

Domain Parklands Master Plan

Summary of feedback from community engagement phase 3

23 August to 28 October 2018

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Submissions provided by:

* Historic Heritage Section, Department of Environment and Energy
* Aboriginal Victoria, Department of Premier and Cabinet
* Shrine of Remembrance Trustees
* Australian Garden History Society
* National Trust
* Rotary Club of Melbourne
* Melbourne Grammar School
* Melbourne South Yarra Group
* Southbank Residents Association
* Protectors of Public Lands
* Astronomical Society of Victoria
* Brighton Residents for Urban Protection
* City of Port Phillip

NB Submissions from Rowing Victoria, individual clubs and rowing community is reported on in section 8.

Executive summary

### *Overview*

The third phase of community engagement sought feedback on the draft Domain Parklands Master Plan and was held from 24 August to 28 October 2018.

The draft master plan has five themes. Respondents were encouraged to provide feedback through these themes, in addition to any general comments.

1. Nurture a diverse landscape and parkland ecology
2. Acknowledge history and cultural heritage
3. Support exceptional visitor experience
4. Improve people movement and access
5. Management and partnerships to build resilience

126 people provided individual responses, primarily through Participate Melbourne. 20 organisations or clubs sent formal submissions. 11 people participated and gave feedback through walks in the park. Six groups provided feedback through meetings. 102 children and 20 young people were consulted.

The engagement findings support how highly valued the Domain Parklands are. There was strong support for the need for and value of a master plan to guide future management of the parklands, with particular recognition of the need to plan for the challenges of climate change and population growth.

There was broad community acceptance and support for the master plan directions in the themes of “Nurture a diverse landscape and parkland ecology”, “Acknowledge history and cultural Heritage” and “Management and partnerships to build resilience”. Any concerns or suggestions are described in this report.

The theme of “Support exceptional visitor experience” invited more detailed feedback, particularly around the organised activity areas. These included the rowing precinct in Alexandra Gardens, the Edmund Herring oval and La Trobe’s cottage. Excellent feedback has been provided and a working group established by the rowing community to work on the detail for improvements to management of the precinct. There were diverse responses to proposals for picnic areas and fitness equipment in Kings Domain South. There were good levels of support for improvements to amenities in the parklands.

The theme of “Improve people movement and access” received the most diversity of responses. The responses ranged from enthusiastic support to complete opposition on proposals relating to future changes to the road network. This diversity of opinion was also expressed about proposed changes to car parking and creation of bike lanes. What was not questioned was that access is very important. The current disruption with the Metro rail project influenced many responses on this topic.

1. Background and methodology

The draft master plan has been prepared over three years, reflecting the importance, multiple layers and complexity of the place. The process to prepare the draft master plan has included collecting and examining technical information about the parklands and at the same time gathering and discussing the future of the parklands with the community.

During 2015 and 2016 two phases of community consultation obtained community input and ideas for the Domain Parklands.

**Phase 1 – Share your memories of Domain Parklands**

The first phase was conducted in September to November, 2015. It gathered information about what people value about the Domain Parklands by inviting them to share memories to stimulate conversations about the themes and aspirations for the future of the parklands.

**Phase 2 – Discussion Paper**

The second phase in July – August 2016 involved the release of a discussion paper seeking public comment on key themes to set the direction for the future of the Domain Parklands.

**Phase 3 – Draft Domain Parklands Master Plan**

The third phase of community engagement was held from 24 August to 28 October 2018.

The engagement sought feedback on the draft Domain Parklands Master Plan. The engagement process provided opportunities for people to become familiar with the draft master plan by

* reading the draft plan;
* reviewing the five precinct plans which summarised physical proposals across the parklands; and /or
* participating in parklands walks with park planners where all aspects of the master plan were described.

Responses were encouraged through the Participate Melbourne website, while some preferred to provide a submission.

The invitation to participate in the community engagement was promoted by the City of Melbourne through a range of mediums and sought a broad audience. This included:

* Postcards were distributed to 4500 households in adjacent areas of South Yarra and Southbank
* Posters, postcards and hard copies of the master plan were provided at three libraries.
* Posters were erected through the parklands.
* The City of Melbourne website directed people to the Participate Melbourne website.
* Emails to stakeholders, agencies and people who had registered interest in the project;
* The engagement was also promoted through the networks of the Shrine of Remembrance, Melbourne Gardens and Victorian Arts Centre.

Several groups also requested briefings and the opportunity to discuss the draft master plan. Advisory Committees of Council were consulted.

Engagement with children was organised through the Junior Ranger program. Separate engagement activities were organised to seek the views of young people. The Family and Children’s Advisory Committee provided advice and suggestions to assist with the design of the engagement program with children and young people.

The focus of the engagement was to seek feedback on the draft master plan. It was recognised that there were two previous comprehensive engagement processes to inform the development of the master plan. This phase of engagement was planned to give people the opportunity to provide informed responses, by providing different ways for people to familiarise themselves with a detailed document proposing long term management aspirations for a complex area.

The draft master plan has five themes. Respondents were encouraged to provide feedback through these themes, in addition to any general comments.

1. Nurture a diverse landscape and parkland ecology
2. Acknowledge history and cultural heritage
3. Support exceptional visitor experience
4. Improve people movement and access
5. Management and partnerships to build resilience

2. Engagement findings

The consultation approach was qualitative. With this approach, attention was given to creating additional opportunities for feedback from segments of the community who might not provide feedback through Participate Melbourne, for example, children and young people. This was to ensure voices who heard from a cross section of community.

Overall, 126 people provided individual responses, primarily through Participate Melbourne. 20 organisations or clubs sent formal submissions. 11 people participated and gave feedback through walks in the park. Six groups provided feedback through meetings. 102 children and 20 young people were consulted.

The Participate Melbourne Domain Parklands master plan website was viewed by 1747 people, indicating a good awareness of the project consultation.

The engagement findings support how highly valued the Domain Parklands are. There was strong support for the need for and value of a master plan to guide future management of the parklands, with particular recognition of the need to plan for the challenges of climate change and population growth.

There was broad community acceptance and support for the master plan directions in the themes of “Nurture a diverse landscape and parkland ecology”, “Acknowledge history and cultural Heritage” and “Management and partnerships to build resilience”. Any concerns or suggestions are described in this report.

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A summary of information gathered is presented in the following report.

3. Children’s Consultation

Children’s engagement for Domain Parklands Master Plan was embedded in the Junior Ranger school holiday program *What's the Time Bunya Pine.* Six sessions of the program were held on 24 – 26 September and 1 – 3 October, each running for 2 hours, 10am to 12pm in the parklands. The program targets 5 to 12 year olds who attend with their families. The program was led by City of Melbourne Park Rangers. An Aboriginal Elder attended and led activities at two programs.

90 children attended the public Junior Ranger sessions. The focus of the engagement was to gather feedback on the master plan’s themes. The engagement took three approaches – direct questions, observation and debrief. Up to three observers attended each session.

A separate Junior Ranger session was held with the Bubup Wilam Aboriginal Child and Family Centre on 10 October, which was attended by 12 children. These were pre -school aged children and the session was modified for the younger group.

The activities sought in particular to gather master plan feedback about nurturing the environment (including discussion about the Arboretum and the importance of the park in responding to climate change), learning more about Aboriginal cultural heritage of the place, and the concepts associated with repurposing the roads.

The children enjoyed visiting so many different parts of the parklands. They balanced on edges, peered over walls and bushes, ran in wide spaces and walked carefully in narrow spaces. They enjoyed collecting things, were fascinated with searching for water bugs, were very interested in learning about wildlife and asked many questions. They were very interested in the diversity of landscape as they visited so many different settings. They described how some spaces made them feel calm and peaceful, others made them feel cool. They noticed how much quieter some enclosed parts of the park were. The children learned about history, the parklands, the wildlife and people who use it and could understand the importance of the existence of the parklands and why we need to maintain it and keep it healthy.

Each day brought different experiences with wildlife which highlighted how observant the children were. Flocks of Black Cockatoos, Corellas, Lorikeets brought much discussion. The children were fascinated on one day as two Wedge Tail Eagles were observed circling very high, and the subsequent behaviour of the other different types of birds in the trees below.

## *Nurturing the environment*

* Children understood and appreciated the parklands being the ‘lungs of the city’, the importance of looking after the trees and parklands, and how people and wildlife need the park to be healthy.
* The children were interested in how the parkland cooled the city, with the older children more aware of this. They understood about rainwater being soaked up “like a sponge” in the park and that this was better for the environment.
* They thought that if there was less ‘concrete jungle’ there would be less pollution, it would be better for wildlife and a better environment for everyone.
* The children were very tactile in the way they interacted with the trees and plants. They showed huge interest in how much wildlife was dependent on the park, from birds and animals to tiny creatures. They were most interested in how a tree (River Red Gum) could be a ‘supermarket’ for Aboriginal people and the number of ways trees could have been used pre European settlement.
* Visiting the fern grotto, the children were observant about how much cooler the area was and why this would be a good place to visit on a hot day.
* The children were very interested to learn about history / evolution as it related to plants that we could see in the parklands.
* The children thought it was very important to look after the parklands environment for the future.

## *Aboriginal cultural heritage*

* The children were very interested in the Aboriginal cultural heritage. This was most evident in the sessions led by Dean Stewart[[1]](#footnote-1), where the children (and adults) were entirely engaged.
* They were interested to imagine what the area might have been like prior to European settlement. They discussed how emus and kangaroos might have been there. When asked to imagine what sounds they would have heard they could describe fire crackling, people talking, birds singing and recognised that the sound of cars would not be heard.
* One activity was a timeline to try to describe how long Aboriginal people had lived here (and how short a period of European settlement). The older children were very interested in this, while a few already knew that Aboriginal people had lived here for 60,000 years.
* The children were very interested to learn about the Aboriginal Burial stone. The older children (and adults) were very thoughtful, quiet and respectful. Some younger children tried to look underneath it. When asked not to climb on the stone none of them did, but many stroked the stone and were quite serious as they observed the plaque.
* The children were very interested to learn more about Aboriginal cultural heritage in the future.

## *Repurposing the roads*

* The children were asked to describe what they could see and hear, when standing above Linlithgow Avenue. They described the birds, cars, trucks, buildings, Eureka tower, bush, trees, wind, and helicopters. They were then asked to close their eyes and imagine what it would be like if the road was not there. They said they would hear birds, would not hear cars, it would be quiet, more space to play, there could be more trees, it would be cooler, and that trees wouldn’t need to be cut (for trucks).
* When asked what they could do with the space they described games to play (tag, roll down the hill, hide and seek), using bikes, and that ‘there would be nothing to stop you crossing’. One child suggested a river with stones on it to cross, instead of a road.
* The children were asked how they would get here if there was no road. Their responses included that it would encourage more people to walk, that you could use bikes or come on public transport.
* The children thought closing the road for people to use it was a good idea.

4. Young People’s Consultation

***Consultation 1***

Five young people (aged between 18 and 22) participated in a two hour consultation session at the City Library meeting room which was facilitated through Melbourne City Mission on 5 October 2018. The discussion has been summarised into three themes of visitor experience, access and history and cultural heritage.

## *Visitor experience*

* Not many bins
* Needs more lighting at night. Blue lighting can be calming and may reduce violence. Do feel unsafe at night and have witnessed violent and antisocial behaviour. There needs to be more lighting along paths – so many paths have only one light.
* More BBQs - can be communal and activate areas. Including in Alexandra Gardens. They can give homeless people a place to cook, and help reduce stigma.
* More park benches and made of softer material, ideally reused and recycled
* More drink fountains
* More toilets
* It is unsafe near boatsheds when students don't take notice of who else is using area.
* Would like a playground for everyone. Young people aren’t sure if they can play in the park or climb trees. It could be an all -ages playground or a tree house. The park needs to invite kids and be friendly.
* When discussing the ‘prompts for play’ suggestions included Questacon type stuff or something like would be found at Scienceworks.
* Love to go to the park rather than lots of commercial things.
* Activate an area along Yarra with paddle boats and kayaks for hire. Free or low cost activity (they discussed whether some days could be free or just operate with a deposit) Similar to a program in Prague. Is it too polluted here? Should it be at another part of the river/ upstream?

## *Access*

* The Yarra bank where the BBQs are located is quite steep and people could fall in water. Some autistic people don’t understand about safety with water. When they have a sensory overload the need to go to a place that is calm to filter it out. Need safety but not block for everyone. We discussed having things to help such as more gradual path access, and somewhere to look at the water (new boat landing).
* There was discussion about access that included the steep hill at the Shrine, how curvy graduated pathways could help people with mobility issues, and that there could be a path for walking and a path for bikes.
* Discussion about bikes along the river edge and possible options for separated bike paths brought a range of ideas. Some liked the idea of changing car parks to bike lanes. One suggestion to cut into the bank to make another bike path was not agreed by others who said there was enough concrete there and it would erode the purpose of the park and what if there were trees there? Another idea was to make a soft path for bikes so it still has an environmental function. A dirt path could be an option for bikes. One person said that in the past they liked the quickest path to go faster by bike, but now preferred riding slower and enjoying the journey. Bikes may use the path for their purpose - along the Yarra for slow easy ride and a secondary path for a speedy ride. Another suggestion was for reflective light poles interspersed along the path to limit bike speed. Speed bumps may limit bike speed, although they could create an access issue. It is important that bike paths are wide enough. On road paths are very narrow “on the road your only friends are other cyclists”.
* The participants agreed to lessen cars use within the park and liked the idea to slowly close down the roads and join the park. One person described that going into the park is confusing (described entry to Toms Block / Kings Domain) and that the park feels exclusive and uninviting for young people – it feels like an adult park.

## *History and cultural heritage*

* How we would translate Aboriginal history? We want more Aboriginal guides, to talk about their history. Aboriginal people need to be consulted. The memorial near the old Billabong should celebrate the history.
* Memorials bring a lot of people but they are not very attractive to look at. They could be made from more natural materials that blend better. If you have too many memorials it devalues the memorials. It becomes tokenistic. Why waste money? Horticultural memorials which are natural and grow are much more respectful. Memorials need to be meaningful, not random. It helps if it is integrated into the landscape. The contrast of a plaque and nature is not great.
* One participant was critical of the police memorial as it needs to look better. It is just concrete and looks rundown and disrespectful.
* We need to “make it kid friendly to learn more”. Child friendly interactive information stations were suggested.
* It would be good to have an edible plant section recreating plants from that part in history. The park is a great place for storytelling and an opportunity for Aboriginal employment.
* Mosaics of animals that historically lived in this location could be created. It would be informative and also can be fun for kids to play on (*refer earlier discussion about somewhere to play*).
* Use an Aboriginal artist. Include Aboriginal artwork. Signage could be in red yellow and black. Audio acknowledgment of traditional owners and for storytelling.
* Wayfinding signs, walking app. Develop app to show calendar of events. Walking guide audio. Need information points along the paths. Apps but also people as guides.
* One participant described the Aboriginal cultural walk along the Yarra and was disappointed at how trashy it was and the amount of graffiti. “this is my river”. “I would love to be able to swim there” Envisioning stories is difficult when there is a lot detracting from it.

***Consultation 2***

Consultation with year 9 students from Melbourne Girls Grammar School was held on 10 October 2018 at the school in Anderson Street (opposite the parklands). 15 students from a geography class and borders participated in the consultation. The students described how they currently use the parklands which included walking, running, riding, rowing, and attending events. The students discussed how the master plan helps plan for change, understand how change impacts people, environmental impacts, maintenance, access and security.

Suggestions, comments and ideas about the master plan included:

* Discussion about balancing needs of car users and park users. Perhaps there could be a shuttle to take users to park entries. Use buggies like in the Botanic Gardens to provide more access to the park.
* Activate the area with more cafes and restaurants
* There is a need for better access to the Sidney Myer Music Bowl (they use this for exercise sessions)
* Improve access to the boat sheds was important.
* The road network is challenging. Agree with idea of having drop off area on St Kilda Road with better lighting.
* Continually take care of planting and keep it looking nice. Love this part of the park.
* Improved pedestrian access to Rod Laver Arena and others, could be at the high point behind Sidney Myer Music Bowl (This followed a brief discussion about bridge locations and issues)
* Improved signage is needed for entries and exits within the Botanic Gardens (students are often asked for directions to find exits).
* More toilets and improvements to signage towards toilets.
* Cyclist speed near Gosch’s paddock and at Morrell Bridge is a safety concern.
* Removal of Number 8 tram has impacted access to park.
* Add pedal boats in the lake in the Botanic Gardens

5. Feedback from walks in the parklands

11 people attended walks in the parklands. The walks were held on 1 September, 5 September, and 5 October. Each walk was for approximately two hours.

All respondents enjoyed the parklands and were very supportive of the initiatives in the master plan. Key themes that emerged included support for new protected bike lanes, support for future Linlithgow Avenue road closure, support for further amenities including drink fountains and fitness equipment, and how to get better public understanding of the value of parks to human health.

## Questions and suggestions raised included:

* Whether new bike lanes on Alexandra/Linlithgow will be protected bike lanes. As a lot of community advocacy was done to secure the protected bike lanes proposed in the City Rd Master Plan, so it makes sense for these to connect up with the same here.
* Supportive of the proposals to provide alternative routes to commuter cyclists currently using the Capital City Trail, and that these should be protected bike lanes.
* Support the reduction of vehicle movement around the boatsheds to improve safety.
* Observation that when the road is closed for events such as ANZAC Day, the feel of the place is completely different and ‘wonderful’.
* Suggestion that a lot of people are visiting for exercise, so basic fitness equipment would be welcome.
* More drinking fountains are needed throughout the parklands, not just around the Tan.
* More bins would be useful throughout the park, not just at barbecues, for things like walkers carrying coffee cups.
* More bike parking at venues and event locations would be useful.
* Support for public transport by water to the parklands.
* Discussion about buildings in the park and that they take up space, while acknowledging that they enjoy the M Pavilion.
* There were numerous observations about visiting parts of the parklands that they had not been to before.
* Observing an amateur photographer taking photos of avenues of trees, paths and the city background highlighted the vast diversity of ways these parklands are appreciated.

There was also consideration about the benefits of open space to population health. Suggestions included:

* It would be useful to understand the health and wellbeing of populations of cities without much green space compared to those with it.
* Researching how does having (or not having) green space impact on stress /cortisol / mental health?
* People understand that green space is good for them, but we don’t understand how best to justify or promote this to the ‘bean counters’.
* Speaking to travellers would be a good way to understand how the city is viewed by visitors – a fresh perspective and anecdotal comparisons with other cities.

6. Feedback from specific committee / organisation consultation

## *Disability Advisory Committee (DAC)*

19 September 2018

DAC members have previously had input to the master plan through an Advisory Committee meeting (Nov 2015), and two site meetings in December 2015. The DAC were supportive of the access improvements proposed in the draft master plan including:

Access improvements

* Paths
* Entrances
* Hierarchy of paths
* Accessible paths of travel

Wayfinding and interpretation improvements

* Wayfinding strategy
* Signage
* Information in different formats
* Interpretation

Visitor experience improvements:

* Proposed visitor and nature centre
* Charging facility for motorised scooters and wheelchairs
* Identified location and provision of changing place facility
* Upgrade to Alexandra Park picnic and BBQ areas
* Proposals to work with Victorian Arts Centre trust to upgrade and improve access to Sydney Myer Music Bowl.

The DAC noted the importance of DDA compliant river path access being incorporated within future plans and fully supported the proposal of an accessible and clearer marked route from Anzac Station to Birdwood Avenue. The safe transition from the park pathways to the grassed areas was also raised as a key equity of access issues with most people using mobility aids are unable to enjoy the grassed areas of the park.

## *Parks and Gardens Advisory Committee*

The Parks and Gardens Advisory Committee provided extensive input to the development of the draft master plan, with detailed discussion at eight meetings since 2015. There was no specific meeting on this draft master plan but members were invited to provide comment.

## *Victoria Police*

6 September 2018

A meeting was held which included briefing on the overall master plan, and then discussion of specific recommendations relating to public safety (lighting, security) and the Police Memorial. Council Officers have had a number of meetings with Victoria Police Community Safety Officers regarding specific improvements to safety in the boathouse and skate park areas in the Alexandra Gardens. All the recommendations in the draft master plan are consistent with these discussions. It was suggested that a further recommendations could be included that detailed designs are reviewed by a community safety officer.

For example Future improvements to access to the Police Memorial will be addressed in the detailed design for Tom’s Block. Specific requests to incorporate signage to the memorial in other parts of the parklands were made, including accessible routes to the memorial.

Further discussion included the need to improve lighting and safe access to and around the Sidney Myer Music Bowl, and possible safety initiatives with fitness equipment.

## *Metro Community Reference Group*

3 October 2018

A presentation to the Metro Community Reference group was made, with particular focus on the proposals associated with the new Anzac station. Questions and discussion included:

* A query about when works would start
* How the parking in the precinct would be rationalised and shifts from long day parking to shorter term parking for visitors and some repurposing.
* How access and movement in the parklands will be improved, particularly for ageing visitors.
* How events would be managed, and support for the proposal to introduce an event coordination committee.

## *Traditional Owners*

*Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation*

The submission included a number of corrections, and a statement that the draft master plan was weak regarding Aboriginal history of the site (section 2.1). There was a view that given the thousands of years of history, this should be better recognised in the document. The submission also suggested that there is recorded history of Aboriginal presence that should be included, as well as more information about Tromgin.

*Wurundjeri Land and Compensation Cultural Heritage Council Aboriginal Corporation*

A number of Elders met with Council Officers at the Wurundjeri Land and Compensation Cultural Heritage Council offices on 22 October to discuss the master plan. Feedback included:

* Would like to see gardens with native species with education about traditional uses and interpretive signage.
* Requested the planting of Manna Gums as they are used in ceremonies.
* All agreed with a suggested change to Key Action 2 ‘Acknowledge history and cultural heritage’ to ‘Celebrate history and cultural heritage’.
* The raised ground of the Observatory creates a natural look out.
* Highlight the original river course in the plans.
* Support for better wayfinding, seating and shade.
* Interest in what species are present in the freshwater lagoon
* Car parking and public transport were discussed.
* There was a view that the parklands need to be peaceful and have less noisy events.
* Discussion about archaeological surveys included caution on any physical disturbance and the use of thermal imaging.
* The observation point could be a location for an Aboriginal focus as it is a place for looking out and looking up at the sky.
* Discussion about landscaping around the Kings Domain Resting Place included suggestions to make the area beautiful, the planting to stop people climbing on it, and hand digging for planting to minimise disturbance. Creating an area nearby for people to stop and pay respects, and hold smoking ceremonies was another suggestion.

7. Responses through Participate Melbourne

126 people provided individual feedback to the draft master plan.

## *Participate Melbourne*

The Domain Parklands feedback page received over 1,700 visitors during the consultation period. 110 people put individual submissions in through Participate Melbourne. A number of organisations put submissions in both through this page and directly to Council. Other submissions were sent directly to Council or via the park planning in box.

37 submissions through participate Melbourne were duplicates. One individual had six submissions.



Those who submitted through the participate Melbourne page were invited to rank their views on the five themes of the master plan. These were ranked as follows:

1. ***Nurture a diverse landscape and parkland ecology***

*Elevate horticultural complexity and management; support a healthy ecosystem; manage a city arboretum; and manage soil and water*.



1. ***Acknowledge history and cultural heritage Required***

*Respect and reveal the Aboriginal cultural heritage; reflect cultural values and historical significance; and manage memorials in the Domain Parklands (areas managed by City of Melbourne*).



1. ***Support exceptional visitor experience Required***

*Provide facilities (amenities) to meet future needs; enhance visitor experience; manage organised activity spaces; and manage events.*



1. ***Improve pedestrian movement and access Required***

*Improve parklands entrances; improve internal pathway networks; reduce barriers and improve access over roads; support access by public transport; network approaches to improve cycling routes; contemporary wayfinding in the Domain Parklands; create journeys in the Domain Parklands; rethink the use of existing road space; and support visitor access while adapting to the future trends of car parking*.



1. ***Management and partnerships to build resilience Required***

*Make one parkland of many unique destinations; create a framework for priorities and decision-making; commitment to future management and collaboration; manage uses in the areas managed by the City of Melbourne; and reduce the impact of services.*



Respondents also provided their views in an open ended request for comments. They were asked to describe what they like, what they think was missing, or what could be improved. The following section collates these responses into the five themes of the master plan and a further list of other topics raised.

## Nurture a diverse landscape and parkland ecology

There were few responses about specific recommendations to support landscape and parkland ecology in the master plan. Rather, many responses described more broad support of the importance of parkland to human health. Some specific comments were made about protecting parkland, not allowing any more parkland to be used for construction activities and deflecting pressure to develop parkland onto hard surface areas. As the population increases, the natural tree environment becomes more important to connect people to nature.

In those comments about specific recommendations, a few people supported the Arboretum and the introduction of some native planting, including a suggestion to reference indigenous plants to reinforce the theme of recognition. Support for understory planting in Tom’s Block or Kings Domain South was mixed. Two submissions were concerned that seeking resilient planting and diversity may be used as an excuse to replace European trees with Eucalypts. There was a suggestion to expand on how biodiversity will drive decisions about planting native species. One response suggested creating more garden beds and a ‘flower precinct’, and organise an annual floral event (similar to Floriade in Canberra).

## Acknowledge history and cultural heritage

There were few responses about specific recommendations to support history and cultural heritage in the master plan. However there were many responses supporting stronger recognition of destinations and history for the La Trobe’s Cottage and the Melbourne Observatory. A number of responses described the vision of Governor La Trobe in setting aside the parklands.

A detailed response was received about improving the opportunities to experience history. Including celebration of the landscape designers

A number of responses discussed how important it was to reflect the Aboriginal culture.

One respondent described the importance of protecting the sweeping drives and feeling of space. Three responses requested more recognition of St Kilda Road boulevard in the plan.

## Support exceptional visitor experience

A number of general responses were received. Two responses strongly supported the recommendations for the skate park upgrade, while requesting that toilets remain in that location. Provision of a BMX track and basketball ring was also suggested. There were a few requests for play equipment for children in Kings Domain South or more generally in the parklands. Two responses did not support the visitor centre or tree top walk. Two responses commented on ‘excessive’ fun runs, the impact on residents (including overstaying resident car parking), and supported the relocation of some events to the MOPT area. There was support for provision of amenities to support cycling including bike parking.

One respondent wanted more consultation on all specifics of lighting, paths, signage, bins and other amenities, and for the hours of lighting of the Tan Track to be reduced. The respondent was concerned that amenities would be excessive and suggested a review of lighting.

Many comments were received regarding recommendations to support visitor experience. These responses were primarily regarding proposals in the organised activities areas rowing precinct, La Trobe’s Cottage, Edmund Herring Oval, and Kings Domain South. These are described in specific sections below. A summary of the detailed responses for the boatshed precinct is provided later in this report.

***Rowing precinct, Alexandra Gardens***

A number of responses were received from clubs located in the Alexandra Gardens boatsheds, individual rowers and the organisers of the winter sculling season. Additional information was gathered at a meeting of rowing clubs on 17 September 2018. Rowing Victoria coordinated a detailed submission from all clubs. The summary of these responses is provided later in this report.

One general submission raised concern at truck movement in the area and potential collision with one of the boatsheds. It included suggestions to alter the road layout to reduce the possibility of impact.

***La Trobe’s Cottage and Domain House***

A number of responses discussed the La Trobe’s cottage and suggested there could be better recognition of the place in the master plan. The cottage provides an important setting to describe the story about the role of Governor La Trobe and his vision in setting aside parkland. Recognising that it is proposed to complete further design in the Kings Domain south, the integration of the La Trobe’s cottage and Domain House into the landscape was supported. Creating a path from Anzac station presented an opportunity to bring people closer to the cottage and Domain House. Requests for additional garden beds to reflect the historical garden extent of the cottage have also been made.

It was recognised that good wayfinding signage was very important. Additional signage to these locations was also requested from Birdwood Avenue. A proposal to create a community hub in this location was suggested, to also incorporate the Depot site for development of a ‘Men’s Shed’.

***Edmund Herring Oval and pavilion***

A number of responses representing different views were received. Some proposals suggested redevelopment of the pavilion to support multi-use sports and supported the provision of a synthetic surface sports field. Other responses strongly opposed any synthetic surface.

There were multiple responses from the Kings Domain soccer club, advocating for the opportunity to partner with community sporting groups to improve facilities. The club described its growth and demand for sports fields and facilities with a growing city population, that it is a club welcoming to all people, and expressing concern at the lack of female specific facilities when they have over 40 female players.

One submission suggested building a primary school next to the oval.

***Kings Domain South east of Dallas Brooks Drive***

A number of responses were strongly opposed to the installation of any picnic tables, BBQs, or any fitness equipment in this location. These respondents preferred the natural setting and the quiet open recreational ambience of the area, and suggested these amenities were better suited to other locations (eg river bank and Fawkner Park). Reasons for not supporting these proposals included pressure on car parking, traffic, smell of cooking food, not wanting a high energy exercise precinct, and preference for picnic rugs rather than fixed tables. One respondent described the proposals as an urban intrusion on highly valued parkland space, detracting from the natural beauty of the trees and the parkland setting, and disputing the suggestion that the area had a different character that should have a neighbourhood use. One respondent stated there that the ban on commercial personal training operators in the area should continue. A few respondents did not support fitness equipment in any location in the parklands.

Other respondents were supportive of the proposals in this location, in particular the provision of fitness equipment.

## Improve people movement and access

***Paths***

A number of responses raised the proposal for a path between the new Anzac station and Birdwood Avenue entries to the Melbourne Gardens and the Shrine of Remembrance. There was strong support for provision of a path. There were a few responses that did not support a path or the alignment suggested on the plans across the Shrine Reserve.

One respondent was not supportive of paths, finding them visually disruptive, and would prefer desire lines[[2]](#footnote-2).

***Wayfinding***

Many responses supported the need for improved wayfinding. One detailed response described the opportunity for a digital strategy, and how this could be beneficial for navigation and the wealth of information to convey, including history and horticulture. A few respondents were concerned that signage would be visual clutter and should be low key.

***Rethink the use of existing road space***

A number of respondents described concern at the number of cars using the park for commuter parking and for through traffic. Those expressing these views supported the proposals for reducing the number of car parking spaces, or limiting times available. They also supported the proposals for removing through traffic at Linlithgow Avenue (s), increasing public transport access and the introduction of an autonomous vehicle to support access.

A number of respondents requested that no changes be made to the road network until completion of the Metro project. They described the current change in conditions including closure of Domain Road access to St Kilda road and the narrowing of Toorak Road West with the introduction of the tram. They requested surveys at completion of Metro project and review at that stage and questioned the usefulness of the existing survey and state there must be provision for easy vehicular ingress and egress of local residents.

There were many responses supportive of closure of Linlithgow Avenue (s) to through traffic. There were also many responses opposed to closure of Linlithgow Avenue (s) to through traffic.

Reasons cited for no change to roads included the ease of access they provide, the opportunity for scenic drives through parklands, the access for visitors to areas of the parklands.

A few respondents requested no further change to speed limits and questioned the need for any pedestrian crossings on Birdwood Avenue and Linlithgow Avenue. Other respondents were very supportive of proposals to prioritise pedestrians in this area. One respondent was not supportive of the specific location of some of the raised crossings. Two respondents did not support any pedestrian crossing or parking removal at Gate C (Melbourne Gardens).

One respondent had particular concerns at further reduction in speed limits suggesting that it would provide a false sense of security for pedestrians, would be a constraint to through traffic, and that there were few alternatives for through traffic. They questioned if the speed of bikes would be policed.

There were generally more responses opposed to any future investigation into closure of part of Birdwood Avenue than supporting this proposal.

There was a request that regardless of decisions made regarding through traffic on internal roadways, that the horse and carriage operators continue to be permitted to operate along Linlithgow and Birdwood Avenues. There was also a request to install a horse drinking trough and a shelter for waiting passengers.

Of the respondents who commented on crossing Alexandra Avenue, some were very supportive of the need for better options, while two responses did not think there was need for any improvement. One respondent suggested roofing over the road.

One respondent noted that Dallas Brooks drive is a critical conduit for local residents and should not be closed.

Removal of the tram from Domain Road was mentioned many times with uncertainty about its future. The 605 bus was also mentioned as a reason for retaining the through traffic on Linlithgow and Birdwood Avenues. One respondent suggested a public bus route along Alexandra Avenue, and for consideration of a well-lit designated departure area from the Botanic Gardens away from residential areas.

***Slip lanes***

The proposed closure of the Linlithgow Avenue / Alexandra Avenue slip lane was not widely supported as the area is currently used to enable access to Boathouse Drive for those coming from the east.

The proposed closure of the Linlithgow Avenue / Linlithgow Avenue (s) slip lane had few responses, with some support and some opposed.

***Car parking***

There were many responses supportive of changes to car parking and reducing the impact of car parking on the landscape. There were also many responses opposed to any changes to existing car parking.

There was concern that any reduction in parking would prevent people from visiting the park. A few suggested it was unfair to take car parking or road space to convert it to cycle paths when there were numerous cycle routes in the area.

The main reasons cited for no change to parking included concern that parking would move to residential streets, and that it would make access to parts of the park more difficult (such as the picnic areas). Two respondents suggested that there was no consideration of parking for events or functions at the Shrine, Government House or Melbourne Gardens with the proposals.

Opinions varied about repurposing road space to create dedicated bike lanes. However many respondents were very supportive of creating bike lanes and specific requests were made to have these as separated paths.

There were a few responses not supportive of repurposing car parking on Linlithgow Avenue for bike lanes, or any change to Linlithgow Avenue (s) parking. One comment was that it would impact on parking for the Arts Centre, theatres and Southbank.

There were a number of respondents concerned about any repurposing of car parking on Alexandra Avenue (s) to create a dedicated cycle path. Reasons cited for these views generally included questioning the need for cycle paths or that there was any commuter cycling conflict, a preference for cyclists to use the paths on the north side of the river, and that the car parking was required for the park visitors to the picnic areas and Melbourne Gardens, and for visitors to events at the MOPT precinct. One respondent was concerned the cycle path would intersect with the picnic area. One response stated that people would park in Anderson Street and nearby residential streets if this were removed.

A few people were concerned that bus parking in Alexandra Avenue would further restrict parking for visitors to the picnic areas.

A few respondents commented on the potential bridge across the Yarra River, but none were supportive.

## Management and partnerships to build resilience

A few responses noted and were supportive of the recommendations for collaborative management approaches. One response cautioned the management to avoid commercial exploitation and over tourism. They supported reducing the impact of services.

One response applauded the provision of a 20 year master plan but suggested one was needed for 100 years. Given the number of Land Managers, another submission described that it would be best for the City of Melbourne to drive the master plan while keeping the stated themes and initiatives as the prime reference for decision making across the site. One response requested key people, residents groups and organisations should be included in collaborative management of the Domain Parklands.

One response proposed that a cost benefit assessment of the plan would be helpful for local residents.

One response described that the provision of reliable mobile services to the large number of visitors to the Domain Parklands assists with the visitor experience, in each of the key actions areas. It was suggested that with regard to improving telecommunications in the precinct, the master plan action to "reduce and resolve the need and impact of temporary infrastructure on the landscape" (a short term action) could be resolved by making the medium term action to "review the need to provide more permanent telecommunications support within existing infrastructure into a short term action. Suggestions about incorporating this into other infrastructure upgrades such as lighting or the skate park were made. The submission concluded with the suggestion that provision of permanent telecommunications infrastructure would be more consistent with the objectives of the master plan.

## Do you have any other comments about the plan – what you like, think is missing or could be improved?

Many respondents provided further suggestions, additional information, support for some proposals or offered general comments. These are summarised below:

* Would like a community garden for growing fruit and vegetables, which would create friendships among local residents.
* Would like to see more relationship of the parklands with the Arts Precinct.
* M Pavilion is shown on plans but is not a permanent feature.
* One submission was concerned that there was no specific reference to residents as a key project partner.
* Keep the parklands for Melbourne citizens, reduce events and commerce.
* While many proposals will enhance the parklands, many are at cost to the surrounding residential areas, and see this as a matter of equity.
* Don’t make any spaces hostile for homeless people.
* Areas that are bright and friendly are really important.
* Suggest renaming the adjacent area of South Yarra “the Domain”.
* Allow more restaurants in the parklands as the current café is disappointing.
* Complaint about use of megaphones by rowing coaches along the Yarra River.
* There must be consideration of amenity of local residents who continue to cope with pressures put on the area by visitors and associated events in the vicinity.
* 2 respondents were critical that the draft master plan consultation was not widely publicised.
* There should be more reference to the National Heritage listing.
* All documents cited in the master plan should be available on the website.
* The master plan should be deferred until the Royal Botanic Gardens master plan is released.
* Corrections to place names on the plans were offered.
* Remove campers from the Pioneer Women’s Memorial Garden.
* Complaint about the music at the SMMB and behaviour of some patrons.

## Melbourne Observatory

A number of submissions were received about the Melbourne Observatory. This important site is within the area managed by the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria and the submissions will be referred to them. Public lighting and planting in the precinct are the matters of relevance to the areas of Domain Parklands managed by the City of Melbourne. Concern about light pollution and heat affecting the operation of the Great Melbourne Telescope (when returned to the site) were raised.

Corrections and clarifications will be made to the titles and references on the maps within the draft master plan.

Other items with regard to areas managed by the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, including the references to a proposed amphitheatre, will be referred to them.

8. Specific feedback on the rowing precinct proposals, Alexandra Gardens

A number of responses were received from rowing clubs located in the Alexandra Gardens boathouses, a school, individual rowers and the organisers of the winter sculling season. Additional information was gathered at a meeting of rowing clubs on 17 September 2018. Rowing Victoria coordinated a detailed submission from all clubs. The summary of these responses is provided below:

While in some instances the broad recommendations were agreed, specific concerns were raised regarding a number of proposals shown on the plans in the draft master plan. The submission from Rowing Victoria outlines all the recommendations, provides detailed comments and questions on each, and then outlines a proposed response or solution.

The submission notes that there are some discrepancies between the Master Plan actions and the way these actions are shown on the plans. These details are raised in the submission.

The topics for discussion included:

* Including a statement in the vision that acknowledges the precinct as the home of rowing in Victoria, celebrating the past, present and future of rowing.
* Retaining two- way vehicle movement behind the boathouses.
* Some concern about proposal to remove some car parking behind the boathouses. Also noting that boat trailers are wider than those depicted in the plans.
* Allocation of sufficient road space for turning vehicles with boat trailers at the corner behind Richmond Rowing club.
* Retaining access to the hardstand close to Princes Bridge.
* Support for improving lighting and security around the boathouses and in the precinct.
* Support for the proposed drop off / pick up area in St Kilda Road.
* Concern and lack of clarity about ‘promenade’ space in front of boathouses as the area is required for manoeuvring boats. The design of all infrastructure in this area should have involvement from the clubs. An example of bins in locations which create complexity for manoeuvring boats was provided.
* The proposed turning circle at the east end of the boathouses – supported by some and not by others, but it was recognised that there was considerable detail required to resolve. This edge of MUBC was the subject of further discussion including resolution of boat trailers storage locations. Also that the MUBC is recognised as a State and National heritage listed structure.
* Public toilet location as suggested was not supported.
* While consolidation of waste bins was considered, the proposed location was not supported. There was interest in a more efficient process than current separate arrangements with clubs.
* Linlithgow Avenue slip lane closure was not supported as it is required to enable access to Boathouse drive from the east. Also concerns that the alternative left hand turn will create congestion.
* Detail was provided to inform any design improvement to the entry to Boathouse drive to facilitate cars towing boat trailers and recognise cyclists and pedestrian safety.
* There was general support for restricting vehicle access and improved traffic management around the boathouses, but not complete support.
* Retaining access for emergency vehicles was raised.
* General support for shared zone along Boathouse Drive but suggest 20km limit. No support for reducing the width of the road space.
* There was concern about any loss of car parking in the area.
* There was concern at any future proposal to remove car parking to open views along the river. Retaining parking during peak training times would be important.
* It was suggested the current parking restrictions supports rowing use, but acknowledged the opportunity to monitor and review this.
* It was suggested a further traffic management study be conducted specifically on the rowing use to assist informing the detailed design for proposals related to vehicle movement and parking.
* The strategic directions for cycling management were generally supported. However a few people did not support the proposals and considered there was not a problem. Alternative options to create the cycle lane were suggested.
* The proposal for a new boat landing was well supported.
* Concern was raised about the silting around the current boat landing and any way to have this addressed.
* Any river bank planting needs to be low to ensure good visibility for rowers.
* There was no support for any tree planting in front of the boathouses.
* There was concern about any further boat landings along the Yarra, as they can present a hazard to scullers. The Melbourne Gardens proposed entry could repurpose an existing landing.
* There was no support for any additional bridge across the Yarra River.

Additional suggestions included:

* There needs to be a rowing access study completed to support the detailed design phase. This needs to include rower and vehicle counts, (incl. regattas), boat trailer turning movements, portage of boat study etc.
* The master plan does not give sufficient weight to the significance and health of the Yarra River to its aspirations. The frontage to the Yarra River and access it provides for river users is a unique setting and is instrumental to the value of the Parklands adjacent to it. The DMP should reference to the City of Melbourne’s important relationship with Parks Victoria in order to successfully implement the master plan.
* The master plan includes actions to improve lighting but none are included in the detailed proposals. Improving lighting behind and in-front of the boathouses will improve security for young athletes walking to and from the drop-off zones. Improved security measures including CCTV is also desirable for improving security for the wider community and athletes using the area.
* Whilst the master plan makes reference to the rowing precinct under the label of ‘Destination Melbourne’, the master plan should further acknowledge the historic association of rowing with the City of Melbourne and the Yarra River. This is a unique relationship that should be celebrated, encouraged and protected. The master plan should recognise that the sport has operational needs, including storage and access to the River for launching and recovery that can only occur at Princes Bridge. Where conflicting needs exist, we believe Rowing should be given precedence over other uses where those other uses can be met elsewhere.
* The master plan should consider identification of a rowing precinct to assist with wayfinding, commuter & traffic management within the area. The presence of boats, trestles, motor launches and boat trailers being loaded and unloaded presents some unique traffic management challenges which may benefit from marking entry and exit points to the rowing precinct.
* The master plan should include desilting of the Yarra River in front of the staging. It is suggested the action be amended to *In partnership with the Victorian Government and Parks Victoria, dredging of the Yarra River and the design and provision of a new boat landing at the rowing sheds, including improved design for the river bank recognizing that dredging is necessary, regardless of whether a new staging is provided.*
* Reconfiguring the exit from the Main Yarra Trail where it crosses Boathouse Drive so that it directly links to the cycle path that runs parallel with, and on the north side, of Alexandra Avenue (pages 40, 45 and 46) allows adequate room for towing vehicles turning into Boathouse Drive. This resolves two unfortunate aspects:

a) Cyclists travelling east arrive at Boathouse Drive facing away from vehicles turning left into Boathouse Drive from Alexandra Avenue, and

b) The obvious continuation from the Main Yarra Trail along Alexandra Avenue is obscured by the offset between the two paths.

* Appropriate signage, prepared in consultation with the rowing community to cover such issues as ‘drop off zone’ at the eastern end of the boathouses and ‘no cycling’ at both ends may help alter behaviour.
* Boathouses should be recognised in the description about cultural values and historical significance.
* Better recognising rowing as a user group under the discussion about providing facilities to meet future needs. As the group is different to users of the skate park, walkers and cyclists because of the relationship with the river.
* The number of rowing visits are estimated to be 200,000 to 300,000 people per year, which is significant for the small area.
* Rowing faces the same issue as other sports with more people participating and limited options for growth. What strategies can assist with successful management of growth in river use?
* Include Parks Victoria in the collaborative management of the parklands to coordinate management of the Yarra River with the parklands.

The rowing submission also provided a number of suggested additions to the descriptive background in the master plan, and to specific proposals.

9. Summary of key points from submissions provided by organisations

Submissions are provided by:

* Historic Heritage Section, Department of Environment and Energy
* Aboriginal Victoria, Department of Premier and Cabinet
* Shrine of Remembrance Trustees
* Australian Garden History Society
* National Trust
* Rotary Club of Melbourne
* Melbourne Grammar School
* Melbourne South Yarra Group
* Southbank Residents Association
* Protectors of Public Lands
* Astronomical Society of Victoria
* Brighton Residents for Urban Protection
* City of Port Phillip

(NB Submission from Rowing Victoria is reported on in section 8.)

**Historic Heritage Section, Department of Environment and Energy**

Officers provided feedback the overall draft master plan is consistent with the National Heritage values of the Domain Parklands and Memorial Precinct, particularly the actions to continue to promote community understanding and recognition of cultural heritage. They note the benefit of master plans to help manage cumulative impacts on heritage values.

A suggestion is made to provide further references to the National Heritage values of the precinct. A further suggestion is made to include an action to have a Heritage Management Plan for the Domain Parklands, noting that consideration would be needed to determine if this should be an action for all Land Managers.

**Aboriginal Victoria, Department of Premier and Cabinet**

Officers from Aboriginal Victoria provided technical advice during finalisation of the draft master plan.

Additional feedback was received during the consultation period with suggestions to implement a coordinated parklands approach to Cultural Heritage Management Plans.

It was further suggested that the management plan could explore the research potential to collect archaeo-botanical / palynological (pollen) samples, particularly in waterlogged deposits to reconstruct an environmental history of the area. A geophysical survey on the site of the Yarra Mission, as a way of attempting to identify Contact-period remains of structures could also be considered.

**Shrine of Remembrance Trustees**

The Shrine of Remembrance Trustees acknowledged the professionalism and respect for the Shrine demonstrated by Council throughout the development of the draft master plan . Their detailed submission spoke to matters of specific concern, clarification or amendment as it relates to the Shrine and its reserve. Feedback included but is not limited to:

* The Shrine is dedicated to the commemoration of service and sacrifice and should not be described as a park.
* Are cognisant of Council’s vision and wherever possible, without compromising their interests will act supportively
* Reinforcing the separate identities and management responsibilities, and that the master plan and statements about guiding future management relate specifically to the areas managed by the City of Melbourne.
* Concern that the vision to create “one parkland of many unique destinations” is completely inconsistent with their purpose, and addressing or removing this aspiration.
* Requested rectification of a land use anomaly in relation to Edmund Herring Oval
* Support improved wayfinding
* Holding concerns regarding the propose closure of Birdwood Avenue as a significant number of patrons are mobility impared
* Do not support the proposal for new path from Anzac Station as it is not aligned with pre-existing axial symmetry of paths

**Australian Garden History Society**

Given the important heritage significance of the parklands the organisation has a great interest in this complex space. Comments were provided on the following aspects of the master plan:

* Requesting all aspects of cultural heritage significance from the Victorian Heritage registration be cited, not just a summary.
* Requesting a more rigorous discussion of the impacts of the National Heritage list in the master plan.
* Suggesting the use of digital strategy to provide information about the heritage information and interpretation.
* Recognise the original Government house boundary on one of the plans.
* Corrections to naming conventions on a number of plans.
* Suggesting more defined landscape characters to include a mixture of deciduous, evergreen, conifers and palms as well as rows and stands of individual trees.
* The original layout, paths and design intent including view lines should be retained and respected as much as possible, but accept that a new path network will be required when Anzac station is completed.
* Improving signposting to La Trobe’s cottage.
* Would like to see detail of management plan to elevate horticultural complexity and management, particularly with regard to retaining historical design intent. Also intere3sted in species lists and planting plans.
* Supportive of the Arboretum. Interested to see it reflect historical plantings and where possible replacing exotic trees with the same species, allocating additional water or maintenance if required.
* Supportive of exploring and strengthening the missing Aboriginal heritage layer.
* Strongly agree with recommendations about memorials
* Agree with proposals to upgrade visitor facilities.
* Not supportive of picnic facilities in Kings Domain south.
* Encourage return of Domain road tram.
* Supportive of better coordination of events.
* Strongly oppose tree top walk.
* Generally agree with traffic, pedestrian and bicycle improvements as long as don’t detract from design intent of parklands. Pedestrian and bicycle access should be a priority.
* Staff car parking at Shrine and question if underground car park is being considered.
* Agree with importance of shared vision of management to ensure better experience, resource management and environmental services. However also recognise it is the collection of different sites and functions within the Domain Parklands which gives its unique layers of history and outstanding cultural heritage significance. This should not be homogenised.
* Would be interested to see consideration of Henley Lawn Landscape, complex path layout, missing avenues of Canary Island Date Palms and the Acacia collection, and treatment of the rockery south of the boathouses.

**National Trust**

The National Trust has an interest in ensuring that the wide range of natural, cultural, social and Indigenous heritage values of the Domain Parklands are protected and respected.

The National Trust is the custodian of La Trobe’s Cottage, the land on which is leased under the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978.*

The National Trust supports the finalisation of the Domain Parklands Master Plan, taking into account our comments below.

***Masterplan Values***

We support the fundamental principle in the plan that there be “no net loss of parkland” and that “future change should bring positive benefits to the Domain Parklands” (page 18). Furthering this, the National Trust suggests that the aim of the Masterplan should be focused toward increasing parkland and associated greenspace within. We support each of the 5 values outlined at this section of the plan.

***Masterplan Themes***

*Elevate horticultural complexity and management*

* Support the development and implementation of a management plan and guiding principles for horticultural work in the landscapes.
* Acknowledge that there are unusual and rare tree plantings across the Parklands, planted at various times of the parks development. The National Trust supports any plan that ensured the continued presence of significant, rare and unusual trees in the Domain
* Any tree with recognised heritage or commemorative significance be replaced like for like. That said, we are aware that climate change may have an effect on the useful life expectancy and maintenance of some of these trees, and decisions may need to be made about whether like for like replacement is viable. In such a case, we would expect that scientific evidence as to a change of species should be required to support this change. A solution may be to choose species which retain the same values that make a tree significant, and retain the same form or character as the tree to be replaced. The decision making process of replacing any commemorative plantings needs to be considered.
* The National Trust supports the proposal for a City Arboretum and for tree succession planning and population renewal on the Domain Parklands site.
* Support investigation and investment in alternative water supply systems

***Respect and reveal the Aboriginal cultural heritage***

* The National Trust agrees that acknowledgement of Aboriginal cultural heritage has been a missing layer in the current Domain Parklands and support the engagement approach with Traditional Owners for proposals for management, interpretation and access.
* Any consideration of using Aboriginal place names must be undertaken through meaningful consultation and with permissions of Traditional Owner groups.
* Strongly support the development of a joint Cultural Heritage Management Plan to guide the ongoing management of the landscape.

***Reflect cultural values and historical significance***

* The role of the parklands as a setting for St Kilda Road and the La Trobe’s Cottage should be added alongside Government House, the Shrine of Remembrance, Sidney Myer Music Bowl, the Melbourne Gardens and Observatory to the descriptions on p23.
* Support the action to promote an increase in community understanding and recognition of cultural heritage in the parklands.

***Manage memorials in Domain Parklands***

* Support the proposal that no further large memorials are to be placed in the Kings Domain, and that future memorialisation only be considered where it could become part of the landscape rather than as a specific element. The National Trust agrees that horticultural memorials are more consistent with the landscape character of the Domain Parklands. Suggest dating the updated Plaques and Memorials policy.

***Enhance visitor experience***

* The new ANZAC Station presents the opportunity to create a new entrance to the parklands, and a path also needs to be created to bring visitors to the entrance of La Trobe’s Cottage. We request that La Trobe’s Cottage be added to the list of actions at this point alongside the Melbourne Gardens and the Shrine of Remembrance, and to the improve entrances section. Also support initiatives to improve wayfinding and signage.
* Suggest that the City of Melbourne work in partnership with the National Trust on the establishment of a new entry to the Parklands through the ANZAC station precinct. We consider that La Trobe’s Cottage can play a role in telling the important stories of this significant cultural landscape, including under the themes of ‘civic and governance’ and ‘the settlement and planning of Melbourne’.
* The Edmund Herring Oval is of social significance for its association with generations of communities who have played and gathered at this location.
* Prior to possible installation of sports lighting at Edmund Herring Oval any impacts of this on the heritage values of the overall site, especially in relation to the use of the Melbourne Observatory site, should be considered. Further consultation should also be undertaken with the Astronomical Society of Victoria.

***Manage events***

* Support the proposal to manage the impacts of organised events on the heritage significance of the Domain Parklands, to maintain the health and condition of the landscape. Providing more significant pause times between events in the same location is recommended.

***Improve internal pathway networks***

* Recognising that there is a requirement to update pathways for accessibility, we suggest that limited changes should be made to general shape of paths as they pertain to the heritage of the Parklands. Several references in the Victorian Heritage Register Statement of Significance describe ‘curving paths’; ‘winding pathways’; ‘symmetrical path system’; and ‘diagonal paths’. Any changes to the established heritage path system should only be made if completely unavoidable. Consideration should be made to historic and heritage value of the existing (or lost) path systems in the planning of path networks, including within the Sidney Myer Music Bowl.
* Have reservations about the Tree Top walk proposal and would welcome opportunity to discuss this further.

***Reduce barrier and improve access over roads***

* Any consideration of Alexandra Avenue should also consider the design association with engineer Carlo Catani.
* Any consideration of future bridges across the Yarra River should be undertaken in consultation with the Birrarung Council, as it would significantly alter this section of river.

***Rethink the use of existing road space***

* The National Trust supports the City of Melbourne’s consideration of measures to reduce the impact of traffic and car parking within the Domain Parklands, especially with regard to the landscape character of the site.
* Consideration should be given to the development and formation of roadways in the history of the Domain Parklands. Any changes to the general shape of established road systems should only be made if completely unavoidable. These drives and associated landscaping (eg rockeries and avenue planting) are recognised in the Statement of Significance for the Domain Parklands.

***Car parking - support visitor access while adapting to future trends***

* The National Trust agrees that the parking of vehicles within the Shrine Reserve is inconsistent with the park values and is detrimental to the health of trees. One such tree that is parked under is a Long-Leaved Indian Pine (*Pinus roxburghii*), included in the National Trust Register of Significant Trees. We strongly support the action to minimise the parking of cars on the landscape within Kings Domain South, and submit that this should read ‘minimise and remove the parking of cars’ in this area. Removing car parking altogether under the Long-Leaved Indian Pine is strongly recommended.

*Create a framework for priorities and decision-making*

* Support the development of an implementation plan
* Support further community consultation on detailed plans
* Support review of the Masterplan for Council endorsement in 2028 as this provides an opportunity to review progress of actions under the plan and capture the community’s ongoing aspirations for the Parklands.

The National Trust is keen to work with the City of Melbourne in many of these initiatives as they relate to the La Trobe’s Cottage.

**Rotary Club of Melbourne**

The Club acknowledges the importance of the Domain Parklands and the broad scope of future actions that are needed to maintain this area as an important focus both environmentally and socially.

The Club considers it may be premature to include the proposal “Continue to contain plaques for Rotary commemoration within the current Rotary corner area”. The Club notes that there are upcoming centennial celebrations and it is likely that more tree dedications will be sought at these times. The Club would be keen to have any tree dedication outside of this area considered within the parameters of the Plaques and Memorials Policy. The Club requests that this recommendation be removed from the final master plan.

**Melbourne Grammar School**

The submission noted concern at the proposal to establish bus parking in Dallas Brooks Drive and the potential loss of car parking to create it. The restoration of Edmund Herring oval as a turf oval is strongly supported by the school. The school provided input to the feedback on the rowing precinct through the process with Rowing Victoria.

**Melbourne South Yarra Group**

A detailed submission was provided by the Melbourne South Yarra Group. Key topics of concern for the Melbourne South Yarra Group are summarised below. They requested that that those parts of the plan that they strongly object to are removed altogether.

*Prohibition of road closures – Metro Rail Project (MRP)*

It is impossible to predict what the traffic and parking requirements will be until the Metro Rail Project (MRP) is completed in 5 – 10 years by which time our population will also have increased significantly.

This must be explained in the Master Plan and also that the Master Plan will be revised following completion of the MRP and that in the meantime there will be no road closures.

While there is merit at an appropriate time in considering how all or parts of Linlithgow Avenue and Birdwood Avenue should be incorporated more effectively as part of the Parkland now is not the time and it should be deferred until well after completion of the MRP.

*Parkland Purpose*

The primary purpose and function of this Parkland is to provide a peaceful, green, restful and attractive open space where people can relax. The character and history of the Domain Parklands is of wide open grassed areas and trees and this must not be changed.

*Edmund Herring Oval*

This small community playing field and is completely unsuited to become a significant sporting venue due to its proximity to the Shrine and La Trobe’s cottage, traffic implications, inadequate parking. Synthetic surface and lighting towers would alienate this space from the parkland setting. Any changes to this oval precinct are opposed.

*Domain South – Precinct 05 (east of Dallas Brooks Drive)*

Residents oppose any changes to this area and do not support provision of any BBQs, picnic tables, or clutter. It should remain with the current open parkland and tree style.

Fitness equipment, which should be inconspicuous and limited in number, should only be located next to the Tan. Commercial operators conducting group personal training should continue to be prohibited in this area.

Understorey of native species should not be introduced here or anywhere else in the Domain Parkland as entirely incompatible with the character and history of these parklands.

The beauty, style and history of the Domain Parkland is of large open green spaces dotted with trees and that appearance and history must be retained.

*Bicycle Paths*

We agree it is important to provide bicycle paths to encourage commuters but we think a great deal more work needs to be undertaken before finalizing proposals for the area between Morrell Bridge and Princes Bridge. Suggestions include waiting until the Metro project is completed before deciding routes, no duplication of paths or dedicated paths, widen the existing riverside path, improve the path on the north of the river for commuters, design rumble strips into the paths to slow cyclists. It was noted that paths around the boathouses and through Southgate need further consideration.

*Parking*

The Draft Plan proposes the removal of parking in Alexandra Avenue, part of Linlithgow Avenue and possibly Birdwood Avenue if the same changes were to be made in the future.

We agree there should be no all -day parking in Linlithgow Avenue, Birdwood Avenue and Alexandra Avenue or Anderson Street and Domain Road. These streets should not be parking lots but preserved for visitors to the gardens, arts complex, riverside barbecues and sporting events on the north side of the river.

However, parking spaces in Alexandra Avenue, Linlithgow Avenue and Birdwood Avenue must not be significantly reduced although that could be part of the traffic and parking review when the MRP has finished.

Any reduction of that parking it will increase the pressure on nearby residential streets which at the very least will need additional protection.

*Public events*

The number of fun runs and public events on and around the Tan and parklands is increasing and must be controlled and limited. They impact on the parkland, the enjoyment of the area by others, and on residents with traffic and parking consequences. The proposals to move some events to the north of the river event precinct which is well serviced with toilet facilities is supported.

*Paths, signs, barbeques and other clutter*

The Plan proposes adding further paths which in our view unnecessarily divide the lawns and break up the areas to the detriment of the park. There should be restraint in provision of paths, signs, barbecues, fitness equipment which divide, clutter and diminish the essential character of the Domain Parklands.

*Native Species Planting*

The planting of native species understoreys is incompatible with the character and history of the Domain Parklands and should not be introduced in Tom’s Block or anywhere else.

*Music Bowl*

Proposals to improve the visual and physical impact of the Bowl on the park are supported, in particular better screening and integration of ticket boxes, buildings and work areas.

*Bridges and river landings*

We strongly oppose another bridge over the river. It is unnecessary as the Swan Street Bridge is nearby and it would visually spoil the vista from the river into the city.

A footbridge over Alexandra Avenue is unnecessary as St Kilda Road and the existing pedestrian crossing at Linlithgow Avenue are adequate.

Construction of another river landing for the purpose of access to the Botanic Gardens is completely unnecessary as the existing ones are adequate.

**Southbank Residents Association**

Members of the Southbank Residents Association attended a walk in the parklands and provided a submission following this briefing. The association note that the masterplan is very positive with a clear commitment to improving the amenity of the Domain Parklands which are so vitally important to the physical and mental health of the growing population of Southbank.

Access to open space is a critical component to liveability in a high-density built-up area such as Southbank, and is something the precinct clearly lacks. The Domain parklands are critical as the major source of open space within walking distance to many of Southbank’s residents.

Some of the key areas of interest of the SRA included the provision of:

* more toilet facilities
* rubbish bins
* pedestrian connections over city road to connect the parklands
* separation of cyclists and pedestrians on thoroughfares
* public outdoor gym equipment near The Tan track
* more child friendly activities, and
* Improved lighting to allow for a safer after dark environment.

They considered that these have been addressed in the master plan.

It is the particular concern of Southbank Residents that the Domain Parklands be protected and nurtured for the benefit of the whole community now and into the future. Considering the increasing population and its density, current green-space must be retained and sustainably managed for the benefit of future residents and workers of Southbank. They described how access to this green-space facilitates relaxation, socialising and physical recreation. Their submission noted that many of the identified improvements are essential for making these areas accessible and enjoyable for all people, which currently is not the case.

We believe that the recommendations of the report should be prioritised in future budgets.

**Protectors of Public Lands Victoria**

The PPLVic support the acknowledgement of the role of the Domain Parklands for passive recreation, relief from the urban environment, recognition of the environmental service function and the parklands as ‘lungs for the city’. They also support the values that there be no net loss of parkland and any future change would have positive benefits to the Domain Parklands. They agree that the highest use of the parklands is unstructured recreation and hope the emphasis will be on this for the next 20 years.

Areas of concern for the PPLVic include:

* Fragmentation of grassy areas through increasing paths
* No support for synthetic surface at Edmund Herring Oval
* Possible clutter in the way signage, fitness equipment and BBQs are provided.
* Disturbance of tranquillity with major events and fireworks.
* What building development is proposed with the Visitor Centre and any potential loss of recreation space? Also querying if the education centre would require more building.
* Lighting improvements need to consider light spill impacting on wildlife, birds and activities at the Observatory.

**Astronomical Society of Victoria**

A comprehensive submission from the ASV and submissions from a number of its members were received. They describe how the Melbourne Observatory is a significant historic site at a State, National and International level. The great Melbourne Telescope is being restored to return to the site. The submissions raise concerns about:

* Current building conditions,
* Light pollution which affects performance of the telescopes and limits the amount of starlight visible,
* The lack of appropriate recognition of the historic and cultural importance of the Melbourne Observatory, and
* “Inappropriate” uses of the Melbourne Observatory grounds.

**Brighton Residents for Urban Protection**

The BRUP object to loss of open space in the Domain Parklands.

**City of Port Phillip**

Officers from the City of Port Phillip were supportive of the master plan. Their feedback and consideration included but is not limited to:

* the identification of the different landscape characters in the Domain Parkland and importance of preserving significant view lines
* the 20 year approach with a review and update required after 10 years
* supporting planning improvements to the landscape succession, urban ecology and biodiversity
* the important role of the parklands to our community in providing a setting for many state significant locations and buildings as well as civic, ceremonial, recreational and landscape experiences
* intuitive wayfinding that meets the needs for people of all abilities
* a hierarchy of paths that provide connections within, to the city and surrounding suburbs

The master plan is as an effective graphic communication document with a clear vision, objectives and action plans.

They provided the following suggestions:

*Improve People Movement and Access*

* Include reference to the important St Kilda Rd interface with the parklands, the St Kilda Rd bike corridor and connections to the existing and proposed bike paths in the precinct.
* The pedestrian and cycling connections to St Kilda Rd and beyond are important and should be mentioned, especially around the Anzac Station area which follows down to Albert Road Reserve and Albert Park Lake, linking together some of Melbourne’s key open spaces.

*Management and Partnerships to Build Resilience*

* The importance of working relationships with other Councils should also be referred to in this section, in particular the importance for a shared vision and consistency along St Kilda Rd.

*Road Space and car parking*:

* Council support repurposing car parks for improved public realm benefits, to prioritise space for pedestrians, cyclists and trialling temporary road closures for events. The closure of Linlithgow Avenue is a great example and approach of prioritising pedestrians in the parkland setting by changing the language and appearance of roads.
1. Dean Stewart is a Wemba Wemba-Wergaia man of Victoria, with over 25 years’ experience creating, co-ordinating and conducting Cultural Education, tourism, conservation and interpretation programs [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. ‘Desire lines’ is a term used to describe a track where people walk, that is not a formal path. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)