for all locals...
Contents

6 Introduction
8 Background
12 Soil Remediation
14 Our Commitment
17 Vision
18 Guiding Principles
20 Consultation
25 Key Findings
26 Current Conditions
42 Park Plan
44 Visualising the future
50 Implementation
52 Extent of works
Gasworks Arts Park requires remediation to be undertaken to comply with EPA Victoria requirements and secure the long term future of the site as a park. The Park Plan provides the context and guides the remediation and restoration of the park, as well as the long term management of the park for community enjoyment.

PARK CONTEXT

Gasworks Arts Park is located in the suburb of Albert Park and forms part of a network of public open space across the City of Port Phillip. This network is made up of parks, reserves, plazas and streetscapes, providing a range of essential functions and services that fundamentally contribute to the health and wellbeing of the community.

The park is located in an area that is experiencing a high level of urban renewal, densification and changing demographics. Existing public open space needs to be adapted over time to accommodate an increase in use and changing community needs, as well as to predicted climatic changes. Gasworks Arts Park has the additional challenge of addressing soil contamination linked to the industrial history of the site.

WHY A PARK PLAN?

The City of Port Phillip Open Space Strategy provides the overarching vision for the network of public open space. The Strategy outlines a road map for how the Council Plan Objectives of an Engaged, Healthy, Resilient and Vibrant Community will be achieved through open space provision and management. The development of high level plans for each of the significant public open spaces, such as Gasworks Arts Park, is a way to ensure that each component of the public open space network is being developed in a coordinated way that helps achieve the Council Plan Objectives for the whole community now and into the future.

Soil remediation is required to secure the long term use of the site as a park and these works will require the removal and replacement of all of the existing park infrastructure and vegetation including trees. The Park Plan provides the context and guides the remediation and restoration of the park. The need for remediation presents both a challenge and an opportunity that will be further explored within this document.
WHAT DOES THE PLAN NEED TO ACHIEVE?

A Park Plan reflects the goals and aspirations of the current users of the park and the local community. It anticipates changing community needs over time and plans to respond to regional (municipal wide) challenges such as climate change adaptation, population growth and changing community needs.

Over time Park Plans need to be reviewed and revised to ensure that the infrastructure and upgrades that were proposed are still relevant and desired by the current community and adequately respond to regional and local changes that have occurred.

The Park Plan needs to:
- Strategically incorporate regional and local priorities.
- Address soil remediation requirements.
- Address current community needs and plan for the future.
- Balance conflicting community needs.
- Address sustainability including climate change and water security.
- Align with the Council Plan, Open Space Strategy, Open Space Water Management Plan and other key strategies and plans.
PARK PLANNING PROCESS
The Park Plan has been prepared through a rigorous process of community consultation, background research and detailed site analysis, including an Environmental Audit and the development of a Remediation Action Plan (RAP). The Park Plan provides the context and process for soil remediation. It also provides the long term vision and principles for development of the site to protect the unique elements that park users love and adapt the space to the changing needs of the community and climate change.

KEY STRATEGIES AND PLANS
The City of Port Phillip has strategies and plans that guide policy, decision making and capital works to ensure continuity for the long term. Strategies and plans relevant to Gasworks Arts Park include:

- Council Plan 2013-2017
- Health and Wellbeing Plan 2013
- Municipal Strategic Statement
- Open Space Strategy 2009
- Access Plan 2012
- Aging Well in Port Phillip Strategy 2006-2016
- Arts and Culture Policy 2011
- Play Space Strategy 2012
- Reconciliation Action Plan 2012-2015
- Indigenous Arts Strategy
- Walk Plan 2011-2020
- Bike Plan 2011-2020
- Greening Port Phillip An Urban Forest Approach 2010
- Climate Adaptation Plan 2010
- Open Space Water Management Plan

Figure 1. The park planning process
PRE EUROPEAN SETTLEMENT
The pre European landscape was dominated by a large coastal swamp that extended from St Kilda to Fishermans Bend in Port Melbourne, where the Yarra River ran into Port Phillip Bay. The people of the Yalukit Willam and Kulin Nation inhabited this area. Emerald Hill, where the South Melbourne Town Hall now stands, was a high point in the swampy landscape and was a traditional social and ceremonial meeting place for a number of Aboriginal tribes.

INDUSTRIAL HISTORY
As with many other parks across Melbourne, Gasworks Arts Park is located on the site of former heavy industry. The South Melbourne Gas Plant was formed in 1872 and started supplying gas to the area in 1873. It was the largest employer in the area at the time. Operating 24 hours a day, coal was hauled from the pier at the end of Bay Street by horse drawn tram. The South Melbourne Gas plant was closed in 1957 after the commissioning of the brown coal plant in Morwell.
TRANSFORMATION

Following decommissioning of the gas plant, South Melbourne City Council purchased a portion of the site in 1979 with the intention of transforming the site into a park. The purchased land included a number of historic gasworks buildings that were retained when the site was remediated. The rest of the site remained as Crown Land.

South Melbourne City Council, and subsequently the City of Port Phillip, was appointed as Committee of Management of the Crown Land. Between 1983 to 1984 Council worked closely with the local community to develop the site as a park. The concept of the park having a key focus on the arts emerged and in 1986 the park was opened to the public and named Gasworks Arts Park.
CURRENT USE

Today Gasworks Arts Park is a place enjoyed by a wide variety of users for a diverse range of activities, including: contact with nature, to rest and relax, meet, gather, play, exercise, study, read, participate in arts activities, undertake school based activities, monthly farmers market, events, free outdoor music concerts and outdoor cinema. Gasworks is also a designated dog off leash park and has one of the highest visitation rates for dog off leash parks within the City of Port Philip.

The historic buildings dotted around the boundary of the park contain theatres, a cafe and studios for local artists. Arts activities undertaken within the park include the resident artists, public sculptures, 30 gallery exhibitions and over 150 performing arts events annually. The performing arts program encompasses theatre, dance, circus, comedy and music, and includes a major presence in some of Melbourne’s best known arts festivals.

Gasworks Arts Inc develops the arts program within the park and coordinates venue hire for workshops and creative classes for adults and children each year. Gasworks Arts Inc is a community based organisation, founded in 1987, that is funded by Council to program a range of arts and cultural including a much-loved children’s holiday program.
INFRASTRUCTURE AND FACILITIES

Gasworks Arts Park is bound by four roads; Pickles Street, Richardson Street, Graham Street and Foote Street. It is 430 metres from the beach, 145 metres from Lagoon Reserve, 530 metres from St Vincent’s Gardens and 1.6km from Albert Park Lake.

The park is enclosed within brick walls from a bygone era. The walls and other elements in the park illustrate the industrial heritage of Port Melbourne with many of the original gasworks structures dotted around the park. These items are listed by Heritage Victoria and are protected under the planning scheme.

Throughout the park are elements of arts and culture ranging from artists studios, to the main theatre building and sculptures. There are places to sit in the shade, places for picnics and barbecues, and places to play with friends or animals.

The park contains a large grassy open space in the centre, bordered by a circuit path, native trees, shrubs and garden beds. To one side of the grassed area are a number of grassy mounds dotted with trees that provide opportunities for kids to run and roll down, places to sit and watch what is happening in the park and amphitheatre style landscaping for events in the park.

On the other side of the park is a winding path through a bushland setting of eucalypts and shrubs that provides a shady reflective space to enjoy nature and contemplate life. The park also contains a bush trail that takes you on a journey of discovery exploring the plant life of Melbourne’s coastline. The trail has signage which describes the plants’ uses. There were many Aboriginal language groups living along the Victorian coastline who utilised the plants for food and medicinal purposes. Today we still make products from many of these plants including medicines. We thank the Wurundjeri and Boon Wurrung people who contributed to the development of the Bush Trail.

The park contains a small playground that provides limited play opportunities and has been identified in the City of Port Phillip Play Space Strategy 2012 as in need of upgrade. The park does however contain significant nature and creative play opportunities through the wider physical environment.
INITIAL ASSESSMENT AND REMEDIATION

Assessment of the soil in the park for contamination was first undertaken in 1985 as part of the conversion of the former industrial site into a park. Contamination was found in the soil, including heavy metals and hydrocarbons left over from the operation of the site as a Gasworks.

Remediation of the contaminated soil was undertaken as part of the redevelopment of the site as a park. The Environment Protection Authority (EPA) Victoria declared the site suitable for park use in 1992. To ensure the ongoing safety of park users, an Interim Contamination Management Plan was put in place that specifies the management actions required to maintain the site as safe for use as a public park, as defined by EPA Victoria. Community meetings were held in 2006 to engage with the community about soil contamination in Gasworks. The Interim Contamination Management Plan continues to guide all maintenance and other management activities within the park.

ENVIRONMENTAL AUDIT 2013

EPA standards have become more stringent since the initial remediation of the site was undertaken. In order to follow best practice principles and because of the history of contamination, Council decided to undertake further investigation of the site. An Interim Environmental Audit was undertaken in 2008 and an EPA approved Environmental Auditor was engaged by Council to oversee the Audit. The role of the Auditor was to liaise with EPA Victoria and provide feedback and recommendations based on legislation regarding remediation requirements. The Audit was completed in 2013.

The Audit found extensive soil contamination across the site, generally located deeper than 200 mm below the surface. Types of contaminants include heavy metals and hydrocarbons from previous use of the site as a Gasworks. Groundwater is also impacted from former site activities.

It was determined that the site is safe for use as a park in the short term whilst management of the park complies with the EPA approved Interim Contamination Management Plan. However, to secure the use of the site as a park for the long term, remediation of the park is required.
AUDITOR RECOMMENDATIONS
The Auditor made a series of recommendations for remediation of the site, which have been documented in a Remediation Action Plan (RAP) and Groundwater Management Plan (GMP) and approved by EPA Victoria. The key recommendation in the RAP is that contaminated soil be retained on site and capped to provide a physical barrier between the contaminated soil and users of the park through a range of methods.

Further detail on the remediation works is contained on Page 28.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE PARK?
Initial investigations undertaken as part of the development of the Park Plan have identified that the requirement to undertake capping of the soil across the whole park will require the removal and replacement of all existing vegetation, landscaping and park infrastructure, as well as changes to existing levels within the park.

The park will need to be closed whilst the works are undertaken. Detailed planning is required to identify the full scope of the remediation required and how the works will impact access to the Gasworks buildings. It is recognised that this will have a significant impact on local residents, park users, the café, artists in residence, the theatre and the community arts program run by Gasworks Inc. based in the park. Detailed planning is required to identify the full scope of the remediation works required.

Park assets such as seating, trees, lights and the playground have become quite run down over time as a result of the contamination limiting works in the park. Though the remediation works will cause a great deal of short term disturbance in the park, it does present a great ‘once in a (park) life time’ opportunity for undertaking a significant upgrade of all the key aspects of the park.

Normally upgrades to an established park such as Gasworks would happen over a number of years. Due to the requirement for remediation, we have the opportunity to undertake more refurbishment of the park all at one time than would normally be possible.

WHY DO ALL TREES NEED TO BE REMOVED?
The Remediation Action Plan requires that a layer of clean soil 500mm deep needs to be placed between the contaminated soil and park users across the whole site. Where we don’t want to raise the ground level, such as at entrances to the park and other key areas, we need to cut out the contaminated soil and store it elsewhere on site as a mound, or provide a hard cap to the existing surface such as a granitic path or paving.

Trees are only able to withstand minor soil disturbances, and the extent of works required at Gasworks Arts Park will require extensive soil disturbance resulting in tree health decline.

The Reference Committee (part of the consultation process) explored possibilities of the retention of some significant trees within the park. Through this analysis it was determined that the risks associated with leaving sections of the park un-remediated to retain trees and possibility of tree loss from stress in changed conditions, demonstrated works to achieve long term access to a safe park required the removal and replacement of all existing trees and vegetation.
our commitment
To return the park to a state that is in better condition than before the works and maintains its current functionality.

To work closely with the local community to minimise the impact of the remediation works.

To ensure the best possible outcome is achieved for the long term future of the park as a resource for the community to enjoy.
‘Gasworks Arts Park is a green oasis in the urban setting, where the past is celebrated, the future is anticipated and our culture has a living presence.’
guiding principles

To achieve the vision for Gasworks Arts Park a number of guiding principles have been developed. These principles will guide all future development of the park to ensure the community’s vision is achieved over the long term.
Promote the development of an accessible, vibrant community hub, by providing:

- Regional facilities that cater for regular local users as well as visitors for specific events or functions.
- Infrastructure to support access for all ages, backgrounds and abilities.
- Access to art facilities and programs.
- Integrated play facilities within the park landscape that provide opportunities for nature play, sensory experiences, and creative and unstructured play opportunities.
- Opportunities for contact with nature for people of all ages.
- Placement of art within the park landscape to celebrate culture and creativity, and provide visual amenity and play opportunities.

Respect and celebrate the park’s story by:

- Protecting all remaining historic Gasworks infrastructure.
- Featuring the historic Gasworks buildings and walls through landscaping.
- Provision of signage that communicates the history of the park to users.
- Inclusion of an Bush Trail that provides access to the indigenous plants of the region.
- Supporting existing users of the park whilst encouraging additional functionality within the park to accommodate developing community needs.

Develop and manage the park in a safe, sustainable, and inclusive manner, by:

- Undertaking soil remediation according to EPA requirements.
- Strategic landscaping and placement of facilities to support various uses within the park.
- Promoting a safe environment for users through good design, provision of adequate facilities and infrastructure and appropriate levels of maintenance.
- Developing energy efficient public lighting that meets user requirements.
- Prioritising the use of natural materials, landscaping and vegetation.
- Planting and maintaining predominantly indigenous and native themed gardens throughout the park.
- Retaining the green open space area and minimising the addition of hard surfaces and infrastructure within the reserve.
- Planting trees to provide habitat, shade and shelter as well as planting feature trees at strategic locations throughout the park.
- Investigating non-potable water sources to support the maintenance of green spaces within the park.
what you said...

consultation

“leash free dog park”

“trees and vegetation”
“upgrade infrastructure”

“keep the farmers’ market”
COMMUNITY CONSULTATION ACTIVITIES

The Park Plan has been developed with extensive input from the local community and key stakeholders. Community consultation activities undertaken as part of the development of the Park Plan include:

- Mail out of information to 2000 local residents in a radius around the park - Nov 2012.
- Signs on site.
- Two Community Ideas Forums – one session at the farmers market and one evening session in the Gasworks Theatre foyer - Dec 2012
- On-line survey and forum on the Have Your Say page.
- Park user and resident survey – 200 interview-style surveys of 5 to 10 minutes duration each.
- Reference Committee made up of 10 representatives, including representatives of key user groups, the local community and the Ward Councillor as Chair – 7 meetings - Feb 2013- June 2014
- 6 week feedback period on the Draft Park Plan (April/May 2014).

WHAT THE COMMUNITY SAID

All of the feedback and ideas received from the on-line survey, on-line forum and Community Ideas Forums in the park were grouped into themes, to form a picture of what the community likes about the park, what they would like to change or improve and ideas for the future.

14 themes were identified. The top five themes were Facilities and Maintenance (19%), Arts and Events (15%), Play Space (12%), Dogs (9%), and Zones of Use (8%). These results show that park users priorities are spread over a number of areas, with the greatest amount of feedback received being about improving existing assets, improving maintenance and support for the arts and events in the park.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>% of feedback</th>
<th>Snap shot of comments received</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facilities and Maintenance</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>Fix paths, lights, drainage, bins. Upgrade furniture, better maintenance for grass, trees and toilets. Better power access.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts and Events</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>More sculptures. Keep outdoor cinema, artists studios, art programs, outdoor amphitheatre. More interaction with artists and educational programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trees/vegetation</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>Replace dead and dying trees. Keep native theme. Add colour, more deciduous trees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fencing</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Fence playground and BBQ to keep dogs away. Fence Richardson Street and Pickles Street. Gate all exits and entrances. No more fencing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity of Use</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Keep diversity of users and activities. Wi-Fi, Mens shed, tennis court, chess board, wetland. Community garden/no community garden. School use/no school use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park Size</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>Purchase adjacent land and transform into park.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmers Market</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>Keep farmers market. Love the farmers market.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>Good access. Keep openness of the reserve.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paths</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>Keep path layout, walking track, indigenous garden trail.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>Garden staff friendly, more environmental elements, keep café, better links to surrounding suburb.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RESIDENT AND PARK USER SURVEY

The Resident and Park User Survey consists of two components, an intercept survey of park users and a door to door survey of residents living in the area immediately surrounding Gasworks Arts Park and Lagoon Reserve.

The aims of the park and resident survey were to:

• Determine the patronage of the two parks by the local community and identify other parks utilised by residents.
• Explore the profile of park users and the nature of their park use.
• Examine the factors underpinning park use, including the importance of various park aspects and the best aspects of the parks.
• Measure respondents’ level of satisfaction with various aspects of the parks, and identify potential park improvements.

A total of 200 interview-style surveys of 5 to 10 minutes duration were conducted within the two parks by trained Metropolis Research field work staff. A total of 100 surveys were conducted in Gasworks. Surveys were conducted at a range of different times and days of the week, including weekends. Some surveys were conducted in the Gasworks park during park events.

A total of 200 interview-style surveys of approximately 5 to 10 minutes duration were also conducted by trained Metropolis Research field work staff of residents living within the local area (approximately 500 metre radius from the two parks).
key findings

- The overwhelming majority of respondents in the local area visit at least one of the two parks.
- Significantly more local residents visit Gasworks than Lagoon Reserve.
- Respondents visiting Lagoon Reserve were considerably more likely to visit on a frequent basis (daily or weekly) than their counterparts visiting Gasworks.
- The overwhelming majority of respondents walk to the two parks, with a slightly higher proportion driving to Gasworks.
- The overwhelming majority of respondents took no more than ten minutes to travel to the park.
- Approximately three-quarters of respondents visiting each of the two parks stay for more than fifteen minutes and up to around one hour.
- Respondents visiting Gasworks were twice as likely as those visiting Lagoon Reserve to be visiting with their dog/s.
- Two-thirds of respondents visiting each of the two parks reported visiting without children.
- The importance of grassed open areas, feeling safe and secure, being located close to home and the provision of shaded areas, were measurably and significantly more important than other aspects of parks when choosing where to visit.
- Respondents considered many other aspects to be very important, including rest areas, the connection with nature, drinking fountains, walking paths, linkages to surrounding areas, that the park allows dogs and picnic areas / facilities.
- The overwhelming majority of respondents visiting each of the two parks reported that the facilities currently in the park meet their needs, with close to two-thirds reporting completely meets their needs and one-third somewhat meets their needs.
- The average satisfaction with all aspects of the parks was rated at 7.76 for Lagoon Reserve and 7.63 for Gasworks, levels of satisfaction best categorised as “very good”. By way of comparison, Governing Melbourne in 2011 recorded average satisfaction with local government across metropolitan Melbourne at 6.32, or a level best categorised as “solid”.

CITY OF PORT PHILLIP GASWORKS ARTS PARK PLAN  25
In addition to the community consultation, an in-depth site analysis was undertaken to identify the condition of all of the different elements of the park.

Recommendations for possible future works in the park have been developed based on feedback from the community and the results of the site analysis. The results of the community consultation identified that the local community hold a range of views and ideas about what should happen to the park in the future. An example of this is the topic of fencing. Some people don’t want to see any more fencing in the park, while others want more fencing, particularly around the playground.

The recommendations for future works have been developed to take into consideration all views expressed by the community, best practice park management and soil remediation requirements. On occasion, recommendations may not address individual preferences, but will reflect what is considered the best fit for the park.

The recommendations have also been developed to comply with the Environmental Audit 2013, which specifies remediation works required for the park. All recommendations are aligned with the Gasworks Arts Park Guiding Principles and are designed to achieve the long term Vision for the park and City of Port Phillip Council Plan Objectives.

The future works recommendations are presented with a summary of the community consultation results and the site analysis, which are grouped in themes.

The themes are:
- Soil remediation
- Play
- Heritage and Art
- Vegetation
- Shade and Shelter
- Lighting
- Infrastructure
- Pedestrian access
- Safety
- Heritage and Art
- Fencing
- Sustainability
Figure 3. Gasworks Arts Park existing conditions.
The Environmental Audit, 2013, states the need for remediation of Gasworks Arts Park. The Gasworks Arts Park Remediation Action Plan (RAP) lists the approved soil remediation options that can be applied within the park.

Remediation options include:
• Cap contaminated soil with 500 mm of clean soil across the site from the existing ground level. (to be used for the majority of the site as contaminated soil is not recommended to be removed.)
• Remove 500 mm of contaminated soil and replace it with 500 mm clean soil (to maintain levels around buildings and other areas)
• Provide a geofabric layer covered with a reduced depth clean soil layer
• Cap contaminated soil with hard paving/impervious surfaces
• Other interventions that cause a separation of the soil from park users.

Council’s first priority is to secure the park as a safe public space for the community to use in the long term. In order to achieve this, we need to comply with EPA requirements to remediate the soil, which will trigger a major park upgrade.
The remediation options listed in the RAP are all of the options available to Council to use on the site. It is up to Council to develop a detailed plan for the remediation that utilises the range of available options to achieve the best outcome for the site.

Initial remediation planning has identified that in order for Council to comply with the EPA requirements and to achieve the best long term outcome for the site, all of the existing vegetation and park infrastructure will need to be removed to enable the remediation to occur. Once the remediation has been completed, all of the existing park infrastructure and vegetation will be replaced.

The program of works and the period of time required for the park to be closed whilst works are undertaken will be identified and communicated to the local community as part of the detailed project planning prior to the remediation works being undertaken.

**Actions**
- Develop an implementation plan for remediation and upgrade of the park.
- Undertake detailed design for remediation works and construction.
- Develop a Vegetation Management Plan for replacement of trees, shrubs and garden beds.
- Develop a communications plan to engage with the community throughout the detailed design and construction process.
- Work with park users and key stakeholders to minimise the impact of works.

![Figure 4. Profile showing different capping options.](image)
The existing play space is quite old and provides minimal play opportunities. The City of Port Phillip Play Space Strategy lists the Gasworks play space as a high priority for upgrade.

The majority of community feedback received during the consultation period was that relocation of the play space was desirable to reduce the incidence of conflict between dogs off-leash and children playing in the play space.

People would also like to see: nature play opportunities, sculptures as play objects, make sure it fits with the look and feel of the park, separation of dogs and kids, shelter, bbq linked with play space, close to toilets, drinking fountain, linked to open space.

The site assessment identified two potential locations for relocation of the play space within the park. Relocation was considered to be the most effective way to separate the play space and the most popular dog off-leash exercise and socialising area to reduce the potential for conflict between children and dogs off-leash.

The first location was identified close by the café in the Gasworks Theatre complex on Graham Street and the public toilets on the Pickles Street boundary near Graham Street.

The second location was identified along the Foote Street boundary close to Graham Street, near the Theatre and Albert Park College across the road.

After an intensive internal review and much consultation with the Reference Committee, it was decided that the location along the Pickles Street boundary near Graham Street was the preferred location and this is proposed in the Park Plan.

The benefits of this location are that it provides a separation between daily theatre vehicular traffic and the play space, there is good separation between the main dog off-leash area and children, it has good visual connections to the green open space area and is close to the café and public toilets.

**Actions**

- Relocate the play space to the location indicated on the Park Plan, near the corner of Graham Street and Pickles Street.
- Undertake design and construction of a new regional play space that is innovative in design, has a focus on ‘art’ and ‘nature play’ and that respects the history of the park.
- Develop the play space design in consultation with the community.
- Incorporate art and nature play elements throughout the park.
- Ensure the play space is accessible for all.
- Provide a buffer around the play space to provide adequate separate between the play space, off-leash dogs and vehicle traffic. Buffer design to be determined in detailed design.
- Co-locate sheltered barbeque and picnic facilities with the play space.
There are a number of heritage listed structures within the park that are reminders of the industrial use of the site as a gasworks. These include much of the park boundary wall, the theatres and artists’ studios, weighbridge and original blue stone paving.

Art also plays a big part in the look and feel of the park, with sculptures, art pieces, artists’ studios and the theatre surrounding the park.

Community feedback indicated that art in the park is highly valued and there were a number of request for more sculptures in the park, more outdoor events such as the outdoor cinema, music and performances, more educational programs and greater connection to the artists in residence in the park.

Actions

• Protect the historic features within the park.
• Continue to support the arts within the park.
• Provide space for sculptures within the park landscape.
• Provide space within the park to enable outdoor community arts activities and performances.
• Provide interpretive signage for heritage elements in the park.
The park has an open and informal grassy centre that allows for a diversity of uses and activities, with smaller paths around the edges of the park that meander through garden beds amongst the eucalyptus stands, creating interesting and relaxing spaces with distinct microclimates and a diversity of textures and colours.

Community feedback was that people generally love the informal nature of the park and the indigenous/native planting theme. There was strong feedback that people would like to retain the look and feel of the park but that there was disappointment over the decline in tree cover that has occurred over time. Lack of shade in many areas of the park was also highlighted as key issue by park users.

A tree audit was undertaken as part of the site analysis. The audit identified that there were a total number of 460 trees within the park at the time of the audit. Due to the relatively young age of the park, the majority of the trees within the park are 30-35 years of age. The palms in the Graham/Pickles street entry are of older age but were transplanted into the park at a later date.

24 trees were identified as significant, using the definition in ‘Greening Port Phillip, An Urban Forest Approach, 2010’ which defines significant trees as trees with a trunk circumference greater than 1.5m at a height of 1.0m above ground.

The tree audit identified that the majority of trees were in fair condition.

Replacement of trees within the park has been restricted in the past due to soil contamination issues and this has led to a decline in tree numbers and a significant reduction in overall canopy cover. This has had an impact on the availability of shade in summer for park users and available habitat for native birds.

An additional assessment of the trees was undertaken as part of the consideration of soil remediation requirements. The assessment looked at how many significant trees there were in the park that were also in good condition.

The assessment found that of the 24 significant trees in the park, 19 of these trees were in good condition. A further assessment was undertaken to identify options for retaining these trees as part of the soil remediation works and park upgrade.

It was determined that there were significant problems associated with retention of the trees. The key issues are:

• The predicted loss of retained trees within five years of works is estimated at up to 50% due to disturbance and changed growing conditions.

• There are significant infrastructure requirements associated with tree retention to ensure separation between contaminated soil and people that would change the look and feel of the park.

• The challenge of remediation at a later date of the sites where trees were retained, leading to ‘hot spots’ in the park that require a much higher level of management and associated on-going maintenance costs to maintain park user safety.

• Reduced level of certainty for users related to the ‘hot spots’ in the park.
**Actions**

- Plant predominantly indigenous and native trees and vegetation to maintain the ‘bush’ feel, that are an appropriate fit for the local climate, and provide habitat for native fauna.
- Plant trees as features, for shade and cooling throughout the park.
- Plant trees and vegetation that contribute to the provision of nature play opportunities.
- Plant garden beds with vegetation to create natural buffers between different zones of use where needed.
- Develop a Vegetation Management Plan for the park with a planting palate to guide future tree and garden planting, and that details management strategies to maintain the health of the tree population and good canopy cover.
- Develop a tree removal and planting plan as part of the detailed project planning for the soil remediation works and park upgrade.
Shade from trees throughout most of the park is fairly light due to the dappled nature of shade from Eucalypt trees. The large open space in the centre of the park contains few trees and provides minimal shade opportunities. More shade is available along the Foote Street boundary, which is heavily vegetated and provides shade all year round.

Feedback from park users was that more shade was desirable to support use of the different spaces throughout the park. Specific mention was made of the need for shade for the playground and BBQ areas and for the provision of seating in areas where shade is available.

Requests were also made for a shelter within the park to enhance opportunities for gatherings, picnics and BBQs in all types of weather. There were also a number of requests for a more formal gazebo for weddings and functions.

**Actions**
- Plant trees for shade and shelter throughout the park.
- Provide a sheltered BBQ and picnic area.
Public lighting is located throughout the park using a variety of light pole styles that reflect the different times that lighting has been installed. Unfortunately, most of the public lighting is non-functional due to the restrictions and costs associated with disturbing the contaminated soil to undertake works to repair or replace lighting. The lack of functional public lighting throughout the park is a major issue for the local community, who have told us that they don’t feel safe walking through the park at night because it is so dark.

**Actions**

- Develop a sustainable lighting plan for the park.
- Implement the sustainable lighting plan as part of the remediation and park upgrade.
Much of the existing park furniture, including seating, picnic tables and BBQ's is of different ages and styles and in need of updating.

Due to the need for soil remediation, all of the park furniture will need to be removed and replaced. This provides the opportunity for updated and consistent park furniture to be installed, as well as provision of additional park furniture to respond to feedback from the community.

Feedback from the community about seating in the park was that there wasn't enough seating in the spots where people wanted to sit and that there was a lack of seats with shade opportunities.

Feedback on the picnic and BBQ facilities was that some people appreciate being able to have picnics and BBQs with their dogs, but that to cater for everyone there was a need for additional facilities located away from the popular dog off-leash area to provide the opportunity for dog-free picnicking.

The site analysis identified that the existing BBQ and picnic facilities were not fully accessible, particularly to people in wheelchairs or with other mobility challenges. There is an opportunity with the remediation of the park to replace, re-distribute and provide additional, seating, picnic and BBQ facilities to cater for the needs of all users.

There are currently two drinking fountains with dog bowls within the park. Bike hoops are provided and bins are distributed throughout the park. Public toilet facilities are provided in two locations within the park, one within the theatre complex and one along the Pickles Street park boundary. Feedback from the community included the need to improve the condition of the public toilets along the boundary of Pickles Street.

There are two three phase power outlets in the park, used for providing power to events such as the farmers market, outdoor cinema, performances and music festivals. Feedback from user groups was that an additional three phase power outlet was required to provide adequate power access to support events in the park and that consideration to events and location of power outlets was required.

Actions

- Remove and replace existing furniture as part of the remediation of the park.
- Develop a detailed design for provision and location of replacement furniture including seats, BBQs, picnic tables, drinking fountains, bike hoops and three phase power.
- Place seating in locations that provide shade opportunities.
- Provide two separate BBQ and picnic facilities in different locations within the park, with one providing separation between dogs off-leash and the BBQ and picnic facilities.
- Provide fully accessible park furniture where possible.
- Review the condition and maintenance of the public toilet along the Pickles Street boundary.
- Investigate opportunities for using the wood from existing trees for artwork or furniture post remediation.
Vehicles enter the park to service the theatre, the monthly farmers market, for rubbish removal, to clean the toilet and BBQ facilities and maintain the vegetation and grass within the park.

Vehicles access the park through the entrance on Graham Street closest to Pickles Street, which has a height restriction of 2.7 metres, the historic bluestone paved entrance on Graham Street beside the café which is the original entrance, and via Richardson Street.

Unauthorised car access to the park has increased since the bollards restricting access to the two entrances along Graham Street were broken and not replaced. The granitic sand area just inside the entrance on Graham Street closest to Pickles Street is being used by unauthorised vehicles for parking. Vehicles also currently enter the park via Richardson Street, predominantly related to the farmers market, but also to access the artists’ studios.

The site analysis identified the opportunity to reduce regular traffic within the park by installing removable barriers (bollards or gates) to restrict unauthorised vehicles. Creation of a vehicle access point and turning circle on the right hand side of the theatre on Graham Street for loading and unloading would concentrate the daily theatre related traffic in one place and reduce the need for reversing vehicles and reduce the risk of conflict between vehicles and park users. Park maintenance vehicles would also use this entrance.

Vehicle traffic across the grass, particularly the concentrated traffic of the farmers market traffic in wet weather, has caused significant damage to grass cover in the past. Development of a wet weather plan for the farmers market and a traffic management plan for all vehicle traffic in the park would assist in prevention of damage.

**Actions**

- Restrict unauthorised vehicle access to the park at all access points by installing removable barriers (bollards or gates) and landscaping.
- Install a new vehicle access point and turning circle beside the theatre on Graham Street to concentrate daily theatre related traffic in one place and reduce the need for reversing vehicles.
- Develop a wet weather plan for the farmers market to minimise damage from vehicles.
- Develop a traffic management plan for the park to better manage vehicle access and movements within the park.
The park has excellent pedestrian access, with multiple pedestrian entry points along all four boundaries of the park. A perimeter path made of granitic sand provides an accessible circuit of the park, with smaller, meandering ‘bush’ tracks leading off the main path.

Feedback from the community was that they like the informal ‘natural’ look and feel of the park, which is complemented by the granitic sand paths and informal edging. Feedback was also given that some of the paths are in poor condition, with poor drainage causing large puddles in wet weather and reducing accessibility.

The historic bluestone pavers and weighbridge beside the café at the original entrance to the site on Graham Street are not Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliant. There are limited opportunities to modify this entrance as it is heritage protected and an attractive feature of the original gasworks.

**Actions**

- Maintain the use of natural paving materials where possible.
- Where hard paving is required to address access issues, use materials complementary to the historic elements in the park.
- Address the drainage and condition of paths as part of the remediation and upgrade of the park.
- Maintain accessibility to the park and within the park for all users, to all key elements including the play space, artists’ workshops, theatres and public toilet facilities.
Feedback from park users was that during the day the park feels safe, with good view lines in the majority of the park. The grassy centre provides a sense of openness and expanse, though dense vegetation and mounding in some areas creates restricted views along the Pickles Street boundary.

At night however, feedback from the community was that park users feel unsafe due to the lack of adequate public lighting along the perimeter path and park entrances.

Whilst there are quite a number of light poles in the park, many of the existing lights are not working. Increasing public lighting in the park would address the existing safety issues.

**Actions**

- Develop a sustainable lighting plan for the park.
- Implement the sustainable lighting plan as part of the remediation and park upgrade.
- Increase the safety of the park through landscaping and strategic placement of park infrastructure to maximise activation of the park, clear lines of sight and natural surveillance.
The park is enclosed on three sides by a red brick wall that is the original industrial boundary wall of the gasworks, with a small amount of newer brick in some areas to complete the structure. The park boundary along Richardson Street is unfenced.

A structural assessment undertaken in 2013 identified that the entire wall and its foundations are structurally sound, with a high section of the wall that was once part of a building, requiring additional bracing to make it compliant with current Australian Standards.

The wall bracing works were undertaken in early 2014. Minor re-grouting of sections of the wall was also recommended in the assessment and will be undertaken as funds become available.

Feedback from the community was that they value the enclosed nature of the park for the separation from the busy roads for children and dogs off-leash and how it creates a ‘green oasis’ for park users.

There were a number of requests to complete the fencing of the park along Richardson Street, which is currently unfenced. There was also support for maintaining the current fence levels within the park.

Internal fencing around the playground and BBQ was requested by a number of people during the consultation to address conflicts between dogs off-leash and children. Feedback was also received that many park users value the natural look and feel of the park and don’t want to see any more hard infrastructure such as fencing.

**Actions**

- Protect and maintain the historic boundary fence.
- Minimise hard infrastructure within the park.
- Address the potential for conflicts through landscaping and positioning of park facilities.
There is a strong native and indigenous planting focus within the park. This has the benefit of minimising the water required to maintain plants in the park as well as providing habitat for indigenous fauna.

The grassed open centre of the park is irrigated to maintain green grass cover over dry periods due to the high use of the park all year round. The irrigation system will need to be replaced as part of the remediation works.

Rainwater harvesting from the roofs of buildings in the park and stormwater harvesting from adjacent streetscapes in future could provide an alternative water supply for irrigation. This would increase water security for the reserve and enhance the ability for Council to maintain the green grass cover and other vegetation during extended dry spells and when water restrictions are in place, or to off-set use of public toilets.

Tree planting for shade, shelter and cooling to mitigate the Urban Heat Island Effect is also a priority. Feedback from the community was that there was not enough shade within the park to support users during summer. There is an opportunity to undertake strategic tree planting of deciduous trees within the reserve for shade, shelter and cooling purposes.

**Actions**

- Continue to plant native and indigenous vegetation as examples of the local flora and for biodiversity outcomes.
- Undertake strategic tree planting for shade, shelter and cooling.
- Investigate opportunities to supplement water use and irrigation requirements for the park through on-site rainwater capture and storage and stormwater harvesting.
- Replace the existing irrigation system as part of the remediation works.
The Park Plan was developed in partnership with the community and reflects the Gasworks Arts Park vision and principles.

Soil remediation is a key driver of the park plan and will require the removal and replacement of all existing vegetation and park infrastructure.
Seating wall & single entry on Richardson Street

Seating area under trees

Amphitheatre created through mounding

Vegetation lined entry

Play space with art and nature theme

Shelter with BBQ

Vegetation lined entry

BBQ area with shelter and picnic tables

Meandering 'bush tracks' through vegetation

Garden bed buffer between barbeque area and open grassed area

Grassed mounds

Perimeter path

1092 m² crown land returned to open space

Existing paved space

Vehicle loop

Grassed mound for seating

Paved gathering space

New vehicle entry point

Figure 5. Park Plan
An ‘artist’s impression’ of different parts of the park is provided to help you imagine what the park might look like once it is restored. The images are designed to indicate the look and feel outcomes that are desired, rather than the detail of exactly where things will go and how they will look.
THE SITE
EXISTING PHOTOGRAPH

AMPHITHEATRE
CREATED THROUGH
MOUNDING

GRASSED SEATING AS MOUND

AMPHITHEATRE
LOOKING NORTH-WESTWARDS

PERIMETER PATHWAY
THE SITE
EXISTING PHOTOGRAPH

PERIMETER PATH

BBQ AREA WITH SHELTER &
PICNIC TABLES

STUDIO BEHIND

LIGHTING

BUSH TRACKS
LOOKING NORTHWARDS

MEandering 'BUSH TRACKS'
THRO' VEGETATION
**THE SITE**
EXISTING PHOTOGRAPH

**SCULPTURE STUDIO**

**BBQ AREA WITH SHELTER & PICNIC TABLES**

**FEATURE TREE**

**SEATING WALL**

**RICHARDSON ST ENTRY**
LOOKING SOUTHWARDS

**SINGLE ENTRY TO PARK**

**PERIMETER PATH**
THE SITE
EXISTING PHOTOGRAPH

EXISTING ENTRY WITH NEW VEHICLE ENTRY

THEATRE BUILDING

PERIMETER PATH

GRASS

GRASSED MOUND FOR SEATING

SHRUBS & LOW PLANTING

FOOTE ST CORNER
LOOKING NORTH-WESTWARDS

PAVED GATHERING SPACE
The Gasworks Arts Park Plan will guide and underpin all future works within the park and will inform the City of Port Phillip’s long term capital works program.

Works will be undertaken according to the priorities listed in the long term capital works program and as funds become available in the budget. Detailed design including specific item locations and materials will be undertaken for each of the projects when they receive funding.

Each project has been given a priority rating of medium or high. It is recognised that all of the projects are important, however due to limited funding availability it is useful to prioritise projects to ensure that the most urgent, or highest impact projects are undertaken first, with medium priority projects being undertaken as further funds become available.

Funding of Council’s Capital Works Program is based on delivery of Council’s priority needs across the municipality. This Park Plan will be considered in the context of priority works across the municipality.

The first priority for implementation of the Gasworks Art Park Plan will be the enactment of the Remediation Action Plan. This will involve capping of the site with clean fill and ensuring that connections to entrances and buildings are maintained.

Council will endeavour to return the park to its current functionality, with further enhancement of areas over time. These areas are prioritised in the table opposite.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NEXT STEPS - SUBJECT TO COUNCIL ADOPTION AND FUNDING</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Wall bracing and monitoring (in progress)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Detailed investigation and design in accordance with the Remediation Action Plan - capping works, lighting plan, irrigation plan, play space design, paths, vegetation management plan.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Closure of park- Removal of furniture, vegetation and other elements to enable soil remediation works.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Earthworks and soil remediation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Building of paths, pavements, garden beds, trees, grassed areas, park furniture, public lighting.</td>
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<td>6. Opening of park</td>
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<td>7. Consultation and design of play space</td>
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<td>8. Construct play space.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Summary</th>
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<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Shelter for existing BBQ and picnic area. Additional BBQ and picnic area with shelter.</td>
<td>BBQ and shelter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Paving and additional landscaping of the Graham Street/Foote Street corner to create a feature space.</td>
<td>Feature space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Installation of sculptures in the park.</td>
<td>Art in the park.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Additional park furniture to supplement replacement furniture installed immediately post remediation.</td>
<td>Additional park furniture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Additional lighting to supplement initial installation of public lighting post remediation.</td>
<td>Additional lighting.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
extent of works

What to expect during construction
EXTENT OF WORKS
The following images show the steps required to carry out the soil remediation and park plan implementation works.

- Closure of park to public
- Tree, vegetation and asset removal
- Soil remediation works
- Park Plan implementation
- Park open to public

CLOSURE OF PARK TO PUBLIC
The park will closed for the duration of the soil remediation and park plan implementation works. The site will be surrounded with construction hoarding.
TREE AND VEGETATION REMOVAL

EXISTING ASSET REMOVAL
All existing trees, vegetation and assets such as seating will be removed in order to carry out the remediation works.
• 460 trees removed
• All shrubs and low vegetation removed
• Existing seating, irrigation removed

SOIL REMEDIATION WORKS
Soil remediation works in accordance to the Remediation Action Plan will include:
• 500mm soil capping across the site resulting in elevation changes
• Cut and fill within the park to meet existing street level
• Mounding in the park; soil from cut and fill methods cannot be taken off site
PARK PLAN IMPLEMENTATION
New trees and vegetation will be planted. New public amenity such as lighting, irrigation, seating and upgrade of the perimeter path will also be installed.
• All new trees will be approximately 2m in height
• New seating and public lighting
• Art pieces reinstated in the park
• Improved drainage across the site

PARK OPEN TO PUBLIC
At the completion of these works, the park will then be open to the public. The picture below of Gasworks Arts Park, circa 1996 ten years after opening demonstrates the rapid growth in vegetation.
REFERENCES

The following artworks from the City of Port Phillip Collection feature in this document:
Not Without Chomley, Anne Ross, 1991, pg. 5.
The Angel, Sione Francis, 1992, pg. 18.
Midden, Matthew Harding, 2008, pp. 14, 42.

(not in collection):
HAVE YOUR SAY ON THE
DRAFT GASWORKS ARTS PARKS PLAN
To find out more and join the conversation online visit haveyoursayatportphillip.net.au/gasworks-arts-park

FOR MORE INFORMATION
Email ospace@portphillip.vic.gov.au or telephone ASSIST on 9209 6777.
Consultation period runs from 1 April to 23 May 2014.
For more information please
call ASSIST on 03 9209 6777
or email: ospace@portphillip.vic.gov.au

You can also visit our website: