

# KILSYTH RECREATION RESERVE MASTER PLAN FOR COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

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Ward(s) affected: Walling;

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*The author(s) of this report and the Responsible Officer consider that the report complies with the overarching governance principles and supporting principles set out in the Local Government Act 2020.*

## CONFIDENTIALITY

This item is to be considered at a Council meeting that is open to the public.

## SUMMARY

This report seeks to inform Council of the draft Kilsyth Recreation Reserve Master Plan (the draft Master Plan) that has been developed following extensive consultation with the local Kilsyth residents, Kilsyth Community Action Group, sports clubs and the broader Yarra Ranges community. The draft Master Plan provides a 10+ year strategic approach to improve sport and recreation facilities at the reserve in response to identified community needs, including repurposing of aged infrastructure.

Improvements recommended include the removal of the redundant tennis courts to provide a multi-generational playspace, multi-purpose court and junior pump track. An upgrade to the oval irrigation and lights is proposed plus the inclusion of a community plaza and oval viewing space. The community will also benefit from an improved path network and 'chillout' spaces.

## RECOMMENDATION

### *That Council*

- 1. Consider the recommendations of the draft Kilsyth Recreation Reserve Master Plan.***
- 2. Council approval to release the draft Kilsyth Recreation Reserve Master Plan for community consultation.***

## RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

The phasing of the draft Master Plan implementation has taken into consideration the proposed purchase of 150 Cambridge Road, Kilsyth. It is understood that the purchase of this land will constrain the amount of public open space funding attributable to the Walling Ward for several years. Hence, the majority of proposed upgrades commence planning and construction in 2026-35.

## DISCUSSION

### *Purpose and Background*

Kilsyth Recreation Reserve is located on the eastern side of Colchester Road, which forms the boundary between Yarra Ranges Walling Ward and Maroondah Council. To the north, the Reserve connects with the Kilsyth Memorial Hall and abuts four disjointed shopping precincts; the main ones being the Churinga Shopping Centre and the collection of independently owned shops combined with a Dan Murphy's outlet (formerly Coles). On the eastern boundary are residential properties and a large retirement village connects to the south of the Reserve.

The Kilsyth Recreation Reserve is the base and offices for the Kilsyth AFL Centre of Excellence, that plays an important part in the development of elite AFL football players in the region. The venue is host to the Yarra Ranges female football finals competition. The broader Reserve is underutilised with little to attract community usage.

Several years ago, the tenant tennis club merged with another and now play at the Kiloran Park facility. Since then, a local coach has leased the courts with a diminishing number of participants. The five en-tous-cas courts are at end of life, in a state of disrepair and are recommended for removal. The two synthetic courts have a limited life before they too become unplayable. Current community use is limited to general walking, dog walking and use of the oval when not being used for football purposes.

Other than football, the predominant use of the reserve is as a thoroughfare to the shops from the adjacent retirement village and some usage of two tennis courts for coaching. Overall, the Reserve fails to meet community expectations as a desirable place to meet, relax and take part in recreation activities or watch football.

Five of the seven tennis courts have laid dormant for many years, are an eyesore and waste of valuable open space. Subject to available funding it is recommended that in 2023-24, the old tennis clubhouse is demolished, and the five en-tous-cas courts are returned to open space. The lease on the other two courts will cease in May and be prepared for community use.

The draft Master Plan aims to maximise future use of the reserve by sporting clubs and the community through upgrades to existing facilities and offerings at the reserve. Actions of the master plan are supported through the initial community

feedback, and consultation with the tenant sporting clubs and the Kilsyth Community Action Group.

### ***Options considered***

The Background Report (Attachment 1) provides details of the site analysis study, issues and opportunities identified through research and extensive internal and external consultation feedback. Issues and opportunities identified have underpinned the development of the draft Kilsyth Recreation Reserve Master Plan (Attachment 2) that address the current needs and support increased participation and usability of the Reserve and its infrastructure.

### ***Recommended option and justification***

The Draft Kilsyth Recreation Reserve Master Plan (Attachment 2) considers the current and future demographics of the area, community feedback and internal recommendations informing the development of the draft Master Plan.

Proposed improvements identified in the draft Master Plan for the Reserve and oval areas include, but are not limited to:

- Sport Precinct
  - Ground and lighting upgrade (irrigation, LED sports lighting)
  - Coach/player and timekeeper boxes
  - removal of redundant buildings
  - extending access to the public toilet at the sports pavilion, and
  - improved traffic flow, parking and path network.
- Plaza precinct
  - Multi-use plaza space with landscaping and terrace seating area, and
  - Improved interface with the Kilsyth Memorial Hall.
- Recreation Precinct
  - Removal of redundant (5) en-tous-cas tennis courts, and
  - Installation of a recreation hub, to include:
    - local level playspace with picnic shelters
    - netball sized court, multi-lined for various ball sports and suitable for netball finals matches
    - pump track
    - additional landscaping and a nature play area
    - public art/sculpture feature at the interface with the shopping centre, and
    - seating and path connections through the Reserve.

## **FINANCIAL ANALYSIS**

The implementation of the draft Master Plan does not have an allocated budget.

The Cost Plan (Attachment 3) has been developed to show estimated costs and a potential funding model, summarised in the Table below. These costs have included a 15% premium from the original (2021) opinion of probable costs to factor in the recent escalation in prices attributable to materials supply and construction.

Full details of the financial implication over the period of the master plan are provided in Attachment 4.

		<b>Potential Funding Contributions</b>			
Activity Area	<b>Estimated Cost</b>	Council	State / Federal Government Grant	Yarra Ranges Community Grant	Outer East FNL / Eastern Ranges
Sports Precinct	<b>\$1,079,350</b>	\$563,275	\$436,075	\$15,000	\$65,000
Plaza Precinct	<b>\$400,300</b>	\$205,900	\$194,400		
Recreation Precinct	<b>\$2,410,975</b>	\$1,572,900	\$832,825	\$5,250	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$3,890,625</b>	<b>\$2,342,075</b>	<b>\$1,463,300</b>	<b>\$20,250</b>	<b>\$65,000</b>

The tenant groups at Kilsyth (Outer East Football Netball League and Eastern Ranges) have indicated that there is a strong likelihood that they/AFL could assist with funding of the sport related items. Based on required contribution from sports clubs to timekeeper's room/scoreboard and coach boxes, an AFL contribution of \$45,000 is expected. A further \$20,000 contribution towards a new storage shed and nets behind goals would be sought. These contributions would be consistent with that expected of other Yarra Ranges based clubs.

The Kilsyth 'Centre of Excellence' is the pinnacle in development for local rising football stars in the region, especially young females. Of the 90 girls and 120 boys based at Kilsyth Recreation Reserve, approximately 60% are Yarra Ranges residents. In addition to the unique role the centre plays in local football development, the reserve serves as a community football backup venue when other grounds are out of action or being redeveloped. Most recently Kilsyth Recreation Reserve was used by the Mt Evelyn and Powelltown football/netball clubs during renovations. Therefore, due to the community usage that occurs at the reserve, it is appropriate that a community contribution approach be applied to the regular tenant groups for the oval based improvements recommended in the Master Plan.

The funding contribution split for the Plaza and Recreation Precinct is based on a favourable outcome of applications to Sport and Recreation Victoria and Growing Suburbs Funds. In the detailed phasing of projects (Attachment 4), elements have been grouped to support a funding application(s) approach.

Of Council funds, the majority is anticipated to come from Public Open Space funding, (\$1.02 million) or Asset New & Improved Reserve (\$610,000), with approximately \$37,000 from Asset Renewal Revenue (ARR), attributable to the demolition of the public toilet block, old youth hall and the tennis clubhouse.

An Asset Maintenance Plan (Attachment 5) has been developed to identify maintenance costs attributable to the improvements proposed in the draft Master Plan. It is anticipated that there will be a total maintenance cost to Council of \$375,000 and the AFL Outer East \$88,500 over the 15 years. Transfer of 67% of toilet cleaning responsibility to Council to increase community access to the pavilion public toilets, in lieu of building an additional facility, means an estimated savings for the AFL Outer East of over \$100,000 over the 15 years.

## **APPLICABLE PLANS AND POLICIES**

This report contributes to the following strategic objectives in the Council Plan:

- Connected and Healthy Communities; and
- Quality Infrastructure and Liveable Places

The provision of improved facilities at Kilsyth Recreation Reserve, through careful community consultation and master planning, will deliver facilities and infrastructure that meets the growing and diverse needs of our community.

### ***Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025***

- increase active living; and
- improve mental wellbeing and social connection

New and improved facilities will contribute to improved health and wellbeing with increased opportunities to socialise and exercise.

### ***Recreation and Open Space Strategy 2013 - 2023***

The Recreation and Open Space Strategy 2013-2023 sets out directions for creating healthy and active environments and services in Yarra Ranges and provides a framework to guide future development and management of Council's recreation reserves, parks and community spaces, including Kilsyth Recreation Reserve.

### ***Equity, Access and Inclusion Strategy 2013-2023***

Through this Strategy, Council recognises that inclusion for people with a disability in all aspects of community life is a human right that also brings many social, cultural and economic benefits for the wider community. It further states as one of the goals that Council buildings and infrastructure are accessible to everyone in our community. Improvements to the amenities and increased ease of mobility through the Kilsyth Recreation Reserve is a key deliverable of this draft Master Plan and will promote broader Reserve use by the residents of the 198 units of Walmsley Retirement Village, abutting the Reserve.

### ***Child and Youth Strategy 2014-2024***

This Strategy has the vision that Yarra Ranges will be a place where every child and young person will be able to thrive, reach their potential and actively participate in

decision making. Outcome 2 has the most relevance to this draft Master Plan, recommending that “Adequate Infrastructure exists to meet the needs of children, young people and their families.” The re-establishment of a playspace at Kilsyth Recreation Reserve was a dominant request from the long-term residents and the new family groups that officers spoke to at the pop-up sessions and in survey responses. The inclusion of a playspace at this location has been added to the revised Playspace Strategy for construction in 2025/26.

## RELEVANT LAW

### ***Gender Impact Assessment***

This policy/program/service/strategy is considered to have a direct and significant impact on the Yarra Ranges community, so a gender impact assessment will be undertaken as part of this work.

A Gender Impact Assessment will be undertaken in collaboration with Council’s Gender Equity Team, in parallel with the community consultation process planned for early 2023. The feedback received will inform the findings of the Gender Impact Assessment and help shape any required modifications of the Master Plan prior to adoption by Council.

The draft Master Plan has however been developed from a whole of community perspective, including consideration of equitable opportunities for use of the reserve by women, men and gender diverse people. Underpinning the recommendations is the objective to provide a reserve that encourages people of all ages, abilities, gender preference and cultural background with a space that is safe, welcoming and has the potential to improve individual health and wellbeing. Current use of reserve facilities is predominantly male and to a lesser extent female AFL football participants. Older adults use the reserve to access the shopping complex and stop briefly to rest as required. There is little to attract general community usage.

Refer to the following Table for a summary of the proposed improvements and the target groups that will benefit most.

Proposed improvement	Target age group	Benefit
Playspace	Young children	New facility for young people and families
Picnic area with shelters	Everyone, especially families and older adults	New plaza area suitable for older community members, families and youth to meet and socialise.
Netball court	Mainly females	New training and competition court for the local football/netball clubs to utilise
Multipurpose court	Children, youth, adults, families	New multi-lined court for local youth to play (at no cost) a range of social sports. Additional netball court to provide a second court to support competition use by local

		clubs
Pump track	Children	New pump track for children starting out, learning the skills before advancing to more challenging facilities elsewhere.
Path network	Everyone	New path network and open space area for walking, dog walking and exercise suited to all ages. Where possible paths will be fully accessible and provide a safer path of travel within the reserve and to the shops.
Sports	Male and female AFL football participants, officials and spectators	Improvements to lighting quality, ground improvements, coach's boxes, etc to increase the quality of facilities to further support the development of elite male and female footballers in Yarra Ranges.  Provision of a terraced viewing area will improve the viewing experience for AFL spectators.
Car park	Reserve users	Realignment and formalisation of the car park to support the anticipated increased usage of the reserve.

## **SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

### ***Economic Implications***

Through future development the Kilsyth Recreation Reserve will become a local community activity hub and the anticipated increased use will have a flow on effect for the abutting shops. Families will couple shopping with a visit to the playspace, pump track or other options proposed. Similarly, the additional visitations the Reserve will attract has the potential for increased sales for the local businesses.

The construction phase of the Reserve improvement delivery is expected to contribute to the local economy through employment opportunities and as a source of materials and equipment.

### ***Social Implications***

Kilsyth has a population of 9,956 (ABS 2020). Compared with the Yarra Ranges average, there is a high percentage of older adults over 60 years (26.3%) and the young workforce group aged 25 to 34 (15.1%). The under 17-year age group (20.6%) is slightly lower than the Yarra Ranges average, however growth is shown in the babies and under 11 years cohorts. Hence this draft Master Plan has a focus to ensure that older residents and the emerging young people in the community are catered for.

There are strong links to social and community impacts resulting from the development and improvement of local reserves such as Kilsyth Recreation Reserve, which include:

1. Enhanced community access to infrastructure that encourages alternative health and wellbeing outcomes;
2. Revitalisation of local communities;
3. Reduction of social isolation;
4. Increased visitor footprint; and
5. Increased female participation in sports.

Other than elite football training, the Kilsyth Recreation Reserve lacks elements to attract people to socialise or be active. The focus of the draft Master Plan has been to provide a plan that will invigorate the area and make it a desirable destination that people of all ages will want to spend time. Older people that we spoke to reminisced about the old playspace and having somewhere to walk, sit and interact with others. Young families craved a local playspace and somewhere for their children to ride bikes and play with friends. For local residents, the closest playspace is located over a kilometre away on the northern side of busy Mt Dandenong Road, at either Kiloran Park or Elizabeth Bridge Reserve.



The Health and Wellbeing Strategy identifies high levels of obesity, dementia and poor mental health as significant issues for our community. Provision of walking and cycling opportunities are important contributors to improved health.

The inclusion of a multi-purpose court will encourage a variety of social ball games for children and youth, plus provide a competition netball court for finals of the football/netball competitions.

A multi-generational playspace will enhance family integration and provide exercise opportunities for older adults that will complement the active recreation activities to be delivered in the new Walmsley Community Centre currently under construction (bocce, table tennis, carpet bowls).

### ***Environmental Implications***

A highly valued aspect of the Kilsyth Recreation Reserve is the opportunity to walk, exercise or just sit and take in the view, watch the children play or a game of football. A consistent message through the consultation was the condition of the old tennis courts and how they detract from the ambiance of the Reserve.

The preservation, enhancement and accessibility for people of all ages and abilities is a key driver for improvement underpinning recommendations, particularly through the Reserve. Opportunity exists to turn the boggy south-east corner into a water sensitive urban design area with a focus on nature play for local children. This will be complimented by a sensory garden walk.

Conscious of the proximity and elevation of the proposed pump track to the neighbouring Walmsley Village residents, the addition of strategic planting of trees and bushes will be important. A sensory walk has also been recommended.

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

The draft Master Plan development involved extensive community consultation through a direct mail-out to local residents, an online survey and pop-up stations at the two main shopping centres. The current user groups were engaged i.e. Outer East Football/Netball League, tennis coach, and Axicom Pty Ltd (owners of the telecommunications tower).

Other stakeholders contacted for their insights to the current and future use of the site included tenant groups of the Kilsyth Memorial Hall, Walmsley Retirement Village management, the owner of the Churinga Village Shopping Centre and Coles franchise and the Disability Advisory Committee. An onsite workshop with the Kilsyth Community Action Group was also conducted.

Officers from across Council were engaged early in the process to identify issues and opportunities and later to provide feedback to enable refinement of the draft Master Plan.

Pop-up community consultations were undertaken in late 2019; one in the Churinga Village, the other on the Coles side of the Kilsyth Shopping Centres. An online

survey attracted 58 responses. Refer to the Background Report (Attachment 1, pp26-34) for details.

Key findings to emerge from consultation included:

- Improve linkages and accessibility between the shopping precinct and the Reserve
- Maintain and improve the connectivity to the Reserve and Kilsyth Shopping Centre from the retirement village
- Strengthen opportunities for more passive recreation opportunities for all age groups, particularly in the existing tennis court areas
- Improve pedestrian access and circuit within the Reserve
- Removal of the underutilised tennis courts to create opportunities for other activities
- Explore methods of enhancing its presence through strengthening community use, and enhancing its qualities as a 'place'
- Maintaining the existing sportsground facilities
- Maintaining the view to the Dandenong Ranges, and
- Increase the diversity of tree planting for habitat and natural shading.

The next step for the draft Master Plan is for it to be released, informing the public of the proposed Reserve improvements and to seek feedback on the draft concept layout (Attachment 1, pp 9-10).

The next phase of community consultation will confirm that we have captured the key concerns and ideas provided through the Master Planning consultation process. Taking into account the demographics of the area, consultation will target key user and reference groups to ensure the range of improvements proposed are appropriate.

## **COLLABORATION, INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

Internal collaboration has been ongoing throughout the research and development phases of the draft Master Plan development. Officers from across Council were asked for their input on the issues and opportunities they saw for the site. Additional comment was sought from the Kilsyth Community Action Group and the Disability Advisory Committee to help shape the early concept design, refine the content and layout of the design included in the draft Master Plan (p9).

The relationship of the Kilsyth Memorial Hall and Town Centre shopping centres to the Kilsyth Recreation Reserve was discussed during the Master Plan development. It was, however, considered beyond the scope of the Reserve Master Plan but identified for future town planning, with an emphasis on improving sense of presence and connectivity between the shopping, community and recreation spaces in the future.

## **RISK ASSESSMENT**

On major game days sufficient parking is an issue. The removal of aged, redundant buildings will free up space to improve traffic flow and provide additional parking to cater for increased usage of the Reserve.

Access to Council POSF and external funding in the timeframe proposed is the greatest risk and some flexibility in the implementation may be required.

Frequent requests from unhappy community members supports the early delivery of access to the pavilion public toilet and the removal of the redundant tennis courts to usable grassed open space. The remaining two courts could be opened for community no-cost casual usage. These short term/low cost items would enable early implementation of master plan initiatives. The cost to implement these items is approximately \$30,000. Construction of major cost elements have been delayed in the implementation plan to allow for the purchase of 150 Cambridge Road, Kilsyth. This provides time to rebuild funds in the Walling POSF and position for external funding co-contributions.

## **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

No officers and/or delegates acting on behalf of the Council through the Instrument of Delegation and involved in the preparation and/or authorisation of this report have any general or material conflict of interest as defined within the *Local Government Act 2020*.

## **ATTACHMENTS TO THE REPORT**

1. Kilsyth Recreation Reserve Master Plan - Background Report
2. Kilsyth Recreation Reserve DRAFT Master Plan
3. Kilsyth Recreation Reserve Master Plan - Draft Cost Plan
4. Kilsyth Recreation Reserve Master Plan - Draft Implementation Plan
5. Kilsyth Recreation Reserve Master Plan - Draft Asset Maintenance Plan