Hobsons Bay City Council

Bruce Comben Reserve Future Directions Plan

Draft Report

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SECTION ONE - INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose and Objectives of Study

The purpose of the study was to produce a cohesive plan to guide the long term redevelopment of Bruce Comben Reserve. The objectives of the study were to:

- Identify the current and future role, functions and values of the reserve.
- Assess the condition of the reserve and its buildings from structural, functionality, landscape character/design, visual, accessibility and horticultural quality perspectives and identify the works/actions required to address any concerns or deficiencies identified in the assessment.
- Identify the facility needs of existing and potential users groups and how these needs could be addressed.
- Investigate measures to enhance the passive spaces and general attractiveness of the reserve.
- Produce a future directions plan for the reserve which includes concept plan/s for the redevelopment of the reserve and a list of recommended, achievable works with estimated costs, priorities and potential funding sources.

1.2 Project Methodology

The methodology for the development of the future directions plan involved eight related stages. A brief summary of the stages is as follows:

- Stage 1: Project Definition Meetings - Meetings were held with the Council's recreation services staff and the project reference group for the purpose of clarifying the objectives of the planning process and discussing in detail any key/sensitive issues.
- Stage 2 - Relevant Council files, strategy documents and operational policies were reviewed.
- Stage 3 – Relevant leisure and demographic trends were analysed and the implications of these characteristics for the future development of the reserve were identified.
- Stage 4 - The existing conditions at and use of the reserve were assessed and described. This description has the following components:
  - A written assessment of the physical condition of the individual components of the reserve
  - A plan which illustrates and describes the condition of the components of the reserve.

- Stage 5 - User clubs, relevant Council officers, Councillors, other interested group and residents were consulted about their use of the reserve and the improvements that were needed.
- Stage 6 - The research findings from the previous stages were documented in a draft report. Included in this report were a list of the works suggested by key stakeholders or emerging from the literature review and condition audit, an assessment of the merit of each works item, a set of recommended works and a preliminary future directions plan. The reference group reviewed the report and suggested deletions and additions. The draft report and preliminary future directions plan were amended in response to this feedback.
- **Stage 7 – The draft report and plan were publicly exhibited and feedback received. The report and plan were amended in response to the feedback and converted to a final report (still to do).**

SECTION TWO - THE RESERVE

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this section is to outline the open space context of and the occupancy, maintenance and management arrangements at Bruce Comben Reserve.

2.2 Open Space Context

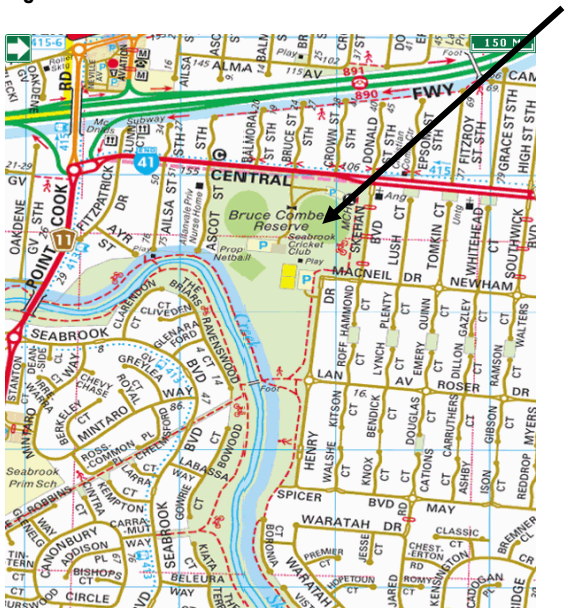
2.2.1 Location and components

Bruce Comben Reserve is located off Central Ave, Altona Meadows. The reserve is bounded by Central Ave to the north; Skehan Blvd, McNeil Dve and Henry Dve to the east; Ascot St South, Point Cook Rd, Ravenswood Ct and The Briars to the west and the path extending through the reserve from Lan Ave to the footbridge in the south. The reserve is around 17ha in size.

The reserve functions as both an active and passive recreation reserve. The active elements are located in the northern section of the reserve and comprise three playing fields, cricket nets, sports pavilion and four lit tennis courts. The passive elements are located in both the northern and southern sections of the reserve. They include an extensive path network, two playgrounds, treed areas and a large open grassed area. A children's services centre is situated in the north eastern corner of the reserve.

Skeleton Creek flows along the western side of the reserve. The creek originates on the southern edge of Rockbank and flows through the suburbs of Truganina, Tarneit, Hoppers Crossing, Point Cook, Seabrook, Altona Meadows and Sanctuary Lakes. It terminates in the Cheetham Wetlands. Bike/walking tracks have been constructed along the sides of the creek. The tracks extend from just north of Sayers Rd in Truganina to the Cheetham Wetlands, ending at the ford in the creek near Sanctuary Lakes East Blvd.

Figure 1 - Bruce Comben Reserve



2.2.2 Nearby Reserves

5 significant parcels of open space are located within 3kms of the reserve - AB Shaw Reserve, the Melbourne Ballpark, Lawrie Emmins Reserve, Dunnings Rd/Boardwalk Reserve and Altona Green.

Table 1 – Nearby Reserves

Area	Reserve	Distance by road	Function
1	Bruce Comben Reserve	NA	Active and passive reserve – football, cricket, rugby, tennis, large grassed area
2	Laverton Park	1.7	Active sporting reserve – soccer, Australian Rules football, cricket, tennis and lawn bowls
3	Melbourne Ballpark Laverton	1.8	Active reserve – softball, baseball
4	Lawrie Emmins Reserve Laverton North	2.2	Active and passive reserve that is still largely undeveloped. Masterplan provides for the following: - bushland, picnic areas, pathways, 5 ovals, 3 soccer fields, 16-24 tennis courts and archery field
5	Dunnings Rd/Boardwalk Rd Reserve	3	Passive and active reserve – football, cricket, wetlands
6	Altona Green	3	Active reserve – cricket, football and tennis

2.2.3 Proximity of like facilities

As indicated in section 2.2.1, Bruce Comben Reserve accommodates playing fields, tennis courts, playground, preschool and maternal and child health centre. The closest venues which contain one or more of these elements are listed in table 2. In all cases, the distances between the facilities at these locations and Bruce Comben Reserve are suitable – the neighbourhood level facilities, like preschool, are suitably close and the subregional facilities, like the rugby field, are suitably distant.

Figure 2 – Location of nearby open space

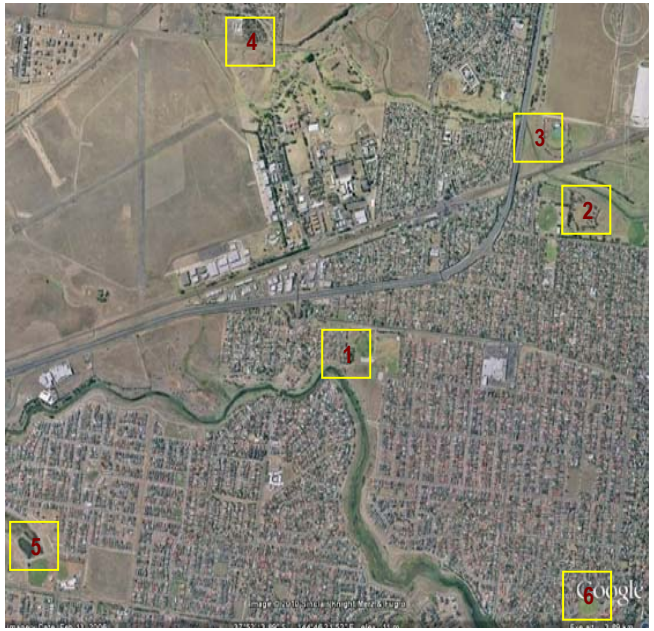


Table 2 - Location of like facilities

Venue	Location	Distance from Bruce Comben Reserve
Oval		
– Football	Laverton Park	1.7
– Cricket	Laverton Park	1.7
– Rugby	AB Langshaw Reserve	11.2
Playground	Altona Meadows Community Centre Reserve	1.2
Tennis	Laverton Park	1.7
Preschool	Donald St Laverton	2.0
M&CH centre	Powlett St Altona Meadows	1.6

2.3 Occupancy and Maintenance Arrangements

2.3.1 Occupancy

The occupancy arrangements between Council and the clubs using Bruce Comben Reserve are as follows:

Table 3 – Occupancy arrangements

Organisation	Facilities	Arrangement	Start	Duration	Expires
Seabrook Cricket Club	Playing fields 1, 2 and 3 Cricket nets Sports pavilion	Seasonal allocation	1st October each year	6 months	31st March each year
Westside Touch	Playing fields 1, 2 and 3 Sports pavilion (part) Note: Westside Touch has elected not to use Playing field 1 in recent years	Seasonal allocation	1st October each year	6 months	31st March each year

2.3.2 Management and Maintenance Responsibilities

Hobsons Bay City Council, Melbourne Water and the user clubs have responsibility for the maintenance of the reserve. The responsibilities of each organisation are reasonably clear (see table 4 below). The only responsibility area that needs clarification is the maintenance of the free-standing lights (non training) in the reserve e.g. the solar light near the creek.

Table 4 – Management and maintenance responsibilities

Organisation/Unit	Tasks
Melbourne Water	Maintenance of Skeleton Creek and its banks

Organisation/Unit	Tasks
HBCC Recreation Dept	Allocation of sports fields and pavilions Monitoring compliance with seasonal allocation agreements Facilities planning and development Maintenance of playgrounds, tennis courts, shelters, training lights, reserve signs and shelters
HBCC Parks	Maintenance of sports fields, all vegetation, paths, park furniture and fencing Maintenance of some sections of the creek banks
HBCC City Cleansing	Litter control and collections of rubbish
HBCC Building Maintenance	Maintenance of buildings
HBCC Works and Assets	Maintenance of access roads, car parks and reserve lighting Maintenance of training lights
User Groups	Minor maintenance as detailed in the seasonal occupancy agreements

2.3.3 Maintenance Regimes

The maintenance regimes for the different components of the reserve are outlined in Table 5. Enhancements to the regimes as suggested by Council staff are also listed in the table. The current total maintenance cost is around $123000. The suggested enhancements would cost an additional $38000.

Table 5 – Maintenance regimes

Element	Current regime		Enhanced regime	
	Action	Estimated Cost $	Suggested change	Additional cost $
Playing fields	Pre season turf wicket table preparation Curation of wicket during cricket season Fields mown 30 times per year Annual ground renovation program which involves herbiciding, scarifying, re-seeding fertilizing and topdressing	52000	Increase mowing to 35-40 cuts per year	7000

Element	Current regime		Enhanced regime	
	Action	**Estimated Cost $**	**Suggested change**	**Additional cost $**
Surrounds/grassed area	Mown at least monthly. More in spring	5000	Increase maintenance frequency to fortnightly	5000
Pathways	Reactive maintenance only	2000	Regular maintenance checks and program (three monthly)	3000
Fences	Reactive maintenance	2000	Regular maintenance checks and program (three monthly)	5500
Trees and other vegetation	Cyclic works on trees every 2 years	3000	Regular condition assessments and works in response to assessments (four monthly)	7000
Park furniture	Reactive maintenance program when fault identified	1000	Regular condition assessments and works in response to assessments (four monthly)	4000
Tennis courts	Reactive maintenance program when problem identified	1000	Regular condition assessments and works in response to assessments (four monthly)	5000
Playground	Inspection every 3 months Re-mulched when required	2500	No change except for additional funds to immediately replace damaged/defective equipment	3000
Access roads and carpark	Re-gravelled when requested by Council's Recreation Dept (typically every 2 years)	$10000 (per annum)	No change	-
Pavilion	Annual check and maintenance of fire equipment Annual check and maintenance of fire doors Annual check of egress/access doors Reactive removal of graffiti Reactive rectification of damage from vandalism	45000	No change	-

SECTION THREE - LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Purpose of Review

This section presents a summary of the findings of the literature review. The purpose of the review is to ensure that the recommendations in the future directions plan are consistent with and take into consideration the relevant recommendations, strategic directions and policy positions of previous Council planning processes.

3.2 Documents

The following documents/files were reviewed:

- Sport and Recreation Strategy Plan 2003.
- Open Space Plan 2005.
- Environment Strategy 2006.
- Tennis Development Plan 2005.
- Cricket Development Plan 2007.
- Soccer Facilities Review 2007.
- Skate Facilities Strategy 2001.
- Skeleton Creek Masterplan 2001.

3.3 Outcomes of Review

Table 6 contains the outcomes of the review. The table lists the recommendations/references from the above documents that have relevance to Bruce Comben Reserve and assesses their implications for the Bruce Comben Reserve Future Directions Plan.

Table 6 – Literature Review

RECOMMENDATION	APPLICATION WITH RESPECT TO BRUCE COMBEN RESERVE (BCR)	IMPLICATIONS FOR BCR FUTURE DIRECTIONS PLAN
Sport and Recreation Strategy Plan 2003-2007		
Undertake facility plans for AFL, soccer and cricket	Plans completed for soccer and cricket, not AFL. The plans make recommendations about the playing fields/ cricket wickets at BCR	Recommendations relating to BCR should be taken into consideration/reviewed in future directions planning process
Undertake a tennis development strategy	Plan completed. Plan contains recommendations about the tennis facilities at BCR (see below)	Recommendations relating to BCR should be taken into consideration/reviewed in future directions planning process
Install floodlights at selected tennis venues to encourage casual night use	Lights are being systematically upgraded at the tennis venues identified in the report. The tennis courts at BCR are lit and the lights were functioning well when last used	Nil
Continue the planning of other shared trails along Skeleton Creek, Kororoit Creek and other linear trails as appropriate	Skeleton Creek flows through BCR. 2.4m to 2.8m wide asphalt trails have been developed along both sides of the creek	Nil
Investigate the demand for and feasibility of installing fitness stations at Cherry Lake, Esplanade and Rifle section of the Bay Trail, Skeleton Creek/Cheetham Wetlands Precinct	A general policy has been developed for trails which recommends against the installation of fitness stations. Therefore, no stations have been or should be installed in BCR	No fitness stations should be installed along the trails in BCR
Implement the playground strategy	Two basic playgrounds have been installed at BCR	Nil
Review the adequacy of the provision of ancillary services and facilities at sports grounds	Condition audits have been completed for park furniture, fencing and carparks	Findings of audits should be considered in future directions planning process
Comben Reserve – Provide new tennis club facility	This recommendation was considered in the Tennis Facilities Review. A new pavilion was not recommended	Nil
Comben Reserve – Provide additional storage in pavilion	Additional storage has been assessed by Council as not being required	Nil
Upgrade the entrances/signage of recreation sites	The signs at BCR have been upgraded. They are attractive and in good condition	Nil
Open Space Plan 2005		
Develop a circuit trail around Bruce Comben Reserve	Trail has been developed	The trail should be retained and enhanced.

RECOMMENDATION	APPLICATION WITH RESPECT TO BRUCE COMBEN RESERVE (BCR)	IMPLICATIONS FOR BCR FUTURE DIRECTIONS PLAN
Provide additional sports facilities at the reserve	No additional sports facilities have been provided	The need for additional sport facilities should be considered in the future directions planning process
Develop a social/family area at the reserve	A playground has been developed. More facilities are needed	Social/family area should be considered in the future directions planning process
Place a greater emphasis on the importance of landscape improvements, tree planting and establishment in sports reserves	Reserve lacks vegetation and attractive landscaped areas	These policy/design recommendations should be seriously considered in the future directions planning process
Restrict the amount of fencing in open space to mitigate the potential alienation of public open space	Fencing at the reserve does not impede pedestrian entry or movement through the reserve	
Replace older fencing with more appropriate types of fencing or vegetation on the perimeters of reserve to form natural barriers	Fencing in BCR is ageing and damaged in parts	These policy/design recommendations should be seriously considered in the future directions planning process
Periodically review maintenance standards and procedures and make improvements to maintenance regimes and practices where appropriate	Maintenance of the reserve needs to be enhanced	
Develop shared trails in larger parks and open space corridors and perimeter pathway circuits around the larger parks	The reserve has a shared trail and perimeter path. The trail is 2.4-2.8m wide. This is narrow for a shared path	
Light the circuit paths for use at night	The circuit path does not have lights	
Provide more shade in open space reserves	The reserve lacks shade	
Increase the provision of seats throughout reserves, focusing on social family recreation spaces and trail corridors	There are not many seats in the reserve. The seats are poorly located and designed	
Ensure all new open space and play areas have accessible entry paths and furniture	There are no paths to the playground near the pavilion	
Environment Strategy 2006		
Undertake a major program of tree planting in parks	Reserve lacks vegetation and attractive landscaped areas	A recommendation to plant more trees should be included in the future directions plan
Develop outline/maintenance plan for each park in Hobsons Bay	The reserve does not have a formal maintenance plan	A recommendation to develop a formal maintenance plan should be included in the future directions plan

RECOMMENDATION	APPLICATION WITH RESPECT TO BRUCE COMBEN RESERVE (BCR)	IMPLICATIONS FOR BCR FUTURE DIRECTIONS PLAN
Protect native grasslands in the Altona/Laverton area. Investigate adding a native grassland to Hobsons Bay's network of paths	The reserve contains some native grasses	A recommendation to protect the grasses should be included in the future directions plan if they are considered to be significant
Tennis Development Plan 2005		
Laverton Park TC - Erect floodlights lights over remaining 2 courts - Consider conversion of some courts to en-tout-cas - Upgrade pavilion - Provide access to Altona Green courts	Lights have been erected over remaining courts and access has been provided to Altona Green courts and lights. A future directions plan has been developed for Laverton Park which recommends the provision of 4 additional lit courts. There is no recommendation in the Plan about the pavilion. The Plan has been adopted by Council	No courts are required at Bruce Comben Reserve. The future of the BCR tennis facility should be resolved in the future directions planning process
Retain courts and provide a shelter at Comben Reserve	The courts have been retained. A shelter has been provided but is some distance from the courts	The future of the BCR tennis facility should be resolved in the future directions planning process
Determine the future of the Altona Green, Laverton Park and Comben Reserve Tennis Facilities in consultation with the Laverton Park Tennis Club	The future directions plan for Laverton Park which recommends the provision of 4 additional lit courts. There is no land available for the expansion of the Altona Green facility. It will remain as a 2 court facility. The future of the BCR facility has not been determined	The future of the BCR tennis facility should be resolved in the future directions planning Process
Renew commitment to providing well maintained 'free to the public' tennis courts. Conduct a further investigation into which existing 'free to the public' courts should be retained.	The BCR tennis facility remains available for public use. However, it is not heavily used and is poorly located for a public venue	The provision of public access courts at BCR should be resolved in the future directions planning Process
Cricket Development Plan 2007		
Undertake a formal assessment of the condition of all the concrete wickets at Council reserves and develop a strategy for repair and replacement as required	An audit of the centre and practice wickets has been undertaken. The wicket on playing field 3 is in poor condition and needs major repair	A recommendation to repair the wicket on playing field 2 should be included in the future directions plan
Reconstruct the ovals at Don Maclean Reserve (main), Bryan Martyn Reserve, Laverton Park, Bayview Reserve (with neighbouring school), Croft Reserve (main), Fearon Reserve (both), Langshaw Reserve, Comben Reserve (2nd oval) Line plant grounds with summer grasses (with summer grasses)	Playing field 2 at Bruce Comben Reserve has not been reconstructed	The need to reconstruct playing fields 1 and 2 and convert the surface to warm season grass should be considered in the future directions planning process

RECOMMENDATION	APPLICATION WITH RESPECT TO BRUCE COMBEN RESERVE (BCR)	IMPLICATIONS FOR BCR FUTURE DIRECTIONS PLAN
Soccer Facilities Review 2007		
Examine the need for and feasibility of developing a soccer facility in the Altona Meadows area	Laverton Park has and will continue to be developed as the soccer venue for the Laverton, Altona Meadows and Seabrook areas	Bruce Comben Reserve is not required as a soccer venue
Skate Facilities Strategy 2001		
Provide a local level skate park at Bruce Comben Reserve	A skate park has not been provided in the reserve. Council is about to develop a playspace strategy. The provision of a skate board facility in Altona Meadows will be reviewed in this strategy	An area for play elements, such as a skate bowl, should be set aside in the future directions plan.
Skeleton Creek Masterplan 2001		
Retain gravel walking path around perimeter	The walking path has been retained	All the recommendations should be considered in the future directions planning Process
Retain grassy slope with new planting to provide shade and definition	Grassy slope has been retained and some planting has taken place	
Strengthen perimeter planting	Some planting has been undertaken. More is needed	
Realign path where it encroaches on oval	Path does not encroach on oval	
Extend carpark	Not completed	
Improve visibility to street and entry profile	Not completed	
Plant an avenue of large eucalypts along entry drive	Avenue of trees was planted. Trees were removed within a few days by vandals	
Upgrade the playground and provide a junior skate facility	New playground has been provided. Skate facility has not been installed.	
Provide a new BBQ and picnic area adjacent to playground and club rooms	Not completed	
Extend the gravel path and planting between car park and street	Not completed	
Expand tennis courts and clubrooms subject to feasibility	Not completed	
Partially remove earth banks to provide views and access between courts and views to creek reserve	Not completed	

SECTION FOUR - EXISTING CONDITIONS/SITE ASSESSMENT

4.1 Introduction

This section describes the condition of the various elements of the reserve from a structural, landscape character/design and horticultural quality perspective. The assessment has been made from inspections of the component facilities by the consultant team and discussions with Council officers and reserve users.

4.2 Summary

The findings of the assessment are detailed in full in the Appendix B. The problems/issues that should be addressed in the future directions plan are as follows:

- The reserve signs not being kept up to date.
- No directional sign to Cooraminta.
- Some entrances without signs advising of the prohibitions relating the consumption of alcohol or walking dogs off leash in the reserve.
- The ageing and damaged post and pipe fence around the perimeter of the reserve.
- The unattractive bollards along the access roads and around the carparks in the reserve.
- The unsealed and unlit access roads and carparks.
- The poorly maintained and, in some sections, eroded sand paths around the reserve.
- The cracked and uneven asphalt paths running along the sides of Skeleton Creek.
- The muddy and uneven desire lines in the reserve.
- The missing section of the perimeter sand path near McNeil Drive.
- The cracked tennis courts surfaces and leaning fences.
- The uneven and, in some areas, poorly grassed playing fields.
- The unattractive bowl area to the east of the tennis courts.
- The dying and damaged trees around the reserve.
- The poorly designed and located park furniture.

Figure 4 – Existing Conditions Plan

SECTION FIVE - LEISURE TRENDS/ DEMOGRAPHICS

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this section is to analyse relevant leisure and demographic trends and discuss their implications for the future use of Bruce Comben Reserve.

5.2 Leisure Trends

There are a number of general leisure trends which should be taken into consideration in the future directions plan. These are as follows:

General Leisure Trends - Informal recreation

- More people are choosing to recreate in informal and unstructured ways. As a consequence, activities such as recreational cycling, jogging and walking in parks for exercise and pleasure, are becoming more prevalent
- The rate of pet ownership, particularly as companion animals for older adults, is increasing. Exercising dogs in parks has become a popular activity.
- The popularity of activities that families can participate in together such as social tennis, picnicking and similar outdoor activities continues to grow.
- Generally, adults are remaining fitter and more active until later in life. This is leading to an increased participation in veteran's sports and more frequent use of open space areas for walking, relaxation and social activities.

General Participation Trends - Active sport (confined to sports played at Bruce Comben Reserve)

<u>Cricket</u>

- There has been a steep increase in participation in Melbourne in both junior and senior cricket over the past 3 years – a 22% jump in junior teams and 10% in seniors. All areas of Melbourne have experienced an increase, the largest rise occurring in the southern metro region (15%).
- Player and team numbers in the senior competition operating across Hobsons Bay are steady. Numbers in local junior competitions are increasing strongly, particularly in lower age juniors.

Tennis

- The number of tennis associations and clubs in Melbourne have increased over the past ten years. Registered member numbers, however, have decreased.
- Even though overall member numbers have declined, participation rates in tennis have risen in recent years. In 2009, 25% of the sport playing population throughout Australia participated in tennis, irrespective of the season. This was up 4% on 2000. Of the total population, over 10% played tennis, up from 6% in 1996. This suggests that the number of people playing social/casual tennis has increased significantly.
- Weekday night tennis has grown in popularity whilst weekend senior tennis has significantly declined.

Touch Rugby

- Touch football caters for junior girls and boys, women, men and mixed teams.
- Participant numbers in touch football across Victoria increased by 13% in 2009. There are now 806 registered teams in Victoria and around 9672 participants. Westside Touch, which plays at Bruce Comben Reserve, has an 18 team competition and 216 players
- The capacity of touch football to grow in participation is limited. Touch football has access to 7 venues across Melbourne. 5 of these venues, including Bruce Comben Reserve, are at capacity.

5.3 Demographics

The catchment areas served by Bruce Comben Reserve for passive recreation and active sport are essentially the suburbs of Seabrook and Altona Meadows (note: it is recognised that Westside Touch is a regional competition and has a catchment area which extends beyond these suburbs). Table 7 provides population projections for the combined Seabrook/Altona Meadows area. An analysis of the projections indicates the following:

- The total population of the catchment area is projected to decrease by 703 or 3% between 2010 and 2031.
- The age cohorts from 0 to 59 years will all decrease. The largest numerical fall will occur in the 40-49 years cohorts (838 people or 20%), followed by the 10-19 years cohort (677 or 20%).

- The age cohorts from 60 to 80+ will all increase. The 60-69 years cohort will increase by 810 or 41%, the 70-79 years cohort by 1024 or 104% and 80+ cohort by 410 or 104%
- The sub-junior age cohorts for sport (5-9 years) will decline by around 388, the junior age cohort (10-19 years) by 617 and the senior age cohort (20-39 years) by around 884.

Table 7 – Population Projections (Seabrook, Altona Meadows combined)

	Forecast years				
Age cohorts	**2010**	**2021**	**2031**	**+-**	**%+-**
0 to 9	3287	2959	2899	**-388**	**-12**
10 to 19	3389	2854	2712	**-677**	**-20**
20 to 29	3561	3180	3112	**-449**	**-13**
30 to 39	3710	3250	3275	**-435**	**-12**
40 to 49	4116	3402	3278	**-838**	**-20**
50 to 59	3206	3405	3046	**-160**	**-5**
60 to 69	1977	2652	2787	**810**	**41**
70 to 79	983	1591	2007	**1024**	**104**
80+	394	571	804	**410**	**104**
Total	**24623**	**23864**	**23920**	**-703**	**-3**

5.4 Implications for Future Directions Plan

The implications of these leisure trends and demographics for the future directions plan are as follows:

- The significant ageing of the local community and the growing popularity of activities such as walking for exercise and strolling will place increased demand on the passive elements of Bruce Comben Reserve. This will heighten the need for improvements to the passive areas, such as the construction of pathways, installation of park furniture and provision of shade and shelter.
- The significant decline in the junior and senior sport age cohorts suggests that the demand for active sports facilities at the reserve will decline. However, any fall in demand from population decline is likely to be offset by a continuing increase in the popularity of cricket and the continuing growth of the catchment area of Westside Touch as a result of residential expansion in Wyndham.

SECTION SIX – CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

6.1 Introduction

This section provides a summary of the outcomes of the consultation processes with the key stakeholders. The stakeholders were asked to provide their thoughts on what improvements should be made at the reserve. The following groups/individuals were consulted:

- Local residents through a written survey.
- Councillors and community representatives on the reference committee.
- Council Officers from the following units: Recreation Services, Parks Management, Children and Family Services, Assets and Works, Street Cleansing/Litter Management and Traffic Planning.
- Current and former user groups: Seabrook Cricket Club, Westside Touch and Laverton Park Tennis Club.

6.2 Consultation Outcomes

The full outcomes of the consultation process are provided in Appendix C. A list of the improvements suggested by the individuals/organisations is provided in Table 8.

Table 8 – Suggested improvements to reserve

SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENT	SOURCE					
	Residents	Councillors	Council staff	Cricket club	Touch Association	Laverton Tennis Club
Signage						
Make sure the users groups listed on the Main Reserve signs are kept current					√	
Erect dog on lead signs at all formal entry points to the reserve and on the western side of the footbridge	√					
Entrances, access roads and carparks						
Provide a two way entry/exit at main entrance					√	

SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENT	SOURCE					
	Residents	Councillors	Council staff	Cricket club	Touch Association	Laverton Tennis Club
Install gates at the entrances to the reserve. Ensure these gates are locked at night	√					
Seal the access roads		√	√	√	√	
Seal the carparks and redesign so that hoon behaviour is discouraged	√	√	√	√	√	
Provide lighting in the carparks	√	√	√	√	√	
Fences						
Replace the fences along the eastern side of the reserve with a new post and pipe fence – same style as near the cricket nets. Consider providing some vegetation breaks along the fence			√			
Replace the low post and log fences and bollards around the carparks and along the access roads with post and pipe fencing	√	√	√	√	√	
Paths						
Better maintain the granitic sand paths around the reserve	√	√	√	√	√	
Resurface the granitic sand paths with asphalt or concrete	√	√	√			
Extend the path network to the pavilion and the playground near the pavilion	√	√	√			
Repair the worn, cracked and raised sections of the asphalt paths	√	√	√			
Give consideration to constructing formal paths along the desire lines in the reserve	√	√	√			
Active recreation facilities						
Maintain the tennis courts and fencing in good condition	√					√
Resolve the future of the tennis courts in the context of the proposed addition of 4 courts at the Laverton Park Tennis Club			√			√
Reconstruct the playing fields in the reserve			√	√	√	
Reconfigure the playing fields. Explore the feasibility of developing a playing field to the south of the pavilion to replace field 3			√			
Redevelop the sports pavilion to meet the needs of users		√	√	√	√	
Redevelop the sports pavilion as a recreation/community hub which incorporates the existing sports facilities and provides a café and activity spaces for community groups						
Provide water fountains near the sports pavilion					√	

SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENT	SOURCE					
	Residents	Councillors	Council staff	Cricket club	Touch Association	Laverton Tennis Club
Passive spaces						
Remediate the bowl area next to the tennis courts	√	√	√			√
Extend the playgrounds	√			√	√	
Provide a larger 'access all abilities' playground	√					
Develop the area around the main playground as the family/ social area of the reserve			√			
Properly maintain all the vegetation areas	√	√	√			
Provide additional shade and shelter in the reserve	√	√	√	√	√	
Ensure that the redevelopment of the reserve does not promote activities that would detrimentally impact on neighbourhood amenity		√				
Provide another foot bridge across the creek	√					
Provide more park furniture, particularly near the playground, around the playing field and in passive spaces			√	√		√
Prove a bike riding area for children	√					
Other						
Provide public toilets in the reserve	√					
Consider providing a dog off leash area in the reserve	√	√				
Reduce trail bike activity in the reserve	√	√				
Provide facilities for dogs – bag dispensers, wash areas etc	√					
Provide facilities to support events in the reserve – water, power, amphitheatre etc	√	√				
Allocate space for the expansion of the Cooraminta facilities			√			
Improve the responsiveness of Council to complaints or requests for assistance relating to the reserve	√					
Provide more bins around the reserve					√	
Increase the maintenance budget			√			

SECTION SEVEN – ASSESSMENT OF MERIT

7.1 Introduction

This section lists the improvements to the reserve identified in the condition assessment and literature review or suggested by key stakeholders and assesses the merit/feasibility of these improvements.

7.2 Assessment

Table 9 – Assessment of Merit

SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENT	ASSESSMENT OF MERIT/FEASIBILITY
Signage	
Erect a sign just inside the reserve which indicates the direction of the Cooraminta Preschool and M&CH centre	– The Cooraminta Centre is located directly to the east of the main entrance. – There is no directional sign at the entrance indicating the location of the centre. – People visiting the centre are likely to drive some distance into the reserve before noticing the centre. Some may even miss the centre completely. A directional sign is required. – Estimated cost: $400 **Recommended**
Make sure the users groups listed on the Main Reserve signs are kept current	– Laverton Auskick and Laverton Park Tennis Club are listed on the main reserve signs as users of the reserve. – These clubs no longer operate at the reserve. – The signs could be confusing for people looking for these clubs. The signs need to be kept current. – No cost. **Recommended**
Erect dog on lead signs at all formal entry points to the reserve and on the western edge side of the footbridge	– The reserve is a 'dog on lead' park. – Signs indicating this are not erected at all the formal entry points to the reserve or at the footbridge. – Signs should be erected at these locations and other strategic points around the boundaries of the reserve. – 8 signs would be required. – Estimated cost: $3200 **Recommended**

SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENT	ASSESSMENT OF MERIT/FEASIBILITY
Entrances, access roads and carparks	
Provide a two way entry/exit at main entrance off Central Ave	– The existing entrance is suitable for current activity levels in the reserve. – When usage grows and Central Ave gets even busier a better controlled two way entrance/exit will be required. – This would involve the installation of a splitter island and widening the entrance. A deceleration lane on Central Ave from the south may also be needed. – Estimated cost of entrance works: $30000. Estimated cost of deceleration lane: $150000 (a power pole would have to be relocated). **Recommended**
Install gates at the entrances to the reserve. Ensure these gates are locked at night	– There are no gates at the Central Ave and Henry Drive entrances. There is a gate on the access road from Central Ave, about 100 metres in from the entrance. The purpose of this gate is to prevent cars from driving down to the pavilion building and gravel carpark – The gate is only meant to be open when the reserve is being formally used for cricket games etc or when Council workers/contractors are at the reserve. In summer the clubs and Council have responsibility for locking the gate and in winter the Council has responsibility. Often the gate is left open. As a result, cars frequently drive to the pavilion carpark and do spins on the gravel surfaces etc. They do the same in the gravel tennis carpark off Henry Drive – Entrance gates could help to reduce this behaviour but only if they were properly managed – closed at night and opened early in the day. The gates would also prevent people driving onto the playing fields. – However if the gates were not properly managed, they would not prevent the problems. If they were left open, the current issues would continue. If they were left shut, they would create problems for people wanting to: • Drive to the Cooraminta carpark • Park their cars in the front carpark so they can recreate informally on the playing fields • Park near the tennis courts so they can use the playground or play a game of casual tennis – In practice, the entrance gates would be difficult to manage and like the existing access road gates would frequently be left open or shut at the wrong time – Other, more practical and certain measures could be taken to reduce the security and vandalism problems (seal access roads, improved lighting, more use of the park and therefore more surveillance etc) **Not recommended**
Provide lighting in the carparks	– The carparks at the front entrance, pavilion and the tennis courts are not lit. The sealed carpark next to the Cooraminta Centre is lit. – All the carparks should be lit for security and safety reasons. – The main carpark should have the highest priority, as it is the most used carpark at night. – 10 lights would be needed - 4 in each of the tennis and pavilion carparks and 2 in the front carpark. – Estimated cost: $60000 **Recommended**

SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENT	ASSESSMENT OF MERIT/FEASIBILITY
Seal the access roads	– The access roads are gravel. They are currently in good condition as they were recently resurfaced. However, their condition can deteriorate quickly after bad weather, heavy use and/or frequent hoon behaviour. – The access roads are surfaced when required. They are not on a regular resurfacing program. – It has worked out the resurfacing occurs about every 2 years. – The cost of resurfacing with gravel is about $8000. The cost of sealing with bitumen is $190000. This figure allows for kerbing along the high side of the access road to Cooraminta **Recommended**
Seal the carparks and redesign so that hoon behaviour is discouraged	– The carparks at the front entrance, pavilion and the tennis courts are not sealed. The Cooraminta carpark is sealed with bitumen – The unsealed carparks are in reasonably good condition as they were recently resurfaced. However, it is apparent they can deteriorate quickly due mainly to hoon behaviour. – Like the access roads, the carparks are resurfaced when required. The resurfacing occurs about every 2 years. – Sealing the surface would reduce hoon behaviour but not eliminate it. Obstructions such as small splitter islands with garden beds should be installed. – The cost of improving the gravel carparks to a higher gravel standard is $36000. Maintaining them at this standard is $10000p.a. – The cost of sealing with bitumen and providing some splitter islands would be around $290000. This allows for kerbing along the south side of the main carpark. **Recommended that carparks be sealed**
Fences	
Replace the low post and log fences and bollards around the carparks and along the access roads with post and pipe fencing	– The fencing and bollards are in reasonable condition. However they are unattractive. There are too many bollards, sections of the log fence and some individual bollards are leaning and their heights are inconsistent. – The bollards can be easily lifted out by people wanting to drive onto the playing fields. – They should be replaced. Council's preferred fence type is bollard post with pipe rail (note: some bollards may have to remain along the tennis access road and some sections of the other access road and carpark because of their curved alignments) – Estimated cost: $37800 **Recommended**

<table>
<tr><th>SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENT</th><th>ASSESSMENT OF MERIT</th></tr>
<tr><td>Replace the old fences around the perimeter of the reserve with a new post and pipe fence – same style as the near the cricket nets. Consider providing some vegetation breaks along the fence.</td><td>– Post and pipe rail fencing is provided along Central Ave (west of the entrance), Skehan Bld, MacNeil Dve, Henry Dve and Ascot St Sth.
– The sections along Central Ave (west of the entrance) and around the court bowl in Ascot St Sth are relatively new and in good condition.
– The sections along Skehan Bld, Henry Dve, MacNiel Dve and the remainder Ascot St Sth are older and beginning to deteriorate.
– The sections of old fence should be replaced. The newer sections along Central Ave and Ascot St Sth may also have to be replaced to achieve a consistent fence type. Council's preferred fence type is bollard post with pipe rail.
– The sections along the eastern edge of the Reserve and Central Ave will be long. It has been suggested that vegetation breaks be provided in the fence to break the monotonous appearance.
– This would make the fence more attractive but the danger is that the trees would be removed or damaged and the breaks may eventually have to be filled. This could be costly. Vegetation could be planted inside the fence to achieve a similar effect.
– The cost of replacing the fence would be as follows:
<table>
<tr><th>Section</th><th>Length (m)</th><th>Cost ($)</th></tr>
<tr><td>Skehan Boulevard</td><td>280</td><td>12600</td></tr>
<tr><td>MacNeil Drive</td><td>110</td><td>4950</td></tr>
<tr><td>Henry Drive (from MacNeil to roundabout)</td><td>300</td><td>13500</td></tr>
<tr><td>Ascot St South</td><td>150</td><td>6750</td></tr>
<tr><td>Central Ave</td><td>200</td><td>9000</td></tr>
<tr><td>Total</td><td></td><td>46800</td></tr>
</table>
– Replacing old fencing is consistent with the recommendations of the Open Space Strategy
Recommended</td></tr>
<tr><td>Paths</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Better maintain the granitic sand paths around the reserve</td><td>– Grass is growing over the paths and some sections have depressions, are eroded and or have damaged plinth boards.
– These problems could be rectified through an upgraded maintenance program. The erosion problems would continue because of the grade on the path in the areas where the erosion occurs.
– The estimated once only cost of rectifying the problems on the path would be $10000.
– The additional amount required in the maintenance budget to keep the paths at the upgraded standard is $8000 pa.
Undertake an immediate upgrade</td></tr>
<tr><td>Repair the worn, cracked and raised sections of the asphalt paths</td><td>– Some sections of the asphalt path are cracked and worn. At a minimum they should be replaced with asphalt.
– Estimated cost: $30000
Replace the asphalt paths as part of the reconstruction of the path network with concrete</td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><th>SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENT</th><th>ASSESSMENT OF MERIT</th></tr>
<tr><td>Extend the path network to the pavilion and the playground near the pavilion</td><td>– There is no constructed path from the perimeter path to the playground.
– 2 desire lines have formed from the carpark and McNeil Drive/Henry Drive Corner to the playground.
– These desire lines are uneven, muddy in wet weather and difficult to negotiate.
– They should be properly constructed with a 1.8m wide path.
– Estimated cost: $15210 concrete, $11700 asphalt and $8840 granitic sand.
Recommended</td></tr>
<tr><td>Construct the missing link in the perimeter path at McNeil Drive/Henry Drive</td><td>– The path is not connected in this area. A desire line has been created and should be constructed.
– Estimated cost: $8000 (for granitic sand path 1.8m wide).
Recommended</td></tr>
<tr><td>Construct the diagonal desire line from the tennis courts carpark to the footbridge</td><td>– The diagonal desire line, it is obvious it is well used.
– Even if the other paths were properly constructed, it would continue to be well used as it is the quickest route to the footbridge.
– For this reason it should be constructed.
– Estimated cost: $36800 concrete, $28750 asphalt and $21850 granitic sand.
Recommended</td></tr>
<tr><td>Resurface the granitic sand paths with asphalt or concrete</td><td>– The granitic sand paths will continue to require regular maintenance. They will also continue to erode in the sections with steeper grade
– Some sections of the path are as narrow as 1.4m, some sections are as wide as 4.5m
– There are sections of concrete and asphalt paths in the reserve. The concrete section is only short but is in good condition. The asphalt sections are longer and some lengths are in poor condition. The path is around 2.4m wide.
– It has been suggested that that a consistent surface be provided.
– The recommend width of dual walking/bike path is 3m. The minimum width is around 2m. 2.5m would be a suitable width for the perimeter path and 1.8m for connections of the path to the playgrounds etc.
– The current lengths of paths are:
<table>
<tr><th>Surface</th><th>Length</th></tr>
<tr><td>Existing granitic sand</td><td>1185</td></tr>
<tr><td>Missing link</td><td>85</td></tr>
<tr><td>Connections to playground/pavilion from tennis carpark and McNeil/Henry St intersection</td><td>130</td></tr>
<tr><td>Diagonal desire line to footbridge</td><td>230</td></tr>
<tr><td>Asphalt on eastern and northern sides of creek</td><td>820</td></tr>
<tr><td>Asphalt on western and southern sides of creek</td><td>740</td></tr>
<tr><td>Total</td><td>3190</td></tr>
</table></td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><th>SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENT</th><th>ASSESSMENT OF MERIT</th></tr>
<tr><td>Resurface the granitic sand paths with asphalt or concrete</td><td>– The characteristics of the different surfaces are as follows:
<table>
<tr><th>Element</th><th>Granitic sand</th><th>Asphalt</th><th>Concrete</th></tr>
<tr><td>Advantages</td><td>Softer surface
Natural look</td><td>Least slippery surface
Reasonably natural look
Can flex and move</td><td>Durable surface
Least maintenance</td></tr>
<tr><td>Disadvantages</td><td>Needs most maintenance
Easily eroded
Not all weather
More difficult surface for prams etc
Can get slippery with moss</td><td>Can crack if not drained well
Once cracked will crumble</td><td>Can get slippery
Hard surface</td></tr>
<tr><td>Cost $ (per linear metre based on 2.5m width)</td><td>95</td><td>125</td><td>160</td></tr>
<tr><td>Overall cost $ (2860m)</td><td>299540</td><td>394200</td><td>504810</td></tr>
<tr><td>Maintenance</td><td>Repairing depressions and eroded areas
Removing weeds etc</td><td>Sealing to cover cracks
Removing weeds</td><td>-</td></tr>
<tr><td>Expected life (if right conditions)</td><td>Top up with sand every 10 years
Raise plinth boards</td><td>30 years</td><td>60 years</td></tr>
</table>
Recommended that paths be resurfaced with concrete</td></tr>
<tr><td>Active recreation facilities</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Reconstruct the playing fields in the reserve</td><td>– The playing fields vary in quality and their surfaces are uneven.
– The fields are subject to subsidence.
– No major works have been undertaken on the playing fields in recent years. They would have little value because of water restrictions.
– Restrictions will ease or even be removed over the next few years. A permanent non-potable water source may also be found (see section 8.3 of this report)
– The fields need total reconstruction. Estimated cost: $450000
Recommended</td></tr>
</table>

SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENT	ASSESSMENT OF MERIT
Maintain the tennis courts and fencing in good condition Provide 4-8 additional courts and pavilion	– The tennis facility at Bruce Comben Reserve has 4 lit hard courts. – The court surfaces are cracked and have some shallow depressions. The fencing is leaning and damaged in areas. Some of the nets are damaged. The lights are functional. – LPTC used the tennis facility at Bruce Comben Reserve as its second venue for more than a decade. Its primary venue was and still is the 4 court venue at Laverton Park. – LPTC stopped using the Bruce Comben Reserve facility in 2007 after becoming concerned about the deteriorating condition of the courts, the continued vandalism and the lack of a pavilion. The club now uses the 2 court facility Altona Green as its second venue. – LPTC deliberately downsized its membership when it left Bruce Comben Reserve as it has access to 2 less courts. – A future directions plan has been prepared for Laverton Park. The Plan provides for 4 additional courts, making the Laverton Park facility an 8 court venue. – It is anticipated that 2 of the new courts will be developed over the next 2 years. No timeline has been set for the remaining 2 courts. – When the additional 4 courts are built, LPTC will have access to 10 courts, 8 at Laverton Park and 2 at Altona Green. – 10 courts would be sufficient for the club's needs. It would not require the courts at Bruce Comben Reserve. The concern the club has, however, is that the timeline for the development of the courts at Laverton Park is not certain. Therefore, the club retains an interest in the courts at Bruce Comben Reserve. – The Bruce Comben Reserve tennis courts are available for public use. This is a valuable use and should be retained at the reserve. The location of the courts - in the bowl at the rear of the pavilion - is not ideal for public access courts. They need visibility and good surveillance in order to encourage use and discourage vandalism. – 4 courts are too many for a public access venue. 2 are sufficient. The existing courts should be removed. 2 new courts should be developed in the tennis carpark area. The cost would be around $110,000. The carpark would need to be relocated. **Determine timelines for the development of the courts at Laverton Park** **Remove the existing courts and fill the area. Construct 2 new courts (fenced but not lit) in the tennis carpark area** **Reconfigure and extend the tennis carpark**
Reconfigure the playing fields. Explore the feasibility of developing a playing field to the south of the pavilion to replace field 3	– The eastern playing area has 2 fields – a senior size ground and a small ground which is used for junior cricket and touch rugby. – It had been suggested that the playground area be redeveloped as a family/social area. This would involve an extension of the existing playground, the installation of BBQs and furniture and the planting of trees. – The family/social area will take up most of the smaller field. – The third field is still needed. It had been suggested that a field be developed to the south of the pavilion. – This could be done in and south of the bowl area. The bowl area could be filled and extended. 2 touch rugby field size fields could be developed. They could also be used for cricket. – Westside Touch wants to play in winter. These fields could be lit. – Estimated cost of construction including lights: $430000 **Recommended**

SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENT	ASSESSMENT OF MERIT
Redevelop the sports pavilion to meet the needs of users	– The pavilion would be serving at least 2 possibly 3 clubs and 3 cricket and 5 touch rugby fields. It would be used in winter and summer. It would need to provide for male and female players. – The required component areas would be: 4 changerooms, umpires rooms, amenities (internally and externally accessible), first aid room, storage areas, kitchen/kiosk, social room, office area. The floor area would be around 650 sqms. – The existing social room could be retained and improved – viewing window to main grounds. – The rest would be new. The floor area of the new spaces would be approximately 400 sqms – Estimated cost of refurbishing the social rooms and building the new spaces: $1.4m. **Recommended**
Redevelop the sports pavilion as a recreation/community hub which provides the existing sports facilities plus spaces for community groups and a café	– There are other facilities in reasonably close proximity to Bruce Comben Reserve that provide supervised activity spaces for community groups. They include Altona Meadows Community Centre, Altona Meadows Library and Learning Centre and Seabrook Community Centre. – Activity rooms could be provided at the pavilion and would probably get reasonable use. – However, management and supervision would be an issue. The other community centres have a staff presence. This centre would not. In term of cost benefit, it may not be justifiable. – The kiosk concept would need further feasibility analysis. Its feasibility would largely depend on the volume of people using the reserve. It would certainly not be feasible at the moment but if usage grows, it may be feasible in the future. – The cricket or touch rugby clubs may be interested in running the kiosk. If not, a private operator may be interested. – A kiosk area has been included in the component areas recommended for the redeveloped pavilion. **Feasibility assessment required for kiosk.**
Passive/informal play spaces	
Extend the playgrounds. Develop the area around the main reserve playground as a family/social area	– The playground near Ayr St is a suitable size and design. The main playground is basic and should be extended. – The reserve has no outdoor social/ picnic facilities – BBQs, tables, benches, shelter etc. These should be provided. – Developing a family/social area is consistent with the recommendations of the Open Space Strategy. – Estimated cost: $100000. **Recommended**
Install a skate bowl	– Council is undertaking a playgrounds' review. The review will look at the provision of skate facilities and revisit the recommendation made in the previous 2001 Skate Plan to provide a skate facility at Bruce Comben Reserve – A family/social area is to be provided at the reserve. This would be a suitable location for a skate facility if recommended by the playgrounds' review **Defer pending outcomes of playgrounds review. Locate in family/social area if recommended by the review**

<table>
<tr><th>SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENT</th><th>ASSESSMENT OF MERIT</th></tr>
<tr><td>Provide more park furniture, particularly near the playground, around the playing field, along the paths and in passive spaces</td><td>– The seats around the parks are generally set at an uncomfortable angle and sit too low for adults. The existing seats should be removed and replaced.
– Additional seats should be introduced in strategic locations – around playing fields, along paths, near pavilion, near play areas. Around 25 seats would be required.
– Providing more park furniture is consistent with the recommendations of the Open Space Strategy
– Estimated cost $50000.
Recommended</td></tr>
<tr><td>Provide an ‘access all abilities’ playground</td><td>– The extension to the play area proposed in Action 22 should be designed as an all abilities play area.
Recommended</td></tr>
<tr><td>Conduct a vegetation audit. Remove or better care for the vegetation that is in poor condition

Provide more trees</td><td>– A number of shrubs and trees have reached senescence, some have died and/or broken.
– The trees need to be pruned and in some areas thinned out. The cootamundra wattle (a weed) should be removed and other dead or broken trees should be replaced.
– Additional trees should be planted along the eastern boundary, in the social/family area, along the access roads and around the carparks.
– The planting on the eastern boundary should allow views into the reserve.
– A suggested planting regime is as follows:

<table>
<tr><th>Location</th><th>Trees</th><th>No</th><th>Cost $</th></tr>
<tr><td>Along Skehan Boulevard</td><td>River red gums, lemon scented gums, lightwood, blackwood, greybox and yellow box</td><td>25</td><td>2000</td></tr>
<tr><td>Along Henry Drive</td><td>Yellow gum, greybox, yellowbox</td><td>35</td><td>3000</td></tr>
<tr><td>At social/family area</td><td>Blackwood, peppercorn
Some advanced deciduous- english oak, october glory, autumn blaze, chanticleer and crepe myrtle</td><td>25</td><td>6000</td></tr>
<tr><td>Along access roads and around carparks</td><td>Spotted gums, lemon scented gums</td><td>70</td><td>6000</td></tr>
<tr><td>Other locations</td><td>River red gums, lemon scented gums, lightwood, blackwood, greybox and yellow box</td><td>50</td><td>3000</td></tr>
<tr><td>Total</td><td></td><td></td><td>20000</td></tr>
</table>
Recommended</td></tr>
</table>

SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENT	ASSESSMENT OF MERIT
Provide a formal bike riding area for children	– The upgrading and widening of the pathways will encourage more riding in the reserve. Is this enough or should a special riding area be developed for children? If the area was for small children, it could be in the family/social area. If it was for older children, it could be down in the grassed areas south of the tennis courts. The work involved would be constructing some sealed paths and mounding. – The new pathways should be sufficient. Their use for cycling should be monitored. If more facilities are needed they could beprovided in the family/social area **Not recommended**
Provide other non-traditional play spaces, such as a trampolining areas	– The reserve has the size to accommodate a range of play spaces.The important questions are: • Would the facilities be used? • Who would take responsibility for supervising their use? • Who would maintain them? – Council should remain open to ideas and assess each option on its merits. – A zoned area could be set aside in the park for informal play – e.g. the family/ social area – Non traditional play facilities could be developed in this area if feasible. **Suggestions would need to be individually assessed**
Other	
Provide a pedestrian crossing on Central Ave to the Reserve	– The number of people crossing the road each day has not been measured but it is unlikely that it would be sufficient to justify the installation of a pedestrian crossing. – VicRoads would have to approve the crossing. They would only approve pedestrian operated signals. – Pedestrian numbers might increase in the future, particularly if the reserve is enhanced. – Signals should be allowed for the masterplan. – The signals would cost $230000. Council may have to pay for the installation if it wanted the crossing quickly. **Recommended**
Provide lighting in suitable locations	– Lighting should be provided in the reserve to enhance safety. – The lights should be located around the play area, along the paths on the western edge and along Skeleton Creek. – 10 lights would be required. – Estimated cost $100000 – Provision of lighting would be consistent with the recommendations of the Open Space Strategy. **Recommended**
Provide public toilets in the reserve	– Externally accessible toilets could be provided in the pavilion. – They could be opened when required. **Recommended as part of the pavilion**

SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENT	ASSESSMENT OF MERIT
Provide facilities for dogs – bag dispensers, wash areas	– A bag dispenser is provided at the front entrance. More dispensers could be installed around the path and at some of the other entrances. Estimated cost is $1000. – Dog wash facilities are not recommended. Dog washing can be done at home. **Bag dispensers recommended**
Consider providing a dog off leash area in the reserve	– The reserve is currently a 'dog on lead' area. However, many people are not observing this restriction. – It has been suggested that a dog off leash zone be provided in the reserve. The area south of the tennis courts was suggested as an option. – Dog zones need to be contained. The area suggested is not contained and would have to be fenced to prevent dogs running across bike paths. – This could be costly and detract significantly from the appearance of the reserve. – There are no other suitable areas in the reserve. **Not recommended**
Provide facilities to support events in the reserve – water, power, amphitheatre etc	– Council's events unit indicated that it is trying to limit the number of outdoor events area in the municipality. – It currently has 4 preferred locations for events: Commonwealth Reserve in Williamstown, Logan Reserve in Altona, Altona Meadows Park and McCormack Park in Laverton. It is satisfied with this number. – The unit recently assessed the suitability of Bruce Comben Reserve as an events venue and ruled it out because it was considered to be too open, desolate and unattractive and not located near a commercial area. It was also concerned about the traffic noise. – It indicated that it would be prepared to reassess the reserve's suitability if improvements were made that addressed the concerns listed above. – The only infrastructure that would be required would be 3 phase power and water. A permanent structure like an amphitheatre is not required as portable stages are brought in. – An area in the reserve could be designated for events (e.g. the new rectangular playing fields) and provision should be made for 3 phase power and water in this area. **Designate an area for events. Make provision for 3 phase power and water**
Allocate space for the expansion of the Cooraminta facilities	– An additional licensed room and extra outdoor space is required at Cooraminta Preschool. The M&CH needs a group meeting room. – The footprint of the preschool/MCH will have to expand to the south or into the carpark by around 400 sq metres. – Expansion to the south would encroach slightly on to the playing field. **Recommended**

SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENT	ASSESSMENT OF MERIT/FEASIBILITY
Provide another foot bridge across the creek e.g. just south of the bend before the creek flows west	– The bridge over Point Creek Rd is being widened to include a bicycle/pedestrian path. This will improve safety for pedestrians/cyclists travelling over the bridge. – An underpass is being constructed at the bridge to link the Skeleton Creek trails. This will provide a safe crossing point for people walking along the trail. – These changes should reduce the need for another footbridge. – Melbourne Water would have to approve. Unlikely because of short distance to existing footbridge. **Not recommended**
Install a viewing platform over the creek	– The reeds make it difficult to see the creek from the path. It has been suggested that a viewing platform be erected off the path to give people the opportunity to see the creek. – The platform would have to be approved by Melbourne Water. It indicated that it would need some convincing of the merits of the platform. – Note: the creek can be viewed from the footbridge. **Not recommended**

SECTION EIGHT – FUTURE DIRECTIONS PLAN

8.1 Introduction

This section contains the following information:

- A plan illustrating proposed works at the reserve.
- An overall development plan for the reserve.
- An implementation plan which indicates the proposed staging of works and estimated costs.
- Discussions about the provision of water to the reserve.

8.2 Aim and Objectives of Future Directions Plan

The aim of the future directions plan is to provide a vision for how the reserve will look and function in the long term. The implementation of the Plan will achieve the following objectives:

- Enhance the visual amenity and safety of the reserve.
- Enhance the vegetation in the reserve.
- Increase the scope and quality of residents' passive recreation experiences in the reserve – walking, cycling, running, playing, relaxing etc.
- Enhance pedestrian and vehicle movement through and within the reserve.
- Provide additional playing fields and improved, contemporary clubrooms for the sports played at the reserve.

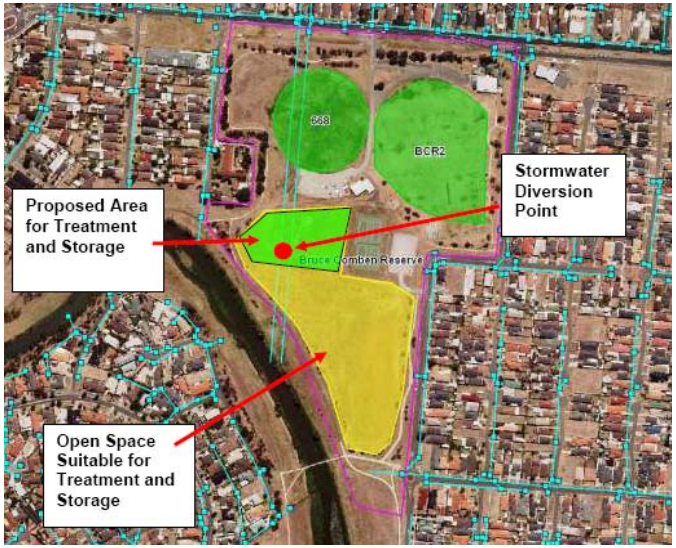
8.3 Provision of water

City West Water (CWW) recently investigated options for supplying non-potable water to 30 sports fields in the Hobson Bay municipality. In total, 17 separate water supply projects were identified to service the 30 sportsfields.

Bruce Comben Reserve was investigated. The following options were considered: harvesting rainwater, harvesting stormwater, using groundwater and mining the sewer. The only option considered feasible was harvesting stormwater. The investigation found that a large underground stormwater drain traversed the reserve; the catchment area for the drain could generate sufficient water to meet 90% of the annual irrigation demand of the Bruce Comben Reserve playing fields; and it would be possible to divert the drain at a point south of playing field 1, store and treat the water on-site and then pipe it to the irrigation systems in the playing fields. CWW estimated the cost of developing and operating the stormwater harvesting scheme at $915,000 capital and $11,000 per annum respectively.

CWW ranked the 17 projects according to their feasibility. The Bruce Comben Reserve project ranked 8th out of 17.

Figure 4 – Proposed Stormwater Project



This potential water supply source for Bruce Comben Reserve needs to be considered in the future directions planning process – in particular the location of the scheme (see Figure 4) and timing of provision. The proposed area for storage and treatment is located in the 'bowl area'. This area has been recommended for development as playing fields. Playing fields and water storage are not incompatible. The storage area - most likely a tank - could be located under the playing fields. With respect to timing, if a decision is made to proceed with the water supply project, it should be undertaken at the same time as the playing fields are developed.

8.4 Future Directions Plan

The recommended actions are listed in table 10 and graphically illustrated in Figure 5.

Table 10 - Future Directions Plan

No	Action
	Signage
1	Erect a sign just inside the Central Ave entrance to the reserve which indicates the direction of the Cooraminta Preschool and M&CH centre
2	Erect dog on lead signs at all the formal entry points to the reserve and on the western entry to the footbridge
	Entrances, access roads and carparks
3	Provide a two way entry/exit at main entrance off Central Ave
4	Seal the access roads
5	Seal the carparks and redesign so that hoon behaviour is discouraged
6	Provide lighting in the carparks
	Fences
7	Replace the low post and log fences and bollards around the carparks and along the access roads with new post and pipe fencing
8	Replace the old fences around the perimeter of the reserve with new post and pipe fencing
	Paths
9	Reconstruct the existing granitic sand paths in the following sections of the path network (2.5m wide with timber plinths on both sides): - Central Ave east of west of entrance - Cooraminta to Skehan - Skehan Boulevard (not including connections from street) - McNeil Drive - Henry Drive - Western edge of reserve at the side and back of houses and along Ascot St
10	Construct new granitic sand paths in the following areas (2.5m wide with timber plinths on both sides): - The desire line connecting the end of the McNeil Drive section and the start of the Henry Drive section - The diagonal desire line from the tennis access road to the footbridge - The desire line along the back of the pavilion carpark to the playground

No	Action
11	Convert the following sections of the existing granitic sand and asphalts paths to concrete paths: - Connections from Skehan Rd and Ascot St Sth to main path (2.5m wide) - Henry Drive to footbridge (2.5m wide) - Both sides of the creek (3m wide)
12	Construct new concrete paths from the tennis carpark and McNeil Drive to the playground (2.5 m wide)
13	Provide lighting at suitable locations along the path network
	Passive/informal play spaces
14	Develop the area around the main reserve playground as a family/social area. The area should comprise an extended playground, seats, BBQ, tables, benches and shelter
15	Provide more park furniture in strategic locations – around playing fields, along paths, near pavilion and near play areas
16	Plant trees in the following locations and numbers:

Location	Suggested species	No
Along Skehan Boulevard	River red gums, lemon scented gums, lightwood, blackwood, greybox and yellow box	25
Along Henry Drive	Yellow gum, greybox, yellowbox	35
At social/family area	Blackwood, peppercorn Some advanced deciduous- english oak, october glory, autumn blaze, chanticleer and crepe myrtle	25
Along access roads and around carparks	Spotted gums, lemon scented gums	70
Other locations	River red gums, lemon scented gums, lightwood, blackwood, greybox and yellow box	50
Total		

	Active recreation facilities
17	Reconstruct playing fields 1 and 2
18	Provide 2 new 'free to the public tennis courts' in the current tennis carpark area (acrylic resin courts with metal nets and fencing)
19	Remove the existing tennis courts and fill the area. Fill the bowl area. Construct a rectangular playing field to be used for touch rugby and cricket. Erect lights over the playing field
20	Provide sealed carparks to service the social/family area, public access courts and new playing field
21	Redevelop the sports pavilion. The component elements should include 4 changerooms, umpires rooms, first aid room, storage areas, kitchen/kiosk, social room, office area, internally and externally accessible toilets and an outside area under a veranda
	Other
22	Advocate to VicRoads for the installation of pedestrian crossing across Central Ave to the Reserve
23	Make provision for the expansion of the Cooraminta Children Services Facility
24	Provide facilities to support events in the reserve – e.g. water, power

Figure 5 – Future Directions Plan

Key Recommendations

Signage

1. Erect a sign just inside the reserve which indicates the direction of the Coonamble Preschool and MCH Centre
2. Erect 'dog on lead' signs at all the formal entry points to the reserve and on the western entry to the footbridge

Entrances, access roads and carparks

3. Provide a two way entry/exit at the main entrance off Central Avenue
4. Seal the access roads
5. Seal the carparks and redesign so that hoon behaviour is discouraged
6. Provide lighting in the carparks
7. Replace the low post and log fences and bollards around the carparks and along the access roads with new post and pipe fencing
8. Replace the old fences around the perimeter of the Reserve with new post and pipe fencing

Paths

9. Reconstruct the existing granitic sand paths in the following sections of the path network (2.5m wide with timber edging on both sides):
   - Central Ave east of west of the entrance
   - Coonamble to Skehan Boulevard
   - Skehan Boulevard (not including connections from street)
   - McNeil Drive
   - Henry Drive
   - Western edge of the Reserve at the side and back of houses and along Ascot Street
10. Construct new granitic sand paths in the following areas (2.5m wide with timber edging on both sides):
    - The desire line connecting the end of the McNeil Drive section and the start of the Henry Drive section
    - The diagonal desire line from the tennis access road to the footbridge
    - The desire line along the back of the pavilion carpark to the playground
11. Convert the following sections of the existing granitic sand and asphalt paths to concrete paths:
    - Connections from Skehan Boulevard and Ascot Street South to main path (2.5m wide)
    - Henry Drive to the footbridge (2.5m wide)
    - Both sides of the creek (3m wide)
12. Construct new concrete paths from the tennis car park and McNeil Drive to the playground (2.5 m wide)
13. Provide lighting at suitable locations along the path network

Passive/informal play spaces

14. Develop the area around the main reserve playground as a family/social area. The area should comprise an extended playground, seats, BBQ, tables, benches and shelter
15. Provide more park furniture in strategic locations – around playing fields, along paths, near pavilion and near play areas
16. Plant trees in the following locations and numbers:

Location	Suggested species	Number
Along Skehan Boulevard	River Red Gums, Lemon Scented Gums, Lightwood, Blackwood, Greybox and Yellow box	25
Along Henry Drive	Yellow gum, Greybox, Yellowbox	35
At social/family area	Some advanced deciduous- English Oak, Crepe Myrtle, Pyrus calleryana "Chanticleer" and Acer freman[illegible] Autumn Blaze, Acer rubrum "October Glory"	25
Along access roads and around carparks	Spotted gums, Lemon scented gums	70
Other locations	River Red Gums,Lemon Scented Gums, Lightwood, Blackwood, Greybox and Yellow box	50

Active recreation facilities

17. Reconstruct playing fields 1 and 2
18. Provide 2 new 'free to the public tennis courts' in the current tennis car park area (acrylic resin courts with metal nets and fencing)
19. Remove the existing tennis courts and fill the area. Fill the bowl area. Construct a rectangular playing field to be used for touch rugby and cricket. Erect lights over the playing field
20. Provide sealed car parks to service the social/family area, public access courts and new playing field
21. Redevelop the sports pavilion. The component elements should include 4 change rooms, umpires rooms, first aid room, storage areas, kitchen/kiosk, social room, office area, internally and externally accessible toilets and an outside area under a verandah

Other

22. Advocate to VicRoads for the installation of pedestrian crossing across Central Ave to the Reserve
23. Make provision for the expansion of the Coonamble Children Services Facility
24. Provide facilities to support events in the Reserve – e.g. water, power

LEGEND

- Site boundary
- Proposed advanced deciduous tree planting
- Proposed native tree planting
- Existing granitic path to be upgraded
- New granitic sand path
- Proposed concrete path
- Proposed sealed access roads
- P Existing car parking (surface varies)
- P Proposed formalised car parking areas
- Area for possible expansion of car park
- Oval to be upgraded
- Proposed family / social area
- Proposed tennis courts
- Proposed rectangular playing field
- Area for possible expansion of playing fields
- eL Proposed lighting
- Proposed picnic shelter with table and barbeque
- Proposed play space
- Proposed building extension
- Redeveloped sports pavilion
- Removed tennis courts

FIGURE 5: DRAFT FUTURE DIRECTIONS PLAN- OPEN SPACE AND LANDSCAPE
BRUCE COMBEN RESERVE, ALTONA MEADOWS
HOBSONS BAY CITY COUNCIL

SCALE 1:1000 (B1 SHEET)

8.5 Stages and Costs

The total cost of implementing the plan is around $4m. The majors cost items are as follows:

- An extended and redeveloped pavilion – $1.2m
- The reconstruction and extension of the path network -$505000
- The reconstruction of the existing playing fields - $430000
- The provision of additional playing fields - $440000

For the purpose of developing the stages for the plan's implementation, it has been assumed that around $600000 will be available for each stage. Therefore, the plan will have 6 stages. However, it is acknowledged that the number of stages may need to be increased to enable the plan to fit in with Council's broader capital and open space development priorities.

The full implementation plan is presented in Table 11. A summary of the plan and its priorities are as follows:

- **Immediate works - Estimated cost: $26000**
  - Enhancing the path network
  - Cleaning up the vegetation
  - Generally tidying up around the reserve
- **Stage One - Estimated cost: $527400**
  - **Generally making the internal areas of the reserve safer and more visually appealing**
  - Addressing signage issues
  - Planting more trees
  - Providing more play opportunities
  - Sealing and lighting the main access road and carpark

- **Stage Two – Estimated cost: $586000**
  - **Generally enhancing the passive and active spaces and opportunities in the reserve and making the reserve safer and more visually appealing**
  - Replacing boundary fences
  - Reconstructing and extending the path network (all paths in northern section and granitic sand paths in southern section)
  - Reconstructing playing field 1
  - Replacing internal fences
  - Improving lighting throughout the reserve
- **Stage Three – Estimated cost: $567120**
  - **Enhancing the passive facilities in the reserve and providing appropriate active facilities**
  - Reconstructing and extending the path network (southern section)
  - Removing the tennis courts and constructing 2 new public access courts
  - Reconfiguring and sealing the tennis carpark
- **Stage Four – Estimated cost: $650000**
  - **Generally expanding the active facilities and providing enhanced facilities for families to socialise and children to play**
  - Reconstructing playing field 2
  - Constructing new playing fields
  - Developing family/social area (Stage 2)
- **Stage Five – Estimated cost: $600000**
  - **Providing a contemporary sports facility which will cater for the organised sports played at the reserve**
  - Redeveloping sports pavilion (Stage 1)
- **Stage Six – Estimated cost: $600000**
  - **Providing a contemporary sports facility which will cater for the organised sports played at the reserve**
  - Redeveloping sports pavilion (Stage 2)

Table 11 – Proposed Implementation Plan

Action	Option 1 GS	Option 2 Concrete	Cumulative total
	$	$	$
Immediate			
Improve paths (cut back grass, fill depressions, repair plinth boards etc)	10000		
Improve trees shrubs (remove dead trees, broken limbs etc)	8000		
Generally tidying up around the reserve (repair fences, straightening bollards, filling potholes in front access road etc)	8000		**26000**
Stage One			
Provide directional sign to Cooraminta	400		
Dog on leads signs at key locations (8 signs)	3200		
Develop the family/social area (stage 1)	50000		
Install seats in strategic locations around the reserve	50000		
Plant additional trees	20000		
- *Skehan Boulevard*	*2000*		
- *Henry Drive*	*3000*		
- *Family/social area*	*6000*		
- *Access roads and carparks*	*6000*		
- *Other locations*	*3000*		
Seal main access road	170000		
Seal carpark pavilion	160000		
Erect lights in front carpark	12000		
Erect lights in pavilion carpark	24000		
Replace bollards in reserve with new bollard post and pipe fence	37800		**527400**
Stage Two			
Erect new boundary fences	46800		**46800**
- *Skehan Boulevard*	*12600*		
- *McNeil Drive*	*4950*		
- *Henry Drive*	*13500*		
- *Ascot St South*	*6750*		
- *Central Ave*	*9000*		

Action	Option 1 GS	Option 2 Concrete	Cumulative total
	$	$	$
Redevelop path network (northern section and southern GS sections)	188835	300810	**235635**
- Central Ave east of entrance (Granitic sand, 2.5m wide)	12350	20800	
- Cooraminta/Skehan (GS, 2.5m)	6650	11200	
- Skehan Boulevard (GS, 2.5m)	19475	32800	
- Connections from Skehan Rd to path (C, 2.5m wide)	8800	8800	
- McNeil Drive (GS, 2.5m)	7125	12000	
- Missing link (McNeil to Henry)	8075	13600	
- Connection to playground/pavilion (Concrete 2.5m wide)	15210	15210	
- Western edge along back of pavilion carpark to playground/pavilion (GS, 2.5m)	15200	25600	
- Diagonal desire line (GS, 2.5m)	21850	36800	
- Henry Drive (GS, 2.5m)	23750	40000	
- Western side of reserve - at side and back of houses and along Ascot (GS, 2.5m)	33250	56000	
- Central Avenue west of entrance (GS, 2.5m)	17100	28000	
Reconstruct playing field 1	250000		**485635**
Install lights around reserve	100000		**585635**
Stage Three			
Redevelop path network (southern section)	317120		**317120**
- Henry Drive to Footbridge (2.5m wide) (C. 2.5m)	8000		
- Eastern side of creek (C, 3m wide)	71040		
- Northern side of creek (C, 3m wide)	86400		
- Western side of creek (C, 3m wide)	65280		
- Southern side of creek (C, 3m wide)	76800		
- Western path to footbridge (C, 2.5m)	9600		
Remove tennis courts and fill the area	15000		**332120**
Construct 2 new public access tennis courts	110000		**442120**
Reconfigure, extend, seal and light tennis access road and carpark	200000		**642120**

Action	Option 1 GS	Option 2 Concrete	Cumulative total
	$	$	$
Stage Four			
Reconstruct playing field 2	180000		**180000**
Construction and light new playing fields	420000		**600000**
- *Construction*	*270000*		
- *Lights*	*150000*		
Develop the family/social area (stage 1)	50000		**650000**
Stage Five			
Redevelop the sports pavilion (Stage 1)	600000		**600000**
Stage Six			
Redevelop the sports pavilion (Stage 1)	600000		**600000**
Other- Timeline and source of funding to be determined			
Two way entry/exit at main entrance	30000		
Deceleration lane	150000		
Pedestrian crossing Central Ave	230000		

8.6 Recommendations

- That the future directions plan detailed in Table 10 and Figure 5 be adopted.
- That the staged implementation plan outlined Table 11 be adopted.
- That the immediate works listed in Table 11 be undertaken.
- That the enhanced maintenance regimes described in Table 5 be introduced.
- That the feasibility and cost benefit of the water supply project for Bruce Comben Reserve be further investigated.
- That the timing of the provision of the 4 additional tennis courts at Laverton Park be confirmed – preferably 2 courts in 20011/12 and 2 more courts in 2013/2014.
- That the HBCC Playspaces Strategy further investigate the feasibility of developing recreation facilities and spaces for children and young people at the reserve. including an extended playground and a local level beginners skate park.
- That the provision of a pedestrian crossing on Central Ave be further discussed with Vic Roads.

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Existing Conditions/Site Assessment

1.1 Introduction

This section describes the condition of the various component areas of and facilities at the reserve from a structural, functionality, landscape character/design and horticultural quality perspective. The assessment has been made from inspections of the component facilities by the consultant team, discussions with Council officers and reserve users and reference to condition reports prepared by Council.

1.2 Condition Assessment

Signage

Reserve signs are erected at the entrances off Central Ave and Henry Dve. They are attractive and in good condition. The signs list the user groups and advise that the Cooraminta Preschool and M&CH centre are located in the reserve. Two of the groups are no longer active at the reserve and the sign to the Cooraminta facilities does not indicate the direction of these buildings. Signs identifying the reserve as a 'dog on leash' area are located at three of the pedestrian entrances along Skehan Bld and Henry Dve and along the path on the western side of the creek. The other entrances are not signed.

Boundary Fencing

Post and pipe rail fencing is provided along Central Ave, Skehan Bld, MacNeil Dve, Henry Dve and Ascot St Sth. The sections along Central Ave and around the court bowl in Ascot St Sth are relatively new and in good condition. The sections along Skehan Bld, Henry Dve, MacNiel Dve and the remainder Ascot St Sth are older and beginning to deteriorate. Some lengths are leaning, many of the posts are splitting and some have lifted out of the ground.

Timber paling fencing is provided at the back of the houses in Ascot St Sth. The vacant block has wire fencing. The fence is lined by trees and largely hidden from view. The Ravenswood Ct frontage is not fenced.

Internal Fencing

Low level post and log fencing and rounded bollards are provided around the carparks and access roads. The fencing and bollards are in good condition but unattractive. Sections of the log fence and some individual bollards are leaning and their heights are inconsistent. Post and wire fencing is erected on the west side of Skeleton Creek. A short section of post pipe fence has been erected between the main carpark and new cricket nets. These two areas of fencing are in good condition.

Vehicle Access

Vehicles can formally access the reserve at the main entrance off Central Ave and the secondary entrance off Henry Dve. The access road off Central Ave has an asphalt and then gravel surface. The asphalt extends 20m to the south of the entrance and 40m to the east where it joins the preschool carpark. The surface is badly worn and pot-holed. The remainder of the access road leading up to the sports pavilion has a gravel surface and is in good condition. The access road off Henry Dve has a gravel surface and is also in good condition (note: the gravel areas have recently been resurfaced). There are also some gravel and dirt access paths around the pavilion.

Pedestrian Access

The reserve has permeable boundaries on all sides and is highly accessible to walkers. Formal entry points are provided on the fenced boundaries but residents can informally enter the reserve by simply scaling the post and pipe fence at any location.

Residents living to the south west can enter the reserve at any point as the boundary is unfenced. However, they must then cross the footbridge if they wish to access the eastern portion of the reserve.

Point Cook Rd is a pedestrian barrier to the path connections established both within the reserve and to the open space corridor further north. Point Cook Rd carries significant volumes of traffic. At peak traffic times, pedestrians using the Skeleton Creek Trail need to wait for a considerable time for breaks in traffic to cross the road.

Pathways

A perimeter granitic sand (pea gravel) pathway extends around the perimeter of the reserve on the north, east and western edges. The pathway is 1.2-1.5 metres wide with a barely visible plinth edge. The eastern section which runs parallel to Henry Dve and Skehan Bld is in poor condition with grass and weeds encroaching the edges and shallow depressions and water furrows in some sections. Some of the links from the path to Skehan Bld are eroded due to the steep gradient. The section running west from the end of Rose St to the pedestrian footbridge has been furrowed by water and the sand has washed down onto the concrete path.

There are some missing links in the sand path network. The path ends at the intersection of Henry and MacNeil Drive and then starts again to the south of the Henry Dr access road. It does not extend to the playground or pavilion although these are key destination points in the reserve.

Asphalt paths run along each side of Skeleton Creek. The southern sections of the paths are in good condition but as they extend north they become worn and cracked. Some small sections of the path network are concrete e.g. the junction of the granitic and asphalt paths on the eastern side. These sections are in good condition. There is a short length of gravel path along the southern edge of the preschool building. This path is only in reasonable condition with moss growing in parts and weeds and grass encroaching on the edges.

There are also some desire lines (informal paths) within the reserve created by foot and bike traffic. These include:

- The gravel and dirt path from the end of the sand path at the corner of MacNeil Dve/Henry Dve to the playground.
- The diagonal dirt path from the same point to the footbridge over Skeleton Creek.
- The dirt path along the southern end of the tennis courts and bowl area.
- The dirt path from the playground, across the back of the pavilion to the sand path near the houses in Ascot St Sth.

These paths are in surprisingly good condition considering their unconstructed nature.

Carparks

Three carpark areas are provided within the reserve - at the preschool, sporting pavilion and tennis courts. The preschool carpark is in good condition. It is sealed and lit and has 38 car spaces including two disabled bays. The sporting pavilion and tennis carpark are also in good condition. They have gravel surfaces and can accommodate around 45 cars each.

Built facilities

The built facilities consist of the sports pavilion and the tennis courts. The main building pavilion is structurally sound but is ageing. The veranda shows sign of movement. The pavilion requires internal reconfiguration and refurbishment. The tennis court surfaces are cracked and have some shallow depressions. The fencing is leaning and damaged in areas. The lights are functional.

Open space areas

The playing fields vary in quality and their surfaces are uneven. The field to the west primarily consists of kikuyu grass while the fields to the east are a mix of kikuyu grass, winter grass, mallow and Galaenia. Galaenia is a serious weed within the basalt soil of the western suburbs and the knoll like setting at the north-west corner of the reserve is made up principally of Galaenia.

The open space to the south extending as a wedge south of the tennis courts to the pedestrian bridge across Skeleton Creek is a relatively flat area made up of introduced rock and various grasses, including winter grass, fescue and weeds of onion grass, plantain and some Galaenia. There was evidence of Danthonia spp., a native grass existing as a remnant species - however it is seriously out-competed by more aggressive introduced grasses and a regular mowing regime.

The cricket nets were recently relocated to a new position west of the pavilion adjacent to the gravel car park. The nets are in excellent condition. The former cricket practice area will soon be reinstated as grass.

The bowl area to the west of the tennis courts was originally intended to be netball courts but was used by the former Werribee Council as a place to dump soil. The fill looks reasonably clean but testing may be required to verify this.

Play spaces

There are two play spaces within the reserve. The main play space is near the pavilion and is of metal frame construction. The equipment was installed over the last six months and incorporates swings, slide, handgrips and climbing apparatus. The second play space is located along Skeleton Creek between Ailsa and Ayr St. The equipment was installed about two years ago and consists of a see-saw and timber fort and climbing apparatus within a mulched fall zone.

The play spaces are in good condition.

Skeleton Creek

Skeleton Creek serves as a wildlife corridor and habitat link to the coastal reserve of the Cheetham Wetlands and Port Phillip Bay. It is lined with Eucalyptus camaldulensis (River Red Gums) and Phragmite reeds and is the major landscape/environmental feature of the reserve. It was flowing well at the time the assessment was conducted and was clear of litter and other debris.

Vegetation

There are many native trees on the Central Ave boundary - established Spotted Gums, Lemon Scented Gums and Yellow Gums. There is a mix of gums with significant stands of Myoporum insulare (Boobialla) on the western edge along Ascot St South. The Acacia baileyana (Cootamundra Wattle) on the Skehan Boulevard frontage have reached senescence.

Elsewhere in the reserve, the trees and shrubs tend to be struggling in the conditions of heavy clay soil and exposure to coastal prevailing winds. Scattered boundary plantings of Acacia implexa (Lightwood), Eucalyptus camaldulensis (River Red Gum), Acacia melanoxylon (Blackwood), Eucalyptus sideroxylon (Ironbark), Allocasuarina littoralis (Black Sheoke) are in generally poor and stunted health.

In the reserve's 'western arm' along Skeleton Creek trees and shrubs are varied. There are many River Red Gums along Skeleton Creek and a mix of gums, Hakea suaveolens (Hakea) and Melaleuca armillaris (Bracelet Honey Myrtle) as group plantings. At Ailsa to Ayr Sts, the mix of Ash and native shrubs are generally in poor condition. A number of shrubs and trees have reached senescence, some have died and/or broken and require replacement.

There is a significant recent planting (approximately 60 trees) of what appear to be Ironbark and River Red Gum between Ascot and Alisa Sts. There is also a good planting in one section of the asphalt path and gravel path interface along Skeleton Creek.

Seating and shelters

Seating is located along the Skeleton Creek trail, however, all seats are set at an uncomfortable angle to sit on, generally set too low for easy access for adults and in particular for elderly people.

The seating between the tennis courts and the pavilion has no shade provision and two of the four seats have no back rests. Elsewhere no seating is provided. Immediately north of the tennis courts is a relatively new picnic shelter of metal post and roof construction. A table and two independent bench seats make up a picnic table.

Security/safety

The security features of the reserve are as follows:

- A gate across the main access road 20 metres from the front entrance
- A gate at the eastern edge of the preschool
- Lights over the preschool carpark and solar light neat the footbridge
- Alarm systems in and security lighting off the sports pavilion and preschool
- Bollards and post and log fencing around the carparks and access roads

The security deficits are as follows:

- The gates are not locked every night
- The tennis courts remained unlocked
- The paths are not lit
- The tennis and sports pavilion carparks are not lit
- The open stormwater drain immediately east of the creek

Rubbish bins/graffiti

- About seven permanent rubbish bins are located around the park reserve – the majority in the carparks and access roads
- The reserve was just about litter free at the time of the assessment
- There was some graffiti on the footbridge and the pavilion

Appendix B – Detailed Consultation Outcomes

B.1 Introduction

This section provides the outcomes of the consultation with the key stakeholders including local residents, Councillors and Council staff.

B.2 Residents

Survey of residents living near the reserve

A mail out survey was distributed to households situated within 1km of the reserve. The survey asked householders to respond to the following questions:

- How long they had lived at their current addresses?
- Had they used the reserve in the last two years and how often?
- What they use the reserve for?
- What was their main mode of travel to the reserve?
- How important are the individual facilities?
- How they would rate the standard of the facilities?
- If they were non-users, why they did not use the reserve?
- What could be done to encourage them to make greater use of the reserve?
- What other parks did they use and why?
- Whether they wanted to make any general comments about problems at or improvements to the reserve?

A full analysis of their responses is provided in Attachment One. A summary of the main findings of the surveys is as follows:

- 1400 surveys were distributed. 160 households responded to the survey. 132 that use the reserve and 28 that do not.

- Only 17% of the respondents were aged over 60 years. This is a low figure – 48% of the respondents for a recent survey conducted by ASR for a reserve masterplan project in Sunshine were aged over 60 years.
- The gender spilt of respondents was close to 50:50. Again this is unusual result – normally the split is at least 60 female: 40 male.
- At least 58% of the respondents had lived in the Altona Meadows area for less than 15 years and 28% for less than 7 years.
- The dominant household types were couples with children living at home (41%), couple only (20%) and group 17% (22%).
- The most popular reasons for using the reserve were walking for exercise (39% of respondents said that they walk in the reserve at least weekly), enjoying the environment (31%), walking the dog (23%), and relaxation/contemplation (22%).
- The main modes of travel to the reserve were walking (83%) and riding bike (25%) – the bike figure is very high.
- The most important facilities at the reserve (in order) were pathways (79% of respondents ranked them as very important), grassed areas for informal play (65%), trees (63%), seats (60%) and shelter (60%). A surprising result was the figure for ovals/playing fields (42%) – this is comparatively high figure.
- The facilities that were considered to be of the poorest standard/quality were the seats (54% rated the seats as being in poor condition), pathways (37%), trees (27%) and tennis courts (26%).
- The popular responses to what improvements could be made to encourage greater use by users and non-users of the reserve were more shade/shelter/seating (63%), additional planting and landscaping (62%), more security lighting (62%), provision of toilet facilities (61%), more walking paths (59%). Better signage (56%) improved maintenance generally (56%) and some BBQ/picnic facilities (54%).
- The respondents indicated that they use at least 24 other parks for recreation – again this is a very high number, the most in any other survey conducted by ASR has been 6 parks. The most popular reserves were Altona Beach, Skeleton Creek and Cherry Lake. The most popular activities were walking the dog, playing tennis, using the playgrounds and using the BBQ picnic facilities.
- The common themes expressed by residents in the written comments section of the survey were as follows:
  - Improving the appearance of the reserve and better maintaining the reserve
  - Improving litter management and control
  - Reducing trail bike activity
  - Providing more lighting around the reserve
  - Enhancing the passive spaces
  - Improving the walking/bicycle paths.

- Providing more seating, shade, picnic and BBQ areas
- Planting more trees
- Improving traffic conditions around the reserve
- Providing dog off lead area/better controlling dogs.

Residents on Steering Committee

The residents were asked to indicate:

- What they consider to be the positive and negative characteristics of the reserve?
- What improvements/changes should be made at the reserve?

Their comments were as follows:

<u>Positive features</u>

- The wide open spaces in the reserve.
- The undeveloped nature of some areas of the park.
- The natural aspects of some areas of the reserve.
- The internal path network.
- The connections to external paths.
- The creek and its ecology.
- The footbridge across the creek.
- The viewlines to the south and south west.
- The peacefulness and tranquillity at most times of the reserve.

- The opportunities for informal play.
- The healthy vegetation in some sections of the reserve.
- The playing fields.

Negative features

- The poor visual amenity of the reserve.
- The poor condition and unsightliness of the tennis courts and the adjacent bowl area.
- The pavilion is unattractive.
- The paths need better maintenance and should have a hard surface.
- The lack of vegetation and park furniture throughout the reserve.
- The general lack of maintenance of the reserve, in particular the care of trees and other vegetation.
- The lack of interest of Council in the reserve and its unresponsiveness to maintenance or similar requests.
- The lack of security in the reserve – the bollards and fences do not prevent cars from driving onto and damaging the playing fields or the grassed area to the south of tennis courts.
- The vandalism and unsavoury behaviour that occurs in the reserve.
- The lack of activity in the reserve.
- The lack of attractors to the reserve.
- The lack of public toilets.
- The playgrounds are basic.
- Some unsafe areas – such as the stormwater drain outfalls and the unlit carpark areas.
- The lack of facilities for dog walkers.

Suggested improvements/changes

- Raise the profile at Council of the reserve.
- Upgrade the facilities in the reserve – playground, pavilion, tennis facilities, pathways etc.
- Better maintain the pathways.
- Address traffic issues around the reserve.
- Better control vehicle movement through the reserve. Install gates at the entrances and ensure internal fences are erected in a manner which prevents entry onto the playing fields and other grassed areas.
- Provide more vegetation and improve the maintenance of existing vegetation.
- Remediate the bowl area.
- Generally improve maintenance regimes.
- Provide more park furniture throughout the reserve.
- Make additions to the path network where feasible, such as along the desire lines.
- Erect lights in the carpark.
- Seal the access roads.
- Develop an outdoor social space. This space should be shaded and provide BBQ, play facilities, drinking fountains etc.
- Develop more facilities in the reserve to increase the amount and diversity of use. These could include:
  - Public toilets
  - More facilities for dog walkers
  - A bike riding area for children
  - A larger ‘access all abilities’ playground
  - An outdoor trampolining facility
  - Redevelopment of the pavilion as a recreation/community hub. The hub would incorporate and expand on the existing sports facilities but could also include activity spaces for community groups and a café (which could be leased to a private operator)
  - Other types of controlled commercial activities

- Community swimming pool.

- Provide public toilets in the reserve.
- Protect the conservation values of the creek and undeveloped grassed areas.
- Explore feasibility of installing an amphitheatre, rebound tennis wall, half court and/or exercise station.
- Provide more support to the 'Friends of' group.
- Improve responsiveness to complaints or requests for assistance.

B.3 User groups

Officials from the user clubs and groups were asked to provide information about the following (where relevant):

- The history of their club/group.
- The activities that the club/group uses the reserve for.
- The club/group' future aims.
- Player/participant numbers and trends.
- Predictions about future player /participant numbers.
- The club/group's facility needs.
- The viability of the club/group.
- How could facilities at the Park be improved (not just the club/group's facilities).

Seabrook Cricket Club

- The Club formed in the early 1970s. It was originally named the St Paul's Cricket Club, then became the Laverton North Saints and now the Seabrook Cricket Club. It played at St Paul's College, then in Wyndhamvale, Laverton and now Altona Meadows. It has been at Comben Reserve for 17 years.
- The Club fields 8 teams – 4 senior and 4 junior. The seniors play in the Melbourne wide Victorian Turf Cricket Association and local Williamstown District Cricket Association. The juniors play in the recently formed Western Regions Junior Cricket Competition.
- The Club uses the 3 ovals at the reserve. The turf oval is used the 1^{sts} and 2^{nds}, the second oval by 3^{rds} and 4^{ths} and U/17s and U/15s and the 3rd oval by the U13s and U/11s.
- The club contributed to the development of the facilities at the reserve. It provided $75000 towards the construction of the pavilion and built the original training nets at a cost of $15000. It funded these works from running Bingo nights. It no longer has access to these funds.
- The club is strong socially, administratively and financially.
- The club's facility needs/wants are as follows:
  - Improved playing surfaces on ovals 2 and 3
  - Installation of a viewing window in the pavilion
  - Proper heating and cooling in pavilion
  - General refurbishment of the pavilion – new carpet, internal and external painting, new tiles in kitchen and update of amenities areas.
- The Club suggested that the following improvements be made to passive areas of the reserve:
  - More trees and park furniture
  - Improved pathways
  - Lighting in the carpark
  - More shade
  - Additional playground area
  - More attractive fencing
  - Sealed access roads and carparks
  - Better control of vehicle access and movement in the reserve – including reducing dirt bike activity in the reserve.

Westside Touch Association

- The Association commenced operation in the 1995. It was originally located at Waringa Crescent Reserve and then Mossfield Park in Hoppers Crossing. It moved to the RAAF Base in Laverton and then to Bruce Comben Reserve in 2001.
- The Association has 18 mixed teams and 250 participating members – including men, women, girls, boys and officials. It is a regional association in a fast growing region. Membership could grow to over 1000 if Association could get access to enough grounds.
- It holds its competition on fields 2 and 3 on Wednesday nights in spring and summer. It configures the fields as 4 playing areas and hold two 2 games on each field. Two teams are required to have a bye each week.
- The Association accesses the toilets and kitchen in the front section of the pavilion. It does not use the social area.
- The Association's facility needs/wants are as follows:
  - Access to more fields
  - Remove trees from fields so they can be correct size
  - Lights over the fields so they can hold competition in autumns and winter
  - Improved ground conditions – even, well grassed and well watered surfaces
  - First aid room and female toilets and changerooms
  - Access to a social area in the pavilion with viewing area and bar facilities
  - Larger veranda area off the pavilion.
- The Association suggested that the following improvements be made to the other areas of the reserve:
  - Lighting in the carpark and around pavilion..
  - Seal carparks and entrances and provide marked car spaces
  - Two way entry/exit at main entrance
  - Plant more trees around the pavilion and the boundaries of the reserve for windbreak and beautification
  - Provision of more bins
  - New BBQ facility
  - Water fountains at the clubrooms.

Laverton Park Tennis Club (former user)

- LPTC used Comben Reserve as its second venue for more than a decade. It stopped using the facility is 2007 after becoming concerned about the deteriorating condition of the courts, the continued vandalism and the lack of a pavilion. The clubs now uses Altona Green as its second venue.
- LPTC would look at resuming its use of the Bruce Comben Reserve courts if the maintenance issues and incidence of vandalism were addressed.
- LPTC deliberately downsized its membership when it left Bruce Comben Reserve. However, it has the potential to expand its membership to fully utilise an additional 8 tennis courts if they were provided at the Reserve.
- Even if LPTC does not return to Bruce Comben Reserve, the tennis venue should be retained and potentially expanded. The reserve is a good location for a tennis venue as it has a large catchment area and could accommodate an 8-12 court venue.
- It 4-8 extra courts are provided, 4 should be built to the east of the existing bank of courts. This would make the tennis venue more visible and improve the surveillance of the courts. The other 4 could be built in the bowl area.
- The Club suggested that the following improvements be made to the other areas of the reserve:
  - Remediate the bowl area
  - Provide more trees and park furniture
  - Provide lighting in the carpark
  - Seal the access roads and carparks
  - Generally enhance the maintenance of the reserve.

B.4 Councillors on Steering Group

Councillors were asked to indicate:

- Their development vision for the reserve.
- What improvements/changes should be made at the reserve?

Their comments were as follows:

Vision

- The reserve should be visually prominent and well known reserve and the hub for community activity in Altona Meadows.
- The active recreation facilities in the reserve will be optimally used in both winter and summer. This use should not have a detrimental impact on residential amenity and must be compatible with the passive recreation uses of the reserve.
- The playing fields and sports pavilion will be maintained at a high standard and will properly cater for the active recreation uses.
- Residents will feel safe in the reserve. The infrastructure will be safe and bad behaviour such as vandalism will be minimal.
- The passive spaces will be well maintained extensively used by residents. Residents of all ages will be playing, walking, riding, running, socialising, relaxing, contemplating and spectating in the reserve.
- The reserve will become the events venue for the Altona Meadows area. Residents will be proud of the reserve and in particular celebrate the creek.

Improvement/changes

- Fencing and bollards replaced with a more attractive fence type
- Access road and carpark sealed and better lit. Car parks better designed and constructed to reduce hoon behaviour.
- More trees planted and existing vegetation better cared for.
- Better social facilities for families provided – BBQs, tables, shelters etc.
- Pavilion redeveloped to better meet the needs of users and to look more attractive.
- Future use of tennis courts resolved
- Bowl area remediated.
- Pathways sealed, connected, properly maintained and linked to main destination points in the reserve (preferable surface asphalt).
- Lighting provided at suitable point along the path.

- Another bridge across the creek – northern end.
- Footpaths of reserve side of Skehan Boulevard and Henry Drive. Fence may have to be moved further into reserve to provide space for footpaths.
- Amphitheatre and other facilities provided in reserve to support events.
- Dog off leash area given consideration.

B.5 Council officers

Officers from sections involved in the planning, management, development and maintenance of and liaison with the users of the facilities at Bruce Comben Reserve were asked (where relevant) to:

- Indicate what they consider to be the role of the Reserve
- Advise of any internal and external factors which may have implications for the future use and role of the Reserve
- Advise of any issues and concerns they have about the design, use, condition and maintenance of the component elements of the Reserve
- Advise of any community facility/open space issues that could be addressed through the redevelopment of the Reserve
- Advise of any issues/constraints/concerns that should be taken into consideration in the future directions plan
- Give their thoughts on the specific issues listed the brief
- Make suggestions about improvement/changes that should be made to the Reserve

Their comments were as follows:

Recreation Unit

- Bruce Comben Reserve is an important open space area with a diversity of roles. It:
  - Contains an area of significant conservation and environmental importance
  - Provides a visual break from the commercial and retail premises along Central Ave

  - Provides attractive vistas to the south and south west
  - Provides for district and local level community sport, school sport and informal play
  - Provides for passive recreation where people can walk, run, ride, spectate, contemplate, rest and enjoy nature
  - Provides a connection between residential areas west and east of the reserve
  - Provides open space and pathway links to the trail from the residential areas on all sides of the reserve.
- The future of the tennis courts and tennis generally in the reserve should be resolved. There is no club based at the courts and they are rarely used by casual players. The courts are poorly located. There is no clubhouse and the court surfaces, net and fences are deteriorating. The proposal to add 4 more courts at Laverton Park should be considered when determining the future of the Bruce Comben courts.
- Two clubs use the playing fields in summer but there are no winter users. Winter use should be encouraged – this could be touch rugby and/or junior football (either a club or as an overflow facility). It should not become a soccer venue as nearby Laverton Park is to be developed as a district level soccer venue.
- The sports pavilion is poorly designed and does not meet the needs of the current users. The pavilion should be extensively redeveloped. The winter use of the reserve and the final location of the playing fields and tennis courts should be determined before undertaking this redevelopment. It might be that the location of the pavilion should change.
- Consideration should be given to reconstructing and reconfiguring the playing fields in the reserve. Field 3 is small and overlaps with field 2. It may be feasible to develop a playing field to the south of the pavilion. This could replace field No 3. Fields 1-3 are in poor condition and need major renovation.
- There are no BBQ/picnic facilities in the reserve. The area where field no 3 and the old cricket nets were located could become the family/social area for the reserve. The playground is already there; shelters, BBQs, seat, trees and shrubs could be added.
- Essentially the reserve could be zoned into active recreation, play, passive and environmental areas.

Assets and Works

- The reserve has six built structures – the two playgrounds, the sports pavilion, shelters and the children's facility.
- The playgrounds are in good condition. The shelter is poorly located but in good condition.
- The pavilion is poorly designed and needs refurbishment. The foundations of the veranda area are subsiding. At this stage, the remainder of the building seems to be sound. The children's services building is also experiencing structural movement.

- The access roads are maintained on an as needs basis. Works are undertaken in response to requests from the Recreation Unit and when budgets allow.
- The gravel access roads and carparks were recently resurfaced. The previous resurfacing was undertaken 2 years ago.
- Consideration should be given to permanently sealing the roads and carparks with a spay seal or asphalt.

Parks Management

- The three playing fields are in poor condition and all require full renovation. The future use and configuration of the grounds should be determined prior to undertaking this renovation. Two of the playing fields significantly overlap and one field is very small. The concrete wicket on field 3 is bowed.
- Full renovation would involve regrading, topdressing, reinstating the irrigation system and sowing warm season grasses. The concrete wickets on fields 2 and 3 (if this remains) would have to be replaced with pitches that have 'massive back bones with reinforced steel cages along the length of the pitch'. This would be needed to protect them from subsidence.
- The reserve is not used to its potential as a passive space. This lack of passive use is mainly due to the passive elements of the reserve being under-developed or in poor condition. The passive spaces should be enhanced as a matter of priority. Works should include the following:
  - The upgrade, resurfacing and extension of the path network (preferably all concrete)
  - Provision of more shade, particularly in the main spectator areas, along the pathway, near the playground and over park furniture
  - More tree planting and garden beds
  - Provision of additional park furniture (seats and tables) that is suitable for walkers and spectators.
- Other priorities should include:
  - Replacing the perimeter fence along the eastern side of the reserve with a new post and pipe fence
  - Replacing the internal log fences and bollards with post and pipe fencing
  - Removing or filling in the basin area
  - Substantially increasing the maintenance budget for the reserve.

Traffic Planning

- There are no short to medium term traffic related works occurring around the reserve. Central Ave will be duplicated at some stage but the timing will be determined by VicRoads.
- The vehicle access points to the ground work reasonably well from a traffic perspective. The entrance off Central Ave can adequately cater for the vehicles, including buses, which access the reserve for school or recreational purposes. This should be retained as the main access point. The secondary access point off Henry Dve is not heavily used.

Family and Children Services/Cooraminta Preschool and M&CH Centre

- The Cooraminta Preschool will need to be expanded to accommodate universal access (15 hours of preschool). An additional licensed room and extra outdoor space will be required. The M&CH needs a group meeting room. The footprint of the preschool/MCH will have to expand to accommodate these facilities. This should be allowed for in the future directions plan.

Attachment One – Detailed results of Residents' Survey

1. No of respondents

Around 1400 surveys were distributed. 160 households responded to the survey. 132 indicated they use the reserve. 28 said they did not

2. Age ranges

Range – Years	% of respondents
15-19	4
20-24	1
25-39	24
40-59	38
60-74	13
75+	4
Not stated	16

3. Gender

Male	74	**Female**	86

4. Length of time living at current address

Range – Years	% of Respondents
0-3 years	15
4-7years	14
7-15 years	30
More than 15 years	23
Not stated	18

5. Household Structure

Type	% of Respondents
Single person	15
Sole parent with children living at home	7
Couple only	20
Couple with children living at home	41
Group	17

6. Purpose for using the Park and how often?

Activity	How often - daily (D) weekly (W), fortnightly (F) monthly (M), yearly (Y) % of respondents					
	D	W	F	M	Y	Total %
Play tennis	1	4	5	9	7	26
Play cricket	0	2	2	4	5	13
Play touch rugby	0	0	0	1	2	3
Officiate in sport	0	1	0	1	2	4
Watch sport	2	12	1	2	2	19
Play informally	2	16	2	6	2	28
Walk for exercise	21	18	2	7	2	50
Walk the dog	15	8	2	7	2	34
Walk to get to a destination	6	11	2	7	2	28
Run	5	8	2	3	1	19
Use playground	7	12	3	4	2	28
Enjoy the environment	19	12	2	2	0	35
Relax/contemplate	11	11	0	0	0	22
Use the preschool/M&CH centre	13	4	5	0	2	24
Other	15	0	9	0	3	27

7. Main mode of travel to Park

Mode	% of Respondents *
Walk	83
Car	7
Bike	25
Public transport	0

Note * - Some respondents gave multiple answers

8. Importance of facilities at the Park

Facility	% of respondents			
	Very Important	Moderately important	Not important	Not stated
Ovals/playing fields	42	20	14	24
Sports pavilion	19	23	20	38
Cricket nets	21	18	28	33
Tennis courts	28	25	14	33
Children's facility	26	13	23	38
Playground	46	20	10	24
Trees	63	16	1	20
Pathways	79	5	0	16
Seats	60	21	1	18
Grassed areas for informal play	65	9	3	23
Shelter	60	21	3	16

8. Standard/quality of the following facilities

Facility	% of Respondents			
	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Not stated
Ovals/playing fields	13	23	21	43
Sports pavilion	18	24	11	47
Cricket nets	16	22	11	51
Tennis courts	26	21	14	39
Children's facility	7	19	15	59
Playground	20	21	19	40
Trees	27	31	19	23
Pathways	37	31	10	22
Seats	54	17	4	25
Grassed areas for informal play	21	32	18	29
Shelter	13	23	21	43

9. Main reasons for not using the Park (non users)

Reason	% of Respondents *
Too busy – other commitments	20
Too far away	7
Feel unsafe in the Reserve	20
Facilities do not suit needs	20
Not interested	20
Do not feel welcome in the Reserve	7
Do not know what is available in the Reserve	33

Note * - Some respondents gave multiple answers

10. Improvements to encourage greater use of the Reserve

Action	% of Respondents*
More play equipment	39
Some BBQ / picnic facilities	54
More shelter / shade / seating	63
Improved surfaces on playing fields	22
More walking paths	59
Improved security lighting	62
Better signage	56
Improved/more carparking	17
Additional planting and landscaping	62
Provision of toilet facilities	61
Improved maintenance generally	56
Other	
- Provide a dog off lead area	5
- Amphitheatre	2
- More trees and shrubs	7
- More bridges	3
- More bile paths	4

Note * - Many respondents gave multiple answers

11. Other parks used in Altona Meadows Area

Action	No of Respondents	Reasons
Altona Beach	16	Walk dog, BBQ picnic area
Skeleton Creek	13	Walking, riding, walking dog, relaxing, tennis
Cherry Lake	12	Walking dog, playground, bike riding, tennis
Point Cook	9	Picnic, BBQ, playground
Logan Reserve	6	Playground
Homestead Run	6	Tennis, walking, bike riding, boats
Apex Park	5	Exercise/walking
Pier St	3	Playground, picnic, beach visit
Dunnings Rd	2	Football, cricket
Truganina Park	2	Biking, running
Bayside Park	1	Walk dog, BBQ picnic area
Werribee Still	1	Walk dog, BBQ picnic area
Ashton Reserve	1	Playground
Werribee Athletics Track	1	Walking
Club Alamanda	1	Playground
Federation Point	1	Walk dog off lead
Seaholme Foreshore	1	Walk dog off lead
Laverton Football Ground	1	Auskick
Esplanade Walk	1	Walk dog
McCormack Park	1	Walk dog
Cruikshank Park	1	Walk dog
Grant Reserve	1	Tennis
Williamstown Back Beach	1	Playground
Park at Nelson Place	1	Playground

12. Written comments about problems with or suggested improvements to the Park

Households that do not use the Park

- I have only been to or pass through the reserve to go to the Central Shopping centre.
- The path along the creek to the reserve became too rough and that's nearly two years ago.
- Example of an excellent park is the Pier St Park in Altona. It has an outstanding play area for children. The Gazebo is excellent shelter in case of the rain. Something that would attract me to parks in general would be the following:
  - Excellent toddler proof play area
  - BBQ facilities
  - Toilets with baby change area
  - Area for shelter such a large gazebo area
  - Adequate seating around the park
  - Plenty of trees and vegetation

  The parks in the Seabrook area and Homestead Run do not meet any of the above requirements and are in desperate need of being updated. There are also not enough trees. We hardly use the parks for this reason.
- Skate parks and BBQs are our main family visit to any park. If this park had these facilities we would definitely be more inclined to use it.
- Combining sporting facilities with pleasant gardens to walk or sit in works when they are kept distinctly separate. If a footy field is in the middle of the park and the gardens and walking path fitted in around the sporting oval the peace and tranquillity that comes from being in a park tends to disappear. Well maintained toilet facilities are a must for all age groups.
- Dogs in parks need to be restricted, perhaps an area where dogs can run free but other areas where they must be on a leash or no permitted at all. A lot of people are afraid to venture to parks as there would likely be dogs roaming around.
- Post Code 3028 is more than Altona Meadows. I live in Seabrook, across Skeleton Creek from Alt Meadows. This makes the reserve impractical for daily use. Although Comben would need better toilet facilities to attract Seabrookers to travel by car to the reserve. Questionnaire not really relevant to Seabrookers who face towards Point Cook and Laverton more than the Meadows.

Households that use the Park

General

- This park has great potential because of its location, size, the creek, access etc. Sadly it has been neglected.
- Provide public toilets (X2)
- Seal the car parks
- As per phone conversation, the facility mentioned in this report as "childcare" is maternal health nurse part time (3 days per week), 3 year old, 4 yr old kindergarten & playground. No childcare or occasional care offered or available.
- Bruce Comben looks quite run down and neglected.
- I would be more appealing for people to use the reserve if Central Ave and the general entrance area were beautified and made to look tidy. Unfortunately I have to say, I ride for fitness along Central Ave to Altona and beyond. I often pass the reserve thinking to myself how disgusting the area looks and no wonder why visitors to the area call it 'low life or scum'.
- We do not use many reserves. In nicer weather I quite often go for a walk/bike ride and we may stop at a reserve to play on the equipment.
- The facility attached to the reserve is not a childcare facility, as described in the survey – it is a maternal and child health, playground 3&4 year old kinder centre
- The lack of general maintenance has discouraged many locals from using the reserve
- Please incorporate a long-term management plan of the area otherwise the whole plan will be a total waste of valuable resources and end up in the same state as now.
- I find eastern suburbs parks are generally more welcoming with lusher vegetation and better maintenance, western parks seem to look like neglected paddocks.
- Thank you for the opportunity to voice. I have long been a little disappointed with genera maintenance of the reserve generally; unkept paths, rubbish, even syringes (on two occasions). We have such a wonderful space, with huge potential. Still one of the reasons we remain living here and not opt to "move on" A big YAY! For any improvement of future development from our whole family.

Safety/Behaviour in Reserve

- Trail bike riders frequently use the reserve, better policing is required to discourage (X7)
- If it is possible, fix the high fence in the middle of tennis courts at Bruce Comben Reserve as some of the posts have only two bolts holding them to the ground and they have a dangerous lean towards the south. I believe they will topple soon in another very strong wind and someone might be hurt or killed. It is a real health and safety matter. I am there

every Saturday morning and it looks like it is getting worse. And if possible have the broken glass from the hoons swept and picked up, it is getting rather dangerous for children to run.

- Perhaps parking should be restricted so that people do not park there in the dark and dump rubbish every weekend or destroy property. Vandals are always trashing everything in this area. Maybe a gate to the carpark and/or more security lighting may help. Lighting will also help walkers at night/whilst out with dog in winter. Grass needs to be cut more often because of snakes.
- At night not safe in park, poor lighting, no security to check. Hoons park and burn outs at night - need to be able to surprise lock the reserve. Toilet facilities badly needed, understand issues with vandalism/drugs may draw bad characters to the area at night.
- Last time we went to Comben Reserve with children to use the playground, a group of teenagers were hitting golf balls out into the open - so we felt in danger of being hit. Also I was embarrassed because the playground was run-down and covered in graffiti and the seating was all broken.
- The area seems to be under attack by vandals. Tennis courts have broken glass on them, nets are cut and motor bikes ride around this area. Similar problems with the cricket nets.
- Provide snake warning signs
- Lighting was installed at bridge crossing Skeleton Creek to Comben Reserve on both sides. This was done under Skeleton Creek master plan. Currently only one solar light remains, it was vandalized approx 3-4 years ago and no repairs have been made.
- Solar lights not working for years at Skeleton Creek footbridge. Have lodged issue over 2 years ago.
- It is difficult (dangerous too) to attempt to cross Pt Cook Rd via the Skeleton Ck pathways especially in the afternoon. There is a path one side of the bridge only.
- Improve security lighting

<u>Access, pathways and movement through the reserve</u>

- Seal the walk tracks and make them even
- Access to the reserve would be improved by upgrading the paths at Point Cook Rd, Skeleton Creek crossing. Pedestrian access and bike access is shockingly bad.
- Provide another footbridge over creek (west end).
- Improve the river bike paths.
- Provide more paths (around & in the park).
- Improve paths. We have a beautiful place, natural, with a creek full of bins and plants. We could enjoy the reserve even more with proper maintenance and improved facilities. We are close to the city and having a great reserve full of life is priceless.
- A good walking path would be a good start.

- Provide a path under the bridge to allow me and others to continue along the pathways in westerly direction.
- Not to do with this topic – but I regularly use the roundabouts at Pt Cook Rd/Central Ave. There is no crosswalk/light for pedestrians – train travellers, school children and general public like me have to "run the gauntlet' so to speak and is extremely dangerous.
- It is a great facility for the area we use it frequently. It is difficult to cross the road to get to the park from Central Ave. A pedestrian crossing would be great and a path across the grass area of the nature strip for when it is wet. Also would help for elderly people and young children in prams.
- Central Avenue along the Reserve needs to be widened – same as the section near the shops.
- Provide a crossing or another larger rock path etc, near bridge for cars at Point Cook Rd. Where the rocks are as it is impossible to get across the bridge by foot especially with a pram, trolley, bike, kids etc. This I am sure would be used by many both enjoying the park and access to aircraft, train and shops. Another point I would like to mention is the condition of the road surface between Victoria Street all the way to Point Cook Rd. It has no bike lane (not that important) - but what is very important is that the road surface is full of large cracks and has many uneven surfaces. This is an accident in waiting for some poor rider to get injured or even killed as the crack swallows the bike tyre.
- Bruce Comben Reserve has great potential. It could be made into a pleasurable walking area. After heavy rain a lot of the tracks are too wet with clay to walk over particularly from behind the cricket nets towards the next gravel section and the track that runs behind the sports club. Spend money and time on this reserve and plant out trees and shrubs.
- A pathway from the tennis court area to the Bridge/Crossing Skeletons Creek to Point Cook/Seabrook would be fantastic. A lot of the time we take the kids to the play area near the tennis courts then walk to the bridge to see the ducks/swans when it is wet, we have to go all the way around.
- Circuit path near nursing home overgrown and impassable. Provision of fitness/exercise equipment around perimeter of reserve – useful to local residents and sports teams who train on reserve.
- Paths throughout the reserve would be great. Not just around the oval. An amphitheatre – very family and school friendly. To the councils credit the grassed areas are always well maintained and best of all the land is still there to be developed as a scenic/park area and not housing or shopping.
- Some of the walking paths are overgrown and in need of urgent repair (especially, Ascot St)
- Paths are poorly maintained currently. Uneven surfaces can cause injury if running or walking. Maintenance of these surfaces would allow and increase usage of these paths. Location of dog poo disposed bins would also be advantages. We have 4 adults living at this property and everyone uses this park regularly.

<u>Active recreation facilities</u>

- Develop a soccer field.
- Provide a basketball/netball court.
- Would love a running track or athletics field for training. A lot of people from Seabrook, Pt Cook, Altona Meadows, Laverton have to travel to Altona or Werribee.

- Why don't you build a community health gym in the land as in Williamstown. Encourage use for exercise and meditation.
- The tennis courts are poor and not maintained. This deters users.
- The large sunken area is ideal for an outdoor heated swimming pool. This would be a real attraction for the area in conjunction with improved tennis courts and exercise.
- Along Noosa River, we love the exercise equipment, similar to a gym but they use your body weights as resistance. Many senior citizens use it daily and having machines here would promote healthy lifestyles for local people without expensive gym fees.
- If the ovals were brought up to scratch maybe this would encourage more sport for children in the area. A football club would be appropriate as Bruce Comben played the game himself and it would be tribute to him to see football played on his namesake grounds.
- Potential to turn Bruce Comben Reserve into the Seabrook/Altona sports precinct.
- The oval is dangerous to run on due to uneven surface level.

Passive spaces

- The reserve is a wonderful community asset. I would like to see more planting of indigenous vegetation that attempts to perhaps re-introduce species of flora that is native to the area.
- Provide seating, picnic tables and shelter (X5)
- Plant more trees and improve landscaping
- In all honesty we're not overly impressed with the playground in Altona Meadows/Altona. We have 3 little children and travel to Williamstown to use play facilities as it seems the council's money has been spent there.
- Remove weeds
- It's great having such a big open area so close to home.
- Please leave our park, four generations of my family have all grown up with this park, it's been part of our lives, don't take it away from us. We use the park daily, my grandchildren love it. Were would they go if it was taken away? Please don't.
- Communities need reserve with BBQs, play equipment, etc in several spots dotted around reserves in order to attract public – they have to look and feel inviting and restful. Artworks/sculptures/fitness circuit etc. Novelties like Geelong "Posts"
- More trees in the reserve would be lovely.
- You just have to remember where there is a playground, you need cover, toilets etc for parents as well (they need to get the kids there)
- I have 3 young girls who love going to a park. Would be good to take them to one where there are lots of thing to play and do.
- Needs more trees to beautify and rubbish collected from around the trees more often. Improve seating area.

- Grass is often to long and too many people encounter snakes because of this. Unstructured open space is important, keep it as is but maintain it properly.
- Maintenance of seats
- Higher seats for older people walking
- There should be shaded BBQ facilities.
- There does not seem to be as much development/improvement on the west side of Skeleton Creek i.e. – no concreted path, no playground, no bbqs etc.
- I feel the area in valley between the pavilion and creek to be an eyesore.
- There is always broken glass everywhere. Needs better playground for children
- More trees would improve the park.
- Many trees have been planted overtime and have died due to lack of care and water
- More bridges across the creek. More trees along the creek and in open area along Henry Drive.
- We choose to live here because we like the open space and park area. We enjoy the bird life the parks attract. More native plates to attract native fauna.
- There are very few areas in the suburbs of Altona meadows and Seabrook for children to play and explore in a safe, shaded and fun outside environment, Bruce Comben reserve has the potential to be great with some work. There are lots of families with walking distance on both sides of the river who I am sure would use and enjoy it a lot more once improvements one made. Newer suburbs like Point Cook have these things built into the design/planning of the estates and it is time the older areas stepped up the standard. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the future plan for the reserve.
- Skeleton creek could do with a bit of a water clean as it has an oil slick in it.
- More trees required. Gumtrees and other natives work well for this type of park. This should be implemented on all sides of the park especially east, west and south side. Landscapes and large trees and planting should be used in the park to the south to make it more visible.
- There needs to be more trees for shade in the area around the tennis courts and playground.

<u>Dogs</u>

- Designate a ‘dog off leash’ area
- I would like the park more if people kept their dogs on leads!
- Provide a dog bag dispenser
- The only dog off lead area to walk to for Seabrook, Laverton, Altona Meadows and Pt Cook residents is that tiny grotty park opposite Seabrook Primary school. We call it “poo” park because it is full of dirty nappies and dumped rubbish. Comben Reserve would be an ideal walking and dog play area where people and pets could come together to chat and play.

- The only comment I would like to make is when people are walking their dogs, I wish they would keep on their leads but unfortunately a lot of people don't and I find it unsafe for the grandchildren with dogs running around.
- Dogs should not be allowed in children playgrounds.
- Dogs should be allowed off leash.
- The dog poo is disgusting, no bags for people to pick it up.
- Dog litter bags are not checked regularly to see if they are empty.

Litter/Rubbish

- There is too much unsightly litter under bushes on the northern and western corner of reserve mostly from people using McDonalds and throwing rubbish from cars, needs concrete circuit path. Need bins to be more obvious in car park, brighter colour.
- Rubbish needs to be removed from river and fishing needs to be banned as already a swan has been rescued with a hook in its beak.
- More bins needed - walking each day I return with a bag full of rubbish.
- More rubbish bins, drinking water taps.
- Rubbish bins along walkways.
- Remove rubbish/litter creek.
- Broken bottles on tennis courts.
- Rubbish left on oval.
- The large sunken area next to tennis courts is an eyesore and encourages dumping of rubbish and electrical items, i.e. computers etc.