



PARKS & LEISURE  
AUSTRALIA

# Open Space Planning and Design Guide



PLA Vic/Tas  
June 2013



**Disclaimer:**

The planning tools and strategies outlined in this guide are consistent with the open space planning approaches and guidance contained in the Victoria Planning Provisions and the Growth Areas Authority's Precinct Structure Planning Guidelines. At the time of writing, the state planning policy framework was under review. Every attempt has been made to ensure that references to the state planning policies are accurate at the time of publication.

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- Parks and Leisure Australia;
- City of Melbourne;
- Hume City Council;
- City of Ballarat;
- Shire of Wellington;
- City of Banyule;
- City of Bayside; and
- City of Casey.

The project was initiated through the Open Space Planners Network (OSPN). The members of the OSPN also contributed through workshops and feedback on key issues and draft documentation.

Funding was provided by the Department of Planning and Community Development to assist in the development of the Open Space Planning and Design Guide.

The guide is also informed by:

- a draft working document prepared by SGS Economic and Planning, HM Leisure Planning, and Land Design Partnership Pty Ltd;
- a significant voluntary contribution made by Sharon Sykes, Cathy Kiss and Bruce Fordham; and
- the knowledge and expertise of members of the Local Government Open Space Planners Network.



## FOREWORD

The Open Space Planning and Design Guide is a collaborative initiative of the Vic/Tas Region of Parks and Leisure Australia, the Victorian Department of Planning and Community Development and the Open Space Planners Network in Victoria.

For this project, the Open Space Planners Network has been supported and represented by the Cities of Melbourne, Hume, Banyule, Bayside, Casey and Ballarat and the Shire of Wellington.

This document sits in a broader industry context to achieve quality non-contested outcomes for open space provision in changing communities. Local Government plays a critical role in setting policy and considering planning applications that determine the future of public space for the benefit of all residents within their communities. Parks and Leisure Australia and the Open Space Planners' Network will continue to work with the State Government, various agencies and the development industry to improve policy and regulation for open space provision.

It is important that the guide is reviewed and improved regularly by Parks and Leisure Australia and the Open Space Planners Network so that it remains relevant for all open space, recreation and statutory planners, as well as the wide range of other planners, designers, managers, developers and agencies that will find it a valuable and useful tool.

This Open Space Planning and Design Guide advocates on behalf of the industry that:

- Open space is vitally important in the development and sustainability of communities;
- Sufficient quantity and quality of open space is critical in the planning of communities to ensure that long term social needs can be addressed and environmental values can be preserved; and
- A no 'net loss' policy for the provision of open space is a sound policy position for local government to consider so that open space is preserved for future generations.

This document guides:

- Development of sound and consistent policy across all local governments to inform open space contributions through planning provisions at a local level;
- Assessment of planning applications that statutory planners will consider as new communities are planned and existing communities are regenerated;
- Strategies to assist local government prepare planning scheme amendments and defend local planning decisions for open space contributions at Council and at the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal;
- Approaches that can be applied to the numerous settlement types that exist in Victoria that are determined by government policy and the urban, regional and rural nature of the state; and
- Planning processes that Councils will undertake to plan and develop open space and achieve the best outcomes from land that is available.

Parks and Leisure Australia is committed to the task of increasing awareness of the value and importance of open space across public and private sectors so that quality space is acquired, preserved and appropriately developed and managed for the benefit of all Victorians.

Parks and Leisure Australia and its partners commend this Open Space Planning and Design Guide to you and your organisation.

**Kevin Lowe**  
**PLA National President**

**Paul Jane**  
**Vic/Tas Region President**

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## SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION

### In this Section:

- ✓ **The Open Space Planning and Design Guide is introduced**
- ✓ **Some guidance is provided about How to Use and Reference the Guide**
- ✓ **The Community Benefit of Open Space is introduced and summarised**

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The provision of public open space is a basic element of settlement planning and an essential component of community life. Public open space supports a broad spectrum of activities and interactions between people and nature and sustains critical environmental functions for the health of communities.

Along with other community infrastructure and services, open spaces are significant public assets that contribute to the development of liveable and sustainable communities.

Unprecedented population growth and changing demographics are increasing the demand for public open spaces to support diverse recreational activities. Concurrently Victoria's urban landscape is rapidly changing to keep pace with growth.

The success of open space provision is strongly influenced by sound strategic planning, good urban planning and design elements and a good understanding of recreation and participation trends.

### 1.1 ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide has been prepared to assist in the planning and development of a range of sustainable open spaces that meet the sport, leisure and recreation needs of diverse communities across Victoria.

The guide:

- *focuses on the planning and provision of land that is publicly owned and/or managed for use by the community;*
- *recognises the value and the preservation of conservation/heritage lands (by virtue of Commonwealth and State Legislation) having value as being maintained in its existing condition and state;*
- *provides practical planning tools and implementation strategies drawn from existing legislation and a wealth of information available across the planning, leisure and sports industry sectors;*
- *encourages collaboration across a range of fields of expertise including but not limited to open space planning, statutory planning, strategic planning, recreation planning, environmental planning, conservation and natural resource management, sports management and planning, landscape design, urban design, community health and wellbeing, and heritage planners; and*
- *discusses issues about open space provision that have arisen across settlement types experiencing population growth, increased urban densities and demographic changes.*

It is envisaged that this guide will be the start of an evolving resource that has the capacity to strengthen the industry's ability to respond to emerging challenges and improve the planning, design and provision of public open space.

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#### 1.1.1 HOW TO USE THE OPEN SPACE PLANNING AND DESIGN GUIDE

The information contained within this guide is applicable to a range of people and for a range of circumstances. The following chart suggests how the information may be useful in answering some common queries that arise for local government and where information might be sourced. The guide can be read from the beginning or by selecting a specific section.

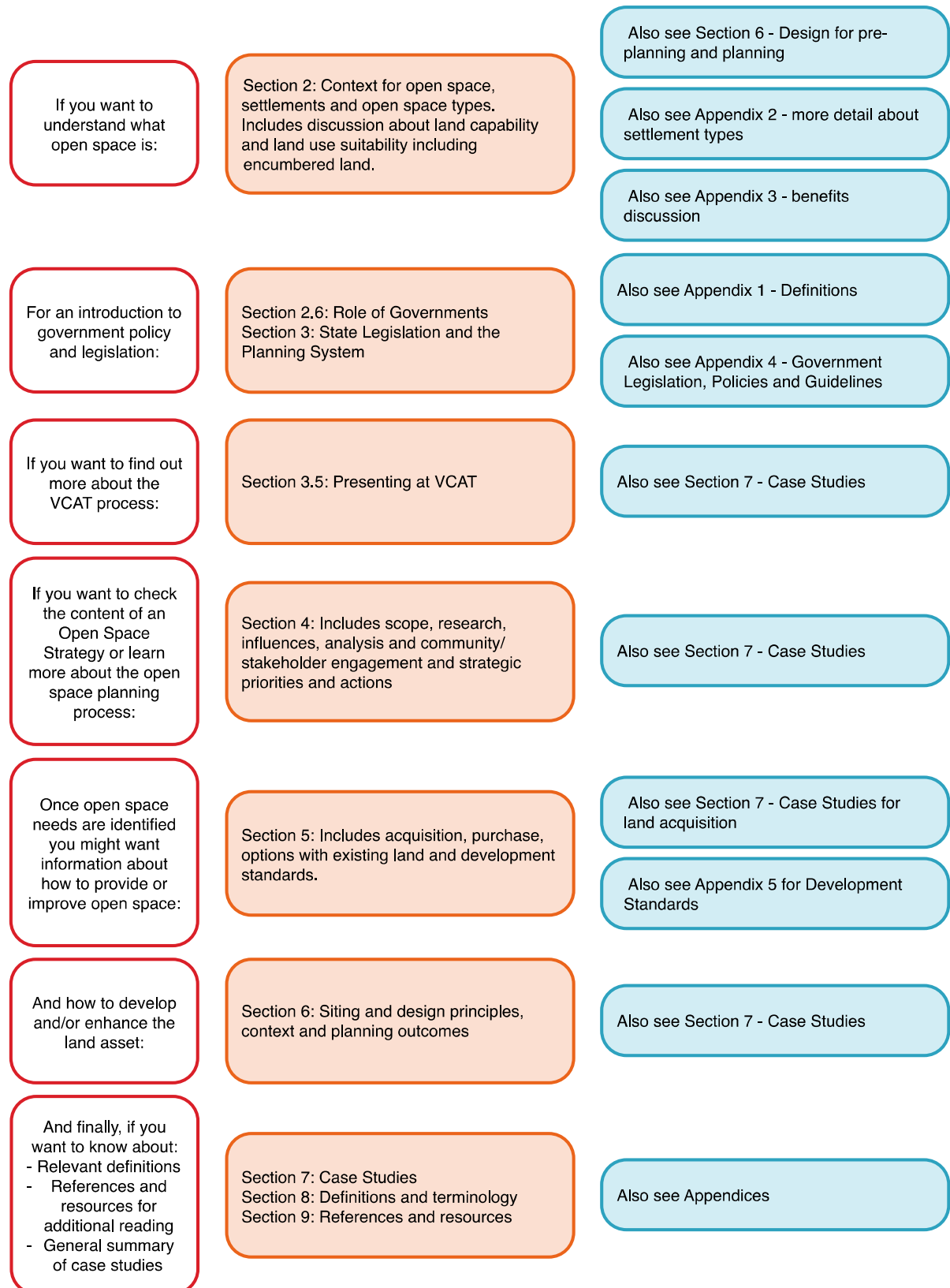


Figure 1 How to use this guide



## 1.2 OPEN SPACE – THE COMMUNITY BENEFITS

Open space provides an array of social, health, economic and environmental benefits to individuals and to the community as a whole. In all its open space is an essential ingredient for enhancing the liveability of an area and improving the quality of life of its residents.

Increasing densities, population growth, climate change and resource depletion will place further importance on the provision of quality open spaces.<sup>1</sup> Easy access to well designed and diverse open spaces will assist in not only managing the impacts of these challenges, but also enhancing the benefits that open spaces provide.

There is a significant body of [local and international research and knowledge](#) (Appendix 3) of the wide ranging benefits of open space, and these include:

- **[Social Benefits](#)** - Open spaces provide a range of social benefits which are increasingly being recognised as important drivers in shaping future communities. Open spaces:
  - Connect and build strong communities by providing opportunities for local people to come together for a range of leisure, cultural and celebratory activities;
  - Enhance opportunities for social cohesion and inclusion; and
  - Improve liveability in urban environments by offering affordable recreation opportunities for all community sectors.
- **[Health Benefits](#)** – Access to open spaces
  - encourages physical activity;
  - enhances physical and mental health;
  - helps reduce the risk of developing chronic diseases;
  - assists in recovery from mental fatigue; and
  - enhances children's development and well-being.
- **[Environmental Benefits](#)** – Green open spaces provide both aesthetic and environmental benefits, including:
  - protection of areas of conservation, biodiversity or cultural heritage value;
  - managing climate change impacts by:
    - providing shade and cooling;
    - contributing to stormwater management;
    - contributing to urban heat abatement; and
  - reduction of air and noise pollution.
- **[Economic Benefits](#)** - Local, regional and state economies benefit significantly from various types of open spaces.
  - Parks are a major drawcard for recreation and tourism industries and significant sources of employment for local communities and flow on economic benefits.
  - Active open spaces serve the same purpose on competition days by attracting participants and spectators beyond the district and this has significant flow on economic benefits.

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<sup>1</sup> Parks Forum (2008) The Value of Parks, produced by Parks Forum in partnership with IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas and The People and Parks Foundation, May 2008 accessed at <http://www.parksforum.org/cms/pages/The-Value-of-Parks.html> July 2012

## SECTION 2 CONTEXT FOR OPEN SPACE

### In this Section:

- ✓ **Public Open Space is defined**
- ✓ **Settlement Types are discussed**
- ✓ **Different types of Open Space are identified**
- ✓ **Open Space Catchments are introduced**
- ✓ **Land Capability and Land Suitability are compared and discussed**
- ✓ **The roles of the different tiers of Government in Open Space delivery are summarised**

### 2.1 WHAT IS PUBLIC OPEN SPACE?

There are varying definitions of public open space in use across all levels of government and the planning and recreation sectors. Some definitions focus on how the open space is used, while others focus on the land type.

For the purposes of this publication, the following definitions of public open space adapted from the Precinct Structure Planning Guidelines will be used:

**Table 1 Definitions: open space**

<b>Public Open Space:</b> Land that is set aside for public recreation or public resort; or as parklands; or for similar purposes. Incorporates active and passive open space.
<b>Active Open Space:</b> Land set aside for the primary purpose of formal outdoor sports by the community.
<b>Passive Open Space:</b> Open space that is set aside for parks, gardens, linear corridors, conservation bushlands, nature reserves, public squares and community gardens that are made available for passive recreation, play and unstructured physical activity.

Throughout the guide the use of the terms “public open space” and “open space” are interchangeable. In general terms open space will refer to the land that is provided by public authorities – where this is not the case, clarification will be provided.

[Appendix 1](#) contains a number of other definitions contained in key government and planning documents and guides relevant to the planning and delivery of local open space specific for recreation purposes.

### 2.2 WHAT ARE THE SETTLEMENT TYPES?

The planning and design of open spaces require both an understanding of individual municipalities as a whole, and of the actual location or settlement type that proposed open space is to sit within.

Some municipalities include more than one settlement type, each with distinctive characteristics that may influence what types of open spaces are required and how these may be provided.

Typically settlements are categorised according to their geographic location, and while their definition and use varies across councils, they generally fall within the following broad categories:

Table 2 Definitions: settlement types

<p><b>Urban</b></p> <p>These are well established areas located in the inner, middle or outer areas of metropolitan Melbourne. These areas are all within the Urban Growth Boundary. Inner and middle urban areas include municipalities located within 10km and 20 km of the CBD respectively. Outer areas are located beyond 20 km of the CBD and may include the already established areas of growth area municipalities</p>
<p><b>Growth</b></p> <p>These are areas on the fringe of metropolitan Melbourne that have been or are subject to a precinct structure planning process for the development of green field sites and in some instances can include smaller towns or farming communities. Included within this category are those large brown field developments or other areas identified for urban regeneration that are subject to a precinct structure planning process. These areas are also within the Urban Growth Boundary.</p>
<p><b>Peri-urban</b></p> <p>Peri-urban areas are the non-urban areas close to cities and towns. They have a relationship to both the urban areas they surround as well as regions in which they are located.</p>
<p><b>Regional</b></p> <p>Regional areas include the larger cities and towns that focus on employment, education and health services, and are experiencing some growth. Regional areas include both existing urban and growth areas.</p>
<p><b>Rural</b></p> <p>Rural areas comprise smaller towns or farming communities. Within these areas, peri urban settlements may emerge where the residential growth boundary expands into rural communities</p>

Coastal communities may be found in each of the above settlement types and may experience seasonal population variation due to tourism.

It is important to note that while each of these settlement types may contain similar types of development and supporting infrastructure (such as activity/commercial centres, residential developments, industrial sites, commercial/employment hubs, community and leisure centres, utilities etc), each face different challenges and opportunities that may influence open space provision.

An understanding of how the following factors present in each of the settlement types will assist in determining the quantity, distribution and type of open spaces that may be required:

- Population growth or decline;
- Demographic profile;
- Housing densities, including access to private open spaces;
- Access to essential infrastructure i.e. public transport, employment or commercial/activity hubs; and
- Access to natural assets or physical landmarks e.g. state and metropolitan parks; coastal resorts and foreshores, hinterlands, major rivers and lakes etc.

These factors are discussed in detail in [Appendix 2 - Overview of Settlement Types and Implications for Open Space Planning](#).

## 2.3 WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF OPEN SPACE?

A consistent and clear approach to defining and classifying open space is important throughout the whole planning and design process.

Various approaches have been used over time to classify public open space and these have tended to focus on the following, or a combination of the following:

- Land ownership (Crown land, State Agency, Local Government);
- Use or function (sports field, biodiversity, conservation, drainage, heritage);
- Vegetation/topography (floodplain, ridgeline, bushland); and/or
- Visitor / user catchment (state, regional, district, local).

Table 3 categorises open space by its broad primary land use and highlights that some open space sites:

- can serve many different primary and secondary functions, thus addressing a broader range of community needs; and
- not primarily provided for recreation may have the capacity to meet important recreation needs.

This highlights that open space planning should not be undertaken in isolation from broader land use planning processes.

**Table 3 Examples of public open space categories, primary uses and potential secondary uses**

Categories / Descriptions	Primary Use	Examples of Potential Secondary Uses
<b>Conservation and Heritage</b>		
Land primarily set aside to protect and enhance areas with significant biodiversity, environmental, or cultural value.	Conservation, protection or enhancement of a highly valuable environmental, cultural or biodiversity resource. Examples include: National/state parks Regional/metropolitan parks State forests Areas of remnant vegetation	Unstructured recreational activities may be accommodated provided there is no impact on environmental/heritage areas, such as walking cycling Nature appreciation Heritage appreciation Fire management Scientific study
<b>Natural or Semi-natural, landscapes and amenity</b>		
Land set aside to add or protect the character of an area, including areas with some environmental or cultural value.	Enhancement or protection of the natural or semi-natural character or attractiveness of an area or resource. Examples include: Wetlands and stream frontages Historic areas Buffers between different land uses Ridge lines Habitat corridors	Recreational activities compatible with the natural, semi natural or landscape values may be accommodated, such as walking, cycling, nature appreciation Nature conservation, protection and enhancement Nature study and other educational activities Water management Fire management Scientific study
<b>Parklands and Gardens</b>		
Land which may have some modifications to support community social interaction, unstructured recreation and well-being uses, including for natural appreciation and reflection.	Established for a range of structured or unstructured activities, community recreation or cultural activities. Examples include: Landscaped parklands and gardens Formal lawn areas / open areas Playgrounds Pocket parks Botanical Gardens Passive spaces (nodes)	Community events Community gardens Picnics Weddings / celebrations Play

<b>Linear open space and trails</b>		
Linear reserves often on or alongside rivers and creeks, drainage easements, habitat corridors, foreshores and some utility reserves (ie pipelines, railway reserves and power lines).	<p>Primarily established to ensure effective functioning of natural processes; to protect fauna and flora corridors; and to provide off-road pathways and trails</p> <p>Linear trails may also provide links to the broader open space network, community or activity hubs and/or other areas of interest.</p> <p>Examples include: River, creek, drainage easements Coastal/foreshores reserves Flood plains Habitat corridors Off-road paths / Rail Trails</p>	<p>Walking and cycling trails Horse riding / bridle trails Commuter travel Nature appreciation Informal recreation</p>
<b>Active Open Spaces</b>		
Land which has been modified to support structure sports and recreation.	<p>Established primarily for structured team sports and active recreation in an outdoor setting, including training and competition. Generally includes built infrastructure to support competition.</p> <p>Examples include: Sports fields Bowling greens Tennis / netball courts Athletics tracks</p>	<p>May accommodate unstructured community or individual use when not required for primary purpose.</p> <p>May include informal lawns, play, picnic and other facilities in the peripheral</p> <p>Community and cultural events Emergency/fire refuges or meeting points Buffering/amenity</p>
<b>Civic Spaces</b>		
Land which has been modified to support a range of informal activities.  Examples include: Civic squares/areas Plazas and malls Promenades	<p>Established primarily to provide areas for family or community activities, gatherings and events.</p> <p>Civic events Passive use for workers Neighbourhood meeting spaces Organised events</p>	<p>Alfresco dining or entertainment Public expos</p>
<b>Utilities and Services</b>		
Land reserved for urban and non-urban infrastructure for utilities and support services.	<p>Reserved primarily for infrastructure utilities and support services.</p> <p>Examples include: Pipe easements Retarding basins / dams Power line easements Railway line buffers Cemeteries/memorials areas</p>	<p>In some instances, such land may be available for community recreation use when not being used for its primary purpose.</p> <p>Linear trails Habitat corridors / refuges Sports fields</p>
<b>Undeveloped/Proposed</b>		
Land acquired, zoned or proposed to be zoned for open space purposes to protect its assets or to meet identified or community needs.	<p>May be identified in an Open Space Strategy or land use planning plan.</p>	<p>Sites for which future uses have not yet been identified, for example: Former school sites Industrial sites Former landfill sites</p>
<b>Coastal and Beaches</b>		
Open space areas that form part of a foreshore, and parklands.	<p>Conservation of natural areas and coastal systems Beach related recreation activity.</p>	
<b>Plantations</b>		
Land used primarily for tree growing.	<p>Forestry Water Catchment</p>	<p>Wildlife habitat Recreation Carbon sink Native vegetation offset</p>

Catchment is a term often used to determine the distribution of public open space and can be effectively used in conjunction with categories, hierarchy and sizes of open space sites.

The definition of open space catchment is unique in each individual context as it can be applied differently. However, in essence, a catchment refers to a “sphere of influence” of open space in terms of travel, use and its role within the open space system.

Catchment can be explained using distance (“as the crow flies” or walkability distance), travel time, role of the site, scale, quality and level of services, and in some cases even subsequent maintenance and resourcing required for effective asset management.

In the following table, catchment has been used in conjunction with hierarchy, size and category. The result is an integrated definition of open space that considers a range of factors and provides an excellent planning tool for local government to establish a successful open space system and to develop individual open space sites.

Table 4 is based on a sample of a variety of open space planning documents and can be used by Councils as a guide in determining their own open space hierarchy.

**Table 4 Description of open space catchments**

<p><b>Local or Small Local</b></p> <p>Open space serving a local catchment such that users are within safe walking distance. This could be in the range of 150m or 300m, depending on the population density and presence of barriers, etc.</p> <p>Size is usually less than .5 hectare and could be quite small sites. A minimum width of 30m could be required to achieve a reasonable proportioned open space.</p> <p>Examples include parklands, gardens and civic spaces.</p>
<p><b>Neighbourhood</b></p> <p>Open space serving an area generally with a walking distance of around 400 metres from dwellings. Size generally a minimum of .75 or 1 hectare and can be up to 2ha. A minimum width of 50m could be required to achieve a reasonable proportioned open space.</p> <p>Generally provided for residents in a single neighbourhood.</p> <p>Examples include parklands and gardens.</p>
<p><b>Sub District</b></p> <p>Open space serving three neighbourhoods.</p> <p>Size generally 5-6 hectares</p> <p>Generally provide several recreation nodes offering a range of opportunities.</p> <p>Provision of sporting facilities will depend on the settlement type and the specific catchments that relate to individual sports and types of facilities.</p> <p>Passive recreation provision is important as either the primary open space provision or to complement a sporting use.</p>
<p><b>District</b></p> <p>Open space serving around six neighbourhoods or a population catchment area of 15,000 to 25,000 people.</p> <p>Size generally up to 10 hectares</p> <p>Generally provide for a wide range of recreational activities including facilities for organised sports.</p> <p>Informal recreation and passive use of open space at this level is also very important.</p> <p>Accessible to residents by safe walking and cycling routes. Where provided beyond 1km from residences, will also cater for visitors arriving by car.</p> <p>Examples include district sports fields and conservation reserves</p>
<p><b>Township</b></p> <p>Typically used in rural areas to describe open space that services a local township area and its surrounding localities / villages.</p> <p>Size can up to 10 hectares and this open space is likely to be home for the towns outdoor sporting and recreation facilities such as playing fields, outdoor courts, pavilion / hall and parkland. The passive recreation use and connectivity features of this open space will be important to ensure accessibility for the whole community.</p>

Will usually be central in a township and accessible by car for the surrounding community.

#### **Municipal**

Open space providing for the needs of the whole municipality. Might be located a minimum of 2km from residences, not necessarily needing to be in safe walking distance, therefore would provide car parking capability.

Minimum of 3 ha would be reasonable for municipal open space.

Open space at a municipal level may be specialised for specific sporting infrastructure. It will be important to ensure that informal recreation and passive activities are well provided for.

#### **Regional**

Open space serving catchment including and beyond the municipality, including neighbouring municipalities.

Size generally 10-30 hectares.

Also includes significant sites of local or state historic, cultural and/or environmental significance.

#### **State**

Open space serving an intra or interstate catchment.

Usually associated with site specific environmental, landscape or cultural values.

State significant open spaces usually managed by state agencies, often in partnership with Council.

Examples include National Parks and State Forests / Forest Parks.

The open space planning and design process needs to consider the full range of open space types and catchments to ensure that land is fit for purpose. This will ensure that a mix of opportunities is provided for community use and that the full range of social, environmental and economic benefits can be achieved.

## 2.4 LAND CAPABILITY

### 2.4.1 WHY LAND CAPABILITY ASSESSMENT IS NECESSARY (PARTICULARLY IN GREEN FIELD DEVELOPMENTS)

As land is a limited resource and the competition between land use alternatives is complex, knowledge of physical constraints identified from a land capability assessment becomes a major consideration in any planning exercise. Building a solution to these constraints or potential problems into the planning phase of a project provides a better longer term outcome.

Land capability should not be confused with land suitability. Land suitability is the assessment of how suitable a particular site is for a particular use, and depends on land capability and a range of other factors such as proximity to centres of population, land tenure, attractiveness of landscape, heritage, cultural value and consumer demand.

### 2.4.2 WHEN IS LAND CAPABILITY ASSESSMENT REQUIRED?

#### INDIVIDUAL SITES

Land capability assessment should be conducted where one or more of the following are involved:

- The site is greater than 5 ha in size and a significant proportion of the site will be developed;
- Road construction is involved; and
- The average slope of the site is over 10 degrees and a significant proportion of the site will be developed.

For all these situations an **initial assessment** is required which will involve determining the erosion risk and general soil/slope based limitations.

## FURTHER PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

A more comprehensive assessment (full assessment) will be required which involves:

- Determining the engineering risks the proposal may encounter;
- Determining the mitigation measures required to contain any problems;
- Assessing the cost, land take or other limitations arising from mitigation measures; and
- Reviewing appropriateness of proposed land use in the light of the preceding analysis.

### 2.5 LAND SUITABILITY

Clause 56.05-2 of the Victorian Planning Provisions provides some guidance about the type of land that should be provided as open space. The following is an extract that follows the Standards of the clause:

Public open space should:

- Be provided along foreshores, streams and permanent water bodies.
- Be linked to existing or proposed future public open spaces where appropriate.
- Be integrated with floodways and encumbered land that is accessible for public recreation.
- Be suitable for the intended use.
- Be of an area and dimensions to allow easy adaptation to different uses in response to changing community active and passive recreational preferences.
- Maximise passive surveillance.
- Be integrated with urban water management systems, waterways and other water bodies.
- Incorporate natural and cultural features where appropriate.

When considering land for suitability as open space it is important to consider whether the land is 'fit for purpose' for the intended open space use. As this is not a 'black and white' assessment, careful consideration will need to be given to what the intended public open space would be used for both now and in the future. The defined categories of open space will be useful in helping to identify the likely uses of an open space site.

By way of example, active open space generally requires land that is unencumbered, that is land that is suitable for development.

It is reasonable and 'common practice' for Councils to require that unencumbered land that is suitable for open space development be provided in addition to encumbered land (that may also be handed over for local government ownership and management).

The provision of suitable land for the establishment of open space is an important one that many Councils regularly face in the assessment of planning applications. Historically many open space areas have been developed on sites that are not suitable for residential or other productive development – it is often the land 'leftover' that a developer will hand over to local government – this land is known as encumbered land and has been defined in Table 5:

**Table 5 Definition: Encumbered land (source: Precinct Structure Planning Guidelines, Growth Areas Authority, 2009)**

#### **Encumbered land**

Land that is constrained for development purposes. It includes easements for powerlines, sewer, gas, waterways/drainage, retarding basins/wetlands, landfill, conservation and heritage areas. This land may be used for a range of activities e.g. walking trails, sportsfields. This is not provided as a credit against public open space requirements. However, regard is taken to the availability of encumbered land when determining the open space requirement.



Further to this definition, a more comprehensive list of encumbered land sites could include the following:

- Easement/location of transformer/control boxes for utilities
- Drainage
- Flood/inundation land
- Land subject to overlays within the local planning scheme (e.g. heritage, cultural, wildfire, LSIO)
- Powerlines, transmission lines
- Conservation/biodiversity
- Retarding function
- Slope/escarpment, gullies
- Land that is unsuitable for building on
- Road reserves
- Waterways

In considering the use of encumbered land, it is important to identify appropriate primary and secondary functions for the site, while also pursuing unconstrained sites elsewhere for a broader range of functions. In this sense, encumbered land should be seen as an adjunct to unencumbered open space and it should be planned and designed to be integrated with it.

Unencumbered land, or land that is suitable for development, will be required for some open space types.

Some examples of how land may be assessed for open space provision when encumbrances exist are in Table 6.

**Table 6 Descriptions of land encumbrance**

Type of encumbrance	Open space uses that might be suitable
<b>Flood prone land (LSIO - Land Subject to Inundation Overlay)</b>	Could be pathway as part of linear reserve. Could be informal active recreation and/or sport training ground.
<b>Drainage basin</b>	Depending on flooding rating (frequency), could be informal active recreation and/or sport training ground. Often not suitable for children's play.
<b>Road reserve</b>	May provide short term additional green spaces and or for the purpose of linkages and pathways.
<b>Easements</b>	Where infrastructure exists (e.g. transformers, control boxes) – NOT suitable for open space Where open spaces under transmission lines or over underground pipes, suitability may be approved for linear corridors or pathways.
<b>Waterways</b>	Water component NOT suitable as open space

While conservation and environment land may be considered encumbered land as it may restrict recreational use and access, it is important to recognise the significant value of the land in protecting factors such as biodiversity, conservation, vegetation, habitat as well as cultural and historic values.

## 2.6 ROLE OF GOVERNMENTS IN OPEN SPACE DELIVERY

In Victoria, the majority of public open spaces are generally owned and managed by the Commonwealth and State Governments (i.e. the Crown), public authorities and Local Government.

A number of Government policies and Legislative Frameworks directly and/or indirectly influence open space delivery. It is important to understand and consider the range of conditions, requirements and opportunities contained within these frameworks when planning open space systems.

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### 2.6.1 COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT

The Commonwealth Government is mainly associated with national parks and reserves established to protect areas of environmental, biodiversity or cultural significance. In many cases, state governments and agencies are responsible for the ongoing management of these parks under various types of agreements, delegations, etc.

When planning for open space, it is essential to consider the provisions contained in the following national legislation.

- **[Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999](#)**  
This legislation focuses on matters of national environmental significance, which includes listed threatened species and communities, listed migratory species, Ramsar wetlands of international importance, Commonwealth marine environment, world heritage properties, national heritage places, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and nuclear projects. This is particularly relevant to refer to if you have (or are adjacent to) an area with threatened species or a place on the National or World Heritage list.
- **[Native Title Act 1993](#)**  
The Native Title Act recognises and protects the native title rights and interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across Australia. It provides a way of acknowledging the existence of native title and sets out procedures for managers of Crown land.

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### 2.6.2 STATE GOVERNMENT

The Victorian Government has responsibility for the planning, delivery and protection of open space of state and/or regional significance, particularly those with significant environmental and/or cultural values. These are often managed in partnership with other state agencies, Local Government and Department of Environment and Primary Industry appointed committees of management.

The Government's strategic open space objectives and broad standards are outlined in relevant State legislation and the state-wide land use planning policy frameworks contained in the Victoria Planning Provisions. In addition the Precinct Structure Planning Guidelines (PSPs) produced by the Growth Areas Authority provide guidance on the planning and delivery of diverse open spaces in new residential developments in growth areas.

The relevant State legislation and the components of the Victoria Planning Provisions relating to public open space are discussed in more detail in [Section 3 State Legislation and Planning System](#).

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### 2.6.3 LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Local Government is the key provider and manager of open spaces for their communities. Some Councils have developed either a Municipal Open Space Strategy and/or a Municipal Sport and Recreation Strategy to guide the planning and management of their open space networks.

In the delivery of certain types of open space, Councils may also enter into partnerships with other organisations, including private providers, neighbouring councils and the State Government. Local Government is often appointed as the committee of management for Crown land reserved for public parkland on behalf of the State Government.

In most cases, Local Government is the "planning authority" and the "responsible authority" for strategic land use planning and implementing planning and development of open space under the Victoria Planning Provisions.

A key document for all local authority planning staff is a Municipal Open Space Strategy. An Open Space Strategy provides the rationale to inform local planning policies and contributes to the land use context contained within Council's Municipal Strategic Statement.

A Municipal Open Space Strategy will identify supply and demand requirements for the provision of open space. This includes the provision of open space in new green field developments and in the case of urban regeneration or renewal. [Section 4 Open Space Planning Considerations](#) provides an overview of the key factors to be considered when preparing an Open Space Strategy.

An Open Space Strategy can be used to determine priorities for the planning, provision and development of open space across a municipality. It is also critical as a tool for determining:

- Open space contributions from developers (either land or cash-in-lieu as part of the approval process for subdivisions)
- The priority for allocating open space contributions that are collected as cash-in-lieu

Councils may specify their local strategic land use planning policies and objectives in the Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS). The MSS provides the strategic basis for any open space provisions contained in the local planning schemes, and also provides a link to the Council's corporate plan.

Some Councils include details of their local open space objectives within the MSS, or may reference or incorporate their Open Space Strategy in the local planning scheme.

[Section 3 details how the MSS relates to the Victoria Planning Provisions.](#) Each municipality's land use planning policies, objectives and standards may be found at Planning Schemes Online at [www.planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/index.html](http://www.planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/index.html).

[Appendix 4 lists the key Commonwealth, State and Local Government legislation, policies and guidelines](#) relevant to the planning and delivery of the various types of public open space.



## SECTION 3 STATE LEGISLATION AND THE PLANNING SYSTEM

### In this Section:

- ✓ Relevant State Legislation is listed and briefly described
- ✓ The State Planning System is discussed
- ✓ The purpose of Precinct Structure Planning Guidelines is outlined
- ✓ Planning Scheme Amendments for open space are discussed
- ✓ The role of VCAT and justifying open space decisions is briefly covered

There are a number of statutory planning tools which provide guidance and support in the planning and delivery of open space. This section includes an overview of the key open space provisions contained in State legislation and the Victoria Planning Provisions.

### 3.1 STATE LEGISLATION

#### 3.1.1 PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT ACT 1987

The [Planning and Environment Act 1987](#) establishes the framework for planning the use, development and protection of land in Victoria. It sets out procedures for preparing and amending the [Victoria Planning Provisions](#) (VPP) and planning schemes, obtaining permits under schemes, settling disputes, enforcing compliance with planning schemes and other administrative procedures.<sup>2</sup>

The Planning and Environment Act provides the following mechanisms that may be used to deliver open space projects:

- [Development Contribution Plans](#) - Part 3B of the Planning and Environment Act provides for the preparation of development contribution plans (DCPs) for the purpose of imposing levies for the provision of development or community infrastructure required to meet the future needs of a community resulting from a development.

Levies can be raised for a range of State and Local government infrastructure including roads, public transport, storm water and urban run-off management systems, open space and community facilities.<sup>3</sup>

[Section 46K](#) of the Planning and Environment Act lists what must be included in a development contribution plan. The [Development Contributions Guidelines](#) contain detailed information on:

- the required methodology for preparing the plans;
- how to prepare a full cost apportionment plan; and
- how to incorporate the plan into the planning scheme.

On 24 November 2011 the Victorian Government announced a [review of the local development contribution system](#) to develop a new system that will be simple to use and underpinned by fairness and certainty for both councils and developers.

- [Section 173 Agreements](#) - Section 173 of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 enables councils to negotiate an agreement with an owner of land that sets out conditions or restrictions on the use or development of land, or to achieve other planning objectives in relation to the land. The agreements are legal contracts and, where appropriate, can be registered over the title of the land to bind any future owners and/or occupiers of the land.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0015/41271/Introduction.pdf](http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0015/41271/Introduction.pdf) accessed June 2013

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/planning/publicationsandresearch/codes-and-guidelines/development-contributions> accessed June 2013

<sup>4</sup> Using Victoria's Planning System accessed at [http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/41279/Chapter\\_8\\_-\\_Agreements.pdf](http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/41279/Chapter_8_-_Agreements.pdf) accessed June 2013

When negotiating Section 173 agreements, it is important to:

- clearly articulate what is to be included in the agreement;
- carefully consider whether the conditions imposed in the agreement are valid; and
- clarify when the conditions contained within the agreement are required to be met.

With respect to open space in an established area, a Section 173 agreement may be applied to upgrade an existing local park as a condition attached to a permit for the subdivision and development of residential dwellings.

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### 3.1.2 SUBDIVISION ACT 1988

The [Subdivision Act 1988](#) sets out the procedures for the subdivision and consolidation of land, including buildings and airspace and for the creation, variation or removal of easements or restrictions; and regulates the management of and dealings with common property.

[Section 18](#) of the *Subdivision Act 1988* enables councils to require a contribution for open space from subdivision applicants. This provision may be used:

- where a requirement for public open space is not specified in the planning scheme (i.e. Schedule to [Clause 52.01 of the VPP](#)); and
- if council can demonstrate that there will be a need for more open space as result of the subdivision.

The open space contribution may be in the form of land, a monetary contribution, or a combination, and cannot exceed 5 per cent of the site value of the land in the subdivision.

The *Subdivision Act 1988* also specifies details relating to when the contributions are to be made, allowable exemptions, valuation of land, what council must do with the land, and compliance with the requirements and enforcement of agreements relating to open space contributions.

*When seeking to obtain open space contributions from developers to meet open space needs arising from new developments, Councils may identify the planning mechanism that best suits their local circumstances.*

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### 3.1.3 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1989

The [Local Government Act 1989](#) sets out the purpose of local government as providing a system under which councils perform the functions and exercise the powers conferred by or under the Act and any other Act for the peace, order and good government of their municipal districts.

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## THE ROLE OF A COUNCIL

A Council is elected to provide leadership for the good governance of the municipal district and the local community.

The role of a Council includes:

- acting as a representative government by taking into account the diverse needs of the local community in decision making;
- providing leadership by establishing strategic objectives and monitoring their achievement;
- maintaining the viability of the Council by ensuring that resources are managed in a responsible and accountable manner;

- advocating the interests of the local community to other communities and governments;
- acting as a responsible partner in government by taking into account the needs of other communities; and
- fostering community cohesion and encouraging active participation in civic life.

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## WHAT ARE THE FUNCTIONS OF A COUNCIL?

The functions of a Council include:

- advocating and promoting proposals which are in the best interests of the local community;
- planning for and providing services and facilities for the local community;
- providing and maintaining community infrastructure in the municipal district;
- undertaking strategic and land use planning for the municipal district;
- raising revenue to enable the Council to perform its functions;
- making and enforcing local laws;
- exercising, performing and discharging the duties, functions and powers of Councils under this Act and other Acts; and
- any other function relating to the peace, order and good government of the municipal district.

For the purpose of achieving its objectives, a Council may perform its functions inside and outside its municipal district.

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### 3.1.4 CROWN LAND (RESERVES) ACT 1978

The [\*Crown Land \(Reserves\) Act 1978\*](#) is an “Act to provide for the Reservation of Crown Lands for certain purposes and for the Management of such Reserved Lands and for other purposes”.

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## CROWN RESERVES

Many parks and gardens are Crown Reserves. The *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978* provides the legislative framework for these Reserves. A Crown Reserve is a parcel of Crown land set aside from sale and reserved for a specific purpose by an Act of Parliament.

The specific purposes of reservations of open space range from Public Park and Gardens, Public Recreation, Recreation and Convenience of the People, Amusement of the People, Conservation, Ornamental gardens, Municipal Purposes, Public Purposes and Children’s Playgrounds, through to Cultural and Natural Heritage, Natural Features, Regional parks, Water Reserves, Forest Parks, Conservation Reserves and Coastal. (There are other purposes for Crown Reserves that do not relate to parks and gardens.)

Crown Reserves will be either Permanent or Temporary. Permanent reserves may be revoked only by an Act of Parliament. Temporary reserves may be revoked by an Order in Council.

Often land is reserved for open space as the result of a specific Act of Parliament (e.g. *Docklands Act*). Generally there is a section inserted into these specific Acts that states that the land reserved under the specific Act is deemed to be reserved under the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978*.

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## COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT

Under the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act*, a Committee of Management may be appointed to care for, manage, improve, maintain and control land for the purpose for which it is reserved.

## RULES AND REGULATIONS

The *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978* provides for making regulations for the open space.

The legislation is specific on uses of reserved land for purposes other than those for which it is reserved. Reference to the legislation must be made in any consideration. This can include, for example, car parking, provision of facilities, commercial activities and tour operators. The Act provides general rules by which these situations are dealt with. It directs the use of leases and licences, the term of such agreements and how permission can be granted.

For example, if land is reserved for public parks gardens and ornamental plantation purposes, the approval of the Minister for Environment and Climate Change must be obtained before the Committee of Management can issue a licence or lease under the provisions of sections 17B or 17D.

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### 3.1.5 OTHER RELEVANT LEGISLATION

In the planning of open spaces, councils need to be aware of the provisions of the following legislation where relevant.

Where the subject land use adjoins local government open space:

- [Conservation, Forests and Lands Act 1987](#)
- [National Parks Act 1975](#)
- [Forests Act 1958](#)

Where responsibilities for sites of significance need to be clarified and also when a cultural heritage management plan is required.

- [Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006](#)

For places on or adjoining sites on the Victorian Heritage register.

- [Heritage \(Amendment\) Act 1997](#)

**Reference:** [How Councils Work – the legal basis](#)

## 3.2 THE PLANNING SYSTEM

The Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) is responsible for land-use planning and environmental assessment in Victoria. This includes managing the regulatory framework and providing advice on planning policy, strategic planning and urban design.

Under Victoria's [planning system](#), local councils and the Victorian government develop planning schemes to control land use and development, and to ensure the protection and conservation of land.<sup>5</sup>

The [DPCD website](#) provides detailed information and a [planning toolkit](#) to assist planners in the use of the planning system, including the following:

- [Planning: a Short Guide](#) which outlines the planning permit application and planning scheme amendment processes, and the course to be followed when applying for or making submissions about planning permits.
- [Using Victoria's Planning System](#) is a technical guide to interpretation and administrative procedures under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the *Planning and Environment Regulations 2005*, and their interactions with other related legislation and planning schemes.
- a series of [planning practice notes and advisory notes](#) relating to planning processes and specific topics to assist planners when using the planning system.

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### Planning Schemes

Planning schemes set out policies and provisions for use, development and protection of land. Each local government area in Victoria is covered by a planning scheme. Planning schemes generally apply to all private and public land. While some exemptions do apply, planning schemes are generally binding on all individuals and corporations.

The administration and enforcement of a planning scheme is the duty of a responsible authority. In most cases this will be a local council, but it can be the Minister administering the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, or any other Minister or public authority specified in the scheme.

Further details relating to the planning system and schemes are available from the [DPCD website](#).

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### Victoria Planning Provisions

The [Planning and Environment Act 1987](#) provides for the preparation of standard planning provisions (the Victoria Planning Provisions) to assist in providing a consistent and co-ordinated framework for planning schemes in Victoria.

The Victoria Planning Provisions (VPP), are prepared and approved by the Minister for Planning, and may contain any matter which may be included in a planning scheme. The VPP is a state-wide reference, used as required, to construct planning schemes.

The VPP comprise the following components.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/planning/theplanningsystem/a-guide-to-the-planning-system> accessed on 20 July 2012



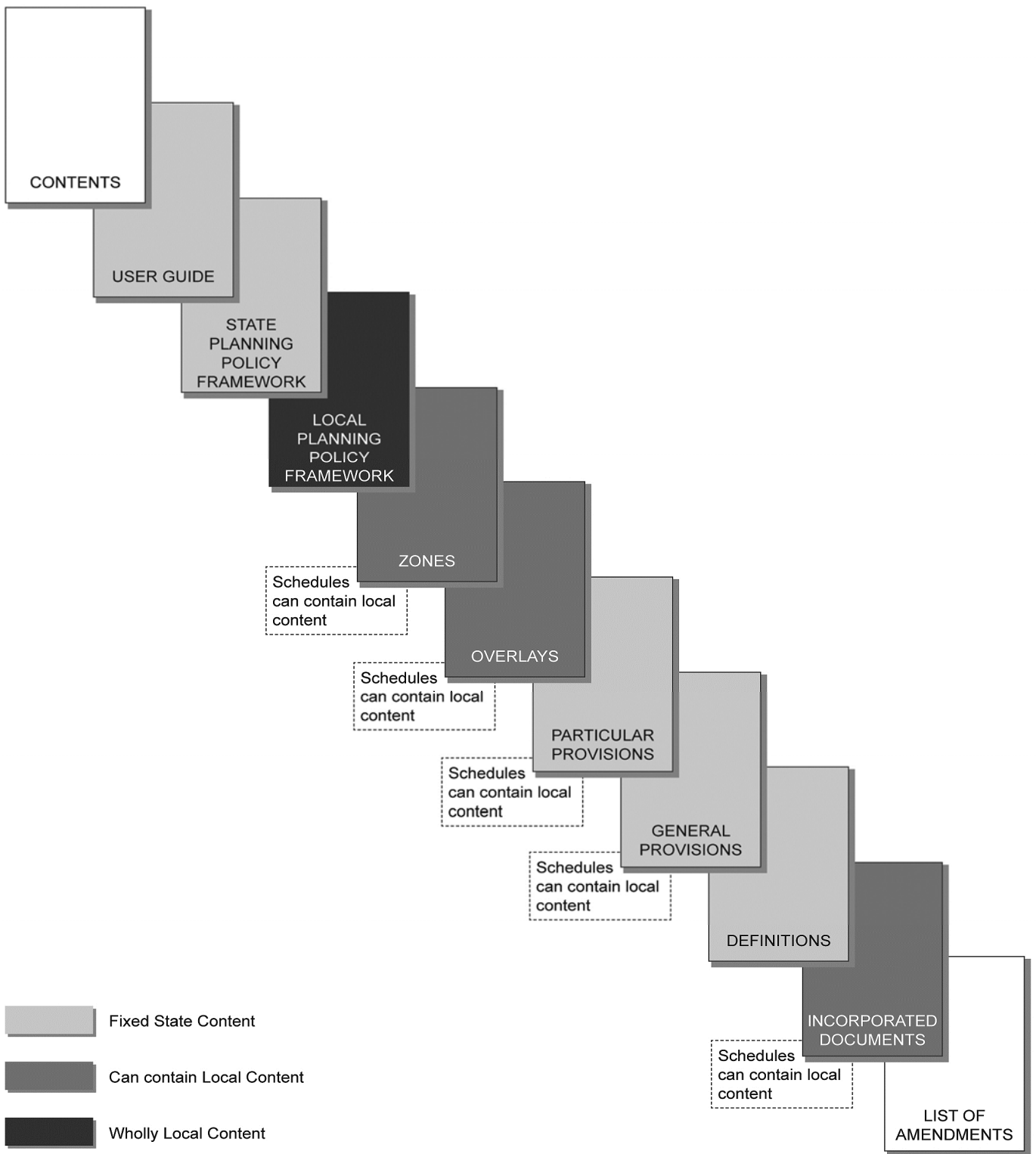


Figure 2 – Victoria Planning Provisions Framework (Source: [Victoria Planning Provisions](#))

### 3.2.1 STATE PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

(Clauses 10-19)

The State Planning Policy Framework (SPPF) comprises general principles for land use and development across Victoria. It reflects the State Government's strategic direction for land use planning and development. Local Government, as a planning authority and/or responsible authority must take account of the general principles and the specific policies contained in the SPPF.

The SPPF contains the following clauses that include specific requirements relating to public open space provision.

**Clause 11 – Settlement:** sets out a number of objectives and strategies for open space planning in urban settings. The following sub clauses focus on various aspects as indicated.

- **Clause 11.02-3 Structure Planning:** focuses on facilitating the orderly development of urban areas. Amongst other things, it includes a strategy to identify the location of open space for recreation, biodiversity protection and/or flood risk reduction purposes in Growth Area Framework Plans.
- **Clause 11.03-1 Open Space Planning:** focuses on the creation and protection of a diverse and integrated network of public open spaces for recreation and conservation of natural and cultural environments.
- **Clause 11.03-2 Open Space Management:** focuses on the management and protection of public open space.
- **Clause 11.04-7 Open Space Network in Metropolitan Melbourne:** focuses on the creation and protection of a network of new metropolitan parks and lists planned regional and linear parks.
- **Clause 11.05-4 Regional Planning Strategies and Principles:** supports the growth and development of regional settlements by creating opportunities to enhance open space networks within and between settlements.

**Clause 12 – Environmental and Landscape Values:** acknowledges that planning must implement ecologically sustainable development, and adopts principles established by national and international agreements.

This clause, and the sub-clauses that follow, focus on the strategic planning, protection and management of areas with significant environmental and landscape values, including:

- biodiversity values (including native plants and animals);
- native vegetation;
- coastal areas and bays;
- Crown Land;
- alpine region; and
- other environmentally sensitive areas.

**Clause 13 – Environmental Risks:** provides guidance on environmental management and risk management approaches that could be adopted to avoid environmental degradation and hazards.

**Clause 14 - Natural Resource Management:** sets out strategies and guidelines to assist in the conservation and wise use of natural resources to support both environmental quality and sustainable development.

**Clause 15 – Built Environment and Heritage:** sets out strategies for ensuring that planning for new land use and development appropriately responds to its landscape, valued built form and cultural context and protects places and sites with significant heritage, cultural and other values.

- **Clause 15.01.3 Neighbourhood and Subdivision Design:** indicates that subdivisions should be designed to create liveable and sustainable communities, and provides for the creation of a range of open spaces to meet a variety of needs with links to open space networks and regional parks where possible.

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### 3.2.2 LOCAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

(Clauses 20+)

The Local Planning Policy Framework (LPPF) component of the VPP enables councils to set the local and regional strategic policy context for the municipality. While it contains only local content, it operates consistently with and furthers those objectives of the SPPF that are relevant to the municipality.

The LPPF includes:

- The **Municipal Strategic Statement** (MSS) which details the strategic planning, land use and development objectives for the municipality. It also includes strategies and actions for achieving the objectives.

The MSS provides the strategic basis for the application of the zones, overlays and particular provisions in the planning scheme and decision making by the responsible authority. The MSS provides an opportunity for an integrated approach to planning across all areas of council and ideally should clearly express links to council's corporate plan and any other relevant plans.

- Other relevant **local planning policies** and/or tools available to implement the objectives and strategies of the MSS or provide further guidance regarding what may influence planning decisions. Some Councils incorporate or reference their municipal open space policies in their local planning scheme to guide the provision of open space.

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### 3.2.3 ZONES

(VPP clauses 30-37)

The Victoria Planning Provisions contain zones that control land use and development, including the following which relate to various public open space types.

- Public Park And Recreation Zone (PPRZ)
- Public Conservation And Resource Zone (PCRZ)
- Rural Conservation Zone (RCZ).
- Urban Floodway Zone (UFZ)
- Green Wedge Zone (GWZ)
- Green Wedge A Zone (GWAZ)

The key purpose of each zone is to "to implement the State Planning Policy Framework and the Local Planning Policy Framework, including the Municipal Strategic Statement and local planning policies".

The following zones also contain provisions that may relate to or influence public open space planning outcomes:

- Residential 1 Zone (R1Z)
- Residential 2 Zone (R2Z)
- Residential 3 Zone (R3Z)
- Rural Living Zone (RLZ)
- Rural Activity Zone (RAZ)
- Public Use Zone (PUZ)
- Comprehensive Development Zone (CDZ)
- Priority Development Zone (PDZ)
- Urban Growth Zone (UGZ)
- Activity Centre Zone (ACZ)

Local planning schemes need only include those zones required to implement its strategy.

It should also be noted that many existing local open spaces are zoned as residential land. Many councils have sought amendments to planning schemes to have such land rezoned to an open space related zone as a way of protecting it into the future.

### 3.2.4 OVERLAYS

*(Clauses 40-45)*

Overlays generally apply to a single issue or related set of issues (such as heritage, environmental concern or flooding), however where more than one issue applies to land, multiple overlays can be used. If an overlay is shown on the planning scheme map, the provisions of the overlay apply in addition to the provisions of the zone and any other provision of the scheme.

As with zones, standard overlays for state wide application are included in the VPP and each planning scheme need only include those overlays required to implement its strategy. Many overlays have schedules to specify local objectives and requirements.

The following overlays may influence the delivery of some public open space types and/or the ancillary infrastructure required to support those spaces.

- Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO)
- Vegetation Protection Overlay (VPO)
- Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO)
- Design and Development Overlay (DDO)
- Neighbourhood Character Overlay (NCO)
- Salinity Management Overlay (SMO)
- Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (LSIO)
- Airport Environs Overlay (AEO)
- Environmental Audit Overlay (EAO)
- Development Contributions Plan Overlay (DCPO)
- City Link Project Overlay (CLPO)
- Melbourne Airport Environs Overlay (MAEO)
- Heritage Overlay (HO)
- Incorporated Plan Overlay (IPO)
- Development Plan Overlay (DPO)
- Erosion Management Overlay (LMO)
- Floodway Overlay (FO or RFO)
- Special Building Overlay (SBO)
- Wildfire Management Overlay (WMO)
- State Resource Overlay (SRO)
- Public Acquisition Overlay (PAO)
- Road Closure Overlay (RXO)
- Restructure Overlay (RO)



### 3.2.5 PARTICULAR PROVISIONS

(Clauses 50 – 57)

Particular provisions are specific prerequisites for a range of uses and developments which apply across Victoria. There is no ability to include in planning schemes any particular provisions which are not in the VPP. Unless specified otherwise, the particular provisions apply in addition to the requirements of a zone or overlay.

The following two clauses contain specific provisions relating to the delivery of public open space.

- **Clause 52.01 Public Open Space Contribution and Subdivision:** recognises the ability of councils to obtain open space contributions under Section 18 of the Subdivision Act 1988. The Schedule to Clause 52.01 provides the mechanism for councils to specify its own open space contribution rate to reflect local circumstances (provided it can be justified).

This Clause also carries over exemptions of the Subdivision Act which are not open to modification by councils.

#### **Clause 52.01 – Public Open Space Contribution and Subdivision**

*A person who proposes to subdivide land must make a contribution to the council for public open space in an amount specified in the schedule to this clause (being a percentage of the land intended to be used for residential, industrial or commercial purposes, or a percentage of the site value of such land, or a combination of both). If no amount is specified, a contribution for public open space may still be required under Section 18 of the Subdivision Act 1988.*

*A public open space contribution may be made only once for any of the land to be subdivided. This does not apply to the subdivision of a building if a public open space requirement was not made under Section 569H of the Local Government Act 1958 or Section 21A of the Building Control Act 1981 when the building was constructed.*

*A subdivision is exempt from a public open space requirement, in accordance with Section 18(8) of the Subdivision Act 1988, if:*

- *It is one of the following classes of subdivision:*
  - *Class 1: The subdivision of a building used for residential purposes provided each lot contains part of the building. The building must have been constructed or used for residential purposes immediately before 30 October 1989 or a planning permit must have been issued for the building to be constructed or used for residential purposes immediately before that date.*
  - *Class 2: The subdivision of a commercial or industrial building provided each lot contains part of the building.*
- *It is for the purpose of excising land to be transferred to a public authority, council or a Minister for a utility installation.*
- *It subdivides land into two lots and the council considers it unlikely that each lot will be further subdivided.*

**Clause 56 Residential Subdivision:** aims to create liveable and sustainable neighbourhoods and to achieve residential subdivision outcomes that respond to the site and its context.

- **Clause 56.05 Urban Landscape:** includes the following two clauses which contain objectives and standards relating to the urban landscape and public open space provision. Relevant to the delivery of some public open space types:
  - **Clause 56.05-1 Integrated Urban Landscape Objectives:** includes landscape objectives and standards for siting and design considerations.
  - **Clause 56.05-2 Public Open Space Provision Objectives:** includes the public open space objectives and standards for local parks, active open space, linear parks and trails and links to regional open space.

**56.05-1 Integrated urban landscape objectives**

- *To provide attractive and continuous landscaping in streets and public open spaces that contribute to the character and identity of new neighbourhoods and urban places or to existing or preferred neighbourhood character in existing urban areas.*
- *To incorporate natural and cultural features in the design of streets and public open space where appropriate.*
- *To protect and enhance native habitat and discourage the planting and spread of noxious weeds.*
- *To provide for integrated water management systems and contribute to drinking water conservation.*

**Standard C12**

*An application for subdivision that creates streets or public open space should be accompanied by a landscape design.*

*The landscape design should:*

- *Implement any relevant streetscape, landscape, urban design or native vegetation precinct plan, strategy or policy for the area set out in this scheme.*
- *Create attractive landscapes that visually emphasise streets and public open spaces.*
- *Respond to the site and context description for the site and surrounding area.*
- *Maintain significant vegetation where possible within an urban context.*
- *Take account of the physical features of the land including landform, soil and climate.*
- *Protect and enhance any significant natural and cultural features.*
- *Protect and link areas of significant local habitat where appropriate.*
- *Support integrated water management systems with appropriate landscape design techniques for managing urban run-off including wetlands and other water sensitive urban design features in streets and public open space.*
- *Promote the use of drought tolerant and low maintenance plants and avoid species that are likely to spread into the surrounding environment.*
- *Ensure landscaping supports surveillance and provides shade in streets, parks and public open space.*
- *Develop appropriate landscapes for the intended use of public open space including areas for passive and active recreation, the exercising of pets, playgrounds and shaded areas.*
- *Provide for walking and cycling networks that link with community facilities.*
- *Provide appropriate pathways, signage, fencing, public lighting and street furniture.*
- *Create low maintenance, durable landscapes that are capable of a long life.*

*The landscape design must include a maintenance plan that sets out maintenance responsibilities, requirements and costs.*

**Clause 56.05-2 Public Open Space Provision Objectives**

- *To provide a network of quality, well-distributed, multi-functional and cost-effective public open space that includes local parks, active open space, linear parks and trails, and links to regional open space.*
- *To provide a network of public open space that caters for a broad range of users.*
- *To encourage healthy and active communities.*
- *To provide adequate unencumbered land for public open space and integrate any encumbered land with the open space network.*
- *To ensure land provided for public open space can be managed in an environmentally sustainable way and contributes to the development of sustainable neighbourhoods.*

**Standard C13**

*The provision of public open space should:*

- *Implement any relevant objective, policy, strategy or plan (including any growth area precinct structure plan) for open space set out in this scheme.*
- *Provide a network of well-distributed neighbourhood public open space that includes:*
  - *Local parks within 400 metres safe walking distance of at least 95 percent of all dwellings. Where not designed to include active open space, local parks should be generally 1 hectare in area and suitably dimensioned and designed to provide for their intended use and to allow easy adaptation in response to changing community preferences.*
  - *Additional small local parks or public squares in activity centres and higher density residential areas.*
  - *Active open space of a least 8 hectares in area within 1 kilometre of 95 percent of all dwellings that is:*
    - *Suitably dimensioned and designed to provide for the intended use, buffer areas around sporting fields and passive open space*
    - *Sufficient to incorporate two football/cricket ovals*
    - *Appropriate for the intended use in terms of quality and orientation*
    - *Located on flat land (which can be cost effectively graded)*
    - *Located with access to, or making provision for, a recycled or sustainable water supply*
    - *Adjoin schools and other community facilities where practical*
    - *Designed to achieve sharing of space between sports.*
- *Linear parks and trails along waterways, vegetation corridors and road reserves within 1 kilometre of 95 percent of all dwellings.*

*Public open space should:*

- *Be provided along foreshores, streams and permanent water bodies.*
- *Be linked to existing or proposed future public open spaces where appropriate.*
- *Be integrated with floodways and encumbered land that is accessible for public recreation.*
- *Be suitable for the intended use.*
- *Be of an area and dimensions to allow easy adaptation to different uses in response to changing community active and passive recreational preferences.*
- *Maximise passive surveillance.*
- *Be integrated with urban water management systems, waterways and other water bodies.*
- *Incorporate natural and cultural features where appropriate.*

The following clauses within the Particular Provisions component of the VPP may also influence the delivery of some public open space types:

- Clause 52.06 Car Parking
- Clause 52.16 Native Vegetation Precinct Plan
- Clause 52.17 Native Vegetation
- Clause 52.25 Crematorium
- Clause 56.06-2 Walking and Cycling Network
- Clause 56.06-5 Walking and Cycling Network Detail Objectives
- Clause 57 Metropolitan Green Wedge Land

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### 3.2.6 GENERAL PROVISIONS

*(Clauses 60-67)*

This section sets out the state wide provisions relating to the administration of the planning scheme, existing uses, decision guidelines, referral of applications and other matters.

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### 3.2.7 DEFINITIONS

*(Clauses 70-75)*

This section lists the state wide definitions that apply across all schemes. Clause 74 – Land Use Terms includes definitions for a number of open space uses.

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### 3.2.8 INCORPORATED DOCUMENTS

*(Clause 80)*

Studies, strategies, guidelines and policies that inform the planning scheme, guide decision-making or affect the operation of the planning scheme should be part of the planning scheme in some form. This can be achieved by incorporating documents into the planning scheme or using them as reference documents.

The VPP lists a number of documents which are common across all planning schemes. Councils may incorporate or reference documents within the respective local planning schemes.

Incorporated and referenced documents can be mentioned in the planning scheme in a State standard provision, or be introduced by a local provision. They can be used as a basis for preparing the Municipal Strategic Statement, local planning policies or any other requirements in the planning scheme, or can be mentioned as a source of useful background information.

If a document is incorporated into a planning scheme, its content or strategic basis is less likely to be capable of challenge when using it to make a planning decision. The decision-maker or VCAT is entitled to presume that the strategic basis for the document was considered at the time of its incorporation into the planning scheme, and to give it due weight.

Reference documents provide background to assist in understanding the context within which a particular planning policy or provision has been framed. They do not have the status of incorporated documents nor carry the same weight.

Examples of documents incorporated by councils, as the Planning Authority, include development guidelines, incorporated plans or restructure plans. Once incorporated these documents carry the same weight as other parts of the scheme, and can only be changed by a planning scheme amendment.

*(Information extracted and summarised from VPP Practice Note –PN 13 – August 2000)*



### 3.3 PRECINCT STRUCTURE PLANNING GUIDELINES

The 2009 [Precinct Structure Planning Guidelines](#) (PSPGs) prepared by the Growth Areas Authority provide guidance for delivering communities in growth areas. However, the planning framework contained within the PSPGs can be used in planning any new development including in regional cities and rural Victoria. It is understood that the guidelines are based on sustainable and viable levels of provision so are applicable as a guide for any community.

The PSPGs comprise two distinct parts.

#### 3.3.1 PART ONE – OVERVIEW OF GROWTH AREA PLANNING

[Part 1](#) provides an overview of planning in growth areas, including a description of the structure of the guidelines, an explanation of where precinct structure plans fit in the planning hierarchy and the objectives for growth area planning.

Broad land use planning for regional open space occurs during the preparation of growth area framework plans, along with other planning proposals for transport networks, significant waterways and areas of potential environmental sensitivity.

Part 1 details six overarching objectives for precinct structure plans, including the following which specifically refer to open space delivery:

**Table 7 Objectives for growth area planning relating to open space delivery**

**Objective 1 - To establish a sense of place and community**

Residents and workers have access to a variety of open spaces (parks, gardens, plazas and reserves) for relaxation and recreation.

**Objective 2 - To create greater housing choice, diversity and affordable places to live**

Higher density dwellings are located within and around activity centres, along bus routes and around railway stations and close to public open spaces.

**Objective 6 - To respond to climate change and increase environmental sustainability**

Areas retained for environmental purposes and Aboriginal and post-contact heritage form part of the open space network, providing for both conservation and recreation needs.

#### 3.3.2 PART TWO – PREPARING THE PRECINCT STRUCTURE PLAN

[Part 2](#) explains how to prepare a precinct structure plan to meet the government's objectives for growth area communities. It aims to standardise the format and process for preparing a precinct structure plan, while facilitating innovative and flexible outcomes.

It discusses in detail seven elements to be considered in the creation of a precinct structure plan, and specifies the outputs, design response, and standards for each. The following elements refer to open space delivery.

**Table 8 Elements of a PSP relating to open space delivery**

**Element 4 - Community Facilities** includes the following standard:

**S1.** Community facilities (e.g. schools, community centres, active open space) are generally co-located with each other, and located either close to a neighbourhood activity centre or with good visual and physical links to a neighbourhood activity centre.

Lower density community uses (e.g. active open space) should generally be further from the activity centre than higher density community uses (e.g. childcare and community centres).

**Element 5 - Open Space and Natural Systems** provides detailed planning guidance in relation to:

Integrated open space network;  
 Biodiversity management;  
 Heritage management;  
 Integrated water management; and  
 Fire and bushfire management.

While standards relevant to public open space planning, design and management may be found across each of these areas, the key standards relative to active and local open spaces are contained within Integrated Open Space Network provisions.

*Integrated Open Space Network* provides guidance on the amount, distribution and quality of public open spaces to be provided in new residential communities. It requires the following to be developed for each precinct structure plan.

- An **open space plan** showing active and passive public open space areas on a precinct-wide scale; integration of different open space types and how encumbered land has been appropriately used.
- An **open space table** showing the different types of public open space; use of encumbered land; integration of open space types, and explanation of how open spaces will be managed.
- A **concept plan** for active open space areas that provides an indication of the configuration of sporting facilities.

An overview of the detailed public open space provision and design standards is provided in Table 9.

**Table 9 Element 5 – Integrated Open Space Network – relevant standards (adapted from PSPG Part 2)**

<b>S1</b>	<p><b>Distribution</b></p> <p>A network of quality, well distributed, multi-functional and cost effective open space should be provided catering for a broad range of users that includes:</p> <p>Local parks within 400 metre safe walking distance of at least 95 per cent of all dwellings;              Active open space within 1 kilometre of 95 per cent of all dwellings              Linear parks and trails, most often along waterways, but also linked to vegetation corridors and road reserves within 1 kilometre of 95 per cent of all dwellings. <i>(See VPP Clause 56.05-2)</i></p>
<b>S2</b>	<p><b>Quantity</b></p> <p>In residential areas, approximately 10 per cent of the Net Developable Area (NDA) is to be allocated for public open space, of which 6 per cent of the NDA is to be allocated for active open space.</p> <p>In addition, residential precincts should contain active indoor recreation facilities that are co-located and/or share space with schools and integrated community facilities. This should result in an active indoor sports provision of approximately 5 hectares per 60,000 residents.</p>
<b>S3</b>	<p>In major employment areas, approximately 2 per cent of the NDA is to be allocated for public open space usually with a passive recreation function.</p>
<b>S4</b>	<p><b>Integration and Sharing</b></p> <p>Encumbered land should be used productively for open space.</p> <p>The network of local and district parks should be efficiently designed to maximise the integration and sharing of space with publicly accessible encumbered land.</p> <p>Encumbered land usually includes land retrained for drainage, electricity, biodiversity and cultural heritage purposes</p> <p>The parkland created by such sharing and integration should be suitable for the intended open space function/s, including maintenance.</p> <p>In this way encumbered land will be well utilised, while the total amount of open space can be optimised without adversely impacting on the quality and functionality of the network.</p>

<b>S5</b>	<p><b>Active Open Space</b></p> <p>Active open space should be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Of an appropriate size, i.e. sufficient to incorporate 2 football/cricket ovals, but small enough to enable regular spacing of active open space provision across the precinct. This configuration would generally require at least 8 hectares.</li> <li>Appropriate for its intended open space use in terms of quality and orientation;</li> <li>Located on flat land (which can be cost effectively graded);</li> <li>Located with access to, or making provision for a recycled or other sustainable water supply;</li> <li>Designed to achieve sharing of spare between sports; and</li> <li>Linked to pedestrian and cycle paths.</li> </ul>
<b>S6</b>	<p><b>Passive Surveillance</b></p> <p>All public open space areas should be designed to maximise passive surveillance. (See <i>VPP Clauses 56.04-4 and 56.05-2</i>)</p>
<b>S7</b>	<p><b>Environmental</b></p> <p>The public open space network is combined with techniques for managing urban run-off and biodiversity. (See <i>VPP Clauses 56.04-4, 56.05-1, 56.05-2, 56.07-4</i>)</p>

In addition, Element 5 identifies the key principles for open space design, and provides guidance on quantitative and qualitative assessments to achieve an integrated open space network.

A series of [PSP Notes](#) provide further guidance on a range of matters and/or processes to be considered in the development of precinct structure plans.

### 3.4 PREPARING A PLANNING SCHEME AMENDMENT

In considering the development of an Open Space Strategy, a Council may wish to prepare a Planning Scheme Amendment that takes into consideration the key findings, policies and outcomes of the Open Space Strategy that can be included within the planning scheme.

The Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) provides the strategic basis for the application of the zones, overlays and particular provisions in the planning scheme and decision making by the responsible authority. The MSS provides an opportunity for an integrated approach to planning across all areas of council and should clearly identify links to council's corporate plan and any other relevant plans.

Other relevant local planning policies and/or tools are available to implement the objectives and strategies of the MSS or provide further guidance regarding what may influence planning decisions. Some Council's incorporate or reference their municipal open space strategy or relevant policies in their local planning scheme to guide the provision of open space.

Sometimes a planning scheme may need to be changed to reflect new circumstances or achieve new objectives. Changes to the scheme are known as amendments and the process for an amendment is set out in the Planning and Environment Act 1987. An amendment may involve a change to a planning scheme map (such as a rezoning), a change to the written part of the scheme, or both.

Before an amendment can be prepared it must be authorised by the Minister for Planning. The Minister may also authorise a planning authority to approve an amendment after certification by the Secretary of the Department of Planning and Community Development.

An amendment to the scheme involves consultation with all the parties who may have an interest in the amendment, or may be affected by it. Usually, an amendment is placed on public exhibition for at least one month.

If there are submissions which cannot be resolved by the planning authority, the Minister for Planning will appoint an independent panel to consider submissions to determine if the proposed amendment should proceed. When it receives the report from the panel, the planning authority must either adopt the amendment, abandon the amendment or adopt the amendment with changes.

An amendment becomes part of the planning scheme when it is approved by the Minister and notice is given in the Victoria Government Gazette. In instances where both a permit and an amendment are required, the Planning and Environment Act makes provision for a combined permit and amendment process.

**Examples of Councils that have created referencing documents in the planning scheme for open space provision include:**

- **Surf Coast Shire Council - reference document in MSS**
- **Whitehorse and Moreland City Councils – incorporating OSS into the planning scheme**

**Please make direct contact with Councils to seek further information.**

### 3.5 THE VICTORIAN CIVIL AND ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNAL

To ensure that there is a nexus between any proposed residential development and/or redevelopment and the provision of unencumbered open space, it is critical that the volume and quantity of land being sought for open space purposes is able to be measured and quantified.

This can be done through a number of processes that may include but are not limited to population projection/s (including demographics), household densities, the hierarchy of open space required to meet spatial and community needs, the nature of proposed development and the demands for both active and passive spaces.

The documents that inform this process include Council's Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS); Open Space Strategy; Leisure Strategy; and municipal demographic data.

In the event that the unencumbered open space that is proposed to be provided in a development is considered inadequate or a developer (proponent) considers the provision to be excessive, the relevant process to arbitrate this is through the Victorian Civil and Administrative Authority (VCAT).

Prior to moving to this process (VCAT), negotiation with the proponent can often lead to an outcome that is satisfactory to all parties and may include a submission from the Council to the proponent outlining the benefits of the provision of open space to a particular development.

A detailed submission is required as a part of the VCAT process. The following extract from the [VCAT website](#) outlines the details required in a submission.

#### **VICTORIAN CIVIL AND ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNAL** **PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT LIST GUIDELINES** **RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITY SUBMISSIONS**

##### **Introduction:**

The submission of a Responsible Authority in a planning appeal serves two important purposes:

1. It provides the Tribunal with a detailed background of the application and its planning context (the background information); and
2. It provides argument in support of the Responsible Authority's decision.  
The background information is of particular importance to the Tribunal as it contributes to informed and expeditious decisions, especially in cases where the submission made on behalf of the responsible authority are the only professionally informed submissions before the Tribunal.

The purpose of this guideline is to assist Responsible Authorities in the preparation of their submissions.

The guideline is for guidance only, and is not intended to be either prescriptive or exhaustive; each party in an appeal including a Responsible Authority is ultimately responsible for preparing its own submissions.

### ***Is the Responsible Authority Ready For Hearing***

1. Has the information which responsible authorities are required to provide to the Tribunal been provided?<sup>6</sup>
2. When required<sup>7</sup> has a Statement of Grounds been provided to the Tribunal and the parties?
3. In a failure<sup>8</sup> application, has the Responsible Authority made a decision<sup>9</sup> and informed the Tribunal and the parties of it? A copy of the associated "officer's report" should also be provided to the Tribunal.
4. Have draft conditions (including referral authority conditions) been circulated to the Tribunal and the parties as required by the Practice Note?<sup>10</sup> (Draft conditions are to be provided to the Tribunal by email)
5. When required have witness statements been circulated to the Tribunal and the parties as required by the Practice Note?<sup>11</sup>
6. If any procedural orders or directions have been made by the Tribunal in relation to the matter, have they been complied with?

### **Structure of Submissions:**

#### ***Background Information***

The extent of the background information provided in a particular appeal will depend upon the circumstances of the appeal itself, however, in most appeals each of the six information topics referred to below should be addressed.

#### ***The Appeal Site***

The location, dimensions, area, topography, vegetation, use and development of the appeal site should be described to the extent that it is relevant to the proposal before the Tribunal.

Elements of this description may include:

- address
- title description/certificate of title
- dimensioned site plan (this could be the application plan/site context plan)
- survey plan.

#### ***The Locality***

The characteristics of the locality and/or environment of the appeal site should be described, remembering the Tribunal may have to find the site on inspection.

Elements of this description may include:

- locality plan (including cadastral information)
- land use plan
- photographs and aerial photographs (dated and labeled)
- location of relevant facilities, infrastructure, public transport etc.

#### ***The Proposal***

The proposal should be described clearly and succinctly, and should include associated characteristics such as car parking and access arrangements. (Elements of the proposal irrelevant to the decision may be omitted<sup>12</sup>)

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<sup>6</sup> Practice Note PNPE2 - Responsible Authority Information

<sup>7</sup> For example, applications under Sections 80 & 82 Planning And Environment Act 1987.

<sup>8</sup> Applications under section 79 Planning And Environment Act 1987

<sup>9</sup> Section 84 Planning And Environment Act 1987

<sup>10</sup> Practice Note PNPE2 - Responsible Authority Information, Clause 1.20

<sup>11</sup> VCAT Practice Note PNVCAT2 – Expert Evidence

<sup>12</sup> For example "each dwelling includes a laundry, bathroom and en-suite bathroom".

Elements of this description may include:

- plans of the proposal
- expert reports and other supporting material accompanying the application.

### **Permit Application Process**

A brief history of the permit application process should be given, and in particular the various statutory steps, i.e. lodgement (and any amendment), advertisement and referral should be described. If relevant, the history of previous permit applications, Tribunal decisions, and/or the previous use of the land should be described.

Elements of this description could include:

- responses from referral authorities and internal referrals;
- a summary of objections;
- copies of Tribunal decisions.

### **The Planning Scheme - Zones Overlays and Particular Provisions**

The zones and overlays affecting the land and surrounding land, the relevant planning scheme provisions should be described. In particular those provisions which trigger the required planning permission should be identified. The classification of the use should also be described.

Elements of the description may include:

- zoning and overlay maps;
- planning scheme extracts.

### **The Planning Scheme - Policies and Guidelines**

It is the planning policy context which must inform decisions making. The planning policy framework, other policy considerations and guidelines, relevant to the decision and relied on by the responsible authority in its decision should be described.<sup>13</sup>

Elements of the description may include:

- planning scheme extracts;
- copies of incorporated or reference documents;
- copies of policies outside the planning scheme;
- tabulated assessment of compliance with objectives, standards, decision guidelines, performance measures etc.

### **Main Submissions**

Many of the elements of background information referred to above will be relevant to the Responsible Authority's main submissions which primarily include argument in support of the Responsible Authority's decision. The structure of argument and the way in which it is presented will vary on a case by case basis.

Parties are not limited to the issues canvassed in the Reasons for Refusal or in the Statement of Grounds<sup>14</sup>. However, any intention to change the grounds relied on must be conveyed to the other parties in the appeal so that any other party (or their witnesses) have time to respond to any new issue raised.

### **Submission Style**

The following style suggestions and advice are intended to assist in the preparation and presentation of better submissions:

1 The State and Local planning policy framework is usually lengthy and repetitive. Readable submissions will refer only those policies which are directly relevant to the decision and seek to succinctly paraphrase the policy framework. However responsible authorities must refer to all relevant policies not only those most influential in the decision the responsible authority made.

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<sup>13</sup> All relevant policy should be described whether or not the particular policy supports the decision of the responsible authority.

<sup>14</sup> Section 84A Planning And Environment Act 1987

- 2 The issues which should be addressed in argument can arise from reasons for refusal, statements of grounds, amendments of applications, witness statements etc. It is useful to group issues into a logical sequence and to identify those issues which are the most significant to the outcome of the appeal. It is useful to briefly list the issues you are to deal with in your main submissions as a way of making the structure of your submissions clear to the Tribunal. This will result in a structure for argument in submissions which avoids unnecessary repetition.<sup>15</sup>
- 3 Tabling suitable extracts from the planning scheme at the hearing is helpful, in particular extracts of the planning policy framework. Extracts are not necessary in the case of more universally applicable provisions.
- 4 Submissions should be clearly and logically structured with appropriate headings and subheadings. Paragraphs and pages should be numbered. A clear numbering system greatly assists referral during the hearing.
- 5 Quotations from legislation, planning schemes, the decisions of a court or the Tribunal should be properly cited. Medium neutral citations for the decisions of courts and tribunals can usually be obtained from the Australian Legal Information Institute (AustLII).<sup>16</sup>
- 6 Draft permit conditions will have been circulated to the parties prior to the hearing, be prepared to discuss these conditions at the end of hearing, and where appropriate to suggest additions or amendments in response to issues raised during the hearing.
- 7 Submissions and appendices should be separately stapled, so that cross-referral during the hearing is facilitated.
- 8 Tendered maps/photographs should, where possible, be on A4 sheets or readily folded into an A4 size. However, the effective presentation of information to the Tribunal should not be compromised to fit into an A4 format.
- 9 Where practicable, written submissions and other written material submitted should be hole punched so as to be capable of placement in a standard two-ring binder or arch file.

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<sup>15</sup> For example, avoid addressing the reasons for refusal then separately addressing the applicant's statement of grounds, this is usually very repetitive.

<sup>16</sup> AustLII – [www.austlii.edu.au](http://www.austlii.edu.au) (Decisions may be printed in a more readable form by clicking the "Download" button on the toolbar at the top of the decisions as display on screen)

## SECTION 4 OPEN SPACE PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

### In this Section:

- ✓ Key considerations for open space planning are presented
- ✓ Guiding principles are listed as a general check-list for open space planning
- ✓ Guidance is provided about scoping an open space planning project
- ✓ Assessing existing open space provision is discussed
- ✓ Considerations for determining needs for future open space demand are presented
- ✓ Best practice references are included for Community and Stakeholder Engagement
- ✓ Key drivers for change and trends in open space provision are listed
- ✓ Undertaking a gap analysis for open space provision is discussed
- ✓ The final step of determining strategic priorities and actions is outlined

### 4.1 OBJECTIVES

This section of the guide is intended to introduce and reinforce the important factors in open space planning to ensure quality open space outcomes. It is important to point out that this section is not a 'how to' guide for preparing open space strategies, and the key objectives are:

- To outline the main considerations when undertaking open space planning;
- To summarise the key components of an open space strategy that should be included when preparing planning scheme amendments that rely on the strength of the Open Space Strategy; and
- To provide tools that may assist in various aspects of open space planning including assessment of planning applications.

#### 4.1.1 KEY CONSIDERATIONS

When undertaking open space planning, the key considerations are to:

- [Establish a scope , purpose and process for the planning activity](#)
- [Assess existing provision – existing supply of open space](#)
- [Identify the needs – future demand for open space](#)
- [Community and stakeholder engagement](#)
- [Understand influences, drivers for change and trends in open space demand and provision](#)
- [Gap analysis – understand the context, opportunities and options for the future](#)
- [Develop strategic priorities and actions to respond to the identified needs and gaps](#)

Further detail about each of these considerations is contained within this section.

### 4.2 PRINCIPLES

Planning principles will vary for different local government areas and for various open space planning exercises. The following principles have been listed under key headings that flow through to the design section of this guide for easy reference (Section 6) and are intended to be a 'checklist' of guiding principles / key statements.

#### 4.2.1 ACCESSIBILITY AND LIVEABILITY

- Acknowledgement of the benefits of open space to social inclusion and health and wellbeing.
- Open space is highly valued by the community - involvement and engagement is critical.
- Safe and supportive environments / accessible and equitable across communities.
- Usability and appropriateness of use (relevant to the primary function of the open space).
- Well distributed and connected – important role of linkages and connections.



- Meet current and future needs of the community / changing trends in participation and delivery.
- Partnerships / collaboration (including volunteers) in development and management of open space.

#### 4.2.2 MULTI-FUNCTIONAL AND ADAPTABLE

- Flexibility and multi-use - encouraging participation.
- Diversity of opportunities, settings and experiences – balanced and complementary.
- Integration of public open space across various land owners and managers.
- Providing for (preserving) state level and regional through to local level needs.
- Responsive / adaptable to population and demographic change.
- Minimising risk, conflict and competing interests.

#### 4.2.3 ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AND SUSTAINABILITY

- Sustainable development – environmental protection / preservation / enhancement.
- Well maintained, sufficiently resourced and sustainable for future generations.
- Planned and strategic approach to the delivery of open space.
- Character – including natural, heritage and cultural features.
- Community sustainability through contributions to economic, health and social wellbeing.
- No net loss as population expands and communities change.

### 4.3 ESTABLISH A SCOPE, PURPOSE AND PROCESS

A critical first step in any open space planning process is to agree on the need and scope for the project. Considerations will include:

- Understanding and agreeing on a definition and the value of open space.
- Understanding and defining Council's role in the provision and delivery of open space.
- Reviewing relevant policies, guidelines or plans that may impact or influence open space planning (e.g. environmental; health; social/community plans; leisure plan etc.).
- Defining the links to key corporate directions and internal decision-making processes.
- Establishing a management / reference group to manage and guide the open space planning project – consider relevant internal and external stakeholders.
- Establishing a liaison process that will ensure informing and involving adjoining Councils, relevant private property owners, and relevant regional and state government agencies.
- Development a community engagement process that will ensure involvement by key people and commitment to project outcomes.
- Defining the specific objectives of the open space planning project.
- Defining the range / diversity of open space types to be covered in order to achieve the objectives.
- Defining the hierarchy categories to be provided for each type of open space.
- Defining the area subject to the study – divide the municipality into areas / districts if appropriate.
- Defining the scope of ownership of the open spaces to be covered.

*Some questions to consider when scoping an open space planning project:*

*What are the key outcomes being sought?*

*What are the key and recurrent issues being raised by the community and within the organisation?*

*What are the current practices of the organisation? What works and what doesn't?*

*What is Council's role in relation to open space? Consider open space owned and managed by a range of organisations?*

*Is there a 'drive'/need to incorporate open space policy into Council's planning scheme?*

*What are the settlement types being planned for?*

*How is the key terminology for the project going to be defined? – consider Definitions, Glossary and List of References*

*What are the drivers for change that are likely to impact future provision?*

*How might outcomes of the project be measured / evaluated? – consider this when scoping the project*

#### 4.4 ASSESS EXISTING PROVISION – EXISTING SUPPLY OF OPEN SPACE

A starting point for any open space planning project is to define the context in which the project is set. There are a few perspectives to be considered and the level of detail of each of these will depend on the nature of the project.

##### 4.4.1 PHYSICAL CONTEXT

Considerations include:

- Settlement types within municipality (see [Section 2](#) and [APPENDIX 2 OVERVIEW OF SETTLEMENT TYPES](#)).
- Housing densities – including access to private open space, private 'communal' open space.
- Urban and landscape design considerations.
- Access to essential infrastructure i.e. public transport, employment or commercial/activity hubs.
- Access and/or links to natural assets or physical landmarks e.g. state and metropolitan parks, coastal resorts and foreshores, hinterlands, major rivers and lakes etc.
- Areas of environmental or biodiversity values, ecology, typography and geology.
- Natural landscape characteristics and cultural heritage values.
- General typology of open space assets throughout the area.

##### 4.4.2 SOCIAL CONTEXT

- Health and wellbeing objectives of the community.
- Population movements/growth/decline.
- Demographic profile and factors affecting change in the population.
- Community connectivity/cohesion.
- Other known social issues incl. cultural; socio-economic.

##### 4.4.3 PLANNING AND POLICY CONTEXT

- International Planning – such as Human Rights Charter, Child Friendly Cities, UN Rights of the Child, Sustainable Cities.
- Legislative and statutory policies - Commonwealth / State / Regional / Local (See [Section 3](#)).
- Planning Scheme Provisions.
- Community and Council Vision documents.
- Relevant local plans, policies and strategies.
- Principles for sustainability and/or liveability that are embedded within the organisation's strategic framework.
- Strategic link to aligned issues such as active transport, healthy ageing, cultural understanding, settlement planning.

- Approaches to asset management within the organisation.
- Priorities for Council's Long Term Financial Planning Framework.

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#### 4.4.4 Assessing Existing Supply

Further to the outlining of context, there needs to be good understanding of the current open space system. If an inventory needs to be prepared of all existing open space the following checklist could be used:

- Site name.
- Ownership.
- Address.
- Component land holdings/titles.
- Total area.
- Hierarchy.
- Category / Function.
- Current uses / capacity.
- Size / dimensions.
- Characteristics: slope, drainage, soils, aspect, land cover, shape, quality.
- Character, heritage and cultural considerations.
- Facilities and infrastructure including landscape features.
- Condition of the site and its improvements.
- Zoning and any relevant planning overlays and controls.
- Provision of or location of services: water, power, sewerage, roads (sealed/unsealed).
- Planned approved additions /deletions to the asset, changes of uses, access, zoning, other local land use / development proposals that may impact on the site.
- Relationship to other open space / connectivity to and from other destinations.

It is also recommended that the collection of data regarding open space provision be integrated in the Council's GIS or equivalent land use mapping system. It is helpful if provision can be made for future updating of this data so that mapping layers can be used as planning and decision-making tools as the outcomes of the open space planning project are implemented.

#### 4.5 IDENTIFY THE NEEDS – FUTURE DEMAND FOR OPEN SPACE

Identifying the need for open space will rely on a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches. This initial assessment is recommended prior to the broad community consultation phase as it develops a clear and objective picture that utilises a range of agreed measures. The following checklist provides some guidance in achieving an understanding of the need for open space:

- The expressed need/demand identified by key stakeholders in an early consultation phase.
- Consideration of private backyard sizes, private / communal open space provided in high density residential areas.
- Recorded, anecdotal and observed demand for public open space by the community, users of spaces, visitors, students and workers.
- Types of open spaces and open space functions that are the subject of such demand.
- Perceived attitudes about open space that might be identified through previous community engagement projects including environmental values, sharing of spaces, existing conditions, adequacy of primary as well as supporting facilities.
- Existing participation trends and how these compare to national, state and local trends (Available from sources such as ABS, Australian Sports Commission and Sport and Recreation Victoria).
- Locational and size requirements of open space.

- Identified constraints to using public open space – barriers such as physical, geographic, financial, social and cultural.
- Analysis of the existing open space supply and its suitability to provide for the various needs and functions. Suitability considerations could include the quality of spaces, size, ability to meet its function and location.
- Hierarchy and associated catchments of the open space network considered in the context of location and distribution.
- The connectivity of the open space network including the physical connection and destination nodes (i.e. spaces of interest).
- Benchmarking of provision can be used as a valuable tool in association with other methods of analysing provision and consideration needs to be given to local factors such as population size, demographics, barriers to access, local needs and trends in demand and usage;
  - The strategic objectives of the organisation (i.e. environmental, economic social, health, active cities);
  - Current and projected population profile including number, age distribution, density;
  - Future development considerations (i.e. urban growth and density);
  - Future public open space provision opportunities;
  - Statutory constraints on open space provision; and
  - Industry and regional trends in open space planning.



4.6 COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

To ensure that open space planning is successful, it is important to understand and address the diverse needs and interests of the various internal and external stakeholders, including strategic and statutory planners, who are likely to be affected by the outcomes of the planning process.

Stakeholder engagement should be planned in any organisation in accordance with the community engagement / community consultation framework that has been approved for use across all departments. Most Council's now have such a framework and many of them are based on the IAP2 Core Values of Public Participation – these core values for community engagement are:

- The public should have a say in decisions about actions that could affect their lives
- Public participation includes the promise that the public's contributions will influence the decision
- Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognising and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers
- Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision
- Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way
- Public participation communicates to participants how their input will affect a decision

The IAP2 Spectrum, shown in the chart to the right outlines how the values of public participation can translate into a community engagement plan:

**State Government Legislation:** The passing of the Local Government (Democratic Reform) Act in 2003 emphasised increased accountability of Local Government to the community and the need for consultation with the community.

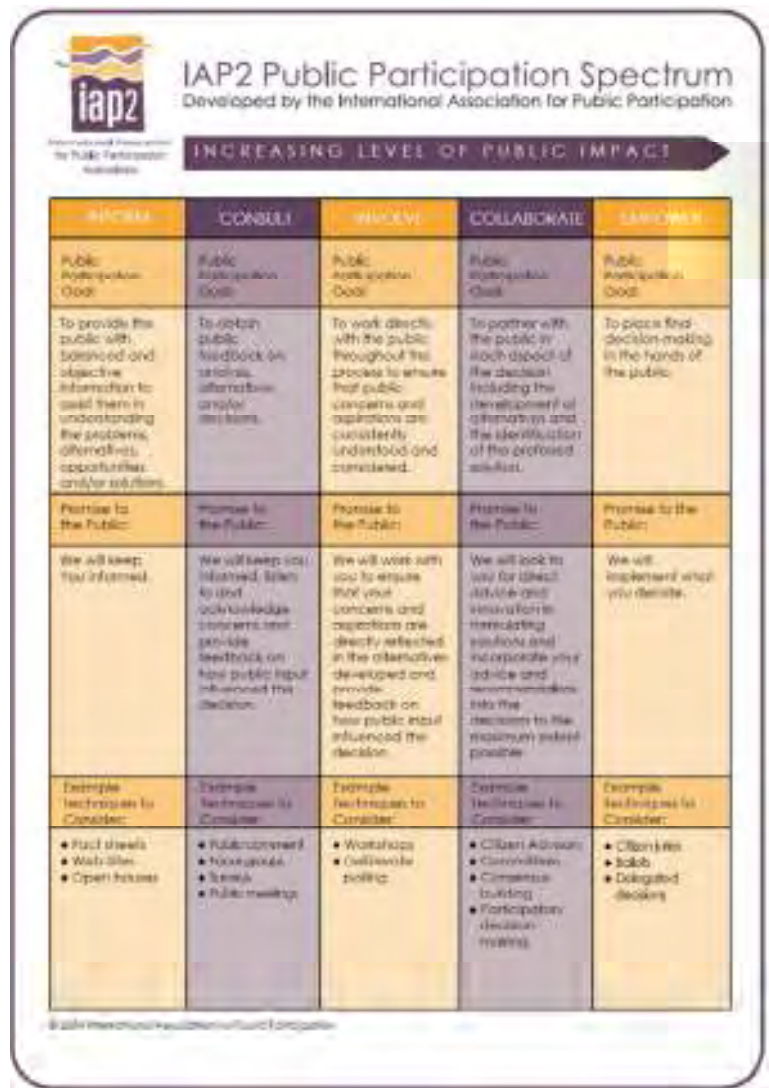


Figure 3 IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum

**Further Reading:**

- **Local Government and Community Engagement – Annotated Bibliography**, prepared by the Institute for Sustainable Futures, University of Technology Sydney for the Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government.

A useful annotated bibliography outlining a number of key resources on the topic of community engagement that have been prepared for practitioners and policy makers can be found at:

[http://www.ancelg.org.au/upload/program1/1311314257\\_ACELG\\_Annotated\\_Bibliography.pdf](http://www.ancelg.org.au/upload/program1/1311314257_ACELG_Annotated_Bibliography.pdf)

## 4.7 UNDERSTANDING INFLUENCES, DRIVERS AND TRENDS

There are numerous factors that influence priorities and change in open space demand and provision. The following list is not exhaustive and not every factor will apply to each area, however it is a starting point and 'trigger' for thinking about the drivers and influencing factors that will guide policy and planning outcomes.

- Changes in settlement types and density of population, with the increasing pressures that come with increased residential density.
- Forecast changes in population – recent trends in Victoria will usually indicate an increase in population (particularly in urban, regional and growth areas) and 'ageing' of the population in terms of age groups.
- Decreasing private back-yard sizes as land sizes decrease and housing sizes increase or multiple units/apartments are developed on single sites.
- Increasing pressure of community expectations for open space;
  - people moving from urban to regional or rural areas often 'take their expectations with them';
  - perceived inequity in established areas when compared to new subdivisions in the same municipality; or
  - expectations not being met when open space is developed and maintained at a higher level by a developer than what a Council is able to achieve once the open space is handed over to the local authority.
- Resourcing pressures on local government for management and maintenance of open space and the perceived 'cost shifting' by other levels of government and land management agencies.
- The opportunity to maximise use of community public land and infrastructure such as schools.
- The implications of community use of land reserved for other primary purposes such as road and railway reserves, waterway corridors.
- Greater awareness of policy that insists on 'no net loss' of open space as population grows – this awareness also includes the understanding that open space is 'alienated' if it is built on, fenced off or allocated for the exclusive use of a specific group to the exclusion of the community.
- Changing sport and recreation preferences and participation trends, particularly the diversification of activity and increasing popularity of informal / casual participation.
- Urban design initiatives that have challenged the definition of open space to include spaces such as civic squares, hard paved forecourts, promenades as well as areas of parkland.
- Design guidelines such as "Crime Prevention through Environmental Design" and "Healthy by Design" that address issues of safety such as the provision of lighting in and around open space.
- Importance of biodiversity values.
- Increasing attention to recognising and protecting indigenous cultural heritage values and other heritage classifications (either through state or local government heritage protection provisions) of open space and features within open space.
- Need for alternative management strategies regarding collection and use of water including reduction of use of potable water wherever possible, alternate approaches to irrigation of green space and landscape, use of drought tolerant grasses and plant species, treatment of stormwater, development of wetlands, sewer mining for irrigation.
- Increasing awareness and pressure for alternate and active forms of transport – this is placing pressure on governments to provide safe and connected pathways, quality and efficient public transport, etc. These measures will influence a decreasing incidence of the use of valuable open space for car parking.
- Greater interest in community gardens / edible landscapes / food production in communities and the diverse ways that this issue can be addressed in open space and other public land / facilities.
- Emphasis on social contact, connectedness and sense of belonging.

- Implications of community celebration, events and festivals taking place in open space.
- A greater understanding of the role that open space, physical activity and recreation has for preventative health and increasing health and wellbeing.
- An appreciation of 'microclimate' conditions that green space provides and the importance of this in providing relief in built up areas.
- Climate change – Consider statements including:
  - Impact of climate change and adaptation strategies as rainfall, weather events and climatic conditions become less predictable and potentially more intensive.
  - Moving towards a green / sustainable economy.
  - Emissions reduction in open space including the travel to and through open space, minimising energy consumption in the provision of facilities and maximising natural solutions for shade, etc.
  - Use of Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) principles for open spaces and community facilities to reduce impact on the environment.
  - Use of permeable surfaces that hold moisture and provide a cooling effect as opposed to hard surfaces that build heat and promote run-off that may increase the risk of erosion.
  - Measures can include energy efficient design to minimise energy use; energy and water efficient fittings and appliances; water conservation through rain water harvesting and grey water use and reuse of buildings and materials.
  - Use of synthetic turf could allow higher usage rates than natural turf (but without the cooling effect of natural turf).
  - Development and design decision-making should consider features that provide protection to users during extreme weather conditions.

#### 4.8 OPEN SPACE GAP ANALYSIS

Articulating the need for open space will rely on a comparison between the identified 'needs and demands for open space' and the 'supply and provision of open space' to address these needs. If the outcomes of this planning exercise are required as tools for statutory planning policy and application assessment, it will be important to develop quantitative outcomes that can be translated into land area for open space contributions and/or land value for cash-in-lieu of land. The methods for this analysis and its outcomes will be different for each municipal area and the following provides a list of options that can be considered in developing a tailored approach.

- Understanding community aspirations and expectations through a community engagement process (see [4.4 ASSESS EXISTING PROVISION – EXISTING SUPPLY OF OPEN SPACE](#))
- Application of statutory requirements ([See SECTION 3 STATE LEGISLATION AND THE PLANNING SYSTEM](#)) to compare 'what should be' with 'what is'
- A spatial analysis using mapping and (GIS) layers to identify barriers and shortfalls in provision in terms of location and distribution of open space
- A clear identification of the requirements for open space provision (that will satisfy demand) using the planning framework that has been defined and developed as part of this assessment. Criteria that form the planning framework might include:
  - Comparison of open space provision to the population (current and projected).
  - Comparison of open space provision to the defined hierarchy of open space and recommended sizes, catchments and level of development of sites.
  - Comparison of open space provision to the agreed definitions of category / function / character of open space to identify any shortfalls.
  - Comparison of open space provision to the identified community needs (through research and community engagement) and the use of participation trends and benchmarks / standards to validate and further discussion gaps in provision.
  - Comparison of open space provision to the agreed sustainable level of development of open space, quality and presentation of existing open space sites.

- Assessment of linkages and connections (that also may include landscape corridors) and identification of shortfalls in the current open space system.

#### 4.9 DEVELOP STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS

Once the gaps / shortfalls in open space provision have been identified, there are a few steps that can be considered in the development of an implementation plan. The following should be used as a guide and checklist to develop a methodology that fits the specific organisation and project.

- Review the policy settings to define any amendments that will be helpful in improving provision through statutory processes, guidelines and policies. This may include local, regional and state planning provisions, statutes and other policies and guidelines.
- By using the findings and outcomes of the open space planning process to determine the mix and levels of open space provision required, specific actions will be able to emerge for specific areas – these may be in the form of site specific recommendations, or be more general about seeking opportunities that may arise in the future to achieve certain outcomes.
- Consider status of land in terms of ownership, management and maintenance responsibilities, other roles and functions that need to be considered (or might take precedence) when formulating recommendations
- An implementation plan might include details such as:
  - Outline or summary of specific recommendations;
  - Level of priority as defined and agreed by the organisation;
  - Resourcing considerations – costs, funding opportunities, staff time and other operational considerations;
  - Responsible organisation / department / authority;
  - Approvals and statutory processes required for successful implementation;
  - Any contextual link to the document – might include principles, reference numbers to actions, and location / site specific;
  - Performance indicators that can be used to measure success of implementation, and
  - Partnerships that need to be considered in the implementation of actions.

#### 4.10 REFERENCES / SOURCES

The following (either currently or formerly public) documents have been used in developing this section of the guide. See Sections 7 and 9 for listing of case studies and references that will complement this reading.

- Hume City Council Open Space Strategy 2010-2015
- Baw Baw Shire Council – Our Community Places and Spaces – A strategy for public open space in Baw Baw Shire (2012)
- City of Melbourne Open Space Strategy (2012)
- Draft Boroondara Open Space Strategy (2012)
- City of Casey Open Space Strategy Issues Paper 2010
- Darebin Open Space Strategy 2007-2017 (2008)
- Ballarat Open Space Strategy (2008)
- City of Whitehorse Open Space Strategy (2007)
- Brimbank City Council – Moving from Paddocks to People Places – Brimbank Open Space and Playground Strategy (2007)
- City of Yarra Open Space Strategy (2006)



## SECTION 5 PROVIDING OPEN SPACE FOR COMMUNITIES

### In this Section:

- ✓ How to provide open space once it has been determined that needs exist
- ✓ Options for acquiring and purchasing land for open space are discussed
- ✓ Guidance is provided for maximising the capacity of existing open space
- ✓ Some suggestions for creating new open space in existing areas are listed
- ✓ Open Space Development Standards are presented and briefly discussed

Whether in a growth or established area, it is essential to provide a range of open spaces that respond to the community's diverse recreational needs and the preservation of heritage and environmental values.

An open space and/or recreation strategy may have identified additional requirements for an existing community, or a municipal council may have identified the need for additional open space in a new or emerging community.

This section describes options for acquiring land or maximising existing open space.

### 5.1 ACQUIRING LAND

#### 5.1.1 OPEN SPACE CONTRIBUTIONS THROUGH STATUTORY AND PLANNING MECHANISMS

In new residential areas or areas undergoing urban renewal, open space planning should occur early in the land use planning process, preferably at the time of preparing the framework plan or the precinct structure plan.

It should be noted that while urban planning mechanisms provide councils with the tools to specify open space requirements, Councils cannot rely solely on developer contributions to deliver the total open space required, particularly in those suburbs that have a historic shortfall of local open space.

[Section 3](#) discusses in detail the following legislative and planning mechanisms available to councils to acquire land (or its monetary equivalent) for local open space use.

- **Subdivision Act 1988** – Section 18 enables councils to obtain from developers up to 5 per cent of land (or its equivalent in cash) in a subdivision for open space purposes.
- **Planning and Environment Act 1989** – Development Contribution Plans and Section 173 Agreements enable councils to specify and/or negotiate with developers the level of community infrastructure to be provided (including open space).
- **Victoria Planning Provisions** – Councils can specify the amount and quality of open space contributions required in the Schedule to Clause 52.01. Clause 56.05 specifies the open space standards with respect to the quality, land size and distance from dwellings.

#### 5.1.2 PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE THE APPLICATION OF CLAUSE 52.01

Use of Clause 52.01 as it currently appears in the VPP or creating a schedule to the clause should be informed by the following key principles for open space provision:

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## CONTRIBUTION BASED ON NEED

Contributions should be based on an assessment of need. Open space is a community asset that provides important social and recreational opportunities. As communities grow, their open space needs, in general, grow with them. Various standards and guidelines have been developed to link open space provision – number and type of open space assets – to various population thresholds.

To justify open space contributions a council must demonstrate there is a need for the open space with reference to demand and adopted standards of provision that are tailored to the local setting, such as through a formal policy position.

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## THE CONTRIBUTION AMOUNT

The contribution amount should have a relationship with the need for open space. A particular subdivision should contribute an amount to achieve an open space outcome as defined by standards stated in formal policy. Further, subdivisions should not pay more than once for a specific open space project or outcome.

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## THE METHOD OF CONTRIBUTION

The subdivision process is an appropriate point at which to take open space contributions, especially in greenfield areas. At the point of subdivision, land can be set aside for open space to meet the needs of the community that will eventually settle in the area.

The contribution can be made as cash in lieu of land provision where the council seeks to pool contributions to provide a consolidated open space network – or improve an existing network – as opposed to obtaining a disjointed series of pocket parks. This is particularly important in established areas where strategic investments are required as opposed to sporadic land contributions.

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## THE USE OF CONTRIBUTIONS FOR OPEN SPACE

In general, open space contributions should relate to provision of land and/or improvements to open space land. This includes parks (which can be used for various purposes), trails and urban open space (such as civic spaces). This implies that contributions should be based on and used for capital assets, and not maintenance of those assets. Other sources of funds should be used for maintenance purposes. It should be noted that open space should be interpreted broadly to include not only land but also facilities to support activities within open space.



### 5.1.3 LAND PURCHASES

While a common way to acquire open space is through open space contributions during the establishment of urban areas, additional open space will need to be acquired through other means. For example, a development may be exempt from making an open space contribution, or a shortfall of open space may be identified within an established area.

Land purchases may also be required where there is urban regeneration and the housing stock and densities are increased as a result.

In such instances, councils may consider purchasing land over time as it becomes available with the view to augmenting existing open spaces or to establishing new open spaces in strategically identified areas.

Funding options available to councils may include:

- **Increased Rates** – Revenue from general or special rates form the major part of councils' annual budgets. While these can be increased from time to time to raise funds for special projects, community resistance to rate increases may need to be addressed.
- **Direct Charges** – The introduction of an entry fee to the open space or to a specific facility within the open space may be used for a specified time to offset the costs or a portion of the costs associated with its provision. Again community resistance to entry fees or other user payments may need to be addressed.
- **Asset Redistribution** – Revenue from the sale of assets no longer required may be used to purchase land in an area that is open space deficient provided nexus can be demonstrated.

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### 5.1.4 SURPLUS PUBLIC LAND

In some instances, opportunities arise with public land no longer being required for its designated purpose. This provides opportunity to access land to add to the open space network, in particular areas that have an undersupply of open space.

In its recent [Metropolitan Melbourne Investigation](#), the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council (VEAC) provided a detailed discussion on the values and scope of public land not committed to a specific use. It also outlined policies and processes for determining its appropriate future uses (Discussion Paper 2010). In its final report it summarised some of the material and provided further discussion on the issues (Final Report 2011).

## 5.2 MAXIMISING THE CAPACITY OF EXISTING OPEN SPACE

Councils continually consider options for responding to the increasing and changing needs of their communities. In cases where there may be limited opportunities to acquire additional land (such as established areas), this often requires modifying existing open space to accommodate additional or different uses.

Depending on local circumstances, options available may include:

- Improving access to existing open spaces:
  - Removing fences or other barriers around sports or training fields to encourage use by the broader community when the fields are not being used for their primary purpose.
  - Improving transport options for those community groups experiencing mobility difficulties (e.g. volunteer commuter bus).
  - Supporting and encouraging sports associations to explore different models of delivery.

- Upgrading facilities to match needs:
  - Reconfiguring sports fields or supporting infrastructure to accommodate additional activities and/or user groups.
  - Incorporating building materials and features that can withstand and/or protect users from extreme weather conditions to reduce downtime.
  - Incorporating design features that support people of all abilities and life stages to participate in the open space opportunities offered.
- Using design solutions to increase capacity:
  - By installing lighting to extend programmable time.
  - By installing synthetic playing surfaces to extend capacity.
  - With the use of removable goals and multiple line markings to allow different users or skill levels or to accommodate diverse and modified sports options.
  - By enhancing informal recreation opportunities.
  - With flexible field layouts for junior competition levels.
  - Maximising climate change adaptation.
  - Through the use of technology for innovative solutions.
- Enabling multiple/shared use of existing open spaces through:
  - Seeking opportunities to work with other authorities, agencies and organisations including other land owners.
  - Developing clear policies and standard agreements that outline roles and responsibilities for regular and cyclical maintenance; insurance and risk management; scheduling and fees.
  - Proposing strategies to reduce conflict between competing uses.

The following resources provide guidance relating to the shared use of community infrastructure.

- [Getting it Together: Inquiry into the Sharing of Government and Community Facilities Final Report](#) – Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission 2009
- [A Guide to Governing Shared Community Facilities](#) – Department of Planning and Community Development 2010
- [Shared Use of School Facilities](#) – Department of Education and Early Childhood Development website
- [Schools as Community Facilities: Policy Framework and Guidelines](#) – Department of Education and Training 2005

### 5.3 OPPORTUNITIES FOR CREATING NEW OPEN SPACE

Opportunities exist to create new open space by redesign of existing sites. Creative approaches to design can create new spaces that have not been delivered in a traditional manner. Some examples might include:

- Change of car park to open space;
- Rooftop gardens;
- Rezoning of road reserve to open space, and
- Landfill.

## 5.4 OPEN SPACE DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Open Space Planners are often required to determine a suitable level of development for new open spaces and to respond to community requests for new infrastructure or features within existing open space sites. This could range from a request for a seat or bin, to a playground, BBQ shelter, public toilets or sporting clubrooms and facilities.

Assessing and responding to these requests takes considerable time and resources and so several Councils have now prepared standards for open space development. The standards are typically a matrix that identifies what infrastructure or landscape features are appropriate and suited to different open space types and functions.

A fine balance is to be achieved between providing quality open space facilities that provide for the needs of the community, while at the same time, ensuring provision is sustainable and can be maintained within operational budgets in the long term.

While the standards vary slightly between Councils, they tend to be quite similar and therefore have the capacity to become an industry standard and to provide generic guidance to assist the open space design and development process. They also greatly assist open space planners and managers to effectively and efficiently provide advice and respond to community requests for infrastructure in open space.

A sample matrix is attached as [APPENDIX 5 OPEN SPACE DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS](#)



## SECTION 6 OPEN SPACE DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

### In this Section:

- ✓ **The importance of careful consideration of location and design is reinforced**
- ✓ **Guidance is provided about factors to be considered in open space design**
- ✓ **Accessibility and liveability principles are discussed and interpreted for design**
- ✓ **Multi-functional and adaptable aspects of open space design are discussed**
- ✓ **Environment protection and sustainability is presented in the context of open space**

### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

Access to well sited and designed open spaces that respond to local needs and the local environment provide a range of benefits to individuals and the community as a whole.

Local open spaces that provide opportunities for community, cultural and/or family gatherings enhance community cohesion and connectedness and are increasingly being recognised as contributing to the liveability of an area.

State legislation and the Victoria Planning Provisions (VPP) provide the state-wide strategic land-use planning, development and protection policies. Guidance on the distribution, quality and design of a range of open spaces is provided throughout the VPP and associated guidelines, such as the Precinct Structure Planning Guidelines.

At the local government level open space planning also occurs through strategic land use planning processes and is reflected in Precinct Structure Plans, Outline Development Plans, Design and Development Overlays and other planning documents referenced or incorporated within local planning schemes. In many cases local authorities have also developed their own generic design and provision guidelines through open space and leisure strategies, policies and standards.

This section aims to provide guidance on the siting and design of local open spaces types generally delivered by local government. It includes:

- guidance on factors to be considered when developing design responses;
- references to the key state-wide open space planning policies and provisions that may influence design; and
- examples to support development of design concepts.

The design guidance in this section may, where practical, be applied across all settlement types, irrespective of whether open space is being newly planned or is undergoing redevelopment.

Recognising that each community and open space site has its own characteristics and requirements, it is important to note that these guidelines are by no means the complete answer to open space design. Appropriately qualified and experienced professionals should be engaged to ensure that open space is well planned, compliant with relevant legislation, in accordance with industry standards and best practice and to an equitable and sustainable level.

### 6.2 SITING AND DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

Locally derived siting and design principles provide the basis for developing design responses that reflect the aspirations of the local community and council's land use planning policies.

In many cases, siting and design principles are developed through the municipal open space planning process (see

SECTION 4 OPEN SPACE PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS).

Three core planning principles have been used as a framework for both open space planning and open space design. These principles are intended to provide guidance in open space provision to ensure that resulting open space outcomes are sustainable and responsive to community needs.

**Accessibility and Liveability**

Siting and design considerations may include the following key statements:

Open spaces encourage healthy, active and connected communities.

Equitable distribution of local open space is a key factor contributing to liveability.

Connectivity between open spaces and activity hubs facilitates access and encourages greater community use and participation.

Land capability and suitability assessments are important determinants of appropriateness and useability of sites for the intended open space function.

Layout of open space relative to surrounding streets and dwellings influences access and passive surveillance.

Accessibility features within an open space enable use by everyone.

**Multi-Functionality and Adaptability**

Siting and design considerations may include the following key statements:

Multi-functional open spaces have greater capacity to offer diverse experiences whilst maximising land use.

Co-located open spaces increase public awareness of the available opportunities and may reduce development and operating costs through shared infrastructure.

Diversity of opportunities and settings across the open space network are essential to meet the community's needs.

**Environmental Protection and Sustainability**

Siting and design considerations may include the following key statements:

Protection and preservation of areas with natural, heritage and cultural values are important considerations for responsible land management.

Design for sustainable open spaces is critical for future generations.

A planned and strategic approach is critical for all open space design.

There will be no (overall) net loss of open space as the population increases and communities change over time.

It is important to note that the considerations listed above are general and flexible rather than definitive. They recognise that each setting, site and community will require an individual design response.

**6.2.1 ACCESSIBILITY AND LIVEABILITY**

**DESIGNING FOR HEALTHY, ACTIVE AND CONNECTED COMMUNITIES**

Access to well distributed and connected open space influences the community use in terms of frequency and extent, feelings of safety and overall enjoyment.

Open space designed to encourage communities to socialise either incidentally, or through cultural, community and sporting events are increasingly being recognised as contributing to the liveability of an area.

Developing partnerships and community engagement and participation in the planning and design of local open spaces is a critical success factor in responding to the community's aspirations. Furthermore, it contributes to developing a sense of community ownership and pride of place, and encourages ongoing community use and civil participation. Community participation throughout the

planning process may, where practicable, lead to involvement with the ongoing management and/or maintenance of the open space.

[\*Healthy by Design: A Planners' Guide to Environments for Active Living\*](#), produced by the Heart Foundation (Victoria Division), provides detailed guidance to assist planners to incorporate healthier design considerations into planning decisions.

With respect to public open space, the guide outlines key design considerations for:

- providing a range of spaces within walking distance from dwellings;
- clearly defining walking and cycling routes that pass through open spaces; and
- incorporating these routes into the broader walking and cycling network.

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## DISTRIBUTION, ACCESS AND CONNECTIVITY

The following factors are critical considerations when developing a siting and design response for a new site being added to an existing open space network, or when designing a newly planned open space network for a large new residential development:

- the equitable distribution of open space sites and connections that offer a diversity of experiences and opportunities close to where people live and work;
- the ease, safety and flexibility of access to open space using any given route, by walking or cycling, with prams, wheelchairs, cars and public transport;
- perceptions of safety when accessing the site, or different areas within the site;
- a general lack of obstruction or barriers such as busy roads without safe crossings, rail lines, high fences, overgrown vegetation, steep changes in grade, deep drains etc.;
- connections to the other forms of open space offered within and adjoining the neighbourhood, and/or and other places of interests and/or activity hubs;
- linkages to the road network and existing off road paths, shared paths, trails and cycle lanes and footpaths in roads;
- path construction details such as widths, grades, crossovers and material finishes; and
- passive surveillance and open space frontage to roads and surrounding residents.





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## CHECKLIST OF DISTRIBUTION, ACCESS AND CONNECTIVITY CONSIDERATIONS

The following considerations may assist in planning or assessing the distribution and connectivity of new or existing open space:

- Is the site located within easy walking distance from where people live and work?
  - *Consider: access by various travel modes; proximity to and access routes from dwellings and employment precincts.*
- Are there any barriers to accessing existing or planned open spaces?
  - *Consider:*
    - *Urban landscape (e.g. freeways and collector roads, street layout; public transport routes; building forms; waterways);*
    - *Natural landscape (e.g. topography and other natural features); and*
    - *Psychological barriers (e.g. perceptions of safety, inclusion/exclusion, cultural/religious factors).*
- Are there any connections to other open space functions and/or the local/regional open space network?
  - *Consider: linkages via linear open spaces, pedestrian and cycling networks, along creeks and waterways, along commuter roads and/or railway land, etc.*
- Are there linkages to other community facilities and services?
  - *Consider: schools, activity hubs, retail areas etc.*

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## USE OF PROVISION STANDARDS AND RATIOS

Provision standards and ratios are tools aimed at providing a basis for determining the quantity or quality of open space provision within any given area.

Land use planning legislation and guidelines currently specify both quantitative and qualitative standards to express what is required to comply.

Quantitative standards are generally expressed as:

- a percentage of the total amount of land (*i.e. 10 and 6 percent of the net developable land*)
- an amount per capita (*i.e. 2 ha/1,000 people for active open space; 5ha/60,000 people for built facilities*)
- a distance from a given point (*i.e. parks to be within 400m of 95 percent of dwellings*); and
- an area size (*i.e. 8 ha minimum for local active open space; 25-30 ha for regional active open space*).

Qualitative standards expressed in the state-wide planning provisions and the *Precinct Structure Planning Guidelines* are expressed as factors that reflect appropriateness for the intended function. (*For example, land for active open space should be:*

- *suitably dimensioned and designed to provide for the intended use etc*
- *located on flat land (which can be cost effectively graded)*
- *located with access to, or making provision for, sustainable water supply etc)*

While there are some exemptions, these open space standards prescribe the 'minimum provisions' to be applied state-wide, and should be used as one of several methods when verifying local requirements. Further investigation by Councils will consider:

- undertaking open space planning to determine local requirements, and use a number of open space assessment tools to determine and verify findings; and
- specifying locally derived open space requirements in their local planning scheme.

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The [Planning for Community Infrastructure in Growth Areas](#) contains provision standards, ratios and benchmarks developed in conjunction with growth area councils to assist in the planning of a wide range of community facilities (including open space) to address the needs of residents in new developments. These standards are applicable to all settlement types as a guide for sustainable and viable provision levels.

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## **Relevant VPP Clauses relating to distribution, access and connectivity of local parks and active open spaces**

### ***Distribution***

1. Provide new parkland in growth areas and in areas that have an undersupply of parkland. *(VPP 11.03-1 – Open space planning objectives and strategies)*
2. Public open space should be provided along foreshores, streams and permanent water bodies. *(Standard C13 - VPP-56.05-2 Public Open Space Provision objectives)*
3. Provide a network of well-distributed neighbourhood public open space that includes;
  - Local parks within 400 metres safe walking distance of at least 95 percent of all dwellings.
  - Additional small local parks or public squares in activity centres and higher density residential areas.
  - Active open space of at least 8 hectares in area within 1 kilometre of 95 percent of all dwellings.
  - Linear parks and trails along waterways, vegetation corridors and road reserves within 1 kilometre of 95 percent of all dwellings. *(Standard C13 - VPP-56.05-2 Public Open Space Provision Objectives)*

### ***Connectivity***

4. Ensure that land is set aside and developed in residential areas for local recreational use and to create pedestrian and bicycle links to commercial and community facilities. *(VPP 11.03-1 – Open space planning objectives and strategies)*
5. Ensure that open space networks:
  - Are linked through the provision of walking and cycle trails and rights of way.
  - Are integrated with open space from abutting subdivisions.
  - Incorporate, where possible, links between major parks and activity areas, along waterways and natural drainage corridors, connecting places of natural and cultural interest, as well as maintaining public accessibility on public land immediately adjoining waterways and coasts. *(VPP 11.03-1 – Open space planning objectives and strategies)*
6. Ensure land identified as critical to the completion of open space links is transferred for open space purposes *(VPP 11.03-1 – Open space planning objectives and strategies)*
7. The provision of public open space should be linked to existing or proposed future public open spaces where appropriate. *(Standard C13 - VPP-56.05-2 Public Open Space Provision Objectives)*
8. An application for subdivision that creates public open spaces should be accompanied by a landscape design that provides for walking and cycling networks that link with community facilities. *(Standard C12 of VPP – 56.05-1 Integrated urban landscape objectives)*

### ***Access***

9. Ensure public access is not prevented by developments along stream banks and foreshores. *(VPP – 11.03-2 – Open space management objectives and strategies)*
10. Ensure public land immediately adjoining waterways and coastlines remains in public ownership. *(VPP – 11.03-2 – Open space management objectives and strategies)*

## Relevant VPP Clauses and urban design principles relating to accessibility of local parks and active open spaces

(VPP 11.03-1 – Open space planning objectives and strategies)

1. Ensure open space is designed to accommodate people of all abilities, ages and cultures.

(Urban Design Charter for Victoria – Principles of good urban design)

2. Accessibility – provide ease, safety and choice of access for all people
3. Inclusiveness and interaction – create places where all people are free to encounter each other as equals.

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## ACCESSIBILITY

Access to sport and recreation settings as a right for everyone is recognised through the following legislation, building codes and other standards that apply to the planning, design and development of buildings:

- [Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#);
- [Disability \(Access to Premises – Buildings\) Standards 2010](#);
- [Building Code of Australia](#);
- Planning Ordinances; and
- Australian Standards.

The key focus is on enabling access and use of buildings by people with disabilities and/or the aged.

Universal Design Principles offer an alternate approach that encourages the creation of environments that are usable by everyone, including people with vision, hearing impairments; families with prams and young children; people with injuries; the elderly; and people with mobility impairments.

The Universal Design Principles and philosophy encourages design and development beyond what is required by the Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards. A [DPCD fact sheet](#) provides an overview of the key Universal Design Principles.

In 2011 the Victorian government released the [Urban Design Charter for Victoria](#) which identifies 12 principles as essential qualities for the effective functioning of good public environments.

The Charter includes a principle of accessibility which aims to *provide ease, safety and choice of access for all people*. Amongst other things, this principle includes consideration of the ease and flexibility of access along any given route, including access by walking, for bikes, prams, wheelchairs, cars and public transport, and the connections between them.

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## LAYOUT OPTIONS RELATIVE TO STREETS AND DWELLINGS

The siting of open space relative to the surrounding streets and dwellings is a major consideration that influences passive surveillance, safety and pedestrian connectivity. The key siting and design features include:

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### Road Frontages

The majority of open space sites require road frontages for access and connectivity, either for vehicles, bicycles or pedestrians. Maximising road frontages to open space therefore also provides the opportunity for improved community access to the open space. Whilst having road frontage to all boundaries (i.e. 100%) of open space provides the optimum level of community access and is often

highly desirable, it is sometimes not possible or practical for a range of reasons. In establishing an industry benchmark however it is recommended that 75% be aimed for but that a minimum of half (i.e. 50%) of the total boundaries of any shape, piece or linear section of open space have direct road frontages.

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### Residential Frontages

Road frontage to open space also provides the opportunity for residential housing lots to be orientated so that they overlook or front onto the open space. This not only increases the passive surveillance of the open space but also the potential land value of the lots with an open space outlook. As there is a direct link between road frontage and residential frontages to open space it is therefore recommended that wherever roads front open space, where practical, all lots on that road should also face the open space. The industry benchmark for residential frontage, as per road frontages, should also be for a minimum of half (i.e. 50%) of the total boundaries of any shape, piece or linear section of open space to have direct residential frontages.

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### Passive Surveillance

Providing a minimum level of road and residential frontages to open space are the major ways of improving passive surveillance and of ensuring that a minimum industry benchmark is achieved in the design or layout of that open space. There are however other methods of improving passive surveillance which can also be applied at this stage, although they are generally less measureable or certain of providing effective passive surveillance of open space in the longer term. Some of these measures include:

- Increasing the density of housing fronting onto open space as this will increase human and street activity opposite the open space. This has the added advantage of allowing a developer to seek higher returns for land opposite open space to offset the road construction costs.
- Providing road frontage car parking but only where it does not obscure views from the residential frontages.
- Providing transparent fencing to residential allotments adjoining the open space to increase views into the open space. This is currently common practice where housing lots back onto linear open space. Transparent fencing can come in various built forms however tubular steel fencing styles currently provides one of the most cost effective options as it provides a safe and secure method of retaining children and pets within the adjoining property.
- Orientating medium-high density residential housing immediately adjoining the open space to face or front onto the open space and in addition utilise low fencing or transparent fencing at ground level.

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### Pedestrian Connectivity

Passive surveillance is also increased through improved connectivity to open space. Road frontages, physical links to surrounding open space (e.g. linear reserves with shared trails) and complementary adjoining land uses (e.g. schools) provide the major forms of connectivity to open space. Other methods of improving connectivity to the open space include:

- Ensuring that where road frontage is not available and residential properties back onto the open space (such as along linear reserves) that connections are made to the open space at locations and distances apart that tie in with the road network layout for that area (i.e. 100 metres apart).
- Encouraging pedestrian access and connectivity from residents adjoining open space through the use of pedestrian gates, and where there is high density housing fronting the open space, connecting paths along the frontage.
- Providing connecting pathways linking to complementary land uses (e.g. schools, community buildings).

### **Example – Open Space Layout Options and Features**

The City of Ballarat has examined a range of options available when considering the siting of open spaces in residential neighbourhoods. Council found that the siting of the open space relative to local streets and dwellings plays an important role in increasing passive surveillance and connectivity, and hence positively impacts on the community's safe use and enjoyment.

The following illustrations:



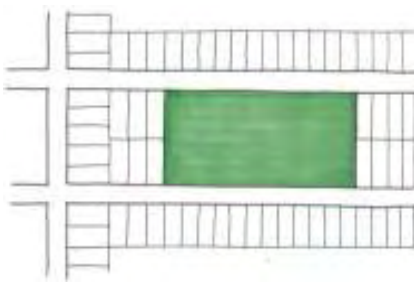

- provide a range of examples of how open space can be designed, laid out or provided so that it optimises community use and safety;
- generally apply to the creation of new open spaces through a plan of subdivision or urban infill and the redevelopment of existing open spaces;
- have been sketched up at a scale suitable for a new low density residential neighbourhood park however the principles can be equally applied to existing open spaces and all open space types, sizes, densities, functions and planning scheme zones; and
- assume a relatively flat site without major obstacles.


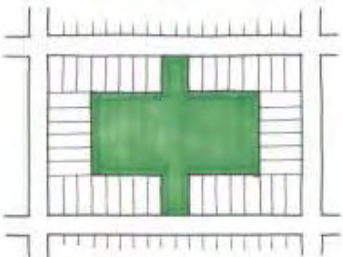


#### ***Layout Principles***

The major design and layout principles to be derived from this exercise include:

1. Maximise road frontage to the open space (min 50%);
2. Maximise surrounding residential frontage to the open space (min 50%);
3. Where road or property frontage cannot be provided utilise other methods of passive surveillance to improve public safety such as transparent fencing immediately adjoining the open space, increasing housing density opposite or backing onto open space and orienting new housing that adjoins open space so that it faces the open space; and
4. Maximise safe pedestrian connectivity and linkages to the open space.

Open Space Layout Options and Features

Type and Illustration	Features
<b>A: Neighbourhood Open Space</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 road frontages (entire lengths)</li> <li>• 4 boundaries with direct residential frontage</li> <li>• 100% passive surveillance</li> <li>• Full pedestrian connectivity potential</li> </ul>
<b>B: Neighbourhood Open Space</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 road frontages</li> <li>• 3 boundaries with direct residential frontage</li> <li>• 75% passive surveillance</li> <li>• Increased density of lots adjoining open space</li> <li>• Option to increase passive surveillance and connectivity with transparent fencing on adjoining residential interfaces</li> </ul>
<b>C: Neighbourhood Open Space</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 road frontages (longer lengths)</li> <li>• 2 boundaries with residential frontage</li> <li>• Approx 60% passive surveillance</li> </ul>
<b>D: Neighbourhood Open Space</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 road frontages</li> <li>• 2 boundaries with direct residential frontage</li> <li>• 50% passive surveillance</li> </ul>

Type and Illustration	Features
<p><b>E: Neighbourhood Open Space</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 road frontage</li> <li>• 1 boundary with direct residential frontage</li> <li>• 25% passive surveillance</li> </ul>
<p><b>F: Neighbourhood Open Space</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No road frontages, only access points</li> <li>• No direct property frontage</li> <li>• Extremely poor connectivity</li> <li>• 10% passive surveillance</li> <li>• Limited options to improve passive surveillance to an acceptable level as all properties are rear facing</li> </ul>
<p><b>G: Linear Open Space</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full road frontages along entire lengths and both sides of the open space</li> <li>• Full direct residential frontage</li> <li>• 100% passive surveillance</li> <li>• Full pedestrian connectivity potential</li> <li>• Multi-functional with recreational open space added onto linear open space</li> </ul>
<p><b>H: Linear Open Space</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Half road frontage equally distributed along either side of the open space along the full length</li> <li>• Half direct residential frontage</li> <li>• 50% passive surveillance</li> <li>• Option to increase passive surveillance with transparent fencing on adjoining rear interfaces and increased density of housing fronting open space</li> <li>• Interconnecting pedestrian linkages at approx 100 metres minimum apart</li> </ul>



### **Relevant VPP Clauses relating to passive surveillance and pedestrian connectivity of local parks and active open spaces**

The following objectives and/or standards contained in the Victoria Planning Provisions provide guidance supporting the development of a design response that enhances passive surveillance and pedestrian connectivity.

- An application for subdivision that creates public open spaces should be accompanied by a landscape design that supports surveillance and provides shade in streets, parks and public open space.  
(Standard C12 - VPP 56.05-1 - Integrated urban landscape objectives)
- The provision of public open space should maximise passive surveillance.  
(Standard C13 – VPP – 56.05-2 – Public Open Space Provision Objectives)
- Subdivision should increase visibility and surveillance by:
  - Ensuring streets and houses look onto public open space and avoiding sides and rears of lots along public open space boundaries;
  - Providing roads and streets along public open space boundaries.  
(Standard C10 - VPP – 56.04-4 – Street orientation objectives)

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### **APPROPRIATENESS AND USEABILITY**

An important factor in open space delivery is that the quality and quantity of land allocated for open space is appropriate and useable for its intended primary function.

Land capability and suitability assessments are important determinants of appropriateness and useability of sites for the intended open space function. The factors to be considered when undertaking these assessments are discussed in [Section 2](#).

As the following factors are also important considerations when determining the appropriateness of a site, each are discussed further within this section:

- Size of the land parcel is appropriate for its primary purpose;
- Shape of the land parcel can accommodate the required components;
- Topography – appropriateness of the slope; vegetation; drainage; cultural or heritage values; and
- Aspect/orientation of a land parcel for the proposed activities.

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### **SIZE**

The size of any given parcel of open space will directly determine its capability to function for its intended use. Generally the larger a piece of open space the greater the capacity for a wider diversity of functions, and adaptation to other functions as leisure preferences change over time.

Standards for the preferred sizes of different types of open spaces and the facilities within them are identified within a range of documents listed in this guide. The Victorian Planning Provisions provide guidance on the required size of local and neighbourhood parks and active open spaces. It should be noted, however that:

- some councils may have prepared or adapted their own sizes based upon the recommended sizes in existing legislation and their local circumstances; and
- regional open spaces may be treated differently across councils.

Irrespective of any existing standards affecting size, open space planners should assess the existing provision of open space in the given area to best determine what the open space needs are of the local area and community and how these can be best delivered. At times this may mean accepting

smaller sizes of open spaces than desired, or developing encumbered open space for recreational purposes, where this is possible given the primary function of the open space.

With respect to active open space, it is important that the appropriate sporting association is consulted when determining the spatial requirements for any given sporting activity and any supporting facilities that may be required.

### Example – Land size requirements for local and regional active open space

#### 1. Minimum land size for active open space

A total rectangular area of approximately 3.9 hectares is required to accommodate:

- 1 senior Australian rules football oval of 165mx135m
- Runoff zone
- Circulation and safety zone

As two ovals are required to sustain a local club competition, a minimum rectangular land parcel of 8 hectares is required to accommodate the sports fields, runoff and safety zones and club facilities.

Alternatively an 8 hectare site can accommodate 3 soccer fields and the required runoff, circulation and safety zones, and club facilities.

#### 2. Minimum land size required for neighbourhood active open space that includes other open space functions

A 10-12 ha site will allow some other open space functions to be provided, such as playgrounds, social/family gathering area, spectator areas (some sheltered spaces), park furniture, play spaces for children, sufficient car parking, buffer from surrounding roads and dwellings etc.

#### 3. Land size requirements for regional active open space\*

Regional active open spaces may range from a minimum of 10 ha to more than 50 ha, depending on the open space functions accommodated on the site. Generally, however, 30 ha will be sufficient to accommodate:

- 3 active outdoor playing fields (such as 3 full sized Australian rules football ovals and 3-4 soccer fields)
- 10 court tennis facility
- A high order playground, such as an adventure playground
- A typical council leisure centre (which may include an aquatics component)

\* Adapted from [Planning for Community Infrastructure in Growth Areas](#). This document also includes details on ancillary infrastructure that may form part of a regional active open space.

**NOTE: Specific technical specifications, including size, dimensions and orientation requirements of playing fields should be obtained from relevant sports associations prior to considering the appropriateness or size of land for active open space.**

## SHAPE

The shape of new open space will generally be determined by a range of factors including topography, hydrology, existing vegetation, the intended function of the open space, the road network and the plan of subdivision.

For maintenance and community safety purposes boundaries of open space sites should generally be continuous, either straight or gently curving, to avoid jagged changes in alignment that provide hidden corners that are difficult to maintain and provide poor passive surveillance.

Furthermore, irregularly-shaped active open spaces are generally less flexible in terms of the range and long term viability of opportunities that may be offered.

## TOPOGRAPHY

The existing slope of an area will determine the suitability of the site to provide for the open space's intended functions.

Land that is steeply sloping or has natural water flowing through it may be perfectly suitable for conservation land, habitat areas or as part of a linear corridor, however will be very difficult and costly to develop for other functions. Likewise land that is virtually flat may also be unsuitable for some recreational purposes without significant expenditure on drainage infrastructure.

In all cases, topography poses a number of challenges in terms of open space design including access and passive surveillance, development costs, public safety and maintenance.

Where other criteria are equal, flatter sites are generally preferred as being more accommodating when complying with the Disability Discrimination Act; more suitable for car parking areas and active open spaces, and reducing construction costs.

Generally recreational open space should be avoided on land with an overall slope greater than the following due to the cost and impact of required earthworks:

- 1:6 (16%) for informal spaces, including mowed areas; and
- 1:50 (2%) for active open spaces.

## ASPECT/ORIENTATION

Understanding the aspect, or solar orientation, of a given piece of open space will assist in ensuring that the open space and any developments and features within it are utilised to their full potential and community benefit. It will also ensure that landscape features, such as trees, do not create future shade issues with reserve users, tenants or nearby residents.

In Australia, the sun arcs in the northern sky, rising in the east and setting in the west. The summer sun arc is higher in the sky with significantly higher levels of UV radiation than the winter sun. With this in mind, providing shade or orientating outdoor built elements, during summer and between the hours of approximately 11.00 am to 4.00 pm is the major design consideration relative to aspect.

Each site however needs to be assessed to determine what existing features provide shade, what the shade impacts of new developments will be, and how new features can be orientated to maximise their use and user comfort.

### Example - Orientation of outdoor playing areas

The [Sports Dimensions Guide for Playing Areas](#) published by the Western Australian Department of Sport and Recreation in 2008 provides guidance on the preferred orientation of outdoor playing areas.

The guide states that:

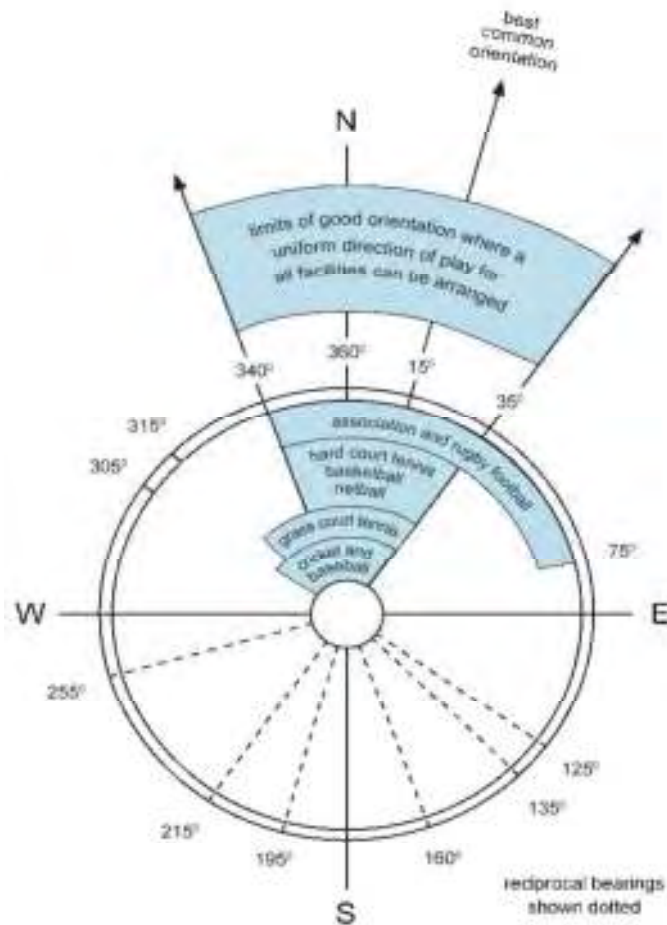
It is generally recommended that playing areas are orientated approximately in a north-south direction to minimise the effect of a setting sun on players;

The best common orientation is 15° east of north;

Limits of orientation where a uniform direction for all facilities can be arranged:

- athletics, basketball, bowls, croquet, handball, lacrosse, netball, tennis — between 20° west of north and 35° east of north;
- football: soccer, five-a-side, Australian rules, Gaelic, rugby league, rugby union — between 20° west of north and 45° east of north;
- hockey, polo, polocrosse — between 45° west of north and 45° east of north; and
- baseball, cricket, softball — between 45° west of north and 35° east of north.

The following diagram extracted from the guide illustrates the optimum orientation for Australia for various sporting activities. However, it should be noted that local conditions may override these recommendations.



The preferred orientation of some other common open space elements:

- **Playgrounds**
  - Shade— slightly to the north of the centre of the play equipment.
  - Slides— sloping to the south or south- east
- **Basketball half courts** – Aligned north- south with the backboard to the south
- **Skate Ramps** – Aligned east-west
- **Picnic tables** - Aligned north-south

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**Relevant VPP Clauses relating to appropriateness and useability of local parks and active open space**

The following key objectives and/or standards contained in the Victoria Planning Provisions provide guidance relating to appropriateness and useability considerations.

**General Guidance**

1. An application for subdivision that creates public open space should be accompanied by a landscape design that:
  - Provide appropriate pathways, signage, fencing, public lighting and street furniture; and

- Develop appropriate landscapes for the intended use of public open space including areas for passive and active recreation, the exercising of pets, playgrounds and shaded areas.  
(Standard C12 – VPP – 56.05-1 Integrated Urban Landscape Objectives)
- 2. The provision of public open space should be suitable for the intended use.  
(Standard C13 – VPP – 56.05-2 Public Open Space Provision Objectives)
- 3. Public open space should be provided along foreshores, streams and permanent water bodies.  
(Standard C13 - VPP-56.05-2 Public Open Space Provision Objectives)

**Appropriateness for local parks - size, distribution and dimension**

- 4. Provide a network of well-distributed neighbourhood public open space that includes;
  - Local parks within 400 metres safe walking distance of at least 95 percent of all dwellings. Where not designed to include active open space, local parks should be generally 1 hectare in area and suitably dimensioned and designed to provide for their intended use and to allow easy adaptation in response to changing community preferences.
  - Additional small local parks or public squares in activity centres and higher density residential areas. (Standard C13 - VPP-56.05-2 Public Open Space Provision Objectives)

**Appropriateness for active open space – size, distribution, dimension and orientation**

- 5. Active open space of at least 8 hectares in area within 1 kilometre of 95 per cent of all dwellings that is:
  - Suitably dimensioned and designed to provide for the intended use, buffer areas around sporting fields and passive open space
  - Sufficient to incorporate two football/cricket ovals
  - Appropriate for the intended use in terms of quality and orientation
  - Located on flat land (which can be cost effectively graded)
  - Located with access to, or making provision for, a recycled or sustainable water supply
  - Adjoin schools and other community facilities where practical
  - Designed to achieve sharing of space between sports.(Standard C13 - VPP-56.05-2 Public Open Space Provision Objectives)

**Linear parks and trails**

- 6. Linear parks and trails along waterways, vegetation corridors and road reserves within 1 kilometre of 95 per cent of all dwellings.  
(Standard C13 – VPP - 56.05-2 Public Open Space Provision Objectives)

**Quantity Guidance Contained in the Precinct Structure Planning Guidelines for Passive and Active Open Spaces**

In addition to the abovementioned VPP guidance relating to the distribution, size, dimensions and quality of parks and active open space, the Precinct Structure Planning Guidelines provide the following guidance with respect to the proportion of net developable land to be allocated.

1. In residential areas, approximately 10 per cent of the net developable area is to be provided as total public open space, of which 6 per cent of the net developable area is to be provided for active open space.
2. In addition, residential precincts should contain active indoor recreation facilities that are co-located and/or share space with schools and integrated community facilities. This should result in an active indoor sports provision of approximately 5 hectares per 60,000 residents.
3. In major employment areas, approximately 2 per cent of net developable area is to be provided as public open space, usually with a passive recreation function.

## 6.2.2 MULTI-FUNCTIONALITY AND ADAPTABILITY

Open space that is designed to offer multiple recreation opportunities, or is co-located with or adjacent to other compatible community services, generally encourage greater use from a wider cross-section of the community. Multifunctional open space has greater capacity to offer diverse opportunities and experiences, therefore maximising community use of available land.

Larger neighbourhood or district level open space offers greater flexibility to accommodate multiple uses and to adapt to changing leisure preferences over time due to the size of the land parcel and ancillary infrastructure.

Open space designed to accommodate a mix of functions, and/or co-located on adjacent land enables efficient use of land, minimises duplication; and has the potential to achieve significant capital and operational savings.

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## MULTI-FUNCTIONAL AND CO-LOCATION

Multi-functional open space or sites co-located with community/activity hubs have the potential to increase public awareness of the opportunities and experiences offered, and thereby attract and enable greater use by the broader community and people of all ages.

In addition, accommodating compatible multiple uses on the one site will result in cost savings due to efficient use of the land and infrastructure, such as car parking, toilets and, where practicable other built facilities.

Compatible community hubs and land uses that may be considered for co-locating parks and active open spaces include:

- public and private schools and other educational institutions;
- built sport, recreation and aquatic centres;
- libraries, child care and aged care centres; and
- encumbered land or water management land that is suitable for the intended function.

When designing for multi-functionality consider:

- both the physical and operational requirements of each function or activity and ensure that the design response accommodates these;
- any potential impacts that may arise, (such as noise, increased traffic and crowds) and ensure that the design response minimises any impacts (i.e. through landscaping, access points and buffering);
- including spaces of an area and dimension that may be adapted to respond to the community's changing leisure preferences over time;
- the topography and the cultural and heritage features of a planned site when determining compatibility with potential secondary uses;
- passive surveillance of the open space through layout of the site relative to surrounding streets and dwellings. Areas that have limited operating hours (such as industrial or warehouse sites) may not be suitable co-location sites due to seclusion and potential to encourage anti-social behaviour;
- location of shared ancillary infrastructure; and
- flexible use of landscaping and other suitable materials to designate activity areas, and which may be reconfigured to adapt to other uses over time.

## Example – Co-location of active open spaces within the Toolern Regional Park

### Toolern Regional Park



The 130 hectare Toolern regional park is located 3 kilometres south of the Melton Township and is expected to cater for around 60,000 new residents over the next two decades.

The design of the park allows for a number of functions to be co-located in a manner that does not impact on adjacent functions.

When completed the site will incorporate:

- Areas with cultural, conservation and/or environmental significance;
- Two active open space areas of 10 ha and 8 ha in size catering for junior and senior competition and training. These active open spaces will also act as a buffer between the areas of high conservation value and the residential developments; and
- A network of sealed and unsealed paths and linear trails connecting different areas of interest within the park. Linear open spaces and trails will also link the park to areas of interest within the township, including other open spaces and activity hubs.

For more information or to view the masterplan:

[http://www.melton.vic.gov.au/page/images/toolern\\_creek\\_regional\\_park.gif](http://www.melton.vic.gov.au/page/images/toolern_creek_regional_park.gif)

[http://parkweb.vic.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0018/313443/Toolern-Creek-Master-Plan.pdf](http://parkweb.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0018/313443/Toolern-Creek-Master-Plan.pdf)

## Relevant VPP Clauses relating to multifunctional local parks and active open spaces and co-location

The following objectives and/or standards contained in the Victoria Planning Provisions may inform the siting and design response.

1. Ensure that urban open space provides for nature conservation, recreation and play, formal and informal sport, social interaction and peace and solitude. Community sports facilities should be accommodated in a way that is not detrimental to other park activities. (*VPP 11.03-1 – Open space planning objectives and strategies*)
2. Ensure exclusive occupation of parkland by community organisations is restricted to activities consistent with management objectives of the park to maximise broad community access to open space.  
(*VPP – 11.03-2 – Open space management objectives and strategies*)
3. To provide a network of quality, well-distributed, multi-functional and cost-effective public open space that includes local parks, active open space, linear parks and trails, and links to regional open space.  
(*VPP – 56.05-2 – Public open space provision objectives*)
4. The provision of active open space should be designed to achieve sharing of space between sports.  
(*Standard C13 of VPP-56.05-2 – Public open space provision objectives*)
5. The provision of public open space should be of an area and dimensions to allow easy adaptation to different uses in response to changing community active and passive recreational preferences.  
(*Standard C13 of VPP-56.05-2 – Public Open space provision objectives*)
6. The provision of public open space should adjoin schools and other community facilities where practical.  
(*Standard C13 of VPP-56.05-2 Public open space provision objectives*)
7. To provide adequate unencumbered land for public open space and integrate any encumbered land with the open space network (*Standard C13 - VPP – 56.05-2 – Public open space provision objectives*)
8. The provision of public open space should:
  - Be integrated with floodways and encumbered land that is accessible for public recreation
  - Be integrated with urban water management systems, waterways and other water bodies.
  - Incorporate natural and cultural features where appropriate.(*Standard C13 - VPP – 56.05-2 – Public open space provision objectives*)

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## DESIGNING FOR A DIVERSE RANGE OF OPEN SPACES

The community's diverse leisure and open space preferences and priorities are identified through the municipal leisure and open space planning processes.

Designing for a diverse range of opportunities across the open space network and within individual spaces is critical if the community's diverse aspirations are to be realised. Key factors to be considered include the range of opportunities to be offered and the settings in which they will occur.



- **Opportunities** – An understanding of the range of opportunities or activities sought by the community will assist in developing an appropriate design response. Consider:
  - Walking in urban and semi-urban settings;
  - Cycling – recreational, commuter, sport training and extreme cycling;
  - Hiking in natural environments;
  - Enjoyment and appreciation of nature;
  - Quiet contemplation or personal reflection, including parks, memorial areas, avenues of honour;
  - Formal sport involving significant spectator attendance;
  - Informal recreation, exercise or other physical activity;
  - Structured and unstructured participation in sport and recreation; and
  - Community, cultural festivals and other gatherings.
  
- **Settings** – A hierarchy of open space types may be considered that provide diverse experiences. Consider:
  - Parks and ornamental gardens;
  - Linear open spaces along waterways, rail corridors, water management corridors;
  - Conservation areas and corridors;
  - Areas of cultural or heritage value;
  - Sports fields, outdoor playing courts, athletic and cycling tracks, playing rinks/greens;
  - Programmable areas;
  - Outdoor areas for local events including markets and festivals;
  - Playgrounds; and
  - Dog obedience and walking areas.

The following considerations may assist in designing for diverse opportunities and settings:

- Flexible areas that may accommodate diverse activities and any required infrastructure (i.e. regularly dimensioned areas of different sizes);
- Connections across different settings and/or other places of interest;
- Use of landscaping to define specific areas and/or to provide buffering for diverse activities (i.e. to reduce any potential impacts);
- Appropriate access points to the different settings and/or activity areas;
- Use of open space corridors, trails and paths to connect to different settings; and
- Accessibility features to enable use by all (i.e. clear signage; clear sight lines; path widths, grades and finishes; and access points).

### **Example – Designing neighbourhoods for play**

Play is essential to healthy childhood development. Unstructured play is important for brain development and optimal physical and emotional functioning.<sup>17</sup> Children are smarter, more cooperative, happier and healthier when they have frequent and varied opportunities for unstructured play in the outdoors.<sup>18</sup>

And, children are more physically active outdoors. There is a connection between learning lifelong habits of physical activity for health and wellbeing and positive outdoor childhood experiences. Yet children today are spending less time outdoors in unstructured play than in any other time in history.

It is important when planning neighbourhoods that opportunities for outdoor unstructured play have a focus. Children need to have access to places to play outdoors – and places that are not solely dependent on a parent driving them to these places as they get older. Consideration of proximity of spaces to where children live and safe routes of travel for independent mobility, are all key ingredients to building neighbourhoods where children can play.

As play is integral to growth and learning for human development, providing for play (including play spaces) is an important service for children and families. Children will benefit from access to a wide range of play opportunities. Children need more experiences than they can get in the home. Planning neighbourhoods is an opportunity to extend their experiences.

We know that:

- Children play wherever they are;
- As children grow they benefit from a graduated range of challenges and experiences;
- Children don't just play on equipment; they play in all sorts of ways, and
- Unstructured free play near the home is an important part of childhood, and depending on the neighbourhood this could take place in the street, in laneways, up a tree, near the local shops, as well as in a local park.

### **So how do we know what to provide? The following points describe some of the variety of experiences and settings for play that children need exposure to:**

Children need a variety of experiences and settings for play in a public setting. They include:

- Choices in the types of activities that interest children of a range of ages and developmental stages;
- Graduated challenges;
- Balance of challenge and risk;
- Access to nature;
- Opportunities to manipulate the environment;
- Opportunities for people to meet and play together;
- Sensory qualities which provide interest to children;
- A comfortable physical environment (shade, shelter, winter sun);
- Places where more than one child can be supervised;
- Places that children can access independently as they grow older;
- Accessible environments which support participation and inclusion, and
- Amenities which are easy and comfortable to use.

### **Planning for a range of experiences:**

In planning for play experiences across a neighbourhood and suburb, a strategic approach will assist in providing a diverse range of settings and consideration being given to all age groups.

It is important to provide opportunities for cognitive and imaginative play as well as physically active play. Some of the types of activities, experiences or settings which must be provided include:

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<sup>18</sup> Cheryl Charles, Ph.D. President, C&NN Editor, C&NN Research and Studies

- Places for physical development and active play. This includes all kinds of physical movement and motion such as places to run, hop, skip, jump, learn to ride, ride, skate, climb, balance, hang, swing and rock. Physical play will not just be equipment based.
- Places for ball play – unstructured play for a variety of ages such as flat areas, walls to bounce against, basketball rings, and “4 square”. These settings allow for play by yourself or with others.
- Environments which stimulate cognitive play – using the imagination, ordering, categorising and manipulating objects to construct or create, sensory experiences and problem solving.
- Places for social play – experiences which involve another child or group of children, often involving games of the imagination, dramatic role play, rules and creative or physical activity.
- A combination of built and natural elements (e.g. cubbies among vegetation, sand, logs), spatial qualities which enhance activities (i.e. partial enclosure or a sense of elevation), loose materials and fixed equipment, and texture.

Source: [The Good Play Space Guide: “I can play too”](#).

### Relevant VPP Clauses relating to the diversity of local parks and active open spaces

The following objectives and/or standards contained in the Victoria Planning Provisions provide guidance.

1. To provide a network of public open space that caters for a broad range of users  
(VPP – 56.05-2 – Public open space provision objectives)
2. To provide a network of quality, well-distributed, multi-functional and cost-effective public open space that includes local parks, active open space, linear parks and trails, and links to regional open space.  
(VPP – 56.05-2 – Public open space provision objectives)
3. To assist creation of a diverse and integrated network of public open space commensurate with the needs of the community.  
(VPP 11.03-1 – Open space planning objectives and strategies)
4. Ensure that urban open space provides for nature conservation, recreation and play, formal and informal sport, social interaction and peace and solitude. Community sports facilities should be accommodated in a way that is not detrimental to other park activities.  
(VPP 11.03-1 – Open space planning objectives and strategies)

### INTEGRATION WITH NATURAL AND URBAN LANDSCAPE

Open space should be sited and designed to integrate with the surrounding natural and urban landscape, including with open space from neighbouring areas.

The design of an open space site should respect the local natural landscape through:

- Use of indigenous plants and natural materials, where appropriate;
- Ensuring that co-located activities do not impact on the natural environmental, cultural or heritage values; and
- Use of appropriate buffers from adjacent activities and buildings.

The activity areas and ancillary facilities within open spaces should be oriented to:

- Take advantage of views to landmarks and features beyond the site;
- Take advantage of northern orientation, where desirable, for solar access;
- Take advantage of occasional shade/dappled light from existing mature vegetation; and
- Be protected from prevailing winds.

## Relevant VPP Clauses relating to the integration of open spaces with the natural and urban landscape

The following objectives and/or standards contained in the Victoria Planning Provisions provide guidance.

1. To provide attractive and continuous landscaping in streets and public open space that contributes to the character and identity of new neighbourhoods and urban places or to existing or preferred neighbourhood character in existing urban areas.  
*(VPPs – 56.05-1 Integrated urban landscape objectives)*
2. To incorporate natural and cultural features in the design of streets and public open space where appropriate.  
*(VPPs – 56.05-1 Integrated urban landscape objectives)*
3. An application for subdivision that creates public open space should be accompanied by landscape designs that:
  - Create attractive landscapes that visually emphasise streets and public open space.
  - Respond to the site and context description for the site and surrounding area.*(Standard C12 - VPPs – 56.05-1 Integrated urban landscape objectives)*
4. To provide adequate unencumbered land for public open space and integrate any encumbered land with the open space network  
*(Standard C13 - VPP – 56.05-2 – Public open space provision objectives)*
5. The provision of public open space should:
  - Be integrated with floodways and encumbered land that is accessible for public recreation
  - Be integrated with urban water management systems, waterways and other water bodies.
  - Incorporate natural and cultural features where appropriate.*(Standard C13 - VPP – 56.05-2 – Public open space provision objectives)*
6. Ensure that open space networks:
  - Are linked through the provision of walking and cycling trails and rights of way.
  - Are integrated with open space from abutting subdivisions.
  - Incorporate, where possible, links between major parks and activity areas, along waterways and natural drainage corridors, connecting places of natural and cultural interest, as well as maintaining public accessibility on public land immediately adjoining waterways and coasts.*(VPP 11.03-1 – Open space planning objectives and strategies)*
7. Ensure that land is set aside and developed in residential areas for local recreational use and to create pedestrian and bicycle links to commercial and community facilities.  
*(VPP 11.03-1 – Open space planning objectives and strategies)*



### 6.2.3 ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AND SUSTAINABILITY

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#### PROTECTION AND PRESERVATION OF AREAS OF ENVIRONMENTAL, HERITAGE AND/OR CULTURAL VALUE

Commonwealth and state legislation governs the planning, design and ongoing management of areas of environmental, biodiversity and cultural significance.

The development, management and protection of these areas are overseen by relevant state authority and/or committees of management in line with detailed guidelines.

As each area of significance has its own unique characteristics and value, and management plan, councils are encouraged to consult directly with the relevant authorities and/or qualified professionals with respect to any local areas that may have environmental, biodiversity or cultural values.

In addition to the links to relevant legislation in [Section 3 – State Legislation and Planning System](#), the following websites may also assist in gaining an understanding of the key policies relating to land with environmental, heritage and/or cultural value:

- [Department of Sustainability and Environment \(DSE\)](#)
- [Parks Victoria](#)
- [Aboriginal Affairs Victoria](#)
- [Land Channel](#)

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#### ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

The current and predicted change to climate has the potential to impact on a range of open space functions and supporting infrastructure, and on the community's safe use and enjoyment of open space.

The Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI) is Victoria's lead government agency for sustainable management of water resources, climate change, bushfires, public land, forests and ecosystems. DEPI has published a [series of documents](#) (as DSE) which detail the current and predicted changes across Victorian regions.

In addition, an information sheet entitled [Environmentally Sustainable Design \(ESD\) Principles](#) provides detailed information and tips on applying ESD principles in the design of new community sport and recreation facilities. This document also provides direct links to an extensive list of resources to assist in translating the ESD principles into design responses.

Environmentally sustainable design considerations for local open spaces may include:

- [Sustainable water use](#) and stormwater harvesting;
- Use of [vegetation swales and depressions](#) to reduce run offs;
- Use of [renewable energy sources](#) (wind, solar, hydro, geothermal)
- Use of landscaping, vegetation, and grading to control/prevent erosion;
- Use of trees and other vegetation to shade areas;
- Use of native vegetation and turf species that are suited to the local conditions and the intended use; and
- Enhancements and protection of biodiversity and natural systems.

## Relevant VPP Clauses relating to sustainable open space

The following objectives and/or standards contained in the Victoria Planning Provisions may inform the siting and design response.

1. To provide for integrated water management systems and contribute to drinking water conservation.  
(VPPs – 56.05-1 Integrated urban landscape objectives)
2. An application for subdivision that creates public open space should be accompanied by a landscape design that (amongst other things):
  - Supports integrated water management systems with appropriate landscape design techniques for managing urban run-off including wetlands and other water sensitive urban design features in streets and public open space;
  - Promotes the use of drought tolerant and low maintenance plants and avoid species that are likely to spread into the surrounding environment.(Standard C12 - VPPs – 56.05-1 Integrated urban landscape objectives)
3. To ensure land provided for public open space can be managed in an environmentally sustainable way and contributes to the development of sustainable neighbourhoods.  
(VPP – 56.05-2 – Public open space provision objectives)
4. The provision of active open space should be located with access to, or making provision for, a recycled or sustainable water supply.
5. The provision of public open space should :
  - Be integrated with urban water management systems, waterways and other water bodies
  - Incorporate natural and cultural features where appropriate.(Standard 13 - VPP – 56.05-2 – Public open space provision objectives)

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## A PLANNED AND STRATEGIC APPROACH

In some instances, improvements to parks and open space occur in an ad-hoc manner and generally in response to specific issues. Where improvements occur in an ad-hoc manner, there is a potential to reduce available resources that may be better utilised elsewhere in the open space network.

A planned and strategic approach to the planning and delivery of open space will enhance the long term sustainability of the open space network for future generations.

A planned and strategic approach to open space provision and design may result in:

- Siting considerations that reflect the outcome of council's open space and land use planning outcomes relating to distribution and access, connectivity and linkages, co-location of compatible services/opportunities, and shared use of available resources;
- Design considerations that reflect the council's policies and objectives relating to diversity of opportunities and settings, integration with natural and urban landscapes, accessibility features, and environmental sustainability;
- The continual enhancement of the open space network in line with Council's capital works program and budgets, changing local needs and changes in the urban environment;
- Improvements in the quality or distribution of open space in line with relevant local strategies and plans may contribute to its longer term protection; and
- Where practicable, design consideration may take into account possible future augmentation or reconfiguration to meet increased demand or changing leisure preferences.

### **Relevant VPP Clauses relating to strategic planning of open spaces**

The following objectives and/or standards contained in the Victoria Planning Provisions provide guidance.

1. The provision of active open space should implement any relevant objective, policy, strategy or plan (including any growth area precinct structure plan) for open space set out in the planning scheme.  
*(Standard C13 of VPP-56.05-2 Open Space Provision Objectives)*
2. Improve the quality and distribution of open space and ensure long-term protection.
3. Ensure land identified as critical to the completion of open space links is transferred for open space purposes.
4. Protect the overall network of open space by ensuring that where there is a change in land use or in the nature of occupation resulting in a reduction of open space, the overall network of open space is protected by the addition of replacement parkland of equal or greater size and quality.
5. Provide new parkland in growth areas and in areas that have an undersupply of parkland.  
*(VPP 11.03-1 – Open space planning objectives and strategies)*
6. An application for subdivision that creates public open space should be accompanied by landscape designs that create low maintenance, durable landscapes that are capable of a long life.  
*(Standard 12 - VPP – 56.05-1 Integrated urban landscape objectives)*



## SECTION 7 CASE STUDIES

### In this Section:

- ✓ **City of Ballarat – Approaches to Assessing Demand and Supply**
- ✓ **City of Moreland – Creating a Schedule to Clause 52.01 of the Planning Scheme**
- ✓ **Whitehorse City Council – A Model for Purchasing Open Space**
- ✓ **Melbourne City Council – Expanding Existing Open Space in North Melbourne**
- ✓ **Yarra Ranges Shire Council – Creating Healthy and Active Environments**
- ✓ **Yarra Ranges Shire Council – An Open Space Planning Framework**
- ✓ **Yarra Ranges Shire Council – A Model Planning Approach to a Regional Athletics Facility**
- ✓ **Banyule City Council – Heidelberg Activity Centre Plan**
- ✓ **Maroondah City Council – Landowner Assessment Policy**

It is recognised that every LGA has different experiences in open space planning and management. To accompany the guide, a number of examples and ideas which have been implemented within the legislative context have been sought as case studies. It is understood that no one method will be suitable for every Council, but that there is much that can be learned from observing how others have approached various aspects of open space planning and provision.

### CASE STUDY 1 - CITY OF BALLARAT

Case Study Title	<b>City of Ballarat – Approaches to Assessing Demand and Supply</b>
Purpose	<p>This case study outlines how the City of Ballarat assesses the demand or need for 'additional' open space as part of the subdivision process.</p> <p>The methods employed are representative of a Regional Council experiencing rapid growth in some areas, urban infill in others, declining growth in rural areas and with insufficient open space planning resources.</p>
Rationale	<p>Ballarat's open space 'supply' is documented and assessed against the recommended supply levels in the Ballarat Open Space Strategy (BOSS). These supply levels are similar to those recommended in Clause 56 of the Victorian Planning Scheme.</p> <p>'Demand' for open space provision is not monitored or considered a priority in determining open space needs, except through designated growth areas, where both future supply and demand for open space are assessed and documented within Precinct Structure Plans (PSP).</p> <p>The assessment of the need to supply 'new' open space, or to add to the existing open space network, is generally not resourced outside of the subdivision process.</p>
Key Issue	<p>This methodology is relatively simple to apply but requires considerable negotiation with the developer to ensure that open space is provided to an appropriate size and in an appropriate location, and then developed to an acceptable standard.</p> <p>Due to urban infill the size of many subdivisions are too small to achieve the recommended minimum size for local parks. Under such circumstances parcels of open space down to 1000m<sup>2</sup> (ie less than the recommended 5000m<sup>2</sup>) may be requested where it can address a deficiency in provision and allow adequate room for a playground, room to kick a ball and plant a few trees.</p>

	<p>If approved a current Planning Scheme Amendment process will increase the open space contribution to 10% which will assist in addressing the above issue.</p> <p>New state legislation and increasing encumbrances (e.g. native vegetation protection and offsets, flood retention basins and protection of areas of cultural heritage significance) are also impacting on the supply of open space as they are often either at the expense of 'recreational' open space or surplus to what local government requires or needs to comply with our standards of provision.</p>
Options	<p>For 'growth areas' open space provision will be documented as part of the (PSP) process. Implementation of the structure plans will occur as subdivision occurs and open space will be supplied and developed in accordance with the approved plans of subdivisions and endorsed landscape plans.</p> <p>Open Space supply for all other areas occurs through subdivision applications and the application of the Subdivision Act using the following methodology:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The area of the subdivision is compared to the BOSS.</li><li>• If there is already sufficient 'recreational' open space within 500 metres of the centre of the subdivision then a 5% monetary contribution is requested.</li><li>• If there is insufficient 'recreational' open space within 500 metres of the centre of the subdivision then opportunities will be explored to see if the deficiency in open space (and its subsequent development) can be addressed through a 5% land contribution.</li></ul>
Detail	<p>This method effectively ensures that open space is provided where it is needed in 'new' subdivisions and growth areas; albeit sometimes compromised by inadequate size.</p> <p>Similar processes have been used in the past to rationalise the 'over' supply of open space in a given areas of the City and to successfully dispose of open space of low value, to use the sale proceeds for development of nearby open space.</p> <p>Deficiencies in the current supply of open space within established urban areas are not resolved through this methodology.</p> <p>Critical learnings are that open space 'supply' is not just about new open spaces acquired through subdivision but also about having resources and strategic processes in place to dispose of open space where it is in over supply or purchase, acquire and add to the open space networks where it is deficient or lacking in connectivity.</p>

CASE STUDY 2 - CITY OF MORELAND

Case Study Title	City of Moreland – Creating a Schedule to Clause 52.01 of the Planning Scheme
Purpose	This case study outlines the process/model adopted by Moreland City Council in developing a Schedule to Clause 52.01 of the Moreland Planning Scheme, to introduce a mandatory Public Open Space contribution.
Rationale	<p>Moreland has a relatively low rate of public open space provision per capita. According to a recent assessment by the Victorian Environmental Council it has the third lowest provision of open space across the metro area.</p> <p>Prior to introduction of a schedule to Clause 52.01, Moreland City Council relied on a blanket 5% public open space contributions policy for non-exempt subdivisions. However, some subdivision proponents challenged this policy at the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) with some success. Council found that the estimated average levy for open space contribution was approximately 4%, calculated by majority standard 5% against contested instances reduced to between 1.5%-3.5%. This was seen as an unsustainable situation because Council relied on open space contributions to implement the Moreland Open Space Strategy (i.e. MOSS). The risk and expense presented by this policy approach of obtaining contributions was deemed inadequate by Council.</p> <p>Council’s position with respect to open space contributions was seen as being able to be clarified and reinforced with incorporation of a Schedule to Clause 52.01 in the Moreland Planning Scheme. A Schedule enables Council to fix the per cent subdivision contribution rate.</p> <p>It was strongly articulated through planning appeal cases that Council should adopt a Schedule to Clause 52.01 to collect and manage open space contributions from subdivisions. An open space levy tool is provided in the Victorian Planning Provisions for that purpose and generally there is no valid reason for not establishing a Schedule.</p> <p>It should also be noted that for developers the ability to reduce the open space contribution, although a benefit in the short term caused uncertainty in what was required by Council and often delayed projects.</p>
Key Issue	The schedule to Clause 52.01 of the Moreland Planning Scheme is the appropriate Victorian Planning Provision to locate a mandatory open space contribution rate for non-exempt subdivisions. Moreland introduced a variable levy rate to the schedule to Clause 52.01, calculated on a suburb basis to reflect the local supply and demand for open space. No standard approach for establishing an open space contribution schedule is available, and as such SGS Economics and Planning on behalf of Council derived a formula and methodology for calculating a fair and equitable open space contribution rate for Moreland. Public open space contributions are necessary for Council to fulfil its open space policy objectives to maintain, upgrade and provide new public open space areas to serve the local community.
Options	It was considered that developing the Schedule was the only way to achieve surety about open space contributions. There was debate on which method to use, based on other Council approaches, including the development of a single rate across the whole municipality. It was determined that the variable rate was the most equitable and way to determine contribution requirements.
Detail	The schedule introduced into the Moreland Planning Scheme includes a variable levy rate on a suburb basis, which is considered to be the most fair and equitable method as it reflects local supply and demand for open space. The

Moreland Open Space Strategy 2004 and Activity Centre Structure Plans provided the policy basis for identifying new and existing open space projects in Moreland. Costings for these projects were used as a basis for calculating the open space contribution for the municipality to ensure that the contribution requirement is linked to the need for open space.

The guiding principles governing open space contributions from subdivisions are:

- Contributions should be based on an assessment of need;
- The specific standard of need should be defined by formal policy;
- The contribution amount should have a relationship with the stated need for open space;
- The manner of contribution should be land or cash in lieu of land or a combination of the two depending on the circumstances; and
- Contributions should be applied for the capital delivery purpose they were obtained – open space land, facility or both.

The open space contribution percentage for each suburb is calculated by identifying the open space projects that each suburb will benefit from, and dividing the cost of these projects between new lots expected to be created within a suburb. This cost is then expressed as a percentage of the median site value for the suburb to create the percentages proposed for the schedule to Clause 52.01. The levy produces a contribution rate per suburb that ranges from 2.5% to 6.8%. The equivalent method averaged across the municipality as a whole produces a contribution rate of 5.1%. This rate is consistent with the rates generally applied by the schedules to Clause 52.01 in the inner and middle ring municipalities in Melbourne.

The adopted levy formula is as follows:

1. Identify the projects that are required to serve the municipality;
2. For each project in turn, determine its capital cost component and identify its catchment area by using one or a group of suburbs;
3. Estimate the total number of future non-exempt lots that are expected to be established within the subject catchment area at the end of the planning horizon, 2023;
4. Divide the project cost by number of incoming non-exempt lots to establish a dollar contribution per lot;
5. Aggregate all dollar sums that apply to a particular suburb;
6. Determine the median per lot site value in each suburb; and
7. Express the aggregated contribution sum as a percentage of site value, to derive a percent rate of contribution.

The open space contribution is made as a cash payment in accordance with the Schedule or Council may, at its discretion, accept a land and / or works in lieu of cash contribution to meet the requirements of the levy.

Key achievements:

Firstly for Moreland City Council to adopt the policy and then to successfully have the Public Open Space Contribution introduced to Clause 52.01 of the Moreland Planning Scheme. A further amendment to the Clause is being sought to revise the open space contribution rates for Glenroy and Brunswick to reflect Structure Plans adopted post approval of the Open Space Contributions Schedule.

Key Learnings

As no standardised process for development an Open Space Contribution was available to Council, it was a resource intensive and time consuming exercise to develop the open space contributions policy and schedule. It took a number of years from commencement of the project to introduction of the schedule into the planning scheme, and further work has occurred since to make further amendments to the schedule to reflect new projects via Activity Centre

Structure Plans.

It is also noted that the Schedule is a 'snapshot' in time and that updating the Open Space Strategy or any other fundamental policy changes in Council will not be reflected in the current Schedule, as well as the project costs potentially being inadequate by the time the project is delivered.

It was recommended in the SGS Economics and Planning Report prepared for Council, that Council:

- Review the potential cash flow implications of the levy by undertaking the necessary analysis and sensitivity testing as required; and
- Monitor progress of income and expenditures for open space and review and if necessary modify the levy to achieve stated open space objectives.

It has already been noted that there has been a saving in officer time and less delay in subdivision approvals.

CASE STUDY 3 - WHITEHORSE CITY COUNCIL

Case Study Title	<b>Whitehorse City Council – A Model for Purchasing Open Space</b>
Purpose	A model for purchasing open space via the open market was developed so Council could obtain open space in parts of the City where no open space existed or high density residential development was predicted.
Rationale	Council was unlikely to obtain sufficient open space via subdivision as the average lot size in areas requiring open space is too small to allow any useful open space to be created. A model to identify and consider properties that would make good open space was needed so that Council could be confident that it was obtaining the best property for open space in each area with an open space shortfall.
Key Issue	The City of Whitehorse Open Space Strategy 2007 identified that increased high density development could place extra demand for open space. To compulsorily acquire land is expensive and use of land contribution via subdivision is often ineffective. Given that an areas open space needs could be met with a single property purchase, a model needed to be developed that identified the best sites and assessed, whether there are other more suitable properties still available in the area and the likelihood of these sites becoming available for use in the future. This prepared approach and opportunity cost assessment can be used quickly by decision makers when the site is offered for sale.
Options	Council's decision to purchase property "on market" avoided the use of other more expensive and unpleasant options such as compulsory acquisition or negotiated purchase, where an additional 30% of purchase price maybe required under compulsory acquisition legislation.
Detail	<p>Through the development of the Whitehorse Open Space Strategy 2007 Council became aware of the importance and use of small open spaces and the effect that extra residential development may have on residents quality of life. Developing an early assessment process for land purchase on market helps obtain new high quality open space at a competitive cost. Council identified properties that would make good open space and ranked these properties to determine if, when the sites are to be sold, whether Council should purchase the site or wait for another more suitable site that may present itself in the future. A standard proforma report outlines the issues to Council and recommends an "upper limit" towards purchase of the property. The Council report allows an appointed Council representative to bid for the property.</p> <p>In terms of key achievements Council has now obtained two properties for conversion to open space within areas without sufficient open space at present.</p> <p>Key learnings relate to the development of a simple process to assess the opportunity cost of purchasing one property over others in a quickly unfolding "on market" property sector.</p>

CASE STUDY 4 - MELBOURNE CITY COUNCIL

Case Study Title	<b>Melbourne City Council – Errol Street Park: North Melbourne Open Space Expansion Project 2008-2013</b>
Purpose	This case study will outline the process/model adopted by the City of Melbourne in acquiring additional public open space adjacent to existing parkland in order to meet increased demand arising from population growth.
Rationale	<p>This project was initiated following strategic directions identified in City Plan (The City of Melbourne’s Municipal Strategic Statement) in 1999 that recognised issues arising from a reversal of population decline identified in inner Melbourne. This initiated a series of planning documents to address future demand for open space in the area given the limitations in North and West Melbourne. The documents included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• North West Melbourne Local Plan, February 1999</li> <li>• Open Space Opportunities in North and West Melbourne, May 2002</li> </ul> <p>Historically North Melbourne has consisted of mixed use including industrial and consequently open space provision was not a major consideration in its development. Recent residential development from the late 1990s has increased demand for open space in the area. The low historic open space allocation and suburb densification has limited the ability to acquire and create new open space. The Local Plan and Open Space Opportunities documents identified road space as a way of potentially expanding existing small reserves in road to create more open space.</p> <p>North Melbourne’s central heart contains 500,000m<sup>2</sup> of built form that contains no public open space. It is surrounding by residential streets occasionally interspersed with some small triangular reserves created from intersecting wide road ways. Errol Street Park is only 400m away from a major open space however a major road barrier restricts access to it and in general there is limited local and neighbourhood spaces in the area.</p> <p>In 2011, the draft Melbourne Open Space Strategy (MOSS) identified future open space needs to meet population demands. Below is the actual and projected population figures for North Melbourne:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2001 = 9,181 (ABS, 2001 Census)</li> <li>• 2006 = 9,962 (ABS, 2006 Census)</li> <li>• Projected population in 2026 to be over 14,000 (Forecast from MOSS in line with Growth Framework Plan in the Draft Municipal Strategic Statement).</li> </ul> <p>The MOSS undertook a gap analysis on distribution, character and the roles of open space throughout Melbourne. It identified Errol Street Park for proposed expansion and upgrade.</p>
Key Issue	Errol Street Reserve was one of nine sites identified in the Open Space Opportunities in North and West Melbourne where additional open space could be created by expanding small triangular reserves into road space (Figure 1).



Figure 1

During the 2000s, the condition and function of Errol Street Reserve as an open space was reduced significantly by the installation of mulch for tree health considerations during the Melbourne drought (Figure 2). This diminished the usability of the reserve by removing the grassed area which local residents used to sit, picnic and play in.



Figure 2

Expansion of the reserve into existing road space surrounding the reserve had the potential to not only increase the current open space but also improve pedestrian and car safety. This would result in potential changes in the area including traffic flow, parking provision, bus route location, cycling and pedestrian flow. A larger park would also improve local area amenity, property values and assist in mitigating climate change impacts in the area.

In order to do this the local community needed to be a part of the planning and design development process.



Options

A community consultation process was initiated in 2008 and a community working group set up to guide the design development process. The design development group considered three draft concept plan options which went to the local community for feedback.

Other considerations included acknowledgement of the North Melbourne heritage streetscape character, flood management in the park and the relocation of the local bus route. Consultants were engaged to provide expert advice to inform the concept plan.

Initially the project was costed at under \$1million and would therefore not require a planning permit. However as the project evolved it was decided to apply for a planning permit given that the potential cost increase. This resulted in a lengthy planning process that culminated in a planning permit issued under direction by VCAT on 18 February 2011. This resulted in an amended concept design to incorporate additional local area heritage character acknowledgement.

The process of the park expansion was also subject to a road discontinuance process under the *Local Government Act 1989* in order to utilise the road space and before construction works could commence.

Detail

The draft concept design developed was a meld of two different options taken out to community consultation. The final design incorporated community feedback and a range of considerations including traffic flow, heritage, pedestrian safety, flood and climate mitigation to ensure the design had an overall positive impact on the site (Figure 3).



Figure 3

Key Achievements included:

- a significant gain in open space from 529m<sup>2</sup> to approximately 4,900m<sup>2</sup>.
- Support from the greater community for a new park.

- Improved pedestrian safety.
- Improved flood mitigation in the area overall.
- Creating more functional local open space in a suburb that needs it.
- Local children can play safely in the park rather than the streets.
- Retention of nearly all the existing trees including a row of elms reflecting the existing Errol Street alignment.
- Acknowledgement of the original Errol Street Reserve triangle in the landscape.

Key Learnings included:

- Support from greater community and political leaders is important for success
- Stay focused on the goal and work through the other issues.
- There are those that will always oppose change.
- Contact referral authorities in the early stages of the design and planning process.
- These projects can take much longer and be more expensive than anticipated.
- Simple landscape design responses in smaller spaces provide better functional outcomes.

The final cost of the project is estimated at \$1.8 million. We believe this is money is well spent given the relative land values in the area and the social, health and wellbeing benefit to the local community. The local community will now have a safe accessible park that they can utilise for a range of informal recreation activities. Adjoining residents will have improved visual amenity and the local area will benefit from the added environmental benefits that come with more green space in an urbanised area.



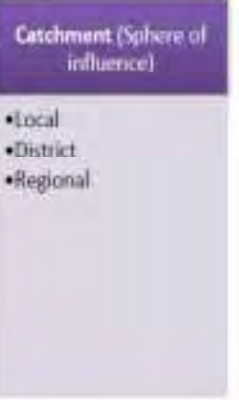

Construction is anticipated to be completed in early 2013.

CASE STUDY 5 - YARRA RANGES COUNCIL

Case Study Title	Yarra Ranges Council – Creating Healthy and Active Environments
Purpose	<p>Yarra Ranges Council is an interface council that has urban and rural settlements as well as large tracts of bushland and agricultural land. It has many challenges when providing for recreation and open space to its communities including distance, topography and competing land uses, however Yarra Ranges offers some spectacular opportunities and environments for people to lead healthy and active lifestyles.</p> <p>This case study builds a solid argument for the health and wellbeing context for provision of recreation and open space.</p>
Rationale	<p>Yarra Ranges Council has some of the most significant and unique natural bushland reserves and biodiversity corridors in Victoria. 65% of the total land in Yarra Ranges is public land including the Dandenong Ranges and the Yarra Ranges National Park.</p> <p>There are 65 playing fields spread over 47 reserves throughout Yarra Ranges. They are home to a range of sporting and recreation activities including Australian Rules football, cricket and soccer, jogging, walking and dog exercising.</p> <p>Swimming is one of the most popular recreation activities in Yarra Ranges. Eight public swimming pools and a water play facility are provided across the municipality. These include the Monbulk Aquatic Centre, Yarra Junction Centre and Seville Water Play.</p> <p>There are over 200 courts and greens that cater for netball, tennis, lawn bowls and croquet and four privately owned golf courses in Yarra Ranges</p> <p>Indoor sports are served by eight public and school sports stadiums and a range of privately owned facilities. Activities include basketball, netball, volleyball, badminton, table tennis, tennis, squash, martial arts, gymnastics, futsal and cricket. The Kilsyth Sports Centre is the main indoor sports centre in Yarra Ranges and home to the largest basketball association in Australia.</p> <p>Walking and cycling are the most popular recreation activities in Yarra Ranges. A range of shared trails, walking circuits, footpaths and on-road cycling routes are offered including the iconic Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail that attracts over 150,000 visits a year and is shared by walkers, cyclists and horse riders.</p> <p>There are a number of local parks and gardens that provide social recreation space for our communities within walking distance from where people live. These parks have play spaces, skate and BMX facilities, picnic facilities, pathways, gardens and event areas.</p> <p>Streetscapes, civic forecourts and plazas are community spaces offering social connectedness within our communities. Our active streetscapes have footpaths, diversity in trees and landscaping and embrace a townships culture and identify.</p> <p>Our diverse park system is integral to the health and wellbeing of our people, community and environment. Parks encourage people to recreate and live a healthy and active lifestyle. They help people escape from the urban environment and reconnect with nature. Parks are the social hub of our communities. They help us learn. Parks protect significant natural environments, habitats and cultural heritage. They offer opportunities for the local economy and give lungs to our cities.</p>

<p>Key Issue</p>	<p>Firstly, our vision for Yarra Ranges is for “A healthy and active Yarra Range’s community and environment”. This vision is important because it governs our objectives to reduce levels of obesity in our communities, increase the participation levels in structured sport and informal recreation activities and enhance the values of our unique open space environments.</p> <p>Secondly, Yarra Ranges Council is a signatory to the <i>Healthy Parks Healthy People Melbourne Communiqué 2010</i> that acknowledges the intrinsic link between nature and people and calls on organisations from around the world to adopt a Healthy Parks Healthy People philosophy.</p> <p>Thirdly, we have drafted a Recreation and Open Space Strategy that reaffirms Yarra Ranges Council’s commitment to the Healthy Parks Healthy People philosophy and our desire for our communities to enjoy the benefits of connecting with our diverse park system.</p> <p>The strategy applies a benefits approach to recreation and open space planning. An approach designed to provide all communities within Yarra Ranges with the full range of benefits recreation and open spaces provides including for sport, social recreation and play.</p> <p>The strategy provides an overarching framework to guide Council’s decision-making process in providing recreation and open space services and facilities in Yarra Ranges. It also consolidates all recreation and open space strategies under one umbrella document, prioritises actions within these strategies and links them to Council’s funding sources.</p> <p>The strategy sits alongside and has a collaborative relationship with other overarching corporate strategies that provide the strategic objectives for how council provides and seeks to improve services in Yarra Ranges. These strategies include Vision 2020, Housing Strategy, Community Wellbeing Plan, Economic Development Plan and Environment Strategy. The strategy will also form part of a revised Municipal Strategic Statement in the Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme.</p> <p>The strategy also critically analyses the recreation and open space Yarra Ranges has and identifies how we can improve it. It is a tool to assist Council in assessing developing and management recreation and open spaces and providing advice to developers in what open spaces we need and want for the future.</p>
<p>Detail</p>	<p>We want...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To plan for a healthy and active Yarra Ranges into the future.</li> <li>• A community that can access quality and diverse sport and recreation facilities, parks and community spaces.</li> <li>• To activate our community spaces, embracing our diversity in people, environment and culture.</li> <li>• A connected community via a network of trails and footpaths and to recreation services and opportunities.</li> <li>• To protect our significant and unique natural environments and landscapes.</li> <li>• To support sport and recreation clubs in being sustainable and advocates for participation in our communities.</li> <li>• To partner community in developing and managing sport and recreation facilities, parks and community spaces.</li> </ul>

CASE STUDY 6 - YARRA RANGES COUNCIL

Case Study Title	<b>Yarra Ranges Council – An Open Space Planning Framework</b>			
Purpose	A framework has been designed to provide Yarra Ranges communities access to the full range of benefits recreation and open spaces provide. The framework involves classifying recreation and open space by the function or role it plays in the community, the setting or form it takes, the catchment it serves and the nature of settlement it is located.			
Rationale	 <p><b>Function (Purpose of open space)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sport</li> <li>• Social recreation and play</li> <li>• Trail</li> <li>• Conservation – flora and fauna and heritage</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Setting (Form of open space)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parkland</li> <li>• Sports fields</li> <li>• Specialised sports facility</li> <li>• Bushland</li> <li>• Gardens</li> <li>• Riparian corridor</li> <li>• Streetscapes</li> <li>• Civic spaces</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Catchment (Sphere of influence)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local</li> <li>• District</li> <li>• Regional</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Settlement (Nature of settlement and density of housing)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Urban</li> <li>• Rural</li> </ul>
Key Issue	<p>Design standards are then applied for sport, social recreation and play and trails. The design standards specify the size, quality and distribution of recreation and open spaces. Design standards are not required for flora and fauna / waterway reserves because they are reserved and managed for their environmental values.</p> <p>This approach allows us to identify opportunities for improving the access and diversity of recreation and open space to communities across Yarra Ranges.</p> <p>We provide a different mix of recreation and open spaces depending on whether it is an urban or rural area.</p>			
Options	<p><b>Providing recreation and open space in our rural areas</b></p> <p>For rural areas, we provide a centrally located sport and recreation reserve to accommodate the participation needs of the local community. This reserve should offer opportunities to play a variety of sports and provide areas for social recreation activities e.g. kick about space, play space, picnic, pathways and seating. Access to off road trails should also be provided.</p> <p><b>Providing recreation and open space in our urban areas</b></p> <p>For urban areas, we provide the following mix of recreation and open spaces:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A local park of approximately 1ha in size providing for social recreation and play, located within 400m of where people live</li> <li>• A district park that is central to the main hub of activity in the area that provides for social recreation and is a venue for community events and activities</li> <li>• A district sports reserve within 2km of where people live and includes multiple sporting opportunities</li> <li>• An off road trails within 800m of where people live that links with a network of footpaths.</li> </ul> <p><b>Providing recreation and open space in our large rural townships</b></p> <p>Within Yarra Ranges there are large rural townships that have a mix of urban and rural areas. For these areas, a mix of the rural and urban areas formulas are provided. It is critical that a centrally located sport and recreation reserve is provided in the township as well as local parks for social recreation and play within 400m of where</p>			

people live. These townships should be linked by a primary off road trail network where possible.

**Recreation planning – an important element to providing recreation and open space**

In addition to the application of the framework, recognition of the recreation participation demands and infrastructure needs of sport in our urban and rural areas are overlaid. Feasibility studies and master plans recognise the demand for recreation infrastructure locally and regionally.

Detail

The Recreation and Open Space Strategy links to the Housing Strategy and recommends different levels of open space provisions based on the settlement type and population projections recommended in the Housing Strategy.

The strategy also links to State Government planning framework including Melbourne 2030, legislation governing public open space, the planning scheme, State Government policies including the State Environment and Planning Policy and Native Vegetation Framework.

The strategy contains tools that assist Council in assessing recreation and open space demands for Yarra Ranges. These include:

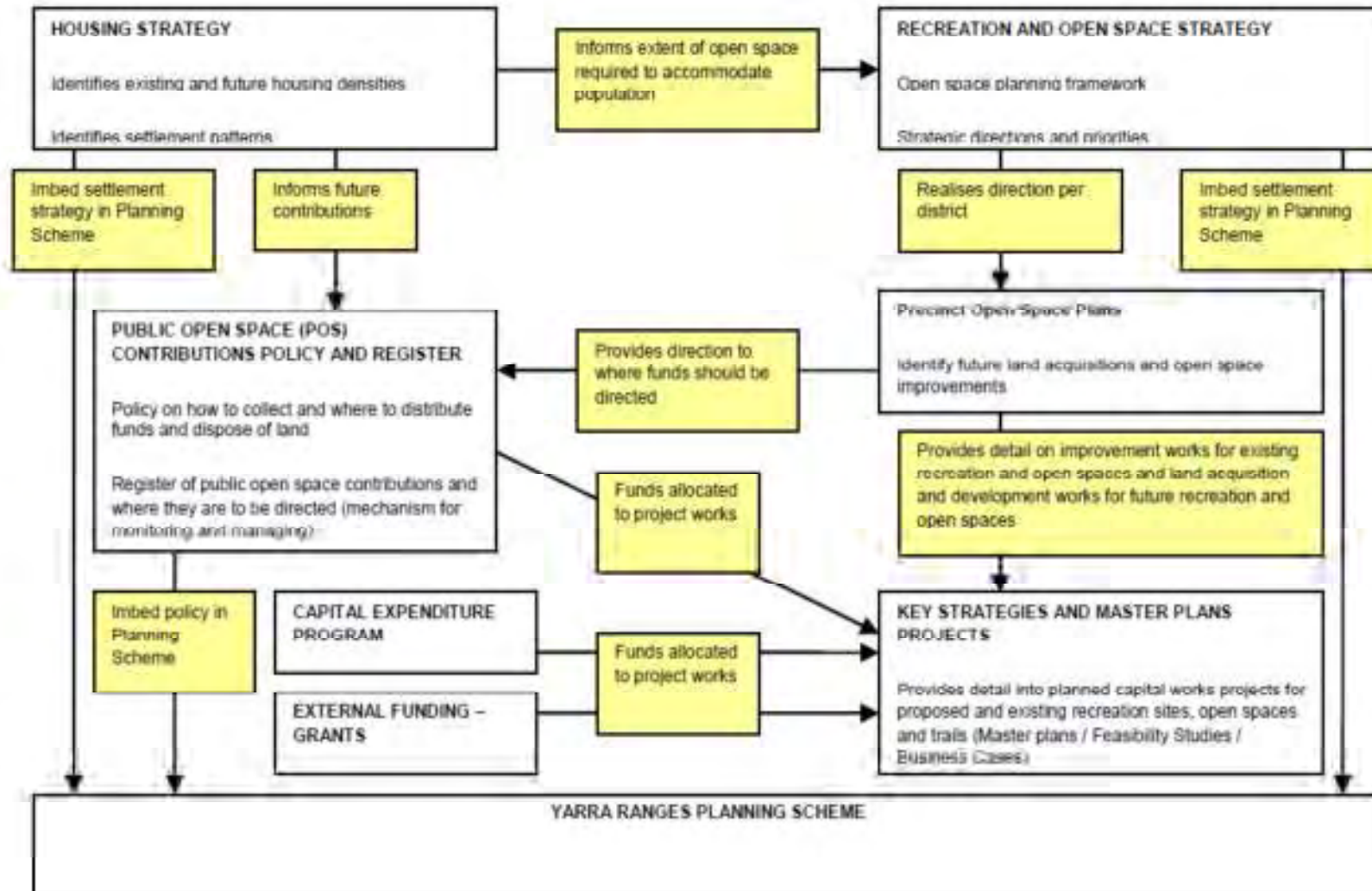
- A demand analysis of recreation and open space across the municipality. This analysis should identify the population, demographic and participation implications for recreation and open space.
- A classification system and design guidelines for core open space functions including sport, social recreation and trails.
- An inventory of open space identifying the functions, settings and catchments.
- A GIS mapping system of the open space network, identifying areas underserved.

The strategy also contains a set of precinct open space plans and a Public Open Space Contributions Policy.

The precinct open space plans examine key open space areas and where there is a shortfall of open space. The strategies identify priorities for precincts arising from recreation strategies and master plans.

The continued roll out of recreation strategies and master plans will support the precinct open space plans. These plans provide the detail for future development and improvement works to a specific sports reserve park or community space.

The Public Open Space Contributions Policy links to the Housing Strategy, Recreation and Open Space Strategy and recreation strategies and master plans. The policy includes details on how to collect and distribute public open space contributions.



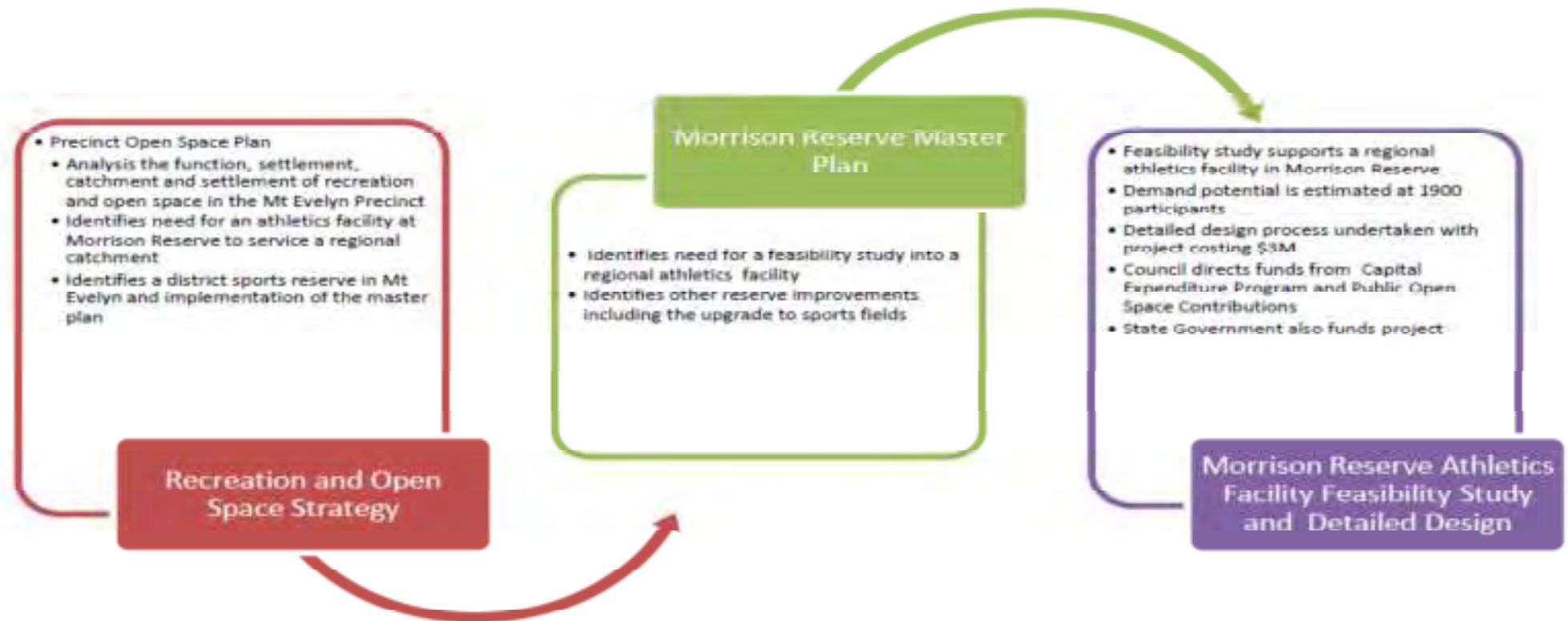
CASE STUDY 7 - YARRA RANGES COUNCIL

Case Study Title	Yarra Ranges Shire Council – A Model Planning Approach to a Regional Athletics Facility
Purpose	<p>The Morrison Reserve Regional Athletics Facility is a model project to how Yarra Ranges recreation and open space planning approach delivers healthy and active environments and communities.</p> <p>Athletics transcends ages, cultures and abilities. The new regional athletics facility will cater for children, young people, adults, veterans, the indigenous community and people with a disability.</p> <p>The project will increase the facilities sphere of influence from providing a local benefit for the Mount Evelyn community to a region benefit, benefiting communities of the Yarra Ranges Shire Council, the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges.</p>
Rationale	<p>There are three key markets that will benefit:</p> <p><i>Local and regional athletics market</i>                      The Lilydale Yarra Ranges Little Athletics Club has over 250 registered members. With the development of the new regional athletics facility and installation of timing equipment, a senior club will be launched later in 2012 and greater local participation will be attracted. A potential regional athletics and running market is estimated at 1900 people. The market represents junior, adult and veteran participants. Athletics Victoria will also run AV regional meets from the new regional athletics facility, attracting athletes from across the eastern region.</p> <p><i>School market</i>                      The Yarra Hills Secondary College is located adjacent the athletics track and is a key user. Other schools both primary and secondary are already attracted to the new synthetic athletics track and support amenities for school PE programs, carnivals and regional competitions.</p> <p><i>Other uses</i>                      Sports clubs are attracted to the new regional athletics facility, a state of the art sports facility, for training and athlete development purposes. The athletics infield grass area is also used heavily as a soccer field during the winter season. Soccer is experiencing unprecedented growth in Australia and the Yarra Ranges has areas of unmet demand. The facility will also be attractive to regional events such as Relay for Life.</p>



How the Yarra Ranges Frameworks come together: (Case Studies 5, 6 and 7)

## Applying the planning framework



CASE STUDY 8 - BANYULE CITY COUNCIL

Case Study Title	<b>Banyule City Council – Heidelberg Activity Centre Plan</b>
Purpose	<p>This case study is about the importance of incorporating planning for public open space within activity centre plans and some of the issues and complexities of doing so. In preparing the an activity centre plan it is important to consider the role public open space can play in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The health and wellbeing of activity centre residents</li> <li>• The overall liveability of the activity centre</li> </ul> <p>In recognition of this, one of the objectives of the Heidelberg Activity Centre Plan has been, as far as practical given the inherent constraints, to provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adequate quality public open space within the activity centre and/or,</li> <li>• Easy access to nearby public open space from within the activity centre</li> </ul>
Rationale	<p>In this particular case study achieving the above objectives is considered critical because of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proposed increase in residential density for the Heidelberg Activity Centre</li> <li>• The very limit amounts of private open space likely to be available to residents due to the nature of much of the proposed residential development; ie multi level apartments,</li> <li>• The limited amount of existing easily accessible public open space within the residential precincts of the activity centre</li> <li>• The importance to the health and wellbeing of activity centre residents of having easy access to ample quality public open space and related facilities.</li> </ul>
Key Issue	<p>The main public open space related issue for the Heidelberg Activity Centre is to provide easy access to quality public open space for activity centre residents, particularly those who have very limited or no access private open space, such as those who live in multi level apartments. This is a complex and difficult task given the majority of the area included within the activity centre has for decades primarily served the community as a commercial centre and also includes Australia’s largest medical precinct. Therefore there has been very limit provision for public open space within it. Further the public open space which does exist within the activity centre has significant access limitations due to either major physical barriers or steep topography. Now that there is an increased need for public open space, the enormous cost of land within this activity centre means acquisition is impractical.</p> <p>An initial step taken in this project was to modify Council’s Public Open Space Strategy to include recommendations and strategies to assist the activity centre planning process to address public open space requirements adequately. For instance the definition of public open space in the Banyule Public Open Space Strategy 2007 was broadened to also include hard public spaces within commercial areas that are available for public use. These types of spaces, if deigned appropriately, can be aesthetically pleasing and inviting and can serve as useful public spaces.</p> <p>Parts of the Heidelberg Precinct Analysis contained within the Banyule Public Open Space Strategy 2007 were specifically written to assist with the Activity Centre Planning process and it identifies a number of key opportunities and recommendations.</p> <p>One of the key directions of the Activity Centre Plan is to redesign and upgrade existing public spaces and create a network within the centre by linking them. The proposal for a public spaces network includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A public square</li> <li>• An art space</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An events space</li> <li>• All linked with improved and upgraded pedestrian friendly laneways and street walkways.</li> </ul> <p>In the case of the Heidelberg Activity Centre, it was recognised early that it was more practical to take steps to improve access to the existing traditional public open space; ie parks, in areas immediately adjacent to the Activity Centre rather than acquiring valuable and expensive commercial land within the Activity Centre for public open space.</p> <p>A “Wayfinding” Plan was therefore prepared. One priority of this plan was to improve access to parks and gardens near the activity centre, particularly the Heidelberg Gardens and the Warringal Parklands both of which form part of a regional park system. The Wayfinding Plan includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Directional Signage located throughout the Activity Centre,</li> <li>• Widened and upgraded footpaths,</li> <li>• Improved lighting</li> </ul> <p>Within the Warringal Parklands a number of significant facilities have recently been built which will service the activity centre well:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Banyule Shared Trail, which links to the Main Yarra Trail and</li> <li>• The Warringal Park Regional Family Playspace.</li> </ul> <p>Whilst neither of these facilities has been included in the Activity Centre Plan itself, they were included in the Public Open Space Strategy specifically with servicing the Heidelberg Activity Centre in mind.</p>
Options	<p>Whilst the Warringal Parklands and Heidelberg Park are physically close to the Heidelberg Activity Centre they are separated from it by the very busy Rosanna Road. Two other actions need to occur at some point in the future to ensure the Activity Centre has optimal access to public open space:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Negotiations need to occur with the Education Department to allow public access to the recreation facilities of the Heidelberg Primary School located in the heart of the activity centre.</li> <li>• Such negotiations may also lead to new and upgraded accessible facilities for both the school and the community.</li> <li>• Improved pedestrian access to Heidelberg Gardens and Warringal Parklands. Whilst there are two sets of traffic lights on Rosanna Road adjacent to the activity centre, a pedestrian bridge, although expensive, would be the most effective way to truly breakdown the physical and psychological barrier posed by Rosanna Road.</li> </ul>
Detail	<p>The key learnings from this project include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The identification of the need to radically improve open space provision in activity centres, particularly where significant amounts of high density residential development is to occur.</li> <li>• The challenges around funding the provision of land acquisition and appropriate infrastructure.</li> <li>• The challenge to find the capacity and the leadership to provide the necessary funding.</li> <li>• The challenges around finding other complementary innovative solutions.</li> <li>• Also as high density residential development intensifies across the Activity Centre there is a challenge to both protect existing public open spaces and provide new spaces for a growing population. One option to meet this challenge is a Developer Contribution Scheme that will direct funds back into protecting and improving existing public space and allowing for the provision of future spaces to service the growing population.</li> <li>• There also needs to be a focus on shifting attitudes (of certain stakeholders) that public space in is not under-utilised space. This is particularly challenging in Activity Centres, such as Heidelberg, where</li> </ul>

land is in such high demand and more value is given to its economic rather than social or environmental return.

- We can also learn from overseas where high density urban environments have been the norm for a long time. For instance there has been much innovation in playground design in order to take advantage of limited space.

Some of the relevant key achievements of this project include:

- The requirement to prepare the activity centre plan created a focus on achieving positive open space outcomes.
- The creation of the Heidelberg Hub concept.
- The development of the Heidelberg Wayfinding Plan.
- There is significantly better pedestrian movement at the busiest location on Burgundy Street as a result of widening and upgrading the footpath and street furniture and installing a signalised pedestrian crossing. This improvement has also created a space that can be utilised by a wide range of users and for different purposes, such as an informal meeting place, a resting point, for fundraising activities etc.
- Pedestrian wayfinding around Heidelberg has been improved, particularly to the main open spaces within and adjacent to the Heidelberg Activity Centre (Heidelberg Gardens and Warringal Parklands). This involved designing and installing a system of signs to improve legibility, access and safety for pedestrians and cyclists.

CASE STUDY 9 - MAROONDAH CITY COUNCIL

Case Study Title	Maroondah City Council – Landowner Assessment Policy
Purpose	<p>The Landowner Assessment Policy Guidelines 2010 have been written to support Council Officers in the implementation of the Landowner Assessment Policy and to provide a step by step process for undertaking a landowner assessment</p>
Rationale	<p>Maroondah City Council (Council) owns and manages an extensive network of open space, sports fields, pavilions, and other facilities on behalf of the community and these Council assets play a vital role in the health and wellbeing of the local community.</p> <p>However, the demands on these assets are increasing due to changing community needs and expectations, and therefore it is vital that Council continues to manage these assets effectively.</p> <p>As a result, Maroondah City Council has established a Landowner Assessment Policy and Policy Guidelines to ensure that any proposed changes to the use of Council owned and/or managed land are carefully considered. This should occur prior to landowner consent being given and/or a building or planning permit is lodged, in the case of internal requests. All external requests will be assessed and be given landowner consent prior to a building and/or planning permit being approved.</p>
Key Issue	<p>Requests for changes of use to Council owned and/ or managed land can occur for a variety of reasons. Examples of when landowner consent would be required include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The development, re-development or relocation of infrastructure, including sports infrastructure.</li> <li>• A development on any private land abutting Council land that proposes an encumbrance of Council land with any permanent infrastructure works associated with the development i.e. creation of easements or impact on existing easements e.g. carriageways.</li> <li>• An application for the construction, upgrade or a change to service authority infrastructure</li> <li>• Changes to the provision of car parking e.g. a car park expansion</li> <li>• The sale or swap of Council property</li> <li>• The purchase or acquisition of new land and/or property e.g. subdivision contributions</li> </ul>
Detail	<p>The Landowner Assessment Policy provides the overarching framework for Council to undertake the landowner assessment process, and is supported by the Policy Guidelines which detail six specific stages of the process.</p>

## SECTION 8 DEFINITIONS AND TERMINOLOGY

Terms	Definitions	Source
<b>Active Open Space</b>	Land set aside for the specific purpose of formal outdoor sports by the community.	<b>PSPGs</b>
<b>Activity Centre</b>	Provide the focus for services, employment and social interaction. They are where people shop, work, meet, relax and live. Usually well-served by public transport, they range in size and intensity of use. In the growth areas, these are referred to as principal activity centres, major activity centres, neighbourhood activity centres and local centres.	<b>PSPGs</b>
<b>Encumbered land</b>	Land that is constrained for development purposes. Includes easements for power/transmission lines, sewers, gas, waterways/drainage; retarding basins/wetlands; landfill; conservation and heritage areas. This land may be used for a range of activities (e.g. walking trails, sports fields). This is not provided as credit against public open space requirements. However, regard is taken to the availability of encumbered land when determining the open space requirement.	<b>PSPGs</b>
<b>Gross Developable Area</b>	The total precinct area excluding encumbered land, arterial roads and other roads with four or more lanes.	<b>PSPGs</b>
<b>Linear Open Space Network and/or Linear Parks and Trails</b>	Corridors of open space, mainly along waterways that link together to form a network.	<b>PSPGs</b>
<b>Net Developable Area</b>	Land within a precinct available for development. This excludes encumbered land, arterial roads, railway corridors, government schools and community facilities and public open space. It includes lots, local streets and connector streets. Net Developable Area may be expressed in terms of hectare units (i.e. NDHa)	<b>PSPGs</b>
<b>Nexus</b>	A connection or link associating two or more things	
<b>Passive Open Space</b>	Open space that is set aside for parks, gardens, linear corridors, conservation bushlands, nature reserves, public squares and community gardens that are made available for passive recreation, play and unstructured physical activity including walking, cycling, hiking, revitalisation, contemplation and enjoying nature.	<b>PSPGs</b>
<b>Precinct Structure Plan</b>	A statutory document that describes how a precinct or series of sites within a growth area will be developed over time. A precinct structure plan sets out the broad environmental, social and economic parameters for the use and development of land within the precinct.	<b>PSPGs</b>
<b>Public Open Space</b>	Land that is set aside in the precinct structure plan for public recreation or public resort; or as parklands; or for similar purposes. Incorporates active and passive open space.	<b>PSPGs</b>
<b>Precinct Infrastructure Plan</b>	<b>Section within the precinct structure plan that defines the priority regional and local infrastructure requirements for future planning and investment by council and government agencies.</b>	<b>PSPGs</b>

## SECTION 9 REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

### 9.1 REFERENCES

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## 9.2 FURTHER INFORMATION

### State Planning Guidelines

- *Activity Centres and Principal Public Transport Network Plan* (2003)
- *Activity Centre Design Guidelines* (Department of Sustainability and Environment 2005)
- *Using Victoria's Planning System* (Department of Planning and Community Development)
- *Incorporated and Reference Documents VPP Practice Note* (Department of Infrastructure 2000)
- *Precinct Structure Planning Guidelines* (Growth Areas Authority)
- *Practice and Advisory Notes - Victoria Planning Provisions* – available at [www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/planning/publicationsandresearch/practicenotes](http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/planning/publicationsandresearch/practicenotes)

### Design Considerations

- *Safer Design Guidelines* (Department of Sustainability and Environment 2005)
- *Healthy by Design: A Planners' guide to Environment for Active Living* (National Heart Foundation of Australia, Victorian Division 2004)

### Sport and Recreation Participation

- *Participation in Sport and Physical Recreation* (Australian Bureau of Statistics) - 2009-2010 data available at <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4177.0Main+Features1209-10?OpenDocument>
- *Exercise, Recreation and Sport Survey* (ERASS), (Australian Sports Commission) -available at <http://www.ausport.gov.au/information/scors/ERASS>

### Community Infrastructure Planning

- *Planning for Community Infrastructure in Growth Areas* (Growth Area Councils) available at <http://www.wyndham.vic.gov.au/aboutwyndham/planspolicieslocallaws/commdev/plancominfr>
- *A Guide to Delivering Community Precincts* – (Department of Planning and Community Development) available at [http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0016/61333/Guide-to-Delivering-Community-Precincts.pdf](http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0016/61333/Guide-to-Delivering-Community-Precincts.pdf)
- *A Guide to Social Infrastructure Planning* (Growth Areas Authority) available at [http://www.gaa.vic.gov.au/Assets/Files/Guide\\_Social\\_Infrastructure\\_Planning\\_Oct09.pdf](http://www.gaa.vic.gov.au/Assets/Files/Guide_Social_Infrastructure_Planning_Oct09.pdf)
- *A Guide to Governing Shared Community Facilities*, Department of Planning and Community Development 2010 available at [http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0007/50866/A-Guide-to-Governing-Shared-Community-Facilities.pdf](http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/50866/A-Guide-to-Governing-Shared-Community-Facilities.pdf)
- *Schools as Community Facilities, Policy Framework and Guidelines*, Department of Education and Training, 2005 available at <http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/propman/facility/SACF-PolicyFramework-Guidelines.pdf>
- *Open Space Strategies Practice Note 70 and Creating Liveable Open Space - Case Studies* is now available on the DTPLI website. I will be forwarding hard copies to you shortly for your use. <http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/planning/plansandpolicies/open-space-planning>

### Public Land

- *The Contribution of Public Land to Melbourne's Liveability* Victorian Environmental Assessment Council 2011
- *Metropolitan Melbourne Investigation Final Report* Victorian Environmental Assessment Council 2011
- *Metropolitan Melbourne Investigation Discussion Paper for public comment* Victorian Environmental Assessment Council 2010

**SECTION 10 APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX 1 DEFINITIONS**

Victorian Subdivision Act 1988	<p><i>“Public open space means land set aside in a plan or land in a plan zoned or reserved under a planning scheme –</i></p> <p><i>(a) for public recreation or public resort; or</i></p> <p><i>(b) as parklands; or</i></p> <p><i>(c) for similar purposes.”</i></p>
VEAC (p. 96)	<p><i>“Public open space is public land and local council land that has an accepted and ongoing community use for outdoor recreation and informal activities, and that is freely accessible to the public.”</i></p>
Precinct Structure Planning Guidelines	<p>Public Open Space - <i>“Land that is set aside in the precinct structure plan for public recreation or public resort; or as parklands; or for similar purposes. Incorporates active and passive open space.”</i></p> <p>Active Open Space – <i>“Land set aside for the specific purpose of formal outdoor sports by the community.”</i></p> <p>Passive Open Space – <i>“ Open space that is set aside for parks, gardens, linear corridors, conservation bushlands, nature reserves, public squares and community gardens that are made available for passive recreation, play and unstructured physical activity including walking, cycling, hiking, revitalisation, contemplation and enjoying nature.”</i></p>
Planning for Community Infrastructure in Growth Areas	<p>Active Open Space – <i>“Public land permanently set aside for the specific purpose of formal outdoor sport by the community. Such land must meet requirements specific to the sports regarding playing area, dimensions, orientation and safety, and must be able to support associated infrastructure requirements of the sport.”</i></p>
Local Government	<p>A number of local authorities have adopted open space strategies each with their own characteristics that influence the definitions relating to open space.</p> <p>Some examples of these are listed below and others can be sought directly from specific Councils.</p>
City of Ballarat	<p>“Open space is defined as the range of public spaces that provide landscape and/or urban design features and are generally for rest, relaxation, recreation activity and for the preservation of the environment. Open space also provides visual amenity, often reflects cultural and heritage significance and includes the natural landscape / bushland areas and vegetation corridors. For the purpose of the Strategy, areas such as recreation and formal parkland, conservation reserves, linkages and waterway reserves, sporting reserves, public land set aside for specific recreation purposes, streetscapes and various urban spaces would be considered as open space.”</p>
City of Whitehorse	<p>“Open space is defined as all publicly owned that that is reserved for leisure, recreation and nature conservation purposes which includes land owned by Councils and other government agencies. There are a range of categories for this land including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• public land owned and managed by Council;</li> <li>• public land owned by other government agencies and managed by Council;</li> <li>• public land owned and managed by other State government agencies which is currently zoned open space; and</li> <li>• public land owned and managed by Melbourne Water which is reserved for water supply, drainage and flood management purposes and is therefore unlikely to be sold for other purposes.</li> </ul>
City of Hume	<p>All parks, gardens, reserves and other parcels of land accessible to the public, managed by Council or other public authorities and used for passive, active, formal and/or informal recreation.</p>

APPENDIX 2 OVERVIEW OF SETTLEMENT TYPES

	Urban Areas	Growth Areas (including peri-urban areas)	Regional/Rural (including peri-urban areas)	Activity Centres (including peri-urban areas)
Descriptions	<p>Established areas that may be located in the Inner, Middle or Outer areas of metropolitan Melbourne.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inner &amp; CBD according to IMAP (Melbourne; Yarra; Port Phillip; Stonnington.)</li> <li>• Middle: (Hobsons Bay, Moonee Valley; Maribyrnong; Banyule; Boroondara; Brimbank; Moreland, Darebin; Frankston; Glen Eira; Greater Dandenong; Bayside; Kingston; Knox; Manningham; Maroondah; Monash; Whitehorse)</li> <li>• Outer:- (Mornington Peninsula; Nillumbik; Yarra Ranges)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Areas undergoing PSP process (either GAA or other Planning Authority) for development of greenfield sites and regeneration of some existing urban areas.</li> <li>• Predominantly in the 20-50 km radius from CBD.<sup>2</sup> (Casey; Cardinia; Hume; Melton; Wyndham; Whittlesea<sup>1</sup>)</li> </ul> <p>In growth areas, open space planning is generally dealing with provision of new open space.</p> <p>In growth areas, there are opportunities to plan an 'ideal' open space network based around natural features with enough flexibility to cater for future needs.</p> <p>The Growth Areas Authority is leading planning in new release areas within Metropolitan Melbourne. The Precinct Structure Planning Guidelines (GAA, 2009) set out the standards for open space and natural systems.</p>	<p>Regional areas include larger cities and towns with a focus on employment, education and health services, and experiencing some growth. Regional areas include both existing urban and growth areas.</p> <p>Greater Bendigo; Ballarat; Greater Geelong; Latrobe; Rural City of Wangaratta; Wodonga, Greater Shepparton; Mildura; Warrambbool; Wellington; East Gippsland</p> <p>Rural areas comprise smaller towns or farming communities. Generally experiencing population stability or decline (although some rural areas are experiencing growth and peri-urban characteristics).</p> <p>Alpine, Towong, Mitchell, Macedon Ranges, Bass Coast, Moorabool; Hepburn; Murrindindi, Mansfield, Strathbogie, Indigo, South Gippsland, Baw Baw, Glenelg, Moira, Moyne, Campaspe, Southern Grampians, Central Goldfields, Mount Alexander' Northern Grampians, Rural City of Benalla, Surf Coast, Colac Otway, Corangamite, Golden Plains, Pyrenees, Ararat, Horsham, West Wimmera, Hindmarsh, Yarriambiack, Buloke, Loddon, Gunnawarra, Swan Hill, Queenscliff,</p> <p>Some regional areas experiencing growth may face challenges similar to growth areas on the fringe of metropolitan Melbourne.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activity centres are a focus for housing, commercial, retailing, community, employment, transport, leisure, open space, entertainment and other services and are places where people shop, work, meet, relax and live. <sup>(PN 58 – Activity Centres)</sup></li> <li>• Activity centres can be found across all settlement types.</li> <li>• In growth areas, these are referred to as:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Principal Activity Centres;</li> <li>○ Major Activity Centres;</li> <li>○ Neighbourhood Activity Centres; and</li> <li>○ Local Centres. <sup>(PSPGs)</sup></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Metro Melbourne has a network of activity centres of various types and sizes, classified into five types:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Central Activities Areas (7)                 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Broadmeadows</li> <li>▪ Box Hill</li> <li>▪ Dandenong</li> <li>▪ Footscray</li> <li>▪ Frankston</li> <li>▪ Geelong</li> <li>▪ Ringwood</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Principal Activity Centres (20)</li> <li>○ Major activity Centres (94)</li> <li>○ Specialised Activity Centres (10)</li> <li>○ Neighbourhood Activity Centres <sup>(DPCD/Planning Website – 6/7/2011)</sup></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<p>Population growth</p> <p><b>Projections sourced from: Victoria in Future 2012 – Population and Household Projections 2011-2031 for Victoria and its Regions, April 2012</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Melbourne is projected to grow by 1.3 million between 2011 and 2031.</li> <li>In addition to the strong growth in the designated growth areas, all municipalities across Melbourne are expected to increase in population, with the strongest change in inner areas.<sup>5</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The greatest population change is expected to be in the municipalities containing the designated growth areas of Cardinia, Casey, Hume, Melton, Mitchell, Whittlesea and Wyndham.<sup>5</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Within regional Victoria, population change will be greatest in the regional centres, areas on the borders of Melbourne, and areas with significant amenity attractors such as coastal or riverfront locations.<sup>5</sup></li> <li>The three largest regional centre municipalities (Ballarat, Greater Bendigo and Greater Geelong) are expected to account for almost 40 per cent of all population increase outside metropolitan Melbourne.<sup>5</sup></li> <li>Significant increase is expected in local government areas containing centres of the next order, such as Latrobe, Warrnambool and Greater Shepparton. While some areas in the west of the state are expected to continue to lose population, the rates of these losses have slowed, and centres such as Horsham and Mildura are expected to grow strongly should current trends continue.<sup>5</sup></li> </ul>	<p>Population growth is expected in these areas, with the most significant growth of a municipality often accounted for in these centres. For example, Ringwood Central Activities Area will grow by most of the population increase (approx. 20,000) expected for City of Maroondah.</p> <p>In terms of open space planning, housing density is the most important consideration of population growth – see below.</p>
<p>Housing Density</p> <p><b>Victoria in Future 2008 predicts that 600,000 extra homes are required in metropolitan Melbourne.</b> (PN 58 – Activity Centres)</p>	<p>Of the 600,000 extra homes required in Metropolitan Melbourne, 316,000 dwellings will be located in established areas and close to central activity districts and other activity centres, along many trams and bus routes, close to train stations as well as on “brownfield” sites ready for redevelopment. (PN 58 – Activity Centres)</p> <p>Predominant form of new housing development is likely to be town houses and apartments, particularly in locations near activity centres. These locations also need to provide additional space for employment to provide services for increasing local population. (SGS)</p>	<p>PSPGs state the following housing densities for growth areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Average housing density of at least 15 dwellings per hectare. This comprises: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High density = average density of more than 30 dwellings per hectare.</li> <li>Medium density = average density of 16-30 dwellings per hectare.</li> <li>Low density = average of less than 10 dwellings per hectare.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>(In practice this has resulted in predominantly stand-alone houses on separate lots with some townhouses and apartment/unit developments near activity centres.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Higher density developments to be located near or within activity centres, public transport, community facilities or open space. Medium or high density within walkable catchment of an activity centre.</li> <li>Growth areas are projected to increase by 284,000 dwellings over the next 20</li> </ul>	<p>Increasing housing density is being experienced in some regional areas where release of land for subdivision is encouraging residential development similar to the growth areas of Melbourne.</p> <p>This provides challenges for provision of open space within walkable distances particularly if there was insufficient open space prior to the increased population and density.</p>	<p>See Urban Areas Column</p> <p>These Activity Centres can experience significant change when housing moves from low density housing and medium - high density with new development.</p>

<p>Private Open Space</p>	<p>Increased residential densities generally result in less private open space and greater demands being placed on existing public open space. It can be difficult to increase the amount of open space in these locations (due to factors such as cost and availability) and therefore it is important to consider more proactive and creative ways to achieve good open space outcomes.</p>	<p>years. <small>(Melb @ 5Million)</small></p> <p>Lot sizes in subdivisions have been steadily declining over many years with housing footprints taking up a larger proportion of the available land. Because backyards can be very small as a result, there is greater reliance on open space to compensate for this lack of private space for a range of social and recreation activities.</p>		<p>Limited or no private open space. Increased no. of residents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• impact on existing public open space due to overuse; conflicting uses...</li> <li>• existing public open space in Activity Centres not originally planned for residential use hence not suitably designed and/or lack of appropriate facilities to cater to residents</li> </ul>
<p>Access to Public Transport</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inner – easy access to public transport. Generally can access public open space either within walking distance or via public transport.</li> <li>• Middle – generally good access to public transport. Open space planning strives to achieve access to open space within walkable distance. However in some cases people will require private transport to access specific types of public open space.</li> <li>• Outer – generally reduced access to public transport and high probability that private transport is required to access public open space.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning provisions require that 95% of dwellings are located no more than 400 metres street walking distance from the nearest existing or proposed bus stop. <small>(PSPGs)</small></li> </ul>	<p>Often public transport might be limited or non-existent, and cannot be relied upon to provide access to open space.</p> <p>It is often accepted that access to private vehicle transport is required for people who live in remote and rural areas.</p>	<p>Linking activity centres to good transport networks (road, public transport, pedestrian and cycle) is crucial, as they attract high numbers of people and generate a significant volume of trips in metropolitan Melbourne. <small>(Guide to Delivering Community Precincts – DPCD &amp; GAA)</small></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Usually well-served by public transport, range in size and intensity of use. <small>(PSPGs)</small></li> <li>• High levels of accessibility for walking, cycling, public transport or car by being located at a junction in the Principal Public Transport Network. <small>(Melb @ 5Million)</small></li> </ul>
<p>Public Open Space Planning Provisions.</p>	<p>Subdivision Act requires max 5% public open space contribution across all subdivisions which are not exempted. Need to demonstrate nexus.</p> <p>Planning &amp; Environment Act provisions enabled through the VPP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clause 56 – includes guidance re distance from dwellings: size &amp; shape for passive and active open space</li> <li>• Clause 52 – enables councils to set requirements based on local needs.</li> </ul> <p>Any large residential/commercial developments that require a precinct structure plan to be developed are required to meet the public open space guidelines contained in the PSPGs.</p>	<p>Subdivision Act requires max 5% public open space contribution across all subdivisions which are not exempted. Need to demonstrate nexus.</p> <p>P&amp;E Act provisions enabled through the VPP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clause 56 – includes guidance re distance from dwellings: size &amp; shape for passive and active open space</li> <li>• Clause 52 – enables councils to set requirements based on local needs.</li> </ul> <p>PSPGs include guidelines for distance and percentage of land allocations for passive and active open spaces; and land size/shape for active open space.</p>	<p>Subdivision Act requires max 5% public open space contribution across all subdivisions which are not exempted. Need to demonstrate nexus.</p> <p>P&amp;E Act provisions enabled through the VPP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clause 56 – includes guidance re distance from dwellings: size &amp; shape for passive and active open space</li> <li>• Clause 52 – enables councils to set requirements based on local needs.</li> </ul> <p>Any large residential/commercial developments that require a precinct structure plan to be developed are required to meet the public open space guidelines contained in the PSPGs.</p>	<p>Subdivision Act requires max 5% public open space contribution across all subdivisions which are not exempted. Need to demonstrate nexus. PSPGs require that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. in major employment areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• approximately 2% of net developable land should be public open space, usually with a passive recreation function</li> <li>• incorporates open space (that links to the open space network) for the benefit of workers, local residents and visitors to the employment area.</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. mixed use employment areas that include housing are designed to ensure residents have access to public transport, local community services and open space.</li> </ol>

				<p>Practice Note 58 – Structure Planning for Activity Centres states that structure planning should... “provide for well-designed and well located public spaces (including passive and active open space) that serve the needs of all the community and visitors to the centre”</p>
<p>Key issues to be addressed in public open space planning &amp; delivery</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In established areas, open space planning focuses on meeting existing needs or historical shortfalls.</li> <li>• In areas undergoing urban renewal and rapid population growth, the focus may be a mix of existing and future needs. In some cases this may include meeting the needs of people working or studying in or visiting the areas.</li> <li>• Many developments are exempt from legislated open space developer contributions.</li> </ul>	<p>In growth areas, planning legislation and associated policies provide an opportunity to plan for the optimal amount of open space required to meet the needs of incoming residents.</p> <p>Where Councils can justify that the local open space requirements (i.e. in terms of quantity and quality of land) are different to those prescribed in legislation or the VPPs, it can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• specify local requirements in its local planning scheme; and/or</li> <li>• plan for the required open space from the outset of the land use planning process i.e. framework planning phase.</li> </ul> <p>Consideration needs to include the full hierarchy of open space provision including regional playing fields and formal parklands (which may require consideration beyond the development site).</p> <p>The best way to deliver open space is during the establishment of urban areas/framework planning stage. Space should be provided to a sufficient size and distribution to meet the needs and sufficiently flexible to respond to changing demographics and demand conditions overtime. “Retrofitting” poorly supplied areas post development can be more difficult and costly.</p>	<p>Private open space may meet needs.</p> <p>Clause 56 standards re distance from residential areas may not be achievable or relevant in rural townships, particularly with respect to travelling to active open spaces for sporting events.</p> <p>Often planning zones in regional and rural areas will include zones such as low density, rural living, mixed use, township zone, and so on, which cannot be treated the same as residential zoning. Provision of open space may be analysed according to factors such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Location of space compared with other rural services</li> <li>• Provision of nearby open space and travel patterns of the community</li> </ul> <p>Some rural areas with small or declining population wanting a specific facility may be unable to sustain it, and/or ultimately compromise the sustainability of a similar facility in an adjoining area.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In addition to catering for diverse daytime activities for workers, visitors, tourists, need to also accommodate needs of new residents.</li> <li>• Creative designs such as use of roof spaces, vertical gardens and other spaces with multi-use potential can be considered.</li> <li>• Generally new active open space is not incorporated in these areas.</li> <li>• There are suggestions that road reserves/landscaping can achieve public open space outcomes.</li> <li>• Good outcomes can be achieved by increasing and/or better use of existing public open space through improvements (seating, shelters, public art).</li> <li>• Increasing access to existing public open space by improving paths and trail networks.</li> </ul> <p>Many Activity Centres are the subject of a Structure Plan. Structure planning processes set out to identify the future uses of centres in line with an agreed vision. The Department of Planning and Community Development has prepared guidelines for preparing Structure Plans<sup>19</sup>. One of the objectives of the Structure Plan process is to “provide for well-designed and well located public spaces, (including passive and active open space) that serve the needs of all the community and visitors to the centre”.</p> <p>The guidance on a model structure plan from DPCD includes approach for background analysis including:</p>

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/planning/planning-policy-and-projects/activity-centres/structure-planning>  
June 2013

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mapping existing passive and active open space areas and open space networks;</li><li>• Identifying priorities and opportunities for redesign and redevelopment addressing quality, design, access (pedestrian and cycle), facilities, safety and lighting;</li><li>• Identifying potential new open space opportunities and links, especially in neighbourhoods with poor access to open space;</li><li>• Analysing recommendations from master plans prepared for key open space areas; and</li><li>• Analysing recommendations from community needs studies.</li></ul>
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Back to [What are the Settlement Types](#)

## APPENDIX 3 OPEN SPACE BENEFITS

Open space provides an array of social, health, economic and environmental benefits to individuals and to the community as a whole. In all its [forms](#), open space is an essential ingredient for enhancing the liveability of an area and improving the quality of life of its residents.

Increasing densities, population growth, climate change and resource depletion will place further importance on the provision of quality open spaces.<sup>1</sup> Easy access to well designed and diverse open spaces will assist in not only managing the impacts of these challenges, but also enhancing the benefits that open spaces provide.

There is a significant body of local and international research and knowledge of the wide ranging benefits of open space. Following are brief overviews and/or extracts of key research and literature reviews. Hyperlinks have been included to enable access to the reports and reviews where available online.

### Social Benefits

The social and health benefits of green open spaces are increasingly being recognised as important drivers in shaping future communities.

#### **Open spaces connect and build strong communities**

Open spaces provide affordable leisure opportunities for local communities and families to come together for a range of leisure, cultural or celebratory activities, enabling relationships and connections to be strengthened whilst enjoying the benefits of interacting with the natural environment.

A [mobile application](#) developed by Parks Forum assists in finding and exploring local, state or national parks. The app provides information and interactive maps of the park location and key features and amenities.

Community participation in structured and unstructured recreation is very important to the Australian sense of identity and social cohesion. Outdoor sport and recreation facilities provide a tangible focus for connecting with the local community and institutions. This connection is an important feature of community strengthening.<sup>2</sup>

A Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into Country Football<sup>3</sup> found that, particularly in rural and regional Victoria, connections to sports clubs are important contributors to the development of “social” capital and community wellbeing.

#### **Green spaces enhance liveability in urban environments**

The importance of public open spaces to improving liveability in the urban environment is widely recognised. As cities are planned to have increased density, so the maintenance, management and distribution of parks and other open spaces is likely to have increased importance for liveability.<sup>4</sup>

An extensive literature review undertaken by Deakin University<sup>5</sup> found that the health benefits of “green nature” cannot be over-stated, particularly for people in urban environments. It found that

<sup>1</sup> Parks Forum (2008). [The Value of Parks](#), produced by Parks Forum in partnership with IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas and The People and Parks Foundation, May 2008 (from SGS doc)

<sup>2</sup> Montgomery, J. (2005), [“Community, Place and Buildings: The Role of Community Facilities in Developing Community Spirit”. Themes and issues emerging from the Better Facilities, Stronger Communities Conference, 15-16 August 2005, Melbourne, Australia.](#) Prepared for the Department for Victorian Communities.

<sup>3</sup> Parliament of Victoria (2004) [Inquiry into Country Football Final Report](#), Rural and Regional Services and Development Committee, ISBN 0-9757058-0-6

<sup>4</sup> Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission, (2008). [A State of Liveability: An Inquiry into Enhancing Victoria's Liveability.](#) Final Report, October 2008



contact with green nature can reduce crime, foster psychological wellbeing, reduce stress, boost immunity, enhance productivity, and promote healing.

Public parks and recreational facilities enhance the liveability of inner-city neighbourhoods; they offer recreational opportunities for at-risk youth, low-income children and families; and provide places in disadvantaged neighbourhoods where people can feel a sense of community. Access to public parks and recreational facilities has been strongly linked to reductions in crime and in particular to reduced juvenile delinquency.<sup>6</sup>

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## Health Benefits

The majority of health problems society will face, now and in the future,<sup>7</sup> are likely to be stress related illnesses, mental health problems and cardiovascular health problems.

There is a growing body of research that indicates that access to green open spaces, be it for experiencing the natural environment, community based activities or structured or unstructured physical activity, enhances physical and mental health, and helps reduce the risk of developing chronic diseases.

### **Access to open spaces improves physical health and wellbeing**

Regular physical activity has been shown to increase health and reduce the risk of a wide range of diseases, including cardiovascular diseases, hypertension, diabetes and some types of cancers.

Increasingly research shows that when people have access to quality parks, they exercise more. Research undertaken by the Atlanta Center for Disease Control and Prevention<sup>8</sup> found that the creation of or improved access to places for physical activity led to a 25.6 per cent rise in the number of people exercising on three or more days per week.

Physical activity is also an important counter to the problem of obesity.<sup>9</sup> Obesity and inactivity can lead to significant detrimental health impacts including coronary heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, breast and bowel cancer, depression and falls. A 2008 Medibank study<sup>10</sup> estimated the following costs of physical inactivity in 2007/08:

- gross healthcare cost were estimated over \$1.6 billion. When offset by the direct costs of being active, the total net cost of inactivity was estimated at \$719 million;
- an estimated 16,000 deaths were attributed to physical inactivity resulting in an estimated economic cost of over \$3.8 billion.

The study concluded that in 2008, the total economic cost of physical inactivity was conservatively estimated to be \$13.8 billion.

### **Access to open spaces improves mental health and well-being**

In 2007, 45 percent of Australians aged 16 to 85 years (or 7.3 million people) had, at some point in their lifetime, experienced anxiety, mood and/or substance use disorders.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Deakin University and Parks Victoria (2008). [Healthy Parks, Healthy People: The Health Benefit of Contact with Nature in a Park Context A review of relevant literature](#). School of Health and Social Development, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, March 2008,

<sup>6</sup> Sherer, Paul M., (2006). [The Benefits of Parks – Why America Needs More City Parks and Open Spaces](#). The Trust for Public Land, San Francisco – reprint of “Parks for People” white paper published in 2003

<sup>7</sup> Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care and Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (1999) Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (1998) cited in Townsend M and Weerasuriya R (2010). *Beyond Blue to Green: The benefits of contact with nature for mental health and well-being*. Beyond Blue Limited: Melbourne, Australia. ISBN 978-0-9581971-6-8

<sup>8</sup> Centre for Disease Control (2001). *Increasing Physical Activity: A Report on Recommendations of the Task Force on Community Preventive Services* (Atlanta: Center for Disease Control and Prevention, October 26, 2001) cited in Sherer, Paul M., (2006). [The Benefits of Parks – Why America Needs More City Parks and Open Spaces](#). The Trust for Public Land, San Francisco – reprint of “Parks for People” white paper published in 2003

<sup>9</sup> [Montgomery, J. \(2005\). “Community, Place and Buildings: The Role of Community Facilities in Developing Community Spirit”. Themes and issues emerging from the Better Facilities, Stronger Communities Conference, 15-16 August 2005, Melbourne, Australia. Prepared for the Department for Victorian Communities](#)

<sup>10</sup> Medibank (2008). [The cost of physical inactivity](#), October 2008

<sup>11</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics (2009a). *Australian Social Trends, March 2009*, ABS Cat. No. 4102.0, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australian Government, Canberra, ACT. – cited in Townsend M and Weerasuriya R (2010). *Beyond Blue to Green: The benefits of contact with nature for mental health and well-being*. Beyond Blue Limited: Melbourne, Australia. ISBN 978-0-9581971-6-8

It is well documented that physical activity also relieves symptoms of depression and anxiety, improves mood, and enhances psychological well-being.

Beyond the benefits of exercise, a growing body of research shows that close proximity to, access to green spaces, and/or a view of the natural world is clearly associated with improved psychological health, and reduced prevalence of depression, anxiety and other mental health problems, particularly amongst children and people with low incomes.<sup>12 13 14</sup>

An extensive review of Australian and international literature on the links between mental health and well-being and contact with nature and green spaces was undertaken by Deakin University as part of the Beyond Blue Initiative. The project found research evidence to demonstrate the following assertions with certainty:

- There are some known beneficial physiological effects that occur when humans encounter, observe or otherwise positively interact with animals, plants, landscapes or wilderness;
- Natural environments, such as parks, foster recovery from mental fatigue and are restorative;
- There are established methods of nature-based therapy (including wilderness, horticultural and animal-assisted therapy among others) that have success healing patients who previously had not responded to treatment;
- When given a choice people prefer natural environments (particularly those with water features, large old trees, intact vegetation or minimal human influence) to urban ones, regardless of nationality or culture;
- The majority of places that people consider favourite or restorative are natural places, and being in these places is recuperative;
- People have a more positive outlook on life and higher life satisfaction when in proximity to nature (particularly in urban areas);
- The majority of health problems society will face, now and in the future, are likely to be stress-related illnesses, mental health problems and cardiovascular health problems;
- Social capital is decreasing and is likely to continue to decline;
- Exposure to natural environments, such as parks, enhances the ability to cope with and recover from stress, cope with subsequent stress, and recover from illness and injury;
- Observing nature can restore concentration and improve productivity;
- Having nature in close proximity (e.g. urban or national parks), or just knowing it exists, is important to people regardless of whether they are regular "users" of it.

Extracted from - Townsend M and Weerasuriya R (2010). *Beyond Blue to Green: The benefits of contact with nature for mental health and well-being*. Beyond Blue Limited: Melbourne, Australia. ISBN 978-0-9581971-6-8

<sup>12</sup> [Sherer, Paul M., \(2006\). \*The Benefits of Parks – why America needs more city parks and open spaces\*. The Trust for Public Land, San Francisco 2006 – reprint of "Parks for People" white paper published in 2003](#)

<sup>13</sup> Townsend M and Weerasuriya R (2010). *Beyond Blue to Green: The benefits of contact with nature for mental health and well-being*. Beyond Blue Limited: Melbourne, Australia. ISBN 978-0-9581971-6-8

<sup>14</sup> US Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), *Increasing Physical Activity: A report on recommendations to the taskforce on community preventive services (Atlanta: Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, Oct 26, 2001)* Cited in : [Sherer, Paul M., \(2003\) \*The Benefits of Parks – why America needs more city parks and open spaces\*. The Trust for Public Land, San Francisco 2006 – reprint of "Parks for People" white paper published in 2003](#)

### **Open spaces benefit children's development and well-being**

Nature is important to children's development in every major way – intellectually, emotionally, socially, spiritually and physically. Kellert (2005 p.83) states “*Play in nature, particularly during the critical period of middle childhood, appears to be an especially important time for developing the capacities for creativity, problem-solving and emotional and intellectual development.*”<sup>15</sup>

This is supported by other researchers ([Burdette and Whitaker 2005](#); [Ginsburg 2007](#); Heerwagen 2009)<sup>16</sup> who believe that playing in outdoor settings at home, camps and schools has long-term benefits for physical, social, emotional and cognitive development in children. Results from Wells' (2000) study confirmed this, showing that children who experienced high levels of contact with nature reported higher global self-worth and higher cognitive function.

Play and motor development, developing a sense of identity, autonomy, psychological resilience and learning healthy behaviours are key elements of child development fostered through contact with nature. (HCNDACRSP (2004)<sup>17</sup> Kellert and Derr (1998)<sup>18</sup>

An Australian investigation conducted in Melbourne primary schools identified perceptions of the social and mental health benefits of nature-based activities (Maller 2005)<sup>19</sup>, and included:

- caring for living things which assists in the development of empathy;
- seeing the changes taking place in the cycle of life such as growth and change which builds resilience;
- improvements in neuro-behavioural disorders in children (e.g. ADD and ADHD)
- improved attitudes towards school and relationships with peers and adults;
- greater calmness and reduced disruptive behaviour;
- giving children a sense of freedom to be innovative, creative and make discoveries which enhanced their self-esteem and self-confidence; and
- increased enjoyment to the senses which increased perceptions of wellness and gave a sense of empowerment and achievement.

A review of research linking nature contact with children's development undertaken by Deakin University as part of the Beyond Blue Initiative found that:

- five-year-old children, who could not access the outdoor play areas unsupervised due to dangerous traffic conditions, displayed poorer social behaviours, less well-developed motor skills and had fewer playmates than their counterparts with better access to the outdoors.<sup>20</sup>
- the development pattern of 11- and 12-year-old children indicates on average that they are two to three years behind where children of a similar age were 15 years ago, in terms of cognitive and

<sup>15</sup> Kellert, Stephen R. (2005) “*Nature and Childhood Development.*” In *Building for Life: Designing and Understanding the Human-Nature Connection*. Washington, D.C.; Island Press, [http://www.childrenandnature.org/downloads/Kellert\\_BuildingforLife.pdf](http://www.childrenandnature.org/downloads/Kellert_BuildingforLife.pdf) accessed on 18 Jan 2012.

<sup>16</sup> All cited in Townsend M and Weerasuriya R (2010). *Beyond Blue to Green: The benefits of contact with nature for mental health and well-being*. Beyond Blue Limited: Melbourne, Australia. ISBN 978-0-9581971-6-8

<sup>17</sup> Health Council of the Netherlands and Dutch Advisory Council for Research on Spatial Planning Nature and the Environment [HCNDACRSP] (2004) *Nature and Health. The influence of nature on social, psychological and physical wellbeing*, Health Council of the Netherlands and RMNO, The Hague.

<sup>18</sup> Kellert, S. and Derr, V.,(1998), ‘*A national study of outdoor wilderness experience*’, Yale: School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, Yale University, CT. <http://www.childrenandnature.org/uploads/kellert.complete.text.pdf> accessed in July 2012

<sup>19</sup> Maller, C. (2005), “*Hands on contact with nature in primary schools as a catalyst for developing a sense of community and cultivating mental health and well-being*” *Journal of the Victorian Association of environmental Education* vol. 28, no. 3 pp. 16-21) cited in Townsend M and Weerasuriya R (2010). *Beyond Blue to Green: The benefits of contact with nature for mental health and well-being*. Beyond Blue Limited: Melbourne, Australia. ISBN 978-0-9581971-6-8

<sup>20</sup> Hüttenmoser, M., ‘*Children and their living surroundings: Empirical investigations into the significance of living surroundings for the everyday life and development of children*’, *Children's Environments*, 1995 vol. 12, no. 4, pp. 403-413. Cited in Townsend M and Weerasuriya R (2010). *Beyond Blue to Green: The benefits of contact with nature for mental health and well-being*. Beyond Blue Limited: Melbourne, Australia. ISBN 978-0-9581971-6-8

conceptual development.<sup>21 22</sup> It was suggested that the growth of TV and video game cultures, alongside the decrease in opportunities for experiential play, have taken away the type of active play which helped children experience how the world operates and make informed judgments about certain abstract concepts encountered during such play.<sup>23</sup>

- The sedentary nature of the lives led by modern-day children is very likely to be a large contributing factor to the global obesity epidemic reported in medical statistics locally and internationally (Burls 2007a). The close links between obesity, depression, stress and anxiety indicates there is likely to be a high cost to mental health if the current generation does not change its sedentary, indoor lifestyles, as suggested by Louv (2008) and others (Burdette and Whitaker 2005; Burls 2007b; Cock and Shaw 2006; Derbyshire 2007; O'Brien 2005a; Travlou 2006).<sup>24</sup>

Extracted from - Townsend M and Weerasuriya R (2010). *Beyond Blue to Green: The benefits of contact with nature for mental health and well-being*. Beyond Blue Limited: Melbourne, Australia. ISBN 978-0-9581971-6-8

### **Open spaces benefit people with low incomes**

A feature of low socio-economic neighbourhoods may include higher crime rates, heavier traffic, poorer variety of facilities for physical activity outdoors, more unsafe play areas, and greater physical deterioration, as well as fewer natural elements compared to wealthier neighbourhoods.<sup>25 26</sup>

A number of studies have examined the relationship between low socio-economic neighbourhoods and people's mortality rate, including:

- An English study in 2007 that showed that deaths from all causes in income-deprived communities was lower for those living in the greenest areas and higher for those living in less green areas.<sup>27</sup>
- A Dutch study in 2009 investigated morbidity levels for 24 selected diseases and found that:
  - green spaces closer to home appeared to play a major role in morbidity prevention, relative to green spaces some distance away;
  - 15 of the 24 diseases studied had lower annual prevalence rates for participants living within a 1km radius of green spaces; and

<sup>21</sup> Shayer, M (undated). Research funded by the Economic and Social Research Council of the UK, and conducted by Michael Shayer, Professor of Applied Psychology at Kings College, University of London. Cited in Crace J., (2006). Cited in Townsend M and Weerasuriya R (2010). *Beyond Blue to Green: The benefits of contact with nature for mental health and well-being*. Beyond Blue Limited: Melbourne, Australia. ISBN 978-0-9581971-6-8

<sup>22</sup> Crace, J., (2006) 'Children are less able than they used to be', The Guardian 2006. Cited in Townsend M and Weerasuriya R (2010). *Beyond Blue to Green: The benefits of contact with nature for mental health and well-being*. Beyond Blue Limited: Melbourne, Australia. ISBN 978-0-9581971-6-8

<sup>23</sup> Research funded by the Economic and Social Research Council of the UK, and conducted by Michael Shayer, Professor of Applied Psychology at Kings College, University of London. Cited in Townsend M and Weerasuriya R (2010). *Beyond Blue to Green: The benefits of contact with nature for mental health and well-being*. Beyond Blue Limited: Melbourne, Australia. ISBN 978-0-9581971-6-8

<sup>24</sup> All cited in Townsend, M. and Weerasuriya, R., *Beyond Blue to Green: The benefits of contact with nature for mental health and well-being*. Beyond Blue Limited: Melbourne, Australia. 2010 ISBN 978-0-9581971-6-8

<sup>25</sup> Coen, R., & Ross, N. (2006), 'Exploring the material basis for health: characteristics of parks in Montreal neighbourhoods with contrasting health outcomes', *Health and Place*, vol. 12, pp. 361-371. Cited in Townsend, M. and Weerasuriya, R., *Beyond Blue to Green: The benefits of contact with nature for mental health and well-being*. Beyond Blue Limited: Melbourne, Australia. 2010 ISBN 978-0-9581971-6-8

<sup>26</sup> Evans, G.W. (2004), 'The Environment of Childhood Poverty', *American Psychologist*, vol. 59, no. 2, pp. 77-92. Cited in Townsend, M. and Weerasuriya, R., *Beyond Blue to Green: The benefits of contact with nature for mental health and well-being*. Beyond Blue Limited: Melbourne, Australia. 2010 ISBN 978-0-9581971-6-8

<sup>27</sup> Mitchell, R., & Popham, F.(2007), 'Greenspace, urbanity and health: relationships in England', *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, vol. 61, no. 8, pp. 681-683. Cited in Townsend, M. and Weerasuriya, R., *Beyond Blue to Green: The benefits of contact with nature for mental health and well-being*. Beyond Blue Limited: Melbourne, Australia. 2010 ISBN 978-0-9581971-6-8

- The relationship was strongest for anxiety disorders and depression; and for people who were expected to spend more of their time closer to their homes, such as children and people with lower socio-economic status.<sup>28</sup>

The serious health and well-being implications of reduced access to green, open spaces for people living in socio-economically disadvantaged areas is significant and warrants serious consideration in future urban renewal and development projects.

## Environmental Benefits

Green open spaces provide both aesthetic and environmental benefits. The trees and vegetation within local parks and gardens and along linear reserves improve the visual amenity of a suburb by providing a break in the urban fabric. The environmental benefits of open spaces and trees are both wide ranging and significant, and include:

- protection of areas of conservation, biodiversity or cultural heritage value
- assisting in mitigating and managing climate change impacts by:
  - providing shade and cooling
  - contributing to stormwater management
  - contributing to urban heat abatement
- reduction of air and noise pollution

These are discussed below.

### **Open spaces protect areas of conservation or cultural heritage value**

Mature trees are significant assets to our environment and our society, regardless of where they occur or whether they are native or exotic.<sup>29</sup>

Trees and vegetation support native birds and animals, adding biodiversity to developed suburbs where Australian native habitat is often scarce.

Avenues of trees planted along streets act as green corridors in highly developed areas, and help birds and animals to travel through to nearby green spaces or bushlands.<sup>30</sup>

National and metropolitan parks can contain sites of significance for indigenous communities, including remnant artefacts, rock engravings and artwork. Parks managed by Indigenous peoples can engender improved social and economic outcomes for their communities.<sup>31</sup>

### **Contribution to Stormwater Management**

Green spaces provide a natural water retention and treatment system to manage stormwater. Tree canopies and root systems reduce stormwater flows and nutrient loads that end up in waterways.<sup>32</sup>

Trees intercept rainfall, and unpaved areas absorb water, slowing the rate at which it reaches stormwater facilities. Trees and vegetation more effectively and less expensively manage the flow of stormwater runoff than do concrete sewers and drainage ditches. This alleviates pressures on storm water management and flow control efforts.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Maas, J., Verheij, R., de Vries, S., Spreeuwenberg, P., Schellevis, F., & Groenewegen, P. 2009, 'Morbidity is related to a green living environment', *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, pp. 1-7. Cited in Townsend, M. and Weerasuriya, R., *Beyond Blue to Green: The benefits of contact with nature for mental health and well-being*. Beyond Blue Limited: Melbourne, Australia. 2010 ISBN 978-0-9581971-6-8

<sup>29</sup> Moore G M (2009) Urban Trees: Worth More Than They Cost accessed at <http://www.aila.org.au/lapapers/papers/trees/Moore-UrbanTreesWorthMoreThantheyCost.pdf> - Feb 2012

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.ramin.com.au/creekcure/green-corridors-report.shtml> accessed in February 2012

<sup>31</sup> Parks Forum (2008) *The Value of Parks*. Produced in partnership with IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas and the People and Parks Foundation. Accessed at <http://www.parksforum.org/cms/pages/Economic-Values-of-Parks.html> in March 2010

<sup>32</sup> Melbourne City Council (2012), *Urban Forest Strategy 2012-2032: Making a great city greener Consultation Draft November 2011* - accessed at <http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/Environment/UrbanForest/Pages/About.aspx> in Feb 2012

<sup>33</sup> Sherer PM. (2003). *Parks for people: Why America needs more city parks and open space*. San Francisco: The Trust for Public Land. Accessed at [http://www.childrenandnature.org/downloads/parks\\_for\\_people\\_Jul2005.pdf](http://www.childrenandnature.org/downloads/parks_for_people_Jul2005.pdf)

According to the U.S. Government Accountability Office, on land with natural ground cover, only 10 percent of precipitation becomes runoff. However, when 75 percent of the site is covered with impervious surfaces, 55 percent of precipitation becomes runoff. On paved parking lots, 98 percent of precipitation becomes runoff, resulting in greater amounts of storm water that must be managed, which can translate into higher municipal costs.<sup>34</sup>

“The Namadgi National Park provides up to 85 percent of Canberra’s water from the Cotter Catchment in the ACT. The Economic value of this eco-service along is estimated to be at least \$100 million per year.”<sup>35</sup>

As climate changes, the importance of green spaces and vegetation is paramount, as trees hold rainwater on their canopies and through transpiration significantly reduce the amount of water entering drains. According to Moore (2009), estimates suggest that trees may hold up to 40% of the rain water that impacts on them and that as little as 40% of water striking trees may enter drains.

A 2007 South Australian study of water filtration by permanent wetlands, many of which are protected in parks, calculated that they provide more than \$700 worth of water purification per hectare each year.<sup>36</sup>

### **Contribution to abatement of Urban Heat Island Effect**

Urban heat island effect is the build up of heat in built up areas. It results from the absorption and entrapment of heat on paved or built surfaces during hot periods.

Established research and ongoing studies confirm that the addition of trees and vegetation in the built environment provides the greatest benefit in terms of mitigating the urban heat island effect.<sup>37</sup>

Examples of recent research include:

- Green open spaces (and the trees and vegetation within those spaces) provide a cooling effect, particularly during hot periods, through the natural process of photosynthesis and transpiration. A 20 per cent increase in a Melbourne’s tree canopy can reduce ambient temperatures by 3-4 degrees Celsius.<sup>38</sup>
- Trees act as natural air conditioners, mitigating the heating effects of concrete and glass. The evaporation from a single large tree can produce the effect of ten room-size air conditioners operating 24 hours a day.<sup>39</sup>
- It is estimated that trees that drop temperatures by up to 8C, reduce air conditioner use and reduce carbon emissions provide savings of between 12-15% per annum.<sup>40</sup>
- Brisbane City Council has mapped the landscape assets of the city and identified that urban parks with shade trees provide greater cooling “services” (by up to 5°C) than those areas without shade trees.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>34</sup> DiNapoli, T.P., (2010), *Economic Benefits of Open Space Preservation*, Office of the State Comptroller, State of New York, March 2010 access at <http://www.osc.state.ny.us/reports/environmental/openspacepreserv10.pdf> in March 2012

<sup>35</sup> Parks Forum (2008) *The Value of Parks*. Produced in partnership with IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas and the People and Parks Foundation. Accessed at <http://www.parksforum.org/cms/pages/Economic-Values-of-Parks.html> in March 2010

<sup>36</sup> Schmidt, C. (2007). *The valuation of South Australian wetlands and their water filtering function: A cost–benefit analysis*. PhD Thesis, The University of Adelaide. Cited in Parks Forum (2008) *The Value of Parks*. Produced in partnership with IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas and the People and Parks Foundation. Accessed at <http://www.parksforum.org/cms/pages/Economic-Values-of-Parks.html> in March 2010

<sup>37</sup> Melbourne City Council (2012), *Urban Forest Strategy 2012-2032: Making a great city greener Consultation Draft November 2011* - accessed at <http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/Environment/UrbanForest/Pages/About.aspx> in Feb 2012

<sup>38</sup> Mc Pherson (1993) cited in Melbourne City Council (2012), *Urban Forest Strategy 2012-2032: Making a great city greener Consultation Draft November 2011* - accessed at <http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/Environment/UrbanForest/Pages/About.aspx> in Feb 2012

<sup>39</sup> U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service Pamphlet No FS-363, cited in “*Benefits of Trees in Urban Areas*,” Colorado Tree Coalition, <http://www.coloradotrees.org/>

<sup>40</sup> Moore G M (2009) *Urban Trees: Worth More Than They Cost* accessed at <http://www.aiala.org.au/lapapers/papers/trees/Moore-UrbanTreesWorthMoreThantheyCost.pdf> in Feb 2012

- Manchester University's Adaptation Strategies for Climate Change in the Urban Environment Project has found increasing green space in cities by 10% reduces surface temperatures by 4C due to water evaporating into the air from trees and other vegetation.<sup>42</sup>
- The presence of shady trees can increase the useful life of asphalt pavement by at least 30 per cent, which can be of considerable value in the hot climate of Australia where asphalt degrades quite rapidly.<sup>43</sup>
- The leafy canopy of trees reduces surrounding temperatures, provides natural shade and reduces ultraviolet radiation (UV) and the risk of skin cancer.<sup>44</sup> Shade alone can reduce overall exposure to UV radiation by up to 75 percent;<sup>45</sup>

### **Open spaces sequester carbon**

During photosynthesis, trees convert carbon dioxide (CO<sup>2</sup>) and water into sugar and oxygen and store carbon within their biomass as they grow older. Urban trees therefore make an impact in absorbing carbon from the atmosphere. Chicago's urban forest annually sequesters 318,800 tonnes of carbon from the atmosphere, equivalent to the annual greenhouse gas emissions from over 50,000 passenger vehicles. (Ulrich, 1984)<sup>46</sup>

Moore's (2009) study on the value of urban street trees also highlights the importance of trees in reducing the level of carbon sequestered to counter the impact of Australia's reliance on coal powered generators that produce large volumes of greenhouse emissions. Moore (2009) also highlights a New York study in 1994 found that the value of the city's trees in removing pollutants was estimated at US\$10 million per annum.<sup>47</sup>

### **Open spaces reduce air pollution**

Open spaces make an important contribution to the reduction of air pollution, especially carbon dioxide particulate levels.

Trees act as the "green lungs" of our cities and towns. Their leaves naturally filter the air by

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<sup>41</sup> [www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/](http://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/) cited in Parks Forum (2008) *The Value of Parks*. Produced in partnership with IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas and the People and Parks Foundation. Accessed at <http://www.parksforum.org/cms/pages/Economic-Values-of-Parks.html> in March 2012

<sup>42</sup> Fisher (2007) cited in Moore G M (2009) *Urban Trees: Worth More Than They Cost* accessed at <http://www.aila.org.au/lapapers/papers/trees/Moore-UrbanTreesWorthMoreThantheyCost.pdf> - Feb 2012

<sup>43</sup> Moore G M (2009) *Urban Trees: Worth More Than They Cost* accessed at <http://www.aila.org.au/lapapers/papers/trees/Moore-UrbanTreesWorthMoreThantheyCost.pdf> - Feb 2012

<sup>44</sup> Grant R, Heisler G, Gao W. (2002) *Estimation of Pedestrian Level UV exposure under trees. Photochemistry and Photobiology*. 2002;75(4):369-376 accessed at <http://uvb.nrel.colostate.edu/UVB/publications/uvexposureundertrees.pdf> in Feb 2012

<sup>45</sup> Parsons et al 1998 – cited in Melbourne City Council (2012), *Urban Forest Strategy 2012-2032: Making a great city greener Consultation Draft November 2011* - <http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/Environment/UrbanForest/Pages/About.aspx> accessed in Feb 2012

<sup>46</sup> (Ulrich 1984 cited in - Melbourne City Council, *Urban Forest Strategy 2012-2032: Making a great city greener Consultation Draft November 2011* - <http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/Environment/UrbanForest/Pages/About.aspx> accessed in Feb 2012)

<sup>47</sup> Moore G M (2009) *Urban Trees: Worth More Than They Cost* accessed at <http://www.aila.org.au/lapapers/papers/trees/Moore-UrbanTreesWorthMoreThantheyCost.pdf> accessed in Feb 2012)

stabilising dust<sup>48</sup> and absorbing pollutants<sup>49</sup>. A United States study estimated that dust levels in an urban park in Georgia were 60 percent lower than outside the park.<sup>50</sup>

Moore (2009) identifies the economic value of the air pollutants removed by Melbourne's 70,000 trees to be more than \$14 million per annum.<sup>51</sup>

### **Open spaces reduce noise pollution**

Open space vegetation has the ability to lower urban noise pollution levels.

Trees, shrubs and grass along freeways can deliver a noise reduction of between 2-8db over short distances. In the EU it has been estimated that noise pollution may impose a total cost to the economy of between 0.2 – 2 percent of GDP.<sup>52</sup>

This method delivers an environmental benefit as a consequence of noise reduction and an economic saving through the use of vegetation as opposed to the construction of large walls.

### **Environmental Benefits in Dollar Values**

The environmental benefits of open spaces, trees and vegetation have for some time now been well recognised and documented.

Growing demand for housing particularly in major cities has led to an increased interest and recognition of the dollar value of the environmental benefits of open spaces. Following is an overview of recent research findings.

- Increasing tree cover by 10 per cent or planting about 3 trees per building lot – saves annual heating and cooling costs by an estimated \$50-\$90 per dwelling unit because of increased shade.<sup>53</sup>
- Moore (2009) estimates that the cooling effect of 100,000 mature urban trees in a city could save around 3 million kilowatt hours of electricity annually. This represents around 3600 tonnes of saved carbon emissions, in addition to the 300 million litres of water that would have been used to generate that amount of electricity.<sup>54</sup>
- Research undertaken by Australian National University estimated the 2008 value of ecosystem services provided by Canberra's 26 million square metres of street tree canopy to be:
  - \$23.5 million - \$6 million saved annually in energy and air conditioning costs;

<sup>48</sup> Beard, JB & Green, RL. 1994. The role of turf grasses in environmental protection and their benefits to humans. *Journal of Environmental Quality*, 23, 1–16. Cited in . Parks Forum (2008) *The Value of Parks*. Produced in partnership with IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas and the People and Parks Foundation. Accessed at <http://www.parksforum.org/cms/pages/Economic-Values-of-Parks.html> in March 2010

<sup>49</sup> Aldous, DE. 2006. Benefits of trees and natural green space for urban communities. International Federation of Park and Recreation Administration European Congress, Annecy, France. Cited in . Parks Forum (2008) *The Value of Parks*. Produced in partnership with IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas and the People and Parks Foundation. Accessed at <http://www.parksforum.org/cms/pages/Economic-Values-of-Parks.html> in March 2010

<sup>50</sup> Aldous, DE. 2006. Benefits of trees and natural green space for urban communities. International Federation of Park and Recreation Administration European Congress, Annecy, France. Cited in . Parks Forum (2008) *The Value of Parks*. Produced in partnership with IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas and the People and Parks Foundation. Accessed at <http://www.parksforum.org/cms/pages/Economic-Values-of-Parks.html> in March 2010

<sup>51</sup> Moore GM (2009) Urban trees: worth more than they cost. *Proceedings of the Tenth National Street Tree Symposium*. (Eds D Lawry, J Gardner and S Smith) pp. 7–14. University of Adelaide/Waite Arboretum, Adelaide  
Cited in "Working trees" key to urban resilience? Published in CSIRO *Ecosmagazine* 2009 accessed at [http://www.ecosmagazine.com/view/journals/ECOS\\_Print\\_Fulltext.cfm?f=EC151p34](http://www.ecosmagazine.com/view/journals/ECOS_Print_Fulltext.cfm?f=EC151p34) in March 2012

<sup>52</sup> Bolund, P. And Hunhammar, S. (1999) "Ecosystem services in urban areas", *Ecological Economics*, vol.29, no.2, pp.293-302

<sup>53</sup> *Mc Pherson Nowak 1997 cited in . Melbourne City Council, Urban Forest Strategy 2012-2032: Making a great city greener Consultation Draft November 2011* at <http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/Environment/UrbanForest/Pages/About.aspx> accessed in Feb 2012

<sup>54</sup> Moore GM (2009) Urban trees: worth more than they cost. *Proceedings of the Tenth National Street Tree Symposium*. (Eds D Lawry, J Gardner and S Smith) pp. 7–14. University of Adelaide/Waite Arboretum, Adelaide  
Cited in CSIRO *Ecosmagazine* 2009 at [http://www.ecosmagazine.com/view/journals/ECOS\\_Print\\_Fulltext.cfm?f=EC151p34](http://www.ecosmagazine.com/view/journals/ECOS_Print_Fulltext.cfm?f=EC151p34) accessed in March 2012



- \$12 million in pollution reduction; and
- \$5.5 million in storm water mitigation and reduced infrastructure costs.

ANU research (Dr Chris McElhinny) points out that this figure does not take into account the carbon sequestration and storage value of these trees. Interestingly, because they are relatively young and fast-growing, Canberra's urban trees have a high sequestration rate – around 0.6 tonnes of carbon per hectare per year, compared to 0.07 tonnes of carbon per hectare per year for the mature native vegetation surrounding Canberra.<sup>55</sup>

- Benefits provided by open space, such as water preservation and storm water control, are often significant. In many instances, it is less expensive for a community to maintain open space that naturally maintains water quality, reduces runoff, or controls flooding than to use tax dollars for costly engineered infrastructure projects such as water filtration plants and storm sewers. When these benefits, also known as ecosystem services are overlooked, open space protection may be considered an expense rather than an investment that can mitigate property tax increases, leading to land use decisions that do not accurately weight costs and benefits.<sup>56</sup>

#### **The Value of Melbourne's Trees**

In formulating its Urban Forest Strategy Consultation Draft, the Melbourne City Council prepared a scientifically based amenity formula to calculate the value of its trees. The council used this formula and a US based tool called i-tree Eco, to roughly estimate the value of trees within a defined section of the municipality. The initial results show that the 982 trees studied:

- remove 0.5 metric tonnes of air pollution per year at a dollar benefit of \$3,820
- store 838 metric tonnes of carbon at a dollar value of \$19,100
- sequester 24 metric tonnes of carbon each year at a value of \$548 per year
- save \$6,370 in energy costs each year through shading buildings in summer and providing solar access in winter
- avoid carbon emissions by reducing energy use by \$114 per year
- are structurally worth \$10.4 million.

Extracted from Melbourne City Council (2012), *Urban Forest Strategy 2012-2032: Making a great city greener Consultation Draft November 2011* at

<http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/Environment/UrbanForest/Pages/About.aspx> in Feb 2012

#### **Economic Benefits**

Local, regional and state economies benefit significantly from parks. They are a major drawcard for the recreation and tourism industries and significant sources of employment for local communities and of flow-on economic benefits.<sup>57</sup>

For ease of reading, the economic value of the identified social/health and environmental impacts of green open spaces have been referred to in the respective preceding sections. This section discusses the economic value of open space arising from the attraction of new residents, business and tourists; increased employment opportunities and workforce productivity; and increased property values.

- **Quality Open Spaces attract visitors and generate tourism**

Numerous international studies demonstrate that quality parks can boost local economies by attracting visitors and tourist and stimulating economic development opportunities.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>55</sup> McElhinny, C., Australian National University cited in [CSIRO Ecosmagazine 2009](http://www.ecosmagazine.com/view/journals/ECOS_Print_Fulltext.cfm?f=EC151p34) accessed at [http://www.ecosmagazine.com/view/journals/ECOS\\_Print\\_Fulltext.cfm?f=EC151p34](http://www.ecosmagazine.com/view/journals/ECOS_Print_Fulltext.cfm?f=EC151p34) accessed in March 2012)

<sup>56</sup> DiNapoli, T.P., (2010), *Economic Benefits of Open Space Preservation*, Office of the State Comptroller, State of New York, March 2010 access at <http://www.osc.state.ny.us/reports/environmental/openspacepreserv10.pdf> accessed in March 2012

<sup>57</sup> Parks Forum (2008) *The Value of Parks*. Produced in partnership with IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas and the People and Parks Foundation. Accessed at <http://www.parksforum.org/cms/pages/Economic-Values-of-Parks.html> in March 2010

A number of Australian studies have found that recreation in natural settings is becoming increasingly important as evidenced by the growing number of people who travel to parks and wilderness areas for their annual holiday to “experience” the wilderness.<sup>59</sup>

A 2004 study found that across Australia the natural attractions offered by national and marine parks attract around 80 million visits annually. Visits continue to grow as more people are motivated by “the enjoyment and experience of nature”. Parks represent the greatest tourism assets in Australia – over 40 per cent of all international visits take in a national park.<sup>60</sup>

A study into the economic contribution of Victoria’s parks found that the economic contribution of tourists to national parks is significant. By way of example, at the Grampians National Park, \$2.6 million was spent on park management services whilst expenditure by tourists generated a substantial economic benefit to Victoria’s economy \$246 million in economic benefit to the state’s economy.<sup>61</sup>

### **Open Spaces attract businesses and create employment**

In regional areas, national parks generate employment and provide regional economic activity through the management of the park.

Urban open spaces and associated facilities create opportunities for local volunteerism and paid employment and generate economic activity through local events, community use of the spaces, and ongoing maintenance and management.

Crompton (2009) found evidence that larger US employers, particularly high-tech companies, are attracted to cities with plentiful parks and open spaces in order to offer employees a better quality of life. These companies reported that the “calibre of employees that they wished to recruit cared as much about their quality of life as their pay cheque”.

Crompton also found that companies based in less desirable areas generally pay “disamenity compensation” in the form of higher salaries to attract the same calibre of worker.<sup>62</sup>

Crompton asserted that “a strategy of conserving parks and open space is not contrary to a community’s economic health, but rather an integral part of it.”<sup>63</sup>

### **Open spaces increases worker productivity**

It is well recognised that many factors, including psychological factors, affect employee’s productivity in the workplace.

International research conducted over a 20 year period has demonstrated benefits for workplace mental health arising from green nature. Research indicates that the ability to perceive nature from

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<sup>58</sup> Gies, Erica (2009) Conservation: An Investment That Pays  
[http://www.brooklinegreenspace.org/pdf/EconBenefitsReport\\_7\\_2009.pdf](http://www.brooklinegreenspace.org/pdf/EconBenefitsReport_7_2009.pdf) accessed at March 2012

<sup>59</sup> Freimund and Cole, 2001 cited in Healthy Parks Healthy People Congress. Accessed at  
<http://www.healthyparkshealthypeoplecongress.org/images/stories/documents/hphp.pdf> in March 2012

<sup>60</sup> Griffin, T & Vacaflores, M. 2004. Project Paper 1 – The visitor experience, p7 in: *A Natural Partnership – Making National Parks a Tourism Priority*. Tourism and Transport Forum (TTF) Australia, Sydney. – cited in Parks Forum (2008) The Value of Parks. Produced in partnership with IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas and the People and Parks Foundation. Accessed at <http://www.parksforum.org/cms/pages/Economic-Values-of-Parks.html> in March 2010

<sup>61</sup> PricewaterhouseCoopers. (2003). *Economic contributions of Victoria’s parks*. Parks Victoria, Melbourne. cited in Parks Forum (2008) The Value of Parks. Produced in partnership with IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas and the People and Parks Foundation. Accessed at <http://www.parksforum.org/cms/pages/Economic-Values-of-Parks.html> in March 2010

<sup>62</sup> Crompton, John (2009) *Competitiveness: Parks and Open Space as Factors shaping a Location’s Success in Attracting Companies, Labor Supplies and Retirees*, in *The Economic Benefits of Land Conservation*, cited in Gies, Erica (2009) Conservation: An Investment That Pays accessed at [http://www.brooklinegreenspace.org/pdf/EconBenefitsReport\\_7\\_2009.pdf](http://www.brooklinegreenspace.org/pdf/EconBenefitsReport_7_2009.pdf) in March 2012

<sup>63</sup> Crompton, John L., *The Proximate Principle: The Impact of Parks, Open Space and Water Features on Residential Property Values and the Property Tax Base*, 2nd edition, 2004, National Recreation and Park Association  
Cited in Neighbourhood Parks Council (2007), Green Envy, Achieving Equity in Open Space. A report prepared by Neighbourhood Parks Council, November 2007 accessed at <http://www.sfnpc.org/files/GE%5B1%5D.pdf> on 9 Feb 2012

office windows is a micro-restorative experience, which is believed to provide an employee with a brief respite from the demand for directed attention which functions at a high level during work.<sup>64</sup>

A Swedish study examining the effects of workplace greenery on worker stress levels considered four levels of greenery ranging from no view of and no access to a garden, to both view and access to a garden in the workplace. Both view and/or access to a garden improved levels of comfort, pleasure and well-being in employees while reducing their levels of stress. Those who had no access or views reported a worse perceived general health status<sup>65</sup>.

Improved health is also closely linked to employee productivity and reduced absenteeism.<sup>66</sup> A healthier workforce is less likely to be sick and therefore, absent from work. Physical inactivity has been linked to increased incidences of a range of diseases.

The Medibank Private 2008 study found that the overall average labour productivity loss caused by physical inactivity corresponds to a direct loss of 1.8 working days per worker per year or a cost of around \$458 per employee per year. It was estimated that physical inactivity caused the GDP to be around \$9.3 billion lower than would otherwise be the case.<sup>67</sup>

### **Properties located near well maintained quality green spaces have a higher market value**

Over 30 US studies demonstrate that residential properties located near green spaces have a higher market value than those further away. A meta-analysis of these studies shows that *well-maintained* parks result in a positive impact of 20% on property values abutting or fronting a passive park area. While the impact of the park was somewhat lower moving away from a park, there was still a positive effect on values two to three blocks away.

In addition, a 2001 survey for the national Association of Realtors found that 50 percent of respondents stated that they would be willing to pay 10% more for a property located close to a park or open space.

This in turn leads to an increase in property taxes paid by the homeowners. Often this increase in property taxes is sufficient to pay off the cost required to purchase the open space. However, Crompton explains that parks and open space can have a negative effect on surrounding housing values of the parks is not properly maintained, if traffic and noise becomes a nuisance or if it attracts deviant behaviour.<sup>68</sup>

Studies have also found that tree planting in streets that directly enhance and improve neighbourhood aesthetics also increase property values. Sander (2010) estimated that properties in tree-lined streets are valued around 30 per cent higher than those in streets without trees.<sup>69</sup>

However, Crompton explains that parks and open space can also have a negative effect on surrounding housing values if the park is not properly maintained, if it is too secluded to discourage deviant behaviour, or if the park is so popular that foot traffic and noise becomes a nuisance to neighbours.

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<sup>64</sup> Kaplan, R., 1993, 'The role of nature in the context of the workplace', *Landscape and Urban Planning*, vol. 26, pp. 193:210. Cited in *Beyond Blue*

<sup>65</sup> Stigsdotter, U., (2004), 'A garden at your workplace may reduce stress', *Design and Health*, pp. 147–157. [http://www.bordbia.ie/aboutgardening/GardeningArticles/ScientificArticles/Garden\\_At\\_Your\\_Workplace\\_May\\_Reduce\\_Stress.pdf](http://www.bordbia.ie/aboutgardening/GardeningArticles/ScientificArticles/Garden_At_Your_Workplace_May_Reduce_Stress.pdf) accessed in March 2012

<sup>66</sup> Van Amelsvoort, L, Spigt M, Swaen G, and Kant I, (2006), *Leisure time physical activity and sickness absenteeism; a prospective study*. *Occupational Medicine*, 56 (3), May, pp. 210-212.

<sup>67</sup> Medibank Private, *The Cost of Physical Inactivity* October 2008. Accessed at

[http://www.medibank.com.au/Client/Documents/Pdfs/The\\_Cost\\_Of\\_Physical\\_Inactivity\\_08.pdf](http://www.medibank.com.au/Client/Documents/Pdfs/The_Cost_Of_Physical_Inactivity_08.pdf) in March 2012

<sup>68</sup> All sourced from - Crompton, John, "The Proximate Principle: The Impact of Parks, Open Space and Water Features on Residential Property Values and the Property Tax Base," 2nd edition. National Recreation and Park Association, 2004 Cited in Neighbourhood Parks Council (2007), *Green Envy, Achieving Equity in Open Space*. A report prepared by Neighbourhood Parks Council, November 2007 accessed at <http://www.sfnpc.org/files/GE%5B1%5D.pdf> on 9 Feb 2012

<sup>69</sup> Sander H., Polasky S., Haight R.G. (2010) *The Value of Urban Tree Cover: a Hedonic Property Price Model in Ramsay and Dakota, Minnesota*, USA. *Ecological Economics* 69(8), 1646-4656 - cited in Melbourne City Council (2012)– *Urban Forest Strategy 2012-2032: Making A Great City Greener* Consultation Draft

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APPENDIX 4 KEY GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS

Legislation, Policies & Guidelines	Public Open Space Categories								
	Conservation & Heritage	Natural / Semi-natural areas	Linear OS & Trails	Active Open Space	Parks & Gardens	Civic Squares	Utilities & Services	Undeveloped / Proposed	Coastal and Beaches
<b>Commonwealth Government Legislation</b>									
Native Title Act 1993	✓	✓							
Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999.	✓	✓							
Flora and Fauna Act	✓	✓							
<b>State Government Legislation **</b>									
Conservation, Forests and Lands Act 1987	✓	✓							
National Parks Act 1975	✓	✓							
Forests Act 1958	✓	✓							
Planning and Environment Act 1987 • Victoria Planning Provisions • Precinct Structure Planning Guidelines 2009	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Subdivision Act 1988			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Crown Land Act	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Disability Discrimination Act 1992			✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Road Management Act 2001			✓						
Local Government Act									
<b>State Govt Policies and Guides</b>									
Parklands Code	✓	✓	✓		✓				
Linking People and Spaces	✓	✓	✓		✓				
Healthy by Design – A Planners Guide to Environments for Active Living – 2004 (National Heart Foundation)									
Sport and Recreation Victoria Skate Park Guide				✓					
Sports Dimensions for Playing Areas				✓					
Victorian Transport Plan			✓						

Legislation, Policies & Guidelines	Public Open Space Categories								
	Conservation & Heritage	Natural / Semi-natural areas	Linear OS & Trails	Active Open Space	Parks & Gardens	Civic Squares	Utilities & Services	Undeveloped / Proposed	Coastal and Beaches
Victorian Cycling Strategy			✓						
Victorian Trails Strategy			✓						
A State of Walking – Go for your Life Initiative			✓						
A Strategic Framework for Creating Liveable New Communities, Growth Areas Authority, 2008		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Safer Design Guidelines for Victoria, Crime Prevention Victoria, Department of Sustainability & Environment, 2005.									
Good Play Space Guide					✓				
<b>Local Government Policies and Guides</b>									
Local heritage, conservation and streetscape guidelines, plans and overlays	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓
Local Planning Scheme, including MSS structure plans; planning policies or documents referenced in the scheme; design guidelines; or development overlays	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Council Plans including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate Plan</li> <li>• Capital Works</li> <li>• Asset Management Plan</li> <li>• Financial Plan</li> <li>• Environmental Plan</li> </ul>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Health Plan			✓	✓	✓				
Neighbourhood Character Guidelines		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Leisure Strategy			✓	✓	✓				✓
Open Space Strategy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Planning for Community Infrastructure in Growth Areas, Growth Area Councils 2008			✓	✓	✓	✓			✓

\* Adapted from VEAC

\*\* Note: At time of publication a number of these were under review by the Victorian Government

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APPENDIX 5 OPEN SPACE DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

The following table is an extract from the Colac Otway Public Open Space Strategy, adopted in 2011.

Infrastructure	Parkland			Formal Garden		Linear Open Space and Corridor			Sports Reserve			Natural Areas			
	Neighbourhood	Township / District	Regional	Township / District	Regional	Neighbourhood	Township / District	Regional	Neighbourhood Might apply to school ovals	Township / District	Regional	Neighbourhood	Township / District	Regional	State
<b>PLANTING / LANDSCAPE</b>															
Shade planting	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Landscape planting	x	✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	xx	xx	xx	xx
Drought tolerant planting	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Indigenous planting	✓	✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓
Heritage (values) planting	x	x	x	✓	✓	x	x	✓	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx
Formal planting incl garden beds	xx	xx	x	✓✓	✓✓	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx	x	xx	xx	xx	xx
Compatible plantings	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	x	x	x	✓	✓	✓	✓
Barrier/fencing - safety	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Fencing - environmental areas	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	x	x	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>PLAY/SPORT</b>															
Open areas (informal play)	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	xx	xx	x	✓	✓✓	✓✓	xx	xx	xx	xx
Natural play elements	✓	✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	✓
Play equipment	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	xx	xx	x	✓	✓	✓✓	xx	xx	xx	xx
Basketball ring/hitting wall	x	✓	✓✓	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx	✓	✓	✓	xx	xx	xx	xx
Kick around area	✓	✓✓	✓✓	x	x	xx	xx	x	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	xx	xx	xx	xx
Skateboard area	x	✓	✓	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx	x	✓	✓	xx	xx	xx	xx
Fitness equipment	x	✓	✓✓	xx	xx	✓	✓	✓	xx	✓	✓	xx	xx	xx	xx
Sports playing areas	xx	x	✓	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	xx	xx	xx	xx
Training fields/cricket practice nets	xx	x	✓	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx	x	✓	✓✓	xx	xx	xx	xx
Courts - tennis/netball/multi-use	x	✓	✓	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx	✓	✓✓	✓✓	xx	xx	xx	xx

✓✓ = must have    ✓ = might have    x = should not have    xx = must not have

Infrastructure	Parkland			Formal Garden		Linear Open Space and Corridor			Sports Reserve			Natural Areas			
	Neighbourhood	Township / District	Regional	Township / District	Regional	Neighbourhood	Township / District	Regional	Neighbourhood Might apply to school ovals	Township / District	Regional	Neighbourhood	Township / District	Regional	State
<b>ACCESS</b>															
Disability / wheel access	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	×	×	×	×
Provision for a range of abilities	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓✓	×	✓	✓	✓
Shared pedestrian/bike pathways	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	×	✓	✓✓	×	×	×	×
Pathways - possible circuit	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pathways - linkages to other open space	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bicycle/pedestrian linkages	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	×	×	×	×
Car parking - on road	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	×	✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Car parking - off road	××	✓	✓✓	✓	✓	×	✓	✓	×	✓✓	✓✓	××	××	✓	✓
Disabled car parking	×	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	×	✓	✓✓	×	✓✓	✓✓	××	××	✓	✓
<b>PARK FURNITURE</b>															
Seating	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Picnic tables	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	×	✓	✓	✓
Rubbish bin	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	×	✓	✓	✓
Bike racks	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	×	✓	✓	✓
Barbecues	××	✓	✓✓	✓	✓	××	××	✓	××	✓	✓✓	××	××	✓	✓
Shade structure/shelter	×	✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	✓	✓✓	×	✓	✓	✓
Drinking fountain	×	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	××	✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	××	××	××	××
<b>SIGNAGE</b>															
Information signage	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓
Directional signage	×	✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓
Interpretive signage	×	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓	×	×	×	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓

✓✓ = must have    ✓ = might have    x = should not have    xx = must not have



Infrastructure	Parkland			Formal Garden		Linear Open Space and Corridor			Sports Reserve			Natural Areas			
	Neighbourhood	Township / District	Regional	Township / District	Regional	Neighbourhood	Township / District	Regional	Neighbourhood Might apply to school ovals	Township / District	Regional	Neighbourhood	Township / District	Regional	State
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN</b>															
Access to water	x	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	xx	xx	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	x	✓	✓	✓
Water sensitive urban design (WSUD)	x	x	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	xx	xx	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	x	x	x	x
Irrigation/irrigation system	xx	✓	✓	✓	✓	xx	xx	xx	✓	✓✓	✓✓	x	x	x	x
Alternate water sources	xx	✓	✓✓	✓	✓	xx	x	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	x	✓	✓	✓
Alternate energy sources	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx	x	✓✓	✓✓	xx	xx	xx	xx
<b>STRUCTURES/FEATURES</b>															
Pavilion/change rooms	xx	xx	x	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx	✓	✓✓	✓✓	xx	xx	xx	xx
Coastal structures - surf lifesaving club	x	x	✓	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx
Water feature - formal	x	x	✓	✓	✓	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx	x	xx	xx	xx	xx
Water feature - informal	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	xx	xx	x	✓	✓	✓	✓
Public toilets	xx	✓	✓✓	✓	✓	xx	xx	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	x	✓	✓	✓
Lighting	xx	xx	x	✓	✓	x	x	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	xx	xx	xx	xx
Artworks/sculptures	✓	✓	✓✓	✓	✓	xx	xx	✓	xx	xx	x	xx	xx	xx	xx

✓✓ = must have    ✓ = might have    x = should not have    xx = must not have