



Coburg North Sports Hub Master Plan

Melbourne's leading nature, sport, recreation and wellbeing destination.

PREPARED BY:



URBAN / MASTER PLANNING / DESIGN



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The background image is a composite of two photographs. The top half shows a dense canopy of trees with sunlight filtering through the leaves against a clear blue sky. The bottom half shows a river flowing through a green landscape, with tall trees on the left bank and reeds on the right bank.

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional custodians of the lands and waterways in the area now known as Merri-bek, and pay respect to their Elders past and present, as well as to all First Nations' communities who significantly contribute to the life of the area.

Merri Creek is one of the most significant gathering spaces for the Kulin Nation in southeast Australia. Prior to colonisation, Edgars Creek was also an important location for resource harvesting, given the freshwater ecosystems, and as a campground.

Coburg North Sports Hub Master Plan

Project Overview

Merri-bek City Council is developing a Master Plan for an area labelled the “Coburg North Sports Hub” and has appointed independent consultants Solucio and The Office for Collective Design (The OCD) to lead this process.

This area has not previously been defined as a collective precinct. It includes five key sporting facilities as well as the surrounding trails, open spaces, Merri Creek and Edgars Creek.

Project Aim

The aim of the project is to strategically guide future planning and development on the site, ensuring it can sustainably meet the needs of the community.

Of significant importance for this project is the requirement for both:

- A long-term vision, as well as;
- Aligned and realistic short-term development plans.

Work Completed

A thorough research, engagement, consultation and analysis process has been undertaken, including the following activities to inform the Master Plan.

- Background research, site and urban design analysis.
- Extensive stakeholder engagement (22 stakeholder interviews and five sporting group/stakeholder workshop sessions).
- Broad community consultation (441 online surveys, 361 interactive map comments, three community pop-ups and eight email submissions).
- Additional workshops with stakeholders, Council officers and a cross-department working group.
- Technical site analysis reports conducted for the site’s facilities.
- Extensive community and stakeholder feedback on a Draft Master Plan.

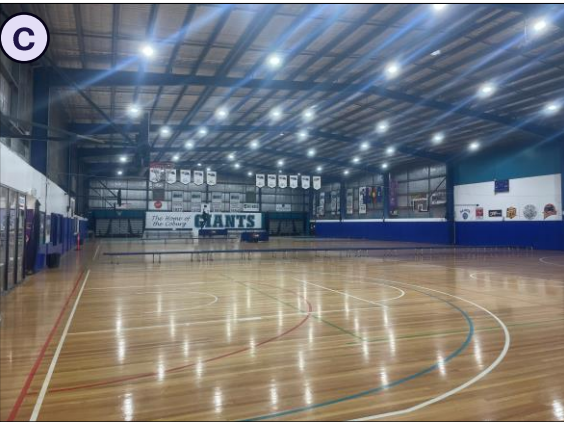
Existing Sporting Facilities



Ray Kibby Table Tennis Centre



Coburg Olympic Swimming Pool



Coburg Basketball Stadium



Harold Stevens Athletics Track



Jackson Reserve



Site Analysis and Constraints

The Master Plan area is complex with several major considerations, including:

- Significant gathering space for the Kulin Nation.
- Dated infrastructure and facilities with non-compliance.
- High demand and use for sport/recreation and a growing population catchment.
- Residential setting, interfaces and impacts.
- Environmental, topographical, planning, zoning and cultural development restrictions.

Community and Stakeholder Priorities

A separate engagement and consultation report is available, however the following key themes have been synthesised to inform the Master Plan:

- Be bold and aspirational.
- Improve safety and increase activation.
- Enhance the environmental outcomes.
- Prioritise sustainable renewal.
- Develop the physical and cultural connectivity.
- Engage and empower the community to shape the outcomes of the project.



Master Plan Zones

The Sports Hub is comprised of three naturally delineated zones, which each require a tailored approach to address the specific priorities. The long-term intention for each zone is outlined as:

Zone 1: Environment, Habitat and Recreation Corridor

- Create a tranquil escape from the surrounding urban landscape that inspires community health and wellbeing.
- Continue to restore and rejuvenate the natural setting, balancing ecological preservation with recreational opportunities.

Zone 2: Community Participation

- Maintain the existing basketball stadium until a superior fit-for-purpose stadium can be developed.
- Reduce the peak load and vehicular congestion around this zone.
- Create more opportunities for community recreation.

Zone 3: Active Destination

- Rejuvenate the Coburg Olympic Swimming Pool.
- Create a community oasis with an innovative sustainable design that reflects the natural setting.

Establishing a long-term concept to support short-term planning and development

The circumstances, context, analysis and conditions of this site have determined that all existing sporting assets will likely need to be replaced, redeveloped, expanded or re-purposed within the next 25-years.

This provides an opportunity to re-imagine the entire area and consider how it can best cater to the community needs in the long-term future.

This challenge has inspired the following Vision, Guiding Principles and 2050 Vision Concept Plan.

Master Plan Vision

Set at the confluence of Merri Creek and Edgars Creek, the Coburg North Sports Hub will instill and cultivate community pride for the growing local population.

The Sports Hub will be a respectful and accessible destination which showcases natural biodiversity, culturally-sensitive environmental practices, and best-practice sport facilities and activation.

Guiding Principles for the Master Plan

- Aspirational and Meaningful.
- Respectful, Accessible and Activated.
- Maximise Community Benefits from Sport-Designated Spaces.
- A Distinct Identity.
- Environmentally-Focused.

These statements have been used as a framework to consider and align a short-term development plan for each zone that will commence the process of achieving the long-term vision.

The Master Plan will be reviewed every ten years, and this will include preparing new short-term development plans.



Community Aspirations and Opportunities

Zone 1: Environment, Habitat and Recreation Corridor



Zone 2: Community Participation



Zone 3: Active Destination





Zone 1: Environment, Habitat and Recreation Corridor

- Increase vegetation buffers and tree canopy along the creek corridors.
- Improve stormwater retention along the creeks, using native plants and vegetation.
- Improve, expand and connect the trail network across the Sports Hub – and incorporate a five-kilometre trail loop.
- Acknowledge and honour traditional owners and incorporate Woi-wurrung language on site entries and interfaces.
- Install directional signage provided in an easy-to-interpret format and in multiple languages.
- Provide signage for designated dog off leash areas in the Merri Creek and Edgars Creek precincts.

Longer-term/or if funding becomes available:

- Embed first nations public art and highlight significant first nations stories.
- Improve and widen the bridges.
- Develop environmentally sustainable amenities and active transport/end of trip facilities.
- Install low-intensity, directional lighting along the trail in designated zones.

^Actions that have external funding allocated.

+Action that has future council budget allocated.



Zone 2: Community Participation

- Complete the new Sports Hub indoor gym^.
- Complete the Basketball Stadium entry refurbishment^.
- Complete a feasibility study and concept design for a new, relocated basketball stadium to allow for the expansion of courts.
- Improve the Basketball Stadium changerooms.
- Investigate appropriate netting options if this can enable senior cricket matches to return to Jackson Reserve.
- Incorporate access gates within the athletics track fence and install LED lighting.
- Retain and maintain the athletics track and explore the feasibility of options to upgrade and extend its useful life.

Longer-term/or if funding becomes available:

- Enhance the creek corridor and vegetation buffer.
- Replace and expand the play space.
- Refresh the cricket pavilion and install cricket training nets.
- Replace the athletics track with a new competition standard synthetic track, ensuring all existing activities can be retained.
- Once a new fit-for-purpose stadium is fully operational on an external site, and if the current stadium is no longer required, it would be removed and this would enable Council to re-align and increase the provision of car parking, trees and landscaping.



Zone 3: Active Destination

- Complete the pool changeroom upgrades^.
- Complete the Table Tennis Centre entry refurbishment and DDA-access upgrade^.
- Complete the Table Tennis Centre building extension investigation that will allow for up to four tables within the future budget allocation in the 27/28 financial year for the Ray Kibby Table Tennis Centre+.
- Review and update Council’s Aquatic and Leisure Strategy.

Longer-term/or if funding becomes available:

- Redevelop the Aquatic facilities (*subject to outcomes of updated strategy), with intent to:
 - Explore new year-round facilities such as a café, gym and indoor wellness, retail, athlete recovery and meeting spaces.
 - Explore innovative and environmentally sustainable design options such as a green rooftop above indoor facilities.
 - Incorporate and expand the Table Tennis Centre, within a delineated/dedicated space.
 - Realign, increase and improve the safety of car parking and access, while enhancing landscaping along Murray Road.
- Work with relevant parties to improve pedestrian access, connectivity, safety and main road crossings.



PREPARED FOR:

