

EMERALD LAKE PRECINCT MASTERPLAN

Community consultation summary

August 2022

Contents

Contents	1
Key findings	2
Methodology	3
Top 3 priorities.....	4
Support for masterplan zones	6
Lake Nobelius Zone.....	6
Lake Treganowan Zone	9
Cafe Zone.....	16
Nobelius Heritage Zone.....	18
Playspace	22
Western Forest Zone	26
Emerald Lake Precinct	28
School Consultation Findings	31

Cardinia Shire Council acknowledges and pays respect to the traditional custodians of these lands the Bunurong and Wurundjeri people.

Prepared by Cardinia Social Research, August 2022

Key findings

1. If you are going to upgrade the amphitheatres around Nobelius Lake, you probably need to keep the toilets as alternatives are too far away.
2. Careful consideration will need to be made regarding the removal of current vegetation, particularly established trees. There is support for new plantings to be native, but people also want to keep large established trees even if they aren't native. In the precinct comments 23 people mentioned the importance of protecting / enhancing or being considerate of the nature in the park.
3. Staging of works is going to be particularly important. People do not want to see facilities being removed followed by long waits for replacements (especially the café and the pool/water play spaces).
4. Toilets are a reoccurring theme. There is a concern that taking away toilet options when there is increased activation of spaces will be problematic. People don't want to walk long distances to a toilet, or encounter toilet blocks that are closed (because they are adjoined to a business). In the precinct comments 8 people mentioned the need for toilet upgrades or appropriate placement of toilets.
5. Throughout all zone forms 10 people mentioned that they wanted the pool to stay (or an alternative pool facility provided), 7 mentioned that they were happy for it to be taken away and 8 mentioned that they like the waterplay concept (sometimes also saying they want to keep the pool). A further 7 people said that they liked all of the playspace and water play concept (or gave a general positive comment). However, it is not possible to identify if the mentions of the pool in different zone responses are the same people or different people. Given the mixed response (and no clear direction regarding the pool), it is recommended that further research specific to this element be undertaken to better understand user and community views. This could be done through inclusion of a question on a multi-topic representative survey (Omnibus or Liveability survey) and/or pop-ups during high use periods (summer) at the pool. In the precinct comments 31 people said they want to pool to stay, and 2 said they were happy for it to be removed.
6. There were 14 people who mentioned in the precinct comments section that they didn't want locals to be charged for entry /using the car park. Feedback provided during the open office sessions and on the Hills Hub display also mentioned that paying for parking is a barrier to locals using the park. Given the potential for this to be a controversial issue, it is recommended that this be explored further, with both current and non-users of the park who live in close proximity.

Emerald residents should not have to pay for parking. A free parking voucher should come with our rates. Emerald has to put up with all the tourists, lose areas of the park for development of roads to allow tourists access to the park and then pay to use our own park. What other town in the shire has to pay to use its own park.

Methodology

This research was conducted using the Creating Cardinia portal, and was distributed to the general community through:

- Council Facebook page
- Mailout to 3,386 local residents,
- Emails: 239 database of interested residents, sports clubs, Emerald community groups and all Cardinia Council staff, 8x local schools (newsletter item)
- Open Office sessions at ELP Lakeside building x 6
- Hills Hub, Emerald: Display

The following targeted consultation also took place

- On site/online meetings: Victoria Police (CPTED feedback), Heritage Victoria (Nobelius Heritage Park)
- Presentations to Committees: Emerald Lake Precinct Advisory Committee, Cardinia Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee, Emerald Village Association
- Local schools: Workshop with Emerald Primary School Grades 4-6 (approximately 146 students), Emerald Secondary College (7 students) – lunchtime drop-in session for all years and newsletter information

Consultation was held 4 July 2022 – 25 August 2022. The Creating Cardinia page received 3,074 views and 428 contributions from 333 contributors (11% of visitors contributed). The high number of views indicate good public awareness of the campaign and high interest in the project.

The on-line consultation was split into 8 separate forms; one for each of the 6 zones in the masterplan, one for the entire precinct, and one to capture priorities overall. Given the way the software works, there was no way to accurately link a single person's response across multiple forms.

The number of responses per section was as follows:

	Online	Other	Total
Lake Nobelius Zone	7	3	10
Lake Treganowan Zone	16	3	19
Cafe Zone	11	3	14
Nobelius Heritage Zone	9	6	15
Playspace	18	3	21
Western Forest Zone	11	1	12
Precinct Wide Actions	31	3	34
Precinct Priorities	325	2	327

The precinct priorities form asked the respondent for their gender, age and suburb; 210 respondents provided this information. The prioritisation tool was mostly completed by Emerald residents, with a skew towards females and middle-aged people.

		Number	%	Census 2021 %
Gender	Male	74	25%	49%
	Female	227	75%	51%
Age	Under 30	31	10%	25%
	30-39	103	33%	21%
	40-54	118	38%	24%
	55+	60	19%	29%
Location	Emerald	180	58%	
	Other Hills	87	28%	
	Other Cardinia	38	12%	
	Outside Cardinia	8	3%	

It should be noted that given the distribution method, this consultation presents feedback from those with an interest in the topic. As such, findings do not represent the broader Cardinia Shire community.

Top 3 priorities

Respondents were asked to select the top 5 priorities for the Emerald Lake Masterplan, from a list of 15 topics, and sort these in order of importance. The list of topics was randomised on each page load to avoid order bias.

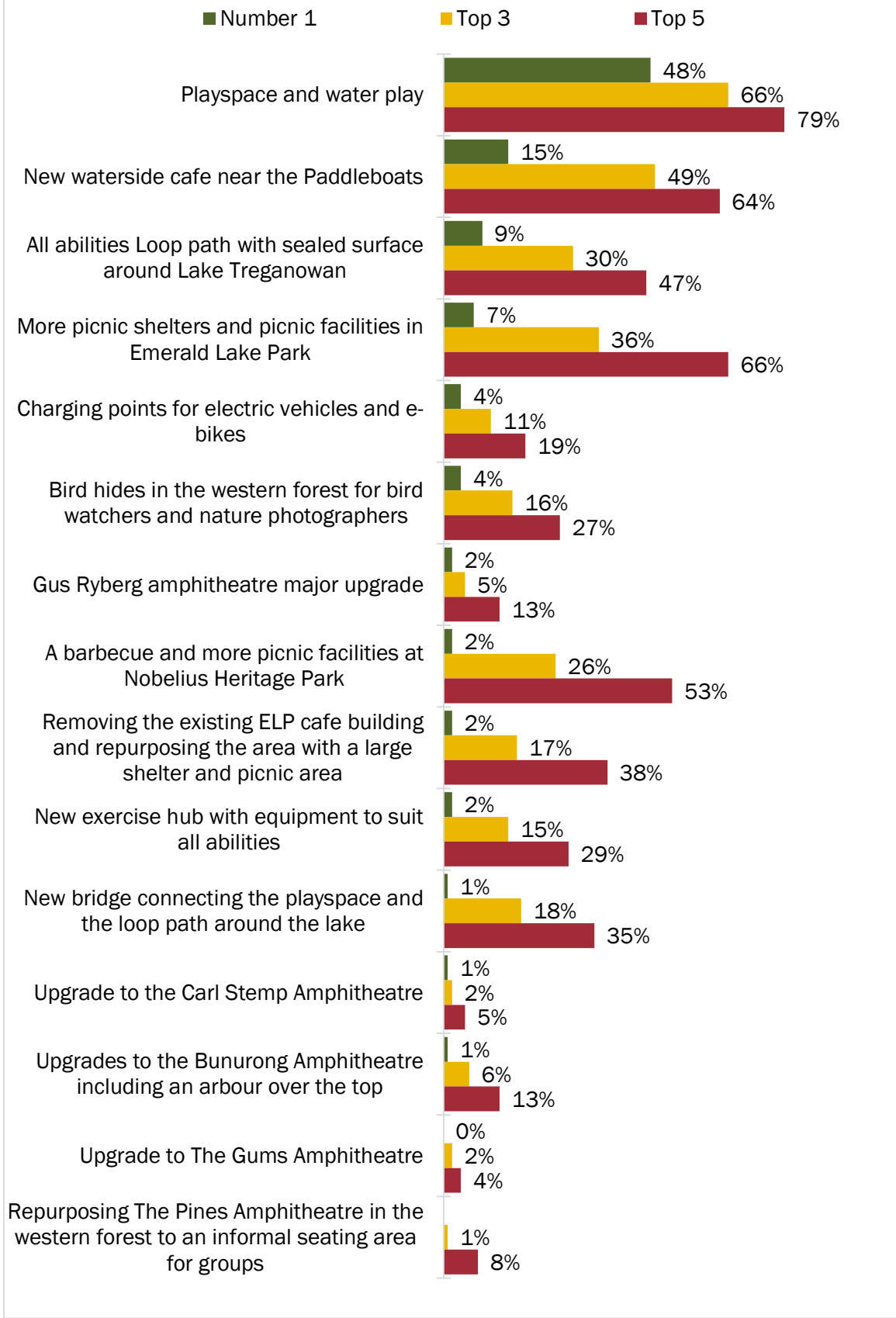
The following chart shows the incidence of each topic being ranked number 1, in the top 3 and in the top 5. There were 290 respondents who answered this question.

The most commonly selected in the top 3 were playspace and water play, waterside café, all abilities loop path and more picnic shelters. A BBQ at Nobelius Heritage Park commonly featured within the top 5, but seldom in the top 3.

Notable demographic variations were:

- A very high 76% of 30-39 year olds rated the playspace and water play as number 1 (only 17% 55+ year olds).
- Under 30 year olds and 55+ year olds show a higher instance of setting their number 1 priority as a new waterside café (23% and 26% respectively, compared to 5% 30-39 year olds).
- Those who live in the hills are, but not Emerald, show a higher instance of setting picnic shelters as their number one priority (12%, compared to 4% Emerald respondents).

Priorities for Emerald Lake Park



There were 138 comments outlining additional things for Council to consider. These comments were grouped into themes for ease of analysis. The most common suggestions were:

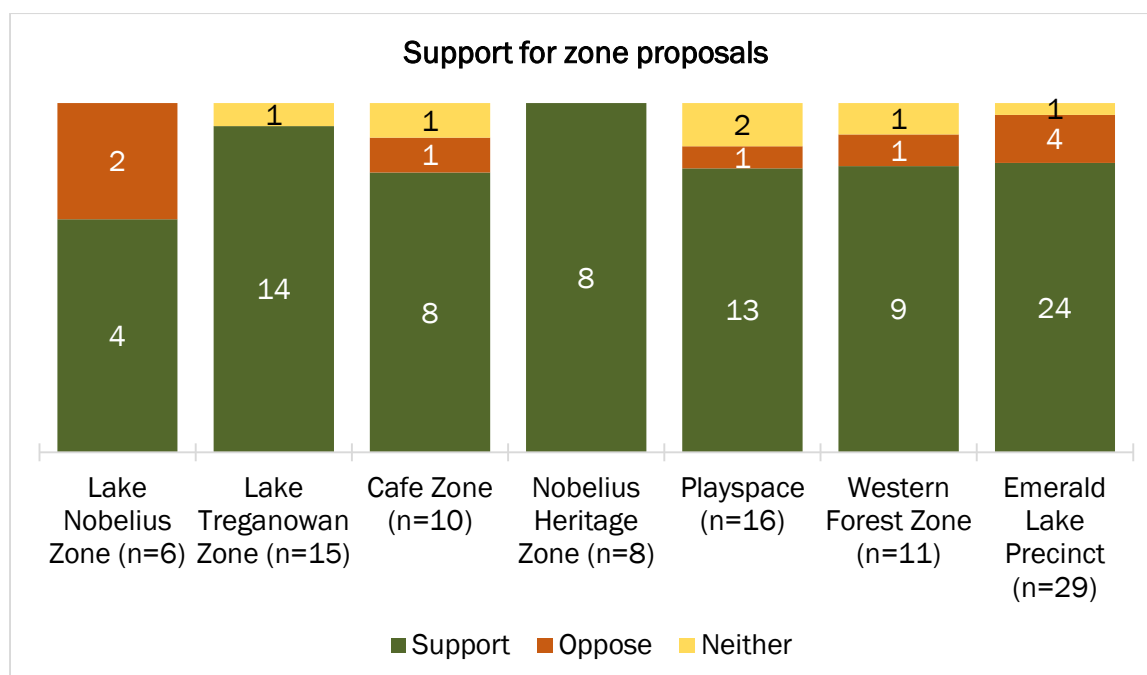
- Keep the pool (31 comments), whilst only 2 mentioned that they were happy for it to be removed.

- Maintain natural aspects (23 comments). Comments under this theme included weed management, water management, not removing native vegetation, and construction that complements the natural surroundings.
- Parking (23 comments). Most of these (14) were specific to wanting free parking for local residents.
- Playground design (22 comments) including comments about the need for the features to cater for all ages.
- Improved pathways (16 comments), including the need for accessibility (6 comments).
- Ensure local needs are considered in the planning, not just tourists (14 comments).
- Improved toilets (8 comments).
- Waterslide (8 requests).

Support for masterplan zones

At the start of each masterplan zone section, respondents were asked to rate their level of support for the proposed changes. Sample sizes are very low so the level of insight from these ratings alone is limited; however they can help us identify any issues.

None of the respondents who completed the Lake Treganowan nor Nobelius Heritage Park zone sections opposed the proposals. There were only one or two respondents who opposed each of the other zones, and 4 who opposed the overall precinct proposal (IP code in the data suggests they were different respondents each time).



Lake Nobelius Zone

The consultation form put forth the following information. Eight people provided a comment about this zone.

Proposed changes to the Lake Nobelius zone

1. Remove existing toilet facilities and associated infrastructure
2. Undertake repair and renewal works at the Gums and the Carl Stemp Amphitheatres with upgraded seating (including all abilities access where possible)
3. Undertake ongoing desilting works at Lake Nobelius as required to maintain lake health

- Undertake repair and renewal works at the Bunurong Amphitheatre with upgraded seating (including all abilities access) a new accessible path and the addition of an arbour

Lake Nobelius zone



The desilting works was well received, with six respondents mentioning that they like this part of the proposal, although two said timing will need to take into account bird nesting schedules.

De-silting of the lake is long overdue. It will improve the health of the lake and the aesthetic value of the site for walkers and visitors. Needs to be done out of bird breeding season.

Agree [desilting] works required - poor lake appears forgotten about

The other aspect of the proposal mentioned as particularly liked was the amphitheatre upgrades (3 mentions), with one respondents suggesting if they were upgraded they would be safer and used more often. However, another respondent suggested that they are never used, and never have been, so it isn't worth upgrading them.

With regards to the toilets, two said that the toilets need to be removed, whereas four mentioned that they should stay if you want people using the amphitheatres, as it is a long way to alternative toilets. Victoria Police suggested the current location for toilets was not ideal in a passive area of the park and suggested signage (with distances to toilets) and QR codes on maps would assist people finding the closest toilet and planning their walks.

Removal of the toilet facilities. It is a considerable distance from other toilet facilities, especially for people who, due to health or wellbeing reasons, need to access toilet facilities quickly. Especially if you want to encourage more picnic-ing in that area.

Better to upgrade toilet facilities and invest in picnic areas, than to invest money in amphitheatres. Also - if investing in amphitheatres goes ahead, limited usage if the closest toilet is over 400m walk away ...

I think the toilet facilities are needed particularly if the amphitheatres are upgraded leading to greater patronage. In past years this has been a popular location for weddings and even a series of theatre performances of "wind in the willows "

I understand the need to remove outdated toilet amenities but it is quite some distance to walk back to the main park area to use those amenities. I would support a smaller toilet block in this area.

Two people also mentioned concerns regarding the addition of an arbour, and others indicated that they didn't want vegetation removed.

I strongly oppose removal of exotic or nursery planted trees

The use of an arbour into Bunurong doesn't quite fit, particularly with wisteria plants.

Other suggestions for this zone include:

- I'm not sure how many amphitheatres one park needs and how often they are used but three in this area and another at The Pines seems like a lot, especially if they all need to be upgraded. Perhaps one of them could be individualised with some art/sculptures or educational focus to make a point of difference or reason for visiting that space.
 - Another comment suggested "The Gums" could be removed, but the others upgraded.
- Better to upgrade toilet facilities and invest in picnic areas, than to invest money in amphitheatres.
- Consideration to relocating the toilet facility to Bunurong side of the footbridge and upgrading to sewerage connected system. Including all abilities access.
- Perhaps one of the amphitheatres could be used as a sculpture park or art trail to display sculptures by local or indigenous artists. Or include some educational resources on the flora and fauna in the park, aimed towards children.

- If the amphitheatres are to be saved they must be repaired and maintained with materials that are durable, attractive, functional and accessible to users.
- If any arbour is constructed native creepers should be used in this area not wisteria.
- More picnic tables in this area.

Lake Treganowan Zone

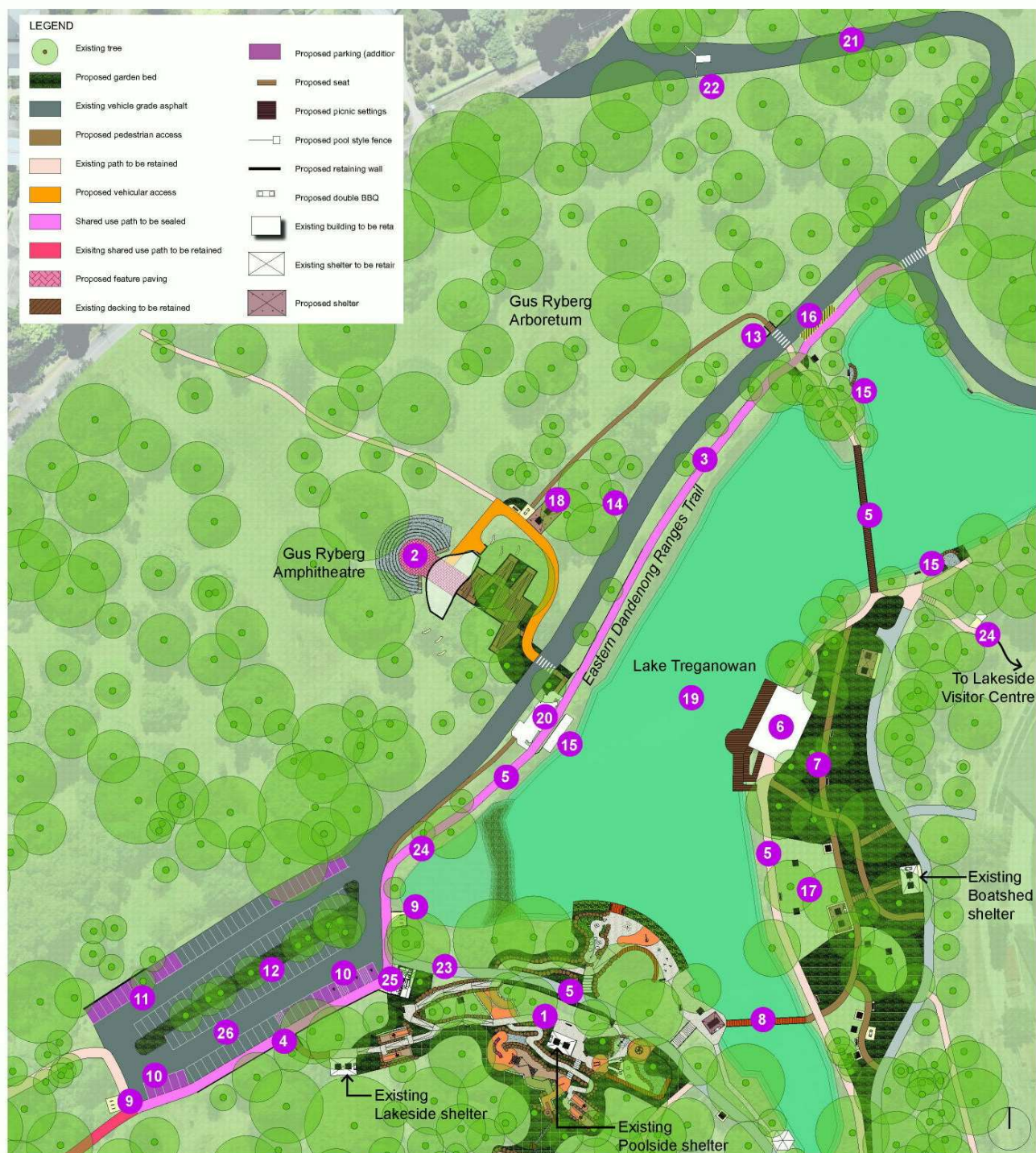
The consultation form put forth the following information. Fourteen people provided a comment about this zone.

Proposed changes to the Lake Treganowan zone

1. Upgrade existing playground facilities to original level play space with a broad range of play opportunities for all ages and abilities including water play, accessible play, nature play and Changing Places facility
2. Enhance the Gus Ryberg Amphitheatre to include a sound shell with lighting shelter and a stage area, all abilities access (i.e. blended ramp and stairs), vehicle access and pedestrian priority road crossing. Upgrade the existing seating facilities to composite timber seats including seating areas for all abilities. As required, relocate or replace the murals which depict the precinct's history
3. Define the Eastern Dandenong Rangers Trail (EDRT) with sealed servicing and way finding and etiquette signage. Upgrade the trail as required to meet regional standards (noting that this may be that this may require removal or relocation of existing trees)
4. Connect the EDRT through the Lakeside carpark. Construct a retaining wall along the southern edge as required
5. Define an all abilities loop path around the lake with sealed surfacing, lighting, and way finding and etiquette signage
6. Investigate developing the Lakeside Office building to 'Emerald Lake Boathouse.' Opportunity to retain the paddle boats, part of the Council office and to include a water side restaurant or cafe (pending market interest for private investment)
7. Upgrade the paths, drainage and garden bed areas behind the Lakeside building with accessible paths and new planted areas including the removal of fencing and edging to garden bed areas. Consider ground covers and plants that prevent erosion of garden beds and to keep sight lines open to encourage CPTED
8. New bridge connecting the playspace to the loop path around the lake and to allow the bandstand to be blocked off to pedestrian traffic during events and performances
9. New bike parking, drink fountains and bike repair station near the EDRT
10. Realign car parking bays along the southern edge of the Lakeside carpark to allow for the EDRT connection and create additional car parking bays, including disabled parking bays
11. Provide lighting to Lakeside carpark and retain existing parking meter
12. Construct stairs with safety balustrades to the top of the embankment and a new path to provide safe access to the Gus Ryberg Arboretum and Amphitheatre. Include a pedestrian crossing as required
13. Embankment stabilisation works north of the entry road including a retaining wall as required
14. To protect the bank of the lake, establish dedicated fishing areas and stabilise areas that have been damaged
15. Establish an informal loading zone near the northern section of the lake to create a drop off area. Stabilise lake edge as required
16. Extend the picnic area with a shelter that has two picnic tables and a double barbecue
17. New shelter with two picnic tables near the existing barbecues
18. Undertake desilting works at Lake Treganowan as required to maintain lake health

19. Upgrade the historic toilet facilities in-line with current health and safety standards and heritage requirements. Provide disability access from the EDRT at the Lakeside carpark
20. Continue to advocate for the widening of Emerald Lake Road with a pedestrian path to the township
21. Provide a CCTV camera at the boom gate entry to the park
22. Create a unique and contemporary gateway at the park entrance that reflects the precinct character
23. Provide event lighting from the Lakeside carpark to the Gus Ryberg Amphitheatre and to the Lakeside Visitor Centre
24. New toilet block with Changing Places facility and unisex ambulant toilets
25. Investigate installation of charging points for electric vehicles (Lakeside carpark) and e-bikes (close to the EDRT)

Lake Treganowan zone



Playspace

A couple of comments welcome the upgrade of the playground and water play space. One recognises that this will include the removal of the pool, which was seen as underutilised and having poor amenity when not in use, whilst another made comment that suggested they perceived that the pool would be upgraded (*Love upgrading the wading pool*).

Pool only open short period in the year and only on very warm days. Rest of the year it looks horrible. Needs a lot of maintenance and cost of Life guards. Turn into a facility that can be used more often.

Great idea to upgrade playground and water play space to make more accessible to all needs.

Water play area is likely to be used more frequently and by more people than the wading pool.

The overall play space proposals are strongly supported. They have the potential to greatly increase the area's appeal to children and families including local residents

There was one comment in this section of the consultation suggesting that the pool should be retained.

Although I do like the sound of the zero depth water play area, the loss of the wading pool is a high price to pay. There is no other swimming pool in the area and even the pool in Monbulk is currently unavailable.

Amphitheatre

Two comments welcome the amphitheatre upgrade, recognising the potential for increased usage. However, one respondent felt the proposed upgrade would take away from the natural feel of the space.

The creation of a Sound shell/performance space is exciting, it will provide wonderful opportunities for community based events. The park has a history of these so the provision of an improved facility will be well received

Upgrade of the Gus Ryberg amphitheatre is excellent, with possible blended ramp, stairs and sound shell. Vehicle access only for activities in the venue, with a bollard closure at the bottom. Relocation of the three murals to join the other three, plus the information podium provided by FELP.

No 2 is inappropriate over-development. The Gus Ryberg Amphitheatre is great the way it is - an amphitheatre in a natural environment. The proposed development involves too much man-made infrastructure which detracts the natural environment in the park.

Path

A range of aspects of the proposed new pathways were mentioned, including appreciation for the safety improvements. However, there is a concern that there may be too many works planned, which could detract from the beauty of the area.

All abilities path around the lake, much safer, neater and requiring less maintenance.

Construction of stairs into the arboretum opposite the bridge is a safety hazard and well overdue.

The new bridge to create a loop path sounds good. Would make an excellent spot to take photos of the lake and surrounds.

Probably don't support another bridge as I don't think it's required. Strongly support pedestrian path along emerald lake road. Considerable works in this area should be kept to minimum as this part of the precinct is beautiful. These plans sounds reasonable not don't want to over do it.

Support pedestrian path along Emerald Lake Drive as it would enable a loop to be walked and provide easier access to the township. Walking along the side of the road is dangerous.

I question the aesthetics of a widened sealed surface pathway all around the lake. Won't it appear as though the beautiful lake is effectively surrounded by a bitumen roadway to the water's edge?

Parking

The loading zone (near the pedestrian bridge) is welcomed, however there is a concern that the area near Lakeside carpark may become too congested with all of the activities in one place (car parking, bike parking, bike repair, EDRT, playspace etc.)

Bike parking, people coming from car park, and EDRT all will be converging in this small area, while families go to water play and play space. It seems very congested. Bike area at the other end of Lakeside car park seems a better place to repair and collect bikes.

One respondent even suggested the parking should be reduced: *Should not create additional car parking within the park. Instead, should reduce car parking and traffic within the park. Carparking within the park should be restricted to mobility impaired visitors.*

Toilets

For the toilet upgrade, people desire for the historic nature of the building to be maintained.

I like the toilet upgrades especially seeing the heritage look of the old stone toilet block at the water's edge will be preserved.

Strongly support keeping historic shelters and toilets where possible as they enhance the amenity of the area and recognise the parks heritage

There was also a mention on the Playspace feedback form of the need for change rooms. Furthermore, 2 students in the Emerald Primary School consultation mentioned the need for change rooms.

Fishing zones

One comment suggested fishing zones were a good idea (Creating designated zones for fishing is crucial to help protect lake from further degradation), whereas another suggested they weren't necessary (*wonder why the fishing area needs to be formalised and dictated. think it should be left as is for the relatively small number who fish there*).

Eight Emerald Primary School students commented on the need for fishing facilities such as platforms and rod holders and fishing spots

Other

Other comments and suggestions include:

- It is important that the planning for the work is staged so that the **removal and replacement of a facility are planned as one job**. ie the removal of the wading pool must coincide with the building of the water park and the cafe moves to the new location. What cannot occur is that we remove the wading pool and then look to get additional funds to build the water park eventually, or we close the cafe and the new one can't happen for some time or drops off the list.
- Concern has been expressed at the water quality in Lake Treganowan. Assurances from Council staff and the reported results of testing has failed to convince EVA members that water quality is not an issue.
- I don't mind the idea of a private cafe in the boathouse building, but **why do all the period buildings in the park have to be removed?** The recently completed new puffing billy centre is suitably modern, but why do we need to remove any remaining heritage look buildings like the old cafe? Puffing billy patrons expect to be travelling into the country, not into a modern business precinct of Colourbond and stainless steel everywhere. Couldn't the building be repurposed?
- I like the suggestion to improve the **outdoor gym**, but question whether moving it to the cafe precinct is really desirable; adults may prefer the current more private location, rather than performing on public display.
- Like the exercise hub being relocated, spreads people out through the park. Pleasant spot to exercise (from café zone data form).
- Support the idea of a **bike repair station** - I have seen these elsewhere are they are very handy. I have had a flat type in ELP and had to walk my bike home.
- Additional work will need to be undertaken to the boathouse to enable the **comfortable flow of visitors** to the boat hire, cafe and those just doing a walk round the Lake. We would be concerned if the removal of the Cafe occurred without the replacement occurring as the current cafe fills a different niche to the cafe in the visitors' centre. A cafe overlooking the lake would be lovely.
- I strongly oppose **removal of exotic or nursery planted trees**.

- No 6: lakeside office building is fine as it is. **Should not commercialise it.** The park is a natural environment, not a business park. Businesses should be encouraged within the Emerald township, not within the park.
- I think a **lakeside cafe** would be a great asset but needs to be purpose built and located either near the footbridge or below the boatshed picnic area. I have concerns that the proposal for a cafe at the paddle boat/ Lakeside office will overload this small already congested area. Could I recommend a study of patron movements during busy periods to see how this space currently functions and how the added attraction of a Cafe would impact paddle boat operations.
 - There is a need for a cafe - even if it is a 'seasonal' one that is closed in winter but open in the spring/summer. It would be great to be able to grab a coffee when on a walk, and would be a popular addition to the park.
- Removal of so many **autumn foliage trees** in the park, presumably because they are not natives is concerning. I can understand some thinning of maple saplings but not 100-year-old oaks. This is not a national park, intended to showcase our native fauna and flora, but a local heritage park, renowned for its autumn colour and its connection to the Nobelius nurseries which specialized in exotic trees, not native scrub. There is weeding and there is environmental fascism. Sorry, but I found the intentional ring-barking of historic oaks quite upsetting, as I did the systematic clearing of non-natives, simply for being non-natives by council/its contractors or the supposed "friends" of Emerald Lake Park.
- Waterside restaurant - consider operation by a **social enterprise** such as L'Arte Central Social Enterprise Cafe, Florist and Art Space in Cranbourne which facilitates employment opportunities for people with disabilities or mental health conditions.
- A small **community art space** in the Lakeside area would be great as the natural environment would be conducive to running arts workshops - could be done in conjunction with programming through Emerald Community House or the Emerald Arts Society.
- Find or develop an **App** for a phone to show a map that can allow a visitor to find their way around tracks within the Precinct. how will garden beds be defined and plants protected. If the hill leading to the bandstand could be reduced, as it is difficult to push a pram or wheelchair up and older people to walk up. Lighting to be only used for events, not on all the time.

Cafe Zone

The consultation form put forth the following information. Twelve people provided a comment about this zone.

Proposed changes to the Cafe zone

1. Remove the Emerald Lake Park cafe building and repurpose the site to a picnic and barbecue area with a large shelter
2. Remove existing toilet facilities and associated infrastructure. Landscape embankment remove fencing and access path. Return the site to open lawn
3. Create an exercise hub close to the paths to provide all abilities excess. Ensure it includes equipment suitable for all abilities
4. Create new garden area to prevent erosion where the slope meets the path
5. Retain Bandstand for small events and performances

Cafe zone



Eight people supported the removal / repurposing of the building to make way for a shelter, another person suggested repurposing the existing building to a shelter. One of these people also suggested to have a coffee van to service the community at peak times

Ten respondents answered the question “How likely are you to use exercise equipment here?”; 3 of these said they would be likely to use the exercise equipment at the proposed location, and 5 said they wouldn't.

Those who said they would mentioned that they enjoy using the current equipment, and that they want a shoulder press. Only one respondent who said unlikely provided an explanation for their response, which was that the location was not part of their daily exercise route.

Most positive comments about the proposed changes for this zone supported the removal of the café to create a large under cover area, as it was seen as better utilization of the space. However, two people mentioned that this café shouldn't be removed before a suitable alternative is available (waterside café). There is also concern about the loss of toilets (4 comments), as it is felt that with a new community space easily accessible toilets will be important. Victorian Police noted that the Bandstand toilets (to be removed) are well utilised on busy days and that more toilets than those proposed should be included.

We are concerned about the removal of 3 toilet blocks as this leaves parts of the park a long way from any facilities. It also appears that you plan to replace 10 toilets with 3. This appears very problematic as it is a significant walk over to the planned new facilities and on busy days do not believe there are enough facilities for the visitor numbers.

In the consultation with Emerald Primary school students, 8 supported new food options (café, ice cream vans, restaurant/pub).

Other suggestions were:

- Would also love to see some creek play opportunities set up in this area if possible. Would create a draw to this area, and provide a natural alternative to the new water play area. Think: creek at Healesville Sanctuary.
- Spend time thinking about how to make new picnic area appealing. It's further into the park from car park so people will want it to look and feel welcoming. Create Views where possible and look to add to charm character to the space.
- A small community art space in the Lakeside cafe area would be great as the natural environment would be conducive to running arts workshops - could be done in conjunction with programming through Emerald Community House or Emerald Artist Society.

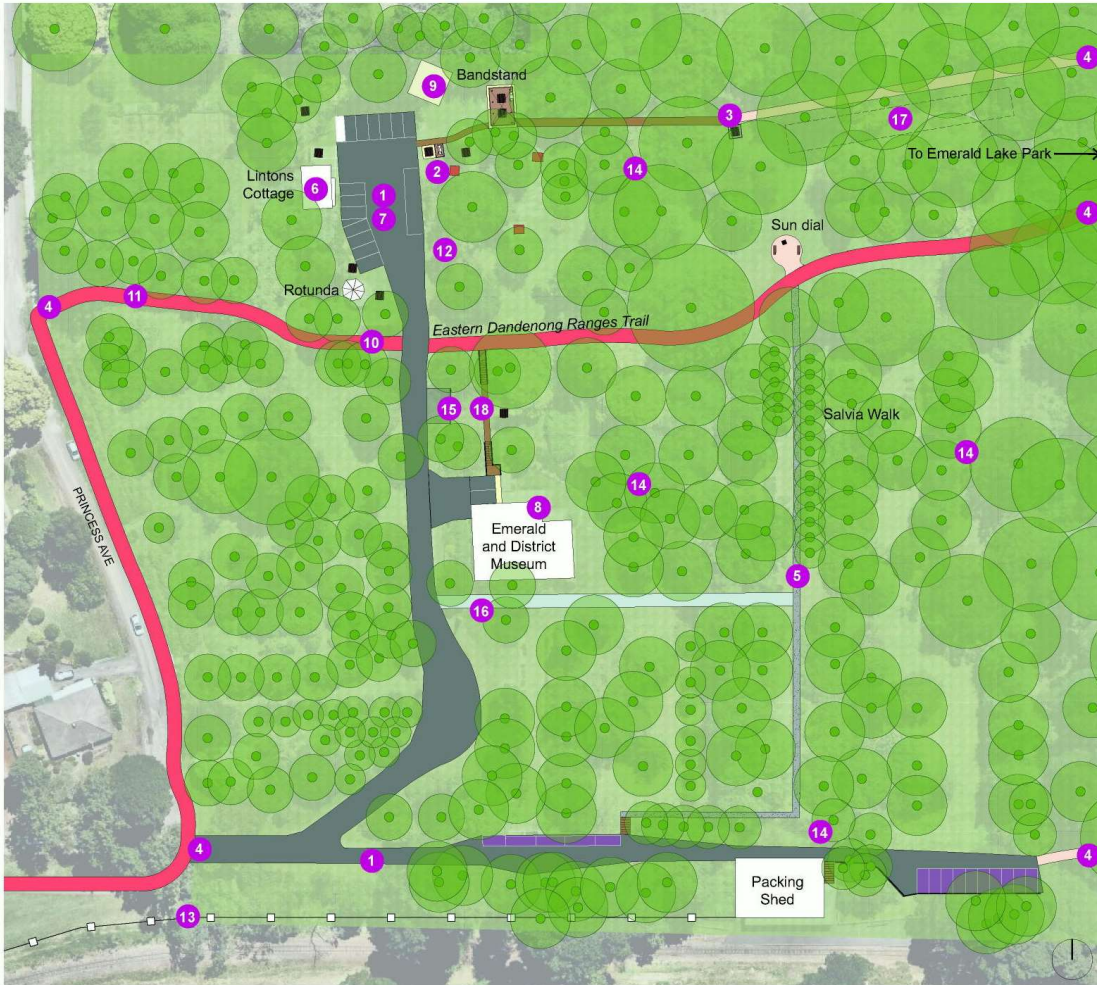
Nobelius Heritage Zone

The consultation form put forth the following information. Thirteen people provided a comment about this zone.













Proposed changes to Nobelius Heritage Park

1. Upgrade existing access Road and carpark
2. More picnic tables near the bandstand area
3. Strengthen the path connection between Emerald Lake Park into Nobelius Heritage Park with wayfinding signage
4. New gateway feature signage at the entrances to Nobelius Heritage Park
5. Provide an informal path connection with wayfinding signage from the Eastern Dandenong Ranges Trail to the packing shed
6. Upgrade the exterior of Linton's Cottage and include interpretive signage to explain its historical significance to the site. Investigate opportunities to improve the interior to meet future community needs
7. Provide carpark lighting
8. Investigate an upgrade to the museum toilets. Explore options for adding a third cubicle
9. Provide power and a shelter over the bandstand and replace barrier to cater for events and performances
10. Remove chicanes from the EDRT and replace with a removable bollard to align with regional trail standards
11. Monitor drainage concerns on the Eastern Dandenong Ranges Trail between Princess Avenue and the road to the car park. Consider upgrading trail surface with an exposed aggregate concrete to match the existing gravel surface
12. Consider opportunities for activation an increased visitation to Nobelius Heritage Park such as markets, performances and events
13. Upgrade fence between rail embankment and main entrance
14. New interpretive signage and maintain tree specimen display plates for park information, historical and educational purposes
15. Replace wheel stops with post and rail fence
16. Relocate wisteria away from the road with a new arbour for support
17. Undertake regular maintenance on the existing water sensitive urban design (WSUD) swale to ensure it retains drainage functionality
18. New connecting path with steps as required from the EDRT to the Emerald and District Museum

Nobelius Heritage Park



LEGEND

	Existing tree (indicative)		Proposed gravel path
	Proposed vehicular grade asphalt		Existing park furniture to be retained
	Existing vehicle access to be retained		Proposed picnic settings
	Proposed path		Proposed BBQ
	Existing path to be retained		Existing building
	Existing shared use path		Proposed shelter

Comments welcomed the upgrades to the paths and car park to improve usability, particularly during winter months, and the historic nursery plantings were valued. It was also felt that improved wayfinding and picnic facilities would increase utilization.

It's a beautiful part of the park so keeping the nursery gardens and trees is an absolute must. Paths and grass get muddy in wetter months so efforts to drain water away from waking paths make sense without disturbing the area. Car park upgrade and events would be great

More wayfinding signage and connection to areas/buildings within the zone and to ELP would be beneficial and would better promote the space.

We are very pleased to see the increased picnic capacities as well as a BBQ as the park is a lovely spot for a picnic and family get togethers due to its level grassed areas for small children to run safely around in. The upgrading of and provision of Power to the Stage is supported as will enhance the amenity of the park of small weddings etc. We support the graveling of the path marked 3 on plan 6.4, this path has been made by walkers and is a logical route from Lakeside through to the carpark in the Heritage Park

The building of the Salvia walk with the path through to the Packing Shed is much needed as is the proposed new path (18) connecting the Eastern Dandenong Ranges Trail to the Museum.

However, there was concern that large events might negatively impact on the ambience of the area.

Please avoid mass congregation events such as festivals, markets etc. The park is valuable because it is peaceful and quiet. Mass congregations of people and traffic would destroy the park

t's a quieter spot, not so overrun with crowds, even on weekends. I think parking and local traffic would be an issue in this area if you were to run a major event there, such as a market.

The Nobelius Heritage Park Zone has always been a peaceful, quiet, beautiful escape where people go to be slow & away from hustle & bustle. People are often seen wandering, meditating, doing yoga/ mindfulness, enjoying the peace & sensory experience or have quiet picnics, lying on the grass. Extra lighting, markets, events, performances, activities space would spoil the nature of this section of the park - let alone the required parking & traffic involved. Also more amenable for local residents & streets. The Emerald Lake Park development should be the activity, fun, noisy, entertaining section, while the Nobelius park should be kept as the peaceful quiet area - often the forgotten space in most developments. Perhaps even promoted as that meditative space that people can enjoy 'being slow' & sensory. There's already beautiful trees & vistas, gardens, lavender & rosemary, salvia garden, small alcoves, wandering paths, history, museum- really only needs a few more picnic areas, perhaps shelters & perhaps meditation signs similar to the ones around Lake Treganowan.

While accepting that the overall strategy for the precinct seeks to 'activate' spaces to a higher level, there should be a balance where the potential lies in offering a contrasting experience. Emerald Lake Park is clearly suited to the activation goal through a range of engagement types, while Nobelius Heritage Park can offer deeper insights to the cultural landscape itself.

Other suggestions for this zone were:

- An addition of a natural **play space** playground amongst the trees would be fun for children.
 - Consider a play space for children.
 - a natural play space playground.
 - It is a quiet safe park and many mothers gather here with their children.
- We would ask that reconsideration be given to the provision of a small natural playground, noting the expansion of the playgrounds planned for both Lakeside and Pepi's Land.
- There is a thin strip of Lakeside Parkland that adjoins the Heritage Park and is on the park side of the linking track that comes down from the Nobelius Track to the Eastern Dandenong Ranges Trail. This area is not currently being well maintained due to its "in between" location. The use and ongoing maintenance of this area needs to be part of the precinct plan.
- Three supported a **toilet upgrade**:
 - **Toilets** toilets toilets - such a wonderful space, just very important that toilets are available and accessible from sunrise to sunset. Also love idea of additional picnic facilities here. Good to have an alternative to the Lakeside - bit quieter.
 - We note and support the desire to increase the number of Public Toilets in the Heritage Park. We are not supportive of any proposal that these would be built adjacent to the current museum as this would remove any future expansion opportunities for the museum, as the proposed placement of the new toilets would be in the only available adjoining space to the museum. We would suggest building a toilet block adjacent to the green shed (Lintons Cottage) utilising the plumbing that is already in existence. This placement is also near the carpark and not uphill and would there be significantly more accessible than the current location.
- Support all the points for Nobelius Heritage Park emphasising the need for signage, the toilet upgrades, bandstand and removal of the chicanes to a bollard. The significance of the precinct as a **habitat for birdlife** should a key consideration for any developments that may be proposed for the precinct.

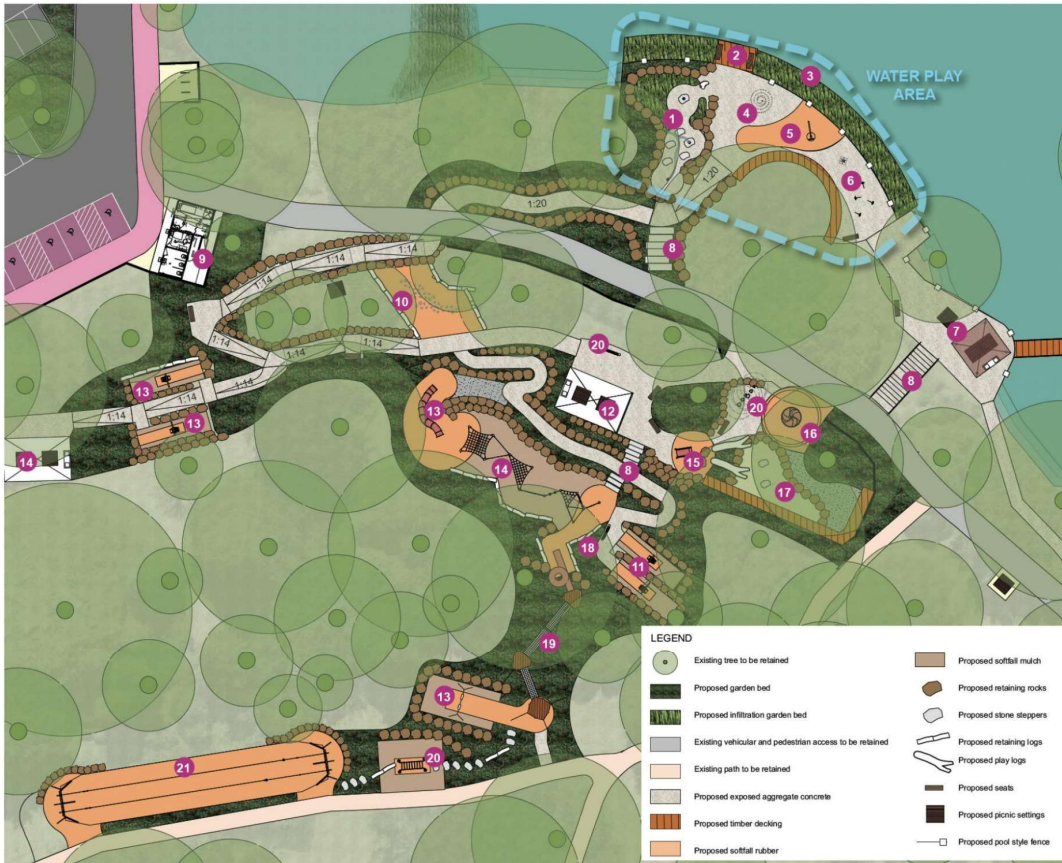
Playspace

The consultation form put forth the following information. Eighteen people provided a comment about this zone.

Proposed Playspace Concept Plan

1. Creek bed with water pumps in rocks
2. Seating and viewing area
3. Investigate opportunities to convert wading pool into infiltration garden bed to catch water play runoff. Garden bed fenced as a barrier between the playground and the lake
4. Water sprays
5. Water pump and seesaw water pump
6. Water spray masts
7. New shelter and picnic area
8. Steps
9. New toilet block with Changing Places facility, disabled cubicle and three ambulant cubicles
10. Climbing pole forest
11. Retain historic stone rubble picnic shelters
12. Embankment tube slide
13. Rope course
14. Junior embankment slide
15. Accessible carousel
16. Sandpit with retaining seating edge
17. Musical equipment
18. Tree top cubby walk with tube slide
19. Monkey bars and balance trail
20. Double flying fox
21. Opportunities to engage local artists in the development of the playground with sculpture and visual artwork signage
22. Ensure all rocks and logs can be used as informal seating to create quiet spaces for all users
23. Provide paths and accessible surfaces to ensure all play areas can be accessed by all

Playspace Concept Plan



Seven people said they like the whole design or made a general comment about liking it. Some of the specific aspects of this proposed redesign that were mentioned as appealing were:

- Spaced out / not congested (2 mentions)
- Using slope of the hill (2 mentions)
- Covers all ages and abilities (4 mentions)
- Artwork and sculptures (2 mentions)

(Playspace is) exactly what area needs to attract more users

Out of all of the masterplan concepts, this is the most vital and will service both locals and bring tourists to the area. Emerald is in desperate need for play spaces for children with facilities extremely lacking compared to surroundings area like Cockatoo, Gembrook and Monbulk. Currently there are two run down parks and families choose to go outside of Emerald to meet play needs of their children e.g. Seville and Warburton. With such a young community this upgrade is desperately needed.

The Zero-Depth pool upgrade is a wonderful idea, along with the Infiltration to save water, would feel safer if entry were less rock and rocky terrain around entrance for all ages and more platform based similar to what it is already.

Love that the playground areas will have natural shade from the canopy trees. All of the elements in the playground sound amazing and will provide interest and challenge for children of all ages.

The pool is getting older and will require more costly maintenance. It is only available for use December to March depending on the weather. The rest of the year it looks horrible. The water play idea will be very popular and will be available longer hours and all year. No lifesavers required

Emerald Primary school students were all supportive of the playspace and waterplay proposal. However, 28 students were keen to keep the spinning element from the current playground. Some of their other ideas included:

- Waterslide (17 requests)
- Big(ger) slide (14 requests)
- Ninja warrior/parkour obstacle style course (11 requests)
- Mountain bike track (11 requests)
- Flying fox (9 requests)
- Tipping bucket, water guns (6 requests)
- Wildlife / forest area for nature play (6 requests)
- Change rooms (4 requests)

However, there were some concerns from the community and the school about the removal of the pool:

- 10 primary school students said they want to keep the pool (or have somewhere they can swim)
- Loss of pool may see more children and teenagers swimming in the lake and jumping off the bridge. This was a problem over the summer of 2021-22.
- This area only caters for Pre Kindergarten and up to grade three at the most. I don't like that the pool is going. Older primary school kids and Teenagers love having a dip after school in summer. You take the pool away, you will take a lot of the locals away. A zero depth play area is not for them.
- Do not want to see the wading pool removed. it provides a different experience to the water play elements.
- Getting rid of pool should be part of redevelopment. Kids need to be able to be in the water not just splash it about.
- We would like at least some of the deep pool retained, need somewhere to be able to fully immerse the body on a hot day!
- Have both a small zero depth water area for the young kids and fix the pool for the older kids. Please don't put it in the too hard to fix box and get rid of it. Our teens are never catered for when it comes to enjoyment, It is a great place in summer for them. Please consider keeping the pool. Our epic water slides were removed now the pool.
- The removal of the wading pool removes the last opportunities for people to "swim" in the Emerald lake. This free swimming experience is part of many people's memories both old and young. The final removal of the "pool" needs to be undertaken with due regard to this strong sense of nostalgia and the feelings that this is an iconic part of living and visiting the "hills". We do understand the issues with maintaining a "pool" especially in the light of the enthusiasm of the local duck population to utilise both the pool water and the edges for duck purposes. We wonder if there is any way we can maintain a small wading pool.
- The proposed closure of the swimming pool is seen as a very unfortunate but understandable element of the Masterplan, given the costs of maintenance and the condition of the pool. There is an understandable concern by many residents about the loss of the swimming pool. The Masterplan should acknowledge that fact and Council needs to understand that in earlier times the Lake was available for swimming and was a very popular facility – Emerald even had its own lifesaving club. With the prohibition on swimming in the Lake that local facility was lost to the community, the small swimming was only a partial replacement for a lost facility. With the closure of the swimming pool local residents, particularly children, will have lost a valued local community facility and children will have to rely on parents to transport them to other venues. There is understandable concern that with the loss of the swimming pool some people may

attempt to swim in the Lake, which potentially has health and other hazards issues. If the water quality is as good as Council officers have assured us that it is – is it feasible to allow swimming in part or all of the Lake? This potential should be examined in the Masterplan and reported on and a clear statement about the feasibility or otherwise should be set out in the Masterplan and if it is to be prohibited on what basis and how is that to be enforced.

Suggestions and ideas include:

- **Artwork and sculptures** - Maybe of park animals and birds, educate the users.
- The removal of the wading pool to a more accessible water play space is a great idea, however I think that more **'features'** are needed in this. Seville water play space has a 'creek' element to it that creates a great central point for kids to play in the puddled water.
- Water play and playspace should be **located in town** where it is more accessible for locals to walk to and enable use of local shops for food/beverage options. Location at Emerald Lake Park encourages people to drive there and add to congested roads and parking. Appears targeted at tourists and not locals.
- The lack of **toilets**. It seems many toilet blocks are being removed in the park and not replaced. Parks this large need MORE toilets, not less.
 - Additional toilets at the 'top' of the playspace are needed. Small children often leave it to the last minute to tell you they need to go, so to have a long downhill walk to get to the toilets could be a disaster. The proposed new toilet block is also servicing a large area of the park, so could be busy. A small toilet block located at the top of the playground (between 11 and 19 on the map, for example) would be helpful.
- The main concern would be any damage or **removal of existing trees** in that area. I strongly oppose removal of exotic or nursery planted trees
- Want to ensure that the **view** from the bridge looking back at that side of the park isn't affected. Currently amazing viewpoint so ensure overhaul change to that side of the lake doesn't affect that view which includes seeing the trees on that side.
- Just make sure it is **good quality** and had a nice **ambience** to sit around with kids.
- Different **themes** for each Area possibly Elemental or Pirate themed etc A possible game where they're hidden things to find and search for and types of unique tunnels to see things in, sculptures of aussie animals and creatures related to emerald, photo shoot areas in creative wooden huts, hammocks, fire pit areas that is ran by staff, food events and sharing exotic animals such as lizards, small bird and frog species and donations towards them for those endangered and art competitions etc.
- Adventure for **older kids**, nature play.
- Maybe **climbing poles** could be added throughout the park to create extra interest and for children to be encouraged to explore different aspects/zones of the park and discover the poles.
- Is there opportunity to include some **shaded areas** (shade cloth) for use on Summer to avoid the current situation of the playground being in full sun and therefore too hot to use in the middle of the day in the summer months?
- It is important that the planning for the work is **staged** so that the removal and replacement of a facility are planned as one job. i.e., the removal of the wading pool must coincide with the building of the water park and the cafe moves to the new location. What cannot occur is that we remove the wading pool and then look to get additional funds to build the water park eventually, or we close the cafe and the new one can't happen for some time or drops off the list.

Western Forest Zone

The consultation form put forth the following information. Eight people provided a comment about this zone.

Proposed changes to the Western Forest zone

1. Define the Eastern Dandenong Rangers Trail (EDRT) through the park with consistent wayfinding and etiquette signage. Retain existing surface through the western forest.
2. Encourage imaginative play opportunities to the informal nature play area and the addition of wide wooden steps. Ensure Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles are considered.
3. Preserve and enhance significant natural assets in the precinct. Undertake an additional tree survey to identify trees and tree groups along the tracks in the western forest in accordance with the Emerald Lake Park Conservation Management Plan.
4. Raise the Pines Amphitheatre to ground level with rock seats to create an informal seating area for groups. Provide an accessible path to provide a safe connection for all users.
5. Provide bird hides for bird watchers and nature photographers in different areas of the park
6. Repair areas through the western forest that have been damaged by mountain biking. Install barricades to encourage bike riders to use the EDRT and prevent them from accessing problem areas.

Western forest zone



When asked which aspects of this proposal they like, cubbyland and wayfinding were mentioned, as well as better bike rider management.

Important to keep bikes out of the areas that have been cleared of weeds and are being revegetated. The informal tracks cause erosion and destruction of any indigenous plants naturalizing.

Love the concept of Cubbyland to encourage adventurous and imaginative play for children. I also support improvement of walking tracks including more signage.

Although there was feedback that the cubbyland features may need reconsidering.

"Cubbyland" steps seem too large. In winter will be very wet and slippery with fallen leaves, need regular cleaning.

Other considerations and ideas for this space were:

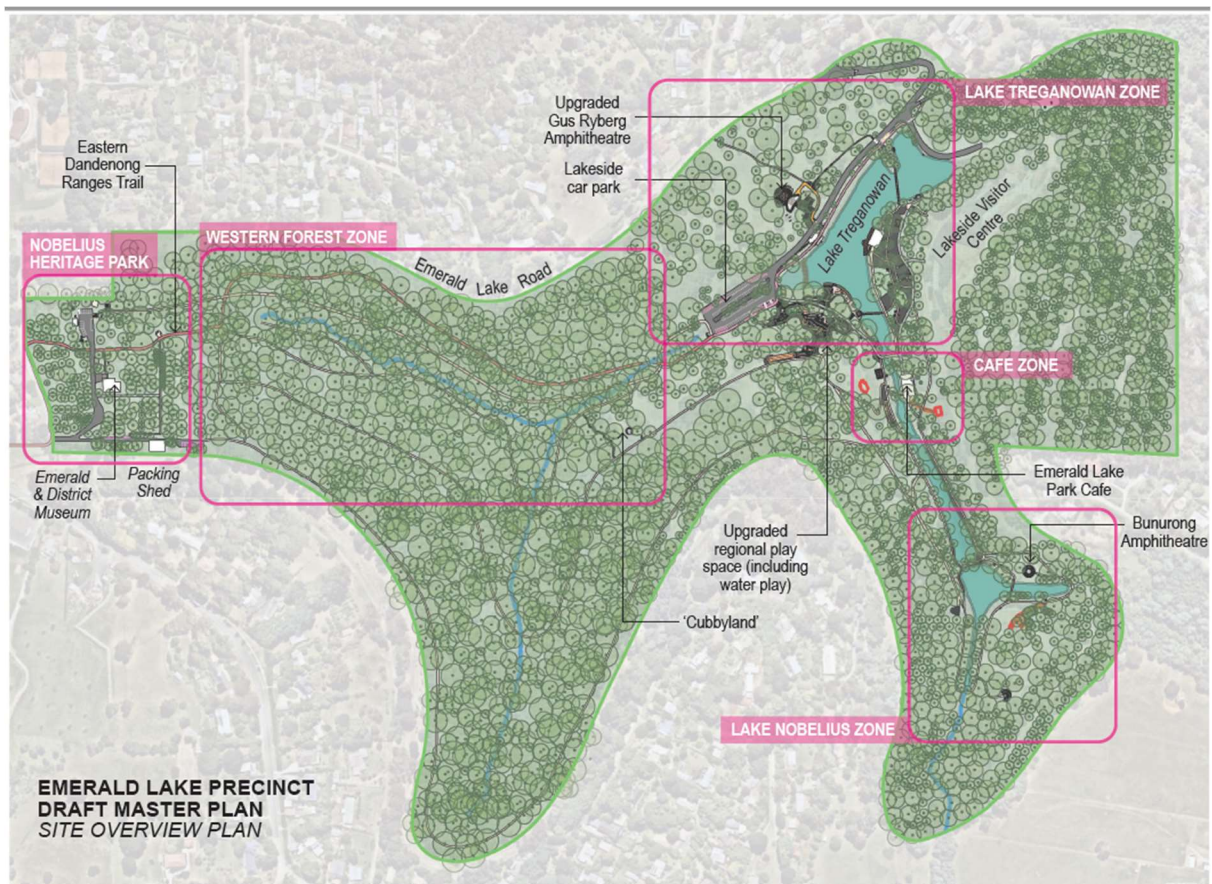
- Do not support raising the Pines Amphitheatre. This is part of the history, culture and character of Emerald Lake Park.
- I strongly don't want to see removal of any exotic or nursery planted trees.
- I don't like the sounds of barricades. If we must have them can they be natural or use signs pointing out features of the park.
- Bikes riding down Fern Gully track. It is very narrow and bikes coming fast, there is nowhere for walkers or people with dogs to get off the track. Bikes need to keep to the wider tracks. Damage is also occurring to ferns and orchids that grow on the side of the track.
- Provide seating for walkers in significant and picturesque areas to enjoy view, peace and quiet. Not in the bird hides. Continue with weed maintenance and removal through the Emerald Lake Park Vegetation Management Project to enhance the natural assets. Increase the funding from Cardinia Shire Council and supported by additional grants sourced by FELP. Provision needs to be made for new dead branches to be added, so live trees and ferns are not destroyed.

Emerald Lake Precinct

The consultation form put forth the following information. Thirty-one people provided a comment about the overall precinct.

Precinct wide proposed actions

1. Provide interpretive signage at all park entries and throughout the park for information and educational purposes. Consider the historical significance of the precinct and how that translates to the present day including indigenous history and post settlement heritage
2. Develop a consistent signage suite for the park. Implement accessible gateway, wayfinding, etiquette, identification and interpretive signage across the site
3. Consider programming opportunities within the park including educational programs, organised recreational activities, arts and culturally events, festivals and markets
4. Upgrade the existing paths to establish a safe and accessible network where possible. Consider the use of boardwalks or 'mini mesh' as required to protect trees and root systems
5. Upgrade all existing furniture to comply with Council's preferred furniture suite including DDA compliant drink fountains, seats, picnic tables and barbecues at all activity nodes and picnic tables at Bellbird picnic area
6. Update the 'Areas of Cultural Heritage Sensitivity' overlay within Emerald Lake Precinct to include the overall extent of the Wattle Creek, Paternoster Creek and Mackenzie Creek
7. Implement and undertake the recommendations outlined in the 2020 Tree Assessment Report including maintaining and improving weed and pest management
8. Ensure the structural integrity of lake edges are maintained or improved in all works
9. Prepare a strategy for long term replacement planting of nursery and exotic trees in accordance with the 2020 Conservation Management Plans
10. Restrict vehicle access within the park to maintenance and emergency vehicles only, to reduce traffic and improve pedestrian safety
11. Engage traditional owners to add value to the precinct upgrades including interpretive signage and artwork
12. Include Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles in future development of the park to ensure the safety of all users
13. Continue to work with Friends of Emerald Lake Park with removal of invasive woody weeds and native revegetation works
14. Complete a fire management strategy for the site that will complement the Emergency Management Plan for extreme weather and fire which is already in place
15. Develop a waste management plan for the precinct



Some of the key positive items mentioned in the comments were:

- Upgraded / all abilities paths (5 mentions);
- Wayfinding and signage needed (4 mentions);
- Indigenous components / consultation (4 mentions);
- New water playspace (4 mentions);
- Need for seating (2 mentions);
- Remove the pool (2 mentions);
- Café by the water (2 mentions);
- Gus Ryberg amphitheatre upgrade / events (2 mentions);
- Reduce traffic (car);
- Drinking fountains; and
- Toilet upgrades.

Some of the key negative features mentioned were:

- Too many toilet blocks removed (2 mentions);
- Don't remove the pool (2 mentions);
- Removal of trees / vegetation – don't remove exotics (2 mentions);
- Concern that large events and congregations will interrupt the ambience of the park;
- Address parking on surrounding roads;
- Better manage fishing areas; and
- Better tell the story of the parks' history.

Additional suggestions were:

- Parking permits for locals (2 mentions);
- Design to reflect heritage / not modern architecture (2 mentions);
- More car parking needed (2 mentions);
- Walking times on signage / signage to support fitness activities (2 mentions);
- Improve entrance signage;
- Footpath from township;
- Camping options;
- Consider CALD users;
- Water slide;
- Ensure it is still appropriate for locals, not just tourists;
- Build a pool in the town somewhere;
- On-site rangers;
- Running and fitness options;
- Large maps of the park;
- Ensure accessibility;
- Fire management considerations (including with Electric Vehicle chargers);
- Dedicated bike track;
- More seating;
- More bins

Engage traditional owners to add value to the precinct upgrades including interpretive signage and artwork. Emerald really lacks an acknowledgement and recognition of traditional owners and emerald lake is a great place to start improving this!

The upgrade of paths is so important. Lots of areas that are not suitable for people with additional needs.

School Consultation Findings

Consultations activities were conducted with students at Emerald Primary School and Emerald Secondary College.

Feedback from primary school students showed their priorities to be:

- Keeping the spinning feature, and perhaps add more spinning playground features;
- Following this suggestion for more spinning features, the next most common new playground idea was some sort of climbing or ropes course (ninja warrior, parkour, climbing wall);
- Bigger equipment was also frequently suggested, most commonly related to a slide (big slide) and/or flying fox;
- Many students indicated that they wanted to keep the pool so there was somewhere for them to swim, although additional waterplay elements were quite popular as well, specifically tipping buckets / water guns;
- Other popular ideas were more food options (café, ice cream van, restaurant), fishing facilities (rod holders, platform) and more forest play areas.

Feedback from secondary college students showed common priorities to be:

- Grassed area for dancing;
- Exercise equipment;
- Picnic area;
- Hang-out places; and
- Under-cover areas.

Useful feedback to follow up

Electric vehicle charging points. Almost an unregulated industry at the moment. We have been watching several webinars on EV recently as all fire brigades are still learning about these vehicle fires. What is known is they can take potentially hours to extinguish, and use tens to hundreds of thousand litres of water to extinguish them. Also 1 in 3 EV fires have occurred whilst charging. Therefore, are the EV charging stations away from structures or trees?

Distances could be included on Eastern Dandenong Ranges Trail e.g. to Museum (signage)

Could the **tables/chairs combo have concrete pads under them** to make them more accessible and cleaner underfoot?

Some **seating** along the EDRT and other major trails would be an asset to walkers to rest and admire the view.

One suggesting regarding the amphitheatre upgrade - **make sure that the hills behind the formal seating are logical places to sit if all the formal seating is taken up**, i.e. the hills behind flow on from the formal seats - this would allow much greater numbers to participate in the event.

The **signage at the entrance** of the lake is confusing for visitors. The wombat corner sign directs cars in both directions and many lake visitors go the wrong way, up Lakeview Ct instead.

Perhaps some **charging points** for technology if you want to make a day of it heading down then need somewhere to charge phones

I would like to see the allocation of **parking** spaces specifically set aside for **motorcycles** especially at the lower carpark, as there isn't any.

Rod holders on bridge