

## 6.2.6 Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands Future Directions Plan 2022

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### Recommendation(s)

That Council:

- Notes the Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands Future Directions Plan 2022 has recently been amended by the DELWP and that the main changes include clarifying wording regarding investment to fund the implementation of the plan. These changes maintain the shared strategic direction for the parklands but do not include the details of any funding for implementation.
- Endorses the Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands Future Directions Plan 2022
- Writes to DELWP, project lead for the preparation of the Plan, advising of its resolution, expressing concern that there is no funding commitment to the implementation of the Plan and requesting funding is allocated to ensure the outcomes of the Plan can be delivered.

### Attachments

1. Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands Final Future Directions Plan 2022 [6.2.6.1 - 53 pages]
2. Engaging on the Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands Draft Future Directions Plan July 2022 [6.2.6.2 - 13 pages]

### Executive Summary

The Cardinia Creek Parklands has been progressively expanding under the guidance of the 2002 Cardinia Creek Parklands Future Directions Plan developed by Parks Victoria. The Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands Future Directions Plan 2022 has been developed by the Mosaic Insights and REALMstudios team on behalf of the Parklands Partnership Group.

DELWP (Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning) led the Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands refresh project, working collaboratively with the Project Partners including Cardinia Shire Council, City of Casey, Parks Victoria, Melbourne Water and the BLCAC (Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation). Supporting Project Partners included the Akoonah Park Committee of Management and the Beaconsfield Recreation Reserve Committee of Management.

The Future Directions Plan 2022 forms the basis for design and implementation planning of the Parklands over the next 10-15 years and will help identify future funding and partnership opportunities. As outlined in the Plan, more detailed planning to deliver actions, including the development of trails and new and upgrades to existing visitor nodes, will be progressively undertaken subject to land availability, visitor demand, and funding obtained or allocated by project partners.

The main objectives of the Plan are to:

- Set strategic management directions within a transparent framework
- Identify management zones to guide decision making regarding appropriate current and future uses
- Identify key actions for expanding the Parklands.

Following two rounds of extensive community engagement, the Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands Future Directions Plan 2022 is ready for endorsement. Each partner needs to confirm its own organisational endorsement of the Plan by 20 September 2022, to DELWP.

## Background

The Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands will encompass more than 600 ha of parkland from Berwick to Clyde on both sides of Cardinia Creek. First reserved in 1994 for future public open space, the Parklands are growing to provide important ecological, cultural and community benefits for the region. Development of the previous Future Directions Plan in 2002 by Parks Victoria focused on ensuring ongoing acquisition of land within the park boundary to protect and enhance flora and fauna values, develop trail connections, and provide visitor facilities for public enjoyment.

There are many existing parks and reserves within the Parklands, approximately 28 privately owned properties, and a mix of additional smaller parcels owned by Melbourne Water, DELWP, the City of Casey and Cardinia Shire Council.

DELWP have been undertaking the Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands Future Directions Plan refresh project in conjunction with the project partners. The project partners include Parks Victoria, Cardinia Shire Council, City of Casey, Melbourne Water, and DELWP. Other invited project partners include the Committees of Management for Akoonah Park and Beaconsfield Recreation Reserve, and Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation.

At its heart, the Plan recognises and embeds the rights and values of the Traditional Owners, the Bunurong people, in the planning and management of the Parklands, and responds to the continued urban expansion in the region. It responds to the pressing need to mitigate climate change, protect, and enhance biodiversity, and contribute to improved community health and wellbeing. The Plan outlines the expanded area of the Regional Parklands with the main purpose to protect new areas of biodiversity values on both sides of the Creek and create new and improved access and links between a network of existing parks and reserves along Cardinia Creek.

The Plan aims to create a shared vision and commitment for the co-management of the expanded parklands to collaboratively expand Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands by working towards a continuous chain of parks and reserves. This open space will provide wellbeing, cultural and environmental benefits for the wider community. The Plan forms the basis for design and implementation planning of the Parklands over the next 10-15 years and will help shape future funding and partnership opportunities.

The Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands Draft Future Directions Plan was presented for community consultation from 25 May to 23 June 2022. Refer attached *Engaging on the Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands Future Directions Plan July 2022* for a detailed outline of the feedback received.

The Draft Plan was revised in response to the feedback from the community and project partners. The Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands Future Directions Plan 2022 is attached and is presented to Council for endorsement.

## Policy Implications

Existing strategies, plans and policy commitments of Federal, State and Local Government and Parklands Partners were reviewed to inform parklands planning. The background review was critical in understanding the opportunities and constraints for parkland planning, and directly informed the Plan.

A number of Cardinia Shire Council's existing Strategies and Policies were considered as part of the development of the Plan including:

- Council Plan 2021
- Community Vision 2040
- Cardinia Shire's Liveability Plan 2017-29
- Cardinia Planning Scheme
- Cardinia Biolink Plan 2023-33
- Cardinia Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2022-33
- Cardinia Shire Council Pedestrian and Bicycle Strategy 2017
- Cardinia Shire Council Equestrian Strategy 2014
- Cardinia Shire Council Integrated Water Management Plan 2015-25

The Cardinia Creek Parklands form important part of existing and future Precinct Structure Plans and township strategies for the area including:

- Beaconsfield Structure Plan (2013)
- Officer Precinct Structure Plan (amended November 2019)
- Officer Precinct Structure Plan Cardinia Creek: Conservation Management Plan 2011 Ecology Australia – Prepared for Growth Areas Authority.
- Officer South Employment Precinct Structure Plan (currently in development by the VPA (Victorian Planning Authority)).

## Relevance to Council Plan

### 1.1 We empower our communities to be healthy, connected and resilient

1.1.2 Enrich local identity and opportunities for the community to connect through art, history and cultural expression.

1.1.4 Facilitate a partnership approach to create safer communities.

### 2.1 We support the creation of liveable spaces and places

2.1.1 Advocate, plan for and deliver accessible community infrastructure and services that address community need.

2.1.2 Plan and maintain safe, inclusive and connected open spaces, places and active travel routes.

### 3.1 We value our natural assets and support our biodiversity to thrive

3.1.3 Work with community to improve and manage our natural assets, biodiversity and cultural heritage.

3.1.4 Plan and advocate for better water cycle planning and management to reduce environmental impacts.

### 4.1 We support our productive land and employment land to grow local industries

4.1.5 Strengthen and promote our shire's unique identity and visitor attractions.

### 5.1 We practise responsible leadership

5.1.1 Build trust through meaningful community engagement and transparent decision-making.

5.1.2 Manage our finances responsibly and leave a positive legacy for future generations.

5.1.4 Maximise value for our community through efficient service delivery, innovation, strategic partnerships and advocacy.

### **Climate Emergency Consideration**

Open Space and green areas reduce the urban heat island affect by having a cooling effect on the landscape and surrounding areas. Green, permeable surfaces increase evapotranspiration rates of the vegetation, with trees and shrubs providing shelter during extreme heat, benefiting various fauna species as well as people.

Open space reduces the impacts of climate change by sequestering carbon through the vegetation. Given climate change is expected to increase the number of extreme heat days, open space areas especially large open spaces such as the Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands, will provide relief for residents, habitat for native fauna, also providing cooling benefits in the surrounding areas.

Green space also provides positive mental health benefits people. Being able to spend time in open space and nature assists people's mental health. The need for green spaces and places to gather outside for mental as well as physical health reasons, has only increased due to the recent pandemic.

The Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands Future Directions Plan 2022, responds to the pressing need to mitigate climate change, protect, and enhance biodiversity, and contribute to improved community health and wellbeing.

### **Consultation/Communication**

Two rounds of community consultation were undertaken. Early community input was sought from 3 November to 30 November 2021 to help understand the future of Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands. Six themes were identified during this round of public consultation. These themes were used to frame and better understand feedback received:

- Biodiversity values
- Safety and accessibility
- Users and uses
- Facilities and landscape elements
- Cultural heritage and Bunurong values
- Parklands management

The feedback helped to develop the Draft Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands Future Directions Plan which was released for a second round of community consultation in May 2022.

Community and stakeholders were invited to review the Plan from 25 May to 23 June 2022 and provide their feedback. A range of methods and tools were used to consult with the community and stakeholders.

The results of the online survey completed by 35 respondents revealed overall support for the commitments outlined in the Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands Draft Future Directions Plan. A summary of online feedback includes the following:

- 62.5% of people were either very satisfied or satisfied with the draft Vision
- 69% people were either very satisfied or satisfied that the commitments in the draft Plan
- will help visitors appreciate the importance of Bunurong values and principles
- 75% people were either very satisfied or satisfied with the commitment to protecting biodiversity in the Parklands

- 87% people were either very supportive or supportive of the commitments to shorter walking loops within the Parklands
- 94% of survey participants were either very supportive or supportive of the commitment to walking and cycling trails that connect the different areas of the Parklands
- 84% of survey participants were either very supportive or supportive of the commitment to connect the trail to the regional cycling network.

Three respondents were 'not satisfied.' One because they sought stronger commitments to biodiversity, one because they sought stronger commitments to increased sporting facilities, and one for unclear reasons.

A summary of the feedback received during the consultation period includes:

- Support for the environmental and cultural benefits that the Draft Plan will provide
- Requests for consideration of wildlife and protection of native flora and fauna
- Support for off-lead dog areas in places that limit damage to natural areas
- Improvements to pedestrian access and safety, in particular at Inglis Road
- Desire for more trails and greater connection of trails in different areas of parklands
- Desire for the provision of wayfinding and interpretive signage
- Desire for more activities such as events, sound stage, sports activities & horse trails
- Provision of amenities and seating
- Seeking more acknowledgement of community groups.

Refer the attached report *Engaging on the Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands Future Directions Plan July 2022*.

### **Financial and Resource Implications**

There will be financial and resource requirements for the implementation of the actions included within the Plan. However, many of these revolve around seeking additional funding from the State Government for upgrade and improvement works to open space along the existing and proposed Cardinia Creek Regional parklands.

There is an expectation that Council will become future land managers of parcels along the Parklands, however, this is to be determined and explored as part of the development of an Implementation Plan. **Section 5 Implementation** of the Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands Future Directions Plan 2022 identifies Actions for each of the Themes. These actions will be progressively implemented over the life of the Plan.

### **Conclusion**

DELWP with the support of the Project Partners have prepared the Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands Future Directions Plan 2022. Two rounds of extensive community engagement were undertaken to help inform the development of the Plan.

At its heart, the Plan recognises and embeds the rights and values of the Traditional Owners, the Bunurong people, in the planning and management of the Parklands, and responds to the continued urban expansion in the region. It responds to the pressing need to mitigate climate change, protect, and enhance biodiversity, and contribute to improved community health and wellbeing. The Plan outlines the expanded area of the Regional Parklands with the main

purpose to protect new areas of biodiversity values on both sides of the Creek and create new and improved access and links between a network of existing parks and reserves along Cardinia Creek.

The Plan forms the basis for design and implementation planning of the Parklands over the next 10-15 years and will help identify future funding and partnership opportunities. As outlined in the Parklands Plan, more detailed planning to deliver actions, including the development of trails and new and upgrades to existing visitor nodes, will be progressively undertaken subject to land availability, visitor demand, and funding obtained or allocated by project partners.

The main objectives of the Plan are to:

- Set strategic management directions within a transparent framework
- Identify management zones to guide decision making regarding appropriate current and future uses
- Identify key actions for expanding the Parklands.

The Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands Future Directions Plan 2022 is ready for endorsement by Cardinia Shire Council as a Project Partner and key stakeholder.



# CARDINIA CREEK REGIONAL PARKLANDS

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS PLAN 2022



**Acknowledgement of Country**

The Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands are located on the traditional lands of the Bunurong people. We pay respects to their Elders past and present. We acknowledge the deep spiritual connection to Country held by traditional custodians and support this in ongoing parkland planning.



Cardinia Creek artwork by Lakeisha Clayton, Bunurong, Munanjali and Muthi Muthi woman

'This piece is about people gathering near water, both fresh and salt. It is about Bunurong people being within the landscape and joining together in celebration' *Lakeisha Clayton, March 2022*



## Executive summary

### Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands

The Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands (the Parklands) will encompass more than 600 ha of parkland from Beaconsfield to Clyde on both sides of Cardinia Creek.

The Parklands includes and links much loved existing parks including Cardinia Creek Regional Park and Grasmere Wetlands, Akoonah Park, Beaconsfield Flora and Fauna Reserve, Beaconsfield Recreation Reserve, Beaconsfield Park, Manna Gum Park, Mick Morland and Bob Burgess Reserve.

### Traditional Owners

The lands and water of the Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands are part of the traditional Country of the Bunurong, a custodianship that endures today. Cardinia Creek is very significant to Bunurong people, and they have asked that it be protected for future generations.

The name ‘Cardinia’ derives from ‘Kar Din Yarr’, Kulin language for ‘looking at the rising sun’ and ‘sunrise’.

This place is considered by Elders to have important spiritual significance due to its direct connection to gathering places, ritual places and ritual journeys and is connected to numerous intangible aspects of Bunurong heritage.

The Parklands will be a space for Bunurong to continue custodianship of Country, practise culture, share stories, protect significant archaeological places, and apply biocultural practices and land management.

### Future Directions Plan 2022

The Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands Future Directions Plan 2022 (the Plan) sets out a vision, principles and directions for progressive parklands establishment, expansion and management to be achieved by 2040.

The vision is:

**The Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands is a connected parklands providing distinct experiences for visitors to recreate and engage with the natural environment while conserving the cultural and ecological values of Cardinia Creek, its floodplain and open spaces for future generations.**

The Plan recognises and embeds the rights and values of the Traditional Owners, the Bunurong people, in the planning and management of the Parklands. It responds to critical drivers including the continued urban expansion in the region, the pressing need to mitigate climate change, protect and enhance biodiversity, and contribute to improved community health and wellbeing.



The Parklands will provide many benefits and the Plan focuses on five objectives: healthy country, healthy ecosystems, healthy people, resilient communities, and collaborative governance.

The Plan is centred around five interrelated themes – *identity, biodiversity, access, water and experience*. The themes collectively define the Parklands character and guide the future directions, strategies and actions for management of the Parklands into the future.

The Plan is a high-level strategic plan. The Precinct Structure Plans (PSPs) remain the key plans that guide future use, subdivision and development of land around the Parklands. This includes stormwater assets, bridges, trails and interfaces with development. Design for land that will be transferred to the Parklands will be based on site specific analysis and be generally in accordance with existing and pending PSPs.

### Identity

Cardinia Creek was an important travel corridor for the Bunurong people as they travelled from Western Port to sheltered areas in the uplands during winter when the flats were flooded. This was part of 'living with the seasons' and consequently the area was an important cultural hub.

Inspired by the travel routes of the Bunurong, the changing landscapes of the Parklands is celebrated with four character identities: uplands, urban refuge, wetlands, and floodplains.

These identities help tell the story of landscape and place, past and future, while also helping to understand the different management strategies that apply in different areas of the 18 km long Parklands. Sense of place, the relationship between people and the Parklands, will be celebrated through design, planning and management. The Parklands will be a safe, inviting place for community members of all abilities, genders, and cultural backgrounds.

### Water and Biodiversity

The Parklands hold an important story of water and is a critical location for the ongoing protection of biodiversity. The character of the Parklands is interlinked with Cardinia Creek and its floodplain, which connect the Dandenong Ranges with the Ramsar-listed Western Port and Yaringa Marine National Park.

Although Cardinia Creek and its tributaries have been altered substantially over time, they retain a natural appearance in many locations and provide habitat for native fauna such as Australian Grayling, Dwarf Galaxia, Growling Grass Frogs, and a variety of important native birds. Waterbodies provide refugia for native animals during dry spells, which will increase as the climate changes. The Plan supports waterway health and the investigation of new waterbodies and revegetation areas that will improve flora and fauna outcomes.

Linking open spaces and supporting wildlife protection, enhancement and movement are important to protect biodiversity values that remain in this critical corridor.

### Experience and Access

As a regional open space, the Parklands support a wide range of activities with a focus on immersive experiences in nature and opportunities to be active in nature.

The creek corridor and its large, open spaces present opportunities to connect people with the natural environment through learning and education, volunteering, passive sensory experiences, interaction with wildlife and physical activity. Sporting activities will continue at Beaconsfield Recreation Reserve, Mick Morland Reserve and Akoonah Park.

Future planning for the Parklands has responded to the overwhelming interest from the community for

opportunities to walk, experience nature and meet with friends and family.

The Plan supports:

- increased access to nature for the diverse communities in Cardinia, Casey and beyond to support community health and wellbeing. Walking loops will be created and a continuous regional walking and cycling trail along the creek will be progressively developed that will connect to other regional trails. Proposed trails will be developed in a way that protects biodiversity and cultural values
- new visitor facilities in the Cardinia Creek Regional Park including a new loop trail and viewing area at the Grasmere Community Gardens Wetlands. Investigations into a new main visitor node and upgrade of facilities north of Inglis Road that will include revegetation, trails and consideration of an informal horse ride-out area.
- traffic and trail improvements to support pedestrian access across Inglis Road to Grasmere Creek Picnic Area and to provide east west connection between Beaconsfield Flora & Fauna Reserve and Grasmere Community Gardens Wetlands
- provision of more and improved equestrian trails
- support for important existing commercial and community activities occurring within the Parklands, such as the annual agricultural show, trailer camping and markets at Akoonah Park, and well-used and loved community sports and recreation facilities
- enhancement of Bob Burgess Reserve to better integrate with adjacent shops and upgrade of Beaconsfield Recreation Reserve for ongoing sporting facilities
- support community involvement, education and volunteering experiences
- More and improved visitor facilities throughout the parklands to cater to people of all abilities, genders, and cultural backgrounds, including seating, water fountains, toilets, areas for play, and shade, as well as signage, wayfinding, and safe, accessible connections to nearby open spaces

### Collaborative Governance

The Future Directions Plan has been developed by the Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands Partners. The Partners include Traditional Owners and ongoing public land managers: Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation, Parks Victoria, Melbourne Water, City of Casey, Cardinia Shire Council, and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning.

The Parkland Partners will work together to develop the Parklands collaboratively in line with the vision, principles and management zones set out in the Plan.

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This document has been drafted by Mosaic Insights and REALMstudios  
on behalf of the Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands Partnership Group

## 1 Introduction

The Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands (the Parklands) will encompass more than 600 ha of parkland from Beaconsfield to Clyde on both sides of Cardinia Creek. First reserved in 1994 for future public open space, the Parklands are growing to provide important ecological, cultural and community benefits for the region. Development of the previous Future Directions Plan in 2002 by Parks Victoria focused on ensuring ongoing acquisition of land within the park boundary to protect and enhance flora and fauna values, develop trail connections, and provide visitor facilities for public enjoyment.

This Future Directions Plan 2022 (the Plan) refreshes the 2002 Plan. It recognises and embeds the rights and values of the Traditional Owners, the Bunurong people, in the planning and management of the Parklands, and responds to the continued urban expansion in the region. It responds to the pressing need to mitigate climate change, protect and enhance biodiversity, and contribute to improved community health and wellbeing.

The Plan is the basis for design and implementation planning of the Parklands over the next 10-15 years. An overview of the method used to develop the Plan is provided in Appendix 1.



Figure 1. Bob Burgess Reserve, Beaconsfield

## 1.1 The Parklands Vision

**The Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands is a connected parklands providing distinct experiences for visitors to recreate and engage with the natural environment while conserving the cultural and ecological values of Cardinia Creek, its floodplain and open spaces for future generations.**

*The Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands are located on Bunurong Country. Bunurong Country is a sentient being that Bunurong people belong to. Country needs to be cared for and nurtured, and in turn it can care for and nurture the people that belong to it. In turn however, if it is neglected, so too become its people. Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation invite the current and future communities of this region to join them in caring for their Country and becoming part of these places<sup>1</sup>.*

The Parklands provide vital regional ecosystem services such as wildlife habitat, river health, urban cooling, and flood mitigation. The Parklands include a Growling Grass Frog Conservation Area that has been established under Commonwealth legislation to mitigate the impacts of urbanisation on threatened species and communities in Melbourne's Growth Corridors.

The Parklands weave along Cardinia Creek through some of outer Melbourne's most rapidly expanding suburbs in the south-east growth corridor municipalities of Casey City Council and Cardinia Shire Council. Extending from the Harkaway Foothills to the plains of the old Koo Wee Rup swamp, the Parklands are both a connector and a gathering space, providing much-needed open space to adjacent suburbs and access for the regional area to the rich natural, social and cultural values along the creek corridor.

The Parklands (Figure 2) contains some of the region's most loved parks and green spaces (which are described in the next section). As the population in the region increases, the expanded Parklands will be critical to supporting 20-minute neighbourhoods and providing opportunities for connection to nature and culture, recreation, and play for workers and residents from the surrounding residential, commercial and industrial precincts.

The Parklands will be an important link to other significant open spaces and activity centres in the area (Figure 3), including:

- Regional shared use trails including the Great Casey Trail, the Royal Botanic Gardens to Cardinia Creek Trail and the Great Southern Rail Trail
- Commercial activity centres including the Berwick and Beaconsfield townships and emerging town centres
- The Ramsar-listed Western Port
- Regional and National Parks such as Churchill National Park, Lysterfield Park, Dandenong Ranges National Park, Cardinia Reservoir Park, Wilson Botanic Gardens and Royal Botanic Gardens in Cranbourne
- The new Clyde Regional Park and Sports Precinct

Through this Plan, the Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands will reach its potential as a regionally important connector and a destination that brings together people, place, and culture.

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<sup>1</sup> Bunurong Land Council, 2022, Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation Cultural Values Mapping: Cardinia Creek.

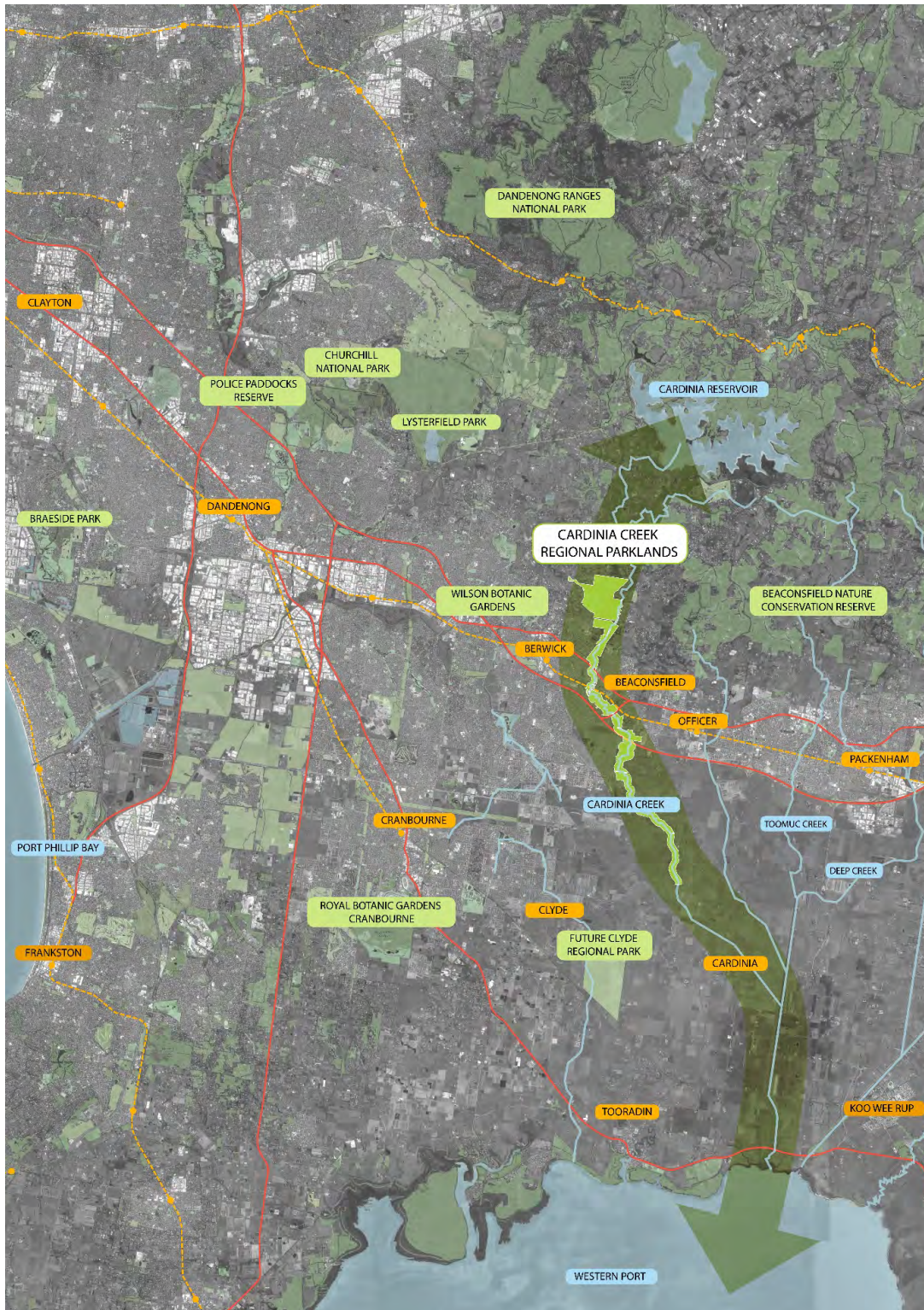


Figure 2. The regional context for the Parklands

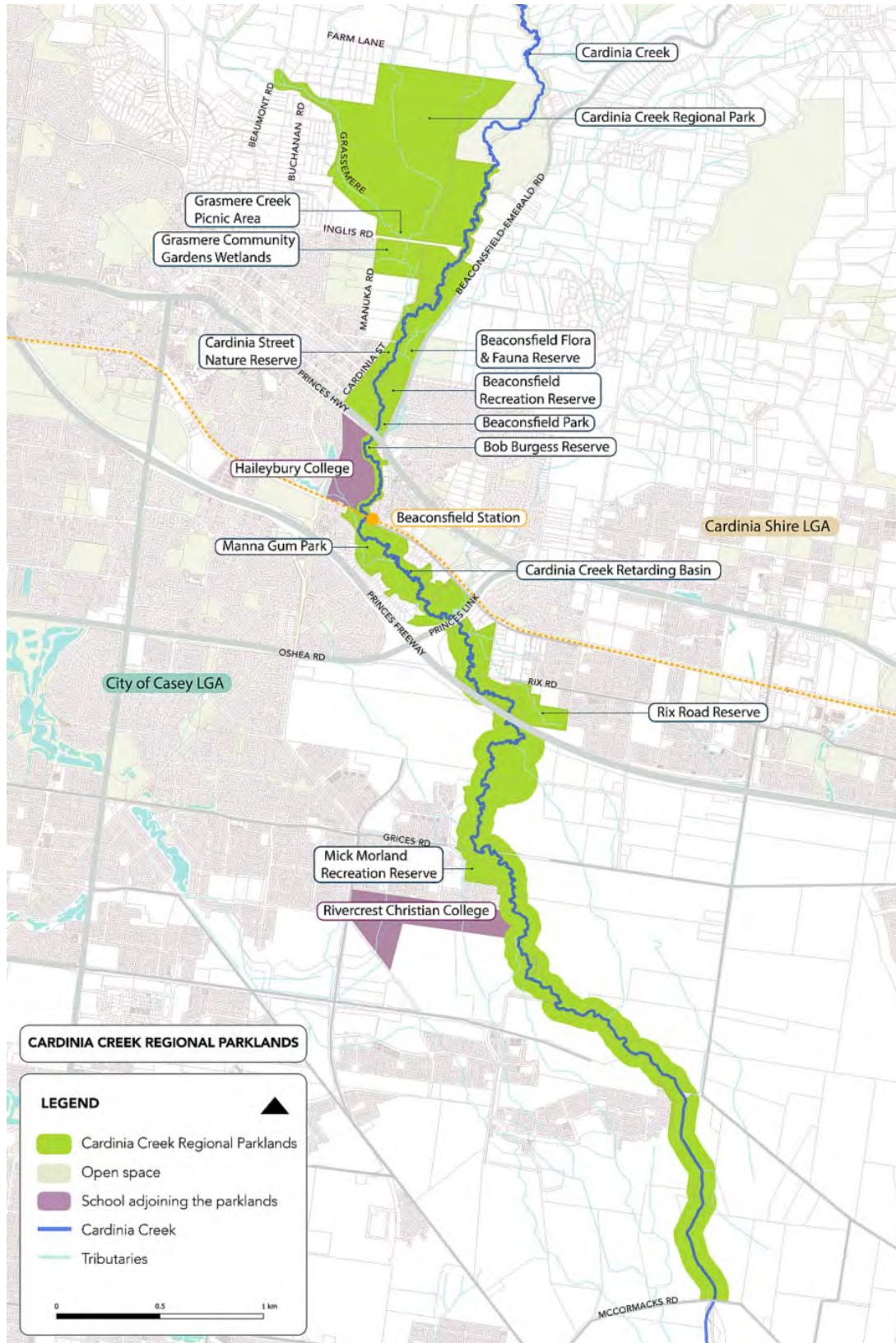


Figure 3. Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands

## 1.2 Parks within the Parklands

The Parklands encompass many well used and loved parks and open spaces, which include visitor nodes that provide infrastructure to support visitation, such as signage, seating and parking. Information on some of the parks in the Parklands is provided in this section.

### Cardinia Creek Regional Park

Located north and south of Inglis Road, this park includes the popular newly constructed stormwater wetland that removes pollutants from Grasmere Creek, provides areas of high value remnant vegetation, and supports biodiversity values including the endangered Dwarf Galaxia. The community can access parts of the 215 ha park via a network of walking trails, allowing visitors to experience nature and expansive rural views, and enjoy picnicking at the Grasmere Creek Picnic Area.



The land is managed by Parks Victoria.

### Beaconsfield Flora and Fauna Reserve

Located on the east side of Cardinia Creek, this 25 ha reserve contains high biodiversity values and provides habitat for important native animals including platypus, echidnas, and corellas. The reserve provides a network of walking and cycling paths around Cardinia Creek that enable visitors to be immersed in nature.



The Friends of Cardinia Creek Sanctuary have been central in the care of the bushland areas of this reserve.

The land is managed by Cardinia Shire Council.

### Beaconsfield Recreation Reserve

Located east of Cardinia Creek and south of the Beaconsfield Flora and Fauna Reserve, this 5 ha reserve provides a variety of facilities for active recreation, including cricket/football ovals, cricket nets, tennis courts, netball courts, and a half-size basketball court.



The land is managed by Beaconsfield Reserve Committee of Management.

### Akoonah Park

Located north of Princes Highway on the west side of Cardinia Creek, this popular park that provides a diverse range of facilities for the Berwick Agricultural & Horticultural Society, equestrian events and recreational facilities for the wider community, and camping facilities. Akoonah Park hosts the annual Berwick show and a weekly farmer's market. This 25 ha park is very popular for walking, with picturesque views of Cardinia Creek, and a separate off-leash dog area.



The land is managed by Akoonah Park Committee of Management.



**Beaconsfield Park**

This gateway park is well recognised by locals thanks to its distinctive sign that was installed in 1939.

The park provides a leafy respite on a busy intersection, and for many visitors is an important part of an urban nature walk taking in both sides of Cardinia Creek through Acoonah Park, Beaconsfield Flora & Fauna Reserve and Beaconsfield Recreation Reserve.

The land is managed by Cardinia Shire Council.



**Cardinia Street Nature Reserve**

Located just north of Acoonah Park, this popular park includes natural walking areas, the old swimming hole and small children’s playground.

The Friends of Cardinia Creek have been central in the care of the bushland areas of this reserve.

The land is managed by Casey City Council.



**Bob Burgess Reserve**

This reserve is located south of the Princes Highway on the east side of Cardinia Creek adjacent to shops and close to the railway station.

The reserve provides 2 ha of natural, cultural and recreational values to the community and is the home of the annual Beaconsfield Carols by the Creek.

The land is managed by Cardinia Shire Council.



**Manna Gum Park**

Manna Gum is a 4 ha park at the northern end of Cardinia Creek Retarding Basin, south of the Beaconsfield Railway Station. It provides an open area of grass with a short loop trail and a picnic rotunda and is used by residents for walking and dog off-leash visits.

The land is managed by Parks Victoria.



**Mick Morland Recreation Reserve**

A 4 ha recreation reserve in Clyde North that includes sports facilities for AFL, cricket, and netball. There is a large multipurpose pavilion, a playground, public art, and landscaping.

The land is managed by Casey City Council.



### 1.3 The role of the Future Directions Plan

The Plan provides an important decision-making framework for determining appropriate management of the Parklands. More detailed planning to deliver actions, including development of trails and visitor nodes, will be progressively undertaken as land becomes available and visitor demand increases. The main objectives of the Plan are to:

- Set strategic management directions within a transparent framework
- Identify management zones to guide decision making regarding appropriate current and future uses
- Identify key actions for expanding the Parklands.

The Plan has been developed through a collaborative partnership between Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation and the various ongoing land managers responsible for the management of the Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands. The process for developing the Plan is outlined in Appendix 1. The Partnership Group will be responsible for the implementation of the Plan. The Parklands Partners are:

- Parks Victoria
- City of Casey
- Cardinia Shire Council
- Melbourne Water
- Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation
- Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning

Supporting Parkland Partners include:

- Akoonah Park Committee of Management
- Beaconsfield Recreation Reserve Committee of Management

The Plan is a high-level strategic plan. The Precinct Structure Plans (PSPs) remain the key plans that guide future use, subdivision and development of land around the Parklands. This includes stormwater assets, bridges, trails and interfaces with development. Final designs for transfer of land to the parklands will be based on site specific analysis and be generally in accordance with the existing and pending PSPs.

2022 represents twenty years since the initial Cardinia Creek Future Directions Plan was released. In that time, much has been achieved:

- Acquisition of 102 hectares of new parkland and development of new visitor area north of Inglis Road
- Realignment of the Grasmere Creek and creation of the new wetlands and walking tracks
- Reintroduction of Platypus to the Cardinia Creek and habitat and reserves for Growling Grass Frog
- Community planting along Grasmere Creek and Manuka Road Drain
- Revegetation, weed and pest management programs
- Creation of new public open space in growth areas such as Mick Morland Reserve

## 1.4 Outcomes

The Plan aims to achieve a range of outcomes across five interconnected areas: healthy country, healthy ecosystems, healthy people, resilient communities and collaborative governance.

### Healthy country

The Plan recognises that the lands and water of the Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands are part of the traditional Country of the Bunurong, a custodianship that endures today. The plan supports all opportunities for Bunurong people to care for their Country and continue land management practices with other partners.

### Healthy ecosystems

The Plan supports regional biodiversity and river health outcomes including habitat for the significant native fauna and flora of the Parklands by protecting, maintaining and enhancing the natural environmental values of the Parklands. Healthy ecosystems also provide important opportunities for people to connect with nature, contributing to improved community health and wellbeing.

### Healthy people

The Plan supports a range of inclusive opportunities for active and passive recreation in a natural environment. The Parklands will promote mental and physical health by supporting people to be physically active in their daily life, providing opportunities for people to connect with nature and gain respite from the urban environment, and reducing exposure to urban heat.

### Resilient communities

The Plan supports community resilience to climate change and other shocks and stresses. The Plan will help reduce threats from increasing urban heat by promoting the planting of climate-appropriate vegetation species, reducing the impact of storms through good design and maintenance of landscapes and infrastructure, and reducing the impacts of flooding through water sensitive urban design. The Plan will contribute to broader community resilience by supporting stronger social connections, improving community wellbeing, and strengthening understanding and connection to Country.

### Collaborative governance

The Plan supports a collaborative governance approach to planning, development and management of the Parklands through clarifying the collective and individual roles of public landowners and managers, and encouraging collaboration, integration and innovative partnerships.

## 1.5 Community consultation

Community consultation was integral to the development of the Plan. An initial consultation phase occurred in November 2021, where feedback was sought from the public on their existing opinions, interests and use of the Parklands, and their aspirations for future development and planning for the Parklands.

The Plan was drafted to support the cultural values recommendations set out by the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (BLCAC), and following this, the community priorities and values.

The Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands Draft Future Directions Plan was released in May 2022. Community and stakeholders were able to review the Plan from 25 May to 23 June 2022.

The results of the online survey revealed the following support for the commitments outlined in the Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands Draft Future Directions Plan

- 62.5% of people were either very satisfied or satisfied with the draft Vision
- 69% people were either very satisfied or satisfied that the commitments in the draft Plan will help visitors appreciate the importance of Bunurong values and principles
- 75% people were either very satisfied or satisfied with the commitment to protecting biodiversity in the Parklands
- 87% people were either very supportive or supportive of the commitments for shorter walking loops within the Parklands
- 94% of survey participants were either very supportive or supportive of commitments for walking and cycling trails that connect the different areas of the Parklands
- 84% of survey participants were either very supportive or supportive of the commitments for connecting the trail to the regional cycling network.

Three respondents were 'not satisfied'. One because they sought stronger commitments to biodiversity, one because they sought stronger commitments to increased sporting facilities, and one for unclear reasons.

The key points and issues raised in feedback related to:

- Protecting biodiversity values
- Celebrating cultural heritage and Bunurong values
- Enhancing safety, in particular prioritising the high-risk Inglis Road connection
- Supporting a diversity of users and parkland uses
- Improving parkland facilities and landscape elements
- Recognising and providing support for environment groups and volunteers
- Balancing the protection of nature with providing dog off-leash and on-leash areas
- Extending and connecting trails within, and beyond, the parklands
- Improving parkland management

A selection of quotes include:

"Grew up in the area, it's special to be able to walk in nature."

"Up to 16 Swift Parrots were seen feeding in flowering Spotted Gums at Akoonah Park during their winter stayover. I observed these Swift Parrots busily feeding in those Spotted Gums on 5 occasions. Given these birds' official conservation status as endangered it was a special treat to see them here at Akoonah Park."

"Urgent attention must be given to vastly improving public safety at the eastern end of Inglis Road. This area also has very poor and very dangerous trail connectivity. There is a constant significant risk of serious injury being caused to Park walkers, joggers and cyclists. They have no choice but to move themselves onto the roadway of Inglis Road itself whenever traversing the Cardinia Creek bridges."

"Activities to do, puzzles, nice seatings and shelters"

"Equestrian trails that are relatively well sign posted"

"Keen to have some form of outdoor stage in Bob Burgess Reserve for the Carols and other music/performance arts events"

"Definitely engage people from the cycling and trail building community to help and mark trail routes to expand the cycling network."

"Currently no access at Cardinia Creek from Upper Beaconsfield."

"Groups such as the Friends of Cardinia Creek are amazing and do so much to preserve and maintain, particularly the Beaconsfield Flora Fauna Reserve."

Survey results showed strong community interest in walking and nature appreciation in the Parklands, along with a good support for cycling, picnicking, birdwatching and other activities as shown below (Figure 4).

Community requests for AFL/cricket/netball facilities were considered however preliminary assessments revealed that this proposal is not consistent with environmental regulations, access limitations and Bunurong cultural values.

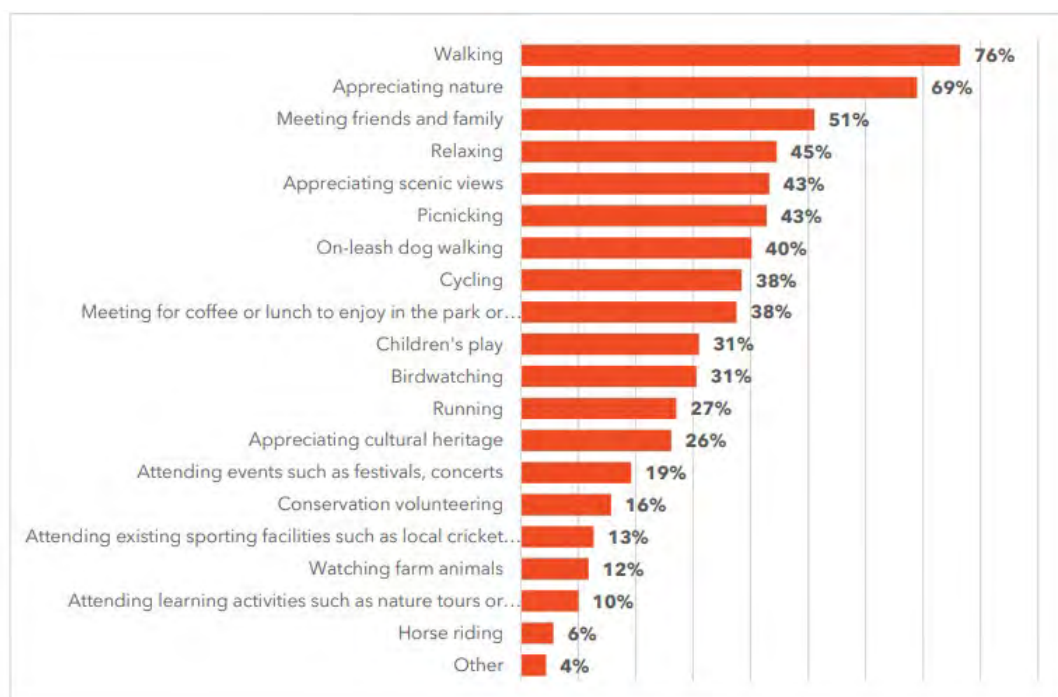


Figure 4. Activities that respondents would enjoy doing in the Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands



**Figure 5. Park survey participants at Cardinia Creek Regional Park. Above at Grasmere Creek Picnic Area, north of Inglis Road in November 2021, and below at Akoonah Park in June 2022.**

## 2 Context

### 2.1 Bunurong values and principles

The lands and water of the Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands are part of the traditional Country of the Bunurong, a custodianship that endures today.

The name 'Cardinia' derives from 'Kar Din Yarr', Kulin language for 'looking at the rising sun' and 'sunrise'.

The Aboriginal Cultural Values of the Bunurong people have been assessed and recorded through the Bunurong Cultural Values Mapping study<sup>2</sup> undertaken by the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation, which is the registered Indigenous Corporation that represents the interests of Bunurong Traditional Owners. Bunurong people define their Aboriginal Cultural Values as:

Aboriginal cultural values are about things that really matter within a culture, like connections and making meanings. Aboriginal cultural values are about respect to the old people and defending what the old people would want, through both traditional and contemporary Bunurong perspectives.

During this assessment, the key themes relating to Bunurong values expressed by Bunurong Elders included:

- People - all people are important in Bunurong Country, but we need to respect, understand, and recognise the past to move forward.
- Place - within Bunurong Country, there are places of significance that are important for connecting community. These places have both tangible and intangible dimensions, within the Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands and the broader cultural landscape there are places associated with important Bunurong spiritual practices.
- Country - Bunurong Country needs to be cared for and needs to be impacted as little as possible, so much has been destroyed, what is left becomes even more important. Rivers and the associated parklands need to be planned in a way that promotes the natural health and cultural flows of the Bunurong people and broader community

The Statement of Significance is an important guiding principle for the Plan, as set out in the Bunurong Cultural Values Mapping study:

*Cardinia Creek is very significant to Bunurong people and should be protected for future generations. This is a very rare place, within the broader Bunurong Country as well as within the cultural landscape. Although the place itself is hopefully not going to be developed in the near future, it is only a fragment of a larger water course and wetland that has sustained ongoing and devastating impacts since colonisation. This place holds a very high potential for expanding the known scientific understanding of Bunurong Country due to the known material culture within this place. The ability of this place to be interpreted has been elevated due to the suburban growth surrounding it and the cumulative impacts of this growth. This place is considered by Bunurong Elders to have important spiritual significance due to its direct connection to gathering places, ritual places and ritual journeys and is connected to numerous aspects of Bunurong intangible heritage.*

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The Plan is further guided by recommendations from Bunurong people:

#### **Protection of Country**

- The area remains as undeveloped as possible, as so much development is occurring in the surrounding area, it will be one of the few parks left, this increases its value considerably. This includes allowing the Cardinia Creek, as modified as it is, to run as freely as possible without concrete channelisation.
- Aboriginal cultural values be recognised as a priority over other values for example environmental or recreational values in this area. It is crucial to note that BLCAC are not stakeholders, but rightsholders.
- Elders do not condone the destruction of any part of their Country and the avoidance to any negative impacts on their Country should be the priority for any project.
- Further detailed archaeological survey of the project area is sought before any on ground works take place. BLCAC request that this is conducted in a self-determined fashion.

#### **Land Management**

- The return of land to Bunurong people. Whilst BLCAC are building the capacity to manage their Country, having government bodies assist in its management is acceptable, but is not a long-term solution.
- Elders would like to see that any revegetation works involve Bunurong species of significance and (potential) training and employment for BLCAC staff.

#### **Sharing and Growing Cultural Knowledge**

- Bunurong biocultural knowledge is used within this project area for interpretation and walking trails etc.
- Bunurong artists be used in regard to design and artwork within the activity area.
- Elders are specifically interested in the use of this space as a teaching and gathering place for the community.
- Further explore the nature of the spiritual journeys and landscape connections (particularly within Cardinia Dam and known Bunurong gathering and ceremonial places) with site visits, further research and on-site recordings.
- BLCAC would also like to further explore the scientific significance of Cardinia Creek. This can be achieved in several ways, including further study of the repatriated objects that have been recovered from within the project area.



## 2.2 Drivers for change

The Plan responds to key trends influencing the current and future planning of the Parklands.

### Traditional Owner Self Determination

Aboriginal self-determination is about Aboriginal people being at the centre of decision-making around the issues that affect their lives. This is a central policy principle of the Victorian Government.

The Bunurong people are an important partner in the planning of the Parklands. Using their own methodology, the Bunurong have set out their cultural values in the Cultural Values Mapping study. This approach to cultural landscape has shaped the Plan.

### Environmental protection

Open spaces, waterways and wetlands provide a haven for some of Melbourne's most threatened animal and vegetation communities. The Parklands is home to a wide variety of native fauna and flora, including the rare and threatened Australian Grayling, Dwarf Galaxias and Growling Grass Frogs.

Parts of the Parklands are covered by Commonwealth requirements to protect habitat for nationally threatened species and communities, to mitigate the impacts of urban development.

As urban development intensifies in the south-east growth corridor, the Parklands will be critical in providing habitat for native flora and fauna, and protecting the natural environment from the competing demands of a growing urban population.

### Climate change adaptation

Climate change in Greater Melbourne will see increasing average temperatures, more frequent and longer heat waves and increased frequency and severity of bushfires. Droughts and extreme storms will increase, leading to larger and more frequent floods.

Engagement on climate change through the development of the Regional Climate Change Adaptation Strategy found that participants were most concerned about the impact of climate change on the natural environment (48%) and

that *protecting and managing our water supply and protecting and providing access to our natural environment* were two of the top three focus areas of highest concern for participants<sup>3</sup>. The Regional Climate Change Adaptation Strategy highlights the increasingly important role that regional open spaces like the Parklands will play in improving climate resilience.

Green spaces in the Parklands will help alleviate increasing temperatures and heat waves through the process of evapotranspiration and the provision of shaded places of respite. The Parklands will play a vital role in cooling the surrounding urban areas (some of which are highly vulnerable to urban heat), contributing to landscape and community resilience to climate change.

Continued urban development in areas adjoining the Parklands will create higher ambient temperatures, otherwise known as the 'urban heat island' effect<sup>4</sup>, meaning the cooling effect of open and green spaces will become more important.

Approximately 50% of the Parklands is currently shaded by tree canopy, which contributes to its natural cooling effect. Native trees also provide important habitat for native animals, particularly birds. Tree planting will need to consider the potential impacts on habitat of native fauna that need open habitat areas, in particular Growling Grass Frogs.

### An expanding Parklands

A significant proportion (but not all) of land in the Parklands is publicly owned (Figure 6). Recent government commitments and legislative requirements will see approximately 196 ha - an additional 32% - of private land transferred into the Parklands over time, with the aim of improving community and environmental outcomes. The Plan informs the primary purpose of all land within the Parklands to assist with identifying appropriate future land managers and management actions.

<sup>3</sup> Regional Adaptation Stakeholder Committee. (2021). Greater Melbourne Regional Climate Change Adaptation Strategy. Greater Melbourne: Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning.

<sup>4</sup> Melbourne Water. (2021, November 17). Urban cooling. Retrieved from Melbourne Water: [melbournewater.com.au/water-data-and-education/environmental-issues/enhancing-liveability-our-commitment/urban-cooling](https://melbournewater.com.au/water-data-and-education/environmental-issues/enhancing-liveability-our-commitment/urban-cooling)

### Community health and wellbeing

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of public open space in increasing people's capacity to cope during times of personal and community stress and restricted movement. COVID-19 also emphasised the inequity of access to green spaces in urban areas, with research published during the Melbourne COVID-19 lockdowns illustrating the large disparity in access to open space within walking distance of their homes across Greater Melbourne<sup>5</sup>.

Research has accumulated in recent decades on the benefits of open space to health and wellbeing, and the inter-generational impacts of lack of access to open space for low-income households and communities<sup>6</sup>.

The expanded Parklands will play a role in addressing both chronic health issues and public health shocks such as COVID-19 by providing the local community with access to green spaces to immerse in nature, connect with other people, and engage in recreation to support individual and community wellbeing.

### Diverse and changing communities

The City of Casey is made up of diverse social and cultural communities. Most residents have both parents born overseas (compared to 46% in Greater Melbourne and 39% in Victoria) and more than a third speak a language other than English at home<sup>7</sup>. Cardinia Shire is one of the fastest growing regions in Australia, with population projections indicating a more than doubling of residents between 2016 and 2041, to approximately 200,000 people<sup>8</sup>. Much of this growth is occurring within the catchment of the Parklands, with large numbers of new residents from within Victoria, interstate and overseas.

Age composition across the region is also changing. Between 2016 and 2031, Cardinia is expected to see a significant increase in the pre-workforce aged population (73%)<sup>9</sup>, while the largest increase in population for Casey will be people of retirement age (92%)<sup>10</sup>.

It is important that in planning for an expanded Parklands, facilities, activities and uses appeal to a diverse audience and cater for people of all abilities, ages, genders, and backgrounds.

<sup>5</sup> Eddie, R., & Goodwin, S. T. (2020, October 9). Half a million Melburnians can't easily walk to a park. Could schools fill the gap? Retrieved from The Age: [theage.com.au/national/victoria/half-a-million-melburnians-can-t-walk-to-a-park-could-schools-fill-the-gap-20201006-p562ep.html](https://www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/half-a-million-melburnians-can-t-walk-to-a-park-could-schools-fill-the-gap-20201006-p562ep.html)

(Mosaic Insights, 2020)

Sharifi, F., Stone, W., Nygaard, C., & Levin, I. (2021, November). Urban equality: equity of access to green space in Melbourne. Retrieved from Cities People Love: [citiespeoplelove.co/article/urban-equality-equity-of-access-to-green-space-in-melbourne](https://citiespeoplelove.co/article/urban-equality-equity-of-access-to-green-space-in-melbourne)

<sup>6</sup> Sharifi, F., Nygaard, A., Stone, W. M., & Levin, I. (2021). Accessing green space in Melbourne: Measuring inequity and household mobility. *Landscape and Urban Planning*. Retrieved from [sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0169204620314882](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0169204620314882)  
Kendal, D., Lee, K., Ramalho, C., Bowen, K., & Bush, J. (2016). Benefits of Urban Green Space in the Australian Context: A synthesis review for the Clean Air and Urban Landscapes Hub. Melbourne: University of Melbourne.

Richardson, E. A., Pearce, J., Mitchell, R., & Kingham, S. (2013). Role of physical activity in the relationship between urban green space and health. *Public health*, 127(4), 318-324.

Van den Berg, A. E., Maas, J., Verheij, R. A., & Groenewegen, P. P. (2010). Green space as a buffer between stressful life events and health. *Social science & medicine*, 70(8), 1203-1210.

<sup>7</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2017). Casey (C). Retrieved from 2016 Census QuickStats:

[quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census\\_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/LGA21610#cultural](https://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/LGA21610#cultural)

<sup>8</sup> .id. (2022a). Cardinia Shire population forecast. Retrieved from

[.idcommunity:forecast.id.com.au/cardinia/population-summary](https://idcommunity:forecast.id.com.au/cardinia/population-summary)

<sup>9</sup> .id. (2022b). Cardinia Shire population forecast. Retrieved from

[.idcommunity:forecast.id.com.au/cardinia/population-age-structure](https://idcommunity:forecast.id.com.au/cardinia/population-age-structure)

<sup>10</sup> .id. (2022c). City of Casey population forecast. Retrieved from

[.idcommunity:forecast.id.com.au/casey/population-age-structure](https://idcommunity:forecast.id.com.au/casey/population-age-structure)



Figure 6. Public and private land ownership within the Parklands

### 2.3 History and heritage

The Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands are located on the lands of the Bunurong people, and most likely within the clan area of the Mayone-bulluk translating to 'people of the swamp'.

The Bunurong people, as traditional custodians of the land for thousands of years, connected with the area as a 'place of ritual, of food, of meeting and gathering'.

Cardinia Creek was an important travel corridor for the Bunurong people as they travelled from Western Port to sheltered areas in the uplands during winter when the flats were flooded. This was part of 'living with the seasons' and consequently the area was an important cultural hub.

European settlement of the area from the 1830s onwards took advantage of the richness of the waters of Cardinia Creek and surrounding land, initially for grazing, which continues in some areas of the Parklands to this day. Runs were established along the Cardinia Creek during this period, including Berwick Station, the Cardinia Creek run and the Panty Gurn Station, fronting onto Cardinia Creek, becoming the eventual sites of the Berwick and Beaconsfield town centres<sup>11</sup>.



Cardinia Creek (1972) at Clyde North/Officer (Heather, 2013)

In 1848, Alexander Patterson acquired 'St Germain's' Station on Cardinia Creek, which consisted of nine square miles of good country with a frontage to Koo-Wee-Rup Swamp. The area was a favourite camping ground of the Bunurong tribe. Their name for the place was 'Barnibyrong', which means 'the haunt of the ring-tailed opossum'.

Intensive farming in the area was often hindered by the dense vegetation and regular flooding of the extensive swamplands. From the 1870s efforts were made to drain the Koo-Wee-Rup Swamp to support farming activities and enable easier travel between Melbourne and Gippsland<sup>12</sup>. The resulting drainage network failed to prevent major floods, while accelerating soil compaction and collapse, and increasing channel erosion, runoff, and sedimentation in the lower parts of the system. Nevertheless, the land remained popular for farming, the area south-east of the Parklands becoming the potato capital of Victoria, providing essential supplies during both World Wars.

It is during these decades that the displacement of the Bunurong people was completed as they lost access to their traditional lands and travel corridors.



Article from The Argus, 1877 'Opening of the Gipps Land Railway' (The Argus, 1877)

<sup>11</sup>Context Pty Ltd. (2004). Thematic Environmental History (Post European Contact). City of Casey. Retrieved from [casey.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/public/userfiles/City%20%26%20Council/About%20Casey/Thematic\\_Environmental\\_History\\_of\\_Casey\\_v16\\_Mar05%5B1%5D.pdf](http://casey.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/public/userfiles/City%20%26%20Council/About%20Casey/Thematic_Environmental_History_of_Casey_v16_Mar05%5B1%5D.pdf)

Beaconsfield Progress Association. (2022). Beaconsfield History. Retrieved from Beaconsfield Victoria Australia: [beaconsfield.org.au/beaconsfield-history](http://beaconsfield.org.au/beaconsfield-history)

The Argus. (1848, September 29). Claims to Leases of Crown Land. The Argus, p. 4. Retrieved from [trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/page/180816?zoomLevel=3&&searchTerm=%20Gardiner&searchLimits=-l-decade=184|||-title=The+Argus+%28Melbourne%2C...%7Ctitleid%3A13](http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/page/180816?zoomLevel=3&&searchTerm=%20Gardiner&searchLimits=-l-decade=184|||-title=The+Argus+%28Melbourne%2C...%7Ctitleid%3A13)

<sup>12</sup> Heather. (2013, March 20). Creeks and Rivers. Retrieved from Casey Cardinia - links to our past: [caseycardinialinkstoourpast.blogspot.com/2013/03/creeks-and-rivers.html](http://caseycardinialinkstoourpast.blogspot.com/2013/03/creeks-and-rivers.html)

Berwick high street image source: Unknown. (1962). Cities and towns - High Street at Berwick, Victoria. National Archives of Australia.

Establishment of the Gippsland Railway in 1877<sup>13</sup>, including the Beaconsfield Railway station, connected the areas surrounding the Parklands with Melbourne and Gippsland, which enabled further tourism and growth of the area's townships. The influence of this agricultural occupation was experienced not only in terms of economy and industry but also the landscape character and community focus. The Mornington Farmers' Society is one of the oldest in Australia, established in 1856, and was a focal point for the community in the district. In 1951, 15 acres of land directly fronting the Cardinia Creek was reserved for the purpose of recreation and as a showground for the society.

The passing of Land Acts in the 1960s allowed for selection of land and establishment of smaller lots, leading to take up of a diverse range of agricultural activities including fishing, horse breeding, orcharding and dairying. These and other intensive forms of agriculture became major occupations in the area.

Cardinia Reservoir was completed in 1973 as part of a large construction program to increase the security of the drinking water supply to Melbourne's south-eastern suburbs. A series of pipelines were constructed to distribute drinking water from the reservoir, which led to creation of pipe tracks including those running through the Parklands. Water from the desalination plant at Wonthaggi connects into the Melbourne Water supply system at Berwick and then flows to Cardinia Reservoir or directly into the water supply system.

The Ash Wednesday bushfires in 1983 burned a significant area of the Cardinia Creek catchment north of the Parklands. The fires killed more than 20 people in Upper Beaconsfield and had widespread impacts on vegetation and wildlife.

In 1994, the neighbouring municipalities of the City of Casey and Cardinia Shire were established, with Cardinia Creek forming the east-west boundary. Over the past two decades, both areas have experienced significant growth in residential and industrial development, forming the farthest area in the south-east growth corridor for Greater Melbourne designated by the Victorian Government.

Reserved for future public open space in 1994, Melbourne Parks and Waterways opened Manna Gum Picnic Area within the Cardinia Creek Retarding Basin. The State Government began acquiring the first large properties for the parklands on Inglis Road and Parks Victoria published the Cardinia Creek Future Directions Plan in 2002 in recognition of significant population growth creating demand for additional public open space within the Berwick and Beaconsfield areas. The Parklands now contains a range of natural and semi-natural environments enjoyed by residents and visitors.

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<sup>13</sup> The Argus. (1877, October 6). Opening of the Gipps Land Railway. *The Argus*, p. 8. Retrieved January 5, 2022, from [trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/5940167?searchTerm=railway%20berwick&searchLimits=l-title=%7C13||l-decade=187||l-year=1877](https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/5940167?searchTerm=railway%20berwick&searchLimits=l-title=%7C13||l-decade=187||l-year=1877)

## 2.4 Strategic policy and planning

Multiple state and local government policies and programs give direction to the future planning, management and use of the Parklands. The five key strategies that strongly influence the Plan are described below. The full list of strategies, plans and policy commitments reviewed in preparing the Plan are listed in Appendix 2.

### Open Space for Everyone

The Victorian Government’s strategy Open Space for Everyone (2021) provides the strategic framework that guides the planning, acquisition, design, management, use and maintenance of the Melbourne metropolitan open space network. The strategic framework is shown below.



The strategy is supported by a series of actions, two of which relate specifically to Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands:

- Progressively acquire parcels of priority Public Acquisition Overlay (PAO) land - land reserved for public use of Cardinia Creek parklands to revegetate them, protect riparian areas and connect trails
- Develop a Plan (this Plan) to deliver infrastructure to create better facilities, linkages and access.

### Protecting Victoria’s Environment - Biodiversity 2037

Protecting Victoria’s Environment - Biodiversity 2037 presents a long-term vision for Victoria’s biodiversity, supported by two goals: *Victorians value nature* and *Victoria’s natural environment is healthy*. Contributing targets for pest and weed control, revegetation and new permanently protected areas are set out as critical for delivery of state-wide biodiversity commitments.

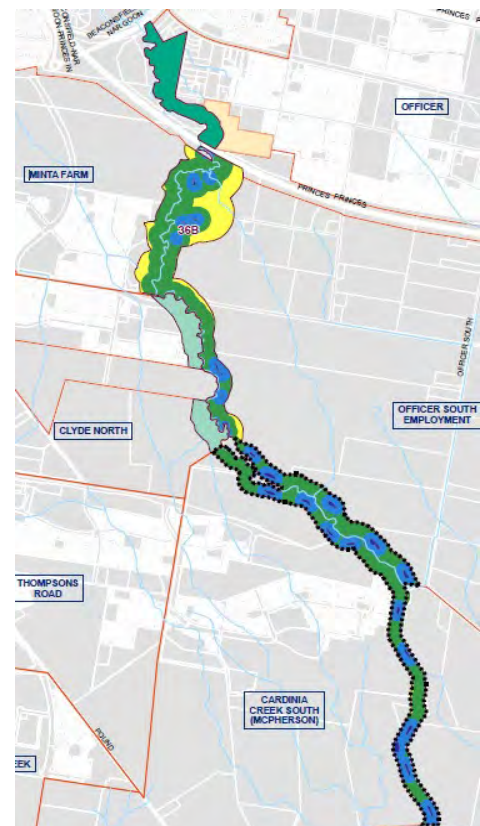
A commitment to connecting people to nature is recognised as a central contribution to the protection of biodiversity. This is crucial to the target of five million Victorians acting to protect the natural environment. The Plan supports these Biodiversity 2037 goals.

**Melbourne Strategic Assessment Program**

The Melbourne Strategic Assessment program implements the Victorian Government’s commitments to protecting Matters of National Environmental Significance from the impacts of urban development in Melbourne’s growth areas. This includes protection and enhancement of habitat for Growling Grass Frogs, threatened fish species and migratory birds. The program commitments form conditions of Commonwealth approvals under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).

The Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands environmental protection requirements include:

- For Clyde North and Officer Precinct Structure Plans (approved prior to March 2012) the requirements are set out in a precinct specific Conservation Management Plan. These plans identify the species and habitat to be protected, as well as where and how conservation requirements will be implemented.
- All other precincts are covered by the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for Melbourne’s Growth Corridors, 2013 (BCS). This includes Conservation Area 36 Growling Grass Frog within the Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands boundary. The BCS identifies Growling Grass Frog, Australian Grayling and Dwarf Galaxias and migratory bird species as species of national and state significance requiring protection within the parts of the Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands. The Growling Grass Frog Masterplan (2017) provided further detail on priorities for existing and potential new wetland locations. The southern portion of Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands is identified for an important cluster of new habitat wetlands.



Parts of the Parklands designated as Conservation Areas under the Melbourne Strategic Assessment program is to be managed primarily for these values, with low impact passive recreation and compatible stormwater management infrastructure proposals subject to DELWP approval.

**Healthy Waterways Strategy 2018-28**

Cardinia Creek forms the spine of the Parklands and performs vital roles in sustaining native biodiversity, connecting people with nature, cooling the environment and as a culturally significant place for Bunurong people. Melbourne Water’s Healthy Waterways Strategy 2018-28 (2018) sets a long-term framework for managing the health of rivers, wetlands and estuaries in the Port Phillip and Western Port region. The vision specific to the Western Port catchment, of which Cardinia Creek is a part, is that: *Waterways and bays are highly valued and sustained by an informed and engaged community working together to protect and improve their value*

The strategy sets out management goals for the catchment, which have directly informed the Plan: stewardship of waterways by the community, celebration of Indigenous cultural and European historical legacies, enabling waterways to perform as important biolinks, managing waterways for instream habitats, ecological resilience and flood mitigation and their social values, establishing water re-use systems, improving flow management of waterways, and managing impacts of urbanisation on water quality and sediment to reduce impacts on the Western Port ecosystem.

**Precinct Structure Plans**

Since the expansion of the Urban Growth Boundary in 2010, the Victorian Government’s South East Growth Corridor Plan (2012) and precinct structure planning, has supported large-scale residential, commercial, and industrial development in the areas surrounding the Parklands. These plans have direct impacts on future management of the Parklands through:

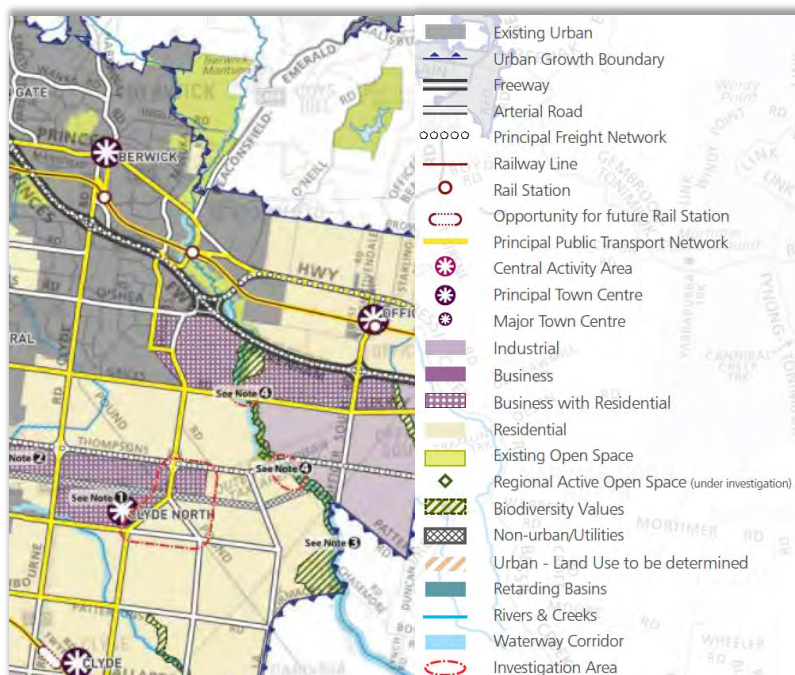
- Introducing significant numbers of residents and workers in surrounding suburbs
- Influencing the timing of release of land for future open space into public ownership
- Development of local and regional open space adjacent to the Parklands
- Planned and proposed modifications to the existing road network that will influence connectivity and access to and through the Parklands
- Establishing residential, commercial, and industrial interfaces that will influence the character and visual amenity of the Parklands

The PSPs that adjoin the Parklands are:

- Officer Precinct Structure Plan (amended Nov 2019)
- Minta Farm Precinct Structure Plan (amended April 2021)
- Clyde North Precinct Structure Plan 2011
- Thompson Road Precinct Structure Plan 2014
- Cardinia Creek South (McPherson) Precinct Structure Plan 2018  
Cardinia Creek South Part 2 Precinct Structure Plan (pending)
- Officer South Employment Precinct Structure Plan (pending)

The above PSPs have been incorporated into planning schemes and are the key statutory plans that guide future use, subdivision and development. The Cardinia Creek Future Directions Plan is a supporting document to help guide future design of the Parklands.

The Officer South Employment PSP and Cardinia Creek South Part 2 PSP have not yet been developed. These pending PSPs will provide further clarification of the Parklands boundary and will consider the objectives of the Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands Future Directions Plan.



**Figure 7. Extract from the South East Growth Corridor Plan**



### 3 The Parklands Plan

The Cardinia Creek Future Directions Plan sets out principles and direction for progressive parklands expansion, establishment, and management to be achieved by 2040. The Plan provides a vision, outcomes across five interconnected areas, five themes that define the Parkland character, future directions for each theme, high-level strategies, and more detailed actions.

#### Vision

The vision for an expanded Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands is:

**The Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands is a connected parklands providing distinct experiences for visitors to recreate and engage with the natural environment while conserving the cultural and ecological values of Cardinia Creek, its floodplain, and open spaces for future generations.**

Implementing this plan will expand the Parklands to stretch along more than 18 km on both sides of the Cardinia Creek and provide more than 600 ha of open space from Beaconsfield to Clyde.

The Parklands will be a space for Bunurong to continue custodianship of Country, practice culture, share stories, protect significant archaeological places, and apply biocultural practices and land management.

The Parklands will continue to protect existing environmental values and create new opportunities for environmental management, such as establishing protected Growling Grass Frog habitat.

The Parklands will play a regional role in providing open space to the south-east metropolitan catchment as well as connecting key open space and biodiversity values within the creek corridor.

The expansive nature of the Parklands and its protected natural setting will strengthen community and landscape resilience to climate change.

Local residents and regional visitors will be better connected to the creek, tributaries and wetlands, nature trails, green open spaces, and areas for passive and active recreation, with opportunities to immerse in nature and learn about the natural environment.

Visitors will be able to safely enjoy the Parklands with diversity and inclusion at the heart of its future management.

The Parklands will continue to be managed through co-operative governance between the ongoing land managers and Bunurong Land Council.

#### Themes

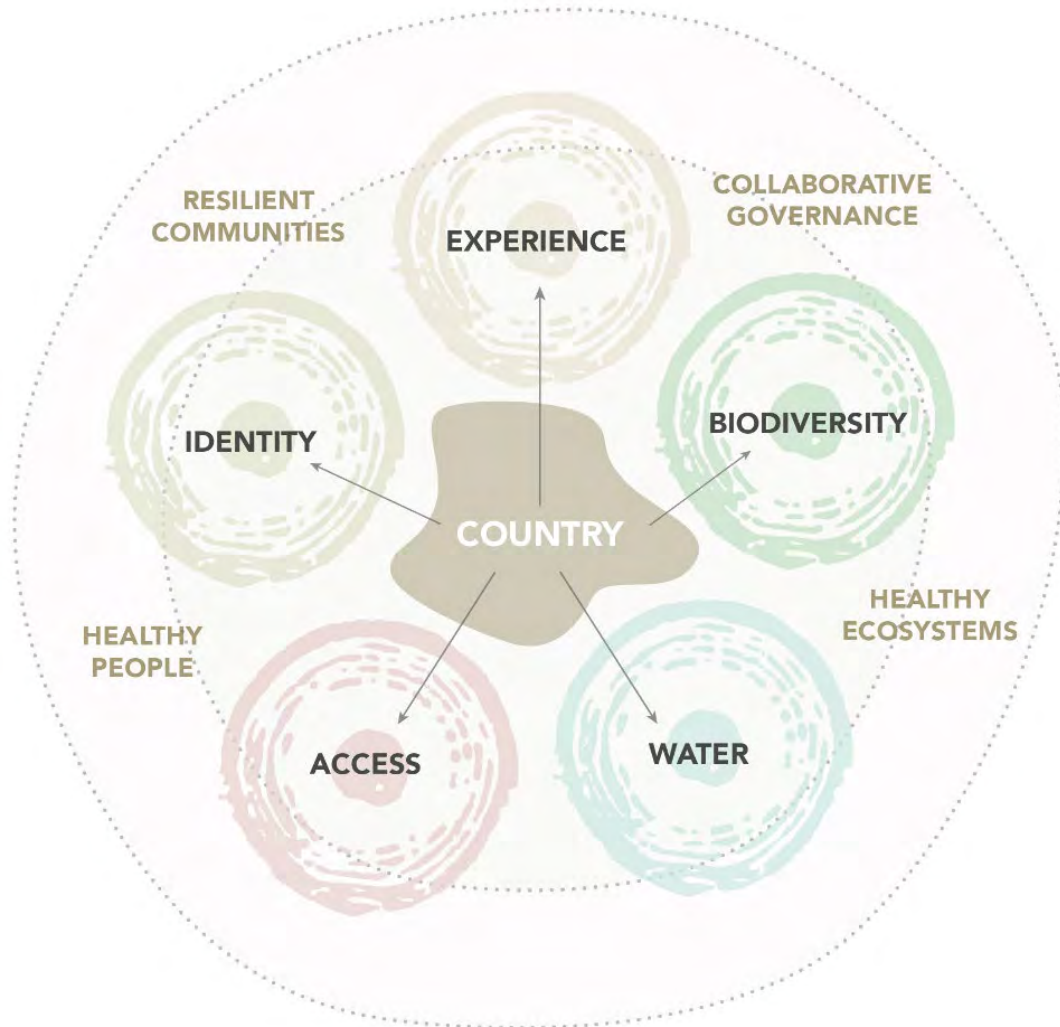
The Future Directions Plan for the Parklands has five themes:

- Identity
- Biodiversity
- Access
- Water
- Experience

The following section outlines the existing context and planning for the Parklands across the five themes, and their contribution to the Plan outcomes. The strategies within each theme will guide implementation of the Plan.

The themes and outcomes that underpin the Plan are illustrated below (Figure 8), which demonstrates how the themes connect to and will achieve the outcomes across healthy country,

healthy ecosystems, cooperative governance, and resilient climate and communities. Specific actions under each theme are provided in Section 5.



**Figure 8. The interrelated outcomes and themes for the Future Directions Plan. The outcomes are linked to management strategies for each theme in the following section.**

### 3.1 Identity

A key aim of the Plan is to create a cohesive identity for the Parklands that recognises its significant contribution to biodiversity, history, and sense of place for the region.

The return of a strong Bunurong identity is important. Inspired by the travel routes of the Bunurong, the changing landscapes of the Parklands is celebrated with four character identities: uplands, urban refuge, wetlands, and floodplains. These identities help tell the story of landscape and place, past and future, while also helping to understand the different strategies that apply in different areas of these 18 km long parklands.

Sense of place, that is the relationship between people and the Parklands, will be celebrated through design, planning and management. Use of local materials in Parkland infrastructure is encouraged where possible to reinforce the sense of place.

The Parklands will be a safe, inviting place for community members of all abilities, genders, and cultural backgrounds. There will be increased community awareness and stewardship of the parklands.

Future planning will provide viewpoints that allow visitors to appreciate the beauty of both the natural scenic qualities of the area, founded on its topography and geomorphology, and the pastoral scenes developed through more than a century of farming. From the rolling hills and forested areas, riparian and creek views that emphasise the beauty of the original Bunurong landscape to the hedgerows, windbreaks, tree rows and clusters of farm buildings and mature exotic trees of the significantly altered pastoral landscape, visitors will have access to many inspiring vistas throughout the Parklands<sup>14</sup>.

The Cardinia Creek corridor has high archaeological significance, within and adjacent to the Parklands, including dozens of important Bunurong places. Through interpretive signage, ongoing management and programming, these places and their histories will be celebrated and protected for future enjoyment by visitors. Ongoing Bunurong culture will be supported through interpretation of certain Bunurong places of significance, inclusion of possible gathering places, Bunurong art, biocultural practices, and possible joint or actual land management.

The Parklands will apply a consistent approach to materials and design, including signage, wayfinding and marketing that recognises the Parklands as one, while emphasising the unique characteristics of the various spaces within it. This collective approach to identity will support tourism and raise awareness of the Parklands as a regional destination.

Parkland infrastructure, such as visitor nodes, gathering places and programming, will support and encourage community members to engage with one another in protecting, enhancing, and valuing the Parklands - whether through recreation groups, historical groups, volunteer, or environmental organisations.

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<sup>14</sup> Cardinia Shire Council. (2022). Key periods in Cardinia Shire's history. Retrieved January 10, 2022, from Cardinia: [cardinia.vic.gov.au/info/20007/your\\_shire\\_and\\_council/737/key\\_periods\\_in\\_cardinia\\_shires\\_history#section-2-pastoral-era-and-land-settlement--1838--c1870-](https://cardinia.vic.gov.au/info/20007/your_shire_and_council/737/key_periods_in_cardinia_shires_history#section-2-pastoral-era-and-land-settlement--1838--c1870-)

**FUTURE DIRECTION - IDENTITY**  
 The Parklands identifies as Bunurong Country and reflects the diverse landscapes from uplands, urban refuge, wetlands to floodplains. The Parklands celebrates the past, present and future stories of the place and its communities. A strong identity is supported through coordinated use of materials, design, and branding.

**STRATEGIES**

- Aboriginal cultural values to be recognised as a priority
- Enable visitors to learn about Bunurong history, landscape, and ongoing cultural practices
- Provide for scenic views and visual connection to the landscape
- Respect historical and contemporary sites of significance through design, maintenance, and interpretation
- Develop and communicate a cohesive brand for the Parklands
- Use materials and design to complement local character and defining features of the Parklands

<b>IDENTITY OUTCOMES</b>	<b>Healthy Country</b>	<b>Healthy Ecosystem</b>	<b>Healthy People</b>	<b>Resilient Communities</b>	<b>Collaborative Governance</b>
Bunurong values are embedded in Parklands planning	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>
Recognition and celebration of history and culture	<b>x</b>		<b>x</b>		<b>x</b>
Increased community awareness and stewardship of Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>

Figure 9 illustrates key aspects of the Parklands (including the four character zones) that define its identity.

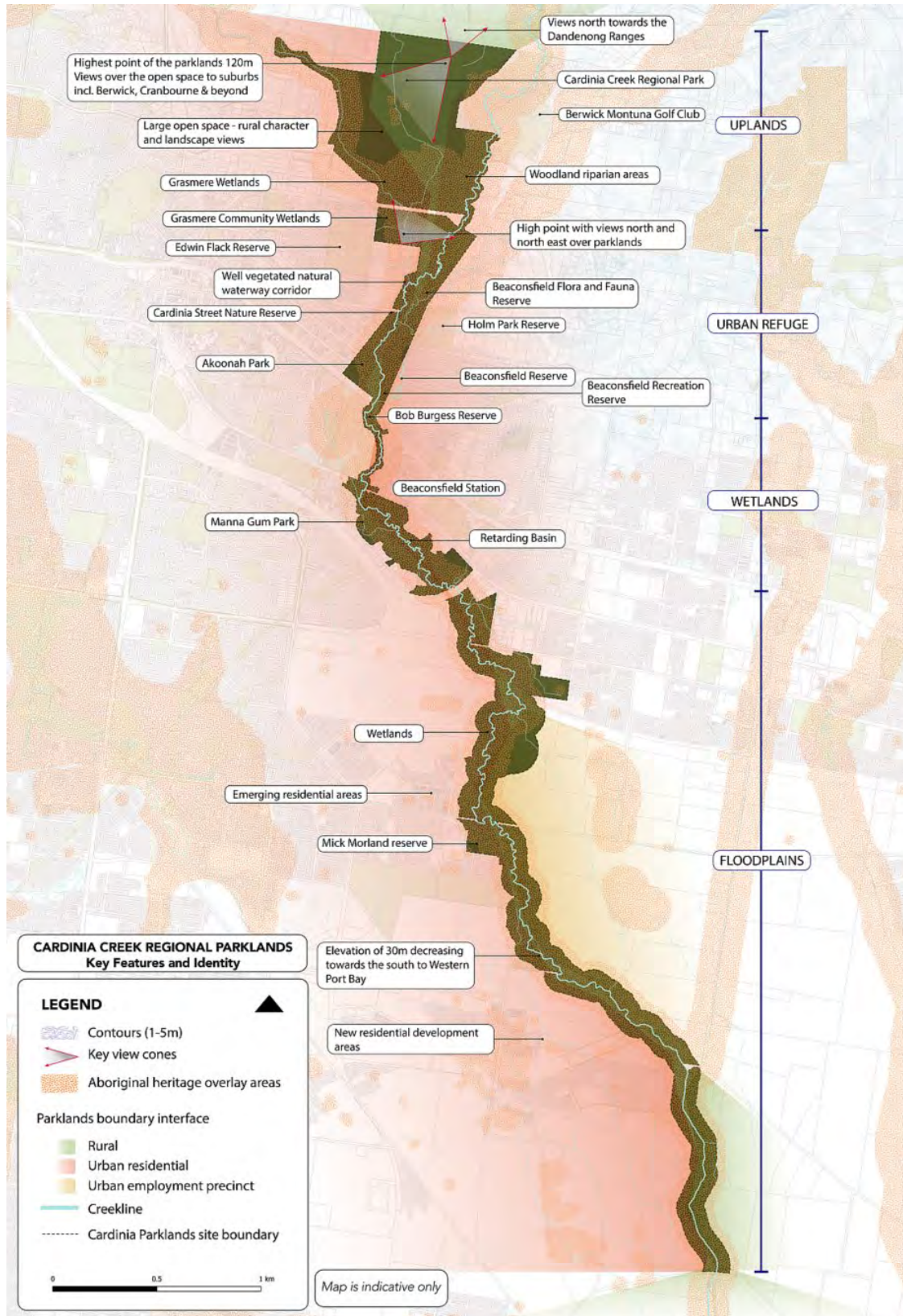


Figure 9. Key features that define the identity of the Parklands

### 3.2 Biodiversity

The Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands encompass a range of habitats and natural environments that support diverse flora and fauna including birds, mammals, amphibians, fish, and crustaceans. This biodiversity is found in both existing public parks and reserves such as the Beaconsfield Flora and Fauna Reserve and across other private and public land. Native vegetation along the river corridor is primarily Swampy Woodland, Riparian Forest and Swampy Riparian Woodland, as well as more open, grassy and wetland vegetation, with smaller areas of other forest and woodland vegetation types. Extensive areas of exotic vegetation are found in the southern half of the Parklands.

In the Cardinia Creek Regional Park (north of Inglis Road), the wide expanse of riparian and floodplain areas offers an opportunity to support biodiversity across a larger area of connected habitat with appropriate revegetation and management. Substantial progress has been made in this area establishing wetlands and revegetation areas, as well as protecting existing habitats. Birdwatchers enjoy winter sightings of the endangered Swift Parrot in the Spotted Gums of Akoonah Park, emphasising the importance of protecting urban bird habitat within the parklands.

In the central and southern half of the parkland, the importance of instream, streamside and floodplain habitats for threatened species such as the Growling Grass Frog, Australian Grayling, and Dwarf Galaxias has been well documented, with the southern section of the Parklands being a conservation area for Growling Grass Frog under the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for Melbourne Growth Corridors. Additional habitat values have also been identified for terrestrial biodiversity, including potential dispersal habitat for the Southern Brown Bandicoot and significant waterbirds.

Engagement with Traditional Owners, public and private land managers and volunteers will be crucial to the protection, connection, and restoration of biodiversity in the Parklands. The contribution and knowledge of local environment groups active along Cardinia Creek, such as Cardinia Catchment Landcare, Friends of Cardinia Creek, Southern Ranges Environment Alliance, Cardinia Environment Coalition, Healesville to Phillip Island Nature Link and the Western Port Biosphere Reserve Foundation is central to the ongoing stewardship of the parklands and beyond. An adaptive management approach and careful planning will enable meaningful connection with nature for visitors while protecting and enhancing the sensitive biodiversity values of the Parklands.

A range of threats to biodiversity need to be managed in the Parklands. These range from urban development interfaces, habitat fragmentation, invasive flora and fauna species, destructive impacts from dogs, cats, and feral animals, changed hydrology and water quality from urbanisation, through to impacts of stock access and climate change. The narrower corridor width and more degraded state of riparian environments and vegetation in the southern portion of the Parklands offers an opportunity for incremental revegetation to avoid worsened erosion and provide improved habitat. Careful planning of stormwater management, low-impact recreational access, revegetation and species management will need to consider a diversity of vegetation and habitat types. Further investigation is needed to better understand how and where to establish biolinks across the landscape.

#### **FUTURE DIRECTION - BIODIVERSITY**

Biodiversity values are protected and enhanced, providing improved habitats and opportunities for park users to engage with the natural environment.

#### **STRATEGIES**

- Establish continuous riparian and biodiversity corridors within and beyond the Parklands
- Care for Bunurong Country to protect and enhance cultural and ecological values
- Protect and enhance high value environmental assets including habitat for Growling Grass Frog, Dwarf Galaxias and significant waterbirds
- Apply adaptive management
- Continue cross-agency pest animal and weed management
- Revegetate for resilience to climate change

- Prevent and manage bushfire at a whole-of-park scale
- Manage appropriate visitor access to conservation areas to provide for nature appreciation activities such as birdwatching
- Partner with volunteers and community groups to support community stewardship

<b>BIODIVERSITY OUTCOMES</b>	<b>Healthy Country</b>	<b>Healthy Ecosystem</b>	<b>Healthy People</b>	<b>Resilient Communities</b>	<b>Collaborative Governance</b>
Community appreciation for ecology and biodiversity	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>	
Achieving obligations for protected and regulated flora and fauna	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>			<b>x</b>
Coordinated environmental management	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>			<b>x</b>
A resilient and connected regional landscape	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>

Figure 10 shows the existing biodiversity values and future management actions in the Parklands.

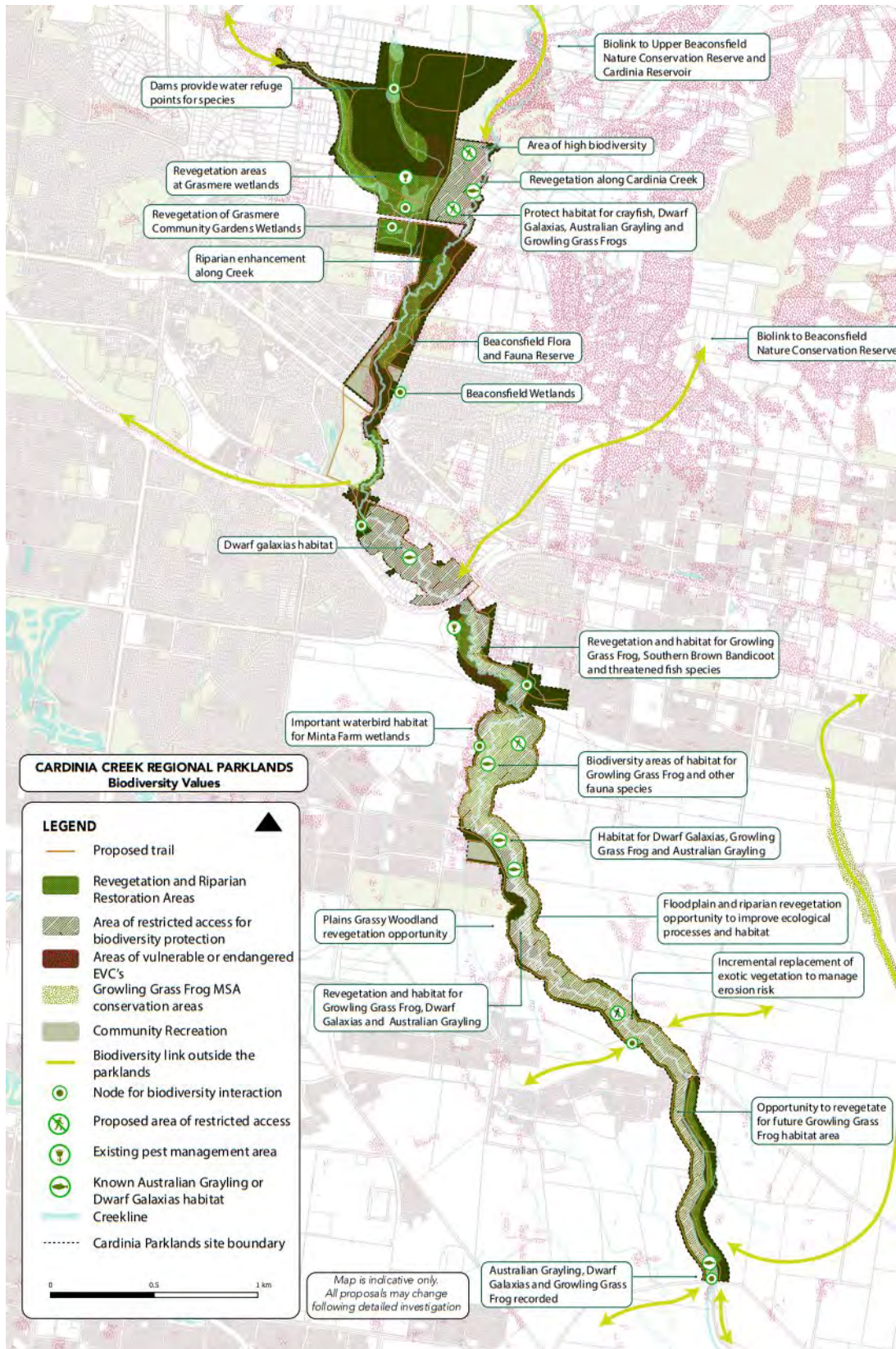


Figure 10. Parkland biodiversity values and future management actions



### 3.3 Access

Providing access to nature for the diverse communities in Cardinia and Casey is an important element in supporting community health and wellbeing.

The Plan sets out public access improvements to help people enjoy more areas of the parklands. At the same time, there will be priority areas of restricted access designed to protect high value biodiversity and protect people from flood risks. The Plan sets out actions that will help people enjoy views and low risk walks around these areas.

A key action of this Plan is to establish a continuous walking and cycling trail along the creek and a network of trails that link to surrounding communities and other regional trail connections. The proposed trail alignment, including additional creek crossings and potential loops, is shown in Figure 11, along with existing parking, entry points and paths. The proposed trail alignment has been sited to reduce visitor conflicts and negative impacts on the significant biodiversity values within the Parklands.

Access varies along the length of the Parklands. Akoonah Park provides parking for cars and larger vehicles such as horse floats and trailers, whilst the Grasmere Creek Picnic Area and Beaconsfield Recreation Reserve both provide visitor car parking. There is additional on-street parking at the northern end of Cardinia Street and informal parking along the Cardinia Street verge. Cardinia Creek Regional Park (north of Inglis Road) provides shared use and walking paths, and there are popular trail loops within the Beaconsfield Flora and Fauna Reserve.

A key barrier for use of Grasmere Creek Picnic Area is the absence of safe walking access from the south. Crossing Inglis Road was clearly identified by park users as the main safety and access concern within the Parklands. Addressing this access issue is a priority to enhance the use of the Parklands. Opportunities for improving access in this area include safer road crossings, expanded walking and cycling trails, consolidated parking, redesigned entry points and better connections to residential communities, Berwick College, Holm Park Recreation Reserve, Beaconsfield Wetlands, Berwick High Street, and the Beaconsfield activity centre.

The central area of the Parklands encompasses a mixture of existing local parks, including Bob Burgess Reserve and Manna Gum Park, and open spaces that are not yet publicly accessible, such as the Cardinia Creek Retarding Basin. The railway and Beaconsfield Station is a significant barrier to movement through the Parklands and future integration with the planned level crossing removal is a crucial opportunity for increasing access for the region. Other opportunities are safe crossing of Princes Highway, with a preference for a pedestrian underpass, and enhancing Bob Burgess Reserve and Beaconsfield Park as an important green space for residents and visitors to Beaconsfield.

The Cardinia Creek Retarding Basin has significant biodiversity values, and is subject to flooding, so new trails must be located outside habitat areas, and managed in a way that does not impact on ecological values; or present a risk to the safety of visitors or the primary function of the retarding basin.

Land south of the Princess Highway Link is mostly currently inaccessible to the public and will be acquired by the government for future public open space and conservation as part of the precinct structure planning process. Future planning for this area will be coordinated with developers and land managers to ensure appropriate pedestrian, cycling and/or equestrian access, parking and trail design as well as linking into the surrounding residential, commercial, and industrial precincts. It is important to consider access through the Parklands in the planning and design of any new road crossings in the southern area that are identified in the Precinct Structure Plans, including Thompsons Road and Grices Road.

An important link will connect the Parklands to the future Clyde Regional Park and Sports Precinct. There are opportunities to connect other proposed regional trails with the Parklands, including the Great Casey Trail, the Royal Botanic Gardens to Cardinia Creek Trail and the Great Southern Rail Trail.

**FUTURE DIRECTION - ACCESS**  
 The Parklands invite enjoyment of open space through visitor-friendly access into and within the Parklands that is safe and welcoming for all residents and visitors. The Parklands are connected by safe crossings and continuous trails and link to other key destinations and trails.

**STRATEGIES**

- Manage and design access to reduce conflicts and protect cultural and biodiversity values
- Increase opportunities for the public to access and enjoy the Parklands by providing safe creek and road crossings, defined entry points, parking, trails, and paths
- Connect the Parklands to local and regional destinations
- Create a regional shared use trail
- Provide equity of access to people of all abilities. Apply universal design principles to maximise user experience, safety, and comfort

<b>ACCESS OUTCOMES</b>	<b>Healthy Country</b>	<b>Healthy Ecosystem</b>	<b>Healthy People</b>	<b>Resilient Communities</b>	<b>Collaborative Governance</b>
Fair and equitable access that protects environmental assets	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>		<b>x</b>
Safe access to and through the Parklands	<b>x</b>		<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>
Surrounding communities and regional visitors can access the Parklands	<b>x</b>		<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>

Figure 11 shows the current and future access into and through the Parklands.

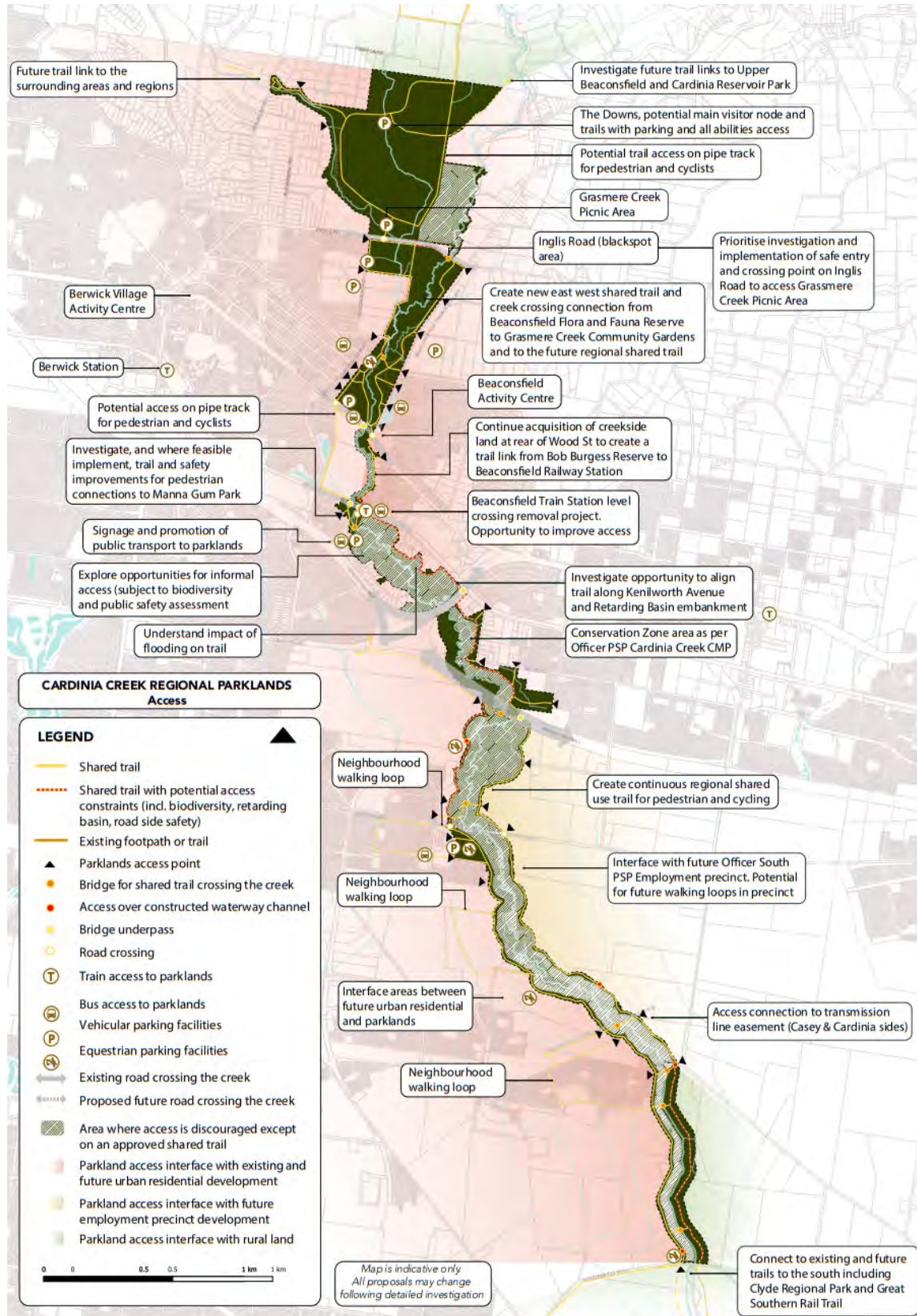


Figure 11. Existing trails and potential future access

### 3.4 Water

The character of the Parklands is interlinked with Cardinia Creek and its floodplain, which link the Dandenong Ranges with the Ramsar-listed Western Port and Yaringa Marine National Park. Before European settlement, the creek was part of the extensive Koo-Wee-Rup swamp, which was drained to allow agricultural development in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. These farmlands are now being developed into urban settlements. Despite these impacts the creek retains habitat for native fauna such as Australian Grayling, Dwarf Galaxia, Growling Grass Frogs, and a variety of important native birds (see biodiversity section for more details on the biodiversity value of the Parklands). Waterbodies provide important refuge for species during dry spells, which will increase as the climate changes.

Although the creek and its tributaries have been altered substantially, they retain a natural appearance in many locations, which provides substantial amenity to the community in locations where they can view or access the waterway. There is a significant opportunity to increase the connection of the community with the waterway and wetlands in the Parklands.

The drainage of the swamp and the clearing of native vegetation from the banks of Cardinia Creek and its catchment have triggered widespread erosion in the creek, which has made the channel deeper and wider (a process known as incision) particularly in the southern area of the Parklands. The erosion threatens instream and streamside vegetation and habitat and left unaddressed, will impact parkland areas and infrastructure including bridges, paths and other park infrastructure located close to the creek. A large erosion control structure (known as the 'drop structure') has reduced creek erosion in the northern area of the Parklands.

The continued management of vegetation and maintenance of existing instream structures is required to ensure Cardinia Creek is a stable, healthy waterway and to enhance the amenity of the Parklands.

The BLCAC would like narrow areas of the parkland corridor to be widened wherever possible enable the creek to meander as naturally as possible. The Bunurong Cultural Values Mapping study explains 'There has been and will be more destruction of Bunurong Country - there are not many natural waterways left now, destroyed mother earth has had enough.' Elders feel 'they have taken away the nature flow - like blood in our veins.'

Urban development of the areas upstream and adjacent to Cardinia Creek has increased erosion and reduced water quality in the creek. As stormwater flows into the creek during rainfall events, sediment and nutrients from urban areas are carried to the waterway. Stormwater rapidly flows to the creek, causing localised flooding and increased flooding in the creek itself. There are opportunities to use areas of open space to create basins and wetlands that will reduce flooding and stormwater pollution and help irrigate green spaces. These will be designed to provide ecological and amenity benefit to the Parklands.

**FUTURE DIRECTION - WATER**

The role of the Parklands as a connected floodplain and creek system is maintained to support the health of Cardinia Creek and floodplain environment. Water is managed to reduce flooding, supply biodiversity habitat wetlands, support park maintenance, cooling, and greening.

**STRATEGIES**

- Manage Cardinia Creek to improve river health and support Parkland amenity
- Expand capacity of the Parklands to:
  - Treat urban stormwater runoff and reduce erosion impacts and localised flooding
  - Harvest stormwater for irrigation and for biodiversity habitat wetland supply needs
- Connect, create, and reshape wetlands for habitat protection and recreation
- Provide access for park users to enjoy and engage with water
- Investigate and manage any flooding impacts from recreational and access infrastructure particularly at Cardinia Creek Retarding Basin

<b>WATER OUTCOMES</b>	<b>Healthy Country</b>	<b>Healthy Ecosystem</b>	<b>Healthy People</b>	<b>Resilient Communities</b>	<b>Collaborative Governance</b>
Parklands is managed as a floodplain	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>			<b>x</b>
A healthy Cardinia Creek	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>		<b>x</b>	
Increased community appreciation for water	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>		

Figure 12 shows the current and future water management in the Parklands.

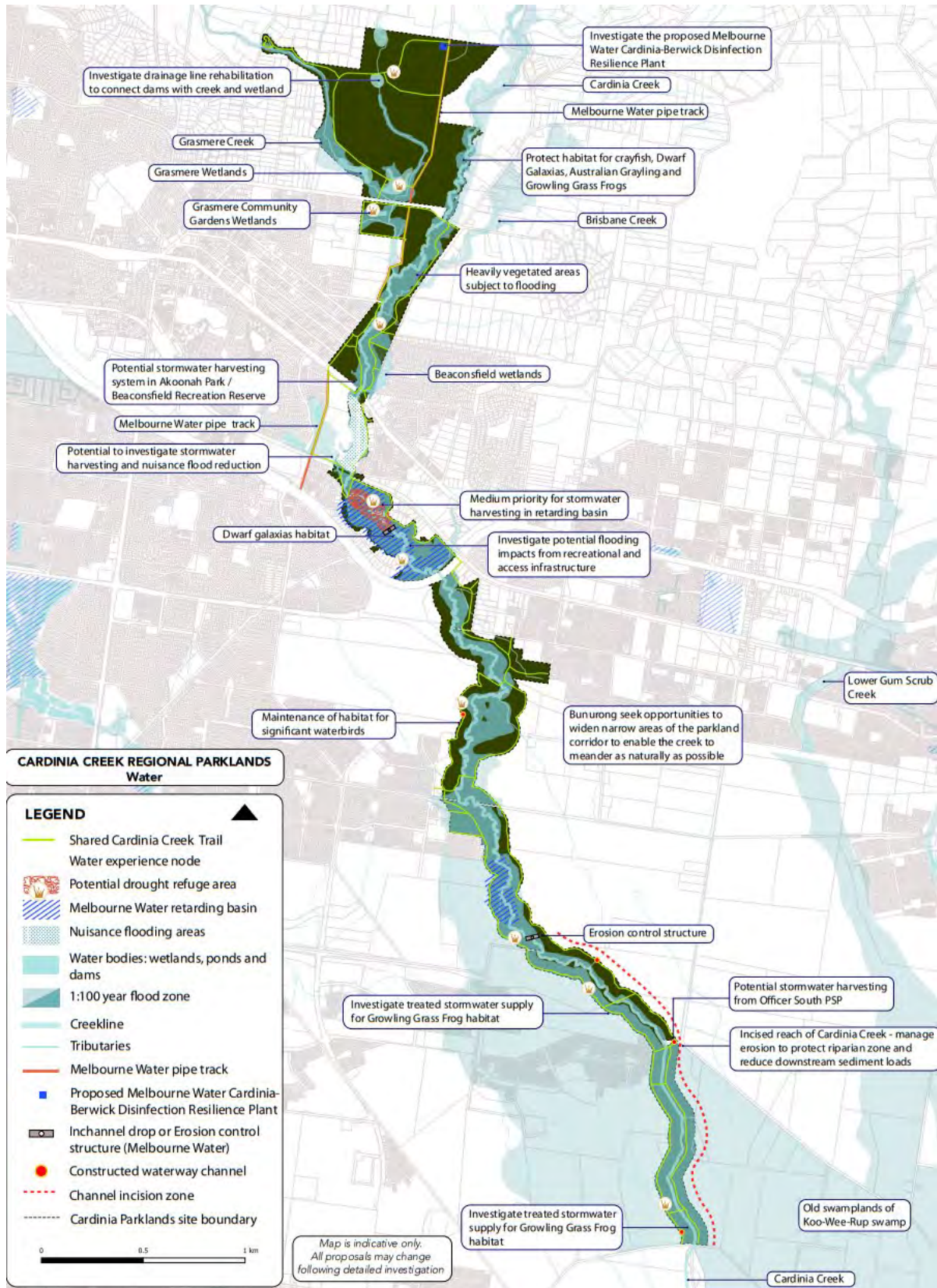


Figure 12. Existing water-related values and future management actions

### 3.5 Experience

Existing experiences found within the Parklands focus primarily on nature-based recreation, appreciating nature, formal recreation and sports, and social interaction and community events.

As a regional open space, the Parklands must support a wide range of activities with a focus on providing immersive experiences in nature and opportunities to be active in nature. The creek corridor and its large, open spaces present substantial opportunities to connect people with the natural environment through learning and education, volunteering, passive sensory experiences, interaction with wildlife and physical activity. There are significant opportunities for the community to benefit from walking, cycling, volunteering, and playing in a natural environment.

Future planning for the Parklands has responded to the overwhelming interest from the community for opportunities to walk, experience nature and meet with friends and family by:

- Maximising opportunities for education and interpretation of the Bunurong values in the Parklands through the commissioning of Bunurong artwork, interpretive signage, and cultural awareness posters
- Creating opportunities for Bunurong people to apply cultural practices and connections within the Parklands
- Expanding the visitor experience in the existing Regional Park by planning for:
  - A new visitor node north of Inglis Road at the area known as The Downs
  - Grasmere Community Gardens Wetlands and loop path
  - Investigate informal horse ride out facility along northern park boundary whilst supporting ecological and cultural values
- Celebrating the significant value of Akoonah Park, which provides a unique range of services to the community
- Expanding visitor opportunities within the Cardinia Creek Retarding Basin
- Establishing new visitor nodes at Rix Road Reserve and Bob Burgess Reserve, where there is an opportunity to activate the space by integrating commercial offerings and improving access
- Creating the continuous regional shared trail for walking and cycling and growing the path networks to support journeys of different lengths and difficulties, and providing a variety of experiences. Support canopy opportunities along walking trails for shade and nature connection.
- Investigating equestrian trails along the east and west side of the southern area of Parklands
- Investigating equestrian trails in the north that link to potential new ride-out facility
- Creating experiential learning opportunities including points of interest and educational signage along the regional trail, education spaces for larger school and community groups and investigate opportunities to integrate QR codes and other digital engagement methods
- Delivering visitor facilities to support a wide variety of appropriate facilities that cater to community members of all abilities, genders, and cultural backgrounds, including seating, water fountains, toilets, areas for play, and shade, as well as signage, wayfinding, and accessible, safe connections to surrounding open spaces

The Plan recognises the important existing commercial and community activities occurring within the Parklands, such as the annual agricultural show, trailer camping, and markets at Akoonah Park, and well-used and loved community sports and recreation facilities. In future, the Parklands will support this through concentrating commercial and larger social gatherings in community recreation nodes.

**FUTURE DIRECTION - EXPERIENCE**

The Parklands attracts visitors from the local and broader regional catchment, with spaces that support individual and collective enjoyment of nature-based recreation. Community facilities and infrastructure are provided at different scales to respond to a diversity of cultural and social needs.

**STRATEGIES**

- Enable experiences across the Parklands are safe, diverse and inclusive
- Design loops and nature trails with clear start and end points for visitors
- Establish a connected horse-riding trail
- Define nodes for individual and collective nature-based recreational, educational and tourism activities.
- Strengthen connections to adjacent active open spaces, parks with play spaces and activity centres
- Increase tree canopy, where appropriate, along trails and at nodes to provide shade and promote walking and cycling
- Deliver and support programs and activation to attract residents, workers, and visitors

<b>EXPERIENCE OUTCOMES</b>	<b>Healthy Country</b>	<b>Healthy Ecosystem</b>	<b>Healthy People</b>	<b>Resilient Communities</b>	<b>Collaborative Governance</b>
Park visitors engage in a diversity of activities	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
Facilities, including trails, shelters, and facilities, support informal nature-based recreation	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
Community connections, volunteering and social interaction are supported	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>

Figure 13 shows existing and future experiences and supporting infrastructure in the Parklands. Figure 14 shows the existing tree canopy cover throughout the Parklands.



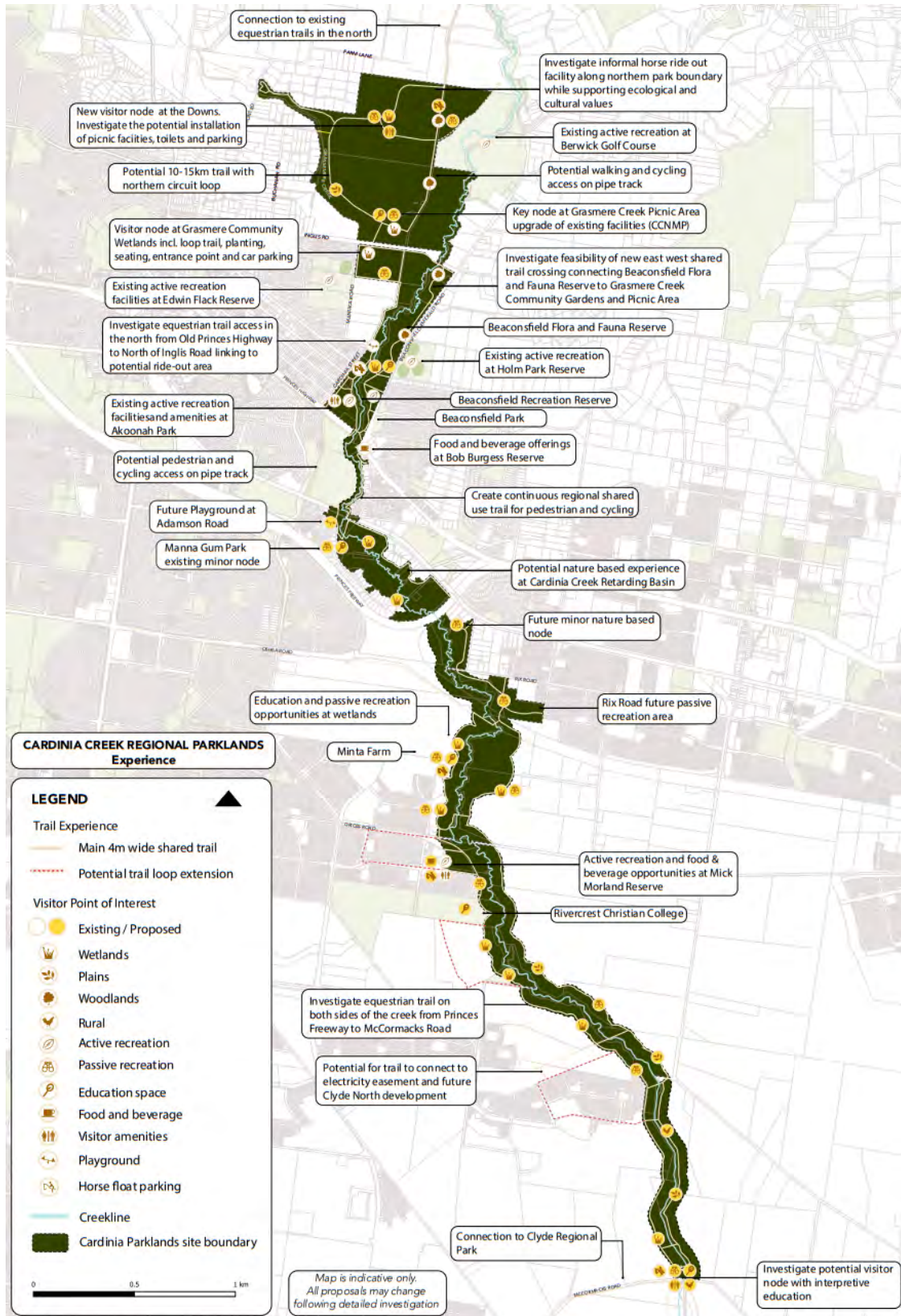
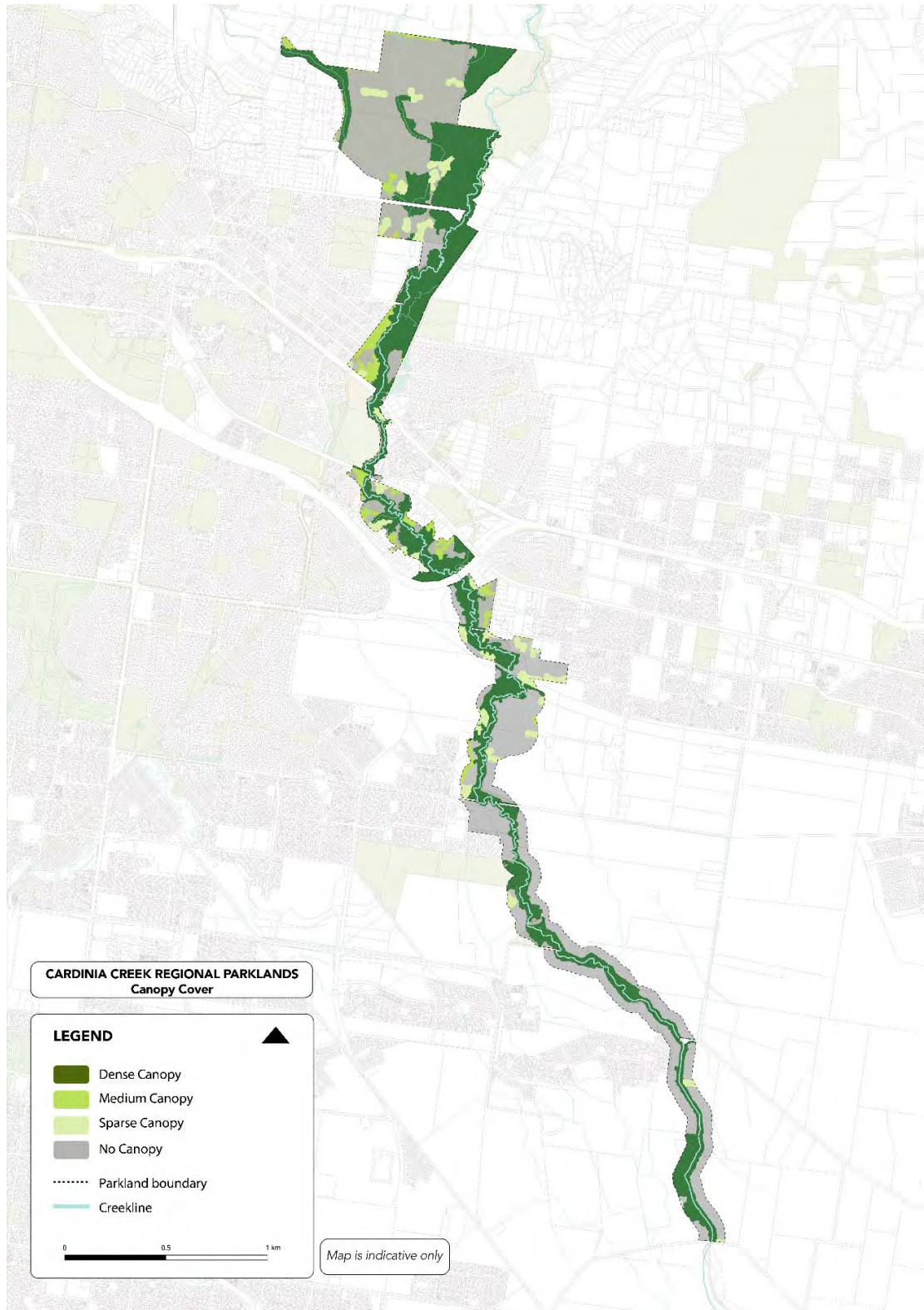


Figure 13. Existing and future experiences and activities



**Figure 14. Approximately 50% of Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands has canopy cover.**  
Data from Vicmap Vegetation - Tree Density data from 2021  
(<https://www.land.vic.gov.au/maps-and-spatial/spatial-data/vicmap-catalogue/vicmap-vegetation>)

## 4 Governance and management zones

### 4.1 Governance

Collaborative governance is one of the four core outcomes of the Plan. It means that the agencies and land managers will work together on the planning and management of the Parklands through clarifying the collective and individual roles of public landowners and managers and encouraging collaboration, integration and innovative partnerships.

Having participated and collaborated on the development of the Plan all land managers have committed to its vision and themes. With this shared vision, land managers will continue to manage and make decisions about their own land and work with others on joint outcomes.

The land managers are Parkland Partners and will continue to meet as a Parkland Partnership Group to deliver the Plan, deliver joint projects, work through shared issues, apply adaptive management, guide and monitor parkland expansion, communications and connections, and provide consistent input for adjacent development.

The Parkland Partners include Parks Victoria, Melbourne Water, City of Casey, Cardinia Shire Council, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, and Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation.

Committees of Management are important Parkland Partners and due to their voluntary nature are classified as Supporting Partners to enable their contribution to best support their available capacity to deal with wider parklands issues. Akoonah Park and Beaconsfield Recreation Reserve are current Committees of Management within the Parklands.

It is acknowledged that Parkland Partners that do not have base funding. The Open Space for Everyone Strategy recognises the need to develop funding models to ensure meaningful partnerships with Traditional Owners to achieve Caring for Country, and to explore new funding models to better support integrated management models.

### 4.2 Management zones

The management zones in the Parklands are a tool for the land management partners to achieve the collaborative governance outcome. Management zones reinforce the identity and role of areas in the Parklands. They are a decision-making tool to help reach consensus and manage potential conflicts between the Partnership Group, including:

- Priorities for use and management of land
- Appropriate future land managers
- Reservation purpose and regulations

The Parklands extent may vary in response to future detailed site specific analysis. Any parkland boundary change will only be supported if the alternative boundary ensures biodiversity, cultural and visitor access values remain protected and is generally in accordance with the endorsed Precinct Structure Plans (PSP). The pending Officer South Employment PSP will consider the visions and objectives of this Plan (and the Plan may need to be updated following the PSP completion).

The management zones for Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands are shown in Figure 15 and described below.

Table 1 Management zone descriptions

Zone	Description
<b>Conservation</b>	Primarily for the protection, maintenance, and enhancement of significant environmental and cultural values, while promoting the enjoyment of these areas to appreciate, learn from and experience nature.
<b>Conservation and Recreation</b>	Balancing the protection, maintenance, and enhancement of environmental and cultural values while enabling nature based recreation.  Recreation activities in this zone includes passive activities such as picnicking and scenic viewing, and 'active in nature' activities such as walking, cycling and children's play.
<b>Community Recreation</b>	Provision of a wide range of structured recreation and sport opportunities and events that cater to community and group activities.
<b>Special Use Zone 1 - Retarding Basin</b>	An area of restricted access focusing on improved water/flood management and protection of biodiversity values. Nature-based recreation supported only where public safety and primary purpose of the Retarding Basin to reduce downstream flood risk is not compromised.
<b>Special Use Zone 2 - School</b>	An area of restricted access that supports educational activities while maintaining cultural and biodiversity values of the parklands. Trail access supported where student and public safety is not compromised.
<b>Overlays</b>	Overlays provide additional information on specific attributes of the land that may constrain or impact future planning in the nominated area. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Pipetrack</b> – Areas covered by this overlay must maintain and protect water supply for the region</li> <li>• <b>Floodplain</b> – Areas covered by this overlay must facilitate and respond to the function of the channel and floodplain</li> </ul>

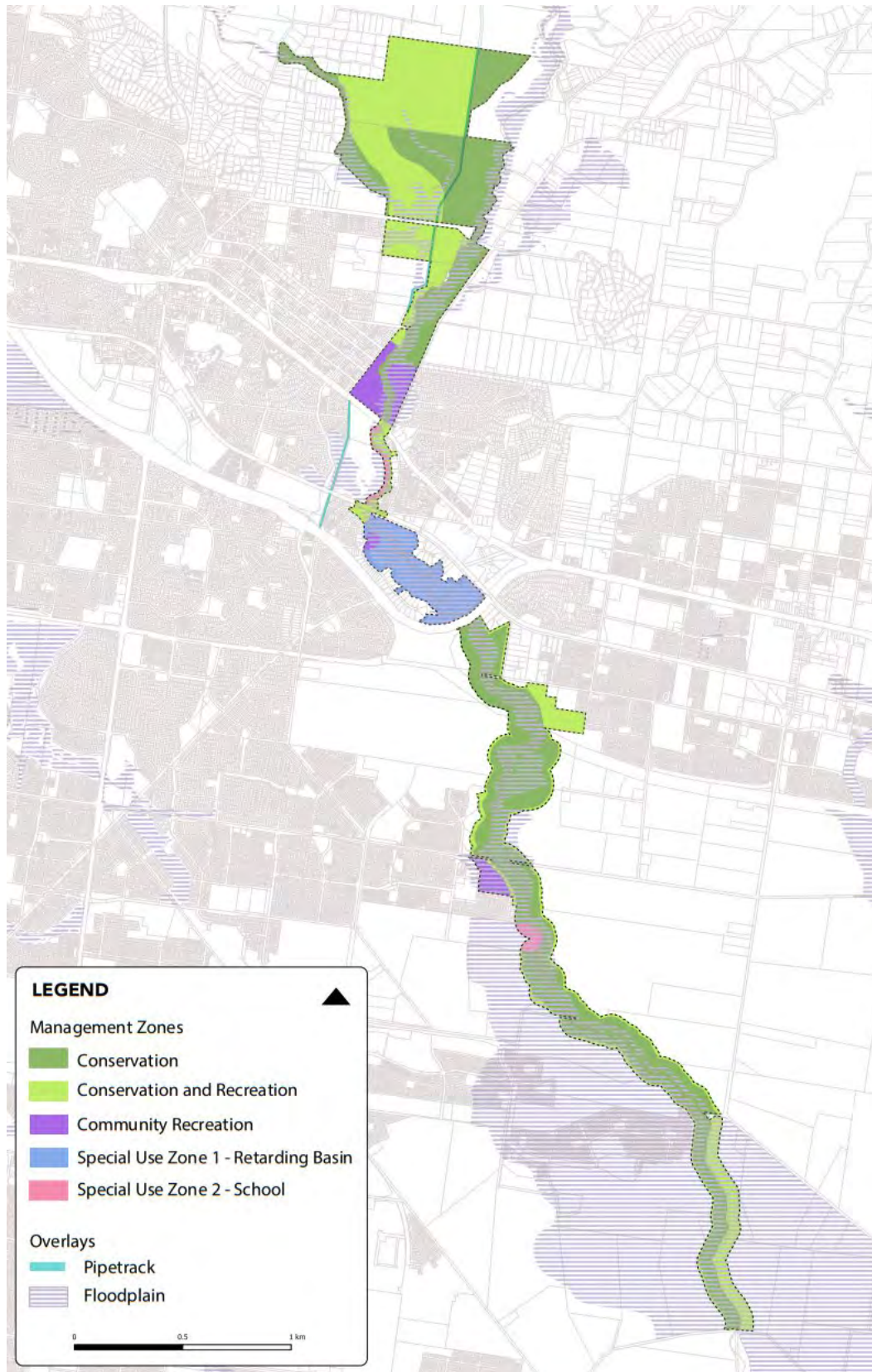


Figure 15. Parkland Management Zones

## 5 Implementation

The actions in the Plan have been developed by the Parkland Partners and reflect the priorities and aspirations of the land managers.

Action	Theme
1. Protect and enhance Bunurong cultural values as a priority. Celebrate and share cultural connections through interpretation and applying biocultural knowledge, artwork by Bunurong artists and potential teaching and gathering places for the Bunurong community.	Identity
2. Ensure future development or easements within and adjacent to the Parklands do not impact on cultural and environmental values, park views, and experiences. Gradually phase out agricultural land uses to enable cultural, environment and parkland experience outcomes.	Identity
3. Develop a branding strategy for the Parklands that supports sense of place, cultural values, wayfinding and increased community awareness and stewardship of the Parklands. Review the node names to help visitors easily identify different visitor areas within the Parklands. Request Bunurong names as a priority.	Identity
4. Protect, maintain and enhance biodiversity values. Undertake weed and pest species management and focused ecological restoration works throughout Parklands. Plant Bunurong species of significance, and where possible, undertake direct ecological land management by Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation for potential areas such as north of Inglis Road.  Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation, 2022, Bunurong Cultural Values Mapping: Cardinia Creek (Table 5)	Biodiversity
5. Implement habitat obligations to protect nationally-significant species such as Growling Grass Frog as per the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for Melbourne's Growth Corridors 2013, Officer and Clyde North PSP Conservation Management Plans, and Growling Grass Frog Masterplan 2017	Biodiversity
6. Implement adaptive management strategies for species and ecosystems to help respond to the identified threats and impacts of climate change and extreme events.	Biodiversity
7. Progressively implement the regional shared use walking and cycling trail and other new trails to provide visitor access and enjoyment, safety, shade while protecting natural and cultural values. Priorities for construction of walking and cycling paths include along and adjacent to the Melbourne Water Pipetrack, at the rear of Woods St properties, and in new development areas. All trail construction is dependent on detailed assessment and design to ensure feasibility.	Access
8. Progressively resolve pinch points that limit safe and comfortable walking and cycling access. This includes addressing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- priority safety issues at Inglis Road <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a new east west shared trail and creek crossing connection from Beaconsfield Flora and Fauna Reserve to Grasmere Creek Community Gardens</li> <li>- a safe north south crossing over Inglis Rd from Grasmere Creek Community Gardens to Grasmere Creek Picnic Area</li> </ul> </li> <li>- safety and access improvements around Manna Gum Park and Beaconsfield Railway Station. Maximise opportunities arising from the Beaconsfield Level Crossing Removal.</li> </ul>	Access
9. Investigate and implement opportunities to improve access <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• with other open spaces nearby to the Parklands including Clyde Regional Park, Cardinia Reservoir Park, Holm Park, transmission line easement</li> <li>• with regional trails such as the Great Southern Trail</li> </ul>	Access

10. Celebrate the story of the creek and floodplains in parkland planning through interpretive design and signage installation. Share the role of Cardinia Creek as an important travel corridor for the Bunurong People.	Water
11. Advocate for greater stormwater protection outside of the Parklands to prevent further loss of parkland area to creek erosion, and widening of narrow areas of the Parkland corridor to enable the creek to meander as naturally as possible. Minimise stormwater pollution to the creek and Westernport and undertake protection and preservation works to support threatened species in Cardinia Creek.	Water
12. Investigate integrating constructed wetlands into the Parklands to provide amenity value, habitat and stormwater pollutant removal, while ensuring access is not compromised. Where feasible, undertake design and construction.	Water
13. Develop and expand regional park-scale visitor experience at Cardinia Creek Regional Park north and south of Inglis Road through the creation of two new visitor nodes to enable greater accessibility, longer stays and opportunities for the community to actively connect with and appreciate natural and cultural values. Planning for the regional park will also apply landscaping to support climate resilience and biodiversity.	Experience
14. Develop and expand visitor facilities at key nodes. Include priority enhancements for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• active sporting facilities at Beaconsfield Recreation Reserve</li> <li>• visitor experience at Beaconsfield Park</li> <li>• visitor experience at Mick Morland Reserve</li> </ul>	Experience
15. Investigate and implement opportunities to integrate open space with adjacent commercial uses by enhancing visitor experience at Bob Burgess Reserve	Experience
16. Progressively implement viewing areas to support visitor enjoyment, safety and the protection of natural and cultural values. Construct viewpoint at Cardinia Creek Regional Park south of Inglis Rd.	Experience
17. Contribute to a quality visitor experience by highlighting unique and precious natural and cultural features. Implement integrated and place specific interpretative and wayfinding signage throughout the Parklands. Incorporate new node names and branding arising from Action 3.	Experience
18. Progressively implement equestrian infrastructure including: investigate connecting trails and provision of a horse ride out area in the northern Parklands; coordinate project management of risk assessments, trail connections, design, approvals and construction in the southern Parklands.	Experience
19. Support active volunteer groups and community programs working to support shared ecological, cultural and community wellbeing outcomes	Experience
20. Establish the Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands Partnership Group as an ongoing collaboration to be reviewed every three years	Governance
21. Progressively secure the transfer of private land within the Parklands boundary to public ownership including land within the Biodiversity Conservation Area	Governance

## **Appendices**



## Appendix 1 Future Directions Plan method

The Future Directions Plan has been developed by the Mosaic Insights and REALMstudios team on behalf of the Parklands Partnership Group, whose members are:

- Parks Victoria
- City of Casey
- Cardinia Shire Council
- Melbourne Water
- Bunurong Land Council
- Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning

Supporting Partners are

- Akoonah Park Committee of Management
- Beaconsfield Recreation Reserve Committee of Management

The draft Plan was developed with significant input from the Project Partners at each stage. Workshops and meetings with the Partners, community groups, developers and other interested parties provided valuable insights into the priorities, challenges and opportunities for the Plan.

The community were engaged through face-to-face interviews and online surveys. The findings of the community consultation are summarised in the Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands Plan Refresh: Engagement Summary Report (2022).

An overview of key phases is provided below.

Phase	Overview
Phase 1. Project planning	The first phase of the project focussed ensuring key stakeholders were identified and confirming a roadmap for delivering the Plan.
Phase 2. Background review and opportunities analysis	In this phase, all previous work on the project area (including the 2002 Future Directions Plan) was reviewed. Information was gathered from the Project Partners and a range of other sources and used to create maps that captured the current ecological, cultural and social conditions of the Parklands and its surrounds.  The Partners were closely involved in confirming the themes and priorities for the Parklands to inform community engagement.
Phase 3. Community engagement Nov 2021	In this phase, the community was consulted on the Plan through a mixture of online surveys, information sessions and face-to-face intercept surveys. The primary purpose of this round of engagement was to generate interest and collect ideas from the community that could be included in the Plan.
Phase 4. Future Directions Plan - drafting and consultation	Bunurong Cultural Values Study for Cardinia Creek was received and informed the key direction of the Draft Plan. Drawing on Phase 3 feedback from community and stakeholders, the Plan was developed. The Draft Future Directions Plan was released, and stakeholder and community feedback gathered in May-June 2022.
Phase 5 Finalising Future Direction Plan	Adapted Future Directions Plan to account for stakeholder and community feedback. All Partners endorse their role in the Plan, and the Parkland Partnership Group endorses the Final Plan.

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## Appendix 2 Strategic document review

Existing strategies, plans and policy commitments of Federal, State and Local Government and Parklands Partners were reviewed to inform parklands planning.

The background review was critical in understanding the opportunities and constraints for parkland planning, and directly informed the Plan. A list of the documents is provided below.

Organisation	Document
Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation	Bunurong Cultural Values Mapping: Cardinia Creek 2022
Parks Victoria	Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands Future Directions Plan 2002
	Managing Country Together Framework 2019
	Parks Victoria Corporate Plan 2020-24
	Cardinia Creek North Parklands Masterplan
	Grassmere Wetlands Community Gardens Concept Plan
	Visitor Experience Framework
	Cardinia Creek Riparian Vegetation Mapping 2012
	Healthy Parks Healthy People Framework 2020
	Shaping Our Future' - Parks Victoria - Strategic Plan
	Volunteering in parks - Vision for the future
	Historic Places Strategic Framework and Action Plan 2019-2022
	Draft Land Management Strategy 2021
	South East Conservation Action Plan (Draft)
	City of Casey
City of Casey Long-term Community Vision 2031	
City of Casey Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2021	
City of Casey Planning Scheme	
City of Casey Open Space Strategy 2015	
City of Casey Sport and Physical Activity Strategy 2021 - 2025	
Casey Cardinia Visitation Strategy 2017 - 2020	
Casey Biodiversity Strategy	
Casey's Southern Urban Rural Interface Design Guide (Nov 2020)	
Integrated Water Management Plan 2011/12	
Leisure Facilities Development Plan Policy 2014	
Western Port Green Wedge Management Plan (April 2019)	
Walk and Ride in Casey Strategy 2019-2041	
City of Casey Sport Cycling Strategy 2014	
City of Casey Equestrian Strategy 2011	

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Cardinia Shire Council	Cardinia Shire Council - Council Plan 2021
	Community Vision 2040
	Cardinia Shire's Liveability Plan 2017-29
	Cardinia Planning Scheme
	Cardinia Open Space Strategy
	Cardinia Biolink Plan 2023-33
	Cardinia Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2019
	Cardinia Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2022-33
	Cardinia Shire Council Pedestrian and Bicycle Strategy 2017
	Cardinia Shire Council Equestrian Strategy 2014
	Cardinia Shire Council Integrated Water Management Plan 2015-25
	Cardinia Play Space Strategy 2014
	Cardinia Weed Management Strategy 2019-29
Melbourne Water	Healthy Waterways Strategy (2018-2028)
	Sites of Biodiversity Significance Management Plan for Cardinia Creek Retarding Basin
Victoria Planning Authority	Cardinia Creek South Precinct Structure Plan 2018
	Officer Precinct Structure Plan (amended November 2019)
	Minta Farm Precinct Structure Plan 2018 (amended April 2021)
	Thompson Road Precinct Structure Plan 2014
	Officer PSP Cardinia Creek: Conservation Management Plan 2011 Ecology Australia - Prepared for Growth Areas Authority
	Clyde North Precinct Structure Plan 2011
	Clyde North PSP Cardinia Ck: Threatened Fauna Conservation Management Plan 2011 Ecology Australia - Prepared for Growth Areas Authority
DELWP	Open Space for Everyone: Open Space Strategy for Metropolitan Melbourne (2021)
	Protecting Victoria's Environment - Biodiversity 2037
	Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for Melbourne's Growth Corridors (2013)
	Growling Grass Frog Masterplan for Melbourne's Growth Corridors 2017
	Greater Melbourne Regional Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2021



# Engaging on the Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands Draft Future Directions Plan

## Consultation Summary Report

July 2022

Prepared by Conversation Co

*Conversation Co.*

For the Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands Partnership Group



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# Acknowledgement of Country

The Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands are located on the traditional lands of the Bunurong people. We pay respects to their Elders past and present. We acknowledge the deep spiritual connection to the Country held by traditional custodians and support this in ongoing parkland planning.

# 1. Engagement Overview

The Draft Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands Future Directions Plan was released in May 2022. Community and stakeholders were able to review the Plan from 25 May to 23 June 2022, and provide their feedback. This document is a summary of the feedback received as part of the consultation on the Draft Plan.

A range of methods and tools were used to consult with the community and stakeholders, including:

- An online survey via the State Government's Engage Victoria website, which received 35 responses
- An evening online community information session on 7 June 2022 which was attended by seven people, with an additional five people from the project working group
- Three in-park drop in events were held on Sunday 19 June at Manna Gum Park, Akoonah Park, and Cardinia Creek Regional Park
- Letters were sent to all directly affected landowners in May 2022 and October 2021 and online meetings held with 19 landowners that responded
- Submissions were invited from the public.

**The majority of respondents were either very satisfied or satisfied with the commitments outlined in the Draft Plan. See a summary in Sections 2 and 3 of this document.**

A summary of the feedback received during the consultation period includes:

- Support for the environmental and cultural benefits that the Draft Plan will provide
- Requests for consideration for wildlife and protection of native flora and fauna
- Support for off-lead dog areas in places that limit damage to natural areas
- Improvements to pedestrian access and safety, in particular at Inglis Road
- Desire for more trails and greater connection of trails in different areas of parklands
- Desire for the provision of wayfinding and interpretive signage
- Desire for more activities such as events, sound stage, sports activities & horse trails
- Provision of amenities and seating
- Seeking more acknowledgement of community groups

## 2. Online Survey and Submissions

The online survey was open to the community from 25 May to 23 June 2022 and received 35 responses.

Of the 35 respondents that provided their demographic information, there were:

- 15 males, 14 females, one non-binary and one respondent preferring not to say
- The most widely represented age groups were 36 - 45 followed by 56 - 65 year olds
- One person identified as a person with disability
- Five people identified as a person with a culturally or linguistically diverse background
- 84% of survey participants travel either less than 5km or between 6 - 10km to reach these open spaces
- The most common modes of transportation to the open spaces included in the Draft Plan were walking (43%) and driving (39%)

The results of the online survey revealed the following support for the commitments outlined in the Draft Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands Future Directions Plan

- 62.5% of people were either very satisfied or satisfied with the Draft Vision
- 69% people were either very satisfied or satisfied that the commitments in the Draft Plan will help visitors appreciate the importance of Bunurong values and principles
- 75% people were either very satisfied or satisfied with the commitment to protecting biodiversity in the Parklands
- 87% people were either very supportive or supportive of the commitments for shorter walking loops within the Parklands
- 94% of survey participants were either very supportive or supportive of commitments for walking and cycling trails that connect the different areas of the Parklands
- 84% of survey participants were either very supportive or supportive of the commitments for connecting the trail to the regional cycling network.
- Three respondents were 'not satisfied'. One because they sought stronger commitments to biodiversity, and because they sought stronger commitments to increased sporting facilities, and one for unclear reasons.

*A range of feedback received via the online survey included:*

**Improving pedestrian access and increased trails**

“Urgent attention must be given to vastly improving public safety at the eastern end of Inglis Road. This area also has very poor and very dangerous trail connectivity. There is a constant significant risk of serious injury being caused to Park walkers, joggers and cyclists. They have no choice but to move themselves onto the roadway of Inglis Road itself whenever traversing the Cardinia Creek bridges.”

“A new footpath along Inglis Road is urgently required from Beaconsfield Emerald Road to the Cardinia Creek Regional Park (north of Inglis Road).”

“Plan should focus on building multiple cycling and running/walking trails.”

“Please don't make the trails concrete monsters! Make them natural wood chips or sand/gravel so that they fit with the natural environment.”

**Biodiversity and protection of flora and fauna**

“Using this project to enhance the diversity of both animals and vegetation along the creek is a high factor for me. Along with the connection to other trails in the network so users can explore for long distances.”

“Widen the corridor of parkland.”

“I'm concerned about the mob of kangaroos that live at the corner of Manuka Road and Inglis Road. I want to ensure they do not lose their home/habitat.”

**Visitor activities**

“Activities to do, puzzles, nice seatings and shelters, a metal fence or wall where people can place decor like padlocks, memories, vine, plants, stones.”

“Heavy protected artwork...that also connects to their cultures etc.”

“Equestrian trails that are relatively well sign posted, quite a few were closed off by locked steel gates, quite misleading as it's impossible to go through.”

“Keen to have some form of outdoor stage in Bob Burgess Reserve for the Carols and other music/performance arts events”

**Provision of amenities and open space**

“There must be public toilets in these parks... The elderly and kids cannot enjoy the parks as they cannot access a toilet.”

“It would be great to increase the planned area, more space would be great.”



“That new trees and greenage will be planted and in larger northern areas open meadows and nice seating for warm summers.”

**Improved linkages and signage**

“Definitely engage people from the cycling and trail building community to help and mark trail routes to expand the cycling network.”

“Imagine having the sporting facilities linked with the Bunurong people and then use that link to educate the local people and kids, it would have been amazing.”

“Lots of signs that lead to toilets and cut off areas to protect kangaroo, reptile and amphibian species.”

**Improved recognition of community groups and volunteers**

“There doesn't seem to be any reference to local environment groups who are active along the creek. Can I suggest you consult with me to ensure groups such as Cardinia Catchment Landcare, Southern Ranges Environment Alliance, Friends of Cardinia Creek, Cardinia Environment Coalition, Healesville to Phillip Island Nature Link and the Western Port Biosphere Reserve Foundation.”

“Additional financial support to the Friends Groups along eh Parkland is also very important. The groups such as the Friends of Cardinia Creek are amazing and do so much to preserve and maintain, particularly the Beaconsfield Flora Fauna Reserve.”

**General reflections on the Draft Plan**

“A very detailed document that seems to have taken into account the previous feedback on the area. I look forward to seeing this project develop.”

“It would be great if an indicative timeline could be provided which sets out the order of priorities for the implementation of the planned works.”

## 2.1 Submissions Received

A total of six submissions were received via email.

Three submissions were from landowners. One of these submissions supported the intent of the Draft Plan and sought clarification on detail to ensure alignment with Precinct Structure Plans. One landowner advised that they intend to manage their area of parkland privately. One landowner advised that they did not support parklands on their land.

Two submissions were received from individuals. These both provided additional access suggestions for consideration.

One submission came from a community group requesting infrastructure upgrades at Beaconsfield Park.

## 3. Information Sessions

Additional styles of consultation were used in order to provide a greater range of opportunities for the community to provide feedback. These consultation methods used in addition to the survey were an online information session, and three in-person place-based intercept surveys at various Parkland locations.

### 3.1 Online information session

An evening online information session was held on 7 June 2022 to inform the community about the project, and how they could provide their feedback on the Draft Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands Future Directions Plan.

Attendees to the online information sessions were invited to share their thoughts on the Draft Plan. Below is a summary of the responses received during these sessions.

Attendees discussed:

- An urgent solution for pedestrian and cyclist safety is needed at Inglis Road in order to reach Grasmere Creek wetlands and picnic area. What is the timeline and process for resolving this dangerous situation?
- Universal support for the role of the parklands in protecting habitat and vegetation
- Sought inclusion of Swift Parrots by name in Draft Plan as an endangered species
- Sought greater provision of and access to rubbish bins
- Sought explanation of how this Plan fits in with existing Precinct Structure Plans (PSPs). It was advised that the PSPs have greater statutory weight, and the Future Directions Plan is a high level strategic plan to guide the future management of the parklands.

### 3.2 Place-based intercept surveys

Place-based intercept surveys were held on 19 June 2022 at three Parkland locations. These place-based intercept surveys were held at Manna Gum Park, Akoonah Park and Cardinia Creek Regional Park.

It is estimated that 44 participants attended across the three locations. Participants at the place-based intercept surveys consisted of 14 females, 15 males and 3 family units. Participant ages ranged upwards from 25 years. The most widely represented age groups were the 55-65 years and 65-75 years age brackets, followed by 35-45 years.



#### Consultation questions

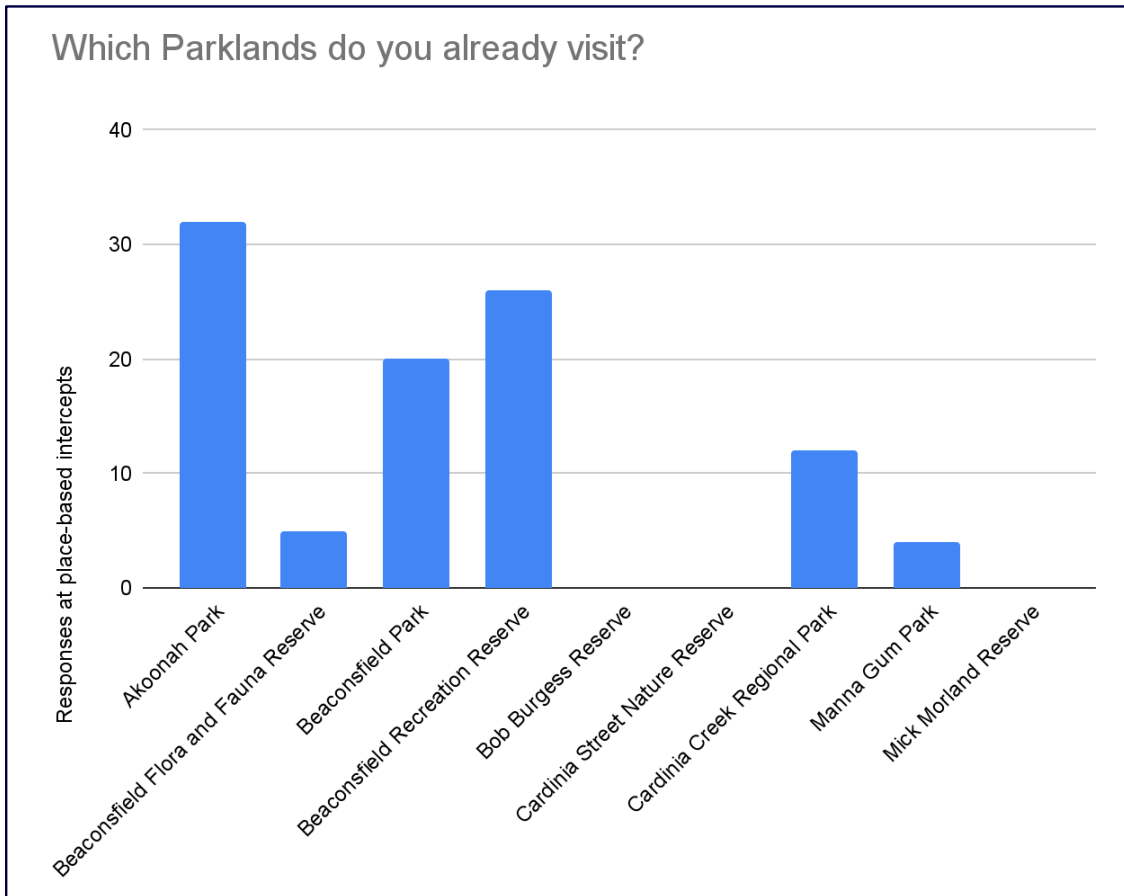
Participants at the place-based intercepts were asked:

- Which Parklands do you already visit?
- Do you have any suggestions for improving walking and cycling in the parklands?
- Do you support the vision to expand the parklands to primarily support biodiversity and cultural values?
- Have you seen any wildlife in the parks?

**Results**

**Parklands visited**

In response to the question “which parklands do you already visit?”, Akoonah Park was reported to have the highest level of visitation by participants (32), followed by Beaconsfield Recreation Reserve (26) and Beaconsfield Park (20). Three of the suggested open spaces received no responses. It is noted that participants may not have been aware of the location of these spaces, and at times have identified walking through these spaces to reach another listed space.



**Walking and cycling suggestions**

Participants spoke of walking loops in the north that incorporate multiple parks - Akoonah Park, Cardinia Creek Nature Reserve, Beaconsfield Flora and Fauna Reserve, Beaconsfield Park and Beaconsfield Recreation Reserve. Many participants felt they were very lucky to live within such close proximity to these nature walks.

Over 25% of participants directly raised the issue of the barrier and danger presented by Inglis Road. Many spoke of their inability to walk to the Cardinia Creek Regional Park because of the lack of pedestrian access

to the park when walking from the south. Not only is there no formal path on the side of the road, but there is no informal path either and visitors need to ‘run out’ onto the main part of the road to get to these parklands. It was reported by participants that this dangerous activity can be seen regularly every day. One participant said they only walk to Cardinia Creek Regional Park on Sunday morning when they know there is less traffic and danger. The participants who were interviewed at Grasmere Creek in Cardinia Creek Regional Park had nearly all walked in from the north (Buchanan Road and Beaumont Rd) suggesting this park is mostly servicing a small area and has the potential to be enjoyed by many more if it were easier to access by foot. The Draft Plan identifies the Inglis Road dangerous road as a lead priority and this was well supported in consultation.

There were multiple requests for use of the pipetrack for walking and cycling, and one request for use of the pipetrack for horse riding. There were very differing opinions from multiple participants about the current use of the pipetrack by horse riders.

Manna Gum Park had almost no park visitors during the intercept survey, likely due to heavy winter fog which appeared to have delayed dog owners' morning walk. It was noted that all visitors to this park travel there by car. One survey comment spoke of the danger of crossing Soldiers Road to reach Manna Gum Park. There is no natural walking connection to surrounding areas that appeared to be used by park visitors.

Several participants put forward considered ideas for expanding the trails beyond the parklands. This includes connecting to Upper Beaconsfield, Harkaway, Cardinia Reservoir and requested that planners draw on the great local knowledge of the walking and cycling community to get the best trail design in place and to help with discussions with private landowners. Many participants had lived in the area their whole life and knew the landowners that could be approached.

Participants expressed different preferences for trail materials. Some did not want trails made of hard surfaces to make running easier and to support a natural feel. Others wanted wide paths made of hard materials to support mobility and help with flood resilience.



**Satisfaction with the Draft Vision**

Participants were asked how satisfied they were with the Draft Vision for the Cardinia Creek Parklands. The Draft Vision for the parklands was explained to participants as being primarily for environment and cultural protection. Of the 44 respondents to this question, all were very satisfied. This sentiment was echoed in responses about the importance of Bunurong values and biodiversity protection.

Participants did not express dissatisfaction that the Draft Plan does not support any new sporting facilities, and several expressed that there were already enough sporting facilities. One participant hoped a mountain bike track could be included; it was explained to them that the biodiversity and cultural priorities of the site limit this option.

One participant requested horse trails in the area and was pleased that equestrian facilities are included in the Draft Plan. Advised that the horse trails need to be away from traffic and dog off-lead areas.

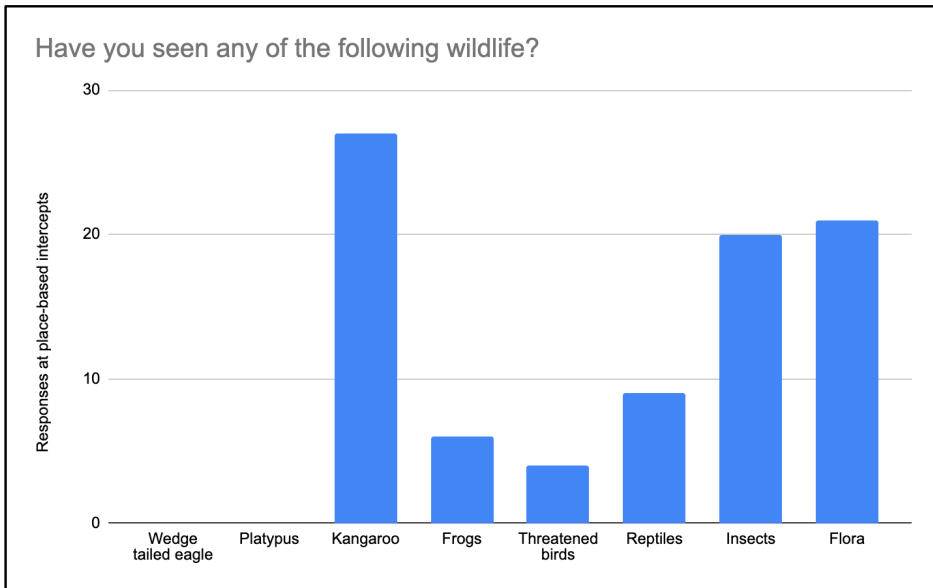
**Wildlife seen in the Parklands**

Participants were asked to select which species they have encountered in these open spaces, from a list of flora and fauna.

The results from this exercise, combined with results from the online survey showed that kangaroos were the most commonly seen species (27), followed by flora (21) and insects (20). Wildlife that was not identified by participants includes the wedge tailed eagle and the platypus.

Participants also reported seeing deer, swift parrots, royal spoonbills and grey goshawks.

Several participants shared that they always look for platypus but have never once seen one.



*A range of feedback received via the place-based intercepts has been broadly grouped into the subheadings below, and is similar in sentiment to responses received via the online survey.*

**Positive interactions with and protection of nature**

"Grew up in the area, it's special to be able to walk in nature."

"It wouldn't be the same if we didn't hear the birds."

"Wetlands are precious."

"Parklands should be wider to protect fauna and flora."

"Landcare is important, additional indigenous planting required."

**Increased pedestrian safety**

"Inglis Road is dangerous as there's no pedestrian path and no road shoulder."

"No shoulder on the road and it's dangerous to walk in Inglis Road, even in daylight."

"Inglis Road presents a safety issue as it's hazardous to walk alongside due to no path."

"This area is incredibly unsafe for children, birds and regular pedestrians to cross Soldiers road to get to Manna Gum Park and vice versa. Vehicles speed past this entire park and creek area, often killing wildlife and making it unsafe for people walking. Action is required!"

**Protected and off lead areas**

"Would like to see a mix of protected areas (no dogs) and off lead areas."

"Love the dog off lead areas in the park."

**Increased amenity**

"Additional bench seats to stop 'and smell the roses' along the tracks."

"Can exercise equipment be included along the park tracks."

"Can you use crushed flat rock instead of having concrete paths to help runners?"

**Improved linkages**

"Opportunity to connect with Upper Beaconsfield trail north of golf course."

"Currently no access at Cardinia Creek from Upper Beaconsfield."

## 4. Conclusion

Community input and advice have been sought twice during the planning of the Draft Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands Future Directions Plan.

The first consultation was in November 2021 when 221 people filled in online surveys or came to information sessions to help parkland partners identify the priorities to be included in the Draft Future Directions Plan. The summary of this early consultation is published on [www.engage.vic.gov.au/CardiniaCkParklands](http://www.engage.vic.gov.au/CardiniaCkParklands)

This second round of consultation has provided direct feedback on the Draft Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands Future Directions Plan which will be used to inform the final editing of the Future Directions Plan.

The Parkland Partners will also use the feedback to inform the delivery and ongoing management of the Parklands.

As the Parklands are incrementally handed over to the partners, a more detailed approach to parkland planning and implementation will be applied where many of the above points will be addressed. This will ensure the Parklands protects and enhances the cultural, heritage, landscape, biodiversity and social values present, whilst enabling public access and inspiring community enjoyment.