

Environment and open space



Strategic indicator

Increase environmental sustainability and protection of the environment and open space. Increase access, safety and quality of public open space.

Domain overview

Cardinia Shire is located on the traditional lands of the Bunurong, Boon Wurrung and Wurundjeri People of the Kulin Nation. Cardinia Shire's public open spaces and places provide highly valued biodiversity, recreational corridors and spaces for the community to connect.

The shire's parks, playgrounds and nature reserves also contribute to the mental and physical wellbeing of our community by providing local destinations for people to enjoy nature and walk, cycle, be active and relax. They provide places for social interaction, critical to creating and maintaining community connections and building a sense of belonging.

Open spaces and reserves also play a vital role during extreme events and natural disasters, used as tactical fire breaks and aid stormwater drainage and water treatment.

Links to Cardinia Shire Council Plan 2021-25

- 1.2 Enrich local identity and opportunities for the community to connect through art, history and cultural expression.
- 2.2 Plan and maintain safe, inclusive and connected open spaces, places and active travel routes.
- 3.1 Partner with community, business and industry to take action on, and adapt to, climate change.
- 3.3 Work with community to improve and manage our natural assets, biodiversity and cultural heritage.
- 3.4 Plan and advocate for better water cycle planning and management to reduce environmental impacts.

About environment and open space

Data about employment in Cardinia Shire identifies:

- Data about environment and open spaces in Cardinia Shire identifies:
- 108 hectares of linear reserve connections.
- 16,280 hectares natural resources (including retarding basins).
- 356 hectares of passive recreation sites, across 173 passive reserves.
- 241 hectares of active recreation sites, across 31 active reserves.
- 168 playgrounds, 1 cultural centre, 6 community gardens.

Housing liveability measures

- Average distance to closest public open space.
- Percentage (%) of dwellings within 400m or less distance of public open space.
- Average distance to closest public open space larger than 1.5 hectares.
- Percentage (%) of dwellings within 400m of public open space larger than 1.5 hectares.
- Percentage of dwellings within 400m or less distance of any local park (>0.4 to <=1ha).

Housing liveability measures (cont)

- Percentage of dwellings within 800m or less distance of any neighbourhood park (>1ha to <=5ha).
- Percentage of dwellings within 400m or less distance of a neighbourhood recreation park (>0.5ha).
- Average distance to closest public open space with a nearby public toilet (within 100m).

Social justice and equity statement

Some groups in the community face unequal barriers to reaching their highest achievable health, social and economic outcomes. The Liveability Plan recognises the need to direct efforts for improving health, wellbeing and liveability in a way that addresses inequities through social justice.

Equity refers to providing resources based upon the circumstances and characteristics of the people involved, to ensure the same opportunities for all. Social justice removes barriers so that people can enjoy the same opportunities without reliance on external support. Social Justice and Equity action areas include:

- Equitable and accessible places, services, programs and activities
- A well-planned, accessible and liveable community.
- A safe and equitable workplace.
- An inclusive and empowered community.
- Leadership, collaboration and advocacy.

The role of housing in addressing climate change

The environment and open spaces help to address climate change by protecting and preserving the many benefits that the land provides to humans, wildlife and vegetation. Trees, plants and open green spaces provide natural cooling of air and surfaces. Vegetation absorbs carbon dioxide, helping to offset greenhouse gas emissions. Nature reserves strengthen the resilience of habitats for native biodiversity, and parks provide activated spaces for community connection and resilience.

Climate-health impacts on employment

Our quality of life is linked to the 'ecosystem services' that the environment provides. Native animals, plants and micro-organisms fuel the ecosystem services and include physical health benefits such as shade, improved air and water quality, places to be active and relax and offer spiritual and mental wellbeing benefits.

The ability to be outdoors, connecting to the land and others in the community is impacted by the extreme weather conditions including severe storms, hot days and heat waves.

Additionally, people who have survived a climate disaster such as bushfire or flooding, can experience psychological distress by feeling a sense of loss and disconnection to the local lands.

When thinking about the future of environment and space, the following is relevant

- Climate-change impacts
- Increased population/housing density, with increased expectations of open space and amenities close to home, and competing uses of open space and recreation facilities.
- Activating underutilised and new open spaces, and in ways that balance the needs of different users.
- Protecting natural and open spaces and species, from pests and waste.
- Ensuring amenity within open spaces to encourage diverse use, accessibility and utilisation (i.e. lighting, bike racks, water access, tree canopy and seating, that incorporates sustainability).
- The increasing land costs that limits opportunities to buy public open space.
- Partnership opportunities with developers to provide open/play spaces within residential areas/streetscapes.
- Active engagement of communities in decisions, activations and delivery of open space projects and maintenance, particularly First Nations.
- Enhancing opportunities for residents to participate in environmental groups and volunteering
- opportunities to preserve nature, and enhance community connection and resilience.