



Reimagining Arnolds Creek

Community engagement report

May 2018



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Overview

The *Re-imagining Arnolds Creek* project involves upgrading a 1400 metre section of the creek from Bulmans Road to High Street and the Cambrian Way Drain from Cambrian Way to High Street, Melton West. See Appendix A – map of Arnolds Creek to be reimagined.

This project is being implemented by Melbourne Water in collaboration with the Melton City Council, the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP), Western Water and representatives from community groups and residents.

Through early engagement with the community, online and face to face, Melbourne Water has been able to identify ideas, suggestions and priorities for redesigning the open space and to capture feedback about the project.

Information and feedback provided by the community will be used to inform the design of a desirable, open space that has been co-designed in collaboration with people who live, work, and play in the area – people who can provide local knowledge and who identified priorities for improvement.

By working together with stakeholders and community representatives, Melbourne Water aims to meet its objectives to deliver improved:

- amenity, connectivity and liveability based on local knowledge, community preferences and aspirations
- flood mitigation and public safety during wet weather events as well as the quality of water flowing into local waterways, rivers and Port Phillip Bay.

This report documents the community engagement activities undertaken during March and April 2018.

Once this initial engagement was completed, the project team began work on a functional design. This design will be shared with the community so that feedback can be captured and incorporated into the final design.

Community engagement activities- what we did

To announce the start of the project, project newsletters were distributed to residents in the vicinity of the works and four large signs were installed at key locations within the project area. This information included a map of the area and the contact details for the project team.

Online activities

The Arnolds Creek Your Say website was launched on 26 February 2018.

<https://yoursay.melbournewater.com.au/reimagining-arnolds-creek>

This informative, interactive page had online engagement tools for capturing community comments and feedback. Visitors to the site were encouraged to:

- read information about the project
- follow the page to receive project updates
- complete the online survey and provide feedback about their preferences and priorities for a reimagined creek
- register online to be part of the Community Advisory Group.

These online activities were supported by face book posts and advertising.

Face to face activities

A number of face to face engagement activities were implemented to provide information about the project, capture feedback and to recruit participants for the Community Advisory Group throughout March and April.

These activities included participation at:

- Community group meetings
- Clean Up Australia Day event, Saturday 3 March
- Harmony Day event, Saturday 17 March.



These face to face engagement activities were held in collaboration with stakeholders, at events where residents gathered and went about their everyday lives.

In addition, there was a pop up information stand at the Woodgrove Shopping Centre in Melton West from Thursday 19 April to Saturday 21 April.



Arnolds Creek Community Advisory Group

To ensure the project team captured a cross-section of community views, members of a Community Advisory Group were recruited.

This group of ten people comprised residents who live in the vicinity of Arnolds Creek, recreational users of the open space and representatives from local associations and community groups.

Members were asked to:

- contribute local knowledge and information about the existing open space
- provide ideas and possibilities for re-designing and naturalising the creek
- offer feedback on ideas and the preferred options developed
- share information with the broader community so that feedback can be captured and incorporated into the detailed design.



These local representatives committed to attending two workshop meetings. The first facilitated workshop was held on 1 May 2018. The second has been scheduled for 13 June 2018.

Online feedback

Once the Reimagining Arnold Creek Your Say site was approved and live, people were encouraged to provide feedback, ideas and aspirations for redesigning and transforming the existing creek and open space into a 'fun, friendly community loved space'.

People could use the online tools to share priorities and comments about the existing space and ideas for improvement. The online survey was open for one month, from the end of February to the end of March.

As at 30 March 2018, there had been 268 visitors to the site and:

- 11 people had signed up to follow the project page
- three people had signed up for the Community Advisory Group
- 46 people had completed the online survey.

To support this online engagement, Melbourne Water posted information about the project via face book on 19 March, 21 March and 27 March 2018. This information generated spikes in the online activity.

What we were told

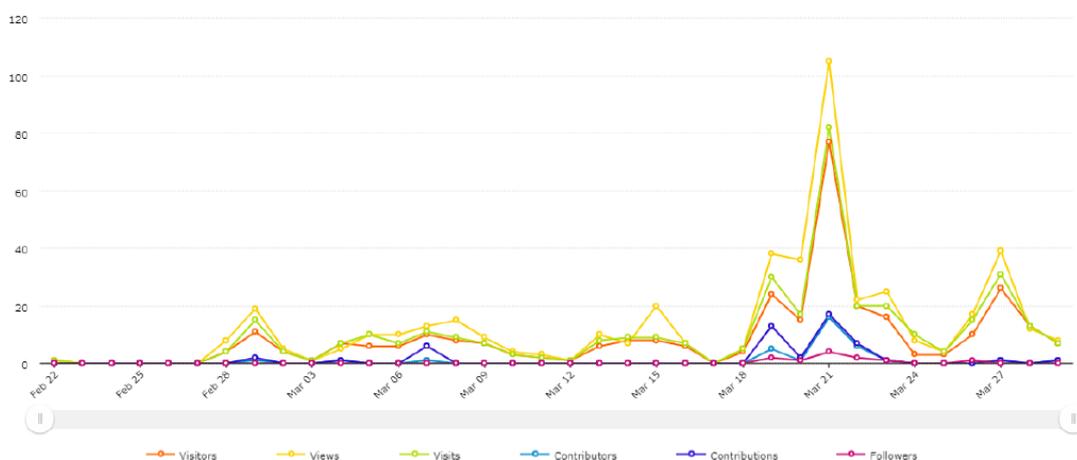
Given the range of comments captured online, the comments have been grouped according to key themes and priorities. An analysis of these comments confirmed a preference for:

- shared paths to connect people to places
- shade/trees and seating so people can sit and enjoy the open space
- open spaces and play areas for children
- signs – wayfinding and educational
- flood mitigation
- other.

A summary of the feedback key themes captured online and face to face is included in Appendix B.

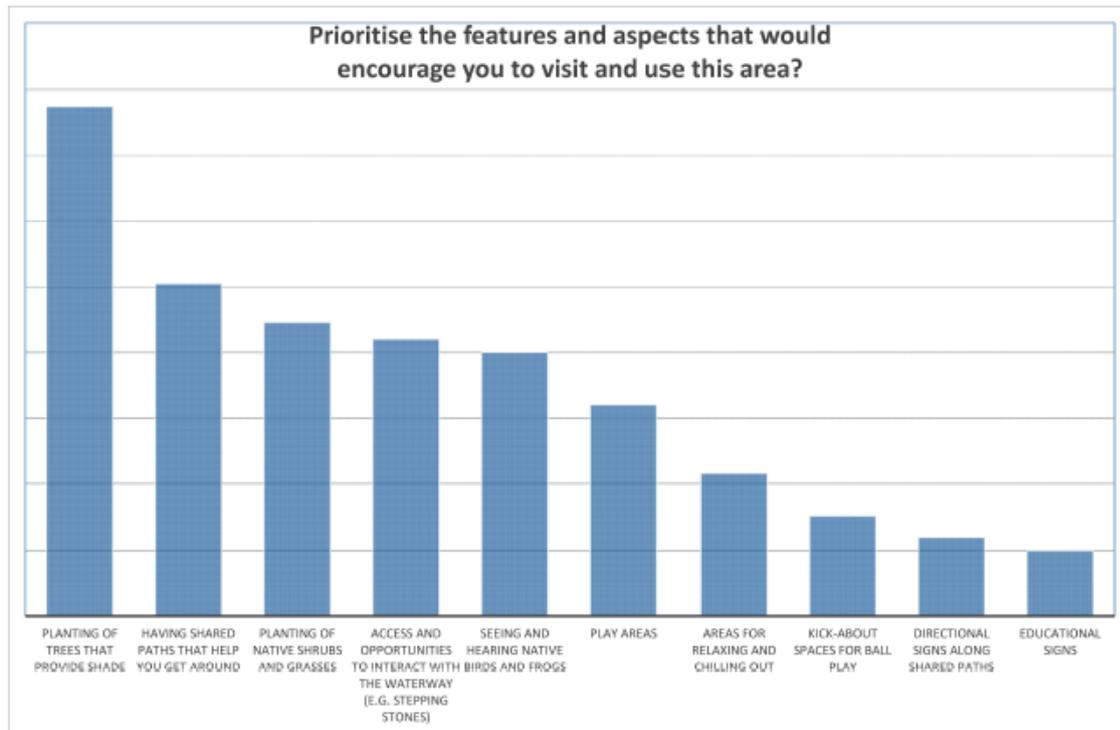
Figure 1: Engagement/key metrics graph as at 30 March 2018 (date the online feedback closed).

Key Metrics



The graph shows that social media posts pushed people to the site – and while there they completed the survey.

Figure 2: Priorities feedback/results from online survey as at 30 March 2018



This graph shows that the top four priorities for the online survey respondents were:

- planting of trees (1)
- access to shared paths (2)
- planting of native grasses and shrubs (3)
- opportunities to interact with water (4).

People who completed the online survey had a clear preference for naturalising the creek and existing open space as well as improving amenity and connections via shared paths.

Face to face feedback

By attending community meetings and events at local venues and by being available to share information about the Arnolds Creek project, residents could engage in conversations with the project team and ask questions specific to their personal interests. These events provided opportunities for people to share their ideas, preferences and priorities.

The majority of people who nominated to join the Community Advisory Group did so at or following these meetings and the pop up information sessions.

What we heard

Pop up information sessions

As at the end of April 2018, the project team had spoken with more than 80 people and 20 had completed the printed version of the feedback form. Approximately 500 copies of the Community Update had been distributed, primarily at the Woodgrove shopping centre.

To support this face to face engagement, Melbourne Water posted information about the pop ups via face book in April 2018.



The feedback captured at these events was very similar to the comments captured on line.

People had a clear preference for naturalising the creek and enhancing the open space. Their preferences were for:

- improving connections across the community with shared paths
- shade/trees and seating so parents can sit and enjoy the open space with their children
- open spaces and play areas for children
- flood mitigation.

A summary of the key comments captured face to face and online is included in Appendix B.

Community Advisory Group

An important focus of the face to face engagement was the establishment of the Community Advisory Group. The first workshop was held on 1 May 2018 and eight community members attended.

Working within small groups, participants were asked to discuss:

- Current values, issues and opportunities. Participants were encouraged to share their experiences and knowledge of the creek and open space
- A vision and 'good outcome' for Arnolds Creek. Participants were asked to identify how people could use the creek and open space if the issues and opportunities were addressed. Key priorities were identified.
- Ideas to realise the group's aspirations. Once the key themes had been identified, each group generated a list of 'most promising' ideas of how to deliver the ideas/aspirations.



The key themes identified were:

- Theme 1: Safe & accessible
- Theme 2: Improved community space & health
- Theme 3: Healthy environment
- Theme 4: Community identity & destination.

From this, a consolidated list of 'top five' ideas were consolidated by the group.

As the urban design consultants were part of the conversations, they heard the priorities identified by residents and representatives from local community groups. Where possible these priorities will be included into the functional design.

This design will be shared with the community through face to face and online engagement activities.

What's next

As the initial feedback from the online and face to face discussions with residents and representatives from the community groups identified a uniform, common vision for a Reimagined Arnolds Creek, Melbourne Water has commissioned its consultants to prepare a functional design.

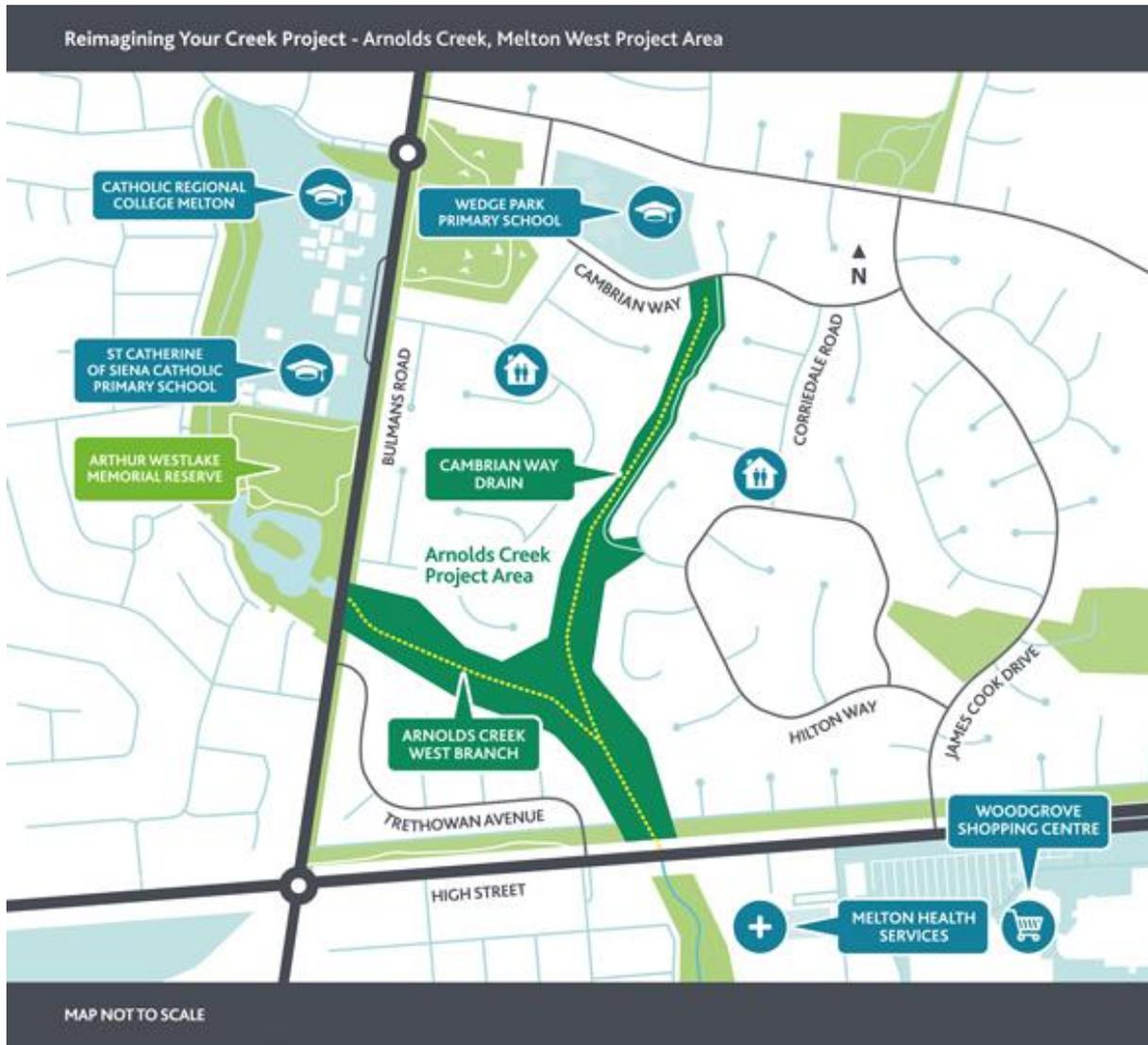
This design will include:

- An improved community space where people can meet, walk their dogs or sit in the shade
- Play areas for children and places where people can enjoy their natural environment
- Shared paths that encourage active transport and connect people to shops and schools etc
- Planting of native species to encourage biodiversity
- Sites for planting shade trees.

This functional design, including the priorities identified through the online and face to face engagement activities, will be shared with the community.

A second round of engagement, to share the functional design, is planned for late June 2018.

Appendix A- Map of Arnolds Creek



Appendix B – Summary of feedback key themes

The following is a review of the comments, captured online and face to face and grouped according to key themes:

Key themes and recurring comments ...
<p>Planting of trees and vegetation to provide shade</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We would love more shared paths with shade in this area. We are deterred from using these paths in the summer because it is way too hot in the straight sun • It is important that the path is shaded so that it isn't too hot in summer. Extensive planting of native trees is essential • Lots of trees for shade and picnic spaces
<p>Having shared paths that help you get around</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep the existing path and extend it! Paths connecting all entrances as currently there are no bike or pram paths. Currently we use the waterways as a footpath for our pram. Also lighting in the area would be good as it is very dark at night time • There needs to be planning with support of council to ensure the paths connect and to the area south of High Street. Ideally, the entire catchment should be all linked up • Priority is for a shared path. It will help improve community health and wellbeing as people more inclined to walk/cycle instead of taking the kids to school by car!
<p>Planting of native trees and grasses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More native and natural setting, full of trees, a nice running waterway - birds and animals • Plantings of indigenous trees that were once present in this area including; various box, Buloke, Banksia, Red gums etc • Please plant more trees and grasses. The area is pretty bare and it should be returned to more natural state with beautiful native vegetation and trees
<p>Access/opportunities to interact with a waterway – play areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I would love to have a place so close to home I can just walk across the road with my young children and go for a walk with lots of nice things to see and do • A space that encourages people to enjoy the outdoors and interact with others • Creating an area similar to the Kevin Hoffman Walk at Lara would be fantastic. This would enhance the creek environment and provide an easily accessible tourism, educational and recreational destination for the community of Melton
<p>Areas for relaxing and chilling out</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It would be nice to have a place to stroll around with dogs and be able to sit in the shade or a shelter with a drinking fountain and bowl for the dogs. Somewhere to sit and watch the kids run around ... • The area is terrible. Over run with weeds and little to no water. What is there is very stagnant and covered in algae • It needs to be an area that invites people and they are able to use all their senses to enjoy the creek and open space

Other comments about reimagining the creek ...

- Anything would make it better ... removing concrete is a great idea!
- Even though this waterway has been heavily modified from its natural drainage some interpretive signage and replanting of endemic species and Aboriginal food and resource plants including trees, shrubs, grasses, roots would be great
- If you bring water to the surface there'll be frogs, snakes and mosquitoes. It's a residential area and a snake haven as it is. We worry when walking around here
- Try and keep out the trail bike riders – and people who drive up and down this area
- Educational signs about flora and fauna and a play area for kids that involves water
- Arnolds Creek at Bulmans Road overtops after high rainfall events. It needs to divert flood water
- If it's improved, people will use it instead of trashing it!
- People don't use the space – no reason to go there and really not attractive at all
- An off lead dog area!!! Melton lacks a large dog free play area, the two we have are too small and used so much there is no grass in them
- We need a BBQ with undercover facilities like at the Melton Botanic Garden and a carpark.