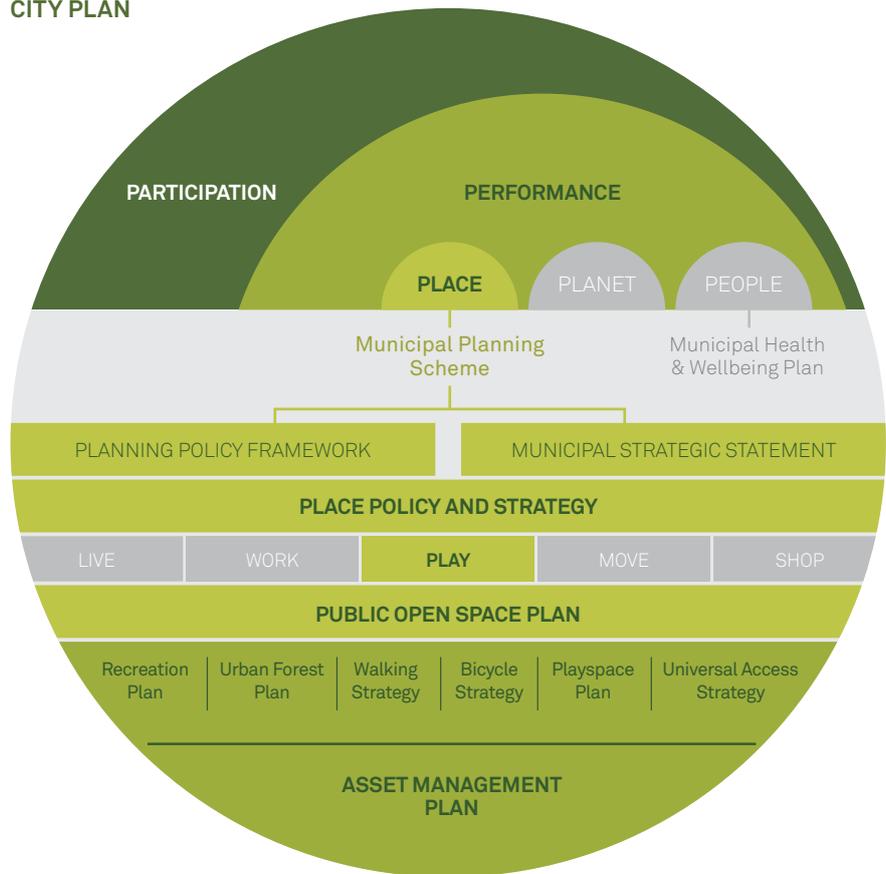
The stated vision of the City Plan is:

Banyule, a green, liveable and prosperous city, sustaining a healthy and engaged community.

This is extremely compatible with the aim of the Public Open Space Plan, which is:

To assist in guiding Council during a period of projected sustained population growth and change to ensure that all present and future residents of Banyule have easy access to high quality “green” public spaces and associated facilities.

CITY PLAN



Other relevant Council planning documents also considered, include the Strategic Transport Plan, the Recreation Strategy, the Urban Forest Plan and the draft Playspace Strategy.

In preparing this document, due consideration was also given to the principle, aims and overall direction of the State Government’s “Plan Melbourne Refresh 2016” and the draft Melbourne Metropolitan Public Open Space Strategy.

STATE POLICY

Plan Melbourne says that Metropolitan Melbourne's vibrant open space network includes gardens and heritage parks, neighbourhood and pocket parks, sports fields, regional and national parks, trails, beaches, wetlands, waterways, piers, jetties, rooftop gardens, plazas, squares and civic areas. Each type of open space holds its own unique values and provides a range of social, economic and environmental outcomes that contribute to the overall liveability of the city.

For example, open space provides a range of physical and mental health benefits to residents and visitors alike – from creating places for organised sport or informal fitness activities to simply providing restorative environments to relax and unwind in. Open spaces also contribute to many environmental benefits, including protecting biodiversity, reducing urban heat and regulating air and water quality, as well as helping to build social connections by providing opportunities for gathering and providing a context for cultural heritage, artistic expression and diversity. Consequently, open space – in its many forms and sizes – is a fundamental element of strategic land use planning and an essential component of our urban environment and community life.

Melbourne's population is now around 4.25 million, with estimates that it may grow to around 7.7 million by 2050. Maintaining the provision of and access to quality open space in the face of this growth is critical for the liveability of the city. In this context and as outlined in Plan Melbourne

(see Initiative 4.5.1), the Metropolitan Planning Authority – together with its partners across the Victorian Government – is developing a new metropolitan open space strategy (MOSS).

LOCAL CONTEXT

Banyule has approximately 890 hectares of public open space. Of this 606.4 hectares are Council owned and managed and 285.4 hectares is crown land managed by Parks Victoria. In addition to this there are also 125 hectares of private open space, most of which consists of two private golf courses.

The main future challenges facing Council in terms of public open space include the impacts of increasing population and residential density, extreme weather conditions, high land prices and diminishing resources due to rate capping.

There are three factors in our society that are having a major impact on play experiences and opportunities for children in our urban society.

• Reduction in Private Outdoor Play

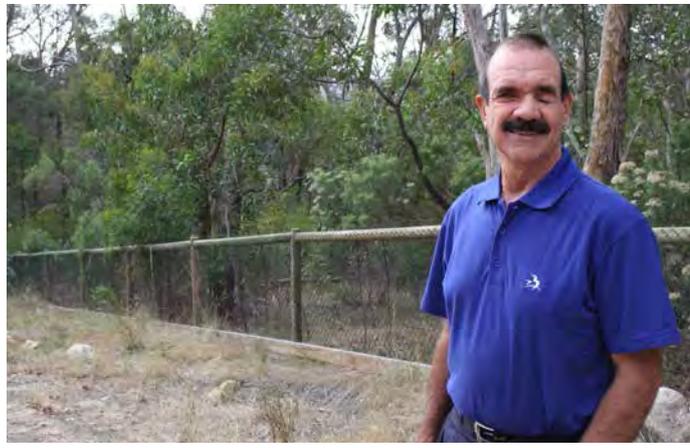
In the past, the backyard was one of the primary places for play which was complemented by playing on the street and nearby parks as children became more independent. With increasing urban density, backyards are shrinking and in many cases are no longer available at all. This has a major effect on children's opportunity to play. It emphasises the increasingly important function of public open space and the availability of play opportunities for children who live in urban areas.

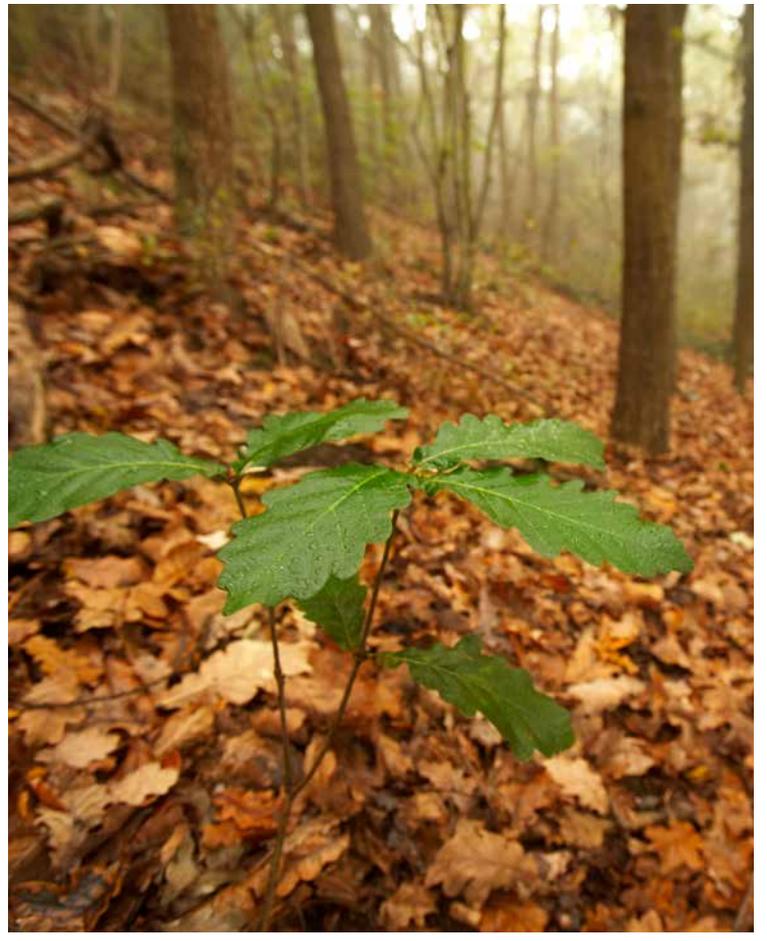
• Reduction in Natural Environments

The trend towards planned and designed open space in residential areas reduces children's access to places where they can play or "muck around" freely. The opportunities for unstructured play and imaginative play in the natural environment may continue to reduce.

• Children's Access to Public Areas

With increasing concerns about children's safety among other things, children's independent and free movement around their neighbourhood is reducing. This combined with children's time being increasingly programmed and their activities moved substantially indoors means that children are increasingly taken to places to play. The size of the territory to which children have free and independent access to has shrunk considerably in recent years. This has resulted in play opportunities close to home remaining vitally important.¹¹





DEFINITIONS

Creating spaces for people to enjoy.

For the purposes of the Banyule Public Open Strategy the definition of public open space and play facilities includes:

DEFINITIONS OF PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

“Green” Space

- Council owned or managed land used as public parks and reserves and usually zoned “Public Park and Recreation Zone,” “Public Conservation and Resource Zone,” or “Public Use Zone”, and small parcels of unzoned land that already function as public open space.”
- Land owned or controlled by State Government authorities, including Crown land managed by Council, which is available to the general public for recreational purposes

“Urban” Space

- Council owned or managed community urban spaces in and around shopping centre and community hubs. NB: this category includes permanent spaces, as well temporary or “pop up” parks.
- Privately owned spaces, which are freely available to the community as informal gathering spaces and for community activities.

NB: • “Green” space is that which substantially consists of “green” infrastructure, such as trees, plants, garden beds, grass etc.

- “Urban” spaces are spaces that are accessible to the community which substantially consist of hard surfaces and infrastructure, such as concrete, pavers, asphalt, etc. but softened wherever possible with “green” infrastructure.

DEFINITIONS OF PLAY FACILITIES

For the purpose of this report, a “playspace” is defined as:

- “A public space designed for play opportunities and features such things as run around areas, play grounds and natural play elements.”
- A “playground” is the play equipment (and the accompanying areas of soft surfacing); e.g. swings, slides. The important difference between playspace and playground is that playspaces include the environment beyond the playground.
- A “Skate & BMX Park” is a facility purpose built and designed for skateboarding, scooters and BMX bikes.
- “BMX Jumps” are usually compacted mounds of soil designed for use by BMX riders.

OPEN SPACE/ PLAYSPACE HIERARCHY, EXPERIENCE & TYPE

HIERARCHY

Metropolitan Park

This description is applied to the very large parks within the municipality that are owned by the State Government and managed by Parks Victoria and aimed at attracting patronage from across Melbourne, particularly from the Northern and Eastern Regions. There are several of these in Banyule within the corridors of the Yarra and Plenty Rivers; e.g. Yarra Flats Metropolitan Park.

Regional Park

Open Space:

The term regional park is applied to municipal owned parkland which has a catchment well beyond the suburb it is located in and often draws users from other municipalities.

Playspaces:

Large, individually designed playgrounds servicing the whole municipality where there is a full range of supporting amenities provided; i.e. toilets, drinking fountains, shelter, seating, bins, off street parking, tables, seats, etc. and cater for all abilities.

The expectation is that users would be prepared to drive for 15 minutes or more to these parks and/or playspaces and could potentially spend up to four hours there in any one visit.

Neighbourhood Park

Open Space:

This applies to parks that are large enough to service the residents of a suburb or at least several large neighbourhoods within a suburb and that users would be prepared to spend between 5 and 15 minutes to get there and could potentially spend an hour or more once there.

Playspace:

Neighbourhood playspaces will generally include medium to substantial sized playgrounds, catering for a range of age groups and abilities.

The expectation is that users would be prepared to travel for up to 15 minutes to these parks and/or playspaces and could potentially spend up to two hours there in any one visit.

Local Park

Open Space:

This describes small parks that local residents would generally be prepared to walk to and on average are only likely spend up to 30 minutes there on any one visit.

Playspace:

Small playground designed to service resident's living within 400 metres with one or two items of play equipment for a limited number of age groups. Local playgrounds are usually only used by residents from nearby streets who normally get there by walking or cycling.

Pocket Park

Open Space:

Pocket parks are very small parcels of public open space, with limited facilities that only people within walking distance are likely to use for short periods of time; e.g. on average 15 minutes or so. Many such parks also often play an important community linking role where they connect two or more streets or court bowls thus greatly enhancing the opportunity for residents to circulate more easily through their communities.

Playspace:

Very small playgrounds with only one or two pieces of play equipment. Usually only used by children in the immediate vicinity and reached by walking.

Urban Spaces

Public Space in and around high use areas such as shopping centres, or civic precincts. Generally hard surfaces predominate in these spaces and often most suited to low-key social gatherings and some informal recreation activities. Larger urban spaces may be suited to larger organised activities such as community markets, promotional displays, out door movies, theatre performances, etc.

5.1.7 "Pop Up Parks"

Generally temporary, "pop up" parks are usually created for a specific activity or for an agreed limited period of time, or as trial. In some instances pop up parks may eventually become permanent public open space.

EXPERIENCE

Formal Sporting

Parks that provide facilities for formal sporting competition and training, including sports playing surfaces, pavilions/clubrooms, sports field lighting, etc.

Informal and Passive Recreation

Parks and gardens with facilities that encourage informal and passive recreation, including such items as paths, seating, shelter, picnic tables, barbecues, drinking fountains, public toilets etc.

Environmental Recreation

Provided by parks which have a distinctive bushland character, wetlands and vegetated areas along the corridors of rivers and streams which enable users to experience nature, see and hear native birds and animals and to have the feeling they are away from suburbia.

Play

Many parks and reserves have formal play infrastructure. Although this strategy also recognises that there are informal play opportunities in every park and in urban spaces, regardless of whether there is a traditional playground there.

Access to Shade and Shelter

The benefit of play that occurs in the natural environment and the value that children place of nature has been highlighted in many studies. These studies relate to children's experience of both natural environments and the public spaces of cities and towns, and the opportunities that these places afford for positive development.

Below is a summary of the key findings:

- Children who are confident physical risk-takers in the outdoor environment are more likely to take risks during indoor activities.
- Children relocating from run down to better residential environments with natural views and yards, have improved levels of concentration than children relocating into environments that do not have these features.
- Many children will go to natural areas after upsetting events.
- Regardless of a child's family's socio-economic status a child will be more resilient the greener the home surroundings.
- Children in stressful life situations are likely to reflect the protective effect of nature.
- Outdoor investigations of nature (rather than indoor) are the most effective way to increase children's knowledge of biodiversity.
- Children with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) are likely to show a reduction in ADD symptoms after a walk through a park or outdoor play in green settings. The greener the surroundings the fewer the symptoms.

- Children are smarter, more cooperative, happier and healthier when they have frequent and varied opportunities for free and unstructured natural play outdoors.¹²

Banyule has a wide variety of natural spaces that are not listed or acknowledged as play spaces. It also has a range of playgrounds located in natural open spaces that could be better integrated into their environments. The Wilson Reserve playground is a good example of where the formal playground is not the primary play feature, as the natural bush environment surrounding the playground lends itself to more nature based play activities, such as the construction of cubby houses out of branches and sticks found lying around.

PARK TYPE

Stand Alone

A park or reserve is designated as "stand alone" when it is not directly connected to any other parcel of public open space.

Linear Park

A linear park or reserve is a long narrow parcel of public open space which often connects several community facilities or a number of elements of community infrastructure.

Part of a Linear Park

A park or reserve that is identified as "part of a linear park," often a major node within a ribbon of parkland, usually along a creek or river corridor.

ACCESS

An underlying principle objective for access is that 90% of Banyule residents will be able to walk from their home to a piece of public parkland within 5 minutes without having to cross any major barriers. A 5 minute walk equates to approximately 400 metres distance.

BARRIERS TO ACCESS

Streets and Roads

Following receipt of specialist technical advice, it has been determined that streets and roads which meet the following criteria shall be deemed significant barriers to accessing public open space:

- Traffic volume – any street or road which has a 7,000 or more daily traffic movements.
- Speed limit – any road or street with a speed limit above 50 kph. The vast majority of streets and roads in Banyule have a default speed limit of 50 kph.
- Divided Roads – most divided roads in Banyule are either very high volume and/or split level – therefore whether a road is divided or not should not diminish its potential impact as a barrier. The section of Oriel Road between Bell Street Bellfield and Green Street Ivanhoe is an exception to this due to its wide flat centre median strip and good site lines.
- Size of vehicles – any roads with a substantial volume of large trucks using it should be considered a barrier.
- VicRoads managed roads – all of these to be considered barriers as they all meet several of the above criteria, particularly speed and traffic volume.
- Signalised crossings should be a consideration in determining whether a road constitutes a barrier. However signalised crossings don't necessarily automatically discount a road as a barrier. Roads that are considered to still constitute a barrier even where traffic signals exist are the Greensborough Highway, Rosanna Road/Lower Heidelberg Road, Upper Heidelberg Road/Waiora Road, Lower Plenty Road, Bell Street, Banksia Street (east of Studley Road) Waterdale Road (north of Banksia Street) and Grimshaw Street. These roads still form major psychological barriers due to traffic volumes, speed of vehicles, size of vehicles using them, corridor width and the generally unpleasant and intimidating environment they present to pedestrians and cyclists.

The following table provides the basis for determining barriers.

Vehicle Size	Road Type	Traffic Volume	Speed Limit	Status
	Undivided	< 7,000 vehicles per day	50 kph or less	No Barrier
	Undivided	>7,000 vehicles per day	Any	Barrier
	Divided	<7,000 vehicles per day	50 kph	No Barrier
	Divided	>7,000 vehicles per day	Any	Barrier

Railway Lines

A railway line is deemed a barrier, except where a signalised pedestrian crossing allows access to public open space.

Rivers and Streams

Rivers and streams are deemed to be barriers except where there is a pedestrian bridge which allows access to public open space.

Private Property

Private property is deemed to be a barrier where it prevents direct access to public open space.

ACCESS TO PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

There are many challenges to facilitating full access, however wherever possible and applicable access to public open space will be facilitated by:

- Universal Deign Guidelines compliant continuous paths.
- Pram crossings.
- Directional and way finding signage in nearby streets.

ACCESS WITHIN PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

Access within open space shall be facilitated by:

- Universal Deign Guidelines compliant path to allow access to key facilities within the reserve or park.
- Universal Deign Guidelines compliant park furniture.
- Provision of some access friendly items of play equipment.
- Accessible toilets

IMPROVING ACCESS TO OPEN SPACE

Generally Banyule is currently well provided for in relation to public open space. The corridors formed by the Yarra River, the Plenty River and the Darebin Creek all flow through the municipality and have played a significant role in placing Banyule in this position. However the distribution of open space is inconsistent and in some areas access to public open space could be improved.

Population density is increasing in Banyule and certain areas within the municipality are expected to experience greater concentrated growth than others. This will occur particularly in activity centres and in the parts of Banyule that are within the Latrobe National Employment Cluster.

Given the rapidly increasing cost of land and lack of undeveloped land in Banyule, it is unlikely that addressing the issue can be realistically done through the purchase of land alone. Therefore other smarter and more cost effective strategies need to also be pursued. Some potential options for doing this are explored below.

Shared Use Agreements

If there are other public authorities with land in areas where there is a deficiency in public open space, the establishment of joint use agreements with such authorities may be a far more cost effective way of addressing the issue of land availability than acquiring new land. Schools are an obvious potential partner in such arrangements, which could lead to a win-win outcome for both parties. In specific areas such as Heidelberg West and Heidelberg Heights where public housing is a significant presence there may be opportunities for joint use/development agreements on the larger public housing estates.

Examples of such agreements include:

- Use of school ovals outside school hours where Council may agree to maintain the oval, or even upgrade it in some instances.
- Use of a school playground for general public purposes, outside of school hours. Council may potentially contribute to playground infrastructure and/or maintenance costs.

Street Environment

Street and/or Intersection Closures
The selective closure of streets and/or intersections can be an effective way of creating new public open space without the high cost of land acquisition. This approach has been used in recent years by both the Melbourne and Yarra City Councils. This method can be useful for creating small pocket or local parks. It may also be used to help increase the size and functionality of an existing adjacent pocket or local park.

Use of Road Reserves
The utilisation of wide roadside plantations and/or road reserves as public open space in some circumstances may be an option for increasing the supply of public open space in an area.

LAND USE

In instances where an area is deemed to have insufficient local open space, the best outcome may be achieved by purchasing a neighbouring block or two to increase the size of the existing park to one that will enable it to function more effectively as a park.

Strategic Land Sale/Land Acquisition Packages

It may be possible to achieve improved public open space, or access to it, for relatively little cost, or even achieve cost neutrality through a strategic land sale and acquisition package. For example where access to public open space is being blocked by private land, it may lead to a much more desirable outcome if a portion of the open space were sold and a similar amount of strategically placed adjacent private land were to be purchased, thus enabling improved access, use of the park and natural surveillance. Alternatively a land swap may also be possible providing a similar outcome.

Public Private Arrangements

In some instances it may lead to an improved community outcome where relatively unusable public open space is sold on the basis that the purchaser provides substantial park related infrastructure, or a more appropriate alternative site for public use, as part of the arrangement.

Access/Use Agreements

The use of power authority and/or water authority easement for the construction of linear trails and/or the provision of community facilities such as community gardens, fenced off-lead dog exercise areas, etc. can be an extremely beneficial and cost effective way of providing opportunities for the community, where this can be negotiated.

INFRASTRUCTURE TO OVERCOME BARRIERS TO ACCESS

Banyule has some good quality parks and reserves where access is limited by substantial barriers such as major roads, the Melbourne-Hurstbridge Railway, rivers and creeks. To improve access to these parks, it may require supporting infrastructure such as signalised crossings or pedestrian bridges.

JOINT PROJECTS WITH NEIGHBOURING COUNCIL'S AND INSTITUTIONS

There is considerable potential to develop joint projects with neighbouring Councils and major public institutions such as Latrobe University. If this approach could be pursued, it would potentially result in savings for all partners and minimise duplication. With the introduction of rate capping, this approach may become a necessity in future. It may also help with the procurement of State and possibly Federal Government funding, as the Metropolitan Planning Authority (MPA) and various government departments are strongly supportive of this type of sub-regional and regional co-operation between local government bodies.

“POP UP” PARKS

Temporary or “pop up” parks may be established on vacant public land, wide pavements, road reserves, in urban spaces, or through temporary road closures. They can be explored particularly in areas that normally attract a lot of people, or where there is poor access to public open space. Overtime a “Pop up” park, should it prove to be successful, may become permanent.

Community expectations in relation to provision of diverse play option is increasing and playspace provision is becoming more sophisticated. Therefore playspace planning needs to consider these factors.

PLAY PLANNING FRAMEWORK

The playspace component of this strategy has been developed to provide a strategic direction for the future provision and management of play spaces in Banyule over the next 10 to 15 years.

The Play Space Plan provides a framework for:

- Providing a range of innovative, diverse, attractive, fun and challenging play spaces for all.
- Enhancing the capacity of play spaces to cater for different ages, abilities and interests across the City.
- Planning play spaces within the context of the Open Space Strategy within which it sits to maximise the play opportunities provided by each site, including nature based play opportunities where appropriate.
- Providing design principles and guidelines for the planning and design of play spaces.
- Ensuring effective consultation with the community in the future provision of play spaces.
- Provide a plan for future play spaces including replacement, renewal and development.

SHADE AND SHELTER ACCESS

The Cancer Council Australia advocates a number of methods for sun protection including:

- Sunscreen
- Wearing a hat
- Staying out of the sun during the hottest part of the day
- Adequate shade provision in public places

Trees provide the best long-term natural shade and are Banyule's preferred shade solution. Shade trees to the north of playspaces are the best form of sustainable shade provision. In large playspaces where people are likely to spend longer periods of time, picnic shelters might be provided in addition to shade trees. Tree species need to be considered and species known for limb shedding are to be avoided.

Existing shade is to be considered in the siting of new and replacement playspaces. Where possible the playspaces should be located where immediate shade will be provided by an established tree, building or other structure.

Shade provision needs to be cost effective and durable to provide the best overall outcome when designing or upgrading playspaces. Whilst shade sails are used in many schools and children's centres where the site is managed and secured, they are not considered the most sustainable form of shade protection in public parks. The initial costs, ongoing maintenance and risk management are all issues associated with shade sails that limit funding being spent on developing quality play experiences. Where there is no other shade option and a shade structure is proposed, the design of the structure should complement the open space character and meet sustainability principles regarding materials used.

In recent years there has been an increase in Vitamin D deficiency in children. One contributing factor is thought to be that children are kept out of the sun to reduce the risk of skin cancer. There is therefore the need to encourage children to play outside before 10 am and in the later afternoon to maintain sufficient levels of Vitamin D and promote good health.¹³

Results from a study by Wells confirm this, showing that children who experienced high levels of contact with nature reported higher global self worth and higher cognitive function.¹⁴

METHODOLOGY (PREPARING THE PLAN)

2007 PUBLIC OPEN SPACE STRATEGY

Since the Council adopted the previous Public Open Space Strategy in 2007, a number of initiatives have occurred which can be directly linked to that document. As part of the process for developing the new public open space plan a review of the previous plan was undertaken. A detailed summary of these initiatives can be found in the technical notes (part 2) of this document. These cover a broad range of initiatives that fall into the following categories:

- Co-ordinated open space planning, including reserve master planning.
- Strategic playground development, resulting in the planning and delivery of a number of regional family playspaces or long stay park destination facilities.
- Improvements in connectivity and quality of Banyule's shared trail network.
- A number of regional planning initiatives were developed through partnerships with neighbouring councils, the State Government and other public institutions.
- Improved management of diminishing water resources.
- The establishment of a series of fenced off-lead dog facilities.
- The adoption and implementation of a number of new recreation trends.
- A range of initiatives to maintain and enhance the sustainability of indigenous vegetation throughout Banyule
- The 2007 Strategy flagged the need for better contributions from land developers to help fund public works. This led to council resolving in 2014 to revise its approach to seeking developer contributions.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

A range of community engagement strategies were used during the consultation phase in order to ensure that the Strategy reflects community views and needs. A summary of the engagement strategies used is as follows:

1. Community on-line survey

2. Interviews/surveys at Malahang & Banyule Festivals
3. Community Workshops
4. Youth Workshops
5. Community Reference Group
6. Council Reference Groups
 - (a) Multi-Cultural Reference Group
 - (b) Disability Reference Group
 - (c) GLBTI Reference Group
 - (d) Age-Friendly Reference Group
 - (e) Internal Reference Group (relevant Council staff)

EXAMINATION OF CURRENT BEST PRACTICE

An examination of the work of public open space strategies recently prepared by other local government authorities both in Victoria and in other states in order to determine current best practice.

CO-ORDINATION WITH STATE GOVERNMENT OBJECTIVES

Several meetings were held with officers of the Metropolitan Planning Authority (MPA) in order to get a clear understanding of the direction of the Authority's public open space strategy for Metropolitan Melbourne which was being prepared at the same time as Banyule's public open space strategy. It is important that the Banyule Strategy reflect similar values, use definitions and be generally in sync with the Metropolitan Strategy.

The MPA's Plan Melbourne Report and its draft report on the Latrobe National Employment Cluster was also used as reference documents in the preparation of this Strategy.

CO-ORDINATION WITH COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

Other relevant Council plans and strategies, including the City Plan, the Strategic Transport Plan, the Recreation Plan, the draft Playground Strategy, the Urban Forest Plan, etc. were referenced in order to ensure that the Public Open Space Strategy is in step with Council's overall objectives.



VISION GUIDING PRINCIPLE AND THE SIX PILLARS

VISION

A green City that provides high quality, sustainable, accessible and well maintained public open space within 5 minutes walk for residents.

KEY GUIDING PRINCIPLE (COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLBEING)

It is widely recognised and verified by research around the World, that public open space provides a wide range of very important health and wellbeing benefits to people. These benefits include both physical and psychological health, as well as feelings of happiness and greater social cohesion.

This Strategy is therefore based on the key guiding principle of community health and wellbeing, which is fundamental to everything in this document and is the underlying “why” of public open space provision.

AIM

To assist in guiding Council during a period of projected sustained population growth and change to ensure the environment is protected and all present and future residents of Banyule have easy access to high quality “green” public spaces and associated facilities.

THE SIX PILLARS (OBJECTIVES)

This Strategy is also built on “six pillars” or principles of open space planning, which also support the key guiding principle of “community health and wellbeing.” These pillars are consistent with those being applied by the Metropolitan Planning Authority (MPA) in the preparation of the Metropolitan Public Open Space Strategy for the Melbourne Metropolitan Area. The six pillars of open space planning are:

- Quantity (*Is there enough?*)
- Quality (*How good is it?*)
- Accessibility & Connection (*Can I get there to use it?*)
- Equitable Distribution (*Is it available throughout Banyule?*)
- Diversity (*Will it provide different experiences?*)
- Sustainability (*Will it affect the environment & will it last?*).

These pillars also form the basis of the strategic directions and actions for both public open space and playspaces set out in this strategy.

PRECINCT OVERVIEW

Banyule’s public open space is generally in good condition and is well maintained. However in order to keep it that way, Council will need to continue to find the resources to ensure that this level of service to the community can be maintained, particularly in areas that are targeted for high levels of growth.

Whilst Banyule in an overall sense is well serviced by public open space, its quality, quantity and accessibility varies considerably from location to location.

For planning purposes Banyule has been divided into seven precincts broadly based on suburb boundaries. The number of suburbs within each precinct varies from between one and four, depending upon the physical size and population of the suburbs.

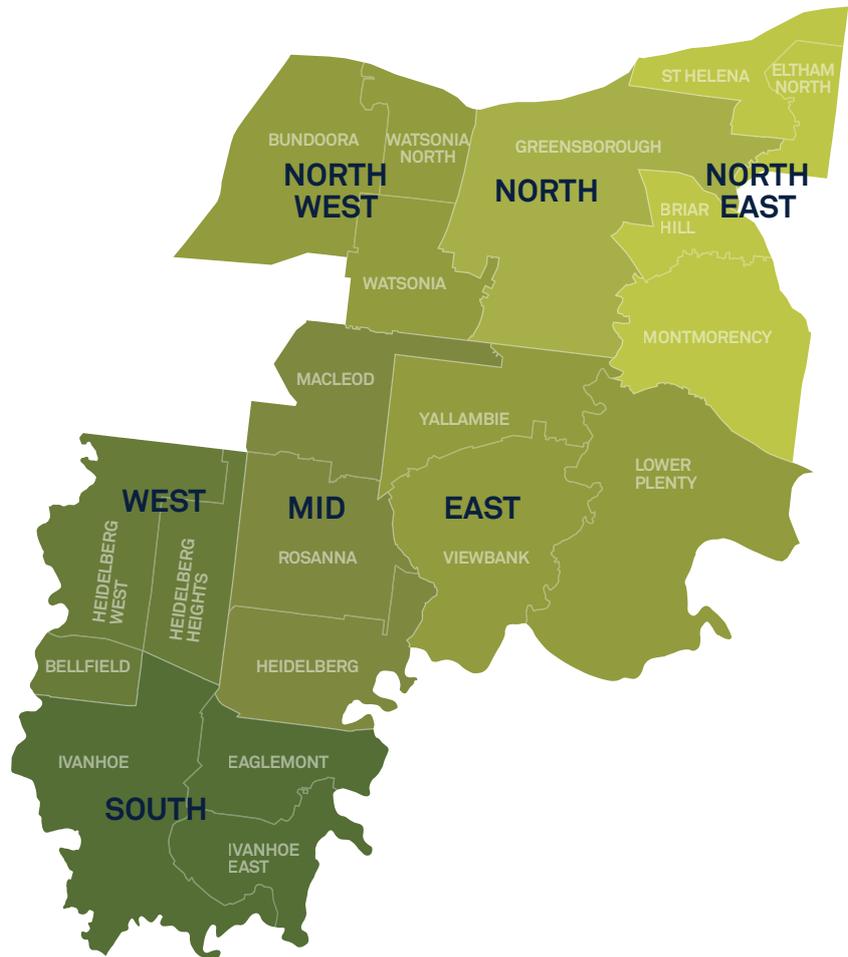
Whilst each precinct has issues, challenges and opportunities specific to it, there are a number that most precincts have in common. These include:

- Access to public open space from some pockets of the municipality could be improved. This is often due to distance or barriers such as major roads, the rail corridor, a river or creek or particularly steep topography.
- Potential to access school land and or facilities outside of school hours through joint use agreements.
- The need to overcome physical barriers with the provision of infrastructure, such as signalised crossings, traffic calming devices, or bridges.

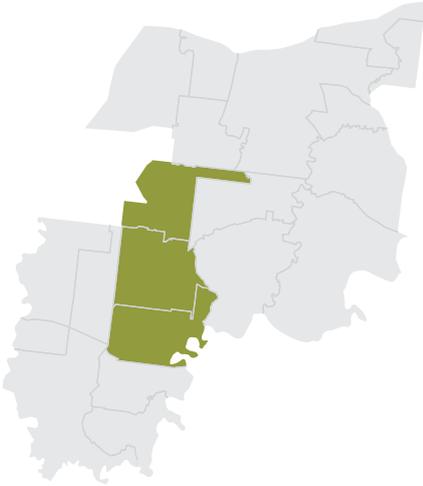
Part of the process of developing the Public Open Space Strategy included a detailed analysis of public open space and an open space asset analysis. This analysis will be used as an in-house technical document, to inform Council asset management plans and to provide direction for Council’s long-term capital program.

A high level summary of this analysis of each precinct is provided in this section of the Strategy, as follows.

PRECINCT MAP



MID PRECINCT



The Mid Precinct of Banyule includes the suburbs of Heidelberg, Rosanna and Macleod and is the most populous precinct within Banyule with a current population of approximately 21,000 people. Parts of the precinct are included in the Latrobe National Employment Cluster particularly areas within and adjacent to the Heidelberg Activity Centre, which has been identified by the State Government as an area of high population growth and substantial increases in residential density are highly likely. This precinct has just over 98 hectares of public open space.

Key Findings

The following is a summary of the key findings from the analysis of the Mid Precinct's public open space and related assets:

- The Mid Precinct has some of the best in terms of quality and most unique public open space in the metropolitan area, particularly the parklands along the Yarra River Corridor and the Rosanna Parklands.
- However accessing the parklands along the Yarra Corridor to use as local open space is problematic for the residents of Heidelberg who live to the west of Rosanna Road, as this road acts as a major barrier.
- Access to public open space from within the Heidelberg Activity Centre is poor.
- Improving access to local open space for residents, visitors and employees of businesses and hospitals located in the Heidelberg Activity Centre will become increasingly important as the population of the Activity Centre area builds to its projected high levels.
- Investment in infrastructure to improve connectivity with existing open space particularly in areas such as the Heidelberg Activity Centre is likely to be a more cost effective strategy than acquiring land to create more public open space.
- The opportunity to develop negotiated agreements for out of school hours access to recreation and play facilities of local schools will become necessary in areas identified as having poor access to local public open space.

Recommendations

- Prepare a local open space strategy for the Heidelberg Activity Centre in order to identify strategies to address the specific and complex public open space needs in this designated high growth area, including improving connectivity, potential agreements with other stakeholders and investment in appropriate open space related infrastructure.
- Explore the potential for developing community use agreements with local schools in areas within the precinct identified as having poor access to local public open space; e.g. the Rosanna Primary School and the Heidelberg Primary School
- Develop a masterplan for Heidelberg Park and Heidelberg Gardens, given their potential local and regional importance.
- Continue to work with Manningham City Council and the State Government to establish pedestrian and cycling connectivity between the Warringal Parklands, the Main Yarra Trail on the western side of the Yarra River with Banksia Park and Heide Museum of Modern Art on the eastern side of the River.

WEST PRECINCT



The West Precinct is made up of the suburbs of Heidelberg West, Heidelberg Heights and Bellfield. The entire precinct is included in the Latrobe National Employment Cluster, which the State Government has identified as an area where high population growth with substantial increases in population density is highly likely. The current population of the West Precinct is approximately 14,000 people. There are currently a total of 77.06 hectares of public open space within the West Precinct.

Key Findings

Whilst from a raw quantitative perspective the West Precinct is well endowed with public open space, a number of issues will need to be addressed going forward if the needs of the much larger projected population are to be met. The public open space in the west Precinct is distributed unevenly. For instance only 7.6 hectares, or 11% of it is located within the suburb of Heidelberg Heights, which has approximately 40% of the precinct's population.

Heidelberg Heights is therefore one of the most under provided for suburbs in Banyule for public open space. Amplifying this problem is the fact that it forms part of the Latrobe National Employment Cluster. Population and residential density are therefore both projected to increase significantly in Heidelberg Heights in the coming years. Serious consideration will therefore need to be given to strategies for addressing the need for better access to public open space within this suburb.

- A significant amount of public open space in the West Precinct is located within the Darebin Creek Corridor (53.52 hectares or approximately 70% of the Precinct's open space).
- Improve access to and natural surveillance of the parklands within the Darebin Creek Corridor, as lack of access and natural surveillance are relegating significant amounts of it to the status of "low value" open space.
- Improvements to connectivity across the Darebin Creek are required to better service residents of the West Precinct of Banyule as well the East Preston area of Darebin.
- There are a total of 9 playgrounds in the West Precinct. Whilst this is the least number of any of the

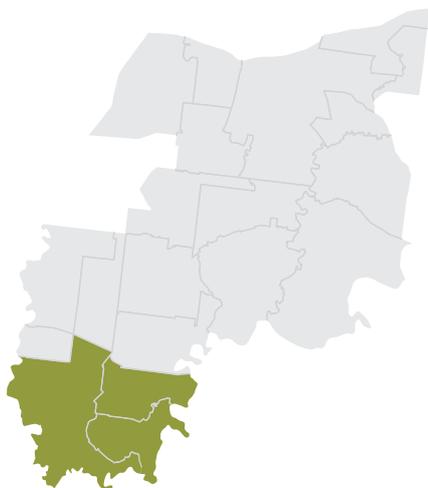
precincts in Banyule, all parks and reserves in the Precinct have at least one playground. The relatively low number of playgrounds is likely to be the result of the fact that a significant majority of the Precinct's public open space is located within the Darebin Creek Corridor, much of which is unsuitable for locating playgrounds due to its seclusion and poor natural surveillance.

- There is a need to improve and expand the infrastructure in a number of specific parks and reserves within the Precinct where there is currently inadequate of sub-standard facilities; e.g. Ramu Parade Reserve, Johnson Reserve, James Reserve, etc.

Recommendations

- Increase the amount of local public open space available within Heidelberg Heights through the exploration of innovative options including those set out in the section 6.4 of this plan.
- Upgrade the sections of the Darebin Creek Trail which don't comply with current shared trail standards.
- Explore opportunities to develop partnerships with other land managers in order to provide more public open space in neighbourhoods where there is limited access, such as the Waratah Education Centre in Bellfield and Ministry of Housing; e.g. Bell-Bardia Housing Estate.
- Develop a public open space masterplan for the Bell Street Mall to increase its recreation value as "urban" open space.
- Work with the Darebin City Council, Latrobe University and Ministry of Housing and explore opportunities for partnerships to increase and improve access to public open space on both sides of the Darebin Creek corridor. In particular use the findings of the Darebin Creek Masterplan to explore such partnership opportunities
- Provide a "nature" based play experience within at least one of the West Precinct's existing playspaces.
- Prepare masterplans for key reserves in the precinct including, Ford Park, Olympic Reserve and Ramu Parade Reserve.

SOUTH PRECINCT



The South Precinct of Banyule consists of the suburbs Ivanhoe, Ivanhoe East and Eaglemont. Included within the precinct is the Ivanhoe major Activity Centre, which is targeted for increased population growth and residential density. The population of the South Precinct is approximately 19,000 people and it has 199 hectares of public open space. Almost half of this public open space is managed by Parks Victoria on behalf of the State government.

Key Findings

- There are several very large tracts of high quality public open space in this precinct, particularly along the Darebin Creek and Yarra River corridors.
- There are a number of excellent regional and local shared trails, such as the Darebin Creek Trail, the Main Yarra trail, the Wilson Reserve Trail and the Donaldson Creek Trail, providing good connectivity for many areas within the precinct.
- There are a number of areas within the precinct that require improved access to public open space due to either distance or physical barriers such as major roads and the Melbourne-Hurstbridge Railway Line.
- There is minimal public open space in and around the Ivanhoe Activity Centre, which may become a bigger issue given likely increases in residential density and population.

Recommendations

- Prepare a local open space strategy for the Ivanhoe Activity Centre in order to identify strategies to address the specific and complex public open space needs in this designated high growth area, including improving connectivity, potential agreements with other stakeholders and investment in appropriate open space related infrastructure.
- Develop a public open space masterplan for the civic space adjacent to the Ivanhoe Library to increase its leisure and general community value as an “urban” open space.
- Develop strategies for improving access to public open space in areas within the precinct where it is currently limited by distance or major physical barriers, including the exploration of the potential for community use agreements with local schools.
- Increase the quantity and the standard of play infrastructure in reserves that are substantial in size and well located to service a reasonably large residential area; e.g. Cartledge Reserve (West Ivanhoe) and Albert Jones Reserve (Eaglemont).
- Establish a nature based play experience in at least one playspace within the precinct.
- Implement the Ivanhoe Park Masterplan

EAST PRECINCT



The East Precinct consists of the suburbs Lower Plenty, Viewbank and Yallambie. It varies in character from established residential areas to areas of semi rural character. The entire precinct is made up of undulating terrain. There are large expanses of public open space particularly those in the Plenty River corridor, which passes through the heart of the precinct. In total the East Precinct has 314 hectares of public open space of which 206 is managed by Parks Victoria. This is more public open space than any other precinct in Banyule. The population of the precinct is approximately 15,000.

Key Findings

The East Precinct is generally well catered for with public open space, both in terms of quality and quantity:

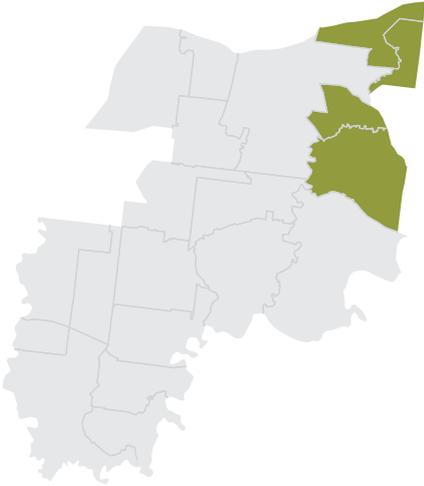
- There are large tracts of Council, as well as Parks Victoria managed parkland within the southern reach of the Plenty River corridor and the Yarra River corridor at the southern end of the precinct.
- Both sides of the Plenty River have a number of excellent parcels of public open space.
- There is also good connection provided to public open space in several adjoining Banyule precincts and to that in the neighbouring municipalities of Manningham and Nillumbik via the Plenty River and Main Yarra Trails.
- Large tracts of quasi-open space are also located within this precinct that provide a visual and psychological benefit to residents as well as habitat havens for native birds and animals. These include the Heidelberg and Rosanna Golf Clubs and the Simpson Army Barracks.
- There are however some residential pockets within the precinct that don't have easy readily accessible public open space within a reasonable walking distance, or without having to negotiate major barriers.
- There are other areas that only have easy local access to relatively small parks.
- Whilst parts of Lower Plenty have limited immediate access to local public open space, this is largely compensated for by the fact that a substantial part of this suburb consists of large residential blocks that are semi-rural in nature.

- There is a reasonably significant horse riding community in Lower Plenty which can't access the community horse riding facilities in View Bank and Lower Eltham without having to "float" their horses.

Recommendations

- Link the Plenty River Trail with a shared path via the East-West Power Easement to commercial and community facilities in Yallambie Road.
- Investigate the potential for better utilising the East-West Power Easement for public open space purposes; e.g. fenced dog exercise facility, community garden, BMX or skate facilities, outdoor gym equipment, etc.
- Investigate the feasibility of providing a horse riding trail to connect Lower Plenty and the community horse riding facilities in View Bank, Manningham and Nillumbik.
- Improve access through the Banyule Flats by realigning the Main Yarra Trail and providing an environmental walk adjacent to the wetlands.
- Investigate strategies for improving access to public open space for residents who aren't within easy walking distance of public open space.
- Identify locations for providing greater variety of play experiences within the precinct, in particular nature based play opportunities, accessible play elements and at least one fully fenced play facility.
- Where there is insufficient shade in and around play facilities, develop a program for planting appropriate species of shade trees.
- Explore the potential for developing "local play networks" in neighbourhoods where there are a series of small parks within walking distance of each other, e.g. in View Bank utilising Crana, Castelton, Cloverly Court and the Glade Reserves and/or in Yallambie utilising Marigolds, Colleen Reserve (North & South) and Borlase Reserve.
- Upgrade the sections of the Plenty River Trail within the Eastern Precinct which still don't comply with current shared trail standards.
- Upgrade pedestrian bridges on the Plenty River Trail where required and improve sight lines where appropriate.

NORTH-EAST PRECINCT



The North-East Precinct includes the suburbs of Montmorency, Briar Hill, St Helena and Eltham North. In total there is 60.63 hectares of public open space within the North-East Precinct. There are approximately 17,000 people living in this precinct. Briar Hill is the least well provided for suburb in terms of public open space in the whole of Banyule.

In the southern section of the precinct, in particular the southern half of Montmorency there is good access to the large tracts of public open space along the Plenty River corridor, which is also serviced by the Plenty River Trail. This part of the precinct also has a series small “stand alone” bushland reserves.

The public open space in the northern half of the precinct tends to be dominated more by a series of small local and/or pocket parks. These on their own don’t have the impact of some of the larger parks, they never-the-less have an important role in providing linkages for the communities within which they are located, as many of these small parks provide connections between streets and courts which enables people to circulate through their local communities and help with accessing schools, local shops, etc.

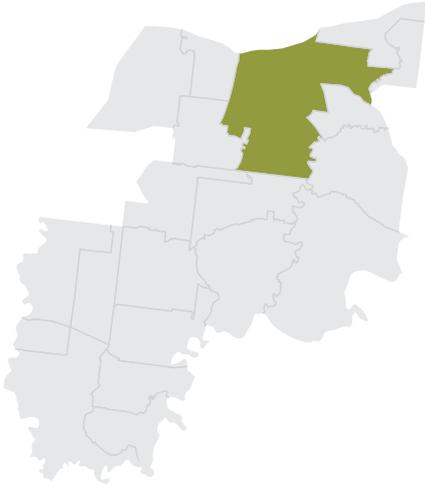
Key Findings

- There are a significant number of reserves in the North –East Precinct which have conservation themes.
- There are numerous small local reserves and pocket parks scattered throughout this precinct, which have an important role in providing community connectivity.
- The Plenty River corridor and the Plenty River Trail play an important role in providing high quality open space for residents of this precinct. The Plenty River Trail also provides connectivity to significant parcels of public open space in adjacent precincts, particularly for the residents of Montmorency.

Recommendations

- Work towards creating enhanced play experiences by developing “local play networks” in neighbourhoods where there are a series of small parks within walking distance of each other, by diversifying the play experiences offered in each of the local parks and by providing directional and interpretive signage.
- Continue to upgrade and enhance the quality of the Anthony Beale Regional Family Playspace.
- Investigate programs for the re-establishment of the Eltham Copper Butterfly habitat, particularly through the planting of Sweet Bursaria, at appropriate sites in Montmorency.
- Investigate the potential of improving access to public open space in areas where major barriers are a significant hindrance, such as St Helena Road (Anthony Beale Reserve) and the Ryan’s Road Reserve pedestrian path.
- Identify an appropriate site within the Precinct for the establishment of a nature based play experience.
- Continue with the implementation of the masterplans for both Petrie Park and Rattray Reserve.
- Identify an appropriate location or locations within the precinct to establish a range of facilities for teenagers and young adults.
- Investigate the potential of Settlers Linear Reserve for:
 - Developing a “local play network”
 - Connecting playgrounds with accessible paths
 - Regenerating remnant indigenous vegetation
 - Creating outdoor gym stations

NORTH PRECINCT



The North Precinct consists entirely of the suburb of Greensborough and contains 92.12ha of public open space. The population of the precinct is approximately 15,500. The Plenty River bisects the precinct in a meandering north – south direction, creating a green corridor of open space along its banks. A significant amount of the open space in Greensborough is concentrated around the Plenty River in the form of large parks and reserves, many which contain playspaces and sporting facilities. Browns Nature Reserve and Andrew Yandell Habitat Reserve are stand alone reserves that contain sensitive conservation areas, which support habitats suitable for native animal and bird life and generally provide excellent biodiversity.

Key Findings

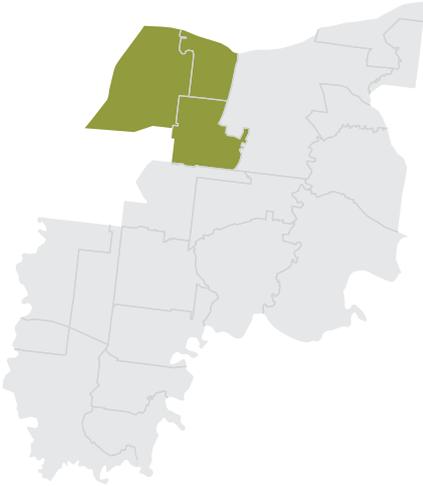
- The North precinct is generally well catered for in terms of public open space but there are pockets where ease of local access to public open space is made difficult by barriers of various types. The Greensborough Activity Centre is a prime example of this. Whilst at present there are a limited number of residents living within the activity centre, as proposed development proceeds the issue of improving access will become increasingly important.
- There is a need to strengthen pedestrian and cycling links between the Greensborough Activity centre, the Plenty River corridor and the Principle Bicycle Network,
- There is a need to provide a wider variety of play experiences in the North Precinct's public parks.
- There is a need to address the steepness of the Plenty River Trail in the section between Willinda Park and Poulter Avenue.

Recommendations

- Maintain on-going habitat restoration programs within key conservation reserves, such as Andrew Yandell Reserve and Browns Nature Reserve.
- Establish areas of remnant indigenous vegetation in appropriate parks and reserves.
- Investigate options for overcoming the steep section of Plenty River Trail between Willinda Park and Poulter Avenue.

- Investigate in the linear reserves north of Partingtons Flat for the potential of:
 - Developing a “local play network”
 - Regenerating remnant indigenous vegetation
 - Creating outdoor gym stations
- Develop further strategies to strengthen pedestrian and cyclist connection between the Greensborough Activity Centre, public open space and the Principle Bicycle Network, particularly the proposed northern extension of the Banyule Trail in the vicinity of the Greensborough Highway and the Western Ring Road Bicycle Path.
- Provide an accessible connection between St Helena Road and the Plenty River Trail, through Pioneer Reserve.
- Develop and implement a masterplan for Kalparrin Gardens Reserve
- Investigate the feasibility of establishing a regional family play space in Kalparrin Gardens Reserve.
- Prepare a local open space strategy for the Greensborough Principal Activity Centre in order to identify strategies to address the specific and complex public open space needs in this designated high growth area, including improving connectivity, potential agreements with other stakeholders and investment in appropriate open space related infrastructure.
- Investigate the potential for better utilising the East-West Power Easement for public open space purposes; e.g. fenced dog exercise facility, community garden, BMX or skate facilities, outdoor gym equipment, shared trail etc.
- Develop a public open space masterplan for the Greensborough Walk to increase its recreation value as “urban” open space.

NORTH-WEST PRECINCT



The North West Precinct is made up of the suburbs of Bundoora, Watsonia and Watsonia North and has a total of 61.04 hectares of public open space. There are just over 19,000 residents living in the precinct.

Key Findings

- There is considerable potential in this precinct to better utilise the easements of various public utilities, such as the East-West Power between Plenty Road and Watsonia Road and various Melbourne Water and Yarra Valley Water easements in Bundoora and Watsonia North, including the Maroondah Aqueduct.
- There is potential to improve connectivity between this precinct and public open space in the City of Darebin, particularly the Gresswell Forest.
- The North West Precinct has a range of major barriers that potentially limit ease of access to public open space. These include the Melbourne-Hurstbridge railway line, the Greensborough Highway, Grimshaw Street and Plenty Road.

Recommendations

- Investigate the potential use as public open space of the Maroondah Aqueduct Easement, which cuts across the northern part of the precinct in an east-west direction and the pipe track, which runs north from Grimshaw Street.
- Explore the feasibility of strengthening Warrawee Park's role as a sporting reserve.
- Prepare a masterplan for Yulong Reserve
- Prepare a masterplan for Elder Street Reserve.
- Explore strategies including the potential for the development of joint community school agreements, in areas identified as needing improved access to public open space.
- Explore opportunities to improve access across Plenty Road to allow for better connectivity to regional open space in the City of Darebin, including Bundoora Park and the Darebin Creek corridor and trail.
- Increase the amount of imaginative, sensory, tactile and nature based play experiences within the precinct.
- Increase the number of accessible items of play equipment within the precinct.
- Identify a playground within the precinct to be fully fenced.





**STRATEGIC
ACTION PLAN
PUBLIC OPEN
SPACE PLAN**

Population : Open Space Ratio

Council will strive to maintain its current healthy ratio between the size of its population and the amount of public open space available to its residents and visitors.

N.B. It is currently 6.9 hectares per 1000 residents.

Strategic Actions	Specific Actions
<p>1. Monitoring Quantity</p> <p>Monitor and benchmark the ratio between Banyule’s population and the amount of usable and accessible public open space available against industry standards every five years.</p>	<p>Undertake a systematic “industry benchmarking” program, particularly with other middle ring urban councils, on a five yearly basis, in order to monitor Banyule’s on-going performance in relation to its population/public open space ratio.</p>
<p>2. Innovation</p> <p>Embrace a range of new and innovative approaches; e.g. land swaps, street closures, pop up parks, etc. in order to increase opportunities for Banyule residents to have easy access to reasonable quantities of local public open space.</p>	<p>Develop specific strategies for affected areas to offset the potential loss of public open space and the loss of habitat due to higher density development.</p> <p>Investigate strategies for increasing the availability of local public open space for residents in areas that aren’t within reasonable walking distance of a park, or where there is currently an under supply, such as Heidelberg Heights (refer to the areas identified in the public Open Space Map). This could include such strategies as creating additional public open space through street closures, pop up parks, negotiated joint use agreements with other public land management authorities, providing crossing of major barriers, acquisition of land, particularly that which is adjacent to current open space in order to expand existing reserves.</p> <p>Explore opportunities for new public open space with the City of Darebin and Latrobe University associated with the proposed future development of the Strathallan Golf Course on the southern boundary of the sub-precinct.</p> <p>Explore opportunities to improve access across Plenty Road to allow for improved connection to regional open space assets such as Bundoora Park.</p> <p>Explore additional open space opportunities on the extensive open space verges owned by VicRoads along the Greensborough Highway in Watsonia North.</p> <p>Explore joint school/community access to open space located on school land in areas where there is currently a deficiency in public parks or reserves.</p>
<p>3. Community School Agreements</p> <p>Develop joint use agreements with local schools to enable after hours community access to school open space and recreation facilities, such as sports fields, playgrounds; etc. particularly in areas identified as having limited access to public open space.</p>	<p>Develop joint use agreements with local schools in areas identified as having poor access to local public open space; e.g. Bundoora Secondary College, Greensborough Secondary College, etc.</p>
<p>4. Community Public Authority Agreements</p> <p>Develop joint use agreements with public authorities such as Ministry of Housing, Parks Victoria, Melbourne Water, Vic Track etc. to facilitate access to open space managed by these authorities and/or the joint development of facilities.</p>	<p>Identify public authority land suitable for community use, particularly in areas where there is a need to improve the supply of public open space.</p>

Strategic Actions	Specific Actions
<p>5. High Growth Areas</p> <p>Develop specific strategies for intensive development and significant population density increases; e.g. activity centres affected by the Latrobe National Employment Cluster, to enable residents of these areas to easily access “green” public open space.</p>	<p>Rezone public land such as road reserves, power easements etc. to public open space in areas of high population growth, or projected high population growth, to meet the demand for public open space; e.g. the Burgundy Street and Powlett Street Road reserves to be reclassified as public open space and prepare park development plans for them.</p> <p>Upgrade hard public spaces with user friendly amenities in high use areas to create inviting urban spaces for people of all ages; Ivanhoe Library Plaza, Greensborough Walk, the Bell Street Mall, etc.</p> <p>Actively seek out potential joint funding arrangements, with State and Federal Government, the City of Darebin and Latrobe University, that will potentially be available as a result of parts of Banyule being within the Latrobe National Employment Cluster.</p> <p>Prepare local open space plans for each of Banyule’s activity centres; i.e. Greensborough, Heidelberg and Ivanhoe.</p>
<p>6. Land Acquisition</p> <p>Where there is a demonstrated need for more public open space and where no other viable options exist, Council will consider appropriate land acquisition.</p>	<p>In the medium to longer term, consider strategies for acquiring where it will increase the size of an existing park and/or it will help to “unlock”and improve access to existing public open space; e.g. along the Darebin Creek corridor between Dougharty Road and Gona Street.</p>
<p>7. Disposal and/or change of function</p> <p>Council will only consider the disposal of public open space, or land which has the potential to be used as public open space where:</p> <p>(a) Where it is of low public open space value;</p> <p>(b) When other community recreation and environmental uses have been considered; and</p> <p>will endeavour to replace it in a location having regard to the overall open space needs of the community.</p>	<p>Identify and review the function of any parcels of public open space that are considered to be of low community value due to poor access, difficult topography, isolation, etc. and recommend specific strategies to address the matter.</p> <p>Identify and review the function of any parcels of public open space that are considered to be of low community value due to poor access, difficult topography, isolation, etc. and recommend specific strategies to address the matter.</p> <p>Conduct a review of Council owned land which is either:</p> <p>(a) Currently serving a public open space function, but not appropriately zoned or</p> <p>(b) Has a public open space zoning, but is not currently serving as public open space.</p>
<p>8. Development Contributions</p> <p>Actively pursue Council’s appropriate entitlement to development contributions to public open space to maximise the amount available to effectively service the changing public open space needs.</p>	<p>Undertake a Planning Scheme Amendment for a revised open space contribution rate.</p>

Quality of Open Space Infrastructure

Provide high quality public open space and related passive and active recreation facilities, including green infrastructure throughout Banyule.

Strategic Actions	Specific Actions
<p>9. Maintaining the Standard</p> <p>Council will strive to improve and maintain its public open space and related infrastructure, at a consistently high standard by providing sufficient resources through its annual operating and capital works programs.</p>	<p>Develop on-going maintenance and renewal programs for all parks and gardens asset classes; e.g. provision and on going maintenance of trail side furniture on Banyule’s shared trail network.</p> <hr/> <p>Develop a parks and gardens asset policy to ensure high standard uniform park furniture is provided though out Banyule and prepare a 10- year program for implementation.</p>
<p>10. Community Safety</p> <p>Council will work towards making all public open space in Banyule safe and feel safe to be in, through openness, natural surveillance and good sightlines.</p>	<p>Investigate and identify strategies for opening up areas of public open space that are secluded and provide better access and improved natural surveillance and, where appropriate, lighting: e.g. the Darebin Creek Corridor.</p>
<p>11. Effective Strategic Design</p> <p>Maximize the use and community benefit of key parcels of Council public open space through the use of good strategic planning and design principles when planning or upgrading public open space infrastructure.</p>	<p>Develop a ten-year capital program to optimise the use of public open space in areas ear marked for higher density development, including a greater emphasis on multi-use of facilities and the creation of more multi-functional spaces and improved access.</p> <hr/> <p>Prepare a 15 year program for the development of masterplans for key parks and reserves; e.g. Heidelberg Park, Macleod Park, Elder Street Reserve, etc.</p>
<p>12. Development Contributions</p> <p>Actively pursue Council’s maximum entitlement to development contributions to public open space to assist council to maximise the quality of public open space to enable it to effectively service changing open space needs, particularly those arising from sub division.</p>	<p>Undertake a Planning Scheme Amendment for a revised open space contribution rate.</p>

PILLAR 03. ACCESSIBILITY AND CONNECTION

Access and Connectivity of Open Space

All members of the Banyule community will have the opportunity to have good easy access to and a strong connection with public open space.

Strategic Actions	Specific Actions
<p>13. Access</p> <p>Work towards making existing parks, reserves and conservation areas and the facilities within them, comply with Universal Design.</p>	<p>Develop a 15 year program for providing better connectivity and access within and between parks</p> <p>Develop a program to identifying major roads which will require pedestrian crossings in order to improve access to public open space; e.g. St Helena Road, in order to provide safe access to Anthony Beale Reserve.</p>
<p>14. Walkability</p> <p>At least 90% of Banyule residents should be able to easily and safely walk to at least one green park, or reserve in five minutes, without having to cross any major barriers. NB: A walk of five minutes generally equates to approximately 400 metres.</p>	<p>Explore opportunities with neighbouring councils, over major streams such as the Yarra River and Darebin Creek, to enable residents from Banyule to more easily access and enjoy the benefits of public open space in neighbouring municipalities; e.g. The Cities of Darebin and Manningham.</p> <p>Increase pedestrian and cycling connectivity to public open space from areas with, or ear marked to have, high density residential development by investing in appropriate infrastructure; e.g. Heidelberg Activity Centre, the Greensborough Principal Activity Centre, etc.</p>
<p>15. Connectivity</p> <p>Wherever practical, parks and reserves in Banyule will be connected by safe accessible corridors.</p>	<p>Include the recommendations of the Northern Region Off-Road Trails Strategy in Council's 10 year Capital plan.</p> <p>Work with other Councils in the region to prepare a joint submission to both State and Commonwealth governments to help fund the implementation of the Northern Region Off-Road Trails Strategy</p> <p>Develop a 10 year plan for the installation of new and the upgrade of existing trail side furniture.</p> <p>In acknowledgement of the rural nature of a significant proportion of the East Precinct and the number of horse riders residing there, investigate the feasibility of enabling access to open space suitable for horse riding by providing safe rideable links such as shared trails, wide road side verges, etc.</p> <p>Develop an on-going program to improve way finding street signage between local parks in order to enhance connectivity and provide greater diversity of experience.</p>
<p>16. Community Involvement</p> <p>Invite the community to be involved in the provision, planning and design of public open space, through well structured public consultation processes.</p>	<p>Ensure that an effective multi-faceted public consultation is conducted whenever an important strategic project is being undertaken, such as the development of a reserve/park masterplan.</p>
<p>17. Information & Effective Promotion</p> <p>Utilise all means at Council's disposal, including the Banyule website, social media and other technology, to promote diversity of public open space available within the municipality.</p>	<p>Develop a parks and gardens information and promotions strategy and include it in Council's 10 year budget.</p> <p>Develop and implement an interactive Banyule Parks & Gardens and Playspaces website.</p>
<p>18. Regional Trails Network</p> <p>Work with the other Councils in the Northern Region as well as the State and Federal Governments, to implement the Northern Region Trails Strategy.</p>	<p>Include Banyule's priorities from the Northern Region Trails Strategy in Council's ten year capital program.</p>

Equity of Distribution

Work towards providing an equitable distribution of public open space throughout Banyule to ensure all residents have good access to quality green public open space.

Strategic Actions	Specific Actions
<p>19. Equity for specific Communities</p> <p>Identify communities most affected negatively by inequitable distribution of public open space and develop strategies to address the needs of these communities.</p>	<p>Identify and prioritise the areas that most require improved access to public open space and identify specific strategies for implementing the strategies that are appropriate for each of those areas.</p>
<p>20. Resourcing</p> <p>The areas in greatest need of public open space will be given priority in the allocation of resources.</p>	<p>The open space assets in areas of greatest social need will be given a high priority in relation to upgrade and improvement; e.g. Ramu Parade Reserve, Heidelberg West.</p> <p>Identify key barriers and develop an on-going funding program for improving access to public open space and for overcoming barriers in communities that have been identified as priorities as having limited and/or restricted local access to public open space.</p>

PILLAR 05. DIVERSITY

Diversity of Need

Acknowledgement that different members of the community have significantly different needs will be a primary consideration in the planning, development and maintenance of public open space.

Strategic Actions	Specific Actions
<p>21. Diversity</p> <p>In recognition of needs of Banyule’s diverse communities, Council will endeavour to provide a wide variety of public open space types and open space infrastructure.</p>	<p>Develop strategies and on-going funding programs for open space facilities that provide greater diversity of opportunity; e.g. environmental education trails, nature based play areas, community gardens, outdoor gym equipment, fenced off-lead dog exercise areas, bike and BMX facilities; riding and walking circuits, etc.</p> <p>Identify sites where possible that aren’t considered “core” public open space; e.g. power easements, for the development of specialised open space facilities, such as fenced, off-lead dog exercise areas, community gardens, BMX jumps, etc.</p>
<p>22. Environment Protection & Biodiversity</p> <p>In order to provide diversity of experience to residents and to protect the habitat of native plants and animals, Council will continue to protect, maintain and enhance its sensitive environments, stream corridors and bushland areas.</p>	<p>Develop a 10 year program of additional tree planting in areas that will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) enhance Banyule’s native habitat corridors and (b) strengthen canopy connectivity with habitat corridors from the suburban street network, stand alone parks and private land. <p>Develop an on-going program for indigenous revegetation, habitat restoration and weed management programs along the main river and creek corridors.</p> <p>Maintain the ongoing habitat restoration programs within key reserves, particularly Peck’s Dam Reserve, Simonelli Reserve, Dalvida Reserve, Rattray Reserve, St. Helena Bush Reserve, Yandell Habitat Reserve and Browns Nature Reserve.</p> <p>Maintain the ongoing habitat restoration programs within key reserves, particularly Peck’s Dam Reserve, Simonelli Reserve, Dalvida Reserve, Rattray Reserve, St. Helena Bush Reserve, Yandell Habitat Reserve and Browns Nature Reserve.</p> <p>Reinforce indigenous vegetation linkages along St. Helena Road, the ring road reservation and through linear reserves in Montmorency and St. Helena, including Settler’s Park.</p> <p>Develop a 10 year program to enable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) systematic implementation of a bushland interpretation program (b) the implementation of an education program in the importance of protecting Banyule’s bushland areas. <p>Investigate specific programs for the re-establishment of the Eltham Copper Butterfly habitat, particularly through planting of Sweet Bursaria, around the Greenhill Road area near Andrew Yandell Habitat Reserve and Browns Nature Reserve as well as in the Montmorency area.</p> <p>Establish regeneration areas around remnant indigenous vegetation in reserves north of Partingtons Flat (currently mown)</p> <p>Continue to work with and actively support environmental reserve “friends” groups.</p>
<p>23. Innovation & Initiative</p> <p>The identification and implementation of new and improved ways to meet community needs through progressive public open space management, planning and design practices will be continuous and ongoing.</p>	<p>When preparing reserve masterplans, consider the latest industry trends in recreation and where possible, include new, different or innovative experiences.</p>

Sustainable Practices

A wide variety of sustainable practices and initiatives will be identified and used in the management, planning and maintenance of public open space.

Strategic Actions	Specific Actions
<p>24. Sharing of Resources and Strategic Partnerships</p> <p>Wherever possible, particularly in relation to large expensive facilities, Council will endeavour to seek out opportunities to work co-operatively and develop partnerships with other public land management authorities and neighbouring councils in order to minimise unnecessary duplication and to save finite resources.</p>	<p>Explore opportunities with Latrobe University, and Darebin City Council for jointly developing sporting facilities. In particular specialised high use facilities, such as synthetic sports fields to meet the growing demand for sports such as soccer.</p> <hr/> <p>Explore opportunities along the Darebin Creek Corridor for joint sporting and recreation facility development with Darebin City Council, particularly in the Northland, Olympic Reserve area.</p> <hr/> <p>Develop and upgrade Olympic Park into a major regional sport and recreation hub and undertake the necessary consultation and planning processes to ensure community benefit, access and community safety are maximised. Involve Darebin City Council and the Metropolitan Planning Authority to ensure that opportunities of joint funding and joint use of facilities are maximised, particularly given the large scale planning occurring around the Latrobe National Employment Cluster and the Northland Structure Plan.</p> <hr/> <p>Work with Latrobe University and Darebin Council to improve access from the West Precinct to the Latrobe Sports Fields, Olympic Park and to Sullivan Reserve from both sides of the Darebin Creek.</p> <hr/> <p>Work with Manningham City Council and the State Government to establish pedestrian and cycling connectivity between the Warringal Parklands, the Main Yarra Trail on the western side of the Yarra River with Banksia Metropolitan Park and Heide Museum of Modern Art on the eastern side of the River.</p> <hr/> <p>Negotiate with Parks Victoria, the State Government and the City of Manningham to construct a pedestrian bridge linking Yarra Flats Metropolitan Park and the Main Yarra Trail to community facilities on the eastern side of the Yarra River including Bulleen Park and the Principal Bicycle Net designated bicycle lanes on Bulleen Road.</p> <hr/> <p>Continue to work closely and co-operatively with Parks Victoria in relation to the management of Yarra Flats Metropolitan Park and in identifying potential joint projects and programs.</p> <hr/> <p>Work with Parks Victoria in the asset management and sharing of resources where adjoining land is being managed, including the co-ordination of joint programs, such as pest eradication.</p> <hr/> <p>Initiate discussions with Melbourne Water Council and/or Yarra Valley Water, to explore potential new linear open space development opportunities along the two easements in Bundoora North: i.e. the Maroondah Aqueduct which travel across the northern half of the sub-precinct in an east-west direction (and through Parade College), and 2) another Melbourne Water Pipe Track from Parade College to Grimshaw Street (between Dendaryl Drive and Sharpes Road).</p> <hr/> <p>Create environmental planning guidelines that can be used to form species selection and siting of indigenous vegetation into developments, particularly commercial developments and residential apartments in high growth areas such as activity centres and areas included in the Latrobe National Employment cluster.</p>

Strategic Actions	Specific Actions
<p>25. Strategic use of Water</p> <p>Opportunities will be actively pursued, in consultation with relevant water authorities, for long term on-going solutions to guaranteeing adequate and low cost water supplies for Banyule's parks and reserves and trees.</p>	<p>Because of continued climate change and the increasing likelihood of future long-term water restrictions, Council to continue to look at strategies such as stormwater harvesting and alternative sporting surfaces in order to position itself well for potential long regular dry spells.</p>
<p>26. Strategic use of Technology</p> <p>Actively identify opportunities to use the latest technology in the management, planning and maintenance of parks and reserves in order to optimise sustainable outcomes.</p>	<p>Develop a parks technology implementation plan and link it to councils strategic resource plan.</p>
<p>27. Sustainable Surfaces</p> <p>Consider use of alternative surfaces, including synthetic playing surfaces for sporting fields, where high use is not sustainable with natural surfaces.</p>	<p>Develop a broadly based long-term synthetic sports field strategy and prepare a 10 year prioritised capital program to implement the strategy.</p>
<p>28. Sustainable Contributions</p> <p>Progress a Planning Scheme Amendment to ensure there is a sustainable level of development contributions to public open space to meet anticipated increased demand due to population growth and changing community profile.</p>	<p>Provide resources to ensure that a Planning Scheme Amendment can proceed.</p>





**STRATEGIC
ACTION PLAN
PLAYSPACE**

Council will strive to maintain its currently healthy provision of public playgrounds and will seek to increase provision in areas where demand justifies it.

Strategic Actions	Specific Actions
<p>1. High Growth Areas</p> <p>In areas of increasing population density, such as the Latrobe National Employment Cluster and designated activity centres, assess the demand for public playgrounds and where demand justifies it, increase the number of playgrounds and/or expand and upgrade existing playgrounds in those areas.</p>	<p>Establish, or upgrade playgrounds and associated facilities in public open space which is located in areas designated for high growth; e.g. Bryant Reserve (within the Ivanhoe Shopping Centre).</p> <hr/> <p>Develop joint use agreements with schools located within areas designated for high growth, to upgrade the playgrounds where necessary and allow access for the general public to the school play equipment “after school hours;” e.g. Heidelberg Primary School.</p>
<p>2. Innovation</p> <p>Embrace a range of new and innovative approaches for providing public playspaces; e.g. street closures, pop up playgrounds, urban spaces and use of public areas in commercial zones, etc. in order to increase opportunities for Banyule residents in areas where there is high demand and/or an undersupply of public playgrounds.</p>	<p>Identify areas/streets where innovative approaches to the provision of playgrounds are required due to lack of appropriate public open space.</p> <hr/> <p>Whenever planning the establishment of a new playground or the upgrade of existing one, consider new and innovative trends within the industry.</p>
<p>3. Community School Agreements</p> <p>Develop joint use agreements with local schools to enable after hours community access to school playgrounds and playspaces, particularly in areas identified as having limited access to public open space.</p>	<p>Negotiate the development of joint school community playgrounds with schools in areas where there is limited access to public playgrounds and public open space.</p>
<p>4. Community Public Authority Agreements</p> <p>Negotiate joint access/development agreements with public authorities, such as Ministry of Housing, Parks Victoria, etc. to facilitate access and/or provide playspaces for general community, use where appropriate.</p>	<p>Identify public authority land suitable for establishing community playgrounds, particularly in areas where there is a need to improve access to playgrounds.</p>

Strategic Actions	Specific Actions
<p>5. Whole of Park Play</p> <p>Playgrounds, wherever possible, will be integrated with other park activities, amenities, natural park features and landscaping in order to optimise the play experiences and social benefits for all.</p>	<p>When replacing or upgrading playgrounds, or preparing park masterplans, ensure the concept of “whole of park play” is used as a fundamental principle.</p>
<p>6. Design Standards</p> <p>All playgrounds will be designed and maintained so they meet all relevant standards and guidelines, particularly the Australian Playground Standards.</p>	<p>When planning new playspaces and when upgrading, or replacing existing ones, ensure that they comply with the official Australian Playgrounds Standards.</p>
<p>7. CPTED</p> <p>Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles will be incorporated into the design of all playspaces.</p>	<p>When designing new playspaces and when upgrading or replacing existing ones, community safety will be a primary consideration and Council’s community safety officer will be consulted and CPTED principles will be applied. Choice of materials, the design and styles of the equipment installed, as well the location within the park and the type and quantity of landscaping and planting used will be considered from a community safety perspective.</p>
<p>8. Shade</p> <p>Provision of shade is considered an important health related element of a playground. Wherever possible, Council will endeavour to provide natural shade in and around playgrounds. NB: Artificial shade, such as shade sails over playgrounds will only be considered at regional or major neighbourhood level playgrounds where there is insufficient natural shade.</p>	<p>Develop a ten year tree planting program at playgrounds where more shade is required</p>

Access for All

All children and their families, regardless of physical or intellectual ability, will be able to access and use playgrounds in Banyule.

Strategic Actions	Specific Actions
<p>9. Connectivity</p> <p>Wherever possible, provide sealed DDA compliant paths connecting to Council owned playgrounds.</p>	<p>Develop a ten year program for improving connection to playgrounds within parks.</p>
<p>10. Accessible Equipment</p> <p>A number of accessible play items will be provided in each major neighbourhood and regional level playspace.</p>	<p>Identify several priority playgrounds in each precinct in which to provide key accessible items of playground equipment and develop a ten year capital program to guide implementation.</p>
<p>11. Accessible Furniture</p> <p>Whenever park furniture is installed in or adjacent to playgrounds, it will be “disability friendly;” e.g. arm rests on seats, wheelchair compatible tables, all furniture accessible via DDA compliant paths, etc.</p>	<p>Develop a park furniture strategy which is “access friendly”and link it to the 10 year capital program.</p>
<p>12. Local Play Networks</p> <p>Where there are several pocket or local playgrounds located within walking distance of each other, Council will endeavour to create a local playground network by strengthening connection between the playgrounds through improved paths and/or information and directional signage and by providing a different type of play experience in each.</p>	<p>Identify locations where local play networks are needed and develop a program for them to be implemented over time.</p>
<p>13. Community Engagement</p> <p>In planning, designing, upgrading and replacing playgrounds and playspaces, a suitable, project specific community engagement process will be undertaken to ensure the needs, views and ideas of the community are considered.</p>	<p>A substantial community consultation will be undertaken as part of the planning process for any regional playspace, or substantial neighbourhood level playspaces.</p> <p>A local consultation will be conducted with residents in the immediate vicinity of a local playground, when the playground equipment is due to be replaced or upgraded as part of Council’s on-going playground replacement program, to ensure local people have the opportunity to express their preferences.</p>
<p>14. Regional and Significant Neighbourhood Playspace</p> <p>A substantial community consultation process will be undertaken as part of the planning process for any regional and significant neighbourhood level playspaces development.</p>	<p>Ensure that a comprehensive consultation plan is incorporated in to project plans for regional and significant neighbourhood playspaces.</p>
<p>15. Playground Replacement Program</p> <p>A local consultation will be conducted with neighbouring residents, schools and businesses when playground equipment is due for replacement, to ensure local people have the opportunity to express their preferences.</p>	<p>Ensure that there is a consultation process incorporated into the annual program.</p>

PILLAR 04. EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION

Work towards providing an equitable distribution of public playgrounds throughout Banyule to ensure all residents have good access to at least one playground.

Strategic Actions	Specific Actions
16. Equity for specific communities Identify communities most affected negatively by inequitable distribution of public playgrounds and develop strategies to address the needs of these communities.	Develop a program to systematically address the play needs of areas that don't have easy access to public playgrounds.
17. Resourcing The areas in greatest need of a public playground will be given priority in the allocation of resources.	Develop a program to systematically provide new or upgraded playgrounds for disadvantaged areas currently under provided for; e.g. Ramu Parade Reserve, (upgrade to neighbourhood level playspace).

Playspaces in Banyule provide a diverse variety of play experiences which people, regardless of age or developmental stage can enjoy and grow from.

Strategic Actions	Specific Actions
<p>18. Design for Play Diversity</p> <p>When designing, upgrading or replacing playgrounds, consideration will be given to the need for providing – Stimulating fun and learning activities – Age related risk opportunities – Activities that support the development of different skills and abilities -structured and unstructured play opportunities – public art in playspaces.</p>	<p>When designing, upgrading, or replacing playgrounds give consideration to the types of play experiences already available in the neighbourhood and include play experiences currently not available locally.</p>
<p>19. Access to play Diversity</p> <p>Council will work towards providing a complete range of play experiences in each precinct where the sum total of the play experiences offered by the playgrounds within each precinct will include the following play opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Basic play activities, including swinging, spinning, climbing and sliding – Imaginative play – Sensory and tactile experiences – Challenging activities – Contact with nature and natural phenomenon – A range of age specific activities – Family inclusive spaces – At least one fully fenced playground – Accessible items of equipment and support facilities – At least one regional or significant neighbourhood playspace; i.e. a long stay park experience. 	<p>Identify the play experience imbalance in each precinct and develop a program to systematically address them.</p> <p>When designing, upgrading or replacing playgrounds, consideration will be given to the need for providing: Stimulating fun and learning activities, Age related risk opportunities for children, Activities that support the development of different skills and abilities in children and structured and unstructured play opportunities.</p> <p>Identify locations suitable to provide nature based play elements and develop a program for systematic implementation.</p>

PILLAR 06. SUSTAINABILITY

Banyule's playgrounds are designed and built to be sustainable.

Strategic Actions	Specific Actions
20. Sustainable Cost Plan and develop playspaces in consideration of all costs, including those associated with the installation maintenance and replacement of the playground equipment and associated amenities.	When building new playgrounds and when replacing or upgrading existing ones, on-going and longer term costs will be a primary consideration, including maintenance costs over the life time of the playground and the cost of eventual replacement.
21. Environmental Sustainability Design and build playspaces that minimise impact on the environment, both in terms of their location and the materials used.	When building new playgrounds and when replacing existing ones, priority will be given to using sustainable and renewable materials to help minimise Council's carbon footprint.



STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION

Funding the actions for the implementation the Public Open Strategy will be enabled through a number of sources, in particularly Council rate revenue. However increasingly other sources, particularly developers open space contributions, will need to play an important role in funding open space acquisitions and improvements.

This is due to a number of factors, including the increasing rate of development, growing population density, the upwardly spiralling cost of land and the State Government's introduction of rate capping.

There is an increasing need for certainty about developers' contributions. Presently there is scope for developers to use the planning process to minimise, or in some circumstances, even completely eliminate their public open space contributions. Contributions from developers need to be confirmed through an appropriate amendment in the planning scheme. Given the high of projected growth for specific parts of Banyule, there is a strong likelihood that council will need to identify strategies for increasing its public open space resources in the future.

Council has developed a Strategic Resource Plan (SRP) that sets out its funding resources and priorities for up to ten years in advance. The SRP, like most long term plans, is broad and will be further subjected to evolving influences throughout its life, including annual reviews. The Strategic Action Plans included in this Public Open Space Strategy will be one of the key influences on the SRP going forward.

In preparing the Public Open Space Plan a detailed assessment of all assets located in public open space throughout Banyule has been conducted and a public open space projects list has been developed by asset class to address long term renewal needs. Council also has developed a 10 year strategic asset plan, which is also subject to annual reviews. The public open space projects list will be one of the regular inputs into the annual reviews of this strategic asset plan.

REFERENCES

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