

# Executive Summary

## 1.1 Introduction

Olympic Park is located in Heidelberg West on the western fringe of the municipality. The park is an established sport and community recreation reserve with a significant history and was once used as a prominent training base for the 1956 Olympic Games.

Olympic Park is now a high profile soccer and cricket venue which also provides a range of other sport, recreation and open space opportunities. The park is also home to Barrbunin Beek, a gathering place for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in and around Banyule.

The increased demand to provide functional and appropriate levels of sport and recreation infrastructure, and the shift towards more informal and casual recreation pursuits, has prompted Council to develop a Master Plan for Olympic Park.

The Master Plan aims to identify the key issues and challenges constraining the use and development of Olympic Park and provide a clear vision and direction for the site that will enable Council to plan for it's future enhancement and improvement.

Olympic Park's proximity to the Northland Shopping Centre, Latrobe University and the Darebin Creek Trail will ensure it's ongoing popularity and future demand as one of Council's premier reserves. It also confirms the importance of delivering a clear and concise evidence based Master Plan that seeks to achieve the future vision for Olympic Park.

*The vision for Olympic Park is to provide a place of welcome, and to deliver leisure, recreational and sporting activities for the community in a safe environment.*



Figure 1: Olympic Park is located in the City of Banyule's West Precinct

## 1.2 Local area context

Heidelberg West contains a diverse and growing community that will heavily influence the future development of Olympic Park. The broader needs and preferences of the local community in regards to the use and expectations for public open space must be understood to ensure the future direction for Olympic Park meets these expectations.

The following information provides an overview of current and future demographic and population projections for the Heidelberg West - Bellfield area that will shape the future direction of Olympic Park.

- The current population is 7,776 (6.06% of Banyule's population).
- The dominant age group is 35-49 year olds (20.3% of Banyule's population)
- 33.3% of residents are under the age of 25 (3% higher than Banyule)
- Lower rates of residents over the age of 50 (27.7% as against 34.7%).
- By 2026, local area population is expected to increase to 8,547 residents (+771 residents)
- 35-49 year olds are projected to make up approximately 21.6% of the population by 2026.
- There is a high proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (0.4% of the population) living in the local area.
- The area returned a very low SEIFA score which means a very high level of disadvantage.

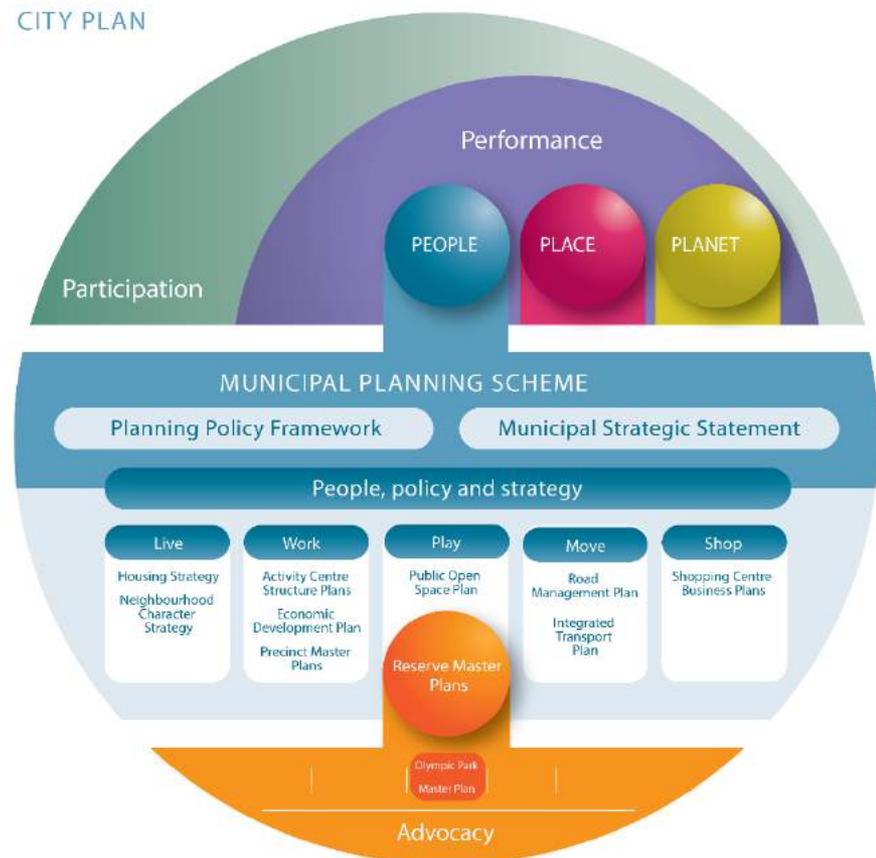
The Latrobe Employment Cluster and the Northland Structure Plan have identified significant future growth in high density housing. There is an estimated population increase of between 10,000 to 15,000 people living locally (particularly on the western side of the creek).

Olympic Park | **Master Plan** | February 2017

## 1.3 Strategic context

The Olympic Park Master Plan has strong connections to Council's Public Open Space Plan and more broadly Banyule's City Plan (2013-2017).

The stated vision of the Public Open Space Plan is to assist in guiding Council during a period of projected sustained population growth and change to ensure that all present and future residents of Banyule have easy access to high quality "green" public spaces and associated facilities. This links strongly with the vision for Olympic Park. This connection and alignment can be best demonstrated in the diagram below.



## 1.4 Project methodology

Development of the Olympic Park Master Plan was delivered in six key stages commencing in December 2015, with completion expected in March 2017.



Council and the project team engaged with a range of internal and external stakeholder groups and individuals to identify issues, needs and opportunities for Olympic Park.

Targeted consultation was undertaken with representatives from state and local government agencies, tenant sporting clubs and community groups, local residents, business owners and casual park users, using a range of consultation methods.

## 1.5 Issues and challenges

Prior to the commencement of the Master Plan, Council identified a range of issues and challenges that are impacting the participation, functionality and use of the site.

- Age, condition and functionality of existing buildings and infrastructure are not meeting the needs of existing users.
- There is a lack of unisex and female friendly player amenities and need for additional training facilities for sporting clubs.
- The site is subject to vandalism, graffiti and anti social behaviour, creating a lack of security and safety for users.
- A single vehicle entry and egress point, lack of on-site car parking and traffic flow are issues for users.
- High perimeter fencing around the soccer precinct creates a perception of 'exclusive use' rather than a place that can be shared by the whole community.
- The site can be difficult to access, is not overly well connected to the surrounding areas, and is visually impeded to the east by residential properties.
- Public amenities such as the toilets and playground are dilapidated and disconnected to primary areas of use.
- The Darebin Creek Trail is heavily utilised as a commuter and community trail but is narrow and unsafe in some areas.

The above issues and challenges featured prominently in the first round of consultation and will be the focus for driving change and creating a safe and inclusive environment at Olympic Park.

## 1.6 Consultation summary

The Draft Olympic Park Master Plan was released for the purpose of community consultation in July 2016. Members of the community were informed of the draft plan and invited to comment via:

- Direct mail out to surrounding neighbours
- Leader Newspaper (Banyule in brief),
- Onsite signage,
- Council's website
- Flyers at the Service Centres, Olympic Leisure Centre and Shop 48.
- Presentation to the Olympic Park Master Plan Community Reference Group.

A total of 10 submissions were received.

A second round of consultation commenced in November and included a community drop-in session. The community were informed of the second round of consultation and drop-in via:

- Direct mail out to surrounding neighbours,
- Onsite signage,
- Council's website
- Flyers at the service centres, Olympic Leisure Centre and Shop 48.

A total of 12 submissions were received.

Key themes identified include:

- Sports fields and infrastructure
- Community recreation and park safety
- Diversity and sustainability
- Movement and access

A summary of written submissions grouped into key themes is included in Volume 2 (appendices).

## 1.7 Strategic framework

Issues and challenges identified have been grouped into the following key strategic pillars to help guide the future planning and development of Olympic Park. These pillars are aligned with those developed for Council's Open Space Plan.

### Quality – of sports fields and infrastructure

- Includes all competition and training fields and associated on field infrastructure for both cricket and soccer, player and spectator amenity, sporting pavilions and lighting infrastructure.

### Quantity – of community recreation and safety

- Includes primary and secondary commuter and recreation trails, playground areas, all non sport related community buildings and infrastructure and safety.

### Diversity and sustainability - of sport, community and open space provision

- Includes formal and informal sport, community open space provision, local creek corridors and residential interface, vegetation and landscaping, storm water harvesting and park furniture.

### Accessibility and connection – getting to and using Olympic Park

- Includes park access and egress, connection to surrounds, car parking, direction and lighting.

The adjacent diagram outlines the strategic framework for the Olympic Park Master Plan, and demonstrates how it will guide the future direction of the site.



*Olympic Park Master Plan Strategic Framework*

## 1.8 Strategic pillars and principles

To assist Council and stakeholders to achieve the future vision and objectives for Olympic Park, the following development principles under each of the four strategic pillars have been proposed. These development principles will be used to guide the future planning and delivery of sport and recreation facilities and infrastructure at Olympic Park.

### 1. Quality (How good is it?)

- 1.1 Replace redundant and functionally obsolete buildings and amenities with quality facilities that meet shared sport, community, environmental and education objectives.
- 1.2 The provision of quality sport and recreation facilities shall maximise participation, shared usage opportunities and provide flexibility to meet changing community needs and aspirations.
- 1.3 Facilities shall provide safe and supportive environments for participants with a demonstrated universal design approach and an emphasis on Safer by Design Guidelines and sustainable best practice principles.
- 1.4 Recognise and acknowledge the sites historical and environmental significance and support projects with immediate and longer term environmental benefits and outcomes.

### 2. Quantity (is there enough?)

- 2.1 Increase the number of passive recreational opportunities through the provision of informal facilities (e.g. paths, seats, plantings, BBQ/picnic areas and play spaces) that promote and support people to enhance their health and wellbeing through physical activity.
- 2.2 Support new projects in the park that have an emphasis on participation in community recreation opportunities, whilst considering the specific facility requirements of the tenant sports.
- 2.3 Promote and facilitate increased participation opportunities for target groups such as older adults, women, children, indigenous and torres strait islanders through provision of reserve facilities and amenities.
- 2.4 Enhance and develop the physical and visual amenity of Olympic Park through tree planting and landscaping, with a focus on community safety, crime prevention and improving passive surveillance.
- 2.5 Continue to investigate and support opportunities to host local community events and consider provision of event infrastructure that will strengthen Banyule's community capacity and liveability.

### 3. Diversity and sustainability (will it provide different experiences and how will it affect the environment?)

- 3.1 Recognise Olympic Park as the premier soccer venue in the City of Banyule.
- 3.2 Continue to develop a range of sports fields and supporting infrastructure and amenities that adequately cater for the needs of tenant sports (soccer and cricket) and Banyule's diverse community.
- 3.3 Ensure future playing field provision and conditions are maintained to meet the different levels of training and competition requirements (e.g. sportsfield lighting) of sports.
- 3.4 Maintain dedicated playing field areas for both sport and community, ensure they are appropriately sized and dimensioned where possible, and maximise their use and flexibility for access by additional sports and activities.
- 3.5 Strengthen the capacity of sporting clubs and organisations seeking to enhance the range of facilities provided, and encourage the shared use of sporting reserves, training facilities, buildings and amenities.
- 3.6 Investigate opportunities to consolidate the use of existing fields before adding any new playing areas.
- 3.7 Minimise (where not required) sportsfield fencing to allow greater flexibility and shared usage.
- 3.8 Protect the habitat of native plants and animals and maintain sensitive environments, stream corridors and bushland areas.
- 3.9 Use the latest technology to optimise sustainable outcomes and consider the use of sustainable surfaces for sportsfields i.e. synthetic surfaces.

### 4. Accessibility and connection (can I get there and use it?)

- 4.1 Ensure Olympic Park is accessible, connected and appealing for all people, including minority groups, older adults and people with a disability (security lighting, car park provision, access into and around facilities).
- 4.2 Improve the quality of the Darebin Creek Trail, promote walkability through the connection of surrounding footpaths and road networks, and enhance connectivity between key sporting reserves and community infrastructure. The network of recreation trails shall allow for safe recreation and commuter use.
- 4.3 Improve vehicle entry / egress and car parking to meet expected day-to-day usage and sporting and community event requirements.