



Quarry Hills Regional Parkland Future Directions Plan - Summary

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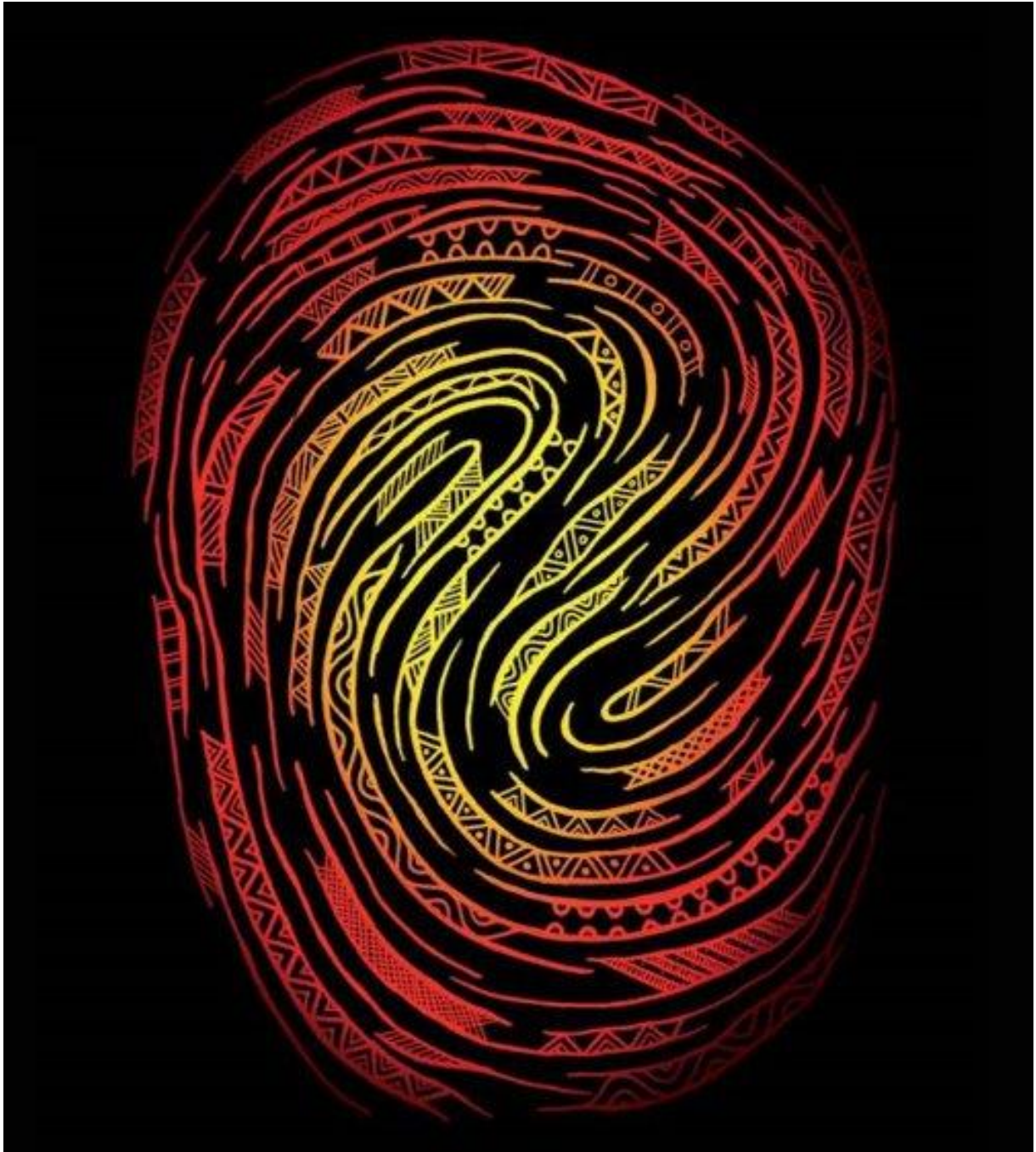
City of Whittlesea



***City of*
Whittlesea**

Acknowledgment of Traditional Owners

We recognise the rich Aboriginal heritage of this country and acknowledge the Wurundjeri Willum Clan and Taungurung People as the Traditional Owners of lands within the City of Whittlesea.



Original cover artwork piece, created by Mandy Nicholson Wurundjeri artist, contains traditional Wurundjeri motifs and represents how we are connected to the Earth, just like our fingerprints. (City of Whittlesea, Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan 2017)

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Introduction

Quarry Hills Regional Parkland (the Parkland) is one of the defining landscape features of the municipality and contributes significantly to the character of the City of Whittlesea's growth suburbs. The hills are a striking visual feature within the landscape and are a common point of reference for the two emerging communities of South Morang and Mernda.

The Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people are the custodians of the Quarry Hills Regional Parkland Cultural Landscape and hold the generationally conferred responsibility of caring for this place to ensure seasonal maintenance of the right ecology, habitats for totemic and creation ancestors and restoration of the landscape traditionally managed by Woi-wurrung people. The Parkland and surrounding area remain a significant area of living cultural heritage, and provides valuable habitat for a diverse range of native animals and plants central to Wurundjeri cosmology. (Excerpt from the Cultural Values Study.)

Over the past 14 years the residential community to the north, south and east have grown around the Parkland which also defines the Urban Growth Boundary. As development has occurred, the parks extents have been defined using its unique topography as a reference point.

In partnership with the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP), the City of Whittlesea (CoW) has undertaken a Future Directions Plan for the planned 1100 hectare Parkland. The intent of the Quarry Hills Regional Parkland Future Directions Plan (The Plan) is to review and evaluate the cultural and landscape values of the site, and together with the Traditional Owners and the community establish a long term, enduring vision.

A new Parkland

bunjil nganga means eagle view in Woi-wurrung language and is the name of the proposed 1100 hectare regional Parkland, that extends the 430 hectare Quarry Hills Parkland.

Quarry Hills Regional Parkland (QHRP), centres around a wish-bone shaped rise and extends along the upper reaches of the Darebin Creek. From the crest of the hills, extensive views take in Country from Mount Martha to the Great Dividing Range and west to Mount Macedon.

The Parkland will protect significant ecological and cultural values and provide significant open space for both the growing population of Whittlesea and for visitors across greater Melbourne.

A place for deep connection to Country, Quarry Hills Regional Parklands, shown in Image 1, will be managed through Aboriginal traditional Caring for Country practices, and rehabilitation practices through partnerships with Council, Parks Victoria and the community.

Healthy Country is vital for healthy people, and this key principle will underpin the Future Direction of this Plan.

Quarry Hills Regional Parklands will help to deliver Victoria's vision of a quality open space network as set out in the Open Space for Everyone Strategy 2021 (DELWP).

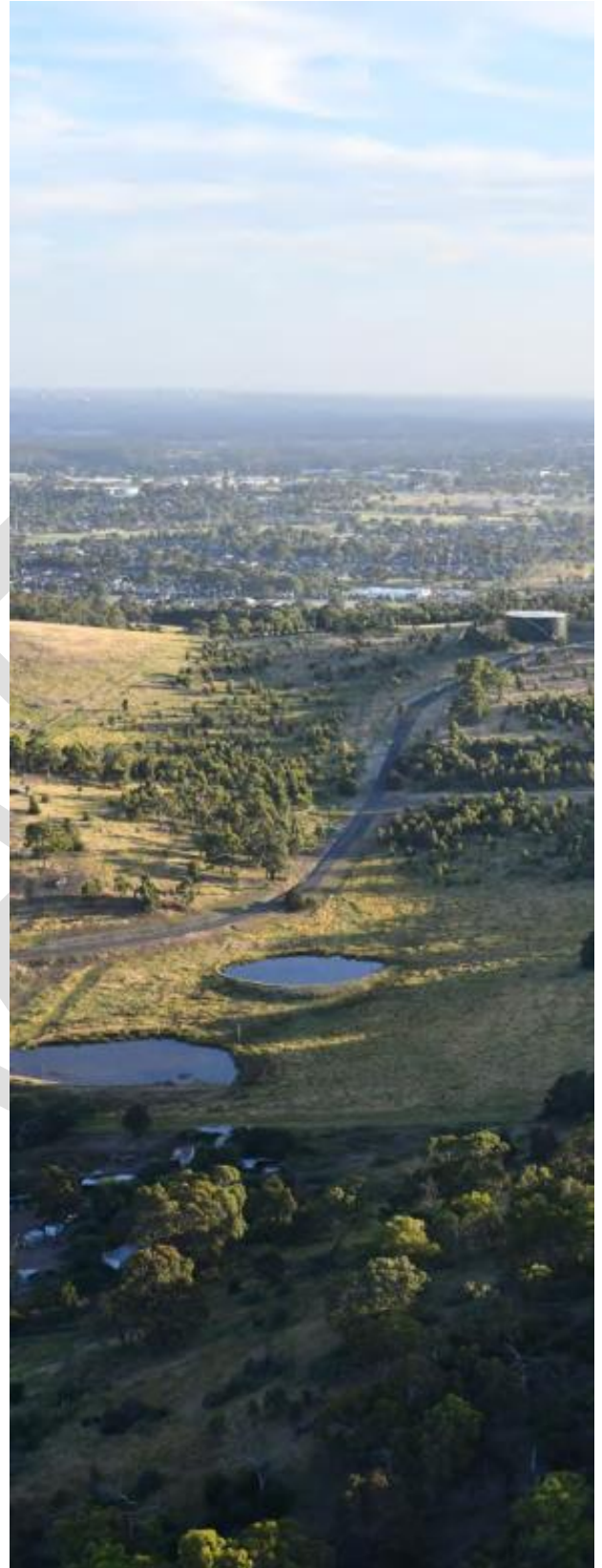


Image 1 Aerial photograph of Quarry Hills Regional Parklands (City of Whittlesea)

Role of the Future Directions Plan

This Quarry Hills Regional Parklands Future Directions Plan (The Plan) will guide the ultimate development and delivery of the Parklands.

A cultural values study has been undertaken on the Parkland and this has helped shape The Plan, laying the foundations for the intent of the Parklands for generations to come. The key recommendations are outlined in the Objectives section below.

Consultation with the community and stakeholders has informed the key values and legacy of The Plan.

The Plan sets a vision and objectives for the Parkland, and strategic future direction statements to guide its ongoing landscape and infrastructure development, eco-tourism opportunities, and economic sustainability.

The vision and objectives are articulated through the key themes of People, Place, Environment and Economy. Each theme has associated principles that are informed by the values and significance of the landscape, traditional owner consultation and community feedback. The principles uphold the long-term lens that has seen Council set out to protect and enhance this unique open space for the community.

The Plan appreciates that opportunities must be aligned with the vision and balance the ongoing and increasing operational management costs of the Parkland.

Through the planning scheme and partnerships, Council will deliver an ultimate Parkland of 1100 hectares, to be achieved by 2040. Image 2 shows the proposed extent.

The Plan forms the basis for more detailed implementation and master planning.

The Plan has been developed by Council, in partnership with the Department of Environment, Land and Planning (DELWP), and through collaboration with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation and the community.

Drivers for change

The key drivers for the expansion of the Parkland identified by CoW include:

- Population growth.
- Distribution and access to open space.
- Fiscal challenges and rate capping.
- Aboriginal reconciliation and treaty.
- Protection and enhancement of cultural values.
- Protection and enhancement of natural systems.
- Improve community health and well-being.
- Climate change mitigation.

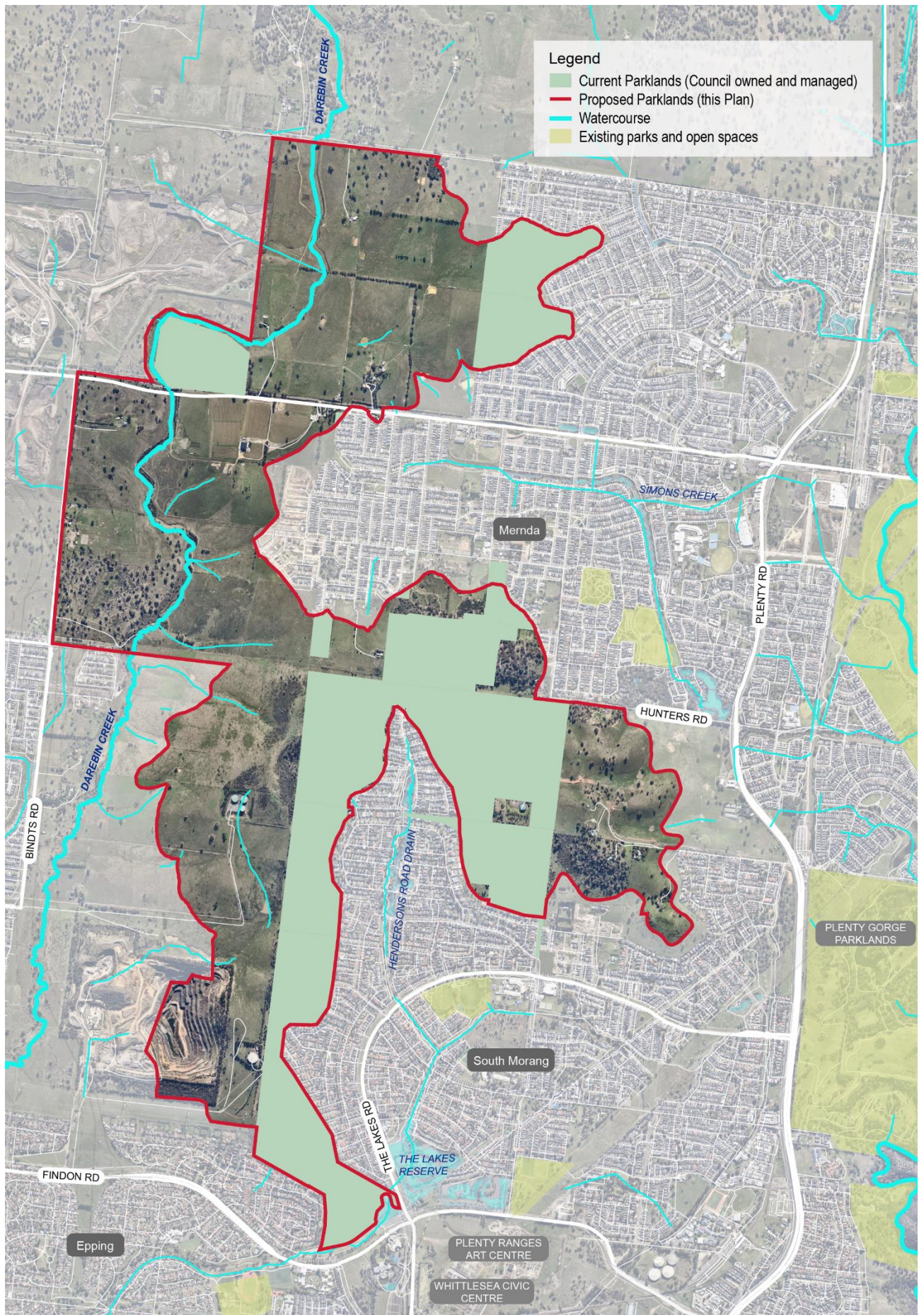


Image 2 The current and proposed Parklands

Objectives of the Plan

The objectives of the Plan have been developed to articulate the key outcomes of the vision. They are:

- The creation of 1100 hectares of Parkland will be valued for its ancient and ongoing Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung connection and the opportunities for exchange of knowledge.
- Council commit to a process of self-determination, to return cultural practices on Country, to Traditional Owners.
- Quarry Hills Regional Parklands will be regenerated to ecological health and vitality, to underpin health and well-being of the community.
- Quarry Hills Regional Parklands will provide rich cultural and landscape experiences for the community, a place for exploration, reconciliation healing and learning.
- Lead by a governance model where Council, and Traditional Owners become partners in the future direction of the Parkland.

Cultural Values Study Objectives

The following extract from the Quarry Hills Regional Parklands Woi-wurrung Cultural Values Study (2022) by Justine Philips explains the study's objectives;

The identification of a significant cultural landscape requires consideration as to how the landscape is managed and protected within the Quarry Hills Regional Parklands plan, legislative compliance and other actions.

Seven objectives for managing Woi-wurrung cultural values and otherwise embedding Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung perspectives into Quarry Hills Regional Parklands have been identified through consultation with the project participants.

The Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung objectives for Quarry Hills Regional Parklands are:

- Objective 1: Tangible Cultural Heritage Management and Protection.
- Objective 2: Protect Aesthetic and Natural Attributes of Infrastructure.
- Objective 3: Caring for Country.
- Objective 4: Planning Controls to Conserve and Enhance the Cultural Landscape.
- Objective 5: Supporting Cultural Practice.
- Objective 6: Involvement in Decision Making.
- Objective 7: Interpretation.

Context

History and heritage

Traditional Owners

The occupiers and Traditional Owners of the South Morang area prior to European settlement were the Wurundjeri Willam patriline of the Wurundjeri Balug clan. The clan belonged to the Woi-wurrung language group of the Kulin nation. Water courses such as Darebin Creek provided an important source of fresh water, fish, eels, bird life and plant resources, while the adjacent grasslands and woodlands provided habitat for larger game species and vegetable foods such as the yam daisy or murrnong. The study area contains various Aboriginal archaeological sites, particularly along Darebin Creek between Bridge Inn Road and Harvest Home Road. (City of Whittlesea, 2021)

European settlement

European settlement commenced in 1836 with squatters moving into the area for cattle and sheep grazing. From 1843, some squatting runs were subdivided into smaller farms of 640 acres. Cropping and meat production to service the north-eastern gold fields gave way to dairying, wood-cutting and other pursuits after 1865.

Post-European settlement structures of interest include bluestone houses and stone outbuildings and numerous dry-stone walls. Image 3 shows a historic dairy building on the eastern boundary of the Parkland.

The original bluestone/reinforced concrete bridge over Darebin Creek at Bridge Inn Road has heritage listing; a new bridge has been built on the southern side to allow the road to by-pass the heritage bridge.

The Parklands contains several properties along Bindts Road connected with early German settlers. The area south of Bridge Inn Road was the site of the 640 acre "Separation" subdivision (c. 1892) but few traces of this remain.

Further east, the view from Hunter's Lane across the basalt plains to the Plenty and Eastern Ranges, "studded with ancient River Red Gums", was described by Meredith Gould (1990) as the best pastoral landscape left in the immediate vicinity of Melbourne.

The area has been associated with landscape painters since the earliest colonial days, including the Heidelberg School (Arthur Streeton), John Rowell, Max Middleton, Arnold Shore, William Frater, Kenneth Jack, Len Annors, Fred Williams and John Borlack. (City of Whittlesea, 2021)

Historic sites

Heritage sites within the Parklands of significant historical interest include Goadby Lodge and Sea View Park, both of which were owned by the Popple family from 1852-1963. Goadby Lodge was a weatherboard homestead comprising of ten rooms but is now only indicated by the remaining granite base walls. Sea View Lodge originally sat on 320 acres of land and comprises of a two cypress pines and a degraded granite building.

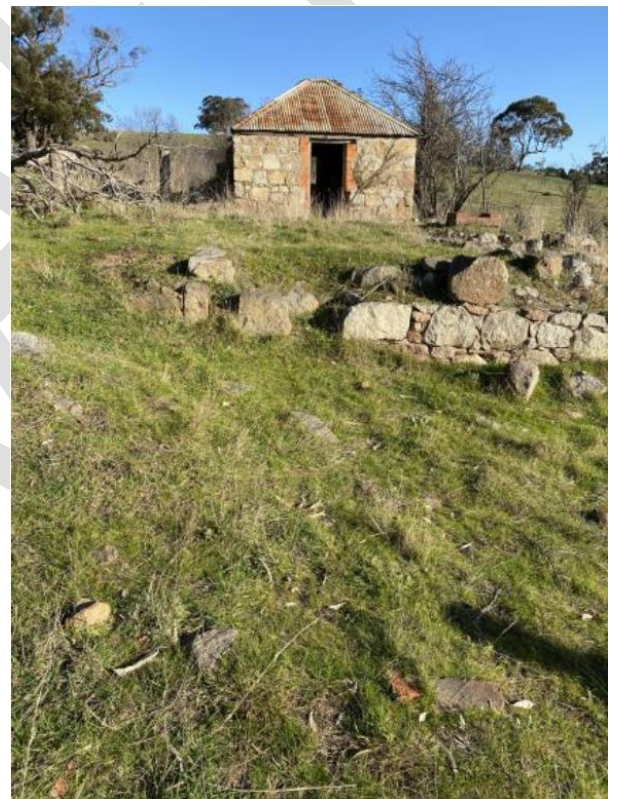


Image 3 Historic dairy on the eastern boundary, surrounded by thick grass and vegetation facing east. From CHMP#17456 (Photo: J. Richmond 12/02/2021)

Woi-wurrung values

As part of the development of The Plan, a Cultural Values Study (CVS) was commissioned to provide a framework for the future directions of the Parkland. The CVS, undertaken through the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation (WWCHAC), is a comprehensive review of the landscape, the heritage and historically significant sites, the Woi-wurrung context and the Woi-wurrung Cultural Significance and Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Perspective. The outcome of the report is a series of objectives and actions, which helped shape the Plan.

The following excerpts of the CVS are from the Woi-wurrung Cultural Significance and Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Perspective section of the report. They articulate the Woi-wurrung findings and values which are critical to understand and influence the principles of the Plan.

The Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people are the custodians of the Quarry Hills Regional Parklands Cultural Landscape and hold the generationally conferred responsibility of caring for this place to ensure seasonal maintenance of the right ecology, habitats for totemic and creation ancestors and restoration of the landscape traditionally managed by Woi-wurrung people. The Parkland and surrounding area remain a significant area of living cultural heritage, and provides valuable habitat for a diverse range of native animals and plants central to Wurundjeri cosmology. Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people have a cultural obligation and a cultural right to care for Country. Healthy Country is linked to healthy people and it is therefore necessary to return the management of Wurundjeri Country to the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people.

Trees and woodlands

It was clear during on-Country visits and workshops that trees, regardless of age and whether or not they had scars, hold a range of cultural values. The health of trees is connected to the health of Country. Trees also provide an important connection to Country. The photograph below in Image 4 shows Uncle Tony Garvey at a river red gum during a visit to Quarry Hills Regional Parklands 2022.

Ridgeline

The geological formation of Quarry Hills Regional Parklands informs its ecological and cultural story. The peaks and granite limited tree species, growth and stability in many areas, and the low-

lying floodplains were important for food and other resources and activities. The peaks stretch around a large semi ellipse/horseshoe shaped ridge, allowing Woi-wurrung people to move along the ridge in accordance with the seasons, burning practices and trade routes whilst looking over the floodplains and the wider expanse of Woi-wurrung Country. This large, horseshoe shaped ridge that dominates Quarry Hills Regional Parklands holds significant cultural values.

Soaring Shelter, Landing Shelter and Eagle Lookout

As stops were made at these points on the ridge it was clear to WWCHAC representatives how useful they were as shelters and that the designs were in line with Woi-wurrung cultural values. There was some suggestion of having more shelter so they could be used in all weathers and some seating. At Eagle Lookout it was noted that the information on the boulder only related to the City of Whittlesea. It was a clear recommendation that there should be an adjacent one that should talk of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung culture and history.

Stony Rises

The WWCHAC representatives and others visited the large stony rise near 180 Bindts Rd, Wollert. The stony rise was admired and one representative noted that 'this is the reason the Darebin and Findon Creeks don't meet.' Stony rises are considered important locations as they were used by Woi-wurrung people in their every-day lives, this is clear from the artefacts that are consistently located on them. Protection of this and other stony rises were discussed. WWCHAC is aware that the City of Whittlesea is working with WWCHAC to map and protect the considerable number of stony rises in the City of Whittlesea.



Image 4 Uncle Tony Garvey at a river red gum, bunjil nganga Cultural Values Study 2022

Grinding stone and sitting stone

While driving to the crest of the ridge, a WWCHAC representative spotted a rock outcrop that they thought could include something of interest. On closer inspection the outcrop contained a grinding stone and a nearby sitting stone. These were visited again by the whole group. After some discussion it was agreed that they were indeed a grinding stone and a sitting stone. Photographs and coordinates of these were taken at the time and have been provided to DELWP for registration.

Granite Hills Play space

At the beginning of the first on-Country, the proposed location for the Granite Hills play space was visited and the site and plans were discussed. It was made clear by the WWCHAC representatives that there were benefits to having a play space. One request was to: 'bring Wurundjeri culture into the future play space.'

Aboriginal Gathering Place

At an on-Country visit Gunditjmara Elder, Karen Bryant, from the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Advisory Group spoke to WWCHAC representatives while on-Country. Karen explained the history of the Aboriginal Gathering Place - that Aboriginal people living in Whittlesea and nearby areas have long sought a place of belonging, and place to share knowledge, create and leave artwork, have indoor and outdoor places, and welcome people into the area.

Dardi Munwurro (Aboriginal men's group area)

Dardi Munwurro is located on the edge of Quarry Hills Regional parklands (bunjil nganga). There is a permanent firepit with seating at the site... While in Quarry Hills Regional parklands (bunjil nganga), the group visited the area where an Aboriginal men's group has been meeting and conducting a range of activities designed to strengthen Aboriginal men's connections to Country and develop skills. '... WWCHAC approved of this activity and wanted to see it supported to continue.

WWCHAC use area

WWCHAC representative suggested that WWCHAC be given special camping rights to Quarry Hills Regional parklands (bunjil nganga) The area would be used for cultural practices and would be very beneficial to the Wurundjeri community. The location should not be near a public thoroughfare and should be chosen through consultation between WWCHAC and CoW. ... it

was decided that there should not be one specific area but that WWCHAC be able to choose areas and be given private access for activities, as requested.

Darebin Creek

Darebin Creek is an important waterway in the area and was discussed during the on-Country visits and workshops. During an inspection of one spot near 180 Bindts Road it was clear that the creek was not healthy. The land around it was polluted with dumped rubbish and landfill and a representative noted that trees were needed for the protection of the creek and that 'if it wasn't for the trees here on this site, the Darebin Creek would seem no more than a little drain with junk in it.' They also discussed the old water levels being much higher in this spot and that before European settlement Darebin Creek would have flowed all year but now it is seasonal. Discussion was had with CoW staff and Graeme Hamilton from the Darebin Creek Management Committee. It was found that many of the WWCHAC aspirations for work to restore and manage the creek were shared. One point made was that there needed to be a wildlife corridor established and maintained along the creek.

Yarra Valley Water tank

One of the specific requests from DELWP and CoW for this CVS was to gather WWCHAC's recommendations for a large water tank and the area around it. The water tank and land around it are owned and managed by Yarra Valley Water. A vantage point to the water tank was visited for the purpose of discussing the tank and gain recommendations. While there the maintenance of the land was discussed as well as the impact of the tank visually. It was agreed by WWCHAC representatives that it would be good for the water tank to be covered in art with a traditional/cultural focus. It was agreed that it would be good to approach Mandy Nicholson about this project.

Cultural Values Study Recommendations

The Cultural Values Study (Cover image is shown in Image 5) makes specific recommendations organised into objectives and actions. There are seven objectives and thirty-two actions. Actions are summarised in the Implementation Section in priorities and Staging.

The seven objectives are described in the CVS are:

Objective 1: Tangible Cultural Heritage Management and Protection

Quarry Hills Regional Parklands is believed to hold an extensive presence of archaeological artefacts. A complete assessment of extent, nature and significance of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Material (ACHM) has not been documented for Quarry Hills Regional parklands (bunjil nganga). It is essential that this be assessed to: register previously unidentified ACHM on the VAHR; avoid future impact from Parkland infrastructure; and reflect accurate cultural heritage sensitivity mapping

Objective 2: Protect Aesthetic and Natural Attributes of Infrastructure

Quarry Hills Regional Parklands is significant to Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people, including the diverse landscape features of the granite peaks, basalt plains, stony rises, ridgeline, Darebin Creek, floodplains, and grassy eucalypt woodlands. Along with preserved ecological biodiversity, this landscape represents ancestral and present-day Woi-wurrung Country. The Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung community find spiritual meaning within Country that embodies the living spaces of their ancestors and which provides a conceptual link to the traditional Country of their people. The Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Elders and representatives would like the public to enjoy Quarry Hills Regional parklands (bunjil nganga). They need to work with land managers to ensure that walking and driving tracks, lookouts and other visitor attractions support, and do not damage, the significant aesthetic and natural attributes of their ancestral place.

Objective 3: Caring for Country

For the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung community, both cultural significance and accordance with their traditions is sustained through the renewal of customary practices on-Country and ensuring the generational conferral of this knowledge. The Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people are the

custodians of the Quarry Hills Regional parklands (bunjil nganga) Cultural Landscape and hold the responsibility of caring for this place to ensure seasonal maintenance of the right ecology, habitats for totemic and creation ancestors and restoration of the landscape traditionally managed by Woi-wurrung people.

Objective 4: Planning Controls to Conserve and Enhance the Cultural Landscape

The Quarry Hills Regional Parklands Cultural Landscape is valued in its entirety for the spiritual, archaeological, historical, ecological and living connections it provides the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung community. Adjacent areas to Quarry Hills Regional Parklands are being developed. It is important that this development is not undertaken in a way that compromises the Cultural Landscape.

Objective 5: Supporting Cultural Practice

The Woi-wurrung people have been the owners and custodians of the land known as Quarry Hills Regional Parklands for at least 65,000+ years. For the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung community, significance is sustained through the renewal of customary practices and ensuring the generational conferral of knowledge. This is achieved in many ways, including Caring for Country, undertaking archaeological assessments, walking Country, knowledge sharing and celebrations that include private ceremonies and on-Country cultural activities.

Sharing and growing cultural knowledge for Aboriginal people living on Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country is supported. Quarry Hills Regional Parklands already provides a valuable space for Aboriginal youth to enjoy as part of their experience with Dardi Munwarro (located on the northern edge of Quarry Hills Regional parklands (bunjil nganga)). WWCHAC support and encourage this activity. Similarly, the proposed Aboriginal Gathering Place will be a future location for the broader Aboriginal community to meet, share knowledge, belong, and celebrate culture. The importance of supported and safe spaces or the Aboriginal community is recognised and Quarry Hills Regional Parklands can provide the space and conditions for these activities and should continue to and take opportunities for further activities.

Objective 6: Involvement in Decision Making

Recognition and protection of the Quarry Hills Regional Parklands Cultural Landscape must be integrated into relevant policies and regulations to ensure adequate protection and cultural respect for the Quarry Hills Regional Parklands area. To ensure this is done to the satisfaction of WWCHAC representatives should be included in decision making in relation to Quarry Hills Regional Parklands from now.

Objective 7: Interpretation

It is recommended that the use of Woi-wurrung artwork and cultural design elements be reflected in any future buildings, works and infrastructure design in the Parkland. Opportunities include more bunjil shelters, Woi-wurrung artwork on the large water tanks, design and interpretive signage built into the upcoming regional play space and proposed buildings such as the proposed Aboriginal Gathering Place. A consistent signage strategy will enhance public knowledge of the cultural importance and sensitivity of Quarry Hills Regional Parklands and the Quarry Hills Regional Parklands Cultural Landscape.



Image 5 bunjil nganga artwork by Ash Firebrace Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung artist 2022

Environmental values

Quarry Hills Regional Parklands has been created to preserve and enhance its natural and environmental values. The importance of the environmental values has been demonstrated both through consultation on this plan, and through broader community engagement. CoW has a distinct natural character that is meaningful to the community with a rural landscape and mature River Red Gums protected throughout the suburbs. Furthermore, the importance of protecting natural environment to preserve heritage and cultural values, and have a positive climate impact is imperative to the community.

The key environmental values of the Parkland highlighted include:

- Ecosystem services.
- Waterways including the Darebin Creek and other drainage lines that extend from Quarry Hills Regional Parklands.
- Significant biodiversity and ecology, with potential for the site to be regenerated to ecological health.
- Significant topography and view lines that extend for tens of kilometres.
- The role that the Parkland plays in creating and connecting a large continuous open space corridor.
- Unique geology and ancient Wurundjeri Woiwurrung quarry sites.
- Experience of seasonality.

Geology, topography, views, valleys and flats

The topography of Quarry Hills Regional defines the unique qualities of the Parkland. These qualities present a defining factor when considering highlighting the park as a regional destination.

The formation of the Quarry Hills terrain is unique. The surrounding flatter areas are basalt and the wish-bone shape is sandstone as shown in Image 6, creating an area that is both unique for its steep terrain and differing ecology. The flat areas of the park relate to the Darebin Creek corridor and the significant Grassy Eucalypt Forest which contract to the open hill top areas.

Key qualities include:

- The top of the hills provide spectacular views across Melbourne.
- Some of the steep areas have rare and threatened species of flora and fauna.
- The ascent and geology of the hill tops are unique – granite outcrops featuring on the slopes.
- The steep climb is desirable for those looking for a physical challenge, with a great reward at the top.
- The topography is undulating and the hills form the shape of a wishbone, creating long rails to explore with differing aspects, views and vegetation.
- The valleys are hugged by distinct topography, creating an enclosed feel with and a sense of expanse viewed up and over the hills. The southern valley nestled within the 'wish-bone' shaped rise has a more local and enclosed feel. The northeast valley is flanked by broader hillsides and faces towards the larger Great Dividing Range, with a distinct bushland feel and national park character with views to the distant ranges.
- The Darebin Creek flats are a unique area of the Parkland, with different vegetation and edges, with opportunity for development of the riparian ecosystem, and connection to an extensive trail and creek network.

Ecosystem Services

Ecosystem services are provided with aid of clean air and cooling effects from vegetation, a refuge for seeds, insects, birds, mammals and reptiles and cleaning of water, all critical to the health of the local ecosystem. In particular trees play a significant role in ecosystem services, offering both values to humans through cleaner air, evapotranspiration and cooling qualities, and to local animals and insects that depend on them as a source of food and shelter. The wood lands have a variety of tree species and ages and the tree canopy can be extended through urban areas, creating a wider network of canopy and biodiversity.

Geology Map

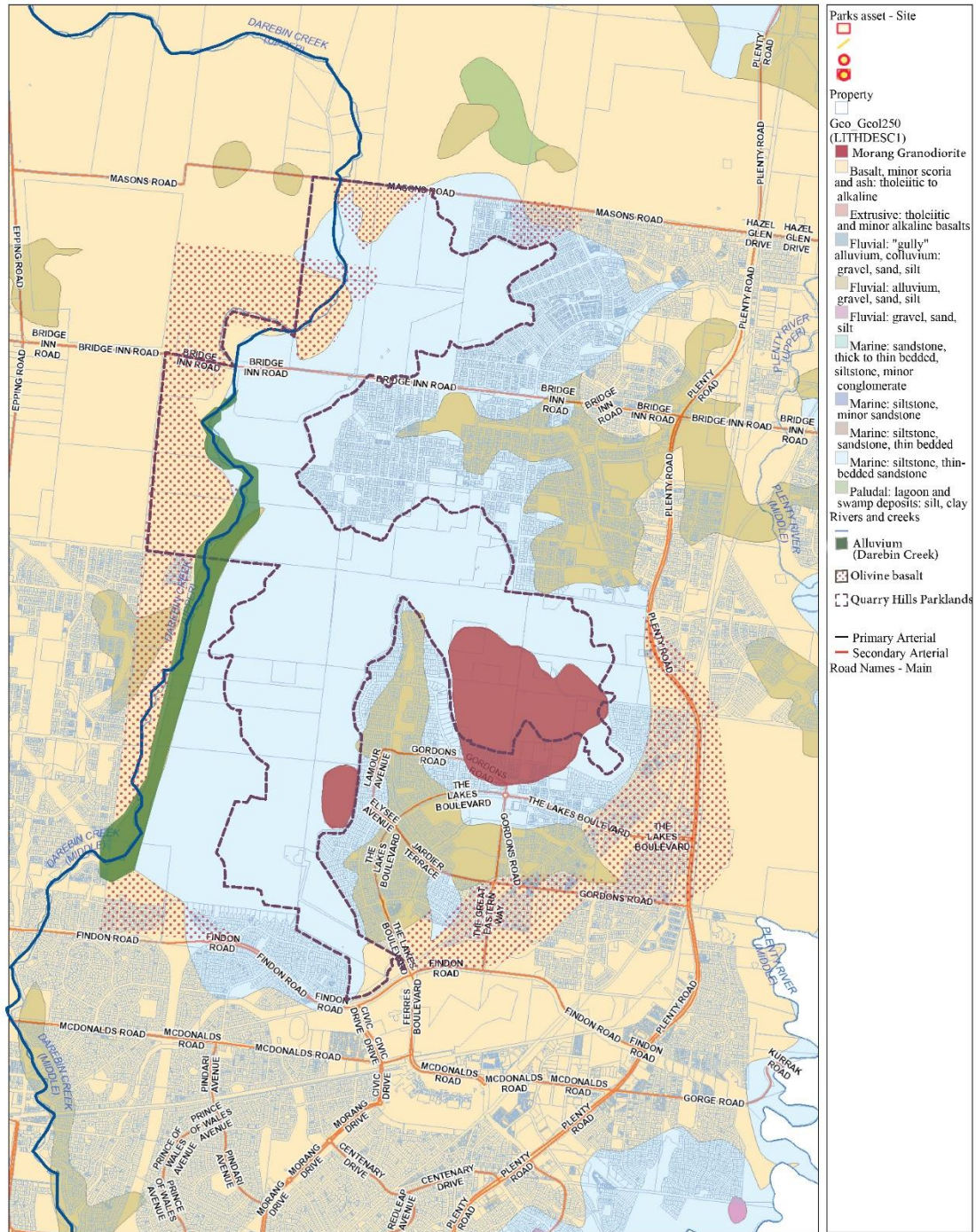


Image 6 Geology Map of the Quarry Hills Parkland area

Waterways

Darebin Creek begins in Melbourne's northern outskirts and travels through both rural and urban/industrial areas, draining into the Yarra River in the inner north-eastern suburbs of Melbourne. The creek has been heavily modified by past use however continues to support some threatened flora and fauna species including growling grass frog.

Darebin Creek runs through the northern sections of Quarry Hills Regional Parklands between Masons Road in the north to Lehmanns Road to the south. The Creek continues to flow west of the Parkland in an approximate southerly direction before heading west of the Boral Quarries site.

The Healthy Waterways Strategy 2018-28 by Melbourne Water, sets a long-term vision for managing the health of rivers, wetlands and estuaries in the Port Phillip and Westernport region, in order to protect and improve their value to the community. Darebin Creek scores lowly in a number of key areas such as frog and platypus health. Consequently, a vital goal of the Plan is the Strategy's aims to improve the ecological health of the river.

Biodiversity and ecology

Located within the Victorian Plains and Central Victorian Uplands bioregions Quarry Hills Regional Parklands supported a number of vegetation types prior to European settlement. The vast majority of this vegetation has now been cleared for agricultural purposes, with remnants of these vegetation communities persisting in small and fragmented areas.

A number of surveys have been undertaken across the site, and CoW have been actively managing vegetation across the Parkland.

Remnant trees and vegetation areas, together with a number of threatened species have been identified throughout the Parkland. In addition a number of habitats have been identified for reptiles, frogs, invertebrates and other native fauna.

Image 7 and Image 8 show grasslands and the dam in the Granite Hills area of the Parkland.



Image 7 Granite Hills Dam (City of Whittlesea)



Image 8 View of grasslands in the parklands (City of Whittlesea)

Community and visitor values

Sense of place and identity

Open spaces contribute to a sense of place and local identity and are, important factors in feeling connected to places that we live and work. Quarry Hills Regional Parklands provides a strong local landmark for surrounding communities, both as a visual landmark due to the rising hills, and as accessible places for people to walk, place and meet in.

There is opportunity to further strengthen the character, accessibility and use of the park, which will promote and enhance a local sense of place and identity. The park can also provide a regional landmark, belonging to the communities of the area, and providing special destinations to those further away

Health and well-being

Access to natural spaces provides health and well-being benefits that include physical health through exercise, social health through opportunities to connect with people and mental health benefits.

Quarry Hills Regional Parklands is a critical asset for the community to access a healthy natural space, through a range of activities including walking, hiking and play.

Community connection

Open spaces offer an important setting for community connection. Opportunities include an informal meeting place for walking, picnicking or structured activities. Organised events and programs can also be part of a park, offering broader opportunities for engaging in open spaces.

Community stewardship, connection to Country and other activities such as tree planting days and have your say surveys are opportunities to gather custodianship of Quarry Hills Regional Parklands.

Liveability

CoW's 2040 Community Vision, *A place for all*, outlines Liveable Neighbourhoods as one of its four goals being: Smart, connected transport, well designed neighbourhoods with vibrant town centres. The Parklands is an important piece in the neighbourhood puzzle, connecting neighbourhoods and regional centres, and adding

to the vibrancy of the municipality. Liveability can be achieved through:

- Education and interpretation.
- Accessible spaces and places.
- High quality infrastructure.
- Connections to active transport.
- High quality design and maintenance.
- Conservation, protection and enhancement of environment and cultural areas.

Visitor experiences

Understanding visitor experiences is crucial in the design and development in parklands. Quarry Hills Regional Parklands has been earmarked due to its high cultural and natural values. Therefore the visitor experience needs to be tailored to maximise these values, to ensure a genuine experience that will be an ongoing drawcard. Rich experiences that reflect these values can include:

- Ensuring accessibility.
- Rich and meaningful layers of Parkland interpretation.
- Public art.
- Cultural activities and sites.
- Environmental education.
- Rich and healthy environment.
- Seasonal activity.
- Gathering places.

Cultural and creative expression

Creative expression is an important part of our culture. The arts are diverse and can include music, dance, sculpture, drawings and many other forms. The arts have a unique way of bringing people together to celebrate, provide contrasting points of view, express and reveal meaning in objects and places and provide exciting and vibrant experiences.

Festivals and events mark seasons, important cultural days and other ways of celebrating and coming together Quarry Hills Regional Parklands has opportunity to host different types of festivals and events that can support the intrinsic values of the park and community.

There is opportunity to extend and focus on existing infrastructure including the proposed Granite Hills Park, Habitat House / Aboriginal Gathering Place. Other events such as night walks, interpretation trails, seasonal events can also be considered.

Play

Play is the way in which any person can experience open space. Play can be walking through a sensory garden, challenging yourself to hike or run up a steep hill or observing small details at a rest stop. Play can also be broadened to absorb other experiences such as art and interpretation trails, education and learning experiences. 'Play' is a way in which we experience and are enriched in our environments and is a fundamental aspect in designing and understanding the Parklands.

Play is a critical for the development of children's physical, social, mental, emotive and creative skills. Play spaces can come in many varied forms including structured, age specific playgrounds, nature play and engagement with natural surroundings.

- Playgrounds, or play activities in nature are key drivers for visitation to parks. Granite Hills will provide a major playground for the park. Other types of integrated play, appropriate to the values of the Parkland can be investigated in more detailed masterplan opportunities.
- As the development of the Parkland progresses, detailed design opportunity to consider rich and varied experiences in the landscape should be explored, that cater to a wide range of abilities.

Community infrastructure and visitor facilities (Places)

Access

Quarry Hills Regional Parklands is located along the Darebin Creek Corridor. It is part of a larger green wedge system, connecting to agricultural areas to the north. The park has opportunity to be well connected via active transport linkages and public transport along adjoining and nearby minor creek catchments, linking to the Plenty River and Merri Creek systems. Further opportunities can be found through street networks and power easements.

Access to the immediate area of the Parklands is somewhat limited by the surrounding local street

network. The park will benefit from regional entry points that come off major roads, and an understanding and improvement of the local public transport network.

Public transport

There are local bus networks that access all sides of the Parkland. Small changes to these routes could accommodate multiple stops at key entries to the park. The Mernda Railway Corridor runs along the eastern side of the park, curving around the council buildings south of the park. The rail line at South Morang Station is approximately 760m from the Findon Road interface, according to Google Maps and at Mernda approximately 3.5km along Bridge Inn Road.

Path network

CoW is currently revisiting the strategic planning of its trail and pathway networks. This plan recommends that detailed planning is undertaken to strengthen the local network, to allow maximum connectivity to the local and municipal networks, enabling maximum passive connectivity to the park.

Granite Hills Community Park

Granite Hills Community Park is set out to be a Major Community Park and has received \$2.5m from the Growing Suburbs Fund. A Draft Concept Plan has been prepared by Rush Wright Associates and is proceeding to community engagement.

The park has a strong ecological landscape character, with elevated views and a diverse range of unstructured recreational activities.

The concept addresses the vision established in the masterplan, delivering:

- Improving public access and use of the Parklands.
- Provision of iconic regional level park and playground facilities.
- Increasing public use and perception of the Parkland.
- Protection and enhancement of existing park biodiversity and cultural heritage values.

Habitat House

Quarry Hills Regional Parklands also includes a large shed dubbed 'Habitat House' which is utilised by the team for extremely popular environmental and nature-based programs, including planting days with the community and partner organisations. (City of Whittlesea, 2021)

Aboriginal Gathering Place

Quarry Hills Regional Parklands has recently been identified as a preferred location for the Aboriginal Gathering Place, and the hilltop area adjacent to Habitat House is a likely site for this asset within the park. The scope, form, and exact location for the Gathering Place facility are being developed with Traditional Owners in parallel with other Quarry Hills Regional Parklands. \$300k has been received from the Suburban Parks Program towards this project. (City of Whittlesea, 2021)

Quarry Hills Regional Parklands has two properties (houses) on site, one is currently vacant, the proposed location for Aboriginal Gathering Place. The other 45 Regent Street, is, leased by the Dardi Munwurro who run Aboriginal Men's Programs from the property.

Foothills Park

Foothills Park is a small local open space accessed via a steep unsealed path from Longwood Drive and Findon Road with picnic and BBQ facilities orientated to take advantage of views towards Hendersons Creek Wetland. There is no public car parking on the site and the convoluted road network used to access the site make further development of this area difficult. (Thompson Berrill Landscape Design P/L, 2019)

Swamp Gully Car Park

Swamp Gully Car park provides the only existing public parking within the reserve. Accessed from Gravlier Way the car park is located at the base of a steep escarpment and provides restricted public access into the park. The car park has poor passive surveillance and the steep topography, lack of all ability access and convoluted road network used to access the site make further development of this site difficult. (Thompson Berrill Landscape Design P/L, 2019)

Topaz Grove

Topaz Grove currently provides unsealed walking access up a steep slope and into the Granite Hills section of the Parkland. There is also an unsealed path link around to Lionsgate Park with connections through to Hendersons Creek Linear Park. There are no drinking fountains or toilet facilities in the park. (Thompson Berrill Landscape Design P/L, 2019)

Eagle Lookout

Eagle Lookout located high above the Swamp Gully Car park, provides expansive views east. Landing Shelter and Soaring Shelter are silhouetted on the horizon and provide elevated views west. These lookout points are accessed via a steep unsealed walking track along the western ridgeline. (Thompson Berrill Landscape Design P/L, 2019)

The 2019 Landscape Masterplan also undertook an infrastructure assessment (Refer Appendix 2) . This will be reviewed as the Future Directions Plan progresses.

Recreation and leisure

The Parkland have been determined as a *regional park* due to its environmental and cultural significance.

Appropriate major facilities and uses to be provided at a State/Regional scale include:

- Barbecue and picnic facilities, including access to water, shelters, seating etc.
- Exercise and fitness considerations – these could be spaces, trails or associated with other types of community facilities.
- Provision of spaces for festivals and events – already under provision through the Granite Hills Park proposal.
- Unstructured recreational uses, such as large open grassy areas – noting, these should not undermine significant environmental areas.
- Path networks.

Appropriate major facilities and uses to be considered at a municipal scale include:

- Major Playground - already under provision through the Granite Hills Park proposal.

Granite Hills is currently under development and will provide a Major Community Park with natural features and play spaces in addition to a small playground to the south western edge of the park.

Leisure pursuits are a key element in designing and imagining opportunities in a park. The Parklands already boasts amazing views marked by 3 bespoke designed shelters. These shelters are reached through gravel trails. Other trails provide a circuit for the park.

In addition, there is opportunity to make connections such as trails, habitat corridors, canopy coverage and through waterways, to other state significant Parklands such as Plenty Gorge Park, Craigieburn Grassland Nature Conservation Reserve, Merri Creek, Darebin Creek and Plenty River.

DRAFT

Consultation

Preceding consultation

To aid the early development of The Plan preceding consultation by Council has been carefully examined to understand key issues and emerging themes with regard to open space. This consultation has included the Granite Hills Community Consultation (2022), Quarry Hills Landscape Master Plan (2017) and the Municipal wide open space survey (2013).

The following elements were identified as important:

- Play and play spaces.
- Environments encouraging wildlife.
- Tree planting.
- Base infrastructure including public toilets, shelters with tables and seats, walking trails and paths and drinking fountains.

Key activities identified as desired in open space include:

- Views and vistas.
- Walking.
- Dog walking.
- Exercising.
- Fitness equipment.
- Birdlife – watching.
- Cycling.

Desirable characteristics include:

- Access – close to home.
- Natural character – bushland environment.
- Open space – peaceful/quiet.
- No motorcycles
- Vegetation – more smaller plants/native grasses required.

Consultation on The Plan

Direct consultation on the Plan will be undertaken in two phases. In phase A (September 2022) focus groups and stakeholders were invited to express their thoughts on both open space generally, and on Quarry Hills Regional Parkland specifically. The engagement activities included:

- Informing the stakeholders about the background information and the importance of Parklands as a regional park and place.

- Communicating the purpose and importance of the Future Directions Plan.
- Hearing from Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Elders about the cultural values of the Parklands.
- To express values, issues, opportunities of the Quarry Hills Regional Parklands - as an example see Image 9.
- Key sentiments and ideas in developing a vision and future direction statements for the Quarry Hills Regional Parklands.

The second of consultation, phase (B) (Planned November 2022), will involve broader community consultation on the *Draft Quarry Hills Regional Parkland Future Directions Plan* (This document). Following phase B, The Plan will be updated.

Recommendations and findings

Council has prepared a Quarry Hills Regional Parkland Future Directions Plan Consultation Findings Report (September 2022) which details the engagement activities, findings and recommendations.

The summary findings include:

Values

The values that were most commonly identified include:

- Uniqueness.
- Diverse habitats.
- Intactness of the indigenous flora and fauna.
- Habitat quality and landscape.
- Natural resource.
- Community connection to nature.
- Cultural values and respecting the cultural protocols.
- Catering to all users and abilities.
- Protection of conservation values.
- Protection of sacred sites.

Issues

- Limited connectivity with private ownership along the Darebin Creek corridor disconnecting the Parklands.
- Limited access and usable spaces due to steepness.
- Limited access from the surrounding area.

- Lack of signage leading to the park.
- Missing links.

Opportunities

- Supporting community connection and stewardship of the park.
- Recognition and acknowledgement of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung culture.
- Develop the Quarry Hills Regional Parklands as a tourism destination.
- Provide opportunities for social enterprise and local jobs, including new initiatives such as indigenous nurseries with indigenous plants and medicinal plants.
- Guided walks along the peaks.
- Bush kinder and/or bush playgroup.
- Walking groups.
- Citizen science opportunities such as bird watching days, fauna and flora counts, annual events and local clean up events.

Vision

The key ideas to establish a legacy or objectives included:

- Development of Darebin Creek.
- Prioritisation of land assembly along the waterways (Darebin Creek).

- Celebrate the history of re-vegetation and restoration.
- Ecological restoration.
- Establish a friends group with ongoing connection caring for the park.
- Highlighting the partnership and work with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung.
- Increase traditional owner presence on site.

The key recommendations that have been included in the Plan are to:

- Ensure that objectives of the *Biodiversity Conservation Strategy* and *Strategy for establishing a Grassy Eucalypt Woodland Protected Area* are considered.
- Develop the Parklands as a key tourism, educational and training destination.
- Support cultural practices.
- Enhance the cultural landscape.
- Protect aesthetic and natural attributes of infrastructure.

Frame 1: Values



Image 9 Snapshot of the on-line consultation board (September 2022)

The Plan

The (Draft) Future Directions Plan has been developed following critical review of strategic documents, plans and assessments, site analysis, community and Traditional Owner consultation and stakeholder feedback.

The main body of this report (The Plan) articulates the vision and objectives for the Quarry Hills Regional Parkland. To achieve this vision and deliver the objectives, four Future Direction Statements have been formed to guide long term and consistent delivery of The Plan. These statements and corresponding theme have been aligned to the *Whittlesea 2040: A place for all* goals as illustrated in Image 10 below.

Each of the Future Direction Statements is supported by *Principles* and *Strategies*. Principles provide high level guidance on the intention of each theme, with the strategies being key actions to deliver The Plan.

The diagram below, shown in Image 11, illustrates the relationship between the vision, objectives and themes. They are described as:

Vision – Crafted from the background analysis, research and consultation.

Objectives – Name the enduring legacy that The Plan aims to achieve.

Future Direction Statements – Establish the long term intention of The Plan

Principles – Articulate the intention of each theme

Strategies – Name key actions to deliver The Plan.



Image 10 Whittlesea 2040: A place for all - goals

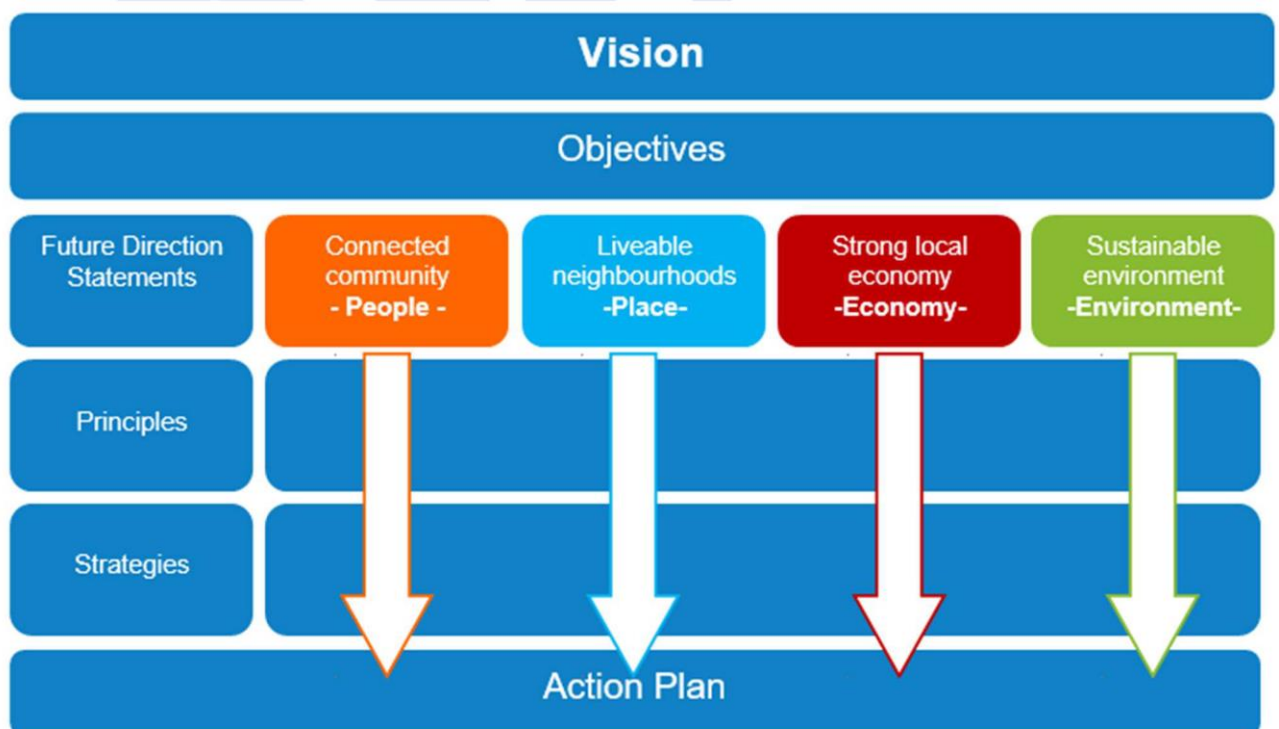


Image 11 Diagram showing the relationship between the Vision, objectives and themes.

Vision

The vision for the Parks lands is:

Quarry Hills Regional Parklands Parkland is a rich and inspiring destination of unique natural and cultural landscapes, valued for the ecological, spiritual, historical and living connections it provides to Aboriginal people and the broader community.

Quarry Hills Regional Parklands is a place of active reconciliation, storytelling and healing, where community can explore and celebrate the unique cultural and ecological significance of the landscape and Aboriginal people can practice connection to country.

Quarry Hills Regional Parklands is a special place of recreation, protection and renewal, a place to learn, explore culture, art and environment, and to connect with the exceptional natural and curated features of the parkland for all generations to come.

Objectives

The Objectives to deliver the Vision are:

- The creation of 1100 hectares of parkland will be valued for its ancient and ongoing Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung connection and the opportunities for exchange of knowledge.
- Council commit to a process of self-determination, to return cultural practices on Country, to Traditional Owners.
- Quarry Hills Regional Parklands will be regenerated to ecological health and vitality, to underpin health and well-being of the community.
- Quarry Hills Regional Parklands will provide rich cultural, and landscape experiences for the community, a place for exploration, reconciliation healing and learning.
- Lead by a governance model where Council, and Traditional Owners become partners in the future direction of the Parkland.

Future Direction Statements

The outcomes of the vision are articulated through the Future Direction Statements below:

People

Quarry Hills Regional Parklands will be a destination for connection to nature, a place to experience rich cultural and community activities, explore, play and learn, and a place of well-being and healing.

Place

Quarry Hills Regional Parklands will provide gateways and warm welcomes into the Parkland, connecting seamlessly into its surroundings, through the creation of green healthy links to other landscapes and the regional trail network.

Economy

Quarry Hills Regional Parklands will be economically sustainable and contribute to the local economy. Drawing on its unique natural and cultural values, it will become a place of learning and a destination, attracting people from across Melbourne.

Environment

Quarry Hills Regional Parklands will be regenerated to ecological health. The Darebin Creek and other waterways, rich and varied geological formations, topography, increased forest, outstanding view-points and significant biodiversity and fauna will be connected and cared for.

People

Future Direction Statement

Quarry Hills Regional Parklands will be a destination for connection to nature, a place to experience rich cultural and community activities, explore, play and learn, and a place of well-being and healing.

Key principles

- Nurture and raise the cultural value of the Parklands.
- Invest in the health and well-being of the community.
- Instil a strong sense of place and character to underpin the value of Quarry Hills Regional Parklands within the community.
- Avoid inappropriate infrastructure and development that erodes the Parklands values.
- Ensure that the Parkland is managed as a safe landscape for the local community.
- Consider all ages and abilities.

Key Strategies

- Establish Caring for Country principles in collaboration with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people, which will guide place planning, management and a staged approach to ecological management.
- Celebrate the establishment of a regional Parkland through Traditional Owners place naming.
- In collaboration with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung, develop a cultural investment strategy for the Parkland to enhance community knowledge.
- Develop stewardship of the park.

COW 2040 Goal

Goal 1: Connected community

- A socially cohesive community
- A healthy and safe community
- A participating community.

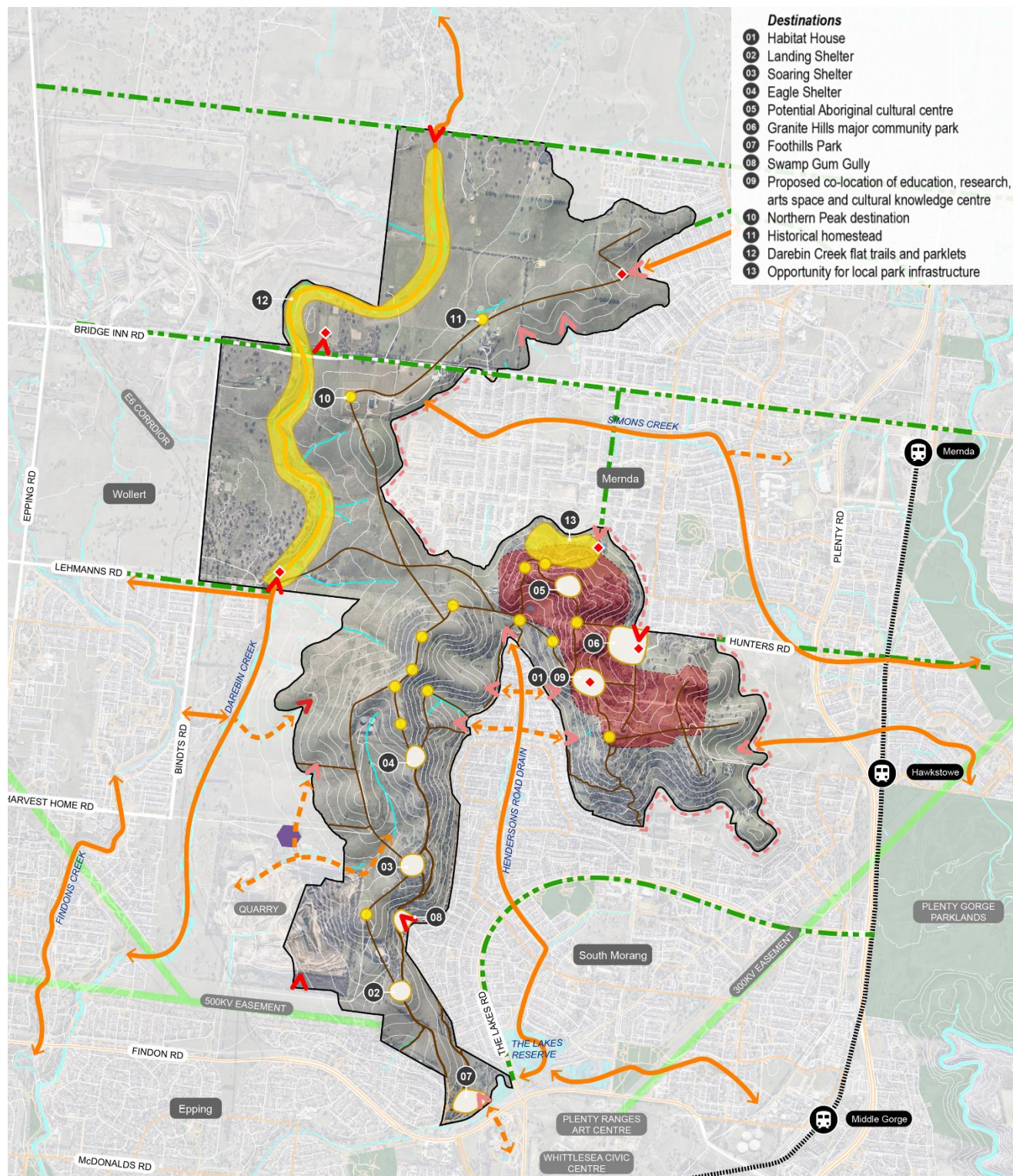


Image 12 People map

The People map, shown above in Image 12, locates and describes the key strategies detailed in the People theme.

Legend

- QHRP boundary
- Existing trail and path network (outside of Parklands)
- Existing parks and open space
- Watercourse
- Railway line
- Bus route
- Quarry Hills PSP "Village Town Centre"
- Proposed trail and path network
- Established priority parkland connections
- Proposed priority parkland connections
- Path and biodiversity opportunity to be explored with partners
- Municipal park entry point
- Neighbourhood park entry point
- Local park entry point
- Local street interface entry to Park
- Proposed key Park amenity locations
- Established destinations
- Proposed destinations
- Proposed 'Green Street' locations
- Cultural practice

Place

Future Direction Statement

Quarry Hills Regional Parklands will provide gateways and warm welcomes into the Parkland, connecting seamlessly into its surroundings, through the creation of green healthy links to other landscapes and the regional trail network.

Key principles

- Embrace a design-led approach specific to place and precinct.
- Prioritise infrastructure and facility planning to maximise regional visitation.
- Consider actions and development of the park with a long-term lens.
- Prioritise accessibility and connectivity to the Parklands through active transport network development.

Key Strategies

- From the Cultural values Study – Objective 1: Tangible Cultural Heritage Management and Protection
- Develop specific Design Guidance for Quarry Hills Regional Parklands that has a principled approach encompassing design excellence and excellence in sustainability.
- Develop a Stakeholder Advocacy plan with tiered approach to governance and partnerships.
- Develop precinct masterplans for Quarry Hills Regional Parklands.
- Enable municipal and neighbourhood movement.

COW 2040 Goal

Goal 2: Liveable neighbourhoods

- Smart, connected transport network
- Well-designed neighbourhoods and vibrant town centres
- Housing for diverse needs.

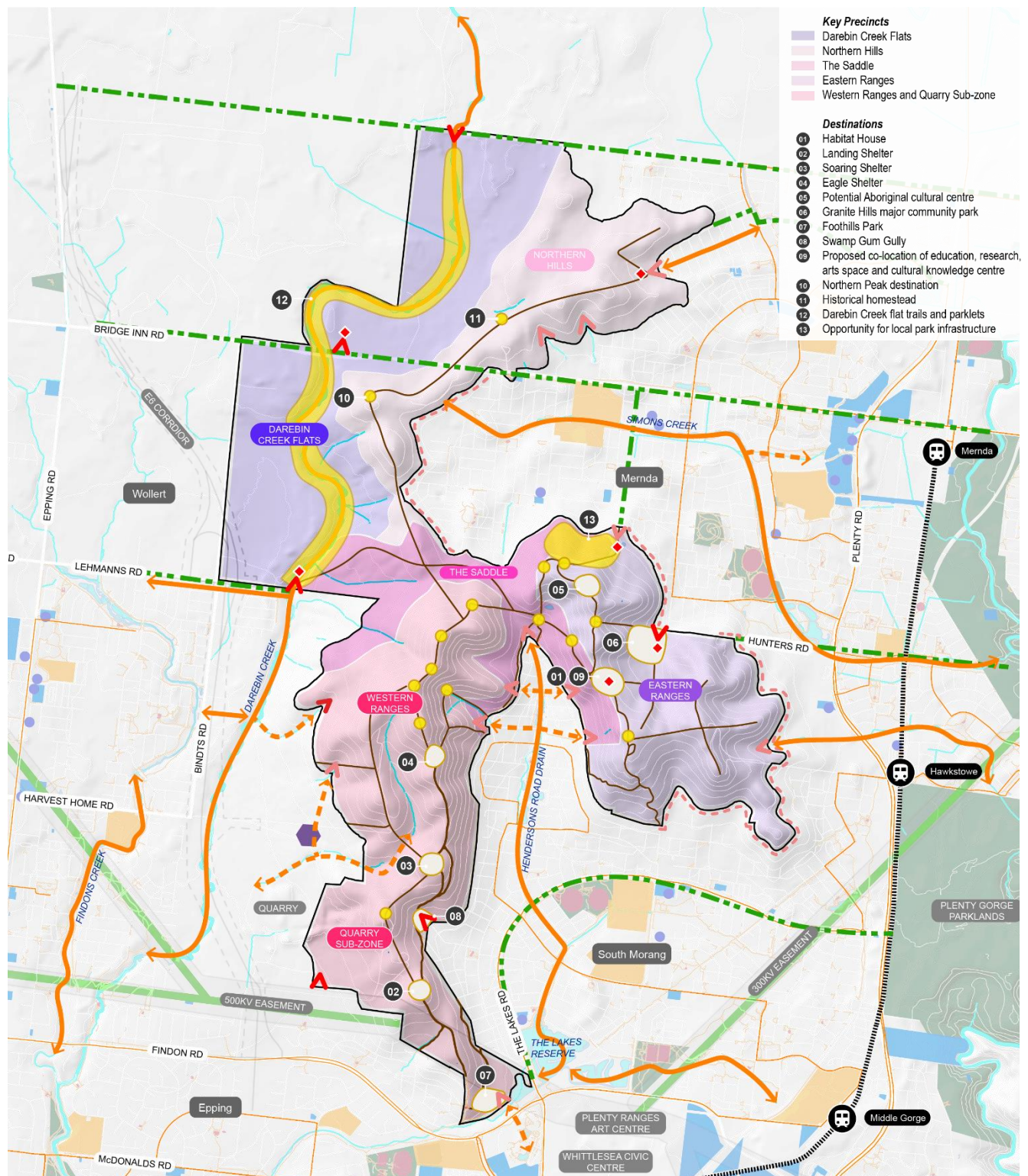


Image 13 Place map

The Place map, shown above in Image 13 locates and describes the key strategies detailed in the Place theme.

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| — QHRP boundary | ↔ Established priority parkland connections |
| — Existing trail and path network (outside of Parklands) | ↔ Proposed priority parkland connections |
| ■ Education zone | — Path and biodiversity opportunity to be explored with partners |
| ■ Commercial zone and shops | ● Municipal park entry point |
| ■ Sports facility | ● Neighbourhood park entry point |
| ■ Existing parks and open space | ● Local park entry point |
| ■ Watercourse | — Local street interface entry to Park |
| — Railway line | ◆ Proposed key Park amenity locations |
| — Bus route | ■ Established destinations |
| ● QH PSP "Village Town Centre" | ■ Proposed destinations |
| — Proposed trail and path network | — Proposed 'Green Street' locations |

Legend

Economy

Future Direction Statement

Quarry Hills Regional Parklands will be economically sustainable and contribute to the local economy. Drawing on its unique natural and cultural values, it will become a place of learning and a destination, attracting people from across Melbourne.

COW 2040 Goal

Goal 3: Strong local economy

- Increased local employment
- Education opportunities for all
- Successful, innovative local business

Key principles

- Develop Quarry Hills Regional Parklands as a key tourism, education and training destination through celebration and recognition of its cultural and natural values.
- Safeguard Economic sustainability of the park through partnerships, to ensure the long term environmental and cultural legacy Quarry Hills Regional Parklands provides for the community.
- Support the local economy by attracting visitors and investment to the area through high quality development of Quarry Hills Regional Parklands.

Key Strategies

- Co-locate educational, research and arts space(s) to facilitate exchange of knowledge, and the development of partnerships.
- Develop appropriate infrastructure to support longer stays within the Parkland.
- Create an Advocacy, Funding and Partnerships Plan to support the economic sustainability of Quarry Hills Regional Parklands.
- Develop an Arts and Culture Framework for the park to ensure appropriate programs, infrastructure and operations are supported.
- Prioritise investment in municipal parkland development for the community
- Prioritise sustainable transport connections between Quarry Hills Regional Parklands and the regional and local shared pathway network which considers surrounding business and tourism.

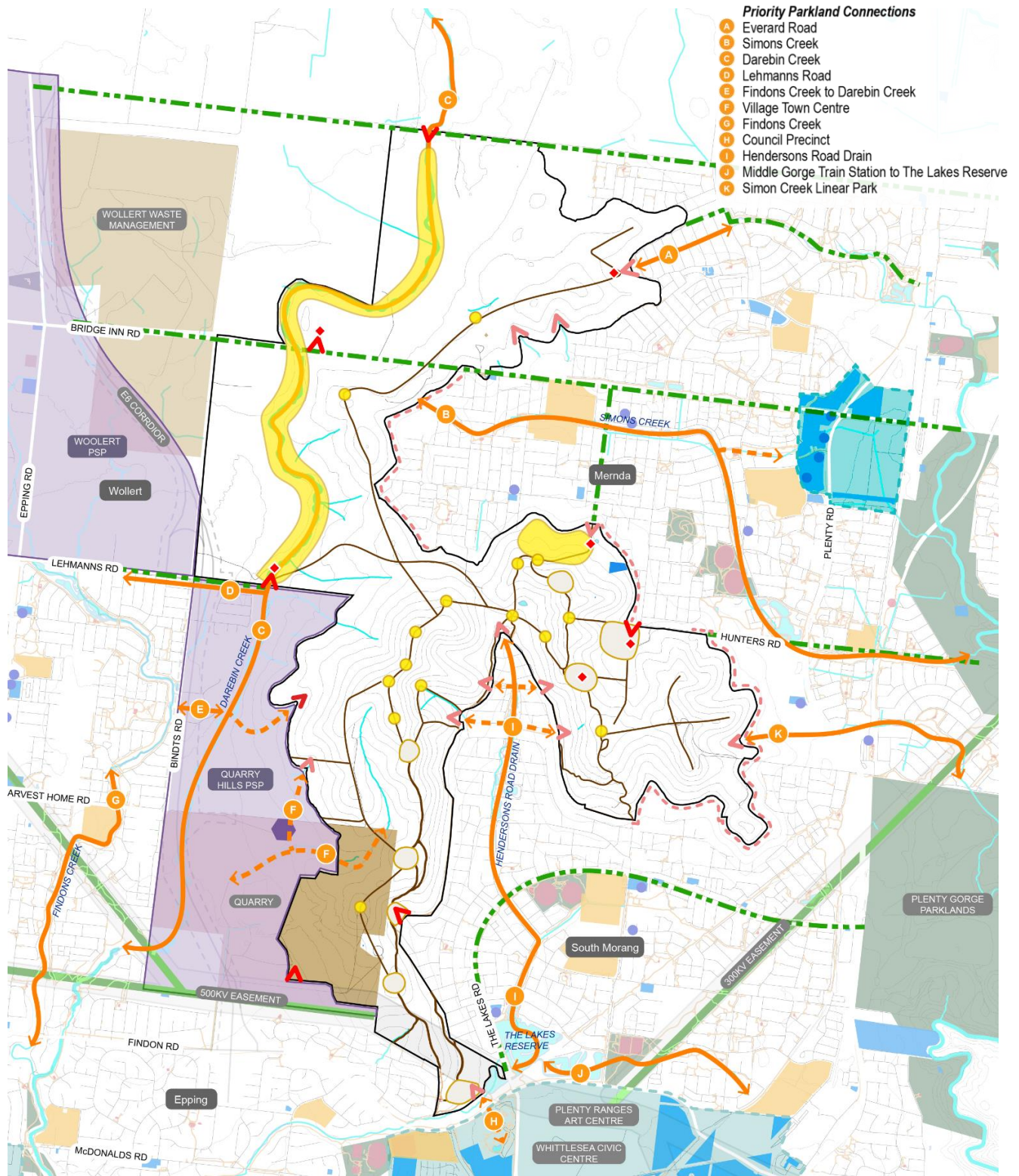


Image 14 Economy map

The Economy map, shown above in Image 15, locates and describes the key strategies detailed in the Economy theme.

Legend	
— QHRP boundary	— Proposed trail and path network
— Existing trail and path network (outside of Parklands)	↔ Established priority parkland connections
■ Education zone	— Proposed priority parkland connections
■ Commercial zone and shops	— Path and biodiversity opportunity to be explored with partners
■ Activity zone precinct	● Municipal park entry point
■ Comprehensive development zone precinct	● Neighbourhood park entry point
■ Industrial zone	● Local park entry point
■ Sports facility	— Local street interface entry to Parklands
■ Existing parks and open space	◆ Proposed key Parklands amenity locations
— Watercourse	— Established destinations
■ Precinct Structure Plan (PSP)	■ Proposed destinations
● Quarry Hills PSP "Village Town Centre"	— Proposed 'Green Street' locations

Environment

Future Direction Statement

Quarry Hills Regional Parklands will be regenerated to ecological health. The Darebin Creek and other waterways, rich and varied geological formations, topography, increased woodland forest, outstanding view-points and significant biodiversity flora and fauna will be connected and cared for.

COW 2040 Goal

Goal 4: Sustainable environment

- Valued natural landscapes and biodiversity
- Climate ready
- Leaders in clean, sustainable living

Key principles

- Regenerate Quarry Hills Regional Parklands to a high quality, healthy ecosystem.
- Build a Caring for Country approach to management of the Parkland in collaboration with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung to enhance and maintain Quarry Hills Regional Parklands.
- Protect and enhance greater biodiversity outcomes for the city and community through connection into larger environmental corridors.

Key Strategies

- Protection, enhancement and further expansion of areas with remnant and threatened species.
- Regenerate the ecological health of Quarry Hills Regional Parklands through ongoing conservation and restorative management of landscapes and development of key areas.
- Creation of Parkland and regional biodiversity and fauna corridors.

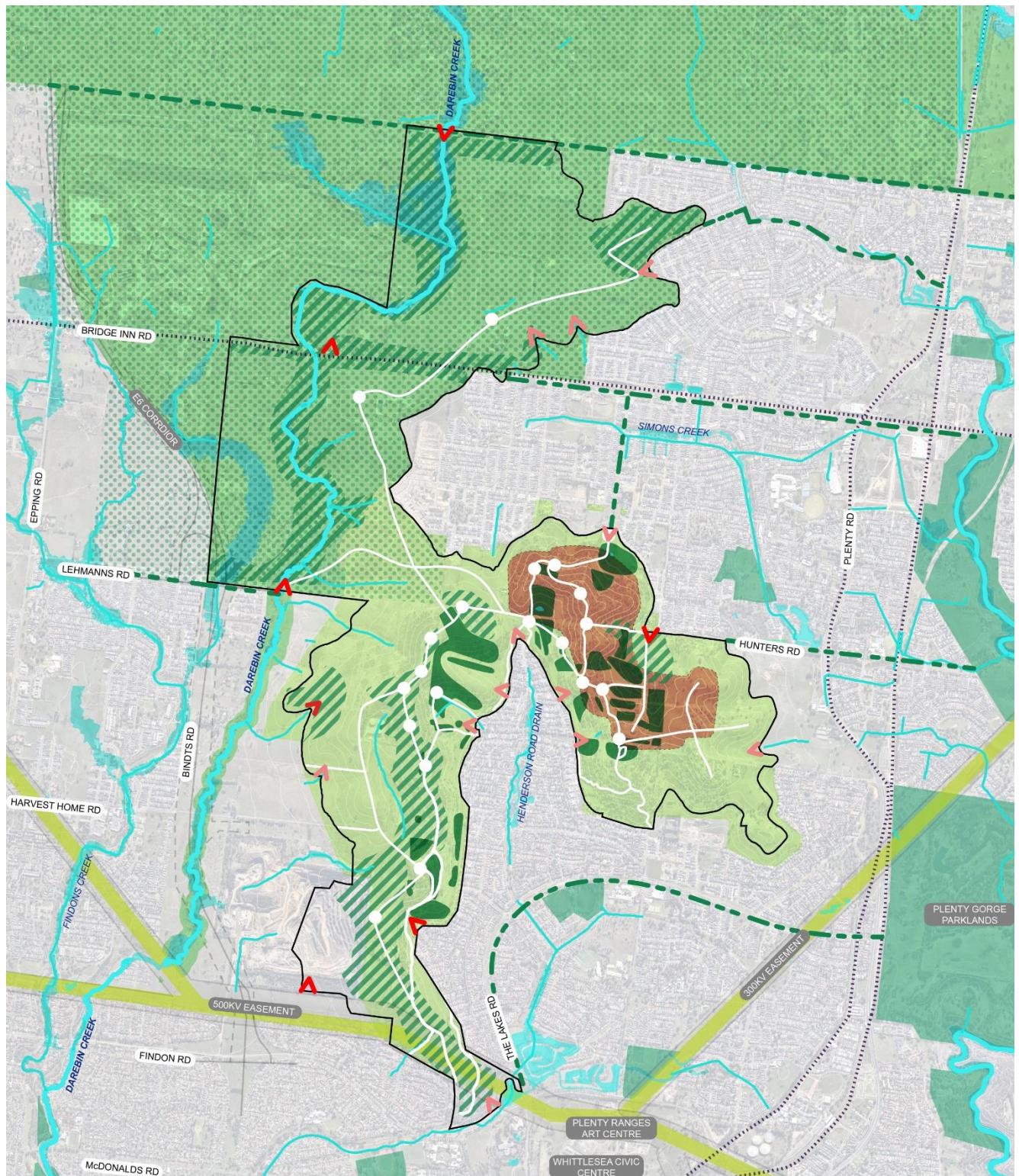


Image 15 Environment map

The Environment map, shown above in Image 14, locates and describes the key strategies detailed in the Environment theme.

- QHRP boundary
- Watercourse
- Flooding 1:100 year
- Environmental Significance Overlay
- Significant Landscape Overlay
- Existing parks and open spaces
- Investigation area for Grassy Eucalypt Woodland
- Major barriers
- Proposed destinations

- Trail and path network
- Opportunity for biodiversity connections through partnership
- Cultural practice
- Green Streets
- Established vegetation
- Priority planting areas
- Municipal park entry point
- Neighbourhood park entry point
- Local park entry point

Legend



City of
Whittlesea