

YARRA FLATS PARK



Revised Concept Plan

2013

A revised concept plan for the northern section of Yarra Flats Park has been developed to incorporate feedback from community consultation.

Background

Yarra Flats Park in Eaglemont is popular with walkers, cyclists, picnickers and birdwatchers. Parks Victoria undertook community consultation to test community support for proposals for the park which include: revegetation and new walking paths; an Impressionist Lab Art Gallery and Education Centre proposed by Banyule City Council; a tree-based adventure course proposed by Parks Victoria and Ecoline; and a stormwater wetland proposed by Melbourne Water.

How we consulted

Formal community consultation on the draft plan ran from Friday 26 April to Thursday 31 May 2012. A Community Information Day was held at the park on Sunday 29 April from 10am to 2 pm, which approximately 110 people attended.

The feedback we received

Parks Victoria would like to thank the many people who took the time to complete the survey or make a submission. The total number of surveys returned was 217, of which 168 were on-line responses and 49 were paper surveys. Letters or emails providing further comment were received from 10 individuals and organisations. A petition with 151 signatures, opposing the Impressionist Lab location and seeking the proposed wetland works to rejuvenate the remnant billabong, was received from the Riverland Conservation Society.

A summary of the survey results is available on the Parks Victoria website www.parks.vic.gov.au under Plans Underway, Yarra Flats Park.

What this means for the plan

Parks Victoria considers that the three proposals are all consistent with its *Healthy Parks Healthy People* philosophy, which aims to encourage more people to enjoy the park more often.

The survey indicated:

Revegetation Almost 90% of respondents were in support of a long-term program to revegetate the river bank and billabong areas to strengthen the habitat corridor.

Wetland - Around 79% agreed/strongly agreed the wetland would be of community benefit and 64% said it would increase their use of the park.

Impressionist Lab - Around 61% of respondents agreed/strongly agreed that an Impressionist Lab Gallery would benefit the community and 45% say the presence of the gallery would increase their use of the parklands.

Tree Course - Around 50% of respondents agreed/strongly agreed that a tree based adventure course in the park would benefit the community and 35% say a tree course is likely/highly likely to increase their use of the park. (note that the majority of respondents were older than the average tree course user).

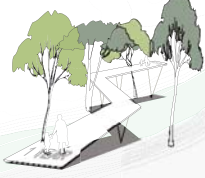
The Concept Plan has been revised to take into account many of the important concerns expressed during the consultation.



A WALK IN THE FLOODPLAIN

This walk provides opportunity to understand the flood levels and flow through the landscape, old billabong traces, water quality treatment and riparian vegetation communities.

Impressionist Lab walkway



wetland boardwalk



river lookout



BANKSIA STREET

Melbourne Water to rework wetland design to rejuvenate billabong

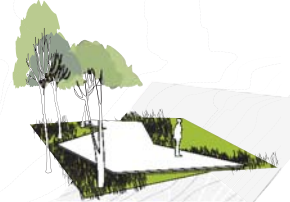
A WALK IN A CHANGING LANDSCAPE

This walk provides opportunity to uncover and understand the layers of history on the site including open grazing land, revegetated forest and parkland.

historic oak tree



outdoor studio/gathering space



Carpark capacity reduced

Carpark reconfigured

A WALK IMMERSSED IN NATURE

This walk encourages the park visitor to become immersed in the landscape, exploring and discovering the Annulus Billabong and riparian vegetation communities via a network of informal narrow trails including boardwalks over low lying areas

billabong boardwalk



response to consultation feedback

A walk in the floodplain
marked interpretative walk, including boardwalks, platforms and lookout points

A walk in a changing landscape
marked interpretative walk, including plantings and outdoor studio/gathering spaces

A walk immersed in nature
marked interpretative walk, including narrow trails and boardwalks over low lying areas

Storm Water Treatment wetland

focused environment improvement works

1 in 2 Year Flood Zone

remnant billabong

- 1 Park entry
- 2 Main Yarra Trail
- 3 Site of existing carpark
- 4 Proposed Car Park (300 spaces)
a. 60 spaces
b. 140 spaces
c. 100 spaces
- 5 Existing Mountain Bike Trail (to be formalised)
- 6 Existing toilets
- 7 Pony Club Paddock
- 8 Annulus Billabong

0 20 50 100 200

METRES



Features of the plan

General Park Improvements

A targeted program of weed control and revegetation will focus on the riverbank and billabong areas.

A series of 3 new experiential walks would be created to give visitors a greater understanding of the park and better access to the Yarra River. Car parking will be increased and more dispersed to allow better landscaping and screening.

The existing informal mountain bike tracks would be redefined to one track and the proliferation of smaller tracks will be revegetated

A Impressionist Laboratory

Banyule City Council

Banyule City Council in partnership with the Heidelberg School Art Foundation is currently planning for the 'Impressionist Lab', a nationally significant innovative art gallery and education facility for the interpretation of art and environment, focussing on the Heidelberg School of artists, Impressionism and the environment. The proposed location is the grassy open area of Yarra Flats Park near the corner of Banksia Street and the Boulevard.

For further information please contact Banyule City Council ph. 9490 4222

B Stormwater Treatment Wetland

Melbourne Water

Melbourne Water is planning to improve the quality of the storm water runoff from the adjacent residential areas, by filtering it through a wetland consisting of a series of three reed filled ponds, which will also provide important habitat for waterbirds and frogs. The proposal is part of Melbourne Water's overall plan to improve the health of the Yarra River.

For further information please contact Melbourne Water ph. 131 722

C Tree-based Eco Adventure Course

Parks Victoria

Parks Victoria and Ecoline are planning a tree-based eco adventure course within the northern part of the park near the existing picnic shelter and toilet. The course will be suspended in the tree canopy and will provide a new perspective on the Yarra River and its vegetation, appealing to a broad range of ages. The course will be developed and managed by a private operator, Ecoline under a lease from Parks Victoria.

For further information please contact Parks Victoria ph. 13 1963

Key Concerns Raised During Consultation

Rejuvenating the Remnant Billabong

Many respondents are keen to see the proposed new stormwater treatment wetland designed in a way that will incorporate and rejuvenate the original, now dry, billabong in the northern section of the park. Melbourne Water has agreed in principle to the proposal. It meets the preferred approach of protecting and extending natural wetlands. Melbourne Water will undertake the necessary engineering calculations to ensure the proposal will work hydraulically and will then redesign the wetland to incorporate the billabong.

Car Parking

The draft plan had proposed a car parking increase from the current 160 spaces to a total of 300 spaces, made up of three landscaped areas of 100 spaces each (ie an increase of 140 spaces). This would be the maximum number of spaces required if all of the proposals were to be implemented. People were especially concerned about the proposed car parking closest to the park entry and the houses. In response, this car park will be reduced in size from 100 spaces to 60 and landscaping will be increased to provide further screening from the residential area. The deleted 40 spaces will be moved to the parking areas near the existing carpark.

Concerns about damaging the trees

The proposed tree course uses ropes, nets and platforms that are basic in their materials to challenge participants. The course does not use the sort of large metal structures such as seen in major tourist attractions like the Otway Fly. Where attachments to trees are required, this is achieved using log collars. Half logs are used to spread the load of the wires and ropes. The trees are not drilled or nailed into. An assessment has been carried out by an arborist and the trees to be incorporated in the course have been deemed safe to use and not at risk of being damaged by the tree adventure course. The health of trees will be monitored annually. Weed control and revegetation works will take place under the tree course to strengthen the available habitat in the area.

Impact on the wildlife corridor

As many people have pointed out during consultation, Yarra Flats Park provides habitat in itself and is also part of a wildlife corridor formed by the Yarra River and its neighbouring parks that allows birds and animals to move between green areas. Many smaller birds and animals rely on mid and understorey layers of vegetation, much of which has been overtaken by weeds. The Plan will include extensive weed control and revegetation, focused along the river, which will help to strengthen the park's role in the habitat corridor. The Impressionist Lab will be sited in the area of the park furthest from the river.

Building in Open Space

Parks Victoria has heard from many people who are concerned about the proposal to construct the Impressionist Lab building in an open space area. Parks Victoria is providing the opportunity for Banyule City Council to develop the idea further as it has the potential to attract a broader range and greater number of people to visit the park and the exhibitions and classes at the gallery will encourage a deeper understanding of the changing landscape of the Yarra River and its environs. In progressing the project, Parks Victoria will require Banyule City Council to further consult with the local community once a design for the Impressionist Lab has been further developed. This will include details of proposed dimensions, elevations and finishes to allow a better consideration of how the Lab would sit within the park.

Increased Traffic at the Boulevard/Banksia Street Intersection

Many people expressed a concern that the already busy intersection will get busier with the plan's proposals. Banyule City Council will undertake a traffic assessment and traffic management plan as part of the further planning for the Impressionist Lab.



Community Information Day April 2012

On the basis of the community feedback received, Parks Victoria will support the proposals for the park advancing to the next stage of planning. Further community consultation for the Impressionist Lab is to occur when there is greater detail about the design.

Next Steps

The draft Preliminary Concept Plan was developed to indicate broadly how each of the proposals could sit within the park. The consultation period provided community feedback about the plan and the proposals and indicated that there is a wide range of views about the proposals. The revised Concept Plan illustrated here has incorporated changes as a result of consultation.

From here:

Melbourne Water are reviewing their stormwater wetland design to incorporate rejuvenation of the remnant billabong. Melbourne Water will consult further on their revised wetland plan when ready.

Ecoline will commence detailed planning for the Tree Based Adventure Course. They will conduct environmental and cultural assessments and their proposal will then go through the appropriate planning process.

Banyule City Council will pursue funding to further develop a design for the Impressionist Lab Gallery and Education Centre. It is expected that sourcing funding and developing a design may take up to 12 months. The council will then be required to consult with the local community on the draft design. The Heidelberg School Art Foundation will continue to pursue funding for the construction of the gallery and the additional tracks and trails proposed in the plan.

Impressionist Lab Community Consultation undertaken by Banyule City Council

Separate consultation including a public meeting and online survey focussing on community views about the Impressionist Lab was carried out by Banyule City Council during March & April 2012. 45 residents and community members attended the public meeting and 106 people responded via the online survey, a range of further comments and feedback was also received via e-mail. The majority of respondents expressed enthusiasm and support for the concept, with 62.5% saying yes they supported the overall Impressionist Lab concept, 27.5% said maybe and 11% said no they did not support the overall concept. Many of the community members unsure or against the Lab being located within Yarra Flats Park wanted to see further details of the Lab proposal including detailed designs, dimensions, materials and landscaping in order to be able to comment on whether they thought that it was appropriate for Yarra Flats Park.

More information

visit www.parks.vic.gov.au or call 13 1963.



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