Open spaces and places

Strategic objective
Increased participation in open spaces and places

Domain overview

Cardinia Shire is located on the traditional lands of the Bunurong, Boon Wurrung and Wurundjeri People of the Kulin Nation. Cardinia Shire's public open spaces and places provide highly valued biodiversity, recreational corridors and community meeting places. The shire's parks, playgrounds and nature reserves also contribute to the mental and physical wellbeing of our community by providing local destinations for people to enjoy nature and walk, cycle, be active and relax. They provide places for social interaction, critical to creating and maintaining community connections and building a sense of belonging.

About open spaces and places

Data about open spaces and places in Cardinia Shire identifies:

- 156 ha of linear reserve connections.
- 740 ha natural resources (including retarding basins).
- 403 ha across 247 passive recreation sites.
- 306 ha across 40 active recreation sites.
- 198 playgrounds.
- 1 cultural centre.
- 6 community gardens.

Open spaces and places liveability indicators

- Average distance to closest public open space.
- Percentage (%) of dwellings within 400m or less distance of public open space.
- Average distance to closest public open space larger than 1.5 hectares.
- Percentage (%) of dwellings within 400m of public open space less than 1.5 hectares.
- Percentage (%) of dwellings within 400m or less distance of any local park (>0.4 to <=1ha).
- Percentage (%) of dwellings within 800m or less distance of any neighbourhood park (>1ha to <=5ha).
- Percentage (%) of dwellings within 400m or less distance of a neighbourhood recreation park (>0.5ha).
- Average distance to closest public open space with a nearby public toilet (within 100m).

Cardinia

The role of open spaces and places in our COVID-19 recovery

Parks and green spaces were of great importance during COVID-19 restrictions, with exercise being one of the 4 permitted reasons to leave home for much of 2020, and an increased number of people working from home. Research indicates that access to parks and green spaces is more critical than ever in supporting our community's health and wellbeing. With eased restrictions, demand on parks and gardens increased along with competing uses, which require planning and management.

The role of open spaces and places in addressing climate change

Open spaces and places support key functions in addressing climate change by protecting and preserving the many benefits these lands provide to humans, wildlife and vegetation. Some benefits include reducing atmospheric carbon emissions, strengthening the resilience of habitats for native biodiversity, as well as providing activated spaces for community enrichment and recreation. The trees and plants within parklands and open spaces remove carbon emissions and provide opportunities for native biodiversity to adapt to the adverse effects of climate change.

Links to Cardinia Shire Council Plan

1.2 Enrich local identity and opportunities for the community to connect through art, history and cultural expression.

2.1 Advocate, plan for and deliver accessible community infrastructure and services that address community need.

2.2 Plan and maintain safe, inclusive and connected open spaces, places and active travel routes.

3.1 Partner with community, business and industry to take action on, and adapt to, climate change.

3.3 Work with community to improve and manage our natural assets, biodiversity and cultural heritage.

3.4 Plan and advocate for better water cycle planning and management to reduce environmental impacts.

When thinking about the future of open spaces and places the following issues are relevant:

- A hotter and drier climate and sustainable water management.
- Reducing the urban heat island effect.
- Increased competition for open space and sport/recreation facilities, due to population growth.
- The increasing cost of land that limits opportunities to buy new land for public open space.
- An increasing housing and population density that puts pressure on our open spaces.
- Growing importance of 'nature play' opportunities that encourage children to learn about the natural world.
- The increasing usage, and at times competing views, of how open spaces are used.
- The role of streets and public realm as spaces where community interactions and events happen, and where people choose to spend time.
- Increased use of public open spaces and the need for lighting for safety and amenities such as drink fountains and seating.
- Balancing community expectations for investment in community facilities in a rate-capped environment.
- Increasing expectations on the standard of public open space and amenities.
- Community desire for quality open spaces close to home.
- Renewing and increasing our street and park tree population.
- Increase in the number of older residents and the retirement of 'baby boomers', including how they will spend their leisure time.
- An increasing need for community facilities to be flexible and adapt to changing needs, including being used by people to experience a sense of connection/inclusion.
- Increasing loneliness and social isolation, which was amplified by COVID-19 restrictions.
- Improving access to open space for community enjoyment.