



**Merri-bek**  
City Council

# Fawkner Merri Creek Parklands Plan

**July 2024**

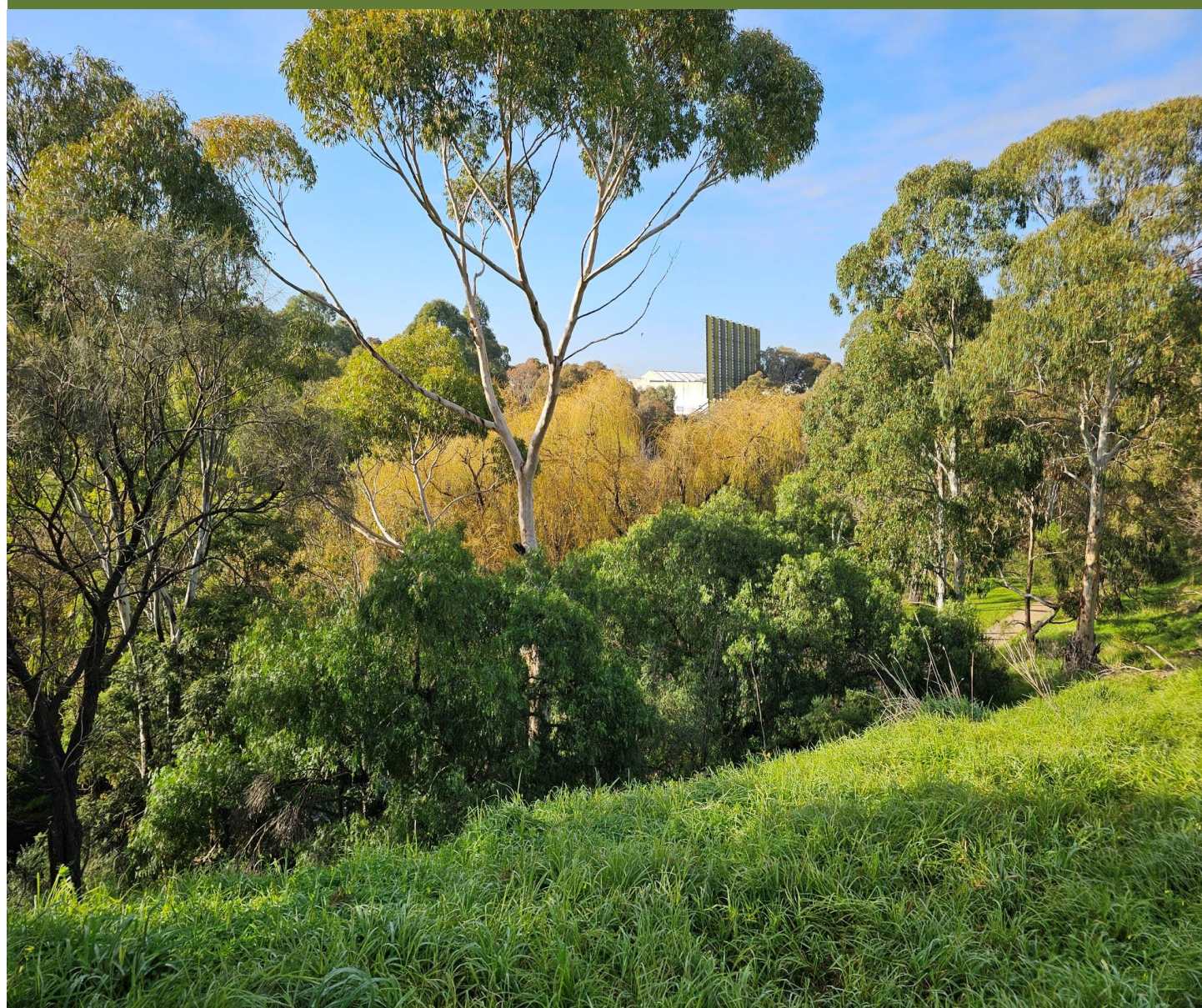






Fig 1. Merri Creek at Bababi Djinanang Park  
Cover Image: Parker Reserve view over Merri Creek

## FAWKNER MERRI CREEK PARKLANDS PLAN

Prepared by:  
Open Space Design & Development Unit  
Merri-bek City Council

July 2024

To achieve a healthy living stream flowing through an attractive environment which provides habitat for native animals and is valued by the community as a peaceful, passive open space haven.

To protect the natural and cultural features of the Merri Creek corridor through sensitive management which will provide a lasting benefit for the community.

Vision from the Merri Creek Environs Strategy

Notes:

1. Analysis and evaluation of existing conditions/facilities/structures in the report are for the purpose of planning only and require further detailed evaluation prior to implementation of recommended actions.
2. Due to the limited survey information available, site specific recommendations for works require further detailed investigation, survey, structural/hydraulic/traffic engineering where appropriate and detailed design prior to implementation.
3. Preliminary opinion of probable cost and implementation priorities are preliminary planning estimates only. The preliminary estimate has been prepared without detailed feature and level survey and is not a quantity survey. A further stage of design development will be required in order to finalise cost estimates.

REVISION	DATE	AMENDMENT
E	10/07/2024	Final V5 Council endorsed
D	11/09/2023	Final Draft V4 incorporating stage 3 community and Council feedback
C	7/02/2023	Draft V3 incorporating Stage 2 community and Council feedback
B	1/12/2022	Revised Draft V2 incorporating Council Project Reference Group comments for stage 2 community engagement
A	1/10/2022	Draft Report V1 for engagement key stakeholders and Council Units.

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## Acknowledgement of Country

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Merri-bek City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waterways in the area now known as Merri-bek. We pay respect to their Elders past, present, and emerging, as well as to all First Nations communities, who significantly contribute to the life of the area.

This Plan acknowledges the principles and objectives of Merri Merri Wayi and will implement this Plan in partnership with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Traditional Owners, the local community, Friends of Merri Creek, Fawkner Residents Association, Merri Creek Management Committee and Darebin City Council.

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Fig 2. Bababi Djinanang Grasslands

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Plan Context

The Fawkner Merri Creek Parklands Plan has been prepared to identify, protect and enhance the environmental, cultural heritage and community open space values along the Merri Creek open space corridor in Fawkner and Coburg North (Figure 1). This valuable 71-hectare parkland is five kilometres long and between 35m and 450m wide and extends from the Western Ring Road and Moomba Park in the north to Parker Reserve and Spry St Reserve in Coburg North in the south. It includes mostly open grassland parkland along the, often steep, Merri Creek adjoining Jukes Road, Leonard Street, Hare Street, McBryde Street, Sahara Way, Mathieson Street and Keady Street.



Fig 3. Merri Creek at Moomba Park Reserve

The Plan seeks to balance the role of the creek as a primary waterway biodiversity corridor with the need to maintain drainage and key service easement functionality whilst meeting the increasing needs of the local community for open space and recreational access. The draft plan has been developed by Merri-bek City Council in consultation with the local community, the Friends of Merri Creek, the Fawkner Residents Association and Merri Creek Management Committee. Following discussion and refinement of priorities and actions in consultation with key stakeholders and the local community the final plan will be used to guide strategic planning and management actions, capital works and implementation priorities over the next nine years along the creek and open space corridor.

The Merri Creek has shaped this landscape with a deep valley surrounded by very flat volcanic plains. Rocky basalt escarpments form important visual features around Moomba Park. The

Fawkner Merri Creek Parklands are on the traditional land of the Wurundjeri-willam people, a clan of the Woiwurrung language group. There is evidence of a long association with the waterways and adjoining parklands with the location of several middens and artefact sites. In recent years, Council, the Merri Creek Management Committee and Friends of Merri Creek have been working with the Wurundjeri's natural resource management Narrap team to undertake traditional land management practices such as cool burns at the Bababi Djinanang Grasslands and Moomba Park. Merri-bek will continue to celebrate, honour the rich Aboriginal history of this land and actively work to expand traditional land management practices in partnership with the Wurundjeri Land Council.



Fig 4. Extent of Fawkner Merri Creek Parklands

Land management practices changed dramatically following colonisation with broad scale vegetation clearance for livestock and the forced removal of the traditional owners. These actions not only threatened the livelihoods and culture of indigenous communities but also resulted in the significant loss of vegetation, habitat and eventually soil erosion and deterioration of the waterway. Since the middle of the 19th century land along the Merri Creek has supported farming, basalt and clay quarries, market gardens, industry, services and residential development. Large market gardens continued to occupy two sites along the Merri Creek floodplains at the eastern end of Jukes Road and Lorne St up until the 1960s. Since then, residential development has come to dominate the adjoining land with very few active frontages on to the parklands.

Some of the residential subdivision resulted in the sale and development of land close to the creek around Hare and Imaroo Streets. Fortunately, the legacy of a now rejected proposed freeway reserve for the Fawkner Merri Creek Parklands meant that residential development is mostly well set-back from the Creek. the naturalised form of the waterway was retained.

During the 1970s the Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works channelised the original alignment of the creek to create a standardized V-shaped channel to speed up the flow of flood waters. This heavily destructive intervention was usual practice at the time. This section of the creek has also been heavily modified by sewer and other works which follow and crisscross the waterway. Active and passive recreation commenced in the 1970s in Moomba Park and Parker Reserve with the provision of sporting fields, pavilions and playgrounds to meet the needs of the growing residential population. The remaining areas of open space were generally neglected until community interest in the Merri Creek corridor increased during the 1980s.

Community demands to protect, and value waterway open space resulted in the removal of the freeway reservation from the Merri Creek between Mahoneys Road and Bell Street as well as improvements to the creek environment with revegetation and new trails. Following the success of community protests to stop the freeway, several sections of the parklands corridor have been

enhanced by areas of indigenous revegetation, walking /cycling trails and areas of adjoining open space provide significant environmental, open space and recreation highly valued by local residents. A few areas of remnant vegetation have been retained, protected and enhanced. Despite these improvements, large areas of the parklands and waterway remain in a poor state dominated by neglected open space, pockets of woody weeds with low levels of environmental and social outcomes.



Fig 5. Site prior to the construction of the Growling Grass Frog Wetlands in Moomba Park in 2024.

Large open areas along the western banks of the Merri Creek in Fawkner, which were initially set aside for the freeway reservation, now contain some of the best quality examples of grassland vegetation in the municipality. A four-hectare grassland at Bababi Djinanang has been protected and intensively managed for conservation since 1995 by the Merri Creek Management Committee (MCMC) on behalf of Council. Some smaller grassland areas at Emma and Hare Streets Fawkner have also been actively managed for two decades.

Many of these grassland parcels are of national significance, either representing endangered species (EPBC listed communities) and/or containing the EPBC listed species, Matted Flax Lily (*Dianella amonena*) and a diverse range of ground storey species of interest and significance.

Following strong calls from the Fawkner community to protect parklands around McBryde Street and Leonard Street from subdivision, Council purchased several parcels of 'surplus' land from VicRoads in 2019. These areas of open space still retain native grassland values despite being neglected for some time. Additional VicRoads land was acquired around Queens Parade as well as private land at Spry Street and Newlands Road (Figure 3). A key rationale for acquiring the nearly five hectares of open space was to protect the waterway habitat corridor and provide a diversity of social and recreation opportunities (Moreland Open Space Strategy 2012).

Earlier plans and actions for the parklands include the Moomba Park Concept Plan (1997), the Management Plan for Remnant Native Grassland at Jukes Road Grasslands (Bababi Djinanang) and the Merri Creek and Environs Strategy (2009). With the exception of the Bababi Djinanang Plan, these other plans have experienced limited success in terms of implementation in Fawkner.

Plans are now underway to improve the management and further enhance connectivity, diversity and resilience of this highly important open space, habitat corridor and nationally significant grasslands. Prior to commencing these works, it is now an ideal time to engage the community to provide an overarching integrated strategy for activating, investing in, and improving the Fawkner Parklands.



Fig 6. Environmental weeds regularly spill over from neighbouring properties near the national significant Bababi Djinanang Grasslands.

## 1.2 Plan Objectives

The Plan will provide direction and assistance for the future planning, design and management of the Fawkner Merri Creek Parklands open spaces. It outlines the direction for future management and specify the types of new facilities to be developed. It also offers guidance for Council to address the various challenges impacting Merri Creek and our open spaces in the parklands, while also aiming for these spaces to be robust, ecologically diverse and accessible to all. The following objectives have been identified by the community and stakeholders.

- Celebrate, connect and enhance the natural bushland character of the corridor
- Strengthen the habitat corridor and connections with adjoining open space
- Engage with Traditional Owners to protect, celebrate and manage Cultural Heritage
- Enhance social value and use through renewal of aging open space infrastructure and exploration of new opportunities including playgrounds, fencing and park facilities
- Facilitate accessible pedestrian and cycling movement including improving connections with the wider transport network
- Investigate Integrated Water Management opportunities to treat and improve local flooding, stormwater quality, and waterway health as well as the supply of alternatives to potable water irrigation
- Maintain serviceability and function of infrastructure assets, service and easements running through the reserve
- Implement design and development principles which consider the long-term sustainable management of the reserves and resource use for maintenance activities

## 1.3 Strategic Context

### Merri-bek Open Space Strategy 2024

Council's Open Space Strategy recognises the importance of community use of open space, biodiversity and community connections to nature as significant elements in Council's open space network and in creating a greener, more liveable city.

### Nature Plan 2020-2030

The Merri-bek Nature Plan is the first dedicated plan towards the protection and enhancement of biodiversity in Merri-bek. It highlights the challenges for nature in the City including climate change, habitat fragmentation, loss of diversity and impacts from increasing urban development.

### Urban Forest Strategy 2017-2027

Merri-bek's Urban Forest Strategy aims to protect and enhance Merri-bek's natural assets on public and private land, including street trees, significant trees, areas of conservation value and habitat

corridors. It seeks to turn around the decline in overall vegetation in Merri-bek with ambitious targets to double public realm canopy by 2030 through a range of greening operations. One of the key objectives as it relates to this plan is to create a diverse urban forest of trees and other vegetation that will enhance urban ecology.

### **Integrated Water Management (IWM) Plan 2020**

The IWM Plan aims to create a City that is more resilient to future population growth and climate change through efficient use of the diverse water resources available. The Plan aims to enhance and protect the health of watercourses, wetlands and aquatic environments; mitigating flood risk and damage; and creating high quality, healthy, cool and connected public spaces and landscapes that harvest, clean and recycle water. The Moomba Park wetland is an outcome of this work.

### **Merri Creek and Environs Strategy 1999**

Provides an overview of important issues along the waterway corridors of the Merri Creek and its tributaries and documents agreed objectives, targets and actions to achieve their resolution. Merri-bek Council is a member of the Merri Creek Management Committee who oversees the delivery of this strategy. It includes strategic and site-specific actions which provide context for the Fawkner Merri Creek Parklands Plan.

### **Merri Creek Land Tenure Investigation 2003**

The 2003 Merri Creek Land tenure Investigations provides a thorough insight into illegal encroachment, vague or poorly assigned property boundary lines and open space connectivity and access constraints.

### **Moreland Environmental Vegetation Assessment, 2011**

This detailed assessment of remnant and significant indigenous vegetation across the municipality provides management priorities for protecting vegetation and responding to threats. The Fawkner Merri Creek Parklands include several high value areas.

### **Metropolitan Open Space Strategy 2021**

This State Government strategy guides all levels of government in the planning, management and delivery of a quality open space network over the next 30 years. It aims to achieve this by fostering a coordinated approach by state and local governments, Traditional Owner groups, communities, researchers and businesses to protect existing open space, apply innovation to make use of other types of public land, and create new metropolitan parks and trails

### **Healthy Waterways Strategy 2019**

Identifies a collaborative approach to waterway management with objectives and actions for improving the health of Melbourne waterways shared across state and local government, water corporations and the community. It identifies a number of priorities for sub-catchments such as the Merri Creek including revegetation and amenity improvement targets

### **Merri-bek Planning Scheme**

The Merri-bek Planning Scheme recognises and seeks to protect biodiversity through a number of Clauses:

- Strategic Framework Clause 21.03-6 Open Space Network Objective 16 “To protect the biodiversity, amenity and recreational values of the open space network (identified)’ and a number of particularly relevant strategies, including:
- 16.5 Ensure development protects and enhances areas of remnant vegetation and indigenous revegetation as identified in the Merri-bek Open Space Strategy 2024.
- 16.5 Ensure development does not compromise the ecological integrity of the Merri, Moonee Ponds, Edgars, Westbreen and Merlynston Creek corridors.

- 16.6 Create a continuous public open space corridor with a minimum of 50 metres on each side along the Moonee Ponds, Merri and Edgars Creeks. A minimum of 30 metres from the edge of the embankment on each side should be a vegetated buffer.
- Environmental Significance Overlay Clause 42.01 over waterway corridors

These overlays recognise the environmental, heritage and recreational values of these corridors and identify a number of objectives to be achieved including protection and restoration of natural systems, waterway function, recreation use, landscape character and heritage (aboriginal and geological). Environmental Sustainable Development Clause 22:08: provides a framework for early consideration of environmental sustainability at the building design stage and includes objectives for a range of considerations including stormwater management and urban ecology.

## **1.4 Land Management**

Public open space along the Fawkner Merri Creek open space corridor is mostly owned and managed by Merri-bek City Council. With the exception of Bababi Djinang, most of the parkland has not been formally named and gazetted. Several areas of open space remain Crown land with responsibility with State Government Departments and Agencies such as Department of Environment, Parks Victoria and VicRoads. Melbourne Water maintain the bed and banks of the Merri Creek as well as the Campbellfield Drain.

Most of the open space is zoned as Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ) or Public Use Zone (PUZ). An Erosion Management Overlay (EMO) and a Special Building Overlay (SBO) extend throughout the open space corridor.

The Traditional Owners and Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) for the northern suburbs of Melbourne including Merri Creek are the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Council. A 400m wide Cultural Heritage Sensitivity Overlay covers both side of the Merri Creek and there are several sites of Cultural heritage significance within the Parklands. Refer Figure 3.

Significantly, in 2018 Council signed a Statement of Commitment to the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people that Merri-bek City Council will, for example:

- Undertake cultural consultations with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people and seek to include Woi-wurrung names in the process of naming and renaming spaces, places, roads and parks.
- Protect Aboriginal cultural heritage through ongoing connection and engagement with Traditional Owners the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people and continue to protect Aboriginal history.
- Work with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people in developing strategies and projects that protect our waterways, communicating Aboriginal water values and interpreting landscapes.
- Engage the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Narrap Team to bring cultural values and cultural practices to natural resource management projects in managing parks.

The Wurundjeri's 2012 Merri Creek Cultural Values Report, 2021 updated Fawkner Merri Creek Parklands Cultural Value Assessment and the Moomba Park Wetland Cultural Heritage Management Plan report on the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung cultural heritage values and significance of the study area. The aim of the Report and Assessment are to ensure Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung aspirations are embedded within future and existing Council activities in the Parklands.

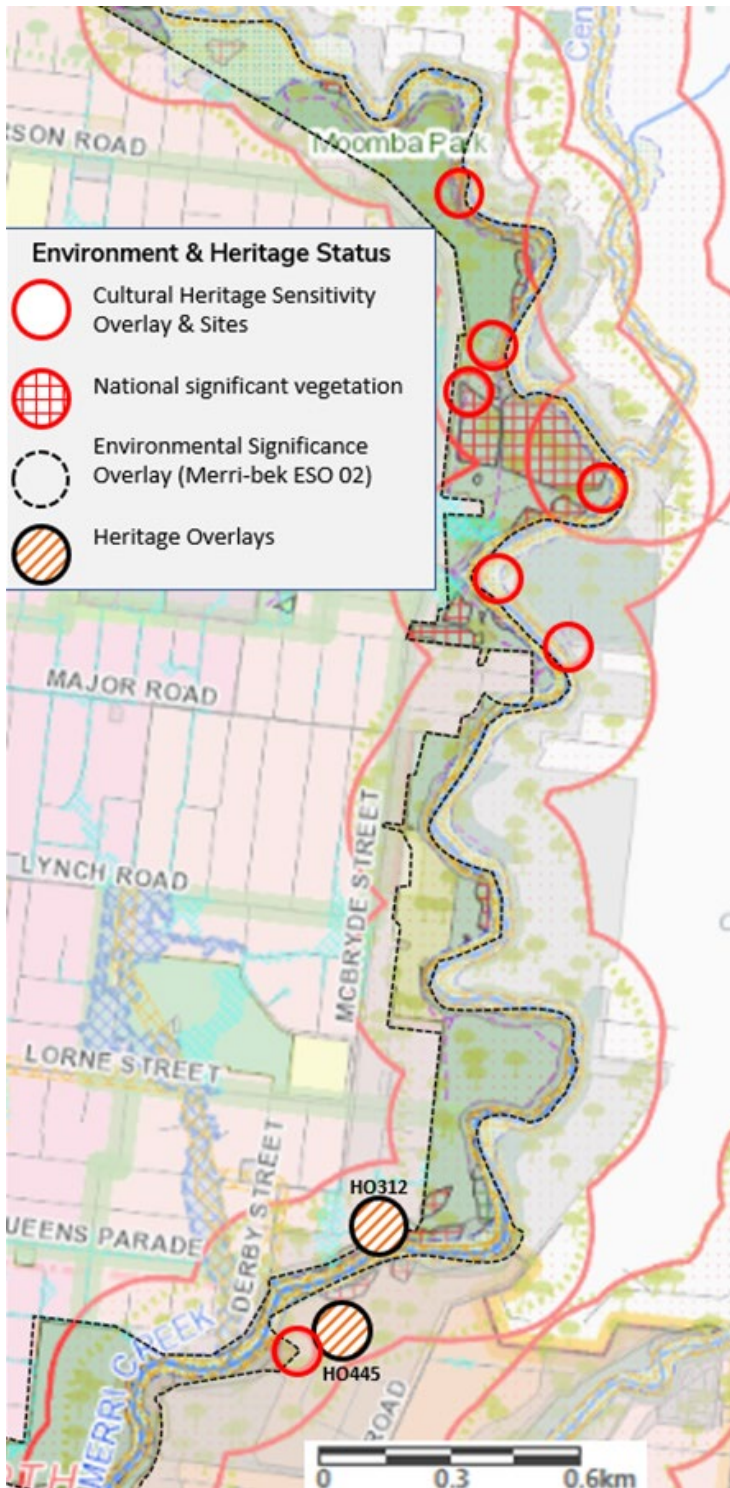


Fig 7. Areas of Environmental and Cultural Sensitivity and Heritage

The key recommendations include:

1. Indigenous Cultural Awareness Training for Council Staff
2. Protect the Aesthetic Attributes and Biodiversity of the Merri Creek
3. Principle 1: Early Engagement and Negotiation in Project Design
4. Principle 2: Capacity Building
5. Principle 3: Self-determined Level of Participation
6. St Leonards Management Plan Engagement
7. Place Based Commitment
8. Interpretation

While historical land uses including use of the area for landfill and establishment of roads, underground sewerage and drainage which have significantly disturbed the natural waterway corridor, the Wurundjeri Traditional Owners must be consulted on works which involve ground disturbance within areas of Cultural Sensitivity.

Local heritage along the parklands include two Heritage Overlay (HO) (refer Figure 7):

- Imaroo Quarry (HO312) – Former Quarry, Imaroo Street, Fawkner (opposite Nos.5, 7 and 9)
- Coburg Drive-In (HO445) – 155 Newlands Road, Coburg (H2218 Victorian Heritage Register under the Heritage Act 2017)



Fig 8. Parker Reserve Community Food Swap Gathering

## 1.5 Community Consultation

Key themes arising from consultation included:

**Conservation and natural values:** Priority is the protection and enhancement of the natural values of the waterway. Most respondents recommended the enhancement of the natural elements of the creek and restorations and improvements of wildlife habitat.



Fig 9. Moomba Park Reserve shared path

**Litter:** respondents were concerned about the significant amount of litter distributed throughout the creek especially after heavy rain.

**Transport:** respondents recommended path improvements throughout the creek corridor to make it easier to connect with the shared path and natural spaces. Maintenance of existing informal paths and alternative flooding routes were regularly raised. Additional wayfinding signage was regularly requested. Care was requested to ensure that there was no duplication of the shared trail planned.

**Signage:** respondents saw opportunity for additional interpretative signage about the history of the creek and park.

**Cultural Heritage:** respondents called for greater engagement with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Traditional Owners on land management, naming, signage and engagement events.

**Dogs:** some respondents were concerned about conflict between dogs/shared path users, wildlife and park users, with requests for more: fencing to separate users and drinking fountains with dog bowls. Many people acknowledged that majority of dog owners shared the space respectfully which improved overall perceptions of safety.

**Recreation:** respondents requested more social recreational facilities like basketball half-courts, cricket pitches, and soccer nets. Many requested access to existing sporting pavilions and toilets for

community meeting spaces and events, such as Nature Stewards, nature based citizen science, and community meetings. Most respondents celebrated the existing sporting facilities and clubs for their positive contribution to the parkland and willingness to share sportsfields with other users. Some concerns were raised about balancing the habitat values of the waterway with sportsfield lighting. All respondents were not supportive of additional sportsfields in particular synthetic pitches.

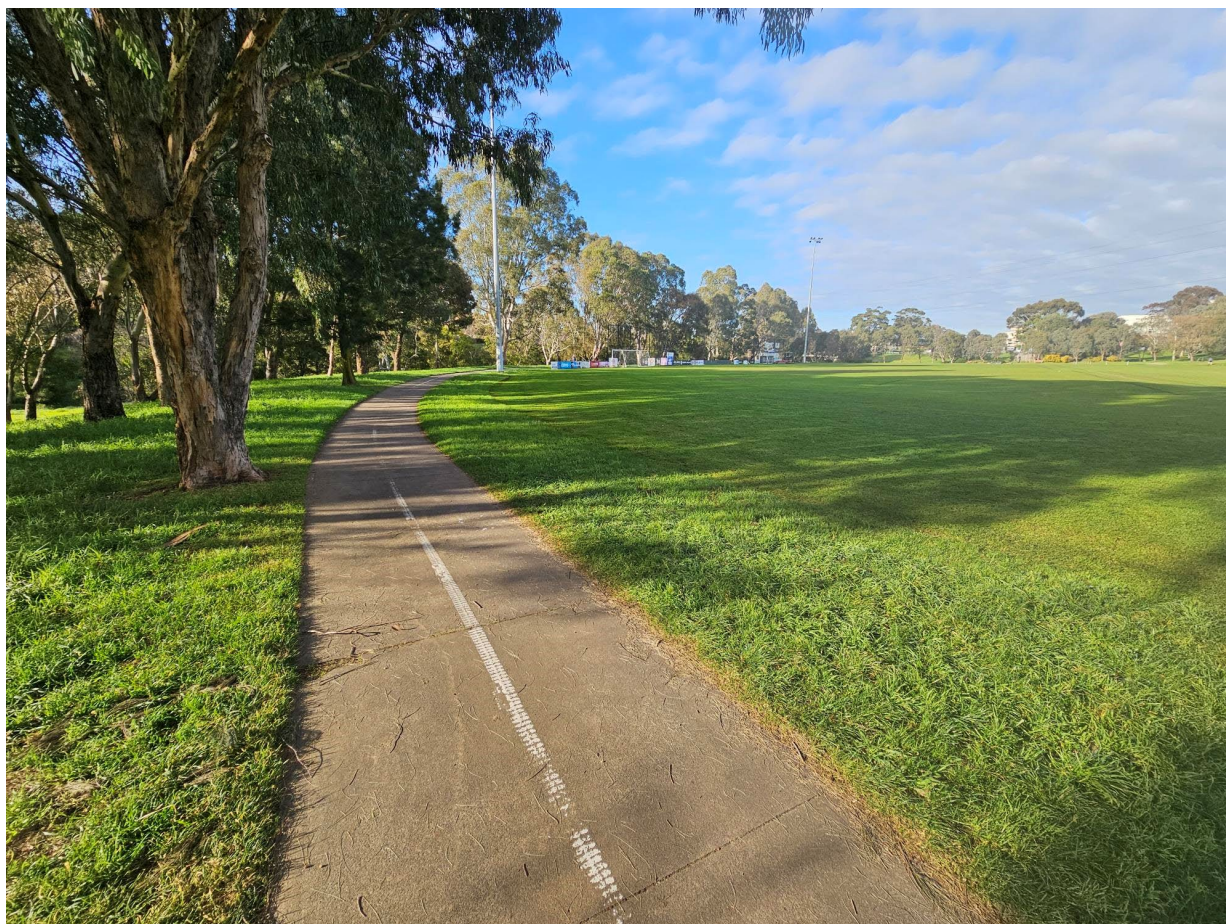


Fig 10. Parker Reserve

**Anti-social behaviour:** respondents were very concerned about the trail bikes dangerous and illegal use of the shared path and parklands with incidents reported to VicPol. There were also concerns about hoon activities within the existing car parks at Moomba Park and Parker Reserve.

**Integrated water management and wetlands:** respondents supported the establishment of the wetland in Moomba Park and the increased diversion of stormwater in to the parklands to help mitigate urban heat island effect, improve habitat values and reduce local flooding.

**Play Spaces:** respondents called for improvements to the two playgrounds at Moomba Park and Parker Reserve while acknowledging they were popular and well designed. There were many calls for more opportunities for nature-based play including bush kinders throughout the parklands.

**Lighting and safety:** some respondents suggested improvements to lighting along the Merri Creek trail whereas the majority were not supportive unless the lighting provided wildlife sensitive lighting for key movement routes such as key bridge crossings to Reservoir at path between Railway Parade to Northumberland Rd and would like to see increased safety measures in car parks.

The suggestions and comments provided have informed the development of the draft Plan. Refer to Appendix A for further detail on completed Community Consultation.



Fig 11. Moomba Park Wetlands



Fig 12. Moomba Park Playground

## 2. Detailed Plans Parkland

### 2.1 Opportunities Summary

The full list of opportunities identified in the Fawkner Merri Creek Parklands Plan is listed below and illustrated on the map (figure 13). The opportunities are described in more detail at the various park precincts, covering park facilities, conservation issues, paths & connectivity, land management and accessible facilities.

1. Council, MCMC and Friends to advocate to the State Government through Northern trails for strengthened Merri Creek Trail and habitat connections.
2. Community nature connection activation of Growling Grassfrog Wetland with waterwatch and bush kinder.
3. Maintenance and fire access track based on Fire Plan.
4. Improve Somerlayton Crescent entry with new signage and vegetation maintenance.
5. Accessible concrete path connections to creek bridge
6. Line marking 2 x senior fields, update perimeter fencing with openings; create warm up space at southern end
7. Sportsfield pavilion works with new social and community meeting space and accessible public toilets; create food truck powered site in car park.
8. Investigate new recreation opportunities: futsal goals, multiuse space (demolish cricket nets), circuit path, safety lighting, exercise stations
9. Develop habitat enhancement plan with interpretation, Banksia woodlands, informal paths, habitat fencing and weed management.
10. Art and nature play loop, bush kinder and riparian vegetation enhancement.
11. Construct fire break maintenance track and remove invasive weeds from rear of property (agave and prickly pear).
12. Investigate community market garden and food forest social enterprise.
13. Investigate improved maintenance connection to Reservoir with rock ripple or pedestrian bridge.
14. Strengthen conservation values of grasslands.
15. Provide high amenity indigenous garden beds with signage and labels.
16. Improved habitat connection to Central Creek grasslands.
17. Undertake feasibility of Jukes Rd IWM wetland and flood mitigation project.
18. Investigate Fenced Dog Park, Jukes Rd.
19. Nature circuit resting place and bush kinder with path links.
20. Investigate new creek crossing (rock ripple and maintenance Jukes Rd – Radford Rd) for loop walk to Hare St bridge.
21. Construct stormwater culvert, develop Emma St habitat plan and revegetate culvert
22. Implement Leonard Street grasslands conservation management plan.
23. New shared path, fire break and maintenance path access with Leonard St powerpole removal.
24. Resolve connectivity issues and public land encroachment; add new maintenance gates; remove invasive and woody weeds; work with residents to establish food forest.
25. Develop nature-based Hood Crescent – McBryde Parkland Plan with community including nature play and path to mound lookout. Refer to Eddie Botha's 2018 plan.
26. Upgrade McBryde path connection and maintenance access.
27. Resting place with circuit path and distance markers.
28. Undertake renaming of acquired VicRoads land and investigate contaminated soil risks and potential land remediation as well as Committee of management for Crown land with suitable land use determined by the community.
29. Potential enclosed Dog Park, McBryde St.
30. Accessible and alternative flood path.
31. Resting place.
32. Create dementia sensory planting with path and pedestrian/maintenance link to McBryde St.
33. Major woody weed works site A.
34. Resting Place and circuit story telling.

35. Cricket wicket.
36. Major woody weed works site B.
37. Habitat and swale restoration.
38. Lorne St toilets.
39. Resting Place.
40. Nature Play, picnic facilities, seating, bush kinder and car parking (3 hour 9am-6pm).
41. Major woody weed works site C.
42. Proposed enclosed Dog Park, Lorne St.
43. Lorne St circuit path, exercise station, distance markers and creek link.
44. Major woody weed works site D.
45. Develop Imaroo Quarry Vegetation Management Plan.
46. Major woody weed works site E.
47. Resolve land ownership issues.
48. Provide clear wayfinding and accessible path from Queens Parade maintenance track.
49. Restore Dairy Drive wetland and create resting place for local workers.
50. Create informal path link between Dairy Drive and Bakers Road and investigate feasibility of creek crossing.
51. Basketball and futsal multiuse court.
52. Detailed design work for staged tree planting, renewal of park amenities, lighting and sportsfield renewal (levels, drainage, irrigation, park fencing etc.)
53. Upgrade car park with swale drainage, resurfacing, drinking fountain, bins and shelter.
54. DDA accessible path improvements.
55. Increase habitat plantings, shade trees and nature play.
56. Parker Reserve circuit path with distance markers and path connections.
57. Improved Mathieson St to car park path.
58. Upgrade escarpment staircase to the creek.
59. Investigate IWM wetland feasibility from Keady St.
60. Investigate Keady St to creek path connection.
61. Naming of 2 Spry St parkland and adjoining parklands with assistance from Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung.

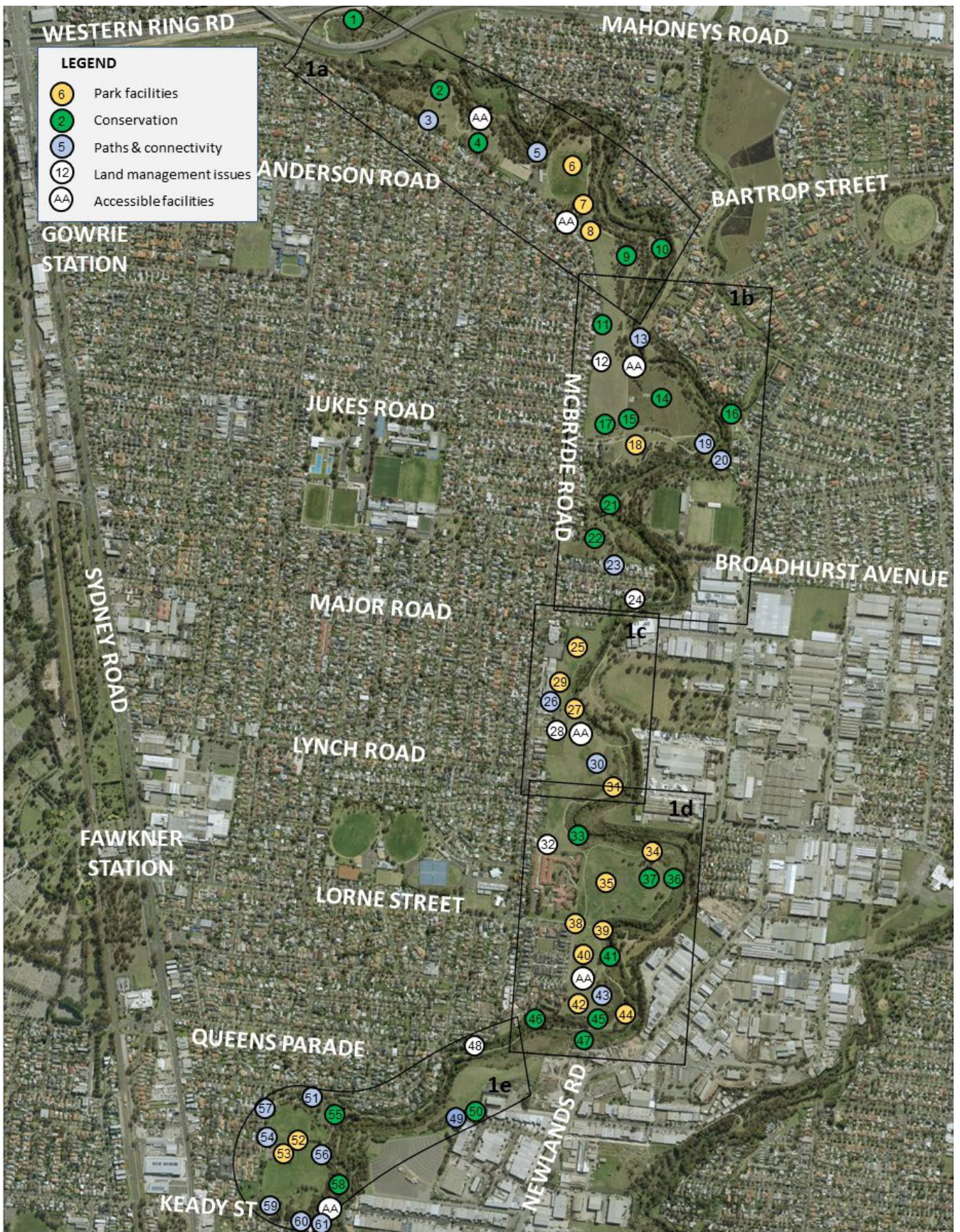


Fig 13. Fawkner Merri Creek Parklands Plan opportunities map

## 2.2 Moomba Park

Opportunities identified for Moomba Park, in the area between Alec Cres and Lawson Street:

1. Council, MCMC and Friends to advocate to State Government through Northern trails for strengthened Merri Creek Trail and habitat connections.
2. Community nature connection activation of Growling Grassfrog Wetland with waterwatch and bush kinder.
3. Maintenance and fire access track based on Fire Plan.
4. Improve Somerlayton Crescent entry with new signage and vegetation maintenance.
5. Accessible concrete shared user path connections to creek bridge
6. Line marking 2 x senior fields, update perimeter fencing with openings; create warm up space at southern end
7. Sportsfield pavilion works with new social and community meeting space and accessible public toilets; create food truck powered site in car park.
8. Investigate new recreation opportunities: futsal goals, multiuse space (demolish cricket nets), circuit path, safety lighting, exercise stations
9. Develop habitat enhancement plan with interpretation, Banksia woodlands, informal paths, habitat fencing and weed management.
10. Art and nature play loop, bush kinder and riparian vegetation enhancement.
11. Construct fire break maintenance track and remove invasive weeds from rear of property (agave and prickly pear).
12. Investigate community market garden and food forest social enterprise.
13. Investigate improved maintenance connection to Reservoir with rock ripple or pedestrian bridge.



Fig 14. Moomba Park opportunities and proposed works

## **2.3 Bababi Djinanang**

Opportunities identified for Moomba Park, in the area between Lawson Street and Hare Street

12. Investigate community market garden and food forest social enterprise.
13. Investigate improved maintenance connection to Reservoir with rock ripple or pedestrian bridge.
14. Strengthen conservation values of grasslands.
15. Provide high amenity indigenous garden beds with signage and labels.
16. Improved habitat connection to Central Creek grasslands.
17. Undertake feasibility of Jukes Rd IWM wetland and flood mitigation project.
18. Investigate Fenced Dog Park, Jukes Rd.
19. Nature circuit resting place and bush kinder with path links.
20. Investigate new creek crossing (rock ripple and maintenance Jukes Rd – Radford Rd) for loop walk to Hare St bridge.
21. Construct stormwater culvert, develop Emma St habitat plan and revegetate culvert
22. Implement Leonard Street grasslands conservation management plan.
23. New shared path, fire break and maintenance path access with Leonard St powerpole removal.

### **Proposed Vegetation Works**

- i. Maintenance vehicle crossing point (rock ripple)
- ii. Habitat enhancement (Banksia woodlands; weed management)
- iii. Strengthen conservation values of grassland
- iv. Strengthen habitat corridor with Central Creek Grasslands
- v. Provide high amenity indigenous garden beds with signage and labels
- vi. IWM wetland, ephemeral swale and flood mitigation project
- vii. Create grassland habitat connection between Bababi Djinanang and Leonard St grasslands.
- viii. Develop habitat plan including clean up of drainage culvert
- ix. Potential maintenance crossing and track upgrade
- x. Implement Emma & Leonard Street grasslands management plan
- xi. Improve vegetation sightlines and set up Bush kinder

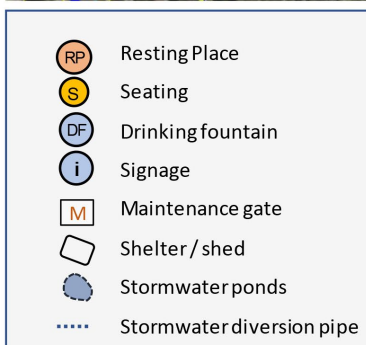
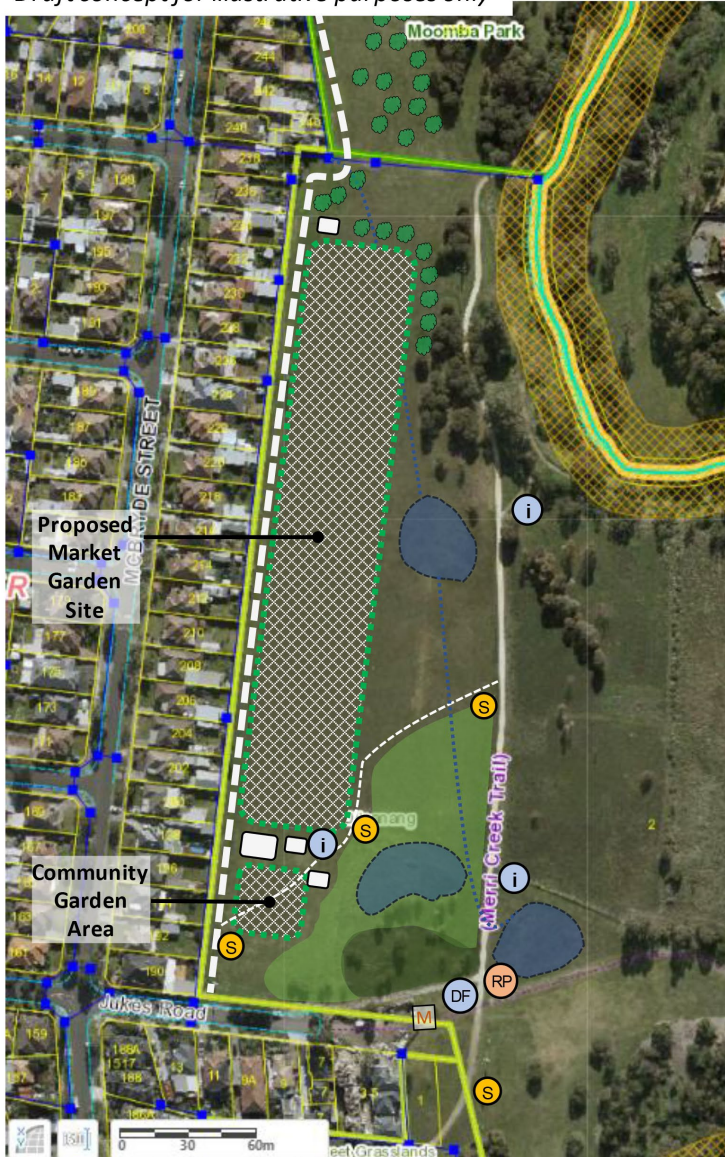


Fig 15. Bababi Djinanang opportunities and proposed works

## Proposed Fawkner Food Hub and Working Farm

Opportunity nr 12, Community Market Garden and Food Forest Social Enterprise. The draft scope for the Food Hub, principles and objectives needs to be developed and trialled to give clarity to prospective partners, funders and the Fawkner community as well as key stakeholders such as the Friends of Merri Creek and Merri Creek Management Committee.

*Draft concept for illustrative purposes only*



### Diverse objectives

- Food systems: address food production and demand
- Social enterprise
  - Key partners: Growing Farmers, Merri Health, Yooralla, CERES, Kevin Heinze Grow, Fawkner Food Bowl, SEEDS
- Disability support service (NDIS) orientated
- Employment and training pathways
- Community connection to food production/systems, improve food literacy in the community
- Aligned with local food production and climate emergency risks
- Integrated water management provision for stormwater harvesting, storage and reuse rather than potable water

### Policy Alignment

- [Food Systems Strategy Extension 2020-24](#)
  - Sustainable (closed loop regenerative) local food production is a priority program area – includes an action to support the development of larger food growing sites to enable greater access to locally grown fresh food and provide education and employment opportunities
- Water Map 2040 (Integrated Water Management Strategy)
- Open Space Strategy
- Health and Well Being Plan
- Zero Carbon Merri-bek Action Plan

### Issues / Risks:

- Governance
- Financial
- Environmental
- Community engagement

Fig 16. Bababi Djinanang, Draft Community Market Garden Proposal

## 2.4 McBryde – Hare

Opportunities identified for McBryde/Hare, in the area between Hare Street and St Basil's Home for the Aged:

23. New shared path, fire break and maintenance path access with Leonard St powerpole removal
24. Resolve connectivity issues and public land encroachment; remove invasive and woody weeds; work with residents to establish food forest
25. Develop nature-based Hood Crescent – McBryde Parkland Plan with community including nature play and path to mound lookout. Refer to Eddie Botha's 2018 plan.
26. Upgrade McBryde path connection and maintenance access.
27. Resting place with circuit path and distance markers.
28. Undertake renaming of acquired VicRoads land and investigate contaminated soil risks and potential land remediation as well as Committee of management for Crown land with suitable land use determined by the community.
29. Potential enclosed Dog Park, McBryde St.
30. Accessible and alternative flooding shared user path.
31. Resting place.

### Revegetation works

- i. Clean up encroachment with new maintenance track and reveg
- ii. Clean up and profile weed pile and soil mound, reveg with nature play and path to lookout.
- iii. Escarpment and riparian vegetation restoration with Melbourne Water
- iv. Habitat enhancement (Banksia woodlands; weed management)
- v. Priority habitat enhancement (Banksia woodlands; weed management)



Fig 17. McBryde Rd Opportunities and Proposed works

## 2.5 Lorne Street – Sahara Way

Opportunities identified for Lorne Street and Sahara Way, in the area between Alec Cres and Lawson Street:

31. Resting place.
32. Create dementia sensory planting with path and pedestrian/maintenance link to McBryde St.
33. Major woody weed works site A.
34. Resting Place and circuit story telling.
35. Cricket wicket.
36. Major woody weed works site B.
37. Habitat and swale restoration.
38. Lorne St toilets.
39. Resting Place.
40. Nature Play, picnic facilities, seating, bush kinder and car parking (3 hour 9am-6pm).
41. Major woody weed works site C.
42. Proposed enclosed Dog Park, Lorne St.
43. Lorne St circuit path, exercise station, distance markers and creek link.
44. Major woody weed works site D.

### Revegetation Works

- i. Weed control: groom, clear, cut and paint
- ii. Native grassland
- iii. Escarpment and riparian vegetation restoration with Melbourne Water
- iv. Wetland
- v. Open habitat enhancement (Casuarina woodlands with grassland)
- vi. Staged woody weed removal and replace with riparian woodland
- vii. Quarry vegetation management plan
- viii. Woody weed removal
- ix. Major MW partnership riparian vegetation works with maintenance track
- x. Work with residents to create a Lorne Street Habitat Corridor



Fig 18. Lorne Street Opportunities and Proposed works

## 2.6 Parker Reserve

Opportunities identified for Parker Reserve between Marlborough Street and Keady Street entries:

45. Develop Imaroo Quarry Vegetation Management Plan.
46. Major woody weed works site E.
47. Resolve land ownership issues.
48. Provide clear wayfinding and accessible path from Queens Parade maintenance track.
49. Restore Dairy Drive wetland and create resting place for local workers.
50. Create informal path link between Dairy Drive and Bakers Road and investigate feasibility of creek crossing.
51. Basketball and futsal multiuse court.
52. Detailed design work for staged tree planting, renewal of park amenities, lighting and sportsfield renewal (levels, drainage, irrigation, park fencing etc.)
53. Upgrade car park with swale drainage, resurfacing, drinking fountain, bins and shelter.
54. DDA accessible path improvements.
55. Increase habitat plantings, shade trees and nature play.
56. Parker Reserve circuit path with distance markers and path connections.
57. Improved Mathieson St to car park path.
58. Upgrade escarpment staircase to the creek.
59. Investigate IWM wetland feasibility from Keady St.
60. Investigate Keady St to creek path connection.
61. Naming of 2 Spry St parkland and adjoining parklands with assistance from Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung.

### Vegetation Management Works

- i. Continue implementation of Imaroo Quarry vegetation management plan
- ii. Remove woody weeds and revegetation
- iii. Queens Parade Habitat Corridor
- iv. Revegetation as a high priority
- v. Construct vegetative swale and culvert
- vi. Major MW partnership riparian vegetation works

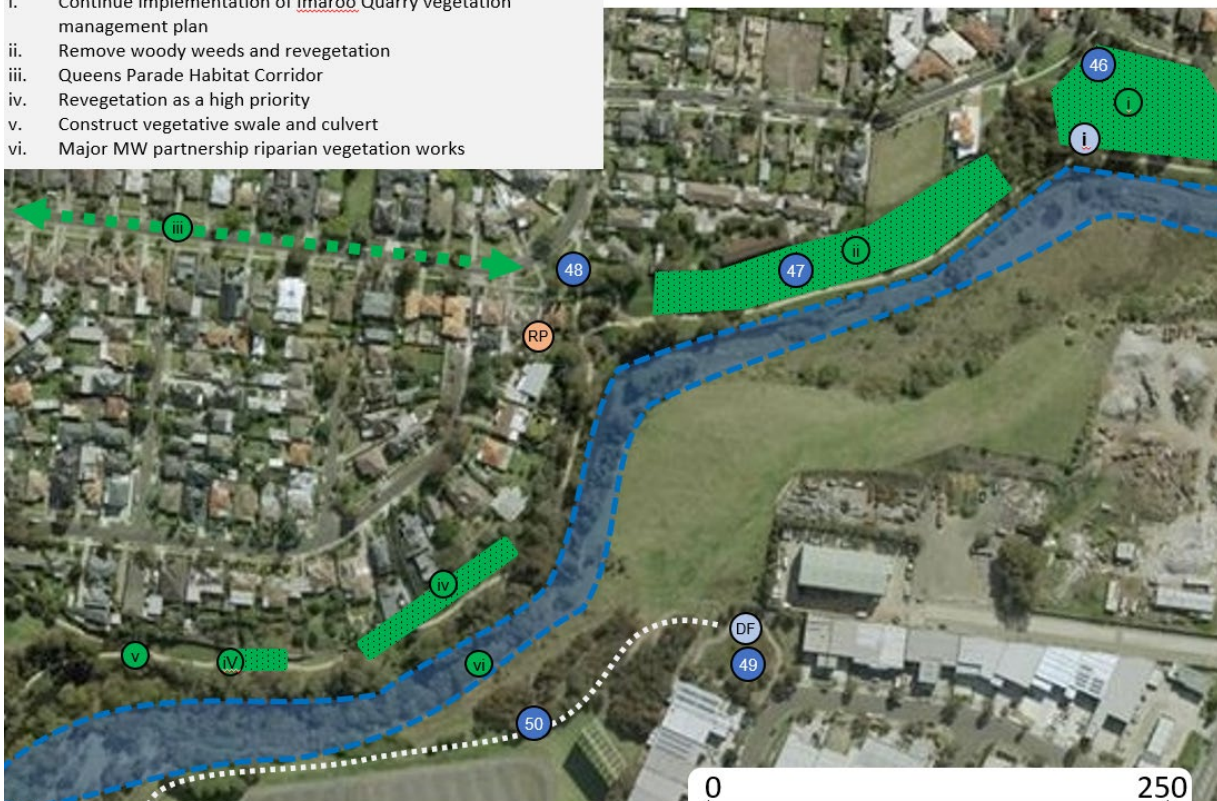


Fig 19a. Parker Reserve North Opportunities and Proposed works



-  Resting Place
-  Seating
-  Drinking fountain
-  Signage
-  Playground
-  Exercise stations
-  New Public Toilet
-  Maintenance gate/bollards
-  Lookout


- Vegetation Works** 
- i. Woodland with grassland
  - ii. Open Banksia woodlands with grassland
  - iii. IWM wsud raingarden
  - iv. Open Banksia woodlands with grassland
  - v. Work with residents to create a Mathieson Street Habitat Corridor
  - vi. Keady Street Habitat Corridor
  - vii. Parker Reserve vegetation escarpment works

Fig 19b. Parker Reserve South Opportunities and Proposed works

### 3. Engagement with Traditional Owners

Priority recommendations arising from the Cultural Assessment and Walk on Country in November 2021 with on-country cultural values recording have identified the following:

- Celebration and educational opportunities
- Commitment to engage Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation
- Opportunities for naming of land
- Immersive Cultural Heritage trail
- Opportunities for Narrap team land management

#### Proposed Wurundjeri Naming Sites

- A. Bababi Djinanang, Fawkner (Expansion of area)
- B. Yaruk'ho Wilam (Magic Place), Coburg North

New name requests lodged with Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation:

- C. 104B McBryde Street Fawkner
- D. 1-9, 2-10 Lorne Street, Fawkner
- E. 2 Spry Street, Coburg North



Fig 20. Meeting Merri Creek Management Committee, Friends of Merri Creek and community members



Image: MCMC

Fig 21. Merri Creek Management Committee crew undertaking vegetation management, Bababi Djinanang Grasslands



Fig 22. Fawkner Merri Creek Parklands Naming sites

## 4. Land Management issues

Land Use and management issues identified for the Fawkner Merri Creek Parklands as a whole:

1. Resolve land management issues and establish Committee of Management for Crown land
2. Investigate improved open space connection and accessibility.
3. Improve open space visibility and connectivity between Moomba Park and McBryde Street
4. Improve open space connectivity and access through to McBryde Street
5. Investigate paper road frontage activation between Jukes and Somerlayton Cr
6. Confirm Committee of Management covers all of Bababi Djinanang Crown Land
7. Resolve encroachment of public land at rear of 178-180 McBryde St
8. Resolve encroachment of public land at rear of Hare Street properties
9. Provide east west pedestrian connection through future development
10. Investigate creating Committee of Management for 88 McBryde Street (DEECA Crown land); Rezone PUZ to PPRZ land
11. Resolve acquisition of VicRoads "surplus" land
12. Investigate Committee of Management for DEECA land at #76 and #78 McBryde St; Rezone PUZ to PPRZ land
13. Investigate new park connection on Council land between #58 and #60 McBryde Street
14. Resolve ownership and title of creek frontage
15. Strengthen open space buffer and resolve ownership and "Crown" title of Newlands Road Merri Creek Linear Park
16. Confirm PAO & lease arrangements for open space adjoining Coburg Drive-In
17. Resolve encroachment on public land with new accessible path connection to Spry St Reserve

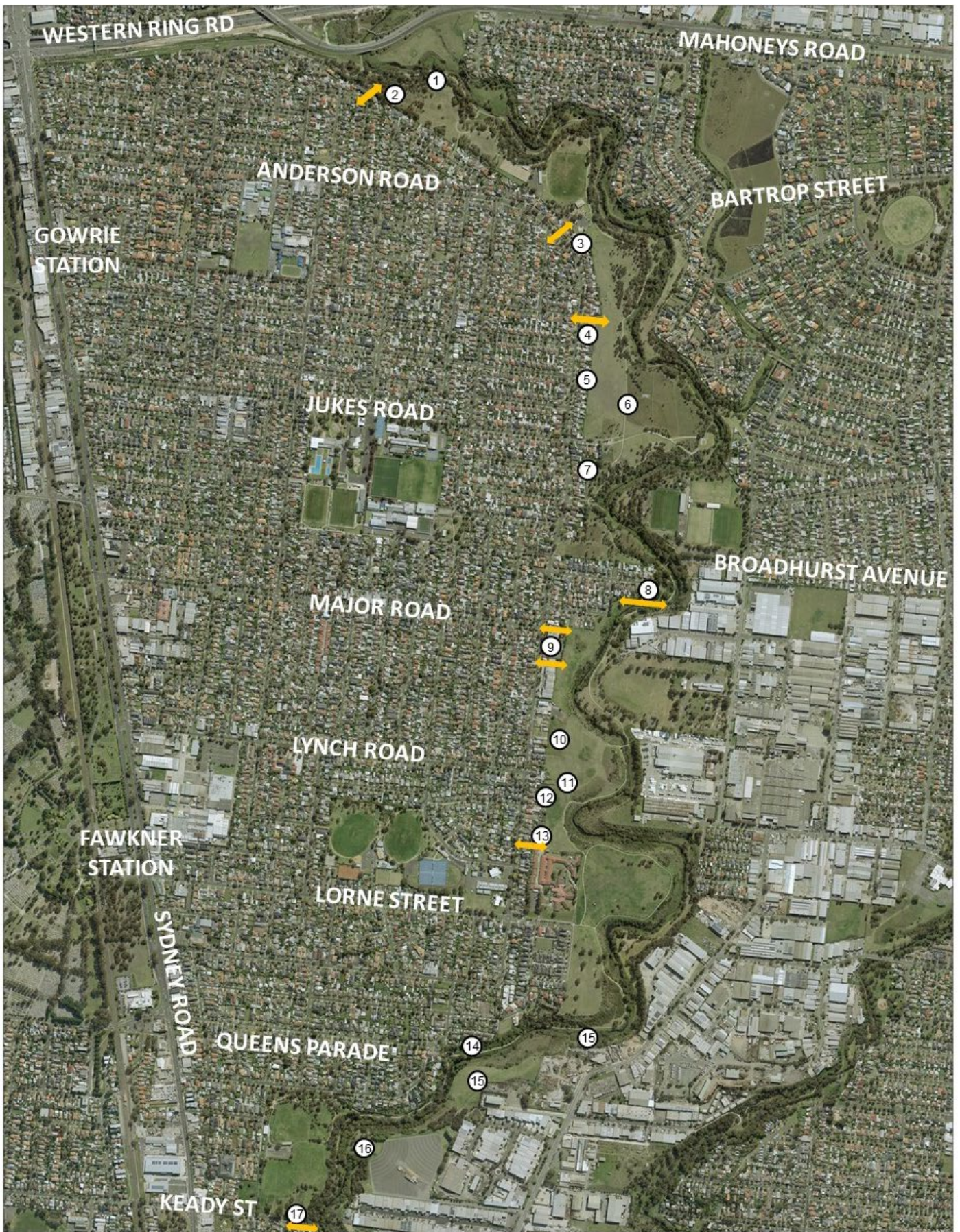


Fig 23. Fawkner Merri Creek Parklands land management issues

## 5. Integrated Water Management

List of Integrated Water Management Opportunities in the Fawkner Merri Creek Parklands:

1. Investigate Alec Crescent land acquisition to help resolve 10% flood zone and divert surface flood waters into open space with newly constructed wetland Moomba Park.
2. Partner with Darebin and Melbourne Water to investigate ecological restoration of the floodplains
3. Lawson St diversion through SW drainage easement of 238 McBryde St to SW harvesting wetland for irrigating potential future market gardens
4. Resolve flooding hot spot by diverting Jukes Rd drain back into the open space for SW harvesting wetland for irrigation of potential future market gardens
5. Investigate passive diversion of stormwater into parkland wetland and swale
6. Restore ephemeral wetlands in parklands
7. Ensure future developments include best practice on-site WSUD systems
8. Create swale to resolve surface drainage issues
9. Refresh the Dairy Drive wetland to include a swale habitat link to the creek
10. Investigate options to intercept Drive-In surface drainage through wetland and swale system
11. Investigate passive diversion of Keady St stormwater into a Parker Reserve wetland and swale system

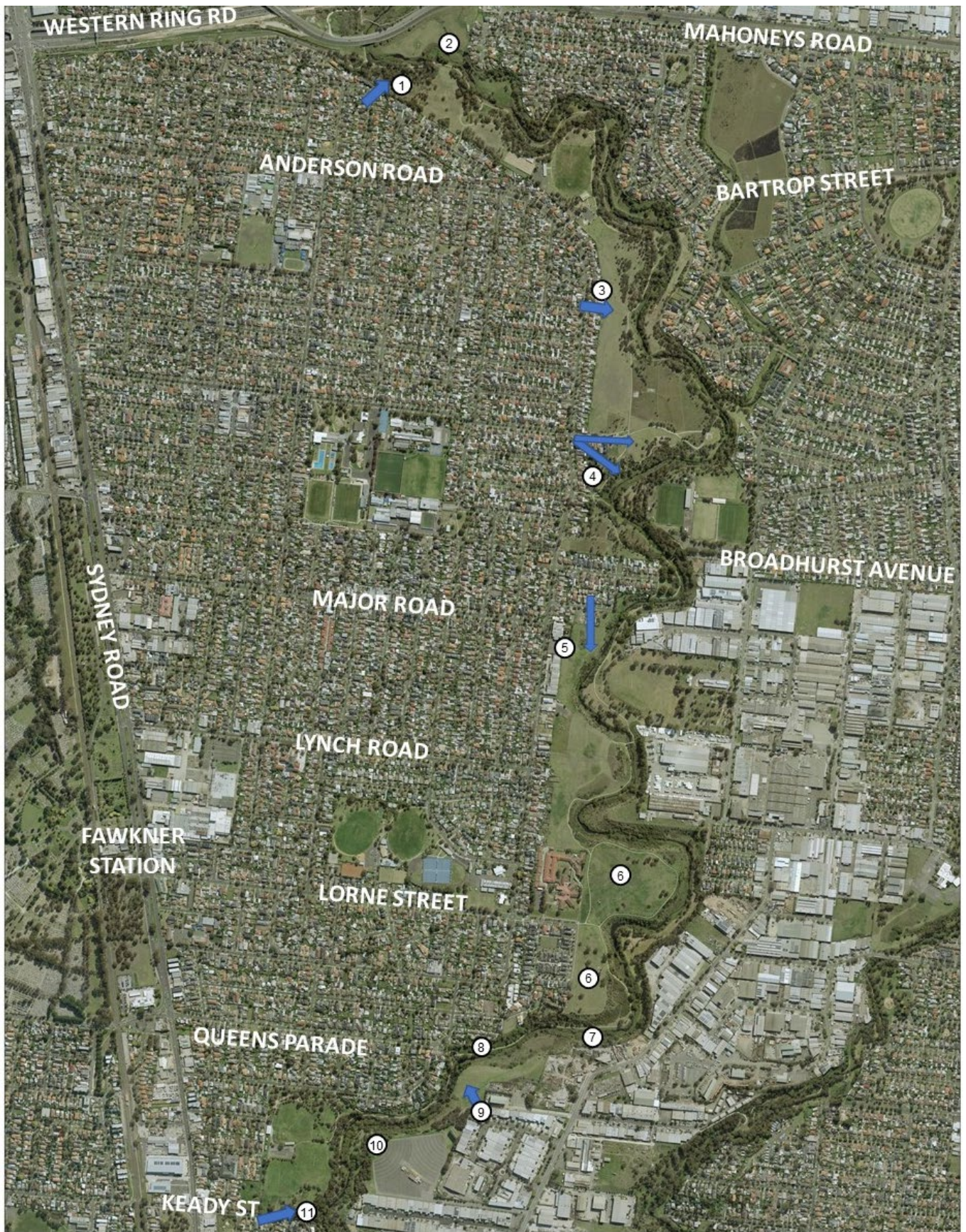


Fig 24. Fawkner Merri Creek Parklands Integrated Water Management Opportunities

## 6. Path Improvements

List of proposed pathworks and connections for Fawkner Merri Creek Parklands:

1. 2m wide Somerlayton Crescent fire break and maintenance and informal path (382 m)
2. 3m wide concrete shared path (SUP) to the bridge (450 m)
3. 2m wide informal link from toilets to pavilion (120 m)
4. 2m wide informal path through Banksia Woodland (255 m)
5. 2m wide McBryde St fire break and maintenance and informal path (700 m)
6. 2m wide informal link at Jukes Rd to Creek Trail (65 m)
7. 3m wide SUP and maintenance access link between Victory and Hare Streets and Creek Trail (280 m)
8. 2m wide maintenance link Hare St bridge to Hood Crescent (100 m)
9. 2m wide informal path between Hood Crescent to McBryde St (350 m)
10. 2.5m wide SUP Trail link McBryde St to Creek Trail (560 m) with 2m wide SUP concrete path link through future development (134 McBryde St) with paper road frontage activation
11. 2m wide (alternate flood route) informal link (300 m)
12. 2m wide concrete Sahara Way circuit walk (700 m)
13. 2m wide informal link from Lorne St to Creek trail (110 m)
14. 2m wide informal link and maintenance access from Dairy Drive to McMahons Road (1,130 m)
15. 2.5m wide SUP link from Mathieson St to Parker Reserve car park (150 m)
16. Parker Reserve informal path links to Mathieson St (95 m); Creek link (50 m); McCoy St (60 m); fix SUP creek link off Mathieson St
17. 2m wide informal Parker Reserve circuit walk (370 m) with restored creek trail steps (55 m)
18. Keady St informal link through to Spry Street and Creek Trail (135 m)

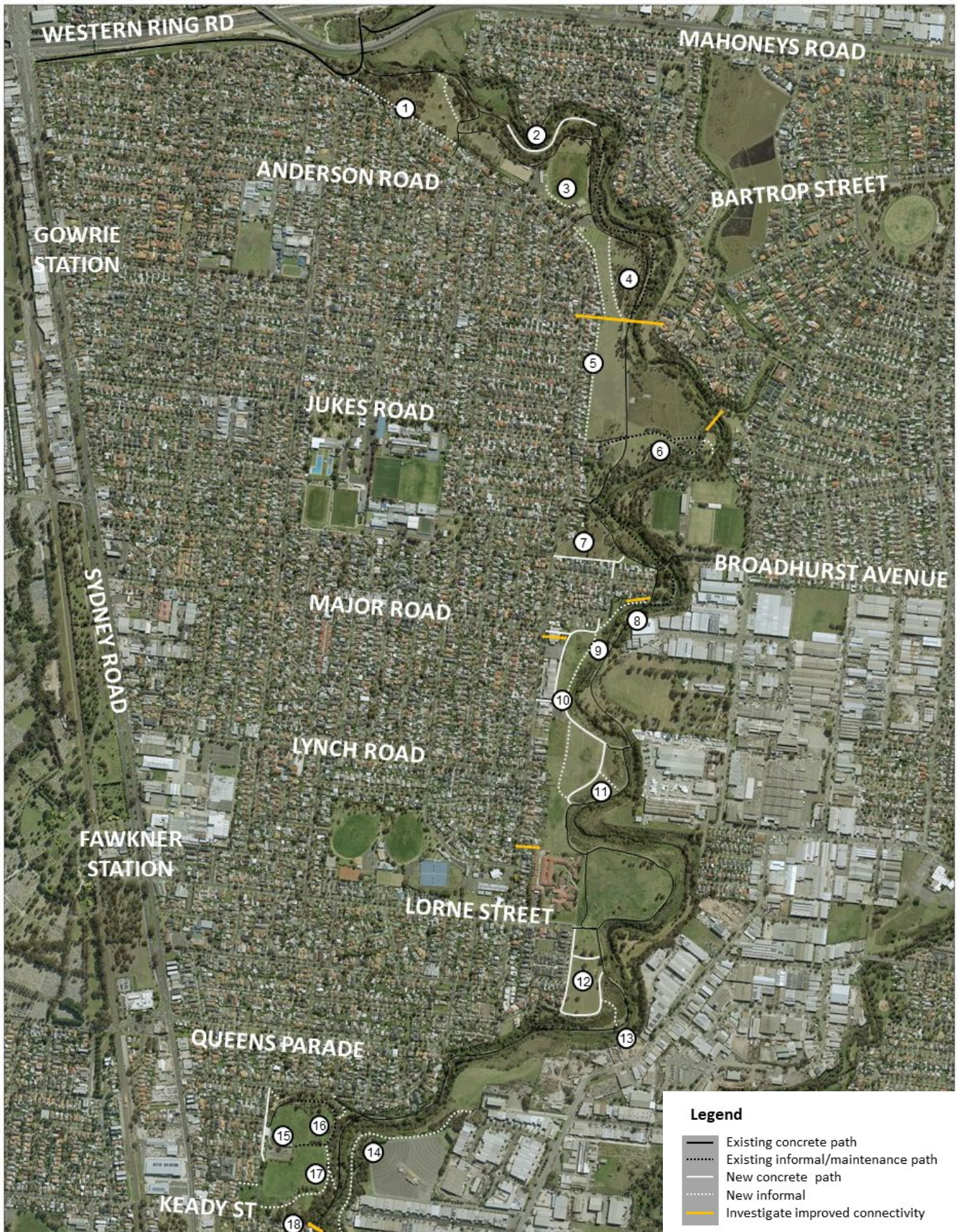


Fig 25. Fawkner Merri Creek Parklands Connections and Path Improvements

## 7. Accessibility Nodes

The following opportunities for Accessibility Nodes/Spaces have been identified for investigation in the Fawkner Merri Creek Parklands:

1. Somerlayton Crescent access to Growling Grassfrog Wetlands, Merri Creek escarpment, Creek WaterWatch site and bridge to Reservoir – requires DDA parking bay on Somerlayton Crescent, signage & drinking fountain
2. Moomba Park playground, new public toilet and path connection to picnic facilities, community market garden and creek connection – requires DDA parking bay in car park, path upgrades and new picnic seating
3. Bababi Djinanang Grasslands with loop path, interpretative signage, resting place – requires DDA parking bay at end of Jukes Rd
4. McBryde St park with circuit path, resting place and fenced dog park
5. Lorne Street Park with new nature-based playground, public toilet, circuit path, picnic facilities, fenced dog park and resting place
6. Parker Reserve with new public toilet, circuit path, public toilet, DDA path connection through to Spry Street picnic area and connection to Creek



Fig 26. Fawkner Merri Creek Parkland Accessibility Nodes

## 8. Wayfinding and Signage

List of proposed signs:

- i. Birchwood St: Merri Creek Trail; Western Ring Rd Trail 50m
- ii. Merri Creek Trail: Sydney Rd 1km; Western Ring Rd Trail 50m; Moomba Park (toilet) 1.2km; Hume and Whittlesea POI
- iii. Somerlayton: Moomba Park entry, dog off leash zoning map for the reserve
- iv. Merri Creek Trail: Western Ring Rd Trail 50m; Moomba Park (toilet) 1.2km ; Somerlayton Cres
- v. Moomba Park bridge
- vi. Moomba Park 1 car park & pavilion
- vii. Moomba Park 2 car park, toilets, fenced dog park & pavilion; dog off leash zoning map
- viii. Existing grasslands signage
- ix. Jukes Rd: Bababi Djinanang Wurundjeri walk and wetlands and distance signage to Western Ring Rd trail; CB Smith (toilets); Bonwick St shops; Coburg Lake; dog on leash zoning
- x. Wurundjeri nature loop
- xi. Emma St wayfinding
- xii. Leonard St grasslands
- xiii. Hood Crescent wayfinding through to Reservoir, Ring Road and Coburg Lake
- xiv. 206a McBryde St: NuFarm plaque and wayfinding; dog off leash zoning
- xv. Wurundjeri interpretative signage
- xvi. Wayfinding; dog off leash zoning
- xvii. Nature loop signage and potential story circuit
- xviii. Wurundjeri signage; fenced dog park; dog off leash zoning
- xix. Wayfinding
- xx. Wayfinding



Fig 27. Fawkner Merri Creek Parklands Wayfinding and Signage

## 9. Dog Management

Changes to the current dog off leash areas are proposed to provide better access for Fawkner and Coburg North residents. Proposed Dog Management Zoning Changes include opportunities for fenced off-leash areas indicatively nominated on the plan (for investigation):

- i. Growling Grassfrog Habitat Zone (dogs prohibited)
- ii. Moomba Park Somerlayton Off-Leash Zone
- iii. Moomba Park Off-Leash Zone
- iv. Moomba Park Off-Leash Zone
- v. Moomba Park Habitat Zone (dogs prohibited)
- vi. Bababi Djinanang Habitat Zone (dogs prohibited)
- vii. Investigate Jukes Road Fenced Dog Park
- viii. Investigate McBryde Street Fenced Dog Park
- ix. McBryde Street Off-Leash Dog Zone
- x. Sahara Way Fenced Dog Park
- xi. Queens Parade Habitat Zone (on lead)
- xii. Parker Reserve Off-Leash Dog Zone

Additional small areas of habitat fencing may be introduced through site specific conservation management plans along the waterway to protect high value conservation areas for wildlife.



Fig 28. Fawkner Merri Creek Parklands Dog Management

## 10. Conservation Management Plans

Proposed Conservation Management Plans are indicated in the list to be determined in collaboration with various stakeholders in the Merri Creek corridor:

1. Advocate to VicRoads to support habitat planting connection to Hume (litter and illegal access issue) 1.2m wire mesh fencing at top
2. Growling Grass Frog swale (no mow zone and dogs on leash)
3. Growling Grass Frog Wetland with resting place and new paths (dogs on leash)
4. Ephemeral wetland
5. Habitat enhancement (Banksia woodlands; weed management; fenced wallaby riparian area, art play and trail)
6. Indigenous vegetative buffer around Community based urban agriculture and IWM project
7. Maintenance vehicle crossing point (rock ripple)
8. Habitat enhancement (Banksia woodlands; weed management)
9. Strengthen conservation values of grassland
10. Strengthen habitat corridor with Central Creek Grasslands
11. Provide high amenity indigenous garden beds with signage and labels
12. IWM wetland, ephemeral swale and flood mitigation project
13. Create grassland habitat connection between Bababi Djinanang and Leonard St grasslands.
14. Develop habitat plan including clean-up of drainage culvert
15. Potential maintenance crossing and track upgrade
16. Implement grasslands management plan
17. Improve vegetation sightlines and set up Bush kinder
18. Clean up encroachment with new maintenance track and reveg
19. Clean up and profile weed pile and soil mound, reveg with nature play and path to lookout.
20. Escarpment and riparian vegetation restoration with Melbourne Water
21. Habitat enhancement (Banksia woodlands; weed management)
22. Priority habitat enhancement (Banksia woodlands; weed management)
23. Weed control: groom, clear, cut and paint
24. Native grassland
25. Escarpment and riparian vegetation restoration with Melbourne Water
26. Wetland
27. Open habitat enhancement (Banksia woodlands with grassland)
28. Staged woody weed removal with Banksia woodland
29. Quarry vegetation management plan
30. Woody weed removal
31. Major MW partnership riparian vegetation works with maintenance track
32. Work with residents to create Queens Parade and Lorne Street Habitat Corridors link to Fawkner Cemetery
33. Reveg as a high priority
34. Construct vegetative swale and culvert
35. Major MW partnership riparian vegetation works
36. Woodland with grassland
37. Open Banksia woodlands with grassland
38. IWM wsud raingarden
39. Open Banksia woodlands with grassland
40. Work with residents to create a Mathieson Street Habitat Corridor
41. Keady Street Habitat Corridor
42. Parker Reserve vegetation escarpment works



Fig 29. Fawcner Merri Creek Parklands Conservation Management Plans

## 11. Land Acquisition Goals

Merri-bek City Council is committed to enhancing the Fawkner Merri Creek Parklands through strategic land acquisition. Any land acquisition should align with our commitment to improving connectivity, increasing community access and engagement, enhancing biodiversity, and implementing integrated water management practices within the parklands. The following primary goals should be considered while assessing potential land acquisitions:

**Enhancing Connectivity:** One of the primary goals of strategic land acquisition is to improve access and connectivity within the Fawkner Merri Creek Parklands. By acquiring strategically located parcels of land, we can create new access points and pathways, ensuring that residents have easy, safe, and convenient ways to enjoy the open space. Improved connectivity encourages active transportation, such as walking and cycling, connecting the parklands with surrounding neighborhoods and fostering a sense of connectedness.

**Empowering Community Uses:** Council recognizes the importance of open spaces as community hubs. Through targeted land acquisition, we aim to create spaces that cater to a wide range of community uses and activities. This includes the development of recreational facilities, event spaces, picnic areas, and nature-based play zones. These enhancements are designed to meet the diverse needs and interests of our residents, promoting physical and social well-being through active engagement with the parklands.

**Boosting Biodiversity:** Preserving and enhancing biodiversity is a cornerstone of our land acquisition strategy. We strategically select land parcels that are ecologically significant, providing opportunities to expand natural habitats, protect native flora and fauna, and restore vital ecosystems. These efforts not only contribute to the health of the parklands but also create educational opportunities for residents to connect with and appreciate the local environment.

**Integrated Water Management:** Our land acquisition approach also integrates water management principles. By securing land adjacent to water bodies and wetlands, we can implement effective stormwater management solutions. This includes the creation of wetlands and natural water filtration systems that reduce the urban heat island effect, enhance water quality, and mitigate flooding. These measures not only benefit the parklands but also contribute to the overall sustainability of our city.

Council remains dedicated to the continuous improvement and responsible stewardship of the Fawkner Merri Creek Parklands. Our strategic land acquisition policy reflects our commitment to creating a vibrant, accessible, and ecologically sustainable open space that enriches the lives of our residents and fosters a strong sense of community connection.





**Appendix A**  
**Community Engagement Summary**

# Fawkner Merri Creek Parklands Plan

## Engagement Summary report

### September 2023

The Parklands covers 75 hectares of open space along the Merri Creek in Fawkner and Coburg North. The Plan has been prepared to identify, protect and enhance the environmental, cultural heritage and community open space values.

#### 1. Consultation

Council's Open Space Design and Development unit have conducted four engagement phases with the local community, these being:

- Initial Consultation (stage 1) November 2020 – May 2021  
Initial consultation was held to establish a community vision and gather ideas in preparation of the Parklands Plan. Council asked the community to share stories and what they would like to protect and enhance in their parklands.
- Draft Parkland Concepts Engagement (stage 2) October - November 2021  
Using results from the initial consultation, Council developed draft concepts based on the community's initial input. Community was asked to respond to the plans.
- Draft Parklands Plan Engagement (stage 3) November 2022 – January 2023  
Feedback from the community on the Draft has progressed further development of the Parklands Plan.
- Final Parklands Plan Engagement (stage 4) May – June 2023  
Council finalised the parklands plan based on the community's input and exhibited the Plan for final feedback.

#### 2. Background

Council have twice notified 2,850 households living within 500m walking distance of the Parklands, erected 18 posters, set up an interactive online mapping and feedback option through Conversations Merri-bek and held pop-up engagement sessions, walks and nature-based activities in the parklands.

In Stage 1, Council asked the Merri-bek community to map their experiences and ideas, and also what they like about the Fawkner Merri Parklands and what improvements they would like to see. Strengthening the natural values was identified as a key priority together with improving community connections to the parklands and nature.

Over 90 people attended pop up site meetings at five separate locations and 76 people posted online suggestions. Separate onsite walks, meetings and online discussions were held with key stakeholder groups (Friends of Merri Creek, the Fawkner Residents Association and Merri Creek Management Committee and the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation) and Council Units (Local Laws, Recreation, Open Space Maintenance, Community Development and Capital).

The Draft Parkland Concepts were developed by Merri-bek City Council in consultation with the local community, the Friends of Merri Creek, the Fawkner Residents Association and Merri Creek Management Committee.

Four stages of community engagement have been undertaken and a Cultural Values Study completed by the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation. Stage 1 gathered ideas and stories from the community and key stakeholders between November 2020 and May 2021 (extended engagement occurred due to COVID lockdowns). Community feedback was

very positive and complementary. Work on the Plan was then paused for a year to clarify the priorities and budget implications of park master planning.

The Draft Parklands Plan with concept plans was developed in October 2022 and shared internally within Council and with key stakeholder groups prior to going out for 8 weeks of community engagement from November 2022 to January 2023. The draft Plan attempted to balance the role of the creek as a primary waterway biodiversity corridor with the need to maintain drainage and key service easement functionality while meeting the increasing needs of the local community for open space and recreational access. Feedback online and during pop-up site meetings was very supportive with the only concerns raised around the location and scale of proposed park activation around Sahara Way Fawkner.

In May and June 2023, the Final Parklands Plan has been exhibited on Conversations Merri-bek for final feedback from the community. In preparation, 10 posters have been placed along reserve entry points and residents that have previously registered were notified of the opportunity for final feedback.

### **3. Community Engagement Summary**

Key themes arising from the consultation Stage 1+2 included:

- Conservation and natural values: Priority is the protection and enhancement of the natural values of the waterway. Most respondents recommended the enhancement of the natural elements of the creek and restorations and improvements of wildlife habitat.
- Litter: respondents were concerned about the significant amount of litter distributed throughout the creek especially after heavy rain.
- Transport: respondents recommended path improvements throughout the creek corridor to make it easier to connect with the shared path and natural spaces. Maintenance of existing informal paths and alternative flooding routes were regularly raised. Additional wayfinding signage was regularly requested. Care was requested to ensure that there was no duplication of the shared trail planned.
- Signage: respondents saw opportunity for additional interpretative signage about the history of the creek and park.
- Cultural Heritage: respondents called for greater engagement with the Wurundjeri Woiwurrung Traditional Owners on land management, naming, signage and engagement events.
- Dogs: some respondents were concerned about conflict between dogs/shared path users, wildlife and park users, with requests for more: fencing to separate users and drinking fountains with dog bowls. Many people acknowledged that majority of dog owners shared the space respectfully which improved overall perceptions of safety.
- Recreation: respondents requested more social recreational facilities like basketball halfcourts, cricket pitches, and soccer nets. Many requested access to existing sporting pavilions and toilets for community meeting spaces and events, such as Nature Stewards, nature based citizen science, and community meetings. Most respondents celebrated the existing sporting facilities and clubs for their positive contribution to the parkland and willingness to share sportsfields with other users. Some concerns were raised about balancing the habitat values of the waterway with sportsfield lighting. All respondents were not supportive of additional sportsfields in particular synthetic pitches.
- Anti-social behaviour: respondents were very concerned about the trail bikes dangerous and illegal use of the shared path and parklands with incidents reported to VicPol. There were also concerns about hoon activities within the existing car parks at Moomba Park and Parker Reserve.
- Integrated water management and wetlands: respondents supported the establishment of the wetland in Moomba Park and the increased diversion of stormwater in to the parklands to help mitigate urban heat island effect, improve habitat values and reduce local flooding.
- Play Spaces: respondents called for improvements to the two playgrounds at Moomba Park and Parker Reserve while acknowledging they were popular and well designed. There were

many calls for more opportunities for nature-based play including bush kinders throughout the parklands.

- Lighting and safety: some respondents suggested improvements to lighting along the Merri Creek trail whereas the majority were not supportive unless the lighting provided wildlife sensitive lighting for key movement routes such as key bridge crossings to Reservoir at path between Railway Parade to Northumberland Rd and would like to see increased safety measures in car parks.

Key themes arising from the consultation Stage 3+4 included:

Stage 3 feedback online and during pop-up site meetings was very supportive with the only concerns raised around the location and scale of proposed park activation around Sahara Way Fawkner.

Changes in the Sahara Way precinct include:

- Removal of the proposed basketball court at Sahara Way / Lorne Street
- Relocation of the proposed nature-based adventure playground, drinking fountain, picnic tables and public toilet away from Sahara Way / Lorne Street towards the eastern edge of the reserve
- Relocation of the proposed exercise station away from Sahara Way / Lorne Street towards the northern boundary of St Basil's.
- Relocation of the proposed wetland site further south in the reserve to be part of the open habitat enhancement area.

Stage 4 feedback on the Final Plan key areas included:

- Dogs: respondents noted there is missing signage for dogs on lead in various reserves and safety issues with off lead dogs along the Merri Creek trail involving cyclists and pedestrians.
- Dogs: a respondent raised concerns with a proposed investigation for a fenced dog off lead area.
- Connectivity: respondents requested better access for pedestrians/cyclists between surrounding urban areas and Merri Creek trail, including from Newland Rd.
- Facilities: a respondent requested instalment of a dog fountain.

The suggestions and comments provided have informed the Final Plan.

#### **4. Next Steps**

In July 2024, the final plan will be presented to Council for endorsement.

#### **5. Further information**

Any questions can be directed to Council's Open Space Design & Development Unit via email [openspace@merri-bek.vic.gov.au](mailto:openspace@merri-bek.vic.gov.au) or by phoning 9240 1111.

## Appendix B

### Fawkner Merri Creek Parklands Indicative Cost Plan

The Projects List identifies specific investments in open space that Merri-bek City Council would need to deliver over time to implement the Parklands Plan.

The purpose of this List is to provide Council with an understanding of the quantum of projects required to be delivered in open space over a long-term timeframe to assist with annual and long-term work planning and financial considerations.

The Projects List is not exhaustive, nor definitive. Council will make other investments in open space and may deliver other capital projects that are identified from time to time that are required and deemed to be consistent with the Parklands Plan. The Projects List does not include maintenance costings, these will be determined through specific project development and Council's asset management processes. Timing and delivery of projects is also subject to change and Council's normal budget and work planning processes. Some projects also rely on other stakeholders and the success of external grant applications.

#### Timeframes:

The timeframes for projects are:

- Short: to commence in 0 – 3 years.
- Medium: To commence within 3 – 5 years.
- Long: To commence within 5 – 8 years.

#### Costs:

The listed project costs are cost estimates only. Projects will be subject to detailed feasibility analysis should the process proceed during future budget and work planning processes. Project costs will also be higher in future years due to cost escalation and consumer price index changes.

Cost estimates are broken down for simplicity as:

\$ \$0 - \$50,000

\$\$ \$50,000 - \$100,000

\$\$\$ \$100,000 - \$200,000

\$\$\$\$ \$200,000 +

ABBREVIATIONS	
CAPEX	Capital expenditure
DEECA	Department of Environment
Health	Department of Health
MW	Melbourne Water
OPEX	Operational expenditure
OSF	Council's Open Space Fund
FS	Council Food Systems
SRV	Sport and Recreation Victoria
MCMC	Merri Creek Management Committee



Action	Description	Location	Type	Mechanisms	Source	Grant	Short 2024-2027	Medium 2027-2029	Long 2029-2031
1	Council, MCMC and Friends to advocate to State Government through Northern trails for strengthened Merri Creek Trail and habitat connections.	Moomba	Advocacy	Existing	Existing				
2	Community nature connection activation of Growing Grassfrog Wetland with waterwatch and bush kinder.	Moomba	Nature	Existing	CAPEX-OPEX	MCMC	\$		
3	Maintenance and fire access track based on Fire Plan.	Moomba	Maintenance	New	OSF			\$	
4	Improve Somerlayton Crescent entry with new signage and vegetation maintenance.	Moomba	Nature	New	CAPEX		\$		
5	Accessible concrete shared user path connections to creek bridge	Moomba	Community	Grant (50%)	CAPEX	DEECA	\$\$\$		
6	Line marking 2 x senior fields, update perimeter fencing with openings; create warm up space at southern end	Moomba	Recreation	Grant (50%)	OSF	SRV			\$\$
7	Sportsfield pavilion works with new social and community meeting space and accessible public toilets; create food truck powered site in car park.	Moomba	Community	Existing	CAPEX		\$\$\$\$		
8	Investigate new recreation opportunities: futsal goals, multisuse space (demolish cricket nets), circuit path, safety lighting, exercise stations	Moomba	Recreation	Grant (50%)	OSF	SRV			
9	Develop habitat enhancement plan with interpretation, Banksia woodlands, informal paths, habitat fencing and weed management.	Moomba	Nature	New	OPEX		\$		
10	Art and nature play loop, bush kinder and riparian vegetation enhancement.	Moomba	Nature	Grant (50%)	OSF	Health	\$		
11	Construct fire break maintenance track and remove invasive weeds from rear of property (agave and prickly pear).	Moomba	Maintenance	New	OSF		\$		
12	Investigate community market garden and food forest social enterprise.	Jukes Rd	Community	Grant (50%)	FS	Health	\$		
13	Investigate improved maintenance connection to Reservoir with rock ripple or pedestrian bridge.	Jukes Rd	Maintenance	Grant (50%)	OSF	MW			\$
14	Strengthen conservation values of grasslands.	Jukes Rd	Nature	Existing	MCMC		\$		
15	Provide high amenity indigenous garden beds with signage and labels.	Jukes Rd	Nature	Grant (50%)	OSF	DEECA	\$		
16	Improved habitat connection to Central Creek grasslands.	Jukes Rd	Nature	New	MCMC	MW			\$
17	Undertake feasibility of Jukes Rd IWM wetland and flood mitigation project.	Jukes Rd	IWM	Grant (50%)	SBE	MW	\$		
18	Investigate Fenced Dog Park, Jukes Rd.	Jukes Rd	Community	New	OSF				
19	Nature circuit resting place and bush kinder with path links.	Jukes Rd	Nature	New	OSF			\$	
20	Investigate new creek crossing (rock ripple and maintenance Jukes Rd – Radford Rd) for loop walk to Hare St bridge.	Jukes Rd	Movement	New	OSF			\$	
21	Construct stormwater culvert, develop Emma St habitat plan and revegetate culvert	Jukes Rd	Maintenance	New	CAPEX			\$\$	
22	Implement Leonard Street grasslands conservation management plan.	Jukes Rd	Nature	Existing	OPEX		\$		
23	New shared path, fire break and maintenance path access with Leonard St powerpole removal.	Jukes Rd	Movement	New	OSF		\$\$		
24	Resolve connectivity issues and public land encroachment; add new maintenance gates; remove invasive and woody weeds; work with residents to establish food forest.	Hood-McBryde	Land Management	New	CAPEX		\$		
25	Develop nature-based Hood Crescent – McBryde Parkland Plan with community including nature play, and path to mound lookout. Refer to Eddie Botha's 2018 plan.	Hood-McBryde	Land Management	New	OSF			\$	
26	Upgrade McBryde path connection and maintenance access.	Hood-McBryde	Movement	New	CAPEX			\$\$\$	
27	Resting place with circuit path and distance markers.	Hood-McBryde	Movement	New	OSF			\$	
28	Undertake renaming of acquired VicRoads land and investigate contaminated soil risks and potential land remediation as well as Committee of management for Crown land with suitable land use determined by the community.	Hood-McBryde	Land Management	New	OSF		\$		

Action	Description	Location	Type	Mechanisms	Source	Grant	Short 2024-2027	Medium 2027-2029	Long 2029-2031
29	Potential enclosed Dog Park, McBryde St.	Hood-McBryde	Community	Grant (50%)	OSF	DEECA		\$\$	
30	Accessible and alternative flooding shared user path.	Hood-McBryde	Movement	New	OSF			\$\$	
31	Resting place.	Hood-McBryde	Community	New	OSF				\$
32	Create dementia sensory planting with path and pedestrian/maintenance link to McBryde St.	Hood-McBryde	Community	New	OSF				\$
33	Major woody weed works site A.	Lorne St	Nature	Grant (50%)	CAPEX	MW			\$\$
34	Resting Place and circuit story telling.	Lorne St	Community	Grant (50%)	OSF	Health		\$	
35	Cricketworket	Lorne St	Recreation	New	OSF			\$	
36	Major woody weed works site B.	Lorne St	Nature	Grant (50%)	CAPEX	MW			\$\$
37	Habitat and swale restoration.	Lorne St	Nature	Grant (50%)	CAPEX	MW		\$	
38	Lorne St toilets.	Lorne St	Community	Grant (50%)	OSF	SRV		\$\$\$	
39	Resting Place.	Lorne St	Community	Grant (50%)	OSF	SRV		\$	
40	Nature Play, picnic facilities, seating, bush kinder and car parking (3 hour 9am-6pm).	Lorne St	Community	Grant (50%)	OSF	Health		\$\$\$	
41	Major woody weed works site C.	Lorne St	Nature	Grant (50%)	CAPEX	MW	\$\$		
42	Proposed enclosed Dog Park, Lorne St.	Lorne St	Community	Grant (50%)	OSF	DEECA			\$\$\$
43	Lorne St circuit path, exercise station, distance markers and creek link.	Lorne St	Movement	Grant (50%)	OSF	SRV		\$\$\$	
44	Major woody weed works site D.	Lorne St	Nature	Grant (50%)	CAPEX	MW	\$		
45	Develop Iमारoo Quarry Vegetation Management Plan.	Lorne St	Nature	Existing	CAPEX		\$		
46	Major woody weed works site E.	Parker	Nature	Grant (50%)	CAPEX	MW	\$		
47	Resolve land ownership issues.	Parker	Land Management	New	CAPEX		\$		
48	Provide clear wayfinding and accessible path from Queens Parade maintenance track.	Parker	Movement	New	OSF		\$		
49	Restore Dairy Drive wetland and create resting place for local workers.	Parker	IWM	New	OSF		\$		
50	Create informal path link between Dairy Drive and Bakers Road and investigate feasibility of creek crossing.	Parker	Movement	New	OSF			\$	\$
51	Basketball and futsal multiuse court.	Parker	Recreation	New	OSF				\$\$
52	Detailed design work for staged tree planting, renewal of park amenities, lighting and sportsfield renewal (levels, drainage, irrigation, park fencing etc.)	Parker	Community	New	OSF		\$		\$
53	Upgrade car park with swale drainage; resurfacing, drinking fountain, bins and shelter.	Parker	Recreation	Existing	CAPEX			\$\$\$	
54	DDA accessible path improvements.	Parker	Movement	Existing	CAPEX		\$		
55	Increase habitat plantings, shade trees and nature play.	Parker	Nature	Existing	UFS		\$		
56	Parker Reserve circuit path with distance markers and path connections.	Parker	Movement	New	OSF		\$		
57	Improved Mathieson St to car park path.	Parker	Movement	New	CAPEX		\$		
58	Upgrade escarpment staircase to the creek.	Parker	Movement	New	OSF		\$\$		
59	Investigate IWM wetland feasibility from Keady St.	Parker	IWM	New	CAPEX				\$
60	Investigate Keady St to creek path connection.	Parker	Movement	New	OSF		\$		
61	Naming of 2 Spry St parkland and adjoining parklands with assistance from Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung.	Parker	Land Management	Existing	CAPEX		\$		