

Maiden Gully Recreation Reserve (Reserve): Infrastructure and Service Plan (Plan)

Community Consultation Summary

Purpose

This report provides information about the consultation process and outcomes. The outcomes have helped to shape the Reserve Plan, which is shared here.

The Plan considers current and future community needs, including the changing ways people are participating in physical activity and using spaces to gather, meet and play.

Consultation process

The goal of the process was to gather input from many different community members.

Targeted consultation with Reserve user groups took place in July 2023. In the meetings, a range of key information was shared, and user groups were able to provide input and ask questions. In addition to the notes taken in the meetings, user groups were invited to also provide written submissions. Two user groups did this.

Other consultation activities ran across August and September 2023. They included:

- A bulletin to let community members know about the project and options for providing feedback
- A Let's Talk page
- Site signage to direct people to the Let's Talk page
- Listening posts for in-person input from community members

The process was guided by an Equity Impact Assessment (EIA). EIAs look at how a policy, program or service affects different genders and diverse groups in different ways and recommends changes that will help reduce and remove barriers to community equality in the community. The EIA about the Reserve Plan identified the need for a range of consultation activities, to support hearing from many different community members.

The Let's Talk page was open for feedback between August 11 and September 8, 2023. In total we received 80 responses from 1394 page views by 959 visitors.

Other targeted consultation ran from August 2023 to February 2024. It included meetings, activities, presentations and discussions with:

- Young people and schools

- Multicultural organisations and groups
- Men, women and gender diverse people
- People with a disability and disability organisations and reference group
- Passionate local community members
- Older people
- The Traditional Owner organisation
- Mental health organisations

Consultation outcomes

Data collected through the different consultation activities was analysed and grouped into key themes.

1. Lighting

What we heard:

Inclusion of lighting within the Reserve was a top priority across all community sectors. Many community members noted that they use the Reserve for walking/physical activity. There were also requests from local cricket clubs to install lighting in the cricket nets.

What we did:

The Plan proposes a sealed circuit path with lighting that extends around the oval and surrounding spectator areas. Updates to the existing oval training lights are also proposed, to improve visibility for users during early/late parts of the day. Following careful consideration, lighting of the proposed dual cricket nets themselves has not been proposed.

The sealed circuit path will provide lit access to the proposed car park and CFA training areas. This responds to feedback from the CFA and Maiden Gully Fire Brigade.

It is also proposed to further investigate opportunities to increase passive surveillance of the Reserve. This aims to enhance perceptions of safety and security throughout the Reserve.

2. Community-focused facilities including barbecue facilities and gathering areas

What we heard:

Making the Reserve feel welcoming and having spaces/facilities to support community gatherings/socialising were top priorities across all community sectors. Having more weather protection and being able to use some spaces year-round were key themes. Suggestions about the inclusion of seating, shade, shelters and barbecues featured strongly.

What we did:

The Plan proposes some spectator seating at various locations around the oval. It also proposes a Neighbourhood level playspace and barbecue area, including a water station, seating and bicycle hoops, to support a range of recreational activities and for people of all ages and abilities to gather.

A proposed pavilion adjacent to the tennis courts and existing car park will provide users with shelter, shade, and protection from the weather while using the facility.

The Plan also proposes an upgrade to the existing pavilion and storage area, to improve the functionality of the space and provide additional amenities and shelter.

3. Accessibility

What we heard:

Accessibility of the Reserve was a top priority for all community sectors. Suggestions received to make the Reserve accessible for people of all ages and abilities included:

- 'connected paths, accessible parking, seating and amenities'
- 'wide, sealed and level pathways'
- 'accessible spectator seating and gathering areas'
- 'ramp access to all facilities and buildings'
- 'inclusive play spaces'
- 'avoid cobblestones, bark chip surfaces and other mobility barriers'

What we did:

The Plan proposes a DDA-compliant accessible pathway connecting the existing car park with the existing pavilion and storage area. This pathway will also provide direct access to the proposed playspace and barbecue area, improving access to key gathering spaces throughout the Reserve.

The proposed new car park will be constructed in bitumen rather than the originally proposed gravel surface, reflecting community feedback. The design will include dedicated accessible parking spaces and bus parking.

The gathering areas adjacent to the proposed playspace and barbecue area will also incorporate DDA-compliant accessible spectator seating, ensuring these spaces can also be enjoyed by people of all abilities.

Accessibility has also been considered beyond the Reserve itself. Future pedestrian and cycling path connections from surrounding areas are proposed, subject to adjoining developments. These connections will help more people access the Reserve. The proposed path network will link with existing sealed pathways and pedestrian crossings, creating a more connected and accessible precinct.

4. Retain vegetation and Reserve's green/natural character

What we heard:

There was strong community support for the Reserve's 'green and natural character' to be retained whilst still enabling future development opportunities. Community members expressed the need to 'strengthen the protection of existing native vegetation and biodiversity' and enhancing the natural landscape.

What we did:

The Plan promotes native vegetation and biodiversity as part of any future development. Input from the Dja Dja Wurrung (Traditional Owner) community highlighted the importance of this approach, noting that protecting native vegetation and wildlife will help in reflecting Indigenous ecological, cultural, and spiritual connections to Country.

Community feedback generally emphasised the importance of retaining existing trees wherever possible and maintaining grassed areas around the central oval. These elements have been incorporated into the Plan to help create a welcoming, natural environment that supports recreation, connection, and a sense of community belonging.

Outcomes not addressed in the Plan

Off-leash dog area

What we heard:

Dogs and dog management featured in 20 responses received via the Let's Talk page. Whilst some comments reflected the desire for the inclusion of an off-leash dog area at

the Reserve, others did not. Some community members specifically raised concerns about dogs being allowed on the oval, with one respondent noting *"As a grandparent of 5 young ones I strongly disagree with junior football and dogs on the oval. Dog poo and young children do not go hand in hand."*

What we did:

The limited available space within the Reserve — combined with the need to protect quality native vegetation and retain existing mature trees — has resulted in prioritising the most broadly supported community requests within the Plan. These included active recreation activities in priority order: a BMX/pump track and basketball half court (equal top rating), outdoor fitness equipment, and/or a skate park, which collectively represented a stronger community priority.

There is a nearby off-leash dog area available for community use: at Reserve 2D on Glenelg Drive — a roughly 700-metre off-leash gravel strip along the power line easement.