

A Place to Play: Yarra Play Space Strategy

Draft
June 2024



Yarra City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people as the Traditional Owners and true sovereigns of the land now known as Yarra. We also acknowledge the significant contributions made by other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to life in Yarra. We pay our respects to Elders from all nations and to their Elders past, present and future.

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1. Executive summary

1.1 The purpose of this Strategy

The purpose of the Yarra Play Space Strategy is to provide strategic direction for the future planning and management of play spaces in the City of Yarra for the next 10 years. This includes understanding and addressing the needs of the existing population, as well as future forward planning to address the changing needs of Yarra's forecast community.

Council recognises the important role 'play' has in the physical, social, emotional, cognitive and language development of children and young people. Play spaces provide wellbeing benefits such as social connection with friends, family and the local community and an outdoor place for relaxation and respite for everyone in the community. Play spaces encourage active participation, to help everyone to maintain a healthier lifestyle, and provide access to open space for community members who are working, visiting, or have limited or no private open space at home.

The development of the Yarra Play Space Strategy is underpinned by the Community Vision and feedback received from community engagement. This Strategy outlines Council's priorities for upgrades, replacements, and infrastructure provisions. It will also guide Council to plan and prioritise upgrades to the existing play space network and provide standards to maximise the quality and use of existing and new play spaces across the City.

The Yarra Play Space Strategy will ensure the design, implementation and works and maintenance of play spaces is appropriate, achievable, and sustainable within Council's resources. It will provide greater certainty that Yarra's overall network of play spaces will be able to cater for the diverse community into the future.

The Strategy comprises the following documents:

- **Draft Strategy Report (this report)** which provides the context, detailed analysis, conclusions, and recommendations.
- **Draft Strategy Snapshot Report** which provides a very short summary of the key issues and recommendations from this Strategy for community engagement.

A Summary Report (to be prepared with the Final Strategy) will provide a summary of the key issues and recommendations from the Final Strategy.

1.2 Key issues to be addressed by this Strategy

The Yarra Play Space Strategy is the first such strategy to be prepared by Yarra City Council. The following items include a summary of the key issues arising from the research, consultation and analysis from the preparation of this Strategy:

- Substantial forecast population growth through to 2034 including the resident and employment population.
- Very limited open space in some of the older precincts, experiencing higher density residential development (i.e. Fitzroy, Collingwood, and North Richmond) and where there is open space it often is not of a suitable size to accommodate larger playgrounds or sometimes to be able to even provide any play equipment.
- Existing open space and play spaces are over-utilised contributing to faster wear and tear, with the need for regular repairs or early replacement.
- Current play spaces often do not strategically or consistently address physical accessibility considerations, including paths, facilities, furniture and play equipment or support for those with intellectual and / or sensory requirements.
- Play spaces are not always well located in proximity to public and active transport options (including shared paths and trails).

- Diversity of play experiences, including for different age groups and types of play, currently are limited mostly to traditional playgrounds which are predominantly suited for young children only.
- Some precincts have lower numbers of families and children than others, and there is a need to align the network of play with the needs of specific current and forecast communities.
- Varying attitudes regarding perceptions of safety, including sightlines and activity on site.
- A need to build further social opportunities for parents and caregivers.
- A need for more safe and welcoming spaces for LGBTIQ+ people and families.
- Increasing impacts of climate change, including more extreme weather events, alongside the impact of built density and the resulting urban heat island effect.

1.3 Summary

The Yarra Play Space Strategy seeks to work with Yarra's existing and new network of play spaces. This is to broaden their purpose for the community and improve the quality and responsiveness to the community's current and emerging needs through:

- **A future vision, principles, and goals;**
- **A framework for equitable distribution and a range of play spaces that are within a walkable distance;**
- **Guidelines for future planning; and**
- **Priority planning actions for play spaces over the next 10 years.**

2. Background

2.1 The unique character of Yarra

As a basis for Yarra's first play space strategy, it is important to discuss the specific characteristics of the City of Yarra and the key points of difference to most other municipalities in metropolitan Melbourne. This will provide an understanding of how Yarra's urban fabric, open space structure, and play spaces have been approached and discussed in this report.

2.1.1 History and development

The City of Yarra adjoins the municipalities of Melbourne, Stonnington, Boroondara, Darebin and Merri-bek. Yarra covers an area of approximately 19.5 square kilometres (1,950 ha). The Birrarung (Yarra River), Merri, and Darebin Creeks form three of its boundaries to the south, east and north. Yarra is predominantly a densely built urban area of small lots, with pockets of current and former industrial sites on large urban parcels. There are rapidly increasing levels of medium-high density development occurring across the municipality, changing its residential character and urban fabric.

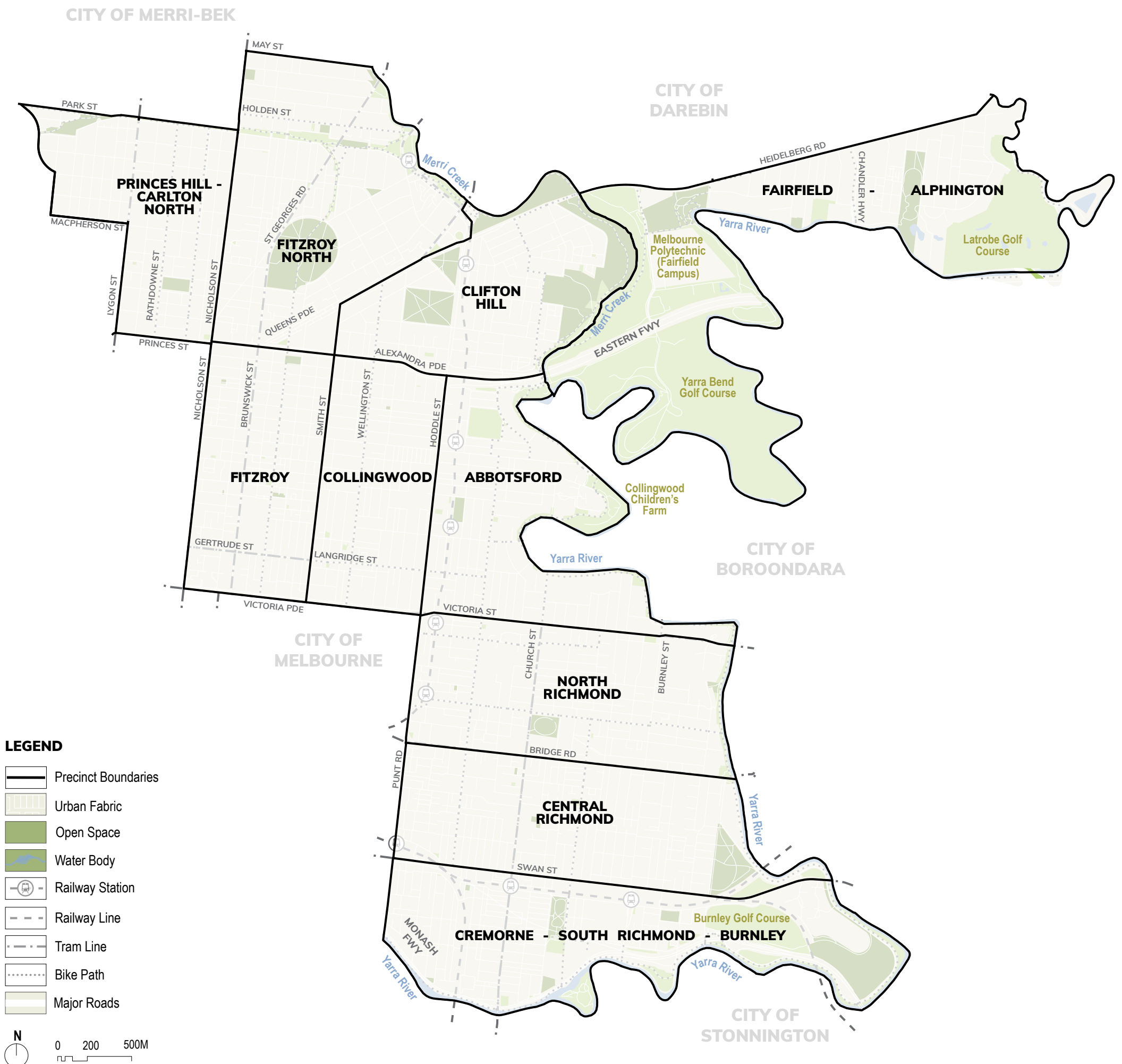
Yarra contains the suburbs of Abbotsford, Burnley, Clifton Hill, Collingwood, Cremorne, Fitzroy, North Carlton, North Fitzroy, Princes Hill, and Richmond, as well as parts of Alphington and Fairfield. Each of these neighbourhoods have their own unique heritage and character as highlighted in the City of Yarra Heritage Review: Thematic History report by Allan Lovell & Associates in 1998.

'Those areas which now combine to form the City of Yarra have developed historically as separate local government areas and communities, with different patterns of economic and social development, particularly those of Collingwood and Abbotsford as compared to Fitzroy, Richmond, North Carlton, and Alphington. To a large degree these differences are reflected in patterns in the built environment and landscape, while simultaneously, there are themes of historical development which were broadly similar across large areas of Yarra, and these are also evident in the urban environment.'

2.1.2 Precincts for planning

For planning purposes in this Strategy, Council is adopting the 10 precinct areas used in other strategic Council documents such as the Yarra Open Space Strategy (YOSS). These precincts are listed below in alphabetical order:

- Abbotsford
- Carlton North – Princes Hill
- Central Richmond
- Clifton Hill
- Collingwood
- Cremorne, Richmond South, and Burnley
- Fairfield – Alphington
- Fitzroy
- Fitzroy North
- North Richmond



Map 1: Planning precincts in Yarra

2.1.3 Open space in Yarra

Council manages approximately 180ha of public open space with a range of other reserves managed by various public authorities totalling approximately 235ha of public open space. Council is proactively investigating opportunities to increase open space offerings across Yarra in addition to new open spaces through the development on the former AMCOR site (Alphington Paper Mills) and Gasworks' site in Fitzroy North.

The Merri Creek and Birrarung (Yarra River) have adjoining linear open space reserves which are highly valued by residents of Yarra and wider metropolitan Melbourne for their recreation and nature conservation values. In contrast, in the highly urbanised areas of the municipality, there is as little as 0.3% of open space per square metre in pockets of Collingwood, Cremorne, and North Richmond. Yarra has two large, significant historical gardens - Edinburgh and Darling Gardens located in North Fitzroy and Clifton Hill. The diverse character, use and distribution of Yarra's open spaces reflect the natural, historic, heritage, urban, cultural, and social makeup of the municipality.

In 2020 Council endorsed the Yarra Open Space Strategy (YOSS). The YOSS recommended the development of a play space strategy, as well as a number of guidelines for the upgrade and integration of play spaces and unstructured recreation facilities into open space. These YOSS guidelines are referenced throughout this report and for the purposes of this Strategy, the term 'informal' is applied rather than "unstructured recreation and recreation facilities".

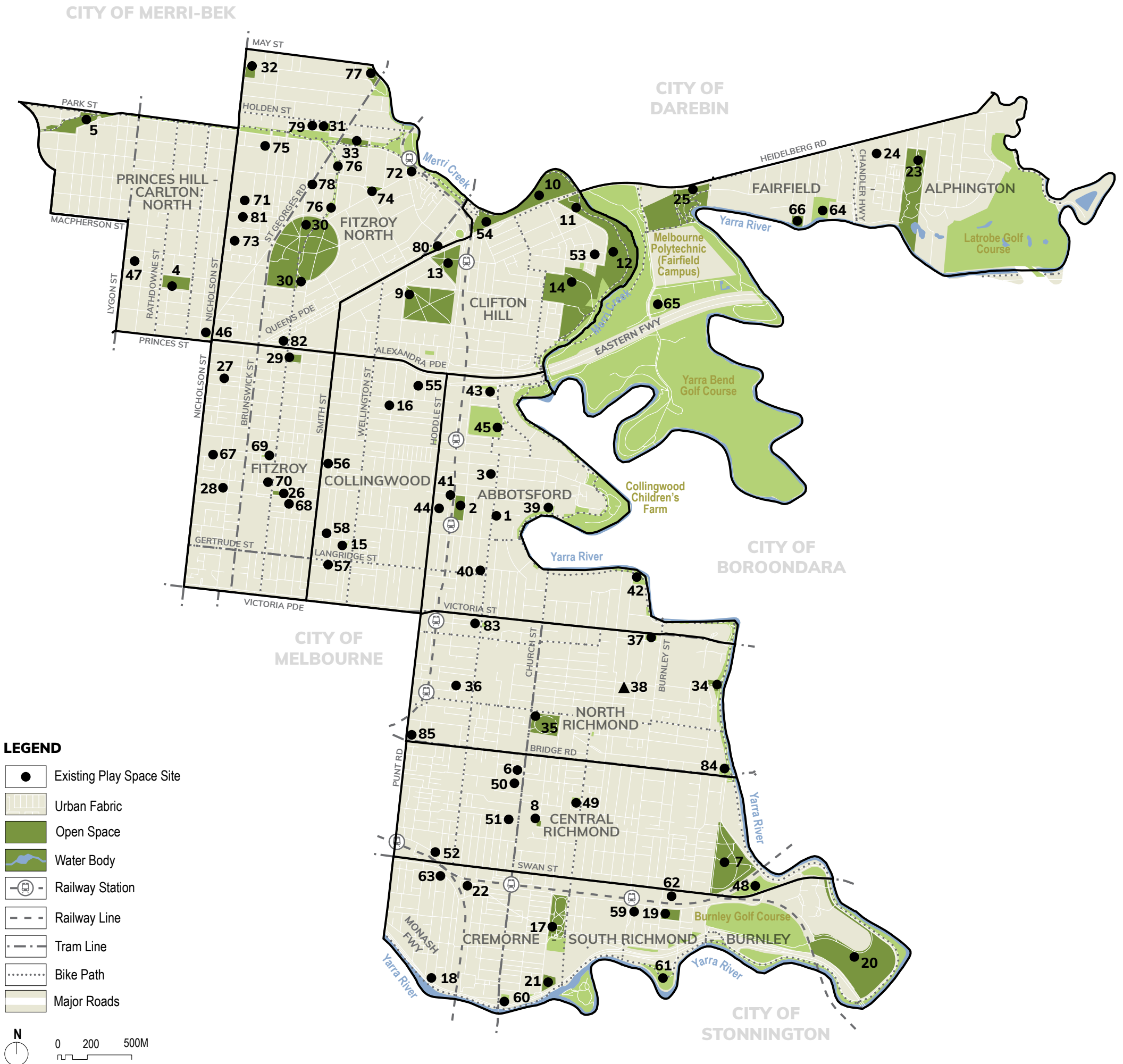
Some key statistics drawn from the YOSS outline differences in open space availability across different precinct areas in Yarra. Constraints with open space access within some precincts are clearly significant and impact upon the directions proposed within this Strategy. It is important however to look at this information in the context of Yarra as a small municipality in terms of area, where there are well-developed public transport and road networks that assist in providing effective mobility across the City and surrounding municipalities.



2.1.4 Existing play spaces in Yarra

Yarra's existing play spaces are currently made up of a total of 85 sites; 37 existing Council managed open spaces with playgrounds (play equipment) and 47 complementary spaces for play. There are 12 multi-use (MUC) ball courts, 2 skate facilities, 3 sites with fitness/agility equipment and 4 sites with recreational games provision. In addition, Council has one shared use agreement with Yarra Primary School, which includes a playground, one multi-use ball court, and one recreational game (table tennis).

These types are defined in greater detail in Section 3 of this report. This represents a broader understanding of the current overall network for play in Yarra.



Map 2: Existing play space site locations in Yarra

KEY GUIDE TO EXISTING OPEN SPACES (WITH PLAY SPACES AND COMPLEMENTARY SPACES)

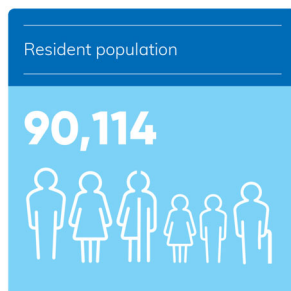
EXISTING PLAY SPACES (INCLUDING PLAYGROUNDS / MULTI-USE COURTS / FITNESS / SKATE / WHEELS & RECREATIONAL GAMES):

Abbotsford 1. Browns Reserve 2. Gahan Reserve 3. Studley Reserve	Cremorne-Richmond South-Burnley 17. Barkly Gardens 18. Charles Evans Reserve 19. Golden Square (Bicentennial Park) 20. Kevin Bartlett Reserve 21. McConchie Reserve 22. White Street Reserve	North Richmond 34. Annette's Place 35. Citizen's Park 36. Egan Park 37. Williams Reserve 38. Yarra Primary School (Shared-Use Facility)	Fitzroy 67. Frank King Park 68. George Street Reserve 69. Greeves Street Reserve 70. Whittlam Place
Carlton North - Princes Hill 4. Curtain Square 5. Hardy Gallagher Reserve	Fairfield - Alphington 23. Alphington Park 24. Artisan Park 25. Fairfield Park	EXISTING COMPLEMENTARY SPACES (INCLUDING MULTI-USE COURTS AND RECREATIONAL GAMES): Abbotsford 39. Clarke Street Reserve 40. Charles Mollison Reserve 41. Eddy Court Reserve 42. Flockhart Reserve 43. Maugie Street Reserve 44. Saint Phillips Reserve 45. Victoria Park (including Bath Street and Brearley Reserves)	Fitzroy North 71. Batman Street Reserve 72. Batson Reserve 73. Brookes Crescent Reserve 74. Edwardes Place Park 75. Liverpool Street Reserve 76. Mark Street Linear Park 77. Ottery Reserve 78. Piedimontes Corner 79. Porter Street Reserve 80. Raines Reserve 81. Reid Street Park 82. Triangle Park
Central Richmond 6. Ben Alexander Reserve 7. Burnley Park 8. Cairns Reserve	Fitzroy 26. Condell Street Reserve 27. Garry Owen Park 28. King William Reserve 29. Smith Reserve	Carlton North - Princes Hill 46. Nicholson Street Reserve 47. Shakespeare Reserve	Clifton Hill 53. Clifton Street Reserve 54. Coulson Reserve
Clifton Hill 9. Darling Gardens 10. George Knott Reserve 11. Hall Reserve North 12. Hall Reserve South 13. Mayors Park 14. Quarries Park	Fitzroy North 30. Edinburgh Gardens 31. Holden Byrne Reserve 32. Langdon Reserve 33. Park Reserve	Central Richmond 48. Circus Site 49. Dame Nellie Melba Memorial Park	Collingwood 55. Alexander Street Reserve 56. Otter Street Park 57. Oxford Street Park 58. Peel Street Park
Collingwood 15. Cambridge Street Reserve 16. McNamara Reserve			Cremorne-Richmond South-Burnley 59. Athol J Brown Reserve 60. Church Street Reserve 61. Loys Paddock 62. Ryans Reserve 63. Stephenson Street Reserve
			Fairfield - Alphington 64. Coate Park 65. Fairlea Reserve 66. Rudder Grange

2.2 Who is the Yarra community?

The 2021 census for the City of Yarra stated that the population was 90,114, however, the most accurate count of the total population is the 'Estimated Resident Population', which factors in an estimate of those missed in the Census and those who were overseas on Census night. It is usually higher than either Census count, and is also updated annually after the Census, providing preliminary estimates for up to 5 years. The City of Yarra's Estimated Resident Population for 2023 is 97,448.

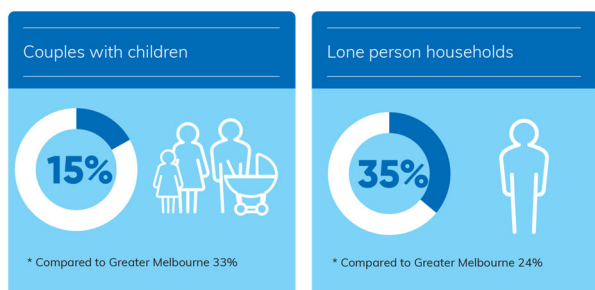
Of this figure, there were slightly more females indicated (51.2%), than males (48.8%). Further to this The *Victorian Population Health Survey* in 2017 cited in the *Yarra LGBTIQ+ Strategy 2021-24* indicated that 10% of Yarra's population identify as LGBTIQ+.



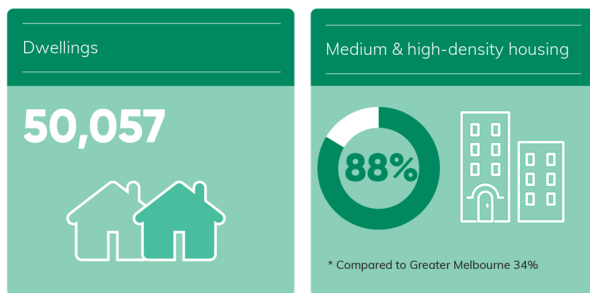
The median age is 34 years which is slightly younger than the Greater Melbourne average of 37 years. 29% of residents were born overseas and 0.6% were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders.



In terms of the makeup of households, Yarra has a much lower number of couples with children (15%) than the Greater Melbourne average (33%) and there is also a much greater number of lone households (35%) than the Greater Melbourne average (24%). As cited in the *Yarra LGBTIQ+ Strategy 2021-24*, in the 2016 Census cited in *the Yarra LGBTIQ+ Strategy*, 5% of Yarra's couples identified as being in a same sex relationship.



Yarra has 50,057 dwellings. A larger number of residential dwellings are considered high-medium density (88%) than the Greater Melbourne average (34%). Yarra also has a much higher number of renters (51%) than the Greater Melbourne average (29%), indicating that half of Yarra's residents may not be long-term residents.



There are higher numbers of children and young people in the North and Central Richmond and North Fitzroy precincts compared to Alphington-Fairfield, Cremorne, Richmond South, and Burnley precincts. These statistics are predicted to change in the next 10 years, with increasing development in areas such as Alphington and Cremorne. However, the percentage of children and young people within the overall municipal population will remain stable. Significant forecasted increases include Fairfield – Alphington (a 14.31% increase in 0–11-year olds and 10.21% increase in 12-24 year olds) and Cremorne, Richmond South, and Burnley (a 10.26% increase in 0-11 year olds and a 11.42% increase in 12-24 year olds).

2.3 How is Yarra's population changing?

The purpose of the Strategy is to plan for play spaces in Yarra over the next 10 years and the influence of the following future demographic projections also needs to be considered.

2.3.1 Projected population trends

In summary the projected trends for the coming 10 years are as follows:

- A slightly older median population.
- A much higher level of rental tenancy over home ownership, resulting in a more transitional population over long term residency.
- Less single occupancy and more multi-person households.
- An increasing level of high-density living in multi-residential apartments with no / or little immediate access to private open space.
- More children than present in the precincts of Fairfield-Alphington (+12.4% increase of the overall population), Richmond North (+10.7%) and Cremorne, Richmond South & Burnley (+10.3%).
- An increase in young people in the precincts of Richmond North (+33.8% increase of the overall population), Fitzroy (+13.9%), Cremorne, Richmond South & Burnley (+12.5%), Fairfield-Alphington (+12.4%), and Fitzroy North (+12%).

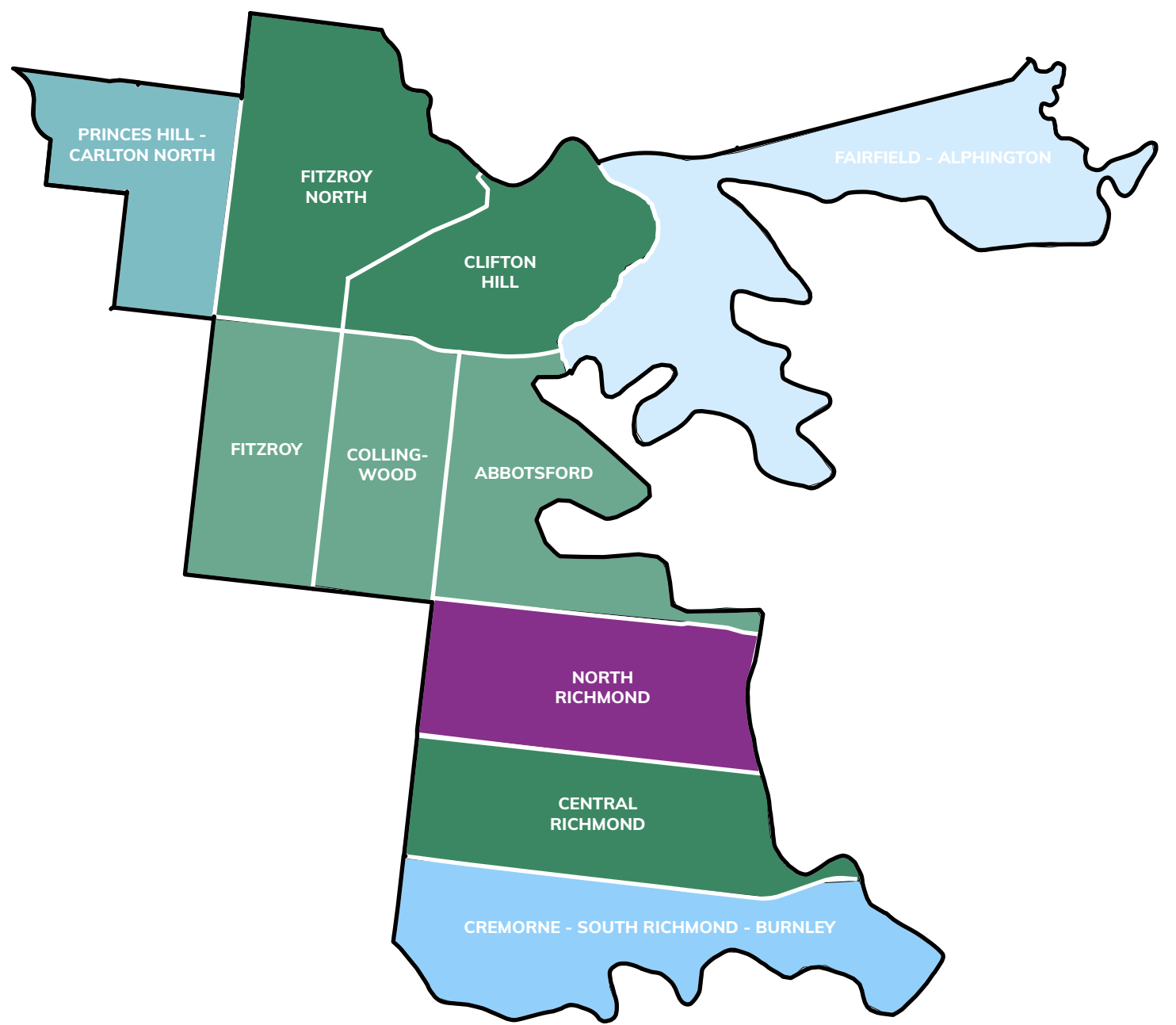
2.3.2 Implications for future play space planning

Yarra's unique community, coupled with the projected changes in demographics and growth into the future, will necessitate careful consideration and strategic thinking for the planning and design of play spaces across Yarra. The key issues for consideration include:

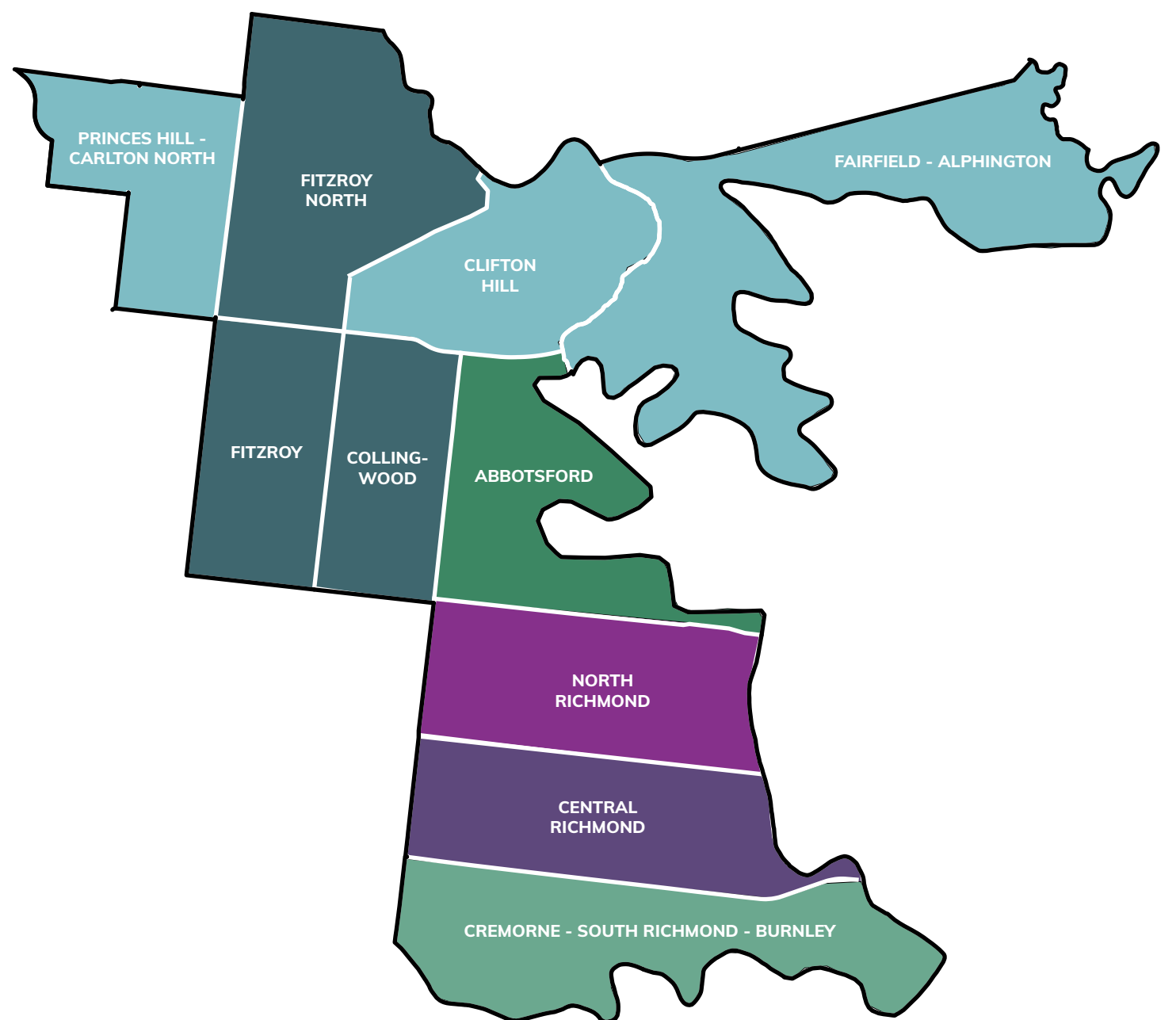
- The future increase of population in precincts with very low open space availability such as Collingwood, Fitzroy, and Richmond North.
- The increase in children (0-11) in North Richmond and young people (12-24 years) in precincts such as North Richmond and Fitzroy where available open space is restricted.
- The need for a greater diversity of play space options to cater for an older population and a population with higher numbers of households without children.

2.3.3 An opportunity to plan for the community

Yarra's unique urban fabric and open-space character, combined with the city's particular residential, worker and visitor mix, provide an opportunity to approach play and play spaces in a different way that will benefit the 'whole' community through a range of different experiences. This will involve responding to both existing and emerging population needs in the coming 10 years, whilst also planning for play in Yarra's open spaces in a more complementary, multi-functional way.

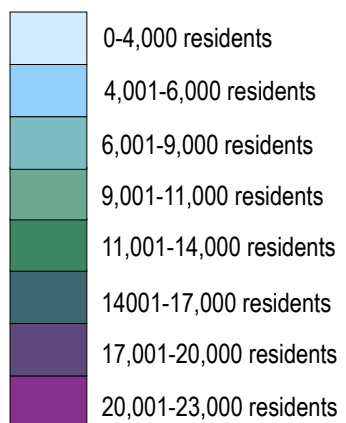


Current population density



10 year projected population density

LEGEND



Map 3: Current population density vs 10 year projected population density change in Yarra

2.4 Council context

2.4.1 Strategic Framework

The following strategic documents in Diagram 1 below were reviewed for the development of this Strategy. The diagram outlines the strategic context of the Yarra Play Space Strategy:

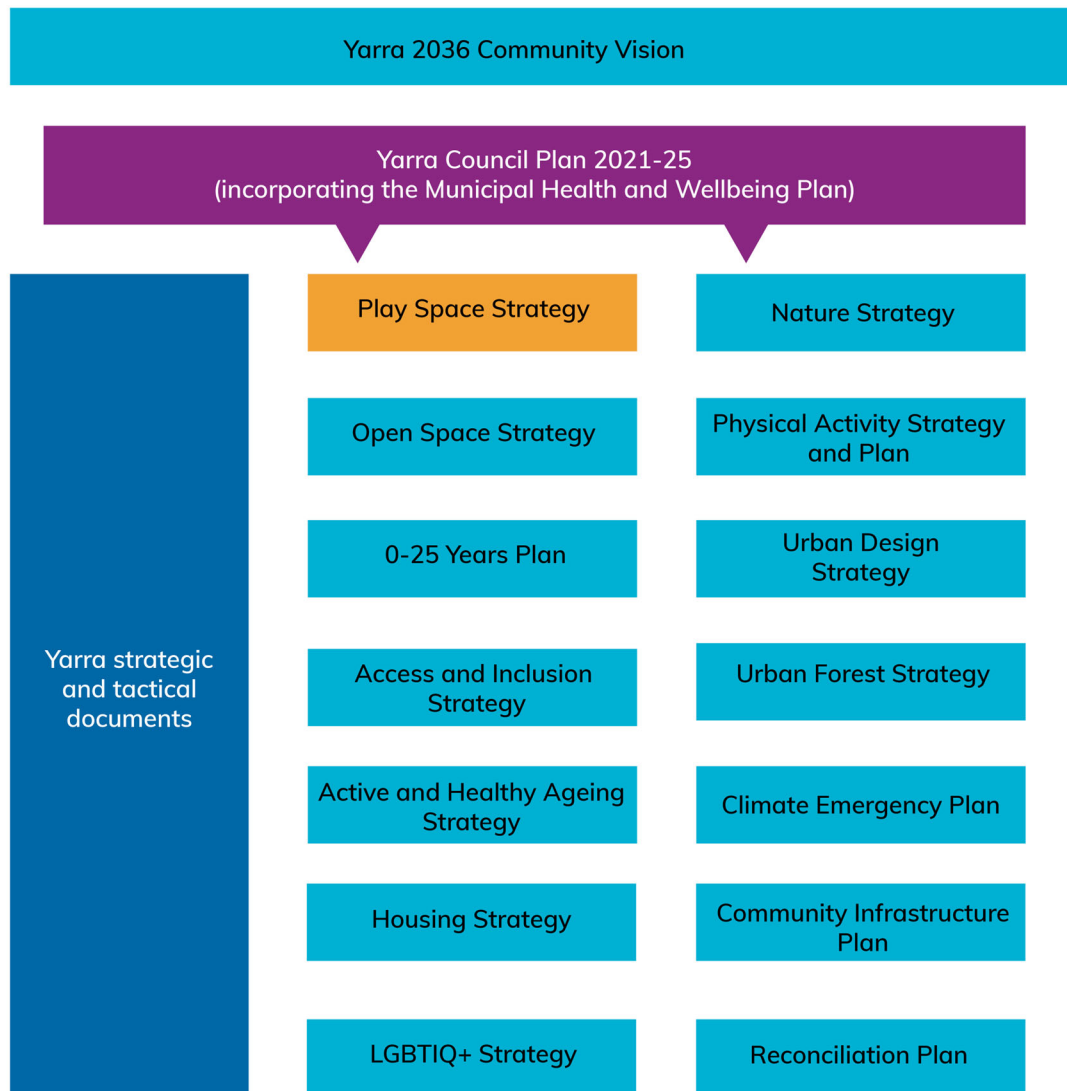


Diagram 1 (above): Key Council strategies and plans referenced in Strategy

2.4.2 YOSS recommendations regarding play spaces and informal recreation

Guidelines for upgrade and integration of existing play areas to open space

a) Demonstrate the play areas provide a diverse range of activities to meet different age groups and skill development including physical, social, and cognitive play, scaled to meet the intended size and use level applicable to the open space catchment in which it is proposed.

b) Integrate the proposed play facility into the open space design to complement and expand the diversity of play opportunities. This could include open grassed areas for informal ball games and other unstructured recreation facilities.

c) Integrate comfortable seating and picnic areas nearby the play facility to encourage social interaction and comfort for adults supervising play. This is important so that the parents will stay outdoors with their children in the park for longer lengths of time.

d) Include access for all principles in play facility design demonstrating that universal access is cohesively integrated into at least part of all play areas.

- e) *Design the play area so it can be used by everyone including young people who will informally use the area to meet and socialise as well.*
- f) *Minimise the use of fencing to play areas when it can be demonstrated there is no safety or accessibility requirement for it. Alternative treatments to fencing are to be investigated such as grade separation, seating walls, steps, and planting, and only where they cannot demonstrate they adequately meet the identified safety concerns is fencing then considered appropriate. This is to meet the accessibility, adaptability, sustainability, and safety principles of open space design by encouraging everyone to share, access and use the open space and the play area.*
- g) *Where possible, locate play areas so they receive some natural shade during the middle of the day to avoid the need for shade structures. The final proximity of the play area to existing and planted trees will need to demonstrate it allows ongoing health and mature size of the trees and is not in total shade (i.e. receives some sunlight during the day).*
- h) *Where feasible, major play areas are to reflect the natural, urban, landscape, cultural, heritage and social character of the open space. The play area is to have associated support facilities including seating, drinking fountains, picnic areas and open grassed areas, trees, and shade.*
- i) *Provide consistent signage regarding no dogs off-lead within 10 metres of all play areas.*

Guidelines to promote and increase unstructured recreational use of open space:

- a) *Encourage a diversity of facilities in open space.*
- b) *Location and type of active unstructured recreation facilities to complement other identified structured, unstructured, and informal uses in the open space and the overall character.*
- c) *Include associated facilities that support and encourage participation in exercise including seats of different types, drinking fountains and shade. This is so that people of all levels of ability and fitness are encouraged to exercise and improve their fitness by providing opportunities for people to rest while exercising.*
- d) *Placement and design of these facilities is to demonstrate they minimise visual and noise impacts on adjoining land, particularly in relation to noise and activity in proximity to adjoining residents and nature conservation areas.*
- e) *Placement and design of these facilities is to demonstrate they are balanced with retaining the natural and unbuilt qualities of the open space.*

2.4.3 Other key reference documents

A number of other external documents were also reviewed and referenced for the development of this Strategy, and they are outlined in Diagram 2 below:



Diagram 2 (above): Key external documents referenced in Strategy

3. Introduction

3.1 The importance of play

The fundamental reason local governments provide play spaces is to provide publicly accessible places for everyone to play and recreate. Play spaces are a key component of the open space network, but why is play so important to us as a community? The following section discusses play and its benefits to the whole community to understand why play spaces are so important.

3.1.1 Why do we play?

One of the most common recreation activities of humans is play. Play is seen in its most common form in children, *freely chosen*, *spontaneous* and *self-directed*. We can however learn from our observations of children's play that its benefits have much wider implications for everyone in our community no matter their age, ability, gender, or background.

The first of those is physical activity - play is about body movement of various kinds. Then there is social connection – play is about cultivating a scenario by which we come together and negotiate relationships in our interactions and games. Finally, there is creativity and innovation – play is about adapting, and re-imagining found materials and environments, storytelling, and inner expression. Play breeds joy and is an immersive and emotive experience which improves our wellbeing.

3.1.2 Human development and the benefits of play

There are five key elements of human development affected by play, these include:

- **Physical development** – which is the learning of fine and gross motor skills, as well as balance, spatial / body awareness, speed, and coordination.
- **Emotional development** - which is the building of self-confidence and resilience, along with skill-mastery and self-discovery.
- **Social development** – which is the learning of skills such as sharing and collaboration, rules and boundaries, negotiation and conflict resolution, leadership, and empathy.
- **Cognitive development** – which is concept learning and application, problem solving, memory use and testing learnt skills.
- **Language development** – which is the learning of expression, receptiveness, vocabulary, body language, tone, listening skills and eye contact.

3.1.3 The difference between children, young people, and adults in play

Traditional definitions of play apply more directly to children (under 14 years). Children's 'play' can be considered as a way of being or state of flow within an environment, rather than an activity. Open space environments (and the play spaces within them) only set the stage for this play, as interactions with them can have some repetition, but overall tend to be unique each time a child visits.

More recently in planning and design there has been movement towards expanding this definition to include young people and adults. There is however a lack of research literature and examples of how infrastructure is used by adults for 'play' by the above definition.

Young people will fluidly move between play and informal recreation. Young people tend to enter the flow state when they are being creative or playing games. They do not tend however, to engage in the types of dramatic, role or symbolic play that younger children do, preferencing social interaction with peers instead.

Adults can certainly be playful in their interactions, however their use of open space environments tends to be with purpose (i.e. to jog, to gather socially, to walk the dog, to play kick-to-kick with friends) and will often be routine or follow a regular pattern. This is considered informal recreation, rather than play.

For this Strategy, we will differentiate between interactions as; children engage in *play*, adults engage in *informal recreation*, and *young people oscillate between play and informal recreation* in varying degrees depending on their age and interest.

It is also important to consider that children will often be accompanied by adults when they visit play spaces and therefore there also needs to be a level of consideration for the requirements of adults.

3.2 Environmental connection of the senses through play

Exploring nature stimulates children and adult's curiosity, observation, and critical thinking skills. In natural environments, by encountering a variety of sights, sounds, textures, and smells, the senses are engaged, and cognitive abilities enhanced.

Play and recreation also engage 'vestibular' and 'proprioceptive' senses. The vestibular sense is important for development of balance, coordination, eye control, attention, being comfortable with movement and some aspects of language development. Proprioception and kinaesthesia (the sensation of joint motion and acceleration) are the sensory feedback mechanisms for motor control and posture. These mechanisms along with the vestibular system, a fluid filled network within the inner ear that can feel the pull of gravity and helps the body keep oriented and balanced, are unconsciously utilised by the brain to provide a constant influx of sensory information. The brain can then send out immediate and unconscious adjustments to the muscles and joints in order to achieve movement and balance.

Exposure to a range of outdoor environments (and associated flora and fauna) for play and recreation is also a gateway to developing a life-long connection and empathy with nature, preparing foundations for future stewardship of the natural environment.

3.3 Ages and related play types

3.3.1 Introduction

It is important to not only understand the suitability of different scales and types of play spaces for different ages, but also what interests and developmental abilities different age groups have when playing and recreating.

The following age definitions are used within this Strategy:

- **Toddler (Under 3 years)**
- **Pre-School (3-6 years)**
- **Junior (7-9 years)**
- **Senior (10-14 years)**
- **Young People: (15-24 years)**
- **Adults (25 years +)**
- **Older Adults (60 years +)**

3.3.2 A balance for different ages and abilities

Each age group will utilise play spaces differently, sometimes at different times.

Play spaces should aim to cater for ages from birth onwards, with multiple activities available. Smaller 'local' play spaces are often best focused on a targeted age range, as better developed outcomes can be achieved this way. With larger, longer stay play spaces, all age groups, abilities, and demographics should be catered, to support the diverse community and their changing needs.

By developing more diverse experiences and opportunities for a range of age groups, this should result in an improved local precinct play network, that is accessible and adaptable enough to grow with a changing population overtime.

3.3.3 Play and informal recreation types

The following are descriptions for play and informal recreation types guiding the development of play spaces for different age groups. Key examples are identified, however are not limited to what is outlined below:

Active Play / Movement

Children and Young People: climbing, sliding, swinging, balancing, jumping, upper body movement, manipulative movement ball skills and wheels.

Adults: walking, running or jogging, stretching, ball skills and wheels.

Concept Play - Science Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) focus

Children and Young People: testing and experimenting, observing the world and people, engaging with STEM concepts.

Deep Play / Risky Play

Children and Young People: climbing, agility, testing balance, strength, and coordination, and learning judgement and confidence in own ability (particularly in new or unknown situations).

Environmental Connection

Children and Young People: loose materials, flora and fauna seeking, tree-climbing, sand, dirt, water play and learning through landscapes.

Adults: walking, relaxing, interacting with gardens and natural environments, community connection, volunteering.

Exercise / Fitness

Adults and Young People: ball play, wheels, fitness / outdoor gym equipment, walking, running or jogging, cross-training, Pilates, yoga, boot camp, Parkour, agility courses, sports training.

Exploration

Everyone: wandering, uncovering and discovering, learning through landscapes.

Group Activity Participation

Everyone: community events, participation in informal recreation and activities, informal games, and social connection.

Imaginative / Creative Play or Creative Recreation

Children and Young People: games, dramatic roles, characters, other worlds and building or making

Adults: outdoor performances, art, and creative activities.

Recreational Games

Adults and Young People: table tennis, bocce and pétanque, chess and board games, and digital interactives.

Sensory Play

Children: loose materials, plants, music / sound interactive elements, textured surfaces, or manipulative activities, movement, propulsion and deep body stimuli.

Adults and Young People: interacting with gardens and natural environments.

Skill Challenge

Everyone: climbing, agility, balance, strength, and coordination, skating, scooting and wheels.

Social Gathering

Everyone: relaxing, connecting, conversing, sharing skills and information, relaxing, sharing food or picnicking.

Social Play

Children and Young People: games, partner or group activities, turn taking experiences, serve and return interactions, and language development.

3.3.4 Children: age groups and play

The interests and skills that pertain to children 0-14 years are as follows:

Age-Group:	Play / Informal Recreation:	Interests and Needs:
Toddler (Under 3 years)	Active Play / Movement Exploratory Play / Concept Play Imaginative / Creative Play Sensory Play	• Play can be supported by the landscape environment and suitable surfacing (for babies). • Access to structured equipment is not a prerequisite to engagement. • Play involves exploration and testing. • Sensory experiences important (sound, touch, colour). • Smaller spaces, tunnels & places to hide are prized. • Play tends to be solitary or parallel, settings should offer opportunities to connect with others or to play independently. • Family members tend to be important.
Pre-School (3-6 years)	Active Play / Movement Exploratory Play / Concept Play Imaginative / Creative Play Outdoor Games Sensory Play	• Play involves more social interaction with peers and the environment needs to support 'playing together'. • Play needs to have flexible and adaptable elements with loose parts for collecting and using in play. • Nature play settings are suited to this age, particularly where sand and water are involved. There is a developing interest in animals, insects, and the natural world. • Elements such as ladders, nets, rocks, and logs allow for balancing and climbing. • Hard surfaces and some open space support activities such as ball play, bikes, and scooters. • As there is a developing interest in the world around them– imaginative settings should reflect these developing concepts. • Elements such as movement (proprioception and vestibular), sound, tactile and colour cues and smell engage the senses.

Age-Group:	Play / Informal Recreation:	Interests and Needs:
Junior (7-9 years)	Active Play / Movement Exploratory Play / Concept Play Group Activity Participation Imaginative / Creative Play Outdoor Games Sensory Play	• Play tends to involve the honing of skills, language, and concepts. • Emotional regulation, more focussed concentration and self-reliance enables greater co-operation, negotiation and problem solving. Inventing and making things are important. Loose parts play is still important – only more sophisticated and detailed. • Children tend to have low muscle tone allowing them to do tasks, which most adults would struggle to achieve, such as scaling a vertical rope or doing flips on monkey bars. • Play tends to involve inventing more complex games with peers, involving rules and a play space will often provide the platform. • Adults are usually becoming less important than peer friendships. • There tends to be enjoyment in rough and tumble play and engagement in deep or risky play. • Open space needs to be larger to support burgeoning independent interests.
Senior (10-14 years)	Active Play / Movement Creative Play Exploratory Play / Concept Play Deep / Risky Play / Skill Challenge Group Activity Participation Outdoor Games Social Gathering Sensory Play	• These years are often referred to as the ‘twens’ as neither childhood nor adolescence. • This age-group will often feel like interlopers in both spaces for both younger children and for adults – need to be welcomed and included. • This age-group may want to disengage from formal sports and spaces should provide alternative opportunities. • Self-identity becomes more important, with experimentation in who they are that continues into adolescence, environments for creative expression are needed to support this. • Play tends to take on a different role, becoming more about social interaction, than exploration of an environment or the development of physical skills. • Independence from adults and hanging out with friends takes centre stage and most interests tend to pivot around this, with clusters or pods of seating or elevated areas to view activity or open spaces to participate in activity supporting play. • Spaces can tend to be dominated by boys, so there is a need to provide suitable spaces and elements to make girls feel welcome. • Spaces for lone reflection and internal retreat are also needed – hence an increased interest in the digital world. • Physical literacy tends to be well developed with increased flexibility, agility, balance, and hand-eye coordination, demonstrated by deft ball skills and confident climbing. • Social norms can begin to be tested and children can enjoy the opportunity for much more ‘risky or challenging’ adventure play at greater heights involving complex skills. A standard play space may not always support these needs.

3.3.5 Young people, play and informal recreation

The interests and skills that pertain to young people 15-24 years are as follows:

Age-Group:	Play / Informal Recreation:	Interests and Needs:
Young People (15-24 years)	Active Play / Movement Deep / Risky Play / Skill Challenge Environmental Connection Exercise / Fitness Group Activity Participation Outdoor Games Relaxation Social Gathering	- The term 'play' tends to be avoided by this age group as they see it associated with younger ages and prefer to use 'chill' or 'hang out' to describe their 'unstructured / non-prescriptive play'. - Spaces for play and recreation can become more closely linked with self-identity and group or club culture associated with those activities (i.e. skating or organised sports). - Hubs associated with spaces for play and recreation providing amenities tend to be preferred with access to public transport and shops close by. - Flexible spaces that cater for more dynamic and changing activity can also be valued.

3.3.6 Adults and informal recreation

The interests and skills that pertain to adults 25+ years are as follows:

Age-Group:	Play / Informal Recreation:	Interests and Needs:
Adults (25+ years)	Environmental Connection Exercise / Fitness Group Activity Participation Movement Outdoor Games Relaxation Social Gathering	- In this age group play tends to be replaced by informal recreation where the play space becomes a destination for social gathering, sharing meals, reading, relaxing outdoors, and exercising. - Role as carer for children needs to be considered. - Opportunities to play with and support younger children in their care should be provided. - Play spaces need to be intuitively accessible to adults of different abilities. - Spaces for adults to recreate such as open space, recreational games, fitness equipment and activities such as agility and climbing should be located separately, but adjacent to play spaces to clearly define the differences in use, whilst allowing for cross over in use and improve on-site safety. - Shade, seating, picnic tables, grassed and garden areas encourage regular use by young adults, families, and local workers. - Opportunities to engage in a fun and playful way should not be forgotten.

3.3.7 Older adults and informal recreation

The interests and skills that pertain to adults 60+ years are as follows:

Age-Group:	Play / Informal Recreation:	Interests and Needs:
Older Adults (60+ years)	Environmental Connection Group Activity Participation Movement Outdoor Games Social Gathering	• In this age group informal recreation becomes about opportunities to socially connect and stay healthy through regular exercise. • The role as carer for grandchildren needs to be considered. • Play spaces need to be intuitively accessible and particularly mindful of this age-group's needs for seating at regular distances, smooth surface transitions and spatial dimensions. • Any specialised equipment for activity or fitness should be designed with this age-groups needs in mind. • Gardens and the natural environment are valued, but shade and shelter need to be present. • Opportunities to engage in a fun and playful way should not be forgotten.

3.4 Summary of current research and trends in play and recreation

A foundation for a 10 year Play Space Strategy requires an understanding of where academic and industry thinking is at present in relation to outdoor play, play spaces and informal recreation in public open space.

3.4.1 Introduction

Research into current and emerging play and informal recreation trends was undertaken for this project, to present opportunities for the inclusion of a greater diversity of play into the future. It is important to note that some of these trends are not suitable for certain play space environments in Yarra's context.

3.4.2 Play

There are a number of current and emerging trends for play in open space that are discussed in this section below. Some of these trends are already present in Yarra's play spaces and others suggest opportunities for broader experiences to be considered (where site and situation are suitable).

Structured / Unstructured Nature Play and Loose Parts

Play spaces that encourage enjoyment and exploration of the natural environment.

This can be presented in two ways; structured and unstructured. Unstructured nature play occurs incidentally in existing natural environments (i.e. open space and bushland environments). Structured nature play is found in the form of fixed timber elements (i.e. logs and log steppers for balance and more organic timber structures for complex climbing). Feature items can also be added (in suitable situations) such as rocks, logs, grass, trees, plants, water, sand, and loose materials (i.e. twigs, leaves, stones, etc) that can be manipulated to create cubby houses or be used in play or games as currency. Nature play should be encouraged in specific areas, leaving other areas of habitat undisturbed.



Sensory Play

Play spaces that engage the different senses including sound, sight, touch, and smell.

This includes items such as outdoor musical instruments or sound elements, sensory planting / garden areas inviting users to touch and smell plants, water features, and custom or specifically designed equipment that spins or rotates. Engaging different senses provides a richer connection to the world and stimulates brain-function and communication skills.



Risky Play / Adventure Play

Play spaces with physically challenging elements and structures that create a sense of adventure, the unknown or perceived risk, but are still designed to meet safety standards and are managed so they are age or skill appropriate to access.

Examples of play and recreation include flying foxes, giant slides, multi-level forts, ropes course, large rock boulders, climbing walls and wobbly bridges. Sometimes depending on scale and intended user age-group, this may also fit under the category of parkour and specific agility activities.



Multi-Generational Play

Play spaces that are designed to be used by people of all ages including adults, parents, grandparents, and carers, as well as adults with disabilities.

The play space is set up with a diverse range of elements, furniture and surfaces can be used by people of different sizes, ages, and abilities to participate in play or recreation, or to supervise younger children at play. This may also incorporate complementary activities next to a play space (i.e. outdoor fitness equipment, multi-use courts or social gathering spaces). There may also be different skill levels, heights, or spaces present, or the elements provided are flexible enough that they can be used effectively by different age-groups and abilities.



Inter-Generational Play

Play spaces that are designed to support different age groups to play or recreate 'together'.

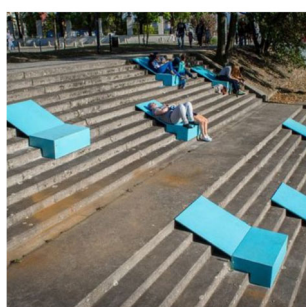
The play space includes open-ended elements, equipment or spaces designed for different ages to play or recreate together in the same space or activity (i.e. a joey swing with child and adult seat, or carousel designed to be used by adults and children together, or open-ended elements that can be used by everyone).



Play Experiences

Play spaces that include treatments and interventions that exist in the everyday urban fabric that encourages playful interactions.

This type of play space can be found as pavement treatments, grassed surfaces, landscape forms (mounds or berms), low walls, steps, furniture, sculpture, garden planting, trees or lighting in most open space or urban / civic squares.



Play Streets

Organised neighbourhood street closures where the street becomes a community space for local residents to play, recreate and gather socially.

Starting as a small revolutionary parent-led action called 'Playing Out' in 2007 in Bristol, UK, the play streets movement has grown globally in recent decades primarily in European and North American cities. The key driver for the Play Streets movement has been the increasing restrictions on children's access to play and recreation and diminishing social connection in residential neighbourhoods. The play streets movement has grown to encompass a multitude of social projects in larger cities of developed countries all around the world. Lead by the premise of greater community connection, this has ignited child-friendly urban planning discussion and debate globally. In Australia, this has

manifested itself less so as a movement, except in major cities where the pressures of increasing urban density are apparent. A local example of the Play Streets movement is found in Play Australia's 1000 Play Streets program.



3.4.3 Informal recreation

There are a number of current and emerging trends for informal recreation in open space that are discussed in the following section. Some of these trends are already present in Yarra's play spaces and others suggest opportunities for broader experiences to be considered (where site and situation are suitable).

Social Gathering

Seating, yarning circles, shaded picnic areas, informal seating, grassed open space for picnics and other activities that involve social connection.

These refer to spaces that provide opportunities for different kinds of social gathering, meet ups or recreational activities (i.e. dog walking, classes, or events) for different ages in an open-space setting.



Fitness / Outdoor Gyms / Older Adults Equipment

Designed equipment, either located as stations along a path circuit or combined in one location in open space as an 'outdoor gym'.

The range of elements and equipment (that often replicate equipment found in commercial gyms or sports centres) specifically designed around different types of fitness training such as cardio, balance, strength and coordination, or a whole body workout. More recent iterations involve equipment specifically designed for active movement, balance, and occupational therapy for older adults.



Skate, Scoot and Wheels

Different kinds of facilities for skating or skateboarding have been around for a number of decades and have their own very well developed culture, however recent years has seen a more multi and user diverse approach.

Skate parks and facilities vary in form (bowls, ridges, steps etc,) where tricks and moves are performed by the user, be that skating or other wheels in particular ways. Skate parks are often formed to encourage risky manoeuvres, but also provide opportunities for learning and improving skills. Skate parks are often key places in the community for meeting peers and socialising and users may travel distances to use a facility.



Ninja Courses / Parkour / Agility

Some of the newest forms of recreational play for older children and adults include design for Parkour and constructed Ninja Courses, both designed for building agility skills and some quite challenging.

Parkour is a form of sport or recreation involving fluid urban movement. It includes techniques such as the tic-tac (wall step/run), kong (a form of vault), and precision (2-foot to 2-foot jump) among a myriad of others and utilises existing structural forms as its platform.

Ninja Courses or Agility Courses are complex structured settings for children or adults (or both) in parks designed with ropes, climbing / crawling, and balance features for usually practising upper-body strength and agility. These parks feature obstacle courses that challenge your balance, upper body strength, co-ordination, and determination.



Climbing Walls / Bouldering

A vertical or almost vertical face with multiple grips fixed to the surface for hands and feet to hold while climbing. Grips are often colour-coded to indicate the difficulty of the course and the aim is to complete the course or use the grips to scramble up to the top.

Climbing walls can be found on play equipment or free-standing walls. Rather than a course, these are used as alternate methods for climbing up structures and can be used by all ages. Bouldering tends to be the term applied to adult climbing and these are usually planned courses on large monolith 360 degree built forms or available existing walls.



Recreational Games / Multi-Use Courts (MUC)

Elements and settings for social connection through supporting games of different kinds.

These may be on the small scale of table games such as chess or table tennis or on a larger scale of grassed open space or courts for ball games. Sometimes these can be structured, intentional and other times can just be part of the open space treatment that accommodates random playful interactions or games.



Technology / Digital Interactives

Integrated technology that encourages physical activity through various games and activities.

These spaces can use wi-fi connectivity that enables complementary interactivity (i.e. for geocaching) or electronic interactive play equipment (i.e. touch challenges, DJ booth or dance floor) using lights, sounds and sequences that promote social play. These features can encourage the use of fine and gross motor skills.



3.5 What does the term ‘play space’ mean?

The term ‘play space’ refers not only to traditional playgrounds (with play equipment), but also includes other structured facilities such as skate, multi-use courts, fitness equipment and climbing walls, as well as recreational games such as table-tennis, bocce, and chess tables.

A play space also describes the broader space beyond any fixed facilities for play and informal recreation to include the supporting landscape environment, paths, furniture, and amenity.

Within Yarra other open spaces that do not contain traditional play equipment or recreational facilities are also considered play spaces, as they also provide for informal play opportunities, social gathering, and fitness activities. Together these form an important part of Yarra’s play space network that caters for all ages, abilities and changing needs.

3.6 Planning locally for play in Yarra

Planning for future play in Yarra will involve using a ‘local lens’ that supports the opportunity for easy, walkable access to play spaces for residents and workers.

3.6.1 Precincts for planning and the role of the ‘Local Play Space Network’

The local play space network uses strategic planning to create a range of diverse experiences across a precinct and beyond. This framework allows Council to avoid a ‘cookie-cutter’ approach to play spaces, by consciously intending to complement what is offered at adjacent sites in a precinct, so simply what is found at one site is not replicated at the next. This is particularly pertinent for precincts with mostly small or constrained sites.

3.6.2 Existing types of play spaces in Yarra’s Local Play Space Networks

The following list, describes and gives examples of the current types of play spaces found in Yarra that form a local play space network for each of the planning precincts.

Playgrounds

This is Yarra’s most recognisable type of play space for children’s play. Comprising of one or more fixed and dimensioned equipment structures and/or elements such as swings, slides, climbing etc., and can include playgrounds with either proprietary or customised equipment / elements and other related amenity. Whilst equipment is seen as being prescriptive in its’ use, children will often adapt it for alternate imaginative use in play and games.



Image: Playground at Citizens Park, Richmond

Other Play Spaces

These other types of play spaces found in Yarra have been described in the previous section:

- **Skate, Scoot and Wheels**
- **Multi-Use Courts**
- **Fitness and Agility**
- **Recreational Games**



Images (Top – Bottom / Left – Right): 1. Skate, scoot and wheels at Quarries Park, Clifton Hill. 2. Multi-use ball court at Hall Reserve South, Clifton Hill. 3. Fitness equipment at McConchie Reserve, Richmond South. 4. Chess (recreational games) at Edinburgh Gardens, Fitzroy North.

All these types of play spaces offer more flexible informal recreation opportunities for different age groups. In certain sites these may be co-located with higher-level playgrounds or in others be the predominant facility. This will be determined by Council in response to the prevailing community and local network needs.

Complementary Spaces

These are play spaces in Yarra that offer opportunities for non-prescriptive play or play experiences and informal recreation, using more open-ended open space features found in reserves, parks, urban and civic spaces. Complementary spaces need to cater for a broader range of user needs where accommodating a playground is either not a suitable or feasible option. Some examples of elements within complementary spaces (suitable for a range of ages / abilities), are listed below:

Features:	Play / Informal Recreation Opportunities:
Art Elements	• Children's play (active play, imaginary play, and games) • Sensory experience
Garden Areas	• Connection to natural world • Loose materials for children's imaginative play • Sensory experience (smell, colour and texture)

Grouped Seating / Tables	• Children's play (games, imaginative and active play) • Resting • Sharing conversation or meals • Social gathering and connection • Working or studying
Lawn Areas	• Creative movement • Fitness / wellbeing activities (group or individual such as Yoga or Pilates etc.) • Informal games (kick-to-kick ball games / frisbee) • Picnicking • Running around / games • Social gathering and connection
Open Space	• Children's play (active play, exploration, imaginative play, and games) • Exposure to natural light and fresh air • Informal games • Relaxation and respite • Social gathering and connection
Paths and Surfaces	• Children's play (active play, imaginary play, and games) • Fitness / exercise / training • Informal games • Walking and social connection • Wheels
Sculptural Seating	• Active play • Games and imaginative play • Sitting / relaxing / social gathering and connection
Shade	• Listening to music / reading • Protection from the elements • Relaxing • Social gathering and connection
Steps / Platforms and Low Decks	• Children's play (active play, imaginative play, and games) • Event participation / seating • Reading or listening to music • Relaxation • Resting • Social gathering and connection • Working or studying



Images (Left – Right): 1. Open space at Coate Park, Alphington. 2. Paths and surfaces, steps, sculptural seating, lawn and garden areas at Richmond Terrace, Central Richmond.

Future BMX

Yarra has no specific formal setting for BMX. There is a concern that environmental habitat in valued open space is presently being destroyed because of self-built courses and jumps. Council will look into future provision where or if suitable space is available.

3.6.3 Additional play space opportunities within the precinct networks

As previously discussed Yarra's particular urban fabric, open space character, and community, means that opportunities for play and informal recreation within Council's own network can be further embellished by other publicly accessible facilities outside of Council's ownership and management.

Play spaces in public housing precincts

Yarra is home to a number of public housing communities that have associated open space and recreational facilities already accessible to those residential communities and in some cases to the general public. These properties and associated recreational facilities are owned and managed by the Victorian State Government Department of Family, Fairness and Housing (DFFH), the Victorian State Government and include the following sites and related facilities:

- Wellington Street, Collingwood (1 full multi-use court, 2 playgrounds, and table tennis)
- Hoddle Street, Collingwood (1 and ½ multi-use courts, 2 cricket practice nets, and 3 playgrounds)
- Fitzroy (1 full multi-use court, cricket practice net, oval space for soccer, and 4 playgrounds)
- Elizabeth Street, Richmond (1 full multi-use court, oval space for soccer, 3 playgrounds, fitness equipment and table tennis)
- Highett Street, Richmond (1 full multi-use court, oval space for soccer, 1 playground, fitness equipment and table tennis)

Public access in schools

There are a number of school grounds in Yarra that are already publicly accessible, such as Princes Hill Secondary College multi-use court. This means that residents can use existing facilities that are owned and managed by the Victorian State Government Department of Education in line with each of the school's own policies. Yarra also has a 25-year shared-use lease for public use of the playground, multi-use courts and table tennis at Yarra Primary School in Richmond, which is included in Council's network of play spaces.

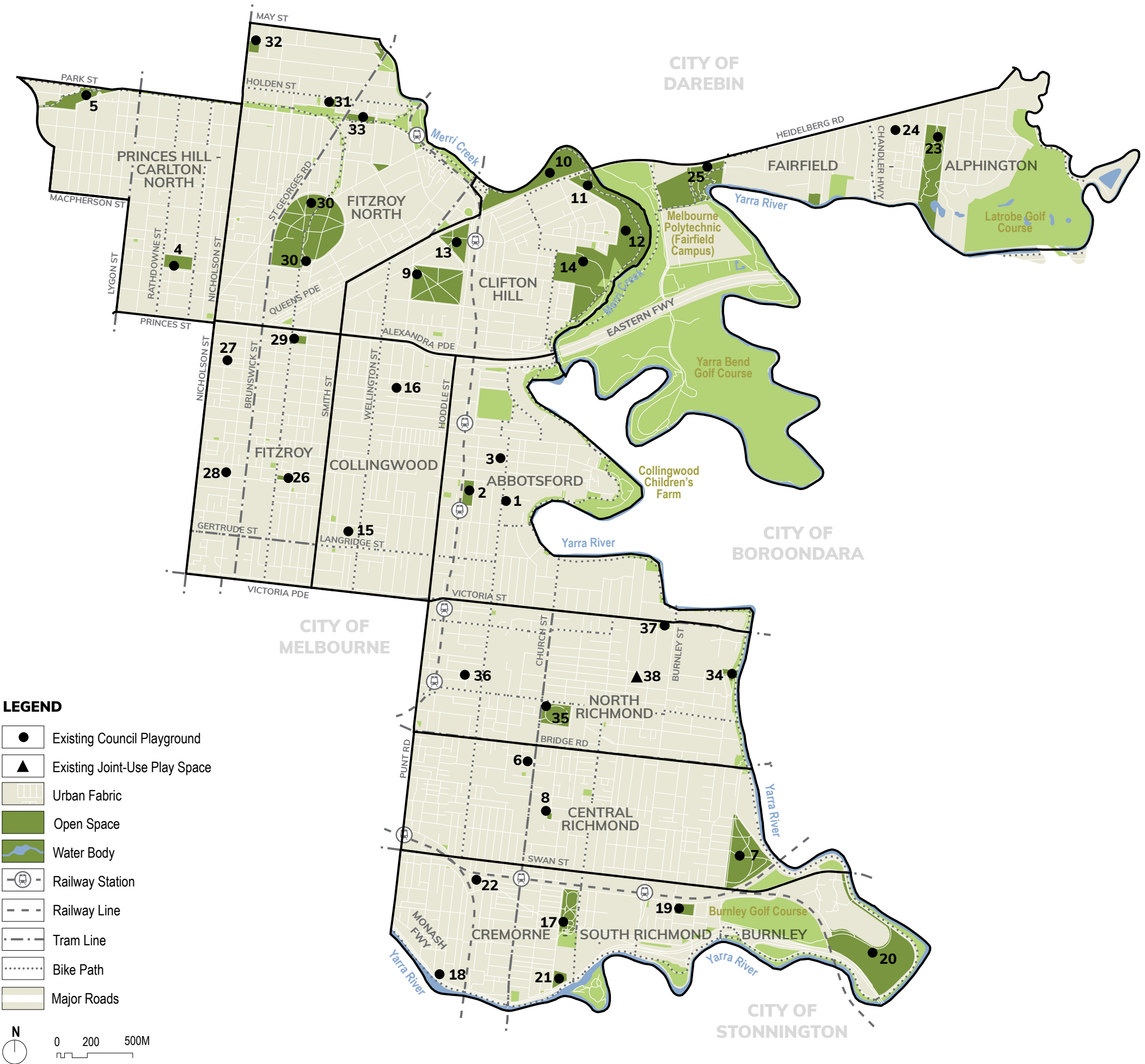
Council will investigate shared use agreements with DFFH and school sites in the future regardless of gaps in provision.

Access to play spaces in surrounding municipalities

The City of Yarra is surrounded by several other local government authorities including the Cities of Melbourne, Stonnington, Boroondara, Darebin, and Merri-bek, which all provide play spaces that are accessible by active or public transport by the Yarra community.

Some of these play spaces have highly developed playgrounds (i.e. Carlton Gardens Playground) or offer larger skate facilities (i.e. Riverside Skate Park in the Alexandra Gardens and Prahran Skate Park) and all provide further supplementary open space experiences to Yarra's play space network.

Many residents living on the periphery of Yarra's municipal boundaries already rely on these nearby facilities to support their needs, and may not perceive major arterial roads, railway and river / creek corridors as significant barriers to access.



Map 4: Existing playgrounds (with play equipment) in Yarra

EXISTING PLAYGROUNDS:

Abbotsford 1. Browns Reserve 2. Gahan Reserve 3. Studley Reserve	Clifton Hill 9. Darling Gardens 10. George Knott Reserve 11. Hall Reserve North 12. Hall Reserve South 13. Mayors Park 14. Quarries Park	Cremorne-Richmond South-Burnley 17. Barkly Gardens 18. Charles Evans Reserve 19. Golden Square (Bicentennial Park) 20. Kevin Bartlett Reserve 21. McConchie Reserve 22. White Street Reserve	Fairfield - Alphington 23. Alphington Park 24. Artisan Park 25. Fairfield Park	Fitzroy North 30. Edinburgh Gardens 31. Holden Byrne Reserve 32. Langdon Reserve 33. Park Reserve
Carlton North - Princes Hill 4. Curtain Square 5. Hardy Gallagher Reserve	Collingwood 15. Cambridge Street Reserve 16. McNamara Reserve		Fitzroy 26. Condell Street Reserve 27. Garry Owen Park 28. King William Reserve 29. Smith Reserve	North Richmond 34. Annette's Place 35. Citizen's Park 36. Egan Park 37. Williams Reserve 38. Yarra Primary School (Shared-Use Facility)
Central Richmond 6. Ben Alexander Reserve 7. Burnley Park 8. Cairns Reserve				



Map 5: Existing other play types and informal recreation in Yarra

EXISTING SKATE & WHEELS / MULTI-USE COURT (MUC) / FITNESS & RECREATIONAL GAMES (RG):

Abbotsford 2. Gahan Reserve MUC	Clifton Hill 12. Hall Reserve South MUC / CRICKET NETS 14. Quarries Park SKATE	Fairfield - Alphington 65. Fairlea Reserve MUC complex
Carlton North - Princes Hill 4. Curtain Square MUC x 2	Cremorne-Richmond South-Burnley 60. Church Street Reserve RG 20. Kevin Bartlett Reserve FITNESS 21. McConchie Reserve MUC / FITNESS / RG 62. Ryans Reserve MUC	Fitzroy North 30. Edinburgh Gardens SKATE / MUC / RG 32. Langdon Reserve MUC 33. Park Reserve MUC
Central Richmond 7. Burnley Park MUC		North Richmond 83. Butler Street Park RG 35. Citizen's Park FITNESS X 2 38. Yarra Primary School (Shared-Use Facility) MUC / RG

4. Yarra's future vision for play

A planning framework for play spaces in Yarra has been developed to clearly guide the actions arising from this Strategy. This framework includes a vision statement, that encapsulates Council's key intentions and 5 guiding principles, each with a set of more specific goals for Yarra's play spaces. These have been developed from the background research and community information gathering undertaken.

4.1 Vision statement

The vision for the Yarra Play Space Strategy is:

'Yarra's play spaces will enhance the wider open space network, be engaging and adaptable, connect to place and be welcoming to all our community.'

4.2 Principles and goals

4.2.1 Purpose

Principles and goals have been developed to provide an overarching framework that responds to community needs and best practice design, and guides the renewal, upgrade, and development of future play spaces in Yarra.

4.2.2 Principals and goals

Yarra's play spaces will:

Principles:	Goals:
1. Respond to changing needs in our community by:	
	• Creating open ended adaptable play opportunities. • Moving away from single use elements for play, creating opportunities for many different experiences and outcomes. • Responding to population growth and projected demographic changes. • Balancing the needs of all users of open spaces. • Responding to broader impacts on the urban environment that may affect the future of Yarra's open spaces.

2. Promote a diversity of experience across the city by:



- Creating a network of play types that complement each other.
- Ensuring differences are offered at each play space across a precinct, responding to the local environment and minimising repetition.

3. Support accessibility, inclusion & participation by:



- Considering the needs of all age groups.
- Considering the needs of people of different abilities, recognising that there is diversity within disability.
- Improving physical access to spaces where feasible and appropriate to the level and scale of the space.
- Creating spaces that are designed to be welcoming and safe.
- Designing spaces to activate the senses.
- Providing a range of 'play' zones, to suit different abilities and preferences (this may include quiet zones, solo play, group play, and sensory spaces).

4. Promote healthy living, through activity & social connection by:



- Promoting walkability and active travel to play spaces.
- Improving access to open space and natural elements (i.e. sunshine, shade, greenery, expanses of lawn, and fresh air).
- Designing spaces to activate the senses.
- Promoting physical fitness and active movement within play spaces.
- Providing a range of opportunities for community connection and gathering within play spaces that improves mental health.

5. Be well designed & sustainable by:



- Ensuring selected play types are suited to existing site conditions and scale, and reflect local character.
- Designing play spaces that are well integrated within the open space environment, including clear sightlines and the consideration of orientation, passive surveillance, and lighting.
- Designing play spaces with materials that are sourced locally, durable, and consider the lifecycle of the material, including its manufacture and its end of life disposal.
- Providing site suitable amenity and natural shade / canopy to help mitigate the urban heat island effect.
- Promoting biodiversity within the open space environment.

5. How we prepared this Strategy

5.1 Methods

This Strategy has been developed through research, consultation and engagement with Yarra's community. In addition, existing playgrounds have been assessed to develop a picture of the current state of play in Yarra. Strengths and weaknesses have been analysed, and a future vision, and set of principles and goals have been developed. Planning tools and recommendations in the form of an action plan have been prepared to inform Council regarding directions to address improvements and implement priority projects.

5.1.1 Diagram of process

This Strategy was developed through the following sequential stages:



Diagram 3 (above): Draft Play Space Strategy methodology

5.1.2 Community engagement summary – Stage 1 (information gathering)

Early engagement with the community was undertaken to gather information to inform the development of this Strategy in October and November 2023. The objectives of this community engagement were to:

- Inform the community that we are developing Yarra's first play space strategy for the next ten years;
- Obtain feedback from the Yarra community;
- Understand the needs of the Yarra community and what sort of play spaces they would like us to create;
- Understand where the Yarra community think improvements can be made and where there should be new types of experiences;
- What is perceived to work in other municipalities and what could be done better in Yarra;
- Make sure that the voices of children and young people were heard from during the community consultation; and
- Make sure that the feedback included representation from all ages and abilities.

This engagement involved a number of methods including a community survey, online mapping contributions, targeted and informal consultations, community pop-ups, and submissions gathered from various community groups and organisations. The engagement activities were designed to reach the diverse community of Yarra in a way that meaningfully captured the needs and interests of different age groups and abilities. Some high-level findings were:

- The top 4 most important features of play spaces were plenty of shade (12.6%), variety of play experience (10.1%), equipment for all ages (9.7%), and close to home (9.1%), and toilets (7.7%).
- The top 4 most mentioned playgrounds were Alphington Park, Edinburgh Gardens, Citizens Park and Darling Gardens.

An engagement summary report is currently available on Council's website for public viewing. It is important to note that at the time the focus of this engagement was limited to discussion of playgrounds (play equipment), rather than the broader definition of play spaces used in this report.

6. Tools for future play space planning

6.1 Walkability and gap analysis

Walkability is easy local access to support residents, workers and visitors to use play spaces more regularly.

We have mapped the walkability of Yarra's current network of play spaces and from this information have identified where the gaps are or where play spaces are not as easily accessible by the community. This information assists with future planning for Yarra's play spaces and is discussed further in this section.

6.1.1 The purpose of the 400 metre (m) walkability measurement

This is a walkable catchment used in planning to map accessibility of spaces within planning precincts.

A 400m (or a 5-10 minute) walkable distance is generally accepted as a standard planning catchment for regularly accessed local facilities from home. Distances beyond 400m are generally only accepted for destinations that have more significant attractors. Furthermore, walking beyond 5-10 minutes can limit access for community members with a physical disability, those pushing prams or wheelchairs, older adults and for activities that require carrying equipment.

For the purpose of this Strategy the 400m measurement has been shown as a radius from facilities. It doesn't always mean 400m direct walking, as there are other variables and considerations such as short-cuts through parks, physical barriers or feelings of safety which can impact walking times.

6.1.2 The importance of 'Complementary spaces' to the overall play space network

Complementary spaces such as Richmond Terrace in Central Richmond (refer Section 3.6), are critical components to meet walkability requirements within Yarra's play space network. These spaces provide more flexible, unstructured play experiences – complementing the more prescriptive playgrounds and other types of informal recreation through more open-ended design.

6.1.3 Perceived barriers to walkability access

Generally, with walkability, 'barriers to access' such as major highways, freeways or arterial roads, railway corridors and water bodies such as rivers and creeks are usually identified as restrictions to the 400m walkability radius. Yarra has a number of these present in its urban fabric.

A larger proportion of Yarra's residents use active transport (walking / cycling) and public transport within and beyond their local areas, than other municipalities due to being compact in area and a community that embraces an inner-city lifestyle. Residents regularly cross busy roads in activity areas and transport corridors. They use inclusive walking routes such as accessible bridges, safe pedestrian crossovers and underpasses, as well as traffic lights, meaning that these barriers are often more **perceived barriers** rather than **physical barriers** and providing inclusive routes for connection to open space is important for the Yarra Community.

6.1.4 Walkability gap analysis

Abbotsford - North-East

There is a walkability access gap to the north-east of the precinct. This gap is balanced by access to the open space around the Collingwood Children's Farm, as well as trail path access to Dights Falls / Yarra Bend Park and Fairfield Park to the north. There would be a good opportunity to address gaps by developing a play space (with a focus on connecting people to water through improving access to the Birrarung - Yarra River) within the existing complimentary space at Flockhart Reserve.

Abbotsford - South-Central

There is a walkability access gap to the north and south-central of Victoria Street. This area is a mix of residential, commercial and industry with limited access to available, suitable open space. The YOSS discusses a possible future opportunity for a Neighbourhood Level open space if the CUB site redevelops, this would be a good opportunity to also consider a play space within this proposed open space to address this gap.

Carlton North – Princes Hill

There is a larger walkability gap south of Park Street and to the north of MacPherson Street, right into the western edge of the precinct where there is higher-density housing. This is due to lack of accessible, suitable open space in this area, but is mitigated by close access to the play space at Princes Park (City of Melbourne) to the west and the Linear Railway Parklands to the north.

Central Richmond

There is a very small walkability access gap east of Punt Road and south of Bridge Road where access to suitable, available open space is not available. This gap is only addressed by complementary spaces to the north at Urban Arts Square and the south at Wangaratta Reserve, near West Richmond Station. The YOSS proposes investigating an opportunity to develop new open space to the north-west of the precinct, this would be a good opportunity to also consider a play space within this proposed open space to address this gap.

Clifton Hill

There is a large walkability gap mostly to the east of the train line corridor, north of Alexandra Parade. This is due to lack of accessible, suitable open space, however there is open space and play space provision to the east along the Merri Creek parklands, including City-Wide Level play spaces such as Quarries Park. Improvement to the diversity of the smaller Local Level play spaces here, will provide the quality of experience needed by this precinct.

Collingwood

There is a walkability access gap to the south-east corner of this precinct, between Langridge Street and Victoria Parade, west of Hoddle Street. This area is predominantly industrial and commercial, with some residential. It is also addressed by close access to play spaces at Fitzroy Gardens and Powlett Reserve to the south in East Melbourne (City of Melbourne).

Cremorne / Richmond South / Burnley

There are no key gaps in walkability within this precinct, however the diversity of play, social gathering and accessibility in existing play spaces such as Charles Evans Reserve, Golden Square (Bicentennial Park) and White Street Reserve needs improvement to meet local community needs.

Fairfield – Alphington

There is a walkability access gap to the east of the Chandler Highway. This area is presently still under development. One new play space with a playground has been developed at Artisan Park and there are 3 future play spaces proposed as part of the AMCOR / Alphington Paper Mills re-development (Yarra Bend); Workshop Park (with future playground), Heritage Park and Village Square.

Fitzroy

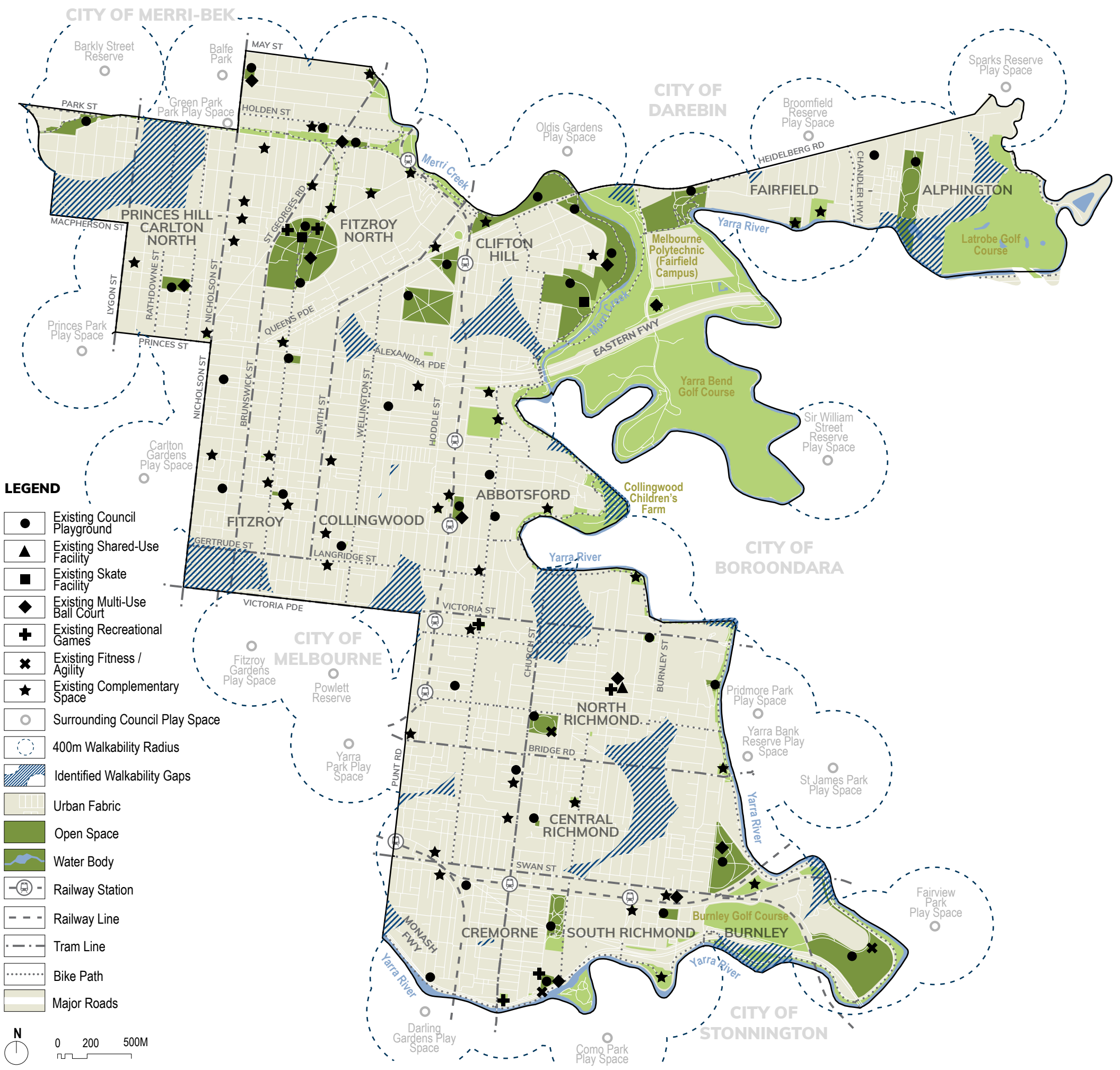
There is a walkability access gap in the south-west corner of this precinct, north of Victoria Parade and east of Nicholson Street, where there is presently no suitable, available open space to develop a play space. The YOSS discusses a future opportunity to develop a new Local Level open space, which would be a good opportunity to add play or informal recreation within this proposed open space to address this gap. It is also addressed by close access to play spaces at Carlton Gardens in Carlton and Fitzroy Gardens in East Melbourne (City of Melbourne).

Fitzroy North

There is a walkability access gap to playgrounds in the north-east of the precinct, which can be addressed by the development of a new playground within Edwardes Place Park which is an existing complementary space in the Local Play Network.

North Richmond

There are no key gaps in walkability within this precinct, however the diversity of play, social gathering and accessibility in existing play spaces such as Annette's Place, Egan Park and Williams Reserve need improvement to meet local community needs.



Map 6: 400m walkability access to play spaces and identified gaps in Yarra



FUTURE PROPOSED LOCAL LEVEL PLAYGROUNDS:

Fairfield – Alphington
1. Workshop Park

Fitzroy North
2. Gasworks Park

FUTURE PROPOSED COMPLEMENTARY SPACES:

Fairfield – Alphington
3. Heritage Park
4. Village Square

Fitzroy
5. Corner Gertrude /
Brunswick Streets Project

ADDITIONAL PROPOSED PLAY PROVISION WITHIN EXISTING SITES:

Abbotsford
6. Flockhart Reserve
7. Gahan Reserve
8. Victoria Park

Carlton North – Princes Hill
9. Curtain Square
10. Hardy Gallagher Reserve

Central Richmond
11. Burnley Park

Clifton Hill
12. Mayors Park
13. Quarries Park

Collingwood
14. Peel Street Park

Cremorne – Richmond South - Burnley
15. Barkly Gardens
16. Charles Evans Reserve
17. Loys Paddock

Fairfield – Alphington
18. Alphington Park
19. Fairfield Park

Fitzroy
20. Whitlam Place
21. King William Reserve

Fitzroy North
22. Edwardes Place Park

North Richmond
23. O'Connell Reserve

6.2 Access and inclusion

Inclusion at its heart involves the removal of barriers to participation in community life for everyone. This section discusses accessibility (or access) and inclusion, to provide a clearer understanding and practical tools for improving the planning of Yarra's play spaces.

6.2.1 The diversity of disability

At least one in five Australians today have some form of disability, which equates to about twenty percent of the population. The number and types of disabilities is often unknown or misunderstood. There are, in reality, innumerable types of disabilities that exist – some are more common than others and some, like mental illness, epilepsy, neurological functioning and sensory differences, are invisible.

Disability is broadly defined as an impairment in body function or structure, an activity limitation (the tasks a person does), or restricted participation (the involvement of a person in life situations). This is primarily based on concepts from the World Health Organisation's (WHO), International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF).

Disability is a rich spectrum. A disability may be permanent or temporary. It may be present at birth, acquired in an accident or develop with age. It may also have a moderate or significant impact on a person's life.

The Disability Discrimination Act (1992) is the legal framework that covers a wide breadth of disabilities including intellectual, physical, mental illness, sensory, neurological, learning disability and more.

6.2.2 What's the difference between inclusion and access in play spaces?

Accessible and *Inclusive* are terms commonly used when labelling or discussing play spaces. These terms do not share the same meaning, though are strongly inter-related and should be clearly understood when planning for children, young people, and adults with a disability to respond effectively.

Accessible play spaces

Accessibility is most commonly associated with mobility standards and safety compliance.

Accessibility refers to the physical ability of people to access a place or thing. Accessible design mainly addresses the movement needs of people with disabilities. When applied to play spaces, conforming to accessibility standards in key aspects including the equipment, surfacing, and supporting facilities, creates an accessible play space.

Inclusive play spaces

An inclusive play space invites people of all ages, abilities, and cultures to come together.

Inclusive play spaces should be easy to get to; easy to move around; provide a range of play and informal recreation options and challenges; active and quiet zones; and have appropriate facilities in a comfortable and safe environment. Inclusive play spaces should encourage everyone to stay as long as they choose. An inclusive play space utilises the principles of universal design, creating spaces people of all ages and abilities can enjoy.

6.2.3 Universal Design

By adopting a universal design approach when designing and planning, play spaces will be accessed, understood, and used to the greatest extent possible by everyone regardless of their age, size, cultural background, gender, or ability. Simply put, if a play space is accessible, usable, convenient and a pleasure to use, everyone in the community benefits.

Universal design is made up of the following 8 goals:

1. **Body fit** – Accommodating a wide range of body sizes and abilities.
2. **Comfort** – Keeping demands within desirable limits of body function and perception.
3. **Awareness** – Ensuring that critical information for use is easily perceived.
4. **Understanding** – Making methods of operation and use intuitive, clear and unambiguous.
5. **Wellness** – Contributing to health promotion and protection from hazards.
6. **Social integration** – Treating all groups with dignity and respect.
7. **Personalisation** – Incorporating opportunities for choice and the expression of individual preferences.
8. **Cultural appropriateness** – Respecting and reinforcing cultural values, and the social and environmental contexts of any design project.

6.2.4 Why focus on greater accessibility in higher level play spaces?

In Yarra, inclusion will be an integral part of all play spaces at any level, however a focus on greater accessibility (as defined above) will be applied to higher level classification play spaces. This is to maximise opportunities in larger sized open space and more complex play space provision, where there are more specialised supporting infrastructure (i.e. public transport access, car parking, accessible toilets or 'changing places' facilities) and higher visitation.

6.3 Classifications and key features

6.3.1 Introduction and purpose

Why classify play spaces? Primarily, classifications are intended to create equity of distribution across the municipality and provide diversity of experience within each precinct's local play network. One of the key planning tools for play spaces in Yarra is the classification system.

On a practical level, classifications respond to the size and situation of the open space which determines the key features criteria and guides provision types. There are 5 classifications of play spaces in Yarra and all 5 classification levels use the metric of 400 metre walkable access. This system is discussed in further detail in this section.

Alignment to YOSS classifications

The classifications already set in the YOSS define the different sizes and criteria for open space. Additionally, within this Strategy, these aligned play space classifications define use and key features of facilities. Council always aims to provide a variety of different classifications within each precinct, it is however important to note that the particular mix is significantly influenced by available and suitable open space for play spaces.

The YOSS defines the following open-space classifications:

- Small Local Level
- Local Level
- Small Neighbourhood Level
- Neighbourhood Level
- City-wide Level
- Regional Level

There are no Regional Level play spaces in this Strategy, because of the suitability for such a facility and the close access to other larger 'destination' play spaces in surrounding municipalities.

Complementary Spaces

Complementary spaces in Yarra that offer opportunities for non-prescriptive play or play experiences and informal recreation using more open-ended open space features found in reserves, parks, urban and civic spaces are defined for the purposes of this document under a Small Local Level classification.

Key Features

Key features described for each classification level below use the terms **should have** (meaning the feature is a definite inclusion) and **consider** (meaning the feature is not a definite inclusion and should first be investigated as to its suitability for the site and community).

6.3.2 Small Local Level

Very small play space, usually only able to accommodate a focused or a small number of play space types and supporting amenity for the immediate local community.

Open Space / Playground Size:	Estimated Dwell Time:
0.03-0.10ha (300m ² – 1,000m ²) Requires a footprint of no less than 170m ² and no greater than 25% of play space size to incorporate a playground.	Less than 1hr (spontaneous and regular short duration use).
Key Features - The following is the broad criteria at this level:	
Open space	• Refer to YOSS for guidance on primary use.
Play space types	• Should have open-ended or unstructured elements for play, that can be used in multiple ways, providing basic experiences (if there is a gap in Local Play Network provision). • Should cater to one or a limited age range. • Consider unstructured nature play (i.e. rocks, logs etc.). • Consider a focused or singular play type, which should differ to surrounding local play spaces (if there is a gap in Local Play Network provision).
Accessibility and inclusion	• Should have a main path connecting to the play space. • Should have clear sightlines for personal safety. • Consider in-ground edging to support accessible entry to play spaces.
Social gathering	• Should have some formal or incidental elements for seating. • Consider accessible grouped seating or a picnic table where suitable.
Other facilities	• Consider an accessible drinking fountain. • Consider bike parking. • Consider fencing, low walls, other barriers or planted landscape mounds where the play space's proximity to roads or water body pose safety issues.
Natural environment	• Should have trees to provide natural shade / shelter. • Consider a combination of natural tree shade (open canopy) and a small amount of lower growing vegetation. • Consider a small amount of open area (grassed or paved depending on site).

6.3.3 Local Level

Small play space focussed on providing opportunities to support the immediate local community to play through a small range of structured play equipment.

Open Space / Playground Size:	Estimated Dwell Time:
0.10-0.49ha (1,000m ² – 4,900m ²) Requires a footprint of no less than 170m ² and no greater than 25% of play space size to incorporate a playground.	Up to 1hr (spontaneous and regular short duration use).
Key Features - The following is the broad criteria at this level:	
Open space	• Refer to YOSS for guidance on primary use.
Play space types	• Should have open-ended or unstructured elements for play and informal recreation, that can be used in a variety of ways. • Should cater to more than one age group. • Consider unstructured nature play (i.e. rocks, logs etc.). • Consider a small sized playground, which should differ to surrounding play spaces (if there is a gap in Local Play Network provision). • Consider multi-use court. • Consider recreational games.
Accessibility and inclusion	• Should have a main path connecting to the play space. • Should have clear sightlines and lighting for personal safety. • Consider in-ground edging to support accessible entry to play spaces. • Consider use of impact absorbing rubber surfacing to connect paths with key play and activities.
Social gathering	• Should have some formal or incidental elements for seating. • Should have grouped accessible seating or picnic tables where suitable to site. • Consider accessible BBQ areas.
Other facilities	• Should have an accessible drinking fountain. • Should have bike parking. • Consider structural shelter. • Consider fencing, low walls, other barriers or planted landscape mounds where the play space's proximity to roads or water body pose safety issues.
Natural environment	• Should have trees to provide natural shade / shelter. • Consider an open grassed space for play and informal recreation. • Consider a combination of natural tree shade (open canopy) and a small amount of lower growing vegetation.

6.3.4 Small Neighbourhood Level

Small - medium sized play space focussed on providing opportunities to support the broader local community to play and gather. With the provision of some structured play and social gathering elements. These spaces are large enough to also include other informal recreation such as multi-use courts and larger more developed social gathering elements. These play spaces aim to be walked to and consider other forms of active or public transport travel options.

Open Space Size:	Estimated Dwell Time:
0.50-0.99ha (5,000m ² – 9,900m ²)	Up to 2hrs (regular short duration use).
Key Features - The following is the broad criteria at this level:	
Play space types	• Should have open-ended or unstructured elements for play and informal recreation. • Should have a small sized playground, which should differ to surrounding play spaces in precinct. • Should have unstructured nature play (i.e. rocks, logs etc.). • Consider multi-use court. • Consider recreational games.
Accessibility and inclusion	• Should have a main path connecting to the play space. • Should have clear sightlines and lighting for personal safety. • Consider in-ground edging to support accessible entry to play spaces. • Consider use of impact absorbing rubber surfacing to connect paths with key play and activities.
Social gathering	• Should have some formal or incidental elements for seating. • Should have accessible grouped seating or picnic tables. • Consider accessible BBQ areas where suitable to site.
Other facilities	• Should have an accessible drinking fountain / fountains. • Should have bike parking. • Consider structural shelter. • Consider fencing, low walls, other barriers or planted landscape mounds where the play space's proximity to roads or water body pose safety issues.
Natural environment	• Should have trees to provide natural shade / shelter. • Should have an open grassed space for play and informal recreation. • Should have a combination of natural tree shade (open canopy) and a small amount of lower growing vegetation.

6.3.5 Neighbourhood Level

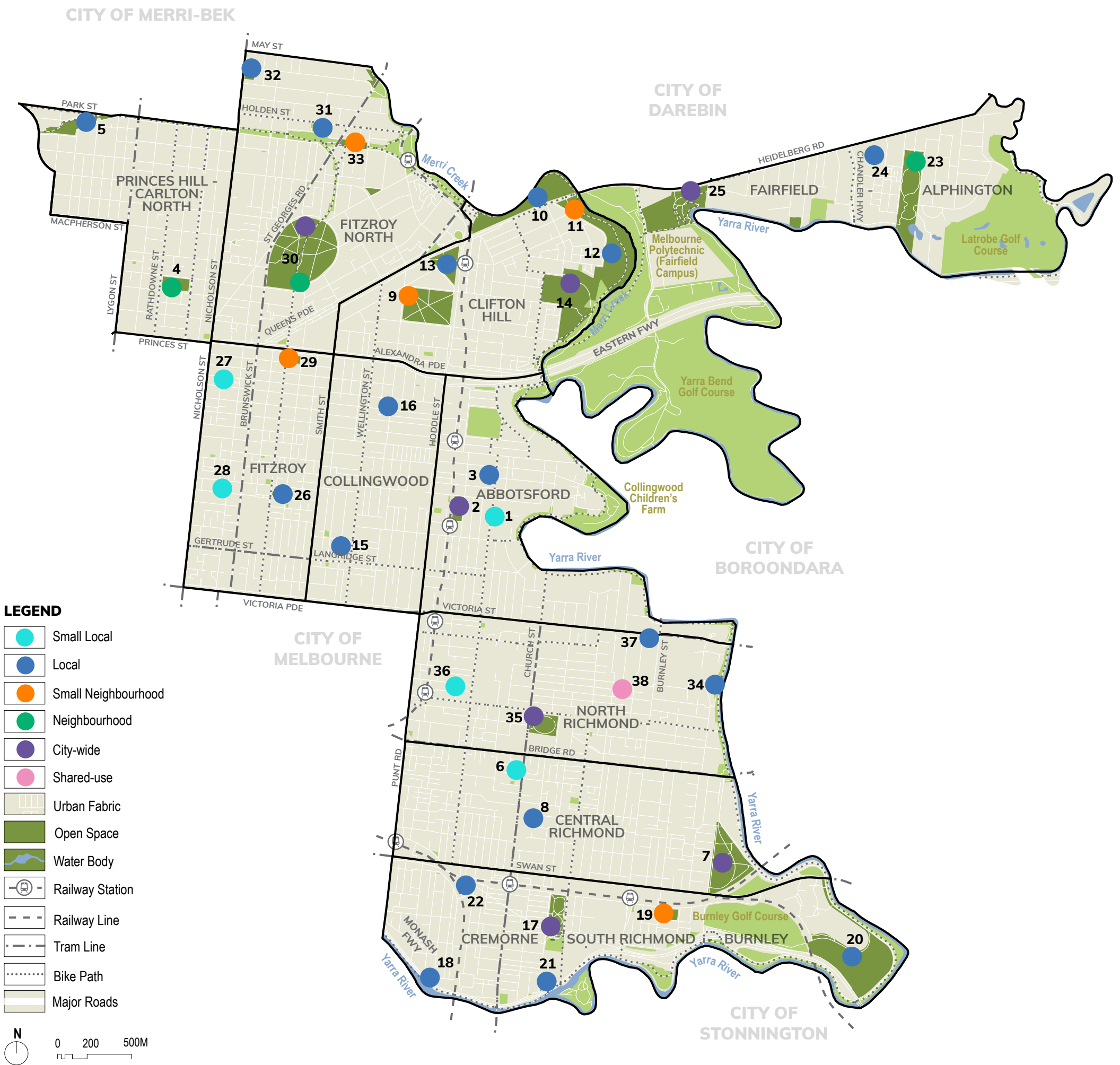
Medium sized play space focussed on providing a broader range of play and social gathering opportunities for different ages and abilities. Designed in context with the local environment, with a nuanced theme or treatment to attract interest. There is structured play, informal play, and social gathering elements. These play spaces aim to be walked to and consider other forms of active or public transport travel options.

Open Space Size:	Estimated Dwell Time:
Minimum 1 hectare (10,000m ²)	Up to 3hrs (regular, medium duration use).
Key Features - The following is the broad criteria at this level:	
Play space types	• Should have open-ended or unstructured elements for play and informal recreation. • Should have a small-medium sized playground, which should differ to surrounding play spaces in precinct. • Should have unstructured nature play (i.e. rocks, logs etc.). • Consider multi-use court. • Consider fitness equipment. • Consider recreational games.
Accessibility and inclusion	• Should have a main path connecting to the play space. • Should have clear sightlines and lighting for personal safety. • Consider secondary looped paths connecting to the main path and other facilities. • Consider in-ground edging to support accessible entry to play spaces. • Consider use of impact absorbing rubber surfacing to connect paths with key play and activities.
Social gathering	• Should have some formal or incidental elements for seating. • Should have accessible grouped seating or picnic tables. • Consider accessible BBQ areas.
Other facilities	• Should have an accessible drinking fountain / fountains • Should have bike parking. • Consider structural shelter. • Consider accessible toilet facilities. • Consider fencing, low walls, other barriers or planted landscape mounds where the play space's proximity to roads or water body pose safety issues.
Natural environment	• Should have trees to provide natural shade / shelter. • Should have an open grassed space for play and informal recreation. • Should have a combination of natural tree shade (open canopy) and a small amount of lower growing vegetation.

6.3.6 City-wide Level

Medium – large play spaces (or more than one play space in open space) focussed on providing a high level of diverse play and recreation experiences and amenity. These are in open space providing facilities that appeal to residents across the municipality and visitors travelling from outside of Yarra, such as sports, historical gardens, or highly valued environments. These play spaces still aim to be walked to, as well as providing some car parking and are connected to other forms of active transport or close to public transport.

Open Space Size:	Estimated Dwell Time:
Generally preferred size of 7hectares (70,000m ²) with a minimum of 3 hectares (30,000m ²)	3hrs+ (long duration, planned use).
Key Features - The following is the broad criteria at this level:	
Play space types	• Should have open-ended or unstructured elements for play and informal recreation. • Should have a medium sized playground (or dual playgrounds where suitable to site), which should differ to surrounding play spaces in precinct. • Should have unstructured nature play (i.e. rocks, logs etc.). • Consider structured nature play (i.e. climbing, swings etc.). • Consider multi-use court. • Consider fitness equipment. • Consider recreational games.
Accessibility and inclusion	• Should have a main path connecting to the play space. • Should have secondary looped paths connecting to the main path and other facilities. • Should have clear sightlines and lighting for personal safety. • Should have in-ground edging to support accessible entry to play spaces. • Should have impact absorbing rubber surfacing to connect paths with key play and activities.
Social gathering	• Should have multiple accessible formal seats and grouped seating. • Should have multiple accessible picnic tables. • Should have accessible BBQ areas. • Consider incidental elements (i.e. rocks for seating).
Other facilities	• Should have accessible drinking fountains. • Should have bike parking. • Should have accessible structural shelter. • Should have accessible toilet facilities. • Consider fencing, low walls, other barriers or planted landscape mounds where the play space's proximity to roads or water body pose safety issues.
Natural environment	• Should have trees to provide natural shade / shelter. • Should have an open grassed space for play and informal recreation. • Should have a combination of natural tree shade (open canopy) and a small amount of lower growing vegetation.



Map 8: Classification distribution of play spaces in Yarra

6.4 Planning Guidelines

Guidelines for planning play spaces are important to produce a consistent standard of facility that meets the needs of Yarra's diverse community. Planning for play spaces occurs at different levels of scale including municipal, precinct, site, and the play space itself. The municipal scale is outlined within this Strategy.

6.4.1 Purpose

The following section outlines and demonstrates through Yarra specific play spaces the important criteria for consideration when planning at precinct, site and play space level.

Guidelines are laid out in this section as 'best practice' case study examples using Yarra play spaces at Edinburgh Gardens in Fitzroy North, Gahan Reserve in Abbotsford, and Cairns Reserve in Central Richmond. Whilst the scale and complexity of these guidelines may vary across different play space classification levels and individual site contexts, consideration of this section should be followed as part of the planning and design process.

6.4.2 12 pillars of play space planning

As an introduction the '12 pillars of play space planning' acts as a guide for Council, illustrating the fundamental combination of scalable qualities needed for play spaces to function effectively regardless of size or type. These have been brought together for this Strategy from general observations and referenced analysis.

1. **The play space is socially connected** and provides elements (such as seating, walls, picnic tables etc.) that support different people to meet, gather and dwell face-to-face fostering important social networks.
2. **The design of the play space is inclusive** welcoming and supporting everyone to participate.
3. **The play space is integrated with the broader landscape** making it more than just a playground, rather it includes or consists of wider natural landscape features or urban elements.
4. **The play space includes open-ended and multi-functional play and informal recreation** with elements within it that are not prescribed and can be used in multiple or different ways for play and recreation.
5. **The play space has access to some loose materials and varied sensory aspects** to provide interesting and stimulating catalysts for play and engagement for all ages.
6. **The play space provides opportunities for risk taking & challenge** to support everyone as they learn new skills.
7. **The play space provides opportunities for different types of movement** for a variety of different body and spatial experiences.
8. **The play space has elements that are flexible and adaptable** that can be easily converted for different uses in play and informal recreation.
9. **The play space has a range and diversity of play and informal recreation activities** woven well together and a local play network that provides different complementary experiences.
10. **There is a relationship or flow between elements** that considers the layout of elements that flow intuitively from one to the other.
11. **That there are opportunities for exploration and learning within the play space** and not everything in the play space is obvious and elements can be 'uncovered' or 'discovered'.
12. **The play space has play and informal recreation for different ages** supporting different ages to both use a space and sometimes play together.

6.4.3 Precinct ‘Network’ Level Planning

This is planning at a highly strategic scale across each identified precinct area within the Yarra municipality. Wider local connections including the overall open space network, the unique urban fabric, community and commercial facilities, as well as the available transport options connect together to support the activation of a play space.

Planning Guidelines: Precinct Level	
Walkability and connectivity	Residents to generally have access to a play space within 400m to encourage the use of active transport (walking or cycling) to travel to them.
	Play spaces are connected to broader walking and cycling networks, and where possible, connected to public transport service routes.
Diversity of experience	A range of play space levels, types and experiences are accessible within the local precinct area that complement, rather than replicate each other.

6.4.4 Site Level Planning

This is planning at a broader open space scale, where placement, surrounding landscape environment and key infrastructure will help support the function of the play space.

Master planning is an important part of this stage for higher classification level sites (as guided by the YOSS) to effectively locate and connect the play space within the open space and develop a community vision prior to more detailed design.

Planning Guidelines: Site Level	
Connections to local area	There are easily accessed active or public transport options. There are nearby accessible car parking bays with continuous path access to play and facilities (City-wide Level only).
Broader open space and path network	The play space is set into the site or if closer to road, fencing is to the boundary of the site, not around the play space. This allows for play to flow throughout the broader landscape.
	When siting a play space, consider a location where there is a clearance in vegetation, the play space is not overshadowed by buildings, is orientated to maximise shade during the summer months and avoid fixing elements where hard surfaces can conduct heat on hot temperature days.
	Locate with views of significant natural features and incorporate existing natural elements (where suitable) into the play space, including trees, garden areas and grassed areas to connect the play space to site.
	There is close connection to other facilities such as picnic areas, barbecues, and toilets (where appropriate).
Playgrounds	The playground is located to maximise natural features and views (i.e. mound slide using natural slope etc.).
	The play is separated, but adjacent to the grassed kickabout area avoiding conflict between quieter play types (i.e. sand play) and more busy, noisy play types (i.e. ball play, skating or wheels etc.).

6.4.5 Play Space Level Planning

Planning at a more detailed level, where the different features of a play space interact and flow together to create an interesting and dynamic experience for play and informal recreation.

Planning Guidelines: Play Space Level

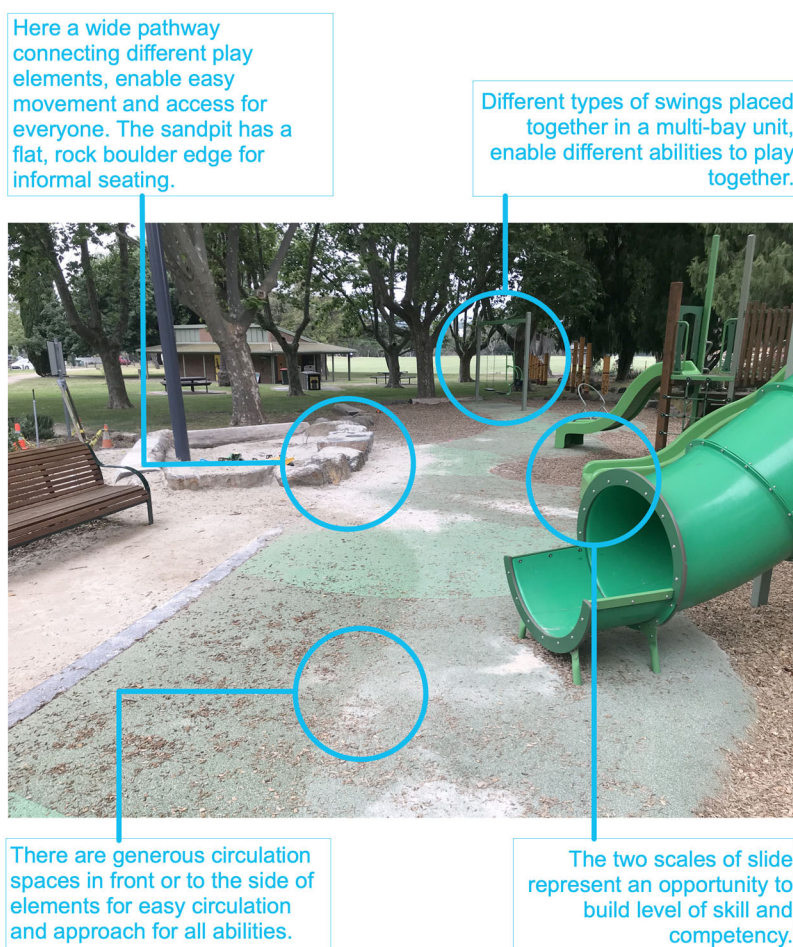
Universal design application

The arrangement of elements offering different skill levels to allow for equal and flexible use by everyone.

The play space is designed so that more than one child, young person or adult of different abilities can participate and socialise together.

A generous space in front or to the side of elements for circulation, differing height clearances and wider entries allow for an easier approach to play spaces.

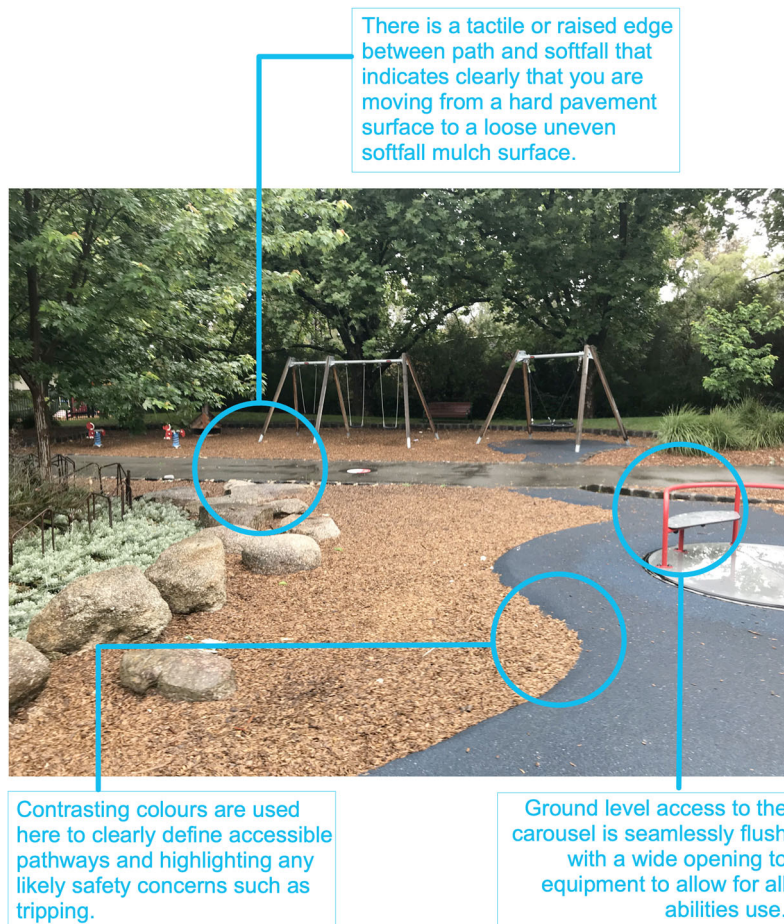
Image (below): Universal design demonstrated at Alphington Park, Alphington



Planning Guidelines: Play Space Level

Access and inclusion	There is flexibility of use or there are increasing levels of challenge for different ages and abilities.
	There is consideration of different needs for different abilities, including sensory or manipulative activities and visual stimulation at ground level.
	There is a wide, flat path to the play space (all levels). There is a wide, flat path/paths within the play space connecting to key activities or elements in higher level facilities.
	Transitions from one surface to another are met flush and where steps occur, alternative options (such as ramps or ground level activities) are also provided.
	That materials are included to aid different sensory readings of the play space, such as tactile surfacing.
	That contrasting colours are chosen to support people with low vision to indicate openings, transitions and highlighting any likely safety concerns.
	In higher classification play spaces, with greater accessible play and amenity, boundaries should be clearly defined by barrier fencing, landform or planting.

Image (top and below of page opposite): Access and inclusion demonstrated at Cairns Reserve, Richmond and Gahan Reserve, Abbotsford



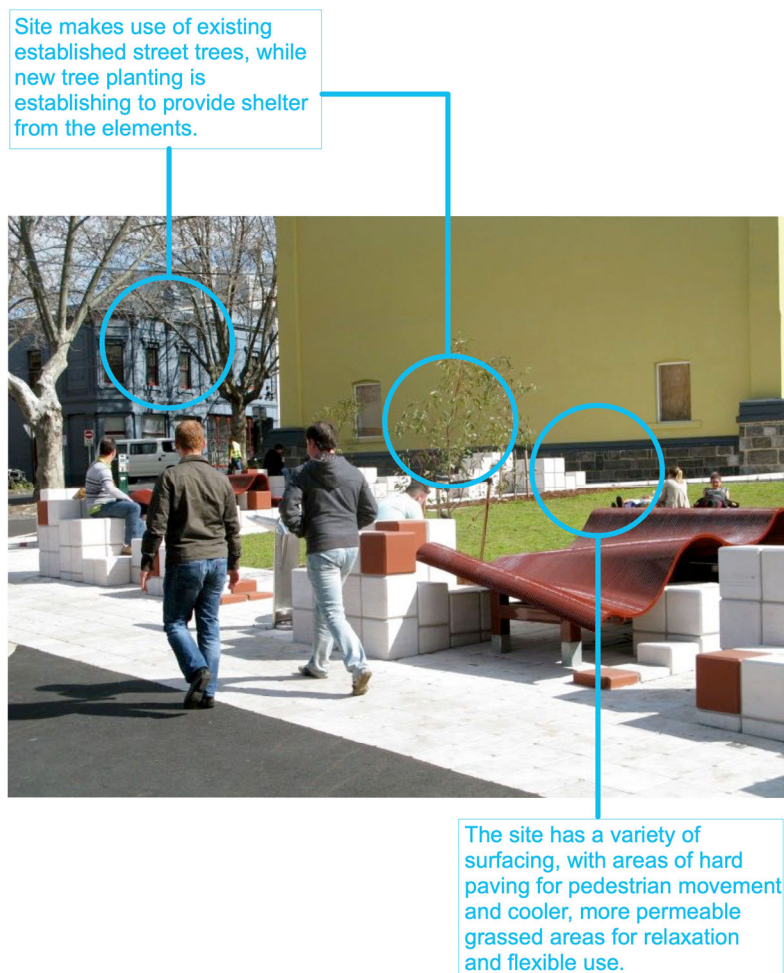
Planning Guidelines: Play Space Level

Protection from the elements

Established tree shade should be utilised for protection and shelter over social gathering areas, play and informal recreation. Where tree shade cannot be established, consideration should be made to install structural shade.

The mixed-use of surfacing and equipment, including some natural materials such as grass / planting, timber, and stone, mean that the space doesn't absorb or retain as much heat during hot temperature days.

Image (below): Protection from the elements demonstrated at Peel Street Park, Collingwood



Planning Guidelines: Play Space Level

Consideration of comfort and ease of sightlines and surveillance

Social gathering areas (such as seating, picnic settings etc.) have overhead shelter as protection from the weather, which will encourage longer stays.

The play space is located within close and visible proximity of social gathering areas and toilets (in higher level play spaces), aiding passive surveillance and perceptions of personal safety.

There are paths connecting key facilities and the play space, making pedestrian movement easy for everyone around the site.

That play spaces are designed to be visually open and activity located throughout the space to fully activate.

Image (below): Consideration of comfort and supervision demonstrated at Edinburgh Gardens (Northern play space), North Fitzroy

The picnic area is adjacent to the play space and the toilet facilities are very close by and connected by an accessible path.



There is shelter provided by established trees over seating and paths, improving comfort for users.

All key facilities in the play space are connected by a wide, accessible path.

Planning Guidelines: Play Space Level

Designing for exploration and engagement

The play space can't be read from one location, it needs to be uncovered and explored.

There are open-ended elements and access to loose materials that can be used for playing in different ways.

The play space is embedded within its environment, encouraging play in the broader landscape.

Image (below): Designing for exploration and engagement demonstrated at Gahan Reserve, Abbotsford

The play space can't be read from one location, it needs to be uncovered and explored.

There are open-ended elements and access to loose materials that can be used for playing in different ways.



The play space is embedded within its environment, encouraging play in the broader landscape.

Planning Guidelines: Play Space Level

Quality of materials / sustainable use of resources

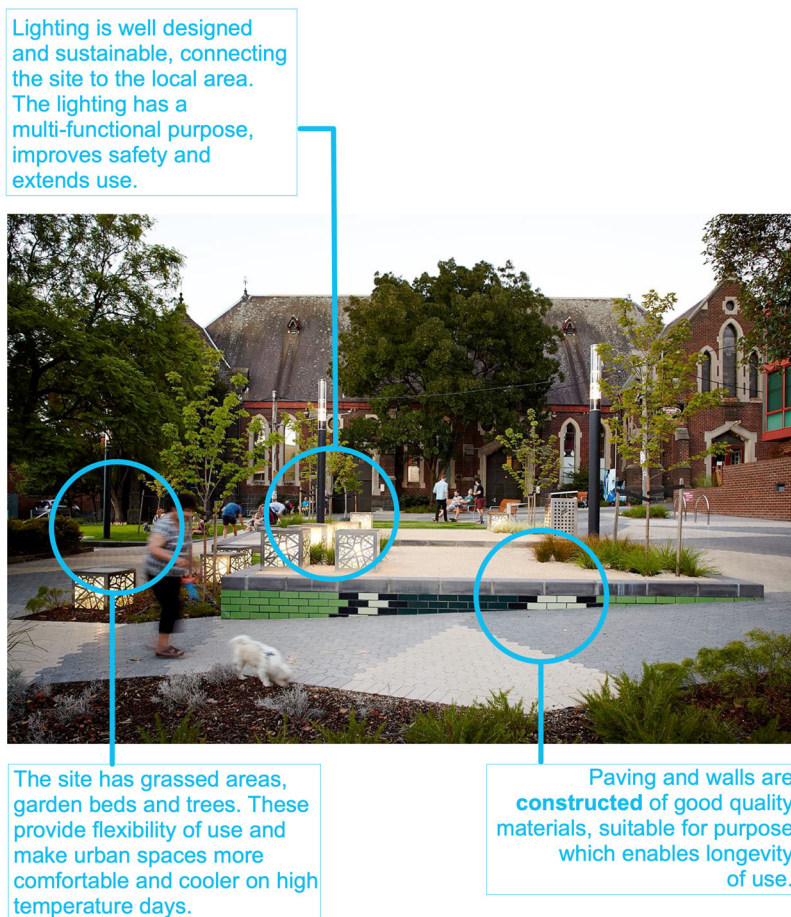
That materials and elements designed or specified are of good quality and suitable for purpose to enable longevity of use.

That products specified are thoughtfully designed to minimise waste and carbon footprint.

That natural timber products are treated for durable, in-ground use.

That grassed areas, garden beds and trees are included to provide cool spaces for retreat from the urban heat island effect.

Image (below): Quality of materials / sustainable use of resources demonstrated at Richmond Terrace, Richmond



Planning Guidelines: Play Space Level

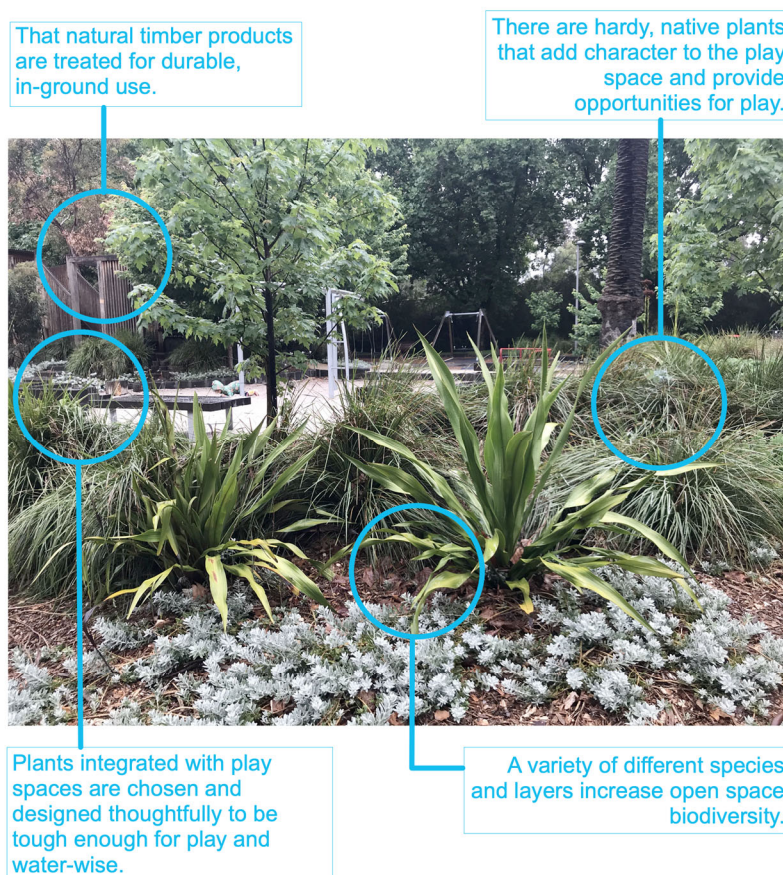
Considered planting

Suitable plant species are selected and located thoughtfully to withstand use in a play space.

Local, waterwise, native plants are selected for sensory play and amenity, giving character to the play space, and building connection with the natural environment.

A diverse planting selection creates increased biodiversity throughout Yarra's open spaces.

Image (below): Considered planting demonstrated at Gahan Reserve, Abbotsford



6.5 Specific infrastructure policy for play spaces

There is certain play space specific infrastructure that needs to be expanded upon, providing guidance around their purpose and application.

6.5.1 Shade / Shelter

The establishment of long-term natural shade, by the strategic planting of open-canopied trees, to the northern or western side (wherever possible) of a playground and any social gathering area, is considered by Council to be best long term, sustainable shade provision.

With increasing impacts from climate change, including extreme weather events and the urban heat island effect, it is acknowledged that the community will more than likely need a range of shelter options in areas of higher density residential development, including built shelter where tree shade is inadequate. This is particularly pertinent in higher level classification play spaces where the community will spend longer periods of time.

6.5.2 Fencing, barriers, and boundary treatments

In situations when site constraints impede an appropriate distance between play space and busy road or water body, a safety design intervention should be considered. Council will consider the suitability of part or full fencing, barriers (post and rail or bollards), low walls or boundary treatments (such as garden beds, berms, or mounds), in line with the particular open space context and play space location, to increase safety measures wherever possible.

Play spaces with a high level of inclusion and accessible features may consider fencing that assists people with disabilities to play and recreate more freely within an enclosed space without safety concerns.

Being designed predominantly for children, playgrounds (with play equipment) may require fencing, barriers or boundary treatments depending on the particular open space context and play space location and should refer to Play Australia's *Fencing and Public Playgrounds* guideline. If play spaces are fully fenced, fencing should not only surround the playground but include the adjacent landscape environment and social gathering areas. This will ensure that further flow of play can continue throughout the broader landscape environment and adult carers are able to comfortably supervise children in their care.

6.5.3 Edging to playgrounds

To support better movement and accessibility, the meeting of adjacent surfaces and edges should where possible be flush (this includes loose surfaces such as tested, impact attenuating, softfall mulch). Where possible playgrounds should be set in-ground, with a continuous path connecting to the top of the mulch area at ground level. In-ground edging should be constructed of a durable material suitable or treated for in-ground use.

6.5.4 Surfacing in playgrounds

The preferred under-surfacing material in playgrounds is tested softfall mulch as it is a permeable, natural material, relatively cost-effective with good impact attenuation to reduce the severity of falls from play equipment. It is also valuable for use in children's games or play. Softfall mulch should always be laid to a minimum depth of 300-350mm to allow for settling over time to maintain a minimum depth of 200mm to comply with Australian and New Zealand Standards for Playground Under surfacing AS/NZS 4422 (1996). Mulch should be checked and certified as free from extraneous (non-timber) materials and clean of any toxic or hazardous waste.

Rubber wet pour surfacing and other alternative approved surfaces may also be used in place of or in combination with softfall mulch. Rubber wetpour as an entire surface is not encouraged, due to its propensity to substantially conduct and hold heat in the summer months. It is not a sustainable option and is costly. Rubber wetpour is useful however when used strategically in small areas within playgrounds to improve accessibility.

7. What we are planning to do

7.1 Recommended Actions

This section outlines the key recommended actions arising from this Strategy and their priority. The priorities are defined by the timeframes below:

Priorities have been organised in the following way:	
HIGH	1 to 3 years
MEDIUM	4 to 6 years
LOW	7 to 10 years
RECENT UPGRADE / NEW SPACE OR PROPOSED FUTURE SPACE	Re-assess in 8 years

Recommendation:	Priority:
1. Prepare a final Play Space Strategy, including summary report for Council endorsement and public access. This report is to articulate the following key information: • Yarra context; • Vision, principles and goals; • Play and play space information; • Planning tools (including classification information and planning guidelines); and • Actions, monitoring, and evaluation	HIGH
2. Prepare a detailed 10-year Play Space Priority Plan for the upgrade and expansion of Council's existing play spaces and development of new play spaces in line with proposed new classification definitions, aligned key features and planning guidelines for Yarra's play spaces. This plan is to consider the following criteria when prioritising sites: • Community need; • Forecast population changes; and • Age and condition of existing facilities. When developing this plan, the priorities should also be distributed equitably across different precincts each year. It should also be noted that this plan will be a dynamic document. The implementation of this plan will be dependent on the changing needs of Yarra's community, designated leaders and available budget.	HIGH
3. Include the 10-year Play Space Priority Plan for inclusion in Yarra Council's 10-year capital works programme for all design and construction works. Each site is to be developed as part of a 2-year program as follows: • Year 1 – Design and Community Consultation • Year 2 – Construction When undertaking design consider the 'Local Play Network' in each precinct. An assessment of all play spaces in a precinct should be undertaken prior to any design, to avoid replication and to ensure diversity in play space experiences.	HIGH

4. Review existing maintenance practices and service levels in line with proposed new classification definitions, aligned key features and planning guidelines for Yarra's play spaces and provide recommendations. Changes to existing service levels should be reviewed to ensure that these are suitably resourced to implement the programme. The following needs to be considered: • Staffing • Budgets • Procurement	HIGH
5. Promote all play space projects on Council's website, linking in opportunities for community consultation on play space design projects during their development.	ONGOING
6. Continue to develop and link capital works information and the open space directory on Council's website to provide consistent and up to date information for the community on play spaces.	ONGOING
7. Monitor and evaluate the Play Space Strategy for performance. Taking into consideration the effectiveness of the following: • Developed vision, principles, and goals; • Classification definitions and key features; and • Planning guidelines.	ONGOING
8. Prepare a revised future Play Space Strategy and associated actions for the next 10 years, once the lifecycle for this Strategy is completed.	LOW

7.2 Replacement, upgrades, and new play spaces

7.2.1 Replacements

At Yarra replacement relates to play spaces where play provision is updated with like for like facilities, with no increase in service. This occurs when an asset requires intervention in terms of condition, or it presents a risk.

7.2.2 Upgrade, expansion and new play spaces

At Yarra the term *upgrade* as it relates to play spaces means an increase in level of service and is driven by an increase in demand or where like for like is not possible.

At Yarra the term *expand* as it relates to play spaces means, where feasible, an increase in area, scale and diversity of play opportunities and is driven by an increase in demand, where open space size is suitable and where like for like is not possible and or suitable.

New play space projects in new or existing open space will be initiated by Council where and when there is a need and all other options have been evaluated.

Upgrades to existing play spaces and new play spaces will be integrated into Council's capital works programme.

7.3 Considerations for future investment in play spaces

7.3.1 Aligning budgets and planning

The allocation of suitable funding for the replacement, upgrade / expansion, and development of Yarra's play spaces (where identified and prioritised) is an action of this Strategy over the next 10 years.

7.3.2 Further community consultation during implementation of the 10 Year Play Space Priority Plan

Delivery of play space projects is a 2-year process, with design and consultation in the first year, followed by construction in the second year. Council will undertake further consultation with local communities as projects are funded in Council's budget and concept designs will be developed and feedback sought from the community prior to construction.

7.3.3 Community equity and a targeted benefit

Overall, the purpose of this Strategy is to improve the equity of access to a range of different play spaces across local precincts for Yarra's diverse and changing community. This investment aims to return greater community satisfaction, more open space activation, and significant health and well-being benefits for the Yarra community.

7.3.4 Advocacy for grants

This Strategy will be a valuable advocacy tool for additional external (non-Council) funding, where suitable opportunities arise.

7.4 Monitoring and evaluation

It is recommended that Council undertakes a process of review at year 5 to monitor the implementation progress of this Strategy. At the end of the strategy's 10 year life cycle, it is also recommended that a revised Play Space Strategy is prepared. These are both outlined in the Action Plan.

8. Precinct actions

Yarra has developed a **10 Year Action Plan** that will enable Council to put the Play Space Strategy's vision, principles and goals into action. These have been determined through a combination of existing site assessments and alignment to classification definitions and features (refer Section 6.3), as well as a detailed walkability analysis determining current gaps in Yarra's play space network (refer Section 6.1). Priority order is based on identified factors such as population need, play space age and quality.

8.1 Abbotsford

Existing provision, distribution and future actions

The Neighbourhood Level play space at Gahan Reserve is the predominant play space in the precinct with small local play spaces at Browns Reserve and Studley Reserve within close walking distance to the north and south of Gahan Reserve, in central Abbotsford. Both these play spaces need to address a lack of play type diversity when replaced. Gahan Reserve playground and MUC should be upgraded, and additional recreational games included. There is a lack of access to play spaces along the Birrarung (Yarra River) corridor, which is somewhat supported by the Collingwood Children's Farm and Clarke Street Reserve.

The north of the precinct is supported by complementary spaces at Maugie Street Reserve, and Victoria Park. Two complementary spaces at St Phillips and Eddy Court Reserves support the central area west of Collingwood train station, the south-west is supported by a complementary space at Charles Mollison Reserve, and south-east by a complementary space and proposed future play space (with a focus on connecting people to water through improving access to the Birrarung - Yarra River) at Flockhart Reserve.

8.1.1 Precinct actions

The following tables outline the actions for the Abbotsford precinct:

Playgrounds & Informal Recreation			
Site name:	Existing playground classification level:	Change in provision:	Priority:
Browns Reserve	SMALL LOCAL	Improve diversity of play type when replacement is required	LOW
Gahan Reserve	NEIGHBOURHOOD	- Upgrade playground and MUC to City-wide Level - Proposed recreational games	MEDIUM
Studley Reserve	SMALL LOCAL	Improve diversity of play type when replacement is required	LOW

Complementary Spaces			
Site name:	Type:	Change in provision:	Priority:
Flockhart Reserve	COMPLEMENTARY SPACE	- Proposed nature play - Proposed fitness	HIGH
Victoria Park (including Bath Street and Brearley Reserves)	COMPLEMENTARY SPACE	Proposed fitness or agility	LOW

No proposed change in provision
Complementary spaces:
- Charles Mollison Reserve - Clarke Street Reserve - Eddy Court Reserve - Maugie Street Reserve - Saint Phillips Reserve

8.2 Carlton North – Princes Hill

Existing provision, distribution and future actions

The east-west linear open space corridor provides excellent off-road shared trail connectivity to open space outside the precinct which counter-balances gaps in play space provision, particularly where no open space is available for use (YOSS, 2020).

Curtain Square is the largest play space in the precinct with a diverse range of activity central to Carlton North. The playground needs to be upgraded to Neighbourhood Level to provide a better diversity of play for a wider range of ages. Hardy Gallagher Reserve is well connected to both community facilities and the shared trail along the Inner Circle Railway Linear Parklands, however, would benefit from a more strategic realignment for access from the east-west corridor share trail and better integration with the North Carlton Railway Neighbourhood House and associated community garden. There is an opportunity for fitness and or agility to be included at Hardy Gallagher Reserve. There are also complementary spaces at Shakespeare Reserve which supports provision to the central west and Nicholson Street Reserve which supports provision to the south-east.

8.2.1 Precinct actions

The following tables outline the actions for the Carlton North – Princes Hill precinct:

Playgrounds & Informal Recreation			
Site name:	Existing playground classification level:	Change in provision:	Priority:
Curtain Square	LOCAL	• Upgrade playground to Neighbourhood Level • Proposed recreational games and fitness	HIGH
Hardy Gallagher Reserve	LOCAL	• Replace playground at Local Level as required • Proposed fitness or agility	MEDIUM

No proposed change in provision	
Complementary spaces:	
• Nicholson Street Reserve • Shakespeare Reserve	

8.3 Central Richmond

Existing provision, distribution and future actions

Burnley Park and the system of open space along the Yarra River contribute significantly to the open space character of Central Richmond, however these are all located in the east of the precinct (YOSS, 2020).

Burnley Park, to the east of the precinct is at present under-realised in terms of potential to provide a larger, more expansive playground, multi-use court, fitness and social gathering areas, as it is well connected and accessible by both active and public transport. The playground here will need to be upgraded to City-wide Level. This can be supported by a complementary space at the Circus Site.

There is very limited open space availability to the central and western parts of the precinct and where there is access, open space is constrained by size and currently provides a Small Local Level play space at Ben Alexander Reserve and a Local Level play space which has recently been upgraded at Cairns Reserve. This precinct is the most challenging in terms of balancing provision and distribution as there is a substantial projected increase in population, including more families with children and young people. The precinct is supplemented by more open-ended complementary spaces at Dame Nellie Melba Memorial Park, Peppercorn Park, Richmond Terrace and Wangaratta Street Reserve that offer a diversity of informal recreation and play.

8.3.1 Precinct actions

The following tables outline the actions for the Central Richmond precinct:

Playgrounds & Informal Recreation			
Site name:	Existing playground classification level:	Change in provision:	Priority:
Ben Alexander Reserve	SMALL LOCAL	Replace playground at Small Local Level as required	LOW
Burnley Park	NEIGHBOURHOOD	- Upgrade playground and MUC to City-wide Level - Proposed fitness	MEDIUM
Cairns Reserve	LOCAL		RECENT UPGRADE

No proposed change in provision
Complementary spaces:
- Circus Site - Dame Nellie Melba Memorial Park - Peppercorn Park - Richmond Terrace - Wangaratta Street Reserve

8.4 Clifton Hill

Existing provision, distribution and future actions.

Clifton Hill is well provided for with open space, with only one small gap area between Hoddle Street and the railway (YOSS, 2020).

Clifton Hill is also well supported in terms of play space provision with a larger playground, including skate at Quarries Park (City-wide Level), playground and multi-use court facilities / cricket nets at Hall Reserve South (Local Level) and playground at Hall Reserve North (Local Level) to the east of the precinct along the Merri Creek and Birrarung (Yarra River) parkland corridors. Darling Gardens (Small Neighbourhood) and Mayors Park (Local Level) in the west of Clifton Hill are more formal parks and the play spaces are within walking distance of each other. To the far north of the precinct the sporting facility at George Knott Reserve is supported by a small playground (Small Local Level).

There is a need to improve the diversity of facilities that appeal to a range of age groups, particularly the older age groups who are forecast to increase over the planning period (YOSS, 2020).

This can be achieved by further diversifying playground offerings in existing sites. The playground at George Knott Reserve should be upgraded to Local Level and relocated to connect with the athletic facilities onsite. The playground at Quarries Park needs upgrading and this should involve a sensitive and considered design process with community engagement to address required changes, whilst maintaining the highly valued look and feel of this much-loved facility. The provision of additional opportunities for recreational games to complement play and an upgrade to skate offerings should be provided here. Further consideration needs to also be given to the interrelationships between play spaces at Hall Reserve North and Hall Reserve South. It is recommended that the playground at Hall Reserve North is relocated before upgrading to Small Neighbourhood Level, to be better connected onsite and to Spensley Street Primary School. Darling Gardens playground needs upgrading to Neighbourhood Level, whilst ensuring a point of difference from Mayors Park given their proximity. Consideration should also be given to the relationship of Gold Street Primary School and the toilet facility that is located in the south-east corner of the park. A new multi-use court is proposed at Mayors Park to align with previous Masterplan designs.

The Clifton Hill precinct is also supported by complementary spaces at Clifton Street Reserve to the central-east and Coulson Reserve to the north-west.

8.4.1 Precinct actions

The following tables outline the actions for the Clifton Hill precinct:

Playgrounds & Informal Recreation			
Site name:	Existing playground classification level:	Change in provision:	Priority:
Darling Gardens	SMALL NEIGHBOURHOOD	- Upgrade playground to Neighbourhood Level - Improve connections to toilets from playground	MEDIUM
George Knott Reserve	SMALL LOCAL	Relocate and upgrade to Local Level playground	HIGH
Hall Reserve (North)	LOCAL	Relocate playground and upgrade to Small Neighbourhood Level	MEDIUM
Hall Reserve (South)	LOCAL	Replace playground at Local Level as required	LOW

Mayors Park	LOCAL	• Replace playground at Local Level as required • Proposed MUC	LOW
Quarries Park	CITY-WIDE	• Upgrade playground and skate • Proposed recreational games	HIGH

No proposed change in provision
Complementary spaces:
• Clifton Street Reserve • Coulson Reserve

8.5 Collingwood

Existing provision, distribution and future actions

The two play spaces in Collingwood include McNamara Reserve (Small Local Level) and the recently upgraded and expanded Cambridge Street Reserve (Local Level), which has responded to the forecast of substantial population increase.

Expanding the size of selected existing Small Local open spaces to allow inclusion of a greater diversity of facilities. The additional distributed open spaces will also assist to mitigate urban heat, provide increased urban greening and open space within a safe and easy walk of residents and workers as urban densities continue to increase in the future. This will positively contribute to the health and wellbeing of residents and workers. A priority for new open space is to ensure it receives excellent winter sunlight to address concerns expressed by the community regarding the more recent overshadowing of existing open space as a result of the increased height of built form in this precinct. (YOSS, 2020)

It is important to note that the population increase in this precinct includes more adults and less families with young children and as such, a balance needs to be sought in the diversity and range of play space experiences provided. Complementary spaces can provide more open-ended play and recreation for different demographics.

An increase and improvement to the recreational quality and diversity of facilities in this area has been a recent focus for Council and road closure / expansions to existing parks has improved the quality of experience for the broader community, such as at Cambridge Street Reserve. Peel Street Park and Oxford Street Park, also serve as complementary spaces in the south of the precinct. There is opportunity for recreational games provision at Peel Street Park. There is a new open space that has been developed, Otter Street Park, which will serve as a complementary space to the central west. There is also an existing complementary space at Alexander Street Reserve to the north of the precinct. McNamara Reserve includes a small playground, which when upgraded to Local Level, needs to supplement experiences at other play spaces within the precinct, with more of a focus on play for younger children, given its' proximity to the Gold Street Children's Centre.

8.5.1 Precinct actions

The following tables outline the actions for the Collingwood precinct:

Playgrounds & Informal Recreation			
Site name:	Existing playground classification level:	Change in provision:	Priority:
Cambridge Street Reserve	LOCAL	Additional play opportunities	HIGH
McNamara Reserve	SMALL LOCAL	Upgrade playground to Local Level	LOW

Complementary Spaces			
Site name:	Type:	Change in provision:	Priority:
Peel Street Park	COMPLEMENTARY SPACE	Proposed recreational games	LOW

No proposed change in provision

Complementary spaces:

- Alexander Street Reserve
- Otter Street Park (NEW OPEN SPACE)
- Oxford Street Park

8.6 Cremorne, Richmond South and Burnley

Existing provision, distribution and future actions

The open space along the Birrarung (Yarra River) contributes to the open space character of this precinct and most of this is characterised by sporting interests and river / parkland environment for sports and recreation. The only play space to the far east of the precinct is at Kevin Bartlett Reserve (Local Level) which acts to support other more formal sporting activities adjacent.

The character of the west is mostly a limited number of Small Local Level and Local Level (White Street Reserve and Charles Evans Reserve, Cremorne and McConchie Reserve, Richmond South) play spaces. It has very limited open space, apart from Barkly Gardens (Neighbourhood Level) which is a well-developed play space with a larger playground. Golden Square Bicentennial Park (Local Level) is the most central of play spaces within the precinct. Church Street Reserve is ostensibly a complementary space, but provides an opportunity for more diversity with recreational games. There are projected increases in population over the next 10 years to the west anticipated, however the age demographic indicates fewer young families with children and more adults living in high-density residential developments and increased worker populations in the area. Replacement and upgrade of existing spaces needs to take this into consideration.

There is potential to improve the quality and diversity of facilities in the existing open spaces in this precinct which will improve the quality of experience for residents and workers in particular to the west (YOSS, 2020).

Council presently has plans underway for the upgrade of Charles Evans Reserve, Cremorne (to meet Local Level and include recreational games provision) and Golden Square Bicentennial Park, in Richmond South (to meet Small Neighbourhood Level). It is recommended that the relationship of provision between Barkly Gardens and McConchie Reserve and how rather than replicating play opportunities, they can become different and supplementary in their offerings, with a playground (to be upgraded to City-wide Level) only at Barkly Gardens (where suitable supporting amenity such as toilets are provided) and skate provision to be implemented at McConchie Reserve.

Additional complementary spaces at Athol J Brown Reserve and Loys Paddock (Council have plans to formalise BMX here) support provision in the central south and north of the precinct and Ryans Reserve also to the central north, north of the railway line. Stephenson Street Reserve is a recently developed new open space that supports provision to the west of the precinct.

8.6.1 Precinct actions

The following tables outline the actions for the Cremorne, Richmond South and Burnley precinct:

Playgrounds & Informal Recreation			
Site name:	Existing playground classification level:	Change in provision:	Priority:
Barkly Gardens	NEIGHBOURHOOD	• Upgrade playground to City-wide Level • New proposed recreational games and fitness	LOW
Charles Evans Reserve	SMALL LOCAL	• Upgrade playground to Local Level • New proposed recreational games • Investigate MUC	HIGH
Golden Square Bicentennial Park	LOCAL	• Upgrade playground to Small Neighbourhood Level	HIGH

Kevin Bartlett Reserve	LOCAL	• Replace playground at Local Level as required	LOW
McConchie Reserve	LOCAL	• New proposed skate • Remove playground	MEDIUM
White Street Reserve	SMALL LOCAL	• Upgrade playground to Local Level	MEDIUM

Complementary Spaces

Site name:	Type:	Change in provision:	Priority:
Loys Paddock	COMPLEMENTARY SPACE	• Formalise BMX / Pump Track	MEDIUM

No proposed change in provision

Complementary spaces:

- Athol J Brown Reserve
- Church Street Reserve
- Ryans Reserve
- Stephenson Street Reserve (NEW OPEN SPACE)

8.7 Fairfield - Alphington

Existing provision, distribution and future actions

Open space is well provided for and significantly contributes to the landscape character of these areas (YOSS, 2020).

There are however only three Local Level play spaces at present, two in Alphington and one in Fairfield. With the significant levels of forecast growth in Alphington, three future local open spaces are proposed at the Yarra Bend Development (former AMCOR site /Alphington Paper Mills). Artisan Park has been constructed with a new Local Level playground and future open space is planned at Workshop Park (to include a new Local Level playground), Heritage Park and Village Square.

There is potential to expand the play and picnic facilities in Alphington Park to cater to the substantial increase in population, combined with ongoing upgrades to and implementation of the Fairfield Park Masterplan (YOSS, 2020).

It is recommended that the playground at Fairfield Park is upgraded to City-wide Level and additional agility and fitness opportunities are also developed to tap into the existing informal recreation and formal sports (soccer and cricket at oval) at the park and nearby Yarra Bend Park (managed by Parks Victoria). An addition of a new adjacent multi-use ball court and recreational games, along with an upgrade of the existing playground to Neighbourhood Level is also recommended at Alphington Park.

The YOSS recommendation, *In Fairfield, secure a formal public pedestrian path link between Coate Park and Rudder Grange along the Yarra River*, should establish greater connectivity between the two complementary spaces in the central-west, namely Coate Park and Rudder Grange. Fairlea Reserve, south of Fairfield Park is a further complementary space that offers an existing multi-use ball court precinct.

8.7.1 Precinct actions

The following tables outline the actions for the Fairfield - Alphington precinct:

Playgrounds & Informal Recreation			
Site name:	Existing playground classification level:	Change in provision:	Priority:
Alphington Park	LOCAL	• Upgrade playground to Neighbourhood Level • Proposed MUC and recreational games	LOW
Artisan Park	LOCAL		NEW SPACE
Fairfield Park	LOCAL	• Upgrade playground to City-wide Level • Proposed fitness and agility	HIGH
Workshop Park		• Proposed new Local Level playground	FUTURE SPACE

Complementary Spaces			
Site name:	Type:	Change in provision:	Priority:
Heritage Park		Proposed new complementary space	FUTURE SPACE
Village Square		Proposed new complementary space	FUTURE SPACE

No proposed change in provision
Complementary spaces:
- Coate Park - Fairlea Reserve - Rudder Grange

8.8 Fitzroy

Existing provision, distribution and future actions

There is potential to improve the recreational quality and diversity of facilities in the existing and proposed open space network. Given the urban densities, increasing the quality of these green spaces including maximising moisture absorbing surfaces will assist to mitigate urban heat island effect in the future. The additional open spaces will be designed to complement the existing network that combined, will provide a diversity of facilities for the existing and future population (YOSS, 2020).

Condell Reserve play space (Local Level) provides a space with a larger playground with a strong community feel in the centre of the precinct. An upgrade to Condell Street Reserve is needed to build on the existing community park with more diverse play and picnic facilities along with improvements to the trees, and garden beds and grassed areas. Combined with proposed new recreational games at complementary space Whitlam Place (which has a distinctly different character), it will create a quality hub of open space around the civic heart of the Fitzroy Library and Town Hall. Existing play spaces with playgrounds in the west of this precinct are King William Reserve (Small Local) and Garryowen Park (Small Local) and are very limited in size and offering and need to be diversified in terms of play when replaced. There is opportunity for the upgrade of recreational games or the implementation of a multi-use court at King William Reserve. Provision to the east of the precinct is supplemented by a complementary space at Greeves Street Reserve and a new future open space on the Corner of Gertrude / Brunswick Streets is proposed. Complementary spaces at Frank King Park supports provision to the west of the precinct and George Street Reserve to the south of the precinct.

Council is also presently in the process of upgrading Smith Reserve to the north of the precinct as a Small Neighbourhood Level open space, which will include informal recreation, a formalised dog park and playground upgrade.

8.8.1 Precinct actions

The following tables outline the actions for the Fitzroy precinct:

Playgrounds & Informal Recreation			
Site name:	Existing playground classification level:	Change in provision:	Priority:
Condell Street Reserve	LOCAL	Replace playground at Local Level as required	MEDIUM
Garryowen Park	SMALL LOCAL	Replace playground at Small Local Level	HIGH
King William Reserve	SMALL LOCAL	- Replace playground at Small Local Level as required - Upgrade recreational games or proposed MUC	MEDIUM
Smith Reserve	LOCAL	Overall upgrade of reserve including playground to Small Neighbourhood Level	HIGH

Complementary Spaces			
Site name:	Type:	Change in provision:	Priority:
Corner Gertrude / Brunswick Streets		Proposed new complementary space	FUTURE SPACE
Whitlam Place	COMPLEMENTARY SPACE	Proposed recreational games	LOW

No proposed change in provision
Complementary spaces:
- Frank King Park - George Street Reserve - Greeves Street Reserve

8.9 Fitzroy North

Existing provision, distribution and future actions.

There is potential to improve the recreational quality and diversity of facilities in the Small Local open spaces in Fitzroy North so that they appeal to the broader community including all age groups (YOSS, 2020).

Upgrades to these, combined with the new and expanded areas of open space will aim to cater to the local open space needs as suitable alternatives to Edinburgh Gardens, given the high levels of use and activity at the Gardens.

With Edinburgh Gardens, Merri Creek and the Inner Circle Railway Linear Parklands, Fitzroy North is one precinct in Yarra that already has a diverse and connected open space network and range of play spaces, including two larger playgrounds (southern playground to be upgraded to City-wide Level with point of difference), skate, multi-use court, and recreational games at Edinburgh Gardens (City-wide Level), which is considered Yarra's most valued and used open space. This volume of use is at times not ideal and as such it is recommended that a new smaller playground is developed at Edwardes Place Park to the north-east of Edinburgh Gardens to provide an alternative facility and also meet local walkability gaps in this part of the precinct east of St Georges Road.

The Inner Circle Railway Linear Parklands provides a highly valuable active transport corridor making connections between Park Street Reserve (Local Level) play space, playgrounds and a multi-use court and Holden Byrne Reserve (Local Level) play space. Park Street Reserve would benefit from consideration around better integration of facilities when being upgraded. Langdon Street Reserve (Local Level) play space provides a playground and multi-use court to the very north of the precinct. A new future Local Level playground is also proposed for construction at Gasworks' Park.

Provision to the north of the precinct is supplemented by a complementary space at Ottery Street Reserve along the Merri Creek. Central to the precinct, provision is also supported by two complementary spaces at the Mark Street Linear Park. Provision to the south is supplemented by a complementary space at Triangle Park and in the east by two complementary spaces at Batson and Raines Reserves. Provision to the west of the precinct is supplemented by smaller complementary spaces at Batman Street, Brookes Crescent, Liverpool Street, Porter Street and Reid Street Reserves, as well as Piedimonte's Corner.

8.9.1 Precinct actions

The following tables outline the actions for the Fitzroy North precinct:

Playgrounds & Informal Recreation			
Site name:	Existing playground classification level:	Change in provision:	Priority:
Edinburgh Gardens	CITY-WIDE (North) NEIGHBOURHOOD (South)	Upgrade the southern playground to City-wide Level, making sure there is diversity to the northern playground	MEDIUM
Gasworks' Park		Proposed new Local Level playground	FUTURE SPACE
Holden Byrne Reserve	LOCAL	Replace playground at Local Level as required	LOW

Langdon Reserve	LOCAL	Replace playground at Local Level as required	HIGH
Park Street Reserve	LOCAL	- Upgrade playground to Small Neighbourhood Level - Improve integration of all facilities	MEDIUM

Complementary Spaces

Site name:	Type:	Change in provision:	Priority:
Edwardes Place Park	COMPLEMENTARY SPACE	Proposed Local Level playground	HIGH

No proposed change in provision

Complementary spaces:

- Batman Street Reserve
- Batson Reserve
- Brookes Crescent Reserve
- Liverpool Street Reserve
- Mark Street Linear Park
- Ottery Reserve
- Piedimonte's Corner (Scotchmer Street and St Georges Road)
- Porter Street Reserve
- Raines Reserve
- Reid Street Park (NEW OPEN SPACE)
- Triangle Park

8.10 North Richmond

Existing provision, distribution and future actions

There is potential to improve the recreational quality and diversity of facilities in the existing Local and Small Local open spaces in North Richmond (YOSS, 2020).

Citizens Park and the system of open space along the Birrarung (Yarra River) contribute significantly to the open space character of North Richmond. With the forecast of substantial increase in the resident and worker population in North Richmond, in particular families with children and young people, this presents Council with a challenge to try and meet access required for both future open space and play spaces needed. Presently Citizen's Park does the heavy lifting for this precinct providing a range of play space options including a large (City-wide Level) playground, fitness and social gathering facilities.

This is supported by smaller play spaces at Egan Park (Small Local Level) to the far west of the precinct and Annette's Place (Local Level) to the far east along the Birrarung (Yarra River) corridor. There is also a 'shared-use' agreement in place with Yarra Primary School which allows for access to the school playground, multi-use court and recreational games facilities and meets local walkability measures in the central-east of the precinct. This area is also supported by Williams Reserve to its north, on the corner of Burnley and Victoria Streets. Further complementary spaces at Butler Street Park, O'Connell Reserve, and Urban Arts Square address gaps in walkable access to play spaces in the south of the precinct by adding a diversity of informal recreation and play. Fitness provision is proposed at O'Connell Reserve to link into existing sporting interests and recreation carried out along the river corridor.

An upgrade of the play space at Williams Reserve, to provide alternative play and recreation to the north is recommended and an upgrade of Annette's Place to the east is also recommended to provide a diversity of more easily accessible options. A diversity of options for different demographics across complementary spaces, such as recently developed social gathering opportunities provided at Butler Street Park is also recommended.

8.10.1 Precinct actions

The following tables outline the actions for the North Richmond precinct:

Playgrounds & Informal Recreation			
Site name:	Existing playground classification level:	Change in provision:	Priority:
Annette's Place	LOCAL	• Replace playground at Local Level as required • Upgrade accessibility	HIGH
Citizen's Park	CITY-WIDE	• Replace playground at City-wide Level as required	LOW
Egan Park	SMALL LOCAL	• Replace playground at Small Local Level as required	LOW
Williams Reserve	LOCAL	• Replace playground at Local Level as required, improving diversity of play options	MEDIUM

Complementary Spaces			
Site name:	Type:	Change in provision:	Priority:
O'Connell Reserve	COMPLEMENTARY SPACE	Proposed fitness	LOW

No proposed change in provision
Complementary spaces:
- Butler Street Park - Urban Arts Square
Shared-use agreement:
Yarra Primary School

9. Appendices

9.1 Glossary

General terms used in this document:	
Accessibility	Where ease of access for users of a play space is considered for people of differing abilities (how they enter and move through a space – pathways, access without barriers, ability to use facilities provided).
Complimentary space	Complementary spaces are parks and reserves that offer a range of qualities such as grassed open space, garden areas, seating, platforms, art, and shade that support non-prescriptive play.
Gender equity (as applied to play spaces)	Where a play space is designed in a way that supports everyone, regardless of gender, to feel welcome and supported to participate.
Inclusion	Where all members of the community, regardless of ability, age, gender, or cultural backgrounds are made to feel welcome and supported to participate in a play space.
Open space	Open space in this context refers mostly to parks and reserves and some urban spaces that are larger than 300sqm.
Play	A spontaneous, freely chosen, and enjoyable activity allowing the individual, either alone or while socialising with others, to interact with and explore the environment around them in different and dynamic ways.
Playground	A constructed and designed area consisting of play equipment (modular or customised), usually protected by impact-absorbing material as a defined ground treatment (with edging), for the primary purpose of play (prescribed).
Play space	An environment that facilitates playful activity by incorporating the whole 'open space' environment, including surfacing, trees and garden areas, level change, furniture, and other elements. This may or may not include a playground.
Play space classifications (Levels)	Play space levels of development and amenity related to their open space classification (as outlined in the YOSS) and catchment of use. Typically, they fall under the classifications Small Local, Local, Small Neighbourhood, Neighbourhood and City-Wide.
Play space types	Play space types are different settings for play and informal recreation that relate to their use.
Play value	The intrinsic value of play elements in relation to the quality and complexity of play that it provides.
Precinct	Precinct is used here as a term to understand the interwoven nature of residential, commercial activities and open space.

	Yarra's 10 precincts generally follow suburb boundaries (as identified through YOSS), apart from Richmond, which is split into North Richmond, Central Richmond and South Richmond combined with Cremorne and Burnley. The suburbs of Carlton North and Princes Hill / Fairfield and Alphington have also been combined to form two precincts.
Service levels	Established routine maintenance standards in parks and reserves, that refer to cleaning, gardening, repairs to furniture, rubbish collection etc.
Social gathering	The community coming together and connecting in open space. Social gathering is supported by the natural and built environment.
Council acronyms and terms used in this document:	
AG	Agility (i.e. Parkour)
CS	Complementary Space
Council	Yarra City Council (governing body)
FIT	Fitness / Outdoor Gym Equipment
MUC	Multi-use Court
RG	Recreational Game (i.e. Table Tennis and Bocce)
this Strategy	Yarra Play Space Strategy
Yarra	Yarra City (municipality)
YOSS	Yarra Open Space Strategy

9.2 Reviewed Yarra documents

9.2.1 Yarra related studies and policies

Yarra Council has recently prepared, or is in the process of preparing, multiple studies, policies, strategies, and plans where community feedback has been considered in preparing this Strategy.

These include:

- Active and Healthy Ageing in Yarra Strategy 2021-2024
- Yarra 0-25 Years Plan 2018-2022
- Yarra 2036 Community Vision
- Yarra Access and Inclusion Strategy 2018-2024
- Yarra Climate Emergency Plan 2020-2024
- Yarra Community Infrastructure Plan 2018
- Yarra Council Plan 2021-2025
- Yarra LGBTIQ+ Strategy 2021-2024
- Yarra Moves (Physical Activity Strategy and Action Plan) 2022-2024
- Yarra Nature Strategy 2020-2025
- Yana Ngargna – Yarra Reconciliation Plan 2018
- Yarra Open Space Strategy 2020
- Yarra Place Making Framework 2022
- Yarra Public Toilet Strategy 2017-2027
- Yarra Urban Design Strategy 2011
- Yarra Urban Forest Strategy 2017

9.2.2 Yarra play space related projects

Yarra Council has delivered or is in the process of delivering play space projects and other interventions where community feedback has been considered when preparing this Strategy. These include:

- Cambridge Street Reserve Expansion - Various Reports including Councillor Briefing, Community Engagement Report – Stage 1 and Stage 2 Consultation
- Charles Evans Reserve – Draft Concept Design (February 2024)
- Charles Mollison Reserve – Constructed (2018)
- Charlotte Street Pocket Park – Draft Concept Plan (July 2023)
- City of Yarra Playground Audit (June 2023)
- Collingwood Town Hall Urban Design Framework
- Cremorne and Church Street Urban Design Framework
- Gertrude & Brunswick Streets Corner – Draft Concept Design (December 2023)
- Gipps Precinct Local Area Plan (2010)
- Golden Square Bicentennial Park Masterplan and Masterplan Report (2023)
- Johnston Street Structure Plan (2015)
- North Fitzroy Gasworks Precinct Urban Design Framework
- Otter Street Park – Constructed (2023)
- Reid Street Park – Constructed (2021/22)
- Richmond Town Hall Precinct Urban Design Framework
- Smith Reserve Preliminary Concept Design (May 2023)

- Stephenson Street Reserve – Constructed (2022)
- Swan Street Structure Plan (2014)
- Victoria Street Structure Plan (2010)

9.2.3 Other key relevant documents

These key documents, frameworks and guidelines have also been considered when preparing this Strategy. These include:

- Article 31 on The Rights of the Child
- Australian Standard AS 4685 Playground equipment and surfacing
- Australian Standard AS 4422: Playground surfacing - Specifications, requirements, and test method
- Fencing and Public Playspaces (Play Australia)
- Guidelines for fitness equipment
- Playground Standards
- The adopted European Standard for skate facilities (N.B. many safety inspectors are not currently offering assessments of skatepark designs to these standards)
- Victorian Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Victorian Gender Equality Act 2020

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