

BREATHING SPACE

The Darebin Open Space Strategy





Independent
insight.

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Contents

Message from the Mayor	4	7 Key Direction 1: Meeting community open space needs	44
1 Introduction	6	7.1 Objective 1: Make the distribution of open space equitable	45
1.1 Strategy	7	7.2 Objective 2: Recognise local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities, particularly Traditional Owners	46
1.2 What is open space?	8	7.3 Objective 3: Designing for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities	47
1.3 Council's role in open space	8	7.4 Objective 4: Reflect diverse needs	48
2 Ambition	10	7.5 Objective 5: Provide facilities that make open spaces more appealing and useable by more people	50
2.1 Council's vision	11	7.6 Objective 6: Balance the needs of different users	52
2.2 Foundations on which this strategy is built	11	7.7 Objective 7: Make all open spaces multi-use	54
2.3 Delivering the strategy	12	7.8 Objective 8: Make open spaces places for expression and art	55
3 The benefits and opportunities of open space	14	8 Key Direction 2: Rewilding Darebin: improving biodiversity	56
3.1 Contributions of open space	15	8.1 Objective 9: Increase appreciation for biodiversity	57
3.2 Diverse roles of open space	18	8.2 Objective 10: Protect local species	58
4 Where are we now	20	8.3 Objective 11: Engage the community as partners in biodiversity protection	62
4.1 Policy context	21	8.4 Objective 12: Make indigenous bushland character the default choice	63
4.2 Darebin now	21	9 Key Direction 3: Creating a Green Streets Network	64
4.3 Existing open space network	27	9.1 Objective 13: Develop a network of green streets in Darebin	65
4.4 Current access to open space	29	9.2 Objective 14: Enable walking and cycling	67
4.5 Biodiversity in Darebin	29	10 Build best practice	68
4.6 The community's views on open space	30	10.1 Objective 15: Build best practice across Council, the community and public asset owners	69
5 Growth and change	32	11 Open space precinct summaries	70
5.1 Rapid population growth	33	11.1 Darebin's precincts	71
5.2 Provision of open space	34	Precinct summaries	72
5.3 Access to open space	35		
6 Shaping the future	36		
6.1 Introduction	37		
6.2 Vision statement	37		
6.3 Quality and quantity of open space	37		
6.4 Increasing the quantity of open space	37		
6.5 Improving the quality of open space	38		
6.6 Classifying open space	40		

Message from the Mayor



Mayor's Message

Darebin is a great place to live and open space is central to our quality of life. It brings our diverse community together, provides a home for precious local species, and allows us to take part in everything from active recreation to silent contemplation.

Here in Darebin we are lucky to have a wealth of natural beauty in our parks, creeks and streetscapes, which make up over 790 hectares of public open space. However we are also under pressure. Like the rest of metropolitan Melbourne, Darebin is growing, and our population is increasing as more people choose to call Darebin home. We need to be bold and ambitious if we are to maintain the beauty of our green and natural spaces and safeguard the liveability our open spaces give us.

Our vision for open space in Darebin is an ambitious one and *Breathing Space: The Darebin Open Space Strategy* provides the context and direction to achieve this.

As the city grows and housing density increases, we see a future city that is more abundant in green, open space.

We look forward to living in a city where...

- local people have more access to beautiful, functional, contemplative and active spaces that improve their health and wellbeing, and increase their social and cultural connections
- local species thrive, lost habitats are regenerated and lost species return
- streets, rooftops, backyards, nature strips, and medians are biodiverse with trees and plants playing their part in keeping the city cooler
- green space is deeply respected, understood and protected by everyone in the city, and locals act as the custodians of the natural world for current and future generations.

Cr. Susan Rennie

Mayor, Darebin City Council

01

Introduction



Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

Darebin City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people as the traditional owners and custodians of the land and waters we now call Darebin and pays respect to their elders, past, present and emerging. Council affirms that Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people have lived on this land for millennia, practising their ceremonies of celebration, initiation and renewal.

Council respects and recognises all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and their values, living culture and practices, including their continuing spiritual connection to the land and waters and their right to self-determination.

1.1 Strategy purpose

Breathing Space: The Darebin Open Space Strategy provides the overarching framework and strategic direction for public open space in the City of Darebin, for the next 10 years and beyond, and builds on the previous Open Space Strategy: 2007–2017.

The strategy acknowledges the rich diversity of public open space in Darebin, and the need to manage these spaces to ensure the city is greener, bolder and more connected, in line with the high value placed on public open space by the community.

The strategy is driven by the overarching theme of responding to the climate emergency. It does this via three key directions:

- Meeting community open space needs
- Rewilding Darebin: improving biodiversity
- Creating a Green Streets Network.

The strategy provides guidance to inform Council's decision making regarding investments in and improvements to open space.

The strategy also interfaces with a number of other Council objectives including:

- As a key component of Council's response to the climate emergency declared in Darebin, the strategy outlines key actions to manage, mitigate and repair damage done through climate change.
- As a practical way to improve the wellbeing of people by providing opportunities for them to live their lives well.
- As an articulation of the importance of planning for biodiversity and increasing the conservation and improvement of habitat.
- As a means to improving active transport throughout the municipality through improving the walkability and cyclability, amenity and provision of shade on residential streets and in activity precincts.
- As a vehicle for planning for the population growth and change that is predicted for the short and long term.

1.2 What is open space?

This strategy focuses on space which is publicly owned, freely accessible and set aside primarily for recreation, nature conservation, passive outdoor enjoyment and/or public gatherings.

It also recognises a broader definition of open space, where open space includes not only parks and reserves, but also streetscapes, nature strips, productive food gardens, urban nodes, quasi-public space, parklets, transport corridors and overlapping uses of space with schools, public asset providers and other institutions.

Collectively, these spaces all make an important contribution to shaping the lived experience and aesthetics of an area, and there are opportunities to recognise the cumulative contribution of these spaces in policy and planning.

While these spaces are outside of traditional definitions of open space, they are recognised in Plan Melbourne, the current metropolitan strategy for Melbourne, as crucial for the future of the city.

This definition is broader than the definition for public open space described in the Subdivision Act¹, which is used to determine how open space contributions from development are expended.

The strategy also acknowledges the contribution private open spaces make to the overall character and environmental qualities of Darebin.

1.3 Council's role in Open Space

Council can fulfil a range of roles in influencing the management, design, quality and location of open space. Many of these roles are addressed in this strategy and Darebin Council is particularly ambitious in the diversity of roles it plays.



1. Public open space is defined in Section 18A of the Subdivision Act of 1988. It states:

Public open space means land set aside in a plan or land in a plan zoned or reserved under a planning scheme –

a) For public recreation or public resort, or

b) As parklands

c) For similar purposes



02

Ambition



Darebin is facing two key challenges in relation to open space.

The first is one of quantity: we don't have enough open space to meet our community's need and this deficiency is projected to grow as our population increases.

The second is one of quality: lack of sufficient indigenous trees, shrubs and ground covers in our open spaces suitable to act as habitat for our biodiverse species, is putting this vital part of our ecosystem under threat, as well as impacting how these spaces are experienced by humans.

Darebin is rapidly becoming denser, more urban and more populated, and this is putting increased pressure on our open spaces. As private open spaces become smaller, access to public open space is more important than ever. This public open space becomes the place where children play, where the local community can commune with nature and keep active, and where diverse cultures and different generations can come together.

At the same time, local species are under threat and it is critical that the natural environment mitigates the impacts of the climate emergency we currently face. Our indigenous ecology is also under pressure from the impacts of urbanisation, declining rainfall, growing community demand for nature based experiences and the impacts of climate change.

2.1 Council's vision

The vision of *Breathing Space: The Darebin Open Space Strategy* is that the future of Darebin will be a green one with more and better open spaces that respond to the climate emergency.

Delivering on this vision will require collaboration of multiple teams in Council and the community.

2.2 Foundations on which this

strategy is built

The following foundations have guided the development of the strategy, and are embedded throughout the content and recommendations.

Climate emergency

Urban design, tree and plant selection and education are targeted towards mitigating the urban heat island effect and conserving precious resources such as water.

Biodiversity

Location and planting of open spaces is viewed through the lens of maximising habitat areas, connectivity and corridors for local species.

Community stewardship

Engagement and participation are seen as a central component of the strategy in building the community's sense of connection to, and protection of, their local open space.

Social cohesion

A broad range of community needs, from access, health and ability to human connection and cultural diversity, are considered in planning and managing open spaces.

Connectivity

Open space is a network of large, small, linear, vertical, public, private, formal and informal spaces and habitats that create an interconnected habitat for wildlife and unfettered access for people.

Leadership

The strategy seeks to set bold and ambitious standards for both quantity and quality of green spaces, to inspire and to demonstrate what's possible.

Return to nature

The default position for developing and managing open space is a return to local indigenous grasslands/ bushlands that celebrate the unique and special natural qualities of our city.

Multifaceted

Our open spaces will function on multiple levels, seeking ways to maximise and integrate benefits to local communities, local species and the natural environment.

Equity and inclusion

Our open spaces are inclusive, accessible and equitable, responding to the diversity of needs, rights and priorities in our communities.

2.3 Delivering the strategy

Breathing Space: The Darebin Open Space Strategy is an ambitious and visionary document that provides a framework for achieving Council's vision of "a greener, bolder, more connected city".

The many strategies and actions described in this document are designed to shape multiple Council services, programs and practices as they are rolled out each year through the work planning and budgeting cycles.

The level of investment and time needed to fully realise the ambitions of the strategy will take major investment of effort and resources over many years, with better integration of internal teams and in collaboration and partnership between Council, our stakeholders and our community.



The benefits and opportunities of open space



Open space plays a role in so many areas of our lives: from mitigating the impacts of climate change and protecting threatened species to inspiring us to move more and giving us access to beauty, wellbeing and social and cultural connection. The strategy considers a much broader range of potential benefits than traditional open space strategies.

3.1 Contributions of open space

Addressing the climate emergency

In 2016, Darebin Council became the first government in the world to formally acknowledge a climate emergency that requires urgent action from all levels of government. Darebin acknowledges that, without ambitious action to restore a safe climate at emergency speed, there will be dramatic and negative impacts on the community – both locally and globally. In Australia, we are already experiencing the impacts of more frequent and extreme heat waves, drought, flooding, bushfires, and bleaching of our Great Barrier Reef. Darebin is not immune to these impacts, with health stressors already felt by the community.

In practice, this means that Council commits to fast tracking programs and policies that rapidly eliminate greenhouse gas emissions, and draw down excess emissions. Management and development of green public open spaces and increasing multilayered vegetation including canopy cover are important, as the natural processes of plants and urban ecosystems can help to offset the hot and dry conditions caused by climate change.

There are a range of ways open space can contribute to addressing the climate emergency. Many of these also help address other issues in Darebin.

- Trees and other vegetation in open spaces cool the city during periods of high temperatures through provision of shade and moisture released through leaves and stems.
- Open spaces with irrigated areas or bodies of water have a cooling effect on cities through evaporation and the natural respiration of plants.
- Increasing multilayered vegetation including canopy cover delivers shade, reduces temperatures, decreases air pollution, sequesters atmospheric carbon and increases biodiversity values such as habitat.
- Cool streetscapes that connect to a network of small and large parks are attractive for walking and cycling and create an appealing alternative to driving. This reduces private motor vehicle travel which decreases emissions and air pollution while improving health and wellbeing.
- Ultimately, a reduction in demand for motorised transport activates open space, resulting in safer open spaces for pedestrians and cyclists, and the opportunity to reclaim parking space for open space.
- Open space can improve the ability of a region to cope with increased incidences of extreme weather events such as floods and storms through attenuation and retention of storm water. The incorporation of water sensitive design can reduce the impacts of flooding, improve water quality, improve the health of trees and vegetation with passive watering and increase the provision of habitat.

Recognising Aboriginal people and their continuing connection to the land and waters

The recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage, and that of Traditional Owners in particular, is paramount to social justice and reconciliation efforts. This includes recognising the historical injustice experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and its lasting legacies, as well as recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents for their knowledge, strengths and contributions.

Given Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's continuing spiritual, physical and cultural connection to the land, open spaces are particularly suited to be reflective of this connection. Respecting the Aboriginal cultural rights highlighted in section 19(2) of the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities is crucial in recognising and celebrating this connection.

Enhancing biodiversity

Biodiversity refers to the variety of plant and animal life in the world or in a particular habitat. It is a critical consideration in open space planning. A high quality open space network can have a significant impact on biodiversity values, particularly in urban environments. Darebin's urban biodiversity includes humans as well as indigenous and introduced species of flora and fauna.

Green open spaces provide an ecological benefit in enhancing the biodiversity of species within the urban landscape. Biodiversity values can be enhanced through species selection, increasing multilayered vegetation and canopy cover, improving soil health, connectivity of parklands and habitat creation for fauna including birds. Nesting boxes, logs, rocks and water sources are important elements to consider when developing habitat areas to provide more flexibility in microclimates for flora and fauna (including vertebrates and invertebrates). Open space distribution is critical to the protection of the diversity of remnant vegetation and habitat. Remnant vegetation refers to vegetation that has not been cleared. To save our remnant areas and create new indigenous vegetation and habitat, open spaces must be increased, protected and managed.

Non-native plants also provide a range of benefits for urban landscapes through passive heating/cooling, food production, evapotranspiration, greenhouse gas reduction, habitat, and adaptation to challenging urban locations (streetscapes in particular). Plants and trees should be selected based on the role and function they are intended to have in the urban ecosystem as well as their likelihood to thrive in the intended location. This includes vegetation selected to create habitat, produce food, increase shade, beautify an area or create a protective buffer or barrier.

Ensuring Darebin's growing population can access open space

Access to open space is central to community health and wellbeing. The increasing number of people moving into the culturally diverse City of Darebin, combined with the fact that growth in Darebin will largely be in the form of higher density development (with reduced private open space), will increase the need for different types of open space.

The strategy considers both acquisition of new open space where possible (although this is challenging in an urban environment) as well as improving the quality and usability of existing open space as ways to meet this need.

Fostering creative culture and events

Public open spaces provide opportunities for festivals and programs, and places to gather or facilitate performances. They can also deliver locations for permanent or temporary public art installations. They are spaces that can strengthen community connectedness, providing social benefits and building a strong sense of identity within the community.

Increasing opportunities for culturally and linguistically diverse communities

Using open space is something that we all have in common. However, the way that individuals from different cultural backgrounds use, understand and interact with open spaces can vary depending on the user group.

Open space plays an important role for many in our culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, particularly those who are more recently arrived, where a sense of welcome, familiarity and safety have profound meaning.

When planning for, managing and designing public open space, it is imperative that the way Darebin's diverse community experiences and uses their open space is considered and included in a practical way. This includes understanding the make up of different CALD user groups, identifying through thoughtful consultation what they need from their open spaces and interpreting that into the way Darebin's public open spaces are designed and managed.

Open space can respond to the specific needs of diverse user groups through consideration of:

- the size and layout of gathering spaces
- the positioning of BBQ areas
- the types of vegetation used
- the inclusion of performance
- the inclusion of culturally reflective art
- allowing for evening use
- wayfinding using universal symbols
- appropriate translations on signage and within spaces
- the type and amount of equipment or park furniture

Open spaces provide members of the CALD communities places to gather with others in their community and feel a sense of home, as well as make connections with the broader Darebin population.

Generating economic benefits

Access to high quality open space increases the economic potential of a region in terms of tourism, leisure and cultural activities. Beautiful, usable and functional open spaces and streetscapes become destinations for visitors and add value for those who live nearby. The character of landscape creates local identity and sets the tone for future growth and development of the municipality. Destinalional parks, play areas, bushland reserves and recreational trails attract visitors within and outside of the local community and provide social benefits to the community which translate to increased land values². More specifically, open space in retail streetscapes helps to create and enhance a sense of place by creating an iconic look and feel that is uniquely Darebin. Furthermore, the construction and maintenance of these spaces and trails creates local employment.

The diversification of activities in open spaces, including mobile premises such as markets, food vans and other creative businesses, can deliver a range of benefits. These may include increasing passive surveillance, providing a drawcard for people to gather, increasing the chance that they will make social connections or be more physically active. This both activates public space while also supporting local businesses to expand their service space into the public realm.

Providing learning opportunities

A network of accessible open space encourages social inclusion and provides opportunities for learning and development for all ages. For children, research indicates the essential nature of development through play in the formation of self-esteem, social competence, understanding identity and the development of cognitive qualities necessary for adulthood such as problem solving and independence. Open space provides both informal and formal development opportunities across life stages.

Natural play and exposure to natural environments helps to forge a connection between humans and the environment. The more this connection is nurtured, the more people will love natural places, and find value and take pride in the native Australian landscape. For many this leads to a passion to preserve, protect and enhance natural spaces.

Fostering stewardship

Education and increased participation are key ways to address the climate emergency by actively involving the community in protecting and improving open space.

Increasing awareness that indigenous vegetation makes an important contribution to the ecosystem, habitat and aesthetics creates a new generation of environmental stewards. Nature is something that we all have in common and can be used to bridge gaps between individuals through this shared experience. For a culturally diverse municipality like Darebin, this is particularly important and meaningful.

Improving health and wellbeing

Human health and wellbeing are directly affected by the built and natural environments. Open spaces provide an opportunity for people to connect with the natural environment and each other, and engage in community activities, improving the health and wellbeing of people who live, work and play in Darebin.

Safety, including cultural safety, in open spaces is important to the success of this strategy. When people feel safe, they are freer to move about the city, socialise and work. When people don't feel safe, they may be isolated, less economically independent and less civically engaged. Council has the opportunity to influence safety by creating and maintaining spaces where people feel safe.

Open space can enhance feelings of belonging within a community by providing a place to meet and interact with others, spend a contemplative moment, participate in events and festivals and engage in sports and physical activity. This has been shown to improve social networks, social capital and the development of social skills, and to foster community cohesion, pride and safety.

There is a strong link between green open space and mental health and wellbeing, including reduced rates of depression and stress levels. Research shows that people in proximity to nature have a more positive outlook and reported higher life satisfaction³.

Open space provides opportunities to participate in organised and informal sport and physical activity and connect with nature. Research has shown that users of open space are more likely to meet suggested physical activity levels.

Participation in walking can increase by up to 50 per cent with access to large and attractive green space⁴. Linking open space with improved pedestrian and cycling transport networks further promotes physical activity. Where possible, new and upgraded transport links should be designed to be comfortable and attractive in their own right.

2. Councils of Banyule, Darebin, Hume, Moreland, Nillumbik and Whittlesea 2016, Northern Regional Trails Strategy

3. Townsend M and Weerasuriya R (2010), Beyond Blue to Green: The benefits of contact with nature for mental health and wellbeing. Beyond Blue Limited: Melbourne

4. Ives, C, Oke, C, Cooke, B, Gordon, A and Bekessy, S (2014) Planning for green open space in urbanizing landscapes

Strengthened inclusion and human rights

Open space has a social dimension: it encompasses places for people to meet and converse as well as places to participate in public life. In its physical design and range of uses, open space reflects shared social and cultural values; it is shaped by (and in turn further shapes and reinforces) social hierarchies and norms. The location and design of open spaces can either facilitate or impede their use by Darebin residents.

Open spaces can impact social inclusion through:

- Redistribution: equality of access to public goods such as open space.
- Recognition: meeting the needs of all within society, including women, children, older people, LGBTIQ community, people with disabilities, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, new migrants, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and homeless people.
- Encounter⁵: planning for interactions of individuals across difference.
- Inclusion: open space can strengthen inclusion, as well as human rights such as the right to peaceful assembly, “right to the city” and cultural rights, notably Aboriginal cultural rights.

Conserving cultural heritage and character

High quality open space reinforces local identity, civic pride and enhances the local character of a region⁶. Furthermore, open spaces can conserve and encourage understanding of the historical and cultural value of the region (including Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander cultural heritage).

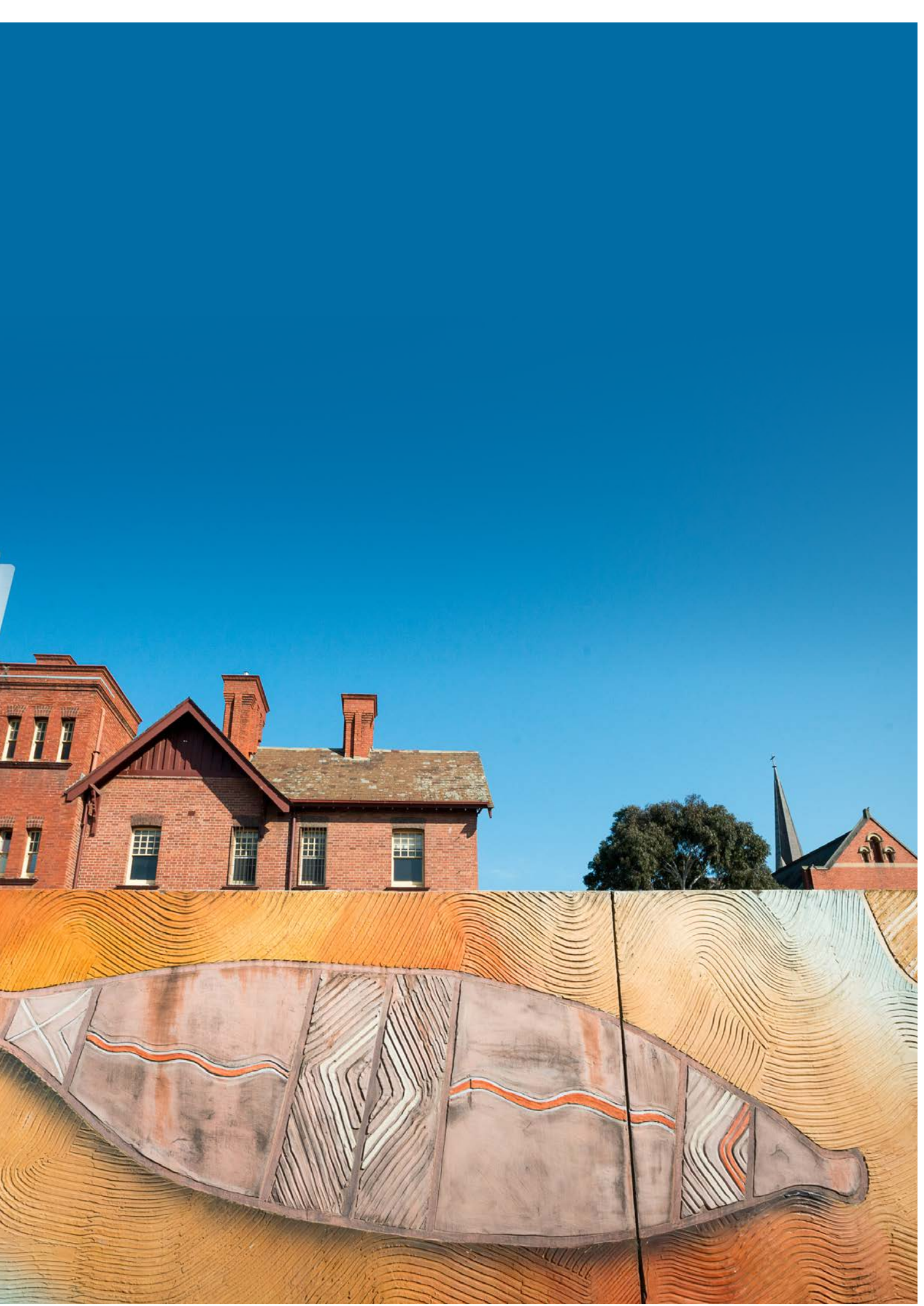
3.2 Diverse roles of open space

Breathing Space: The Darebin Open Space Strategy recognises the broad range and diversity of roles that open space can play, which at times overlap or are in conflict. This strategy suggests ways they can be balanced.

The process for planning this diversity is complex, and in many cases, there will be competing objectives and aspirations with practical implications. For example, the management of cycling paths through open space, if not done properly, has the potential to cause conflict with playspaces and more passive activities; dog off lead areas can compromise biodiversity; children are attracted to natural, wild environments for play however, this can also compromise biodiversity. It is through good land management practices and education that Council and the community can collaborate to ensure the best use of resources and assets, consistent with the vision and principles of the strategy.

5. Fincher, Ruth and Iveson, Kurt, (2008) *Planning and diversity in the city: redistribution, recognition and encounter*. Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, Hampshire

6. CABE, (2009) *Open space strategies best practice design*.



04

Where are we now?



Breathing Space: The Darebin Open Space Strategy takes account of the current context for open space and builds on a range of existing policies and strategies and provides direction for new ones which influence the planning, design and management of open space to avoid duplication of policy and actions.

4.1 Policy context

Breathing Space: The Darebin Open Space Strategy is guided by the Darebin Council Plan and, at a State Level, Plan Melbourne 2017–2050. It also interfaces with a number of existing Council frameworks, strategies and policies.

Council's commitments to being an age-friendly and child-friendly city also informs this strategy.

The relationship of the strategy to other plans and strategies is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

4.2 Darebin now

Darebin is a rapidly growing and urbanising part of Melbourne, home to a progressive and culturally diverse community and a place of areas of significant open space and habitat corridors.

The City of Darebin is in the north of metropolitan Melbourne. The municipality's southern boundary is approximately 3.5 kilometres north east of the CBD, with the northern boundary approximately 13 kilometres north east.

Darebin's open space per capita is similar to other established municipalities, however it is lower than Melbourne's outer and growth municipalities.

Darebin residents currently have access to 19.6 sq. m/ open space per capita which is below the commonly accepted benchmark of 30 sq. m per capita.

Figure 1: Existing policy context

Plan Melbourne 2017–2050		
City of Darebin Planning Scheme		Darebin Council Plan
<i>Breathing Space: The Darebin Open Space Strategy</i>		
Influencing Policy		
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Gender Equity Action Plan	Playspace Strategy
Access and Inclusion Plan	GreenStreets Streetscape Strategy	Public Toilet Strategy
Active and Healthy Ageing Strategy	Health and Wellbeing Strategy	Safe Travel Strategy
Arts Strategy	Leisure Strategy	Tourism Strategy
Climate Emergency Plan	Multicultural Action Plan	Transport Strategy
Community Engagement Framework	Natural Heritage Strategy	Urban Food Production Strategy
Creative and Cultural Infrastructure Framework	Nature Strip Planting Guidelines	Urban Forest Strategy
Cycling Strategy	Open Space Asset Management Plan	Walking Strategy
Darebin Creek Management Plan	Open Space Contribution Framework	Waste and Litter Strategy
Equity and Inclusion Policy	Parking Strategy	Watershed: Towards a Water Sensitive Darebin
New Policy *		
Biodiversity Management Plan	Land Management Plan	Strategic Land Acquisition Plan

* New policy as a result of actioning *Breathing Space: The Open Space Strategy*

The City of Darebin includes a mix of traditional low density suburban areas as well as higher density developments in activity centres and along transport corridors. Major activity centres include Northcote, Thornbury, Preston, Reservoir and Fairfield.

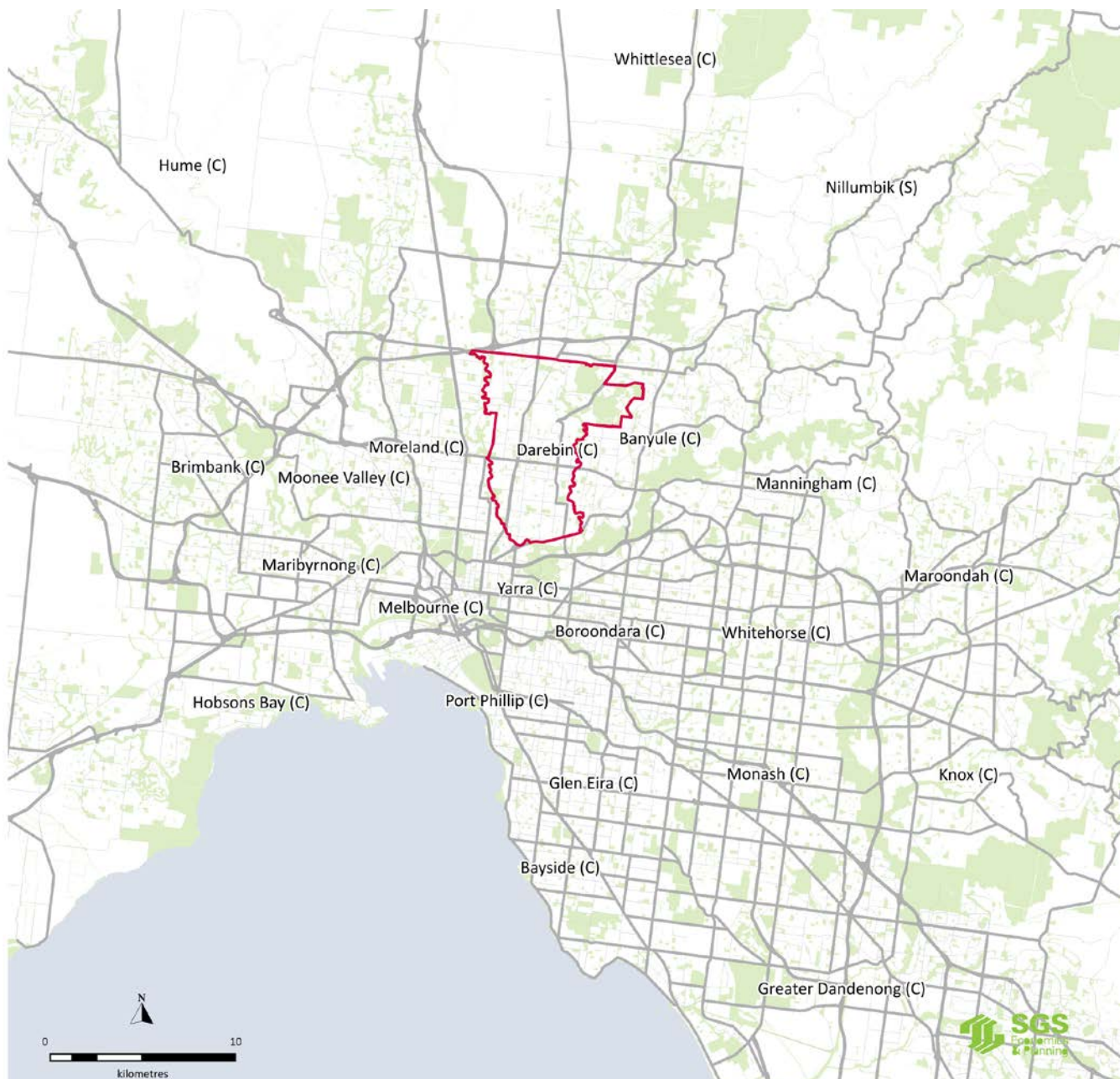
It is bounded by the Darebin Creek Corridor to the east and the Merri Creek Corridor to west, major regional ecosystems that are critical habitat corridors. The northern area of Darebin is home to several major remnant vegetation patches of the critically endangered and nationally threatened Western Plains Grasslands ecosystem of which less than 1% remains. Figure 2 shows neighbouring municipalities.

The Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people of the Kulin Nations are the traditional owners and custodians of the land that is now known as the City of Darebin.

Currently 10.6 per cent of the total City area has canopy cover (vegetation above 3m), and thermal hotspots exist throughout the city, particularly in areas that people gather, such as shopping centres and recreation areas. This level of canopy cover is comparable to other inner northern suburbs however significantly lower than Council's goal of 25% canopy cover.

Figure 2: City of Darebin and neighbouring municipalities

Source: SGS Economics and Planning 2018



Recent growth trends

Darebin is growing at a rapid rate (refer Table 1). Recent rates of development in Darebin have been high in a regional context: between 2011 and 2016 Darebin grew at around 1.6 per cent per annum and accommodated nearly 10 per cent of regional population growth. The municipalities which are growing faster than Darebin are predominantly Growth Areas, rather than established areas.

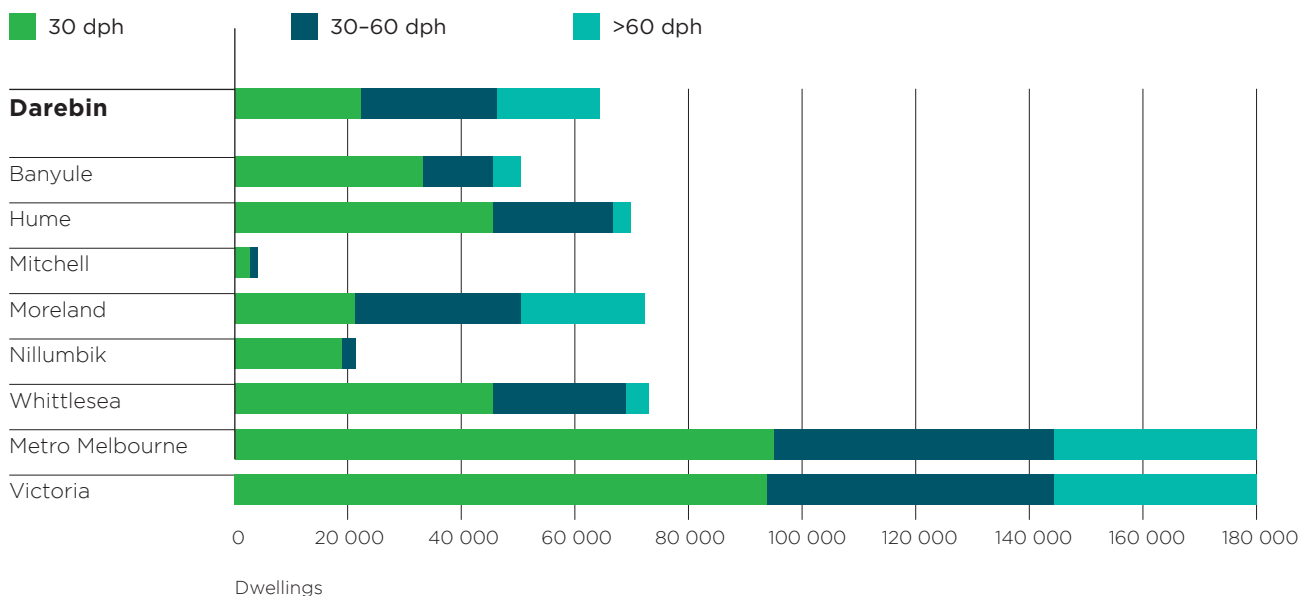
The form of recently developed dwellings is an important consideration for open space. The density of dwellings in Darebin in 2016 is a relatively even distribution between low, medium and higher density. As illustrated in Figure 3, there is a higher proportion of medium and higher density dwellings compared to metropolitan Melbourne. Dwellings per hectare (dph) is a measure of density. Fewer than 30 dwellings per hectare is low density, 30–60 dwellings per hectare is medium density and greater than 60 dwellings per hectare is higher density.

Table 1: Recent population growth trends

	2011	2016	2011-16 AAGR	2011-16 Change	2011-16 % of regional growth
Banyule	122,815	127,508	0.8%	4,693	3.8%
Darebin	142,942	155,022	1.6%	12,080	9.8%
Hume	174,320	207,663	3.6%	33,343	27.1%
Mitchell	35,095	41,692	3.5%	6,598	5.4%
Moreland	154,252	172,027	2.2%	17,775	14.4%
Nillumbik	62,884	64,465	0.5%	1,581	1.3%
Whittlesea	160,800	207,881	5.3%	47,081	38.2%
Northern Metro Region	853,108	976,258	2.7%	123,151	N/A
Metropolitan Melbourne	4,108,837	4,653,078	2.5%	544,241	N/A

Figure 3: Overall dwelling density by LGA 2016

Source: Housing Development Data, 2016



Dwelling type

Darebin's residential areas are becoming denser and more urban (see Figure 4). Between 2006 and 2016, the number of medium (townhouses) and higher (multistorey developments) density dwellings in Darebin increased significantly, while the number of lower density (free standing houses) dwellings (30 dwellings per hectare or lower – generally correlating with detached dwellings) decreased. This often occurs when stand-alone houses are replaced with town houses or apartments.

Age profile

The age profile of Darebin is illustrated in Figure 5, illustrating Darebin has a similar age profile to other established parts of the northern region, and to metropolitan Melbourne.

Figure 4: Change in dwellings by type 2006–2016

Source: Housing Development Data, 2016

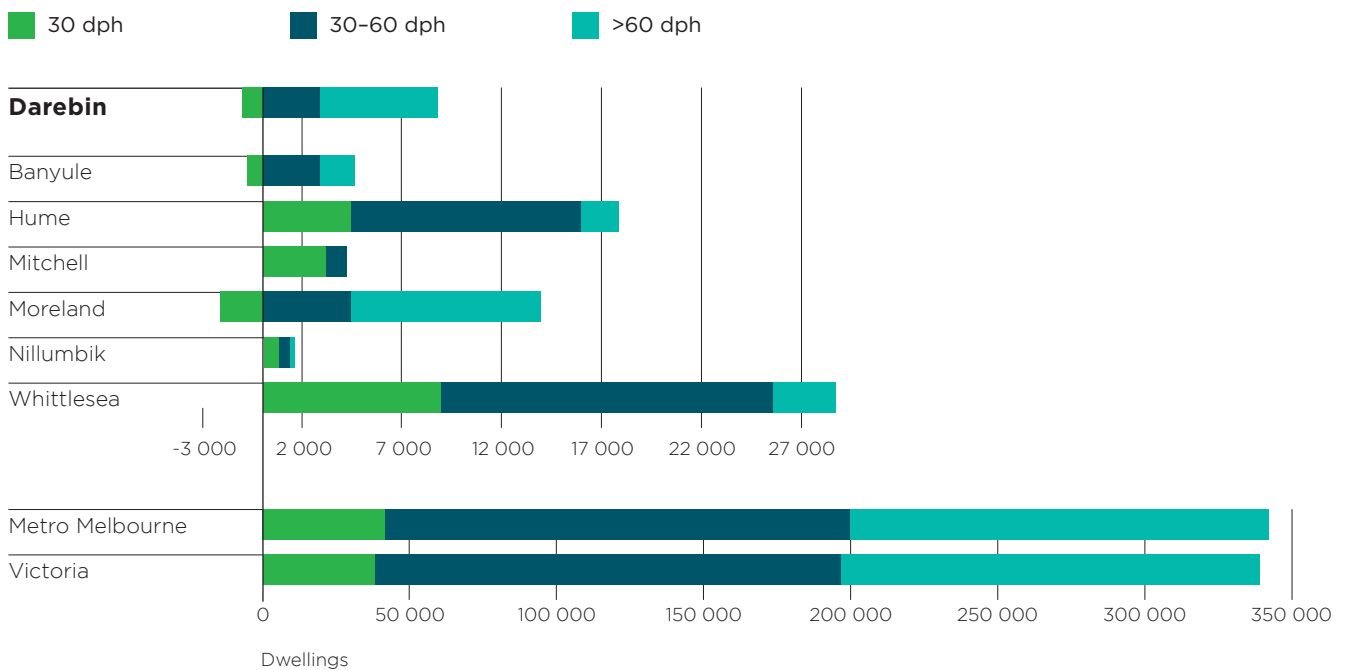
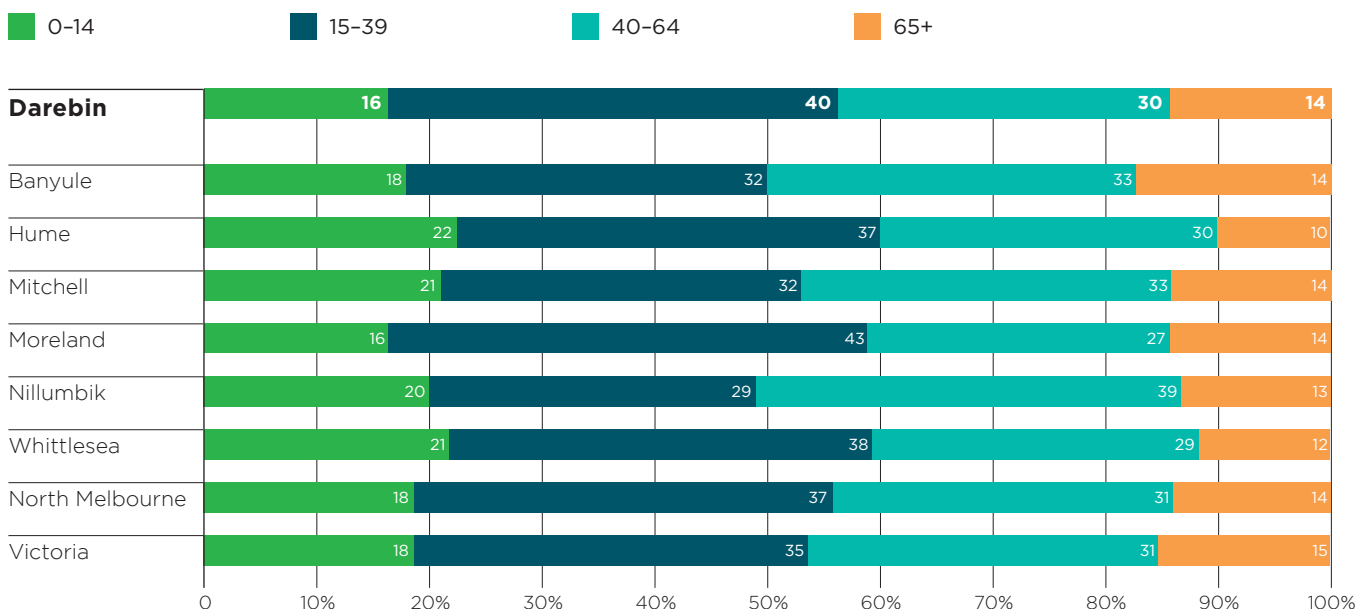
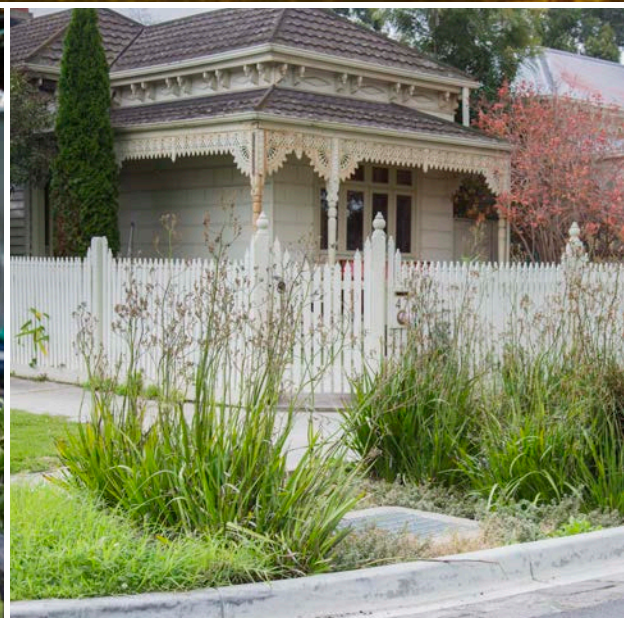
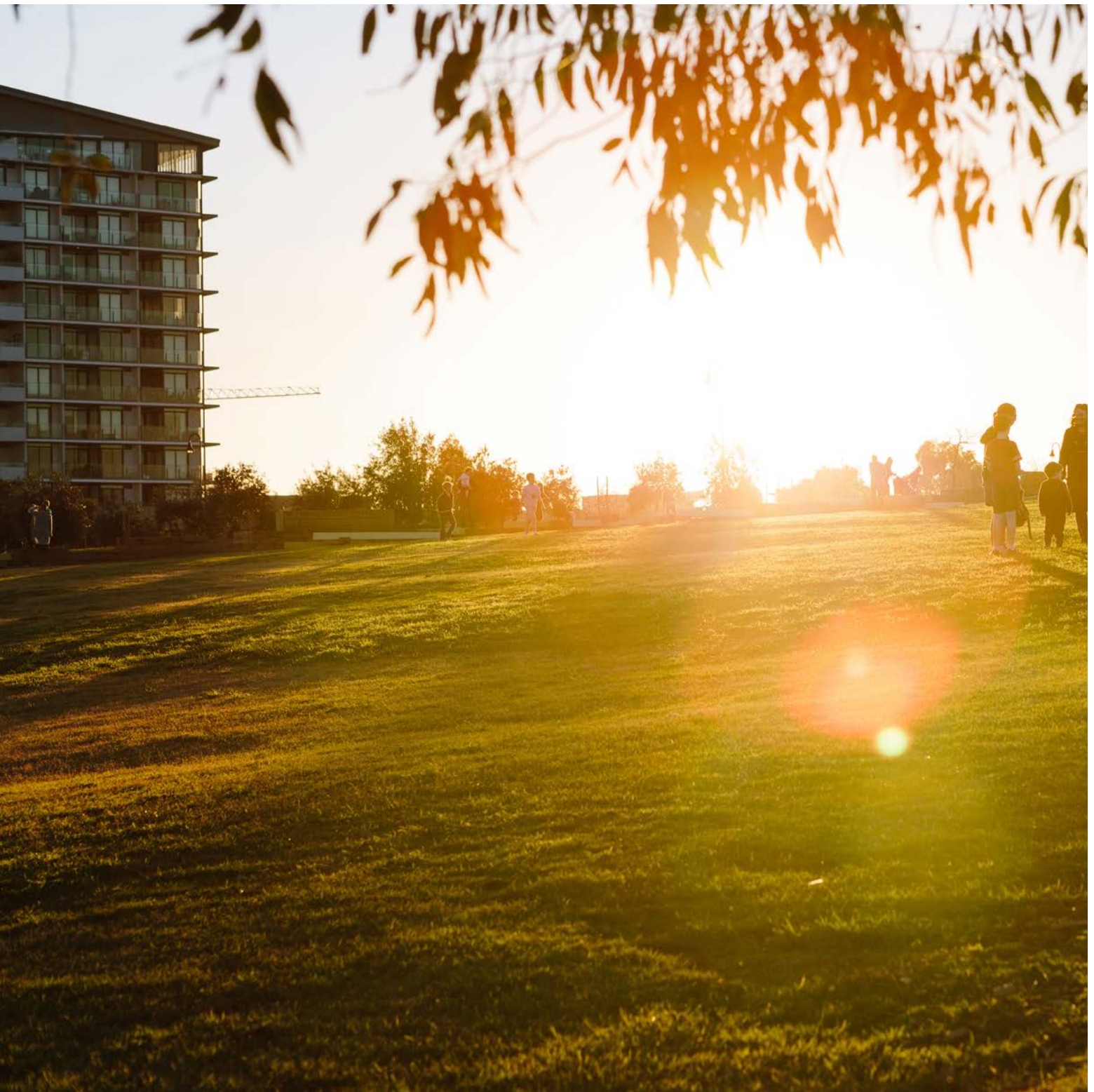


Figure 5: Proportion of population by age group (2016)

Source: ABS Census 2016





Cultural and linguistic diversity

Darebin is highly diverse. The cultural diversity in Darebin compared to other northern region municipalities, and metropolitan Melbourne, is illustrated in Figure 6. It shows Darebin has a lower proportion of people born in Australia compared to the outer northern region of metropolitan Melbourne and Victoria as a whole.

After Australian-born, the second highest place of birth was Europe and Americas, followed by East Asia. This is similar when compared with other established

parts of the northern region. Darebin does stand out in that it has one of the largest proportions of Aboriginal residents of the 31 municipalities in Greater Melbourne.

In Darebin, 56.6 per cent of people speak English at home (see Figure 7), compared to 68 per cent of Victorian households. The main languages other than English spoken at home in Darebin included Italian, Greek, Mandarin, Arabic, and Vietnamese. Many other languages are also spoken at home, and comprise a further 22 per cent of households which further illustrates the degree of cultural diversity in the Darebin community.

Figure 6: Place of birth of residents (2016)

Source: ABS Census 2016

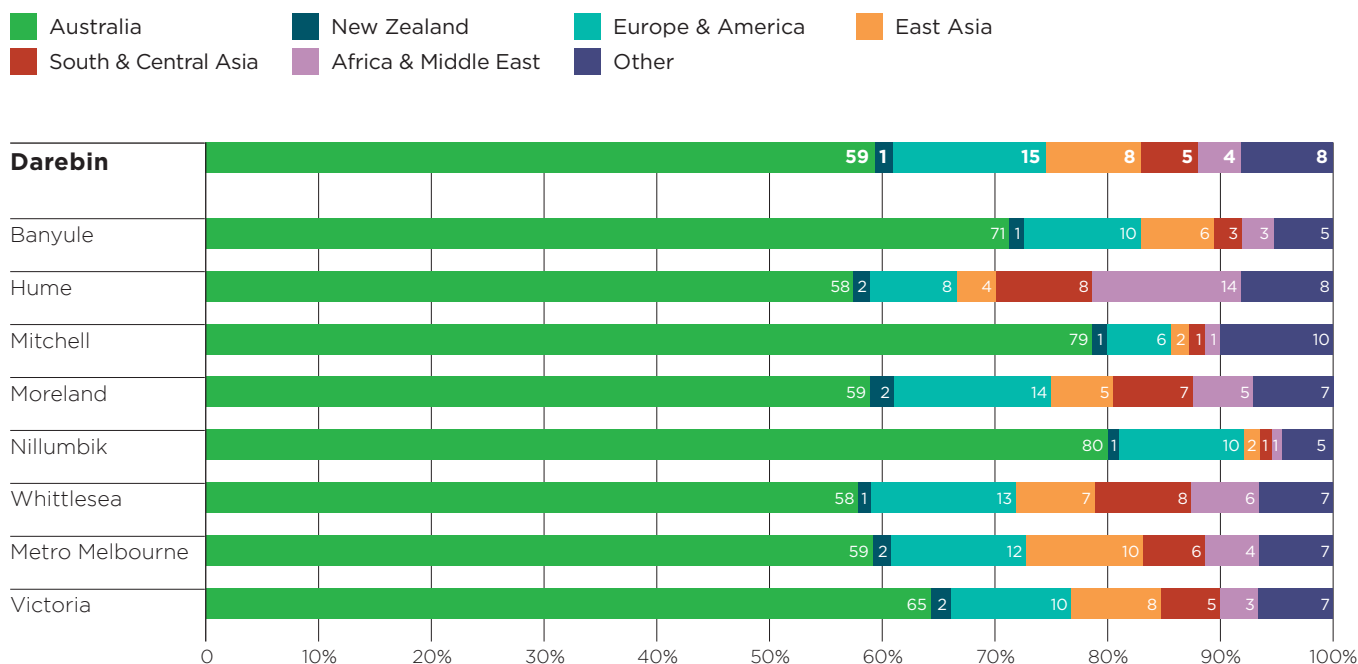
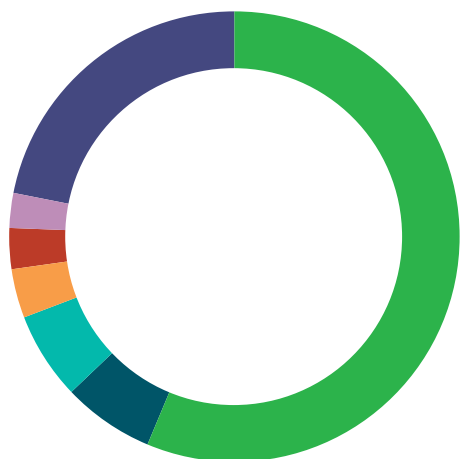
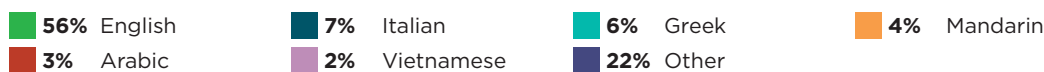


Figure 7: Language spoken at home



Open space plays a critical role for the community given that most interact with open space on a daily basis. As a result of its diverse community, Darebin's open space should consider and be reflective of the community profile by offering different types of spaces to meet these varying needs.

We know that a diverse community has different needs for their open space and it is important to understand what each group requires to encourage use, make them feel welcome and safe, and to embed the sense of Darebin as their home.

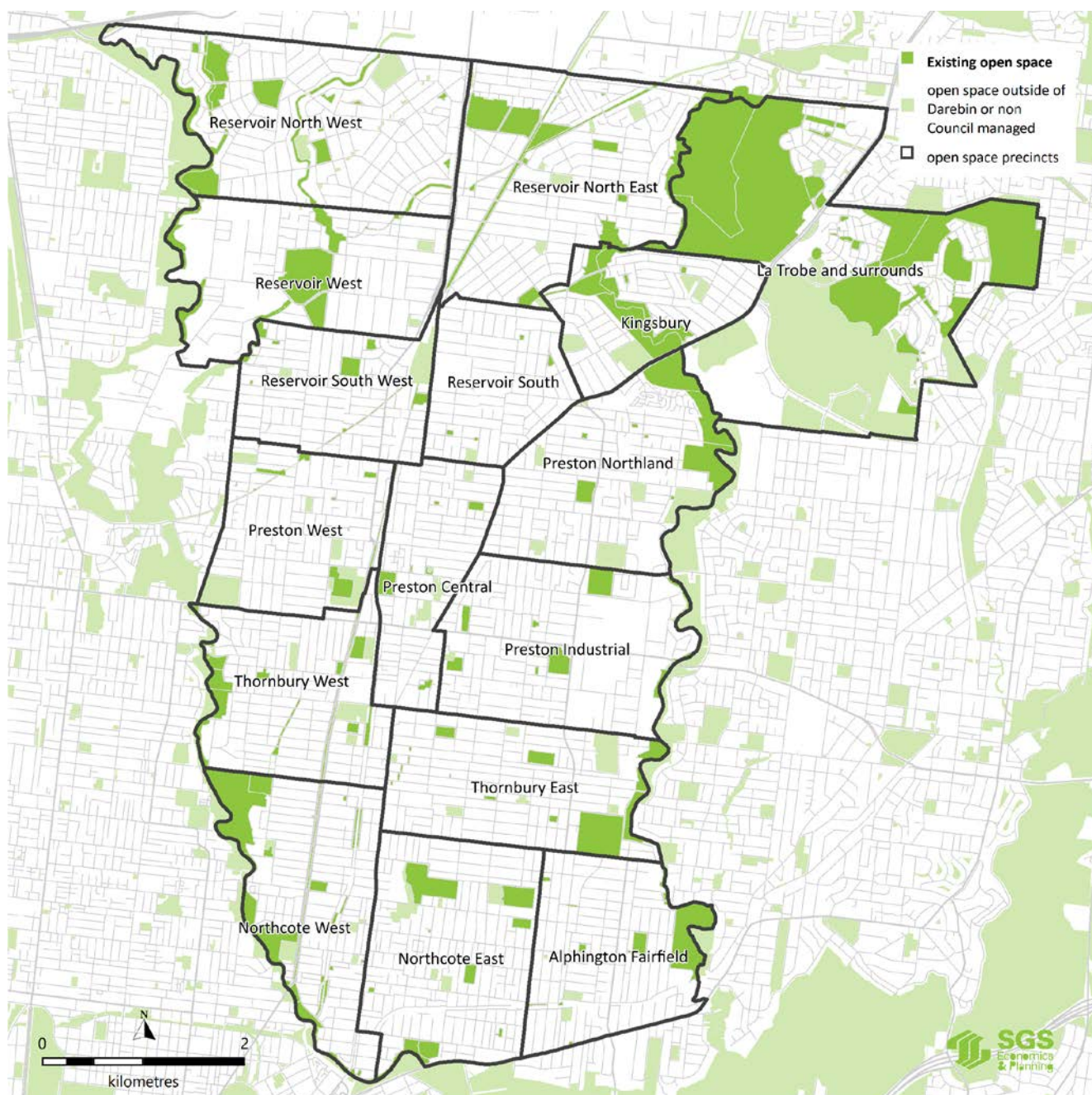
4.3 Existing open space network

There are over 790 hectares of open space in Darebin, including local and district parks, nature reserves, creek corridors, community gardens, large regional parks and sporting reserves. The existing open space network is illustrated in Figure 8.

The traditional approach to classifying open space is to consider its primary purpose – for example: conservation, recreation, scenic amenity or formal garden. In this strategy, to align with the diversity of roles and benefits of open space, all open spaces are considered opportunities for recreation – both active and passive, contemplation, climate change mitigation and biodiversity protection.

Figure 8: Open space network

Source: City of Darebin, 2018

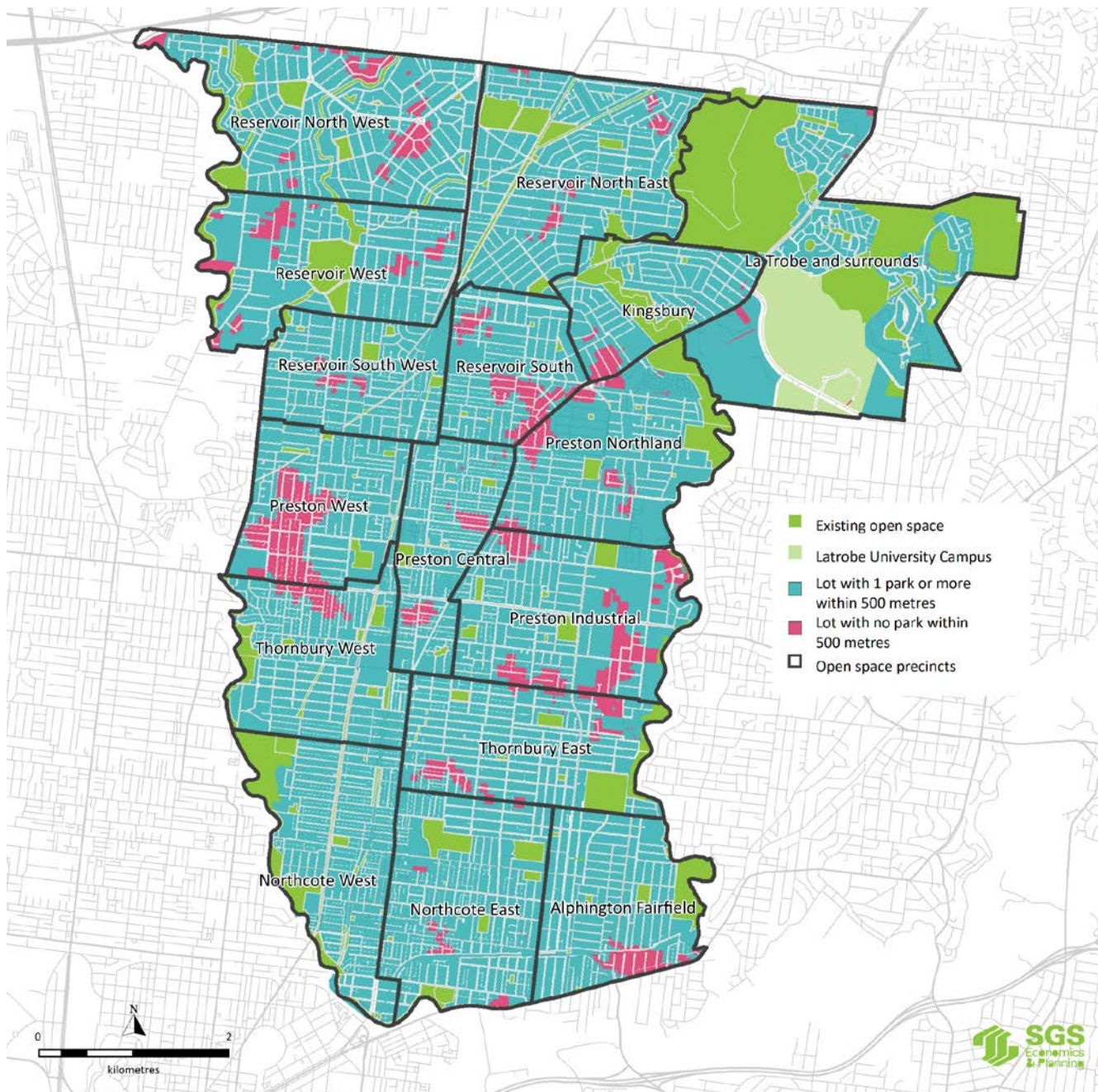


To aid in the planning of open space, parks in Darebin are classified according to their size and role. There are small *local parks* that meet the everyday needs of residents, usually located within 500 metres walking distance of their homes, *district parks* that provide a broader range of sport and recreation opportunities for residents at the suburb scale and large *regional parklands* that are enjoyed by all residents of Darebin, as well as visitors to the municipality. Regional public open spaces in Darebin include Edwardes Lake Park, Bundoora Park, John Cain Memorial Park as well as several golf courses and other active open spaces.

Residents in Darebin also have access to significant regional open space corridors that are located on the southern, eastern and western boundaries of the municipality, notably, the Darebin Creek Corridor and the Merri Creek Corridor. These regional open spaces are part of metropolitan level open space corridors along critical waterways and are popular walking and cycling routes.

Figure 9: Current variation in open space access (2018)

Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2018



4.4 Current access to open space

While overall provision of open space is important, the access that households have to open space must also be considered.

Pedestrian catchments for the open spaces in Darebin have been analysed to identify the number and location of households which can access a public open space within 500m⁷.

This includes access to Council managed and/or publicly accessible open spaces within Darebin. Golf courses, schools and conservation reserves with limited public access are excluded from the analysis. Open spaces in neighbouring municipalities are also excluded⁸ (standard planning practice is to exclude any land over which Council does not have direct ownership and control and is therefore unable to guarantee its future use and availability).

Figure 9 illustrates the key findings of this analysis, showing concentrations of households with limited access to open space particularly in Preston and Reservoir as well as parts of Alphington. There are also pockets which have limited access in all other precincts, excluding Northcote West which has significant open space assets. Table 2 reveals these gaps in the open space network.

Areas with a high population density require more access to quality open space than areas of low population density, as there is generally less private open space in high density areas. This additional demand for open space can be provided by both increasing the overall quantum of open space and increasing investment in existing open space to increase and improve its quality.

Increased investment in quality amenities and facilities, such as lighting, planting, seating, shade trees and accessible toilets and pathways allows for open space to be used by a wider range of people, for a broader range of activities. This investment increases the quality of open space making it more desirable for use throughout the day and into the evening.

When considering the projected population increase for Darebin, it is clear that an increase in both the quantity of land for recreation as well as an increase in the overall quality of open space is required to meet the needs of the growing community.

4.5 Biodiversity in Darebin

Darebin is home to a vast number of species – from treasured local fauna like the blue banded bee and the red rumped parrot to all kinds of flora, fauna, fungi and bacteria.

The devastating impacts of human settlement, urbanisation and densification mean that a complete recovery of local biodiversity is unattainable. Open space is nonetheless a key location for improving biodiversity and fighting against local extinctions.

The integrated planning and management of biodiversity has not traditionally been a core function of local government, and land with biodiverse attributes is managed by a complex array of agencies, including Melbourne Water, Vic Track, Latrobe University, Parks Victoria and Management Committees for Darebin and Merri Creeks.

While floral and faunal species do not recognise anthropogenic boundaries in the landscape (boundaries defined by humans), there are numerous significant species found in cities that can be managed to improve local and regional biodiversity.

Because of the number of species existent in any area, it is not practical to prevent extinction in all categories. Instead, it is more feasible to focus efforts on species that are important, threatened or unique to the area and to take steps to increase habitat and protect those key organisms. However much can be done. Significant revegetation and expansion of habitats can and has had profound results in species recolonisation.

Table 2: Gaps in open space network

Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2018

Open Space Precinct	% of all households which don't have access within 500m
Reservoir North West	5.6%
Reservoir North East	2.1%
La Trobe and surrounds	8.4%
Reservoir West	8.7%
Kingsbury	15.3%
Reservoir South West	3.8%
Reservoir South	17.1%
Preston Northland	6.9%
Preston West	25.4%
Preston Central	7.1%
Preston Industrial	10.5%
Thornbury West	4.4%
Thornbury East	8.7%
Northcote West	0.0%
Northcote East	2.5%
Alphington Fairfield	9.5%
City of Darebin	7.4%

7. Refer Council policy

8. Data limitations prevent inclusion of neighbouring open space

Significant plants and animals in Darebin include:

- 179 species of significant plants and animals
- 51 sites of local significance
- 24 sites of regional significance
- 2 sites of regional-state significance
- 34 sites of state significance
- 2 sites of regional-national significance
- 26 sites of national significance.

Areas of high conservation value include:

- Merri Creek
- Darebin Creek
- Cherry Street Reserve
- Forensic Drive Reserve
- Ngarrri-djarrang Grasslands
- Edgars Creek
- Bundoora Park.

Specific threats to biodiversity in Darebin include:

- Urban development encroaching on natural areas, e.g. housing and development along creek corridors including Merri Creek, Darebin Creek and Edgars Creek
- Pest animals including domestic cats and dogs
- Exotic and invasive weed species and habitat loss
- Pollution of air, water and land
- Fractured habitat – natural heritage in Darebin currently provides habitat stepping stones for flora and fauna rather than a connected network
- Lack of community awareness: community engagement and education is needed to mitigate negative community behaviours that threaten and harm natural heritage sites
- Cost of resourcing natural heritage protection activities needs to be balanced against Council's other priorities
- Impacts of climate change including declining rainfall, increasing temperatures and increasing intensity and frequency of storm events

Darebin as an urban ecosystem

Urban ecosystems are dynamic hybrid systems that encompass all living organisms (including humans), the natural environment and the built environment. Understanding Darebin as an urban ecosystem allows for locally indigenous plants and animals to be protected. Some exotic species (especially non-invasive ones), have a legitimate role as street trees in a number of urban situations. This is due to the limited number of indigenous species that are highly suited to streetscapes where pruning of limbs might be undertaken regularly, or where other constraints operate to limit larger indigenous trees. Non-native species can also still have a place in certain open space reserves where there are particular historical values, or irrigation is supplied, or if a particular look is being sought for cultural reasons. However, the default needs to be local, indigenous species as non-native plants have limited biodiversity values.

An urban ecosystem approach also recognises the importance of open space to people, the role of open space in urban food production, the value of culture and design, and that open space can fulfil a range of needs and activities.

4.6 The community's views on open space

Community consultation analysis

It is important that community members see themselves in their open spaces. To begin the process of understanding how individuals perceive and experience their open spaces, Council undertook a municipal wide survey in March 2018. The survey was released simultaneously with an Expression of Interest for the Darebin Nature Trust.

From the responses, it is overwhelmingly clear that Darebin residents value their open space and, for many, engaging with nature forms a positive part of their lives. Passive or informal recreation such as the use of a playspace, socialising, walking, cycling, dog walking, jogging, contemplation and exercise featured prominently as the main activities that drew people to Darebin's open spaces. Respondents valued a place rich in natural bushland character, habitat for native plants and animals, trees, an escape from the built environment and a place to relax and unwind. Parks that offered a diversity of uses as well as un-programmed spaces rated as some of the most preferred.

Broadly, areas identified for improvement included provision of a consistent level of maintenance in all open spaces throughout the city; ensuring a standard level of basic amenities such as seating, bins and drinking fountains; improving the quality of footpaths as well as increasing the amount of tree planting and the quality of garden beds. There was also a clear concern expressed by the rapid growth, change and development that many saw throughout the municipality.

Many respondents noted a gap in provision of natural, bushland reserves and reserves with a natural character for passive recreation. Spending time outdoors with pets, particularly dogs, ranked as important for many residents with people reporting that dogs enabled and supported exercise, socialisation and as a reason to get outside and engage with nature. Conversely, not all responses around dogs were positive, with some residents reporting safety concerns for themselves and their families around off lead dogs.

Open space is highly valued by Darebin's diverse community for a wide variety of reasons and this strategy is guided by these initial conversations.

Darebin Nature Trust

In 2018 Council established the Darebin Nature Trust, made up of a group of knowledgeable and skilled local experts from nature-related fields. This group will provide invaluable ongoing advice and expertise as the strategy is translated into management practice, as well as influencing a broad range of Council plans, strategies and actions, big and small.

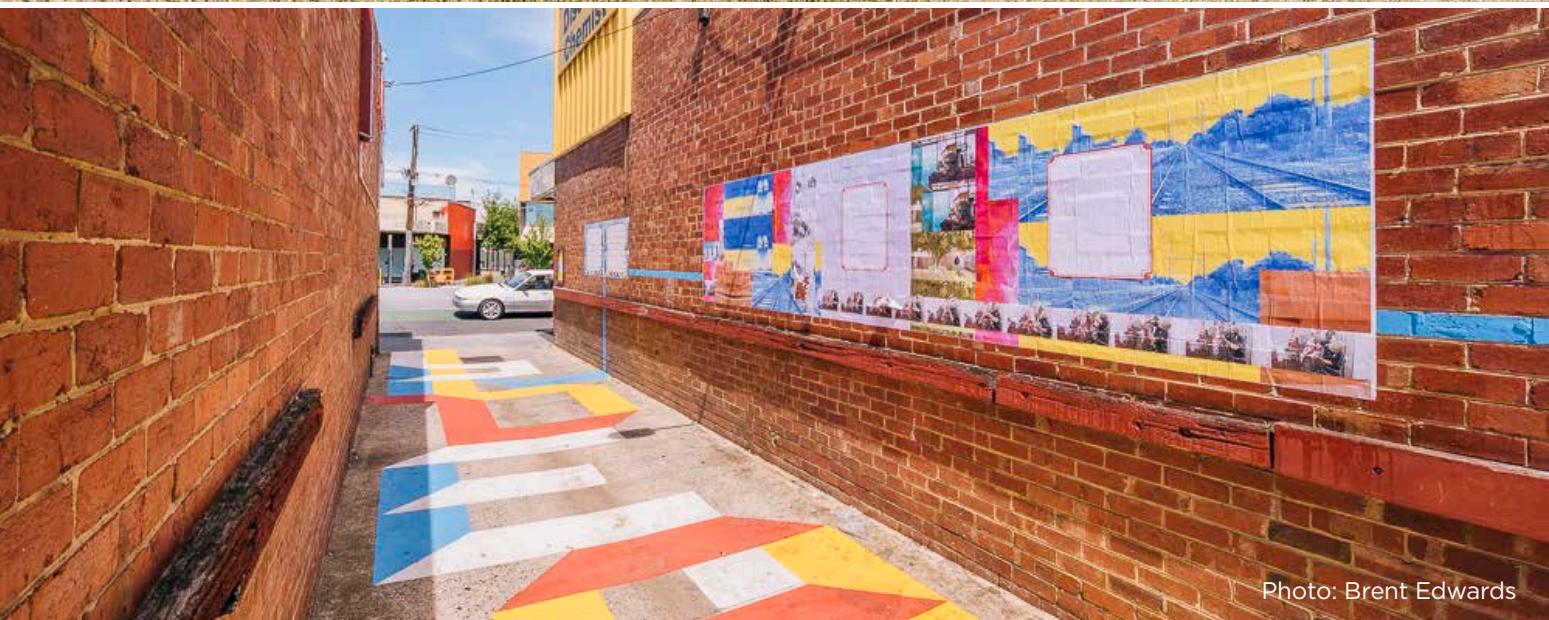


Photo: Brent Edwards

05

Growth and change



Darebin has experienced major change in recent years and will continue to grow, urbanise and change. Without significant action, our communities will have less access to quality open space and our ecosystems will suffer. *Breathing Space: The Darebin Open Space Strategy* is a central strategy for Council in being able to protect quality of life and natural systems, encompassing human, plant and animal communities, as the city grows.

This section outlines the drivers of change, need and demand.

5.1 Rapid population growth

Population growth is a key driver of demand for open space. The City of Darebin is forecast to be home to approximately 196,000 people in 2028. This is an increase of more than 35,000 people from the 2018 population of approximately 161,000 and represents population growth of approximately 21 per cent. On average, this is 2 per cent growth annually. The distribution of both the current population and projected growth across the municipality is uneven, as illustrated below in Table 3.

This future population growth will generate additional demand for open space, delivered through a combination of more open space and improvements to existing open space. The strategy will outline the approach which is based on current levels of access and current open space conditions.

Table 3: Projected population growth: 2018–2028

Source: City of Darebin, 2018

Open Space Precinct	2018	2028 (projected)	2018–2028 projected change	2018–2028 % projected change
Reservoir North West	10,565	11,322	757	7.2%
Reservoir North East	15,172	17,140	1,968	13.0%
La Trobe and surrounds	8,933	11,807	2,875	32.2%
Reservoir West	7,320	8,544	1,224	16.7%
Kingsbury	5,831	6,913	1,082	18.5%
Reservoir South West	7,936	8,765	830	10.5%
Reservoir South	6,938	9,140	2,202	31.7%
Preston Northland	10,229	13,275	3,047	29.8%
Preston West	9,736	13,560	3,825	39.3%
Preston Central	9,472	13,972	4,500	47.5%
Preston Industrial	7,394	9,926	2,531	34.2%
Thornbury West	10,755	13,011	2,256	21.0%
Thornbury East	11,949	13,716	1,767	14.8%
Northcote West	13,942	16,998	3,056	21.9%
Northcote East	16,116	17,328	1,212	7.5%
Alphington Fairfield	8,962	10,318	1,356	15.1%
City of Darebin	161,249	195,736	34,487	21.4%

5.2 Provision of open space

There are areas in Darebin which currently have limited access to open space, and many of these areas are projected to accommodate high levels of growth. If no additional open space is acquired, the overall provision rate of open space will decline.

Table 4 provides an overview of the current provision rate of open space across Darebin, and the likely future rate, assuming no additional open space is provided.

Only open spaces that are publicly accessible and have a primary purpose for recreation are included in the analysis.

Excluded from this analysis are the regionally significant open spaces at Bundoora Park and John Cain Memorial Reserve, conservation areas such as Gresswell Forest Wildlife Reserve, golf courses and open space located in road reserves and along creek corridors where one or more of the following applies: they are not owned or managed by council, have restricted access or require a paid membership.

Table 4 shows that overall in Darebin, in the future, there will be approximately 16.0 square metres per capita of open space, if no additional open space is provided. This is well below the commonly accepted benchmark of 30 sq. m per capita. It also shows that there are multiple areas which will have a shortage in open space provision in the future, based on projected population growth.

Table 4: Access to open space per capita (2018 and projected)

Source: SGS Economics and Planning

Open Space Precinct	2018 open space (ha)	2018 open space per capita (m ²)	2028 projected open space per capita (m ²)	2028 projected open space provision
Reservoir North West	52.7	18.6	17.3	Undersupplied
Reservoir North East	61.1	24.2	21.4	Minor undersupply
La Trobe and Surrounds	326.4	18.9	14.3	Undersupplied
Reservoir West	46	37.7	32.3	Well supplied
Kingsbury	37.6	63.7	53.7	Well supplied
Reservoir South West	10.2	10.2	9.3	Undersupplied
Reservoir South	1.3	1.9	1.4	Undersupplied
Preston Northland	43.3	31.0	23.9	Minor undersupply
Preston West	9.9	8.0	5.7	Undersupplied
Preston Central	6.4	6.7	4.6	Undersupplied
Preston Industrial	18.3	20.9	15.6	Undersupplied
Thornbury West	28.8	15.8	13.1	Undersupplied
Thornbury East	36.2	5.6	4.9	Undersupplied
Northcote West	56.5	19.1	15.7	Undersupplied
Northcote East	30.4	17.7	16.5	Undersupplied
Alphington Fairfield	25.4	28.2	24.5	Minor undersupply
City of Darebin	790.4	19.4	16.0	Undersupplied

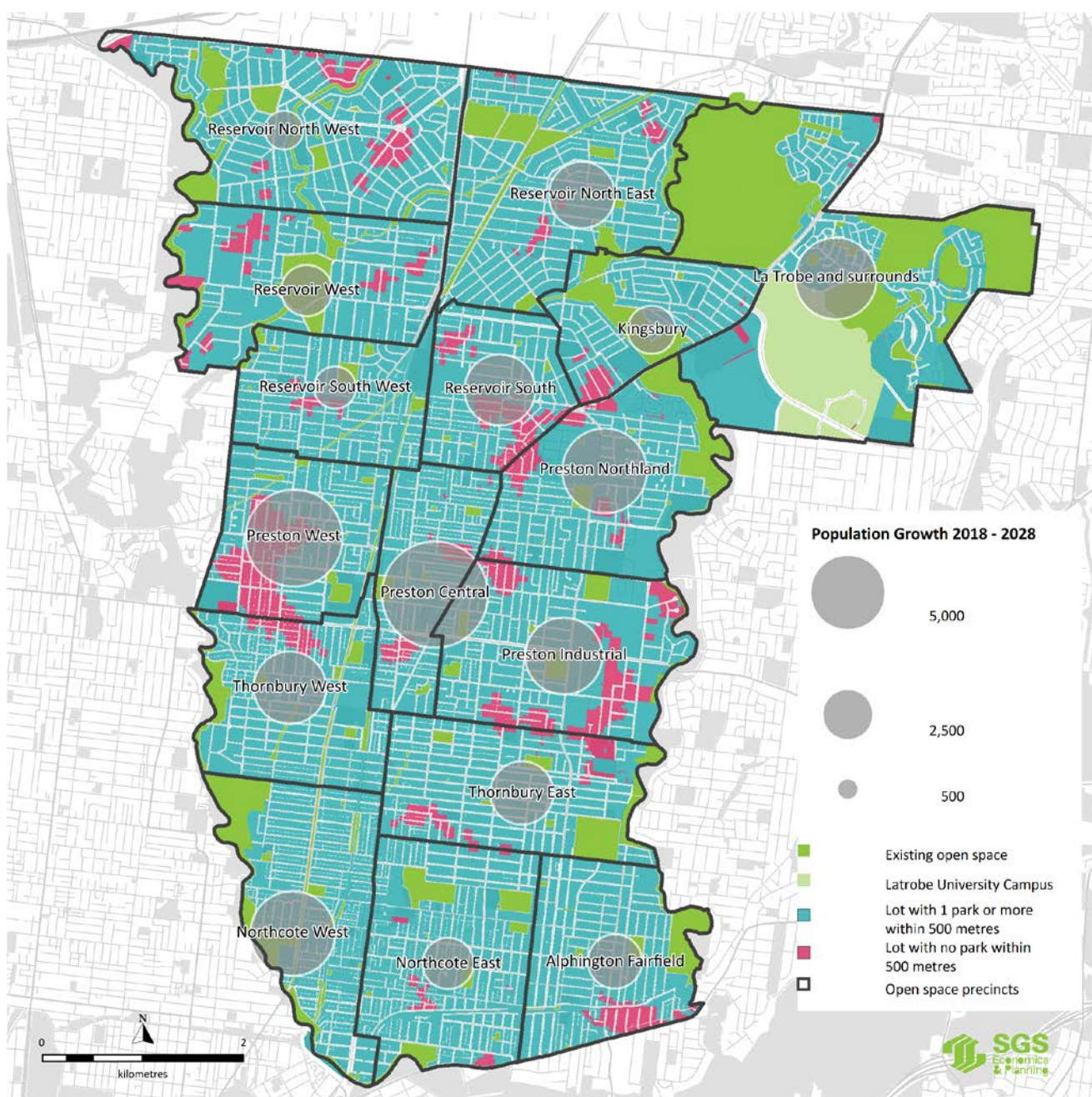
5.3 Access to open space

There are areas in Darebin which currently have limited access to open space.

Figure 10 shows how the areas where there are gaps are often aligned with areas that are anticipated to experience major population growth. Of particular note, are the Preston precincts, which currently have significant gaps in access to open space, and are forecast to experience significant population growth.

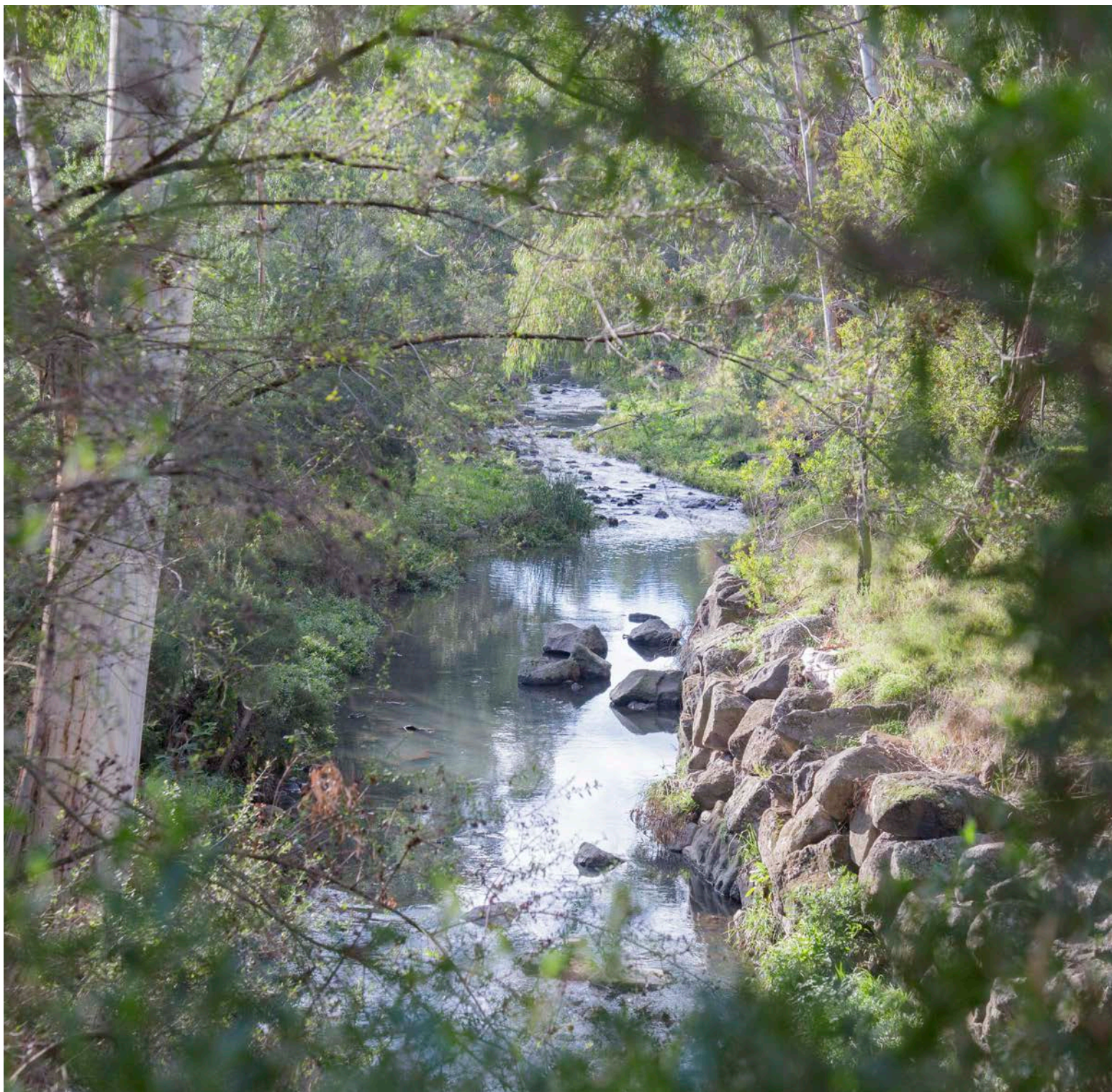
Figure 10: Current variation in open space access and projected population growth (2018)

Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2018



06

Shaping the future



Breathing Space: The Darebin Open Space Strategy is a far-reaching and ambitious strategy. It recognises that significant action, investment and time will be needed to realise the vision of more and better open space. The strategy identifies a framework of approaches and actions to achieve it.

6.1 Introduction

The overarching theme of *Breathing Space: The Darebin Open Space Strategy* is responding to the climate emergency.

Within this context, the strategy provides a vision, directions, objectives, strategies and actions for open space in Darebin arranged in the following way:

- The vision statement identifies the desired future
- The key directions identify the areas of impact
- The objectives outline what is to be achieved
- The strategies identify how to meet the objectives
- The actions are the specific steps that need to be taken

6.2 Vision Statement

We see a future city that has more and better open space. Where we share multifaceted, contemplative, biodiverse, inspiring and active spaces that promote health, wellbeing, and social and cultural connections. Our streets, reserves, nature strips and medians are lush and rewilded with bushland trees, flowers and plants.

Breathing Space: The Darebin Open Space Strategy seeks to achieve a place where we work together to protect local species and extend their habitat, celebrate our unique natural character and where everyone in the community feels a deep sense of ownership and responsibility towards our beautiful natural world.

6.3 Quality and quantity of open space

The strategy will achieve its vision of more and better open space through increasing the quantity of open space by working towards all residents having access to open space within 500m walking distance of their homes and improving the quality of open space to meet the three key directions of the strategy:

- Meeting community open space needs
- Rewilding Darebin: improving biodiversity
- Creating a Green Streets Network

Both quality and quantity of open space in Darebin are key challenges and this strategy seeks to address them both.

6.4 Increasing the quantity of open space

In order to work towards all of Darebin's residents living within 500m walking distance of open space, more open space will need to be added into the network. This can be achieved through a number of means including purchase, joint user agreements and partnerships with private and public entities.

Addressing gaps in biodiversity corridors should be a strong consideration in land acquisition.

Acquisition of open space

The following should be considered when planning for the acquisition of new public open space:

- Does it fill a gap in the open space network?
- Is it in an area of high population density?
- Is it in an area of projected growth?
- Does it contain remnant vegetation or biodiversity values?
- Is it/can it be habitat for a protected species of flora or fauna?
- Does it make a connection in habitat, active transport etc?
- Does it make an existing open space or habitat corridor larger?
- Does it make access to an existing open space or transport corridor easier?
- Is it within 100m of a creek system?
- Is it in or near an area of natural or environmental significance?
- Is it nominated in a council strategic document?
- Would it make a connection in the Principal Pedestrian Network?
- Does it provide green public open space in commercial or retail areas?
- Does it service a population likely to be experiencing disadvantage, social isolation or poor health, such as older people, social housing tenants or newly arrived migrants?
- Is it good value?

For each open space precinct, parcels or locations for land acquisitions will be identified in the proposed Strategic Land Acquisition Plan.

Traditional owners will be engaged meaningfully in the planning and design of upgrades and new open spaces in areas of cultural significance.

Potential Sources of funding

As shown in Figure 10, there is a distinct gap in the amount of open space we have, compared to what we are projected to need.

To help close this gap, and improve the quality of existing open spaces, there are a number of potential funding sources to acquire new and improve existing open space.

These include but are not limited to:

1. Government grants
2. Council funds
 - i. Capital works, and asset management program budgets
 - ii. Other internal sources such as community grants/sport programs targeting users
 - iii. Land sales
3. Philanthropic trusts/foundation grants/bequests etc.
4. Reinvestment of funds generated from use of council facilities
5. Joint access arrangements, developments and partnerships with schools, peak bodies, other public agencies
6. Public Open Space Contributions from developers triggered by subdivision (levy)
7. Development contributions
8. Public open space provided by other Government bodies or agencies, on their landholdings

6.5 Improving the quality of open space

The quality of an open space is often a key factor in determining how much positive benefit that a particular open space can offer to the community that uses it and to the natural systems that depend on it to survive and thrive.

To achieve this increase in quality, all open spaces have been assigned a hierarchy and a type. This classification system correlates to a matrix (see Figure 11) for the provision of assets, amenity and service for each park. Hierarchy and type are explained in section 6.6.

Quality open space includes the following:

- Maintenance: Good maintenance practices include activities required to keep an open space functioning optimally such as regular mowing and weeding. It also includes replacing parts and assets that are worn and past their useful life expectancy such as replanting trees, repairing paths and replacing benches.
- Sustainable infrastructure and good design: Sustainable infrastructure selection and well considered design provides numerous environmental and cost benefits. Selecting locally made, sustainable, robust and easily maintained open space assets (play equipment, benches, bins etcetera) leads to a longer life for assets and increased enjoyment and use by the community. Good design ensures that consideration is given to layout, circulation, neighbourhood character and aesthetics and ensures that all assets are fit for purpose.
- Biodiversity: All open spaces should contribute to the biodiversity of Darebin. This is accomplished through appropriate plant selection, increased canopy cover, a clear network of paths that allows areas to regenerate and through the purposeful creation of habitat. High quality open spaces support local flora and fauna while simultaneously providing people with the opportunity to connect with and integrate into the natural environment. Planting should be suited to the local microclimates and be selected to thrive. The main vehicle by which all open space in Darebin will contribute to biodiversity is via the planting of indigenous species and the use of layers of vegetation (trees, shrubs and understorey) to create diverse habitat for fauna and insect species. Biodiversity will also be assisted if the vegetation cover in many parks is transitioned to indigenous species. Flowering indigenous species and plant palettes should be considered foremost where ornamental garden beds are preferred by the community.
- Universal design and inclusiveness: Well considered open spaces are welcoming and inclusive places. They are inviting and accommodate a variety of uses for all people regardless of culture, gender, sexual orientation, age, socioeconomic conditions, disability, etcetera.
- Service provision: A high quality network of open spaces contains a variety of uses including conservation, organised sport, active transport, food production, passive recreation, contemplation and habitat. Every space does not need to contain every service, however the network as a whole should have a fair and equitable distribution of activities. Available services should be in proportion with the intended use and the number of users of the open space.
- Character and distinctiveness: A successful green space will promote and reflect the identity and culture of a local community and create a sense of place. High quality open spaces contribute positively to the economic growth of an area and add to neighbourhood character.
- Wayfinding and navigation: Signage, landmarks and visual cues should be prevalent and prominent. This

will allow users to confidently and safely navigate the space and to understand what is available within and around the area.

- Connectivity: The network of open spaces should be integrated into the surrounding urban fabric with well defined access points. Integrated, safe and attractive routes should link the network of green spaces and local services encouraging the use of active transport.
- Accessibility: Well planned open spaces are easily accessible where the individual open space and the wider network considers accessibility as a default.

Figure 11: Open Space Matrix

Basic Minimum Requirements	Hierarchy Type	Regional Regional	District			Local		
			A	B	C	A	B	C
Public toilet		May have	Should have	May have		May have	Should not have	
Lighting		May have	Should have	May have		May have	Should not have	
Internal path network catering for a range of users		May have	Should have	May have		Should have	May have	
Path connections to surrounding footpaths		May have	Should have	Should have	May have	Should have	Should have	May have
BBQ		May have	May have	May have	Should not have	May have	May have	Should not have
Picnic tables		Should have	Should have	Should have	Should not have	May have	May have	Should not have
Bike racks		Should have	Should have	Should have	Should have	Should have	May have	May have
Drinking water		May have	Should have	Should have	May have	Should have	May have	Should not have
Shade structure		Should have	Should have	Should have	May have	Should have	May have	May have
Seating		Should have	Should have	Should have	Should have	Should have	Should have	May have
Fitness equipment		May have	May have	May have	May have	May have	May have	Should not have
Formal sporting facilities (suitable for organised sport)		May have	May have	May have	Should not have	May have	May have	Should not have
Informal/casual sporting facilities (including basketball half-courts)		May have	May have	May have	May have	May have	May have	May have
Playspace		Should have	Should have	Should have	May have	May have	May have	Should not have
Public event space (min. 100m ² gathering space)		May have	Should have	May have	May have	May have	Should not have	Should not have
Canopy trees		Should have	Should have	Should have	Should have	Should have	Should have	Should have
Garden beds		Should have	Should have	Should have	Should have	Should have	Should have	Should have
Biodiverse indigenous plantings		Should have	Should have	Should have	Should have	Should have	Should have	Should have
Areas of irrigated mown grass (including playing surfaces)		May have	Should have	May have	Should not have	Should have	May have	Should not have
Unique elements that enhance the visitor experience and contribute to identity of the reserve (such as artwork or other design elements)		May have	Should have	May have	May have	Should have	May have	May have
Car parking		Should have	Should have	Should have	May have	May have	Should not have	Should not have
Car share and electric car charge points (with solar panels on shelter/s)		Should have	Should have	Should have	May have	May have	Should not have	Should not have

6.6 Classifying open space

Planning for the future open space network will be informed by a classification system that considers both the overall catchment and role of the open space as well as the type of infrastructure that is required.

In developing responses to these future challenges, it is useful to classify open space based on the population it serves. This is done using two frameworks: one which addresses the geographic scale of the catchment that an open space serves (local, district and regional) referred here as 'hierarchy' and a second which is based on the density of population within the open space's geographical catchment referred here as 'type'. The two concepts are conceptually illustrated in Figure 12.

The underlying assumption of this approach is that areas of higher density require a higher level of open space services, due to increased demand.

The hierarchy is determined by the geographical catchment of visitors. Regional open spaces draw visitors from across the municipality and beyond. District parks draw visitors from surrounding suburbs as well as people who live within walking distance, while local open space draw visitors who are within walking distance, or suburbs that are directly adjacent. Examples of different hierarchies are shown in Figure 13.

The type (or level of amenity) of open space required is determined by the population density around the open space. The measure for population density is the number of people who live around the open space.

The recommended type for an open space provides guidance on the mix of infrastructure and facilities and level of maintenance that should be provided within them. Parks with more people living nearby have higher minimum requirements. Examples of different types are shown in Figure 14.

For each type, a basic minimum requirement is identified. Type A open spaces provide a high level of open space services, Type B provide a medium level of open space services, and Type C provide a lower level of open space services.

To identify the appropriate type (level of open space amenities provided) for each local open space, the population within 500 metres walking distance is identified. For each district open space, the population within the open space precinct is identified. Regional Parks and Corridors (such as Bundoora Park, Edwardes Lake Park and Merri Creek Corridor) are used by the entire municipality and beyond so are not distinguished within Figure 12.

This approach means that local parks with a large number of people living nearby require a higher level of service than local parks with fewer people living nearby. District parks in open space precincts with large populations require a higher level of service than those located in precincts with smaller populations.

The population density associated with each type of open space are described below.

Park hierarchy and type are used to set a proposed level of amenity provision. This will be explored later in the strategy.

Local Parks

Type	2018 population located within 500m
Type A	10,000 plus people
Type B	7,000 to 10,000 people
Type C	Fewer than 7,000 people

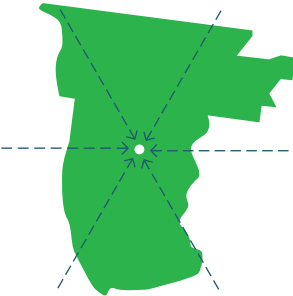
District Parks

Type	2018 population within open space precinct
Type A	12,000 plus people
Type B	9,000 – 12,000 people
Type C	Fewer than 9,000 people

Figure 12: Open space classification framework

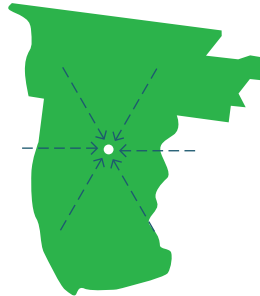
Hierarchy

‘Hierarchy’ is determined by catchment – the distance from which the reserve is able to (or should be able to) attract visitors.



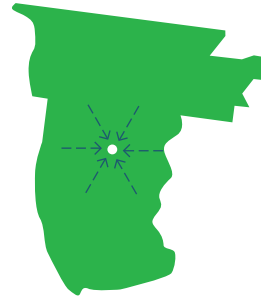
Regional

Draws visitors from/has significance across the municipality and beyond.



District

Draws visitors from/has significance to surrounding suburbs as well as people who live within walking distance.



Local

Draws visitors from/has significance within walking distance from the location suburb, or suburbs directly adjacent.

Type

‘Type’ is determined by population density around the reserve – how many people the reserve needs to provide ‘services’ to. Different types require different capital cost and maintenance inputs.



Type A

High level of provision of capital expenditure and maintenance. These reserves are relied upon to provide a variety of services and are of significant importance within their catchment.



Type B

Medium level of equipment and maintenance. These reserves are relied upon to provide a few different services and have a supporting role within the catchment.



Type C

Lower level provision of equipment and maintenance. These reserves are supplementary to other reserves in the catchment, and may cater primarily for opportunistic or limited use.

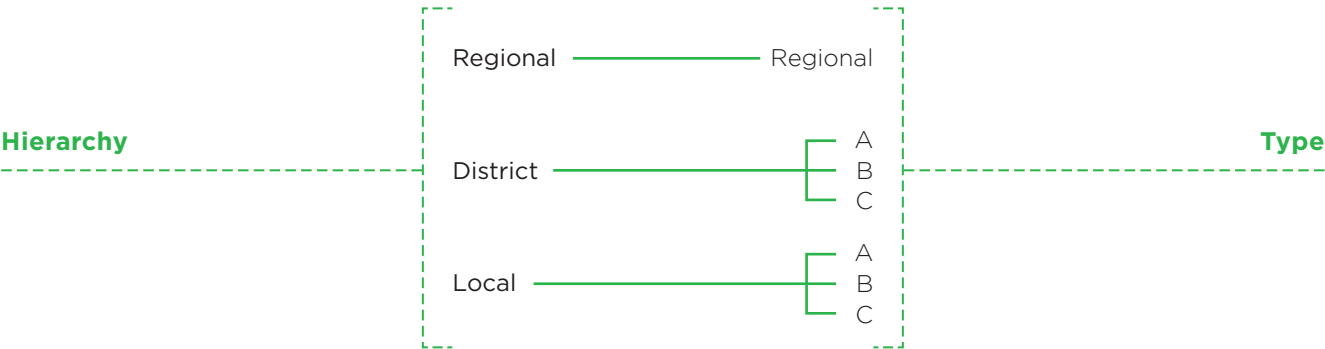


Figure 13: Hierarchy — benchmarking**Regional**

Draws visitors from / has significance across the municipality and beyond.

**Bundoora Park, Bundoora**

- Approx. 190 ha.
- Urban farm, cafe and multiple playspaces.
- Incorporates multiple separate uses such as golf course and river red gum preservation area.

**Booran Reserve, Glenhuntly**

- Approx. 1.8 ha.
- High quantity and variety of equipment, including water-play. Shade and seating also provided.

District

Draws visitors from surrounding suburbs as well as people who live within walking distance.

**Hayes Park, Thornbury**

- Approx. 3 ha.
- Parks with an oval automatically achieve district status due to increased catchment size.
- Playspaces with medium provision of equipment.
- Other features and facilities: picnic tables and BBQ, open lawn, seating, vegetation.

**JC Donath Reserve, Reservoir**

- Approx. 20 ha.
- Multiple sports ovals.
- Youth precinct and playspace.
- Picnic facilities including BBQ and shelter.
- Open lawn areas and tree plantings.
- Path network.

Local

Draws visitors from within walking distance from the location suburb, or suburbs directly adjacent.

**University Square, Parkville**

- Approx. 2 ha.
- Shade, seating, plaza areas, open lawn areas, vegetation, water feature, public art.
- A local space designed to cater for passive recreation. This type of space is particularly suited to servicing open space needs of residents in higher-density developments.
- Can accommodate events and large numbers of people.

**Doug Hannan Reserve, Reservoir**

- Approx. 0.67 ha.
- Mini skate park, half-court, playground.
- Drinking fountain, seating and picnic table.
- Open lawn area, trees and garden beds.

Figure 14: Type — benchmarking

Type A

High level capital cost and maintenance requirements.

**JC Donath Reserve, Reservoir**

- Approx. 20 ha.
- Multiple sports ovals.
- Youth precinct and playspace
- Picnic facilities including BBQ and shelter
- Open lawn areas and tree plantings.
- Path network.

**University Square, Parkville**

- Approx. 2 ha.
- Redevelopment, to be funded by City of Melbourne, the State Government and Melbourne University.
- Shade, seating, plaza areas, open lawn areas, vegetation, water feature, public art. Built partially over a car park.
- Additional space created by road closures.

Type B

Medium level capital cost and maintenance requirements.

**Batman Park, Northcote**

- Approx. 1.6 ha.
- Sizeable playspace
- Picnic shelter and barbeque.
- Public toilet.
- Tree plantings, lawn area and ornamental garden beds.
- Formal path network
- Entry signage.

**Wilson Avenue, Brunswick**

- Approx. 0.05 ha.
- Bouldering wall.
- Seating.
- Shade trees and small raised lawn area.
- Feature paving and artwork.
- Area created by closing off road.

Type C

Lower level capital cost and maintenance requirements.

**Bracken Avenue Reserve, Thornbury**

- Approx. 0.93 ha.
- Shared path.
- Green link across several blocks with trees, seating and signage.

**Foch Reserve, Reservoir**

- Approx. 0.14 ha.
- Playspace.
- Seating.
- Lawn area, trees and garden beds.

Key Direction 1: Meeting community open space needs



7.1 Objective 1:

Make the distribution of open space equitable

Providing access for all residents of Darebin to open space within walking distance (500m) of their house will ensure the whole community can enjoy the benefits of open space. Council is committed to providing a strong open space network, and to deliver a net gain of open space across Darebin. The population of Darebin is expected to grow rapidly over the next 10 years and there are areas which will accommodate high housing densities. These areas will require high performing open spaces that support intensive use by the local community.

Strategies

- S1.1 Work towards all Darebin residents having quality public open space within 500m of their homes.
- S1.2 Over time, plan and deliver new open space where there are identified gaps in the open space network and where there is the greatest need.
- S1.3 Increase funding for new and improved open space needs generated by population growth via an increased open space contribution rate delivered through the Planning Scheme.

Actions

- A1.1 Acquire additional open space. This may be through purchase, joint use agreements and/or partnerships with public and private entities.
- A1.2 Implement a higher open space contribution rate as a schedule to Clause 53.01 in the Darebin Planning Scheme, across all land uses.
- A1.3 Create a strategic land acquisition plan that contains a decision making framework to guide selection of open space referencing section 6.4 of this strategy.
- A1.4 Review the Darebin Planning Scheme to ensure public open space is correctly zoned in accordance with the use of the land.

Gender-inclusive spaces

Public open space encompasses places for social encounter and exchange, and participation in public life. In its physical design and its uses, open space reflects our shared social values; it is shaped by and in turn further shapes and reinforces social hierarchies and norms. The accessibility, use and experience of open space differ for all of us since gender, class, age, race and ethnicity, sexuality and dis/ability contribute to shaping our experiences of it and our possibilities to use it.

However, a city inclusive of its open space is not gender-neutral. In some cases, the organisation or use of space unconsciously or unintentionally reflects traditional or outdated gender roles and unequal power relations between women and men. The design of spaces can either facilitate or impede inclusive use by individuals of all genders.

For example, in a park, young girls may gather together under a certain tree and watch young boys play soccer in a field. As this process continues, the space under the tree will become understood as a “girl’s space” and the soccer field will become understood as a “boy’s space”. But public space should belong to everyone and everyone should have a right to use it. All genders should feel safe and free to use the soccer field just as everyone should feel free to sit under the tree.

Women are more likely to express greater fears for their personal safety in urban open environments (and parks are a prime example) than do men. A space that is untended, appears to be abandoned, is riddled with graffiti, is dark or has areas that are not visually permeable will impact how people choose to use or not use the space. Women in particular may choose not to use public space both in the day but more so at night because they fear for their safety. In effect, this reduces the amount of public open space available to women and girls.

It is important that everyone regardless of gender, sexual orientation, age, culture, socioeconomic conditions, dis/ability, etc. has a right to enjoy open space. Design of Darebin’s public open space must reflect this in partnership with registered Aboriginal parties and the Darebin Aboriginal Advisory Council (DAAC).

Council recognises that gender is not binary – and that people who are transgender or gender-non-conforming experience added barriers and discrimination.

7.2 Objective 2:

Recognise local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities, particularly traditional owners

The Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people, traditional owners and custodians of the land and waters now called Darebin, have lived here for thousands of years. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people more generally have maintained a strong physical and cultural presence in Darebin in the face of displacement, disenfranchisement and policies of assimilation. Meaningfully engaging with the traditional custodians and local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities regarding the naming, planning and design of open spaces is a step towards recognition. Respecting Aboriginal cultural rights (as posited in section 19(2) of the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities) is also crucial.

Strategies

- S2.1** Meaningfully engage with traditional owners and local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the naming, planning and design phases of open space provision.

Actions

Identify priorities and actions for open space in Darebin in partnership with Registered Aboriginal Parties and the Darebin Aboriginal Advisory Council (DAAC). This could potentially include:

- A2.1** Naming at least 50% of new public open spaces for significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, figures, symbols or items, with particular attention to Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people as the Traditional Owners
- A2.2** Engaging with Registered Aboriginal Parties when creating strategies and master plans on culturally significant land
- A2.3** Designing public open spaces and streetscapes to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage
- A2.4** Further developing existing and new Aboriginal tourism experiences including the Spiritual and Healing Trail, Merri Creek, the Koori Mural, the site where the Batman “Treaty” was first “signed”, and contemporary experiences, in consultation with Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung elders and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders particularly DAAC.

7.3 Objective 3:

Designing for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities

Open spaces are natural equalisers – something we all have in common – and present an opportunity to reflect the diversity of Darebin's residents. Open spaces will be designed and programmed to be welcoming, inclusive and safe places for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities. This goes beyond taking steps to increase the equity in the quality and quantity of open spaces throughout the municipality. It intends to strengthen and reflect the cultural identities of the community and create opportunities for meaningful interaction across all ethnic and cultural backgrounds, for the Darebin population both new and old.

All residents, from newly arrived migrant families to families that have called Darebin home for many generations, should feel safe, welcome and included in their public open spaces including streets, parks and urban spaces.

Strategies

- S3.1** Consider diversity and CALD users when designing open spaces through meaningful engagement and understanding how different cultural and ethnic groups use, navigate and interpret open spaces.
- S3.2** Design public open spaces that are welcoming, safe and easy to access.
- S3.3** Engage thoroughly and equitably on improvements and changes to public open space with specific emphasis on understanding and incorporating the needs of CALD communities.

Actions

- A3.1** Undertake research to identify and understand the cultural and linguistic groups surrounding areas of open space being considered for improvements, and ensure engagement activities to plan these improvements reach these groups.
- A3.2** Name at least 25% of new public open spaces for significant members, figures, symbols, items or terms of CALD communities.
- A3.3** Work with the University of Melbourne's Designing for Difference program to deliver a pilot project which addresses the intersections of cultural and ethnic difference in public space and the development of design and policy toolkits to optimise diverse public space use.
- A3.4** Create and implement strategies around best practice engagement with CALD communities.
- A3.5** Include a reflection of the cultural make up of an area in all master planning and open space design.
- A3.6** Ensure that wayfinding signage is clear and usable to individuals of CALD backgrounds. This can mean translation information, infographics or easily understood icons.
- A3.7** Include a variety of seating and gathering area types, layouts and configurations in designs and upgrades to open spaces to allow for CALD communities to choose the areas that most appeal to them. These areas should be identified through inclusive engagement.
- A3.8** Identify universal activities like play and exercise, and design for diversity in these spaces to appeal to a wide user base.
- A3.9** Ensure that community engagement is done in Darebin's top languages inclusive of print materials and translation services for all District and Regional major park upgrades.
- A3.10** Celebrate diversity in open space by programming open spaces to reflect the community's unique make-up. This can include art, music, food, storytelling or celebrating culturally significant dates.

7.4 Objective 4:

Reflect diverse needs

Darebin is an inclusive community, and all residents are entitled to open spaces they can safely access and that meet their needs. This includes residents with a disability, elderly people, children and young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, women, LGBTIQ people, as well as homeless people. Delivering an open space network that reflects the breadth of the Darebin community also requires meaningful engagement with the community in the planning, maintenance and design of open space.

Strategies

- S4.1** Engage with users, residents and community groups to help inform the design, planning and management of open space with particular emphasis on diverse communities.
- S4.2** Enhance women's visibility and representation in open space.

Actions

- A4.1** When planning and designing new and upgraded open space, include safe and equitable access for all residents, particularly those with a disability, older people, children and young people and gender diverse residents.
- A4.2** When planning and designing new and upgraded open space, utilise Principles of Universal Design, the World Health Organisation's Age Friendly Cities Framework and all relevant Australian Standards regarding accessibility.
- A4.3** A safety and gender-based audit should be conducted where possible engaging a user based community group to assist in the design and planning of equitable open spaces.
- A4.4** Develop an intergenerational playspace with equipment, activities and amenities specifically targeted at all ages in an area of high population density.
- A4.5** Incorporate a purpose built space or area for youth in all upgrades to district and regional parks. This space will be gender inclusive and include a youth focused consultation process to understand what infrastructure the user groups need.
- A4.6** Update the Civic Recognition Policy to ensure the contributions of diverse individuals in the municipality are reflected in the names of Council assets, open spaces and memorials.
- A4.7** Achieve gender parity in the naming of open spaces as quickly as possible over the course of this strategy (and beyond) through naming at least 80% of new public open spaces (and renaming existing spaces where appropriate) for significant women.
- A4.8** Reflect the community profile and diversity notably of the contribution of the elderly, children, the LGBTIQ community and people with a disability in the naming of open spaces.
- A4.9** Reflect the community profile and diversity on all community reference groups or advisory committees.

Actions from other plans

Other actions articulated in other plans relevant to this objective:

- Undertake gender-based audit of open spaces in Darebin as outlined in "Safer City for Women" action in Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2021.



7.5 Objective 5:

Provide facilities that make open spaces more appealing and useable by more people

Darebin is an established area experiencing significant population growth, including an increasing number of people living in apartments with limited private open space. Therefore existing open spaces play the role of private open space for many residents. As a result, existing open spaces, and new open spaces need to provide a range of quality facilities to support higher levels of use.

Strategies

- S5.1 Over time, plan and deliver open space improvements where there are gaps in the current level of service/amenity provision.
- S5.2 Reduce the dependency on single use plastic by providing increased access to freely accessible drinking water in open spaces.
- S5.3 Remove barriers to accessing open space through improvements to public toilets, lighting and the path network.
- S5.4 Improve public open spaces to increase tourism particularly in high profile parks and streetscapes.
- S5.5 Increase the provision of rubbish and recycle bin suites in public spaces.

Drinking Fountains

Drinking fountains are important infrastructure in public open spaces. They encourage walking and cycling, and provide equitable access to clean water for people and animals reducing dependency on single use plastic bottles.

Council has committed to increasing the provision of drinking fountains across Darebin's open space network and their installation will be considered in all future open space projects.

Free public Wi-Fi

In a modern society, the internet provides social connectivity, navigation, information and communication for many people. Financial or cultural barriers and homelessness can be barriers for many to have access to the internet which may result in social, employment and educational consequences. To counter this, Darebin will increase the provision of free Wi-Fi hotspots which will be clearly signposted and be associated with accessible public infrastructure such as seating, shade and sealed paths. These hotspots will be clearly identified on maps available both online and through Council's customer service centres.

Safety in open spaces

Council's approach to community safety is from a health and wellbeing perspective and is informed by evidence and best practice in crime prevention research. While Council works across the spectrum of crime prevention to enhance community safety and support the reduction of crime, one of the areas where Council can have the most influence and greatest impact is through Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED).

CPTED is a framework of best practice principles applied to urban design which seeks to reduce the likelihood of crime occurring. This may include increasing passive surveillance, improving lines of sight, activating unused spaces, or defining boundaries between private and public spaces.

Women feel less safe than men in open spaces. There is also evidence that people from a non-English speaking background, young people and adults over 60 are more likely to feel unsafe in open spaces (Darebin Community Survey; Collins 2016). Open spaces will be designed to be gender-sensitive and inclusive.

Lighting upgrades have been shown to sometimes decrease crime and reduce fear of crime. However whole of place upgrades, or upgrades that incorporate CPTED are more effective than lighting upgrades alone. Lighting does not prevent crime in isolation, but may be effective when the purpose is to increase visibility at night, and activate an open space and support natural surveillance.

Actions

- A5.1** Over time, upgrade open spaces in need of safety, quality and amenity improvements.
- A5.2** Install water fountains at key nodes such as trail junctions and key destinations along all major cycling trails and walking paths throughout the municipality including as a priority the Darebin Creek Trail, Merri Creek Trail and St Georges Road Shared Path/Northern Pipe Trail.
- A5.3** Include a water fountain with dog bowl (where appropriate) in the design for public spaces particularly around sports pavilions, playspaces and BBQ areas.
- A5.4** Identify sites in Type A and B parks for the provision of BBQ areas. Priority should be given to parks adjacent to existing high population hubs.
- A5.5** Identify sites in Type A and B parks for the provision of outdoor gym areas/circuits. Priority should be given to parks adjacent to existing high population hubs.
- A5.6** Include provision of rubbish and recycle bin suites in the design for parks and open space.
- A5.7** Create an improvements program to ensure all dog off lead areas have at least one rubbish bin at the entrance to the park closest to the off lead area spots in public open spaces.
- A5.8** Identify locations and install free public Wi-Fi hot spots. Seating, shade, sealed paths and wayfinding signage should accompany the hot spot. Priority should be given to regional parks.
- A5.9** Review and update current maintenance standards for all open spaces.
- A5.10** Review Council's Open Space Asset Management Plan to include a clear table of responsibilities, action plan and service level agreements regarding maintenance.
- A5.11** Design paths to safely accommodate a range of users in terms of surface materials, width and location. Paths should be fit for purpose.
- A5.12** Undertake landscape improvement works to raise the profile, activity offerings and amenities in the Bundoora Park Precinct, All Nations Park, Darebin Parklands, Edwardes Lake, Darebin and Merri Creeks, and major retail precincts.
- A5.13** Create a plan to identify opportunities to partner with businesses and organisations to activate street frontages in retail activity precincts.
- A5.14** Incorporate Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles such as encouraging increased activation, passive surveillance and the thoughtful provision of lighting to increase perceptions of safety.
- A5.15** Adequately maintain all shared paths, footpaths and trails within public open space to be in line with maintenance standards.
- A5.16** Incorporate cycle parking in all park upgrade works where demand exists.
- A5.17** Continue to implement the Joint Community Infrastructure Plan for the La Trobe National Employment and Innovation Cluster.
- A5.18** Improve relationships and co-working with non-council landowners and bordering local government areas to identify opportunities for joint projects.
- A5.19** Continue to implement the Darebin Public Toilet Strategy.
- A5.20** Increase the total percentage of multilayered vegetation and tree canopy cover on public land to 25 per cent by 2028 as identified in the Urban Forest Strategy.
- A5.21** Review the tree canopy cover target to establish a long term target (beyond 2028) and milestones that maximise tree canopy cover and support maximising vegetation cover, taking into consideration:
- The need to create habitat and to layer understorey plantings with trees in an integrated way
 - What is achievable from the point of view of available land, including considering functional uses that necessarily restrict cover (e.g. sports fields)
 - Leading examples from other parts of Melbourne and the world

Actions from other plans

Actions articulated in other plans (Darebin Public Toilet Strategy 2015–25) relevant to this objective:

- Conduct annual physical condition audit to determine renovation, repair or replacement of Darebin's public toilet network.
- Ensure that public toilet facilities are maintained to a high standard of cleanliness and repair.
- Assess provision of public toilets throughout the municipality to determine gaps in the public toilet network. Use this data to inform capital works process.

7.6 Objective 6:

Balance the needs of different users

Population growth and an increasingly diverse community mean that most open spaces must cater to not just one use but many uses. Some uses for open space are not always compatible and require design and management consideration to ensure the best outcomes for the whole community.

Strategies

- S6.1** Provide open spaces, both green and urban, that are accessible, welcoming and multipurpose that accommodate passive, active and contemplative pursuits.
- S6.2** Adequately plan for the provision of dog on and off lead areas in Darebin's open spaces.
- S6.3** Consider all users when designing and maintaining shared paths.
- S6.4** Improve connections for active transport by reducing the number of 'missing links' in the walking and cycling network.
- S6.5** Increase the number of urban food production opportunities.
- S6.6** Include edible trees and vegetation as part of an integrated ecosystem approach to designing parks and open space.
- S6.7** Recognise the importance of productive food plants in addressing climate change, greening the municipality and connecting people to nature.
- S6.8** Activate and revitalise degraded or underutilised public open space through community gardens and other types of community based food growing.

Dogs

As Darebin grows, there will be more pressure on open spaces to be multifaceted and cater for a variety of uses simultaneously including some that may be in conflict. For many dog owners, their pet opens the door to a wealth of activities and provides an outlet for social interaction, encourages people to be more physically active and provides comfort and companionship. On the other hand, some may feel threatened by unleashed dogs in open space and can be fearful for their own or their family's safety. Older people or those with mobility issues may feel particularly vulnerable. Dogs can also be disruptive around roadways, near a shared or cycle path or near a protected or regenerated habitat area.

According to the Domestic Animals Act, dogs are required to be on lead unless council has identified an area as being a dog off lead area. At present, Darebin has 36 designated dog off lead areas within parks and reserves. These areas are identified through signage and on Council's website.

Where user conflict exists in a dog off lead area, Council will facilitate the community to identify a code of conduct for park users that specifically addresses dog behaviour. These types of codes of conduct are most adhered to where members of the community feel a sense of responsibility to each other, particularly given the limits to how far these behaviours can be policed by Council or any other agency.

Dog off lead principles

Some parks or areas within parks are not suitable for dogs to be off lead including:

- Where the area is within 10m of cycling paths, 20m of playspace or a shared path, or 30 meters of a BBQ area. If there is not enough space in a park for this to occur, dogs should be on lead.
- Where there is significant cultural, biodiversity or habitat value.
- In environmentally significant areas along the Darebin, Merri or Edgars Creek ecosystems unless specifically signed.
- While formal active sport is in session.

Actions

- A6.1** Identify opportunities that enable diversification of public space types to meet the needs of a diverse community within a growing urban setting.
- A6.2** Create a plan to ensure equitable access is provided across streetscapes and open spaces through a connected path network, provision of disabled parking and clear wayfinding for all users over time.
- A6.3** Explore the opportunity to provide designated times of day for dogs to be off-lead, to ensure Darebin's space is accessible to multiple users.
- A6.4** Review the provision of dog on and off lead areas in parks across the municipality to determine suitability of existing network in consultation with community and in line with the dog off lead principles.
- A6.5** Undertake a review of signs in all dog off lead areas to ensure it is correct and clear.
- A6.6** Ensure that all dog off lead areas are clearly identified in Council's website.
- A6.7** Consider separating uses which can conflict with cycling as part of the design process.
- A6.8** Consider adding cycling links through key open spaces, where it can improve the network of off road cycling paths.
- A6.9** Where public open space connects to or is directly adjacent to the Principal Pedestrian Network (PPN), prioritise pedestrian connections from the open space to the PPN and identify opportunities for improved crossing facilities.
- A6.10** Develop a register of 'missing links' of existing paths and trails within existing public open spaces (e.g. based on customer requests, clearly identified desire lines, etc).
- A6.11** Develop a method of prioritising missing links for further design investigation/delivery.
- A6.12** Implement wayfinding signage and user etiquette messaging along shared paths over time.
- A6.13** For shared paths within open space, develop a level of service, which includes elements such as path/pavement width and construction material, linked to the function of the open space and intended use of the path.
- A6.14** Design new and upgraded paths as low-stress environments for all path users, and where high volume travel is expected, consider separation of pedestrians and cyclists.
- A6.15** Create a species palette of hardy plants including perennial productive food plants.
- A6.16** Consult with the Aboriginal community regarding opportunities and concepts for growing indigenous foods.
- A6.17** Identify opportunities to collaborate with community groups on urban food production projects, including mentoring programs.
- A6.18** Continue to implement actions from the Darebin GreenStreets Streetscape Strategy and Urban Food Production Strategy.

Actions from other plans

Actions articulated in other plans (Darebin Walking Strategy, 2018-2028) relevant to this objective:

- Deliver a connected walking network.
- Provide lighting and opportunities for passive surveillance on walking and cycling paths along the Principal Pedestrian Network PPN as appropriate.
- Provide facilities which encourage cycling.

7.7 Objective 7:

Make all open spaces multi-use

Activating open spaces through making them multi-use has many benefits including increasing passive surveillance, providing a drawcard for people to gather, increasing the chance that they will make social connections, and increasing physical activity.

Strategies

- S7.1** Activate retail streetscapes and open spaces to help support and enhance local businesses.
- S7.2** Seek opportunities to partner with schools and other private land owners to provide increased access to open space.
- S7.3** Limit the number of single-use public open spaces.
- S7.4** Ensure some open spaces remain 'wild' to provide users with the experience of nature in the city.
- S7.5** Incorporate a variety of vegetation types and species in open spaces to provide for multiple uses including human comfort and habitat.

Actions

- A7.1** Use vacant sites and other temporary spaces for pop ups as a tool for consultation or space for public art.
- A7.2** Test goods and services associated with open space through a social procurement rating with preference given to local providers and social enterprises.

- A7.3** Identify parcels of land owned by schools, government bodies and private land owners and develop partnerships with their owners to increase access to open space.
- A7.4** Minimise the fencing of public open spaces.
- A7.5** Use planting and other well placed barriers as boundaries to playspaces. Sections of fencing for playspaces may be considered along busy roads.
- A7.6** Make sporting grounds available for public use when games or training sessions are not in session.
- A7.7** Identify priorities for 'wild spaces' that conserve natural character and habitat.
- A7.8** Incorporate bushland or 'wild' spaces in designs for park upgrades.
- A7.9** Increase seating, tree planting for shade and drinking fountains in retail streets to increase amenity and activation of the spaces.
- A7.10** Select a variety of tree species to provide for multiple uses including shade, habitat and urban cooling.

Partnerships with local businesses

One way to activate public space while encouraging the local economy is to support businesses to expand their service space into the public realm, or set up as a mobile premises such as at markets, food vans and other creative business opportunities.

As part of a campaign to activate retail streetscapes and open spaces, Council will investigate innovative ways to work with businesses/organisations that have a street frontage to help create and enhance Council's Green Streets vision and actions. Many businesses have street frontage and underused open space at the front of their businesses. Opportunities to consider are a street fair or market; planter boxes installed by Council and maintained by local businesses; permanent or temporary pause points or seating nodes in underutilised parking spaces or parcels of land or increased tree planting in retail strips.

Partnerships with schools

Increasing access to non-Council owned public open space is a way to immediately and cost-effectively add more public open space into the usable network for Darebin's community. Depending on the site and community need, this could include developing a playspace or building a community garden on Department of Education land that is jointly used by the school and the Darebin community outside of school hours. In each case, Council, the school and the community should all come together to develop, build, fund and maintain the space.

7.8 Objective 8:

Make open spaces places for expression and art

Public open spaces inclusive of streetscapes and parks should be places where Darebin's diverse community can come together to freely and safely express themselves, whether it be through a gathering, performance, protest or physical work of artful expression. Art is a form of expression that both reflects and unites cultural groups and can foster feelings of community and connectedness.

Strategies

- S8.1** Utilise Darebin's parks and gardens, natural heritage assets, tracks and trails for public art and expression.
- S8.2** Increase the amount of art and places for expression in Darebin's public open spaces.

Public Art

Public open spaces should be places where expression is supported and encouraged. Public art and artful objects (seats, signs, cycle hoops etcetera created by artists) should be designed into parks and streetscapes. Un-programmed gathering spaces should accommodate public meetings and community engagement should be varied and creative. Local artists, children and cultural leaders should be part of the consultation process to identify and commission works of art in public spaces.

Action:

- A8.1** Commission works of public art from local artists in Darebin's streetscapes and parks as part of a consultative design process.
- A8.2** Use public art as a placemaking tool to create iconic places within Darebin.
- A8.3** Use art as a consultation tool when designing for open spaces.
- A8.4** Develop the following precinct plans (refer Table 5):
- A premier arts precinct at Darebin Arts Centre including Ray Bramham Gardens.
 - A premier arts precincts at Northcote Town Hall and Bundoora Homestead.
 - A landscape upgrade plan for Northcote Town Hall including Civic Square.
 - A landscape plan for premier events spaces at Edwardes Lake Park, All Nations Park, Ray Bramham Gardens and TW Blake Reserve.
- A8.5** Create a booking policy inclusive of a fees and charges schedule for all arts facilities, sites and places.

Table 5: Arts precincts and policies

Precinct/policy	Plan content
Darebin Arts Centre including Ray Bramham Gardens	A conscious focus on all aspect of the arts including performance spaces, display spaces, affordable housing and access to public transport. This plan should include a landscape upgrade plan for Ray Bramham Gardens as well as a clear plan outlining how the built form will reflect support for the arts.
Bundoora Homestead	Ways to integrate the Homestead into the adjacent parkland with performance and display spaces purpose built to support a variety of uses in line with the Bundoora Park Master Plan.
Northcote Town Hall	How to integrate the building and outdoor spaces into the streetscape of High Street Northcote to allow for multipurpose indoor/outdoor use of the forecourt and interior spaces.
Booking policy	Costs and allowable usage for spaces within arts precincts and premier events sites as well as conditions for the use of spaces and consequences for damage to a site's landscape or infrastructure (Darebin Arts).

Key Direction 2: Rewilding Darebin: improving biodiversity



8.1 Objective 9:

Increase appreciation for biodiversity

Increasing appreciation of and respect for urban biodiversity, ecosystems and natural heritage will lead to greater community support, awareness and commitment to biodiversity protection. This can be achieved by providing opportunities for children and adults to engage with nature and providing biodiversity education and training opportunities.

Nature Play

As the desire for children to experience nature in the city becomes more prevalent, current conservation parkland and conservation bushland sites will be put under increased pressure. The development of nature play areas in open spaces will bring this experience to a greater number of young people.

These nature play areas should have a natural character but should not be located in areas of natural significance so as to prevent over-use and damage of ecologically significant vegetation.

Vegetation Cover

A core focus of improving biodiversity in Darebin is to increase the quantity and quality of indigenous multilayered and diverse vegetation cover. Expanding the lower, mid and upper vegetation layers will extend habitat and provide greater connectivity.

Strategies

- S9.1** Improve understanding of biodiversity across Council and the community.
- S9.2** Utilise advocacy and education to engage the community and permit improved co-existence with Darebin's natural heritage, flora and fauna.
- S9.3** Increase the opportunities for children to engage with nature.
- S9.4** Deliver a whole of ecosystem approach to biodiversity recognising the importance of diverse urban ecosystems.
- S9.5** Increase prevalence of indigenous plantings in all revegetation sites in Darebin

Actions

- A9.1** In open space designs, include areas of indigenous plantings to increase contact with nature.
- A9.2** Deliver education and training initiatives to Council and community focussed on increasing understanding of biodiversity values.
- A9.3** Join the Gardens for Wildlife program.
- A9.4** Increase the provision of purpose built nature play and bush kinder areas throughout the municipality.
- A9.5** Develop community science projects to engage and educate the community and to foster custodianship.
- A9.6** Develop nature play guidelines

8.2 Objective 10:

Protect local species

Darebin is an urban ecosystem, and all public open space has the opportunity to enhance biodiversity. This may be accomplished through protecting and maintaining existing biodiversity areas, planting indigenous plant species in open spaces, streetscapes and water sensitive urban designs, and rewilding open spaces. Increasing the size of existing biodiversity assets through targeted land acquisitions will also increase their quality and richness.

A central challenge of Darebin's open space is its limited vegetation cover and lack of habitat for biodiverse species. Significant resource and effort is required to rebuild this loss of habitat through revegetation across the city.

Strategies

- S10.1** Increase biodiversity in Darebin.
- S10.2** Improve land management practices, particularly in relation to revegetation and habitat creation.
- S10.3** Minimise requirements for ongoing maintenance including weed management including a reduction of chemical usage.
- S10.4** Increase multilayered vegetation cover inclusive of trees, shrubs, climbers and groundcovers.
- S10.5** Consideration for and decision making about biodiversity protection and enhancement must be integrated across council.
- S10.6** Protect and improve sites with high or important biodiversity values.
- S10.7** Maintain and improve the quality and extent of indigenous vegetation, flora and fauna (including vertebrates and invertebrates).
- S10.8** Increase uninterrupted larger areas of biodiversity through acquisition of strategic connections.
- S10.9** All new land acquired by Council for open spaces must contribute to increasing biodiversity in Darebin.
- S10.10** Place the needs of natural ecosystems and managing climate change at equal prominence with the needs of the community.
- S10.11** Work towards no local extinctions of indigenous flora and fauna (including vertebrates and invertebrates).
- S10.12** Provide increased habitat extent and protection for bees and insects.
- S10.13** Increase use of indigenous plant species within open spaces and streetscapes and water sensitive urban design.
- S10.14** Maintain some places within Darebin as 'wild' spaces with areas identified for conservation.
- S10.15** Improve relationships and co-working with non-council landowners and bordering

local government areas to enhance habitat connectivity and biodiversity beyond Darebin's borders.

S10.16 Recognise a reduction in rainfall due to climate change as a threat to biodiversity.

S10.17 Increase the prevalence of water sensitive design across the municipality.

Actions

- A10.1** Conduct a biodiversity survey and develop a Biodiversity Management Plan (refer break out box on page 60) which identifies a street tree and open space plant palette.
- A10.2** As part of the implementation of the Biodiversity Management Plan, develop an action plan which covers all relevant activities of Council to ensure integrated planning, and identifies priorities for protection of biodiversity sites.
- A10.3** Undertake a Vegetation Assessment to understand the quantity, quality, extent, location and habitat value of existing vegetation in open spaces.
- A10.4** Develop revegetation priorities for strengthening existing habitats and filling gaps in habitat corridors as a priority action.
- A10.5** Use local provenance indigenous species in all revegetation sites, and increase biodiverse plantings.
- A10.6** Include nesting boxes, logs, rocks and water sources in parks and open spaces to increase habitat value.
- A10.7** When designing open spaces consider the impact of infrastructure such as lighting and paths to indigenous flora and fauna.
- A10.8** Prioritise conservation and enhancement of sites with remnant biodiversity values.
- A10.9** Develop and implement a land management plan over time.
- A10.10** Investigate other resourcing arrangements (capital and recurrent) in relation to indigenous vegetation cover.
- A10.11** Hire a biodiversity officer.
- A10.12** Select key species to preserve and protect following a review of the existing flora and fauna audit as a key action of the Biodiversity Management Plan (see page 60).
- A10.13** Habitat for bees and insects should be reflected in designs for open spaces and considered in land management practices including stepping stones and hotels.
- A10.14** Prioritise the acquisition of biodiverse remnant sites.
- A10.15** When planting indigenous vegetation, use

plants of local provenance wherever possible.

- A10.16** Limit unchecked access of domestic animals and unmanaged spread of introduced species.
- A10.17** Minimise requirements for ongoing maintenance including weed management through good design, reduction in edges and effective use of surface materials.
- A10.18** Increase investment for remnant site management, revegetation programs and weed control guided by the following order of site priority as per the Natural Heritage Strategy:
- Remnant vegetation sites of national and state significance.
 - Remnant vegetation sites of regional and local significance.
 - Revegetated sites.
 - Degraded sites, noting that additional resources for ongoing maintenance would also be required.
- A10.19** Where water quality can be improved (especially along waterways), reintroduce fauna species through habitat creation to form more permanent populations.
- A10.20** Use smaller areas of open space as building blocks towards connectivity, especially where there is re-introduction of indigenous vegetation.
- A10.21** Actively engage non-council landowners and bordering local government areas to identify joint projects that enhance habitat connectivity and biodiversity beyond Darebin's borders.
- A10.22** Set out a buffer of 100m from creeks. In these locations, ensure that indigenous vegetation is used in new developments and encourage its use in existing situations with the exception of productive gardens in a contained environment.
- A10.23** Create a Strategic Land Acquisition Plan that contains a decision making framework to guide selection of open space for biodiversity referencing section 6.4 of this strategy.
- A10.24** Decrease dependency on potable water for landscape maintenance through increased use of recycled water and stormwater as well as appropriate species selection and management as a response to declining rainfall.
- A10.25** Reduce amount of exposed hard surfaces through an increase in multilayered vegetation and canopy cover.
- A10.26** Continue to implement and maintain WSUD throughout the municipality including wetlands, swales and detention systems as a response to declining rainfall.
- A10.27** Investigate a developer contribution scheme

for off-site stormwater management on council land in lieu of providing a stormwater management system on private land for sites that must meet planning scheme requirements for WSUD and integrated water management.

Actions from other plans

Actions articulated in other plans (Natural Heritage Strategy, 2017) relevant to this objective:

- Create participatory programs like Open Indigenous Gardens to encourage local heroes to open their gardens to the community.
- Create an indigenous botanic showcase garden to physically illustrate the types of planting methods and ways that indigenous plants can be used in backyard gardens.
- Create a program to harness the power of citizen science and encourage community engagement with indigenous ecosystems.
- Undertake or update a detailed flora and fauna audit or study to understand what the protected or target for return species are in Darebin.
- Actively engage non-council landowners and bordering local government areas to create yearly actions to enhance habitat connectivity and biodiversity beyond Darebin's borders.

Biodiversity Management Plan

Proposed scope

As a preliminary step to a Biodiversity Management Plan, and using the Darebin Natural Heritage Plan, commission a specialist ecologist to conduct a flora and fauna biodiversity survey in Darebin to identify:

- Areas of high biodiversity value to protect.
- Threatened remnant sites suited to acquisition.
- 'At risk' or key species to prioritise for protection in No Local Extinctions Policy
- Management and maintenance practices to protect and enhance biodiversity on Council land, including recommendations for specific sites.
- Priority areas for revegetation and restoration.
- Approaches to managing threats to biodiversity.
- Planning controls that could be implemented to protect biodiversity.

The Biodiversity Management Plan will also:

- Build on the principles of the Darebin Natural Heritage Strategy 2015–2025, Darebin Heritage Study (2011) and Darebin Natural Heritage Plan (2011) and use the data protocols, database, and data used in the Darebin Natural Heritage Plan.
- Direct and inform street and park tree selection.
- Identify and develop initiatives to work with stakeholders (e.g. private landholders) to move towards a more holistic landscape management approach.
- Identify cross council working groups to ensure biodiversity outcomes are considered in planning, management and upgrade of all Council assets.
- Include a comprehensive and integrated plan to guide open space acquisition and management programs and ensure biodiversity has linkages to the multiple other assets and interests under council's management (e.g. open space; streetscapes, street trees and nature strips; roads; drainage; stormwater and integrated water management; recreation and more).



8.3 Objective 11:

Engage the community as partners

in biodiversity protection

Residential gardens, commercially owned land and school and university grounds take up large tracts of Darebin. They represent a major opportunity to enhance and protect biodiversity. Council can provide support for the local community and land owners in becoming stewards, planting indigenous trees and vegetation, strengthening habitat corridors and increasing multilayered vegetation and tree canopy cover.

Strategy

- S11.1 Support the community to plant indigenous vegetation and get involved in preserving, protecting and enhancing their open space.
- S11.2 Create opportunities for the community to engage and participate in the design, planning and use of their open spaces.
- S11.3 Encourage stewardship to develop the community's sense of connection to, and protection of, their local open space.

Actions

- A11.1 Create a program where Council subsidises planting of indigenous gardens and trees on school grounds and private land.
- A11.2 Continue to provide community planting days.
- A11.3 Engage with community and advisory groups in the planning and design of biodiverse open space.
- A11.4 Commit resources to support the founding, development, programming and longevity of community stewards to identify local projects, 'get their hands dirty' and make a positive change locally.
- A11.5 Work with communities who want to increase the open space on their streets. This could include removal of on street parking of a lane of travel and upgrading nature strips.
- A11.6 Use all forms of art as a way to activate open spaces, create a sense of connection to place and as an education tool.
- A11.7 Engage the community in citizen science activities such as monitoring local species.

Biodiversity planning

An integrated approach to planning for biodiversity is required, given flora and fauna species do not recognise anthropogenic or man made boundaries in the landscape.

Darebin has a varied distribution of biodiversity values from remnant vegetation (in areas such as Bundoora Park and along the Darebin Creek) to landscapes dominated by exotic plant species. Acquisition of sites is one important response to improve biodiversity values and sound, skilled and well-informed management of biodiversity sites and values within open space is imperative to their retention and re-creation.

While it will mean different things for different species, (e.g., connectivity for flying vs non-flying species, under/over-road passes or reintroductions might be necessary for some species), overall and in principle, resilience of biodiversity will be improved by increasing habitat area, connectivity and vegetation cover and quality.

When planning for biodiversity:

- It is easier to maintain a remnant than to restore it and available remnants should be protected and such land brought into public ownership wherever possible.
- Water availability and water quality are both critical to sustaining biodiversity.
- Indigenous vegetation is most likely to increase

biodiversity (compared with native or exotic).

- Uninterrupted connectivity between larger areas of biodiversity is a long-term objective and ideal, but in the meantime smaller areas of open space can have an important role as building blocks towards connectivity, especially where there is re-introduction of indigenous vegetation.
- Sound, skilled and well-informed management of biodiversity sites and values within open space is imperative to their retention and re-creation.
- Acquisition of sites is one important response to improve biodiversity values across open space.

Management of biodiversity has not traditionally been a core function of local government and the activities that do exist have been inadequately funded. There are however opportunities for local government to increase biodiversity and improve management of biodiversity resources.

Darebin Nature Strip Planting Guidelines

Darebin Council encourages and promotes residents to plant and beautify their nature strips. Search Council's website for helpful tips and suggestions regarding planting your nature strip.

8.4 Objective 12:

Make indigenous bushland character the default choice

As part of a commitment to biodiversity and responding to the climate emergency, the default landscape of Darebin is recognised as indigenous bushland or grassland.

This challenges the status quo where turf and ornamental trees are the default and parks are primarily for recreation. Instead, the strategy refocusses open space planning on the natural environment, where bushland is the default choice of character. Well-designed open space has endless potential to compatibly accommodate indigenous vegetation alongside numerous other functions such as recreation, sport, urban food production and play. Increasing the prevalence and size of landscape with a bushland character will contribute to increasing biodiversity as it will provide more habitat for indigenous flora and fauna.

Indigenous plantings fulfil all the same functions as non-indigenous plantings in a variety of contexts: hedging, formal settings, sports field edging, lawns, canopy cover, etc. and should be considered first in all of these contexts.

Strategy

S12.1 Plan new and upgraded open spaces as partially or wholly indigenous bushland or grassland, unless a clear demand for alternative uses is established.

Actions

A12.1 Consider indigenous vegetation ahead of native or exotic vegetation to improve complexity and recover biodiversity, including in water sensitive urban design treatments.

A12.2 Increase the use of indigenous vegetation when planning new open spaces.

A12.3 Cease mowing of areas known to comprise remnant indigenous vegetation to allow regeneration while reducing Council's reliance on fossil fuel.

Key Direction 3: Creating a Green Streets Network



9.1 Objective 13:

Develop a network of green streets in Darebin

Breathing Space: The Darebin Open Space Strategy combines the intent and vision of the Greenstreets Streetscape Strategy and the Darebin Walking Strategy's Principal Pedestrian Network (PPN) to create a series of green links connecting Darebin's public open space, pedestrian/cycling corridors and biodiversity. The Green Streets Network is the result.

The network will increase access to open space, cool the city, foster sustainable transport use and enhance habitat connectivity and ecological resilience.

Strategies

S13.1 Create a Green Streets Network.

S13.2 Increase multilayered vegetation and tree canopy cover on public land as per A5.20.

Actions

A13.1 Identify the priority streets and develop a delivery plan for the Green Streets Network using the:

- Darebin GreenStreets Streetscape Strategy.
- Darebin Walking Strategy.
- Darebin Natural Heritage Strategy.
- Watershed: Towards a Water Sensitive Darebin.
- Proposed biodiversity strategy.

A13.2 Ensure a minimum of 25 per cent of land is planned to be covered by multilayered vegetation and tree canopy.

A13.3 Seek opportunities to put power lines underground as part of public or private development works.

A13.4 In consultation with council advisory committees, create a list of preferred trees and plants to be used in the Green Streets Network which prioritise shade provision, and include indigenous and drought tolerant tree and plant species.

A13.5 Increase the biodiversity value of streets through

the use of multi-layered, local provenance indigenous species in the green streets network

A13.6 Plant the largest tree possible.

A13.7 Prioritise infill planting on the Principle Pedestrian Network.

A13.8 Audit existing water sensitive urban design projects for effectiveness and use lessons learnt to improve future projects.

A13.9 Improve water quality in creeks and water bodies through increased use of WSUD on streets.

A13.10 Employ passive irrigation measures to water 50 per cent of street trees planted.

A13.11 When designing the Green Streets Network, focus on sustainable technology, skills and actions.

A13.12 Increase urban food production through fruiting trees in streetscapes and open space upgrades.

Actions from other plans

The Council Plan 2017–2021 provides an overall strategic direction for Darebin. It includes:

- Increase our tree canopy and urban forest to make Darebin a city in the trees.
- Grow urban forest by 7,600 trees to increase tree coverage on public land by 25 per cent (a goal in Greenstreets Streetscape Strategy and Darebin Urban Forest Strategy).
- Install rain gardens/water sensitive urban devices to improve the condition of our waterways.

Primary elements of a green streets network include:

- Continuous canopy cover for shade
- Extensive garden beds
- Habitat creation through use of a variety of types and layers of indigenous vegetation
- Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) and passive irrigation
- Footpaths that are at a minimum 1.8m wide
- Street reconfigurations to allocate more space for people and vegetation
- Underground powerlines where feasible
- Safe crossing points such as kerb outstands and raised crossing points to minimise conflict between different road users
- Space for multiple modes of transport particularly active transport
- Directional and wayfinding signage
- Pause points at strategic locations to include seating, drinking water, rubbish bins

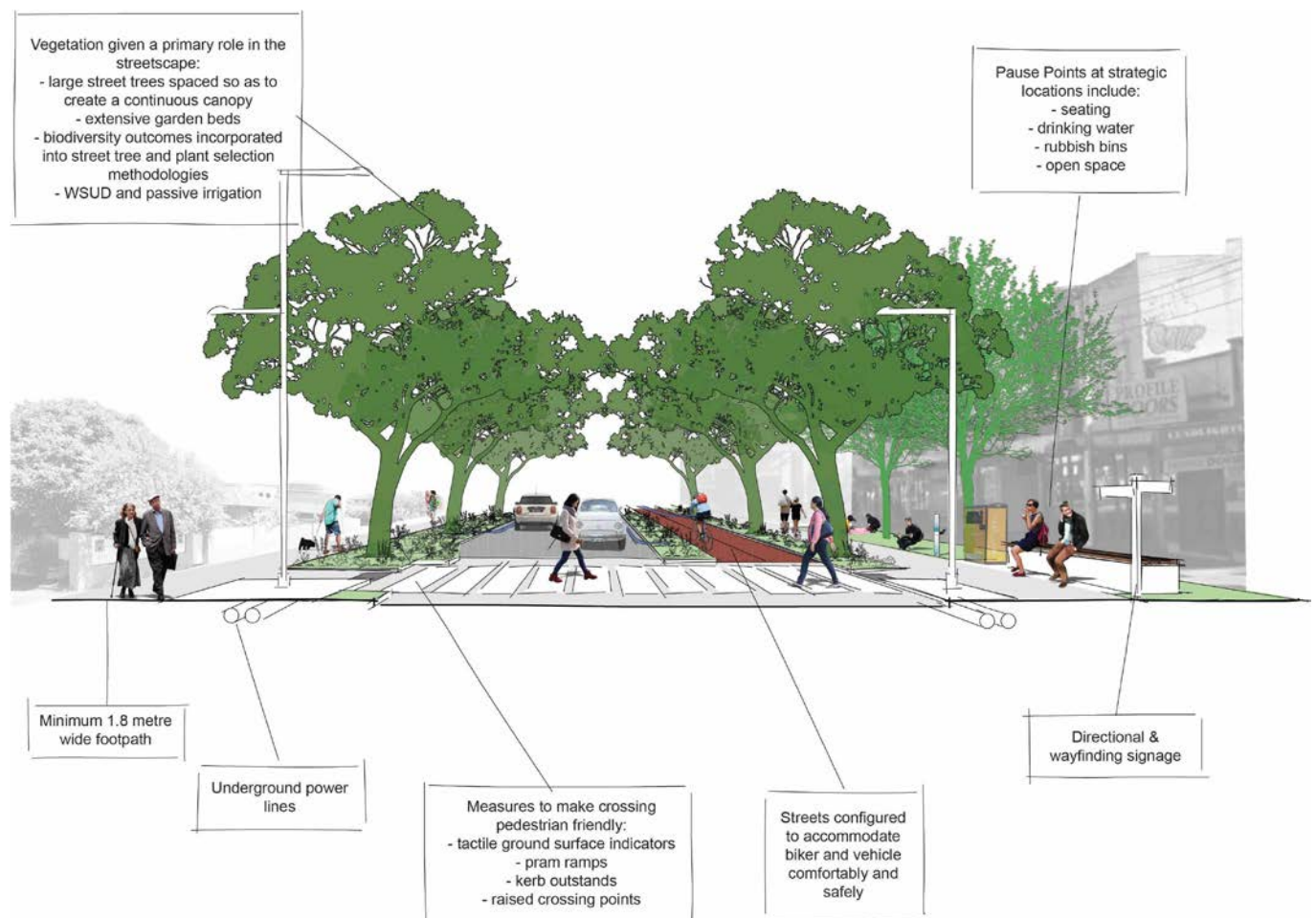
The long-term goal is a network of streets that are accessible, increase active transport and improve biodiversity as illustrated in Figure 15.

Urban hotspots

Many parts of Darebin have limited tree canopy cover, and these areas are more vulnerable to climate change. Key urban spots (areas that are notably hotter than others) include buildings which have expansive roofs that reflect not absorb heat: for example Northcote Plaza, Darebin International Sports Centre, Latrobe Retirement Village, Preston Market, Bundoora Extended Care Centre, Melbourne Water Reservoir and Reservoir industrial area. While the strategy cannot address roof treatments on private property, it can prioritise increasing tree canopy cover in these areas.

The condition of grass and turf in exposed areas appears to have a substantial impact on surface temperature, with areas of dead grass and turf having very high surface temperatures (often higher than adjacent paved areas), for example at Bundoora Park Farm.

Figure 15: Primary elements of a green streets network



9.2 Objective 14:

Enable walking and cycling

Darebin City Council recognises that a quality walking and cycling environment is critical to the success of a sustainable, functional and liveable place. This environment aims to promote and facilitate walking and cycling for a range of outcomes, including leisure and recreation, physical activity and wellbeing, social interaction, economic gain, improved community participation in public spaces, and transport.

To ensure that public open spaces are available and are appropriately designed for all of Darebin's broad community, it is fundamental to ensure that such infrastructure caters for the most vulnerable members of our community including older people, children, and people with reduced mobility.

Strategies

- S14.1** Increase use of active and sustainable transport
- S14.2** Apply the principles from The GreenStreets Streetscape Strategy, The Darebin Walking Strategy and the Streets for People Strategy in delivering the Green Streets Network.
- S14.3** Continue to invest in the Streets for People Program.
- S14.4** Ensure that public open spaces are accessible and all users are considered in the design.
- S14.5** Improve access and safety across Darebin's creek trails and shared paths.

Actions

- A14.1** Increase the use of sustainable and active transport through the design and implementation of the Green Streets Network.
- A14.2** Enhance bicycle links through the creation of on and off road trails, additional bike racks and improved bicycling connections at intersections.
- A14.3** Ensure clear delineation of spaces for pedestrians, cyclists and drivers including clear line marking.
- A14.4** Increase standard of maintenance on walking and cycling paths.
- A14.5** Increase the number of safe crossings across Darebin's creeks to ensure a cohesive and integrated network for cyclists and pedestrians.
- A14.6** Improve passive surveillance along shared paths particularly creek trails through rear interface treatments.

Build best practice



10.1 Objective 15:**Build best practice across Council,
the community and public asset owners**

Realising the actions of this strategy will require careful and considered collaboration between Council, the community and public asset owners.

Internally, Council teams have come together to identify the challenges and opportunities of the strategy and own its implementation across multiple areas of Council's work.

Council teams will continue to work together using a place-based approach to take advantage of opportunities created through co-located capital projects or upgrades. Further, staff in key areas including transport, bushland, environment, engineering, design, capital works and maintenance must have the appropriate skills and expertise. This will result in the strategy's key directions, objectives, strategies and actions being implemented while responding to the climate emergency.

Relationships and partnerships with non-council stakeholders including schools, VicTrack, VicRoads and Melbourne Water must be built and managed to create a holistic approach to land management in Darebin. The outcomes of this strategy should be encouraged in all open spaces in Darebin to maximise its impact such as landscaping along railway corridors.

Strategies

- S15.1** Ensure Council staff are appropriately trained to deliver the three key directions of the strategy.
- S15.2** Create an environment for Council staff to work collaboratively across teams using a place-based approach.
- S15.3** Create and manage collaborative and productive relationships with community as well as non-council land and asset owners.

Actions

- A15.1** Provide relevant training to all teams whose work plan includes delivery of actions in the strategy.
- A15.2** Build capacity within Council for design, review, auditing and maintenance of green infrastructure including water sensitive urban design, passive irrigation as well as the management and regeneration of biodiverse landscapes through training opportunities.
- A15.3** Provide time for collaborative working across teams responsible for delivering the strategy.
- A15.4** Develop and maintain working relationships with entities like VicTrack, Vic Roads, Melbourne Water, schools and private land owners and advocate for the strategy's vision, objectives and goals on their land.
- A15.5** Distribute Breathing Space: The Darebin Open Space Strategy to all large land owners to maximise its impact across the municipality.

Open space precinct summaries



11.1 Darebin's precincts

This section provides an overview of each open space precinct in Darebin (see Figure 16). It includes a discussion on the character of each precinct, including housing density and the provision of open space. It also describes existing and projected population growth, and assesses access to open space. These precincts are not meant to define how open space is used or the role it plays, instead they are intended to divide the municipality into manageable areas for the purpose of reference and planning.

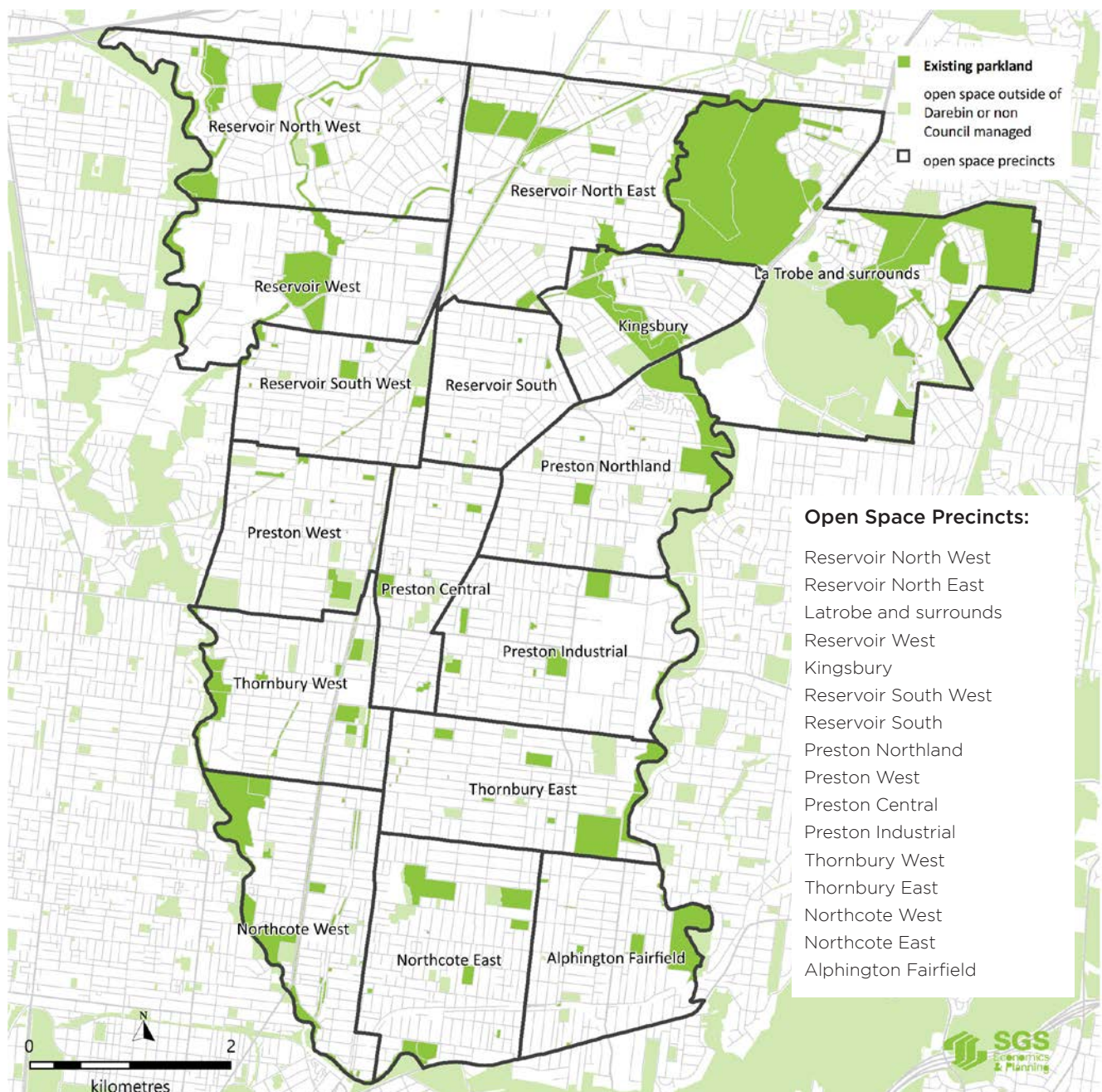
Based on the population densities around local and district open spaces, a type (level of amenity) is recommended. The recommended type will provide guidance on upgrades and improvements to open space, however site specific assessments for open spaces will be required to confirm the level of amenity that is suitable.

For example a small linear local park that is recommended as type A and used as a walking and cycling connection would not be a suitable space to provide all recommended infrastructure and facilities such as a grassy area for informal sport.

A series of recommendations for each precinct is provided to inform future planning of site specific open space upgrades and land acquisitions.

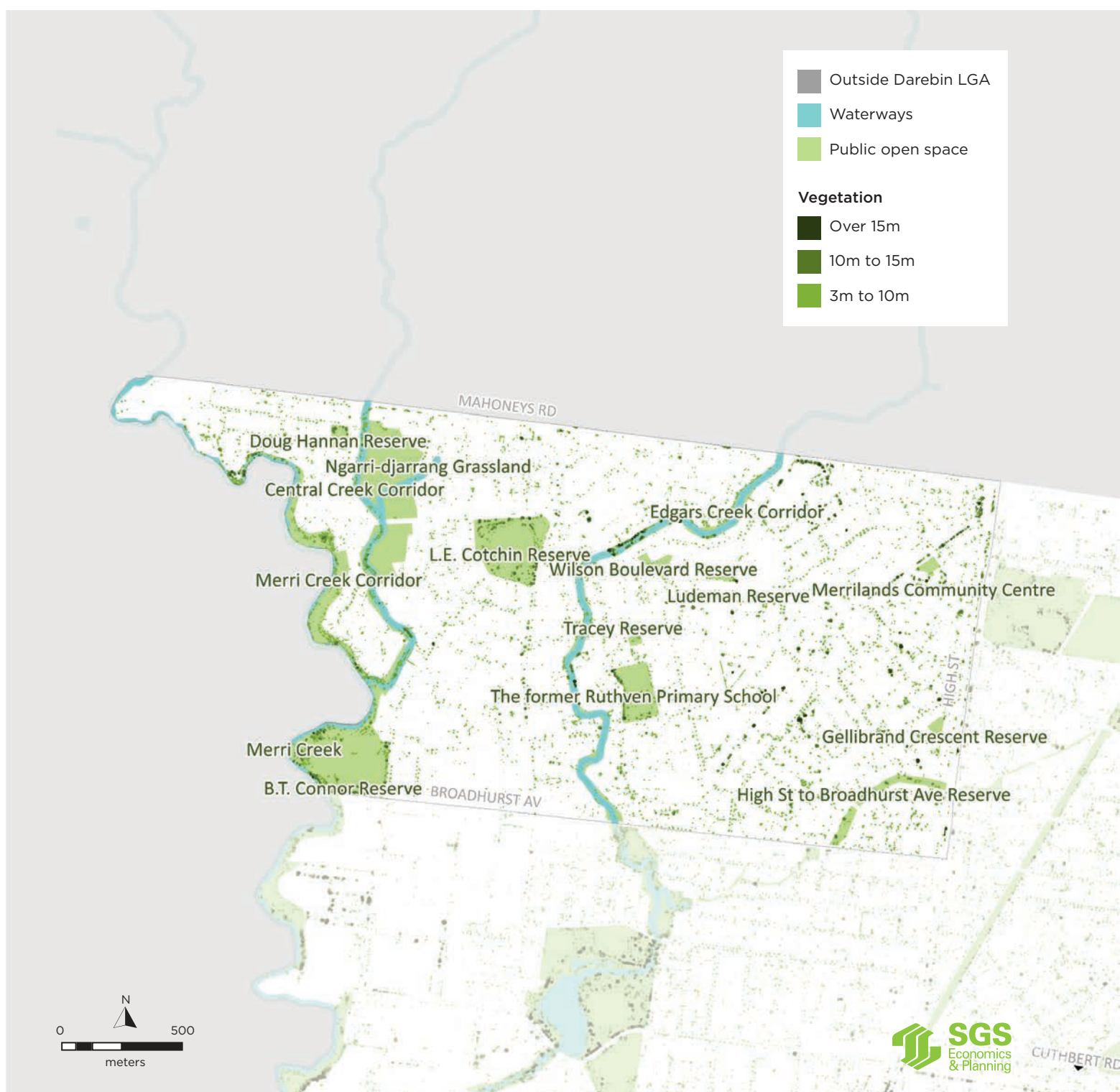
Figure 16: Open space precincts, Darebin

Source: City of Darebin, 2018



Precinct

Reservoir North West



Precinct character

Reservoir North West is a low density suburban area characterised by large lots and detached dwellings.

Merri Creek Corridor and Ngarri-djarrang Grassland run along the western boundary of the Reservoir North West precinct and are nationally significant Natural Heritage areas. Edgars Creek runs through the centre of the precinct. The Merri Creek runs along the west boundary of the precinct. The Merri Creek is well vegetated with trees and shrubs, while Edgars Creek has a mown interface with surrounding residential areas and sporadic tree coverage. B.T Connor Reserve and L.E Cotchin Reserve provides district sporting facilities, along with some informal leisure opportunities.

An electricity power line easement runs diagonally through the municipality anchored by a series of open spaces. Stretches of Hughes Parade include a large central median strip, and the roundabout of Botha Avenue and Hughes Parade includes a large open space of approx. 0.25 hectares.

The Council plan includes the action to create a new park and upgrade the site of the former Ruthven Primary School in Reservoir.

Biodiversity

Merri Creek Corridor and Ngarri-djarrang Grassland are nationally significant Natural Heritage areas.

Existing open spaces

Name	Size (ha)	Hierarchy	Recommended category
B.T. Connor Reserve	7.54	District	Type B
Central Creek Corridor	3.72	Regional	Regional
Doug Hannan Reserve	0.67	Local	Type C
Edgars Creek Corridor	7.45	Regional	Regional
Gellibrand Crescent Reserve	0.42	Local	Type B
High St to Broadhurst Ave Reserve	1.88	Local	Type B
L.E. Cotchin Reserve	6.48	District	Type B
Ludeman Reserve	0.22	Local	Type C
Merri Creek	2.38	Regional	Regional
Merri Creek Corridor	7.84	Regional	Regional
Merrilands Community Centre	0.38	Local	Type B
Ngarri-djarrang Grassland	9.77	Regional	Conservation area
The former Ruthven Primary School	3.05	District	Type B
Tracey Reserve	0.19	Local	Type C
Wilson Boulevard Reserve	0.67	Local	Type C

Access to open space

6 per cent of all households do not have access to public open space within 500 metres. Most of those households are located close to the Botha Avenue and Hughes Parade intersection.

Despite low levels of population growth, this area is anticipated to have an undersupply of open space, with 17.3 square metres of open space per capita projected at 2028.

Population growth

Current population: 10,565

Projected 2028 population: 11,322,

Growth rate 7.2 per cent (lowest in municipality).

Population density

Lowest housing density in Darebin, typically between 10 to 15 dwellings per hectare. Future housing expected to be separate houses and some villas/townhouse developments.

Implications for open space planning

With the lowest growth rate in the municipality and little medium or high-density development, intensification of use of the public open space in Reservoir North West is expected to be less than in other precincts. As a result non-regional reserves in this area are recommended to be upgraded/maintained as Type B or C. No Type A reserves are recommended.

Land (with emphasis on the area near the Botha Avenue/ Hughes Parade intersection) should be considered for acquisition or repurposing to ensure that all residents have access to public open space within 500m. There is potential to make use of additional space provided by the median strip and roundabout. As in other precincts, improvements are needed in east-west connections, and this should be considered in land acquisitions and design of the Green Streets Network.

Landscape works and revegetation along the creek corridor within this precinct have been minimal in comparison to others within the municipality. Improvements to amenity, access and planting along creek corridors and linear reserves should be considered to improve their function in terms of biodiversity, connectivity and public open space. The power line easement also provides this opportunity.

The ecological values of the Ngarri-djarrang Grassland should be considered for enhancement. Increasing public appreciation of the grassland by improving its landscape setting and upgrading interpretive signage should be considered.

Playspaces will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Playspace Strategy.

Formal and informal sporting facilities will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Leisure Strategy.

Precinct

Reservoir North East



Precinct character

Home to regional sporting facilities at J.C Donath & I.W. Dole Reserves which make up the majority of open space in the Reservoir North East precinct.

Much of the council owned public open space is located along Cheddar Road and Tunnelley Parade in large central road reserves which have access and amenity issues.

The eastern boundary interfaces with Bundoora Park along the Darebin Creek Corridor. Road reserve corridors and the Bundoora Park boundary include off road cycling and walking trails.

There is extremely limited tree canopy cover over 10 metres outside of J.C Donath and I.W. Dole reserve.

Biodiversity

Darebin Creek Corridor includes areas of State and National Heritage Significance.

Existing open spaces

Name	Size (ha)	Hierarchy	Recommended category
Beenak/McMahon Reserve	5.34	District	Type A
Cheddar Road Reserve	4.83	Regional	Type A
D.R. Atkinson Reserve	2.4	District	Type B
Daleglen Street Reserve	0.07	Local	Type B
Darebin Creek Corridor/ Bundoora Park interface	14.26	Regional	Regional
Frank A.A. Dunstan Reserve	0.29	Local	Type A
Frank A.A. Dunstan Reserve – Link I.W. Dole Reserve	0.15	Local	Type C
Fyfe Reserve	0.36	Local	Type A
I.W. Dole Reserve	4.57	District	Type B
J.C. Donath Reserve	20.04	District	Type A
Leslie Reserve	0.7	Local	Type A
San Leandro Reserve	0.09	Local	Type B
T.W. Andrews Reserve	2.72	District	Type A
Tunaley Pde – Cheddar Rd Reserve	5.25	Regional	Type A

Access to open space

Only 2 per cent of all households do not have access to public open space within 500 metres.

Despite low levels of population growth, this area is anticipated to have a minor undersupply of open space, with 21.4 square metres of open space per capita projected at 2028.

Population growth

Current population: 15,172

Projected 2028 population: 17,140

Growth rate: 13 per cent

Population density

Low to medium housing density, with substantial quantities of villa style housing which increase housing density. Future dwellings anticipated to be a mix of separate housing and medium density housing, with little high density housing growth.

Implications for open space planning

Reservoir North East has a low growth rate compared to most areas within the municipality, therefore intensification of use of the public open space is expected to be less than in other precincts. Nonetheless eight reserves in this area are recommended to be upgraded/ maintained as Type A, and four as Type B.

Land should be considered for acquisition or repurposing within the south-east part of the precinct to ensure that all residents have access to public open space within 500m. As in other precincts improvements are needed in east-west connections, and this should be considered in land acquisitions and design of the Green Streets Network.

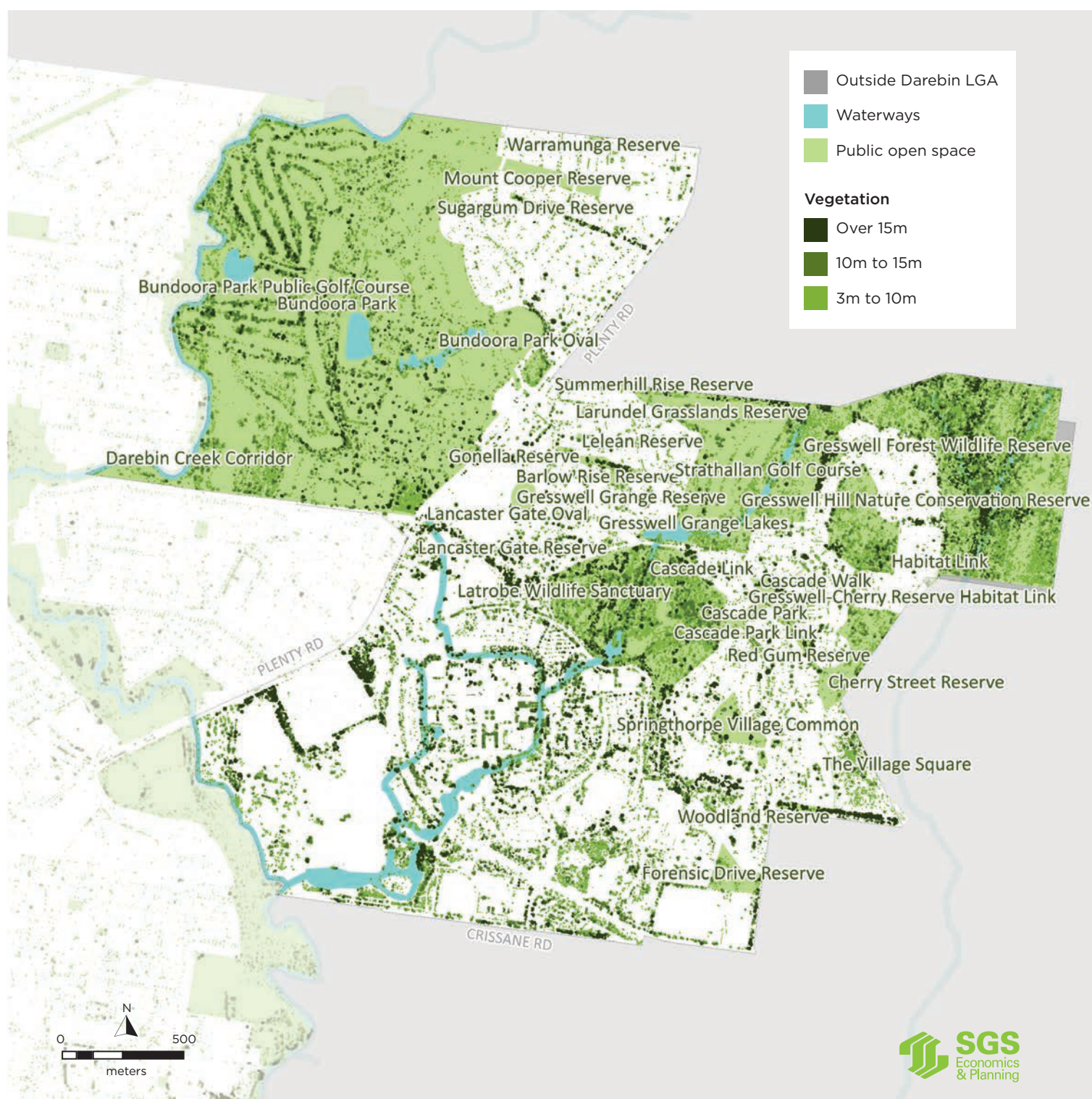
Improvements to amenity, access and planting along the Darebin Creek corridors and the Cheddar Road Reserve should be considered to improve their function in terms of biodiversity, connectivity and public open space. The Cheddar Road Reserve should be considered to become an important public open space stretching from the southern to the northern boundary of the precinct, providing a link as well as other open space services.

Playspaces will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Playspace Strategy.

Formal and informal sporting facilities will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Leisure Strategy.

Precinct

La Trobe and surrounds



Precinct character

The La Trobe and surrounds precinct is home to the extensive Latrobe University campus and a number of nature reserves.

Many open spaces are not owned by Council, for example the cemetery, university campus, La Trobe Golf Course and sports reserves owned by the university. These are outside of the scope of the strategy.

The precinct is characterised by expansive nature reserves.

The university and major regional open spaces and conservation reserves enjoy extensive tree canopy cover, including those over 15 metres.

There are plans to improve trail connections for walking and cycling as per regional trails strategy.

Biodiversity

There are expansive nature reserves and non-council owned and managed biodiversity hot spots which are important areas to biodiversity conservation. This precinct has the greatest concentration of natural heritage assets in Darebin, with nationally significant sites in Bundoora Park and Gresswell Hill and Gresswell Forest Reserves.

Existing open spaces

Name	Size (ha)	Hierarchy	Recommended category
Barlow Rise Reserve	0.53	Local	Type B
Bundoora Park	113.11	Regional	Regional
Bundoora Park Oval	3.2	District	Type C
Bundoora Park Public Golf Course	64.89	Regional	Golf Course
Cascade Link	0.04	Local	Type B
Cascade Park	2.36	District	Type C
Cascade Park Link	0.07	Local	Type C
Cascade Walk	0.04	Local	Type C
Cherry Street Reserve	6.51	District	Type C
Darebin Creek Corridor	3.27	Regional	Regional
Forensic Drive Reserve	2.36	District	Type C
Gonella Reserve	0.17	Local	Type B
Gresswell Forest Wildlife Reserve	63.8	Regional	Conservation area
Gresswell Grange Lakes	1.15	District	Type C
Gresswell Grange Reserve	0.76	Local	Type B
Gresswell Hill Nature Conservation Reserve	8.81	District	Conservation area
Gresswell-Cherry Reserve Habitat Link	0.24	Regional	Conservation area
Habitat Link	0.26	Local	Type C
Lancaster Gate Oval	1.02	District	Type C
Lancaster Gate Reserve	0.14	Local	Type B
Larundel Grasslands Reserve	0.34	Regional	Conservation area
La Trobe Wildlife Sanctuary	28.92	District	Conservation area
Lelean Reserve	0.07	Local	Type B
Mount Cooper Reserve	2.18	District	Type C
Red Gum Reserve	0.77	Local	Type C
Springthorpe Village Common	2.86	District	Type C
Strathallan Golf Course	16.83	Regional	Golf Course
Sugargum Drive Reserve	0.73	Local	Type C
Summerhill Rise Reserve	0.55	Local	Type B
The Village Square	0.11	Local	Type C
Warramunga Reserve	0.23	Local	Type C
Woodland Reserve	0.09	Local	Type C

Access to Open Space

8% of all households do not have access to public open space within 500 metres.

Well supplied with open space, however this is predominantly open space used for conservation, golf courses, and the Latrobe University Campus. Access to publicly accessible local and district public open spaces owned by council is low with 14.3 square metres per capita projected for 2028.

Population growth

Current population: 8,933

Projected 2028 population: 11,807

Growth rate: 32.2 per cent

Population density

Most of precinct is covered by La Trobe University and associated facilities, and significant conservation reserves. In the small areas that accommodate housing, density is low to medium, with few dwellings exceeding 30 dwellings per hectare.

Future dwellings anticipated to be predominantly high density housing – student housing and apartments to cater to students and staff at Latrobe University and Latrobe Employment centre.

Implications for open space planning

This precinct has a growth rate of 32.3%, the majority of that is expected to be high density student housing, therefore considerably higher use of the open space is expected. There is significant amount of open space within this precinct and all are categorised as Type B, C or regional. There are no category A reserves recommended.

Whilst a significant proportion of this precinct is accessible open space, the majority of it is privately owned and/or managed, including two golf courses, the open space at Latrobe University, or fenced off areas to retain and protect environmental values. The growth in population to this precinct is expected to be mainly tertiary students however the provision of publicly open space should allow for potential changes or reduction to privately owned open space. Therefore, it is recommended that consideration be given to acquisition of land in the south and south west of the precinct to cater for the growth in population around the university.

Playspaces will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Playspace Strategy.

Formal and informal sporting facilities will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Leisure Strategy.



Precinct

Reservoir West



Precinct character

Edwardes Lake Park is home to the second largest lake in metropolitan Melbourne and makes up the majority of open space in the Reservoir West precinct.

Almost half the precinct is industrial land. The industrial area has very little tree cover and there are poor links through it for pedestrians and cyclists. Edgars Creek Corridors link Edwardes Lake hydrological system south to join Merri Creek and then extend north.

The J.E. Moore Park supplies two large sporting ovals shaded along the perimeter by established trees.

Biodiversity

Edwardes Lake Park has natural heritage values of state significance, the adjoining Edgars Creek Corridor is of National Significance.

Existing open spaces

Name	Size (ha)	Hierarchy	Recommended category
Broadhurst Ave to McFadzean Ave Reserve	0.62	Local	Type A
Edgars Creek Corridor	9.48	Regional	Regional
Edwardes Lake Park	22.13	Regional	Regional
J.E. Moore Park	5.19	District	Type C
Merri Creek Corridor	8.31	Regional	Regional
Whitby Reserve	0.26	Local	Type B

Access to open space

9 per cent of all households do not have access to public open space within 500 metres.

The precinct is well supplied with open space due to the large Edwardes Lake Park. It is anticipated that the precinct will remain well supplied.

Population growth

Current population: 7,320

Projected 2028 population: 8,544

Growth rate: 16.7 per cent

Population density

The precinct is characterised by low to medium housing density with some villa style housing

Future dwellings are anticipated to be predominantly medium to higher density. A 26 per cent increase in the 5 – 17 age group is expected with more families moving into the area.

Implications for open space planning

Reservoir West has a low growth rate compared to many areas within the municipality, therefore intensification of use of the public open space is expected to be less than in other precincts. One reserve in this area is recommended to be upgraded/maintained as Type A.

Although the size of Edwardes Lake Park means that no undersupply of public open space is projected from a quantity perspective, land should be considered for acquisition or repurposed to ensure that all residents have access to public open space within 500m. As in other precincts, improvements are needed in east-west connections, and this should be considered in land acquisitions and design of the Green Streets Network.

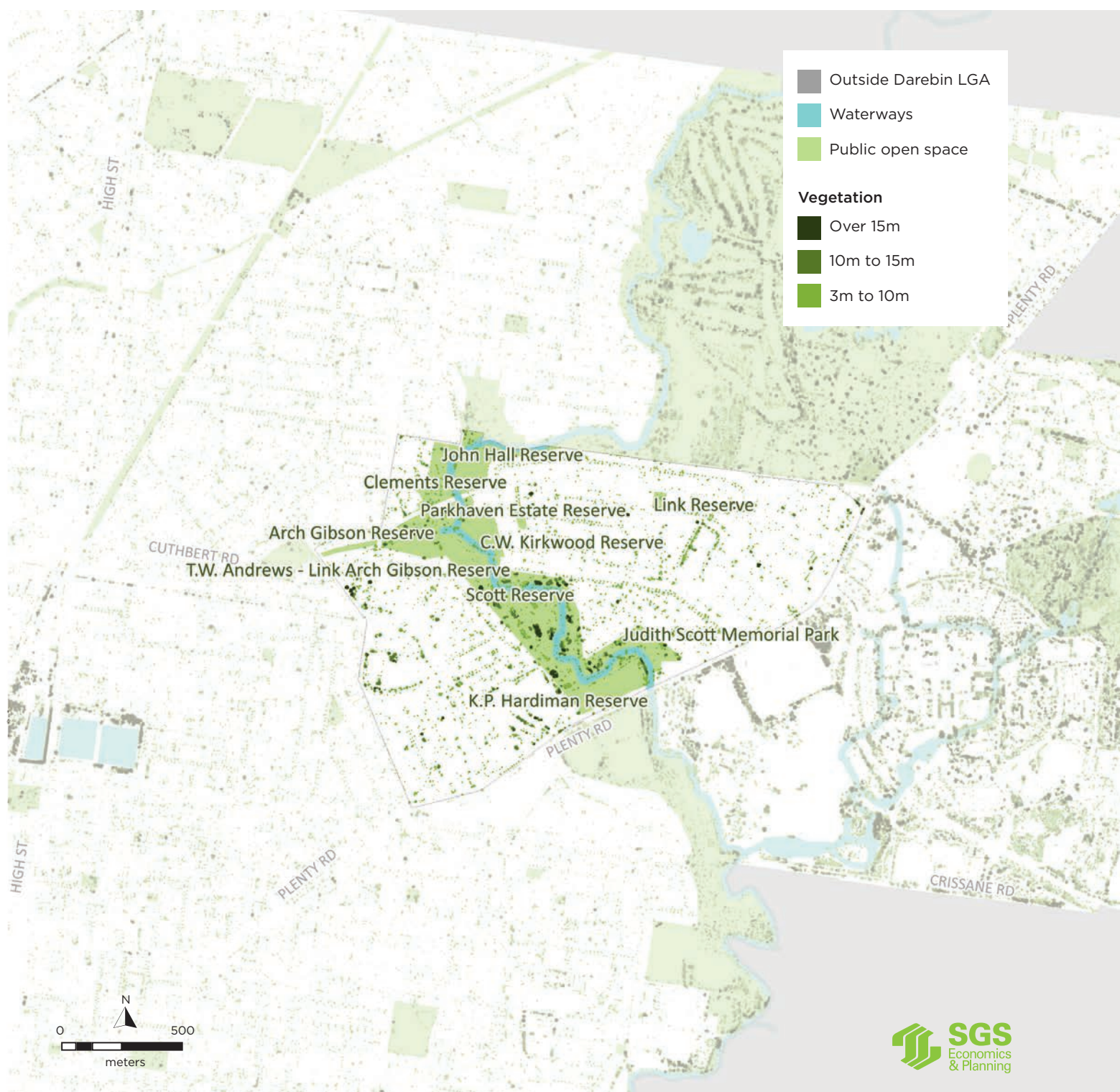
The Edgars Creek and Merri Creek corridors form an important part of the public open space in this precinct. Improvements to amenity, access and planting along creek corridors should be considered to improve their function in terms of biodiversity, connectivity and public open space.

Playspaces will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Playspace Strategy, and taking into account a projected increase of 26% of children in the area.

Formal and informal sporting facilities will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Leisure Strategy.

Precinct

Kingsbury



Precinct character

The Kingsbury precinct is home to the K.P. Hardiman Reserve adjacent to Darebin Creek which runs through the centre of the precinct. The reserve is bordered to the south by the La Trobe University Hockey Club and the Darebin Community Sports Stadium.

To the northern end of the K.P. Hardiman Reserve is another large reserve, Arch Gibson Reserve, which houses a large lawn area and bowling complex. Over Dunne St is the John Hall Reserve which consists of a single oval backing onto Darebin Creek.

These three reserves make up the majority of the open space in the Kingsbury precinct.

There are several medium sized reserves across the precinct between 2.5 and 3 hectares and these include the Clements Reserve, C.W. Kirkwood Reserve (adjoins Arch Gibson Reserve), and Scott Reserve.

Biodiversity

Darebin Creek Corridor includes areas of state and national natural heritage significance.

Existing open spaces

Name	Size (ha)	Hierarchy	Recommended category
Arch Gibson Reserve	5.56	District	Type C
C.W. Kirkwood Reserve	2.51	District	Type C
Clements Reserve	2.84	District	Type C
John Hall Reserve	3.07	District	Type C
Judith Scott Memorial Park	5.28	District	Type C
K.P. Hardiman Reserve	14.83	District	Type C
Link Reserve	0.34	Local	Type A
Parkhaven Estate Reserve	0.3	Local	Type A
Scott Reserve	2.4	District	Type C
T.W. Andrews - Link Arch Gibson Reserve	0.47	Local	Type A

Access to open space

The precinct is well supplied with open space. Currently 15.3 per cent of all households do not have access to public open space within 500 metres. 53.7 square metres of open space per capita projected at 2028. Considering the minimal population growth, it is expected Kingsbury will continue to be well supplied.

Population growth

Current population: 5,831

Projected 2028 population: 6,913

Growth rate: 18.5%

Population density

Kingsbury is characterised by low density housing between 10 – 15 dwellings per hectare. Future dwellings will also be predominantly low to medium density with limited higher density dwellings.

It is expected that Kingsbury will see the most demographic change in the 0 – 4 age group (42 per cent to 2028) and 5 – 17 age group (40 per cent) with families moving into the area.

Implications for open space planning

This precinct has a growth rate of 18.5% therefore intensification of use of the public open space is expected. Three reserves in this area are recommended to be upgraded/ maintained as Type A.

Land should be considered for acquisition or repurposing in the south of the precinct to ensure that all residents have access to public open space within 500m.

The Darebin Creek corridor is centrally located in this precinct, providing the vast majority of its public open space. Improvements to amenity, access and planting along the creek corridor should be considered to improve their function in terms of biodiversity, connectivity and public open space.

Playspaces will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Playspace Strategy, and taking into account a projected increase in 42% of children under 4 and a 42% increase in children 5–17 in the area.

Formal and informal sporting facilities will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Leisure Strategy.

Precinct

Reservoir South West



Precinct character

Reservoir South West is bordered by the Edgars Creek Corridor (link to Glenvale Rd; link to Kia Ora Road) which has a mown interface between residential properties and the creek border. To the west, outside of the precinct border is the Darebin Resource Recovery Centre which backs directly onto the creek.

The G.E. Robinson Park borders High Street to the south of a large area of inaccessible land owned and managed by Melbourne Water. Some tree canopy cover from established trees and landscaping is provided along the perimeter of the Melbourne Water land.

G.E. Robinson Park has some shade provided by established trees and a shared bicycle/pedestrian footpath through to Crawley Street, connecting with Regent Station. The park and link to railway are well maintained.

There is some poorer quality and underutilised open space in and around Regent Station from Henry to Stewart Street and a wide median strip with a shared bike path.

Crispe Park provides the precinct with a large sporting oval which is home to the Reservoir Football Club. The perimeter of the oval is shaded by established trees. There is a lack of east-west connection through the open space in and around the oval from Pine Street and Taylor Ave through to Glouchester Street.

Wright Reserve has a north-south pedestrian connection from Henty Street to Wright Street and is co-located with the World Manifest Ministries International church. The reserve has scattered established trees and two playspaces.

There are several other smaller reserves and pockets of open space scattered across the precinct (see below).

Non council owned open space also includes the Reservoir West Primary School sporting fields.

Biodiversity

Edgars Creek Corridor includes areas of state natural heritage significance.

Existing open spaces

Name	Size (ha)	Hierarchy	Recommended category
Allan Reserve	1.23	District	Type C
Allan Reserve - Linkage	0.3	Local	Type C
Crispe Park	3.36	District	Type C
Edgars Creek Corridor	0.28	Regional	Regional
G.E. Robinson Park	1.82	District	Type C
G.E. Robinson Park -Link to Railway	0.09	Local	Type A

Name	Size (ha)	Hierarchy	Recommended category
High St to Regent St Reserve	1.28	District	Type C
Hillcroft Reserve	0.28	Local	Type B
Horton Reserve	0.13	Local	Type B
Pipe Track	0.43	District	Type A
Vale Reserve	0.07	Local	Type B
Wright Reserve	0.93	Local	Type A

Access to open space

4 per cent of all households do not have access to public open space within 500 metres.

Future undersupply is predicted. 9.3 square metres per capita projected at 2028.

Population growth

Current population: 7,936

Projected 2028 population: 8,765

Growth rate: 10.5 per cent

Population density

Reservoir South West is characterised by low density dwellings (detached housing) with most housing between 0 - 15 dwellings per hectare.

Future dwellings will continue to be low to medium density, only a small proportion of higher density is forecast for 2028.

Implications for open space planning

Reservoir South West has a low growth rate compared to many areas within the municipality, therefore intensification of use of the public open space is expected to be less than in other precincts. Nonetheless three reserves in this area are recommended to be upgraded/maintained as Type A.

Land should be considered for acquisition or repurposing within the central south-west part of the precinct to ensure that all residents have access to public open space within 500m. As in other precincts improvements are needed in east-west connections, and this should be considered in land acquisitions and design of the Green Streets Network.

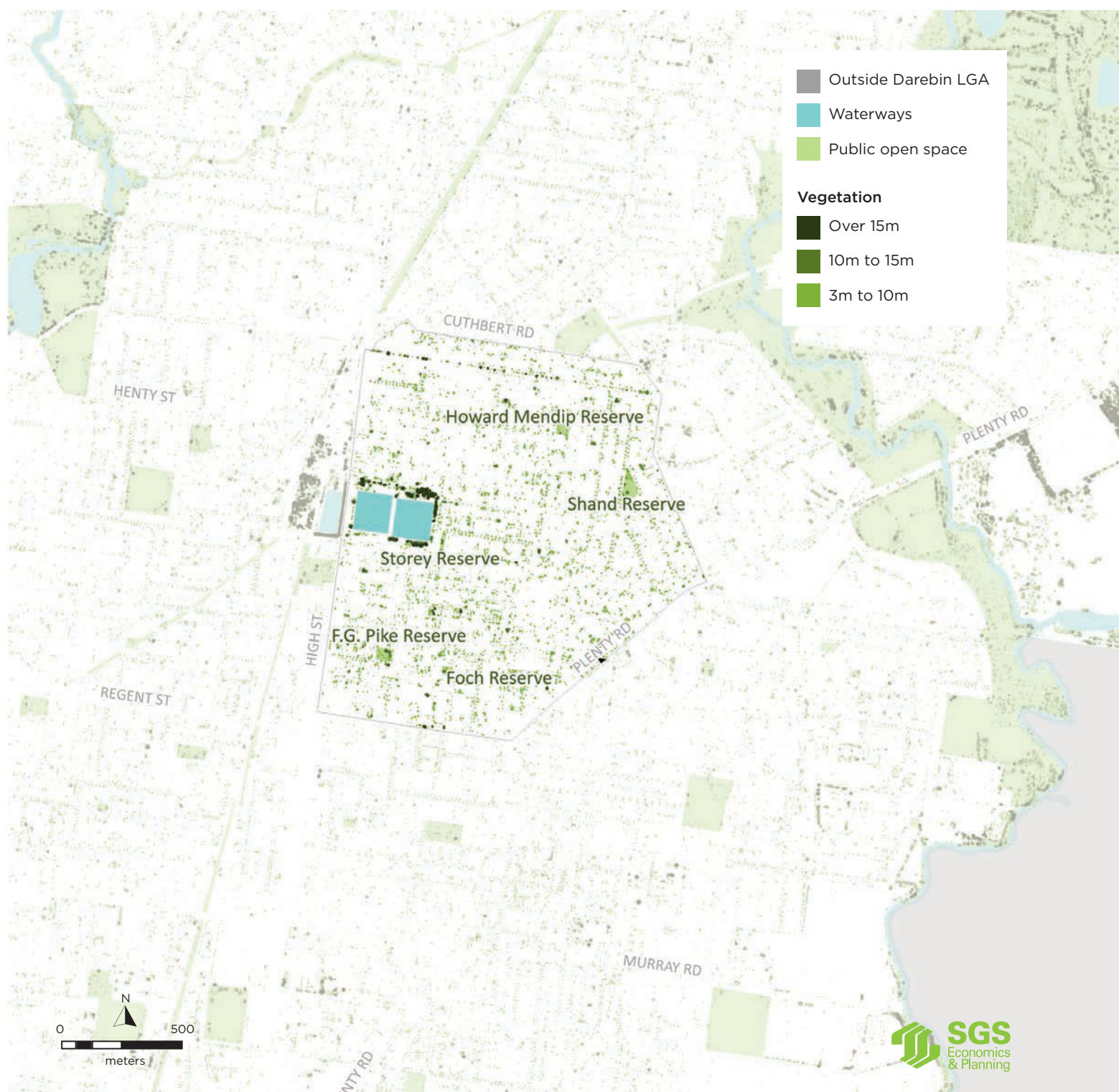
Improvements to amenity, access and planting along the Edgars Creek corridor and the linear reserves should be considered to improve their function in terms of biodiversity, connectivity and public open space.

Playspaces will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Playspace Strategy.

Formal and informal sporting facilities will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Leisure Strategy.

Precinct

Reservoir South



Precinct character

Reservoir South is home to five small reserves which are scattered across the precinct. Each reserve has a playspace of varying scale, Shand Reserve also has a small basketball court. Most reserves also serve as pedestrian links. The Howard Mendip reserve is bordered by private properties.

Part of the precinct is covered by Melbourne Water Reservoirs, situated to the western side of the precinct boundary at High St.

Biodiversity

Biodiversity values are unclear and more information is required. The completion of a biodiversity audit will provide insight into existing biodiversity values

Existing open spaces

Name	Size (ha)	Hierarchy	Recommended category
F.G. Pike Reserve	0.33	Local	Type A
Foch Reserve	0.14	Local	Type A
Howard Mendip Reserve	0.21	Local	Type A
Shand Reserve	0.49	Local	Type A
Storey Reserve	0.12	Local	Type A

Access to open space

17 per cent of all households do not have access to public open space within 500 metres.

Future undersupply is predicted. 1.4 square metres per capita projected at 2028.

Population growth

Current population: 6,938

Projected 2028 population: 9,140

Growth rate: 31.7 per cent

Population density

The precinct is characterised by low density housing, with some medium density villas and townhouses occurring along the High St border. Future dwellings are anticipated to be predominantly medium to higher density dwellings. A 40 per cent increase in the 5 – 17 age group is expected with more families moving into the area.

Implications for open space planning

Reservoir South has a fairly high growth rate (31.7%), and new development is expected to be primarily medium and higher density, so considerable intensification of public open space use is predicted in this precinct. As a result all reserves in this area are recommended to be upgraded/maintained as Type A. Careful consideration must be given when upgrading existing reserves to how much intensification of use is appropriate in reserves bordered by residential properties.

The typology of existing reserves within this precinct is extremely limited, consisting entirely of small reserves set within residential streets.

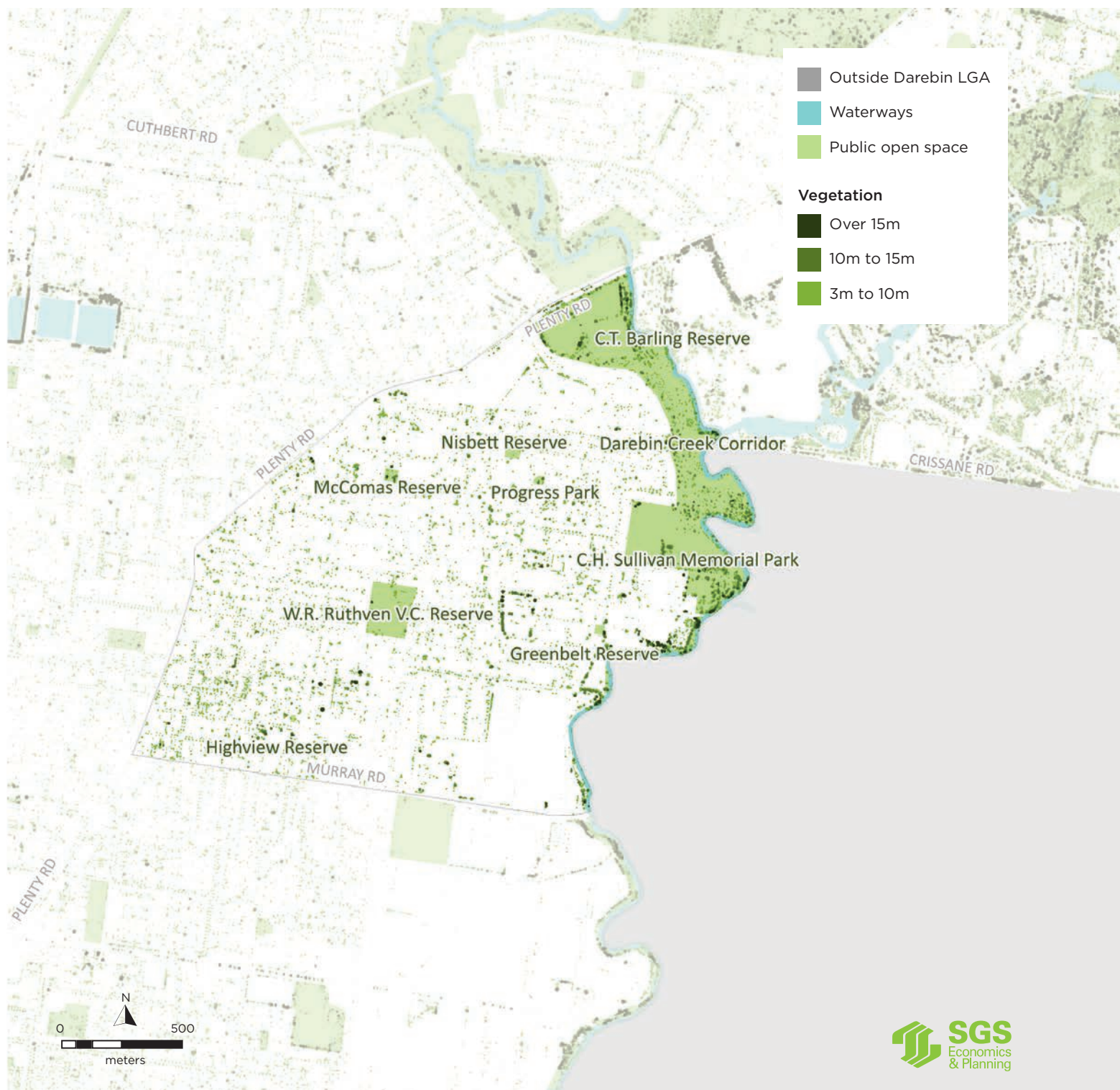
Land should be considered for acquisition or repurposing to ensure that all residents have access to public open space within 500m. Improvements are needed in both north-south and east-west connections, and this should be considered in land acquisitions and design of the Green Streets Network. Consideration should be made in acquisition to broaden the type of public open space offered (for example near shops and/or linking to linear reserves and creek corridors in adjacent precincts).

Playspaces will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Playspace Strategy, and taking into account a projected increase in 40 percent of children in the area.

Formal and informal sporting facilities will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Leisure Strategy.

Precinct

Preston Northland



Precinct character

Preston Northland is home to the Darebin Creek Corridor between Murray Road and Plenty Road. At the northern end of the corridor is the CT Barling Reserve which has football, soccer and cricket sporting fields. Further along the corridor to the south is the CH Sullivan Memorial Park which has a playspace as well as outdoor gym equipment and three sporting grounds. At the southern Murray Road end of the precinct is the Darebin Creek Linear Reserve which backs directly on to the Northland Shopping Centre. The length of the trail has important shared paths for cyclists and pedestrians.

There are four smaller reserves with playspace equipment scattered across the precinct. W.R. Ruthven V.C. Reserve is a larger reserve towards the centre of the precinct which provides football, cricket and tennis facilities as well as an outdoor exercise station.

The precinct contains a major shopping centre, the Northland Shopping Centre, one of the largest retail shopping centres in the north. The precinct is set to see substantial change with planning for the Northland Urban Renewal Precinct now underway.

Biodiversity

Darebin Creek Corridor includes areas of state and national natural heritage significance.

Existing open spaces

Name	Size (ha)	Hierarchy	Recommended category
C.H. Sullivan Memorial Park	14.21	District	Type B
C.T. Barling Reserve	13.02	District	Type B
Darebin Creek Corridor	11.59	Regional	Regional
Greenbelt Reserve	0.15	Local	Type A
Highview Reserve	0.05	Local	Type B
McComas Reserve	0.28	Local	Type A
Nisbett Reserve	0.23	Local	Type A
Progress Park	0.14	Local	Type A
W.R. Ruthven V.C. Reserve	3.62	District	Type B

Access to open space

7 per cent of all households do not currently have access to public open space within 500 metres. Currently well supplied with open space per capita. It is predicted there will be a minor undersupply of open space with 23.9 square metres of open space per capita projected at 2028.

Population growth

Current population: 10,229

Projected 2028 population: 13,275

Growth rate: 29.8%

Population density

The precinct is currently characterised by low to medium density housing with few dwellings exceeding 30 dwellings per hectares. Medium density dwellings are generally clustered to the north of the Northland shopping complex, in and around the CT Barling Reserve and to the west along the Plenty Road retail strip.

Significant growth in the number of medium to higher density dwellings is anticipated for Northland, with over 1,000 additional apartment dwellings expected by 2028. This higher density development will in part be accommodated by the Northland Urban Renewal Precinct development.

The precinct will also see an increase in the number of children and young people, with more families moving into the area.

Implications for open space planning

This precinct has a growth rate of 29.8%, with new development primarily expected to be medium and higher density, so considerable intensification of public open space use is expected. As a result all local reserves in this area are recommended to be upgraded/maintained as Type A, and all district reserves to Type B.

Public open space in this precinct is primarily located in the north-east, and associated with the Darebin Creek. Land should be considered for acquisition or repurposing in the southern part of the precinct to ensure that all residents have access to public open space within 500m.

The Darebin Creek corridor forms an important part of the public open space in this precinct. Improvements to amenity, access and planting along the creek corridor should be considered to improve its function in terms of biodiversity, connectivity and public open space. There is potential for revegetation works along the narrow section of the creek adjacent to Northland.

Playspaces will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Playspace Strategy.

Formal and informal sporting facilities will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Leisure Strategy.

Precinct

Preston West



Precinct character

Preston West is bordered by St Georges Road and is close to Preston Station and the Preston Market in the neighbouring Preston Central precinct. Significant education assets include the Melbourne Polytechnic Preston campus.

The Melbourne Polytechnic Preston campus backs on to the precinct's largest reserve (H.P. Zwar Reserve) which provides football and cricket sports ground and playspace facilities as well as a playspace in the adjoining Margaret Walker Reserve.

W.K. Larkins Reserve is one of the precinct's larger reserves and runs along the length of Dunstan Street and connects to the railway easement which runs diagonally through the precinct along the back of residential properties from Murray Street through to Regent Street.

J.S. Grey reserve is another smaller reserve which houses the J.S. Grey Kindergarten and provides an important through section from Regent St to Gilbert Rd and Gilbert Rd through to Sheffield St.

The Coburg Pine Ridge Cemetery, which takes up the far western corner of the precinct, is outside the scope of this strategy.

Biodiversity

Biodiversity values are unclear and more information is required. The completion of a biodiversity audit will provide insight into existing biodiversity values

Existing open spaces

Name	Size (ha)	Hierarchy	Recommended category
Asling Reserve	0.04	Local	Type A
H.P. Zwar Reserve	4.59	District	Type B
J.S. Grey Reserve	0.79	Local	Type A
Jacka Reserve	0.06	Local	Type B
L.W. Williams Reserve	0.65	Local	Type A
McNamara – Symons Pedestrian Link	0.04	Local	Type B
Murray & St. Georges Rd Reserve	0.03	Local	Type A
Paywitt Reserve	0.13	Local	Type A
Railway Easement (Murray St to Regent St)	1.07	District	Type A
Regent Street to Elizabeth Street Reserve	0.57	District	Type B
Spring Street Reserve	0.1	Local	Type B
St. Georges Road Reserve	0.48	Regional	Regional
Union Reserve	0.11	Local	Type B
W.K. Larkins Reserve	1.23	District	Type B

Access to open space

25 per cent of all households do not have access to public open space within 500 metres (the largest proportion of households without access of the precincts). The assessment of the future rate of provision sees the precinct undersupplied. 5.7 square metres of open space per capita projected at 2028.

Population growth

Current population: 9,736

Projected 2028 population: 13,560

Growth rate: 39.3%

Population density

Preston West is characterised by medium to low density housing with most of the precinct housing between 0 – 20 dwellings per hectare. However, higher density housing, in the form of townhouses and apartments is beginning to appear along transport corridors such as St Georges Rd and in locations able to take advantage of access to Preston Station.

In the future, medium and higher density development will continue with an increase in the number of apartments.

Implications for open space planning

This precinct has a high growth rate (39.3%), with a lot of new development being medium and higher density, so considerable intensification of public open space use is expected. As a result six reserves in this area are recommended to be upgraded/maintained as Type A.

Over a quarter of the population of Preston West currently doesn't have access to public open space within 500m so acquisition and/or repurposing of land in the centre and south-west of the precinct is vital to ensure an adequate amount of public open space is provided for the fast-growing population. There is potential to build on the connections to the adjacent Merri Creek corridor. Improvements are needed in both north-south and east-west connections, and this should be considered in land acquisitions and design of the Green Streets Network.

Playspaces will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Playspace Strategy.

Formal and informal sporting facilities will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Leisure Strategy.

Precinct

Preston Central



Precinct character

Preston Central is home to the High Street Activity Centre and Preston Market, a large fresh food market and visitor attraction.

Education assets include Melbourne Polytechnic. Preston Station and tram services along St Georges Linear Reserve make the precinct a highly accessible location by public transport.

The precinct has a limited number of council owned open space assets. These are limited to a handful of small reserves and the areas surrounding the civic buildings including the Municipal Offices, Darebin Civic Forecourt and Preston Court House surrounds.

The largest open space is the Preston City Oval, a VFL stadium which also has a grandstand with a capacity of 5,000.

Biodiversity

The Preston City Oval is of local natural heritage significance.

Existing open spaces

Name	Size (ha)	Hierarchy	Recommended category
A.G. Davis Park	1.22	District	Type B
Adams Reserve	0.85	Local	Type A
Darebin Civic Forecourt	0.13	Local	Type A
Preston City Oval	3.68	District	Type B
Preston Library Forecourt	0.31	Local	Type A
Walter Reserve	0.19	Local	Type A

Access to open space

7 per cent of all households do not have access to public open space within 500 metres.

4.6 square metres of open space per capita projected at 2028. Significant population growth and substantial higher density development indicates the future rate of open space will be undersupplied.

Population growth

Current population: 9,472

Projected 2028 population: 13,972

Growth rate: 47.5%

Population density

Preston Central is currently made up of low to medium density housing, with most of the precinct housing between 0 - 20 dwellings per hectare.

In future, Preston Central is anticipated to see the largest increase in higher density housing (apartments) of all the precincts, with over 2,000 additional dwellings by 2028. Much of the growth is expected to occur in and around the transport corridors and the Preston Market. Preston Central will also see most growth in the number of young children aged 0-4 (58 per cent increase) and for young people aged 5-17 (49 per cent).

Implications for open space planning

This precinct has the highest growth rate in the municipality (47.5%), with proposed high density development, so considerable intensification of public open space use is expected. As a result four reserves in this area are recommended to be upgraded/maintained as Type A.

Acquisition and/or repurposing of land within this precinct is vital to ensure an adequate amount of public open space is provided within 500m for the fast-growing population. In some cases there is scope to acquire properties adjacent to existing reserves (for example Adams Reserve). A high proportion of the existing public open space is very small and/or urban in character so the focus should be on acquiring properties that broaden the offering. Improvements are needed in both north-south and east-west connections, and this should be considered in land acquisitions and design of the Green Streets Network.

Playspaces will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Playspace Strategy, and taking into account a projected increase in 58% of children under 4 and a 49% increase in children aged 5-17 in the area.

Formal and informal sporting facilities will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Leisure Strategy.

Precinct

Preston Industrial



Precinct character

Preston Industrial is characterised by large areas of big box retail and industrial land which borders the Darebin Creek corridor from Bell St to Murray Road. The industrial area has very little tree cover and there are poor links through it to the creek corridor and trail.

The Darebin Creek corridor is home to areas of state and national natural heritage significance and the length of the trail has important shared paths for cyclists and pedestrians.

H.L.T. Oulton Reserve and the T.W. Blake are larger open spaces with sporting ovals for football and cricket. The H.L.T. Oulton has a pavilion and greater tree coverage than the T.W. Blake reserve which has no shaded area.

The T.A. Cochrane Reserve serves the west of the precinct and abuts the Preston South Primary School. The reserve is home to a local tennis club with two courts and bordered by established trees. Other smaller reserves include Walsh Reserve which is well vegetated with a playspace forming a pedestrian through link from Walsh to Mornane Street. Lahinch Reserve also provides a suburban through link for pedestrians and is bordered by private properties. It includes a playspace and small basketball court is also available.

G.H. Mott Reserve is a larger linear reserve along the length of Patterson Street and is largely comprised of unshaded flat lawn with a playspace and seating area which is shaded by established trees.

The precinct is set to see substantial change with planning for the Northland Urban Renewal Precinct now underway.

Biodiversity

The Darebin Creek corridor includes areas of state and national natural heritage significance.

Existing open spaces

Name	Size (ha)	Hierarchy	Recommended category
Darebin Creek Corridor	2.77	Regional	Regional
G.H. Mott Reserve	1.85	District	Type C
H.L.T. Oulton Reserve	5.03	District	Type C
Lahinch Reserve	0.41	Local	Type A
T.A. Cochrane Reserve	1.85	District	Type C
T.W. Blake Park	6.1	District	Type C
Walsh Reserve	0.25	Local	Type A

Access to open space

11 per cent of all households do not have access to public open space within 500 metres.

A future undersupply of open space is expected. 15.6 square metres of open space per capita projected at 2028.

Population growth

Current population: 7,394

Projected 2028 population: 9,926

Growth rate: 34.2%

Population density

Preston Industrial is currently comprised of low to medium density housing with most of the precinct housing between 0-20 dwellings per hectare. There is some medium density villa style housing close to the Preston South Primary school and along Bell Street.

Future dwellings are expected to be predominantly medium to higher density, which will in part be accommodated by the Northland Urban Renewal Precinct development. The precinct will also see an increase in the number of children and young people, with more families moving into the area.

Implications for open space planning

This precinct has a high growth rate (34.2%), with a lot of new medium and higher density development, so considerable intensification of public open space use is expected. As a result two reserves in this area are recommended to be upgraded/maintained as Type A.

Land should be considered for acquisition or repurposing to ensure that all residents have access to public open space within 500m. As in other precincts improvements are needed in east-west connections, and this should be considered in land acquisitions and design of the Green Streets Network.

The industrial area currently forms a barrier between the residential area in the west of the precinct and the Darebin Creek, which forms the eastern border of the precinct. This should be considered in land acquisitions and design of the Green Streets Network.

Although the Darebin Creek corridor does form part of the public open space in this precinct the space between the creek and the property boundary is quite narrow in most places, with industrial buildings backing onto it, so under current conditions provides little opportunity for recreational use. Improvements to amenity, access and planting along the creek corridor should be considered to improve its function in terms of biodiversity, connectivity and public open space.

Playspaces will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Playspace Strategy.

Formal and informal sporting facilities will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Leisure Strategy.

Precinct

Thornbury West



Precinct character

Thornbury West is a precinct with some existing industrial land and significant cultural assets including the Darebin Arts and Entertainment Centre, Islamic Museum of Australia and Gertrude Contemporary.

The precinct includes Merri Creek Corridor link which houses A.H. Capp reserve. This stretch of Merri Creek is well vegetated with trees and shrubs which mark the interface between the creek and residential and industrial areas. The Islamic Museum of Australia is an important cultural asset accessible from the Merri Creek Trail (Fyffe Street/Normanby Ave). The Merri Creek Trail is an important pedestrian and bicycle link.

H. Swain Reserve is situated to the east of Merri Creek and provides a pedestrian connection from Oakover Road to Robeson Street and Burgess Street. At the centre is a small basketball court and playspace. The reserve is relatively shaded and well vegetated in parts.

The Ray Bramham Gardens are in the far east of the precinct situated along St Georges Rd and co-located with cultural asset the Darebin Arts and Entertainment Centre and St Johns College. While close to Bell Station there is no direct connection or link to the gardens. The gardens are landscaped and are shaded by established trees.

Newman Park also runs along St Georges Road. While providing a connection, the pedestrian experience along St Georges Road is poor. The park includes playspace facilities and is shaded by established trees. Nearby there are large tracts of undeveloped residential lots (to the west of St Georges Road) not accessible to the public.

Further south is Henderson Park which also has poor pedestrian pathways and interface with the road and limited landscaping.

Biodiversity

Merri Creek Corridor is home to areas of state and national natural heritage significance, and the Ray Bramham Gardens is recognised for its biodiversity values.

Existing open spaces

Name	Size (ha)	Hierarchy	Recommended category
A.H. Capp Reserve	3.54	District	Type B
Bracken Ave Reserve	0.93	Local	Type A
H. Swain Reserve	1.13	District	Type B
Henderson Park	1.07	District	Type B
Merri Creek Corridor	3.96	Regional	Regional
Newman Reserve	0.68	Local	Type A
Ray Bramham Gardens	2.65	District	Type B
St. Georges Road Reserve	3.21	Regional	Regional
Strettle Reserve	3.75	District	Type B
Thornbury Railway Station	1.6	District	Type B
Turner Reserve	0.39	Local	Type A
W.H. Robinson Reserve	2.21	District	Type B

Access to open space

The precinct is currently undersupplied with open space. 4 per cent of all households do not have access to public open space within 500 metres.

An undersupply is forecast with 13.1 square metres of open space per capita projected at 2028.

Population growth

Current population: 10,755

Projected 2028 population: 13,011

Growth rate: 21.0%

Population density

Thornbury West is predominantly low to medium density with most housing between 0 – 20 dwellings per hectare.

Future dwellings are expected to be largely in the form of higher density apartments as well as more medium density townhouses and villas. It is worth noting the undeveloped residential land and the precinct's industrial land is located close to existing quality open space.

The demographic change in the area to 2028 is reasonably well balanced across each of the cohorts.

Implications for open space planning

This precinct has a growth rate of 21% therefore intensification of use of the public open space is expected, although not to the extent of many other precincts in the municipality. Three reserves in this area are recommended to be upgraded/ maintained as Type A and the remainder as Type B.

Land should be considered for acquisition or repurposing in the central north of the precinct to ensure that all residents have access to public open space within 500m, and to an adequate area of public open space. The precinct has excellent north-south connectivity via the Merri Creek corridor and St Georges Road cycle path, however in other precincts improvements are needed in east-west connections, and this should be considered in land acquisitions and design of the Green Streets Network.

The Merri Creek corridor forms an important part of the public open space in this precinct. The precinct also has the St Georges Road central median.

Improvements to amenity, access and planting along creek corridors and linear reserves should be considered to improve their function in terms of biodiversity, connectivity and public open space.

Playspaces will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Playspace Strategy.

Formal and informal sporting facilities will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Leisure Strategy.

Precinct

Thornbury East



Precinct character

Thornbury East shares its border with the Preston Industrial Area and has reasonable share of industrial land along the Darebin Creek Corridor between Darebin Road and Bell Street. The industrial area has very little tree cover and there are poor links through it to the creek corridor and trail.

The precinct is home to education asset Thornbury High School which holds a reasonable amount of the precinct's open space, in the form of sporting fields and outdoor sporting facilities. These areas are bordered by established trees.

The John Cain Reserve is the precinct's largest open space holding and is situated in the far east of the precinct, adjoining the Darebin Creek corridor and trail. The reserve houses several significant recreational and sporting assets, including the DISC velodrome, Darebin International Sports Centre, Darebin Bowls Club and Bowls Australia.

There are also a handful of smaller reserves across the precinct. Hayes Park is the largest of these and contains sporting grounds and a pavilion along the length of Flinders Street and backing on to residential properties. The interface along Flinders Street is of poor quality and there is currently poor access from the street.

Penders Park is a stand-alone, well vegetated park with some landscaped elements, bordered by Pender St, Tharratt Street, Collins St and St David Street. The park is within easy walking distance to the High Street tram and Thornbury Station and provides an important pedestrian through link. The park has opportunities for recreation with shaded picnic tables and areas, BBQ facilities and a playspace.

Biodiversity

Darebin Creek Corridor includes areas of state and national natural heritage significance.

Existing open spaces

Name	Size (ha)	Hierarchy	Recommended category
Allan Sheppard Reserve	0.05	Local	Type A
Andrew Boyd Reserve	0.49	Local	Type A
Clyde Jones Reserve	0.43	Local	Type A
Darebin Creek Corridor	12.18	Regional	Regional
Harry Reserve	0.14	Local	Type A
Hayes Park	3.27	District	Type B
John Cain Reserve – DISC	17.34	Regional	Regional
Jones Reserve	0.14	Local	Type A
McDonald Reserve	0.07	Local	Type A
Olver Reserve	0.14	Local	Type A
Penders Park	1.91	District	Type B
Roberts Reserve	0.08	Local	Type A

Access to open space

The precinct is reasonably well supplied with open space and includes recreational assets of regional significance. 9 per cent of all households do not have access to public open space within 500 metres.

An undersupply of open space in the precinct is forecast. 4.9 square metres of open space per capita projected at 2028.

Population growth

Current population: 11,949

Projected 2028 population: 13,716

Growth rate: 14.8%

Population density

Thornbury East is predominantly low to medium density. Most of the housing is between 0–30 dwellings per hectare. Medium and higher density housing is clustered in the west of the precinct along Bell Street and in and around Penders Park and further to the south of the precinct along Clarendon Street.

Future dwellings are expected to be in the form of more medium density and some higher density housing. An increase is expected between the 5–17 age group as more families move into the area and take advantage of good access to primary and secondary education options.

Implications for open space planning

This precinct has a growth rate of 14.8%, with an increase in medium and high density development, therefore intensification of use of the public open space is expected, although not to the extent of many other precincts in the municipality. The majority of the reserves in this area are recommended to be upgraded/maintained as Type A.

Land should be considered for acquisition or repurposing in the central north of the precinct to ensure that all residents have access to public open space within 500m, and to an adequate area of public open space. The precinct has north-south connectivity via the Darebin Creek corridor, however access is blocked on the north side of Darebin Road. This should be considered in land acquisitions and design of the Green Streets Network. There is also an opportunity to improve the disjointed north-south link created by the five narrow reserves in the west of the precinct, and to better connect it to destinations such as High Street and All Nations Park.

The Darebin Creek corridor forms an important part of the public open space in this precinct. Improvements to amenity, access and planting along creek corridors and linear reserves should be considered to improve their function in terms of biodiversity, connectivity and public open space.

Playspaces will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Playspace Strategy, and taking into account a projected increase in children living within the precinct.

Formal and informal sporting facilities will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Leisure Strategy.

PRECINCT

Northcote West



Precinct character

Northcote West has significant open space assets along the western border of the precinct, including the Merri Creek Corridor (Westgarth St/High St; Arthurlton Rd/Beavers Rd). The corridor is well vegetated with trees and shrubs and is home to areas of state and national natural heritage significance. The trail has important shared paths for cyclists and pedestrians. Just outside the border of the precinct is the not for profit CERES Community Environment Park which covers 4.5 hectares of Merri Creek and draws visitors and tourists to the area.

Northcote Public Golf Club and the adjoining Mayer Park make up the largest council owned tracts of open space. The area is well vegetated with established trees and backs on to residential properties along Bird Avenue and Leinster Grove.

Northcote High School houses a large sporting field which back on to Merri Creek and Merri Park. Merri Park is densely vegetated and connects to the trail. An unsurfaced pedestrian walkway also winds through the area connecting from the Northcote High School to Arthurlton Road.

Across the precinct there are several small open space reserves. The largest of these is Batman Park which is situated along the St Georges Rd transport corridor. There are several through connections from Elm Street to Arthurlton Road and the park is collocated with Batman Park Kindergarten. The park has landscaped elements and shaded by established trees.

The precinct has open space at the Northcote Station Railway Easement which is currently underutilised.

There are large areas of privately-owned open space in and around the Greek Welfare Centre, Holy Monastery of Axion Estin and St Joseph's Home which are outside the scope of this study.

Biodiversity

Merri Creek Corridor includes areas of state and national natural heritage significance.

Existing open spaces

Name	Size (ha)	Hierarchy	Recommended category
Allan Bird Reserve	0.06	Local	Type A
Batman Park	1.64	District	Type A
Bridge Park	0.21	Local	Type C
Caddayes Corner	0.2	Local	Type B
Green Memorial Reserve	0.97	Local	Type B
Grovesland Reserve	2.47	District	Type A
Mayer Park	3.98	District	Type A
Merri Common	0.68	Local	Type B
Merri Creek Corridor	2.22	Regional	Regional
Merri Creek Reserve	0.29	Regional	Regional
Merri Park	12.24	District	Type A
Northcote Civic Square	0.13	Local	Type B
Northcote Community Gardens Reserve	0.48	Local	Type B
Northcote Public Golf Course	24.34	Regional	Golf Course
Northcote Station Railway Easement	0.36	Local	Type B
Pearl Reserve	0.15	Local	Type A
Peters Reserve	0.17	Local	Type B
South Park Reserve	0.61	Local	Type B
Spencer Reserve	0.83	Local	Type A
St. Georges Road Reserve	3.0	Regional	Regional
Stott Reserve	0.71	Local	Type A
Woolhouse Reserve	0.72	Local	Type B
Zoe Reserve	0.02	Local	Type B

Access to open space

All households have access to public open space within 500 metres.

An undersupply of open space is anticipated. 15.7 square metres of open space per capita projected at 2028. This is due to the levels of population growth and concentrated apartment development.

Population growth

Current population: 13,942

Projected 2028 population: 16,998

Growth rate: 21.9%

Population density

Northcote West is predominantly low to medium density (including 3–4 storey apartment complexes) with some higher density housing appearing in and around Northcote Station and the St Georges Road tram corridor.

Future dwellings are expected to be in the form of medium to higher density housing. The precinct will see a notable increase in the number of higher density housing in the form of apartments. Next to Preston Central, Northcote West has the second largest increase of higher density housing, with 1,047 new apartments forecast. There will be an increase in the number of young children and young adults between the ages of 0–17.

Implications for open space planning

This precinct has a growth rate of 21.9%, with an increase in medium and high density development, therefore intensification of use of the public open space is expected. The majority of the local reserves in this area are recommended to be upgraded/maintained as Type B, with four recommended to be Type A. District reserves are recommended to be upgraded/maintained as Type A.

Land should be considered for acquisition or repurposing to ensure that future residents have access to an adequate area of public open space. There is potential to repurpose the Northcote Public Golf Course to broaden the range of users. The precinct has excellent north-south connectivity via the Merri Creek corridor, St Georges Road median, and the rail reserve. As in other precincts improvements are needed in east-west connections, and this should be considered in land acquisitions and design of the Green Streets Network.

The Merri Creek corridor forms an important part of the public open space in this precinct. The precinct also has the St Georges Road central median and the railway reserve. Improvements to amenity, access and planting along creek corridors and linear reserves should be considered to improve their function in terms of biodiversity, connectivity and public open space.

Playspaces will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Playspace Strategy, and taking into account a projected increase in children living within the precinct.

Formal and informal sporting facilities will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Leisure Strategy.



Precinct

Northcote East



Precinct character

Northcote East is a well populated precinct which is home to the 12.19 hectare All Nations Park. The park is situated behind the Northcote Shopping Plaza and consists of landscaped areas and large lawn areas, playspaces, a skate park and opportunities for informal leisure activities.

In walking distance from the All Nations Park is the McDonnell Park and Northcote Aquatic and Recreation Centre. The park is comprised of two large sporting fields with perimeters shaded by established trees. The park is collocated with the Clifton Street Children's centre. The Rubie Thomson Reserve is to the south of the park over Separation Street and provides a pedestrian connection through to Main and Mitchell Street. The reserve is well vegetated with established trees and shrubs and has easy access from the street.

The Baden Morgan Reserve is close to High Street and includes lawn and landscaped areas as well as playspace facilities. The reserve is backed by a higher density apartment complex.

Other open spaces not owned by council include the Northcote Cemetery and the sporting fields of Santa Maria College. There is also informal outdoor space outside of the Bulgarian Eastern Orthodox Church along High Street.

Biodiversity

Merri Creek Corridor includes areas of state and national natural heritage significance.

Existing open spaces

Name	Size (ha)	Hierarchy	Recommended category
All Nations Park	12.19	Regional	Regional
Baden Morgan Reserve	0.26	Local	Type B
Dennis St Pedestrian Link	0.02	Local	Type C
Derby Reserve	0.07	Local	Type B
Johnson Park	2.1	District	Type A
McAdam Reserve	0.34	Local	Type C
McDonnell Reserve	6.13	District	Type A
Merri Creek Corridor	1.78	Regional	Regional
Northcote Park (Bill Lawry Oval)	3.1	District	Type A
Oldis Gardens	2.63	District	Type A
Rubie Thomson Reserve	1.75	District	Type A

Access to open space

3 per cent of all households do not have access to public open space within 500 metres.

It is anticipated that Northcote East will be undersupplied with open space with 16.5 square metres of open space per capita projected at 2028.

Population growth

Current population: 16,116

Projected 2028 population: 17,328

Growth rate: 7.5%

Population density

Northcote East is low to medium density with a high proportion of separate dwellings. Typically, between 10 to 15 dwellings per hectare on residential streets with far higher densities along High Street.

Future dwellings are expected to be in the form of more medium density and some higher density apartments. Demographics are expected to remain consistent out to 2028 with the largest change occurring in the 65+ cohort. Reasonably low levels of population growth are expected.

Implications for open space planning

At 7.5% Northcote East has a low growth rate compared to many areas within the municipality, therefore intensification of use of the public open space is expected to be less than in other precincts. However, the recent growth in residential apartments along High Street has increased pressure on open space. Five reserves in this area are recommended to be upgraded/maintained as Type A, with the rest of the non-regional reserves designated Type B and C.

Land should be considered for acquisition or repurposing to ensure that all residents have access to public open space within 500m. Atypically for the municipality there is a strong east-west link on Dennis Street, however improvements are needed in north-south connections. This should be considered in land acquisitions and design of the Green Streets Network.

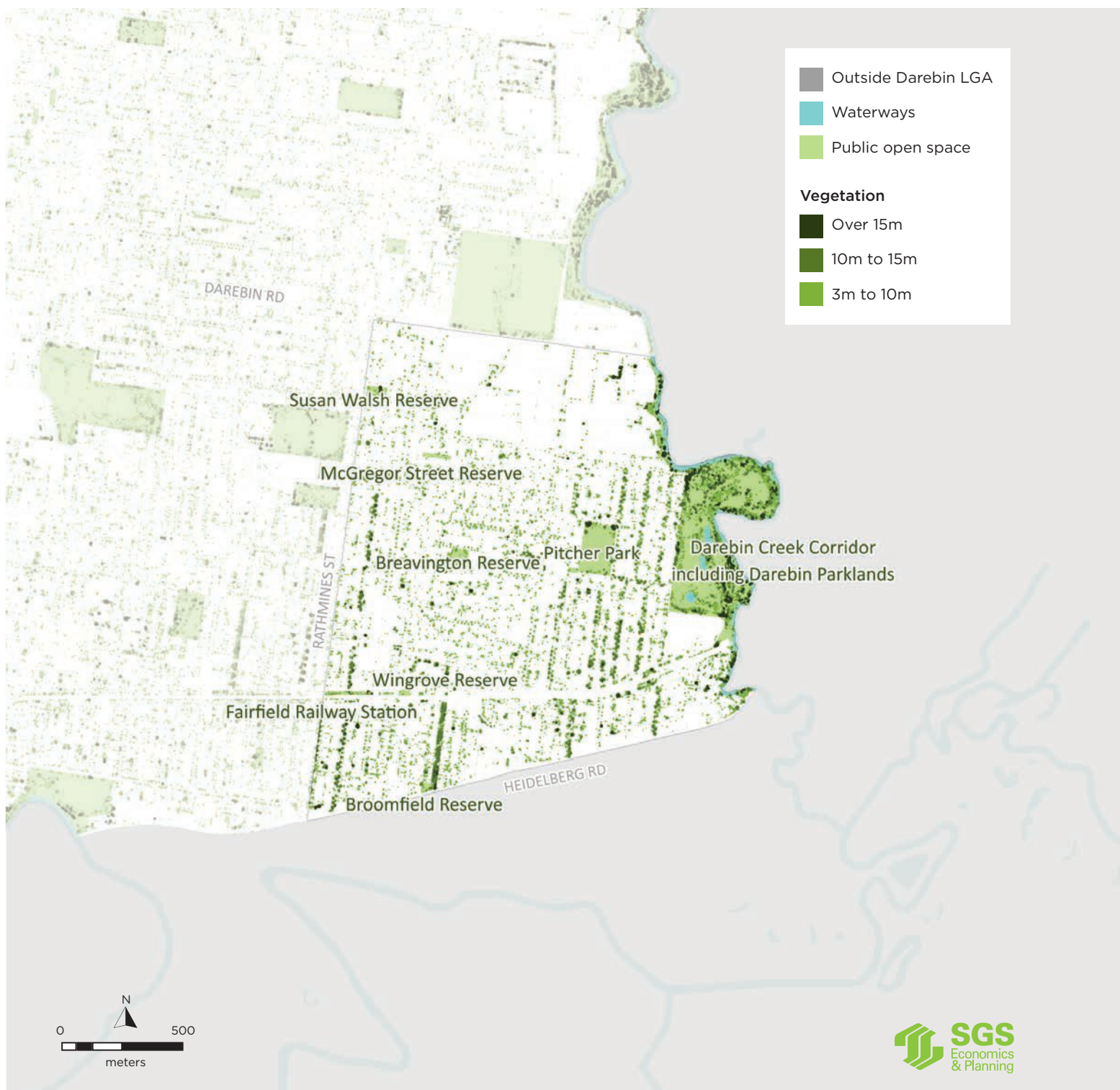
The Merri Creek corridors forms part of the southern border of this precinct. Improvements will be made to amenity, access and planting along the creek corridor and pedestrian links to improve their function in terms of biodiversity, connectivity and public open space.

Playspaces will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Playspace Strategy.

Formal and informal sporting facilities will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Leisure Strategy. The needs of a growing population of residents aged 65+ should be considered.

Precinct

Alphington Fairfield



Precinct character

Alphington Fairfield is home to the Darebin Creek Corridor between Heidelberg Road and Darebin Road. The corridor is the largest area of open space in the precinct, however, has less vegetation and canopy cover than stretches of the creek corridor further north. The southern end of the corridor includes the Darebin Parklands and a series of small dams/lakes. The area provides BBQ facilities and informal leisure opportunities.

Pitcher Park is to the west of the corridor and consists of a large sporting oval. There are some established trees clustered around the periphery and the space is relatively accessible from street level.

The precinct also has several smaller reserves, including the Breavington Reserve which provides an important pedestrian through connection.

Biodiversity

Darebin Creek Corridor includes areas of state and national natural heritage significance.

Existing open spaces

Name	Size (ha)	Hierarchy	Recommended category
Breavington Reserve	0.57	Local	Type B
Broomfield Reserve	0.14	Local	Type C
Darebin Creek Corridor including Darebin Parklands	21.03	Regional	Regional
Fairfield Station Reserve	0.27	Local	Type C
McGregor Street Reserve	0.18	Local	Type B
Pitcher Park	2.78	District	Type C
Susan Walsh Reserve	0.3	Local	Type B
Wingrove Reserve	0.14	Local	Type C

Access to open space

10 per cent of all households do not have access to public open space within 500 metres.

A minor undersupply of open space is anticipated. 24.5 square metres of open space per capita projected at 2028.

Population growth

Current population: 8,962

Projected 2028 population: 10,318

Growth rate: 15.1%

Population density

Alphington Fairfield is characterised by low to medium density housing, with most of the housing between 0–30 dwellings per hectare.

Future housing is expected to be medium to higher density infill.

Demographics are expected to remain consistent out to 2028 with the largest change occurring in the 65+ cohort.

Implications for open space planning

At 15% Alphington Fairfield has a low growth rate compared to many areas within the municipality, therefore intensification of use of the public open space is expected to be less than in other precincts. Three reserves in this area are recommended to be upgraded/maintained as Type B, with the rest of the non-regional reserves designated Type C.

Land should be considered for acquisition or repurposing to ensure that all residents have access to public open space within 500m. There is potential for a strong east-west link along the railway corridor. Improvements are needed in north-south connections. This should be considered in land acquisitions and design of the Green Streets Network.

The Darebin Creek corridor, including Darebin Parklands forms the eastern border of this precinct and comprises a significant part of the public open space in this precinct. Improvements to amenity, access and planting along the creek corridor and pedestrian links should be considered to improve their function in terms of biodiversity, connectivity and public open space.

Playspaces will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Playspace Strategy.

Formal and informal sporting facilities will continue to be developed and upgraded in accordance with the Leisure Strategy. The needs of a growing population of residents aged 65+ should be considered.



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