

WELCOME TO

# PENDERS PARK

Master Plan 2019



# PENDERS PARK

"I love the amazing palms - majestic and resilient."

"I grew up in that park and have even written a song about it!"

## Established in 1908

Penders Park, Thornbury has been providing for the recreation needs of the community since the turn of last century.

In August 1910 an Arbour Day celebration of tree planting was held in 'commemoration of the commencement of improvements' in Penders Park.

— Northcote park's Council Minutes, 1st August, 1910.

The park's importance was recognised in April 1927 when W.G. Swift the Town Clerk wrote:

*Parks are the lungs of a city; indeed they are more than this, as they provide for the recreation, rest and education of the citizens.*

The park has long been a place for weddings, picnics, community events and gatherings by a wide diversity of community members.

This master plan celebrates this much loved park and the important role it inhabits in the lives of the community and sets out the long term vision for its future.







"Penders Park was my little paradise when I used to walk through it to visit my grandparents everyday."



"At the opening corner entrance on St David Street... I remember newlyweds use to take photos there."



# About the Penders Park Master Plan

## About the Park

Penders Park is a district park located in Thornbury, bound by Pender Street, St David Street, Tharratt Street and Collins Street. Located in the south of the municipality, it is one of over 170 parks and reserves set aside for recreation within the City of Darebin.

The park is a much loved open space with a friendly local feel. The park caters for informal recreation needs of the local community including walking, using the playground, access to picnic and BBQ facilities, parties and gatherings, use of the shelter and toilet facilities. The park is informally used by disability services groups, day care centres, exercise groups and off lead dog play.

## What is the Penders Park Master Plan?

Darebin Council worked collaboratively with a community group made up of local residents to prepare a master plan for Penders Park. The master plan communicates a vision for the park that is inclusive, sustainable and welcoming in a way that is highly accessible and easily understood by a diverse audience.

## Purpose

The Master Plan is intended to act as both a resource and an inspiration, to guide and challenge the community and Council to work collaboratively to rethink and reimagine how open space can provide ways of addressing:

- opportunities to improve the wellbeing of the growing population
- recognition and celebration of a growing and diverse community
- providing and maintaining 'green spaces' in a changing climate

## Framework

The Master Plan framework is made up of four key parts:



### A VISION

which captures a vibrant picture of the park now and for the next 20 years



### DESIGN PRINCIPLES

written as goals to work towards and guide decision making and actions by people implementing the Master Plan



### BIG IDEAS

that underpin the design principles



### COUNCIL LED ACTIVITIES AND COMMUNITY LED ACTIVITIES

for the short, medium and long term to realise the vision

The vision, design principles and big ideas provide a framework for making decisions about the park as opportunities and challenges change over time.

## Council and Community Roles

The Council has a formal role as the maintainer of the park. It manages open space across the municipality and each year considers its investments in improvements across the city. This master plan sets a vision that council will use to plan and deliver works in the park according to community aspirations.

The **council led activities** have been costed by council officers. The high priority projects are proposed to start in 2019–2020. Council can consider further improvements in future budget cycles.

The **community led activities** are a mix of ideas that could be taken up by a Friends of Penders Park group or 'anyone, anytime' ideas that we hope inspire community members and park users.





*A vision that is  
inclusive, sustainable  
and welcoming*

## Features

- Ambitious and inspiring, shaped by the community and with broad ownership
- Focuses as much on park improvements as people, activity, growth and change, local pride and experiences
- A clear guide for detailed plans and projects to achieve the vision
- A staged implementation program with budget estimates
- An advocacy tool for Council and Community
- Big ideas that can be taken up by the community

## How did we get here?

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- A master plan for Penders Park was completed in 2002.
- The actions identified in the master plan were completed over the following 10 years.
- DECEMBER 2016**
- Council considered an upgrade of the play space to an all abilities play space.
- 27 FEBRUARY 2017**
- Council resolved to review and revisit the master plan for Penders Park to direct future works in the park.
- 20 NOVEMBER 2017**
- Keen to take a different approach to engagement with the community; Council endorsed the preparation of a community led master plan for Penders Park and sought expressions of interest from members of the community.
- 26 FEBRUARY 2018**
- Council appointed eight community members to work collaboratively to advise and shape the master plan.
- MARCH 2018 – JUNE 2019**
- The community reference group (CRG) met fortnightly to carry out consultation, develop the master plan and set priorities for implementation.



## Where are we in the process?





## What are the challenges facing Penders Park?

- Managing interactions between families, children, dogs and other users of the park
- Pressure for access to open green space from an increasing and diverse community
- Resilience and sustainability in the context of a changing climate
- Community aspirations for improvements to infrastructure

## Who did we talk to?

**Phase one** Council led community consultation in December 2017 captured over 200 comments. The CRG grouped the comments into eight themes with upgrading the play space the top theme, closely followed by management of dogs in an off leash park, and amenity and landscape upgrades.

**Phase two** community consultation led by the CRG took place for eight weeks in July and August 2018, and included a drop in session in the park, an online survey and targeted discussions with park user groups calling for comment on the vision and principles developed by the CRG.

Overall, feedback from the second round of engagement showed that the community felt the key design principles were relevant and important to them.

**Key themes** from feedback captured from 2016 to now, clearly indicate that a new, all-abilities play space and accompanying accessible toilets are a priority for the community.



*Phase two community consultation led by the PCG took place for eight weeks in July and August 2018*

## Next steps

Implementation of both council led activities and community led activities are essential to realising the vision and goals of the Master Plan. These may include:

- Targeted consultation and detail design of spaces within the park
- Establishment of an incorporated Penders Park Friends Group
- Community investigations and activations
- Capital works bids to deliver upgrades
- Funding and grant investigations and applications



## Ideas from the community

More native plants

Community art

A 'forrest' to explore, different plants and trees to play in, admire, hide in. We have no garden, so plants and playing in nature is everything

Community garden

Shade -  
more trees!

Native plants  
to attract birds

landscaping to  
create sheltered  
picnic areas

Wide perimeter  
bike bath

Please make dogs  
inclusive - my dog  
and I love this park!

Bird boxes

Accessible play  
equipment

Improve toilets

Some areas with more  
lush plants would be nice  
- more invigorating for  
the eye and spirit

Bike parking

Opportunities to  
learn about the areas  
Indigenous heritage

Sensory play area

Picnic spaces

Please don't over-engineer  
the design. Keep it an open,  
tranquil space where you  
can refresh and relax,  
without being forced into  
specific activities

More shade areas when  
eating/barbequing - sun safe!

Better playground

Exercise equipment

More Indigenous  
art/monuments

Roofing over BBQ area

Community garden  
and nature play  
group :)

Recycling bins

## Penders Park Vision

Penders Park is a significant gathering place for our diverse and changing community. As a district park, it's a place for play, celebrating, active and passive recreation and connecting with nature.



## Penders Park Design Principles



### DISTINCTIVE IDENTITY

Penders Park is a unique place with a character that everyone recognises and values. The park's identity is shaped by its Indigenous significance, heritage design and our culturally diverse community.



### 'PLAYFUL'

Penders Park is a shared space that offers a range of exciting 'play' opportunities for adults, children and dogs, while respecting the needs of everyone.



### NATURAL AND BUILT ELEMENTS

Shade, shelter, lighting, seating and amenities are well designed, constructed and maintained. These elements encourage the community to meet, socialise and provide everyone with a feeling of safety and an enjoyable outdoor experience.



### ACCESSIBLE, EQUITABLE AND UNIVERSAL

Penders Park is a welcoming and respectful place for everyone to enjoy. The design ensures that everyone can access the park and feel a sense of belonging, using the park and its facilities equitably.



### CONNECTION TO NATURE

In a highly urbanised neighbourhood, Penders Park is an oasis of green space for people to connect and experience nature.

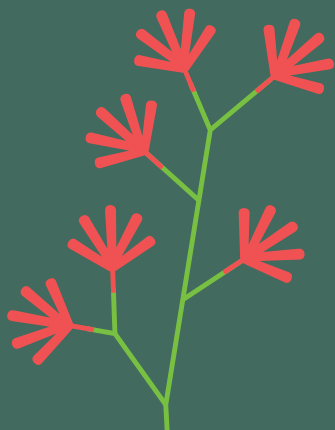


### RESILIENCE AND SUSTAINABILITY

The park's natural and built elements are robust, easy to maintain, and durable for the long-term to support current and future generations.

# Distinctive Identity

Penders Park is a unique space with a character that everyone recognises and values. The park's identity is shaped by its Indigenous history, heritage design and its culturally diverse community.



*"Aboriginal recognition of past and present relevance is most important to me."*

## Big Idea

Acknowledge and celebrate the park's Indigenous and post European settlement history and today's diverse community.

### WHY THIS IDEA?

A distinctive identity and sense of place are central to creating a feeling of belonging.

## Council Led Activities

- Develop a suite of interpretative signage and art works to tell the story of Penders Park before and after European contact and the cultural diversity of current park users.
- Protect, maintain and provide interpretation for areas with remnant Eucalypt trees and grasses.
- Give the all-abilities playspace an indigenous name in Woi-Wurrung language.
- Consolidate the garden bed planting around the pergola covered entry on Collins Street. Plant deciduous street trees to highlight the entry.
- Engage with the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation to locate a fire pit and advise on indigenous plantings.

- Incorporate local Indigenous stories, narratives and Indigenous place making elements within the park. For example kangaroo paw prints in the paths and a mural.

## Community Led Activities

- Investigate opportunities for a 'Friends of Penders Park' group to engage with Council and the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation to conduct ceremonies in the park marking significant events in the Indigenous calendar. For example including but not limited to NAIDOC week.

### 'ANYONE, ANYTIME IDEAS'

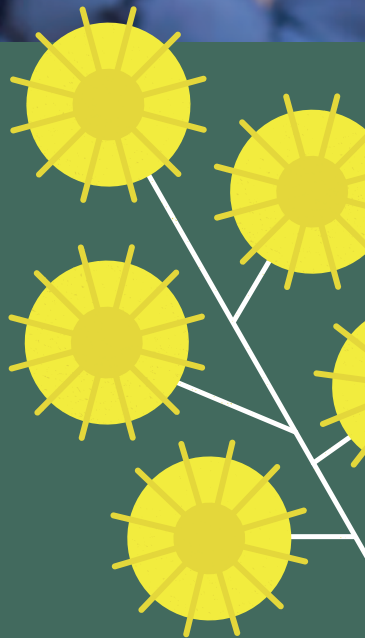
- Engage the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation to connect the community with Country, people and identity.







*"Would like to see  
greater connection  
with indigenous  
cultural heritage."*



### Community benefits

- Develop a stronger sense of appreciation and connection for the community to the park and its current and historical significance.
- Recognise the diversity of our suburbs and provide a place where everyone feels welcome, now and into the future.
- Provide opportunities to respectfully recognise the oldest living culture on earth and acknowledge that the land was never ceded.

### Challenges

- Making sure we have a good way to collaborate and have the conversations.
- Ensuring our efforts respectfully engage with a diversity of community members.

# Accessible, Equitable & Universal

Penders Park is a welcoming and respectful place for everyone to enjoy. The design ensures that anyone can access the park and feel a sense of belonging, using the park and its facilities equitably.

## Big Idea

Incorporate accessible, equitable and universal principles to all aspects of park improvements, maintenance and activities.

### WHY THIS IDEA?

An accessible park, inclusive of all, creates a caring community and emphasises community connection.



## Council Led Activities

- Design and deliver an all abilities play space, accessible toilets and changing places facility.
- Improve pathways for jogging, walking, wheelchair and pram access within and around the park.
- Relocate the play space closer to the toilets to improve access for families with young children.
- Install an accessible car parking space adjacent to the all abilities play space.
- Investigate opportunities to reuse existing play equipment in the proposed all abilities play space.
- Undertake a community safety audit to consider what factors make the community feel safe or unsafe.

## Community Led Activities

- Investigate opportunities for an incorporated 'Friends of Penders Park' group made up of park users and local community members to access local and state government funding or grants for all abilities facilities and improvements in the park.
- Investigate opportunities for 'Friends of Penders Park' to establish a park users agreement with the community. Use the park principles to guide the development of the agreement and identify the values and responsibilities of park users and their shared responsibility for ensuring compliance.

### 'ANYONE, ANYTIME IDEAS'

- Advocate for funds for all abilities facilities and improvements in the park.
- Advocate for the road crossing points on St David Street to be upgraded to pedestrian crossings (zebra crossing) by council and VicRoads.
- Advocate for a "Choose Tap" drinking fountain with dog bowl from Yarra Valley Water to be located away from the play space.



*"I would like the park to become more of a 'community centre' that draws/attracts people of all ages and backgrounds to frequent and use."*



## Community benefits

- Supports active and passive outdoor recreation and social interaction for all ages, abilities and cultures.
- Facilitates community connection and equity, while creating child and age friendly urban environments.
- Creating a space that enables all members of the community to feel 'at home' and safe in the park.

## Challenges

- Identifying funding for infrastructure improvements.





# Playful

Penders Park is a shared space that offers a range of exciting 'play' opportunities for adults, children and dogs, while respecting the needs of everyone.

## Big Idea

Provide play opportunities for all ages and abilities.

### WHY THIS IDEA?

Values the role of play in everyday life and its contribution to a healthy, happy, and vibrant community.



*"Annual Penders Park Festival to bring community together."*



## Council Led Activities

- Add BBQ and seating areas inside the play space to support families with young children to socialise.
- Provide outdoor exercise stations at the east end of the park adjacent to the circuit path for all ages to support active and healthy aging.
- Provide play opportunities for young and old community members to engage and interact such as chess tables and 'conversation' seating.
- Incorporate playful built elements in the park (For example stage area for community events, informal nature play rocks and logs).
- Improve grassed surfaces for people and dogs, including play and active and passive recreation.

## Community Led Activities

- Investigate opportunities for a 'Friends of Penders Park' group to explore partnerships with local businesses to develop events in the park that celebrate play.

### 'ANYONE, ANYTIME IDEAS'

- Use the park as an inclusive event space for community based festivals, celebrations and activities.
- Explore interest in community-based dog education sessions, aimed at dog owners and children to develop appropriate behaviours, interactions, and education to build relationships and how to be safe around dogs.

*"More community events, markets, music, pop-up coffee, outdoor cinema events in summer."*



*"Neighbourhood library. Lots of playing for older kids and adults."*

### Community benefits

- Playful urban environments have social, health and psychological benefits for local communities.
- The changing nature of suburbs has often reduced private outdoor space. Playful streets and public spaces ease the pressures of urban living.

### Challenges

- Locating space throughout all days and seasons throughout the year for multiple play activities within the park.

# Connection to Nature

In a highly urbanised neighbourhood, Penders Park is an oasis of green space for people to connect and experience nature.

## Big Idea

Maintain and enhance the diversity of 'nature' spaces within the park to provide park users with choice.

### WHY THIS IDEA?

Creates spaces that support the 'nature based' activities that might otherwise happen in people's backyards.



## Council Led Activities

- Revitalise existing garden beds with a plant palette of indigenous, native and hardy exotic plants that complement the heritage of the park.
- Create a layered planting structure within garden beds including canopy trees, large and small shrubs and groundcovers to increase habitat for birds, insects and reptiles.
- Include nature play and sensory elements within the play space (For example logs, water play, sand, dry creek bed and timber equipment).
- Explore informal nature play and interpretation and education opportunities within the areas of remnant indigenous grasses and Eucalyptus trees.
- Plant a mix of indigenous and exotic tree species to balance the needs of all living creatures.

## Community Led Activities

- Investigate opportunities for a 'Friends of Penders Park' group to support the regular and ongoing maintenance of the garden beds in collaboration with the Council parks team.

### 'ANYONE, ANYTIME IDEAS'

- Develop community based events and activities that celebrate connection to nature and bring the community together around their diverse interests in nature. Self-guided nature walks telling story of the parks diverse and remnant plants, solstice celebrations, food swaps, Indigenous planting days.
- Investigate funding and grant opportunities for installing and monitoring nesting boxes for birds, bats and possums.

## Community benefits

- Connection between neighbours, increased safety, and a happier, healthier community.
- Provide locations in which local kindergartens and schools can encourage children's interests in nature and care for the environment.
- Improved biodiversity.

## Challenges

- Locating space throughout all days and seasons throughout the year for activities within a highly used space.





"Make it a 'garden' for all  
those in the local area that  
no longer have a backyard."

# Natural and Built Elements

Shade, shelter, lighting, seating and amenities are well designed, constructed and maintained. These elements encourage the community to meet, socialise and provide everyone with a feeling of safety and an enjoyable outdoor experience.



## Big Idea

Improve and maintain all the park's facilities so it remains a much-loved meeting place and a comfortable green space for the community.

### WHY THIS IDEA?

Provides a welcoming place for people to meet and enable strong community and nature-based connections.

## Council Led Activities

- Provide a community noticeboard that welcomes people to the park explaining the diversity of use and park users (e.g. play space, quiet reflection, connection to nature) and provides details on community activities and the shared and agreed values for the park.
- Adapt roofing to the shelter within the centre of the park to provide more shade and protection from rain.
- Relocate a BBQ to the central shelter and upgrade the picnic tables and benches to provide a sheltered picnic space.
- Provide a small stage area to rear of the shelter under the existing trees for small community performances.
- Undertake landscape upgrades including relocating and installing new bins sets (including recycling bins) and additional dog bag dispensers.
- Reinstate turf to central grassed area to the east end of park for team games and family cricket matches.
- Provide formal and informal 'conversation seats' in current locations along the path and within the park.
- Plant deciduous shade trees in the informal picnic area to increase the tree canopy and create an urban forest for passive recreation.
- Create informal picnic area to reference the former play space, include new picnic tables, seats and shade trees.
- Assess current lighting levels within the park and determine if lighting levels are sufficient.

"Shelter for  
birthday parties  
and gatherings."

## Community benefits

- Increased comfort, safety and amenity.
- Improved sanitation and recycling.
- Modernised infrastructure.

## Challenges

- Maintaining park infrastructure that is fit for purpose with increased usage of the park by a diverse and changing community.





# Resilience and Sustainability

The parks natural and built elements are robust, easy to maintain, and durable for the long-term to support current and future generations.

## Big Idea

Increase shade and shelter with natural and built elements and improve soil moisture retention to strengthen the parks resilience to the shocks and stresses of a changing climate.

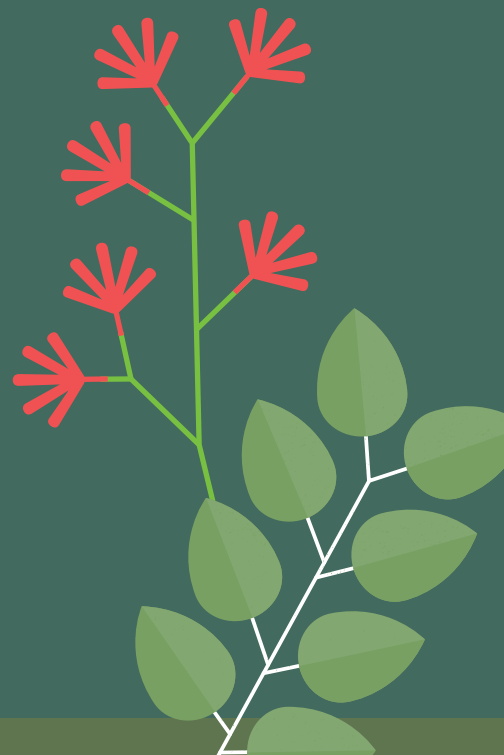
### WHY THIS IDEA?

To future proof the park and its ability to adapt and transform to weather and climate changes and remain a comfortable green open space for the community for future generations.



## Council Led Activities

- Perform regular tree assessment, maintenance of tree health and succession planting of trees reaching maturity and those in decline.
- Mulch around existing heritage and remnant trees and garden beds.
- Incorporate recycled materials where it is more sustainable than natural materials.
- Investigate opportunities to refurbish / reuse the toilet block structure as part of upgrade to accessible toilets and a Changing Place facility.
- Provide bike hoops to encourage sustainable transport modes to accommodate the increased usage of all abilities play space.
- When upgrading infrastructure, relocate and reuse seats and play equipment within the municipality where possible.



“...I like the idea of sustainability, the park should integrate water sensitive design... and be a good place to learn about sustainable design.”



### Community benefits

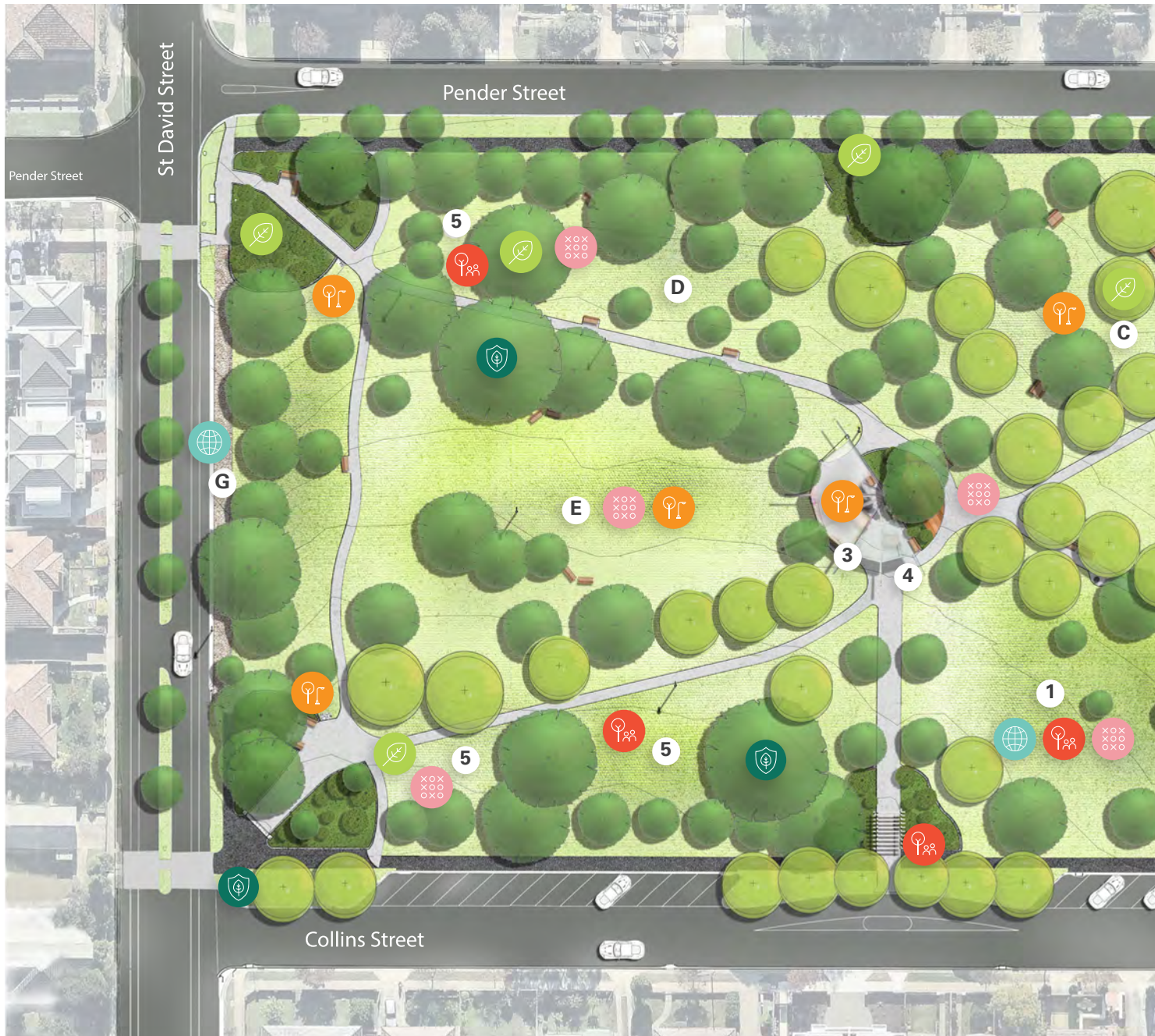
- Provides a real demonstration of living more sustainably as a community.
- Provides opportunities for connection with nature for current and future generations.
- More sustainable and resilient open space.

### Challenges

- A warmer and drier climate and access to affordable water makes tree establishment more challenging and increases the years required to provide natural shade.









# Landscape Master Plan – Priorities






## Council led activities and Community led activities locations by Design Principle

	Distinctive Identity		Connection to Nature
	Accessible, Equitable and Universal		Natural and Built Environments
	Playful		Resilience and Sustainability

### Legend

- 1** All abilities play space with BBQ and picnic facilities
- 2** Accessible toilets and Changing Places facility
- 3** Renovation and extension of shelter structure with BBQ, picnic facilities and small community stage
- 4** Interpretation, local wayfinding and community information board. Incorporate indigenous stories and artwork
- 5** Informal nature play and regeneration of remnant grasses, incorporate indigenous interpretation and education
- 6** Multigenerational play space including green gym
- A** Fire pit for Indigenous ceremonies and events (Final location to be confirmed with Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation)
- B** Active play
- C** Informal picnic area with additional picnic tables and shade trees
- D** Passive recreation, relaxation and contemplation
- E** New turf for active play / team games
- F** Accessible car space
- G** Granitic gravel path to create park circuit





**This Master Plan is a unique culmination of  
Community and Council working collaboratively  
to rethink and reimagine the potential benefits  
of open spaces in regard to climate, wellbeing  
and diversity.**

*Thank you*

to all members of the Darebin community that  
have contributed to this unique project.

For any enquiries, please contact  
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**PENDERS PARK  
COMMUNITY  
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to live**