

Albert Park

MASTER PLAN



Albert Park Master Plan project governance

The project team structure established to guide and oversee development of the master plan includes:

- **Hansen Partnership**
landscape architecture and master planning
- **@ Leisure**
recreational planning
- **GTA consultants**
traffic and transport consultants
- **Ecology & Heritage Partners**
ecological and cultural heritage consultant
- **Harvest Digital Planning**
web developer
- **Laidlaw & Laidlaw**
landscape heritage and arboricultural advice
- **Optias**
investment and revenue opportunities.

The project governance structure established to guide and oversee development of the master plan includes:

- Parks Victoria collaborating with the Traditional Owners Boon Wurrung Foundation and Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation, and with Wurundjeri Land Council
- Project Working Group comprised of Parks Victoria planning and regional staff
- Project Steering Committee comprised of Parks Victoria directors to provide direction, strategic advice and input into the master plan development.

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Acknowledgment of contributors

The project group wishes to acknowledge the input and assistance of the following:

- Traditional Owner group representatives
- Members of the Project Working Group and Project Steering Committee
- Parks Victoria staff from various directorates and Albert Park staff who provided technical advice
- Community, industry and stakeholder group representatives who gave their time and knowledge during various consultation phases
- Anne-Marie Pisani, Senior Precinct Planner (Project Manager)
- Nick Loschiavo, Senior Precinct Planner (Document)
- Cameron Bergmeier, Precinct Planner (Maps and Document)
- Andrew Shannon, Manager Stakeholder and Community Engagement (Document).

Traditional Owners acknowledgment

Parks Victoria acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Victoria, and pays respects to their Elders past, present and future, and their ongoing connection and responsibilities in caring for Country. Parks Victoria will continue to work with the Traditional Owners in the implementation of this plan.

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1. Executive summary

Albert Park will offer a diverse range of high quality visitor experiences within an urban parkland setting. It will be valued as an opportunity to connect with nature in the city, contributing to the health and wellbeing of the community of Melbourne and its visitors.



Planning Albert Park's future

Albert Park is situated three kilometres from the centre of Melbourne and provides 225 hectares of parkland including a 45 hectare lake. Over six million visits to the park are made each year. The park provides open space for local communities, hosts district sports games, is the venue for a multitude of charitable events, fun runs/walks and is known internationally as a venue for the Australian Formula One Grand Prix.

Melbourne is Australia's fastest growing city, with the current population of 5 million, is expected to increase to 7 million by 2042. Rates of obesity and health issues across the population and life stages; increases in chronic diseases such as coronary heart disease, cancers, diabetes and mental health issues, such as depression, for which increased physical activity can have positive effects, and the levels of social isolation in Australia are rising and climate change is placing increasing pressure on our urban parks and open spaces.

As Melbourne's population grows, so does the demand on our parks and gardens. The Albert Park Master Plan will guide improvements to the park over the next 25 years, ensuring it meets the diverse and changing needs of visitors, while enhancing the health and wellbeing of visitors to the park and quality of the park landscape.

Through consultation we have heard that the park is much loved and that the underlying layout is working well, but there are some key areas for improvement. The master plan provides a series of interventions to improve the quality of experiences available for visitors, in large part by improving the park environment through increased planting and by improving access to the park.



Master Plan aims

Parks Victoria recognises that, over the life of a master plan, circumstances affecting the park may change. Changed circumstances that may necessitate a refresh of the master plan, based on demonstrated need and clear rationale, would be prioritised. These changes may be a response to new recreational opportunities; unexpected and/or significant increases in visitor demand; new threats or risks to natural and cultural values; changes in park/ reserve boundaries and/or land-use; or changes in government policy or legislation.

The master plan sets out a flexible and adaptable framework for the future, under three themes and five future directions. Project initiatives are outlined under each of the strategic directions.

Theme one: Nature and environment

- A healthy park that will showcase the sustainable use of resources in a time of climate change
- Celebrate the importance of the lake as the heart of the park

Theme two: Community connections

- A welcoming park for everyone
- A healthy environment where people can connect with one another while being immersed in nature and culture

Theme three: Healthy and active

- An adaptable and diverse urban park that is enjoyed and valued for relaxation, sports and recreation.

Executive summary

The Vision: Albert Park — open space for Melbourne's growing future

What does the Master Plan propose?

The master plan proposes adaptation and activation of the site to meet the changing needs of Melbourne's growing population. The main proposals of the master plan include:

- A new 6–8 metre wide, 5 km long Lake Promenade, with lighting for evening use.
- The creation of a wetland edge a new meandering board walk to bring people close to nature on the lake.
- A diverse range of picnic, play and fitness areas, connected to the Lake Promenade.
- Ongoing provision for community-based and grassroots sports, by increasing resilience of sporting fields and greater use of programming through sharing of fields and pavilions.
- Support for the Albert Park Planting Strategy, for further tree planting, to mitigate the effects of climate change, provide shade and shelter, improve amenity and provide greater opportunities for visitor experiences.
- A reduction in non-essential through traffic to improve visitor safety and park amenities, and to better provide for prioritised public transport, walking, cycling and event opportunities.
- Crossings to improve visitor safety across Queens Road and a green walking and cycling link from the park to the new Anzac Station.
- Improved access by better defining entrances and tree-line avenues leading to the lake.
- Protection of the Ngargee (Corroboree) Tree.
- A range of programs and activities to get a broader range of people involved in the park.
- A treed community urban space adjoining Fitzroy Street.
- Establishing Albert Park as one of Australia's most accessible parks for people of all abilities.

The master plan provides clarity for Parks Victoria, as the park managers, for the various clubs and leaseholders and park visitors. It establishes a shared community vision for the park and a long-term framework to inform decision making and

investment. This will aim to ensure that Albert Park is flexible and can evolve over time to meet the changing needs of the community and contemporary park. This shared vision will provide the desired confidence for government and leaseholders to invest in the future of Albert Park.

Consultation informing the master plan

The master plan has been informed by three rounds of community engagement, stakeholder discussions and detailed analysis that has included meetings with stakeholders, community information and drop-in sessions, and an interactive website with online mapping tools and surveys.

The background analysis report is underpinned by investigations, analysis and the first phase of engagement in 2014, where people told us what they consider is most important about the park and what needs to be addressed. For many people the lake is the heart of the park and the lake walk is an important part of their daily or weekly life. We heard that sports build a sense of community as well as contributing to health and fitness. Many people referred to the park as “breathing space” in the midst of a rapidly growing city. People told us that the park can be inhospitable on windy, rainy or hot days and that the landscape lacked interest for those not engaged in sport. Visitors felt that the park was not easy to get into or move through and that we need to be better prepared to respond to climate change and to cater for an increase in participation in sport and other health and recreational activities.

The initial framework plan

The Framework Plan tested ten key ideas and was exhibited in 2016. All of the ideas received support, to varying degrees, with particularly strong support to “enhance the park’s landscape character, quality and habitat potential through additional planting.” Feedback, together with expert advice from the Victorian Design Review Panel of the Office of the Victorian Government Architect, subsequently informed the development of a draft master plan. Exhibited during November 2017 and January 2018, the draft master plan received 2000+ responses. The new Lake Promenade concept was well supported, while we heard overwhelmingly from golfing advocates that they treasured the existing 18-hole golf course and did not want to see it reduced in size. Sports clubs continued to advocate that the future park will need to meet increasing demand for sports grounds.

How will the master plan be implemented?

Due to the complexity of functions and operations at Albert Park, actions will be implemented incrementally over time as leases expire and new opportunities arise, as visitation and demands change and as funding is made available to support the associated capital works program.

The delivery of new infrastructure and facilities will follow best practice in design, provide flexibility and support a variety of different complementary uses and provide resilience and sustainability into the future.

A series of design and development parameters have been established to provide guidance on the design of these facilities. These parameters are listed in the ‘Implementation’ chapter.

Implementation will be supported by a process of design review led by the Office of the Victorian Government Architect to review major development proposals and provide independent advice to government, clients and design consultants on design ambitions. Its purpose is to ensure quality design and visitor experience outcomes are met and realisation of the ambition of the master plan is met. Successful implementation of the master plan will depend on partnerships with external organisations, community and stakeholder groups and the private sector to deliver the full spectrum of opportunities.

The Albert Park Master Plan aligns with the four pillars of Parks Victoria Shaping Our Future. The vision is underpinned by the Healthy Parks Healthy People approach that this master plan will further explore and activate.

2. Introduction

Victorians love Albert Park, and make more than 6 million visits to the park each year. For over 140 years, the 225 hectare park, located 3 kilometres from the centre of Melbourne has provided for a range of amateur sports, community events and an escape to nature.

The need for a plan

The 1993 master plan for Albert Park has been largely implemented and has provided a strong structure for the park. Parks Victoria has developed this new master plan to set a vision for the park and guide it through the next 25 years and enable the park to maximise its contribution to the health and wellbeing of the Victorian community. As an inner city park, every square metre performs a function. There is an increasing demand for space by new and emerging sports and leisure activities, including a myriad of public and charitable events, a need for further environmental and amenity improvements, and for greater accessibility for our diverse community.

Twenty five years ago Melbourne was very different to what it is today. With the rate of technological and social change increasing significantly, Melbourne in 25 years from now, (the lifespan of this plan) will be very different to what it is today.

- Twenty-five years ago the greater Melbourne population was 3.2 million, and is now 5 million. On current trends could be 6-7 million in 25 years time. The biggest demographic change is the number of people aged over 65, which is expected to double to 1.26 million by 2041.
- Climate change impacts in Melbourne are expected to see a rise in the number of very hot days (where temperatures exceed 35 degrees) and flash flooding, known to cause the most deaths or injuries of all natural disaster weather events, will increase. With this, Albert Park will be called on to assist in climate change mitigation and flood control.

How to read this master plan

The Albert Park master plan is underpinned by the Parks Victoria Shaping Our Future four pillars and a broad project vision and future directions. The master plan approach addresses three major themes that support the objectives of the project vision. These themes are then investigated through a series of key initiatives. These initiatives direct a sequence of actions that inform the implementation plan for potential deliverables.

Shaping Our Future



Healthy Parks
Healthy People®

Parks Victoria's vision

Shaping Our Future outlines Parks Victoria's vision, purpose and strategic directions for the next decade, and in the context of this master plan, for the next 25 years. It identifies a vision for Parks Victoria to be a world class park service ensuring healthy parks for healthy people.

Healthy Parks Healthy People is a global movement that recognises the fundamental connections between human health and environmental health. For Parks Victoria, *Healthy Parks Healthy People* is the very foundation of how we manage parks and gives us the opportunity to improve the health of both our parks and communities.

In delivering our vision, Parks Victoria aims to inspire the community to conserve and enjoy Albert Park's unique natural and cultural heritage. Together, we care for Country and promote the value of Albert Park and Albert Park lake for the benefit of all Victorians and visitors.

The following four pillars of Parks Victoria's strategic plan explain the vision and purpose and how it will be achieved through the Albert Park Master Plan.

Conserving Victoria's special places aims to increase the resilience of natural and cultural assets in Albert Park and maintain ecosystem services in the face of climate change and other stressors. Albert Park Lake plays a significant role in meeting this objective and provides the opportunity for greater engagement with visitors to Albert Park

Enhancing organisational excellence is focused on improving the Parks Victoria's capacity and capabilities and recognises the important role of our partners in achieving the desired outcomes. This master plan acknowledges the commitment and ongoing relationship with other government partners, lessees, sporting groups and independent event organisers to enhance Albert Park.

Providing benefits beyond park boundaries recognises the organisation's role in contributing to the safety, living standards and wellbeing of Victorians. Albert Park is a key urban space contributing to and enhancing the liveability of Melbourne. It builds strong connection with the surrounding city fabric, connecting with Anzac Station, linking with other nearby open spaces such as Faulkner Park, Fitzroy Street and the bay.

Connecting people and parks aims to support and improve the health and wellbeing of Victorians by managing Albert Park in a way that is highly valued by the community. Implementation of this master plan supports increasing visitor access, activation and enjoyment, and deliver social and community-based programs to promote social sustainability, universal inclusion, health and wellbeing.

Planning for diverse people and activity

In talking with many hundreds of people through the course of planning it is clear that Albert Park is a much-loved part of Melbourne and is providing a range of healthy activities and experiences. From what we have heard, the basic structure and layout of the park are working, but there is a need for improvements in some key areas. These include:

- Access into and around the park
- Provision of increased shade and shelter
- Access to playing fields and adaptable open space
- Improving the experiences for casual visitors, especially the lake environs
- Opportunities to experience the park's flora and fauna
- Environmental sustainability.

Albert Park with the neighbouring Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre (MSAC) has long been known as “the home of amateur sport”, providing entry at a community level for a range of popular sports. The lake is often described by sailors as a ‘valuable nursery for learners’. While some have gone on to represent Australia at a national level, most people play for recreation, fitness, wellbeing and the community connection.

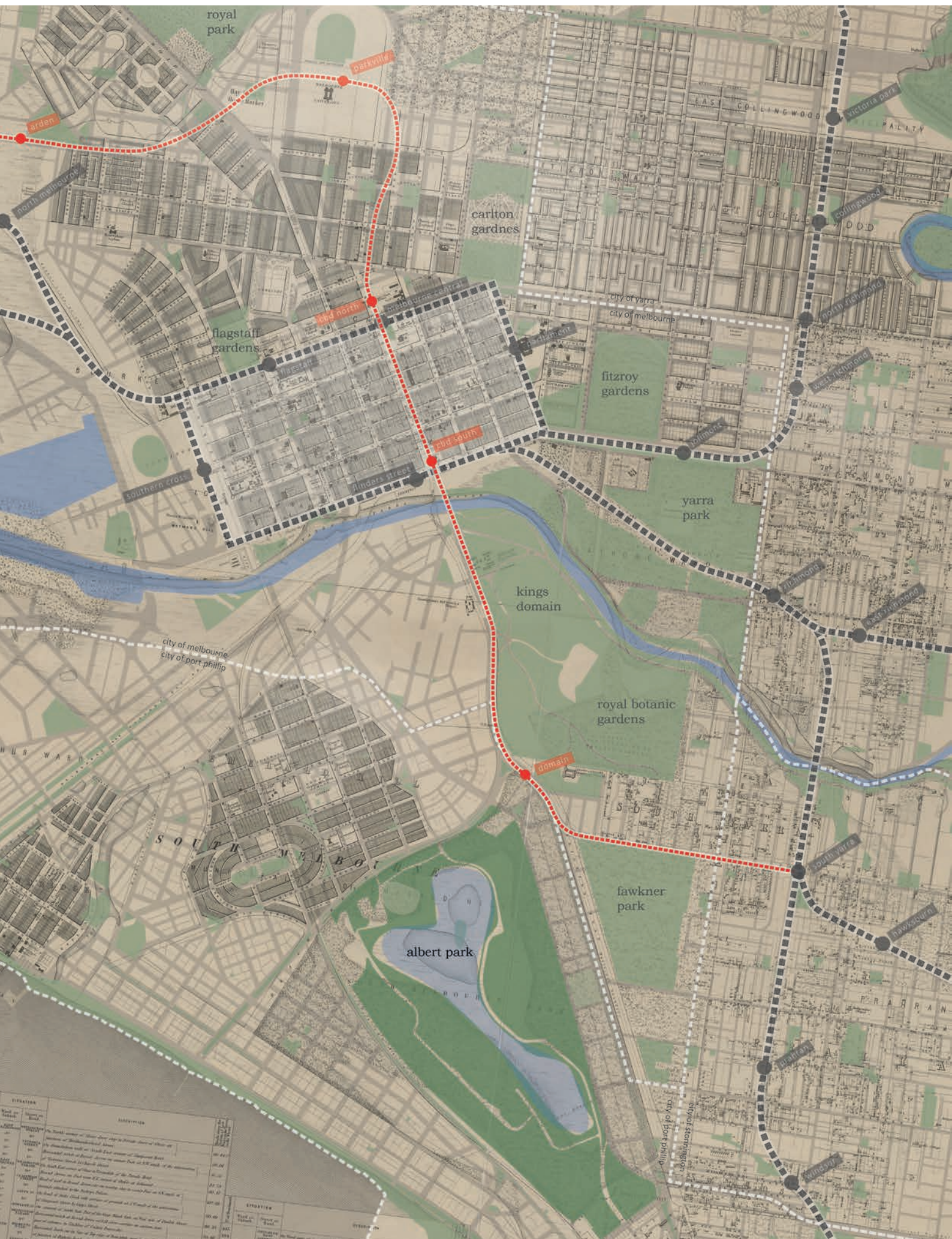
The 2011-12 report on Participation in Sport and Physical Recreation in Australia notes that walking for exercise has the highest rate of participation nationally. The lake path is the most-used facility in the park and accommodates a very broad range of fitness levels and diversity of users.

Continuing to provide for diverse community members to be active is critical in tackling the growing issues of obesity, diabetes, heart disease and mental health. Albert Park will continue to provide community-based and entry level sport to encourage greater rates of participation by more people.

Albert Park's topography, its central location and the activities on offer, provide a great opportunity for it to be an exemplar for all abilities access. Parks Victoria's aim is to support inclusive experiences where diverse visitors feel included when visiting the park with their family and friends. Bringing together accessible park infrastructure and experiences, and providing opportunities for everyday social interaction with others will be central to achieving this aim. This will be supported by improved access to public transport connections in the park and improved continuous paths of accessible travel throughout the park.

The master plan places emphasis on improving the casual recreation and amenity values of the park to meet the needs of a more diverse community, with a range of abilities and interests. Albert Park will continue to evolve to provide a broader range of visitor experiences and environmental outcomes supported by accessible infrastructure and amenity including toilets and ‘Changing Places’ facilities.





3. Significance of Albert Park

Albert Park provides open space for local communities, hosts district sport competitions, and is known internationally as a venue for the Australian Formula One Grand Prix.

The people's playground

The following perspectives Albert Park are important and have been considered in the master planning process.

For some local residents, the park is significant as local open space where they can relax and perhaps walk the dog. The heart of the park is the lake and it provides a daily dose of nature and peace. For local communities, the park is a place to get together with family and friends, or be part of a community sports club. The park helps define their suburb and their relationship with the city. A number of built structures within the park have local heritage significance, helping to tell the story of early St Kilda and South Melbourne.

In the context of Melbourne as a capital city of 5 million people, the park provides breathing space and green relief from the hard-edged urban environment. The path around the lake is one of its most loved features, attracting residents and workers for a regular walk or run. With its plentiful settings for community sport, Albert Park has earned a reputation as 'the people's playground'. Many popular community events, such as the RSPCA Million Paws Walk and the Melbourne Marathon, are celebrated at the park. Along with Domain Parkland, Royal Park, and Yarra Bend Park, it is one of the significant open spaces contributing to Melbourne's fame as being the "World's Most Liveable City" between 2012 to 2018.

At a state level, Albert Park hosts many sporting challenges and state championships. The Junction Oval has become the new home to Cricket Victoria. The Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre, a neighbour to the park, is the state's major swimming venue and Lakeside Stadium is the state's premier athletics venue.

From a national perspective, the 2006 Commonwealth Games used many of the park's venues and many sporting championships are undertaken at the park. Albert Park is an important tourist destination and a popular attraction for interstate and international visitors. The distinctive shape of the lake, with the backdrop of the city skyline, has been taken to the world through the televising of the Formula One Grand Prix.

4. Vision, themes and future directions

Albert Park – open space for Melbourne’s growing future

The vision for Albert Park

Albert Park will offer a diverse range of high quality visitor experiences within an urban parkland setting. It will be valued as an opportunity to connect with nature in the city, contributing to the health and wellbeing of the community of Melbourne and its visitors.

Themes and future directions

The master plan sets out a flexible and adaptable framework for the future under three themes and five future directions. Project initiatives are outlined under each of the future directions.

Theme one: Nature and environment

- A healthy park that will showcase a sustainable use of resources in a time of climate change
- Celebrate the importance of the lake as the heart of the park

Theme two: Community connections

- A welcoming park for everyone
- A healthy environment where people can connect with one another while being immersed in nature and culture

Theme three: Healthy and active

- An adaptable and diverse urban park that is enjoyed and valued for relaxation, sports and recreation.

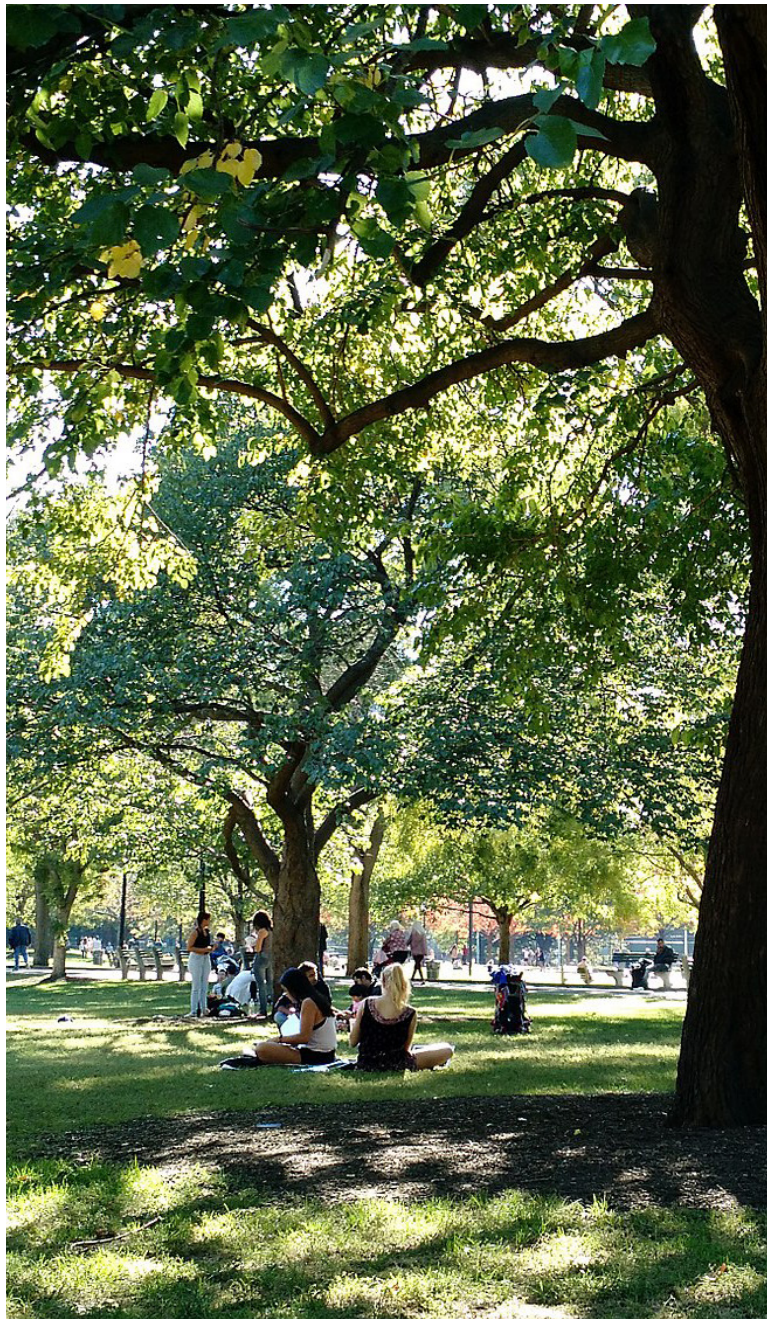


Image: Open Woodland
Photo credit: Phoebe, 2018.

5. Statutory environment

Statutory planning

This section highlights a number of strategic and operational planning documents produced, or in production, by both state and local government authorities that interact or overlap the Albert Park Master Plan. Mentioned in this section is the Resilient Melbourne (Melbourne Urban Forest Strategy). The recommendations from this plan directly influence the ecological recommendations within the plan including linkages and plant palette.

Strategic planning

State Government's Plan Melbourne and the Fishermans Bend Public Space Strategy and Framework Plan have been carefully considered in the preparation of the Albert Park Master Plan, in relation to future neighbourhood planning and maximising public benefit with the provision of open space. Consideration has also included the strategic direction of the City of Port Phillip and its open space and biodiversity strategies.

Other key documents considered through the development of the master plan include:

- City of Melbourne's Urban Forest Strategy: Making a Great City Greener 2012 – 2032
- City of Port Phillip Open Space Strategy (2009)
- Inner Melbourne Action Plan 2016-2026
- Victorian Memorandum for Health and Nature 2017
- Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2015-2019
- Protecting Victoria's Environment – Biodiversity 2037
- Resilient Melbourne (2016).

As the master plan is implemented over time, it will be important to understand the context and influence of these and other documents including relevant local government municipal strategic statements and public health and wellbeing plans.



6. Community and stakeholder engagement

What we've heard

Parks Victoria thanks all local residents, park visitors, sports players, clubs and government agencies who contributed their ideas and views to the planning process.

Sports clubs and commercial tenants based in the park generally have some form of lease or licence agreement with Parks Victoria, and were invited directly to participate in the planning. A dedicated project website was established at www.albertparkmasterplan.com.au. A postcard introducing the project was letter boxed in the neighbouring communities. Signs in the park raised the profile of the planning to regular visitors.

The initiatives listed in this master plan have been developed from and based upon comments and feedback received during the various stages of engagement and consultation between 2014 and 2018.

Phase One

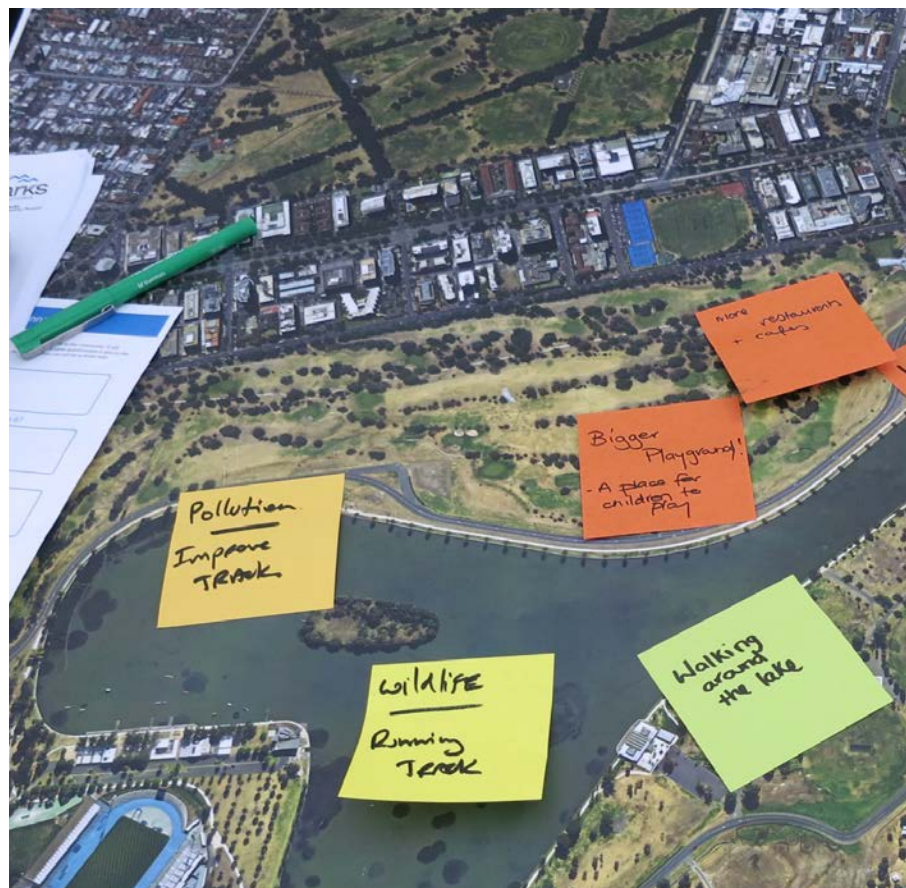
What do you value in the park?

In the 2014 consultation, Parks Victoria sought feedback on what was important about the park, and what people thought needed to be addressed.

Engagement opportunities included :

- Three drop-in sessions by the lake path
- Three forums – summer and winter sports clubs, lake sports clubs, and commercial tenants
- An online map where people could provide information (received over 3,900 views)
- Meetings with major stakeholders.

In response, we heard from more than 500 people and organisations. Feedback from phase one highlighted that many people consider the lake the heart of the park, and the lake walk is an important part of their daily or weekly routine. A key aspect of the park is that community-level sports build a sense of community contributing to health and wellbeing. A key consideration identified was a desire to cater for a greater number of sport participants, generally. Clubs using the lake talked about issues with aquatic vegetation and water level affecting their sports, and about wave reflection from the lake wall. Some people stated their view of the importance of the park as “breathing space” in the midst of a rapidly growing city.



We heard that the park can be inhospitable on windy, rainy or very hot days and that much of the landscape lacked interest for those not engaged in a sport. We heard it isn't always easy to get into or move through the park, and the park needs to be better prepared for climate change and an increase in participation in sport.

For detail on the consultation and findings, refer to the Albert Park Master Plan Consultation Report, 2017, located on the project website.



Image: Albert Park, Melbourne
Photo credit: Parks Victoria, 2018.



Phase Two

Engagement on concept framework

The 2016 consultation tested community and stakeholder views on a series of ten “ideas” designed to address the issues and ideas raised in phase one.

Engagement opportunities included drop-in sessions by the lake path, facilitated workshops, meetings with stakeholders and an online survey.

More than 500 survey responses were received with support for all of the ten ideas. There was particularly strong support to “enhance the park’s landscape character, quality and habitat potential through additional planting.”

The ideas presented in phase two have been further developed to form the draft master plan. A report of the consultation findings is available on the project website.

Fitzroy Street workshop

During phase two of consultation, the section of the park that fronts Fitzroy Street was the subject of much discussion. Local resident groups were interested in how this section of the park, which is easily accessed but currently not highly visited, can become a valued destination for local residents and visitors. Particularly given, the rapid increase in the residential population around the St Kilda Junction area and the redeveloped Victorian Community Cricket Centre at Junction Oval. A workshop was convened in May 2017 to discuss issues and develop the ideas into an outline concept. The output of the workshop was included in the draft master plan, for broader community comment in phase three.

Phase Three

Draft Albert Park Master Plan Engagement

In late 2017 the draft master plan was released for comment. A number of engagement opportunities were held, including drop in sessions by the lake path, meetings with stakeholders, facilitated workshops and an interactive online survey.

Feedback and comments were received from more than 2000 individual responses from a range of stakeholders, sporting clubs, community groups and individual community members.

What we heard

We heard strong support for the key concepts outlined in the draft master plan including:

- Widening and lengthening the lake side promenade
- Increase tree and shade through programmed planting and
- Retention of the 18-hole golf course and golf driving range in their current locations.

Phase 3 consultation closed in January 2018.



Image: Albert Park, Melbourne consultation
Photo credit: Parks Victoria, 2018.



7. The Albert Park Master Plan

Melbourne's iconic park

The Albert Park Master Plan establishes our vision to reinvigorate a highly utilised and loved public open space that caters to a great diversity of park visitors. Increasing population and greater public transport access will create pressures on the park, that the master plan responds to. Three themes have been developed to support the master plan vision: nature and environment; community connections; and healthy and active.

A major component of the plan is to increase the tree planting and to continue the work undertaken with the current planting strategy, providing landscape amenity and connecting habitat, shade and shelter. A broader and continuous lakeside promenade will create focus on the lake and increased wetlands. The promenade will be a journey interspersed with nodes of play and intense activity such as exercise stations and parkour areas.

The wetland area aims to connect people with nature and to invite exploration. Interwoven boardwalks will allow closer access to the wetland and lake, promoting the values of learning and investigation.

To cater to and increase the current level of sport and organised activation, the master plan promotes the upgrade and shared use of sports grounds and fields and associated facilities. This will include refurbishing and upgrading sport and playing areas to improve diversity of sport use.

A key focus for increased activation of the park is through promoting and ensuring clear, welcoming, safe, easily accessible and legible entrances and access into and around the park including from neighbouring roads and transport hubs. This includes access and thoroughfare for pedestrians, cyclists, both commuter and recreational, and other active participants such as joggers, dog walkers, young families, anglers and national and international visitors. Car parking will be consolidated to create efficiencies and, legible and accessible parking areas.

The master plan responds directly to a series of existing and current site factors including the lake as a storm water receivable point, the spatial requirements and overlay of the Grand Prix event, the 18 hole golf course, the golf driving range, existing tenancies on the park and adjacent neighbours, as referred to on adjacent map.



Landscape character

Iconic landscape

The Albert Park landscape has a relatively flat, open and exposed character compared to other major metropolitan parklands such as the Royal Botanic Gardens and Royal Park. This is due to the natural topography, compounded by considerable expanse of playing fields and the sizable lake. While this character of the park means that it is at times more exposed to climatic conditions, it also creates notable views across Melbourne's skyline.

At 225 hectares, the Albert Park is one of the largest public green spaces in inner Melbourne, therefore a consideration for 'no net loss' of open space may be required for its sustainable future to support a rapidly growing city. The principles guiding 'no net loss' of open space will be developed and defined through the implementation stage of the master plan. The park provides nearly 60% of the City of Port Phillip's public open space (*Open Space Strategy*, 2009. City of Port Phillip) and plays a critical environmental role as the "green and blue" lungs within its dense urban setting.

Albert Park needs to continue building on its sense of place and identity, and create more defined spaces to achieve a sense of protection and personal retreat.

Establishing a cohesive landscape character

Albert Park is a significant urban park. The various landscape types provide visitors with a number of different opportunities and landscape settings, within which to interact, socialise and recreate.

The master plan aims to build park resilience through strengthening the park as a healthy urban ecosystem. This can be achieved by transitioning to landscape plant species of greater resilience that are better able to adapt and cope with climate change. This will provide a broader diversity of settings and a long term sustainable and cohesive landscape park experience.

Additional trees will strengthen and define the park character and will provide more shade which will help cool the environment and mitigate urban heat island effects. Tree and plant species are selected through a process of investigation and understanding of which species respond to the changing climate conditions as well seeking to address the larger issue of the Melbourne urban forest fragmentation of urban canopy, currently an ongoing concern in Albert Park and other large parks.

The overall canopy density within the Albert Park will be enhanced through increased planting with a preference for selection from a native plant palette. Work done by City of Melbourne through their Melbourne Urban Forest Strategy will directly feed into this approach. A common conservation approach is to create or improve connectivity by restoring habitat using corridors, "stepping stones" and buffer zones.

8. Theme one - Nature and environment

8.1 Future direction – protecting and enhancing landscape values

Initiative 1 – Albert Park landscape character types

The master plan describes the future conditions in terms of the landscape character and function. The intent is to work with the park's existing features, qualities and values to create a range of diverse settings, suited to different visitor's needs.

- Albert Road boulevard plantings
- eastern woodland and golf course
- eastern woodland and golf course
- avenue plantings
- open woodlands and sports fields
- the lake and lake edge
- perimeter planting
- indigenous restoration
- Fitzroy Street precinct



1 The lake and lake edge

The lake is a central feature of Albert Park and the Lake Promenade following the lake edge will be the primary destination for visitors.

The objective for the lake perimeter is to soften the south-western edge of the lake with new wetlands consisting of marshy and reedy areas of variable depth and inundation. This aims to provide a rich aquatic habitat and an inviting fringe for visitors to explore, via a weaving and interconnected timber boardwalk, complete with picnic decks. The marshy vegetation surrounding the edge location of the original swamp will be expressed with a contemporary landscape treatment. The wetland areas will be created and planted with indigenous species that will provide habitat for fauna such as fish, birds, insects and reptiles.

The lake is fed by stormwater runoff gathered from neighbouring suburbs and plays an important role in storing and treating storm water, and capturing litter prior to overflowing into Port Phillip Bay.

The additional wetland planting will further assist in the cleaning and re-use of storm water from surrounding neighbourhoods, providing a source for park irrigation and trap litter that bypasses the gross pollutant trap that washes in with the storm water,

and is able to be collected from the lake to reduce the amount entering the bay.

The wetland plants will play an important role in filtering and cleaning the lake water by removing contaminants and nutrients. They will help reduce wave reflection, reducing erosion around the lake bank and contribute to a reduction in water turbidity and reduce the impact of waves on rowers and sailors.

Boardwalks will link aquatic nature play spaces with picnic decks nested amongst the reeds. This will enhance the experience of the aquatic environment to provide opportunities to learn more about the role of water in the urban environment and connect with nature.

The design and implementation of the wetlands will be developed in consultation with lake users to mitigate negative effects on rowing and sailing.

Plant communities will vary along the length of the lake edge and will respond to the wetland character in the specific location, be that native or exotic plantings referencing the original indigenous landscape or the recent European history, creating a range of settings for visitors to enjoy.



Image: Concept Planning - Wetlands
Image credit:

2 Open woodlands and sports precinct

The open woodlands will consist of sports grounds interspersed with an open mixed canopy of native and exotic trees, planted in informal clumps with a low grassy under storey. Framing ovals and sports grounds, the open woodlands will occupy the 'spaces in between' providing a shaded environment for spectating, picnicking, relaxing and informal active recreation.

The open landscape character is an important aspect of Albert Park and has the advantage of providing notable views across to Melbourne's skyline and provides good general visibility, passive surveillance and a sense of personal safety.

A disadvantage of the open landscape is that the park can feel very exposed to the natural elements on windy or hot days and the sparseness of tree canopy means some park areas lack shade. There is an opportunity to provide smaller areas with increased tree planting and shelter as retreat spaces.

The establishment of an open woodlands is a long-term whole-of-park objective to be implemented considering existing constraints and current and future uses including current leases and major events. Where the objective is to provide tree lined avenues or shade within areas that are affected by existing functions, alternative planting options and consideration for provision of trees includes relocatable planters.

Tree selection will vary from large native to exotic shade trees providing a broad canopy, to those with a narrow canopy structure, where it is important to reflect and build on heritage plantings. Low under storey plantings will complement the majestic lake promenade tree lined avenue.

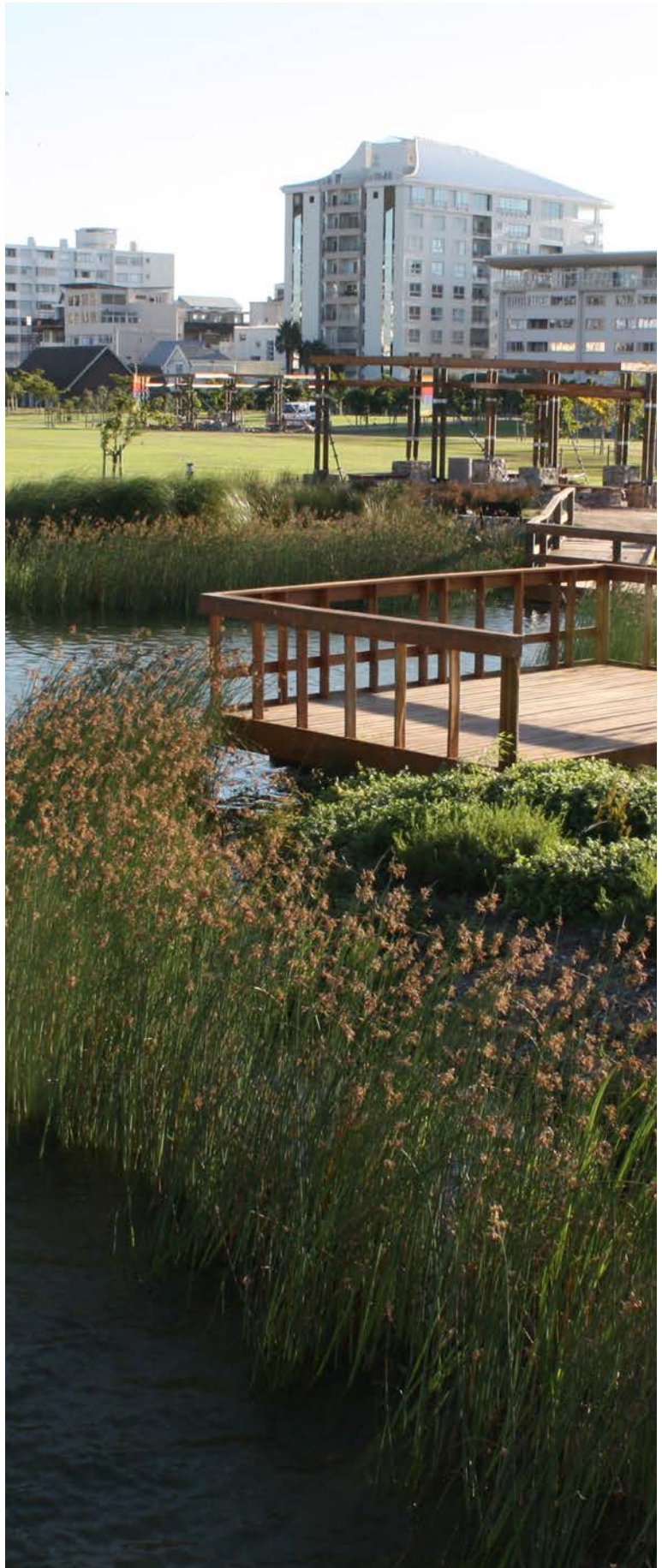


Image: Wetland edge - Green Point Associates
Photo credit: Abu Shawka

Further, the planting will enhance the park character and quality. Plantings, particularly those near paths or facilities, will consist of native grasses and small shrubs to maintain clear sight lines in accordance with Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles. Increased tree canopy will provide a pleasant contrast to the open fields that characterise much of the park and provide the co-benefits of shade, climate change mitigation, increased biodiversity and a setting to promote general health and wellbeing.

New planting will increase biodiversity values and enhance habitat. These improvements will create habitat for attracting canopy specialist birds such as Pardalotes, Thornbills and Gerygones, as well as mid-canopy specialists, such as Whistlers, Grey Shrike-thrush and a variety of robins. Increases in these host species may lead to the return of cuckoos to Albert Park, four species of which have been historically recorded, but none in the past 20 years.

An area just north of the golf course and away from adjacent paths is allocated to be home to a range of under storey planting heights, from low to three metres high, to further aid in increasing the biodiversity of this area (CPTED principles will be applied).

The open woodlands will create settings that offer new visitor experiences and extend the directions developed by neighbouring City of Melbourne in its Urban Forest Strategy: Making a Great City Greener 2012–2032, which aims to increase the tree canopy cover throughout Melbourne.

Along the western boundary of the Albert Park, immediately south-east of MSAC with its native plantings and grassed landscape setting, and adjacent to the Community Playground, a nature play area will be established in the open woodland. Adjoining the south end of the lake and surrounding Ross Gregory Oval, the open woodland will connect the leafy urban space along Fitzroy Street with the lake.

Open woodlands planting will be a mix of native and exotic trees with a low under storey. Trees will be chosen for their tall height, open form and shade provision. The tree palette will be broadened to provide greater variety and interest in the park, taking into account adaptability for climate change.

Avenues through the open woodlands will be consistent in species type to provide a uniform approach to tree planting within the park and clarity in way-finding.

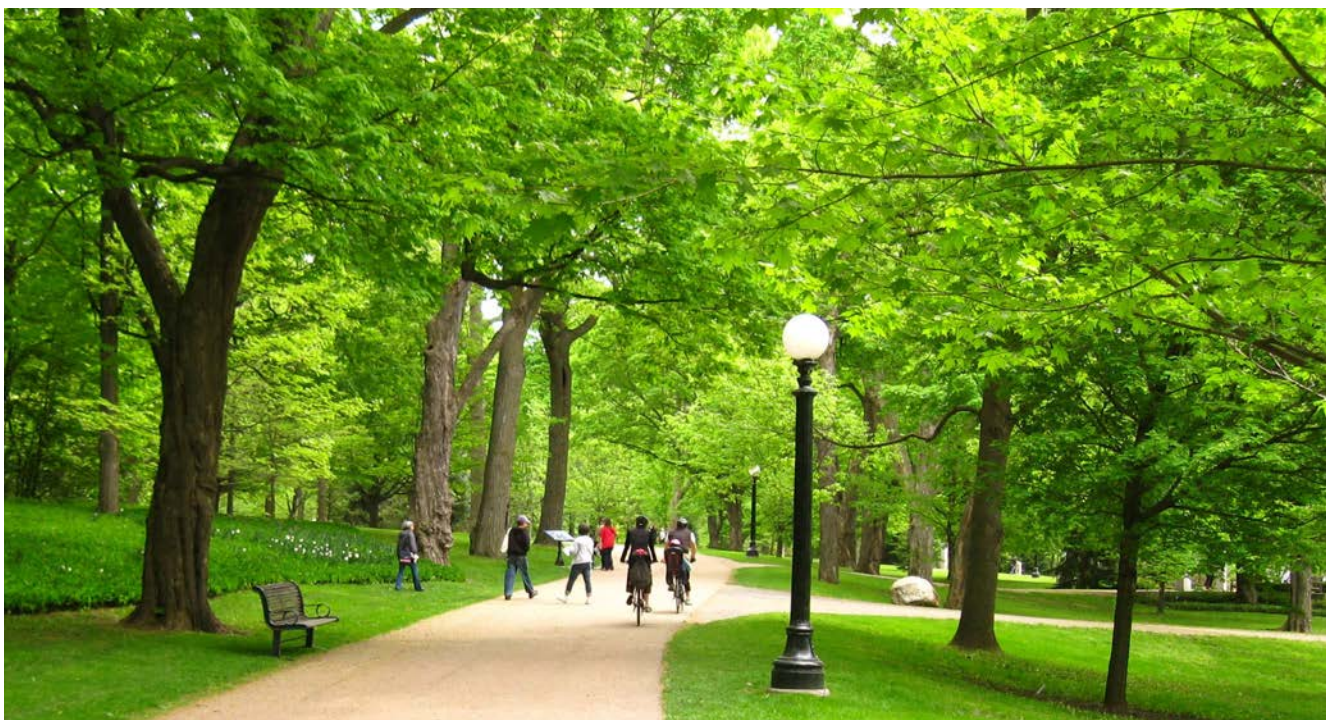


Image: Open woodland
Photo credit: Creative Commons

3 Eastern woodland

The eastern woodland setting encompasses a large portion of the eastern side of the park as the golf course, currently to remain. It is a distinctive arrangement of bands of shade trees within open space. It takes advantage of the mature trees in this area, that provide a backdrop for the park and a buffer from Queens Road. It will provide a tranquil setting, that can be experienced by visitors playing golf.

The plantings in this woodland landscape form part of the larger urban forest that will provide an ecological buffer within Albert Park, connecting the woodland canopy to the larger city urban forest canopy to create habitat corridors and help to mitigate adverse effects of climate change.

Public access exists along the eastern woodland to north of the golf course bounded by Albert Road and Lakeside Drive and MacRobertson Girls High School.



4 Fitzroy Street precinct

The landscape treatment in this area provides for a functional space for small to medium-scale programmed community events such as markets, community or local school gatherings.

This will be a leafy urban space characterised by a grid of trees with joining canopies that provide shade and dappled light supporting an open space for community events.

As part of the City of Port Phillip Fitzroy Street streetscape upgrade, Fitzroy Street will be lined on each side with a row of plane trees. A second row along the Albert Park/Fitzroy Street boundary will create a strong avenue character, and behind this second row will be multiple rows of exotic trees with touching canopies.

Tall exotic tree species with clear trunks will provide shade during hot weather, and allow the warm sun to filter through the canopy during the colder, winter months. Low garden beds will provide additional visual interest and separation, and increase the biodiversity of this urban park setting. The pavement surrounding these trees will be a hard wearing and resilient permeable pavement treatment to accommodate a high volume of activity and foot traffic.



Image: Sporting Render- Albert Park
Photo credit: Cam Bergmeier

5 Avenue plantings

Broad tree-lined avenues will provide defined access and connect the primary entrances to the park and the Lake Promenade located at the centre of the park. Generous in width to cater for a mix of walkers, joggers, cyclists including maintenance access, the avenues will provide a range of seating and facilities that take advantage of the shaded environment. The avenue planting strategy is a long-term objective that will be implemented in a staged fashion over time to ensure that current use and events are not compromised. Alternative planting options will be considered in areas that are constrained.

Ultimately, once established, the planted avenues will form modest thoroughfares, providing a strong visual and physical connection to the lake.

Tree selection for the avenues will be a key component of the planting approach. Avenues will use a mixture of proven and new species to increase diversity and provide habitat to encourage bird species to return to Albert Park.

6 Albert Road boulevard

A broad tree-lined boulevard with a wide separate shared pedestrian cycling path prioritises sustainable travel and strengthens the east/west connections between Anzac Station and Port Phillip Bay. The aim is to enhance the identity of Albert Park by strengthening the planting along its perimeter with a mixture of species.

A row of trees will line the park boundary, supplementing the majestic boulevard street trees. The selection of native and exotic trees will be chosen for their tall height, wide canopies and resilience to the specific climate.



Image: Tree-lined avenue
Photo credit: Abu Shawka, 2018

7 Perimeter planting

The master plan aims to enhance the identity of Albert Park by strengthening the planting around its perimeter with a mixture of species. Perimeter planting will ensure a uniform and distinguishable edge to Albert Park from all sides. It will provide a sense of arrival through which visitors move to reach the more expansive open woodlands that will characterise the majority of the park. Perimeter planting will include species that are considered street and road plantings in adjacent neighbourhoods.

Perimeter plantings will make the boundaries of Albert Park highly recognisable, guiding visitors to the park entrances and will reflect the character of the adjacent areas. Existing stately tree plantings along Albert Road will reinforce the shade providing boulevard tree character.

Perimeter planting along the northern length of Queens Road reinforces the existing elm avenue and transitions to native plantings just over half-way along, to reinforce the regeneration of native plantings of the existing Red Gum Triangle and Ngargee Tree environs.

Fitzroy Street interface planting will reference the Fitzroy Street streetscape upgrade with broad, exotic shade trees.

The full extent of the Canterbury Road perimeter will continue with a mix of native plantings and trees for shade and increased biodiversity.

8 Indigenous restoration

The master plan supports an approach for a flourishing indigenous under storey at the Red Gum Triangle and promotes indigenous planting through to the area surrounding the Ngargee (Corroboree tree).

The aim is to enhance the original identity of the landscape of Albert Park by strengthening the indigenous plantings in this small, little-known pocket of the park. Extending indigenous plantings further into the centre of the park along the southern perimeter of the lake gives this area the recognition it deserves.

The restoration of the indigenous plant community at the Red Gum Triangle will support natural regeneration of species and ensure the full range of indigenous plant types are established at the site, including low ground covers, mid-height under storey and trees.

The future management and landscape response will respect and respond to the aspirations of the Traditional Owners of this area and further works will be undertaken in collaboration with the Traditional Owners.

Planting Objectives

Key objectives for tree planting may include:

- Establishing a continuous spreading canopy with trees to have stately form and depict strong avenue aesthetics
- Trees planted in blocks, along evenly spaced lines to create an avenue effect
- Maintain a continuous rhythm of tree planting with trees planted directly opposite each other along parallel lines
- Clear trunks to ensure clear sight lines
- Hardiness and drought tolerance are important considerations in the selection of plant species.

Action:

Include in the planting approach and methodology for Albert Park, a plant palette developed through canopy mapping of both the park and surrounding areas which contain the specific and individual landscape character types and plant species associated with individual feature and zone plantings.